THE

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

COLLECTION

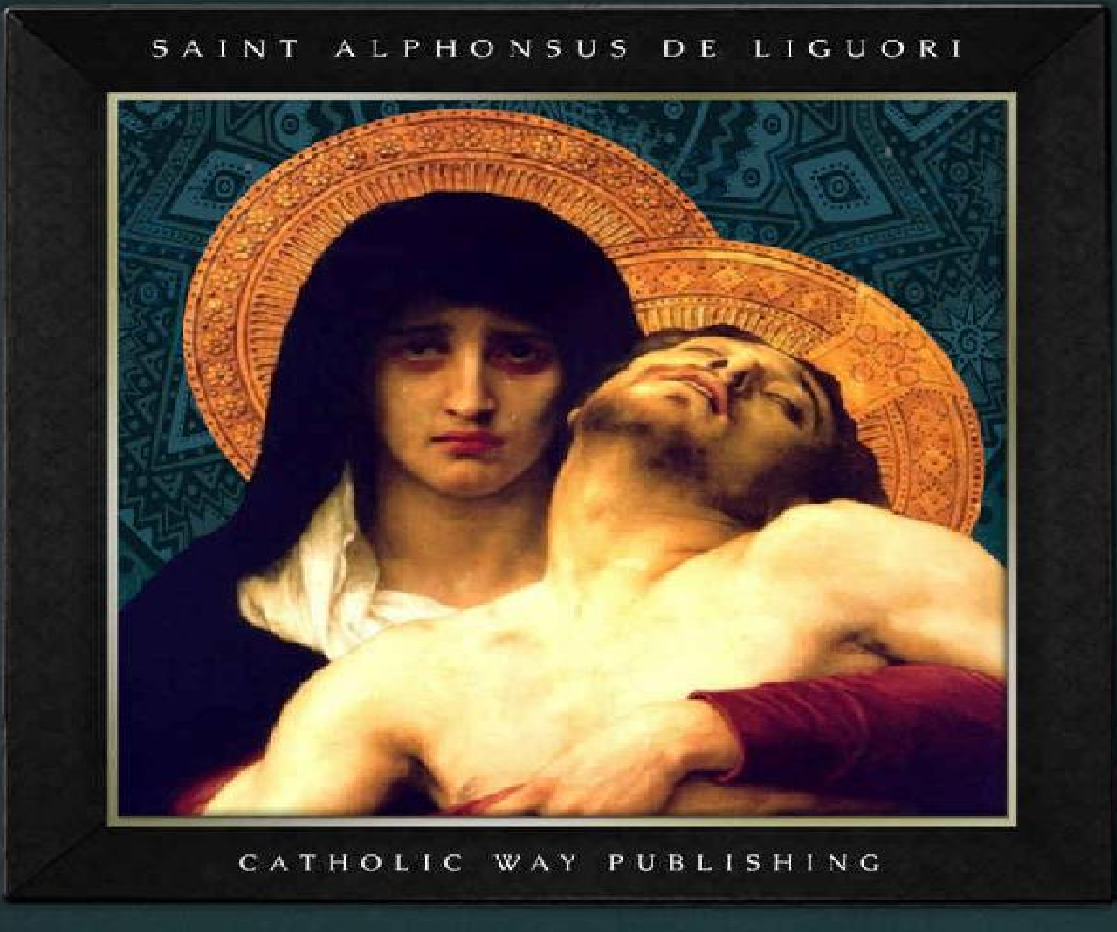
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—30 BOOKS—

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

CATHOLIC WAY
PUBLISHING

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INDEX

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

BOOKS INDEX

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

HOW TO PRAY AT ALL TIMES

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

PREPARATION FOR DEATH

THE WAY OF SALVATION AND OF PERFECTION

THE GREAT MEANS OF SALVATION AND OF PERFECTION

THE INCARNATION BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS CHRIST

THE PASSION AND THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

THE GLORIES OF MARY

THE VICTORIES OF THE MARTYRS

THE TRUE SPOUSE OF JESUS CHRIST

DIGNITY AND DUTIES OF THE PRIEST

THE HOLY MASS

THE DIVINE OFFICE

PREACHING

SERMONS FOR ALL THE SUNDAYS IN THE YEAR

MISCELLANY

THE HISTORY OF HERESIES AND THEIR REFUTATION

UNIFORMITY WITH GOD’S WILL

THE SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

THE RELIGIOUS STATE

SERMONS UPON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

DEVOUT REFLECTIONS ON VARIOUS SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS

LETTERS OF SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

—LIFE OF THE AUTHOR—

THE LIFE OF SAINT ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI

—POPULAR BOOK EXCERPTS—

THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

DEATH, JUDGMENT, HEAVEN, AND HELL

NINE DISCOURSES FOR TIMES OF CALAMITIES

THE SEVEN SORROWS OF MARY

—ARTICLES—

ILLUSTRATIONS

PUBLISHER

ENDNOTES

BOOK INDEX

THE SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI COLLECTION

INDEX

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

HOW TO PRAY AT ALL TIMES

- CONTENTS
- How to Pray at All Times

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

- CONTENTS
- The Way of the Cross

PREPARATION FOR DEATH

- CONTENTS
- Preparation for Death
- Preparation for Death
- Maxims of Eternity
  Or Meditations for Every Day in the Week
- A Christian’s Rule of Life

THE WAY OF SALVATION AND OF PERFECTION

- CONTENTS
- The Way of Salvation and of Perfection
- PART I
  Meditations Suitable for All Times in the Year
- PART II
  Pious Reflections on Different Points of Spirituality to Guide Souls that Desire to Advance in the Love of God

PART III
Spiritual Treatises

THE GREAT MEANS OF SALVATION AND OF PERFECTION

CONTENTS

The Great Means of Salvation and of Perfection

PART I
The Necessity, Power, and Conditions of Prayer

Part II
Which proves that the Grace of Prayer is given to all, and which treats of the Ordinary Mode in which this Grace operates

Mental Prayer and the Exercises of a Retreat

The Choice of a State of Life, and the Vocation to the Religions State
Counsels Concerning A Religious Vocation

Considerations for Those Who are Called to the Religious State

Answer to a Young Man who asks Counsel on the Choice of a State of Life

Advice to a Young Person in Doubt About the State of Life which she Ought to Embrace

Discourse to Pious Maidens

The Vocation to the Priesthood

THE INCARNATION BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS CHRIST

CONTENTS

The Incarnation Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ

The Mysteries of the Faith
The Incarnation

Discourses for the Novena of Christmas

Meditations for Every Day of Advent

Meditations for the Novena for Christmas

Meditations for the Octave of Christmas, and for the following Days until the Epiphany

Meditations for the Octave of the Epiphany

Other Mediations for the First Eight Days of Advent

Other Meditations for the Novena of Christmas

Darts of fire or Proofs that Jesus Christ has given us of His Love in the Work of Redemption

THE PASSION AND THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

CONTENTS

The Passion and the Death of Jesus Christ

Reflections and Affections on the Passion of Jesus Christ

Simple Exposition of the Circumstances of the Passion of Jesus Christ

Considerations on the Passion of Jesus Christ

Meditations on the Passion of Jesus Christ for each Day of the Week

Eight Meditations Drawn from the Considerations on the Passion of Jesus Christ.

Fifteen Meditations on the Passion of Jesus Christ

Three Meditations on Paradise, for the Easter Festival

Various Exercises for the Use of Persons devoted to the Passion of our Lord

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

CONTENTS

The Holy Eucharist

The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ with a short explanation of The Prayers of the Mass

Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin

Meditations for the Octave of Corpus Christi

Novena to the Sacred heart of Jesus

The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ

Pions Exercise to obtain the Seven Gifts of the holy Ghost

THE GLORIES OF MARY

CONTENTS

The Glories of Mary

PART I
On the Salve Regina

- PART II
- Discourses on the Seven Principal Feasts of Mary and Her Dolors
- Reflections
  On Each of the Seven Dolors of Mary in Particular
- Of the Virtues of the Most Holy Mary
- Various Practices of Devotion to the Divine Mother
- Various Additional Examples Appertaining to the Most Holy Mary

THE VICTORIES OF THE MARTYRS
- CONTENTS
- The Victories of the Martyrs
- PART I
  Martyrs of the First Ages
- PART II
  The Martyrs of Japan

THE TRUE SPOUSE OF JESUS CHRIST
- CONTENTS
- The True Spouse of Jesus Christ

DIGNITY AND DUTIES OF THE PRIEST
- CONTENTS
- Dignity and Duties of the Priest
- PART I
  Material for Sermons
- PART II
  Material for Instructions
- Appendix

THE HOLY MASS
- CONTENTS
- The Holy Mass

- The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, with a Short Explanation of the Prayers of Mass
- The Ceremonies of the Mass
- Preparation for Mass and Thanksgiving after it

THE DIVINE OFFICE

- CONTENTS
- The Divine Office
- Explanation of the Psalms and Canticles
- Matins
- Lauds
- Prime, Terce, Sext, None
- Prime
- Terce throughout the Week
- Sext throughout the Week
- None
- Vespers

PREACHING

- CONTENTS
- Preaching
- The Exercises of the Missions
- Instructions for the People
- PART I
  Instructions on the Commandments
- PART II
  Instructions on the Holy Sacraments

SERMONS FOR ALL THE SUNDAYS IN THE YEAR

- CONTENTS
- Sermons for All the Sundays in the Year

Sermons of Saint Alphonsus Liguori

MISCELLANY

CONTENTS

Miscellany

Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

PART I
Missions and Other Exercises

PART II
The Particular Obligations of the Members of the Congregation

PART III
GOVERNMENT of the Congregation

Counsels Concerning a Religious Vocation

Considerations for those who are Called to the Religious State

Exhortation to Novices to Persevere in their Vocation.

Notes on the Life of the Rev. Father Paul Cafaro, of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

Notes on the Life of Father Januarius Maria SARNELLI of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

Notes on the Life of VITUS Curzius, Lay-Brother of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

Various Smaller Works

Sermon on the Rosary

Sermon on the Passion of Jesus Christ.

Nine Discourses for Times of Calamities

Texts from Holy Scripture and from the Holy Fathers Referring to Some Particular Calamities

Reflections Useful for Bishops that they may Govern Well their Churches

Fidelity of Subjects TO God Renders them faithful to the Prince, their Ruler

THE HISTORY OF HERESIES AND THEIR REFUTATION

CONTENTS

- The History of Heresies and their Refutation
- Supplementary Chapter. Heresies of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

UNIFORMITY WITH GOD’S WILL

- CONTENTS
- Uniformity with God’s Will

THE SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

- CONTENTS
- The School of Christian Perfection

THE RELIGIOUS STATE

- CONTENTS
- The Religious State

SERMONS UPON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

- CONTENTS
- Sermons Upon Various Subjects

DEVOUT REFLECTIONS ON VARIOUS SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS

- CONTENTS
- Devout Reflections on Various Spiritual Subjects

LETTERS OF SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

- CONTENTS
- Letters

—LIFE OF THE AUTHOR—

THE LIFE OF SAINT ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI

- CONTENTS
- The Life of Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori

—POPULAR BOOK EXCERPTS—

THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

- CONTENTS
- The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ

VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

- CONTENTS
- Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin

DEATH, JUDGMENT, HEAVEN, AND HELL

- CONTENTS
- Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell
- PART I
  Meditations Suitable for All Times in the Year
- PART II
  Pious Reflections on Different Points of Spirituality to Guide Souls that Desire to Advance in the Love of God

NINE DISCOURSES FOR TIMES OF CALAMITIES

- CONTENTS
- Nine Discourses for Times of Calamities

THE SEVEN SORROWS OF MARY

- CONTENTS
- The Seven Sorrows of Mary

—ARTICLES—

- ARTICLES BY ALPHONSUS
- ARTICLES ABOUT ALPHONSUS

ILLUSTRATIONS

PUBLISHER

ENDNOTES

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

INDEX

He was born in Marinella, in the suburbs of Naples, on the 27th of September, 1696, the feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian, and baptized two days after, on the feast of St. Michael the Archangel. Amongst the names given him, Alphonsus, Maria, were the leading ones, and by these, to the exclusion of the others, he is usually known. His father Joseph, of the noble house of Liguori, was alike distinguished for talent (especially military) and for virtue: and his mother Catherine (also of a noble house) was sister to the celebrated servant of God, Emilio Jacomo Cavalieri, Bishop of Troy in partibus, who died in the odor of sanctity. Indeed she was worthy such a brother, being scarcely, if at all, inferior to him in sanctity of life.

Alphonsus, in early youth, nay, we might almost say, in infancy, even then, edified all with whom he conversed; and those who have written his life in detail, mention numerous instances of virtue, which we cannot afford to specify. He had a remarkable disinclination for the amusements of children, and never took part in them, unless when charity, or the fear of singularity, ruled it otherwise. He evinced the most tender devotion to mysteries, which most children of his age can scarce be brought to understand, and even amongst the youths with whom he was obliged to associate in the college of nobles, under the conduct of the priests of the oratory, his conduct never varied; his devotion to the sacrament of the altar, and the Mother of God, continually gaining strength. His progress in human learning kept pace so well with his progress in the science of the saints, that when he had completed his legal studies, he required a dispensation of three years for admission to the degree of doctor in canon and civil law.

He practised for some time at the bar, and was fast growing into repute, when an incident occurred, to which, in the dispensations of Providence, we are indebted for the apostolic labors and learned writings of our Saint. Alphonsus having been retained as counsel for the defence, in a case of great interest and importance, his pleading was so ingenious and so eloquent, that the president, Signor Caravita, felt disposed to give judgment in favor of his client, when the counsel on the other side, instead of replying, simply begged of Alphonsus to reconsider his argument, and see whether it was not unsound. Alphonsus, to his great confusion and surprise, perceived it to be flawed by reason of his having overlooked one negative particle in the process. The court and audience complimented him upon his able defence, and acquitted him of any blame upon the score of negligence; attributing his oversight to the warmth so natural to a young lawyer in his situation. Alphonsus, however, did not so readily acquit himself; but, having bowed to the court, was heard to say, as he withdrew, "false world, I know you, and have done with you;"—he had given up the bar.

Almighty God was pleased to enlighten his mind, during a retreat of three days, which he made under the direction of his confessor; at the end of which period he was confirmed in his resolution, to attend solely to the care of his salvation. Alphonsus having now nothing to divide his attention with the pursuit of virtue and sacred science, devoted himself unreservedly to the attainment of both,—and applied his powerful intellect so vigorously to the study of theology, as rapidly to fit himself for the office of a teacher in Israel. The rapid and steady progress of Alphonsus in piety and learning induced Cardinal Pignatelli, the then Archbishop of Naples, to hasten his promotion to tonsure and minor orders; unwilling that the church should longer remain without numbering such a youth as he amongst her ministers. Immediately that Alphonsus was advanced to minor orders, he entered upon the discharge of his functions, and kept it with faith and assiduity. Anxious, not only to preserve that purity of life to which he was exhorted by the ordaining bishop, but, moreover, continually to amass new treasures of grace, he regularly attended the religious exercises of the fathers of the mission; a practice which he persevered in up to the time of his ordination to the priesthood. No sooner had Alphonsus received deaconship, than the Cardinal Archbishop, not content with permitting, exhorted him to preach; and the obedient levite, in compliance with the desire of his pastor, preached his first sermon in the parish church of St. John, in Porta, upon the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

On the 27th of December, 1726, Alphonsus, being in the thirty-first year of his age, was ordained priest. We shall not dilate upon the raptures of Alphonsus, when he found himself on the summit of the holy mountain. We pass over the sentiments of faith, love, and gratitude, with which he immolated, for the first time, the sacred victim of the altar. We speak not of the redoubled fervor with which he applied himself to all his usual practices of piety, and more especially to the loving adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; we press onward to his apostolical labors, and taking a hasty survey of all he did, and taught, and weighing his title to greatness in the balance of the sanctuary, over which is inscribed, “qui fecerit et docuerit sic homines, hic magnus vocabitur in regno cœlorum,” we shall see whether his title be such, that in the kingdom of Heaven he is called great.

As a matter of course, the pulpit labors of Alphonsus increased on his advancement to the priesthood; and to these were added the toilsome and revolting duties of the confessional. So great, in fact, was the esteem in which Alphonsus was held by his Archbishop, that he had no sooner been ordained priest, than he was appointed to conduct the retreat of the clergy, although there were amongst them many apostolic and eloquent men of older standing than he. He was peculiarly fitted for the confessional, not by the qualities which he possessed (all of which are indispensable to every good confessor), but by the degree in which he possessed them. His tenderness in receiving, his patience in hearing, his sweetness in admonition, were such as few or none have ever met with. The unction with which he represented to the sinner his ingratitude, and the moving words by which he sought to excite him to repentance, were irresistible.

Inspired by his zeal for the salvation of souls, he bethought him of a means whereby to confirm his penitents in their holy resolutions, and instruct them more at large in the science of perfection. On festival days assembling them around him, in some remote and silent quarter of the city, he there addressed them on spiritual subjects. There, encircled by persons of the meanest condition, he was all the better pleased on that account, as they afforded him an opportunity of enlightening them upon many portions of the Christian doctrine, of which they had, till then, been ignorant. After a time several priests, and some laymen of a spiritual life, joined him in his conferences, when the assembly having been represented to the governor as of a suspicious character, was dissolved, though not without the innocence of its object having been recognised. The priests, upon this, retired to a house in the city, and spent their time in exercises of penance and devotion, and those of no ordinary character, but, to Alphonsus, scarce any extremity of vigor, scarce any pitch of fervor was unknown. Alphonsus took care that the dispersion of his hearers should not be prejudicial to the poor people who shared most of his attention, for he caused the more enlightened and zealous of his penitents to assemble their less favored brethren, and speak to them on spiritual subjects, with the consent of the Archbishop, in private houses, and hired rooms, and at length, even in public oratories and chapels.

Father Matteo Ripa, a truly apostolic priest, having returned from China, with some youths of that nation, destined for the sacred ministry, succeeded in 1729 in establishing a college for the Chinese mission. To this college Alphonsus withdrew, as well to escape the distractions of his father’s house, as to perfect himself in the ministry of the divine word, under such a master as Matteo Ripa. Alphonsus lived in the college on no other footing than that of a guest, although for a time he had some thoughts of China, which he relinquished in obedience to his confessor, Father Pagano. Our Saint meanwhile continued to preach in all the churches of Naples to immense congregations, and with abundant fruit. At stated periods of the year, he conducted missions in various quarters of the kingdom, and while laboring for the sanctification of others, took such measures for his own, as are taken only by saints such as he.

He addressed himself to God in prayer, and took counsel of several learned and pious men, all of whom assured him that it was the will of God he should become the founder of a new congregation of missionary priests for the spiritual aid of those souls who are most destitute. The Bishop of Scala engaged him to establish the first house of the future Order in his diocess. He set off for Scala, and on the ninth of November, 1732, after having celebrated a Mass of the Holy Ghost, and sung the “Te Deum,” in thanksgiving for all the protection vouchsafed him in this matter, he laid the foundation of his new society. His first companions numbered twelve, consisting of ten priests, and two candidates for orders, together with a serving lay-brother, Vito Curzio by name, a rich gentleman of Acquaviva di Bari, who, admonished by a vision at Naples, had chosen that humble post amongst the brethren of the new congregation.

The life which Alphonsus and his companions led in Scala, resembled nothing so exactly as the life of those penitents whom St. John Chrysostom speaks of in his “Mystic Ladder.” Their lodging was small and incommodious; their beds a little straw shaken on the floor; their bread black, hard, and coarse; their other food disgusting from its insipidity, and taken kneeling, their religious exercises incessant. From time to time they dispersed themselves over the country to conduct the missions, and gathered in such harvests of souls (Alphonsus always foremost in labor and success), as caused the bishop to thank God with all the fervor of his heart, for having provided his diocess with these apostles, and above all, with Alphonsus, who was the great instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and next to God best entitled to its gratitude.

Whilst Alphonsus and his brethren, laboring thus for their neighbors’ salvation, and their own, seemed like the primitive Christians to have one only heart, and one only soul, the enemy contrived to sow his tares amongst them, and scatter the infant congregation. Our Saint thinking it high time to have a code of rules framed for the government of his congregation, wished to collect the views of his brethren upon the subject. Some would fain combine the care of poor schools with their missionary labors; some were advocates for more absolute, and some for mitigated poverty; some insisted upon increased austerity, and some advised relaxation; nearly all condemned the plan of Alphonsus. The saint at other times so deferential to his brethren, defended his plan, and adhered to it in every particular, notwithstanding the opposition of his companions, who at length deserted him, with the exception of Cæsar Sportelli, as yet a secular, and the lay-brother Vito Curzio.

As soon as it reached Naples that Alphonsus was abandoned by his brethren, those who had originally been hostile to his design, renewed their condemnation of it in no very temperate strain. They taxed the saint with presumption, and held him up to ridicule, not allowing even the Archbishop to escape uncensured for the favor which he showed Alphonsus; but the venerable Archbishop, uninfluenced by these malicious speeches in his opinior of Alphonsus or his design, sent for the holy man, and encouraged him to prosecute his good work, an encouragement which, though well meant, was little needed, as Alphonsus, nothing daunted, went the mission by himself in the confidence that God in his own time would provide him with fellow-laborers. The man of God was not disappointed in his expectations; after a while he was joined by father John Mazzini, and as others began to flow in apace, Alphonsus submitted to the holy see the rules he had drawn up for the government of the congregation, and which met with the entire approval of the Pope.

The congregation being now distributed into different houses, the brethren set about the election of a superior-general, and were unanimous in their choice of Alphonsus, whom they appointed general for life. We shall not go into many details upon the government of the holy superior-general; suffice it to say, that he united the greatest humility with the highest dignity—the greatest meekness with the most unlimited command—and all the virtues of the subject with all the qualities of the superior. He made a yearly visitation of all the houses of his order; and as soon as he had completed the visitation, addressed to each house a circular replete with tender piety and spiritual learning, breathing the most ardent charity towards God and his neighbor, and expressive of the tenderest love for the congregation. He was wont to embody in short and pithy sentences, the whole duty of a missionary of the congregation, or place the observance of the rule in a new and striking light.

In training the students for their missionary labors, every other study was of course subordinate to the great object of the congregation—the ministry of the divine word; and it was the anxious care of Alphonsus to impress them with correct notions upon this all-important matter. He instructed them to avoid defacing the simplicity of the gospel with the frippery of rhetoric, or even the genuine beauties of purely human eloquence. He took especial care that they should fit themselves for the confessional by the study of moral theology; which, he said, should finish only with the life of the student, and without the knowledge of which, a confessor, he said, would damn himself, and bring ruin on his penitents. He instructed them, moreover, in the proper treatment of different classes of penitents, impressing upon them the necessity of sweetness and charity, the danger of severity and harshness, and the importance of using to advantage their discretion in giving or withholding absolution in those cases where the church has left either course open to them.

The sanctity of Alphonsus, and the wonders by which his preaching was attended, began to attract the notice of the entire kingdom, and, amongst others, of Cardinal Spinelli, who immediately fixed his eye upon him for promotion to the episcopacy. Shortly after, the Archbishopric of Palermo becoming vacant, the king determined upon appointing Alphonsus to that dignity, saying, “If the Pope appoint good bishops, I shall appoint still better.” Alphonsus, who, upon the mere suspicion of Cardinal Spinelli’s designs, had left his unfinished mission in Naples, was dreadfully alarmed when he heard of the king’s intention, and bestirred himself so vigorously to counteract it, that he did at length succeed, and was consoled by witnessing the appointment of another. But his joy was of short duration, and his escape from the burthen of the episcopacy proved to be nothing more than a reprieve; for the see of Sant’ Agata de’ Goti becoming vacant, he was nominated by the Pope himself to the care of that church. Alphonsus having recovered from the desolation into which he was thrown by the announcement of this intelligence, addressed a letter to the Pope, setting forth his unfitness for that high office, as well by reason of his infirm health, and advanced age, as of his spiritual unworthiness. The Holy Father upon receiving the letter of Alphonsus was deeply moved by the pathetic remonstrances of the saint; and, on the evening of the 14th of March, communicated to his Pro-auditor, Cardinal Negroni, his intention of allowing Alphonsus to decline the dignity; but, on the following morning, informed Cardinal Negroni, that God had inspired him during the night to have Alphonsus consecrated. The Pro-auditor then, by command of the Pope, wrote to Alphonsus, acquainting him with the determination of His Holiness, and put him upon his obedience.

The companions of our Saint, in sore affliction at their approaching bereavement, and unwilling to lose his sweet and fatherly government, having assembled in chapter, confirmed him in the perpetual superior-generalship, empowering him at the same time to govern through one of his vicars, when he should find it necessary: and this decree, in order to its greater stability, they submitted to the sacred congregation of bishops and superiors of orders, by whom it was confirmed on the 25th of May, 1762.

Alphonsus having accepted the episcopal office, through pure obedience, set out for Rome accompanied by Father Andrea Villani, a man of approved virtue.

During his residence in Rome, notwithstanding his retired habits, and the scantiness of his retinue (a single servant), he was paid the most distinguished respect by generals of religious orders, bishops, princes, and cardinals. Almost every moment of his sojourn in the Eternal City he spent in austere watchings, disciplines to blood, constant adoration of the most holy Sacrament, and the exercise of acts of mercy. Having been at length formally declared bishop of Sant' Agata de' Goti, by the Sovereign Pontiff, in the secret consistory held on the 14th of June, 1762, Alphonsus was consecrated on the 20th of the same month, the third Sunday after Pentecost, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, in the Church of St. Mary Sopra Minerva, by Cardinal de Rossi, assisted by Monsignor Gorgoni, Archbishop of Emessa, and Monsignor Giordani, Archbishop of Nicomedia, governor of Rome. As soon as he had been consecrated, Alphonsus took leave of the Sovereign Pontiff, unwilling that he should be absent from his church a moment longer than was necessary.

Upon his return to Naples, many persons of the highest distinction, as well as many of his former colleagues, endeavored to detain him there, and dissuade him from his precipitate journey to Sant' Agata. which seemed to portend so constant a residence in that unwholesome town as would prove ruinous to his health. Their remonstrances, however, were ineffectual, and he set out on the 11th of July, accompanied by his brother Hercules, and Father Francis Margotto. His journey through the country was like the triumphal procession of a conqueror. He was met at every stage by reverential multitudes, and welcomed into Sant' Agata by the citizens, and the chapter of the process. Having proceeded to the Church, he spent some time in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and then addressing the people in a moving strain gave them his benediction and the indulgence usual upon such occasions The very next morning he began the mission to the people, which he continued during eight days, giving each morning spiritual exercises to the clergy, secular and regular, as well as to the gentry; so that shortly after his arrival, the entire aspect of the city and diocess had undergone a most surprising and consoling change.

Alphonsus, in the government of his diocess, simply carried out the principles which he had laid down in a book, entitled “Reflections useful to bishops in the government of their Churches,” and published before his elevation to the episcopacy. Though removed in body from his congregation, it ceased not to be directed by his spirit, as he was in constant communication with Father Villani, his Vicar-general, and the superiors of houses, continually exhorting and instructing them by letters full of unction and wisdom alike divine. His elevation to the episcopal dignity no wise prejudiced that eminent spirit of poverty by which he had been distinguished while residing with the congregation. His dress (invariably the habit of the congregation) was of the coarsest texture. He left the best apartments to his household clergy, occupying himself a couple of the most unpretending, and furnished in the meanest style, possessing, in fact, only some straw chairs, a table with an inkstand and a few books, a small wooden bedstead with a straw bed, and coarse sheets, some pictures of saints and one of our blessed Lady of good counsel, together with a little altar for the celebration of Mass, when his health should not permit him to go to the Cathedral. His table was originally very simple, and every day experienced new retrenchments, until it reached the standard of insipidity, which Alphonsus had laid out for it. His household resembled nothing so closely as a religious community, so regular were the hours of prayer, and silence, and meals, and religious converse.

If Alphonsus, by reason of his pastoral cares, was unable to pray as much as he could have desired during the day time, he abridged to a mere nothing the hours of repose, spending the greater part of the night in meditation, or those appalling acts of penance which we have mentioned. The little time which he contrived to steal from his pastoral cares, or his devotions, he spent not in recreation, but in writing, or dictating letters, or composing works for the good of souls, or reading spiritual or theological books. An application unintermitting as was his, could not, unless by miracle, fail to prejudice his health, and in addition to his other infirmities, he began to be afflicted with grievous headaches. But it mattered not, for even when obliged to go out in his carriage, he had his secretary to read a book to him, so that he contrived not to allow a single moment to pass unoccupied. And, lest by possibility a single imperfection should escape his notice, he appointed a discreet and pious priest to make him acquainted with anything he should observe in him, which might require correction.

Alphonsus having fallen sick in Arienzo during one of his yearly visitations, had no sooner recovered his health sufficiently to travel, than he began to think of returning to Sant’ Agata, and the representations of his vicar-general regarding the unsafe condition of a portion of the palace, would have been ineffectual had not the doctors insisted upon his remaining where he was; the damp and insalubrious air of Sant’ Agata being peculiarly hurtful to one afflicted as he was with asthma. But neither his infirmities, nor his withdrawal from the usual seat of episcopal government, caused him to suspend for a day the instructions, private as well as public, which he was in the habit of giving his flock. He preached as usual on Sundays and holidays; and on Saturdays, in honor of the blessed Virgin; he continued to give missions, conduct retreats, and attend at conferences; in a word, he never permitted his health to interfere with the discharge of any of those duties which even holy bishops deem themselves justified in devolving upon others. He catechised in person the infants of both sexes, holding out, and awarding with his own hand, little prizes for their encouragement. He gave audience to persons of either sex, or any degree, who wished to consult him upon their wants and occasions, spiritual or temporal, but summarily dispatched all visits of mere compliment; and once a year made a visitation of half the diocess, so that he saw every portion of it once in two years. In travelling he rode upon an ass, or hired mule (his equipage he had early disposed of), and made use of no other conveyance, no matter how great his infirmities, or what the badness of the road. During the course of the visitation, he everywhere addressed the people, confirmed the children, and inspected the churches, even in the poorest and remotest districts; his household, his table, and his devotions, wherever he resided, being the same as in Sant’ Agata. To the sick of his entire diocess he was attentive, and not satisfied with relieving their wants when they thrust themselves upon him, took measure to discover such wants as might not have attracted his notice. In the administration of justice in his episcopal court, he was so assiduous and vigilant, and weighed so well both sides of the question, that there never was an appear from his decision to that of the Archiepiscopal Court of Benevento: and with regard to ecclesiastical privileges and immunities, though not so tried, he was full as unflinching an asserter of the church’s rights, as was St. Thomas of Canterbury.

There were many things in the clergy requiring reformation, when our saint came to the government of the diocess; and he effected a total change, at once so rapidly and noiselessly, that the people perceived it to be finished almost before they had perceived it to be in progress. To the canonries and other benefices in his gift, he collated none whose moral and intellectual fitness he had not ascertained; the moral, by personal experience, or strict investigation, and the intellectual, by what is technically termed, a “concursus,” or an examination, properly speaking, of two or more candidates, but sometimes of one only. Nor was this strictness confined to his choice of dignitaries only, he was equally exact in the appointment of every priest who was to have the cure of souls, and sit in the tribunal of penance. The rules which he drew up for the conduct of his seminary were equally admirable with every other portion of his government; providing not only for the maintenance of discipline and piety within doors, but for the practice of piety by the students in their own homes during the vacation, at the close of which, if they meant to be readmitted, they should bring with them a certificate of their religious conduct, signed on oath by the parish priest.

The regular clergy and conventuals of his diocess, men and women, claimed his most paternal attention. He did his utmost, and with the most perfect success, to improve the character of those peculiarly catholic institutions, especially such as were under the invocation of the Mother of God. His beautiful work entitled the “True Spouse of Jesus Christ, or the Nun Sanctified,” will be read with peculiar spiritual advantage by nuns, and with vast profit by any religious whosoever.

If Alphonsus was attentive to the sanctification of the clergy and sacred virgins of his diocess. Oh! how zealously and unremittingly did he not labor for the simple faithful? Not satisfied with his continual preaching by word and example, or his yearly visitations, or the missions he gave in person, or those which he procured by inviting missionaries from other diocesses, or providing the people with virtuous and learned clergy; not satisfied with all this, he tracked vice and scandals to their strongholds.

He exerted himself with the most astonishing activity to put down the absurd and atrocious practice of duelling, often personally interfering to present hostile meetings; and at length memorialing the king to put in force chose laws which had been directed against duelling in the kingdom of Naples. But there was no vice or scandal which he pursued and extirpated with so much zeal as that of immorality, in the more received and restricted sense. It would be impossible to enumerate all the licentious men and abandoned women whom he reclaimed, in very many cases by personal exertion, and often by judicious advice to the civil authorities, who always received it with respect by reason of the esteem in which they held the

Saint. Knowing well however that poverty is often the most fatal incentive to vice, he procured honest employment for such young women as he had fears of, and respectable matches for others, giving them portions out of his own revenue. Some whom he reclaimed he sent to asylums of penance; and against those whom he could not reclaim, he called in the arm of the law.

Carefully as Alphonsus provided for the spiritual wants of his flock, he was not less assiduous in ministering to their temporal necessities. He knew well that the man who has not bowels of compassion for his neighbor, cannot love God, and that the funds of the church are the patrimony of the poor. We have already seen how rigid was the economy of Alphonsus in his household concerns, and that this was produced partly by charity; but to whatever it was owing, the poor had all the benefit of it. So chary was he of the patrimony of the poor, as he called the revenues of his church, that he would not entertain his brother Hercules and his two children for more than three days, saying, that to entertain them longer than that would be to defraud the poor. His brother imagining that the revenues of the diocess were more than sufficient for the maintenance of Alphonsus, as a bishop, thought he would relinquish to him the pension which he enjoyed from the estate; but this Alphonsus declined, saying, that the proceeds of his diocess belonged to the poor, and that he required the income for his own support.

He had an alms for every one who asked it, and summoned his vicar-general and others to the aid of his own zeal in discovering such as shame (so ill-consorted with penury) prevented from putting in their petitions with the others. Superannuated priests, old people of every description, widows with families, and more especially young maidens whose poverty might be the occasion of their fall, were the objects of his tenderest care. We have already mentioned his care of the sick; and it was at least equalled by his care of those in prison, both as concerned their spiritual and temporal wants. But all his other acts of love were outdone by one act of stupendous charity, in the year 1765, during which Italy was afflicted in a great and prevailing famine. As if in preparation for the disastrous season, Alphonsus, contrary to custom, had laid up a large store of corn, and as soon as the scarcity began to be felt, distributed it to the poor. After having expended his entire store, he wrote to every one of wealth and distinction, and more especially to his brother Hercules, to contribute to the relief of the starving population. He afterwards gave orders for the secret sale of the carriage and mules which his brother had presented to him, as well as of his pectoral cross, and the ring given him by Monsignor Ganini, substituting for them gilded things of trifling value. But, notwithstanding all his efforts, thousands remained unsupplied, and in the madness of their hunger, attacked the corporate officers; for whose safety Alphonsus has been known to expose his own life to the fury of the mob.

Alphonsus had accepted the bishopric through pure obedience, and ever held it with fear and trembling; but after a time his advanced years and complicated infirmities raised grievous scruples in his mind upon the score of incapacity, inducing him to think of resigning his office into the hands of the Pope, and retiring with his permission to one of the houses of the congregation. Lest, however, as he said, “The cell to which he should retire, might be to him a hell in consequence of his having withdrawn from an office in which God wished him to remain,” he took counsel of learned and pious men, and finding them favorable to his resignation, applied to Clement XIII., who had appointed him, for his removal, and received for answer, that his name alone was sufficient for the well-ordering the diocess. He received tills answer with perfect submission to the will of God, as intimated to him by His Holiness; but after a time, his increasing infirmities awakening new scruples in his breast, and supplying him with new reasons for requesting the acceptance of his resignation, he applied to Clement XIV. and received for answer, that one prayer from his bed of pain would be more worth than a thousand visitations and disciplines to blood; for the Saint had put forward his inability to make the visitation of his diocess as a ground for his removal.

Alphonsus again bowed in submission to the will of God, and it was to no purpose that his own scruples, or the representations of bishops his advisers, and others, solicited him to renew his application to that Pope. “If I apply,” he said, “my application will not be granted; we shall see what his successor will do for me,” an answer which almost tempted those who heard him to smile, Alphonsus being brought to the grave’s edge by infirmity and years, while the Pope was yet hale and vigorous. For five weary years after this did Alphonsus continue to govern his diocess, and break to his flock the bread of the divine word. Ascending the pulpit, his feeble step propped upon several supporters, his worn frame and drooping head moved every one to tears, but no sooner had he begun to speak, than he was renewed in youth and vigor; his nerves and sinews relaxed from their habitual rigidity, and he preached with all his natural vehemence and fervor. Upon leaving the pulpit, he relapsed into his former state. By order of the physicians, he was now obliged to procure a carriage and take an airing every day, together with eating meat in lent, and sundry other indulgences which mortified Alphonsus infinitely more than could have done the most grievous austerity.

For thirteen years had Alphonsus borne the burthen of the episcopacy, when, on the 21st of September, 1774, being seated in his arm-chair, he fell into a tranquil slumber, which lasted not only that night, but during a portion of the next day, the servant having orders from the vicar-general not to disturb him. On the 22d, about one o'clock in the afternoon, he awoke, and pulled the bell. Seeing the attendants in tears, he inquired of them, what was the matter? and, on being told that he had not eaten or spoken for two days, "True," he replied, "I have been to attend the Pope, who has just expired," and, as shortly afterwards came to be known, the Pope had actually just expired at that very moment.

Upon the earliest opportunity Alphonsus made application to Pius VI. for permission to retire from his office, and that Pontiff, although at first disposed to act as his predecessor had done, knowing that the bare presence of Alphonsus was enough to sanctify the diocess, was at length induced by the representations of many distinguished persons to accede, though (as he said with great sorrow, to the request of Alphonsus, and accept his resignation.

Immediately that Alphonsus had received the welcome intelligence, "blessed be God," he exclaimed, "who has removed a mountain from my breast;" and, in a few days after, having arranged all matters for his departure, left the diocess amid the lamentations of the entire flock, and directed his course towards San Michele de' Pagni, where there was a house of his order. Having reached his destination, he humbly besought the fathers to receive him once more amongst them. As he ascended the stairs, leading to the choir, he repeated the "Gloria Patri," and exclaimed, "how light is not now this cross upon my breast, which was so heavy when I first mounted the steps of the palace of Sant' Agata!" Here he lived completely after the manner of the other fathers of the congregation, attending all the exercises where and when it was done by the rest of the community, and enjoying every distinction and indulgence, the carriage drives, the two apartments, the silver service, and the invalid fare by mere compulsion, and solely through obedience. For the rest, the Pope had given him permission to retain the portable altar in his chamber for his own use, and that of others, and had assigned him a pension of eight hundred ducats upon the diocess of Sant' Agata, which occasioned him so many scruples, that he wrote concerning it to the Grand Penitentiary, who left the affair in the hands of the Saint's confessor, and thus set him at ease. of this pension, however, the Saint appropriated barely what was necessary and distributed the rest amongst public mendicants, or private pensioners of his. For many years he continued to preach in several of the neighboring churches, and especially in the parish church of St. Michael, where his congregation was engaged in giving the mission. Upon one occasion during a season of terrible drought, wretchedly infirm as he was, he dragged himself along an entire street in a procession, with a halter about his neck, a crown of thorns upon his head, and his garments covered with ashes. He foretold to the people the happy result of the procession; and, it is useless to say, that the prediction was soon verified. During all this time he ceased not to compose works for the sanctification of souls.—Amongst other works composed and published by him after his return to San Michele de' Pagni, he gave to the world the book entitled, "Admirable Dispositions of Divine Providence, for the Salvation of the World, through means of Jesus Christ;" and dedicated it to Pius VI., who was pleased to acknowledge it as an especial favor, and compliment the blessed author in the loftiest, and, at the same time, most affectionate strain. But the health of Alphonsus, which had been all along declining, began rapidly to grow worse. From the 29th of November, 1779, he was unable to say Mass, and continued thenceforward to communicate in one kind; his manner of life being, in other respects, as before described. Indeed, we should rather say, that in proportion to the increase of his decrepitude and weakness, his abstemiousness and general spirit of mortification increased, and he certainly would have persevered in the use of that dreadful implement of penance, the discipline, to his last breath, had he not been forbidden by his confessor, and when obliged to part with it and its fellows, he ordered his lay-brother in attendance to throw into some sewer the box in which he used to keep them.

On the 18th of July, 1787, in addition to his old complaints, he was attacked by a sharp fever, together with a terrible dysentery and retention of urine. These were symptoms so little to be mistaken, that, although he had been absolved three days before by Father Vincenzo Magaldi of the congregation, he confessed again to Father Lorenzo Negri of the congregation also, and after having received absolution, was released from all his usual anxiety, and broke forth into expressions of the liveliest joy and hope, the Lord being doubtless willing to console his servant by a foretaste of Paradise, for all that he had made him suffer during this life, and especially for the grievous temptations against faith, by which he had been assailed some time after his retirement from his diocess. His sufferings lasted for fourteen days, during which he was constantly engaged in acts of piety, keeping his eyes lovingly fixed upon the crucifix and image of the blessed Mother; confessing frequently, and communicating every day.

The news of his mortal illness having been spread abroad, priests, secular as well as regular, and persons of the highest distinction, came from all parts to kiss his hand, bringing kerchiefs, and other things, to sanctify by contact with him, and preserve as relics. At length it become necessary for him to receive the sacrament of Extreme Unction, which he did with the most fervent acts of faith, hope, charity, resignation, and joy. On the 25th of the same month, he received the Blessed Sacrament as a viaticum; and when the time for communicating approached, every moment appeared intolerably long, and unable to contain himself, he incessantly exclaimed, give me the body of my Jesus—when will Jesus come to me?—when shall I possess him? His longings having been at length satisfied, he sunk into a long and deep meditation upon the love of Jesus in the most Holy Sacrament.

Four days before his death he was seized with convulsions so violent as to deprive him of the use of speech. On the thirtieth day of the month, Father Villani not thinking it safe to give him the Viaticum, as he was afraid he should not be able to swallow, one of the fathers desired him to make a spiritual communion, which he did, showing by his eyes and various signs, that he joined in the devout sentiments suggested by that father. On the day before his death, Monsignor Tafuri came to visit him, and seeing him so near his dissolution, reverently kissed his hand, and placed it on his head. On the day of his death, just before the commencement of his agony, upon hearing the names of Jesus and Mary, he opened his eyes and appeared somewhat to revive. What is even more surprising, on the night before his death, the image of the blessed Mother having been brought near his bed, he not only opened his eyes, but fixing them upon it, smiled sweetly, his countenance all radiant with delight. Whence we may all conclude, that the divine Mother blessed her holy client with one of those visits which it was his daily prayer to have at the hour of death, and which he so often held out to all who should be devout to Mary.

Alphonsus straining the crucifix and image of most holy Mary to his breast, the brethren in tears and prayer around him, calmly and without struggle or contortion, breathed forth his blessed soul, on Tuesday, the 1st of August, 1787.

On the 21st day of December, 1809, the venerable Pontiff Pius VII. issued the decree for the beatification of Alphonsus, and on the 26th of May, 1836, our Most Holy Father, Gregory, after having gone through the glorious proofs of his sanctity, vouchsafed to the Church by the Almighty, after the beatification of his servant, proceeded with the solemn ceremony of canonization. or enrolment amongst the saints.

FROM HIS LIFE, ENTITLED, *VITA DI S. ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI:* ROMA, 1839. COMPOSED FROM AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS ADDUCED IN THE PROCESS OF HIS CANONIZATION.

A. D. 1787.

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HOW TO PRAY
AT ALL TIMES

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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Translated by a Redemptorist.

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Method of Mental Prayer or Meditation According to Saint Alphonsus de Liguori.

Translated by T.A.M., C.SS.R. (A Redemptorist), Mount Saint Alphonsus, Mayfield, N.S.W.

One of the earliest works of Saint Alphonsus first published in 1753. The Saint entitled it: “A method of conversing continually and lovingly with God.”

CONTENTS

INDEX

HOW TO PRAY AT ALL TIMES

- CONTENTS
- How to Pray at All Times
  - INTRODUCTION
  - HOW TO PRAY AT ALL TIMES
  - *Chapter I*
    GOD WISHES US TO SPEAK TO HIM WITH CONFIDENCE AND FAMILIARITY
  - *Chapter II*
    IT IS EASY AND AGREEABLE TO CONVERSE WITH GOD
  - *Chapter III*
    ON WHAT, AND HOW, WE SHOULD CONVERSE WITH GOD
    - 1. IN GENERAL
    - 2. PRAY IN YOUR TRIALS
    - 3. PRAY IN YOUR JOYS
    - 4. PRAY AFTER A FAULT
    - 5. PRAY IN YOUR DOUBTS
    - 6. PRAY FOR YOUR NEIGHBOUR
    - 7. SPEAK TO GOD OF HEAVEN
  - *Chapter IV*
    HOW GOD ANSWERS THE SOUL
  - *Chapter V*
    THE PRACTICE OF PRAYING CONSTANTLY
  - APPENDIX
    - I. PREPARATION
    - II. BODY OF THE PRAYER

1. ACTS AND AFFECTIONS

2. PRAYERS OF PETITION

3. RESOLUTIONS

III. CONCLUSION

How to Pray at All Times

INTRODUCTION

THIS BEAUTIFUL LITTLE WORK was first published in 1753. It is therefore one of the earliest works of Saint Alphonsus. The Saint entitled it: “*A method of conversing continually and lovingly with God*”; and to the title, he added a note to say that it had been translated from the French, but that he had “augmented it with holy thoughts, affections and practices.” It was surely the Saint’s humility that made him thus minimise his part in the composition of the book, for as a matter of fact he entirely recast the little French treatise and made it all his own. His biographer, Father Berthe, could write of it: “In this golden little book are to be found the most familiar thoughts of the holy author.” (*Life* Volume I. Page 575).

It will be easily seen that the treatise has a twofold message. Saint Alphonsus, like the Divine Redeemer before him, always puts the thought of God’s justice, and the fear of punishment, before those who are obstinate in sin. But, following again the Redeemer’s example, the saintly Doctor preaches in burning words the truth that every soul wishing to serve God may go to Him with perfect, unwavering confidence. To such souls, God shows infinite tenderness and love. This message of confidence to men of goodwill, is the first lesson which the Saint teaches, with convincing force, in the following pages. The second lesson is deduced from the first: those who wish to serve God should speak to Him frequently, confidingly, lovingly.

Be it remembered that this treatise is from the pen of a Doctor of the Church: every sentence of it bears the impress of his authority. A new translation of it is now given to the public in the hope that it will continue its mission of mercy, and lead men, in ever increasing numbers, to speak frequently and lovingly to God.

T.A.M., C.SS.R. (A REDEMPTORIST),
MOUNT SAINT ALPHONSUS, MAYFIELD, N.S.W.

HOW TO PRAY AT ALL TIMES

“Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of Man.”
—Saint Luke (21:36).

Chapter I

GOD WISHES US TO SPEAK TO HIM WITH CONFIDENCE AND FAMILIARITY

What is man that You should magnify him: or why do You set Your Heart upon him? (Job, 7:17). Such was the astonished cry of Job when he considered the marvellous condescension of God in loving man and in longing to be loved by him. Hence, it is a mistake to think that great confidence and familiarity in treating with God is a want of reverence towards His infinite Majesty. You should, indeed, devout reader, worship Him in all humility and prostrate yourself before Him; especially when you call to mind the ingratitude and sin of which, in the past, you may have been guilty. Yet this should not hinder you from treating Him with the most tender confidence and love. He is infinite majesty; but, at the same time, He is infinite love and goodness. In God you possess the most exalted and supreme Lord; but also a Friend who loves you with the greatest possible love. He is not offended—on the contrary He is pleased—when you treat Him with that confidence, freedom and tenderness with which a child treats its mother. Hear how He invites us to go to Him and even promises to welcome us with His caresses: ‘You shall be carried at the breasts and upon the knees they shall caress you. As one whom the mother caresses, so will I comfort you’ (Isaiah 66:12). As a mother delights to place her child upon her knees, there to feed or fondle it: so is our merciful God pleased to treat souls whom He loves, who have given themselves wholly to Him, and placed all their hopes in His goodness.

Bear well in mind that you have neither friend, nor brother, nor father, nor mother, nor spouse, nor lover, who loves you more than God. Divine grace is that great treasure whereby we, vile creatures and poor servants, become the dear friends of our Creator Himself: ‘For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use, become the friends of God (Wisdom

7:14). In order to fill our hearts with confidence, He emptied Himself, as Saint Paul says (Philippians 2:7), abasing Himself to our level and conversing familiarly with us: He conversed with men (Baruch 3:38). He went so far as to become an infant, to become poor, to die publicly on a cross; He went so far as to hide Himself under the appearance of bread in order to become our constant Companion and to unite Himself intimately to us: ‘He that eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood abides in Me and I in him (John 6:57). In a word, He loves you as though He had no one else to love but you alone. You, too, should love Him alone, and all others for His sake. Of Him, you may say, and, indeed, you should say: ‘My Beloved to me and I to Him’ (Canticles 2:16). My God has given Himself all to me, and I give myself all to Him; He has chosen me for His beloved, and I choose Him, of all others, for my only love: ‘My Beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands’ (Canticles 5:10).

Say, then, to him, often:

O my Lord! Wherefore do You love me thus? What good thing do You see in me? Have You forgotten the injuries I have done You? But since You have treated me so lovingly, and, instead of casting me into hell, have granted me so many favours, whom can I desire to love from this day forward but You, my God, my all? Ah, most gracious God, if in time past I have offended You, it is not so much the punishment I have deserved that now grieves me, as the displeasure I have given You, who are worthy of infinite love. But You know not how to despise a heart that repents and humbles itself: ‘A contrite and humble heart, O God, You will not despise.’ (Psalm 51:17 in the Hebrew or Psalm 50:19 in the Vulgate.) Ah, now, indeed, neither in this life nor in the other do I desire any but You alone: ‘What have I in heaven? And besides You what do I desire upon earth? You are the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.’ (Psalm 73:25–26 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 72:25–26) You alone are and shall be forever the only Lord of my heart, of my will; You my only good, my heaven, my hope, my love, my all: “The God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.”

The more to strengthen your confidence in God, often call to mind His loving treatment of you, and the gracious means He has used to help you to overcome your faults and to detach you from the things of this world, in order to draw you to His holy love. Fear, therefore, to have too little confidence in treating with God, now that you are determined to love Him and to please Him by every means in your power. The mercy which He has shown you is a most sure pledge of His love for you. God is displeased with a want of confidence on the part of souls who sincerely love Him, and whom He loves. If, then, you desire to please His merciful Heart, converse with Him henceforward with the greatest possible confidence and tenderness.

“I have graven you in My hands; your walls are always before My eyes” (Isaiah 49:16). In these words, God says to you in effect: ‘Beloved soul, why are you timid or distrustful? I have written you in My hands so as never to forget to do you good. Are you afraid of your enemies? Know that the care of your defence is always before Me, so that I cannot lose sight of it.’ This is the thought which made David rejoice, as he cried out to God: ‘You have crowned us as with a shield of Your good will.’ (Psalm 5:12 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 5:13.) Who, Lord, can ever harm us if You do surround us with Your goodness and love?

Let the thought of the gift of our Divine Lord be the greatest motive of your hope: ‘God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son’ (John, 3:16). How can we ever fear, as the Apostle asks, that God would refuse us any good gift, seeing that He has deigned to give us His own Son? He delivered Him up for us all; how has He not also, with Him, given us all things? (Romans 8:32).

‘My delights are to be with the children of men’ (Proverbs 8:31). If one may so express it—the paradise of God is the heart of man. Does God love you? Love Him in return. His delights are to be with you; let yours be to be with Him—to pass all your lifetime with Him, in whose company you hope to spend a blissful eternity. Accustom yourself to speak to Him alone, familiarly, with confidence and love, as to the dearest friend you have, the Friend who loves you most.

Chapter II

IT IS EASY AND AGREEABLE TO CONVERSE WITH GOD

If, as has been already said, it is a great mistake to speak to God with diffidence—to appear before Him as a timid slave, trembling with alarm before his prince—it would be a still greater mistake to think that conversing with God is wearisome and unpleasant. No—on the contrary her conversation has no bitterness nor her company any tediousness (Wisdom 8:16). Ask those souls who love Him with a true love, and they will tell you that in the sorrows of their life their sweetest and truest consolation is to converse lovingly with God.

Now, you are not required to apply your mind so constantly to prayer as to forget your ordinary work and recreation. “Praying always,” means that, without neglecting your ordinary occupations, you treat God as you treat the friends who love you and whom you love. God is ever near you, even within you: ‘In Him we live and move and have our being’ (Acts 18:28). He who would speak to God has no door to open; God is pleased when you speak to Him without reserve. Tell Him of your business, your plans, your griefs, your fears—of all that concerns you. Above all, do so (as I have already said) with confidence and entire freedom. For God is not wont to speak to the soul which does not speak to Him; in fact, being unaccustomed to speak to God, the soul would scarcely understand Him when He spoke. This is what the Lord complains of, in these words: ‘Our sister is little: what shall we do to our sister in the day when she is to be spoken to?’ (Canticles 8:8). Our sister is but a child in My love; what shall we do to speak to her if she understands not? It is the will of God that we remember His surpassing power and His rigorous justice if we despise His grace; but, on the contrary, He wishes that we should treat Him as a most affectionate friend if we love Him, and that we should speak to Him confidingly and without restraint.

It is true that God ought to be worshipped always with the greatest reverence; however, when He deigns to make you feel His presence and when He makes known His desire that you should speak to Him as to the Friend who loves you better than any other friend, then you should open your heart to Him with the greatest liberty and confidence. ‘She prevents them that covet her, so that she first shows herself unto them’ (Wisdom, 6–16). If you only desire His love, He will take the first step, without waiting for you to come to Him, and He will present Himself to you with all the graces and remedies of which you stand in need. He only waits for you to speak to Him, to show that He is near you, ready to hear and to comfort you: ‘And His ears are unto our prayers’ (Psalm 34:15 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 33:16).

By reason of His immensity, God is present everywhere; but there are two places where He dwells in a particular manner. One is in the highest heavens, where He is present by that glory which He communicates to the blessed; the other is on earth—within the humble soul that loves Him: ‘His name is holy who dwells in the high and holy place, and with a contrite and humble spirit (Isaiah 57:15).

(Footnote: Elsewhere Saint Alphonsus has of course written on the third special dwelling of God with men—the sacramental presence of our Lord in the holy Eucharist. In fact, in the earlier editions of the saint’s works the present treatise was always published with the *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament*.)

Our God, then, dwells in the heights of heaven, and yet He does not disdain to occupy Himself with His servants day and night in their homes or in their monastic cells. There He bestows on them His divine consolations, the least one of which surpasses all the delights that the world offers, and which He alone does not desire who has never tasted their sweetness: ‘Oh, taste and see that the Lord is sweet.’ (Psalm 34:8 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 33:9).

Friends in the world have generally certain days on which they meet and converse; on other days they are apart; but between God and you, if you wish, there need never be one hour of separation: ‘You shall rest, and your sleep shall be sweet: the Lord will be at your side (Proverbs 3:24).

You may sleep, but God will place Himself at your side and watch over you continually: ‘I will rest with Him and He will be a comfort in my cares and grief.’ (Consult Wisdom 8:9 and 8:16). When you take your rest, He does not leave your bedside. He remains there, always thinking of you, that when you awake in the night He may speak to you by His inspirations, and receive from you in return some act of love, of oblation, of thanksgiving. Thus, He desires to continue even in the hours of the night His sweet and gracious converse with you. Sometimes also, He will speak to you while you sleep, and make you hear His voice, so that in waking you may put in practice what He has spoken: ‘I will speak to Him in a dream’ (Numbers 12:6).

He is there also in the morning, to hear from you some word of affection, of confidence; to be the depository of your first thoughts, and of all the actions which you promise to perform that day to please Him; of all the griefs, too, which you offer to endure willingly for His glory and love. But as He fails not to present Himself to you at the moment of your waking, do not fail, on your part to give Him immediately a look of love, and to rejoice when your God announces to you the glad tidings that He is not far from you (as once He may have been by reason of your sins); but that He loves you, and would be beloved by you; and at that same moment He gives you the gracious precept, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart’ (Deuteronomy, 6:5).

Chapter III

ON WHAT, AND HOW, WE SHOULD CONVERSE WITH GOD

1. IN GENERAL

Never, then, forget His sweet presence, as do the greater part of men. Speak to Him as often as you can, for He does not grow weary of this nor disdain it, as do the lords of the earth. If you love Him, you will not be at a loss what to say to Him. Tell Him all that occurs to you about yourself and your affairs, as you would tell it to a dear friend. Do not look upon Him as a haughty monarch who will converse only with the great and on great matters. He, your God, is pleased to lower Himself to you, and to hear you communicate to Him your smallest and most ordinary concerns. He loves you as much—He has as much care for you—as if He had no one else to think of but you. He is as completely devoted to your interests as though the only end of His providence was to help you, of His almighty power to aid you, of His mercy and goodness to take pity on you, to do you good and to win by His kindness your confidence and love. Manifest to Him, then, freely your whole state of mind and pray to Him to enlighten you that you may perfectly accomplish His holy will. Let all your desires and aims be directed to learn His good pleasure and to do what is agreeable to His divine Heart: ‘Commit your way to the Lord’; and ‘desire of Him to direct your ways and that all your counsels may abide in Him.’ (Psalm 37:5 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 36:5 and Tobit 4:20).

Say not: Why disclose all my wants to God, since He already sees and knows them better than I do? Yes, He knows them; but He acts as if He did not know the needs about which you do not speak to Him and for which you do not seek His aid. Our Saviour knew that Lazarus was dead, and yet He acted as if He did not know until Mary (Magdalen) told Him of it; it was then that He comforted her by bringing her brother back to life.

When you are afflicted with sickness, persecution, temptation, or any other trouble, turn at once to God and ask His help. It is enough for you to lay your affliction before Him—to go to Him and say: ‘Behold, O Lord, for I am in distress’ (Lamentations 1:20). He will not fail to comfort you, or at least to give you strength to suffer the trial with patience, and in this case it will prove a greater good than if He had freed you altogether from it. Tell Him of all the things that make you fear, or make you sad, and say to Him: ‘*My God, in You are all my hopes*. I offer this cross to You. I resign myself to Your will. Take pity on me and either deliver me from my trial or give me strength to endure it.’ He will remember immediately the promise which He made in the Gospel, of consoling and comforting all those who have recourse to Him in tribulation: ‘Come to Me all you that labour and are burdened and I will refresh you (Matthew 11:28).

He will not be displeased if you seek comfort from your friends in the hour of trial; but He wishes you to have recourse principally to Him. At least, therefore, when you have had recourse to creatures and they have not been able to console your heart, go to your Creator and say to Him: ‘Lord, men have only words; they cannot afford me consolation. I no longer desire to be consoled by them. You alone are my hope; You alone my only love. By You alone do I desire to be comforted and the consolation I ask for, is to do on this occasion what is most pleasing to You. Behold, I am ready to endure this trial for the whole of my life, and for all eternity, if such be Your will. Only help me.’

Do not be afraid of offending Him if you sometimes gently complain, saying: ‘Why, Lord, have You retired afar off? (Psalm 10:1 in the Hebrew and in the Vulgate.) ‘Lord, You know that I love You, and that I desire nothing but Your love. Have pity on me and help me. Do not abandon me.’

If desolation should continue for a long time and grievously afflict you, unite your voice to the voice of your afflicted Jesus and say: ‘My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?’ (Matthew 28:46). Let the thought humble you that having offended God, you do not deserve His consolations. At the same time, remember that He permits every thing for your good, and do not lose confidence: ‘All things work together unto good to them that love God’ (Romans 8:28). Say with courage, even when you feel most troubled and disconsolate: ‘The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?’ (Psalm 27:1 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 26:1). Lord, You will guide me, You will save me; In You do I trust. In You, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be confounded (Ecclesiasticus 2:11). Reflect that God loves you more than you can love yourself. Why, then, should you be afraid? David brought comfort to his heart saying: ‘The Lord is careful for me.’ (Psalm 40:17 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 39:18). Let such be your sentiments, too, when you pray; and speak in this manner to God: ‘Lord, I cast myself into Your arms; and I desire to think only of loving and pleasing You. Behold me ready to do what You ask of me. You do not only will my good, but You are “careful” for it. To You, then, I leave the care of my salvation. In You I rest, and will rest for evermore, since You will that in You I should place all my hopes’: ‘In peace, in the self-same I will sleep and I will rest; for You, O Lord, singularly have settled me in hope’ (Psalm 4:8 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 4:9–10)

‘Think of the Lord in goodness’ (Wisdom 1:1). In these words, the inspired writer exhorts us to have more confidence in the divine mercy than dread of the divine justice. *For God is incomparably more inclined to bestow favours upon us than to chastise us,* as Saint James says: ‘Mercy exalts itself above judgment’ (2:13). For this reason, Saint Peter exhorts us in all our fears—whether for our temporal or eternal interests—to abandon ourselves entirely to the goodness of God, who has the interests of our salvation at heart: ‘Casting all your care upon Him, for He has care of you’ (1 Peter 5:7). The royal prophet, David, has the same message of hope when he gives to God the beautiful title of our God and the God who is willing to save us: ‘Our God is the God of salvation.’ (Psalm 68:20 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 67:21). This means, as (Saint Robert) Bellarmine explains it, that it is the will of God, not to condemn, but to save all. He threatens with His displeasure those who despise Him; but He promises mercy to those who fear Him: in the words of the canticle of our Blessed Lady: ‘His mercy is from generation to generation to them that fear Him.’

I place before you, devout reader, all these passages from the sacred scriptures, so that if you are ever troubled by the doubt as to whether you will be saved or no—whether you are of the number of the predestined or no—you may take courage at the thought that you know from God’s Word that He desires to save you, if only you are resolved to serve and love Him as He asks of you.

3. PRAY IN YOUR JOYS

When you receive some pleasant news, do not act like some unfaithful and thankless souls who have recourse to God in time of trouble, but forget and forsake Him when things go well with them. Show Him the fidelity that you would show to a sincere friend who rejoices in your happiness. Go at once and tell Him of your joy, and praise Him and give Him thanks, acknowledging your good fortune as a gift from His hands. Rejoice in the fact that you owe your happiness to Him, and place all your joy and comfort in Him: ‘I will rejoice in the Lord’ (Habakkuk 3:18). ‘I have trusted in Your mercy. My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. (The name “Jesus” means “Saviour” or “Salvation.”) I will sing to the Lord, who gives me good things. Yea I will sing to the name of the Lord the most high.’ (Psalm 13:6 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 12:6) (This Psalm is thus praying: ‘I will joy in God my Jesus.’ Say to Him: ‘My Jesus, I bless, and will ever bless You, for granting me so many favours, when I deserved at Your hands not favours, but chastisements for the affronts I have offered You.’ Say to him, with the sacred Spouse: ‘All fruits, the new and the old, my Beloved, I have kept for You’ (Canticles 7:13). ‘Lord, I give You thanks; I keep in memory Your many acts of kindness, past and present, to render You praise and glory for them forever.’

But if you love your God, you ought to rejoice more in His blessedness than in your own. He who has a dear friend sometimes takes more delight in that friend’s good fortune than if it had been his own. Comfort yourself, then, in the knowledge that God is infinitely happy. Often say to him: ‘My beloved Lord, I rejoice more in Your blessedness than in any happiness of my own, for I love You more than I love myself.’

4. PRAY AFTER A FAULT

Another mark of confidence highly pleasing to our most loving God is this: that when you have committed any fault, you are not ashamed to go at once to Him and seek His pardon. Consider that God is so willing to pardon sinners that He laments their perdition, when they depart far from Him and live dead to His grace. Therefore, does he lovingly call them, saying: ‘Why will you die, O house of Israel? Return all of you, and live’ (Ezekiel 18:31). He promises to receive a soul that has forsaken Him, if only it returns to His arms: ‘Turn to Me . . . and I will turn to you’ (Zechariah 1:3). Would that sinners only knew how mercifully our Saviour awaits them in order to pardon them: ‘The Lord waits that He may have mercy upon you’ (Isaiah 30:18). Would that sinners realised the desire on the part of God, not, indeed, to chastise them, but to see them converted and to embrace and press them to His Heart: ‘As I live, says the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live’ (Ezekiel 33:11).

He has even still more consoling words: ‘Come and accuse Me, says the Lord; if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow’ (Isaiah 1:18). In other words, He says: ‘Sinners, repent of having offended Me and then come to Me. If I do not pardon you, accuse Me of being unfaithful to My promises; but, no, I will keep My word. If you come to Me and repent, though your soul be dyed deep crimson with crime, by My grace it shall be made white as snow.’ Almighty God promises even to forget the sinner’s wrong-doing if only he repents: ‘I will not remember all his iniquities’ (Ezekiel 18:22). As soon, then, as you fall into any fault, raise your eyes to God, make an act of love, and humbly confessing your fault, place unwavering confidence in God, saying to Him: ‘Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick’ (John 11:3). The heart which You love is sick—is wounded. ‘Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You.’ (Psalm 41:4 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 40:5). ‘You seek penitent sinners. Behold one at Your feet, seeking You. The evil is committed—what must I do? You will not have me lose confidence; even after the sin which I have committed, You desire my good, and I again love You. Yes, my God I love You with all my heart. I am sorry for my sin, and will never more offend You.’ ‘You are a God, sweet, and mild, and plenteous in mercy.’ (Psalm 86:5 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 85:5.) ‘Pardon me. Let me hear from You what You did say to Magdalen: “Your sins are forgiven you” (Luke 7:48); and give me strength for the future to be faithful to You.’

Then, in order not to be discouraged, cast your eyes upon Jesus Christ crucified; offer to the Eternal Father his merits, and confidently hope for pardon; since to pardon you he spared not his own Son. Say to him with confidence: ‘Look on the face of Your Christ–Your Anointed One.’ (Psalm 84:9 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 83:10.) ‘My God, have regard to Your Son who has died for me and for His sake grant me pardon.’

Attend, especially, devout soul, to what is commonly taught by masters of the spiritual life, who recommend you to have recourse immediately to God after you have fallen, although you should repeat the fall a hundred times in the day. Having done this, do not be disturbed. If you remain discouraged and troubled because of the fault committed, you will scarcely speak to God; your confidence will grow less your desire to love God will grow cold and you will make little or no advance in the way of the Lord. On the other hand, by having immediate recourse to God, asking His pardon and promising amendment for the future, your very faults will help you to advance in divine love. Between friends who sincerely love one another, it sometimes happens that when one offends the other and then humbles himself and asks pardon, their friendship becomes stronger than ever. Do you act in like manner with regard to God: let your faults only strengthen the bonds of love, which unite you to Him.

5. PRAY IN YOUR DOUBTS

Whenever you are in doubt about anything—whether it regards yourself or others—act like good friends do, who always consult one another in their difficulties. Show the same mark of confidence to God; consult Him; ask Him to enlighten you, that you may decide on what is most pleasing to Him: ‘Put You words in my mouth and strengthen the resolution in my heart’ (Judith 9:18). Lord, make known to me what You would have me do, to answer, and I will obey You: ‘Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears (1 Samuel 3:10 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, 1 Kings 3:10).

6. PRAY FOR YOUR NEIGHBOUR

Recommend to God with confidence not only your own needs but also the needs of others. How pleasing to Him it will be if you sometimes forget yourself and speak to Him of His own glory, of the miseries of others, especially those who mourn in sorrow; of the souls in purgatory, His spouses, who long to behold Him in Heaven; and of poor sinners who live deprived of His grace. Pray to Him for sinners thus:

Lord, You are all goodness and worthy of an infinite love: how, then, can You endure in the world so many souls on whom You have lavished Your favours, and who yet have no desire to know You, who have no desire to love You, who even offend and despise You? Ah, my most amiable God, make Yourself known—make Yourself loved. ‘Hallowed be Your name.’ ‘Your kingdom come.’ May Your name be adored and loved by all men. May Your love reign in all hearts. Do not let me depart from You without granting me some grace for the unhappy souls for whom I pray.

7. SPEAK TO GOD OF HEAVEN

It is said that souls who in this life have but little longing for heaven are punished in purgatory with a peculiar pain, called the pain of languor. This surely is only just; because to have but little longing for heaven is to set little value on the happiness of that eternal kingdom which our Lord opened to us by His death. Remember, then, frequently to think of, and long for heaven. Say to God that your life seems an endless span, so great is your desire to go to Him, to see Him face to face, and to love Him. Long to be set free from your exile, from this world of sin, from the danger of losing divine grace, that you may arrive at that land of love where your heart will be given wholly to God. Say to Him over and over again: ‘Lord, as long as I live on this earth I am in danger of forsaking You and of losing Your love. When shall I leave this life, wherein I am forever offending You? When shall I go to love You with all my soul and unite myself to You without any danger of losing You again?’

Saint Teresa was ever sighing for heaven in this manner. She used to rejoice when she heard the clock strike, because another hour of life and of the danger of losing God, had passed. She so earnestly desired to die that she might see God, that she was dying with the desire to die. This was the subject of the loving poem which she composed: “I die because I do not die.”

Chapter IV

HOW GOD ANSWERS THE SOUL

In a word, if you wish to please the loving Heart of God, endeavour to speak to Him as often as you can, and with the fullest confidence that He will answer and speak to you in return. When you withdraw yourself from conversation with creatures to speak to God alone, He will not speak in a voice that strikes the ear, but in a voice that reaches the heart: ‘I will lead her into the wilderness and I will speak to her heart’ (Hosea or Osee, 2:14). He will speak by inspiration, by interior light, by manifestations of His goodness, by a tenderness which touches the heart, by assurance of pardon, by a feeling of peace, by the hope of heaven, by intimate happiness, by the sweetness of His grace, by loving and tender embraces of the soul—in a word, He will speak in a voice easily understood by those whom He loves and who have given their hearts to Him.

Chapter V

THE PRACTICE OF PRAYING CONSTANTLY

To conclude this treatise, I will recall briefly, what has been said in the preceding pages, and I will suggest a practice by which you may render all your daily actions pleasing to God.

When you awake in the morning, let your first thought be to raise up your mind to God, to offer to His honour whatever you may have to do or suffer during the day, and to beseech Him to assist you with His holy grace. Then perform your other morning devotions, making acts of love and of gratitude, and praying and resolving to spend the day as if it were to be the last of your life.

Father Saint-Jure recommends you to make a compact every morning with God, that every time you make a certain sign, such as placing your hand upon your heart, or raising your eyes to heaven or to the crucifix, or the like, you intend thereby to make an act of love, of desire to see God loved by all, of oblation of yourself, and other acts of the same kind. When you have made these acts, place your soul in the wound of the side of Jesus and under the mantle of Mary, and beg of the Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus and Mary, to protect you during the day. Then, before all things else, be sure to make your meditation, or mental prayer, at least for half an hour. Meditate especially on the sufferings and contempt which Jesus endured in His Passion. This is the subject dearest to fervent souls, and the one best calculated to set hearts aflame with divine love. If you desire to make progress in the spiritual life, there are three devotions which must be particularly dear to you: Devotion to the Passion of our Lord, to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In all your meditations repeat again and again acts of contrition, of the love of God and of oblation of yourself. The venerable Father Charles Caraffa, (1561–1633) founder of the Congregation of Pious Workers, says that one fervent act of love made thus in the morning is sufficient to maintain the soul in fervour throughout the whole day.

Perform your more important acts of devotion with great care, such as going to confession, receiving Holy Communion, reciting the divine office, and other similar duties. Whenever you are going to begin some external occupation, like study or work, or the duty of your state in life, do not forget to offer it to God, praying His assistance to enable you to perform it well. Afterwards follow the example of Saint Catharine of Siena and retire often to the cell of your heart in order to unite yourself to God. In a word, whatever you do, do it with God and for Him. When you leave your room, or go out of the house—and when you return—say a Hail Mary, and thus recommend yourself to the Blessed Virgin. At your meals, whether you find them pleasant to your taste, or not to your liking, offer all to God. On rising from table, say, as grace, some little prayer like this: ‘Lord, how good You are to one who has offended You!’ During the day give some time to spiritual reading; and make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and to our Lady. In the evening say the Rosary, examine your conscience, make acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition; promise to serve God more fervently and to receive the holy sacraments during life and at death, and form the intention of gaining all the indulgences within your power. When you go to bed, reflect that you have deserved to lie in the fire of hell; then, with a crucifix in your arms, compose yourself to sleep, saying: ‘In peace, in the self-same I will sleep and I will rest.’ (Psalm 4:8 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 4:9.)

(Here, in passing, {Saint Alphonsus adds,} I would remind the reader of indulgences which are attached to various acts of devotion; and also I would remind him of the desirability of renewing each morning the intention of gaining all the indulgences possible during the day. For reciting the acts of faith, hope and charity there is an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines each day. {A Quarantine is the remission of as much temporal punishment as would be blotted out by an ecclesial penance of forty days.} If they are recited daily for a month, a plenary indulgence may be gained on the condition of going to confession and Communion and of praying for the intentions of the Church; this indulgence may be applied to the souls in purgatory or to oneself at the hour of death.) [Since the revisions of Vatican II, all indulgences are now classed either as ‘partial’ or as ‘plenary.’ Let us recall, however, that God is never outdone in generosity.]

(In like manner, form the intention of gaining also all the indulgences granted for saying the Rosary on beads properly blessed, the Angelus three times a day, the Litany of our Blessed Lady, the ‘Salve Regina’ {Hail Holy Queen}, the ‘Ave Maria’ {Hail Mary}, and the ‘Gloria Patri’ {Glory be to the Father}; for saying, “Blessed be the holy and Immaculate Conception of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God”; as also for saying, “Blessed and praised every moment be the most holy and divine Sacrament”; for reciting the prayer ‘Anima Christi’ {Soul of Christ or ‘Soul of my Saviour’—the hymn}, et cetera; for bowing the head at the ‘Gloria Patri’ and at the most holy names of Jesus and Mary; as also for hearing Mass; for making half an hour’s mental prayer—for this there is a partial indulgence, and also, if the meditation is made daily, a plenary indulgence on the usual conditions of confession, Communion and praying for the intentions of the Church; for genuflecting before the Blessed Sacrament; for kissing the cross.)

{Footnote from the 1957 Redemptorist editor regarding genuflecting before the Blessed Sacrament: The recent edition of the *Raccolta*, (the book formally listing indulgenced prayers) No. 116a, quotes this indulgence in these terms: “Any exterior act of reverence when passing a Church or Chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved,” 100 days ‘Toties Quoties’ (‘as often as it is done’). For kissing the cross, the new *Raccolta* gives no indulgence.}

In order to keep yourself recollected and united to God as far as the imperfections of human nature permit, endeavour, by means of what you see and hear, *to raise your mind to God and to recall the things of eternity*. For instance, when you see running water, reflect that your life is rushing on in like manner and taking you nearer to death. When you see a lamp going out for want of oil, reflect that thus your life will one day flicker out and be extinguished. When you see graves or the bodies of the dead, think of what will happen to yourself one day. When you see worldly people rejoicing in their wealth or distinction, have pity on their folly, and say to yourself: ‘For me God is sufficient’: ‘Some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we in the name of the Lord’ (Psalm 20:7 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 19:8). ‘Let them glory if they wish in vanity. Be it mine to glory only in the grace of God and in His holy love.’ When you see monuments erected to the dead, or take part in the funeral ceremonies of the great ones of this world, ask yourself the question: ‘If their souls are lost, what will all this pomp avail them?’ When you look out over the ocean and see it now calm and tranquil and now lashed to fury by the winds, consider the difference there is between a soul in sin and a soul in the state of grace. When you see a tree that is withered, reflect on the fact that a soul without God is fit for nothing but to be cast into the fire.

If you ever happen to see one who has been guilty of some great crime, trembling with shame and fear in the presence of his judge, or his father, or of his Bishop, consider what the terror of the sinner will be in the presence of Jesus Christ, his judge. When thunder crashes through the heavens, and you grow alarmed, reflect how those miserable souls that are damned tremble as they hear continually in hell the thunders of the divine wrath. If you ever see one who has been condemned to suffer a painful death, and who says, “Is there, then, no longer any means of my escaping death?” consider what will be the despair of a soul when it is condemned to hell, as it says: “Is there, then, no longer any means of escaping from eternal ruin?”

When you behold beautiful scenes in the country or along the sea coast, or when you look at flowers or fruit, and are pleased by the sight or the perfume, say: ‘*For me God has created these lovely things in this world, that I may love Him.* What delights has He not prepared for me in heaven?’ Seeing fair plains and beautiful hills, Saint Teresa used to say that they reproached her with her ingratitude to God. The Abbot de Rance, founder of La Trappe, declared that the beauty of creation around him obliged him to love God. Saint Augustine had the same thought: “The heavens and the earth and all Your works cry out to me to love You.” There is a story told of a certain holy man, that in passing through the fields he would strike with a little stick the flowers and plants which he found on his way, saying, “Be silent; do not reproach me any longer for my ingratitude to God. I have understood you; be silent; say no more.” When Saint Mary Magdalene of Pazzi held in her hand any beautiful fruit or flower, she used to feel herself glowing with divine love, saying to herself, “Behold, my God has thought from eternity of creating this fruit, this flower, in order to give it to me as a token of the love which He bears towards me.”

When you see rivers or streams, reflect that as their waters run towards the sea, and never remain still, *so ought you ever tend towards God, who is your only good*. When you happen to be in some vehicle drawn by horses say: “See what labour these innocent animals go through for my service; and how much pains do I myself take in order to serve and please my God?” When you see a little dog, which for a miserable morsel of bread is faithful to its master, reflect how much greater reason you have to be faithful to God, who has created and preserved you, and heaps upon you so many blessings. When you hear the birds sing, say: “Hearken, O my soul, to the praise which these little creatures are giving to their Creator; and what are you doing?” Then do you also praise him with acts of love. On the other hand, when you hear the cock crow, recall to your memory that there once was a time when you also, like Peter, denied your God; and renew your tears and your contrition. If you see the house or the locality in which you fell into some sin, turn to God and say in your heart: ‘The sins of my youth and my ignorance; remember not, O Lord.’ (Psalm 25:7 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 24:7).

When you see valleys fertilised by waters that descend on them from the heights of the mountains, consider that grace in a similar manner leaves those who are proud, to flow into hearts that are humble. When you see a church beautifully adorned, consider the beauty of a soul in grace, which is truly the temple of God. When you look upon the sea, consider the greatness and immensity of God. When you see fire, or candles lighted on the altar say: “For how many years ought I to have been burning in hell? But since You, O Lord, have not yet condemned me to that place of woe, grant that my heart may now burn with Your holy love, even as this fuel or these candles.” When you behold the heavens and the stars, say with Saint Andrew of Avellino (1521–1608): “My feet will one day tread upon those stars.”

Recall also frequently the mysteries of our Saviour’s love; and when you see straw or a manger or a rocky cave, remember the Infant Jesus and the stable at Bethlehem. When, you see a hammer, or a saw, or a plane, or an axe, recall how Jesus laboured like any ordinary young working man in the cottage at Nazareth. If you see cords, thorns, nails, or beams of wood, think of the sorrows and death of the Most Holy Redeemer. When Saint Francis of Assisi happened to see a lamb, he shed tears, as he exclaimed: “My Lord like a lamb was led to die for me.” When you look at an altar, a chalice, or a chasuble, recall to mind the great love which Jesus has shown us in giving Himself to us in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Following the example of Saint Teresa, often offer yourself to God during the day, and say: “Behold me, O Lord, ready to do what You will. Make known to me Your holy will; I am eager to do all that You ask of me.”

As the hours go by, make repeated acts of divine love, for—to quote Saint Teresa again—these acts of love are the fuel by which divine love is kept burning within the heart. One day, when the Venerable Sister Seraphine of Capri (Serafina di Dio, 1621–1699) happened to see the convent mule, the thought occurred to her that the poor animal could not love God. She expressed her compassion in these words: “Poor brute you can neither know nor love God.” Then a wonderful thing happened—tears welled into the animal’s eyes and forthwith began to flow abundantly. Do you imitate the saintly sister’s example. When you see, creatures incapable of knowing or loving God, use the intelligence that He has given you to repeat many acts of love.

If anything painful or disagreeable happens to you, immediately offer to God what you have to suffer, and unite your will to His. Accustom yourself to repeat in every trial: ‘It is the will of God; it is my will also.’ Acts of resignation are the acts of love dearest to the Heart of God.

When you have to arrive at some decision, or to give some important advice, ask God’s help before you do so. Repeat as often as you reasonably can during the day: ‘Incline unto mine aid, O God,’ as Saint Rose of Lima was accustomed to do. To obtain this help of God turn frequently to the crucifix or to the picture of our Blessed Lady (which, of course, you will have in your room) and do not fail to invoke frequently the names of Jesus and Mary, especially in time of temptation. God, being infinitely kind, has the greatest desire to communicate His graces to us. The Venerable Father Alphonsus Alvarez saw our Lord, on one occasion, with His hands filled with graces, going about seeking souls to whom He might dispense them. But He will have us ask Him for them: Ask and you shall receive; otherwise, He will withdraw His hands. He will, on the contrary, stretch them out to us and willingly open them to us if we invoke Him. Who ever had recourse to God, asks Ecclesiasticus, and God despised him by refusing to hear him? ‘Who has called upon Him, and He despised him?’ (2–11).

David declares that God shows not only mercy, but great mercy, to those who invoke Him: ‘For You, O Lord, are sweet and mild; and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon You.’ (Psalm 86:5 in the Hebrew or, in the Vulgate, Psalm 85:5).

How good and kind God is to those who lovingly seek Him! ‘The Lord is good to the soul that seeks Him’ (Lamentations 3:25). He is found even by those who do not seek Him: ‘I was found by them that did not seek Me’ (Romans 10:20); with far greater willingness He will anticipate those who seek Him in order to serve and love Him.

I conclude with a thought from Saint Teresa. It is this: ‘The souls of the just should do on earth, through a spirit of love, what the Blessed do in heaven. In heaven, the saints occupy themselves only with God; all their thoughts are for His glory; all their pleasure is to love Him. Do you act in the same way. During your life on earth let God be your only happiness, the only object of your affections, the only end of all your actions and desires, until you arrive at that eternal Kingdom, where your love will be consummated and made perfect, and your desires will be completely fulfilled and satisfied.’

APPENDIX

Method of MENTAL PRAYER or Meditation According to Saint Alphonsus.

I. PREPARATION

A recollected life and regular Spiritual Reading are the best remote preparation.

For the immediate preparation, make three short but fervent acts.

(1) An Act of Adoration of God present to the soul.

Example: ‘O my God, I believe You are really here present; I bow down and adore You. You are so good, I am so sinful; You are so great, I am only nothingness’; et cetera.

(2) An Act of Sorrow for Sin.

Example: ‘O my God, I am heartily sorry for all my sins of thought, word, deed, and omission, and by the help of Your holy grace I will never sin again.’

(3) A Petition for Light and Strength.

Example: ‘O my God, give me light to see Your holy Will, give me grace to do Your Will. *O Wisdom of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, direct me in all my ways*. O Love of the Sacred Heart, consume me in Your fire.

Add a Hail Mary to the Blessed Virgin and an ejaculation to Saint Joseph, your Patron Saints and Angel Guardian.

II. BODY OF THE PRAYER

Use the mind in thinking on some subject as much as is necessary in order to pray fervently. But do not imagine that very much is necessary in order to pray. Do not wait for a great fire to burn up in your soul, but cherish any little spark you may feel.

To help your mind, read a text of Scripture or a short Meditation out of a book. Saint Teresa used a book in her Meditations for seventeen years.

Meditate for a few minutes on any thought that has struck you; that is, think for a short time on what it means, what lessons it teaches you, and ask yourself: ‘What have I done about this hitherto? What shall I now do?’ But remember, you think only in order that you may pray.

The great benefit of Mental Prayer consists less in meditation or thinking than in acts, prayers and resolutions, which are the fruits of Meditation. The thinking is the needle which draws after it the golden thread of acts, prayers and resolutions. The thread is more important than the needle. The chief part of the time of Meditation should, then, be spent in making:

1. ACTS AND AFFECTIONS

Examples.—Acts of Humility: “My God, I am nothing in Your sight.”

Act of Thanksgiving: “My God, I thank You for Your goodness.”

Act of Love: “My God, I love You with my whole heart. I wish to please You in all things. I will only what You will. I love You because You are infinitely good. Do with me and mine all that pleases You, because it is Your will.”

Acts of love and of contrition are golden chains binding us to God. Saint Thomas says: “Every act of love merits eternal life.” Make then many simple but fervent acts of love and sorrow.

2. PRAYERS OF PETITION

In mental prayer, it is extremely useful, and, perhaps better than all else, to make many earnest petitions for the graces you want.

Always ask, above all, for

(a) the perfect forgiveness of all past sin;

(b) the perfect love of God; and

(c) the grace of a holy death.

“At first,” said Father Paul Segneri, S.J., “I used to employ my time of prayer in reflections and affections, but God opened my eyes, and then I gave myself to petitions, and if I have any good, it comes from this practice.”

3. RESOLUTIONS

“The progress of a soul,” says Saint Teresa, “does not consist in thinking much of God, but in loving Him, and this love is gained by resolving to do much for Him.” Make one practical resolution that you mean to keep during the day.

III. CONCLUSION

Three short fervent acts:

(1) Thank God for the light He has given you.

(2) Renew your resolution to abstain from some fault or to do some good thing, during the day.

(3) Ask the Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus and Mary, to help you to keep it.

At the end of meditation, always pray for poor sinners and for the souls in Purgatory.

N.B.—The acts and prayers of petition should occupy the most of the time. Thus, in a half-hour’s prayer, give three minutes to the preparation: think for five minutes and then pray.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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CONTENTS

INDEX

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

CONTENTS

The Way of the Cross

PREPARATORY PRAYER

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Station
1
JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Station
2
JESUS BEARS HIS CROSS

Station
3
JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

Station
4
JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

Station
5
JESUS IS HELPED BY SIMON

Station
6
VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Station
7
JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

Station
8
JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN

Station
9
JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

Station
10
JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Station
11
JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Station
12
JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Station
13
JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Station
14
JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

ENDING

PRAYERS

- GLORY BE
- HAIL MARY
- OUR FATHER
- ACT OF CONTRITION
- STABAT MATER
- STABAT MATER–LATIN

The Way of the Cross

Kneeling before the altar, make an Act of Contrition, and form the intention of gaining the indulgences, whether for yourself or for the souls in Purgatory.

PREPARATORY PRAYER

My Lord Jesus Christ, Thou hast made this journey to die for me with love unutterable, and I have so many times unworthily abandoned Thee; but now I love Thee with my whole heart, and because I love Thee, I repent sincerely for ever having offended Thee. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany Thee on this journey. Thou goest to die for love of me; I wish also, my beloved Redeemer, to die for love of Thee. My Jesus, I will live and die always united to Thee.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

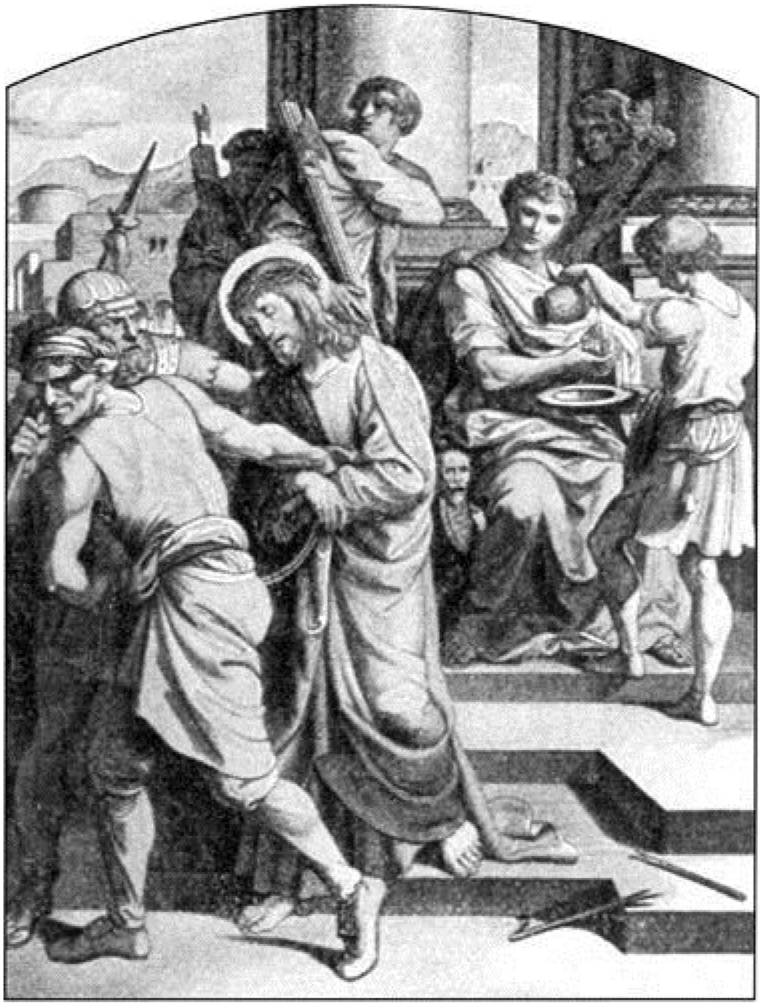

STATION 1: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Station 1

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider how Jesus, after having been scourged and crowned with thorns, was unjustly condemned by Pilate to die on the Cross.

My adorable Jesus, it was not Pilate, no, it was my sins that condemned Thee to die. I beseech Thee, by the merits of this sorrowful journey, to assist my soul in its journey towards eternity. I love Thee, my beloved Jesus; I repent with my whole heart for having offended Thee. Never permit me to separate myself from Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

> Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
> For very love of me:
> Ah! let me bear Thee company;
> I wish to die with Thee.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

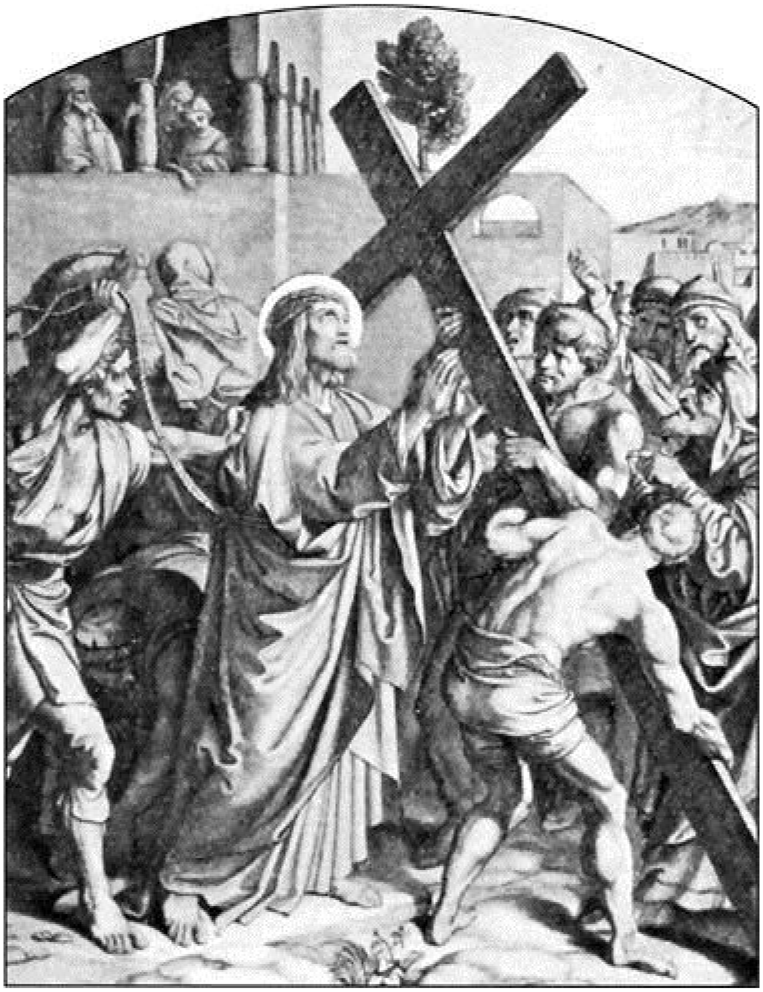

STATION 2: JESUS BEARS HIS CROSS

Station 2

JESUS BEARS HIS CROSS

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider how Jesus, in making this journey with the Cross on His shoulders thought of us, and for us offered to His Father the death He was about to undergo.

My most beloved Jesus, I embrace all the tribulations Thou hast destined for me until death. I beseech Thee, by the merits of the pain Thou didst suffer in carrying Thy Cross, to give me the necessary help to carry mine with perfect patience and resignation. I love Thee, Jesus my love; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to separate myself from Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company;
I wish to die with Thee.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

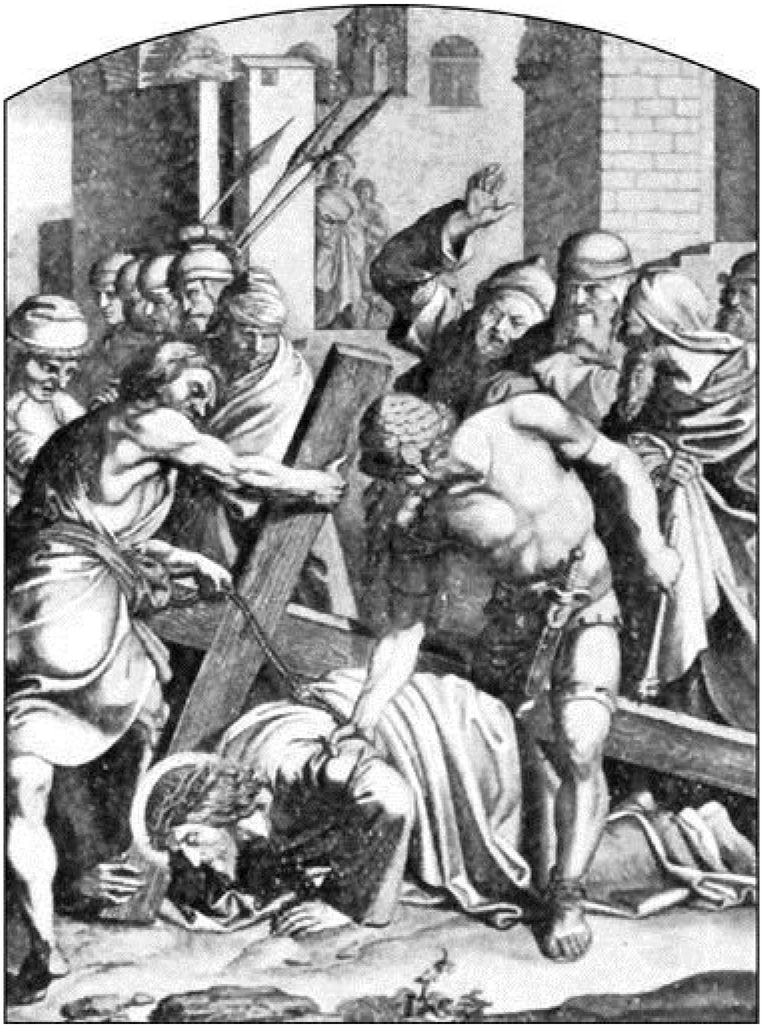

STATION 3: JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

Station 3

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider this first fall of Jesus under His Cross. His flesh was torn by the scourges, His head crowned with thorns, and He had lost a great quantity of blood. He was so weakened that he could scarcely walk, and yet he had to carry this great load upon His shoulders. The soldiers struck Him rudely, and thus He fell several times in His journey.

My beloved Jesus, it is not the weight of the Cross, but my sins, which have made Thee suffer so much pain. Ah, by the merits of this first fall, deliver me from the misfortune of falling into mortal sin. I love Thee, O my Jesus, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to separate myself from Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company;
I wish to die with Thee.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

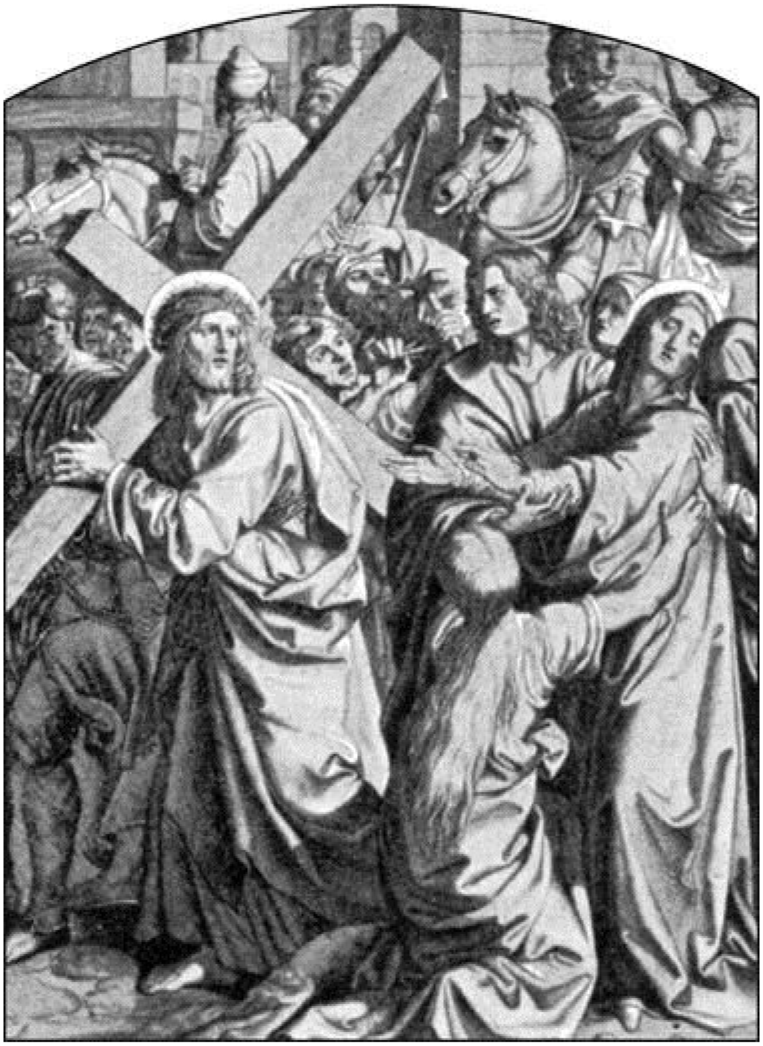

STATION 4: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

Station 4

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider the meeting of the Son and the Mother, which took place on this journey. Jesus and Mary looked at each other, and their looks became as so many arrows to wound those hearts which loved each other so tenderly.

My most loving Jesus, by the sorrow Thou didst experience in this meeting, grant me the grace of a truly devoted love for Thy most holy Mother. And thou, my Queen, who wast overwhelmed with sorrow, obtain for me by thy intercession a continual and tender remembrance of the Passion of thy Son. I love Thee, Jesus my love; I repent of ever having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company;
I wish to die with Thee.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

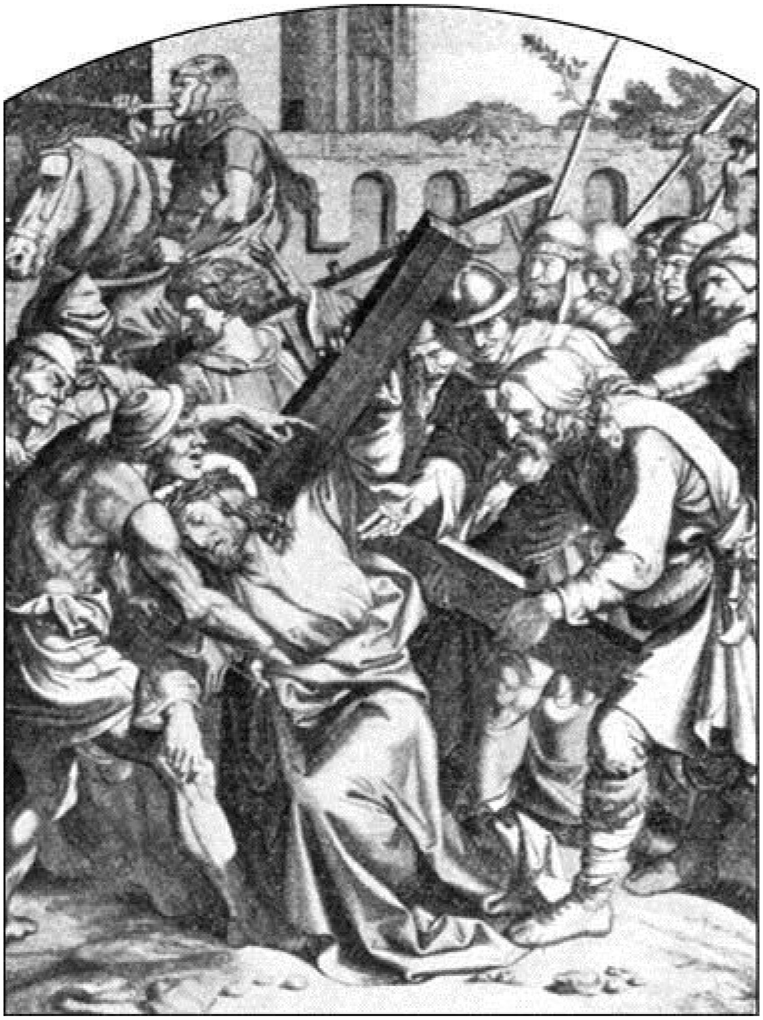

STATION 5: JESUS IS HELPED BY SIMON

Station 5

JESUS IS HELPED BY SIMON

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider how the Jews, seeing that at each step Jesus from weakness was on the point of expiring, and fearing that He would die on the way, when they wished Him to die the ignominious death of the Cross, constrained Simon the Cyrenian to carry the Cross behind our Lord.

My most sweet Jesus, I will not refuse the Cross, as the Cyrenian did; I accept it; I embrace it. I accept in particular the death Thou hast destined for me; with all the pains that may accompany it; I unite it to Thy death, I offer it to Thee. Thou hast died for love of me; I will die for love of Thee, and to please Thee. Help me by Thy grace. I love Thee, Jesus my love; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company;
I wish to die with Thee.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

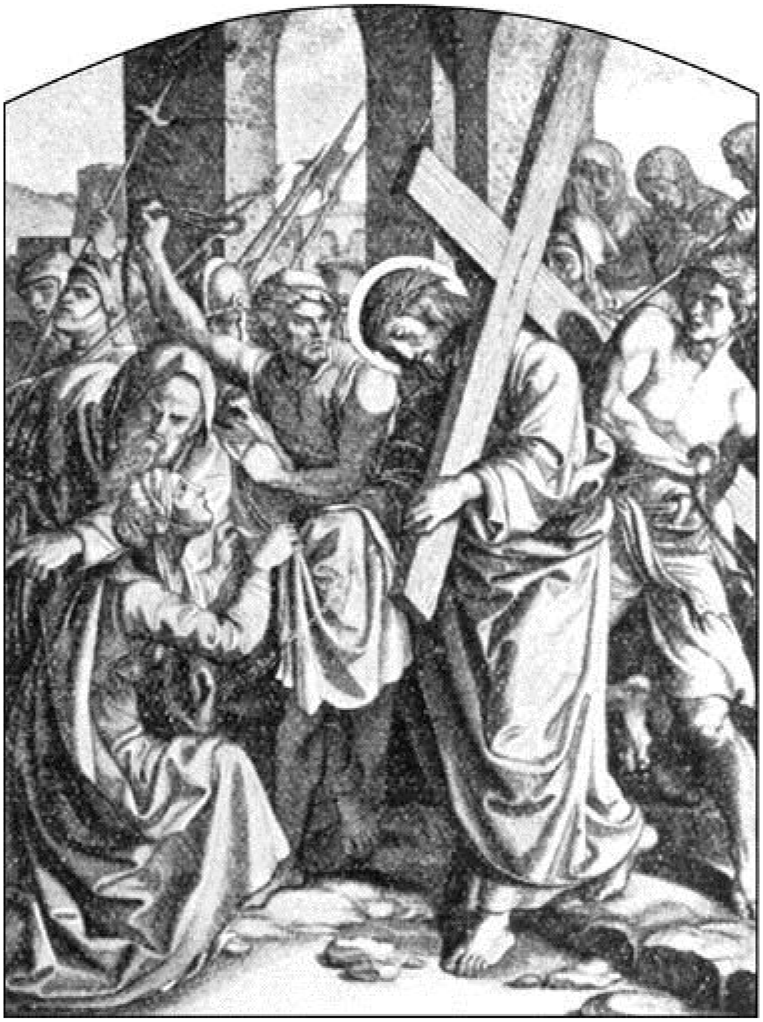

STATION 6: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Station 6

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider how the holy woman named Veronica, seeing Jesus so afflicted, and His face bathed in sweat and blood, presented Him with a towel, with which He wiped His adorable face, leaving on it the impression of His holy countenance.

My most beloved Jesus, Thy face was beautiful before, but in this journey it has lost all its beauty, and wounds and blood have disfigured it. Alas, my soul also was once beautiful, when it received Thy grace in Baptism; but I have disfigured it since by my sins; Thou alone, my Redeemer, canst restore it to its former beauty. Do this by Thy Passion, O Jesus. I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company;
I wish to die with Thee.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

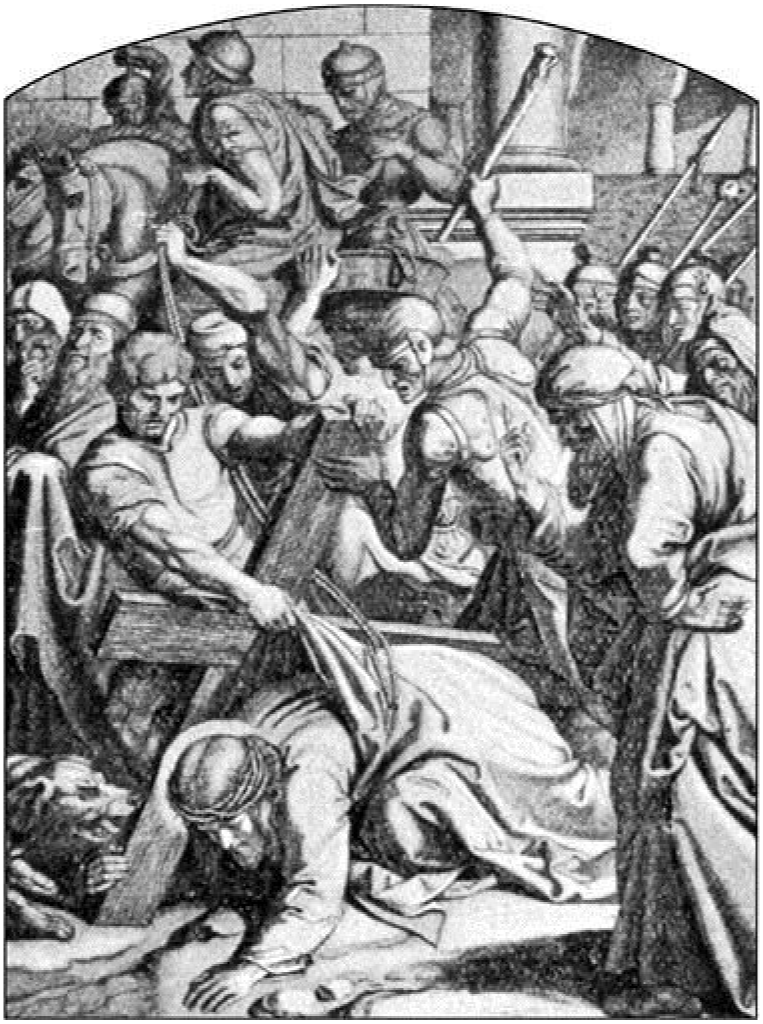

STATION 7: JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

Station 7

JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider the second fall of Jesus under the Cross—a fall which renews the pain of all the wounds of the head and members of our afflicted Lord.

My most gentle Jesus, how many times Thou hast pardoned me, and how many times have I fallen again, and begun again to offend Thee! Oh, by the merits of this new fall, give me the necessary help to persevere in Thy grace until death. Grant that in all temptations which assail me I may always commend myself to Thee. I love Thee, Jesus my love; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company;
I wish to die with Thee.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

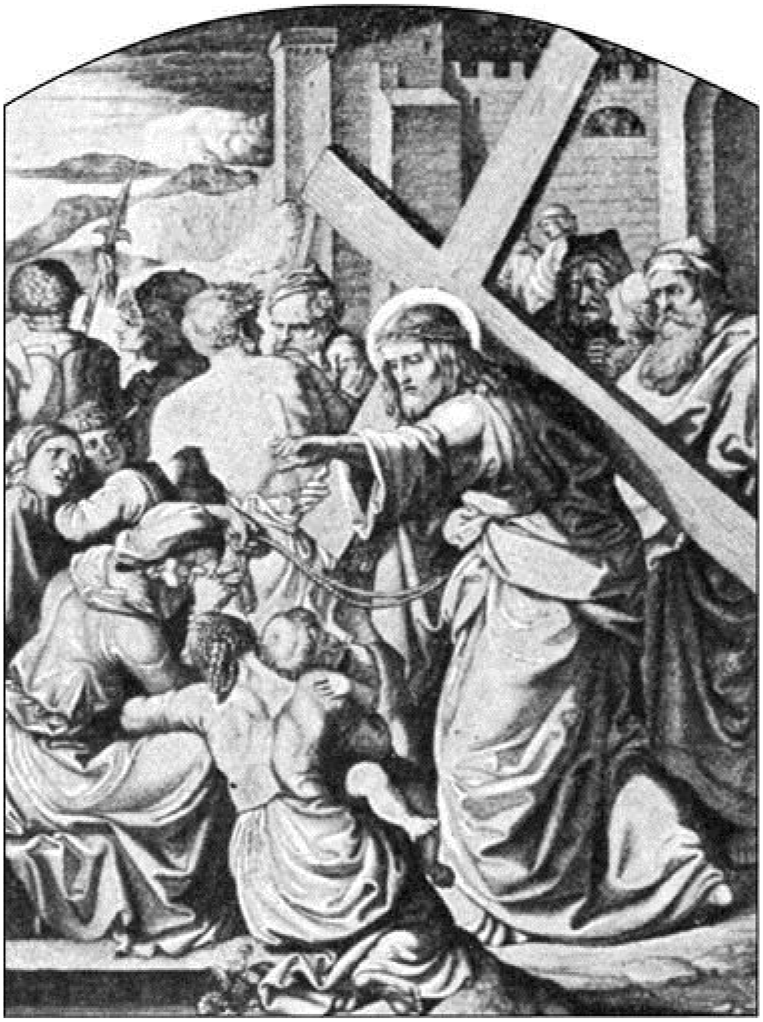

STATION 8: JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN

Station 8

JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider how those women wept with compassion at seeing Jesus in such a pitiable state, streaming with blood, as He walked along. But Jesus said to them: Weep not for Me, but for your children.

My Jesus, laden with sorrows, I weep for the offences I have committed against Thee, because of the pains they have deserved, and still more because of the displeasure they have caused Thee, who hast loved me so much. It is Thy love, more than the fear of hell, which causes me to weep for my sins. My Jesus, I love Thee more than myself; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company;
I wish to die with Thee.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

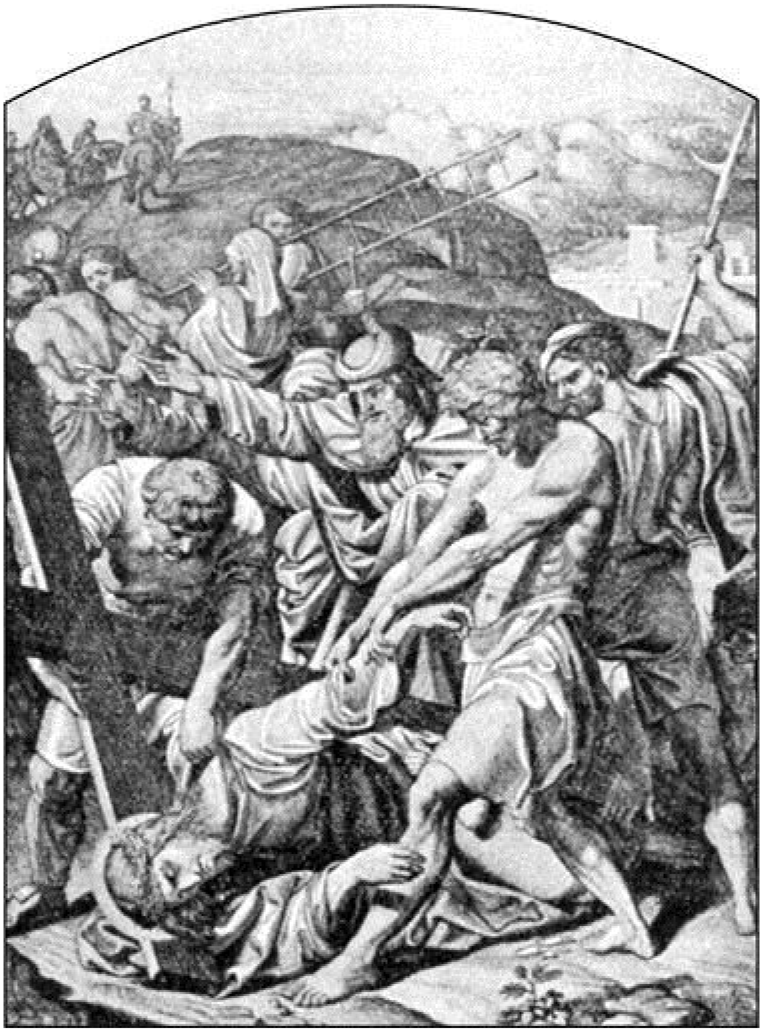

STATION 9: JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

Station 9

JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider the third fall of Jesus Christ. His weakness was extreme, and the cruelty of His executioners was excessive, who tried to hasten His steps when He had scarcely strength to move.

Ah, my outraged Jesus, by the merits of the weakness Thou didst suffer in going to Calvary, give me strength sufficient to conquer all human respect, and all my wicked passions, which have led me to despise Thy friendship. I love Thee, Jesus my love, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company;
I wish to die with Thee.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

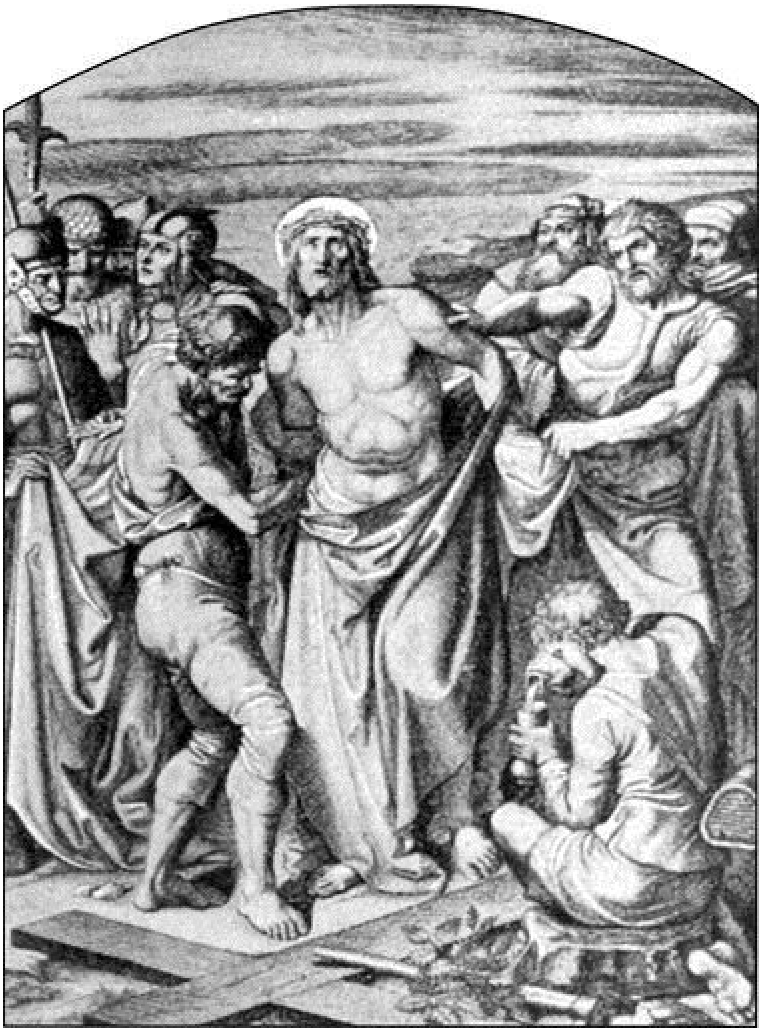

STATION 10: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Station 10

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider the violence with which the executioners stripped Jesus. His inner garments adhered to His torn flesh, and they dragged them off so roughly that the skin came with them. Compassionate your Savior thus cruelly treated, and say to Him:

My innocent Jesus, by the merits of the torment Thou hast felt, help me to strip myself of all affection to things of earth, in order that I may place all my love in Thee, who art so worthy of my love. I love Thee, O Jesus, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
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R. Have mercy on us.

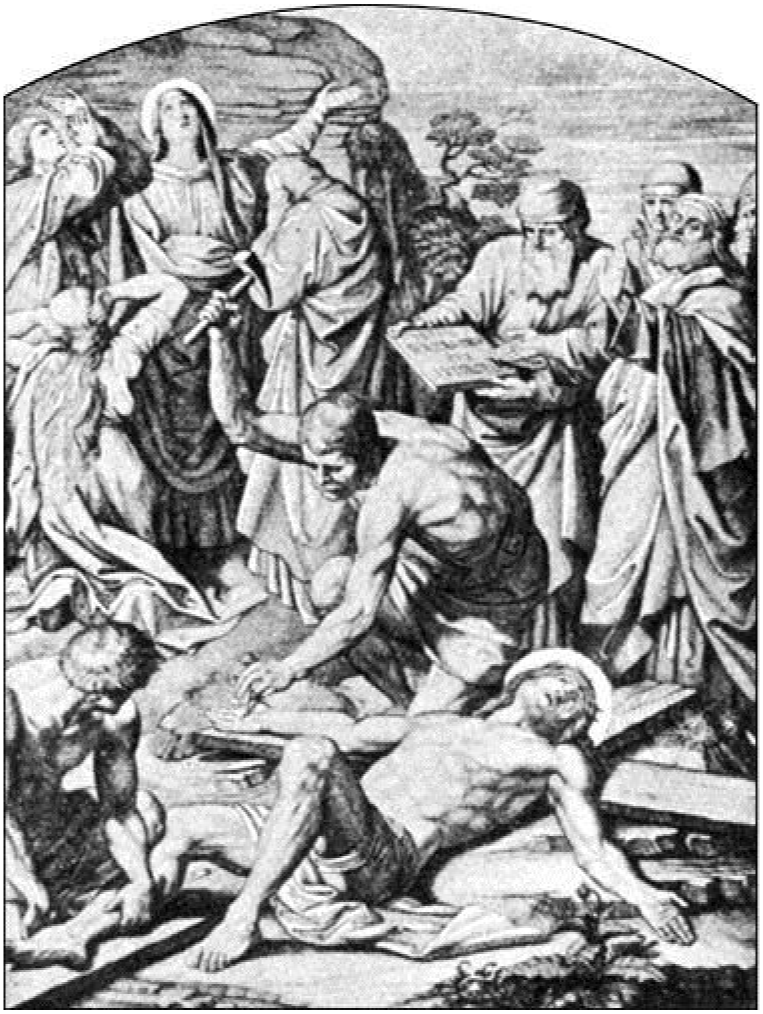

STATION 11: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Station 11

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider how Jesus, after being thrown on the Cross extended His hands, and offered to His Eternal Father the sacrifice of His death for our salvation. These barbarians fastened Him with nails, and then, raising the Cross, allowed Him to die with anguish on this infamous gibbet.

My Jesus! loaded with contempt, nail my heart to Thy feet, that it may ever remain there, to love Thee, and never quit Thee again. I love Thee more than myself; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company;
I wish to die with Thee.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

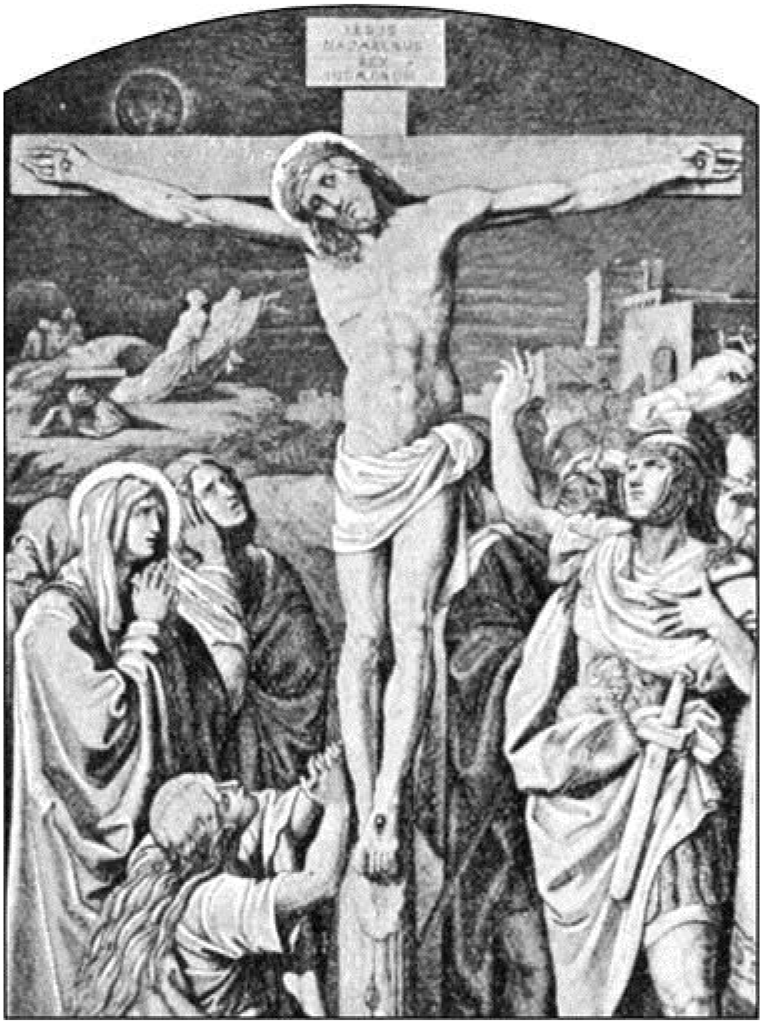
IESUS
NAZARENUS
REX
IUDAEORUM

STATION 12: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Station 12

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider how thy Jesus, after three hours’ Agony on the Cross, consumed at length with anguish, abandons Himself to the weight of His body, bows His head, and dies.

O my dying Jesus, I kiss devoutly the Cross on which Thou didst die for love of me. I have merited by my sins to die a miserable death; but Thy death is my hope. Ah, by the merits of Thy death, give me grace to die, embracing Thy feet, and burning with love for Thee. I yield my soul into Thy hands. I love Thee with my whole heart; I repent of ever having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

> Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
> For very love of me:
> Ah! let me bear Thee company;
> I wish to die with Thee.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

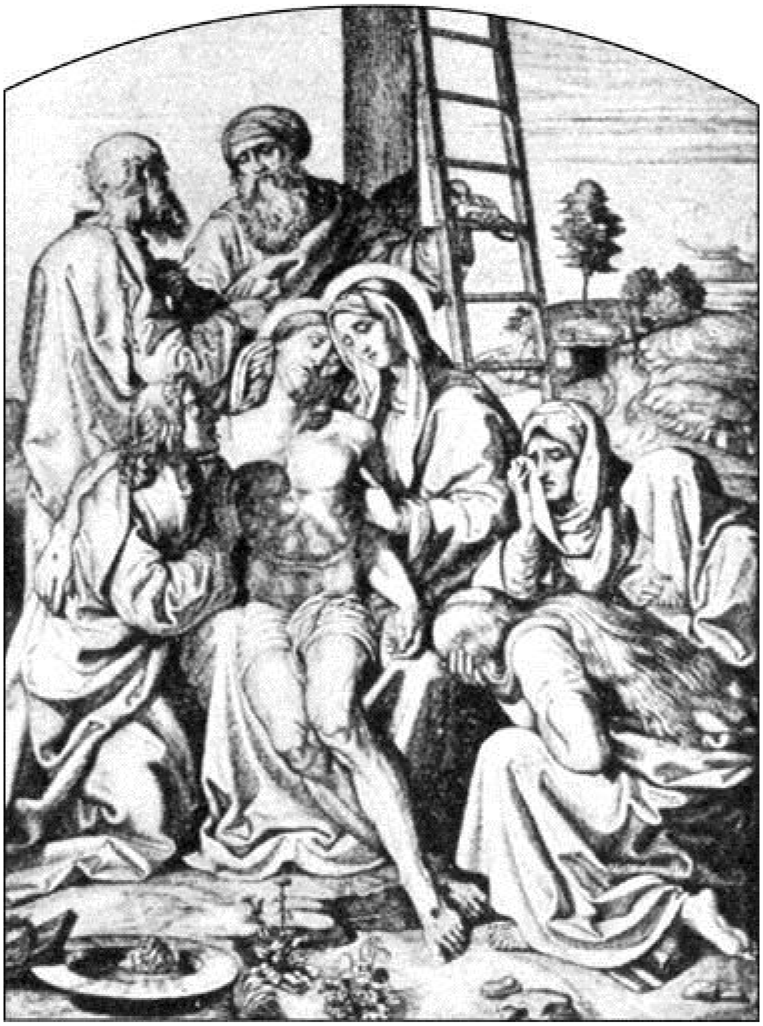

STATION 13: JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Station 13

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider how, after the death of our Lord, two of His disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus, took Him down from the Cross, and placed Him in the arms of His afflicted Mother, who received Him with unutterable tenderness, and pressed Him to her bosom.

O Mother of sorrow, for the love of this Son, accept me for thy servant, and pray to Him for me. And Thou, my Redeemer, since Thou hast died for me, permit me to love Thee; for I wish but Thee, and nothing more. I love Thee, my Jesus, and I repent of ever having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company;
I wish to die with Thee.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

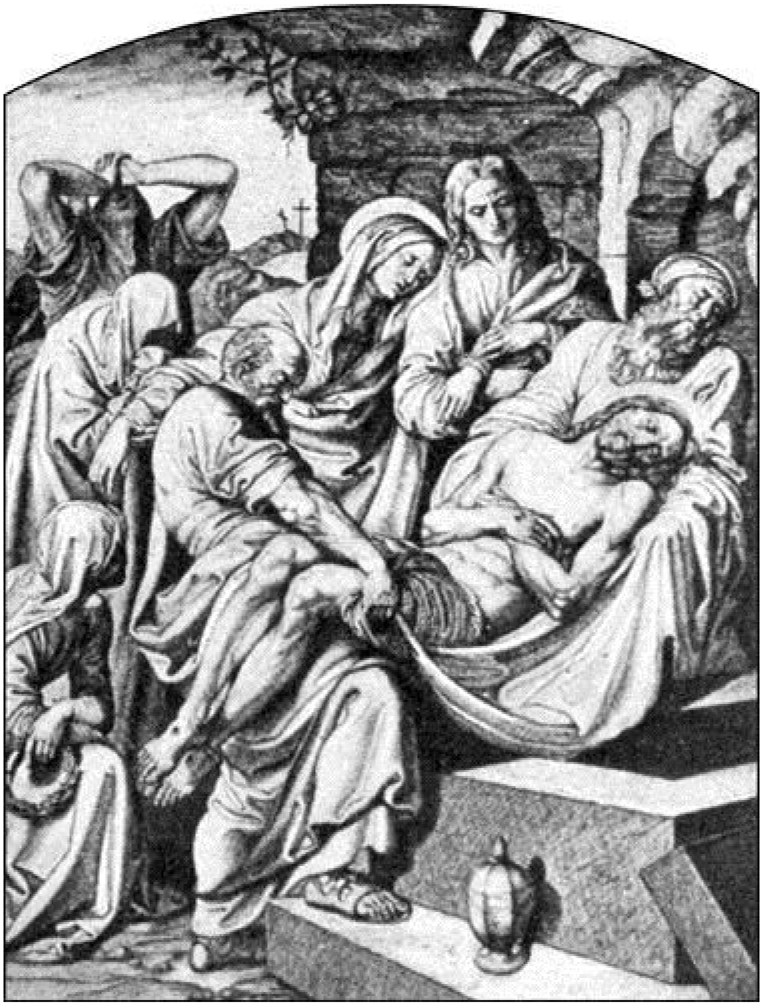

STATION 14: JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

Station 14

JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider how the disciples carried the body of Jesus to bury it, accompanied by His holy Mother, who arranged it in the sepulchre with her own hands. They then closed the tomb, and all withdrew.

Oh, my buried Jesus, I kiss the stone that encloses Thee. But Thou didst rise again the third day. I beseech Thee, by Thy resurrection, make me rise glorious with Thee at the last day, to be always united with Thee in heaven, to praise Thee and love Thee forever. I love Thee, and I repent of ever having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company;
I wish to die with Thee.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

ENDING

After this, say the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, five times, in honour of the Passion of Jesus Christ, to gain other indulgences granted those who recite them. Lastly, say one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff. Optional; Stabat Mater or Stabat Mater–Latin.

St Alphonsus Liguori, Pray for us! Amen.

PRAYERS

GLORY BE

Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

HAIL MARY

Hail Mary, Full of Grace, The Lord is with Thee. Blessed art Thou among women, and Blessed is the Fruit of Thy Womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of death. Amen.

OUR FATHER

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, On earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day Our daily bread, and Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, because You are so good. I am very sorry that I have sinned against You; and with the help of Your Grace, I will try not to sin again. Amen.

STABAT MATER

At the Cross her station keeping,
stood the mournful Mother weeping,
close to her Son to the last.
Through her heart, His sorrow sharing,
all His bitter anguish bearing,
now at length the sword has passed.

O how sad and sore distressed
was that Mother, highly blest,
of the sole-begotten One.

Christ above in torment hangs,
she beneath beholds the pangs
of her dying glorious Son.

Is there one who would not weep,
whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ’s dear Mother to behold?

Can the human heart refrain
from partaking in her pain,
in that Mother’s pain untold?

For the sins of His own nation,
She saw Jesus wracked with torment,
All with scourges rent:

She beheld her tender Child,
Saw Him hang in desolation,
Till His spirit forth He sent.

O thou Mother! fount of love!
Touch my spirit from above,
make my heart with thine accord:

Make me feel as thou hast felt;
make my soul to glow and melt
with the love of Christ my Lord.

Holy Mother! pierce me through,
in my heart each wound renew

of my Savior crucified:

Let me share with thee His pain,
who for all my sins was slain,
who for me in torments died.

Let me mingle tears with thee,
mourning Him who mourned for me,
all the days that I may live:

By the Cross with thee to stay,
there with thee to weep and pray,
is all I ask of thee to give.

Virgin of all virgins blest!,
Listen to my fond request:
let me share thy grief divine;

Let me, to my latest breath,
in my body bear the death
of that dying Son of thine.

Wounded with His every wound,
steep my soul till it hath swooned,
in His very Blood away;

Be to me, O Virgin, nigh,
lest in flames I burn and die,
in His awful Judgment Day.

Christ, when Thou shalt call me hence,
by Thy Mother my defense,
by Thy Cross my victory;

While my body here decays,

may my soul Thy goodness praise,
Safe in Paradise with Thee.

STABAT MATER–LATIN

Stabat mater dolorosa
juxta Crucem lacrimosa,
dum pendebat Filius.

Cuius animam gementem,
contristatam et dolentem
pertransivit gladius.

O quam tristis et afflicta
fuit illa benedicta,
mater Unigeniti!

Quae moerebat et dolebat,
pia Mater, dum videbat
nati poenas inclyti.

Quis est homo qui non fleret,
matrem Christi si videret
in tanto supplicio?

Quis non posset contristari
Christi Matrem contemplari
dolentem cum Filio?

Pro peccatis suae gentis
vidit Iesum in tormentis,
et flagellis subditum.

Vidit suum dulcem Natum
moriendo desolatum,
dum emisit spiritum.

Eia, Mater, fons amoris
me sentire vim doloris
fac, ut tecum lugeam.

Fac, ut ardeat cor meum
in amando Christum Deum
ut sibi complaceam.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
crucifixi fige plagas
cordi meo valide.

Tui Nati vulnerati,
tam dignati pro me pati,
poenas mecum divide.

Fac me tecum pie flere,
crucifixo condolere,
donec ego vixero.

Juxta Crucem tecum stare,
et me tibi sociare
in planctu desidero.

Virgo virginum praeclara,
mihi iam non sis amara,
fac me tecum plangere.

Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,
passionis fac consortem,
et plagas recolere.

Fac me plagis vulnerari,
fac me Cruce inebriari,

et cruore Filii.

Flammis ne urar succensus,
per te, Virgo, sim defensus
in die iudicii.

Christe, cum sit hinc exire,
da per Matrem me venire
ad palmam victoriae.

Quando corpus morietur,
fac, ut animae donetur
paradisi gloria. Amen.

PREPARATION FOR DEATH

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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The Centenary Edition

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

EDITED BY

REV. EUGENE GRIMM,

Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

THE ASCETICAL WORKS

Volume I

PREPARATION FOR DEATH;

Or CONSIDERATION ON THE ETERNAL TRUTHS,

Useful For All As Meditations And Serviceable to Priests For Sermons

MAXIMS OF ETERNITY—RULE OF LIFE

Nihil obstat.

Arthur J. Scanlan, S.T.D.,

Censor Librorum.

Imprimatur.

† Patritius Cardinalis Hayes,

Archiepiscopus Neo-Eboracensis

NEO-EBORACE

Die 26 Jilii, 1926

APPROBATION

By virtue of the authority grant to me by the Most Rev. Patrick Murray, Superior-General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the book entitled PREPARATION FOR DEATH, or Considerations on the Eternity Truths, which is Volume I of the complete edition of the Works of St Alphonsus de Liguori.

James Barron, C.SS.R.,

Provincial

BROOKLYN, N.Y., July 15th 1926.

CONTENTS

INDEX

PREPARATION FOR DEATH

- CONTENTS
- Preparation for Death
  - PREFACE
  - CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ETERNAL TRUTHS
  - THE AUTHOR’S PROTEST
  - AIM OF THE WORK
- Preparation for Death
  - *Consideration I*
PORTRAIT OF A MAN WHO HAS RECENTLY GONE INTO THE OTHER WORLD
    - FIRST POINT
THE BODY ON THE DEATH-BED
    - SECOND POINT
THE BODY IN THE GRAVE
    - THIRD POINT
LET US LABOUR TO SAVE OUR SOULS
  - *Consideration II*
WITH DEATH ALL ENDS
    - FIRST POINT
DEATH DEPRIVES US OF EVERYTHING
    - SECOND POINT
GLORY AND POWER ON THE DEATH-BED
    - THIRD POINT
LET US HASTEN TO GIVE OURSELVES TO GOD
  - *Consideration III*
SHORTNESS OF LIFE

FIRST POINT
DEATH COMES QUICKLY

SECOND POINT
THE LIGHTED CANDLE AT DEATH

THIRD POINT
IMPORTANCE OF THE LAST MOMENT

Consideration IV
THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

FIRST POINT
ALL MUST DIE

SECOND POINT
EVERY MOMENT WE APPROACH DEATH

THIRD POINT
WE SHOULD THINK CONTINUALLY OF DEATH

Consideration V
UNCERTAINTY OF THE HOUR OF DEATH

FIRST POINT
THE MOMENT IS FIXED, BUT IT IS UNKNOWN

SECOND POINT
WE SHOULD MAKE UP OUR ACCOUNTS

THIRD POINT
WE MUST ALWAYS BE READY

Consideration VI
THE DEATH OF THE SINNER

FIRST POINT
THE SINNER WILL SEEK GOD AT DEATH, BUT HE WILL NOT FIND HIM

SECOND POINT
ANGUISH OF THE DYING SINNER

THIRD POINT
WE MUST SEEK GOD WHEN WE CAN FIND HIM

Consideration VII
SENTIMENTS OF DYING CHRISTIAN, WHO HAS BEEN CARELESS ABOUT THE DUTIES OF RELIGION AND HAS THOUGHT BUT LITTLE OF DEATH

FIRST POINT
SAD STATE OF THE WORLDLING AT DEATH

SECOND POINT
DESIRE OF THE WORLDLING AT DEATH

THIRD POINT
TARDY REGRETS OF A DYING PERSON

Consideration VIII
THE DEATH OF THE JUST

FIRST POINT
THE DEATH OF THE JUST IS A REST

SECOND POINT
THE DEATH OF THE JUST IS A VICTORY

THIRD POINT
THE DEATH OF THE JUST IS THE ENTRANCE TO LIFE

Consideration IX
PEACE OF THE JUST AT THE HOUR OF DEATH

FIRST POINT
THE JUST HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR AT THE HOUR OF DEATH

SECOND POINT
THE JUST DIE IN A SWEET PEACE

THIRD POINT
THE JUST IN DYING HAVE A FORETASTE OF CELESTIAL JOY

Consideration X
MEANS OF PREPARING FOR DEATH

FIRST POINT
NOT TO WAIT TILL THE LAST MOMENT

SECOND POINT
PUT OUR CONSCIENCE IN A GOOD STATE, AND REGULATE OUR LIVES

THIRD POINT
WE MUST DETACH OURSELVES FROM THE WORLD

Consideration XI
VALUE OF TIME

FIRST POINT
TIME IS A TREASURE OF THE EARTH

- SECOND POINT
  NEGLECT OF TIME

- THIRD POINT
  WE MUST PROFIT BY THE TIME

Consideration XII
THE IMPORTANCE OF SALVATION

- FIRST POINT
  SALVATION IS OUR OWN IMPORTANT AFFAIR

- SECOND POINT
  SALVATION IS OUR OWN AFFAIR

- THIRD POINT
  A FAILURE IN SAVING ONE’S SOUL IS AN IRREMEDIABLE EVIL

Consideration XIII
THE VANITY OF THE WORLD

- FIRST POINT
  THE GOODS OF THIS WORLD ARE USELESS

- SECOND POINT
  THE GOODS OF THIS WORLD ARE CONTEMPTIBLE

- THIRD POINT
  WE MUST WORK FOR HEAVEN

Consideration XIV
LIFE IS A JOURNEY TO ETERNITY

- FIRST POINT
  MAN IS A TRAVELLER ON EARTH

- SECOND POINT
  MAN CAN SECURE ETERNAL HAPPINESS

- TJHIRD POINT
  MAN SHALL GO INTO THE HOUSE OF HIS ETERNITY

Consideration XV
THE MALICE OF MORTAL SIN

- FIRST POINT
  THE SINNER INSULTS GOD

- SECOND POINT
  THE SINNER DISHONOURS GOD

THIRD POINT
THE SINNER AFFLICTS GOD

Consideration XVI
THE MERCY OF GOD

FIRST POINT
GOD WAITS FOR THE SINNER

SECOND POINT
GOD CALLS THE SINNER

THIRD POINT
GOD RECEIVES THE SINNER WITH KINDNESS

Consideration XVII
ABUSE OF DIVINE MERCY

FIRST POINT
GOD IS MERCIFUL, BUT HE IS ALSO JUST

SECOND POINT
THE SINNER ABANDONED BY GOD

THIRD POINT
UNFORTUNATE IS HE WHO ALLOWS THE TIME OF MERCY TO PASS BY

Consideration XVIII
THE NUMBER OF SINS

FIRST POINT
THE MEASURE IS DETERMINED FOR EACH ONE

SECOND POINT
THE MEASURE IS NOT THE SAME FOR ALL

THIRD POINT
WE MUST ALWAYS FEAR

Consideration XIX
THE STATE OF GRACE AND OF DISGRACE WITH GOD

FIRST POINT
DIGNITY TO WHICH THE GRACE OF GOD RAISES US

SECOND POINT
ADVANTAGES THAT THE GRACE OF GOD PROCURES FOR US

THIRD POINT
ENMITY WITH GOD

Consideration XX
THE FOLLY OF THE SINNER

FIRST POINT
THE LARGE NUMBER OF FOOLS

SECOND POINT
GREAT FOLLY

THIRD POINT
TRUE WISDOM

Consideration XXI
UNHAPPY LIFE OF THE SINNER: AND THE HAPPY LIFE OF HIM WHO LOVES GOD

FIRST POINT
THE WORLD CANNOT MAKE US HAPPY

SECOND POINT
INTERIOR TORMENTS OF THE SINNER

THIRD POINT
HAPPINESS OF THE JUST ON EARTH

Consideration XXII
THE HABIT OF SIN

FIRST POINT
THE HABIT OF SIN BLINDS THE SOUL

SECOND POINT
THE HABIT OF SIN HARDENS THE HEART

THIRD POINT
THE HABIT OF SIN LEADS TO FINAL IMPENITENCE

Consideration XXIII
THE DELUSIONS WHICH THE DEVIL PUTS INTO THE MINDS OF SINNERS

FIRST POINT
I WILL GO TO CONFESSION.—I CANNOT RESIST

SECOND POINT
GOD IS MERCIFUL

THIRD POINT
I AM YOUNG—PERHAPS

Consideration XXIV
THE PARTICULAR JUDGEMENT

FIRST POINT
THE GUILTY SOUL BEFORE ITS JUDGE

SECOND POINT
NOTHING WILL REMAIN HIDDEN

THIRD POINT
THE SENTENCE

Consideration XXV
THE GENERAL JUDGEMENT

FIRST POINT
THE GENERAL RESURRECTION

SECOND POINT
THE VALLEY OF JOSAPHAT

THIRD POINT
THE ETERNAL SENTENCE

Consideration XXVI
THE PAINS OF HELL

FIRST POINT
THE PAIN OF SENSE

SECOND POINT
THE FIRE OF HELL

THIRD POINT
THE PAIN OF LOSS

Consideration XXVII
THE ETERNITY OF HELL

FIRST POINT
HELL IS ETERNAL

SECOND POINT
THE WEIGHT OF ETERNITY

THIRD POINT
ETERNITY IS UNCHANGEABLE

Consideration XXVIII
THE REMORSE OF THE DAMNED

FIRST POINT
THE LITTLE FOR WHICH THE DAMNED ARE LOST

SECOND POINT
THE LITTLE THAT WAS REQUIRED FOR THEIR SALVATION

THIRD POINT
THE GREAT GOOD THAT THE DAMNED HAVE LOST

Consideration XXIX
HEAVEN

FIRST POINT
ENTRANCE OF A SOUL INTO PARADISE

SECOND POINT
HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN

THIRD POINT
HEAVEN IS ETERNAL

Consideration XXX
PRAYER

FIRST POINT
EFFICACY OF PRAYER

SECOND POINT
NECESSITY OF PRAYER

THIRD POINT
CONDITIONS OF PRAYER

Consideration XXXI
PERSEVERANCE

FIRST POINT
NECESSITY OF PERSEVERANCE—MEANS OF DEFENCE AGAINST THE DEVIL

SECOND POINT
WE MUST CONQUER THE WORLD

THIRD POINT
WE MUST STRUGGLE AGAINST THE FLESH—RECAPITULATION

Consideration XXXII
CONFIDENCE IN THE PATRONAGE OF MARY

FIRST POINT
POWER OF MARY

SECOND POINT
MERCY OF MARY

THIRD POINT
CHARITY OF MARY

Consideration XXXIII
THE LOVE OF GOD

FIRST POINT
LOVE AND GOODNESS SHOWS BY GOD TO MAN

SECOND POINT
GOD HAS GIVEN HIMSELF TO US

THIRD POINT
LOVE THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN IN HIS PASSION

Consideration XXXIV
HOLY COMMUNION

FIRST POINT
THE EUCHARIST IS A PRECIOUS GIFT

SECOND POINT
THE EUCHARIST IS A GIFT OF LOVE

THIRD POINT
HOW MUCH JESUS CHRIST DESIRES TO UNITE HIMSELF TO US

Consideration XXXV
DWELLING OF JESUS ON OUR ALTARS

FIRST POINT
JESUS MAKES HIMSELF ACCESSIBLE TO EVERY ONE

SECOND POINT
JESUS GIVES AUDIENCE TO ALL AT ALL TIMES

THIRD POINT
JESUS ONLY WISHES TO BESTOW HIS GRACES

Consideration XXXVI
THE CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

FIRST POINT
EXCELLENCE OF THIS VIRTUE

SECOND POINT
IN WHAT WE SHOULD CONFORM TO GOD’S WILL

THIRD POINT
HAPPINESS DERIVED FROM CONFORMITY TO GOD’S WILL

HYMN

Maxims of Eternity
Or Meditations for Every Day in the Week

MEDITATION FOR SUNDAY
THE END OF MAN

MEDITATION FOR MONDAY

MEDITATION FOR TUESDAY
MORTAL SIN

MEDITATION FOR WEDNESDAY
DEATH

MEDITATION FOR THURSDAY
JUDGMENT

MEDITATION FOR FRIDAY
HELL

MEDITATION FOR SATURDAY
THE ETERNITY OF THE PAINS OF HELL

HYMN

A Christian’s Rule of Life

Chapter I
THE MEANS OF PRESERVING THE GRACE OF GOD

Chapter II
ACTS AND PRACTICES OF PIETY

§ 1. ACTS AND DIFFERENT PRAYERS ON RISING IN THE MORNING, AND DURING THE DAY

§ 2. METHOD OF MAKING MENTAL PRAYER

§ 3. ACTS TO BE MADE BY WAY OF PREPARATION AND THANKSGIVING BOTH FOR CONFESSION AND COMMUNION

§ 4. METHOD OF HEARING MASS

§ 5. ACTS TO BE MADE IN VISITING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT AND THE DIVINE MOTHER

§ 6. CHRISTIAN ACTS, TO BE MADE IN THE EVENING BEFORE GOING TO BED

§ 7. DEVOUT PRAYERS TO JESUS AND MARY TO OBTAIN THE GRACES NECESSARY FOR SALVATION

PRAYERS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY FOR EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK

SUNDAY
TO OBTAIN THE PARDON OF SINS.

MONDAY
TO OBTAIN HOLY PERSEVERANCE.

TUESDAY
TO OBTAIN A HAPPY DEATH

WEDNESDAY
TO ESCAPE HELL

THURSDAY
TO OBTAIN HEAVEN

FRIDAY
TO OBTAIN LOVE FOR JESUS CHRIST AND FOR MARY

SATURDAY
TO OBTAIN THE PATRONAGE OF MARY

Chapter III
THE PRACTICE OF THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

§ 1. THE PRACTICE OF HUMILITY

§ 2. THE PRACTICE OF MORTIFICATION

§ 3. THE PRACTICE OF CHARITY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR

§ 4. THE PRACTICE OF PATIENCE

§ 5. THE PRACTICE OF CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

§ 6. THE PRACTICE OF PURITY OF INTENTION

§ 7.·RULES FOR AVOIDING TEPIDITY

§ 8. THE PRACTICE OF DEVOTION TOWARDS THE GREAT MOTHER OF GOD

§ 9. ON THE PRACTICE OF CERTAIN MEANS BY WHICH WE MAY ACQUIRE THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

HYMN

Preparation for Death

PREFACE

TO THE CENTENARY EDITION OF THE WORKS OF ST ALPHONSUS

The present volume is the first of a new and only complete edition in English of the ascetical and dogmatical works of St Alphonsus de Liguori. The works of the Saint, relating to Moral Theology and written by him in Latin, will remain untranslated. In regard to the arrangement of matter, this English edition is based on the French translation, from the Italian, published in twenty-seven volumes, of Fathers Leopold Dujardin and Jules Jacques, of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. It will contain many of the explanatory notes with which their translation is enriched. These notes will enable the reader to understand more fully the writings of the holy Doctor. It was usual with the saintly author to insert in his works Latin Scripture texts and Latin quotations from the Fathers. This method, which has been adopted in the published German and French translations, is also followed in this new English edition. The Latin texts will, however, be given as foot-notes. The sacred poetry composed by St Alphonsus will be found interspersed through the different volumes of the ascetical works. The editor has availed himself of the few works already translated into English by the late Bishop Coffin, C.SS.R, and by others. But whatever he has used he has thoroughly revised and made to conform to the general plan of the present publication. Besides the table of contents, each volume will contain an alphabetical index. This new and complete edition bears the name of “The Centenary Edition” in commemoration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the death of St Alphonus, occurring in the year 1887.

In regard to the value and merits of the writings of St Alphonsus, the editor believes that it will prove interesting to insert here the sanctions and approbations conferred upon them by the sovereign Pontiffs.

The learned Pope Benedict XIV approved very highly of the writings of the Saint, and in a letter addressed to him in regard to his Moral Theology, expressed the belief that his work would prove most welcome and useful to the whole Christian world.

Clement XIV entertained the highest esteem for the Saint. This was the Pope at whose death St Alphonsus assisted in so wonderful a manner.

Pius VII wished to possess as relics the three fingers of the right hand with which the Saint had written his works and defended the honour of God, of the Blessed Virgin, and of our holy religion. He also confirmed the judgement pronounced, May 3rd, 1803, by the Sacred Congregation of Rites that in the printed as well as unprinted works of St Alphonus there is nothing that deserves censure. A second decree of the same Congregation, of the year 1815, met also with his approbation. In this decree we read these words: “The omnipotent word of God that calls the stars that they should shine in the firmament of the Church militant, has also called his Venerable Servant Alphonsus Liguori that he should shine by the light of apostolic virtues. He was obedient to the call, and like the sun that sends its rays everywhere, he has send forth rays of virtues, worthy of an apostle, when he contemned the honours of the world or showed by his voice and his writings, the road to justice to those who were wandering about in the dark night of this world, that they might be able to pass from the power of darkness into the light and the kingdom of God; or when he gave the best rules to his disciples whom he called member of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer; or when, as Bishop, he united fortitude to meekness, and adorned his crown with the ornaments of the other virtues like so many heavenly jewels. To adjudge to so great and illustrious a man the honour of the saints, may be regarded in these days a joyful event for the Church, because the faithful may learn there-from that though the times and years do indeed change and pass away, yet the Church of Christ cannot change nor perish; that the spirit of our holy Fathers has not become extinct; and that the Spouse of Christ never grows old, but amid the perishableness and changeableness of the years is ever blooming in continual youth and beauty. Thence, all those who have the care of souls, and all those who preach the word of God, may learn how very much of that which is noble and salutary in Alphonsus Mary de Liguori they may imitate.”

The finest eulogy of St Alphonsus was, however, pronounced by Pius VII in his Bull of Beatification, September 6th, 1816. He says: “Alphonsus was in God’s hands a sharp arrow which, discharged against vice, strikes now in one piece, now in another, in order to promote the honour of God and the salvation of souls. As a sharp arrow, heated by the fire of love, he has wounded the hearts of not a few priests, and so inflamed them that they also left all things and followed their Redeemer. Thus he established the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, whose priests have the special duty to preach to the people living scattered in the country. One cannot wonder enough how many enmities he has removed, how many wandering sinners he has led back to the right road and to Christian perfection, by word and example, and by his numerous writings. Besides, he was so devoted a client of the Mother of God, that it was always a pleasure to him to praise this sublime Mother and Virgin, and to write about her glories books filled with holy learning. (This is beautiful praise of his book *The Glories of Mary.*) Bowed down physically by age, labour and very grievous illness, yet mentally strong and ardent, he never ceased to speak and to write about heavenly things till his ninetieth year, when full of joy, he died a saintly death.”

Pope Leo XII in a Brief dated February 19th, 1825, addressed to Signor Marietti of Turin, approving of his complete edition of the works of St Alphonsus, classes the saint among the number of pious and learned writers raised up by Divine Providence to stem the torrent of bad publications which at that time was rushing down on society, and says of him, “that he is pre-eminent for a most tender piety and devotion, and for a singular zeal with which in his writings he urges the frequentation of the Sacraments, and inculcates the love of Jesus Christ, and confidence in His merits and mercy, together with devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, and to the saints, which are indeed the surest bulwarks against every kind of demoralisation.” And of Signor Marietti himself His Holiness says, “that in collecting and publishing the works of such a writer he had deserved well, not only of religion, but, if it did but know its own real good, of society in general.”

Pope Pius VIII when as Cardinal Castiglione he held the office of *Pœnitentiarius Major,* exhibited on different occasions his great affection for St Alphonsus. For example, he congratulates the Bishop of Marseilles because he promoted among the faithful a veneration for the Saint, “who not only in our day has adorned the august episcopate with the lustre of his virtues, but has made it resplendent by a doctrine that is sound and according to God (*sana ac secudum Deum*), and who has written so many books in which, according to the laudable judgement (of the Holy See), nothing is contained worthy of censure.” In another letter he expresses his joy that the veneration of St Alphonsus is extending more and more every day. For “St Liguori was conspicuous by the light of all the virtues that can be imitated by the clergy, and his writings are a pure fountain (*fons purus*), from which one may draw sacred science without endangering the piety of faith, as St Jerome expresses himself.”

Gregory XVI of holy memory, loved to praise the profound learning and eminent sanctity of St Alphonsus. He placed his name in the ecclesiastical calendar, and extended his Mass and office to the universal Church. “He is resplendent,” said the great Pope, “even among the brilliant lights that adorns the Catholic Church. It was under Pope Gregory XVI, that the decision was given by the *Sacra Pœnitentiaria* that, according to the words, *Nihil censura dignum repertum est*—there is nothing found worthy of censure,—the opinions of St Alphonsus may be followed in the pulpit as well as in the confessional, even if one has not maturely examined the reasons upon which the opinions are founded, provided only that one does not regard it as a reproach to those who follow the opinions of other approved authors. This decision induced the Cardinal Archbishop of Besançon, Rohan-Chabot, earnestly to exhort his clergy to adhere to the practice of St Alphonsus, in order that uniformity might be attained.

Pope Pius IX in a letter to the Rev. Fr Hugues, of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, dated November 25th, 1846, is pleased to express his joy and consolation on hearing that that German edition of the works of St Alphonsus had met with so great success, “at a moment, too, when by the insidious devices of the enemies of religion so many pestilential books are in circulation on every side, to corrupt and deprave the minds and morals especially of those not on their guard against them.” “Wherefore,” His Holiness continues, “we greatly commend your pious undertaking, and we encourage you to continue with still greater diligence in endeavouring to spread the most wholesome writings of St Alphonsus every day more and more. To read them cannot but be of the greatest advantage, not only to

Christian in general, but also to ecclesiastics, and to those especially who have the care and the direction of souls. For the works of that most holy and most learned man, written with an extraordinary tenderness of piety and devotion, breathe in every page a special love for Jesus Christ, and confidence in His merits and mercy; they inspire the highest devotion to the Virgin Mother of God and to the saints; they inflame men's hearts with the desire of frequenting the most holy Sacraments, and furnish a most copious supply of excellent admonitions, counsels and injunctions for procuring and carrying on the work of the salvation of souls."

It was Pope Pius IX who graciously responded to the petitions of many Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops and other dignitaries, by declaring St Alphonsus a Doctor of the Church—a distinction that had not been conferred on any ecclesiastical writer or theologians for six centuries. The following is a translation of the decree which placed the name of St Alphonsus in the category of the Doctors of the Church:

"Among those who have done and taught, and whom Our Lord Jesus Christ has declared should be great in the kingdom of heaven, is rightly counted St Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, and Bishop of St Agatha of the Goths. He shone as a watch-light on its tower, giving examples of all virtues to those who follow Christ and are of the household of God. Already, because of the brightness of his light, he has been reckoned among the Saints, the domestics of God. But what he reduced to practise his holy life, he taught also in word and by writing. He stands distinguished for exposing and destroying the lurking-places of unbelievers and Jansenists, so widely spread about. And, over and beyond this, he has cleared up questions that were clouded; he has solved what was doubtful, making a safe path, through which the directors of Christian souls may tread with foot unhurt, between the involved opinions of theologians whether too loose or too rigorous.

"And besides this, he has signally cast light on the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception, and of the Infallibility of the Sovereign Pontiff teaching *ex cathedra;* and he strenuously taught these doctrines, which in our day have been defined as of faith.

"He has, finally, made clear dark passages of the Holy Scriptures, both in his ascetic writings, which are freighted with a celestial odour, and in a most salutary commentary, in which, for the nourishment of piety and the instruction of the soul, he has given expositions of the Psalms, as well as of the hymns recited in the Divine Office, for the benefit especially of those obliged to its recitation.

“Pius VII of holy memory, was greatly moved by the exceeding wisdom of Alphonsus, and spoke in his praise as follows: ‘In the dark night of the world, he has shown by his voice and his writings the road of justice to the wandering, by which they may pass from the power of darkness to the light and the kingdom of God.’

“Nor were less remarkable words used by Pope Gregory XVI of holy memory, when he raised, by decretal letters, St Alphonsus to the honours of canonisation. Pope Gregory XVI said that there were in the writings of the Blessed Alphonsus ‘a wonderful force, an abundance and variety of doctrine.’ But in our days the ‘nations declare his wisdom, and the Church shows forth his praise.’ So that very many cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, almost all the prelates of the whole Catholic universe, the generals of religious orders, the theological faculties of the most celebrated universities, illustrious chapters of canons and learned men of every ecclesiastical body, have presented petitions to our Holy Father, Pius IX, Supreme Pontiff, in which they express their common desires that St Alphonsus Maria di Liguori may be adorned with the title and the honours of *Doctor of the Church.* His Holiness, graciously accepting these prayers, committed to the Congregation of Rites, according to custom in matters of this kind, the examining of so very grace a question. Consequently, in ordinary meetings held at the Vatican on the day below mentioned, hearing the Most Eminent and Reverend Cardinal Constantine Patrizi, Dean of the Sacred College, Prefect of the said Congregation, and reporter of the Cause; full attention having been given to the animadversions of the Rev. Fr D. Peter Minetti, Promoter of the Holy Faith, with the answers of the Promoter of the Cause; and also the opinions of the theologians not engaged in the Cause (*pro veritate*); and finally, all relating to the matter on the one side and the other having been most severely weighed, the Most Eminent and the Most Reverend Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation of Rites have judged by unanimous consent that it should be answered:

“To give counsel to His Holiness in favour of the granting or declaration, and extension to the whole Church, of the title of *Doctor,* in honour of St Alphonsus Maria di Liguori, with special Office and Mass, the *Credo;* the antiphon *O Doctor at the Magnificat* of the First and Second Vespers; the *Sapientiam* (from the Common of Doctors) for the lessons of the First Nocturn; and the *In medio Ecclesiæ,* for the Responsory of the Eighth Lesson. Dated March 2nd, 1871.

“Afterwards, a faithful account having been made of all and singular of the above, to our Most Holy Lord Pope Pius IX, by the undersigned Secretary of the said Congregation, His Holiness approved and confirmed the rescript, and of his supreme authority ordered that a General Decree, *urbis et orbis* should be sent forth, on the twenty-third day of the same month and year.

“CONSTANTINE, CARD. PATRIZI,

“*Bishop of Ostia and Villetri, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.*

[L.S.] “D. BARTOLINI, *Secretary of S.C.R.*”

The editor wishes to add one more testimony in regard to the value and the merits of the works of St Alphonsus. In a letter of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII addressed to Fathers Dujardin and Jules Jacques, priests of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, we read as follows:

“Beloved Sons: Health and Apostolic Benediction:

“Although the writings of the holy Doctor Alphonsus Maria de Liguori have already been spread throughout the world, not without very great profit to the Christian religion, yet it is desirable that they be propagated more and more, and be found in the hands of all. For he very well knew how to adapt Catholic truths to the comprehension of all, to provide for the moral direction of souls, to excite in a wonderful way true piety in the hearts of all, and ‘to show to those who wander in the dark night of the world the road by which they may pass from the power of darkness to the light and to the kingdom of God’ (Decree of December 21st, 1815). And assuredly he has protected by the most solid reasons divine revelation against the attacks of the Deists; he has defended with zeal the truths of our faith; he has very efficaciously maintained the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God; he has fought very energetically in behalf of the primacy and infallible authority of the Roman Pontiff; with as much learning as piety he has thrown light upon the designs of Divine Providence in the work of saving man through Jesus Christ; he has written commentaries on the Psalms and Canticles in a manner best adapted to nourish the piety of the clergy; he has shown the glory of the Church in the victories of the martyrs; in a history of heresies and a dogmatical work he has vigorously refuted all heresies, but has chiefly overthrown Jansenism and Febronianism, the errors of which had already spread, carrying with them the germs of so many monstrous opinions that to-day shake the foundations of religions and civil society, and which he himself attacked with such perspicacity that most of the propositions condemned in the *Syllabus* a century after are expressly refuted by his writings. ‘One might even truly say that there is no error in our time that has not been refuted, at least for the greater part, by St Alphonsus’ (Apostolic Brief, July 7th, 1871). And without speaking of the Moral Theology, which is everywhere held in the highest esteem, and which offers to directors of souls a perfectly sure rule of conduct, he has by means of numerous learned ascetical works enkindled, as it were, by burning coals, nourished and augmented languishing love principally toward Our Lord Jesus Christ and His sweetest Mother, for whom, to the great advantage of the people, he knew how to inflame the coldest hearts. And, ‘what is above all worthy of remark, though he wrote so many things, it must be acknowledged that, after an attentive examination, these writings may be read by the faithful without the least danger to their faith’ (Bull of May 26th , 1839, n. 7). We therefore congratulate you, Beloved Sons, that you have translated into French all the dogmatical and ascetical writings that are published, either in Latin or in Italian, by your very holy and very learned Father; first, because the French language, being known nearly to all peoples, can extend more the fruits of the works of the eminent Doctor; and secondly; because it is to you in preference to others that has been entrusted this difficult task—you, who otherwise should have written about the character, the learning and the holiness of these same writings, and who, as sons, could more easily and more perfectly acquire the spirit of your Father. Moreover, we congratulate ourselves because of your undertaking in this, that the holy author often glories in his writings that he has followed the doctrine of the Angel of the schools. Such deference of the new Doctor of the Church in regard to the latter is a new eulogy and a new glory of the doctrine of St Thomas. Hence follows a recommendation of great weight in favour of the restoration of Christian philosophy, which, by our recent encyclical letter, we have so strenuously urged that it should be carried into effect according to the spirit of the angelic Doctor. We therefore bespeak for this new publication of the works of St Alphonsus a very great success, corresponding to our and your desires; and in this expectation as an omen of celestial favour, we grant most affectionately, Beloved Sons, to you and to the whole Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, the Apostolic Benediction as a mark of our paternal benevolence.

“Given at Rome, at St Peter’s, August 8th, 1879, the second year of our Pontificate.

“LEO XIII, POPE.”

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ETERNAL TRUTHS

It was towards the year 1758, at the age of sixty-two, after more than thirty years of apostolic labour, that St Alphonsus published this excellent work, which has converted and sanctified so many souls.

In the order of the ascetical works the PREPRATAION FOR DEATH is put, not without reason, in the first place. It is death that predominates in some way over our life on earth; it should also predominate over our thoughts and our whole conduct. Man, the Christian, begins to live well only when he prepares himself to die well. This method is precisely that which is followed in the exercises of spiritual retreats and of the missions during which we begin to meditate on the Last Things of man, in order to enter at first what we call the Purgative Way. This is also the order that our Author has followed in the Considerations that compose the present work. —ED.

TO MARY IMMACULATE
AND
EVER VIRGIN,
TO HER WHO IS FULL OF GRACE, AND BLESSED AMONG ALL THE
CHILDREN OF ADAM;
TO THE DOVE, THE TURTLE, THE BELOVED OF GOD;
HONOUR OF THE HUMAN RACE, DELIGHT OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY;
HOUSE OF LOVE, EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY;
MIRROR OF ALL VIRTUES;
MOTHER OF FAIR LOVE, MOTHER OF HOLY HOPE, AND MOTHER OF MERCY;
ADVOCATE OF THE MISERABLE, DEFENCE OF THE WEAK, LIGHT OF
THE BLIND, PHYSICIAN OF THE SICK;
GATE OF HEAVEN;
ANCHOR OF CONFIDENCE, CITY OF REFUGE, ARK OF LIFE, RAINBOW
OF PEACE, HAVEN OF SALVATION’
STAR OF THE SEA, AND SEA OF SWEETNESS;

ADVOCATE OF SINNERS, HOPE OF THOSE WHO ARE IN DESPAIR, HELP OF THE ABANDONED;
COMFORTER OF THE AFFLICTED, CONSOLTION OF THE DYING, AND JOY OF THE WORLD;
HER AFFECTIONATE AND LOVING, THROUGH VILE AND UNWORTHY SERVANT, HUMBLY DEDICATES THIS WORK.

THE AUTHOR’S PROTEST

In obedience to the decrees of Urban VIII, I declare that I have no intention of attributing any other than a purely human authority to the miracles, revelations, favours, and particular cases recorded in this book; and the same as regards the titles of SAINTS and BLESSED, applied to servants of God not yet canonised, except in those cases which have been confirmed by the Holy Roman Catholic Church and the Apostolic See, of which I declare myself to be an obedient son; and therefore I submit myself and all that I have written in this book to her judgement.

AIM OF THE WORK

THIS SHOULD BE READ

Some persons asked me to write a book on the Eternal Maxims, for the use of those who desire to establish themselves in virtue and to advance in a spiritual life. Others requested me to prepare a collection of matter for the sermons of the missions and of the spiritual exercises. Not to multiply books, labour, and expense, I resolved to compose the work in the present form, with the hope that it might answer both purposes. To render it useful as a book of meditations for seculars, I have divided the considerations into three points. Each point will serve for one meditation, and therefore I have annexed to each point affections and prayers. I entreat my readers not to grow weary, if, in those prayers, they always find petitions for the grace of perseverance and of divine love. For us, these are the two graces most necessary for the attainment of eternal salvation.

The grace of divine love is, according to St Francis de Sales, the grace which contains in itself all graces; because the virtue of charity toward God brings with it all other virtues. *Now all good things come to me together with her.*[1] He who loves God is humble, chaste, obedient, and mortified; in a word, he possesses all virtues. “Love,” says St Augustine, “and do what you wish,”[2] They who love God labour to avoid whatever is offensive to Him, and seek to please Him in all things.

The grace of perseverance is that grace by which we obtain the eternal crown. St Bernard says that Paradise is promised to those who begin a good life, but is only given to those who persevere. “To beginners a reward is promised, but to him who persevere it is given.[3] But this gift of perseverance is, as the Fathers teach, given only to those who ask it. Hence St Thomas asserts that to enter heaven continual prayer is necessary.[4] And our Redeemer said: We ought always to pray, and not to faint.[5] It is because they do not pray for the gift of perseverance that so many miserable sinners, after having obtained pardon, lose again the grace of God. Their sins are forgiven; but because they afterward neglect to ask of God the grace of perseverance, particularly in the time of temptation, they relapse into sin. And although the grace of final perseverance is altogether gratuitous and cannot be merited by good works; still Suarez teaches that it can be infallibly obtained by prayer; and according to St Augustine, it may be merited by humble supplication.[6]

This necessity of prayer I have demonstrated at length in another little work, entitled The Great Means of Prayer. This book, though, small, has cost me a great deal of labour. I consider it to be of extreme utility to all sorts of persons; and I unhesitatingly assert that, among all spiritual treatises, there is none, and there can be none, more necessary than that which treats on prayer as a means of obtaining eternal salvation.

To render these considerations useful to preachers who have but few books or little time for reading, I have furnished these considerations with texts of Scripture and passages from the Fathers, which are short, but strong and animated, as they ought to be in sermons. The three points of each consideration will supply matter for one sermon. I have endeavoured to collect from many authors the sentiments which appeared to me best suited to move the will, and have inserted several of them expressed briefly, that the reader may select and extend at pleasure those that please him most. May all tend to the glory of God!

I pray my reader to recommend me to Jesus Christ, whether I am living or dead; and I promise to do the same for all those who perform this act of charity toward me. Live Jesus, our love, and Mary, our hope!

Preparation for Death

Consideration I

PORTRAIT OF A MAN WHO HAS RECENTLY GONE INTO THE OTHER WORLD

“Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.”—Gen.iii.19.

FIRST POINT

THE BODY ON THE DEATH-BED

CONSIDER that you are dust, and that you shall return to dust. A day will come when you shall die, and rot in a grave, where *worms shall be your covering*.[7] The same lot awaits all, the nobleman and the peasant, the prince and the vassal. The moment the soul leaves the body, it shall go to eternity, and the body shall return to dust. *Thou shalt send forth their breadth, and they shall fail and shall return to their dust.*[8]

Imagine that you behold a person who has just expired. Look at that body still laid on the bed, the head fallen on the chest, the hair in disorder, and still bathed in the sweat of death, the eyes sunk, and cheeks hollow, the face the colour of ashes, the lips and tongue like iron, the body cold and heavy. The beholders grow pale and tremble. How many, at the sight of a deceased relative or friend, have changed their life and retired from the world!

Still greater horror will be excited when the body begins to putrefy. Twenty-four hours have not elapsed since the death of that young man, and his body has already begun to exhale an offensive smell. The windows must be opened; a great quantity of incense must be used; and, to prevent the communication of disease to the entire family, he must soon be transferred to the church, and buried in the earth. “If he ahs been one of the rich or nobles of the earth, his body shall send forth a more intolerable stench,”[9] says St Ambrose.

Behold the end of that proud, of that lewd and voluptuous man! Before death desired and sought after in conversations, now become an object of horror and disgust to all who behold him. His relatives are in haste to remove him from the house; they hire men to shut him up in a coffin, to carry him to the church-yard and throw him into a grace. During life, the fame of his wit, of his politeness, of the elegance of his manners, and of his facetiousness, was spread abroad; but after death he is soon forgotten. *Their memory hath perished with a noise.*[10]

On hearing the news of his death, some say, He was an honour to his family;’ others say, He has provided well for his children. Some regret his death because he had done them some service during life; others rejoice as it because it is an advantage tot hem. But in a little time no one speaks of him. In the beginning, his nearest relatives feel unwilling to hear his name, through fear of renewing their grief. In the visits of condolence, all are careful to make no mention of the deceased; and should any happen to speak of him, the relatives exclaim, For God’s sake, do not mention his name!

Consider that as you have acted on the occasion of the death of friends and relatives, so others will act on occasion of your death. The living takes part in the scene. They occupy the possession and offices of the deceased; but the dead are no longer remembered—their name is scarcely ever mentioned. In the beginning, their relatives are afflicted for a short time; but they will soon be consoled by the share of the property of the deceased which falls to them.

Thus in a short time your death will be rather a source of joy; and in the very room in which you have breathed forth your soul, and in which you have been judged by Jesus Christ, others will dance, and eat and play and laugh as before. And where will your soul then be?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O Jesus, my Redeemer! I thank Thee for not having taken me out of life when I was Thy enemy. For how many years have I deserved to be in hell! Had I died on such a day or such a night, what should be my lot for all eternity? Lord, I thank Thee; I accept my death in satisfaction for my sins, and I accept it in the manner in which Thou shalt be pleased to send it. But since Thou hast borne with me until now, wait for me a little longer. *Suffer me, therefore, that I may lament my sorrow a little!*[11] Give me time to bewail, before Thou judgest me, the offences I have offered to Thee. I will no longer resist Thy calls. Who knows but the words which I have just read may be the last call for me? I acknowledge that I am unworthy of mercy. Thou hast so often pardoned me, and I have ungratefuly offended Thee again. *A contrite and humble heart, O God! Thou will not despise.*[12] Since, O Lord, Thou knowest not how to despise a contrite and humble heart, behold the penitent traitor who has recourse to Thee. For Thy mercy's sake, cast me not away from Thy face. Thou hast said: *Him that cometh to me I will not cast out.*[13] It is true that I have outraged Thee more than others, because I have been favoured more than others with Thy lights and graces. But the blood Thou hast shed for me encourages me, and offers me pardon if I repent. My sovereign Good! I am sorry with my whole soul for having insulted Thee. Pardon me, and give me grace to love Thee for the future. I have offended Thee sufficiently. The remainder of my life I wish to spend, not in offending Thee, but only in weeping unceasingly over the insults I have offered to Thee, and in loving with my whole heart a God worthy of infinite love. O Mary, my hope! Pray to Jesus for me.

SECOND POINT

THE BODY IN THE GRAVE

But, Christian soul, that you may see more clearly what you are, follow the advice of St Chrysostom: "Go to the grave; contemplate dust, ashes, worms; and sigh."[14] Behold how that corpse first turned yellow, and then black. Afterwards, the entire body is covered with a white, disgusting mould; then comes forth a clammy, fetid slime, which flows to the earth. In that putrid mass is generated a great multitude of worms, which feed on the flesh. Rats come to feast on the body; some attack it on the outside; others enter into the mouth and bowels. The cheeks, the lips, and the hair fall off. The ribs are first laid bare, and then the arms and legs. The worms, after having consumed all the flesh, devour one another; and, in the end, nothing remains but a fetid skeleton, which in the course of time falls to pieces; the bones separate from one another and the head separates from the body.

They became like the chaff of a summer's threshing floor, and they were carried away by the wind.[15] Behold what man is; he is a little dust on the threshing-floor, which is blown away by the wind.

Behold a young nobleman, who was called the life and soul of conversation: where is he now? Enter into his apartment: he is no longer there. If you look for his bed, his robes, or his armour, you will find that they have passed into the hands of others. If you wish to see him, turn to the grave, where he is changed into corruption and withered bones. O God! That body, pampered with so many delicacies, clothed with so much pomp, and attended by so many servants, to what is it now reduced? O ye saints! Who knew how to mortify your bodies for the love of that God whom alone you loved on this earth, you well understood the end of all human greatness, of all earthly delights; now your bones are honoured as sacred relics, and preserved in shrines of gold, and your souls are happy in the enjoyment of God, expecting the last day, on which your bodies shall be made partners of your glory, as they have been partakers of your cross in this life. The true love for the body consists in treating it here with rigour and contempt, that it may be happy for eternity; and in refusing it all pleasures, which might make it miserable forever.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Behold, then, O my God! To what my body, by which I have so much offended Thee, must be reduced! to worms and rottenness. This does not afflict me; on the contrary, I rejoice that this flesh of mine, which has made me lose Thee, my Sovereign Good, will one day rot and be consumed. What grieves me is, that, to indulge in these wretch pleasures, I have given so much displeasure to Thee. But I will not despair of Thy mercy. Thou hast waited for me in order to pardon me. *The Lord waiteth, that He may have mercy on you.*[16] Thou will forgive me if I repent. O Infinite Goodness, I repent with my whole heart of having despised Thee. I will say with St Catherine of Genoa, “My Jesus, no more sins! No more sins!” I will no longer abuse Thy patience. O my crucified Love, I will not wait till the confessor places the crucifix in my hands at the hour of death. From this moment I embrace Thee; from this moment I recommend my soul to Thee. *Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.*[17] My soul has been so many years in the world and has not loved Thee. Give me light and strength to love Thee at the hour of death. From this moment I love Thee; I embrace Thee, and unite myself to Thee; and I promise never more to depart from Thee. O most holy Virgin! Bind me to Jesus Christ, and obtain for me the grace never to lose him more.

THIRD POINT

LET US LABOUR TO SAVE OUR SOULS

My brother, in this picture of death behold yourself and what you must one day become. “Remember that dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.” Consider that in a few years, and perhaps in a few months or days, you will become rottenness and worms. By this thought Job became a saint. *I have said to rottenness: Thou art my father: to worms, my mother, and my sister.*[18]

All must end; and if, after death, you lose your soul all will be lost for you. Consider yourself already dead, says St Laurence Justinian, since you know that you must necessarily die.[19] If you were already dead, what would you not desire to have done? Now that you have life, reflect that you will one day be among the dead. St Bonaventure says, that, to guide the vessel safely, the pilot must remain at the helm; and in like manner, to lead a good life, a man should always imagine himself at the hour of death. Says St Bernard, “Look to the sins of your youth, and be covered with shame.”[20] “Remember the sins of manhood and weep.”[21] Look to the present disorders of your life; tremble,[22] and hasten to apply a remedy.

When St Camillus de Lellis saw the graves of the dead, he said within himself: If these return to life, what would they not do for eternal glory? And what do I do for my soul, who have time? This the saint said through humility. But my brother, you, perhaps, have reason to fear that you are the fruitless fig-tree of which the Lord said: *Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree and I find none.*[23] You have been in this world for more three years; what fruit have you produced? Remember, says St Bernard, that the Lord seeks not only flowers, but fruits; that is, not only good desires and resolutions, but also holy works. Learn then to profit of the time which God in his mercy gives you: do not wait until you desire time to do good, when time shall be no more. Do not wait till you are told, Time shall be no longer; depart;[24] the time for leaving this world has arrived; what is done, is done.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Behold me, O my God! I am that tree which deserved for so many years to hear from Thee, Cut it down—why cumbereth it the ground?[25] Yes; for so many years during which I have been in the world, I have brought forth no other fruit than the briers and thorns of sins. But O Lord! Thou dost not wish that I despair. Thou hast said to all, that he who seeks Thee shall find Thee. Seek and you shall find.[26] I seek Thee, O my God! And wish for Thy grace. For all the offences I have offered to Thee I am sorry with my whole heart; I would wish to die of sorrow for them. Hitherto I have fled from Thee; but now I prefer Thy friendship to the possession of all the kingdoms of the earth. I will no longer resist Thy invitations. Dost Thou wish me to be all Thine? I give Thee my whole being without reserve. Thou gavest Thyself entirely to me on the Cross. I give myself entirely to Thee.

Thou hast said: *If you shall ask me anything in my name, that I will do.*[27] My Jesus, trusting in this great promise, I ask, in They name and through Thy merits Thy grace and Thy love. Grant that Thy grace and Thy holy love may abound in my soul, in which sin has abounded. I thank Thee for having given me grace to make this petition by inspiring the prayer, Thou showest that Thou dost intend to hear t. hear me, O my Jesus; give me a great love for Thee; give me a great desire to please Thee, and give me strength to do Thy will. O Mary, my great advocate! Do thou also listen to my cry and pray to Jesus for me.

Consideration II

WITH DEATH ALL ENDS

“An end is come, the end is come.”—Ezek.vii.6.

FIRST POINT

DEATH DEPRIVES US OF EVERYTHING

By worldlings they only are esteemed happy who enjoy the pleasures, the riches, and the pomps of this world; but death puts an end to all these earthly goods. *For what is your life? It is a vapour which appeareth for a little while.*[28] The vapours exhaled from the earth, when raised in the air and clothed with light by the sun, make a splendid appearance; but how long does their splendour last? It vanishes before the first blast of the wind. Behold that nobleman: to-day he is dead, despised, reviled, and trampled upon. At death we must leave all things. The brother of that great servant of God, Thomas à Kempis, took delight in speaking of a beautiful house which he had built for himself: a friend told him that it had one great defect. “What is it?” said he. “It is,” answered the other, “that you have made a door in it.” “What,” rejoined the brother of à Kempis, “is a door a defect?” “Yes,” answered the friend, “for through this door you must be one day carried dead, and must leave the house and all things.”

Death, in fine, strips man of all the goods of this world. Oh, what a spectacle to behold a prince banished from his palace, never more to return to it, and to see others take possession of his furniture, of his money, and of all his other goods! The servants leave him in the grave, with a garment scarcely sufficient to cover his body. There is no longer any one to esteem or flatter him, no longer any one to attend to his commands. Saladin, who had acquired many kingdoms in Asia, gave directions at death, that when his body should be carried to the place of burial a person should go before, holding his winding sheet suspended from a pole, and crying aloud: “This is all that Saladin brings with him to the grave.”

When the body of the prince is laid in the grace, his flesh drop off; and behold, his skeleton can no longer be distinguished from others. “Contemplate,” St Basil says, “the sepulchres of the dead, and see if you can distinguish who has been a servant, and who has been a master.”[29] Diogenes was one day seen by Alexander the Great seeking with great anxiety for something among the bones of the dead. Alexander asked him what he was in search of. “I am looking,” replied Diogeners, “for the head of Philip your father. I am not able to distinguish it: if you can find it, show it to me.” “Men,” says Seneca, “are born unequal; but after death all are equal.”[30] And Horace says that death brings down the sceptre to the level of the spade.[31] In a word, when death comes, the end comes; all ends, we leave all things; and of all that we possess in this world, we bring nothing to the grave.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My Lord! Since Thou givest me light to know that whatever the world esteems is smoke and folly, grant me strength to detach my heart from earthly goods, before death separates me from them. Miserable that I have been! How often, for the miserable pleasures and goods of this earth, have I offended and lost Thee, who art an infinite good! O my Jesus! My heavenly physician, cast Thine eyes on my poor soul, look at the many wounds which I have inflicted on it by my sins, and have pity on me. If Thou wishest Thou canst make me clean.[32] I know that Thou art able and willing to heal me; but in order to heal me, Thou wishest me to repent of the injuries which I have committed against Thee. I am sorry for them from the bottom of my heart. Heal me, then, now that it is in Thy power to heal me. *Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee*.[33] I have forgotten Thee; but Thou hast not forgotten me; and now Thou makest me feel that Thou wilt even forget the injuries I have done Thee, if I detest them. “But if the wicked do penance. . . . .I will not remember all his iniquities.”—*Ezek.*xviii.21. Behold, I detest my sins, I hate them above all things. Forget, then, O my Redeemer, all the displeasures I have given Thee. For the future I will lose all things, even life, rather than forfeit Thy grace. And what can all the goods of this earth profit me without Thy grace?

Ah, assist me! Thou knowest my weakness. Hell will not cease to tempt me: it already prepares a thousand attacks to make me again its slave. No, my Jesus, do not abandon me, I wish to be henceforth the slave of Thy love. Thou art my only Lord; Thou hast created and redeemed me; Thou hast loved me more than all others; Thou alone hast merited my love: Thou alone do I wish to love.

SECOND POINT

GLORY AND POWER ON THE DEATH-BED

At the hour of death, Philip II, King of Spain, called his son, and throwing off his royal robe, uncovered his breast, which had been eaten away by worms, and said to him: “Prince, behold now how we die! See how all the grandeur of this world ends!” Theodoret has truly said that death fears not riches, nor satellites, nor sovereign and that from princes as well as vassals rottenness and corruption flow.[34]

Thus the dead, though they be princes, bring nothing with them to the grave; all their glory remains on the bed on which they expire. When he shall die, he shall take nothing away, nor shall his glory descent with him.[35]

St Antonine relates, that after the death of Alexander the Great a certain philosopher exclaimed: “Behold! The man who yesterday trampled on the earth is now buried in the earth. Yesterday the whole earth was not sufficient for him, and now he is content with seven palms. Yesterday he led his armies through the earth, and now he is carried by a few porters to the grave.” But it is better to listen to the words of God. Why, says the Holy Ghosts, *is earth and ashes proud?*[36]—O man! Do you not see that you are dust and ashes? Why are you proud? Why do you spend so many thoughts and so many years of life in seeking worldly greatness? Death will come; and then all your greatness and all your projects will be at an end. *In that day,* says David, *all their thoughts shall perish.*[37]

Oh! How much more happy was the death of St Paul, the Hermit, who lived sixty years shut up in a cave, than the death of Nero the Emperor of Rome! How much more happy was the death of St Felix, a Capuchin, lay-brother, than that of Henry the Eighth, who lived in the midst of royal magnificence, but at the same time at enmity with God! But we must remember that, to secure a happy death, the saints have abandoned all things; they have left their country; they have renounced the delights and the hopes which the world held out to them, and have embraced a life of poverty and contempt. But how can worldlings, living in the midst of sins, in the midst of earthly pleasures and dangerous occasions, expect a happy death? God warns sinners that at death they shall seek and shall not find Him.[38] He tells us that the hour of death shall be the time, not of mercy but of vengeance.[39] I will repay them in due time. Reason tells us the same; for, at death, men of the world shall find their understanding weak and darkened, and their heart hardened by the bad habits which they have contracted. Their temptations will then be more violent; how can they resist at death who were almost always accustomed to yield to temptations during life, and to be conquered by them? To change, their hearts a most powerful grace would be then necessary. But is god obliged to give them such a grace? Have they merited such a grace by the scandalous and disorderly life which they have led? And on that last hour depends their happiness or misery for eternity. How is it possible that he who reflects on this, and believes the truths of faith, does not leave all to give himself to God, who will judge us all according to our works?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah Lord! How many nights have I slept in enmity with Thee? O God! in what a miserable state was my soul during that time. It was hated by Thee, and wished to be hated by Thee. I was condemned to hell; there was nothing wanting but the execution of the sentence. But Thou, my God hast never ceased to seek after me, and to invite me to pardon. But, who can assure me that Thou hast pardoned me? Must I, O my Jesus! Live in this uncertainty till Thou judgest me? But the sorrow which I feel for having offended Thee, my desire to love Thee, and still more Thy Passion, O my beloved Redeemer, make me hope that Thy grace dwells in my soul. I am sorry for having offended Thee, O Sovereign Good, and I love Thee above all things. I resolve to forfeit everything rather than lose Thy grace and Thy love. Thou wishest that the heart which seeks Thee should be full of joy. *Let* *the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.*[40] Lord, I detest all the injuries I have offered to Thee. Give me courage and confidence; do not upbraid me with my ingratitude; for I myself know and detest it. Thou hast said that Thou wilt not the death of a sinner, but that he be converted and live.[41] Yes, my God, I leave all things and turn to Thee. I seek Thee. I desire Thee, I love Thee above all things. Give me Thy love; I ask nothing else. O Mary, thou, after Jesus, art my hope; obtain for me holy perseverance.

THIRD POINT

LET US HASTEN TO GIVE OURSELVES TO GOD

David calls the happiness of this life a dream of one who awakes from sleep.[42] In explaining these words, a certain author says: The goods of this world appear great, but they are nothing: like a dream, which lasts but a little, and afterwards vanishes, they are enjoyed but a short time.[43] The thought, that with death all ends, made St Francis Borgia resolve to give himself entirely to God. The saint was obliged to accompany the dead body of the Empress Isabella to Grenada. When the coffin was opened, her appearance was so horrible and the smell so intolerable that all ran away. But St Francis remained to contemplate in the dead body of his sovereign the vanity of the world; and looking at it, he exclaimed: “Are you then my empress? Are you the queen before whom so many bent their knee in reverential awe? O Isabella, where is your majesty, your beauty gone? Thus then,” he said within himself, “end the greatness and the crowns of this world. I will, therefore, henceforth serve a master who can never die.” From that moment he consecrated himself to the love of Jesus crucified; and he made a vow to become a religious, should his wife die before him. This vow he afterwards fulfilled by entering into the Society of Jesus.

Justly then has a person who was undeceived written on a skull these words: “Cogitanti vilescunt omnia.” To him who reflects on death, everything in this world appears contemptible; he cannot love the earth. And why are there so many unhappy lovers of this world? It is because they do not think of death. *O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity, and seek after lying?*[44] Miserable children of Adam, says the Holy Ghost, why do you not chase away from your heart so many earthly affections, which make you love vanity and lies? What has happened to your forefathers must befall you. They have dwelt in the same palace which you inhabit, and have slept in your very bed; but now they are no more. Such, too, will be your lot.

My brother, give yourself to God before death comes you. *Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly.*[45] What you can do to-day, defer not till tomorrow; for a day once passed never returns, and tomorrow death may come, and prevent you from ever more being able to do good. Detach yourself instantly from everything which removes, or can remove, you from God. Let us instantly renounce in affection the goods of this earth, before death strips us of them by force. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.[46] Happy they who at death are already dead to all attachment to this world. They fear not, but desire death, and embrace it with joy; for, instead of separating them from the good which they love, it unites them to the Supreme Good, who is the sole object of their affections, and who will render them happy for eternity.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dear Redeemer, I thank Thee for having waited for me. What should have become of me had I died when I was at a distance from Thee? May Thy mercy and patience which I have experienced for so many years, be forever blessed! I thank Thee for the light and grace with which Thou dost now assist me. I did not then love Thee, and I cared but little to be loved by Thee. I now love Thee with my whole heart, and nothing grieves me so much at the thought of having displeased so good a God. This sorrow tortures my soul; but it is a sweet torment, because it gives me confidence that Thou hast already pardoned me. O my sweet Saviour, would that I had died a thousand times before I sinned against Thee! I tremble lest I should hereafter offend Thee again. Ah! Make me die the most painful of all deaths, rather than permit me evermore to lose Thy grace/ I have been once the slave of hell; but now I am Thy servant, O God of my soul. Thou hast said that Thou lovest those who love Thee.[47] I love Thee: then I am Thine, and Thou art mine. I may lose Thee at some future time; but the grace which I ask of Thee is, to take me out of life rather than suffer me ever to lose Thee again. Unasked, Thou hast bestowed upon me so many graces; I cannot now fear that Thou wilt not hear my prayer for the grace which I now implore. Do not permit me ever to lose Thee. Give me Thy love and I desire nothing more. Mary, my hope! Intercede for me.

Consideration III

SHORTNESS OF LIFE

“What is your life? It is a vapour, which appeareth for a little while.”—James, iv.15.

FIRST POINT

DEATH COMES QUICKLY

WHAT is your life? It is like a vapour, which is dissipated by a blast of wind, and is seen no more. All know that they must die; but the delusion of many is, that they imagine death as far off as if it were never to arrive. But Job tells us that the life of man is short. *Man born of a woman, living for a short time. . . . who cometh forth like a flower, and is destroyed.*[48] This truth the Lord commanded Isaias to preach to the people. *Cry . . . All flesh is grass. . . . Indeed, the people is grass. The grass is withered, and the flower is fallen.*[49] The life of man is like the life of a blade of grass; death comes, the grass is dried up: behold, life ends, and the flower of all greatness and of all worldly goods falls off.

My days, says Job, *have been swifter than a post.*[50] Death runs to meet us more swiftly than a post and we at every moment run towards death. Every step, every breath brings us nearer to our end. “What I write,” says St Jerome, “is so much taken away from life.”[51] “During the time I write, I draw near to death.” We all die, and like the waters that return no more, we fall into the earth. Behold how the stream flows to the sea, and the passing waters never return! Thus, my brother, your days pass by, and you approach death. Pleasures, amusements, pomps, praises, and acclamations pass away; and what remains? And only the grave remaineth for me.[52] We shall be thrown into a grave, and there we shall remain to rot, stripped of all things. At the hour of death the remembrance of the delights enjoyed, and of all the honours acquired in this life, will serve only to increase our pain and our diffidence of obtaining eternal salvation. Then the miserable worldling will say: “My house, my gardens, my fashionable furniture, my pictures, my garments, will in a little time be no longer mine, ‘and only the grave remaineth for me.’”

Ah! At that hour all earthly goods are viewed only with pain by those who have had an attachment for them. And this pain will serve only to increase the danger of their eternal salvation; for we see by experience, that persons attached to the world wish at death to speak only of their sickness, of the physicians to be called to attend then, and of the remedies which may restore their health. When any one speaks of the state of the soul, they soon grow weary, and beg to be allowed repose. They complain of headache, and say that it pains them to hear any one speak. And if they sometimes answer, they are confused, and know not what to say. It often happens that the confessor gives them absolution, not because he knows that they are disposed for the sacrament, but because it is dangerous to defer it. Such is the death of those who think but little of death.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God, and Lord of infinite majesty! I am ashamed to appear before Thee. How often have I dishonoured Thee by preferring to Thy grace a sordid pleasure, a little dust, the indulgence of anger, caprice, or vanity! I adore and kiss, O my Redeemer, Thy holy wounds, which I have inflicted by my sins; but through these wounds I hope for pardon and salvation. Make me, O my Jesus! Understand the great injury I have done Thee in leaving Thee, the fountain of every good, to drink putrid and poisoned waters. Of all the offences I have given Thee nothing now remains but pain, remorse of conscience and fruits for hell. *Father, I am not worthy to be called Thy child.*[53] My Father! do not cast me off. It is true that I no longer merit the grace which would make me Thy child; but *Thou hast* died to pardon me. *Thou hast said: Turn ye to me,. . . . and I will turn to you.*[54] I give up all that gratifies me, I renounce all the pleasures that the world can give me, and I turn to Thee. Pardon me for the sake of the blood which has been shed for me; I repent with my whole heart of all the insults I have offered to Thee. I repent, and I love Thee above all things. I am not worthy to love Thee; but Thou dost not refuse the love of a heart that has once despised Thee. Thou didst purposely abstain from taking me out of life when I was in sin, that I might love Thee. I wish to love Thee during the remainder of my life, and I wish to love nothing but Thee. Assist me; give me holy perseverance, and Thy holy love. Mary, my refuge! Recommend me to Jesus Christ.

SECOND POINT

THE LIGHTED CANDLE AT DEATH

King Ezechias said with tears: *My life is cut off as by a weaver; while I was yet beginning, he cut me off.*[55] Oh, how many have been overtaken and cut off by death, while they were executing and arranging worldly projects devised with so much labour! By the light of the last candle, all things in this world, applause, diversions, pomps, and greatness vanish. Great secret of death! It makes us see what the lovers of this world do not see. The most princely fortunes, the most exalted dignities, and the most superb triumphs lose all their splendour when viewed from the bed of death. The ideas that we have formed of certain false happiness are then changed into indignation against our own folly. The black and gloomy shade of death then covers and obscures every dignity, even that of kings and princes.

At present, our passions make the goods of this earth appear different from what they are in reality. Death takes off the veil, and makes them appear what they really are—smoke, dirt, vanity and wretchedness. O God! Of what use are riches, possessions, or kingdoms at death, when nothing remains but a wooden coffin, and a simple garment barely sufficient to cover the body? Of what use are the honours, when they all end in a funeral possession and pompous obsequies, which will be unprofitable to the soul if it be in hell? Of what use is beauty, when after death nothing remains but worms, stench, and horror, and in the end a little fetid dust?

He hath made me, says Job, *as it were a byword of the people, and an example before them.*[56] The rich man, the captain, the minister of state dies: his death is the general topic of conversation; but if he has led a bad life he will become, "a byword of the people, and an example before them."[57] As an instance of the vanity of the world, and even of the divine justice, he will serve for the admonition of others. After burial his body will be mingled with the bodies of the poor. The small and great are there.[58] What profit has he derived from the beautiful structure of his body, which is now but a heap of worms? Of what use are the power and authority which he wielded, when his body is now left to rot in a grave, and his soul has, perhaps, been sent to burn in hell? Oh, what misery! To be the occasion of such reflections to others, and not to have made them for his own profit! Let us then persuade ourselves that the proper time for repairing the disorders of the soul is not the hour of death, but the time of health. Let us hasten to do now what we shall not be able to do at that hour. The time is short.[59] Everything soon passes away and comes to an end: let us therefore labour to employ all things for the attainment of eternal life.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O God of my soul! O infinite goodness! Have mercy on me who have so grievously offended Thee. I knew that in yielding to sin I should lose Thy grace, and I have voluntarily lost it. Tell me what I must do in order to recover it. If Thou wishest me to repent of my sins, behold I repent of them with my whole heart: I wish to die of sorrow for them. If Thou wishest me to hope for Thy pardon, I hope for it through the merits of Thy blood. If Thou wishest me to love Thee above all things, I give up all, I renounce all the pleasures and goods which the world can give me: I love Thee above every good. O my most amiable Saviour! If Thou wishest me to ask Thy graces, I beg two graces from Thee—do not permit me ever more to offend Thee, and make me love Thee: treat me then as Thou pleasest. Mary, my hope, obtain for me these two graces; through thy intercession I hope to obtain them.

THIRD POINT

IMPORTANCE OF THE LAST MOMENT

How great, then, the folly of those who, for the miserable and transitory delights of this short life, expose themselves to the danger of an unhappy death, and afterward of an unhappy eternity. Oh! How important is that last moment; that last gasp, the last closing of the scene! On it depends an eternity either of all delights or of all torments—a life of eternal happiness or of everlasting woe. Let us consider that Jesus Christ submitted to a cruel and ignominious death in order to obtain for us the grace of a good death. That we may at that last moment die in the grace of God, is the reason why he gives us so many alls, so many lights, and admonishes us by so many threats.

Antisthenes, though a pagan, being asked what was the greatest blessing which man could receive in this world, answered, *A good death.* And what will a Christian say, who knows by faith, that at the moment of death eternity begins, and that at that moment he lays hold of one of two wheels, which draws with it either eternal joy or everlasting torments? If there were two tickets in a lottery, on one of which might be written *Hell* and on the other *Heaven,* what care would you not take to draw that which would give you a right to Paradise, and to avoid the other, by which you would win a place in Hell! O God! How the hands of those unhappy men tremble who are condemned to throw the die on which their life or death depends! How great will be your terror at the approach of that last hour, when you will say: On this moment depends my life or death for eternity; on this depends whether I shall be forever happy or forever in despair! St Bernardine of Sienna relates, that at death a certain prince exclaimed, with trembling and dismay: Behold, I have so many kingdoms and palaces in this world; but if I die this night I know not what apartment shall be assigned to me.

Brother, if you believe that you must die, that there is an eternity, that you can die only once, and that if you then err your error will be forever irreparable, why do you not resolve to begin at this moment to do all in your power to secure a good death? St Andrew Avellino said with trembling: “Who knows what will be my lot in the next life? Shall I be saved or damned?” The thought of the uncertainty of being damned or saved filled St Louis Bertrand with so much terror, that he could not sleep during the night, because of this thought which would suggest itself to him: “Who knows whether thou wilt be lost?” And will not you, who have committed so many sins, tremble? Oh! Hasten to apply a remedy in time; resolve to give yourself sincerely to God, and begin from this moment a life which, at the hour of death, will be to you a source, not of affliction, but of consolation. Give yourself up to prayer, frequent the sacraments, avoid all dangerous occasions, and, if necessary, leave the world, secure to yourself eternal salvation, and be persuaded that to secure eternal life no precaution can be too great

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my dear Saviour! How great are my obligations to Thee! How hast Thou been able to bestow so many graces on so ungrateful a traitor as I have been? Thou hast created me; and in creating me Thou didst see the injuries which I would commit against Thee. Thou didst redeem me by dying for me; and then, too Thou didst see the ingratitude which I would be guilty of toward Thee. Being placed in the world I turned my back upon thee by my sins. My soul was dead and rotten, and Thou didst restore me to life. I was blind, and Thou hast enlightened me. I had lost Thee and Thou didst enable me to find Thee. I was Thy enemy and Thou hast made me Thy friend. O God of mercy, make me feel the obligations which I owe Thee and make me weep over the offences which I have committed against Thee. Ah! Take vengeance on me by giving me a great sorrow for my sins. Do not chastise me by the privation of Thy grace and love. O eternal Father, I abhor and detest, above all evils, the injuries I have done Thee. Have mercy on me for the sake of Jesus Christ. Look at Thy Son dead on the cross. "*Sanguis ejus super me.*" May his blood flow upon me, and wash my soul! O King of my heart! *Thy kingdom come.* I am resolved to banish every affection which is not for Thee. I love Thee above all things; come and reign in my soul with undivided sway. Grant that I may love Thee, and love nothing but Thee. I desire to please Thee to the utmost of my ability, and to do Thy will in all things, during the remainder of my life. Bless, O my Father, this my desire, and grant me the grace to keep myself always united to Thee. All my affections I consecrate to Thee, and from this day forward I wish to belong to Thee alone, my treasure, my peace, my hope, my love, my all. I hope for all graces through the merits of Thy Son. Mary, my queen and mother, assist me by thy intercession. Mother of God! Pray for me.

Consideration IV

THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

“It is appointed unto men once to die.”—Hebrew ix.27.

FIRST POINT

ALL MUST DIE

THE sentence of death has been written against all men: you are a man; you must die. “Our other goods and evils,” says St Augustine, “are uncertain; death alone is certain.”[60] It is uncertain whether the infant that is just born will be poor or rich, whether he will have good or bad health, whether he will die in youth or in old age. But it is certain that he will die. The stroke of death will fall on all the nobles and monarchs of the earth. When death comes there is no earthly power able to resist it. St Augustine says, “Fire, water, the sword, and the power of princes may be resisted; but death cannot be resisted.”[61] Belluacensis relates that at the end of his life a certain king of France said: “Behold, with all my power, I cannot induce death to wait one more hour for me.” When the term of life arrives, it is not deferred a single moment. *Thou hast appointed his bounds, which cannot be passed.*[62]

Dearly beloved reader, though you should live as many years as you expect, a day will come and on that day an hour, which will be the last for you. For me, who am now writing, and for you, who read this little book, has been decreed the day and the moment when I will no longer write, and you will no longer read. *Who is the man that shall live and not see death?*[63] There never has been a man so foolish as to flatter himself that he will not have to die. What has happened to your forefathers; will also happen to you. Of the immense numbers that lived in this country in the beginning of the last century there is not one now living. Even the princes and monarchs of the earth have changed their country: of them nothing now remains but a marble mausoleum with a grand inscription, which only serves to teach us, that of the great ones of this world nothing is left but a little dust enclosed in the tomb. “Tell me,” says St Bernard, “where are the lovers of the world? Of them nothing remains saves ashes and worms.”[64]

Since our souls will be eternal, we ought to procure not a fortune which soon ends, but one that will be everlasting. What would it profit you to be happy here (if it were possible for a soul to be happy without God), if hereafter you must be miserable for all eternity? You have built that house to your entire satisfaction; but remember that you must soon leave it to rot in a grave. You have obtained that dignity which raises you above others; but death will come and reduce you to the level of the poorest peasant.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah! unhappy me, who have spent so many years only in offending Thee, O God of my soul. Behold these years are already past: death is perhaps at hand; and what do I find but pains and remorse of conscience? Oh, that I had always served Thee, O my Lord! Fool that I have been! I have lived so many years on this earth and instead of acquiring merits for heaven. I have laden my soul with debts to the divine justice. Ah, my dear Redeemer, give me light and strength now to prepare for that great moment, which will decide my eternal happiness or misery. I thank Thee for having waited for me till now; and since Thou hast given me time to repair the past, behold me, O my God! Tell me what I am to do for Thee. Dost Thou wish me to weep over the offences I have offered to Thee? I am sorry for them, and detest them with my whole soul. Dost Thou wish me to spend the remaining years and days of my life in loving Thee? I desire to do so, O God; I have even hitherto frequently resolved to do so; but I have violated my promise. O my Jesus, I will be no longer ungrateful for the great graces Thou hast bestowed upon me. If I do not now change my life, how shall I be able at death to hope for pardon and for Paradise? Behold, I now firmly resolve to begin to serve Thee in earnest. But give me strength; do not abandon me. Thou didst not abandon me when I offended Thee; I therefore hope more confidently for Thy aid, now that I purpose to renounce all things to please Thee. Accept me, then, as one of Thy lovers, O God worthy of infinite love!

Receive the traitor that now casts himself with sorrow at Thy feet—that loves Thee, and asks Thy mercy. I love Thee, o my Jesus; I love Thee with my whole heart; I love Thee more than myself. Behold, I am Thine; dispose of me, and of all that I possess, as Thou pleasest. Give me perseverance in obeying Thy commands; give me Thy love; and then do with me whatsoever Thou wishest. Mary, my mother, my hope, my refuge, to thee I recommend myself to thee I consign my soul: pray to Jesus for me.

SECOND POINT

EVERY MOMENT WE APPROACH DEATH

IT is appointed. It is certain, then, that we are all condemned to death. We are born, says St Cyprian, with the halter round our neck; every step we take brings us nearer to death. My brother, as your name has been one day entered in the register of baptisms, so it will be one day entered in the register of deaths. As in speaking of your ancestors you say: God be merciful to my father, to my uncle, to my brother, so others shall say the same to you. As you have heard the death-bell toll for many, so others shall hear it toll for you.

But what would you say if you saw a man on his way to the place of execution jesting, laughing, looking about in every direction and thinking only of comedies, festivities, and amusements? And are not you now on your way to death? What is the object of your thoughts? Behold in that grave your friends and relatives, on whom justice has already been executed. How great is the terror and dismay of a man condemned to die, when he beholds his companions suspended on the gallows! Look then at these dead bodies. Each of them says to you: *Yesterday for me; to-day for thee*.[65] The same is said to you by the portraits of your deceased relatives, by the memoranda-books, the houses, the beds, the garments, which they have left.

To know that you must die, that after death you will enjoy eternal glory or suffer eternal torments, that on death depends your eternal happiness or eternal misery, and, with all this before your eyes, not to think of settling your accounts, and of adopting every means of securing a happy death, is surely the extreme of folly. We pity those who meet with a sudden and unprovided death; why then do we not endeavour to be always prepared? We too may die suddenly and without preparation. But, sooner or later, with or without warning, whether we think or do not think of it, we shall die; and every hour, every moment, brings us nearer to our end, which shall be the last illness that will send us out of the world.

At every age, the house, the streets, and the cities are filled with new people; the former inhabitants are borne to the grave, their last resting-place. As the days of life have ended for them, so a time will come when neither I nor you, nor any one alive, will live any longer on this earth. *Days shall be formed and no one in them.*[66] We shall all then be in eternity, which shall be for us either an eternal day of delights, or an eternal night of torments. There is no middle way; it is certain and an article of faith, that either one lot or the other will be ours.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My beloved Redeemer! I would not dare to appear before Thee, did I not see Thee hanging on the cross, lacerated, despised, and lifeless, for the love of me. My ingratitude has been great; but Thy mercy is still greater. My sins have been very grievous; but Thy merits exceed their enormity. Thy wounds, Thy blood, and Thy death are my hope. I deserved hell by my first sin: to that sin I have added so many other offences. And Thou hast not only preserved my life, but Thou hast also invited me to pardon, and hast offered me peace with so much mercy and so much love. How can I fear that Thou wilt drive me away, now that I love Thee and desire nothing but Thy grace? Yes, my dear Lord, I love Thee with my whole heart, and I desire only to love Thee. I love Thee and I am sorry for having despised Thee, not so much because I have deserved hell, as because I have offended Thee, my God, who hast loved me so tenderly. O my Jesus, open to me the bosom of Thy goodness; add mercies to mercies. Grant that I may be no longer ungrateful to Thee; change my whole heart. Grant that my heart, which has once despised Thy love, and has exchanged it for the miserable delights of this earth, may now be entirely Thine, and may burn with continual flames for Thee. I hope to gain Paradise, that I may always love Thee. I cannot enjoy in that kingdom a place among the innocent—I must remain among the penitents; but though among these, I wish to love Thee more than the innocent. For the glory of Thy mercy, make all heaven behold so great a sinner inflamed with an ardent love. I resolve henceforth to be all Thine, and to think only of loving Thee. Assist me with Thy light and with Thy grace to execute this desire, which Thou in Thy goodness hast inspired. O Mary! Thou who art the mother of perseverance, obtain for me the grace to be faithful to this my promise.

THIRD POINT

WE SHOULD THINK CONTINUALLY OF DEATH

Death is certain. But, O God! This truth Christian know, this they believe and see; and how can they still live so forgetful of death as if they would never have to die? If after this life there were neither hell nor heaven, could they think less of it than they do at present? It is this forgetfulness that makes them lead so wicked a life. My brother, if you wish to live well, spend the remaining days of life with death before your eyes. *O death, thy sentence is welcome.*[67] Oh! How correct the judgements, how well directed the actions, of the man is regulated in view of death! “Consider the end of life,” says St Laurence Justinian, “and you will love nothing in this world.”[68] *All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, of the eyes and the pride of life.*[69] All the goods of this earth are reduced to the pleasures of sense, to riches and to honours. But all these are easily despised by the man who considers that he will be soon reduced to ashes, and that he will be soon buried in the earth to be the food of worms.

And in reality it was at the sight of death that that saints despised all the goods of this earth. St Charles Borromeo kept on his table a skull, in order that he might continually contemplate it. Cardinal Baronius had inscribed on his ring the words, *Memento mori*, (*Remember death.*) The Venerable P. Juvenal Ancina, Bishop of Saluzzo, had this motto written on a skull, “What you are, I was; and what I am, you shall be.” A holy hermit being asked when dying how he could be so cheerful, said: “I have always kept death before my eyes; and therefore, now that it has arrived, I see nothing new in it.”

What folly would it not be for a traveller, who would think only of acquiring dignities and possessions in the countries through which he had to pass, and should reduce himself to the necessity of living miserably in his native land, where he must remain during his whole life! And is not he a fool who seeks after happiness in this world, where he will remain only a few days, and exposes himself to the risk of being unhappy in the next, where he must live for eternity? We do not fix our affections on borrowed goods, because we know that they must soon be returned to the owner. All the goods of this earth are lent to us: it is folly to set our heart on what we must soon quit. Death shall strip us of them all. The acquisitions and fortunes of this world all terminate in a dying gasp, in a funeral, in a descent into the grave. The house which you have built for yourself you must soon give up to others. The grave will be the dwelling of your body till the day of judgement; thence it will go to heaven or to hell, whither the soul will have gone before.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Then, at death, all shall be at an end for me. I shall then find only the little I have done for Thee, O my God! And what do I wait for! Do I wait till death come and find me as miserable and defiled with sin as I am at present? Were I now called to eternity I should die with great disquietude on account of my past sins? No, my Jesus; I will not die so discontented. I thank Thee for having given me time to weep over my iniquities and to love Thee. I wish to begin from this moment. I am sorry from the bottom of my heart for having offended Thee, O Sovereign Good! And I love Thee above all things—I love Thee more than my life. My Jesus! I give myself entirely to Thee. From this moment I embrace and unite Thee to my heart. I now consign my soul to Thee. *Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.* I will not wait to give it to Thee when that *proficiscere,* “Depart, O soul,” will announce my departure from this world. I will not wait till then to seek Thee to save me. “Jesu sis mihi Jesus.” My Saviour, save me now by granting me pardon and the grace of Thy holy love. Who knows but this consideration which I have read may be the last call which Thou wilt give me, and the last mercy which Thou wilt show me? Extend Thy hand, O my love, and deliver me from the mire of my tepidity. Give me fervour and make me do with great love all that Thou dost demand of me. Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, gives me holy perseverance, and the grace to love Thee, and to love Thee ardently, during the remainder of my life. O Mary! Through the love which thou bearest to thy Jesus, obtain for me these two graces—perseverance and love.

Consideration V

UNCERTAINTY OF THE HOUR OF DEATH

“Be you then also ready; for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come.”—*Luke* xii.40.

FIRST POINT

THE MOMENT IS FIXED, BUT IT IS UNKNOWN

IT is certain that we shall die; but the time of death is uncertain. “Nothing,” says the author who styles himself Idiota, “is more certain than death; but nothing is more uncertain than the hour of death.”[70] My brother, God has already fixed the year, the month, the day, the hour, and the moment when I and you are to leave this earth and go into eternity; but the time is unknown to us. To exhort us to be always prepared, Jesus Christ tells us that death will come unawares, and like a thief in the night. *The day of the Lord shall so come as a thief in the night.*[71] He now tells us to be always vigilant; because, when we least expect him, he will come to judge us. *At what hour you think not, the Son of man will come.*[72] St Gregory says that, for our good, God conceals from us the hour of death that we may always be prepared to die.[73] “Since then,” says St Bernard, “death may take away life at all times and in all places, we ought, if we wish to die well and save our souls, to live always in expectation of death.”[74]

All know that they must die; but the misfortune is, that many view death at such a distance, that they lose sight of it. Even the old, the most decrepit, and the mist sickly, flatter themselves that they will live three or four years longer. But how many, I ask, have we known, even in our own times, to die suddenly—some sitting, some walking, some sleeping? It is certain that not one of these imagines that he should die so suddenly, and on that day on which he died. I say, moreover, that of all who have gone to the other world during the present year, no one imagined that he should die and end his days this year. Few are the deaths which do not happen unexpectedly.

When, therefore, Christian soul, the devil tempts you to sin by saying, To-morrow you will go to confession, let your answer be, How do I know that this will be the last day of my life? If this hour, this moment, in which I would turn by back on God, were the last of my life, so that I would have no time for repentance, what would become of me for all eternity? To how many poor sinners has it happened, that in the act of feasting on the poison of sin they were struck dead and sent to hell? *As fishes are taken with the hook,* says Ecclesiastes, *so men are taken in the evil time.*"[75] The evil time is that in which the sinner actually offends God. The devil tells you that this misfortune will not happen to you; but you should say to him, in answer: If it should happen to me, what will become of me for all eternity?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Lord! The place in which I ought to be at this moment is not that in which I find myself, but in hell, which I have so often merited by my sins "Infernus domus mea est." (Hell is my house). St Peter says: *The Lord waiteth patiently for your sake, not willing that any one should perish, but that all should return to penance.*[76] Then Thou hast had so much patience with me, and hast waited for me, because Thou wishest me not to be lost, but return to Thee by repentance. My God, I return to Thee; I cast myself at Thy feet, and supplicate mercy. *Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy.*[77] Lord, to pardon me requires a great and extraordinary act of mercy, because I offended Thee after I had been favoured with a special light. Other sinners also have offended Thee, but they have not received the light which Thou gavest to me. But, in spite of all my sinfulness and ingratitude, Thou commandest me to repent of my sins, and to hope for pardon. Yes, my Redeemer, I am sorry with my whole heart for having offended Thee, and I hope for pardon through the merits of Thy Passion. Thou, my Jesus, though innocent, wished to die like a criminal on the cross, and to shed all Thy blood in order to wash away my sins. "O sanguis innocentis lava, culpas pœnitentis." O blood of the innocent, wash away the sins of the penitent. O eternal Father! Pardon me for the sake of Jesus Christ. Hear his prayers, now that He intercedes for me and makes Himself my advocate. But it is not enough to receive pardon: I desire also, O God! Worthy of infinite love, the grace to love Thee: I love Thee, O Sovereign Good! And I offer Thee henceforth my body, my soul, my liberty, and my will. I wish henceforth to avoid not only grievous, but also venial offences. I will fly from all evil occasions. *Lead us not into temptation.*[78] For the love of Jesus Christ, preserve me from the occasions in which I would offend Thee. *But deliver us from evil:* Deliver me from sin, and then chastise me as Thou pleasest. I accept all infirmities, pains, and losses which Thou mayest be pleased to send me: it is enough for me not to lose Thy grace and Thy love. *Ask and you shall receive.*[79] Thou promisest to grant whatsoever we ask; I ask these two graces—holy perseverance and the gift of Thy love. O Mary, Mother of mercy! Thou dost pray for me: in thee do I put my trust.

SECOND POINT

WE SHOULD MAKE UP OUR ACCOUNTS

The Lord does not wish us to be lost; and therefore, by the threat of chastisement, he unceasingly exhorts us to a change of life. *Except you will be converted, He will brandish His sword.*[80] Behold, he says in another place, how many, because they would not cease to offend me, have me with a sudden death, when they were least expecting it and were living in peace, secure of a life of many year. *For when they shall say: Peace and security: then shall sudden destruction come upon them.*[81] Again he says: Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish.[82] Why so many threats of chastisement before the execution of vengeance? It is because he wishes that we amend our lives, and thus avoid an unhappy death. “He,” says St Augustine, “who tells you to beware, does not wish to take away your life.”[83] It is necessary, then, to prepare our accounts before the day of account arrives. Dearly beloved Christians, were you to die, and were your lot for eternity to be decided before night would your accounts be ready? Oh! How much would you give to obtain from God another year or month, or even another day, to prepare for judgement? Why then do you not now, that God gives you this time, settle the accounts of your conscience? Perhaps it cannot happen that this shall be the last day for you? *Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day; for His wrath* *shall come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance He will destroy thee*.[84] My brother, to save your soul you must give up sin. “If then you must renounce it at some time, why do you not abandon it at this moment?” says St Augustine. Perhaps you are waiting till death arrives? But, for obstinate sinners, the hour of death is the time, not of pardon, but of vengeance. *In the time of vengeance He will destroy thee.*

When any one borrows from you a large sum of money you take care to get a written security for it. Who knows, you say, what may happen? Why are you not equally careful about the salvation of your soul, which is of far greater importance to you than all the riches of the earth? When eternity is at stake, why do you not say: Who knows what may happen? If you were to lose a sum of money, all would not be lost; you would have the hope of recovering it. But if at death you lose your soul, then you will truly have lost all, and can never hope to regain it. You are careful to keep an exact account of all the goods you possess, lest, by dying suddenly, any of them might be lost; and if you meet with a sudden death, and find yourself at enmity with God, what will become of your soul for all eternity?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah! My Redeemer! Thou hast spent all Thy blood and hast given Thy life in order to save my soul: and I have often lost it by confidence in Thy mercy. I have, then, so often abused Thy goodness to offend Thee. By doing so, I have deserved to be suddenly struck dead, and to be cast into hell. In a word, I have been engaged in a contest with Thee. Thou didst treat me with mercy, and I offended Thee; Thou didst seek after me and I fled away from Thee; Thou gavest me time to repair the evil I had done, and I employed that time in adding insults to insults. Lord, make me understand the injustice I have done Thee, and the obligation by which I am bound to love Thee. Ah! My Jesus! How could I be so dear to Thee, who sought after me so often when I chased Thee away? How hast Thou been able to bestow so many graces on one who has given Thee so much displeasure? From this I see the ardour of Thy desire to save me from perdition. I am sorry with my whole heart for having offended Thee. O infinite goodness! Ah, receive this ungrateful sheep, that casts itself sorrowful at Thy feet; receive it and bind it on Thy shoulders, that I may never more fly away from Thee. I will never again abandon Thee. I wish to love Thee; I wish to be Thine; and provided I belong to Thee. I am content to suffer every pain. And what greater punishment can fall upon me than to live without Thy grace, to be separated from Thee, who art my God, who hast created me and died for me? O accursed sins! What have you done? You have made me displease my Saviour, who has loved me so tenderly. Ah! My Jesus, as Thou hast died for me, so I ought to die for Thee. Thou hast died through love for me—I should die through sorrow for having despised Thee. I accept death in whatever manner and at whatever time Thou pleasest to send it. Hitherto I have not loved Thee, or I have loved Thee too little. I do not wish to die in this state. Ah, grant me a little more time, that I may love Thee before I die. Change my heart: wound it: inflame it with Thy holy love. Through that affection of charity which made Thee die for me, grant me this favour. I love Thee with my whole heart. My soul is enamoured of Thee. Do not permit me to lose Thee. Give me holy perseverance; give me Thy holy love. Most holy Mary, my refuge, and my Mother, perform the office of advocate in my behalf.

THIRD POINT

WE MUST ALWAYS BE READY

Be ye ready. The Lord does not tell us to prepare ourselves, but to be prepared, when death arrives. When death comes, it will be almost impossible, in that tempest and confusion, to give ease to a troubled conscience. This, reason tells us: this, God threatens, saying that then he will come, not to pardon, but to avenge, the contempt of his graces. *Revenge is mine, I will repay.*[85] It is, says St Augustine, a just punishment, that he who was unwilling, when he was able to save his soul, will not be able when he is willing.[86] But you will say: Perhaps I may still be converted and saved. Would you throw yourself into a deep well, saying, Perhaps I may not be drowned? O God! How sin blinds the understanding, and deprives the soul of reason. When there is question of the body, men speak rationally; but when the soul is concerned, they speak like fools.

My brother, who knows but this point which you read is the last warning that God may send you? Let us immediately prepare for death, that it may not come upon us without giving us time to prepare for judgement. St Augustine says that God conceals from us the last day of life, that we may be always prepared to die.[87] St Paul tells us that we must work out our salvation, not only with fear, but also with trembling.[88] St Antonine relates that a certain king of Sicily, to make one of his subjects understand the fear with which he sat on the throne, commanded him to sit at table with a sword suspended over him by a slender thread. The apprehension that the thread might give way filled him with so much terror that he could scarcely taste food. We are all in like danger: for the sword of death, on which our eternal salvation depends, may at each moment fall upon us.

It is indeed a question of eternity. *If the tree fall to the south or the north, in which soever it shall fall, there shall it lie.*[89] If, when death comes, we are found in the grace of God, oh! with what joy shall we say: I have secured all; I can never again lose God; I shall be happy forever. But, if death finds the soul in sin, with what despair will it exclaim, “Ergo erravimus!”—therefore have I erred; and for my error there will be no remedy for all eternity. The fear of an unhappy eternity made the venerable Fr Avila, apostle of Spain, say, when the news of death was brought to him: Oh! That I had a little more time to prepare for death! This fear made the Abbot Agatho, who spent so many years in penance, say at death: What will become of me? Who can know the judgements of God? St Arsenius, too, trembled at the hour of death; and being asked by his disciples, why he was so much alarmed, he said: “My children this fear is not new to me; I have had it always during my whole life.” Above all, holy Job trembled when he said: *What shall I do when the Lord shall rise to judge? And when he shall examine, what shall I answer Him?*[90]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah my God! Who has ever loved me more than Thou hast and whom have I despised and insulted more than I have insulted Thee? O blood! O wounds of Jesus, you are my hope. Eternal Father, look not upon my sins, but look at the wounds of Jesus; behold Thy Son dying through pain for my sake, and asking Thee to pardon me. I repent, O my Creator! Of having offended Thee. I am sorry for it above all things. Thou didst create me that I might love Thee; and I have lived as if Thou didst create me to offend Thee. For the love of Jesus Christ, pardon me and give me grace to love Thee. I have hitherto resisted Thy will, but I will resist no longer, and will do whatsoever Thou commandest. Thou commandest me to detest the outrages I have offered Thee; behold I detest them, with my whole heart. Thou commandest me to resolve to offend Thee no more; behold, I resolve to lose my life a thousand times, rather than forfeit Thy grace. Thou commandest me to love Thee with my whole heart; yes, with my whole heart I love Thee, and I wish to love nothing else but Thee. Thou wilt henceforth be my only beloved, my only love. From Thee I ask, and from Thee I hope for holy perseverance. For the love of Jesus Christ, grant that I may be always faithful to Thee, and that I may always say to Thee, with St Bonaventure: "Unus est dilectus meus, unus est amor meus." My beloved is one, my love is one. I do not wish that my life be employed any longer in giving Thee displeasure; I wish to spend it only in weeping over the offences I have committed against Thee, and in loving Thee. Mary, my Mother! Pray for all who recommend themselves to thee—pray to Jesus also for me.

Consideration VI

THE DEATH OF THE SINNER

> "When distress cometh upon them, they will seek for peace, and there shall be none. Trouble shall come upon trouble."—*Ezek.*vii.25.

FIRST POINT

THE SINNER WILL SEEK GOD AT DEATH, BUT HE WILL NOT FIND HIM

AT present sinners banish the remembrance and thought of death; and thus they seek after peace, though they never find it, in the sinful life which they lead. But when they are found in the straits of death, on the point of entering into eternity, *they shall seek peace, and there shall be none.*[91] Then they will not be able to fly from the torture of their sinful conscience. They will seek peace; but what peace can be found by a soul loaded with sins that sting it like so many vipers? What peace can the sinner enjoy when he sees that he must in a few moments appear before the judgement seat of Jesus Christ, whose law and friendship he ahs till then despised? Trouble shall come upon trouble.[92] The news of death, which has been already announced, the thought of being obliged to take leave of everything in this world, the remorse of conscience, the time lost, the want of time at present, the rigour of the divine judgement, the unhappy eternity which awaits sinners—all these things will form a horrible tempest, which will confuse the mind, will increase his apprehensions; and thus, full of confusion and distrust, the dying sinner will pass to the other world.

Trusting in the divine promise, Abraham, with great merit, hoped in God, against human hope.[93] But sinners, with great demerit, hope falsely and to their own perdition, not only against hope but also against faith; because they despise the menaces of God against all who are obstinate in sin. They are afraid of a bad death, but they fear not to lead a wicked life. But who has assured them that they will not suddenly be deprived of life by a thunderbolt, by apoplexy, or by the bursting of a blood-vessel? And were they at death even allowed time for repentance, who assures them that they will sincerely return to God? To conquer bad habits, St Augustine had to fight against them for twelve years. How will the dying man, who has always lived in sin, be able, in the midst of the pains, the stupefaction and the confusion of death, to repent sincerely of all his past iniquities? I say *sincerely,* because it is not enough to say and to promise with the tongue: it is necessary to promise with the heart? O God! What terror and confusion will seize the unhappy Christian who has led a careless life, when he finds himself overwhelmed with sins, with the fears of judgement, of hell, and of eternity! Oh! What confusion will these thoughts produce when the dying sinner will find his reason gone, his mind darkened, and his whole frame assailed by the pains of approaching death? He will make his confession; he will promise, weep, and seek mercy from God, but without understanding what he does; and in this tempest of agitation, of remorse, of pains and terrors, he will pass to the other life. *The people shall be troubled, and they shall pass.*[94] A certain author says that the prayers, the wailings, and promises of dying sinners are like the tears and promises of a man assailed by an enemy who points a dagger to his throat to take away his life. Miserable the man who takes to his bed at enmity with God, and passes from the bed of sickness to eternity.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O wounds of Jesus! You are my hope. I should despair of the pardon of my sins, and of my eternal salvation, did I not behold Thee, the fountain of mercy and grace, through which a God has shed all his blood, to wash my soul from the sins which I have committed. I adore Thee, then, O holy wounds! And trust in Thee. I detest a thousand times, and curse those vile pleasures by which I have displeased my Redeemer, and have miserably lost his friendship. Looking then at Thee, I raise up my hopes and turn my affections to Thee. My dear Jesus, Thou deservest to be loved by all men, and to be loved with their whole heart. I have so grievously offended Thee. I have despised Thy love; but, notwithstanding my sinfulness, Thou hast borne with me so long, and invited me to pardon with so much mercy. Ah, my Saviour, do not permit me evermore to offend Thee, and to merit my own damnation. O God! What torture should I feel in hell at the sight of Thy blood and of the great mercies Thou hast shown me. I love Thee and will always love Thee. Give me holy perseverance. Detach my heart from all love which is not for Thee, and confirm in me a true desire, a true resolution henceforth, to love only Thee, my Sovereign Good. O Mary, my Mother! Dram me to God, and obtain for me the grace to belong entirely to Him before I die.

SECOND POINT

ANGUISH OF THE DYING SINNER

The poor dying sinner will be assailed, not by one, but by many causes of distress and anguish. On the one hand, the devils will torment him. At death there horrid enemies exert all their strength to secure the perdition of the soul that is about to leave this world. They know that they have but little time to gain it, and that if they lose it at death, they shall lose it forever. *The Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.*[95] The dying man will be tempted, not by one, but by innumerable devils, who will labour for his damnation. *Their houses shall be filled with serpents.*[96] One will say: Fear not; you will recover. Another: You have been deaf to the inspiration of God for so many years, and do you now expect that he will have mercy on you? Another will ask: How can you make satisfaction for all the injuries you have done to the property and character of your neighbours? Another: Do you not see that your confessions have been null, that they have been made without sorrow or a purpose of amendment? How will you now be able to repair them?

On the other hand, the dying man will see himself surrounded by his sins. *Evils,* says David, *shall catch the unjust man unto destruction.*[97] These sins, says St Bernard, like so many satellites, shall keep him in chains, and shall say unto him: “We are your works; we shall not desert you.”[98] “We are your offspring; we will not leave you; we will accompany you to the other world, and will present ourselves with you to the Eternal Judge. The dying man will then wish to shake off such enemies; but, to get rid of them, he must detest them, he must return sincerely to God. His mind is darkened, and his heart hardened. *A hard heart shall fare evil at the last; and he that loveth* *danger shall perish in it.*[99] St Bernard says that the man who has been obstinate in sin during life, will make efforts, but without success, to get out of the state of damnation; and that, overwhelmed by his own malice, he will end his life in the same unhappy state. Having loved sin till death, he has also loved the danger of damnation. Hence the Lord will justly permit him to perish in that danger in which he has voluntary lived till the end of his life. St Augustine says that he who is abandoned by sin before he abandons it, will scarcely detest it as he ought; because what he will then do will be done through necessity.[100]

Miserable the sinner that hardens his heart and resists the divine calls: *His heart shall be as hard as a stone and as firm as a smith's anvil.*[101] Instead of yielding to the graces and inspirations of God, and being softened by them, the unhappy man becomes more obdurate, as the anvil is hardened by repeated strokes of the hammer. In punishment of his resistance to the divine calls, he will find his heart in the same miserable state at the very hour of death, at the moment of passing into eternity. *A hard heart shall fare evil at the last.*[102] Sinners, says the Lord, you have, for the love of creatures, turned your back upon me. *They have turned their back upon me, and not their face; and in the time of their affliction they will say: Arise, and deliver us. Where are the gods thou hast made thee? Let them arise and deliver thee.*[103] They will have recourse to God at death; but He will say to them: Why do you invoke me now? Call on creatures to assist you; for they have been your gods. The Lord will address them in this manner, because, in seeking Him, they do not sincerely wish to be converted. St Jerome says that he holds, and that he has learned from experience, that they who have to the end led a bad life, will never die a good death.[104]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dear Saviour! Assist me; do not abandon me. I see my whole soul covered with the wounds of sin, my passion attack me violently, my bad habits weigh me down. I cast myself at They feet; have pity on me and deliver me from so many evils. In Thee, O Lord! I have hoped: may I not be confounded forever.[105] Do not suffer a soul that trusts in Thee to be lost. *Deliver not up to beasts the souls that confess to Thee.*[106] I am sorry for having offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness. I have done evil, I confess my guilt. I wish to amend my life, whatsoever it may cost me. But if Thou dost not help my by Thy grace, I am lost. Receive O my Jesus! the rebel who has so grievously outraged Thy majesty. Remember that I have been purchased by Thy blood and Thy life. Through the merit then of Thy Passion and death, receive me into Thy arms, and give me holy perseverance. I was lost, Thou hast called me back: I will resist no longer: to Thee I consecrate myself; bind me to Thy love, and do not permit me evermore to lose Thee by losing Thy grace again. My Jesus! Do not permit it. Mary, my Queen! Do not permit it: obtain for me death and a thousand deaths, rather than that I should again forfeit the grace of Thy Son.

THIRD POINT

WE MUST SEEK GOD WHEN WE CAN FIND HIM

It is a marvellous thing that God unceasingly threatens sinners with an unhappy death. *Then they shall call upon me, and I will not hear.*[107] *Will God hear his cry when distress shall come upon him?*[108] *I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock.*[109] According to St Gregory, God laughs when he is unwilling to show mercy.[110] *Revenge is mine, and I will repay them in due time.*[111]

The Lord pronounces the same threats in so many other places: and sinners live in peace as securely as if God had certainly promised to give them, at death, pardon and paradise. It is true that at whatsoever hour the sinner is converted to God promises to pardon him. But He has not promised that sinners will be converted at death: on the contrary, he has often protested that they who live in sin shall die in sin. *You shall die in your sins.*[112] He has declared that they who seek him at death shall not find Him.[113] *You shall seek me, and shall not find me.*[114] We must, therefore, seek God while he may be found.[115] A time shall come when it will not be in our power to find Him. Poor blind sinners! They put off their conversion till death, when there will be no more time for repentance. “The wicked,” says Oleaster, “have never learned to do good unless when the time for doing good is no more.”[116] God wills the salvation of all: but He takes vengeance on obstinate sinners.

Should any man in a state of sin be seized with apoplexy and be deprived of his sense, what sentiments of compassion would be excited in all who should see him die without the sacraments and without signs of repentance! And how great should be their delight, if he made acts of sorrow for his sins! But is not he a fool who has time to repent and prefers to continue in sin? Or who returns to sin, and exposes himself to the danger of being cut off by death without the sacraments, and without repentance? A sudden death excites terror in all; and still how many expose themselves to the danger of dying suddenly, and of dying in sin?

Weight and balance are the judgements of the Lord.[117] We keep no account of the graces which God bestows upon us; but he keeps an account of them, he measures them; and when he sees them despised to a certain degree, he then abandons the sinner in his sin, and takes him out of life in that unhappy state. Miserable the man who defers his conversion till death. St Augustine says: “The repentance which is sought from a sick man is infirm.”[118] St Jerome teaches, that of a hundred thousand sinners who continue in sin till death, scarcely one will be saved.[119] St Vincent Ferrer writes that it is a greater miracle to bring such sinners to salvation, than to raise the dead to life.[120]

What sorrow, what repentance, can be expected at death from the man who has loved sin till that moment? Bellarmine relates that when he exhorted to contrition a certain person whom he assisted at death, the dying man said that he did not know what was meant by contrition. The holy Bishop endeavoured to explain it to him; but he said: *Father, I do not understand you; these things are too high for me.* He died in that state, leaving as the venerable Cardinal has written, sufficiently evident signs of his damnation. St Augustine says that by a just chastisement the sinner who has forgotten God during life shall forget himself at death.[121]

Be not deceived, says the Apostle, God is not mocked. For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall he reap corruption.[122] It would be a mockery of God to live in contempt of his laws, and afterwards to reap remuneration and eternal glory. But God is not mocked. What we sow in this life, we reap in the next. For him who sows the forbidden pleasures of the flesh, nothing remains but corruption, misery and eternal death.

Beloved Christian, what is said for others is also applicable to you. Tell me: if you were at the point of death, given over by the physicians, deprived of your senses, and in your last agony, with what fervour would you ask of God another month or week to settle the accounts of your conscience! God at present gives you this time: thank him for it, and apply an immediate remedy to the evil you have done; adopt all the means of finding yourself in the grace of God when death comes; for then there will be no more time to acquire his friendship.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God! Who would have borne with me so patiently as Thou hast? If Thy goodness were not infinite, I would despair of pardon. But I have to deal with a God who has died for my salvation. Thou commandest me to hope, and I will hope. If my sins terrify and condemn me, Thy merits and Thy promise encourage me. Thou hast promised the life of Thy grace to all who return to Thee. *Return ye and live.*[123] Thou hast promised to embrace him who is converted to Thee. *Turn ye to me, and I will turn to you.*[124] Thou hast said that Thou knowest not how to despise a contrite and humble heart.[125] Behold me, O Lord: I return to Thee; I acknowledge that I deserve a thousand hells: I am sorry for having offended Thee. I firmly promise never again to offend Thee voluntarily, and to love Thee forever. Ah! Do not suffer me any longer to be ungrateful to such unbounded goodness. O eternal Father, through the merits of the obedience of Jesus Christ, who died to obey Thee, grant that I may till death be obedient to all Thy wishes. I love Thee, O Sovereign Good! And through the love which I bear Thee, I desire to obey Thee. Give me holy perseverance, give me Thy love; I ask nothing more. Mary, my Mother! Intercede for me.

Consideration VII

SENTIMENTS OF DYING CHRISTIAN, WHO HAS BEEN CARELESS ABOUT THE DUTIES OF RELIGION AND HAS THOUGHT BUT LITTLE OF DEATH

“Take order with thy house; for thou shalt die, and shalt not live.”—*Isa.*xxxviii.I.

FIRST POINT

SAD STATE OF THE WORLDLING AT DEATH

IMAGINE yourself at the bedside of a negligent Christian, who is overpowered by sickness, and has but a few hours to live. Behold him oppressed by pains, by swoons, by suffocation, by want of breadth, by cold perspirations, his reason so impaired, that he feels but little, understands little, and can speak but little. The greatest of all his miseries is, that though at the point of death, instead of thinking of his soul and of preparing accounts for eternity, be fixes all his thoughts on physicians, on the remedies by which he may be rescued from sickness, and from the pains which will soon put an end of life. “They are unable to have any other thought of themselves,”[126] says St Laurence Justinian, speaking of the condition of negligent Christians at the hour of death. They can think only of themselves. Surely his relatives and friends will admonish the dying Christian of his danger? No; there is not one among all his relatives and friends who has the courage to announce to him the news of death, and to advise him to receive the last sacraments. Through fear of offending him, thy all refuse to inform him of his danger—O my God! From this moment I thank Thee, that at death I shall, through Thy grace, be assisted by my beloved brothers of my Congregations, who will then have no other interest than that of my eternal salvation, and will all help me to die well.

But though he is not admonished of his approaching death, the poor sick man, seeing the family in disorder, the medical consultations repeated, the remedies multiplied, frequent and violent, is filled with confusion and terror. Assaulted by fears, remorse and distrust, he says within himself: Perhaps the end of my days has arrived. But what will be his feelings when he is told that death is at hand? “Take order with thy house’ for thou shalt die, and shalt not live.”[127] What pain will he feel in hearing these words: Your illness is mortal: it is necessary to receive the last sacraments, to unite yourself to God, and to prepare to bid farewell to the world. What! Exclaims the sick man; must I take leave of all—of my house, my villa, my relatives, friends, conversations, games and amusements? Yes, you must take leave of all. The lawyer is already come, and writes this last farewell: I bequeath such-a-thing and such-a-thing, etc. And what does he takes away with him? Nothing but a miserable rag, which will soon rot with him in the grave.

Oh! With what melancholy and agitation will the dying man be seized at the sight of the tears of the servants, at the silence of his friends, who have not courage to speak in his presence. But his greatest anguish will arise from the remorse of his conscience which in that tempest will be rendered more sensible by the remembrance of the disorderly life he has until then led, in spite of so many calls and lights from God, of so many admonitions from spiritual Fathers, and of so many resolutions made, but never executed, or afterward neglected. He will then say: O unhappy me! I have had so many lights from God, so much time to tranquilise my conscience and have not done so. Behold, I am now arrived at the gate of death. What would it have cost me to have avoided such an occasion of sin, to have broken off such a friendship, to have frequented the tribunal of penance? Ah, very little; but, though they had cost me much pain and labour, I ought to have submitted to every inconvenience in order to save my soul, which is of more importance to me than all the goods of this world. Oh! If I had put into execution the good resolutions which I made on such an occasion; if I had continued the good works which I began at such a time, how happy should I now feel! But these things I have not done, and now there is no more time to do them. The sentiments of dying sinners, who have neglected the care of their souls during life, are those of the damned who mourn in hell over their sins as the cause of their sufferings, but mourn without fruit and without remedy.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Lord! If it were at this moment announced to me that my death was at hand, such would be the painful sentiments that would torture my soul. I thank Thee for giving me this light, and of giving me time to enter into myself. O my God! I will no longer fly from Thee. Thou hast sought after me long enough. I have just reason to fear that Thou wile abandon me, if I now made so bad use of it. I have loved creatures and have not loved Thee, my Creator and Redeemer! who hast given Thy life for the love of me. Instead of loving Thee, how often have I offended, how often have I despised Thee, and turned my back upon Thee! I knew that by such a sin I insulted Thee and still I have committed it. My Jesus! I am sorry for all my sins; they displease me above all things. I wish to change my life. I renounce all the pleasures of the world in order to love and please Thee. O God of my soul! Thou hast given me strong proofs of Thy love. I too would wish before death to give Thee some proofs of my love. From this moment I accept all the infirmities, crosses, insults and offences that I receive from men; give me strength to submit to them with peace. I wish to bear them all for the love of Thee. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness! I love Thee above every good. Increase my love, give me holy perseverance. Mary, my Mother! Pray to Jesus for me.

SECOND POINT

DESIRE OF THE WORLDLING AT DEATH

Oh, how clearly are the truths of faith seen at the hour of death! But then they only serve to increase the anguish of the dying Christian who has led a bad life, particularly if he has been consecrated to God, and has had greater facilities for serving him, more time for exercises of piety, more good examples and more inspirations. O God! what torture will he fell in thinking and saying: I have admonished others, and my life has been worse than theirs? I have left the world, and have cherished attachment to worldly pleasures and vanities. What remorse will he fell in thinking that with the lights which he had received from God a pagan would become a saint! With what pain will his soul be racked when he remembers that he ridiculed in others certain practices of piety, as if they were weakness of mind; and that he praised certain worldly maxims of self-esteem, or of self-love, such as: It is necessary to seek our own advancement; We ought to avoid suffering, and indulge in every amusement within our reach.

The desire of the wicked shall perish.[128] How ardently shall we desire at death the time which we now squander away? In his dialogues, St Gregory relates that a certain rich man, called Crisorius, who had led a wicked life, seeing at death the devils who came to carry him off, exclaimed: Give me time, give me time until tomorrow. They replied: O fool! Do you now seek for time? You have had so much time, but have wasted it and have spent it in committing sin; and now you seek for time. Time is now no more. The unhappy man continued to cry out and call for assistance. To his son Maximus, a monk, who was present, he said: O my son, assist me! O Maximus, come to my aid! With his face on fire, he flung himself furiously from one side of the bed to the other; and in that state of agitation, screaming aloud, like one in despaired, he breathed forth his unhappy soul.

Alas! During this life, these fools love their folly; but at death they open their eyes, and confess that they have been fools. But this only serves to increase their fear of repairing past evils; and dying in this state; they leave their salvation very uncertain. My brother, now that you are reading this point, I imagine that you too say: This is indeed true. But if this is true, your folly and misfortune will be still greater, if after knowing these truths during life, you neglect to apply a remedy in time. This very point which you have read will be a sword of sorrow for you at death.

Since, then, you now have time to avoid a death so full of terror, begin instantly to repair the past: do not wait for that time in which you can make but little preparation for judgement. Do not wait for another month, nor for another week. Perhaps this light which God in his mercy gives you now may be the last light and the last call for you. It is folly to be unwilling to think of death, which is certain, and on which eternity depends; but it would be still greater folly to reflect on it, and not prepare for judgement. Make now the reflections and resolutions which you would then make; they may be made now with profit—then without fruit; now, with confidence of saving your soul—then, with diffidence as to your salvation. A gentleman who was about to take leave of the court of Charles the Fifth, to live only to God, was asked by the Emperor why he thought of quitting the court. The gentleman answered: To secure salvation, it is necessary that some time spent in penitential works should intervene between a disorderly life and death.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my God! I will no longer abuse Thy mercy. I thank Thee for the light Thou now givest me and I promise to change my life. I see that Thou canst not bear with me any longer. I will not wait until Thou either dost send me to hell, or dost abandon me to a wicked life, which would be a greater punishment than death itself. Behold, I cast myself at Thy feet; receive me into favour. I do not deserve Thy grace; but Thou hast said: *The wickedness of the wicked shall not hurt him in whatsoever day he shall turn from his wickedness.*[129] If then, O my Jesus! I have hitherto offended Thy infinite goodness I now repent with my whole heart, and hope for pardon. I will say with St Anselm: “Ah! Since Thou hast redeemed me by Thy blood, do not permit me to be lost on account of my sins.” Look not on my ingratitude; but have regard to the love which made Thee die for me. If I have lost Thy grace Thou hast not lost the power of restoring it to me. Have mercy on met then, O my dear Redeemer! Pardon me, and give me grace to love Thee; for I purpose henceforth to love nothing but Thee. Among so many possible creatures, Thou hast chosen me to love Thee. I make choice of Thee, O Sovereign Good! to love Thee above every good. Thou goest before me with Thy cross; I am willing to follow Thee with the cross which Thou wilt give me to carry. I embrace every mortification and every pain that comes from Thee. Do not deprive me of Thy grace, and I am content. Mary, my Mother! Obtain for me from God perseverance and the grace to love him; and I ask nothing more.

THIRD POINT

TARDY REGRETS OF A DYING PERSON

The dying man who has neglected the salvation of his soul, will find thorns in everything that is presented to him—thorns in the remembrance of past amusements, rivalries overcome and pomps displayed; thorns in the friends who will visit him, and in whatever their presence shall bring before his mind; thorns in the spiritual Fathers who assist him in turn; thorns in the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Extreme Unction, which he must receive; thorns even in the crucifix which is placed before him. In that sacred image he will read his want of correspondence to the love of a God who died for his salvation.

O fool that I have been! The poor sick man will say, with the lights and opportunities that God has given me; I could have become a saint. I could have led a life of happiness in the grace of God; and after so many years that he gave me, what do I find but torments, distrust, fears, remorse of conscience and accounts to render to God? I shall scarcely save my soul. And when will he say this? When the oil in the lamp is on the point of being consumed, and the scene of this world is about to close forever; when he finds himself in view of two eternities, one happy, the other miserable; when he is near that last gasp on which depends his everlasting bliss or eternal despair, as long as God shall be God. What would he then give for another year, month, or even another week, with the perfect use of his faculties? In the stupefaction, oppression of the chest, and difficulty of breathing, under which he then labours, he can do nothing; he is incapable of reflection, or of applying his mind to the performance of any good act: he is, as it were, shut up in a dark pit of confusion, where he can see nothing but the ruin which threatens him, and which he feels himself unable to avert. He would wish for time; but the assisting priest shall say to him, *Proficiscere;* adjust your accounts as well as you can in the few moments that remain, and depart. Do you not know that death waits for no one, respects no one?

Oh! With what dismay will he then think and say” This morning I am alive; this evening I shall probably be dead! To-day I am in this room; tomorrow I shall be in the grave! And where will my soul be found? With what terror will he be seized when he sees the death candle prepared? When he hears his relatives ordered to withdraw from his apartment, and to return to it no more? When his sight begins to grow dim? Finally, how great will be his alarm and confusion when he sees that, because death is at hand, the candle is lighted? O candle, O candle, how many truths will you then unfold! How different will you make things appear then from what they appear at present! O how clearly will you show the dying sinner that all the goods of this world are vanities, folly and lies? But of what use is it to understand these truths when the time is past of profiting by them?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God! Thou wilt not my death, but that I be converted and live. I thank Thee for having waited for me till now, and I thank Thee for the light which Thou givest me at this moment. I know the error I have committed in preferring to Thy friendship the vile and miserable goods for which I have despised Thee. I repent and am sorry with my whole heart for having done Thee so great an injury. Ah! Do not cease, during the remainder of my life, to assist me by Thy light and grave to know and to do all that I ought to do in order to amend my life. What shall it profit me to know these truths when I shall be deprived of the time in which they may be reduced to practice? *Deliver not up to beasts the souls that confess to Thee.*[130] When the devil tempts me to offend Thee again, ah! I entreat Thee, my Jesus, through the merits of Thy Passion to stretch forth Thy hand and to preserve me from falling into sin, and from becoming again the slave of my enemies. Grant that in all temptations I may have recourse to Thee, and that I may not cease to recommend myself to Thee as long as the temptations continue. Thy blood is my hope and Thy goodness is my love. I love Thee, my God, worthy of infinite love; grant that I may always love Thee. Make known to me the things from which I ought to detach my heart from them: but give me strength to execute this desire. O Queen of heaven! O Mother of God! Pray for me, a sinner. Obtain for me the grace that in all temptations I may never omit to have recourse to Jesus and to thee, who, by thy intercession, preserves from falling into sin all who invoke thee.

Consideration VIII

THE DEATH OF THE JUST

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.”—Ps.cxv.15.

FIRST POINT

THE DEATH OF THE JUST IS A REST

VIEWED according to the senses, death excites fear and terror; but viewed with the eyes of faith, it is consoling and desirable. To sinners it appears full of terror; but to the saints it is amiable and precious. “It is precious,” says St Bernard, “as the end of labours, the consummation of victory, the gate of life.”[131] It is the end of toils and labours. *Man*, says Job, *born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries.*[132] Behold, a picture of our life; it is short and all full of miseries, of infirmities, of fears, and of passions. What, says Seneca, do worldlings, who desire a long life, seek, but a continuation of torments?[133] What, says St Augustine, is a prolongation of life but a prolongation of suffering?[134] Yes; for, as St Ambrose tells us, the present life is given us, not for repose, but that we may labour and by our toils, merit eternal glory.[135] Hence Tertullian has justly said, that when God abridges life he abridges pain.[136] Hence though man has been condemned to death in punishment of sin, still the miseries of this life are so great, that, according to St Ambrose, death appears to be a remedy and relief, rather than a chastisement.[137] God pronounces happy all who die in his grace, because they terminate their labours and go to repose. *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours.*[138]

The torments which afflict sinners at death do not disturb the peace of the saints. The souls of the just are in the hands of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them.[139] That *proficiscere* which is so full of terror to worldlings does not alarm the saints. The just man is not afflicted at the thought of being obliged to take leave of the goods of the earth, for he has always kept his heart detached from them. During life he has constantly said to the Lord: *Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.*[140] Happy you, said the Apostle to his disciples, who have been robbed of your goods for the sake of Jesus Christ. *You took with joy the being stripped of your goods, knowing that you had a better and a lasting substance.*[141] The saint is not afflicted at bidding an eternal farewell to honours, for he always hated them, and considered them to be what they really are—smoke and vanity. He is not afflicted in leaving relatives, for he loved them only in God, and at death he recommends them to his heavenly Father, who loves them more than he does; and having a secure confidence of salvation, he expects to be better able to assist them from constantly than on this earth. In a word, he who has constantly said during life, *My God and my all,* continues to repeat it with greater consolation and greater tenderness at the hour of death.

He who dies loving God, is not disturbed by the pains of death; but, seeing that he is now at the end of life, and that he has no more time to suffer for God, of to offer him other proofs of his live, he accepts these pains with joy. With affection and peace he offers to God these last moments of life, and feels consoled in uniting the sacrifice of his death to the sacrifice which Jesus Christ offered for him on the Cross to his eternal Father. Thus he dies happily, saying: In peace in the self-same I will sleep and I will rest.[142] Oh! How great the peace of the Christian who dies abandoned and reposing in the arms of Jesus Christ, who has loved us to death, and has condescended to suffer so cruel a death in order to obtain for us a death full of sweetness and consolation.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my beloved Jesus! Who, to obtain for me a happy death, hast freely submitted to so painful a death on Calvary, when shall I see Thee? The first time I shall behold Thee, I shall see Thee as my judge in the very place in which I shall expire. What shall I then say? What wilt Thou say to me? I will not wait till that moment to think of what I shall say; I will meditate on it now. I will say to Thee: My Redeemer! Thou art the God who hast died for me. I have hitherto offended Thee; I have been ungrateful to Thee; I did not deserve pardon but afterward, assisted by Thy grace, I have entered into myself, and during the remainder of my life, I have bewailed my sins, and Thou hast pardoned me. Pardon me again, now that I am at Thy feet, and give me a general absolution of all my sins. I did not deserve ever again to love Thee, because I have despised Thy love; but Thou in Thy mercy hast drawn my heart to Thee, so that if I have not loved Thee as Thou deservest, I have at least loved Thee above all things, and have left all to please Thee. I see that Paradise and the possession of Thy divinity in Thy kingdom is too much for me; but I cannot live at a distance from Thee, now, especially after Thou hast shown me Thy amiable and beautiful countenance. I therefore ask for Paradise, not to enjoy greater delights, but to love Thee more perfectly. Send me to Purgatory as long as Thou pleasest. Defiled as I am at present, I do not wish to enter into the land of purity, and to see myself among those pure souls. Send me to be purified; but do not banish me forever from Thy presence. I shall be content to be one day, whenever Thou pleasest, called to Paradise to sing Thy mercies for all eternity. Ah, my beloved Judge! raise Thy hand and bless me; tell me that I am Thine, and that Thou art and shalt be forever mine. Behold, I go to a distance from Thee; I go into fire; but I go in peace, because I go to love Thee, my Redeemer, my God and my all! I am content to go; but during my absence from Thee, I go, O Lord! To count the moments that will elapse before Thou callest me. Have mercy on a soul that loves Thee with all its power, and that sighs to see Thee, that it may love Thee better.

This I hope, O my Jesus! to say to Thee at death. I entreat Thee to give me the grace to live in such a manner that I may then say to Thee what I have now thought. Give me holy perseverance, give me Thy love. Assist me, O Mary! Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.

SECOND POINT

THE DEATH OF THE JUST IS A VICTORY

God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more.[143] Then, at death the Lord will wipe away from the eyes of his servants all the tears that they have shed in this world, where they live in the midst of pains, of fears, of dangers, and of combats with hell. The greatest consolation which a soul that has loved God will experience in hearing the news of death, will arise from the thought that it will soon be delivered from the many dangers of offending God, to which it is exposed in this life, from so many troubles of conscience, and from so many temptations of the devil. The present life is an unceasing warfare with hell, in which we are in continual danger of losing ours souls and God. St Ambrose says that in this life we walk among snares; we walk continually amid the snares of enemies, who lie in wait to deprive us of the life of grace. It was this danger that made St Peter of Alcantara say at death to a religious who, in attending the saint, accidentally touched him: “Brother, remove, remove from me; for I am still alive, and am still in danger of being lost.” The thought of being freed by death from the danger of sin consoled St Teresa, and made her rejoice as often as she heard the clock strike, that another hour of the combat was passed. Hence she would say: “In each moment of life I may sin and lose God.” Hence, the news of approaching death filled the saints with consolation; because they knew that their struggles and dangers were soon to have an end, and that they would soon be in secure possession of that happy lot in which they could never more lose God.

It is related in the lives of the Fathers, that one of them who was very old, when dying, smiled while the others wept. Being asked why he smiled, he said: ‘Why do you weep at seeing me go to rest?”[144] Likewise St Catharine of Sienna in her last moments said: “Rejoice with me: for I quit this land of pains and go to a place of peace.” If, says St Cyprian, you lived in a house whose walls, and roof and floors are tottering, and threatened destruction, how ardently would you desire to fly from it! In this life everything menace the ruin of the soul; the world, hell, the passions, the rebellious senses, all draw us to sin and eternal death. *Who,* exclaimed the Apostle, *shall deliver me from the body of this death?*[145] Oh! How great will be the joy of the soul in hearing these words: “Come, my spouse, depart from that land of tears, from the dens of lions who seek to devour you, and to rob you of the divine grace.[146] Hence St Paul, sighing for death said that Jesus Christ was his only life; and therefore he esteemed death his greatest gain, because by death he acquired that life which never ends. *To me, to live in Christ, and to die is gain.*[147]

In taking a soul while it is in the state of grace out of this world, where it may change its will and lose his friendship, God bestows on it a great favour. *He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding.*[148] Happy in this life is the man that lives in union with God; but, as the sailor is not secure until he has arrived at the port and escaped the tempest, so the soul cannot enjoy complete happiness until it has left this world in the grace of God. “Praise,” says St Maximus, “the felicity of the sailor; but not until he has reached the port.”[149] Now, if at his approach to the port the sailor rejoices, how much greater ought to be the joy and gladness of a Christian who is at the point of securing eternal salvation.

Moreover, it is impossible in this life to avoid all venial sins. For, says the Holy Ghost, a just man shall fall seven times.[150] He who quits this life ceases to offend God. “For,” says St Ambrose, “what is death but the burial of vices?”[151] This consideration makes the souls that love God long for death. The Venerable Vincent Caraffa consoled himself at death, saying: “By ceasing to live, I cease forever to offend God.” And St Ambrose said: “Why do we desire this life, in which, the longer we live, the more we are loaded with sin?”[152] He who dies in the grace of God can never more offend him, says the same holy doctor.[153] Hence, the Lord praises the dead more than any man living, though he be a saint.[154] A certain spiritual man gave directions that the person who should bring him the news of death, should say: “Console yourself; for the time has arrived when you will no longer offend God.”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Into Thy hands, I commend my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.[155] Ah, my sweet Redeemer! What should become of me if Thou hadst deprived me of life when I was far from Thee? I should now be in hell, where I could never love Thee. I thank Thee for not having abandoned me, and for having bestowed on me so many great graces in order to gain my heart. I am sorry for having offended Thee. I love Thee above all things. Ah! I entreat Thee to make me always sensible of the evil I have done in despising Thee, and of the love which Thy infinite goodness merits. I love Thee; and I desire to die soon, if such be Thy will, that I may be freed from the danger of ever again losing Thy grace, and that I may be secure of loving Thee forever. Ah, my beloved Jesus! During these remaining years of my life, give me strength to do something for Thee before I die. Give me strength against all temptations, and against my passions, but particularly against the passion which has hitherto most violently drawn me to sin. Give me patience in all infirmities, and under all the injuries which I may receive from men. Now, for the love of Thee, pardon all who have shown me any contempt, and I beg of Thee to bestow upon them the graces which they stand in need of. Give me strength to be more diligent in avoiding even venial faults, about which I have been hitherto negligent. My Saviour! Assist me. I hope for all graces through Thy merits. O Mary, my Mother, and my hope! I place unbounded confidence in thee.

THIRD POINT

THE DEATH OF THE JUST IS THE ENTRANCE TO LIFE

Death is not only the end of labours, but it is also the gate of life, says St Bernard.[156] He who wishes to see God must necessarily pass through this gate. *This is the gate of the Lord; the just shall enter into it.*[157] St Jerome entreated death to open its gates to him. “Death, my sister, if you do not open the door to me, I cannot enter to enjoy my Lord.”[158] Seeing in his house a picture which represented a skeleton with a scythe in the hand, St Charles Borromeo sent for a painter, and ordered him to erase the scythe, and to paint a golden key, in order that he might be more and more inflamed with a desire of death, which opens Paradise, and admits us to the vision of God.

If, says St John Chrysostom, a king had prepared for one of his subjects apartments in his own palace, but for the present obliged him to live in a tent, how ardently would the vassal sigh for the day on which he should leave the tent to enter into the palace.[159] In this life the soul, being in the body, is as it were confined in a prison which it must leave in order to enter the celestial palace. Hence, David prayed to the Lord to bring his soul out of prison.[160] “As if detained by necessity, he,” says St Ambrose, “begs to be dismissed." The Apostle desired the same grace when he said: *I am straitened, having a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.*[161]

How great was the joy of the cup-bearer of Pharaoh when he heard from Joseph that he should soon be rescued from the prison and restored to his situation! And will not a soul that loves God exult with gladness at hearing that it will soon be released from the prison of this earth, and go to enjoy God? "*While we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord.*"[162] While the soul is united to the body, it is at a distance from the vision of God, as if in a strange land, and excluded from its true country. Hence, according to St Bruno, the departure of the soul from the body should not be called death, but the beginning of life.[163]

Hence, the death of the saints is called their birthday; because at death they are born tot hat life of bliss which will never end. St Anthanasius says: "To the just, death is only a passage to eternal life."[164] "O amiable death," says St Augustine, "who will not desire thee, who art the end of evils, the close of toils, the beginning of everlasting repose?[165] Hence the holy Doctor frequently prayed for death, that he might see God.[166]

The sinner, as St Cyprian says, has just reason to fear death; because he will pass from temporal to eternal death.[167] But he who is in the state of grace, and hopes to pass from death to life, fears not death. In the life of St John the Almoner, we read that a certain rich man recommended to the prayers of the saint an only son, and gave the saint a large sum of money to be distributed in alms, for the purpose of obtaining from God a long life for his son. The son died soon after; but when the father complained of his death, God sent an angel to say to him: "You sought for your son a long life; he now enjoys eternal life in heaven." This is, as was promised by the Prophet Osee, the grace which Jesus Christ merited for us. *O death, I shall be thy death.*[168] By dying for us, Jesus has changed death into life. When Pionius, the Martyr was brought to the stake, he was asked by those who conducted him, how he could go to death with so much joy. "You err," replied the saint: "I go not to death, but to life."[169] Thus, also, the mother of the youthful St Symphorian exhorted him to martyrdom, "My son," said she, "life is not taken away from you; it is only exchanged for a better one."

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O God of my soul! I have hitherto dishonoured Thee by turning my back upon Thee; but Thy Son has honoured Thee by offering to Thee the sacrifice of his life on the cross. Through the honour which Thy beloved Son has given Thee, pardon the dishonour which I have done Thee. I am sorry, O Sovereign Good! For having offended Thee; and I promise henceforth to love nothing but Thee. From Thee I hope for salvation; whatever good is in me at present is the fruit of Thy grace; to Thee I ascribe it all. *By the grace of God, I am what I am.*[170] If I have hitherto dishonoured Thee, I hope to honour Thee for eternity by blessing and praising Thy mercy forever. I feel a great desire to love Thee. This Thou hast given me: I thank Thee for it, O, my love! Continue, continue the aid which Thou hast begun to give me. I hope to be henceforth Thine, and entirely Thine. And what greater pleasure can I enjoy than that of pleasing Thee, my Lord! Who art so amiable, and who hast loved me so tenderly! O my God! I ask only love, love, love: and hope always to ask of Thee, love love, until, dying in Thy love, I reach the kingdom of love, where, without evermore asking it, I shall be full of love, and never for a single moment cease to love Thee for all eternity, and with all my strength. Mary, my Mother! Who lovest thy God so intensely, and who desirest so vehemently to see him loved, obtain for me the grace to love him ardently in this life, that I may love him ardently forever in the next.

Consideration IX

PEACE OF THE JUST AT THE HOUR OF DEATH

> “The souls of the just are in the hands of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise, they seemed to die; but they are in peace”—*Wis.*iii. I, etc.

FIRST POINT

THE JUST HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR AT THE HOUR OF DEATH

THE souls of the just are in the hands of God. If God holds fast in his hands the souls of the just, who can snatch them from him? It is true that hell does not cease to tempt and attack even the saints at the hour of death; but is also true that God does not cease to assist, and to multiply helps to his faithful servants, whenever their danger is increased. *There,* says St Ambrose, *There is greater aid, where there is greater peril, because God is a helper in due time.*[171] David also assures us in the Psalms: *A helper in time of tribulation.*[172] The servant of Eliseus was struck with terror when he saw the city encompassed with enemies; but the saint inspired him with courage, saying: *Fear not: for there are more with us than with them.*[173] He then showed him an army of angels sent by God to defend the city. The devil will come to tempt the dying Christian; but his angel-guardian will come to strengthen him: his holy advocates will come—St Michael, whom God has appointed to defend his faithful servants in their last combat with hell, will come; the divine Mother will come to chase away the devils, and to protect her servant; above all, Jesus Christ will come to guard against every temptation of hell, the innocent or penitent sheep for whose salvation he has given his life. He will give that confidence and strength of which the soul shall stand in need in that last struggle with its enemies. Hence, full of courage, it will say: *The Lord became my helper.*[174] *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*[175] God, says Origen, is more solicitous for our salvation than the devil is for our perdition; for the Lord loves our souls far more than the devil hates them.[176]

God is faithful, says the Apostle; he does not permit us to be tempted above our strength.[177] But you will say: Many saints have died with great fear of being lost. I answer: we have but few examples of persons who, after leading a holy life, died with fears for their eternal salvation. Belluacensis says that, to purify them at the hour of death from some defect, God sometimes permits holy souls to be disturbed by such fears.[178] But generally the servants of God have died with a joyful countenance. At death the judgement of God excites fear in all; but if sinners pass from terror to despair, the saints rise from fear to confidence. St Antonine relates that in a severe illness, St Bernard trembled through fear of judgement, and was tempted to despair. But thinking of the merits of Jesus Christ, he drove away all fear, saying to his Saviour: Thy wounds are my merits.[179] St Hilarion also was seized with fear; but he said: “Go forth, my soul; what do you fear? For near seventy years you have served Christ; and are you now afraid of death?”[180] As if he said: My soul, what do you fear? Have you not served a God who is faithful, and knows not how to abandon at death the Christian who has been faithful to him during life? Fr Joseph Scamacca, of the Society of Jesus, being asked if in dying he felt confidence in God, said: “Have I served Mahomet, that I should now doubt of the goodness of my God, or of his desire to save me?”

Should the though of having offended God at some time of our life molest us at death, let us remember that he has protested that he forgets the iniquities of all penitent sinners. *If the wicked do penance—I will not remember all his iniquities.*[181] But you may ask: How can I be secure of having received pardon from God? St Basil asks the same question: “How can any one be certain that God has forgiven his sins?”[182] “He can be certain of pardon,” answered the saint, “if he say: I have hated and abhorred iniquity.”[183] He who detests sin, can rest secure of having obtained pardon from God. The heart of man cannot exit without loving some object; it must love creatures or God. If it loves not creatures, it loves God. And who are they that love God? All who observe His commands. *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.*[184] He then who dies in the observance of the commandments, dies in the love of God; and he that loves fears not, *Charity casteth out fear.*[185]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my Jesus! When will the day arrive on which I can say: My God! I can never lose Thee? When shall I see Thee face to face, and be sure of loving Thee with all my strength for eternity? Ah, my Sovereign Good, my only love! As long as I have life, I shall be in danger of offending Thee and of losing Thy grace. There has been an unhappy time when I did not love Thee, but, on the contrary, despise Thy love. I am sorry for it with my whole soul, and hope that Thou hast already pardoned me. I now love Thee with my whole heart, and desire to do all in my power to love and please Thee. But I am still in danger or refusing Thee my love, and of again turning my back upon Thee. Ah, my Jesus, my life and my treasure! Do not permit it. Should this misfortune ever happen to me, take me this moment out of life by the most cruel of deaths; I am content to suffer such a death, and I entreat Thee to send me such a death, sooner than permit me ever to cease to love Thee. Eternal Father! Fort he love of Jesus Christ, do not abandon me to so great an evil. Chastise me as Thou wishest, I deserve and accept any chastisement Thou pleasest to inflict upon me: but preserve me from the punishment of seeing myself deprived of Thy grace and of Thy love. My Jesus! Recommend me to Thy Father. Mary, my Mother! Recommend me to Thy Son; obtain for me perseverance in his friendship and the grace to love Him; and then do with me what thou pleasest.

SECOND POINT

THE JUST DIE IN A SWEET PEACE

The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die; . . . but they are in peace.[186] In the eyes of the unwise the servants of God appear to die, as worldlings do, in sorrow and with reluctance. But God knows well how to console his children in their last moments; and even in the midst of the pains of death he infuses into their souls certain sweetnesses, as foretastes of Paradise, which he will soon bestow upon them. As they who die in sin begin to experience on the bed of death certain foretastes of hell, certain remorse, terrors, and fits of despair; so, on the other hand, the saints, by the frequent acts of divine love which they then make, by their ardent desire and firm hope of soon possessing God, begin to feel that peace which they will afterwards fully enjoy in heaven. To the saints death is not a punishment, but a reward. *When He shall give sleep to His beloved, behold the inheritance of the Lord.*[187] The death of the Christian that loves God is called, not death, but sleep, thus he shall be able to say less, *In peace in the self-same I will sleep and I will rest.*[188]

Fr Suarez died with so much peace, that in his last moments he exclaimed: “I could never imagine that death would be so sweet.”[189] When Cardinal Baronius was advised by his physician not to fix his thoughts so much on death, he said: “Perhaps you think I am afraid of dead. I fear it not; but on the contrary, I love it.” In going to death for the faith, the Cardinal of Rochester, as Saunders relates, put on his best clothes, saying that he was going to a nuptial feast. Hence at the sight of the scaffold he threw away his stuff, and said: “O my feet! Walk fast; we are not far from Paradise.”[190] Before death he intoned the “Te Deum,” to thank God for giving him the grace to die a martyr for the holy faith; and, full of joy, he laid his head on the block. St Francis of Assisi began to sing at the hour of death, and invited the brethren to join him. Br Elias said to him: “Father, at death we ought rather to weep than to sing.” “But,” replied the saint, “I cannot abstain from singing; for I see that I shall soon go to enjoy my God.” A young nun of the order of St Teresa, in her last illness said to her sisters in religion who stood round her bed in tears. “O God! Why do you weep? I go to enjoy my Jesus. If you love me, rejoice with me.”

Fr Granada relates that a certain sportsman found a solitary infected with leprosy, singing in his last agony. “How,” said the sportsman, “can you sing in such a state?” “Brother,” replied the hermit, “between me and God there is nothing but the wall of this body. I now see that my flesh is falling off—that the prison wilt soon be destroyed, and that I shall go to see my God. It is for this reason that I rejoice and sing.” The desire of seeing God made St Ignatius the Martyr say that if the wild beasts should not take away his life he would provoke them to devour him.[191] St Catharine of Genoa could not bear to hear death called a misfortune. Hence she would say: “Oh! beloved death, in what a mistaken light are you viewed! Why do you not come to me? I call on you night and day.” St Teresa desired death so vehemently that she regarded the continuation of life as death: hence she composed the celebrated hymn, *I die because I do not die.* Such is death to the saints.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my supreme good, my God! If for the past I have not loved Thee, I now turn to Thee with my whole soul. I take leave of all creatures, and chose Thee, my most amiable Lord for the sole object of my love. Tell me what Thou wishest from me: I will do all Thou desirest. I have offended Thee enough. I wish to spend all the remaining moments of life in pleasing Thee. Give me grace to compensate by my love my past ingratitude, which has continued to this moment. I deserve to burn in the fire of hell for so many years; Thou hast sought after me, and hast drawn me to Thyself. Make me now burn with the fire of Thy holy love. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness! Thou justly claimest all the affections of my heart; for Thou hast loved me more than all others have loved me. Thou alone deservest my love; Thou only do I wish to love. I desire to do everything in my power to please Thee. Do with me whatsoever Thou wishest. For me it is enough to love Thee and to be loved by Thee. Mary, my Mother! Assist me; pray to Jesus for me.

THIRD POINT

THE JUST IN DYING HAVE A FORETASTE OF CELESTIAL JOY

And how can he fear death, says St Cyprian, who hopes to receive a kingly crown in Paradise! “Let us not be afraid to be put to death when we are certain that we shall be crowned after death.”[192] How can he fear death when he knows that by dying in the state of grace his body will become immortal? *This moral must put on immortality.*[193] He that loves God and desires to see Him, regards life as a punishment and death as a source of joy, says St Augustine.[194] And St Thomas of Villanova says that death, if it fins a man sleeping, comes like a thief, robs him, kills him, and casts him into the pit of hell. But if it finds him watching, it comes as an ambassador from God, and salutes him, saying: “The Lord expects you to the nuptial feast: come; I will conduct you to the happy kingdom for which you sigh."[195]

Oh! With joy does he expect death who finds himself in the grace of God, and hopes soon to see Jesus Christ, and to hear from him these consoling words: *Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many.*[196] Oh, what consolation will he then receive from his works of penance, his prayers, his detachment from earthly goods and from all he has done for God! *Say to the just man, that it is well; for he shall eat the fruit of his doing.*[197] Then he who has loved God will taste the fruit of all his holy works. Hence, in hearing that a religious, his friend, died in sentiments of fervent piety, Fr Hyppolitus Durazzo, of the Society of Jesus, wept not, but exulted with joy and gladness. But, says, St John Chrysostom, would it not be most unreasonable to believe that heaven is eternal, and to pity those who go to that kingdom of delights?[198] What special consolation will the just man receive at the hour of death from the devotions performed in honour of the Mother of God, from the Rosaries he has recited, from his visits to her image, from his fasts on Saturdays, from his frequent attendance at her Confraternities! Mary is called the faithful Virgin. Oh, how great is her fidelity in consoling her faithful servants at the hour of death! A certain person devoted to the Most Holy Virgin said in his last moments to Fr Binetti: "Father, you cannot conceive the consolation which the thought of having served Mary infuses at the hour of death. O my Father! If you knew the happiness I feel on account of having served this Mother. I am not able to express it." How great will be the joy of him who has loved Jesus Christ—who has often received him in the Holy Communion, when he see his Lord entering his room in the Most Holy Viaticum, and coming to accompany him in his passage to eternity! Happy he who then be able, with St Philip Neri, to say to his Saviour: "Behold my love! Behold my love! Give me my love."

But you will, perhaps, say: Who knows what shall be my lot? Who knows but I shall die an unhappy death? Of you who speak in this manner, I ask what is it that causes a bad death? Nothing but sin. We should then fear sin only, and not death, but of life.[199] *With him that feareth the Lord, it shall go well in the latter end.*[200]

Fr Colombière held it to be morally impossible that the man who has been faithful to God during life should die a bad death. And before him, St Augustine said: “He who has die fears no death, however sudden.”[201] *The just men, if he be prevented with death, shall be in rest.*[202] Since we cannot go to enjoy God without passing through death, St John Chrysostom exhorts us to offer to God what we are obliged to give him.[203] And let us be persuaded that they who offer their death to God, make the most perfect act of divine love which it is in their power to perform; because, by cheerfully embracing that kind of death which God is pleased to send, and at the time and in the manner in which God sends it, they render themselves like the holy martyrs. He who loves God should desire and sigh after death; because it unites him forever to God, and delivers him from the danger of losing God. He who does not desire to see God speedily, and to be secure against the possibility of ever losing God, shows that he has but little love for God. Let us, during life, love him to the utmost of our power. We should make use of life only to advance in divine love: the measure of our love of God at death will be the measure of our love for him in a happy eternity.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My Jesus! Bind me to Thyself so that I may never more be separated from Thee. Make me entirely Thine before I die, that I may see Thee appeased, O my Redeemer! The first time I behold Thee. Thou didst seek after me when I fled away from Thee: ah! Do not cast me off, now that I seek after Thee. Pardon me all the offences I have given Thee. From this day I will think only of serving and loving Thee. Thou hast laid me under too many obligations; Thou hast not refused to give Thy blood and Thy life for the love of me. I would wish to be entirely consumed for the love of Thee. O God of my soul! I wish to love Thee ardently in this live, that I may love Thee ardently in the next. Eternal Father! Draw my whole heart to Thee: detach it from earthly affections: would and inflame my whole soul with Thy holy love. Through the merits of Jesus Christ, hear my prayers. Give me holy perseverance, and grant me the grace always to ask it of Thee. Mary, my Mother! Assist me and obtain for me the grace to ask unceasingly of thy Son the gift of holy perseverance.

Consideration X

MEANS OF PREPARING FOR DEATH

“Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.”—*Eccl.*vii.40.

FIRST POINT

NOT TO WAIT TILL THE LAST MOMENT

ALL confess that they must die, and die only once, and that nothing is of greater importance than to die well; because on death depends whether we shall be forever in bliss or forever in despair. All know that our eternal happiness or our eternal unhappiness depends on leading a good or a bad life. How then does it happen that the greater part of Christians live as if they were never to die, or as if to die well or ill were of little moment! They live in sin because they do not think of death. *Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.*[204] We must be persuaded that the hour of death is not fit for settling the accounts of the soul, and securing the great affair of eternal salvation. In worldly matters prudent men take measures in due time to secure temporal gain—to obtain a situation of emolument. To preserve or restore bodily health the necessary remedies are not deferred a single moment. What would you say of the man who should put off his preparation for a trial on which his life depended till the day of trial arrived? Would you not stigmatise as a fool the general who should not begin to lay in a supply of provisions and arms till the city is besieged? Would it not be folly in a pilot to neglect till the time of the tempest, to provide the vessel with an anchor and a helm? Such precisely is the folly of the Christian who neglects to tranquilise his conscience till death arrives.

When sudden calamity shall fall on you, and destruction, as a tempest, then shall they call upon me, and I will not hear, ... Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way.”[205] The time of death is a time of storm and confusion. At that awful hour sinners call on God for assistance; but they invoke his aid through the fear of hell, which they see at hand, and not with true contrition of heart. It is for this reason that God is deaf to their cry; it is for their reason also that they will then taste the fruit of their wicked life. What they have sown they shall reap.[206] Ah! It will not then be enough to receive the sacraments; it is necessary at death to hate sin, and to love God above all things. But how can he, then, hate forbidden pleasures, who has loved them till that moment? How can he love God above all things, who has till then loved creatures more than he has loved God?

The Lord called the virgins foolish who wished to prepare their lamps when the bridegroom was nigh. All have a horror of a sudden death, because there is no time to settle the accounts of conscience. All confess that the saints have been truly wise, because they prepared for death during life. And what are we doing? Shall we expose ourselves to the danger of preparing for death when it arrives? We ought to do so at present what we shall then wish to have done. Oh! What pain will then arise from the remembrance of time lost, and still more from the remembrance of time spent in sin: time given by God to merit eternal life; but now past, and never to return! What anguish will the sinner feel when he shall be told: You can be steward no longer![207] There is no more time for doing penance, for frequenting the sacraments, for hearing sermons, for visiting Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament or for prayer. What is done is done. To make a good confession, to remove several grievous scruples and thus tranquillise the conscience, would require a better state of mind and time more free from confusion and agitation. But time will be no more.[208]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God! Had I died on one of the nights known to Thee, where should I be at present? I thank Thee for having waited for me; I thank Thee foal 1those moments which I should have spend in hell from the first moment that I offended Thee. Ah! Give me light, and make me sensible of the great evil I have done Thee in voluntarily losing Thy grace, which Thou didst merit for me by the sacrifice of Thy life on the cross. Ah! My Jesus, pardon me: I am sorry from the bottom of my heart, and above all things, for having despised Thee, who are infinite goodness. Ah! Assist me, O my

Saviour! that I may never lose Thee again. Alas, my Lord! If I return again to sin, after so many lights and graces which Thou hast bestowed upon me, I should deserve a hell to be made on purpose for myself. Through the merits of that blood which Thou hast shed for my sake, do not permit me ever more to offend Thee. Give me holy perseverance, give me Thy love. I love Thee and I will never cease to love Thee till death. My God, have mercy on me for the love of Jesus Christ. O Mary, my hope! Do thou too have pity on me; recommend me to God: thy recommendations are never rejected by that God who loves thee so tenderly.

SECOND POINT

PUT OUR CONSCIENCE IN A GOOD STATE, AND REGULATE OUR LIVES

Brother, since it is certain that you will die, go as soon as possible to the foot of the crucifix; thank you crucified Redeemer for the time which in his mercy he gives you to settle the affairs of your conscience; and then review all the irregularities of your past life, particularly of your youth. Cast a glance at the commandments of God: examine yourself on the duties of the state of life in which you have lived, and on the society you have frequented: mark down in writing the sins you have committed; make a general confession of your whole life, if you have not as yet made one. Oh! How much does a general confession contribute to regularity of life in a Christian! Consider that you have to settle accounts for eternity; and take care to adjust them as if you were on the point of rendering these accounts to Jesus Christ: at judgement. Banish from your heart every sinful affection, and every sentiment of rancour; remove every ground of scruple on account of the injury done to the property or character of others, or of scandal to your neighbour; and resolve to fly from all those occasions in which you should be in danger of losing God. Remember that what now seems difficult will appear impossible at the hour of death.

It is still more important for you to resolve to practise the means of preserving your soul in the grace of God. These means are,—hearing Mass every day, the meditation on the eternal truths, the frequentation of the sacraments of penance and Eucharist at least every eight days, the visit every day to the Most Holy Sacrament, and to an image of the divine Mother, attendance at her confraternity, spiritual reading, examination of conscience every evening, some special devotion to the Blessed Virgin, along with fasting every Saturday in her honour. Above all, resolve to recommend yourself frequently to God, and to the Blessed Virgin, and frequently to invoke, in the time of temptations, the sacred names of Jesus and Mary. These are the names by which you will be able to secure a happy death, and to obtain eternal life.

The practice of these means will be fore you a great sign of your predestination. And as to the past, trust in the blood of Jesus Christ, who now gives you these lights, because he desires your salvation; and trust in the intercession of Mary, who obtains these lights for you. Oh! If you adopt this mode of life, and place great confidence in Jesus and Mary, what aid will you receive from God, and what strength will your soul acquire? Dearly beloved reader, give yourself then instantly to God, who invites you, and begin to enjoy that peace of which you have been hitherto deprived through your own fault. And what greater peace can a soul enjoy than to be able to say, in going to rest at night. Should death come this night, I hope to die in the grace of God! How happy the man who, amid the terrors of thunder or of earthquakes, is prepared to accept death with resignation, should God be pleased to send it!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my Lord! With what fervour do I thank Thee for the light which Thou gavest me! I have so often abandoned Thee and turned my back upon Thee; but Thou hast not abandoned me. Hadst Thou abandoned me I should now be blind, as I have hitherto wished to be; I should be obstinate in my sins, and should not have the desire either to renounce sin or to love Thee. I now feel a great sorrow for having offended Thee, and great desire to be in the state of grace. I feel a hatred of these accursed delights which have made me lose Thy friendship. These sentiments are all graces which come from Thee, and make me hope that Thou wilt pardon and save me. Since, then, after all my sin, Thou hast not abandoned me—since Thou now wishest to save me, behold O Lord! I give myself entirely to Thee. I am sorry, above all things, for having offended Thee; and I propose to lose life a thousand times rather than forfeit Thy grace. I love Thee, o my Sovereign Good1 I love Thee, O my Jesus! Who hast died for me; and I hope in Thy blood, that

Thou wilt not permit me to be ever again separated from Thee. O my Jesus! I will never more lose thee. I wish to love Thee always during life. I wish to love Thee at death. I wish to love Thee for all eternity. Preserve me then, O Lord! At all times and increase my love for Thee. This favour I ask through Thy merits. Mary, my hope! Pray to Jesus for me.

THIRD POINT

WE MUST DETACH OURSELVES FROM THE WORLD

It is also necessary to endeavour to be at all times in the state in which we desire to be at death. Blessed are he dead who die in the Lord.[209] St Ambrose says that they die well who, at the hour of death, are found dead to the world; that is, detached from the goods from which death will separate us by force. We ought then, from this moment, to accept the spoliation of our goods, and the separation from relatives and from everything in this world. Unless we do it voluntarily during life, we shall have to do it through necessity at death, but with extreme pain and great danger of eternal perdition. Hence St Augustine says, that to settle during life all temporal matters, and dispose by will of all the goods we shall have to bequeath, contribute greatly to a tranquil death; because when all worldly affairs are already adjusted, the soul may be entirely occupied in uniting itself to God. At that hour, we should think and speak only of God and of Paradise. These last moments are too precious to be squandered in earthly thoughts. At death is completed the crown of the elect; for it is then, perhaps, that they reap the greatest harvest of merits, by embracing, with resignation and love, death and all its pains.

But the Christian, who has not been in the habit of exciting these sentiments during life, will not have them at the hour of death. Hence some devout souls, with great spiritual profit to themselves are accustomed to renew every month, after being at confession and Communion, the Protestation of death along with the Christian acts, imagining themselves at the point of death, and to be near their departure from this world.[210] Unless you do this during life you will find it very difficult to do it at death. In her last illness, that great servant of God, Sister Catharine of St Alberts, of the order of St Teresa, sent forth a sigh, and said, “Sisters, I do not sigh through fear of death, for I have lived for twenty-five years in expectation of it; but I sigh at the sight of so many deluded Christians, who spend their life in sin, and reduce themselves to the necessity of making peace with God at death, when I can scarcely pronounce the name of Jesus."

Examine then, O my brother, if you are now attached to anything on this earth, to any person, to any honour, to your house, to your money, to conversation or amusements; and reflect that you are not immortal. You must one day, and perhaps very soon, take leave of them and thus expose yourself to the risk of an unhappy death? Offer from this moment all to God: tell him you are ready to give up all things whenever he pleases to deprive you of them. If you wish to die with resignation you must from this moment resign yourself to all the contradictions and adversities which may happen to you, and must divest yourself of all affections to earthly things. Imagine yourself on the bed of death, and you will despise all things in this world. "He," says St Jerome, "who always thinks that he is to die, easily despises all things."[211]

If you have not yet chosen a state of life, make choice of that state of life which at death you will wish to have selected, and which will make you die with greater peace. If you have already made choice of a state of life, do now what at death you will wish to have done in that state. Spend every day as if it were the last of your life: and perform every action, every exercise of prayer, make every confession and Communion, as if they were the last of your life. Imagine yourself every hour at the point of death, stretched on a bed, and that you hear that *Proficiscere de hoc mundo* which announces your departure from this world. Oh! How powerfully will this thought assist you from this earth! *Blessed is that servant whom, when his Lord shall come, he shall find him so doing.*[212] He who expects death every hour will die well, though death should come suddenly upon him.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Every Christian ought to be prepared to say at the moment the news of death is announced to him: Then, my God, only a few hours remain: during the short remainder of the present life, I wish to love Thee to the utmost of my power, that I may love Thee more perfectly in heaven. But little remains for me to offer to Thee. I offer Thee these pains, and the sacrifice of my life in union with the sacrifice which Jesus Christ offered for me on the Cross. Lord! The pains which I suffer are few and light compared with what I have deserved; such as they are, I embrace them as a mark of the love which I bear Thee. Provided I am to love Thee for eternity. I resign myself to all the punishments which Thou wishest to send me in this or the next life. Chastise me as much as Thou pleases, but do not deprive me of Thy love. I know that, on account of having so often despised Thy love, I deserved never more to love Thee; but Thou canst not reject a penitent soul. I am sorry, O Sovereign Good! for having offended Thee. I love Thee with my whole heart, and place all my trust in Thee. Thy death, O my Redeemer! is my hope. To Thy wounded hands I recommend my soul. *Into Thy hands I commend my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of Truth.*[213] O my Jesus, Thou hast given Thy blood for my salvation: do not suffer me to be separated from Thee. I love Thee, O eternal God, and hope to love Thee for eternity. Mary, my Mother, assist me at the awful moment of death. To thee I now consign my spirit: to thee I recommend myself. Deliver me from hell.

Consideration XI

VALUE OF TIME

“Son, observe the time.”—*Eccl.*iv. 23.

FIRST POINT

TIME IS A TREASURE OF THE EARTH

SON, says the Holy Ghost, be careful to preserve time, which is the greatest and the most precious gift which God can bestow upon you in this life. The very pagans knew the value of time. Seneca said that no price is an equivalent for it.[214] But the saints have understood its value still better. According to St Bernardine of Sienna, a moment of time is of as much value as God; because in each moment a man can, by acts of contrition or of love, acquire the grace of God and eternal glory.[215]

Time is a treasure which is found only in this life; it is not found in the next, either in hell or in heaven. In hell the damned exclaim with tears: Oh! That an hour was given to us![216] They would pay any price for an hour of time, in which they might repair their ruin: but this hour they will never have. In heaven there is no weeping; but were the saints capable of weeping, all their tears would arise from the thought of having lost the time in which they could have acquired greater glory, and from the conviction that this time will never again be given to them. A deceased Benedictine nun appeared in glory to a certain person, and said that she was perfectly happy, but that if she would desire anything, it would be to return to life, and to suffer pains and privations in order to merit an increase of glory. She added that, for the glory which corresponds to a single *Ave Maria*, she would be content to endure till the day of judgement the painful illness which caused her death.

My brother, how do you spend your time? Why do you always defer till tomorrow what you can do to-day? Remember that the time which is past is no longer yours: the future is not under your control: you have only the present for the performance of good works. “Why, O miserable man,” says St Bernard, “do you presume on the future, as if the Father had placed time in your power?”[217] St Augustine asks: “How can you, who are not sure of an hour, promise yourself tomorrow?”[218] If then, says St Teresa, you are not prepared for death to-day; tremble lest you die an unhappy death.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my God! I thank Thee for the time which Thou givest me to repair the disorders of my past life. Were I to die at this moment, the remembrance of the time I have lost should be one of my greatest torments. Ah, my Lord! Thou hast given me time to love Thee, and I have spent it in offending Thee. I deserve to be sent to hell from the first moment in which I turned my back upon Thee; but Thou hast called me to repentance, and hast pardoned me. I promised to offend Thee no more; but how often have I returned to sin? How often hast Thou pardoned my ungrateful relapses? Blessed forever be Thy mercy! If it were not infinite, how couldst Thou have had so much patience with me? Who could have borne with me so long> Oh! How sorry do I feel for having offended so good a God! My Saviour! The patience alone with which Thou didst wait for me ought to enamour me of Thee. Ah! Do not suffer me to live any longer ungrateful to the love Thou hast had for me. Detach me from every creature, and draw me entirely to Thyself. O my God! I will no longer dissipate the time Thou givest me to repair the evil that I have done; I will spend it all in serving and loving Thee. Give me holy perseverance. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness, and hope to love Thee for eternity. I thank Thee, O Mary! By they advocacy thou hast obtained for me this time which is given to me. Assist me now, and obtain for me the grace to spend it all in loving thy Son, my Redeemer, and in loving thee, my Queen and my Mother.

SECOND POINT

NEGLECT OF TIME

There is nothing more precious that time; but there is nothing less esteemed and more despised by men of the world. This is what St Bernard deplores when he says: Nothing is more precious than time, but nothing is regarded more cheaply."[219] The same saint adds: "The days of salvation pass away, and no one reflects that the day which has passed away from him can never return."[220] You will see a gambler spend nights and days in play. If you ask him what he is doing, his answer is: I am passing the time. You will see others standing several hours in the street, looking at those who pass by, and speaking on obscene or on useless subjects. If you ask them what they are doing, they will say: We are passing the time. Poor blind sinners! Who lose so many days; but days which never return?

O time despised during life! You will be ardently desired by worldlings at the hour of death. They will then wish for another year, another month, another day; but they will not obtain it: they will then be told that time shall be no longer. How much would they then pay for another week, or another day, to settle the account of their conscience? To obtain a single hour, they would, St Laurence Justinian, give all their wealth and worldly possessions.[221] But this hour shall not be given. The assisting priest shall say to the dying sinner: Hasten, hasten your departure from this world; for your time is no more.

The prophet exhorts us to remember God, and to procure his friendship, before the light fails. *Remember Thy Creator. . . . before the sun and the light be darkened.*[222] How great the distress and misery of a traveller who, when the night has come, perceives that he has missed the way, and that there is not time to correct the mistake. Such at death will be the anguish of the sinner who has lived many years in the world, and has not spent them for God. *The night cometh, when no man can work.*[223] For him, death shall be the night in which he will be able to do nothing. *He hath called against me the time.*[224] Conscience will then remind the worldling of all the time that God gave him, and that he has spent in the destruction of his soul; of all the calls and graces that he has received from God for his sanctification, and that he has voluntarily abused. The sinner will then see that the way of salvation is closed forever. Hence he will weep and say: O fool that I have been! O time lost! O life misspent! O lost years, in which I could have, but have not, become a saint! And now the time of salvation is gone forever.

But, of what use are these sighs and lamentations, when the scene is about to close—the lamp on the point of being extinguished—and when the dying sinner has reached that awful moment on which eternity depends?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my Jesus! Thou hast spent Thy whole life for the salvation of my soul. There has not been a single moment of Thy life in which Thou hast not offered thyself to the eternal Father to obtain for me pardon and eternal glory. I have been so many years in the world, and how many of them have I hitherto spent for Thee? Ah! All that I remember to have done produces remorse of conscience. The evil has been great, the good very little and all full of imperfections and tepidity, of self-love and forgetfulness of what Thou hast done for me. I have forgotten Thee, but Thou hast not forgotten me; when I fled from Thee, Thou didst follow me, and call me so often to Thy love. Behold me, O Jesus! I will resist no longer. Shall I wait till Thou abandon me? I am sorry, O Sovereign Good! For having separated myself from Thee by sin. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness! Worthy of infinite love. Ah! Do not permit me ever again to lose this time, which Thou in Thy mercy givest me. Ah! Remind me always, O my beloved Saviour! Of the love Thou hast borne me, and of the pains Thou hast endured for me. Make me forget all things, that, during the remainder of my life, I may think only of loving and pleasing Thee. I love Thee, my Jesus, my love, my all! I promise, whenever Thou remindest me, to make acts of love. Give me holy perseverance. I place all my confidence in the merits of Thy blood. I also trust in thy intercession, O my dear Mother, Mary.

THIRD POINT

WE MUST PROFIT BY THE TIME

Walk whilst you have light.[225] We must walk in the way of the Lord during life, now that we have light; for, at the hour of death this light is taken away. Death is not the time for preparing, but for finding ourselves prepared. Be ye ready. At the hour of death we can do nothing: what is then done is done. O God! Were a person told that in a short time a trial should take place, on which would depend his life and his entire property, with what hast would he seek an able counsel to plead his cause! How little time would he lose in adopting every means of securing a favourable result! And what are we doing? We know for certain that the most important of all causes—the affair of eternal salvation—will soon be decided; the decision may take place every hour, and still we lost time.

Some may say: I am young; I will hereafter give myself to God. But remember that, as the Gospel remarks, the Lord cursed the fig-tree the first time he found if without fruit, although the season for figs had not arrived. By this Jesus Christ wished to signify that men should at all times, even in youth, bring forth fruits of good works; otherwise they will be accursed, and will never more bring forth fruit. *May no man hereafter eat fruit of thee any more forever.*[226] Such the malediction of the Redeemer on the fruitless fig-tree; such is his malediction against all who resist his calls. Satan regards the whole time of our life as short, and, therefore, in tempting us he loses not a moment. *The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.*[227] Then the devil loses no time in seeking our perdition; and shall we lose the time given to us to secure our salvation?

Some will say, What evil am I doing? O God, is it not an evil to lose time in gaming, in useless conversations, which are unprofitable to the soul? Does God give you time, that you may squander it? No: the Holy Ghost says, *Defraud not thyself of the good day, and let not the part of a good gift overpass thee.*[228] The workmen mentioned by St Matthew, though they did no evil, but only lost time, were rebuked by the master of the vineyard. *Why stand ye here all the day idle?*[229] On the day of judgement Jesus Christ will demand an account of every idle word. All the time that is not spent for God is lost time. “Believe,” says St Bernard, “that you have lost all the time in which you have not thought of God.”[230] Hence the Holy Ghost says, *Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly, for neither work nor reason shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening.*[231] The Venerable Sister Jane of the Most Holy Trinity, of the Order of St Teresa, used to say that, in the lives of the saints, there is no to-morrow. To-morrow is found in the lives of sinners, who always say: Hereafter, hereafter; and in this state they continue till death. *Behold, now is the acceptable time.*[232] To-day, if you shall hear his voice, hardens not your hearts.[233] If God call you to-day to do good, do it; for to-morrow it may happen that for you time will be no more, or that God will call you no more.

If you have hitherto spent the time in offending God, endeavour, like King Ezechias, to weep, during the remainder of your life, over your misspent years. *I will recount to Thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul.*[234] God spares your life that you may repair the time you have lost.[235] In explaining this passage, St Anselm says: “You will redeem the time if you do what you have neglected to do.”[236] Of St Paul, St Jerome says that, though the last of the apostles, he was, on account of his great labours after he was called, the first in merits. Let us reflect that at each moment of time we may acquire new treasures of eternal riches. Were all the land round which you could walk, or all the money which you could count in a day, promised to you, would you not hasten to walk over the ground, or to count the money? At each moment you can acquire eternal treasures: will you, notwithstanding, squander your time? Say not what you can do to-day you will be able to do to-morrow; for this day will then be lost, and never return. When his companions spoke of the world, St Francis Borgia conversed with God by holy affections; and so recollected was he, that when his opinion was asked on the subject of conversation, he knew not what to answer. Being corrected for this, he said: “I would rather be regarded stupid and unlearned, than lose time.”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

No, my God, I will no longer lose the time which Thou in Thy mercy givest me. I should at this hour be in hell weeping without fruit. I thank Thee for having preserved my life: I wish during the remainder of my days to live only for Thee. Were I now in hell I should weep in despair, and without profit: I will now bewail the offences I have offered to Thee; and if I weep over them, I know for certain that Thou wilt pardon me. Of this the prophet assures me: *Weeping, thou shalt not weep; He will surely have pity on thee?*[237] Were I in hell, I could never more love Thee; and now I love Thee, and hope always to love Thee. Were in hell, I could ask no more graces; but now I hear Thee say: Ask, and ye shall receive. Since, then, I still have time to ask Thy graces, O God of my soul! I ask two graces: give me perseverance in They grace; give me Thy love; and then do with me what

Thou pleasest; grant that in all the remaining moments of my life I may always recommend myself to Thee, saying: Lord! Assist me; have mercy on me; grant that I may never more offend Thee; make my love Thee. Most Holy Mary, my Mother! Obtain for me the grace always to recommend myself to God, and to ask hi, for perseverance and for his holy love.

Consideration XII

THE IMPORTANCE OF SALVATION

“But we entreat ye, brethren . . . that you attend to your own business.”—I *Thess.* .iv. 10,11.

FIRST POINT

SALVATION IS OUR OWN IMPORTANT AFFAIR

THE business of eternal salvation is to us the most important of all affairs; but it is also the most neglected by Christians. They are diligent, and lose no time in seeking to gain a lawsuit, or a situation of emolument. How many measures taken to attain these objects? How many means adopted? They neither eat nor sleep. And what efforts do they make to secure their eternal salvation? How do they live? To save their souls, the greater number of Christians do nothing; on the contrary, they do everything to bring their souls to perdition; they live as if death, judgement, hell, heaven, and eternity were not truths of faith, but fables invented by the poets. If a person loses a lawsuit, or a harvest crop, how great is his pain and distress of mind? With what deal does he labour to repair the loss? If worldlings lose a horse, or a dog, with what diligence do they seek after it? But if they lose the grace of God, they sleep, and jest, and laugh. All blush at being told that they neglect their worldly affairs, but how few are ashamed to neglect the business of eternity, which is the most important of all. The worldling says that the saints were truly wise, because they sought only the salvation of their souls, and still be attends to all worldly business, but utterly neglects the concerns of the soul. *Brethren*, says St Paul, let the great business of your eternal salvation be the sole object of all your care.[238] This is to you the most important of all affairs. Let us then be persuaded that eternal salvation is for us the most *important affair,*—the *only* affair,—and that if once neglected it is an irreparable affair if we ever make a mistake.

It is the most important affair, because if the soul be lost, all is lost. We ought to set a higher value on the soul than on all the goods of the earth. “The soul,” says St John Chrysostom, “is more important than the whole world!”[239] To be convinced of this truth, it is enough to know that God himself has condemned his Son to death in order to save our souls. The Eternal Word has not refused to purchase them with his own blood.[240] Hence a holy Father says that man appears to be of as much value as God.[241] Hence Jesus Christ has asked: *What exchange shall a man give for his soul?*[242] For God so loved the world as to give His only Begotten Son.[243] If then such is the value of the soul, for what earthly good shall a man exchanged and lose it?

St Philip Neri with reason could say that he who does not attend to the salvation of his soul is a fool. Were there on this earth two classes of men? One mortal and the other immortal, and were the former to see the latter seeking after the things of this world, its honour, goods, and amusements, they should certainly exclaim: O fools that you are! You have it in your power to acquire eternal riches, and do you fix your thoughts on those miserable and transitory things? Will you, for these, condemn yourselves, to an eternity of torments in the next life? Leave us, for whom all shall end at death, to seek after these earthly goods. But no; we are immortal. How then does it happen that so many lose their souls for the miserable pleasures of this life? How does it come to pass, says Salvian that Christians believe in judgement, hell and eternity, and still live as if they feared them not?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God! How have I spent so many years which Thou hast given me in order to secure my eternal salvation? Thou, my Redeemer, hast purchased my soul with Thy blood, and hast consigned it to me that I might attend to its salvation; and I have laboured only for its perdition by offending Thee who hast loved me so tenderly. I thank Thee for giving me time to be able to repair the great loss which I have suffered. I have lost my soul and Thy grace. Lord! I am sorry with my whole heart for my past offences, and I resolve, henceforth, to lose everything, even my life, rather than forfeit Thy friendship. I love Thee above all things, and I resolve always to love thee, my Sovereign Good! Who are worthy of infinite love. Assist me, my Jesus, that this purpose may not be like my past resolutions, to which I have been always unfaithful. Take me out of life rather than suffer me ever again to offend Thee or ever to cease to love Thee. O Mary, my hope, after Jesus, save me by obtaining for me holy perseverance.

SECOND POINT

SALVATION IS OUR OWN AFFAIR

The affair of eternal salvation is not only the most important, but it is the only affair to which we have to attend in this life. One thing is necessary.[244]St Bernard weeps over the blindness of Christians, who call the occupations of children trifles, and their own employments business. If the amusements of children be trifles, the employments of men are still greater follies. *What,* says the Redeemer, *will it profit us to gain the whole world if we lose our souls?*[245] My brother, if you save your soul, it will do you no harm to have lived here in poverty, afflictions, and contempt; for then you will have no more sorrows, and you will be happy for all eternity. But if you lose your soul, what will it profit you, in hell, to have indulged in all the amusements of the world, and to have enjoyed its riches and honours? If the soul be lost, amusements, riches and honours are lost—all is lost.

What answer will you give on the day of account? Were a king to send an ambassador to a city to transact some important business, and were legate, instead of attending to the charge intrusted to him, to spend all his time in banquets, comedies, and festivities, and thus injure the rights of his master, what account would the Sovereign demand of him at his return? But, O God! How strict must be the account which the Lord will exact of him who, after being placed in this world, not to indulge in amusements, nor to acquire wealth and dignity, but to save his soul, has attended to everything except to his own salvation? Worldlings think of the present, but not of the future. St Philip Neri conversing one day in Rome with Francis Zazzera, a young man of talent, who was attached to the world, said to him: “You will realise a great fortune; you will be a prelate, afterward, perhaps, a cardinal, and perhaps even Pope. But what must follow? What must follow? Go,” said the saint, “and mediate on these last words.” Francis went home, and after reflecting on the words what must follow? What must follow? He abandoned his secular pursuits, left the world, entered into the Congregation of St Philip and began to attend only to God.

It is our only affair, because we have but one soul. A prince asked, through his ambassador, a favour of Benedict XII, which could not be granted without sin. In answer, the Pope said—"Tell the prince that I if had two souls, I might, perhaps, lose one of them for him, and reserve the other for myself; but since I have but one, I cannot and will not lose it." St Francis Xavier used to say that there is but one good and one evil in the world: the former consists in the salvation of the soul, the latter in its damnation. St Teresa used frequently to say to her nuns—"One soul, one eternity." As if she said—One soul; if this be lost, all is lost; one eternity—the soul, if lost once, is lost forever. Hence David said—*One thing have I asked of the Lord: this I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord.*[246] Lord, I ask but one favour—save my soul and I ask nothing else.

With fear and trembling, work out your salvation.[247] He that does not fear and tremble for his salvation will not be saved: to save the soul, it is necessary to labour, and to do violence to nature. *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent bear it away.*[248] To obtain eternal glory, our life must be found at death conformable to the life of Jesus Christ. Hence we must be careful, on the one hand, to avoid the occasions of sin; and, on the other, to adopt the means necessary for the attainment of eternal life. All would wish to be saved without trouble. "The devil," says St Augustine, "sleeps not, but labours strenuously for your perdition; and will you slumber when your eternal happiness is at stake?"[249]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God! I thank Thee for making me now remain at Thy feet and not in hell, which I have so often deserved. But of what use would the life which Thou hast preserved be to me, should I continue to live without Thy grace. Ah! May this never be! I have turned my back upon Thee; I have lost Thee, O my Sovereign Good! I am sorry for it with my whole heart. Oh, that I had died a thousand times, rather than have offended Thee! I have lost Thee; but the prophet tells me that Thou art all goodness, and that Thou art easily found by the soul that seeks Thee. If I have hitherto fled away from

Thee, I now seek Thee, and seek nothing but thee. I love Thee with all the affections of my heart. Accept me. Do not disdain to give Thy love to a soul that has at one time despised Thee. Teach me what I must do in order to please Thee; I am ready and willing to do it. Ah, my Jesus! Save this soul, for which Thou hast given Thy blood and Thy life; and in order to save me, give me the grace always to love Thee in this and in the next life. This grace I hope for through Thy merits. For this I also hope, O Mary, through thy intercession.

THIRD POINT

A FAILURE IN SAVING ONE’S SOUL IS AN IRREMEDIABLE EVIL

Important affair! Only affair! Irreparable affair! No error, says St Eucherius, can be compared with the error of neglecting eternal salvation. For all other errors there is a remedy: if you lose property in one way, you may recover it in another; if you lose a situation, there may be some means of afterwards regaining it; if you soon lose your life, provided your soul be saved, all is safe. But if you lose your soul the loss is irreparable. Death happens but once; the soul, if once lost, is lost forever. Nothing remains but to weep for eternity with the other miserable wretches in hell, where their greatest torment consists in the conviction, that the time of repairing their ruin is gone forever. *The summer is over, and we are not saved.*[250] Ask the worldly wise who are now in the pit of fire, what are their present sentiments; ask them if, now that they are condemned to that eternal prison, they feel happy at having made a fortune in this life. Listen to their wailing and lamentation: *We have erred.*[251] But of what use is it to know their error, now that there is no remedy for their eternal damnation? Should a man who could have preserved his palace at a small expense find it in ruins, how great would be his pain in reflecting on his own negligence, and on the impossibility of repairing the evil!

The greatest torment of the damned consists in the thought of having lost their soul, and of being damned through their own fault. *Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in me.*[252] St Teresa says that if a person loses through his own fault a ring or even a trifle, his peace is distributed; he neither eats nor sleeps. O God! How great will be the torture of the damned

Christian when, on entering hell and finding himself shut up in that dungeon of torments, he reflects on his misfortune, and sees that for all eternity there will be no relief, no mitigation of pain! He will say, “I have lost my soul, paradise and God; I have lose all forever! And why? Through my own fault.”

But you will say—If I commit this sin, why should I not expect to escape damnation? I may still be saved. Yes; but you may also be damned; and it is more likely that you will be lost, for the Scriptures menace eternal woes to all obstinate traitors, such as you are in your present dispositions. *Woe to you, apostate children, saith the Lord.*[253] Woe to them, for they have departed from me.[254] By committing this sin, you at least expose your eternal salvation to great danger. And is this an affair to be exposed to risk? There is not question of a house, of a villa, or of a situation: there is question, says St John Chrysostom, of being sent into an eternity of torments, and of losing an eternity of glory. And will you risk on a *perhaps* this business of sovereign importance?

You say: Perhaps I shall not be lost: I hope that God will hereafter pardon me. But what happens in the mean time? You condemn yourself to hell. Tell me, would you cast yourself into a deep pool of water, saying, perhaps I shall not be drowned? Surely you would not; why then should not trust your eternal salvation to such a groundless hope, to a perhaps? Oh! How many has this accursed hope sent to hell! Do you not know that the hope of those who are obstinately determined to commit sin is not hope, but an illusion and presumption which move God not to mercy but to greater wrath? If you say that you are now unable to resist the temptation and passion to whose domination you submit, how will you resist them hereafter, when, by yielding to sin, you strength will not be increased, but greatly diminished? For, on the one hand, your own malice will render you more blind and obdurate; and, on the other, the divine helps will be withheld. Do you expect that the more you multiply sins and insults against God, the more abundantly he will pour upon you his lights and grace?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my Jesus! Remind me always of the death Thou hast suffered for me, and give me confidence. I tremble lest the devil should make me despair at death by bringing before my view the many acts of treason I have committed against Thee. How many promises have I made never more to offend Thee after the light Thou hast given me! And after all my promises, I have, with the hope of pardon, again turned my back upon Thee. Then have I insulted Thee because Thou didst not chastise me? My Redeemer! Give me a great sorrow for my sins before I leave this world. I am sorry, O Sovereign Good! For having offended Thee. I promised to die a thousand times rather than abandon Thee. But make me in the mean time feel that Thou hast said to me what Thou didst say to Magdalene—*Thy sins are forgiven thee*—by giving me, before death, a great sorrow for all my iniquities, otherwise I fear my death will be troubled and unhappy. *Be not Thou a terror to me: Thou art my hope in the day of affliction.*[255] O my crucified Jesus! Be not a terror to me in my last moments. If I die before I have wept over my sins and have loved Thee, Thy wounds and Thy blood will inspire me with fear rather than with confidence. I do not ask of Thee consolations and earthly good during the remainder of my life, I ask of Thee sorrow and love. O my dear Saviour! Hear my prayer for the sake of that love which made Thee offer Thy life in sacrifice for me on Calvary. Mary, my Mother! Obtain for me these graces, along with holy perseverance till death.

Consideration XIII

THE VANITY OF THE WORLD

> “What doth it profits a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?.”—*Matt.*xvi.26.

FIRST POINT

THE GOODS OF THIS WORLD ARE USELESS

AN ancient philosopher called Aristippus was once shipwrecked, and lost all his goods. When he reached the shore, the people, through respect for his great learning, presented him with an equivalent of all he had lost. He wrote to his friends, exhorting them to imitate his example, and to seek only the goods which cannot be wrested from them by shipwreck. Now, our relatives and friends who are in eternity exhort us from the other world to attend only to the acquisition of goods which even death cannot take from us. Death is called *the day of destruction.*[256] It is the day of destruction, because on that day we shall lose all the goods of this earth—its honours, riches and pleasures. Hence, according to St Ambrose, we cannot call the things of this life our goods, because we cannot take them with us to eternity. Our virtues alone accompany us to the next life.[257]

What then, says Jesus Christ, does it profit us to gain the whole world, if, at death, by losing the soul, we lose all? Ah! How many young men has this great maxim sent into the cloister! How many anchorets has it sent to the desert! And how many martyrs has it encouraged to give their life for Jesus Christ! By this maxim St Ignatius of Loyola drew many souls to God, particularly the soul of St Francis Xavier, who was then in Paris, attached to the things of the world. “Francis,” said the saint one day, “reflect that the world is a traitor, which promises but does not perform. And though it should fulfil all its promises, it can never content your heart. But let us grant that it did make you happy, how long will this happiness last? Can it last longer than your life; and after death what will you take with you to eternity? Where is the rich man that has ever brought with him a piece of money, or a servant to attend him? What king has ever carried with him a shred of the purple as a badge of royalty?” At these words St Francis abandoned the world, followed St Ignatius and became a saint,

Solomon confessed that *whatsoever his eyes desired he refused them not;*[258] but, after having indulged in all the pleasures of this earth, he called all the goods of the world *vanity of vanities*—“vanitas vanitatum.” Sr Margaret of St Anne, a Discalced Carmelite, and daughter of the Emperor Rudolph the Second, used to say: “Of what use are kingdoms at the hour of death?” The saints tremble at the thought of the uncertainty of their eternal salvation. Fr Paul Segneri trembled, and, full of terror, said to his confessor: “Father, what do you think—shall I be saved?” St Andrew Avellino trembled, and with a torrent of tears, said: “Who knows whether I shall be saved or lost?” St Louis Bertrand was so much terrified by this thought, that, during the night, in a fit of terror, he sprang out of bed, saying: “Perhaps I shall be lost! And sinners, while they live in a state of damnation, sleep, and jest and laugh!”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, Jesus, my Redeemer! I thank Thee for making me see my folly and the evil I have done in turning my back on Thee who hast given Thy blood and Thy life for me. Thou didst not deserve to be treated by me as I have treated Thee. Behold! If death now came upon me, what should I find but sins and remorse of conscience, which would make me die with great disquietude! My Saviour! I confess that I have done evil, and committed a great error in leaving Thee, my Sovereign Good! For the miserable pleasures of this world. I am sorry from the bottom of my heart. Ah! Through the sorrow which killed Thee on the Cross, give me a sorrow for my sins, which will make me weep during the remainder of my life over the injuries I have done Thee. My Jesus! Pardon me: I promise to displease Thee no more, and to love Thee forever. I am not worthy of Thy love, which I have hitherto so much despised. But Thou hast said that Thou lovest him who loves Thee. I love Thee; love me, then, O Lord! I do not wish to be any longer in enmity with Thee. I renounce all the grandeurs and pleasures of the world, provided Thou lovest me. Hear me, O my God! for the love of Jesus Christ. He entreats Thee not to banish me from Thy heart. To Thee I consecrate my whole being; to Thee I consecrate my life, my pleasures, my senses, my soul, my body, my will and my liberty. Accept me; reject not my offering, as I have deserved for having so often refused Thy friendship; *cast me not away from Thy face.* Most Holy Virgin, my Mother, Mary! Pray to Jesus for me. In thy intercession I place unbounded confidence.

SECOND POINT

THE GOODS OF THIS WORLD ARE CONTEMPTIBLE

There is a deceitful balance in his hand.[259] We must weigh things in the balance of God, and not in the deceitful balance of the world. The goods of this life are miserable goods' they do not content the heart; they soon end. *My days have been swifter than a post: they have passed by as ships carrying fruits.*[260] The days of our life passed and fly away' and of all the pleasures of this earth, what remains? They have passed like a ship, which leaves no trace behind. *As a ship that passeth through the waters, whereof it is gone by, the trace cannot be found.*[261] Ask so many of the rich and learned of the world, so many princes and emperors who are now in eternity, what they possess of all the pomps, and delights, and grandeur which they enjoyed in this life? They all answer, Nothing, nothing, "O man," says St Augustine, "you attend to what he had here; but attend to what he bring with him."[262] "You," says the saint, "regard only the goods which the rich man possessed; but observe what he takes with him at death—a fetid body and a rag of a garment to rot with him."

After death the great ones of the world are spoken of for a little while; but they are soon forgotten. *Their memory hath perished with a noise.*[263] And if they have gone to hell, what do they do and say in that place of woe? They weep and say, *What hath pride profited us? Or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow.*[264] What have our pomps and riches profited us, now that they are passed away like a shadow, and for us nothing remains but eternal torments, wailing and despair?

The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.[265] How prudent are worldings in earthly affairs! What toil do they endure in order to obtain a situation, or to acquire an estate? With what care do they attend to the preservation of bodily health! They adopt the safest means; they select the best physicians, the best remedies, and the purest air. But how careless are they about the concerns of the soul! And it is certain that health, situations and possessions will one day end; but the soul and eternity are everlasting. What do not the unjust, the vindictive, and voluptuous endure in order to attain their wicked objects? And will they refuse to suffer anything for the soul? O God! By the light of the death-candle, at that time of truth, worldlings know and confess their folly. Then they say, Oh, that I had left the world and led a life of sanctity! Pope Leo XI said at the hour of death, "It were better for me to have been porter in my convent than to be Pope." Honorious III also said in his last illness, "It would have been better for me to have remained in the kitchen of my monastery to wash the plates than to be chosen head of the Church." In his dying moments, Philip II, King of Spain, sent for his son, and throwing off his royal robes, showed him his breast eaten away by worms, and said to him, "Prince, behold how we die, and how the grandeurs of this world end. Oh," he exclaimed, "that I had been a lay-brother in some religious community, and had not been king!" He then ordered a cross to be fastened to his neck by means of a cord, and having made all his arrangements for death, he said to his son: "I wished you to be present at this scene, that you may see how the world treats monarchs in the end. Their death is like that of the poorest peasant. In short, he who leads the most holy life is in the greatest favour with God." This same son, who afterward Philip III, dying at the age of forty-three years, said: "My subjects, in the sermon to be delivered at my funeral, preach nothing but this spectacle which you behold: say that to have been king serves at death but to excite regret and pain." He then exclaimed, "Oh, that I had never been a king! Oh, that I have lived in a desert to serve God! I should now go with greater confidence to present myself at his tribunal, and should not now find myself in so much danger of being damned forever." But these desires at the hour of death serve only to increase the anguish and despair of those who have not loved God. Then, says St Teresa, "we should make no account of what ends with life; the true life consists in living in such a manner as not to have any reason to fear death.” If then we wish to see the true value of earthly things, let us look at them from the bed of death and say, These honours, these amusements, these revenues will one day have an end; we ought then to labour to become saints, and rich in good which will accompany us to the other world, and which will make us content and happy for all eternity.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my Redeemer! Thou hast suffered so many pains and ignominies for my sake; and I have loved the pleasures and vanities of this earth to such an excess, that, for the sake of the, I have often trampled on Thy grace. But, since Thou didst not cease to seek after me when I despised Thee, I cannot, O my Jesus! Fear that Thou wilt now cast me away, when I seek and love Thee with my whole heart, and am more sorry for having offended Thee than I should be having suffered every other misfortune. O God of my soul! From this day forward I wish never to offend Thee, even by a venial fault. Make known to me what is displeasing to Thee. I will not, for any earthly good, do what I know to be offensive to Thee. Make known to me what I must do in order to please Thee. I am ready to do it. I wish to love Thee with a true love. I embrace, O Lord! All the pains and crosses which may come to from Thy hands, give me the resignation I stand in need of: *here burn, here cut.* Chastise me in this life, that in the next I may be able to love Thee for eternity. Mary, my Mother, to thee I recommend my soul, do not ever cease to pray to Jesus for me.

THIRD POINT

WE MUST WORK FOR HEAVEN

The time is short: it remaineth that. . . . they that use this world, be as if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away.[266] What is our life on this earth but a scene, which passes away and ends very soon? The fashion of this world passeth away/[267] “The world,” says Cornelius à Làpide. “is like a stage; one generation passes away, another comes.” He, who acts the part of a king, takes not the purple with him. Tell me, O villa, O house, how many masters have you had? When the comedy is over, the king is no longer king; the master ceases to be master. You at present are in possession of such a villa and palace; but death will come and they will pass to other masters.

The affliction of an hour maketh one forget great delights.[268] The gloomy hour of death brings to an end and makes us forget all the grandeur, nobility, and pomp of the world. Casimir, king of Poland, while he sat at a table with the nobles of his kingdom, died in the act of raising a cup to take a draught; and the scene ended for him. In seven days after his election, the Emperor Ceisus was killed, and the scene closed for Census. Ladislaus, king of Poland, in his eighteenth year, while he was preparing for the reception of his bridge, the daughter of the king of France, was suddenly seized with a violent pain, while soon deprived him of life. Couriers were instantly despatched to announce to her that the scene was over for Ladislaus, and that she might return to France. By mediating on the vanity of the world, Francis Borgia became a saint. At the sight of the Empress Isabella, who had died in the midst of worldly grandeur and in the flower of youth, he, as has been already said, resolved to give himself entirely to God. “Thus, then,” he said, “end the grandeurs and crowns of this world: I will henceforth serve a master who can never die.”

Let us endeavour to live in such a manner that what was said to the fool in the Gospel may not be said to us at the hour of death: *Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee: and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?*[269] Hence, the Redeemer adds: *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*[270] Again he tells you to acquire the riches, not of the world but of God;—of virtues and merits, which are goods which shall remain with you for eternity in heaven. *Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume.*[271] Let us then labour to acquire the great treasure of divine love. “What,” says St Augustine, “has the rich man, if he has not charity? What does the poor man want, if he has charity?”[272] If a man had all the riches in the world, and has not God, he is the poorest of men. But the poor man, who possesses God, possesses all things. And who are they that possess God? *He,* says St John, *that abideth in charity, abideth in God and God in him.*[273]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God! I do not wish that the devil should have any longer dominion over my soul: I wish that Thou alone be the lord and master of it. I will renounce all things in order to acquire Thy grace. I esteem it more than a thousand thrones and a thousand kingdoms. And whom shall I love but thee, who art infinitely amiable, who art infinite good, infinite beauty, bounty and love? Hitherto, I have abandoned Thee for the sake of creatures; this is, and always will be, to me a source of sorrow, which will pierce my heart with grief for having offended Thee, who hast loved me with so much tenderness. But since Thou hast favoured me with so many graces, I can no longer bear to see myself without Thy love. O my Lord! Take possession of my whole will and of all that I possess, and do with me what Thou pleasest. If I have hitherto been impatient under adversity, I ask pardon. O my Lord! I will never complain of Thy arrangements; I know that they are all holy, all for my welfare. Treat me, O my God! As Thou wishes; I promise to be always content, always to thank Thee. Make me love Thee and I ask no more. What goods, what honours, what world can I love? O God! O God! I wish only for God. Happy thou, O Mary! Who didst love nothing in the world but God. Obtain for me the grace to imitate thee, at least during the remainder of my life. In thee I trust.

Consideration XIV

LIFE IS A JOURNEY TO ETERNITY

“Man shall go into the house of his eternity.”—*Eccl.*xii.5.

FIRST POINT

MAN IS A TRAVELLER ON EARTH

SEEING that on this earth so many miscreants live in prosperity, and that so many saints live in tribulations, the very Gentiles, by the sole and of the light of nature, have known this truth—that, since there is a just God, there must be another life, in which the wicked are punished and the good rewarded. But what the Gentiles learned by the light of reason, we Christian know by faith. *We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come.*[274] This earth is not our country; it is for us a place of passage, from which we shall soon go to the house of eternity. “Man shall go into the house of his eternity.” The house, then, dear reader, which you inhabit, is not your house; it is a hospital, from which you will soon, and when you least expect, be dislodged. Remember that when the time of death has arrived, you dearest relatives will be the first to banish you from it: and what will be your true house? The house of you body will be a grave, in which it will remain till the day of judgement; but your soul will go to the house of eternity—either to heaven or to hell. St Augustine tells that you are a stranger, a traveller, a spectator.[275] It would be foolishness in a traveller to spend all his patrimony in purchasing a villa or a house in a country through which he merely passes, and which he must leave in a few days. Reflect, says the saint, that in this world you are only on a journey; fix not your affections on what you see; look and pass on, and labour to procure a good house, in which you will have to dwell forever.

Happy you, if you save your soul! Oh! How delightful is heaven! All the princely palaces of this world are but stables compared with the city of paradise, which alone can be called *the city of perfect beauty.* There you will have nothing to desire; for you will be in the society of the saints, of the divine Mother, and of Jesus Christ, and will be free from all fear of evil; in a word, you will live in a sea of delights, and in unceasing joy, which will last forever. *Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.*[276] This joy shall be so great, that at every moment for all eternity it will appear new. But unhappy you, if you are lost! You will be confined in a sea of fire and of torments, in despair, abandoned by all, and without God. And for how long? Perhaps, after the lapse of a hundred thousand years, your pains will have an end? A hundred and a thousand millions of years and ages will pass by, and your hell will always be at its commencement. What are a thousand years compared with eternity? Less than a day which is gone by. *A thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday, which is past.*[277] Would you wish to know the house which will be your dwelling for eternity? It will be that which you merit, and which you choose for yourself by your works.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Then, O Lord! Behold the house which I have deserved by the life which I led. Alas! It is hell, in which, from the first sin I have committed, I ought to dwell, abandoned by Thee, and without having it ever in my power to love Thee. Blessed forever be Thy mercy, which has awaited for me, and which now gives me time to repair the evil I have done. O my God! I will no longer abuse Thy patience. I am sorry above all things for having offended Thee, not so much because I have merited hell, as because I have outraged Thy infinite goodness. Never more, my God! Never more will I rebel against Thee; I desire death rather than offend Thee. O my Sovereign Good! Were I in dell, I could never love Thee, nor couldst Thou love me. I love Thee, and wish to be loved by Thee; this I do not deserve, but Jesus merits it, because he has offered Himself to Thee in sacrifice on the cross, that Thou mightest be able to pardon and love me. Eternal Father! Give me, then, for the sake of Thy Son, the grace to love Thee and to love Thee intensely. I love Thee, O my Father! Who hast given me Thy Son. I love Thee, O Sin of God! Who didst die for me. I love thee, O Mother of Jesus !

who, by the intercession, hast obtained for me time for repentance. O Mary! Obtain for me sorrow for my sins, the love of God, and holy perseverance.

SECOND POINT

MAN CAN SECURE ETERNAL HAPPINESS

If the tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall there it shall be.[278] Wheresoever the tree of your soul will fall at death, there will it remain forever. There is no medium; you will be forever a king a heaven, or a slave in hell; forever in bliss, in an ocean of delights, or forever in despair in a pit of torments. In contemplating the fate of the rich glutton, who was esteemed happy in this world because he was rich, but was afterward confined in hell; and the condition of Lazarus, who was regarded to be miserable because he was poor, but was afterward raised to the glory of heaven. St John Chrysostom exclaimed: “O unhappy felicity, which dragged the rich man to eternal misery! O happy infelicity, which brought the poor Lazarus to the happiness of eternity!”[279]

Of what use is it to torture yourself, as some do, saying: Who knows whether I am among the predestined or not? When the tree is cut down, where does it fall? It falls on the side to which it inclines. Brother, to what side do you incline? What sort of life do you lead? Labour always to incline to the south; preserve your soul in the grace of God; fly from sin, and thus you will save your soul, and will be predestined. And in order to avoid sin, keep always before your eyes the thought of eternity, which St Augustine calls “the great thought”[280] This through has led so many young men to abandon the world and to live in deserts, in order to attend only to the care of the soul; and they have secured eternal life. And, now that they are saved, they will rejoice for all eternity at having sought during life nothing but the salvation of their souls.

Fr M Avila converted a certain lady, who lived at a distance from God, by saying to her: “Madam, reflect on these two words—always and never.” In consequence of a thought which he had one day of eternity, Fr Paul Segneri could not sleep for several nights; and from that day forward gave himself up to a more rigorous life. Drexelius relates that a certain bishop was encouraged to lead a holy life by the thought of eternity, and by repeating within himself, “I stand every moment at the gate of eternity.”[281] A certain monk shut himself up in a cave, an did nothing else but exclaim, *O Eternity! O eternity!*” He who believes in eternity,” said Fr Avila, “and does not become a saint, should be confined in a madhouse.”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God! Have mercy on me. I know that in committing sin I condemned myself to an eternity of torments; and I have been content to resist Thy will, and to incur this punishment. Ah, my Lord! Pardon me; I am sorry for my sins from the bottom of my heart. I do not wish ever more to oppose Thy holy will. How miserable should I be, hadst Thou taken me out of life during my career of sin! I should at this moment be condemned to remain forever in hell, to hate Thy will. But now I love it, and wish forever to love it. Teach me and give me strength henceforth to do Thy will. I will no longer resist Thee. O infinite Goodness! This grace only do I ask: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Enable me to do Thy will perfectly; and I ask nothing more. And what, O my God! Doest Thou desire, but my welfare and my salvation? Ah, eternal Father! Hear my prayer, for the love of Jesus Christ, who has taught me to pray continually to Thee. In his name, I ask this grace—Thy will be done; thy will be done. Happy me if I spend the remainder of my life and if I end my days doing Thy will. O Mary! Happy thou, who hast always done the will of God perfectly! Obtain for me, through thy intercession, the grace to do his will during the remainder of my life.

TJHIRD POINT

MAN SHALL GO INTO THE HOUSE OF HIS ETERNITY

“*Man shall go into the house of his eternity.*”[282] The prophet says man shall go, to show that each shall go to the house to which he wishes to go; he shall not be carried to it, but will go of his own accord. It is certain that God wills the salvation of all men, but he will not save us by force. He has placed before each of us life and death; whichsoever we choose, will be given us.[283] *That which he shall choose, shall be given him.*[284] Jeremias likewise says, that the Lord has given us two ways in which to walk; one the way to heaven, the other the way of hell. *Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.*"[285] The choice rests with us. But how will he who wishes to walk in the way of hell, be able to reach heaven? All sinners wish for salvation, and in the mean time they, by their own choice, condemn themselves to hell, with the hope of being afterward saved. But, who, says St Augustine, can be found, so foolish as to take poison with the hope of escaping death?[286] And still so many Christians, so many fools, kill their souls by sin, saying: I will hereafter think of a remedy. O delusion, which has sent so many souls to hell!

Let us not be so foolish; let us reflect that eternity is at stake. In erecting a house in which he expects to live for the remainder of his life, a man spares no trouble in seeking a beautiful site, and submits to great toil and fatigue in endeavouring to make the house commodious and airy. And why are men so careless when there is question of the house in which they must dwell for eternity? The business for which we labour, says St Eucherius, is eternity; there is not question of a house more or less commodious, more or less airy; but there is a question of being in a place full of delights, among the friends of God, or in a pit of all torments, in the midst of an infamous crowd of abandoned miscreants. And for how long? Not for twenty nor forty years, but for all eternity. This is a great point; it is not a business of little moment; it is an affair of infinite importance. When Thomas More was condemned to die by Henry VIII, his wife Louisa went to him for the purpose of prevailing on him to yield to the wishes of the king. He said to her: "Tell me, Louisa, how many years could I, who am now so old, expect to live?" "You might," answered Louisa, "live for twenty years more." "O foolish woman," rejoined the holy man, "do you want me, for twenty years of life on this earth, to forfeit an eternity of happiness, and to condemn myself to an eternity of torments." (*Sander, Schism, angl.*)

O God! Give me light. If eternity were a doubtful matter, or only resting on a probable opinion, we ought to make every effort in our power to lead a good life, lest, should the doctrine of eternity be true, we should expose ourselves to the danger of being eternally miserable; but it is not doubtful, but infallibly certain; not a mere opinion, but a truth of faith. "Man shall go into the house of his eternity." "Alas!" says St Teresa, "the want of faith is the cause of so many sins, and of the damnation of so many Christians." Let us then always enliven our faith, saying: “Credo in vitam æternam.” I believe that after this life there is another which never ends. And with this thought always before, our eyes, let us adopt the means of securing eternal salvation. Let us frequent the sacrament; let us make meditation every day; and let us reflect on eternal life; let us fly from dangerous occasions. And if necessary, let us leave the world; for, to make ourselves sure of eternal life, no security can be too great.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

There is, then, my God! No medium; I must be forever happy, or forever miserable; either in a sea of joys or in a sea of torments; either forever with Thee in heaven or forever separated at a distance from Thee in hell. And this hell I know for certain I have so often deserved; but I also know for certain that Thou dost pardon all who repent, and that Thou rescuest from hell all who hope in Thee. Of this Thou assurest me. *He shall cry to me. . . . I will deliver him and will glorify him.*[287] Pardon me, then, O Lord! Pardon me immediately, and deliver me from hell. O Sovereign Good! I am sorry above all things for having offended Thee. Restore to me Thy grace as soon as possible, and give me Thy holy love. Were I now in hell, I could never more love Thee; I should have to hate Thee forever. Ah, my God! What evil hast Thou done to me that I should hate Thee? Thou hast loved me unto death. Thou art worthy of infinite love. O Lord! Do not permit me to be ever separated from Thee. I love Thee and will always love Thee. *Who shall separate me from the charity of Christ?*[288] Ah, my Jesus! Sin alone can separate me from Thee. Ah! Through the blood which Thou didst shed for me, do not permit me to be ever separated from Thee. Strike me dead, rather than suffer me to lose Thy love. “Ne permitta me separai a te.” Mary, my Queen and my Mother! Assist me by thy prayers; obtain for me death and a thousand deaths rather than that I should be separated from the love of thy Son.

Consideration XV

THE MALICE OF MORTAL SIN

“I have brought up children and exalted them; but they have despised Me.” *Isaias,* i.2.

FIRST POINT

THE SINNER INSULTS GOD

WHAT does the sinner do when he commits mortal sin? He insults God, he dishonours him, he afflicts him. In the first place, mortal sin is an insult offered to God. The malice of an insult is, as St Thomas says, estimated from the condition of the person who receives, and of the persons who offers, the insult. It is sinful to offend a peasant; it is more criminal to insult a nobleman; but to treat a monarch with contempt and insolence, is a still greater crime. Who is God? *He is Lord of lords, and King of kings.*[289] He is a being, of infinite majesty, before whom all the princes of the earth and all the saints and angels are less than an atom of sand. *As a drop of bucket. . . . as a little dust.*[290] The Prophet Osee adds, that compared with the greatness of God, all creatures are as insignificant as if they did not exist. *All nations,* he says, *are before Him as if they had no being at all.*[291] Such is God; and what is man? He is, according to St Bernard, a heap of worms, the food of worms, by which he shall be soon devoured. *He is miserable, and poor and blind and naked.*[292] Man is a miserable worm that can do nothing: he is so blind that he knows nothing, and so poor and naked that he possesses nothing. And this miserable worm voluntarily insults a God! “Vile dust,” says the same St Bernard, “dares to provoke such tremendous majesty.”[293] The angelic Doctor, then, had just reason to say that the sin of man contains, as it were, an infinite malice. And St Augustine calls sin “an infinite evil.”[294] Hence, were all men and angels to offer themselves to death and annihilation, such an offering would not satisfy for a single in. God punishes sin with the pains of hell; but all theologians teach that this chastisement is less than sin deserves.[295]

And what punishment can be sufficient for a worm who assails his Lord? God is the Lord of all, because he has created all. *All things are in Thy power. . . . Thou hast made heaven and earth and all things.*[296] All creatures obey God. *The winds,* says St Matthew, *and the sea obey Him. Fire, hail, snow, ice, stormy winds, which fulfil His will.*[297] But when man sins, what does he do? He says to God, Lord, I will not serve Thee. *Thou hast broken My yoke; thou hast burst My bonds; thou sadist I will not serve.*[298] The Lord says to him: Seek not revenge; take not that property which belongs to another; abstain from that unchaste gratification. But man answers: I will have revenge; I will take possession of that property; I will indulge in that forbidden pleasure. Like Pharaoh, when Moses, on the part of God, commanded him to allow the people to go into the desert, the sinner answers: *Who is the Lord that I should hear His voice, and let Israel go?*[299] The sinner says the same—Lord, I know Thee not, I will do what I please; in a word, he insults the Lord to his face, and turns his back upon him. Mortal sin is precisely a turning away from God. Of this the Lord himself complains. *Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord; thou art gone backward.*[300] You have, says God, been ungrateful to me; you have turned your back upon me; you are gone backward. God ahs declared that he hates sin. Hence, he cannot but hate the sinner who commits it. *But to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.*[301] In committing sin, man dares to declare himself the enemy of God, and to contend single-handed with the Lord. *He hath,* says Job, *strengthened himself against the Almighty.*[302] What would you say if you saw an insect attack an armed soldier? God is the Omnipotent Being, who, by a rod, has created heaven and earth out of nothing. And if he wished, he can, by another act of his will, destroy all creatures. *The Almighty Lord, who, at a beck, can utterly destroy . . . the whole world.*[303] In consenting to sin, the sinner stretches out his arms against the Lord. *He hath,* says Job, *stretched out his hand against God. He hath run against Him with his neck raised up and is armed with a fat neck.*[304] He raises his neck, that is, he swells with pride and runs to insult God; he arms himself with a fat neck, that is, with ignorance which makes the sinner say, *What harm have I done? What great evil is that sin* *which I have committed? God is merciful—he pardons sinners.* What an insult! What temerity! What blindness.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Behold, O my God! at Thy feet the rash and daring rebel who has had the temerity and the audacity to insult Thee so often to Thy very face, and to turn his back upon Thee. Thou hast said: *Cry to me, and I will hear.*[305] Hell is too little for me; this I already know. But remember, O Lord! that I am more sorry for having offended Thee, who art infinite goodness than I would be for the loss of all my property and of my life. Ah, Lord! Pardon me, and do not permit me ever to offend thee more. Thou hast waited for me that I may forever bless Thy mercy and love Thee. Yes, I bless Thee, I love Thee, and I hope, through the merits of Jesus Christ, that I shall never again be separated from Thy love; Thy love has rescued me from hell. It is by Thy love that I am to be preserved from fin for the future. I thank Thee, my Lord, for the light and the desire Thou givest me to love Thee forever. Ah! take possession of my whole being—of my soul and body—of my powers and senses—of my will and liberty. I am Thine—save me. Thou art my only good; Thou art alone amiable; may Thou also be my only love. Give me fervour in loving Thee. I have offended Thee grievously. Hence it is not enough for me to love Thee, I wish to love Thee ardently, in order to compensate for the injuries I have done Thee. From Thee, who art omnipotent, I hope for this love. I also hope for it through thy prayers, O Mary! which are powerful before God.

SECOND POINT

THE SINNER DISHONOURS GOD

The sinner not only insults, but he also dishonours God. *By the transgression of the law thou dishonoured God.*[306] Yes; for he renounces God’s grace, and for a miserable pleasure he tramples on the friendship of God. Were man to forfeit the divine friendship in order to gain a kingdom, or even the entire world, he should do a great evil; for the friendship of God is more valuable than the world and even a thousand worlds. But for what does the sinner insults the Lord? *Wherefore hat the wicked provoked God?*

[307] For a little earth, for the gratification of revenge, for a beastly pleasure, for the indulgence of vanity or caprice. *They violated Me among My people for a handful of barley and a piece of bread.*[308] When the sinner deliberates whether he will give or refuse his consent to sin, he, as it were, takes in his hand a balance and examines whether the grace of God has more or less weight than the indulgence of his passion, vanity or pleasure; and when he consents to sin, he declares that his passion, vanity or pleasure is of greater value than the friendship of God. Behold the Lord covered with shame by the sinner!

Contemplating the greatness and majesty of God, David said, *Lord, who is like to Thee?*[309]

But seeing sinners compare and prefer a miserable gratification to his friendship, the Lord exclaimed, *To whom have you likened Me, or made Me equal?*[310] Then, he says, was that vile pleasure of greater value than my grace?—*Thou hast cast Me off behind thy back?*[311] Were you to forfeit a hand, or ten dollars, or even a much smaller sum, you would not have committed that sin. Then, says Salvin, is God alone so contemptible in your eyes, that he deserves to be despised for the indulgence of a passion, or for a miserable gratification?

Moreover, by offending God for the sake of his pleasure, the sinner makes that pleasure his god, by making it his last end. St Jerome says: “What a person desires, if he worships it, is to him a god. A vice in the heart is an idol on the altar.”[312] Hence St Thomas says, “If you love delights, delights are your god.”[313] And according to St Cyprian, “Whatever man prefers to God that he makes a god to himself.”[314] When St Jeroboam rebelled against the Lord, he endeavoured to draw the people with him into idolatry. Hence, he placed before them his idols, saying: *Behold thy gods, O Israel.*[315] It is thus the devil acts; he represents a certain pleasure to the sinner, and says: “Make this your god: behold this pleasure, this revenge is your god: adhere to them and forsake the Lord.” And in consenting to sin, the sinner obeys the devil, and in his heart adores as his god the pleasure in which he indulges.[316]

If the sinner dishonours God he surely does not dishonour him in his presence! Oh, he insults and dishonours God to his very face; for God is present in all places. *Do I not full heaven and earth, saith the Lord?*[317] This, sinners know, and still they dare to provoke God before his eyes. *They provoke Me to anger before My face.*[318]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Thou, then, my God, art an infinite good, and I have frequently exchanged Thee for a miserable pleasure, which I had scarcely indulged when it vanished. But Thou, though despised by me, now offerest me pardon if I wish for it and Thou promisest to give me Thy grace, if I repent of having offended Thee. Yes, my Lord! I repent with my whole heart of having outraged Thee so grievously: I detest my sins above all things. Behold! I already return to Thee, as I hope and Thou already receivest me and embracest me as Thy child. I thank thee, O infinite Goodness! But assist me now, and do not permit me ever gain to banish Thee from my heart. Hell will not cease to tempt me; but Thou art more powerful than hell. I know that I shall never more abandon Thee, if I always recommend myself to Thee. The grace, then, which I ask is, that I may always recommend myself to Thee, and that I may always say to Thee, as I now do, Lord, assist me; give me light, give me strength, give me perseverance, give me paradise; but above all, give me Thy love which is the true paradise of souls. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness! And I wish always to love Thee. Hear me for the love of Jesus Christ. Mary, thou art the refuge of sinners; assist by thy prayers, a sinner who wishes to love thy God.

THIRD POINT

THE SINNER AFFLICTS GOD

The sinner insults God, he dishonours God, and fills the heart of God with grief and bitterness. There is nothing more galling than to be treated with ingratitude by a person tenderly loved and highly favoured. Whom does the sinner assail? He insults God who has created him, and has loved him so as to give his blood and his life for his salvation; and by committing mortal sin he banishes God from his heart. God comes to dwell in the soul that loves him. *If any one loves Me . . . My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.*[319] God comes to dwell forever in the soul; he never departs from it, unless he is driven away. According to the Council of Trent, “He deserts not the soul, unless he is deserted.”[320] But, O Lord! Thou knowest that the ungrateful sinner sill, in a few moments, banish Thee; why dost Thou not instantly depart from him? Wilt Thou wait until he expels Thee? Abandon him; depart from him before he offers Thee this great insult. “No,” says the Lord, “I will not depart until he himself chases Me away.”

Then, in consenting to sin, the soul says to God: Lord, depart from me. *The wicked,* says Job, *have said to God, Depart from us.*[321] The sinner, according to St Gregory, says the same, not in words, but acts. The sinner knows that God cannot dwell with sin; in yielding to sin, he sees that God must depart; hence by his conduct he says to God: Since Thou canst not remain in me along with my sin, depart—farewell. And through the very door by which God leaves the soul, the devil enters. *Then he goeth and* taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there.[322] In baptising an infant, the priest commands the devil to depart. “Go out from him, unclean spirit, and make room for the Holy Ghost.”[323] Yes; for the soul, by receiving the grace of God, becomes his temple. *Know you not,* says St Paul, *that you are the temple of God?*[324] But, in consenting to sin, man does the very contrary: he says to God, who is in his soul: “Go out from me, O Lord, make room for the devil.”[325] Of this the Lord complained to St Bridget, saying, that he is treated by the sinner as a king expelled from his throne. “I am like a monarch banished from his own dominions; and in my place the worst of plunderers is chosen.”[326]

What pain should you feel if you received a grievous insult from a person on whom you have lavished favours? This is the pain which you have given to your God who laid down his life for your salvation. The Lord calls heaven and earth to pity him on account of the ingratitude of sinners. *Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, . . . I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have despised Me.*[327] In a word, by their iniquities sinners afflict the heart of God. *But they provoked to wrath and afflicted the Spirit of the Holy One.*[328] God is not susceptible of pain; but were he capable of sorrow, a single mortal sin should, as Far Medina teaches, be sufficient to make him die through pure grief. “Mortal sin would, were it possible, destroy God himself because it would be the cause of infinite sadness in God."[329] Thus, as St Bernard says, "Sin, as far as in it lies, destroys God."[330] In committing mortal sin, the sinner, as it were, gives poison to God, and does all in his power to deprive him of life. *The sinner,* says David, *hath provoked the Lord.*[331] And according to St Paul, he tramples on the Son of God. For he despises all that Jesus Christ has done and suffered in order to take away the sins of the world.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Then, my Redeemer, as often as I have sinned, I have banished Thee from my soul, and have done what would, were it possible for Thee to die, have taken away Thy life. I now hear Thee ask: *What evil have I done Thee? Tell Me. What displeasure have I given Thee that thou shouldst offer Me so many insults?* Lord, Thou hast given me existence, and hast died for me. Behold the evil Thou hast done me. What answer then can I make? I say that I have deserved a thousand hells; Thou hast just ground for sending me to everlasting torments. But remember the love which make Thee die on the cross for my salvation; remember the blood which Thou hast shed for my sake, and have mercy on me. But I know that Thou dost not wish that I despair; on the contrary Thou makest me feel that Thou standest at the door of my heart and that by Thine inspirations Thou knockest for admission. *I stand at the gate, and knock.* Thou tellest me to open—*Open to Me, my sister.* Yes, my Jesus: I banish sin from my soul; I am sorry for it with my whole heart, and I love Thee above all things. Enter, O my love! The gate is open; enter, and never more depart from me. Bind me to Thyself by Thy love, and do not permit me to be ever separated from Thee. No, my God, we will never again be disunited; I embrace Thee and unite Thee to my heart; give me holy perseverance. "Ne permittas me separari a Te." Mary, my Mother, assist me always; pray to Jesus for me; obtain for me this favour, that I may never more lose his grace.

Consideration XVI

THE MERCY OF GOD

> “Mercy exalteth itself above judgement.”—*St James*, ii.13.

FIRST POINT

GOD WAITS FOR THE SINNER

GOOD is naturally diffusive—that is, inclined to communicate its good even to others. But God, who is by nature infinite, goodness, as St Leo expresses himself,[332] has an infinite desire to impart his own felicity to us; and therefore his inclination is, not to chastise, but to show mercy to all. To punish is, according to Isaias, a work opposed to the inclination of God. *He shall be angry . . . that he may do His work, His strange work: His work is strange to Him.*[333] And when the Lord chastise in this life, he does it in order to show mercy in the next. *O God! . . . Thou hast been angry, and hast had mercy on us.*[334] He appears angry that we may enter into ourselves and detest our sins. *Thou hast shown Thy people hard things; Thou hast made us drink the wine of sorrow.*[335] And when he sends us any chastisement, he does it because he loves us, and wishes to deliver us from eternal punishment. *Thou hast given a warning to them that fear Thee that they may flee from before the bow, that Thy beloved may be delivered.*[336] And who can sufficiently admire and praise the mercy of God toward sinners in waiting for them, in calling them, and in receiving them when they return? Oh! How great is the mercy of God in waiting for our repentance! My brother, when you offended God, he could have struck you dead; but he waited for you, and instead of chastising you, he conferred favours upon, he preserved your life, and provided for you. He pretended not to see your sins that you might repent. *Thou overlookest the sin of men for the sake of penance.*[337] But, O Lord, how does it happen that Thou canst not bear to behold a single sin, and beholdest so many of them in silence? *Thou canst not look on iniquity; why lookest Thou upon them that do unjust things, and holdest Thy peace?*[338] Thou beholdest the blasphemer, the unchaste, the vindictive man, multiplying iniquities from day to day; and Thou dost not chastise him; and why so much patience. *Therefore the Lord waiteth that He may have mercy on thee.*[339] God waits for sinners, that they may amend and that thus he may pardon and save them.

St Thomas says that all creatures, fire, the earth, air, water, by a natural instinct, would wish to punish and to take vengeance on the injuries done to their Creator.[340] But God in his mercy restrains them. But, O Lord! Thou waitest for these impious wretches that they may see their wickedness; but dost not Thou see that they ungratefully take advantage of Thy mercy to offend Thee still more? *Thou hast been favourable to the nation: Thou hast been favourable to the nation; art Thou glorified?*[341] And why so much patience? *Because God wills not the death of the sinner; but that he be converted and live.*[342] O patience of God! St Augustine goes so far as to say that God were he not God, would be unjust on account of his excessive patience toward sinners.[343] To wait for those who abuse patience to become more insolent, appears to be an injustice to the divine honour. "We sin," continues the holy Doctor "we adhere to sin."[344] Some make peace with sin, and sleep in sin for months and years. "Gaudemus de peccato"—*We rejoice at sin;* others go so far as to boast of their wickedness; and Thou art appeased.[345] We provoke Thee to anger—Thou invitest us to mercy.[346] We appear to be engaged with God in a contest in which we labour to provoke him to chastise our guilt; and he invites us to pardon.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my Lord! I know that I deserve to be at this moment in hell. Hell is my house.[347] But through Thy mercy, I am not now in that place of woe, but I am here at Thy feet, and fell that Thou wishes and commandest me to love Thee. *Thou shall love the Lord thy God.*[348] I hear Thee tell me that Thou wilt pardon me if I repent of the injuries I have done Thee. Yes, my God: since Thou wishest me, a miserable rebel against Thy majesty, to love Thee, I love Thee with my whole heart, and I feel more regret for the outrages I have offered to Thee, than for any evil that could have befallen me. Ah!

Enlighten me, O inifinite Goodness; make me sensible of the wrongs I have done Thee. I will no longer resist Thy calls. I will give no more displeasure to a God who has loved me so tenderly, who has pardoned me so often and with so much love. Ah! That I had never offended Thee, my Jesus ; pardon me, and grant that, from this day forward, I may love nothing but thee: that I may live only for Thee who didst die for me; that I may suffer for Thy love, since Thou hast suffered so much for the love of me. Thou hast loved me from eternity: Grant that for eternity I may burn with Thy love. I hope for all things, O my Saviour, through Thy merits; I trust also in thee, O Mary, save me by thy intercession.

SECOND POINT

GOD CALLS THE SINNER

Consider, moreover, the mercy of God in calling the sinner to repentance. When Adam rebelled against the Lord, and hid himself from his face, behold, God, having lost Adam, goes in search of him, and calls him as it were with tears, *Adam, where art thou?*[349] "These," says Fr Pereira in his commentary on this passage, "are the words of a father seeking a lost son."[350] My brother, God has often done the same to you. You fled from God, and he sought after you, calling you at one time by his inspiration, at another by remorse of conscience, now by sermons, again by tribulations, and by the death of your friends. Speaking of you, Jesus appears to *say I have laboured with crying: my jaws are become hoarse.*[351] My son, I have almost lost my voice in calling you to repentance. Remember, O sinners, says St Teresa, that the Lord who will one day be your Judge, is now calling you to return to him.

Dearly beloved Christian, how often have you been deaf to the calls of God? You deserved that he should call you no more; but your God has not ceased to call you, because he wishes to make peace with you, and to save you. Who was it that called you? A God of Infinite Majesty. And what were you but a miserable fetid worm! Why did he call you? For no other purpose than to restore to you the life of grace which you had lost? *Return ye and live.*[352] To acquire the divine grace, it would be but little to live in a desert during your entire life. God offered to give you his grace at each moment, if you wished to obtain it by making an act of contrition and you refused. And after all this, God has not abandoned you, he ahs gone in search of you, as it were weeping, and saying: Son, why will you bring yourself to perdition? *And why will you die, O house of Israel?*[353]

When man commits a mortal sin, he banishes God from his soul. The wicked have said to God, *Depart from us.*[354] But what does God do? He places himself at the door at that ungrateful heart. *Behold, I stand at the gate and knock.*[355] He even appears to entreat the soul to allow him to enter, *Open to Me, my sister.*[356] He grows weary praying for admission. *I am weary of entreating thee.*[357] Yes, says St Denis, the Aeropagite, God follows sinners like a despised lover, entreating them not to destroy their souls.[358] And this precisely the Apostle meant when he wrote to his disciples. *For Christ, I beseech you to be reconciled to God.*[359] In explaining this passage, St John Chrysostom makes a beautiful reflection "Christ himself entreats you; but what does he entreat you to do? To be reconciled with God; for it is not God that acts like an enemy, but you."[360] The saint's meaning is, that the sinner has not to labour in order to move God to make peace with him; for he, and not God, refuses peace.

Ah! This good Lord goes every day in search of so many sinners, continually saying to them: Ungrateful souls do not fly away any longer; tell me why you fly away from me? I love your welfare, and desire nothing else than to make you happy. Why will you destroy yourselves? But, O Lord, what is it Thou dost? Why so much patience and so much love toward these rebels? What good dost Thou expect from them? It redounds but little to Thy honour to show such an excess of love for the miserable worms that fly away from Thee. *What is a man that Thou shouldst magnify him? Or why dost Thou set Thy heart upon him?*[361]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Behold, O Lord at Thy feet an ungrateful soul, imploring mercy. Father, forgive me. I call Thee Father, because Thou wishest me thus to call Thee. My Father, pardon me. I do not deserve pity, for I have treated Thee with ingratitude because Thou hast been bountiful to me. Ah, my God! Through that goodness which did not allow Thee to abandon me when fled from Thee, receive me, now that I return to Thee. Give me O my Jesus, a great sorrow for the offences I have offered to Thee, and give me the kiss of peace. I am sorry above all things for the injuries I have done Thee: I detest and abhor them, and I united this hatred and abhorrence to that which Thou, O my Redeemer didst feel for them in the garden of Gethsemane. Ah! Pardon me through the merits of that blood which Thou hast shed for me in the garden. I promise firmly never more to depart from Thee, and to banish from my heart every affection which is not for Thee. My Jesus, my love! I love Thee above all things: I wish always to love thee, and love Thee alone; give me strength to execute this good will, make me all Thine. O Mary, my hope after Jesus! Thou art the Mother of mercy: pray to God for me, and have pity on me.

THIRD POINT

GOD RECEIVES THE SINNER WITH KINDNESS

The princes of the earth disdain even to look at the rebel who comes to ask pardon; but God acts not in this manner with us: *He will not turn away His face from you, if you return to Him.*[362] God cannot turn away his face from those who return and cast themselves at his feet; no, for he himself invites them, and promises to receive them as soon as they come. *Return to me, said the Lord, and I will receive thee.*[363] *Turn to Me . . . and I will turn to you, saith the Lord of Hosts.*[364] Oh! With what love and tenderness does God embrace the sinner that returns to Him. This love and tenderness Jesus Christ wished to give us to understand by the parable of the sheep which the shepherd, when he found it, placed on his shoulders. *Doth he not lay it upon his shoulder, rejoicing; and coming home, call together his friends and neighbours, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost.*[365] The Redeemer adds: There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance.[366] This tenderness the Saviour declared more fully in the parable of the prodigal son; in which he tells us that he is the father who, when he saw his lost son returning, runs to meet him, and before his son utters a word, embraces and kisses him, and in embracing him, almost swoons away through tenderness of consolation. *And running to him he fell upon his neck and kissed him.*[367]

The Lord promises that, if sinners repent, he will even forget their sins, as if they had never offended him. *If the wicked do penance. . . . living he shall live . . . I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done.*[368] He even goes so far as to say, *Come and accuse Me, saith the Lord; if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow.*[369] As if he said: *Sinners, come and accuse Me;* if I do not pardon you, reprove me, upbraid me with having been unfaithful to my promises. But no; God knows not how to despise a humble and contrite heart.

The Lord glories in showing mercy and granting pardon to sinners. *And therefore shall He be exalted sparing you.*[370] And how long does he deter pardon? Not an instant: he grants it immediately. *Weeping,* says the Prophet Isaias, *thou shalt not weep; He will surely have pity on thee.*[371] Sinners, exclaims the prophet, you have not long to weep; at the first tear the Lord will be moved to pity: *At the voice of thy cry, as soon as He shall hear, He will answer thee.*[372] God does not treat us as we treat him: we are deaf to the calls of God: but as soon as he shall hear, he will answer thee; the very instant you repent and ask forgiveness, God answers and grants your pardon.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my God! Against whom have I rebelled? Against Thee who art so good, against Thee that hast created me, and died for me. After so many acts of treason, Thou hast borne with me. Ah! The thought of the patience Thou hast had with me ought to make me live always on fired with Thy love. And who would have borne so long as Thou hast the injuries which I have done Thee? Miserable shall I be, should I ever again offend Thee, and condemn myself to hell! I already see that Thy mercy can bear with me no longer. I am sorry, O Sovereign Good, for having offended Thee. I love Thee with my whole heart: I am resolved to give Thee all the remainder of my life. Hear me, O Eternal Father, through the merits of Jesus Christ: give me holy perseverance and Thy love: hear me, O my Jesus! For the sake of the blood which Thou hast shed for me. We therefore beseech Thee; assist Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.[373]O Mary, my Mother! Look upon me, “turn thy eyes of mercy to us,” and draw me entirely to God.

Consideration XVII

ABUSE OF DIVINE MERCY

> "Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance."—*Rom.*ii.4. .

FIRST POINT

GOD IS MERCIFUL, BUT HE IS ALSO JUST

WE read in the parable of the cockle that the servants of the good man of the house, seeing that it had grown up in the field along with the wheat, wished to pluck it up. *Will thou,* said they that *we go and gather it up?*[374] No, replied the master; suffer it to grow up, and then it shall be gathered and cast into the fire. *In the time of the harvest, I will say to the rappers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it in bundles to burn.*[375] In this parable we see, on the one hand, the patience with which the Lord treats sinners and on the other, the rigour with which he chastises the obstinate. St Augustine says that the devil deludes men in two ways*, by despair and hope.*[376] After the sinner has offended God, the enemy, by placing before his eyes the terror of divine justice, tempts him to despair; but before he sins, the devil encourages him to sin with the hope of divine mercy. Hence the saint gives to all the following advice: "After sin, hope for mercy; before sin, fear justice."[377] He, who abuses God's mercy to offend him, is undeserving of mercy. God shows mercy to those who fear him, but not to those who avail themselves of his mercy to banish the fear of God from their hearts. Abulensis says that he who offends justice may have recourse to mercy; but to whom can he have recourse, who offends mercy itself?

It is hard to find a sinner so sunk in despair as to wish for his own damnation. Sinners wish to sun, without losing the hope of salvation. They sin and say: God is merciful; I will commit this sin, and will afterward confess it. They say, observes St Augustine, "God is good, I will do what I please.”[378] Behold, the language of sinners; but O God, such too was the language of so many who are now in hell.

Say not, says the Lord, that the mercies of God are great: that however enormous your sins may be, you will obtain pardon by an act of contrition. *And say not: The mercy of the Lord is great: He will have mercy on the multitude of my sins.*[379] Say it not, says the Lord; and why? *For mercy and wrath quickly come from Him, and His wrath looketh upon sinners.*[380] The mercy of God is infinite; but the acts of his mercy or his mercies are finite. God is merciful but he is also just. “I am just and merciful,” said Our Lord to St Bridget; “but sinners regard me only as merciful.”[381] St Basil writes that sinners wish to consider God only as good and merciful. To bear with those who avail themselves of the mercy of God to offend him, would not, says Fr M.Avila, be mercy, but a want of justice. Mercy is promised, not to those who abuse it, but those who fear God. *And His mercy,* said the divine mother, *to those that fear Him.*[382] Against the obstinate, threats of just retribution have been pronounced; says St Augustine, as God is not unfaithful to his promises, so he is not a liar in his threats.[383]

Beware, says St John Chrysostom, when the devil, not God, promises you divine mercy that he may induce you to commit sin. “Never attend to that dog that promises to you the mercy of God.”[384] “Woe,” says St Augustine, “to him who hopes in order to sin.”[385] Oh! How many, says the saint, has this vain hope deluded and brought to perdition! “They who have been deceived by this shadow of vain hope cannot be numbered.”[386] Miserable the man who abuses the mercy of God to offer new insults to his majesty! St Bernard says that Lucifer’s chastisement was accelerated, because he rebelled against God with the hope of escaping punishment. King Manasses sinned: he afterward repented, and obtained pardon. His son Ammon, seeing that his father’s sins were so easily forgiven, abandoned himself to a wicked life with the hope of pardon, but for Ammon there was no mercy. Hence, St John Chrysostom asserts that Judas was lost because he sinner, through confidence in the benignity of Jesus Christ.[387] In fine, God bears, but he does not bear forever. Were God to bear forever with sinners, no one would be damned; but the most common opinion is that the greater part of adults, even among Christians, are lost. *Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are that go in thereat.*[388]

According to St Augustine, he who offends God with the hope of pardon "is a scoffer, not a penitent."[389] But St Paul tells us that God does not allow himself to be mocked.[390] To continue to offend God as often and as long as the sinner pleases, and afterward to gain heaven, would be to mock God. *For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap*.[391] He that sows sin, has no reason to hope for anything else than chastisement and hell. The net with which the devil drags to hell almost all Christians who are damned, is the delusion by which he leads them into sin with the hope of pardon. Sin freely, he says to them; for, after all your iniquities, you will be saved. But God curses the man that sins with the hope of mercy. The hope of sinners after sin is pleasing to God, when it is accompanied with repentance; but the hope of the obstinate is an abomination to the Lord.[392] As the conduct of a servant who insults his master because he is good and merciful, irritates the master, so such hope provokes God to inflict vengeance.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God! I have been one of those who have offended Thee because Thou wert bountiful to me. Ah, Lord! Wait for me, do not abandon me. I am sorry, O infinite Goodness! For having offended Thee and for having so much abused Thy patience. I thank Thee for having waited for me till now. Henceforth I will never more betray Thee as I have hitherto done. Thou hast borne with me so long, that Thou mightest one day see me a lover of Thy goodness. Behold this day has, I hope arrived: I love Thee above all things, and esteem Thy grace more than all the kingdoms of the world: rather than lose it, I am ready to forfeit life a thousand times. My God, for the love of Jesus Christ, give me holy perseverance till death, along with Thy holy love. Do not permit me ever again to betray Thee, or to cease to love Thee. Mary! Thou art my hope: obtain for me this gift of perseverance and I ask nothing more.

SECOND POINT

THE SINNER ABANDONED BY GOD

Some will say: God has hitherto shown me so many mercies; I hope he will treat me with the same mercy for the future. But I answer: And will you insult God again, because he has been so merciful to you? Then, says St Paul, do you thus despise the mercy and patience of God? Do you not know that the Lord has borne with you to this moment, not that you may continue to offend him, but that you may weep over the evil you have done? *Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and patience and long-suffering? Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance?*[393] If through confidence in the divine mercy you continue to sin, the Lord will cease to show mercy. *Except you be converted,* says David, *he will brandish his sword.*[394] *Revenge is mine, and I will repay thee in due time.*[395] God waits; but when the time of chastisement arrives, he waits no longer, but executes vengeance.

Therefore the Lord waiteth, that he may have mercy on you.[396] God waits for sinners that they may amend: but when he sees that the time given to bewail their sins is employed in multiplying crimes, he then calls the very time to judge them. *He hath called against me the time.*[397] “The very time,” says Gregory, “comes to judge.”[398] Thus the very time given, and the very mercies shown to sinners, will serve to make God chastise them with greater rigour, and abandon them sooner. *We would have cured Babylon, but she is not healed: let us forsake her.*[399] And how does God abandon sinners? He either sends them a sudden death, and makes them die in sin, or he despises them of his abundant graces, and leaves them with the sufficient grace, with which they can, but will not, save their souls. The blindness of their understanding, the hardness of their heart, the evil habits which they have contracted, will render their salvation morally impossible; and thus they will be, if not absolutely, at lest morally abandoned. *I will take away the hedge, thereof, and it shall be wasted.*[400] Oh! What a chastisement! When the master of the vineyard takes away its hedges, and leaves it open to men and to beasts, does not show that he abandons it? It is thus that God acts when he abandons the soul: he takes away the hedge of holy fear, and of remorse of conscience, and leaves it in darkness. And then all the monsters of crime will enter the soul. *Thou hast appointed darkness, and it is night: in it shall all the beasts of the woods go about.*[401] And the sinner, abandoned in that obscurity, will despise the grace of God, heaven, admonitions and excommunications; and will make a jest of his own damnation. The wicked man, when he is come into the depth of sins, contemneth.[402]

God will not chastise the sinner in this life; but, not to be punished in this world will be the greatest chastisement of the wicked. *Let us have pity on the wicked, but he will not learn justice.*[403] On this passage St Bernard says, "This mercy I do not wish for: it is above all wraths."[404] Oh! What a chastisement is it when God abandons the sinner into the hands of his sins, and appears not to demand any further account of them! *According to the multitude of his wrath he will not seek him.*[405] God appears not to be enraged against sinners. *My jealousy shall depart from you, and I will cease and be angry no more.*[406]—He appears to allow them all that they desire in this life. *I let them go according to the desires of their heart.*[407] Miserable the sinner that prospers in this life! His prosperity is a sign that God waits to make him a victim of his justice for eternity. *Why,* said Jeremias, *doth the way of the wicked prosper?* He answers: *Gather them together as sheep for a sacrifice.*[408] There is no punishment greater than that which God inflicts, when he permits a sinner to add sin to sin. *Add thou iniquity upon their iniquity . . . let them be blotted out of the book of the living.*[409] In explaining these words, Bellarmine says that "there is no punishment greater than when sin is the punishment of sin?"[410] It would be a smaller punishment to be struck dead by the Lord after their first sin; fir, by dying afterward they will suffer as many hells as they have committed sins.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My God! I know that in my miserable state I have deserved to be deprived of Thy grace and light; but seeing the light which Thou now givest me, and feeling that Thou now callest me to repentance, I have just reason to hope that Thou hast not as yet abandoned me. And since, O Lord! Thou hast not abandoned me, multiply Thy mercies on my soul, increase Thy light, increase my desire to serve and love Thee. Change me, O omnipotent God! And from being a traitor and rebel, make me a great lover of Thy goodness, that I may one day enter heaven to praise Thy mercies for all eternity. Thou dost then wish to pardon me, and I desire nothing but the pardon of my sins and the gift of Thy love. I am sorry, O infinite Goodness, for having so often offended Thee. I love Thee, O Sovereign Good! Because Thou commandest me to love Thee; I love Thee, because Thou well deservest my love. Ah, my Redeemer, through the merits of Thy blood, gives Thy love to a sinner whom Thou hast loved so ardently, and whom Thou hast borne with so patiently for so many years: I hope for every grace from Thy mercy. I hope to love Thee always till death, and for eternity. *The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever.*[411] I will praise Thy mercy, O my Jesus. I will forever praise thy mercy, O Mary, who hast obtained for me so many graces; I acknowledge that I have received them all through thy intercession. Continue, O my Mother to assist me by thy prayers and to obtain for me holy perseverance.

THIRD POINT

UNFORTUNATE IS HE WHO ALLOWS THE TIME OF MERCY TO PASS BY

It is related in the life of Fr Louis La Nusa, that in Palermo there were two friends, who went one day to take a walk. One of them, called Cæsar, who was a comedian, seeing the other oppressed with melancholy, said: How long is it since you were at confession? Is it on account of your long absence from the sacraments that you are so much troubled? Listen to me: “Fr La Nusa told me one day that God gave me twelve years to live, and that if, within that period, I did not amend, I should die an unhappy death. I have since travelled through so many parts of the world; I have had many attacks of sickness, one of which brought me to the brink of death; but, in this month the twelve years will be completed, and I now feel better than in any part of my past life.” He then invited his friend to hear, on Saturday, a new comedy which he had composed. But what happened? On Saturday, the 24th November, 1688, as he was going to the stage, he was seized with apoplexy, and died suddenly. He expired in the arms of a female comedian, and thus the comedy ended. But let us make the application to ourselves. Brother, when the devil tempts you again to sin, if you wish to be lost, you have it in your power to commit sin; but do not then say that you wish to be saved. As long as you wish to sin, regard yourself as damned, and imagine that God writes the sentence of your damnation, and that he says to you: ?[412] Ungrateful soul, what more ought I to do for you, that I have not done? But, since you wish to be lost, go into eternal fire; the fault is your own.

But you will say, Where then is the mercy of God? Ah, unhappy soul? Do you not feel that God has shown you mercy in bearing with you for so many years, after so many sins? You should remain forever prostrate on the earth, thanking him for his mercy, and saying: *The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed?*[413] By committing a single mortal sin, you have been guilty of a greater crime that if you have trampled under foot the first monarch in the world. You have been guilty of so many mortal sins, that if you had committed against your brother the injuries which you have offered to God, he would not have borne with you. God has not only waited for you, but he has so often called you and invited you to pardon. *What is there that I ought to have done more?*[414] If God had stood in need of you, or if you had conferred a great favour upon him, could he show you greater mercy? If, then, you offend him again, you will change his mercy into wrath and vengeance.

It, after the master had given it another year to produce fruit, the fruitless fig-tree still remained barren, who could expect that the Lord would allowed it more time, or would not have cut it down? Listen then, to the admonition of St Augustine: "O fruitless tree! The axe is deferred; be not secure; *you will be cut down.*"[415] Your punishment, says the saint, has been delayed, but not taken away; if you abuse any longer the divine mercy, you shall be cut down: in the end vengeance will fall upon you. What do you wait for? Will you wait till God sends you to hell? But should he send you there, you already know that your ruin is irreparable! The Lord is silent, but he is not silent forever: when the time of vengeance arrives he no longer holds his peace. *These things hast thou done, and I was silent. Thou thoughtest unjustly that I should be like to thee. I will reprove thee, and set before thy face*.[416] I will place before your eyes the mercies I have shown you, and will make these very mercies judge and condemn you.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God, unhappy me, should I henceforth be unfaithful to Thee, and betray Thee again after the light Thou now givest me. This light is a sign that Thou wishest to pardon me. I repent, O Sovereign Good, of all the injuries I have done Thee because they have offended Thee, who art infinite goodness. In Thy blood I hope for pardon and I hope for it with certainty:

but should I again turn my back upon Thee, I would deserve a hell created on purpose for myself. And what makes me tremble, O God of my soul! Is, that I may again lose Thy grace. I have so often promised to be faithful to Thee, and have afterward rebelled against Thee. Ah, Lord! Do not permit it; do not ever abandon me to the great misfortune of seeing myself again Thy enemy. Send my any chastisement, but not this. *Do not permit me to be separated from Thee*. Shouldst Thou see that I shall again offend Thee, strike me dead, rather than permit me so great an evil? I am content to suffer the most cruel death, sooner than have to weep over the misery of being again deprived of Thy grace. *Do not permit me to be separated from Thee*. I repeat this prayer, O my God: grant that I may repeat it always. *Do not permit me to be separated from Thee?*[417] I love Thee, my dear Redeemer! I do not wish to be separated from Thee. Through the merits of Thy death, give me an ardent love, which will bind me so closely to Thee, that I may never more be able to dissolve the union. O Mary, my Mother, I fear that if I again offend God, thou too wilt abandon me. Assist me then, by thy prayers: obtain for me holy perseverance and the love of Jesus Christ.

Consideration XVIII

THE NUMBER OF SINS

> “Because sentence is not speedily pronounced against the evil, the Children of men commit evil without fear”—*Eccles.*viii.II.

FIRST POINT

THE MEASURE IS DETERMINED FOR EACH ONE

If God instantly chastises the man who insults him, we certainly should not see him so much outraged as we do at present. But because the Lord does not instantly punish sinners, but waits for them, they are encouraged to offend him the more. It is necessary to understand that, though God waits and bears, he does not wait and bear forever. It is the opinion of many holy Fathers—of St Basil, St Jerome, St Ambrose, St Cyril of Alexandria, St John Chrysostom, St Augustine and others—that as God (according to the words of Scripture, *Wis. xi. 21, Thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number and weight*)[418] has fixed for each the number of his days, the degrees of health and talent which he will give to him, so he has also determined the number of sins that he will pardon; and when this number is completed, he will pardon no more. Eusebius of Cæsarea says the same thing: “God waits up to a certain number and afterwards abandons;” and to speak also the above-mentioned Fathers.

And these Fathers have not spoken at random, but according to the sacred Scriptures. In one place the Lord says that he restrained his vengeance against the Amorrrithes, because the number of their sins was not as yet filled up: *For as yet the iniquities of the Amorrithes are not at the full.*[419] In another place he says: *I will not add any more to have mercy on the house of Israel.*[420] Again he says: *All the men who have tempted Me ten times shall not see the land.*[421] *Thou hast,* says Job, *sealed up my offences as it were in* *a bag.*[422] Sinners keep no account of their sins; but God keeps an account of them, the when the harvest is ripe, that is, when the number of sins is completed, he may take vengeance on them. *Put ye in the sickles; for the harvest is ripe.*[423] In another place he says: *Be not without fear about sin forgiven, and add not sin to sin.*[424] As if he said: O sinner! You must tremble even on account of the sins which I have forgiven you; for if you add another, it may happen that this new sin, along with those which have been pardoned, may complete the number, and then there will be no more mercy for you. *The Lord waiteth patiently, that when the day of judgement shall come, he may punish them in the fullness of their sins.*[425] God waits till the measure of iniquities is filled up, and then he chastise the sinner.

Of such chastisements there are many examples in the Scriptures. Saul disobeyed God a second time, and was abandoned. When he entreated Samuel to intercede for him, saying: *Bear, I beseech thee, my sin, and return with me that I may adore the Lord.*[426] Samuel answered: *I will not return with thee, because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee.*[427] We have also the example of Balthasar, who, after having profaned the vessels of the temple at table, saw a handwriting on the wall—*Mene, Theccel, Phares.* Daniel came, and in explaining these words, among other things, said: *Thou art weighted in the balance, and art found wanting.*[428] By these words he gave the king to understand that in the balance of divine justice the weight of his sins had made the scale descent. *The same night Balthasar, the Chaldean king, was killed.*[429] Oh! How many miserable sinners meet with a similar fate! They live many years, multiplying sins; but when the number is filled up, they are struck dead, and cast into hell! *They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell.*[430] There are some who spend their time in investigating the number of the stars, the number of the angels, or the number of years which each one will live. But who can discover the number of sins which God will pardon each individual? We should, therefore, tremble. My brother, it may be that God will pardon you no more after the first criminal pleasure which you indulge, after the first thought to which you consent, or after the first sin which you commit.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God! I thank Thee. How many for fewer sins than I have committed are now in hell! For them there is no pardon—no hope. And I am still living: I am not in hell: but, if I wish, I can hope for pardon and for Paradise. I am sorry above all things for all my sins, because by them I have offended Thee, who art infinite goodness. Eternal Father, *look on the face of Thy Christ?*[431] Behold Thy Son dead on the cross for my sake; and through his merits have mercy on me. I wish to die rather than offend Thee any more. When I consider the sins I have committed, and he graces Thou hast bestowed upon me, I have just reason to fear that, if I commit another sin, the measure will be completed, and I shall be damned. Ah! Assist me by Thy grace; from Thee I hope for light and strength to be faithful to Thee. And if Thou seest that I should again offend Thee, take me out of my life, not that I hope to be in a state of grace. My God! I love Thee above all things, and I feel a greater fear of incurring Thy enmity than of death. For Thy mercy's sake do not permit me any more to become Thy enemy. Mary, my Mother, has pity on me; assist me; obtain for me holy perseverance.

SECOND POINT

THE MEASURE IS NOT THE SAME FOR ALL

Some sinners say: But God is merciful. Who, I ask, denies it? The mercy of God is infinite; but though his mercy is infinite, how many are cast into hell every day? *The Lord hath sent Me to heal the contrite heart.*[432] God heals those who have a good will. He pardons sins, but he cannot pardon the determination to commit sin. These sinners will also say: I am young. You are young; but God counts not years, but sins. The number of sins which God pardons is not the same for all: some he pardons a hundred: others a thousand sins: others he send to hell after the second sin. How many has the Lord condemned to eternal misery after the first sin? St Gregory[433] relates that a child of five years, for uttering a blasphemy was condemned to hell. The Most Holy Virgin revealed to that great servant of God, Benedicta of Florence, that a girl of twelve years old was damned after her first sin. A boy of eight years died after his first tin, and was lost. In the Gospel of St Matthew we find that the Lord instantly cursed the fig-tree the first time he saw it without fruit. *May no fruit grow on thee forever. And immediately the* *fig-tree withered away.*[434] Another time God said: For three crimes of Damascus, and for four, I will not convert it.[435] Perhaps some daring sinner may have the temerity to demand an account of God why he pardons some three sins, but not four. In this we must adore the judgements of God, and say with the apostle: *O the depth of the riches of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgement and unsearchable His ways!*[436] "The Lord," says St Augustine, "knows whom he spares and whom he does not spare. To those who receive mercy he gives it gratuitously; from those who do not receive mercy, it is justly withheld."[437]

The obstinate sinner may say: But I have so often offended God, and he has pardoned me; I also hope he will pardon me the sin which I intend to commit. But, I ask, must God spare you forever, because he has not hitherto chastised you? The measure shall be filled up, and vengeance shall come. Samson continued to allow himself to be deluded by Dalila, hoping that, as on former occasions, he would escape from the Philistines. *I will go out as I did before, and shake myself.*[438] But at last he was taken, and lost his life. *Say not, I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me? Say not,* says the Lord, *I have committed so many sins, and God has not chastise me; for the Most High is a patient rewarder,*[439] that is, he will one day come and punish all; and the greater the mercy which he will have shown, the more severe shalt be the chastisement which he will inflict. St Chrysostom says that God should be dreaded more when he bears with the obstinate sinner, than when he punishes him suddenly.[440] Because, according to St Gregory, if they remain ungrateful, God punishes with the greatest rigour those whom he waits for with the greatest patience.[441] And it often happens, adds the saint that they whom God has borne with for a long time, die unexpectedly, and without time for repentance.[442] And the greater the light which God will have given, the greater will be your blindness and obstinacy in sin. *For it had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than after they have known it, to turn back.*[443] And St Paul says that it is morally impossible for a soul that sins after being enlightened, to be again converted. *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gifts . . . and are fallen away, to be renewed to penance.*[444]

The threats of the Lord against those who are deaf to his calls are truly alarming. *Because I have called, and you have refused . . . I also will laugh at your destruction, and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared.*[445] Mark the words—I also: they mean that as the sinner has mocked God by his confessions, by promising fidelity, and afterward betraying him: so the Lord will mock him at the hour of death. The wise man says: *As a dog that returned to the vomit, so is the fool that repeateth his folly.*[446] In explaining this text, Denis the Carthusian says, that as a dog that eats what he has just vomited is an object of disgust and abomination, so the sinner, who relapses into sins which he has detested in the tribunal of penance, renders himself hateful in the sight of God.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Behold me, O my God, at Thy feet. I am that disgusting dog that has so often eaten the forbidden apples, which I before detested. I do not deserve mercy; but O my Redeemer, the blood which Thou hast shed for me encourages and obliges me to hope for it. How often have I offended Thee and Thou hast pardoned me! I promised never more to offend Thee, and I have afterward returned to the vomit and Thou hast again pardoned me. What do I wait for? Is it that Thou mayest send me to hell or that Thou mayest abandon me into the band of my sins, which would be a greater punishment than hell? No, my God! I wish to amend and in order to be faithful to Thee, I will put all my confidence in Thee. I will, whenever I am tempted, always and instantly have recourse to Thee. Thitherto I have trusted in my promises and resolutions and have neglected to recommend myself to Thee in my temptations: this has been the cause of my ruin. Henceforth Thou shalt be my hope and my strength and thus I shall be able to do all things. *I can do all things in Him that strengthened me.*[447] Give me grace then, O my Jesus, through Thy merits, to recommend myself to Thee and to ask Thy aid in my wants. I love Thee, O Sovereign Good, amiable above every good: I wish to love Thee alone; but it is from Thee I must receive aid to love Thee. O Mary, my Mother, do thou also assist me by thy intercession; keep me under thy protection, and make me always invoke thee when I am tempted. Thy name shall be my defence.

THIRD POINT

WE MUST ALWAYS FEAR

My son, hast thou sinned? Do so no more; but, for thy former sins, pray that they may be forgiven thee.[448] Behold, dear Christian, the advice which your good Lord gives you because he desires your salvation. Son, offend me no more: but from this day forward be careful to ask pardon for your past transgressions. My brother, the more you have offended God, the more you should tremble at the thought of offending him again; for the next sin which you commit will make the balance of divine justice descend, and you will be lost. I do not say absolutely that after another sin there will be no more forgiveness for you; for this I do not know: but I say that it may happen. Hence, when you are tempted, say within yourself: Perhaps God will pardon me no more, and I shall be lost. Tell me; were it probable that certain food contained poison, would you eat it? If you had reason to think that on a certain road your enemies lay in wait to take away your life, would you pass that way as long as you could find another more free from danger? And what security, or even what probability, have you that if you relapse into sin, you will afterward repent sincerely of it; and that you will not return again to the vomit? What just reason have you to believe that God will not strike you dead in the very act of sin, or that, after your sin, he will not abandon you.

If you purchase a house, you spare no pains to obtain all the securities necessary to guard against the loss of your money; if you take medicine, you are careful to assure yourself that it cannot injure you; if you pass over a torrent, you cautiously avoid all danger of falling into it; and for a miserable gratification, for a beastly pleasure, you will risk your eternal salvation, saying: I expect o go to confession after this sin. But when, I ask, will you go to confession? Perhaps on Sunday. And who has promised that you will live till Sunday? Perhaps you intend to go to confession tomorrow? But who promised you tomorrow? “Do you cling,” says St Augustine, “to a day, who are not sure of an hour?”[449]How can you promise yourself that you will go to confession tomorrow, when you know not whether you will be among the living in another hour? “He,” continues the saint, “who has promised pardon to penitents has not promised tomorrow to sinners; perhaps he will give it, and perhaps he will not.”[450] If you now commit sin, God, perhaps will give you time for repentance, and perhaps he will not; and should he not give it, what will become of you for all eternity? In the mean time, by consenting to sin, you lose your soul for the sake of a miserable pleasure, and expose yourself to the risk of being lost forever. Would you, for that vile gratification, risk a momentary pleasure, expose to danger your all—your money, your houses, your possessions, your liberty and life? Surely you would not. Will you then, for that wretched delight, lose all—your soul, heaven and God? Do you believer that heaven, hell and eternity are truths of faith, or that they are fables? Do you believe that if death overtakes you in sin, you will be lost forever? Oh. What temerity! what folly! To condemn yourself by your own free act to an eternity of torments with the hope of afterward reversing the sentence of your condemnation. No one is so foolish as to take poison with the hope of being preserved from death; and will you condemn yourself to eternal death, saying, I will, perhaps, be hereafter delivered from it? O folly, which has brought, and brings, so many souls to hell! *Thou hast,* says the Lord, *trusted in thy wickedness . . . Evil shall come upon thee, and thou shalt not know the rising therefore.*[451] You have sinned through a rash confidence in the divine mercy; vengeance will unexpectedly fall upon you, and you will not know whence it comes.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Behold, O Lord! One of those fools who have so often lost their soul and Thy grace with the hope of afterward recovering them. And hadst Thou struck me dead in those nights in which I was to sin, what would have become of me? I thank Thy mercy, which has waited for me, and which now makes me sensible to my folly. I see that Thou desirest my salvation; and I too wish to save my soul. I am sorry, O infinite Goodness for having so often turned my back upon Thee. I love Thee with my whole heart. And I hope in the merits of Thy Passion. O my Jesus! That I will never again be one of those fools. Pardon me at this moment and give me the gift of Thy grace. I will never leave Thee again. *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be confounded.*[452] Ah no; I hope O my Redeemer, never more to suffer the misfortune and confusion of seeing myself deprived of Thy grace and love. Grant me holy perseverance, and give me the grace always to ask it of Thee by invoking Thy holy name and the name of Thy Mother, and by saying: Jesus, assist me; most holy Mary, pray for me. Yes, my Queen, if I have recourse to thee, I shall never be conquered. And when the temptation continues, obtain for me the grace not to cease to invoke thy aid.

Consideration XIX

THE STATE OF GRACE AND OF DISGRACE WITH GOD

“Man knoweth not the price thereof”—*Job,* xxviii.13. .

FIRST POINT

DIGNITY TO WHICH THE GRACE OF GOD RAISES US

IF, says the Lord, *thou will separate the precious from the vile, shalt be as my mouth.*[453] They who know how to distinguish what is precious from what is vile, are like God, “who knows how to refuse the evil and to choose the good.” Let us examined now great a good it is to be in grace of God, and how great and evil to be in enmity with God. Men do not understand the value of divine grace. *Man knoweth not the price thereof.*[454] Hence, they exchange it for vanity, for a little earth, or for a beastly pleasure; but it is an infinite treasure which makes us worthy of the friendship of God. *For,* says the Wise Man, *she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.*[455] Hence, a soul in grace is the friend of God. The Gentiles, who were deprived of the light of faith, deemed it impossible for a creature to attain to the friendship of God; and they who were guided only by the light of nature, could scarcely think otherwise; for, as St Jerome says, “Friendship either finds or makes equal.”[456] But God has declared in several places in the Holy Scriptures, that by means of this grace we become his friends, if we observe his law. *You are my friends if you do the things which I command. I will not now call your servants, . . . but I have called friends.*[457] Hence, St Gregory exclaims: “O goodness of God! We do not deserve to be called even servants, and he condescends to call us friends.”[458]

How fortunate would the man esteem himself, who should have the king for his friend! In a vassal, it would be temerity to presume to seek the friendship of his sovereign; but it is not temerity in a soul to aspire to the friendship of its God. St Augustine[459] relates that two courtiers entered into a monastery of hermits, and that one of them began to read the life of St Antony the Abbot. He read, and in reading his heart became gradually divested of worldly affections. Turning to his companion, he said: “What do we seek? We can hope for nothing more than the friendship of the emperor. And through how many perils do we reach this greater danger? And how long will this last?” Friend, fools that we are, what do we seek? The most we can expect to gain in the service of the emperor is, to become his friends: and should we succeed in gaining his friendship, we shall expose our eternal salvation to greater risk. It is with difficulty we can ever become the friends of Cæsar: “but, if I wish, I am this moment the friend of God.”

Whosoever, then, is in the state of grace is the friend of God. He also becomes the son of God: *You are gods and the son of the Most High.*[460] This is the great gift which we have received from the divine love through Jesus Christ. *Behold,* says St John, *what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us—that we should be called, and should be, the sons of God.*[461] Moreover, the soul in the state of grace is the spouse of God. *I will espouse thee to me in faith.*[462] Hence the father of the prodigal, when his son returned, ordered a ring to be put on his finger, in token of his espousal. Lastly, the soul becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost. Sr Mary d’Oignies saw a devil go out from an infant who was receiving baptism and the Holy Ghost enter with a multitudes of angels.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Therefore my God! When my soul had the happiness of being in Thy grace, it was Thy friend, Thy child, Thy spouse, and Thy temple; but by committing sin, it lost all, and became Thy enemy and the slave of hell. But I thank Thee, O my God, for giving me time to recover Thy grace. I am sorry above all things for having offended Thee, O infinite Goodness and I love Thee above all things. Ah! Receive me again into Thy friendship. For Thy mercy’s sake do not reject me. I know that I deserve to be banished from Thy face; but by the sacrifice which He offered on Calvary; Jesus Christ has merited for me mercy and pardon. *Thy kingdom come.* My Father (it is thus Thy Son has taught me to call Thee)—My Father, come with Thy grace to reign in my heart; grant that I may serve Thee alone, that I may live for Thee alone, and that I may love Thee alone. *And lead us not into temptation.* Ah! Do not permit my enemies to tempt me so that I may be conquered. *But deliver us from evil.* Deliver me from hell; but deliver me first from sin, which alone can lead me to hell. O Mary, pray for me and preserve me from the great misfortune of ever seeing myself in sin and deprived of the grace of thy and my God.

SECOND POINT

ADVANTAGES THAT THE GRACE OF GOD PROCURES FOR US

St Thomas of Aquino says that the gift of grace surpasses every gift that a creature can receive, since it is a participation of the divine nature.[463] And before him, St Peter said the same: "*that by these ye may be made partakers of the divine nature*.[464] So great things Jesus Christ has merited for us his Passion: he has communicated to as the same splendour that he received from the Father. *And the glory which Thou hast given to Me, I have given to them.*[465] In fine, a soul in the state of grace is one thing with God. *He,* says St Paul, *that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.*[466] The Redeemer has said that in a soul that loves God, the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity dwell. *If any one love Me, my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and we will make our abode with him.*[467]

So great is the beauty of a soul in the state of grace, that God himself extols it. *How beautiful art thou! How beautiful art thou!*[468] The Lord appears never to take his eyes off the soul that loves him, nor to close his ears to his petitions. *The eyes of the Lord are upon the just: and His ears unto their prayers.*[469] St Bridget used to say that a man could not behold the beauty of a soul in the grace of God, without dying through joy. And St Catharine of Sienna, seeing a soul in the state of grace, said that she would willingly have given her life to prevent that soul from losing such beauty. Hence she kissed the ground on which priests walked, because through them souls recover the grace of God.

How many treasures of merits can a soul in the state of grace acquire? Each moment it can merit an eternity of glory. St Thomas teaches that every act of love merits for the soul eternity life.[470] Why then should we envy the great ones of the earth? If we are in the grace of God, we can constantly acquire far more greatness in heaven. A certain lay-brother of the Society of Jesus, as Fr Patrignani relates in his Menologies, appeared after death, and said that he and Philip the Second, King of Spain, were in the enjoyment of glory; but that his glory in heaven was as far superior to that of Philip, as that monarch was raised above him on this earth. Moreover, he alone who has experienced it, can conceive the peace which a soul in the grace of God enjoys in this life. *O taste and see that the Lord is sweet.*[471] The words of the Lord cannot fail. *Much peace have they that love thy law.*[472] The peace of a soul that is untied with God surpasses all the pleasures that the sense and the word can give. *The peace of God which surpasseth all understanding.*[473]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my Jesus! Thou art the good pastor, who allowed Thyself to be slaughtered in order to give life to Thy sheep. When I fled away from Thee, Thou didst not cease to follow and seek after me: Thou receivest me now that I seek Thee, and cast myself with a penitent heart at Thy feet. Give me again Thy grace which I have miserably lost through my own fault. I am sorry for it with my whole heart; I would wish to die of sorrow at the thought of having so often turned my back on Thee. Pardon me through the merits of the painful death which Thou didst suffer for me on the cross. Bind me with the sweet chains of Thy love, and do not permit me ever more to fly away from Thee. Since I have merited the eternal torments of hell, give me strength to bear with patience all the crosses which Thou sendest me. Since I have deserved to be for eternity under the feet of the devils, make me embrace with love all the contempt and insults which I shall receive from men. Finally make me obedient to all Thy holy inspirations, and give me grace to conquer all human respect for the love of Thee. I am resolved henceforward to serve Thee only: let others say what they please, I will serve Thee alone, O my most amiable God! Thee only do I wish to please. But give me Thy aid, without which I can do nothing. I love Thee, O my Jesus with my whole heart, and I trust in Thy blood. Mary, my hope, assists me by thy prayers. I glory in being thy servant, and thou dost glory in saving sinners who have recourse to thee. Come to my relief and save me.

THIRD POINT

ENMITY WITH GOD

Let us now see the misery of a soul that is in enmity with God. It is separated from God, his sovereign good. *Your iniquities*, says the prophet Isaias, *have divided between you and your God.*[474] Hence the soul is no longer his, and he is no longer its God. *You are not my people and I will not be yours.*[475] The soul not only belongs no longer to God, but God even hates if and condemns it to hell. God does not hate any of his creatures; he does not hate the wild beast, the vipers or the toad. *Thou loveset all things that are, and hatest none of the things which Thou hast made.*[476] But he cannot refrain from hating sinners. *Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity.*[477] Yes; God cannot but hate sin, which is diametrically opposed to his will; and in hating sin he must necessarily hat the sinner who is united to his sin. But to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.[478]

O God! If a man has for his enemy a monarch of the earth, he cannot sleep, he is every moment in dread of death. And how can he who is the enemy of God enjoy peace? He may escape the vengeance of his sovereign by concealing himself in a wood, or by taking refuge in a distant country. But who can fly from the hands of God? *Lord*, says David, *if I shall ascend into heaven, if I shall hide myself in hell, wheresoever I go, Thy hand can reach me. If I ascent into heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art present . . . Even there also shall Thy hand lead me.*[479]

Poor sinners! They are cursed by God, cursed by the angels, cursed by the saints, cursed also every day on earth by all priests and religious, who, in reciting the divine office, proclaim them accursed. *They are cursed who decline from thy commandments.*[480] Moreover, the soul that is at enmity with God has lost all its merits. Should a man be equal in merit to St Paul the Hermit, who lived forty-eight years in a cave; to St Francis Xavier, who gained ten millions of souls to God; or to St Paul the Apostle, who, according to St Jerome, surpassed in merit all the other apostles—that man, if he commit a single mortal sin, loses all. *All his justices which he hath* *done shall not be remembered.*[481] Behold the ruin which the enmity of God produces; it transforms the child of God into the slave of Lucifer; his beloved friend into an enemy whom he sovereignly hates; and the heir of heaven into one condemned to hell. St Francis de Sales used to say that, were the angels capable of weeping they should shed tears of pity the sight of a soul that commits mortal sin and loses the divine grace.

But the greatest misery is that the angels would, if it were in their power, weep; and the sinner weeps not. “A Christian,” says St Augustine, “if he loses a sheep or any other valuable animal, weeps over the loss, and neither eats nor sleep; but when he loses the grace of God, he eats and sleeps, and shed not a single tear.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Behold, O Redeemer! The miserable state to which I have brought myself. To make me worthy of Thy grace, Thou didst spend thirty-three years in toil and pains; and I, for the poisoned pleasure of a moment, have despised and lost it. I thank Thy mercy, which still give me time to recover it if I wish. Yes, I wish to do everything in my power to regain it. Tell me what I must do in order to obtain Thy pardon. Dost Thou wish me to repent? O my Jesus! I am sorry with my whole heart for having offended Thy infinite Goodness. Dost Thou wish me to love Thee? I love Thee above all things. Hitherto I have unfortunately employed my heart in loving creatures and vanities. From this day forward I will live only for Thee; I will love only Thee my God, my treasure, my hope and my strength. *I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength.*[482] Thy merits, Thy wounds, O my Jesus, shall be my hope and my strength; from Thee I hope for strength to be faithful to Thee. Give me then, O my Redeemer the gift of Thy grace, and do not permit me ever again to depart from Thee. Divest my soul of all worldly affections, and to inflame my heart with Thy holy love. Kindle in it the fire of Thy love. Mary, my Mother, who wert always on fire with divine love, make me burn like thee with the love of God.

Consideration XX

THE FOLLY OF THE SINNER

"For the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God."—I. *Cor.,* iii.19. .

FIRST POINT

THE LARGE NUMBER OF FOOLS

THE Venerable John Avila would have divided the world into two prisons, one for the incredulous; the other for Christians who live in sin at a distance from God. The prison of the latter he would have called the prison of fools. But the greatest misery and misfortune is that these miserable men esteem themselves wise and prudent, though they are the most foolish and imprudent of mortals. And unfortunately they are exceedingly numerous. *The number of fools is infinite.*[483] Some are foolish through love of honours; some for the sake of pleasures; and others from attachment to the miserable goods of this earth. And great as their folly is, they have the temerity to call the saints fools, because they despise the goods of this life in order to gain eternity salvation and the possession of God, who is true and supreme good. They deem it folly to embrace contempt, and to pardon injuries; folly to abstain from sensual pleasures, and to practise mortification; folly to renounce honours and riches, to love solitude and a humble and hidden life. But they never reflect that the Lord has called their wisdom folly. *For,* says the apostle, *the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God.*[484]

Ah! They will one day confess their folly; but when? When there will be no remedy for it. They will then say in despair: *We fools esteemed their life madness and their end without honour.*[485] Ah! Fools that we have been! We regarded the lives of the saints as folly; but now we know that we have been miserably foolish. *Behold how they are numbered among the children of*

God, and their lot is among the saints.[486] Behold how they have obtained a place among the happy number of the children of God, and have secured their lot among the saints—an eternal lot, which will make them happy for eternity; and we are among the number of the slaves of the devils, condemned to burn in this pit of torments of all eternity. *Therefore we have erred,* thus they shall conclude their lamentation, from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us.[487] Then we have erred by shutting our eyes to God's light; and what renders our condition still more forlorn is, that for our error there is no remedy, and there will be none as long as God will be God.

How great then the folly of sinners, who, for a worthless gain, for a little smoke, for a transient delight, lose the grace of God! What would not a vassal do in order to gain the favour of his sovereign? O God, for a miserable gratification, to lose God, the supreme God; to lose paradise, to forfeit peace in this life, by bringing into the soul the monster sin, which, by its remorse, will torture it unceasingly and to condemn yourself voluntarily to everlasting woe! Would you indulge in that forbidden pleasure if, in punishment, your hand was to be burned? Or if you were to be shut up for a year in a grave? Would you commit that sin, if after consenting to it, you should forfeit a hundred crowns? And still you believe and know that in yielding to sin, you lose heaven and God, and that you are condemned to eternal fire: and after all you transgress the divine law.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O God of my soul! What should be my lot at this moment, if Thou hast not shown me so many mercies? I should be in hell among the number of the foolish to which I have belonged. I thank Tee, O my Lord! And I entreat Thee not to abandon me in my blindness. I feel that Thou tenderly callest and invitest me to ask pardon, and to hope for great graces from Thee, after the insults I have offered to Thee. Yes, my Saviour! I hope Thou wilt admit me among Thy children; I am worthy to be called Thy child, after having so often insulted Thee to Thy face. *Father, I am not worthy to be called Thy child: I have sinned against heaven and before Thee.*[488] But I know that Thou goest in search of the strayed sheep and that Thou feelest consolation in embracing Thy lost children. My dear Father! I am sorry for having offended Thee. I cast myself at Thy feet, and embrace them: I will not depart till Thou pardon and bless me.

I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.[489] Bless me, O my Father! And let the fruit of Thy benediction be, a great sorrow for my sin, and a great love for Thee. I love Thee, O my Father! I love Thee with my whole heart. Do not permit me ever more to depart from Thee. Deprive me of all; but do not strip me of Thy love. O Mary, if God is my Father, thou art my Mother. Do thou also bless me. I do not deserve to be thy son: accept me for thy servant; but make me a servant who will always love thee tenderly and always confide in thy protection.

SECOND POINT

GREAT FOLLY

Poor sinners! They labour and toil for the attainment of worldly sciences, or the art of gaining the goods of this life, which will soon end, and neglect the goods of the next life, which is everlasting! They lose their reason to such a degree, that they become not only fools, but senseless beasts; for living like brute animals, they attend not to what is lawful or unlawful, but only follow the beastly instincts of the senses, and embrace what is pleasing to the flesh, without ever reflecting on what they lose, or on the eternal ruin which they bring upon themselves. To live in this manner is, to act not like a man, but like a senseless beast. St John Chrysostom says: “We call him a man who preserves intact the image of man; but what is this image of man: To be rational.”[490] To be a man is to be rational—that is, to act according to reason, and not according to the sensual appetite. Were beasts to receive from God the use of reason, and to act according to its dictates, we should say that they acted like men; and on the other had, when a man follows the impulse of the senses in opposition to reason, it must be said he acts like a beast.

O that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last end.[491] He, who acts according to the rules of prudence, looks to the future—that is, to what must happen at the end of life—to death and judgement, and after judgement, hell or heaven. Oh! How much wise is the peasant who saves his soul than the monarch who brings himself to hell.

Better is a child who is poor and wise than a king that is old and foolish, who knoweth not to foresee hereafter.[492] O God! Would not all pronounce the man to be a fool, who in order to gain a shilling, would risk his entire property? And will he not be considered foolish, who, for a momentary gratification, forfeits the grace of God, and expose his soul to the danger of eternal perdition? The care of present and the total neglect of eternal goods and evils is the ruin of the immense multitude of the damned.

God has certainly not placed us in this world to become rich, or acquire honours, or to indulge our senses, but to gain eternal life. *But the end life everlasting.*[493] And nothing but the attainment of this end is of importance to us. *One thing is necessary.*[494] But there is nothing that sinners despise more than this end: they think only of the present; they each day walk toward death, and approach the gate of eternity, but know not whither they are going. “What would you think,” says St Augustine, “of a pilot, who, when asked where he is going should answer, that he did not know? Would not all exclaim that he is bringing the ship to ruin? Such,” adds the saint “is the man who runs out of the way.”[495] Such are the wise of the world, who know how to acquire wealth, to indulge in amusements, to gain posts of honour and emolument, but know not how to save their souls. The rich glutton knew how to lay up wealth; *but he died, and was buried in hell.*[496] Alexander the Great knew how to acquire many kingdoms; but in a few yeas he died, and was lost forever. Henry VIII knew how to preserve his throne by rebelling against the Church; but seeing at death that he lost his soul, he exclaimed: We have lost all. How many miserable sinners now weep and cry out in hell: *What hath pride profited us? Or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow.*[497] Behold, they exclaim, for us all the goods of the world have passed away like a shadow, and nothing remains but eternal wailing and everlasting torments.

Before man is life and death, that which he shall choose shall be given him.[498] Beloved Christian, God places before you in this world, life and death—that is, the voluntary privation of forbidden pleasures, by which you will gain eternal life; or the indulgence of them, by which you merit everlasting death. What do you say? What choice do you make? In making the choice, act like a man, and not like a senseless beast. Act like a

Christian who believes in the Gospel and says: *What doth it profit a man if he gains the whole world and suffer the lost of his own soul?*[499]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God! Thou hast given me reason, Thou hast given me the light of faith, and I have acted like a senseless beast, by losing Thy grace for the miserable pleasure of the senses, which have passed away like air; and now I find nothing but remorse of conscience, and debts to Thy divine justice. *Enter not into judgement with Thy servant?*[500] Ah Lord! Judge me not according to my merits but treat me according to Thy mercy. Give me light, give me sorrow for the offences that I have committed against Thee, and pardon me. “I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost; seek thy servant.” I am a lost sheep; and unless Thou seek after me, I shall be lost forever. Have pity on me for the sake of that blood which Thou hast shed for me. I am sorry, O Sovereign Good! For having left Thee, and for having voluntarily renounced Thy grace. I would wish to die of sorrow but give me an increase of sorrow. Bring me to heaven that there I may sing Thy mercies. Mary, my Mother, thou art my refuge: pray to Jesus for me: beg of him to grant me pardon and holy perseverance.

THIRD POINT

TRUE WISDOM

Let us be persuaded that the truly wise are they who know how to acquire the divine grace, and the kingdom of heaven; and let us incessantly implore the Lord to give us the science of the saints, which he gives to all who ask it from him.[501] Oh! What a precious science to know how to love God, and to save our souls! This science consists in knowing how to walk in the way of salvation, and to adopt the means of attaining eternal life. The affair of salvation is of all affairs the most necessary. If we know all things, and know not how to save our souls, our knowledge will be unprofitable to us, and we shall be forever miserable: but on the other hand, though we should be ignorant of all things, we shall be happy for eternity, if we know how to love God. “Blessed is the man,” says St Augustine, “who knows Thee though he be ignorant of other things.”[502] One day, Br Giles said to St

Bonaventure: Happy you, Fr Bonaventure, who are so learned. I am a poor, ignorant man, who knows nothing. You can become more holy than I can. “Listen,” replied the saint: “If an ignorant old woman love God more than I do, she shall be more holy than I am.” On hearing this, Br Giles began to exclaim O poor old woman! Poor old woman! Listen, listen: if you love God, you can become more holy than Fr Bonaventure.

“The unlearned rise up,” says St Augustine: “and bear away the kingdom of heaven.”[503] How many souls and illiterate Christians, who, though unable to read, know how to love God and are saved! And how many of the learned of this world are damned! But the former, not the latter, are truly wise. Oh! How truly wise were St Paschal, St Felix the Capuchin, St John of God, though unacquainted with human sciences! Oh! How truly wise were so many holy men, who abandoning the world, shut themselves up in the cloister, or spent their lives in the desert! How truly wise were St Benedict, St Francis of Assisi, and St Louis of Toulouse, who renounced the throne! Oh! How truly wise were so many martyrs, so many tender virgins, who refused the hand of princes, and suffered death for the sake of Jesus Christ! That true wisdom consists in despising the goods of this life, and in securing a happy eternity, even worldlings know and believe: hence of persons who give themselves to God, they say: Happy they, who are truly wise, and save their souls! In fine, they who renounce the goods of the world to give themselves to God are said to be undeceived. What then should we call those who abandon God for worldly goods? We should call them deluded men.

Brother, to what class do you wish to belong? In order to make a good choice, St Chrysostom tells you to visit the sepulchres of the dead.[504] The grave is the school in which we may se the vanity of earthly goods, and in which we may learn the science of the saints. “Tell me,” says St Chrysostom, “are you able there to discover who ahs been a prince, a noble, or a man of learning? For my part,” adds the saint, “I see nothing but rottenness, worms and bones. All is but a dream, a shadow.”[505] Everything in this world will soon have an end, and will vanish like a dream or a shadow. But, dearly beloved Christians, if you wish to be truly wise, it is not enough to know your end, it is necessary to adopt the means of attaining it. All would wish to be saved and to be saints; but because they do not employ the means, they never acquire sanctity, and are lost. It is necessary to fly from the occasions of sin, to frequent the sacraments, to practise mental prayer, and above all to impress on the heart the following maxims of the Gospel: *What doth it profits a man if he gains the whole world?*[506] He that loveth his life shall lost it.[507] That is, we must even forfeit our life in order to save the soul. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.*[508] To follow Jesus Christ it is necessary to refuse to self-love the pleasures which it seeks. *Life is His good will.*[509] Our salvation consists in doing the will of God. These, and other similar maxims, should be deep impressed on the soul.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O Father of mercies! Behold my miseries, and have pity on me; give me light, make me sensible of my past folly, that I may bewail it, and make known to me Thy infinite goodness, that I may love it. My Jesus! *Do not deliver up to beast the souls that confess to Thee.*[510] Thou hast expended Thy blood for my salvation: do not permit me ever more to be, as I have hitherto been, the slave of the devils. I am sorry, O my Sovereign Good, for having abandoned Thee. I curse all the moments in which I voluntarily consented to sin; and I embrace Thy holy will, which desires nothing but my welfare. Eternal Father! Through the merits of Jesus Christ, give me strength to do all that is pleasing to Thee. Strike me dead rather than permit me to oppose Thy holy will. Assist me by Thy grace to banish from my heart every affection which does not tend to Thee. I love Thee, O God of my soul! I love Thee above all things: and from Thee I hope for every good, for pardon, for perseverance in Thy love, and for paradise, that there I may love Thee for eternity. O Mary, ask these graces for me. Thy son refuses thee nothing. My hope! I trust in thee.

Consideration XXI

UNHAPPY LIFE OF THE SINNER: AND THE HAPPY LIFE OF HIM WHO LOVES GOD

“There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord.”—*Isa.*xiviii. 22

“Much peace have they that love Thy law.”—*Ps.*cxviii.165. .

FIRST POINT

THE WORLD CANNOT MAKE US HAPPY

IN this life all men seek after peace. The merchant, the soldier, the man who goes to law, labour with the hope of making a fortune, and of thus finding peace, by worldly fortune, by a more exalted post, by gaining a lawsuit. But poor worldlings seek from the world that peace which the world cannot give. God alone can give peace which the world cannot give. God alone can give us peace. The holy Church prays in the following words: “Give to Thy servants that peace which the world cannot give.”[511] No; the world with all its goods cannot content the heart of man: for he was created not for them, but for God alone: hence God alone can make him happy and content. Brute animals, that have been made for sensual delights, find peace in earthly goods. Give to an ox a bundle of hay, and to a dog a piece of flesh, and they are content, they desire nothing more. But the soul that has been created for no other end than to love God, and to live in union with him, will never be able to find peace or happiness in sensual enjoyments: God alone can make it perfectly content.

The Son of God gave the appellation of fool to the rich man who, after having reaped a rich harvest from his fields, said to himself: *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thy rest, eat, drink and made good cheer.*[512] “Miserable fool!” says St Basil, have you the soul of a swine, of a brute, that you expect to make it happy by eating, drinking, or by sensual delights?”[513] A man may be puffed up, but he cannot be satisfied by the goods of this world. On the words of the Gospel, *behold we have left all things.*[514]St Bernard writes that he saw different classes of fools labouring under different species of folly. All had a great thirst for happiness: some were satiated with the goods of the earth, which is a figure of the avaricious; others with the wind, the figure of the ambitious, who seek after empty honours: others seated round a furnace, swallowing the sparks that were thrown from it; these were the passionate and vindictive: others, in fine, drank putrid waters from a fetid lake: and these were the voluptuous and unchaste. Hence, turning to them, the saint exclaims: O fools! Do you not see that these things increase rather than diminish your thirst! The goods of this world are but apparent goods, and therefore they cannot satisfy the heart of man. *You have eaten,* says the Prophet Aggeus, *but have not had enough.*[515] Hence, the more the avaricious man possesses, the more he seeks to acquire. “The possession of great wealth,” says St Augustine, “does not close, but rather extends, the jaws of avarice.”[516] The more the unchaste man wallows in the mire of impurity, the greater is his disgust, and at the same time, his desire for such beastly pleasures; and how can dung and carnal filthiness content the heart? The same happens to be the ambitious man, who wishes to satisfy his desires by smoke; for he always attends more to what he wants then to what he possesses. After having acquired many kingdoms, Alexander the Great wept, because he had not dominion over other countries. If worldly goods could content the human heart, the rich and the monarchs of the earth would enjoy complete happiness; but experience shows the contrary. Solomon tells us that he refused no indulgence to his senses. *Whatsoever my eyes desired, I refused them not.*[517] But after all his sensual enjoyments what did he say? *Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity.*[518] That is, everything in this world is mere vanity, a pure lie, pure folly.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God! What now remains of all the offences I have offered to Thee, but pain, bitterness and merits for hell? I am not sorry for the pain and remorse which I now feel; on the contrary, they console me, because they are the gift of Thy grace and make me hope that, since Thou inspirest these sentiments, Thou wishes to pardon me. What displeases me is the pain I have given Thee, my Redeemer, who loved me so tenderly. I deserved, O my Lord, to be abandoned by Thee but, instead of abandoning me, I see that Thou offerest me pardon, and that Thou art the first to ask for a reconciliation. O my Jesus! I wish to make peace with Thee, and desire Thy grace more than every earthly good. I am sorry, O infinite Goodness, for having offended Thee; I would wish to die of sorrow for my offences. Ah! Through the love which Thou didst entertain for me when Thou didst expire on the cross, pardon me, receive me into Thy heart, and change my heart, so that henceforth I may please Thee as much as I have hitherto offended Thee. I now renounce, for Thy sake, all the pleasures that the world can give me and I resolve to forfeit my life rather than lose Thy grace. Tell me what I must do in order to please Thee; I wish to do it. What pleasures, what honours, what riches can I seek? I wish only for Thee, my God, my joy, my glory, my treasure, my life, my love, my all. Give me O Lord, strength to be faithful to Thee. Give me the grace to love Thee, and then do with me what Thou pleasest. Mary, my Mother and my hope! Take me under thy protection, and obtain for me the grace to belong entirely to God.

SECOND POINT

INTERIOR TORMENTS OF THE SINNER

But, according to Solomon, the goods of this world not only do not content the heart, but they are even a source of pain and affliction of spirit. *And behold all is vanity and affliction of spirit.*[519] Poor sinners! They seek for happiness in their sins, but they find nothing but bitterness and remorse. *Destruction and happiness in their ways, and the way of pace they have not known.*[520] What peace? What peace? *There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord.*[521] In the first place, sin brings with it a dread of divine vengeance. The man that is beset with powerful enemies neither eats nor sleeps in peace. And can he who has God for his enemy enjoy repose? *Fear to them that work evil.*[522] When the man who is in the state of sin hears the roaring of thunder, oh! How does he tremble! Every lead that moves excites terror. *The sound of dread is always in his ears.*[523] He is always flying away though no one pursues him. *The wicked man fleeth when no man* *pursueth.*[524] He is pursued by his own sin. After having killed his brother Abel, Cain said: *Everyone therefore that findeth me, shall kill me.*[525] God assured him that no one should injure him. *And the Lord said to him: No; it shall not be so.*[526] But, notwithstanding this assurance, Scripture tells us that Cain *dwelt a fugitive on the earth.*[527] He was always flying from one place to another. And who, but his own sin, was the persecutor of Cain?

Sin also brings with it remorse of conscience, that cruel worm which unceasingly gnaws the soul. If the miserable sinner goes to a festivity, to a comedy, to a place of amusement, his conscience will say to him, you are the enemy of God: should you die in your sin, where will you go? The torture of remorse of conscience is so great even in this life, that to free themselves from it, some have committed suicide. It is related of a certain man, who had killed an infant, that, in order to get rid of the stings of remorse, he entered into a monastery; but finding no peace even there, he went before a judge, confessed his crime, and was condemned to death.

What is a soul without God? The Holy Ghost compared it to a sea agitated by the tempest. *The wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest.*[528] Were a person brought to a musical exhibition, or to a ball, and obliged to remain suspended by a cord, which his head downward, could he enjoy the entertainment? Such is the state of a man who lives in the enjoyment of worldly goods, but without God: his soul is as it were turned upside down. He may eat and drink and dance, he may wear costly apparel, and may acquire honours, dignities, and possessions; but he never will have peace. There is no peace to the wicked.[529] God alone imparts peace; but he gives it to his friends, not to his enemies.

“The goods of this earth,” says St Vincent Ferrer, “do not enter the soul. They are waters which do not penetrate where there is thirst.”[530] The sinner may wear embroidered robes and the riches jewels; he may indulge the palate as much as he pleases; but his poor soul will be full of thorns and gall; and therefore with all his riches, pleasures, and amusements, you will see him always unhappy and ready to fly into a rage and fury at every contradiction. He who loves God resigns himself to the divine will in adversity, and enjoys peace; but he who lives in opposition to the divine will, cannot conform to it, and therefore he has no means of tranquillising the soul. The miserable man serves the devil; he serves a tyrant who repays him with gall and bitterness. Ah! The words of God can never fail. *Because thou didst not serve the Lord thy God with joy and gladness, thou shalt serve the enemy in hunger and thirst, and nakedness, and in want of all things.*[531] What do not the vindictive suffer after they have gratified their resentment? The unchaste, after they have attained their wicked object? What do not the ambitious, the avaricious endure? Oh, how many are there, who, if they suffer for God as much as they suffer to bring themselves to their own damnation, would become great saints?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my lost life! O my God! If to serve Thee I had suffered the pain which I have endured in order to offend Thee, how many merits should I now find treasured up for Paradise! Ah, my Lord, for what have I abandoned Thee, and lost Thy grace? For poisoned and momentary pleasures, which, as soon as they were indulged, disappeared and left my soul full of thorns and bitterness. Ah, my sins, I detest you, I curse you a thousand times. I bless Thy mercy, O my God! which has borne with me so patiently? I love Thee, O my Creator and Redeemer! Who hast given Thy life for me, and because I love Thee, I am sorry with my whole heart for having offended Thee. My God, my God! Why have I lost Thee? For what have I exchanged Thee? I now know the evil I have done; and I resolved to lose everything, even life, rather that lose Thy love. Give me light, O Eternal Father! For the sake of Jesus Christ; make know to me Thy greatness, and the nothingness of the goods which the devils present to me in order to make me lose Thy grace. I love Thee but I desire to love Thee with greater ardour. Grant that Thou alone may be my only though, my only desire, my only love. I hope for all from Thy goodness, through the merits of Thy Son. Mary, my Mother, through the love which thou bearest to Jesus Christ, I entreat thee to obtain for me light and strength to serve him and to love him till death.

THIRD POINT

HAPPINESS OF THE JUST ON EARTH

Then all the goods and delights of this world cannot content the human heart. Who can satisfy all its desires? God alone. *Delight in the Lord and*

He will give thee the requests of thy heart.[532] The heart of man is always in search of goods that will make him happy. He enjoys riches, pleasures, honours and he is not content; for these are finite goods, and he was created for an infinite good. But, let him seek God, let him unite himself to God, and behold he is content, all his desires are satisfied. *Delight in the Lord and He will give thee the requests of thy heart.* During all the time which St Augustine spent in sensual delights, he never found peace. This he afterwards confessed when he gave himself to God. "Our heart is restless till it rests in thee."[533] My God I know that all is vanity and affliction, and that Thou alone art the true peace of the soul. "All things are hard, and thou alone repose."[534] Hence he afterward wrote: "What do you seek, O miserable man? Seek one good, in which are all goods."[535] While he was in sin, David went to his gardens, and indulged in the pleasures of the table and all other royal entertainments; but the table, the gardens, and the creatures in which he tool delight, said to him: David, do you expect that we shall make you happy! It is not in our power to content your heart. *Where is your God?* Go and find your God; he alone can satisfy the cravings of your soul. Hence, in the midst of all his enjoyments, David wept continually. *My tears have been my bread day and night, while it is said to me daily: Where is thy God?*[536]

But, oh! How content and happy does God make the faithful souls that love him! After having left all for God, without shoes, almost naked, and dead from cold and hunger, St Francis of Assisi, enjoyed a paradise in saying: "My God and my all." After he had become a religious, St Francis Borgia was obliged, in travelling often to lie on a bed of straw; but so abundant were the consolations which he experienced, that he could not sleep. When St Philip Neri left all things, he used, after going to rest, to receive so much consolation from God, that he would say: O my Jesus, allow me to sleep. Fr Charles of Lorraine, who was descended from the princes of Lorraine, and entered the Society of Jesus, began sometimes to dance through joy in his poor cell. In the plains of India, St Francis Xavier would uncover his breast and exclaim: "Enough, O Lord." No more consolation: my heart can bear no more. St Teresa used to say that a single drop of heavenly consolation gives more content than all the pleasures and amusements of the world can give. Ah! God cannot but fulfil his promises to give peace and happiness to all who renounce worldly goods for his sake. *And everyone that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, for My name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shalt possess life everlasting.*[537]

What then do we seek after? Let us go to Jesus Christ, who calls us, saying: *Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.*[538] Ah! The soul that loves God enjoys that peace which surpasses all the pleasures and gratifications which the world and the senses can give. It is true that in this life, event he saints have to submit to pains and crosses; for this earth is a place of merit, and it is impossible to merit without suffering. But, according to St Bonaventure, divine love, like honey, renders things the most bitter, sweet and amiable. He that loves God, loves the will of God, and therefore he rejoices in sorrows, because in embracing them he knows that he gives delight and pleasure to his God. "We see the cross," says St Bernard, "but not the unction."[539] We behold only the mortifications which the lovers of God endure, and the pleasures from which they abstain; but we do not see the spiritual delights with which the Lord consoles them. Oh! If sinners tasted the peace enjoyed by a soul that wishes for nothing but God, *O taste and see,* says David, *that the Lord is sweet.*[540] My brother, begin to make meditation every day, to communicate frequently to converse with God; and you will find that during the short time which you spend with him, he will give you greater consolation than the world, with all its amusements, as ever given you. *O, taste and see!* He who has not tasted, cannot understand how God contents the soul that loves him.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My dear Redeemer! How have I been hitherto so blind as to abandon Thee, who art an infinite good, and the fountain of all consolations, for the miserable and momentary gratification of the senses? I am astonished at my blindness, but I am still more astonished at Thy mercy, which has so bountifully borne with me. I thank Thee for making me now sensible of my folly, and of my obligation to love Thee. I love Thee, O my Jesus! With my whole soul but I desire to love Thee with greater fervour. Increase my desire and my love. Enamour my soul of Thee, who art infinitely amiable—

of Thee, who hast left nothing undone to gain my love; of Thee, who so ardently desirest my love. *If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.*[541] Ah, my dear Redeemer, purify my heart from all impure affections, which hinder me to love Thee as I would wish! It is not in my power to inflame my whole heart with the love of Thee, and to make it love nothing but Thee. This requires the power of Thy grace, which can do all things. Detach me from every creature, banish from my soul every affection that is not for Thee, make me all Thine. I am sorry above all things for all the displeasure I have given Thee. I resolve to consecrate all the days of my life to Thy holy love; but it is only Thy grace that can make me fulfil this resolution. Grant me, O Lord, this grace for the sake of the blood which Thou didst shed for me with so much pain, and so much love. Let it be the glory of Thy power to make my heart, which was once full of earthly affections, now become all flames of love for Thee, O infinite Good! O mother of fair love, O Mary! By thy prayer make my whole soul burn, as thine did, with the charity of God.

Consideration XXII

THE HABIT OF SIN

“The wicked man, when he is come into the dept of sins, contemneth.”—*Ps.*xviii.13.

FIRST POINT

THE HABIT OF SIN BLINDS THE SOUL

THE evil inclination to sin is one of the greatest injuries that we have received from the sin of Adam. This made the Apostle weep when he saw himself impelled by concupiscence to the very evil which he abhorred. *I see another law in my members. . . . captivating me in the law of sin.*[542] Hence it is so difficult for us, whoa re drawn to evil by this concupiscence and by so many enemies, to reach, without sin, the land of bliss. What would you say of a traveller who, being obliged to cross an agitated sea in a shattered vessel, would load the ship with a burden which, even in a calm sea, would be sufficient to sink the vessel? What hopes could you entertain of the safety of such a man? Now, we may say the same of the man who has contracted an evil habit: he must pass the sea of this life (a sea always tempestuous, in which so many perish) in the weak and shattered vessel of the flesh, to which we are united: and he overloads this vessel with sins of habit. It is very difficult for such a man to save his soul; because a bad habit blinds the understanding, hardens the heart and thus makes the sinner obstinate till death.

First, a bad habit *blinds* the understanding. Why do the saints always implore light from God, and tremble lest they should become the greatest sinners in the world? Because they know that if thy lose God’s light they may commit the greatest crimes. How does it happen that so many Christians live obstinately in sin until they are lost in the end*? Their own malice blinded them.*[543] Sin blinds them, and thus they are lost. Every sin produces blindness; the more sins are multiplied, the greater the blindness they produce. God is our light; and therefore, the farther the soul is removed from God, the blinder it becomes. *His bones,* says Job, *shall be filled with the vices of his youth.*[544] As the light of the sun cannot enter a vessel filled with clay; so a heart replete with vices cannot admit the light of God. Hence we see certain sinners lose the divine light, so that they go on from sin to sin without ever thinking of repentance. *The wicked walk round about.*[545] Fallen into the dark pit of sin, they do nothing but commit sins, they speak only of sins, they think only of sinning, and scarcely feel any longer that sin is an evil. The very habit of sin, says St Augustine, does not allow them to see the evil which they do.[546] Hence they live as if they no longer believed in the existence of God, of heaven, hell or eternity.

And behold! after an evil habit is contracted, the sins which before excited horror are now viewed with indifference. *Make them, says David, like a wheel, and as stubble before the wind.*[547] See, says Gregory, how a straw is blown about by every breath of air. In like manner a person, before he fails into sin, resists and combats temptations, at least for some time; but, after having contracted a bad habit, he yields instantly to every temptation, and falls in every occasion of sin; and why? Because the habit of sin has deprived him of light. St Anselm says that the devil acts toward certain sinners like a person who fastens a cord to a bird: he allows it to fly away; but, whenever he pleases, draws it back to the earth. These are, accordingly to the saint, habitual sinners. St Bernardine says (tom. iv. serm. xv.) that some continue to commit sin without being exposed to any dangerous occasion. He compares habitual sinners to the wings of a windmill, which *are driven round by every wind,* and turn the mill even when there is no corn to be ground, and against the will of the master. You will find habitual sinners who indulge in bad thoughts even without any occasion to excite them, without pleasure, and drawn into them as it were involuntarily and forcibly by the effects of evil habits. As St Augustine says a bad habit brings on a certain necessity.[548] And according to St Bernardine, evil habits are changed into our nature.[549] Hence, as it is necessary for a man to breathe, so it appears that habitual sinners become the slaves of sin, and bring themselves into a necessity of falling into sin. I have said that they become slaves of sin. There are servants, who serve for wages and *slaves,* who serve by force and without remuneration. With these we may compare certain miserable men, who sin even without pleasure.

The wicked man, when he is come into the depth of sins contemneth.[550] This passage St Chrysostom explains of habitual sinners, who, sunk in an abyss of darkness, despise corrections, sermons, censures, hell and God: they despise everything and resemble the vulture that waits to be killed by the fowler, rather than abandon the dead body on which it feeds. Fr Recupito relates that a man condemned to death, even when going to the place of execution, raised his eyes, saw a young female, and consented to a bad thought. Fr Gisolfo relates that a blasphemer, who had been likewise condemned to death, when thrown off the scaffold, broke out into a blasphemy. St Bernard goes so far as to say that it is almost useless to pray for habitual sinners,—that we must weep over them as lost forever. If they no longer see their danger, how can they escape the precipice? To preserve them from it, a miracle of grace is necessary. The miserable wretches will open their eyes in hell, when the sight of their misery will serve only to make them weep more bitterly over their folly.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My God! Thou hast bestowed more favours on me than on others, and I have done greater injuries to Thee than any person whom I know. O sorrowful heart of my Redeemer, so much afflicted and tortured on the cross at the sight of my sins; give me through Thy merits a lively sense of my faults, and a lively sorrow for them. Ah, my Jesus! I am full of vices, but Thou art omnipotent: Thou canst easily fill my soul with Thy holy love. I therefore hope in Thee, who art infinite Goodness and infinite mercy. I repent, O Sovereign Good of having offended Thee. O that I had died rather than have ever offended Thee! I have forgotten Thee; but Thou hast not forgotten me; this I see with the light which Thou now givest me. Since, then, Thou givest me this light, give me also strength to be faithful to Thee. I promise to die a thousand times rather than ever turn my back upon Thee. But in Thy aid I place my hopes. *In Thee! O Lord, I have hoped; let me never be confounded.* I hope, O my Jesus, in Thee, that I shall never more see myself confounded in sin, and deprived of Thy grace. To thee also, O Mary, my mistress, I turn. In thee, O Lady! I have hoped; let me not be confounded forever. O my hope, I trust in thy intercession, that I shall never again see myself the enemy of thy Son. Ah! Beg of him to strike me dead rather than abandon me to this sovereign misfortune.

SECOND POINT

THE HABIT OF SIN HARDENS THE HEART

A bad habit hardens the heart. And this hardness of heart God justly permits in punishment of resisting his calls. *The Lord,* says the Apostle, *hath mercy on whom He will: and whom He will He hardeneth.*[551] According to St Augustine, God hardens the sinner by not showing mercy.[552] It is not that God directly hardens habitual sinners, but he subtracts his graces in punishment of their ingratitude for past favours, and thus their heart becomes hard like a stone. *His heart shall be as hard as a stone, and as firm as a smith's anvil.*[553] Hence, it is that, while others are softened, and shed tears in hearing sermons on the rigour of divine justice, on the pains of the damned, or on the Passion of Jesus Christ, the habitual sinner remains unmoved, he speaks and listens to others speaking on these subjects with as much indifference as if they did not concern him; and thus these sermons will serve to render him more obdurate. *His heart shall be as firm as a smith's anvil.*

Even sudden deaths, earthquakes, thunder and lightning will no longer strike terror into the heart of the habitual sinner; instead of awaking, and making him enter into himself, they will rather encourage him in the deadly sleep of death and perdition in which he slumbers: *At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, they have all slumbered.*[554] An evil habit gradually takes away all remorse of conscience; to the habitual sinner crimes the most enormous appear trifling. The commission of sin is naturally accompanied with shame; but, according to St Jerome, they who contract evil habits lose even the shame of committing sin.[555] St Peter compares the habitual sinner to the swine that wallows in the mire.[556] As the swine wallowing in the mire feels not is stench, so the habitual sinner perceives not the stench of his crimes, which disgusts all others. "And," says St Bernardine, "what wonder is it that, after the mire of sin has blinded him, he should not see his miserable condition, even when God scourges him for his iniquities?[557] Hence, it happens that, instead of regretting his sins, he rejoices at them, he laughs at them, and boasts of them. *They are glad when they have done evil.*[558] *A fool worketh mischief as it were for sport.*[559] Are not these clear signs of diabolical obduracy? They are, says St Thomas of Villanova, all signs of damnation.[560] My brother, tremble lest this may happen to you. If you have contracted any evil habit, endeavour to abandon it now that God calls you. Rejoice and be glad as long as conscience reproves you; for it is a sign that God has not as yet abandoned you; but amend, and instantly shake off the bad habit; it you do not, the wound will become gangrenous, and you will be lost.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O Lord, how shall I be able to thank Thee as I ought for so many graces which Thou hast bestowed upon me? How often hast Thou called, and I have resisted? Instead of being grateful to Thee, and loving Thee, for having delivered me from hell, and for having called me with so much love, I have continued to provoke Thy wrath, by offering repeated insults to Thee. O my God! I will no longer outrage Thy patience: I have offended Thee enough. Thou alone, who art infinite Goodness, couldst have borne with me till the present moment. But I now see that Thou canst bear no longer with me. Pardon me then, O my Lord and my Sovereign Good! Pardon me all the injuries I have offered to Thee. I am sorry for them with my whole heart, and purpose never more to offend Thee. Shall I forever continue to provoke Thee? Ah, be appeased with me, O God of my soul! Not through my merits, for which nothing else is reserved but vengeance and hell, but through the merits of Thy Son and my Redeemer, in which I place all my hopes. For the love of Jesus Christ, receive me into favour, and give me perseverance in Thy love. Banish from me all impure affections and draw me entirely to Thyself. I love thee, O supreme God! I love Thee, O sovereign lover of souls! who art worthy of infinite love. Oh! that I had always loved Thee. O Mary, my Mother! Obtain for me the grace to spend the remainder of my life not in offending, but in loving thy Son, and in bewailing the displeasure I have given him.

THIRD POINT

THE HABIT OF SIN LEADS TO FINAL IMPENITENCE

When the understanding is deprives of light, and the heart hardened, the sinner ordinarily makes a bad end, and dies obstinate in his sin. *A hard heart shall fare ill at the end.*[561] The just continue to walk in the straight path. *The path of the just is right to walk in.*[562] But habitual sinners always *walk round about.*[563] They give up sin for a little, and afterward return to it. Their damnation St Bernard regards as certain. "Woe to the man who follows this circle."[564] Some of them say: I will amend before death; but it is very difficult for a habitual sinner, even in his old age, to change his life. *A young man,* says the Holy Ghost, according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it.[565] We are very weak. Your strength, says the Prophet Isaias, shall be as the ashes of tow.[566] Hence, as St Thomas of Villanova says, the soul deprived of grace cannot abstain from committing new sins.[567] But would it not be the extreme of folly to play for, and voluntarily to lose, all your property with the hope of the man who continues to live in the midst of sins, and hopes at the last moment of life to repair all the evil he has done. Can the Ethiopian or the leopard change the colour of his skin? And how can he who has long indulged in the habit of sin, lead a good life? *If,* says the Prophet Jeremias, *the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots, you also may do well when you have learned evil.*[568] Hence the habitual sinner, in the end, abandons himself to despair. Such is the manner in which his life terminates. *But he that is hardened in mind shall fall into evil.*[569]

On the words of Job, *He hath torn me with wound upon wound, he hath rushed in upon me like a giant.*[570] St Gregory says that a person may, perhaps, be able to defend himself after the first wound; but after every additional one, he loses strength, till in the end he loses his life. So it is with sin. After the first and second transgressions, the sinner will have some strength (that is, through the aid of God's grace); but, if he continue in the habit of sin, it will rush on him like a giant. How is it possible for the sinner to escape death after his strength has been diminished, and his wounds multiplied? Sin, as the Prophet Jeremias says, like a huge stone, oppresses the sinner.[571] St Bernard compares the habitual sinner with a man who ahs fallen under a large stone, which he has not strength to remove. It is as difficult for the former to shake off his bad habits, as it is for the latter to get rid of the load that presses upon him. “The man on whom the weight of a bad habit presses, rises with difficulty.”[572]

The habitual sinner may say: Is my salvation then hopeless? No, you are not beyond hope: if you wish to apply it, there is still a remedy for the past. But a certain author says, that in grievous maladies very severe remedies are necessary. If to a sick man in danger of death, and unwilling to take medicine, because he is not aware of the malignity of his disease, the physician said: Friend, you will certainly die unless you take such a medicine: what would be the answer of the invalid? He would say, “As my life is in danger, I am ready to obey all your directions.” Dearly beloved Christian, if you are an habitual sinner, I say the same to you. You are very ill; you are one of those invalids who, as St Thomas of Villanova says, are seldom cured;[573] you are on the brink of perdition. But if you wish to recover from your illness, there is a remedy for you; however, you must not expect a miracle of grace. You must on your part labour hard to take away the occasions of sin, to avoid bad company, and resist temptations by recommending yourself to God as soon as you perceive them: you must adopt the means of salvation, by going frequently to confessions, by reading a spiritual book every day, by practising devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and continually imploring her to obtain for you strength not to relapse into sin. You must do violence to yourself: otherwise the threat of the Lord against obstinate sinners will fall upon you. *You shall die in your sin.* And if you do not adopt these means now that the Lord gives you light, you will scarcely adopt them hereafter. Listen to God calling you to repentance. *Lazarus, come forth.* Poor sinner! You are long dead: go forth from the dark grave of your sinful life. Respond at once to the call, and give yourself instantly to God. Tremble lest this should be the last call for you.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God! What do I wait for? Shall I wait till Thou dost abandon me and send me to hell? Ah, Lord, bear with me; I wish to change my life, and to give myself to Thee. Tell me what I must do and I will do it. O blood of Jesus! Assist me. O Mary, advocate of sinners, come to my relief. O eternal

Father! Have mercy on me through the merits of Jesus and Mary. I am sorry, O God of infinite Goodness! For having offended Thee, and I love Thee above all things. Pardon me for the sake of Jesus Christ, and give me Thy love. Give me also a great fear of being lost, should I again offend Thee. Light, O God! light and strength. I hope for everything from Thy mercy. Thou didst bestow so many graces on me when I wandered at a distance from Thee; I hope for far greater graces, now that I return to Thee, resolved to love nothing but Thee. I love Thee, my God, my life, my all. I love thee also, O my Mother, Mary! To thee I consign my soul; preserve it by thy intercession from ever returning to a state of enmity with God.

Consideration XXIII

THE DELUSIONS WHICH THE DEVIL PUTS INTO THE MINDS OF SINNERS

(Although the preceding considerations contain many of the sentiments contained in this, it will be useful to collect them all together, in order to dissipate the usual illusions by which the devil succeeds in inducing sinners to relapse.)

FIRST POINT

I WILL GO TO CONFESSION.—I CANNOT RESIST

LET us imagine a young man who has fallen into grievous sins, which he has already confessed, and who is restored to the friendship of God. The devil again tempts him to relapse: the young man resists for a while; but, in consequence of the delusions suggested by the enemy, he begins to vacillate. Tell me, young man, I say to him: What will you do? Will you now, for this miserable pleasure, forfeit the grace of God, which you have just acquired and which is more valuable than the whole world? Will you, yourself, write the sentence of eternal death, and condemn yourself to burn forever in hell? No, you answer, *I do not wish to damn myself, I wish to be saved: If I commit this sin, I will afterward confess it.* Behold the first delusion of the devil! Then you say that you will afterward confess it; but in the mean time you lose your soul. Tell me, if you had a jewel worth a thousand crowns, would you throw it into a river, saying, I will make a diligent search for it, and hope to find it? You hold in your hand the precious jewel of your soul, which Jesus Christ has purchased with his blood and you voluntarily cast it into hell (for in punishment of every mortal sin, you are condemned to eternal fire), and say: I hope to recover it by a good confession. But should you not recover it, what will be the consequence? To recover the divine grace, true repentance, which is the gift of God, is necessary. Should God not give you the grace of repentance;

should death overtake you, and not allow you time to go confession, what will become of you?

You say that you will go to confession before the lapse of a week. And who promises you that you will live for week? You then say that you will go to confession tomorrow. And who promises you tomorrow? St Augustine says: “God has not promised tomorrow: perhaps he will give it, and perhaps he will not.” Perhaps he will deny it to you, as he has denied it to so many others who have gone to bed in good health, and have been found dead in the morning. How many have been struck dead in the act of sin, and sent to hell? And should the same happen to you, how will you be able to repair your eternal ruin? Be assured that by this delusion—*I will afterward go to confession*—the devil has brought thousands and thousands of Christian to hell. It is difficult to find a sinner so abandoned to despair as to wish for his own damnation. In committing sin, all sinners hope to repent and go to confession; it is thus that so many miserable souls are lost; and now there is no remedy for their damnation.

But you say: *At present I cannot resist this temptation.* Behold the second delusion of the devil, who makes it appear to you that at present you have not strength to resist your passions. First, it is necessary to know that, as the Apostle says: *God is faithful, and never permits us to be tempted above our strength.*[574] Moreover, I ask, if you are unable to resist your passions, how will you be able to resist them hereafter? After you have yielded to one by your consent to sin he will have gained an increase of strength against you, and you will have become weaker. If, then, you are now unable to extinguish the flame of passion, how can you expect to extinguish it when it has grown stronger? You say: God will give me his aid. But this aid he gives you at present. Why, then, do you not correspond with his grace and conquer your passion? Perhaps you expect that God will give you more abundant helps and graces after you have multiplied sins. If at present you wish for greater help and strength, why do you not ask them from God? *Ask, and it shall be given you.*[575] God cannot violate his promise. Have recourse to him, and he will give you the strength which you require in order to resist every temptation. God does not command impossibilities; but by his commands he admonished us to do what we can with the actual aid which he gives us; and when this aid is not sufficient to enable us to resist temptations, he exhorts us to ask additional help, which he gives whenever we pray for it.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Then, my God! Why hast Thou been so bountiful to me, and I so ungrateful to Thee? We have been engaged in a mutual contest. I fled away from Thee, and Thou didst seek after me. Thou didst confer benefits on me, and I offered insults to Thee. Ah, Lord, the goodness alone which Thou hast shown me ought to enamour me of Thee; for, when I multiplied sins, Thou didst multiply Thy graces. And when have I merited the light which Thou now givest me? My Lord, I thank Thee for it with my whole heart, and I hope to thank Thee for it eternally in heaven. I hope in Thy blood for eternal salvation and I hope for it with certainty, since Thou hast treated me with so much mercy. I hope that Thou will give me grace never more to betray Thee. I purpose with Thy grace to die a thousand times rather than ever again offend Thee. I have offended Thee sufficiently. During the remainder of my life I wish to love Thee. And how can I but love a God who, after having died for me, has waited for me with so much patience, in spite of the numberless injuries I have done him. O God of my soul, I repent of all my sins with whole heart. I would wish to die of sorrow for them. But if I have hitherto turned my back upon Thee, I now love Thee above all things; I love Thee more than myself. Eternal Father! Through the merits of Jesus Christ, assist a miserable sinner, who wishes to love Thee. Mary, my hope! assist me; obtain for me the grace always to have recourse to thy Son, and to thee as often as the devil tempts me to offend God again.

SECOND POINT

GOD IS MERCIFUL

God is merciful. Behold the third delusion of sinners by which an immense number are lost! A learned author says that the mercy of God sends more souls to hell than his justice; for sinners are induced, by a rash confidence in the divine mercy, to continue in sin, and thus are lost. God is merciful. Who denies it? But great as is his mercy, how many does he sent o hell every day? God is merciful: but he is also just; and therefore he is obliged to punish those who offend him. He shows mercy but to whom? To them who fear him. *He hath strengthened His mercy toward them that fear Him. As a father hath compassion on his children, to hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him.*[576] But he executes justice on those who despises him, and abuses his mercy to insult him the more. God pardon sin; but he cannot pardon the will or the determination to sin. St Augustine says, that he who sins with the intention of afterward repenting, is not a penitent, but a mocker of God's majesty. But the Apostle tells us that God does not allow himself to be mocked. *Be not deceived. God is not mocked.*[577] It would be a mockery of God to insult him as often and as much as you please, and afterward to expect heaven.

But as God has shown me so many mercies hitherto, so I hope he will treat me with mercy hereafter. Behold the fourth delusion! Then, must the Lord because he has had compassion on you, show mercy forever, and never chastise you? No: the greater have been his mercies to you, the more you have reasons to fear that, if you offend him again, he will pardon you no more, but will take vengeance on your sins. *Say not: I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me? For the Most High is a patient rewarder.*[578] Say not: I have sinned, and have not been punished; for though God endures, he will not to do so forever. When the number of mercies which he has resolved to show to the sinner is exhausted, he then punishes all his sins together. And the longer God has waited for his repentance, the more severe will be his punishment, says St Gregory.[579]

If then, O my brother, you see that you have often offended God, and that he has not sent you to hell, you should say: The merits of the Lord, that we are not consumed.[580] Lord! I thank Thee for not having sent me to hell as I deserved. Consider how many have been damned for fewer sins than you have committed, and labour to atone, by penance and other good works for the offences you have offered to God. The patience which he has had with you, and the great mercies which he has shown to you, and not to others, ought to animate you not to offend him again, but to serve and love him.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My crucified Jesus, my Redeemer and my God! Behold a traitor at Thy feet. I am ashamed to appear before Thee. How often have I mocked Thee!

How often have I promised to offend Thee no more! But my promises have been so many treasons; for when the occasion of sin was presented to me I have forgotten Thee, and have again turned my back upon Thee. I thank Thee that I am not now in hell, but at Thy feet, where Thou enlightenest me and callest me to Thy love. Yes; I wish to love Thee, my Saviour and my God! And I wish never more to despise Thee. Thou hast borne with me long enough. I see that Thou canst bear with me no longer. Unhappy me, if after so many graces, I offend Thee again! Lord, I sincerely wish and resolve to change my life: I wish to love Thee as much as I have offended Thee. It consoles me to have to deal with Thee, who art infinite goodness: but I am sorry above all things for having so much despised Thee, and I promise Thee all my love for the future. Pardon me through the merits of Thy Passion; forget the injuries I have done Thee, and give me strength to be faithful to Thee during the remainder of my life. I love Thee, O my Sovereign Good! and I hope to love Thee forever. My dear God! I will never more abandon Thee. O Mary, Mother of God! Bind me to Jesus Christ and obtain for me the grace never again to depart from his feet. In Thee I trust.

THIRD POINT

I AM YOUNG—PERHAPS

But I am young. God compassionates youth. I will hereafter give myself to God. We are now at the fifth delusion. But do you not know that God counts, not the years, but the sins of each individual? You are young! But how many sins have you committed? There are many persons of very advanced age who have not been guilty of the tenth part of the sins which you have committed. And do you not know that God has fixed the number and measure of sins which he will pardon each? *The Lord waiteth patiently,* says Holy Scripture, *that when the day of judgement shall come, He may punish them in the fullness of their sins.*[581] That is, God has patience, and waits for a certain time; but when the measure of the sins which he has resolved to pardon is filled up, he pardons no more, but chastises the sinner of sending him a sudden death while in the state of damnation, or he abandons him in his sin—a chastisement worse than death. I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be wasted.[582] If you had encompassed a field with a hedge, and cultivated it many years, and found that after all your labour and expense it produced no fruit, what would you do with it? Would you not take away the hedge and abandon it? Tremble, lest God should treat you in a similar manner. If you continue to offend him, you will gradually lose remorse of conscience—you will cease to think of eternity, or of the salvation of your soul—you will lose all light and fear: behold the hedge taken away: behold your soul already abandoned by God.

Let us come to the last delusion. You say: *It is true that if I commit this sin, I shall lose the grace of God, and shall be condemned to hell; it may be that in punishment of it I shall be damned; but it may also happen that I shall afterward make a good confession, and save my soul.* Yes, it may, I admit, happen that you will be saved; for I am not a prophet, and therefore I cannot say for certain, that, if you commit this sin, God will show you no more mercy. But you cannot deny that, if, after the great graces God has bestowed upon you, you offend him again, you will expose yourself to very great danger of being lost forever. Attend to the language of Scripture. *A hard heart shall fare evil at the last.*[583] Evil-doers shall be cut off.[584] The wicked will in the end be cut off by divine justice. *What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap.*[585] He that sows sins, will reap nothing but pains and torments. *I called and you refused . . . I will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared.*[586] I have called you, says the Lord, and you have mocked me; but I will mock you at the hour of death. *Revenge is mine, and I will repay them in due time.*[587] To me belongs the punishment due to sins: I will inflict it when the time of vengeance arrives. Such are the threats of the Scriptures against obstinate sinners; such is the chastisement which reason and justice demand. You say: *It may happen, after all, that I shall be saved.* I again admit that this may happen; but is it not the height of folly to trust the eternal salvation of your soul to a perhaps?—to a possibility of escaping hell when your salvation is so very improbable? Is eternal life an affair to be exposed to such imminent danger?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My dear Redeemer! Prostrate at Thy feet, I thank Thee for not having abandoned me after I had committed so many sins. How many who have offended Thee less than I have will never receive the light which Thou now givest me? I see that Thou earnestly desirest my salvation, and I wish to be saved, principally for the sake of pleasing Thee. I wish for heaven that there I may eternally sing the mercies which Thou hast shown me. I hope that Thou hast already pardoned me. But should I still be Thy enemy in consequence of not repenting as I ought of the offences I have offered to Thee. I am now sorry for them with my whole soul; they displeased me above all things. Pardon me for Thy mercy's sake, and increase continually my sorrow for having offended Thee who art so good a God. Give me sorrow—give me love. I love Thee above all things, but I love Thee too little. I wish to love Thee ardently. This love I ask and hope for from Thee. Hear me, O my Jesus! Thou hast promised to hear all who pray to Thee. O Mary, Mother of God, tell me that thou never allowest a soul that recommends itself to thee to go away disconsolate. I trust in thee; recommend me to thy Son, and obtain for me eternal life.

Consideration XXIV

THE PARTICULAR JUDGEMENT

“We must all be manifested before the judgement seat of Christ.”—2. *Cor* v.10.

FIRST POINT

THE GUILTY SOUL BEFORE ITS JUDGE

CONSIDER the appearance, the accusation, the examination, and the sentence. With regard to the appearance of the soul before its Judge, it is the common opinion of theologians, that the particular judgement takes place at the very moment of death; and that on the very spot where the soul is separated from the body, it is judged by Jesus Christ, who will not send, but will come himself to judge it according to its works. *At what hour you think not the Son of man will come.*[588] “He will,” says St Augustine, “come in love to the good, in terror to the wicked.”[589] Oh! How great will be the terror of the soul the first time it sees the Redeemer, and sees his countenance full of wrath! *Who,* says the prophet Nahum, *shall stand before the face of His indignation?*[590] This thought made Fr Louis Ponte tremble so as to shake the cell in which he lay. Hearing the *Dies Iræ* sung, and reflecting on the terror of the soul when it is presented before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, the venerable P. Juvenal Ancina took, and afterward executed, the resolution of forsaking the world. The sight of the wrath of the Judge will announce the sentence. *The wrath of the King is as messengers of death.*[591]St Bernard says that the soul will suffer more in seeing the indignation of Jesus Christ than in hell itself.[592] When presented before an earthly judge, criminals have been known to perspire with a cold perspiration. Such was the confusion which Piso felt at the thought of appearing as a criminal before the senate, that he killed himself. How great is the pain of a child, or of a vassal, in appearing before an angry parent or an enraged sovereign! Oh, how much greater will be the pain and confusion of the soul when it beholds Jesus Christ enraged against it for the insults which it offered to him during life! *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.*[593] The soul will see in wrath the Lamb that bore with it so patiently during life, and tat there is no hope of appeasing his anger. This shall make the soul call upon the mountains to fall upon it and to hide it from the fury of the wrathful Lamb.[594] Speaking of judgement, St Luke says: *Then they shall see the Son of Man.*[595] Oh! What pain will the sight of the judge in the form of man excite in the soul of the sinner! The sight of a Man-God who died for his salvation will upbraid him with his ingratitude. When the Saviour ascended into heaven, the angels said to the disciples: *This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall to come as you have seen Him going into heaven.*[596]

With the same wounds with which he ascended into heaven, Jesus Christ will come to judge the soul. “Great joy of the beholders,” says the Abbot Rupert, “great terror of those who are in expectation.”[597] The wounds of the Redeemer will console the just and terrify the wicked. When Joseph said to his brothers, *I am Joseph*, whom you sold, the Scripture tells us that, through fear, they were silent and unable to utter a word.[598] His brethren could not answer him, being struck with exceeding great fear. Now what answer will the sinner make to Jesus Christ? Will he dare to ask mercy when he must first render an account of his abuse of the mercy which he has received? “With what face,” says Eusebius Emissenus, “will you, who are to be first judged for contempt of mercy, ask for mercy?”[599] What, then, will become of him? Where, says St Augustine, will he fly? He will behold an angry judge above; hell open below; on one side his own sins accusing him; on the other, the devils ready to inflict chastisement; and within, the remorse of his conscience. “Above shall be an enraged Judge; below, a frightful chaos; on the right, sins accusing him; on the left, the devils dragging him to punishment; within, a burning conscience: beset in this manner, whither will the sinner fly?[600]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my Jesus! I will always call Thee Jesus. Thy name consoles and encourages me because it reminds me that Thou art my Saviour, who didst die for my salvation. Behold me at Thy feet. I acknowledge that I have deserved hell as often as I have offended Thee by mortal sin. I am unworthy of pardon, but Thou hast died to merit pardon for me. Pardon me, then, immediately, O my Jesus, before Thou comest to judge me. I shall not then be able to ask pardon: I can now ask it from Thee, and I hope for it. Thy wounds will then fill me with terror, but now they give me confidence. My dear Redeemer! I am sorry above all things for having offended Thy infinite goodness. I purpose to submit toe very pain, every loss, rather than forfeit Thy grace. I love Thee with my whole heart. Have pity on me. “Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy.” O Mary, Mother of mercy, obtain for me a great sorrow for my sins, pardon and perseverance in thy divine love. I love thee, O my queen, and trust in thee.

SECOND POINT

NOTHING WILL REMAIN HIDDEN

Consider the accusation and scrutiny: *The judgement sat and the books were opened*.[601] There will be two books, the Gospel and conscience. In the Gospel will be read what the accused should have done, and in his conscience what he has done. “Each individual,” says St Jerome, will see what he has done.”[602] In the balance of divine justice, nor riches nor dignities, nor nobility, but works only, will have weight. *Thou art weighted in the balance,* said Daniel to Balthasar, *and art found wanting*.[603] “Neither his gold,” says Fr Alvarez, “nor his wealth, but the king alone, is weighed.”[604] The accusers will then come forward; and first of all the devil. “The devil,” says St Augustine, “will be at hand, and will recite the words of your profession. He will charge us before our face with what we have done, he will state the day and the hour in which we have sinned.”[605] *He will recite the words of your profession*—that is, he will bring forward the promises we have made and afterward violated: he will recount all our sins, pointing to the day and hour in which they were committed. According to St Cyprian, he will then say to the Judge, “I have suffered neither stripes nor scourges for these men.”[606] I have suffered nothing for this ungrateful sinner; and, to become my slave, he has forsaken you, who have died for his salvation: he therefore belongs to me. Their angel guardians will also, as

Origen says, accuse sinners; each of them will say: I have laboured so many years for the salvation of that man, but he has despised my admonitions. Thus "his very friends will then despise him."[607] The very walls within which he sinned shall bear witness against the sinner. *The stone shall cry out of the wall.*[608] His own conscience will accuse him. *Their conscience,* says St Paul, *bearing witness to them . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men.*[609] Their very sins, says St Bernard, will speak and say, "You have made us; we are your works; we shall not desert you."—*Lib. Med.* cap. ii. Finally, according to St Chrysostom, the wounds of Jesus Christ will accuse the sinner: "the nails shall complain of thee, the wounds and the cross of Christ shall speak against thee." The examination will now begin.

I, says the Lord, *will search Jerusalem with lamps.*[610] The lamp, says Mendozza, penetrates every corner of the house. In explaining the words *with lamps,* Cornelius a Lapide says, that God shall then place before the sinner the examples of the saints, all the lights and inspirations bestowed upon him during his life, and all the years that had been given him that he might do good. *He hath called against me the time.*[611] The sinner shall have to render an account of every glance of the eye. According to the prophet Malachi, the Lord *shall purify the sons of Levi, and shall refine them as gold.*[612] As gold is refined by removing the dross, so our good works confessions and communions will be subjected to a severe examination. *When I shall take a time, I will judge justices.*[613] In fine, St Peter tells that at judgement, the just will scarcely be saved. *If the just shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*[614] If the sinner must answer for every idle word, what account will he have to give for consenting to so many bad thoughts, for uttering so many obscene words? Speaking of the authors of scandal, who have robbed him of so many souls, the Lord says: *I will meet him as a bear that is robbed of her whelps.*[615] With regard to works, the Judge will say: *Give her of the fruit of her hands.*[616] Reward him according to the works which he has performed.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my Jesus, wert Thou now to reward me according to my works, hell would be my lot. O God! How often have I myself written the sentence of my condemnation to that place of torments! I thank Thee for the patience with which Thou hast borne me so long. O God! were I now obliged to appear before Thy judgement-seat, what account should I have to render of my past life! Enter not into judgement with Thy servant. Ah Lord, wait for me a little longer, do not judge me yet. Wert Thou now to judge me, what should become of me? Wait for me, since Thou hast treated me with so many mercies hitherto, grant me this new favour, infuse into my heart a great sorrow for my sins. I am sorry, O infinite Good, for having so often despised Thee. I love Thee above all things. Eternal Father! Pardon me for the love of Jesus Christ; and through his merits, grant me holy perseverance. My Jesus! I hope for all things from Thy blood. Most holy Mary, in thee I trust. "Turn, then, O most gracious advocate, thy eyes of mercy toward us." Behold my miseries and have pity on me.

THIRD POINT

THE SENTENCE

In fine, to obtain eternal life, the soul must be found, at judgement, to have led a life conformable to the life of Jesus Christ. *Whom he foreknew, he predestined to be made conformable to the image of his Son.*[617] It was this that made Job tremble. *What shall I do when God shall rise to judge me and when he shall examine, what shall I answer him?*[618] Philip II rebuking a domestic for having told him a lie, said to him: *Is it thus you deceive me?* The domestic went home, and died of grief. What will the sinner do? What answer will he make to Jesus Christ, his Judge? He will, like the man in the Gospel, who came to the feast without the nuptial garment, remain silent, because he will not know what to answer. His very sins will close the sinner's mouth. *All iniquity shall stop her mouth.*[619] St Basil says that the sinner will then suffer more from shame than from the very fire of hell.[620]

Finally, the Judge will pass sentence. *Depart from Me ye cursed into everlasting fire.*[621] Oh! What an awful thunder-clap will that sentence be to the sinner! "Oh! How frightfully," says Denis, the Carthusian, "will that thunder resound!"[622] "He," says St Anselm, "that does not tremble at such thunder, sleeps not, but is dead."[623] Eusebius writes, that the terror of sinners at hearing the sentence of their condemnation, will be so great, that, if they could, they would die again.[624] “The wicked shall be seized with such dismay at the sight of the Judge pronouncing sentence, that, were they not immortal, they should die a second time.” There is then no more time for prayer, no more intercessors whom the sinners can invoke. “There,” says St Thomas of Villanova, “there is no opportunity of praying; there no intercessor, no friend, no father, shall assist.”[625] To whom will the sinner then have recourse? Is it to God, whom he ahs so much despised? “Who,” says St Basil, “shall deliver you? Is it that God whom you have insulted?”[626] Perhaps he may have recourse to the saints, or to Mary? No: *for then the stars*—that is, his holy advocates—*shall fall from heaven and the moon,* which represents Mary, *shall not give her light.*[627] “Mary,” says St Augustine, “will fly from the gate of heaven.”[628]

“O God! With what indifference,” exclaims St Thomas of Villanova. “do we listen to persons speaking on judgement! We appear to feel as little as if the sentence of condemnation could not fall upon ourselves, or as if we were not to be judged.[629] “And is it not,” says the same saint, “great folly to entertain security in so perilous an affair.”[630] My brother, St Augustine admonishes you not to say: Will God really send me to hell?[631] Say it not, says the holy Doctor; for even the Jews did not persuade themselves that they should be exterminated. So many of the damned did not believe that they would be cast into hell, but afterward the final vengeance came upon them. *And end is come, the end is come. . . . Now I will accomplish My anger in thee, and will judge thee.*[632] And thus, as St Augustine says, the same will also happen to you. “The day of judgement will come, and you shall find the threats of God verified.”[633] At present it depends on us to choose whatever sentence we please. It is in our power, says St Eligius, to determine the character of the sentence which we shall receive. What then must we do? We must adjust our accounts before judgement. *Before judgement prepare thee justice.*[634] St Bonaventure says that, to escape the danger of failing in business, prudent merchants frequently review and settle their accounts. The Judge may be appeased before judgement, but not during judgement,” says St Augustine.[635] Let us then say with St Bernard: “I desire to present myself before Thee already judged, and not to be judged.”[636] O my Judge, I wish to be judged and punished during life, which is a time of mercy and pardon; for after death will be the time of justice.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My God! If I do not appease Thee now, there will then be no more time for turning away from Thy anger. But how shall I, who have so often despised Thy friendship for miserable beastly pleasures, be able to appease Thy wrath? I have repaid with ingratitude Thy immense love. How can a creature ever make sufficient satisfaction for having offended the Creator? Ah, my Lord! I thank Thee, for giving me in Thy mercy a means of appeasing Thy anger and satisfying Thy justice. I offer Thee the blood and death of Jesus Christ, Thy Son and behold! I see a superabundant atonement and satisfaction made to Thee. To appease Thy anger, my repentance is also necessary. Yes, my God! I repent with my whole heart of all the injuries I have done Thee. Judge me now, O my Redeemer! I detest above all things all the offences I have offered to Thee. I love Thee with my whole heart and above all things, and I purpose to love Thee always, and to die rather than ever offend Thee again. Thou hast promised to pardon all who repent. Ah! Judge me now, and absolve me from my sins. I accept the punishment which I deserve, but reinstate me in Thy grace, and preserve me in it till death. Such is my hope. O Mary, my Mother! I thank thee for all the mercies which thou hast obtained for me. Ah! Continue to protect me to the end.

Consideration XXV

THE GENERAL JUDGEMENT

“The Lord shall be known when He executeth judgements.”—*Ps.* ix. 17.

FIRST POINT

THE GENERAL RESURRECTION

AT present there is no one in this world more despised than Jesus Christ. There is more respect shown to a peasant than to the Lord; for we are afraid to insult a peasant, or provoke him to anger, lest he should seek revenge. But insults are offered to God, and are repeated as wantonly as if he could not avenge them whenever he pleases. *The wicked,* says Job, *looked upon the Almighty as if He could do nothing.*[637] Therefore the Redeemer has appointed a day of general judgement, and which is called in the Scripture, *the day of the Lord;* on which Jesus Christ will make known the greatness of his majesty. *The Lord shall be known when He executeth judgments.*[638] Hence that day is called, not a day of mercy and pardon, but *a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery.*[639] Yes, for then the Lord will come to repair the honour which sinners have sought to take from him on this earth. Let us examine how the judgement of this great day will take place.

The coming of the Judge will be preceded by fire. *A fire shall go before Him.*[640] Fire will descend from heaven, and shall burn the earth and all things upon the earth. *The earth, and the works which are in it, shall be burnt up.*[641] Thus palaces, churches, villas, cities, kingdoms, all must be reduced to one heap of ashes. This house, defiled by sins, must be purified by fire. Behold the end of all the riches, pomps, and pleasures of this earth. After the death of all men, the trumpet will sound, and all will rise again.[642] “As often,” says St Jerome, “as I consider the day of judgement, I tremble;

that trumpet appears always to sound in my ears, Arise, ye dead, and come to judgement.[643] At the sound of this trumpet, the souls of the just will descend to be untied to the bodies with which they served God in this life; and the unhappy souls of the damned will come up from hell to take possession of the accursed bodies with which they offended God.

Oh! How great will be the difference between the bodies of the just and the bodies of the damned! The just will appear whiter, more beautiful, and more resplendent than the sun. *Then the just shall shine as the sun.*[644] Happy he who knows how to mortify his flesh in his life by refusing it forbidden pleasures; and who, to keep it under greater check, imitates the saints, by denying it even lawful gratifications, and by treating it with severity and contempt. Oh! How great will then be the happiness of those who will have practiced mortification of the flesh! We may estimate it from the words which St Peter of Alcantara addressed after death to St Teresa: “O happy penance, which merited for me so great glory.”[645] But, on the other hand, the bodies of the reprobate will appear black and hideous, and will send forth an intolerable stench. Oh! How great the pain of the damned in taking possession of their bodies! Accursed body, the soul will say, to indulge you, I have brought myself to perdition. And the body will say: Accursed soul! Why have you, who had the use of reason, allowed me the pleasures which have merited for you and me the eternal torments of hell?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my Jesus and my Redeemer, who will be one day my judge, pardon me before that day arrives. *Turn not away Thy face from me.*[646] Thou art now a Father to me: and, like a father, receive into Thy friendship a son who casts himself with sorrow at Thy feet. My Father, I ask pardon. I have offended Thee: I have unjustly forsaken Thee. Thou didst not deserve such treatment from me. I repent of it: I am sorry for it with my whole heart. Turn not away thy face from me; do not cast me off as I deserved. Remember the blood which Thou hast shed for me, and have pity on me. My Jesus, I wish for no other judge than Thee. “I willingly,” says St Thomas of Villanova, “submit to the judgement of him who died for me, and who, that he might not condemn me has condemned himself to the cross.” St Paul has said the same. *Who is he that shall condemn? Christ Jesus that died.*[647] My Father, I love Thee and for the future, I will never more depart from Thy feet. Forget the injuries I have done Thee, and give me a great love for Thy goodness. I desire to love thee more than I have offended Thee; but if Thou dost not assist me, I shall not be able to love Thee. Assist me, O my Jesus! Make me always grateful to Thy love, that on the day of judgement, I may be found in the valley of Josaphat, among the number of Thy lovers. O Mary, my Queen and my advocate! Assist me now, for if I am lost, thou wilt not be able to help me on that day. Thou prayest for all; pray also for one who glories in being thy devoted servant, and who places so much confidence in thee.

SECOND POINT

THE VALLEY OF JOSAPHAT

After their resurrection, all men will be told by the angels to go to the valley of Josaphat, that there they may be judged, *Nations, nations, in the valley of destruction; for the day of the Lord is near.*[648] When the whole human race will be assembled, the angels will come and separate the reprobate from the elect. *The angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just.*[649] The just will stand on the right, and the wicked will be driven to the left. How great would be the pain that you would feel at being driven away from a party of pleasure, or at being expelled from the church! But how much greater will be the pain of those who are banished from the society of the saints! “What think you,” says the author of the Imperfect Work, “must be the confusion of the wicked, when, after being separated from the just, they will be abandoned?”[650] This confusion alone would, according to St Chrysostom, be sufficient to constitute a hell for the reprobate. The son will be separated from the father, the husband from the wife, and the master from the servant. *One shall be taken and one shall be left.*[651] Tell me, my brother, what place do you think will fall to you? Would you wish to be found at the right hand? If you do, abandon the life which leads to the left.

In the life the princes of the earth and the worldly rich are deemed fortunate, but the saints, who live in poverty and humiliations, are despised. O faithful souls who love God, be not troubled at seeing yourselves in contempt and tribulations on this earth: *Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*[652] On the day of judgement you will be called truly fortunate, and will have the honour of being declared as belonging to the court of Jesus Christ. Oh! How beautiful will then be the appearance of St Peter of Alcantara, who was despised as an apostate! of St John of God, who was treated as a fool! of St Peter Celestine, who, after having renounced the papal throne, died in prison! Oh! How great will then be the honours of so many martyrs who have been torn to pieces by their executioners! *Then shall every man have praise from God.*[653] But on the other hand, how horrible will be the appearance of Herod, of Pilate, of Nero, and so many other great men of this earth, who are now damned! O lovers of the world, in the valley, in the valley I expect you. There, without doubt you will change your sentiments, there you will weep over your folly. Miserable beings, who for the sake of making a figure for a short time on the theatre of this world, will afterward have to act the part of reprobate in the tragedy of judgement. The elect will then be placed on the right; according to the apostle, they will, for their greater glory, be raised in the air above the clouds, and will go with the angels to meet Jesus Christ descending from heaven. We shall be taken up together with them to meet Christ into the air.[654] But the damned, like so many goats destined for the slaughter, will be compelled to remain at the left, waiting for the Judge, who will publicly pronounce sentence of condemnation against all his enemies.

But behold the heavens are already opened; the angels come to assist at the Judgement, carrying the symbols of the Passion of Jesus Christ. “When,” says St Thomas, “the Lord comes to judge, the sign of the cross and the other emblems of his passion shall be exhibited.”[655] The cross especially will appear. *And then,* says the Redeemer, *shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn.*[656] Oh! Says Cornelius à Lapide, how great, at the sight of the cross, will be the wailing of sinners who, during life, disregarded their own salvation, which the Son of God purchases at so dear a price! Then, says St Chrysostom, “shall the nails complain of thee; the wounds, the cross of Christ shall speak against thee.”[657] The holy apostles and all their imitators will act as successors at the general judgement, and shall, together with Jesus Christ, judge the nations. *The just shall shine . . . They shall judge* *nations.*[658] Mary, the Queen of angels and saints, will also come to assist at the judgement. Lastly, the eternal Judge will come seated on a throne of majesty and light. *And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty.*[659] At their presence, says the prophet Joel, *the people shall be in grievous pains.*[660] The sight of Jesus Christ will console the elect; but in the reprobate it will excite more pain than hell itself. “It would,” says St Jerome, “be easies to bear the pains of hell than the presence of the Lord.”[661] St Teresa used to say: “My Jesus, afflict me with every pain, but do not allow me to Thy countenance enraged against me on that day.” And St Basil says, “This confusion surpasses all torture.”[662] Then will be verified the prediction of St John, that the damned will call upon the mountains to fall upon them, and to hide them from the sight of an angry judge. *And they shall say to the mountains and rocks: Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.*[663]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my Redeemer! O Lamb of God who hast come into the world, not to punish, but to pardon sins; ah! pardon me immediately: pardon me before the arrival of that day on which Thou wilt judge me. Then the sight of Thee O divine Lamb! who hast borne with me so long and with so much patience, should, if I were lost, be the hell of hells. Ah! I say again, pardon me soon: draw me by Thy merciful hand from the abyss into which my sins have cast me. I repent, O sovereign Good! of having offended Thee, and of having offended Thee so grievously. I love Thee, my judge, who hast loved me so tenderly. Ah! Through the merits of Thy death, grant me a great grace, which will transform me from a sinner into a saint. Thou hast promised to hear all who pray to Thee. Cry to me and I will hear thee.[664] I do not ask earthly goods: I ask Thy grace, Thy love and nothing else. Hear me, O my Jesus! through the love which Thou didst bear to me when Thou didst die on the cross for my salvation. My beloved Jesus, I am a criminal, but a criminal who loves Thee more than he does himself. Have pity on me. Mary, my Mother, come to my aid, and come immediately; now is the time that thou canst assist me. Thou didst not abandon me when I lived in forgetfulness of thee and of God; come to my relief now that I am resolved to serve thee always, and never more to offend my Lord. O Mary, after Jesus, thou art my hope.

THIRD POINT

THE ETERNAL SENTENCE

But, behold! The judgement already begins. The books, which shall be the consciences of each individual, are opened. *The judgement sat, and the books were opened.*[665] The witnesses against the reprobate will be—first, the devils, who according to St Augustine, will say: “Most just God, declare him to be mine who has unwilling to be yours.”[666] Secondly, they will be their own consciences: *Their own conscience bearing witness to them.*[667] The very walls of the house in which they have offended God will bear testimony, and will cry for vengeance against them. *The stone shall cry out of the wall.*[668] Finally the Judge himself, who has been present at all the insults offered to him, will give evidence against the sinner. *I am the Judge and the witness, saith the Lord.*[669] St Paul says, that then the Lord *will bring to light the hidden things of darkness.*[670] He will make known to all men the most secret and shameful sins of the reprobate, which they concealed even in the tribunal of confession. *I will discover thy shame to thy face.*[671] The Master of the Sentences, along with other authors, is of opinion that the sins of the elects will not be manifested; but will, according to the words of David, be covered: *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiver, and whose sins are covered.*[672] But St Basil teaches that with a single glance all will see, as in a picture, the sins of the damned. If, says St Thomas (*De Hum. Chr.* a.25), in the garden of Gethsemane, at the words of Christ, “*I am He,*” the soldiers who came to take him prisoner fell prostrate on the ground, what will be the condition of the damn when, sitting in judgement, he will say to them: Behold, I am He whom you have so much despised.?

But now comes the sentence. Jesus Christ will first turn to the elect, and address them in these consoling words: *Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*[673] So great was the consolation which St Francis of Assisi felt when he learned by revelation that he was predestined, that he could not contain himself. How great will be the joy of the elect in hearing the Judge say to him: Come, blessed children, come to a kingdom; for you there are no more pains, no more fears, you are and shall be saved forever. I bless the blood which I have shed for you, and I bless the tears which you have shed for your sins. Let us ascend into Paradise, where we shall remain together for all eternity! The most holy Mary will also bless her servants, and will invite them with her to heaven. And thus, singing Allelujas, the elect will enter heaven in triumph, to possess, to praise, and to love God forever.

But on the other hand, the reprobate, turning to Jesus Christ, will say to him: What will become of us? Since, the Judge will say, you have renounced and despised my grace, *depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire.*[674] *Depart;* begone from Me; I wish neither to see nor to hear you ever more. *You cursed,* go and since you have despised my blessing, go accursed. And where, O Lord, will they go? *Into fire,* into hell, to burn both in soul and in body. And for how many years, or for how many ages? *Into everlasting fire;* for all eternity; as long as God shall be God. After this sentence, says St Ephrem, the reprobate will take leave of the angels, of the saints, of relatives, and of the divine Mother. “Farewell, ye just! Farewell, O cross! Farewell, O paradise! Farewell, fathers and children, for we shall never see any of you again! Farewell, O Mary, Mother of God!”[675] Then, in the middle of that valley, a put will be opened, into which the devils and the damned will fall. O God! They will see those gates closed, never to be opened, never, never for all eternity. O accursed sin, to what a melancholy end will you one day lead so many poor souls! O unhappy souls, to whom this unhappy end is reserved!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my Saviour and my God! What sentence shall I receive on that day? If, O my Jesus! Thou now demandest an account of my life, what could I say to Thee but that I deserve a thousand hells? Yes, it is true. O my divine Redeemer! I deserve a thousand hells; but remember that I love Thee and that I love Thee more than myself, and for the insults I have committed against Thee, I feel so great a sorrow that I would be content to have suffered every evil rather than have offended Thee. Thou O my Jesus! condemnest obstinate sinners, but not those who repent and wish to love Thee. Behold me penitent at Thy feet; make me feel that Thou pardonest me. But this Thou hast declared by the mouth of Thy prophet. “Turn ye to me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn to you.”—*Zac.* i. 3. I give up all things; I renounce all the pleasures and goods of this world; I turn to Thee, and embrace Thee, O my beloved Redeemer! Ah! Receive me into Thy heart, and there inflame me with Thy holy love; but inflame me in such a manner, that I shall never again think of separating from Thee. O my Jesus! save me, and let my salvation consist in loving Thee always, and in singing Thy mercies forever. *The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever.*[676] Mary, my hope, my refuge, and my Mother, assist me and obtain for me holy perseverance. No one has been lost who has had recourse to thee. To thee I recommend myself: have pity on me.

Consideration XXVI

THE PAINS OF HELL

“And these shall go into everlasting punishment.”—*Matt.* xxv. 46.

FIRST POINT

THE PAIN OF SENSE

IN committing sin, the sinner does two evils. He abandons God, the Sovereign Good, and turns to creatures. *For My people have done two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns—broken cisterns—that can hold no water.*[677] Since then, by turning to creatures the sinner offends God, he will be justly tortured in hell by the same creatures by fire, and by devils: in this punishment consists the pain of sense. But because his greatest guilt and the malice of his sin consists in turning his back on God, his principal torments, his hell, will be the pain of loss, or that pain arising from having lost God.

Let us first consider the pain of sense. It is of faith that there is a hell. In the middle of the earth there is a prison reserved for the chastisement of rebels against God. What is this hell? It is what the glutton who was damned called a place of torments.[678] A place of torments, where all the senses and powers of the damned will have their proper torment and where, the more a person has offended God by any sense, the more he will be tortured in that sense. *By what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented.*[679] *As much as she hath gloried herself and lived in delicacies, so much torments and sorrow give ye to her.—Apoc.* xviii.7. The sight will be tormented with darkness. *A land,* says Job, *that is dark, and covered with the mist of death.*[680] How pitiable the condition of a man who is shut up in a dark cave for forty or fifty years, or during his whole life! Hell is a dungeon closed up on every side, into which a ray of the sun, or of any other light, shall never enter. *He shall never see the light.*[681] The fire of this world sends forth light; but the fire of hell is utterly dark. *The voice of the Lord divided the fire.*[682] In explaining these words, St Basil says, that the Lord will separate the light from the fire, so that this fire will burn, but will not illuminate. Albertus Magnus expounds them more briefly, and says that God "will divide the flame from the heat."[683] The very smoke that issues from that fire shall form a storm of darkness which, according to St Jude, will blind the damned. *To whom the storm of darkness is reserved forever.*[684] St Thomas teaches that the damned have only the light which serves to increase their torments. In that glimmering light they will see the deformity of their associates, and of the devils, who will assume horrible forms in order to increase the terrors of the damned.

The sense of smell will also be tormented. How painful to be confined in a close room along with a putrid corpse! *Out of their carcasses,* says the Prophet Isaias, *shall rise a stink.*[685] The damned must remain the midst of so many millions of the reprobate, who, though forever alive to pain, are called carcasses on account of the stench which they send forth. St Bonaventure says, that if the body of one of the damned were placed on this earth, it would, by its stench, be sufficient to cause the death of all men. Miserable fools! The greater the number of the damned in hell, the more insufferable will be their torments. "There," says St Thomas, "the society of the reprobate will cause, not a diminution, but an increase of misery."[686] Their sufferings are more intolerable on account of the stench, on account of the shrieks of the damned, and on account of the narrowness of the place. In hell, they will be one over the other, like sheep gathered together in the winter. *They are,* said David, *laid in hell like sheep.*[687] They will be even like grapes pressed under the wine-press of God's wrath. *And he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of God the Almighty.*[688] From this will arise the pain of immobility. *Let them become immovable as a stone.*[689] Thus, in whatsoever position the damned will fall into hell after the last day, in that they must remain, without ever changing their posture, and without ever being able to move hand or foot, as long as God will be God.

The sense of hearing will be tormented by the unceasing howling and wailing of those miserable beings, who are sunk in an abyss of despair. The devils will torment the damned by continual noises. *The sound of dread is always in his ears.*[690] How painful to a person longing for sleep to hear the groans of a sick man, the barking of a dog, or the screams of an infant! But, oh! How miserable the condition of the damned, who must listen incessantly for all eternity to the clamour and cries of the companions of their torments! The damned will be tormented by a ravenous hunger. *They shall suffer hunger like dogs.*[691] But they never will have a morsel of bread. Their thirst will be so great that all the waters of the ocean will not be able to quench it; but they will never be allowed a single drop. The rich glutton asked for a drop of water; but he has not as yet had it, and he never, never will have it.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my Lord! Behold at Thy feet one who has so much despised Thy grace and Thy chastisement! Miserable should I be, O my Jesus! if Thou hadst not taken pity on me. How many years should I be in that fetid furnace, in which so many of my companions are now burning! Ah, my Redeemer! Why does not this thought make me burn with Thy love? How can I ever again think of offending Thee? Ah, my Jesus! may I never more displease Thee. Strike me dead a thousand times rather than permit me ever again to insult Thee. Since Thou hast begun, complete the work. Thou hast taken me out of the abyss of so many sins, and hast so lovingly called me to love Thee. Ah! Grant that I may spend for Thee all the time which Thou now givest me. How ardently should the damned desire a day or an hour of the time granted to me! And shall I continue to spend it in offending Thee? No, my Jesus! through the merits of that blood, which has hitherto delivered me from hell, do not permit it. I love Thee, O Sovereign Good! and because I love Thee I am sorry for having offended Thee. I wish never more to offend Thee, but to love Thee forever. Mary, my Queen and my Mother, pray to Jesus for me, and obtain for me the gift of perseverance and of his holy love.

SECOND POINT

THE FIRE OF HELL

The pain which most severely torments the senses of the damned arises from the fire of hell, which tortures the sense of touch. *The vengeance on the flesh of the ungodly is fire and worms.*[692] Hence, in passing sentence, the Lord makes special mention of it. *Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire.*[693] Even in this life, the pain of fire is the greatest of all torments; but according to St Augustine, our fire, compared with the fire of hell, is but painted fire.[694] St Vincent Ferrer says, that in comparison with the fire of hell our fire is cold. The reason is, that the fire of this earth has been created for our use; but God has made the fire of hell purposely to torment the damned. As Tertullian remarks: “Fire which is made for the use of man in this world, is very different from that which is used for the justice of God.”[695] *A fire is kindled in my rage.*[696] Hence, the Prophet Isaias calls the fire of hell the spirit of heat. *If the Lord shall wash away the filth of the daughters of Sion . . . by the spirit of burning*.[697] The damned will be sent, not to the fire, but into the fire. “Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire.” Thus, like a piece of wood in the furnace, they will be surrounded by fire. They will have an abyss of fire below, an abyss of the fire above, and an abyss of fire on every side. If they touch, or see, or breathe, they touch and see, and breathe nothing but fire. They will live in fire, like a fish in water. But this fire will not only surround the damned, but will also enter into their very bowels to torment them. Their bodies will become all fire. Thus, this fire will burn the bowels, the heart, the brain, the blood within the veins, and even the marrow within the bones. Each of the damned will be in himself a furnace of fire. *Thou shall make them as a furnace of fire*.[698]

Some cannot bear to walk under a strong sun, or to remain in a close room before a large fire; they cannot endure a spark that flies from a candle; and still they fear not the devouring flames of hell. *Which of you,* says the Prophet Isaias, *can dwell with devouring fire*?[699] As a wild beast devours a lamb, so the fire of hell devours the damned; but it devours them without ever causing death. “Fools,” says St Peter Damian, addressing the unchaste, “continue, continue to indulge your flesh; a day will come when your impurities, like pitch, will nourish and increase within your bowels the flame which will torment you in hell.”[700] St Jerome says that this fire will bring with it all the pains and torments to which men are subject on this earth—pains in the sides, in the head, in the bowels, in the nerves. In this fire the damned will suffer even the pain of cold.[701] *Let him*, says Job, *pass from the snow waters to excessive heat.*[702] But we must always keep in mind, that all the torments of this earth are, as St Chrysostom says, but the shadow of the pains of hell.

The powers of the soul will also have their proper torment. The damned will be tormented in the memory by the remembrance of the time which was given to them in this life, that they might save their souls, and which they spent in procuring their own damnation; by the remembrance of the graces which they have received from God, and of which they have lost in losing heaven and God, and that this loss is forever irreparable. In the will, by seeing that they will be refused whatsoever they ask. *The desire of the wicked shall perish*[703]. The miserable being will never have anything which they desire, and will be forever afflicted with the eternal torments which they abhor. They would wish to be rid of these torments, and to enjoy peace; but in these torments they will forever remain, and peace they will never find.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my Jesus! Thy blood and Thy death are my hope. Thou hast died to deliver me from eternal death. Ah, Lord! Who hast partaken more of Thy merits than I, who have so often deserved hell? Ah! Do not allow me to live any longer ungrateful to the great graces Thou hast bestowed upon me. Thou hast delivered me from the fire of hell, because Thou wishest me to burn, not in that tormenting fire, but with the sweet flames of Thy love. Assist me, then, that I may satisfy thy desire. Were I now in hell, I could never more love Thee. But since I am able to love Thee, I wish to love Thee. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness! I love Thee, O my Redeemer who hast loved me so tenderly. How have I been able to live so long in forgetfulness of Thee? I thank Thee for not having been forgetful of me. Hadst Thou forgotten me, I should now either be in hell or without sorrow for my sins. This sorrow which I feel in my heart for having offended Thee, and my desire to love Thee ardently, are gifts of Thy grace, which still assist me. I thank Thee for them, O my Jesus! I hope for the future to give Thee the remainder of my life. I wish to think only of serving and pleasing

Thee. Remind me always of the hell I have deserved and of the graces Thou hast bestowed upon me, and do not permit me ever again to turn my back upon Thee, and to condemn myself to that pit of torments. O Mother of God! Pray for me a sinner. Thy intercession has delivered me from hell. Deliver me also, O my Mother, by thy prayers, from sin, which alone can again condemn me to hell.

THIRD POINT

THE PAIN OF LOSS

But all these torments are nothing, compared with the pain of loss. Hell does not consist in the darkness, stench, shrieks, and fire; the pain which constitutes hell is, the pain of having lost God. “Let torments,” says St Bruno, “be added to torments, and let them not be deprived of God.”[704] And St John Chrysostom says that a thousand hells are not equal to this pain.[705] According to St Augustine, if the damned enjoyed the vision of God, “they should feel no pain, and hell should converted into a paradise.”[706] To conceive some notion of this pain, consider that, should a person lose a jewel worth a hundred crowns, the loss would occasion great pain, but were the jewel worth two hundred crowns, his pain is doubled; and if it were worth four hundred crowns, the pain is still greater. In a word, the pain which he suffers increase in proportion to the value of which he has lost. What have the damned lost? They have lost God, who is an infinite good. Hence St Thomas says that the pain of the damned is, in a certain manner, infinite.[707]

This pain is dread only by the saints. St Ignatius of Loyola used to say: Lord, I am willing to bear every pain, but not the pain of being deprived of Thee. But, because they live in the midst of darkness, sinners who are content to live for months and years without God do not understand this pain. However, they will know at death the great good which they lose. At its departure from this world, the soul, as St Antonine says, instantly sees that it has been created for God.[708] Hence it will suddenly rush forward to embrace its Sovereign Good: but, if it be in sin, God will cast it off. If a dog sees a hare, what efforts does he not make to break his chains and seize his prey. At its separation from the body, the soul is naturally drawn to God, but sin drags it away and sends it to hell, at a distance from him. *Your iniquities*, says the Prophet Isaias, *have divided between you and your God*.[709] The entire, then, of the hell of the damned consists in that first word of the sentence of their condemnation—*Depart from Me, you cursed*. Go, Jesus Christ shall say: I do not wish you ever again to see my face. When Absalom heard that David condemned him never more to appear before him, he said: *Tell my father either to permit me to see his face, or to put me to death*—2 Kings, xiv. 24. To one of his grandees, whom he saw guilty of irreverence in the church, Philip II said: "Do not dare ever again to appear in my presence." So great was the pain which the nobleman felt, that, after having returned home, he died of grief. What will be the anguish of the reprobate at the hour of death, when God will say to him: Begone, I will never see you again! *I will hide my face from thee; . . . all evils and afflictions shall find him*.[710] On the day of judgement Jesus Christ will say to the reprobate: You are no longer mine; I am no longer yours. Call his name not, my people; for you are not my people, and I will not be yours.[711]

With what pain does a son at the death of a father, or a wife at the death of a husband say: My father, my wife, I shall never see you again! Ah! if we now heard the wailing of one of the damned, and asked him why he weeps so bitterly, his answer would be: I weep because I have lost God, and shall never see him more. Perhaps the miserable man can love God in hell, and can resign himself to his will? No, if he could do this, hell would not be hell. The unhappy being can never resign himself to the divine will? Neither can he love his God; he hates and will hate him forever, and his hell will consist in the conviction that God is an infinite good, and that he is compelled to hate him, while he sees that he is worthy of infinite love. When St Catherine asked a devil who he was, he said: "I am that wicked wretch that is deprived of the love God."[712] The damned will hate and curse God; and in cursing God, they will also curse the benefits he has conferred upon them; they will curse the benefits of creation, of redemption, of the sacraments, particularly the sacraments of baptism and penance, and above all, the most holy sacrament of the altar. They will hate all the angels and saints, and especially their angel-guardians and their holy advocates, and above all the divine Mother. But they will principally hate the Three Divine Persons, and among them they will hate in a special manner the Son of

God, who once died for their salvation; they will curse his wounds, his bloods, his pains and his death.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my God! Thou then art my supreme and infinite Good; and I have so often voluntarily lost Thee! I knew that in committing sin I gave Thee great displeasure, and that I lost Thy grace; and with this knowledge, I have consented to sin! Ah! If I did not see Thee, O Son of God, nailed to the cross in order to die for me, I should not have courage to ask or hope for pardon from Thee. Eternal Father! Look not on me, but behold Thy beloved Son, who asks mercy for me; hear him, and pardon me. I ought at this moment to be in hell, without any hope of being ever more able to love Thee, or to recover Thy lost grace. My God! I am sorry above all things for the injury I have done Thee in renouncing Thy friendship, and despising Thy love for the miserable pleasures of this world. Oh! That I had died a thousand times, rather than have offered Thee so great an insult! How could I have been so blind and foolish! I thank Thee, O my Lord! for giving me time to repair the evil I have done. Since through Thy mercy, I am not in hell, and can love Thee, O my God! I wish to love Thee. I will wait no longer to convert myself entirely to Thee. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! I love Thee, my life, my treasure, my love, my all. Remind me always, O Lord! of the love which Thou hast borne to me, and of the hell which I have deserved, that this thought may continually excite me to make acts of love, and to say always, I love Thee, I love thee, I love Thee, O Mary, my Queen, my hope and my Mother, if I were in hell, I could never more love thee. I love thee, o my Mother, and in thee, after Jesus, I trust that I shall never again cease to love my God and thee. Assist me; pray to Jesus for me.

Consideration XXVII

THE ETERNITY OF HELL

“And these shall go into everlasting punishment.”—*Matt.* xxv. 46.

FIRST POINT

HELL IS ETERNAL

WERE hell not eternal, it would not be hell. Torments which continue but a short time, are not a severe punishment. The man who is afflicted with an abscess or cancer submits to the knife or the cautery. The pain is very sharp; but, because it is soon over, the torture is not very great. But, should the incision or cauterisation last for a week, or for an entire month, how frightful should be his agony! A slight pain in the eye, or in the teeth, when it lasts for a long time, becomes insupportable. Even a comedy, a musical entertainment, would it continue for an entire day, produces intolerable tediousness. And would it last for a month, or for a year, who could bear it? What then must hell be, where the damned are compelled, not to listen to the same comedy or the same music, nor to submit merely to pains in the eyes, or in the teeth, or to the torture of the knife, or of the red-hot iron but to suffer all pains and all torments? And for how long? For all eternity. *They shall be tortured forever and ever.*[713]

This belief in eternity is an article of faith; it is not an opinion, but a truth attested by God in so many places in Holy Scriptures. *Depart from Me, you accursed, into everlasting fire. And these shall go into everlasting punishment.*[714] Who shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction.[715] Everyone shall be salted with fire.[716] As salt prevents putrefaction, so the fire of hell, while it tortures the damned, performs the office of salt by preserving their life.

Now, how great would be the folly of the man who, for the sake of a day's amusement, would voluntarily condemn himself to be shut up in a dungeon for twenty or thirty years! If hell lasted but a hundred, or even but two or three years, it would be the extreme of folly in a Christian to condemn himself to fire for two or three years for the vile pleasure of a moment. But there is not the question of thirty, of a hundred, or of a hundred thousand years; but there is question of eternity; there is question of suffering forever the same torments—torments which will never end, and will never be mitigated in the slightest degree. The saints then had reason, as long as they were on this earth, and in danger of being lost, to weep and tremble. Blessed Isaias, even while he lived in the desert in fasting and penitential rigours wept and said: Ah! unhappy me, who am not as yet free from the danger of losing my soul.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my God! If Thou hadst sent me to hell, as I have often deserved, and hadst afterward drawn me from it, how deeply should I feel my obligations to Thee! What a holy life would I have begun! And now that Thou hast shown me greater mercy by preserving me from falling into that place of woe, what shall I do? Shall I again offend Thee and provoke Thy wrath, that Thou mayest sent me to burn in that prison of rebels against Thy majesty, where so many are buried in fire for fewer sins that I have committed? Ah, my Redeemer! I have hitherto done so; and instead of availing myself to the time which Thou gavest me to weep over my sins, I have spent it in provoking Thee still more. I thank Thy infinite goodness for having borne with me so long. If Thy goodness were not infinite, how couldst Thou have borne with me? I thank Thee for having waited for me till now with so much patience. I thank Thee in a most special manner for the light which Thou now givest me, by which Thou makest me see my folly, and the injury I have done Thee in insulting Thee so often by my sins. My Jesus! I detest them, and am sorry for them with my whole heart. Through the merits of Thy Passion, pardon me and assist me with Thy grace that I may never more offend Thee. I now have just reason to fear that, if I commit another moral sin, Thou wilt abandon me. My Lord! I entreat Thee to place this just fear before my eyes whenever the devil will tempt me to offend Thee again.

My God! I love Thee; I do not wish ever more to lose Thee, assist me by Thy grace. O most holy Virgin! do thou also assist me. Obtain for me the grace always to have recourse to thee in my temptation, that I may never again lose my God. Mary, after Jesus, thou art my hope.

SECOND POINT

THE WEIGHT OF ETERNITY

He that enters hell will not depart from it for all eternity. This thought made David tremble and say: *Let not the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.*[717] As soon as the damned fell into that pit of torments, its mouth is closed, never to be opened. In hell there is a gate for admission, but none for egress. “There will be a descent,” says Eusebius, “but there will be no ascent.”[718] In explaining the words of the Psalmist, this author says, and let not the pit shut her mouth; because when it shall have received them, it will be closed above and opened downward![719] As long as the sinner remains on this earth, he may hope to reverse the sentence of his damnation; but as soon as death overtakes him in sin, all his hopes are at end forever. *When the wicked man is dead, there shall be no hope any more.*[720] Perhaps the damned may flatter themselves with a false hope, and thus find some relief in their despair. The man who is mortally wounded, confined to his bed, and given over by his physicians, may console himself with the hope of finding a physician or a remedy to heal his wounds. The man who is condemned to the galleys for life may also find comfort in the expectation of being one day delivered from his chains. And may not the damned at least say: Who knows but I shall one day escape from this prison? And thus delude himself with this false hope. No: in hell there is no hope, whether true or false; there is no *perhaps. I will set before thy face.*[721] The unhappy damned will always see the sentence of their reprobation written before their eyes. In it they will read, that they will weep forever in that pit of torments. *And many shall awake: some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always.*[722] Hence the damned not only suffer the torments of each moment, but in each moment they endure the pain of eternity, saying: What I now suffer, I must suffer forever. “They bear,” says Tertullian, “the weight of eternity.”[723]

Let us then pray to the Lord in the words of St Augustine: “Here burn, here cut, here spare not, that you may spare for eternity.”[724] The chastisements of this life pass away: *Thy arrows pass; but the pains of the next life last forever, the voice of Thy thunder in a wheel.*[725] Let us dread these punishments. Let us dread that thunder of eternal damnation which will issue from the mouth of the Judge in passing sentence against the wicked. “Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire.” The Psalmist says: “The voice of thy thunder in a wheel.” A wheel is a figure of eternity, which has no end. *I have drawn my sword out of its sheath, not to be turned back.*[726] The punishment of hell will be great; but what ought to terrify us more us, that it will be irrevocable.

But the unbeliever will say: Can it be just to punish a sin which lasts but a moment, with eternal torments? But how, I ask, can a sinner, for a momentary pleasure, dare to insult a God of infinite majesty? St Thomas says that, even in human judgements, the punishment of crime is measured, not from its duration, but from its malice.[727] Hell is but a small punishment for mortal sin; an offence against infinite majesty deserves infinite chastisement. “In every mortal sin,” says St Bernardine of Sienna, “an infinite insult is offered to God; but an infinite injury merits infinite punishment.”[728] But, because, says St Thomas, a creature is not capable of suffering pain infinite in point of intensity, God inflicts punishment infinite in extension or duration.[729]

Besides, since the damned are incapable of making satisfaction for their sins, their punishment should be necessarily eternal. In this life penitent sinners can atone for their iniquities only in as much as the merits of Jesus Christ are applied to them. But, from the application of these merits the reprobate are excluded. Hence, since they cannot appease the anger of God, and since their sin is eternal, their punishment also must be eternal. *He shall not give to God his ransom . . . and he shall labour forever.*[730] Hence Belluacensis says: “There sin can be forever punished, and can never be expiated;”[731] for, according to St Augustine, “there the sinner cannot repent.”[732] Therefore the wrath of the Lord shall be always provoked against him. *The people with whom the Lord is angry forever.*[733] Moreover, the damned, though God should wish to pardon them, are unwilling to be pardoned; for their will is obstinate and confirmed in hatred against God.

And St Jerome says that the reprobates “are insatiable in the desire of sinning.”[734] Hence, because the damned refuse to be healed, their wounds are incurable. *Why is my wound desperate, so as to refuse to be healed.*[735]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Then, my Redeemer! If at this hour I were damned, as I have deserved, I should be obstinate in hatred against Thee, my God! who hast died for me. O God! What a hell should it be to hate Thee, who hast loved me so tenderly, who art infinite beauty, infinite goodness, and worthy of infinite love! Then if I were now in hell, I should be in such an unhappy state, that I would not even wish for the pardon which Thou now offerest to me. My Jesus, I thank Thee for the mercy Thou hast shown me; and since I now can obtain pardon, I wish to love Thee. Thou offerest me pardon, and I ask it from Thee, and hope for it through thy merits. I am sorry for all the offences I have committed against Thee. O infinite Goodness! Pardon me, then. I love Thee with my whole soul. Ah, Lord! What evil hast Thou done me that I should have to hate Thee forever as my enemy? And what friend have I ever had who has done and suffered so much for me as Thou, O my Jesus! hast done and suffered for me? Ah, do not permit me ever more to fall into enmity with Thee, and to lose Thy love. Take me out of life, sooner than permit this sovereign evil to befall me. O Mary! Take me under thy protection and do not permit me ever more to rebel against God and against thee.

THIRD POINT

ETERNITY IS UNCHANGEABLE

In this life death is greatly feared by sinners; but in hell it will be most ardently desired. *Men shall seek death, and shall not find it; and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.*[736] Hence St Jerome has written: “O death, how sweet should you be to those to whom you have been so full of bitterness.”[737] David says, that death will feast on the damned. *Death shall feed upon them.*[738] In explaining this passage, St Bernardine observes that as, in feeding, sheep eat the blades of grass, and leave the roots untouched; so death feeds on the damned; it kills them every moment, but leaves them life in order to continue to kill them by pains for all eternity. Thus, according to St Gregory, the damned die every moment without every dying. Delivered up to avenging flames, they will die always. A man who dies through pain in an object of pity to all who behold him. Perhaps the damned, too, experienced commiseration from others? None; they die every moment, and have not, and never will have, any one to take compassion on them. The Emperor Zeno, being one day shut up in a pit, continually cried out: *For pity's sake, open this grave and release me.* But no one heard him, and he was found dead, after having eaten the flesh off his arms. The damned cry out from the pit of hell, says St Cyril of Alexandria, but no one comes to deliver them—no one feels compassion for them.[739]

And for how long will this their misery last? Forever, forever. In the spiritual exercises of Fr Paul Segneri, written by Muratori, it is related that in Rome, a devil in the body of a man possessed, being asked how long he would remain in hell, began to beat his hand against a chair, and answered in a rage: *Forever, forever!* At hearing this great sermon of two words, *forever, forever,* many students of the Roman seminary, who were present, made a general confession, and changed their lives. Poor Judas! He has spent more than eighteen hundred years in hell, and his hell is still at its commencement. Poor Cain, he is in fire for more than five thousand eight hundred years, and his hell is at its beginning. Another devil was asked how long it was since he had been sent to hell. He answered, yesterday. "How," said the person who asked him, "could it be yesterday when you are damned for more than five thousand years? He replied: Oh! if you knew what is meant by eternity, you would easily conceive how a thousand years, compared with it, are but a moment. If an angel said to one of the damned: You will leave hell, but only after the lapse of as many ages as there are drops of water in the ocean, leaves on the trees, or grains of sand in the sea; he would feel greater joy than a beggar would at hearing of his elevation to a throne. Yes; all these ages will pass away, they will be multiplied an infinite number of times, and hell will be at its commencement. Each of the damned would make this compact with God: Lord, increase my pain as much as Thou wishest, let it last as long as Thou pleasest; but put an end to it, and I am content. But this end will never take place. In hell, the trumpet of divine justice will sound nothing else but these words—*forever, forever, never, never.*

The damned will ask the devils what is the hour of the night. *Watchman, what of the night?*[740] When will it end? When will these trumpets, these shrieks, this stench, these flames, these torments cease? Their answer is never, never. And how long will they last? *Forever, forever.* Ah Lord! give light to so many blind Christians, who, when entreated not to damn themselves say: If I go to hell, I must have patience. O God! They have not patience to bear the least cold, to remain in an overheated room, or to submit it to a buffet on the cheek. And how can they have patience to remain in a sea or fire, trampled by the devils and abandoned by God and by all, for all eternity!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, Father of mercies! Thou dost not abandon him who seeks Thee. Thou hast not forsaken them that seek Thee, O Lord.[741] I have hitherto turned my back upon Thee so often, and Thou hast not abandoned me: do not abandon me now that I seek Thee. I repent, O Sovereign Good! of having made me so little account of Thy grace, which I have exchanged for nothing. Look at the wounds of Thy Son. Listen to his cries, which implore Thee to pardon me; and grant me pardon. O my Redeemer! Remind me always to the pains Thou hast suffered for me, of the love Thou hast borne me, and of my ingratitude, by which I have soften deserved hell, that I may live always bewail the injury I have done Thee, and I may live always burning with Thy love. Ah, my Jesus! how can I but burn with Thy love when I reflect that for so many years I ought to burn in hell, and continue to burn in it for all eternity; when I remember that Thou hast died in order to deliver me from it, and that Thou hast with so much mercy rescued me from that land of misery! Were I in hell, I should now hate Thee there, and should have to hate Thee forever: but now I love thee and will love Thee forever. Thou lovest me, and I also love Thee. Thou wilt love me forever unless forsake Thee. Ah, my Saviour! Save me from the misfortune of ever leaving Thee, and then so with me whatsoever Thou pleasest. I merit every punishment, and I accept every chastisement, that Thou mayest deliver me from the punishment of being deprived of Thy love. O Mary, my refuge, how often have I condemned myself to hell, and thou hast preserved me from it. Ah, deliver me now from sin, which alone can deprive me of the grace of God, and bring me to hell.

Consideration XXVIII

THE REMORSE OF THE DAMNED

“Their worm dieth not”—*Mark.* ix. 47.

FIRST POINT

THE LITTLE FOR WHICH THE DAMNED ARE LOST

ACCORDING to St Thomas, this worm which dieth not is to be understood of remorse of conscience, which will eternally torment the damned in hell. The remorse which will gnaw the hearts of the reprobate will be many; but the most excruciating will be first, the thought of the trifles for which they are damned; secondly, the thought of the little which they required to do in order to save their souls; and thirdly, the thought of the great good which they have lost. After Esau had eaten the pottage of lentils for which he had sold his birthright, the Scripture says that, through sorrow and remorse for the loss, *he began to roar aloud.*[742] Oh! how will the damned howl and roar at the thought of having, for a few momentary poisoned pleasures, lost an eternal kingdom of delights, and of having condemned themselves forever to a continual death! Hence they will weep far more bitterly than Jonathan did when he saw himself condemned to death by his father for having eaten a little honey, I did but taste a little honey, and behold I must die.[743] O God! What torture will each of the damned feel in thinking that he was the cause of his own damnation! At present our past life appears to us but a dream, a moment. But what will he who is in hell think of the fifty or sixty years which he spend on this earth, when he will be in the abyss of eternity, and after the lapse of a hundred and a thousand millions of years, will see that this hell only begins? But were these fifty or sixty years all years of pleasure? Perhaps a sinner living without God, always feel happy in his sin! How long do the pleasures of sin last? Only for a few moments. All the remaining hours of the man who lives at enmity with God are full of pain and bitterness. But what will these moments of pleasure appear to the unhappy damned? How will he view that last sin in particular, by which he brought himself to perdition? Then he will say: For a miserable brutal pleasure, which lasted but a moment, and which was scarcely indulged when it vanished like air, I must burn in this fire, in despair, and abandoned by all, as long as God will be God—for all eternity.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Lord! enlighten me, that I may felt the injustice which I have done Thee, and the eternal chastisements I have deserved, by offending Thee. My God! I feel a great remorse for having offended Thee; but this pain consoles me. Hadst Thou sent me to hell, as I deserved, the thought of the trifle for which I was damned should be the hell of my hell. But now this remorse, I say, consoles me; because it encourages me to hope for pardon from Thee, who hast promised to pardon all who repent. Yes, my Lord! I repent of having offended Thee. I embrace this sweet pain of remorse. I even entreat Thee to increase it and to preserve it in my heart till death, that I may always weep bitterly over the offences I have offered to Thee. My Jesus! pardon me. O my Redeemer! who, to procure mercy for me, hadst not mercy on Thyself but condemneth Thyself to die through pain in order to deliver me from hell, have mercy on me. Grant that my remorse for having offended Thee may keep me always sorrowful, and at the same time, inflame my whole soul with love for Thee, who hast loved me so tenderly, who hast borne with me so patiently, and who now, instead of chastising me, enrichest me with Thy lights and graces. I thank Thee, O my Jesus! and I love Thee. I love Thee more than myself. I love Thee with my whole heart. Thou knowest not how to despise a soul that loves Thee. I love Thee. Do not banish me from Thy face. Receive me, then into Thy friendship and do not permit me ever more to lose Thee. Mary, my Mother! accept me for thy servant, and bind me to Jesus, thy Son. Ask him to pardon me, to give me his love and the grace of perseverance till death.

SECOND POINT

THE LITTLE THAT WAS REQUIRED FOR THEIR SALVATION

St Thomas says that the principal pain of the reprobate will consist in seeing that they are damned for nothing, and that, if they wished, they could with so much facility acquire for themselves the glory of Paradise.[744] The second remorse of conscience, then, will arise from the thought of the little that was necessary to be done for the attainment of salvation. A person who was damned appeared to St Humbert, and said to him that the most excruciating pain which he suffered in hell was caused the thought of the trifles for which he was lost, and of the little which he required to do in order to save his soul. The unhappy soul will then say: had I mortified myself by not looking at such an object; had I overcome human respect at such a time; had I avoided such an occasion of sin, such a companion, such a conversation, I should not now be damned. If I had gone to confession every week; if I have frequented the confraternity; if I had read every day a spiritual book; if I had recommended myself to Jesus Christ and to Mary, I should not have relapsed into sin. I have so often purposed to do these things, but have either neglected my resolutions, or after having begun to practise these exercises, I gave them up, and therefore I am lost.

The torture of this remorse will be increased by the good examples of virtuous friends and companions which the reprobate has witnessed; and still more by the gifts which God has given him for the salvation of his soul; gifts of nature, such as good health; gifts of fortune, which were so many talents which the Lord had given him, that he might make a good use of them, and become a saint; gifts of grace; so many lights, inspirations, calls and so many years given to him that he might repair the evil which he had done. But he will see that, in the miserable state to which he is reduced, there is no remedy. He will hear the angel-of the Lord proclaiming and protesting that time shall be no more. *And the angels whom I saw standing . . . swore by Him that liveth forever and ever . . . that time shall be no longer.*[745] Oh! what cruel swords will all these gifts and graces be to the heart of the unhappy reprobate, when he sees that the time in which he could repair his eternal ruin is already past! With tears and despair he and his companions will say: *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.*[746] He will say: if the fatigues to which I had submitted for my damnation had been borne for God, I should have become a great saint; and now what advantage do I derive from them but pain and remorse, which will torment me for eternity? Ah! The thought that it was in his power to be forever happy, and that he must be forever miserable, will torture the damned more than the fire and all the other torments of hell.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my Jesus! how hast Thou been able to bear with me? I have so often turned my back upon Thee and Thou hast not ceased to seek after me. I have so often offended Thee, and Thou hast pardoned me. Ah! Impart to me a portion of that sorrow which Thou didst feel in the Garden of Gethsemane for my sins, and which made Thee there sweat blood. I am sorry, O my Redeemer! for having so badly repaid Thy love. O accursed pleasures! I detest and curse you. You have mad me lose the grace of my Lord. My Beloved Jesus! I now love Thee above all things, and I renounce all unlawful gratifications, and purpose to die a thousand times, rather than ever more offend Thee. Ah! Through that affection with which Thou dost love me on the cross, and offered for me Thy divine life, give me light and strength to resist temptations, and to have recourse to Thy aid whenever I shall be tempted. O Mary, my hope! Thou art all-powerful with God; obtain for me holy perseverance, obtain for me the grace never more to be separated from his holy love.

THIRD POINT

THE GREAT GOOD THAT THE DAMNED HAVE LOST

The third remorse of the damned shall arise from seeing the great good which they have lost. St John Chrysostom says that the reprobate will be tormented more by the loss of paradise than by the pains of hell![747] A certain princess once said: *If God gives ma a reign of forty years, I will renounce paradise.* The unhappy princess reigned for forty years; but now that her soul has departed from this world, what does she say? Certainly she has changed her sentiments. Oh! how great at present must be her affliction and despair at the thought of having, for the enjoyment of an earthly reign of forty years, lost for eternity the kingdom of heaven!

But the torment which will most grievously torture the damned for eternity will arise from the conviction that they have lost heaven and God, their sovereign good, not by any unlucky accident, nor by the malevolence of others, but by their own fault. They will see that they have been created for paradise, and that God placed in their hands the choice of procuring for themselves eternal life or eternal death. *Before man is life and death; . . . that which he shall choose shall be given him.*[748] Thus they will see that they had it in their power, if they wished, to be eternally happy, and that they have voluntarily precipitated themselves into that pit of torments, from which they can never escape, and from which no one will ever deliver them. They will see among the elect many of their companions, who were placed in the same, or perhaps in greater, danger of sinning, and who saved their souls because they restrained their passions by recommending themselves to God, or, if they fell into sin, soon repented and gave themselves to God. But because they would not give up sin, they have in the end unhappily gone to hell—they have fallen into that sea of torments without any hope of remedy for all eternity.

Brother, if you too have been so foolish as, by your own free acts, to lose paradise and God for a miserable pleasure, endeavour as soon as possible to apply a remedy, now that you have time. Do not voluntarily continue in your foolishness. Tremble lest you should be to weep over your folly for all eternity. Who knows but this consideration which you now read is the last call which God will give you? Perhaps, if you do not now change your life, if you commit another mortal sin, the Lord will abandon you, and in punishment of that sin, send you to suffer forever among that crowds of fools who are now in hell, and confess their error (therefore we have erred), but confess it with despair, because they see that it is forever irreparable. When the devil tempts you again to sin, remember hell, have recourse to God and to the Most Holy Virgin. The thought of hell will preserve you from hell, because it will make you have recourse to God. *Remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin.*[749]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my Sovereign Good! how often have I lost Thee for nothing! How often have I deserved to lose Thee forever! But I am consoled by the words of Thy prophet: *Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.*[750] I must not, then, despair of finding Thee again, O my God! if I sincerely seek

Thee. Yes, my God! I now sigh for Thy grace more than for any other good. I am content to be deprived of all things, even of life, rather than see myself deprived of Thy love. I love Thee, O my Creator! Above all things; and because I love Thee, I am sorry for having offended Thee. O my God! Whom I have lost and despised, pardon me immediately, and enable me to find Thee again; for I wish never more to lose Thee. If Thou dost admit me again to Thy friendship, I will leave all things, and will seek to love Thee alone. I hope to do so through Thy mercy, Eternal Father! Hear me for the love of Jesus Christ; pardon me, and give me the grace never more to be separated from Thee. If I voluntarily lost Thee again, I ought to fear that Thou wilt abandon me. O Mary, O advocate of sinners! Obtain for me the grace to make peace with God and afterward keep me under thy protection that I may never more lose him.

Consideration XXIX

HEAVEN

“Your sorrow shall be turned into joy”—*John.* xvi 20.

FIRST POINT

ENTRANCE OF A SOUL INTO PARADISE

LET us at present animate ourselves with the hope of heaven, to bear patiently the afflictions of this life, and to offer them to God in return for the sufferings which Jesus Christ endured for the love of us. All these afflictions, sorrows, persecutions, and tears, will one day have an end, and will, if we save our souls, become to us sources of joy and happiness in the kingdom of bliss. This is the ground to courage and hope which the Saviour holds out to us. *Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*[751] Let us then this day make some reflections on the joys of heaven. But what shall we be able to say on these joys, when the most enlightened of the saints knew not how to give us an idea of that happiness which God has prepared for his faithful servants? David could only say that paradise is a good exceedingly to be desired. *How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts.*[752] But, my beloved St Paul, do you, at least, who had the happiness of being rapt up into heaven, declare to us some of the things you have seen. No, exclaims the Apostle, what I have seen it is impossible to describe. The delights of heaven *are secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter.*[753] They are so great that they only who enjoy them are able to comprehend them. All that I can say of them, says the Apostle, is, that *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.*[754] No man living has ever seen, or heard or conceived the beauty, the harmony, the delights which God has prepared for those who love Him.

At present it is impossible for us to comprehend the happiness of heaven, because we have no idea but of earthly enjoyments. Were a horse capable of reasoning, he would, if he expected a rich feast from his master, imagine it to consist in excellent hay and oats; for these are the only species of food of which he has any idea. It is thus we form our notions of the happiness of heaven. It is beautiful in the summer to behold at night the starry heaven; it is delightful in the spring to stand on the shore when the sea is unruffled, and to see in its bosom the rocks covered with seaweed, and the fishes gliding through the waters; it is also delightful to be a garden full of fruits and flowers, ornamented with flowing fountains, and enlivened by the flutter and singing of birds; in such a scene one is tempted to exclaim: Oh! what a paradise! what a paradise! But far different are the delights of heaven. To form some imperfect idea of them, let us reflect that in heaven is an all-powerful God, who has pledged himself to make the soul that loves him happy. Do you wish, says St Bernard, to know what is in heaven? "There is nothing there that gives displeasure; there is everything that delights."[755]

O God! What will be the sentiments of the soul on its entrance into that happy kingdom? Let us represent to our minds a young maiden, who, after consecrating herself to the love of Jesus Christ, dies and quits this world. The soul of the young maiden is presented for judgement: the Judge embraces her and pronounces the sentence of her salvation. Her angel-guardian meets and congratulates her; she thanks him for his assistance, and the angel then says: "Rejoice, O happy soul! Thy salvation is now secure, come and behold the face of thy Lord." Behold, the soul now passes beyond the clouds, the spheres, the stars, and enters into heaven. O God! What will be her feelings on first setting her foot in this happy country, and beholding, for the first time, this city of delights! The angels and the saints will come to meet her, and will receive her with a joyous welcome. What shall be her consolation in rejoining there her relatives or friends, who have been already admitted into heaven, and in meeting her holy advocates!

The soul will wish to bend her knees to venerate these saints, but they will say: See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant.[756] She will thence be carried to kiss the feet of Mary, the Queen of heaven. What tenderness will not the soul experience in first beholding this divine Mother, who gave her so much assistance in the work of her salvation; for then the soul will see all the graces she obtained through the intercession of Mary, who will embrace her with love and tenderness. This Queen of heaven will then conduct the soul to Jesus, who will receive her as his spouse, and will say: *Come from Libanus, my spouse . . . thou shalt be crowned.*[757] My spouse, rejoice: there is now an end to tears, to sufferings, and to fears: receive the eternal crown I have purchased for you by my blood. Jesus himself will then present her to receive the benediction of his divine Father, who shall embrace and bless her, saying: *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;*[758] and shall bestow upon her the same happiness which he himself enjoys.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Behold, O my God! At Thy feet an ungrateful sinner, whom Thou hast created for heaven, but who has so often, for the sake of a wretched pleasure, renounced Thee to Thy face, and has consented to be condemned to hell. But I hope Thou hast already pardoned me all the injuries I have done Thee, for which I am always sorry, and will be sorry as long as I live. Of these injuries I desire to receive from Thee new pardon. But, O God! Although my sins have been already forgiven, it will still always true that I have dared to afflict Thee, my Redeemer, who hast given Thy life to bring me Thy kingdom. But may Thy mercy be forever praised and blessed, O my Jesus! for having borne me with so much patience, and for having bestowed upon me multiplied graces, instead of chastising me as I deserved. I see, my dear Saviour! That Thou ardently desirest my salvation, and that Thou wishest to bring me to Thy kingdom, that I may love Thee forever; but it is Thy wish that I should first love Thee here on earth. Yes; I wish to love Thee. Though there were no heaven, I would wish to love Thee while I live, with my whole soul and with all my strength. It is enough for me to know that Thou, my God, desirest to be loved by me. My Jesus! assist me by Thy grace; do not abandon me. My soul is immortal: I must then either love Thee or hate Thee for all eternity. Ah! It is my wish to love Thee for eternity, and I wish to love Thee without reserve here, that I may love Thee without reserve hereafter. Dispose of me as Thou pleasest, chastise me as Thou wishest; do no deprive me of Thy love, and then do with me what Thou wishes. My Jesus! Thy merits are my hope. O Mary! I place great confidence in thy intercession. Thou didst deliver me from hell when I was in sin; now that I wish to give myself to God, obtain for me the grace to save my soul, and to become a saint.

SECOND POINT

HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN

When the soul has once entered into the happy kingdom of God, *there will be nothing to molest it.*[759] God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things are passed away. And He that sat on the throne said: Behold I make all things new.[760] In heaven there is no infirmity, no poverty, no distress; there are no longer the vicissitudes of days and nights, nor of cold and heat; but a perpetual day always serene, an eternal spring always delightful. There are no persecutions; no envy. In that kingdom of love, all love one another tenderly; and each rejoices in the good of the other as if it were his own. There are no fears; because the soul, being confirmed in grace, can no longer sin nor lose her God. *Behold I make all things new. Everything is new; everything gives consolation and content.*[761] The sight will be filled with delight in beholding this city of perfect beauty. How delightful the view of a city in which the streets are of crystal, the palaces of silver, the ceilings of gold, and all adorned with festoons of flowers! Oh! how much more beautiful the city of paradise! How splendid the appearance of these citizens, who are all, clothed in royal robes; for, as St Augustine says, they are all kings. How delightful must it be to behold Mary, who will appear more beautiful than all paradise! But what must it be to see the Lamb of God, the Heavenly Spouse, Jesus! St Teresa had one transient glimpse of one of the hands of Jesus Christ, and was struck senseless by its beauty. The smell will be regaled with odours, but with the odours of paradise. The ear will be delighted with celestial harmony. St Francis once heard from an angel a single stroke on a violin, and almost died through joy. What then must it be to hear the whole choir of saints and angels chanting the glories of God! *They shall praise Thee forever and ever.*[762] What must it be to hear Mary praising God! St Francis de Sales says that, as the singing of the nightingale surpasses that of all other birds, so the voice of Mary is far superior to that of all the other saints. In a word, in heaven are found all the delights which can be desired.

But the joys we have been hitherto considering are the least of the blessings of heaven. The good which constitutes heaven is God himself, the Sovereign Good. The reward which God promises us is not merely the beauty, the harmony, and the other joys of this blessed city; the chief reward is God himself—that is, to see and love God face to face. *I am Thy reward exceeding great.*[763] St Augustine says that, if God showed his face to the damned, “hell would be instantly turned into a paradise of delights.”[764] And he adds that, were a departed soul allowed the choice of seeing God and enduring the torments of hell, or of being delivered from them and deprived of the sight of God, “it would prefer to see the Lord, and to suffer these torments.”

During the present life, we cannot comprehend the delight of seeing and loving God face to face; but we may form some notion of it by considering that divine love is so enchanting, that, even in this life, it has sometimes raised up from the earth, not only the souls, but even the bodies of the saints. St Philip Neri was once lifted up into the air along with a bench which he had grasped. St Peter Alcantara was also elevated from the earth, and a tree which he held was torn up from the roots. St Vincent, while he was tormented, spoke, says St Augustine, in such a manner, that one person appeared to suffer and another to speak.[765] St Lawrence, while he was on the red-hot gridiron, upbraided the tyrant, saying: “Turn and eat.”[766] “Yes,” says St Augustine, “for St Lawrence, inflamed with the fire of divine love, was insensible to the burning heat of the fire.”[767] Besides, how great the sweetness which a sinner experiences on this earth even in weeping over his sins! Hence, St Bernard used to say: “If it is so sweet to weep for Thee, O my God! What must it be to rejoice in Thee?”[768] What sweetness does not a soul experience when, by a ray of light, God unfolds to it in prayer his goodness, the mercies he has shown it, and the love which Jesus Christ has borne, and still bears, to it! In such moments, the soul melts and faints away through love. Yet in this life we do not God as he is: we see him only in the dark. *We now see through a glass in a dark manner: but then face to face.*[769] At present there is a veil before our eyes, and God is seen only with the eyes of faith; but that will be our joy when the veil is removed, and we see God face to face? We shall then see the infinite beauty of God; his infinite greatness, his justice, his perfection, his amiableness and his infinite love for us.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my Sovereign Good! I am that wretch who has turned his back upon Thee and renounced Thy love. I therefore am, undeserving of seeing or of loving Thee. But, to show mercy to me, Thou hast not shown mercy to Thyself, but hast condemned Thyself to a painful and ignominious death, on an infamous gibbet. Thy death, therefore, makes me hope that I shall one day see and enjoy Thee face to face, and that I shall then love Thee with all my strength. But now that I am in danger of losing Thee forever, now that I am conscious of having lost Thee by my sins, what shall I do during the remainder of my life? Shall I continue to offend Thee? No, my Jesus! I detest with a sovereign hatred the offences I have offended Thee. I feel a sovereign sorrow for having insulted Thee, and I love Thee with my whole heart. Wilt Thou cast off a soul that repents and loves Thee? No: I know, O my Redeemer! that Thou hast said that Thou wilt not reject any one that comes to Thee with a penitent heart. *Him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out.*[770] My Jesus! I renounce all things, and turn to Thee. I embrace Thee, and untie Thee to my heart: do Thou also embrace me and unite me to Thy heart. I dare to speak in this manner, because I speak and conversed with infinite Goodness. I speak with a God who was content to die for the love of me. My dear Saviour, grant me perseverance in Thy love. My dear Mother Mary! Through the love which thou didst bear to Jesus Christ, obtain for me this perseverance. Such is my hope, such is my desire.

THIRD POINT

HEAVEN IS ETERNAL

In this life, the greatest pain which afflicts souls that are in desolation and love God, arises from the fear of not loving him, and of not being loved by him. *Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred.*[771] But, in heaven, the soul is certain that it loves God, and that he loves it. It sees that it is happily lost in the love of its Lord, and that he embraces it as a beloved child, and that this love will not be dissolved for all eternity. These blessed flames will be augmented by the increased knowledge which the soul will then have of the greatness of the love of God, in becoming man and dying for us; of his love in instituting the Most Holy Sacrament, in which a God becomes the food of a worm. Then also will the soul clearly see all the graces which God has bestowed upon it in delivering it from so many temptations and so many dangers of perdition; it will then understand that the tribulations, infirmities, persecutions, and losses, which it called misfortunes and divine chastisement, were all love, all means intended by intended by divine Providence to conduct it to heaven. It will see particularly the patience of God in bearing with it after so many sins, and the mercies he had shown it in giving it so many lights and invitations to his love. From that blessed mountain it will behold so many souls in hell, condemned for fewer sins than it had committed, and will see that it is saved, that it is in the possession of God, and secure against all danger of ever losing that Sovereign Good for all eternity.

The blessed then will forever enjoy that felicity which, during each moment of eternity, will be always as new as at the first moment of its enjoyment. The soul will always desire and always possess that joy. It shall be always satisfied, and always thirsty: forever thirsty and always satisfied with delights: because the desire of heaven begets no pain, and its possession produces no tediousness. In a word, as the damned are vessels full of wrath, so the blessed are vessels filled with happiness, so that they have nothing more to desire. St Teresa says that even in this life, when God introduces a soul into the cellar of wine—that is, of his love, it becomes happily inebriated, so that it loses all affections for earthly things. But in entering into paradise, how much more perfectly, as David says, will the elect *be inebriated with the plenty of God’s house.*[772] In seeing God face to face, and in embracing its Sovereign Good, the soul will be so inebriated with love that it will happily lose itself in God—that is, it will entirely forget itself, and will think only of loving, of praising and of blessing the infinite Good which it possesses.

When, therefore, the crosses of this life afflict us, let us animate ourselves with the hope of heaven to bear them patiently. St Mary of Egypt, being asked at the end of her life by the Abbot Zozimus, how she had been able to live for so many years in such a desert, replied: *With the hope of heaven.* When the dignity of Cardinal was offered to St Philip Neri, he threw up the cap in the air, exclaiming, *Paradise! Paradise!* At the mention of paradise, Br Giles of the Order of St Francis, was raised up from the ground through joy. Let us, likewise, when we are afflicted by the miseries of this life, raise up our eyes to heaven, and console ourselves, saying with a sigh, *Heaven! Heaven!* Let us reflect that if we be faithful to God, all these sorrows, miseries and fears will one day have an end, and we shall be admitted into that blessed country, where we shall enjoy complete happiness as long as God will be God. Behold, the saints are expecting us, Mary is expecting us, and Jesus stands with a crown in his hand, to make us kings in that eternal kingdom.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dear Jesus! Thou hast taught me this prayer—*Thy kingdom come.* I therefore now pray that Thy kingdom may come into my heart, so that Thou mayest possess it entirely and that my soul may possess Thee, its Sovereign Good. O my Jesus! Thou hast spared nothing in order to save me and to acquire my love; save me then, and let my salvation consist in loving Thee always in this life and in the next. I have so often turned by back upon Thee and yet Thou assurest me that Thou wilt not disdain to embrace me for all eternity in heaven, with as much love as if I had never offended Thee. And knowing this, can I ever love anything else but Thee, who wishest to bestow heaven upon me after I have so often deserved hell? Ah, my Lord! Would that I had never offended The! Oh! were I born again I would always love Thee. But what is done is done. I can now do no more than give Thee the remainder of my life. Yes, I give it entirely to Thee. I consecrate myself entirely to Thy love. Depart from my heart, all earthly affections; give place to my God, who wishes to possess it entirely. Yes; take possession of my whole being, my Redeemer, my Love, and my God! From this day forward I will think only of pleasing Thee. Assist me by Thy grace. I hope in Thy merits. Augment in me continually Thy love, and the desire of pleasing Thee. Heaven! Heaven! When, O Lord! Shall the day come when I shall see Thee face to face, and embrace Thee, without fear of ever more losing Thee? Ah, my God! Keep Thy hand upon me that I may never more offended Thee. O Mary! When shall I see myself at thy feet in heaven? Assist me, my Mother; do not permit me to be lost, and to go forever to a distance from thee and thy Son.

Consideration XXX

PRAYER

“Ask, and it shall be given you; for every one that asketh, receiveth.”—*Luke*, xi 9, 10.

FIRST POINT

EFFICACY OF PRAYER

NOT only in this, but in a thousand places in the Old and New Testament, God promises to hear all who pray to him. *Cry to me, and I will hear thee*.[773] “Call upon me, and I will deliver you from all dangers.”[774] *If you ask anything in My name, that I will do.*[775] Whatsoever you shall ask through my merits I will grant. *You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.*[776] Ask as much as you wish: all that you ask will be given you. There are many other similar passages. Hence Theodoret has said that prayer is one, but can obtain all things. St Bernard says that when we pray, the Lord will give either the grace we ask, or one that is more useful to us.[777] The prophet animates us to pray by assuring us that God is all mercy to those who invoke his aid. *Thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Thee.*[778] The words of St James are still more encouraging. *If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth abundantly to all men, and upbraideth not.*[779] This apostle tells us that when we pray to the Lord, he opens his hands, and gives us more than we ask. *He giveth to all men abundantly and upbraideth not.* He does not reproach us with the offences that we have offered to him; but, when we pray to him, he appears to forget all the injuries that we have done him.

St John Climacus used to say that prayer in a certain manner forces God to grant us whatsoever we ask of him. “Prayer piously offers violence to God.”[780] But it is, as St Tertullian says, a violence which is dear to him, and which he desires from us.[781] Yes; for, as St Augustine says, God has a greater desire to give us his graces, than we have to receive them.[782] The reason is, because God is of his own nature infinite goodness. Hence he feels an infinite desire to impart his goods to us. Hence St Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say, that God feels as it were under an obligation to the soul that prays to him; because by prayer it opens to him the way by which he can satisfy his desire of dispensing his graces to us. David says that goodness of God, in instantly hearing all who pray to him, showed him that he was his true God. *In what day soever I shall call upon Thee, behold I know Thou art my God.*[783] Some, observes St Bernard, complain that God is wanting to them; but the Lord far more justly complains that many are wanting to him by neglecting to ask his graces. Of this precisely the Redeemer appears to have complained one day to his disciples, *Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name; ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.*[784] As if he said: Do not complain of me if you do not enjoy complete happiness; complain of yourselves for not having asked my graces: ask me for them henceforth, and you shall be satisfied.

Hence in their conferences, the ancient monks came to the conclusion, that there is no exercise more conducive to salvation than to pray always and say: Lord, assist me; incline unto my aid, O God."[785] The Venerable Paul Segneri used to say of himself, that in his meditations he was at first accustomed to spend his time in pious affections; but, having afterward learned the great efficacy of prayer, he endeavoured generally to employ himself in petitions to God. Let us always do the same. We have a God who loves us to excess, and who is solicitous for our salvation, and therefore he is always ready to hear all who ask his graces. The princes of the earth, says St Chrysostom, give audience only to a few; but God gives audience to all who wish for it.[786]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Eternal God! I adore Thee, and I thank Thee for all the benefits Thou hast bestowed upon me—for having created me, for having redeemed me through Jesus Christ, for having made me a Christian, for having waited for me when I was in sin, and for having so often pardoned me. Ah, my God! I should never have offended Thee, if in my temptations I had recourse to Thee; I thank Thee for the light by which Thou now makest me understand that my salvation consists in praying to Thee, and in asking graces of Thee. Behold, I entreat Thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to give me a great sorrow for my sins, holy perseverance in Thy grace, a good death, heaven, but above all, the great gift of Thy love, and perfect resignation to Thy most holy will. I well know that I do not deserve these graces but Thou hast promised them to all who ask them of Thee through the merits of Jesus Christ; through these merits I hope and ask for them. O Mary! Thy prayers are always heard; pray for me.

SECOND POINT

NECESSITY OF PRAYER

Let us also reflect on the necessity of prayer. St Chrysostom says that, as the body without the soul is dead, so the soul is dead without prayer. He also teaches that, as water is necessary to prevent the decay of plants, so prayer is necessary to preserve us from perdition.[787]*God wills that all men be saved.*[788]—and is unwilling that any be lost. *The Lord . . . dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any one should perish, but that all should return to penance.*[789] But he also wishes that we ask him for the graces necessary for salvation. For, on the one hand, it is impossible for us to observe the divine commands, and save our souls, without the actual assistance of God; and on the other, ordinarily speaking, God will not give us his graces unless we ask them from him. Hence, the holy Council of Trent has declared that God has not command impossibilities; because he either gives us the proximate and actual grace to fulfil his precepts, or he gives us the grace to ask him for this actual aid.[790] St Augustine teaches, that God gives without prayer the first graces, such as vocation to the faith and to repentance; but all other graces, and particularly the gift of perseverance, He gives only to those who ask them.[791]

Hence, theologians, after St Basil, St Augustine, St John Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria and others, teach, that for adults prayer is necessary as a means of salvation; so that, without it, it is impossible to be saved. And the most learned Lessjus says that this doctrine must be held as of faith.[792]

The Scriptures are clear on this point. *We ought always to pray.*[793]*Pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*[794] *Ask and you shall receive.*[795] *Pray without* *ceasing.*[796] The words, *we ought, pray, ask,* according to St Thomas (3 part, qu. 39, art. 5) and the generality of theologians, imply a strict precept, which binds under grievous sin particularly in three cases. First, when a person is in the state of sin; secondly, when he is in danger of death; and thirdly, when he is in great danger of falling into sin. Theologians teach that, ordinarily, he who neglects prayer for a month, or at most, for two months, is guilty of a mortal sin (*Less., loco citato*). The reason is, because prayer is a means without which we cannot obtain the helps necessary for salvation.

Ask, and you shall receive. He who asks, receives; then, says St Teresa, he who does not ask, does not receive. And before her, St James said the same thing. You have not, because you ask not.[797] Prayer is particularly necessary to obtain the virtue of continence. And, said the wise man, as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it . . . I went to the Lord, and besought Him.[798] Let us conclude this point. He who prays, is certainly saved; he who does not pray, is certainly lost. All the elect are saved by prayer; all the damned are lost by neglect of prayer, and their greatest despair is, and will be forever, caused by the conviction, that they had it in their power to save their souls so easily by prayer, and that now the time of salvation is no more.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my Redeemer! how have I been able hitherto to live in such forgetfulness of Thee? Thou wert prepared to grant me all the graces that I should ask of Thee; Thou only didst wait for me to ask them. But I have thought only of indulging my senses, and have been indifferent about the privation and loss of Thy love and of Thy graces. Lord! Forget all my ingratitude, and have mercy on me. Pardon me all the displeasures I have given Thee, and grant me perseverance. O God of my soul! Give me the grace always to ask Thy aid not to offend Thee. Do not permit me to be, as I have hitherto been, negligent in the performance of this duty. Grant me light and strength always to recommend myself to Thee, and particularly when my enemies tempt me to offend Thee again. Grant, O my God! this grace through the merits of Jesus Christ, and through the love which Thou bearest to him. O Lord! I have offended Thee enough. I wish to love Thee during the remainder of my life. Give me Thy love; and may this love remind me to ask Thy aid whenever I am in danger of losing Thee by sin. Mary, my hope after Jesus! through thy intercession I hope for the grace to recommend myself in all my temptations to thee and to thy Son. Hear me, O my Queen, through the love which thou bearest to Jesus Christ.

THIRD POINT

CONDITIONS OF PRAYER

Lastly, let us consider the conditions of prayer. Many pray, and do not obtain the object of their prayers, because they do not pray as they ought. *You ask,* says St James, *and receive not, because you ask amiss.*[799] To pray well, it is necessary, in the first place, to pray with humility. *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*[800] God rejects the petitions of the proud, but does not allow the humble to depart without hearing all their prayers. *The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds. . . . and he will not depart till the Most High behold.*[801] This holds, even though they have been hitherto sinners. A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou will not despise.[802] Secondly, it is necessary to pray with confidence. No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.[803] Jesus Christ has taught us to call God, in our petitions for his graces, by no other name than that of Father, in order to make us pray with the same confidence, who prays with confidence, obtains every grace. *All things whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.*[804] And who, says St Augustine, can fear that the promises of God, who is truth itself, will be violated?[805] God, says the Scripture, is not like men, who promise, but do not perform, either because they intend to deceive, or because they change their purpose. *God is not as a man, that he should lie, nor as the son of man, that He should be changed. Hath He told them, and will He not do?*[806] And why, adds the same St Augustine, should the Lord so earnestly exhort us to ask his graces, if he did not wish to bestow them upon us? By his promises he has bound himself to grant us the graces we ask from him. “By promising,” says St Augustine, “he has made himself a debtor.”[807]

But some will say: I am a sinner, and therefore I do not deserve to be heard. In answer, St Thomas says that the efficacy of prayer to obtain graces depends, not on our merits, but on the divine mercy.[808] *Everyone,* says Jesus Christ, *that asketh receiveth;*[809] that is, says the author of the Imperfect Work, "every one, whether he be a just man or a sinner."[810] But the Redeemer himself takes away all fear, saying: *Amen, amen, I say to you: If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you.*[811] As if he said: Sinners, if you are without merits, I have merits before my Father. Ask, then, in my name, and I promise that you will receive whatsoever you ask. But it is necessary to know that this promise does not extend to temporal favours, such as health, goods of fortune, and the like; for God often justly refuses these graces, because he sees that they would be injurious to our salvation. "The physician," says St Augustine, "knows better than the patient what is useful to him."[812] The holy Doctor adds, that God refuses to some through mercy, what he gives to others through wrath.[813] Hence we should ask temporal blessings only on condition that they will be profitable to the soul. But spiritual graces, such as pardon of sins, perseverance, divine love, and the like, should be asked absolutely and with a firm confidence of obtaining them. If, says Jesus Christ, *you being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him!*[814]

Above all, perseverance in prayer is necessary. In this commentary on the eleventh chapter of St Luke, Cornelius a Lapide says, that the Lord "wishes us to persevere in prayer even to importunity."[815] This may be inferred from the following passages of Scripture: *We ought always to pray.*[816] Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times. Pray without ceasing.[817] It may be also inferred from our Lord's repeated exhortations to prayer, *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.*[818] It might be sufficient to have said, *ask;* but no; the Lord wishes us to understand that we ought to imitate beggars, who do not cease to ask, to entreat, and to knock at the gate, until they receive an alms. But final perseverance, in particular, is a grace which is not obtained without continual prayer. We cannot merit this grace of perseverance; but according to St Augustine, it may be merited in a certain manner. "This gift," says the holy Doctor, "can be suppliantly merited; that is, it may be obtained by supplication."[819] Let us, then, if we wish to be saved, pray always and never cease to pray. And let all confessors and preachers, if they desire the salvation of souls, never cease to exhort their penitents or hearers to prayer. And, in conformity with the advice of St Bernard, let us always have recourse to the intercession of Mary. Let us ask grace, and ask it through Mary, for what she asks, she obtains, and her prayer cannot be fruitless.[820]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My God! I hope that Thou hast already pardoned me; but my enemies will not cease to fight against me till death. Unless Thou dost assist me, I shall lose Thee again. Ah! Through the merits of Jesus Christ, I ask holy perseverance. Do not permit me to be separated from Thee. And I ask the same grace for all who are at present in the state of grace. I hope, with certainty in Thy promise, that Thou wilt give me perseverance if I will continue to ask it from Thee. But I fear that in my temptations, I shall neglect to have recourse to Thee and that thus I shall relapse into sun. I therefore ask of Thee the grace never more to neglect prayer. Grant that in the occasions in which I shall be in danger of relapsing, I may recommend myself to Thee, and may invoke the aid of the most holy names of Jesus and Mary. My God! This I purpose and hope to do with the assistance of Thy grace. Hear me for the sake of Jesus Christ. O Mary, my Mother! Obtain for me the grace that in all dangers of losing God, I may have recourse to thee and to thy Son.

Consideration XXXI

PERSEVERANCE

“He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved.”—*Matt.* xxiv.13.

FIRST POINT

NECESSITY OF PERSEVERANCE—MEANS OF DEFENCE AGAINST THE DEVIL

ST JEROME says that many begin well but few perseverance.[821] Saul, Judas, Tertullian, began well, but ended badly, because they did not persevere in grace. The Lord, says St Jerome, requires not only the beginning of a good life, but also the end:[822] it is the end that will be rewarded. St Bonaventure says that the crown is given to perseverance.[823] Hence St Laurence Justinian calls perseverance the “gate of heaven.”[824] No one can enter paradise unless he finds the gate of heaven. My brother, at present you have renounced sin, and justly hope that you have been pardoned. You are then the friend of God: but remember that you are not yet saved. And when will you be saved? When you will have persevered to the end. *He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved.*[825] Have you begun a good life? Thank the Lord for it; but St Bernard warns you that to him who begins, a reward is only promised and is given only to him who perseveres.[826] It is not enough to run for the prize, you must run till you win it. *So run,* says St Paul, *that you may obtain.*[827]

You have already put your hand to the plough, and you have begun to live well; but now you must tremble and fear more than ever. *With fear and trembling work out your salvation.*[828] And why? Because if—which God forbid—you look back and return to a life of sin, God will declare you unfit for paradise. *No man pulling his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*[829] At present through the grace of God, you avoid evil occasions, you frequent the sacraments, and make meditation every day. Happy you if you continue to do so, and if, when he comes to judge you, Jesus Christ will find you doing these things. *Blessed is that servant whom, when his lord shall come, he shall find so doing.*[830] But do not imagine that, now that you have begun to serve God, there is as it were an end, or a lack of temptation: listen to the advice of the Holy Ghost. *Son, when thou comest to the service of God. . . . prepare thy soul for temptation.*[831] Remember that now more than ever you must prepare yourself for conflicts, because your enemies, the world, the devil, and the flesh, will arm themselves now more than ever to fight against you in order to deprive you of all that you have acquired. Denis the Carthusian says, that the more a soul gives itself to God, the more strenuously hell labours to destroy it.[832] And this is sufficiently expressed in the Gospel of St Like, where Jesus Christ says: *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest, and not finding it, he saith: I will return into my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in, they dwell there. And the last state of that man is worse that the first.*[833] When banished from a soul, the devil finds no repose, and does everything in his power to return: he even calls companions to his aid; and if he succeeds in re-entering, the second fall of that soul will be far more ruinous than the first.

Consider, then, what arms you must use in order to defend yourselves against these enemies, and to preserve your soul in the grace of God. To escape defeat, and to conquer the devil, there is no other defence than prayer. St Paul says that we have to contend, not with men of flesh and blood like ourselves, but with the princes of hell. *Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers.*[834] By these words the Apostle wished to admonish us that we have not strength to resist such powerful enemies, and that we stand in need of aid from God. With his aid we shall be able to do all things. *I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.*[835] Such is the language of St Paul, such, too, should be our language. But this divine aid is given only to those who pray for it. *Ask and you shall receive.* Let us, then not trust in our purposes; if we trust in them, we shall be lost. Whenever the devil tempts us, let us place our entire confidence in the divine assistance, and let us recommended ourselves to

Jesus Christ and to the Most Holy Mary. We ought to do this particularly as often as we are tempted against chastity; for this is the most terrible of all temptations, and is the one which the devil gains most victories. We have not strength to preserve chastity; this strength must come from God. *And*, said Solomon, as I know that I could not otherwise be continent except God gave it. . . . I went to the Lord, and besought Him.[836] In such temptations, then, we must instantly have recourse to Jesus Christ and to his holy Mother, frequently invoking the most names of Jesus and Mary. He who des this, will conquer; he who neglects it, will be lost.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my God! "cast me not away from Thy face." I know that Thou wilt never abandon me, unless I first abandon Thee. Experience of my own weakness makes me tremble lest I should again forsake Thee. Lord! It is from Thee I must receive the strength necessary to conquer hell, which labours to make me again its slave. This strength I ask of Thee for the sake of Jesus Christ. O my Saviour! Establish between Thee and me a perpetual peace which will never be broken for all eternity. For this purpose I ask Thy love. "He who loves not is dead." O God of my soul, it is by Thee I must be saved from this unhappy death. I was lost; Thou knowest it. It is Thy goodness alone that has brought me into the state in which I am at present, in which I hope I am Thy friend. Ah, my Jesus! through the painful death which Thou didst suffer for my salvation, do not permit me ever more to lose Thee voluntarily. I love Thee above all things. I hope to see myself always bound with this holy love, and to die in the bonds of love, and to live for eternity in the chains of Thy love. O Mary! Thou art called the mother of perseverance; through thee this great gift is dispensed. Through thy intercession I ask and hope to obtain it.

SECOND POINT

WE MUST CONQUER THE WORLD

Let us now see how we must conquer the world. The devil is a great enemy of our salvation, but the world is worse. If the devil did not make use of the world and of wicked men, by whom we mean the world, he would not obtain the victories which he gains. But says Jesus Christ, *beware of men.*[837] Men are often worse than the devils; for these are put to flight when we pray and invoke the most holy names of Jesus and Mary. But when a person gives a becoming answer to the wicked companions, who tempt him to sin, they redouble their efforts, they treat him with ridicule, upbraiding him with vulgarity and want of education; and when they can say nothing else, they call him a hypocrite, who only pretends to sanctity. To escape such derision and reproach, certain weak souls miserably associate with these ministers of Lucifer, and return to the vomit. My brother, be persuaded that, if you wish to lead a holy life, you must expect the ridicule and contempt of the wicked. *The wicked,* says the Holy Ghost, *loath them that are in the right way.*[838] He who loves in sin cannot bear the sight of those who live according to the Gospel. And why? Because their life is a continual reproach to him; and therefore to avoid the pain of remorse caused by the good example of others, he would wish that all should imitate his own wickedness. There is no remedy. The Apostle tells us that he who serves God must be persecuted by the world. All that will live godly as Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.[839] All the saints have been persecuted. Who was more holy than Jesus Christ? The world persecuted him so as to cause him to bleed to death on a cross.

There is no help for this; for the maxims of the world are diametrically opposed to the maxims of Jesus Christ. What the world esteems, Jesus Christ has called folly. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.[840] And the world regards as folly when Jesus Christ has strongly recommended—such as crosses, pains and contempts. *For the word of the cross, to them indeed that perish, is foolishness.*[841] But if the wicked revile and reproach us, let us console ourselves with the reflection that God blesses and praises us. *They will curse, and Thou wilt bless.*[842] Is it not enough for us to be praised by God, by Mary, by the angels, the saints and all good men? Let us, then, leave sinners to say what they please and let us continue to please God, who is grateful and faithful to all who serve him. The greater the opposition and difficulty we meet in doing good, the more we shall please God and treasure up merits for ourselves. Let us imagine that we are alone with God in this world. When the wicked treat us with derision, let us recommend them to the Lord, let us thank him for giving us light, which he does not give to these miserable men, and let us continue our journey. Let us not be ashamed to appear like Christians; for, if we are ashamed of Jesus Christ, he protests that he will be ashamed of us on the day of judgement. *For he that shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him the Son of man shall be ashamed, when He shall come in His majesty.*[843]

If we wish to save our souls, we must resolve to suffer and to do violence to ourselves. *How narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away.*[844] He who does not violence to himself, will not be saved. There is no remedy. If we wish to do good, we must act in opposition to our rebellious nature. In the beginning, it is particularly necessary to do violence to ourselves in order to root out bad habits, and to acquire habits of virtue. When good habits are once acquired, the observance of the divine law becomes easy, and even sweet. Our Lord said to St Bridget, that when in the practice of virtue a person suffers the first punctures of the thorns with patience and courage, these thorns afterward become roses. Be attentive, them dearly beloved Christian. Jesus Christ now says to you, what he said to the paralytic: *Behold, thou are made whole, sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee*.[845] Remember, says St Bernard, that if you have the misfortune of relapsing into sin, your relapse will be more disastrous than all your falls.[846] Woe, says the Lord, to them who begin to walk of God, and afterward forsake it. *Woe to you, apostate children.*[847] Such sinners are punished as rebels against God’s light. They have been rebellious to the light.[848] The chastisement of these rebels, who have been favoured by God with a great light and have been afterward unfaithful to him, is, to remain in blindness, and thus die in their sins. *But if the just man turn himself away from his justice . . . shall he live? All his justices which he hath done shall not be remembered; in the prevarication by which he hath prevaricated and in his sin which he hath committed in them he shall die.*[849]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my God! Such chastisement I have often deserved, because I have, through the light which Thou gavest me, renounced sin, and have miserably returned to it. I infinitely thank Thy mercy for not having abandoned me in my blindness by leaving me entirely destitute of light, as I deserved. Great then, O my Jesus! are my obligations to Thee, and great should be my ingratitude, were I again to turn my back upon thee. No, my Redeemer, the mercies of the Lord I will sing forever. I hope that during the remainder of my life, and for all eternity, I will always sing and praise Thy mercies by loving Thee always, and never more seeing myself bereft of Thy graces. The great ingratitude with which I have hitherto treated Thee, and which I now hate and curse above every evil, will serve to make me weep bitterly over the injuries I have done Thee, and to inflame me still more with the love of Thee, who, after I had given Thee so many grievous offences, have bestowed upon me so many great graces. Yes, I love Thee, O my God! worthy of infinite love. Henceforth Thou shalt be my only love, my only good. O eternal Father! Through the merits of Jesus Christ I ask of Thee final perseverance in Thy grace and in Thy love. I know that Thou wilt grant it to me whenever I ask it. But who assures me that I shall be careful to ask this perseverance from Thee? Hence O my God, I ask perseverance, and the grace always to ask it of Thee. O Mary, my advocate, my refuge, and my hope! Obtain for me by thy intercession the gifts of constancy in always asking of God the grace of final perseverance. Through the love which thou bearest Jesus Christ, I ask thee to obtain for me the gift.

THIRD POINT

WE MUST STRUGGLE AGAINST THE FLESH—RECAPITULATION

Let us come to the third enemy—that is, the flesh, which is the worst of all; and let us see how we must defend ourselves against its attacks. The first means is prayer; but this we have already considered. The second is, to avoid the occasion of sin; and let us now ponder well upon this means of overcoming the flesh. St Bernardine says that the greatest of all counsels, and the one which is, as it were, the foundation of religion, is to fly from sinful occasions.[850] Being compelled by exorcisms, the devil once confessed that of all sermons, that which displeased him most was the sermon on avoiding the occasions of sin; and justly; for the devil laughs at all the resolutions and promises of penitent sinners who remain in the occasion of sin. The occasion of sins of the flesh, in particular, is like a veil placed before the eyes, which prevents the soul from seeing either its resolutions, or the lights received from God, or the truths of eternity: in a word, it makes it forget everything, and almost blinds it. The neglect of avoiding the occasions of sin was the cause of the fall of our first parents. God had forbidden them even to touch the forbidden fruit. *God commanded us,* said Eve, *that we should not eat, and that we should not touch it.*[851] But through want of caution *she saw, took and ate it.* She first began to look at the apple, she afterward took it in her hand, and then ate it. He who voluntarily exposes himself to danger, will perish in it.[852] St Peter tells us that the devil *goeth about seeking whom he may devour.*[853] And what, says St Cyprian, does he do in order to enter again into the soul from which he has been expelled?[854] He seeks an occasion of sin. If the soul permits him to bring it again into the occasion of sin, he will enter again, and shall devour it. The Abbot Guerric says that Lazarus came forth from the grave bound hand and foot,[855] and after rising in this state, he died again. Miserable, this author means to say, is that man who rises from sin bound by the occasion of sin; though he should rise, he surely will die again. He, then, who wishes to be saved must forsake not only all sin, but the occasions of sin—that is, the companions, the house, the connections which lead to sin.

But you will say: I have changed my life, and now I have no bad motive, nor even a temptation, in the society of such a person. I answer: it is related that in Mauritania there are bears that go in search of the apes. As soon as they see a bear, the apes save themselves by climbing up the trees; but what does the bear do? He stretches himself, as if dead, under the tree; and when the apes descend, he springs up, seizes and devours them. It is thus the devil acts: he makes the temptations appear dead: and when the soul exposes himself to the occasion of sin, he excites the temptation, which devours it. Oh! how many miserable souls, that practised mental prayer, frequented Communions, and might be called saints, have, by putting themselves into dangerous occasions, become the prey of hell? It is related in ecclesiastical history, that a holy matron, who devoted herself to the pious work of burying the martyrs, found one of them not dead. She brought him to her house; he recovered. What happened? By the proximate occasion, these two saints, as they might be called, first lost the grace of God and afterward lost the faith.

The Lord commanded Isaias to proclaim that *all flesh is grass.*[856] Is it possible, says St John Chrysostom, for hay not to burn when it is thrown into the fire.[857] And St Cyprian says that it is impossible to stand in the midst of flames, and not be burned.[858] According to the prophet Isaias, our strength is like that of tow cast into the fire. *And your strength shall be as the ashes of tow.*[859] And Solomon says that it would be folly to expect to walk on red-hot coals, without being burned. *Can a man walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?*[860] Thus it is likewise folly to expose ourselves to the occasion of sin, and to expect not to fall. It is necessary then to fly from sin as from the face of a serpent. *Flee from sins as from the face of serpent.*[861] We ought, says Gualfrido, not only to avoid the bite or contact of a serpent, but should also abstain from approaching it.[862] But you will say: My interest requires that I should frequent such a house, or that I should keep up a certain friendship. But if you see that such a house is for you a way to hell, there is no remedy; you must forsake it if you wish to save your soul. *Her house is the way to hell.*[863] The Lord tells you that if your right eye is a cause of damnation to you; you must pluck it out and cast it from you.[864] Mark the words; you must cast it, not beside you, but to a distance *from you*—that is, you must take away every occasion of sin. St Francis of Assisi says, that the devil tempts spiritual souls, who have given themselves to God, in a way different from that in which he tempts the wicked. In the beginning he does not seek to bind them with a chain; he is content to hold them by a single hair: he then binds them with a slender thread; afterward with a cord; then with a chain; and thus drags them to sin. And therefore he who wishes to be free from the danger of perdition must, in the beginning, break all these hairs, he must avoid all occasions of sins, he must give up these salutations, presents, notes and the like. And for those who have contracted a habit of committing sins against purity, it will not be enough to avoid proximate occasions: unless they fly even from remote occasions, they will relapse.

He who sincerely wishes to be saved, must, by often repeating with the saints, *Let all be lost, provided God is not lost,* labour continually to strengthen and renew his resolution of never again renouncing the friendship of God. But it is not enough to resolve never more to lose God, it is moreover necessary to adopt the means by which you may be preserved from the danger of losing him. The first means is, to avoid the occasions of sin; of this we have already spoken. The second is, to frequent the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist. In the house which is often swept more this is no uncleanness. By the sacrament of penance the soul is purified; by it, it obtains not only the remission of sins, but also helps to resist temptations. The Communion is called the bread of heaven; because as the body cannot live without earthly food, so the soul cannot live without this celestial bread. *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.*[865] But on the other had, to those who frequently eat this bead, is promised eternal life. *If any man eats of this bread, he shall live forever.*[866] Hence the Council of Trent calls the Communion a medicine which delivers us from venial, and preserves us from mortal sins.[867] The third means is meditation, or mental prayer. Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.[868] He who keeps before his eyes the eternal truths—death, judgement, eternity—will not fall into sin. God enlightened us in meditation. *Come ye to Him, and be enlightened.*[869] In meditation God speaks to us, and makes known to us what we are to avoid, and what we are to do. *I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart.*[870] Meditation is the blessed furnace in which divine love is lighted up. *In my meditation a fire shall flame out.*[871] To preserve the soul in the grace of God, it is, as has been already said, absolutely necessary always to pray and to ask for the graces we stand in need of. They, who do not make mental prayer, will scarcely pray for God’s graces; and by neglecting to pray for them, they will certainly be lost.

It is necessary then to adopt the means of salvation, and to lead a life of order and regularity. It is necessary, after rising in the morning, to make the Christian acts of thanksgiving, love, oblation, and a purpose of avoiding sin, along with a prayer to Jesus and Mary that they may preserve you from sin during the day; you should afterward make your meditation and hear Mass. During the day you ought to make a spiritual reading, visit the Blessed Sacrament and an image of the divine Mother. In the evening, say the rosary, and make an examination of conscience. Go to Communion several times in the week, according as your director may advise: you should ordinarily go to confession to the same confessor. It would also be very profitable to make the spiritual exercises in some religious house. It is likewise necessary to honour the Most Holy Mary by some special devotion—such as by fasting on Saturdays. She is called the Mother of perseverance, and she promises to obtain it for all who serve her. *They that work by me shall not sin.*[872] Above all, it is necessary to ask of God holy perseverance, and especially in the time of temptation, invoking then more frequently the names of Jesus and Mary as long as the temptation continues. If you act in this manner, you will certainly be saved; if not, you will certainly be lost.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dear Redeemer! I thank Thee for the lights which Thou now givest me, and for the means of salvation which Thou makest known tome. I promise to endeavour to persevere in the practice of them. I see that Thou wishest for my salvation; and I wish to be saved principally to please Thy heart, which so ardently desires my salvation. O my God! I will no longer resist the love which Thou entertainest for me. This love has made Thee bear me with so much patience when I offended Thee. Thou callest me to Thy house, and I desire only to love Thee. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness! I love Thee, O infinite Good! Ah! I entreat Thee, through the merits of Jesus Christ, not to permit me to be ever again ungrateful to Thee; either make me cease to be ungrateful to Thee, or make me cease to live. Lord! Thou hast already begun the work; bring it to perfection, *Confirm, O God! That which Thou hast wrought in me.*[873] Give me light, give me strength, give me love. O Mary! Who art the treasurer of graces, assist me, accept me for thy servant, and pray to Jesus for me. Through the merits of Jesus Christ first, and then through thy prayers, I hope for salvation.

Consideration XXXII

CONFIDENCE IN THE PATRONAGE OF MARY

“He that shall find me, shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.”—*Prov. viii.35.*

FIRST POINT

POWER OF MARY

OH! how great will be our thankfulness to the mercy of God, for having given us for our advocate, Mary, who by her prayers, can obtain for us all the graces we stand in need of. “Truly wonderful,” exclaims St Bonaventure, “is the bounty of our God, who has given thee, O Lady, to his guilty subjects as their advocate, so that thou art able to obtain for them by thy assistance whatever thou wilt.” Sinners, brethren, if we find ourselves debtors to the divine justice, and condemned to hell by our sins, let us not despair; let us have recourse to this divine mother; let us put ourselves under her protection, and she will save us. But we must have a sincere purpose of amending our lives. If we have such a purpose, and place confidence in Mary, we shall be saved. And why? Because Mary is a *powerful* advocate, a *merciful* advocate, an advocate *that desires to save all.*[874]

In the first place, let us consider that Mary is a *powerful* advocate, who can obtain from the Judge all graces for her servants. This is a singular privilege given to her by the Judge himself, who is her Son. “It is a great privilege, that Mary is most powerful with her Son.”[875] John Gerson says that the Blessed Virgin asks nothing from God with an absolute will, which she does not obtain; and that, like a queen, she sends the angels to enlighten, to purify, and to perfect her servants. Hence to inspire confidence in this great advocate, the Church makes us invoke her under the title of Powerful Virgin. *Powerful Virgin, pray for us.*[876] And why is the patronage of Mary so powerful? Because she is the Mother of God. “The prayer of the divine Mother,” says St Antoninus, “partakes of the nature of a command, and therefore it is impossible for her not to be heard.”[877] The prayers of Mary are the prayers of a mother, and are therefore regarded by Jesus Christ, in a certain manner, as commands; hence it is impossible that her petitions should be rejected. St George, Archbishop of Nicomedia, says that the Redeemer, as if to discharge the obligation which he owes to his mother for having given to him his human nature, hears all her prayers. Hence, St Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, has written: “The Son is pleased that his Mother should pray to him, because he wishes to grant her whatsoever she asks, in order to repay her for the favour received from her in giving him flesh.”[878] Hence the martyr St Methodius exclaimed: “Rejoice, rejoice, O Mary! Thou hast for a debtor thy Son. We are all debtors to him: but he is a debtor to thee alone.”[879]

Hence Cosmas of Jerusalem says that the intercession of Mary is omnipotent.[880] Yes, her prayers are omnipotent, because as Richard of St Laurence says, it is but just that the Mother should partake of the power of the Son. The Son, then, who is omnipotent, has made the Mother omnipotent.[881] The Son is omnipotent by nature; the Mother is omnipotent by grace—that is, she obtains by her prayers whatsoever she asks, as is happily expressed in the celebrated verse: “What God doeth by right, thou, O Virgin, dost by prayer.”[882] This was revealed to St Bridget, who one day heard Jesus Christ addressing his mother in the following words: “Ask from me what you wish; for your petition cannot be fruitless.”[883] My mother, ask as much as you please; for I shall hear all your prayers. He then subjoins the reason, “Because you refused me nothing on earth, I will refuse nothing to you in heaven.”[884] You refused me nothing when I lived on earth; it is just that I should refuse nothing to you now that you are with me in heaven.

In fine, there is no sinner, however abandoned, whom Mary cannot save by her intercession. “You have,” says St George of Nicomedia, “insuperable strength, lest the multitude of our sins should overcome your clemency. Nothing resists your power; for the Creator regards your glory as his own”—*Orat. De. Exit. B.V.* O Mother of God, nothing can resist thy power, since thy Creator regards thy glory as his own.”[885] “Nothing, then,” says St

Peter Damian, “is impossible to thee, who can raise even those who are in despair to a hope of salvation.”[886]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dear Queen and Mother, Mary, I will address thee in the words of St Germanus: “Thou art omnipotent in saving sinners; thy prayers are all-powerful with God, because thou art the mother of true life.”—Serm. iii. in Dom. B.V. Then, O my mistress if I have recourse to thee, all my sins cannot make me despair of salvation. Thou obtainest by thy prayers whatever thou wishest. If thou prayest for me I shall certainly be saved. I will then say to thee with St Bernard: Pray for me, who am so miserable, O great Mother of God, for thy Son hears thee, and grants whatsoever thou askest.[887] I am indeed a sinner; but I wish to amend my life, and I glory in being specially devoted to thee. I am, it is true, unworthy of thy protection; but I know that thou hast never abandoned any one who has placed his trust in thee. Thou art able and willing to save me, and I trust in thee. When I was in the state of perdition, and forgetful of thee, thou didst think of me, and didst obtain for me the grace to enter into myself. How much more ought I to trust in thy mercy now that I am dedicated to thy service, and that I recommend myself with confidence to thy prayers! O Mary! Pray for me, and obtain for me the grace to be a saint. Obtain for me holy perseverance; obtain for me a great love of thy Son, and of thee, O my amiable mother! I love thee, O my Queen! And hope to love thee always. Do thou also love me, and obtain from me the grace that I may be transformed from a sinner into a saint.

SECOND POINT

MERCY OF MARY

Let us consider, in the second place, that Mary is an advocate as merciful as she is powerful, and that she knows not how to refuse her protection to any soul that has recourse to her. The eyes of the Lord, says David are upon the just; and this mother of mercy, says Richard of St Laurence, keeps her eyes upon the just and upon sinners, that she may preserve them from falling into sin, or that, should they fall, she may arise them up.[888] St Bonaventure used to say that, in looking at Mary, he seemed to behold mercy itself.[889] Hence St Bernard exhorts us to recommend ourselves with great confidence in all our necessities to this powerful advocate, who is all sweetness and benignity to those who invoke her intercession.[890] Hence Mary is called an olive-tree. *As a fair olive-tree in the plains*.[891] As from the olive-tree nothing comes forth but oil, the symbol of mercy; so from the hands of Mary nothing flows but the graces and mercies which she dispenses to all who take shelter under her protection. Hence Denis the Carthusian has justly called her the "advocate of all sinners who have recourse to her."[892] O God! How great will be the remorse of the damned Christian in thinking that, during life, he could have saved his soul with so much facility by invoking the intercession of this mother of mercy; that he had not done so; and that there will be no more time to do it! The Blessed Virgin said one day to St Bridget: I am called, and I really am, the Mother of mercy; for such God has made me.[893] "I am called by all the Mother of mercy, and truly his mercy has made me merciful."—*Rev.* lib. i. cap. vi. And who, but God in his mercy, because he desires our salvation, has given us this advocate to defend us? "Therefore," adds Mary, "miserable will he be, who, while it is in his power, has not recourse to me, who am merciful."[894] Miserable is the man, and miserable for eternity, who, though he could, during life, have recommended himself to me, who am so benign and merciful to all, has neglected to have recourse to me, and is lost.

Perhaps, says St Bonaventure, we are afraid that in asking Mary's intercession she will refuse it to us? No, says the saint: "Mary does not refuse, and never has refused pity and aid to any sinner who has invoked her intercession."[895] She has not done so, and she cannot do so; because God has made her the queen and the mother of mercy; and as queen of mercy she is bound to attend to the care of the miserable. "Thou," says St Bernard, "art the queen of mercy; and who but the miserable are the subjects of mercy?"[896] Hence the saint through humility adds: Since then, O Mother of God! Thou art the queen of mercy, thou must have a special care of me, who am the most miserable of sinners.[897] As mother of mercy it is her duty to deliver from death her sick children, to whom her mercy makes her a mother. Hence, St Basil calls her a public hospital.[898] Public hospitals are erected for the poor; and they who are in the greatest poverty have the best claims to be admitted into them. Hence, according to St Basil, Mary ought to receive with the greatest tenderness and care the greatest sinners who have recourse to her.

But let us not doubt of the mercy of Mary. One day, St Bridget heard the Saviour saying to his mother: “Thou wouldst show compassion to the devil, should he ask it with humility.”[899] The haughty Lucifer will never humble himself to ask her prayers; but if he humbled himself to this divine mother, and invoked her help, she, by her intercession would deliver him from hell. By those words, Jesus Christ wished to give us to understand what Mary herself afterward said to the same St Bridget—that when a sinner has recourse to her, however enormous his guilt may be, she regards not the sins with which he is charged, but the intention with which he comes. If he comes with a sincere desire to amend, she receives him and heals all his wounds.[900] Hence St Bonaventure says: “Poor sinners! do not despair; raise your eyes to Mary, and trust in the mercy of this good mother.”[901] Let us then, says St Bernard, ask the grace we have lost, and let us ask it through Mary.[902] The grace which we have lost, she ahs found, says Richard of St Laurence;[903] we therefore ought to go to her in order to recover it. When the Archangel Gabriel announced to the Most Holy Virgin the divine maternity, he said to her: *Fear not, Mary, thou hast found grace.*[904] But, since Mary was never deprived of grace, but was, on the contrary, always full of grace, how could he say that she had found it! In answer to this question, Cardinal Hugo says, that Mary found grace, not for herself, because she had always possessed it, but for us, who have lost it. Hence the same author says, that we ought to go to her and say: O Lady, property ought to be restored to him who has lost it; the grace which thou hast found is not thine, for thou hast always possessed it; it is ours, we have lost it through our own fault; thou shouldst then restore it to us.[905] “Let sinners, then, who have lost grace by their sins, run—let them run to the Virgin, and say with confidence: Restore to us our property, which thou hast found.”[906]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Behold, O great Mother of God! At thy feet a miserable sinner, who has not once, but several times, voluntarily lost the divine grace, which thy Son had purchased for him by his death. O mother of mercy! I come to thee with a soul covered with wounds and sores; be not angry with me on that account, but have the greater pity on me, and assist me. I do not ask of thee earthly goods; I ask thee to obtain for me the grace of God and the love of thy Son. My mother, pray for me and never cease to pray for me. It is through the merits of Jesus Christ and thy intercession that I am to be saved. Thy office is to intercede for sinners: I will then say, with St Thomas of Villanova: “O our advocate, fulfil thy office!” recommend me to God and defend me. No cause, however desperate, is lost, when defended by thee. Thou, after Jesus, art the hope of sinners; thou art my hope. O Mary! I will not cease to serve thee, to love thee, and to have recourse to thee always. Do not then ever cease to pray for me, particularly when thou seest me in danger of again losing the grace of God. O Mary, O great mother of God, have pity on me.

THIRD POINT

CHARITY OF MARY

Let us consider, in the third place, that Mary is so merciful an advocate that she not only assists all who have recourse to her, but also goes in search of the miserable, in order to defend and save them. Behold how she invites us all, and encourages us to hope for every good, if we have recourse to her. *In me is all hope of life and virtue.* Come over to me all.[907] In explaining this passage, the devout Pelbart says: “She invites all, the just and sinners.”[908] The devil, according to St Peter, goes about continually seeking whom he may devour.[909] But this divine mother, says Bernard da Bustis, goes about seeking whom she may save.[910] Mary is called the mother of mercy; because like a mother, she cannot see her children in danger of being lost without giving them assistance. Mary pities all our miseries and constantly seeks our salvation. And, says St Germanus, who, after Jesus, has greater care of our salvation, than thou, O mother of mercy?[911] St Bonaventure says that Mary is so solicitous about the relief of the miserable, that she appears to desire nothing with greater ardour than to comfort them.[912]

She certainly assist us as often as we have recourse to her; no one has ever been rejected by her, says the Idiot.[913] But this, adds Richard of St Victor, is not enough for her; she anticipates our supplications, and obtains aid for us before we ask her prayers.[914] Moreover, the same author says, that Mary is so full of mercy, that, as soon as she sees misery, she instantly obtains relief, and cannot behold any one in distress without coming to his assistance.[915] It was thus she acted when she lived on this earth, as we learn from what happened at the marriage of Cana in Galilee; where, when, the wine failed, she did not wait to be asked, but taking pity on the affliction and shame of the spouses, asked her Son to console them, saying: *They have no wine.*[916] Thus she induced him to change, by miracle, water into wine. But, says St Bonaventure, if Mary's compassion for the afflicted was so great while she was in this world, her pity for us is certainly much greater now that she is in heaven, where she has a better knowledge of our miseries, and greater compassion for us.[917] Novarino adds: If Mary, unasked, shows such readiness to afford relief, how much more careful will she be to console those who ask her prayers![918]

Ah! Let us never cease to have recourse in all our necessities to the divine mother, who is always ready to obtain relief for all who pray to her. "You will find her ever ready to assist,"[919] says Richard of St Laurence. And Bernadine da Bustis adds that she desires more ardently to obtain graces for us, than we do to receive them.[920]Hence he says that, whenever we have recourse to her, we shall always find her hands full of graces and mercies.[921] According to St Bonaventure, Mary's desire for our welfare and salvation is so great that she feels offended not only with those who do her a positive injury; but also with those who neglect to ask favours from her.[922] And, on the other hand, the saint affirms that they who invoke Mary's intercession (that is, with a determination to amend their lives) are saved. Hence he calls her the salvation of those who invoke her.[923] Let us, then, always have recourse to the divine mother, and always says to her with the holy Doctor: "In thee, O Lady, have I hoped; may I not be confounded forever."[924] No, O Lady, O Mother of God, O Mary! I shall not be lost after having placed my hopes in thee after Jesus.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Mary! Behold at thy feet a miserable slave of hell, who implores thy mercy. I, indeed, deserve no good; but thou art the mother of mercy, and mercy is exercised in favour of those who are unworthy of it. The whole world calls thee the refuge and the hope of sinners; then thou art my refuge and my hope. I am a lost sheep; but to save the lost sheep, the Eternal Word came down from heaven, and became thy Son; he wishes that I have recourse to thee, and that thou assist me by thy prayers. *Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us, sinners.* O great Mother of God, thou prayest for all; pray to thy Son also for me: tell him that I am thy client, and that thou art my protectress: tell him that in thee, after him, I have placed all my hopes: tell to him; tell him to grant me in his mercy holy perseverance: tell him to grant me the grace to love him with my whole heart. In fine, tell him to save me. He does whatsoever thou askest. O Mary, my hope! In thee I trust: have pity on me.

Consideration XXXIII

THE LOVE OF GOD

“Let us therefore love God, because God hath first loved us”—I. *John,* iv.19.

FIRST POINT

LOVE AND GOODNESS SHOWS BY GOD TO MAN

CONSIDER, in the first place, that God deserves your love, because he has loved you before you loved him, and because he has been the first of all to love you. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*[925] Your parents have been the first to love you on this earth; but they have loved you only after they have known you. Before your father or your mother came into this world, God loved you: even before the world was created, he loved you. And how long before the creation of the world did God love you? Perhaps a thousand years, or a thousand ages? It is useless to count years of ages; God has loved you from eternity. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee.*[926] In a word, as long as he has been God, he has loved you; as long as he has loved himself, he has loved you. Hence the holy virgin St Agnes had reason to say: “I am prevented by another lover.”[927] When the world and creatures sought her love, she answered: No, I cannot love you. My God has been the first to love me; it is but just, then, that I should consecrate all my love to him alone.

Thus, my brother, God has loved you from eternity and through pure love has taken you from among so many men whom he could create; he has given you existence, and has placed you in the world. For the love of you, God has created so many other beautiful creatures, that they might serve you and remind you of the love which he has borne to you and of the love which you owe to him. “Heaven and earth,” says St Augustine, “tell me to love Thee."[928] When the saint looked at the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the rivers, they appeared to him to speak, and say: "Augustine, love your God; for he has created us for you, that you might love him." The Abbot de Rancé, founder of La Trappe, when he saw a hill, a fountain or a flower, would say that all these creatures upbraided him with ingratitude to God. In holding a flower or a fruit in her hand, St Mary Magdalene de Pazzi felt her heart wounded as it were by a dart of divine love, and would say within herself: "Then, my God has from eternity though of creating this flower or fruit, that I might love him."

Consider, moreover, the special love God has shown to you in allowing you to be born in a Christian country, and in the bosom of the true Church. How many are born among idolaters, Jews, Mohammedans, or heretics, and are all lost! The number of those who have the happiness of being born in country where the true faith prevails is small, compared with the rest of mankind; and he has chosen you to be one of that small number. Oh, what an infinite gift is the gift of faith! How many millions are deprived of the sacraments, of sermon, of the examples of good companions and of all the other helps to salvation which are found in the true Church! And God is resolved to give all these great helps to you without any merit on your part, and even with a foreknowledge of your demerits; for when he thought of creating you, and bestowing these graces upon you, he foresaw the insults with you would offer to him.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, infinite good, infinite majesty! Who hast loved men so tenderly, how does it happen that Thou art so much despised by them? But among these me, Thou, O my God! Hast loved me in a particular manner, and hast bestowed on me special graces, which Thou hast not given to so many others. And I have despised Thee more than others. I prostrate myself at Thy feet: O Jesus, my Saviour! "cast me not away from The face."[929] I would deserve to be cast off on account of my frequent ingratitude to Thee. But Thou hast said that Thou wilt not reject a penitent soul that returns to Thee. *Him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out.*[930] My Jesus, I am sorry for having offended Thee. Hitherto I have not known Thee. I now acknowledge Thee for my Lord and Redeemer, who hast died in order to save me and to be loved by me. When, O my Jesus! shall I cease to be ungrateful to Thee? When shall I begin truly to love Thee with a true love? Behold, I this day resolved to love Thee with my whole heart, and to love nothing but Thee. O infinite Goodness! I adore Thee for all those who do not adore Thee, and I love Thee for all who do not love Thee. I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee, and offer my whole being to Thee. Assist me by Thy grace; Thou knowest my weakness. But if Thou didst bestow so many graces upon me I neither loved nor desired to love Thee, how much greater graces should I hope for from Thy mercy now that I love Thee and desire only to love Thee! My Lord, give me Thy love, but a fervent love which will make me forget all creatures: a strong love, which will make me conquer all difficulties in order to please Thee; a perpetual love, which will never be dissolved between me and Thee. I hope for all graces through Thy merits, O my Jesus! and I hope for them through thy intercession, O my mother, Mary.

SECOND POINT

GOD HAS GIVEN HIMSELF TO US

But God has not only given us so many beautiful creatures—he was not content until he even gave us himself. He loved us, and delivered himself up for us.[931] Accursed sin had robbed us of the divine grace, and made us the slaves of hell; but, to the astonishment of heaven and of all nature, the Son of God came one earth to become man in order to redeem us from eternal death, and to purchase for us the grace and the eternal glory which we had lost. How great would be our wonder if we saw a monarch become a worm for the love of worms! But our astonishment would be infinitely greater at the sight of a God made man for the love of men. *He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, . . . and in habit found as man.*[932] A God clothed in flesh! *And the word was made flesh.*[933] But the astonishment increase when we see all that this Son of God has done and suffered for the love of us. To redeem us it would have been sufficient for him to shed a single drop of his blood, or a single tear, or to offer a single prayer; for a prayer offered by a divine person would be of infinite value, and therefore sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, and of an infinite number of worlds. But, says St Chrysostom, what was sufficient for redemption was not sufficient for the immense love which this God bore to us.[934] He not only wished to save us, but, because he loved us ardently, he wished to be loved ardently by us; and therefore he resolved to lead a life full of sorrows and humiliations, and to suffer a death the most painful of all deaths, in order to make us understand the infinite love which he entertained for us. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.[935] O excess of divine love, which all men and all angels will never be able to comprehend! I say, excess; for Moses and Elias, speaking of the Passion of Jesus Christ, called it an excess.[936] St Bonaventure called the Passion of Christ an "excess of sorrow and of love."[937] If our Redeemer had not been God, but a friend or a relative, what greater proof of love could he have given, than to die for us? *Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*[938] If Jesus Christ had to save his own Father, he could not have done more for the love of him! If, my brother, you had been God and the creator of Jesus Christ, what more could he have done for you than sacrifice his life in the midst of a sea of torments and sorrows, for the love of you? If the most contemptible man on earth had done for you what Jesus Christ has done for you, could you live without loving him?

But what do you say? Do you believe in the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ? You believe these mysteries; and do you not love him? Or can you think of loving anything but Jesus Christ! He, says St Augustine, has come on earth to suffer and to die for you in order to make known to you the immense love which he bears you.[939] Before the Incarnation, man might doubt whether God loved him tenderly; but how, after the Incarnation and death of Jesus Christ, can he any longer doubt that God loves him with the most tender love? And what greater tenderness of affection could he show you, than to sacrifice his divine life for the love of you? Our ears are accustomed to hear of creation, of redemption, of a God in a manger, of a God on a cross. O holy faith, enlighten us!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my Jesus! I see that Thou couldst have done nothing more in order to compel me to love Thee; and I also see that by my ingratitude I have laboured to force Thee to abandon me. Blessed forever be Thy patience, which has borne with me so long. I would deserve a hell made on purpose for myself; but Thy death gives me confidence. Ah! make me understand well the claims which Thou, O infinite Good! hast to my love, and the obligations by which I am bound to love Thee. I knew, O my Jesus! that Thou didst die for me; how then, O God! Have I been able to live for so many years in forgetfulness of Thee? Oh that the past years of my life commenced again! I would wish, O my Lord! to give them all to Thee. But years do not return. Ah! grant that I may be least spend all the remaining days of my life in loving and pleasing Thee. My dear Redeemer! I love Thee with my whole heart; but increase this love within me. Remind me always of all that Thou hast done for me; and do not permit me to be any longer ungrateful to Thee. No; I will no longer resist the lights Thou hast given me. Thou didst wish to be loved by me and I desire to love Thee. And whom will I love, if I do not love a God of infinite beauty and infinite goodness? A God who has died for me? A God who has borne goodness? A God who has died for me? A God who has borne with me with so much patience and who, instead of chastising me as I deserved, has changed chastisements into graces and favours? Yes; I love Thee, O God! Worthy of infinite love and I sigh and seek to love wholly employed in loving Thee, and forgetful of everything but Thee. O infinite charity of my Lord! Assist a soul that ardently desires to be entirely Thine O great mother of God, Mary, do thou too assist me by thy intercession; beg of Jesus to make me belong entirely to him.

THIRD POINT

LOVE THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN IN HIS PASSION

Our astonishment increase when we consider the ardour with which Jesus Christ desired to suffer and die for the love of us. *I have a baptism, says Jesus Christ, wherewith I am to be baptised; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.*[940] I am to be baptised with the baptism of my own blood: and I feel myself dying through a desire that my Passion and death may soon come, that thus man may soon know the love which I bear to him. It was this desire that made him say on the night before his Passion: *With* *desire have I desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer.*[941] Then, says St Basil of Seleucia, it appears that our God cannot be satisfied with loving men.[942]

Ah, my Jesus! men do not love Thee because they do not think of the love which Thou hast had for them. O God! how is it possible for a soul to live without loving God, if it considers that he died for its sake, and that he died with so great a desire of showing his love for it? *The charity of Christ presseth us.*[943] St Paul says that it is not so much what Jesus Christ has done and suffered for our salvation, as the love which he has displayed in suffering for us that obliges, and as it were, forces us to love him. Contemplating the love which Jesus Christ exhibits in his Passion, St Laurence Justinian exclaimed: “We behold the All-wise infatuated through excess of love.”[944] We have seen a God as it were foolish, through the excess of his love for us. And who could ever believe, had not faith assured us of it, that the Creator would die for his own creatures? In an ecstasy, St Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, carrying a crucifix in heads, exclaimed: “Yes, my Jesus, Thou art foolish through love.” This the Gentiles also said when they heard the apostles preaching the death of Jesus Christ; they, as St Paul attests, regarded it as a folly which could not be believed. *We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness.*[945] And how, said they, could a God that is most happy in himself, and stands not in need of any one, descend on earth, to become man, and die for the love of men, who are his creatures? This would be the same as to believe that a God had become foolish for the sake of men. But, it is of faith that Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, has delivered himself to death for the love of us. *Christ hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.*[946]

And why has he done so? He has done so that we might no longer live to the world, but only to that Lord who has died for us. Christ died for all, that they also who live may not live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them.[947] He has done it that, by the love which he has shown us, he might win all the affections of our hearts. *For to this end Christ died and rose again, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living.*[948] Hence the saints contemplating the death of Jesus Christ, thought it very little to give their life and all things for the love of so loving a God. How many noblemen, how many princes, have left relatives, riches, country, and even kingdoms, to shut themselves up in a cloister, in order to live only to the love of Jesus Christ! How many martyrs have sacrificed their life! How many tender virgins, renouncing the nuptials of the great, have gone with joy to death, in order thus to make some return for the affection of a God who had died for their sake! And, my brother, what have you hitherto done for the sake of Jesus Christ? As he has died for the saints—for St Laurence, for St Lucy, for St Agnes, so he has also died for you. What do you intend to do during the remaining days of life, which God gives you that you may love him? From this day forward, look frequently at the crucifix, and, in looking at it, call to mind the love which Jesus Christ has borne you, and say within yourself: Thou hast then, my God, died for me? Do this at least, I say, and do it often; if you do, you cannot but feel yourself sweetly constrained to love a God who has loved you so tenderly.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my dear Redeemer! it is true that I have not loved Thee because I have not reflected on the love which Thou hast borne me! Ah, my Jesus! I have been very ungrateful to Thee! Thou hast given Thy life for me by submitting to the most painful of all deaths; and have I been so ungrateful as not even to think of Thy sufferings? Pardon me; I promise, O my crucified Love! that from this day forward Thou shalt be the only object of my thoughts and of all my affections! Ah! when the devil or the world presents me a forbidden apple, remind me, O my beloved Saviour! of the pains which Thou hast endured for my sake, that I may love Thee, and may never more offend Thee! Ah! if one of my servants had done for me what Thou hast done, I could not bring myself to despise him. And I have dared to turn my back so often on Thee, who hast died for me. O beautiful flames, which have obliged a God to give his life for me, inflame, fill my whole heart, and destroy all affections to create things. Ah, my beloved Redeemer! how is it possible for me to contemplate Thee, either in the manger, in Bethlehem, on the cross on Calvary, or in the sacrament on our altars, and not be enamoured of Thee? My Jesus! I love Thee with my whole soul. During the remaining years of my life Thou shalt be my only good, my only love. I have unhappily lived long enough forgetful of Thy Passion and of

Thy love. I give Thee all things, and if I do not give myself to Thee as I ought, take me and reign in my whole heart. Thy kingdom come. May my heart be the servant only of Thy love. May I speak of nothing else, may I treat of nothing else, may I think of nothing else, may I sigh and desire only to love and please Thee. Assist me by Thy grace, that I may be faithful to Thee. In thy merits I trust, O my Jesus! O mother of fair love! make me ardently love thy Son, who is so amiable and who has loved me so tenderly.

Consideration XXXIV

HOLY COMMUNION

“Take ye, and eat: this is my body.”—*Matt.* xxvi. 26.

FIRST POINT

THE EUCHARIST IS A PRECIOUS GIFT

LET us consider the great gift which Jesus Christ has bestowed on us in the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament; the great love he has shown to us in this gift; and his great desire that we should receive this gift. Let us, in the first place, consider the great gift which Jesus Christ has bestowed upon us in giving us himself entirely for our food in the Holy Communion. St Augustine says that Jesus Christ, though an omnipotent God, has nothing more to give us.[949] And what greater treasure, adds St Bernardine of Sienna, can a soul receive or desire, than the sacred body of Jesus Christ?[950] The prophet Isaias exclaims: *Make His works known among the people.*[951] O men! Proclaim aloud the loving inventions of our good God. And if our Redeemer had not bestowed this gift upon us, who among us could have asked it? Who could have dared to say to him: Lord, if Thou wishes to make us understand Thy love, remain under the species of bread, and permit us to make Thee our food? Even to think of it would be considered folly. “Does it not,” says St Augustine, “appear foolishness to say, eat my flesh—drink my blood?”[952] When Jesus Christ made known to his disciples this great gift of the Most Holy Sacrament which he wished to leave us, they could not bring themselves to believe it; and, therefore, they departed from him, saying: *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?. . . . This saying is hard, and who can hear it?*[953] But, what men could never imagine, the great love of Jesus Christ has invented and executed.

St Bernardine says that the Lord has left us this sacrament as a memorial of the love he has shown us in his Passion.[954] And this accords with what Jesus Christ himself has said: *Do this for a commemoration of Me.*[955] The love of our Saviour, adds St Bernardine, was not content with sacrificing his life for our salvation: before his death this love constrained him to bequeath to us the greatest gift which he had ever bestowed upon us, by giving us himself for our food.[956] The Abbot Guerric says that, in this sacrament, Jesus made the last effort of love.[957] This was better expressed by the Council of Trent, which declared that, in the Eucharist, Jesus poured out all the riches of his love for men.[958]

How great, says St Francis de Sales, the tenderness of love which a prince would shoe to a beggar by sending him a part of what he had on his own plate! How much greater would it be if he sent him the entire of his own dinner! But what would it be, if he sent him, for his food, a part of his own arm! In Holy Communions, Jesus gives us not only a portion of his own dinner, not only a part, but the entire of his body. *Take ye, and eat: this is My body.*[959] And with his body he gives us his soul and his divinity. In a word, St Chrysostom says that, in giving you himself in Holy Communion, he gives you all that he has, and reserves nothing for himself.[960] And the angelic Doctor says that, "in the Eucharist, God has given us all the he is and has."[961] Behold! exclaims St Bonaventure, that God whom the world cannot contain makes himself our prisoner in the Most Holy Sacrament.[962] And since the Lord gives himself entirely to us in the Eucharist, how can we fear that he will refuse us any grace which we ask of him? *How,* says St Paul, *hath He not also, with Him, given us all things.*[963]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my Jesus! what has induced Thee to give Thyself entirely to us for our food? After this gift, what more remains for Thee to give us in order to oblige us to love Thee? Ah, Lord! give us light, make us understand the excess of Thy love in becoming food in order to unite Thyself to poor sinners! But, if Thou givest Thyself entirely to us, it is just that we too give our whole being to Thee. O my Redeemer! how have I been able to offend Thee, who hast loved me so tenderly, and who hast done so much to gain my love? Thou hast become man for my sake, Thou hast died for me, Thou hast become my food; tell me, what more couldst Thou have done? I love Thee, O infinite Goodness! I love Thee, O infinite Love! Lord, come often to my soul; inflame my whole heart with Thy holy love; grant that I may forget all things in order to think only of Thee, and to love nothing but Thee. Most Holy Mary, pray for me, and by thy intercession, make me worthy to receive thy Son frequently in the Holy Sacrament.

SECOND POINT

THE EUCHARIST IS A GIFT OF LOVE

Let us consider, in the second place, the great love which Jesus Christ has shown us in giving us himself in the Holy Eucharist. The Most Holy Sacrament is a gift which has proceeded from pure love. For our salvation it was necessary, according to the decree of God, that the Redeemer should die, and, by the sacrifice of his life, satisfy the divine justice for our sins; but what necessity was there that Jesus Christ, after having died for our redemption, should leave himself to us for our food? But this his love wished to do. He, says St Laurence Justinian, instituted the Eucharist for no other purpose than to show his great charity, for no other purpose than to make us understand the immense love which he bears us.[964] This is precisely what St John has written: *Jesus, knowing that His hour was come that He should pass out of this world to the Father: having loved His own, He loved them to the end.*[965] Knowing that the time of his departure from this earth had arrived, he wished to give us the greatest proof of his love, by bequeathing to us this gift of the Most Holy Sacrament. This is the precise meaning of the words, *He loved them to the end;* that is, according to Theophilactus and St Chrysostom, “he loved them with an extreme love.”[966]

And mark what the apostle has observed—that the time at which Jesus Christ wished to bequeath this gift was the time of his death. The Lord Jesus, the same night on which He was betrayed, took bread, and, giving thanks, broke and said, “Take ye, and eat: this is My Body.”[967] At the very time that men prepared for him scourges, thorns and a cross to crucify him, the loving Saviour wished to leave us this the last proof of his love. And why at death, and not before that time, did he institute this sacrament?

Because, says St Bernardine, the marks of love given by friends at death make a greater impression on the memory, and are preserved with greater affection.[968] Jesus Christ, says the saint, had already given himself to us in many ways: he had given himself to us for a companion, a master, a father; for our light and our victim. The last degree of love remained; and this was, to give himself to us for our food in order to untie himself entirely to us, as food is united with him who eats it.[969] This he has done by giving himself to us in the Most Holy Sacrament. Thus, our Redeemer was not content with uniting himself only to our human nature: he wished by this sacrament to find a means of also uniting himself to each of us in particular.

St Francis de Sales says “that in no other action can the Saviour be considered more tender or more loving than in the institution of the Holy Eucharist; in which he, as it were, annihilates himself, and becomes food, in order to penetrate our souls, and to unite himself to the hearts of his faithful servants.” Thus, says St Chrysostom, with that Lord on whom the angels dare not fix their eyes we are united, and are made one holy and one flesh.[970] What shepherd, adds the saint, has ever fed his sheep with his own blood? Even mothers intrust their children to the care of nurses. But Jesus, in the sacrament, nourishes us with his own blood, and unites us to himself.[971] And why become our food? Because, says the saint, he loved us ardently, and by making himself our food, he wished to unite himself entirely to us, and to make himself one thing with us.[972] Then Jesus Christ wished to perform the greatest of his miracles (He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works; He hath given food to them that fear Him[973]) in order to satisfy his desire of remaining with us, and of uniting in one, our heart and his own most holy heart. “O wonderful is Thy love, O Lord Jesus!” exclaims St Laurence Justinian, “who wished to incorporate us in such a manner with Thyself, that we should have one heart and one soul inseparably united to Thee.”[974]

That great servant of God, Fr De la Colombière, used to say: If anything could shake my faith in the mystery of the Eucharist, I would not doubt of the power, but rather of the love, which God displays in this sacrament. If you ask me how bread becomes the body of Jesus—how Jesus is found in many places, I answer that God can do all things. But if you ask me how it is that God loves men so as to make himself their food, I can only say that I do not understand it, and that the love of Jesus cannot be comprehended. But, O Lord! to reduce Thyself to the condition of food, appears to be an excess of love not suited to Thy majesty. But St Bernard's answer is, that love makes lovers forget their own dignity.[975] St Chrysostom also answers that love seeks not what is convenient when there is question of making itself known to the beloved; it goes not where it ought, but where it is carried by the ardour of its desire.[976] Justly, then, has the angelic Doctor called this sacrament "a sacrament of love—a pledge of love."[977] And St Bernard calls it *love of loves.* St Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to call Holy Thursday, the day on which this sacrament was instituted, *the day of love.*

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O infinite love of Jesus, worthy of infinite love? Ah! My Jesus, when shall I love Thee as Thou hast loved me? Thou couldst do nothing more to make me love Thee; and I have forsaken Thee, O infinite Good! for the sake of vile and miserable goods! Ah! enlighten me, O my God! Discover to me always more and more the greatness of Thy goodness that my whole soul may be enamoured of Thee, and that I may labour to please Thee. I love Thee, O my Jesus! my love, my all; and I wish to unite myself frequently to Thee in this sacrament, in order to detach myself from all things, and to love Thee alone, who art my life. Through the merits of Thy Passion, assist me, O my Redeemer! O Mother of Jesus and my Mother, do thou, too, assist me, beg of him to inflame my whole heart with his holy love.

THIRD POINT

HOW MUCH JESUS CHRIST DESIRES TO UNITE HIMSELF TO US

Let us, in the third place, consider the great ardour with which Jesus Christ desires that we should receive him in Holy Communion. *Jesus knowing that His hour was come.*[978] But how could Jesus call the night on which his bitter Passion should commence, *His hour?* He calls it *His hour,* because on that night he was to institute this divine sacrament in order to unite himself entirely to his beloved souls. This desire made him say: *With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you.*[979] Words by which the Redeemer wished to show us the great ardour with which he desired to unite himself to each of us in this sacrament. *With desire I have desired*. Word which, according to St Laurence Justinian, proceeded from his immense love for us. This is the language of the most burning love.[980] The Redeemer wished to give himself to us under the appearance of bread, that all might be able to receive him. Had he given himself to us under the appearance of costly food, the poor would not be able to receive him, and had he instituted the Holy Sacrament under the appearance of any other cheap food, this perhaps would not be found in all parts of the world. Jesus wished to leave himself under the species of bread, because it costs but little, and is found in every country; so that all persons in all places may find him and receive him.

Through his great desire that we should receive him, the Redeemer not only presses us to receive him by so many invitations: *Come, eat My bread and drink the wine which I have mingled for you.*[981] *Eat, O friends and drink and be inebriated, My dearly beloved,*[982] but he also commands us to receive him. Take ye and eat: this is My body.[983] Moreover, he endeavours to allure us to the holy table by promises to eternal life. *He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath life everlasting. He that eateth this bread shall live forever.*[984] He also threatens to exclude from paradise all who neglect to receive him in the holy sacrament. *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you.*[985] These invitations, promises, and threats all proceed from the ardent desire of Jesus Christ to unite himself to us in this sacrament. And this desire springs from the great love which he bears us; for, as St Francis de Sales says, the end of love is nothing else than to be united with the object of love. And because in this sacrament Jesus unites himself entirely to the soul—*He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in him.*[986] Therefore he desires so ardently that we should receive him. Our Lord said one day to St Mechtilde: “The bee does not cast itself on the flower from which it sucks the honey, with as much ardour as I come to the soul that desires to receive them.”

Oh! If the faithful understood the great blessing which Holy Communion brings to the soul! Jesus is the Lord of all riches; for his Father has made him master of all things. *Knowing that the Father had given Him all things into His hands.*[987] Hence, when Jesus Christ comes to a soul in Holy Communion, he brings with him immense treasures of graces. *Now all good* *things*, says Solomon speaking of the eternal wisdom, *came to me together with her.*[988]

St Denis says that the Most Holy Sacrament has the greatest efficacy in sanctifying the soul.[989] And St Vincent Ferrer asserts that the soul derives greater profit from one Communion, than from fasting for week on bread and water. The Communion, as the Council of Trent teaches, is that great remedy which delivers us from venial, and preserves us from mortal sins.[990] Hence St Ignatius, martyr, has called the Most Holy Sacrament the medicine of immortality.[991] Innocent III has said that, by his Passion, Jesus Christ has delivered us from the punishment of sin; but, by the Eucharist, he preserves us from the commission of sin.[992]

Moreover, this sacrament kindles the fire of divine love. *He brought me into the cellar of wine; he set in order charity in me. Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples; because I languish with love.*[993] St Gregory of Nyssa says that Holy Communion is this cellar of wine, in which the soul is so inebriated with divine love, that she forgets the earth and all creatures; it is thus the soul languishes with holy charity. The Venerable Far Francis Olimpio, of the Order of Theatines, used to say that there is nothing that so powerfully inflames the soul with divine love, as Holy Communion. God is love and a fire of love. *God is charity.*[994] *My God is a consuming fire.* And this fire of love the Eternal Word came to light upon the earth. *I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but hat if be kindled?*[995] Oh! what burning flames of holy love does Jesus kindle in the souls who receive him in this sacrament with a desire of being inflamed with his love. St Catherine of Sienna saw, one day, in the hands of a priest, Jesus, in the Holy Sacrament, like a furnace of love; and wondered that the hearts of all men were not set on fire and reduced to ashes by the flames which issued from the Holy Eucharist. St Rose of Lima used to say that, in receiving Jesus Christ, she felt that as if she received the sun. Hence she sent forth from her countenance rays which dazzled the sight, and the heat emitted from her mouth after Communion was so intense, that the person who reached her a drink felt her hand scorched as if she approached a furnace. In visiting the Most Holy Sacrament, St Wenceslaus, king and martyr, was inflamed, even externally, with such a degree of heat that the servant who accompanied him, when obliged to walk on the snow, trod in the footsteps of the saint, and thus felt no cold. “The Eucharist,” says St Chrysostom, “is a fire which inflames us, that, like lions breathing fire, we may retire from the altar being made terrible to the devil.”[996] The Holy Sacrament is a fire which inflames the soul to such a degree that we ought to depart from the altar breathing such flames of love that the devil will no longer dare to tempt us.

But some will say: I do not communicate often because I am cold in divine love. But, says Gerson, he who acts in this manner is like the man who refuses to approach the fire because he feels cold. The greater, then, our tepidity, the more frequently we ought to receive the Most Holy Sacrament, provided we have a desire to love God. “If,” says St Francis de Sales (in his *Devout Life*, chap. xxi), “you are asked why you communicate so frequently, say that two sorts of persons ought to communicate often—the perfect and the imperfect: the perfect to preserve perfection, and the imperfection to acquire perfection.” St Bonaventure says: “Though you feel tepid, approach, trusting in the mercy of God. The more a person feels sick, the more he stands in need of a physician.”[997] And Jesus Christ says to St Mechtilde: “When you are to communicate, desire to have all the love which any soul has ever had for me, and I will accept your love in proportion to the ardour with which you wish for it.[998]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O enamoured of souls, O my Jesus! It is not in Thy power to give us proofs of love in order to show us that Thou lovest us. And what more couldst Thou invent to induce us to love Thee? Ah! Grant O infinite Goodness! That I may love Thee tenderly and with all my strength! And who is there that has greater claims on the affections of my heart, than Thou, my Redeemer, who, after having given Thy life for my salvation, hast given me Thyself entirely in this sacrament? Ah! Lord, that I always remembered Thy love in order to forget all things and to love Thee alone without interruption and without reserve! I love Thee, O my Jesus above all things and I wish to love Thee alone. Banish from my heart, I entreat Thee, all affections which are not for Thee. I thank thee for giving me time to love Thee and to weep over the offences I have offered to Thee. My Jesus, I desire that Thou mayest be the only object of my affections. Assist e, save me, and let my salvation consist in loving Thee with my whole heart, and in loving Thee always in this life and in the next. Mary, my Mother, obtain for me the grace to love Jesus Christ; pray to him for me.

Consideration XXXV

DWELLING OF JESUS ON OUR ALTARS

“Come to me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.”—*Matt.* xi. 28.

FIRST POINT

JESUS MAKES HIMSELF ACCESSIBLE TO EVERY ONE

HAVING to depart from this world after he had completed the work of redemption, our loving Saviour did not wish to leave us alone in this valley of tears. “No tongue,” says St Peter of Alcantara, “can express the greatness of the love which Jesus Christ bears to our souls. Hence that his absence from us might not be an occasion of forgetting him, this spouse, before his departure from this world, left, as a memorial of his love, this Most Holy Sacrament, in which he himself has remained. He did not wish that between him and his servants there should be any other pledge than himself, to keep alive the remembrance of him.” This effort of love on the part of Jesus Christ merits great love from us; and according to the revelation said to have been made to his servant, Sr Margaret Mary Alacoque, he wished that in these latter times a festival should be instituted in honour of his Most Sacred Heart, in order that, by our devotions and affections, we might make some return for his loving dwelling on our altars, and thus compensate the insults which he has received in this sacrament of love, and which he receives every day from heretics and bad Catholics.

Jesus has left himself in the Most Holy Sacrament, first, that all may be able to find him; secondly, to give audience to all; thirdly, to give his graces to all. He, is the first place, remains on so many altars, that all who wish may be able to find him. On the night on which the Redeemer took leave of his disciples to go to his death, they shed tears of sorrow at the thought of being separated from their dear Master; but Jesus consoled them, saying (and the same he then said also to us): My children, I am going to die for you, in order to show you the love which I bear you. But at my death I will not leave you alone; as long as you are on earth, I will remain with you in the Most Holy Sacrament. I leave you my body, my soul, my divinity: I leave myself entirely to you. As long as you remain on earth, I will not depart from you. *Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.*[999] The Saviour, says St Peter of Alcantara, did not wish to leave his spouse alone at such a distance, and therefore he has left this sacrament, in which he himself, the best of all companions, has remained with her. The Gentiles have invented so many gods; but they could never imagine a god more loving than our God, who remains nigh to us, and assist us with so much love. *Neither is there any other nation so great, that hath God so nigh them, as our God is present to all our petitions.*[1000] The holy Church applies this passage of Deuteronomy to the festival of the Most Holy Sacrament.—*Resp.* ii. *Noct.* iii.

Behold, then, Jesus Christ remains in our tabernacles as if confined in so many prisons of love. His priests remove him from the tabernacle to expose him on the altar, or to give Communion, and afterward put him back to be again shut up; and Jesus is content to remain there day and night. But why, my Redeemer, dost thou remain in so many churches, even during the night, when the faithful lock the doors, and leave Thee alone? It would be enough for Thee to remain during the day. No, he wished to remain also during the night, though left alone, that, in the morning, all who seek may instantly find him. The sacred spouse went in search of her beloved, saying to everyone she met: *Have you seen him whom my soul loveth?*[1001] And, not finding him, she raised her voice and exclaimed: My spouse, tell me where thou art. Show me. . . . Where thou feedest, where thou liest in the mid-day.[1002] The spouse did not find him, because then the Most Holy Sacrament was not instituted; but, at present, if a soul wishes to find Jesus Christ, it has only to go to a church in which the Holy Eucharist is preserved, and there it will find its beloved expecting it. There is not a town nor a convent in which the Holy Sacrament is not kept; and in all these places the King of Heaven is content to remain shut up in a case of wood or of stone, often almost without a lamp bringing before him, and without any one to keep him company. But, “O Lord!” says St Bernard, “this is not suited to Thy Majesty." "No matter," Jesus replies; if it becomes not my Majesty, it well becomes my love."

What tender devotion do pilgrims feel in visiting the holy house of Loretto—the Holy Land—the stable at Bethlehem—the hill of Calvary—or the holy sepulchre, in which Jesus Christ was born, or lived, or died, or was buried! But how much greater tenderness should we feel in a church, in presence of Jesus himself in the Blessed Sacrament? The venerable Fr John D'Avila used to say that he knew no sanctuary capable of inspiring greater devotion or consolation than a church in which Jesus remains in the Holy Eucharist. Fr Balthazar Alvarez would weep in seeing the palaces of princes filled with countries, and the churches, in which Jesus Christ dwells, solitary and abandoned. O God! if the Lord remained only in one church—for example, in St Peter's in Rome—and only on one day in the year, oh! how many pilgrims, how many nobles, how many princes would endeavours to have the happiness of being there on that day, to pay court and homage to the King of Heaven descended again upon the earth! Oh, what a splendid tabernacle of gold, adorned with gems, would be prepared for the occasion! Oh, with what an abundance of lights would the dwelling of Jesus Christ on the earth be celebrated on that day! But, says the Redeemer, I do not wish to remain only in a single church, or but for a single day; nor require either such church, or but for a single day: nor require with such riches, or such a profusion of lights. I wish to remain continually every day, and in all places in which my servants are found; that all may easily find me at all times and at any hour they wish.

Ah! If Jesus Christ had not invented this excess of love, who could have ever thought of it? Should a Christian after the ascension of the Redeemer into heaven, say to him, Lord, if Thou wishest to show us Thy affection, remain with us on our altars under the appearance of bread, that we may be able to find Thee whenever we wish: would not such a demand be regarded as the extreme of temerity? But, what no man could ever even imagine, our Saviour has invented and accomplished. But, alas! Where is our gratitude for so great a favour? If a prince came from a distance to a village for the purpose of being visited by a peasant, how great would be the ingratitude of the peasant if he refused to visit his sovereign or if he paid him only a passing visit?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Jesus, my Redeemer, O love of my soul! How much has it cost Thee to remain with us in the sacrament? To be able to remain on our altars. Thou hadst first to suffer death; afterward, in order to aid us by Thy presence, Thou hadst to submit to so many grievous insults in this sacrament. And, after all this we are so slothful and negligent in visiting Thee, though we know that Thou so ardently desirest our visits for the purpose of enriching us with Thy graces when Thou seest us in Thy presence, Lord, pardon me; for I too have been one of these ungrateful souls. From this day forward, O my Jesus! I wish to visit Thee often, and to remain as long as I can in Thy presence, to thank Thee, to love Thee, and to ask Thy graces; for it is for this purpose that Thou remainest on earth shut up in our tabernacles, and made our prisoner of love. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness! I love Thee, O God of love! I love Thee, O sovereign Good! amiable above every good. Grant that I may forget myself and all things, in order to remember only Thy love and to spend the remainder of my life wholly occupied in pleasing Thee. Grant that from this day forward I may relish no pleasure more than that of remaining at Thy feet. Inflame my whole soul with Thy holy love. Mary, my mother, obtain for me a great love for the Most Holy Sacrament: and whenever Thou seest that I am negligent, remind me of the promise I now make of going every day to visit the Holy Sacrament.

SECOND POINT

JESUS GIVES AUDIENCE TO ALL AT ALL TIMES

In the second place, Jesus Christ, in the Blessed Sacrament, gives audience to all. St Teresa used to say that all cannot speak with the sovereign. The poor can scarcely hope to address him, and make known to him their necessities, even through a third person. But to speak to the King of Heaven, the intervention of a third person is not necessary: all, the poor as well as the nobles of the earth, may speak to him face to face in the Holy Sacrament. Hence Jesus is called the flower of the fields. *I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys.*[1003] The flowers of gardens are inclosed and reserved; but the flowers of the fields are exposed to all. "I am the flower of the field," says Cardinal Hugo, in his comment on this passage, “because I exhibit myself to be found by all. With Jesus then, in the Holy Sacrament, all may speak every hour in the day. Speaking of the birth of the Redeemer in the stable of Bethlehem, St Peter Chrysologus says that princes do not always give audience; that when a person goes to address the king, the guards send him away, saying that the hour or day for giving audience is not yet arrived, and telling him to come at another time. But the Redeemer wished to be born in an open cave, without a door and without guards, in order to give audience to all, at all doors: there is not attendant to say, “It is not the hour.”[1004] The same happens in the Holy Sacrament. The churches are always open: all can go to converse with the King of Heaven whenever they wish. Jesus desires that we speak to him with unbounded confidence: it is for this purpose that he remains under the species of bread. If Jesus appeared on our altars, as he will on the day of judgement, on a throne of glory, who among would dare to approach him? But, says St Teresa because the Lord desires that we speak to him and ask his graces with confidence and without fear, he has therefore clothed his majesty with the appearance of bread. He desires, as Thomas à Kempis says, that we converse with him as one friend does with another.[1005]

When a soul remains at the foot of the altar, Jesus appears to address it in the words of the Canticles: *Arise, make haste, my love, my beautiful one, and come.*[1006] Arise, arise, O my soul, and fear not. Make haste, approach to me. *My love*, you are no longer my enemy; for you love me, and you repent of having offended me. *My beautiful one*, you are no longer deformed in my eyes: my grace has made you beautiful. *And come*, tell me what you want: I remain here on purpose to hear your prayers. What joy should you feel, dear reader, if a king called you into his cabinet and said to you: what do you wish for? *What do you stand in need of? I love you, and I desire to promote your welfare.* This, Jesus Christ, the King of Heaven, says to all who visit him: *Come to me, all you that labour and are burthened, and I will refresh you.*[1007] Come, all you that are poor, infirm, or afflicted; I am able and willing to enrich you, to heal you, to console you. For this purpose I remain on your altars. *Thou shalt call and he shall say: here I am.*[1008]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Since then, my beloved Jesus, thou remainest on our altars to hear the supplications of the miserable who, have recourse to Thee, hear the prayer which I, a miserable sinner, present to Thee. O Lamb of God! sacrificed and lifeless on the cross. I am a soul redeemed by Thy blood; pardon me all the offences I have offered to Thee, and assist me by Thy grace, that I may never lose Thee again. Impart to me, O my Jesus! a portion of the sorrow which Thou didst feel in the garden of Gethsemane for my sins. O my God! That I have never offended Thee! My dear Lord, had I died in sin, I could never more love Thee; but thou hast waited for me that I might love Thee. I thank Thee for the time which Thou givest me; and since I can now love Thee, I wish to love Thee. Give me the grace of Thy holy love, but of a love which will make me forget all things, to think only of pleasing Thy most loving heart. Ah, my Jesus! Thou hast spent Thy whole life for me; grant that I may spent at least the remainder of my life for Thee. Draw me entirely to Thy love; make me all Thine before I die. I hope for all graces through the merits of Thy Passion. I also hope in thy intercession, O Mary! Thou knowest that I love thee; have pity on me.

THIRD POINT

JESUS ONLY WISHES TO BESTOW HIS GRACES

Jesus, in the Holy Sacrament, gives audience to all in order to bestow his graces to all. St Augustine says that the Lord has a greater desire of communicating his graces to us than we have of receiving them.[1009] The reason is, that God is infinite goodness and goodness is naturally diffusive; therefore, it desires to impart its goods to all. God complains when souls do not come to ask his graces. *Am I, he says, become a wilderness to Israel, or a lateward springing land? Why, then have my people said, We are revolted; we will come to thee no more?*[1010] Why, says the Lord, will you come to me no more? Have you, when you asked my graces, found me like a barren or lateward springing land? St John saw the Lord with his breast full of milk—that is, of mercy—and girded with a band of gold—that is, with the love with which he desires to dispense his graces to us. *I saw one like the Son of man. . . . girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*[1011] Jesus Christ is always ready to bestow his favours upon us; but the *disciple* says that, in the Holy

Sacrament, he dispenses his graces in greater abundance. And, according to Blessed Henry Suso, it is in the Holy Eucharist that Jesus most willing hears our prayers.

As a mother whose breast are full of milk goes in search of infants to give them suck in order to be relieved of the burden, so our Lord from this sacrament of love cries out, and says to all: *You shall be carried at the breasts. . . . As one whom the mother caresses, so will I comfort you.*[1012] Fr Balthassar saw Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, having his hands full of graces, to dispense them to men, but found no one to ask them.

Oh! happy the soul that remains at the foot of the altar to ask graces of Jesus Christ! The Countess of Feria, afterward a religious of the Order of St Clare, remained as long as she could before the Blessed Sacrament, and was therefore called the spouse of the sacrament. She continually received treasures of graces at the foot of the altar. Being asked one day how she was employed during so many hours before the tabernacle, she answered: "I would remain there for all eternity. I am asked what I do before the Blessed Sacrament. And what do I not do? What does a beggar do in the presence of a rich man? What does a sick man do before his physician? What do I do? I thank my Saviour, I love him, I ask his graces." Oh! how precious these last words are to make us draw fruit from our visits to the Holy Sacrament!

Jesus Christ complained to the servant of God, Sr Margaret Mary Alacoque, of the ingratitude of men to him in this sacrament of love. To make her understand the love with which he dwells on our altars, he showed her his heart in a throne of flames, surrounded with thorns and surmounted by a cross, and said to her: "Behold that heart, which has loved men so tenderly, which has reserved nothing, and which has been even consumed to show its love for them. But, in return, the greater part of them treats me with ingratitude by their irreverence and by their contempt of my love in this sacrament. And what is most painful to me is, that they are hearts consecrated to me" Christians do not visit Jesus Christ because they do not love him. They spent entire hours in the society of friends; and they feel tediousness in conversing half an hour with Jesus Christ. Some will say: Why does not Jesus Christ give me his love? I answer: If you do not banish the world from your heart, how can divine love enter it? Ah! If you could say with sincerity, what St Philip Neri said at the sight of the Holy

Sacrament—*Behold my love! Behold my love!*—you should not feel tediousness in spending hours and entire days before the Blessed Sacrament.

To souls enamoured of God, hours spent before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament appear moments. St Francis Xavier laboured the whole day for the salvation of souls; and what was his repose at night? It consisted in remaining before the Holy Sacrament. St John Francis Regis, that great missionary of France, after having spent the entire day in preaching and hearing confessions, went at night to the church. And having some times found it shut, he remained outside the door, exposed to the cold and wind, to pay homage, at least at a distance, to his beloved Lord. St Aloysius Gonzaga wished to remain always before the Holy Sacrament: but was forbidden to do sp by his Superiors. In passing by the altar, he felt himself drawn by Jesus to remain, but was compelled by obedience to depart. Hence he would lovingly say to his Saviour: "Withdrew from me, O Lord! withdrew."[1013] Lord, do not draw me; allow me to depart; obedience obliges me to go away. If, my brother, you do not feel this love for Jesus, endeavour at least to visit him every day: he will certainly inflame your heart. Do you feel cold? Approach the fire, says St Catherine of Sienna. Ah! Happy you, if Jesus, by his grace, inflame you with his love. Then you will certainly no longer love; on the contrary, you will despise all the goods of this world. "When," says St Francis de Sales, "a house is on fire, all that is within is thrown out through the windows."

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my Jesus! make Thyself known, make Thyself loved. Thou art so amiable, Thou canst do nothing more to induce men to love Thee; how then does it happen that so few among them love Thee? Alas! I have been among these ungrateful wretches. I have been sufficiently grateful to creatures, who have bestowed no gift or favour upon me. To Thee only, who hast given me Thyself, have I been ungrateful, so as often to offend Thee grievously, and insult Thee by my sins. But I see that, instead of abandoning me, Thou continuest to seek after me, and to ask my love. I feel that Thou continuest to propose to me this loving precept—"*Thou shalt love the Lord thy god with thy whole heart.*" Since, then Thou didst wish to be loved even by me after my ingratitude, I desire to love Thee. Thou wishest for my love and at present through Thy grace, I desire only to love Thee. I love Thee, my love, my all. Through the blood which Thou hast shed for me, help me to love Thee. My beloved Redeemer! I place all my hopes in this blood and also in the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, whom Thou wishest to assist me by her prayers in the work of my salvation. O Mary, my Mother! Pray to Jesus for me. Thou inflamest all thy lovers with the divine love; I love thee ardently; procure it also for me.

Consideration XXXVI

THE CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

“And life in his good will.”—*Ps.* xxix. 6.

FIRST POINT

EXCELLENCE OF THIS VIRTUE

ALL our salvation and perfection consists in loving God. *He that loveth not, abideth in death. Charity, which is the bond of perfection.*[1014] But the perfection of love consists in conformity to the divine will; for, as St Denis the Areopagite says, to the principal effect of love is, to unite the will of lovers, so that they may have but one heart and one will. Hence our actions, our works of penance our Communions and alms-deeds, please God only inasmuch as they are conformable to the divine will; for if they are not conformable to the will of God, they are not good works, but are defective, and deserving of chastisement.

Our Saviour came down from heaven principally to teach us by example to conform ourselves to the will of God. Behold what he said, as the apostle writes, at his entrance into this world. *Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not; but a body Thou hast fitted to me . . . Then, said I, behold I come. . . . that I should do Thy will, O my God.*[1015] Thou, O my Father! Hast refused the victims offered by men; Thou wishes that, by my death, I should sacrifice this body which Thou hast given me; behold me ready to do Thy will. This he frequently declared, saying that he came on earth only to do the will of his Father. *I came down from heaven, not to do My will, but the will of Him that sent Me.*[1016] And by going to die through obedience to the will of his Father, he wished to make known to us his great love for his Father. *That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I. Arise; let us go hence.*[1017] Hence he has said that he acknowledges for his disciples only those who fulfil the divine will. *Whosoever shall do the will of My Father that is in heaven, he is my brother and sister, and mother.*[1018] The accomplishment of the divine will has been the only object and desire of the saints in all their works. Blessed Henry Suso used to say: "I would rather be the vilest worm one earth in conformity to the will of God, than be a seraph with my own will." St Teresa says: "All that he who practises prayers should seek is, to conform his will to the divine will; and let him be assured," adds the saint, "that in this consists the highest perfection. He who practises it best, will receive the greatest gifts from God, and will make the greatest progress in spiritual life." The blessed in heaven love God perfectly, because they are in all things conformed to the divine will. Hence Jesus Christ has taught us to do the will of God on earth as the saints do it in heaven. *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*[1019] He who does the will of God, will, as David says, become a man according to God's own heart. *I have found a man according to My own heart, who shall do all My wills.*[1020] And why? Because David was always prepared to do whatever God wished. *My heart is ready, O my God, my heart is ready.*[1021] He asked nothing else from the Lord, than to teach him to do his will.

Oh! how great is the value of an act of perfect resignation to the will of God: it is sufficient to make a saint! While St Paul was persecuting the Church, Jesus appeared to him, enlightened, and converted him. *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*[1022] And behold, Jesus Christ instantly declared him a vessel of election, and apostle of the Gentiles. *This man is to Me a vessel of election to carry My name before the Gentiles.*[1023] He who fasts, gives alms or mortifies himself for God's sake, gives a part of himself to God; but the man who gives his will to God, gives himself entirely to him. All that God asks of us is, our heart—that is, our will. My son, give Me thy heart. In a word, the accomplishment of the divine will must be the object of all our desires, of our devotions, meditations, Communions, etc. The object of all our prayers must be to obtain from God the grace to do his will. And for this purpose we must implore the intercession of our holy advocates, and particularly of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that they may procure for us light and strength to conform ourselves to the will of God in all things, but particularly in embracing what is opposed to self-love. The venerable John Avila used to say: “A single ‘Blessed be God’ in adversity is better than six thousand acts of thanksgiving in prosperity.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my God! All my past ruin has arisen from a want of conformity to Thy will. O God of my soul! I detest and curse a thousand times the days and moments in which I have, in order to do my own will, contradicted Thy holy will. I now give my whole will to Thee. Accept it, O my Lord! and bind it so firmly to Thy love, that it may never more be able to rebel against Thee. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness! And through the love which I bear Thee, I offer myself entirely to Thee. Dispose of me and of all I possess, as Thou pleasest; I resign myself entirely to Thy holy will. Preserve me from the misfortune of doing anything against Thy holy will, and then treat me as Thou wishest. Eternal Father, hear me for the love of Jesus Christ. My Jesus, hear me through the merits of Thy Passion. Most Holy Mary, assist me; obtain for me the grace to fulfil the divine will, in the accomplishment of which my salvation entirely consists: obtain this grace for me and I ask nothing more.

SECOND POINT

IN WHAT WE SHOULD CONFORM TO GOD’S WILL

It is necessary to conform ourselves to the will of God, not only in crosses and adversity which come directly from God, such as infirmities, desolation of spirit, loss of property or relatives; but also in those which come indirectly from him.—that is, through men—such as defamation, contempt, injuries, and all other persecutions. And let us remember that when others injure us in our property or honour, God does not will their sin, but he wills our poverty and our humiliations. It is certain that whatsoever happens take place by the divine will. *I am the Lord: I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil.*[1024] And Ecclesiasticus says: *Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God.*[1025] In a word, all things, blessings as well as misfortunes, come from God.

The crosses that happen to us are called evils, because we call them so, and because we make them evils; if we accepted them as we ought, with resignation, from the hands of God, they should prove to us, not evils, but blessings. The jewels which give the greatest splendour to the crown of the saints are the tribulations which they have borne for God, as coming from his hands. What did holy Job say when he was told that the Sabeans had taken away his property? *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.*[1026] He did not say: The Lord gave me these goods, and the Sabeans have taken them away; but the Lord has given them, and the Lord has taken them away. And therefore he blessed the Lord, knowing that all had happened by his will. *And as it hath pleased the Lord, so it is done; blessed be the name of the Lord.*[1027] When the holy martyrs Epictetus and Athone were tormented with iron hooks and burning torches, they only said: “Lord, Thy will be done in us.” And their dying words were: “O eternal God, be blessed for giving us the grace to accomplish in ourselves Thy holy will.” Cesarius relates (lib. x. cap. Vi) that a certain monk wrought many miracles, though his life was not more austere than that of the other monks. Being astonished at his miracles, the abbot asked him one day what devotions he practised. In answer he said that he was more imperfect than his companions, but that he was always careful to conform himself in all things to the divine will. “And,” said the Superior, “did you feel no displeasure at the injury which an enemy did to our farm some days ago?” “No, Father,” replied the monk; “I on the contrary, thanked the Lord because I know that he does and permits all things for our welfare.” From this, the abbot perceived the sanctity of this good religious.

We ought to do the same when any cross of adversity happens to us. Let us accept them all from the divine hands, not only with patience, but also with joy, in imitation of the apostles, who rejoiced when they were maltreated for the sake of Jesus Christ. *They went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.*[1028] And what greater happiness than to bear crosses, and to know that, in embracing them, we please God? If we wish to enjoy continual peace, let us endeavour, from this day forward, to embrace the divine will, always saying in all that happens to us: *Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.*[1029] Lord, this has pleased Thee, let it be done. To this end we ought to direct all our meditations, Communions, visits and prayers, always imploring the Lord to make us conform to hi will. And let us always offer ourselves to him, saying: “Behold me, O my God! Do with me what thou pleasest.” St Teresa offered herself to God at least fifty times in the day, that he might dispose of her as he wished.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my divine King, my beloved Redeemer! come and reign henceforth in my soul with undivided sway. Take my whole will, that is may desire and wish nothing but what Thou wishest. My Jesus, I have hitherto offended Thee so grievously by resisting Thy holy will. This gives me greater pain than if I had suffered every other evil. I repent of it, and am sorry for it with my whole heart. I deserve chastisement; I do not refuse it; I accept it. Preserve me only from the chastisement of being deprived of Thy love, my dear Redeemer; I love Thee, my God, and because I love Thee, I wish to do whatever Thou wishes. O will of God! Thou art my love. O blood of my Jesus, Thou art my hope. In Thee I hope to be, from this day forward, always united to the divine will. It shall be my guide, my desire, my love and my peace. In it I wish to live and repose. *In peace in the self-same I will sleep and I will rest.*[1030] I shall always say, in whatever shall befall me; My God, this Thou hast willed, thus I will; my God, I wish only that Thou wishest, may Thy will be always accomplished in me. Thy will be done. My Jesus, through Thy merits, grant me the grace always to repeat this beautiful dictate of love: Thy will be done! Thy will be done! O Mary, happy thou, who didst always fulfil, in all things, the divine will. Obtain for me the grace that henceforth I, too, may always fulfil it. My queen, through thy great love for Jesus Christ, obtain for me this grace. Through thy prayers I hope for it.

THIRD POINT

HAPPINESS DERIVED FROM CONFORMITY TO GOD’S WILL

He who is united with the divine will, enjoys, even in this life, a perpetual peace. *Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad.*[1031] Yes, for a man cannot enjoy greater happiness than that which arises from the accomplishment of all his wishes. He who wills only what God wills, possesses all that he desires; for whatever happens to him, happens by the will of God. If, says, Salvian, the soul that is resigned be humbled, it desires humiliations, if it is poor, it delights in poverty; in a word, it wishes whatever happens ,and thus leads a happy life.[1032] Let cold, heat, wind or rain come and he that is united with the will of God says: I wish for this cold, this heat, this wind, and this rain, because God wills them. If loss of property, persecution, or sickness befall him he says: I wish to be miserable, to be persecuted, to be sick, because such is the will of God. He who reposes in the divine will, and is resigned to whatever the Lord does, is like a man who stands above the clouds, and without injury or perturbation, beholds the tempest raging below. This is the peace which, according to the Apostle, *surpasseth all understanding,*[1033] which exceeds all the delights of the world; a perpetual peace, subject to no vicissitudes. *A fool is changed like the moon. . . . A holy man continueth in wisdom like the sun.*[1034] Fools—that is, sinners—are changed like the moon, which increases today, grows less and on to-morrow. To-day they are seen to laugh, and to-morrow to weep; today all joy and meekness, tomorrow, all sadness and fury, in a word, they change with prosperity and adversity. But the just man is like the sun, always the same, and uniformly tranquil in whatever happens; for his peace consists in conforming himself to the divine will. *And on earth peace to man of goodwill.*[1035] At the bare mention of the will of God, St Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to feel much consolation that she would fall into an ecstasy of love. When the will is united with the will of God, crosses may produce some pain in the inferior part, but in the superior part peace will always reign. *Your joy no man shall take from you.*[1036] But how great the folly of those who oppose the will of God! What God wills will certainly happen; *for who resisteth his will?*[1037] They, therefore, must bear the cross, but without fruit and without peace. *Who hath resisted him, and hath had peace?*[1038]

And what else but our welfare does God will? *This is the will of your God, your sanctification.*[1039] He wishes to see us saints, that we may be content in this life, and happy in the next. Let us remember that the crosses which come to us from God *work together unto good.*[1040] Even chastisements are inflicted on us in this life, not for ruin, but that we may amend, and again eternal beatitude. *Let us believe that these scourges of the Lord. . . . have happened for our amendment, and not for our* *destruction.*[1041] God loves us so ardently, that he not only desires, but is solicitous for, the salvation of each of us. *The Lord is careful for me.*[1042] And what will he deny us after having given us his Son? *He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all things.*[1043] Let us then always abandon ourselves into the hands of that God who is always solicitous for our welfare as long as we remain in this world. *Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you.*[1044] Think of me, said our Lord to St Catharine of Sienna, and I will always think of you. Let us often say with the spouse of the Canticles: My beloved to me, and I to him.[1045] My beloved thinks of my welfare, and I will think only of pleasing him, and of uniting myself to his holy will. We ought, says the holy Abbot Nilus, to pray, not that God would do what we wish, but that we may do what he wills.

He who always acts in this manner will lead a happy life, and will die a happy death. He who dies with entire resignation to the divine will, gives to others a moral certainty of his salvation. But he who is not united with the divine will during life, will not be united with it at death, and will not be saved. Let us, then, endeavour to make ourselves familiar with some sayings of the Scripture, by which we shall always keep ourselves united with the will of God. *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*[1046] Lord, tell me what Thou wishest me to do; I am ready and willing to do it. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord.*[1047] Behold! My soul is Thy servant; command, and Thou shalt be obeyed. *I am Thine; save me.*[1048] Save me, O Lord! and then do what Thou pleasest with me; save Thine, I am no longer mine. When any serious cross or adversity happens to us, let us say: *Yes, Father, for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight.*[1049] My God, this has pleased Thee; let it be done. Above all, let the third petition of the Lord’s prayer be dear to us: *Thy will be done earth as it is in heaven.* Let us say it often, with fervour and let us repeat it several times. Happy we, if we live and die saying: *Thy will be done! Thy will be done!*

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Jesus, my Redeemer! Thou hast sacrificed Thy life on the cross in order to become the cause of my salvation; have mercy on me, then, and save me; do not permit a soul that Thou hast redeemed by so many pains, and with so much love, to hate Thee for eternity in hell. Thou canst do nothing more to oblige me to love Thee. This Thou gavest me to understand, when, before Thou didst expire on Calvary, Thou didst utter these loving words: *It is consummated.* But how have I repaid Thy love? For the past, I can truly say that I have done all I could to displease Thee, and to oblige Thee to hate me. I thank thee for having borne me with so much patience, and for now giving me time to repair my ingratitude, and to love Thee before I die. Yes, I wish to love Thee, and I wish to love Thee ardently, my Saviour, my God, my love, and my all; I wish to do whatever is pleasing to Thee; I give Thee my whole will, my whole liberty, and all that I possess. From this hour I sacrifice my life to Thee, accepting the death which Thou wilt send me, along with all the pains and circumstances that will accompany it. From this moment I unite this sacrifice of mine to the great sacrifice of Thy life, which Thou, my Jesus, didst offer for me on the cross. I wish to die in order to do Thy will. Ah! Through the merits of Thy Passion, give me gave to be, during life, resigned to the arrangements of Thy Providence. And when death comes, grant that I may embrace with an entire conformity, Thy holy will. I wish to die, O my Jesus! in order to please Thee. I wish to die saying: Thy will be done. Mary, my Mother, it was thus thou didst die: ah! Obtain for me the grace that I too, may die in this manner.

Live, Jesus, our love, and Mary, our hope.

HYMN

The Soul Enamoured of the Beauty of God
Let those who will for other beauties pine,
God, God alone my love shall ever be;
My God, my life! O loveliness divine!
Whom can I wish to love, and love not Thee?
Where could I find a nobler, lovelier heart,
A heart more worthy object of my love?
Such loveliness, that but to see a part
Can ravish with delight the saints above.
Ah! foolish souls, that throw away your hearts
On love of beauties earthly, false, and vain!
Ah! see you not that all true peace departs,
And leaves within but emptiness and pain?
Love God, love Him, the beauty infinite,—Love God alone, who loveth you so much;
Ah, happy you, if loving Him aright
You know the secret way His heart to touch.
Ye who love God! souls beautiful and chaste!
Do I not speak the truth? Bear witness, say
What peace, what joy He gives your hearts to taste
While yet poor exiles here on earth you stay.
Thrice happy now! Ah! then what will you say
When once you reach in Heaven the home of bliss?
What, when you see unveiled in cloudless day
Your God, the God of beauty, as He is?
Alas! could I but live my life again,
In loving Him should be my sole content:
At least, whate'er of life may yet remain
Shall all in loving God alone be spent.
Shall it not be, O loveliness divine?

Then if Thou will it so, give me Thy love;
I seek in vain to give Thee love of mine,
Unless Thy hand first help me from above.
But more Thou lovest me than I love Thee,
I seek Thy love, but more Thou seekest mine;
Then Thou belongest even now to me,
And I shall all and evermore be Thine.

Maxims of Eternity

Or Meditations for Every Day in the Week[1050]

MEDITATION FOR SUNDAY

THE END OF MAN

I

Consider, O my soul! that the being which you enjoy was given to you by God: he created you to his own image, without any merit on your part; he adopted you for his child by baptism; he loved you more than the most affectionate parent could have loved you; he has made you all you are, that you might know him, love him, and serve him in this life, and thereby arrive at the eternal possession of him in heaven. Hence you did not come into this world for the sake of enjoyment, to grow rich and powerful, to eat, drink, and sleep like irrational animals, but solely to love your God and to work out your eternal salvation. And is this the object that I have hitherto had in view? Oh! how unfortunate have I been, in having thought of everything else rather than of my last end. O God! I beg of Thee, in the name and for the love of Jesus, to grant that I may begin a new life of perfect holiness and conformity to Thy divine will.

II

Consider what deep remorse and bitter regret you will feel at the hour of death, if, during life, you have not devoted yourself to the service of God. How great will be your disappointment when, at the close of your days, you will perceive that nothing remains at that sorrowful moment of all your goods, of all your pleasures, and of all your earthly glory, but a shadow that flies before you, and a bitter remembrance which pursues you! What will be your consternation when you will discover that, for the sake of miserable vanities, you have lost your God, your soul, and your salvation, without the possibility of being able to repair your misfortune? O despair!

O cruel torment! you will then see the value of the time that you are losing; but it will be too late. Gladly would you then purchase time at the price of all you have; but you will not be able to do so. Oh! how full of bitterness and sorrow will that day be for every soul that has not loved and served the Lord!

III

Consider the general disregard of men for their last end. Their ordinary thoughts are upon the accumulation of wealth, the gratification of their senses, parties of pleasure, amusement, and festivity. They think nothing of God or of his service; they do nothing for the salvation of their souls: they regard the affair of salvation as a trifle not worthy of notice. Thus, O deplorable misfortune! the greater part of Christians, by indulging in foolish pleasures and criminal gratifications, precipitate themselves into hell. O man! you take much pains to damn yourself, and will you do nothing for your salvation? Listen to the dying sentiments of a Secretary of State of one of the kings of England: “How great,” said he, “is my misfortune: I have used many sheets of paper in writing letters for my sovereign, and, alas! I have not used one to help me in the recollection of my sins, that I might make a good confession!” Listen to the death-bed sentiments of a king of Spain: “Oh that I had spent my life in a desert, occupied in serving God, and had never been a king!” But to what do these sighs and lamentations then serve, but to augment the horrors of despair? Learn, then, this day, at the expense of others, to devote yourself to the salvation of your soul: remember well that all your actions, all your words, and all your thoughts, that are not directed to God, are entirely lost. Oh! it is time then to amend your life. Do not wait, therefore, to be convinced of this till you arrive at the gates of eternity, and the jaws of hell: it will be then too late. O my God! pardon me all the errors of my life: I love Thee above all things. I am sorry, from the bottom of my heart, for all my sins. O Mary! my hope, intercede with Jesus in my behalf.

MEDITATION FOR MONDAY

I

Consider, O man! how important it is to you to save your soul. Your dearest interests are there concerned, because, if you attain salvation, you will be eternally happy in the enjoyment of every good both of soul and body; but, in losing it, you lose your soul and body; heaven and God: you will be eternally miserable, eternally damned. Your only important, your only necessary affair, therefore, is to serve your God and to save your soul. Do not, then, O Christian! think of serving your passions now, and of giving yourself to God hereafter. Oh, how many has this false and deceitful hope precipitated into hell! Thousands of sinners have flattered themselves with the hope of future repentance; but the day in which they hoped never arrived, and they are now suffering without resource the torments of the damned. And who amongst them all ever thought of falling into that place of woe? Which of them had not the intention of saving his soul? But God curses him that sins in the hope of pardon.[1051] You say perhaps, within yourself, I will commit this sin and then repent: but are you sure that time will be allowed you for repentance? You may die the moment you have sinned. By sinning you lose the grace of God; and what if you never more recover it? God shows mercy to those who fear him, but not to those who contemn and despise him.[1052] Think not, therefore, that it will cost you no more to repent of and confess three sins than to repent of and confess one sin. No: in this thought you are deceived; God might pardon you a first or a second sin, but not a third. He has patience with the sinner for a time, but not forever.[1053] When the measure of iniquity is filled up, his mercy ceases, and he punishes the impenitent sinner either by death, or by abandoning him to a reprobate sense, in which state he goes on from sin to sin without remorse, and at length is precipitated into hell. O Christian! attend seriously to this. It is time you should put an end to your disorders and return to God; you should fear lest this will be the last warning that he will ever send you.

You have offended him long enough, and he has borne with you long enough in your sins: tremble, then, lest he should forsake you after the next mortal sin. Oh! how many souls has this striking thought of eternity caused to retire from the disorders and dangers of the world, to live in cloisters, solitudes, and deserts! Unfortunate sinner that I have been! what is the fruit of all my crimes?—a conscience gnawed with despair, a troubled heart a soul overwhelmed with grief, hell deserved, and God lost! Ah! my God, my heavenly Father! Bind me to Thy love.

II

Consider, O man! that this affair of eternity is above all others the most neglected. Mankind has time to think of everything but God and salvation. If a man of the world is advised to frequent the sacraments, or to spend a quarter of an hour daily in meditation, he will immediately say: I have a family to provide for, I have my business to attend to, 1have sufficient to keep me employed. Good God! and have you not a soul to save? Will your riches and your family be able to assist you at the hour of your death, or deliver you from hell if you are condemned? No, no: flatter not yourself that you are able to reconcile God and the world, heaven and sin together. Salvation is not to be attained by a life of indolence and ease. It is necessary to use violence and to make great efforts in order to obtain the crown of immortality. How many Christians have flattered themselves with the idea of serving God and saving their souls hereafter who are at this moment, and will forever be, in the flames of hell! How great is the folly of men in attending to what will so shortly terminate, and thinking so little of that state which will never end! Ah, Christian! put your affairs in order; reflect that your all is at stake; remember that in a very short time your body will be deposited in the earth, and your soul will go to dwell in the house of eternity. How dreadful, then, will be your misfortune if you are condemned to an eternity of woe! Reflect well on this; for then you can have no remedy.

III

Consider and say within yourself: I have a soul, and if I lose it all is lost; I have a soul, and if in losing it I were to gain the whole world, what would it profit me? I have a soul, but if I lose it, although I were to arrive at the highest pinnacle of glory, of what advantage will it be to me? If I hoard up riches, if I get forward in the world, but in the end lose my soul, what will be my consolation? Where are now the dignities, pleasures and vanities of those great ones of the world whose bodies are moldering in the dust and whose souls are a prey to the flames of hell? Since, then, I have a soul, and only one, to save, and if I lose it once it is lost forever, I ought to endevour to save it. This is an affair of the highest importance to me, eternal happiness and eternal misery are at stake. O my God! I am forced to acknowledge with shame and confusion that I have hitherto blindly wandered astray from Thee: I have scarcely ever thought seriously of saving my soul. O my Father! save me, through Jesus Christ. I am willing to part with everything here, provided I do not lose Thee. O Mary, my surest hope! save me by thy powerful intercession.

MEDITATION FOR TUESDAY

MORTAL SIN

I

Consider, O my soul! that having been created to love God, you have rebelled against him, and thereby been guilty of the basest ingratitude. You have treated him like an enemy; you have despised his grace and friendship. You were aware how much sin offends him, and still you have committed it. Yes, you have turned your back on God; you have insulted him; you have in a manner raised your hand to strike him; you have saddened his Holy Spirit. The man who sins says to God, if not in words, at least in effect: Begone from me: I will not serve Thee, I will not acknowledge Thee for my God: the God whom I adore is this pleasure, this interest, this revenge. Such has been the language of your heart every time that you have preferred any creature to God. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi could not conceive how a Christian could knowingly commit a mortal sin. O you who are reading these lines, what are your sentiments? how many mortal sins have you committed? O my God! pardon me, have mercy on me: I detest all my sins; I love Thee, and grieve sincerely for the insults that I have offered to Thee, who are deserving of infinite love.

II

Consider that God thus spoke to your heart at the moment you were offending him: My son, I am your God, who created you and redeemed you with the price of my blood. I forbid you, then, to commit that sin under pain of incurring my eternal displeasure. But in yielding to the temptation you have replied: Lord, I will not obey Thee; I am resolved to gratify my passions; I value not Thy friendship. Thou hast said, *I will not serve.*[1054] Ah! my God: and this I have done many, perhaps thousands of times. How couldst Thou bear with my insults? Why did I not die rather than live to offend Thee? But, O infinite goodness! I will do so no more; henceforth I will love Thee with all my heart. Give me perseverance; give me Thy holy love.

III

Consider, O my soul! that, when sins reach a certain number, they cause God to abandon the sinner. *The Lord patiently expecteth that when the day of judgment shall come, he may punish them in the fullness of sins.*[1055] If, therefore, you are again tempted to return to your sins, say no more within yourself, I will commit this one, and will then repent. For what if the Lord should instantly strike you dead? or what if he should forsake you forever? What has been the fate of thousands who have thus lost the grace of God? They flattered themselves with the hope of pardon; but death surprised them, and hell enveloped them in its flames. Tremble, then, lest your fate be the same. Those who abuse the goodness of God in order to offend him are undeserving of his mercy. After the multitude of crimes that he has pardoned you, you have too much reason to fear that, if you relapse into mortal sin, he will pardon you no more. Thank him, then, a thousand times for having borne patiently with you until now, and form the resolution rather to die than to offend him anymore. Say frequently to him: My God! I have already offended Thee enough: the remainder of my life shall be spent in loving Thee and in bewailing my past ingratitude. O my Jesus! I wish to love Thee; grant me the grace to do so. O Blessed Virgin, my Mother! assist me by thy prayers. Amen.

MEDITATION FOR WEDNESDAY

DEATH

I

Consider that this life must soon terminate. The sentence is already passed: You must die. Death is certain, but the moment of it is uncertain: we know not when it will come. But to how many casualties and accidents is human life constantly exposed? The bleeding of an artery, a stroke of apoplexy, the bite of a venomous animal, an inundation, an earthquake, a thunderbolt, and numberless other causes that we can neither foresee nor prevent, may deprive you instantly of life. Death may surprise you when you least expect it. How many have gone to bed at night in apparent good health, and in the morning have been found dead? And may not the same happen to you? Numberless others, who have, been visited by sudden death, never expected to die in that manner; and, if they were then found in mortal sin, what is now their fate, and what will it be through all eternity? But, at all events, it is certain that either the night will come, when you will no more see the day, or the day will come, when you will no more see the night. “I shall come,” says Jesus Christ, “like a thief in the night, when I am the least expected.”—*Matt.* xxiv. 44 Your good master warns you of this beforehand, because he wishes your salvation. O sinner! correspond, then, With this mercy, profit by this admonition, hold yourself always in readiness for death. When that moment comes there will be no time for preparation. Consider well that you must certainly die. The scene of this world must soon terminate for you, though you know not when. Who can tell whether it will be within a year, within a month, within a week, or even whether you will be alive tomorrow? O my Jesus! give me light, and pardon me.

II

Consider that, at the hour of your death, you will be extended on a bed, with your relatives and friends weeping over you, a priest to assist you, a lighted taper by your side, within one step of the terrible passage into eternity. Your head will be oppressed with pain, your eyes will become dim, your tongue parched with heat, your blood cooling in your veins, and your heart in agony: you will see the world passing from before you. No sooner will your soul become separated from your body than you will be stripped of all things, and cast into the earth to rot. There you will become the food of worms, which will gnaw and devour your flesh, and in a short time nothing will remain of your body but a few withered bones and a little dust. Open a grave, and take a view of the state of that rich and avaricious man! of that vain woman! Ah! such is the termination of human life; such is the end of mortal man, and such will soon be yours. But penetrate with the eyes of faith into the other world, and see the condition in which your soul will be placed. It will instantly be surrounded by the monsters of hell, representing before you all the sins that you have committed from your very childhood. At present the devil hides from you the malice of your crimes: he persuades you that there is little evil in this act of vanity, this indulgence, this resentment, this dangerous company;—but in death he will display before your eyes the enormity of your sins, to make you despair. Then you will discover in the light of God himself the evil which you have committed in offending his infinite goodness. Ah! hasten then, whilst time remains, to make reparation for what is past: at the hour of death it will be too late.

III

Consider that death is a moment on which eternity depends. Take the view of a man who is on the point of expiring, and reflect that he is just going to enter into one, or other of the two eternities; his fate is pending but for a moment: when that is expired, he is either saved or condemned forever. O this last breath! O this moment on which depends an eternity!—an eternity either of torment or of glory; an eternity either always happy or always miserable; an eternity either of all that is good or of all that is evil; an eternity either of heaven or of hell. If you are then saved, you will be secure from all evils, and at the summit of happiness and content; if you are condemned, you will live in punishment and despair as long as God will be

God. In death you will understand the meaning of heaven, hell, sin, an offended God, the contempt of divine laws, sins concealed in confession, ill-gotten goods unrestored, injuries not pardoned. “Unhappy me!” will the dying man say, “in a few moments I must appear in the presence of God. What will my sentence be? Whither shall I go? To heaven or to hell? Shall I be happy with the saints or burn with the damned? Shall I be a child of God or a slave of the devil? Alas! but a minute more and I shall know; and the destiny which I shall then receive will last for all eternity.” Then will you detest a thousand times the day on which you had the misfortune to sin. But it will be too late; your sorrow will be fruitless, because it will proceed from the fear and not from the love of God. Ah, my God! from this hour I will turn to Thee: I will not delay my repentance until death. I now love Thee, I embrace Thee, and I wish to die in Thy embraces. O Mary! my true Mother, let me die under thy protection: help me at that critical and decisive moment.

MEDITATION FOR THURSDAY

JUDGMENT

I

Consider that the soul will no sooner have departed from the body than it will appear before the tribunal of God to be judged. This judge is the Almighty, whose wrath is provoked by your sins. Your accuser will be your mortal enemy, the devil; the matter of your trial will be your sins; your sentence will be without appeal; and if found guilty, your punishment will be hell. You will not have the power of calling your parents, friends, and companions to your aid: all must be concluded between God and your soul. You will then see the deformity of your crimes, and will not be able, as at present, to excuse them. You will be examined upon all your sins of thought, of words, of actions, of omissions, of scandal; you will be weighed in the terrible scales of divine justice, and, if found wanting in a single point, you are lost. My Jesus and my Judge, pardon me before Thou dost judge me.

II

Consider that, at the end of the world, our bodies will rise again to participate in the reward or punishment of the soul according to our works, when all the nations of the earth will be assembled in the valley of Josaphat to be judged. If you are condemned, you will resume your body as an eternal prison for your unfortunate soul. At this sorrowful reunion the soul will curse the body and the body the soul, so that, although at present they mutually consent to pursue unlawful pleasures, after death, they will become each other’s tormentor. On the other hand, if you are saved, your body will arise beautiful, impassible, and glorious, and thus, both in body and soul, you will be judged worthy of eternal happiness. Thus will close the scene of this world: thus will terminate all the greatness, all the pleasures, and all the pomps of the earth. Yes, all will be at an end; nothing will remain but two eternities, one of glory, the other of pain; one of joy, the other of torments: the just will dwell in heaven, the wicked in hell. Woe, then, to him that has loved the world! woe to him that for the vain and fleeting pleasures of the earth has lost his soul, his body, heaven, and God!

III

Consider the eternal sentence which Jesus Christ will pass upon the reprobate and the elect. This sovereign Judge turning towards the reprobate, will say: “Behold, ye ungrateful wretches, the event of your crimes! My hour is come—the hour of truth, of justice, of vengeance, and of wrath. Criminal souls, you have chosen my curse; let it fall upon you: be ye cursed for all eternity. Depart from me, despoiled of every good and laden with all evil into eternal fire.”[1056] Then turning towards the elect Jess will thus address them: “Come, ye blessed children of my heavenly Father, come and take possession of the kingdom of heaven which is prepared for you. Come, no longer to carry your cross after me, but to wear a crown. Come to inherit my riches, and to be the companions of my glory. Come from the land of exile to your true country; come from sufferings to glory, from tears to joy.” O my Jesus! I hope to be one of those whom Thou wilt then bless. I love Thee above all things. Bless me at this moment. O my Mother Mary, do thou also bless me.

MEDITATION FOR FRIDAY

HELL

I

Consider that hell is a dreadful prison filled with fire. In this fire the reprobate are enveloped, having an abyss of fire above them, and around them and below them, in their eyes, their mouths, and throughout every part of their frame. There each sense suffers a torment peculiar to itself. The eyes are tormented with darkness and smoke, and at the same time by the sight of devils and damned souls; the ears hear nothing but continual howlings, lamentations and blasphemies; the smell is tormented by the stench of half-putrefied bodies; the taste by a burning thirst and cruel hunger, without the possibility of being alleviated by a drop of water or a morsel of bread. Hence proceed from those miserable captives, tears, groans, lamentations, howlings and despair; but all in vain: they will never obtain the smallest consolation under their torments, or the least mitigation of their pains. O hell, hell! shall we wait until we are buried in your flames to believe you and to fear you? And yet this is the conduct of thoughtless and unrepenting sinners. O you who are reading this, what is your state? Were you to die this moment, whither would you go? Ah! you could not endure the pain of a spark of fire falling upon your hand, and have you the assurance to expose yourself to the hazard of burning in a pool of fire, in desolation and despair for all eternity?

II

Consider the punishments that will be inflicted in hell on all the powers of the soul. The memory will be forever tormented with the recollection of sin, and with remorse of conscience; this gnawing worm will continually remind you that you have damned yourself for some miserable pleasure or interest. O God! what will the soul think of past pleasures, after hundreds, thousands, and millions of years spent in hell? This gnawing worm will call to its recollection the time which God had given it for repentance, the means of salvation wherewith he had furnished it, the good example which he had set before it, and the resolutions which it had formed, but would never execute. The soul will, moreover, see that its present state is irremediable. O God, O God! how terrible is hell. The will, also, will be eternally contradicted; it will never obtain what it wishes, and will always meet with what it would gladly avoid. The understanding will discover the greatness of the good which it has lost in losing heaven and God. O God! O God! pardon me, for the love of Jesus Christ.

III

Sinner, you, who at present make small account of losing God, will discover your misfortune, when you will see the elect triumph and exult with joy on their entrance into heaven, and yourself banished, like an unclean animal, from that blessed country, deprived forever of seeing the face of an infinitely amiable God, and separated from the company of Mary, of the angels and saints. Then, in fury and despair, you will exclaim: “O paradise of delights: O God of infinite goodness! thou art not and never will be mine.” Repent, then; change your life; do not wait till the time of repentance is at an end. Give yourself to God; begin truly to love him. Beg of Jesus and Mary to have pity on you.

MEDITATION FOR SATURDAY

THE ETERNITY OF THE PAINS OF HELL

I

Consider that the torments of hell will never terminate. The damned suffer in every way, and they suffer eternally. A hundred years of suffering will pass away, a thousand will pass away, and hell will still be only at its beginning. A hundred thousand and a thousand million years and ages will pass, and hell will still begin anew. Were an angel to be sent to one of the damned, informing him that, after as many millions of ages have expired as there are drops of water in the sea, leaves upon the trees, and grains of sand on the seashore or upon the earth, he should be delivered from hell, this news would fill him with inconceivable joy. For although he would be compelled to suffer for an innumerable multitude of ages, still he would be able to say: The time will come when my sufferings will end. But alas! as many ages will really expire, and hell will be only at its beginning. Nay, this number of ages may be multiplied as many times as there are grains of sand on the earth, drops of water in the ocean, and leaves on the trees, and, at the close of this immense period, hell will begin again. There is not a wretch in that abode of torments, that would not willingly make this proposition to the Almighty. “Increase, O Lord, as much as Thou pleasest, my torments, prolong the duration of them to any extent Thou pleasest, provided they may terminate.’’ But no: this termination will never be granted. It would be an alleviation, if the unfortunate sufferer could flatter himself with the hope that perhaps the Lord would one day have compassion on him and deliver him from hell. But alas! he will always keep the sentence of his eternal reprobation before his eyes, and will see that all these pains, this fire, this despair, these lamentations, will never cease, will never end. O hell! O eternity! how can men believe in you and yet continue in sin?

II

Christian soul! pay attention to these truths: remember that hell is for you, if you live in sin. This horrible furnace is already enkindled under your feet, and numbers throughout the world are falling into it, whilst you are reading this. Reflect, that if the same misfortune ever befalls you, it will be irreparable; if ever, then, you did deserve hell, thank God with all your heart for his mercy in having spared you. Weep over your sins; employ every possible means of securing your salvation; frequently approach the sacraments; read daily some pious book, entertain a sincere devotion to the Blessed Virgin, recite every day the Rosary, and fast every Saturday in her honour; be firm and resolute in resisting the beginning of temptation, invoking frequently the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary; flee from all occasions of sin, in sort use your utmost endeavours to avoid eternal misery, remembering that there cannot be too great security where eternity is at stake. Consider what numbers of men have hidden themselves in deserts, and shut themselves up in caverns, in order the more effectually secure their eternal welfare. And what are you doing? Oh ! give yourself sincerely to God, and say to him from your heart: Lord, behold I am now Thy servant: ready and willing to do whatever Thou commandest me. Mary, assist me.

HYMN

The Soul Sighing for Heaven.
Oh! I am dying of desire,
Sweet Lord, to see Thy face;
To linger here on earth I tire,
O God of loveliness!
A pang so bitter rends my heart,
I can no more endure the smart;
Ah! do not, Lord, my grief despise.
I live indeed apart from Thee,
But hope and cry unceasingly,
O Paradise! O Paradise!
An empty joy, which ends in pain,
Is all this world bestows;
Deceitful pomp and pageant vain,
Which death anon will close.
He to whom all save God is nought
Best knows the anguish of the thought
I yet might lose my prize;
On Thee I fix my longing gaze,
To Thee alone my sighs I raise,
O Paradise! O Paradise!
In vain Thou wouldst ensnare my heart
With wealth and empty joys;
Go, world, thy gifts to those impart
Who madly love such toys.
Vain pomps, or pleasures stained with sin;
Ah! do not hope my hopes to win,
For other goods my spirit sighs;—To reign in heaven I aspire;
This is my hope, this my desire,

O Paradise! O Paradise!

O beauteous home! where love’s reward
Love will itself bestow;
Where my so sweet and loving Lord
Himself unveiled will show.
When shall I see that blest abode,
And there behold and love my God?
When will that wished—for dawn arise?
While now I cry, ‘twixt smiles and tears,
Ah, when, ah, when shall end my fears?
O Paradise! O Paradise!

A Christian's Rule of Life[1057]

In this Rule the first chapter treats of the means we must make use of to keep ourselves in the grace of God. In the second, the acts of those devout exercises which should be practised are set forth at length. In the third is shown the exercise of the principal virtues which a Christian ought to practise.

Chapter I

THE MEANS OF PRESERVING THE GRACE OF GOD

WE must be fully persuaded, that in order to obtain eternal salvation, it is not sufficient to wish to be saved; but we must further use the means which have been left us by Jesus Christ. Otherwise, if we commit sins, it will not avail us in the day of judgment to excuse ourselves by saying that the temptations were great, and we were weak; because God has given us the means, through his grace, to conquer all the assaults of our enemies: if, then we do not take advantage of them, and are overcome, the fault will be our own. All men desire to be saved; but because they omit to employ the means of salvation they sin and are lost.

1. TO FLEE FROM THE OCCASIONS OF SIN

The first means is, to avoid all occasions of sin. It is impossible for anyone who does not endeavour to flee from the occasions of sin, especially in the matter of sensual pleasures, to avoid falling into sin. St. Philip Neri said: “In the war of the senses, the conquerors are the cowards who fly.” The occasion is like a veil put before our eyes, so that we can see nothing else—neither God, nor hell nor the resolutions we had made. The Scripture says, it is impossible to walk on burning coals without being burnt: *Or can he walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?*[1058]. So it is morally impossible for anyone to put himself voluntarily into the occasion of sin and not to fall, although he may have made a thousand resolutions and a thousand promises to God. This is clearly shown every day by the misery of so many poor souls who are plunged into vice for not avoiding the occasions. Anyone who has had the evil habit of sins of impurity must know that, in order to restrain himself, it is not enough merely to avoid those occasions which are absolutely proximate; for if he does not also flee from those which are not altogether proximate, he will easily fall again. Nor must we allow ourselves to be deceived by the devil into thinking that the person towards whom we are tempted is a saint; it often happens that the more devout a person is, the stronger is the temptation. St. Thomas Aquinas says, that the holiest persons attract the most. The temptation will begin in a spiritual way, and will terminate carnally. The great servant of God F. Sertorio Caputo, of the Society of Jesus, said that the devil first induces one to love a person's virtue, then the person, and then blinds one and brings one to ruin. We must also flee from evil companions: we are too weak; the devil is continually tempting us, and the senses are drawing us to evil; the slightest suggestion of bad companions is only wanting to make us fall. Therefore the first thing that we have to do to save ourselves is to avoid evil occasions and bad companions. And we must in this matter do violence to ourselves, resolutely overcoming all human respect. Those who do not use violence to themselves will not be saved. It is true, that we must not put confidence in our own strength, but only in the divine assistance; but God Wills that we should do our part in doing violence to ourselves, when it is necessary to do so, in order to gain Paradise: *The violent bear it away.*[1059]

2. MENTAL PRAYER

The second means is *mental prayer.* Without this, the soul will find it almost impossible to remain a long time in the grace of God. The Holy Spirit says: *In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.*[1060] He who often meditates on the Four Last Things, namely, death, judgment, and the eternity of hell and paradise, will not fall into sin. These truths are not to be seen with the [natural] eyes, but only with the eyes of the mind: if they are not meditated on, they vanish from the mind, and then the pleasures of the senses present themselves, and those who do not keep before themselves the eternal truths are easily taken up by them; and this is the reason why so many abandon themselves to vice, and are damned. All Christians know and believe that all must die, and that we shall all be judged; but because they do not think about this, they live far from God. Without mental prayer there is no light; we walk in the dark; and walking in the dark, we do not see the danger which we are in, we do not make use of the means we ought, nor pray to God to help us, and so we are lost. Without prayer we have neither light nor strength to advance in the ways of God;

because without prayer we do not ask God to give us his grace, and without so praying we shall certainly fall. It was for this reason that Cardinal Bellarmine declared it to be morally impossible for a Christian who does not meditate to persevere in the grace of God. Whereas he who makes his meditation every day can scarcely fall into sin; and if unhappily he should fall on some occasion, by continuing his prayer he will return immediately to God. It was said by a servant of God, that "mental prayer and mortal sin cannot exist together." Resolve, then, to make every day, either in the morning or in the evening,—but it is best in the morning,—half an hour's meditation. In the following chapter you will see briefly explained an easy method for making this prayer. For the rest, it is sufficient that during that time you should recollect yourself by reading some book of meditation—either this one or one of the many others; and from time to time excite some good affection or some aspiration, as you will find pointed out in the following chapter. Above all, I beg you never to leave off this prayer, which you should practise at least once a day, although you may be in great aridity, and should feel great weariness in performing it. If you do not discontinue it, you will certainly be saved.

Together with prayer, it is of great use to make a spiritual reading, in private, out of some book which treats of the life of a saint or of the Christian virtues, during half, or at least a quarter of an hour. How many by reading a pious book have changed their way of living and become saints! Like St. John Colombino, St. Ignatius Loyola, and so many others. It would also be a most useful thing if you were every year to make a retreat in some religious house. But at least do not omit your daily meditation.

3. THE FREQUENTATION OF THE SACRAMENTS.

The third means is the frequenting of the sacraments of Confession and of Communion. By confession the soul keeps itself purified; and by it, it not only obtains remission of sins, but also greater strength to resist temptations. For this purpose you should choose a director, and always confess to the same, consulting him on all more important matters, even temporal ones; and obey him in everything, especially if you are distressed by scruples. He who obeys his confessor need not fear to go astray: *He that heareth you, heareth Me.*[1061] The voice of the confessor is the voice of God.

Holy Communion is called heavenly bread, because as common bread preserves the life of the body, so Communion preserves the life of the soul: *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man . . . you shall not have life in you.*[1062] On the other hand, to those who often eat this bread eternal life is promised: *If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.*[1063] Therefore the Council of Trent calls Holy Communion "the medicine which delivers us from venial sins and preserves us from mortal ones." You should, then, resolve to go to Communion at least once a week, being determined not to give it up for anything in the world; as there is no affair of greater importance than that of your eternal salvation. Indeed, the longer you remain in the world, the greater need you have of assistance, because your temptations are greater.[1064] To make a good confession, as also a good Communion, see the following chapter, where you will also find the acts which may be made before and after confession and Communion by way of preparation and thanksgiving.

4. TO HEAR MASS.

The fourth means is to hear Mass every day. When we attend Mass we give more honour to God than all the angels and saints in heaven can give him because theirs is the honour of creatures; but in the Mass we offer to God Jesus Christ, who gives him an infinite honour. Read the following chapter, where you will also find a way of hearing Mass with much profit.

5. THE VISIT TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

The fifth means is to make a visit every day to the Most Holy Sacrament in some church, and to the Divine Mother before some devout image. Jesus Christ dwells on the altars of so many churches in order to dispense graces to all who come to visit him; and thus the souls of those who practise this beautiful devotion receive innumerable benefits from it. At the end of the next chapter you will find the prayer which may be said when visiting the Most Holy Sacrament, and the Divine Mother. The graces you ought especially to ask for both from Jesus and Mary, are, the love of God, and holy perseverance till death.

6. PRAYER.

The sixth means which I recommend you above all to put in practice is holy prayer. It is certain that without the divine assistance we can do nothing good for our souls. God also has declared that graces are granted to those only who ask for them: *Ask, and it shall be given you.*[1065] Seek, and it shall be given you; therefore, as says St. Teresa, he who seeks not does not receive. Hence it is a common opinion of the holy Fathers, with St. Thomas, that without prayer it is impossible to persevere in the grace of God, and to save one's self. But he who prays is sure of the help of God; we have his word for it, which cannot fail, repeated so often in the sacred Gospels: *All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come to you.*[1066] *Every one that asketh receiveth.*[1067] *Amen, amen, I say unto you, if you ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it you.*[1068] God grants everything that we ask him for in the name of Jesus Christ. If, then, we wish to be saved, we must pray, and pray with humility and confidence, and above all with perseverance. And this is the reason why mental prayer is so useful, because then we are reminded to pray; otherwise we forget to do so, and so are lost. St. Teresa says, that out of her desire of seeing every one saved, she would have wished to go to the top of a mountain and then to cry out, so as to be heard by all men, nothing but these words, "Pray! pray!" The ancient Fathers of the desert in their conferences decided that there was no better means of saving ourselves than by continually repeating the prayer of David: *Incline unto my aid, O God! O Lord, make haste to help us!*[1069] So let us also try to say. Or else let us make use of the beautiful ejaculation of the Blessed F. Leonard of Porto—Maurice: "My Jesus, mercy!" And the two principal graces which we must always ask for (as I have said before), are the love of God and holy perseverance. We must always ask the same graces from the Most Holy Mary, who is called the dispenser of all the divine graces; and when we pray to her, she will certainly obtain them for us from God. Therefore St. Bernard thus exhorts us: "Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary; for what she seeks she finds, and she cannot be disappointed."[1070]

Chapter II

ACTS AND PRACTICES OF PIETY

§ 1. ACTS AND DIFFERENT PRAYERS ON RISING IN THE MORNING, AND DURING THE DAY

On rising make the sign of the cross, and then say: My God, I adore Thee and love Thee with all my heart.

I thank Thee for all Thy benefits, and especially for having preserved me this night.

I offer thee whatever I may do or suffer this day, in union with the actions and sufferings of Jesus and of Mary, with the intention of gaining all the indulgences I can gain.

I resolve to avoid all sin this day, and especially such a one (it is good to make a resolution, particularly about the fault into which we fall the oftenest); and I beg of Thee to give me perseverance for the love of Jesus Christ.

I resolve to conform myself to Thy holy will, and particularly in those things that are contrary to my inclination, saying always: Lord, Thy will be done.

My Jesus! keep Thy hand over me this day. Most Holy Mary! take me beneath thy mantle. And do Thou, Eternal Father, help me, for the love of Jesus and Mary!

O my angel guardian and my patron saints, assist me.

An Our Father and a Hail Mary and the Creed, with three Hail Marys in honour of the purity of Mary.

When you begin any work or study, say: Lord! I offer Thee this work. When you eat: My God, bless this food and me, that I may commit no fault about it; and may all be for Thy glory. After having eaten: I thank Thee, Lord! for having done good to one who was Thy enemy. When the clock strikes: My Jesus! I love Thee: never permit me to offend Thee again, and let me never be separated from Thee. In adverse circumstances: Lord, since Thou hast so willed it, I will it also. In time of temptation often repeat: Jesus and Mary! When you know or doubt of some fault or sin you have committed, say immediately: My God! I repent of having offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness! I will do so no more. And if it was a grievous sin, confess it at once.

It would be a good thing for parents and masters and mistresses to make the children and those under them learn these acts by heart, that they may use them afterwards throughout life.

§ 2. METHOD OF MAKING MENTAL PRAYER

Mental prayer consists of three parts; the *preparation,* the *meditation,* and the *conclusion.* The *preparation* consists of three acts: one of *faith* in the presence of God; of *humility,* with a short act of contrition; and of *prayer* to be enlightened: saying as follows, for the first: My God I believe that Thou art present with me, and I adore Thee with all the affection of my soul. For the second: O Lord, by my sins I deserve to be now in hell. I repent, O Infinite Goodness! with my whole heart, of having offended Thee. For the third: My God, for the love of Jesus and Mary, give me light in this prayer, that I may profit by it. Then say a Hail Mary to the Most Blessed Virgin, that she may obtain light for us; and a Glory be to the Father, to St. Joseph, to your guardian angel, and to your patron saint, for the same end. These acts should be made with attention; but briefly; and then you go on directly to the meditation.

In the meditation you can always make use of some book,[1071] at least at the beginning, and stop where you find yourself mostly touched. St. Francis de Sales says that in this we should do as the bees, which settle on a flower as long they find any honey in it, and then pass on to another. It should also be observed, that the fruits to be gained by meditation are three in number: to make affections, to pray, and to make resolutions; and in these consists the profit to be derived from mental prayer. After you have meditated on some eternal truth, and God has spoken to your heart, you must also speak to God; and first, by forming affections, be they acts of faith, of thanksgiving, of humility, or of hope; but above all, repeat the acts of love and contrition. St. Thomas says, that every act of love merits for us the grace of God and paradise: “Every act of love merits eternal life.”[1072] Each act of contrition obtains the same thing. Acts of love are such as these: My God, I love Thee above all things! I love Thee with all my heart! I desire to do Thy will in all things. I rejoice that Thou art infinitely happy! and the like. For an act of contrition it is enough to say: O Infinite Goodness, I repent of having offended Thee!

In the second place, you must *pray;* ask God to enlighten you, to give you humility or other virtues, to grant you a good death and eternal salvation; but above all, his love and holy perseverance. And when the soul is in great aridity, it is sufficient to repeat: My God, help me! Lord, have mercy on me! My Jesus, have mercy! and if you do nothing but this, your prayer will succeed exceedingly well.

In the third place, before finishing your prayer, you must form a particular resolution; as, for instance, to avoid some occasion of sin, to bear with an annoyance from some person, to correct some fault and the like.

Finally, in the conclusion, three acts are to be made; in the first, we must thank God for the inspirations we have received; in the second, we must make a determination to observe the resolutions we have made; in the third, we must ask God, for the love of Jesus and Mary, to help us to keep our resolution. The prayer concludes by the recommendation of the souls in purgatory, the prelates of the Church, sinners, and all our relatives and friends for which we may say an Our Father and a Hail Mary: St. Francis of Sales exhorts us to choose some thought which may have struck us more especially in our prayer, that we may remember it during the rest of the day.

Benedict XIV granted seven years’ indulgence to those who make half or at least a quarter of an hour’s mental prayer during the day, and a plenary indulgence if it is made every day for a month on the condition of confession and Communion.

§ 3. ACTS TO BE MADE BY WAY OF PREPARATION AND THANKSGIVING BOTH FOR CONFESSION AND COMMUNION

Before confessing, the penitent should beg for light from God to enable him to know what sins he has committed, and to obtain the grace of a true sorrow and purpose of amendment. He should also particularly recommend himself to Our Lady of Sorrows, that she may obtain contrition for him. Then he may make the following acts:

ACT BEFORE CONFESSION.

O God of infinite majesty, behold at Thy feet a traitor, who has offended Thee over and over again, but who now humbly seeks forgiveness. O Lord, reject me not; Thou dost not despise a heart that humbles itself: *A contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*[1073] I thank Thee that Thou hast waited for me till now, and hast not let me die in sin, casting me into hell, as I deserved. Since Thou hast waited for me, my God, I hope that, by the merits of Jesus Christ, Thou wilt pardon me in this confession for all the offences I have committed against Thee; I repent, and am sorry for them, because by them I have merited hell and lost paradise. But above all, it is not so much on account of hell which I have merited, but because I have offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness! that I am sorry from the bottom of my heart. I love Thee, O Sovereign Good! and because I love Thee, I repent of all the insults I have offered Thee. I have turned my back upon Thee; I have not respected Thee; I have despised Thy grace and Thy friendship.

O Lord! I have lost Thee by my own free—will; forgive me all my sins for the love of Jesus Christ, now that I repent with all my heart; I hate, detest, and abominate them above every evil. And I repent not only of mortal sins, but also of venial sins, because these are also displeasing to Thee. I resolve for the future, by Thy grace, never more wilfully to offend Thee. Yes, my God, I will rather die than ever sin again.

And if a person confesses a sin into which he has often relapsed, it is a good thing to resolve particularly not to fall into it again, by promising to avoid the occasion of it, and to take the means pointed out by the confessor, or such as he may himself judge to be most efficacious for correcting himself of it.

ACT AFTER CONFESSION.

My dear Jesus! how much do I not owe Thee. By the merits of Thy blood I hope that I have this day been pardoned. I thank Thee above all things. I hope to reach heaven, where I shall praise Thy mercies forever. My God, if I have hitherto lost Thee so often, I now desire to lose Thee no more. From this day forward I will change my life in earnest. Thou dost merit all my love; I will love Thee truly; I will no longer see myself separated from Thee. I have promised Thee this already; now I repeat my promise of being ready to die rather than offend Thee again. I promise also to avoid all occasions of sin, and to use such means as will prevent me from falling again. My Jesus, Thou knowest my weakness: give me grace to be faithful to Thee till death, and to have recourse to Thee when I am tempted. Most holy Mary, help me! Thou art the mother of perseverance; I place my hope in thee.

PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION.

There is no means more efficacious in freeing us from our sins, and in enabling us to advance in the love of God, than Holy Communion. Why is it, then, that some souls find themselves always in the same tepidity, and committing the same faults, notwithstanding the many Communions they make? This happens through the want of a proper disposition and preparation. Two things are requisite for this preparation. The first is to disengage our heart from all affections which are an impediment to the divine love. The second is to have a great desire to love God. And this, says St. Francis de Sales, should be our chief intention when we communicate, namely, to increase in divine love. Out of love alone says the saint, ought our God to be received, who out of love alone gives himself to us. For this end let us make the following acts.

ACTS BEFORE COMMUNION.

My beloved Jesus, true Son of God, who didst die for me on the cross in a sea of sorrow and ignominy, I firmly believe that Thou art present in the Most Holy Sacrament; and for this faith I am ready to give my life.

My dear Redeemer, I hope by Thy goodness, and through the merits of Thy blood, that when Thou dost come to me this morning, Thou wilt inflame me with Thy holy love, and wilt give me all those graces which I need to keep me obedient and faithful to Thee till death. Ah, my God! true and only lover of my soul, what couldst Thou do more to oblige me to love

Thee? Thou wert not satisfied, my love, with dying for me, but Thou wouldst also institute the Most Holy Sacrament, making Thyself my food, and giving Thyself all to me; thus uniting Thyself most closely to such a miserable and ungrateful creature. Thou dost Thyself invite me to receive Thee, and dost greatly desire that I should receive Thee. O infinite Love! A God gives himself all to me! O my God, O infinite love, worthy of infinite love, I love Thee above all things; I love Thee with all my heart; I love Thee more than myself, more than my life; I love Thee because Thou art worthy of being loved; and I love Thee also to please Thee, since Thou dost desire my love! Depart from my soul, all ye earthly affections; to Thee alone, my Jesus, my treasure, my all, will I give all my love. This morning Thou dost give Thyself all to me, and I give myself all to Thee. Permit me to love Thee; for I desire none but Thee, and nothing but what is pleasing to Thee. I love Thee, O my Saviour, and I unite my poor love to the love of all the angels and saints, and of Thy Mother Mary, and the love of Thy Eternal Father! Oh; that I could see Thee loved by all! Oh, that I could make Thee loved by all men, and loved as much as Thou dost deserve!

Behold, O my Jesus, I am now about to draw near to feed on Thy most sacred Flesh! Ah, my God, who am I? and who art Thou? Thou art a Lord of infinite goodness, and I am a loathsome worm, defiled by so many sins, and who have driven Thee out of my soul so often. *Domine, non sum dignus.* Lord, I am not worthy to remain in Thy presence; I ought to be in hell forever, far away, and abandoned by Thee. But out of Thy goodness Thou callest me to receive Thee: behold, I come, I come humbled and in confusion for the great displeasure I have given Thee, but trusting entirely to Thy mercy and to the love Thou hast for me. I am exceedingly sorry, O my loving Redeemer, for having so often offended Thee in time past! Thou didst even give Thy life for me; and I have so often despised Thy grace and Thy love, and have exchanged Thee for nothing. I repent, and am sorry with all my heart for every offence which have offered Thee, whether grievous or light, because It was an offence against Thee, who art infinite goodness. I hope Thou hast already pardoned me; but if Thou hast not yet forgiven me, pardon me, my Jesus, before I receive Thee, Ah, receive me quickly into Thy grace, since it is Thy will soon to come and dwell within me.

Come, then, my Jesus, come into my soul, that sighs after Thee. My only and infinite good, my life, my love, my all, I would desire to receive Thee this morning with the same love with which those souls who love Thee most have received Thee, and with the same fervor with which Thy Most Holy Mother received Thee; to her Communions I wish to unite this one of mine. O Blessed Virgin, and my Mother Mary, give me Thy Son; I intend to receive him from thy hands! Tell him that I am thy servant, and thus will he press me more lovingly to his heart now that he is coming to me.

ACTS AFTER COMMUNION.

The time after Communion is a precious time for gaining treasures of grace, because the acts and prayers made whilst the soul is thus united with Jesus Christ have more merit, and are of more value, than when they are made at any other time. St. Teresa says that our Lord then dwells in the soul enthroned as on a mercy—seat, and speaks to it in these words: My child, ask of me what you will; for this end am I come to you to do you good. Oh, what great favours do those receive who converse with Jesus Christ after Communion! The Ven. F. Avila never omitted to remain two hours in prayer after Communion; and St. Aloysius Gonzaga continued his thanksgiving for three days. Let the communicant, then, make the following acts, and try during the rest of the day to go on making acts of love and prayer, in order to keep himself united with Jesus Christ, whom he has received in the morning.

Behold, my Jesus, Thou art come, Thou art now within me, and hast made Thyself all mine. Be Thou welcome, my Beloved Redeemer. I adore Thee, and cast myself at Thy feet; I embrace Thee, I press Thee to my heart, and thank Thee for that Thou hast deigned to enter into my breast. O Mary, O my patron saints, O my guardian angel, do you all thank him for me! Since then, O my Divine King! Thou art come to visit me with so much love, I give Thee my will, my liberty, and my whole self. Thou hast given Thyself all to me, I will give myself all to Thee; I will no longer belong to myself; from this day forward I will be Thine, and altogether Thine. I desire that my soul, my body, my faculties, my senses, should be all Thine, that they may be employed in serving and pleasing Thee. To Thee I consecrate all my thoughts, my desires, my affections, and all my life. I have offended Thee enough, my Jesus; I desire to spend the remainder of my life in loving Thee, who hast loved me so much.

Accept, O God of my soul, the sacrifice which I, a miserable sinner, make to Thee, and who desires only to love and please Thee. Work Thou in me, and dispose of me, and of all things belonging to me, as Thou pleasest. May Thy love destroy in me all those affections which are displeasing to Thee, that I may be all Thine, and may live only to please Thee! I ask Thee not for goods of this world, for pleasures, for honours; give me, I pray Thee, by the merits of Thy Passion, O my Jesus, a constant sorrow for my sins! Enlighten me, and make me know the vanity of worldly goods, and how much Thou dost deserve to be loved. Separate me from all attachment to the world, and bind me entirely to Thy love, that from henceforth my will may neither seek nor desire anything but what Thou willest. Give me patience and resignation in infirmities, in poverty, and in all those things which are contrary to my self—love. Make me gentle towards those who despise me. Give me a holy death. Give me Thy holy love. And, above all, I pray Thee to give me perseverance in Thy grace till death; never permit me to separate myself from Thee again: *Jesu dulcissime, ne permittas me separari a Te.* And I also ask of Thee the grace always to have recourse to Thee, and to invoke Thy aid, O my Jesus, in all my temptations; and the grace to ask Thee always for holy perseverance.

O Eternal Father, Thy Son Jesus Christ has promised me that Thou wilt grant me everything that I shall ask Thee in his name: *If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you*[1074]. In the name, therefore, and by the merits of this Son, I ask for Thy love and holy perseverance, that I may one day love Thee in heaven with all my strength, and sing Thy mercies forever, secure of never more being separated from Thee.

O most holy Mary, my mother and my hope, obtain for me these graces which I so desire; as also a great love for thee, my Queen: may I always recommend myself to thee in all my necessities!

§ 4. METHOD OF HEARING MASS

The same action is performed in the Mass as was accomplished on Calvary, except that there the blood of Jesus Christ was really shed, while on the altar it is shed mystically; but in the Mass the merits of the Passion of Jesus are applied to each one in particular. To hear Mass, therefore, with great fruit, we must pay attention to the ends for which it was instituted, namely:

1. To honour God. 2. To thank him for his benefits. 3 To satisfy for our sins. 4. To obtain graces.

For this reason you may use the following prayer during Mass.[1075]

Eternal Father, in this Sacrifice I offer to Thee Thy Son Jesus, with all the merits of his Passion:

1. In honour of Thy majesty. 2. In thanksgiving for all the favours Thou hast hitherto shown me, and for all those which I hope to receive for all eternity. 3 In satisfaction for my sins, and for those of all the living and dead. 4 To obtain eternal salvation, and all the graces that are necessary for me to gain it.

At the elevation of the Host: My God, for the love of this Thy Son, pardon me and give me holy perseverance. At the elevation of the Chalice: By the Blood of Jesus, give me Thy love and a holy death. At the Communion of the priest make a spiritual Communion saying: My Jesus, I love Thee, and desire to possess Thee. I embrace Thee, and

I will never more separate myself from Thee.

§ 5. ACTS TO BE MADE IN VISITING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT AND THE DIVINE MOTHER

My Lord Jesus Christ, who, for the love Thou bearest to mankind, dost remain night and day in this Sacrament, full of pity and love, awaiting, calling, and receiving all who come to visit Thee; I believe that Thou art present in the Sacrament of the Altar; I adore Thee from the depths of my own nothingness; I thank Thee for the many graces Thou hast given me, and especially for having given me Thyself in this Sacrament; for having given me Mary Thy Mother as my advocate, and for having called me to visit Thee in this church. I salute Thy most amiable and most loving heart; and I do so, first, in thanksgiving for this great gift; secondly, to atone for all the insults Thou hast received in this Sacrament from all infidels, heretics, and bad Catholics; thirdly, I intend in this visit to adore Thee in all those places where Thou, thus veiled in the Most Holy Sacrament, art least reverenced and most abandoned. My Jesus I give Thee with my whole heart. I am sorry that I have hitherto so often offended Thy infinite goodness. With the help of Thy grace, I resolve to displease Thee no more; and, unworthy as I am, I now consecrate myself wholly to Thee; I renounce and give to Thee my will, my affections, my desires, and all that is mine. Henceforward do with me, and all that belongs to me, whatsoever Thou pleasest. I ask for nothing but Thee and Thy holy love, final perseverance, and a perfect fulfilment of Thy will.

I recommend to Thee the souls in purgatory, especially those who were most devout to this Most Holy Sacrament, and to Most Holy Mary. I also recommend to Thee all poor sinners. And lastly, my beloved Saviour, I unite all my affections to those of Thy most loving heart; and thus united, I offer them to Thy Eternal Father; and in Thy name I beseech him to accept and grant them.

While Visiting any Image of the Ever—Blessed Virgin.

Most holy immaculate Virgin Mary, my Mother, I, the most miserable of sinners, have this day recourse to thee, the Mother of my Lord, the advocate, the hope, the refuge of sinners! I worship thee O great Queen, and I thank thee for the many favours thou hast hitherto obtained for me; especially for having delivered me from Hell, which I have so often deserved. I love thee, O most amiable Lady, worthy of all love! and for the love I bear thee, I promise to serve thee always and to do everything in my power to make others serve thee also. In thee do I hope; I place my salvation in thy hands. Accept me for thy servant, receive me under thy mantle, O Mother of Mercy! Thou art all—powerful with God; free me, then from all temptations, or at least obtain for me strength to conquer them as long as I live. From thee I beg a true love of Jesus Christ; and by thy help I hope for a good death. I beseech thee, Mother, by the love thou bearest to God, that thou wilt always help me, but especially at the last moment of my life. Leave me not till thou shalt see me safe in heaven, blessing thee, and singing thy mercies for all eternity. Amen. This is my hope. So may it be!

§ 6. CHRISTIAN ACTS, TO BE MADE IN THE EVENING BEFORE GOING TO BED

Before going to rest, make your examination of conscience in the following manner: First thank God for all the favours you have received; then cast a glance over all the actions you have done and the words you have spoken during the day, repenting of all the faults you have committed. Afterwards make the Christian acts in the following manner:

ACT OF FAITH.

O my God, who art infallible truth, because Thou hast revealed it to Thy Church, I believe all that she proposes to my belief! I believe that Thou art my God, the Creator of all things; that Thou dost reward the just with an eternal paradise, and dost punish the wicked in hell for all eternity. I believe that Thou art one in essence, and three in persons, namely, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I believe in the Incarnation and death of Jesus Christ. I believe, in fine, all that the Holy Church believes. I thank Thee for having made me a Christian; and I protest that I will live and die in this holy faith.

ACT OF HOPE.

O my God, confiding in Thy promises, because Thou art powerful, faithful, and merciful, I hope through the merits of Jesus Christ to obtain pardon of my sins, final perseverance, and the glory of paradise.

ACT OF LOVE AND CONTRITION.

My God, because Thou art infinite goodness, worthy of infinite love, I love Thee with all my heart above all things; and for the love of Thee I love my neighbour also. I repent with all my heart, and am sorry above all things for all my sins, because by them I have offended Thy infinite goodness. I resolve, by the help of Thy grace which I beseech Thee to grant me now and always: rather to die than ever to offend Thee again. I purpose, also, to receive the holy Sacraments during my life, and at the hour of my death.

It is well to know, that to those who make these Christian acts with the desire of receiving the holy Sacraments during their life and at their death Benedict XIII granted seven years' indulgence; and a plenary indulgence, applicable to the souls in purgatory, when they are said regularly for a month; as also a plenary indulgence in *articulo mortis*—at the hour of death. Besides, by a concession of Benedict XIV., the indulgence may be gained several times a day by any one who recites the above acts, provided he does so with the intention of gaining the indulgence.

Conclude the whole by saying the Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

§ 7. DEVOUT PRAYERS TO JESUS AND MARY TO OBTAIN THE GRACES NECESSARY FOR SALVATION

PRAYER TO JESUS CHRIST, TO OBTAIN HIS HOLY LOVE.

My crucified Jesus, I confess Thee to be the true Son of God and my Saviour. I adore and thank Thee for the death Thou didst suffer for me. My dear Redeemer if I have hitherto done nothing but offend Thee I am now sorry for it above all things, and I desire nothing but to love Thee. Thou hast promised to hear those who pray to Thee; by the merits of Thy Passion, I ask Thee to give me Thy holy love. Ah, draw my heart entirely to Thyself, that from this day forward I may love Thee with all my strength, and may love none other but Thee: a d so may I one day come to love Thee for all eternity in paradise.

PRAYER TO OBTAIN FINAL PERSEVERANCE.

O sovereign and eternal God, I thank Thee for having created me; for having redeemed me by means of Jesus Christ; for having made me a Christian by calling me to the true faith, and giving me time to repent after the many sins I have committed. O Infinite Goodness, I love Thee above all things; and I repent with all my heart of all my offences against Thee. I hope Thou hast already pardoned me; but I am continually in danger of again offending Thee. For the love of Jesus Christ, I beg of Thee holy perseverance till death. Thou knowest my weakness; help me, then, and permit me never again to separate myself from Thee. Rather let me die a thousand times, than ever again to lose Thy grace. O Mary, my Mother, obtain for me holy perseverance!

PRAYERS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY FOR EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK

SUNDAY

TO OBTAIN THE PARDON OF SINS.

Behold at thy feet, O mother of God! a miserable sinner, who has recourse to thee, and places his confidence in thee. O Mother of mercy, have pity on me. Thou art the refuge, the hope of sinners; thou art, therefore, my refuge and my hope. Thou hast it in thy power to save me by thy holy intercession; succour me for the love of Jesus Christ, stretch forth thy hand to a fallen sinner who commends himself to thee. I know that thou delightest to assist a poor sinner; assist me therefore now that thou hast it in thy power to assist me. I have forfeited divine grace and lost my soul by my sins; I now put myself into thy hands; tell me what I must do to regain the grace of my Lord, for I am willing to do all that thou shalt direct me. To thee then do I have recourse. Thou prayest for many others, pray also to Jesus for me; ask him to pardon me, and he will pardon me; tell him that thou desirest my salvation and he will save me. Manifest the good which thou art able to accomplish in behalf of those who confide in thee. This is my hope. Amen.

MONDAY

TO OBTAIN HOLY PERSEVERANCE.

O Queen of heaven, I dedicate myself to thee to be thy perpetual s:tvant, and I offer myself to serve thee during my whole life; accept of me, and do not reject me as I have deserved. O mother, in thee do I place all my hopes. I bless and thank God, that, in his mercy, he has given me this confidence in thee, which I hold as a great earnest of my salvation. Ah, how have I hitherto miserably fallen, because I have not had recourse to thee! I now hope, through the merits of Jesus and thy prayers, that I have been pardoned; but I may again fall and forfeit divine grace. Most blessed Lady, protect me, and suffer me not to become any more the slave of the devil; always assist me; I know that thou wilt assist me, and I shall conquer With thy assistance, if I recommend myself to thee, but of this I am not afraid: I am afraid that when in danger of falling I may not call upon thee and may perish. This favour I ask of thee, that in all the assaults of the devil I may always have recourse to thee, saying, Mary, help me; help me, Mary, most holy mother· do not suffer me to lose God.

TUESDAY

TO OBTAIN A HAPPY DEATH

O Mary! what will my death be? Considering my sins, and reflecting on that awful moment, when I must breathe my last and be judged, I tremble and am confounded. Most holy Mother, in the blood of Jesus and in thy prayers are placed my hopes. O consolation of the afflicted, do not abandon me then; fail not to console me in that great affliction. If thou assist me not I shall be lost. Ah, blessed Lady! before my death be at hand, obtain for me a great sorrow for my sins, a real amendment of life and fidelity to God, during the remainder of my days. And when I shall arrive at the end of my life, O Mary, my hope, assist me in that distressing moment, and so comfort me that I may not fall into despair at the sight of my sins, which the devil will place before me. Grant that I may invoke thee then more frequently, and that I may expire with thy name on my tongue and the name of thy most holy and divine Son. O blessed Lady, pardon my assurance; but before I die, do thou in person come to console me with thy presence. I am a sinner, it is true, and do not deserve such a favour; but I am devoted to thee, I love thee, and have great confidence in thee. O Mary, I look for thee; let me not remain disconsolate. At least, if I be not then worthy of so great a favour, assist me from heaven, that I may depart from this life loving God and thee, to come to love thee eternally in heaven.

WEDNESDAY

TO ESCAPE HELL

Most dear and blessed Lady, I thank thee for having so often preserved me from falling into hell, which I have deserved by my repeated sins. Alas! there was a time when I must have stood condemned to that dreadful prison; and it may be that on my first committing sin the sentence would have been executed upon me had not thou in thy pity assisted me. Although I did not pray to thee, yet, through thy goodness alone, thou didst restrain divine justice; and conquering the, hardness of my heart, induce me to place my confidence in thee. And oh! into how many more sins should I have fallen, to the dangers of which I was exposed, hadst not thou, my most affectionate Mother, preserved me from them by the graces which thou didst obtain for me! O holy Queen, continue, beseech Thee, to preserve me from hell. If at one time I did not love thee, now, next to God, I love thee above all things. Never suffer me to turn my back upon thee, and upon God, who through thy means hast bestowed so many mercies upon me. Most amiable Lady, suffer me not to have to curse thee for all eternity in hell. Couldst thou endure to see one lost who is thy servant and loves thee? Most Blessed Virgin, since thou hast done so much to save me, accomplish thy work, and continue to assist me. But if thou, when I lived forgetful of thee, didst so favour me, what may I not expect from thee now that I love thee and recommend myself to thee! No, no one can be lost who recommends himself to thee. O my Mother, leave me not to myself, that I may be lost; grant that I may always have recourse to thee. Save me, my hope, by thy powerful intercession; save me from hell; and first save me from sin, which alone can condemn me to hell.

THURSDAY

TO OBTAIN HEAVEN

O Queen of heaven, who sittest above all the choirs of angelic spirits nearest to the throne of God, from this valley of tears I salute thee, miserable sinner as I am, and beseech thee to turn towards me those eyes of mercy which distribute favours whithersoever thou directest them. Behold, O Mary! to how many dangers I am now exposed, and must remain exposed so long as I continue in this world, of losing my soul, heaven, and God. In thee, O blessed Lady! next to God, are placed all my hopes. I love thee, and long to approach and behold and praise thee in heaven. O Mary! when will the day come when I shall see myself saved at thy feet, and shall behold thee the mother of my Lord, and my mother also, who hast taken such pains to save me! O blessed Lady! I have been very ungrateful to thee during my life; but if I gain heaven, I shall not be any more ungrateful to thee: then shall I love thee as much as I am able for all eternity, and shall make amends for my past neglect by blessing thee and thanking thee forever. I give sovereign thanks to God for having given me so great confidence in the blood of Jesus, and in thee, as to hope that thou wilt deliver me from my sins, and obtain for me light and strength to accomplish the divine will, and finally conduct me to the gates of paradise. Thy servants have very much hoped in thee, and none have been deceived; nor shall I be deceived. O Mary! thou desirest nothing else in my regard; thou wilt save me. Pray to thy Son Jesus (as I now beseech him through the merits of his bitter Passion) to preserve and to increase in me more and more this my confidence in thee, and I shall be saved.

FRIDAY

TO OBTAIN LOVE FOR JESUS CHRIST AND FOR MARY

O Mary! I know that thou art the most noble, the most holy, and the most amiable of all creatures. O blessed Lady! would that all knew thee and loved thee as thou deservest! I am consoled that so many holy souls both in heaven and on earth love thy goodness and beauty. Above all, I rejoice that God himself loves thee more than all men and angels. Most amiable Queen, I, a miserable sinner, also love thee, but I love thee too little; I desire to obtain a greater and more tender love for thee; obtain this for me: for to love thee is a great sign of predestination, and a grace which God does not grant but to those whom he especially wills to be saved.

I am sensible, O holy Mother! that I am under immense obligations to thy Son, and he is deserving of infinite love. Thou desirest nothing else but to see him loved: to do this is the grace which above all others I beseech thee to obtain for me: obtain for me a great love for Jesus Christ. Thou obtainest from God whatever thou pleasest; oh, then, obtain for me the grace of being so united with the divine will that I may never be separated from it. I ask thee not for the goods of this world, nor for honours, nor riches; I ask thee for what thy heart most desires, that I may love my God. Is it possible that thou shouldst not assist me in obtaining this, which is so pleasing to thee? No; thou wilt assuredly help me, and pray for me. Pray, and cease not to pray, until thou seest me in paradise, safe from all danger of again losing my Lord, and secure of ever loving him, together with thee, my most dear mother.

SATURDAY

TO OBTAIN THE PATRONAGE OF MARY

O Most Holy Mother! I am sensible of the graces which thou hast obtained for me, and of the ingratitude with which I have employed them; but notwithstanding this, I will not cease to confide in thy mercy, which is much greater than my ingratitude. O my powerful advocate, have pity on me. Thou art the dispenser of all the graces which God grants to us miserable sinners. For this end has he made thee so powerful, so rich, and so benign, that thou mayest succour us in our miseries.

O Mother of mercy, leave me not in my poverty. Thou art the advocate of the most miserable and abandoned sinners when they have recourse to thee; defend me, therefore, who recommend myself to thee. Say not that my cause is difficult to be gained; whilst the most desperate causes, when entrusted to thee, are always successful. In thy hands, therefore, do I place my eternal salvation and to thee do I consign my soul, which was lost but which thou wilt save by thy holy intercession. This is my hope. Amen.

Chapter III

THE PRACTICE OF THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

§ 1. THE PRACTICE OF HUMILITY

No one can please God without being humble, for he cannot bear the proud. He has promised to hear those who pray to him; but if a proud man prays to him, the Lord hears him not; to the humble, on the contrary, he dispenses his graces: *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*[1076] Humility is of two kinds; humility of affection, and humility of the will. The former consists in the conviction we have of our own wretchedness so that we can neither know nor do anything but what is evil. All that we have and do that is good comes from God. Let us come now to the practice of humility. With regard, then, to the humility of the affections, first, we must put no confidence in our own strength, nor in our own resolutions; but we must be always diffident and fearful of ourselves: *With fear and trembling work out your salvation.*[1077] St. Philip Neri said: "He who fears not is sure to fall." Secondly, we must not glory in things that belong to us, as in our natural abilities, in our actions, in our birth, in our relatives, and the like. It is therefore well never to speak of our actions, except to point out where we have been wrong. And it is better not to speak of ourselves at all, either for good or bad; because, even when we blame ourselves, it is often an occasion of vain-glory, by making us think that we shall be praised, or at least be considered humble, and thus humility becomes pride. Thirdly, let us not be angry with ourselves after we have committed a fault. That would not be humility, but pride; and it is even a device of the devil to take away all our confidence, and make us leave off following a good life. When we see that we have fallen, we should say with St. Catharine of Genoa: "Lord, these are the fruits of my own garden." Then let us humble ourselves, and rise up immediately from the fault we have committed by an act of love and contrition, resolving not to fall into the same fault again, and trusting in the help of God. And if we unhappily do fall again, we must always do the same. Fourthly, when we see others fall, we are not to wonder; rather let us compassionate them; and let us thank God, praying him to keep his hand over us; otherwise the Lord will punish us by permitting us to fall into the same sins, and perhaps worse. Fifthly, we must always consider ourselves as the greatest sinners in the world; even when we know that others have sinned more than we; because our sins having been committed after we had received so many favours, and had been enlightened by so many graces, will be more displeasing to God than the faults of others, though they may be more numerous. St. Teresa writes that we must not think we have made any progress in the way of perfection if we do not esteem ourselves worse than everyone else, and desire to be considered the last of all.

The humility of the *will* consists in being pleased when we are despised by others. Anyone who has deserved hell, deserves to be trodden under foot by the devils forever. Jesus Christ desires that we should learn of him to be meek and humble of heart: *Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart*[1078] Many are humble in word, but not in heart. They say: "I am worse than all: I deserve a thousand hells." But when any one reproves them, or says a word that displeases them, they immediately take umbrage. They are like hedgehogs, which put out their bristles as soon as they are touched. But how is it—you say you are worse than all, and yet you cannot bear a word? "He who is truly humble," says St. Bernard, "esteems himself good for nothing, and desires to be considered good for nothing by others as well."

In the first place, then, if you wish to be truly humble, when you receive an admonition, receive it in good part, and thank the person who admonishes you. St. Chrysostom says, "When the just man is corrected, he is sorry for the error he has committed; but the proud man is sorry that the error should be known." The saints, when they are accused, even wrongfully, do not justify themselves, except when to defend themselves is necessary to avoid giving scandal: otherwise they are silent, and offer all to God.

In the second place, when you receive any affront, suffer it patiently, and increase in love towards the person who has ill—treated you. This is the touchstone by which you may know whether a person is humble and holy. If he resents an injury, even though he may work miracles; you may say that he is an empty reed. Father Balthazar Alvarez said that the time of humiliation is the time to gain treasures of merits. You will gain more by peaceably suffering contempt, than you could do by fasting ten days on bread and water. Humiliations which we inflict on ourselves are good; but those which we accept from the hands of others are worth much more, because in these last there is less of self and more of God; therefore, when we know how to bear them the merit is greater. But what can a Christian pretend to do if he cannot bear to be despised for the sake of God? How much contempt did not Jesus Christ suffer for us! Buffetings, derisions, scourging, and spitting in his face! Ah! if we loved Jesus Christ, not only should we not show resentment for injuries, but we should rejoice at seeing ourselves despised as Jesus Christ was despised.

§ 2. THE PRACTICE OF MORTIFICATION

If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.[1079] This is all that anyone who wishes to be a follower of Jesus Christ has to do. The denying of one's self is the mortification of self-love. Do we wish to be saved? We must then conquer all to make sure of all. How miserable is the soul that allows itself to be guided by self-love! Mortification is of two kinds—internal and external: by interior mortification we have to study to conquer our passions and especially our most predominant one. A person who does not overcome his predominant passion is in great danger of being lost; whereas he who has overcome that will easily conquer all the others. Some, however, allow one vice to predominate in themselves, and think that they are good, because they do not see in themselves vices which others have. "But what does it matter?" says St. Cyril: "one leak is sufficient to sink the ship." Nor will it suffice to say, "I cannot abstain from this vice;" a resolute will conquers all; that is, of course, with the assistance of God, who will never fail us.

External mortification has to do with conquering the sensual appetites. Worldly people call the saints cruel when they deny their bodies all satisfaction of the senses and chastise them with hair-shirts, disciplines, and other penances. "But," says St. Bernard, "they are in reality much more cruel to themselves, who condemn themselves to burn forever in hell-fire for the sake of the short and miserable pleasures of this life." Others say that all forbidden pleasures should be denied to the body; but they despise external mortifications, saying, that interior mortification is what is required; that is, the mortification of the will. Yes, it is principally necessary to mortify the will, but the mortification of the flesh is also necessary; because, when the flesh is not mortified, it will be hard to be obedient to God. St. John of the Cross said that anyone who taught that external mortification was not necessary, ought not to be believed, even though he worked miracles. But let us come to the practice of it.

In the first place, the eyes must be mortified. The first arrows which wound the soul, and often kill it, enter through the eyes. The eyes are, as it were, grappling-irons of hell, which drag souls, as if by main force, into sin. A certain Pagan philosopher voluntarily put out his eyes to free himself from impurity. It is not lawful for us to pluck out our eyes, but we ought to make them blind by means of mortification; otherwise we shall find it difficult to keep ourselves chaste. St. Francis de Sales said: “You must close the gates, if you do not wish the enemy to enter into the citadel.” We must then abstain from looking at any object that may give occasion to temptation. St. Aloysius Gonzaga did not dare to raise his eyes to look even at his own mother; and when by chance our eyes light on some dangerous object, let us take care not to fix them on it. “It is not so much the mere seeing,” says St. Francis de Sales,” but the inspecting and continuing to look, that is the cause of ruin.” Let us then be very careful in mortifying our eyes; because many are now in hell on account of sins committed with the eyes.

In the second place, we must mortify our tongue, by abstaining from words of detraction, or of abuse, or of obscenity. An impure word spoken in conversation, even in jest, may prove a scandal to others, and be the cause of a thousand sins arising from it. And it should be observed, that sometimes a word of double meaning, said in a witty way, does more harm than a word openly impure.

In the third place, we must mortify the taste. St. Andrew Avellini said that, in order to begin to live a good Christian life, a man must begin by the mortification of his palate. And St. Francis de Sales said: “We must eat to live, not live to eat.” Many seem to live only to eat, and thus they destroy the health both of their soul and body. For the most part costiveness, diarrhoea, and other illnesses are caused by the vice of gluttony. But the worst is, that intemperance in eating and drinking is often the cause of incontinence. Cassian writes that it is impossible that a man who is satiated with food and heating drinks—as wine, brandy, and the like—should not feel many impure temptations. “But how is this?” says such a one; “must I eat no more?” Yes, my good friend, we must eat to preserve our life, but like rational beings, not as brutes. Especially if you desire to be free from impure temptations, abstain from eating overmuch meat, and from overmuch wine. The Scripture says: *Give not wine to kings.*[1080] By a king is meant one who brings his flesh under the dominion of reason. Much wine makes us lose our reason, and involves not only the vice of drunkenness, which is certainly a mortal sin, but also that of impurity. Regret not having sometimes to fast or to abstain, especially on a Saturday, in honour of the Most Holy Mary. Many do so on bread and water; this you can at least do on the vigils of the seven principal feasts of Our Lady. I pray you to observe at least, the fasts of obligation. Some go beyond fifteen or twenty ounces at collation, and say: “It is sufficient if I am not satisfied.” No, it is not enough; the most that can be taken on the evenings of fast days of obligation is eight ounces; and even that has grown up by custom; for in olden times food could be taken only once a day.

In the fourth place, we must mortify our hearing and our touch: the hearing, by avoiding listening to immodest and scandalous conversations; the touch, by using all possible caution, as well in regard to others as in regard to ourselves. Some say it is nothing, that they only do it in jest; but who, I ask, would play with fire?

§ 3. THE PRACTICE OF CHARITY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR

He who loves God, loves his neighbour also; but he who loves not his neighbour, neither does he love God; for the divine precept says, *That he who loveth God, loves also his brother.*[1081] We must also love our neighbour in heart as well as in deed. And how much are we to love him? Here is the rule: *“Love the Lord thy God with Thy whole soul, . . . and thy neighbour as thyself.”*[1082]We must, then, love God above all things, and more than ourselves, and our neighbour as ourselves. So that, as we desire our own good, and take delight in it when we have it, and, on the contrary, are sorry for any evil that may happen to us, so also we must desire our neighbour’s good, and rejoice when he obtains it; and, on the other hand, we must be sorry for his misfortunes. So, again, we must neither Judge nor suspect evil of our neighbour, without good grounds. And this is what constitutes interior charity.

External charity consists in our words and actions towards our neighbour. As to words, first we must abstain from the least shadow of detraction. A detractor is hateful to God and man. On the contrary, he who speaks well of every one is beloved by God and men; and when the fault cannot be excused, we must at least excuse the intention. Secondly, let us be careful not to repeat to any one the evil that has been said of him by another; because sometimes long enmities and revenge arise from such things. The Scripture says, he who sows discord is hated by God. Thirdly, we must take care not to wound our neighbour, by saying anything that may hurt him; even were it only in jest. Would you like to be laughed at in the same way as you laugh at your neighbour? Fourthly, let us avoid disputes: sometimes on account of a mere trifle quarrels are begun which end in abuse and rancour. We have also to guard against the spirit of contradiction, which some indulge when they gratuitously set themselves to contradict everything. On such occasions give your opinion and then be quiet. Fifthly, let us speak gently to all even to our inferiors; therefore let us not make use of imprecations or abuse. And when our neighbour is angry with us, and is somewhat abusive, let us answer meekly, and the quarrel will be at an end: *A mild answer breaketh wrath.*’[1083] And when we are annoyed by our neighbour, we must be careful not to say anything; because our passion will then make us go too far: it will make us exaggerate; but afterwards we shall certainly be sorry for it. St. Francis de Sales says, “I was never angry in my life, that I did not repent of it shortly afterwards.” The rule is to be silent as long as we feel ourselves disturbed. And when our neighbour continues to be irritated, let us reserve the correction till another time, even though it should be necessary; because for the moment our words would not convince, and would do no good.

With regard also to the charity of our actions towards our neighbour: first, it is practised by aiding him as we best may. Let us remember what the Scripture says: For alms deliver from all sin and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness.[1084] Almsgiving, then, saves us from sin and from hell. By alms is understood any assistance which it is in our power to render to our neighbour. The kind of alms giving which is the most meritorious is to help the soul of our neighbour, by correcting him gently and opportunely, whenever we can. And let not us say with some, “What doth it signify to me?” It does signify to one who is a Christian. He who loves God, wishes to see him loved by all.

Secondly, we must show charity towards the sick, who are in greater need of help. Let us make them some little present, if they are poor. At least let us go and wait on them and comfort them, even though they should not thank us for doing so; the Lord will reward us.

Thirdly, we must above all show charity to our enemies. Some are all kindness with their friends; but Jesus Christ says, *Do good to those that hate you.*[1085] By this you may know that a man is a true Christian, if he seeks to do good to those who wish him evil. And if we can do nothing else for those who persecute us, let us at least pray that God will prosper them, according as Jesus commands us: *Pray for them that persecute you.*[1086] This is the way the saints revenged themselves. He who pardons anyone who has offended him, is sure of being pardoned by God; since God has given us the promise: *Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.*[1087] Our Lord said one day to the Blessed Angela of Foligno, that the surest sign of a soul being loved by God, is when it loves a person who has offended it.

Fourthly, let us also be charitable to our neighbours who are dead, that is, to the holy souls in purgatory. St. Thomas says, that if we are bound to help our neighbours who are alive, we are also bound to remember them when dead. Those holy prisoners are suffering pains which exceed all the sufferings of this life; and nevertheless are in the greatest necessity, since they cannot possibly help themselves. A Cistercian monk once said to the sacristan of his monastery: “Help me, brother, by your prayers, when I can no longer help myself.” Let us then endevour to succour these holy souls, either by having Masses said for them, or by heating Masses for them, by giving alms, or at least by praying, and applying indulgences in their behalf; they will show themselves grateful by obtaining great graces for us, not only when they reach heaven, if they arrive there sooner through our prayers, but also in purgatory.

§ 4. THE PRACTICE OF PATIENCE

St. James says, that patience is the perfect work of a soul: *And patience hath a perfect work.*[1088] It is by patience that we gain heaven. This earth is a place where we can gain merit; therefore it is not a place of rest, but of labours and sufferings; and it is for this end that God makes us live here, that by patience we may obtain the glory of paradise. Everyone has to suffer in this world; but he who suffers with patience suffers less and saves himself, while he who suffers with impatience suffers more and is damned. Our Lord does not send us crosses that he may see us lost, as some impatient people say, but that we may be thereby saved, and inherit more glory in heaven. Sorrows, contradictions, and all other tribulations, when accepted with patience, become the brightest jewels in our heavenly crown. Whenever, then, we are in affliction, let us console ourselves and thank God for it, since it is a sign that God wishes us to be saved, by chastising us in this life, where the chastisements are but slight and short, so as not to punish us in the next, where the chastisements are cruel and eternal. Woe to the sinner who is prosperous in this life! it is a sign that God has reserved for him eternal punishment. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said: “All sufferings, however great, become sweet when we look at Jesus on the cross.” And St. Joseph Calasanctius: “He who cannot suffer for Jesus Christ, does not know how to gain Jesus Christ for his own.” He, then, who loves Jesus Christ bears patiently all external crosses-sickness, pains, dishonour, loss of parents and friends ; and all interior crosses-afflictions, weariness, temptations, and desolation of spirit, and he bears them all in peace. On the other hand, he who is impatient and angry when he is in tribulation, what does he do? He does but increase his suffering, and adds to his punishments in the next life. St. Teresa says in her writings: “The cross is felt by those who drag it after them by force; but he who embraces it with a good will does not feel it.” Hence St. Philip Neri also said: “In this world there is no purgatory; it is either heaven or hell: he who bears tribulation with patience is in heaven, but he who does not, is in hell.” Let us proceed to the practice.

First, patience must be practised in sickness. The time of sickness is a time for testing the devotion of people, whether it is of lead or of gold. Some are pious and cheerful when they are in good health; but when they are visited by any illness, they lose their patience, complain of everything, and give themselves up to melancholy, and commit a thousand other faults. Their gold turns out to be lead. St. Joseph Calasanctius said: “If sick people were patient, we should hear no more complaints.” Some complain and say: “But as long as I am in this state, I cannot go to church, nor to Communion, nor to Mass; in short, I can do nothing.” You say you can do nothing. You do everything when you do the will of God. Tell me, why do you want to do those things you have named? Is it to please God? This is the good pleasure of God, that you should embrace with patience all vow have to endure, and should leave everything else that you wish to do alone. “God is served,” writes St. Francis de Sales, “more by suffering than by any other works we can do.” If our sickness be dangerous, then especially must we accept it with all patience, being willing to die should the end of our life be really at hand. Nor should we say: “But I am not now prepared; I should like to live a little longer to do penance for my sins.” And how do you know that if you were to live on you would do penance, and would not fall into greatest sins? How many there are who, after recovering from some mortal illness, have become worse than they were before, and have been lost; while, perhaps, if they had died then, they would have been saved! If it is the will of God that you should leave this world, unite yourself to his holy will, and thank him for allowing you the help of the holy Sacraments, and accept death with tranquillity, abandoning yourself into the arms of his mercy. This compliance with the divine will, by accepting death, will be sufficient to insure your eternal salvation.

In the second place, we must accept also with patience the death of our relatives and friends. Some on the death of a relative are so inconsolable, that they leave off saying their prayers, frequenting the sacraments, and all their devotions. Such a one goes so far as even to be angry with God, and to say : “ Lord, why hast Thou done this?” What rashness is this! Tell me, what does all your grief profit you? Do you perhaps think to do pleasure to the dead person? No; what you are doing is displeasing to him as well as to God. He desires that with regard to his death, you should become more united with God, and should pray for him if he is in purgatory.

In the third place, let us accept the poverty which God sends us. When you are in want even of the necessaries of life, say: “My God, Thou alone art sufficient for me.” One such act will gain treasures for us in paradise. He who possesses God has every good. In the same way let us embrace with patience the loss of property, the failure of our expectations, or even the loss of those who were helping us. Let us be resigned at such times to the will of God, and God will help us; and if he should not then help us as we should wish, let us be content with whatever he may do, because he will do it to try our patience,· that he may enrich us with greater merits and the goods of heaven.

In the fourth place, we must accept patiently contempt and persecutions. You will say: "But what evil have I done, that I should be so persecuted? Why have I had to suffer such an affront?" My brother, go and say this to Jesus Christ on the cross, and he will answer: "And I, what have I done, that I should have to suffer such sorrow and ignominy, and this death of the cross?"

If, then, Jesus Christ has suffered so much for the love of you, it is no great thing that you should suffer this little for the love of Jesus Christ. Particularly if you have ever during your life committed some grievous sin, think that you deserve to be in hell, where you would have to suffer much greater contempt and persecution from the devils. If also you should be persecuted for having done good, rejoice exceedingly. Hear what Jesus Christ says: *Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake.*[1089] Let us be convinced of the truth of what the Apostle says, that he who would live united with Jesus Christ in this world must be persecuted.

In the fifth place, we must practise patience also in spiritual desolations, which are the heaviest afflictions for a soul that loves God. But God in this way proves the love of his beloved ones. At such times let us humble ourselves and be resigned to the will of God, putting ourselves entirely into his hands. Let us be most careful also not to leave off any of our devotions, our prayers, frequenting of the sacraments, our visits to the Blessed Sacrament, or our spiritual reading. As we do everything then with weariness and trouble, it seems to us to be all lost, but it is not so: while we persevere in all these things, we work without any satisfaction to ourselves; but it is very pleasing to God.

In the sixth and last place, we must practise patience in temptations. Some cowardly souls, when a temptation lasts a long time, are disheartened, and will sometimes even say: God, then, desires my damnation. No; God permits us to be tempted, not for our damnation, but for our advantage, that we may then humble ourselves the more, and unite ourselves more closely to him, by forcing ourselves to resist, redoubling our prayers, and thereby acquiring greater merits for heaven. *And because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee.*’[1090] Thus was it said to Tobias. Every temptation which we overcome gains for us fresh degrees of glory, and greater strength to resist future temptations. Nor does God ever permit us to be tempted beyond our strength: *And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.*[1091]

We should, however, beg our Lord to deliver us from temptations; notwithstanding, when they come, let us resign ourselves to his holy will, beseeching him to give us strength to resist. St. Paul was troubled with carnal temptations, and he prayed to God to deliver him from them; but the Lord said to him: *My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity.*[1092] In sensual temptations especially the first precaution to be taken is to remove ourselves as far as possible from all occasions, and then immediately to have recourse to Jesus Christ for help, not trusting in our own strength. And when the temptation continues, let us not cease to pray, saying: “Jesus, help me! Mary, ever Virgin, assist me!” The mere invocation of these all—powerful names of Jesus and Mary will suffice to defeat the most violent assaults of hell. It is also of great use to make the sign of the cross on our forehead, or over our heart. By the sign of the cross, St. Anthony Abbot overcame similar attacks of the devil. It is also a very good thing to acquaint your spiritual father with your temptations. St. Philip Neri used to say: “A temptation which is manifested is half overcome.”

§ 5. THE PRACTICE OF CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

All sanctity consists in loving God; and the love of God consists in fulfilling his holy will. In this is our life: *And life in His good will.*’[1093] And he who is always united with the will of God is always in peace; for the divine will takes away the bitterness of every cross. By saying, God wills it so, God has so willed, holy souls find peace in all their labours: *Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad.*[1094] You say: Everything goes wrong with me; God sends me all kinds of misfortunes. Things go wrong with you, my friend, because you make them go wrong; if you were to be resigned to the will of God, all would go well, and for your good. The crosses which God sends you are misfortunes, because you make them misfortunes; if you would take them with resignation, they would no longer be misfortunes, but riches for paradise. Ven. Balthazar Alvarez says: “He who in his troubles resigns himself with peacefulness to the divine will, runs to God post-haste.” Let us now come to the practice.

And first, let us resign ourselves in the sicknesses which befall us. Worldly people call illnesses misfortunes, but the saints call them visitations of God and favours. When we are ill we ought certainly to take remedies in order to be cured, but we should always be resigned to whatever God disposes. And if we pray for restoration to health, let it always be done with resignation, otherwise we shall not obtain the favour. But how much do we not gain when we are ill by offering to God all we suffer! He who loves God from his heart does not desire to be cured of his illness in order not to suffer, but he desires to please God by suffering. It was this love which made the scourge, the rack, and the burning pitch sweet to the holy martyrs. We must also be especially resigned in mortal sickness. To accept death at such a time, in order that the will of God may be fulfilled merits for us a reward similar to that of the martyrs, because they accepted death to please God. He who dies in union with the will of God makes a holy death; and the more closely he is united to it, the more holy death does he die. The Venerable Blasius declares that an act of perfect conformity to the will of God at the hour of death not only delivers us from hell, but also from purgatory.

Secondly, we must also unite ourselves to the will of God with regard to our natural defects, as want of talents, being of low birth, weak health, bad sight, want of ability for affairs, and the like. All that we have is the free gift of God. Might he not have made us a fly or a blade of grass? A hundred years ago were we anything but nothingness? And what more do we want? Let it suffice that God has given us the power of becoming saints. Although we may have little talent, poor health, and may be poor and abject, we may very well become saints through his grace if we have the will. Oh, how many unfortunate beings have been damned on account of their talents, their health, high birth, riches or beauty! Let us then be content with what God has done for us; and let us thank him always for the good things he has given us, and particularly for having called us to the holy faith; this is a great gift, and one for which few are found to thank God.

Thirdly, we must resign ourselves in all adversities that may happen to us, as the loss of property, of our expectations, of our relatives; and in the attacks and persecutions we may meet with from men. You will say: But God does not will sin; how is it that I must resign myself when someone calumniates me, wrongs me, attacks and defrauds me? That cannot happen by the will of God. What a deception is this! God does not will the sin of such a one; he permits it: but, on the other band, he does will the adversity which you suffer by means of this person. So that it is our Lord himself who sends you that cross, though it comes to you by means of your neighbour; therefore even in these cases you must embrace the cross as coming from God. Nor let us seek to find out a reason for such treatment. St. Teresa says: “If you are willing to bear only those crosses for which you see a reason, perfection is not for you.”

Fourthly, we must be resigned in aridity of soul; if, when we say our prayers, make our Communions, visit the Blessed Sacrament, etc., all seems to weary and give us no comfort, let us be satisfied in knowing that we please God, and that the less satisfaction we feel ourselves in our devotions the more pleasure do we give him. At no time can we know better our own insufficiency and misery than in the time of aridity; and therefore let us humble ourselves in our prayers, and put ourselves with resignation into God’s hands, and say: “Lord, I do not deserve consolations; I desire nothing but that Thou have pity on me; keep me in Thy grace, and do with me what Thou wilt.” And so doing, we shall gain more in one day of desolation than in a month of tears and sensible devotion. And generally speaking, this should be the continual tenor of our prayers, offering ourselves to God; that he may do with us as he pleases; saying to him in our prayers, our Communions, and in the visit: “My God, make me do Thy will.” In doing the will of God we shall do everything. For this end let us accustom ourselves to have always on our lips the ejaculation: *Fiat voluntas tua!* “Thy will be done,” even in the least things we do; for instance, if we snuff out a candle, break a glass, or stumble over something , let us always repeat; “May the will of God be done!” When we lose any of our possessions, or when one of our relatives dies, or anything else of the same sort happens to us, let us say: “O Lord, it is Thy will, it is my will also.”

And when we fear any temporal ill, let us say: “O Lord, I will whatever Thou wiliest.” Thus we shall be very pleasing in the sight of God, and shall be always in peace.

§ 6. THE PRACTICE OF PURITY OF INTENTION

Purity of intention consists in doing everything with the sole view of pleasing God. The good or bad intention with which an action is performed renders it good or bad before God. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi says: “God rewards actions according to the amount of purity of intention with which they are done.” Let us examine the practice of it. In. the first place, in all our exercises (of devotion), let us seek God and not ourselves: if we seek our own satisfaction we cannot expect to receive any reward from God. And this holds good for all spiritual works. How many labour and exhaust themselves in preaching, hearing confessions, serving at the altar, and in doing other pious works; and because in these they seek themselves and not God, they lose all! When we seek neither approbation nor thanks from others for what we do, it is a sign that we work for God’s sake: as also when we are not vexed at the good we undertake not succeeding; or when we rejoice as much at any good that is done by others, as if it had been done by ourselves. Further, whenever we have done some good in order to please God, let us not torment ourselves in endevouring to drive away vain-glory; if we are praised for it; it is enough to say: “To God be the honour and glory.” And let us never omit doing any good action which may be edifying to our neighbour, through fear of vain-glory. Our Lord wishes us to do good even before others, that it may be profitable to them: *So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*[1095] Therefore when you do good, have first the intention of pleasing God; and secondly, that also of giving a good example to your neighbour. In the second place, in our bodily actions; whether we work, eat, drink, or amuse ourselves with propriety, let us do all in order to please God. Purity of intention may be called the heavenly alchemy, which changes iron into gold; by which is meant, that the most trivial and ordinary actions when done to please God become acts of divine love. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi used to say: “A person who performs all his actions with a pure intention will go straight to paradise.” A holy hermit, before putting his hand to any work, used to raise his eyes to heaven, and keep them fixed there for a short time; and when he was asked what he was doing, he answered: “I am taking my aim, so that I may not miss the mark.” Let us also do in like manner: before beginning any action, let us make sure of our aim, and say: “Lord, I do this to please Thee.”

§ 7.·RULES FOR AVOIDING TEPIDITY

Souls that make no account of venial sins, and give themselves up to tepidity, without a thought of freeing themselves from it, live in great danger. We do not here speak of those venial sins that are committed by mere frailty, such as useless or idle words, interior disquietudes, and negligence in small matters; but we speak of venial sins committed with full deliberation, above all when they are habitual. St. Teresa writes thus: “From all deliberate sin, howsoever small it may be, O Lord, deliver us!” Ven. Alvarez used to say: “Those little backbitings, dislikes, culpable curiosity, acts of impatience and intemperance, do not indeed kill the soul, but they so weaken it, that when any great temptation takes it unexpectedly, it will not have strength enough to resist, and will consequently fall.” So that as on the one hand deliberate venial sins weaken the soul, so on the other do they deprive us of the divine assistance; for it is but just that God should be sparing with those who are sparing towards him: *He who sows sparingly, shall also reap sparingly.*[1096]‘ And that is what a soul that has received special graces from God has the most reason to fear. Still more ought it to fear lest such faults should be caused by some passionate attachment, as of ambition, or avarice, or of aversion, or inordinate affection towards any person. It happens not unfrequently to souls that are in bondage to some passion, as it does to gamblers, who, after losing many times, at the last throw say, “Let us risk everything;” and so finish by losing all they have. In what a miserable state is that soul which is the slave of some passion; for passion blinds us, and lets us no longer see what we are doing. Let us now come to the practice of what we have to do, in order to be able to deliver ourselves from the wretched state of tepidity.

It is necessary in the first place to have a firm desire to get out of this state. The good desire lightens our labour, and gives us strength to go forward. And let us rest assured that he who makes no progress in the way of God will always be going back; and he will go back so far that at last he will fall over some precipice.

Secondly, let us try to find out our predominant faults to which we are most attached, whether it be anger, ambition, or inordinate affection to persons or things: a resolute will overcomes all with the help of God.

Thirdly, we must avoid the occasion, otherwise all our resolutions will fall to the ground.

And lastly, we must above all be diffident of our own strength, and pray continually with all confidence to God, begging him to help us in the danger in which we are, and to deliver us from those temptations by which we shall fall into sin; which is the meaning of the petition, *Ne nos inducas in tentationem*, "Lead us not into temptation." He who prays obtains: *Ask, and you shall receive.*[1097]' This is a promise of God, and can never fail; therefore we must always pray, always pray; and let us never leave off repeating, "We must pray always, we must pray always; my God help me, and that soon!"

§ 8. THE PRACTICE OF DEVOTION TOWARDS THE GREAT MOTHER OF GOD

As regards this devotion, I hope that the reader is fully persuaded that, in order to insure eternal salvation, it is most important to be devout to the Most Holy Mary. And if he should wish to be still more convinced of it I would beg him to read the book I have written called *The Glories of Mary.* We shall here speak only of the practices you may observe, that you may obtain the protection of this sovereign Lady.

First, every morning and evening, when you rise and before you go to bed, say three Hail Marys, adding this short prayer: " By thy pure and immaculate conception, O Mary, make me pure in body and holy in soul!" And put yourself beneath her mantle, that she may keep you that day or that night from sin. And every time you hear the clock strike, say a Hail Mary; do the same whenever you go in or out of the house, and when you pass by any picture or statue of the Blessed Virgin. So also when you begin and finish any of your occupations, such as your study, work, eating, or sleeping, never omit to say a Hail Mary.

Secondly, say the Rosary, meditating on the mysteries, every day, at least five decades. Many devout people also say the Office of Our Lady; it would be well to say at least the Little Office of the Name of Mary, which is very short, and composed of five short psalms.

Thirdly, say an Our Father and Hail Mary every day to the ever blessed Trinity in thanksgiving for the graces that have been bestowed upon Mary. The Blessed Virgin herself revealed to a person that this devotion was very pleasing to her.

Fourthly, fast on bread and water every Saturday in honour of Mary, or at least on the vigils of her seven feasts; or at least fast in the ordinary way, or eat only of one dish, or abstain from something you like. In short, make use of some kind of mortification on Saturdays, and on the above—named vigils, for the sake of this Queen, who, as St. Andrew of Crete says, repays these little things with great graces.

Fifthly, pay a visit every day to some image of your patroness, and ask her to give you holy perseverance and the love of Jesus Christ.

Sixthly, let no day pass without reading a little about Our Lady, or else say some prayer to this Blessed Virgin. For this purpose we have here put seven prayers to Mary, for the seven days of the week (see Chap. II § 7). Seventhly, make the novenas for the seven principal feasts of Mary, and ask your confessor to tell you what devotions and mortifications you should practise during those nine days: say at least nine Hail Marys and Glory be to the Father, and beg her each day of the novena to give you some special grace that you need.

Lastly, often recommend yourself to this divine Mother during the day, and particularly in time of temptation, saying at such times, and often repeating with great affection, “Mary, help me! help me, my Mother!” And if you love Mary, try to promote devotion to this great Mother of God among your relatives, friends, and servants.

§ 9. ON THE PRACTICE OF CERTAIN MEANS BY WHICH WE MAY ACQUIRE THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ ought to be our whole love. He is worthy of it, both because he is a God of infinite goodness, and because he has loved us to such an excess, that he died for us. Oh, how great are our obligations to Jesus Christ! All the good we enjoy, all our inspirations, calls, pardons, helps, hopes, consolations, sweetnesses, and loving affections, come to us through

Jesus Christ. Let us see by what means we are to acquire this love of Jesus Christ.

In the first place, we must desire to have this love of Jesus Christ, and we must, therefore, often ask him to give it us, especially in our prayers, in our Communions, and in the visit to the Blessed Sacrament. And this grace must also be sought for at the hands of the ever—blessed Mary, from our guardian angel and our holy patrons, that they may enable us to love Jesus Christ. St. Francis de Sales says that the grace of loving Jesus Christ contains all other graces in itself; because he who truly loves Jesus Christ cannot be wanting in any virtue.

In the second place, if we wish to acquire the love of Jesus Christ, we must detach our hearts from all earthly affections; divine love will find no place in a heart that is full of this world. St. Philip Neri used to say: “The love we give to creatures is all so much taken from God.”

In the third place, we must often exercise ourselves, especially when we pray, in making acts of love to Jesus Christ. Acts of love are the fuel with which we keep alive the fire of holy charity. Let us make acts of love and complacency, saying: “My Jesus, I rejoice that Thou art infinitely happy, and that Thy eternal Father loves Thee as much as himself!” Of benevolence: “I wish, my Jesus, that all could know and love Thee!” Of predilection, as: “My Jesus, I love Thee more than all things! I love Thee more than myself!” Let us also often make acts of contrition, which are called acts of sorrowful love.

In the fourth place, if any one wishes to make sure of being inflamed with love towards Jesus Christ, let him often try to meditate on his Passion. It was revealed to a holy solitary, that no exercise was more efficacious in enkindling love, than the consideration of the sufferings and ignominy which Jesus Christ endured for love of us. I say it is impossible that a soul, meditating often on the Passion of Christ, should be able to resist his love. It was for this that, although he could have saved us by one drop of his blood, nay even by a single prayer, he chose to suffer so much, and to shed all his blood, that he might attract all hearts to love him; therefore he who meditates on his Passion does what is very agreeable to him. Do you then often make your meditation on the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do so at least every Friday, the day on which he died for the love of us. For this purpose I have written many meditations on the Passion of our Lord Jesus

Christ, especially the Darts of Fire, which speak of the love which Jesus Christ has borne us in the great work of our redemption.[1098]

ADMONITIONS ADDRESSED TO PERSONS OF ALL STATES WHO DESIRE TO BE SAVED.[1099]

God wishes us all to be saved: *Who will have all men saved.*[1100] "And he is ready to give to all the help necessary for salvation; but he grants it only to those that ask him, as St. Augustine says: "He gives only to those who ask."[1101] Hence, it is a common opinion of theologians and of the holy Fathers, that prayer is necessary for adults as a means of salvation; that is to say, that a person who does not pray, and neglects to ask of God the help requisite f or overcoming temptations, and for preserving grace already received, cannot be saved.

On the other hand, our Lord cannot refuse to give graces to those who ask for them, because he has promised to do so: *Cry to Me, and I will hear thee.*[1102] Have recourse to me, and I will not fail to hear you. Ask of me all you desire, and you shall attain it: *Ask, and it shall be given to you.*[1103] These promises, however, are not to be understood with reference to temporal goods, because God only gives these when they are for the good of the soul; but he has promised 'absolutely to give spiritual graces to any one who asks him; and having promised it, he is obliged to give them to us: "By his promise, he has made himself our debtor," says St. Augustine.

It should also be observed, that on God's part prayer is a promise, and on our part a binding precept: *Ask and it shall be given you.*[1104] *We ought always to pray.*[1105] These words, "ask, we ought," convey, as St. Thomas teaches, a grave precept, which is binding for our whole life; but especially when a man is in danger of death, of falling into sin; because if he does not then have recourse to God, he will certainly be overcome. And he who has already fallen under God's displeasure commits a fresh sin when he does not turn to God for help to rise out of his miserable state. But will God then hear him while he is yet his enemy? Yes, he does hear, if the sinner humbles himself, and prays for pardon from his heart; since it is written in the Gospel: *For every one that asketh, receiveth.*[1106] It says that God has promised to hear all that pray to him, whether they are just or sinners. In another place God says, *Call upon Me . . . and I will deliver Thee.*[1107] Call upon Me, and I will deliver thee from hell to which thou dost stand condemned.

No, there will be no excuse in the day of judgment for any one who dies in mortal sin. It will be of no use for him to say that he had not the strength to resist the temptation which troubled him; because Jesus Christ will answer: If you had not the strength, why did you not ask it of me, and I should certainly have given it you? If you fell into sin, why did you not have recourse to me, that I might have delivered you from it?

You see, then, that if you desire to be saved, and would keep yourself in the grace of God, you must often pray to him, that he would keep his hand over you. The Council of Trent declares that for a man to persevere in the grace of God, it is not enough that he should have only that general aid which he gives to all; but he must also have that special assistance which can only be obtained by prayer. For this reason all the Doctors of the Church say, that each one is bound, under grievous sin, to recommend himself often to God, and to ask for the grace of holy perseverance at least once a month. And any one who finds himself in the midst of many dangerous occasions is under the obligation of asking more frequently for the grace of perseverance.

It is besides most useful to keep up some particular devotion to the Mother of God, who is called the Mother of perseverance, in order to obtain this grace; and a person who has not this special devotion to the Blessed Virgin will find it very difficult to persevere; for as St. Bernard says, all divine graces, and especially this one of perseverance, which is the greatest of all, come to us by means of Mary.

Would to God that preachers were more mindful in putting before their hearers this great means of prayer! Some even in the whole course of their Lenten sermons scarcely mention it more than once or twice in passing: while they ought often to make it their chief subject, besides speaking of it in every discourse; if they omit to do so, they will have to render a severe account for it to God. Thus also many confessors are particular merely about the resolution their penitents make not to offend God again, and few take the trouble to inculcate that they must pray when they are tempted again to fall; but we must be well persuaded, that when a temptation is violent, if the penitent does not beg for God’s assistance, all his resolutions will avail him little; prayer alone can save him. It is certain that he who prays is saved; he who prays not is damned.

Therefore, I repeat, if you wish to be saved, pray continually to the Lord that he would give you light and strength not to fall into sin. Thus we must be importunate with God, in asking him for his grace. “This importunity with God is our opportunity,” say St Jerome. Every morning we must beseech him to keep us from sin during that day. And when any bad thought or occasion of sin presents itself to your mind or you are tempted by some dangerous occasion, immediately have recourse to Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin, and say, “My Jesus, help me! Most Blessed Virgin, come to my aid.” It is enough at such a time to pronounce the names of Jesus and Mary, and the temptation will. vanish; but should the temptation continue, persevere in invoking the assistance of Jesus and Mary, and you will be victorious.

PROTESTATION FOR A HAPPY DEATH.

MY God, prostrate in Thy presence, I adore Thee; and I intend to make the following protestations, as if I were on the point of passing from this life to eternity:

My Lord, because Thou art infallible truth, and hast revealed it to the holy Church, I believe in the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; three Persons, but only one God, who eternally rewards the just with heaven, and punishes sinners with hell. I believe that the second Person—that is, the Son of God—became man and died for the salvation of men; and I believe all that the holy Church believes. I thank Thee for having made me a Christian; and I protest that in this holy faith I wish to live and die.

My God, my hope, trusting in Thy promises, I hope from Thy mercy, not through my merits, but through the merits of Jesus Christ, for the pardon of my sins, perseverance in Thy grace, and, after this miserable life, for the glory of heaven. And should the devil, at death, tempt me to despair at the sight of my sins, I protest that I wish always to hope in Thee, my Lord, and that I wish to die in the loving arms of Thy goodness.

O God, worthy of infinite love! I love Thee with my whole heart, and more than I love myself; and I protest that I wish to die making an act of love, that thus I may continue to love Thee for eternity in heaven; which, for this purpose, I ask and desire from Thee. And if, O Lord! instead of loving Thee, I have hitherto despised Thy infinite Goodness, I am sorry for it with my whole heart, and I protest that I wish to die bewailing and detesting forever the offences I have offered to Thee. I purpose, for the future, to die rather than commit another sin. And, for the love of Thee, I pardon all who have offended me.

O my God! I accept death, and all the pains that will accompany my death. I unite them to the sorrows and to the death of Jesus Christ, and offer them in honour of Thy supreme dominion, and in satisfaction for my sins.

O Lord! for the sake of the great sacrifice of himself which Thy divine Son offered on the altar of the cross, accept this sacrifice of my life, which I offer to The. I now, for the moment of my death, resign myself entirely to Thy divine will, protesting that I wish to die, saying: *O Lord! Thy will be always done.*

Most holy Virgin Mary, my advocate and my mother, thou, after God, art and shalt be my hope and consolation at the hour of death. I now invoke thee, and pray thee to assist me in that great passage. My dear queen, do not abandon me at that last moment. Come, then, and take my soul, and present it to thy Son. From this moment I expect thee, and hope to die under thy protection and prostrate at thy feet. My protector, St. Joseph, St. Michael the archangel, my angel—guardian, my holy advocates, come all, and assist me in that last battle with hell.

And Thou, my crucified Love—Thou, my Jesus, who, to obtain for me a good death, hast voluntarily chosen so painful a death, remember at that hour that I am one of the sheep which Thou hast purchased with Thy blood. O my Saviour, who alone can console me and save me at that hour when every one on this earth will have abandoned me and when no friend will be able to assist me! make me then worthy to receive Thee for my Viaticum. Do not permit me to lose Thee forever, and to go forever to remain at a distance from Thee. No, my beloved Saviour; since I now embrace Thee, receive me then into Thy holy wounds. At my last breath I intend to breathe forth my soul into the loving wound in Thy side, saying now, for that moment: Jesus and Mary, I give Thee my heart and my soul: Jesus and Mary, I give Thee my heart and my soul.

Happy suffering, to suffer for God! Happy death, to die in the Lord!

I embrace Thee, my good Redeemer, that I may die in Thy embraces. If, O my soul! at your departure from this world, Mary assists you, and Jesus receives you, death will be for you not death, but sweet repose.

’Tis blessed to suffer, Creator most kind;
’Tis blessed to die, and to suffer for Thee.
I embrace Thee, O Crucified! hoping to find
Thine arms everlasting in death circling me.
So it will not be death, but ineffable rest,
That shall close at the last on these earth—wearied eyes,
When my forehead by Mary is soothingly prest,
And Jesus receives my last penitent sighs.

A Short Prayer to be said every day to Jesus crucified, and to our Lady of Sorrows, to obtain the grace of a happy death.

My Lord Jesus Christ, by that bitterness which Thou didst endure on the cross, when Thy blessed soul was separated from Thy most sacred body, have pity on my sinful soul, when it leaves my miserable body to enter into eternity.

O Mary! by that grief which thou didst experience on Calvary in seeing Jesus expire on the cross before thine eyes, obtain for me a good death, that loving Jesus and thee, my Mother, in this life, I may attain heaven, where I shall love thee for all eternity.

Latin Prayer for the Same Object.

Domine Jesu Christe, per illam amaritudinem quam sustinuit nobilissima anima tua, quando egressa est de benedicto corpore tuo, miserere animæ meæ peccatricis, quando egredietur de corpore meo. Amen.

HYMN

Mary our Hope.
Mary, thou art hope the brightest,
Love most pure and sweet;
Life and peace I find reposing
At thy blessed feet!
When I call on thee, O Mary!
When I think on thee,
Joy and pleasure all entrancing
Fill my heart with glee.
If anon the clouds of sadness
Rise within my heart,
when they hear thy name, O Mary!
Straightway they depart.
Like a star on life’s dark ocean,
Shining o’er the wave,
Thou canst guide my bark to harbor.
Thou my soul canst save.
Under thy protecting mantle,
Queen belov’d, I fly;
There I wish to live securely,
There I hope to die.
If I chance my life to finish
Mary, loving thee,
Then I also know, dear Lady,
Heaven is for me.
Cast thy gentle bonds around me,
And my heart enchain;
Prisoner of love forever,
Safe will I remain.

Thus my heart, O sweetest Mary!
Is not mine, but thine:
Take it; give it all to Jesus;
Ne’er shall it be mine.

THE WAY OF SALVATION AND OF PERFECTION

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

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REDEMPTORIST FATHERS

BROOKLYN

ST. LOUIS

TORONTO

CONTENTS

INDEX

THE WAY OF SALVATION AND OF PERFECTION

CONTENTS

The Way of Salvation and of Perfection

NOTICE

PART I
Meditations Suitable for All Times in the Year

Meditation I
ETERNAL SALVATION

Meditation II
SIN AS IT DISHONOURS GOD

Meditation III
THE PATIENCE OF GOD IN WAITING FOR SINNERS

Meditation IV
THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

Meditation V
THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS IN DEATH

Meditation VI
THE GREAT THOUGHT OF ETERNITY

Meditation VII
THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

Meditation VIII
THE ABUSE OF GOD’S MERCY

Meditation IX
THE EMPTINESS AND SHORTNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

Meditation X
THE CONTEMPT WITH WHICH THE SINNER TREATS GOD

Meditation XI
THE PAIN OF LOSS

Meditation XII
THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

Meditation XIII
PREPARATION FOR THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENTS

Meditation XIV
THE SUFFERING OF SOULS IN HELL IN THEIR MENTAL FACULTIES

Meditation XV
Devotion TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Meditation XVI
JESUS SUFFERING FOR OUR SINS

Meditation XVII
THE ONE THING NECESSARY

Meditation XVIII
THE SINNER’S DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD

Meditation XIX
THE MERCIFUL CHASTISEMENTS OF GOD

Meditation XX
THE PATIENCE OF GOD WITH SINNERS

Meditation XXI
DEATH, THE PASSAGE TO ETERNITY

Meditation XXII
THE REFORMATION OF OUR LIVES BEFORE DEATH,

Meditation XXIII
THE LAMB OF GOD SACRIFICED FOR OUR SINS

Meditation XXIV
THE VALUE OF TIME

Meditation XXV
THE TERRORS OF THE DYING MAN AT THE THOUGHT OF APPROACHING JUDGMENT

Meditation XXVI
THE FIRE OF HELL

Meditation XXVII
THE VANITY OF ALL WORLDLY THINGS

Meditation XXVIII
THE NUMBER OF OUR SINS

Meditation XXIX
THE FOLLY OF LIVING AS ENEMIES OF GOD

Meditation XXX
THE SACRED WOUNDS OF JESUS

Meditation XXXI
THE GREAT AFFAIR OF SALVATION

Meditation XXXII
THE FREQUENT THOUGHT OF DEATH

Meditation XXXIII
THE TURNING AWAY FROM GOD BY SIN

Meditation XXXIV
THE MERCY OF GOD IN CALLING SINNERS TO REPENTANCE

Meditation XXXV
THE SOUL’S APPEARANCE AT THE TRIBUNAL OF GOD

Meditation XXXVI
THE UNHAPPY LIFE OF THE SINNER

Meditation XXXVII
THE LOVE OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

Meditation XXXVIII
THE WILL OF GOD TO SAVE ALL

Meditation XXXIX
THE NEAR APPROACH OF DEATH

Meditation XL
GOD ABANDONS THE SINNER IN HIS SINS

Meditation XLI
THE EXAMINATION AT THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

Meditation XLII
THE JOURNEY TO ETERNITY

Meditation XLIII
JESUS, THE MAN OF SORROWS

Meditation XLIV
THE FOLLY OF NEGLECTING SALVATION

Meditation XLV
THE MOMENT OF DEATH

Meditation XLVI
THE DESIRE OF GOD TO SAVE SINNERS

Meditation XLVII
THE SENTENCE OF PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

Meditation XLVIII
AN UNPROVIDED DEATH

Meditation XLIX
THE ETERNITY OF HELL

Meditation L
THE UNCERTAINTY OF GRACE

Meditation LI
THE DEATH OF JESUS FOR THE LOVE OF MEN

Meditation LII
THE CERTAINTY OF BEING EITHER SAVED OR LOST

Meditation LIII
THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

Meditation LIV
THE VANITY OF THE WORLD

Meditation LV
THE PROVOKING OF GOD BY SIN

Meditation LVI
THE LAST JUDGMENT

Meditation LVII
THE INTENSITY OF THE PAINS OF HELL

Meditation LVIII
THE LOVE OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED

Meditation LIX
THE IRRETRIEVABLE LOSS OF THE SOUL

Meditation LX
WE MUST DIE

Meditation LXI
THE LOVE WITH WHICH GOD RECEIVES THE REPENTANT SINNER

Meditation LXII
TEMPTATIONS TO RELAPSE

Meditation LXIII
THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

Meditation LXIV
THE LOVE OF GOD IN GIVING US HIS SON

Meditation LXV
EARNEST LABOUR TO SECURE ETERNAL SALVATION

Meditation LXVI
THE APPEARANCE OF THE BODY IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH

Meditation LXVII
THE STATE OF THE BODY IN THE GRAVE

Meditation LXVIII
MAN IS SOON FORGOTTEN AFTER DEATH

Meditation LXIX
THE APPEARANCE OF ALL MANKIND IN THE VALLEY OF JOSAPHAT

Meditation LXX
THE BLINDNESS OF THOSE WHO SAY, IF WE BE LOST WE SHALL NOT BE LOST ALONE

Meditation LXXI
THE MEASURE OF GRACE

Meditation LXXII
LOVING GOD BECAUSE HE HAS DIED FOR US

Meditation LXXIII
THE CARE OF OUR SALVATION

Meditation LXXIV
THE LEAVING OF ALL AT DEATH

Meditation LXXV
THE MOMENT OF DEATH

Meditation LXXVI
THE EXAMINATION OF OUR SINS AT THE LAST DAY

Meditation LXVII
THE GREAT LOVE OF GOD FOR OUR SOULS

Meditation LXXVIII
THE REMORSE OF THE REPROBATE

Meditation LXXIX
JESUS, THE KING OF LOVE

Meditation LXXX
THE MISERABLE DEATH OF THE SINNER

Meditation LXXXI
THE HAPPY DEATH OF THE JUST

Meditation LXXXII
AT THE POINT OF DEATH

Meditation LXXXIII
THE RASHNESS OF THE SINNER IN COMMITTING MORTAL SIN

Meditation LXXXIV
THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Meditation LXXXV
THE EVIL OF LUKEWARMNESS

Meditation LXXXVI
THE GIVING OF OURSELVES TO GOD WITHOUT RESERVE

Meditation LXXXVII
THE TROUBLE AND CONFUSION OF THE HOUR OF DEATH

Meditation LXXXVIII
THE PROVOKING OF GOD BY SIN TO DEPART FROM US

Meditation LXXXIX
THE ABUSE OF GRACE

Meditation XC
DIVINE LOVE VICTORIOUS OVER GOD HIMSELF

Meditation XCI
THE SENTENCE OF THE WICKED AT THE LAST JUDGMENT

Meditation XCII
THE SENTENCE OF THE ELECT

Meditation XCIII
THE DISHONOURING OF GOD BY SIN

Meditation XCIV
THE JOY OF JESUS CHRIST AT FINDING THE LOST SHEEP

Meditation XCV
JESUS SUFFERING THE PUNISHMENT DUE TO OUR SINS

Meditation XCVI
THE HAPPINESS OF POSSESSING THE GRACE OF GOD, AND THE MISERY OF BEING DEPRIVED OF IT

Meditation XCVII
CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

PART II
Pious Reflections on Different Points of Spirituality to Guide Souls that Desire to Advance in the Love of God

I
THE THOUGHT OF ETERNITY

II
WE ARE PILGRIMS ON EARTH

III
GOD DESERVES TO BE LOVED ABOVE EVERYTHING

IV
IN ORDER THAT A SOUL MAY BECOME HOLY, IT MUST GIVE ITSELF TO GOD WITHOUT RESERVE

V
THE TWO GREAT MEANS FOR BECOMING HOLY DESIRE AND RESOLUTION

VI
THE SCIENCE OF THE SAINTS

VII
OUR ETERNAL SAFETY CONSISTS IN PRAYER

VIII
I MUST ONE DAY DIE

IX
PREPARATION FOR DEATH

X
HE THAT LOVES GOD MUST LOVE AND NOT ABHOR DEATH

XI
OUR SALVATION IS IN THE CROSS

XII
HOW MUCH IT PLEASES JESUS CHRIST THAT WE SUFFER FOR THE LOVE OF HIM

XIII
DIVINE LOVE CONQUERS ALL THINGS

XIV
THE NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER

XV
THE OBJECT OF MENTAL PRAYER

XVI
THE MERCY OF GOD

XVII
CONFIDENCE IN JESUS CHRIST

XVIII
SALVATION ALONE IS NECESSARY

XIX
PERFECT RESIGNATION TO THE DIVINE WILL

XX
HAPPY IS HE WHO IS FAITHFUL TO GOD IN ADVERSITY

XXI
HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST OUGHT TO HATE THE WORLD

XXII
THE WORDS OF A DYING MAN TO JESUS CRUCIFIED

XXIII
ACTS OF Devotion FOR THE TIME OF DEATH

XXIV
THE HOUSE OF ETERNITY

XXV
SOULS WHO LOVE GOD DESIRE TO GO TO SEE HIM IN HEAVEN

XXVI
JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

XXVII
THE AFFAIR OF ETERNAL SALVATION

XXVIII
WHAT WILL BE THE JOY OF THE BLESSED

XXIX
THE PAIN OF HAVING LOST GOD WILL BE THAT WHICH CONSTITUTES HELL

XXX
CONTEMPT FOR THE WORLD

XXXI
LOVE OF SOLITUDE

XXXII
THE SOLITUDE OF HEART

XXXIII
THE SIGHT AND LOVE OF GOD IN THE NEXT LIFE WILL CONSTITUTE THE JOY OF THE BLESSED

XXXIV
Meditation BEFORE THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

XXXV
IN GOD ALONE IS FOUND TRUE PEACE

XXXVI
WE OUGHT TO HAVE GOD ALONE AS THE END OF OUR ACTIONS

XXXVII
WE MUST SUFFER EVERYTHING IN ORDER TO PLEASE GOD

XXXVIII
HAPPY IS HE WHO DESIRES NOTHING BUT GOD

XXXIX
DRYNESS OF SPIRIT

XL
THE RETIRED LIFE

XLI
DETACHMENT FROM CREATURES

XLII
PRECIOUS IS THE DEATH OF THE SAINTS

XLIII
LUKEWARMNESS

XLIV
PURITY OF INTENTION

XLV
ASPIRATIONS AFTER THE COUNTRY OF THE BLESSED

PART III
Spiritual Treatises

I
DIVINE LOVE

I. HOW MUCH GOD DESERVES TO BE LOVED

II. HOW MUCH GOD DESIRES TO BE LOVED BY US

III. MEANS TO ACQUIRE THE LOVE OF GOD

HYMN. ON THE LOVE OF GOD

II
THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST

I. WHAT THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST HAS DONE FOR GOD AND FOR US

II. WHAT THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST REQUIRES OF US

III. A SWEET ENTERTAINMENT FOR SOULS THAT LOVE GOD, AT THE SIGHT OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

HYMN. ON THE LOVE WHICH JESUS BEARS TO THE SOUL

III
CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

I. EXCELLENCE OF THIS VIRTUE

II. CONFORMITY IN ALL THINGS

III. HAPPINESS OBTAINED FROM PERFECT CONFORMITY

IV. GOD WISHES ONLY OUR GOOD

V. SPECIAL PRACTICES OF THIS CONFORMITY

VI. CONCLUSION

HYMN. HOW AMIABLE IS THE WILL OF GOD?

IV
THE WAY TO CONVERSE ALWAYS AND FAMILIARLY WITH GOD

I. GOD WISHES US TO SPEAK TO HIM WITH CONFIDENCE AND FAMILIARITY

II. IT IS EASY AND AGREEABLE TO ENTERTAIN ONE’S SELF WITH GOD

III. OF WHAT, WHEN, AND HOW WE SHOULD CONVERSE WITH GOD

IV. GOD ANSWERS THE SOUL THAT SPEAKS TO HIM

V. PRACTICAL SUMMARY

HYMN. DIALOGUE BETWEEN JESUS AND THE LOVING SOUL

V
A SHORT TREATISE ON PRAYER

I. THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

II. THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER

III. THE CONDITIONS REQUISITE FOR THE DUE PERFORMANCE OF PRAYER

IV. GOD HEARS EVEN THE PRAYERS OF SINNERS

V. GOD HAS PLEDGED HIMSELF TO GRANT US NOT TEMPORAL BUT SPIRITUAL GOODS

VI. CONCLUSION

A PRAYER TO OBTAIN FINAL PERSEVERANCE

HYMN. DESCRIPTION OF THE LIFE OF A SOUL, THE TRUE SPOUSE OF JESUS, FROM THE WORDS OF ST. BERNARD

VI
INTERIOR TRIALS

I. REST FOR SCRUPULOUS SOULS IN OBEDIENCE TO THEIR DIRECTOR

II. COUNSELS, FROM WHICH A SOUL, WHEN IN DESOLATION, MAY DERIVE COMFORT AND CONFIDENCE

III. REASONS FOR HAVING CONFIDENCE IN THE DIVINE MERCY THROUGH THE MERITS OF JESUS CHRIST

IV. OTHER SPECIAL COUNSELS

V. EXAMPLE: ST. LIDWINE

HYMN. THE LOVING SOUL IN DESOLATION

VII. SURE SIGNS BY WHICH WE MAY KNOW WHETHER WE HAVE THE DIVINE LOVE IN US

HYMN. THE SOUL INTRODUCED INTO THE WINE-CELLAR, AND ALREADY INEBRIATED WITH DIVINE LOVE

VIII. RULE OF LIFE. (ABRIDGED)

The Way of Salvation and of Perfection

NOTICE

THIS volume contains the quintessence of the science of the saints. It gives a correct idea of the spirit, of the heart, and of the talent of Saint Alphonsus: one might say that in it his whole soul is poured out.

The entire work is divided into three parts. In the first, we resume, under another form, the considerations on the eternal truths or the Last Things, treated at greater length in the preceding volume. The second part traces and paves the way that leads to divine love, or to sanctity and true happiness, and inspires us at the same time with the desire, the zeal, and the courage to undertake everything to reach this end. The third part transports us to the summit of the holy mountain, or Christian perfection, shows us in detail the mysteries of the interior life, and enables us to breathe its sweetest perfume.

Some persons have objected that the writings of Saint Alphonsus contain many repetitions. This is true in regard to the ascetical works; but these repetitions are not useless. There is no question here of a study, a scientific work done for the sole purpose of exercising the mind. It is a food destined to give strength to the life of the soul. Each one takes for himself everyday the amount that agrees with his spiritual temperament. But let us hear what the author himself says in regard to this matter: *"I entreat my readers not to grow weary if in those prayers they always find petitions for the grace of perseverance and the grace of divine love. For us, these are the two graces most necessary for the attainment of eternal salvation."*[1108] He also says: *"One should not find it tiresome that I repeat the texts that I have already cited several times. . . . The authors of pernicious books, who treat of obscene things, reproduce even to satiety their impure sallies in order to inflame their imprudent readers with the fire of concupiscence; and should it not be permitted to me to repeat sacred texts that are most suitable to inflame souls with divine love?"*[1109] Ah, let us never grow tired of reading and meditating on what the holy bishop has had the patience to write so many times for our benefit. ED.

PART I

Meditations Suitable for All Times in the Year[1110]

Meditation I

ETERNAL SALVATION

1. Our most important affair is that of our eternal salvation; upon it depends our happiness or misery for ever. This affair will come to an end in eternity, and will decide whether we shall be saved or lost forever; whether we shall have acquired an eternity of delights, or an eternity of torments; whether we shall live forever happy, or forever miserable. O God! what will my lot be? Shall I be saved, or shall 1 be lost? I may be either. And if I may be lost, why do I not embrace such a life, as may secure for me life eternal? O Jesus! Thou didst die to save me; yet have I been lost, as often as I have lost Thee, my sovereign good: suffer me not to lose Thee any more.

2. Men esteem it a great affair to gain a lawsuit, to obtain a post of honour, or to acquire an estate. Nothing, however, that will end with time deserves to be esteemed great. Since, therefore, all the goods of this world will one day end in our regard, as we shall either leave them or they will leave us, that affair alone should be esteemed great, upon which depends eternal happiness or eternal misery.

O Jesus, my Redeemer, cast me not away from Thy face, as I have deserved! I am indeed a sinner; but I am grieved from the bottom of my heart for having offended Thy infinite goodness. Hitherto I have despised Thee, but now I love Thee above all things. Henceforth Thou alone shalt be my only good, my only love. Have pity on a sinner who penitently casts himself at Thy feet, and desires to love Thee. If I have grievously offended Thee, I now ardently desire to love Thee. What would have become of me, if Thou hadst called me out of life when I had lost Thy grace and favour? Since Thou, O Lord! hast shown so much mercy to me, grant me grace to become a saint.

3. Let us awaken our faith in a heaven and a hell of eternal duration: one or other will be our lot. *O God! how could I, knowing that by committing*

sin I was condemning myself to eternal torments how could I sin so often against Thee and forfeit Thy grace? Knowing that Thou art my God and my Redeemer, how could I, for the sake of a miserable gratification, so often turn my back upon Thee? O God, I am sorry above every evil for having thus despised Thee. I love Thee above every good, and henceforth I will suffer the loss of all things rather than lose Thy friendship. Give me strength to continue faithful. And do Thou, O Blessed Virgin Mary! pray for me and assist me.

Meditation II

SIN AS IT DISHONOURS GOD

1. *By transgression of the law thou dishonourest God.*[1111] When the sinner deliberates whether he shall give or refuse his consent to sin, he takes the balance into his hands to decide which is of most value the favour of God, some passion, some worldly interest or pleasure. When he yields to temptation, what does he do? He decides that some wretched gratification is more desirable than the favour of God. Thus it is that he dishonours God, declaring, by his consent, that a miserable pleasure is preferable to the divine friendship. Thus, then, O God! have I so many times dishonoured Thee, by esteeming Thee less than my miserable passions.

2. Of this the Almighty complains by the prophet Ezekiel, when he says: *They violated Me among My people, for a handful of barley and a piece of bread.*[1112] If the sinner should exchange God for a treasure of jewels, or for a kingdom, it would indeed be doing a great evil, because God is of infinitely more value than all the treasures and kingdoms of the earth. But for what do so many exchange him? for a vapour, for a little dirt, for a poisoned pleasure, which is no sooner tasted than it vanishes.

God! how could I have had the heart for such vile things, so often to despise Thee, who hast shown so much love for me? But behold, my Redeemer, how I now love Thee above all things; and because I love Thee, I feel more regret for having lost Thee, my God, than if I had lost all other goods, and even my life. Have pity on me, and forgive me. I will never more incur Thy displeasure. Grant that I may rather die than offend Thee any more.

3. *Lord, who is like to Thee?*[1113] And what good things, God! can be comparable to Thee, O infinite goodness? But how could I have turned my back upon Thee, to give myself to those vile things which sin held out to me? O Jesus, Thy precious blood is my hope. Thou hast promised to hear

him who prays to Thee. I ask Thee not for the goods of this world: I ask Thee for the pardon of those sins which I have committed against Thee, and for which I am sorry above every other evil. I ask Thee for perseverance in Thy grace until the end of my life. I ask Thee for the gift of Thy holy love; my soul is enamoured of Thy goodness; hear me, O Lord! Only grant that I may love Thee both here and hereafter, and to all things else do with me as Thou pleasest. My Lord, and my only good, suffer me not to be any more separated from Thee! Mary, Mother of God, do thou also listen to me, and obtain for me that I may ever belong to God, and that God may be my inheritance forever.

Meditation III

THE PATIENCE OF GOD IN WAITING FOR SINNERS

1. Who in this world has so much patience with his equals as God with us his creatures, in bearing with us, and waiting for our repentance, after the many offences we have committed against him? Ah! my God, had I thus offended my brother or my father, long ago would he have driven me from his face! O Father of mercies, *cast me not away from Thy face,*[1114] but have pity on me.

2. *Thou hast mercy, says the wise man, upon all, because Thou canst do all things, and overlookest the sins of men for the sake of repentance.*[1115] Men conceal their sense of the injuries which they receive, either because they are good, and know that it belongs not to themselves to punish those who offend them; or because they are unable, and have not the power to revenge themselves. *But to Thee, my God, it does belong to take revenge of the offences which are committed against Thy infinite majesty; and thou indeed art able to avenge Thyself, whenever Thou pleaseth; and dost Thou dissemble? Men despise Thee; they make promises to Thee and afterwards betray Thee; and dost Thou seem not to behold them, or as if Thou hadst little concern for Thy honour? Thus, O Jesus, hast Thou done towards me. Ah! my God, my infinite good, I will no longer despise Thee, I will no longer provoke Thee to chastise me. And why should I delay until Thou abandonest me in reality and condemnest me to hell? I am truly sorry for all my offences against Thee. I would that I had died rather than offend Thee! Thou art my Lord, Thou hast created me, and Thou hast redeemed me by Thy death; Thou alone hast loved, Thou alone deservest to be loved, and Thou alone shall be the sole object of my love.*

3. My soul, how could you be so ungrateful and so daring against your God? When you offended him, could he not have suddenly called you out of life and punished you with hell? And yet he waited for you; instead of

chastising you, he preserved your life and gave you good things. But you, instead of being grateful to him and loving him for such excessive goodness, you continued to offend him! O my Lord, since Thou hast waited for me with so great mercy, I give Thee thanks. I am sorry for having offended Thee. I love Thee. I might at this hour have dwelt in hell, where I could not have repented, nor have loved Thee. But now that I can repent, I grieve with my whole heart for having offended Thy infinite goodness; and I love Thee above all things, more than I love myself. Forgive me, and grant that from this day I may love no other but Thee, who hast so loved me. May I live for Thee alone, my Redeemer, who for me didst die upon the cross! All my hopes are in Thy bitter Passion. O Mary, Mother of God! assist me by thy holy intercession.

Meditation IV

THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

1. We must die! how awful is the decree! we must die. *The sentence is passed: It is appointed for all men once to die.*[1116] Thou art a man and thou must die. St. Cyprian says that we are born with a rope around our necks, and as long as we live on earth we hourly approach the gallows, that is, the sickness that puts an end to our life. It would be madness for any one to delude himself with the idea that he shall not die. A poor man may flatter himself that he may become rich, or a vassal that he may be a king; but who can ever hope to escape death? One dies old, another young, but all at last must come to the grave. I therefore must one day die and enter eternity. But what will be my lot for eternity? happy or miserable? My Saviour Jesus, be Thou a Saviour to me!

2. Of all those who were living upon the earth at the beginning of the last century, not one is now alive. The greatest and most renowned princes of this world have exchanged their country; scarcely does there remain any remembrance of them, and their bare bones are hardly preserved in stone monuments. Make me, O God! more and more sensible of the folly of loving the goods of this world, and for the sake of them renouncing Thee, my sovereign and infinite good. What folly have I not been guilty of; and how much it grieves me! I give Thee thanks for having made me sensible of it.

3. A hundred years hence, at most, and neither you nor I will be any longer in this world; both will have gone into the house of eternity. A day, an hour, a moment, is approaching which will be the last both for you and me; and this hour, this moment, is already fixed by Almighty God; how then can we think of anything else but of loving God, who will then be our judge? Alas! what will my death be? O my Jesus and my judge! what will become of me when I shall have to appear before Thee to give an account

of my whole life? Pardon me, I beseech Thee, before that moment arrives which will decide my happiness or misery for eternity. I am sorry for having offended Thee, my sovereign good. Hitherto I have not loved Thee; but now I will love Thee with my whole soul. Grant me the grace of perseverance. O Mary, refuge of sinners, have pity on me!

Meditation V

THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS IN DEATH

1. *The day of destruction is at hand.*[1117] The day of death is called the day of destruction, because then is destroyed all that man has acquired; honours, friends, riches, possessions, kingdoms all are then no more. What then doth it profit us to gain the whole world if in death we must leave all? All is at an end at the bedside of the dying man. Is there any king, think you, said St. Ignatius to Xavier when he sought to bring him to God, who has taken with him into the other world even a thread of purple to mark his sovereignty? Has any rich man taken with him a single coin, or even one servant to attend him? In death all is left behind. The soul enters eternity alone and unattended, except by its works. Woe to me! where are my works to accompany me to a blessed eternity? I can discover none but such as render me deserving of eternal torments.

2. Men come into the world in unequal conditions: one is born rich, another poor, one a noble, another a plebeian; but all go out of it equal and alike. Consider the graves of the dead: see if you can discover among the bodies which are there interred, who was a master and who a servant, who was a king and who a beggar. O God! while others amass the fortunes of this world, may my only fortune be Thy holy grace. Thou alone art my only good both in this life and in the next.

3. In one word, everything on earth will come to an end. All greatness will end, all misery will end, honours will end, ignominies will end; pleasures will end, sufferings will end. Blessed in death, therefore, not he who has abounded in riches, honours, and pleasures, but he who has patiently endured poverty, contempt, and sufferings! The possession of temporal goods affords no consolation at the moment of death: that alone consoles us which has been done or suffered for God. O Jesus! separate my heart from this world, before death entirely takes me from it. Help me with

Thy grace; Thou indeed knowest how great is my weakness. Permit me not to be any more unfaithful to Thee, as I have hitherto been. I am sorry, O Lord! for having so often despised Thee. Now will I love Thee above every good, and will die a thousand times rather than forfeit Thy grace. But the infernal one ceases not to tempt me; in mercy abandon me not, leave me not to myself, permit me not to be any more separated from Thy love. O Mary, my hope! obtain for me the grace of perseverance.

Meditation VI

THE GREAT THOUGHT OF ETERNITY

1. Thus did St. Augustine designate the thought of eternity: *“The great thought” “magna cogitatio.”* It was this thought that induced so many solitaries to retire into deserts; so many religious, even kings and queens, to shut themselves up in cloisters; and so many martyrs to sacrifice their lives in the midst of torments, in order to acquire a happy eternity in heaven, and to avoid a miserable eternity in hell. The Ven. John of Avila converted a certain lady with these two words: *“Reflect,“ said he to her, “on these two words: Ever and Never.”* A certain monk went down into a grave that he might meditate continually on eternity, and constantly repeated, *“O eternity! eternity!”* How frequently, my God, have I deserved the eternity of hell! Oh, that I had never offended Thee! Grant me sorrow for my sins; have compassion on me.

2. The same Ven. John of Avila says, that he who believes in eternity and becomes not a saint should be confined as one deranged. He who builds a house for himself takes great pains to make it commodious, airy, and handsome, and says: *“I labour and give myself a great deal of trouble about this house, because I shall have to live in it all my life.”* And yet how little is the house of eternity thought of! When we shall have arrived at eternity there will be no question of our residing in a house more or less commodious, or more or less airy: the question will be of our dwelling in a palace overflowing with delights, or in a gulf of endless torments. And for how long a time? not for forty or fifty years, but forever, as long as God shall be God. The saints, to obtain salvation, thought it little to give their whole lives to prayer, penance, and the practice of good works. And what do we do for the same end?

O my God! many years of my life are already past, already death is near at hand, and what good have I hitherto done for Thee? Give me light, and *strength, to devote the remainder of my days to Thy service. Too much, alas! have I offended Thee; I desire hence forth to love Thee.*

3. *With fear and trembling work out your salvation.*[1118] To obtain salvation we must tremble at the thought of being lost, and tremble not so much at the thought of hell, as of sin, which alone can send us thither. He who dreads sin avoids dangerous occasions, frequently recommends himself to God, and has recourse to the means of keeping himself in the state of grace. He who acts thus will be saved; but for him who lives not in this manner it is morally impossible to be saved. Let us attend to that saying of St. Bernard: *"We cannot be too secure where eternity is at stake."*[1119] Thy blood, O Jesus, my Redeemer! is my security. I should have been already lost on account of my sins, hadst Thou not offered me Thy pardon, on condition of my repentance for having offended Thee. I am sorry therefore with my whole heart for having offended Thee, who art infinite goodness. I love Thee, O sovereign good! above every other good, I know that Thou willest my salvation, and I will endeavour to secure it by loving Thee forever. O Mary, Mother of God! pray to Jesus for me.

Meditation VII

THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

1. How is it possible to believe that the Creator should have been willing to die for us, his creatures? Yet we must believe it because faith so teaches it. Hence the Council of Nice commands us to confess: *"I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who for us men and for our salvation was crucified for us, suffered, and was buried."*[1120] And if it is true, O God of love! that Thou hast died for the love of men, can there be one who believes this, and does not love Thee, so loving a God? But, O God! of those who are guilty of such ingratitude I am one; and not only have I not loved Thee, my Redeemer, but I have many times, for the sake of gratifying my miserable and depraved inclinations, renounced Thy grace and Thy love.

2. Thou hast then, my Lord and my God, died for me; and how could I, knowing this, have so often disowned Thee and turned my back upon Thee? But Thou, my Saviour, *didst come down from heaven to save that which was lost.*[1121] My ingratitude, therefore, does not deprive me of the hope of pardon. Yes, O Jesus! I hope that Thou wilt pardon me all offences which I have committed against Thee, through the death which Thou didst suffer for me on Mount Calvary. Oh that I could die of grief and of love as often as I think of the offences which I have committed against the love which Thou hast shown towards me! Make known to me, O Lord! what I must do henceforward to make amends for my ingratitude. Keep up in my mind a continual remembrance of the bitter death Thou wast pleased to suffer for me, that I may love Thee and never more offend Thee.

3. God, then, has died for me; and shall I be able to love anything else but God? No, my Jesus, I will love none but Thee. Thou hast loved me too much. Thou canst do no more to compel me to love Thee. I have obliged Thee by my sins to cast me away from Thy face; but Thou hast not abandoned me forever; Thou regardest me with tender affection; Thou art

about to call me to Thy love; I will no longer resist. I love Thee, my sovereign good; I love Thee, my God, who art worthy of infinite love; I love Thee, my God, who hast died for me. I love Thee, but I love Thee not enough; do Thou increase my love. Grant that I may forsake all things, and forget all things else, to please and to love Thee, my Redeemer, my love, and my all. O Mary, my hope! recommend me to thy divine Son.

Meditation VIII

THE ABUSE OF GOD’S MERCY

1. There are two ways by which the devil endeavours to deceive men to their eternal ruin: after they have committed sin he tempts them to despair on account of the severity of divine justice; but before they have sinned he encourages them to do so by the hope of obtaining the divine mercy. And he effects the ruin of numberless souls as well by the second as by the first artifice. *“God is merciful,”* says the obstinate sinner to him who would convert him from the iniquity of his ways. *“God is merciful.”* But as the Mother of God expresses it in her canticle, *His mercy is to them that fear Him.*[1122] Yes, the Lord deals mercifully with him that fears to offend him, but not so with the man who presumes upon his mercy to offend him still more. O God! I give Thee thanks for having made me sensible of Thy patience in bearing with me. Behold, I am of the number of those who, presuming on Thy goodness, have offended Thee again and again.

2. God is merciful; but he is also just. Sinners are desirous that he should be merciful only, without being just; but that is impossible, because were he only to forgive and never to chastise, he would be wanting in justice. Hence Father Avila observes that patience on the part of God towards those who avail themselves of his compassion to offend him the more, would not be compassion, but a want of justice. He is bound to chastise the ungrateful. He bears with them for a certain time, but after that abandons them.

Such a punishment, O God! has not as yet overtaken me, or else I had now dwelt in hell, or had been obstinate in my sins. But no: I desire to amend my life; I desire to offend Thee no more. Though I have hitherto displeased Thee, I am sorry for it with my whole soul; I desire henceforth to love Thee, and I desire to love Thee more than others do, because Thou hast not shown the same patience towards others as towards me.

3. God is not mocked.[1123] Yet he would be mocked, if the sinner could go on continually offending him, and yet afterwards enjoy him in heaven. *What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap.*[1124] He who sows good works shall reap rewards; but he who sows iniquities shall reap chastisements. The hope of those who commit sin because God is forgiving, is an abomination in his sight: *their hope, says holy Job, is an abomination.*[1125] Hence the sinner, by such hope, provokes God to chastise him the sooner, as that servant would provoke his master, who, because his master was good, took advantage of his goodness to behave ill.

O Jesus! such, I fear, has been my conduct towards Thee; because Thou wast good I have made no account of Thy precepts. I confess that I have done wickedly; and I detest all the offences I have committed against Thee. Now do I love Thee more than myself, and I desire never more to displease Thee. Ah, if I should again offend Thee by mortal sin! Permit it not, O Lord; rather let me die. O Mary, Mother of perseverance, do thou assist me.

Meditation IX

THE EMPTINESS AND SHORTNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

1. Holy David said that the happiness of this life is as the dream of one awaking from sleep: *as the dream of them that awake*[1126] All the greatness and glory of this world will appear no more to poor wordlings, at the hour of death, than as a dream to one awaking from sleep, who finds that the fortune which he had acquired in his dream ends with his sleep. Hence, did one who was undeceived wisely write on the skull of a dead man, *"Cogitanti omnia vilescunt" He who thinks, undervalues all things.* Yes, to him who thinks on death, all the goods of this life appear, as they really are, vile and transitory. Nor can that man fix his affections on the earth who reflects that in a short time he must leave it forever. Ah, my God, how often have I despised Thy grace for the miserable goods of this world! Henceforth I desire to think of nothing but of loving and serving Thee. Assist me with Thy holy grace.

2. "And is it thus, then, that worldly grandeur and sovereign power must end?" Such was the exclamation of St. Francis Borgia, when he beheld the corpse of the Empress Isabella, who died in the flower of her youth. Reflecting upon what he saw, he resolved to bid adieu to the world, and to give himself entirely to God, saying, *"I will henceforth serve a master who will never forsake me."* Let us detach ourselves from present goods before death tears us away from them. What folly it is to expose ourselves to the danger of losing our souls, for the sake of some attachment to this miserable world, from which we shall soon have to depart; for soon it will be said to us by the minister of God, *"Go forth, Christian soul, out of this world!"*[1127]

O my Jesus, that I had always loved Thee! How many offences have I been guilty of against Thee! Teach me how to correct my disorderly life, for I am willing to do whatever Thou pleasest. Accept of my love, accept of my repentance, in which I love Thee more than myself, and crave Thy mercy and compassion.

3. Reflect that you cannot remain forever in this world. You must one day leave the country in which you now reside; you must one day go out from the house in which you now dwell to return to it no more. Think that many before you inhabited the same room in which you are at present reading; that they slept in the same bed in which you are accustomed to sleep; and where are they? gone into eternity. The same will happen to you. Make me sensible, O God, of the injustice I have been guilty of in turning my back upon Thee, my sovereign good; and grant me the sorrow to bewail my ingratitude as I ought. O that I had died rather than ever offended Thee! Suffer me not to live any longer ungrateful for the love which Thou hast shown me. My dear Redeemer, I love Thee above all things, and I desire to love Thee to the best of my power during the remainder of life. Strengthen my weakness by Thy grace; and do thou, Mary, Mother of God, intercede for me.

Meditation X

THE CONTEMPT WITH WHICH THE SINNER TREATS GOD

1. God himself declares that the sinner treats him with contempt, and complains of it in these words: *I have brought up children, and exalted them; but they have despised me*.[1128] I have brought up my children, I have preserved and nourished them, but with base ingratitude they have despised me. But who is God who is thus despised by men? He is the Creator of heaven and earth; he is the sovereign infinite good, in whose sight men and angels are as a drop of water, or a grain of sand: *as a drop of a bucket, as a little dust.*[1129] a word, all things created, in the presence of his infinite greatness, are as though they were not: *All nations are before him as if they had no being at all, and counted to him nothing and vanity.*[1130]

Behold me, O God! a daring sinner who have presumed to despise Thy infinite majesty. But whilst Thou art infinite majesty, Thou art also infinite mercy. I love Thee, O Lord! and because I love Thee I am sorry for having offended Thee; do Thou have pity on me.

2. And, O God! who am I who have despised Thee? A poor helpless worm, who have nothing but what Thou in Thy bounty hast bestowed upon me. Thou hast given me my soul, my body, the use of reason, and numberless other benefits in this world; and I have made no other use of them all but to offend Thee, my benefactor. Nay, more; at the very time that Thou didst preserve my life, that I might not fall into hell as I deserved, I abused Thy goodness and forbearance. O my Saviour! how couldst Thou have had such patience with me? Wretch that I am, how many nights I slept under Thy displeasure! But Thou wouldst not have me perish. I trust, O my Jesus! in Thy blessed Passion that Thou wilt enable me to change my life. Let not that sacred blood be lost, which with so much pain and sorrow Thou didst shed for my salvation.

3. *But, O God! what have I done! Thou, my Redeemer, hast shown that regard for my soul, so as to shed Thy blood for its salvation, and I have been so wretched as to allow it to perish for a mere nothing, for a caprice, for a maddening passion, for a miserable gratification, for contempt of Thy grace and love. Ah! if faith did not assure me that Thou hast promised to pardon those who repent, I should not now dare to implore Thy forgiveness. O my Saviour! I kiss Thy sacred wounds, and for the love of these wounds I beseech Thee to forget the injuries which I have committed against Thee. Thou hast said that, when the sinner repents, Thou wilt forget all his ingratitude. I am sorry above every evil for having despised Thee, my sovereign good; make haste to pardon me, as Thou hast promised; let me be quickly reconciled to Thee. I love Thee now more than myself; may I never more incur Thy displeasure. O Mary, refuge of sinners! succour a poor sinner who invokes thy assistance.*

Meditation XI

THE PAIN OF LOSS

1. The greatest pain of hell is not the fire nor the darkness, not the stench, nor any other of all the material torments of that dreadful prison of despair; it is the pain of loss that is, the pain of having lost God which of itself may be said to constitute hell. The soul was created to be forever united with God, and to enjoy the sight of his enrapturing countenance. God is its last end, its only good, so that all the goods of earth and heaven, without God, could not make it happy. Hence it is that if a condemned soul in hell could possess and love God, hell, with all its torments, would be to it a paradise. But this will be its sovereign punishment, which will render it forever inconceivably miserable, to be deprived of God for all eternity, without the least hope of ever again beholding him or loving him. *Jesus, my Redeemer! nailed to the cross for my sake, Thou art my hope; oh that I had died rather than offended Thee!*

2. The soul, being created for God, has an instinctive tendency to become united with its sovereign good, its God; but being united with the body, when it wallows in iniquity, it becomes so darkened by the created objects which allure the senses that it loses its sight, and has so little knowledge of God as no longer to desire to be united with him. But when separated from the body, and from sensible objects, then it will know that God is the only good that can render it happy. Therefore, as soon as it shall have departed hence, it will feel itself drawn with most powerful attraction towards a union with God; but having left this life an enemy of God, it will be not only kept back from him by its sins, as by a chain, but dragged by them into hell, there to be forever separated and at a distance from God. The wretched soul in that eternal dungeon will know how beautiful God is, but will not be able to behold him. It will know how amiable God is, but will not be able to love him; it will even feel itself forced by its sins to hate him; and this will

be its hell of hells, to know that it hates a God who is infinitely lovely. It will desire that it were possible to destroy God, to whom it is hateful; and to destroy itself, hating God; and this will be the eternal occupation of this unhappy soul. *Do Thou, O Lord! have pity on me.*

3. This torment will be immensely increased by the remembrance of the graces that God bestowed upon it, and the love which he evinced towards it during its lifetime. It will especially call to mind the love of Jesus Christ in shedding his blood, and laying down his life for its salvation; but, ungrateful soul, not to forego its own miserable gratifications, it consented to lose God, its sovereign good; and it will find that no hope will be left of ever regaining him. *Ah, my God! were I in hell, I should not be able to love Thee, nor to repent of my sins; but as I have it now in my power to repent and to love Thee, I am sorry with my whole soul for having offended Thee, and love Thee above all things. Grant me to remember continually that hell which I have deserved, that I may love Thee with still greater and greater fervour. O Mary, refuge of sinners! do not abandon me.*

Meditation XII

THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

1. It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.[1131] It is of faith, that immediately after death we shall be judged according to our works in this life. And it is also of faith, that upon this judgment will depend our eternal salvation or perdition. Imagine yourself to be in your agony, and to have only a short time to live. Think that in a short time you would then have to appear before Jesus Christ to give an account of your whole life. Alas! how alarming would the sight of your sins then be to you! Jesus, my Redeemer! pardon me, I beseech Thee, before Thou judgest me. I know that I have many times already deserved to be sentenced to eternal death. No, I desire not to present myself guilty before Thee, but penitent and pardoned. O my sovereign good! I am grievously sorry for having offended Thee.

2. O God! what will be the anguish of the soul when it shall first behold Jesus Christ as its judge, and behold him terrible in his wrath? It will then see how much he has suffered for its sake; it will see what great mercies he has exercised towards it, and what powerful means he has bestowed upon it for the attainment of salvation; then will it also see the greatness of eternal goods, and the vileness of earthly pleasures, which have wrought its ruin; it will then see all these things, but to no purpose, because then there will be no more time to correct its past errors; what shall have then been done will be irrevocable. Before the judgment-seat of God, no nobility, nor dignity, nor riches will be considered; our works alone will be weighed there. *Grant, O Jesus! that when I first behold Thee I may see Thee appeased; and, for this end, grant me the grace to weep, during the remainder of my life, over the evil which I have done in turning my back upon Thee, to follow my own sinful caprices. No, I desire never more to offend Thee. I love Thee and desire to love Thee forever.*

3. What contentment will that Christian enjoy at the hour of death who has left the world to give himself to God; who has denied his senses all unlawful gratifications: and who, if he has on some occasions been wanting, has at last been wise enough afterwards to do worthy penance for it! On the other hand, what anguish will that Christian experience who has continually relapsed into the same vices, and at last finds himself at the point of death! Then will he exclaim: *"Alas! in a few moments I must appear before Jesus as my judge, and I have not as yet even begun to change my life! I have many times promised to do so, but I have not done it; and now, in a short time, what will become of me?"*

Ah, my Jesus and my judge! I return Thee thanks for the patience with which Thou hast hitherto waited for me. How many times have I myself written my own eternal condemnation. Since Thou hast thus waited to pardon me, reject me not, now prostrate at Thy feet. Receive me into Thy favour through the merits of Thy bitter Passion. I am sorry, my sovereign good! for having despised Thee. I love Thee above all things. I desire never more to forsake Thee. O Mary! recommend me to thy Son Jesus, and do not abandon me.

Meditation XIII

PREPARATION FOR THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENTS

1. *“Be you ready: for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come.”*[1132] The time of death will not be the time to prepare ourselves to die well; to die well and happily, we must prepare ourselves beforehand. There will not be time then to eradicate bad habits from the soul, to expel from the heart its predominant passions, and to extinguish all affection to earthly goods. *“The night cometh when no man can work”*[1133] All in death will be night; when nothing will be seen; and, hence, nothing done. The heart hardened, the mind obscured, confusion, fear, the desire of health, will all render it almost impossible at the hour of death to set in order a conscience confused and entangled in sin. Sacred wounds of my Redeemer! I adore you, I humbly kiss you, and I confide in you.

2. The saints thought they did but little, though they spent their whole lives in preparing for death, by acts of penance, prayer, and the practice of good works; and they trembled when they came to die. The venerable John Avila, although he had led a very holy life from his youth, when it was announced to him that he was about to die, made answer and said, *“Oh that I had a little more time to prepare myself for death!”* And what shall we say when the summons of death shall be brought to us? *No, my God, I do not wish to die disquieted and ungrateful, as at present I should die, if death were to overtake me; I desire to change my life, I desire to bewail my offences against Thee, I desire to love Thee with my whole heart. O Lord! help me, enable me to do something for Thee before I die, for Thee who hast died for the love of me.*

3. *The time is short,*[1134] says the Apostle. Yes, we have but a short time in which to set our accounts in order. Hence the Holy Ghost admonishes us, *Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it quickly.*[1135] Whatever thou art able to do to-day, put it not off till to-morrow; for to-day is passing away, and to-

morrow may bring death, which will deprive thee of all means of doing good, or of amending what thou hast done amiss. Woe to me! if death should find me still attached to this world. *Ah, my God, how many years have I lived at a distance from Thee! And how hast Thou had so much patience with me, in waiting for me and in calling me so often to repentance! I thank Thee, O my Redeemer! for Thy long forbearance, and I hope to thank Thee for it forever in heaven. "The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever."*[1136] *Hitherto I have not loved Thee, and have made little account of being or not being loved by Thee, but now I do love Thee with my whole heart; I love Thee above all things, more than I love myself, and I desire nothing so much as to be loved by Thee; and, recollecting how I have despised Thy love, I would willingly die of grief for having done so. Jesus, grant me perseverance in virtue. Mary, my holy mother, obtain for me the happiness of being faithful to God.*

Meditation XIV

THE SUFFERING OF SOULS IN HELL IN THEIR MENTAL FACULTIES

1. The souls in hell will be tormented in their memory. Never, in the abode of infinite misery will they lose for a moment the remembrance of the time that was allowed them in this life to practise virtue, and to make amends for the evil which they have done; and never will it be concealed from them that there is no longer the least hope of remedy. They will call to mind the lights which they received from God, his many loving calls, his offers of pardon, all despised; and they will see that all is now at an end, and that nothing remains for them, but to suffer and to despair for all eternity. *O Jesus! Thy blood, Thy sufferings, and Thy death are my trust and hope. Alas! suffer me not to fall into hell, there to curse forever even the blessings which Thou hast bestowed upon me.*

2. The souls in hell will be tormented in their understanding, by thinking continually of heaven, which they have wilfully lost through their own fault. The immense felicity enjoyed by the blessed in the abode of delights will be forever before their eyes; and this will render their life of dreadful sufferings, which they must drag on forever in the prison of despair and woe, still more tormenting. *Had I then died, my Redeemer, when I was in sin, I should now have had no hope of ever enjoying Thee in heaven! Thou gavest me life that I might gain heaven, and now have I lost heaven for something worse than nothing, by losing Thy grace! I love Thee, O God, and I am sorry for having offended Thee; and I hope, through the merits of Thy Passion, to come to love Thee forever in heaven.*

3. The souls in hell will be tormented in their will, by being denied everything which they desire, and by having every punishment inflicted upon them which they do not desire. They will never have anything which they wish for, but everything which they abhor. They will long to rid

themselves of their torments and to find peace; but there will be no peace for them; they will be forced to dwell in the midst of their torments forever. Their perverse will, by hating God when they know him to be the supreme good, and worthy of infinite love, will become their greatest torment. *So it is, my God; Thou art an infinite good and worthy of infinite love, and I have exchanged Thee for nothing! Oh that I had died and had not offered Thee so grievous an injury! I love Thee, my sovereign good. Have pity on me and suffer me not to be again ungrateful to Thee! I renounce all the delights of this world, and embrace Thee as my only good. I will be forever Thine; be Thou forever mine. This is my hope, my God, my love, and my all. Deus meus et omnia. O Mary! thou art all-powerful with God; obtain for me the grace of leading a holy life.*

Meditation XV

Devotion TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

1. Jesus is the mediator of justice; Mary obtains for us grace; for, as St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Bernardine of Sienna, St. Germanus, St. Antoninus, and others say, it is the will of God to dispense through the hands of Mary whatever graces he is pleased to bestow upon us. With God, the prayers of the saints are the prayers of his friends, but the prayers of Mary are the prayers of his mother. Happy they who confidently and at all times have recourse to this divine mother! This, above all others, is the most pleasing devotion to the Blessed Virgin, ever to have recourse to her and to say: O Mary! intercede for me with thy Son Jesus.

2. Jesus is omnipotent by nature; Mary is very powerful by grace; she obtains whatever she asks for. It is impossible, says St. Antoninus, that this mother should ask any favour of her Son for those who are devout to her, and the Son not grant her request. Jesus delights to honour his mother by granting whatever she asks of him. Hence St. Bernard exhorts us to seek for grace, and to seek for it through Mary; *because she is a mother to whom nothing can be denied.*[1137] If, then, we should be saved, let us recommend ourselves to Mary, that she may intercede for us, because her prayers are always heard. O mother of mercy! have pity on me. Thou art styled the advocate of sinners; assist me, therefore, a sinner placing my confidence in thee.

3. Let us not doubt whether Mary will hear us when we address our prayers to her. It is her delight to exercise her powerful influence with God in obtaining for us whatever graces we stand in need of. It is sufficient to ask favours of Mary to obtain them. If we are unworthy of them, she renders us worthy, by her powerful intercession; and she is very desirous that we should have recourse to her, that she may save us. What sinner ever perished, who, with confidence and perseverance, had recourse to Mary, the

refuge of sinners? He is lost who has not recourse to Mary. *Mary, my mother and my hope! I take refuge under thy protection; reject me not, as I have deserved. Protect me and have pity on me, a miserable sinner. Obtain for me the forgiveness of my sins; obtain for me holy perseverance, the love of God, a good death, and a happy eternity. I hope all things of thee, because thou art most powerful with God. Make me holy, since thou hast it in thy power to do so, by thy holy intercession. O Mary! in thee do I confide, in thee do I place all my hopes, next to thy divine Son Jesus.*

Meditation XVI

JESUS SUFFERING FOR OUR SINS

1. Seeing men lost in their sins, God was pleased to take pity on them; but his divine justice required satisfaction, and there was no one capable of making adequate satisfaction. On this account he sent into the world his own Son, made man, and loaded him with all our offences: *The Lord laid on him the iniquity, of us all,*[1138] so that he might pay our debts, satisfy divine justice, and save mankind. *O eternal God! what more couldst Thou have done to induce us to confide in Thy mercy, and to attract our hearts to Thy love, than give us even Thy own Son? But how could I, after all that Thou hast done for me, have been guilty of so many offences against Thee? O my God! for the love of this Thy Son, have pity on me. I am sorry above every evil for having offended Thee. And though I have grievously offended Thee, I desire to love Thee with the greatest fervour; give me strength so to love Thee.*

2. The eternal Father having loaded his Son with all our crimes, was not content even with such satisfaction from him, as would have amply atoned for us all, but, as Isaias continues: *The Lord was pleased to bruise him in infirmity.*[1139] He would have him mangled to exhaustion, with scourges, thorns, nails, and torments, until he died of tortures on an infamous gibbet. If faith, O God! did not assure us of this excess of Thy love towards men, who could possibly believe it? O God, worthy of all love! permit us not to be anymore ungrateful to Thee. Enlighten and strengthen us to correspond with such immense love during the remainder of our lives; do this, we beseech Thee, for the love of this Thy Son, whom Thou hast given to us.

3. Behold that innocent Son, attentive to the will of his Father, who would have him thus sacrificed for our sins, full of humility before his Father, full of love towards us, obediently embraces his life of pain and his bitter death: *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to*

the death of the cross.[1140]Dearest Saviour, I will therefore say to Thee with the penitent Ezechias: *Thou hast delivered my soul that it should not perish; Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.*[1141] I had deserved by my sins to be cast into hell, but Thou hast delivered me from it, and, as I hope, pardoned me. I had offended Thy divine majesty, and Thou hast loaded Thyself with my crimes, and hast suffered for me. After this, if I should again offend Thee, or if I should not love Thee with my whole heart, what punishment will ever be sufficient for my chastisement? Beloved Jesus, O love of my soul! I am exceedingly sorry for having so grievously offended Thee. I give Thee my whole self; accept of me, and suffer me not to be anymore separated from Thee. Holy Virgin, Mary, Mother, pray to thy divine Son for me, that he may be pleased to accept of me, and make me all his own.

Meditation XVII

THE ONE THING NECESSARY

1. One thing is necessary,[1142] the salvation of our souls. It is not necessary to be great, noble, or rich in this world, or to enjoy uninterrupted health; but it is necessary to save our souls, For this has God placed us here: not to acquire honours, riches, or pleasures, but to acquire by our good works that eternal kingdom which is prepared for those who, during this present life, fight against and overcome the enemies of their eternal salvation. *Ah, my Jesus, how often have I renounced heaven by renouncing Thy grace! But, O Lord! I am more grieved for having forfeited Thy friendship than for having lost heaven. Give me, O Jesus! a great sorrow for my sins, and mercifully pardon me.*

2. Of what consequence is it if a man be poor, mean, infirm, and despised in this life, provided that in the end he dies in the grace of God and secures his salvation? The more he has been afflicted with tribulations, if he suffered them with patience, the more will he be glorified in the kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, what does it profit a man to abound in riches and honours, if, when he dies, he is lost forever? If we are lost, all the goods that we have enjoyed in this world will be remembered only to increase our misery for eternity. Do Thou, my God, enlighten me; give me to understand that my only evil is to offend Thee, and my only good to love Thee. Enable me to spend the remainder of my days in serving Thee.

3. Salvation is necessary, because there is no medium; we must either be saved or lost. It will not do to say: I shall be satisfied with not going to hell; I shall not be concerned at being deprived of heaven. No; either heaven or hell; either forever happy with God in heaven in an ocean of delights, or forever trampled upon by devils in hell in an ocean of fire and torments: either saved, or lost; there is no alternative. *Jesus! I have hitherto chosen hell, and for years past I should have been suffering there, if in pity Thou*

hadst not borne with me. I thank Thee, O my Saviour! and I am sorry above every evil for having offended Thee. I hope, for the future, with the assistance of Thy grace, to walk no more in the way that conducts to hell. I love Thee, O my sovereign good! and I desire to love Thee forever. Grant me perseverance in good, and save me through that blood which Thou hast shed for me. O Mary, my hope! intercede for me.

Meditation XVIII

THE SINNER'S DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD

1. Pharaoh, when Moses announced to him the orders of God for the liberation of the Hebrews, insolently answered, *Who is the Lord, that I should hear His word? . . . I know not the Lord.*[1143] It is thus that the sinner replies to his own conscience when it intimates to him the divine precepts, which forbid him to do that which is evil: "I know not God; I know that he is my Lord, but I will not obey him." *Thus have I too often addressed Thee, O God! when I have committed sin. If Thou hadst not died for me, my Redeemer! I should not dare to crave Thy pardon; but Thou hast offered me Thy pardon from the cross, if I be desirous of availing myself of it. I do indeed desire it; I am sorry for having despised Thee, my sovereign good. I will rather die than offend Thee anymore.*

2. Thou hast broken my yoke; thou saidst, I will not serve.[1144] The sinner, when tempted to commit sin, hears indeed the voice of God, saying to him, *"My son, do not revenge thyself, do not gratify thyself with that infamous pleasure; relinquish the possession of that which is not thine."* But by yielding to sin, he replies, *"Lord, I will not serve thee. Thou desirest that I should not commit this sin, but I will commit it." My Lord and my God, how frequently have I, not by my words, but my deeds and my will, thus daringly replied to Thee! Alas! cast me not away from Thy face.*[1145] *I am now sensible of the wrong I have done Thee in parting with Thy graces for the gratification of my own wretched desires. Oh that I had died rather than ever offended Thee!*

3. God is the Lord of all things, because he has created all. *All things are in Thy power, because Thou hast made heaven and earth, and all things that are under the cope of heaven.*[1146] All creatures obey God; the heavens, the earth, the sea, the elements, the brute creation; while man, although he has

been gifted and loved by God above all other creatures, obeys him not, and is heedless of the loss of his grace!

I give Thee thanks, O God, for having waited for me. What would have become of me, had I died in one of those nights in which I went to rest under Thy displeasure? But as Thou hast patiently waited for me, it is a sign that Thou art desirous of pardoning me. Pardon me then, O Jesus! I am sorry above every evil for having ever lost the respect which is due to Thee. But then I did not love Thee; now I do love Thee more than myself, and I am ready to die a thousand times rather than again forfeit Thy grace and friendship. Thou hast said that Thou lovest those who love Thee.[1147] *I love Thee; do Thou love me in return, and give me grace to live and die in Thy love; that so I may love Thee forever. Mary, my refuge, through thee do I hope to remain faithful to God until the hour of my death.*

Meditation XIX

THE MERCIFUL CHASTISEMENTS OF GOD

1. God, being infinite goodness, desires only our good and to communicate to us his own happiness. When he chastises us, it is because we have obliged him to do so by our sins. Hence the prophet Isaias says that on such occasions *he doth a work foreign to his desires.*[1148] Hence it is said that it is the property of God to have mercy and to spare, to dispense his favours and to make all happy. *O God! it is this Thy infinite goodness which sinners offend and despise, when they provoke Thee to chastise them. Wretch that I am, how often have I offended Thy infinite goodness!*

2. Let us therefore understand that when God threatens us it is not because he desires to punish us, but because he wishes to deliver us from punishment; he threatens because he would have compassion on us. *O God, . . . Thou hast been angry, and hast had mercy on us.*[1149] But how is this? he is angry with us, and treats us with mercy? Yes! He shows himself angry towards us, in order that we may amend our lives, and that thus he may be able to pardon and save us; hence if in this life he chastises us for our sins, he does so in his mercy, for by so doing he frees us from eternal woe. How unfortunate, then, is the sinner who escapes punishment in this life! *Since then, O God! I have so much offended Thee, chastise me in this life, that Thou mayest spare me in the next. I know that I have certainly deserved hell; I accept all kinds of pain, that Thou mayest reinstate me in Thy grace and deliver me from hell, where I should be forever separated from Thee. Enlighten and strengthen me to overcome every obstacle to Thy favour.*

3. He who makes no account of the divine threats ought much to fear lest the chastisement threatened in the Proverbs should suddenly overtake him. *The man that with a stiff neck despiseth him that reproveth him shall suddenly be destroyed; and health shall not follow him.*[1150] A sudden death shall overtake him that despises God’s reprehensions, and he shall have no

time to avoid eternal destruction. *This, O Jesus! has happened to many, and I indeed have deserved that the like should happen to me; but, my Redeemer! Thou hast shown that mercy towards me which Thou hast not shown to many others who have offended Thee less frequently than I have done, and who are now suffering in hell without the least hope of ever again being able to regain Thy favour. I know, O Lord! that Thou desirest my salvation, and I also desire it, that I may please Thee. I renounce all, and turn myself to Thee, who art my God and my only good. I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee, and Thee alone. O infinite goodness! lam exceedingly displeased with myself for having hitherto done evil against Thee; and I wish that I had suffered every evil rather than offended Thee. Suffer me not any more to depart from Thee, rather let me die than offer Thee so great an injury. In Thee, my crucified Jesus, do I place all my hopes. O Mary, mother of Jesus! recommend me to thy Son.*

Meditation XX

THE PATIENCE OF GOD WITH SINNERS

1. The more we have experienced the patient mercies of God, the more we ought to be afraid of continuing to abuse them, lest the time of God's vengeance overtake us. *Revenge is Mine, and I will repay in due time.*[1151] God will put an end to his forbearance towards those who will not cease to abuse it. *I give Thee thanks, O Lord! for having patiently borne with me, though I have so often betrayed Thee. Make me sensible of the evil that I have done by abusing Thy patience for so long a time; make me sorry for all the offences I have committed against Thee. No, I will never more abuse Thy tender mercy.*

2. "Commit this sin; you can afterwards confess it." Such is the artifice with which the devil has drawn many souls into hell. Many Christians, now in hell, have been lost by this delusion. *The Lord waiteth, that He may have mercy on you.*[1152] God waits for the sinner, that the sinner may be converted, and obtain mercy; but when God sees that the time which he allows the sinner for doing penance is employed only in increasing the number of his offences, then he waits no longer, but punishes him as he deserves. Pardon me, O God! for I desire never more to offend Thee. And why should I delay? that Thou mayest condemn me to hell? I fear indeed that now Thou canst no longer have patience with me. I have indeed offended Thee too grievously. I am sorry for it. I repent of it. I hope for forgiveness through the merits of that blood which Thou hast shed for me.

3. The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed: because His commiserations have not failed.[1153] Thus should he exclaim who finds, to his confusion, that he has frequently offended God. He should be most grateful to God for not having suffered him to die in his sins, and be most careful not to offend him again; otherwise the Lord will reproach him, saying: *What more could I have done for My vineyard that I have not done?*

[1154] God will say to him: Ungrateful soul! if thou hadst committed the same offences against man, who is viler than the earth, verily he would not have borne with thee. And how great mercies have I exercised towards thee! How many times have I called thee, and enlightened thee, and pardoned thee? The time of punishment is at hand; the time of forgiveness is past. Thus has God spoken to many who are now suffering in hell; where one of their greatest torments is the remembrance of the mercies which they formerly received from God. *O Jesus, my Redeemer and my Judge! I also have deserved to hear the same from Thy mouth; but I hear Thee now again calling me to pardon: Be converted to the Lord thy God:*[1155] *O accursed sin, which has made me lose my God, how much do I abhor and detest thee! I turn my whole self towards Thee, my Lord and my God! My sovereign good, I love Thee; and because I love Thee I repent with my whole soul for having, during the time that is past, so much despised Thee. My God! I desire never more to offend Thee: give me Thy love, grant me perseverance. Mary, my refuge, succour and help me.*

Meditation XXI

DEATH, THE PASSAGE TO ETERNITY

1. It is of faith that my soul is immortal, and that one day, when I least think of it, I must leave this world. I ought therefore to make a provision for myself, which will not fail with this life, but will be eternal even as I am eternal. Great things were done here, in their life time, by an Alexander or a Caesar; but for how many ages past have their glories ceased! and where are they now? *O my God, that I had always loved Thee! What now remains for me, after so many years spent in sin, but trouble and remorse of conscience? But since Thou dost allow me time to repair the evil which I have done, behold me, Lord, ready to perform whatever Thou requirest of me, whatever Thou pleasest. I will spend the remainder of my days in bewailing my ungrateful conduct towards Thee, and in loving Thee with all my power, my God and my all, my only good.*

2. What will it avail me to have been happy in this world (if indeed true happiness can be attained without God) if hereafter I should be miserable for all eternity? But what folly it is, to know that I must die, and that an eternity either of happiness or misery awaits me after death, and that upon dying ill or well depends my being miserable or happy forever, and yet, not to adopt every means in my power to secure a good death! *O Holy Spirit, enlighten and strengthen me to live always in Thy grace, until the hour of my departure. O infinite goodness! I am sensible of the evil which I have done by offending Thee, and I detest it: I know that Thou alone art worthy of being loved, and I love Thee above all things.*

3. In a word, all the good things of this life must end at our burial and be left, while we are mouldering in our graves. The shadow of death will cover and obscure all the grandeur and splendour of this world. He only, then, can be called happy who serves God in this world, and by loving and serving him acquires eternal happiness. *O Jesus! I am truly sorry for having*

hitherto made so little account of Thy love. Now I love Thee above all things, and I desire nothing else but to love Thee. Henceforth Thou only shalt be the sole object of my love, Thou only shalt be my all; and this is the only inheritance I ask of Thee; to love Thee always, both in this life and in the next. For the merits of Thy bitter Passion, give me perseverance in all virtues. Mary, mother of God, thou art my hope.

Meditation XXII

THE REFORMATION OF OUR LIVES BEFORE DEATH,

1. Everyone desires to die the death of the saints, but it is scarcely possible for the Christian to make a holy end who has led a disorderly life until the time of his death; to die united with God, after having always lived at a distance from him. The saints, in order to secure a. happy death, renounced all the riches, the delights, and all the hopes which this world held out to them, and embraced poor and mortified lives. They buried themselves alive in this world, to avoid, when dead, being buried forever in hell. *O God! for how many years past have I deserved to be buried in that place of torments, without hope of pardon, or of being able to love Thee! But Thou hast waited in order to pardon me. Truly, then, am I sorry from the bottom of my heart for having offended Thee, my sovereign good; and have pity on me, and do not permit me to offend Thee any more.*

2. God forewarns sinners that they will seek him in death and will not find him: *You shall seek and shall not find Me.*[1156] They shall not find him because they will not then seek.him through love, but only through the fear of hell; they will seek God without renouncing their affection for sin, and hence they shall not find him. No, my God, I will not wait to seek Thee in death, but will seek and desire Thee from this moment. I am sorry for having hitherto given Thee so much displeasure by seeking to gratify my own inclinations. I am sorry for it, I confess that I have done evil. But Thou willest not that the heart that seeks Thee should despair, but rejoice: *Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.*[1157] Yes, O Lord! I seek Thee, and I love Thee more than myself.

3. How miserable is the Christian who before his death has not spent a good part of his life in bewailing his sins! It is not to be denied that such a man may be converted at his death and obtain salvation; but the mind obscured, the heart hardened, the bad habits formed, the passions

predominant, render it morally impossible for him to die happily. An extraordinary grace will be necessary for him; but does God reserve such a grace to bestow it upon one who has continued ungrateful to him even until the moment of death? *O God, to what straits are sinners reduced to escape eternal destruction! No, my God, I will not wait until death to repent of my sins and to love Thee. I am sorry now for having offended Thee; now do I love Thee with my whole heart. Suffer me not any more to turn my back upon Thee; rather let me die. O holy Mother, Mary, obtain for me perseverance in virtue.*

Meditation XXIII

THE LAMB OF GOD SACRIFICED FOR OUR SINS

1. *Behold the Lamb of God;*[1158] thus did the Baptist speak of our Blessed Redeemer, who offered his blood and even his life in sacrifice to obtain our pardon and our eternal salvation. Behold him in the hall of Pilate; as an innocent Lamb he permits himself to be shorn, not of wool, but of his sacred flesh, with thorns and scourges, *He shall be dumb as a lamb before His shearer, and He shall not open His mouth.*[1159] He opens not his mouth, nor does he complain, because he desires to suffer himself the punishments due to our sins. May the angels and all creatures bless Thee. O Saviour of the world! for the great mercy and love which Thou hast shown towards us. We had committed sins, and Thou didst make satisfaction for them.

2. Behold him, bound like a malefactor and surrounded by executioners, conducted to Calvary, there to become the victim of the great sacrifice, by which the work of our redemption is to be accomplished. *I was as a meek lamb that is carried to be a victim.*[1160] *Whither, O Jesus! do the people conduct Thee, loaded with such a cross, after having so cruelly tormented Thee? Thou answerest me. They conduct Me to death, and I go willingly, because I am going to save thee, and to prove how great my love is towards thee. And how, O my Saviour! have I proved my love towards Thee? Thou indeed knowest: by injuries and grievous offences, and by my frequent contempt of Thy grace and love. But Thy death is my hope. I am sorry, O Thou love of my soul! for having offended Thee; I am sorry, and will love Thee with my whole heart.*

3. St. Francis of Assisi, seeing a lamb led to the slaughter, could not refrain from tears, saying, *“As this lamb is led to the slaughter, so was my innocent Lord conducted for me to the death of the cross.”* Since, then, O Jesus! Thou dost not refuse to go to sacrifice Thy life for the love of me, shall I refuse to give my whole self for the love of Thee? This Thou

requirest of me: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.*[1161] This, and this only, do I desire to love Thee, and to love Thee with my whole heart. Thou hast loved without any reserve, and so will I love Thee. I am sorry for having offended Thee, O Lamb of God! and I give my whole self to Thee. Accept of me, O Jesus! and make me faithful to Thy grace. O Mary, Mother of my Redeemer, make me by thy prayers entirely his!

Meditation XXIV

THE VALUE OF TIME

1. Time is a treasure of inestimable value, because in every moment of time we may gain an increase of grace and eternal glory. In hell the lost souls are tormented with the thought, and bitterly lament that now there is no more time for them in which to rescue themselves by repentance from eternal misery. What would they give but for one hour of time to save themselves by an act of true sorrow from destruction! In heaven there is no grief; but if the blessed could grieve, they would do so for having lost so much time during life, in which they might have acquired greater glory, and because time is now no longer theirs. *I give Thee thanks, O God! for giving me time to bewail my sins, and to make amends by my love for the offences I have committed against Thee.*

2. Nothing is so precious as time; and yet how comes it that nothing is so little valued? Men will spend hours in jesting, or standing at a window or in the middle of a road, to see what passes; and if you ask them what they are doing, they will tell you they are passing away time. O time, now so much despised! thou wilt be of all things else the most valued by such persons when death.shall have surprised them. What will they not then be willing to give for one hour of so much lost time! But time will remain no longer for them when it is said to each one of them: *"Go forth, Christian soul, out of this world:"*[1162] hasten to be gone, for now there is no time for thee. How will they then exclaim, lamenting, Alas! I have squandered away my whole life; during so many years I might have become a saint; but how far am I from being such; and shall I become such, now that there is no more time for me! But to what purpose will such lamentations be, when the dying man is on the verge of that moment on which will depend eternity?

3. Walk whilst you have light.[1163] The time of death is the time of night, when nothing can any longer be seen, nor anything be accomplished. *The* *night cometh, in which no man can work.*[1164] Hence the Holy Spirit admonishes us to walk in the way of the Lord, whilst we have the light and the day before us. Can we reflect that the time is near approaching in which the cause of our eternal salvation is to be decided, and still squander away time?

Let us not delay, but immediately put our accounts in order, because when we least think of it, Jesus Christ will come to judge us. *At what hour ye think not, the Son of man will come.*[1165] Hasten, then, my Jesus, hasten to pardon me. And shall I delay? shall I delay until I am cast into that eternal prison, where, with the rest of the condemned souls, I must forever lament, saying, *"The summer is past, and we are not saved."*[1166] No, my Lord, I will no longer resist Thy loving invitations. Who knows but that this meditation which I am now reading may be the last I shall ever cast my eyes upon! I am sorry for having offended Thee, O sovereign good! To Thee do I consecrate the remainder of my days, and beseech Thee to grant me holy perseverance. I desire never more to offend Thee, but forever to love Thee. O Mary, refuge of sinners! in thee do I place my confidence.

Meditation XXV

THE TERRORS OF THE DYING MAN AT THE THOUGHT OF APPROACHING JUDGMENT

1. Consider the fear which the thought of judgment will cause in the mind of a dying man, when he reflects that in a very short time he must present himself before Jesus Christ, his Judge, to render an account of all the actions of his past life. When the awful moment of his passage out of this world into another, out of time into eternity, arrives, then will there be nothing so tormenting to him as the sight of his sins. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, being ill, and thinking of judgment, trembled. *Her confessor told her not to fear. "Ah, Father," she replied, "it is an awful thing to appear before Jesus Christ as our Judge."* Such were the sensations of this holy virgin, who was a saint from her infancy. What will he say who has frequently deserved hell?

2. The abbot Agatho after many years of penance trembled, saying, *"What will become of me when I shall be judged?"* And how should he not tremble who has offended God by many mortal sins, and yet has done no penance for them? At death, the sight of his crimes, the rigor of the divine judgments, the uncertainty of the sentence to be pronounced upon him, what a tempest of horror and confusion will these raise around him! Let us be careful to throw ourselves at the feet of Jesus Christ, and secure our pardon before the arrival of our accounting day. *Ah! my Jesus and my Redeemer, who wilt one day be my judge, have pity on me before the day of justice. Behold at Thy feet a deserter, who has often promised to be faithful to Thee, and has as often again turned his back upon Thee. No, my God, Thou hast not deserved the treatment which Thou hast hitherto received at my hands. Forgive me, O Lord! for I desire truly to change and amend my life. I am sorry, my sovereign good! for having despised Thee: take pity on me.*

3. Then will be decided the great affair of our eternal salvation. Upon this decision will depend our being either saved or lost forever, our being happy or miserable for all eternity. But, O God! each one knows this, and says, *"So it is."* But if it is so, why do we not leave all to attend only to our sanctification, and to the securing of our eternal salvation? *My God, I give Thee thanks for the light which Thou hast given me. Remember, O Jesus! that Thou didst die for my salvation; grant that when I first behold Thee I may see Thee appeased. If hitherto I have despised Thy grace, I now esteem it above every other good. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! and because I love Thee, I am sorry for having offended Thee. Hitherto I have forsaken Thee, but now I desire Thee and seek Thee; grant that I may find Thee, O God of my soul! Mary, my mother, recommend me to thy Son Jesus.*

Meditation XXVI

THE FIRE OF HELL

1. It is certain that hell is a pit of fire, in which the miserable souls of the wicked will be tormented forever. Even in this life the pain of burning is of all pains the most intense and dreadful; but the fire of hell has the power of inflicting much more excruciating torment, because it has been created by God to be the instrument of his wrath upon his rebellious creatures. "*Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,*"[1167] is the sentence of the reprobate. And as in this sentence of condemnation fire is particularly mentioned, we may conclude that, of all the torments with which the senses of the wicked are afflicted, fire is the greatest. *Ah, my God, for how many years past have I deserved to burn in this fire! But Thou hast waited for me, to behold me burning, not with this dreadful fire, but with the blessed flames of Thy holy love. Wherefore do I love Thee, my sovereign good, and desire to love Thee forever.*

2. In this world fire burns only outwardly, and does not penetrate our interior; but in hell the fire enters into the inmost recesses of its victims. *Thou shalt make them as an oven of fire.*[1168] Every one will become as a furnace of fire, so that the heart will burn within the chest, the bowels within the carcass, the brains within the skull, and even the marrow within the bones. Sinners, what are your feelings with regard to this fire? You, who cannot now bear a spark accidentally fallen from a candle, nor a house too hot, nor a ray of the sun upon your head, how will you endure to be permanently immersed in an ocean of fire, where you will be forever dying, and yet never, never die? *O my Redeemer! let not that blood which Thou didst shed for the love of me, be shed for me in vain. Grant me sorrow for my sins, grant me Thy holy love.*

3. *Which of you, saith the prophet, can dwell with devouring fire?*[1169] As a wild beast devoureth his prey, so shall the fire of hell continually devour

the unhappy soul, but without ever depriving him of life. Hence St. Peter Damian exclaims, *"Go on, sinner, go on, unchaste one; give thy flesh its desires: a day will come when thy impurities will be to thee as pitch within thy bowels, to nourish the fire which will consume thee in hell for all eternity."*[1170] *O my God, whom I have despised and lost! forgive me, and suffer me not to lose Thee any more. I am sorry above every evil for having offended Thee. Receive me into Thy favour, for now do I promise Thee that I will love Thee, and love no other but Thee. Most holy Mary, deliver me by thy holy intercession, from ever suffering the torments of hell.*

Meditation XXVII

THE VANITY OF ALL WORLDLY THINGS

1. What is life but a vapour, which appears for a short time and then is seen no more? *What is your life? says St. James; it is a vapour which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away.*[1171] The vapours which arise from the earth, when raised into the air and surrounded by the rays of the sun, appear brilliant and beautiful; but the least wind disperses them, and they are seen no more. Such is the grandeur of this world. Behold that prince; to-day, he is feared, attended upon and honoured by thousands; to-morrow, he will be dead, despised and hated by all. In a word, honours, pleasures, and riches must all end in death. *O my God! make me sensible of the immensity of Thy goodness, that I may love nothing but Thee.*

2. Death deprives man of whatever he may possess in this world. What a sad sight, to behold a rich man, after death, carried out of his palace, to return thither no more! How sad to behold others taking possession of the estates which he has left, of his wealth, and whatever else he so lately enjoyed! His servants, after having accompanied him to his grave, abandon him, and leave him there, to be devoured by worms; no one esteeming him, no one flattering him. Formerly every one obeyed his nod, but now no one takes the least notice of his orders. *How wretched have I been, O Lord! in having, for so many years, gone after the vanities of the world, and left Thee, my sovereign good! But from this day forward I desire to possess Thee as my only treasure, as the only love of my soul.*

3. *Dust and ashes, why are you proud?*[1172] Man, says the Almighty, seest thou not that in a short time thou wilt become dust and ashes? and on what dost thou fix thy thoughts and affections? Reflect that death will soon rob thee of everything, and separate thee from the whole world. And if, when thou givest in thy accounts, thou be found wanting, what will become of thee for eternity? *I give Thee thanks, my Lord and my God. Thou speakest*

thus to me, because thou desirest to save me. Let Thy mercies now prevail. Thou hast promised to pardon such as repent of their offences against Thee. From the bottom of my heart do I repent: grant me therefore pardon. Thou hast promised to love those who love Thee: above all things do I now love Thee; wherefore do Thou love me also, and hate me not any more, as I have deserved. O Mary, my advocate, in thy protection is my hope.

Meditation XXVIII

THE NUMBER OF OUR SINS

1. It is the opinion of St. Basil, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and others, that as God has determined for each one the number of talents, the goods of fortune, and the number of days to be bestowed upon him, so he has also determined for each one the number of sins to be pardoned him, which being completed, God will pour out his chastisements upon him and pardon him no more. *Each one, says St. Augustine, is patiently borne with by Almighty God for a certain time; but when this is over, there is then no longer any more pardon for him.*[1173] *I am aware, O God! that I have hitherto abused Thy patience too much; but I know that Thou hast not yet abandoned me, because I am sorry for my sins, and this sorrow is a sign that Thou still lovest me. O my God! I desire never more to displease Thee; for pity's sake do not abandon me.*

2. *The Lord patiently expecteth, that when the day of judgment shall come, He may punish them in the fullness of their sins.*[1174] Although God has patience and waits for the sinner, yet, when the day arrives for the measure of his sins to be filled up he will wait for him no longer, but chastise him. *O Lord! wait yet for me a little while, do not yet abandon me; I hope with the assistance of Thy grace never to offend Thee more, nor to excite Thy anger against me. I am sorry, O my sovereign good! for having offended Thee, and I protest that I will never more betray Thee. I now esteem Thy friendship more than all the goods of the whole world.*

3. We commit sins, and we take no notice of the load of guilt which we are accumulating; but let us tremble lest what happened to King Baltassar befall us also: *Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting.*[1175] The devil may tell you that it matters not whether it be ten or eleven sins. But no, that wicked enemy deceives you; the sin which he is tempting you to commit will increase the load of your guilt; it may decide the balance of

divine justice against you, and you may be condemned for it to the torments of hell. If, Christian brother, you live not in fear that God will not show you mercy, should you add one more mortal sin to those which you have already committed; if you tremble not at the thought of this, you are in great danger of being lost. *No, my God: Thou hast borne with me too long; I will never more abuse Thy bountiful goodness. I thank Thee for having waited for me until now. I have forfeited Thy love too often; but I hope never more to lose Thee. Since Thou hast not yet abandoned me, enable me to find Thee again. I love Thee, O my God! and I am sorry from the bottom of my heart for having ever turned my back upon Thee. No, I desire never more to lose Thee. Assist me with Thy grace. And thou, my queen and my mother, Mary, help me by thy holy intercession.*

Meditation XXIX

THE FOLLY OF LIVING AS ENEMIES OF GOD

1. Sinners call the saints who, in this life, fly from honours, riches, and the pleasures of sense, and embrace poverty, contempt, and mortification, fools. But at the day of final retribution they will confess that they themselves have been fools in judging the lives of the saints to be folly: *We fools esteemed their life madness.*[1176] And what greater folly can there be than to live without God? which is to live a miserable life in this world, to be succeeded by a still more miserable one in hell. *No, I will not wait till the last day to confess my folly; I now confess it: how great has it been in offending Thee, my sovereign good! Father, "I am not worthy to be called Thy son."*[1177] *Father, I am not worthy to receive Thy forgiveness, but I hope for it through the blood which Thou hast shed for my sake. My Jesus, I am sorry for having despised Thee, I love Thee above all things.*

2. Unhappy sinners! blinded by their sins, they lose all judgment. What would be said of a man who should sell a kingdom for the smallest coin? And what should be said of him who, for a momentary pleasure, a vapour, a caprice, sells heaven and the grace of God? They think only of this life, which will shortly end, and in the meantime deserve hell for that life which will never end. O my God! permit me not to become any more so blind as to prefer, as I have hitherto done, my own unlawful gratifications before Thee, and for the sake of them to despise Thee, my sovereign good! I now detest them, and love Thee above all things.

3. Miserable worldlings! the time will come when they will bewail their folly; but when? when there will be no longer anything to prevent their eternal ruin. Then will they say, *What hath pride profited us? or what advantage Hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow?*[1178] Behold, they will exclaim, how all our delights have passed away like a shadow, and nothing remains to us now

but suffering and eternal lamentation! *Dear Jesus! have pity on me. I had forgotten Thee, but Thou didst not forget me. I love Thee with my whole soul, and I detest above all evil whatever sins I have committed against Thee. Pardon me, O God! and remember not my offences against Thee. And since Thou knowest my weakness, do not abandon me; give me strength to overcome all things to please Thee. O Mary, Mother of God! in thee do I place my hopes.*

Meditation XXX

THE SACRED WOUNDS OF JESUS

1. St. Bonaventure says that the wounds of Jesus wound the hardest hearts and inflame the coldest souls.[1179] And in truth, how can we believe that God permitted himself to be buffeted, scourged, crowned with thorns, and finally put to death for the love of us, and yet not love him? St. Francis of Assisi frequently bewailed the ingratitude of men as he passed along the country, saying, *“Love is not loved, love is not loved.”* Behold, O my Jesus! I am one of those who are thus ungrateful, who have been so many years in the world and have not loved Thee. And shall I, my Redeemer, remain forever such? No, I will love Thee until death, and will give myself wholly to Thee; mercifully accept of me and help me.

2. The Church, when she shows us Jesus Christ crucified, exclaims: *“His whole figure breathes forth love; his head bowed down, his arms extended, his side opened.”*[1180] She cries out: Behold, O man! behold thy God, who has died for thy love; see how his arms are extended to embrace thee, his head bowed down to give thee the kiss of peace, his side opened to give thee access to his heart, if thou wilt but love him. Assuredly I will love Thee, my treasure, my love, and my all. And whom shall I love, if I love not God who has died for me?

3. The charity of Christ, saith the Apostle, presseth us.[1181] Ah! my Redeemer, Thou hast died for the love of men; yet men do not love Thee, because they live unmindful of the death which Thou hast suffered for them. Did they bear it in mind, how could they live without loving Thee? *“Knowing,”* says St. Francis de Sales, *“that Jesus being really God, has so loved us as to suffer the death of the cross for us, do we not on this account feel our hearts, as it were, in a press, in which they are forcibly held, and love expressed from them by a kind of violence, which is the more powerful as it is the more amiable?”* And this is what St. Paul says in these words:

“The charity of Christ presseth us”[1182] the love of Jesus Christ forces us to love him. Ah! my beloved Saviour, heretofore I have despised Thee, but now I esteem and love Thee more than my own life; nothing afflicts me so much as the remembrance of the many offences I have committed against Thee. Pardon me, O Jesus! and draw my whole heart to Thyself, that so I may not desire, nor seek, nor sigh after any other beside Thee. O Mary, my mother! help me to love Jesus.

Meditation XXXI

THE GREAT AFFAIR OF SALVATION

1. The affair of our eternal salvation is of all affairs the most important. But how comes it that men use all diligence to succeed in the affairs of this world, leave no means untried to obtain a desirable situation, to gain a lawsuit, or to bring about a marriage, reject no counsels, neglect no measures by which to secure their object, neither eat nor sleep, and yet do nothing to gain eternal salvation, nothing to gain it, but everything to forfeit it, as though hell, heaven, and eternity were not articles of faith, but only fables and lies? O God! assist me by Thy divine light; suffer me not to be any longer blinded, as I hitherto have been.

2. If an accident happen to a house, what is not immediately done to repair it? If a jewel be lost, what is not done to recover it? The soul is lost, the grace of God is lost, and men sleep and smile. We attend most carefully to our temporal welfare, and almost entirely neglect our eternal salvation! We call those happy who have renounced all things for God; why then are we so much attached to earthly things? *O Jesus! Thou hast so much desired my salvation as to shed Thy blood and lay down Thy life to secure it; and I have been so indifferent to the preservation of Thy grace as to renounce and forfeit it for mere nothing! I am sorry, O Lord! for having thus dishonoured Thee. I will renounce all things to attend only to Thy love, my God, who art most worthy of all love.*

3. The Son of God gives his life to save our souls; the devil is most diligent in his endeavours to bring them to eternal ruin: and do we take no care of them? St. Philip Neri convicts that man of the height of folly who is inattentive to the salvation of his soul. Let us arouse our faith: it is certain that, after this short life, another life awaits us, which will be either eternally happy or eternally miserable. *God has given us to choose which we will. Before man is life and death . . . that which he shall choose shall be*

given him.[1183] Ah! let us make such a choice now as we shall not have to repent of all eternity. O God! make me sensible of the great wrong I have done Thee in offending Thee and renouncing Thee for the love of creatures. I am sorry with my whole heart for having despised Thee, my sovereign good; do not reject me now that I return to Thee. I love Thee above all things, and for the future I will lose all things rather than forfeit Thy grace. Through the love which Thou hast shown me in dying for me, succour me with Thy help, and do not abandon me. O Mary, Mother of God! be thou my advocate.

Meditation XXXII

THE FREQUENT THOUGHT OF DEATH

1. Men who are attached to this world endeavour to banish the thoughts of death from their minds, as though, by avoiding the remembrance of death, they could avoid death itself. But no; by banishing the thoughts of death from their minds, they expose themselves to greater danger of making an evil end. There is no alternative: sooner or later we must die; and what is still more, we can die but once; and if once we be lost, we shall be lost forever. *My God, I give Thee thanks for having enlightened me. I have already lost too many years in offending Thee; but I will now spend the remainder of my life entirely in Thy service. Command me what Thou willest, for I desire to please Thee in all things.*

2. Holy anchorets, who formerly fled from the world into deserts in order to secure for themselves a happy death, took nothing with them but some spiritual book and a skull, by the sight of which they might continually keep up in their minds the remembrance of their last end. They meditated upon it, saying: *"As the bones of him to whom this skull belonged, so will the bones of my body one day be: and my soul who knows where that shall dwell?"* And thus they endeavoured to gain not the goods of this life, but of that life which will never end. *I give Thee thanks, O Lord! for not having suffered me to die when I was in the state of sin. I am sorry for having offended Thee, and hope, through Thy precious blood, for mercy and pardon. I desire, O Jesus! to renounce all things, and to do my utmost to please Thee.*

3. A certain hermit, being at the point of death, was observed to smile, and being asked why he was so cheerful, answered: "I have always kept death before my eyes, and hence, now that it is come, it does not alarm me." The approach of death, therefore, is terrible to those only who have thought of nothing but of gratifying themselves during their lifetime, and have never thought of their last end; but it is not terrible to those who, by frequently

thinking upon it, have learned to despise all earthly goods, and to love nothing but God. *O my Saviour! I perceive that death is already drawing near to me, and as yet I have done nothing for Thee, who didst die for me. No, before death, I will, O God! love Thee, who art worthy of infinite love. I have hitherto dishonoured Thee by the offences which I have committed against Thee; but I am sorry for them with my whole heart. For the future I will honour Thee, by loving Thee to the utmost of my power. Give me light and strength to do so. Thou wouldst have me be wholly Thine, and such do I desire to be. Help me by Thy grace; in Thee do I confide. And in thee also do I confide, O Mary, my Mother, and my hope!*

Meditation XXXIII

THE TURNING AWAY FROM GOD BY SIN

1. St. Augustine and St. Thomas define mortal sin to be a turning away from God: that is, the turning of one's back upon God, leaving the Creator for the sake of the creature. What punishment would that subject deserve who, while his king was giving him a command, contemptuously turned his back upon him to go and transgress his orders? This is what the sinner does; and this is punished in hell with the pain of loss, that is, the loss of God, a punishment richly deserved by him who in this life turns his back upon his sovereign good. *Alas! my God, I have frequently turned my back upon Thee; but I see that Thou hast not yet abandoned me; I see that Thou approachest me, and inviting me to repentance, dost offer me Thy pardon. I am sorry above every evil for having offended Thee, do Thou have pity on me.*

2. Thou hast forsaken Me, saith the Lord, thou hast gone backward.[1184] God complains and says, Ungrateful soul, thou hast forsaken me! I should never have forsaken thee hadst not first turned thy back upon me: *thou hast gone backward.*[1185] O God, with what consternation will these words fill the soul of the sinner when he stands to be judged before Thy divine tribunal! Thou makest me hear them now, O my Saviour! not to condemn me, but to bring me to sorrow for the offences I have committed against Thee. Yes, O Jesus! I sincerely repent of all the displeasure which I have given Thee. For my own miserable gratifications I have forsaken Thee, my God, my sovereign, infinite good! But behold me a penitent returned to Thee; and reject me not.

3. *Why will you die, O house of Israel? return ye and live.*[1186] I have died, says Jesus Christ, for the salvation of your souls, and why will you condemn them by your sins to eternal death? Return to me, and you will recover the life of my grace. *O Jesus! I should not dare to crave Thy*

pardon, did I not know that Thou hast died to obtain my forgiveness. Alas! how often have I despised Thy grace and Thy love! O that I had died rather than ever offered Thee so great an injury! But Thou, who didst come near to me even when I offended Thee, wilt not now reject me, when I love Thee and seek no other but Thee. My God and my all, suffer me not any more to be ungrateful to Thee. Mary, Queen and Mother, obtain for me the grace of holy perseverance.

Meditation XXXIV

THE MERCY OF GOD IN CALLING SINNERS TO REPENTANCE

1. The Lord called to Adam, and said to him, *Where art thou?*[1187] These are the words of a father, says a pious author, going in quest of his lost son. Oh the immense compassion of our God! Adam sins, he turns his back upon God; and yet God does not abandon him, but follows him and calls after him, *"Adam, where art thou?" Thus, my soul, has God frequently done towards thee; thou hadst forsaken him by sin; but he did not hesitate to approach thee, and to call upon thee by many interior lights, by remorse of conscience, and by his holy inspirations; all of which were the effects of his compassion and love. God of mercy, O God of love! how could I have so grievously offended Thee, how could I have been so ungrateful to Thee!*

2. As a father when he beholds his son hastening to cast himself down from the brink of a precipice, presses forward towards him, and with tears endeavours to withhold him from destruction; so, my God, hast Thou done towards me. I was already hastening by my sins to precipitate myself into hell, and Thou didst hold me back. I am now sensible, O Lord! of the love which Thou hast shown me, and I hope to sing forever in heaven the praises of Thy mercy: *The mercies of the Lord I will—sing forever.*[1188] I know, O Jesus! that Thou desirest my salvation; but I do not know whether Thou hast yet pardoned me. Oh! give me intense sorrow for my sins, give me an ardent love for Thee, as signs of Thy merciful forgiveness.

3. *O my Saviour! how can I doubt of receiving Thy pardon, when Thou Thyself dost offer it to me, and art ready to receive me with open arms on my return to Thee? Wherefore I do return to Thee, sorrowing and overpowered at the consideration that after all my offences against Thee, Thou indeed still lovest me. Oh that I had never displeased Thee, my sovereign God! how much am I grieved for having done so! Pardon me, O*

Jesus! I will never more offend Thee. But I shall not be able to rest satisfied with Thy forgiveness only: give me also a great love for Thee. Having so often deserved to burn in the fire of hell, I now desire to burn in the fire of Thy holy love. I love Thee, who art my only love, my life, my treasure, my all. O Mary, my protectress! pray for me, that I may continue faithful to God until the end of my life.

Meditation XXXV

THE SOUL'S APPEARANCE AT THE TRIBUNAL OF GOD

1. When criminals are presented before their judges, though they fear and tremble, yet flatter themselves that either their crimes will not be proved against them, or that their judges will remit in part the punishments which they have deserved. O God! how great will be the horror of a guilty soul when presented before Jesus Christ, from whom nothing will be hidden, and who will judge it with the utmost severity! *I am the Judge and the Witness.*[1189] will he then say: *"I am thy Judge, and I am witness of all the offences thou hast committed against me." O my Jesus! I deserved to hear this from Thy mouth, had the hour of my judgment arrived. But now Thou art pleased to assure me, that if I will repent of my sins, Thou wilt no longer remember them: I will not remember all his iniquities.*[1190]

2. It is the opinion of divines, that in the same place in which the soul is separated from the body it will be judged, and its lot decided either for eternal life or eternal death. But should the soul unhappily depart from the body in sin, what will it be able to say when Jesus Christ reminds it of his abused mercies, of the years he granted it, of the calls by which he invited it, and of the many other means which he afforded it of securing its salvation? *O Jesus, my Redeemer! Thou who condemnest obstinate sinners, dost not condemn those who love Thee and who are sorry for having. offended Thee. I am a sinner, but I love Thee more than myself, and I am sorry above every evil for having displeased Thee; oh, do Thou pardon me before the time comes when Thou wilt judge me!*

3. *At what hour you think not, the Son of man will come.*[1191] *When, therefore, O my Jesus and my Judge! Thou shalt judge me, after my death, Thy wounds will be a terror to me, reproaching me with my ingratitude for the love which Thou hast shown me in suffering and dying for me, but now they encourage me and give me confidence to hope for pardon from Thee,*

my Redeemer, who for the love of me, and that Thou mayest not have to condemn me, didst suffer Thyself to be tormented and crucified. We therefore pray Thee, "help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood."[1192] *O my Jesus! have pity on me, who am one of those sheep for whom Thou didst shed Thy sacred blood. If hitherto I have despised Thee, I now esteem and love Thee above all things. Make known to me the means by which I may be saved, and strengthen me to fulfil Thy holy will. I will no longer abuse Thy goodness. Thou hast placed me under too many obligations to Thee; I will no longer suffer myself to live at a distance from Thee and deprived of Thy love. Mary, Mother of mercy, have compassion on me.*

Meditation XXXVI

THE UNHAPPY LIFE OF THE SINNER

1. There is no peace for the wicked.[1193] The devil deceives poor sinners by making them believe that if they gratify their sensual desires, revenge themselves, or take what belongs to another, they will gain satisfaction and obtain peace: but no, for the reverse will always be their portion; the soul after sin becomes more than ever disquieted and afflicted. The brutes alone, who are created for the earth, can gain contentment from the enjoyments of the earth; but man, who is created to enjoy God, cannot derive satisfaction from any or all of God's creatures; his only source of happiness is God. *O my God! what, of all the delights by which I have offended Thee, now remains but bitterness and sorrow to torment me? I do not regret the bitterness which they now cause me; but only the displeasure which they have given Thee, who hast so much loved me.*

2. The wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest.[1194] What is a soul in disgrace with God but a tempestuous sea, always in agitation? one wave rises and another succeeds, and all are waves of pain and anguish. No one in the world can have all things according to his will. He who loves God, when adversity comes resigns himself to God's blessed will, and thus secures peace to his soul; but how can the sinner, if he is an enemy of God, pacify himself by resignation to God's holy appointments? Besides, sin always brings with it the dread of divine vengeance. *The wicked man fleeth, when no man pursueth.*[1195] Yes, for his own sin followeth after him, and by the remorse with which it preys upon his soul, makes him suffer an anticipated hell. *O my Lord and my God! I am exceedingly sorry for having forsaken Thee; do Thou forgive me, and suffer me not to lose Thee any more.*

3. *Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart.*[1196] Man, whither goest thou in search of content? Seek after God, and he will

satisfy all the desires of thy soul. *“Seek,” says St. Augustine, the one only good, in whom are all other goods.”*[1197] Behold a St. Francis, who when stripped of all worldly goods, being still united with God, found in this a heaven even here upon earth, and could not often enough exclaim, *“My God! my God and my all!”*[1198] Happy the soul that leaves all for God, for in him it finds all. *O Jesus! instead of abandoning me, as I have deserved, Thou offerest me pardon, and callest me to Thy love. Behold, I return to Thee overwhelmed with sorrow for the evil which I have done, and deeply affected at seeing that even still Thou lovest me after the many offences I have committed against Thee. Thou lovest me, and I also love Thee and love Thee more than myself. Receive me into Thy favour, and do with me what Thou pleasest: only do not deprive me of Thy love. Mary, Mother, have pity on me.*

Meditation XXXVII

THE LOVE OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

1. Well might our loving Redeemer declare that he came upon the earth to enkindle divine love, and that he desired nothing else but to see this sacred fire burning in our hearts: *I am come to cast fire upon the earth: and what will I but that it be kindled?*[1199] And, in fact, how many happy souls have been so inflamed with the thoughts of a crucified God as to forsake all things else to give themselves entirely to his holy love! What more could Jesus Christ have done to induce us to love him than to die in torments upon a cross to prove how much he loved us? With good reason did St. Francis of Paula, when he contemplated with admiration Jesus crucified, exclaim in an ecstasy of love, *"O charity! charity! charity!"*

2. But alas, how generally do men live forgetful of so loving a God! If the vilest of men if a slave had done for me what Jesus Christ has done and suffered for me, how should I be able to live without loving him? O God! who is he that hangs upon the cross? the same that created me and that now dies for me, That cross, those thorns, those nails, exclaim, and with a still louder voice those wounds cry out and demand our love.

3. "May I die," said St. Francis of Assisi, "for the love of Thy love, O Jesus! who hast died for the love of my love." To make an adequate return for the love of God in dying for us would require another God to die for him. It would be but little, it would be nothing, were each of us to give a thousand lives in return for the love of Jesus Christ. But Jesus is satisfied with our giving him our hearts; nevertheless he is not satisfied unless we give them entirely to him. For this end, says the Apostle, did he die, that he might have the entire dominion of our hearts: *That He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*[1200] *My beloved Redeemer, how can I ever more forget Thee? how can I love anything else, after having seen Thee die in torments on an infamous gibbet to satisfy for my sins? and how can I*

reflect that my sins have reduced Thee to this, and not die with grief at the remembrance of the offences I have committed against Thee? Jesus, help me; I desire nothing but Thee; help me and love me. O Mary, my hope! assist me by thy prayers.

Meditation XXXVIII

THE WILL OF GOD TO SAVE ALL

1. The Apostle St. Paul teaches us that God willeth the salvation of all: *He will have all men to be saved;*[1201] and St. Peter saith: *the Lord, dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.*[1202] For this end the Son of God came down from heaven, and was made man, and spent thirty-three years in labours and sufferings, and finally shed his blood and laid down his life for our salvation; and shall we forfeit our salvation? Thou, my Saviour, didst spend Thy whole life in securing my salvation, and in what have I spent so many years of my life? What fruit hast Thou hitherto reaped from me? I have deserved to be cut off and cast into hell. *But Thou desirest not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live.*[1203] Yes, O God! I leave all and turn myself to Thee. I love Thee, and because I love Thee I am sorry for having offended Thee. Accept of me, and suffer me not to forsake Thee any more.

2. How much did the saints do to secure their eternal salvation! How many nobles and kings have forsaken their kingdoms and estates, and shut themselves up in cloisters! How many young persons have forsaken their country and friends, and have dwelt in caves and deserts! And how many martyrs have laid down their lives under the most cruel tortures! And why? to save their souls. And what have we done? *Woe to me, who, although I know that death is near at hand, yet think not of it! No, my God, I will no longer live at a distance from Thee. Why do I delay? Is it that death may overtake me in the miserable state in which I now am? No, my God, do Thou assist me to prepare for death.*

3. O God, how many graces has my Saviour bestowed on me to enable me to save my soul! He has caused me to be born in the bosom of the true Church; he has many times pardoned me my transgressions; he has

favoured me with many lights in sermons, in prayers, in meditations, in Communions, and spiritual exercises; and often has he called me to his love. In a word, how many means of salvation has he granted me which he has not granted others! And yet, O God! when shall I detach myself from the world and give myself entirely to Thee? Behold me, O Jesus! I will no longer resist. Thou hast obliged me to love Thee. I desire to be wholly Thine: do Thou accept of me, and disdain not the love of a sinner who has hitherto so much despised Thee. I love Thee, my God, my love, and my all; have pity on me, O Mary! thou art my hope.

Meditation XXXIX

THE NEAR APPROACH OF DEATH

1. Every one knows that he must certainly die; yet many delude themselves by imagining that death is at so immense a distance from them that it will scarcely ever reach them. No; our life is indeed short, and death is very near us. The days of our sojourning here are few, and perhaps much fewer than we imagine. What else is our life but a light vapour, which is driven away and disappears with the wind? a blade of grass which is dried up in the heat of the sun? O *God! Thou wouldst not suffer death to overtake me when I was under Thy displeasure, because Thou didst love me and didst desire my salvation; wherefore I will also love Thee.*

2. My days, said holy Job, have been swifter than a post.[1204] Death is hasting towards us more rapidly than a post, and we at every step, and every breath and moment, are drawing nearer and nearer to death. At the time of our death how shall we wish for one day or one hour of the many we now squander away to no purpose! *Ah! Lord, if death were now announced to me, what should I find that I have done for Thee? Alas! come to my assistance; let me not die ungrateful to Thee as I hitherto have been. Grant me true sorrow for my sins, the gift of Thy love, and holy perseverance.*

3. Death hastens towards us; wherefore we must also hasten to do that which is good, and to put our accounts in order against the day of its arrival. When death comes it precludes all remedies for what has been done amiss. How many are now in hell who thought of amending their lives at some future period, but were prevented by death and consigned to eternal torments! *My dear Redeemer, I will no longer resist Thy calls. Thou offerest me pardon, and I am desirous of obtaining it; I pray for it, and hope for it, through that death which Thou, my Jesus, hast suffered that Thou mayest be able to impart it to me. I am sorry, O infinite goodness, for having offended Thee. Thou, my Jesus, hast died for me, and I have postponed Thy*

friendship to my own wretched inclinations. For the future I hope with Thy assistance always to love Thee. I love Thee, O God! I love Thee. Thou art now and shalt be forever my only good, my only love. Mary, mother of God, watch over me and take pity on me.

Meditation XL

GOD ABANDONS THE SINNER IN HIS SINS

1. It is a grievous chastisement of God, when he cuts the sinner off in his sins; but still worse is that whereby he abandons him and suffers him to add sin upon sin. *“No punishment is so great,” says Bellarmine, “as when sin is made the punishment of sin.”*[1205] *I give Thee thanks, therefore, O Jesus! for not having suffered me to die in my sins; and I give Thee still greater thanks for not having abandoned me in my sins. And oh! into how much deeper an abyss of sin should I have fallen if Thou hadst not supported me. Continue, O Lord! to keep me from sin and do not forsake me.*

2. *I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be wasted.*[1206] When the master cuts down the fence of his vineyard, and leaves it open for any one to enter therein, it is a sign that he considers it not worth cultivating, and abandons it. In like manner does God proceed when he forsakes a sinful soul: he takes away from it the hedge of his holy fear, of his light, and of his voice; and hence the soul being blinded and enslaved by its vices, which overpower it, despises everything, the grace of God, heaven, admonitions, and censures; it thinks lightly even of its own damnation, and thus enveloped in darkness is certain to be lost forever.

The wicked man, when He is come into the depths of sins, contemneth.[1207] This have I deserved, O God! for having so often despised Thy light and Thy calls. But I see that Thou hast not yet abandoned me. I love Thee, O my God! and in Thee do I place all my hopes.

3. *We would have cured Babylon, but she is not healed; let us forsake her.*[1208] The physician visits the sick man, prescribes remedies for him, and makes him sensible of his maladies; but when he sees that his patient does not obey him, and on this account grows worse and worse, he takes leave of him and forsakes him. It is thus that God deals with obstinate sinners: after a certain time he speaks but little to them; and only assists them with grace

just sufficient to enable them to save their souls; but they will not save them. The darkness of their minds, the hardness of their hearts, and the inveteracy of their wicked habits, render it morally impossible for them to gain salvation. *But, O God! since Thou still callest me to repentance, Thou hast not yet abandoned me; I desire never more to forsake Thee. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! and because I love Thee I am exceedingly sorry for having offended Thee. I love Thee, and I hope through Thy blood to love Thee forever. Suffer me not to be any more separated from Thee. Hail Mary, Virgin of virgins, become my advocate.*

Meditation XLI

THE EXAMINATION AT THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

1. In the same moment and in the same place in which the soul departs from the body, the divine tribunal is erected, the indictment read, and the sentence pronounced by the sovereign judge. *Whom he foreknew, says St. Paul, he also predestinated to be made conformable to his Son . . . them he also justified.*[1209] In order, therefore, to be made worthy of glory, our lives must be made conformable to the life of Jesus Christ. Hence it is that St. Peter says that, *in the day of judgment, the just man shall scarcely be saved.*[1210] *O Jesus, my Saviour and my judge! what will become of me, since my whole life has hitherto been the reverse of Thine? But Thy Passion is my hope. I am a sinner, but Thou canst make me a saint, and this I hope for from Thy bounty.*

2. The Venerable Father Louis da Ponte, reflecting on the account which he should have to give of his whole life at the time of his death, trembled to such a degree as to make the whole room shake. And how ought we to tremble at the thought of this account! and how diligent ought we to be in seeking the Lord whilst we may find him! *At the time of death it will be difficult to find him, if we are overtaken in our sins; but now we may easily find him by repentance and love.*[1211] *Yes, my God, I am sorry above every evil for having despised Thee; and I now esteem and love Thee above every good.*

3. What shall I do, said holy Job, when God shall rise to judge? and when He shall examine, what shall I answer Him?[1212]

And what shall I answer him, if, after so many mercies, so many calls, still I resist him? No, Lord, I will no longer resist Thee, I will no longer be ungrateful to Thee. I have committed many offences and disloyalties against Thee, but Thou hast shed Thy blood to save me from my sins. *“Help Thy servant whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious* *blood.”*[1213] *I am sorry, my sovereign good, for having offended Thee, and I love Thee with my whole heart; have pity on me. And O Mary, my Mother, do not abandon me!*

Meditation XLII

THE JOURNEY TO ETERNITY

1. Man shall go into the house of his eternity.[1214] This earth is not our true country; we are only passing through it on our way to eternity. The land in which I dwell, the house which I inhabit, are not mine. In a short time, and when I least expect it, I must leave them. The house which will contain my body until the day of general judgment will be the grave, and the house of my soul will be eternity, in heaven if I be saved, in hell if I be lost. Foolish indeed, then, should I be were I to place my affections on things which I must soon leave. I will endeavour to procure for myself a happy mansion in which I may dwell forever.

2. Man shall go into the house of his eternity. It is said "he shall go," to give us to understand that each one shall go, in another life, into that house which he himself has chosen: "he shall go," he shall not be conducted, but shall go thither of his own free will. Faith teaches us that, in the next life, there are two habitations: one is a palace of delights, where all are happy forever, and this is paradise; the other is a prison of excruciating torments, where all are forever miserable, and this is hell. Choose, my soul, to which of the two thou wilt go. If thou desirest heaven, thou must walk in the way which leads to heaven; if thou shouldst walk in the way which leads to hell, thou wilt one day unhappily find thyself there. *O Jesus, enlighten me; Jesus, strengthen me. Suffer me not to be separated from Thee.*

3. *Man shall go into the house of his eternity.* If then I be saved and enter into the house of bliss, I shall there be happy forever; but if I be lost and enter into the house of woe, I shall be miserable forever. If, therefore, I would be saved, I must keep eternity always before my eyes. He who frequently meditates upon eternity does not become attached to the goods of this world, and thus secures his salvation. I will endeavour, therefore, so to regulate all my actions that they may be so many steps towards a happy

eternity. *O God! I believe in life eternal. Henceforth I will live only for Thee; hitherto I have lived for myself and have lost Thee, my sovereign good. I will never more lose Thee; but will forever serve and love Thee. Assist me, O Jesus! and do not abandon me. Mary, my Mother, protect me.*

Meditation XLIII

JESUS, THE MAN OF SORROWS

1. The prophet Isaias calls our Blessed Redeemer *a man of sorrows;*[1215] and such he was, for his whole life was a life of sorrows. He took upon his own shoulders all our debts. It is true that as he was man and God, a single prayer from him would have been sufficient to make satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; but our Saviour would rigorously satisfy divine justice, and hence he chose for himself a life of contempt and suffering, being content for the love of man to be treated as the last and the vilest of men, as the prophet Isaias had foreseen him: *We have seen Him* . . . *despised and the most abject of men.*[1216] *O my despised Jesus! by the contempt which Thou didst endure Thou hast made satisfaction for the contempt with which I have treated Thee. Oh that I had died and had never offended Thee!*

2. Who, my God, amongst the sons of men, was ever so afflicted and oppressed as our most loving Redeemer? Man, however much he may be afflicted in this world, enjoys from time to time relief and consolation. Thus does our compassionate God treat his ungrateful and rebellious creatures. But he would not thus treat his beloved Son; for the life of Jesus Christ in this world was not only a life of afflictions, but of continual afflictions from its commencement until death. Our Blessed Saviour was deprived of all consolation and of every kind of relief. In a word, he was born but to suffer and to be the man of sorrows. *O Jesus! how unhappy is he who does not love Thee, or who loves Thee but little, after Thou hast so loved us miserable worms who have offended Thee! Enable me from this day forward to love no other but Thee, who alone art worthy of being loved.*

3. Again, men suffer afflictions, but it is only while they are suffering them, because they do not know those which are yet to come. But Jesus Christ, having, as God, a knowledge of all future things, suffered in every moment of his life, not only the pains which actually afflicted him, but all

those also which were to come upon him, and especially the outrages of his most sorrowful Passion, having always before his eyes his scourging at the pillar, his crowning with thorns, his crucifixion and bitter death, with all the sorrows and desolation which accompanied it. *And why, O Jesus! didst Thou suffer so much for me who have so grievously offended Thee? Accept of me now that I may love Thee, and that henceforward I may love no other but Thee. My love and my only good, accept of me and strengthen me. I am resolved to become holy, that I may please Thee alone. Thou desirest me to be all Thine, and such do I desire to be. Holy Mary, thou art my hope.*

Meditation XLIV

THE FOLLY OF NEGLECTING SALVATION

1. *What doth it profit a man, saith our Lord, if he gain the world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?*[1217] How many rich men, how many nobles, how many monarchs, are now in hell! What now remains to them of their riches and honours but remorse and rage, which prey upon their souls, and will continue to prey upon them for all eternity? O my God! enlighten me and assist me. I hope nevermore to be deprived of Thy grace. Have pity on a sinner who desires to love Thee.

2. How comes it, writes Salvian, that men believe in death, judgment, hell, and eternity, and yet live without fearing them? Hell is believed, and yet how many go down thither! But, O God! while these truths are believed, they are not dwelt upon, and hence are so many souls lost. Alas! I also have been of the number of those who have been guilty of such folly. Although I knew that by offending Thee I was forfeiting Thy friendship, and writing my own condemnation; yet I was not restrained from committing sin! "Cast me not away from Thy face." I am sensible of the evil I have done in despising Thee, my God, and am grieved for it with my whole soul. Oh, *"cast me not away from Thy face."*

3. And then? and then? Oh, what force had these two words with F. P. Francis Zazzera when repeated to him by St. Philip Neri, in order to induce him to renounce the world and give himself wholly to God! *Oh that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their latter end.*[1218] Oh! if all persons would but think of death, in which everything must be relinquished; of judgment, in which an account must be given of our whole lives; of a happy or miserable eternity, which must be the lot of each one: if all did but provide for these last things of their lives, no one would be lost. The present only is thought of, and hence is eternal salvation lost. *I give Thee thanks, O God, for the patience with which Thou hast*

hitherto borne with me, and for the light which—Thou now bestowest upon me. I see that although I forgot Thee, Thou didst not forget me. I am sorry, my sovereign good, for having turned my back upon Thee, and I am now resolved to give myself entirely to Thee. And why should I delay? That Thou mayest abandon me, and that death may find me as miserable and ungrateful as I have been even until now? No, my God, I will no more offend Thee, but will love Thee. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! Give me perseverance and Thy holy love; I ask for nothing more. Mary, refuge of sinners, intercede for me.[1219]

Meditation XLV

THE MOMENT OF DEATH

1. “O moment, on which depends eternity!”[1220] *x* Oh: how much depends on the last moment of our lives, on our last breath Either an eternity of delights, or an eternity of torments, a life of happiness, or a life of misery. What folly therefore must it be, for the sake of a wretched momentary pleasure in this life, to run the risk of making an evil end, and beginning a life of misery which will never terminate! *O God! what will become of me in the last moment of my life? O Jesus, who didst die for my salvation! suffer me not to be lost forever; suffer me not to lose Thee, my only good.*

2. O God! how do those miserable criminals who are condemned to cast lots for their lives tremble when they throw the dice, upon the cast of which depends their life or death! Tell me, Christian, if you were in such a situation, how much you would give to be liberated from it? But faith teaches you that you will one day arrive at that last moment, on which will depend your eternal life or death. You will then say, *“Alas! I must now be either happy forever with God, or in despair forever without him.”* No, my God, I will not lose Thee; if I have hitherto forfeited Thy friendship, I am sorry for it, and sincerely repent of it; I will never lose Thee more.

3. Either we believe, or we do not believe. And if we believe that there is an eternity, that we can die only once, and that if we die ill, the consequences will be eternal, without the least hope of remedy; why do we not resolve to separate ourselves from all danger of being lost, and to use all the means in our power to secure for ourselves a happy death? No security can be too great when eternity is at stake. The days of our lives are so many favours from God, by which he allows us time to prepare our accounts against the arrival of death. Delay not, for you have no time to lose. *Behold me, O God! tell me what I must do to be saved, for I will do all that Thou requirest of me. I have turned my back upon Thee; and for this I am* *exceedingly sorry, and for having done so would willingly die of grief. Pardon me, O Lord! and suffer me not to forsake Thee anymore. I love Thee above all things, and will never more cease to love Thee. Holy Mary, Virgin of virgins, obtain for me the grace of perseverance in virtue.*

Meditation XLVI

THE DESIRE OF GOD TO SAVE SINNERS

1. It is indeed very surprising that man, a worm of the earth, should dare to offend his Creator and turn his back upon him, by despising his graces after God has so favoured and loved him as to lay down his life to save him. But it is still more surprising that God, after having been thus despised by man, should seek after him, invite him to repentance and offer him his pardon, as though God stood in need of us and not we of him. *O Jesus! Thou seekest me, and I seek after Thee. Thou desirest me, and I desire only Thee.*

2. For Christ, saith the Apostle, we beseech you, be reconciled to God.[1221] *"And does God,"* exclaims St. Chrysostom, *"call thus upon sinners? And what does he ask of them? to be reconciled, and be in peace with him."*[1222] *My Redeemer, Jesus Christ, how couldst Thou have had so much love for me, who have so often offended Thee? I detest all my offences against Thee; give me still greater grief, still greater love, that I may deplore my sins, not so much on account of the punishments I have deserved by them, as for the injury I have offered to Thee, my God, who art infinitely good and amiable.*

3. What is man, exclaims holy Job, that thou shouldst magnify him? or why dost thou set thy heart upon him?[1223] What good, O Lord! hast Thou ever derived from me? and what canst Thou expect from me, that Thou lovest me so much, and comest so near to me? Hast Thou then forgotten all the injuries and treasons which I have committed against Thee? But since Thou hast so much loved me, I, a miserable worm, must also love Thee, my Creator and my Redeemer. Yes, I do love Thee, my God; I love Thee with my whole heart, I love Thee more than myself, and because I love Thee I will do everything to please Thee. Thou knowest that nothing is so grievous to me as the remembrance of my having so often despised Thy love. I hope for the future to be able to compensate by my love for the frequent displeasure which I have given Thee. Help me for the sake of that precious blood which Thou hast shed for me. Help me also, O holy Mary! for the love of thy Son who died for me.

Meditation XLVII

THE SENTENCE OF PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

1. Oh! what joy will he experience who, departing out of this life in the grace of God, will, on being presented before Jesus Christ, behold him with a benignant countenance, be lovingly received by him, and hear from him those delightful words: *Well done, thou good and faithful servant: because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*[1224] *But, O Jesus! if I were now to be summoned to judgment before Thee, how could I hope that Thou wouldst call me a good and faithful servant, when I have hitherto been so bad and faithless towards Thee, changing my promises of fidelity into treasons? But I will be faithful to Thee for the future, and will sooner lose my life a thousand times than forfeit Thy grace. Do Thou give me strength to fulfil this my resolution.*

2. On the other hand, what anguish, O Jesus! will that sinner experience, who, dying in sin, and being presented before Thee, beholds Thy wrathful countenance! The soul that departs this life in God's displeasure will first condemn itself, and will then hear from Jesus Christ that terrible sentence: *Depart from me, thou accursed, into everlasting fire?*[1225] How often, O Jesus, have I deserved to hear from Thee the same sentence when I have committed mortal sin! When death overtakes me, Thou wilt then be my judge; but now Thou art my Father and Redeemer, ready to pardon me, if I am sorry for having offended Thee. I am therefore sorry, from the bottom of my heart, for all my offences against Thee; and I am sorry, not so much on account of hell which I have deserved by them, as because by them I have grievously offended Thee, who hast loved me with an infinite love.

3. The soul goes forth and leaves the body, but it is for some time doubtful whether the person be alive or dead. While the bystanders are doubting, the soul has already entered eternity. The priest, satisfied at length

that the man is dead, recites the prayer of the Church: “*Come to his assistance, all ye saints of God: meet him, all ye angels of God: receive his soul and present it now before its Lord.*”[1226] But of what avail will it be to the soul that has departed an enemy of God, and upon which sentence has already been passed, to call the saints and angels to its assistance? *O my good angel, ye saints, my holy advocates, St. Michael, St. Joseph, and you my holy protectress Mary! help me now whilst you have it in your power. And Thou, my Redeemer, pardon me now whilst Thou dost exercise mercy. I am sorry for having offended Thee, and I love Thee with my whole heart. Assist me, O Lord! and support me, that I may never offend Thee more. O Mary! take me forever to thy care.*

Meditation XLVIII

AN UNPROVIDED DEATH

1. Nothing is more certain than death, but nothing more uncertain than the hour of death. It is certain that the year and day of each one's death are already determined by our Lord, though we know them not; and wisely does God conceal them from us, in order that we may always prepare for our departure. I give Thee thanks, O Jesus! for having waited for me, and for not having called me out of life in the state of mortal sin. During the remainder of my life I will bewail my iniquities and love Thee with all my strength. I know that I must die, and by Thy grace I will prepare myself for a good death.

2. Jesus Christ admonishes us of the hour of our death, and when will it be? when we least expect it. *At what hour you think not, the Son of man will come.*[1227] If then, says St. Bernard, death may at any time take us out of life, we should at all times be prepared for it and keep our accounts in order. O Jesus! I will not wait until the moment of my death to give myself to Thee. Thou hast said that those who seek Thee shall find Thee: *Seek and ye shall find.*[1228] I seek Thee, I desire Thee; grant that I may find Thee. I am sorry for my sins and will nevermore offend Thee.

3. When then, dear Christian, you are tempted to commit sin with the hope of confessing it on the morrow, say to yourself: But who knows but that this moment may be my last? And if in this moment I should be guilty of sin, and death should overtake me, whither should I go? O God! how many miserable sinners have been struck by death in the act of feasting themselves on some poisonous gratification! The devil will say to you: This misfortune will not befall you. But do you answer him: If it should befall me, what will become of me for eternity? *O God! may not that happen to me which has happened to so many other unhappy sinners? How many are now in hell for lesser sins than I have committed! I give Thee thanks. O*

Jesus! for having waited for me with so much patience, and for having now enlightened me. I have erred in forsaking Thee; and death might have been my punishment; but since Thou givest me time, henceforward I will think of nothing but of loving Thee. Assist me with Thy grace. And do thou, Mary, assist me by thy holy intercession.

Meditation XLIX

THE ETERNITY OF HELL

1. If hell were not eternal, it would not be hell. Punishment that does not continue for a long time is not grievous punishment. On the other hand, punishment, however light it may be, when it continues for a long time, becomes intolerable. Were a person obliged during the whole of his life to see the same entertainments, or to hear the same music, how could he endure it? What then must it be to remain in hell and to suffer all its torments! And for how long a time? For all eternity. It would be folly, for the sake of a day’s pleasure, to condemn onēs self to be burnt alive. And is it not folly, for the sake of a sensual gratification, which can last but for one moment, to condemn onēs self to the fire of hell, whose victims, though dying every moment, yet never, never die? *O God! preserve me by Thy grace. Woe to me if I should turn my back upon Thee after the great mercy with which Thou hast dealt with me! Keep me, O God! and preserve me from so great a misfortune.*

2. Let us awaken our slumbering faith. It is certain that he who is lost is lost forever, without the least hope of being redeemed from eternal ruin. *They shall go into eternal punishment.*[1229] He who once enters the prison of hell can come out no more. Otherwise the condemned wretches would flatter themselves with hopes, and would say, Who knows, perhaps God may some day have pity on us and deliver us? But no, they well know that hell will never have an end, and that they must continue to suffer the same torments that they at present endure so long as God shall be God. *My dear Redeemer, I know too well that by the past I have forfeited Thy grace, and condemned myself to hell; but I do not know whether Thou hast pardoned me. Hasten to forgive me, O Jesus! while I bitterly lament my offences against Thee, and never suffer me to offend Thee any more.*

3. In this life death is of all things the most dreaded, but in hell it is of all things the most desired. There they desire and long for death, but cannot die. *They shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.*[1230] Are there not at least, in that place of torments, some to compassionate them? No, all hate them, and rejoice in their sufferings, which will last forever, without end of mitigation. The trumpet of divine justice continually sounds and thunders forth in their ears those terrible words: *"Ever, ever; never, never."* Amongst these miserable beings, O Jesus! I have deserved to be numbered; but do Thou, who hast hitherto preserved me from falling into hell, preserve me for the future from falling into sin, which alone can condemn me to that place of woe. Ah! never suffer me again to become Thy enemy. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! and I am sorry for having offended Thee. Pardon me, and as I have deserved to burn forever in the fire of hell, grant me to burn forever with the fire of Thy holy love. O Mary, in thy powerful intercession do I confide.

Meditation L

THE UNCERTAINTY OF GRACE

1. *Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and put it not off from day to day: for His wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance will He destroy thee.*[1231] The Lord admonishes us to be speedily converted, if we would be saved; because if we go on putting off our conversion from day to day, the time of vengeance will come, when God will neither call nor wait for us any longer; death will overtake us in sin, and there will be no means of escaping eternal damnation. God admonishes us in this manner, because he loves us and wills not to see us perish. I am convinced, O God! that Thou desirest my salvation; I know that Thou desirest to deal with me in Thy mercy; and it is my desire nevermore to despise Thee.

2. Alas! to how many are the admonitions given by God during life, become now in hell the most cruel swords that pierce their souls! In proportion as the mercies which God showed them were greater, so were their crimes more enormous. If, O Jesus! Thou hadst condemned me to hell, as I have deserved, how great would have been my punishment, since Thy graces and favours have been so abundant towards me! No, I will no longer be ungrateful to Thee. Say to me what Thou pleasest, and I will obey Thee in all things. I am sorry for having so often offended Thee; henceforward I will not seek to please myself, but to please only Thee, my God and only good.

3. How cautious are men in their temporal affairs, and yet how negligent in the affairs of eternity! If a man has to receive a sum of money from another, he uses every expedient to obtain it as quickly as possible, saying, *"Who knows what may happen?"* And yet, why do so many live months and years in sin? Because they do not say, when the soul is at stake, *"Who knows what may happen?"* If money be lost, however valuable it may be, all is not lost; but if the soul be lost, all is lost, and must be lost forever,

without hope of recovery. *My beloved Redeemer, Thou hast given me life that I may become worthy of Thy grace; and yet I have often renounced Thy grace for something worse than nothing. Pardon me, O infinite goodness! for I am sorry, from the bottom of my heart, for having done so. O Jesus! Thou hast done too much to oblige me to love Thee, and I desire to love Thee to the utmost of my power. I love Thee, my sovereign good, I love Thee more than myself. Permit me not, O God! to cease to love Thee any more. O Mary, holy queen! protect me.*

Meditation LI

THE DEATH OF JESUS FOR THE LOVE OF MEN

1. Was it ever possible that God, the Creator of all things, should have been pleased to die for the love of his creatures? It is of faith that he has done so. *He hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.*[1232] The earth, the heavens, and all nature, with astonishment beheld Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, the lord of the universe, die of intense pain and anguish, on a disgraceful cross; and why? For the love of men. And do men believe this and not love God? *I have believed it, O Jesus! and yet not only have I not loved Thee, but I have frequently offended Thee. Pardon me, I beseech Thee, and remind me continually of the death which Thou hast suffered for me, that I may nevermore offend Thee, but may always love Thee.*

2. It was not necessary for man's salvation that God should die; one drop of his blood, a single tear, or a prayer would have been sufficient, because being of infinite value, it would have redeemed this or a thousand other worlds. But, O Jesus! Thou wouldst suffer so much, to teach us Thy great love for us. Hence, St. Bonaventure exclaims, but with much greater reason may I exclaim, who have so often offended my Redeemer: *"Alas! my God, why hast Thou so much loved me? why, O Lord, why? Who am I?" O divine Pastor of my soul, behold I am the lost sheep, in quest of which Thou didst come upon the earth. I have ungratefully fled away from Thee; since, unmindful of the sufferings which I have occasioned Thee, Thou callest me, miserable as I am, but overcome with Thy great goodness, embracing Thy sacred feet, nailed to the cross. Jesus, my love, my treasure! I love Thee, and because I love Thee I am sorry for having offended Thee.*

3. St. Bernard, imagining himself present when Pilate passed sentence of death on our Blessed Saviour, thus addresses him: "*What hast Thou done, my most innocent Saviour, that Thou shouldst be thus condemned?*[1233] Thou art innocence itself; and how do I now behold Thee condemned to death,

even to the death of the cross? What crime hast Thou committed?” And he proceeds to answer, “Thy crime is love.” As if he had said, Ah! it is Thy too great love for us, and not Pilate, that condemns Thee to death. When, my dear Redeemer, I remember the offences I have committed against Thee, it is not hell, which I have deserved for them, that makes me grieve, but the love which Thou hast shown me. Ah! my crucified God, I desire to be henceforth and forever Thine, and I will love no other but Thee. Strengthen my weakness, and make me faithful to Thee. Holy Mary, mother of God, enable me to love Jesus; this is the only favour I ask.

Meditation LII

THE CERTAINTY OF BEING EITHER SAVED OR LOST

1. *With fear and trembling, saith the Apostle, work out your salvation.*[1234] In order to be saved we should tremble lest we be lost, for there is no medium; we must be either saved or lost forever. He who trembles not is in great danger of being lost, because he takes but little care to employ the means of obtaining salvation. God desires that all should be saved, and he gives to all his grace; but lie requires that all should co-operate for this end. All desire to be saved; many, because they will not employ the means of salvation, are lost. St. Philip Neri used to say, *"Heaven is not made for the slothful."* Enlighten me, O Lord, that I may know what I ought to do, and what to avoid, for I desire to do all that Thou requirest of me. I am determined, by Thy grace, to save my soul.

2. St. Teresa said to her religious, *"One soul! my daughters, one eternity!"* She meant that in this world we ought not to attend to anything but to the salvation of our souls; because if the soul be lost, all will be lost; and if once lost, will be lost forever. Benedict XII, being asked by a prince for a favour that he could not grant without committing sin, answered the ambassador: *"Tell your prince that if I had two souls I would give him one; but as I have only one, I cannot consent to lose it for his sake."* Thus should we answer the devil or the world when they offer us forbidden fruit. *O God! how often have I lost my soul. By forfeiting Thy grace! But since Thou offerest me Thy pardon, I detest all the offences I have committed against Thee, and love Thee above all things.*

3. Would that we were fully impressed with the meaning of that great maxim of St. Francis Xavier, "There is but one evil, and there is but one good in the world!" The only evil is damnation; the only good, salvation. No; poverty, infirmity, ignominies are not evils; these when embraced with resignation will increase our glory in heaven. On the other hand, health,

riches, and honours are not goods for too many Christians, because they become to them greater occasion of losing their souls. Save me then, O God! and do with me what Thou pleasest. Thou knowest and willest what is best for me. I abandon myself to Thy mercy: *Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.*[1235] I am so sorry for having been hitherto opposed to Thy will, as to die to expiate my offences; but now I love Thee, and will nothing but what Thou willest. Grant me Thy love, that I may be faithful to Thee. And, Mary, give me thy powerful assistance.

Meditation LIII

THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

1. How is it possible, O God! that there should be any Christians who believe that they must one day die; and that after death an eternity of happiness or misery awaits them; who know that on the moment of death will depend their being happy or miserable forever; and yet adopt not all the means of securing for themselves the blessing of a good death? *Give, O Lord! tears to my eyes that I may bewail my offences against Thee. I knew that by offending Thee I should forfeit Thy grace and condemn myself to eternal torments; I knew this, and yet I was not restrained from committing sin. I am sorry, O God! for having dishonoured Thee, by renouncing Thee for the sake of my own wretched inclinations; have pity on me.*

2. If we hear of one dying suddenly who did not live prepared for death, we compassionate him, and say, “Alas! what has become of his poor soul?” And yet why are we not ourselves prepared at all times to die? It may be that the misfortune of a sudden death may happen to us; but whether sooner or later, whether prepared or unprepared, whether we think of it or not, we must one day surrender our souls into the hands of God. The place of execution is already prepared for us, and the malady which is to be our executioner and take us out of the world is stealing upon us; why then do we not endeavour to become daily more and more united with Jesus Christ, who will soon become our Judge? *My dear Redeemer, I hope through the merits of Thy death to live and die in Thy grace and favour. I love Thee, O infinite goodness, and I hope to love Thee always in this life and for all eternity in the next.*

3. In every succeeding age, cities and kingdoms are peopled with new beings, and their predecessors buried in their graves. Those who lived here a century ago, where are they now! gone into eternity! And thus, dear reader, in a hundred years hence, even in a much shorter time, neither you

nor I will be alive in this world, but we shall be either happy or miserable forever in the next; either saved or lost for all eternity, one or other will most certainly be our lot. I may then, O God! either be saved, as I hope I shall be, or I may be lost on account of my sins And is it possible that I may be lost, and yet not think of adopting every means of securing my salvation? Enlighten me, O Lord! and make known to me what I must do to be saved, for with Thy help I will do all that Thou requirest of me. I have many times lost my respect for Thee, my Father, but Thou hast not ceased to love me. I detest all my offences against Thee, and I love Thee, O God! with my whole soul. Give me Thy blessing, Father, and never suffer me to be again separated from Thee. Mary, my mother, have pity on me.

Meditation LIV

THE VANITY OF THE WORLD

1. Only the grave, saith holy Job, remaineth for me.[1236] Days and years pass away, pleasures, honours, and riches pass away, and what will be the end? Death will come and strip us of all, and we shall be buried in the grave to corrupt and moulder into dust, deserted and forgotten by all. Alas! how, in the end of our lives, will the remembrance of all we have acquired in this world serve for nothing but to increase our anguish and our uncertainty of salvation! *O death, O death, never depart from before my eyes. O God, do Thou enlighten me.*

2. My life is cut off as by a weaver.[1237] How many, in the midst of executing their long-contemplated designs, are overtaken by death and deprived of all things! Ah, with what pain and remorse will the goods of this world be regarded, on the bed of death, by those who have been unduly attached to them! To worldlings who are spiritually blind the goods of this present life appear great; but death will discover what they really are. dust smoke, and vanity. Before the light of this last lamp all the dazzling grandeur of this world will vanish and disappear. The greatest fortunes, the highest honours, when considered on the bed of death, will lose all their value and splendour. The shade of death will obscure even crowns and sceptres. *Grant me, O God! Thy holy grace, for this alone is all I desire. I am grieved for having ever despised such a treasure. Jesus, have pity on me.*

3. Of what avail then will riches be at the hour of death, when nothing will remain for us but a wooden coffin and a winding-sheet? Of what avail will be the honours which we have acquired, when no others will remain for us but a funeral procession and a tomb, which will not be able to afford us the least satisfaction, if our souls should be lost? And of what avail will the beauty of the body be, when the body itself will become a mass of worms, infect the air with its stench, and excite horror in all who behold it? *My dear Redeemer, although I knew that by sinning I should forfeit Thy friendship, yet did I sin; but I hope for pardon from Thee who hast died to purchase pardon for me. Oh that I had never offended Thee, my good God! I behold the love which Thou hast shown me; and this increases my grief for having displeased Thee who art so good a Father. I love Thee, O Lord! and will never live without loving Thee; give me perseverance. Mary, my mother, pray to Jesus for me.*

Meditation LV

THE PROVOKING OF GOD BY SIN

1. Thus does the royal prophet speak of sinners: *They tempted and provoked the most high God.*[1238] God is incapable of grief; but were it possible for him to grieve, every sin that men commit would deeply afflict him and deprive him of happiness. Sin, O God! is the return I have made Thee for Thy love! How often have I renounced Thy friendship for the sake of some wretched self-gratification O infinite goodness! because Thou art such, pardon me my offences.

2. St. Bernard, moreover, adds that *the malice of sin is so great that it would annihilate God, were this possible.*[1239] If God could die, mortal sin would deprive him of life.

And how? Father Medina answers, “Because it would give him infinite sorrow.” How afflicting is it to be injured by those whom we have especially befriended and loved! What then must it be for God to behold man, whom he has favoured with so many and so great benefits and loved with so great love, even to shedding his blood and laying down his life, what must it be to behold man turn his back upon him and despise his grace for a mere nothing, for a fit of passion, or a momentary pleasure! *Were he capable of grief and sadness, he would die of the bitterness which such conduct would occasion him.*[1240] Dearest Jesus, I am the lost sheep; Thou art the good shepherd who hast laid down Thy life for Thy sheep; have pity on me, pardon me for all the displeasure which my sins have occasioned Thee. I am grieved, O Jesus! for having offended Thee, and love Thee with my whole soul.

3. It was because our loving Redeemer had our sins constantly before his eyes that his life was so painful and full of bitterness. This was the cause of his sweating blood and suffering the agonies of death in the garden of Gethsemane, where he declared that *“his soul was sorrowful even unto*

death.”[1241] What made him sweat blood and cast him into so dreadful an agony but the sight of the sins of men? *Give me then, O Jesus! a share of the sorrow which then oppressed Thee for my sins; grant that it may afflict me during my whole life, and, if Thou pleasest, even unto death. O Jesus! I desire nevermore to displease Thee, I will nevermore afflict Thee, but will love Thee with all my strength, who art my love, my life, and my only good. Suffer me not to offend Thee any more. Mary, my hope, have compassion on me.*

Meditation LVI

THE LAST JUDGMENT

1. The last day is called in Scripture *a day of wrath and misery;*[1242] and such it will be for all those unhappy beings who have died in mortal sin; for on that day their most secret crimes will be made manifest to the whole world, and themselves separated from the company of the saints, and condemned to the eternal prison of hell, where they will suffer all the agonies of ever dying yet always remaining alive. St. Jerome, in the cave of Bethlehem, devoted to continual prayer and penance, trembled at the bare thought of the general judgment. The Ven. F. Juvenal Ancina hearing that sequence for the dead sung, “Dies iræ, dies ilia,”[1243] was so struck with the anticipation of judgment that he left the world and embraced a religious life. *O Jesus! what will become of me on that day? Shall I be placed on Thy right with the elect, or on Thy left with the reprobate? I know that I have deserved to be placed on Thy left, but I know also that Thou wilt still pardon me, if I repent of my sins: wherefore I do repent of them with my whole heart, and am resolved rather to die than offend Thee any more.*

2. As this will be a day of calamity and terror for the reprobate, so will it be a day of joy and triumph for the elect; for then, in the sight of all mankind, will the blessed souls of the elect be proclaimed queens of paradise, and spouses of the immaculate Lamb. *O Jesus! Thy precious blood is my hope. Remember not the offences that I have committed against Thee, and inflame my whole soul with Thy love. I love Thee, my sovereign good, and I trust that in that day I shall be associated with those loving souls who will praise and love Thee for all eternity.*

3. Choose, my soul; choose now either an eternal crown in that blessed kingdom, where God will be seen and loved face to face in the company of the saints, of the angels, and of Mary the Mother of Jesus; or the prison of hell, where you must weep and lament forever, abandoned by God and by all. *"O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us."*[1244] O divine Lamb, who, to deliver us from the pains of hell, wast pleased to sacrifice Thy divine life by a bitter death upon the cross, have compassion on us; but more particularly on me who have more than others offended Thee. I am sorry above every evil for having dishonoured Thee by my sins, but I hope on that day to honour Thee before men and angels, by proclaiming Thy mercies towards me. O Jesus! help me to love Thee; 1 desire Thee alone. O Mary, holy queen! protect me in that day.

Meditation LVII

THE INTENSITY OF THE PAINS OF HELL

1. In this life when a person suffers, however great his sufferings may be, he may, at least occasionally, obtain some mitigation or repose. A sick man may suffer all the day long the pains of the most cruel disorders; but, when night comes, he may perhaps sleep a little and be somewhat relieved. Not so with the miserable reprobate. For him there is no relief, no repose. He must weep and lament forever, he must suffer forever, and suffer torments the most excruciating, without once having throughout all eternity one moment of ease or mitigation. *Such, O Jesus! would have been my lot, hadst Thou called me out of life in my sins. Dearest Redeemer, I refuse not to suffer, but will truly love Thee.*

2. In this life by constantly suffering pain we become accustomed to it and better able to bear it; time mitigates sufferings which at first were most grievous to us. But will the souls in hell, by eternally suffering the torments which they endure, by the habit of enduring them for so many years, will they ever find their intensity diminished? No, for the torments of hell are of such a nature that, at the end of a hundred or a thousand years, those souls will experience the same degree of pain from them as when they first descended into that bottomless abyss. *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded.*[1245] I know, O Lord! that I have frequently deserved hell, yet I know likewise that Thou dost not desire the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live. O my God! I will not continue obstinate, but will repent with my whole soul of all my sins, and will love Thee more than myself; do Thou restore me to life, to the life of Thy holy grace.

3. In this life, when a person suffers he has the pity and sympathy of his relatives and friends; and these afford at least some comfort. But how miserable would it be for a man in the most excruciating pains to be upbraided and reproached by his relatives and friends with the misdeeds for

which he was suffering, saying to him without pity, *“Rave on in rage and despair; you have deserved all you suffer!”* The miserable wretches in hell suffer all kinds of torments, suffer them continually without any relief or comfort, and have none to compassionate them. Not even God can compassionate them, for they are his enemies; nor Mary, the Mother of Mercy; nor the angels, nor the saints; on the contrary, they rejoice in their sufferings. And, at the same time, what is the conduct of the devils towards the reprobate? They trample upon them and reproach them with the crimes which they have committed against God, and for which they are now most justly punished. *O Holy Mary, Mother of God, have pity on me, for thou hast it now in thy power to take pity on me and to recommend me to thy divine Son. O Jesus! Thou who didst not spare Thyself, to have compassion on me, but didst die upon the cross for my sake, save me, and may my salvation be to love Thee forever. I am sorry, O Lord! for having offended Thee, and will love Thee with my whole heart.*

Meditation LVIII

THE LOVE OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED

1. Who could have conceived that the Son of God, the Lord of the universe, to show his love for us, would suffer and die upon the cross, if he had not really done so? With reason therefore did Moses and Elias on Mount Tabor speak of the death of Jesus Christ *as of an excess of love.*[1246] And what could be greater excess of love than for the Creator to die for his creatures? *To make Thee an adequate return for Thy love, my dear Redeemer, it would be necessary for another God to die for Thee. It would therefore be but little, it would be nothing, were we poor miserable worms of the earth to give up our whole lives for Thee, who hast given Thine for us.*

2. What should still more excite us to love him is the ardent desire with which, through the course of his life, he longed for the hour of his death. By this desire he indeed proved how great his love was for us.

I have a baptism, said he, wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.[1247] I must be baptized with the baptism of my own blood, to wash away the sins of men, and how am I dying with the desire of my bitter Passion and death! My soul, lift up your eyes, and behold thy Lord hanging upon a disgraceful cross; behold the blood which trickles down from his wounds; behold his mangled body, all inviting you to love him. Your Redeemer in his sufferings would have you love him at least through compassion. *O Jesus! Thou didst not refuse me Thy life and precious blood, and shall I refuse Thee anything that Thou requirest of me? No, Thou hast given Thyself to me without reserve. I will give myself to Thee in like manner.*

3. St. Francis de Sales, speaking of these words of the Apostle, *The charity of Christ presseth us*[1248] says: *“Knowing that Jesus Christ, being true God, has loved us even to the laying-down of his life for us, and this upon a cross, do we not feel our hearts as it were in a press, forcibly*

straitened, and love expressed from them by a violence which is the more powerful as it is the more amiable?" And he adds: "Why, therefore, do we not cast ourselves upon Jesus Christ crucified, to die on the cross for the love of him who has willingly died upon the cross for the love of us? I will adhere to him, should we say, and will never abandon him; I will die with him, and be consumed in the fire of his love. My Jesus has given himself entirely to me, and I will give myself entirely to him. I will live and die upon his bosom; neither life nor death shall ever separate me from him. O eternal love! my soul seeks Thee and espouses Thee forever."[1249] O *Mary, Mother of God, obtain that I may belong entirely to Jesus Christ.*

Meditation LIX

THE IRRETRIEVABLE LOSS OF THE SOUL

1. There is no error so fatal in its consequences as the loss of eternal salvation. Other errors may be repaired; if a person lose a situation, lie may perhaps in time regain it; if he lose his goods, he may replace them, but if he lose his soul, he has no remedy nor hope of redemption. He can die but once; and if that once his soul be lost, it must be lost forever, and no power can save it for all eternity. *Behold, O God! a wretched sinner prostrate at Thy feet, one who for so many years past has deserved to dwell in hell without further hope of salvation, but who now loves Thee, and is sorry above every other evil for having offended Thee, and hopes for mercy.*

2. Does then nothing remain for the many wretched souls in hell but to lament bitterly, and say, *"Therefore we have erred,"*[1250] and there is no remedy for our error, nor will there be so long as God shall be God? *Ah! my Redeemer, were I in hell, I could nevermore repent, nor love Thee. I thank Thee for having borne with me with so great patience, even though I have deserved hell; and now that I am still able to repent and to love Thee, I do sincerely repent for having offended Thy infinite goodness, and love Thee above all things, more than I love myself. Never permit me, O Jesus! to cease to love Thee.*

3. Oh, what a torment must it be to the souls in hell to think that they knew their error before they were lost, and that they are lost entirely through their own fault! If a person lose a gold ring through carelessness, or a valuable coin, he has no peace for thinking that he has lost it through his own fault. *O God! how great is the internal torment of the wicked when they exclaim, "I have lost my soul, I have lost heaven, I have lost my God; I have lost my all; and this through my own fault!" O my dear Saviour! I desire never to lose Thee: if I have hitherto lost Thee, I have done ill; 1am sorry for it with my whole soul, and love Thee above all things. O Jesus!*

Thou hast saved me from hell that I may love Thee. I will therefore truly love Thee. Enable me to compensate by my love for the offences which I have committed against Thee. Holy Virgin Mary, thou art my hope.

Meditation LX

WE MUST DIE

1. How much is contained in these words, *“we must die!”* Christian brother, you must one day certainly die. As your name was one day entered in the baptismal register, so will it one day be entered in the book of the dead, and this day is already determined by Almighty God. As you now speak of the dear memory of your father, or of your uncle, or brother, so will posterity speak of you. As you now frequently hear of the deaths of your friends or acquaintances, so will others hear of your death, and you will be gone into eternity. *O God! what will then become of me? When my body is carried to the church, and Mass said over me, where will be my soul? Enable me, O Lord! to do something for Thy service before death overtakes me. How wretched should I be if at this moment it should surprise me!*

2. What would you say of a criminal on the way to execution who was looking about him here and there, and attending only to the amusements which happened to be going on? Would you not think him mad, or a man who did not believe his impending fate? Are you not every moment advancing towards death? And what do you think of? You know that you must die, and that you can die only once. You believe that after this life another awaits you which will never end; and that this eternal life will be happy or miserable according as your accounts are found at the day of your judgment; and how can you believe these truths and attend to anything else than making preparation for a good death? *Enlighten me, O my God, and let the thoughts of death, and of the eternity in which I must dwell, be ever present to my mind.*

3. Look at the skeletons heaped up in cemeteries: they are silently saying to you, *“What has happened to us will soon overtake you.”* The same is repeated to you by the portraits of your parents who are dead, by the letters of their handwriting, by the rooms, the beds, the clothes which they once

possessed and used, but which they have now quitted and left behind for you. All these things remind you of death which is waiting for you. *My crucified Jesus, I will not delay to embrace Thee till the moment of my death, when Thy crucified image will be presented to me; but I will embrace Thee now and press Thee to my heart. Hitherto I have frequently expelled Thee from my soul, but now I love Thee more than myself, and am sorry for having despised Thee. For the future I will be always Thine, and Thou shalt be always mine. This is my hope through Thy bitter Passion and death. And this also do I hope for through thy protection, O ever blessed Mary!*

Meditation LXI

THE LOVE WITH WHICH GOD RECEIVES THE REPENTANT SINNER

1. The kings of the earth reject from their presence their rebellious subjects when they come to seek for pardon; but Jesus Christ assures us that he will never reject any rebellious sinner that penitently casts himself at his feet: *Him that cometh to Me I will not cast out.*[1251] He despiseth not the heart that is humble and sorry for having offended him: *A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*[1252] *I do not, O Jesus! deserve Thy pardon for the offences which I have committed against Thee, but Thou knowest that nothing afflicts me so much as the remembrance of my having offended Thee.*

2. But how can I be afraid that Thou, my God, wilt cast me off, when Thou invitest me to return to Thee, and offerest me Thy pardon? *Return to Me and I will receive thee.*[1253] How can I doubt, when Thou promisest to embrace us, when we are converted to Thee? *“Turn ye to Me, and I will turn to you.”*[1254] Do not, then, O Lord! turn Thy back upon me, for I will renounce all things, and turn myself to Thee, my sovereign good. I have offended Thee too long, and will now at least love Thee.

3. Our good God moreover adds that if the sinner repent of the evil which he has done, he is willing to forget all his sins: *If the wicked do penance* . . . *living he shall live, and shall not die. I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done.*[1255]

My dear Redeemer! I will never forget my sins, that I may always bewail the evil which I have done against Thee; but I trust and hope that Thou, as Thou hast promised, wilt soon forget them, and that my past iniquities will not hinder Thee from loving me. Hast Thou not said that Thou lovest those who love Thee?[1256] *Hitherto I have not loved Thee, and have deserved Thy hatred; but now I will love Thee and hope that Thou wilt no longer reject* *me; and as Thou forgettest what is past, forgive me, unite me to Thyself, and never suffer me to be again separated from Thee. Mary, assist me by thy holy intercession.*

Meditation LXII

TEMPTATIONS TO RELAPSE

1. O Christian! when the devil again tempts you to sin, telling you that *“God is merciful,”* remember that the Lord *“showeth mercy towards them that fear him,”*[1257] and not to them that despise him.”God is merciful,” it is true; yet how many does he daily condemn to the torments of hell! “God is merciful,” but he is also just. He is merciful to those who repent of their sins, but not to those who abuse his mercy to offend him the more freely. O God, how often have I done this! how often have I offended Thee because Thou wast good and merciful!

2. The devil will say to you, *“As he has pardoned you many past sins, so will he pardon you the sin which you are now about to commit.”* No, you must reply; because he has so often forgiven me, I ought to be the more afraid, that, if I should again offend him, he will no more pardon me, but punish me for all the crimes I have ever committed against him.

Attend to the admonition of the Holy Ghost: *Say not, I have sinned and what harm hath befallen me? for the most High is a patient rewarder.*[1258] *O God! how basely have I corresponded with Thy favours! Thou hast bestowed graces upon me, and I have requited them with injuries; Thou hast loaded me with blessings, and I have insulted and dishonoured Thee. But for the future it shall not be so. The more Thou hast borne with me, so much the more will I love Thee. Do Thou assist my weakness.*

3. The devil will say to you: “But do you not see that you cannot now resist this temptation?” Answer him: *But if I do not resist now, how shall I be able to resist afterwards, when I shall have become weaker, and the divine assistance will fail me? Am I to be told that in proportion as I multiply the number of my sins, God will multiply the number of his graces towards me?* Finally, he will say to you: “But although you were to commit this sin, you may still be saved.” Say to him in reply: *I may be saved; but is*

this a reason why I should write my own sentence of condemnation to hell? I may be saved; but I may also be lost, and this is more probable. This is not an affair to be left to the chance of a "may be." But, O Lord! how much hast Thou done for me? I have multiplied my faults, and Thou hast increased Thy graces! The thought of this embitters my sorrow for having so heinously offended Thee. My good God, why have I offended Thee? Oh that I could die of grief! Help me, O Jesus! for I desire to be wholly Thine. Holy Mary, obtain for me perseverance in virtue, and suffer me not any more to live ungrateful to God who has so much loved me.

Meditation LXIII

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

1. A day will come which will be the last of days, when this world will be no more. Before the coming of the Judge, fire will descend from heaven, and consume everything that is upon the earth: *The earth and the works which are in it shall be burnt up.*[1259] So that in that day everything upon the earth will be reduced to ashes. *O God! what will all the vanities of this world then appear, for which so many now sacrifice the salvation of their souls? What appearance will all the highest dignities of this earth then make, its purple, its crowns, and its sceptres? O the folly of those who shall have loved them! And O the lamentations of those who for the love of such vanities shall have lost their God!*

2. *The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again.*[1260] This trumpet will call all men together from their graves to come to judgment. Oh how beautiful and resplendent will the bodies of the just appear! *Then shall the just shine like the sun.*[1261] On the contrary, how ugly and deformed will the bodies of the reprobate appear! *What a torment will it be to these wretched souls to be again united with their bodies, for whose gratification they have lost heaven and lost their God, to be cast with them forever into hell, there to burn together in eternal flames! Happy will they then be who have denied their bodies all gratifications displeasing to God; and who, in order to hold them in greater subjection, have mortified them by fasting and penance! O Jesus! turn not Thy face away from me,*[1262] *as I have deserved. How often, for the sake of gratifying my senses, have I renounced Thy friendship! Oh that I had died rather than have thus dishonoured Thee! Have pity on me.*

3. All mankind being assembled together, will be summoned by angels to appear in the valley of Josaphat, there to be publicly judged before all: *Nations, nations in the valley of destruction.*[1263] O my God! and must I

appear in that valley? In what place shall I stand there? with the elect in glory, or with the reprobate in chains? My beloved Redeemer, Thy precious blood is my only hope. Woe to me! how often have I deserved to be condemned to dwell forever in hell, far, far from Thee, without being able to love Thee! No, my Jesus! I will love Thee forever, in this life and in the next. Permit me not to be ever again separated from Thee by sin. Thou knowest my weakness; be Thou always my help, O Jesus! and do not abandon me. Mary, my advocate, obtain for me the gift of holy perseverance.

Meditation LXIV

THE LOVE OF GOD IN GIVING US HIS SON

1. So great was God’s love for us that, after having loaded us with gifts and graces, he bestowed upon us his own Son: *God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son.*[1264]

For us poor miserable worms of the earth, the eternal Father sent his beloved Son into this world to lead a poor and despised life, and to undergo the most ignominious and bitter death that any mortal on earth had ever suffered, an accumulation of internal as well as eternal torments, such as to cause him to exclaim when dying, *“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me.”*[1265] O eternal God! who but Thyself, who art a God of infinite love, could have bestowed upon us a gift of such infinite value? I love Thee, O infinite goodness! I love Thee, O infinite love!

2. *He spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.*[1266] But, O God eternal! consider that this divine Son, whom Thou dost doom to die, is innocent, and has ever been obedient to Thee in all things. Thou lovest him even as Thyself, how then canst Thou condemn him to death for the expiation of our sins? The eternal Father replies: *“It was precisely because he was my Son, because he was innocent, because he was obedient to me in all things, that it was my will he should lay down his life, in order that you might know the greatness of that love which we both bear towards you.” May all creatures forever praise Thee, O God! for the excess of bounty through which Thou hast caused Thine own Son to die for the deliverance of us Thy servants. For the love of this Thy Son, have pity on me, pardon me, and save me; and let my salvation be to love Thee forever, both in this world and in the next.*

3. *But God (who is rich in mercy) for His too great charity wherewith He loved us . . . hath quickened us together in Christ.*[1267] Too great, says the Apostle, too great has been the love of God towards us. We by sin were

dead, and he raised us to life again by the death of his Son. But no, such love was not too great for the infinite bounty of our God. Being infinite in all perfection, he was infinite in love. *But, O Lord! how comes it that after Thou hast shown such love towards men, there are so few who love Thee? How much do I desire to become one of the number of these few! Hitherto I have not known Thee, my sovereign good, but have forsaken Thee; I am sorry for it from the bottom of my heart, and will so love Thee that, though all should leave Thee, I will never forsake Thee, my God, my love, and my all. O Mary! unite, me ever more and more to my dearest Saviour.*

Meditation LXV

EARNEST LABOUR TO SECURE ETERNAL SALVATION

1. To be saved it is not sufficient to profess merely to do what is absolutely necessary. If, for example, a person wishes to avoid only mortal sins, without making any account of those which are venial, he will easily fall into mortal sins and lose his soul. He who desires to avoid only such dangers as are absolutely the immediate occasions of sin will most probably one day discover that he has fallen into grievous crimes and is lost. O God! with what attention are the princes of this world served! Everything is avoided that can possibly give them the least offence for fear of losing their favour; but with what carelessness art Thou served! Everything that can endanger the life of the body is shunned with the greatest caution, while the dangers which threaten the life of the soul are not feared! O God! how negligently have I hitherto served Thee? Henceforth I will serve Thee with the greatest attention; be Thou my helper and assist me.

2. O Christian brother! if God should act as sparingly with you as you do with him, what would become of you? If he should grant you only grace barely sufficient, would you be saved? You would be able to obtain salvation, but you would not obtain it; because in this life temptations frequently occur so violent that it is morally impossible not to yield to them without a special assistance from God. But God does not afford his special assistance to those who deal sparingly with him: *He who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly.*[1268] But, O God! Thou hast not dealt sparingly with me: while I have been so ungrateful towards Thee as to repay Thy many favours with offences, Thou, instead of chastising me, hast redoubled Thy graces towards me. No, my God! I will never more be ungrateful to Thee, as I have hitherto been.

3. To obtain salvation is not an easy task, but difficult, and very difficult. We carry about us the rebellious flesh, which allures to the gratification of

sense; and we have, moreover, numberless enemies to contend with in the world, in hell, and within our own selves, who are ever tempting us to evil. It is true, the grace of God is never wanting to us; but still this grace requires us to struggle hard to overcome temptations, and to pray fervently to obtain more powerful assistance, as the danger becomes greater. *O Jesus! I desire nevermore to be separated from Thee and deprived of Thy love. Hitherto I have been ungrateful to Thee, and have turned my back upon Thee, but will now love Thee with my whole soul, and fear nothing so much as to cease to love Thee. Thou knowest my weakness; assist me, therefore, Thou who art my only hope and confidence. And thou, O ever-blessed Virgin Mary, cease not to intercede for me.*

Meditation LXVI

THE APPEARANCE OF THE BODY IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH

1. Remember, man, that thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return.[1269] At present you can see, feel, speak, and move. The day will come when you will no longer see, nor feel, nor speak, nor move. When your soul is separated from your body, your body will be consumed by worms and will moulder into dust; and your soul will go into eternity to be happy or miserable according as you have deserved by the actions of your life. *O God! I have deserved only Thy displeasure and the punishments of hell; but Thou wouldst not have me despair, but repent and love Thee, and place all my hopes in Thee.*

2. Figure to yourself the body of one whose soul has just departed. Look on his corpse still remaining on the bed: the head fallen upon the chest, the hair in disorder and still bathed in the cold sweat of death, the eyes sunk, the cheeks fallen in, the face of the colour of ashes, the lips and tongue black; so as to be loathsome and frightful to every beholder. See, dear Christian, to what a state your body will shortly be reduced which you now treat with so much indulgence. *O my God! I will no longer resist Thy gracious calls. What now remains of the many gratifications with which I have indulged my body, but remorse of conscience which continually torments me? Oh that I had rather died than ever offended Thee!*

3. When the body begins to corrupt, it becomes still more horrible. Twenty-four hours have scarcely elapsed since that young person died, and already his corpse begins to be offensive. The windows of the apartment must be opened, and perfumes employed, that the stench may not infect the whole house. His relatives and friends are in haste to commit him to the grave. He may have been a person of high rank, and to what does the pampering of his body now serve? It only hastens its corruption and increases its offensiveness. *Dearest Redeemer, although I knew that by sin I should greatly offend Thee, yet did I commit it. To afford myself a short-lived satisfaction, I was willing to forfeit the invaluable treasures of Thy grace. With sorrow do I cast myself prostrate at Thy feet; pardon me through the blood which Thou hast shed for me. Receive me again into Thy favour, and chastise me as Thou pleasest. I will willingly accept every chastisement, provided I be not deprived of Thy love. I love Thee, O God! with my whole heart; I love Thee more than myself. Grant that I may remain faithful to Thee till the end of my life. Mary, my hope, intercede for me.*

Meditation LXVII

THE STATE OF THE BODY IN THE GRAVE

1. Consider now, Christian brother, to what a state your body will be reduced in the grave. It will first become livid and then black. Mould of a dirty white colour will be produced over the whole surface of the flesh, from which a rotten humour will begin to ooze and flow upon the ground. In this humour a multitude of maggots will be generated, which will feast themselves upon the putrid flesh. Rats and other vermin will join in the feast and prey upon your poor carcass, some upon the outside, while others will enter into the mouth and others into the bowels. See to what a state that body will be reduced to please which you have so often offended God. *No, my God, I will never more offend Thee. Too many already have been my offences. Enlighten me and strengthen me against temptations.*

2. Then will your hair, cheeks, and lips fall off from your skull; your ribs will first be laid bare, and soon after your corrupted arms and legs. The worms, after having consumed all your flesh, will at last be consumed themselves. After this, nothing will remain of you but a mouldering skeleton, which in time will all fall to pieces; the head will be separated from the, trunk, and the bones from one another. See then what man is, considered as a mortal being. *O Jesus! have pity on me. For how many years past have I deserved to burn in hell! I have forsaken Thee, my God, but Thou hast not yet forsaken me. Pardon me, I beseech Thee, and suffer me not anymore to abandon Thee; and, when temptations assault me, may I ever have recourse to Thee.*

3. Behold, finally, that gay young warrior who a little while ago was considered the life and soul of society; where is he now? Enter his house; he dwells there no longer. His bed is occupied by another, and others have already seized and divided his spoils and armour. If you would see him, look into that newly made grave and you will behold a putrid mass of

corruption, horrible and offensive. *Saints of God, happy indeed are you, who, for the love of God, whom alone you loved in this world, were wise enough to mortify your bodies; now your bones are honoured upon altars, and your souls happy in the enjoyment of God face to face. Your bodies at the last day will again be united with your souls, to be your companions in bliss as they were formerly your companions in suffering. O God! I do not lament, but rejoice, that this my flesh, for which I have so often offended Thee, will one day be given to rottenness and worms: but I do indeed lament the crimes I have committed against Thee, for Thou art infinite goodness. O Jesus! I love Thee, and will never, nevermore offend Thee. Mary, mother of God, pray for me.*

Meditation LXVIII

MAN IS SOON FORGOTTEN AFTER DEATH

1. A young person has died early in life. A little while ago he was courted in conversation, and everywhere welcomed by all; but now that he is dead, he is become the horror of those who behold him. His.parents are in haste to get him out of the house, and call in bearers to carry him to the grave. How wretched, if, to satisfy his parents or others of this world, he has lost God! *My dear Redeemer, though all may forget me, Thou wilt still remember me, for Thou hast given Thy life for my salvation. Oh that I had never offended Thee!*

2. A little while ago the fame of his wit, gracefulness, urbanity, and facetiousness was spread far and wide; but now that he is dead he is almost out of mind and will soon be quite forgotten. Upon hearing the news of his death, some may remark of him, “He did himself great credit;” others may exclaim, “Oh, how sad! What a clever, facetious, and delightful man he was!” Some may grieve for him because he was pleasant or useful to them; while others may perhaps rejoice, because his death may be of advantage to them; but in a short time no one will so much as mention him. Even his parents and nearest relatives do not like to hear him spoken of, that their grief for him may not be renewed; and hence in visits of condolence everything is made the subject of conversation but the person who is dead; and if any one begins to allude to him, he is immediately stopped with an exclamation, “Pray do not mention him to me!” See what becomes of the affection of our parents and friends for us in this world! *My God, I am content that Thou alone shouldst love me, and will for the future love only Thee.*

3. Your relatives will at first be afflicted at your death, but it will not be long before they will console themselves with the portion of your property which may fall to their lot; and in the same room in which your soul

departed and was judged by Jesus Christ, they will feast, jest, dance, and laugh as before, and who knows where your soul will be? *Give me, O Lord! time to lament the offences I have committed against Thee before Thou summonest me to judgment. I will no longer resist Thy calls: who knows but that this meditation may be the last call I may receive? I confess that I have deserved hell, and as many hells as I have committed mortal sins; but Thou wilt not despise poor penitent sinners. I am sincerely sorry with my whole soul for having abused Thy infinite goodness by sensual gratifications. Forgive me and grant me grace to obey Thee and to love Thee till the end of my life. O Mary! I place myself under thy protection, and confide in thy holy intercession.*

Meditation LXIX

THE APPEARANCE OF ALL MANKIND IN THE VALLEY OF JOSAPHAT

1. The angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just.[1270] What would be the confusion of a person who, on entering into a church in the presence of a great concourse of people, should be forcibly expelled as one excommunicated!

Alas! how much greater will the ignominy of the reprobate be to see themselves in the day of judgment expelled from the company of the saints in presence of all mankind! In this life the wicked are honoured equally with the saints, and frequently more. But in that day, when the figure of this world passes away, the elect will be placed on the right hand, and caught up into the air to meet Jesus Christ, advancing to place crowns of glory on their heads, according to the words of the Apostle, *Then shall we be taken up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ in the air.*[1271] But the wicked, surrounded by their tormentors, the infernal spirits, will be placed on the left hand, waiting for the appearance of the judge coming publicly to condemn them. O foolish worldlings! you who now hold the lives of the saints in derision and contempt, in the valley of Josaphat, you will change your sentiments. There will you acknowledge your folly, but it will be too late.

2. Oh, what a splendid appearance will the saints make, on that day, who have forsaken all for God! How beautiful will be the appearance of the many young persons who, despising the riches and delights of the world, have shut themselves up in deserts or in cloisters, to attend only to their eternal salvation! And of the many martyrs who were so much despised and so cruelly tortured by the tyrants of this world! All these will be proclaimed courtiers of Jesus Christ in his heavenly glory. On the contrary, what a horrible appearance will a Herod make, or a Pilate, a Nero, or many others, who made so great a figure in this world, but died under God’s displeasure! *O Jesus, I embrace Thy holy cross. What are riches, what are honours, what is the whole world? Besides Thee, what do I desire?*

3. Christian, what will be your station at the last day? the right hand or the left? If you would occupy the right, you must walk in the way which conducts thither; it is impossible to keep the way to the left, and at length arrive at the right. *O Lamb of God! who didst come into the world to take away our sins, have pity on me. I am sorry for having offended Thee, and will love Thee above all things; suffer me not to offend Thee any more. I seek not worldly goods; give me only Thy grace and Thy love, and I ask for nothing more. O Mary, thou art my refuge and my hope.*

Meditation LXX

THE BLINDNESS OF THOSE WHO SAY, IF WE BE LOST WE SHALL NOT BE LOST ALONE

1. What do you say? that if you go to hell you will not go alone? But what consolation will the company of the wicked be to you in hell? Every condemned soul in hell weeps and laments, saying, Although I am condemned to suffer forever, would that I might suffer alone! The wretched company which you will meet with there will increase your torments by their despairing groans and moanings. What a torment to hear even a dog howling all night long, or an infant crying for five or six hours, and not to be able to sleep! And what will it be to hear the yells and howlings of so many wretched souls in despair, who will continually torment one another with their dismal noises, and this, not for one night, nor for many nights only, but for all eternity!

2. Again, your companions will but increase the torments of hell, by the stench of their burning carcasses. *Out of their carcasses, saith the prophet Isaias, shall a stench arise.*[1272] They are called carcasses, not because they are dead, for they are alive to pain, but because of the stench which they will emit. Your companions will also increase the torments of hell by their numbers; they will be in that pit as grapes in the wine-press of the anger of God: *He treadeth, said St. John, the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of God the Almighty.*[1273] They will be straitened on every side, so as to be unable to move hand or foot so long as God shall be God.

3. O accursed sin! how canst thou so blind men who are gifted with reason? Sinners, who affect to despise damnation, are yet more careful to preserve their goods, their situations, and their health; they do not say, “If I lose my property, my place, my health, I shall not be the only one who will lose such things.”Yet when the soul is at stake, they say, “If I be lost, I shall not be lost alone!” He who loses the good things of this world and saves his

soul will find a recompense for all he has lost; but he who loses his soul, what indemnity will he find? *What shall he give in exchange for his soul?* [1274] *O my God, enlighten me and do not forsake me. How often have I sold my soul to the devil, and exchanged Thy grace and favour for a wretched transitory indulgence of sense! I am sorry, O God! for having thus dishonoured Thy infinite majesty. My God, I love Thee: suffer me not to lose Thee any more. O Mary, Mother of God! deliver me from hell, and from the guilt of sin by thy holy intercession.*

Meditation LXXI

THE MEASURE OF GRACE

1. There is a certain measure beyond which God does not bestow his graces upon us. We should therefore be very much afraid of abusing any of the graces which our Lord dispenses to us. Every grace, every light, every call, may be the last we shall receive from God, and by despising it we may lose our souls. *O my God! Thou hast already bestowed too many graces upon me, and too often have I abused them. Have mercy on me, and do not yet abandon me.*

2. This measure is not the same for all persons; but for some greater, for others less. Christian brother, think how many graces you have received from God; and if you continue to abuse them, will you be saved? Reflect that the more abundant the graces have been which God has granted you, the more should you fear lest he abandon you in your sins, and the more should you be resolved upon a change of life. It may be that by one more mortal sin you may close against you the gates of mercy, and ruin your soul forever. And it may not be so. But you should very much fear lest it should be so. And miserable are you if you do not thus fear. *No, my God, I desire nevermore to lose Thee. When ever the devil shall tempt me, I will have recourse to Thee, my Jesus; I know that Thou art ever ready to assist those who fly to Thee for help.*

3. The greater the graces, the greater is the ingratitude of him who abuses them. The graces which you have received should induce you to hope that the Lord will pardon you if you amend your life and remain faithful to him for the future. But they should also make you fear lest God should condemn you to hell, if after so many offences you continue still to provoke him by sin. *O God! I give Thee thanks for not having even yet forsaken me. The light which Thou at present impartest to me, the displeasure which I feel for having offended Thee, the desire which I have to love Thee and to continue*

in Thy grace, are certain signs that Thou hast not yet abandoned me. And since Thou hast not abandoned me after so many sins, I desire nevermore to abandon Thee, who art the God of my soul. I love Thee above all things; and because I love Thee, I am sorry for having despised Thee. Through Thy sacred Passion I beseech Thee, O Jesus! to grant me perseverance. Holy Mary, queen of mercy, take me under thy protection.

Meditation LXXII

LOVING GOD BECAUSE HE HAS DIED FOR US

1. *He loved me, saith the Apostle, and delivered Himself for me.*[1275] When was a master ever known to lay down his life for the love of his servant? or a king for the love of his slave? And yet it is certainly true that my Creator, the Lord of heaven and earth, the Son of God, has of his own will laid down his life for the love of me his vile and ungrateful creature. St. Bernard says, *"He spared not himself that he might spare his servant."*[1276] To pardon me, he would not pardon himself, but condemned himself to die in torments upon a cross. I believe, O Jesus! that Thou hast died for me, and how has it been possible for me to have lived so many years without loving Thee?

2. *But, my Redeemer, Thou hast given Thy life not only for a vile creature, but for a rebellious and ungrateful creature, who has oftentimes turned his back upon Thee, and for some base gratification renounced Thy grace and Thy love. Thou hast sought by the most endearing motives to make me love Thee; and I have sought to make Thee hate me and condemn me to hell. Nevertheless, that same love which induced Thee to die for me, now induces me to hope that Thou wilt not reject me if I return to Thee. Pardon me, O Jesus! I am sensible of the wrong which I have done Thee; and I know also the wrong I should still do Thee, were I to love Thee only in a slight degree: no, I will love Thee to the utmost of my power; too much hast Thou deserved such a love. Grant me Thy help and assistance.*

3. *Ah, my Saviour, what more couldst Thou have done to gain my heart than Thou hast done by dying for my sake? What greater love couldst Thou have shown for Thy friend than to die for the love of him? Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*[1277] *Since then, O Word incarnate, Thou canst do nothing more to make me love Thee, shall I continue to be ungrateful to Thee? No, death is approaching, and is perhaps very near me, and I will not die so ungrateful to Thee as I hitherto*

have been. I love Thee, my beloved Jesus. Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me; I will give myself entirely to Thee. Bind and straighten me with the bonds of Thy love, so that I may live and die in the love of Thy infinite goodness. O sacred Mother Mary! take me under Thy protection, and teach me to burn with the love of thy divine Son, who died on the cross for the love of me.

Meditation LXXIII

THE CARE OF OUR SALVATION

1. The devil makes salvation appear to some too difficult to be accomplished, in order to dishearten them and induce them to abandon themselves to a disorderly life. It is true that if to obtain salvation it were necessary to retire into a desert, or to shut one's self up in a cloister, we ought to do so. But these extraordinary means are not necessary; ordinary means are sufficient, such as the frequentation of the sacraments, the avoiding of dangerous occasions, and the frequently recommending of ourselves by prayer to God. At our death we shall see that these things were easy; hence will our remorse be very great if until then we have neglected them.

2. We should resolve and say, *"I will save my soul, cost what it may."* Perish alt things else property, friends, and even life itself if I can but only save my soul! Let us never think we can do too much to obtain eternal salvation. Eternity is at stake, the being happy or miserable forever. "*No security can be too great," says St. Bernard, "where eternity is at stake."*[1278] *O God! I am ashamed to appear before Thee; how often for a mere nothing have I turned my back upon Thee! No, I will nevermore forfeit Thy grace, nor wilfully become Thine enemy. In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me not be confounded forever.*[1279] *I would rather a thousand times lose my life than lose Thy friendship.*

3. If during the past we have forfeited salvation, we must now endeavour to remedy the evil; we must change our lives, and this without delay. It is to no purpose to say I will do so in a short time. Hell is filled with souls who formerly said the same; but death surprised them, and prevented their proceedings. What a favour would God bestow upon a dying man on the point of breathing his last, were he to grant him one more year, or even one more month! Christian brother, at this very time, God bestows such a favour

upon you, and what use do you make of it? *Why, O God, do I delay? Do I wait for the period when there will be no more time for me, and when I shall find that I have in reality done nothing for Thee? I have the consolation of being as yet assisted by Thy grace. I love Thee above every good, and desire rather to die than to offend Thee. But Thou knowest my weakness, and the many treasons I have been guilty of against Thee. Help me, O Jesus! in Thee do I place all my hopes; and to Thee, O Mary, Mother of God! do I fly for protection.*

Meditation LXXIV

THE LEAVING OF ALL AT DEATH

1. Christians are well aware that they must die, yet for the most part they live as though they were never to die. If after this life there were no other life, if there were neither hell nor heaven, could they think less of death than they now do? If, dear Christian, you desire to live well, endeavour to spend the remainder of your days in the continual remembrance of death. Oh, how correctly does he judge of things, and how rightly does he direct all his actions, who performs them with a view to his departure hence! The remembrance of death destroys in him all affection to the good things of this world, by reminding him that he must soon leave them all behind him. *O God! since Thou givest me time to remedy the evil which I have done, make known to me Thy will, and I will do all that Thou requires! of me.*

2. If a traveller, on his journey to his own country, were to stop and spend his all in building a palace in a land through which he ought only to pass, and neglect to provide a dwelling for himself in that country in which he was to reside his whole life, he would be thought mad. And must not the Christian be deemed mad who thinks only of gratifying himself in this world, through which he has only to pass during a few days, and heeds not the danger of being miserable in the next, where he must live forever, as long as God shall be God? *Woe to me, O God! if Thou hadst called me out of life in my sins! I thank Thee for having borne with me with such great patience. Never suffer me to be again separated from Thee. My God, my sovereign good, I do and will love Thee above all things.*

3. Death will rob us of all things. Whatever we may have acquired in this world we must leave all behind us at our death. Nothing will then be allowed us but a coffin and a shroud, which will soon moulder away and become dust with our bodies. We must then leave the house which we now inhabit, and a dismal grave must be the dwelling-place of our bodies until

the day of judgment, when they must go either to heaven or to hell, accordingly as our souls have gone before them. All things will therefore end with me in death. Then shall I find that nothing will remain for me but the little which I have done for God. And were I to die this moment, what should I find that I have done for Thee, my Jesus? For what do I delay? that death may come and find me thus miserable? No, my God, I will amend my life. I detest all the offences I have ever committed against Thee. For the future I will not seek to gratify my own inclinations, but solely to do Thy will, who art the God of my soul. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! I love Thee above all things; mercifully grant me Thy grace. And do thou also, Mary, Mother of God, pray to thy divine Son for me.

Meditation LXXV

THE MOMENT OF DEATH

1. Imagine yourself, dear Christian, just now dead, and your soul entered into eternity. If now you had just departed from this world, what would you not wish to have done for life eternal? But what would such wishes avail you, if you had not spent the days of your mortal life in serving God? If you would now prevent that which you have time to prevent, place yourself in imagination frequently for the future in your grave, or rather upon your deathbed; imagine yourself to be dying, on the point of breathing your last, listen to the reproaches of your conscience and delay not to silence them by repentance. Delay not, for you have no time to lose. *Ah, my God! enlighten me, make known to me the way in which I should walk, and I will obey Thee in all things.*

2. St. Camillus de Lellis, looking at the graves of the dead, was accustomed to say, *"If those who are here interred could now return to life again, what would they not do to become saints! And I who have time at my disposal, what do I do for God?"* Thus did this saint animate himself to become more and more closely united with his Lord. Know then, dear Christian, that the time which God in his mercy now grants you is of the greatest value. Do not wait for time to labour for your salvation until you are gone into eternity, or until the arrival of that awful moment when it will be said to you, *"Depart, Christian soul, out of this world;"* make haste to go forth, for there is no more time for you to labour: what is done is done. O Jesus! remember that I am the lost sheep for which Thou hast laid down Thy life. *"We beseech Thee, therefore, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood."* Give me light and grace to do that now which I shall wish to have done at the hour of my death.

3. O eternal God! I tremble at the thought of being that unhappy tree of which Thou hast said: *Behold for these three years I come seeking fruit on*

this fig—tree, and I found none. Cut it down therefore: why cumbereth it the ground.[1280] Yet so it is, O Lord! for the many years I have now lived upon this earth, what good have I hitherto done? What fruit have I borne Thee all this time, but sin and bitterness? Alas! how have I deserved to have dwelt long ago in hell! Dearest Redeemer, spare me yet a little longer; I will not be obstinate; death will never find me in the state in which I now am. I will deplore and detest the days which I have spent in offending Thee, and will pass the remainder of my life in loving and honouring Thy infinite goodness. I do and will love Thee, my sovereign good. Take not Thy help away from me. And thou, O Blessed Virgin Mary, deprive me not of thy powerful protection.

Meditation LXXVI

THE EXAMINATION OF OUR SINS AT THE LAST DAY

1. Behold the heavens will open, and the angels and saints will descend to be present at the judgment followed by the Queen of Heaven, the ever blessed Virgin, and after her will appear the eternal Judge of the living and of the dead, encompassed with great power and majesty. The appearance of Jesus will be to the just the greatest consolation; but to the wicked, the indignant countenance of the Son of God will be horror and confusion worse than hell itself. *They will say to the mountains: Fall upon us, and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb.*[1281] They will desire that the mountains may immediately fall upon them rather than behold the indignant countenance of the Lamb, that is, of the Redeemer, who in their lifetime was as a lamb towards them, in silently bearing with their repeated injuries against him. *O Jesus! Thou who wilt one day be my Judge; I am heartily sorry for having so grievously offended Thee. Pardon me my sins, and grant that when Thou appearest as my Judge, I may not behold Thee indignant against me.*

2. *The judgment sat, and the books were opened.*[1282] Then will it be impossible to conceal our sins; Jesus himself, who will be our Judge, having long ago witnessed them, will manifest them to the whole world. *He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness.*[1283] Even the most secret sins, the most abominable impurities, and cruelties the most horrible, he will make known to all mankind. *O my Redeemer! Thou who already knowest all my iniquities, have mercy on me now, before the time of mercy ends.*

3. In a word, Jesus Christ will on that day make himself known as the great Lord of all: *The Lord shall be known, says the Psalmist, when he executeth judgment.*[1284] At present more account is made of some pleasure, of a mere vapour, of a fit of passion, than of God. Hence will the Judge then

justly say to the sinner, *To whom have ye likened me, or made me equal?*[1285] To what have you compared me and postponed me? Have your base inclinations, or a mere caprice, prevailed with you more than my grace? O God! what shall we then answer to such reproaches? Oh, how will our utter confusion close our mouths! But let us now answer and say: *O Jesus! I know that Thou wilt one day be my Judge, but now Thou art my Saviour. Remember that Thou hast died for me. I am sorry with my whole heart for having despised Thee, my sovereign good. But if hitherto I have despised Thee, behold I now esteem and love Thee more than myself, and am willing to die for Thy love. O Jesus! pardon me, and never suffer me to live any more deprived of Thy love. Mary, most gracious advocate of sinners, help me now whilst I can yet receive Thy powerful assistance.*

Meditation LXVII

THE GREAT LOVE OF GOD FOR OUR SOULS

1. The love which God bears our souls is eternal and infinite. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*[1286] So that God has from all eternity loved every human soul. For the salvation of souls he placed all other creatures in the world: *All things for the sake of the elect.*[1287] And lastly he sent his only Son into the world, made man for our sake, to die upon the cross for the salvation of our souls. *Thou, O God! hast indeed loved me from all eternity, and hast died for me, and how could I ever so grievously offend Thee?*

2. The only begotten Son of God, for the love of our souls, came down from heaven to free them from eternal death by his own death upon the cross; and having redeemed them with his blood, he called his angels to rejoice with him for the recovery of his lost sheep: *Rejoice with Me, because I have found the sheep that was lost.*[1288] *Dearest Redeemer, Thou didst come to seek me, and how have I hitherto fled away from Thee. No, my Jesus! I will no more fly from Thee. I will love Thee; and oh! do Thou so bind me to Thee by Thy holy love that I may live and die in Thy sacred embraces.*

3. The eternal Father has then given his Son, and the divine Son has given his precious blood and life for the salvation of my soul; and how often have I withdrawn myself from God and sold myself for something worse than nothing to his and my mortal enemy the devil! *Verily, my God! Thou hast spared nothing to save me from being lost, while I, for the sake of some paltry gratification, have many, many times renounced Thy friendship and love. Thou hast borne with me, that I might have time to bewail my sins and to love Thee, the God of my soul. I will therefore love Thee, my only good, and will grieve above every evil for having so often offended Thee. Oh! suffer me not to be anymore separated from Thy love. Remind me continually how much Thou hast done for my salvation, and how great has*

been the love which Thou hast shown me, that I may never cease to love Thee, my treasure, my life, and my all. Grant that I may ever love Thee, and then dispose of me as Thou pleasest. Mary, Mother of God, thy divine Son denies thee nothing; recommend to him, I beseech thee, my sinful soul.

Meditation LXXVIII

THE REMORSE OF THE REPROBATE

1. The condemned soul is tormented with three kinds of remorse. The first arises from reflecting for what a mere trifle it has incurred everlasting misery. For how long does the pleasure of sin last? only for a moment. To a man at the point of death, how long does his past life appear? a mere moment. But to one in hell, what do the fifty or sixty years of his sojourning upon the earth appear, when, in the gulf of eternity, he foresees that after a hundred or a thousand millions of years he will be only beginning eternity? Alas! does he exclaim, for a few moments of indulgence in poisonous pleasures, which I did but just taste, I must forever suffer, lament, and despair in this fiery furnace, abandoned by all, as long as God shall be God. *O my God! I give Thee thanks for Thy great mercy to me, and implore Thee still to have mercy on me.*

2. The second kind of remorse arises from the reflection of the condemned soul on the little which it need have done to be saved, but did not do it; and that now there is no remedy. Alas! does it say, if I had frequently confessed my sins, given myself to prayer, restored that ill-gotten property, pardoned my enemies, avoided that dangerous occasion, I should not have been lost. What would it have cost me? Although it might have cost me much, yet I ought to have been most willing to do my utmost to be saved. But I did not do it, and now I am lost forever. With how many inspirations did God favour me! How many times did he call me and admonish me that unless I desisted I should certainly be lost! I might then have remedied my past iniquity, but now I have no remedy. Ah! how does this thought afflict the wretched soul, even more than the fire and all the other torments of hell, that it might have been happy forever, but now must be miserable for all eternity! *O Jesus! it is now the time of mercy; do Thou*

mercifully pardon me. I love Thee, my sovereign good, and am exceedingly sorry for having ever despised Thee.

3. The third and most bitter kind of remorse arises from the consciousness of the wretched soul of the great happiness which it has forfeited through its own fault. It recollects that God afforded it abundant means of gaining heaven, that he died for its salvation, permitted it to be born in the bosom of the true Church, and bestowed upon it numberless graces, and it reflects that all have been rendered useless through its own fault. I am lost, it exclaims, and neither the merits of Jesus Christ, nor the intercession of the Mother of God, nor the prayers of the saints, are of any avail to me; every gleam of hope is vanished from me forever. *Oh that I had died, my God, rather than ever offended Thee! Receive me now into Thy favour; I love Thee, and will love Thee forever. Mary, most gracious advocate of sinners, intercede for me.*

Meditation LXXIX

JESUS, THE KING OF LOVE

1. St. Fulgentius, contemplating the Infant Jesus flying into Egypt from the hands of Herod, who through fear of losing his kingdom sought the infant's life, tenderly exclaims, *"Why art thou thus troubled, O Herod? The King who is just now born comes not to overthrow other kings by force of arms, but to subjugate them by dying for them."*[1289] As though he had said, The King of heaven is not come to conquer us by war, but by love; he is not come to put us to death, but to rescue us from death by dying for us. Hence it is that Jesus may indeed be styled the King of love. *Oh that I had always loved Thee, O Jesus, my sovereign King! and had never offended Thee! Thou didst spend thirty-three years in pain and labour to save me from being lost, and I have wilfully renounced Thee, my sovereign good, for the sake of momentary pleasures. Father of mercy, forgive me, and embrace me with the kiss of peace.*

2. Ungrateful Jews! why did you refuse to acknowledge for your king one so lovely and so loving towards you? *Why did you exclaim, We have no king but Cæsar?*[1290] Cæsar did not love you, nor desire to die for you; while your true King had descended from heaven upon the earth to die for the love of you. *O sweet Saviour! if others will not receive Thee as their King, I will have no other King but Thee: "Thou art my King."*[1291] *I know that Thou alone lovest me; Thou alone hast redeemed me with Thy blood; where then shall I find one who has loved me as Thou hast loved me? I am grieved for having hitherto rejected Thee as my King, by losing my respect for Thee and rebelling against Thee. Pardon me, O Jesus, my King! for Thou hast died to purchase pardon for me.*

3. *To this end Christ died and arose again; that he might be Lord of the dead and of the living.*[1292]

My beloved King, dearest Jesus, since Thou camest upon earth to gain our hearts to Thyself, if hitherto I have resisted Thy loving calls, I will now no longer resist them. Do not disdain to accept me; I now give myself to Thee, I give Thee my whole self. Take, O King! possession of my whole will, and of my whole self; make me faithful to Thee; and grant that I may rather die than betray Thee any more, my King, my love and only good. O Queen, and Mother of my King! O Mary, obtain for me that fidelity which I this day promise to thy divine Son.

Meditation LXXX

THE MISERABLE DEATH OF THE SINNER

1. Poor unhappy being! see how he is oppressed with sorrows! Alas! he is now about to die; a cold sweat is stealing over him, his breath is failing him, and he frequently faints away; and when come to himself, his head is so far gone and so weak that he can attend but to very little, understand but little, and speak but little. But the worst is, although he is drawing near his end, instead of thinking of the account he must shortly render to God, he thinks only of his medical attendants, and of the remedies they may be able to afford him to save him from death. And those who stand around him, instead of exhorting him to unite himself to God, flatter him by telling him that he is better, or say not a word, that they may not disturb him. O my God! deliver me from such an unhappy end.

2. But at last the priest admonishes him of his approaching dissolution, saying to him, *"You are now, dear brother, in a state of great danger, and must bid farewell to the world; give yourself then to God, and receive his holy sacraments."* On hearing this fatal announcement, how dreadfully is he agitated, what sadness and remorse of conscience overwhelm him, and how dreadful is the conflict which he suffers! All the sins he has committed appear in confusion before him, the inspirations which he has neglected, his broken promises, and the many years of his past life now lost and gone forever, all rush upon his mind. He now opens his eyes to the truths of eternity, of which during his past life he made but very little account. O God! what terror do the thoughts of loss of Thy favour, of death, of judgment, of hell, and of eternity, strike into his unhappy soul! *O Jesus! have pity on me and pardon me; do not abandon me. I am sensible of the evil I have done in despising Thee, and would willingly die for Thy love. Assist me, O God! to begin now at least a new life.*

3. The dying sinner exclaims, *“O what great folly have I been guilty of! How have I squandered away my life! I might have been a saint, and I would not; and now, what can I do? My head wanders, and fears oppress me and will not suffer me to bring my mind to any one good work! In a few moments what will become of me? Dying in this manner, how can I be saved?”* He wishes for time to make his peace effectually with God, but time is no longer his. *“Alas!”* he cries out, *“this cold sweat is a sure symptom of the near approach of death;*

I begin to lose my sight and my breath; I can no longer move, I can hardly speak.” And thus, in the midst of so much confusion, despondency, and fear, his soul departs from his body and appears before Jesus Christ. *O my Jesus! Thy death is my hope. I love Thee above every good, and because I love Thee, I am sorry for having offended Thee. Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.*

Meditation LXXXI

THE HAPPY DEATH OF THE JUST

1. To the just man death is not a punishment, but a reward; it is not dreaded by him, but desired. How can it be dreadful to him if it is to terminate all his pains, afflictions, and conflicts, and all danger of losing God? Those words, *"Depart, Christian soul, out of this world,"*[1293] which strike such terror into the soul of the sinner, fill the soul that loves God with joy. The just man is not afflicted at leaving the good things of this world, because God has always been his only good; not at leaving honours, because he has always regarded them as smoke; not at being separated from his friends and relatives, because he has always loved them in God and for God. Hence, as in life he frequently exclaimed, *"My God and my all!"* he now repeats the same in death, with ecstasies of delight; the time being at hand for him to return to his God who made him, to love him face to face forever and ever in heaven.

2. The sorrows of death do not afflict him; he even rejoices to sacrifice the last remnants of his life as a testimony of his love for God, uniting the sufferings of his death to the sufferings of Jesus when dying on the cross. The thought that the time of sin and the danger of losing God are now past overwhelms him with delight. The devil fails not to suggest to his mind thoughts of despondency at the recollection of his past sins; but as he has for many years bewailed them, and loved Jesus Christ with his whole heart, he is not dismayed, but comforted. *O Jesus! how good and faithful art Thou to a soul that seeks and loves Thee!*

3. As the sinner who dies in mortal sin experiences, in the internal troubles and rage which he suffers in death, a foretaste of hell; so does the just man experience in death a foretaste of heaven. His acts of confidence and of the love of God, and his ardent desire to see God, afford him a beginning of that happiness which is soon to be completed for him in

heaven. With what gladness does he welcome the holy Viaticum when brought into his chamber! He exclaims like St. Philip Neri when he was on his death-bed, *“Because I have offended Thee, my God, I will say to Thee, with St. Bernard, “Thy wounds are my merits.” O my God! if I am in Thy grace, as I hope I am, grant me soon to die, that I may presently behold and love Thee face to face, and be secure of nevermore losing Thee. Mary, my Mother, obtain for me a holy death.”*

Meditation LXXXII

AT THE POINT OF DEATH

1. If now you were at the point of death, already in your agony and almost breathing your last, and about to appear before the divine tribunal, what would you not wish to have done for God? And what would you not give for a little more time to make your salvation more secure? Woe to me, if I do not make use of the light that is now given me, and amend my life! *He hath called against me the time.*[1294] The time which is now granted me by the mercy of God will be a great torment and a subject of bitter remorse to me at the hour of death, when time for me will be no more. *O Jesus! Thou didst spend Thy whole life for my salvation, and I have been many years in the world, and yet what have I hitherto done for Thee? Alas! all that I have done gives me only pain and remorse of conscience.*

2. Christian, God now gives Thee time, be then resolved: in what will you spend it? What do you wait for? Do you wait to see that light which will show you your wretched neglect, when there will be no remedy? Do you wait to hear that *"Go forth"* which must be obeyed without demur? *O my God! I will no longer abuse the light which Thou affordest me; but which I have hitherto so much abused. I thank Thee for this fresh admonition, which, may be the last Thou wilt ever give me. But since at present Thou thus enlightenest me, it is a mark that Thou hast not yet abandoned me, and art desirous of showing me mercy. My beloved Saviour, I am sorry above all things for having so often despised Thy graces and neglected Thy calls and inspirations. I promise with Thy help nevermore to offend Thee.*

3. O God! how many Christians die in the greatest uncertainty as to their salvation, and tormented with the thought that they have had time to serve Thee, and are now arrived at the end of their life, when no more time is left them for any good works! They are sensible that now all that remains to

them is to render a strict account of the many graces and inspirations bestowed upon them by God, and know not what to answer. *O Lord! I will not die under such a torment. Say what Thou requirest of me, make known to me the way of life in which I should walk, and I will obey Thee in all things. Hitherto I have despised Thy commands, but I am now sorry for it with my whole heart, and love Thee above all things. O Mary, refuge of sinners! recommend my soul to thy divine Son.*

Meditation LXXXIII

THE RASHNESS OF THE SINNER IN COMMITTING MORTAL SIN

1. God cannot but hate mortal sin, because mortal sin is directly opposed to his divine will: *"Sin,"* says St. Bernard, *"would destroy the divine will."*[1295] As he cannot but hate mortal sin, so he cannot but hate the sinner who identifies himself with sin and rebels against his God: *To God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.*[1296] How great then is the rashness of the sinner in committing sin, when he knows that by so doing he will bring upon himself the hatred of God! *O my God! have mercy on me; Thou hast distinguished me with many graces, and I have repaid Thee with numerous offences; no one has so grievously offended Thee as I have done. Grant me, for Thy mercy's sake, contrition for my sins.*

2. God is that all-powerful being who by a single act of his will created all things: *He commanded and they were made.*[1297] And he can in like manner, by a single act of his will, destroy all that he has created, whenever he pleases: *At a beck he can utterly destroy the whole world.*[1298] And will the sinner have the hardihood to put himself in opposition to this omnipotent God and make him his enemy? *He hath stretched out his hand, says holy Job, against God, and hath strengthened himself against the Almighty.*[1299] What should we think of an ant pretending to fight against an armed soldier? *And what ought to be said of me, O eternal God! who have so often dared to oppose myself to Thee, making no account of Thy power, and sensible that I was drawing down Thy anger upon me? But Thy holy Passion, O Jesus, gives me confidence to hope in Thee for pardon, who didst die to obtain forgiveness for me.*

3. The rashness of the sinner increases when we reflect that he offends God before his own eyes: *He provoketh Me to anger before My face.*[1300] What subject had ever the audacity to break the laws in the presence of the

king himself? But the sinner knows that God beholds him, and yet he does not hesitate to commit sin before him. *My dear Redeemer, I am that audacious being who has dared to despise Thy holy precepts before Thy face. I have therefore deserved hell; but Thou art my Saviour, who earnest to take away the sins of the world and to save poor sinners: The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*[1301] *How much am I grieved for having offended Thee! Thou hast given me many proofs of Thy love, and I have returned Thee as many injuries. O Jesus! put an end to my sins, and replenish me with Thy love. I love Thee, O infinite love! and tremble at the thought of being ever again deprived of Thy love, Permit it not, O God! rather let me die. O Mary, thou obtainest whatever thou askest of God; obtain for me the gift of holy perseverance.*

Meditation LXXXIV

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

1. St. Luke writes (chap, xv.) that an ungrateful son, disdaining to remain in subjection to his father, went one day to demand from him his inheritance, that he might live as he pleased; and having obtained it, turned his back upon his father and went his way to live in vice in a far distant country, This prodigal son is a figure of the sinner, who, abusing the liberty which God has granted him, forsakes God, and lives in iniquity far away from him. *O my Lord, and my Father! this is what I have done, when to satisfy my capricious desires I have so often forsaken Thee, to live at a distance from Thee deprived of Thy grace.*

2. But as it happened to the prodigal son, that, having left his father, he was reduced to so great misery that he was unable to satisfy himself with the husks which the swine refused to eat; so does it happen to the sinner. When he forsakes God, he can nowhere find contentment nor peace; because, at a distance from God, all the pleasures of the earth cannot satisfy his heart. The prodigal son, seeing himself reduced to such a state of misery, said within himself, *I will arise and go to my father.*[1302] Do Thou, Christian, in like manner, arise from the filth of sin and return to your heavenly Father, who will not reject you. *Yes, my God, my Father, I confess that I have done evil in forsaking Thee; I am sorry for it and repent of it with my whole heart. Oh, do not cast me off now that I return to Thee penitent, and resolved nevermore to depart from before Thy feet. My dear Father, forgive me, pardon me, give me the kiss of peace and receive me into Thy favour.*

3. The prodigal son, on his return, cast himself with humility at his father’s feet and said, *Father, I am not worthy to be called thy son.*[1303] Upon which his father embraced him with tenderness, and, forgetting all his past ingratitude, welcomed him with the greatest affection, and was

overjoyed at regaining his son who was lost. *Most tender Father, suffer me to cast myself with sorrow at Thy feet, for my multiplied offences against Thee. I am not worthy to be called Thy son, having so many times forsaken and despised Thee; but I know that Thou art so good a parent that Thou wilt not reject a repentant child. If hitherto I have not loved Thee, I will now love Thee above all things, and will willingly undergo any suffering for Thy love. Assist me with Thy holy grace, that I may ever remain faithful to Thee. O Mary, God is my Father, thou art my Mother; be not forgetful of me.*

Meditation LXXXV

THE EVIL OF LUKEWARMNESS

1. Great indeed is the evil which tepidity occasions in the souls of those who, while they have a dread of being in a state of mortal sin, make but little account of deliberate venial sins, and take no pains to avoid them. God threatens the lukewarm to vomit them out of his mouth*: Because thou art lukewarm I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth.*[1304] This means rejection on the part of God; and what is once rejected, in the way here mentioned, is never received again. The tepid Christian dishonours God, by showing in his conduct that he does not consider God deserving of being served with the greatest attention. *Yes, my God! I have indeed hitherto dishonoured Thee in this manner, but I will now amend my life; do Thou help and support me.*

2. St. Teresa never fell into any grievous sin, as is related in the Bull of her canonization; yet it was revealed to her that a place was prepared for her in hell, if she did not shake off her tepidity. How was this? since it is only mortal sin that is punished in hell. The Holy Spirit supplies the answer, when he says, *He that despiseth small things shall fall by little and little.*[1305] He who makes no account of deliberate venial sins will easily fall into “those which are mortal; because by habitually offending Almighty God in small things he will not have much dread of sometimes offending him in great things; and because by continually withdrawing himself from God, he provokes God not to afford him those special helps without which he will easily be overcome by powerful temptations. Abandon me not, O Lord, to such a misfortune; grant that I may rather die; have pity on me.

3. *He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly.*[1306] With justice does God withhold his graces from the soul that loves and serves him slothfully. Hence saith the prophet, *Cursed is he who doeth the work of God deceitfully.*[1307] He therefore who serves God deceitfully, must commit a

great evil, since God curses him. The grievous sinner, conscious of his crimes, confesses them; but the tepid Christian, deeming himself to be better than others because he is not guilty of great sins, lives on in the mire of his defects, and does not humble himself. *O my God! I have by my tepidity closed up the avenue of those graces which Thou wast willing to bestow upon me. Help me, O Lord! for I am resolved to amend my life. There is no reason why I should be sparing with Thee, who hast given Thy life for me. Holy Mary, Mother of God, help me; in thy patronage I confide.*

Meditation LXXXVI

THE GIVING OF OURSELVES TO GOD WITHOUT RESERVE

1. God has declared that he loves all those who love him: *I love them that love Me.*[1308] But it is not to be supposed that God will give himself entirely to one who loves anything in the world equally with God. At one time St. Teresa was in this state, keeping up an affection, not indeed an impure affection, but an inordinate one, for a certain relative. When, however, she divested her self of this attachment, God was pleased to say to her in a vision, *"Now that thou art wholly mine, I am wholly thine." O my God! when will the day arrive when I shall be wholly Thine? Consume within me, I beseech Thee, by the flames of Thy divine love, all those earthly affections which hinder me from belonging entirely to Thee. When shall I be able to say to Thee with truth, My God, Thee only do I desire, and besides Thee there is nothing that I wish for?*

2. *One is my dove, my perfect one is but one.*[1309] God so loves the soul that gives itself entirely to him that he seems to love no other; and hence he calls it his only dove. St. Teresa after her death revealed to one of her sisters that God has greater love for one soul that aspires to perfection than for a thousand others that are in a state of grace, but are tepid and imperfect. O my God, for how many years hast Thou invited me to become entirely Thine, and I have refused! Death is already approaching, and shall I die as imperfect as I have hitherto lived? No, I hope that death will not find me as ungrateful as I have hitherto been. Help me; for I desire to leave all things to become entirely Thine.

3. Jesus Christ, through the love which he has for us, has given his whole self to us. *He hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.*[1310] *"If then,"* says St. Chrysostom, *"God has given himself entirely to you without reserve, if he has given you all, and nothing more remains for him to give you, as indeed he has done in his Passion and in the Holy Eucharist, reason*

requires that you also should give yourself without reserve to him.” St. Francis de Sales says, *”The heart is too little to love our bountiful Redeemer, who has loved us even to the laying down his life for us.”*[1311] Oh, what ingratitude, what injustice, to divide our hearts, and not to give them wholly to God! Let us then say with the spouse in the Canticles, *My beloved to Me, and I to My beloved.*[1312] Thou, my God, hast given all to me, I will give all to Thee. I love Thee, my sovereign good. “*My God and my all.”*[1313] Thou desirest that I should be all Thine, and such do I desire to be. O Mary, my mother, pray for me, that I may not love anything but God.

Meditation LXXXVII

THE TROUBLE AND CONFUSION OF THE HOUR OF DEATH

1. *Be ye always ready: for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come.*[1314] "Be ye always ready." Our blessed Saviour does not tell us to begin to prepare ourselves when death has arrived, but to prepare ourselves beforehand; because the time of death will be a time of confusion, when it will be morally impossible to prepare ourselves in a proper manner to appear for judgment, and to obtain a favourable sentence. *"It is a just punishment,"* says St. Augustine, *"upon him who, having it in his power to do good, will not do it, not to be able to do it afterwards when he desires to do it."*[1315] *No, my God! I will not wait until that time to begin a change of life. Make known to me what I must now do to please Thee, for I desire to do without reserve whatever Thou requirest of me.*

2. The time of death is the time of night, when nothing can be done. *The night cometh on, when no man can work.*[1316] The fatal news of the disease being mortal, the grief and pains which accompany it, the disordered state of the head, and, above all, remorse of conscience, will cast the poor sick man into such a state of distress and confusion as to hinder him from knowing what he is doing. He will anxiously desire to escape damnation, but will not find the means, for the time of chastisement will be at hand. *I will repay them in due time, that their foot may slide.*[1317] *O my God! I give Thee thanks for allowing me time to amend, now that it is the time of mercy and not of punishment. I would rather lose all things than forfeit Thy grace. My sovereign good, I love Thee above all things.*

3. Imagine yourself in a vessel overtaken by a storm in the midst of the sea, already struck upon a rock and on the point of sinking; think how great would be your confusion, and that you would not know what to do to escape death. And hence imagine how great will be the confusion of the sinner, who at his death finds himself in a bad state of conscience. His will,

his relatives, the last sacraments, restitutions to be made, the calls of God which he despised, oh, what a tempest will all these things create in the soul of the poor dying sinner! Go then, go now and put your troubled conscience in order. *O my God! let not Thy blood be shed for me in vain. Thou hast promised pardon to him that repents, wherefore do I grieve from the bottom of my heart for the many offences I have committed against Thee. I love Thee, O Lord! above all things, and will nevermore offend Thee. How is it possible I should ever again, after so many mercies, offend Thee? No, my God! I will rather die. Holy Mary, pray for me to thy divine Son, that I may never more offend him.*

Meditation LXXXVIII

THE PROVOKING OF GOD BY SIN TO DEPART FROM US

1. Every soul that loves God is loved by him in return; and God dwells within it and leaves it not until he is expelled by sin: *"He forsakes not, unless he be forsaken,"*[1318] says the Council of Trent. When the soul deliberately consents to mortal sin, it expels God, and as it were says to him, Leave me, O Lord! for I desire to possess Thee no longer. *The wicked have said to God, Depart from us.*[1319] *O my God! I have then had the audacity, when I committed sin, to expel Thee from my soul and to desire to have Thee no longer with me! But Thou wouldst not have me despair, but repent and love Thee. Yes, my Jesus, I do repent for having offended Thee, and love Thee above all things.*

2. The sinner must be sensible that God cannot dwell in a soul together with sin. When therefore sin enters the soul God must depart from it. So that the sinner, by admitting sin, says to God, As Thou canst not remain any longer with me, unless I renounce sin, depart from me; it is better to lose Thee than the pleasure of committing sin. At the same time that the soul expels God it gives possession to the devil. Thus does the sinner eject his God who loves him, and makes himself the slave of a tyrant who hates him. *This, O Lord! is what I have hitherto done. Oh, give me some share of that abhorrence for my sins which Thou didst experience in the garden of Gethsemane. Dearest Redeemer, would that I had never offended Thee!*

3. When an infant is baptized, the priest commands the devil to depart from its soul: "Go forth, unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost."[1320] On the contrary, when man falls from a state of grace into mortal sin, he says to God, "*Go forth from me, O Lord, and give place to the devil."*[1321] *Such is the foul ingratitude, O Lord! with which I have frequently repaid Thy great love towards me. Thou didst come down from heaven to seek me, the lost sheep; and I have fled from Thee and expelled*

Thee from my soul. But no, I will now embrace Thy sacred feet and will nevermore leave Thee, my beloved Lord. Help me with Thy holy grace. And, O blessed Mary, most holy Queen! do not abandon me.

Meditation LXXXIX

THE ABUSE OF GRACE

1. The graces which God bestows on us, his lights, his calls, and the good thoughts with which he inspires us, have all been purchased for us by the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. To the end that man might be able to receive them, it was necessary that the Son of God should die, and by his merits render him capable of such divine favours. He, therefore, who despises the divine graces, by abusing them, despises the blood and death of Jesus Christ. Such abuse has caused the eternal destruction of numberless Christians, who are now bewailing their sins in hell without hope or remedy. *O my God! how often have I deserved to become one of their number! I thank Thee that Thou now allowest me time to bewail my past crimes, and hope that Thou wilt pardon me.*

2. O God! what an eternal torment must it be to the souls in hell, to call to mind the many graces they received from Thee in this world, now that they know the value of them and the evil which they have done by despising them! My beloved Redeemer, give me light and grace to know my obligation to love Thee, for having, instead of chastising me for my ingratitude, and abandoning me to my sins, increased Thy lights and redoubled Thy calls upon me. Behold, since Thou now callest me, I will become entirely Thine, and forever.

3. Reflect, Christian, that if God had bestowed the same graces upon an infidel which he has upon you, that infidel would now most probably be a saint. And what have you done? God has multiplied his graces, and you have multiplied your offences against him. If you continue in your sins, how will it be possible for God to bear longer with you and not to abandon you? Put en end, without delay, to your ingratitude, and tremble, lest, if you should not now avail yourself of the graces which he bestows upon you, no more lights nor graces should be conferred upon you. *Yes, my God, Thou*

hast already borne with me too long; I will nevermore despise Thee. And why should I delay? That Thou mayest really abandon me? Cast me not away from Thy face.[1322] *Reject me not, O Lord; from henceforth I will love Thee with my whole soul. Thou, indeed art most worthy of all love; and I will endeavour to please and love Thee in all things. Strengthen me and make me faithful. Mary, Mother of God, help me with thy prayers.*

Meditation XC

DIVINE LOVE VICTORIOUS OVER GOD HIMSELF

1. Our God is omnipotent: who then will ever overcome and conquer him? *But no, says St. Bernard, love towards man has conquered and triumphed over him:*[1323] for this his love has caused him to die in torments upon a disgraceful cross to secure man's salvation. O infinite love! unhappy the soul that loves Thee not.

2. What man, passing by Calvary on that day when Jesus was dying upon the cross, if, on inquiring who that criminal was, crucified in such a mangled state, he had been told that it was the Son of God, true God, equal with his Father, had he not been a believer, would not have said with the Gentiles that to believe such things was folly? *"It appeared folly," says St. Gregory, "that the author of life should die for men."*[1324] If it would have appeared folly to suppose that a king would become a worm for the love of a worm; greater still would have appeared the folly of believing that God had become man for the love of man, to die for man. *This led St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi to say, concerning this immense love of God, "My Jesus, Thou lovest us to infatuation." And, alas! I, a miserable sinner, have not loved God, but have many times offended him!*

3. Christian, lift up your eyes, and behold that afflicted one upon the cross, oppressed with grief and torments, struggling in his agony, on the point of expiring, dying for the pure love of you. Know you who he is? He is your God. And if you believe that he is thy God, ask who has reduced him to such a miserable condition. *"What has done this?"*[1325] says St. Bernard. *"Love has done it, regardless of its own dignity."*[1326] It was love, which refuses no pain, nor disgrace, when it would make itself known and exert itself for its beloved. *O Jesus! it was because Thou didst so much love me, that Thou didst suffer so much for me: if Thou hadst loved me less Thou wouldst have suffered less. I love Thee, my dear Redeemer, with my whole*

heart. And how can I refuse God my whole love, when he has not refused me his precious blood, his life? I love Thee, O Jesus, my love, my all! Holy Mary, Virgin of virgins, help me by thy prayers faithfully to love Jesus.

Meditation XCI

THE SENTENCE OF THE WICKED AT THE LAST JUDGMENT

1. Consider how great the rage of the wicked will be, to behold on the last day, the just, shining with glory, waiting with joyful eagerness for that *Come, ye blessed,*[1327] with which Jesus Christ will invite them into heaven; and how great the shame and confusion of the wicked will be to behold themselves surrounded by devils, and trembling with expectation of that *Depart from me, ye cursed,*[1328] with which Jesus Christ will pronounce their condemnation before the whole world. O my dear Redeemer! suffer not Thy death, which Thou didst undergo with so much love, to become of no avail to me.

2. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.[1329] Such will be the sentence of condemnation, such the unhappy doom, which will fall upon the wicked: to burn forever in the flames of hell, accursed of God and separated from him. Do Christians believe that there is a hell? How comes it, then, that so many voluntarily expose themselves to its terrible torments? O my God! who knows but that I also may be of their number at the last day? I hope through Thy precious blood that so dreadful an evil will not befall me; but who will make me certain of this? Enlighten me, O Lord! and make known to me what I must do to escape Thy wrath, which I have hitherto so often provoked; take Thou pity on me and forgive me.

3. At last, in the midst of the valley of Josaphat, the earth will open and swallow up the wicked, together with the devil and all his evil spirits; who will all hear those gates shut over them which will never again be opened for all eternity. O accursed sin, to what a miserable end wilt thou one day conduct innumerable souls! *Unhappy they for whom is reserved such a lamentable doom for all eternity! O my God! what will my lot be? The fire of hell does not terrify me so much as the thought of being forever*

separated and at a distance from Thee, my only good. My dear Redeemer, if hitherto I have despised Thee, I now love Thee above all things and with my whole heart. I know that the punishment of remaining forever separated from Thee will not befall those who love Thee; grant therefore that I may love Thee forever; bind me and unite me closely to Thee; unite me daily more and more to Thee, that I may never be separated from Thee, and then do with me whatever else Thou pleasest. Holy Mary, advocate of sinners, never cease to protect me.

Meditation XCII

THE SENTENCE OF THE ELECT

1. Come, ye blessed of my Father.[1330] Such will be the glorious sentence which in the day of triumph will be pronounced in favour of those who have loved God. St. Francis of Assisi, having had it revealed to him that he was one of the predestinate, almost died of the consolation which such a revelation afforded him; what then will be the joy of the elect when they hear Jesus Christ inviting them, Come, ye blessed children, come and possess the inheritance of your divine Father; come and reign with him forever in heaven! *How often, O God! have I through my own fault forfeited Thy blessed kingdom! But, O Jesus! Thy precious merits encourage me to hope that I shall regain it. My dear Redeemer, I trust in Thee and love Thee.*

2. Oh, how will the blessed congratulate one another when they behold themselves placed upon thrones and united in the enjoyment of God for all eternity, without the least fear of ever being again separated from him! What joy and glory will be theirs to enter on that day crowned into heaven, singing together songs of gladness and the sweet praises of God! Happy souls, that are destined to such a blessed lot! *O God of my soul! bind me to Thee with the sweet bonds of Thy holy love, that in that day I may enter into Thy kingdom and praise and love Thee forever. The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever.*[1331]

3. Let us arouse our slumbering faith. It is certain that we shall one day be judged, and that we shall receive sentence either of eternal life or of eternal death. If we be not secure of obtaining the sentence of life, let us endeavour to make it certain. Let us fly from all those occasions which might expose us to the loss of our souls; and unite ourselves to Jesus Christ by frequently approaching the sacraments, by pious meditations, by spiritual reading and continual prayer. The adoption or neglect of these means will be the sign of our salvation or of our perdition. *My beloved*

Jesus, and my Judge, I hope through Thy precious blood that Thou wilt on that day bless me; and hence do Thou bless me now, and pardon me all the offences I have committed against Thee. Grant me to hear the same consoling words that Thou didst address to Magdalen, Thy sins are forgiven thee.[1332] *I am sorry with my whole heart for having offended Thee; pardon me, and at the same time give me grace always to love Thee. I love Thee, my sovereign good; I love Thee more than myself, my treasure, my love, my all. Thou art the God of my heart, and my portion forever.*[1333] *O my God! Thee only do I desire. Holy Mary, by thy powerful intercession thou canst procure my salvation, and thou desirest it; in thee do I confide.*

Meditation XCIII

THE DISHONOURING OF GOD BY SIN

1. By transgression of the law thou dishonourest God.[1334] Take notice, sinner, what the Apostle says, and consider what you do when you break the divine law; you dishonour God. Yes, the sinner dishonours God when he loses all respect for him before his face, and declares by his actions that it is not a great evil to disobey God and to make no account of his law. *Behold, O God! prostrate at Thy feet an ungrateful sinner, who, after having been so loved and favoured by Thee, has many times dishonoured Thee by breaking Thy precepts. I have deserved a thousand hells, but remember that Thou didst die in order to save me from hell.*

2. The sinner dishonours God by preferring a miserable gratification, a wretched worldly gain, or a mere caprice to the grace of God; for by giving his consent to sin he declares that such things are more precious to him than the friendship of God. Thus is God dishonoured and affronted by the sinner, who by his actions pronounces him to be viler than some wretched gratification, for which he turns his back upon him. *O my God! Thou art an infinite good; and how could I, a miserable worm, prefer any corrupt inclinations and passions to Thee? If I did not know that Thou hast promised pardon to those who repent, I should not dare to crave Thy mercy. I am sorry, O infinite goodness! for having offended Thee.*

3. God is our last end, for he has created us to serve and love him in this world, that we may be happy with him forever in the next. But when man prefers a vile pleasure to divine grace, he makes his pleasure his last end, he makes it his God. What a dishonour must it be to God, who is infinitely good, to see himself exchanged for something so vile and wretched! *My beloved Redeemer, I have offended Thee; but Thou wouldst not have me despair Thy mercy; although Thou knowest my ingratitude, yet dost Thou love me and desire my salvation. I am sensible of the evil I have done by* *offending Thee, and I am sorry for it with my whole heart. I am resolved rather to die than again incur Thy displeasure. I fear my own weakness, but I hope, in Thy goodness, that Thou wilt enable me to be faithful to Thee till death. O Jesus! Thou art my hope and my love. Holy Mary, intercede for me, that I may obtain salvation.*

Meditation XCIV

THE JOY OF JESUS CHRIST AT FINDING THE LOST SHEEP

1. Our blessed Saviour says of. himself, in St. Luke (chap, xv.), that he is the affectionate shepherd, who, having lost one of his hundred sheep, leaves the ninety-nine in the desert, and goes in search of the one that is lost; and finding it, receives it with joy, takes it on his shoulders, and returning home calls together his neighbours to rejoice with him, saying, *Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost.*[1335] *O divine shepherd! I have been that lost sheep, but Thou hast sought me until, as I hope, Thou hast found me. Thou hast found me and I have found Thee. How shall I ever again stray away from Thee, my beloved Lord? And yet such a misfortune may happen to me. Oh, permit it not; never suffer me, O Jesus! to leave Thee and to lose Thee again.*

2. But why, O Jesus! dost Thou call together Thy friends to rejoice with Thee for having found the lost sheep? Shouldst Thou not rather bid them rejoice with the lost sheep for having again found Thee, its God? But so great is Thy love for my poor soul that Thou esteemest it Thy happiness to have found it! My dearest Redeemer, since Thou hast found me, bind me to Thee with the blessed bonds of Thy holy love, that I may always love Thee and may nevermore depart from Thee.

3. God, says the prophet, no sooner hears the voice of the penitent sinner crying to him for mercy, than he immediately answers and forgives him. *At the voice of thy cry, as soon as he shall hear, he will answer thee.*[1336] *Behold me then at Thy sacred feet, O God! grieved from the bottom of my heart for having so often offended Thee, and craving Thy compassion and pardon. I can no longer endure to behold myself at a distance from Thee and deprived of Thy love. Thou art infinite goodness, and most worthy of infinite love. If hitherto I have despised Thy grace, I now value it above all the kingdoms of the earth. And because I have offended Thee, I beseech*

Thee to avenge thyself upon me, not indeed by casting me away from Thy face, but by giving me such a sorrow for my sins as may cause me to lament my guilt before Thee, all the days of my life. Lord, I love Thee with my whole heart, and as I cannot trust that I shall continue faithful to Thy love, be Thou my help and my succour. And do thou, O holy Virgin! help me with thy holy intercession.

Meditation XCV

JESUS SUFFERING THE PUNISHMENT DUE TO OUR SINS

1. *Surely he hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows.*[1337] Who could believe this, if divine faith did not assure us of it: *"Surely he hath borne our infirmities!"* Man sins, and the Son of God makes satisfaction for him, *O Jesus! I have sinned, and hast Thou made satisfaction for me? Yes, I have deserved hell, and Thou, in order to deliver me from eternal death, hast been pleased to be condemned to death upon the cross! In a word, in order to pardon me Thou wouldst not pardon Thyself, and shall I ever be so base as to offend Thee again during the remainder of my life? No, my Saviour, I owe Thee too much, I am too much obliged to love Thee. Behold I am Thine, do with me what Thou pleasest; I will endeavour to please Thee in all things.*

2. *He was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins.*[1338] Behold, my soul, behold your God scourged at a pillar in Pilatēs hall, crowned with thorns, wounded from head to foot, and his whole body mangled and streaming with blood; hear how he lovingly says to you, My son, see what you have cost me. *Ah, my sweet Saviour! Thou hast suffered so much for me, and how could I have repaid all Thy love with so many offences! Thou, to save me from being lost, hast suffered so many torments, and I have lost Thee for a mere nothing! O accursed sinful pleasures! I hate and detest you; you have been the cause of all the sufferings of my Saviour for me.*

3. St. Margaret of Cortona, when she meditated on the sufferings of Christ, could not restrain herself from excessively bewailing her sins. One day her confessor said to her, "Margaret, cease to weep; for God has pardoned thee." But hear what the penitent sinner answered: *"Ah, Father, how can I think of no longer bewailing my sins, while I remember that they afflicted my dear Redeemer during the whole of his life?" My beloved*

Jesus, I also must have afflicted Thee during Thy life by my sins. St. Margaret knew how to bewail her sins and to love Thee; but when shall I begin really to bewail mine, when shall I begin really to love Thee? I am sorry, my sovereign good, for having afflicted Thee. I love Thee, my dear Redeemer, more than myself. Oh, draw my whole heart to Thee, and inflame it entirely with Thy holy love; suffer me not to live any more ungrateful for the many graces which Thou hast bestowed upon me. Holy Mary, thou canst powerfully assist me by thy holy intercession to become holy; do this, I beseech thee, for the love of Jesus Christ.

Meditation XCVI

THE HAPPINESS OF POSSESSING THE GRACE OF GOD, AND THE MISERY OF BEING DEPRIVED OF IT

1. *Man knows not the value of divine grace,*[1339] and hence he exchanges it for a mere nothing. *It is a treasure of infinite value.*[1340] The Gentiles said it was impossible for a creature to become the friend of God. But, no; divine grace induces *God to call the soul that possesses it his friend:*[1341] *You are My friends.*[1342] *said* our Blessed Saviour to his disciples. *When, therefore, O God! my soul was in the state of grace, it was Thy friend; but by sin it became the slave of the devil, and Thine enemy. I give Thee thanks for affording me time to recover Thy grace. I am sorry, O Lord! with my whole heart, for having lost it; in Thy pity, restore it to me, and suffer me not to lose it any more.*

2. How fortunate should that man esteem himself who becomes the friend of his king! It would be presumption for a vassal to expect that his prince should make him his friend; but it is not presumption for the soul to aspire to be the friend of God. *"If I would be come a friend of Cæsar," said a certain courtier, as St. Augustine relates, "I should have great difficulty in becoming such; but if I would become the friend of God, I am already his friend."*[1343] An act of contrition and of love makes us the friends of God. *St. Peter of Alcantara said, "No tongue can express the greatness of the love of Jesus for a soul in the state of his grace."* O my God! am I in Thy grace or not? I certainly know that at one time I had lost it, and who knows whether I have regained it? O Lord! I love Thee, and am sorry for having offended Thee; make haste to pardon me.

3. Oh, how great, on the contrary, is the misery of a soul that is fallen from the state of grace! It is separated from the sovereign good. It belongs no more to God, and God belongs no more to it. It is no longer loved by God, but hated and abhorred by him. Before, he blessed it as his child; but

now, he curses it as his enemy. Such is the unhappy state in which I was, O God! when I had forfeited Thy grace. I hope I have arisen from my unhappy condition, but if I have not, hasten, O Jesus! to rescue me from it. *Thou hast promised to love those who love Thee.*[1344] I love Thee, my sovereign good; do Thou love me; and may I never again be deprived of Thy love. Holy Mary, succour me, thy humble client; I commend myself to thy patronage.

Meditation XCVII

CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

1. The first effect of love is the union of will. The most high God, because he loves us, would have us love him, and hence he demands our hearts, that is, our wills: *My son, give me thy heart.*[1345] Our whole life and salvation depend upon uniting our wills to the will of God, which is the only rule of what is just and perfect: *"Life,"* says the Psalmist, *"is in his will."*[1346] He who is united with the will of God lives and is saved; but he, who separates himself from it dies and is lost. No, my God, I will never more separate myself from whatever Thou desirest of me. Give me grace to love Thee, and dispose of me as Thou pleasest.

2. This is the great object of all those who love God, to conform themselves at all times to his divine will. And this is what Jesus taught us to pray for, that we may be able to fulfil the will of God here upon earth, with as much perfection as the blessed do in heaven. *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*[1347] St. Teresa made an offering of her will to God, at least fifty times everyday; in this imitating David, who said, *My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready.*[1348] Ah! how effectually does one perfect act of conformity to the will of God change the sinner into a saint, as it happened to St. Paul, who by only saying to God, *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do.*[1349] from a persecutor of the Church was changed into an apostle and vessel of election. O my God! I will never more lament the tribulations which Thou mayest send me. I know that all will be for my good. I will say always, Lord, may thy holy will be ever accomplished. As Thou willest, so do I will. Thy will be done. *As it hath pleased the Lord, so be it done.*[1350]

3. The most certain sign that the soul loves God is its peaceful conformity to the will of God in all adverse occurrences, such as poverty, sickness, losses, and ruin. In the afflictions which happen to us from the malice of men, we should consider not the stone which strikes us, but the hand of God

who casts it. God does not will the sin of those who deprive us of our goods, reputation, or life; but that we should accept such afflictions as coming from his hands, and should say as Job did when his goods were taken from him, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord, so it is done; blessed be the name of the Lord*[1351] O my God! I have not acted in this manner; how often, to follow my own will have I despised Thine! But then I did not love Thee; now I do love Thee more than myself; I embrace all Thy divine appointments, and desire to do whatever Thou pleasest. But Thou knowest my weakness, enable me therefore by Thy assistance to accomplish what I now resolve. O holy will of God! thou shalt be from henceforward my whole love. Holy Mary, obtain for me the grace ever to do the will of God during the remainder of my life.

PART II

Pious Reflections on Different Points of Spirituality to Guide Souls that Desire to Advance in the Love of God[1352]

I

THE THOUGHT OF ETERNITY

SAINT AUGUSTINE called the thought of eternity the great thought: *Magna cogitatio.* This thought has brought the saints to count all the treasures and greatness of this life as nothing more than straw, dust, smoke, and refuse. This thought has sent many anchorites to hide themselves in deserts and caves, and so many noble youths, and even kings and emperors, to shut themselves up in cloisters. This thought has given courage to so many martyrs to endure the torture of piercing nails and heated irons, and even of being burnt in the fire.

No; we are not created for this earth: the end for which God has placed us in the world is this, that with our good deeds we may inherit eternal life. *The end is eternal life.*[1353] And, therefore, St. Eucherius said that the only affair that we should attend to in this life is eternity; that is, that we should win a happy eternity, and escape a miserable one. *The object for which we struggle is eternity.*[1354] If assured of this end, we are forever blessed; if we fail of it, we are forever miserable. Happy he who lives ever with eternity in view, with a lively faith that he must speedily die, and enter upon eternity. *The just man lives by faith.*[1355] It is faith that makes the just to live in the sight of God, and which gives light to their souls, by withdrawing them from earthly affections, and placing before their thoughts the eternal blessings which God promises to them that love him. St. Teresa said that all sins had their origin in a want of faith. Therefore, in order to overcome our passions and temptations, we ought constantly to revive our faith by saying: *I believe the life everlasting.*[1356] I believe that after this life, which will soon be ended, there is an eternal life, either full of joys, or full of pains, which will befall me, according to my merits or demerits. St. Augustine also said that a man who believes in eternity, and yet is not converted to God, has either lost his senses or his faith. *“O eternity!” (these are his* *words), “he that meditates upon thee, and repents not, either has not faith, or he has no heart.”*[1357] In reference to this, St. John Chrysostom relates that the Gentiles, when they saw Christians sinning, thought them either liars or fools. *If you believe not (they said) what you say you believe, you are liars; if you believe in eternity and sin, you are fools.*[1358] *“Woe to sinners who enter upon eternity without having known it, because they would not think upon it!” exclaims St. Cæsarius; and then he adds, “But oh, double woe! They enter upon it, and they never come forth.”*[1359]

St. Teresa said constantly to her disciples, *“My children, there is one soul, one eternity.”* By which she meant to say, *My children, we have one soul, and when that is lost, all is lost; and, once lost, it is lost forever.* In a word, upon that last breath which we breathe in dying, it depends whether we are forever blessed, or in despair. If the eternity of the next life, if paradise, if hell, were mere fictions of literary men, and things of doubtful reality, even then we ought to bestow all our care to live well, and not to risk our soul forever. But no; these things are not doubtful; they are sure things, they are things of faith; they more surely exist than those things which we see with our bodily sight. Let us, then, pray to our Lord, *Increase our faith;*[1360] for, if we are not strong in faith, we may become worse than Luther or Calvin. On the other hand, one thought of living faith upon the eternity that awaits us may make us saints. *St. Gregory wrote that they who meditate on eternity are neither puffed up by prosperity, nor cast down by adversity; for they desire nothing and they fear nothing in this world.*[1361]

When it happens to us to suffer any infirmities or persecutions, let us think of the hell which we have deserved through our sins. When we do this, every cross will seem light, and we shall thank the Lord, and say, *It is the mercy of the Lord that we are not consumed.*[1362] We shall say, with David, *Unless the Lord had been my helper, my soul had almost dwelt in hell.*[1363] Through myself I was already lost; Thou hast done this, O God of mercy! that Thou hast stretched forth Thy hand, and drawn me forth from hell: *Thou hast delivered my soul, that it should not perish.*[1364] *O my God! Thou knowest how often I have deserved hell; but, notwithstanding, Thou biddest me hope, and I desire to hope. My sins terrify me; but Thy death giveth me courage, and Thy promise of pardon to him that repenteth. A contrite and humbled heart, O God! Thou wilt not despise. I have* *dishonoured Thee for the time that is past, but now I love Thee above all things; and I grieve more than for any other evil, that I have offended Thee. O my Jesus! have mercy upon me. Mary, Mother of God, pray for me.*

II

WE ARE PILGRIMS ON EARTH

While we live in this life, we are so many pilgrims who wander up and down upon the earth, far from our country, which is heaven, where the Lord awaits us, that we may rejoice forever in his glorious countenance. *While we are in the body, writes the apostle, we are absent from the Lord.*[1365]

If, then, we love God, we ought to have a continual desire to leave this place of exile, by being separated from the body, that we may go and see him. It was for this that St. Paul ever sighed, as he said, *We are confident, and have a good will to be absent rather from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*[1366] Before the common redemption of us miserable sons of Adam, the way of approach to God was closed up; *but Jesus Christ, by his death, has obtained for us the grace of having it in our power to become the sons of God;*[1367] and thus has opened to us *the gates by which we can have access, as children, to our Father, Almighty God.*[1368] On this account St. Paul says, *Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow-citizens with the saints and the domestics of God.*[1369] Thus, so long as we are in the grace of God, we enjoy the citizenship of paradise, and belong to the family of God, St. Augustine says, *“Nature corrupted with sin produces citizens of an earthly city; but grace, which frees our nature from sin, makes us citizens of a heavenly country, and vessels of mercy.”*[1370] This made David say, *I am a stranger on earth; hide not Thy commandments from me.*[1371] O Lord! I am a pilgrim upon this earth, teach me to keep Thy precepts, which are the road by which I may reach my country in heaven.

It is not wonderful that the wicked should wish to live forever in this world, for they justly fear that they shall pass from the pains of this life to the eternal and infinitely more terrible pains of hell; but how can he who loves God, and has a moral certainty that he is in a state of grace, desire to go on living in this vale of tears, in continual bitterness, in straits of conscience, in peril of perishing? How can he help sighing to depart at once to unite himself to God in a blessed eternity, where there is no danger of his destroying himself? Oh, how souls that love God groan continually while they live, and cry out with David, *Woe is me, for my banishment is prolonged!*[1372] Unhappy is he who must continue to live a long time in this world, in the midst of so many perils to his salvation! Therefore it is that the saints have continually had this prayer upon their lips, *Thy kingdom come.*[1373] Quickly, O Lord! quickly carry us to Thy kingdom. Let us make speed, then, as the apostle exhorts us, to enter that kingdom, where we shall find perfect peace and contentment: *Let us hasten to enter into that rest.*[1374] Let us hasten, I say, with desire, and not cease to walk onwards till we come to that blessed harbour which God prepares for them that love him. *"He that runs," says St. John Chrysostom, "pays not heed to the spectators, but to the crown of victory; he stands not, but hastens on his course."*[1375] Therefore the saint argues that the longer has been our life, the more we should hasten with good works to win the palm. Thus, our one constant prayer for the relief of the troubles and trials which we endure in this life ought to be this: *Thy kingdom come.*[1376] Lord, may Thy kingdom speedily come, where, united eternally with Thee, and seeing Thee face to face with all our powers, we shall no longer know fear, or danger of falling away.

And when we find ourselves afflicted with the labours or dishonours of the world, let us comfort ourselves with the great reward that God prepares for those who suffer for the love of him: *Rejoice in that day, and be glad; for behold, your reward is great in heaven.*[1377] St. Cyprian said *that with good reason our Lord wills that we should rejoice in labours and persecutions, because then the true soldiers of God are proved, and crowns are distributed to the faithful.*[1378] *Behold, O my God! my heart is ready;*[1379] behold me prepared for every cross that Thou givest me to endure. No, I desire not delights or pleasures in this life; he who has offended Thee and deserves hell, deserves not pleasures. I am ready to suffer all the infirmities and adversities that Thou sendest me; I am ready to embrace all the slights of men; I am content, if it pleases Thee to deprive me of all bodily and spiritual consolations; it is enough that Thou dost not deprive me of Thyself, and of the eternal love of Thee. This I deserve not, but I hope for it, through the blood that Thou hast shed for me. I love Thee, O my God, my love, my all! I shall live forever, and I shall love Thee forever, as I hope; and my paradise will ever be to rejoice in Thy infinite joy., which Thou dost truly merit, through Thine infinite goodness.

III

GOD DESERVES TO BE LOVED ABOVE EVERYTHING

St. Teresa said that it was a great favour that God should call a soul to love him. Let us, then, love him, since we are called to this love, and let us love him as he desires to be loved. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.*[1380] The Venerable Louis da Ponte felt ashamed at saying to God, *"O Lord, I love Thee above everything; I love Thee more than all creatures, than all riches, than all honours, than all earthly pleasures;"* for it seemed to him that it was equivalent to saying, *"My God, I love Thee more than straw, and smoke, and dust."* But God is satisfied that we should love him above all things. Therefore, at least, let us say, *"Yea, O Lord! I love Thee more than all the honours of the world, more than all its riches, more than all my kindred and friends; I love Thee more than health, more than my good name, more than science, more than all my comforts; I love Thee more Than everything I possess, more than myself."* And let us still further say: *"O Lord! I value Thy graces and Thy gifts; but more Than all Thy gifts, I love Thyself, who alone art infinite goodness, and a good worthy of infinite love, which exceeds every other good thing. And, therefore, O my God! whatever Thou mayest give me short of Thyself, which is not Thyself, is not sufficient for me; if Thou givest me Thyself, Thou alone art sufficient for me. Let others seek what they will, I will seek nothing but Thee alone, my love, my all.*

In Thee alone I receive all that I can find or desire."

The sacred Spouse said, that among all things, she had chosen to love her beloved: *My beloved is fair and ruddy, and chosen out of thousands.*[1381] And whom shall we choose to love? Among all our friends of this world, where can we find a friend more worthy of love and more faithful than God, and who has loved us more than God? Let us pray, then, and let us pray constantly, *"O Lord! draw me after Thee; for if Thou dost not draw me* *after Thee, I cannot come to Thee.”*[1382] O Jesus! my Saviour, when will it be that, stripped of any other affection, I may ask and seek for none but Thee! I fain would detach myself from everything; but constantly some importunate affections enter my heart, and draw me away from Thee. Separate me, then, with Thy powerful hand, and make Thyself the one object of all my affections and all my thoughts. *St. Augustine said that he who has God has everything, and he who has not God has nothing.*[1383] What does it profit a rich man that he possesses many treasures of gold and jewels, if he lives apart from God? What does it profit a monarch to extend his dominions, if he has not the grace of God? What does it profit a man of letters to understand many sciences and languages, if he knows not how to love his God? What does it profit a general to command an army, if he lives the slave of the devil, and far from God? While David was yet king, but in a state of sin, he walked in his gardens, he went to his sports and all other pleasures; but these creatures seemed to say, *Where is thy God?*[1384]

Wouldst thou seek in us thy happiness? Go seek God, whom thou hast left, for he alone can give thee rest. And thus David confessed that, in the midst of all his delights, he found not peace, and mourned night and day, considering that he was without God. *Tears were my bread night and day, while they daily said to me, Where is thy God?*[1385] In the midst of the miseries and toils of this world, who can console us better than Jesus Christ? He alone says, *Come to me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.*[1386] O folly of the worldly! One single tear shed for our sins, one cry, “My God!” uttered in love, by a soul in a state of grace, is worth more than a thousand festivals, a thousand plays, a thousand banquets, in giving contentment to a heart in love with the world. I say again, O folly! and a folly, too, which none can remedy when there comes that, death, when it is night, as the Gospel says, *The night cometh, in which no man can work.* Wherefore our Lord warns us *“to walk while the light favours us; for the night will come, when no m*[1387]*an can walk.”*[1388] Let God alone, then, be all our treasure, all our love; and let all our desire be to please God, who will not suffer us to conquer him in love. He rewards a hundred-fold everything that we do to give him pleasure. *O my God, and all my good! be Thou the ruling power in my soul; and, as I would choose to love Thee above all things, so do Thou grant that in all things I may prefer*

Thy will to my own pleasure. O my Jesus! I trust in Thy blood, that, through all my life that remains, I may love none but Thee upon this earth, in order that I may come one day to possess Thee forever in the kingdom of the blessed. O holy Virgin! aid me with thy powerful prayers, and carry me to kiss thy feet in paradise.

IV

IN ORDER THAT A SOUL MAY BECOME HOLY, IT MUST GIVE ITSELF TO GOD WITHOUT RESERVE

St. Philip Neri said that so much of our love as we fix upon creatures we take away from God; *and, therefore, our Saviour, as St. Jerome wrote, is jealous of our hearts.*[1389] As he himself has loved us so abundantly, he desires to reign alone in our heart?, and to have no companions there, who may rob him of a portion of that love which he desires to have wholly to himself; and, therefore, it displeases him to see us attached to any affection which is not for him. And does our Saviour ask too much; after having given his own blood and life, dying for us upon a cross? Does he not deserve to be loved by us with all our hearts, and without reserve? St. John of the Cross said, that every attachment to creatures hinders us from belonging wholly to God. *Who will give me the wings of a dove, that I may flee away and be at rest?*[1390] says the Psalmist. There are souls that are called by God to become saints, but that, coming to him with reserve, and not giving him their whole love, retain some affection for earthly things, and thus never become, and never will become, holy. They fain would fly, but being held down by some attachment, they cannot, but remain fixed upon earth. We must, therefore, strip ourselves of everything. Every thread, says the same St. John, whether great or small, hinders the soul from flying to God.

St. Gertrude once prayed to the Lord that he would teach her what he would have her to do. The Lord answered, *I desire nothing from thee but a devoted heart.*[1391] And it was this which David sought from God, *Create in me a clean heart, O God!*[1392] O my God! give me a pure heart; that is, emptied and stripped of every earthly affection. *“All for all,”*[1393] wrote Thomas a Kempis. To gain all, we must give all. To possess God, we must leave all that is not God. Then the soul can say to the Lord, “My Jesus, I have left all for Thee; now give Thyself wholly to me.” To attain this, we must not cease to beg of God that he would fill us with his holy love. Love is that mighty fire that burns up in our hearts every affection that is not for God. *St. Francis de Sales said that when a house is in flames, we throw all the furniture out of the windows;*[1394] by which he meant that when a soul is inflamed, and the divine love takes possession of it, it has no need of sermons or spiritual directors to detach it from the world; the love of God itself will cleanse the heart, and despoil it of every impure desire. Holy love is introduced in the Canticles under the symbol of a cellar of wine: *The king brought me into the wine-cellar; he created love within me.*[1395]

In this blessed cell the souls that are the brides of Christ, inebriated with the wine of holy love, lose all sense for the things of the world, admire God alone, in all things seek God alone, speak only of God, and desire to think only of God; and when they hear others speak of riches, dignities, pleasures, they turn to God and say to him, with a burning sigh, *My God, and my all!*[1396] What a world, what pleasures, what honours! Be Thou all my joy, all my contentment. *St. Teresa wrote, when speaking of the prayer of union with God, that this union consists in dying to all worldly things, in order to possess nothing but God.*[1397] That a soul may give itself wholly to God, three means are especially necessary: *1. The avoidance of all defects, even the very least, accompanied with conquests over every inordinate desire, such as an abstinence from observing such and such an object of sight or hearing, from certain little pleasures of sense, from certain witty or unnecessary conversations, and suchlike; 2. Among things which are good, the constant choice of those that are the best and the most pleasing to God; and 3. The receiving with peace of mind and thanksgiving, from the divine hands, all things that are displeasing to our self—love. O my Jesus, my love, my all! how can I see Thee dying upon a shameful cross, despised by all, and consumed by anguish, and then go and seek earthly pleasures and lories? I would be wholly Thine. Forget the offences I have committed against Thee, and receive me. Teach me to know from what things I ought to separate myself, and what I must do to please Thee all this I desire to do. Give me strength to follow Thy will, and to be faithful to Thee. O my beloved Redeemer! Thou willest that I should give myself to Thee without reserve, that I may unite myself wholly to Thy heart. Behold, this day I give* *myself wholly to Thee, without reserve, everything that I am; from Thee I hope for grace to be faithful even to death. O Mother of God, and my own Mother Mary! obtain for me the grace of holy perseverance.*

V

THE TWO GREAT MEANS FOR BECOMING HOLY DESIRE AND RESOLUTION

1. All holiness consists in loving God, *The love of God is that infinite treasure in which we gain the friendship of God.*[1398] God is ready to give this treasure of his holy love, but he wills that we earnestly desire it. He that faintly desires any good thing takes little trouble to gain it. *On the other hand, St. Laurence Justinian said that an earnest desire lightens all toil, and gives us strength.*[1399] And thus, he who little desires to advance in divine love, instead of becoming more ardent in the way of perfection, ever becomes more and more lukewarm; and thus is ever in imminent peril of falling headlong down some precipice. And, on the other hand, whoever aspires with fervent desire after perfection, and strengthens himself daily to advance in its path, little by little, with time will attain it. *St. Teresa said, "God never gives many favours, except to those who earnestly desire his love." And again, "God leaves no good desire with out its reward."*[1400] And therefore the saint advises everyone not to suffer his desires to slacken, because, trusting in God, and strengthening ourselves little by little, we shall reach that point which all the saints have reached. It is a deceit of the devil, according to the opinion of the same saint, which makes us think that it is a mark of pride to desire to become saints. It would be pride and presumption, if we trusted in our own works or intentions; but if we hope for all from God, he will give us that strength which we have not.

Let us, then, desire, with a very great desire, to attain to a lofty height of divine love; and let us say, with courage, *I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me.*[1401] And if we do not find that we possess this great desire, at least let us ask it urgently of Jesus Christ, that he may give it to us.

2. We will now pass on to the second means resolution. Good desires must be accompanied by a determined spirit to strengthen ourselves in the

attainment of the desired blessing. Many desire perfection, but take no right means to gain it; they want to live in a desert, to accomplish great works of penance and prayer, to endure martyrdom; but such desires are nothing better than mere fancies, which, instead of benefiting them, do them great harm. *These are the desires which slay the slothful man:*[1402] Such a person, feeding himself upon these fruitless desires, pays no heed to the cure of his defects, the mortification of his appetites, and patience in suffering contempt and crosses. He would do great things, but such as are incompatible with his present condition, and therefore his imperfections increase; in every time of adversity he is agitated, every infirmity makes him impatient; and thus he lives imperfect, and imperfect he dies. If, then, we truly desire to become saints, let us resolve:

1. To avoid every venial sin, however slight.
2. To detach ourselves from every earthly desire.
3. Let us not cease our accustomed exercises of prayer and mortification, however great may be the weariness and dryness we feel in them.
4. Let us meditate daily on the Passion of Jesus Christ, which inflames with divine love every heart that meditates upon it.
5. Let us resign ourselves in peace to the will of God in all things that trouble us, as Father Balthazar Alvarez said, “He that in troubles resigns himself to the divine will, runs to God as swift as by a post.”
6. Let us continually beg of God the gift of his holy love.

Resolution, resolution, said St. Teresa: *“The devil has no dread of irresolute souls.”*[1403] On the contrary, he who resolves to give himself truly to God will overcome even what seemed impossible. A resolved will conquers everything. Let us study to redeem the time that is lost; the time that remains, let us give it all to God. All time that is not devoted to God is lost. Do we not fear lest God should abandon us to our lukewarmness, which may lead us to utter ruin? Let us take courage, and live from this day forth upon the holy maxim, “We must please God even to death.” Souls thus resolute are assisted by the Lord to fly in the way of perfection. He that would belong wholly to God must resolve:

1. Not to commit even the slightest venial sin.

2. To give himself to God without reserve, and therefore to neglect nothing which may be pleasing to God, always with the approbation of his *director.*

3. Out of all good things, to choose that which is most pleasing to God.

4. Not to wait for the morrow, but whatever can be done to-day, to do it.

5. To pray daily to God, that he may increase in his love. With love everything can be done; without love, nothing. To gain everything, we must give everything. Jesus has given himself wholly to us, that we may be wholly his.

O miserable being that I am! O Thou God of my soul! for so many years I have lived upon earth, and what progress have I made in Thy love? My progress has been in my faulty in self-love, in sins. And shall I live this life even unto death? No; Jesus, my Saviour, help me I would no longer be so ungrateful as I have been till now. I would truly love Thee, and would leave all to please Thee. Give me Thy hand, O Jesus! Thou who hast poured forth all Thy blood, that Thou mightest see me Thine. Such I would be, with Thy grace. Even till death, aid me, and strip me of everything which may hinder me from belonging wholly to Thee, who hast so much loved me. Grant it me through Thy merits; from Thee I hope it. And I hope it also from thee, O my Mother Mary. With thy prayers, which can obtain everything from God, obtain for me the grace of belonging wholly to him.

VI

THE SCIENCE OF THE SAINTS

There are two kinds of sciences upon earth, one heavenly, the other worldly. The heavenly is that which leads us to please God, and makes us great in heaven. The worldly is that which moves us to please ourselves, and to become great in the world. But this worldly science is folly and madness in the sight of God. *The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God.*[1404] It is folly, for it makes fools of those who cultivate it; it makes them fools, and like the brutes, for it teaches them to gratify their carnal appetites like the beasts. St. John Chrysostom wrote, *"We call him a man who preserves complete the image of a man; and what is the image of a man? to be rational."*[1405] Hence it is that if a brute were ever to act according to reason, we should say that such a brute acted like a man; so we say that a man who acts upon sensual appetites and contrary to reason acts like a brute.

But to return to the human and natural knowledge of earthly things, what do men know of all things which they have studied? What are we but so many blind moles, who, besides the truths which we know by faith, know only by means of our senses, or by conjecture; so that everything is uncertain and fallible. What writers on such subjects, however applauded by many, have escaped the criticism of others? But the evil is that *the knowledge of the world puffs us up,*[1406] and makes us proud and prone to despise others a pernicious fault, for, as St. James says, *God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.*[1407] *Oh that they would be wise and understand, and know the latter end!*[1408] Oh, if men would act by reason and the divine law, and thus would learn to provide, not so much for a temporal existence, which speedily ends, as for eternity, they would assuredly not occupy themselves in the attainment of any knowledge, except such as aids them in the obtaining eternal happiness and avoiding eternal pains. St. John Chrysostom advises us to walk among the tombs of the dead, in order to learn the knowledge of salvation. Oh, what a school of truth are the sepulchres for learning the vanity of the world! *"Let us go to the tombs; there," said the saint, there I see nothing but corruption, bones, and worms. "*[1409]

From all these skeletons which I see, I cannot tell which belonged to the ignorant and which to the learned; I only see that with death all the glories of the world were finished for them. What remained to a Cicero, a Demosthenes, an Ulpian? *They have slept their sleep, and have found nothing in their hands.*[1410] *Blessed is he who has received from God the science of the saints.*[1411] The science of the saints is to know the love of God. How many in the world are well versed in literature, in mathematics, in foreign and ancient languages! But what will all this profit them, if they know not the love of God? *Blessed is he, said St. Augustine, who knows God, even if he knows nothing else.*[1412] He that knows God and loves him, though he be ignorant of what others know, is more learned than the learned who know not how to love God. *"Let the unlearned arise, and seize upon heaven!"*[1413] cried the same Augustine. How learned were St. Francis of Assisi, St. Pascal, St. John of God! ignorant in worldly knowledge, but well skilled in that which is divine. *Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes.*[1414] By the wise, we are here to understand the worldly-wise, who labour for the possessions and glories of the world, and think little of eternal joys. And by babes we are to understand simple souls (like those of children), who know little of worldly wisdom, but devote all their care to pleasing God.

Let us not, then, envy those who know many things; let us only envy those who know how to love Jesus Christ; and let us imitate St. Paul, who said that he desired to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Happy are we if we attain to the knowledge of the love which Jesus crucified had for us, and from this book of love attain to the love of him. O Thou who art my true and perfect lover, where shall I find one who has so loved me as Thou hast! During my life that is past, I have lost my time in attaining the knowledge of many things which have profited my soul nothing, and I have thought nothing of knowing how to love Thee. I see that my life has been lost. I perceive that Thou callest me to Thy holy love;

behold, I leave all; from this day forth, my one thought shall be to please Thee, my highest good. I give myself wholly to Thee; accept me; give me help to be faithful to Thee; I desire to be no longer my own, but all, all Thine. O mother of God! do thou also help me with thy prayers.

Permit me here to express the great consolation which I derived a few days since from information connected with the subject of the preceding considerations the science of the saints. I have been assured that, after having received so much applause from all Europe for his poetic compositions, which are as noxious as they are beautiful (I mean those only which treat of profane love), for the more tender his expressions, the more they are calculated to kindle in the breasts of young persons the pernicious flames of impure affections, the celebrated Signore Peter Metastasio has published a little book in prose, in which he expresses his detestation of his writings on profane love, and declares that, were it in his power, he would retract them and make them disappear from the world, even at the cost of his blood. And I am informed that his poetic compositions are now confined to some pieces on moral or spiritual subjects, which he writes in order to comply with his obligation as poet to the imperial court. He lives retired in his own house, leading a life of prayer. This information has given me unspeakable consolation; because his public declaration and his most laudable example will help to undeceive many young persons who seek to acquire a great name by similar compositions on profane love. It is certain that, by his retraction, Signore Metastasio has deserved more encomiums than he would by the publication of a thousand poetic works; for these he might be praised by men, but now he is praised by God. Hence, as I formerly detested his vanity in prizing himself for such compositions (I do not speak of his sacred pieces, which are excellent and deserving of all praise), so now I shall never cease to praise him; and were I permitted, I would kiss his feet, seeing that he has voluntarily become the censor of his own works, and that he now desires to see them banished from the whole world, at the expense, as he says, even of his own blood.

VII

OUR ETERNAL SAFETY CONSISTS IN PRAYER

Prayer is not only useful, but necessary for salvation; and therefore God, who desires that we should be saved, has enjoined it as a precept, *Seek, and it shall be given you.*[1415] It was an error of Wickliff, condemned by the Council of Constance, to say that prayer was a subject of divine counsel to us, and not of command. *It is necessary,* not, it is advisable or fitting, *always to pray.*[1416] Wherefore Doctors of the Church always say that he cannot be held innocent of grievous sin who neglects to recommend himself to God, at least once in a month, and at all times when he finds himself assaulted by severe temptation. The reason of this necessity of recommending our selves often to God arises from our inability to do any good work, or to entertain any good thoughts, of our selves: *Without Me ye can do nothing.*[1417] *We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves.*[1418]

Therefore, St. Philip Neri said that he despaired of himself. *On the other hand, St. Augustine wrote that God desires to bestow his graces, but only on those who beg them.*[1419] And, especially, said the saint, *God only gives the grace of perseverance to those who seek it.*[1420] It is a fact that the devil never ceases to go about to devour us, and therefore we need ever to defend ourselves by prayer. *"Continual prayer is necessary for man," said St. Thomas.*[1421] And Jesus Christ first taught us, *We must always pray, and not faint.*[1422] Otherwise, how can we resist the perpetual temptations of the world and the devil? It was the error of Jansenius, condemned by the Church, that the observance of certain precepts was impossible, and that sometimes grace itself fails to render it possible to us. *God is faithful, said St. Paul, who does not suffer us to be tempted above our strength.*[1423] Yet he desires that, when we are tried, we should have recourse to him for help to resist. St. Augustine wrote: *"The law is given, that grace may be sought;*

grace is given, that the law may be fulfilled."[1424] Granting that the law cannot be obeyed by us without grace, God has yet given us the law, in order that we may seek the grace to fulfil it; and, therefore, he gives the grace that we may fulfil it. All this was well expressed by the Council of Trent, in these words: *"God does not command things that are impossible, but, in commanding us, he counsels thee both to do what thou canst, and seek for aid for what thou canst not do, and he helps thee that thou mayst be able to do it."*[1425]

Thus, the Lord is ever ready to give us his help, in order that we may not be overcome by temptation; but he only gives this help to those who fly to him in the time of trial, and especially in temptations against chastity, as the Wise Man wrote: *Because I knew that thus only could I preserve continence, if God should grant it, therefore I went to the Lord and besought Him.*[1426] Let us rest assured that we can never overcome our carnal appetites, if God does not give us help, and this help we cannot have without prayer; but if we pray, we shall assuredly have power to resist the devil in everything, and the strength of God, who strengthens us; as St. Paul says, *I can do all things, through God who strengthens me.*[1427] It is also most useful to us, in order to obtain the divine grace, that we should have recourse to the intercession of the saints, who have great power with God, especially for the benefit of those who have a particular devotion to them. *And this is not a mere devotion dependent upon our private fancy, but it is a duty, as St. Thomas writes,*[1428] *that the divine law requires that we mortals should receive the aid which is necessary for our salvation, through the prayers of the saints.* Especially this aid comes through the intercession of Mary, whose prayers are of more value than those of all the saints; so much so, indeed, as St. Bernard says, that it is through her intercession that we have access to Jesus Christ our Mediator and Saviour. "Through thee we have access to the Son, O thou giver of grace, and Mother of our salvation! that through thee he may receive us, who through thee was given for us."[1429]

This, indeed, I have sufficiently proved in my book called "The Glories of Mary;"[1430] and, so in my work "On Prayer,";[1431] chap, I, I have brought forward the opinion of many saints, especially St. Bernard, and many theologians, as, for example, Father di Alessandro and Father Contenson, that through Mary we receive all the graces which we receive from God. Hence, also, St. Bernard says, *"Let us seek for grace, and let us seek it through Mary; for he that seeks finds, and cannot be deceived."*[1432] The same was said by St. Peter Damian, St. Bonaventure, St. Bernardine of Sienna, St. Antoninus, and others. Let us then pray, and pray with confidence, says the Apostle. *Let us go boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.*[1433] Jesus Christ now sits on the throne of grace to comfort all who fly to him, and says, *Seek, and it shall be given to you.*[1434] On the day of judgment he will also sit upon his throne, but it will be a throne of judgment; what madness, then, it is in those who, having it in their power to be delivered from their miseries by going to Jesus, now that he sits on his throne of grace, wait till he becomes their judge, and will not avail themselves of his mercy. Now he says to us that whatever we ask of him, if we have confidence, he will give us all. And what more can one friend do to another to show his love than say, *"Seek what thou wilt, and I will give it thee."*[1435]

St. James adds more, and says, *If any man need wisdom, let him ask it of God, who gives to all men liberally, and reproaches not, and it shall be given him.*[1436] By "wisdom" is here meant the knowledge of the salvation of the soul; to have this wisdom, we must seek of God the graces necessary to bring us to salvation. And will God give them? Most assuredly he will give them, and in still greater abundance than we ask them. Let us observe also the words, " He does not reproach us." If the sinner repents of his sins, and asks salvation from God, God does not that which men do, who reproach the ungrateful with their ingratitude, and deny them what they ask; but he gives it to them willingly, and even more than they beg for. If, then, we would be saved, we must have our lips ever opened to pray, and say, "My God, help me; my God; have mercy; Mary, have mercy." When we cease to pray, we are lost. Let us pray for ourselves: let us pray for sinners, for this is most pleasing to God. Let us pray also daily for holy souls in purgatory; those holy prisoners are most grateful to all who pray for them. *Whensoever we pray, let us seek grace of God through the merits of Jesus Christ, for he himself assures us that whatever we ask in his name, he will give it to us.*[1437] O my God! this is the grace which, above all others, I ask through the merits of Jesus Christ: grant that throughout my life, and especially in time of temptation, I may recommend myself to Thee, and hope for Thy help through the love of Jesus and Mary. O holy Virgin! obtain for me this grace on which depends my salvation.

VIII

I MUST ONE DAY DIE

It is a most useful thought for salvation to say often to ourselves, “I must one day die.” The Church every year on Ash-Wednesday brings this remembrance to the faithful. *O man, remember that thou art dust, and to dust shalt thou return.*[1438] And this certainty of death is brought to our recollection many times in the year; sometimes by the burial-grounds which we pass upon the road, sometimes by the graves which we behold in churches, sometimes by the dead who are carried to burial. The most precious furniture that was carried by the anchorites to their caves was a—cross and a skull; the cross to remind them of the love which Jesus Christ has had for us, and the skull to remind them of the day of their own death. And thus they persevered in penitential works till the end of their days; and thus, dying in poverty in the desert, they died more content than if they had died as kings in their palaces. *The end is at hand; the end is at hand.*[1439] In this life, one man lives a longer, another a shorter time; but for every one, sooner or later, the end comes; and when that end is here, nothing will comfort us at the point of death but that we have loved Jesus Christ, and have endured with patience the labours of this life for the love of him. Then not the riches we have gained, nor the honours we have obtained, nor the pleasures we have enjoyed, will console us. All the greatness of the world cannot comfort a dying man; it rather adds to his pains; and the more he has gained of it, the more does he suffer. It was said by Sister Margaret of St. Anne, a nun of the Barefooted Carmelites, and daughter of the Emperor Rodolph II.: *“What profit is a kingdom in the hour of death?”*

Oh, how many worldly persons are there to whom, at the very moment when they are busy in seeking for gain, power, and office, the word of death comes: *Set thy house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.*[1440] Why, O man! hast thou neglected to make thy will till the hour when thou art in sickness? O my God! what pain is suffered by him who is on the point of gaining some lawsuit, or of taking possession of some palace or property, who hears it said by the priest who has come to pray for his soul, *“Depart, Christian soul, from this world.*[1441] Depart from this world, and render thy account to Jesus Christ.” “But now,” lie cries, “I am not well prepared.” What matters that? Thou must now depart. O my God! give me light, give me strength to spend the rest of my life in serving and loving Thee. If now I should die, I should not die content; I should die disturbed. What, then, do I wait for? That death should seize me at a moment of the greatest peril to my soul? O Lord! if I have been mad for the past, I would not be so for the time to come. Now I give myself wholly to Thee; receive me, and help me with Thy grace. In a word, to every one the end comes, and with the end comes that decisive moment on which depends a happy or a wretched eternity. *Oh, what a moment, on which eternity depends!*[1442] Oh, that all would think upon that moment, and the account they must give to their judge of their whole life! *Oh, that they were wise, and would understand, and would consider their last end!*[1443]

Truly, they would not then devote themselves to amassing riches, or labour to become great in this perishing world; they would think how to become saints, and to be great in that life which never ends. If, then, we have faith, let us believe that there is a death, a judgment, an eternity, and labour for the rest of our life to live only for God. And, therefore, let us take care to live as pilgrims in this earth, remembering that we must speedily leave it. Let us live ever with death before our eyes; and, in all the affairs of life, let us take care to act precisely as we should act at the point of death. All things upon earth either leave us, or we leave them. Let us hear Jesus Christ, who says, *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy.*[1444] Let us despise the treasures of earth, which cannot content us, and speedily end; and let us gain those heavenly treasures which will make us happy, and never be ended.

Miserable I am, O Lord! in that I have so often, for the sake of the goods of this life, turned my back upon Thee, who art the infinite good! I see my folly in having sought for a great name, and for making my fortune in the world. I see what my true happiness is: it is henceforth to love Thee, and in everything to fulfil Thy will. O my Jesus! take from me the desire of gain;

make me love neglect and an humble life. Give me strength to deny myself in everything that displeases Thee. Make me embrace, with a calm mind, infirmities, persecutions, desolations, and all the crosses that Thou mayest send me. Oh, that I could die for the love of Thee, abandoned by all, as Thou didst die for me! Holy Virgin, thy prayers can enable me to find my true happiness, which is to love earnestly thy Son. Oh, pray for me; in thee I trust.

IX

PREPARATION FOR DEATH

Death is certain. *"It is appointed to all men once to die."*[1445] On the other hand, the time and manner of our death are uncertain. Therefore, Jesus Christ exhorts us, "Be ye ready, for ye know not the hour when the Son of man cometh." He says, "Be ye ready;" and, there fore, it is necessary not only to prepare for death when death comes, but we must be ready to embrace it in whatever manner and in whatever circumstances it may come to us. It is accordingly very desirable that everyone, at least once a month, should make the following acts of devotion: *Behold, O my God! I am ready to embrace that death which Thou dost destine for me. From this time I embrace it, and I sacrifice my life in honour of Thy Majesty, and also in penance for my sins; being satisfied that this flesh, to please which I have so often offended Thee, should be devoured by worms, and be reduced to dust. O my Jesus! I unite the pains and agonies which I must then suffer to the pains and agonies which Thou, my Saviour j didst suffer in Thy death. I accept death with all the circumstances Thou mayest appoint; I accept its time, whether it be near or distant; I accept the manner, whether in bed or out of it, whether sudden or not, and from that more or less painful illness which may please Thee. In everything I resign myself to Thy holy will. Give me strength to suffer all with patience. What shall I render to the Lord for all the benefits He hath given to me?*[1446]

I thank Thee, O my God! first for the gift of faith, declaring that I desire to die a son of the holy Catholic Church. I thank Thee for not having caused me to die when I was in sin, and for having so often pardoned me with so much mercy. I thank Thee for so many lights of grace with which Thou hast sought to draw me to Thy love. I pray Thee to grant me to die after receiving the holy Viaticum, that, united with Thee, I may present myself at Thy tribunal. I do not deserve to hear from Thy mouth, *Well done, good and* *faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter into the joy of thy Lord.*[1447] I do not deserve it, for in nothing have I been perfectly faithful to Thee; but Thy death gives me hope that I shall be admitted to heaven, to love Thee there eternally, and with all my powers. O my crucified Love! have mercy upon me; look upon me with that love with which Thou didst look upon me from the cross when dying for me. *Remember not the sins of my youth and my ignorance, O Lord.*[1448] My sins terrify me, but I am comforted by that cross, on which I see Thee dead through the love of me. *"Behold the wood of the cross, on which hung the salvation of the world."!*[1449] I desire to end my life, that I may cease to offend Thee; by the blood that was shed for me, pardon me all my sins before death comes upon me. *"O blood of the Innocent, wash away the stains of the guilty."*[1450] My Jesus, I embrace Thy cross, and kiss the wounds of Thy holy feet, before which I desire to breathe my soul away. Leave me not at that last hour; *"We pray Thee save Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood."*[1451]

I love Thee with all my heart, I love Thee more than myself, and I repent with all my soul that I have displeased Thee. O Lord! I was lost, but Thou in Thy goodness hast delivered me from the world; receive, then, my soul from this hour, until that hour when it leaves the world. Therefore, I pray with St. Agatha, "Lord, Thou who hast taken from me the love of this world, receive my soul."[1452] *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth!*[1453] *O holy Virgin! help me at the moment of my death; O holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me a sinner, now and at the hour of my death; in thee, O Lady! have I hoped, I shall not be confounded forever. St. Joseph, my protector, obtain for me a holy death. My guardian angel, St. Michael the Archangel, defend me from the evil one in that last conflict. My holy patrons, and all saints in Paradise, succour me in that last hour. Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, be in my company at the hour of my death.*

X

HE THAT LOVES GOD MUST LOVE AND NOT ABHOR DEATH

How can he ever abhor death who is in the grace of God? *He that abideth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him.*[1454] He, therefore, that loves God is secure of his grace, and, thus dying, he is sure of going to rejoice forever in the kingdom of the blessed; and shall such a one fear death?

David truly said, Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.[1455] This means that no man may presume to be saved by his own merits; for no one but Jesus and Mary can say that he has been without sin throughout his life. But he ought not to fear death, if, with true repentance for his sins, he trusts in the merits of Jesus Christ, who came on earth to save sinners. *The Son of man came to save that which was lost.*[1456] And for this end he died, and poured forth his blood to save sinners. *The blood of Christ Jesus, says the Apostle, speaks more in favour of sinners than the blood of Abel spoke against Cain, who slew him.*[1457] It is true that, without a divine revelation, no man can possess an infallible certainty of his own salvation; but he that has given himself with a true heart to God, and is ready to lose everything, even life itself, rather than lose the divine grace, has a moral certainty that he will be saved. *This certainty is founded on the divine promises; no man, says the Scripture, ever trusted in God and was confounded.*[1458] Almighty God declares in many passages that he does not desire the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live. *Is it My will that a sinner should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should be converted from his ways, and live?*[1459] In another place he makes the same declaration, and adds an oath: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*[1460]

And, in the same chapter, God laments over those obstinate sinners who choose to perish because they will not leave their sins, and says, *Why will you die, O house of Israel.*[1461] And to those who repent of their sins he promises to forget all their iniquities. *If the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed he shall live, . . . I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done.*[1462] When a sinner also hates the sins he has committed, it is a certain sign that he has been pardoned. A holy Father[1463] says that whoever can say, with truth, *"I hate and abhor my iniquities,"*[1464] may be certain that they are forgiven. We have another sign of pardon when we recover grace and persevere in a good life for a considerable time after having sinned. It is also a sure sign to the same effect when we have a fixed resolution to die rather than lose the friendship of God, as also when we earnestly desire to love him, and to see him loved by others, and when we feel distress at seeing him offended. How is it, then, that certain great saints, after having given themselves wholly to God, and after a life of mortification and detachment from all earthly things, at the hour of death have felt great terror at the thought of appearing before Christ their judge? I reply that those great saints who have suffered these fears at the moment of death have been very few, and that it was the will of God that they should thus purge away the remains of their sins before entering on eternal blessedness; but that, ordinarily speaking, all the saints have died in remarkable peace, and with earnest desires to depart to the presence of God.

And for the rest, this is the very difference between sinners and saints at the hour of death, that sinners from fear pass on to despair, and saints from fear pass on to confidence, and thus die in peace. Therefore, every one who has a hope that he is in the grace of God ought to desire death, repeating the prayer which Christ Jesus has taught us, "Thy kingdom come;" and he ought to embrace death with joy when it comes that he may thus be freed from sin, and leave this world where no one lives without imperfections, and go to behold God, face to face, and love him with all his powers in the kingdom of love. O my beloved Jesus and my judge! when Thou dost judge me, for Thy mercy condemn me not to hell. In hell I cannot love Thee, but must hate Thee forever; and how can I hate Thee who art so worthy of love, and ho hast so loved me? If Thou wilt condemn me to hell, at least grant me grace to be able to love Thee there with all my heart. This grace I do not deserve, through my sins; but if I do not deserve it, Thou hast purchased it for me with the blood which Thou didst shed with such anguish for me upon the cross. O my Judge! inflict on me every pain, but deprive me not of the power of loving Thee. O Mother of God! behold the peril in which I stand of being condemned to be unable to love thy Son, who deserves an infinite love; help me; have pity on me.

XI

OUR SALVATION IS IN THE CROSS

“Behold the wood of the cross, on which hung the salvation of the world!”[1465] So sings the holy Church on Good Friday. In the cross is our salvation, our strength against temptations, our detachment from early pleasures; in the cross is found the true love of God. We must, therefore, resolve to bear with patience that cross which Jesus Christ sends us, and to die upon it for the sake of Jesus Christ, as he died upon his cross for the love of us. There is no other way to enter heaven but to resign ourselves to tribulations until death. And thus may we find peace, even in suffering. When the cross comes, what means is there for not loving peace, except the uniting of ourselves to the divine will? If we do not take this means, let us go where we will, let us do what we may, we shall never fly from the weight of the cross. On the other hand, if we carry it with good-will, it will bear us to heaven, and give us peace upon earth.

What does he gain who refuses the cross? He increases its weight. But he who embraces it, and bears it with patience, lightens its weight, and the weight itself becomes a consolation; for God abounds with grace to all those who carry the cross with good-will in order to please him. By the law of nature there is no pleasure in suffering; but divine love, when it reigns in a heart, makes it take delight in its sufferings. Oh, that we would consider the happy condition we shall enjoy in Paradise, if we be faithful to God, in enduring toils without lamenting; if we do not complain against God, who commands us to suffer, but say with Job, *Let this be my comfort, that he should not spare in afflicting me, nor contradict the words of the Holy One.*[1466] If we are sinners and have deserved hell, this should be our comfort in the tribulations which befall us, that we should be chastised in this life; because this is the sure sign that God will deliver us from eternal chastisement. Miserable is that sinner who prospers in this world! Whoever suffers a bitter trial, let him cast a glance at the hell which he has deserved, and thus the pains he endures will seem light.

If, then, we have committed sins, this ought to be our continual prayer to God, “O Lord, spare not pains, but give me, I pray Thee, strength to endure them with patience, that I may not oppose myself to Thy holy will. I will not oppose the words of the Holy One; in everything I unite myself to that which Thou wilt appoint for me, saying always, with Jesus Christ, *Even so, Father; for so hath it seemed good to Thee.*[1467] The soul which is governed by divine love seeks only God. *When a man has given all the substance of his house for love, he will despise it as nothing.*[1468] He that loves God despises and renounces everything that does not help him to love God; and in all the good works that he does, in his penitential acts and his labours for the glory of God, he seeks not consolations and sweetnesses of spirit; it is enough for him to know that he pleases God. In a word, he ever strives in all things to deny himself, renouncing every pleasure of his own; and then he boasts of nothing and is puffed up with nothing; but calls himself an unprofitable servant, and, setting himself in the lowest place, he abandons himself to the divine will and mercy We must change our tastes in order to become saints. If we do not arrive at a state in which bitter appears sweet, and sweet bitter, we shall never attain to a perfect union with God. In this consist all our security and perfection: in suffering with resignation all things that are contrary to our inclinations, as they happen to us day by day, whether they are small or great. And we must suffer them for those purposes for which the Lord desires that we should endure them: *(1) to purify our selves from the sins we have committed; (2) to merit eternal life; (3) to please God, which is the chief and most noble end at which we can aim in all our doings.*

Let us, then, ever offer ourselves to God, to suffer every cross that he may send us; and let us take care to be ever ready to endure every toil for the love of him, in order that, when it comes we may be ready to embrace it, saying, as Jesus Christ said to Peter when he was taken in the garden by the Jews to be led to death, *The cup which My Father Hath given Me, shall I not drink it?*[1469] God hath given me this cross for my good, and shall I say to him that I will not receive it? And whenever the weight of any cross seems very heavy, let us immediately have recourse to prayer, and God will give us strength to endure it meritoriously. And let us then recollect what St. Paul said, *that no tribulation of this world, however grievous it may be, can be compared with the glory which God prepares for us in the world to come.*[1470] Let us, therefore, reanimate our faith whenever tribulations afflict us; let us first cast our eyes upon the crucified One, who was in agonies for us upon the cross, and let us look also at Paradise, and on the blessings that God prepares for those who suffer for his love; and thus we shall not be faint-hearted, but shall thank him for the pains he gives us to suffer, and shall desire that he may give us more to suffer. Oh, how the saints rejoice in heaven, not that they have possessed honours and pleasures upon earth, but that they have suffered for Jesus Christ! Everything that passes is trifling; that only is great which is eternal, and never passes away. O my Jesus! how comforting is that which Thou sayest to me, *Turn unto Me, and I will turn to you.*[1471] For the sake of creatures, and of my own miserable tastes, I have left Thee; now I leave all, and turn to Thee; and I am confident that Thou wilt not reject me, if I desire to love Thee; for Thou hast told me that Thou art ready to embrace me. Receive me, then, into Thy grace; make me know the great good that Thou art, and the love that Thou hast borne to me, that I may no more leave Thee. O my Jesus! pardon me; O my beloved! pardon me the offences I have committed against Thee. Give me the love of Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt. Chastise me as much as Thou wilt; deprive me of everything, but deprive me not of Thyself. Were the whole world to come and offer me all its blessings, I declare that I desire Thee alone, and nothing more. O my Mother! recommend me to thy Son he giveth thee whatever thou askest; in thee I trust.

XII

HOW MUCH IT PLEASES JESUS CHRIST THAT WE SUFFER FOR THE LOVE OF HIM

If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.[1472] It will be useful to make a few reflections on these words of Jesus Christ. He says, "If any one will come after Me;" he does not say, "to me," but, "after me." The Lord desires that we should come close after him; we must therefore walk in the same road of thorns and sufferings in which he walked. He goes before, and does not rest until he reaches Calvary, where he dies; therefore, if we love him, we must follow him even to death. And thus it is necessary that every one should deny himself; that is, that he should deny himself everything that self-love demands, but that is not pleasing to Jesus Christ.

Our Lord says further, *"Let him take up his cross daily, and follow Me."* Let us consider these last words one by one. *Let him take up;* it avails little to carry the cross by compulsion; all sinners bear it, but without merit; to bear it with merit, we must embrace it voluntarily. His cross; under this word is implied every kind of tribulation, which is called a *"cross"* by Jesus Christ, in order that the name may render it sweet, from the thought that he died on the cross for love of us. He also says, *"his cross."* Some persons when they receive spiritual consolations, offer themselves to suffer as great things as were endured by the martyrs, hot irons, piercing nails, and tortures; but then they cannot endure a headache, the carelessness of a friend, the ill temper of a relative. My brother, my sister, God does not ask you to endure hot irons, piercing nails, and tortures; but he desires that you should suffer patiently this pain, this annoyance, this contempt.

A certain nun would fain go to suffer in a desert; she would perform great acts of penance; but yet she cannot endure such a one for her Superior, or such a one for her companion in her duties; but God desires that she should bear that cross which he gives her to suffer, and not that which she would herself choose. He says daily. Some persons embrace the cross at the beginning, when it reaches them; but when it lasts long, they say, *“Now I can bear no more.”* Yet God wills that we should go on to endure it with patience, and even that we should bear it continually, even till death. See, then, that salvation and perfection consist in these three words, let him deny; we must deny to our self-love whatever is not right: let him take up; we must embrace the cross that God gives us: let him follow we must follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ even to death. Let us be persuaded that for this end God keeps us in the world, that we may bear the crosses he sends us; and in this consists the merit of our life. Therefore our Saviour, because he loves us, came into this world, not for enjoyment, but to suffer, in order that we might follow in his steps. *To this end you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps.*[1473]

Let us watch him, as he goes before with his cross, to point out the road by which we must follow him, if we would be saved Oh, what a joy it is, in every trouble that befalls us, to say to Jesus Christ, *“Lord, is it Thy will that I should endure this cross? I accept it, and will endure it as long as it pleases Thee.”* Many persons are delighted to hear one speak of prayer, of peace, of love to Jesus Christ; but they find little pleasure in hearing one speak of crosses or of suffering. These are satisfied so long as the wind breathes with spiritual delights, but if it ceases, and there comes some adversity or desolation, in which the Lord hides himself in order to prove them, and deprives them of their usual comfort, they leave off prayer, Communion, and mortifications, and abandon themselves to ill-humour and lukewarmness, seeking their pleasure from earthly things. But these souls love themselves more than Jesus Christ; while they who do not love him with an interested love, for the sake of consolations, but with a pure love, and only because he is worthy of hove, do not leave their usual devout exercises for any dryness or weariness which they experience, being content to please God; and they offer themselves to suffer this desolation even till death, and through all eternity, if God so will it. Jesus Christ, says St. Francis de Sales, is as kind in desolation as in consolation. Souls that love God find their comfort and sweetness in suffering; in recollecting that they suffer for his love, and say, *"How sweet it is, O my Lord! to those who love Thee to suffer for Thee! Oh, that I might die for the love of Thee, my Jesus, who hast died for me!"*

All this, and still more, is claimed from us by Jesus Christ, who chose a life of pains, and a bitter death, without the slightest relief, for love of us; in order to teach us that if we would love him, we must love him as he loved us. Oh, how dear to Jesus Christ is a soul which suffers and loves! O divine gift! gift, above every other gift; to love in suffering, and to suffer in loving! *O my Jesus! Thou alone hast been able to teach us these maxims of salvation, all contrary to the maxims of the world; and Thou alone canst give us strength to suffer crosses with patience. I do not pray Thee to exempt me from suffering; I only pray Thee to give me strength to suffer with patience and resignation. O Eternal Father, Thy Son has promised that whatever we ask Thee in his name, Thou wilt give it us.*[1474] *Behold, we ask this of Thee: give us grace to endure with patience the pains of this life; hear us for the love of Jesus Christ. And Thou, O my Jesus! pardon me all the offences I have committed against Thee, in that I have not been willing to suffer with patience the troubles Thou hast sent me. Give me Thy love, that it may give me strength to suffer all for love of Thee. Deprive me of everything, of every earthly good, of relatives, friends, health of body, of every comfort; deprive me even of life; but not of Thy love. Give me Thyself, and I ask no more. O most holy Virgin! obtain for me an enduring love for Jesus Christ, even till death.*

XIII

DIVINE LOVE CONQUERS ALL THINGS

Love is strong as death.[1475] As death separates us from all the good things of the world, from riches, honours, kindred, friends, and all earthly pleasures, so the love of God, when it reigns in a heart, strips it of all affection for these perishing advantages. Therefore the saints have thought fit to strip themselves of everything the world offered them, to renounce their possessions, their posts of honour, and all they had, and to fly to deserts or cloisters, to think upon and to love God alone. The soul cannot exist without loving either the Creator or its creatures. Grant that a soul is weaned from every other love, and you will find it filled with love divine. Would we know whether we have given ourselves wholly to God? Let us examine ourselves whether we are weaned from every earthly thing. Some persons lament that in all their devotions, prayers, communions, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, they do not find God. To such St. Teresa says, “Detach thy heart from creatures, and then go seek God, and thou shalt find him.” Thou wilt not find a continual spiritual sweetness which God does not give without interruption to those who love him in this life, but only from time to time, to make them fly onwards towards those boundless delights which he prepares for them in paradise; but yet he gives them that inward peace which excels all sensual delights; *that peace of God which passes all sense.*[1476] And what greater delight can be enjoyed by a soul that loves God than to be able to say, with true affection, *“My God and my all?”* St. . Francis of Assisi continued a whole night in an ecstasy of paradise, continually repeating these words, *“My God and my all.”*

“Love is as strong as death.” If a dying man were to give a sign of moving towards any earthly thing, we should then know that he was not dead; death deprives us of everything. He that would give himself altogether to God must leave everything. If he reserves any one thing, he

gives a sign that his love for God is not strong, but weak. Divine love strips us of everything. Father Segneri, the. younger, an eminent servant of God (whose life was written by Muratori), said: *“Love to God is a beloved thief, which robs us of every earthly thing.”* Another servant of God, when he had given to the poor all his possessions, and was asked what had reduced him to such poverty, took the book of the Gospels out of his pocket, and said, *“This has robbed me of everything.”* In a word, Jesus Christ will possess our whole heart, and he will have no companion there. St. Augustine writes that the Roman senate refused to allow adoration to be paid to Jesus Christ because he was a haughty God who claimed to be honoured alone; and truly as he is our only Lord, he has the right to be adored and loved with our unmingled love. St, Francis de Sales said that the pure love of God consumes everything that is not God. When, then, we see in our heart any affection for anything that is not God,, or not for the sake of God, we must instantly banish it, saying, *“Depart, there is no place for thee.”* In this consists that complete renunciation which our Lord recommends, if we would be wholly his. It must be complete; that is, of everything, and especially of our friends and kindred. How many, for the sake of men, have never become saints! *David said that they who please men are despised by God.*[1477]

But, above all, we must renounce ourselves by conquering self-love. Cursed is self-love, which thrusts itself into everything, even our most holy actions, by placing before us our own love of pleasure! How many preachers, how many writers, have thus lost all their labours! Constantly, even in prayer, in spiritual reading, in the Holy Communion, there enters some end not pure, either the desire of being noticed, or of obtaining mere spiritual pleasures. We must, therefore, strive to conquer this enemy, who would ruin our best deeds. We must deprive ourselves, as far as possible, of everything that pleases us; we must deprive ourselves of this pleasure, for the very reason that it is agreeable; we must do a service to this ungrateful person, because he is ungrateful; we must take this bitter medicine, because it is bitter. Self-love makes it appear that nothing is good in which we do not find our own personal satisfaction; but he that would wholly belong to God must do force to himself whenever he is employed in anything that is according to his own pleasure, and say always, “Let me lose everything, so that I please God.” For the rest, no one is more contented with the world than he who despises all the good things of the world. The more he strips himself of such good things, the richer he becomes in divine grace. Thus does the Lord know how to reward those who love him faithfully. But, O my Jesus! Thou knowest my weakness; Thou hast promised to help those who trust in Thee. Lord, I love Thee; in Thee I trust; give me strength, and make me wholly Thine. In thee also I trust, O my sweet advocate, Mary!

XIV

THE NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER

Mental prayer is, in the first place, necessary, in order that we may have light to go on the journey to eternity. Eternal truths are spiritual things that are not seen with the eyes of the body, but only by the reflection of the mind. *He that does not meditate, does not see them; and thus he advances with difficulty along the way of salvation. And, further, he does not meditate, does not know his own failings, and thus, says St. Bernard,*[1478] *he does not detest them; so, also, he does not see the perils of his state, and therefore does not think of avoiding them.* But when we meditate, our failings and perils quickly present themselves; and when we see them we seek to remedy them. *St. Bernard said that meditation regulates our affections, directs our actions, and corrects our defects.*[1479] In the second place, without meditation we have no strength for resisting temptations and practising virtues. St. Teresa said that when a man leaves off meditation, the devil has no need of carrying him to hell, for he throws himself into it. And the reason is, that without meditation there is no prayer. God has every willingness to give us his graces; but *St. Gregory said that before giving them he desires to be asked, and that he is, as it were, compelled to give them through our prayers.*[1480] But without prayer we shall have no strength to resist our enemies, and thus shall not obtain perseverance in what is good. Palafox, in his note upon the tenth letter of St. Teresa, wrote thus: *“How will the Lord give us perseverance if we do not ask for it? and how shall we ask it without meditation?” While he who practises meditation is like a tree planted by the water-side.*[1481]

And, further, meditation is the happy furnace in which souls are inflamed with divine love; *“in my meditation a fire shall flame out.”*[1482] St. Catherine of Bologna said, *“Meditation is the bond which binds the soul to God; the king brought me into the wine-cellar, he fixed his love upon* *me."*[1483] This wine-cellar is meditation, in which the soul becomes so inebriated with divine love that it loses, as it were, its sense for the things of the world; it sees only that which pleases its beloved; it speaks only of the beloved; it would only hear of the beloved; every other discourse wearies and troubles it. In meditation, the soul, retiring to converse alone with God, rests upon itself: *He shall sit solitary and hold his peace; because he hath taken it upon himself.*[1484] When the soul sits, that is, shuts itself up in meditation to consider how worthy is God of love, and how great is the love he bears to it, it thus tastes of God, and fills itself with holy thoughts, and detaches itself from earthly affections, and conceives great desires for becoming holy, and finally resolves to give itself wholly to God. And where but in meditation have the saints made their most generous resolutions, which have lifted them up to the highest point of perfection? Let us hear what St. John of the Cross said, speaking of mental prayer: *"Here we open our heart, here we learn sweet doctrine, and make ourselves wholly to belong to God, reserving nothing, and espousing ourselves to him."* And St. Aloysius Gonzaga said *that no one will ever attain a high degree of perfection who is not much given to meditation.* Let us, then, earnestly apply ourselves to it, and not leave it for any weariness that we may experience; this weariness which we endure for God will be abundantly recompensed by him.

Pardon me, O my God, my slothfulness; what treasures of grace have I lost in so often neglecting to meditate! For the future give me grace to be faithful through life in conversing with Thee, with whom I hope to converse forever in heaven. I do not ask Thee to delight me here with Thy consolations; I do not deserve it; it is enough that Thou dost suffer me to approach Thy feet to recommend to Thee my poor soul, which is thus miserable because it has separated itself from Thee. Here, O my crucified Jesus! the sole memory of Thy Passion shall keep me detached from earth, and united with Thee. O holy Virgin Mary! aid me with thy prayers.

XV

THE OBJECT OF MENTAL PRAYER

In order to practise mental prayer, or meditation, well, and to make it truly profitable to the soul, we must well ascertain the ends for which we attempt it. First, we must meditate in order to unite ourselves more completely to God. It is not so much good thoughts in the intelligence, as good acts of the will, or holy desires, that unite us to God; and such are the acts that we perform in meditation, acts of humility, confidence, self-sacrifice, resignation, and especially of love and of repentance for our sins. Acts of love, says St. Teresa, are those that keep the soul inflamed with holy love. Secondly, we must meditate in order to obtain from God, by prayer, the graces that are necessary in order to enable us to advance in the way of salvation, to avoid sin, and to take the means that will lead us to perfection. The best fruit, then, that comes from meditation is the exercise of prayer. Almighty God, ordinarily speaking, does not give grace to any but those who pray.

St. Gregory writes, *"God desires to be entreated, he desires to be constrained, he desires to be, as it were, conquered by importunity."*[1485] Observe his words, *"to be conquered by importunity."* At times, in order to obtain graces of special value, it is not enough simply to pray; we must pray urgently, and, as it were, compel God, by our prayers, to give them. It is true that at all times the Lord is ready to hear us; but at the time of meditation, when we are most truly in converse with God, he is most bountiful in giving us his aid. Above all, we must apply to meditation, in order to obtain perseverance and the holy love of God. Final perseverance is not a single grace, but a chain of graces, to which must correspond the chain of our prayers; if we cease to pray, God will cease to give us his help, and we shall perish. He who does not practise meditation will find the greatest difficulty in persevering in grace till death. Palafox, in his notes on

St. Teresās letters, writes thus: *"How will the Lord give us perseverance, if we do not ask it? And how shall we ask for it without meditation? Without meditation there is no communion with God."* Thus must we be urgent with prayers to obtain from God his holy love. St. Francis de Sales said that all virtues come in union with holy love. *All good things came to me together with her.*[1486] Let our prayer for perseverance and love, therefore, be continual; and, in order to pray with greater confidence, let us ever bear in mind the promise made us by Jesus Christ, that whatever we seek from God through the merits of his Son, he will give it us.[1487] Let us, then, pray; and pray always, if we would that God should make us bound in every blessing.

Let us pray for ourselves, and, if we have zeal for the glory of God, let us pray also for others. It is a thing most pleasing to God to be entreated for unbelievers and heretics, and all sinners. *Let the people confess to Thee, O God! let all the people confess to Thee.*[1488] Let us say, O Lord! make them know Thee, make them love Thee. We read in the lives of St. Teresa and St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi how God inspired these holy women to pray for sinners. And to prayer for sinners let us also add prayers for the holy souls in purgatory.

Thirdly: we must apply ourselves to meditation, not for the sake of spiritual consolations, but chiefly in order to learn what is the will of God concerning us. *Speak, Lord, said Samuel to God, for Thy servant heareth.*[1489] Lord, make me to know what Thou wilt, that I may do it. Some persons continue meditation as long as consolations continue; but when these cease, they leave off meditation. It is true that God is accustomed to comfort his beloved souls at the time of meditation, and to give them some foretaste of the delights he prepares in heaven for those who love him, These are things which the lovers of the world do not comprehend; they who have no taste except for earthly delights despise those that are celestial. Oh, if they were wise, how surely would they leave their pleasures to shut themselves in their closets, to speak alone with God! Meditation is nothing more than a converse between the soul and God; the soul pours forth to him its affections, its desires, its fears, its requests, and God speaks to the heart, causing it to know his goodness, and the love which he bears it, and what it must do to please him. *I will lead her into solitude, and speak to her heart.*[1490]

But these delights are not constant, and, for the most part, holy souls experience much dryness of spirit in meditation. “*With dryness and temptations,” says St. Teresa, “the Lord makes proof of those who love him.” And she adds, “Even if this dryness lasts through life, let not the soul leave off meditation; the time will come when all will be well rewarded.”* The time of dryness is the time for gaining the greatest rewards; and when we find ourselves apparently without fervour, without good desires, and, as it were, unable to do a good act, let us humble ourselves, and resign ourselves, for this very meditation will be more fruitful than others. It is enough then to say, if we can say nothing more, “O Lord! help me, have mercy on me, abandon me not!” Let us also have recourse to our comforter, the most holy Mary. Happy he who does not leave off meditation in the hour of desolation. God will make him abound in graces; and therefore let him say:

“O my God, how can I expect to be comforted by Thee! I, who, until this hour, have deserved to be in hell, forever separated from Thee, and deprived of the power of loving Thee any more! I do not therefore grieve, O my God! that Thou deprivest me of Thy consolations; I do not deserve them; I do not pretend to them. It is enough for me to know that Thou wilt never repel a soul that loves Thee. Deprive me not of the power of loving Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt. If thou wilt that I continue thus afflicted and desolate even till death, and through all eternity, I am content; it is enough that I can say with truth, O my God, I love Thee, I love Thee! Mary, Mother of God, have pity on me!”

XVI

THE MERCY OF GOD

So great is the desire which God has to give us his graces that, as St. Augustine says, he has more desire to give them to us than we have to receive them from him.[1491] And the reason is, that goodness, as the philosophers say, is of its own nature diffusive; it is compelled by itself to pour itself forth in benefits to others. God, therefore, being infinite goodness, possesses an infinite desire to communicate himself to us, his creatures, and to make us share his gifts. Hence flows the boundless pity which the Lord has for our miseries. *David said that the earth is full of the divine mercy.*[1492] It is not full of the divine justice, inasmuch as God does not exercise his justice in punishing evil-doers, except when it is necessary; and he is, as it were, compelled to call it into operation. On the other hand, he is bounteous and liberal in showing forth his mercy to all, and at all times; whence St. James says, *Mercy is exalted over justice.*[1493] Mercy herself frequently stays the strokes which are prepared for sinners by the hand of justice, and obtains their pardon. Therefore the prophet calls God by the very name of mercy: *My God, my mercy!*[1494] And for the same reason he says, *For Thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful to my sin: Lord, pardon me for Thy name's sake, for it is mercy itself.*[1495]

Isaias said that chastisement is a work which is not dear to the heart of God, but alien and foreign to it, as if he would say that it was far from his inclinations: *The Lord shall be angry, as in the valley which is in Gabaon; that he may do His work, His strange work; that He may perform His work, His work is strange to Him.*[1496] His mercy it was that brought him to send his own Son on earth to be made man, and to die upon a cross to deliver us from eternal death. Therefore, Zacharias exclaimed, *Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, when the day star visited us from on high.*[1497] The expression the *"bowels of the mercy of God"* implies a mercy which proceeds from the depth of the heart of God, through which he preferred that his own Son should die, rather than we should perish. In order to see how great is the goodness of God towards us, and the desire he has to give us his blessings, it is enough to read these few words of the Gospel: *Seek, and it shall be given you.*[1498] Who could say more to a friend to show him his affection? Yet this is what God says to every one of us. Seeing our misery, he invites us to come to him, and promises to relieve us: *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.*[1499] The Jews, on one occasion, complained of God, and said they would no longer go and seek his graces; wherefore he said to Jeremias, *Why will not My people come to Me? am I become a desert, or a land slow of produce, which yields no fruit, or yields it out of season?*[1500]

At the same time the Lord was willing to explain the wrong which the Jews did to him, while He is ever ready to comfort every one who comes to him, as he said by Isaias*, As soon as He shall hear, He will answer thee.*[1501] Art thou a sinner, and wilt thou have pardon? *"Doubt not," said St. John Chrysostom, "that God has more desire to pardon thee than thou hast to be pardoned."*[1502] If, then, God sees any one obstinate in his sin, *he waits in order to shower mercy upon him.*[1503] And therefore he points out the torment that awaits him, in order that he may learn wisdom. Thou Hast given a warning to them that fear Thee, that they may flee from before the bow.[1504] Now he stands and knocks at the door of our hearts, that we may open to him: *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.*[1505] And again he urges his people, saying, *Why will ye die, O house of Israel.?*[1506] As if he were saying, in compassion, *"O my son, why wilt thou perish?"* St. Dionysius the Areopagite writes: *"God even entreats those who turn from him as a lover, and entreats them not to perish."*[1507] And this very thing was written before by the Apostle, when he entreated sinners, on the part of Jesus Christ, *to be reconciled with God;*[1508] on which Chrysostom remarks, *"Christ himself is beseeching you, and what is it that he prays you? that ye would be reconciled to God."*[1509]

If, then, some determine to continue obstinate, what more can God do? He makes all understand that whosoever he sees come to him in penitence he will not cast away: *Him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out.*[1510] He says that he is ready to embrace every one who turns to him: *Turn unto Me,* *and I will turn unto you.*[1511] He promises to every ungodly man that if he repents he will pardon him, and forget his sins: *If the wicked do penance, he shall live; I will forget all his iniquity that he hath committed.*[1512] He even says, *Come, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.*[1513] As though he would say, *"Come, penitent, unto me, and if I embrace you not, rebuke me as one who has failed in his word."* No; the Lord knoweth not how to despise a contrite heart. *A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*[1514] We read in St. Luke[1515] with what joy he embraced—the lost sheep, and with what love he welcomed the prodigal son when he returned to his feet. *And God himself says that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons.*[1516] *St. Gregory explains the reason of this by saying that very often sinners, when pardoned, are most fervent in loving God, while those who have not thus fallen grow lukewarm in their security.*[1517]

O my Jesus! as Thou hast had so great patience with me in waiting for me, and so great love in pardoning me, as I trust I would love Thee with all my heart; but this love Thou must give me. Give it me! O my Lord! and little honour is it to Thee that I, a sinner so favoured by Thee, should love Thee in some little degree. O my Jesus! when shall I begin to be grateful to Thee, as Thou hast been gracious to me? For the past, instead of being grateful to Thee, I have offended Thee, and despised Thee. Shall I, then, hereafter ever live thus turned away from Thee, who hast spared nothing to gain my love? No, my Saviour! I would love Thee with all my heart I would never displease Thee. Thou commandest me to love Thee, and I desire nothing but to love Thee. Thou seekest me, and I seek nothing but Thee. Give me Thy help, without which I can do nothing. O Mary, O Mother of Mercy! draw me altogether to God.

XVII

CONFIDENCE IN JESUS CHRIST

Wonderfully great, as has been said, is the mercy of Jesus Christ to us; but for our greater good he desires that we should put our trust in his mercy, with a lively confidence, trusting in his merits and his promises. Therefore, *St. Paul recommends us to preserve this confidence, saying that it has a great reward from God.*[1518] And therefore, when a fear of the divine judgment seems to diminish this confidence in us, we ought to chase it away, and say to ourselves, as the learned Dr. Saverio Mattel writes in his excellent version of the Psalms, on Psalm xli.:[1519] *"My heart, dost thou tremble? knowest thou not how to hope? Banish thy fear, and tremble not. Why wilt thou trouble me? Hope in the Lord, that we may one day sing his praise and glory."*

The Lord revealed to St. Gertrude that our confidence so constrains him that he cannot possibly refuse to hear us in everything we seek of him. The same thing was said by St. Climachus: *"Prayer exerts a holy violence upon God."*[1520] Every prayer offered with confidence, as it were, forces God; but this force is acceptable and pleasing to him. Therefore, St. Bernard writes that the divine mercy is like a vast fountain, from which whosoever brings a larger vessel of confidence carries away a larger abundance of graces. And this is according to what the Psalmist wrote, *Let Thy mercy be upon us, O Lord, according as we have put our trust in Thee.*[1521] *God has declared that he protects and saves all who trust in him.*[1522] Let them, then, rejoice. David said, *"All who hope in Thee, my God, shall be blessed forever, and Thou wilt ever dwell in them."*[1523] The same prophet said, *Mercy is round about all who trust in God.*[1524] He that trusts in God shall be ever so circled and guarded around, that he is safe from all danger of perishing. Oh, what great promises the Holy Scriptures make to those who trust in God! Are we lost through our sins? Behold the remedy at hand! Let us go with confidence, says the Apostle, to the feet of Jesus Christ, and there shall we find pardon.[1525] Let us not wait to go to Jesus Christ until he sits upon his throne of judgment; let us hasten at once, while he sits on his throne of grace.

But, says the sinner, I do not deserve to be heard, if I beg for pardon. But I reply, though he has not deserved, his confidence in the divine mercy will obtain grace for him; for this pardon is not dependent upon his merits, but upon the divine promise to pardon those who repent; and this it is which Jesus Christ says, *Every one that seeketh, receiveth.*[1526] The author of a certain incomplete work says, commenting on the words "everyone," that they mean every one, whether just or unjust: it is sufficient that they pray with confidence. Let us, then, hear from the lips of Jesus Christ himself how great things are done by confidence: *Whatsoever things ye seek, when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive them, and they shall be given to you.*[1527] Whosoever, then, fears that through infirmity he shall fall again into his old sins, let him trust in God, and he shall not fall; as the prophet assures us, *All that hope in Him shall not fail.*[1528] Isaias says *that they who hope in the Lord renew their strength.*[1529] Let us, then, be strong in not wavering in our confidence, because God has promised, as St. Paul says, to protect all who hope in him; and when anything seems especially difficult to overcome, then let us say, *I can do all things through Him that comforteth me.*[1530] *And who that ever trusted in God was confounded?*[1531] Yet, let us not go about seeking some constant sensible confidence, palpable to our feelings; it is enough if we have the will to trust.

This is true confidence, the will to trust in God, because he is good, and desirous to help us, and powerful, and can help us, and faithful, and has promised to help us. Above all, let us strengthen ourselves with the promise made by Jesus Christ, *Amen, amen, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.*[1532] Thus let us seek grace from God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and we shall obtain what we will. *O eternal God! I know that I am poor in all things; I can do nothing, I have nothing, save what comes to me from Thy hands; all I can say to Thee is, Lord, have mercy upon me. My misery is, that to my poverty I have added the sin of having answered Thy graces with the sins I have committed against Thee. But, notwithstanding, I would hope from Thy mercy this* *twofold blessing: first, that Thou wouldst pardon my sins; and then that Thou wouldst give me perseverance together with Thy holy love, and with grace to pray to Thee constantly to help me even till death. I ask it all of Thee, I hope for it, through the merits of Thy Son Jesus, and the blessed Virgin Mary. O my chief advocate! help me with thy prayers.*

In a previous paragraph I mentioned the work of Signer Mattel on the Psalms, a work worthy of general approbation. But I beg him to permit me to express here my regret at the eulogies that he lavishes upon the poetical compositions of his celebrated friend, Signor Pietro Metastasio. He should have excepted the pieces that treat of profane love, and that merit no praise but blame; for the more beautiful they are, as I said in Chap. 6, the more hurtful they are to youth. He should have frankly avowed that his worthy friend should have made a better use of the talent that God had given him, in employing it in works that would edify the people, not in the composition of verses that would indeed secure to him the applause of worldlings, but not of good people, and much less of God. In my writings I have always avoided censuring any one, whoever he might be, even those who have heaped injury upon me; but, under the present circumstances, I do not hesitate to disapprove of the erotic poems of Metastasio; and in this I am fully in accord with him, since at present, as I have mentioned above, he detests with horror, and in an edifying manner, his own works that the world applauds. I know very well that this censure will be blamed by the admirers of Metastasio; but let them reflect that in boasting of his pernicious productions they but displease him who now repents of having composed them, and displease God who wishes that books injurious to souls should not be praised, but should be blamed as they deserve to be, in order to open the eyes of the imprudent youth that read them. It is true that in the poetry of Metastasio there is nothing immodest, that in it we find none of the obscenities that sully the impious works of Marini and the like; however, we must admit that his expressions are too tender, and are capable of inflaming the heart with impure love. Who does not see in this passionate language the source of grave disorder? This can easily be seen in the pestilential work entitled II Pastor fido, a work justly condemned by the Church, as I have been told; and if it is not condemned, it deserves to be a thousand times. Earthly and carnal love is a fire that leads sooner or later to the fire of hell. Ah! ask the multitude of those wretched people who did not take *care to protect themselves from the impure flame that has perverted them, mind and heart at the same time. Signer Mattei ought to thank God for having inspired him with the happy thought of consecrating his fine talent and his acquirements to a work so erudite, so useful, and so pious.*

XVIII

SALVATION ALONE IS NECESSARY

One thing is needful.[1533] It is not necessary that in this world we should be honoured with dignities, favoured with riches, with good health, and earthly pleasures; but it is necessary that we should be saved; for there is no middle course, we must either be saved or be damned. After this short life, we shall be either eternally happyin heaven, or eternally wretched in hell. *O my God! what is it that will befall me? Shall I be saved or be lost? One lot or the other must be mine. I hope to be saved; but who shall assure me of it? I know that I have repeatedly deserved hell. Yes, my Saviour, Thy death is my hope.*

How many worldly persons there are who were for a time loaded with riches and honours, and lifted up to high positions, and even to thrones, and who now find themselves in hell, where all their fortune in this world serves only to increase their pains and despair. This is what the Lord warned us of: *Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth destroy.*[1534] Every acquisition of earthly goods perishes with death; but the acquisition of spiritual goods is an unrivalled treasure, and is eternal. *God has taught us that he wills the salvation of all.*[1535] And to all he gives the power of being saved. Miserable he who is lost; it is all his own deed: *Thou art thy destruction, O Israel; in Me alone is thy help.*[1536] And this will be the greatest pain of the damned, the thought that they were lost through their own fault. Fire and the worm (that is, the remorse of conscience) will be the torturers of the damned, in punishment for their sins;[1537] but the worm will torment them forever more terribly than the flame. How much pain we suffer in this world from the loss of any object of value, a diamond, a clock, a purse of money, when it happens through our own carelessness! We cannot eat or sleep, for thinking of our loss, so long as there is a hope of repairing it in some other way. What, then, will be the torment of one who is lost, in that, through his own fault, he has lost God and paradise, without a hope of ever recovering them!

We have gone astray.[1538] This will be the eternal complaint of the miserable damned ones: we have gone astray, destroying ourselves of our own accord, and there is no remedy for our error. In all the misfortunes that occur to most persons in this life, a remedy comes with time, or with a change of state, or, at least, through a holy resignation to the will of God. But none of these remedies will be for us when we have reached eternity, if we have wandered from the path to heaven. Therefore, the Apostle St. Paul exhorts us to labour for eternal salvation with a continual fear of losing it: *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*[1539] This fear will cause us to walk in it with caution, and to avoid occasions of evil; it will aid us continually to recommend ourselves to God, and thus we shall be saved. Let us pray the Lord that he will fix this thought in our hearts, that upon that last opening of the lips, which will be our act before death, depends the question whether we shall be eternally blessed, or eternally miserable, without hope of remedy. *My God, many times have I despised Thy grace; I deserve no mercy; but Thy prophet teaches me that Thou showest mercy to all who seek Thee.*[1540] *For the past I have fled from Thee; but now I seek nothing, I ask nothing, I love nothing, but Thee. In Thy goodness, despise me not; remember the blood Thou hast shed for me. This blood, and thy intercession, O Mary, Mother of God! are my only hope.*

XIX

PERFECT RESIGNATION TO THE DIVINE WILL

My meat is to do his will.[1541] So said Jesus Christ, speaking of himself. In this mortal life, meat is that which preserves our life; and, therefore, our Lord said that it was his meat to do the will of the Father. This also ought to be the meat of our souls: *Life is in his will.*[1542] Our life consists in doing the divine will; he that does not fulfil it is dead. The wise man writes: *They that are faithful in love shall rest in Him.*[1543] They who are little faithful in loving God will desire that he should agree with them, that he should conform himself to their pleasure, and do whatever they desire; but they who love God agree with him. and unite their wills to his will, and are satisfied with everything that God does with them, and with all their circumstances; and in every adversity that afflicts them, whether sickness, dishonour, weariness, loss of property or of kindred, they ever have on their lips and in their heart these words, “Thy will be done,” which are the constant expression of saints. *God only desires that which is best for us, which is our sanctification.*[1544]

Let us take care, therefore, to quiet our own will, uniting it ever to the will of God; and thus we shall be able, also, to quiet our intellect, recollecting that everything that God does is the best thing that can befall us. Whoever does not this will never find true peace. All the perfection that can be attained in this world, which is a place of purification, and consequently a place of pains and troubles, consists in suffering patiently those things that are opposed to our self-love; and, in order to suffer with patience, there is no more efficacious means than a willingness to suffer, in order to do the will of God. *Submit thyself, then, to Him, and be at peace.*[1545] He that agrees with the divine will in everything is always at peace, and nothing that happens to him can make him miserable. *It will not make the just man sad, whatever shall befall him.*[1546] But why is the just man never miserable under any circumstances? Because he knows well that whatever happens in the world, happens through the will of God. The divine will (so to say) draws out all the thorns and bitterness of the tribulations that come upon us in this world. The hymn which speaks of the divine will thus sings: “ Thou changest crosses into joys; Thou makest even death to be sweet; he that can unite himself to Thee knows neither cross nor fear. Oh, how worthy art Thou of love, O Thou will of God!” Behold the excellent counsel of St. Peter, in order to find a perfect peace in the midst of the toils of this present life, *Casting all your care upon Him; for He has care for you:*[1547] And if it is God who thus gives thought for our good, why should we weary ourselves with so many anxieties, as if our happiness depended on our own cares, and not rather abandon ourselves into the hands of God, upon whom all depends?

Cast thy care upon the Lord, says David, and He shall nourish thee.[1548] Let us strive to obey God in everything he commands us and advises us, and then let us leave to him the care of our salvation, and he will take care to give us all the means that are necessary, in order that we may be saved: *Thy soul shall be saved, because thou hast had confidence in Me.*[1549] Whosoever places his whole confidence in God is sure of eternal salvation. In a word, whoever does the will of God enters into paradise; and he that does it not, enters not. Some people trust their eternal salvation to certain devotions, or to certain outward works of piety, and yet do not the will of God. But Jesus Christ says: *Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.*[1550] Thus, if we desire to be saved, and to acquire a perfect union with God, let us take care to be ever offering up the prayer of David: *Teach me, O Lord, to do Thy will.*[1551] And for this purpose, let us strip ourselves of our own will, and give it wholly to God, without reserve. When we give to God our property in alms, our food in fastings, our blood in scourgings, we give him what we possess; but when we give him our will, we give him altogether ourselves; wherefore he that gives to God all his will is able to say, Lord, having given Thee all my will, I have nothing more to give Thee.

The sacrifice of our own will is the most acceptable sacrifice we can make to God; and God pours fourth his graces abundantly upon him who makes it. This sacrifice, however, in order to be perfect, must have two conditions: it must be *without reserve,* and it must be *constant.* Some persons give to God their will, but with a certain reserve; and little does this, gift please God. Others give him their will, but speedily they take it back again; and such persons place themselves in great peril of being abandoned by God; so that it is necessary that all our strength, and desires, and prayers, should be directed to obtain from God perseverance in doing nothing but what he wills. Let us, then, day by day, renew to God our total renunciation of our own will, and constantly take care to seek and ask for nothing which is not according to the will of God. And thus will cease within us passions, desires, fears, and all inordinate affections. Sister Margaret of the Cross, a daughter of the Emperor Maximilian, and a Barefooted Nun of St. Clare, when she became quite blind, was wont to say, *"How can I desire to see, when God wills it not?"*

Receive, O God of my soul I receive the sacrifice of my whole will and my whole liberty. I see that I have deserved that Thou shouldst turn Thy back upon me, and refuse this gift of mine, so often have I been unfaithful to Thee; but I learn that Thou dost again command me to love Thee with all my heart, and, therefore, I am sure Thou wilt receive it. I resign myself, then, wholly to Thy will; make me to know what Thou wilt, that I may be able to accomplish it all. Make me love Thee, and then dispose of me and all my affairs as it pleases Thee. I am in Thy hands; do what Thou knowest to be most expedient for my eternal salvation; while I declare that I desire Thee alone, and nothing more. O mother of God! do thou obtain for me the gift of holy perseverance.

XX

HAPPY IS HE WHO IS FAITHFUL TO GOD IN ADVERSITY

The faithfulness of soldiers is tried, not in repose, but in battle. This earth is our battle-field, where everyone is placed to fight, and to conquer, in order to be saved: if he conquers not, he is lost forever. Therefore said holy Job, *Every day I now fight; I wait until my change cometh.*[1552] Job suffered in struggling with many a foe, but he comforted himself with the hope that, in conquering and rising from the dead, he should change all his state. Of this change St. Paul spoke, and rejoiced in speaking of it: *The dead shall be raised incorrupt. and we shall be changed.*[1553] Our estate is changed in heaven, which is no place of toil, but of rest; not of fear, but of security; not of sorrow or weariness, but of gladness and joy eternal. With the hope, then, of so great joy, let us inspire ourselves, and fight until death, and never give ourselves up conquered to our enemies *until our change comes;*[1554] until the end of our struggle is attained, and we possess a blessed eternity. *"The patient man will endure for the time, and then shall gladness be restored to him."* Blessed is he who suffers for God in this life; he suffers *"for the time,"* but his joy will be eternal in the country of the blessed. This will end the persecutions, the temptations, the infirmities, the annoyances, and all the miseries of this life; and God will give us a life full of satisfaction, which will never end. Now is the time for pruning the vine, and for cutting off everything that hinders its growth towards the promised land of heaven.

But the cutting off produces pain, so that we have need of patience; and then is the restoration of gladness, when the more we have suffered, the more shall we be filled with consolations. God is faithful; and to him who suffers on earth for his love's sake, with resignation, he promises that he himself will be his reward; a reward in finitely greater than all our sufferings: *Behold, I am thy exceeding great reward.*[1555] Nevertheless, before we receive the crown of eternal life, the Lord wills that we should be tried with sufferings. *Blessed is the man that suffereth temptation; for, when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him.*[1556] Blessed, then, is he who is faithful to God in adversity. Some people think they are beloved of God when all their affairs go prosperously, and they have no troubles; but they complain because God does not try the patience and faithfulness of his servants by prosperity, but by adversity, in order to give them that crown which fadeth not away, as all the crowns of this life do fade away. This will be a crown of eternal glory, as St. Peter writes: *Ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*[1557] To whom, then, is this crown promised? St. James says, *God has promised it to those who love Him.*[1558] God has promised it again and again to those who love him, because divine love makes us fight with courage and win the victory. To the love of God we must also join humility.

The Preacher says, *Gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation.*[1559] It is in humiliation that saints are discovered, in which it is made known whether they are gold or lead. Such a one has been counted a saint; but when he receives an injury from another, he is all in an agitation; he complains of it to every one; he say he will make him repent of it. This is a sign of what he is; it is a sign that he is lead. The Lord said, *In thy humility have patience.*[1560] The proud man, whatever humiliation he receives, considers it a great injustice, and, therefore, cannot endure it; but the humble man, accounting himself deserving of every evil treatment, suffers all with patience. Let him who has committed a mortal sin cast a glance upon the hell that he has deserved, and thus he will suffer with patience every contempt and every pain. Let us, then, love God, and be humble; and whatever we do, let us do it, not to please ourselves, but only to please God. O cursed self-love! which intrudes itself in all our works. Even in our spiritual exercises, in meditation, in works of penance, and in all our pious works, it goes about seeking its own interests. Few are the devout souls who do not fall into this defect: *Who shall find a valiant woman? Far, and from the uttermost coasts, is the price of her.*[1561] Where shall we find a soul so brave that, despoiled of every passion, and of every love for its own interests, goes on to love Jesus Christ in the midst of slights, pains, desolations of spirit, and wearinesses of life? Solomon said that these are gems of great price; they come from the last ends of the world, and therefore are most rare.

O my crucified Jesus! I am one who, even in my devotions, have gone about seeking my own pleasure, and my own satisfaction; all unlike to Thee, who, through love of me, hast passed a life of trouble, deprived of every alleviation. Give me Thy help, that henceforth I may seek only Thy pleasure and Thy glory. I would love Thee without any other reward; but I am weak, Thou must give me the strength to accomplish it. Behold me; I am Thine; dispose of me as it pleases Thee; make me love Thee, and I ask for nothing more, O Mary, my Mother! obtain for me faithfulness to God, through thy intercession.

XXI

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST OUGHT TO HATE THE WORLD

Whosoever loves Jesus Christ with true love, let him greatly rejoice when he sees himself treated by the world as Jesus Christ was treated, who was hated, scorned, and persecuted by the world, even to an agonizing death upon a shameful cross. The world is all against Jesus Christ; and therefore, hating Jesus Christ, it hates all his servants. Therefore the Lord encouraged his disciples to surfer in peace all the persecutions of the world, saying to them that, having given up the world, they could not but be hated by the world. *Ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*[1562] And as the lovers of God are hateful to the world, thus the world ought to be hateful to him who loves God. St. Paul said, *God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me.*[1563]

The Apostle was an odious thing to the world, as a man condemned and dead upon a cross is odious; and thus, in return, the world was odious to St. Paul: The world is crucified unto me. *Jesus Christ chose to die upon the cross for our sins, for this end, that he might deliver us from this evil world.*[1564] Our Lord, having called us to the love of him, desires that we should become superior to the promises and threats of the world. He desires that we should no longer take account of its censures or its praises. We must pray God to make us utterly forget the world, and to make us rejoice when we see the world reject us. It is not enough, in order to belong wholly to God, that we should abandon the world; we must desire that the world should abandon us, and utterly condemn us. Some people leave the world, but they do not cease to wish to be praised by it, at least for having abandoned it; in such persons the desire of worldly estimation causes the world still to live in them. Thus, then, the world hates the servants of God, and therefore it hates their good examples and holy maxims; and therefore it is necessary that we should hate all the maxims of the world. *The wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be.*[1565] The Apostle says it cannot be, for this reason, that the world has no other object but its own interest or pleasure; and thus it cannot agree with those who seek only to please God.

Yea, O Jesus! who wast crucified, and died for me, Thee alone I desire to please. What is the world, what are riches, what are honours? I desire that Thou, my Redeemer, shouldst be all my treasure; to love Thee is my riches. If Thou wilt have me poor, I desire to be poor; if Thou wilt have me humbled and despised by all, I embrace all, and receive it from Thy hands; Thy will shall ever be my comforter. This is the grace that I seek of Thee, that in every event I may not depart a moment from Thy holy will.

XXII

THE WORDS OF A DYING MAN TO JESUS CRUCIFIED

Jesus, my Redeemer! who within a few moments wilt be my judge, have mercy upon me before the moment comes when Thou wilt judge me. No, my sins do not terrify me, nor the rigors of Thy judgment, while I see Thee dead upon this cross to save me. Yet, cease not to comfort me in the agony to which I am come: my enemies would terrify me by saying that there is no salvation for me: *Many say unto my soul, there is no salvation for him in his God.*[1566] But I will never cease to trust in Thy goodness, and say, *Thou, O Lord! art my lifter up.*[1567] Do Thou comfort me; do Thou make me feel that Thou art my salvation; *Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*[1568] Oh, let not all those pangs, those insults endured, that blood poured forth by Thee, be lost unto me. "Thou hast redeemed me, dying upon the cross; let not so great labour be in vain." Especially, I pray Thee, through that bitterness Thou didst feel when Thy blessed soul was separated from Thy most holy body, have mercy upon my soul when it departs from my body. It is true that through my sins I have continually despised Thee; but now I love Thee above everything, I love Thee more than myself; and I grieve with all my heart for all the offences that I have committed against Thee; I detest them, I hate them above every evil.

I see that through the offences I have been guilty of, I have deserved a thousand hells; but the bitter death which Thou hast been willing to endure for me, and the great mercies Thou hast already shown me, make me confidently hope that when I appear before Thee, Thou wilt welcome me with the kiss of peace. Trusting all in Thy goodness, O my God! I abandon myself into Thy loving arms. *In Thee, O Lord! I have hoped: I shall not be confounded forever.*[1569] Through the sins I have committed, I have again and again deserved hell; but I hope in Thy blood, that Thou hast not pardoned me; and I hope that I shall come to heaven to praise Thy mercies forever: *The mercies of God I will sing forever.*[1570] I willingly accept all the pains Thou dost destine for me in purgatory: it is just that the fire should purge away the wrongs I have done Thee. O holy prison, when shall I find myself shut up in thee, secure from being able ever to lose my God! O holy fire, when wilt thou purge away my vileness, and make me worthy to enter the kingdom of the blessed! O eternal Father! through the merits of the death of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, make me to die in Thy grace, and in Thy love, that I may come to love Thee throughout eternity. I thank Thee for all the graces Thou hast given me through my life, and especially for the great grace of Thy holy faith, and for having caused me to receive, in these my last days, all the holy sacraments. Thou willest that I should die, and I desire to die to please Thee. It is little, O Jesus, my Saviour! that I should die for Thee, who hast died for me. I am satisfied to say to Thee, with St. Francis, *"Let me die for love of Thee, who hast vouchsafed to die for love of me."*

I receive death with peace, and also the pains that I must endure so long as I breathe; give me strength to suffer with a perfect conformity to Thy will. I offer them all to Thy glory, uniting them to the pains that Thou didst suffer in Thy Passion. O eternal Father! I sacrifice to Thee my life, and all my being; and I pray Thee to accept this my sacrifice, through the merits of the great sacrifice that Jesus Thy Son offered up of himself upon the cross. O Mother of God, and my Mother Mary! thou hast obtained many graces from God for me during my life; I thank thee with all my heart. Oh, abandon me not in this hour of my death, in which I have greater need of thy prayers. Pray to Jesus for me, and increase thy prayers; obtain for me sorrow for my sins, and more love for God, that I may come to love him forever, in company with Thee, and with all my powers, in heaven. "In thee, O Lady! I have hoped: I shall not be confounded forever." Mary, my hope, in thee I trust.

XXIII

ACTS OF Devotion FOR THE TIME OF DEATH

It was revealed to St. Lidwina by an angel that the crown of merits and glory that awaited her in heaven could only be completed through the sufferings which she was to endure in the days which would immediately precede her death. The same thing happens to all devout souls when they depart from this world. It is certain that all good acts, and especially those of resignation in accepting death, performed with the view of pleasing God, are of great merit to everyone who dies in the grace of God. Let us here set down certain acts of devotion, which may be very acceptable to the Lord at the time of death.

O my God! I offer Thee my life, and I am prepared to die at any hour that may be pleasing to Thy holy will. *“Thy will be done;”* ever, ever, may Thy will be done. O Lord! if Thou willest to leave me in life for some time longer, blessed be Thy name; but I desire not life, except to spend it all in loving Thee and giving Thee pleasure. If Thou wilt that I should die of this sickness, still blessed art Thou. I embrace death to do Thy will, and I repeat, “Thy will, Thy will be done;” I only beg Thee to help all through this hour. “Have mercy on me, O God! according to Thy great mercy.” If, then, Thou wilt that I should leave this earth, I declare that I desire to die, because thus Thou wilt have it. I desire also to die, in order that, by the pain and bitterness of my death, I may satisfy Thy divine justice for all my sins, through which I have offended Thee and deserved hell. I desire also to die, that I may nevermore offend Thee, or cause Thee displeasure in this life. I also desire to die in acknowledgment of the gratitude which I owe Thee for all the benefits and gifts that Thou hast given me, contrary to all my own deserts. I desire to die, that I may show that I love Thy will more than my life. I desire, if it pleases Thee, to die now, at a time when I trust I am in Thy grace, in order to be assured that I shall praise and bless Thee forever. I desire, above all, to die, in order that I may come to love Thee eternally, and with all my powers, in heaven; where, through Thy blood, O my Redeemer! I hope to come, and to be sure of never ceasing to love Thee through all eternity. O my Jesus! Thou didst accept the death of the cross through love of me; I accept death, and all the pains that await me, through love of Thee. Therefore I say with St. Francis, *“May I die, O Lord! through love of Thee, who, through love of me, didst not disdain to die.”*[1571]

I pray Thee, O my Saviour, my love, and my only good! by Thy holy wounds and Thy bitter death, make me to die in Thy grace, and through Thy blood suffer me not to perish. O sweetest Jesus! suffer me not to be separated from Thee. Lord! drive me not away from Thy face. I confess that, through my sins, I have deserved hell, and I mourn for them more than for any evil; and I hope to come to heaven to praise forever the great mercies Thou hast shown to me. “The mercies of the Lord I shall sing forever.” I adore Thee, O my God! who hast created me. I believe in Thee, O Eternal Truth! I hope in Thee, O Infinite Mercy! I love Thee, O Supreme Goodness! I love Thee above everything; I love Thee more than myself, for Thou art worthy of being loved. And because I love Thee, I repent with all my heart for having despised Thy grace. I promise Thee to suffer every kind of death, and a thousand deaths, rather than displease Thee. O Jesus! Son of God, who didst die for me, have pity upon me! My Saviour, save me; and let it be my salvation to praise Thee through eternity. O Mary, Mother of God! pray to Jesus for me; now it is the time for thee to aid me. Mary, Mother of grace, Mother of mercy, do thou defend us from the enemy, and receive us in the hour of death. To thy protection we fly, O holy Mother of God! O Mary, holy Mother of God! pray for us sinners. St. Joseph, my patron and father, help me in this hour. St. Michael the Archangel, deliver me from the devils who lie in wait for my soul. O my holy advocates, and ye saints of paradise, pray to God for me. And Thou, my Jesus crucified, at the moment when I must breathe my last breath, receive my soul in Thy arms; to Thee I recommend it; remember that Thou hast redeemed me with Thy blood. “We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.”[1572] *O my crucified Jesus! my love and my hope, whether I live or die, I declare that I desire Thee alone, and nothing more. Thou art my God and my all, and what else can I desire but Thee! “What have I in* *heaven or upon earth! Thou art the God of my heart and my portion forever."*[1573] *Thou art the love of my heart; Thou art all my riches! To Thee, then, I recommend my soul; to Thee, who hast redeemed it with Thy death, Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit:*[1574] *Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth! Trusting in Thy mercy, I therefore say, In Thee, O Lord! have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever. O Mary, thou art my hope; to thee, therefore,*

I say again, In thee, O Lady! have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.[1575]

XXIV

THE HOUSE OF ETERNITY

A man shall go to the house of his eternity.[1576] We err in calling this our habitation in which we now dwell; the habitation of our body in a little while will be a grave, in which it must rest until the day of judgment; and the habitation of the soul will be either paradise or hell, according as it has deserved, and there will it continue through all eternity. At our burial our corpses do not go to the grave of themselves, they are carried thither by others; but the soul goes itself to the place which awaits it, either of eternal joy or eternal woe. *A man shall go to the house of his eternity.* According as a man lives well or ill, so he departs himself to his habitation, in paradise or in hell, which he shall never change.

Those who live on this earth often change their home, either to please themselves, or because they are compelled. In eternity the habitation is never changed; where we enter the first time, there we abide forever. If the tree fall to the south or to the north, in whatever place it shall fall, there shall it be. He that enters into the south, which is heaven, will be ever happy; he that enters the north, which is hell, will be ever miserable. He, then, who enters heaven, will be always united with God, always in company with the saints, always in the profoundest peace, always abundantly contented; because every blessed soul is filled and satisfied with joy, nor will he ever know the fear of losing it. If fear of losing their happiness could enter among the blessed, they would be no longer blessed; for the mere thought of losing the joy they possess would disturb the peace they enjoy. On the other hand, whoever enters into hell will be forever far from God: he will ever suffer in the fire of the damned. Let us not think that the pains of hell will be like those of earth, where, through the force of habit, a trouble continually grows less; for, as in paradise, the delights never cause weariness, but seem ever new, as though they were for the first time enjoyed (which is implied by the expression of “ *the new canticle,”* which the blessed are ever singing); so, in hell, the pains never grow less through all eternity; long custom will never diminish their torment. The miserable beings who are damned will feel the same anguish through eternity that they feel the first moment they experience its pangs.

St. Augustine said that he who believes in eternity and is not converted to God, has either lost his sense or his faith. Woe, cries St. Cæsarius, woe to sinners who enter eternity without knowing it, through having neglected to think upon it! And then he adds, *“But, O double woe! they enter it, and they never come forth.”* It is a double woe, the first of which will be to fall into that abyss of fire; the second, that he who falls into it will never come out: the door of hell opens only to those who enter, not to those who would depart. No; the saints did not do too much when they went to hide themselves in caves and deserts, to eat herbs, and to sleep on the ground, in order to save their souls. *“They did not do too much,” says St. Bernard, “because, where eternity is in question, no certainty can be too great.”* When, then, God visits us with any cross of infirmity, poverty, or any evil, let us think of the hell we have deserved, and thus every sorrow will appear light. Let us say, with Job, *I have sinned, and truly gone astray, and I have not received in accordance with my deserts.*[1577] O Lord, I have offended Thee, and many times betrayed Thee, and I have not been punished as I deserved; how, then, can I lament if Thou sendest me any tribulation? I, who have deserved hell! O my Jesus! send me not to hell, to the hell in which I could no longer love Thee, but must hate Thee forever. Deprive me of everything, of property, health, life; but deprive me not of Thyself. Grant that I may love Thee and praise Thee forever; and then chastise me, and do with me what Thou wilt. O Mother of God! pray to Jesus for me.

XXV

SOULS WHO LOVE GOD DESIRE TO GO TO SEE HIM IN HEAVEN

While we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord.[1578] Souls that, in this life, love nothing but God are like noble pilgrims, destined, according to their present state, to be the eternal bride of the King of heaven, but who now live far away without seeing him; wherefore they do nothing but sigh to depart to the country of the blessed, where they know that their Spouse awaits them. They know, indeed, that their Beloved is ever present with them, but that he is, as it were, hidden by a veil, and does not show himself. Or, to speak more correctly, he is like the sun behind clouds, which, from time to time, sends forth some ray of its splendour, but displays not itself openly. These beloved brides have a bandage before their eyes, which prevents them from seeing him whom they love. They live, nevertheless, contented, uniting themselves to the will of the Lord, who chooses to keep them in exile, and far away from himself; but with all this, they cannot but continually sigh to know him face to face, in order to be more inflamed with love towards him.

Therefore, everyone of them often sweetly laments with their beloved Spouse, because he shows himself not; and they say, *“O Thou only love of my heart, since Thou hast so loved me, and hast stricken me with Thy holy love, why hidest Thou Thyself, and makest me not to see Thee? I know that Thou art an infinite beauty, I love Thee more than myself, though I have never yet beheld Thee; open to me Thy fair countenance; I would know Thee all revealed, in order that I may no more look to myself nor to any creature, and may think only of loving Thee, my highest good.”*

When to these souls thus filled with love for God there appears any ray of the divine goodness, and of the love which God bears them, they would be dissolved and fade away for desire of him; and though for them the sun is still hidden behind the clouds, and his fair face is covered by a veil, and their own eyes are bandaged, so that they cannot gaze on him face to face; yet what shall be their joy when the clouds disperse, and the gate opens, and the bandage is taken from their eyes, and the fair countenance of their Beloved appears without a veil, so that in the clear light of day they look upon his beauty, his goodness, his greatness, and the love which he bears to them! O death, why dost thou so delay to come? If thou comest not, I cannot depart to behold my God. It is thou that must open to me the gate, that I may enter into the palace of my Lord. O blessed country, when will the day be here when I shall find myself beneath thy eternal tabernacles? O beloved of my soul, my Jesus, my treasure, my love, my all! when will that happy moment come, when, leaving this earth, I shall see myself all united with Thee? I deserve not this happiness; but the love which Thou hast shown me, and, still more, Thy infinite goodness, make me hope that I shall be one day joined to those happy souls, who, being wholly united with Thee, love Thee, and will love Thee with a perfect love through all eternity. O my Jesus! Thou seest the alternative in which I am placed, of being either ever united with Thee, or ever far from Thee; have mercy upon me; Thy blood is my hope; and thy intercession, O my Mother Mary! is my comfort and my joy.

XXVI

JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Thus spoke he himself: *I am the good Shepherd.*[1579] The work of a good shepherd is nothing but this, to guide his flock to good pastures, and to guard them from wolves; but what shepherd, O sweet Redeemer! ever had the mercy, like Thee, to give his life to save his flocks, which flocks are we, to deliver them from the punishment they had deserved? *He Himself hath borne our sins in His own body on the tree, that, being dead to sin, we should live to justice; by whose stripes we were healed.*[1580] To heal us of our sicknesses this good Shepherd took upon himself all our debts, and paid them with his own body, dying with agony upon a cross. It was this excess of love towards us, his sheep, which made St. Ignatius the martyr burn with desire to give his life for Jesus Christ, saying, *"My Love is crucified;"*[1581] as—he wrote in his letter, saying, "What! has my God been willing to die on a cross for me, and cannot I desire to die for him?" And, in truth, was it a great thing the martyrs did in giving their lives for Jesus Christ, when he died for love of them? Oh, how the death endured for them by Jesus Christ made sweet to them all their torments, stripes, piercing nails, fiery plates of iron, and most tormenting deaths! But the love of this good Shepherd was not satisfied in giving his life for his sheep; he desires, also, after his death, to leave them his body itself, first sacrificed upon the cross, that it might be the food and pasture of their souls.

"The burning love which he bore to us," says John Chrysostom, "induced him to unite himself and make himself one thing with us."[1582] When this good Shepherd sees a sheep lost, what does he not do, what means does he not take, to recover it? and he does not cease to seek it till he finds it. *If he lose one of them, he goeth after that which was lost until he finds it. 2* And when he has found it, rejoicingly he places it upon his shoulders, that it may be lost no more; and, calling to him his friends and

neighbours, i.e., the angels and saints, he invites them to rejoice with him for having found the sheep that was lost. Who, then, will not love with all his affections this good Lord, who shows himself thus loving to sinners who have turned their backs upon him, and destroyed themselves of their own accord? O my Saviour, worthy of all love, behold at Thy feet a sheep that was lost! I had left Thee, but Thou hast not abandoned me; Thou hast left no means untried to recover me. What would have become of me, if Thou hadst not thought of seeking me? Woe is me! how long a time have I lived far from Thee! Now, through Thy mercy, I trust that I am in Thy grace; and as I first fled from Thee, now I desire nothing but to love Thee, and to live and die embracing Thy feet. But while I live, I am in danger of leaving Thee; oh, bind me, chain me with the bond of Thy holy love, and cease not to seek for me so long as I live on this earth. I have gone astray like a sheep that was lost; oh, seek Thy servant?[1583] O thou advocate of sinners, obtain for me a holy perseverance.

XXVII

THE AFFAIR OF ETERNAL SALVATION

The business of our eternal salvation is for us that affair which is not only the most important, but the only thing that ought to trouble us; because, if this goes wrong, all is lost. One thought upon eternity, well weighed, is enough to make a saint. The great servant of God, F. Vincenzo Carafa, was wont to say that if all men thought with a living faith upon the eternity of another life, the world would become a desert, for no one would attend any more to the affairs of this life. Oh, that all had ever before their eyes the great truth taught us by Jesus Christ! *What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?*[1584] This truth has taught many a man to leave the world; many noble virgins, and even those of royal blood, to shut themselves up in a cloister; many anchorites to live in deserts, and many martyrs to give their lives for the faith; because they considered that if they lost their souls, all the good things of the world would profit them nothing in the eternal state. Therefore the Apostle wrote to his disciples: *We entreat you, brethren, that ye attend to your own business.*[1585] And of what business did St. Paul speak? He spoke of that business which, if it fail, implies that we lose the eternal kingdom of Paradise, and are cast into an abyss of torments that never end. *It is an affair of eternal punishments, and of the loss of the heavenly kingdom, says St. John Chrysostom.*[1586]

St. Philip Neri, therefore, had good reason for calling all those persons mad who bestow pains in this life for gaining riches and honours, and give little heed to the salvation of the soul. “All such,” said the venerable John Avila, “deserve to be shut up in an asylum for lunatics.” How can this be? This great servant of God meant to say, “You believe that there is an eternity of joys for those who love God, and an eternity of pains for those who offend him; and do you offend him?” Every loss of property, of reputation, of relatives, of health, can be repaired in this life, at least by a good death, and by the acquisition of eternal life, as it happened to the holy martyrs; but for what good things of the world, with fortune even the greatest, can be given the loss of the soul? *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*[1587] He that dies in the wrath of God, and loses his soul, loses with this every hope of repairing his ruin. *To the wicked, when he is dead, there is no hope more?*[1588] O God! if the doctrine of eternal life were but a simple, doubtful opinion of divines, we ought surely to give all our care for gaining a happy eternity, and avoiding a miserable one. But no; it is not a doubtful thing; it is certain, it is of faith, that we must come to one or the other. But what do we see? Every one who has faith, and thinks upon this truth, says, "So it is we must attend to the salvation of the soul;" but few are they who truly give heed to it. They devote themselves with all their energies to win this cause, or to obtain this situation, but lay aside the care of eternal salvation. *"Truly, it is the greatest of errors to neglect the business of eternal salvation,"*[1589] said St. Eucherius; it is an error that exceeds all others; for to lose the soul is a mistake without a remedy.

Oh, that they would be wise, and would understand, and consider the last things! Miserable are those learned men who labour at many things, and know not how to take forethought for their souls, that they may obtain a favourable sentence in the day of judgment! O my Redeemer! Thou hast given Thy blood to purchase my soul, and I have so often lost it, and given it to destruction! I give Thee thanks that Thou hast given me time to recover it, by recovering Thy grace. O my God! would that I had died before I had offended Thee! It comforts me to know that Thou knowest not how to despise a heart that humbles itself and repents of its sins. O Mary, refuge of sinners! help me a sinner, who recommends himself to thee, and trusts in thee.

XXVIII

WHAT WILL BE THE JOY OF THE BLESSED

“Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord”[1590] When the soul enters the kingdom of the blessed, and the barrier which hinders its sight is taken away, it will see openly and without a veil the infinite beauty of God; and this will be the joy of the blessed. Every object that the soul then will see in God himself will overwhelm it with delight; it will see the rectitude of his judgments, the harmony of his regulations for every soul, all ordained to his divine glory, and its own good. The soul will especially perceive, in respect to itself, the boundless love which God has entertained towards it in becoming man, and sacrificing his life upon the cross through love of it. Then will it know what an excess of goodness is comprehended in the mystery of the cross, in the sight of a God become a servant, and dying condemned upon an infamous tree; and in the mystery of the Eucharist, in the sight of a God beneath the species of bread, and made the food of his creatures.

In particular the soul will perceive all the graces and favours shown to it, which, until then, had been hidden. It will see all the mercies he has bestowed on it, in waiting for it, and pardoning its ingratitude. It will see the many calls, and lights, and aids that have been granted to it in abundance. It will see that these tribulations, these infirmities, these losses of property or of kindred, which it counted punishments, were not really punishments, but loving arrangements of God for drawing it to the perfect love for him. In a word, all these things will make the soul know the infinite goodness of its God, and the boundless love which he deserves; whence, so soon as it has reached heaven, it will have no other desire but to behold him in his blessedness and content; and, at the same time, comprehending that the happiness of God is supreme, infinite, and eternal, it will experience a joy that is only not infinite because a creature is not capable of anything that is infinite. It will enjoy, nevertheless, a pleasure that is extreme and full, which fills it with delight, and with that kind of delight that belongs to God himself; and thus will be fulfilled in it the words, *Enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord.*[1591] The blessed are not so much blessed through the delight which they experience in themselves as in the joy with which God rejoices; for the blessed love God so infinitely more than themselves that the blessedness of God delights them infinitely more than their own blessedness, through the love which they bear to him; which love makes them forget themselves, and all their delight is to please their Beloved.

And this is that holy and loving inebriation which causes the blessed to lose the memory of themselves, to give themselves wholly to praise and love the dear object of all their love, which is God. *They shall be inebriated with the fullness of Thy house.*[1592] Happy from their first entrance into heaven, they continue, as it were, lost, and, so to say, swallowed up in love, in that boundless ocean of the goodness of God. Wherefore every blessed soul will lose all its desires, and will have no other desire but to love God, and to beloved by him; and knowing that it is sure of ever loving him, and of being ever loved by him, this very thing will be its blessedness, which will fill it with joy, and will make it throughout eternity so satisfied with delight that it will desire nothing more. In a word, it will be the paradise of the blessed, to rejoice in the joy of God. And thus, he who in this life rejoices in the blessedness that God enjoys, and will enjoy through eternity, can say that even in this life he enters into the joy of God, and begins to enjoy Paradise. Yet, O my sweet Saviour, and the love of my soul! in this vale of tears I still see myself surrounded by enemies, who would separate me from Thee. O my beloved Lord! suffer me not to perish; make me ever love Thee in this life and in the next life, and then do with me what Thou wilt. O Queen of Paradise! if thou prayest for me, assuredly I shall be with thee eternally, to be in thy company, and to praise thee in Paradise.

XXIX

THE PAIN OF HAVING LOST GOD WILL BE THAT WHICH CONSTITUTES HELL

The weight of punishment must correspond to the weight of the sin. Mortal sin is defined by theologians in a single phrase, *"a turning away from God;"*[1593] and in this consists the wickedness of mortal sin; it consists in despising the divine grace, and in being willing, of one's own accord, to lose God, who is the greatest good; wherefore justly the greatest punishment of sinners in hell is the punishment of having lost God. The other pains of hell are terrible: the fire which devours; the gloom which darkens; the cries of the damned which deafen; the stench, which would be enough to cause those miserable beings to die, if die they could; the closeness which oppresses and hinders their breath; but these pains are nothing in comparison with the loss of God. In hell the reprobate wail eternally; and the bitterest subject of their wailing is the thought that, through their own fault, they have lost God. O God! what a blessing will they have lost! In this life of present objects, passions, temporal occupations, sensible pleasures and adverse events hinder us from contemplating the infinite beauty and goodness of God; but when the soul has departed from the prison-house of the body, it does not instantly behold God as he is; for, if it saw him, it would be instantly blessed; but it knows that God is an infinite good, and worthy of infinite love; whence the soul, which is created to see and love this God, would instantly go to unite itself to God; but if it were in sin, it would find an impenetrable wall (which is sin), that would forever close up the path which leads to God. O Lord! I thank Thee that this life is not yet closed to me, as I have deserved. I still can come to Thee; cast me not away from Thy face!

The soul that is created to love its Creator, by natural love cannot find itself impelled to love its ultimate end, which is God; in this life, the darkness of sin, and earthly affections, lull to sleep this inclination which it has to unite itself to God, and therefore it is not greatly afflicted at being separated; but when it leaves the body, and is delivered from the senses, then it comprehends with a clear knowledge that God only can give it content. Hence, so soon as it is separated from the body, immediately it flees to embrace its greatest good; but finding itself in sin, it perceives that, as an enemy, it is driven from God, But though driven away, it will not cease to feel itself ever drawn to unite itself to God; and this will be its hell, to find itself ever drawn towards God, and ever driven away from God. But it would be said that the miserable soul, if it has lost God, and can no more see him, can at least comfort itself in loving him. But this is not so; for being abandoned by grace, and made a slave to sin, its will is perverted; so that, on one side, it finds itself ever drawn to love God, and, on the other, compelled to hate him. Thus, at the same time that it knows that God is worthy of infinite love and praise, it hates him and curses him. Yet perhaps it might, at least in this prison of torments resign itself to the divine will, as holy souls do in purgatory, and bless the hand of this God that justly punishes it. But no; it cannot resign itself, because, to do this, it must be assisted by grace, while grace (as has been said) has abandoned it; whence it cannot unite its will to that of God, because its own will is altogether contrary to the divine will.

Whence it also comes that the wretched soul turns all its hatred upon itself, and thus will live forever, torn by contrary desires. It would fain live, it would fain die. On one part, it would live, in order to hate God, who is the object of its greatest hatred; on the other, it would die, that it might not feel the pain it experiences of having lost him, while it perceives that it cannot die. Thus it will live forever in one continual mortal agony. Let us pray God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to deliver us from hell; and especially he ought to pray thus, who, at any time in his life, has lost God through any grievous sin.

O Lord! (let him say) save me, and therefore bind me ever to Thee with Thy holy love; redouble these holy and sweet chains of salvation, which may ever bind me the more to Thee, Miserable that I am, I have despised Thy grace, and deserved to be forever separated from Thee, my greatest good, and to hate Thee forever. I thank Thee for having borne with me when I was at enmity with Thee; what would have become of me, had I then died? But now that Thou hast lengthened my life, grant that it may not be that I may still more displease Thee, but only to love Thee, and to mourn for the offences I have committed against Thee. O my Jesus! from this day forth Thou shalt be my only love, and my only fear will be to offend Thee, and to separate myself from Thee. But if Thou aidest me not, I can do nothing; I hope in Thy blood, that Thou wilt give me help to be all Thine own, O my Redeemer, my love, my all! O Mary, thou great advocate of sinners, help a sinner who recommends himself to thee, and trusts in thee. If we would be assured of not losing God, let us give ourselves indeed wholly to God. He that does not give himself wholly to God is ever in danger of turning his back upon him, and of losing him; but a soul which resolutely separates itself from everything, and gives itself all to God will no more lose him; because God himself will not allow that a soul that has heartily given itself all unto him should turn its back upon him and perish. Wherefore a great servant of God was wont to say that when we read of the fall of any who had before given tokens of living a holy life, we must consider that such persons had not given themselves all to God.

XXX

CONTEMPT FOR THE WORLD

The thought of the vanity of the world, and that all things that the world values are but falsehood and deceit, has made many souls resolve to give themselves wholly to God. *What does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*[1594] How many young persons has this great maxim of the Gospel brought to leave relatives, country, possessions, honours, and even crowns, to go to shut themselves up in a cloister or desert, there to think of God alone! The day of death is called the day of loss: *The day of loss is at hand.*[1595] It is a day of loss, because all the goods that we have gained on earth must be left, on the day of our death. *Wherefore St. Ambrose wisely says that we falsely call these good things our good things, because we cannot carry them with us into the other world, where we must dwell forever. It is our holy deeds alone that accompany us, and they alone will comfort us in eternity.*[1596] All earthly fortunes, the highest dignities, gold, silver, the most precious jewels, when contemplated from the bed of death, lose their splendour; the dark shadow of death obscures even sceptres and crowns, and makes us see that whatever the world values is but smoke, dust, vanity, and misery. And, in truth, at the time of death, what profit is there in all the riches acquired by the dying person, if nothing belongs to him after death, except a box of wood, in which he is placed to grow corrupt? For what will vaunted beauty of body serve, when there remains of it only a little polluted dust and four fleshless limbs?

What is the life of man upon earth? Behold it, as described by St. James: *What is your life? It is a smoke which appear eth for a little while; and then will pass away.*[1597] Today this great man is esteemed, feared, praised; tomorrow he is despised, contemned, and abused. *I saw the wicked lifted on high; I went by, and behold he was gone.*[1598] He is no longer to be found in this his beloved house, in this great palace which he built; and where is he? he is become dust in the grave! *A false balance is in his hand.*[1599] In these words the Holy Spirit advises us not to be deceived by the world, because the world weighs its goods in a false balance; we ought to weigh them in the true balance of faith, which will show us what are the true goods of which it can never be said that they speedily finish. St. Teresa said we should not take account of anything that ends with death. O God! what greatness ever remained to these so many first ministers of state, commanders of armies, princes, Roman emperors, now that the scene is changed, and they find themselves in eternity! *Their memory has perished with a sound.*[1600] They made a great figure in the world, and their names resounded among all; but when they were dead, for them was changed rank, name, and everything. It is useful here to notice an inscription placed over a certain cemetery in which many gentlemen and ladies are buried: *"See where end all greatness, all earthly pomp, all beauty. Worms, dust, a worthless stone, a little sand, close the brief scene at the end of all."*

The form of this world passeth away.[1601] Our life is but a scene that passes away and speedily ends; and it must end for all, whether nobles or commoners, kings or subjects, rich or poor. Happy he who, in this scene, has played his part well before God. Philip III., King of Spain, died a young man, at the age of forty-two years; and before he died he said to those who stood by, *"When I am dead proclaim the spectacle that you now see; proclaim that, in death, to have been a king, serves only to make one feel the pain of having reigned." And then he ended with a sigh, saying, "Oh that during this time I had been in a desert, becoming a saint, that now I might appear with more confidence before the tribunal of Jesus Christ!"* We know the change of life of St. Francis Borgia at the sight of the corpse of the Empress Isabella, who, in life, was most beautiful, but, after death, struck horror into all who saw her. Borgia, when he saw her, exclaimed, *"Thus, then, end the good things of this world!"* and he gave himself wholly to God. Oh that we could all imitate him before death comes upon us! But let us haste, because death runs towards us, and we know not when it will arrive. Let us not so act that the light that God will then give us will cause nothing but remorse, when we hold in our hands the candle of death. Let us resolve to do now what we shall then wish to have done, and shall not be able to do. *No, my God, it is enough that Thou hast hitherto borne with me; I do not wish that Thou shouldst wait longer to see me give myself wholly to Thee. Thou hast called me many times to have done with this world, and to give myself all to Thy love. Now Thou turnest to me to call unto Thee; behold me, receive me into Thy arms, while at this moment I abandon myself wholly to Thee. O Spotless Lamb, who at Calvary was sacrificed on a cross for me, wash me first with Thy blood, and pardon all the injuries that Thou hast received from me; and then inflame me with Thy holy love. I love Thee above everything; I love Thee with all my heart. And what object can I find in the world more worthy of love than Thou art, and which has loved me more? O Mary, Mother of God, and my advocate! pray for me; obtain for me a true and lasting change of life. In thee I trust.*

XXXI

LOVE OF SOLITUDE

God does not allow himself to be found in the tumult of the world; therefore the saints have been wont to seek him in the most rugged deserts, in the most hidden caves, in order that they might converse with God alone. St. Hilarion made trial of several deserts, going from one to another, ever seeking the most solitary, where no man could communicate with him; and, in the end, he died in a desert in Cyprus, after having lived there for five years. St. Bruno, when he was called by the Lord to leave the world, went, with his companions, who wished to follow him, to find St. Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble, that he might assign them some desert place in his diocese. St. Hugh assigned them the Certosa, which, from its wildness, was more fitted to be a covert for wild beasts than a habitation for men; and there they went with joy to dwell, placing themselves each in so many little huts, each distant from the rest. The Lord said once to St. Teresa, *"I would willingly speak to many souls, but the world makes so much noise in their hearts that they cannot hear my voice."* God does not speak to us in the midst of the rumours and affairs of the world, knowing that if he were to speak he would not be understood. The words of God are his holy inspirations, his lights and calls, through which the saints are enlightened and inflamed with divine love; but they who do not love solitude will be unable to hear these voices of God.

God himself says, I will lead her into solitude and speak to her heart. When God desires to raise any soul to a high degree of perfection, he inspires it to retire to some solitary place, far from the converse of creatures, and there he speaks to the ears, not of the body, but of the heart; and thus he enlightens and inflames it with his divine love. St. Bernard[1602] said that he had learned much more of the love of God, in the midst of the oaks and beeches of the forest, than from books and from the servants of

God. Therefore St. Jerome left the pleasures of Rome, and shut himself up in the cave of Bethlehem, and then exclaimed, *"O solitude, in which God speaks and communes familiarly with his people!"*[1603] In solitude God converses familiarly with his beloved souls, and there he makes them hear those words that melt their hearts with holy love, as the sacred Spouse said, *My heart melted when my Beloved spoke.*[1604] We see by experience that conversing with the world, and occupying ourselves in the acquisition of earthly goods, make us forget God; but in the hour of death what do we find from all the toils and time we have spent upon things of the earth, except pains and remorse of conscience? In death we only find comfort from that little which we have done and suffered for God. Why, then, do we not separate ourselves from the world, before death separates it from us?

He shall sit solitary, and hold his peace, because he hath taken it upon himself.[1605] The solitary is not moved as he was formerly in worldly affairs; he will sit in repose; and he will hold his peace, and will not call for sensual delights to satisfy him, for he is lifted up above himself, and above all created things; in God he will find every good, and all his content. *Who will give me the wings of a dove, that I may fly away, and be at rest?*[1606] David desired to have the wings of a dove, that he might leave this earth, and not touch it even with his feet, and thus give rest to his soul. But while we are in this life, it is not given to us to leave this earth. We must, however, take care to love retirement, so far as it is practicable, conversing alone with God; and thus gaining strength for avoiding those defects that arise from our being obliged to have intercourse with the world; as David said, at the very time he was ruling his kingdom, *Behold, I have fled far away, and abode in the wilderness.*[1607] *Oh that I had ever thought upon Thee, O God of my soul, and not of the goods of this world! I curse those days in which I went about seeking earthly pleasures, and offended Thee, my greatest good. Oh that I had ever loved Thee! Oh that I had died, and not caused Thee displeasure! Miserable that I am, death draws near, while I find myself still attached to the world! No, my Jesus, from this day I resolve to leave all, and to be wholly Thine. Thou art almighty; Thou must give me strength to be faithful to Thee. O thou Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me!*

XXXII

THE SOLITUDE OF HEART

St. Gregory wrote, *“What does the solitude of the body profit if the solitude of the heart is not there?”*[1608] In the preceding chapter we have seen how much solitude assists towards a recollectedness of mind; but St. Gregory says that it profits us little or nothing to be with the body in a solitary place, while the heart is full of worldly thoughts and affections. That a soul may be wholly given to God, two things are necessary: the first is, to detach ourselves from the love of every created thing; the second is, to consecrate all our love to God; and this is implied in true solitude of the heart. We must, then, in the first place, detach our heart from every earthly affection. St. Francis de Sales said: *“If I knew that I had a single fibre in my heart which was not given to God, I would instantly pluck it out.”* If we do not purify and strip the heart of everything earthly, the love of God cannot enter in and possess it all. God would reign with his love in our heart, but he would reign there alone; he will have no companions to rob him of a portion of that affection which he justly claims to have all his own. Some souls lament that, in all their devout exercises, in meditations, Communions, spiritual readings, visits to the blessed Sacrament, they do not find God, and know not what means to apply themselves to in order to find him. To these St. Teresa suggests the right means when she says, *“Detach thy heart from all created things, and seek God, and thou shalt find him.”*

Many persons, in order to separate themselves from creatures, and to converse with God alone, cannot go to live in deserts, as they would wish; but we must remember that deserts and caves are not necessary in order to enjoy the solitude of the heart. Those who, from necessity, are obliged to converse with the world, whenever their hearts are free from worldly attachments, even in the public streets, in places of resort, and public assemblies, can possess a solitude of heart, and continue united with God. All those occupations which we undertake in order to fulfil the divine will have no power to prevent the solitude of the heart. St. Catharine of Sienna truly found God in the midst of the household labours in which her parents kept her employed in order to draw her from devotional exercises; but in the midst of these affairs she preserved a retirement in her heart, which she called her cell, and there ceased not to converse alone with God. *“Be still, and see that I am God.”*[1609] In order to possess that divine light which enables us to know the goodness of God, the knowledge of which draws to itself all the affections of our heart, we must be empty, and separate from us the earthly attachments that hinder us from knowing God. As a crystal vase, when it is filled with sand, cannot receive the light of the sun, so a heart which is attached to riches, worldly honours, or sensual pleasures cannot receive the divine light; and, not knowing God, it does not love him. In every condition in which a man is placed by God, in order that creatures may not draw him from God, it is necessary that he give attention to perform his duties according to the pleasure of God, and then in everything else let him act as if there were no other beings in existence except himself and God. We must detach ourselves from everything, and especially from ourselves, by continually thwarting our self-love. For example, a certain thing pleases us; we must leave it for the very reason that it pleases us. A certain person has injured us; we must do him good for this very reason. In a word, we must desire and not desire, exactly as God desires or does not desire, without inclination to any one thing; because we do not know that what we ourselves wish is the will of God.

Oh, how easily is God found by everyone who detaches himself from creatures in order to find him! *The Lord is good to the soul that seeks Him.*[1610] St. Francis de Sales wrote, *“The pure love of God consumes everything that is not God, in order to convert everything into itself.”* We must, therefore, offer ourselves as an enclosed garden, as the holy spouse in the Canticles is called by God, *My sister, my spouse, is an enclosed garden.*[1611] The soul that keeps its door shut against earthly affections is called an enclosed garden. It is God who has given us everything that we have, and it is right that he should require of us all our love. When, then, any creature would enter and take up a portion of our love, we must altogether deny it an entrance, and, turning to our greatest good, we must say, with all our heart, “ What have I in heaven, and what have I desired upon earth, but Thee, O God of my heart, and my portion forever?” “O my God! what but Thyself can satisfy my soul? No; except Thee I desire nothing either in heaven or on earth; Thou alone art sufficient for me, O God of my heart, and my portion forever!” Oh! happy is he who can say, *“I have despised the kingdom of the world, and all the glory of the time, for the love of my Lord Jesus Christ.”*[1612] Truly, that great servant of God, Sister Margaret of the Cross, the daughter of the Emperor Maximilian II , could say this, when, at her profession, she stripped herself of her rich garments and gems, to clothe herself in the poor woollen habit of the Barefooted Nuns of the Strict Rule of St. Clare; and when, as the author of her life relates, she cast them away with a contempt that moved to tears of devotion all who were present at the function.

O my Jesus! for myself I do not desire that creatures should have any part in my heart; Thou must be my only Lord, by possessing it altogether. Let others seek the delights and grandeurs of this life; Thou alone, both in the present and future life, must be my only portion, my only good, my only love. And, as Thou lovest me, as I see by all the signs Thou givest me, help me to detach myself from everything that can draw me from Thy love. Grant that my soul may be all taken up with pleasing Thee, as the only object of all my affections. Take possession of all my heart; I would be no longer my own. Do Thou rule me, and make me ready to follow out all Thy will. O Mary, Mother of God! in thee I trust; thy prayers can make me belong wholly to Jesus.

XXXIII

THE SIGHT AND LOVE OF GOD IN THE NEXT LIFE WILL CONSTITUTE THE JOY OF THE BLESSED

Let us see what it will be which in heaven will make those holy citizens completely happy. The soul in heaven when it sees God face to face, and knows his infinite beauty, and all his perfections that render him worthy of infinite love, cannot but love him with all its powers, and it loves him far more than itself; it even, as it were, forgets itself, and desires nothing but to behold him satisfied and loved who is its God; and seeing that God, who is the only object of all its affections, enjoys an infinite delight, this joy of God constitutes all its paradise. If it were capable of anything that is infinite, in seeing that its Beloved is infinitely content, its own joy thereupon would be also infinite; but, as a creature is not capable of infinite joy, it rests at least satisfied with joy to such an extent that it desires nothing more; and this is that satisfaction that David sighed for, when he said, *I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear.*[1613] Thus also is fulfilled what God says to the soul when he admits it into paradise, *Enter into the joy of thy Lord.*[1614] He does not bid joy enter into the soul, because this his joy, being infinite, cannot be contained in the creature; but he bids the soul enter into his joy, that it may receive a portion of it, and such a portion as will satisfy it, and fill it with delight. Therefore, I am of opinion that in meditation, among all acts of love towards God, there is none more perfect than the taking delight in the infinite joy of God. This is certainly the continual exercise of the blessed in heaven; so that he who often rejoices in the joy of God begins in this life to do that which he hopes to do in heaven through all eternity.

The love with which the saints in paradise burn towards God is such that if ever a fear of losing it were to enter their thoughts, or they were to think that they should not love him with all their powers, as now they love him, this fear would cause them to experience the pains of hell. But it is not so; for they are as sure, as they are sure of God, that they will ever love him with all their powers, and that they will be ever loved by God, and this mutual love will never change throughout eternity. O my God! make me worthy of this, through the merits of Jesus Christ. This happiness, which constitutes paradise, will be further increased by the splendour of that delightful city of God, the beauty of its inhabitants, and by their companionship, especially by that of the Queen of all, Mary, who will appear fairer than all, and by that of Jesus Christ, whose beauty again will infinitely surpass that of Mary.

The joy of the blessed will be increased by the dangers of losing so great a good, which they have all passed through in this life. What, then, will be the thanksgivings that they offer to God, when, through their own sins, they have deserved hell, and now find themselves there on high, whence they will see so many condemned to hell for less guilt than their own, while they are saved, and sure of not losing God, being destined to enjoy eternally those boundless delights in heaven, of which they will never grow weary. In this life, however great and continual be our joys, with time they always weary us; but for the delights of paradise, the more they are enjoyed, the more they are desired; and thus the blessed are ever satisfied and filled with these delights, and ever desire them: they ever desire them, and ever obtain them. Wherefore that sweet song with which the saints praise God and thank him for the happiness he has given them, is called a new song: *Sing to the Lord a new song*.[1615] It is called new, because the rejoicings of heaven seem ever new, as though they were experienced for the first time; and thus they ever rejoice in them, and ever ask for them; and, as they ever ask for them, they ever obtain them. Thus, as the damned are called *"vessels of wrath,"*[1616] the blessed are called " vessels of divine love."[1617] Justly, then, does St. Augustine[1618] say that to obtain this eternal blessedness there is needed a boundless labour.

Hence, it was little that the anchorites did with their penitential works and prayers to gain Paradise; it was little for the saints to leave their riches and kingdoms to gain it; little that the martyrs suffered from instruments of torture, and burning irons, and cruel deaths. Let us, at any rate, give heed to suffer joyfully the crosses that God sends us, because they all, if we are saved, will become for us eternal joys. When infirmities, pains, or any adversities afflict us, let us lift up our eyes to heaven and say, *"One day all these pains will have an end, and after them I hope to enjoy God forever."* Let us take courage to suffer, and to despise the things of the world. Blessed is he who in death can say with St. Agatha, *"O Lord, who hast taken from me the love of the world, receive my soul."*[1619] Let us endure everything, let us despise everything that is created; it is Jesus who awaits us, and stands with the crown in his hands to make us kings in heaven, if we be faithful to him. *But how can I, O my Jesus! aspire to so great a good,—I, who have so often, through the miserable desires of earth, renounced Paradise before Thee, and trodden under foot Thy grace? Yet Thy blood gives me courage to hope for Paradise, though I have so often deserved hell, because Thou hast died upon the cross, in order to bestow Paradise upon those who have not deserved it. O my God and Redeemer! I would no more lose Thee; give me help to be faithful to Thee; Thy kingdom come; through the merits of Thy blood grant me one day to enter Thy kingdom; and, in the meanwhile, until death comes, enable me perfectly to fulfil Thy will, which is the greatest good, and is that Paradise which can be possessed upon earth by him who loves Thee.* Therefore, O ye souls who love God! while we live in this vale of tears, let us ever sigh for Paradise, and say, "O fair country, wherein love bestows itself upon love, I sigh for Thee hour by hour, when, O my God, when will it be here?"

XXXIV

Meditation BEFORE THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

Meditation, wherever it is made, pleases God; but it appears that Jesus Christ especially delights in the meditation that is made before the Most Holy Sacrament, since it appears that there he bestows light and grace most abundantly upon those who visit him. He has left himself in this Sacrament, not only to be the food of souls which receive him in Holy Communion, but also to be found at all times by every one who seeks him. Devout pilgrims go to the holy house of Loretto where Jesus Christ dwelt during his life, and to Jerusalem, where he died on the cross; but how much greater ought to be our devotion when we find him before us in a tabernacle, where this Lord himself now dwells in person, who lived among us, and died for us on Calvary! It is not permitted in the world for persons of all ranks to speak alone with kings; but with Jesus Christ, the King of heaven, both nobles and plebeians, rich and poor, can converse at their will in this Sacrament, and employ themselves as long as they will in setting before him their wants, and in seeking his graces; and there Jesus gives audience to all, hears all, and comforts them. Men of the world, who know no treasures but those of the earth, cannot comprehend what pleasure can be found in spending a long time before an altar, where is placed a consecrated Host; but to souls which love God, hours and days passed before the Blessed Sacrament seem as moments, for the celestial sweetness which the Lord there gives them to taste and to enjoy.

But how can worldly people expect to enjoy this sweetness if they keep their hearts and thoughts full of the earth? St. Francis Borgia said that in order that divine love may rule in our hearts, we must first drive the world away from them; otherwise, divine love will never enter into them, because it finds no place to rest. *Be still, and see that I am God.*[1620] said David. In order to have experience of God, and to prove how sweet he is to them that love him, our hearts must be empty, that is, detached from earthly affections. Wouldst Thou find God? *“Detach thyself from creatures, and thou shalt find him,” said St. Teresa.* What should a soul do when in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament? It should love and pray. It should not stand there in order to experience sweetness and consolation, but only to give pleasure to God, by making acts of love, by giving itself wholly to God without reserve, by stripping itself of its own will, and offering it self in saying, *“O my God, I love Thee, and desire nothing but Thee; grant that I may ever love Thee, and then do with me and with all that I possess according to Thy pleasure.”* Among all acts of love, that is most pleasing to God which the blessed continually exercise in heaven, that is to say, the rejoicing in the infinite joy of God; for the blessed soul loves God infinitely more than itself, and therefore desires the happiness of her Beloved far more than her own; and seeing that God enjoys an infinite joy, the blessed soul would thence receive an infinite delight; but as a creature is not capable of an infinite delight, it rests full of satisfaction, and thus the joy of God constitutes its joy and its Paradise. These acts of love, even when made by us without any sensible sweetness, please God greatly. He also does not give to souls whom he loves a perpetual enjoyment of. his comfort in this life, but only at intervals; and when he gives them, he gives them not so much as a reward for good works (the full reward of which he reserves for them in heaven), as to give them more strength to suffer with patience the troubles and adversities of this present life, and especially the distractions and dryness of spirit which pious souls experience in meditation.

So far as distractions are concerned, of these we must not make much account, it is enough to drive them away when they come. For the rest, even the saints suffered involuntary distractions. But they did not on this account leave off meditation; and so also must we do ourselves. St. Francis de Sales said that if in meditation we did nothing but drive away, or seek to drive away, distractions, our meditation would be of great profit. As for dryness of spirit, the greatest pain of souls in meditation is to find themselves sometimes without a feeling of devotion, weary of it, and without any sensible desire of loving God; and with this is often joined the fear of being in the wrath of God through their sins, on account of which the Lord has abandoned them; and being in this gloomy darkness, they know not any way of escaping from it, it seeming to them that every way is closed against them. Let the devout soul, then, continue strong in not leaving off meditation, as the devil will suggest to it. At such a time let it unite its desolation to that which Jesus Christ suffered upon the cross; and if it can only say this, it is enough to say it, at least with the intention of the will, "*My God, I would love Thee, I would be wholly thine. Have pity on me; oh, leave me not!*" Let it say, also, as a holy soul said to its God, in a time of desolation, "*I love Thee, though I seem to myself an enemy in Thy sight: drive me away as Thou wilt; I will ever follow after Thee,*"

XXXV

IN GOD ALONE IS FOUND TRUE PEACE

He that seeks peace in creatures will never find it, because no creatures are fitted for giving satisfaction to the heart. God has created man for himself, who is an infinite good; wherefore God alone can content him. Hence it comes that many persons, though loaded with riches, honours, and earthly pleasures, are never satisfied; they are ever seeking for more honours, more possessions, more amusements; and, however many they obtain, they are always restless, and never enjoy a day of true peace. *Delight thou in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desire of thy heart.*[1621] When any person delights only in God, and seeks nothing but God, God himself will take care to satisfy all the desires of his heart; and then he will attain the happy state of those souls who desire nothing but to please God. Senseless are they who say, " Happy is he who can employ himself as he likes, who can command others, who can take what pleasures he pleases." It is madness; he alone is happy who loves God, who says that God alone is sufficient for him. Experience, shows clearly that multitudes of persons who are called fortunate by men of the world, because they are raised up to the possession of great riches and great dignities, live a miserable life, and never find rest. But how is this, that so many rich and titled people, and princes, in the midst of the abundance of the goods of the world, do not find peace? And, on the other hand, how is it that so many good religious, who live retired in a cell, poor and hidden, pass their days so happily?

How is it that so many solitaries, living in a desert or within a cave, suffering hunger and cold, yet rejoice with gladness? It is because they wait only on God, and God comforts them. *The peace of God surpasseth all understanding.*[1622] Oh, how the peace which the Lord gives to those who love him exceeds all the delights which the world can give. *Oh, taste and see how sweet the Lord is.*[1623] O men of the world! cries the prophet, why will ye despise the life of the saints without having ever known it? Try it, for once; leave the world, leave it, and give yourself to God, and you will see how well he knows how to comfort you more than all the greatnesses and delights of this world. It is true that even the saints suffer great troubles in this life; but they, resigning themselves to the will of God, never lose their peace The lovers of the world seem now at times joyful, at times sad, but, in truth, they are ever restless and in a state of storms. On the other hand, the lovers of God are superior to all adversity and to the changes of this world, and therefore they live in uniform tranquillity. See how the celebrated Cardinal Petrucci describes a soul that is wholly given to God: "It beholds all creatures around change into a thousand various forms, while within, the depths of its heart, ever united with God, continue without change." But he who would live ever united with God, and would enjoy a continual peace, must drive from his heart everything that is not God, and live as if he were dead to earthly affections O my God! give me strength to separate myself from all the snares that draw me to the world. Grant that I may think of nothing but to please Thee. Happy are they for whom God alone is sufficient! O Lord! give me grace that I may seek nothing but Thee, and ask for nothing but to love Thee and give Thee pleasure. For love of Thee I now renounce all earthly pleasures, I renounce also all spiritual consolations; I desire nothing but to do Thy will, and to give Thee pleasure. O Mother of God! recommend me to thy Son, who denies thee nothing.

XXXVI

WE OUGHT TO HAVE GOD ALONE AS THE END OF OUR ACTIONS

In all our actions we should have no other end in view than to please God; not to please our relatives, friends, great people, or ourselves, because everything that is not done for the sake of God is lost. Many things are done for the sake of pleasure, or in order not to displease men; but, says St. Paul, *If I yet please men, I should not be the servant of God.*[1624] God only must be regarded in everything we do, so that we may say, as Jesus Christ said, *I do always the things that please him.*[1625] It is God who has given us everything we have; we have nothing of our own, except nothingness and sin. It is God alone who has truly loved us. He has loved us from eternity, and he has loved us so far as to give himself for us upon the cross and in the Sacrament of the altar: God alone, therefore, deserves all our love. Unhappy is the soul that looks with affection upon any object upon earth which displeases God. It will never know peace in this life, and it is in imminent peril of never enjoying peace in the next. But happy is he, O my God! who seeks Thee alone, and renounces everything for Thy love. He will find that pearl of Thy pure love a joy more precious than all the treasures and kingdoms of the earth. He that does this obtains the true liberty of the sons of God, for he finds himself freed from all the bonds that bind him to earth, and hinder him from uniting himself to God.

O my God and my all! I would rather have Thee than all the riches, honours, knowledge, glory, expectations, and gifts that Thou couldst give me. Thou art all my good. Thee alone I desire, and nothing more; for Thou alone art infinitely beautiful, infinitely kind, infinitely worthy of love, in a word, Thou art the only thing that is good. Wherefore every gift that is not Thyself is not enough for me. I repeat, and I will ever repeat it, Thee alone I wish for, and nothing more; and whatever is less than Thee, I say it again, is not sufficient for me. Oh, when will it be given me to occupy myself wholly in praising Thee, loving Thee, and pleasing Thee, so that I shall no more think of the creature, nor even of myself? O my Lord and my love! help me when Thou seest me growing cold in Thy love, in danger of giving my affection to creatures and to earthly goods; *Stretch forth Thy hand from on high, seize me, and deliver me from many waters.*[1626] Deliver me from the danger of going far away from Thee. Let others seek what they will; it pleases not me, and I desire nothing but Thee, my God, my love and my hope: *What have I in heaven, and what have I desired on earth, but Thee, O thou God of my heart, and my portion forever; my God and my all.*[1627] Let men undeceive themselves; all good things that come from creatures are but dust, smoke, and deceits; God alone can satisfy them.

But in this life he does not grant us to enjoy him fully; he only gives us certain foretastes of the good things which he promises us in heaven; there he waits to satisfy us with his own joy, when he will say to us, *Enter into the joy of thy Lord*[1628] The Lord gives heavenly consolations to his servants, only to make them yearn for that happiness which he prepares O almighty God! O God worthy of love! grant that in all things henceforth we may love and seek nothing but Thy pleasure. Grant that Thou mayest be my all and my only love, since Thou alone, both justly and through gratitude, dost deserve all our affections. I have no greater pain to afflict me than the thought that in times past I have so little loved Thy infinite goodness; but I desire and resolve, with Thy help, to love Thee with all my strength for the time to come, and thus I hope to die, loving Thee alone, my greatest good. O Mary, Mother of God! pray for me, a miserable being: thy prayers are never refused; pray to Jesus, that he may make me all his own.

XXXVII

WE MUST SUFFER EVERYTHING IN ORDER TO PLEASE GOD

This has been the one chief and dearest endeavour of all saints, to desire with their whole heart to endure every toil, all contempt, every pain, in order to please God, and thus to please that divine heart, which so much deserves to be loved, and loves us so much. In this consists all perfection, and the love of a soul towards God, in its ever seeking the pleasure of God, and the doing of that which most pleases God. Oh, blessed is he who can say with Jesus Christ, *Those things which are pleasing to Thee, I always do.*[1629] And what greater honour, what greater comfort, can a soul have than to go through some fatigue, or to accept some labour, believing it to be acceptable to God?

It is more than a duty that we should give pleasure to that God who has so much loved us, has given us all that we possess; and, not content with giving us so many blessings, has gone so far as to give himself for us upon the cross, dying upon it for love of us; and then has instituted the Sacrament of the altar, where he gives himself wholly to us in the Holy Communion, so that he has no more that he can give. On this account the saints have never known where to stay, in order to give pleasure to God. How many young nobles have left the world, in order to give themselves wholly to God! How many young women, even of royal blood, have renounced marriage with the great in order to shut themselves up in a cloister! How many anchorites have gone to hide themselves in deserts and caves in order to meditate upon God alone! How many martyrs have embraced scourges and fiery plates, and the most cruel torments of tyrants, in order to please God! In a word, in order to give pleasure to God, the saints have stripped themselves of their possessions, have renounced the greatest earthly dignities, and have accepted as treasures infirmities, persecutions, the loss of property, and the most painful and desolate deaths. The good pleasure of God, therefore, if we truly love it, ought to be preferred by us to the acquisition of all riches, of the loftiest glory, of all the delights of earth, and even of Paradise itself; for it is certain that all the blessed, if they were to know that it would please God more that they should burn in hell, one and all, even the Mother of God among them, would cast themselves into that abyss of flames, and suffer eternally in order to give greater pleasure to God. For this end the Lord has placed us in the world, in order that we may devote ourselves to pleasing him, and to giving him glory. Wherefore the will of God ought to be the one object of all our desires, of all our thoughts and actions. Well does that heart deserve to be pleased in all things which has so greatly loved us, and is so anxious for our good.

But how is it, O Lord! that, ungrateful, instead of seeking to give Thee pleasure, I have so often displeased Thee? Yet the abhorrence which Thou causest me to feel for the sins I have committed against Thee teaches me that Thou dost desire to pardon me. Pardon me, then, and suffer me not to be any more ungrateful to Thee. Grant that I may conquer everything to give Thee pleasure. *In Thee, O Lord! have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.*[1630] O Queen of Heaven, and my Mother! draw me wholly to God.

XXXVIII

HAPPY IS HE WHO DESIRES NOTHING BUT GOD

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.[1631] By *“the poor in spirit “* is meant those who are poor in earthly desires, and desire nothing but God. These are poor in desires, but not without affection, because they live contented even in this life; and, therefore, the Lord docs not say, *“Theirs will be the kingdom of heaven,”* but *“ theirs is,”* because even in this life they are rich in spiritual blessings which they receive from God; and thus, however poor they are in temporal goods, they live content with their condition. They are different from the rich in earthly desires, who, in the present life, whatever riches they possess, are always poor, and live discontented; for the good things of this life do not satisfy our thirst, however much they are increased; wherefore, these persons are never contented, never attaining to the acquisition of what they desire.

In order to enrich us with true riches, Jesus Christ chose to be a poor man, as the Apostle writes, *For your sakes He became poor, that by His poverty ye might become rich.*[1632] He chose to be poor in order to teach us by his example to despise earthly blessings; and thus to enrich us with heavenly blessings, which are infinitely more precious, and which last forever. Wherefore he declared that whoever did not renounce every species of attachment to this earth could not be his true disciple. Happy he who desires nothing but God, and can say, with St. Paulinus, *“Let the rich have their riches, kings their kingdoms; Christ is my wealth and my kingdom.”*[1633] Let us rest assured that God alone can content us, but he does not fully content any but those souls which love him with a whole heart. And what place can the love of God find in a heart that is full of this earth? Such people may go often to communion, and pay visits to the Blessed Sacrament; but, because this earth is in their hearts, God cannot wholly possess them, and enrich them as he would. Many souls lament that in their meditations and communions, and in their other most devout exercises, they do not find God. To such St. Teresa said, *"Detach thy heart from all creatures, and thou shalt find God."* Let us strip ourselves of every affection that tends to earthly things, and especially of our own will; let us give to God our whole will, without reserve, and say to him, "Lord, do Thou dispose of me, and of all I have, as Thou wilt; I desire nothing but what Thou desirest, and I know that what Thou wilt is the best for me. Grant me, then, that I may ever love Thee, and I desire nothing more."

The only means for detaching ourselves from creatures is to acquire a great love for God. If the love of God does not go so far as to obtain the mastery over our own will, we shall never attain to being saints. The means for acquiring this ruling love is devout prayer. Let us constantly pray to God to give us his love, that we may thus find ourselves detached from every created thing. Divine love is a thief, which, in a holy way, robs us of all earthly affections, and causes us to say, "*What other thing do I desire but Thee alone, O God of my heart" Love is strong as death.*[1634] This means that as there is no power that resists death, so there is nothing, even of things most invincible, that can resist the love of God. Love conquers everything. With the love of God the martyrs conquered the fiercest torments and the most agonizing deaths. Oh, happy indeed is he who can say with David, What have I in heaven, and what have I desired upon earth, but Thee, O God of my heart, and my portion forever! What else can I desire in this life and in eternity, but Thee alone, O my God? Let others find the good things they choose; be Thou, O God of my heart, my only good; be Thou all my peace. In what peril does the soul stand of losing God and perishing when it has not attained to the giving itself wholly to God; while he who has truly given himself altogether to God can rest secure of never leaving him, because the Lord is truly merciful and faithful to everyone who gives himself to him without reserve. But why is it that some persons, who began by living a holy life, afterwards fall so grievously, that they leave us little hope of their salvation? Why, indeed, is this? I answer, that they had not given themselves wholly to God; and this their fall is the proof of it.

O my God, and my true lover! suffer it not that my soul, which was created to love Thee, should love anything apart from Thee, and should not wholly belong to Thee, who hast purchased me with Thy blood. O my Jesus! how is it possible that, after having known the love which Thou hast borne to me, I can love anything apart from Thee? Draw me continually within Thy heart; make me forget everything that I may neither seek nor sigh after anything but Thy love. O my Jesus! in Thee I trust. O Mary, Mother of God! in thee is my hope; detach me from the love of everything that is not of God, that he may be the one object of all my affections, and of my eternal happiness.

XXXIX

DRYNESS OF SPIRIT

St. Francis de Sales said that true devotion and the true love of God do not consist in the receiving of spiritual consolations in prayer and other devout exercises, but in the possession of a resolute will to desire and to do nothing but what God wills. This is the one end for which we should apply ourselves to prayer, to Communion, to mortification, and to every other thing that is pleasing to God; even though we experience in them no sweet flavour, and continue in the midst of temptations, and in a desolateness of spirit. *"With dryness of mind and temptations," said St. Teresa, "the Lord makes trial of those who love him."* Even if this dryness last for the whole of life, let not the soul leave off prayer; the time will come when all will be abundantly rewarded. As all masters of the spiritual life recommend, in time of desolation we ought especially to exercise ourselves in acts of humility and resignation. There is no better time for learning our own helplessness and our misery than when we are barren in prayer, wearied, distracted, and desolate, without any perceptible fervour, and even without perceptible desires for making progress in divine love. At such times let the soul say, " Lord, have mercy upon me; behold how powerless I am to do a single good deed." We must besides resign ourselves to the will of God, and say, " O my God, it is Thy will to keep me thus in darkness, thus in affliction; may Thy holy will be ever done. I desire not to be comforted; it is enough for me to abide solitary to give Thee pleasure." And thus we ought to persevere in prayer during all its duration.The greatest trouble, however, which any one suffers in prayer is not so much a dryness as a darkness, in which he finds himself stripped of every good wish, and tempted to give up faith and hope. Sometimes, in addition, he experiences violent attacks of temptations, and such distrust that lie continues in grievous fear of having even lost the grace of God, and that for his sins God had driven him from Him, and had abandoned him; so that he looks upon himself as abhorred by God; and therefore at such times solitude torments him, and meditation seems to him like a kind of hell. Then must he take courage, and recollect that this dread of having yielded to temptation or to despair is simply the dread and the torment of the soul, but not a voluntary act, and therefore he is free from sin. At such a time a person really resists temptation with his will, though, through the darkness which enshrouds him, he is not able distinctly to perceive it. And the proof of this is the experience which he has, that if he were to be tempted knowingly to commit a single venial sin, his soul, which loves God, would rather accept death a thousand times. On this account, we must not trouble ourselves at such times to attain a certainty that we are in the grace of God, and that there is no sin in what we are doing. Thou wouldst then know and be sure that God loves thee; but at such a time God does not choose to let thee know it; he wills that thou shouldst only strive to humble thyself, and trust in his goodness, and resign thyself to his will. Thou wouldst see that God does not will that thou shouldst see. For the rest, St. Francis de Sales says that the resolution which thou hast (at least in thy will) to love God, and not to cause him deliberately the slightest displeasure, is an assurance that thou art in the grace of God. Abandon thyself, therefore, at such times, to the divine mercy; declare to God that thou desirest nothing but him and his will, and fear not. Oh, how dear to the Lord are these acts of confidence and resignation, accomplished in the midst of this terrible darkness.

For forty-one years, St. Jane Frances of Chantal suffered these internal pains, accompanied by terrible temptations, and by fears that she was in a state of sin, and was abandoned by God. Her pangs were so great that she was accustomed to say that the thought of death was the only thing that gave her relief. She was wont to say, “ Sometimes it seems to me that my patience is exhausted, and that I am on the point of giving up everything, and of abandoning myself to perdition.” For the last eight or nine years of her life, her temptations, instead of diminishing, became fiercer; so that whether she was praying or in any occupation, her inward martyrdom was such as to call forth the compassion of everyone who associated with her. It seemed to her sometimes that God had driven her from him, so that to relieve herself, she turned her thoughts away from God; but not finding the relief she sought, she turned again to the contemplation of God, even though he seemed wroth against her. In meditations, in communions, and other devout exercises, she experienced nothing but weariness and torment. She seemed to herself to be like a sick person overwhelmed with complaints, unable to turn herself from side to side; dumb, so as not to be able to explain her sufferings; and blind, so that she could see no way of escaping from the depths. She seemed to have lost love, hope, and faith; and, for the rest, she kept her eyes fixed upon God, resting upon the arm of the divine will. In a word, St. Francis de Sales used to say to her that that blessed soul was like a deaf musician who could sing most admirably, but had no pleasure in his voice, because he could not hear it.

The soul, therefore, which finds itself tried with dryness, however it may be oppressed with gloom, must not lose courage, but trust in the blood of Jesus Christ, and resign itself to the divine will, and say: *“O Jesus, my hope, and my soul’s only love! I deserve no consolations; give them to those who have always loved Thee; I have deserved hell, and to be ever abandoned there by Thee, without hope of ever being able to love Thee. But no, my Saviour, I accept every pain; punish me as Thou wilt, but deprive me not of the power of loving Thee. Take from me everything, except Thyself. Miserable as I am, I love Thee more than myself, and I give myself wholly to Thee; I desire to live no more for myself. Give me strength to be faithful to Thee. O holy Virgin, hope of sinners! I trust in thy intercession; make me love my God, who has created and redeemed me.”*

XL

THE RETIRED LIFE

Souls that love God find their Paradise in the retired life, in which they have no communication with men. It brings no bitterness nor weariness to converse with God and to separate ourselves from creatures. *His conversation has no bitterness, nor does His society bring weariness, but joy and gladness.*[1635] Worldly people, with good reason, fly from solitude; because in solitude, where they are not occupied with diversions or worldly business, the remorse of conscience makes itself felt more acutely in their hearts; and therefore such persons seek to relieve themselves, or at least to distract their thoughts, by conversing with men; but the more they study to relieve themselves among men, and in the midst of worldly affairs, the more they encounter thorns and bitter disappointments. To the lovers of God this does not happen, because in their retirement they find a sweet companion, who comforts them and makes them glad, more than the company of all their friends or relatives, or of the highest personages of the earth. St. Bernard said, *"I am never less alone than when alone"*[1636] never less alone than when far from men; for then I find God who speaks to me, and then I find myself more ready to listen to him, and more prepared to attach myself to him?" Our Saviour desired that his disciples, although he had destined them to propagate the faith by journeying through the whole world, from time to time should leave their labours, and retire to solitude, to commune with God alone. Besides, let us remember that Jesus Christ, from the time when he began to live with the world, was wont to send them into the different parts of Judea, that they might convert sinners; but, after their labours, he did not cease to call them to retire to some solitary place, saying to them, *Come ye apart to a desert, and rest a while; for those who came and returned were many, and the disciples had no time to eat.*[1637]

If our Lord said, even to the Apostles, “ Rest a while,” it is indeed necessary for all holy labourers to retire, from time to time, into solitude, to preserve their recollectedness with God, and to obtain strength to labour with greater vigour for the salvation of souls. He that labours for his neighbour but with little zeal, and with little love towards God, retaining some object dictated by self-love, and seeking to gain honour or wealth, does little for the gaining of souls. Therefore our Lord says to his workmen, *“Rest a little while.”* Certainly Jesus Christ did not mean by this expression that the Apostles were to set themselves to slumber, but that they should repose in holding communion with God, in praying to him for the graces necessary for living well, and thus should gain strength for conducting the salvation of souls, for without this rest with God in prayer, strength fails for labouring rightly to our own benefit, and to the profit of others. St. Laurence Justinian wisely remarks, when speaking of the retired life, that it is to be always loved, but not always possessed; meaning to say that they who are called by God to the conversion of sinners must not remain always in solitude shut up in a cell, for they would fail of their divine calling, to obey which, when it is God who calls them, they must leave their retirement; yet they should never cease to love and to sigh for solitude, whenever God makes it more easy for them to find it.

O my Jesus! I have loved solitude little, because I have loved Thee little. I have gone about seeking pleasures and refreshment from creatures who have made me lose Thee, the infinite good. Miserable I am, that for so many years I have kept my heart distracted, thinking only of the good things. of earth, and forgetting Thee. Oh, take Thou this heart of mine, since Thou hast bought it with Thy blood; inflame it with Thy love, and possess it for Thine own. O Mary, Queen of Heaven! thou canst obtain for me this grace; from thee I hope for it.

XLI

DETACHMENT FROM CREATURES

In order to attain to loving God with all our heart, we must separate it from everything that is not God, that does not tend towards God. He chooses to be alone in the possession of our hearts; he admits no companions there; and with reason, because he is our only Lord, who has given us everything. Still further, he is our only lover, who has loved us not for his own interest, but solely from his goodness; and because he thus exceedingly loves us, he desires that we should love him with all our hearts: *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart."* To love God with our whole heart implies two things: the first is, to drive from it every affection that is not for God, or not according to the will of God. *"If I knew," said St. Francis de Sales, "that I had one fibre in my heart which did not belong to God, I would instantly tear it out."* The second is prayer, by which holy love introduces itself into the heart. But if the heart does not fly from the earth, love cannot enter, for it finds no place for itself, On the other hand, a heart detached from all creatures instantly becomes inflamed, and in creases in divine love at every breathing of grace. *"Pure love" said the holy Bishop of Geneva, "consumes everything that is not God, in order to change it into itself; because everything that is done for God is the love of God."* Oh, how is God full of goodness and liberality to those souls that seek nothing but him and his will! *The Lord is good to them that seek Him.*[1638]

Happy he who, living still in the world, can say with truth, with St. Francis, *"My God and my all!"* and thus can hold in contempt all the vanities of the world. *"I have despised the kingdom of the world, and all the glory of this life, for the love.of Jesus Christ my Lord."*[1639] When, then, creatures would enter into our heart and take a share of this love, all of which we owe to God, we must immediately banish them, shutting the door against them, and saying, *"Begone, begone to those who desire you; my* *heart I have given wholly to Jesus Christ; for you there is no place.”* And, in addition to this resolution to desire nothing but God, we must hate that which the world loves, and love that which the world hates. Above all, to attain to perfect love, we must deny ourselves, embracing that which is distasteful to self-love, and rejecting that which self-love demands. A certain thing is pleasant to us; for that very reason, we must reject it. A certain medicine is disagreeable, because it is bitter; we must take it for the very reason that it is bitter. It is unpleasant to us to do good to a certain person who has been ungrateful to us; we must, by all means, do him good; for the very reason that he has been ungrateful.

Further, St. Francis de Sales said that we must love even virtues with a detachment of heart; for example, we ought to love meditation and retirement; but when they are forbidden to us, through the calls of obedience or of charity, we must leave both the one and the other without being disquieted. And thus it is necessary to embrace with equanimity everything that happens to us through the will of God. Happy he who wishes to have or refuses to have, whatever happens, because God wishes it or refuses it, without inclining to either side. And therefore we must pray the Lord to enable us to find peace in everything that he appoints for us.

It is certain that no one lives more happy in the world than he who despises the things of the world, and lives in continual conformity to the will of God. Therefore, it is a useful thing frequently during the day, or at least at the times of prayer and Communion, to renew at the feet of the crucifix the total renunciation of ourselves and of all our possessions, saying, *“O my Jesus! I desire to think no more of myself; I give myself wholly to Thee, do with me what Thou wilt. I see that everything that the world offers me is vanity and deceit. From this day,I would seek nothing but Thee, and Thy good will; help me to be faithful to Thee. O Virgin Mary, pray to Jesus for me.”*

XLII

PRECIOUS IS THE DEATH OF THE SAINTS

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.[1640] Why is the death of the saints called precious? *"Because,"* answers St. Bernard,[1641] "it is so rich in blessings which deserve to be purchased at any cost." Some persons, attached to this world, would wish that there was no such thing as death; but St. Augustine says, "What is it to live long upon this earth, except to suffer long?"[1642] *"The miseries and difficulties that constantly weary us in this present life are so great,"* says St. Ambrose, *"that death seems rather a relief than a punishment."*[1643]

Death terrifies sinners, because they know that from the first death, if they die in sin, they will pass to the second death, which is eternal; but it does not terrify good souls, who, trusting in the merits of Jesus Christ, have sufficient signs to give them a moral assurance that they are in the grace of God. Wherefore, those words, "Depart, Christian soul, from this world," which are so terrible to those who die against their will, do not afflict the saints, who preserve their hearts free from worldly love, and with a true affection can continue repeating, *"My God and my all."*[1644] To these, death is not a "torment, but a rest from the pains they have suffered in struggling with temptations, and in quieting their scruples, and their fear of offending God; so that what St. John writes of them is fulfilled: *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord! Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.*[1645] He that dies loving God is not disturbed by the pains that death brings with it; but rather it is delightful to such persons to offer them to God, as the last remains of their life. Oh what peace is experienced by him who dies, when he has abandoned himself into the arms of Jesus Christ who chose for himself a death of bitterness and desolation, that he might obtain for us a death of sweetness and resignation!

O my Jesus! Thou art my judge, but Thou art also my Redeemer, who hast died to save me. From my first sin I have deserved to be condemned to hell, but in Thy mercy Thou hast given me a deep sorrow for my sins, wherefore I confidently hope that now Thou hast pardoned me. I have not deserved to love Thee; but with Thy gifts Thou hast drawn me to Thy love. If it is Thy will that this sickness shall bring death to me, I willingly receive it. I see truly that I do not now deserve to enter Paradise; I go content to purgatory, to suffer as much as it pleases Thee; there my greatest pain will be to continue far from Thee, and I shall sigh to come and see Thee and love Thee face to face; therefore, O my beloved Saviour! have mercy upon me.

And what else is this present life, but a state of perpetual peril of losing God? “ We walk amidst snares,” says St. Ambrose; amidst the deceits of enemies, who seek to cause us to lose the divine grace. Therefore St. Teresa, every time that the clock struck, gave thanks to God that another hour of struggle and peril had passed without sin; and therefore she was so rejoiced at the tidings of her coming death, considering that her struggles were over, and the time was near for her to depart and behold her God. In this present life we cannot live without defects. This is the motive that makes souls that love God even desire death. It was this thought that, at the time of death, gladdened Father Vincent Carafa, when he said, “Now that I finish my life, I cease to displease God.” A certain man gave directions to his attendants, that at the time of his death they should often repeat to him these words, “ Comfort thyself, because the time is near when thou wilt no more offend God.” And what else is this body to us but a prison in which. the soul is incarcerated, so that it cannot depart to unite itself to God? On this account, St. Francis, inflamed with love, at the hour of his death cried out with the prophet, “Take my soul out of prison.” O Lord, deliver me from this prison which prevents me from seeing Thee. O death, worthy of love, who can fear thee and not desire thee, since thou art the end of all toils, and the beginning of eternal life! St. Pionius the martyr, standing by the instruments of death, showed himself so full of joy, that the people who stood by wondered at his delight, and asked him how he could be so happy when he was just going to die. *“You are mistaken,” said he, as Eusebius relates, “you are mistaken; I am not hastening to death, but to life.”*

O most sweet Jesus, I thank Thee for not having called me to death when I was under Thy wrath, and for having won over my soul with such gentle *means as Thou hast employed. When I think of the displeasure I have caused Thee, I am ready to die with grief. This my soul, which was lost, I now commit wholly into Thy hands: into Thy hands I commend my spirit; remember, O Lord! that Thou hast redeemed it with Thy death. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! and I desire to depart quickly from this life, that I may come and love Thee with a more perfect love in heaven. And so long as I shall continue to live on this earth, make me continually to comprehend better my obligation to love Thee. O my God! receive me; I give myself wholly to Thee, and I trust in Thee through the merits of Jesus Christ. I also trust in thy intercession, O Mary, my hope!*

XLIII

LUKEWARMNESS

There are two kinds of lukewarmness; one that can be avoided, and the other that cannot. We cannot avoid that kind which, in the present state of being, is suffered even by spiritual souls, who, through their natural weakness, cannot avoid falling, but who, from time to time, without the full consent of their will, fall into some light fault; from which defects no one is free, because of the corruption of our nature through original sin, without a most special grace, which was granted to none but the Mother of God. God himself permits these flaws in his saints, in order to keep them humble. Often they find themselves without fervour, wearied and wandering in their devout exercises; and at such times of dryness they are more apt to fall into many defects, at least without deliberation. For the rest, they who find themselves in this condition must not leave off their ordinary devotions nor lose courage, nor believe that they have fallen into real lukewarmness; for this is not lukewarmness. Let them go on with their accustomed exercises, let them detest their defects, let them often renew their resolutions of giving themselves wholly to God, and let them have confidence in him, for he will comfort them. There is true lukewarmness to be mourned over, when the soul falls into venial sins with a full will, and grieves but little for them, and takes little care to avoid them, asserting that they are trifles of no moment. *What! is it nothing to displease God? St. Teresa said to her nuns, "My daughters, may God deliver you from known sins, however small."*

Yet people say, that such sins do not deprive us of the grace of God. He that says this is in imminent danger of seeing himself one day deprived of divine grace, and in a state of mortal sin. St. Gregory writes, that whoever falls into deliberate mortal sins habitually, without feeling pain at it, and without thinking of amending himself, does not stay just where he has fallen, but goes on to fall down a precipice: *"The soul never lies on the spot* *where it falls."*[1646] Mortal diseases do not always spring from serious disorders, but from slight disorders of long continuance; and thus the fall of certain souls into a state of sin is often to be attributed to the repetition of venial sins, which make the soul so weak, that when it is attacked by any powerful temptation, it has no strength to resist, and so falls. *"He that despiseth little things, by little degrees shall he fall."*[1647] He that takes no account of trifling falls, will one day find himself upon a precipice.

The Lord said, *"Because thou art lukewarm, I am about to vomit thee out of my mouth."* This signifies that the soul would be abandoned by God, or at least deprived of those special divine aids which are necessary to preserve us in a state of grace. Let us pay good heed to this. The Council of Trent condemns those who say that we can persevere in grace without a special help from God: "If any man shall say, that the justified can persevere in the justification he has received without the special help of God, let him be accursed." Thus, we cannot persevere in grace without a special extraordinary help from God; but this special help God will justly deny to one who makes no account of committing many venial sins with his eyes open. Is God bound to give this special help to one who thinks nothing of voluntarily causing him continual displeasure? " He that sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly." If we act grudgingly with God, how can we hope that God will act bountifully with us? Miserable is that soul that is at peace with sin, even when it is venial! Such a one will go from bad to worse; for his passions, ever gaining strength upon him, easily blind him; and when a man is blind, it is easy for him to find himself falling down a precipice when least he expects it. Let us fear to fall into voluntary lukewarmness; for it is like a fever, that does not cause much alarm, but is in itself so malignant, that it is with great difficulty cured.For the rest, though it is very difficult for a lukewarm person to amend, yet there are remedies, if only he desires amendment. *The remedies are: 1. A resolution to escape, at all costs, from this miserable state; 2. The removal of the occasions of falling, without which there is no hope of amendment; and 3. The constant recommendation of himself to God, with fervent prayer that he would give him strength to escape from this deplorable condition, continued until he finds himself free.Lord, have mercy upon me! I see that I have deserved to be vomited forth by Thee, for the many defects with which I serve Thee.*

Miserable I am, for I see myself without love, without confidence, and without desire. O my Jesus! abandon me not; stretch forth Thy powerful hand, and drive me from this depth of lukewarmness in which I see myself fallen. Grant thisthrough the merits of Thy passion, in which I trust. O holy Virgin, pray to Jesus for me!

XLIV

PURITY OF INTENTION

Purity of intention consists in doing everything from a simple desire to please God. Jesus Christ has said, that according to the intention, whether it be good or evil, so is our work judged before God. *If thine eye be single, thy whole body is full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body is full of darkness.*[1648] The single eye signifies a pure intention of pleasing God; the dark and evil eye signifies a want of such honest and holy intention, when our actions are done from a motive of vanity, or from a desire to please ourselves. Can any action be more noble than for a man to give his life for the faith? and yet St. Paul says, that he who dies from any motive but that of a pure desire to do God's will, gains nothing by his martyrdom. If, then, martyrdom avails nothing unless it be endured for the sake of God alone, of what value will be all the preaching, all the labour of good works, and also all the austerities of penitents, if they are done to obtain the praise of men, or to satisfy their own inclination?

The prophet Aggæus says, *that works, however holy in themselves, if not done for God, are nothing better than bags full of holes;*[1649] which means, that they are all lost directly, and that no good comes of them. On the contrary, every action done with an intention of pleasing God, of however little value in itself, is worth more than many works done without such pure intention. We read in St. Mark that the poor widow cast into the alms-box of the temple only two mites; but yet of her the Saviour said, *See, that poor widow has cast in more than all.*[1650] St. Cyprian remarks on this, that she put in more than all the others, because she gave those two little pieces of money with the pure intention of pleasing God. One of the best signs by which we may know whether a person's work is done with a right intention is, that if the work has not the effect desired he will not be at all disturbed. Another good sign is, that when a person has completed any work, and then is spoken ill of for it, or is repaid with ingratitude, he nevertheless remains contented and tranquil. On the other hand, if it happen to any one to be praised for his work, he must not disquiet himself with the fear of being filled with vain glory; but should it come upon him, only let him despise it in his heart, and say, with St. Bernard, *"I did not begin it for thee, nor because of thee will I leave it."*[1651] To work with an intention of acquiring more glory in heaven is good, but the most perfect is the desire to give glory to God. Let us be sure that the more we divest ourselves of our earthly interests, so much the more will our Saviour increase our joy in Paradise. Blessed is he who labours only to give glory to God, and to follow his holy will. Let us imitate the love of the blessed, who, in loving God, seek only to please him.

St. Chrysostom says, *"If we can attain to the fulfilment of God's pleasure, what more can we desire? If thou art worthy of doing anything that pleases*[1652] *God, dost thou ask any other reward?"*This is that single eye which pierces the heart of God with love towards us; as he says to the holy Spouse, *Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast wounded my heart with one of thine eyes.*[1653] This single eye signifies the one end that holy souls have in all their actions, that of pleasing God. And this was the counsel that the Apostle gave to his disciples: *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.*[1654] The Venerable Beatrice of the Incarnation, the first daughter of St. Teresa, said, *"No price can be put on anything, however small, that is done entirely for God."* And with great reason she said this, for all works done for God are acts of divine love. Purity of intention makes the lowest actions become precious, such as eating, working, recreation, when they are done from obedience and from a desire to please God. We must, then, in the morning, direct to God all the actions of the day; and it will be very useful to us to renew this intention at the beginning of every action, at least of the most important, such as meditation, Communion, and spiritual reading pausing a little in the beginning of these, like the holy hermit, who, before beginning anything he had to do, lifted his eyes to heaven, and remained still; and when he was asked what he was then doing, replied, *"I am making sure of my aim."*

When, O my Jesus! shall I begin to love Thee truly? Miserable that I am! If I seek among my works for any that are good, for one work done only to please Thee, my Saviour, I shall not find it. Alas! then, have pity on me, and suffer not that I continue to serve Thee so ill up to the time of my death. Grant me Thy help, that what remains to me of life I may spend only in serving and loving Thee. Make me overcome all, that I may please Thee, and do all only to fulfil Thy holy pleasure; through the merits of Thy Passion, I ask it. O my great advocate, Mary, obtain for me this grace by thy prayers!

XLV

ASPIRATIONS AFTER THE COUNTRY OF THE BLESSED

Happy is he who is saved; who leaves this place of exile, and enters into the heavenly Jerusalem, and enjoys that perfect day which will be always day and always joyful, free from all molestation, and from all fear of ever losing so infinite a happiness. Jacob said, *The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty; few, and evil.*[1655] The same may be said of us miserable pilgrims, whilst we remain on this earth, to endure the toils of our exile, afflicted by temptations, torn by passions, and tormented by miseries, and still more by the fear of losing our eternal salvation at last. Seeing all this, we should conclude, and ever keep it in mind, that this is not our country, but a land of exile, where God detains us, in order that we may, through suffering, come to merit the reward of entering one day into our happy country.

And thus living detached from this earth, we ought always to aspire after Paradise, saying: “ When shall it be, O Lord, that I shall be delivered from all these distresses, and think only of loving Thee and praising Thee? When will it be that Thou wilt be all to me in all things, as the Apostle writes: *That God may be all in all?*[1656] When shall I enjoy that unchanging peace, free from all affliction, and from all danger of being lost? When, my God, shall I find myself dwelling with Thee, and enjoying the sight of Thine infinite beauty face to face, and without veil? When shall I attain to the possession of Thee, my Creator, in such a manner that I may say, My God, I cannot lose Thee more? O my Saviour, whilst Thou seest me an exile, and full of trouble, in this land of enemies, where I live in continual warfare, help me with Thy grace, and console me in this sorrowful pilgrimage. Whatever the world may offer me, I know that nothing in it can bring peace; but yet I fear lest, if I have not help from Thee, the pleasures of the world, joined to my evil inclinations, should draw me on to some terrible precipice. Exile as I am in this valley of tears, I would think of Thee continually, O my God! and share in that infinite happiness which Thou enjoyest; but the evil appetites of sense make themselves heard within me, and disturb me. I would that my affections were ever occupied in loving Thee and thanking Thee; but in my flesh I feel drawn towards sensual delights, and thence I am constrained to exclaim with St. Paul, *Unhappy man that lam, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*[1657] Miserable man that I am, in continual combat, not only with external enemies, but with myself, whence *I am weighed down and a trouble to myself.*[1658]

Who, then, will deliver me from the body of this death? that is, from the danger of falling into sin, from that peril, the fear only of which is to me a continual death, which torments me, and will not cease to torment me during all my life: *Go not far from me, O God; my God, in Thy help I put my trust.*[1659] My God, go not far from me; because if Thou goest from me, I fear I shall displease Thee. Therefore, draw nearer to me with Thy powerful help; succour me continually, that I may be able to resist the attacks of my enemies. The royal prophet has said that Thou art ever near, that *Thou dost endow with holy patience all those who are of sorrowful heart, afflicted within themselves.*[1660] Remain beside me, then, my beloved Saviour, and give me that patience that I need to overcome the continual attacks by which I am tormented. As often as I try to give myself to meditation and prayer, troublesome thoughts draw me away, and distract me with a thousand follies; do Thou give me force to drive them from me, and to crucify all the evil inclinations that hinder me from uniting myself to Thee. And take from me, I pray Thee, the great repugnance that I feel to embracing in love and peace everything that is not according to my own self-love. O house of my God, prepared for those that love Thee, to Thee I sigh from this land of misery. “*I have gone astray as a sheep that is lost: O, seek Thy servant.*” O beloved Shepherd of my soul, who didst descend from heaven to seek and to save the lost sheep, behold me, one of these who has turned from Thee, and lost itself! Seek Thy servant; Lord, seek me; abandon me not, as I deserve; seek me and save me; take me and keep me safe within Thine arms, that I may not leave Thee anymore. While I am looking towards Paradise with strong desire, my enemy frightens me with the remembrance of my sins; but the sight of Thee, my crucified Jesus, consoles me, and gives me courage to hope that some day I may come to love Thee, and behold Thee unveiled, in Thy blessed kingdom. Queen of heaven, continue to be my advocate. Through the blood of Jesus Christ, and through thine intercession, I have a firm hope of being saved.

PART III

Spiritual Treatises[1661]

I

DIVINE LOVE

I. HOW MUCH GOD DESERVES TO BE LOVED

GOD is a treasury of all grace, of all good, of all perfection. God is infinite, God is eternal, God is immense, God is unchangeable. God is powerful, God is wise, God is provident, God is just. God is merciful, God is holy, God is beautiful, God is brightness itself, God is rich, God is all things, and he is therefore worthy of love; and of how much love! God is infinite; he gives to all, and receives nothing from any one.

All that we have comes to us from God; but God has nothing from us: *Thou art my God, for Thou hast no need of my goods.*[1662] God is eternal; he has ever been eternal, and always shall be. We can count the years and the days of our existence; but God knows no beginning, and will never have an end; *But Thou art always the selfsame, and Thy years shall not fail.*[1663] God is immense, and is essentially present in every place. We, when we are in one place, cannot be in another. But God is in all places, in heaven, on earth, in the sea, in the depths, without us, and within us. *Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy face? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there: if I descend into hell, Thou art present.*[1664] God is unchangeable; and all that he has ordained by his holy will from eternity, he wills now, and will do so forever. *For I am the Lord, and I change not.*[1665] God is powerful; and with respect to God, all the power of creatures is but weakness. God is wise; and with respect to God, all human wisdom is ignorance. God is provident; and with respect to God, all human foresight is ridiculous. God is just; and with respect to God, all human justice is defective: *And in His angels He found wickedness.*[1666]

God is merciful; and with respect to God, all human clemency is imperfect. God is holy; in comparison with God, all human sanctity, though it be heroic, falls short in an infinite degree: *None is good but God* *alone.*[1667] God is beauty itself; yes, how beautiful is God! and with respect to God, all human beauty is deformity. God is brightness itself; and with respect to God, all human brightness, even that of the sun, is darkness. God is rich; and with respect to God, all human riches is poverty. God is all things; and with respect to God, the highest, the most sublime, the most admirable of created things, and even if they were all united in one, are as nothing: *All men areas nothing before Thee.*[1668] He is, therefore, worthy of love; and, oh, of how much! Ah, God is worthy of so much love, that all the angels, and all the saints of Paradise, do nothing but love God, and they will throughout all eternity be occupied only in loving him; and in this love of God, they are and will be always happy. Ah, God is so worthy of love, that he is obliged to love himself with an infinite love; and in this same love, so necessary, but at the same time so delightful, which God bears to himself, consists his beatitude! And shall we not love him? How did the saints love him? St. Francis Xavier used to loosen his clothes and throw himself on the ground, not being able to resist the impulse of holy love. St. Stanislaus Kostka bared his breast, and used to run to fountains to refresh himself with the water. The heart of St. Philip Neri became sensibly enlarged by the force of holy love.

St. Francis de Sales said, that if he knew that there was the smallest fibre in his heart that was not saturated with divine love, he would tear it out at once and cast it far from him. And St. Catharine of Sienna, St. Teresa, St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, and other souls like them, were often in transports, and ravished as it were through the violence of the holy love of God; and St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, not satisfied with loving him so much herself, sometimes went about her convent, in order to give vent to her love, crying with aloud voice, “Love is not loved; Love is not loved.” And shall we then not love him? Do you know why we do not love him? It is because we know him so little. The saints, who knew him better than we do, loved him so much. Let us then also try to know him a little more. Let us meditate from time to time on his divine attributes, on his divine perfections; let us at least, from time to time, raise our minds by a simple glance to him in the way I have here proposed, and our hearts will also become inflamed with this holy divine love. It is condescension in so great a God, that he should permit himself to be loved by such vile creatures as we are; and it is also his sweet commandment. When God gave Moses his law on the top of Mount Sinai, before giving him any other precept, he taught him this: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart; and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength.*[1669] And he enjoined him first of all to imprint well these words in his own heart: *And these words shall be in thy heart;*[1670] and afterwards to promulgate them with ardour among the children of Israel: *And thou shalt tell them to thy children.*[1671]

Let us also love him as he deserves; let us fulfil perfectly this his precept, which is at the same time so noble and so sweet; which is in fine the first and greatest precept of the law: *This is the greatest and the first commandment.*[1672] And let us live and die in the fulfilment of this precept.

II. HOW MUCH GOD DESIRES TO BE LOVED BY US

Our good God, because he loves us much, desires to be loved much by us; and therefore he has not only called us to love him by so many invitations repeated again and again in the Holy Scriptures, and by so many blessings both general and individual, but he would also oblige us to love him by an express commandment; and he threatens those with hell who love him not; while to those who do love him he promises Paradise. His will is, that no one be lost, but that all attain salvation, as St. Peter and St. Paul most clearly teach: *Who will have all men to be saved.*[1673] *He dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.*[1674] But since God wishes all men to be saved, why has he created hell? He did so, not to see us damned, but in order to be loved by us. If he had not created hell, who in the whole world would love him? If with hell, existing as it really does, the greater part of men choose rather to be damned than to love Almighty God, who, I repeat, would love him were there no hell? And therefore the Lord threatens those who will not love him with an eternal punishment; so that they who will not love him out of love may at least love him by force, being constrained to do so through fear of falling into hell.

O God, how fortunate and honoured would that man esteem himself to whom his king should say, “Love me because I love you”! An earthly monarch would take good care not to humble himself to such an extent as to ask one of his subjects for his love; but God, who is infinite goodness, the

Lord of all, almighty, all-wise, in a word, God, who merits an infinite love, God, who has enriched us with spiritual and temporal gifts, does not disdain to ask of us our love. He exhorts us and commands us to love him, and he cannot obtain it. What does he ask of each one of us but to be loved? *What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou fear the Lord thy God . . . and love Him?*[1675] It was for this end that the Son of God came to converse with us even upon earth, as he himself said: *I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?*[1676] Observe these last words, *and what will I but that it be kindled?* As if it were that a God, who possesses in himself infinite happiness, could not be happy without seeing himself loved by us: *"As if,"* says St. Thomas, *"He could not be happy without thee."*[1677] We cannot doubt, then, that God loves us, and loves us exceedingly; and because he loves us exceedingly, he wishes us to love him with our whole heart: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*[1678]

And then he adds: *And these words shall be in thy heart . . . and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising: and thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand, and they shall be and shall move between thy eyes. And thou shalt write them in the entry and on the doors of thy house.*[1679] We can see in all these words how earnest is the desire which God has to be beloved by each one of us. He wishes that the injunction of loving him with our whole heart should be imprinted in our heart; and that we may never be unmindful of these words, he wishes us to meditate upon them when we are sitting at home, when we are walking abroad, when we lie down to sleep, and when we awake from it again. He wishes us to hold them in our hands bound up with some significant memento, in order that, wherever we may be, our eyes may ever rest upon them; and hence it was that the Pharisees, taking them only in their literal sense, used, as we are told by St. Matthew, *to wear them inscribed on pieces of parchment, not only in their right hands, but also upon their foreheads,*[1680] St. Gregory of Nyssa exclaims. *"Blessed is the arrow that carries along with it into the heart the God by whom it is aimed!"*[1681] And what the holy Father means is this: that when God wounds the heart with an arrow of love, it acts like a flash or ray of special illumination, whereby the soul becomes cognizant of his goodness and of the love which he bears towards it, as also of the desire which he has to possess the love of that soul; whilst at the same moment he himself comes together with that arrow of his love, he who is the archer being himself also love: for, as St. John says, *God is charity.*[1682] And as an arrow remains fixed in the heart which it has wounded, so in like manner does God, when he wounds a soul with his love, come to remain forever united with that soul which he has wounded. Let us be assured that it is God only who loves us truly. The love of parents, of friends, and of all others who profess to love us, excepting in the case of those who love us solely out of regard for God, is not a true but a self-interested love, and arises from some motive of self-love as the end for the sake of which we are loved.

Yes, O my God! I know full well that it is Thou alone who lovest me, and desirest for me every good, not for any selfish interests of Thine own, but solely out of Thine own goodness, and out of the pure affection which Thou dost bear towards me: whilst I am so ungrateful as to have caused no one so much displeasure and so much grief as I have done to Thee, who hast loved me so much. O my Jesus! do not permit me to be ungrateful to Thee any more. Thou hast loved me truly, and I wish to love Thee truly in whatever of this life may still be mine. With St. Catharine of Genoa, I say to Thee: *“My Love, no more sins, no more sins;”* I wish to love Thee only, and naught besides. St. Bernard says, that a soul that truly loves God *“cannot will anything but what God wills,”*[1683] Let us pray to God to wound us with his holy love; for a soul thus wounded has neither the faculty nor the power to have a will for anything but that which God wills, and divests itself of every desire arising out of self-love. This self-spoliation, moreover, together with the giving of one’s self unreservedly to God, is the arrow by which he declares that he himself is wounded by the soul; as he said to the sacred Spouse in the Canticles: *Thou hast wounded My Heart, My sister, My spouse.*[1684]

How beautifully does St. Bernard express himself on this subject when he says: *“Let us learn to dart our hearts at God!”*[1685] When a soul gives itself up wholly and unreservedly to God, it is as if it darted its own heart like a spear towards the heart of God, who declares himself to be, as it were, captivated and taken prisoner by the soul that has made over to him the gift of itself in full. This is the employment of such souls in the prayers which they offer; *"they dart their hearts at God;"*[1686] they give themselves wholly up to God; and they are ever renewing that gift in these or similar ejaculations of love: *"My God and my All:"*[1687] my God, I wish for Thee, and for naught besides. Lord! I give myself wholly to Thee; and if I know not how to make the gift as perfect as I ought, do Thou take the management of it Thyself. And what would I love, O my Jesus! if I love not Thee, who hast died for me? *"Draw me after Thee:"*[1688] *O my Saviour, drag me out of the mire of my sins, and draw me after Thee. Bind me, O Lord! and fetter me with the chains of Thy love, that I may never leave Thee more. I wish to be all Thine own. Lord, hast Thou understood me? I wish to be wholly, wholly Thine: it is for Thee to make me so. And what would I have but Thee, my Love, my All? Since Thou hast called me to Thy love, enable me to please Thee as Thou dost desire. And what would I love but Thee, who art infinite goodness, deserving infinite love? Thou hast inspired me with the desire of being wholly Thine: oh, make the work complete! And what would I have in this world but Thee, who art the Sovereign Good? I give myself to Thee without reserve: oh, accept me, and give me the strength to be faithful unto Thee till death! I wish to love Thee greatly in this life, that I may love Thee greatly for all eternity.*

Jesus, my true, my only Love,

I wish for nought but Thee:

Behold me all Thine own, my God;

Do what Thou wilt with me.

Whoever says this little canticle from the heart causes joy in Paradise. Blessed, in short, is that soul that can truly say, *My Beloved to me, and I to him.*[1689] My God has given himself wholly to me, and I have given myself wholly to him; I am no longer my own; I belong entirely to my God. St. Bernard says that whosoever can speak thus from his heart, would most readily and willingly embrace all the pains of hell (provided that he could do so without separating himself from God) rather than behold himself, even for one single moment, separated from God: *"It would be more tolerable to such a one to suffer hell than to withdraw from him."*[1690] Oh, what a beautiful treasure is the treasure of divine love! He who possesses it is happy indeed; let him take every care, and make use of all the means which are necessary to preserve and increase it; while he who does not yet possess it ought to employ every means in order to acquire it.

III. MEANS TO ACQUIRE THE LOVE OF GOD

Let us now see which are the means most suitable to acquire and preserve the love of God.

1. DETACHMENT FROM CREATURES

The first of these is the detachment of one's self from earthly affections. In a heart that is full of earth there is no room to be found for the love of God; and the more the earthly element predominates, the less does the divine love bear sway. Wherefore, he who desires to have his heart filled with divine love should study to remove out of it all that is of earth. In order to become saints, we must follow the example of St. Paul, who, that he might gain the love of Jesus Christ, despised as so much dung all the good things of this world: *I count all things as dung, that I may gain Christ.*[1691] Oh, let us pray the Holy Spirit to enkindle within us his holy love; for then we too shall despise and reckon as mere vanity, smoke, and dirt all this world's riches, pleasures, honours, and distinctions, for the sake of which mankind in general involve themselves so miserably in destruction. Ah! whenever holy love enters into the heart, it no longer regards as of any value all that the world holds in estimation: *If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing.*[1692] St. Francis de Sales observes that when a house is in flames the goods are all thrown out of the windows; meaning to say that when the heart is on fire with divine love, a man needs not the preachings and exhortations of a spiritual father, but of his own accord sets himself to work to divest himself of the good things of this world, of its honours, of its riches, and of all earthly things, in order that he may love nothing but God. St. Catharine of Genoa used to say that she did not love God for the sake of his gifts, but that she loved the gifts of God in order that she might love him the more.

Gilbert observes that it is hard and intolerable to a heart that loves God to divide its affections between him and creatures, by loving at one and the same time God and creatures too: *"Oh, how hard it is for the lover to divide* *his heart between Christ and the world!"*[1693] St. Bernard says that the divine love is, on the other hand, insolent: *"Love is insolent;"*[1694] insolent, because God will not suffer that, in a heart which loves, there should be others to share with him in its love, wishing, as he does, to have it all for himself. Is it, then, that God claims too much, in wishing that a soul should love him, and him alone? "The Sovereign Loveliness," observes St. Bonaventure, *"ought to be loved exclusively."*[1695] Such a one as God, whose loveliness and goodness are infinite and worthy of an infinite love, has a just claim to be alone in his possession of the love of a heart created by himself for the express purpose that it should make him the object of its love; while, in order that he might be loved exclusively, he has gone so far as to expend himself wholly for that heart, as St. Bernard says, when speaking of himself and of the love which Jesus Christ had borne towards him: *"He was utterly spent for my benefit."*[1696] What each one of us can most truly say, when thinking of Jesus Christ, is, that for each one of us he has sacrificed all his life and all his blood, dying upon a cross, consumed by pain; and that although his death be past? he has bequeathed to us his body and his blood, his soul and his whole self in the Sacrament of the Altar, that it may be the meat and drink of our souls, and that we may each of us be united with himself.

Happy is the soul, as St. Gregory observes, that has arrived at a state wherein everything is intolerable that is not the God whom it exclusively loves.[1697] "Whatever does not speak of the God whom it so intensely loves is intolerable." We must, then, be on our guard against setting our affections on creatures, lest they steal from us a portion of the love which God wishes to be wholly for himself. And even when such affections are right, as in the case of the affections entertained for parents or friends, we should never forget the saying of St. Philip Neri, that whatever love we entertain for creatures is so much taken away from God. We ought, therefore, to endeavour to make ourselves " gardens enclosed," as the Sacred Spouse in the Canticles was styled by her Lord: *My Spouse is a garden enclosed.*[1698]The title of *"a garden enclosed"* applies to the soul that keeps itself closed against the entrance of all mere earthly affections. Whenever, therefore, any creature seeks to enter and to seize a portion of our heart, we must utterly refuse it admission; and then we ought to turn to Jesus Christ, and say to him: My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me. I do not wish to love aught but Thee: *“Thou art the God of my heart; and God is my portion forever.”*[1699] My God, Thou alone art the Lord of my heart, and my only love. And on this account let us not cease to pray continually to God, that he would bestow upon us the gift of his pure love; since, as St. Francis de Sales observes, *“The pure love of God consumes all that is not God, to transform everything into itself.”*

2. MEDITATION ON THE PASSION

Meditation on the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is the second means for acquiring divine love. On this subject the reader can refer to my book, which was published a short time since, entitled *Reflections on the Passion of Jesus Christ,* in which he will find a detailed examination of the sufferings that our Saviour underwent in his Passion. As for the rest, it is certain that the fact of Jesus Christ being so little loved in the world arises from the negligence and ingratitude of mankind, and from not considering, at least occasionally, how much he has suffered for us, and the love wherewith he suffered for us. *“To mankind it has appeared foolish,”*[1700] as St. Gregory observes, *“that God should die for us.”* It seems folly, says the Saint, that God should have been willing to die in order to save us miserable slaves: nevertheless, it is of faith that he has done so. *“He has loved us, and delivered himself for us.”*[1701] And he has willed to shed all his blood, in order to wash away our sins therewith: *He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own Blood.*[1702] St. Bonaventure says, *“My God, so much hast Thou loved me, that through Thy love for me, Thou dost seem to have gone so far as even to have hated Thyself.”*[1703] Besides, he has yet further willed that he himself should be our food in Holy Communion.

And here the angelic doctor St. Thomas, speaking of this Most Holy Sacrament, says that God has so humbled himself with us, that it is as if he were, our servant, and each of us his God: *“as though He were their servant, and each of them were God’s God.”*[1704] Hence it is that the Apostle says, *For the charity of Christ presseth us.*[1705] St. Paul says that the love which Jesus Christ has borne us constrains us, and in a certain sense forces us, to love him. O my God! what is there that men will not do out of love for some creature on which they have set their affections! And how little is their love for One who is, moreover, God; whose goodness and loveliness are infinite, and who has even gone so far as to die upon a cross for each one of us! Ah, let us all follow the example of the Apostle, who said, *But God forbid that I should glory , save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*[1706] So spoke the holy Apostle; and what greater glory can I hope for in the world than that of having had a God to sacrifice his blood and life, out of his love for me? And this is what every one who has faith must say, and if he has faith, how will it be possible for him to love any other than God? O my God! how can a soul, contemplating Jesus crucified, as, suspended on three nails, he hangs from those same wounds of his in his hands and feet, and dies of sheer anguish, through his love for us, not perceive itself drawn, and as it, were constrained, to love him with all its powers? Let a soul be as cold as it can be in the divine love; if it have faith, I know not how it be possible for it not to perceive itself urged to love Jesus Christ, or even the most hasty consideration of what the Holy Scriptures tell us of the love which he has manifested towards us in his Passion, and in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

As regards his Passion, we read in Isaias*: Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows;* and in the verse that follows: *But He was wounded for our iniquities; He was bruised for our sins.*[1707] So that it is of faith that Jesus Christ has willed to suffer in his own person pains and afflictions, to set free from them ourselves, to whom they were justly due. And why is it that he has done so, if it be not for the love which he has borne towards us? *Christ hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us.*[1708] as St, Paul says. And St. John says: *Who hath loved us and washed us from our sins with His own Blood.*[1709] While with respect to the Sacrament of the Eucharist, it was Jesus himself who said to us all, when he instituted it. *Take ye, and eat; this is My Body.*[1710] And in another passage *He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me, and I in him.*[1711] How can any one who has faith read this without feeling himself, as it were, forced to love his Redeemer, who, after having sacrificed his blood and life out of love for him, has left him his own body in the Sacrament of the Altar, to be the food of his soul, and the means of uniting him wholly to himself in Holy Communion? We may add one more brief reflection on the Passion of Jesus Christ. He shows himself to us on the cross pierced by three nails, with blood issuing from every pore, and agonizing in the pangs of death.

I ask, why is it that Jesus manifests himself to us in such a pitiable condition? Is it, perchance, that we may compassionate him? No: it is not so much to gain our compassion, as to become the object of our love, that he has reduced himself to so miserable a state. It ought to have been a motive more than sufficient to secure our love, had he given us to know that his love for us is from all eternity: *I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*[1712] But seeing that this was not enough for our lukewarmness, the Lord, in order to move us to love him according to his desires, has willed thus to give us indeed a practical demonstration of the love which he bore towards us, by making us behold him, covered with wounds, die of anguish, through his love for us, that by means of his sufferings we might understand the immensity and tenderness of the love which he cherishes towards us; as it is so well expressed in these words of St. Paul: *He has loved us, and delivered Himself for us.*[1713]

3. CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

The third means of gaining a perfect love of God is the bringing of our own will into uniformity with the divine will in all things. St. Bernard says that he who loves God perfectly *"cannot will anything excepting that which God wills."*[1714] There are many who profess themselves to be thoroughly resigned to whatever God wills; but when afterwards any adverse circumstance or any troublesome infirmity befalls them, they cannot retain their peace of mind. It is not so with souls that are in a state of true uniformity. They say, " Thus it pleases, or thus it has pleased, Him whom I love;" and they are immediately at rest. *"To holy love," says St. Bonaventure, "all things are sweet."*[1715] These souls know that everything that happens in the world is either ordered or permitted by God; consequently, in all that comes to pass, they humbly bow down their head and live contented with what God assigns. And although it be frequently the case that he does not will that those who persecute and injure us should do so, yet he nevertheless wills for wise ends that we should suffer with patience the persecution or the injury by which we are afflicted.

St. Catharine of Genoa used to say, *“If God had placed me in the depths of hell, I would sincerely have said, It is good for us to be here.”*[1716] I would have said, It is enough for me that I am here by the will of Him whom I love, who loves me more than all others do, and knows what is best for me. Sweet is the repose of those who repose in the arms of the divine will. St. Teresa says: “ *The grand thing to be acquired by one who practises the habit of prayer is the conformity of his own will to the divine; for in that consists the highest perfection.”*[1717] Wherefore we must be ever repeating to God that prayer of David: *Teach me to do Thy will.*[1718] Lord, since Thou dost wish me to be saved, teach me ever to do Thy will. The most perfect act of love which a soul can perform towards God is that of St. Paul, when, on his conversion, he said, *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*[1719] Lord, tell me what Thou dost desire of me, for I am ready to do it. This act is worth more than a thousand fasts and a thousand disciplines. This—ought to be the object of all our works, desires, and prayers, the accomplishment of the divine will. For this we ought to pray our divine Mother, our patron saints and guardian angels, to obtain for us the grace to fulfil the will of God.

And whenever things that are opposed to our self-love befall us, we may then, by one act of resignation, gain treasures of merit. Let us accustom ourselves on such occasions to repeat those which Jesus himself has, by his own example, taught us: *The chalice which My Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?*[1720] or, again, *Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.*[1721] Lord, thus it hath pleased Thee, and thus it pleases me also. Or, again, with holy Job, let us say, *As it hath pleased Thee, Lord, so is it done; blessed be the name of the Lord.*[1722] The venerable Father Avila used to say that a single “ *Blessed be God,”* under adverse circumstances, is worth more than a thousand thanksgivings when things go smoothly. And here we may say again, what has already been said above, beautiful is the repose of those who repose themselves in the arms of the will of God; for then will the declaration of the Holy Spirit be fulfilled in them: *Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad.*[1723]

4. MENTAL PRAYER

The fourth means for becoming enamoured of God is mental prayer. The eternal truths are not discernible by the natural eye, like the things that are visible in this world. They are to be discerned solely by means of meditation and contemplation. Therefore, unless we pause for a certain length of time, in order to consider the eternal truths, and more especially our obligation to love God, on account of his being so deserving of our love, as also for the great blessings which he has conferred upon us and the love which he has borne us, we shall hardly loose ourselves from the love of creatures, to fix our whole love on God. It is in the time of prayer that God gives us to understand the worthlessness of earthly things, and the value of the good things of heaven; and then it is that he inflames with his love those hearts which do not offer resistance to his calls.

There are many, however, who complain that they go to prayer and do not find God; the reason of which is, that they carry with them a heart, full of earth. Detach the heart from creatures, says St. Teresa, seek God and you will find him. *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him.*[1724] Therefore to find God in prayer, the soul must be stripped of its love for the things of earth, and then God will speak to it: *I will lead her into the wilderness and I will speak to her heart*. But in order to find God, the solitude of the body, as St. Gregory observes, is not enough; that of the heart is necessary too. The Lord one day said to St. Teresa: *“I would willingly speak to many souls; but the world makes such a noise in their heart that My voice cannot make itself heard.”* Ah! when a detached soul is engaged in prayer, truly does God speak to it and make it understand the love which he has borne it; and then the soul, as a certain author says, burning with holy love, speaks not; but in that silence, oh, how much does it say! The silence of charity, observes the same writer, says more to God than could be said by the utmost powers of human eloquence: each sigh that it utters is a manifestation of its whole interior. It then seems as if it could not repeat often enough, My *Beloved to me, and I to him.*[1725]

5. PRAYER

The fifth means of attaining to a high degree of divine love is prayer. We are poor in all things; but if we pray, we are rich in all things; for God has promised to grant the prayer of him who prays to him. He says: *Ask and it* *shall be given to you.*[1726] What greater love can one friend show towards another than to say to him, *Ask of me what you will, and I will give it you.*[1727] This is what the Lord says to each one of us. God is Lord of all things. He promises to give us as much as we ask him for; if, then, we are poor, the fault is our own, because we do not ask him for the graces of which we stand in need. And it is on this account that mental prayer is morally necessary for all; inasmuch as when prayer is laid aside, while we are involved in this world's cares, we pay but little attention to the soul; but when we practise it we discover the wants of the soul, and then ask for the corresponding graces and obtain them. The whole life of the saints has been one of meditation and prayer; and all the graces by means of which they have become saints have been received by them in answer to their prayers. If, therefore, we would be saved and become saints, we ought ever to stand at the gates of the divine mercy to beg and pray for, as an alms, all that we stand in need of. We need humility: let us ask for it and we shall be humble. We need patience under tribulations: let us ask for it and we shall be patient. The divine love is what we desire: let us ask for it, and we shall obtain it. Ask and it shall be given you? is God's promise, which cannot fail.

And Jesus Christ, in order to inspire us with the greater confidence in our prayers, has promised us that whatever be the graces which we shall ask of the Father in his name, for the sake of either his love or his merits, the Father will give us them all: *Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name He will give it you.*[1728] And in another place he says: Whatsoever ye shall ask of me myself in my name, through my merits, I will grant it: *If you shall ask me anything in my name, that I will do.*[1729] Yes; because it is of faith that whatever God can do can also be done by Jesus Christ, who is his Son.

PRAYER OF ST. BONAVENTURE TO JESUS CHRIST, TO OBTAIN HIS HOLY LOVE

Most sweet Jesus, pierce the interior of my soul with the sweet wound of Thy love, that my soul may ever languish and be dissolved with Thy love and with the desire of possessing Thee, and long to quit this life, that it may come to be perfectly united with Thee in a blessed eternity. Grant that my soul may ever thirst after Thee, speak only to Thee, find Thee, and do all for Thy glory. Grant that my heart may be ever fixed on Thee who art my only *hope, my riches, my peace, my refuge, my confidence, my treasure, and my inheritance,*

PRAYER TO THE EVER-BLESSED VIRGIN, TO OBTAIN THE LOVE OF JESUS AND A HAPPY DEATH

O Mary! thou who so much desirest to see Jesus loved, if thou lovest me this is the favour that I now ask of thee, to obtain for me a great love for Jesus Christ. Thou obtainest from thy Son whatever thou pleasest; pray, then, for me, and console me. Obtain for me a great love for thee, who of all creatures art the most loving and beloved of God. And through that grief which thou didst suffer on Calvary, when thou didst behold Jesus expire on the cross, obtain for me a happy death, that by loving Jesus and thee, my Mother, I may come to love you both forever in heaven.

HYMN. ON THE LOVE OF GOD

BY MONSIGNORE FALCOJA

O God of loveliness!

O Lord of Heaven above! How worthy to possess

My heart’s devoted love! So sweet Thy countenance, So gracious to behold,

That one, one only glance To me were bliss untold. Thou art blest Three in One, Yet undivided still;

Thou art that One alone Whose love my heart can fill. The heavens, the earth below, Were fashioned by Thy Word;

My God, my dearest Love! My God for evermore! My soul’s true life above! Thee does my heart adore. No love on earth I own, For nought on earth 1 sigh; For love of Thee alone I faint away, I die.

Were hearts as countless mine As sands upon the shore, All should in choir combine To love Thee evermore. And every heart should yearn With tenderest desire,

How amiable art Thou, And in my bosom burn

My ever-dearest Lord! With flames of holiest fire.

To think Thou art my God, O Loveliness supreme,

O thought for ever blest! And Beauty infinite!

My heart has overflowed O ever-flowing stream,

With joy within my breast. And ocean of delight!

My soul so full of bliss O Life by which I live,

Is plunged, as in a sea, My truest life above!
Deep in the sweet abyss To Thee alone I give
Of holy charity. My undivided love.
No object here below Death even, for Thy sake
Awakens my desire; I count to be no loss;
No suffering nor woe And sweet repose I take,
Can grief or pain inspire. For Thee, on every cross.
The world I could despise, Could I but love Thee still
Though it were all of gold; In the dark pit of hell,
Thee only do I prize, E’en there, to do Thy will,
O mine of wealth untold! I should not fear to dwell.

II

THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST

THE POWER OF THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST TO ENKINDLE THE DIVINE LOVE IN EVERY HEART

I. WHAT THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST HAS DONE FOR GOD AND FOR US

Father Balthassar Alvarez, a great servant of God, used to say that we must not think we have made any progress in the way of God until we have come to keep Jesus crucified ever in our heart. And St. Francis de Sales said that "the love which is not the offspring of the Passion is feeble." Yes, because we cannot have a more powerful motive for loving God than the Passion of Jesus Christ, by which we know that the Eternal Father, to manifest to us his exceeding love for us, was pleased to send his only begotten Son upon earth to die for us sinners. Whence the Apostle says that God, through the excess of love wherewith he loved us, willed that the death of his Son should convey life to us: *For His exceeding charity wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ.*[1730] And this was precisely the expression used by Moses and Elias on Mount Tabor, in speaking of the Passion of Jesus Christ. They did not know how to give it any other appellation than an excess of love: *And they spoke of His excess, which He should consummate in Jerusalem.*[1731]

When our Saviour came into the world, the shepherds heard the angels singing, *Glory to God in the highest,*[1732] But the humiliation of the Son of God in becoming man, through his love for man, might have seemed rather to obscure than to manifest the divine glory; but no; there was no means by which the glory of God could have been better manifested to the world than by Jesus Christ dying for the salvation of mankind, since the Passion of Jesus Christ has made us know how great is the mercy of God, in that a God was willing to die to save sinners, and to die, moreover, by a death so painful and ignominious. *St. John Chrysostom says that the Passion of Jesus Christ was not an ordinary suffering, nor his death a simple death like that of other men.*[1733] It has made us know the divine wisdom. Had our Redeemer been merely God, he could not have made satisfaction for man; for God could not make satisfaction to himself in place of man; nor could God make satisfaction by means of suffering, being impassible. On the other hand, had he been merely man, man could not have made satisfaction for the grievous injury done by him to the divine majesty. What, then, did God do? He sent his own very Son, true God with the Father, to take human flesh, that so as man he might by his death pay the debt due to the divine justice, and as God might make to it full satisfaction.

It has, moreover, made us know how great is the divine *justice*. St. John Chrysostom says that God reveals to us the greatness of his justice, not so much by hell in which he punishes sinners, *as by the sight of Jesus on the cross; since in hell creatures are punished for the sins of their own, but on the cross we behold a God cruelly treated in order to make satisfaction for the sins of men.*

What obligation had Jesus Christ to die for us? *He was offered because it was His own will.*[1734] He might have justly abandoned man to his perdition; but his love for us would not let him see us lost; wherefore he chose to give himself up to so painful a death in order to obtain for us salvation: *He hath loved us, and delivered Himself up for us.*[1735] From all eternity he had loved man: *I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*[1736] But then, seeing that his justice obliged him to condemn him, and to keep him at a distance separated from himself in hell, his mercy urged him to find out a way by which he might be able to save him. But how? By making satisfaction himself to the divine justice by his own death. And consequently he willed that there should be affixed to the cross whereon he died the sentence of condemnation to eternal death which man had merited, in order that it might remain there cancelled in his blood. *Blotting out the writing of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us, He hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross.*[1737] And thus, through the merits of his own blood, he pardons all our sins: *Forgiving you all offences.*[1738] And at the same time he spoiled the devils of the rights they had acquired over us, carrying along with him in triumph as well our enemies as ourselves, who were their prey. *And despoiling the principalities and powers, He Hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in Himself.*[1739]

On which Theophylact comments, *"As a conqueror in triumph, carrying with him the booty and the enemy."*[1740] Hence, when satisfying the divine justice on the cross, Jesus Christ speaks but of mercy. He prays his Father to have mercy on the very Jews who had contrived his death, and on his murderers who were putting him to death: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*[1741] While He was on the cross, instead of punishing the two thieves, who had just before reviled him, *And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him,*[1742] when he heard one asking for mercy, *Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom,*[1743]— overflowing with mercy, he promises him Paradise that very day: *This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.*[1744] Then, before he expired, he gave to us, in the person of John, his own mother to be our mother: *He saith to the disciple, Behold thy mother.*[1745] There upon the cross he declares himself content in having done everything to obtain salvation for us, and he makes perfect the sacrifice by his death: *Afterwards Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, . . . said, It is consummated; and bowing His head, He gave up the ghost.*[1746]

And behold, by the death of Jesus Christ, man is set free from sin and from the power of the devil; and, moreover, is raised to grace, and to a greater degree of grace, than Adam lost: *And where sin abounded, says St. Paul, grace did more abound.*[1747] It remains therefore for us, writes the Apostle, to have frequent recourse with all confidence to this throne of grace, which Jesus crucified exactly is, in order to receive from his mercy the grace of salvation, together with aid to overcome the temptations of the world and of hell! *Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.*[1748] Ah, my Jesus, I love Thee above all things, and whom would I wish to love if I love not thee, who art infinite goodness, and who hast died for me? Would that I could die of grief every time I thin-k how I had driven Thee away from my soul by my sins, and separated myself from Thee, who art my only good, and who hast loved me so much. *Who shall separate us from the charity of Christ?*[1749] It is sin only that can separate me from Thee. But I hope, in the blood Thou hast shed for me, that Thou wilt never allow me to separate myself from Thy love, and to lose Thy grace, which I prize more than every other good. I give myself wholly to Thee. Do Thou accept me, and draw all my affections to Thyself, that so I may love none but Thee.

II. WHAT THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST REQUIRES OF US

Does Jesus Christ, perhaps, claim too much in wishing us to give ourselves wholly to him, after he has given to us all his blood and his life, in dying for us upon the cross? *The charity of Christ presseth us.*[1750] Let us hear what St. Francis de Sales says upon these words: *"To know that Jesus has loved us unto death, and that the death of the cross, is not this to feel our hearts constrained by a violence which is the stronger in proportion to its loveliness?" And then he adds, "My Jesus gives himself all to me, and I give myself all to him. On his bosom will I live and die. Neither death nor life shall ever separate me from him."*[1751]

It was for this end, says St. Paul, that Jesus Christ died, that each of us should no longer live to the world nor to himself, but to Him alone who has given himself wholly to us. *And Christ died for all, that they who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them.*[1752] He who lives to the world seeks to please the world; he who lives to himself seeks to please himself; but he who lives to Jesus Christ seeks only to please Jesus Christ, and fears only to displease him. His only joy is to see him loved; his only sorrow, to see him despised. This is to live to Jesus Christ; and this is what he claims from each one of us. I repeat, does he claim too much from us, after having given us his blood and his life? Wherefore, then, O my God! do we employ our affections in loving creatures, relatives, friends, the great ones of the world, who have never suffered for us scourges, thorns, or nails, nor shed one drop of blood for us; and not in loving a God, who for love of us came down from heaven and was made man, and has shed all his blood for us in the midst of torments, and finally died of grief upon a cross, in order to win to himself our hearts!

Moreover, in order to unite himself more closely to us, he has left himself, after his death, upon our altars, where he makes himself one with us, that we might understand how burning is the love wherewith he loves us? " *He hath mingled himself with us," exclaims St. John*

Chrysostom,"[1753]*that we may be one and the same thing; for this is the desire of those who ardently love."* And St. Francis de Sales, speaking of the Holy Communion, adds: *"There is no action in which we can think of our Saviour as more tender or more loving than this, in which he, as it were, annihilates himself, and reduces himself to food, in order to unite himself to the hearts of his faithful."* But how comes it, O Lord! that I, after having been loved by Thee to such an excess, have had the heart to despise Thee? According to Thy just reproach, *I have nourished and brought up children, and they have despised me.*[1754] I have dared to turn my back upon Thee, in order to gratify my senses. *Thou hast cast me behind Thy back.*[1755] I have dared to drive Thee from my soul, *The wicked have said to God, Depart from us.*[1756]

I have dared to afflict that heart of Thine which has loved me so much. And what, then, am I now to do? Ought I to be distrustful of Thy mercy? I curse the days wherein I have dishonoured Thee. Oh, would that I had died a thousand times, O my Saviour, rather than that I had ever offended Thee! O Lamb of God! Thou hast bled to death upon the cross to wash away our sins in Thy blood. O sinners! what would you not pay on the day of judgment for one drop of the blood of this Lamb? O my Jesus! have pity on me, and pardon me; but Thou knowest my weakness; take, then, my will, that it may never more rebel against Thee. Expel from me all love that is not for Thee. I choose Thee alone for my treasure and my only good. Thou art sufficient for me; and I desire no other good apart from Thee. The God of my heart) and God is my portion forever. 1 O little sheep, beloved of God (so used St. Teresa to call the Blessed Virgin), who art the Mother of the divine Lamb, recommend me to thy Son. Thou, after Jesus, art my hope; for thou art the hope of sinners. To thy hands I entrust my eternal salvation. Spes nostra, salve.

III. A SWEET ENTERTAINMENT FOR SOULS THAT LOVE GOD, AT THE SIGHT OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

1. SUFFERINGS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

O Jesus on the cross! O stupendous sight for heaven and earth of mercy and of love! To see the Son of God dying through pain upon a gibbet of infamy, condemned as a malefactor to so bitter and shameful a death, in order to save sinful men from the penalty that was due to them! This sight has ever been, and will always be, the subject of the contemplation of the saints, and has led them willingly to renounce all the goods of the earth, and to embrace with great courage sufferings and death, that they might make themselves more pleasing to a God who died for love of them. The sight of Jesus despised between two thieves has made them love contempt far more than worldlings have loved the honours of the world. Beholding Jesus covered with wounds upon the cross, they hold in abhorrence the pleasures of sense, and have endeavoured to afflict their flesh in order to unite their sufferings to the sufferings of the Crucified. Beholding the patience of our Saviour in his death, they have joyfully accepted the most painful sicknesses, and even the most cruel torments that tyrants can inflict. Lastly, from beholding the love of Jesus Christ in being willing to sacrifice his life for us in a sea of sorrows, they have sought to sacrifice to him all that they had, possessions, children, and even light itself.

St. Paul, in speaking of the love which the Eternal Father has borne towards us, in that, when he saw us dead by reason of sin, he willed to restore life to us by sending his Son to die for us, calls it too great a love. *But God, who is rich in mercy for his exceeding charity where with He loved us, hath quickened us together in Christ.*[1757] And in the same way ought we to call the love wherewith Jesus Christ has willed to die for us *too great* a love. Hence the same apostle says, *We preach Jesus Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles, foolishness.*[1758] St. Paul says that the death of Jesus Christ appeared to the Jews a stumbling-block, because they thought that he should have appeared on earth full of worldly majesty, and not indeed as one condemned to die like a criminal upon a cross. On the other hand, to the Gentiles it seemed a folly that a God should be willing to die, and by such a death too, for his creatures. On this subject St. Laurence Justinian remarks: *“We have seen Him who is wise infatuated through an excess of love.”*[1759] We have beheld Him who is the eternal wisdom itself, the Son of God, become a fool for us, by reason of the *too great* love which he bore towards us.

And does it not seem a folly for a God, almighty and supremely happy in himself, to be willing of his own accord to subject himself to be scourged, treated as a mock king, buffeted, spit upon in the face, condemned to die as a malefactor, abandoned by all upon a cross of shame, and this to save the miserable worms he himself had created? The loving St. Francis, when he thought of this, went about the country exclaiming with tears, “ Love is not loved! Love is not loved!” And hence St. Bonaventure says that he who wishes to keep his love for Jesus Christ ought always to represent him to himself hanging on the cross; and dying there for us. *“Let him ever have before the eyes of his heart Christ dying upon the cross.”*[1760] Oh, happy is that soul which frequently sets before its eyes Jesus dying on the cross, and stops to contemplate with tenderness the pains which Jesus has suffered, and the love wherewith he offered himself to the Father, while he lay agonizing on that bed of sorrow. Souls that love God, when they find themselves more than usually harassed by temptations of the devil and by fears about their eternal salvation, derive great comfort by considering in silence and alone Jesus hanging on the cross, and shedding blood from all his wounds. At the sight of the crucifix, all desires for the goods of this world flee utterly away. From that cross exhales a heavenly breath, which causes us to forget all earthly objects, and enkindles within us a holy desire of quitting all things, in order to employ all our affections in loving that Lord who has pleased to die through love for us. Isaias foretold that our Redeemer would be a man of sorrows. *And we have seen him . . . despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows.*[1761]

Now let him who wishes to behold this man of sorrows, foretold by Isaias, look on Jesus Christ dying on the cross. There, nailed by his hands and feet, he hangs, the whole weight of his body pressing on his wounds in all his members, which are every one of them torn and bruised. He suffers continual and excruciating pains; whichever way he turns, so far from finding relief, his pain but increases more and more, until it deprives him of life; and thus this man of sorrows is condemned by the Father to die of sheer sufferings on account of our sins. What Christian, then, O my Jesus! knowing by faith that Thou hast died upon the cross for love of him, can live without loving Thee! Pardon me, then, O Lord! first of all, this great sin of having lived so many years in the world without loving Thee. My beloved Saviour, the thought of death fills me with dread, as being the moment when I shall give an account to Thee of all the sins that I have committed against Thee; but that blood that I see flowing from Thy wounds causes me to hope for pardon from Thee, and at the same time the grace of loving Thee for the future with my whole heart, by virtue of those merits Thou hast earned by so many pains. I give myself wholly to Thee; I will no longer be my own; I desire to do all; I desire to suffer in order to please Thee. I will die for Thee who hast died for me: I will say to Thee, with St. Francis, *“ May I die for love of the love of Thee, who didst vouchsafe to die for love of the love of me.”*[1762]

2. DEATH OF JESUS

Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.[1763] These words, uttered by Jesus Christ upon the cross when he was on the point of death, bring great comfort to the dying, who find themselves engaged in that last combat with hell, and are about to pass into eternity. My beloved Jesus, I will not wait for the moment of my death to recommend my soul to Thee. From this moment I recommend it to Thee. By that blood shed for me, permit it not to be separated from Thee. Hence forth I will be Thine, and all Thine without reserve. If Thou seest that I should ever turn my back upon Thee, as I have in times past, I beseech Thee, let me die in this moment in which I hope to be in Thy grace.

In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.[1764] O faithful soul! lift up thine eyes, and look at the cross of thy Redeemer, now dead for the love of thee. Say to him: O my Jesus! in Thy flesh lacerated and torn by the scourges, the thorns, the nails, I behold the burning love Thou hast borne me, and the ingratitude I have shown Thee; but Thy blood is my hope. Wretch that I am, how often have I renounced Thy grace, and have myself willed to condemn myself to hell. What would become of me if Thou hadst not chosen to die for me? I could die of grief every time I think of having despised Thine infinite goodness, and of having of my own accord banished and separated Thee from my soul. But no; henceforth, with the help of Thy grace, I will leave all. Enough for me to be united with Thee, my God and my all! O men, O men! how can you show such contempt for a God who has suffered so much for you? Behold him on that cross, how he sacrifices himself by death to pay for your sins, and to gain your affections. *My Jesus, I will live no longer ungrateful for such* *goodness. O wounds of Jesus, wound me with love! O blood of Jesus, inebriate me with love! O death of Jesus, make me die to every affection which is not for Jesus! I love Thee more than myself, O my Jesus! and there is no pain that causes me more sorrow than the thought of having so often despised Thy love. Accept me; in Thy mercy reject me not, now that I give myself to Thee without reserve.*

Behold, lastly, how our Saviour, overwhelmed with sufferings upon the cross, bows his head, and breathes forth his soul: *And bowing His head, He gave up the ghost.*[1765] Eternal God, I, a wretched sinner, have dishonoured Thee by my evil life; but Jesus Christ, in making satisfaction for me by his death, has abundantly restored Thy honour. By the merits of Thy Son, who hast died for me, have pity on me. *O Jesus, my Saviour! I see Thee now dead on this cross. Thou speakest no more; Thou breathest no more; because Thou hast life no longer, having willed to lose it to give life to our souls. Thou hast no longer any blood; for Thou hast shed it all, by dint of torments, to wash away our sins. In one word, Thou hast abandoned Thyself to death through Thy love for us. He hath loved us, and delivered Himself for us*[1766] *"Let us consider," writes St. Francis de Sales, "this divine Saviour stretched upon the cross, as upon his altar of honour, where he is dying of love for us; but a love more painful than that very death. Ah, why, then, do we not in spirit throw ourselves upon him to die upon the cross with him, who has willed to die there for love of us? I will hold him, we ought to say, and will never let him go. I will die with him, and be burned up in the flames of his love.*

One and the same fire shall consume this divine Creator and his miserable creature. My Jesus is all mine, and I am all his. I will live and die upon his breast; neither death nor life shall ever separate him from me."[1767] *Yes, my sweet Redeemer, I embrace with tenderness Thy pierced feet; and, filled with confidence in beholding Thee dead for love of me, I repent of having despised Thee, and I love Thee with my whole soul. At the foot of Thy cross I leave Thee my heart and my will. Do Thou Thyself nail it to this cross, so that it may never be separated from Thee, and henceforth may have no other desire than to please Thee alone.*

3. FRUITS OF THE DEATH OF JESUS

St. John writes that our Saviour, in order to make his disciples understand the death he was to suffer upon the cross, said, *And, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. Now this he said, signifying what death he should die?*[1768] And, in fact, by exhibiting himself crucified and dead, how many souls has Jesus drawn to himself, so that they have left all to give themselves up entirely to his divine love. Ah, my Jesus! draw my soul to Thyself, which was one time lost; draw it by the chains of Thy love, so that it may forget the world to think of nothing else but of loving and pleasing Thee. *Draw me after Thee by the odour of Thine ointments.*[1769] *O my Lord, Thou knowest my weakness and the offences that I have committed against Thee. Draw me out of the mire of my passions; draw all my affections to Thyself, so that I may attend to nothing but Thy pleasure only, O my God, most lovely! Hear me, O Lord! by the merits of Thy death, and make me wholly Thine.*

St. Leo tells us that he who looks with confidence upon Jesus dead upon the cross is healed of the wounds caused by his sins. *"They who with faith behold the death of Christ are healed from the wounds of sin."*[1770] Every Christian, therefore, should keep Jesus crucified always before his eyes, and say with St. Paul, *I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*[1771] In short, the Apostle says, that he did not desire any other knowledge in this world than that of knowing how to love Jesus Christ crucified. My beloved Saviour, to obtain for me a good death Thou hast chosen a death so full of pain and desolation! I cast myself into the arms of Thy mercy. I see that many years ago I ought to have been in hell, separated from Thee forever, for having at one time despised Thy grace; but Thou hast called me to penance, and I hope hast pardoned me; but if through my fault Thou hast not yet pardoned me, pardon me at this moment. I repent, O my Jesus! with my heart, for having turned my back upon Thee, and driven Thee from my soul. Restore me to Thy grace. But that is not enough: give me strength to love Thee with all my soul during my whole life. And when I come to the hour of my death, let me expire burning with love for Thee, and saying, my Jesus, I love Thee, I love Thee, and thus continue to love Thee for all eternity. From this moment I unite my death to Thy holy death, through which I hope for my salvation. *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever*[1772] O great mother of

God, thou after Jesus art my hope. In thee, O Lady, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever. O devout souls, when the devil wishes to make us distrustful about our salvation by the remembrance of our past sins, let us lift up our eyes to Jesus dead upon the cross, in order to deliver us from eternal death. After a God has made us know by means of the holy faith the desires he has of our salvation, having even sacrificed his life for us, if we are resolved really to love him for the remainder of our lives, cost what it may, we should be on our guard against any weakness of confidence in his mercy. After he has given us so many signs of his love for us, and of his desire for our salvation, it is a kind of sin against him not to put our whole confidence and hope in his goodness.

Full, then, of holy confidence, let us hope for every good from the hands of a God so liberal and so loving; and at the same time let us give ourselves to him without reserve, and thus pray to him: O eternal God, we are sinners, but Thou who art Almighty canst make us saints; grant that henceforth we may neglect nothing that we know to be for Thy glory, and may do all to please Thee. Blessed shall we be if we lose all to gain Thee, the infinite good. Grant that we may spend the remainder of our lives in pleasing Thee alone. Punish us as Thou wilt for our past sins, but deliver us from the chastisement of not being able to love Thee; deprive us of all things save Thyself. Thou hast loved us without reserve; we also will love Thee without reserve, O infinite Love, O infinite Good. O Virgin Mary, draw us wholly to God; thou canst do so; do so for the love that thou hast for Jesus Christ.

4. CONCLUSION

Let us finish this little treatise with the prayer of St. Francis de Sales, saying: *“O Eternal Love, my soul seeks Thee and chooses Thee for all eternity. Come, O Holy Spirit! and kindle in our hearts the fire of Thy love. To die and to love; to die to everything, in order to live eternally for the love of Jesus. O Saviour of our souls, grant that we may sing forever and ever, Live, Jesus! I love Jesus. Live, Jesus, whom I love! I love Jesus, who liveth and reigneth forever and ever. Amen!”*[1773]

5. Ah, my Jesus! and who, seeing that Thou, the Son of God, hast willed to end Thy life by so bitter a death for love of us, will be so hard and ungrateful of heart as to be able to love anything in the world but Thee, or

to prefer before Thee any of the miserable good things of earth? My God and my all, I prefer Thee before all the knowledge, all the wealth, all the riches, all the glories and hopes, and all the gifts that Thou canst bestow upon me. Thou art all my good. Thou art infinitely amiable; and how can I love any but Thee? Every gift, therefore, which is not Thyself, is not sufficient for me, does not satisfy me; Thee only do I desire, and nothing more. And if for my sins it be Thy will to punish me, punish me by the deprivation of everything, but deprive me not of Thyself. Thou alone art sufficient for me; I repeat, I desire Thee alone and nothing more. I desire to spend the remainder of my life in loving and pleasing Thee. What have the saints not done to please Thee? They have stripped themselves of all their possessions, have renounced the greatest dignities of the world, and have welcomed as treasures contempt, torments, and the most cruel deaths that the cruelty of tyrants could contrive. O Lord! I now understand that Thou hast created us to love and please Thee. In past time I was wretched enough, instead of pleasing Thee, to cause Thee so much displeasure. What do I say? I could die of grief at the very thought. I hope that now Thou hast pardoned me for Thy mercy’s sake. Since Thou hast now pardoned me, I give Thee my whole will, my whole self. Take possession of me forever; make me all Thine. Draw me ever closer within Thy heart. Banish from me every love that is not Thee, who art my only good, my only Love. O Mary, Mother of God! thou after Jesus art my hope. I ask of God the grace to be wholly his; this is his only desire for us. Thou canst do all things with God; thou must obtain for me this grace. O divine Love, how is it that Thou art so despised by men? O men, look at the Son of God upon that cross, who like a lamb is sacrificing himself by a painful death to pay for your sins, and so to gain your love; look at him, and love him.My Jesus, worthy of infinite love, let me not live any longer ungrateful for such goodness. In past time I have thought but little of corresponding to the love that Thou hast borne me; for the future I will only think of loving and pleasing Thee. Let us strip ourselves of all self-love, and of all earthly affections, to give our will wholly, wholly to God without reserve. O Lord! dispose of me and of all belonging to me for life and death as Thou wilt: I only will what Thou willest. My only desire is to love Thee always in this life and for all eternity. And what will I but Thee alone, O God of my heart? O blood of my Jesus, inebriate me with the love of Jesus! O wounds of Jesus, pierce me with the love of Jesus! O death of Jesus, make me die to every love that is not for Jesus! My Jesus, I love Thee above all things; I love Thee with my whole soul; I love Thee more than myself. My beloved Lord, give me Thy love, and make me all Thine. O Mary, my Mother! again I beg of thee, make me all for Jesus. Thou canst do so; I hope it from thee.

DEVOUT ASPIRATIONS

O loving Heart of Jesus! inflame this poor heart of mine. My Jesus, when shall I begin to love Thee as Thou hast loved me? My God, when shall I die to everything, to live to Thee alone?

My beloved One, make me love Thee even in sufferings. Thou hast loved me without reserve; I also will love Thee without reserve. My Jesus, make Thyself known and loved by all. My Jesus, grant that I may die, saying, I love Thee, I love Thee. My God, suffer me not to lose Thee forever. Give me the grace to love Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt. At this hour I might have been in hell; but now I love Thee, and I hope always to love Thee. And what else do I wish for, O my God! but Thee, who art my chief, my only good? My Jesus, in the Day of Judgment do not separate me from Thee. My Jesus, how lovely art Thou, but by how few art Thou loved! Oh that I could die of grief every time that I think of having voluntarily lost Thee! My Jesus, grant me Thy love, and I ask Thee for nothing more. Thou hast died for me; I wish also to die for Thee. O death of Jesus! from thee I hope for a good death. O blood of Jesus! from thee I hope for the pardon of all my sins. O wounds of Jesus! from you I hope to love Jesus forever. O agony of Jesus! from thee I hope to bear peacefully the agony of my death. O sorrows of Jesus! from you I hope for patience in all contradictions. O scourges of Jesus! deliver me from everlasting despair. O tears of Mary! obtain for me sorrow for my sins. My own St. Joseph, by thy happy death obtain for me a good death. O ye holy Apostles! by your blessed death obtain for me the grace to die in the love of God. And what wish I, either in this life or in the next, but Thee alone, my God? My Jesus, had I died in sin, I could no more love Thee; now I desire to love Thee, and Thee alone. My God, I love Thee, and I will love none but Thee. St. Teresa, St. Philip Neri, my advocates, make me burn with love for Jesus, as you yourselves did burn. My Jesus, by the pain Thou didst endure when Thy left hand was pierced with the nail, give me a true sorrow for my sins. My Jesus, by the pain Thou didst endure when Thy right hand was pierced with the nail, give me perseverance in Thy grace. My Jesus, by the pain Thou didst endure when Thy left foot was pierced with the nail, deliver me from the pains of hell. My Jesus, by the pain Thou didst endure when Thy right foot was pierced with the nail, give me the grace to love Thee eternally in heaven. My Jesus, by the wound that was made in Thy Sacred Heart, give me the grace to love Thee always in this life and in the. next. Live, Jesus, our Love, And Mary, our Hope.

HYMN. ON THE LOVE WHICH JESUS BEARS TO THE SOUL

Oh, it were joy and high reward, Transpierced with wound of love, to die For that most lovely, loving God For whom alone all hearts should sigh. Such is his beauty, such his grace, That stars of heaven, or gems of earth, Compared with that divinest face Lose their loveliness and worth. He seeks his prey with skill divine, He draws his bow, the arrow flies; The heart is pierced, and forced to pine With love for him for whom it dies. To wound those souls he longs to gain, The charm of varied guise he found, And all to make those hearts remain Close to his heart for ever bound. For this the Word Divine appears On earth, a babe, so poor, so weak; And from our hearts, with infant tears, All love, he came our love to seek. In youth He next is seen again A lowly humble artisan,

And God’s own Son does not disdain The vilest services of man.

At last a criminal in chains Himself unto his spouse he shows; And thus his life of varied pains He ends amid the direst woes. His love does more; in form of bread To give himself he yet desires; There with himself the soul is fed That loves and to his love aspires. His love knows every winning way; He spares no toil, he fears no pain, To make another heart his prey, Or truer love from it to gain. Sometimes he loves to banish fear, With all the sweetness of a spouse; Anon he shows a look severe: ’Tis all fresh fervor to arouse. Of old he deigned my heart to woo, And bound me with love’s fiery chains; Then seized my heart his hostage true, And jealous still his prey retains. Then silence, wicked world! depart, Seek not esteem or love of mine; Another Lover owns my heart, His charms are other far than thine.

III

CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD[1774]

I. EXCELLENCE OF THIS VIRTUE

OUR whole perfection consists in loving God, who is in himself most lovely: *Charity is the bond of perfection.*[1775] But, then, all perfection in the love of God consists in the union of our own with his most holy will. This, indeed, is the principal effect of love; as St. Dionysius the Areopagite observes, "*such a union of the will of those who love as makes it to become one and the same will.*"[1776] And therefore the more united a person is with the divine will, so much greater will be his love. It is quite true that mortifications, meditations, Communions, and works of charity towards others are pleasing to God. But where is this the case? When they are done in conformity to his will; for otherwise, not only does he not approve them, but he abominates and punishes them. Suppose that there are two servants, one of whom labours hard and incessantly throughout the day, but will do everything after his own fashion; while the other does not work so much, but acts always in obedience to orders: is it not certain that the latter, and not the former, is the one who pleases his master?

In what respect do any works of ours serve to the glory of God, where they are not done according to his good pleasure? It is not sacrifices that the Lord desires, says the prophet to Saul, but obedience to his will: *Does the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed?*[1777] To refuse to obey is like the crime of idolatry. He who will act from his own will, independently of that of God, commits a kind of idolatry; since in that case, instead of worshipping the divine will, he worships, in a certain sense, his own. The greatest glory, then, that we can give to God is the fulfilment in everything of his holy will. This is what our Redeemer, whose object in coming upon earth was the establishment of the glory of God, principally came to teach us by his example. See how St.

Paul makes him address his eternal Father: *Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not; but a body Thou hast fitted to Me: then said I, Behold, I come, that I should do Thy will.*[1778] O God? Thou hast refused to accept the victims which mankind have offered Thee. It is Thy will that I should sacrifice to Thee the body which Thou hast given Me; lo, I am ready to perform that will of Thine. And hence it is that he so often declares that he had come upon earth not to fulfil his own, but his Father's will only: *I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent Me?*[1779]

And on this account he wished that the world might have known the love which he bore toward his Father, from the obedience to his will which he manifested in sacrificing himself upon the cross for the salvation of mankind; just as he said himself in the garden, when going forth to meet his enemies, who had come to take him and lead him away to death: *That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I: arise, let us go hence.*[1780] And for this reason, too, it was that he said that he would recognize as a brother of his own him who should have acted according to the divine will: Whosoever *shall do the will of My Father, he is My brother.*[1781] On this account it is that all the saints have ever kept steadfastly in view the fulfilment of the divine will, thoroughly understanding that herein consists the entire perfection of a soul. The blessed Henry Suso used to say, *"God does not desire that we should abound in knowledge, but that in all things we should submit ourselves to his will."* And St. Teresa, *"All that one who devotes himself to prayer has need to acquire is the conformity of his own will to the divine; and he may rest assured that herein consists the highest perfection. Whoever practises this best will receive from God the greatest gifts, and will make most progress in the interior life."*[1782] The Dominican nun the Blessed Stephana of Soncino, being one day, in a vision, carried into heaven, saw certain persons who had died, and with whom she had been acquainted, stationed amongst the seraphim; and it was told her that these had been raised to so high a position in glory through the perfect conformity to God's will which they had practised on earth.

And the Blessed Suso already mentioned used to say, when speaking of himself: *"I would much rather be the vilest worm of earth through God's will than a seraph through my own."* While we are in this world, we should learn from the blessed in heaven the way in which we have to love God. The pure and perfect love which the blessed in heaven entertain for God lies in their own perfect union with the divine will. Should the seraphim understand it to be his will that they must employ themselves for all eternity in gathering into a heap the sands of the sea-shore, or in plucking up the grass from the gardens, they would willingly do it with all possible pleasure. Nay, more: if God were to give them to understand that they should go to burn in the flames of hell, they would immediately precipitate themselves into that abyss, in order to accomplish the divine will. And it is this that Jesus Christ has taught us to pray, namely, that we may perform the divine will on earth, as the saints perform it in heaven: *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*[1783] The Lord calls David a man after his own heart, because David accomplished all his desires: *I have found a man according to My own heart, who shall do all My wills.*[1784] David was ever prepared to embrace the divine will, as he frequently declared: *My heart is ready, O God; my heart is ready.*[1785] And, on the other hand, the only prayer which he made to the Lord was that he would teach him to do his will: *Teach me to do Thy will.*[1786] A single act of perfect conformity to the divine will is sufficient to make one a saint.

Look at Saul, whom Jesus Christ illuminates and converts, while he is going on in his persecution of the Church. What does Saul do? what does he say? He simply makes an offering of himself to do the divine will: *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*[1787] And, behold, the Lord declares him to be a vessel of election and apostle of the Gentiles*: This man is to Me a vessel of election, to carry My name before the Gentiles.*[1788] Yes, for he who gives his will to God gives him everything: he who gives him his goods in alms, his blood by disciplines, his food by fasting, gives to God a part of what he possesses; but he who gives him his will gives him the whole; so that he can say to him, Lord, I am poor, but I give Thee all that is in my power; in giving Thee my will, there remains nothing for me to give Thee. But this is precisely all that our God claims from us: *My son, give Me thy heart.*[1789] My son, says the Lord to each of us, My son, give Me thy heart; that is to say, thy will. *"There is no offering," says St. Augustine, "that we can make to God more acceptable to himself than to say to him, Take possession of us."*[1790] No, we cannot offer to God anything more precious than by saying to him, Lord, take possession of us; we give our whole will to Thee; make us understand what it is that Thou dost desire of us, and we will perform it. If, then, we would give a full satisfaction to the heart of God, we must bring our own will in everything into conformity with his; and not only into conformity, but into uniformity, too, as regards all that God ordains. Conformity signifies the conjoining of our own will to the will of God; but uniformity signifies, further, our making of the divine and our own will one will only, so that we desire nothing but what God desires, and his sole will becomes ours. This is the sum and substance of that perfection to which we ought to be ever aspiring; this is what must be the aim of all our works, and of all our desires, meditations, and prayers. For this we must invoke the assistance of all our patron saints and of our guardian angels, and, above all, of our divine Mother Mary, who ,vas the most perfect of all the saints, for the reason that she ever embraced most perfectly the divine will.

II. CONFORMITY IN ALL THINGS

But the chief point lies in our embracing the will of God in all things which befall us, not only when they are favourable, but when they are contrary to our desires. When things go on well, even sinners find no difficulty in being in a state of conformity to the divine will; but the saints are in conformity also under circumstances which run counter and are mortifying to self-love. It is herein that the perfection of our love for God is shown. The Venerable Father John Avila used to say, *“A single Blessed be God, when things go contrary, is of more value than thousands of thanksgivings when they are to our liking.”* Moreover, we must bring ourselves into conformity to the divine will, not only as regards those adverse circumstances which come to us directly from God, such, for instance, as infirmities, desolations of spirit, poverty, the death of parents, and other things of a similar nature, but also as regards those which come to us through the instrumentality of men, as in the case of contumelies, reproaches, acts of injustice, thefts, and persecutions of every kind. On this point, we must understand that when we suffer injury from any one in our reputation, our honour, or our property, although the Lord does not will the sin which such a one commits, he nevertheless does will our humiliation, our poverty, and our mortification. It is certain and of faith, that everything that comes to pass in the world comes to pass through the divine will: *I form the light and darkness, I make peace and create evil.*[1791] From God come all things that are good and all things that are evil; that is to say, all things that are contrary to our own liking, and that we falsely call evil; for, in truth, they are good, when we receive them as coming from his hands: *Shall there be.an evil in the city which the Lord hath not done?*[1792] said the prophet Amos. And the Wise Man said it before: *Good things and evil, life and death, are from God.*[1793] It is true, as I observed above, that whenever any one unjustly treats you in an injurious manner, God does not will the sin which such a person commits, nor concur in the malice of his intentions; but he quite concurs, with a general concurrence, as regards the material action by which such a one wounds, plunders, or injures you; so that what you have to suffer is certainly willed by God, and comes to you from his hands. Hence it was that the Lord told David that he was the author of the injuries which Absalom would inflict upon him, even to the taking away his wives in his very presence; and that in punishment for his sins: *Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thy own house, and I will take thy wives before thy eyes, and give them to thy neighbour.*[1794]

Hence, too, he told the Jews that it would be as a punishment for their wickedness when he should have commanded the Assyrians to spoil and bring them to ruin: *The Assyrian, he is the rod of My fury. . . . I will give him a charge to take away the spoils, and to lay hold on the prey;*[1795] which St. Augustine explains, *“The wickedness of these men is made to be, as it were, an axe of God.”*[1796] God uses the iniquity of the Assyrians, like an axe, to chastise the Jews. And Jesus himself said to St, Peter that his Passion and death did not come to him so much from men, as from his Father himself*: The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?*[1797] When the messenger (who is thought to have been the devil) came to Job to tell him that the Sabeans had taken all his goods away and had put his sons to death, what is the saint’s reply? *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away*[1798] He said not, the Lord hath given me sons and property, and the Sabeans have taken them away from me; but the Lord hath given them me, and the Lord hath taken them away; because he perfectly understood that that loss of his was willed by God; and therefore he added, *As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord.*[1799]

We must not, then, look upon the troubles that befall us as happening by chance, or only through the fault of others; we must rest assured that everything that happens to us comes to pass through the divine will. *"You should know," says St. Augustine, "that whatever happens in this world contrary to our will does not happen excepting through the will of God."*[1800] Epictetus and Atho, blessed martyrs of Jesus Christ, when subjected to the torture by the tyrant, torn with hooks of iron and burnt with blazing torches, said nothing but this: *"Lord, let Thy will be accomplished in us;" and on arriving at the place of their suffering, they exclaimed, in a loud voice, "Blessed be Thou, O everlasting God! because Thy will has been in everything fulfilled in us."*[1801] Cæsarius relates of a certain religious that although there was in no respect any external difference between himself and the others, he had nevertheless arrived at such a degree of sanctity as to heal the sick by the mere touch of his clothes. His Superior, in astonishment at this, one day asked him how he could ever perform such miracles, while his life was not more exemplary than that of others. In reply, he said that it was a matter of astonishment to himself also, and that he did not know how to account for it. "But what devotions do you practise?" asked the Abbot. The good religious, in answer, said that he did but little or nothing in this respect; only that he had ever made it his great care to will that alone which God willed, and that the Lord had granted him the grace to keep his own will thoroughly abandoned in that of God. "Prosperity," he said, "does not elate me, nor does adversity cast me down, because I receive everything from the hands of God; and to this end it is that I direct all my prayers, namely, that his will may perfectly accomplish itself in me." "And with respect to that loss," rejoined the Superior, "which our enemy caused us the other day, by depriving us of our means of subsistence, setting fire to our farm-buildings where our corn and cattle were housed, did you not feel some resentment in consequence?" "No, my Father," was his reply; "but, on the contrary, I returned thanks to God for it, as is my custom in similar cases, knowing that God does and permits all for his own glory and for our greater good; and with this conviction, I am always content under every circumstance that comes to pass."[1802] The

Abbot, understanding this, and seeing in that soul so great a conformity to the divine will, was no longer surprised at his performance of such great miracles.

III. HAPPINESS OBTAINED FROM PERFECT CONFORMITY

He who acts in this way does not only become a saint, but he enjoys, even in this world, a perpetual peace. Alphonsus the Great, King of Arragon, and a most wise prince, on being one day asked whom he considered to be the happiest man in the world, replied, He who abandons himself to the will of God, and receives all things, whether prosperous or adverse, as from his hands. *To those who love God, all things work unto good.*[1803] Those who love God are ever content, because their whole pleasure lies in the accomplishment, even in things that run counter to themselves, of the divine will; and hence even afflictions themselves are converted into their contentment, by the thought that in the acceptance of them they are giving pleasure to their Lord whom they love: *Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad.*[1804] And, in truth, what greater contentment can a man ever experience than in seeing the accomplishment of all that he desires? Now, whenever any one desires nothing save what God desires, since everything that comes to pass in the world (sin only excepted) always comes to pass through the will of God, everything that such a one desires does consequently come to pass.

There is a story in the lives of the Fathers of a certain countryman whose land was more productive than that of others, and who, on being asked how it happened, replied that no one should be surprised at it, because he always had such weather as he desired. “ And how so?” it was asked. “ Yes,” replied he, “ because I desire no weather but that which God desires; and as I desire what God desires, so does he give me the fruits of the earth as I desire them.” *Souls that are truly resigned, says Salvian, if they are in a state of humiliation, desire this; if they suffer poverty, they desire to be poor; in short, whatever happens to them, they desire it all, and therefore they are, in this life, happy: “They are in humble station, they wish for this; they are poor, they make poverty their delight; therefore we must say of them that they are happy.”*[1805] When cold or heat, rain or wind, prevails, he who is in a state of union with the divine will says, I wish it to be cold, I wish it to be hot; I wish the wind to blow, the rain to fall, because God wishes it so. Does poverty, persecution, sickness, death arrive, I also wish (says such a one) to be poor, persecuted, sick; I wish even to die, because God wishes it thus. This is the beautiful liberty that the sons of God enjoy, worth more than all the domains and all the kingdoms of this world. *This is that great peace that the saints experience, which surpasseth all understanding.*[1806] with which all the pleasures of the senses, all gayeties, festivities, distinctions, and all other worldly satisfactions, cannot compete; for these, being, as they are, unsubstantial and transitory, although, while they last, they may be fascinating to the senses, nevertheless do not bring contentment, but affliction, to the spirit wherein true contentment resides.

So that Solomon, after having enjoyed such worldly pleasures to the full, cried out, in his affliction, *But this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.*[1807] *The fool (says the Holy Spirit) is changed like the moon: the holy man continueth in wisdom like the sun.*[1808] The fool that is to say, the sinner changes like the moon, which to-day grows, to-morrow wanes. To-day you will see him laughing, to-morrow weeping; to-day all gentleness, to-morrow furious like the tiger, And why so? because his contentment depends on the prosperity or the adversity that he meets with; and therefore he varies as the circumstances which befall him vary. Whereas the just man is like the sun, ever uniform in his serenity under whatever circumstances may come to pass; because his contentment lies in his uniformity to the divine will, and therefore he enjoys a peace that nothing can disturb: *And on earth peace to men of good will.*[1809] said the angel to the shepherds. And who can these men of good will ever be but those who are at all times in unison with the will of God, which is supremely good and perfect? *The will of God is good, delightful, and perfect.*[1810] Yes, because he wills only that which is best and most perfect. The saints, through their conformity to the divine will, have enjoyed in this world a paradise in anticipation. St. Dorotheus tells us that it was thus that the ancient Fathers kept themselves in profound peace, receiving all things as they did from the hands of God.

When St, Mary Magdalene of Pazzi heard mention only of the will of God, she used to experience so intense consolation that she fell into an ecstasy of love. And although, on the other hand, the sting of adverse circumstances will not fail to make itself felt, yet its influence will not extend beyond the lower part of our nature; for in the higher part of the soul there will reign peace and tranquillity while the will remains in union with that of God. *Your joy (said the Redeemer to the Apostles) no man shall take from you. That your joy may be full.*[1811] He who is ever in conformity to the divine will possesses a full and perpetual joy; full, because he has all that he wishes for, as was observed above; perpetual, because it is a joy of which no one can deprive him, while, at the same time, no one can prevent that which God wills from coming to pass. Father John Taulerus relates of himself that after having for many years prayed the Lord to send some one to instruct him in the true spiritual life, he one day heard a voice saying to him, “Go to such a church, and you will find what you ask for.” On reaching the church, he finds at the gate a beggar, barefooted and with scarcely a rag on his back. He salutes him: a “Good day, my friend.” The poor man replies, “Sir, I do not remember ever to have had a bad day.” The Father rejoins, “God grant you a happy life;” to which he answers, “But I have never been unhappy.” And then he goes on to say, “Listen, my Father; it is not without reason that I have told you that I have never had a bad day; because, when I suffer hunger, I praise God; when it snows or rains, I bless him; if I am treated with contempt, or repulsed by any, or if I experience misfortunes of any other kind, I always give glory to my God for it. I said, besides, that I have never been unhappy, and this also is true; because it is my habit to desire, without reservation, all that God desires; therefore, in all that happens to me, whether it be pleasant or painful, I receive it from his hands with joy, as being what is best for me; and herein lies my happiness.”

“And if it should ever happen,” says Taulerus, “that God willed you to be damned, what would you say then?” “If God were to will this,” replied the beggar, “I would, with all humility and love, lock myself so fast in my Lord’s embrace, and hold him so tight, that if it were to be his will to cast me down into hell, he would be obliged to come along with me; and thus, with him, it would then be sweeter to me to be in hell than to possess without him all the enjoyments of heaven.” “Where was it that you found God?” said the Father. “I found him where I took leave of creatures,” was the reply. “Who are you?” The poor man answered, “I am a king.” “And where is your kingdom?” “It is within my soul, where I keep everything in due order; the passions are subjected to the reason, and the reason to God.”

In conclusion, Taulerus asked him what it was that had led him on to so high a degree of perfection? “It has been silence,” said he, “observing silence with man, in order to hold converse with God; and also the union which I have maintained with my Lord, in whom I have found, and still do find, all my peace.”[1812] Such, in short, had this poor man become through his union with the divine will; and certainly he was, in all his poverty, more wealthy than all the monarchs of the earth, and in his sufferings more happy than all the men of the world with their earthly pleasures.

IV. GOD WISHES ONLY OUR GOOD

Oh, great indeed is the folly of those who fight against the divine will! They have now to suffer troubles, because no one can ever prevent the accomplishment of the divine decrees: *Who resisteth His will?*[1813] And, on the other hand, they have to suffer them without deriving benefit from them; nay, even drawing down upon themselves greater chastisements in the next life, and greater disquietude in this: *Who hath resisted Him, and hath had peace?*[1814] Let the sick man make as great an outcry as he will about his pains; let him who is in poverty complain, rave, blaspheme against God as much as he pleases in his distresses, what will he gain by it, but the doubling of his affliction? “*What are you in search of, O foolish man,” says Augustine, “when seeking good things? Seek that one Good in whom are all things good.”*[1815] What are you going in search of, poor silly fellow, outside of thy God? Find God, unite yourself to his will, bind yourself up with it; and you will be ever happy, both in this life and in the other. And, in short, what is there that God wills but our good? Whom can we ever find to love us more than he? It is his will, not merely that no one should perish, but that all should save and sanctify themselves: *Not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.*[1816] *This is the will of God, your sanctification.*[1817] It is in our good that God has placed his own glory, being, as St. Leo says, in his own nature goodness infinite, *“God, whose nature is goodness,”* and it being the nature of goodness to desire to spread itself abroad, God has a supreme desire to make the souls of men partakers of his own bliss and glory.

And if, in this life, he sends us tribulations, they are all for our own good: *All things work together unto good.*[1818] *Even chastisements,* as was observed by the holy Judith, *do not come to us from God for our destruction, but in order to our amendment and salvation: Let us believe that they have happened for our amendment, and not for our destruction.*[1819] In order to save us from eternal evils, the Lord throws his own good will around us: *O Lord, Thou hast crowned us as with a shield of Thy goodwill.*[1820] He not only desires, but is anxious for, our salvation: *The Lord is careful for me.*[1821] And what is there that God will ever refuse us, says St. Paul, after having given us his own Son? *He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all things.*[1822] This, then, is the confidence in which we ought to abandon ourselves to the divine dispensations, all of which have for their object our own good. Let us ever say, under all the circumstances that may happen to befall us, *In peace, in the self-same, I will sleep and I will rest; for Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope.*[1823] Let us also place ourselves entirely in his hands, for he will certainly take care of us: *Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you.*[1824]

Then, let our thoughts be fixed on God, and on the fulfilment of his will, that he may think of us and of our good. *"Daughter,"* said the Lord to St. Catharine of Sienna, *"do thou think of Me, and I will ever think of thee."* Let us be frequently saying with the sacred spouse, *My Beloved to me, and I to Him.*[1825] The thoughts of my Beloved are upon my good; I will think of nothing but of pleasing him, and bringing myself into a state of perfect uniformity to his holy will. The holy Abbot Nilus used to say that we ought never to pray to God that he would make our will succeed, but that in us he would accomplish his own will. And whenever, too, things that are contrary befall us, let us accept them all, as from God's hands, not merely with patience, but with joy, *as did the Apostles when they went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."*[1826] And what greater satisfaction can a soul enjoy than in the knowledge that by suffering with a good will anything that it may have to suffer it gives to God the greatest pleasure that it can give him? The masters of the spiritual life teach that, though the desire which certain souls have of suffering to give him pleasure is acceptable to him, he is yet more pleased with the conformity of those who wish for neither joy nor pain, but, in perfect resignation to his holy will, have no other desire than to fulfil whatever that will may be. If then, O devout soul! you would please God, and live in this world a life of contentment, unite yourself ever and in everything to the divine will. Consider that all the sins that you have committed, when leading a life of disorder and distress, have come to pass in consequence of having separated yourself from the will of God.

Bind yourself up, from this day forward, with his good pleasure; and always say, in everything that may befall you: *Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.*[1827] Thus let it be, O Lord! since thus it is pleasing unto Thee. Whenever you feel yourself troubled on account of any occurrence of an adverse description, consider that it has come from God; and therefore say at once, *"Thus God wills," and so remain in peace." "I was dumb, and I opened not my mouth, because Thou hast done it"*[1828] Lord, since Thou hast done it, I say nothing, and accept it. To this end you must direct all your thoughts and prayers; namely, to strive and pray ever unto God, in meditations, in Communions, in visits to the Most Holy Sacrament, that he would make you accomplish his will. And ever be making an offering of yourself, saying, *My God, behold, here I am; do what Thou willest with me, and with all that I have.* This was St. Teresa's continual exercise; *fifty times a day at least did the saint offer herself to the Lord, that he might dispose of her according to his pleasure.* Oh, happy will you, my reader, be if you act ever thus! You will certainly become a saint; your life will be one of peace, and your death will be one of greater happiness still When any one is passing to the other life, all the hopes that are conceived of his salvation depend on the judgment formed as to whether he has died in resignation or not. If, after having, during life, welcomed to your embrace all things that have come from God, you in like manner embrace death also in order to accomplish his divine will, you will certainly secure your salvation and die the death of a saint. Let us, then, abandon ourselves in everything to the good pleasure of that Lord who, being most wise, knows what is best for us; and being most loving, since he has sacrificed his life through love for us, wills also that which is most for our good. *And let us, too, be thoroughly assured and convinced that, as St. Basil says God lays himself out for our good, incomparably beyond all that we ourselves could ever do or desire.*[1829]

V. SPECIAL PRACTICES OF THIS CONFORMITY

But let us now look at the matter in a more practical point of view, and consider what things there are in which we have to bring ourselves into uniformity to the will of God.

1. ORDINARY OR COMMON ACCIDENTS

In the first place, we must have this uniformity as regards those things of nature that come to us from without; as when there is great heat, great cold, rain, scarcity, pestilence, and the like. We must take care not to say, What intolerable heat! what horrible cold! what a misfortune! how unlucky! what wretched weather! or other words expressive of repugnance to the will of God. We ought to will everything to be as it is, since God is he who orders it all. St. Francis Borgia, on going one night to a house of the Society when the snow was falling, knocked at the door several times; but, the Fathers being asleep, he was not let in. They made great lamentations in the morning for having kept him so long waiting in the open air; but the saint said that during that time he had been greatly consoled by the thought that it was God who was casting down upon him those flakes of snow. In the second place, we must have this conformity as regards things that happen to us from within, as in the sufferings consequent on hunger, thirst, poverty, desolations, or disgrace. In all, we ought ever to say, *“Lord, be it Thine to make and to unmake. I am content; I will only what thou dost will.”*[1830] And thus, too, we ought, as F. Rodriguez says, to reply to such imaginary cases as the devil occasionally suggests to the mind, in order to make us fall into some consent that is wrong, or at least to disgust us. If such a person were to say so and so to you, if he were to do so and so to you, what would you say? what would you do? Let our answer always be, *“I would say and do that which God wills.”* And by this means we shall keep ourselves free from all fault and molestation.

2. NATURAL DEFECTS

In the third place, if we have any natural defect either in mind or body, a bad memory, slowness of apprehension, mean abilities, a crippled limb, or weak health, let us not therefore make lamentation. What were our deserts, and what obligation had God to bestow upon us a mind more richly endowed, or a body more perfectly framed? Could he not have created us mere brute animals?.or have left us in our own nothingness? Who is there that ever receives a gift and tries to make bargains about it? Let us, then, return him thanks for what, through a pure act of his goodness, he has bestowed upon us; and let us rest content with the manner in which he has treated us. Who can tell whether, if we had had a larger share of ability, stronger health, or greater personal attractions, we should not have possessed them to our destruction? How many there are whose ruin has been occasioned by their talents and learning, of which they have grown proud, and in consequence of which they have looked upon others with contempt, a danger which is easily incurred by those who excel others in learning and ability!

How many others there are whose personal beauty or bodily strength have furnished the occasions of plunging them into innumerable acts of wickedness! And, on the contrary, how many others there are who, in consequence of their poverty, or infirmity, or ugliness, have sanctified themselves and been saved; who, had they been rich, strong, or handsome, would have been damned! And thus let us ourselves rest content with that which God has given us: *But one thing is necessary.*[1831] Beauty is not necessary, nor health, nor sharpness of intellect; that which alone is necessary is our salvation.

3. CORPORAL MALADIES

In the fourth place, we must be particularly resigned under the pressure of corporal infirmities; and we must embrace them willingly, both in such a manner, and for such a time, as God wills. Nevertheless, we ought to employ the usual remedies; for this is what the Lord wills also: but if they do us no good, let us unite ourselves to the will of God, and this will do us much more good than health. O Lord! let us then say, I have no wish either to get well or to remain sick: I will only that which Thou dost will. Certainly the virtue is greater, if, in times of sickness, we do not complain of our sufferings; but when these press heavily upon us, it is not a fault to make them known to our friends, or even to pray to God to liberate us from them. I am speaking now of sufferings that are severe; for, on the other hand, there are many who are very faulty in this, that on every trifling pain or weariness they would have the whole world come to compassionate them, and to shed tears around them. Even Jesus Christ, on seeing the near approach of his most bitter Passion, manifested to his disciples what he suffered: *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*[1832] and he prayed the Eternal Father to liberate him from it: *My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me.*[1833]

But Jesus himself has taught us what we ought to do after praying in like manner; namely, straightway to resign ourselves to the divine will, adding, as he did, *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*[1834] How foolish, too, are those who say that they wish for health, not indeed, in order to suffer, but to render greater service to God, by the observance of the rules, by serving the community, by going to church, by receiving Holy Communion, by doing penance, by study, by employing themselves in the saving of souls, by hearing confessions, and by preaching! But, my good friend, I wish you would tell me why it is that you desire to do these things? Is it to please God? And why go out of your way in order to do this; certain, as you are, that what pleases God is, not that you pray, receive Communion, do acts of penance, study, or preach sermons, but that you suffer with patience the infirmity or the pains which he sees fit to send you? Unite, then, your own sufferings to those of Jesus Christ. But, you say, I am troubled that, in consequence of being such an invalid, I am useless and burdensome to the community and to the house. But as you resign yourself to the will of God, so you ought to believe that your Superiors, too, resign themselves, seeing, as they do, that it is not through any laziness of your own, but through the will of God, that you have laid this burden upon the house. Ah, these desires and regrets do not spring from the love of God, but from the love of self, which is hunting after excuses for departing from the will of God! Is it our wish to give pleasure to God? Let us say, then, whenever we happen to be confined to bed, to the Lord this only, *Fiat voluntas Tua, "Thy will be done."*

And let us be ever repeating it, although for the hundredth or thousandth time; and by this alone we shall give more pleasure to God than we could give him by all the mortifications and devotions which we could perform. There is no better mode of serving God than by cheerfully embracing his will. The Venerable Father Avila wrote thus to a priest who was an invalid:

“My friend, do not stop to calculate what you might do if you were well, but be content to remain unwell as long as God shall please. If your object be to do the will of God, how is it of more consequence for you to be well than ill? “[1835] And certainly this was wisely said; for God is not glorified so much by our works as by our resignation and conformity to his holy will. And therefore St. Francis de Sales used to say that we serve God more by suffering than by working. It will often happen that we shall find ourselves with out doctors and medicine; or, again, our medical attendant may not clearly understand our complaint; and here, too, we must be in a state of conformity to the divine will, which ordains it to be so for our good. It is related of one who had a devotion to St. Thomas of Canterbury, that, being unwell, he went to the tomb of the saint to obtain his recovery. He returned home in good health; but then he said within himself, But if the sickness would have been a greater help towards my salvation, what benefit shall I gain from the health which I now have? With this thought in his mind, he went back to the tomb, and prayed the saint to ask for him of God that which was the more expedient of the two for his eternal salvation; and after doing this he relapsed into the sickness, and remained in it with perfect contentment, holding it for certain that God ordained it to be so for his good. There is a similar anecdote related by Surius,[1836] of a certain blind man who received his sight through the intercession of the Bishop St. Vedast; but afterwards prayed that, if that sight was not expedient for his soul, he might return to his former state of blindness; and after this prayer he continued blind as before.

In times of sickness, then, it is best not to seek after health, either good or bad, but to abandon ourselves to the will of God, that he may dispose of us as pleases him. But if health is what we would seek, let us ask for it with resignation at least, and on the condition that health of body be suitable to the health of our soul; otherwise a prayer to this effect will be faulty, and rejected, because the Lord does not listen to prayers of this description when unaccompanied by resignation.

I call the time of sickness the touchstone by which spirits are tried, because in it is ascertained the value of the virtue of which any one stands possessed. If he does not lose his tranquillity, if he makes no complaints, and is not over-anxious, but obeys his medical advisers and his superiors, preserving throughout the same peacefulness of mind, in perfect resignation to the divine will, it is a sign that he possesses great virtue. But what, then, ought one to say of the sick person who laments and says that he receives but little assistance from others; that his sufferings are intolerable; that he can find no remedy to do him good; that his medical man is ignorant; at times complaining even to God that his hand presses too heavily upon him? St. Bonaventure relates,[1837] in his Life of St. Francis, that when the saint was suffering pains of an extraordinary severity, one of his religious, who was somewhat over-simple, said to him, *“Father, pray to God to treat you with a little more gentleness; for it seems that he lays his hand upon you too heavily.” St. Francis, on hearing this, cried aloud, and said to him in reply, Listen; if I did not know that these words of yours were the offspring of mere simplicity, I would never see you more, daring, as you have done, to find fault with the judgments of God.”* And after saying this, extremely enfeebled and emaciated through his sickness though he was, he threw himself from his bed upon the floor and kissing it, he said, “ Lord, I thank Thee for all the sufferings which Thou sendest me. I pray.Thee to send me more of them, if it so please Thee. It is my delight for Thee to afflict me, and not to spare me in the least degree, because the fulfilment of Thy will is the greatest consolation which in this life I can receive.”

4. LOSS OF USEFUL PERSONS

Under this head we must also class the loss which we may at times have to suffer of persons who, in either a temporal or spiritual point of view, happen to be of service to us. This is a matter in regard to which those who are devout are often very faulty, through their want of resignation to the divine dispensations. Our sanctification must come to us, not from spiritual directors, but from God. It is, indeed, his will that we should avail ourselves of directors as spiritual guides, when he gives them to us; but when he takes them away, he wills that we should rest content with this, and increase our confidence in his goodness; saying at such times, Lord, it is Thou who hast given me this assistance; now Thou hast taken it from me; may Thy will be ever done; but I pray Thee now to supply my wants Thyself, and to teach me what I ought to do to serve Thee. And in the same way ought we to receive all other crosses from the hands of God. But so many troubles, you say, are chastisements. But, I ask in reply, are not the chastisements that God sends us in this life acts of kindness and benefits? If we have offended him, we have to satisfy the divine justice in some way or other, either in this life or in the next. Therefore we ought all of us to say with St. Augustine, *“Here burn, here cut, here do not spare; that so Thou mayest spare in eternity;”*[1838] and again, with holy Job: *“And that this may be my comfort, that, afflicting me with sorrow, He spare not.”*[1839] It ought, too, to be a consolation to one who has deserved hell to see that God is punishing him in this world; because this ought to give him good hopes that it may be God’s will to deliver him from punishment eternal. Let us, then, say, when suffering the chastisements of God, what was said by Heli the high priest: *It is the Lord; let Him do what is good in His sight.*[1840]

5. SPIRITUAL DESOLATION

Moreover, we ought to be resigned in times of spiritual desolation. The Lord is accustomed, when a soul gives itself up to the spiritual life, to heap consolations upon it, in order to wean it from the pleasures of the world; but afterwards, when he sees it more settled in spiritual ways, he draws back his hand, in order to make proof of its love, and to see whether it serves and loves him unrecompensed, while in this world, with spiritual joys. “While we are living here,” as St. Teresa used to say, “ our gain does not consist in any increase of our enjoyment of God, but in the performance of his will.” And in another passage: “The love of God does not consist in tenderness, but in serving him with firmness and humility.” And again, elsewhere: “The Lord makes trial of those who love him by means of drynesses and temptations.” Let, then, the soul thank the Lord when he caresses it with sweetnesses; but not torment itself by acts of impatience, when it beholds itself left in a state of desolation. This is a point which should be well attended to; for some foolish persons, seeing themselves in a state of aridity, think that God may have abandoned them; or, again, that the spiritual life was not made for them; and so they leave off prayer, and lose all that they have gained. There is no time better for exercising our resignation to the will of God than that of dryness.

I am not saying that you will not suffer pain on seeing yourself bereft of the sensible presence of your God; it is impossible for a soul not to feel such pain as this; nor can it refrain from lamentation, when our Redeemer himself upon the cross made lamentation on this account: *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*[1841] But, in its sufferings, it should ever resign itself perfectly to the will of its Lord. These spiritual desolations and abandonments are what all the saints have suffered. *"What hardness of heart," said St. Bernard, "do I not experience! I no longer find any delight in reading, no longer any pleasure in meditation or in prayer."* The condition of the saints has been ordinarily one of dryness, not of sensible consolations. These are things which the Lord does not bestow, excepting on rare occasions, and to perhaps the weaker sort of spirits, in order to prevent their coming to a standstill in their spiritual course: the joys which he proposes as rewards, he prepares for us in Paradise. This world is the place for meriting, where we merit by suffering; heaven is the place for recompense and enjoyments. Therefore, what the saints have desired and sought for in this world has been, not a sensible fervour with rejoicing, but a spiritual fervour with suffering. *The Ven. John Avila used to say, "Oh, how much better is it to be in dryness and temptations with the will of God, than in contemplation without it!"*[1842]

But, you will say, if I could only know that this desolation comes from God, I should be content; but what afflicts and disquiets me is the fear that it may have come through my own fault, and as a punishment for my tepidity. Well, then, take your tepidity out of the way, and employ greater diligence. But will you, because you are perhaps under a cloud, will you therefore disquiet yourself, leave off prayer, and thus double the evil of which you complain? Let it be that, as you say, the dryness is come upon you as a chastisement. Then accept it as a chastisement on one who so much deserves to be chastised, and unite yourself to the divine will. Do you not say that you deserve hell? And why, then, are you complaining? Perhaps it is because you deserve that God should give you consolations? Ah, go and rest content with the manner in which God is dealing with you; persevere in prayer, and in the way on which you have entered; and henceforth let it be your fear that your complaints may arise from your little humility and your little resignation to the will of God. When a soul applies itself to prayer, it can derive no benefit from it that can be greater than the union of itself with the divine will. Therefore make an act of resignation, and say, Lord, I accept this pain from Thy hands, and I accept it for as long as may please Thee; if it be Thy will that I should be thus afflicted for all eternity, I am content. And in this way your prayer, painful though it may be, will be a greater help to you than any consolation, however sweet. We must, however, bear in mind that dryness is not always a punishment, but is occasionally ordained by God for our greater good, and in order to keep us humble.

That St. Paul might not grow proud of the gifts that he had received, the Lord permitted him to be tormented by temptations of impurity: *Lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me.*[1843] He who prays in times of sweetness does no great thing: *There is a friend, a companion at table; and he will not abide in the day of distress.*[1844] You would not esteem to be a true friend of yours the man who was with you only at your table; but him who assisted you in times of trouble, and without advantage to any interests of his own. When God sends darkness and desolations, it is then that he is trying who are true friends of his. Palladius suffered great weariness in prayer; and when he went to tell St. Macarius, the latter said to him, *"When the thought suggests itself to you that you should leave off prayer, let this be your reply: I am content, for the love of Jesus Christ, to remain here as guardian of the walls of this cell."*[1845] This, then, is your answer, whenever you feel yourself tempted to leave off prayer, because it appears to you as no better than a mere waste of time: *"I am here in order to give pleasure to God."* St. Francis de Sales used to say that if in time of prayer we did no more than drive away distractions and temptations, our prayer would, nevertheless, be well made.[1846] Nay, Taulerus says that on him who perseveres in prayer in a state of aridity, God will bestow greater graces than had he prayed much with great sensible devotion. Fr Rodriguez tells us of a certain person who used to say that during forty years of prayer he had never experienced any consolation; but that on such days as he prayed he found himself strong in virtue; whereas, on the contrary, on whatever day he omitted it he experienced such a weakness as made him unfit for anything that was good.

It is observed by S. Bonaventure, and by Gerson,[1847] that many serve God more in the absence of the recollection they desire than if they had possessed it; because they thus live in a state of greater diligence and humility; whereas otherwise they might perhaps become proud and more tepid, thinking that they had already gained the object of their desire. And what is said with regard to aridity must also be said of temptations. We ought to try to avoid temptations; but if God wills or permits that we be tempted against the faith, against purity, or against any other virtue, we ought not to complain, but resign ourselves in this also to the divine will. To St. Paul, who prayed to be released from his temptation to impurity, the Lord made answer, *My grace is sufficient for thee.*[1848] so, if we see that God does not listen to us, by releasing us from some troublesome temptation, let us likewise say, Lord, do and permit that which pleaseth Thee; Thy grace is sufficient for me; only grant me Thy assistance, that I may never lose it. It is not temptations, but the consenting to temptations, that is the cause of our loss of divine grace. Temptations, when we overcome them, keep us more humble, gain for us greater merits, make us have recourse to God more frequently; and thus keep us further from offending him, and unite us more closely to his holy love.

6. DEATH

Lastly, we must unite ourselves to the will of God in regard to our death, and as to the time and the manner in which he will send it. St. Gertrude one day, when climbing up a hill, slipped and fell into a ravine. Her companions asked her afterwards whether she would not have been afraid to die without the sacraments? The saint answered, *"It is my great desire to die with the sacraments; but I consider that the will of God is more to be accounted of, because I hold that the best disposition one could have for dying a good death would be one's submission to that which God might will; consequently, I desire whatever death my Lord shall be pleased to allot me."*[1849] It is related by St Gregory, in his Dialogues, that the Vandals having condemned to death a certain priest named Santolo, they granted him the liberty of choosing the kind of death which he would prefer; but the holy man refused to make a selection, saying, *"I am in the hands of God, and will suffer the death which he permits you to make me suffer; nor do I wish for any other than that."*[1850] This act was so pleasing to God that, when these barbarous men had resolved on having his head cut off, he held back the executioner’s arm; whereupon they gave in to so great a miracle, and spared his life. As to the manner, then, we ought to esteem that death to be the best for us which God may have determined shall be ours. Save us, Lord (let us ever say, when thinking of our death); and then let us die in whatever manner seemeth good unto Thee. Thus, again, we ought to unite our will to his as to the time of our death. What is this world but a prison for us to suffer in, and to be in danger every moment of losing God? It was this that caused David to exclaim, *Bring my soul out of prison.*[1851] It was this fear that made St. Teresa sigh for death. On hearing the clock strike, she felt the utmost consolation in the thought that an hour of her life had passed, an hour of her danger of losing God.

Father Avila used to say that every one with imperfect dispositions ought to desire death, because of the danger in which we live of losing the divine grace. What is more precious, or more to be desired, than by a good death to secure to ourselves the impossibility of losing the grace of our God? But, you say, *“I have as yet done nothing; there is nothing that I have gained for my soul.”* But if it be the will of God for your life to terminate at this time, what would you do afterwards, if you were to remain alive contrary to his will? And who knows whether, in that case, you would die such a death as you can have hopes of dying now? Who knows whether, through a change of will, you might not fall into other sins, and involve yourself in damnation? And even were there nothing else, yet by remaining alive you could not live without committing at least venial sins. Hence St. Bernard exclaims, “*Why, oh, why do we wish for a life in which the longer we live, the more we sin?*[1852] And it is certain that one single venial sin displeases God more than all the good works that we can do please him.

I say, moreover, that he who has but little desire for Paradise shows that he has but little love for God. One who loves desires the presence of the object loved; but we cannot see God without leaving this world; and therefore it is that all the saints have sighed for death, in order to go and see the Lord whom they have loved. Thus did Augustine sigh, “ *Oh, may I die, that I may see thee!”*[1853] Thus, too, St. Paul: *Having a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.*[1854] Thus, again, David: *When shall I come and appear before the face of God?*[1855] And in like manner, too, all the souls that have been enamoured of God.

It is related by a certain writer that one day, as a gentleman was out hunting in a forest, he heard a man singing sweetly; on going in that direction, he found a poor leper in a state of semi-putrefaction: he asked him if it was he who was singing? *“Yes,”* answered he, *“ it was I, sir, who was singing.” “And how can you ever be singing and contented under sufferings like these, which are taking your life away?”* The leper answered, *“There is nothing to stand between my Lord God and myself but this wall of clay, which is my body; when this impediment is removed, I shall go to enjoy my God. And seeing, as I do, that it is falling into pieces every day, I therefore rejoice and sing.”*

7. SPIRITUAL GOODS

Finally, even as regards our degrees in grace and glory we must bring our own will into conformity to the divine. Highly as we ought to value the things of the glory of God, we ought to value his will yet more. It is right for us to desire to love him more than the Seraphim do, but it is not right for us to go on to wish for any other degree of love than that which the Lord has determined on granting us. Father Avila says, “I do not believe that there was ever a saint who did not desire to be better than he was. But it has not deprived any one of them of his peace; because this desire of theirs had not relation to any cravings of their own, but to God; with whose measures of distribution they rested content, although he might have given them less than others; out of true love deeming that contentment with what God gave them had a greater value than the desire of possessing much. It all comes to this, as F. Rodriguez explains it,[1856] that although we ought to be diligent to attain the greatest perfection in our power, that our own lukewarmness and laziness may not be furnished with an excuse, as in the case of those who say, God has to give me what I need I can only do so much; nevertheless, when we fall short, we ought not to lose our peace and conformity to the will of God, which has permitted the failing on our part, nor our courage either.

Let us raise ourselves up immediately from our fall; let us humble ourselves in acts of penance; and, seeking for greater assistance from God, let us pursue our course. So, in like manner, although we may rightly desire to be added in heaven to the choir of the Seraphim, not, indeed, that we may have the more glory for ourselves, but in order to give greater glory to God, and that we may love him the more, we ought, nevertheless, to resign ourselves to his holy will, contenting ourselves with that degree which, through his mercy, he shall vouchsafe to grant us. It would, moreover, be but too evident a fault to desire to possess gifts of supernatural prayer such, more especially, as ecstasies, visions, and revelations; whereas, on the contrary, spiritual writers say that those souls on which God bestows the favour of such graces ought to pray to him to deprive them of them, in order that they may love him by the way of pure faith, which is the safest way. There are many who have attained perfection without these supernatural graces. Those only are virtues that raise the soul to sanctity; and chief amongst their number stands conformity to the will of God. If God does not choose to raise us to a high degree of perfection and of glory, let us conform ourselves in all respects to his holy will, praying to him that he would at least save us through his mercy. And if we act in this manner, the reward will not be small which, of his goodness, our good Lord will give us; loving above everything, as he does, those souls that are resigned.

VI. CONCLUSION

In short, we ought to regard all things that do or will happen to us as proceeding from God’s hand; and everything that we do we ought to direct to this one end, the fulfilment of his will, and to do it simply because God wills it to be done. And in order to go on with greater security in this, we must follow the guidance of our superiors as regards what is external, and of our directors with regard to what is internal, that so we may, through them, understand what it is that God desires of us, having great faith in those words of Jesus Christ to us: *He that heareth you heareth Me.*[1857] And, above all, let it be our study to serve God in the way in which it is his will that we should serve him. I say this, that we may shun the deception practised upon himself by one who loses his time, amusing himself by saying, *“If I were in a desert, if I were to enter into a monastery, if I were to go somewhere, so as not to remain in this house, to a distance from these relatives or these companions of mine I would sanctify myself; I would do such and such penance; I would say such and such prayers.”* He says, *“I would do, I would do;”* but in the mean time, through bearing with a bad will the cross which God sends him in short, through not walking in the way that God wills for him he not only does not sanctify himself, but goes on from bad to worse. These desires are temptations of the devil, at such times when they are not in accordance with the will of God; we must therefore drive them away, and brace ourselves up to the service of God in that one way which he has chosen for us. By doing his will, we shall certainly sanctify ourselves in any state wherein God places us.

Let us, then, ever will that only which God wills, that so he may take and press us to his heart; and, for this end, let us make ourselves familiar with some of those passages of Scripture that call upon us to unite ourselves ever more and more to the divine will: *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*[1858] My God, tell me what thou desirest of me; for I desire to do it all. *I am Thine: save Thou me.*[1859] O my Lord! I am no longer my own, but Thine; do with me whatsoever Thou dost please. And at such times especially as any very grievous calamity befalls us as in the case of the death of parents, of the loss of property, and things of a similar kind *Yea, Father* (let it ever be ours to say), *yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.*[1860] Yes, my God and my Father, let it be even so; for so it hath pleased Thee. And, above all, let us love that prayer which Jesus Christ has taught us: *Fiat voluntas Tua sicut in cœlo et in terra, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* The Lord told St. Catharine of Genoa that whenever she said the " Our Father," she was to pay particular attention to these words, and pray that his holy will might be fulfilled by her with the same perfection with which it is fulfilled by the saints in heaven. Let us, too, act in this manner, and we shall certainly become saints ourselves. *May the divine will, and the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary, be ever loved and praised!*

HYMN. HOW AMIABLE IS THE WILL OF GOD?

'Tis Thy good pleasure, not my own, In Thee, my God, I love alone; And nothing I desire of Thee But what Thy goodness wills for me.

O will of God! O will divine! All, all our love be ever Thine.

In love no rival canst Thou bear, But Thou art full of tenderest care; And fire and sweetness all divine To hearts which once are wholly Thine. O will of God, etc.

In Thee all pure affections live, To love Thou dost perfection give; While ever burning with desires The loving soul to Thee aspires. O will of God, etc.

Thou makest crosses soft and light And death itself seem sweet and bright. No cross nor fear that soul dismays Whose will to Thee united stays. O will of God, etc.

To all the glorious choirs of heaven Their very bliss by Thee is given; And heaven itself deprived of Thee Would be a land of misery.

O will of God, etc.

Yea, to the lost who burn in hell, If in their souls Thy love could dwell, The very flames and torments there Would seem but sweet and light to bear, O will of God, etc.

Oh! that one day my life may end In closest bonds to Thee enchained! For thus to die is not to die,

But live, and live eternally.

O will of God, etc.

To Thee I consecrate and give My heart and being while I live; Jesus, Thy heart alone shall be My love for all eternity.

O will of God, etc.

Alike in pleasure and in pain.

To please Thee is my joy and gain; That, O my Love, which pleases Thee Shall ever more seem best to me. May heaven and earth with love fulfil, My God, Thy ever-blessed will!

IV

THE WAY TO CONVERSE ALWAYS AND FAMILIARLY WITH GOD

TAKEN FROM A SMALL FRENCH WORK, AND ENLARGED BY OTHER SACRED THOUGHTS, AFFECTIONS, AND EXERCISES OF THE AUTHOR

I. GOD WISHES US TO SPEAK TO HIM WITH CONFIDENCE AND FAMILIARITY

HOLY Job was struck with wonder to consider our God so devoted in benefiting man, and showing the chief care of his heart to be, to love man and to make himself beloved by him. Speaking to the Lord, he exclaims, *What is man, that Thou shouldst magnify him, or why dost Thou set Thy Heart upon him?*[1861] Hence it is clearly a mistake to think that great confidence and familiarity in treating with God is a want of reverence to his Infinite Majesty. You ought indeed, O devout soul! to revere him in all humility, and abase yourself before him; especially when you call to mind the unthankfulness and the outrages whereof, in past times, you have been guilty. Yet this should not hinder your treating with him with the most tender love and confidence in your power. He is Infinite Majesty; but at the same time he is Infinite Goodness, Infinite Love. In God you possess the Lord most exalted and supreme; but you have also him who loves you with the greatest possible love. He disdains not, but delights that you should use towards him that confidence, that freedom and tenderness, which children use towards their mothers.

Hear how he invites us to come to his feet, and the caresses he promises to bestow on us: *You shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knees they shall caress you: as one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you.*[1862] As a mother delights to place her little child upon her knees, and so to feed or to caress him; with like tenderness does our gracious God delight to treat the souls whom he loves., who have given themselves wholly to him, and placed all their hopes in his goodness. Consider, you have no friend nor brother, nor father nor mother, nor spouse nor lover, who loves you more than your God. The divine grace is that great treasure whereby we vilest of creatures, we servants, become the dear friends of our Creator himself: *For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.*[1863] For this purpose he increases our confidence; *he emptied himself,*[1864] and brought himself to nought, so to speak; abasing himself even to becoming man and conversing familiarly with us: *He conversed with men,*[1865] He went so far as to become an infant, to become poor, even so far as openly to die the death of a malefactor upon the cross. He went yet farther, even to hide himself under the appearance of bread, in order to become our constant companion and unite himself intimately to us: *He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me, and I in him.*[1866]

In a word, he loves you as much as though he had no love but towards yourself alone. For which reason you ought to have no love for any but for himself. Of him, therefore, you may say, and you ought to say, *My Beloved to me, and I to Him.*[1867] My God has given himself all to me, and I give myself all to him; He has chosen me for his beloved, and I choose him, of all others, for my only Love: *My Beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.*[1868] Say, then, to him often, *O my Lord! wherefore dost Thou love me thus? what good thing dost Thou see in me? Hast Thou forgotten the injuries I have done Thee? But since Thou hast treated me so lovingly, and instead of casting me into hell, hast granted me so many favours, whom can I desire to love from this day forward but Thee, my God, my all? Ah, most gracious God, if in time past I have offended Thee, it is not so much the punishment I have deserved that now grieves me, as the displeasure I have given Thee, who art worthy of infinite love. But Thou knowest not how to despise a heart that repents and humbles itself: A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*[1869] Ah, now, indeed, neither in this life nor in the other do I desire any but Thee alone: *What have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth! Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.*[1870] Thou alone art and shalt be forever the only Lord of my heart, of my will; Thou my only good, my heaven, my hope, my love, my all: *“The God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.”*

The more to strengthen your confidence in God, often call to mind his loving treatment of you, and the gracious means he has used to drive you from the disorders of your life and your attachments to earth, in order to draw you to his holy love; and therefore fear to have too little confidence in treating with your God, now that you have a resolute will to love and to please him with all your power. The mercies he has granted you are most sure pledges of the love he bears you. God is displeased with a want of trust on the part of souls that heartily love him, and whom he loves. If, then, you desire to please his loving heart, converse with him from this day forward with the greatest confidence and tenderness you can possibly have.

I have graven thee in My hands: thy walls are always before My eyes.[1871] Beloved soul, says the Lord, what do you fear or mistrust? I have you written in my hands, so as never to forget to do you good. Are you afraid of your enemies? Know that the care of your defence is always before me, so that I cannot lose sight of it. Therefore did David rejoice, saying to God, *Thou hast crowned us as with a shield of Thy good will.*[1872] Who, O Lord! can ever harm us, if Thou with Thy goodness and love dost defend and encompass us round about? Above all, animate your confidence at the thought of the gift that God has given us of Jesus Christ: *God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son.*[1873] *How can we ever fear, exclaims the Apostle, that God would refuse us any good, after he has vouchsafed to give us his own Son? He delivered Him up for us all; how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?*[1874]

My delights are to be with the children of men.[1875] The paradise of God, so to speak, is the heart of man. Does God love you? Love him. His delights are to be with you; let yours be to be with himself, to pass all your lifetime with him, in the delight of whose company you hope to spend a blissful eternity. Accustom yourself to speak with him alone, familiarly, with confidence and love, as to the dearest friend you have, and who loves you best.

II. IT IS EASY AND AGREEABLE TO ENTERTAIN ONE’S SELF WITH GOD

If it be a great mistake, as has been already said, to converse mistrustfully with God, to be always coming before him as a slave, full of fear and confusion, comes before his prince, trembling with dread, it would be a greater to think that conversing with God is but weariness and bitterness. No, it is not so: *Her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness?*[1876] Ask those souls who love him with a true love, and they will tell you that in the sorrows of their life they find no greater, no truer relief, than in a loving converse with God. Now this does not require that you continually apply your mind to it, so as to forget all your employments and recreations. It only requires of you, without putting these aside, to act towards God as you act on occasion towards those who love you and whom you love. Your God is ever near you, nay, within you: *In Him we live, and move, and be.*[1877]

There is no barrier at the door against any who desire to speak with him; nay, God delights that you should treat with him confidently. Treat with him of your business, your plans, your griefs, your fears, of all that concerns you. Above all, do so (as I have said) with confidence, with open heart. For God is not wont to speak to the soul that speaks not to him; forasmuch as, if it be not used to converse with him, it would little understand his voice when he spoke to it. And this is what the Lord complains of: *Our sister is little: what shall we do to our sister in the day when she is to be spoken to?*[1878] Our sister is but a child in my love; what shall we do to speak to her if she understand me not? God will have himself esteemed the Lord of surpassing power and terribleness, when we despise his grace; but, on the contrary, he will have himself treated with as the most affectionate friend when we love him; and to this end he would have us often speak with him familiarly and without restraint. It is true that God ought always to be revered in the highest degree; but when he favours you by making you feel his presence and know his desire that you should speak to him as to that one who loves you above all, then express to him your feelings with freedom and confidence. *She preventeth them that covet her, so that she first showeth herself unto them.*[1879] When you desire his love, he takes the first step, without waiting till you come to him; and presents himself to you, bringing with him the graces and the remedies you stand in need of. He only waits for you to speak to him, to show you that he is near to you, ready to hear and to comfort you: *And His ears are unto their prayers.*[1880]

By reason of his immensity, our God is in every place; but there are two places above all where he has his own peculiar dwelling. One is the highest heaven, where he is present by that glory which he communicates to the blessed; the other is upon earth, it is within the humble soul that loves him: *Who dwelleth with a contrite and humble spirit.*[1881] He, then, our God, dwelleth in the height of heaven; and yet he disdains not to occupy and engage himself day and night with his faithful servants in their cabins or their cells. And there he bestows on them his divine consolations, each one of which surpasses all the delights the world can give, and which he only does not desire who has no experience of them: *Oh, taste and see that the Lord is sweet.*[1882] Friends in the world have some hours in which they converse together, and others during which they are apart; but between God and you, if you wish, there shall never be one hour of separation: *Thou shalt rest, and thy sleep shall be sweet: the Lord will be at thy side.*[1883] You may sleep, and God will place himself at your side, and watch with you continually: *I will repose myself with Him, and He shall be a comfort in my cares and grief.*[1884] When you take your rest, he departs not from beside your pillow; he remains thinking always of you, that when you wake in the night he may speak to you by his inspirations, and receive from you some act of love, of oblation, of thanksgiving; so as to keep up even in those hours his gracious and sweet converse with you.

Sometimes also he will speak to you in your sleep, and cause you to hear his voice, that on waking you may put in practice what he has spoken: *I will speak to him in a dream.*[1885] He is there also in the morning, to hear from you some word of affection, of confidence; to be the depositary of your first thoughts, and of all the actions which you promise to perform that day to please him; of all the griefs, too, which you offer to endure willingly for his glory and love. But as he fails not to present himself to you at the moment of your waking, fail not you, on your part, to give him immediately a look of love, and to rejoice when your God announces to you the glad tidings that he is not far from you, as once he was by reason of your sins; but that he loves you, and would be beloved by you: and at that same moment he gives you the gracious precept, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*[1886]

III. OF WHAT, WHEN, AND HOW WE SHOULD CONVERSE WITH GOD

1. IN GENERAL

Never, then, forget his sweet presence, as do the greater part of men. Speak to him as often as you can; for he does not grow weary of this nor disdain it, as do the lords of the earth. If you love him, you will riot be at a loss what to say to him. Tell him all that occurs to you about yourself and your affairs, as you would tell it to a dear friend. Look not upon him as a haughty sovereign, who will only converse with the great, and on great matters. He, our God, delights to abase himself to converse with us, loves to have us communicate to him our smallest, our most daily concerns. He loves you as much, and has as much care for you, as if he had none others to think of but yourself. He is as entirely devoted to your interests as though the only end of his providence were to succour you, of his almighty power to aid you, of his mercy and goodness to take pity on you, to do you good, and gain by the delicate touches of his kindness your confidence and love. Manifest, then, to him freely all your state of mind, and pray to him to guide you to accomplish perfectly his holy will. And let all your desires and plans be simply bent to discover his good pleasure, and do what is agreeable to his divine heart: *Commit thy way to the Lord:*[1887] *and desire of Him to direct thy ways, and that all thy counsels may abide in Him.*[1888] Say not, But where is the need of disclosing to God all my wants, if he already sees and knows them better than I? True, he knows them; but God makes as if he knew not the necessities about which you do not speak to him, and for which you seek not his aid. Our Saviour knew well that Lazarus was dead, and yet he made as if he knew it not, until the Magdalene had told him of it, and then he comforted her by raising her brother to life again.[1889]

2. IN TRIALS

When, therefore, you are afflicted with any sickness, temptation, persecution, or other trouble, go at once and beseech him, that his hand may help you. It is enough for you to present the affliction before him; to come in and say, *Behold, O Lord, for I am in distress.*[1890] He will not fail to comfort you, or at least to give you strength to suffer that grief with patience; and it will turn out a greater good to you than if he had altogether freed you from it.

Tell him all the thoughts of fear or of sadness that torment you; and say to him, *My God, in Thee are all my hopes; I offer to Thee this affliction, and resign myself to Thy will; but do Thou take pity on me, either deliver me out of it, or give me strength to bear it.* And he will truly keep with you that promise made in the Gospel to all those who are in trouble, to console and comfort them as often as they have recourse to him: *Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.*[1891] He will not be displeased that in your desolations you should go to your friends to find some relief; but he wills you chiefly to have recourse to himself. At all events, therefore, after you have applied to creatures, and they have been unable to comfort your heart, have recourse to your Creator, and say to him, Lord, men have only words for me; *my friends are full of words,*[1892] they cannot comfort me, nor do I any more desire to be comforted by them; Thou art all my hope, all my love. From Thee only will I receive comfort; and let my comfort be, on this occasion, to do what pleaseth Thee. Behold me ready to endure this grief through my whole life, through all eternity, if such be Thy good pleasure. Only do Thou help me. Fear not that he will be offended if you sometimes gently complain, and say to him, *Why, O Lord, hast Thou retired afar off?*[1893] Thou knowest, Lord, that I love Thee, and desire nothing but Thy love; in pity help me, and forsake me not. And when the desolation lasts long, and troubles you exceedingly, unite your voice to that of Jesus in agony and dying on the cross, and beseech his mercy, saying, *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?*[1894]

But let the effect of this be to humble you yet more at the thought that he deserves no consolations who has offended God; and yet more to enliven your confidence, knowing that God does all things, and permits all, for your good: *All things work together unto good*[1895] Say with great courage, even when you feel most troubled and disconsolate: *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*[1896] Lord, it is Thine to enlighten me, it is Thine to save me; in Thee do I trust: In Thee, *O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be confounded.*[1897] And thus keep yourself in peace, knowing there never was any one who placed his hopes in God and was lost: *No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.*[1898] Consider, your God loves you more than you can love yourself; what do you fear? David comforted himself, saying, *The Lord is careful for me.*[1899] Say to him, therefore, Lord, into Thy arms I cast myself; I desire to have no thought but of loving and pleasing Thee; behold me ready to do what Thou requirest of me. Thou dost not only will my good, Thou art careful for it; unto Thee, then, do I leave the care of my salvation. In Thee do I rest, and will rest for evermore, since Thou willest that in Thee I should place all my hopes: *In peace, in the self same, I will sleep and I will rest; for Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope.*[1900] *Think of the Lord in goodness.*[1901]

In these words the Wise Man exhorts us to have more confidence in the divine mercy than dread of the divine justice; since God is immeasurably more inclined to bestow favours than to punish; as St. James says, *Mercy exalteth itself above judgment.*[1902] Whence the Apostle St. Peter tells us that in all fears, whether about our interests for time or for eternity, we should commit ourselves altogether to the goodness of our God, who keeps the greatest care of our safety: *Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you,*[1903] Oh, what a beautiful meaning does this lend to the title which David gives to the Lord, when he says that our God is the God who makes it his care to save: *Our God is the God of salvation;*[1904] which signifies, as Bellarmine explains it, that the office peculiar to the Lord is, not to condemn, but to save all. For while he threatens with his displeasure those who disregard him, he promises, on the other hand, his assured mercies to those who fear him; as the divine Mother said in her Canticle, *And His mercy is to them that fear Him.*[1905] I set before you, devout soul, all these passages of Scripture, that when the thought disquiets you, Am I to be saved or not? Am I predestined or not? you may take courage, and understand from the promises he makes you what desire God has to save you, if only you are resolved to serve him and to love him as he demands at your hands.

3. IN JOYS

Further, when you receive pleasant news, do not act like those unfaithful, thankless souls who have recourse to God in time of trouble, but in time of prosperity forget and forsake him. Be as faithful to him as you would be to a friend who loves you and rejoices in your good; go at once and tell him of your gladness, and praise him and give him thanks, acknowledging it all as a gift from his hands; and rejoice in that happiness because it comes to you of his good pleasure.

Rejoice, therefore, and comfort yourself in him alone: *I will rejoice in the Lord;*[1906] *and I will joy in God my Jesus.*[1907] Say to him, *My Jesus, I bless, and will ever bless Thee, for granting me so many favours, when I deserved at Thy hands not favours, but chastisements for the affronts I have given Thee.* Say to him, with the sacred Spouse, *All fruits, the new and the old, my Beloved, I have kept for Thee.*[1908] Lord, I give Thee thanks; I keep in memory all Thy bounties, past and present, to render Thee praise and glory for them forever and ever. But if you love your God, you ought to rejoice more in his blessedness than in your own. He who loves a friend very much sometimes takes more delight in that friend's good than if it had been his own. Comfort yourself, then, in the knowledge that your God is infinitely blessed. Often say to him, My beloved Lord, I rejoice more in Thy blessedness than in any good of mine; yes, for I love Thee more than I love myself.

4. AFTER A FAULT

Another mark of confidence highly pleasing to your most loving God is this: that when you have committed any fault, you be not ashamed to go at once to his feet and seek his pardon. Consider that God is so greatly inclined to pardon sinners that he laments their perdition, when they depart far from him and live as dead to his grace.

Therefore does he lovingly call them, saying, *Why will you die, O house of Israel? Return ye, and live.*[1909] He promises to receive the soul that has forsaken him, so soon as she returns to his arms: *Turn ye to me, . . . and I will turn to you.*[1910] Oh, if sinners did but know with what tender mercy the Lord stands waiting to forgive them! *The Lord waiteth, that He may have mercy on you.*[1911] Oh, did they but know the desire he has, not to chastise, but to see them converted, that he may embrace them, that he may press them to his heart! He declares: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*[1912] He even says: *And then come and accuse Me, saith the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow.*[1913] As though he had said, Sinners, repent of having offended Me, and then come unto Me: if I do not pardon you, *"accuse Me;"* upbraid Me, and treat Me as one unfaithful. But no, I will not be wanting to My promise. If you will come, know this: that though your consciences are dyed deep as crimson by your sins, I will make them by My grace as white as snow. In a word, he has declared that when a soul repents of having offended him, he forgets all its sins: *I will not remember all his iniquities.*[1914] As soon, then, as you fall into any fault, raise your eyes to God, make an act of love, and with humble confession of your fault, hope assuredly for his pardon, and say to him, *Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick;*[1915] that heart which Thou dost love is sick, is full of sores: *heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee.*[1916]

Thou seekest after penitent sinners; behold, here is one at Thy feet, who has come in search of Thee. The evil is done already; what have I now to do? Thou wilt not have me lose courage: after this my sin Thou dost still love me, and I too love Thee. Yes, my God, I love Thee with all my heart; I repent of the displeasure I have given Thee; I purpose never to do so any more. Thou, who art that God, *merciful and gracious, patient and of much compassion*[1917] forgive me; make me to hear what Thou didst say to the Magdalene, *Thy sins are forgiven thee;*[1918] and give me strength to be faithful unto Thee for the time to come. That thou mayest not lose courage at such a moment, cast a glance at Jesus on the cross; offer his merits to the Eternal Father; and thus hope certainly for pardon, *since He spared not even His own Son.*[1919] Say to him with confidence, *Look on the face of Thy Christ.*[1920] My God, behold Thy Son, dead for my sake; and for the love of that Son forgive me. Attend greatly, devout soul, to the instruction commonly given by masters of the spiritual life, after your unfaithful conduct, at once to have recourse to God, though you have repeated it a hundred times in a day; and after your falls, and the recourse you have had to the Lord (as has been just said), at once to be in peace. Otherwise, while you remain cast down and disturbed at the fault you have committed, your converse with God will be small; your trust in him will fail; your desire to love him grow cold; and you will be little able to go forward in the way of the Lord.

On the other hand, by having immediate recourse to God to ask his forgiveness, and to promise him amendment, your very faults will serve to advance you further in the divine love. Between friends who sincerely love each other it often happens that when one has displeased the other, and then humbles himself and asks pardon, their friendship thereby becomes stronger than ever. Do you likewise; see to it that your very faults serve to bind you yet closer in love to your God.

5. IN DOUBTS

In any kind of doubtfulness also, either on your own account or that of others, never leave acting towards your God with a confidence like to that of faithful friends, who consult together on every matter. So do you take counsel with himself, and beseech him to enlighten you that you may decide on what will be most pleasing to him: *Put those words in my mouth, and strengthen the resolution in my heart.*[1921] Lord, tell me what Thou wouldst have me to do or to answer; and thus will I. *Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth.*[1922]

6. FOR YOUR NEIGHBOR

Use towards him also the freedom of recommending not only your own needs, but also those of others. How agreeable will it be to your God that sometimes you forget even your own interests to speak to him of the advancement of his glory, of the miseries of others, especially those who groan in affliction, of those souls, his spouses, who in purgatory sigh after the vision of himself, and of poor sinners who are living destitute of his grace!

For these especially say to him*: Lord, Thou who art so amiable, and worthy of an infinite love, how dost Thou, then, endure to see such a number of souls in the world, on whom Thou hast bestowed so many favours, and who yet will not know Thee, will not love Thee, nay, even offend and despise Thee? Ah! my God, object of all love, make Thyself to be known, make Thyself to be beloved. "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come;"*[1923] *may Thy name be adored and beloved by all; may Thy love* *reign in all hearts. Ah, let me not depart withoutgranting me some grace for those unfaithful souls for whom I pray.*

7. THE DESIRE FOR HEAVEN

It is said that in purgatory those souls who in this life have had but little longing for heaven are punished with a particular suffering, called the pain of languor; and with reason, because to long but little for heaven is to set small value on the great good of the eternal kingdom which our Redeemer has purchased for us by his death. Forget not, therefore, devout soul, frequently to sigh after heaven: say to your God that it seems to you an endless time for you to come and see him, and to love him face to face. Long ardently to depart out of this banishment, this scene of sinning, and danger of losing his grace, that you may arrive in that land of love where you may love him with all your powers. Say to him again and again, Lord, so long as I live on this earth, I am always in danger of forsaking Thee and losing Thy love. When will it be that I quit this life, wherein I am ever offending Thee, and come to love Thee with all my soul, and unite myself to Thee, with no danger of losing Thee any more? St. Teresa was ever sighing in this way, and used to rejoice when she heard the clock strike, because another hour of life, and of the danger of losing God, was past and gone. For she so greatly desired death in order to see God, that she was dying with the desire to die; and hence she composed that loving canticle of hers, *I die, because I do not die.*

IV. GOD ANSWERS THE SOUL THAT SPEAKS TO HIM

In a word, if you desire to delight the loving heart of your God, be careful to speak to him as often as you are able, and with the fullest confidence that he will not disdain to answer and speak with you in return. He does not, indeed, make himself heard in any voice that reaches your ears, but in a voice that your heart can well perceive, when you withdraw from converse with creatures, to occupy yourself in conversing with your God alone: *I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart.*[1924] He will then speak to you by such inspirations, such interior lights, such manifestations of his goodness, such sweet touches in your heart, such tokens of forgiveness, such experience of peace, such hopes of heaven, such rejoicings within you, such sweetness of his grace, such loving and close embraces, in a word, such voices of love, as are well understood by those souls whom he loves, and who seek for nothing but himself alone.

V. PRACTICAL SUMMARY

Lastly, to make a brief summary of what has already been said at large, I will not omit to suggest a devout practice whereby you may fulfil all your daily actions in a manner pleasing to God. When you wake in the morning, let it be your first thought to raise your mind to him, offering to his glory all that you shall do or suffer that day, praying to him to assist you by his grace. Then make your other morning acts of devotion, acts of thanksgiving and of love, prayers, and resolutions to live that day as though it were to be the last of your life. Father St. Jure recommends the making in the morning of a compact with the Lord; that every time you make a certain sign, as placing your hand upon your heart, or raising your eyes to heaven or to the crucifix, and the like, you wish thereby to make an act of love, of desire to see him loved by all, of oblation of yourself, and other acts of the same kind. When you have made these acts, and placed your soul in the side of Jesus and under the mantle of Mary, and have prayed the Eternal Father that for the love of Jesus and Mary he would protect you during the day, be careful, before you engage in anything else, to make your mental prayer, or meditation, at least for half an hour; and let your specially chosen meditation be the sorrow and the shame which Jesus Christ suffered in his Passion. This is the dearest subject to loving souls, and the one that most kindles divine love within them. If you would make spiritual progress, let three devotions be especially dear to you; devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ, to the Most Holy Sacrament, and to the ever-blessed Virgin. In mental prayer, make again and again acts of contrition, of love to God, and oblation of yourself. *The Venerable Father Charles Caraffa, founder of the Pious Workers, said that one fervent act of the love of God made thus in the morning is sufficient to maintain the soul in fervour throughout the whole day.* Then, besides the more specific acts of devotion, such as confession, Communion, recitation of the divine office, etc., whenever you are engaged in external occupations, as in study, in labour, or in any other employment that may be proper to your condition, never forget, when setting about it, to make an offering of it to God, praying for his assistance to enable you to perform it in a perfect manner; and do not omit to retire frequently into the cell of your heart, in order to unite yourself to God, according to the practice of St. Catharine of Sienna. In short, whatever you do, do it with and for God. In going out of your room or house, and on returning again, always commend yourself to the divine Mother, by saying a Hail Mary. When sitting down to meals, make an offering to God of the disgust or gratification you may find in what you eat and drink; and, on rising from table, return thanks to him and say, Lord, how great is Thy goodness to one who has offended Thee so much! In the course of the day be careful to make your spiritual reading, to visit the Most Holy Sacrament and the Most Holy Mary; and in the evening to say the Rosary, and to make an examination of conscience, together with the Christian acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition, resolutions of amendment, and of receiving the Holy Sacraments during life and at the hour of death, forming also the intention of gaining all the indulgences that you can gain. And again, on going to bed, reflect that if you had your deserts, you would be lying down in the flames of hell; then, with the crucifix in your arms, compose yourself to sleep, saying, *In peace, in the self—set me, I will sleep and take my rest.*[1925]

And here, in passing, I would briefly point out to you the many indulgences that are attached to various prayers or acts of devotion. Whence it is desirable for you in the morning to make the intention of gaining all the indulgences in your power during the day. To one who makes acts of the three theological virtues mentioned above of faith, etc. there are granted seven years and seven quarantines for each day; and by continuing them for a month a plenary indulgence may be gained, provided on the day of his choice he confesses, communicates, and prays to the intention of the Church, applicable also to the souls in purgatory and to himself. This indulgence is in articulo mortis. In like manner, form the intention of gaining also all the indulgences granted for saying the *Rosary* on beads properly blessed, the *Angelus Domini* three times a day, the *Litany of our Blessed Lady,* the *Salve Regina,* the *Ave Maria,* and the *Gloria Patri;* for saying, *“Blessed be the holy and immaculate and most pure conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary;”* as also for saying, *“Praised now and for ever be* *the Most Holy Sacrament;"* for reciting the prayer *Anima Christi, etc.;* for *bowing the head at the Gloria Patri* and at the most *holy names* of *Jesus and Mary;* as also for *hearing Mass;* for *making half an hour's mental prayer;* to which, besides a partial, there is also a plenary, indulgence attached, provided it be continued for a month, on condition of confession and Communion, and prayers to the intention of the Church in the course of the same; for *genuflecting before the Most Holy Sacrament, and for kissing the crucifix.* Always have the intention formed of gaining every such indulgence.

Then, that you may be able to keep yourself ever in a state of recollection and union with God, as long as you live, and as far as may be possible, turn everything that you may see or hear into an occasion for raising your mind to God, or for taking a glance at eternity. For example, when you see running water, reflect that your life is also in like manner running on, and carrying you nearer and nearer to death. When you see a lamp going out for want of oil, reflect that thus also one day you will have to bring your life to its end. When you see the graves or remains of the dead, consider that you also have to become like them. When you see the great ones of this world rejoicing in their wealth or distinction, pity their folly, and say, For me God is sufficient: *Some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we in the name of the Lord.*[1926] Let these glory in such vanity; I will make nothing my glory but the grace of God, and the love of him. When you behold the pompous funerals, or the fine sepulchral monuments of the great ones who are dead, say, If these are damned, what is the good of this pomp to them? When you behold the sea in a calm or a storm, consider the difference that there is between a soul when in the grace and when out of the grace of God. When you see a tree that is withered, consider that a soul without God is serviceable for nothing but to be cast into fire. If you ever happen to see one who has been guilty of some great crime, trembling with shame and. fright in the presence of his judge, or of his father, or of his bishop, consider what the panic of a sinner will be in the presence of Christ his judge. When it thunders, and you become alarmed, reflect how those miserable ones who are damned tremble as they hear continually in hell the thunders of the divine wrath. If you ever see one who has been condemned to suffer a painful death, and who says, Is there, then, no longer any means for my escaping death? consider what will be the despair of a soul when it is condemned to hell, as it says, *Is there, then, no longer any means for escaping from eternal ruin?* When your eye rests on scenes in the country or along the shore, on flowers or fruits, and you are delighted by the sight and scent of all, say, Behold, how many are the beautiful creatures that God has created for me in this world, in order that I may love him; and what further enjoyments does he not keep prepared for me in Paradise? St. Teresa used to say that when she saw any beautiful hills or slopes, they seemed to reproach her for her own ingratitude to God.

And the Abbot de Rancé, founder of La Trappe, said that the beautiful creatures around him reminded him of his own obligation to love God. St. Augustine also said the same, crying out aloud, *“Heaven, and earth, and all things tell me to love Thee.”*[1927] It is related of a certain holy man, that in passing through the fields he would strike with a little stick the flowers and plants which he found, saying, *“Be silent; do not reproach me any longer for my ingratitude to God. I have understood you; be silent; say no more.”* When St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi held in her hand any beautiful fruit or flower, she used to feel herself smitten by it with divine love, saying to herself, *“Behold, my God has thought from eternity of creating this fruit, this flower, in order to give it me as a token of the love which he bears towards me.”* When you see rivers or brooks, reflect that as the water which you behold keeps running on to the ocean without ever stopping, so ought you to be ever hasting on to God, who is your only good. When you happen to be in a vehicle that is drawn by beasts of burden, say, See what labour these innocent animals go through for my service; and how much pains do I myself take in order to serve and please my God? When you see a little dog, which for a miserable morsel of bread is so faithful to its master, reflect how much greater reason you have to be faithful to God, who has created and preserved and provided for you, and heaps upon you so many blessings. When you hear the birds sing, say, Hearken, O my soul, to the praise which these little creatures are giving to their Creator; and what are you doing? Then do you also praise him with acts of love.

On the other hand, when you hear the cock crow, recall to your memory that there once was a time when you also, like Peter, denied your God; and renew your contrition and your tears. So, likewise, when you see the house or place where you have sinned, turn yourself to God, and say, “*The sins of my youth and my ignorance remember not, O Lord.*”[1928] When you behold any valleys, consider that as their fertility is owing to the waters that run down from the mountains, so from heaven do graces descend upon the souls of the humble, and pass by the proud. When you see a beautifully ornamented church, consider the beauty of a soul in a state of grace, which is a real temple of God. When you behold the sea, consider the immensity and the greatness of God. When you see fire, or candles lighted on an altar, say, How many years is it since I ought to have been cast into hell to burn? But since Thou, O Lord, hast not sent me there, make this heart of mine burn with love for Thee, as that wood or those candles burn. When you look up at the sky, all studded with stars, say with St. Andrew of Avellino, *“O my feet, you will one day have those stars beneath you.”* Then, in order frequently to recall to mind the mysteries of our Saviour’s love, when you see hay, a manger, or caves, let the Infant Jesus in the stable of Bethlehem be present to your recollection. When you see a saw, a hammer, a plane, or an axe, remember how Jesus worked like a mere lad, in the shop at Nazareth. Then if you see ropes, thorns, nails, or pieces of wood, reflect on the Passion and Death of our Redeemer. St Francis of Assisi, on seeing a lamb, would begin to weep, saying, “My Lord like a lamb was led to death for me.” Again: when you see altars, chalices, or patens, recall to mind the greatness of the love which Jesus Christ has borne us in giving us the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Frequently during the day make an offering of yourself to God, as St. Teresa used to do, saying, *“Lord, here am I; do with me that which pleaseth Thee. Declare to me Thy will, that I may do it for Thee; I wish to do it thoroughly.”*

Then repeat, as often as you can, acts of love towards God. St. Teresa used also to say that acts of love are the fuel by which holy love is to be kept on fire within the heart. When the Venerable Sister Seraphine of Carpi was one day considering that the mule belonging to the convent had not the power of loving God, she expressed her compassion for it thus: “Poor brute; thou neither knowest nor canst love thy God;” and the mule commenced to weep so that the tears fell in streams from its eyes: so likewise do you, when beholding any animal which has not the capacity for knowing or loving God, animate yourself, who can love him, to make the more abundant acts of love. Whenever you fall into any fault, humble yourself for it immediately; and, with an act of more fervent love, endeavour to rise again. When anything adverse happens, immediately make an offering to God of what you have to suffer, bringing your will into conformity with his own; and ever accustom yourself under all adverse circumstances to repeat these words: *“Thus God wills; thus I will too.”* Acts of resignation are the acts of love that are most precious and acceptable to the heart of God.

When you have to decide upon anything, or to give any counsel of importance, first commend yourself to God, and then set about your undertaking, or give your opinion. As often as you can during the day, after the example of St. Rose of Lima, repeat the prayer, *Deus in adjutorium meum intende: “Lord, come to my assistance; do not leave me in my own hands.”* And for this end frequently turn to the image of the Crucified, or to that of the Most Holy Mary, which is in your room; and do not omit to make frequent invocations of the names of Jesus and of Mary, especially in time of temptation. Since God is infinite goodness, his desire of communicating his graces to us is perfect. The Venerable Father Alvarez one day saw our Saviour with his hands full of graces, and going about in search of those to whom he might dispense them. But it is his will that we should ask them of him. *Ask, and ye shall receive,*[1929] otherwise he will draw back his hand; whereas, on the contrary, he will willingly open it to those who call upon him. And who is there, says the Preacher, that hath called upon him and God despised him by not granting his prayer? *Who hath called upon Him, and He hath despised him?*[1930] And David tells us that the Lord shows not merely mercy, but great mercy, to those who call upon him: *For Thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Thee.*[1931] Oh, how good and bountiful is the Lord to him who seeks him lovingly! *The Lord is good to the soul that seeks Him.*[1932] If he lets himself be found even by him who seeks him not *I was found by them that did not seek Me.*[1933] how much more willingly will he let himself be found by one who seeks him, and seeks him, too, in order to serve him and to love him! To conclude: St. Teresa says that holy souls in this world have to conform themselves by love to what the souls of the blessed do in heaven. As the saints in heaven occupy themselves only with God, and have no other thought or joy than in his glory and in his love, so also must this be the case with you. While you are in this world, let God be your only happiness, the only object of your affections, the only end of all your actions and desires, until you come to that eternal kingdom where your love will be in all things perfected and completed, and your desires will be perfectly fulfilled and satisfied.

HYMN. DIALOGUE BETWEEN JESUS AND THE LOVING SOUL

(Taken from the Canticles.)

THE DIVINE SPOUSE

Aperi mihi, soror mea (Cant. v. 2).

Open to Me, my sister.

Open to me, my sister, To me thou art all coldness,
Open to me thy heart; Yet still for thee I burn;
My love can bear no longer Ah! see how much I love thee,
To live from thee apart. And love for love return.

Anima mea liquefacta est, ut dilectus locutus est (v. 6).

My soul melted when my Beloved spoke.

THE SOUL

As soon as my Beloved But oh! what tongue could utter
Had made me hear his voice, The gladness I had known
Within my breast all melting, Had he but deigned to tarry,
I felt my heart rejoice. And speak with me alone!

Adjuro vos filia: Jerusalem, si inveneritis dilectum meutn, ut nuntietis ei quia amore langueo (v. 8).

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell him that I languish with love.

My sisters, I entreat you Tell him my heart is mourning
If ye perchance have seen In sadness, night and day;
My Love, as ye were wandering While banished from his presence
Amid the woodlands green, I languish far away.

Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus, electus ex millibus (v. 10).

My Beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.

My sisters, do you ask me Who is that lovely One, Whose winning charms have conquered And made my heart his own?

He is that Lord of glory, Whose sweet and lovely face

Is radiant with the beauty Of every heavenly grace!

White is my Love, and ruddy, And all surpassing fair; Among a thousand chosen None can with him compare.

Qua’sivi, et non invent ilium; vocavi, et non respondit mihi (v. 6).

I sought Him, and found Him not; I called, and He did not answer me.

My Spouse, my well-beloved, I seek Thee; dost Thou fly me?

Ah, tell me where Thou art; I call; dost Thou not hear?

Oh, come, and by Thy presence I weep; dost Thou not pity?

Peace to my soul impart. My Spouse, why thus severe?

Fuge, dilecte mi, et assimilare caprea’ hinnuloque cervorum super montes aromatum (viii. 14).

Flee away, O my Beloved, and be like to the roe and to the young hart upon the mountains of aromatical spices.

But haste away, Beloved, Upon the desert mountains

If love thus makes Thee flee, Hie Thee, my Love, away;

That I may learn to follow, Tis there I will await Thee,

And grow in love for Thee. Alone with Thee to stay.

Trahe me; post te curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum (i. 3). Draw me; we will run after Thee to the odour of Thy ointments.

By the enticing odour Then, by Thy love all ravished,

Of Thy delights so pure, A captive, chained, but free,

O sweetest Lord of Heaven, My heart with love united

To Thee my soul allure. Shall joyful run to Thee.

Ego flos campi, et liliuin convallium (ii. 1).

I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys.

THE DIVINE SPOUSE

To all myself I offer, Like lily of the valley,

Like flow’ret of the field; He only findeth me

To all that seek me truly Who seeketh in the shadow.

My beauty is revealed. Of deep humility.

Hortus conclusus, soror mea, sponsa; emissions tug paradisus (iv. 12, 13). My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed; thy plants are a paradise.

And thou, my spouse, a garden Most pleasant dost appear, So fruitful and so lovely, And to my heart so dear:

For thou art closed to creatures, Open to me alone;I, only I, possess thee,

And thou art all mine own.

As from the heavenly gardens Thy fruits are sweet to me; Those acts of love so tender, Which now I draw from thee.

Averte oculos tuos a me, quia, ipsi me avolare fecerunt (vi. 4). Turn away thy eyes from me; for they have made me flee away.

Ah, turn away thine eyes, love, Long since thine eyes had made me

Those tender looks restrain; My throne in heaven resign,

They pierce like darts, they bind me, And come on earth to seek thee

And captive I remain. And join my heart to thine.

Vent, columba mea,in foraminibus petrg,ostende mihi faciem tuam; sonet vox tua, in auribus meis (ii. 13, 14).

Come, my dove, in the clefts of the rocks; show me thy face; let thy voice sound in my ears.

Come, O my spouse, my dearest, Come, O my chosen dove! Within my heart now enter, Take thy repose of love.

Then turn thy face unto me, And whisper in my ear,

For thy sweet voice like music To me was ever dear.

Say to me thou dost love me, That word will joy impart; Say thou art happy with me, And thus console my heart.Fasciculus myrrhg dilectus meus mihi: inter ubera. mea commorabitur (i. 12).

A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me: He shall abide between my breasts.

THE SOUL

If Thee, my Spouse, I love not, Who else my heart could woo? For Thou art all-endearing, Most lovely, and most true.

But Thou who ever feedest Among the lilies fair,

And mid the flowers of virtue That bloom with lustre rare,

As sense and feeling languish At the approach of death, And earthly goods and pleasures Fade at his fatal breath;

So sweet to me Thou seemest

That ever shalt Thou rest

Like to a fragrant bundle

Of myrrh upon my breast.

Qui pascitur inter lilia (ii. 16).

Who feedeth among the lilies.

Come to my heart, and with Thee

Come ev’ry flower of spring;

As pledge of Thy affection

Those flowers Thou lovest bring.

Fortis ut mors dilectio (viii. 6).

Love is strong as death.

So Love divine e’er changes

The soul he makes his own,

And then it finds no pleasure

In aught but him alone.

Dura sicut infernus crmulatio; lampades ejus, lampades ignis atque flammarum (viii. 6).

Jealousy is hard as hell; the lamps thereof are fire and flames.

Love is a flame that kindles Such ardour in the breast As makes it prompt to labour And seek no ease nor rest.

Unconquered still, unwearied, It burns with deep desireEn ipse stat post parietem nostrum, respiciens per fenestras, etc. Surge, propera. etc. (ii. 9, 10).

Behold, He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices. Behold, my

Beloved speaketh to me: arise, make haste, my Love, my Dove, my beautiful One, and come.

Behold the Spouse stands hidden, Hark! the Beloved speaketh:

His eyes are fixed on me; Arise, my lovely one,

And is my love still burning, Come to thy throne of glory,

Or cold, he looks to see. The storm is past and gone.

Inveni quem diligit anima mea: tenui eum, nec dimittam (iii. 4).

I found Him whom my soul loveth; I held Him, and I will not let Him go.

O lot too sweet, too happy! Then ever, O Beloved!

To make all hearts, all creatures, With love of God on fire.

And as in hell the torment Of fire insatiate glows, So in the ardent lover His love unceasing grows.

O bliss! I now have found Mine ever shalt Thou be;

My Spouse, my Love, my Treasure, No more, no more, my Treasure,

To whom my heart is bound. Shalt Thou depart from me.

Introduxit me in cellam vinariam (ii. 4).
He brought me into the cellar of wine.

Now to the lonely cellar What is that mystic cellar?

All full of mystic wine, Ah! ’tis this Sacred Heart;

The King, my Lover, led me And love, the wine entrancing, With tenderness divine. He deigneth to impart

Surge, aquilo, et vent, auster,perfla hortum meum, et fluant aromata (iv. 16).

Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind, blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow.

Ye thoughts of worldly pleasures, Ye wintry winds, depart, And come no more to trouble The peace of my poor heart.

Come, with Thy breath inflaming, Spirit of Love Divine!

Come, fires of love enkindle Within this breast of mine:

For, when Thy heavenly breathings Within my garden blow, With streams of every virtue My soul shall fragrant flow.

Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis, quid amore langueo (ii. 5).

Stay me up with flowers; compass me about with apples; because I languish with love.

Come, O ye heavenward longings! Come, sweetest fruits of love! Fresh vigour to my spirit Bring to me from above.

I sleep, but, ever watchful, My heart is loving still That sovereign Good who only With joy my heart can fill.

Within my breast is glowing

Such sweet, such loving fire,

That, lo! my soul is fainting,

I languish with desire.

Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat (v. 2).

I sleep, and my heart watcheth.

What peaceful sleep, what pleasure,

What calm repose is this?

No voice of earth intruding,

Love reigns in silent bliss.

Indica mihi, quem diligit anima wea, ubi pascas, ubi cubes in meridie (i. 6).

Show me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day.

Blest spirits, who in heaven Tell me where Thou reposest,

The sight of God enjoy, And with Thy love divine

No fear again to lose him Vouchsafe to feed, O Jesus!

Can e’er your bliss destroy. This heart so loved by Thine.

Ah, when to me my Treasure O Heaven, in Thy bright palaceIn heaven will you give, The Spouse his beauty shows,

For whom I die of longing, And all unveiled, there only,

For whom alone I live? Himself on all bestows.

Ne suscitetis, neque evigilare faciatis dilectam (iii. 5).

Stir not up, nor awake my beloved.

THE DIVINE SPOUSE

Ah, see! My Spouse now slumbers; Tranquil she lies, reposing

My loved one do not wake; In peace of love divine;

That sleep of love entrancing Her loving heart united

Oh, dare not yet to break. In closest bonds to mine.

Qua est ista, quæ ascendit per desertum, sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus myrrhæ et thuris . . . deliciis

affluens, innixa super dilectum suum? (iii. 6; viii. 5.)

Who is she that goeth up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices of myrrh and frankincense . . .

flowing with delights, leaning upon her Beloved?

Before my eyes how charming This soul in beauty shone, Who lived for me so constant, Like turtle-dove alone!

Her heart so true was pining With peaceful keen desire, While love, her prayer inflaming, Consumed her in its fire.Now like a cloud of incense Ascending to the skies,

The hearts of all consoling, Her fragrant odours rise.

With what delights o’erflowing That soul arises blest,Who sought with love confiding On me alone to rest!

Vulnerasti cor meum soror mea,, sponsa, in uno oculorum tuorum; et in uno crine colli tui (iv. 9).

Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, with one of thy eyes, and with one hair of thy neck.

My sister, spouse beloved, This thy desire to please me

Thy dart has pierced me through; Was like a fiery dart;

Now sweetly I invite thee These thoughts of thine so humble

To love thy Lover true. Have pierced and won my heart.

Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni, coronaberis (iv. 8).

Come from Libanus, my spouse, come, thou shalt be crowned.

Oh, come, and quit forever A coronet of roses

The land of misery, Entwined with lilies chaste,

Where they who love most truly The crown of faithful spouses,

Must suffer most for me. Shall on thy brow be placed.

Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum (viii. 6).

Put me as a seal upon thy heart.

Meanwhile, my spouse, if truly Thou bearest in thy breast For me that true affection Thou hast so oft expressed,

Then must thou have my image Engraven in thy heart

By hand of love so deeply That never it depart.

And since thou hast beheld me, No shame nor torments fly; As spouse I now invite thee Upon the cross to die.

V

A SHORT TREATISE ON PRAYER[1934]

ITS EFFICACY, AND THE CONDITIONS REQUISITE FOR ITS DUE PERFORMANCE

I. THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

It is blasphemy to say with Luther and Calvin that the fall of Adam has made it impossible for men to keep God’s law; and it is also an error, condemned by the Church, to say with Jansenius that some precepts are impossible even to the just, with their present strength, and that God does not give them aid to enable them to fulfil them. Now the Council of Trent has declared that God does not command impossibilities, but admonishes us to do what we can with the assistance of the ordinary grace with which we are always furnished, and then pray to him to give us the further grace requisite to enable us to fulfil that which otherwise is beyond our strength, upon which he gives us the assistance which we require. In the words of the Council, God does not command impossible things; but, by commanding, he admonishes thee both to do what thou canst, and to pray for that which is beyond thy strength; and he assists thee, so as to make thee able to do it.”[1935]

And hence many sound theologians[1936] teach that God gives, or at least offers, to all men either the grace which immediately enables them actually to fulfil the commandments, or at any rate the remote grace which enables them to pray, and by means of prayer to obtain the proximate grace by which they can actually observe the commandments of God. Yet, for all this, there can be no doubt that the observance of the law, in the present state of our corrupt nature, is very difficult, and even morally impossible without a special assistance of God, and more abundant than that which man required in the state of innocence. Now, ordinarily speaking, says the celebrated Gennade,[1937] God only gives this special assistance to those who pray for it. St. Augustine teaches, that with the exception of the first motions of grace such as the first call to faith or to penance, which come to us without our concurrence all other graces, and especially that of perseverance, are only given to those persons who pray for them: “We believe that no one comes to be saved, except by the call of God. That no one works out his own salvation, except by the assistance of God; and that no one merits this assistance, except by prayer.”[1938]

And elsewhere he assumes it as certain, *“that God gives us a few things even when we do not pray, such as the beginnings of faith; but that he has provided the rest only for those who pray.”* From this theologians, such as Suarez, Habert, Layman, F. Segneri, and others, with Clement of Alexandria, St. Basil, St. Augustine, and St. Chrysostom, conclude that prayer is necessary to adults, if not as an end, yet as a means; that is to say, in the ordinary course of Providence, no Christian can be saved without recommending himself to God, and asking him for the graces necessary for his salvation. St. Chrysostom says that as the soul is necessary for the life of the body, so is prayer necessary for the soul to preserve it in the grace of God.[1939] This, too, is the meaning of those words of Jesus Christ: Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.[1940] Men ought it is necessary for them always to pray. St. James teaches us the same thing: You have not because you ask not;[1941] and the same lesson is taught us in that short sentence which our Saviour spoke: Ask, and it shall be given you.[1942] If, then, says St. Teresa, he who asks obtains, he that does not ask does not obtain. God wishes the salvation of all men: He willeth all men to be saved;[1943] but he wills that we should ask him for the graces which are necessary for our salvation. Shall we refuse to do such a little thing as this? Let us conclude this first point by gathering from what we have said, that he who prays is certain to be saved; while he who prays not is certain to be damned. All the saints were saved, and came to be saints by praying; all the accursed souls in hell were lost through neglect of prayer; if they had prayed, it is certain that they would not have been lost. And this will be one of the greatest occasions of their anguish in hell, the thought that they might have saved themselves so easily; that they had only to beg God to help them, but that now the time is past when this could avail them.

The Holy Scriptures are full of texts in which God tells us that he hears all our prayers. In one place he says: *He shall cry to Me, and I will hear him.*[1944] In an other, *Cry to me and I will hear thee.*[1945] Again: *Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.*[1946] Thou shalt cry, and I will deliver thee from the danger of being damned. Again: *Who hath called upon Him, and He despised Him?*[1947] Has it ever occurred that God has turned a deaf ear to the prayers of any one that called upon him? Again: *At the voice of thy cry, as soon as He shall hear, He will answer thee.*[1948] He will hear and respond to thy prayer immediately. Again: *As they are yet speaking, I will hear.*[1949] Before they have time to finish their petitions, I will answer them. Again: *Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer nor His mercy from me.*[1950]

Our prayer is always accompanied by God's mercy; hence, St. Augustine remarks upon this text, that when we find ourselves calling on God we ought to feel very happy, because when we are praying we ought to feel certain that God is hearing us: *"When you see that your prayer is not removed from you, be sure that his mercy is not removed from you either."*[1951] Again: *You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done to you.*[1952] Ask what you like; it is enough to ask, and it shall be granted to you. Hence Theodoret says that prayer is omnipotent: *"It is one, but. can obtain all things."*[1953] And St. Bonaventure says that by prayer we obtain every good, and are delivered from every evil: *"By it is obtained the enjoyment of every good, and deliverance of every ill."*[1954] And if, adds St. Bernard, at times God does not give us the grace which we ask, we ought to feel quite convinced that he is giving us in its stead some grace that is more needful to us. O Lord, said David, Thou art full of pity and mercy to all those who pray to Thee: *Thou, O Lord, art sweet, and mild, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Thee.*[1955] And St. James says, *If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all abundantly, and upbraideth not.*[1956] To those who pray, God gives with no sparing hand, as do the rich of this world, for their wealth soon comes to an end; but God's riches are infinite, and the more he gives the more he has to give, and therefore he gives abundantly, with unsparing hand, far surpassing aught that we can ask. And upbraideth not; does not cast in our teeth the insults we have offered him when we go to ask favours of him.

The nature of goodness is to be diffusive; and therefore God, whose very essence is infinite goodness *("his nature is goodness,"*[1957] says St. Leo*)*, has the greatest possible desire to communicate to us his good things and his own happiness, and is therefore anxious for our good. *The Lord is careful for me.*[1958] said David; and this made the royal prophet exclaim, *In whatsoever day I shall call upon Thee, behold I know that Thou art my God.*[1959] O Lord, he would say, whenever I call upon Thee, I at once know that Thou art my God; that is, that Thou art the infinite goodness, who desirest us to pray to Thee, to give Thee an opportunity to shower Thy benefits upon us; for as soon as we begin to ask Thee for grace, Thou dost at once give it. One day a miserable leper presented himself to our Saviour, and said to him, *Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean; and Jesus answered, I will; be thou made clean,*[1960] as though he had said, Ah, my child, dost thou doubt of my willingness to cure thee? dost thou not know that I am thy God, and that my desire is to see all my creatures happy? And for what cause am I come down from heaven to earth, if not to make all men happy? Yes, I will; be thou healed. Many persons complain that God does not give them the graces which they wish for. But, says St. Bernard, how much reason has God to complain of them that they do not pray, and that by this neglect they close his hand, which he would be so glad to open for their benefit? *"Many complain that grace fails them; but much more justly might grace complain that many fail her."*[1961]

No, do not complain of me, says our Lord, if you have not received from me the graces of which you stood in need; complain of yourselves for not having asked me for them, which is the real reason why you have not received them; pray for them from this day forward, and ye shall be satisfied to the full: *Hitherto ye have not asked anything. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*[1962] The monks of old once held a council among themselves to examine which was the most useful exercise to secure eternal salvation, and they concluded that it was to beseech God in prayer, with the words, *Incline unto my aid, O God!*[1963] And F. Paul Segneri tells us that when he began the practice of meditation, his chief object was to elicit affections; but that afterwards, when he came to know the great utility and necessity of prayer, he was careful to make it the principal part of his meditation.

III. THE CONDITIONS REQUISITE FOR THE DUE PERFORMANCE OF PRAYER

But how does it come to pass that some persons pray, but yet do not receive? They pray, indeed, but they do not pray as they ought, and this is why they obtain nothing: *You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss.*[1964] Many persons seek for grace, but do not observe the proper conditions. Let us see, then, what are the necessary conditions of prayer, in order to make it efficacious to obtain the graces we desire.

1. HUMILITY

Prayer must be humble: *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*[1965] Here St. James tells us that God does not listen to the prayers of the proud, but resists them; while, on the other hand, he is always ready to hear the prayers of the humble: *The prayer of the man that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds, . . . and he will not depart till the Most High behold.*[1966] The prayer of an humble soul at once penetrates the heavens and presents itself before the throne of God, and will not depart thence till God regards it and listens to it. However sinful such a soul may be, God can never despise a heart that repents of its sins, and humbles itself: *A contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*[1967]

2. CONFIDENCE

Prayer must be confident: *No one hath hoped in the Lord and been confounded.*[1968] The Holy Ghost assures us that it never has happened that any one who placed his trust in God has been deceived. He once said to St. Gertrude that a person who prays to him with confidence does him, in a certain way, such violence that he cannot but listen to him and grant all his requests. *"Prayer," said St. John Climacus, "is a pious way of forcing God."*[1969] Prayer does violence to him; but a violence which he loves and delights in. *"This violence is pleasing to God."*[1970]

In the *"Our Father,"* which is the prayer which Jesus Christ himself taught us as a means whereby to obtain all the graces necessary for our salvation, how are we made to address God? *Not as Lord, not as Judge, but as Father, "our Father," because he wishes us to ask God for grace with the same confidence as a son, when he is hungry or ill, asks his own father for food or medicine. If a son is famished, he has only to tell his father, and he will be immediately fed; if he has been bitten by a venomous serpent, he has only to show the wound, and his father will apply the best remedy that he has.* For this cause, our Saviour has told us: *All things whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.*[1971] We have, then, only to pray to God with confidence in order to obtain all that we desire. And how could our Lord have exhorted us so earnestly to pray for grace, unless he had wished to give it? *"He would not have exhorted us (says St. Augustine) to ask, unless he had been willing to grant."*[1972] The woman of Canaan whose daughter was possessed by a devil went to beseech Jesus Christ to deliver her from him, and said, " Have mercy on me, my daughter is grievously vexed by a devil." Jesus answered, *I am not sent except to the sheep of Israel;*[1973] my mission is not to you Gentiles, only to the Jews. Yet she did not lose heart, but confidently repeated her prayer: *O Lord, Thou canst console me: Lord help me!*[1974] Jesus replied, But the children's bread must not be given to dogs: *It is not good to take the bread of the children, and to give it to dogs,*[1975]

But, Lord, she replied, even the dogs are allowed the crumbs of bread which fall from the table: *"Even the whelps eat of the crumbs." Upon which our Lord, having proved the great confidence of the woman, praised her for it, and did what she asked: O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt; and her daughter was healed from that hour.*[1976] Thus, confidence is necessary to obtain what we ask of God. But on what, it may be said, are we to found this confidence? On what? on the goodness of God, and on the promise which lie made when he said, *Ask, and you shall receive.*[1977] *"Who," says St. Augustine, "fears to be deceived when the Truth promises?*[1978] Who can ever fear that what is promised will not be given to him, when it is God, the sovereign truth, who has promised?

3. PERSEVERANCE

Prayer should be persevering, otherwise it will not obtain eternal life. The grace of salvation is not a single grace, but is a chain of graces all united with the grace of final perseverance. Now to this chain of graces there must be a corresponding chain of prayers on our part. There is in St. Luke (chap, xi.) a parable of a man who, to rid himself of the importunity of his friend, got out of bed, and gave him the loaves which he. wanted. *On this St. Augustine says: "Now, if this man, simply to rid himself of the importunity of his friend, would, against his will, give him the bread which he asked for, how much more will the good God give, who exhorts us to ask him?*[1979]

How much more will God, who has such a desire to make us partakers of his good things, dispense to us his graces when we ask him for them! Especially as he commands us to beg of him, and is displeased when we do not do so. God then wishes to grant us eternal life, and all the graces necessary for its attainment; but he also wishes us to be persevering in prayer. As Cornelius à Lapide says on this parable, *"he wishes us to be persevering in prayer, so as to be even importunate."*[1980] Men cannot endure importunity; but God not only endures it, but wishes us to be importunate in begging for his grace, and especially for the grace of final perseverance. It is true that we cannot merit final perseverance, as the Council of Trent has declared;[1981] for it is a gift that God gives us quite gratuitously; nevertheless St. Augustine tells us that perseverance may, in a certain way, be merited by prayer: "This gift of God maybe merited in the way of begging; that is, it may be obtained by supplication."[1982] So that the man who asks for perseverance, though he cannot merit it, will yet, as Suarez says, infallibly obtain it. *But, says Bellarmine, "it is not enough to ask for it once, we must ask it daily, in order to obtain it daily."*[1983] And therefore Jesus Christ says, *Men ought always pray, and not to faint.*[1984] We must never cease from prayer; for when we do so, temptation may overcome us: *Watch ye therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of Man.*[1985]

"Be watchful in continual prayer," says Jesus Christ, *"that I may not have to drive you from Me when you stand before My judgment-seat."* Well, therefore, does St. Paul admonish his disciples: *Pray without ceasing.*[1986] Pray, and never cease to pray. *Blessed is the man that heareth Me, and that watcheth daily at My doors.*[1987] God pronounces him to be blessed who continually watches at the doors of his mercy. And therefore, in the

following words of the Gospel, Jesus Christ not only exhorts us, but also commands us, to pray (for prayer is not only a counsel, but a precept): *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.*[1988] It might seem enough to have said *"ask,"* without adding *"seek"* and *"knock."* But no, this repetition is not superfluous; for this was our Saviour's way of teaching us to do like the poor beggars, who, if they do not at once receive the relief they demand and are turned away, still keep on demanding it over and over again, and then begin knocking at the door, and insist on seeing the master of the house, and, indeed, make themselves exceedingly importunate and troublesome. This is how our Lord wishes us to do; to pray, and pray again, and never cease praying him to assist us, to keep his hand over us, and never to permit us to separate ourselves from him by sin. And this we should do, not only when we rise in the morning, but oftentimes during the day: when we hear Mass, when we make our meditation, when we make our thanksgiving after Communion, when we pay our visit to the Blessed Sacrament, when we examine our conscience at night, but, above all, when we are assailed by any temptation, especially if it is a temptation to impurity; the man who does not in this case have recourse to God, and at least invoke the holy names of Jesus and Mary, will scarcely be able to avoid falling.

IV. GOD HEARS EVEN THE PRAYERS OF SINNERS

But a person might say, I am a sinner, and God does not hear sinners, as we read in St. John's Gospel: *God doth not hear sinners.*[1989] I answer, that these words were not spoken by our Lord, but by the man who had been born blind. *And the proposition, if taken absolutely, is false; there is only one case in which it is true, as St. Thomas says, and that is when sinners pray as sinners;*[1990] that is, ask something that they require to assist them in their sin; as, for instance, if a man asked God to help him to take vengeance of his enemy; in such cases God certainly will not hear. But when a man prays and asks for those things that are requisite for his salvation, what matters it whether he is a sinner or not? Suppose he were the greatest criminal in the world, let him only pray, he will surely obtain all that he asks. The promise is general for all men; every one that seeks obtains: *Everyone that asketh receiveth.*[1991] "It is not necessary," says St. Thomas, " that the man who prays should merit the grace for which he asks.” *“By prayer we obtain even those things which we do not deserve.”*[1992] In order to receive, it is enough to pray. The reason is (in the words of the same holy Doctor), “*merit is grounded on justice, but the power of prayer (impetration) is grounded on grace.”*[1993]

The power of prayer to obtain what we ask does not depend on the merit of the person who prays, but on the mercy and faithfulness of God, who has gratuitously, and of his own mere goodness, promised to hear the man who prays to him. When we pray, it is not necessary that we should be friends of God in order to obtain grace; indeed, the act of prayer, as St. Thomas says, makes us his friends: “Prayer itself makes us of the family of God.”[1994] And that which we cannot obtain through friendship, we may (as St. Chrysostom in a similar way affirms) obtain by prayer: *“That which friendship could not accomplish, has been accomplished by prayer.”*[1995] And Jesus Christ, to give us more encouragement to pray, and to assure us of obtaining grace when we pray, has made us that great and special promise: *Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[1996] As though he had said, Come, sinners, you have no merits of your own for which My Father should listen to you. But this is what you must do; when you want grace, ask for it in My name, and through My merits, and I promise you *(“Amen, amen, I say to you,” amounts to a kind of oath)* you may depend on it, that whatever you ask, you shall obtain from My Father: Whatever you shall ask, He will give it you. Oh, what a sweet consolation for a poor sinner, to know that his sins are no hindrance to his obtaining every grace he asks for, since Jesus Christ has promised that whatever we ask of God, through his merits, he will grant it all!

V. GOD HAS PLEDGED HIMSELF TO GRANT US NOT TEMPORAL BUT SPIRITUAL GOODS

It is, however, necessary to understand that our Lord’s promise to hear our prayers does not apply to our petitions for temporal goods, but only to those for spiritual graces necessary, or at any rate useful, for the salvation of the soul; so that we can only expect to obtain the graces which we ask in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ, as we said just now. *“But,” as*

St. Augustine says, “if we ask anything prejudicial to our salvation, it cannot be said to be asked in the name of the Saviour.”[1997] That which is injurious to salvation cannot be expected from the Saviour; God does not and cannot grant it; and why? because he loves us. A physician who has any regard for a sick man will not permit him to have food which he knows will injure him. And how many people would be prevented from committing the sins which they do commit if they were poor or sick? Many people ask for health or riches, but God does not give them, because he sees they would be an occasion of sin, or at least of growing lukewarm in his service. So when we ask these temporal gifts, we ought always to add this condition, if they are profitable for our souls. And when we see that God does not give them, let us rest assured that he refuses them only because he loves us, and because he sees that the things which we ask would only damage our spiritual well-being. And often we ask God to deliver us from some trouble some temptation, which would persuade us to forfeit his grace; but God does not deliver us, in order that our soul may be more closely united in love with him.

It is not temptations or bad thoughts that hurt us, and separate us from God, but consent to evil. When the soul, through the assistance of God’s grace, resists a temptation, it makes a great advance in the way of perfection. St. Paul tells us that he was very much troubled with temptations to impurity, and that he prayed God thrice to deliver him from them: *A sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, was given me to buffet me; for which thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me.*[1998] And what did the Lord answer? He told him, It is enough for you to have my grace: *My grace is sufficient for thee.*[1999] Thus should we, in the temptations which assault us, pray God to deliver us from them, or at least to help us to resist them. And when we thus pray, we should be quite certain that God is already helping us to resist them: *Thou didst call upon Me in affliction, and I delivered thee. I heard thee in the secret place of tempest.*[2000] Often does God leave us in the storm for our greater good; but still he hears us in secret, and gives us his grace to strengthen us to resist and to be resigned. So, I repeat, all temporal gifts which are not necessary for salvation ought to be asked conditionally; and if we see that God does not give them, we must feel sure that he refuses them for our greater good. But with regard to spiritual graces, we must be certain that God gives them to us when we ask him. St. Teresa says that God loves us more than we love ourselves.

And St. Augustine has declared that God has a greater desire to give us his grace than we have to receive it: *“He is more willing to bestow his favours upon you, than you are desirous of receiving them.”*[2001] And after him, St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi has said that God feels a kind of obligation to the soul that prays, and, as it were, says to it, *“Soul, I thank thee that thou askest me for grace.”* For then the soul gives him an opportunity of doing good to it, and of thus satisfying his desire of giving his grace to all. And how can it ever happen that God will not hear a soul that asks for the things which he most delights to give? When the soul says, *“Lord, I ask Thee not for riches, honours, the goods of this world, but I only beg for Thy grace; deliver me from sin, give me a good death, give me Paradise, and meanwhile give me Thy love”* (which is the grace that, as St. Francis de Sales says, we ought to pray for above all others), “give me resignation to Thy will” (which is the virtue in which the whole of the love of God consists), when the soul prays thus, how is it possible that God should refuse to hear it? And what prayers, O my God, wilt Thou ever hear (says St. Augustine), if Thou hearest not those which are made as Thou wishest them to be made: *“If Thou hearest not these, what dost thou hear?”*[2002] And St. Bernard says, that when we ask for spiritual graces of this kind, the desire of obtaining them can only come to us from God himself; so the saint turns to God, and says to him, *“Wherefore hast Thou given the desire, unless Thou wert willing to satisfy it?”*[2003] Since Thou, O Lord, dost put into my heart to ask for these graces, I ought to be certain that Thou art willing to hear my prayer.

But above all, the words of Jesus Christ ought to revive our confidence, when we are praying for spiritual graces: *If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the Good Spirit to them that ask him?*[2004] If you, who are full of evil, and of self-love, are unable to refuse your children the good things which they ask, how much more will your heavenly Father, who loves you more than any earthly father can love his family, grant you his spiritual gifts, when you ask him for them?

VI. CONCLUSION

Let us pray, then, and let us always be asking for grace, if we wish to be saved. Let prayer be our most delightful occupation; let prayer be the exercise of our whole life. And when we are asking for particular graces, let us always pray for the grace to continue to pray for the future; because if we leave off praying we shall be lost. There is nothing easier than prayer. What does it cost us to say, Lord, stand by me! Lord, help me! give me Thy love! and the like? What can be easier than this? But if we do not do so, we cannot be saved. Let us pray, then, and let us always shelter ourselves behind the intercession of Mary: *"Let us seek for grace, and let us seek it through Mary,"*[2005] says St. Bernard. And when we recommend ourselves to Mary, let us be sure that she hears us and obtains for us whatever we want. She cannot lack either the power or the will to help us, as the same saint says: *"Neither means nor will can be wanting to her."*[2006]

And St. Augustine addresses her: *"Remember, O most pious Lady, that it has never been heard that any one who fled to thy protection was forsaken."*[2007] Remember that the case has never occurred of a person having recourse to thee, and having been abandoned. Ah, no, says St. Bonaventure, he who invokes Mary, finds salvation; and therefore he calls her "the salvation of those who invoke her." Let us, then, in our prayers always invoke Jesus and Mary; and let us never neglect to pray. I have done. But before concluding, I cannot help saying how grieved I feel when I see that though the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers so often recommend the practice of prayer, yet so few other religious writers, or confessors, or preachers, ever speak of it; or if they do speak of it, just touch upon it in a cursory way, and leave it. But I, seeing the necessity of prayer, say, that the great lesson which all spiritual books should inculcate on their readers, all preachers on their hearers, and all confessors on their penitents, is this, to pray always; thus they should admonish them to pray; pray, and never give up praying. *If you pray, you will be certainly saved; if you do not pray, you will be certainly damned.*

A PRAYER TO OBTAIN FINAL PERSEVERANCE

Eternal Father, I humbly adore Thee, and thank Thee for having created me, and for having redeemed me through Jesus Christ. I thank Thee most *sincerely for having made me a Christian, by giving me the true faith, and by adopting me as Thy son, in the sacrament of baptism. I thank Thee for having, after the numberless sins I had committed, waited for my repentance, and for having pardoned (as I humbly hope) all the offences which I have offered to Thee, and for which I am now sincerely sorry, because they have been displeasing to Thee, who art infinite goodness. I thank Thee for having preserved me from so many relapses, of which I would have been guilty if Thou hadst not protected me. But my enemies still continue, and will continue till death, to combat against me, and to endeavour to make me their slave. If Thou dost not constantly guard and succour me with thy aid, I, a miserable creature, shall return to sin, and shall certainly lose Thy grace. I beseech Thee, then, for the love of Jesus Christ, to grant me holy perseverance unto death. Jesus, Thy Son, has promised that Thou wilt grant whatsoever we ask in his name. Through the merits, then, of Jesus Christ, I beg, for myself and for all the just, the grace never again to be separated from Thy love, but to love Thee forever, in time and eternity. Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.*

HYMN. DESCRIPTION OF THE LIFE OF A SOUL, THE TRUE SPOUSE OF JESUS, FROM THE WORDS OF ST. BERNARD

> *“Servus timet, mercenarius sperat, films honorat; at ego, quia sponsa sum, amo amare, amo amari, amo amorem.*
>
> “Exigit Deus timen ut Dominus, honorari ut Pater, ut Sponsus amari, Serm. 83 ain Ctn.
>
> The slave fears, the hireling hopes, the son honours; but I, because I am a spouse, love to love, I love to be loved, I love love.
>
> God requires that we fear him as our Lord, that we honour him as our Father, that we love him as our Spouse.
>
> To love is the only true life of a spouse; For love, love alone, her Beloved she serves; One dread, and one only, her fears can arouse, The dread of not loving him as he deserves.
>
> To forfeit her treasure, the love of her Lord,
>
> Were the greatest misfortune she ever could fear:
>
> She seeks no reward for to love is reward,
>
> And to love is the hope which her love holds most dear.
>
> But merely to love the dear Spouse of her heart, To a soul once espoused can never give rest; So, of all that can serve him, or pleasure impart, The spouse who is true ever gives him the best.
>
> Each action she does, every good she may seek, Is to please her dear King and her fealty to prove; To the heart of a spouse her best love seems but weak; When she loves him the most, then she

longs most to love.

How great is the joy such a Spouse must impart,

When the light of his presence shines clear in her breast!

But when he withdraws, then her desolate heart Is pining in darkness, and cannot find rest.

She esteems not their lot whom the worldly call great, ’Tis compassion, not envy, she feels in her breast; But she envies their happy and glorious fate Who, united to Jesus, can love him the best.

When she thinks of the spouses departed in peace, Who yet are detained in the prison of pain,

She labours with joy for their speedy release,

That in heaven with God these dear spouses may reign,

She would that all hearts, who yet dwell here below, With the love of her Spouse should so ardently burn, That as much as he merits, so each heart should glow, Or at least with such love as that heart can return.

And when she sees others offend her Belov’d, Oh! for them with what fervour she pleads at his feet, That, hearts so rebellious and proud may be moved, And return to the love of a Saviour so sweet!

Far more does she weep when she sees her own heart Unfaithful sometimes to the love of her Lord; She welcomes his scourges, she dreads not their smart, But she weeps for displeasing her Saviour adored.

O worldlings! souls made for a kingdom above!

She watches her heart, lest some creature should steal A share of that love which to him is all due; For she well knows how jealous her Jesus can feel Of the love of a spouse who has sworn to be true.

Wherever he leads, the spouse follows him still; He speaks, and the spouse, ever faithful, obeys; And such is her pleasure in doing his will, That obedience alone is the joy of her days.

She seeks not for pleasures, no wishes has she, No will of her own does she take for her guide; For the will of her Spouse the sole pleasure must be Of a soul that is chosen by Christ for his bride.

Since to suffer with joy every pain here below Is the best proof of love while on earth we remain, The spouse who desires her affection to show Seeks only and always for suff’ring and pain.

From that world which deceives you forever depart; Be foolish no longer give Him all your love, Who only and ever brings peace to the heart.

No spouse will I own but my Saviour and King: Yet it is not the glory I seek, nor the name;

’Tis the faith and the love of a spouse I would bring, And that faith and that love my whole life shall proclaim.

And since my sweet Jesus in heaven bestows Himself as a Spouse to the spouse of his love, Here I long but to suffer, I ask not repose; I await my repose there, in heaven above.

VI

INTERIOR TRIALS

I. REST FOR SCRUPULOUS SOULS IN OBEDIENCE TO THEIR DIRECTOR

All the anxiety of scrupulous persons consists in the fear lest, in what they do, they are not acting with scruple merely, but with real doubt as to the act being simple, and are therefore incurring sin. But the chief thing they ought to consider is this: that he who acts in obedience to a learned and pious confessor, acts not only with no doubt, but with the greatest security that can be had upon earth, on the divine words of Jesus Christ, that he who hears his ministers is as though he heard himself: *He that heareth you heareth Me;*[2008] whence St. Bernard says, *"Whatever man enjoins in the place of God, provided it be not certainly displeasing to God, is altogether to be received as though enjoined by God."*[2009] It is certain that, as to the personal direction of conscience, the confessor is the lawful superior, as St Francis de Sales, with all spiritual instructors, declares, while F. Pinamonti, in his Spiritual Director, says: *"It is well to make the scrupulous perceive, that submitting their will to the ministers of the Lord provides them the greatest security in all that is not manifestly sin. Let them read the lives of the saints, and they will find that they know no safer road than obedience."*

The saints plainly trusted more to the voice of their confessor than to the immediate voice of God; and yet the scrupulous would lean more on their own judgment than on the Gospel, which assures them, *"He that heareth you heareth Me."*[2010] The Blessed Henry Suso says, that "God demands no account from us of things done under obedience." St. Philip Neri says the same: *"Let such as desire to advance in the way of God submit themselves to a learned confessor, and obey him in God's stead; let him who thus acts assure himself that he will have to render no account to God for his actions."*[2011] He says, moreover, that one should have all faith in one's confessor, on the ground that God would not permit him to err; and that there is nothing that more surely cuts asunder the snares of the devil than to do the will of another in what is good, nor anything more full of danger than to be guiding ourselves according to what seems best to us; which is confirmed by St. John of the Cross, who says, in the name of the Lord: *“When thou art unfaithful to confessors, thou art so unto Me, who have said, He that despiseth you despiseth Me.”* And again: *“Not to rest satisfied with what the confessor says is pride and failure in faith.”* We are, therefore, to have this certain confidence, that each person, in obeying his spiritual Father, may be sure of not sinning. *“The sovereign remedy for the scrupulous,” says St. Bernard, “is a blind obedience to their confessor.”* John Gerson relates, that the same St. Bernard told one of his disciples, who was scrupulous, to go and celebrate, and take his word for it. He went, and was cured of his scruples.

“But a person may answer,” says Gerson, “Would to God I had a St. Bernard for my director! but mine is one of indifferent wisdom.” And he answers, “Thou dost err, whoever thou art that so speakest; for thou hast not given thyself into the hands of the man because he is well read, etc., but because he is placed over thee; wherefore obey him not as man, but as God.”[2012] For this reason St. Teresa well said, “ Let the soul accept the confessor with a determination to think no more of personal excuses, but to trust in the words of the Lord, He that heareth you heareth Me. The Lord so highly values this submission, that when, in spite of a thousand inward conflicts, and considering the decision to be an absurd one, we execute it nevertheless, cost us what it may, the Lord so assists us,”[2013] etc.; and she goes on to say, that we then comply with his divine will. Hence St. Francis de Sales, speaking of direction from a spiritual Father in order to walk securely in the way of God, says, *“This is the very counsel of all counsels.”*[2014] *“Search as much as you will,”* says the devout Avila, *“you will in no way discover the will of God so surely as by the path of that humble obedience which is so much recommended and practised by the devout of former times.”* Thus, too, Alvarez said, *“Even if the spiritual Father should err, the obedient soul is secure from error, because it rests on the judgment of him whom God has given it as a superior.”* And F. Nieremberg writes to the same effect: *“Let the soul obey the confessor; and then, although the thing itself were matter of fault, he does not sin who does*

it with the intention of obeying him who holds to him the place of God, persuading himself (as is, indeed, the case) that he is bound to obey him;" forasmuch as (according to the words of F. Rogacci and F. Lessius) the confessor is to us the interpreter of the divine will.

And this is confirmed also by the gloss: *"But if what is prescribed be of a doubtful kind, the virtue of obedience exempts from sin, although the thing in itself be evil;"*[2015] and in the chapter *Inquisitioni de Sent, exc.,* from the same text, obedience to the confessor is enjoined, when it says that scruples *"ought to be dismissed at the judgment of one's pastor."*[2016] St. Francis de Sales gives three maxims of great consolation to the scrupulous: *"1 An obedient soul has never been lost; 2. We ought to rest satisfied with knowing from our spiritual Father that we are going on well, without seeking a personal knowledge of it; 3. The best thing is to walk on blindly through all the darkness and perplexity of this life, under the providence of God."*[2017] And therefore all the doctors of morals conclude, in general, with St. Antoninus, Navarro, Silvester, etc., that obedience to the confessor is the safest rule for walking well in the ways of God. F. Tirillo and F. La Croix[2018] say that this is the common doctrine of the holy Fathers and masters of the spiritual life. In the second place, the scrupulous should know, not only that they are safe in obeying, but that they are bound to obey, their director, and to despise the scruple, acting with all freedom in the midst of their doubts. This is the teaching of Natalis Alexander: "That scruples ought to be despised when one has the judgment of a prudent, pious, and learned director; and that one ought to act against them is plain from the chapter *Inquisitioni,* etc.,[2019] as above; and of Father Wigandt: *"He who acts against scruples does not sin; nay, sometimes it is a precept to do so, especially when backed by the judgment of the confessor."*[2020]

So do these authors speak, although they belong to the rigid school; so, too, the doctors in general;[2021] and the reason is, that if the scrupulous man lives in his scruples, he is in danger of placing grievous impediments in the way of satisfying his obligations, or, at least, of making any spiritual progress; and, moreover, of going out of his mind, losing his health, and destroying his conscience by despair or by relaxation. Hence St. Antoninus agrees with Gerson in thus reproving the scrupulous, who, through a vain fear, is not obedient in overcoming his scruples: *"Beware lest, from* *overmuch desire to walk securely, thou fall and destroy thyself.”*[2022] For this reason F. Wigandt also says, that the scrupulous man ought to obey his director in all cases where the precept is not plainly sin, *“unless the director enjoins what is manifestly against God;”*[2023] and it is the general and undoubted decision among Doctors, that in things doubtful each one is bound to obey him who is placed over him, if it be not evidently a sin. This is proved by St. Bernard in a passage quoted at the commencement; and by St. Ignatius Loyola, who says: *“There must be obedience in all things in which no sin is perceived, that is, in which there is not manifest sin.”*[2024]

Also by Blessed Humbert, General of the Friars Preachers, who says: *“Unless the precept be plainly evil, it is to be received as though enjoined by God.”*[2025] Moreover, by Blessed Denis the Carthusian: *“In things doubtful as to whether or not they are against the divine precept, one must stand by the precept of him who is set over one; because, although it should be against the precept of God, yet, in virtue of obedience, the person under direction sins not.”*[2026] Of the same opinion is St. Bonaventure. This makes Gerson say: *“The scrupulous are to act against their scruples, and plant their feet firmly in resisting them. We cannot set scruples to rest better than by despising them; and, as a general rule, not without the advice of another, and especially our Superior. Otherwise, either ill-regulated fear or inconsiderate presumption will be our fall.” “With a firm foot,”* says he, *“they ought to overcome the scruple.”*[2027] And so the remedy that St. Philip Neri gave the scrupulous was, to make them despise their scruples. It is thus written in his life: *“Moreover, besides the general remedy of committing one’s self altogether and for everything to the judgment of the confessor, he gave another, by exhorting his penitents to despise their scruples. Hence he forbade such persons to confess often; and when, in confession, they entered upon their scruples, he used to send them to Communion without hearing them.”*[2028] So, then, in conclusion, the scrupulous man ought to set before himself obedience, and look upon his scrupulous fear as vain, and so act with freedom.

Nor does this require (say the Doctors Busembaum,[2029] with Sanchez and others) that in each particular act he should expressly determine that the thing is a scruple, and that he ought to obey his confessor in despising it; it is enough that he act against it in virtue of a judgment made beforehand, since, from his past experience, the same judgment resides in his conscience habitually or virtually, though dim and confused. Hence La Croix[2030] and Tamburini, together with Vasquez, Val., etc.,[2031] add, that if he who is scrupulous be unable amid that darkness to lay aside his scruple at once, or call clearly to mind the obedience laid on him by the confessor, which some anxious consciences are disabled from doing, perplexed as they are how to put by their scruple, by reason of the fear that weighs upon them, in that case he does not sin, though he act with a positive fear of sinning; and for this reason that as he has already passed a like judgment upon former scruples, and on the duty of obeying the injunction given him to despise them, he ought assuredly to believe himself to possess it now also, though, from the force of his fear, he does not perceive it. But the scrupulous ought at such a time to despise the fear, inasmuch as it forms no true verdict of conscience.

Hear how Gerson openly confirms this point, and what advice he gives: *“A formed conscience is, when, after discussion and deliberation, a definite sentence of the reason judges that a thing is to be done or to be avoided; and to act against this is a sin: but fear or scruple of conscience is, when the mind wavers in doubt, not knowing which of two things it is bound to do, and yet would not omit whatever it could ascertain to be agreeable to the divine will; and this fear is as much as possible to be cast away and quenched.”*[2032] In fact, then, Gerson says that a person sins by acting under a practical doubt, when the doubt proceeds from a formed conscience; but that this formed conscience exists when, after examining the circumstances, he deliberately judges with a definitive sentence on what he is obliged and what he is forbidden to do; and he sins by acting against such a conscience as this. But that, when the mind is doubtful and wavering, and yet would not do anything that was displeasing to God, this, says Gerson, is no true doubtfulness, but a vain fear, which ought as much as possible to be cast away and despised. So that when there certainly exists in the scrupulous person the habitual will not to offend God, it is certain (according to Gerson) that while he acts in his doubtfulness he does not sin; and with reason, since it is then not a true doubt, although he may apprehend it to be a doubt, but a vain fear. On the other hand, it is certain, that for the commission of a mortal sin there is required a full perception on the part of the reason, and a complete deliberate consent on the part of the will, and to will something which grievously offends God. This doctrine is undoubted, and common to all the theologians,[2033] and even to the most rigid, as Juenin, Habert, and that most rigorous of all, Genet, who speaks thus: *“But if (the act) contain only an imperfect degree of deliberation, the sin will be venial, not mortal.”*[2034] And this, too, is the teaching of all the rest, with St. Thomas, who says: *“That which is mortal may be venial, owing to the act being imperfect, since it does not absolutely amount to the perfection of a mortal act, being not deliberate, but sudden.”*[2035]

Let scrupulous souls, then, suffer this cross of theirs with resignation, and not perplex themselves in the greatest distresses which God may send or permit. It is for their profit, to the end that they may be humbler, may guard better against such occasions as are beyond doubt and seriously dangerous, may commend themselves oftener to the Lord, and put a more entire trust in the divine goodness. Meanwhile let them often have recourse to the most holy Virgin Mary, who is called, and is in truth, the Mother of Mercy, and comforter of the afflicted. Let them, indeed, fear to offend God, wherever they do in truth discern what will offend him; but if only they are steadfast in resolving rather to die a thousand times than lose the grace of God, let them, above all things, fear lest they fail in obedience to their directors. On the other hand, while they blindly obey, they may assure themselves of not being abandoned by that Lord who will have all men saved, and who, loving good-will as he does, never suffers a really obedient soul to perish. “*No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded,*[2036] *Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you.”*[2037] *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*[2038] *In peace in the self—same I will sleep and I will rest; for Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope?*[2039] *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be confounded?*[2040]

II. COUNSELS, FROM WHICH A SOUL, WHEN IN DESOLATION, MAY DERIVE COMFORT AND CONFIDENCE

A SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE—BETWEEN THE AUTHOR AND ONE WHO SEEKS HIS ADVICE WHEN SUBJECTED BY GOD TO SPIRITUAL TRIBULATIONS

Question. Let me hear what these troubles of conscience are, which, as you tell me, keep you in a state of such affliction.

Answer. Father, it is now about three years since I began to suffer such dryness and desolation of spirit as to prevent my finding God either in prayer or before the Sacrament of the Altar, or in my Communions. I seem to be a soul without love, without hope, and without faith, abandoned, in short, by God. Neither the Passion of Jesus Christ nor the Holy Eucharist any longer affects me; I am become insensible to devotion of every kind. I confess that it is all on account of my sins, for which I deserve nothing short of hell.

Q. You tell me, in short, that you have now been for a long time in a state of aridity. In order to give you an answer adequate to your need, it is necessary that I should know whether this aridity of yours is voluntary or involuntary. Let me explain myself. “It is voluntary aridity” when a person commits voluntary and deliberate faults, and takes no pains to amend. This is not, properly speaking, to be called aridity, but tepidity, from which if—the soul does not exert itself to get free, it will ever be going on from bad to worse; and God grant that, in course of time, it may not fall into more serious disasters: aridity of this kind is a slow fever, which does not cause death immediately, but to a certainty brings it on. Whereas aridity is “involuntary” when a person makes it his study to walk in the way of perfection, keeps on his guard against deliberate faults, frequently prays, and goes to the Sacraments; and, with all this, feels himself dry of spirit. To come to our present case: you have mentioned the sins of your past life; and, I ask, have you not made these sins the subject of confession?A. Yes, Father; I have not only made a general confession of them, but I have confessed them many times.

Q. And what does your director say?

A. He has forbidden me to make further mention of what belongs to my past life; but I always feel disquieted, continually fearing that I may not have explained myself sufficiently. I am, moreover, tormented by thousands of temptations to unbelief, impurity, and pride. I drive them away; but still am ever in fear lest I may in some way have tacitly consented to them.

Q. And what does your director say with regard to this other head of bad thoughts?A. He wishes me not to confess them, excepting when I could with certainty make oath, at first sight, that I had consented to them. What do you, Father, tell me? Give me some instruction for my comfort.

Q. What do I tell you? I tell you that you ought more implicitly to trust in obedience to your director. Have you read that instruction of St. Philip Neri, that he who acts in obedience to his confessor may rest assured that he will not have to render an account to God of the things which he does? The saint used to say, besides, that *“one should have faith in one’s confessor, for God would not leave him in error; and that there is nothing more sure to defeat the designs of the devil than obedience to one’s spiritual father as regards what relates to God; whereas, on the contrary, there is nothing more dangerous than the will to be guided by one’s own opinion.”* Have you read what St. Francis de Sales says, when speaking on the subject of obedience to onēs director? *“Of all counsels this is the chief.” “Search as much as you will,”* says the devout Avila, *“and you will never so surely find out the will of God as by the way of this humble obedience, which was so much recommended and practised by all the devout in the early ages.”* We find the same also in the writings of St. Teresa, who says:[2041] “Let the soul choose its confessor with the determination to take no further thought for itself, but to place its trust in the words of the Lord, *He that heareth you heareth Me.*[2042] So great is the value which God sets on this submission, that, even in spite of a thousand conflicts, and though it appears to ourselves that his judgment is wrong, let us, whether it costs us suffering or not, act according to it, and thus fulfil the divine will.” St. John of the Cross, too, says (speaking in the name of Jesus Christ): “When you are unfaithful to your confessor, you are so to Me, who have said, *He that despiseth you despiseth Me.* And then he adds these words: *“Not to rest satisfied with what one’s confessor says is pride and want of faith.”* The saint speaks thus on account of those words of Jesus Christ, which have been quoted above, “He that heareth you heareth Me;” and hence, too, it was that St. Francis de Sales[2043] set down these other most useful maxims: *“1. One who is truly obedient is never lost. 2. We should rest satisfied with knowing from our spiritual Father that we are going on well, without searching for the reasons on which that judgment of his is formed.” (An excellent instruction this for those scrupulous people who wish to find out the reasons for what their spiritual Father enjoins them.) 3. St. Francis adds another excellent* *maxim, as a consequence of the foregoing, saying, "It is best for us in this life to go on blindly, under divine providence, in a state of darkness and perplexity."*

This instruction to be obedient to onēs spiritual Father in doubts of conscience is, moreover, that which is given by all the Doctors of the Church, and by all the holy Fathers; for all the rest of whom let St. Bernard suffice, saying, as he does, that whatever is imposed by man acting on behalf of God, provided only it be not certainly a sin, should not be regarded otherwise than as the command of God himself: *"Whatever precept is given by man when representing God, and is not such as certainly to be displeasing unto him, is to be by no means otherwise received than as the precept of God."*[2044] In short, obedience to his consecrated ministers is the one safest remedy that Jesus Christ has left us for quieting the doubts of conscience, and we ought to return him the greatest thanks for it; for how could a scrupulous soul, in its doubts, find perfect rest otherwise? This tribulation of scruples and for those who love God it has far greater torments than all other afflictions of infirmity, persecutions, and the like is what almost all the saints have had to suffer, St. Teresa, St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, St. Frances of Chantal, and many others besides; and how have they obtained tranquillity, excepting by obedience? Now, what have you to say? Are you satisfied that, in obeying your director, you are going on safely?

A. Yes, Father, I am persuaded of this; but how does it happen that in a course of obedience persevered in for even two whole years, I experience nothing in the way of devotion?

Q. Now, then, I understand what is your defect, and why it is that, as you say, you do not find peace. Is the will of God the object of your search, or are not consolations and spiritual sweetnesses the things that you are seeking for? If you wish to sanctify yourself, seek only, from this day forth, the will of God, whose will it is that you become a saint, but who will not maintain you in this life in a state of consolation. If you have not consolation itself, console yourself with the hope of having with you him who is the Consoler. Is it of having suffered two years of dryness that you complain? It was forty years of dryness that St. Frances of Chantal suffered. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi suffered five years of pains and temptations without the smallest alleviation; and, at the end of those five years, she herself prayed to God that he would not grant her, in this world, any more sensible consolations. St. Philip Neri was so much inflamed with divine love, and yet he used to say, “My Jesus, I have never yet loved Thee, and I would wish to love Thee.” At another time he would say, “As yet I do not know Thee, O my Jesus! for I am seeking Thee.” Again, he would say, “I would wish to love Thee, O my Jesus! and I find not the way. I seek for Thee, and I find Thee not.” This is the way in which the saints speak; and why do you alarm yourself so because you are in a state of dryness, and do not find God as you would wish to find him?

A. But these were saints; whereas I know not whether God has yet pardoned the many sins whereby I have offended him, as I cannot be sure of having had a true sorrow for them.

Q. But what is the matter now? Perhaps it is that you take complacency in the thought of the sins that you have committed?

A, No; I detest them; I hate them more than death.

Q. And why do you fear that God may not have pardoned you? The holy Fathers say that he who hates the sins he has committed is sure of forgiveness from God; and, besides, it is certain, as St. Teresa says, that “he who is resolved to die rather than offend God is, without a doubt, penitent for his past offences against him.” Tell me, are you resolved to endure sufferings of every description rather than lose the divine grace?

A. Yes, my Father; by the grace of God, I am resolved to let myself be torn to pieces sooner than commit, with eyes open to it, a single sin, even though it were a venial one.

Q. Well, then, what reason is there why God should hate you? You are afraid lest God hate you. Oh, if you only saw the love which he now bears towards you, you would this very moment drop down dead here where you are standing, out of mere consolation! Do you not know that Jesus Christ is that good Shepherd who has come into the world to give life, and to save every poor sheep of his flock, even though voluntarily lost? And how, then, is it his will to abandon one of those sheep of his who is ready to die sooner than deliberately cause him the least possible displeasure?

A. But who knows whether I may not have consented to some grievous sin, and God may have abandoned me on this account?

Q. No; you are not speaking well. Mortal sin is so horrible a monster that it is impossible for a sin of this kind to be in the soul, without the souls being aware of it. No sinner who is out of God's grace has any doubts about it, but is certain that he has lost it; and therefore it is an established maxim with all the masters of the spiritual life that when a person who fears God doubts whether he has not lost the divine grace, it is certain that he has not lost it; for the very reason that no one loses God without knowing it for certain; and thus, whenever you are in doubt about having lost God, be sure that you have not lost him.

A. But why is it that I feel so devoid of confidence?

Q. Listen. You know that true confidence consists not in feeling it, but in willing it. Have you the will to put your trust in God? If you have the will to confide in him, you have already confidence itself.

A. But where is my love for God?

Q. As regards love for God, the same rule holds good which holds with regard to confidence. Love, too, is in the will. Have you the will to love God? If it is your will to love him, understand that you already love him. You would like to have the consolation of feeling the confidence and the love; but God, for your greater good, does not will that you should be consoled by feeling this confidence and this love of yours. Be content, therefore, to possess without feeling it. I tell you the same thing with regard to faith also: it is enough that you have the will to believe whatsoever the Church teaches you, without desiring to feel that you believe. There will come a time when the clouds will clear away, and the light will arise, which will make your consolation twofold. Meanwhile, be content to remain in the dark, and to abandon yourself to the hand of God's divine will and mercy. Let us take the divine Scriptures for our comfort during this interval. In one place God says: *Turn to me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn to you.*[2045] If, then, we wish for God, let us take our leave of creatures; let us turn with love to him, and he will straightway turn with love to us. To all he says: *Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened and I will refresh you.*[2046]

O ye who are afflicted, come unto Me; and it shall be my care to raise you up. In another passage he says, *Come and accuse me, saith the Lord; if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow.*[2047] He goes so far as to say, “Come, ye sinners, come as penitents; and if I do not pardon you, accuse Me, accuse Me, and treat Me as a liar. But no; howsoever blackened your consciences may be, I will, through My grace, cause them to become white as snow.” He goes after sinners as one weeping out of compassion over their ruin, saying, *And why will ye die, O house of Israel?*[2048] As though he said, *“And why will you involve yourselves in damnation, My children, when you have in Me one who is ready to save you, if you will have recourse to Me?”* Now, if he speaks in this way to those who are obstinate, how is it possible that he should drive away a soul that wishes to love him? Tell me honestly, are you attached to any earthly affection, to any person, to anything in the shape of property, to the ambition of excelling, of being preferred before others? Take heed to what is said by St. John of the Cross, that *“every attachment, however trifling, every thread has power to prevent you from winging your way to God, and from being all his own.”*

A. No; by the grace of God, I think that I have no attachment to anything in this world, so as to be willing to commit for it any deliberate fault; but I see, nevertheless, that I am full of defects. I dislike to be despised; and on such occasions I sometimes show resentment.

Q. And after this resentment, what is it that you do?

A. I humble myself, I pray to God to forgive me, and I resolve not to fall into the same error again, trusting in Jesus Christ to give me strength; but notwithstanding this, I remain altogether in a state of fear and disquiet. Then it seems as though it were impossible for me to possess the power of sanctifying myself; nay, the very pretending to it appears to me to be pride.

Q. All is well; persevere in acting thus. It is only not well to remain in a state of disquiet. If you fall, so to say, a hundred times in the day, always do the same, make an act of contrition, and a resolution, through God’s assistance, not to fall again, together with an act of confidence in Jesus Christ; and then remain in peace. You must know, likewise, that it is not pride, even after a fault, for us to hope to sanctify ourselves; rather it would be pride to despond after the fault, and to be troubled, as though the resolutions we had made had secured us against any subsequent fall. Humble yourself then, and have confidence in God. Enough now. I already understand and comprehend the substance of all your fears, which arise from not knowing whether you will obtain your salvation, and whether you are at present in the grace of God. What you have told me is enough; do not propose to me any more doubts and questions about these troubles of yours. I know your conscience already; and I wish to leave with you some reflections, which I hope will give you peace whenever you are troubled. Peace, I say, but not that peace which is free from every shade of fear; for this is the peace which God reserves for us in heaven. But while we are in this world, it is his will that we should ever have a certain degree of fear, that so we may not leave off waiting upon and praying for the divine assistance, and confiding in the divine mercy, otherwise we should often be forgetting to have recourse to God; and therefore it is that he permits us to be harassed by fears, in order that we may not give up having recourse to him.

III. REASONS FOR HAVING CONFIDENCE IN THE DIVINE MERCY THROUGH THE MERITS OF JESUS CHRIST

There are, then, according to what you have told me, two great fears by which, principally, you are distressed, the first, that salvation may not be yours; the second, that God may not have pardoned your sins.

1. With regard to the former of these, whether your name is or is not inscribed in the Book of Life, this is a secret which it is not the will of God that any should know; that so, through the fear of damnation, every one should be diligent by means of good works to secure his salvation. Thus St. Peter writes: *Wherefore, brethren, labour the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election.*[2049] It is true that our conversion and salvation must be the work of God; but it is requisite for us, too, to strive on our own part to convert ourselves to God, and then he will not fail to save us: *Be converted unto me and you shall be saved.*[2050] It was Calvin's detestable blasphemy which asserted that God creates some people for the express purpose of sending them to hell; and the same infamous heretic went on to say that God himself constrained them to sin, in order that they might be damned; whereas it is certain that it is God's will for all to be saved: *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*[2051]

And he declares, even with respect to the wicked, who richly deserve everlasting death, that he would wish them too to be converted and saved:

As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.[2052] It is observed by Tertullian that the words which stand first in this sentence ("As I live") are an oath which is taken by God, in order that we may believe him without hesitation: *"Swearing even, saying, As I live, desiring to be believed."*[2053] And hence that most learned writer, Petavius, expresses himself in terms of great astonishment that there should be any one to doubt that truth, that God's will is for all to be saved; and therefore he says that if this Scripture, which God has confirmed by an oath, were ever permitted to be vilified and wrested into any other signification, what will there remain in matters of faith sufficiently clear to be safe against being called in question? *"What is there so clearly set forth in decrees of faith as to be henceforth safe from cavils?"*[2054] And why is it that God has so great a desire to save all mankind? It is because he himself has created them, by reason of the love which he has borne towards them from all eternity. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, this is what the Lord says to every man, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity upon thee.*[2055]

Moreover, the Lord, knowing our weakness, has patience with sinners, as St. Peter tells us, because he wills not that they should perish, but do penance for their sins, and obtain salvation: *But dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.*[2056] That Redeemer who has ransomed us from eternal death at the price of his own blood, says St. Augustine, does not desire to see those souls of ours lost which have cost him so much: *"He who has redeemed us at so great a price does not wish those whom lie has purchased to perish."*[2057] In short, God would wish to save all; and when he sees any who are constraining him by their sins to sentence them to hell, he, as it were, weeps in compassion over them, and says, *And wherefore will ye die, O house of Israel? Return ye and live.*[2058] As though he were to say, *"But, My children, why will you destroy and damn yourselves in eternity, when I have died upon the cross in order to save you? If you have gone astray from Me, return to Me as penitents, and I will restore to you the life that you have lost."* Now from this you may infer whether it is not God's desire to see you saved; and therefore, from this day forth, never again say, "But who knows whether God wills that I be saved? Who knows whether he does not will that I be damned for the offences which I have given him?" Drive all thoughts like these utterly away, seeing, as you do, that God is assisting you with his grace, and calling you by so many motives to his love.

2. Moreover, as regards your other fear, that the Lord may not yet have pardoned the sins of your past life, I have already told you at the outset that, in respect of this, you ought to quiet yourself by the obedience which your confessor has given you, to think no further about confessing what has happened during your past life, after the confessions which you have already made. Recollect, as I told you, what St. Teresa says, that one who obeys his confessor, *"whether with suffering or without it,"* may rest assured that he is doing God's will. And I would also put you in mind of what St. John of the Cross says, "That not to rest satisfied with what one's confessor says is a want of faith;" since, in truth, Jesus Christ has said that he who is obedient to his ministers is obedient to himself, and he who despises his ministers despises him: *He that heareth you heareth Me; he that despiseth you despiseth Me.*[2059] And so from this day forth, let us place every thought about our salvation in the hands of our Lord, and leave it there; for lie (as St. Peter says) has taken us into his care: *Casting all your care upon Him: for He hath care of you.*[2060] Moreover, in order to keep ourselves in the grace of God, we must have an utter distrust of our own strength; since, without the aid of grace, we could not do anything that is good, and, on the contrary, might fall into all that is evil; and therefore it is that our entire safety lies in recommending ourselves continually unto God, because being, as we are, in continual danger of falling, so we have continual need of procuring, through prayer, the assistance of God. This assistance, says St. Bernard, offers itself to all; and no one remains without it except he who despises it: *"It is offered to all; and no one is devoid of it save he who refuses it."*[2061] The divine aid, then, is offered to all; but it is God's will that he who desires it should ask him for it, *Ask, and ye shall receive.*[2062]

And he who is careless about asking for it will remain without it, and will involve himself in destruction. When the devil, then, is frightening us by the thought of our weakness, let us not give ourselves up to despair, but hope to receive the power to resist all his temptations from that God who is omnipotent, and who strengthens us to hope, paying, with the apostle, *I can* *do all things in Him who strengthened me.*[2063] And if we place our confidence in God, how shall it be possible for us to be put to confusion? No; it is written in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, *No one hath hoped in the Lord, and been confounded.*[2064] The mere name of Jesus is sufficient to vanquish all the powers of hell. St. Paul says that God has given to Jesus Christ a name which is above every name, since it is at that name that everything is made to humble itself: *He hath given Him a name which is above all names; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.*[2065] In contending with the enemies of our salvation, it often avails more to victory to call to our aid the name of Jesus than to say many long prayers.

IV. OTHER SPECIAL COUNSELS

Further, while upon this point, I wish to leave with you for your consolation some other instructions as to particulars, which, I think, may prove to be of great use to your conscience.

1. I repeat my recommendation to you to be obedient to your confessor, because, by what I have been able to ascertain with respect to this obedience, you have not had up to this time an entire faith, and therefore have often been disquieted. What I have said to you above on this matter is sufficient. Hold it for certain that one who goes on under obedience is journeying safely to Paradise.

2. Then, when things go contrary, be careful to receive it all as from the hands of God; and especially in times of sickness be scrupulously obedient to your medical adviser, in taking the remedies he prescribes, making known to him without exaggeration all that you are suffering; and then remain in peace. Forbear to ask for acts of compassion from those who come to see you; and whenever any one expresses for you more than a moderate amount of compassion, let your reply be made in the words of Jesus Christ: *The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*[2066] Say, *“God sends me this evil, not because he wishes me evil, but because he wishes well to me; and shall I not accept it with peace?”* In time of sickness it is perceived whether a person is spiritual or not. There are some devout people who, when they are in health, are all sweetness and humility; but if they are in any way invalided, they straightway become

impatient and proud, complaining of all about them, and especially if they have not, to a moment, the medicine or the attendance which they require. In sickness, then, suffer all without making complaints; and in all circumstances, too, which savour of adversity say, with Job, *As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord.*[2067] Be also careful to endure contempt without resentment; it is by this that one knows whether a person is humble, namely, if he receives contempt patiently.

3. God is all goodness to one who seeks him: *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him.*[2068] No one has ever put his trust in God, and had to remain abandoned by him: *None hath hoped in the Lord, and been confounded.*[2069] God lets himself be found even by those who seek him not, as St. Paul observes: *I was found by them that did not seek Me,*[2070] With how much greater ease will he not allow himself to be found by one who does seek him! From this day forth, then, forbear to say that God has abandoned you; the Lord abandons none but the obstinate only, who desire to live in sin; neither does he altogether abandon even these, but is ever going after them up to the time of their death, giving them portions of light for their succour, that so he may not see them lost.

4. When a soul is seeking to love him, he cannot but love it, as he has himself declared: *I love them that love Me.*[2071] And whenever he hides himself from these loving souls, he does so for their advantage only, that he may see them yet more desirous of finding his grace, and more closely united with himself. Behold what St. Catharine of Genoa used to say, when suffering aridity to such a degree that it seemed to her as if God had abandoned her, and that nothing remained to her as a ground for hope; it was then that she would say: *“How happy I am in this state, so deplorable even as it is! May my heart be broken down to ruins, provided that my Love be glorified! O my dearest Love! if from this unhappy state of mine is produced but a single atom of glory for Thee, I pray that Thou wouldst leave me thus for all eternity!” And saying this, she would burst into a flood of tears in the midst of her desolation.*

5. You must know that souls which love the Crucified enter, in time of desolation, into a closer union with God in the interior of their heart. There is nothing which occasions so diligent a search for God as does desolation; neither is there anything that attracts God to the heart so much as

desolation, since the acts of conformity to the divine will which are made in desolation are more pure and perfect than others; and hence, the greater the desolation, the greater is the humility, the purer is the resignation, the purer is the confidence, the purer are the prayers, and so the more abundant are the divine graces and assistances.

6. In order to arrive at perfection, attend above all things to the exercise of divine love; the love of God, when he makes our heart his abode, is that which of itself despoils it of every irregular affection; nevertheless, let it be your endeavour to make frequent repetitions of acts of divine love, saying, *My God, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee; and I hope to die with these words on my lips, My God, I love Thee.* The saints tell us that a soul ought not to make fewer acts of love than of respiration.

7. Moreover, in time of prayer, make an unreserved offering of yourself to God many times over. Say to him in all sincerity: *My Jesus, I give myself up to Thee without reserve. I wish to be all Thine own, all Thine own; and if I know not how to give myself up as I ought, do Thou, my Jesus, take me, and make me all Thine own.* St. Teresa made an entire offering of herself to God fifty times every day. This is a practice which even you can follow. Therefore make a continual offering to him of your will, in those words of St. Paul: *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*[2072] This one act was enough to transform St. Paul from a persecutor of the Church into a vessel of election.

For this purpose, too, pray to God frequently in the words of David: *Teach me to do Thy will.*[2073] To this end should be directed all the prayers that you offer to God and to the Mother of God, to your guardian angel, and to all your patron saints, that they would obtain for you the grace perfectly to do the will of God; in short, let this one expression, *Fiat voluntas Tua,* serve you as a remedy for all your evils, and as a means of attaining all that is good.

8. And when you experience more aridity than usual, exercise yourself by delighting in the infinite joy which your God, whom you love, is enjoying, which is an act of love the most perfect that is exercised by the saints in heaven, who rejoice not so much for their own beatitude as for that of God, loving him all the while, as they do, immeasurably beyond themselves.

9. Then, with reference to the subject of prayer, always meditate on the Passion of Jesus Christ. Jesus suffering out of his love for us is the object which most forcibly attracts our hearts. If, while meditating on the mysteries of the Passion, the Lord grants you any feeling of tenderness, receive it with thankfulness; but whenever you do not experience this, you must know that you will always derive from the practice great comfort for your soul. Frequently go, more especially, to the garden of Gethsemani, after the example of St. Teresa, who used to say that she found him there alone; and on considering him when in affliction so great that he falls into an agony, sweats blood, and declares his sorrow to be such as to be enough to cause him to die, you will readily find comfort in any afflictions of your own, seeing that he endures it all out of his love for you.

And at that sight of Jesus preparing himself to die for you, do you likewise prepare yourself to die for him; and when you experience in your distresses more affliction than usual, then say what St. Thomas the Apostle said to the other disciples: *Let us also go, that we may die with Him.*[2074] Let us die with Jesus. Go likewise to Calvary, where you will find him expiring on the Cross, consumed by suffering; and on seeing him in that condition, it were impossible for you not to rest content willingly to suffer pain of every kind for a God who is dying of sufferings undergone through his love for you. St. Paul protested that he neither knew nor wished to know anything in this life save Jesus crucified: *For I judged not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*[2075] St. Bonaventure says that one who would maintain a continued devotion towards Jesus Christ ought, with the eye of his understanding, to be ever contemplating him dying upon the Cross: *"Let him who would preserve devotion within his soul, ever keep the eyes of his heart fixed upon Christ dying upon the Cross."*[2076] And thus, in all your fears, look at Jesus crucified, and take courage, and brace yourself up to suffer through love for him.

10. Above everything, prayer is that which I recommend to you; when you cannot tell what else to say, it would be enough for you to say, Lord, help me, and help me quickly: *Lord, come to my assistance; make haste, O Lord, to help me.*[2077] You are already aware how often the Church repeats this prayer in the office which priests and religious have to recite. And St.

Philip Neri made the recital of the same prayer sixty-three times, in the fashion of a rosary, a subject of his instruction.

The Lord has promised to grant us whatsoever we ask him for: *Ask, and it shall be given unto you.*[2078] St. Bernard went off into an ecstasy while thinking upon those words of Jesus Christ to the two sons of Zebedee, who said to him, *Master, we desire that whatsoever we shall ask, Thou wouldst do it for us;*[2079] and the reply of Jesus was: *What would you that I should do for you?*[2080] And all the graces which you ask of God, ask for them always in the name of Jesus Christ. Whatsoever we receive from God, we receive it all through the merits of Jesus Christ; and our Redeemer has himself promised us that whatsoever we ask of the Father in his name, the Father will give it us all: *"Amen, Amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you."*[2081] Now, when you are afraid lest it should be God's will to send you to hell, think with yourself whether it be possible for him who says, *"Ask of Me what you will, and I will give it you,"* to have the will to send you to hell.

11. And why, then, when you are in a state of desolation, are you disposed to entertain the suspicion that God hates you? You ought not to grieve, but rather to be consoled, by seeing that God is dealing with you as he deals with the souls of those of his servants who are the most dear to himself. And how has he not dealt with his own Son, of whom it is written in Holy Scripture: *The Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity.*[2082] It was his will to behold him consumed and crushed under sufferings and torments.

12. When you are frightened by the thought that it may be God's will to abandon you on account of your ingratitude, do that which was done by the two disciples, who, as they were going to Emmaus, were accompanied by Jesus in the guise of a pilgrim; and when they were near the place, Jesus gave signs that it was his will to go further (*He made as though He would go further*[2083]), but they, the Gospel tells us, constrained him, saying, *Stay with us because it is towards evening,*[2084] And then He was pleased to enter into the house, and to remain with them: *And He went in with them,*[2085] And thus, when it seems to you as if it were the Lord's will to leave you, do you constrain him to remain with you, saving to him. *My Jesus, stay with me, remain with me; I wish that Thou wouldst not leave me; if Thou dost leave*

me, to whom shall I have to go for consolation and salvation? Lord, to whom shall we go?[2086] as was said by St. Peter. And so go on to pray to him lovingly and tenderly; and do not fear but that, to a certainty, he will not leave you. Then say with the apostle: Neither death, nor life . . . nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God,[2087] which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? Say to him: My Saviour, show thyself as much displeased with me as Thou wilt; but know that not the fear of death, nor a desire for life, nor any other of this world's creatures, shall ever have power to separate me from my love for Thee. Or, again, say what was said by St. Francis de Sales, when a young man and in a state of aridity, in answer to the devil, who suggested to him that he was destined to go to hell: "And since I shall not be able to love my God in eternity, I wish to love him, at least in this life, as much as lies in my power." And so he recovered his cheerfulness.

13. Again: when you feel yourself more than usually oppressed by fears or dryness, do not omit to have recourse to Most Holy Mary, whom God has given us as a consoler for those who are in affliction. Jesus Christ is the foundation of all our hopes; but the Church desires us to call Mary our hope: *"Spes nostra, salve."* All graces in their origin, come to us from God; but St. Bernard says that they all pass through Mary's hand; and consequently he who does not recommend himself to the Blessed Virgin closes against himself the channel of grace; while, on her part, she does not neglect to give succour to every one who calls upon her to aid him. And therefore it is that all the saints have been careful to recommend themselves continually to this divine Mother, who has all power with God.

14. Moreover, all the time that you have the intention of loving God, keep your heart open: *Open thy mouth, and I will fill it.*[2088] The meaning of what is here said by God, "Open thy mouth, and I will fill it, is, that the more we hope for from God, the more we shall receive from him. He has declared that he shows favour towards those who place confidence in him: *He is the protector of all that trust in Him.*[2089] And represent to yourself, whenever you feel doubts about the Lord's hearing you, that he is chiding you as he did St. Peter, and saying to you: *O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?*[2090] Why dost thou doubt My hearing thee, knowing as thou dost the

promise which I have made, to grant the requests of every one that prays to Me?

And because he is willing to grant us our requests, it is his will that we believe that he certainly does grant them whenever we ask him for graces: *All things whatsoever you ask, when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.*[2091] Observe the words, believe that you shall receive; for they show that we must ask God for graces with a sure, unhesitating confidence that we shall receive them; as St. James also exhorts us: *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.*[2092] In dealing with this God, who is all goodness, have a great confidence, and rid yourself of everything like sadness. He who serves God and is sad, instead of honouring him, treats him rather with dishonour. St. Bernard tells us that he wrongs God who represents him to himself as cross and severe; being, as he is, goodness and mercy itself. *"How can you entertain a doubt,"* says the saint, *"of Jesus pardoning your sins, when he has affixed them to the cross, whereon he died for you, with the very nails by which his own hands were pierced?"* God declares that it is his delight to be with us: *My delights are to be with the children of men.*[2093] If, then, it is God's delight to treat with us, it is only just that all our delights should consist in treating with him; and this thought should give us courage to treat with God with every confidence, endeavouring to spend all that remains of life to us with this God of ours, who loves us so much, and with whom we hope to be in company in heaven for all eternity. Let us, then, treat him with all confidence and love, as our most dear and affectionate friend, who loves us more than any other does.

Alas! souls that are scrupulous treat God as a tyrant, from whose subjects reserve and fear only are required; and consequently they are apprehensive that, at every word inconsiderately spoken, at every thought which crosses their mind, he may enter into his wrath with them, and be disposed to cast them into destruction in hell. No; God does not take his grace away from us excepting when we consciously and deliberately despise him and turn our backs upon him; and when, by some venial fault, we slightly offend him, he is certainly displeased by it, but does not therefore deprive us of the love which he bears towards us; whence, by an act of contrition or of love, he is at once appeased. His infinite majesty may justly claim all reverence and self-abasement from us; but he is better pleased that the souls which love him should treat him with loving confidence rather than with timid servility. So do not treat God as a tyrant any more. Recall to your mind the graces which he has bestowed upon you, even after the offences and acts of ingratitude which you have committed against him; recollect the loving treatment which he has dealt out towards you, in order to extricate you from the disorders of your past life, and the extraordinary lights which he has given you, by means of which he has so often called you to his holy love; and so treat him from this day forth with great confidence and affection, as being your dearest object. Now, to proceed to another point.

15. It were unnecessary for me here to recommend to you the frequentation of the Sacraments, frequenting them as you do already. Go to confession no less frequently than twice, or at least once, during the week; and with regard to Communion, act in obedience to your director; but even when you feel to be in a state of aridity, do not neglect to ask for it, since it is a rule with directors to allow Communion more or less frequently according to the desire which they perceive in the penitent. When your director sees that you do not ask him for it, nor show a desire for it, he will hardly of his own accord prescribe it; and when you do not make an actual Communion, at least make a spiritual one, which you are able to do, and make it frequently in the course of the day.

16. Moreover, let the dearest objects of your affection be these two great mysteries, the Sacrament of the Altar and the Passion of Jesus Christ. If the love of all hearts were to gather itself together into one heart only, this would certainly not be able to correspond, even in the smallest measure, to the love which Jesus Christ has shown us in these two mysteries of the Passion and the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

17. Finally, if you love Jesus Christ, do not fail to recommend him every day unfortunate sinners. St. Teresa and St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi always prayed for sinners. If we know how much God is offended by infidels, heretics, and so many others, and we neglect to pray to the Lord for their conversion, this would be a sign that our love for God is very feeble.

V. EXAMPLE: ST. LIDWINE

Let it, then, be your endeavour, during the remainder of your life, to love and have confidence in him; and do not become sad when you find yourself in afflictions and tribulations; for this is a sign, not of his hatred, but of the love which God bears towards you. And therefore, in reference to this point, and as a conclusion to this little treatise, I will here cite for you the example of the virgin St. Lidwine; and I know not whether there is to be met with among the annals of the saints an instance of any other soul suffering so great affliction and desolation as did this holy virgin.

She was born of poor parents, in a town of Holland called Schiedam. One day, while she was yet a little girl, in walking on the ice, she fell and broke a rib; and as, in consequence of their poverty, it was not afterwards cured, there was formed upon the broken rib an abscess, which broke of itself, and infected her whole body, so that it became paralyzed. Her parents left her to herself, without taking any care of her, while-she continued full of pain, with all the limbs of her body, excepting only her head and left arm, contracted. Her right arm was, consequently, utterly useless; and at the same time she was seized with St. Anthony’s fire to such a degree that her very bones were gradually eaten away; and during all this she did not venture even to speak of the evils from which she was suffering, lest her parents might do something to increase them. She suffered continual and excruciating pains in her head. On her forehead she had a large sore; and in her chin there was a wound extending to the mouth, full of congealed blood, which prevented her from speaking and eating. One of her eyes had retreated inwards and become useless; the other was so full of bad humours that she could not bear the light of the sun, and scarcely even that of a lamp. She suffered so much from toothache that the pain brought her down even to death’s door. She had a continual flow of blood from the mouth, nostrils, eyes, or ears. In her throat she had a tumour, which prevented her even from breathing freely; she had to bear the torment of a perpetual fever; she suffered continually from vomiting, throwing up a great quantity of bloody water after taking even the smallest amount of food. She was at one and the same time dropsical, feverish, and consumptive, destitute of everything; and she received assistance from no one. There might sometimes be one who, out of compassion, would hand her some medicine; but that only made her sufferings two fold; and she would take it with all the obedience of a lamb, never making complaints about it. Her parents, being poor, and wearied out by her calamities, which were so great, used to grumble at her, saying that she was born only to be a torment to them, and to consume whatever little supplies their home might furnish; so that it would be better if death were to take her. She used to weep, not for her own afflictions, but for the inconvenience which she caused to others.

Being unable to move, she was obliged constantly to lie upon her back, which was all in such a state of putrefaction that the skin stuck to the bed, that is to say, to that poor straw on which she lay abandoned; so that whenever any one, out of compassion, raised her up, her skin would remain adhering to the straw; and her body became, as it were, excoriated. In short, the appearance of that poor maiden of fifteen years of age upon her bed was the same as that of a corpse lying all but breathless upon a bier; and such was the state in which this holy virgin lived for thirty-eight years. It is also related that four soldiers entered her room one day; and, after using much abusive language to her, calling her a hypocrite and a witch, the truth about whom would in due time be discovered, they took away from her the poor blanket which covered her half-dead body. Before taking their departure, too, they beat her, and even wounded her with their swords. There was added to all these external evils an interior desolation, an affliction from which she suffered for years; since God, for her greater purification, withdrew from her (as is his wont in the case of those souls which are most precious in his sight) his sensible assistance, so that she found herself bereft of her usual loving confidence in God; and then the devil tormented her fiercely, suggesting to her that such great evils as those by which she was oppressed were a sure sign that the Lord had abandoned her, and that she would die in a state of despair. Nevertheless, assailed although she was by so much sickness and by such interior tribulations, she suffered it all with resignation, blessing God for dealing with her so; and in order to appease him, she girt herself with a cincture of horse-hair, which penetrated into her sores.

Such was the state of desolation in which the saint lived for four years; but all her sufferings she bore with resignation to the divine will, ever blessing God for treating her in this manner. All that she had to undergo she united to the Passion of Jesus Christ; and this was the way in which, throughout the whole of that time, she sustained that fearful storm. But then God began to give her great consolation; and however great might be the sufferings which she might experience after wards, she would nevertheless say: *“When I see my Jesus Christ hanging upon the cross, I feel my pains no longer. My sufferings urge me to cry out; but my heart urges me to say, Jesus, my love, increase my pains, but increase my love.”* To others, when condoling with her, she would say: *“All the evil from which I am suffering is a mere nothing, being, as I am, in the hands of a goodness which is infinite, such as my God is, whose bowels of compassion exceed those of one’s father or mother.”* Take courage, I pray you, from all that you have now heard, and bear your aridity with fortitude; and when you feel more than usually oppressed, offer up the following prayer:

PRAYER FOR A LOVING SOUL WHEN IN DESOLATION

O my crucified Jesus! Thou dost already know that, out of love for Thee, I have left all; but after that Thou hast caused me to leave my all. I find that Thou Thyself hast left me too. But what am I saying, O my Love? Have pity upon me; it is not I who speak; it is my weakness that makes me speak thus. For myself, I deserve every kind of suffering, for such great sins as mine have been. Thou hast left me, as I have deserved, and hast withdrawn from me that loving assistance of Thine where with Thou hast so often consoled me; notwithstanding, however disconsolate and abandoned I may be by Thee, I protest that it is my will ever to love Thee and to bless Thee. Provided that Thou dost not deprive me of the grace of being able to love Thee, deal with me as Thou pleasest. I will say to Thee, in the words of that beloved servant of Thine:

I love Thee, though I seem
An enemy in Thy sight:
Repel me as Thou wilt,
I will ever follow Thee.”

Lord, take not Thyself from me, and then take from me all besides, as may seem good in Thy sight. “Draw me after Thee.” My Love, draw me after Thee, and then it matters not though Thou take from me the consolation of being conscious of it; but let it be forcibly that Thou drawest me, dragging me out of the mire of my sins. Help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious Blood. I wish to be all Thine own, cost me what it may; I wish to love Thee with all my strength; but what can I do myself? Thy blood *is my hope. O Mary, Mother of God, my refuge! neglect not to pray for me in all my tribulations. First of all in the blood of Jesus Christ, and then in Thy prayers, do I trust for my eternal salvation. "In thee, O Lady, have I hoped, I will say to thee with St. Bonaventure, "I shall not be confounded forever." Obtain for me the grace ever to love my God in this life and in eternity, and I ask for nothing more.*

HYMN. THE LOVING SOUL IN DESOLATION

Alas! forsaken and alone
Myself I ever see,
And in my bitter agony
No one can comfort me.
Death, death itself with cruel spite
Torments, but does not kill;

O dark and solitary grove,
Whose sombre shades impart
A gloom that makes thee well accord
With my sad lonely heart;
Come, bear me friendly company,
Compassionate my woe,

And suffer thus without restraint
My sobs and tears to flow.
I weep, and ever still must weep,
Nought can my tears restrain,
Until my God, my best beloved,
At length I find again.
Ah! where art Thou, my only good?
Ah! whither hast Thou gone?
Far, far away, thus leaving me
Disconsolate, alone.
Where is that happy time, O God,
That time of joy and grace,
When the loved Spouse consoled my heart
With his sweet heavenly face;
When, in that sweetest sleep of soul,
He aimed the flaming dart,
Inflicting first a wound of love,
Then ravishing my heart;
When, all inflamed with love divine,
My sighs were breaths of fire;
And while I loved, still more and more
To love was my desire.
Alas! how soon the cruel storm

Succeeds that calm so dear!
The very light of heaven above
Now fills my soul with fear.
Horrors I see and feel around,
Where’er I look or go;
And everything inspires with dread,
And adds fresh pain and woe.

The gates are shut, I cannot flee,
I live a captive still.
I fain would flee, but where to find
A hand to set me free,
If He whose life alone can give
Flies far away from me?
O my Beloved! help Thou me;
If Thou hast gone, return;
See how I sigh disconsolate,
And for Thy presence yearn.
Ah! be at length appeased with me,
My Life! return again;
And since ’tis Thou hast pierced me thus,
Heal Thou my hidden pain.
Good cause hast Thou, dear Lord, I own,
Forever to depart;
Yet see, ah! see, Thy chains remain
Entwined around my heart.
And should there be, alas! no hope
Of pardon yet for me,
Still know, dear Jesus, I am Thine,
And Thine will ever be.
I love Thee, though I seem to be
But hateful in Thy sight;
And I will ever follow Thee
Where’er Thou turn Thy flight.

VII. SURE SIGNS BY WHICH WE MAY KNOW WHETHER WE HAVE THE DIVINE LOVE IN US

Divine love is compared in the Scriptures to fire. Our Lord, in declaring to us in the Gospel that he had come on earth to bring down the divine love, expresses himself by saying that he had come on earth to bring fire: *I am come to cast fire on the earth.*[2094] And God himself, in the Apocalypse, counsels a soul to provide itself with burnt gold: *I counsel thee, O soul, to buy of Me gold fire-tried;*[2095] that is, divine love. Now, fire has these two properties, it resists what is contrary to itself I mean to say, that instead of being put out by winds and gusts, it is thereby augmented and it is operative; if it is fire it will act. Here are therefore, two sure signs by which we may find out if we have ourselves the holy love of God works and patience. Do we always work for our God, at least by means of a pure right intention of doing his divine will in all things, of finding his divine good pleasure in all things? Do we voluntarily suffer for his sake everything that is against our inclination, poverty, tribulations, sickness, and everything else? And instead of such things making us go far from him, do they bring us nearer to him? If they do, then we have the holy love of God.

Our love is a fire which acts, which opposes what is contrary to itself, otherwise we have it not; our love towards God will be not true, but false; it will be a love of the lips, but not of the heart. St. John also warns us against this: *My little children* (see how he makes use of the very expressions of love), *let us not love in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*[2096] St. Gregory says, *"If there is no work, there is no love."*[2097] And Jesus Christ: *He that hath My commandments and keepeth them (he who keeps my commandments and observes them faithfully), he it is that loveth Me.*[2098] And St. Augustine adds, *"The bitterest and most disagreeable things are rendered comparatively easy, and almost of no account, by love."*[2099] So that if we always act in the manner laid down above, that is, for our God, if we keep his divine commandments, if we observe them faithfully (and with the divine commandments come also those of the holy Church, the obligations of our state, and each one's own duty), if we overcome with generosity and even with cheerfulness, for our God, everything that is contrary to our nature, though it be most distasteful to us, we have in us the holy love of God. Our love is then a fire which acts, which resists what is contrary to itself; otherwise we have it not: our love towards God will certainly not be true, but false; it will be a love of the lips, not a love of the heart: *"My little children, let us not love in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth,"*[2100] Let us give some more practical example.

Suppose you have an opportunity of making such and such profit, but it is dishonest to do so; or an opportunity occurs for you to indulge yourself in some pleasure, but that pleasure is unlawful; the duties of your state trouble you, or the labours of your employment weary you; and for the sake of your God you do not care to make that profit, you renounce that pleasure, do your duty, and continue your work, then you have the holy love of God, your love is a fire which operates; otherwise you have it not, your love towards God will not be true love, but false; it will be a love of the lips, and not a love of the heart: *"My little children, let us not love in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth."*

Further, suppose some tribulation comes upon you suddenly, that an action is brought against you unexpectedly, on which all you have depends, that you suddenly lose some person in whom were all your hopes, and who was your whole support. Do you with promptness offer it all to our Lord; do you even bear all with joy? If so, you have the holy love of God. Your love is a fire which resists what is contrary to itself; otherwise you have it not: your love will not be true, it will be false a love of the lips, not a love of the heart: "My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth." But it is a still surer sign of love to suffer than to act; because in acting, a person employs himself in favour of the person beloved, and so far gives a sign of love; but in suffering, a person has no care for himself, and thinks of nothing but the person beloved, and therefore gives a sign of greater love.

And by this mark God was pleased singularly to try the great love of holy Job towards him. The holy man Job was certainly a great lover of God; but when did he show himself most truly to be so? Was it when he was surrounded by a numerous family? When he was in the enjoyment of an abundance of earthly goods? When he was in perfect health? Yes, even then; for even then he acknowledged that all came from God; he thanked him for all these things, offered sacrifices, and fulfilled his duty; giving good advice to his sons, and by continually praying for them, that they might never sin and offend their Lord: *Lest, perhaps, my sons have sinned.*[2101] But his love of God showed itself really great, when God, on purpose to try his great love for him, despoiled him of all his possessions at once; caused all his sons to die at the same time; deprived him entirely, in one moment, of his health; so that he was reduced to such a state, that, covered with ulcers from head to foot, he sat on a dunghill, and scraped with a potsherd the corrupt matter from all his members; with all these horrible misfortunes, and in the midst of all these unheard-of afflictions, he did nothing but repeat continually, with invincible and more than wonderful patience, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so be it done; blessed be the name of the Lord.*[2102] But why speak of the holy Job? Jesus Christ himself said to his apostles, as he was going to his Passion, *That the world may know that I love the Father, etc. . . . Arise, let us go hence.*[2103] Here, then, we have the surest and most incontestable proof of the true love of God patience, patience; the voluntary suffering of anything for him. The sayings and doings of the saints on this matter are also known to all. St. Teresa said, *"either to suffer or to die;"* St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, *"to suffer, and not to die;"* St. John of the Cross, *"to suffer, and be silent."*

The holy martyrs invited their executioners to torment them, and the wild beasts to devour them, St. Lidwine willingly suffered a painful illness for thirty-three years. St. Frances of Rome willingly suffered the unjust banishment of her husband, and the confiscation of all their property; and St. John of the Cross already named willingly endured a cruel imprisonment for nine months, with numberless other inconveniences and hardships. See, see, the surest and most incontestable mark of the true love of God, patience, patience; suffering, willingly suffering everything for him. And oh, happy and blessed is he who by these two sure marks of works and patience, of acting and suffering for our great God, discovers in himself the holy love of God! All the gold in the world, when compared with the smallest degree of the holy love of God, is nothing but a handful of sand: *All gold in comparison of her is as a little sand.*[2104] All the riches even of the world, compared with the least degree of the holy love of God, are as nought, as the Wise Man says in the Scripture: *I esteemed riches nothing, in comparison of her.*[2105] But why talk about all the gold or all the riches of the world, while all the greatest of the supernatural gifts are worth nothing without the holy love of God?

This is the language of the holy Apostle Paul, who possessed the holy love of God in such abundance, and who therefore so well knew its value. If, said he, I had the gift of all tongues, and could speak not only in all the languages of men, but also in that wonderful language with which the angels speak to one another: *If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels; and had not the holy love of God, and have not charity, I should be no better than a cymbal that was out of tune: I am become as sounding* *brass or as a tinkling cymbal.*[2106] If I had the highest gift of prophecy, so that I could penetrate the depths of the most abstruse mysteries, “And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries;” if I had the gift of all sciences, and such a great faith that I could remove mountains, from one place to another; “if I should have all knowledge, and all faith, so that I could remove mountains,” and had not the holy love of God: “And have not charity;” I am good for nothing: I “am nothing.” This beautiful virtue of charity, or holy love of God, is the queen of all the other virtues, and reigns, and will reign, for all eternity. After death faith will have its reward, because it will see that in which it has believed; but the virtue of faith will have no place in Paradise. After death hope will have its reward, because it will possess that which it hoped in; but there will be no virtue of hope in heaven. After death, charity or love towards God will have its reward, and will reign eternally, because with infinite beatitude it will continue to love throughout all eternity that same God whom it loved here on earth.

Therefore, oh, how happy, oh, how blessed is he who, by these two most certain marks of works and patience, voluntarily acting and suffering for his God, is able to recognize in himself the holy and true love of God! Let us, then, all love our God, and let us all love him in the manner and according to the rule here given. In all our works let us have God before our eyes, in everything fulfilling always his divine will, his divine good pleasure; and let us bear not only patiently but also joyfully all that is contrary to our self-love and to our human sensibilities. It is for this one only end, that of loving our God, that we have been created and put into this world by him. To the accomplishment of this one only end let us turn all our care, all our solicitude. On his love alone let us set any value, let us often ask him to give us his holy love alone: “Thy holy love alone” (let all and each of us say constantly); “give us Thy holy love alone, O Lord, together with Thy holy grace, and I am rich enough; nor will I ask anything else of Thee;” as that great saint who was so filled with the love of God, the great St. Ignatius, continually prayed.

A Short Act of Perfect Love towards God, to be repeated very often.

My God, I love Thee above all things, and in all things, with my whole soul, because Thou art worthy of all love!

HYMN. THE SOUL INTRODUCED INTO THE WINE-CELLAR, AND ALREADY INEBRIATED WITH DIVINE LOVE

“He brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me.” Cant. ii. 4

Oh! where am I? What cell is this
In which I breathe an air of bliss
So heavenly that I burn and pine,
Consumed with flames of love divine?
Who led me to this garden fair,
So rich with flowers of beauty rare,
Whose thousand-scented breaths impart
A perfume sweet which fills the heart?
A sleep unearthly calms my heart;
Vain creatures, wake me not, depart!
Ah! leave me, leave me, I entreat,
To sleep yet on, in peace so sweet.
A love all-pure embraces me,
And sets rny soul’s affections free
From earthly things; my heart, so blest,.
Now finds in God alone its rest.
I burn, and yet no fire is near;
A captive, yet no chains are here;
No dart, yet I am pierced through;
Tis past belief, and still tis true.
A thousand chains my soul have bound,
A thousand darts my heart have found;
A thousand wounds of love it feels;
The Archer still himself conceals.
Sweet flames of love consume me now,
They death inflict, yet love bestow;
Dying, I live, yet would I not
For lives a thousand change my lot.
Silence and solitude I seek,
And yet of love would ever speak;
I would repose, yet soar above,
And draw with me all hearts to love.
When most alone, ’tis then I see
My best companion is with me;
And to my Love I most am bound
When most detached from all around.
I seek abasement, yet I reign!
Though leaving all, my All I gain;
I shun all pleasures, yet I find
A joy beyond all joys combined.
I burn, and evermore would burn;
I yearn for God, and still would yearn;
I wish to live, I long to die,

I know not well for what I sigh!
I seek in vain I know not what;
I love, yet comprehend it not;
Scarce only in my love, I seem
To know I love the Good Supreme.

Come, ye enamoured souls, and say
What comfort can your pain allay,
When sick with love, you feel the smart
Of those sweet flames that burn the heart.
But no one hears, not one replies;
And Thou, my Love, these burning sighs,
These bitter tears which Thou dost see,
But make Thee yet more deaf to me.
Come, Love! for I am now Thy prey;
Who art Thou? and what will Thou? say!
Let me but see Thy beauty nigh,
Then, if Thou wilt, then let me die.
Ah! let me speak, great God above!
Thou knowest all, save how to love;
For Thou art pitiless to me,
A heart that loves and pleases Thee.
If, then, so great Thy love has been,
Why pierce my heart with dart so keen,
And leave me thus in bitter pain,
Apart from Thee to pine in vain?
Ah! cruel, cruel One! but no,
Beloved! yes, I call Thee so;
Thou know’st my one, one only thought
Is but to please Thee as I ought.
’Tis love thus leads my tongue astray;
Senseless, I know not what I say:
That piercing dart of charity
Makes me thus mad through love of Thee.
Dear object of my love alone,
Thou one, one only love I own;
My God! my All! O Loveliness!
My Good, my Life, my Happiness!
My Treasure! ah! what can I do,
Thy sweet and noble heart to woo?
Oh, speak, and tell me how I may
Thy love with my poor love repay.
‘Twere little in love’s fiercest fire
For Thee to languish of desire;
Nor pain nor death could pay the debt;
To be consumed were little yet.
And now, since words can say no more,
Accept, Beloved, I implore,

This unreserved gift from me,
All, all I am I give to Thee.

VIII. RULE OF LIFE. (ABRIDGED[2107])

I. On rising in the morning make the following acts:

1. "O my God! I adore Thee. I love Thee with my whole heart, and thank Thee for all Thy benefits, particularly for having preserved me this night."

2. "I offer to Thee all that I shall do or suffer throughout the day, in union with the actions and sufferings of Jesus and Mary, intending to gain all the indulgences in my power."

3. "I purpose, O Lord! to avoid this day every offence against Thee; but do Thou extend Thy protecting hand over me, that I may not betray Thee. Most Holy Mary, take me under thy protection. My angel guardian and patron saints, assist me."

Then say one *Our Father,* one *Hail Mary,* and the *Creed;* with the *Hail Mary* three times in honour of the purity of the Blessed Virgin.

II. Take care to make half an hour's meditation as soon as possible in the day. For though meditation is not absolutely necessary, it is morally necessary, in order to obtain the grace of perseverance. Those who neglect it will find it very difficult to persevere in the grace of God. The reasons for this are twofold: the first is, because the eternal truths cannot be seen by the eyes of the flesh, but by the eye of the understanding, which is reflection. Hence he does not perceive them who does not meditate; and for want of perceiving them he will hardly arrive at a due appreciation of the importance of salvation, of the means which secure it, and of the obstacles which hinder it; so that his salvation will be placed in imminent risk. The second reason is, because the soul that does not practise meditation will also be backward to practise prayer. Now, prayer is necessary, not merely as a precept, but as a means to observe the commandments, since, as a general rule, and speaking of adults, God only gives his grace to those who ask for it. But without meditation a person has a very faint notion of his own spiritual wants, and he is moreover but slightly impressed with the necessity of praying, in order to overcome temptations and to save his soul: thus he is led to pray but little or nothing, and for want of prayer is eventually lost. The eminent Bishop Palafox said, *"How will the Lord give us perseverance,* *unless we ask him for it? And how shall we ask him for it without prayer?"* On the other hand, St. Teresa declares that it is hardly possible for a man that prays to remain long in sin; he will either forsake prayer or forsake sin: prayer and sin are incompatible.

With regard to practice, meditation has three parts: preparation, consideration, and conclusion. In the preparation must be made three acts: *1, Of the presence of God; 2, Of humility; 3, Of petition for light.* We say, *1, "My God, I believe Thou art here present, and I adore Thee;" 2, "I deserve at this moment to be burning in hell. O my God, I am sorry for having offended Thee!" 3, "Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus and Mary, grant me light in this meditation, that I may profit by it."* Then say a Hail Mary to the divine Mother, and a Glory be to the Father, etc., in honour of our angel guardian. Then read the point of meditation, and be sure to meditate, at least occasionally, on the Passion of Jesus Christ. It must also be understood that the fruit of prayer does not so much consist in meditating, but rather 1, *In producing affections for instance, of humility, confidence, love, sorrow, offering, resignation, and the like; 2, In making petitions, and especially imploring God to grant us perseverance and his holy love; 3, In making the resolution to avoid some particular sin, and of practising some particular virtue.*

Finally, the conclusion is made thus: *1"I thank Thee, O God, for the lights thou hast given me;" 2, "I purpose to keep the resolutions I have made;" 3, "and I beg Thy grace to fulfil them." Nor must we ever forget to recommend to God the holy souls in purgatory, and all poor sinners.* We must never omit our accustomed meditation, whatever coldness and weariness we may feel over it; for St. Teresa says, "To do so would be to cast ourselves into hell with our own hands." Moreover, let all bear in mind that Benedict XIV. granted a plenary indulgence to every one who makes a meditation of half an hour, or at least a quarter of an hour, every day for a month, with confession, Communion, and prayers to the intention of the Church, and partial indulgences are also granted every day to those who meditate. This indulgence is applicable to the souls in purgatory.

III. Do not omit to hear Mass daily. But what is of the greatest importance is that those who hear Mass should make a special application to their own souls of the merits of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Mass should be heard for the same ends for which it was instituted; namely, *1, To honour*

Almighty God; 2, To thank him for his benefits; 3, To make atonement for the punishment due to our sins; 4, To obtain divine grace. So that we ought then to pray as follows: "Eternal Father, in this Mass I offer Thee Jesus Christ, with all the merits of his Passion: 1, To honour Thy Majesty; 2, To thank Thee for all Thy benefits towards me; 3, In satisfaction for my sins, and for those of all the living, and of those who died in Thy grace; 4, To obtain all the graces necessary for salvation." At the elevation of the Host, we may say, *"By the blood of Jesus Christ, grant me to love Thee in this life and in the next."* When the priest communicates, make the spiritual Communion thus: *"My Jesus, I love Thee, and I long for Thee in my soul; I embrace Thee, and wish nevermore to be separated from Thee."IV. In addition to this, read some spiritual book for half an hour, or at least a quarter; and it will be best to make use of the lives of the saints.*

Moreover, do not fail to pay every day a visit to the Most Holy Sacrament, when you should make at least the following acts: *1, "O Lord, I thank Thee for Thy love in leaving Thyself to me in this holy Sacrament;" 2, "With my whole heart I love Thee, O God! above all other good; and because I love Thee I am sorry for all my offences against Thee, whether great or small;" 3, "I beseech Thee to grant me perseverance in Thy grace and Thy holy love."* At the same time make a visit to our Blessed Lady, before one of her images, and beg of her also the same graces of perseverance and the love of God.

VII. VI. In the evening make the examination of conscience, and then add the Christian acts.Frequent the holy sacraments of confession and Communion at least once a week, and oftener if possible.

With regard to confession, say beforehand: "I thank Thee O my God! for having waited for me until now! I hope, through the merits of Jesus Christ, for the pardon of all my offences against Thee! I am sorry for them, and repent of them with my whole heart, because by them I have lost heaven and have deserved hell; but, above all, I am grieved to my inmost soul, and hate and detest my sins more than all evils, because they have offended Thy infinite goodness. I purpose in future rather to die than offend Thee any more." After confession, thank Almighty God for the pardon which you hope to have received, and renew your good resolution never more to offend him, and to avoid all occasions of sin; and pray to Jesus and Mary for perseverance.

VIII. As to the Holy Communion, we must know that it is the grand medicine, as the Council of Trent terms it, which purifies us from our daily venial faults, and preserves us from mortal ones. He who communicates most frequently will be freest from sin, and will make farthest progress in divine love; only let him communicate with a good desire. But, in order to derive more abundant fruits from Communion, he should manage to spend half an hour after receiving in producing devout acts, or at least in praying out of some spiritual book; however, let no one make this more frequent Communion without the counsel of his spiritual director, and on this account.*It is well to make choice of a good confessor, and to follow his direction in all spiritual matters, and even in temporal matters of importance; nor should he be left without a good reason.* St. Philip Neri spoke thus: "Let those who are desirous of advancing in the way of God put themselves under an enlightened confessor; and let them obey him, as occupying the place of God. Whoever does this may feel assured that he will never have to render an account to God of what he does." And this is only conformable to the words of Jesus Christ, that whosoever hears his ministers hears himself: *He that heareth you heareth Me.*[2108] *A general confession should be made, if it has not hitherto been made, for it is a most excellent means of, bringing one's life into good order; and it is advisable to make it to the director himself, that he may be the better able to guide us.*

IX. Avoid idleness, dissipated companions, immodest conversations, and, more than all, evil occasions, especially where there is danger of incontinency; and for this reason one cannot be too cautious in keeping one's eyes from dwelling on any dangerous objects. For a person that does not avoid the voluntary occasions of sin, especially those which have frequently proved fatal to his innocence, it is morally impossible to persevere in the grace of God: *He that loves the danger shall perish in it.*[2109]

X. In temptations trust not to yourself, nor to all the good resolutions and promises which you have made, but rely solely on the divine assistance; and for this reason have immediate recourse to God and the Blessed Virgin. Especially in temptations against purity, the greatest care must be taken not to remain to dispute with the temptation. In such moments some are accustomed to set their will to make acts of the contrary virtue; but they run considerable risk.

The best plan to adopt on these occasions is to renew the firm purpose rather to die than to offend God, and forthwith to make the sign of the cross without remonstrance, and to call on God and the divine Mother, making frequent invocations of the most holy names of Jesus and Mary, which have a wonderful efficacy against filthy suggestions, and should therefore be invoked continually till the temptations are over. Of ourselves we have not strength to overcome the attacks of the flesh, our most cruel enemy; but God readily supplies the strength to all who ask him; but he that fails to do so, almost invariably falls a prey to the enemy. The same is to be observed in combating temptations against faith, protesting at such times, without remaining in dispute, that we are ready to die for the holy faith; and instead of then eliciting acts of faith, it is better to elicit other acts, as of love, contrition, and hope.

XI. If you commit a venial fault, make an act of the love of God and of contrition, purpose of amendment, and forthwith resume your wonted, tranquillity. To remain troubled after a fault is the greatest fault that a person can commit, for a troubled soul is incapable of doing the least good. If, by mischance, the fault has been grievous, then immediately make an act of contrition (which is sufficient to recover the divine grace), resolve never to be guilty of the same again, and take the first opportunity of going to confession.

XII. Endeavour to hear all the sermons in your power. And it would be most advisable to make a spiritual retreat once a year in some religious house; or if that be impracticable, at least in your own house, by applying yourself for eight days to prayer and spiritual reading. During this time all company and conversation on secular matters should be avoided. In like manner make a retreat of one day every month, with confession and Communion. If your state of life allow it, become a member of some confraternity in which the Sacraments are frequented, and there make your eternal salvation the grand and sole aim. Whoever enters a confraternity for the sake of managing, directing, or out of party spirit, will derive more harm than good from it. If a person would really profit by it, he must enter it solely with a view to his spiritual interests.

XIII. In all the vicissitudes of life, such as illnesses, losses, and persecutions, be ever mindful to bow with resignation to the will of God, and repose on these words: "God wills it so, and so I will it likewise." Or thus: "God will have it so; so be it done." He that behaves in this manner stores up immense rewards for heaven, and always lives in peace. On the contrary, he that refuses to bow to the will of God only redoubles his afflictions; for he must endure them whether he will or not; and, more over, by his impatience he lays up for himself an additional punishment.

XIV. Be especially careful to preserve a tender and marked devotion to most holy Mary, by performing daily in her honour some exercise of piety. Never omit the first thing in the morning and the last at night to say three times the Hail Mary in honour of her purity, imploring her to keep you from all sin. Read every day something, be it only a few lines, on the Blessed Virgin. Say her Litanies, and the Rosary, meditating on the mysteries. When you leave or enter the house, ask her blessing with a Hail Mary; and on passing by any of her images, salute her in the same way. When the clock strikes, say the Hail Mary; and then, "Jesus and Mary, I love you! Do not permit me to offend you." With the advice of your confessor, fast on Saturdays, on the vigils of the seven festivals of our Blessed Lady, and make the novenas for the said feasts, as also for Christmas, Pentecost, and for the feast of your patron saint.

PRAYER TO JESUS CHRIST, TO OBTAIN HIS HOLY LOVE

My crucified Love, my dear Jesus! I believe in Thee, and confess Thee to be the true Son of God and my Saviour. I adore Thee from the abyss of my own nothingness, and I thank Thee for the death Thou didst suffer for me, that I might obtain the life of divine grace. My beloved Redeemer, to Thee I owe all my salvation. Through Thee I have hitherto escaped hell; through Thee have I received the pardon of my sins. But I am so ungrateful, that, instead of loving Thee, I have repeated my offences against Thee. I deserve to be condemned, so as not to be able to love Thee any more: but no, my Jesus, punish me in any other way, but not in this. If I have not loved Thee in time past, I love Thee now; and I desire nothing but to love Thee with all my heart. But without Thy help I can do nothing. Since Thou dost command me to love Thee, give me also the strength to fulfil this Thy sweet and loving precept. Thou hast promised to grant all that we ask of Thee: You shall ask whatever you will and it shall be done unto you. Confiding, then, in this promise, my dear Jesus, I ask, first of all, pardon of all my sins; and I repent, above all things, because I have offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness! I ask for holy perseverance in Thy grace till my death. But, above all, I ask for the gift of Thy holy love. Ah, my Jesus, my Hope, my Love, my All, inflame me with that love which Thou didst come on earth to enkindle! *"Tui amoris me ignem accende."* For this end, make me always live in conformity with Thy holy will. Enlighten me, that I may understand more and more how worthy Thou art of our love, and that I may know the immense love Thou hast borne me, especially in giving Thy life for me. Grant, then, that I may love Thee with all my heart, and may love Thee always, and never cease to beg of Thee the grace to love Thee in this life; that, living always and dying in Thy love, I may come one day to love Thee with all my strength in heaven, never to leave off loving Thee for all eternity. *O Mother of beautiful love, my advocate and refuge, Mary, who art of all creatures the most beautiful, the most loving, and the most beloved of God, and whose only desire it is to see him loved! ah, by the love thou bearest to Jesus Christ, pray for me, and obtain for me the grace to love him always, and with all my heart! This I ask and hope for from thee. Amen.*

FINIS

DIES IRA:, DIES ILLA,

Solvet sa:clum in favilla:
Teste David cum Sybilla.
Quantus tremor est futurus,
Quando Judex est venturus,
The day of wrath, that dreadful day,
Shall the whole world in ashes lay,
As David and the Sybil say.
What horror must invade the mind
When the approaching Judge shall find,
Few venial faults in all mankind!
Cuncta stricte discussurus!
Tuba mirum spargens sonum

Per sepulchra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum.
Mors stupebit, et natura,
Cum resurget creatura,
Judicanti responsura.
Liber scriptus proferetur,
In quo totum continetur,
Unde mundus judicetur.
Judex ergo cum sedebit,
Quidquid latet, apparebit:
Nil inultum remanebit.
Quid sum, miser! tunc dicturus,
Quem patronum rogaturus.
Cum vix Justus sit securus?
Rex tremenda: majestatis!
Qui salvandos salvas gratis
Salva me, fons pietatis.
Recordare, Jesu pie,
Quod sum causa tua: via:,
Ne me perdas illa die.
Qua:rens me, sedisti lassus:
Redemisti, crucem passus:
Tantus labor non sit cassus.
Juste Judex ultionis,
Donum fac remissionis,
Ante diem rationis.
Ingemisco tanquam reus,
Culpa rubet vultus meus
Supplicanti parce, Deus.
Qui Mariam absolvisti,
Et latronem exaudisti,
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.
Preces mea: non sunt digna:,
Sed tu bonus fac benigne,
Ne perenni cremer igne.

Inter oves locum pra:sta,
Et ab ha:dis me sequestra,
Statuens in parte dextra.
Confutatis maledictis,
Flammis acribus addictis,
Voca me cum benedictis.
Oro supplex et acclinis,
Cor contritum quasi cinis,
Gere curam mei finis.
Lacrymosa dies illa,
Qua resurget ex favilla
Judicandus homo reus.
Huic ergo parce Deus:
Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem. Amen.
The last loud trumpet’s wondrous sound
Shall through the rending tombs rebound,
And wake the nations under ground.
Nature and death shall with surprise
Behold the trembling sinner rise,
To view his Judge with conscious eyes.
Then shall with universal fear,
The seven-seal’d judgment book appear,
To scan the whole of life’ s career.
The Judge ascends His awful throne,
Each secret sin shall here be known.
All must with shame confess their own.
Ah, wretched! what shall I then say,
What patron find, my fears t’allay,
When even the just shall dread that day?
Thou mighty, formidable King!
Of mercy unexhausted spring!
Save me! save! and comfort bring.
Remember what my ransom cost;
Let not my dear-bought soul be lost,
In storms of guilty terrors tos’t.

In search of me why feel such pain;
Why on Thy cross such pangs sustain,
If now those sufferings must be vain?
Avenging Judge, Whom all obey,
Cancel my debt, too great to pay,
Before the sad accounting day.
O’erwhelmed, oppressed with doubts and fears,
Their load my soul in anguish bears?;
I sigh, I weep—accept my tears.
Thou, Who wast moved at Mary’s grief,
Who didst absolve the dying thief,
Dost bid me hope, O grant relief.
Reject not my unworthy prayer,
Preserve me from the dangerous snare,
Which death and gaping hell prepare.
Give my immortal soul a place
Among Thy chosen right-hand race,
The sons of God, and heirs of grace.
From that insatiate abyss,
Where flames devour and serpents hiss,
Deliver me, and raise to bliss.
Prostrate my contrite heart I rend,
My God, my Father and my Friend!
Do not forsake me in the end.
Well may they curse their second birth,
Who rise to a surviving death.
Thou great Creator of mankind,
Let all Thy faithful mercy find. Amen.

THE GREAT MEANS OF SALVATION AND OF PERFECTION

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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The Centenary Edition

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

EDITED BY

REV. EUGENE GRIMM,

Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

THE ASCETICAL WORKS

Volume III

THE GREAT MEANS OF SALVATION AND OF PERFECTION

PRAYER—MENTAL PRAYER—THE EXERCISES OF A RETREAT—CHOICE OF A STATE OF LIFE, AND THE VOCATION TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE AND TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

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APPROBATION

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Nicholas Mauron, Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled "The Great Means of Salvation and of Perfection," which is Vol. III. of the new and complete edition in English of the works of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, called "The Centenary Edition."

ELIAS FRED. SCHAUER,

Sup. Prov. Baltimorensis.

BALTIMORE, MD., *April* 26, 1886.

Prayer,

THE GREAT MEANS OF OBTAINING SALVATION AND ALL THE GRACES WHICH WE DESIRE OF GOD.

A Work of Ascetic Theology.

TO THE INCARNATE WORD,

JESUS CHRIST,

THE BELOVED OF THE ETERNAL FATHER,

THE BLESSED OF THE LORD,

THE AUTHOR OF LIFE,

THE KING OF GLORY,

THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD,

THE EXPECTED OF NATIONS,

THE DESIRE OF THE ETERNAL HILLS,

THE BREAD OF HEAVEN,

THE JUDGE OF ALL,

THE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN,

THE MASTER OF VIRTUES,

THE LAMB WITHOUT SPOT,

THE MAN OF SORROWS,

THE ETERNAL PRIEST, AND VICTIM OF LOVE,

THE HOME OF SINNERS,

THE FOUNTAIN OF GRACES,

THE GOOD SHEPHERD,

THE LOVER OF SOULS,

ALPHONSUS THE SINNER

CONSECRATES THIS BOOK.

CONTENTS

INDEX

THE GREAT MEANS OF SALVATION AND OF PERFECTION

- CONTENTS
- The Great Means of Salvation and of Perfection
  - DEDICATION TO JESUS AND MARY
  - INTRODUCTION
    - NECESSARY TO BE READ
    - DEFINITION OF PRAYER
    - PLAN OF THE WORK
- PART I
  The Necessity, Power, and Conditions of Prayer
  - *Chapter I*
    THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER
    - I
      PRAYER IS A MEANS NECESSARY TO SALVATION
    - II
      WITHOUT PRAYER IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO RESIST TEMPTATIONS AND TO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS
    - III
      INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS
      - 1. IS IT GOOD AND USEFUL TO HAVE RECOURSE TO THE INTERCESSION OF THE SAINTS?
      - 2. IS IT GOOD TO INVOKE ALSO THE SOULS IN PURGATORY?
      - 3. IT IS OUR DUTY TO PRAY FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY
      - 4. IS IT NECESSARY TO INVOKE THE SAINTS?
    - IV
      THE INTERCESSION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Chapter II
THE POWER OF PRAYER

I
EXCELLENCE OF PRAYER AND ITS POWER WITH GOD

II
POWER OF PRAYER AGAINST TEMPTATION

III
GOD IS ALWAYS READY TO HEAR US

IV
WE SHOULD NOT LIMIT OURSELVES TO ASKING FOR LITTLE THINGS. TO PRAY IS BETTER THAN TO MEDITATE

Chapter III
THE CONDITIONS OF PRAYER

I
WHICH ARE THE REQUISITE CONDITIONS

OBJECT OF PRAYER

CAN WE PRAY EFFICACIOUSLY FOR OTHERS?

WE OUGHT TO PRAY FOR SINNERS

WE MUST ASK FOR GRACES NECESSARY TO SALVATION

OTHER CONDITIONS OF PRAYER

II
THE HUMILITY WITH WHICH WE SHOULD PRAY

III
THE CONFIDENCE WITH WHICH WE OUGHT TO PRAY

EXCELLENCE AND NECESSITY OF THIS VIRTUE

FOUNDATION OF OUR CONFIDENCE

THE PRAYER OF SINNERS

IV
THE PERSEVERANCE REQUIRED IN PRAYER

WHY GOD DELAYS GRANTING US FINAL PERSERVANCE—CONCLUSION

Part II
Which proves that the Grace of Prayer is given to all, and which treats of the Ordinary Mode in

which this Grace operates

INTRODUCTION

Chapter I
GOD WISHES ALL MEN TO BE SAVED, AND THEREFORE CHRIST DIED TO SAVE ALL MEN

- I
  GOD WISHES ALL MEN TO BE SAVED
  - 1. DECISION OF THE CHURCH
  - 2. THE CELEBRATED TEXT OF ST. PAUL
  - 3. OTHER TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE
  - 4. GENERAL CONSENT OF THE FATHERS
- II
  JESUS CHRIST DIED TO SAVE ALL MEN
  - 1. THE TESTIMONY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE
  - 2. THE TEACHING OF THE HOLY FATHERS
- III
  CHILDREN WHO DIE WITHOUT BAPTISM

Chapter II
GOD COMMONLY GIVES TO ALL THE JUST THE GRACE NECESSARY FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF THE COMMANDMENTS, AND TO ALL SINNERS THE GRACE NECESSARY FOR CONVERSION

- I
  PROOFS
  - 1. TEACHING OF THE FATHERS OF THE GREEK CHURCH
  - 2. TEACHING OF THE FATHERS OF THE LATIN CHURCH
  - 3. TESTIMONY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE
- II
  OBSTINATE OR HARDENED SINNERS, AND THE ABANDONMENT OF THEM BY GOD

Chapter III
EXPOSITION AND CONFUTATION OF JANSENIUS’ SYSTEM OF “DELECTATION RELATIVELY VICTORIOUS”

I
THE SYSTEM OF JANSENIUS

REFUTATION OF THE FIRST PROPOSITION

REFUTATION OF THE THIRD PROPOSITION

II
TRUE DOCTRINE OF ST. AUGUSTINE ON THE “VICTORIOUS DELECTATION” AND ON FREE WILL

III
CONTINUATION OF THE REFUTATION OF JANSENIUS AND OF HIS ADHERENTS

Chapter IV
GOD GIVES ALL MEN THE GRACE TO PRAY IF THEY CHOOSE, AS THE “SUFFICIENT GRACE” WHICH IS COMMON TO ALL MEN IS BY ITSELF ENOUGH FOR PRAYER

I
THE PRINCIPAL THEOLOGIANS WHO TEACH THIS DOCTRINE

II
AUTHORITY UPON WHICH THIS DOCTRINE IS BASED

1. HOLY SCRIPTURE

2. THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

3. THE HOLY FATHERS

III
REASONS THAT JUSTIFY THIS DOCTRINE

CONCLUSION

DEVOUT PRACTICES

I
PRAYER TO OBTAIN FINAL PERSEVERANCE

II
PRAYER TO JESUS CHRIST, TO OBTAIN HIS HOLY LOVE

III
PRAYER TO OBTAIN CONFIDENCE IN THE MERITS OF JESUS CHRIST AND IN THE INTERCESSION OF MARY

IV
PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GRACE OF BEING CONSTANT IN PRAYER

V
PRAYER TO BE SAID EVERY DAY, TO OBTAIN THE GRACES NECESSARY FOR SALVATION

VI
THOUGHTS AND EJACULATIONS

HYMN
INVOCATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN TIME OF TEMPTATION

Mental Prayer and the Exercises of a Retreat

I. MENTAL PRAYER

I
MENTAL PRAYER IS MORALLY NECESSARY FOR SALVATION

II
MENTAL PRAYER IS INDISPENSABLE IN ORDER TO ATTAIN PERFECTION

III
THE ENDS OF MENTAL PRAYER

IV
PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS OF MEDITATION

V
THE PLACE AND THE TIME SUITABLE FOR MEDITATION

VI
MANNER OF MAKING MENTAL PRAYER

VII
DISTRACTIONS AND ARIDITIES

II. THE EXERCISES OF A RETREAT

I

II

HYMN

MEDITATIONS FOR A PRIVATE RETREAT OF EIGHT DAYS

INTRODUCTION

FIRST DAY
THE IMPORTANCE OF SALVATION

MEDITATION I
SALVATION IS OUR ONLY BUSINESS IN THIS WORLD

MEDITATION II
DAMNATION IS AN IRREPARABLE EVIL

MEDITATION III
WE MUST, BEFORE ALL, SECURE OUR SALVATION

SECOND DAY
THE VANITY OF THE WORLD

MEDITATION I
THE GOODS OF THIS WORLD ARE FALSE GOODS

MEDITATION II
THE GOODS OF THIS WORLD ARE OF SHORT DURATION

MEDITATION III
DEATH DISCLOSES THE VANITY OF THE WORLD

THIRD DAY
OUR JOURNEY TO ETERNITY

MEDITATION I
WE ARE TRAVELLERS ON THIS EARTH

MEDITATION II
FOLLY OF THOSE WHO DO NOT THINK OF ETERNITY

MEDITATION III
WE MUST PROFIT BY THE TIME

FOURTH DAY
SIN

MEDITATION I
MALICE OF MORTAL SIN

MEDITATION II
ABUSE OF THE DIVINE MERCY

MEDITATION III
VENIAL SINS

FIFTH DAY
DEATH

MEDITATION I
THE WORLDLING AT THE APPROACH OF DEATH

- MEDITATION II
  LAST PREPARATIONS
- MEDITATION III
  THE AGONY OF DEATH
- MEDITATION IV
  THE DEATH OF THE JUST
- SIXTH DAY
  JUDGMENT
  - MEDITATION I
    PARTICULAR JUDGMENT
  - MEDITATION II
    THE SENTENCE DEPENDS ON US
  - MEDITATION III
    GENERAL JUDGMENT
- SEVENTH DAY
  REMORSE OF THE CHRISTIANS IN HELL
  - MEDITATION I
    FOR VERY LITTLE HAVE THOSE IN HELL DAMNED THEMSELVES
  - MEDITATION II
    THE CHRISTIAN IN HELL HAD VERY MANY GRACES TO SAVE HIMSELF
- EIGHTH DAY
  LOVE FOR JESUS CRUCIFIED
  - MEDITATION I
    OUR INGRATITUDE TOWARDS JESUS CRUCIFIED
  - MEDITATION II
    THE LOVE OF JESUS FOR US DEMANDS OUR LOVE
- HYMN
  TO GOD THE CREATOR

VARIOUS PRACTICES

- I
  RULES FOR LEADING A GOOD LIFE
- II
  DEVOUT ACTS TO BE MADE EVERY DAY

III
SPIRITUAL MAXIMS FOR A CHRISTIAN

IV
AN EPITOME OF THE VIRTUES IN WHICH A CHRISTIAN SOUL, THAT DESIRES TO LEAD A PERFECT LIFE AND BECOME A SAINT, SHOULD EXERCISE ITSELF

V
PRAYER TO OBTAIN ALL HOLY VIRTUES

VI
PRAYER TO OBTAIN HOLY PERSEVERANCE

VII
PRAYER OF A DEVOUT SOUL TO MARY AND JESUS

VIII
PRAYERS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

- 1. TO OBTAIN THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS AND HOLY PERSEVERANCE
- 2. TO OBTAIN A GOOD DEATH
- 3. TO OBTAIN DELIVERANCE FROM HELL AND THE POSSESSION OF PARADISE

IX
CONSECRATION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

X
PROTESTATION FOR A HAPPY DEATH

APPENDIX
THE MANNER OF MAKING A RETREAT

- 1. THE ENDS OF A RETREAT
- 2. THE PLACE
- 3. ITS DURATION
- 4. ORDER OF THE EXERCISES
- THE MORNING.
- BEFORE DINNER.
- AFTER DINNER.
- THE EVENING.

    - 5. SILENCE AND RECOLLECTION
    - 6. THE MEDITATIONS
    - 7. MORTIFICATION
    - 8. THE SACRAMENTS

The Choice of a State of Life, and the Vocation to the Religions State
Counsels Concerning A Religious Vocation

- *I*
  WE OUGHT TO CONFORM TO THE DESIGNS OF GOD IN THE CHOICE OF A STATE OF LIFE, WHATEVER IT MAY BE
- *II*
  THE VOCATION TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE. HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO FOLLOW IT PROMPTLY
    - 1 MISERY TO WHICH ONE EXPOSES ONE’S SELF BY NOT CORRESPONDING TO IT
    - 2. WE MUST OBEY THE VOICE OF GOD WITHOUT DELAY
- *III*
  MEANS TO BE EMPLOYED FOR PRESERVING A RELIGIOUS VOCATION IN THE WORLD
    - 1. SECRECY
    - 2. PRAYER
    - 3. RECOLLECTION
- *IV*
  DISPOSITION REQUIRED FOR ENTERING RELIGION
    - 1. DETACHMENT FROM HIS COMFORTS
    - 2. DETACHMENT FROM HIS PARENTS
    - 3. DETACHMENT FROM SELF-ESTEEM
    - 4. DETACHMENT FROM HIS OWN WILL
- *V*
  TRIALS WHICH WE MUST EXPECT TO HAVE IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE
    - FIRST REMEDY: TO HAVE RECOURSE TO GOD
    - SECOND REMEDY: TO HAVE RECOURSE TO THE SUPERIORS

CONCLUSION

Considerations for Those Who are Called to the Religious State

Consideration I
HOW THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL IS SECURED BY ENTERING THE RELIGIOUS STATE

PRAYER

Consideration II
THE HAPPY DEATH OF THE RELIGIOUS

PRAYER

Consideration III
THE ACCOUNT WHICH HE WILL HAVE TO RENDER TO JESUS CHRIST, ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, WHO DOES NOT FOLLOW HIS VOCATION

PRAYER

Consideration IV
THE TORMENT WHICH IN HELL WILL BE THE LOT OF HIM WHO IS DAMNED FOR HAVING LOST HIS VOCATION

PRAYER

Consideration V
THE IMMENSE GLORY WHICH RELIGIOUS ENJOY IN HEAVEN

PRAYER

Consideration VI
THE INTERIOR PEACE THAT GOD GIVES GOOD RELIGIOUS TO ENJOY

PRAYER

Consideration VII
THE DAMAGE DONE TO RELIGIOUS BY TEPIDITY

PRAYER

Consideration VIII
HOW DEAR TO GOD IS A SOUL THAT GIVES ITSELF ENTIRELY TO HIM

PRAYER

Consideration IX
HOW NECESSARY IT IS, IN ORDER TO BECOME A SAINT, TO HAVE A GREAT DESIRE FOR SUCH A THING

PRAYER

Consideration X
THE LOVE WE OWE TO JESUS CHRIST IN Consideration OF THE LOVE HE HAS SHOWN TO US

PRAYER

Consideration XI
THE GREAT HAPPINESS WHICH RELIGIOUS ENJOY IN DWELLING IN THE SAME HOUSE WITH JESUS CHRIST IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

PRAYER

Consideration XII
THE LIFE OF RELIGIOUS RESEMBLES MOSTLY THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

PRAYER

Consideration XIII
THE ZEAL WHICH RELIGIOUS OUGHT TO HAVE FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

PRAYER

Consideration XIV
HOW NECESSARY TO RELIGIOUS ARE THE VIRTUES OF MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY

PRAYER

Consideration XV
HOW MUCH RELIGIOUS OUGHT TO CONFIDE IN THE PATRONAGE OF MARY

PRAYER

PRAYER

Answer to a Young Man who asks Counsel on the Choice of a State of Life

Advice to a Young Person in Doubt About the State of Life which she Ought to Embrace

Discourse to Pious Maidens

EXCELLENCE OF VIRGINITY

MEANS TO PRESERVE VIRGINAL PURITY

CONCLUSION

The Vocation to the Priesthood

I
NECESSITY OF A DIVINE VOCATION TO TAKE HOLY ORDERS

II
MARKS OF A DIVINE VOCATION TO THE SACERDOTAL STATE

III
TO WHAT DANGERS ONE EXPOSES ONE’S SELF BY ENTERING HOLY ORDERS WITHOUT A VOCATION

APPENDIX
MEANS TO BE ADOPTED IN ORDER TO KNOW ONE’S VOCATION

HYMN
SIGHS OF LOVE TO JESUS CHRIST

The Great Means of Salvation and of Perfection

DEDICATION TO JESUS AND MARY

O INCARNATE WORD, Thou hast given Thy Blood and Thy Life to confer on our prayers that power by which, according to Thy promise, they obtain for us all that we ask. And we, O God, are so careless of our salvation, that we will not even ask Thee for the graces that we must have if we should be saved! In prayer Thou hast given us the key of all Thy divine treasures; and we, rather than pray, choose to remain in our misery. Alas! O Lord, enlighten us, and make us know the value of prayers, offered in Thy name and by Thy merits, in the eyes of Thy Eternal Father. I consecrate to Thee this my book; bless it, and grant that all those into whose hands it falls may have the will to pray always, and may exert themselves to stir up others also to avail themselves of this great means of salvation.

To thee also do I recommend my little work, O Mary, great Mother of God: patronize it, and obtain for all who read it the spirit of prayer, and of continual recourse in all their necessities to thy Son, and to thee, who art the Dispenser of graces, the Mother of mercy, and who never leavest unsatisfied him who recommends himself to thee, O mighty Virgin, but obtainest from God for thy servants whatever thou askest.

THIS book, which was published in 1759, is one of the most important works of Saint Alphonsus. He himself explains, in the *Introduction* and the *Conclusion*, what it has cost him, and the value that he sets upon it. In his preface to the “Preparation for Death,” he speaks thus: “This book, though small, has cost me a great deal of labor. I regard it as of extreme utility to all sorts of persons; and I unhesitatingly assert that among all spiritual treatises, there is none, and there can be none, more necessary than that which treats on prayer as a means of obtaining eternal salvation.”—ED.

INTRODUCTION

NECESSARY TO BE READ

I HAVE published several spiritual works,—on visiting the Blessed Sacrament, on the Passion of Jesus Christ, on the Glories of Mary, and, besides, a work against the Materialists and Deists, with other devout little treatises. Lately I brought out a work on the Infancy of our Saviour, entitled *Novena for Christmas;* and another entitled *Preparation for Death*, besides the one on the Eternal Maxims, most useful for meditation and for sermons, to which are added nine discourses suitable during seasons of divine chastisements. But I do not think that I have written a more useful work than the present, in which I speak of prayer as a necessary and certain means of obtaining salvation, and all the graces that we require for that object. If it were in my power, I would distribute a copy of it to every Catholic in the world, in order to show him the absolute necessity of prayer for salvation.

I say this, because, on the one hand, I see that the absolute necessity of prayer is taught throughout the Holy Scriptures, and by all the holy Fathers; while, on the other hand, I see that Christians are very careless in their practice of this great means of salvation. And, sadder still, I see that preachers take very little care to speak of it to their flocks, and confessors to their penitents; I see, moreover, that even the spiritual books now popular do not speak sufficiently of it; for there is not a thing preachers, and confessors, and spiritual books should insist upon with more warmth and energy than prayer; not but that they teach many excellent means of keeping ourselves in the grace of God, such as avoiding the occasions of sin, frequenting the sacraments, resisting temptations, hearing the Word of God, meditating on the eternal truths, and other means, “all of them, I admit, most useful; but, I say, what profit is there in sermons, meditations, and all the other means pointed out by masters of the spiritual life, if we forget to pray? since our Lord has declared that he will grant his graces to no one who does not pray. *Ask and ye shall receive.*[2110] Without prayer, in the ordinary course of Providence, all the meditations that we make, all our resolutions, all our promises, will be useless. If we do not pray, we shall always be unfaithful to the inspirations of God, and to the promises we make to him. Because, in order actually to do good, to conquer temptations, to practise virtues, and to observe God's law, it is not enough to receive illumination from God, and to meditate and make resolutions, but we require, moreover, the actual assistance of God; and, as we shall soon see, he does not give this assistance except to those who pray, and pray with perseverance. The light we receive, and the considerations and good resolutions that we make, are of use to incite us to the act of prayer when we are in danger, and are tempted to transgress God's law; for then prayer will obtain for us God's help, and we shall be preserved from sin; but if in such moments we do not pray, we shall be lost.

My intention in prefacing my book with this sentiment is, that my readers may thank God for giving them an opportunity, by means of this little book, to receive the grace of reflecting more deeply on the importance of prayer; for all adults who are saved, are ordinarily saved by this single means of grace. And therefore I ask my readers to thank God; for surely it is a great mercy when he gives the light and the grace to pray. I hope, then, that you, my beloved brother, after reading this little work, will never from this day forward neglect to have continual recourse to God in prayer, whenever you are tempted to offend him. If ever in times past you have had your conscience burdened with many sins, know that the cause of this has been the neglect of prayer, and not asking God for help to resist the temptations that assailed you. I pray you, therefore, to read it again and again with the greatest attention; not because it is my production, but because it is a means that God offers you for the good of your eternal salvation, thereby giving you to understand that he wishes you to be saved. And after having read it yourself, induce as many of your friends and neighbors as you can to read it also. Now let us begin in the name of the Lord.

DEFINITION OF PRAYER

The Apostle writes to Timothy: *I beseech, therefore, that first of all supplications, petitions, and thanksgivings be made.*[2111] St. Thomas explains, that prayer is properly the lifting up of the soul to God.[2112] *Petition* is that kind of prayer which begs for determinate objects; when the thing sought is indeterminate (as when we say, “Incline to my aid, O God!”) it is called *supplication. Obsecration* is a solemn adjuration, or representation of the grounds on which we dare to ask a favor; as when we say, “By Thy cross and Passion, O Lord, deliver us!” Finally, *thanksgiving* is the returning of thanks for benefits received, whereby, says St. Thomas, we merit to receive greater favors. Prayer, in a strict sense, says the holy Doctor, means recourse to God; but in its general signification it includes all the kinds just enumerated. It is in this latter sense that the word is used in this book.

PLAN OF THE WORK

In order, then, to attach ourselves to this great means of salvation, we must first of all consider how necessary it is to us, and how powerful it is to obtain for us all the graces that we can desire from God, if we know how to ask for them as we ought. Hence, in the first part, we will speak first of the necessity and power of prayer; and next, of the conditions necessary to make it efficacious with God. Then, in the second part, we will show that the grace of prayer is given to all; and there we will treat of the manner in which grace ordinarily operates.

PART I

The Necessity, Power, and Conditions of Prayer

Chapter I

THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

I

PRAYER IS A MEANS NECESSARY TO SALVATION

ONE of the errors of Pelagianism was the assertion that prayer is not necessary for salvation. Pelagius, the impious author of that heresy, said that man will only be damned for neglecting to know the truths necessary to be learned. How astonishing! St. Augustine said: “Pelagius discussed everything except how to pray,”[2113] though, as the saint held and taught, prayer is the only means of acquiring the science of the saints; according to the text of St. James: *If any man want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all abundantly, and upbraideth not.*[2114] The Scriptures are clear enough in pointing out how necessary it is to pray, if we would be saved. *We ought always to pray, and not to faint.*[2115] *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.*[2116] *Ask, and it shall be given you.*[2117] The words “we ought,” “pray,” “ask,” according to the general consent of theologians, impose the precept, and denote the necessity of prayer. Wickliffe said, that these texts are to be understood, not precisely of prayer, but only of the necessity of good works, for in his system prayer was only well-doing; but this was his error, and was expressly condemned by the Church. Hence Lessius wrote that it is heresy to deny that prayer is necessary for salvation in adults; as it evidently appears from Scripture that prayer is the means, without which we cannot obtain the help necessary for salvation.[2118]

The reason of this is evident. Without the assistance of God’s grace we can do no good thing: *Without Me, ye can do nothing.*[2119] St. Augustine remarks on this passage, that our Lord did not say, “Without Me, ye can complete nothing,” but “without Me, ye can do nothing;[2120] giving us to understand, that without grace we cannot even begin to do a good thing.

Nay more, St. Paul writes, that of ourselves we cannot even have the wish to do good. *Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.*[2121] If we cannot even think a good thing, much less can we wish it. The same thing is taught in many other passages of Scripture: *God worketh all in all. I will cause you to walk in My commandments, and to keep My judgments, and do them.*[2122] So that, as St. Leo I. says, "Man does no good thing, except that which God, by his grace, enables him to do,"[2123] and hence the Council of Trent says: "If any one shall assert, that without the previous inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and his assistance, man can believe, hope, love, or repent, as he ought, in order to obtain the grace of justification, let him be anathema."[2124]

The author of the *Opus Imperfectum* says, that God has given to some animals swiftness, to others claws, to others wings, for the preservation of their life; but he has so formed man, that God himself is his only strength.[2125] So that man is completely unable to provide for his own safety, since God has willed that whatever he has, or can have, should come entirely from the assistance of his grace.

But this grace is not given in God's ordinary Providence, except to those who pray for it; according to the celebrated saying of Gennadius. "We believe that no one approaches to be saved, except at the invitation of God; that no one who is invited works out his salvation, except by the help of God; that no one merits this help, unless he prays."[2126] From these two premises, on the one hand, that we can do nothing without the assistance of grace; and on the other, that this assistance is only given ordinarily by God to the man that prays, who does not see that the consequence follows, that prayer is absolutely necessary to us for salvation? And although the first graces that come to us without any co-operation on our part, such as the call to faith or to penance, are, as St. Augustine says, granted by God even to those who do not pray; yet the saint considers it certain that the other graces, and specially the grace of perseverance, are not granted except in answer to prayer: "God gives us some things, as the beginning of faith, even when we do not pray. Other things, such as perseverance, he has only provided for those who pray."[2127]

Hence it is that the generality of theologians, following St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria, St. Augustine, and other Fathers, teach that prayer is necessary to adults, not only because of the obligation of the precept (as they say), but because it is necessary as a means of salvation. That is to say, in the ordinary course of Providence, it is impossible that a Christian should be saved without recommending himself to God, and asking for the graces necessary to salvation. St. Thomas teaches the same: “After baptism, continual prayer is necessary to man, in order that he may enter heaven; for though by baptism our sins are remitted, there still remain concupiscence to assail us from within, and the world and the devil to assail us from without.”[2128] The reason then which makes us certain of the necessity of prayer is shortly this, in order to be saved we must contend and conquer: *He that striveth for the mastery is not crowned except he strive lawfully.*[2129] But without the divine assistance we cannot resist the might of so many and so powerful enemies: now this assistance is only granted to prayer; therefore without prayer there is no salvation.

Moreover, that prayer is the only ordinary means of receiving the divine gifts is more distinctly proved by St. Thomas in another place, where he says, that whatever graces God has from all eternity determined to give us, he will only give them if we pray for them. St. Gregory says the same thing: “Man by prayer merits to receive that which God had from all eternity determined to give him.”[2130] Not, says St. Thomas, that prayer is necessary in order that God may know our necessities, but in order that we may know the necessity of having recourse to God to obtain the help necessary for our salvation, and may thus acknowledge him to be the author of all our good.[2131] As, therefore, it is God’s law that we should provide ourselves with bread by sowing corn, and with wine by planting vines; so has he ordained that we should receive the graces necessary to salvation by means of prayer: *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find.*[2132]

We, in a word, are merely beggars, who have nothing but what God bestows on us as alms: *But I am a beggar and poor.*[2133] The Lord, says St. Augustine, desires and wills to pour forth his graces upon us, but will not give them except to him who prays. “God wishes to give, but only gives to him who asks.”[2134] This is declared in the words, *Seek, and it shall be given to you.* Whence it follows, says St. Teresa, that he who seeks not, does not receive. As moisture is necessary for the life of plants, to prevent them from drying up, so, says St. Chrysostom, is prayer necessary for our salvation.

Or, as he says in another place, prayer vivifies the soul, as the soul vivifies the body: “As the body without the soul cannot live, so the soul without prayer is dead and emits an offensive odor.”[2135] He uses these words, because the man who omits to recommend himself to God, at once begins to be defiled with sins. Prayer is also called the food of the soul, because the body cannot be supported without food; nor can the soul, says St. Augustine, be kept alive without prayer: “As the flesh is nourished by food, so is man supported by prayers.”[2136] All these comparisons used by the holy Fathers are intended by them to teach the absolute necessity of prayer for the salvation of every one.

II

WITHOUT PRAYER IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO RESIST TEMPTATIONS AND TO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS

Moreover, prayer is the most necessary weapon of defence against our enemies; he who does not avail himself of it, says St. Thomas, is lost. He does not doubt that the reason of Adam’s fall was, because he did not recommend himself to God when he was tempted: “He sinned because he had not recourse to the divine assistance.”[2137] St. Gelasius says the same of the rebel angels: “Receiving the grace of God in vain, they could not persevere, because they did not pray.”[2138] St. Charles Borromeo, in a pastoral letter, observes, that among all the means of salvation recommended by Jesus Christ in the Gospel, the first place is given to prayer; and he has determined that this should distinguish his Church from all false religions, when he calls her “the house of prayer:” *My house is a house of prayer.*[2139] St. Charles concludes that prayer is “the beginning and progress, and the completion of all virtues.”[2140] So that in darkness, distress, and danger, we have no other hope than to raise our eyes to God, and with fervent prayers to beseech his mercy to save us: *As we know not,* said king Josaphat, *what to do, we can only turn our eyes to Thee.*[2141] This also was David’s practice, who could find no other means of safety from his enemies, than continual prayer to God to deliver him from their snares: *My eyes are ever towards the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the snare.*[2142] So he did nothing but pray: *Look Thou upon me, and have mercy* *on me; for I am alone and poor. I cried unto Thee, O Lord; save me that I may keep Thy commandments.*[2143] Lord, turn Thine eyes to me, have pity on me, and save me; for I can do nothing, and beside Thee there is none that can help me.

And, indeed how could we ever resist our enemies and observe God's precepts, especially since Adam's sin, which has rendered us so weak and infirm, unless we had prayer as a means whereby we can obtain from God sufficient light and strength to enable us to observe them? It was a blasphemy of Luther's to say, that after the sin of Adam the observance of God's law has become absolutely impossible to man. Jansenius also said that there are some precepts which are impossible even to the just, with the power which they actually have, and so far his proposition bears a good sense; but it was justly condemned by the Church for the addition he made to it, when he said that they have not the grace to make the precepts possible.[2144] It is true, says St. Augustine, that man, in consequence of his weakness, is unable to fulfil some of God's commands with his present strength and the ordinary grace given to all men; but he can easily, by prayer, obtain such further aid as he requires for his salvation: "God commands not impossibilities, but by commanding he suggests to you to do what you can, to ask for what is beyond your strength; and he helps you, that you may be able."[2145] This is a celebrated text, which was afterwards adopted and made a doctrine of faith by the Council of Trent.[2146] The holy Doctor immediately adds, "Let us see whence?" (i. e., how man is enabled to do that which he cannot). "By medicine he can do that which his natural weakness renders impossible to him."[2147] That is, by prayer we may obtain a remedy for our weakness; for when we pray, God gives us strength to do that which we cannot do of ourselves.

We cannot believe, continues St. Augustine, that God would have imposed on us the observance of a law, and then made the law impossible. When, therefore, God shows us that of ourselves we are unable to observe all his commands it is simply to admonish us to do the easier things by means of the ordinary grace which he bestows on us, and then to do the more difficult things by means of the greater help which we can obtain by prayer. "By the very fact that it is absurd to suppose that God could have commanded us to do impossible things, we are admonished what to do in easy matters, and what to ask for in difficulties."[2148] But why, it will be asked, has God commanded us to do things impossible to our natural strength? Precisely for this, says St. Augustine, that we may be incited to pray for help to do that which of ourselves we cannot do. "He commands some things which we cannot do, that we may know what we ought to ask of him."[2149] And in another place: "The law was given, that grace might be sought for; grace was given that the law might be fulfilled."[2150] The law cannot be kept without grace, and God has given the law with this object, that we may always ask him for grace to observe it. In another place he says: "The law is good, if it be used lawfully; what then, is the lawful use of the law?" He answers: "When by the law we perceive our own weakness, and ask of God the grace to heal us."[2151] St. Augustine then says: We ought to use the law; but for what purpose? to learn by means of the law, which we find to be above our strength, our own inability to observe it, in order that we may then obtain by prayer the divine aid to cure our weakness.

St. Bernard's teaching is the same: "What are we, or what is our strength, that we should be able to resist so many temptations? This certainly it was that God intended; that we, seeing our deficiencies, and that we have no other help, should with all humility have recourse to his mercy."[2152] God knows how useful it is to us to be obliged to pray, in order to keep us humble, and to exercise our confidence; and he therefore permits us to be assaulted by enemies too mighty to be overcome by our own strength, that by prayer we may obtain from his mercy aid to resist them; and it is especially to be remarked, that no one can resist the impure temptations of the flesh, without recommending himself to God when he is tempted. This foe is so terrible that, when he fights with us, he, as it were, takes away all light; he makes us forget all our meditations, all our good resolutions; he makes us also disregard the truths of faith, and even almost lose the fear of the divine punishments. For he conspires with our natural inclinations, which drive us with the greatest violence to the indulgence of sensual pleasures. He who in such a moment does not have recourse to God is lost. The only defence against this temptation is prayer, as St. Gregory of Nyssa says: "Prayer is the bulwark of chastity;"[2153] and before him Solomon: *And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent except God gave it, I went to the Lord and besought Him.*[2154] Chastity is a virtue which we have not strength to practise, unless God gives it us; and God does not give this strength except to him who asks for it. But whoever prays for it will certainly obtain it.

Hence St. Thomas observes (in contradiction to Jansenius), that we ought not to say that the precept of chastity, or any other, is impossible to us; for though we cannot observe it by our own strength, we can by God's assistance. "We must say, that what we can do with the divine assistance is not altogether impossible to us."[2155] Nor let it be said that it appears an injustice to order a cripple to walk straight. No, says St. Augustine, it is not an injustice, provided always means are given him to find the remedy for his lameness; for after this, if he continues to go crooked, the fault is his own. "It is most wisely commanded that man should walk uprightly, so that when he sees that he cannot do so of himself, he may seek a remedy to heal the lameness of sin."[2156] Finally, the same holy Doctor says, that he will never know how to live well who does not know how to pray well. "He knows how to live aright who knows how to pray aright;"[2157] and, on the other hand, St. Francis of Assisi says, that without prayer you can never hope to find good fruit in a soul.

Wrongly, therefore, do those sinners excuse themselves who say that they have no strength to resist temptation. But if you have not this strength, why do you not ask for it? is the reproof which St. James gives them: *You have it not, because you ask it not.*[2158] There is no doubt that we are too weak to resist the attacks of our enemies. But, on the other hand, it is certain that God is faithful, as the Apostle says, and will not permit us to be tempted beyond our strength: *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with the temptation issue, that ye may be able to bear it.*[2159] "He will provide an issue for it," says Primasius, "by the protection of his grace, that you may be able to withstand the temptation."[2160] We are weak, but God is strong; when we ask him for aid, he communicates his strength to us; and we shall be able to do all things, as the Apostle reasonably assured himself: *I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.*[2161] He, therefore, who falls has no excuse (says St. Chrysostom), because he has neglected to pray; for if he had prayed, he would not have been overcome by his enemies. "Nor can any one be excused who, by ceasing to pray, has shown that he did not wish to overcome his enemy."[2162]

III

INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS

1. IS IT GOOD AND USEFUL TO HAVE RECOURSE TO THE INTERCESSION OF THE SAINTS?

Here a question arises, whether it is necessary to have recourse also to the intercession of the saints to obtain the grace of God.

That it is a lawful and useful thing to invoke the saints, as intercessors, to obtain for us, by the merits of Jesus Christ, that which we, by our demerits, are not worthy to receive, is a doctrine of the Church, declared by the Council of Trent. "It is good and useful to invoke them by supplication, and to fly to their aid and assistance to obtain benefits from God through his Son Jesus Christ."[2163]

Such invocation was condemned by the impious Calvin, but most illogically. For if it is lawful and profitable to invoke living saints to aid us, and to beseech them to assist us in prayers, as the Prophet Baruch did: *And pray ye for us to the Lord our God*[2164] and St. Paul: *Brethren, pray for us;*[2165] and as God himself commanded the friends of Job to recommend themselves to his prayers, that by the merits of Job he might look favorably on them: *Go to my servant Job, . . . and my servant Job shall pray for you; his face I will accept;*[2166] if, then, it is lawful to recommend ourselves to the living, how can it be unlawful to invoke the saints who in heaven enjoy God face to face? This is not derogatory to the honor due to God, but it is doubling it; for it is honoring the king not only in his person but in his servants. Therefore, says St. Thomas, it is good to have recourse to many saints, "because by the prayers of many we can sometimes obtain that which we cannot by the prayers of one."[2167] And if any one object. But why have recourse to the saints to pray for us, when they are already praying for all who are worthy of it? The same Doctor answers, that no one can be said to be worthy that the saints should pray for him; but that "he becomes worthy by having recourse to the saint with devotion."[2168]

2. IS IT GOOD TO INVOKE ALSO THE SOULS IN PURGATORY?

Again, it is disputed whether there is any use in recommending one's self to the souls in purgatory. Some say that the souls in that state cannot pray for us; and these rely on the authority of St. Thomas, who says that those souls, while they are being purified by pain, are inferior to us, and therefore "are not in a state to pray for us, but rather require our prayers."[2169] But many other Doctors, as Bellarmine,[2170] Sylvius,[2171] Cardinal Gotti,[2172] Lessius,[2173] Medina and others, affirm with great probability, that we should piously believe that God manifests our prayer to those holy souls, in order that they may pray for us; and that so the charitable interchange of mutual prayer may be kept up between them and us. Nor do St. Thomas's words present much difficulty; for, as Sylvius and Gotti say, it is one thing not to be in a state to pray, another not to be able to pray. It is true that those souls are not in a state to pray, because, as St. Thomas says, while suffering they are inferior to us, and rather require our prayers; nevertheless, in this state they are well able to pray, as they are friends of God. If a father keeps a son whom he tenderly loves in confinement for some fault; if the son then is not in a state to pray for himself, is that any reason why he cannot pray for others? and may he not expect to obtain what he asks, knowing, as he does, his father's affection for him? So the souls in purgatory, being beloved by God, and confirmed in grace, have absolutely no impediment to prevent them from praying for us. Still the Church does not invoke them, or implore their intercession, because ordinarily they have no cognisance of our prayers. But we may piously believe that God makes our prayers known to them; and then they, full of charity as they are, most assuredly do not omit to pray for us. St. Catharine of Bologna, whenever she desired any favor, had recourse to the souls in purgatory, and was immediately heard. She even testified that by the intercession of the souls in purgatory she had obtained many graces which she had not been able to obtain by the intercession of the saints.

3. IT IS OUR DUTY TO PRAY FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

But here let me make a digression in favor of those holy souls. If we desire the aid of their prayers, it is but fair that we should mind to aid them with our prayers and good works. I said it is fair, but I should have said it is a

Christian duty; for charity obliges us to succor our neighbor when he requires our aid, and we can help him without grievous inconvenience. Now it is certain that amongst our neighbors are to be reckoned the souls in purgatory, who, although no longer living in this world, yet have not left the communion of saints. “The souls of the pious dead,” says St. Augustine, “are not separated from the Church,”[2174] and St. Thomas says more to our purpose, that the charity which is due to the dead who died in the grace of God is only an extension of the same charity which we owe to our neighbor while living: “Charity, which is the bond which unites the members of the Church, extends not only to the living, but also to the dead who die in charity.”[2175] Therefore, we ought to succor, according to our ability, those holy souls as our neighbors; and as their necessities are greater than those of our other neighbors, for this reason our duty to succor them seems also to be greater.

But now, what are the necessities of those holy prisoners? It is certain that their pains are immense. The fire that tortures them, says St. Augustine, is more excruciating than any pain that man can endure in this life: “That fire will be more painful than anything that man can suffer in this life.”[2176] St. Thomas thinks the same, and supposes it to be identical with the fire of hell: “The damned are tormented and the elect purified in the same fire.”[2177] And this only relates to the pains of sense. But the pain of loss (that is, the privation of the sight of God), which those holy souls suffer, is much greater; because not only their natural affection, but also the supernatural love of God, wherewith they burn, draws them with such violence to be united with their Sovereign Good, that when they see the barrier which their sins have put in the way, they feel a pain so acute, that if they were capable of death, they could not live a moment. So that, as St. Chrysostom says, this pain of the deprivation of God tortures them incomparably more than the pain of sense: “The flames of a thousand hells together could not inflict such torments as the pain of loss by itself.”[2178] So that those holy souls would rather suffer every other possible torture than be deprived for a single instant of the union with God for which they long. So St. Thomas says, that the pain of purgatory exceeds anything that can be endured in this life: “The pain of purgatory must exceed all pain of this life.”[2179] And Dionysius the Carthusian relates, that a dead person, who had been raised to life by the intercession of St. Jerome, told St. Cyril of Jerusalem that all the torments of this earth are refreshing and delightful when compared with the very least pain of purgatory: “If all the torments of the world were compared with the least that can be had in purgatory they would appear comfortable.”[2180] And he adds, that if a man had once tried those torments, he would rather suffer all the earthly sorrows that man can endure till the Day of Judgment, than suffer for one day the least pain of purgatory. Hence St. Cyril wrote to St. Augustine: “That as far as regards the infliction of suffering, these pains are the same as those of hell—their only difference being that they are not eternal.”[2181] Hence we see that the pains of these holy souls are excessive, while, on the other hand, they cannot help themselves; because as Job says: *they are in chains, and are bound with the cords of poverty.*[2182] They are destined to reign with Christ; but they are withheld from taking possession of their kingdom till the time of their purgation is accomplished. And they cannot help themselves (at least not sufficiently, even according to those theologians who assert that they can by their prayers gain some relief,) to throw off their chains, until they have entirely satisfied the justice of God. This is precisely what a Cistercian monk said to the sacristan of his monastery: “Help me, I beseech you, with your prayers; for of myself I can obtain nothing.” And this is consistent with the saying of St. Bonaventure: “Destitution prevents solvency.”[2183] That is, those souls are so poor, that they have no means of making satisfaction.

On the other hand, since it is certain, and even of faith, that by our suffrages, and chiefly by our prayers, as particularly recommended and practised by the Church, we can relieve those holy souls, I do not know how to excuse that man from sin who neglects to give them some assistance, at least by his prayers. If a sense of duty will not persuade us to succor them, let us think of the pleasure it will give Jesus Christ to see us endeavoring to deliver his beloved spouses from prison, in order that he may have them with him in paradise. Let us think of the store of merit which we can lay up by practising this great act of charity; let us think, too, that those souls are not ungrateful, and will never forget the great benefit we do them in relieving them of their pains, and in obtaining for them, by our prayers, anticipation of their entrance into glory; so that when they are there they will never neglect to pray for us. And if God promises mercy to him who practises mercy towards his neighbor—*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy*[2184]—he may reasonably expect to be saved who remembers to assist those souls so afflicted, and yet so dear to God. Jonathan, after having saved the Hebrews from ruin by a victory over their enemies, was condemned to death by his father Saul for having tasted some honey against his express commands; but the people came before the king, and said, *Shall Jonathan then die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel?*[2185] So may we expect, that if any of us ever obtains, by his prayers, the liberation of a soul from purgatory, that soul will say to God: “Lord, suffer not him who has delivered me from my torments to be lost.” And if Saul spared Jonathan’s life at the request of his people, God will not refuse the salvation of a Christian to the prayers of a soul which is his own spouse. Moreover, St. Augustine says that God will cause those who in this life have most succored those holy souls, when they come to purgatory themselves, to be most succored by others. I may here observe that, in practice, one of the best suffrages is to hear Mass for them, and during the Holy Sacrifice to recommend them to God by the merits and Passion of Jesus Christ. The following form may be used: “Eternal Father, I offer Thee this Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, with all the pains which he suffered in his life and death; and by his Passion I recommend to Thee the souls in Purgatory, and especially that of,” etc. And it is a very charitable act to recommend, at the same time, the souls of all those who are at the point of death.

4. IS IT NECESSARY TO INVOKE THE SAINTS?

Whatever doubt there may be whether or not the souls in purgatory can pray for us, and therefore whether or not it is of any use to recommend ourselves to their prayers, there can be no doubt whatever with regard to the saints. For it is certain that it is most useful to have recourse to the intercession of the saints canonized by the Church, who are already enjoying the vision of God. To suppose that the Church can err in canonizing, is a sin, or is heresy, according to St. Bonaventure, Bellarmine, and others; or at least next door to heresy, according to Suarez, Azorius, Gotti, etc.; because the Sovereign

Pontiff, according to St. Thomas is guided by the infallible influence of the Holy Ghost in an especial way when canonizing the saints.[2186]

But to return to the question just proposed: are we obliged to have recourse to the intercession of the saints? I do not wish to meddle with the decision of this question; but I cannot omit the exposition of a doctrine of St. Thomas. In several places above quoted, and especially in his book of Sentences, he expressly lays it down as certain that every one is bound to pray; because (as he asserts) in no other way can the graces necessary for salvation be obtained from God, except by prayer: “Every man is bound to pray, from the fact that he is bound to procure spiritual good for himself, which can only be got from God; so it can only be obtained by asking it of God.”[2187] Then, in another place of the same book, he proposes the exact question, “Whether we are bound to pray to the saints to intercede for us?”[2188] And he answers as follows—in order to catch his real meaning, we will quote the entire passage: “According to Dionysius, the order which God has instituted for his creatures requires that things which are remote may be brought to God by means of things which are nearer to him. Hence, as the saints in heaven are nearest of all to him, the order of his law requires that we who ‘remaining in the body are absent from the Lord,’ should be brought to him by means of the saints; and this is effected by the divine goodness pouring forth his gifts through them. And as the path of our return to God should correspond to the path of the good things which proceed from him to us, it follows that, as the benefits of God come down to us by means of the suffrages of the saints, we ought to be brought to God by the same way, so that a second time we may receive his benefits by the mediation of the saints. Hence it is that we make them our intercessors with God, and as it were our mediators, when we ask them to pray for us.” Note well the words—“The order of God’s law requires;” and especially note the last words—“As the benefits of God come down to us by means of the suffrages of the saints, in the same way we must be brought back to God so that a second time we may receive his benefits by the mediation of the saints.”[2189] So that, according to St. Thomas, the order of the divine law requires that we mortals should be saved by means of the saints, in that we receive by their intercession the help necessary for our salvation. He then puts the objection, that it appears superfluous to have recourse to the saints, since God is infinitely more merciful than they, and more ready to hear us. This he answers by saying: “God has so ordered, not on account of any want of mercy on his part, but to keep the right order which he has universally established, of working by means of second causes. It is not for want of his mercy, but to preserve the aforesaid order in the creation.[2190]

In conformity with this doctrine of St. Thomas, the Continuator of Tourneley and Sylvius writes, that although God only is to be prayed to as the Author of grace, yet we are bound to have recourse also to the intercession of the saints, so as to observe the order which God has established with regard to our salvation, which is, that the inferior should be saved by imploring the aid of the superior. “By the law of nature we are bound to observe the order which God has appointed; but God has appointed that the inferior should obtain salvation by imploring the assistance of his superior.”[2191]

IV

THE INTERCESSION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

And if this is true of the saints, much more is it true of the intercession of the Mother of God, whose prayers are certainly of more value in his sight than those of all the rest of the inhabitants of heaven together. For St. Thomas says, that the saints, in proportion to the merits by which they have obtained grace for themselves, are able also to save others; but that Jesus Christ, and so also his Mother, have merited so much grace, that they can save all men. “It is a great thing in any saint that he should have grace enough for the salvation of many beside himself; but if he had enough for the salvation of all men, this would be the greatest of all; and this is the case with Christ, and with the Blessed Virgin,”[2192] And St. Bernard speaks thus to Mary: “Through thee we have access to thy Son, O discoverer of grace and Mother of salvation, that through thee he may receive us, who through thee was given to us.”[2193] These words signify, that as we only have access to the Father by means of the Son, who is the Mediator of justice, so we only have access to the Son by means of the Mother, who is mediator of grace, and who obtains for us, by her intercession, the gifts which Jesus Christ has merited for us. And therefore St. Bernard says, in another place, that Mary has received a twofold fulness of grace. The first was the Incarnation of the Word, who was made Man in her most holy womb; the second is that fulness of grace which we receive from God by means of her prayers. Hence the saint adds: “God has placed the fulness of all good in Mary, that if we have any hope, any grace, any salvation, we may know that it overflows from her who ‘ascendeth abounding with delights.’ ”[2194] She is a garden of delights, whose odors spread abroad and abound; that is, the gifts of graces. So that whatever good we have from God, we receive all by the intercession of Mary. And why so? Because, says St. Bernard, it is God’s will: “Such is his will, who would have us receive everything through Mary.”[2195] But the more precise reason is deduced from the expression of St. Augustine, that Mary is justly called our Mother, because she co-operated by her charity in the birth of the faithful to the life of grace, by which we become members of Jesus Christ, our head: “But clearly she is the mother of his members (which we are); because she co-operated by her charity in the birth of the faithful in the Church, and they are members of that Head.”[2196] Therefore, as Mary co-operated by her charity in the spiritual birth of the faithful, so also God willed that she should co-operate by her intercession to make them enjoy the life of grace in this world, and the life of glory in the next; and therefore the Church makes us call her and salute her, without any circumlocution, by the names, “our life, our sweetness, and our hope.”[2197]

Hence St. Bernard exhorts us to have continual recourse to the Mother of God; because her prayers are certain to be heard by her Son: “Go to Mary, I say, without hesitation; the Son will hear the Mother.” And then he says: “My children, she is the ladder of sinners, she is my chief confidence, she is the whole ground of my hope.”[2198] He calls her “ladder,” because, as you cannot mount the third step except you first put your foot on the second, nor can you arrive at the second except by the first, so you cannot come to God except by means of Jesus Christ, nor can you come to Christ except by means of his Mother. Then he calls her “his greatest security, and the whole ground of his hope;” because, as he affirms, God wills that all the graces which he gives us should pass through the hands of Mary. And he concludes by saying, that we ought to ask all the graces which we desire through Mary; because she obtains whatever she seeks, and her prayers cannot be rejected. “Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary; because what she seeks she finds, and she cannot be disappointed.”[2199] The following saints teach the same as St. Bernard: St. Ephrem, “We have no other confidence than from thee, O purest Virgin!”[2200] St. Ildephonsus, “All the good things that the divine Majesty has determined to give them, he has determined to commit to thy hands; for to thee are intrusted the treasures and the wardrobes of grace.”[2201] St Germanus, “If thou desertest us, what will become of us, O life of Christians?”[2202] St. Peter Damian, “In thy hands are all the treasures of the mercies of God.”[2203] St. Antoninus, “Who seeks without her aid, attempts to fly without wings.”[2204] St. Bernardine of Sienna, “Thou art the dispenser of all graces; our salvation is in thy hands.”[2205] In another place, he not only says that all graces are transmitted to us by means of Mary, but he also asserts that the Blessed Virgin, from the time she became Mother of God, acquired a certain jurisdiction over all the graces that are given to us. “Through the Virgin the vital graces are transfused from Christ, the Head, into his mystical body.”[2206] From the time when the Virgin Mother conceived in her womb the Word of God, she obtained a certain jurisdiction (if I may so speak) over every temporal procession of the Holy Ghost; so that no creature could obtain any grace from God, except by the dispensation of his sweet Mother.”[2207] And he concludes, “Therefore all gifts, virtues, and graces are dispensed through her hands to whom she wills, and as she wills.”[2208] St. Bonaventure says the same: “Since the whole divine nature was in the womb of the Virgin, I do not fear to teach that she has a certain jurisdiction over all the streams of grace; as her womb was, as it were, an ocean of the divine nature, whence all the streams of grace must emanate.”[2209] On the authority of these saints, many theologians have piously and reasonably defended the opinion, that there is no grace given to us except by means of the intercession of Mary; so Mendoza, Vega, Paciucchelli, Segneri, Poirè, Crasset, and others, as also the learned Alexander Natalis who says: “It is God’s will that we should look to him for all good things, to be procured by the most powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin, when we invoke her, as it is fit.”[2210] And he quotes in confirmation the passage of St. Bernard: “Such is his will, who has determined that we should receive all through Mary.”[2211] Contenson says the same, in a comment on the words addressed by Jesus on the cross to St. John, “Behold thy Mother:” As though he had said, “No one shall be partaker of my blood except by the intercession of my Mother.[2212] My wounds are fountains of grace; but their streams shall flow to no one, except through the canal of Mary. O my disciple John, I will love you as you love her!”[2213] For the rest, it is certain, that if God is pleased when we have recourse to the saints, he will be much more pleased when we avail ourselves of the intercession of Mary, that she, by her merits, may compensate for our unworthiness, according to the words of St. Anselm: “That the dignity of the intercessor may supply for our poverty. So that, to invoke the Virgin, is not to distrust God’s mercy, but to fear our own unworthiness.”[2214] St. Thomas, speaking of her dignity, calls it, as it were, infinite: “From the fact that she is the Mother of God, she has a certain infinite dignity.”[2215] So that it may be said with reason, that the prayers of Mary have more power with God than those of all heaven together.

CONCLUSION OF THE CHAPTER

Let us conclude this first point by giving the gist of all that has been said hitherto. He who prays is certainly saved. He who prays not is certainly damned. All the blessed (except infants) have been saved by prayer. All the damned have been lost through not praying; if they had prayed, they would not have been lost. And this is, and will be, their greatest torment in hell, to think how easily they might have been saved, only by asking God for his grace; but that now it is too late,—the time of prayer is over.

Chapter II

THE POWER OF PRAYER

I

EXCELLENCE OF PRAYER AND ITS POWER WITH GOD

OUR prayers are so dear to God, that he has appointed the angels to present them to him as soon as they come forth from our mouths. “The angels,” says St. Hilary, “preside over the prayers of the faithful, and offer them daily to God.”[2216] This is that smoke of the incense, which are the prayers of saints, which St. John saw ascending to God from the hands of the angels;[2217] and which he saw in another place represented by golden phials full of sweet odors, very acceptable to God. But in order to understand better the value of prayers in God’s sight, it is sufficient to read both in the Old and New Testaments the innumerable promises which God makes to the man that prays. *Cry to Me, and I will hear thee.*[2218] *Call upon Me, and I will deliver thee.*[2219] *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. He shall give good things to them that ask Him.*[2220] *Everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth.*[2221] *Whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done for them by My Father.*[2222] *All things whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive them, and they shall come unto you.*[2223] *If you ask Me anything in My name, that will I do.*[2224] *You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you. Amen, amen, I say unto you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[2225] There are a thousand similar texts; but it would take too long to quote them.

God wills us to be saved; but for our greater good, he wills us to be saved as conquerors. While, therefore, we remain here, we have to live in a continual warfare; and if we should be saved, we have to fight and conquer. “No one can be crowned without victory,” says St. Chrysostom.[2226] We are very feeble, and our enemies are many and mighty; how shall we be able to stand against them, or to defeat them? Let us take courage, and say with the Apostle, *I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.*[2227] By prayer we can do all things; for by this means God will give us that strength which we want. Theodoret says, that prayer is omnipotent; it is but one, yet it can do all things: “Though prayer is one, it can do all things.”[2228] And St. Bonaventure asserts that by prayer we obtain every good, and escape every evil: “By it is obtained the gain of every good, and liberation from every evil.”[2229] St. Laurence Justinian says, that by means of prayer we build for ourselves a strong tower, where we shall be secure from all the snares and assaults of our enemies: “By the exercise of prayer man is able to erect a citadel for himself.”[2230] “The powers of hell are mighty,” says St. Bernard; “but prayer is stronger than all the devils.”[2231] Yes; for by prayer the soul obtains God’s help, which is stronger than any created power. Thus David encouraged himself in his alarms: *Praising I will call upon the Lord, and I shall be saved from my enemies.*[2232] For, as St. Chrysostom says, “prayer is a strong weapon, a defence, a port, and a treasure.”[2233] It is a weapon sufficient to overcome every assault of the devil; it is a defence to preserve us in every danger; it is a port where we may be safe in every tempest; and it is at the same time a treasure which provides us with every good.

II

POWER OF PRAYER AGAINST TEMPTATION

God knows the great good which it does us to be obliged to pray, and therefore permits us (as we have already shown in the previous chapter) to be assaulted by our enemies, in order that we may ask him for the help which he offers and promises to us. But as he is pleased when we run to him in our dangers, so is he displeased when he sees us neglectful of prayer. “As the king,” says St. Bonaventure, “would think it faithlessness in an officer, when his post was attacked, not to ask him for reinforcements, he would be reputed a traitor if he did not request help from the king;”[2234] so God thinks himself betrayed by the man who, when he finds himself surrounded by temptations, does not run to him for assistance. For he desires to help us; and only waits to be asked, and then gives abundant succor. This is strikingly shown by Isaias, when, on God's part, he told the king Achaz to ask some sign to assure himself of God's readiness to help him: *Ask thee a sign of the Lord Thy God.*[2235] The faithless king answered: *I will not ask, and I will not tempt the Lord;*[2236] for he trusted in his own power to overcome his enemies without God's aid. And for this the Prophet reproved him: *Hear, therefore, O house of David; is it a small thing for you to be grievous to men, that you are grievous to my God also?*[2237] because that man is grievous and offensive to God who will not ask him for the graces which he offers.

Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.[2238] "My poor children," says our Saviour, "though you find yourselves assailed by enemies, and oppressed with the weight of your sins, do not lose heart but have recourse to me in prayer, and I will give you strength to resist, and I will give you a remedy for all your disasters." In another place he says, by the mouth of Isaias, *Come and accuse Me, saith the Lord; if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow.*[2239] O men, come to me; though your consciences are horribly defiled, yet come; I even give you leave to reproach me (so to speak), if after you have had recourse to me, I do not give you grace to become white as snow.

What is prayer? It is, as St. Chrysostom says, "the anchor of those tossed on the sea, the treasure of the poor, the cure of diseases, the safeguard of health."[2240] It is a secure anchor for him who is in peril of shipwreck; it is a treasury of immense wealth for him who is poor; it is a most efficacious medicine for him who is sick; and it is a certain preservative for him who would keep himself well. What does prayer effect? Let us hear St. Laurence Justinian: "It pleases God, it gets what it asks, it overcomes enemies, it changes men."[2241] It appeases the wrath of God, who pardons all who pray with humility. It obtains every grace that is asked for; it vanquishes all the strength of the tempter, and it changes men from blind into seeing, from weak into strong, from sinners into saints. Let him who wants light ask it of God, and it shall be given. As soon as I had recourse to God, says Solomon, he granted me wisdom: *I called upon God, and the Spirit of wisdom came to me.*[2242] Let him who wants fortitude ask it of God, and it shall be given. As soon as I opened my mouth to pray, says David, I received help from God: *I opened my mouth, and drew in the Spirit.*[2243] And how in the world did the martyrs obtain strength to resist tyrants, except by prayer, which gave them force to overcome dangers and death?

"He who uses this great weapon," says St. Chrysostom, "knows not death, leaves the earth, enters heaven, lives with God."[2244] He falls not into sin; he loses affection for the earth; he makes his abode in heaven; and begins, even in this life, to enjoy the conversation of God. How then can you disquiet such a man by saying: "How do you know that you are written in the book of life?" How do you know whether God will give you efficacious grace and the gift of perseverance? *Be nothing solicitous,* says St. Paul, *but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your petitions be known unto God.*[2245] What is the use, says the Apostle, of agitating yourselves with these miseries and fears? Drive from you all these cares, which are of no use but to lessen your confidence, and to make you more tepid and slothful in walking along the way of salvation. Pray and seek always, and make your prayers sound in God's ears, and thank him for having promised to give you the gifts which you desire whenever you ask for them, namely efficacious grace, perseverance, salvation, and everything that you desire. The Lord has given us our post in the battle against powerful foes; but he is faithful in his promises, and will never allow us to be assaulted more violently than we can resist: *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which ye are able.*[2246] He is faithful, since he instantly succors the man who invokes him. The learned Cardinal Gotti writes, that God has bound himself not only to give us grace precisely balancing the temptation that assails us, but that he is obliged, when we are tempted, and have recourse to him, to afford us, by means of that grace which is kept ready for and offered to all, sufficient strength for us actually to resist the temptation. "God is bound, when we are tempted, and fly to his protection, to give us by the grace prepared and offered to all such strength as will not only put us in the way of being able to resist, but will also make us resist; 'for we can do all things in him who strengthens us' by his grace, if we humbly ask for it."[2247] We can do all things with God's help, which is granted to every one who humbly seeks it; so that we have no excuse when we allow ourselves to be overcome by a temptation. We are conquered solely by our own fault, because we would not pray. By prayer all the snares and power of the devil are easily overcome. “By prayer all hurtful things are chased away,” says St. Augustine.[2248]

III

GOD IS ALWAYS READY TO HEAR US

St. Bernardine of Sienna says that prayer is a faithful ambassador, well known to the King of Heaven, and having access to his private chamber, and able by his importunity to induce the merciful heart of the King to grant every aid to us his wretched creatures, groaning in the midst of our conflicts and miseries in this valley of tears. “Prayer is a most faithful messenger, known to the King, who is used to enter his chamber, and by his importunity to influence the merciful mind of the King, and to obtain us assistance in our toils.”[2249] Isaias also assures us, that as soon as the Lord hears our prayers, he is moved with compassion towards us; and does not leave us to cry long to him, but instantly replies, and grants us what we ask: *Weeping, thou shalt not weep; He will surely have pity upon thee: the voice of thy cry as soon as He shall hear, He will answer thee.*[2250] In another place he complains of us by the mouth of Jeremias: *Am I become a wilderness to Israel, or a lateward springing land? Why then have My people said, we are revolted, and will come to Thee no more!*[2251] Why do you say that you will no more have recourse to me? Has my mercy become to you a barren land, which can yield you no fruits of grace? or a cold soil, which yields its fruit too late! So has our loving Lord assured us that he never neglects to hear us, and to hear us instantly When we pray; and so does he reproach those who neglect to pray through distrust of being heard.

If God were to allow us to present our petitions to him once a month, even this would be a great favor. The kings of the earth give audiences a few times in the year, but God gives a continual andience. St. Chrysostom writes, that God is always waiting to hear our prayers, and that a case never occurred when he neglected to hear a petition offered to him properly: “God is always prepared for the voice of his servants, nor did he ever, when called upon as he ought to be, neglect to hear.”[2252] And in another place he says, that when we pray to God, before we have finished recounting to him our supplications, he has already heard us: “It is always obtained, even while we are yet praying."[2253] We even have the promise of God to do this: *As they are yet speaking I will hear.*[2254] The Lord, says David, stands near to every one who prays, to console, to hear, and to save him: *The Lord is nigh to all them that call upon Him; to all that call upon Him in truth* (that is, as they ought to call). *He will do the will of them that fear Him; and He will hear their prayer and will save them.*[2255] This it was in which Moses gloried, when he said: *There is not another nation so great, that has gods so nigh them, as our God is present to all our petitions.*[2256] The gods of the Gentiles were deaf to those who invoked them, for they were wretched fabrications, which could do nothing. But our God, who is Almighty, is not deaf to our prayers, but always stands near the man who prays, ready to grant him all the graces which he asks: *In what day soever I shall call upon Thee, behold I shall know that Thou art my God.*[2257] Lord, says the Psalmist, hereby do I know that Thou, my God, art all goodness and mercy, in that, whenever I have recourse to Thee, Thou dost instantly help me.

IV

WE SHOULD NOT LIMIT OURSELVES TO ASKING FOR LITTLE THINGS. TO PRAY IS BETTER THAN TO MEDITATE

We are so poor that we have nothing; but if we pray we are no longer poor. If we are poor, God is rich; and God, as the Apostle says, is all liberality to him that calls for his aid: *Rich unto all who call upon Him.*[2258] Since, therefore (as St. Augustine exhorts us), we have to do with a Lord of infinite power and infinite riches, let us not go to him for little and valueless things, but let us ask some great thing of him: "You seek from the Almighty,—seek something great."[2259] If a man went to a king to ask some trumpery coin, like a farthing, methinks that man would but insult his king. On the other hand, we honor God, we honor his mercy, and his liberality, when, though we see how miserable we are, and how unworthy of any kindness, we yet ask for great graces, trusting in the goodness of God, and in his faithfulness to his promises of granting to the man who prays whatever grace he asks: *Whatsoever you will, ask, and it shall be done unto you.*[2260] St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, "that God feels himself so honored and is so delighted when we ask for his grace, that he is, in a certain sense, grateful to us; because when we do this we seem to open to him a way to do us a kindness, and to satisfy his nature, which is to do good to all.” And let us be sure that, when we seek God’s grace, he always gives us more than we ask: *If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all abundantly, and upbraideth not.*[2261] Thus speaks St. James, to show us that God is not like men, parsimonious of his goods; men, though rich and liberal, when they give alms, are always somewhat close-handed, and generally give less than is asked of them, because their wealth, however great it be, is always finite; so that the more they give the less they have. But God, when he is asked, gives his good things “abundantly,” that is, with a generous hand, always giving more than is asked, because his wealth is infinite, and the more he gives the more he has to give: *For Thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild; and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Thee.*[2262] Thou, O my God, said David, art but too liberal and kind to him that invokes Thee; the mercies which thou pourest upon him are super-abundant, above all he asks.

On this point, then, we have to fix all our attention, namely, to pray with confidence, feeling sure that by prayer all the treasures of heaven are thrown open to us. “Let us attend to this,” says St. Chrysostom, “and we shall open heaven to ourselves.”[2263] Prayer is a treasure; he who prays most receives most. St. Bonaventure says that every time a man has recourse to God by fervent prayer, he gains good things that are of more value than the whole world: “Any day a man gains more by devout prayer than the whole world is worth.”[2264] Some devout souls spend a great deal of time in reading and in meditating, but pay but little attention to prayer. There is no doubt that spiritual reading, and meditation on the eternal truths, are very useful things; “but,” says St. Augustine, “it is of much more use to pray.” By reading and meditating we learn our duty; but by prayer we obtain the grace to do it. “It is better to pray than to read: by reading we know what we ought to do; by prayer we receive what we ask.”[2265] What is the use of knowing our duty, and then not doing it, but to make us more guilty in God’s sight? Read and meditate as we like, we shall never satisfy our obligations, unless we ask of God the grace to fulfil them.

And, therefore, as St. Isidore observes, the devil is never more busy to distract us with the thoughts of worldly cares than when he perceives us praying and asking God for grace: “Then mostly does the devil insinuate thoughts, when he sees a man praying.”[2266] And why? Because the enemy sees that at no other time do we gain so many treasures of heavenly goods as when we pray. This is the chief fruit of mental prayer, to ask God for the graces which we need for perseverance and for eternal salvation; and chiefly for this reason it is that mental prayer is morally necessary for the soul, to enable it to preserve itself in the grace of God. For if a person does not remember in the time of meditation to ask for the help necessary for perseverance, he will not do so at any other time; for without meditation he will not think of asking for it, and will not even think of the necessity for asking it. On the other hand, he who makes his meditation every day will easily see the needs of his soul, its dangers, and the necessity of his prayer; and so he will pray, and will obtain the graces which will enable him to persevere and save his soul. Father Segneri said of himself, that when he began to meditate, he aimed rather at exciting affections than at making prayers. But when he came to know the necessity and the immense utility of prayer, he more and more applied himself, in his long mental prayer, to making petitions.

As a young swallow, so will I cry, said the devout king Hezekias.[2267] The young of the swallow does nothing but cry to its mother for help and for food; so should we all do, if we would preserve our life of grace. We should be always crying to God for aid to avoid the death of sin, and to advance in his holy love. Father Rodriguez relates, that the ancient Fathers, who were our first instructors in the spiritual life, held a conference to determine which was the exercise most useful and most necessary for eternal salvation; and that they determined it was to repeat over and over again the short prayer of David, *Incline unto my aid, O God!*[2268] “This,” says Cassian, “is what every one ought to do who wishes to be saved: he ought to be always saying, My God, help me! my God help me!” We ought to do this the first thing when we awake in the morning; and then to continue doing it in all our needs, and when attending to our business, whether spiritual or temporal; and most especially when we find ourselves troubled by any temptation or passion. St. Bonaventure says, that at times we obtain a grace by a short prayer sooner than by many other good works: “Sometimes a man can sooner obtain by a short prayer what he would be a long time obtaining by pious works."[2269] St. Ambrose says, that he who prays, while he is praying obtains what he asks, because the very act of prayer is the same as receiving: "He who asks of God, while he asks receives; for to ask is to receive."[2270] Hence St. Chrysostom wrote, that "there is nothing more powerful than a man who prays,"[2271] because such a one is made partaker of the power of God. To arrive at perfection, says St. Bernard, we must meditate and pray: by meditation we see what we want; by prayer we receive what we want. "Let us mount by meditation and prayer: the one teaches what is deficient, the other obtains that there should be nothing deficient."[2272]

CONCLUSION OF THE CHAPTER

In conclusion, to save one's soul without prayer is most difficult, and even (as we have seen) impossible, according to the ordinary course of God's Providence. But by praying our salvation is made secure, and very easy. It is not necessary in order to save our souls to go among the heathen, and give up our life. It is not necessary to retire into the desert, and eat nothing but herbs. What does it cost us to say, My God, help me! Lord, assist me! have mercy on me! Is there anything more easy than this? and this little will suffice to save us, if we will be diligent in doing it. St. Laurence Justinian specially exhorts us to oblige ourselves to say a prayer at least when we begin any action: "We must endeavor to offer a prayer at least in the beginning of every work."[2273] Cassian attests that the principal advice of the ancient Fathers was to have recourse to God with short but frequent prayers. Let no one, says St. Bernard, think lightly of prayer, because God values it, and then gives us either what we ask, or what is still more useful to us: "Let no one undervalue his prayer, for God does not undervalue it . . . he will give either what we ask, or what he knows to be better."[2274] And let us understand, that if we do not pray, we have no excuse, because the grace of prayer is given to every one. It is in our power to pray whenever we will, as David says of himself: *With me is prayer to the God of my life; I will say to God, Thou art my support.*[2275] On this point I shall speak at length in the second part, where I will make it quite clear that God gives to all the grace of prayer, in order that thereby they may obtain every help, and even more than they need, for keeping the divine law, and for persevering till death. At present, I will only say, that if we are not saved, the whole fault will be ours; and we shall have our own failure to answer for, because we did not pray.

Chapter III

THE CONDITIONS OF PRAYER

I

WHICH ARE THE REQUISITE CONDITIONS

OBJECT OF PRAYER

Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.[2276] Jesus Christ then has promised, that whatever we ask his Father in his name, his Father will give us. But always with the understanding that we ask under the proper conditions. Many seek, says St. James, and obtain not, because they seek improperly: *Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.*[2277] So St. Basil, following out the argument of the Apostle, says, "You sometimes ask and receive not, because you have asked badly; either without faith, or you have requested things not fit for you, or you have not persevered;"[2278] "faithlessly," that is, with little faith, or little confidence; "lightly," with little desire of the grace you ask; "things not fit for you," when you seek good things that will not be conducive to your salvation; or you have left off praying, without perseverance. Hence St. Thomas reduces to four the conditions required in prayer, in order that it may produce its effect: these are, that a man asks (1) *for himself;* (2) *things necessary for salvation;* (3) *piously;* and (4) *with perseverance.*[2279]

CAN WE PRAY EFFICACIOUSLY FOR OTHERS?

The first condition then of prayer is, that you make it *for yourself;* because St. Thomas holds, that one man cannot *ex condigno* (*i.e.* in the fitness of things) obtain for another eternal life; nor, consequently, even those graces which are requisite for his salvation. Since, as he says, the promise is made not to others, but only to those that pray: "He shall give to you."

Nevertheless, there are many theologians, Cornelius à Lapide, Sylvester, Tolet, Habert, and others, who hold the opposite doctrine, on the authority of St. Basil, who teaches that prayer, by virtue of God’s promise, is infallibly efficacious, even for those for whom we pray, provided they put no positive impediment in the way. And they support their doctrine by Scripture: *Pray one for another, that you may be saved; for the continual prayer of the just man availeth much.*[2280] *Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.*[2281] And better still, on the text of St. John: *He that knoweth his brother to sin a sin which is not to death, let him ask, and life shall be given to him who sinneth not unto death. There is a sin unto death; for that I say not that any man ask.*[2282] St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, the Ven. Bede, and others,[2283] explain the words “who sinneth not unto death” to mean, provided the sinner is not one who intends to remain obstinate till death; since for such a one a very extraordinary grace would be required. But for other sinners, who are not guilty of such malice, the Apostle promises their conversion to him who prays for them: *Let him ask, and life shall be given him for him that sinneth.*

WE OUGHT TO PRAY FOR SINNERS

Besides, it is quite certain that the prayers of others are of great use to sinners, and are very pleasing to God; and God complains of his servants who do not recommend sinners to him, as he once complained to St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, to whom he said one day: “See, my daughter, how the Christians are in the devil’s hands; if my elect did not deliver them by their prayers they would be devoured.” But God especially requires this of priests and religious. The same saint used to say to her nuns: “My sisters, God has not separated us from the world, that we should only do good for ourselves, but also that we should appease him in behalf of sinners;” and God one day said to her, “I have given to you my chosen spouses the City of Refuge (i.e., the Passion of Jesus Christ), that you may have a place where you may obtain help for my creatures. Therefore have recourse to it, and thence stretch forth a helping hand to my creatures who are perishing, and lay down your lives for them.” For this reason the saint, inflamed with holy zeal, used to offer God the blood of the Redeemer fifty times a day in behalf of sinners, and was quite wasted away for the desire she had for their conversion. Oh, she used to say, what pain is it, O Lord, to see how one could help Thy creatures by giving one’s life for them, and not be able to do so! For the rest, in every exercise she recommended sinners to God; and it is written in her life, that she scarcely passed an hour in the day without praying for them. Frequently, too, she arose in the middle of the night, and went to the Blessed Sacrament to pray for them; and yet for all this, when she was once found bathed in tears, on being asked the cause, she answered, “Because I seem to myself to do nothing for the salvation of sinners.” She went so far as to offer to endure even the pains of hell for their conversion, provided that in that place she might still love God; and often God gratified her by inflicting on her grievous pains and infirmities for the salvation of sinners. She prayed especially for priests, seeing that their good life was the occasion of salvation to others, while their bad life was the cause of ruin to many; and therefore she prayed God to visit their faults upon her, saying, “Lord, make me die and return to life again as many times as is necessary to satisfy Thy justice for them! “And it is related in her life, that the saint, by her prayers, did indeed release many souls from the hands of Lucifer.

I wished to speak rather particularly of the zeal of this saint; but, indeed, no souls that really love God neglect to pray for poor sinners. For how is it possible for a person who loves God, and knows what love he has for our souls, and what Jesus Christ has done and suffered for their salvation, and how our Saviour desires us to pray for sinners,—how is it possible, I say, that he should be able to look with indifference on the numbers of poor souls who are living without God, and are slaves of hell, without being moved to importune God with frequent prayers to give light and strength to these wretched beings, so that they may come out from the miserable state of living death in which they are slumbering? True it is that God has not promised to grant our requests, when those for whom we pray put a positive impediment in the way of their conversion; but still, God of his goodness has often deigned, at the prayer of his servants, to bring back the most blinded and obstinate sinners to a state of salvation, by means of extraordinary graces. Therefore let us never omit, when we say or hear Mass, when we receive Holy Communion, when we make our meditation or our visit to the Blessed Sacrament, to recommend poor sinners to God. And a learned author says, that he who prays for others will find that his prayers for himself are heard much sooner. But this is a digression. Let us now return to the examination of the other conditions that St. Thomas lays down as necessary to the efficacy of prayer.

WE MUST ASK FOR GRACES NECESSARY TO SALVATION

The second condition assigned by the saint is, that we ask those favors which are necessary to salvation; because the promise annexed to prayer was not made with reference to temporal favors, which are not necessary for the salvation of the soul. St. Augustine, explaining the words of the Gospel, “whatever ye shall ask in my name,” says, that “nothing which is asked in a way detrimental to salvation is asked in the name of the Saviour.”[2284] Sometimes, says the same Father, we seek some temporal favors, and God does not hear us; but he does not hear us because he loves us, and wishes to be merciful to us. “A man may pray faithfully for the necessities of this life, and God may mercifully refuse to hear him; because the physician knows better than the patient what is good for the sick man.”[2285] The physician who loves his patient will not allow him to have those things that he sees would do him harm. Oh, how many, if they had been sick or poor, would have escaped those sins which they commit in health and in affluence! And, therefore, when men ask God for health or riches, he often denies them because he loves them, knowing that these things would be to them an occasion of losing his grace, or at any rate of growing tepid in the spiritual life. Not that we mean to say that it is any defect to pray to God for the necessaries of this present life, so far as they are not inconsistent with our eternal salvation, as the Wise man said: *Give me only the necessaries of life.*[2286] Nor is it a defect, says St. Thomas,[2287] to have anxiety about such goods, if it is not inordinate. The defect consists in desiring and seeking these temporal goods, and in having an inordinate anxiety about them, as if they were our highest good. Therefore, when we ask of God these temporal favors, we ought always to ask them with resignation, and with the condition, if they will be useful to our souls; and when we see that God does not grant them, let us be certain that he then denies them to us for the love he bears us, and because he sees that they would be injurious to the salvation of our souls.

It often happens that we pray God to deliver us from some dangerous temptation, and yet that God does not hear us, but permits the temptation to continue troubling us. In such a case, let us understand that God permits even this for our greater good. It is not temptation or bad thoughts that separate us from God, but our consent to the evil. When a soul in temptation recommends itself to God, and by his aid resists, oh, how it then advances in perfection, and unites itself more closely to God! and this is the reason why God does not hear it. St. Paul prayed instantly to be delivered from the temptation of impurity: *There was given me a sting of my flesh an angel of Satan to buffet me; for which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me.*[2288] But God answered him, that it was enough to have his grace: *My grace is sufficient for thee.*[2289] So that even in temptations we ought to pray with resignation, saying, Lord, deliver me from this trouble, if it is expedient to deliver me; and if not, at least give me help to resist. And here comes in what St. Bernard says, that when we beg any grace of God, he gives us either that which we ask, or some other thing more useful to us. He often leaves us to be buffeted by the waves, in order to try our faithfulness, and for our greater profit. It seems then that he is deaf to our prayers. But no; let us be sure that God then really hears us, and secretly aids us, and strengthens us by his grace to resist all the assaults of our enemies. See how he himself assures us of this by the mouth of the Psalmist: *Thou calledst upon me in affliction, and I delivered thee: I heard thee in the secret place of tempest; I proved thee at the waters of contradiction.*[2290]

OTHER CONDITIONS OF PRAYER

The other conditions assigned by St. Thomas to prayer are, that it is to be made piously and perseveringly; by piously, he means with humility and confidence—by perseveringly, continuing to pray until death. We must now speak distinctly of each of these three conditions, which are the most necessary for prayer, namely of humility, confidence, and perseverance.

II

THE HUMILITY WITH WHICH WE SHOULD PRAY

The Lord does indeed regard the prayers of his servants, but only of his servants who are humble. *He hath had regard to the prayer of the* *humble.*[2291] Others he does not regard, but rejects them: *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*[2292] He does not hear the prayers of the proud who trust in their own strength; but for that reason leaves them to their own feebleness; and in this state, deprived of God's aid, they must certainly perish. David had to bewail this case: *Before I was humbled I offended.*[2293] I sinned because I was not humble. The same thing happened to St. Peter, who, though he was warned by our Lord that all the disciples would abandon Him on that night—*All you shall be scandalised in Me this night*[2294]—nevertheless, instead of acknowledging his own weakness, and begging our Lord's aid against his unfaithfulness, was too confident in his own strength, and said, that though all should abandon him he would never leave him: *Although all shall be scandalised in Thee, I will never be scandalised.*[2295] And although our Saviour again foretold to him, in a special manner, that in that very night, before the cock-crow, he should deny him three times; yet, trusting in his own courage, he boasted, saying, *Yea, though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee.*[2296] But what came of it? Scarcely had the unhappy man entered the house of the high priest, when he was accused of being a disciple of Jesus Christ, and three times did he deny with an oath that he had ever known him: *And again he denied with an oath, that I know not the Man.*[2297] If Peter had humbled himself, and had asked our Lord for the grace of constancy, he would not have denied him.

We ought all to feel that we are standing on the edge of a precipice, suspended over the abyss of all sins, and supported only by the thread of God's grace. If this thread fails us, we shall certainly fall into the gulf, and shall commit the most horrible wickedness. *Unless the Lord had been my helper, my soul had almost dwelt in hell.*[2298] If God had not succored me, I should have fallen into a thousand sins, and now I should be in hell. So said the Psalmist, and so ought each of us to say. This is what St. Francis of Assisi meant, when he said that he was the worst sinner in the world. But, my Father, said his companion, what you say is not true; there are many in the world who are certainly worse than you are. Yes, what I say is but too true, answered St. Francis; because if God did not keep his hand over me, I should commit every possible sin.

It is of faith, that without the aid of grace we cannot do any good work, nor even think a good thought. "Without grace men do no good whatever, either in thought or in deed," says St. Augustine.[2299] As the eye cannot see without light, so, say the holy Father, man can do no good without grace. The Apostle had said the same thing before him: *Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.*[2300] And David had said it before St. Paul: *Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.*[2301] In vain does man weary himself to become a saint, unless God lends a helping hand: *Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.*[2302] If God did not preserve the soul from sins, in vain will it try to preserve itself by its own strength: and therefore did the holy prophet protest, *I will not trust in my bow.*[2303] I will not hope in my arms; but only in God, who alone can save me.

Hence, whoever finds that he has done any good, and does not find that he has fallen into greater sins than those which are commonly committed, let him say with St. Paul, *By the grace of God I am what I am;*[2304] and for the same reason, he ought never to cease to be afraid of falling on every occasion of sin: *Wherefore, he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall.*[2305] St. Paul wishes to warn us that he who feels secure of not falling, is in great danger of falling; and he assigns the reason in another place, where he says, *If any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*[2306] So that St. Augustine wrote wisely, "the presumption of stability renders many unstable; no one will be so firm as he who feels himself infirm."[2307] If a man says he has no fear, it is a sign that he trusts in himself, and in his good resolutions; but such a man, with his mischievous confidence, deceives himself, because, through trust in his own strength, he neglects to fear; and through not fearing he neglects to recommend himself to God, and then he will certainly fall. And so, for like reasons, we should all abstain from noticing with any vain-glory the sins of other people; but rather we should then esteem ourselves as worse in ourselves than they are, and should say, Lord, if thou hadst not helped me, I should have done worse. Otherwise, to punish us for our pride, God will permit us to fall into worse and more shameful sins. For this cause St. Paul instructs us to labor for our salvation; but how? always in fear and trembling: *With fear and trembling work out your salvation.*[2308] Yes; for he who has a great fear of falling, distrusts his own strength, and therefore places his confidence in God, and will have recourse to him in dangers; and

God will aid him, and so he will vanquish his temptations, and will be saved. St. Philip Neri, walking one day through Rome, kept saying, “I am in despair!” A certain religious rebuked him, and the saint thereupon said, “My father, I am in despair for myself; but I trust in God.” So must we do, if we would be saved; we must always live in despair of doing anything by our own strength; and in so doing we shall imitate St. Philip, who used to say to God the first moment he woke in the morning, “Lord, keep Thy hands over Philip this day; for if not, Philip will betray Thee.”

This, then, we may conclude with St. Augustine, is all the grand science of a Christian,—to know that he is nothing, and can do nothing. “This is the whole of the great science, to know that man is nothing.”[2309] For then he will never neglect to furnish himself, by prayer to God, with that strength which he has not of himself, and which he needs in order to resist temptation, and to do good; and so, with the help of God, who never refuses anything to the man who prays to him in humility, he will be able to do all things: *The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds, and he will not depart until the Most High behold.*[2310] The prayer of an humble soul penetrates the heavens, and presents itself before the throne of God; and departs not without God’s looking on it and hearing it. And though the soul be guilty of any amount of sin, God never despises a heart that humbles itself: *A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise;*[2311] *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.*[2312] As the Lord is severe with the proud, and resists their prayers, so is he kind and liberal to the humble. This is precisely what Jesus Christ said one day to St. Catharine of Sienna: “Know, my daughter, that a soul that perseveres in humble prayer gains every virtue.”[2313]

It will be of use to introduce here the advice which the learned and pious Palafox, Bishop of Osma, gives to spiritual persons who desire to become saints. It occurs in a note to the 18th letter of St. Teresa, which she wrote to her confessor, to give him an account of all the grades of supernatural prayer with which God had favored her. On this the bishop writes, that these supernatural graces which God designed to grant to St. Teresa, as he has also done to other saints, are not necessary in order to arrive at sanctity, since many souls have become saints without them; and, on the other hand, many have arrived at sanctity, and yet have, after all, been damned.

Therefore he says it is superfluous, and even presumptuous, to desire and to ask for these supernatural gifts, when the true and only way to become a saint is, to exercise ourselves in virtue and in the love of God; and this is done by means of prayer, and by corresponding to the inspirations and assistance of God, who wishes nothing so much as to see us saints. *For this is the will of God, your sanctification.*[2314]

Hence Bishop Palafox, speaking of the grades of supernatural prayer mentioned in St. Teresa's letter, namely, the prayer of quiet, the sleep or suspension of the faculties, the prayer of union, ecstasy or rapture, flight and impulse of the spirit, and the wound of love, says, very wisely, that as regards the *prayer of quiet,* what we ought to ask of God is that he would free us from attachment to worldly goods, and the desire of them, which give no peace, but bring disquiet and affliction to the soul: *Vanity of vanities,* as Solomon well called them, *and vexation of spirit.*[2315] The heart of man will never find true peace, if it does not empty itself of all that is not God, so as to leave itself all free for his love, that he alone may possess the whole of it. But this the soul cannot do of itself; it must obtain it of God by repeated prayers. As regards *the sleep and suspension of the faculties,* we ought to ask God for grace to keep them asleep for all that is temporal, and only awake them to consider God's goodness, and to set our hearts upon his love and eternal happiness. As regards the *union of the faculties,* let us pray him to give us grace not to think, nor to seek, nor to wish anything but what God wills; since all sanctity and the perfection of love consists in uniting our will to the will of God. As regards *ecstasy and rapture,* let us pray God to draw us away from the inordinate love of ourselves and of creatures, and to draw us entirely to himself. As regards *the flight of the spirit,* let us pray him to give us grace to live altogether detached from this world, and to do as the swallows, that do not settle on the ground even to feed, but take their food flying;—so should we use our temporal goods for all that is necessary for the support of life, but always flying, without settling on the ground to look for earthly pleasures. As regards *impulse of spirit,* let us pray him to give us courage and strength to do violence to ourselves, whenever it is necessary, for resisting the assaults of our enemies, for conquering our passions, and for accepting sufferings even in the midst of desolation and dryness of spirit. Finally, as regards *the wound of love,* as a wound by its pain perpetually renews the remembrance of what we suffer, so ought we to pray God to wound our hearts with his holy love in such a way that we shall always be reminded of his goodness and the love which he has borne us; and thus we should live in continual love of him, and should be always pleasing him with our works and our affections. But none of these graces can be obtained without prayer; and with prayer, provided it be humble, confident, and persevering, everything is obtained.

III

THE CONFIDENCE WITH WHICH WE OUGHT TO PRAY

EXCELLENCE AND NECESSITY OF THIS VIRTUE

The principal instruction that St. James gives us, if we wish by prayer to obtain grace from God, is, that we pray with a confidence that feels sure of being heard, and without hesitating: *Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.*[2316] St. Thomas teaches that as prayer receives its power of meriting from charity, so, on the other hand, it receives from faith and confidence its power of being efficacious to obtain: “Prayer has its power of meriting from charity, but its efficacity of obtaining from faith and confidence.”[2317] St. Bernard teaches the same, saying that it is our confidence alone which obtains for us the divine mercies: “Hope alone obtains a place of mercy with Thee, O Lord.”[2318] God is much pleased with our confidence in his mercy, because we then honor and exalt that infinite goodness which it was his object in creating us to manifest to the world: *Let all those, O my God,* says the royal prophet, *who hope in Thee be glad, for they shall be eternally happy, and Thou shalt dwell in them.*[2319] God protects and saves all those who confide in him: *He is the Protector of all that hope in Him.*[2320] *Thou who savest them that trust in Thee.*[2321] Oh, the great promises that are recorded in the Scriptures to all those who hope in God! He who hopes in God will not fall into sin: *None of them that trust in Him shall offend.*[2322] Yes, says David, because God has his eyes turned to all those who confide in his goodness to deliver them by his aid from the death of sin. *Behold, the eyes of the Lord are on them that fear Him, and on them that hope for His mercy to deliver their souls from death.*[2323] And in another place God himself says: *Because he hoped in me I will deliver him; I will protect him; I will deliver him and I will glorify him*[2324] Mark the word “because.” *Because* he confided in Me, I will protect, I will deliver him from his enemies, and from the danger of falling; and finally I will give him eternal glory. Isaias says of those who place their hope in God: *They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall take wings as the eagles; they shall run and not be weary: they shall walk and not faint.*[2325] They shall cease to be weak as they are now, and shall gain in God a great strength; they shall not faint; they shall not even feel weary in walking the way of salvation, but they shall run and fly as eagles; *in silence and in hope shall your strength be.*[2326] All our strength, the prophet tells us, consists in placing all our confidence in God, and in being silent; that is, in reposing in the arms of his mercy, without trusting to our own efforts, or to human means.

And when did it ever happen that a man had confidence in God and was lost? *No one hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded*[2327] It was this confidence that assured David that he should not perish: *In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted; I shall not be confounded forever.*[2328] Perhaps, then, says St. Augustine, God could be a deceiver, who offers to support us in dangers if we lean upon him, and would then withdraw himself if we had recourse to him? “God is not a deceiver, that he should offer to support us, and then when we lean upon him should slip away from us.”[2329] David calls the man happy who trusts in God: *Blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee*.[2330] And why? because, says he, he who trusts in God will always find himself surrounded by God’s mercy. *Mercy shall encompass him that hopeth in the Lord.*[2331] So that he shall be surrounded and guarded by God on every side in such a way that he shall be prevented from losing his soul.

It is for this cause that the Apostle recommends us so earnestly to preserve our confidence in God; for (he tells us) it will certainly obtain from him a great remuneration: *Do not therefore lose your confidence, which hath a great reward.*[2332] As is our confidence, so shall be the graces we receive from God: if our confidence is great, great too will be the graces: “Great faith merits great things.”[2333] St. Bernard writes that the divine mercy is an inexhaustible fountain, and that he who brings to it the largest vessel of confidence shall take from it the largest measure of gifts: “Neither, O Lord, dost Thou put the oil of thy mercy into any other vessel than that of confidence."[2334] The Prophet had long before expressed the same thought: *Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us* (*i.e.*, in proportion) *as we have hoped in Thee*.[2335] This was well exemplified in the centurion to whom our Saviour said, in praise of his confidence, *Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.*[2336] And our Lord revealed to St. Gertrude that he who prays with confidence does him in a manner such violence that he cannot but hear him in everything he asks: "Prayer," says St. John Climacus, "does a pious violence to God." It does him a violence, but a violence which he likes, and which pleases him.

Let us go, therefore, according to the admonition of St. Paul, *with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid."*[2337] The throne of grace is Jesus Christ, who is now sitting on the right hand of the Father; not on the throne of justice, but of grace, to obtain pardon for us if we fall into sin, and help to enable us to persevere if we are enjoying his friendship. To this throne we must always have recourse with confidence; that is to say, with that trust which springs from faith in the goodness and truth of God, who has promised to hear him who prays to him with confidence, but with a confidence that is both sure and stable. On the other hand, says St. James, let not the man who prays with hesitation think that he will receive anything: *"For he who wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore let not that man think to receive anything of the Lord.*[2338] He will receive nothing, because the diffidence which agitates him is unjust towards God, and will hinder his mercy from listening to his prayers: "Thou hast not asked rightly, because thou hast asked doubtingly," says St. Basil; "thou hast not received grace, because thou hast asked it without confidence."[2339] David says that our confidence in God ought to be as firm as a mountain, which is not moved by each gust of wind. *They who trust in the Lord are as Mount Sion; he shall not be moved forever.*[2340] And it is this that our Lord recommends to us, if we wish to obtain the graces which we ask: *Whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.*[2341] Whatever grace you require, be sure of having it, and so you shall obtain it.

FOUNDATION OF OUR CONFIDENCE

But on what, a man will say, am I, a miserable sinner, to found this certain confidence of obtaining what I ask? On what? On the promise made by Jesus Christ: *Ask, and you shall receive*[2342] “Who will fear to be deceived, when the truth promises?” says St. Augustine.[2343] How can we doubt that we shall be heard, when God, who is truth itself, promises to give us that which we ask of him in prayer? “We should not be exhorted to ask,” says the same Father, “unless he meant to give.”[2344] Certainly God would not have exhorted us to ask him for favors, if he had not determined to grant them; but this is the very thing to which he exhorts us so strongly, and which is repeated so often in the Scriptures—pray, ask, seek, and you shall obtain what you desire: *Whatever you will, seek and it shall be done to you*[2345] And in order that we may pray to him with due confidence, our Saviour has taught us, in the “Our Father,” that when we have recourse to him for the graces necessary to salvation (all of which are included in the petitions of the Lord’s Prayer) we should call him, not Lord, but Father—“Our Father”—because it is his will that we should ask God for grace with the same confidence with which a son, when in want or sick, asks food or medicine from his own father. If a son is dying of hunger, he has only to make his case known to his father, and his father will forthwith provide him with food; and if he has received a bite from a venomous serpent, he has only to show his father the wound, and the father will immediately apply whatever remedy he has.

Trusting, therefore, in God’s promises, let us always pray with confidence; not vacillating, but stable and firm, as the Apostle says: *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering; for He is faithful that hath promised.*[2346] As it is perfectly certain that God is faithful in his promises, so ought our faith also to be perfectly certain that he will hear us when we pray. And although sometimes, when we are in a state of aridity, or disturbed by some fault we have committed, we perhaps do not feel while praying that sensible confidence which we would wish to experience, yet, for all this, let us force ourselves to pray, and to pray without ceasing; for God will not neglect to hear us. Nay, rather he will hear us more readily; because we shall then pray with more distrust of ourselves; and confiding only in the goodness and faithfulness of God, who has promised to hear the man who prays to him. Oh, how God is pleased in the time of our tribulations, of our fears, and of our temptations, to see us hope against hope; that is, in spite of the feeling of diffidence which we then experience because of our desolation! This is that for which the Apostle praises the patriarch Abraham, *who against hope, believed in hope.*[2347]

St. John says that he who reposes a sure trust in God certainly will become a saint: *And every one that hath this hope in Him sanctifieth himself, as he also is holy.*[2348] For God gives abundant graces to them that trust in him. By this confidence the host of martyrs, of virgins, even of children, in spite of the dread of the torments which their persecutors prepared for them, overcame both their tortures and their persecutors. Sometimes, I say, we pray, but it seems to us that God will not hear us. Alas! let us not then neglect to persevere in prayer and in hope; let us then say, with Job, *Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him.*[2349] O my God! though Thou hast driven me from Thy presence, I will not cease to pray, and to hope in Thy mercy. Let us do so, and we shall obtain what we want from God. So did the Canaanitish woman, and she obtained all that she wished from Jesus Christ. This woman had a daughter possessed by a devil, and prayed our Saviour to deliver her: *Have mercy on me, my daughter is grievously tormented by a devil.*[2350] Our Lord answered her, that he was not sent for the Gentiles, of whom she was one, but for the Jews. She, however, did not lose heart, but renewed her prayer with confidence: Lord, Thou canst console me! Thou must console me: *Lord, help me!*[2351] Jesus answered, But as to the bread of the children, it is not good to give it to the dogs: *It is not good to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs.*[2352] But, my Lord, she answered, even the dogs are allowed to have the fragments of bread which fall from the table: *Yea, Lord; for the whelps eat of the crumbs that fall from the tables of their masters.*[2353] Then our Saviour, seeing the great confidence of this woman, praised her, and did what she asked, saying: *O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt.*[2354] For who, says Ecclesiasticus, has ever called on God for aid, and has been neglected and left unaided by him? *Or who hath called upon Him, and He hath despised him?*[2355]

St. Augustine says that prayer is a key which opens heaven to us; the same moment in which our prayer ascends to God, the grace which we ask for descends to us: “The prayer of the just is the key of heaven; the petition ascends, and the mercy of God descends.”[2356] The royal prophet writes that our supplications and God’s mercy are united together: *Blessed is God, who has not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy for me.*[2357] And hence the same St. Augustine says that when we are praying to God, we ought to be certain that God is hearing us: “When you see that your prayer is not removed from you, be sure that his mercy is not removed from you.”[2358] And for myself, I speak the truth, I never feel greater consolation, nor a greater confidence of my salvation, than when I am praying to God, and recommending myself to him. And I think that the same thing happens to all other believers; for the other signs of our salvation are uncertain and unstable; but that God hears the man who prays to him with confidence is an infallible truth, as it is infallible that God cannot fail in his promises.

When we find ourselves weak, and unable to overcome any passion, or any great difficulty, so as to fulfil that which God requires of us, let us take courage and say, with the Apostle, *I can do all things in Him, who strengtheneth me.*[2359] Let us not say, as some do, I cannot; I distrust myself. With our own strength certainly we can do nothing; but with God’s help we can do everything. If God said to any one, Take this mountain on your back, and carry it, for I am helping you, would not the man be a mistrustful fool if he answered, I will not take it; for I have not strength to carry it? And thus, when we know how miserable and weak we are, and when we find ourselves most encompassed with temptations, let us not lose heart; but let us lift up our eyes to God, and say, with David, *The Lord is my helper; and I will despise my enemies.*[2360] With the help of my Lord, I shall overcome and laugh to scorn all the assaults of my foes. And when we find ourselves in danger of offending God, or in any other critical position, and are too confused to know what is best to be done, let us recommend ourselves to God, saying, *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*[2361] And let us be sure that God will then certainly give us light, and will save us from every evil.

THE PRAYER OF SINNERS

But I am a sinner, you will say; and in the Scriptures I read, *God heareth not sinners.*[2362] St. Thomas answers (with St. Augustine) that this was said by the blind man, who, when he spoke, had not as yet been enlightened: “That is the word of a blind man not yet perfectly enlightened, and therefore it is not authoritative.”[2363] Though, adds St. Thomas, it is true of the petition which the sinner makes, “so far forth as he is a sinner;” that is, when he asks from a desire of continuing to sin; as, for instance, if he were to ask assistance to enable him to take revenge on his enemy, or to execute any other bad intention. The same holds good for the sinner who prays God to save him, but has no desire to quit the state of sin. There are some unhappy persons who love the chains with which the devil keeps them bound like slaves. The prayers of such men are not heard by God; because they are rash, presumptuous, and abominable. For what greater presumption can there be than for a man to ask favors of a prince whom he not only has often offended, but whom he intends to offend still more? And this is the meaning of the Holy Spirit, when he says that the prayer of him who turns away his ears so as not to hear what God commands is detestable and odious to God: *He who turneth away his ears from learning the law, his prayer shall be an abomination.*[2364] To these people God says, It is of no use your praying to me, for I will turn My eyes from you, and will not hear you: *When you stretch forth your hands, I will turn away my eyes from you; and when you multiply prayer, I will not hear.*[2365] Such, precisely, was the prayer of the impious King Antiochus, who prayed to God, and made great promises, but insincerely, and with a heart obstinate in sin; the sole object of his prayer being to escape the punishment that impended over him; therefore God did not hear his prayer, but caused him to die devoured by worms: *Then this wicked man prayed to the Lord, of whom he was not to obtain mercy.*[2366]

But others, who sin through frailty, or by the violence of some great passion, and who groan under the yoke of the enemy, and desire to break these chains of death, and to escape from their miserable slavery, and therefore ask the assistance of God; the prayer of these, if it is persevering, will certainly be heard by him, who says that every one that asks receives; and he who seeks grace finds it: *For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth.*[2367] “Every one, whether he be a just man or a sinner,” says the author of the *Opus Imperfectum.*[2368] And in St. Luke, our Lord, when speaking of the man who gave all the loaves he had to his friend, not so much on account of his friendship as because of the other's importunity, says, *If he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.*[2369] *And so I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you.*[2370] So that persevering prayer obtains mercy from God, even for those who are not his friends. That which is not obtained through friendship, says St. Chrysostom, is obtained by prayer: "That which was not effected by friendship was effected by prayer." He even says that prayer is valued more by God than friendship: "Friendship is not of such avail with God as prayer; that which is not effected by friendship is effected by prayer.[2371] And St. Basil doubts not that even sinners obtain what they ask if they persevere in praying:" Sinners obtain what they seek, if they seek perseveringly."[2372] St. Gregory says the same: "The sinner also shall cry, and his prayer shall reach to God."[2373] So St. Jerome,[2374] who says that even the sinner can call God his Father, if he prays to him to receive him anew as a son; after the example of the Prodigal Son, who called him Father, *Father, I have sinned,*[2375] even though he had not as yet been pardoned. If God did not hear sinners, says St. Augustine, in vain would the Publican have asked for forgiveness: "If God does not hear sinners, in vain would that Publican have said, God be merciful to me a sinner."[2376] But the Gospel assures us that the Publican did by his prayer obtain forgiveness: *This man went down to his house justified.*[2377]

But further still, St. Thomas examines this point more minutely, and does not hesitate to affirm that even the sinner is heard if he prays; for though his prayer is not meritorious, yet it has the power of impetration,—that is, of obtaining what we ask; because impetration is not founded on God's justice, but on his goodness. "Merit," he says, "depends on justice; impetration, on grace."[2378] Thus did Daniel pray, *Incline, O my God, Thine ear and hear. . . . For not in our justifications do we present our prayers before Thy face, but in the multitude of Thy mercies.*[2379] Therefore, when we pray, says St. Thomas, it is not necessary to be friends of God, in order to obtain the grace we ask; for prayer itself renders us his friends: "Prayer itself makes us of the family of God."[2380] Moreover, St. Bernard uses a beautiful explanation of this, saying that the prayer of a sinner to escape from sin arises from the desire to return to the grace of God. Now this desire is a gift, which is certainly given by no other than God himself; to what end, therefore, says St. Bernard, would God give to a sinner this holy desire, unless he meant to hear him? “For what would he give the desire, unless he willed to hear?”[2381] And, indeed, in the Holy Scriptures themselves there are multitudes of instances of sinners who have been delivered from sin by prayer. Thus was King Achab[2382] delivered; thus King Manasses;[2383] thus King Nabuchodonosor;[2384] and thus the good thief.[2385] Oh, the wonderful! oh, the mighty power of prayer! Two sinners are dying on Calvary by the side of Jesus Christ: one, because he prays, “Remember me,” is saved; the other, because he prays not, is damned.

And, in fine, St. Chrysostom says, “No man has with sorrow asked favors from him, without obtaining what he wished.”[2386] No sinner has ever with penitence prayed to God, without having his desires granted. But why should we cite more authorities, and give more reasons, to demonstrate this point, when our Lord himself says, *Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.*[2387] The “burdened,” according to Saints Augustine, Jerome, and others, are sinners in general, who groan under the load of their sins; and who, if they have recourse to God, will surely, according to his promise, be refreshed and saved by his grace. Ah, we cannot desire to be pardoned so much as he longs to pardon us. “Thou dost not,” says St. Chrysostom, “so much desire thy sins to be forgiven, as he desires to forgive thy sins.”[2388] There is no grace, he goes on to say, that is not obtained by prayer, though it be the prayer of the most abandoned sinner, provided only it be persevering: “There is nothing which prayer cannot obtain, though a man be guilty of a thousand sins, provided it be fervent and unremitting.”[2389] And let us mark well the words of St. James: *If any man wanteth wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all abundantly, and upbraideth not.*[2390] All those, therefore, who pray to God, are infallibly heard by him, and receive grace in abundance: *He giveth to all abundantly.* But you should particularly remark the words which follow, *and upbraideth not.* This means that God does not do as men, who, when a person who has formerly done them an injury comes to ask a favor, immediately upbraid him with his offence. God does not do so to the man who prays, even though he were the greatest sinner in the world, when he asks for some grace conducive to his eternal salvation. Then he does not upbraid him with the offences he has committed; but, as though he had never displeased him, he instantly receives him, he consoles him, he hears him, and enriches him with an abundance of his gifts. To crown all, our Saviour, in order to encourage us to pray, says, *Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[2391] As though he had said, Courage, O sinners; do not despair: do not let your sins turn you away from having recourse to My Father, and from hoping to be saved by him, if you desire it. You have not now any merits to obtain the graces which you ask for, for you only deserve to be punished; still do this: go to My Father in My name, through My merits ask the favors which you want, and I promise and swear to you ("Amen, amen, I say to you," which, according to St. Augustine, is a species of oath) that whatever you ask, My Father will grant. O God, what greater comfort can a sinner have after his fall than to know for certain that all that he asks from God in the name of Jesus Christ will be given to him!

I say "all;" but I mean only that which has reference to his eternal salvation; for with respect to temporal goods, we have already shown that God, even when asked, sometimes does not give them; because he sees that they would injure our soul. But so far as relates to spiritual goods, his promise to hear us is not conditional, but absolute; and therefore St. Augustine tells us, that those things which God promises absolutely, we should demand with absolute certainty of receiving: "Those things which God promises, seek with certainty."[2392] And how, says the saint, can God ever deny us anything, when we ask him for it with confidence? how much more does he desire to dispense to us his graces, than we to receive them! "He is more willing to be munificent of his benefits to thee than thou art desirous to receive them."[2393]

St. Chrysostom says that the only time when God is angry with us is when we neglect to ask him for his gifts: "He is only angry when we do not pray."[2394] And how can it ever happen that God will not hear a soul who asks him for favors all according to his pleasure? When the soul says to him, Lord, I ask Thee not for goods of this world,—riches, pleasures, honors; I ask Thee only for Thy grace: deliver me from sin, grant me a good death, give me Paradise, give me Thy holy love (which is that grace which St. Francis de Sales says we should seek more than all others), give me resignation to Thy will; how is it possible that God should not hear! What petitions wilt Thou, O my God, ever hear (says St. Augustine), if Thou dost not hear those which are made after Thy own heart? “What prayers dost Thou hear, if Thou hearest not these?”[2395] But, above all, our confidence ought to revive, when we pray to God for spiritual graces, as Jesus Christ says: *If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him!*[2396] If you, who are so attached to your own interests, so full of self-love, cannot refuse your children that which they ask, how much more will your heavenly Father, who loves you better than any earthly father, grant you his spiritual goods when you pray for them!

IV

THE PERSEVERANCE REQUIRED IN PRAYER

Our prayers, then, must be humble and confident; but this is not enough to obtain final perseverance, and thereby eternal life. Individual prayers will obtain the individual graces which they ask of God; but unless they are persevering, they will not obtain final perseverance: which, as it is the accumulation of many graces, requires many prayers, that are not to cease till death. The grace of salvation is not a single grace, but a chain of graces, all of which are at last linked with the grace of final perseverance. Now, to this chain of graces there ought to correspond another chain (as it were) of our prayers; if we, by neglecting to pray, break the chain of our prayers, the chain of graces will be broken too; and as it is by this that we have to obtain salvation, we shall not be saved.

It is true that we cannot merit final perseverance, as the Council of Trent teaches: “It cannot be had from any other source but from him who is able to confirm the man who is standing, that he may stand with perseverance.”[2397] Nevertheless, says St. Augustine, this great gift of perseverance can in a manner be merited by our prayers; that is, can be obtained by praying: “This gift, therefore, can be suppliantly merited; that is, can be obtained by supplication.”[2398] And F. Suarez adds, that the man who prays, infallibly obtains it. But to obtain it, and to save ourselves, says St. Thomas, a persevering and continual prayer is necessary: “After baptism continual prayer is necessary to a man in order that he may enter heaven."[2399] And before this, our Saviour himself had said it over and over again: *We ought always to pray, and not to faint.*[2400] *Watch ye therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of man.*[2401] The same had been previously said in the Old Testament: *Let nothing hinder thee from praying always.*[2402] *Bless God at all times, and desire Him to direct thy ways.*[2403] Hence the Apostle inculcated on his disciples never to neglect prayer: *Pray without intermission.*[2404] *Be instant in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving.*[2405] *I will therefore that men pray in every place.*[2406] God does indeed wish to give us perseverance, says St. Nilus, but he will only give it to him who prays for it perseveringly: "He willeth to confer benefits on him who perseveres in prayer."[2407] Many sinners by the help of God's grace come to be converted, and to receive pardon. But then, because they neglect to ask for perseverance, they fall again, and lose all.

Nor is it enough, says Bellarmine, to ask the grace of perseverance once, or a few times; we ought always to ask it, every day till our death, if we wish to obtain it: "It must be asked day by day, that it may be obtained day by day."[2408] He who asks it one day, obtains it for that one day; but if he does not ask it the next day, the next day he will fall.

And this is the lesson which our Lord wished to teach us in the parable of the man who would not give his loaves to his friend who asked him for them until he had become importunate in his demand: *Although he will not rise and give because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.*[2409] Now if this man, solely to deliver himself from the troublesome importunity of his friend, gave him even against his own will the loaves for which he asked, "how much more," says St. Augustine, "will the good God give, who both commands us to ask, and is angry if we ask not!"[2410] How much more will God, who, as he is infinite goodness, has a commensurate desire to communicate to us his good things,—how much more will he give his graces when we ask him for them! And the more, as he himself tells us to ask for them, and as he is displeased when we do not demand them. God, then, does indeed wish to give us eternal life, and therein all graces; but he wishes also that we should never omit to ask him for them, even to the extent of being troublesome.

Cornelius à Lapide says on the text just quoted, “God wishes us to be persevering in prayer to the extent of importunity.”[2411] Men of the world cannot bear the importunate; but God not only bears with them, but wishes us to be importunate in praying to him for graces, and especially for perseverance. St. Gregory says that God wishes us to do him violence by our prayers; for such violence does not annoy, but pleases him: “God wills to be called upon, he wills to be forced, he wills to be conquered by importunity. . . . Happy violence, by which God is not offended, but appeased!”[2412]

So that to obtain perseverance we must always recommend ourselves to God, morning and night, at meditation, at Mass, at Communion, and always; especially in time of temptation, when we must keep repeating, Lord, help me; Lord, assist me; keep Thy hand upon me; leave me not; have pity upon me! Is there anything easier than to say, Lord, help me, assist me! The Psalmist says, *With me is prayer to the God of my life.*[2413] On which the gloss is as follows: “A man may say, I cannot fast, I cannot give alms; but if he is told to pray, he cannot say this.[2414] Because there is nothing easier than to pray. But we must never cease praying; we must (so to speak) continually do violence to God, that he may assist us always—a violence which is delightful and dear to him.” “This violence is grateful to God,” says Tertullian;[2415] and St. Jerome says that the more persevering and importunate our prayers are, so much the more are they acceptable to God: “Prayer, as long as it is importunate, is more acceptable.”[2416]

Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates.[2417] Happy is that man, says God, who listens to Me, and watches continually with holy prayers at the gates of My mercy And Isaias says, *Blessed are all they that wait for Him.*[2418] Blessed are they who till the end wait (in prayer) for their salvation from God. Therefore in the Gospel Jesus Christ exhorts us to pray; but how? *Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.*[2419] Would it not have been enough to have said, “ask?” why add “seek” and “knock?” No, it was not superfluous to add them; for thereby our Saviour wished us to understand that we ought to do as the poor who go begging. If they do not receive the alms they ask (I speak of licensed beggars), they do not cease asking; they return to ask again; and if the master of the house does not show himself any more, they set to work to knock at the door, till they become very importunate and troublesome. That is what God wishes us to do: to pray, and to pray again, and never leave off praying, that he would assist us and succor us, that he would enlighten us and strengthen us, and never allow us to forfeit his grace. The learned Lessius says[2420] that the man cannot be excused from mortal sin who does not pray when he is in sin, or in danger of death; or, again, if he neglects to pray for any notable time, as (he says) for one or two months. But this does not include the time of temptations; because whoever finds himself assailed by any grievous temptation, without doubt sins mortally if he does not have recourse to God in prayer, to ask for assistance to resist it; seeing that otherwise he places himself in a proximate, nay, in a certain, occasion of sin.

WHY GOD DELAYS GRANTING US FINAL PERSERVANCE—CONCLUSION

But, some one will say, since God can give and wishes to give me the grace of perseverance, why does he not give it me all at once, when I ask him?

The holy Fathers assign many reasons:

1. God does not grant it at once, but delays it, first, that he may better prove our confidence.

2. And, further, says St. Augustine, that we may long for it more vehemently. Great gifts, he says, should be greatly desired; for good things soon obtained are not held in the same estimation as those which have been long looked for: “God wills not to give quickly, that you may learn to have great desire for great things; things long desired are pleasanter to obtain, but things soon given are cheapened.”[2421]

3. Again, the Lord does so that we may not forget him; if we were already secure of persevering and of being saved, and if we had not continual need of God’s help to preserve us in his grace and to save us, we should soon forget God. Want makes the poor keep resorting to the houses of the rich; so God, to draw us to himself, as St. Chrysostom says, and to see us often at his feet, in order that he may thus be able to do us greater good, delays giving us the complete grace of salvation till the hour of our death: “It is not because he rejects our prayers that he delays, but by this contrivance he wishes to make us careful, and to draw us to himself,”[2422] Again, he does so in order that we, by persevering in prayer, may unite

ourselves closer to him with the sweet bonds of love: “Prayer,” says the same St. Chrysostom, “which is accustomed to converse with God, is no slight bond of love to him.”[2423] This continual recurrence to God in prayer, and this confident expectation of the graces which we desire from him, oh, what a great spur and chain is it of love to inflame us, and to bind us more closely to God!

But, till what time have we to pray? Always, says the same saint, till we receive favorable sentence of eternal life; that is to say, till our death: “Do not leave off till you receive.”[2424] And he goes on to say that the man who resolves, I will never leave off praying till I am saved, will most certainly be saved: “If you say, I will not give in till I have received, you will assuredly receive.”[2425] The Apostle writes that many run for the prize, but that he only receives it who runs till he wins: *Know you not that they who run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain.*[2426] It is not, then, enough for salvation simply to pray; but we must pray always, that we may come to receive the crown which God promises, but promises only to those who are constant in prayer till the end.

So that if we wish to be saved, we must do as David did, who always kept his eyes turned to God, to implore his aid against being overcome by his enemies: *My eyes are ever towards the Lord, for He shall pluck my feet out of the snare.*[2427] As the devil does not cease continually spreading snares to swallow us up, as St. Peter writes: *Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour;*[2428] so ought we ever to stand with our arms in our hands to defend ourselves from such a foe, and to say, with the royal prophet, *I will pursue after my enemies; and I will not turn again till they are consumed.*[2429] I will never cease fighting till I see my enemies conquered. But how can we obtain this victory, so important for us, and so difficult? “By most persevering prayers,”[2430] says St. Augustine,—only by prayers, and those most persevering; and till when? As long as the fight shall last. “As the battle is never over,” says St. Bonaventure, “so let us never give over asking for mercy.”[2431] As we must be always in the combat, so should we be always asking God for aid not to be overcome. Woe, says the Wise Man, to him who in this battle leaves off praying: *Woe to them that have lost patience.*[2432] We may be saved, the Apostle tells us, but on this condition, *if we retain a firm confidence and the* *glory of hope until the end;*[2433] if we are constant in praying with confidence until death.

Let us, then, take courage from the mercy of God, and his promises, and say with the same Apostle, *Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or danger, or persecution, or the sword?*[2434] Who shall succeed in estranging us from the love of Jesus Christ? Tribulation, perhaps, or the danger of losing the goods of this world? The persecutions of devils or men? The torments inflicted by tyrants? *In all these we overcome* (it is St. Paul who encourages us), *because of Him that hath loved us.*[2435] No, he says, no tribulation, no misery, danger, persecution, or torture, shall ever be able to separate us from the love of Jesus Christ; because with God's help we shall overcome all, if we fight for love of him who gave his life for us.[2436]

F. Hippolitus Durazzo, the day when he resolved to relinquish his dignity of prelate at Rome, and to give himself entirely to God by entering the Society of Jesus (which he afterwards did), was so afraid of being faithless by reason of his weakness that he said to God, "Forsake me not, Lord, now that I have given myself wholly to Thee; for pity's sake, do not forsake me!" But he heard the whisper of God in his heart, "Do not thou forsake Me; rather," said God, "do I say to thee, Forsake Me not." And so at last the servant of God, trusting in his goodness and help, concluded, "Then, O my God, Thou wilt not leave me, and I will not leave Thee."[2437]

Finally, if we wish not to be forsaken by God, we ought never to forsake praying to him not to leave us. If we do thus, he will certainly always assist us, and will never allow us to perish, and to be separated from his love. And to this end let us not only take care always to ask for final perseverance, and the graces necessary to obtain it, but let us, at the same time, always by anticipation ask God for grace to go on praying; for this is precisely that great gift which he promised to his elect by the mouth of the prophet: *And I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and prayers.*[2438] Oh, what a great grace is the spirit of prayer; that is, the grace which God confers on a soul to enable it to pray always! Let us, then, never neglect to beg God to give us this grace, and this spirit of continual prayer; because if we pray always, we shall certainly obtain from God perseverance and every other gift which we desire, since his promise of hearing whoever prays to him cannot fail. *For we are saved by hope*."[2439] With this hope of always praying, we may reckon ourselves saved. "Confidence will give us a broad entrance into this city."[2440] This hope, said Venerable Bede, will give us a safe passage into the city of Paradise.

Part II

Which proves that the Grace of Prayer is given to all, and which treats of the Ordinary Mode in which this Grace operates

INTRODUCTION

TAKING, then, for granted that prayer is necessary for the attainment of eternal life, as we have proved in Part I., chap, i., we should consequently, also, take for granted that every one has sufficient aid from God to enable him actually to pray, without need of any further special grace; and that by prayer he may obtain all other graces necessary to enable him to persevere in keeping the commandments, and so gain eternal life; so that no one who is lost can ever excuse himself by saying that it was through want of the aid necessary for his salvation. For as God, in the natural order, has ordained that man should be born naked, and in want of several things necessary for life, but then has given him hands and intelligence to clothe himself and provide for his other needs; so, in the supernatural order, man is born unable to obtain salvation by his own strength; but God in his goodness grants to every one the grace of prayer, by which he is able to obtain all other graces which he needs in order to keep the commandments and to be saved.

But before I explain this point, I must prove two preliminary propositions. First, that God wills all men to be saved; and therefore that Jesus Christ has died for all. Secondly, that God, on his part, gives to all men the graces necessary for salvation; whereby every one may be saved if he corresponds to them.

Chapter I

GOD WISHES ALL MEN TO BE SAVED, AND THEREFORE CHRIST DIED TO SAVE ALL MEN

I

GOD WISHES ALL MEN TO BE SAVED

GOD loves all things that he has created: *For Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things that Thou hast made.*[2441] Now love cannot be idle: “All love has a force of its own, and cannot be idle,”[2442] says St. Augustine. Hence love necessarily implies benevolence, so that the person who loves cannot help doing good to the person beloved whenever there is an opportunity: “Love persuades a man to do those things which he believes to be good for him whom he loves,”[2443] says Aristotle. If, then, God loves all men, he must in consequence will that all should obtain eternal salvation, which is the one and sovereign good of man, seeing that it is the one end for which he was created: *You have your fruit unto sanctification; but your end eternal life.*[2444]

This doctrine, that God wishes all men to be saved, and that Jesus Christ died for the salvation of all, is now a certain doctrine taught by the Catholic Church, as theologians in common teach, namely, Petavius, Gonet, Gotti, and others, besides Tourneley, who adds, that it is a doctrine all but of faith.[2445]

1. DECISION OF THE CHURCH

With reason, therefore, were the predestinarians condemned, who, among their errors, taught (as may be seen in Noris, Petavius, and more especially in Tourneley) that God does not will all men to be saved; as Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, testifies of them in his first letter, where he says, “The ancient predestinarians asserted that God does not will all men to be saved, but only those who are saved.”[2446] These persons were condemned, first in the Council of Arles, A.D. 475, which pronounced “anathema to him that said that Christ did not die for all men, and that he does not will all to be saved.”[2447] They were next condemned in the Council of Lyons, A.D. 490, where Lucidus was forced to retract and confess, “I condemn the man who says that Christ did not suffer death for the salvation of all men.”[2448] So also in the ninth century, Gotheschalcus, who renewed the same error, was condemned by the Council of Quercy, A.D. 853, in the third article of which it was decided “God wills all men, without exception, to be saved, although all men be not saved;” and in the fourth article: “There is no man for whom Christ did not suffer, although all men be not redeemed by the mystery of his Passion.”[2449] The same error was finally condemned in the 12th and 13th Propositions of Quesnel. In the former it was said: “When God wills to save a soul, the will of God is undoubtedly effectual;” in the latter: “All whom God wills to save through Christ are infallibly saved.”[2450] These propositions were justly condemned, precisely because they meant that God does not will all men to be saved; since from the proposition that those whom God wills to be saved are infallibly saved, it logically follows that God does not will even all the faithful to be saved, let alone all men.

This was also clearly expressed by the Council of Trent, in which it was said that Jesus Christ died, “that all might receive the adoption of sons,” and in chapter iii.: “But though he died for all, yet all do not receive the benefits of his death.”[2451] The Council then takes for granted that the Redeemer died not only for the elect, but also for those who, through their own fault, do not receive the benefit of Redemption. Nor is it of any use to affirm that the Council only meant to say that Jesus Christ has given to the world a ransom sufficient to save all men; for in this sense we might say that he died also for the devils. Moreover, the Council of Trent intended here to reprove the errors of those innovators, who, not denying that the blood of Christ was sufficient to save all, yet asserted that in fact it was not shed and given for all; this is the error which the Council intended to condemn when it said that our Saviour died for all. Further, in chapter vi. it says that sinners are put in a fit state to receive justification by hope in God through the merits of Jesus Christ: “They are raised to hope, trusting that God will be merciful to them through Christ."[2452] Now, if Jesus Christ had not applied to all the merits of his Passion, then, since no one (without a special revelation) could be certain of being among the number of those to whom the Redeemer had willed to apply the fruit of his merits, no sinner could entertain such hope, not having the certain and secure foundation which is necessary for hope; namely, that God wills all men to be saved, and will pardon all sinners prepared for it by the merits of Jesus Christ. And this, besides being the error formerly condemned in Baius, who said that Christ had only died for the elect, is also condemned in the fifth proposition of Jansenius: "It is Semi-Pelagianism to say that Christ died or shed his blood for all men."[2453] And Innocent X., in his Constitution of A.D. 1653, expressly declared that to say Christ died for the salvation of the elect only is an impious and heretical proposition.

2. THE CELEBRATED TEXT OF ST. PAUL

On the other hand, both the Scriptures and all the Fathers assure us that God sincerely and really wishes the salvation of all men and the conversion of all sinners, as long as they are in this world. For this we have, first of all, the express text of St. Paul: *Who will have all men to be saved, ana to come to the knowledge of the truth.*[2454] The sentence of the Apostle is absolute and indicative—*God wills all men to be saved.* These words in their natural sense declare that God truly wills all men to be saved; and it is a certain rule, received in common by all, that the words in Scripture are not to be distorted to an unnatural sense, except in the sole case when the literal meaning is repugnant to faith or morals. St. Bonaventure writes precisely to our purpose when he says, "We must hold that when the Apostle says, God wills all men to be saved, it is necessary to grant that he does will it."[2455]

It is true that St. Augustine and St. Thomas mention different interpretations which have been given to this text; but both these Doctors understand it to mean a real will of God to save all, without exception.

And concerning St. Augustine, we shall see just now that this was his true opinion; so that St. Prosper protests against attributing to him the supposition that God did not sincerely wish the salvation of all men, and of each individual, as an aspersion on the holy Doctor. Hence the same St. Prosper, who was a most faithful disciple of his, says, "It is most sincerely to be believed and confessed that God wills all men to be saved; since the Apostle (whose very words these are) is particular in commanding that prayers should be made to God for all."[2456]

The argument of the saint is clear, founded on St. Paul's words in the above-cited passage—*I beseech therefore, first of all, that prayers should be made for all men;*[2457] and then he adds, *For this is good and acceptable before God our Saviour, who wills all men to be saved.*[2458] So the Apostle wishes us to pray for all, exactly in the same sense that God wishes the salvation of all. St. Chrysostom uses the same argument: "If he wills all to be saved, surely we ought to pray for all. If he desires all to be saved, do you also be of one mind with him."[2459] And if in some passages in his controversy with the Semi-Pelagians, St. Augustine seems to have held a different interpretation of this text, saying that God does not will the salvation of each individual, but only of some, Petavius well observes that here the holy Father speaks only incidentally, not with direct intention; or, at any rate, that he speaks of the grace of that absolute and victorious will (*voluntas absoluta et victrix*) with which God absolutely wills the salvation of some persons, and of which the saint elsewhere says, "The will of the Almighty is always invincible."[2460]

Let us hear how St. Thomas uses another method of reconciling the opinion of St. Augustine with that of St. John Damascene, who holds that antecedently God wills all and each individual to be saved: "God's first intention is to will all men to be saved, that as good he may make us partakers of his goodness; but after we have sinned, he wills to punish us as just."[2461] On the other hand, St. Augustine (as we have seen) seems in a few passages to think differently. But St. Thomas reconciles these opinions, and says that St. Damascene spoke of the antecedent will of God, by which he really wills all men to be saved, while St. Augustine spoke of the consequent will. He then goes on to explain the meaning of antecedent and consequent will: "Antecedent will is that by which God wills all to be saved; but when all the circumstances of this or that individual are considered, it is found to be good that all men should be saved; for it is good that he who prepares himself, and consents to it, should be saved; but not he who is unwilling and resists, etc. And this is called the consequent will, because it presupposes a foreknowledge of a man's deeds, not as a cause of the act of will, but as a reason for the thing willed and determined."[2462]

So that St. Thomas was also of opinion that God truly wills all men and each individual to be saved. This opinion he reasserts in several other places. On the text—*Him that cometh to Me I will not cast out,*"[2463] he quotes St. Chrysostom, who makes our Lord say, "If then I was incarnate for the salvation of men, how can I cast them out?" And this is what He means when He says, "Therefore I cast them not out, because I came down from heaven to do My Father's will, who wills all men to be saved."[2464] And again, "God, by his most liberal will, gives (grace) to every one that prepares himself,"—*who wills all men to be saved;* and therefore the grace of God is wanting to no man, but as far as He is concerned He communicates it to everyone."[2465] Again, he declares the same thing more expressly in his explanation of the text of St. Paul—*God wills all men to be saved.* "In God," he says, "the salvation of all men, considered in itself, belongs to that class of things which he wishes, and this is his antecedent will; but when the good of justice is taken into consideration, and the rightness of punishing sin, in this sense he does not will the salvation of all, and this is his consequent will."[2466] Here we may see how consistent St. Thomas was in his explanation of antecedent and consequent will; for he here repeats what he had said in the passage quoted a little before. In this place he only adds the comparison of a merchant, who antecedently wills to save all his merchandise; but if a tempest comes on, he willingly throws it overboard, in order to preserve his own life. In like manner, he says, God, considering the iniquity of some persons, wills them to be punished in satisfaction of his justice, and consequently does not will them to be saved; but antecedently, and considered in itself, he wills with a true desire the salvation of all men. So that, as he says in the former passage, God's will to save all men is on his part absolute; it is only conditional on the part of the object willed, that is, if man will correspond to what the right order demands, in order to be saved. "Nor yet," he says, "is there imperfection on the part of God's will, but on the part of the thing willed; because it is not accepted with all the circumstances which are required, in order to be saved in the proper manner."[2467] And he again and more distinctly declares what he means by antecedent and consequent will: "A judge antecedently wishes every man to live, but he consequently wishes a murderer to be hanged; so God antecedently wills every man to be saved, but he consequently wills some to be damned; in consequence, that is, of the exigencies of his justice."[2468]

I have no intention here of blaming the opinion that men are predestined to glory previously to the prevision of their merits; I only say that I cannot understand how those who think that God, without any regard to their merits, has elected some to eternal life, and excluded others, can therefore persuade themselves that he wills all to be saved; unless, indeed, they mean that this will of God is not true and sincere, but rather a hypothetical or metaphorical will. I cannot understand, I say, how it can be maintained that God wills all men to be saved, and to partake of his glory, when the greater part of them have been already excluded from this glory antecedently to any demerit on their part. Petavius says, in defence of his contrary opinion, What was the use of God's giving to all men the desire of eternal happiness, when he had excluded the majority of them from it antecedently to any demerits of theirs? What was the use of Jesus Christ's coming to save all men by his death, when so many poor creatures had been already deprived by God of all benefit therefrom? What was the use of giving them so many means of salvation, when they had been already excluded from the attainment of the end? Therefore, adds Petavius (and this is a most weighty reflection), if this ever was the case, we must say that God, who loves all things that he has created, yet in creating mankind did not love them all, but rather utterly detested the greater part of them, in excluding them from the glory for which he had created them. It is certain that the happiness of a creature consists in the attainment of the end for which it was created. On the other hand, it is certain that God creates all men for eternal life. If, therefore, God, having created some men for eternal life, had thereupon, without regard to their sins, excluded them from it, he would in creating them have utterly hated them without cause, and would have done them the greatest injury they could possibly suffer in excluding them from the attainment of their end, that is, of the glory for which they had been created—"For," says Petavius in a passage which we abridge, "God cannot feel indifferent between love and hatred towards his creatures, especially towards men, whom he either loves to eternal life, or hates to damnation;

but it is the greatest evil of man to be alienated from God and to be reprobate; wherefore, if God wills the everlasting destruction of any man’s soul, he does not love him, but hates him with the greatest hatred possible, in that kind which transcends the natural order.”[2469] And by this eternal ruin or “everlasting destruction,” he does not mean the positive damnation which God destines for certain individuals, but simply the exclusion from glory; since in fact, as Tertullian says, of what use would it ever be to us that God had not created us for hell, if in creating us he had separated us from the number of his elect? since the separation from the elect necessarily implies the loss of salvation, and therefore damnation; since there is no mean between them. “For what,” says Tertullian, “will be the end of the separated? Will it not be the loss of salvation?”[2470] Whence Petavius concludes—“Wherefore, if God loves every man with a love which is antecedent to their merits, he does not hate his soul, and therefore he does not desire the greatest evil to him.”[2471] If, therefore, God loves all men, as is certain, we ought to hold that he wills all to be saved, and that he has never hated any one to such a degree, that he has willed to do him the greatest evils, by excluding him from glory previously to the prevision of his demerits.

I say notwithstanding, and repeat again and again, that I cannot understand it; for this matter of predestination is so profound a mystery, that it made the Apostle exclaim: *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord?*[2472] We ought to submit ourselves to the will of God, who has chosen to leave this mystery in obscurity to his Church, that we all might humble ourselves under the deep judgments of his divine Providence. And the more, because divine grace, by which alone men can gain eternal life, is dispensed more or less abundantly by God entirely gratuitously, and without any regard to our merits. So that to save ourselves it will always be necessary for us to throw ourselves into the arms of the divine mercy, in order that he may assist us with his grace to obtain salvation, trusting always in his infallible promises to hear and save the man who prays to him.

3. OTHER TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE

But let us return to our point, that God sincerely wills all men to be saved. There are other texts which prove the same thing, as when God says: *As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked man turn from his way and live.*[2473] He not only says that he wills not the death, but that he wills the life of a sinner; and he swears, as Tertullian observes, in order that he may be more readily believed in this: “When moreover he swears, saying, as I live, he desires to be believed.”[2474]

Further, David says: *For wrath is in His indignation, and life in His will.*[2475] If he chastises us, he does it because our sins provoke him to indignation; but as to his will, he wills not our death, but our life: *Life in His will.* St. Basil says about this text, that God wills all to be made partakers of life.[2476] David says elsewhere: *Our God is the God of salvation; and of the Lord of the Lord are the issues from death.*[2477] On this Bellarmine says: “This is proper to him, this is his nature, our God is a saving God, and his are the issues from death—that is, liberation from it;”[2478] so that it is God’s proper nature to save all, and to deliver all from eternal death.

Again, our Lord says: *Come to Me, all ye that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you*[2479] If he calls all to salvation, then he truly wills all to be saved. Again, St. Peter says: *He willeth not that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.*[2480] He does not will the damnation of any one, but he wills that all should do penance, and so should be saved.

Again, our Lord says: *I stand at the gate and knock; if any one will open, I will enter.*[2481] *Why will you die, O house of Israel? return and live.*[2482] *What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it?*[2483] *How often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not!*[2484] How could our Lord have said that he stands knocking at the heart of us sinners? How exhort us so strongly to return to his arms? How reproach us by asking what more he could have done for our salvation? How say that he has willed to receive us as children, if he had not a true will to save all men? Again, St. Luke relates that our Lord, looking over Jerusalem from a distance, and contemplating the destruction of its people because of their sin: *Seeing the city, He wept over it.*[2485] Why did he weep then, says Theophylact (after St. Chrysostom), seeing the ruin of the Jews, unless it was because he really desired their salvation? Now then, after so many attestations of our Lord, in which he makes known to us that he wills to see all men saved, how can it ever be said that God does not will the salvation of all? “But if these texts of Scripture,” says Petavius, “in which God has testified his will in such clear and often-repeated expressions, nay even with tears and with an oath, may be abused and distorted to the very opposite sense,—namely, that God determined to send all mankind (except a few) to perdition, and never had a will to save them, what dogma of faith is so clear as to be safe from similar injury and cavil?”[2486] This great writer says, that to deny that God really wills the salvation of all men is an insult and cavil against the plainest doctrines of the faith. And Cardinal Sfondrati adds: “Those who think otherwise, seem to me to make God a mere stage-god; like those people who pretend to be kings in a play, when indeed they are anything but kings.”[2487]

4. GENERAL CONSENT OF THE FATHERS

Moreover, this truth, that God wills all men to be saved, is confirmed by the general consent of the Fathers. There can be no doubt that all the Greek Fathers have been uniform in saying that God wills all and each individual to be saved. So St. Justin, St. Basil, St. Gregory, St. Cyril, St. Methodius, and St. Chrysostom, all adduced by Petavius. But let us see what the Latin Fathers say.

St. Jerome: (God) “wills to save all; but since no man is saved without his own will, he wills us to will what is good, that when we have willed, he may also will to fulfil his designs in us;”[2488] and in another place, “God therefore willed to save those who desire (to be saved); and he invited them to salvation, that their will might have its reward; but they would not believe in him.”[2489]

St. Hilary: “God would that all men were saved, and not those alone who are to belong to the number of the elect, but all absolutely, so as to make no exception.”[2490]

St. Paulinus: “Christ says to all, *Come to Me,* etc.; for he, the Creator of all men, so far as he is concerned, wills every man to be saved.”[2491]

St. Ambrose: “Even with respect to the wicked he had to manifest his will (to save them), and therefore he could not pass over his betrayer, that all might see that in the election even of the traitor he exhibits (his desire) of saving all . . . and, so far as God is concerned, he shows to all that he was willing to deliver all."[2492]

The author of the work known as the *Commentaries of St. Ambrose* (supposed by Petavius to be Hilary the Deacon) in speaking of the text of St. Paul (*Who wills all men,*[2493] etc.), asks this question: "But since God wills that all should be saved, as he is Almighty, why are there so many who are not saved?" And he answers: "He wills them to be saved, if they also are willing; for he who gave the law excluded no one from salvation . . . this medicine is of no use to the unwilling."[2494] He says that God has excluded no one from glory, and that he gives grace to all to be saved, but on condition that they are willing to correspond to it; because his grace is of no use to the man who rejects it. St. Chrysostom in like manner asks, "Why then are not all men saved, if God wills all to be saved?" and he answers, "Because every man's will does not coincide with his will, and he forces no man."[2495] St. Augustine: "God wills all men to be saved, but not so as to destroy their free will."[2496] He says the same thing in several other places, which we shall shortly have to produce.

II

JESUS CHRIST DIED TO SAVE ALL MEN

That Jesus Christ, therefore, died for all and each of mankind, is clear, not only from the Scriptures, but from the writings of the Fathers. Great certainly was the ruin which the sin of Adam occasioned to the whole human race; but Jesus Christ, by the grace of Redemption, repaired all the evils which Adam introduced. Hence the Council of Trent has declared that baptism renders the soul pure and immaculate; and that the sin which remains in it is not for its harm, but to enable it to gain a higher crown, if it resists so as not to consent to it: "For in the regenerate God hates nothing . . . they are made innocent, immaculate, pure, and beloved of God. . . . But this holy synod confesses and feels that concupiscence or the fuel (of sin) remains in baptized persons; but as it was left for our probation, it cannot injure those who do not consent to it; nay rather, he who contends lawfully (against it) shall be crowned."[2497] Thus, as St. Leo says, "we have gained greater things by the grace of Christ than we had lost through the envy of the devil."[2498] The gain which we have made by the redemption of Jesus Christ is greater than the loss which we suffered by the sin of Adam. The Apostle plainly declared this when he said, *Not as the offence, so also the gift. For where the offence abounded, there did grace more abound.*[2499] Our Lord says the same: *I am come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.*[2500] David and Isaias had predicted it: *With Him is plentiful redemption.—She hath received of the hand of the Lord double for all her sins.*[2501] About which words the interpreter says: "God has so forgiven iniquities through Christ, that men have received double—that is, very much greater good, instead of the punishment of sin which they deserved."[2502]

Now that our Saviour, as I said, died for all, and that he offered the work of his redemption to the Eternal Father for the salvation of each one, the holy Scriptures assure us of the following:

1. THE TESTIMONY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

The Son of Man came to save that which was lost.[2503] *Who gave Himself a redemption for all.*[2504] *Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but to Him who died for them.*[2505] *For hereunto we labor and are reviled, because we hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of the faithful.*[2506] *And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.*[2507] *For the charity of Christ presseth us, judging this that, if one died for all, then all were dead.*[2508] And to speak only of this last text, I ask, how could the Apostle ever have concluded that all were dead, because Christ died for all, unless he had been certain that Christ had really died for all? And the more, because St. Paul uses this truth as an argument for the love which it should kindle in us towards our Saviour. But by far the best passage to exhibit the desire and wish which God has to save all men, is another text of St. Paul: *He that spared not His own son, but delivered Him for us all.*[2509] The force of this passage is increased by what follows: *How hath He not also with Him given us all things.*[2510] If God has given us all things, how can we henceforth fear that he has denied us the election to glory, always on condition that we correspond (to his grace)? And if he has given us his Son, says Cardinal Sfondrati, how will he deny us the grace to be saved? “Here he clearly instructs us” (he is speaking of St. Paul) “that God assures us that he will not refuse us the less after he has given the greater; that he will not deny us grace to save ourselves, after giving his Son that we might be saved.”[2511] And in truth, how could St. Paul have said that God, in giving us his Son, has given us all things, if the Apostle had believed that God had excluded many from the glory which is the one good and the one end for which they were created? Has then God given “all things” to these “many,” and yet denied them the best thing—namely, eternal happiness, without which (as there is no middle way) they cannot but be eternally miserable? Unless we would say another thing still more unseemly, as another learned author well observes—namely, that God gives to all the grace to attain glory, but then refuses to allow many to enter on its enjoyment; that he gives the means, and refuses the end.

2. THE TEACHING OF THE HOLY FATHERS

For the rest, all the holy Fathers agree in saying that Jesus Christ died to obtain eternal salvation for all men.

St. Jerome: “Christ died for all; he was the only one who could be offered for all, because all were dead in sins.”[2512]

St. Ambrose: “Christ came to cure our wounds; but since all do not search for the remedy . . . therefore he cures those who are willing; he does not force the unwilling.”[2513] In another place: “He has provided for all men the means of cure, that whoever perishes may lay the blame of his death on himself, because he would not be cured when he had a remedy; and that, on the other hand, the mercy of Christ to all may be openly proclaimed, who wills that all men should be saved.”[2514] And more clearly still in another place: “Jesus did not write his will for the benefit of one, or of few, but of all; we are all inscribed therein as his heirs; the legacy is in common, and belongs by right to all; the universal heritage, belonging wholly to each.”[2515] Mark the words, “We are all inscribed as heirs; the Redeemer has written us all down as heirs of heaven.”[2516]

St. Leo: “As Christ found no one free from guilt, so he came to deliver all.”[2517]

St. Augustine, on the words of St. John, *For God did not send His Son to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him,*[2518] says: “So, as far as it lies with the physician, he came to heal the sick man.”[2519] Mark the words, “as far as it lies with the physician.” For God, as far as he is concerned, effectually wills the salvation of all, but (as St. Augustine goes on to say) cannot heal the man who will not be healed: “He heals universally, but he heals not the unwilling.[2520] For what can be happier for thee, than, as thou hast thy life in thy hands, so to have thy health depend on thy will?”[2521] When he says “He heals,” he speaks of sinners who are sick, and unable to get well by their own strength; when he says “universally” (*omnino*), he declares that nothing is wanting on God’s part for sinners to be healed and saved. Then when he says, “as thou hast thy life in thy hands, so thy health depends on thy will,” he shows that God for his part really wills us all to be saved; otherwise, it would not be in our power to obtain health and eternal life. In another place, “He who redeemed us at such a cost, wills not that we perish; for he does not purchase in order to destroy, but he redeems in order to give life.”[2522] He has redeemed us all, in order to save us all. And hence he encourages all to hope for eternal bliss in that celebrated sentence: “Let human frailty raise itself; let it not say, I shall never be happy. . . . It is a greater thing that Christ has done, than that which he has promised. What has he done? He has died for thee. What has he promised? That thou shalt live with him.”[2523]

Some have pretended to say that Jesus Christ, offered his blood for all, in order to obtain grace for them, but not salvation. But Petrocorensis will not hear of this opinion, of which he says: “O disputatious frivolity! How could the wisdom of God will the means of salvation, without willing its end.”[2524] St. Augustine, moreover, speaking against the Jews, says: “Ye acknowledge the side which ye pierced, that it was opened both by you and for you.”[2525] If Jesus Christ had not really given his blood for all, the Jews might have answered St. Augustine, that it was quite true they had opened the side of our Saviour, but not that it was opened for them.

In like manner. St. Thomas has no doubt that Jesus Christ died for all; whence he deduces that he wills all to be saved: “Christ Jesus is mediator between God and men; not between God and some men, but between him and all men; and this would not be, unless he willed all to be saved.”[2526]

This is confirmed, as we have already said, by the condemnation of the fifth proposition of Jansenius, who said, “It is semi-Pelagianism to assert that Christ died or shed his blood for all men.”[2527] The sense of this, according to the context of the other condemned propositions, and according to the principles of Jansenius, is as follows: Jesus Christ did not die to merit for all men the graces sufficient for salvation, but only for the predestined; or, in Jansenius’s own expressed words, “It is in no way consonant to the principles of Augustine, to think that Christ our Lord died or shed his blood for the eternal salvation either of unbelievers, who die in their unbelief, or of the just, who do not persevere.”[2528] Therefore the contrary and Catholic belief is as follows: It is not semi-Pelagianism, but it is right to say that Jesus Christ died to merit not only for the predestinate, but for all, even for the reprobate, grace sufficient to obtain eternal salvation in the ordinary course of Providence.

Further, that God truly, on his part, wills all men to be saved, and that Jesus Christ died for the salvation of all, is certified to us by the fact that God imposes on us all the precept of hope. The reason is clear. St. Paul calls Christian hope the anchor of the soul, secure and firm: *Who have fled for refuge to hold fast the hope set before us which we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm.*[2529] Now in what could we fix this sure and firm anchor of our hope, except in the truth that God wills all to be saved? “With what confidence,” says Petrocorensis, “will men be able to hope for God’s mercy, if it is not certain that God wills the salvation of all of them? With what confidence will they offer the death of Christ to God, in order to obtain pardon, if it is uncertain whether he was offered up for them?”[2530] And Cardinal Sfondrati says, that if God had elected some to eternal life, and excluded others, we should have a greater motive to despair than to hope; seeing that, in fact, the elect are much fewer than the damned: “No one could have a firm hope, since he would have more grounds of despair than of hope; for the reprobate are much more numerous than the elect.”[2531] And if Jesus Christ had not died for the salvation of all, how could we have a sure ground to hope for salvation through the merits of Jesus Christ, without a special revelation? But St. Augustine had no doubt when he said, “All my hope, and the certainty of my faith, is in the precious blood of Christ, which was shed for us and for our salvation.”[2532] Thus the saint placed all his hope in the blood of Jesus Christ; because the faith assured him that Christ died for all. But we shall have a better opportunity of examining this question of hope in chapter iii., where we shall establish the principal point—namely, that the grace of prayer is given to all.

III

CHILDREN WHO DIE WITHOUT BAPTISM

Here it only remains for us to answer the objection which is drawn from children being lost when they die before baptism, and before they come to the use of reason. If God wills all to be saved, it is objected, how is it that these children perish without any fault of their own, since God gives them no assistance to attain eternal salvation? There are two answers to this objection, the latter more correct than the former. I will state them briefly.

First, it is answered that God, by antecedent will, wishes all to be saved, and therefore has granted universal means for the salvation of all; but these means at times fail of their effect, either by reason of the unwillingness of some persons to avail themselves of them, or because others are unable to make use of them, on account of secondary causes (such as the death of children), whose course God is not bound to change, after having disposed the whole according to the just judgment of his general Providence; all this is collected from what St. Thomas says. Jesus Christ offered his merits for all men, and instituted baptism for all; but the application of this means of salvation, so far as relates to children who die before the use of reason, is not prevented by the direct will of God, but by a merely permissive will; because as he is the general provider of all things, he is not bound to disturb the general order, to provide for the particular order.

The second answer is, that to perish is not the same as not to be blessed: since eternal happiness is a gift entirely gratuitous; and therefore the want of it is not a punishment. The opinion, therefore, of St. Thomas is very just, that children who die in infancy have neither the pain of sense nor the pain of loss; not the pain of sense, he says, "because pain of sense corresponds to conversion to creatures; and in original sin there is not conversion to creatures" (as the fault is not our own), "and therefore pain of sense is not due to original sin;" because original sin does not imply an act.[2533]

Objectors oppose to this the teaching of St. Augustine, who in some places shows that his opinion was that children are condemned even to the pain of sense. But in another place he declares that he was very much confused about this point. These are his words: “When I come to the punishment of infants, I find myself (believe me) in great straits; nor can I at all find anything to say.”[2534] And in another place he writes, that it may be said that such children receive neither reward nor punishment: “Nor need we fear that it is impossible there should be a middle sentence between reward and punishment; since their life was midway between sin and good works.”[2535] This was directly affirmed by St. Gregory Nazianzen: “Children will be sentenced by the just judge neither to the glory of heaven nor to punishment.”[2536] St. Gregory of Nyssa was of the same opinion: “The premature death of children shows that they who have thus ceased to live will not be in pain and unhappiness.”[2537]

And as far as relates to the pain of loss, although these children are excluded from glory, nevertheless St. Thomas,[2538] who had reflected most deeply on this point, teaches that no one feels pain for the want of that good of which he is not capable; so that as no man grieves that he cannot fly, or no private person that he is not emperor, so these children feel no pain at being deprived of the glory of which they were never capable; since they could never pretend to it either by the principles of nature, or by their own merits. St. Thomas adds, in another place,[2539] a further reason, which is, that the supernatural knowledge of glory comes only by means of actual faith, which transcends all natural knowledge; so that children can never feel pain for the privation of that glory, of which they never had a supernatural knowledge. He further says, in the former passage, that such children will not only not grieve for the loss of eternal happiness, but will, moreover, have pleasure in their natural gifts; and will even in some way enjoy God, so far as is implied in natural knowledge, and in natural love: “Rather will they rejoice in this, that they will participate much in the divine goodness, and in natural perfections.”[2540] And he immediately adds, that although they will be separated from God, as regards the union of glory, nevertheless “they will be united with him by participation of natural gifts; and so will even be able to rejoice in him with a natural knowledge and love.”[2541]

Chapter II

GOD COMMONLY GIVES TO ALL THE JUST THE GRACE NECESSARY FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF THE COMMANDMENTS, AND TO ALL SINNERS THE GRACE NECESSARY FOR CONVERSION

I

PROOFS

IF then God wills all to be saved, it follows that he gives to all that grace and those aids which are necessary for the attainment of salvation, otherwise it could never be said that he has a true will to save all. “The effect of the antecedent will,” says St. Thomas, “by which God wills the salvation of all men, is that order of nature the purpose of which is our salvation, and likewise those things which conduce to that end, and which are offered to all in common, whether by nature or by grace.”[2542] It is certain, in contradiction to the blasphemies of Luther and Calvin, that God does not impose a law that is impossible to be observed. On the other hand, it is certain, that without the assistance of grace the observance of the law is impossible; as Innocent I. declared against the Pelagians when he said, “It is certain, that as we overcome by the aid of God, so without his aid we must be overcome.”[2543] Pope Celestine declared the same thing. Therefore, if God gives to all men a possible law, it follows that he also gives to all men the grace necessary to observe it, whether immediately, or mediately, by means of prayer, as the Council of Trent has most clearly defined: “God does not command impossibilities; but by commanding he admonishes you both to do what you can, and to ask for that which is beyond your power, and by his help enables you to do it.”[2544] Otherwise, if God refused us both the proximate and remote grace to enable us to fulfil the law, either the law would have been given in vain, or sin would be necessary, and if necessary would be no longer sin, as we shall shortly prove at some length.

1. TEACHING OF THE FATHERS OF THE GREEK CHURCH

And this is the general opinion of the Greek Fathers:

St. Cyril of Alexandria says: “But if a man endowed as others, and equally with them, with the gifts of divine grace, has fallen by his own free will, how shall Christ be said not to have saved even him, since he delivered the man, since he gave him the necessary aid to avoid sin.”[2545] How, says the saint, can that sinner, who has received the assistance of grace equally with those who remained faithful, and has of his own accord chosen to sin, how can he blame Jesus Christ, who has, as far as he is concerned, delivered him by means of the assistance granted to him? St. John Chrysostom asks: “How is it that some are vessels of wrath, others vessels of mercy?” And he answers, “Because of each person’s free will; for, since God is very good, he manifests equal kindness to all.”[2546] Then, speaking of Pharaoh, whose heart is said in Scripture to have been hardened, he adds, “If Pharaoh was not saved, it must all be attributed to his will, since no less was given to him than to those who were saved.”[2547] And in another place, speaking of the petition of the mother of Zebedee’s sons, on the words, “*It is not mine to give, etc.*,”[2548] he observes: “By this Christ wished to show that it was not simply his to give, but that it also belonged to the combatants to take; for if it depended only on himself, all men would be saved.”[2549]

St. Isidore of Pelusium: “For God wills seriously, and in all ways, to assist those who are wallowing in vice, that he may deprive them of all excuse.”[2550]

St. Cyril of Jerusalem: “God has opened the gate of eternal life, so that, as far as he is concerned, all may gain it without anything to hinder them.”[2551]

But the doctrine of these Greek Fathers does not suit Jansenius, who has the temerity to say that they have spoken most imperfectly on grace: “None have spoken in grace more imperfectly than the Greeks.”[2552] In matters of grace, then, are we not to follow the teaching of the Greek Fathers, who were the first masters and columns of the Church? Perhaps the doctrine of the Greeks, especially in this important matter, was different from that of the Latin Church? On the contrary, it is certain that the true doctrine of faith came from the Greek to the Latin Church; so that, as St. Augustine wrote against Julian, who opposed to him the authority of the Greek Fathers, there can be no doubt that the faith of the Latins is the same as that of the Greeks. Whom, then, are we to follow? Shall we follow Jansenius, whose errors have already been condemned as heretical by the Church; who had the audacity to say that even the just have not the grace requisite to enable them to keep certain precepts; and that man merits and demerits, even though he acts through necessity, provided he is not forced by violence; these and all his other errors springing from his most false system of *the delectation relatively victorious,* of which we shall speak at length when we confute him in chapter iii.

2. TEACHING OF THE FATHERS OF THE LATIN CHURCH

But since the Greek Fathers do not satisfy Jansenius, let us see what the Latins say on this subject. But they in no wise differ from the Greeks.

St. Jerome says, “Man can do no good work without God, who, in giving free will, did not refuse his grace to aid every single work.”[2553] Mark the words “did not refuse his grace for every single work.” St. Ambrose: “He would never come and knock at the door, unless he wished to enter; it is our fault that he does not always enter.”[2554] St. Leo: “Justly does he insist on the command, since he furnishes beforehand aid to keep it.”[2555] St. Hilary: “Now the grace of justification has abounded through one gift to all men.”[2556] Innocent I.: “He gives to man daily remedies; and unless we put confidence in them and depend upon them, we shall never be able to overcome human errors.”[2557]

St. Augustine: “It is not imputed to you as a sin if you are ignorant against your will, but if you neglect to learn that of which you are ignorant. Nor is it imputed as a sin that you do not bind up your wounded limbs, but (mark this) that you despise him who is willing to cure you. These are your own sins; for no man is deprived of the knowledge of how to seek with benefit to himself.” In another place: “Therefore if the soul is ignorant what it is to do, it proceeds from this, that it has not yet learned; but it will receive this knowledge if it has made a good use of what it has already received; for it has received in this that it can piously and diligently seek, if it will;" (mark the words) "it has received power to seek piously and diligently."[2558] So that every one receives at least the remote grace to seek; and if he makes good use of this, he will receive the proximate grace to perform that which at first he could not do. St. Augustine founds all this on the principle, that no man sins in doing that which he cannot help; therefore, if a man sins in anything, he sins in that he might have avoided it by the grace of God, which is wanting to no man: "Who sins in that which cannot in any way be helped? but a man does sin, therefore it might have been helped."[2559] "But only by his aid, who cannot be deceived."[2560] An evident reason, by which it becomes quite clear (as we shall have to show further on, when we speak of the sin of the obstinate), that if the grace necessary to observe the commandments were wanting, there would be no sin.

St. Thomas teaches the same in several places. In one place, in explaining the text, *Who wills all men to be saved,*[2561] he says, "and therefore grace is wanting to no man, but (as far as God is concerned) is communicated to all; as the sun is present even to the blind."[2562] So that as the sun sheds its light upon all, and only those are deprived of it who voluntarily blind themselves to its rays, so God communicates to all men grace to observe the law; and men are lost simply because they will not avail themselves of it. In another place: "It belongs to divine Providence to provide all men with what is necessary to salvation, if only there be no impediment on man's part."[2563] If, then, God gives all men the graces necessary for salvation, and if actual grace is necessary to overcome temptations, and to observe the commandments, we must necessarily conclude that he gives all men either immediately or mediately actual grace to do good; and when mediately, no further grace is necessary to enable them to put in practice the means (such as prayer) of obtaining actual proximate grace. In another place, on the words of St. John's Gospel, *No man cometh to Me*, etc.,[2564] he says, "If the heart of man be not lifted up, it is from no defect on the part of Him who draws it, who as far as He is concerned, never fails; but from an impediment caused by him who is being drawn."[2565]

Scotus says the same: "God wills to save all men, so far as rests with him, and with his antecedent will, by which he has given them the ordinary gifts necessary to salvation."[2566] The Council of Cologne in 1536: "Although no one is converted except he is drawn by the Father, yet let no one pretend to excuse himself on the plea of not being drawn. He stands at the gate, and knocks by the internal and the external Word."[2567]

3. TESTIMONY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

Nor did the Fathers speak without warrant of the Holy Scriptures; for God in several places most clearly assures us that he does not neglect to assist us with his grace, if we are willing to avail ourselves of it either for perseverance, if we are in a state of justification, or for conversion, if we are in sin.

I stand at the gate and knock; if any man shall hear My voice and open to Me the gate, I will come in to him.[2568] Bellarmine reasons well on this text, that our Lord who knows that man cannot open without his grace, would knock in vain at the door of his heart, unless he had first conferred on him the grace to open when he will. This is exactly what St. Thomas teaches in explaining the text; he says that God gives every one the grace necessary for salvation, that he may correspond to it if he will: "God by his most liberal will gives grace to every one that prepares himself: *Behold I stand at the door and knock.*[2569] And therefore the grace of God is wanting to no one, but communicates itself to all men, as far as it is concerned."[2570] In another place he says, "It is the business of God's Providence to provide every one with what is necessary to salvation." So that as St. Ambrose says: The Lord knocks at the gate, because he truly wishes to enter; if he does not enter, or if after entering he does not remain in our souls, it is because we prevent him from entering, or drive him out when he has entered: "Because he comes and knocks at the door, he always wishes to enter; but it is through us that he does not always go in, nor always remain."[2571]

What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard that I have not done to it? Was it that I expected that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes?[2572] Bellarmine says on these words, "If he had not given the power to bring forth grapes, how could God say, *I expected?*[2573] And if God had not given to all men the grace necessary for salvation, he could not have said to the Jews, *What is there that I ought to have done more?* for they could have answered, that if they had not yielded fruit, it was for lack of necessary assistance. Bellarmine says the same on the words of our Lord: *How often would I have gathered together thy children, and thou wouldst not?*[2574] "How did he wish to be sought for by the unwilling unless he helps them that they may be able to be willing?"[2575]

We have received Thy mercy, O God, in the midst of Thy temple.[2576] On this St. Bernard observes: "Mercy is in the midst of the temple, not in any hole and corner, because there is no acceptance of persons with God;[2577] it is placed in public, it is offered to all, and no one is without it, except he who refuses it."[2578]

Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness? Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance?[2579] You see that it is through his own malice that the sinner is not converted, because he despises the riches of the divine goodness which calls him, and never ceases to move him to conversion by his grace. God hates sin; but at the same time never ceases to love the sinful soul while it remains on earth, and always gives it the assistance it requires for salvation: *But Thou sparest all, because they are Thine, O Lord, who lovest souls.*[2580] Hence we see, says Bellarmine, that God does not refuse grace to resist temptations to any sinner, however obstinate and blinded he may be: "Assistance to avoid new sin is always at hand for all men, either immediately or mediately (*i.e.,* by means of prayer), so that they may ask further aid from God, by the help of which they will avoid sin."[2581] Here we may quote what God says by Ezechiel: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*[2582] St. Peter says the same: *He beareth patiently for your sakes, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.*[2583] If, therefore, God wishes that all should actually be converted, it must necessarily be held that he gives to all the grace which they need for actual conversion.

II

OBSTINATE OR HARDENED SINNERS, AND THE ABANDONMENT OF THEM BY GOD

I know well that there are theologians who maintain that God refuses to certain obstinate sinners even sufficient grace. And, among others, they avail themselves of a position of St. Thomas, who says: "But although they who are in sin cannot through their own power avoid putting or interposing an obstacle to grace, unless they are prevented by grace, as we have shown; nevertheless, this also is imputed to them as a sin, because this defect is left in them from previous sin—as a drunken man is not excused from murder committed in that drunkenness which was incurred by his own fault. Besides, although he who is in sin has not this in his own power that he altogether avoid sin, yet he has power at this present moment to avoid this or that sin, as has been said; so that whatever he commits, he commits voluntarily; and therefore it is properly imputed to him as sin."[2584] From this they gather that St. Thomas intends to say that sinners can indeed avoid particular sins, but not all sins; because in punishment for sins previously committed they are deprived of all actual grace.

But we answer that here St. Thomas is not speaking of actual, but of habitual or sanctifying, grace, without which the sinner cannot keep himself long from falling into new sins, as he teaches in several places.[2585] And that he means the same in the passage just quoted is clear from the context, which we must here transcribe, in order to understand the true meaning of the saint.

In the first place, the title of chapter clx., where the quotation occurs, is as follows: "That man, when he is in sin, cannot avoid sin without grace." The very title shows that St. Thomas intended no more than he has said in the other places which we have referred to.

Moreover, in the course of the chapter he says: "For when the mind of man has declined from the state of uprightness, it is manifest that it has fallen from its relation, 'order' (*ordo*), to its true end. . . . Whensoever, therefore, anything shall have occurred to the mind conducive to the inordinate end, but improper for the true end, it will be chosen, unless the mind be brought back to its due relation, so as to prefer its true end to all others; and this is the effect of grace. But while anything repugnant to our last end is the object of our choice, it puts a hindrance in the way of the grace which conducts us to that end; whence it is manifest that, after sinning, man cannot altogether abstain from sin, before he is brought back by grace to the due order. And hence the opinion of the Pelagians is shown to be absurd, that man, being in sin, can without grace avoid (fresh) sin."[2586] And then he goes on with the sentence quoted above: "But although they,"[2587] etc., of which our opponents make use.

So that, in the first place, the intention of St. Thomas is not to prove that some sinners are deprived of all actual grace, and therefore, being unable to avoid all sin, they do commit sin, and are worthy of punishment; but his intention is to prove against the Pelagians that a man who remains without sanctifying grace cannot abstain from sinning. And we see that he is here certainly speaking of sanctifying grace, for this is that which alone brings the soul back to the right order. It is of this same sanctifying grace that he intends to speak, when he says immediately after, "Except he be prevented by the assistance of grace;"[2588] by which he means that if the sinner is not prevented—that is, is not previously informed (*informato*)—by grace, and brought back to the right order of holding God to be his last end, he cannot avoid committing fresh sins. And this is the meaning of the Thomists—for instance, of Ferrariensis (Silvestre) and Father Gonet—in their comments on this passage. But, without having recourse to other authors, it is quite clear from what St. Thomas himself says in his *Summa*, where he discusses the same point, and brings forward the identical reasons in the same words as in the 160th chapter of his book *Contra Gentes;* and there he expressly says that he is only speaking of habitual or sanctifying grace.

And it is impossible that the holy Doctor could have meant otherwise, since he elsewhere teaches that, on the one hand, God's grace is never wanting to any one, as he says in his commentary on St. John: "But lest you might suppose that this effect was consequent on the removal of the true light, the Evangelist, to obviate this opposition, adds, that was the true light which enlightens every man. For the Word enlightens, so far as he is concerned, because on his part he is wanting to no one, but wishes all men to be saved. But if any one is not enlightened, this is the fault of the man who turns himself away from the light that would enlighten him."[2589] And, on the other hand, he teaches that there is no sinner so lost and abandoned by grace as not to be able to lay aside his obstinacy, and to unite himself to the will of God, which he certainly cannot do without the assistance of grace: "During this life there is no man who cannot lay aside obstinacy of mind, and so conform to the divine will."[2590] In another place he says, "So long as the use of free will remains to a man in this life . . . he can prepare himself for grace by being sorry for his sins."[2591] But no one can make an act of sorrow for sin without grace. In another place he says, "No man in this life can be so obstinate in evil but that it is possible for him to co-operate to his own deliverance."[2592] "To co-operate" necessarily implies grace to co-operate with.

In another place he observes, on the text of St. Paul, *He wills all to be saved.*[2593] "Therefore the grace of God is wanting to no man; but, as far as it is concerned, it communicates itself to all."[2594] Again, on the same words, "God, so far as he is concerned, is prepared to give grace to all men. . . . Those, therefore, only are deprived of grace who permit a hindrance to grace to exist in themselves; and, therefore, they cannot be excused if they sin."[2595] And when St. Thomas says, "God is prepared to give grace to all,"[2596] he does not mean actual grace, but only sanctifying grace.

Cardinal Gotti justly contradicts those who say that God keeps ready at hand the aids necessary for salvation, but in matter of fact does not give them to all. Of what use would it be to a sick man (says this learned author) if the physician only kept the remedies ready, and then would not apply them? Then he concludes (quite to the point of our argument) that we must necessarily say, "God not only offers, but also confers on every individual, even on infidels and hardened sinners, help sufficient to observe the commandments, whether it be proximate or remote."[2597]

For the rest, St. Thomas says that it is only the sins of the devils and the damned that cannot be wiped out by penance; but, on the other hand, "to say that there is any sin in this life of which a man cannot repent is erroneous . . . because this doctrine would derogate from the power of grace."[2598] If grace were wanting to any one, certainly he could not repent. Moreover, as we have already seen, St. Thomas expressly teaches in several places, and especially in his comment on Heb. 12, that God, as far as he is concerned, refuses to no man the grace necessary for conversion: "The grace of God is wanting to no man; but, as far as it is concerned, communicates itself to all."[2599] So that the learned author of the Theology for the use of the seminary of Peterkau says, "It is a calumny to impute to St. Thomas that he taught that any sinners were totally deserted by God."[2600]

Bellarmine makes a sound distinction on this point, and says that for avoiding fresh sins every sinner has at all times sufficient assistance, at least mediately: "The necessary and sufficient assistance for the avoidance of sin is given by God’s goodness to all men at all times, either immediately or mediately. . . . We say *or mediately* because it is certain that some men have not that help by which they can immediately avoid sin, but yet have the help which enables them to obtain from God greater safeguards, by the assistance of which they will avoid sins.”[2601] But for the grace of conversion, he says that this is not given at all times to the sinner; but that no one will be ever so far left to himself “as to be surely and absolutely deprived of God’s help through all this life, so as to have cause to despair of salvation.”[2602]

And so say the theologians who follow St. Thomas—thus Soto: “I am absolutely certain, and I believe that all the holy Doctors who are worthy of the name were always most positive, that no one was ever deserted by God in this mortal life.”[2603] And the reason is evident; for if the sinner was quite abandoned by grace, either his sins afterwards committed could no longer be imputed to him, or he would be under an obligation to do that which he had no power to fulfil; but it is a positive rule of St. Augustine that there is never a sin in that which cannot be avoided: “No one sins in that which can by no means be avoided.”[2604] And this is agreeable to the teaching of the Apostle: *But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be templed above that which you are able; but will also make with the temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.*[2605] The word “issue” means the divine assistance, which God always gives to the tempted to enable them to resist, as St. Cyprian explains it: “He will make with the temptation a way of escape.”[2606] And Primasius more clearly: “He will so order the issue that we shall be able to endure; that is, in temptation he will strengthen you with the help of his grace, so that ye may be able to bear it.”[2607] St. Augustine and St. Thomas go so far as to say that God would be unjust and cruel if he obliged any one to a command which he could not keep. St. Augustine says, “It is the deepest injustice to reckon any one guilty of sin for not doing that which he could not do.[2608] And St. Thomas: “God is not more cruel than man; but it is reckoned cruelty in a man to oblige a person by law to do that which he cannot fulfil; therefore we must by no means imagine this of God.”[2609] “It is, however, different,” he says, “when it is through his own neglect that he has not the grace to be able to keep the commandments,”[2610] which properly means, when man neglects to avail himself of the remote grace of prayer, in order to obtain the proximate grace to enable him to keep the law, as the Council of Trent teaches: “God does not command impossibilities; but by commanding admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask for that which is beyond your power; and by his help enables you to do it.”[2611]

St. Augustine repeats his decision in many other places that there is no sin in what cannot be avoided. In one he says, “Whether there be iniquity or whether there be justice, if it was not in the man’s power, there can be no just reward, no just punishment.”[2612] Elsewhere he says, “Finally, if no power is given them to abstain from their works, we cannot hold that they sin.”[2613] Again, “The devil, indeed, suggests; but with the help of God it is in our power to choose or to refuse his suggestions. And so, when by God’s help it is in your power, why do you not rather determine to obey God than him?”[2614] Again, “No one, therefore, is answerable for what he has not received.”[2615] Again, “No one is worthy of blame for not doing that which he cannot do.”[2616]

Other Fathers have taught the same doctrine. So St. Jerome, “We are not forced by necessity to be either virtuous or vicious; for where there is necessity, there is neither condemnation nor crown.”[2617] Tertullian: “For a law would not be given to him who had it not in his power to observe it duly.”[2618] Marcus the Hermit: “Hidden grace assists us; but it depends on us to do or not to do good according to ourstrength.”[2619] So also St. Irenæus, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Chrysostom, and others.

Nor is there any difficulty in what St. Thomas says, that grace is denied to some persons, in punishment of original sin: “To whomsoever the assistance of grace is given, it is given through simple mercy; but from those to whom it is not given, it is withheld justly in punishment of previous sin, or at least of original sin, as Augustine says.”[2620] For, as Cardinal Gotti well observes, St. Augustine and St. Thomas are speaking of actual proximate grace to satisfy the precepts of faith and charity, of which, indeed, St. Thomas is speaking in this place; but, for all this, they do not intend to deny that God gives every man interior grace, by means of which he may at any rate obtain by prayer the grace of faith and of salvation; since, as we have already seen, these holy Doctors do not doubt that God grants to every man at least remote grace to satisfy the precepts. Here we may add the authority of St. Prosper, who says, “All men enjoy some measure of heavenly teaching; and though the measure of grace be small, it is sufficient to be a remedy for some, and to be a testimony for all.”[2621]

Nor could it be understood otherwise; for if it were true that any had sinned for want of even remote sufficient grace, withheld through original sin being imputed to them as a fault, it would follow that the liberty of will, which by a figure of speech we are said to have had in the sin of Adam, would be sufficient to make us actual sinners. But this cannot be said, as it is expressly condemned in the first proposition of Michael Baius, who said, “That liberty which caused sin to be voluntary and free in its cause—namely, in original sin, and in the liberty of Adam when sinning—is sufficient to (cause) formal sin (in us), and to make us deserve punishment.”[2622] Against this proposition we may make use of what Bellarmine said,[2623] that to commit a personal sin distinct from the sin of Adam a new exertion of free will is requisite, and a free will distinct from that of Adam, otherwise there is no distinct sin; according to the doctrine of St. Thomas, who teaches, “For a personal sin, absolute personal liberty is requisite.”[2624] Further, with respect to the baptized, the Council of Trent has declared that in them there remains nothing to condemn: “God hates nothing in the regenerate; for there is no condemnation to them who are truly buried with Christ by baptism unto death.”[2625] And it is added that concupiscence is not left in us as a punishment, “but for our trial; and it cannot harm those who do not consent to it.”[2626] On the contrary, the concupiscence left in us would do exceedingly great harm to man if on account of it, God denied him even the remote grace necessary to obtain salvation.

From all this, several theologians conclude that to say that God refuses to any one sufficient help to enable him to keep the commandments would be contrary to the faith, because in that case God would oblige us to impossibilities. So says F. Nuñez: “God never refused aid sufficient to keep the commandments, otherwise they could not be in any way fulfilled; and thus we should have the heresy of Luther back again, that God has obliged men to impossibilities.”[2627] And in another place, “It is of faith, so that the opposite doctrine is a manifest heresy, that every man, while he is alive, can do penance for his sins."[2628] And Father Ledesma, "It is a certain truth of faith, that that is not sin which is not in the free power of man."[2629]

Giovenino says that the sinner becomes guilty through the exercise of free will, in choosing voluntarily this or that sin; though at the time he is necessitated to sin, because he is without actual grace sufficient to deliver him from all sin. But this doctrine, that a man when fallen sins, not having liberty to do otherwise than to choose what sin he will commit, and is necessitated to commit some sin, justly offends Monseigneur de Saléon, Archbishop of Vienne, who, in his book *Jansenismus Redivins,* writes as follows: "Who will endure to hear that a man once fallen, being deprived of grace, can enjoy no other liberty than that of choosing one sin rather than another, being necessitated to sin in some way."[2630] So that a criminal condemned to death, who has no other liberty allowed him than to choose whether he will die by the sword, by poison, or by fire, may be said, when he has made his choice, to die a voluntary and free death. And how can sin be imputed to a man who *must* sin in some way or another? The 67th of the condemned Propositions of Baius is as follows: "Man sins damnably even in that which he does through necessity."[2631] How can there be liberty, where there is necessity to sin? Jansenius answers, that the liberty of will, which by a figure of speech we are said to have had in Adam's sin, is sufficient to make us sinners. But this too was condemned in Baius' first proposition, "That liberty;" etc., as we have seen above.

Our opponents go on to say that though the sinner abandoned by grace cannot avoid all mortal sins collectively, yet he can avoid each sin distributively, or individually, "by a simple suspension or negation of activity,"[2632] as they say. But this cannot be admitted, for several reasons. First, because when a vehement temptation is assailing us, which it requires much strength to resist, it cannot morally be overcome (as all theologians agree) except by the assistance of grace, or else by yielding to another, but opposite, vicious passion; so that a sinner deprived of grace would be irremediably necessitated to sin in one or the other way; which it is horrible to affirm, as we have already shown. Secondly, when we are urged by a great concupiscence to sin in a particular way, there is not always—nay, it seldom happens that there is—another improper motive urging us to the contrary course, of sufficient force to hinder us from committing the first sin; so that, when this second motive is absent or weak, then it would be necessary for the sinner to commit that particular sin to which he feels inclined. Thirdly, this abstaining from sin “by a simple negation of activity,”[2633] as they say, can hardly be imagined in sins against the negative precepts; but, as Tourneley and Gotti well observe, is altogether impossible in cases where a positive precept obliges us to do some supernatural act; as, for instance, to make an act of faith, hope, love, and contrition: for as these acts are supernatural, they necessarily require the supernatural assistance of God to enable us to perform them. So that, at any rate in this case, if grace were wanting, man would be necessitated to sin, by not satisfying the positive precept, although he was unable to avoid the sin. But to assert this is, as F. Bannez observes, contrary to faith: “A man cannot sin without having first actually received an inspiration of divine grace. We assert this conclusion to be certainly of faith; because no one sins in not doing that which he cannot do, as it is certain *de fide;* but a man to whom nothing more is given than the bare faculties of human nature has no power to act above nature, and therefore does not sin in omitting to perform a supernatural act.”[2634]

Nor will it do to say that if the sinner is deprived of grace, he is deprived of it by his own fault; and therefore, though he is deprived of grace, yet he sins. For Cardinal Gotti well replies to this, that God can justly punish the sinner for his previous faults, but not for his future transgressions of precepts which he is no longer able to fulfil. If a servant, he says, were sent to a place, and if he, through his own fault, fell into a pit, his master might punish him for his carelessness in falling, and even for his subsequent disobedience, if means (such as a rope or ladder) were given him to get out of the pit, and he would not avail himself of them; but supposing that his master did not help him to get out, he would be a tyrant if he ordered him to proceed and punished him for not proceeding. Hence he concludes, “When, therefore, a man has by sin fallen into the ditch, and become unable to proceed on his way to eternal life, though God may punish him for this fault, and also if he refuses the offer of grace to enable him to proceed; yet if God chose to leave him to his own weakness, he cannot without injustice oblige him to proceed on the way, nor punish him if he does not proceed.”[2635]

Moreover, our opponents adduce many texts of Scripture where this abandonment is apparently expressed: *Blind the heart of this people* . . . *lest they see with their eyes* . . . *and be converted, and I heal them.*[2636] *We would have cured Babylon, but she is not healed; let us forsake her.*[2637] *Add thou iniquity upon their iniquity, and let them not come into Thy justice.*[2638] *For this cause God delivered them up to shameful affectionis. He hath mercy on whom He will; and whom He will He hardeneth;*[2639] and others similar. But it is usually and easily answered to all these in general, that in the Holy Scriptures God is often said to do what he only permits; so that if we would not blaspheme with Calvin, and say that God positively destines and determines some persons to sin, we must say that God permits some sinners, in penalty of their faults, to be on the one hand assailed by vehement temptations (which is the evil from which we pray God to deliver us when we say, *Lead us not into temptation*);[2640] and, on the other hand, that they remain morally abandoned in their sin; so that their conversion, and the resistance they should make to temptation, although neither impossible nor desperate, is yet, through their faults and their bad habits, very difficult; since, in their laxity of life, they have only very rare and weak desires and motions to resist their bad habits, and to regain the way of salvation. And this is the imperfect obstinacy of the hardened sinner which St. Thomas describes: “He is hardened who cannot easily co-operate in his escape from sin; and this is imperfect obstinacy, because a man may be obstinate in this life, if he has a will so fixed upon sin, that no motions towards good arise, except very weak ones.”[2641] On one side, the mind is obscured, the will is hardened against God’s inspirations, and attached to the pleasures of sense, so as to despise and feel disgust for spiritual blessings; the sensual passions and appetites reign in the soul through the bad habits that have been acquired; on the other side, the illuminations and the callings of God are, by its own fault, rendered scarcely efficacious to move the soul, which has so despised them, and made so bad a use of them, that it even feels a certain aversion towards them, because it does not want to be disturbed in its sensual gratifications. All these things constitute moral abandonment; and when a sinner has once fallen into it, it is only with the utmost difficulty that he can escape from his miserable state, and bring himself to live a well-regulated life.

In order to escape, and pass at once from such disorder to a state of salvation, a great and extraordinary grace would be requisite; but God seldom confers such a grace on these obstinate sinners. Sometimes he gives it, says St. Thomas, and chooses them for vessels of mercy, as the Apostle calls them, in order to make known his goodness; but to the rest he justly refuses it, and leaves them in their unhappy state, in order to show forth his justice and power: "Sometimes," says the Angel of the Schools, "out of the abundance of his goodness he prevents with his assistance even those who put a hindrance in the way of his grace, and converts them, etc. And as he does not enlighten all the blind, nor cure all the sick, so neither does he assist all who place an impediment to his grace, so as to convert them. . . . This is what the Apostle means when he says that God, *to show forth His anger, and to make His power, known, endured with much patience the vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, that He might show the riches of His glory upon the vessels of mercy, which He hath prepared unto glory.*"[2642] Then he adds, "But since out of the number of those who are involved in the same sins, there are some to whom God gives the grace of conversion, while others he only endures, or allows to go on in the course of things, we are not to inquire the reason why he converts some and not others. For the Apostle says, *Has not the potter power over the clay, to make of the same mass one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor?*"[2643]

We do not then deny (to bring this point to a conclusion) that there is such a thing as the moral abandonment of some obstinate sinners, so that their conversion is morally impossible; that is to say, very difficult. And this concession is abundantly sufficient for the laudable object which our opponents have in defending their opinion, which is to restrain evil-doers, and to induce them to consider, before they come to fall into such a deplorable state. But then it is cruelty (as Petrocorensis well says) to take from them all hope, and entirely to shut against them the way of salvation, by the doctrine that they have fallen into so complete an abandonment as to be deprived of all actual grace to enable them to avoid fresh sins, and to be converted; at any rate, mediately by means of prayer (which is not refused to any man while he lives, as we shall prove in the last chapter), whereby they can afterwards obtain abundant help for placing themselves in a state of salvation: since the fear of total abandonment would not only lead them to despair, but also to give themselves more completely to their vices, in the belief that they are altogether destitute of grace; so that they have no hope left of escaping eternal damnation.

Chapter III

EXPOSITION AND CONFUTATION OF JANSENIUS’ SYSTEM OF “DELECTATION RELATIVELY VICTORIOUS”[2644]

I

THE SYSTEM OF JANSENIUS

I. In the following chapter we will, as we promised, demonstrate that the grace of prayer is given to all men. But this doctrine does not please Jansenius; he goes so far as to call it an hallucination: “It is an hallucination to think that the grace of prayer is always present to a man.”[2645] According to his system, he considers that without *the delectation relatively victorious* we cannot pray; but this delight is not granted to all men, therefore (he adds) all men have not sufficient grace and power to fulfil the commandments; for many are without even the remote grace to enable them to pray as they ought, or indeed to pray at all. “Since, therefore,” he continues, “most men either do not ask for grace to enable them to fulfil the law, or do not ask for it as is necessary; and since God does not give all men the grace either to pray fervently, or even to pray at all, it is most evident that many of the faithful are without that sufficient grace, and, consequently, without that perpetual power of fulfilling the one precept (of the moment) which some theologians proclaim.”[2646] Before, then, we prove our own position, we must confute his pernicious system, from which all his errors are derived; and we must show that not we, but that he is laboring under an hallucination.

All know the five propositions of Jansenius which were condemned by the Church as heretical.[2647] Now, as Tourneley proves, all these propositions follow if you once grant his system of preponderating delectation, on which Jansenius founds all his doctrine.[2648] F. Ignatius Graveson says the same: “From this pernicious principle Jansenius and his followers derived these erroneous conclusions (the five propositions), which are most intimately connected and form one system with that principle."[2649] So F. Berti, who says that "from the principle of the two invincible delectations, as from a root, almost all the other Jansenist errors have sprung, and especially the five condemned propositions."[2650] And Father Fortunato da Brescia, in his lately published book, called *A Confutation of the System of Cornelius Jansenius*, proves to demonstration that, admitting this system, you must necessarily admit the five condemned propositions.

Let us, therefore, distinctly exhibit this system of Jansenius. He says that the will of man, since the fall of Adam, is unable to do otherwise than to follow either the pleasure of grace (which he calls the celestial delectation), or that of concupiscence (which he calls earthly delectation), according as one prevails over the others. So that if the heavenly delectation is greater, then it necessarily overcomes the other; if the earthly delectation preponderates, then the will necessarily yields to it.

And here we must remark that Jansenius does not hereby intend deliberate or consequent delectation, for thus he would be in accord with all Catholic Doctors; since, when the pleasure we take in a thing is deliberate, and embraced not from necessity but from free choice of the will, then certainly it is necessary that the will should act according to the delectation. But Jansenius intends indeliberate delectation, and in this sense he understands the celebrated saying of St. Augustine: "It is necessary that our act should follow the greater pleasure."[2651] Now, as we shall presently show, this sentence must necessarily be understood of deliberate and consequent delectation; but Jansenius falsely interprets (and on this false interpretation founds his whole doctrine) that it means indeliberate delectation, antecedent to any act of the will. So that, in his system, there is no such thing as sufficient grace; since it is either of too little weight, and necessarily insufficient, or else it preponderates over the concupiscence, and is then necessarily efficacious, since he makes the whole efficacy of grace consist in the relative preponderance of the indeliberate delectation: "There will be no such thing as sufficient grace" (these are his words); "but it will be either efficient, or so inefficient that no act can follow from it."[2652]

When this system is once laid down, all the five condemned propositions follow as necessary conclusions from it. Let us omit the others, and speak here exclusively of the first and third, as being most to our purpose.

REFUTATION OF THE FIRST PROPOSITION

The first is, “Some commands of God are impossible to just men, who wish to fulfil them and endeavor to do so according to the strength they at present possess. Moreover, grace is wanting to them, whereby these precepts may become possible.”[2653] Some precepts (says he) become impossible even to the just, who have the will and strive to observe them, in proportion as they want the grace which should prevail over concupiscence: “Unless the heavenly delectation is greater than the earthly, it cannot but happen that we are overcome by the infirmity of our will.”[2654] And again: “While carnal delectation is in vigor, it is impossible that the thought of virtue should prevail.”[2655] Although, said Jansenius, grace regarded absolutely in itself, and apart from act and circumstance, may be abundantly sufficient to move the will to virtue; nevertheless, relatively considered,—that is, when the carnal delectation is greater than the heavenly (for when the carnal preponderates over grace, it is always accompanied by the act of will),—then grace is completely insufficient to draw to itself the consent of the will. And, as Father Graveson well observes, the absolute power to keep the commandments, which many would have by virtue of grace, whenever it is derived from a grace which is less than the concupiscence, is actually no longer power, but a true impotence; since the will is then entirely unable to act rightly, as the less weight cannot outweigh the greater.

How, then, can a man be blamed for not fulfilling the precept, when he is without grace even sufficient to enable him to do so? The objection is strong, and is most manifestly just; so much so, that Jansenius himself cannot help putting it: “How is it that they are not excused who are without this assistance, since without it they would not be able to fulfil the precept?”[2656] Let us see how he answers this question. The difficulty is great, therefore he attempts to disembarrass himself of it in several ways.

1. He answers that inability excuses when a man wishes to fulfil the precept, but cannot; but not when he does not wish to fulfil it. But we answer that when, the will, according to his principles, is necessarily

obliged to yield to the indeliberate pleasure of the concupiscence, because of its outweighing grace, it is then physically impossible for a man to wish to fulfil the precept; since, supposing the preponderance of the carnal pleasure, grace has no longer sufficient active strength to overcome it. And of this principle Jansenius has no doubt, for he says that the stronger delectation intrinsically determines, and insuperably moves the will to accept it, so that the will is then completely deprived of relative power to resist. "Whence it follows," says Father Graveson, "that this necessity, according to the doctrine of Jansenius and his disciples, is not a moral but an antecedent and invincible necessity, which cannot be admitted without open heresy."[2657] Jansenius says, moreover, that except the delectation of grace preponderates, it is as impossible for a man to fulfil the precept as it is "for one without wings to fly, for the blind to see, for the deaf to hear, or for a man with broken limbs to walk straight."[2658] It would be the same for a man who had eyes but was deprived of light; because it is no more physically impossible for a blind man without eyes to see than it is for one who has eyes but is without light; for physical impossibility is simply that which exceeds the natural powers. So that any one can see how baseless is this first reply of Jansenius.

2. Let us examine the second, which is still more so. He says that all the commandments are possible to man, just so far as God can give him grace to make him keep them: "All men are said to be able to believe, to be able to love God . . . for this power is nothing else than a passive flexibility of capacity, through which they are able to receive faith and charity."[2659] So that, according to Jansenius, man's sin in breaking the commandments is in proportion to his capacity of receiving grace to fulfil them. But by this rule we might say that the blind can see, and the deaf hear, because God can make them see and hear; but, for all that, it is physically impossible for the blind to see, on the deaf to hear, unless God gives them the power. So that to say that it is sufficient reason to call a precept possible, if it is possible to man in case God gives him the power, is either nonsense or fraud, intended to hide the truth; for, I ask, what help can a man have from that grace which he might have, but has not at the time? It is the same as saying, a man might observe all the precepts if he could observe them; but at present he cannot. When the sick man, says St. Augustine, needs care to cure him, he cannot

get well without care, however he may wish it: “Nor yet can he become well when he will, but when he is healed by the use of proper care.”[2660]

3. Jansenius’ third answer is, that liberty of will consists entirely in knowing the delightful object and in taking pleasure in it: “Wherefore” (these are his words), “after surveying the arguments of Augustine, on which the whole doctrine of free will depends, we think that it is nothing but knowledge and delectation, or a pleasurable complacency in the object which has the power over the free will to make it accept or reject. . . . Concerning knowledge we are not very particular, for scarcely any one doubts that it is necessary to an act of will.”[2661] So that, according to Jansenius, the liberty of man consists, on the one hand, in his complacency in the delectation; on the other hand, in his knowledge of the object, or, in other words, in that judgment indifferent (equally applicable either to good or evil) whereby he knows the good and evil of the action; as, for instance, in murder, he knows the evil of the sin and the pleasure of the revenge. Hence he says, in another place, that the wicked sin in proportion as they know by means of the law the malice of sin: “The first effect of the law is confessed to be, to give the knowledge of sin;”[2662] and quotes the text of St. Paul: *I did not know sin but by the law.*[2663] In this he followed Calvin, who said: “The object of the law is to render man inexcusable; and this would not be a bad definition of it—it is the knowledge of the conscience distinguishing between right and wrong, for the purpose of taking away the pretext of ignorance.”[2664] But we may answer that the indifferent judgment, or the knowledge of good and evil which belongs only to the intellect, can never constitute the freedom of choice which belongs altogether to the will; for liberty consists simply in the free choice of the will to do or not to do a thing.

4. Jansenius gives a fourth reply; but this is more incongruous and untenable than any of the former. He says that for sin it is not requisite to have the liberty of indifference, so that a man should be free from all necessity of sinning; but that it is enough to have a liberty of exercise or of choice, so as to be able to abstain from the particular sin to which our concupiscence tempts us, but only by committing another. “So that” (these are his words) “a man may act, and abstain from this particular sin, at least by committing another;”[2665] whereby he places man in such a dilemma that

in order to avoid one sin he must necessarily commit another; and he says that such a liberty is sufficient to make a man guilty, though he may be necessitated to sin in one way or another. Thus he explains himself more clearly in another place: “The will of fallen man by no means ceases to be free in committing sin, although it be bound by a certain general necessity of sinning; for it will be free in its exercise (as they say), necessitated in the kind of thing it is to choose.”[2666] In answer to this we might repeat all that we said in Chap. II. § 2, p. 154, against Giovenino, who says that all sinners, though deprived of sufficient grace, yet sin by this liberty of exercise. But what kind of liberty is this, that a man, whether he be good or bad, could be called guilty, though he is necessitated to sin in one way or another? St. Thomas says that it is heresy to maintain that the will merits or demerits when it acts through necessity, although not compelled by violence to act: “Some have asserted that the will of man is necessarily moved to choose a thing, . . . but they still did not assert that the will is forced. . . . But this opinion is heretical, for it destroys the rule of merit or demerit in human actions; for there seems to be nothing meritorious or otherwise in a man acting from necessity in a way that he cannot help.”[2667] Moreover, when a man is necessitated to commit one or the other sin, according to the general consent of all theologians, if he chooses the less sin, even though he voluntarily chooses it, he does not sin; because he is without the liberty which is required before an action can be imputed to him as sin. So that, in our case, when, by reason of a concupiscence that outweighs grace, a man has chosen the less of two sins, he does not sin.

But, putting aside all these reflections, the direct answer is, that, supposing Jansenius’ principle of the pleasure relatively preponderating to be true, this liberty of exercise to abstain from one sin by committing another becomes quite impossible. His principle, as we have already explained, is, that when the carnal pleasure outweighs the heavenly, then the will is necessitated to consent to that individual pleasure to which it is physically drawn. And therefore he somewhere says that tin superior pleasure destroys the indifference of the will; for as a weight inclines the index of a balance, which before stood in equilibrium, so does the pleasure move the will to consent to that concupiscence to which it tempts it: “Since (the carnal delight) by the persuasion of its motion is the cause that the man, who before the motion was indifferent whether he acted or not, should be by the very motion of the concupiscence impelled to one side or the other, like a balance into which a weight, is put."[2668] He says the same in another place, where he tries to refute those who will have it that the superior pleasure moves morally; and says that it does not draw and determine the will to accept the object proposed to it morally, but physically: "Since that is called moral predetermination, which is only in the object when it, as it were, counsels, orders, or beseeches; but this (delectation) has its seat in the very power of the will, which it sets in motion by the intensity of the pleasure it gives, and by setting it in motion determines it; since it makes the will determine its own object, and therefore it may be said to predetermine the will."[2669] So that, according to Jansenius, the pleasure predetermines the will to embrace the object to which it moves it, before the will determines itself. And that this is the true meaning of Jansenius the learned Diroys has no doubt, who on this account says that Jansenius does not differ from the astrologers, who make the will of man subject to the influence of the planets; "so that the will is determined in the choice of its object by any impression which may happen to precede its determination."[2670] The Archbishop of Vienne says the same in his book *Baianism and Jansenism Revived:* "The Jansenists contend that by a pleasure superior in degree the will is invincibly determined in its operation, without any respect to the future determination of the will itself."[2671]

Granting this system, how is the liberty of exercise possible? since, according to Jansenius, the preponderating pleasure by itself predetermines the will to accept it; so that, as in the balance the less weight necessarily gives way to the larger, so does the will necessarily yield to the preponderating pleasure. So that, for instance, if any one is drawn by this pleasure to take another man's property, it is true that he may be led to abstain from thieving by love for his own reputation; but in cases where this love either does not exist, or is not greater than the pleasure of stealing, the love of reputation certainly cannot conquer, and then evidently all liberty of exercise ceases.

REFUTATION OF THE THIRD PROPOSITION

But let us now pass on to the third proposition of Jansenius: “To merit and demerit in a state of fallen nature, man does not require freedom from necessity, but freedom from compulsion.”[2672] He says then that, in order to merit or to sin, the liberty of indifference, which excludes necessity, is not wanted, but it is enough if the will is not repugnant. And he goes so far as to assert that it is a paradox to say that the act of will is free, so far forth as the will is at liberty to accept or refuse the object. This proposition, also condemned as heretical, follows similarly from his system; for, supposing that the will, when moved by a preponderating pleasure, must necessarily obey it, it necessarily follows (as Jansenius shows) that it is sufficient for merit or demerit that a man should be willing to consent to the pleasure, although he cannot do otherwise than be willing, and is even physically necessitated to be so. F. Serry well maintains that it is a monstrous doctrine to say “that merit can coexist with the necessity of acting.”[2673] And it was before this called heretical by St. Thomas, whose words, already quoted, I shall be pardoned for repeating here: “Some have asserted that the will of man is necessarily moved to choose a thing; but they still did not assert that the will is forced. But this opinion is heretical, for it destroys the rule of merit and demerit in human actions; for there seems to be nothing meritorious or otherwise in a man acting from neccessity in any way that he cannot help.”[2674]

And with reason it is called heresy, for it is contrary to Holy Scripture: *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will also make with the temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.*[2675] But Jansenius says that at times man is so completely deprived of grace that he cannot resist temptations, and is necessitated to succumb to them.

Moses said to the people: *This commandment that I command thee this day is not above thee.*[2676] Again, *Blessed is he that could have transgressed, and hath not transgressed; and could do evil things, and hath not done them.*[2677] Therefore it is not sufficient for merit that a man should act willingly, but it is necessary that he also act freely; that is, that he should be able to neglect the commandments, and should not be necessitated to fulfil them; and, *vice versa* in sin, that he should have the grace to abstain, and that it should be his own fault if he does not abstain.

Nor is the reply of the impious Theodore Beza valid here; he says that the necessity does not depend on nature, but on original sin, by which man voluntarily deprived himself of liberty, and is therefore justly punished for sinning, though he be necessitated to sin; for it may be answered that if a servant had by his own fault broken his leg, his master would be unjust if, after having forgiven the fault, he commanded him to run, and punished him for not running. "To hold a man guilty of sin," says St. Augustine, "because he has not done what he could not do, is abominable iniquity and folly."[2678]

Moreover, supposing that man could merit or demerit when acting by necessity, without any balance of power to do otherwise, I do not know how it could be reconciled with Holy Scripture, which says: *You have your choice; choose this day that which pleaseth you, whom you would rather serve, whether . . . the gods of the Amorites, etc.; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*[2679] A choice cannot be given where men act from necessity, and without liberty; so that this text clearly proves that man is free from necessity. "A full power of choosing either side," says Petavius on this passage, "is clearly shown; so that the will, as it were suspended and placed in the middle, may choose whichever it likes of the two objects."[2680]

The same is said in other parts of Scripture: *I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing.—Choose, therefore, life, that both thou and thy seed may live.*[2681] *God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel. He added His commandments and precepts. . . . Before man is life and death, good and evil; that which he shall choose shall be given him.*[2682] On the latter passage Petavius says: "If the teacher had now to decide the present point, how could he more clearly express the freedom from necessity which man enjoys? If he lived among us, and judged from our point of view, he could not describe in more precise terms the nature and property of human liberty and of free will than he has done here."[2683]

There are other texts to the same purpose: *I called, and you refused.*[2684] *They have been rebellious to the light.*[2685] *I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes.*[2686] *You always resist the Holy Ghost.*[2687] It is certainly the work of the Holy Spirit to call men, to enlighten their minds, and to move the will to good; but how can it be said that *he* refuses the call, that *he* rebels against the light, that *he* resists grace, who is destitute of preponderating grace, and therefore must necessarily yield to the prevailing concupiscence?

II

TRUE DOCTRINE OF ST. AUGUSTINE ON THE "VICTORIOUS DELECTATION" AND ON FREE WILL

"But what," says Jansenius, "if Augustine before me has maintained this same theory, that we must necessarily do that which pleases us most, according to the well-known passage, 'It is necessary that we act according to that which delights us most?'[2688] Now, before we answer Jansenius, we must premise that St. Augustine, who had to confute several heresies of his time, all on the subject of grace, and all contrary to one another, had to speak of it diffusely and upon different points of view, and is therefore in several places obscure. Hence it has come to pass that not only each of the Catholic schools boasts of having him on its side, though their opinions are quite different, but also Calvin and Jansenius, whose errors have been condemned by the Church, have presumed to call him their patron. Calvin, writing against Pighius, says, "We follow nothing but Augustine. . . . Pighius may squeak as he pleases, he will never make us allow that Augustine is not on our side."[2689] And Jansenius puts forward Augustine as his sole teacher, so that he even called his book by the title of "Augustinus." And the Jansenists only call themselves Augustinians. From these premises we only wish to infer that many passages of St. Augustine require explanation by comparison with other passages of his works, where he declares his true opinion, if we would not be misled. Now let us come to the point.

We have already explained at the beginning of the chapter that this sentence of St. Augustine ought not and cannot be understood of indeliberate pleasure, antecedent to any co-operation of the will, but ought to be understood of deliberate and consequent pleasure; for in cases where man freely consents to the pleasure, then, certainly, it is necessary that he should act upon it. And this is proved by what Augustine says in other places, where he confounds pleasure with love, or, rather, explains that the superior pleasure is nothing else than that deliberate love, and that affection, which, by our own free choice, predominates in us; in which pleasure, if we deliberately take delight, then it is necessary that we act upon it. So, that in substance, he simply says that the will must act upon that which it deliberately loves the most; for in one place he says that the pleasure is, as it were, the weight of the soul, which drags it along with it—“for pleasure is, as it were, the weight of the soul;”[2690] and in another place, that this weight which draws each man’s soul is his love—“My love is my weight.”[2691] This he explains more clearly in another place, where he says we ought to be careful, “by God’s help, to be so disposed as not to be tripped up by inferior things, and to take pleasure only in the higher things.”[2692] See how clearly he speaks of deliberate pleasure, freely accepted. In another place, “What is it to be drawn by pleasure? To delight in the Lord; and he will give thee the petitions of thy heart.”[2693] Again, “See how the Father draws! He delights us by teaching, not by laying us under necessity.”[2694] Again, “If we wish to enjoy the pleasures of heaven, we must bridle unlawful pleasure; as when we fast, the appetite rises against us; this it does by pleasure (i.e., indeliberate), but we restrain it by the law of the governing reason.”[2695] So that, according to St. Augustine, the pleasure which incites us to break the law may be freely repressed by man by means of the dominant reason, and by the help of grace. Hence he exhorts us: “Let justice so delight you as to conquer even lawful pleasures.”[2696]

This is made still clearer by the context of the passage on which we are now disputing, where, after saying, “We must needs act upon the greater pleasure,” he adds, “It is clear that our life must be according to our pursuits, and our pursuits must be according to our affections (mark this). Therefore, if there are two contradictory things, the command of justice and the carnal habit, and both of them are loved, we shall pursue that which we love most.”[2697] So that when he says we must needs act according to that which delights us most, he only means that the will must necessarily act on that which it loves best; nor will it do to say, with Jansenius, that what gives most pleasure is most loved; for this is not always true, and St. Augustine expressly contradicts it when, in his *Confessions,* he says of himself, “I did not do that in which my affections took incomparably more pleasure, and which as soon as I would, I could do;”[2698] by which he means that he was already moved by God with an indeliberate affection, which made virtue incomparably more pleasant to him than vice, and that he might easily have been virtuous if he would; but that he resisted grace, and refused to be virtuous, and abandoned himself to vice.

Further, if St. Augustine had believed that it was necessary for us to act upon the greater pleasure, he could never have said, “When the unlawful pleasure of concupiscence tickles you, fight, resist, do not consent; and the saying is fulfilled, Go not after thy desires.”[2699] Still further, he says elsewhere that of two persons who have the same temptation to impurity, it sometimes happens that one consents to it and the other resists; and why? because, he says, one wills to observe chastity, the other wills not: “If both are tempted by the same (mark the word *same*) temptation, and one yields and consents to it, while the other perseveres; what else is shown, but that one willed to fail, the other willed not to fail in chastity?”[2700]

Moreover, when he says that it is necessary that we should act upon that which best pleases us, it may be asked whether he speaks of deliberate or indeliberate pleasure. Now, we say that if he had meant indeliberate pleasure, he would have been obliged, in consequence, to deny that the will, in order to be truly free, need be free not only from violence, but also from necessity. But there are a thousand places where he teaches the reverse, and says that man, whether in good or in evil, acts without necessity; therefore, when he speaks of the predominant pleasure overcoming, he must necessarily mean the deliberate or consequent pleasure. To quote a few of these numerous passages:

“Our will would be no will at all if it were not in our own power; for that is not free to us which we have not in our power.”[2701]

In another place, speaking of the passage of St. Matthew where our Lord talks of good fruit springing from a good tree, and bad fruit from a bad tree,[2702] he says, “When, therefore, our Lord says this, do this or do that, he shows that it is in the power of man to do it; for he that will not keep the law can keep it if he will.”[2703] Calvin objects that Augustine is here speaking of man in the state of innocence; but Bellarmine well observes that St. Augustine is here explaining a passage where our Lord is speaking against the Jews, and says of them, *Ye shall know them by their fruits*.[2704] So that it can never be supposed that St. Augustine meant to apply the remark to Adam. Moreover, he repeats what he had said against the Manichees, when writing against the Pelagians: “Whenever it is said, ‘Do not this and do not that,’ and whenever an act of will is required of us to do or not to do something which God commands or forbids, in such places the will is shown to be sufficiently free.”[2705] Here Jansenius replies (like a partisan of Calvin, as he is) that St. Augustine is speaking of necessity violently imposed on us, not of simple necessity. But here again Jansenius is mistaken; for on this point St. Augustine agreed with the Pelagians, and conceded to them that the will was free both from coercive and from simple necessity; hence in his book against Julian he did not scruple to say, “Both of us affirm that the will in man is free. But you say that anyone is free to do good without God’s help; hence you are a Pelagian”[2706] When St. Augustine says, “Both of us affirm,”[2707] he admitted the same liberty to do or not to do which the Pelagians maintained, and they certainly maintained it to be exempt from any necessity whatever; so that there is no doubt that he held the will to be free not only from violence, but from any necessity whatever; he only contradicted the Pelagians in this point, that they maintained the will to be free to do good even without grace.

Further, St. Augustine says that it is difficult to reconcile the liberty of the will with the efficacy of grace: “This question, wherein we discuss the choice of the will, and the grace of God, is so difficult to determine that when we defend free will we seem to deny the grace of God; and when we assert the grace of God, we are supposed to destroy free will.”[2708] If St. Augustine had supposed that the will was not free from simple necessity, but only from violence, it would not have been difficult, but the easiest thing possible, to understand how grace acted; when, therefore, he said that it was difficult to understand, it was because he, held that efficacious grace certainly produced its effect in good acts; and, on the other hand, that the will did these acts freely, working without any necessity to prevent it from being able to do or to wish any acts different from those to which it was moved by grace. For the rest, the holy Father held it as certain that man, with the help of ordinary grace, was able to fulfil the commandments, or, at any rate, to procure by prayer greater help to enable him to fulfil them; otherwise (as he said) God would not have imposed these commandments on him: “Nor would he have commanded us to do this if he had considered it impossible to be done by man.”[2709]

We will quote some more passages of St. Augustine, where he reiterates the doctrine that the will of man is free from any necessity: “For that would not be sin which was not done by the will; and therefore punishment would also be unjust, if man had not free will; that is, if he acted well or ill through necessity.”[2710] Again, “Who would not exclaim that it is folly to give commands to a man who is not free to do what is commanded; and that it is injustice to condemn the man who had no power to fulfil the command?”[2711] Again, “If the motion whereby the will turns aside from the unchangeable good is natural and necessary, it can by no means be culpable.”[2712] Then, after saying that previous grace is necessary to enable us to do good, he adds, “But to consent to the call of God, or to dissent from it, is in the power of our own will.”[2713] Here he plainly teaches that the will can freely obey grace or resist it. Nor does it avail to say with Jansenius that St. Augustine only means that to consent and dissent is the proper office of the will; for we can never believe that the holy Doctor would have taken such useless pains to prove that consent and dissent belong to the will and not to the intellect, a thing which any illiterate man can tell. Especially as St. Augustine’s words, just before the last quoted sentence, are as follows: “No one has it in his power to determine what shall come into his mind, but to consent, etc.”[2714] So that it is clear that he is speaking of the free power of the will to consent or dissent from that which comes into the head. In another place he says, “No one but God can make the tree” (he is speaking of the good trees that produce good fruit, and of the bad trees which produce bad fruit); “but every man’s will has power to choose either good or bad. When, therefore, our Lord says, Do this or do that, he shows that it is in men’s power to choose what to do.” Elsewhere, in explanation of the help *sine quo,* he says, “Without it the will cannot will; but still it is left to the free will either to will or not to will, to use the help or not to use it.”[2715]

From all this it is very clearly seen how far St Augustine was from the opinion of Jansenius, that the will of man in its action is not free from necessity, much less that it is obliged to follow the preponderating pleasure, which by its impulse invincibly moves and determines it.

Now, let us apply this to the point we have in view, namely, to prove that God gives every one either proximate grace, or the remote grace of prayer, to enable him to observe the precepts; since otherwise the transgression of the law could never be imputed to him as a fault. Let us then see what are the two propositions that are exactly opposite to those of Jansenius.

His first is, “Some precepts of God are impossible to the just man who wishes and tries to fulfil them with his present strength; nor does God give him grace to make them possible.”[2716] Hence the Catholic proposition, contradictory of this, is as follows: “Not any of the precepts of God is impossible, at least to the just man, who wishes to observe them, and who endeavors to do so; nor, even with his present strength, is he without the grace (either proximate, or at least remote) whereby he may at least obtain greater assistance to enable him to fulfil them. And here we must again observe that to avoid the condemned error it is not enough to grant the absolute possibility of observing the precept, for the Jansenists themselves admit this possibility; but we must also admit the possibility (relatively to the actual carnal delectation which preponderates over the delectation of grace) to fulfil the commandment when it is incumbent on us to do so, or at least to obtain grace to keep it; since the error of Jansenius consists precisely in denying, not the absolute, but the relative possibility.

Jansenius’ third proposition is that “in order to merit ill or well in the state of fallen nature, man need not have freedom from necessity, but only freedom from compulsion.”[2717] Hence the Catholic proposition is the contradictory: to merit ill or well, even in the state of fallen nature, man, whether just or unjust, requires freedom, not only from compulsion, but also from simple necessity; since, according to the Catholic doctrine, the voluntary, whenever it is necessary, is not free in such a sense as is sufficient to merit ill or well in this life; but to merit ill or well the will must be free from any necessity whatever of being obliged to consent to either of two things determinately.

Moreover, F. Fortunato da Brescia (a man universally celebrated by the learned of these days, especially by Muratori), in his late work entitled *Confutation of the System of Cornelius Jansenius*, says that if this system could possibly be true, God's law would be either foolish or unjust; for, according to it, if the heavenly pleasure predominates, then the will, quite independently of the law, is obliged to follow the precise impulse of the pleasure, and thus the law is useless; or, if the earthly pleasure predominates, then the law is unjust, for God imposes a commandment which it is physically impossible for man to obey, since the will must necessarily yield to the temptation.

And in this way all the threats and admonitions of the Scriptures would be useless, and there would be no human action which could merit reward or punishment, since all the actions of man would be done through necessity. So that whenever any one exhorted us to do well, we might answer with Eusebius against the Fatalists, "These powers are not mine, O Doctor; for they will do it if the fates so desire" (*i.e.*, if the carnal delight does not preponderate); "that which is fated will necessarily come to pass."[2718] I must necessarily follow the pleasure that prevails.

The same author says, further, that if we admit this system, we must also admit Manicheism, which supposed two principles, a good and an evil; and says that as all the acts of men were derived from one or the other principle, the man was obliged to follow that which prevailed. Nor does it do to say that the necessity in the system of the preponderating pleasure is not derived from a good or evil principle, as the Manicheans held, but depends on the sin of Adam, which is its cause; for the question is not through what principle the will acts necessarily when it is moved, but whether the will after Adam's fall has remained free from necessity in its actions. And this is what the Jansenists deny, who hold that the will merits well and ill, though it is necessitated to will that to which the preponderating pleasure determines it. But, as F. Fortunato well observes, the books of Arnold, Irénée, Ventrochio, and the other Jansenists, were condemned for this very error of maintaining Jansenius' principle of the invincibility of the pleasure which is superior in degree. And we know that it was for this reason that the theology of Giovenino was prohibited; for though he did not expressly hold the system we are discussing, yet he imprudently spoke too obscurely on the point: "The physical nature of efficacious grace consists simply in the preponderance of the pleasure which the mind takes in goodness."[2719] Still he did not use the phrase "relatively preponderating," though he proves his proposition by the often-quoted text of St. Augustine: “We must act according to that which pleases us most.” And for this cause his work was so long prohibited, and has at last been allowed because of the addition of a compendium, entitled *The True Doctrine of the Church,* extracted from the theology of Tourneley, who has amply and well confuted the system.

F. Fortunato concludes: “It is clear, then, that the system of Jansenius is favorable to them (Luther and Calvin), and so cannot be maintained by a Catholic without violating his faith. For we cannot preserve our faith and religion while defending a system on the admission of whose fundamental principles the reception of condemned doctrines necessarily follows.”[2720] Tourneley meant the same when he said, “Since the Church condemned the five propositions in the sense of Jansenius, they must be condemned as parts of Jansenius’ theory of the superior and relatively preponderating pleasure, which is the foundation of his whole system.”[2721]

Nor will it avail to say that the system of Jansenius is one thing, which supposes that the pleasure which relatively preponderates is indeliberate, that is, that it comes to us without any assent of the will; but that it is quite a different thing to say that the pleasure, though it relatively preponderates by the superiority of its degree, yet is deliberate; that is, it preponderates not by itself and by its own strength (as the maintainers of this system say), but it preponderates by being reinforced by the power of the consenting will. And hence they say that though the preponderating pleasure certainly and infallibly overcomes, yet it does not do so necessarily, as Jansenius maintained.

This will not avail, because, as Tourneley well replies, that grace, or that pleasure which is infallibly efficacious, and invincibly determines the will by its preponderating power, cannot but necessitate the will to consent. And he proves it thus, “That grace necessitates which supposes the will to be destitute of real power to resist it; but of this nature is grace, which is infallibly efficacious, because of the superiority of the degree of its strength. For grace of this kind supposes that the will has only inferior strength to resist; but it is a contradiction to say that superior strength, acting as such, can be overcome by inferior; otherwise it would be necessary that the inferior strength should act beyond the degree of its power of acting.”[2722] Nor does it avail to reply, that though the power of grace relatively preponderating is superior to that of the concupiscence taken by itself, it is not superior to that of the concupiscence joined with that of the will, because, as Tourneley says, such a power of the will could only be admitted with respect to evil which a man can do by himself, as when he overcomes one vice by another, or at least with respect to good of the natural order; but not with respect to supernatural good, such as the conquest of a strong concupiscence, which cannot be effected without God's grace.

Hence the Fathers of Diospolis required every Pelagian, among other things, "to confess that when we fight against temptations and unlawful concupiscence, the victory comes not from our own will, but from the help of God."[2723] And the reason is, as St. Thomas teaches, that no active principle can produce an effect exceeding the sphere of its activity; so that no natural principle or cause can produce a supernatural effect: "No act exceeds the proportion of its active principle; and hence we see that in natural things nothing can by its own operation produce an effect which exceeds the power of its activity, but can only by its own operation produce an effect proportionate to its power."[2724] So that the natural power of the human will, although united to the power of grace, cannot, when the latter is inferior to the power of the concupiscence, contribute to produce a supernatural effect, such as the conquest of a violent concupiscence that preponderates over grace. And, in fact, the Jansenists say, we are contented if you grant to us that the delectation certainly overcomes by reason of its superior power. See how one of them, the Abbot de Bourzéis, speaks: "It is sufficient for us if this single truth be granted, that as often as we consent to the grace of God, it always arises from the right love which God inspires, being superior in strength to the perverse love; and in consequence of this superiority always most certainly overcoming it."[2725] Hence Tourneley, speaking of the two systems, of pleasure absolutely preponderating, and of pleasure relatively preponderating, concludes, "We have known orthodox theologians who test efficacious grace by its pleasure being absolutely and simply preponderating over all other pleasures; and who call that sufficient grace which has just power enough to overcome the lust actually opposed to it. But we have only met with Jansenists who maintain that no grace can overcome unless it is relatively preponderating in degree, and who admit no other sufficient grace than one that is inferior in strength to the superior concupiscence which opposes it."[2726]

So that, to conclude, we do not intend now to blame the opinion that the will, even when it follows the greater delectation, yet always acts freely, that is, without necessity, and with true power (not merely nominal or hypothetical power) to act in a contrary way; but we only reject the opinion of those who say that when one of the two pleasures, the carnal or the heavenly, preponderates by being greater in degree than the other, then man has no more power to resist and to overcome it, because the greater force always overcomes the less.

Nevertheless, I cannot in this place neglect to mention the difficulty that I find in this system of the preponderating delectation. Its defenders say, as also F. John Laurence Berti, that the efficacy of grace, as they maintain it, does not differ in substance from the efficacy as taught by the Thomists, though founded on different principles; for the Thomists make the efficacy of grace consist in a physical predetermination, but the Jansenists in the preponderating pleasure. That which is done by physical premonition according to the Thomists, the same is done by victorious delectation according to the Augustinians; namely, the liberty of the will is moved to give consent *in actu secundo.* Further, both opinions teach that man still has the power, *in actu primo*, to act in opposite directions; so that the will always acts freely and without necessity.[2727]

But I observe that, as the principles and the reasons of these two opinions are different, so also are their consequences.

According to the Thomists, the reason of the efficacy of grace is because the created will is in a state of passive potentiality, able to receive the motions of grace; so that to come to actual operation it must be moved by God, as the first agent and first free cause, who, by his predetermination, adapts and determines the potentiality (of the will) into actuality, This only relates to the act; but as for the power of capability, the Thomists say that man has the grace of potentiality wholly complete, and in proximate preparation, so as to be able to act virtuously. Thus F. Gonet, "The grace which gives the power gives the full complement, and all the strength or sufficiency which is requisite, so far as the *actus primus* is concerned."[2728] So, also, Cardinal Gotti: "Sufficient grace gives proximate power, and complete power within the limits of potentiality.”[2729].[2730] And thus all other Thomists in general; and if any of them apparently speak otherwise, it is only of the *actus secundus,* not *primus.*

On the other hand, the reason of the principle of those who maintain the opinion of the pleasure superior in degree is because (as they say) whereas at first, in the state of innocence, man only required “sufficient grace” to do well, since his will, being then sound and in perfect balance, could easily act with only sufficient grace, without needing efficacious grace,—now, on the other hand, since the fall of Adam, the will, being injured and inclined to evil, has need of “efficacious grace,” which, by means of the victorious pleasure, adapts it for acting virtuously. But (I say) according to this reason for the system, granting that the will of man has become so weak that, in its present state, it cannot act without efficacious grace, it is impossible to say that man still has, by virtue of sufficient grace, not even in the *actus primus,* nor either in the *sensus compositus,* nor *sensus divisus,* the complete and proximately prepared power to observe the commandments, or to be able to do any good work, even though it be mediate, by means of which he can place himself in a position to obtain greater help to enable him to fulfil the law.

I know that the supporters of this opinion have no objection to grant this, and to say that, in our present state, sufficient grace does not give complete and prepared power. “Sufficient grace,” says F. Macedo, one of this school, “does not give power proximately complete and prepared.”[2731] And elsewhere, speaking of the grace of Adam innocent and of Adam fallen, he says, “The first supposed (a power) prepared and free; the second a power crippled, hindered, and enslaved.”[2732]

So, supposing that grace, when inferior to the concupiscence, does not give complete and prepared power to observe the commandments, it can, in truth, be no longer called sufficient. So that, in fact, F. Berti, who defends such a system of the relatively victorious delectation, finds no difficulty in further granting that such inferior grace ought properly to be called inefficacious, and not sufficient. So that on this system, they who do not receive from God grace that is efficacious, by means of the delectation relatively victorious over that of the concupiscence, have not even grace sufficient to enable them to fulfil the commandments. F. Berti thus writes in defence of his opinion: first, he states the three objections of his opponents, which are as follows: “There are three things which savor of the Jansenist dogma, and are the fountain and source of the five condemned propositions; to which the new Jansenists, the chief of whom are two (doubtless pretended) Augustinians, make no objection” (these two are F. Bellelli and F. Berti, against whom the Archbishop of Vienne wrote). “The first of these three things is, that they do not make efficacious grace consist simply in a victorious delectation, but in a delectation relatively preponderating, etc. The second is, that they deny the existence of a power proximately prepared in the case of a delectation of a lower grade, requiring for this, as regards the power and the *actus primus,* a stronger delectation; and therefore inefficacious grace (or the assistance *sine quo,* which they preach about) is not really sufficient grace, either in the Molinist sense or the Thomist sense; since sufficient grace, by the common consent of Catholics, confers power proximately prepared. The third thing that follows from this is, that they deny the existence of such a thing as sufficient grace; the very name of which they fraudulently abstain from using, and call it rather inefficacious than insufficient.”[2733] Such are the objections. Now for F. Berti’s answer: “I most firmly and unhesitatingly declare that the three doctrines just cited are noway erroneous, nor principles of the five condemned propositions; but that some people, moved indeed by a laudable zeal for refuting Jansenius, but nevertheless carried away by the prejudice of their private judgment, have made no distinction between what is Catholic and what is erroneous and condemned; and that from these people’s lucubrations, some anonymous sciolist” (the Archbishop of Vienne, to wit), “and some other men of scanty learning and fat wits, have taken occasion to calumniate the unshaken doctrines of Augustine (which, whether they admit it or not, are the same as ours) as monstrous heresies.”[2734]

Now I confess myself also to be precisely one of these scantily learned and gross-minded men; for I cannot understand how the propositions of F. Berti hold together; since in their consequences they appear clearly repugnant to one another. If he had said that to observe the divine law we have need of efficacious grace, but that sufficient grace, which is given to all, gives the proximate power to enable us to pray, and by prayer to obtain the greater assistance necessary for the actual observance of the commandments, we should quite agree; for this is our opinion, which we shall set forth and prove in the next chapter.

But we cannot agree; because, while speaking of prayer, he says well that every one of the faithful, by means of this sufficient grace, if he puts no impediment in the way, can pray, and by prayer obtain the immediate assistance to enable him actually to fulfil the commandments. “To each of the faithful” (these are his words), “unless he freely puts an obstacle in the way, the grace of prayer is given, by which he may obtain the aid immediately sufficient to fulfil the commandments.”[2735] And, further, he says in another place that the said sufficient grace, common to all the faithful, although only remotely sufficient for the observance of the precepts, is, nevertheless, proximately sufficient for prayer, by which efficacious grace is then obtained: “In him who has the little will (that is, the will which is furnished by the sufficient grace) there is a power proximately sufficient for prayer, and remotely sufficient for the observance of the commandments, which he will be able proximately to fulfil, when by prayer he has obtained a strong will” (which strong will is furnished by efficacious grace).[2736] He says then, and says wisely, that for the observance of the commandments, it cannot be said that sufficient grace gives to all the proximate power actually to fulfil them; for (as he well observes in the place just cited, § 4) the proximate power to observe the precepts is that which needs nothing further to enable it to act; hence he writes in the same section (4), near the beginning, that the complete and prepared power can only be had from efficacious grace: “Efficacious grace alone gives the complete and ready power.”[2737] Hence he adds that, in order that the sufficient grace may be said to be proximately sufficient for actual operation, “it is requisite that it should not need any further means in order to act.”[2738] So that, according to the reasoning of F. Berti, though the sufficient grace does not supply all the faithful with proximate power to keep the commandments, yet it supplies all with power proximately sufficient to pray. Therefore each of the faithful, by the aid of “sufficient grace” alone, can actually pray, without the need of any further assistance, that is, of efficacious grace.

But then I do not know how this agrees with what he says in another place: “No one without grace, efficacious in itself, has the power of praying united with the act."[2739] Therefore, according to this second proposition, the "sufficient grace" does not give really, but only in name, the power proximately sufficient for prayer. It only gives the power remotely sufficient, if there is need of efficacious grace to make the power of praying issue in act. Either, therefore, for actual prayer, "efficacious grace" is requisite, and then it cannot be said that the sufficient grace gives the power proximately sufficient; or else "sufficient grace" gives the power proximately sufficient for actual prayer; and then there is no need of the efficacious grace of the preponderating pleasure, which he seeks to establish. But St. Augustine also, says F. Berti, requires an overpowering pleasure to enable us to pray: "Augustine teaches that for prayer a certain knowledge is requisite, and an overpowering pleasure."[2740] I have examined the passage referred to, which is as follows: "Let us understand, if we can, that the good Lord God sometimes does not give even to his saints either the certain knowledge of some good work, or an overpowering delight in it, in order that they may understand that the light wherewith their darkness is enlightened comes not from themselves, but from him, and so also the sweetness by which their land yields its fruit."[2741] St. Augustine does not say that an overpowering delight is requisite for prayer; he only says that sometimes God does not give even to his saints either the certain knowledge or the overpowering delight of some just work, in order that they may know that from him, and not from themselves, they have the light to illumine them, and the sweetness to make them bear fruit.

Therefore St. Augustine does not here primarily speak of the sufficient grace by which a man can work, but does not always work; nor does he say that man with only sufficient grace, and without efficacious grace, cannot actually pray; but he speaks only of efficacious grace, which, by means of an overpowering delight, infallibly causes him to do well. Secondly, he does not speak here of prayer, but of just works; which properly means the observance of the precepts or of the counsels; since prayer, though it is a good work, of its own nature is not a work, but the means of obtaining the aid necessary to execute good works.

We also hold, as we said before, that efficacious grace is necessary for the observance of the commandments; but we say that for actual prayer, whereby we may obtain efficacious grace, the sufficient grace which God gives to all the faithful is enough. And thus we do no violence to the truth that God's commandments are not impossible to any one; since every man, by means of the sufficient grace only, can perform such an easy thing as prayer; and by means of prayer he will obtain the assistance of gratuitous efficacious grace, which is necessary for the actual performance of difficult things—such as the observance of the commandments. Thus says Cardinal Noris, whose words I will quote in the next chapter, and before him St. Augustine: "By the fact that we most firmly believe that God does not command impossibilities, we are admonished in easy matters what to do, and in difficult matters what to ask for."[2742] Otherwise, if sufficient grace were not enough for actual prayer, and the addition of efficacious grace were always necessary, and if this were denied to any man—as, in fact, efficacious grace is denied to many—I cannot see how the commandments of God could be said to be possible to such a person, and how God could demand of him the observance of his law (at the time when he denies him even the efficacious grace to enable him actually to pray), and how with justice he could condemn him to hell for not observing it. This is precisely that which made Jansenius say that some precepts were impossible even from the first; because he erroneously said that some men want the grace to make the precepts possible to them. But it is not so; because God gives to all men (we are not here considering the case of infidels and obstinate sinners) the proximate grace to enable them actually to pray, as we shall prove in the next chapter. And so no one will be able to make the excuse that the observance of the precepts was impossible to him; for though he had not efficacious grace for their actual observance, he had, nevertheless, grace proximately sufficient for actual prayer, by means of which he would have obtained from God efficacious grace, according to his promise of hearing whoever prays to him; and with this he certainly might have observed the precepts. And the Council of Trent has expressly declared this against Luther, who asserted that the observance of God's law was impossible even to the faithful. "God," it says, "does not command impossibilities; but by commanding, he admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask for what you cannot do; and by his help he enables you to do it."[2743]

Chapter IV

GOD GIVES ALL MEN THE GRACE TO PRAY IF THEY CHOOSE, AS THE “SUFFICIENT GRACE” WHICH IS COMMON TO ALL MEN IS BY ITSELF ENOUGH FOR PRAYER

I

THE PRINCIPAL THEOLOGIANS WHO TEACH THIS DOCTRINE

Assuming, then, that God wills all men to be saved, and that, as far as he is concerned, he gives to all the graces necessary for their salvation, we must say that all men have given to them the grace to enable them actually to pray (without needing a further grace); and by prayer to obtain all further aid necessary for the observance of the commandments and for salvation. But it must be remarked that when we say “without needing a further grace,” we do not mean that the common grace gives the power of prayer without the aid of assisting grace, since, in order to exercise any act of piety, besides the exciting grace, there is doubtless required the assisting or co-operating grace. But we mean that the common grace gives every man the power of actual prayer, without a further preventing grace, which, physically or morally, determines the will of man to exercise the act of prayer. We will first mention the names of the famous theologians who teach this opinion as certain, and then we will prove it by authorities and arguments.

It is held by Isambert, Cardinal du Perron, Alphonsus le Moyne, and others whom we shall presently quote, and at greater length as a set proposition by Honoratus Tourneley. All these authors prove that every man, by means of the ordinary sufficient grace alone, can actually pray, without need of further aid; and by prayer can obtain all the graces requisite for the performance of the most difficult things.

It was also held by Cardinal Noris, who proves the proposition, that man, when the commandment urges (*urgendo il precetto*), can pray if he will; and he proves it thus: “It is clear that the power to pray should be proximate in the just man or the faithful; for if the faithful has only a remote power for a simple act of prayer (I am not here speaking of fervid prayer), he will not have another proximate power to obtain the grace of prayer, otherwise the series would be infinite.”[2744] Assuming that, in order to keep the commandments and to be saved, prayer is necessary, as we proved in the beginning, when we spoke of the necessity of prayer, this learned author says well that every one has the proximate power of prayer, in order that by prayer he may obtain the proximate power to do good; and therefore all can pray with only the ordinary grace, without other assistance. Otherwise, if, in order to obtain the proximate power for the act of prayer we required another power, we should still want another power of grace to obtain this power, and so on *ad infinitum*, and it would no longer be in the power of man to co-operate in his salvation.

The same author in another place maintains this doctrine more clearly: “Even in the state of fallen nature the assistance *sine quo* (*i.e.,* the sufficient grace which is common to all) is given, though Jansenius denies it; and this assistance produces in us weak acts, namely, prayer not very fervid, for fulfilling the commandments; but for the actual observance of these, the assistance *sine quo* is only a remote help, by which we can, however, obtain by prayer the assistance *quo*, or efficacious grace, by which the commandments are fulfilled.”[2745] So that Cardinal Noris held it as certain that in the present state all men have the assistance *sine quo, i.e.,* ordinary grace, which, without need of further assistance, produces prayer, by which we can then obtain efficacious grace to enable us to observe the law. And hence we can easily understand the axiom universally received in the schools: “To him who does what in him lies, God does not refuse his grace.”[2746] That is, to the man who prays, and thus makes good use of the sufficient grace which enables him to do such an easy thing as prayer, God does not refuse the efficacious grace to enable him to execute difficult things.

Thus, also, Louis Thomassin, who expresses astonishment at those who say that “sufficient assistance” is not enough to do any actual good work, nor to avoid any sin: “For if,” he says, “this assistance is truly assistance, and gives proximate power, how is it that, out of the innumerable quantity of men who are thus assisted, none keep the commandments? Or how is it truly sufficient, if, besides it, efficacious grace is necessary? That man has not a sufficient power who wants a necessary assistance which is not in his own power.”[2747] He means that “sufficient grace,” to be really sufficient, ought to give a man the proximate and ready power to execute a good act; but since, in order to perform such an act, another grace—namely, efficacious grace—is wanted, unless a man has (at least mediately) this efficacious grace which is necessary for salvation, how can it be said that the “sufficient grace” gives this proximate and ready power? Since, says St. Thomas, “God does not neglect to do that which is necessary to salvation.”[2748] On the one hand, it is true that God is not bound to give us his grace, because what is *gratis* is not of obligation; but, on the other hand, supposing that he gives us commandments, he is obliged to give us the assistance necessary for observing them. And as God obliges us actually to observe every precept whenever it applies, so ought he also actually to supply us (at least mediately or remotely) with the assistance necessary for the observance of the precept, without the necessity of a further grace, which is not common to all. Hence Thomassin concludes, that in order to reconcile the proposition that “sufficient grace” is enough for a man’s salvation with the statement that efficacious grace is requisite to observe the whole law, it is necessary to say that sufficient grace is enough to pray, and to perform similar easy acts, and that by means of these we then obtain efficacious grace to fulfil the difficult acts. And this is without doubt in conformity with the doctrine of St. Augustine, who teaches: “By the very fact that God is most firmly believed not to command impossibilities, we are admonished both what to do in easy things, and in difficult things what to ask for.”[2749] On this passage Cardinal Noris observes, “Therefore, we are able to do easy or less perfect works without asking God for further help; for which, however, we must pray in more difficult works.”[2750] Thomassin also brings forward the authority of St. Bonaventure, Scotus, and others on this subject, and says, “All these considered the sufficient grace to be truly sufficient, whether the will consents to it or not.”[2751] And this he demonstrates in four parts of his book, adducing the authorities of the schoolmen for a long series of years, beginning from the year 1100.

Habert, Bishop of Vabres and Doctor of the Sorbonne, who was the first to write against Jansenius, says: “We think, first, that ‘sufficient grace’ has only a contingent or mediate connection with the actual effect of the complete consent. . . . We think, further, that ‘sufficient grace’ is a grace that disposes for efficacious grace, since from a good use of it God afterwards grants to the created will the grace that performs the complete effect.”[2752] He had said before that “all Catholic Doctors, of all schools, have professed, and do profess, that a real inward grace is given, which is capable of persuading the will to consent to good, though, on account of the free resistance of the will, it sometimes does not persuade it thus to consent,”[2753] and for this doctrine be quotes Gamaches, Duval, Isambert, Perez, Le Moyne, and others. Then he goes on: “The assistance, therefore, of sufficient grace disposes us for the reception of efficacious grace; and is in some sort efficacious, namely, of an incomplete effect, obtained first remotely, then more nearly, and at last proximately—such as is an act of faith, hope, love, and, mixed with these, one of prayer. Hence the famous Alphonsus Le Moyne taught that this sufficient grace was the grace of asking, or of prayer, of which St. Augustine so often speaks.”[2754] So that, according to Habert, the difference between efficacious and sufficient grace is, that the former produces its effect completely, while the latter produces it either contingently (*i.e.*, sometimes, but not always) or mediately (*i.e.*, by means of prayer). Moreover, he says that sufficient grace, according to the good use we make of it, prepares us to obtain efficacious grace; hence he calls sufficient grace “in some sort efficacious” (*secundum quid*), because of its effect commenced but not completed. Lastly, he says that sufficient grace is the grace of prayer, of which it is in our power to avail ourselves, as St. Augustine teaches. So that a man has no excuse if he does not do that which he already has sufficient grace to enable him to perform; by which grace, without further assistance, he may either act, or at least obtain more help to enable him to act. And Habert asserts that this was the common doctrine of the Sorbonne.

Charles du Plessis d’Argentré, another theologian of the Sorbonne, quotes more than a thousand theologians who teach directly that with sufficient grace easy works are accomplished; and that a man who makes use of it obtains thereby a more abundant assistance for his thorough conversion. And precisely in this sense, as we said before, he says the celebrated axiom of the schools is to be understood: “To those who do what is in their power” (that is, by means of sufficient grace) “God does not deny grace;”[2755] that is, more abundant and efficacious grace.

The learned Dionysius Petavius proves at great length that man works with simple sufficient grace; and he even asserts that it would be monstrous to say otherwise; and that this is the doctrine not only of theologians, but also of the Church. Hence he says that the grace of observing the precepts follows prayer; and that the gift of prayer is given by God at the time when he imposes the precept: “This gift, by which God grants us power to do justly, follows the act of prayer; and this act is given contemporaneously with the law.”[2756] So that as the law is imposed upon all, so the gift of prayer is given to all.

The author of the *Theology for the Use of the Seminary of Peterkau* says that with sufficient grace alone “a man can do well, and sometimes does so;”[2757] so that “there is nothing to hinder that, of two persons furnished with the same assistance, one should very often perform the mere acts (which precede full conversion), the other not.”[2758] And this, he says, is in conformity with the doctrine of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, and of his first disciples, especially of Father Bartholomew Medina, who says, “Sometimes a man is converted only with sufficient grace.”[2759] And I find that also Father Louis of Granada asserts this to be the common doctrine of theologians: “Theologians reckon two kinds of assistance—one sufficient, the other more than sufficient; by the former of which men are sometimes converted, sometimes refuse to be converted.”[2760] And, shortly afterwards, “And theologians define how universally this assistance is open to men.”[2761] Hence Petrocorensis says: “So man can do some acts of piety, such as to pray to God with humility with the sufficient grace only, and sometimes actually does them, and so prepares himself for further graces.”[2762] This, he says, is the order of God’s Providence with regard to graces, “that the succeeding should follow the good use of the former.”[2763] And he concludes that thorough conversion and final perseverance “are infallibly obtained by prayer, for which the sufficient grace which is given to every one abundantly suffices.”[2764]

The same is held by Cardinal d’Aguirre, who in all things follows St. Augustine.[2765]

Father Antonio Boucat, of the order of St. Francis of Paula, defends the position that every one is *now* able, without new assistance, to obtain by prayer the grace of conversion. And after quoting Gamaches, Duval, Habert, Le Moyne, he cites in favor of this opinion Peter of Tarantasia, Bishop of Tulle, Godert de Fonté, and Henry of Ghent, Doctors of the Sorbonne, together with the Regius Professor Lygné, who, in his tract *De Gratia*, demonstrates that “sufficient grace” not only gives prayer, as Le Moyne and Professor Elias said, but also gives the power to do some works that are not difficult.

Gaudenzio Bontempi in like manner demonstrated that sufficient grace obtains efficacious grace by means of prayer, which is given to all who will avail themselves of it.

Cardinal Robert Pullo asserts two kinds of grace—one always victorious, the other one by which man sometimes works, sometimes does not: “The other by the assistance of which man can do which he chooses of these two things, either to co-operate with grace, or to despise it, and to continue sinning.”[2766]

Father Fortunato da Brescia is also of the same opinion, and holds that all men have the mediate grace of prayer to enable them to observe the precepts; and has no doubt that St. Augustine held the same.

Richard of St. Victor similarly teaches that there is a sufficient grace which a man sometimes consents to, sometimes resists.

Dominic Soto asks, “Why of two persons whom God is most ready and desirous to convert, one is drawn by grace, and not the other?” And he answers: “No other reason can be given, except that one consents and co-operates, while the other does not co-operate.”[2767]

Matthias Felicio, who wrote against Calvin, thus defines ordinary or sufficient grace: “It is a divine motion, or instinct, which moves a man to good, and is denied to none. Men behave differently to this instinct; for some acquiesce in it, and are disposed *de congruo* for habitual grace; for we believe that God will not desert those who do what they can. Others, on the contrary, oppose it."[2768]

Andreas Vega likewise says: "These helps, which are given to all men, are by most called inefficacious, because they do not always produce their effect, but are sometimes frustrated by sinners."[2769] Therefore, sufficient grace sometimes produces its effect, and sometimes does not.

Cardinal Gotti in one place of his *Theology* apparently agrees with us; for where he discusses the difficulty, how a man can persevere if he will, when it is not in his power to have the special assistance which is requisite for perseverance, he answers that although this special assistance is not in a man's power, "yet it is said to be in a man's power, because he can by the grace of God ask for it and obtain it; and in this way it may be said to be in a man's power to have the assistance necessary for perseverance, because it can be obtained by prayers."[2770] So, to verify the proposition that it is in a man's power to persevere, it is necessary to grant both that he can, without needing any further grace, obtain by prayer the assistance requisite for perseverance; and, also, that with only the sufficient grace common to all, without need of any special grace, he can actually pray, and by prayer obtain perseverance; otherwise it could not be said that every man had the grace necessary for perseverance, at least remotely or mediately, by means of prayer.

But if Cardinal Gotti did not mean this, at any rate St. Francis de Sales did, when he said that the grace of actual prayer is given to every one who will avail himself of it, and thence deduced that perseverance is in the power of everybody. The saint says this clearly in his *Theotimus,* where, after proving that constant prayer is necessary to obtain from God the gift of final perseverance, he adds: "Now, since the gift of prayer is freely promised to all those who will consent to the heavenly inspirations, consequently it is in our power to persevere."

Cardinal Bellarmine teaches the same thing: "An assistance, then and there, sufficient for salvation, is given mediately or immediately to all men. . . . We say mediately or immediately, because to those who have the use of reason we believe that holy inspirations are given by God, and that by this they have immediately the exciting grace; by which, if they will acquiesce in it, they can be disposed to be justified, and at last to obtain salvation."[2771]

II

AUTHORITY UPON WHICH THIS DOCTRINE IS BASED

Let us now proceed to examine the proofs of this doctrine. It is proved, first from authority. We shall cite Scripture, the Council of Trent, and the Holy Fathers.

1. HOLY SCRIPTURE

We have first the authority of the Apostle, who assures us that God is faithful, and will not permit us to be tempted beyond our strength, since he always gives us assistance (whether immediate or mediate, by means of prayer) to resist the assaults of our enemies: *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will make with the temptation issue, that ye may be able to bear it.*[2772] Jansenius says that this text refers only to the predestinate, but this comment of his is completely unfounded; for St. Paul is writing to all the faithful of Corinth, all of whom he certainly did not consider to be predestinate. So that St. Thomas has good reason for understanding it generally of all men, and for saying that God would not be faithful if he did not grant us (so far as in him lies) those graces by means of which we can obtain salvation: "But he would not appear to be faithful were he to refuse us (so far as he is concerned) those things which are requisite to enable us to come to him."[2773] It is proved, moreover, by all those texts in which God exhorts us to convert ourselves, and to have recourse to him to ask him for the graces necessary for our salvation, and promises to hear us when we have recourse to him. *Wisdom preacheth aloud, . . . saying, O children, how long will ye love childishness, and fools covet those things which are hurtful to themselves, etc.? Turn ye at My reproof: behold, I will utter My Spirit to you. . . . Because I called, and you refused, etc., I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock at you.*[2774] This exhortation, *Turn ye,* would be simple mockery, says Bellarmine, if God did not give to sinners at least the mediate grace of prayer for their conversion. Besides, we find in the passage mention made of the internal grace by which God calls sinners, and gives them actual assistance for conversion, if they will accept it, in the words, *Behold, I will bring forth My Spirit to you.*[2775] *Come to Me, all you that labor and are* *heavy laden, and I will refresh you.*[2776] *Come, and accuse me, saith the Lord; if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow.*[2777] *Ask, and it shall be given you.*[2778] And so in hundreds of other texts already quoted. Now, if God did not give every one grace actually to have recourse to him, and actually to pray to him, all these invitations and exhortations, *Come all, and I will refresh you; seek, and it shall be given you*, would be vain.

2. THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

It is clearly proved by the passage of the Council of Trent so often quoted.[2779] I beg the reader to give his best attention to this proof; which, if I am not mistaken, is perfectly decisive. There were innovators who said that as man was deprived of free-will by the sin of Adam, the will of man at present does nothing in good actions, but is induced to receive them passively from God, without producing them itself; and hence they inferred that the observance of the commandments was impossible to those who are not efficaciously moved and predetermined by grace to avoid evil and to do good. Against this error the Council pronounced sentence in words borrowed from St. Augustine: "God does not command impossible things; but by commanding, admonishes you both to do what you can, and to pray for what you cannot do; and he helps you, so that you may be able."[2780]

The Council, then, in order to prove against the heretics that God's commandments are not impossible to any one, has declared that all men have assistance to enable them to do good, or at least have the grace of prayer whereby to obtain greater assistance. The meaning of this is, that every man can, by means of the common grace, do easy things (such as pray) without need of further extraordinary grace; and can by prayer obtain strength to do difficult things, according to the teaching of St. Augustine, already quoted: "By the very fact that we most firmly believe that the good and just God could not have commanded impossible things, we are admonished in easy matters what to do, and in difficult matters what to pray for."[2781] So that, according to the Council, the divine precepts are possible to all men, at least by means of prayer, by which greater help may be obtained to enable us to observe them. If, therefore, God has imposed his commands on all men, and has rendered their observance possible to all, at least mediately by means of prayer, we must necessarily conclude that all men have the grace to enable them to pray; otherwise, the commandments would not be possible to him who was without this grace. And as God grants to prayer actual grace to do good, and thereby renders all his commandments possible, so also he gives all actual grace to pray; otherwise, if there were any man who had not actual grace to pray to him, the commandments would be impossible, as he could not even by means of prayer obtain the assistance necessary for their observance.

This being settled, it is of no use to say that the words, "God admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask for what you cannot do,"[2782] are only to be understood of possible, not of actual, prayer; because, we reply, if the common and ordinary grace gave only possible and not actual prayer, the Council would not have said, "He admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask for what you cannot do;"[2783] but, "He admonishes you that you can do, and that you can pray."[2784] Moreover, if the Council had not intended to declare that every one can observe the precepts, or can pray to obtain grace to observe them, and had not meant to speak of actual grace, it would not have said "He admonishes," because this word properly refers to actual operation, and imports not the instruction of the mind, but the movement of the will to do that good which it can actually do. When, therefore, it said, "He admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask for what you cannot do," it most clearly expressed, not only possible operation and possible prayer, but actual operation and actual prayer. For if man had need of another extraordinary grace, which as yet he has not, in order actually to work or to pray, how could God admonish him to do or to ask that which he cannot actually either do or ask without efficacious grace? Father Fortunato Brescia speaks wisely on this point: If the actual grace of prayer were not given to all, but if for prayer we had need of efficacious grace, which is not common to all. prayer would be impossible to the great number who are without this efficacious grace; so that it could not be said with propriety that "God admonishes you to ask for that which you cannot do," because he would then admonish us to do a thing requiring a grace which we did not possess. So that God's admonition to work and to pray must be understood of actual operation and prayer, without need of a further extraordinary grace. And this is exactly what St. Augustine means: "Hence we are admonished in easy things what to do, and in difficult things what to pray for;”[2785] because he supposes that though all have not grace to enable them to do difficult things, all have at least grace to pray, prayer being an easy thing for everybody, as he also propounds in the words afterwards adopted by the Council of Trent, “God admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask for what you cannot do.”

To recapitulate the argument: the Council says that God does not impose impossible commands, because he either gives assistance to observe them, or gives the grace of prayer to obtain this assistance, which he always grants when it is prayed for. Now, if it could ever be true that God does not give all men grace, at least the mediate grace of prayer, actually to observe all his precepts, Jansenius’ proposition would be true, that even the just man is without grace to enable him actually to observe some of the commandments.

I do not know how else the text of the Council of Trent can be understood and explained, unless the “sufficient grace” gave to all men the power of actually praying without the “efficacious grace” which our opponents suppose to be necessary for the actual performance of any pious work. And supposing this necessity of a further grace for actual prayer, I cannot understand how this other text of the same Council can be true: “God does not leave those who have been once justified without grace, unless they first leave him.”[2786] If, I say, the ordinary sufficient grace would not be enough for actual prayer, but if for this purpose efficacious grace, which is not common to all men, would be required, it would be true that when the just man would be tempted to commit his first mortal sin, and God would not give him efficacious grace at least to enable him to pray, and so to obtain strength to resist, then his succumbing to temptation might rather be said to result from the just man being abandoned by God before he had abandoned God, and from being left without the efficacious grace necessary to enable him to resist.

Our opponents object to us a passage of St. Augustine where he appears to maintain that the grace of prayer is not granted to all men: “Is not our prayer itself at times so tepid, or rather so cold, and almost null—so null, indeed, that we do not notice its nullity with any sorrow; for if this coldness is against our will, it does not prejudice our prayer?”[2787] But Cardinal

Sfondrati well replies, “It is one thing to say that sinners do not pray, another to say that they have not grace to enable them to pray.”[2788] St. Augustine does not say that any persons are without grace to pray as they ought, but only that at times our prayer is so cold as to be almost null, not for want of God’s assistance to enable us to pray better, but simply through our fault, which renders our prayer null. Tourneley answers in the same way, where he says of the first condemned proposition of Jansenius: “The just do not always pray as they ought. It is their own fault that they do not pray so, since they have by grace sufficient strength to pray. St. Augustine says that our prayer is sometimes cold and almost null; but he does not say that we have not grace to enable us to pray more fervently.”[2789] Moreover, Cardinal Noris observes on this same passage, that by means of tepid prayer we can at least obtain grace to pray more fervently, and then by this we obtain efficacious grace to keep the commandments: “I conclude that even tepid prayer is made with the assistance *sine quo non,* and by the ordinary help of God, since they are weak acts, etc. . . . And yet by tepid prayer we obtain the spirit of more fervent prayer, which is given to us by the assistance *quo.*”[2790] And he confirms this by the authority of St. Augustine, who writes thus on Ps. xvi.: “I have directed my prayers unto Thee with a free and strong intention; for Thou didst hear me when I prayed more weakly, and didst grant me strength for this.”[2791]

Nor can a valid objection be drawn from St. Augustine’s observation on the text of St. Paul: “*The Spirit beseeches for us with groans not to be uttered,*”[2792] that it is the Holy Spirit that makes us intercede, and inspires us with the disposition to intercede,[2793] since the saint here simply says, against the Pelagians, that no one can pray without grace. And thus he himself explains it in his commentary on Ps. lii., where he says, “What thou doest by His gift, He is said to do; because without Him thou couldst not do it.”[2794]

3. THE HOLY FATHERS

In the third place, our opinion is proved by the sayings of the holy Fathers.

St. Basil says: “When, however, any one is allowed to fall into temptation, it happens that he may be able to endure it, and to ask in prayer that the will of God may be done.”[2795] The saint then says that when God permits a man to be tempted, he does it in order that the man may resist by asking for God’s will, *i.e.*, the grace to overcome. He therefore supposes that when a man has not sufficient assistance to overcome the temptation, he at least has the actual and common grace of prayer, by which he may obtain whatever further grace he needs.

St. John Chrysostom says, “He gave a law which might make their wounds manifest, in order that they might desire a physician.”[2796] And again: “Nor can any one be excused who, by ceasing to pray, has voluntarily abstained from overcoming his adversary.[2797] If such a man had not the grace necessary for actual prayer, whereby he might obtain grace to resist, he might excuse himself when he is overcome.

So also St. Bernard: “Who are we, or what is our strength? This is what God wanted, that we, seeing our weakness, and that we have no other help, should, with all humility, have recourse to his mercy.”[2798] God, then, has imposed on us a law impossible to our own strength, in order that we should go to him, and by prayer obtain strength to observe it; but if any one were without the grace of actual prayer, to him the law would be utterly impossible. “Many persons,” says the same St. Bernard, “complain that they are deserted by grace; but grace could much more justly complain of being deserted by them.”[2799] God has much more reason to complain of us for not corresponding to the grace he gives us, than we have to complain of not having grace to which we may correspond.

But no Father is more clear on this point than St. Augustine in several places. In one he says: “The Pelagians think themselves very knowing when they say, God would not command that which he knows man could not do. Who is ignorant of this? But God does command some things that we cannot do, in order that we might know that for which we ought to ask him.”[2800]

Again, “It is not reckoned your fault, if you are ignorant without wishing to be so; but only if you neglect to inquire into that of which you are ignorant; nor that you do not cure your wounded members, but that you despise him who is willing to heal you. These are your own sins; for no man is deprived of the knowledge of how to seek with advantage.”[2801] So that, according to St. Augustine, no one is deprived of the grace of prayer, whereby he may obtain help for his conversion; otherwise, if this grace were wanting, it could not be his fault if he were not converted.

Again: “What else, then, is shown us, but that it is God who gives us power both to ask, and to seek, and to knock, who commands us to do these things?”[2802]

Again: “Once for all, receive this and understand it. Art thou not yet drawn? Pray that thou mayest be drawn.”[2803]

Again: “That the soul, then, knows not what it ought to do comes from this, that it has not yet received it; but it will receive this also, if it has made a good use of what it has received; and it has received power to seek piously and diligently if it will.”[2804]

Mark the words “it has received power to seek diligently and piously.” Every one, then, has the grace necessary for prayer; and if he makes a good use of this, he will receive grace to do that which before he was unable to do immediately. Again: “Let the man who is willing, but cannot do what he wills, pray that he may have such a measure as suffices for fulfilling the commandments; for he is so far assisted as to be able to do what is commanded.”[2805] Again: “Free will is admonished by command to seek the gift of God; but it would be admonished without fruit to itself, unless it had first received some little love, to induce it to seek such aid as would enable it to fulfil what was commanded.”[2806]

Mark the words, “some little love;” this means “sufficient grace” whereby man is able to obtain by prayer actual grace to keep the commandments, whereby “he is induced to seek such aid as would enable him to fulfil what was commanded.”[2807]

Again: “He gives us commandments for this reason, that when we have tried to do what we are commanded, and are wearied through our infirmity, we may know how to ask the help of grace.”[2808] Here the saint supposes that with ordinary grace we are not able to do difficult things, but can by means of prayer obtain the aid necessary to accomplish them. Hence he goes on to say, *The Law entered that sin might abound,* when men do not implore the aid of God’s grace; but when, by God’s vocation, they understand to whom they must groan, and thereupon invoke him, the succeeding words will be fulfilled: *Where sin abounded, grace superabounded.*[2809] Here, as Petavius says, we see in express terms the want of abundant grace; and, on the other hand, the presence of ordinary and common grace which enables men to pray, and which St. Augustine here calls “God’s vocation.”

In another place he says: “Free-will is left to man in this mortal life, not to enable him to fulfil justice when he pleases, but to enable him to turn with pious supplications to Him by whose gift he can fulfil it.”[2810] When, therefore, Augustine says that man is unable to fulfil the whole law, and that prayer is the only means given him to obtain help to fulfil it, he certainly supposes that God gives every man the grace of actual prayer, without need of a further extraordinary aid, not common to all men; otherwise, where this special aid was wanting, “nothing would be left to the will” to observe all the commandments, or at least the more difficult of them. And when the saint speaks thus, he certainly cannot mean that “sufficient grace” gives only the power, not the act of prayer; for so far as relates to power, it is certain that “sufficient grace” gives power for even the most difficult works. Hence the holy Father evidently means (as he teaches elsewhere) that easy things, such as prayer, may well be actually accomplished by any man with the “sufficient grace;” and difficult things with the help which is obtained by means of prayer.

But there are two texts of St. Augustine which are peculiarly to the point.

The first is this: “It is certain that we can keep the commandments if we will; but since the will is prepared by God, we must ask him that we may have such a will as is sufficient to enable us to perform what we will.”[2811] Here he says that it is certain we could observe the law if we would; on the other hand, he says that in order to will to do so, and actually to do so, we must pray. Therefore all men have grace given them to pray, and by prayer to obtain the abundant grace which makes us keep the commandments; otherwise, if for actual prayer, efficacious grace, which is not common to all, were requisite, those to whom it was not given would not be able to keep the commandments, nor to have the will to keep them.

The second text is that where the holy Doctor answers the monks of Adramyttium, who said that “if grace was necessary, and if we can do nothing without it, why blame when we cannot work, and have not grace to do so? You should rather pray God for us, that he would give us this grace.” St. Augustine answers: You must be blamed, not because you do not work when you have not strength, but because you do not pray to obtain strength: "He who will not be admonished, and says, Do you rather pray for me, must on that very account be admonished to do it (*i.e.*, to pray) for himself."[2812] Now if the saint had not believed that every man has grace, to pray (if he will) without need of further aid, he never could have said that these people were to be blamed for not praying; for they could have answered, that if they were not to be blamed for not working, when they had not special grace to enable them to work, in like manner they could not be blamed for not praying, when they had not special grace for actual prayer. This is what St. Augustine elsewhere says: "Let them not deceive themselves who say, why are we commanded to abstain from evil and do good, if it is God who works in us both to will and to do it?"[2813] And he answers, that when men do good they should thank God for it, who gives them strength to do it; and when they do it not, they should pray to have the strength which they lack: "But when they do it not (these are his words), let them pray that they may receive that which as yet they have not."[2814] Now, if these people had not even the grace for the act of prayer, they might answer, "Why are we commanded to pray, if God does not work in us to make us pray?"[2815] How are we to will to pray, if we do not receive the grace necessary for actual prayer?

St. Thomas does not speak expressly of prayer, but assumes the certainty of our proposition, when he says, "It belongs to God's Providence to provide every individual with what is necessary for salvation, provided he puts no impediment in the way."[2816] Since, then, it is true, on the one hand, that God gives to all men the graces necessary for salvation, and, on the other, for prayer,—we require the grace which enables us actually to pray, and thereby to obtain further and greater assistance to enable us to do that which we cannot compass with ordinary grace,—it follows, necessarily, that God gives all men sufficient grace actually to pray if they will, without need of efficacious grace.

Here we may add the answer of Bellarmine to the heretics, who inferred from the text, *No one can come to Me, unless My Father draw him,*[2817] that no one could go to God who was not properly drawn by him. "We answer," he says, "that the only conclusion from this text is, that all men have not the efficacious grace to make them really believe; but we cannot conclude that all men have not at least assistance which confers the possibility of believing, or, at any rate, the possibility of asking for grace."[2818]

III

REASONS THAT JUSTIFY THIS DOCTRINE

Let us now proceed, in the third and last place, to examine the reasons of this opinion. Petavius, Duval, and other theologians ask why God imposes on us commands which we cannot keep with the common and ordinary grace? Because, they answer, he wishes us to have recourse to him in prayer, according to the general consent of the Fathers, as we have seen above. Hence they infer that we ought to hold it to be certain that every man has grace actually to pray, and by prayer to obtain greater grace to enable him to do that which is impossible to him with the ordinary grace; otherwise God would have imposed an impossible law.

This reason is very strong; another is, that if God imposes on all men the duty of actual observance of his commandments, we must necessarily suppose that he also gives to all men the grace necessary for this actual observance, at least mediately, by means of prayer. In order, therefore, to uphold the reasonableness of the law, and the justice of the punishment of the disobedient, we must hold that every man has sufficient power, at least mediately, by means of prayer, for the actual satisfaction of the law; and that at times he prays without need of an unusual and additional grace; otherwise, if he had not this mediate or remote power of actually keeping the commandments, it could never be said that all men had from God sufficient grace for the actual observance of the law.

Thomassin and Tourneley accumulate many other reasons for this opinion; but I pass them over to attend to one that seems to me demonstrative. It is founded on the precept of hope, which obliges us all to hope in God with confidence for eternal life; and I say that if we were not certain that God gives us all grace to enable us actually to pray, without need of another particular and unusual grace, no one without a special revelation could hope for salvation as he ought. But I must first explain the grounds of this argument.

The virtue of hope is so pleasing to God that he has declared that he feels delight in those who trust in him: *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that hope in His mercy.*[2819] And he promises victory over his enemies, perseverance in grace, and eternal glory, to the man who hopes, because he hopes: *Because he hoped in Me, I will deliver him; I will protect him. . . . I will deliver him and I will glorify him.*[2820] *Preserve me, for I have put my trust in Thee.*[2821] *He will save them, because they have hoped in Him.*[2822] *No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.*[2823] And let us be sure that the heaven and earth will fail, but the promises of God cannot fail: *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.*[2824] St. Bernard, therefore, says that all our merit consists in reposing all our confidence in God: "This is the whole merit of man, if he places all his hope in him."[2825] The reason is, that he who hopes in God honors him much: *Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.*[2826] He honors the power, the mercy, and the faithfulness of God; since he believes that God can and will save him; and that he cannot fail in his promises to save the man who trusts in him. And the Prophet assures us that the greater is our confidence, the greater will be the measure of God's mercy poured out upon us: *Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have hoped in Thee.*[2827]

Now, as this virtue of hope is so pleasing to God, he has willed to impose it upon us by a precept that binds under mortal sin, as all theologians agree, and as is evident from many texts of Scripture. *Trust in Him, all ye congregations of people.*[2828] *Ye that fear the Lord, hope in Him.*[2829] *Hope in thy God always.*[2830] *Hope perfectly for that grace which is offered to you.*[2831] Then this hope of eternal life ought to be sure and firm in us, according to the definition of St. Thomas: "Hope is the certain expectation of beatitude.[2832] And the sacred Council of Trent has expressly declared, "All men ought to place and repose a most firm hope in the help of God; for God, unless they fail to correspond to his grace, as he has begun the good work, so will he finish it, working in them both to will and to perform."[2833] And long before St. Paul had said of himself: *I know whom I have believed, and I am certain that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him*[2834] And herein is the difference between Christian and worldly hope. Worldly hope need only be an uncertain expectation: nor can it be otherwise; for it is always doubtful whether a man who has promised a favor may not hereafter change his mind, if he has not already changed it. But the Christian hope of eternal salvation is certain on God’s part; for he can and will save us, and has promised to save those who obey his law, and to this end has promised us all necessary graces to enable us to obey this law, if we ask for them. It is true that hope is accompanied by fear, as St. Thomas says; but this fear does not arise from God’s part, but from our own; since we may at any time fail, by not corresponding as we ought, and by putting an impediment in the way of grace by our sins. Reasonably, then, did the Council of Trent condemn the innovators, who, because they entirely deprive man of free will, are obliged to make every believer have an infallible certitude of perseverance and salvation. This error was condemned by the Council; because, as we have said, in order to obtain salvation, it is necessary for us to correspond; and this correspondence of ours is uncertain and fallible. Hence God wills that we should, on the one hand, always fear for ourselves, lest we should fall into presumption, in trusting to our strength; but, on the other, that we should be always certain of his good will, and of his assistance to save us; provided always that we ask him for it; in other words, that we might always have a secure confidence in his goodness. St. Thomas says that we ought to look with certainty to receive from God eternal happiness, confiding in his power and mercy, and believing that he can and will save us. “Whoever has faith, is certain of God’s power and mercy.”[2835]

Now, as the hope of our salvation by God ought to be certain (as St. Thomas defines it), “the certain expectation of beatitude,”[2836] consequently the motive of our hope must also be certain; for if the foundation of our hope were uncertain, and admitted a doubt, we could not with any certainty hope and expect to receive salvation, and the means necessary for it, from the hands of God. But St. Paul will have us to be nothing less than firm and immovable in our hope, if we would be saved: *If so ye continue in the faith, grounded, and settled, and immovable from the hope of the Gospel, which you have heard.*[2837] In another place he repeats that our faith ought to be as immovable as an anchor securely fixed; since it is grounded on the promises of God, who cannot lie: *And we desire that every one of you should show forth the same carefulness to the accomplishing of hope unto the end. That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to* *lie, we may have the strongest comfort, who have fled for refuge to hold fast the hope set before us, which we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm.*[2838] Hence St. Bernard says that our hope cannot be uncertain, as it rests on God's promises: "Nor does this expectation seem to us vain, or this hope doubtful, since we rely on the promises of the eternal truth."[2839] In another place he says of himself that his hope depends on three things,—the love which induced God to adopt us as his children, the truth of his promises, and his power to fulfil them: "Three things I see in which my hope consists,—the love of adoption, the truth of promise, the power of performance."[2840]

And therefore the Apostle St. James declares that the man who desires the grace of God must ask for it, not with hesitation, but with the confident certainty of obtaining it: *Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.*[2841] For if he asks with hesitation, he shall obtain nothing: *For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, that is moved and carried about by the wind; therefore, let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.*[2842] And St. Paul praises Abraham for not doubting God's promise; as he knew that when God promises, he cannot fail to perform: *In the promise, also, of God, he staggered not by distrust; but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God; most fully knowing that whatsoever He has promised, He is able also to perform.*[2843] Hence, also, Jesus Christ tells us that we shall then receive all the graces that we desire when we ask them with a sure belief of receiving them: *Therefore I say to you, all things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive them, and they shall come unto you.*[2844] In a word, God will not hear us, unless we have a sure confidence of being heard.

Now let us come to the point. Our hope of salvation, and of receiving the means necessary for its attainment, must be certain on God's part. The motives on which this certainty are founded, as we have seen, are the power, the mercy, and the truth of God; and of these the strongest and most certain motive is God's infallible faithfulness to the promise which he has made to us, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to save us, and to give us the graces necessary for our salvation; because, though we might believe God to be infinite in power and mercy, nevertheless, as Giovenino well observes, we could not feel confident expectation of God's saving us, unless he had surely promised to do so. But this promise is conditional, if we actively correspond to God's grace and pray, as is clear from the Scriptures: *Ask, and ye shall receive; if ye ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you. He will give good things to those that ask Him. We ought always to pray. Ye have not, because ye ask not. If any one wanteth wisdom, let him ask of God;*[2845] and many other texts which we have quoted before. For this cause the Fathers and theologians, as we showed in Part I., Chapter I., maintain that prayer is a necessary means of salvation.

Now, if we were not certain that God gives to all men grace to enable them actually to pray, without need of a further, special, and unusual grace, we could have no certain and firm foundation for a certain hope of salvation in God, but only an uncertain and conditional foundation. When I am certain that by prayer I shall obtain eternal life, and all the graces necessary to attain it; and when I know that God will not deny me the grace of actual prayer, if I will (because he gives it to all men), then I have a sure foundation for hoping in God for salvation, unless I fail on my part. But when I am in doubt whether or not God will give me that particular grace which he does not give to all, but which is necessary for actual prayer, then I have not a certain foundation for my hope of salvation, but only a doubtful and uncertain one; since I cannot be sure that God will give me this special grace, without which I cannot pray, since lie refuses it to so many. And in this case the uncertainty would not be only on my part, but also on God's part; and so Christian hope would be destroyed, which, according to the Apostle, ought to be immovable, firm, and secure. I really cannot see how a Christian can fulfil the precept of hope—hoping, as he ought, with sure confidence for salvation from God, and for the graces necessary for its attainment—unless he holds it as an infallible truth that God commonly gives to every individual the grace actually to pray, if he chooses, without need of a further special assistance.

So that, to conclude, our system or opinion (held by so many theologians, and by our humble Congregation) well agrees, on the one hand, with the doctrine of grace intrinsically efficacious, by means of which we infallibly, though freely, act virtuously.

It cannot be denied that God can easily, with his omnipotence, incline and move men's hearts freely to will that which he wills, as the Scriptures teach:

The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; whithersoever He will, He shall turn it;[2846] *I will put My Spirit in the midst of you, and I will cause you to walk in My commandments;*[2847] *My counsel shall stand, and all My will shall be done;*[2848] *He changeth the heart of the princes of the people of the earth;*[2849] *May the God of peace make you perfect in every good work, that you may do His will; working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ.*[2850]

And it cannot be denied that St. Augustine and St. Thomas have taught the opinion of the efficaciousness of grace in itself, by its own nature. This is evident from many passages, and specially from the following:

St. Augustine says: "Yet God did not this, except by the will of the men themselves; since he, no doubt, has the most almighty and absolute power of inclining the hearts of men."[2851] Again: "Almighty God works in the hearts of men, that he may do by their means that which he has determined to do."[2852] Again: "Although they all do what is right in the service of God, yet he causes them to do what he commands."[2853] Again: "It is certain that we act when we act; but he causes us to act, by bestowing most efficacious powers on the will, according to his words, *I will make you to walk in my justifications.*[2854] Again, on the text *For it is God that worketh in you, both, to will and accomplish according to His good will*, he says "We therefore will; but God worketh in us, both to will and to perform."[2855] Again: "As the will is prepared by God, we must pray that we may have as much will as is sufficient to make us act when we will."[2856] Again: "God knows how to work in men's hearts, not so as to make them believe against their will, which is impossible, but so as to make them willing instead of unwilling."[2857] Again: "He works in men's hearts, not only true revelations, but also good-will."[2858] Again: "Our acts of will have just so much power as God chooses them to have."[2859] Again: "The wills which preserve the system of creation are in such sort in God's power, that he makes them incline where he will and when he will."[2860] So St. Thomas: "God infallibly moves the will by the efficacy of the moving power, which cannot fail."[2861] Again: "Love has the character of impeccability, from the power of the Holy Spirit, who infallibly works whatever he will; hence it is impossible that these two things should be at the same time true,—that the Holy Spirit wills to move a person to an act of love, and that at the same time the person should lose love by an act of sin.”[2862] Again: “If God moves the will to anything, it is impossible to say that the will is not moved to it.”[2863]

On the other hand, our opinion is quite consonant to the doctrine of truly sufficient grace being given to all, by corresponding to which a man will gain efficacious grace; while by not corresponding, but resisting, he will deservedly be refused this efficacious grace. And thus all excuse is taken away from those sinners who say that they have not strength to overcome their temptations; because if they had prayed, and made use of the ordinary grace which is given to all men, they would have obtained strength, and would have been saved. Otherwise, if a person does not admit this ordinary grace, by which every one is enabled at least to pray (without needing a further special and unusual grace), and by prayer to obtain further assistance to enable him to fulfil the law, I do not know how he can explain all those texts of the Scripture, in which souls are exhorted to return to God, to overcome temptation, and to correspond to the divine call: *Return, ye transgressors, to the heart;*[2864] *Return and live; Be converted, and do penance;*[2865] *Loose the bonds from off thy neck;*[2866] *Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened;*[2867] *Resist, strong in faith;*[2868] *Walk whilst you have the light.*[2869] I cannot tell, I say, supposing it were true that the grace of prayer were not given to all, to enable them thereby to obtain the further assistance necessary for salvation, how these texts could be explained, and how the sacred writers could so forcibly exhort all men, without any exception, to be converted, to resist the enemy, to walk in the way of virtue, and, for this end, to pray with confidence and perseverance—if the grace of doing well, or at least of praying, were not granted to all, but only to those who have the gift of efficacious grace. And I cannot see where would be the justice of the reproof given to all sinners without exception, who resist grace and despise the voice of God: *You always resist the Holy Ghost;*[2870] *Because I called and you refused; I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded; you have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my reprehensions.*[2871] If they were without even the remote but efficacious grace of prayer, which our opponents consider necessary for actual prayer, I cannot tell how all these reproofs could be justly made against them.[2872]

CONCLUSION

I have done. Some, perhaps, will wish that I had given more space to the distinct examination of the question so much controverted, wherein consists the efficaiousness of grace, and which the systems of different schools attribute to a physical premotion, to congruous grace, to concomitant grace, to a delectation which overcomes by reason of a moral action, or to a delectation which overcomes by reason of its superiority in degree. But for this, such a book as this, which I deliberately intended should be small and easily readable, would not have been enough. To explore this vast sea, many volumes would have been required. But this work has been sufficiently performed by others, and, moreover, it was beside my purpose. Still, I wished to establish the point treated of in my second part, for the honor of God's providence and goodness, and to be of assistance to sinners, to prevent them from giving themselves up to despair, because they think themselves deprived of grace; and also to take from them all excuse, if they say that they have not strength to resist the assaults of the senses and of hell. I have shown them, that of those who are lost, no one is damned for the original sin of Adam, but solely for his own fault, because God refuses to no one the grace of prayer, whereby we may obtain his assistance to overcome every concupiscence, and every temptation.

For the rest, my principal intention was to recommend to all men the use of prayer as the most powerful and necessary means of grace, in order that all men should more diligently and earnestly attend to it, if they wish to be saved; for many poor souls lose God's grace, and continue to live in sin, and are finally damned, for this very reason, that they do not pray, nor have recourse to God for assistance. The worst of the matter is (I cannot help saying so), that so few preachers and so few confessors have any definite purpose of indoctrinating their hearers and penitents with the use of prayer, without which it is impossible to observe the law of God, and to obtain perseverance in his grace.

Having observed that so many passages, both of the Old and the New Testament, assert the absolute necessity of prayer, I have made it a rule to introduce into all the missions, as given by our Congregation for several years, a sermon on prayer; and I say, and repeat, and will keep repeating as long as I live, that our whole salvation depends on prayer; and, therefore, that all writers in their books, all preachers in their sermons, all confessors in their instructions to their penitents, should not inculcate anything more strongly than continual prayer. They should always admonish, exclaim, and continually repeat, Pray, pray, never cease to pray; for if you pray, your salvation will be secure; but if you leave off praying, your damnation will be certain. All preachers and directors ought to do this; because, according to the opinion of every Catholic school, there is no doubt of this truth, that he who prays, obtains grace and is saved; but those who practise it are too few, and this is the reason why so few are saved.

DEVOUT PRACTICES

I

PRAYER TO OBTAIN FINAL PERSEVERANCE

Eternal Father, I humbly adore and thank Thee for having created me, and for having redeemed me by means of Jesus Christ. I thank Thee for having made me a Christian by giving me the true faith, and by adopting me for Thy child in holy baptism. I thank Thee for having given me time for repentance after my many sins, and for having, as I hope, pardoned all my offences against Thee. I renew my sorrow for them, because I have displeased Thee. O Infinite Goodness! I thank Thee also for having preserved me from falling again as often as I should have done if Thou hadst not held me up and saved me. But my enemies do not cease to fight against me, nor will they until death, that they may again have me for their slave; if Thou dost not keep and help me continually by Thine assistance, I shall be wretched enough to lose Thy grace anew. I therefore pray Thee, for the love of Jesus Christ, to grant me holy perseverance till death. Thy Son Jesus has promised that Thou wilt grant us whatever we ask for in his name. By the merits, then, of Jesus Christ, I beg of Thee for myself, and for all those who are in Thy grace, the grace of never more being separated from Thy love, but that we may always love Thee in this life and in the next.

Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.

II

PRAYER TO JESUS CHRIST, TO OBTAIN HIS HOLY LOVE

My crucified Love, my dear Jesus! I believe in Thee, and confess Thee to be the true Son of God and my Saviour. I adore Thee from the abyss of my own nothingness, and I thank Thee for the death Thou didst suffer for me, that I might obtain the life of divine grace. My beloved Redeemer, to Thee I owe all my salvation. Through Thee I have hitherto escaped hell; through

Thee have I received the pardon of my sins. But I am so ungrateful that, instead of loving Thee, I have repeated my offences against Thee. I deserve to be condemned, so as not to be able to love Thee any more. But no, my Jesus, punish me in any other way, but not in this. If I have not loved Thee in time past, I love Thee now; and I desire nothing but to love Thee with all my heart. But without Thy help I can do nothing. Since Thou dost command me to love Thee, give me also the strength to fulfil this Thy sweet and loving precept. Thou hast promised to grant all that we ask of Thee: *You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.*[2873] Confiding, then, in this promise, my dear Jesus, I ask, first of all, pardon of all my sins; and I repent, above all things, because I have offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness! I ask for holy perseverance in Thy grace till my death. But, above all, I ask for the gift of Thy holy love. Ah, my Jesus, my Hope, my Love, my All, inflame me with that love which Thou didst come on earth to enkindle![2874] For this end, make me always live in conformity with Thy holy will. Enlighten me, that I may understand more and more how worthy Thou art of our love, and that I may know the immense love Thou hast borne me, especially in giving Thy life for me. Grant, then, that I may love Thee with all my heart and may love Thee always, and never cease to beg of Thee the grace to love Thee in this life; that living always, and dying in Thy love, I may come one day to love Thee with all my strength in heaven, never to leave off loving Thee for all eternity.

O Mother of beautiful love, my advocate and refuge, Mary, who art of all creatures the most beautiful, the most loving, and the most beloved of God, and whose only desire it is to see him loved! ah, by the love thou bearest to Jesus Christ, pray for me, and obtain for me the grace to love him always, and with all my heart! This I ask and hope for from thee. Amen.

III

PRAYER TO OBTAIN CONFIDENCE IN THE MERITS OF JESUS CHRIST AND IN THE INTERCESSION OF MARY

Eternal Father, I thank Thee for myself, and on behalf of all mankind, for the great mercy that Thou hast shown us, in sending Thy Son to be made man, and to die to obtain our salvation; I thank Thee for it, and I should wish to offer Thee in thanksgiving all that love which is due for such an inestimable benefit. By his merits our sins are pardoned, and Thy justice is satisfied for the punishment we had merited; by these merits Thou dost receive us miserable sinners into Thy grace, while we deserve nothing but hatred and chastisement: Thou dost receive men to reign in Paradise. Finally, Thou hast bound Thyself, in consideration of these merits, to grant all gifts and graces to those who ask for them in the name of Jesus Christ.

I thank Thee also, O Infinite Goodness, that, in order to strengthen our confidence, besides giving us Jesus Christ as our Redeemer, Thou hast also given us Thy beloved daughter Mary as our advocate; so that, with that heart full of mercy which Thou hast given her, she may never cease to succor by her intercession any sinner who may have recourse to her; and this intercession is so powerful with Thee that Thou canst not deny her any grace which she asks of Thee.

Hence it is Thy will that we should have a great confidence in the merits of Jesus, and in the intercession of Mary. But this confidence is Thy gift, and it is a great gift which Thou dost grant to those only who ask Thee for it. This confidence, then, in the blood of Jesus Christ, and in the patronage of Mary, I beg of Thee, through the merits of Jesus and Mary. To Thee, also, my dear Redeemer, do I turn; it was to obtain for me this confidence in Thy merits that Thou didst sacrifice Thy life on the cross for me, who was worthy only of punishment. Accomplish, then, the end for which Thou hast died; enable me to hope for all things, through confidence in Thy Passion. And thou, O Mary, my Mother, and my hope after Jesus, obtain for me a firm confidence, first in the merits of Jesus thy Son, and then in the intercession of thy prayers,—prayers which are all-powerful in gaining all they ask!

O my beloved Jesus! O sweet Mary! I trust in you. To you do I give my soul; you have loved it so much, have pity on it, and save it.

IV

PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GRACE OF BEING CONSTANT IN PRAYER

O God of my soul, I hope in Thy goodness that Thou hast pardoned all my offences against Thee, and that I am now in a state of grace. I thank Thee for it with all my heart, and I hope to thank Thee for all eternity.[2875] I know that I have fallen, because I have not had recourse to Thee when I was tempted, to ask for holy perseverance. For the future, I firmly resolve to recommend myself always to Thee, and especially when I see myself in danger of again offending Thee. I will always fly to Thy mercy, invoking always the most holy names of Jesus and Mary, with full confidence that when I pray Thou wilt not fail to give me the strength which I have not of myself to resist my enemies. This I resolve and promise to do. But of what use, O my God, will all these resolutions and promises be, if Thou dost not assist me with Thy grace to put them in practice; that is, to have recourse to Thee in all dangers? Ah. Eternal Father! help me, for the love of Jesus Christ; and let me never omit recommending myself to Thee whenever I am tempted. I know that Thou dost always help me when I have recourse to Thee; but my fear is, that I should forget to recommend myself to Thee, and so my negligence will be the cause of my ruin, that is, the loss of Thy grace, the greatest evil that can happen to me. Ah, by the merits of Jesus Christ, give me grace to pray to Thee; but grant me such an abundant grace that I may always pray, and pray as I ought!

O my Mother Mary, whenever I have had recourse to thee, thou hast obtained for me the help which has kept me from falling! Now I come to beg of thee to obtain a still greater grace, namely, that of recommending myself always to thy Son and to thee in all my necessities. My Queen, thou obtainest all thou dost desire from God by the love thou bearest to Jesus Christ; obtain for me now this grace which I beg of thee,—namely, to pray always, and never to cease praying till I die. Amen.

V

PRAYER TO BE SAID EVERY DAY, TO OBTAIN THE GRACES NECESSARY FOR SALVATION

Eternal Father, Thy Son has promised that Thou wilt grant us all the graces which we ask Thee for in his name. In the name, therefore, and by the merits of Jesus Christ, I ask the following graces for myself and for all mankind. And, first, I pray Thee to give me a lively faith in all that the holy Roman Church teaches me. Enlighten me also, that I may know the vanity of the goods of this world, and the immensity of the infinite good that Thou art; make me also see the deformity of the sins I have committed, that I may humble myself and detest them as I ought; and, on the other hand, show me how worthy Thou art by reason of Thy goodness, that I should love Thee with all my heart. Make me know also the love Thou hast borne me, that from this day forward I may try to be grateful for so much goodness. Secondly, give me a firm confidence in Thy mercy of receiving the pardon of my sins, holy perseverance, and, finally, the glory of paradise, through the merits of Jesus Christ and the intercession of Mary. Thirdly, give me a great love towards Thee, which shall detach me from the love of this world and of myself, so that I may love none other but Thee, and that I may neither do nor desire anything else but what is for Thy glory. Fourthly, I beg of Thee a perfect resignation to Thy will, in accepting with tranquillity sorrows, infirmities, contempt, persecutions, aridity of spirit, loss of property, of esteem, of relatives, and every other cross which shall come to me from Thy hands. I offer myself entirely to Thee, that Thou mayest do with me and all that belongs to me what Thou pleasest. Do Thou only give me light and strength to do Thy will; and especially at the hour of death help me to sacrifice my life to Thee with all the affection I am capable of, in union with the sacrifice which Thy Son Jesus Christ made of his life on the Cross on Calvary. Fifthly, I beg of Thee a great sorrow for my sins, which may make me grieve over them as long as I live, and weep for the insults I have offered Thee, the Sovereign Good, who art worthy of infinite love, and who hast loved me so much. Sixthly, I pray Thee to give me the spirit of true humility and meekness, that I may accept with peace, and even with joy, all the contempt, ingratitude, and ill-treatment that I may receive. At the same time, I also pray Thee to give me perfect charity, which shall make me wish well to those who have done evil to me, and to do what good I can, at least by praying, for those who have in any way injured me. Seventhly, I beg of Thee to give me a love for the virtue of holy mortification, by which I may chastise my rebellious senses and cross my self-love; at the same time, I beg Thee to give me holy purity of body, and the grace to resist all bad temptations, by ever having recourse to Thee and Thy most holy Mother. Give me grace faithfully to obey my spiritual Father and all my Superiors in all things. Give me an upright intention, that in all I desire and do I may seek only Thy glory, and to please Thee alone. Give me a great confidence in the Passion of Jesus Christ, and in the intercession of Mary Immaculate. Give me a great love towards the most Adorable Sacrament of the Altar, and a tender devotion and love to Thy holy Mother. Give me, I pray Thee, above all, holy perseverance, and the grace always to pray for it, especially in time of temptation and at the hour of death.

Lastly, I recommend to Thee the holy souls of Purgatory, my relatives and benefactors; and in an especial manner I recommend to Thee all those who hate me or who have in any way offended me; I beg of Thee to render them good for the evil they have done, or may wish to do me. Finally, I recommend to Thee all infidels, heretics, and all poor sinners; give them light and strength to deliver themselves from sin. O most loving God, make Thyself known and loved by all, but especially by those who have been more ungrateful to Thee than others, so that by Thy goodness I may come one day to sing Thy mercies in paradise; for my hope is in the merits of Thy blood, and in the patronage of Mary.

O Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me! So I hope; so may it be!

VI

THOUGHTS AND EJACULATIONS

O God! who knows what fate awaits me?

I shall be either eternally happy or eternally miserable.

Of what worth is all the world without God?

Let all be lost, but let not God be lost.

I love Thee, my Jesus, who didst die for me!

Would that I had died before I ever offended Thee!

I will rather die than lose God.

Jesus and Mary, you are my hope.

My God, help me, for the love of Jesus Christ!

My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me!

Suffer me not to separate myself from Thee.

Give me Thy love, and then do with me what Thou pleasest.

Whom shall I love, if I love not Thee, my God?

Eternal Father, help me, for the love of Jesus!

I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee!

Here I am, O Lord; do with me what Thou wilt!

When shall I see myself altogether Thine, my God?

When shall I be able to say to Thee, My God, I can lose Thee no more?

Mary, my hope, have pity on me!

Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me!

Lord, who am I, that Thou shouldst desire to be loved by me?

My God, I desire Thee alone, and nothing more.

I desire all that Thou dost will, and that alone.

Oh, that I might be annihilated for Thee, who wast annihilated for me!

Towards Thee alone, my God, have I been ungrateful!

I have offended Thee enough, I will no longer displease Thee.

If I had died then, I could not have loved Thee any more.

Let me die before again offending Thee.

Thou hast waited for me that I might love Thee. Yea, I will love Thee.

I consecrate the remainder of my life to Thee.

O my Jesus, draw me entirely to Thyself!

Thou wilt not leave me; I will not leave Thee. I hope that we shall always love each another, O God of my soul!

My Jesus, make me all Thine before I die!

Grant that when Thou shalt come to judge me, I may see Thee with a benign countenance.

Thou hast done more than enough to oblige me to love Thee. I love Thee, I love Thee!

Deign to accept the love of a sinner who has so often offended Thee.

Thou hast given Thyself all to me; I give myself all to Thee.

I desire to love Thee exceedingly in this life, that I may love Thee exceedingly in the next.

Teach me to know Thy great goodness, that I may love Thee very much.

Thou lovest those that love Thee. I love Thee; do Thou also love me.

Give me the love Thou requirest of me.

I rejoice that Thou art infinitely happy.

Oh that I had always loved Thee, and had died before I had offended Thee.

Grant that I may overcome all things to please Thee.

I give Thee my whole will; dispose of me as thou pleasest.

My pleasure is to please Thee, O Infinite Goodness!

I hope to love Thee for all eternity, O eternal God!

Thou art omnipotent; make me a saint.

Thou didst seek me while I was flying from Thee; Thou wilt not drive me away now that I seek after Thee.

I thank Thee for giving me time to love Thee. I thank Thee, and love Thee!

Let me give myself entirely to Thee this day,

Punish me in anyway, but deprive me not of the power of loving Thee.

I will love Thee, my God, without reserve.

I accept all sufferings and all contempt, provided I may love Thee.

I desire to die for Thee, who didst die for me.

I wish that all could love Thee, who didst die for me.

I wish that all could love Thee as Thou meritest.

I wish to do everything that I know to be Thy pleasure.

I care more to please Thee than for all the pleasures of the world.

O holy will of God, you are my love!

O Mary, draw me entirely to God!

O my Mother, make me always have recourse to thee; it is for thee to make me a saint; this is my hope.

HYMN

INVOCATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN TIME OF TEMPTATION

Haste, my Mother, run to help me;
Mother, haste, do not delay;
See from hell the envious serpent
Comes my troubling soul to slay.
Ah! his very look affrights me,
And his cruel rage I fear;
Whither fly, if he attacks me?
See him, see him coming near!
Lo? I faint away with terror,
For if yet thou dost delay,
He will dart at me his venom;
Then, alas! I am his prey.
Cries and tears have nought availed me,
Spite of all, I see him there;
Saints I call till I am weary,
Still he stands with threat’ning air.
Now his mighty jaws are open,
And his forkèd tongue I see;

Ah! he coils to spring upon me,—
Mother! hasten, make him flee.
Mary! yes, the name of Mary
Strikes with dread my cruel foe,
Straight he flees, as from the sunbeam
Swiftly melts the winter’s snow.
Now he’s gone, but do thou ever
Stay beside me, Mother dear;
Then the hellish fiend to tempt me
Nevermore will venture near.

Mental Prayer and the Exercises of a Retreat

I. MENTAL PRAYER[2876]

I

MENTAL PRAYER IS MORALLY NECESSARY FOR SALVATION

1. IT ENLIGHTENS THE MIND

In the first place, without mental prayer the soul is without light. They, says St. Augustine, who keep their eyes shut cannot see the way to their country. The eternal truths are all spiritual things that are seen, not with the eyes of the body, but with the eyes of the mind; that is, by reflection and consideration. Now, they who do not make mental prayer do not see these truths, neither do they see the importance of eternal salvation, and the means which they must adopt in order to obtain it. The loss of so many souls arises from the neglect of considering the great affair of our salvation, and what we must do in order to be saved. *With desolation,* says the prophet Jeremias, *is all the land made desolate: because there is none that considereth in the heart.*[2877] On the other hand, the Lord says that he who keeps before his eyes the truths of faith—that is, death, judgment, and the happy or unhappy eternity that awaits us—shall never fall into sin. *In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.*[2878] Draw near to God, says David, and you shall be enlightened. *Come ye to Him and be enlightened.*[2879] In another place, our Saviour says, *Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands.*[2880] These lamps are, according to St. Bonaventure, holy meditations;[2881] for in prayer the Lord speaks to us, and enlightens, in order to show us the way of salvation. *Thy word is a lamp to my feet.*[2882]

St. Bonaventure also says that mental prayer is, as it were, a mirror, in which we see all the stains of the soul. In a letter to the Bishop of Osma, St. Teresa says, “Although it appears to us that we have no imperfections, still when God opens the eyes of the soul, as he usually does in prayer, our imperfections are then clearly seen."[2883] He who does not make mental prayer does not even know his defects, and therefore, as St. Bernard says, he does not abhor them.[2884] He does not even know the dangers to which his eternal salvation is exposed, and, therefore, he does not even think of avoiding them. But he who applies himself to meditation instantly sees his faults, and the dangers of perdition, and, seeing them, he will reflect on the remedies for them. By meditating on eternity, David was excited to the practice of virtue, and to sorrow and works of penance for his sins. *I thought upon the days of old, and I had in my mind the eternal years* . . . *and I was exercised, and I swept my spirit.*[2885] The spouse in the Canticles says, *The flowers have appeared in our land: the time of pruning is come: the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.*[2886] When the soul, like the solitary turtle, retires and recollects itself in meditation to converse with God, then the flowers—that is, good desires—appear: then comes the time of pruning, that is, the correction of faults which are discovered in mental prayer. "Consider," says St. Bernard, "that the time of pruning is at hand, if the time of meditation has gone before."[2887] For (says the saint in another place) meditation regulates the affections, directs the actions, and corrects defects.[2888]

2. IT DISPOSES THE HEART TO THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUES

Moreover, without meditation there is not strength to resist the temptations of our enemies, and to practise the virtues of the Gospel.

Meditation is like fire with regard to iron, which, when cold, is hard, and can be wrought only with difficulty. But placed in the fire it becomes soft, and the workman gives it any form he wishes,[2889] says the venerable Bartholomew à Martyribus. To observe the divine precepts and counsels, it is necessary to have a tender heart, that is, a heart docile and prepared to receive the impressions of celestial inspirations, and ready to obey them. It was this that Solomon asked of God: *Give, therefore, to thy servant an understanding heart.*[2890] Sin has made our heart hard and indocile; for, being altogether inclined to sensual pleasures, it resists, as the Apostle complained, the laws of the spirit: *But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind.*[2891] But man becomes docile and tender to the influence of grace which is communicated in mental prayer. By the contemplation of the divine goodness, the great love which God has borne him, and the immense benefits which God has bestowed upon him, man is inflamed with love, his heart is softened, and made obedient to the divine inspirations. But without mental prayer, his heart will remain hard and restive and disobedient, and thus he will be lost: *A hard heart shall fare evil at the last.*[2892] Hence, St. Bernard exhorted Pope Eugene never to omit meditations on account of external occupations. “I fear for you, O Eugene, lest the multitude of affairs (prayer and consideration being intermitted) may bring you to a hard heart, which abhors not itself, because it perceives not.”[2893]

Some may imagine that the long time which devout souls give to prayer, and which they could spend in useful works, is unprofitable and lost time. But such persons know not that in mental prayer souls acquire strength to conquer enemies and to practise virtue. “From this leisure,” says St. Bernard, “strength comes forth.”[2894] Hence, the Lord commanded that his spouse should not be disturbed. *I adjure you . . . that you stir not up, nor awake my beloved till she please.*[2895] He says, *until she please;* for the sleep or repose which the soul takes in mental prayer is perfectly voluntary, but is, at the same time, necessary for its spiritual life. He who does not sleep has not strength to work nor to walk, but goes tottering along the way. The soul that does not repose and acquire strength in meditation is not able to resist temptations, and totters on the road. In the life of the Venerable Sister Mary Crucified, we read that, while at prayer, she heard a devil boasting that he had made a nun omit the common meditation, and that afterwards, because he continued to tempt to her, she was in danger of consenting to mortal sin. The servant of God ran to the nun, and, with the divine aid, rescued her from the criminal suggestion. Behold the danger to which one who omits meditation exposes his soul! St. Teresa used to say that he who neglects mental prayer, needs not a devil to carry him to hell, but that he brings himself there with his own hands. And the Abbot Diocles says that “the man who omits mental prayer soon becomes either a beast or a devil.”

3. IT HELPS US TO PRAY AS WE SHOULD

Without petitions on our part, God does not grant the divine helps; and without aid from God, we cannot observe the commandments.[2896] From the absolute necessity of the prayer of petition arises the moral necessity of mental prayer; for he who neglects meditation, and is distracted with worldly affairs, will not know his spiritual wants, the dangers to which his salvation is exposed, the means which he must adopt in order to conquer temptations, or even the necessity of the prayer of petition for all men; thus, he will give up the practice of prayer, and by neglecting to ask God's graces he will certainly be lost. The great Bishop Palafox, in his Annotations to the letters of St. Teresa, says:[2897] "How can charity last, unless God gives perseverance? How will the Lord give us perseverance, if we neglect to ask him for it? And how shall we ask him without mental prayer? Without mental prayer, there is not the communication with God which is necessary for the preservation of virtue." And Cardinal Bellarmine says, that for him who neglects meditation, it is morally impossible to live without sin.

Some one may say, I do not make mental prayer, but I say many vocal prayers. But it is necessary to know, as St. Augustine remarks, that to obtain the divine grace it is not enough to pray with the tongue, it is necessary also to pray with heart. On the words of David, *I cried to the Lord with my voice,*[2898] the holy Doctor says, "Many cry not with their own voice (that is, not with the interior voice of the soul), but with that of the body. Your thoughts are a cry to the Lord.[2899] Cry within, where God hears."[2900] This is what the Apostle inculcates: *Praying at all times in the spirit.*[2901] In general, vocal prayers are said distractedly with the voice of the body, but not of the heart, especially when they are long, and still more especially when said by a person who does not make mental prayer; and, therefore, God seldom hears them, and seldom grants the graces asked. Many say the Rosary, the Office of the Blessed Virgin, and perform other works of devotion; but they still continue in sin. But it is impossible for him who perseveres in mental prayer to continue in sin: he will either give up meditation or renounce sin. A great servant of God used to say that mental prayer and sin cannot exist together. And this we see by experience: they who make mental prayer rarely incur the enmity of God; and should they ever have the misfortune of falling into sin, by persevering in mental prayer they see their misery and return to God. Let a soul, says St. Teresa, be ever so negligent, if it persevere in meditation, the Lord will bring it back to the haven of salvation.

II

MENTAL PRAYER IS INDISPENSABLE IN ORDER TO ATTAIN PERFECTION

All the saints have become saints by mental prayer. Mental prayer is the blessed furnace in which souls are inflamed with the divine love. *In my meditation,* says David, *a fire shall flame out.*[2902] St. Vincent of Paul used to say that it would be a miracle if a sinner who attends at the sermons in the mission, or in the spiritual exercises, were not converted. Now, he who preaches, and speaks in the exercises, is only a man; but it is God himself that speaks to the soul in meditation. *I will lead her into the wilderness; and I will speak to her heart.*[2903] St. Catharine of Bologna used to say, "He who does not practise mental prayer deprives himself of the bond that unites the soul with God; hence, finding her alone, the devil will easily make her his own." "How," she would say, "can I conceive that the love of God is found in the soul that cares but little to treat with God in prayer?"

Where, but in meditation, have the saints been inflamed with divine love? By means of mental prayer, St. Peter of Alcantara was inflamed to such a degree that in order to cool himself, he ran into a frozen pool, and the frozen water began to boil like water in a caldron placed on the fire. In mental prayer, St. Philip Neri became inflamed, and trembled so that he shook the entire room. In mental prayer, St. Aloysius Gonzaga was so inflamed with divine ardor that his very face appeared to be on fire, and his heart beat as strongly as if it wished to fly from the body.

St. Laurence Justinian says: "By the efficacy of mental prayer, temptation is banished, sadness is driven away, lost virtue is restored, fervor which has grown cold is excited, and the lovely flame of divine love is augmented."[2904] Hence, St. Aloysius Gonzaga has justly said that he who does not make much mental prayer will never attain a high degree of perfection.

A man of prayer, says David, is like a tree planted near the current of waters, which brings forth fruit in due time; all his actions prosper before God. *Blessed is the man . . . who shall meditate on his law day and night! And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season, and his leaf shall not fall off: and* *all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper.*[2905] Mark the words *in due season;* that is, at the time when he ought to bear such a pain, such an affront, etc.

St. John Chrysostom[2906] compared mental prayer to a fountain in the middle of a garden. Oh! what an abundance of flowers and verdant plants do we see in the garden which is always refreshed with water from the fountain! Such, precisely, is the soul that practises mental prayer: you will see, that it always advances in good desires, and that it always brings forth more abundant fruits of virtue. Whence does the soul receive so many blessings? From meditation, by which it is continually irrigated. *Thy plants are a paradise of pomegranates with the fruits of the orchard. . . . The fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, which run with a strong stream from Libanus.*[2907] But let the fountain cease to water the garden, and, behold, the flowers, plants, and all instantly wither away; and why? Because the water has failed. You will see that as long as such a person makes mental prayer, he is modest, humble, devout, and mortified in all things. But let him omit meditation, and you will instantly find him wanting in modesty of the eyes, proud, resenting every word, indevout, no longer frequenting the sacraments and the church; you will find him attached to vanity, to useless conversations, to pastimes, and to earthly pleasures; and why? The water has failed, and, therefore, fervor has ceased. *My soul is as earth without water unto thee. . . . My spirit hath fainted away.*[2908] The soul has neglected mental prayer, the garden is therefore dried up, and the miserable soul goes from bad to worse. When a soul abandons meditation, St. Chrysostom regards it not only as sick, but as dead. “He,” says the holy Doctor, “who prays not to God, nor desires to enjoy assiduously his divine conversation, is dead. . . . The death of the soul is not to be prostrated before God.”[2909]

The same Father says that mental prayer is the root of the fruitful vine.[2910] And St. John Climacus writes, that “prayer is a bulwark against the assault of afflictions, the spring of virtues, the procurer of graces.”[2911] Rufinus asserts, that all the spiritual progress of the soul flows from mental prayer.[2912] And Gerson goes so far as to say that he who neglects meditation cannot, without a miracle, lead the life of a Christian.[2913] Speaking of mental prayer, Jeremias says, *He shall sit solitary, and hold his peace; because he hath taken it up upon himself.*[2914] That is, a soul cannot have a relish for God, unless it withdraws from creatures, and *sits*, that is, stops to contemplate the goodness, the love, the amiableness of God. But when solitary and recollected in meditation—that is, when it takes away its thoughts from the world—it is then raised above itself; and departs from prayer very different from what it was when it began it.

St. Ignatius of Loyola used to say that mental prayer is the short way to attain perfection. In a word, he who advances most in meditation makes the greatest progress in perfection. In mental prayer the soul is filled with holy thoughts, with holy affections, desires, and holy resolutions, and with love for God. There man sacrifices his passions, his appetites, his earthly attachments, and all the interests of self-love. Moreover, by praying for them, in mental prayer, we can save many sinners, as was done by St. Teresa, St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, and is done by all souls enamoured of God, who never omit, in their meditations, to recommend to him all infidels, heretics, and all poor sinners; begging him also to give zeal to priests who work in his vineyard, that they may convert his enemies. In mental prayer we can also, by the sole desire of performing them, gain the merit of many good works which we do not perform. For, as the Lord punishes bad desires, so, on the other hand, he rewards all our good desires.

PRAYER

My Jesus, Thou hast loved me in the midst of pains; and in the midst of sufferings, I wish to love Thee. Thou hast spared nothing, Thou hast even given Thy blood and Thy life, in order to gain my love; and shall I continue, as hitherto, to be reserved in loving Thee? No, my Redeemer, it shall not be so: the ingratitude with which I have hitherto treated Thee is sufficient. To Thee I consecrate my whole heart. Thou alone dost deserve all my love. Thee alone do I wish to love. My God, since Thou wishest me to be entirely Thine, give me strength to serve Thee as Thou deservest, during the remainder of my life. Pardon my tepidity and my past infidelities. How often have I omitted mental prayer, in order to indulge my caprice! Alas! how often, when it was in my power to remain with Thee in order to please Thee, have I remained with creatures, so as to offend Thee! Oh, that so many lost years would return! But, since they will not return, the remaining days of my life must be entirely Thine, O my beloved Lord! I love Thee, O my Jesus! I love Thee, O my Sovereign Good! Thou art and shalt be forever the only love of my soul. O Mother of fair love, O Mary! obtain for me the grace to love thy Son, and to spend the remainder of my life in his love. Thou dost obtain from Jesus whatsoever thou wishest. Through thy prayer I hope for this gift.

III

THE ENDS OF MENTAL PRAYER[2915]

In order to practise well mental prayer, or meditation, and to make it truly profitable to the soul, we must well ascertain the ends for which we attempt it.

TO UNITE OURSELVES TO GOD

We must meditate in order to unite ourselves more completely to God. It is not so much good thoughts in the intellect as good acts of the will, or holy desires, that unite us to God; and such are the acts which we perform in meditation,—acts of humility, confidence, self-sacrifice, resignation, and especially of love and of repentance for our sins. Acts of love, says St. Teresa, are those that keep the soul inflamed with holy love.

But the perfection of this love consists in making our will one with that of God; for the chief effect of love, as Dionysius the Areopagite says, is to unite the wills of those who love, so that they have but one heart and one will. St. Teresa also says, “All that he who exercises himself in prayer should aim at, is to conform himself to the divine will, and he may be assured that in this consists the highest perfection; he who best practises this will receive the greatest gifts from God, and will make the greatest progress in an interior life.”[2916]

There are many, however, who complain that they go to prayer and do not find God; the reason of which is, that they carry with them a heart full of earth. “Detach the heart from creatures, says St. Teresa; seek God, and you will find him.” *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him.*[2917] Therefore, to find God in prayer, the soul must be stripped of its love for the things of earth, and then God will speak to it: *I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart.*[2918] But in order to find God, solitude of the body, as St. Gregory observes, is is not enough; that of the heart is necessary too. The Lord one day said to St. Teresa: “I would willingly speak to many souls; but the world makes such a noise in their heart that my voice cannot make itself heard.” Ah! when a detached soul is engaged in prayer, truly does God speak to it, and make it understand the love which he has borne it; and then the soul, says St. Laurence Justinian, burning with holy love, speaks not; but in that silence, oh, how much does it say! The silence of charity, observes the same writer, says more to God than could be said by the utmost powers of human eloquence; each sigh that it utters is a manifestation of its whole interior.[2919] It then seems as if it could not repeat often enough, *My Beloved to me, and I to Him.*

TO OBTAIN GRACE FROM GOD

We must meditate in order to obtain from God the graces that are necessary to advance in the way of salvation, and especially to avoid sin, and to use the means which will lead us to perfection.

The best fruit which comes from meditation is the exercise of prayer. Almighty God, ordinarily speaking, does not give grace to any but those who pray. St. Gregory writes: “God desires to be entreated; he desires to be constrained; he desires to be, as it were, conquered by importunity.” It is true that at all times the Lord is ready to hear us, but at the time of meditation, when we are most truly in converse with God, he is most bountiful in giving us his aid.

Above all, should we, in meditation, ask God for perseverance and his holy love.

Final perseverance is not a single grace, but a chain of graces, to which must correspond the chain of our prayers. If we cease to pray, God will cease to give us his help, and we shall perish. He who does not practise meditation will find the greatest difficulty in persevering in grace till death. Let us remember what Palafox says: “How will the Lord give us perseverance if we do not ask it? And how shall we ask for it without meditation? Without meditation there is no communion with God.”

We must also be urgent with prayers to obtain from God his holy love. St. Francis de Sales says that all virtues come in union with holy love. *All good things came to me together with her.*[2920]

Let us, therefore, pray continually for perseverance and love; and, in order to pray with greater confidence, let us ever bear in mind the promise made us by Jesus Christ, that whatever we seek from God through the merits of his Son, he will give it us.[2921] Let us, then, pray, and pray always, if we would that God should make us abound in every blessing. Let us pray for ourselves, and, if we have zeal for the glory of God, let us pray also for others. It is a thing most pleasing to God to be entreated for unbelievers and heretics, and all sinners. *Let the people confess to Thee, O God; let all the people confess to Thee.*[2922] Let us say, O Lord, make them know Thee, make them love Thee. We read in the lives of St. Teresa and St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi how God inspired these holy women to pray for sinners. And to prayer for sinners let us also add prayers for the holy souls in purgatory.

WE OUGHT NOT TO SEEK IN MENTAL PRAYER SPIRITUAL CONSOLATIONS

We must apply ourselves to meditation, not for the sake of spiritual consolations, but chiefly in order to learn what is the will of God concerning us. *Speak, Lord,* said Samuel to God, *for Thy servant heareth.*[2923] "Lord, make me to know what Thou wilt, that I may do it. Some persons continue meditation as long as consolations continue; but when these cease, they leave off meditation. It is true that God is accustomed to comfort his beloved souls at the time of meditation, and to give them some foretaste of the delights he prepares in heaven for those who love him. These are things which the lovers of the world do not comprehend; they who have no taste except for earthly delights despise those which are celestial. Oh, if they were wise, how surely would they leave their pleasures to shut themselves in their closets, to speak alone with God! Meditation is nothing more than a converse between the soul and God; the soul pours forth to him its affections, its desires, its fears, its requests, and God speaks to the heart, causing it to know his goodness, and the love which he bears it, and what it must do to please him.

But these delights are not constant, and, for the most part, holy souls experience much dryness of spirit in meditation. "With dryness and temptations," says St. Teresa, "the Lord makes proof of those who love him." And she adds, "Even if this dryness lasts through life, let not the soul leave off meditation; the time will come when all will be well rewarded." The time of dryness is the time for gaining the greatest rewards; and when we find ourselves apparently without fervor, without good desires, and, as it were, unable to do a good act, let us humble ourselves and resign ourselves, for this very meditation will be more fruitful than others. It is enough then to say, if we can say nothing more, "O Lord, help me, have mercy on me, abandon me not!" Let us also have recourse to our comforter, the most holy Mary. Happy he who does not leave off meditation in the hour of desolation.

IV

PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS OF MEDITATION[2924]

The Holy Spirit says, *In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.*[2925] He who often meditates on the four last things—namely, death, judgment, and the eternity of hell and paradise will not fall into sin. But these truths are not seen with the eye of the body; the soul only perceives them. If they are not meditated on, they vanish from the mind; and then the pleasures of the senses present themselves, and those who do not keep before themselves the eternal truths are easily taken up by them; and this is the reason why so many abandon themselves to vice, and are damned. All Christians know and believe that they must die, and that we shall all be judged; but because they do not think about this, they live far away from God.

If we, moreover, do not meditate especially on our obligation to love God on account of his infinite perfections and the great blessings that he has conferred upon us, and the love that he has borne us, we shall hardly detach ourselves from the love of creatures in order to fix our whole love on God. It is in the time of prayer that God gives us to understand the worthlessness of earthly things, and the value of the good things of heaven; and then it is that he inflames with his love those hearts that do not offer resistance to his calls.

After all, the good rule is that we preferably meditate on the truths and mysteries that touch us more and procure for our soul the most abundant nourishment. Yet the subject most suitable for a person that aspires to perfection ought to be the Passion of our Lord. Louis Blosius relates that our Lord revealed to several holy women—to St. Gertrude, St. Bridget, St. Mechtilde, and St. Catharine of Sienna—that they who meditate on his Passion are very dear to him. According to St. Francis de Sales, the Passion of our Redeemer should be the ordinary subject of the meditation of every Christian. Oh, what an excellent book is the Passion of Jesus! There we understand, better than in any other book, the malice of sin, and also the mercy and love of God for man. To me it appears that Jesus Christ has suffered so many different pains—the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the crucifixion, etc.—that, having before our eyes so many painful mysteries, we might have a variety of different subjects for meditating on his Passion, by which we might excite sentiments of gratitude and love.

V

THE PLACE AND THE TIME SUITABLE FOR MEDITATION

THE PLACE[2926]

We can meditate in every place, at home or elsewhere, even in walking, in working. How many are there who, not being able to do otherwise, raise their hearts to God and apply their minds to mental prayer without leaving for this purpose their occupations, their work, or meditate even when travelling! He who seeks God will find him everywhere and at all times.

The essential condition to converse with God is the solitude of the heart, without which prayer would be worthless, and, as St. Gregory says, it would profit us little or nothing to be with the body in a solitary place, while the heart is full of worldly thoughts and affections.[2927] But to enjoy the solitude of the heart, which consists in being disengaged from worldly thoughts and affections, deserts and caves are not absolutely necessary. Those who from necessity are obliged to converse with the world, whenever their hearts are free from worldly attachments, even in the public streets, in places of resort, and public assemblies, can possess a solitude of heart, and continue united with God. All those occupations that we undertake in order to fulfil the divine will have no power to prevent the solitude of the heart. St. Catharine of Sienna truly found God in the midst of the household labors in which her parents kept her employed in order to draw her from devotional exercises; but in the midst of these affairs she preserved a retirement in her heart, which she called her cell, and there ceased not to converse with God alone.

However, when we can, we should retire to a solitary place to make our meditation. Our Lord has said, *When thou shalt pray, enter thy chamber, and, having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret.*”[2928] St. Bernard says that silence, and the absence of all noise, almost force the soul to think of the goods of heaven.[2929]

But the best place for making mental prayer is the church; for Jesus Christ especially delights in the meditation that is made before the Blessed Sacrament, since there it appears that he bestows light and grace most abundantly upon those who visit him. He has left himself in this sacrament, not only to be the food of souls that receive him in Holy Communion, but also to be found at all times by every one who seeks him. Devout pilgrims go to the holy town of Loreto, where Jesus Christ dwelt during his life; and to Jerusalem, where he died on the cross; but how much greater ought to be our devotion when we find him before us in the tabernacle, in which this Lord himself now dwells in person, who lived among us, and died for us on Calvary! It is not permitted in the world for persons of all ranks to speak alone with kings; but with Jesus Christ, the King of kings, both nobles and plebeians, rich and poor, can converse at their will, setting before him their wants, and seeking his grace; and there Jesus gives audience to all, hears all, and comforts all.

THE TIME

We have here to consider two things—namely, the time of the day most suitable for mental prayer, and the time to be spent in making it.

1. According to St. Bonaventure, the morning and the evening are the two parts of the day which, ordinarily speaking, are the fittest for meditation.[2930] But, according to St. Gregory of Nyssa, the morning is the most seasonable time for prayer, because, says the saint, when prayer precedes business, sin will not find entrance into the soul.[2931] And the Venerable Father Charles Carafa, founder of the Congregation of the *Pious Workers*, used to say that a fervent act of love, made in the morning during

meditation, is sufficient to maintain the soul in fervor during the entire day. Prayer, as St. Jerome has written, is also necessary in the evening. Let not the body go to rest before the soul is refreshed by mental prayer,[2932] which is the food of the soul. But at all times and in all places we can pray; it is enough for us to raise the mind to God, and to make good acts, for in this consists mental prayer.

2. With regard to the time to be spent in mental prayer, the rule of the saints was, to devote to it all the hours that were not necessary for the occupations of human life. St. Francis Borgia employed in meditation eight hours in the day, because his Superiors would not allow him a longer time; and when the eight hours had expired, he earnestly asked permission to remain a little longer at prayer, saying, “Ah! give me another little quarter of an hour.” St. Philip Neri was accustomed to spend the entire night in prayer. St. Anthony the Abbot remained the whole night in prayer; and when the sun appeared, which was the time assigned for terminating his prayer, he complained of it for having risen too soon.

Father Balthassar Alvarez used to say that a soul that loves God, when not in prayer, is like a stone out of its centre, in a violent state; for in this life we should, as much as possible, imitate the life of the saints in bliss, who are constantly employed in the contemplation of God.

But let us come to the particular time which a religious who seeks perfection should devote to mental prayer. Father Torres prescribed an hour’s meditation in the morning, another during the day, and a half-hour’s meditation in the evening, when they should not be hindered by sickness, or by any duty of obedience. If to you this appears too much, I counsel you to give at least two hours to mental prayer. It is certain that a half hour’s meditation each day would not be sufficient to attain a high degree of perfection; for beginners, however, this would be sufficient.[2933]

Sometimes the Lord wishes you to omit prayer in order to perform some work of fraternal charity; but it is necessary to attend to what St. Laurence Justinian says: “When charity requires it, the spouse of Jesus goes to serve her neighbor; but during that time she continually sighs to return to converse with her Spouse in the solitude of her cell.”[2934] Father Vincent Carafa, General of the Society of Jesus, stole as many little moments of time as he could, and employed them in prayer.

Mental prayer is tedious to those who are attached to the world, but not to those who love God only. Ah! conversation with God is not painful nor tedious to those who truly love him. *His conversation has no bitterness, his company produces not tediousness, but joy and gladness.*[2935] Mental prayer, says St. John Climacus, is nothing else than a familiar conversation and union with God.[2936] In prayer, as St. Chrysostom says, the soul converses with God, and God with the soul. No, the life of holy persons who love prayer, and fly from earthly amusements, is not a life of bitterness. If you do not believe me, *Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.*[2937] Try it, and you shall see how sweet the Lord is to those who leave all things in order to converse with him only. But the end which we ought to propose to ourselves in going to meditation should be, as has been said several times, not spiritual consolation, but to learn from our Lord what he wishes from us, and to divest ourselves of all self-love. "To prepare yourself for prayer," says St. John Climacus, "put off your own will."[2938] To prepare ourselves well for meditation, we must renounce self-will, and say to God, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.*[2939] Lord, tell me what Thou wishest me to do; I am willing to do it. And it is necessary to say this with a resolute will, for without this disposition the Lord will not speak to us.

VI

MANNER OF MAKING MENTAL PRAYER

Mental prayer contains three parts: the preparation, the meditation, and the conclusion.

I. THE PREPARATION

Begin by disposing your mind and body to enter into pious recollection.

Leave at the door of the place where you are going to converse with God all extraneous thoughts, saying, with St. Bernard, O my thoughts! wait here: after prayer we shall speak on other matters. Be careful not to allow the mind to wander where it wishes; but should a distracting thought enter, act as we shall tell you to do in § 7.

The posture of the body most suitable for prayer is to be kneeling; but if this posture becomes so irksome as to cause distractions, we may, as St.

John of the Cross says, make our meditation while modestly sitting down.

The preparation consists of three acts: 1. Act of faith in the presence of God; 2. Act of humility and of contrition; 3. Act of petition for light. We may perform these acts in the following manner:

ACT OF FAITH IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD, AND ACT OF ADORATION

My God, I believe that Thou art here present, and I adore Thee with my whole soul.

Be careful to make this act with a lively faith, for a lively remembrance of the divine presence contributes greatly to remove distractions. Cardinal Carracciolo, Bishop of Aversa, used to say that when a person is distracted in prayer there is reason to think that he has not made a lively act of faith.

ACT OF HUMILITY AND OF CONTRITION

Lord, I should now be in hell in punishment of the offences I have given Thee. I am sorry for them from the bottom of my heart; have mercy on me.

ACT OF PETITION FOR LIGHT

Eternal Father, for the sake of Jesus and Mary, give me light in this meditation, that I may draw fruit from it.

We must then recommend ourselves to the Blessed Virgin by saying a *Hail Mary,* to St. Joseph, to our guardian angel, and to our holy patron.

These acts, says St. Francis de Sales, ought to be made with fervor, but should be short, that we may pass immediately to the meditation.

II. THE MEDITATION

When you make meditation privately you may always use some book,[2940] at least at the commencement, and stop when you find yourself most touched. St. Francis de Sales says that in this we should do as the bees that stop on a flower as long as they find any honey on it, and then pass on to another. St. Teresa used a book for seventeen years; she would first read a little, then meditate for a short time on what she had read. It is useful to meditate in this manner, in imitation of the pigeon that first drinks and then raises its eyes to heaven.

When mental prayer is made in common, one person reads for the rest the subject of meditation and divides it into two parts: the first is read at the beginning, after the preparatory acts; the second, towards the middle of the half hour, or after the Consecration if the meditation is made during the Mass. one should read in a loud tone of voice, and slowly, so as to be well understood.

It should be remembered that the advantage of mental prayer consists not so much in meditating as in making affections, petitions, and resolutions: these are the three principal fruits of meditation. “The progress of a soul,” says St. Teresa, “does not consist in thinking much of God, but in loving him ardently; and this love is acquired by resolving to do a great deal for him.”[2941] Speaking of mental prayer, the spiritual masters say that meditation is, as it were, the needle which, when it has passed, must be succeeded by the golden thread, composed, as has been said, of affections, petitions, and resolutions; and this we are going to explain.

1. THE AFFECTIONS

When you have reflected on the point of meditation, and feel any pious sentiment, raise your heart to God and offer him acts of humility, of confidence, or of thanksgiving; but, above all, repeat in mental prayer acts of contrition and of love.

The act of love, as also the act of contrition, is the golden chain that binds the soul to God. An act of perfect charity is sufficient for the remission of all our sins: *Charity covereth a multitude of sins.*[2942] The Lord has declared that he cannot hate the soul that loves him; *I love them that love Me.*[2943] The Venerable Sister Mary Crucified once saw a globe of fire, in which some straws that had been thrown into it were instantly consumed. By this vision she was given to understand that a soul, by making a true act of love, obtains the remission of all its faults. Besides, the Angelic Doctor teaches that by every act of love we acquire a new degree of glory.

“Every act of charity merits eternal life.”[2944]

Acts of love may be made in the following manner:

My God, I esteem Thee more than all things.

I love Thee with my whole heart.

I delight in Thy felicity.

I would wish to see Thee loved by all.

I wish only what Thou wishest.

Make known to me what Thou wishest from me, and I will do it.

Dispose as Thou pleasest of me and of all that I possess.

This last act of oblation is particularly dear to God.

In meditation, among the acts of love towards God, there is none more perfect than the taking delight in the infinite joy of God. This is certainly the continual exercise of the blessed in heaven; so that he who often rejoices in the joy of God begins in this life to do that which he hopes to do in heaven through all eternity.[2945]

It may be useful here to remark, with St. Augustine, that it is not the torture, but the cause, which makes the martyr.[2946] Whence St. Thomas[2947] teaches that martyrdom is to suffer death in the exercise of an act of virtue. From which we may infer, that not only he who by the hands of the executioner lays down his life for the faith, but whoever dies to comply with the divine will, and to please God, is a martyr, since in sacrificing himself to the divine love he performs an act of the most exalted virtue. We all have to pay the great debt of nature; let us therefore endeavor, in holy prayer, to obtain resignation to the divine will—to receive death and every tribulation in conformity with the dispensations of his Providence. As often as we shall perform this act of resignation with sufficient fervor, we may hope to be made partakers of the merits of the martyrs. St. Mary Magdalene, in reciting the doxology, always bowed her head in the same spirit as she would have done in receiving the stroke of the executioner.[2948]

Remember that we here speak of the ordinary mental prayer; for should any one feel himself at any time united with God by supernatural or infused recollection, without any particular thought of an eternal truth or of any divine mystery, he should not then labor to perform any other acts than those to which he feels himself sweetly drawn to God. It is then enough to endeavor, with loving attention, to remain united with God, without impeding the divine operation, or forcing himself to make reflections and acts. But this is to be understood when the Lord calls the soul to this supernatural prayer; but until we receive such a call, we should not depart from the ordinary method of mental prayer, but should, as has been said, make use of meditation and affections. However, for persons accustomed to mental prayer, it is better to employ themselves in affections than in consideration.

2. PETITIONS

Moreover, in mental prayer it is very profitable, and perhaps more useful than any other act, to repeat petitions to God, asking, with humility and confidence, his graces; that is, his light, resignation, perseverance, and the like; but, above all, the gift of his holy love. St. Francis de Sales used to say that by obtaining the divine love we obtain all graces; for a soul that truly loves God with its whole heart will, of itself, without being admonished by others, abstain from giving him the smallest displeasure, and will labor to please him to the best of its ability.

When you find yourself in aridity and darkness, so that you feel, as it were, incapable of making good acts, it is sufficient to say:

My Jesus, mercy. Lord, for the sake of Thy mercy, assist me. And the meditation made in this manner will be for you perhaps the most useful and fruitful.

The Venerable Paul Segneri used to say that until he studied theology, he employed himself during the time of mental prayer in making reflections and affections; but "God" (these are his own words) "afterwards opened my eyes, and thenceforward I endeavored to employ myself in petitions; and if there is any good in me, I ascribe it to this exercise of recommending myself to God." Do you likewise do the same; ask of God his graces, in the name of Jesus Christ, and you will obtain whatsoever you desire. This our Saviour has promised, and his promise cannot fail: *Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*

In a word, all mental prayer should consist in acts and petitions. Hence, the Venerable Sister Mary Crucified, while in an ecstasy, declared that mental prayer is the respiration of the soul; for, as by respiration, the air is first attracted, and afterwards given back, so, by petitions, the soul first receives grace from God, and then, by good acts of oblation and love, it gives itself to him.

3. RESOLUTIONS

In terminating the meditation it is necessary to make a particular resolution; as, for example, to avoid some particular defect into which you have more frequently fallen, or to practise some virtue, such as to suffer the annoyance which you receive from another person, to obey more exactly a certain Superior, to perform some particular act of mortification. We must repeat the same resolution several times, until we find that we have got rid of the defect or acquired the virtue. Afterwards reduce to practice the resolutions you have made, as soon as an occasion is presented. You would also do well, before the conclusion of your prayer, to renew the vows or any particular engagement by vow or otherwise that you have made with God. This renewal is most pleasing to God; we multiply the merit of the good work, and draw down upon us a new help in order to persevere and to grow in grace.

III. THE CONCLUSION

The conclusion of meditation consists of three acts:

1. In thanking God for the lights received.
2. In making a purpose to fulfil the resolutions made.
3. In asking of the Eternal Father, for the sake of Jesus and Mary, grace to be faithful to them.

Be careful never to omit, at the end of meditation, to recommend to God the souls in purgatory and poor sinners. St. John Chrysostom says that nothing more clearly shows our love for Jesus Christ than our zeal in recommending our brethren to him.

St. Francis de Sales remarks that in leaving mental prayer we should take with us a nosegay of flowers, in order to smell them during the day; that is, we should remember one or two points in which we have felt particular devotion, in order to excite our fervor during the day.

The ejaculations which are dearest to God are those of love, of resignation, of oblation of ourselves. Let us endeavor not to perform any action without first offering it to God, and not to allow at the most a quarter of an hour to pass, in whatever occupations we may find ourselves, without raising the heart to the Lord by some good act. Moreover, in our leisure time, such as when we are waiting for a person, or when we walk in the garden, or are confined to bed by sickness, let us endeavor, to the best of our ability, to unite ourselves to God. It is also necessary by observing silence, by seeking solitude as much as possible, and by remembering the presence of God, to preserve the pious sentiments conceived in meditation.

VII

DISTRACTIONS AND ARIDITIES

1. DISTRACTIONS

If, after having well prepared ourselves for mental prayer, as has been explained in a preceding paragraph, a distracting thought should enter, we must not be disturbed, nor seek to banish it with a violent effort; but let us remove it calmly and return to God.

Let us remember that the devil labors hard to disturb us in the time of meditation, in order to make us abandon it. Let him, then, who omits mental prayer on account of distractions, be persuaded that he gives delight to the devil. It is impossible, says Cassian, that our minds should be free from all distractions during prayer.

Let us, then, never give up meditation, however great our distractions may be. St. Francis de Sales says that if, in mental prayer, we should do nothing else than continually banish distractions and temptations, the meditation would be well made. Before him St. Thomas taught that involuntary distractions do not take away the fruit of mental prayer.[2949]

Finally, when we perceive that we are deliberately distracted, let us desist from the voluntary defect and banish the distraction, but let us be careful not to discontinue our meditation.

2. ARIDITIES[2950]

The greatest pain of souls in meditation is to find themselves sometimes without a feeling of devotion, weary of it, and without any sensible desire of loving God; and with this is joined the fear of being in the wrath of God through their sins, on account of which the Lord has abandoned them; and being in this gloomy darkness, they know not how to escape from it, it seeming to them that every way is closed against them.

When a soul gives itself up to the spiritual life, the Lord is accustomed to heap consolations upon it, in order to wean it from the pleasures of the world, but afterwards, when he sees it more settled in spiritual ways, he draws back his hand, in order to make proof of its love, and to see whether it serves and loves God unrecompensed, while in this world, with spiritual joys. Some foolish persons, seeing themselves in a state of aridity, think that God may have abandoned them; or, again, that the spiritual life was not made for them; and so they leave off prayer, and lose all that they have gained.

In order to be a soul of prayer, man must resist with fortitude all temptations to discontinue mental prayer in the time of aridity. St. Teresa has left us very excellent instructions on this point. In one place she says, "The devil knows that he has lost the soul that perseveringly practises mental prayer." In another place she says, "I hold for certain that the Lord will conduct to the haven of salvation the soul that perseveres in mental prayer, in spite of all the sins that the devil may oppose." Again, she says, "He who does not stop in the way of mental prayer reaches the end of his journey, though he should delay a little." Finally she concludes, saying, "By aridity and temptations the Lord proves his lovers. Though aridity should last for life, let not the soul give up prayer: the time will come when all shall be well rewarded."

The Angelic Doctor says that the devotion consists not in feeling, but in the desire and resolution to embrace promptly all that God wills. Such was the prayer that Jesus Christ made in the Garden of Olives; it was full of aridity and tediousness, but it was the most devout and meritorious prayer that had ever been offered in this world. It consisted in these words: My Father, not what I will, but what Thou wilt.

Hence, never give up mental prayer in the time of aridity. Should the tediousness which assails you be very great, divide your meditation into several parts, and employ yourself, for the most part, in petitions to God, even though you should seem to pray without confidence and without fruit. It will be sufficient to say and to repeat: *My Jesus, mercy. Lord, have mercy on us.* Pray, and doubt not that God will hear you and grant your petition.

In going to meditation, never propose to yourself your own pleasure and satisfaction, but only to please God, and to learn what he wishes you to do. And, for this purpose, pray always that God may make known to you his will, and that he may give you strength to fulfil it. All that we ought to seek in mental prayer is, light to know, and strength to accomplish, the will of God in our regard.

PRAYER

Ah! my Jesus, it appears that Thou couldst do nothing more, in order to gain the love of men. It is enough to know that Thou hast wished to become man; that is, to become, like us, a worm. Thou hast wished to lead a painful life, of thirty-three years, amid sorrow and ignominies, and in the end to die on an infamous gibbet. Thou hast also wished to remain under the appearance of bread, in order to become the food of our souls; and how is it possible that Thou hast received so much ingratitude, even from Christians who believe these truths, and still love Thee so little? Unhappy me! I have hitherto been among those ungrateful souls; I have attended only to my pleasures, and have been forgetful of Thee and of Thy love. I now know the evil I have done; but I repent of it with my whole heart: my Jesus, pardon me. I now love Thee; I love Thee so ardently that I choose death, and a thousand deaths, rather than cease to love Thee. I thank Thee for the light which Thou givest me. Give me strength, O God of my soul! always to advance in Thy love. Accept this poor heart to love Thee. It is true that it has once despised Thee, but now it is enamoured of Thy goodness; it loves Thee and desires only to love Thee. O Mary, mother of God, assist me: in thy intercession I place great confidence.

II. THE EXERCISES OF A RETREAT

ADVANTAGES OF THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES MADE IN RETREAT

A LETTER TO A YOUNG MAN WHO IS DELIBERATING ON THE CHOICE OF A STATE OF LIFE[2951]

I have received your last favor, in which you tell me that you are still undecided as to the state of life you should choose, and that, having communicated to your pastor the counsel I gave you,—namely, to go for that purpose to perform the spiritual exercises in that house which your father has in the country,—the said pastor answered you that it was not necessary for you to go to that house to torture your brains during eight days in solitude, but that it was enough for you to attend the exercises he would soon give to the people in his own church. Since, then, on this last point of the exercises, you again ask my advice, it is necessary that I should answer you more at length, and show you, first, how much greater the fruit of the spiritual exercises is, when they are performed in silence, in some retired place, than when performed whilst they are given in public, when one is obliged during that time to go to one's own house, and continues to converse with one's parents and friends; and the more so in your case, as you write to me, you have in your house no room to which you may retire. On the other hand, I am very much in favor of those exercises when performed in solitude, as I know it is to such I owe my own conversion and my resolution to leave the world. I will then, in the second place, suggest to you the means and precautions to be taken during the exercises, in order to derive from them the fruit you desire. I beg you, when you have read this letter yourself, to give it to your Rev. Pastor, that he may read it also.

I

Let us then speak first of the great benefit of the exercises, when they are performed in solitude, where one treats with no person but God; and, first of all, let us see the reason for it.

The truths of eternal life, such as the great affair of our salvation, the value of the time that God gives us that we may amass merits for a happy eternity, the obligations under which we are to love God for his infinite goodness and the immense love he bears towards us,—these and similar things are not seen with the eyes of the flesh, but with the eyes of the mind. It is, on the contrary, certain that, unless our intellect represents to the will the value of a good or the greatness of an evil, we shall never embrace that good nor reject that evil. And this is the ruin of those who are attached to the world. They live in darkness; whence it happens that, not knowing the greatness of eternal good and evil, and allured by the senses, they give themselves up to forbidden pleasure and miserably perish.

Wherefore the Holy Ghost admonishes us that in order to avoid sin, we must keep before our eyes the last things which are to come upon us; that is, death, with which all the goods of this earth will come to an end for us, and the divine judgment, in which we shall have to give an account of our whole life. *Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.*[2952] And in another place he says, *Oh, that they would be wise and would understand, and would provide for their last end.*[2953] By which words he wishes to give us to understand that if men would consider the things of the other life, they would all certainly take care to sanctify themselves, and would not expose themselves to the danger of an unhappy life through all eternity. They shut their eyes to the light and thus, remaining blind, precipitate themselves into so great evils. For this reason the saints always prayed the Lord to give them light. *Enlighten my eyes, that I never sleep in death.*[2954] *May God cause the light of His countenance to shine upon us.*[2955] *Make the way known to me wherein I should walk.*[2956] *Give me understanding and I will learn Thy commandments.*[2957].

But to obtain this divine light, we must go near to God. *Come ye to Him and be enlightened.*[2958] “For,” says St. Augustine, “as we cannot see the sun without the light of the sun itself, so we cannot see the light of God but by the light of God himself.”[2959] This light is obtained in the spiritual exercises; by them we approach to God, and God enlightens us with his light. The spiritual exercises mean nothing else than that we retire for that time from intercourse with the world, and go to converse with God alone, where God speaks to us by his inspirations, and we speak to God in our meditations by acts of love, by repenting of our sins by which we have displeased him, by offering ourselves to serve him for the future with all our heart, and by beseeching him to make known to us his will, and to give us strength to accomplish it.

Holy Job says, *Now I should have rest in my sleep with kings and consuls of the earth, who build themselves solitudes.*[2960] Who are those kings that build themselves solitudes? They are, as St. Gregory says, those despisers of the world, who go from its tumults to render themselves fit to talk alone with God. “They build solitudes, that is, they separate themselves as far as possible from the tumult of the world, in order to be alone and to become fit to speak with God.”[2961]

When Arsenius was reflecting on the means that he should take to become a saint, God caused him to hear these words: “Fly, be silent, and rest.”[2962] Fly from the world, be silent, cease to talk with men, and talk alone with me, and thus rest in peace and solitude. In conformity with this, St. Anselm wrote to one worried by many worldly occupations, who complained that he had no moment of peace, the following advice: “Leave a little your occupations; hide yourself for a while from your tumultuous thoughts; apply yourself a little to contemplate God and rest in him; say to God, Now teach my heart where and how I may seek Thee, where and how I shall find Thee.”[2963] Words that are applicable each and all to yourself. Fly, says he, for a short time from those earthly occupations which render you so unquiet, and rest in retirement with God; say to him, O Lord, show me where and how I may find Thee, that I may speak alone to Thee, and at the same time hear Thy words.

God speaks indeed to those who seek him, but he does not speak in the midst of the tumult of the world. *The Lord is not in the commotion of the earthquake,*[2964] as was said to Elias, when God called him to solitude. The voice of God, as it is said in the same place, is as *the whistling of a gentle air,*[2965] which is scarcely heard, not, however, by the ear of the body, but by that of the heart, without noise and in a sweet rest. This is exactly what the Lord says through Osee: *I will lead her into solitude, and I will speak to her heart*[2966] When the Lord wishes to draw a soul to himself, he leads it into solitude, far from the embarrassment of the world and intercourse with men, and there speaks to it with words of fire.[2967] The words of God are said to be of fire, because they melt a soul, as the sacred Spouse says: *My soul melted, when He* (my Beloved) *spoke.*[2968] In fact, they prepare the soul to submit readily to the direction of God, and to take that form of life which God wishes it to take; they are words exceedingly efficacious, and so efficient that at the very time they are heard they operate in the soul that which God requires of it.

One day the Lord said to St. Teresa: “Oh, how willingly would I speak to many souls, but the world makes so great a noise in their hearts that my voice cannot be heard! Oh, if they would but separate themselves a little from the world!” Thus, then, my very dear friend, the Lord wishes to speak to you, but alone and in solitude; since if he should speak to you in your own house, your parents, your friends, and your domestic occupations would continue to make a noise in your heart, and you would be unable to hear his voice. The saints have for this reason left their homes and their country, and gone to hide themselves in caverns or deserts, or at least in a cell of a religious house, there to find God and hear his words. St. Eucherius[2969] relates that a certain person seeking a place in which he could find God, went for this purpose to ask counsel from a master of the spiritual life. The man of God led him to a solitary place and then said: “Behold, here God may be found,” without saying anything more. By this he wished to give him to understand that God is not to be found in the midst of the noise of the world, but in solitude. St. Bernard says that he learned to know God among the beech-trees and oaks better than in all the learned books he had read.

The inclination of worldlings is to be in company with friends, to talk and divert themselves; but the desire of the saints is to be in solitary places, in the midst of forests, or in caverns, there to converse alone with God, who in solitude familiarly converses with souls, as a friend with his friend. “Oh, solitude!” exclaims St. Jerome, “in which God familiarly converses with his servants.”[2970] The Venerable Vincent Caraffa said that if it had been free to him to wish for anything in this world, he would have asked for nothing but a little grotto with a piece of bread and a spiritual book; there always to live far from men and conversing alone with God. The Spouse of the Canticles, praising the beauty of a soul living in solitude, compares it to the beauty of the turtle-dove: *Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle-dove's.*[2971] Precisely because the turtle-dove avoids the company of other birds, and always lives in the most solitary places. Hence it is that the holy angels admire with joy the beauty and splendor which embellish on its flight to heaven a soul, that in this life has lived hidden and solitary as in a desert: *Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights?*[2972]

I have wished to write all these things to you in order to inspire you with a love for holy solitude, for I hope that in the exercises which you will perform, you will not have to torture your brains, as your pastor said, but that the Lord will make you taste so great a spiritual delight, that you will come out of your retreat with such an affection for them that you will not fail hereafter to go through them every year; a thing which will be of immense advantage to your soul, whatever state of life you may choose, because in the midst of the world, the various occupations, disturbances, and distractions always produce dryness of spirit, so that it is necessary from time to time to irrigate, as it were, and renew it, as St. Paul exhorts: *Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind.*[2973]

King David, troubled by earthly cares, wished to have wings and to fly away from the bustle of the world in order to find rest: *Who will give me wings, and I will fly away, and be at rest?*[2974] But being unable to leave the world with his body, he at least sought from time to time to disengage himself from the affairs of the realm he governed, and dwell in solitude conversing with God, and thus his spirit found peace. *I have gone far off flying away, and I abode in the wilderness.*[2975]

Jesus Christ also, who had no need of solitude to be recollected and united with God, but wished to set us an example, often retired from intercourse with man and went away to mountains or into deserts to pray: *Having dismissed the multitude, He went into a mountain alone to pray;*[2976] and *He retired into a desert and prayed.*[2977] And he desired that his disciples, after the fatigue of their missions, should retire to some solitary place to rest in spirit: *Come apart into a desert place and rest a little;*[2978] declaring by this that the spirit, even amidst spiritual occupations, being obliged to treat with men, becomes somewhat relaxed, whence it becomes necessary to renew it in solitude.

Worldlings, who are accustomed to divert themselves in conversations, at banquets and plays, believe that in solitude, where no such things are found, one must suffer an insupportable tediousness. This is really the case with those who have a conscience defiled by sin; for when they are occupied in the affairs of this world, they do not think of the things of the soul; but when they are disengaged and in solitude, as they do not seek God, they feel at once the remorse of their conscience, and thus find not peace, but tediousness and pain. But give me one who seeks God; and he will find in solitude not tediousness, but contentment and joy. This the Wise Man assures us of: *For her* (wisdom's) *conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness, but joy and gladness.*[2979] Oh no! to converse with God causes no bitterness, no tediousness, but joy and peace.

The venerable Cardinal Bellarmine used, during the season, when the other cardinals went to divert themselves in country-seats and villas, to go to some solitary house to make the exercises during a month, and these he called his country diversions, and certainly his heart found more delight in them than all the others did in their amusements.

St. Charles Borromeo made the exercises every year and found in them his paradise on earth; and it was whilst he was one year engaged in these exercises on Mount Varalla that his last illness came upon him and brought him to his blessed end. For this reason St. Jerome says that solitude was a paradise which he had discovered on earth: "Solitude is a paradise to me."[2980]

But, perhaps, some one will say, What contentment can a person find, being alone and having no one to converse with? St. Bernard answers, "He who seeks God is by no means alone in solitude, for God himself is there with him, and renders him more content than if he had the company of the first princes of the world." "I was never less alone," writes the holy abbot, "than when I was alone."[2981]

The prophet Isaias, describing the sweetness which God gives those to taste who go to seek him in solitude, says: *The Lord therefore will comfort Sion, and will comfort all the ruins thereof; and He will make her desert as a place of pleasure, and her wilderness as the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of praise*[2982] The Lord well knows how to comfort a soul who retires from the world; he recompenses a thousand-fold all the pleasures of the world it foregoes, and makes solitude become for it a garden of delight, where all the tumult of the world being excluded and there being only thanksgiving and praise to that God who treats it so lovingly, it finds a peace that satiates it. If there were no other contentment in solitude than that of knowing the eternal truths, this alone should be sufficient to induce us to desire it. Divine truth, when known, truly satiates the soul, and not the vanities of the world, which are but lying and deceitful things; and this is precisely that great delight which is found in the exercises made in solitude and silence. In them we see in their purest light the Christian maxims, the importance of eternal salvation, the ugliness of sin, the value of grace, the love of God towards us, the vanity of the goods of this world, and the foolishness of those who, in order to acquire them, lose eternal goods and prepare for themselves an eternity of pains. Whence it happens that man, at the sight of these truths, takes the most efficacious means to secure his eternal salvation, and rises above himself, as Jeremiah says: *He shall sit solitary and hold his peace, because he raised himself above himself.*[2983] There man disengages himself from earthly affections, and unites himself to God in prayer, by the desire of belonging to him altogether, by offering himself to him, and by other repeated acts of sorrow, love, and resignation, and thus finds himself raised so high above all created things that he laughs at those who so much prize the goods of this world which he despises, knowing them to be too little and too unworthy of the love of a heart created to love the infinite good, which is God.

It is certain that he who comes out of the exercises, comes out of them much changed and better than he was when he began them. It was the sentiment of St. John Chrysostom that retirement is a great help towards the acquisition of perfection.[2984] Therefore a learned author speaking of the exercises, writes thus: “Happy the man whom Christ leads from the noise of the world to the spiritual exercises, and into the solitude filled with heavenly sweetness.”[2985] Happy indeed is the man who, flying from the tumult of the world, lets the Lord lead him to the spiritual exercises, where he enjoys a solitude which gives him a foretaste of the delights of paradise. The sermons preached in churches are good; but if the hearers do not apply themselves to reflect on them, little will be the fruit they will derive from them. Our reflections on them will never be made as they ought, if we do not make them in solitude. The sea-shell, after having received the dew of heaven, suddenly shuts itself and goes down to the bottom of the sea, and there the pearl is formed. It is an undoubted fact that what makes the fruit of the exercises perfect is the reflecting in silence (treating alone with God) on the truths heard in the sermon or read in a book. Therefore St. Vincent of Paul, in the missions he gave, always invited the hearers to perform the exercises, retired in some solitary place. one single holy maxim, well ruminated, is sufficient to make a saint. St. Francis Xavier left the world in consequence of the impression made on him by that sentence of the Gospel: “*What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?*”[2986] A certain student in consequence of one single sentiment on death, suggested to him by a good religious, changed his bad life and became virtuous. St. Clement of Ancyra was encouraged by another consideration on eternity suggested to him by his mother, namely, “The thing we contend for is life eternal,”[2987] and joyously suffered for Jesus Christ many torments inflicted on him by the tyrant.

To conceive, then, a just idea of the fruit which the exercises produce when performed in solitude, read a book on this subject, if you have one, and see there the stupendous conversions occasioned by them. I will here mention a few.

Father Maffei relates that there was in Sienna a priest who gave public scandal. This priest having made the exercises with a missionary who passed by accident through Sienna, was not only converted and made a good confession, but on a certain day, whilst a great number of people was present in the church, he went into the pulpit weeping and having a cord round his neck, and asked pardon for all the scandals he had given, and after this he went away to become a Capuchin and died as a saint. On his death-bed he confessed that for all the graces he had received he was indebted to those spiritual exercises.

Moreover, Father Bartoli relates of a certain German knight who had given himself up to all kinds of vice, so far as to give his soul to the devil by a written contract signed with his own blood, that, having afterwards performed the exercises, he conceived so great a sorrow for his sins that he fainted several times, and thenceforth he continued to lead a penitential life as long as he lived.

F. Rossignoli relates that, in Sicily, a son of a certain Baron became so debauched that his father, after having tried without effect many means to correct him, was obliged to put him in chains in a galley with the slaves. But a certain good religious, moved by compassion, went to see him, and by his winning manners and good advice induced him to meditate on certain eternal truths in the galley where he was confined. The young man having done so, wished to make a general confession, and showed such a change in his conduct that his father with much joy received him again into his house, and never afterwards had any reason to be displeased with him.

Another youth of Flanders, having made the exercises and being converted by them from a most wicked life he had been leading, said afterwards to his companions who were wondering at this: “You wonder at me, but I tell you that the devil himself, if he could make the exercises, would be brought to penance.”

Another, a religious, but of so bad conduct that he had rendered himself insupportable to all, was by his Superiors sent to make the exercises. Being about to leave, he jestingly said to his friends, “Keep your beads ready to touch my body when I come back.” But after the exercises he was so much changed that he became an example to all the other religious, who, seeing this change, wished to make them also.

Certain young men seeing other young men, their friends, going to make the exercises, wished to accompany them, not to profit, but to jest afterwards in their conversations about their devotions. But exactly the contrary happened; for during the exercises they were filled with such compunction that they all began to sigh and weep, confessed their sins, and changed their lives.

I could adduce such facts by thousands, but I shall relate only one more, that of a nun in the monastery of Torre di Specchi in Rome, who pretended to learning, but led a very imperfect life. This nun began, though with a bad will, to assist at the exercises that were given in the monastery; but the first meditation she made on the end of man made such an impression on her that she began to weep, went to her spiritual Father and said to him “Father, I wish to become a saint, and this promptly.” She wanted to say more, but the tears prevented her from speaking. Having then retired to her cell, she made a writing by which she gave herself entirely to Jesus Christ, and began to live a penitent and retired life, in which she persevered until death.

But when we see the esteem in which the exercises have been held by so many holy men, this, if we had no other reason, should be enough to make us prize them highly. St. Charles Borromeo, from the first time he made the spiritual exercises in Rome, began to lead a perfect life. St. Francis de Sales confessed that it was to the exercises he owed the beginning of his holy life. Father Louis of Granada, a holy man, said that his whole life would not suffice to explain the knowledge of heavenly things that he had received in making the spiritual exercises. Father Avila called the exercises a school of heavenly wisdom, and wished that all his spiritual children should go to make them. Father Louis Blosius, a Benedictine, said that we should give to God special thanks for having in these latter times made known to his Church this treasure of the exercises.

II

But if the exercises are of a great help to persons in every state or condition, they are of an especial help to him who wishes to make the choice of the state of life he should embrace. For I find it stated that the first end for which the exercises were instituted was that of making the choice of a state of life, because upon this choice depends the eternal salvation of each one. We cannot expect that an angel from heaven should come to assure us of the state which, according to the will of God, we should choose. It is sufficient to place before our eyes the state we think of choosing, and then we ought to consider the end we have in view in that choice, and weigh all the circumstances of the case.

This is the principal reason for which I wish you to make the exercises in silence; namely, for making the choice of the state of life. When, then, you have entered upon the exercises, as I hope you will, I beg of you to follow the advice I am going to subjoin:

1. The only intention you should have in making these exercises is that you may know what God will have you to do; and, therefore, in going to that solitary house, say within yourself, *I will hear what the Lord God shall speak in me.*[2988] I go to know what the Lord will tell me and what he wishes from me.

2. Besides, it is necessary that you have a determined will to obey God and to follow without reserve the vocation he will make known to you.

3. It is, moreover, necessary that you pray earnestly to the Lord, that he may make known to you his will, namely, in what state of life he wishes you to live. But remember that in order to obtain this light you ought to pray with indifference of mind. He who prays to God to enlighten him on his state of life, but does so without this indifference, and, instead of wishing to conform to the will of God, wishes rather that God should conform to his own will, is like a pilot who feigns to will, but indeed wills not that his vessel should advance, since he casts the anchor and then hoists the sail. God does not enlighten or speak to such a person. But if you will supplicate him with this indifference and the resolution to accomplish his will, he will make you see clearly the state which is best for you. And if you should then feel any repugnance to it, you ought to place before your eyes the hour of your death, and reflect which state you would in that hour wish to have embraced, and then embrace it.

4. Take with you to your house of retreat a book containing the meditations which are commonly made during the exercises; read these meditations and let them be instead of sermons, reflecting on them for half an hour, as well in the morning as in the evening. Take also with you the Life of some saint or some other spiritual books out of which to make your spiritual reading; and these ought to be your only companions in solitude during the eight days. It is also necessary, in order to obtain that light and to hear what the Lord will speak to you, to avoid every distraction: *Be still, and see that I am God.*[2989] To hear the divine voice, we must cease all intercourse with the world. To a sick man no remedies will be of any use if he does not take them with the proper precaution, as avoiding exposure to the cold air, unwholesome food, or too much application of mind. In the same manner, in order that the exercises may be useful for the health of your soul, you must remove hurtful distractions, such as the receiving of visits from friends, messages from without, or letters which are sent to you. St. Francis de Sales, when he was engaged in the exercises, laid aside all the letters he received, and did not read them until after the exercises. It is also necessary to read no books of amusement, and not even of study; for then we ought only to study the crucifix. Therefore, have in your room none but

spiritual books, and, reading in them, read not for curiosity's sake, but only for this one end,—namely, to decide on the state of life which God will make known to you as the one that he wishes you to embrace.

6. Moreover, it is not enough to avoid distractions from without, you must also avoid those from within, for if you should there deliberately allow your mind to think on the things of the world, or of study, or the like, the exercises and the solitude will be of little use to you. St. Gregory says, "What avails the solitude of the body if the solitude of the heart is wanting?"[2990] Peter Ortiz, an envoy of Charles V., wished to go to the monastery of Monte Cassino, to make the exercises. Having arrived at the door of the monastery, he said to his thoughts what our Lord said to his disciples: *Sit ye here till I go yonder and pray*[2991] Thoughts of the world, wait here outside; having finished the exercises, I shall again see you, and we will again talk together. Whilst one is engaged in the exercises, one ought to make use of the time only for the good of his soul, without losing any moment of it.

7. I beg of you to recite during the exercises the following short prayer:

My God, I am that miserable one who in the past have despised Thee; but now I esteem and love Thee above everything, nor will I love any other but Thee. Thou wouldst have me belong entirely to Thee, to Thee I will belong entirely. *Speak, O Lord; for thy servant heareth.*[2992] Let me know what Thou wishest from me, and I will do all; and let me especially know in what state Thou wishest me to serve Thee: *Make Thou known to me the way in which I should walk.*[2993]

During the exercises recommend yourself also in an especial manner to the divine Mother Mary, praying her to obtain for you the grace perfectly to accomplish the will of her Son.

And do not forget, when you make the exercises, to recommend me to Jesus Christ, as I will not omit to do in a particular manner for you, that he may make you a saint, as I heartily wish. In which sentiment I sign myself to be your most devoted and obliged servant, etc.

HYMN

"I will lead her into solitude, and I will speak to her heart."—*Osee*, 2:14.

Fly hither from the storm that rages round;

Fly, where true peace in solitude is found;
Where cares and strife and worldly troubles cease,
Here I invite thee to repose in peace.
A gift awaits thee here: My light divine,
To loving souls so dear, on thee shall shine;
Here thou shalt see how vile is all the earth,
How sweet My love to those who know its worth.
Then from My lips that sweet inviting word,
That bids thee love Me, shall by thee be heard;
How much I always loved thee thou shalt see,
And how ungrateful thou hast been to Me.
Sweet contrite tears thy wounds of sin shall heal,
The ardor of My love thou then shalt feel.
And here I wait thee to bestow in love
A foretaste of the joys of heaven above.

MEDITATIONS FOR A PRIVATE RETREAT OF EIGHT DAYS

INTRODUCTION[2994]

1. There can be no doubt that retreats made in community, in which meditations and instructions are given by the clergy, are very profitable; but for persons who desire to advance in divine love, one great means is to go through the same spiritual exercises in private retreats. It is in total solitude that God speaks most efficaciously to the souls of his beloved; and it is impossible for a Christian to make such retreats, and not, each time, come out a different man from what he was when he entered into them. The saints, in order the more to enjoy God, who in solitude communicates himself more familiarly to those who seek him, retired into caves and deserts. St. Bernard says that he learned more of divine things amidst the beeches and oaks of the desert than he ever learned from masters and from books. You may have the same desert, if you will, in your own house; strive to avail yourself of it for at least eight days. But others do not make such retreats. What then? If others do not make them, do you at least make them; and by so doing, you may induce others to follow your example. Such singularities are pleasing to God. No one, says St. Bernard, can become a saint, if he leads not a singular life in the practice of virtue and in the availing himself of the means of salvation: “That cannot be perfect which is not singular.”[2995]

It is necessary, in order to make these retreats in a proper manner, to relinquish, during the time, all temporal affairs and worldly thoughts; to keep silence as much as possible, and to remain only in the church or in your own house. You may, however, take a walk occasionally for the sake of recreation.

For the purpose of such retreats I here add the following meditations, which are not in the way of discourses, but only collections of eternal maxims, of devout sentiments and affections, in order that you may stay on any point from which the soul seems to derive most nourishment, without obliging yourself to read the whole meditation. Sometimes our Lord will enlighten you at the first or second sentiment that you read; if so, stop there, without going farther, in order that the mind and heart may find that on which to feed.

Take care not to enter into these retreats with an anxiety for sensible tenderness and devotion, but solely to learn and to accomplish what God desires of you. If you have purely this object in view, although you should experience nothing but tediousness and aridity, God will not fail to enlighten you and to inflame you with his holy love; and the greater your fidelity in desolation, the greater will be the divine graces with which your soul will be enriched.

As to the distribution of time and the different exercises, you may make use of the following, which every person may adapt to his circumstances.

In the Morning.—After rising, first meditation for half an hour. Recitation of the office. Preparation for Communion for half an hour. Communion, after which, an hour’s thanksgiving, and during this time hear one or more masses. Work for half an hour. Spiritual reading for half an hour, to be followed by the second meditation. Particular examination of conscience, and dinner.

After Dinner.—Vespers and Complin. Second lecture of the Lives of the saints, for half an hour. Third meditation. Work for half an hour. Visit to the Most Holy Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin.

In the Evening.—Fourth meditation for half an hour. The noting-down of resolutions. The Rosary. Supper. General examination of conscience. The Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and other vocal prayers.

FIRST DAY

THE IMPORTANCE OF SALVATION[2996]

MEDITATION I

SALVATION IS OUR ONLY BUSINESS IN THIS WORLD

I. Of all our affairs there is none more important than that of our eternal salvation, on which depends our happiness or misery for eternity.

One thing is necessary.[2997] It is not necessary that we should be rich, honored, or in the enjoyment of good health, but it is necessary that we should be saved. For this end alone has God placed us in the world; and woe to us if we do not attain it!

St. Francis Xavier said that the only good to be obtained in this world is salvation; and the only evil to be dreaded, damnation. What matter if we are poor, despised, or infirm? If saved, we shall be happy forever. On the contrary, what does it avail to be great, or to be monarchs? If lost, we shall be miserable for eternity.

O God, what will become of me? I may be saved, and I may also be lost. And if I may be lost, why do I not resolve to adhere more closely to Thee?

My Jesus, have pity on me. I will amend my life. Give me Thy assistance. Thou hast died to save me, and shall I, notwithstanding, forfeit my salvation?

II. Have we already done enough to secure salvation? Are we already secure of not falling into hell?

What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?[2998] If he lose his soul, what will compensate him for its loss?

What have not the saints done to secure their salvation? How many kings and queens have renounced their kingdoms and shut themselves up in cloisters! How many young men have left their country, and have gone to live in deserts! How many young virgins have renounced marriage with the great ones of the world, to go and give their lives for Jesus Christ? And what do we do?

O my God, how much has Jesus Christ done for our salvation! He spent thirty-three years in toil and labor; he gave his blood and his life: and shall we, through our own fault, be lost?

O Lord! I give Thee thanks for not having called me out of the world when I had forfeited Thy grace. Had I then died, what would have become of me for all eternity?

III. God desires that all should be saved: “He will have all men to be saved.”[2999] If we are lost, it will be entirely our own fault. And this will be our greatest torment in hell.

St. Teresa says that even the loss of a trifle, of an ornament, of a ring, when it has happened through our own carelessness, occasions us the greatest uneasiness. What a torment, then, will it be to the damned to have wilfully lost all,—their souls, heaven, and God!

Alas! death approaches; and what have I done for life eternal?

O my God! for how many years have I deserved to dwell in hell, where I could not repent, nor love Thee! Now, that I can do both, I will repent and will love Thee.

MEDITATION II

DAMNATION IS AN IRREPARABLE EVIL

I. And how long shall we delay? Until we weep with the damned, saying, *We therefore have erred,*[3000] and there is now no longer, nor will there ever be, any remedy for us?

For every other error in this world there is a remedy, but for the loss of the soul there is none.

What pains and trouble do men take to obtain wealth, dignities, or pleasures! But what do they do to save their souls? Nothing: as though the loss of the soul were but of little consequence.

How much diligence in preserving bodily health! The best physicians, the best remedies, the best climate are sought after. And as regards the health of the soul, what great negligence!

O my God! I will no longer resist Thy calls. Who knows but that the words which I am now reading may be my last call from God?

II. Can we be sensible of the danger of being lost forever and not tremble? and do we delay to apply a remedy to the disorders of our consciences?

My soul, how many graces has our Lord bestowed upon you that you might be saved! he has caused you to be born in the bosom of the true Church. How many advantages for becoming a saint! sermons, confessions, the good example of companions. How many lights, how many loving calls in spiritual exercises, in meditation, in holy Communion! How many mercies has he shown you! how long has he waited for you! how many times has he pardoned you!—graces which he has not bestowed on so many others.

What is there that I ought to do more for My vineyard that I have not done to it?[3001] What more, says the Almighty, ought I to do for your soul? For how many years have you been in the world, and what fruit have you hitherto brought forth?

If we had been allowed to choose the means of salvation, what more easy and effectual means could we have chosen?

Alas! if we do not avail ourselves of so many graces, they will serve only to render our death the more miserable.

To become a saint it is not necessary to have ecstasies and visions; sufficient for you are the ordinary means which you possess. Meditate, communicate frequently, read spiritual books, fly all sinful occasions, and you will become a saint.

O God, already have I lived many years in the world, and what have I hitherto gained? O Jesus! Thy precious blood, Thy death upon the cross, are my hope.

III. If this night I were to die, should I be satisfied with my past life? No; and why do I delay? that death may arrive, and I may lament and say, Alas! my life is now at an end, and I have done nothing?

What a grace would it be for a sick man, already despaired of by his physicians, to be allowed another year, or even another month! And God grants me this time; and in what shall I employ it for the future?

O Lord! since Thou hast waited for me until now, I will no longer disregard Thee. Behold me; tell me what Thou requirest of me, and I will do it. I will not wait to give myself to Thee until that time when time for me will be no more. O Jesus! I will nevermore offend Thee. I will spend the remainder of my life in bewailing my past sins, and in loving Thee, the God of my soul.

MEDITATION III

WE MUST, BEFORE ALL, SECURE OUR SALVATION

I. Let us proceed quickly, for death is at hand. What we can do to-day let us not put off till to-morrow. Today passes on and returns not.

Every one says, at the hour of death, Oh that I had been a saint! But of what avail will such regrets be, when the lamp will soon be extinguished for want of oil?

We shall say when death comes, What would it have cost me to have avoided that occasion, to have borne with that person, to have broken off that correspondence, to have yielded that punctilio? But I did not do so; and now what will become of me?

O Lord, help me. I will say to Thee, with St. Catharine of Genoa, “My Jesus, no more sins, no more sins!” I renounce all things to please Thee.

II. Let us not think that we can do too much to gain eternal salvation. “No security can be too great,” says St. Bernard, “where, eternity is at stake.”[3002]

To secure our salvation, we must be resolved to adopt the means. Inclination will not be sufficient; nor will it serve us to say, I will do it by and by. Hell is filled with souls who said by and by, by and by. Death came in the mean time, and they were lost.

The Apostle says, *With fear and trembling work out your salvation.*[3003] He who trembles at the thought of being lost, always recommends himself to God, avoids the occasions of sin, and will be saved.

To be saved we must use violence. Heaven is not given to indolent cowards. *The violent bear it away.*[3004]

O Lord! how many promises have I made Thee? but my promises have all been treasons. I will never betray Thee more; help me, grant that I may die rather than offend Thee.

III. *Ask*, says our Lord, *and you shall receive;*[3005] by which he manifests to us his great desire that we should be saved. If any one should say to his friend, Ask of me what you please, he could say nothing more. Let us, then, ever pray to God, and we shall be enriched with graces, and secure of salvation.

My dear Jesus, cast Thine eyes on my miseries and have pity on me. I have been forgetful of Thee, but Thou hast not forgotten me. I love Thee, my love, with all my soul; I detest all the offences that I have committed against Thee above every evil. Pardon me, my God, and forget my many ingratitudes. And since Thou knowest my weakness, do not abandon me; enlighten me, and strengthen me to conquer all things to please Thee. Grant that I may forget all, that I may think only of Thy love, and the mercies by which Thou hast so powerfully obliged me to love Thee. Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.

SECOND DAY

THE VANITY OF THE WORLD

MEDITATION I

THE GOODS OF THIS WORLD ARE FALSE GOODS

I. *What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul.*[3006] O great maxim, which has conducted so many souls to heaven, and bestowed so many saints on the Church! What doth it profit to gain the whole world, which passes away, and lose the soul, which is eternal?

The world! And what is this world but outside show a scene which quickly passes away? *The fashion of this worldpasseth away.*[3007] Death approaches, the curtain falls, the scene closes, and thus all things come to an end.

Alas! at the hour of death, how will all worldly things appear to a Christian—those vases of silver, those heaps of money, that rich and vain furniture—when he must leave them all forever?

O Jesus! grant that henceforward my soul may be wholly Thine; grant that I may love no other but Thee. I desire to renounce all things before death tears me away from them.

II. St. Teresa says, “Nothing ought to be considered of consequence which must have end.” Let us, therefore, strive to gain that fortune which will not fail with time. What does it avail a man to be happy for a few days (if anything can be called happiness without God), if he must be unhappy forever.

David says that earthly goods, at the hour of death, will seem as a dream to one waking from sleep: *As the dream of them that awake.*[3008] What disappointment does he feel who, having dreamt that he was a king, on awaking, finds himself still lowly and poor as ever?

O my God! who knows but that this meditation which I am now reading may be the last call for me? Enable me to root out of my heart all earthly affections, before I enter into eternity. Grant that I may be sensible of the great wrong that I have done Thee, by offending Thee, and by forsaking Thee for the love of creatures. *Father, I am not worthy to be called Thy Son.*[3009] I am grieved for having turned my back upon Thee; do not reject me, now that I return to Thee.

III. No posts of honor, no pomps, no riches, no amusements, no punctilios, will console a Christian at the hour of death; the love of Jesus Christ, and the little that he has suffered for his love, will alone console him.

Philip 2, while dying, said, “Oh that I had been a lay brother in some monastery, and not a king!” Philip 3 said, “Oh that I had lived in a desert! for now I shall appear but with little confidence before the tribunal of God.” Thus, at the hour of death, do those express themselves who have been esteemed the most fortunate in this world.

In short, all earthly goods acquired during life, at the hour of death, generally end in remorse of conscience and fears of eternal damnation. O God! will the dying sinner say, I have had sufficient light to direct me to withdraw myself from the world, but yet I have followed the world, and the maxims of the world; and now what sentence will be pronounced upon me? He will say, Fool that I have been! I might have been a saint, with the means and advantages that I enjoyed! I might have led a happy life in union with God; and now what do I find from my past life? But when will he say this? when the scene is about to close, and himself about to enter into eternity, at that moment on which will depend his happiness or misery forever.

O Lord, have pity on me! For the past I have not been so wise as to love Thee. From this day forward Thou alone shalt be my only good: *My God and my all.*[3010] Thou alone deservest all my love, and Thee only will I love.

MEDITATION II

THE GOODS OF THIS WORLD ARE OF SHORT DURATION

I. Ye great ones of the world, who are now tormented in the flames of hell, what remains of your honors and riches? They answer, weeping, Nothing,

nothing; we have nothing but torments and despair. All is passed but our punishment, which will never end.

They will say, *What hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow.*[3011] Alas! the remembrance of the good things which we have enjoyed in this world will not, at the hour of death, inspire us with confidence, but will fill us with terror and confusion.

Woe to me! how many years have I been in the world, and what have I hitherto done for God? O Lord, have pity on me, and *cast me not away from Thy face.*[3012]

The time of death is the time of truth: then do all worldly things appear as they really are,—vanity, smoke, and dust.

O my God! how frequently have I exchanged Thee for nothing! I should not dare to hope for pardon, were it not that Thou hast died in order to pardon me. Now will I love Thee above all things, and will esteem Thy grace of greater value than all the kingdoms of the earth.

II. Death is compared by St. Paul to a thief,[3013] because it robs us of all things,—possession, beauty, dignity, parents, even of our own flesh.

The day of death is called also *the day of destruction.*[3014] Then shall we lose all that we have ever acquired, and all that we can hope for from this world. O my Jesus! I am not concerned about the loss of earthly goods, but only lest I should lose Thee, the infinite good.

We extol the saints, who, for the love of Jesus Christ, despise the goods of this earth; and do we continue to be attached to them at the imminent danger of our salvation?

We have a great esteem for the advantages of this life; and why do we make so little account of the advantages of eternity?

Enlighten me, O my God! and make me sensible that all creatures are nothing, and that Thou art my all, the infinite good. Grant that I may leave all things to gain only Thee. My God, my God, Thee only do I desire, and besides Thee nothing.

III. St. Teresa says that all our faults and attachments to the goods of this earth arise from a want of faith. Let us then reanimate our faith, that we shall one day have to leave all and to go into eternity. And hence let us leave all now, while we can obtain merit by so doing, which we shall one day be forced to leave. What are riches, honors, parents? God, God, let us seek only God, and God will be our all.

That eminent servant of God, Sister Margarite of St. Ann, daughter of the Emperor Rudolf II., and a discalceated nun, said, “What will kingdoms avail at the hour of death?”

The death of the Empress Isabella induced St. Francis Borgia to renounce the world, and to give himself entirely to God; at the sight of her corpse he said, It is thus, then, that the grandeurs and the crowns of this world terminate?

O my God! Thou hast always loved me! Grant that I may become wholly Thine before death overtakes me.

MEDITATION III

DEATH DISCLOSES THE VANITY OF THE WORLD

I. O the great secret of death! how does it destroy all worldly desires! how does it expose all worldly grandeur as smoke and deceit! Things the most desired of this earth lose all their splendor when beheld from the bed of death. The shadow of death obscures the beauty of all things here below.

Of what avail are riches when nothing remains but a winding-sheet? Of what avail is bodily beauty, when all is reduced to a heap of worms? Of what avail is authority, when nothing remains but to be thrown into the grave, and be forgotten by all?

St. Chrysostom says, “Go to a sepulchre, contemplate dust and worms; and sigh.” Look on the graves of the dead; see those skeletons gnawed by worms and crumbling into dust, and say, with a sigh, Such must I become, and why do I not think of this? why do I not give myself to God? Alas! who knows but that the sentiments which I am now reading may be the last call for me?

My dear Redeemer, I accept of my death, and I accept of it in whatever way it may please Thee to send it to me; but I beseech Thee, before Thou judgest me, to allow me time to bewail the offences which I have committed against Thee. I love Thee, O my Jesus! and I am truly sorry for having despised Thee.

II. O God! how many miserable beings, to obtain worldly things, pleasures, or vanities, have lost their souls, and, by losing their souls, have lost all!

Do we believe or not believe that we must die? and that only once? And why do we not leave all, to secure a happy death? Let us leave all, to secure all.

Is it possible to know that the remembrance of a disorderly life will at the hour of death be an insufferable torment, and still continue to live on in sin?

O my God! I thank Thee for the light which Thou affordest me. But, O Lord! what have I done? Have I multiplied my sins, and hast Thou augmented Thy graces? Woe to me, if I do not avail myself of them!

He who reflects that in a short time he must leave the world will not be attached to it.

Oh, with what peace of soul do those live and die who, despoiled of all things, are contented to say, *My God and my all!*

Solomon said that all the goods of this earth are only vanity and affliction of spirit; since the more any one possesses of them, the more he suffers.

St. Philip Neri called those fools whose hearts are attached to this world. Fools, because even here they lead miserable lives.

O my God! what now remains of the many offences of which I have been guilty, but the pain and remorse which now torment me, and will torment me still more at the hour of death? Oh, do Thou make haste to pardon me. Thou desirest that I should be all Thine, and such do I desire to be. Behold, from this moment, I give myself to Thee, and I desire nothing in return but Thyself.

III. Let us not imagine that to be detached from all, in order to love only God, is to live a disconsolate life. Who on this earth is so contented and happy as the man that loves Jesus Christ with his whole heart? Find me one amongst all the kings of the world who is more happy than the soul that gives itself wholly to God.

My soul, if now thou wert to depart out of this world, wouldst thou die satisfied with thy past life? And for what dost thou delay? that the light which God in his mercy now affords thee may serve to reproach thee at the great accounting day?

O Jesus! I renounce all to give myself to Thee. Thou didst seek me when I fled from Thee; and now that I seek Thee, do not reject me. Thou didst love me when I did not love Thee, nor even desire that Thou shouldst love me: and now that I have no other desire but to love Thee, and to be loved by

Thee, cast me not away from Thy face. O my God! I am now convinced that Thou desirest to save me, and I desire to work out my salvation to please Thee. I leave all, and give my whole self to Thee. Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.

THIRD DAY

OUR JOURNEY TO ETERNITY

MEDITATION I

WE ARE TRAVELLERS ON THIS EARTH

I. *We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come.*[3015] In this world we are not citizens, but pilgrims; we are on our way to eternity: *Man shall go into the house of his eternity.*[3016]

Soon, therefore, must we be dislodged from this world. The body must soon go down into the grave, and the soul into eternity.

Would not that traveller be guilty of great folly, who should consume all he had in building himself a dwelling in a place which he must soon leave?

O my God! my soul is eternal; I must, then, either enjoy Thee or lose Thee for eternity.

In eternity there are two places of abode,—one overflowing with all delights, the other replete with every torment. And these delights and torments will be eternal. *If the tree fall to the south, or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be.*[3017] If the soul go to the place of salvation, it will be happy there forever; but if it fall into hell, it will remain there to weep and lament as long as God shall be God.

There is no medium: either forever a king in heaven, or forever a slave of Lucifer; either forever blessed in heaven, or forever in despair in hell.

Which of these abodes will fall to the lot of each one of us? That which each one voluntarily chooses. *Man shall go.*[3018] He who goes to hell, goes of his own accord. Every one that is damned, is damned because he wills his own damnation.

O my Jesus, would that I had always loved Thee! Too late have I known Thee; too late have I loved Thee, O Thou, *the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever!*[3019]

II. Every Christian, in order to live well, ought always to keep eternity before his eyes. Oh, how well regulated is the life of that man who lives and sees all things in the light of eternity!

If heaven, hell, and eternity were doubtful things, surely we ought to do all in our power not to run the risk of being lost forever. But no; they are not doubtful things, but articles of faith.

To what will all the fortunes of this world come? To a funeral, to a descent into the grave. Blessed is he who obtains eternal life!

O Jesus! Thou art my life, my riches, my love. Grant me a great desire to please Thee during the remainder of my life; and give me Thy assistance to fulfil it.

III. One thought of eternity is sufficient to make a saint. St. Augustine called it the “great thought.” It is this thought that has sent so many young persons into cloisters, so many anchorites into deserts, and so many martyrs to cruel deaths.

Father Avila converted a lady who was attached to the world, by only saying, “Consider, *always, forever.*”

Oh, how much depends on the last moment of our lives! On our last breath depends an eternity, either of happiness or misery; a life of eternal bliss, or of eternal woe. Jesus Christ died upon the cross, in order to secure for us his grace at this last moment.

My dear Redeemer, if then Thou hadst not died for me, should I have been lost forever? I thank Thee, O my love! I confide in Thee, and love Thee.

MEDITATION II

FOLLY OF THOSE WHO DO NOT THINK OF ETERNITY

I. Either we believe or we do not believe. If we do not believe, we do too much for things which we regard as fables. But if we do believe, we do too little to obtain a happy eternity, and to avoid eternal misery.

Father Vincent Carafa said that if men thoroughly knew the truths of eternity, and compared the goods and evils of this life with those of the next, the world would become a desert, because there would be none that would attend to the affairs of this life.

When the last moment of life is near at hand, how shall we tremble at the thought that on that moment will depend our eternal happiness or misery!

O God! months and years pass away; we are approaching eternity, and we think not of it! And who knows but that this year or month may be my last? Who knows but that this may be the last warning I may receive from God?

O my God! I will no longer abuse Thy graces. Behold me; make known to me what Thou wouldst have me do, and in all things I will obey Thee.

II. And why should we delay after so many lights and calls from God? Unless we desire to lament with the damned, saying, *The summer is ended, and we are not saved.*[3020] Now is the time for reconciliation with God; after death no remedy will be left us.

With good reason did Father Avila say that Christians who believe eternal life, and live at a distance from God, ought to be shut up within an asylum as insane.

The business of eternity is indeed a great point. It is not whether we shall inhabit a house less commodious or lightsome; but whether we shall dwell in a palace of all delights, or in an abyss of the worst of torments.

It is whether we shall be happy with the saints and angels, or live in despair with the multitude of the enemies of God. And for how many years? For a thousand? No, forever, forever, as long as God shall be God.

If then, O God, I had died in my sins, should I have lost Thee forever? If as yet, O Lord, Thou hast not pardoned me, pardon me now, I beseech Thee. I love Thee with all my soul, and I am sorry above every other evil for having offended Thee. I will never lose Thee more. I love Thee with all my heart, and will forever love Thee. Have pity on me.

III. Upon many, during life, it makes little impression to hear of judgment, hell, or eternity. But in death, what dread and terror do these truths excite! but, alas! with but little fruit; because then they serve only to increase their remorse and confusion.

St. Teresa said to her religious, “Daughters, one soul, one eternity;” by which she meant that if the soul is lost, all is lost, and that the soul once lost is lost forever.

O Lord! wait yet awhile, that I may weep for my sins. Too many years have I spent to Thy displeasure; the time which yet remains to me shall be given all to Thee. Accept of me, that I may serve Thee, my God, my God!

The Lord waits for us; let us highly prize the time which, in his mercy, he bestows upon us, that we may not have to regret it when it will be no more for us.

O God! what would not a dying man give for another day, or even another hour! but another day or hour, with his sound senses, for the time which remains to the dying is but little adapted to the settling of affairs of conscience. Giddiness of head, pains of body, oppressions at the chest, hinder the mind from doing anything in a proper manner. Then the soul, as it were, buried in obscurity, is alive to nothing but the distress which overpowers it, and which it cannot alleviate; it would that there were time, but sees that there is no more time for it.

At what hour you think not, the Son of Man will come.[3021] God conceals from us the time of death, that we may always be ready. The time of death is not the time to prepare ourselves to give in our accounts, but the time when we should find ourselves prepared to do so. St. Bernard said, “In order to die well, we must be ever prepared to die.”

O Jesus! too long have I offended Thee. It is surely now time that for the future I should prepare for death. I will no longer abuse Thy patience. I desire to love Thee with all my power. I have very much offended Thee; I desire now in like manner to love Thee.

MEDITATION III

WE MUST PROFIT BY THE TIME

Oh, what a torment, to repent of our carelessness when there is no longer time to do what has been left undone!

St. Laurence Justinian says that worldlings, in death, will willingly give all their riches to obtain but one more hour of life. But it will be said to them, *Time shall be no more.*[3022] It will be intimated to them to depart without delay: *Go forth, Christian soul, out of this world.*[3023]

St. Gregory relates that a certain Crisorius, being at the point of death, cried out to the demons, “Give me time until to-morrow.” But they replied, “Fool! thou hast had it, and why didst thou lose it? Now there is no more time for thee.”

Ah, my God, how many years have I lost! The remainder of my time shall be entirely devoted to Thee. Grant that Thy holy love may abound in me, in whom sin has long abounded.

St. Bernardine of Sienna said that every moment of time in this life is as precious as God; because at every moment, by an act of love or contrition, we may acquire new degrees of grace.

St. Bernard says that time is a treasure to be found only in this life. In hell, the lamentation of the damned is: “Oh, if one hour were given us!”[3024] Oh, if we had but one hour in which to escape from eternal ruin! In heaven there is no weeping; but if the blessed could weep it would be at the thought of having lost, during their lives, portions of time in which they might have acquired higher degrees of glory.

My beloved Redeemer, I do not deserve Thy pity; but Thy Passion is my hope. Help me, therefore, and stretch out Thy hand to a miserable sinner, who now desires to become wholly Thine.

II. And who knows but that a sudden death may surprise us, and deprive us of all time for the makingup of our accounts? The many who have died suddenly did not expect so to die; and if they were in sin, what has become of them for all eternity?

The saints thought that they did but little, in preparing themselves during their whole lives to secure a good end. Father Avila, when it was announced to him that he was about to die, said: “Oh that I had but a little more time to prepare myself!”

And we, why do we delay? That we may make a wicked and miserable end, and leave to others an example of the divine justice?

No, my Jesus, I will not oblige Thee to abandon me. Tell me what Thou requirest of me, and in all things I will do it. Grant that I may love Thee, and I ask for nothing more.

III. *He will call against me the time*.[3025] Let us tremble, and let us not so live that God may hereafter, as judge of our ingratitude, call against us the time which, in his mercy, he now bestows upon us. *Walk*, says our Lord, *whilst you have the light.*[3026] *The night cometh when no man can work.*[3027]

St. Andrew Avellino trembled, saying, “Who knows whether I shall be saved or lost?” But so saying, he ever united himself the more closely to

God. But we, what do we do? How is it possible that he who believes that he must die and go into eternity should not give himself wholly to God?

My beloved Redeemer, my crucified love, I will not wait to embrace Thee until Thou consignest me to death: from this moment I embrace Thee, I bind Thee to my heart, and leave all to love Thee alone, my only good. O Mary, my Mother, unite me to Jesus, and obtain for me, that I may never more separate myself from his love.

FOURTH DAY

SIN

MEDITATION I

MALICE OF MORTAL SIN

I. What is mortal sin? According to St. Thomas and St. Augustine, *it is a turning-away from God;* an act of contempt for his grace and love; and a throwing-off of all respect for him before his face, by which the sinner declares, I will not serve Thee; I will do as I please, and it matters not to me if by so doing I displease Thee, and forfeit thy friendship.

To understand how great is the malice of mortal sin, we must first know what God is, and what man is who contemns him. Before God all the saints and angels are as nothing, and shall a worm of the earth have the insolence to contemn him?

But what more? Man by committing sin, not only contemns a God of infinite majesty, but a God who has so loved him as to die for the love of him. An eternity, therefore, would not be sufficient to bewail but one mortal sin.

He who commits it, dishonors God by preferring a vapor, a fit of madness, a wretched gratification before him. A God so great! a God so good!

O Lord! if Thou hadst not sacrificed Thyself on the cross for the love of me, I should lose all hope of pardon: but Thy death gives me confidence. *Into thy hands I commend my spirit.*[3028] I commend to Thee my soul for which thou hast been pleased to shed Thy blood and sacrifice Thy life; grant that it may love Thee and never more lose Thee. I love Thee, my

Jesus, my love, and my hope. And how shall I ever be able, after having learned how much Thou hast loved me, to separate myself from Thee, my only good?

II. What an affliction is it to us to be injured by one for whom we have done much? God is not capable of grief; but could he grieve, he would die of grief and sorrow, at being despised by a creature for whom he has given even his own life.

O my accursed sins! a thousand times do I detest and abhor you: you have caused me to offend my Redeemer, who has so much loved me.

Unhappy souls, who are now confined in hell, you who, during life, said that sin was a slight evil, acknowledge now that all your torments are not equal to what you have deserved.

It must be that sin is a great evil, since God, who is mercy itself, is obliged to punish it with an eternal hell. But what more? In order to satisfy divine justice for sin, a God was obliged to sacrifice his own life.

O God, we know that hell is the most horrible punishment, and have we no fear of sin, which may cast us into hell? We know that God has died, in order that he might be able to pardon our sins; and do we continue to commit sin.

The loss of the least worldly good makes us uneasy and sad; and does the loss of God by sin fail to overwhelm us with affliction and grief for the remainder of our lives?

I give Thee thanks, O Lord! for having given me time to bewail my offences against Thee. O Jesus! I abhor them with the greatest hatred: give me still greater sorrow, still greater love, that I may lament all my sins, not so much on account of the punishments which I have deserved by them, as for having offended Thee, my most amiable God.

III. What disquiet and fears agitate a courtier who is afraid of having offended his prince? And do we, who know for certain that we have displeased God, and have for a time forfeited his friendship, live tranquil and without being in continual grief?

What care do not men take to avoid poison, which destroys the body? And yet what great negligence in avoiding sin, which is the poison of the soul, and robs us of God!

Let us not be ensnared to commit sin by that fraud of the devil, by which he suggests to us that we may afterwards confess it. Oh, how many has the enemy drawn into hell by this stratagem!

O my God! for how many years have I deserved to dwell in hell! Thou hast waited for me, that I may forever bless Thy mercy and love Thee. Yes, my Jesus, I bless Thee and love Thee; and I trust in Thy merits that I shall nevermore be separated from Thy love. But if after so many graces I should again offend Thee, how shall I be able to presume that Thou wilt not abandon me, but again forgive me? Permit it not, O Lord.

MEDITATION II

ABUSE OF THE DIVINE MERCY

I. God has pity on them that fear him, but not on them that despise him. To offend God because he shows mercy is to provoke him in the highest degree to chastise us.

Again, to offer an outrage to God, because God is forgiving, is to deride him; but *God is not mocked.*[3029]

The devil will say to you: “But who knows? even with this sin it may be that you may still be saved.” But meanwhile, if you sin, you yourself may condemn yourself to hell. Who knows? It may be that as yet you may be saved; but it may also be, and that more easily, that you may be lost. And is the affair of eternal salvation to be risked on a *who knows?* If in the mean time death should come upon you! if God should abandon you! What will become of you?

No, my God, I will nevermore offend Thee. How many are now suffering in hell for fewer sins than mine? I will no longer be devoted to self, but will be Thine and entirely Thine. To Thee I consecrate my whole liberty and will. *I am Thine; do Thou save me.*[3030] Save me from hell, but first save me from sin. I love Thee, my Jesus, I will nevermore forsake Thee.

II. The holy Fathers say, that God has determined the number of sins which he will forgive each one. Hence, as we know not this number, we ought to fear lest at every additional sin God should abandon us. This fear —Who knows whether God will any more pardon me?—ought to be a great restraint upon us to keep us from again offending God: with this fear we should be secure.

And he who has been the more favored by God with his lights and graces ought to be the more afraid of being abandoned by him. The Angelic Doctor says that the grievousness of sin increases in proportion to the ingratitude with which sin is committed. Woe, then, to the Christian who, after having been enriched with the graces of God, offends him mortally!

O my Jesus, while Thou hast shown me numberless mercies, I have repaid them by multiplied offences! Thou hast bestowed favors upon me, and I, in return, have despised Thee! But now I love Thee with my whole heart, and I desire to make amends by my love for all the offences that I have committed against Thee. O do Thou enlighten and strengthen me.

III. “Sin,” said Sister Mary Strozzi, “in a religious person, strikes heaven with horror, and obliges God to turn himself away.”

He who has not a great dread of mortal sin is not far from falling into it. Hence it is necessary to fly from dangerous occasions as much as possible.

It is necessary also to fly from all deliberate venial sins. Father Alvarez said, “Little negligences, but voluntary, do not kill the soul, but they weaken it; so that, on occasion of a grievous temptation, it will not have strength to resist, and will fall.”[3031]

St. Teresa has written: “From known sin, however small it be, may God deliver us!”[3032] Because, said the saint, a deliberate venial sin does us more harm than all the devils in hell can do.

No, my Jesus, no, I will no more offend Thee; neither in great nor in small things. Thou hast done too much to oblige me to love Thee. I desire rather to die than to give Thee the least offence. Thou hast not deserved it; but hast deserved all my love, and I desire to love Thee with all my strength. Give me Thy assistance.

MEDITATION III

VENIAL SINS

I. Unhappily, venial sins are regarded as slight evils: but how can that be called a slight evil which is an offence against God!

He who commits venial sins without restraint says: I may do this and still be saved. But I say: by continuing such a course, you will not be saved; for, says St. Gregory: “The soul never remains where it falls, but always descends lower.” St. Isidore[3033] writes that he who makes no account of venial sins is permitted by Almighty God to fall into mortal sins, in punishment of his want of love. And our Lord himself said to the Blessed Suso, that those who make no account of venial sins expose themselves to much greater danger than they are aware of; because it thus becomes much more difficult for them to persevere in grace.

The Council of Trent[3034] teaches that we cannot persevere in grace without the special assistance of God; but he is too undeserving of such special assistance who offends God by voluntary venial sins, without any thought of amendment.

Chastise me not, O Lord! as I have deserved. Remember not the many offences which I have committed against Thee, and deprive me not of Thy light and assistance. I desire to amend, I desire to be Thine. O omnipotent God, accept of me and change me. This is my hope.

II. Our Lord said to Blessed Angela de Foligni, “Those who are enlightened by me to aim at perfection, but, debasing their souls, walk in the ordinary way, will be abandoned by me.”

He who serves God, but is not afraid of offending him by venial indulgences, would seem to think that God is not worthy of being served with greater attention. He declares, in fact, that God is not deserving of so much love as to oblige us to prefer his pleasure to our own satisfaction.

Habitual defects, says St. Augustine,[3035] are a kind of leprosy, which renders the soul so disgusting as to deprive it of God’s embraces.

I am sensible, O Lord! that Thou hast not as yet abandoned me, as I have deserved; strengthen me, therefore, to shake off tepidity. I desire nevermore deliberately to offend Thee. I desire to love Thee with my whole soul. O Jesus! help me; in Thee do I confide.

III. St. Francis says that it is the devil’s art to bind souls first with a hair, that he may afterwards bind them with a chain, and secure them. Let us therefore be on our guard not to be entangled by any of the passions. A soul that is entangled by passion is either lost, or in great danger of being lost.

“The devil,” said Mary Victoria Strada, “when he cannot have much, is content with little, but by that little he gains much.”

Our Lord declares that the lukewarm are loathsome and disgusting to him: *Because thou art lukewarm, . . . I will begin to vomit thee out of my* *mouth.*[3036] This means abandonment on the part of God.

Tepidity is a hectic fever, which is scarcely perceived, but if neglected becomes fatal; inasmuch as tepidity renders the soul insensible to remorse of conscience.

O Jesus! do not cast me off, as I have deserved; look not on my ingratitude, but on the sufferings which Thou hast endured for my sake. I am sorry for all my offences against Thee. I love Thee, O my God! and from this day forward I desire to do my utmost to please Thee. O love of my soul! I have very much offended Thee; grant that for the remainder of my life I may very much love Thee. O Mary, my hope, help me by thy holy intercession.

FIFTH DAY

DEATH

MEDITATION I

THE WORLDLING AT THE APPROACH OF DEATH

I. We must die. Sooner or later we must die. In every age, houses and cities are filled with new inhabitants, and their predecessors consigned to the grave.

We are born but to die. However long our life may be, a day, an hour, will come which will be our last, and this hour is already determined.

I thank Thee, O God! for the patience with which Thou hast borne me. Oh that I had died rather than have ever offended Thee! But since Thou givest me time to repair what is past, make known to me what Thou requirest of me, and I will obey Thee in all things.

In a few years, neither I who write, nor Thou that readest, will be living on this earth. As we have heard the bell toll for others, so will others one day hear it toll for us. As we now read the names of others inscribed in the lists of the dead, so will others read ours.

In a word, there is no alternative; we must die. And, what is more terrible, we can die but once; and if once lost, we shall be lost forever.

What will be your alarm when it is announced to you that you must receive the last sacraments, and that there is no time to be lost! Then will you see your relatives and friends leave your room, and none remain but your confessor, and the servants to attend you.

O Jesus! I will not wait until death to give myself to Thee. Thou hast said that Thou knowest not how to reject the soul that seeks Thee: *Seek and you shall find.*[3037]

Now, therefore, do I seek Thee; grant that I may find Thee. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! Thee alone do I desire, and besides Thee, nothing.

II. In the midst of his schemes and intrigues the man of the world shall hear it said to him: “Christian Brother, you are fatally ill, and must prepare to die.” He would put his accounts in order; but, alas! the terror and confusion which agitate him render him incapable of doing anything.

Whatever he sees or hears adds to his fears and distress. All worldly things become to him as thorns; the remembrance of past pleasures, punctilios of honor, vanities, ostentation, friends who have withdrawn him from God, vain apparel, and all such things, alarm and torment him.

What will be his terror when he reflects: “In a short time I shall be no more; and I know not whether I shall be happy, or miserable, for eternity!” O God, what consternation will the bare words judgment, hell, eternity, strike into the souls of poor dying worldlings.

My Redeemer, I believe that Thou hast died for me. From Thy precious blood do I hope for salvation. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! and I am grieved for having offended Thee. O Jesus, my hope, my love! have pity on me.

III. Imagine to yourself a man seized with his last illness. He who but a little while ago went about slandering, threatening, and ridiculing others is suddenly paralyzed, and deprived of his strength and bodily senses, so that he cannot speak, nor see, nor hear.

Alas! the unhappy man thinks now no more of his engagements, or his schemes of vanity; the thought of the account which he must soon render to God alone occupies his mind. His relatives, weeping, sighing, or in sad silence surround him, and his confessor tries to assist him.

Physicians consult together and increase his alarm. In such a state, he thinks no longer of his amusements; he thinks only of the news which is brought him, that his malady is mortal.

But there is no remedy; in this state of confusion, in this tempest of pain, affliction, and fear, he must prepare himself to depart out of this world. But how is he to prepare himself in so short a time? His mind is almost gone. But there is no remedy, he must depart. What is done is done.

O God! what will my death be? No, I desire not to die in so great uncertainty as to my salvation. I will change my life. O Jesus! help me, for I am resolved to love Thee henceforward, with my whole heart. Unite me to Thyself, and never suffer me to be separated from Thee.

MEDITATION II

LAST PREPARATIONS

I. If you were about to die, what would you not give for another year, or another month? Resolve, therefore, to do now what you will not be able to do at the hour of death.

Who knows but that this year, or this month, or even this day, may be your last?

You would not wish to die in the state in which you now are; and will you dare to continue to live on in the same state? You lament over those who die suddenly, because they have no time to prepare themselves for death; and have you time, and will not prepare yourself?

O my God! I will not oblige Thee to forget me. I thank Thee for the mercies which Thou hast bestowed upon me; assist me in my endeavors to change my life. I see that Thou desirest to save me; and I desire to be saved that I may praise and love Thee for all eternity.

At the approach of death the crucifix will be presented to you, and you will be admonished that Jesus Christ must be your only refuge and consolation. To those who have had but little love for the crucifix, it will be a subject of fear rather than of encouragement. On the contrary, what a consolation will it be to those who have left all for the love of their crucified Jesus!

My beloved Jesus, Thou shalt be my only love in life and in death: *My God and my all.*

II. How are the dying, whose consciences reproach them, filled with terror at the sole mention of eternity! Hence they will not hear anything else spoken of but their malady, physicians, and remedies; and if the affairs of their souls be mentioned, they soon grow tired, change the subject, and beg of you to let them rest.

The sinner will exclaim: “Oh that I had time to amend my life!” But it will be said to him,[3038] *Depart out of this world*[3039] “Call in additional medical aid,” will he answer; “try other remedies.” But of what avail will these be? His hour is come; he must depart and go into eternity.

To him who loves God how consoling will it be to hear it said, *Depart!* He will not be terrified, but rejoice at the thought of being soon out of all danger of losing his sovereign and beloved good.

Let thy place be this day in peace, and thy abode in holy Sion.[3040] What a joyful announcement to him who dies in a well-grounded confidence of being in the grace of God!

O Jesus! in Thy precious blood do I place my hope, that Thou wilt conduct me into that place of peace, where I shall be able to say, My beloved God, I have now no longer any fear of losing thee.

Have compassion, O Lord, on his sighs: have compassion on his tears.[3041] My God, I will not wait until death to bewail my offences against Thee; I now detest and abhor them, and am sorry for them with my whole heart, and would willingly die of sorrow for having committed them. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! I desire to live and to die in sorrow and in love.

Remember, O Lord, he is Thy creature; not made by strange gods, but by Thee, the only living and true God.[3042] O my God, Thou who hast created me for Thyself, cast me not away from Thy face. If I have despised Thee, I now love Thee more than myself, and I desire to love only Thee.

III. He who has had but little love for Jesus Christ will tremble at the appearance of the holy Viaticum; but he, on the contrary, who has loved only Jesus, will be filled with confidence and love, when he beholds his Lord at hand to accompany him in his passage to eternity.

While Extreme Unction is received, the devil will remind the dying man of all the sins committed by means of the senses. Let us therefore be careful to bewail them before the approach of death.

When he has received all the sacraments, his relatives and friends will retire, and he will be left alone with the crucifix.

O Jesus! when all have abandoned me, do not Thou depart from me. *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded.*[3043]

MEDITATION III

THE AGONY OF DEATH

1. A cold sweat spreads itself over him, his eyes become dim, his pulse intermits, his extremities become cold, he stretches himself out like a corpse, and his agony begins. Alas! he is already rapidly passing away into eternity.

His breath fails him, his respirations become much less frequent, and death is near at hand. The priest lights a blessed candle and places it in his hand, and begins to repeat for him acts suitable for the soul's immediate departure. O light, enlighten now our souls, for then thou wilt be of but little service to us when the time has gone for repairing the evil which we have done.

O God! how will our offences and the vanities of this world appear by this last light?

The dying man expires; and in the same moment in which he breathes his last, time for him concludes and eternity begins. O moment which will decide our happiness or misery for eternity!

O Jesus! have mercy; pardon me and unite me to Thee, that I may not at my last moment be lost forever.

II. The soul being departed, the priest says to the bystanders, He is gone.—Is he dead? Yes, he is dead.—May he rest in peace. He rests in peace if he has died in peace with God; but if not, he will never enjoy peace so long as God shall be God.

As soon as he is dead the news spreads abroad. One says, He was a man of address, but not very devout. Another, Who knows whether he is lost? His relatives and friends, to save their feelings, will not hear him spoken of, and say to those who mention his name, "For pity's sake, do not mention him."

Thus, he who was the life of conversation becomes the horror of all. Go into his house, he is no longer there; his room, his bed, his furniture, are divided amongst others. And he, where is he? His body is in the grave, his soul in eternity.

If you wish to see him, open that grave; he is no longer blooming and feasting, but a heap of corruption, in which are engendered multitudes of worms, which will soon eat away the lips and the cheeks, so that in a little while nothing more will remain of him but a fetid skeleton, which, in time, will fall to pieces, the head from the trunk, and the bones from one another.

See then to what this body of ours will one day be reduced, on account of which we so often offend God!

O saints of God! you remembered this, and kept your bodies in subjection by mortification; now are your bones venerated upon altars, and your souls are enjoying the sight of God, waiting for the day of final retribution, when your bodies will become your companions in glory, as they were formerly your companions in suffering.

III. Were I now in eternity, what should I not wish to have done for God?

St. Camillus de Lellis, looking on the graves of the dead, was accustomed to say: “Oh, if these were alive, what would they not now do for eternal life? And I who am alive, what do I do?”

O Lord! do not condemn me with the reprobate on account of my ingratitude. Others have offended Thee in the midst of darkness and ignorance, but I have offended Thee in the midst of light. Thou hast more than sufficiently enlightened me to know the wrong which I did in committing sin; and yet I closed my eyes to Thy lights, trampled on Thy graces, and turned my back upon Thee. *O Thou who art my hope, be not to me a subject of dread, in the day of affliction.*[3044]

MEDITATION IV

THE DEATH OF THE JUST

I. *Precious. . . . the death of His saints.*[3045] St. Bernard says that the death of the just is called precious, because it is the end of labor and the gate of life. To the saints death is a reward, because it is the end of sufferings, pains, struggles, and the fear of losing God.

That word *Depart*, which is such a terror to worldlings, alarms not the just; because to them it is not painful to leave all worldly goods, for God has been their only riches: nor honors, for they have despised them: nor relatives, for they have loved them only in God. Hence, as they frequently repeated in life, so now with redoubled joy do they exclaim in death, *My God and my all.*

Nor do the pains of death afflict them; they rejoice in offering to God the last moments of life in testimony of their love for him, uniting the sacrifice of their lives to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ offered on the cross, for the love of them.

II. Oh, what a consolation for the saints is the thought that now the time is over when they might have offended God, and were in constant danger of losing him! Oh, what joy to be able then to embrace the crucifix, and to say, *In peace, in the self same, I will sleep and I will rest!*[3046]

The devil will endeavor at that time to disquiet us by the sight of our sins; but if we have bewailed them, and have loved Jesus Christ with our whole heart, Jesus will console us. God is more desirous of our salvation than the devil is for our perdition.

Moreover, death is the gate of life. God is faithful, and will indeed at that time console those who have loved him. Even in the sorrows of death he will bestow upon them foretastes of heaven. Their acts of confidence, of love of God, of desire soon to behold him, will begin for them that peace which they will enjoy throughout eternity. What joy, in particular, will the holy Viaticum afford to those who can say, with St. Philip Neri, “Behold my love, behold my love.”

III. We ought therefore not to fear death, but sin, which alone makes death so terrible. A great servant of God, Father Colombiere, said, “It is morally impossible for one who in life has been faithful to God to die unhappily.”

He who loves God is desirous of death, which will unite him eternally to God. It is a sign of but little love for God, not to desire soon to behold him.

Let us accept of the hour of death with the loss of worldly things. We may do this now meritoriously, but then, it must be done forcibly and with danger of being lost. Let us live as though every day were to be the last of our lives. Oh, how well does he live who lives always with the remembrance of death present to his mind!

O my God! when will the day arrive, in which I shall see Thee and love Thee face to face? I do not deserve it; but Thy wounds, O my Redeemer! are my hope. I will say to Thee with St. Bernard: *Thy wounds are my merits.* And hence I will take confidence, and will also say to Thee with St. Augustine: *Would that I may die, O Lord, that I may behold Thee!*[3047] O

Mary, Mother, in the blood of Jesus Christ, and in thy holy intercession, do I hope for salvation, and to come to praise thee, thank thee, and love thee forever in heaven.

SIXTH DAY

JUDGMENT

MEDITATION I

PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

I. Place yourself, in imagination, in the same situation in which you will be when dying and in your agony, when not more than an hour or less will remain for you. Imagine that in a very short time you will have to be presented before your Judge, Jesus Christ, to render an account of your whole life. Nothing will then so much alarm you as remorse of conscience. Put, therefore, your accounts in order, before the arrival of the great accounting day.

When you are on the point of entering into eternity, how will remorse for past sins, diffidence, increased by the suggestions of the devil, and uncertainty as to our future lot, cast us into a tempest of confusion and fear! Let us therefore now unite ourselves to Jesus Christ, and to Mary that at that critical moment they may not abandon us.

How terrified shall we be at the thought, that in a few moments we shall be judged by Jesus Christ! St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, being ill, and being asked by her director why she trembled, answered: “How terrible is the thought of being obliged to appear before Christ as our Judge.”

O Jesus! remember that I am one of those whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy blood. *We beseech Thee, therefore, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.*[3048]

II. It is the common opinion among divines that in the same place and moment in which the soul departs, it is judged by Jesus Christ. So that in that same moment the trial is gone through, and the sentence passed and put in execution.

O fatal moment, in which is decided the happy or miserable lot of each one for eternity!

The Ven. Father da Ponte, when he thought of judgment, trembled to such a degree as to shake the room in which he was.

O Jesus! if now Thou wert to judge me, what would become of me? Eternal Father, *look upon the face of thy Christ.*[3049] I sincerely repent of all the sins that I have committed against Thee: look on the blood, the wounds of Thy Son, and have pity on me.

III. The soul goes forth and leaves the body, but it is some time doubtful whether the person is alive or dead. While the bystanders are doubting, the soul enters into eternity. The priest, satisfied at length that the man is dead, sprinkles the corpse with holy water and repeats the prayer of the Church: "Come to his assistance, all ye saints of God; meet him, ye angels of the Lord."[3050] But if the soul be lost, the saints and angels can no longer assist it.

Jesus will come to judge us appearing with the same wounds that he received for us in his Passion. These wounds will be a source of great consolation to penitents, who with true sorrow have bewailed their sins during life, but will be a source of great terror to sinners who have died in their sins.

O God! how painful will it be for man to behold him for the first time as his indignant Judge! It will be more painful than hell itself.

Man will then behold the majesty of the Judge: he will see how much He has suffered for the love of him; he will see the many mercies which He has exercised toward him, the many and great means which He has afforded him of gaining salvation; he will see the vanity of all worldly things, and the greatness of those which are eternal; he will see, in a word, all these, truths, but without any advantage. Then will there be no more time to repair past errors. What is done is done.

My beloved Redeemer! grant that when I first behold Thee, I may see Thee with an appeased countenance; and for this end give me now light, give me strength to reform my life. I desire always to love Thee. If hitherto. I have despised Thy graces, I now esteem them above all the kingdoms of the world.

MEDITATION II

THE SENTENCE DEPENDS ON US

I. What great consolation will he enjoy at the hour in which he is to be judged, who, for the love of Jesus Christ, has been detached from all worldly things, who has loved contempt, and mortified the body; who, in a word, has loved nothing but God!

What joy will he experience in hearing it said to him: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Be glad and rejoice, for now thou art saved, and there is no longer any fear of thy being lost.”

On the contrary, the soul which leaves this life in a state of sin, before Jesus condemns it, will condemn itself, and will declare itself deserving of hell.

O Mary, my powerful advocate, pray to Jesus for me. Help me, now that thou art able to help me. Then thou wouldst behold me perish and wouldst not be able to assist me.

II. *What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap.*[3051] Let us examine what things we have hitherto sown. And let us do now what we shall then wish to have done.

If now, within an hour, we had to appear for judgment, how much should we be willing to give to purchase another year? And in what shall we spend the years which remain for us?

The abbot Agatho, after many years of penance, when he thought of judgment, said, “What will become of me when I shall be judged?” And holy Job exclaimed: *What shall I do when God shall rise to judge? and when He shall examine, what shall I answer Him?*[3052] And what shall we answer when Jesus Christ calls us to account for the graces which he has bestowed upon us, and for the bad use which we have made of them?

O God, *deliver not up to beasts the souls that confess to Thee.*[3053] I do not deserve pardon, but Thou wouldst not have me lose confidence in Thy mercy. Save me, O Lord! raise me up from the mire of my miseries. I desire to amend my life, do Thou assist me.

III. The cause to be decided at the hour of death will be one that will involve our eternal happiness or misery. Hence we should be most careful in using our utmost endeavors to secure a favorable issue. Each one, considering this, should say to himself, So it is. Why, therefore, do I not leave all things to give myself entirely to God? *Seek ye the Lord, while He* *may be found.*[3054] He who at his judgment after death loses God will never again find him; but, in life, he who seeks him finds him.

O Jesus! if hitherto I have despised Thy love, I now seek for nothing but to love Thee and to be loved by Thee. Grant that I may find Thee, O Thou the God of my soul!

MEDITATION III

GENERAL JUDGMENT

I. O the folly of worldings! I look forward to your appearance in the valley of Josaphet. There you will change your sentiments, there you will bewail your folly; but to no purpose.

And you, who are afflicted in this world, be of good heart. On that last day all your pains will be changed into the delights and enjoyments of paradise: *Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*[3055]

What a glorious appearance will the saints then make who in this world were so much despised! And what a horrible appearance will so many nobles, kings, and princes make, who will then be condemned!

My crucified and despised Jesus, I embrace Thy cross. What is the world, what are pleasures, what are honors? O my God, Thee only do I desire, and besides Thee, nothing.

II. What horror will the reprobate in that day experience at being separated from Jesus Christ by that terrible sentence, publicly pronounced: *Depart from Me, ye cursed!*[3056]

O my Jesus! I also at one time deserved such a sentence. But now I hope that Thou hast pardoned me. Oh, do not suffer me to be any more separated from Thee. I love Thee, and hope to love Thee forever.

What joy, on the other hand, will the elect experience, when they hear themselves invited by Jesus Christ to partake of the bliss of heaven in those sweet words: *Come, ye blessed!*

My beloved Redeemer, I hope in Thy precious blood that I also shall be numbered with these happy souls, and, embracing Thy feet, shall love Thee for all eternity.

III. Let us reanimate our faith, and reflect that one day we shall meet in that valley, and be placed either on the right hand with the elect, or on the left with the reprobate. Let us cast ourselves at the feet of the crucifix, and turn our attention to the state of our souls; and if we find them unprepared to appear before Jesus Christ, let us correct and amend them now, whilst we have time. Let us detach ourselves from everything which is not God, and unite ourselves to Jesus Christ as much as we are able, by meditation, the holy Communion, mortification of the senses, and, above all, by prayer. The use of these means which God affords us for our salvation will be a great sign of our predestination.

O my Jesus and my Judge! I do not desire to lose Thee, but to love Thee forever. I love Thee, my Lord, I love Thee; and thus I hope to be able to address Thee when I shall first behold Thee as my Judge. I now say to Thee: Lord, if Thou desirest to chastise me, as I have deserved, chastise me, but do not deprive me of Thy love; grant that I may always love Thee, and may be always loved by Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

SEVENTH DAY

REMORSE OF THE CHRISTIANS IN HELL

MEDITATION I

FOR VERY LITTLE HAVE THOSE IN HELL DAMNED THEMSELVES

I. The greatest torment that the damned will have to endure in hell will be, themselves ever preying on themselves by remorse: *Their worm dieth not.* Alas! what a cruel worm will it be to Christians who are lost, to think for how very little they have condemned themselves! Have we then, will they say, for such trifling, transitory, and poisonous gratifications, lost heaven and God, and condemned ourselves to this prison of torments forever?

We had the happiness of being of the true faith; but, forsaking God, we led miserable lives, to be succeeded by others still more miserable in this pool of fire! God favored us with so many lights, so many means of salvation, and we miserably chose to damn ourselves.

O my Jesus! thus should I now have been bewailing my misery in hell, if Thou hadst caused me to die when I was in sin. I thank Thee for the mercies which Thou hast shown me, and detest all the sins that I have committed against Thee. Had I been in hell, I could no longer have loved Thee; but since I can still love Thee, I desire to love Thee with all my heart. I love Thee, my God, my love, my all.

II. At present what does our past life appear, but as a dream, a moment? But what will a life of forty or fifty years appear to the damned, when, after hundreds and thousands of millions of years have passed away, they will find that their eternity is still to come?

What will those miserable pleasures for which they have sacrificed their salvation appear to them? They will say, “Have we, then, for these accursed gratifications, which were scarcely tasted before they were ended, condemned ourselves to burn forever in this furnace of fire, abandoned by all, for all eternity?”

III. Another subject of remorse will be the thought of the little that they were required to do in order to be saved. They will say, “Had we pardoned those injuries, had we overcome those human respects, had we avoided those occasions, we should not have been lost.”

What would it have cost us to avoid those conversations? to deprive ourselves of those accursed gratifications? to yield that punctilio? Whatever they have cost us, we ought to have been willing to do everything to obtain salvation; but we did not do so, and now there is no remedy for our eternal ruin.

Had we frequented the sacraments, had we not neglected meditation, had we recommended ourselves to God, we should not have fallen into sin. We frequently proposed to do this, but we did it not. We sometimes began a good course, but we soon discontinued it; hence we are lost.

O God of my soul! how many times have I promised to love Thee, and again turned my back upon Thee? Oh, by that love with which Thou didst die for me on the cross, grant me sorrow for my sins, grant me grace to love Thee, and ever to have recourse to Thee in the time of temptation!

MEDITATION II

THE CHRISTIAN IN HELL HAD VERY MANY GRACES TO SAVE HIMSELF

I. What cruel swords will the lights, the calls, and all the other graces of God be to the damned! Of these they will say, “We might have been saints and happy forever in heaven; but now we must be forever miserable!”

The greatest torment of the damned will be to reflect that they are lost wilfully, through their own fault, notwithstanding Jesus Christ died to save them. “God,” will they say, “gave his life for our salvation, and we fools wilfully cast ourselves into this furnace of fire to burn forever! Heaven lost! God lost! ourselves eternally miserable!”

Such will be the eternal lamentations of the damned.

O my God! despised and forsaken by me, grant that I may now find Thee whilst time yet remains for me. For this end, grant me, O my Redeemer! to share in that sorrow which overwhelmed Thee in the garden of Gethsemani for my sins. I am sorry above every evil for having offended Thee. Receive me into Thy favor, O Jesus! now that I promise to love Thee, and to love no other but Thee.

II. Represent to yourself a sick man in great pain and suffering, who has none to pity him, but many to load him with injuries, to reproach him with his disorders, and to scorn him with great bitterness. The damned are treated much worse. They suffer all kinds of torments, without the slightest compassion from any one.

But, at least, cannot the damned love God who justly punishes them? Ah, no; while they know that he is sovereignly amiable, they are constrained to hate him. This is hell, not to be able to love the sovereign good, which is God.

If the damned could resign themselves to the divine will, as pious souls in their sufferings are now able to do, hell would no longer be hell. But no; the damned shall rage like wild beasts under the scourge of divine justice, and their rage shall serve but to increase their torments.

If, then, O Jesus! I were in hell, should I be incapable of loving Thee and hate Thee forever? And what evil hast Thou done me, for which I should hate Thee? Thou hast created me, Thou hast died for me; Thou hast bestowed upon me many special graces: these are the evils which Thou hast done me. Chastise me as Thou pleasest, but do not deprive me of the power of loving Thee. I love Thee, my Jesus, and I desire ever to love Thee.

III. Think of the horror of a soul on its first entrance into hell. “Am I then,” will it say, “really damned? or am I mistaken?” It will think whether there can be any remedy; but will find that there can be none for all eternity.

Millions of ages will pass away, as many as there are drops of water in the sea, or grains of sand on the earth, or leaves upon the trees; and hell will still be hell, eternity will be still to come.

At least, will not the damned be able to flatter themselves saying, “Who knows but that hell may one day have an end?” No, for in hell there can be no one *who knows*. The damned will be most certain that all the torments which they suffer every moment will continue throughout all eternity. O God! is hell believed, and are there any that commit sin?

Greater will be the torment of those who have often meditated on hell, and yet by sin have consigned themselves to its torments. Ah! let us not lose time, let us renounce all and unite ourselves to Jesus Christ. All that we can do to avoid hell will be but little. And let us tremble; he that trembles not, will not be saved.

O my Jesus! Thy precious blood, Thy death, are my hope. All others may abandon me, but do not Thou abandon me. I see that Thou hast not as yet abandoned me, since Thou still invitest me to pardon, if I will but repent of my sins, and still offerest me Thy grace and Thy love, if I will but love Thee. Yes, my Jesus, my life, my treasure, my love, I will ever bewail my offences against Thee, and will ever love Thee with my whole heart. My God, if I have lost Thee, I will lose Thee no more. Tell me what Thou requirest of me, and I will endeavor to comply with Thy will in all things; grant that I may live and die in Thy grace, and then dispose of me as Thou pleasest. O Mary, my hope, be thou my protectress, and suffer me not any more to lose God.

EIGHTH DAY

LOVE FOR JESUS CRUCIFIED

MEDITATION I

OUR INGRATITUDE TOWARDS JESUS CRUCIFIED

I. O my Jesus! what greater proof of Thy love couldst Thou have given me, than the sacrificing of Thy life upon the disgraceful gibbet of the cross, to make satisfaction for my sins, and to conduct me with Thee into paradise.

He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.[3057] The Son of God therefore, for the love of man, obedient to his Eternal Father, whose will it was that he should die for our salvation, humbled himself to die, and to die on a cross! and are there those to be found who believe this and love not such a God?

O Jesus! how much has it cost Thee to make me understand that Thou ardently lovest me; and I have basely repaid Thee with ingratitude. Oh, accept of me now and suffer me to love Thee, since now I will no more abuse Thy love. I love Thee, my sovereign good, and desire to love Thee forever. Remind me continually of the pains which Thou suffered for me, that I may never forget to love Thee.

II. O God! the Passion of Jesus Christ is spoken of, and is listened to as though it were a fable, or the sufferings of some one unknown to us, and not at all belonging to us.

O ye sons of men, why do ye not love Jesus Christ? Tell me, what more could our blessed Redeemer have done to make us love him than to die in the midst of grief and torments?

If the vilest of mankind had suffered for us the torments which Jesus Christ has suffered, could we help giving him our affection and showing him our gratitude?

But, my Jesus, why do I speak of others and not rather of myself? What has hitherto been my ingratitude towards Thee? Alas, I have repaid Thy love only with offences against Thee!

Pardon me; for, from this day, I desire to love Thee, and to love Thee much. I should be too ungrateful, if, after so many favors and mercies, I loved Thee but little.

III. Let us reflect that this man of sorrows, nailed to the disgraceful wood of the cross, is our true God, and suffers and dies there for no other motive but love for us.

Do we, then, believe that Jesus Christ crucified is our God, and really dies for us, and can we love anything but him?

O beautiful flames of love which consumed the life of my Saviour on Calvary! come and consume in me all worldly affections; cause me ever to burn with love for such a God, who was pleased to die and to sacrifice his whole self for the love of me.

What a spectacle, for the angels of heaven to behold the divine Word fastened to a gibbet, and dying for the salvation of us his miserable creatures!

O my Saviour! Thou hast not refused me Thy blood and Thy life, and shall I refuse Thee my affections? Shall I refuse Thee anything that Thou askest of me? No; Thou hast given Thy whole self to me, and I will give my whole self without reserve to Thee.

MEDITATION II

THE LOVE OF JESUS FOR US DEMANDS OUR LOVE

I. My soul, behold on Calvary Thy God crucified and dying; see how much he suffers, and say to him,

Why, O Jesus! why dost Thou so much love me, why art Thou so much afflicted and tormented on the cross? Oh, Thou wouldst be less afflicted if Thou didst love me less!

Ah, my dear Redeemer! what a multitude of sorrows, ignominies, and internal afflictions torment Thee upon the cross! Thy most sacred body hangs from three nails, and bears only on Thy wounds; the people who surround Thee deride and blaspheme Thee; and Thy immaculate soul is internally much more afflicted than Thy body. Tell me, why dost Thou suffer so much? Thou answerest me: I suffer all for the love of thee; remember, then, the affection which I have borne thee, and love Me.

Yes, my Jesus, I will love Thee. And whom shall I love, if not God who dies for me? Hitherto I have despised Thee, but now my greatest grief is the remembrance of my offences against Thee, and I desire nothing but to be entirely Thine. O my Jesus! pardon me, and draw my heart to Thee; pierce and inflame it thoroughly with Thy love.

II. Let us consider how loving were the sentiments of Jesus Christ, with which he presented his hands and feet to be nailed to the cross, offering at the same time his divine life to his Eternal Father for our salvation. My beloved Saviour, when I think how much my soul has cost Thee, I cannot despair of pardon. However great and numerous my sins, I will not despair of being saved, since Thou hast already superabundantly satisfied for me. My Jesus, my hope, and my love, as much as I have offended Thee, so much will I love Thee: I have exceedingly offended Thee, I desire also exceedingly to love Thee; Thou who givest me this desire, help me.

Eternal Father, *look on the face of thy Christ.*[3058] Behold Thy dying Son upon the cross; look on that livid countenance, that head crowned with thorns, those hands pierced with nails, that body all bruised and wounded; behold the victim sacrificed for me, and which I now present to Thee; have pity on me.

III. *He hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.*[3059] Why should we fear that our sins will hinder us from becoming saints, when Jesus Christ has instituted a bath of his own blood, to wash our souls from them? It is sufficient that we repent of them and desire to amend.

Jesus, on the cross, had us in his thoughts, and thence prepared for us all those graces and mercies that he now bestows upon us, with as much love as though he had had to save only the soul of each one in particular.

O my Saviour! Thou didst foresee upon the cross the offences which I should commit against Thee, and instead of punishments Thou didst prepare for me lights, loving calls, and pardon. O my Jesus! shall I ever again, after so many graces, offend Thee and separate myself from Thee? O my Lord! permit it not. Grant that I may die rather than not love Thee. I will say to Thee, with St. Francis de Sales, “Either to die, or to love; either to love, or to die.”[3060]

HYMN

TO GOD THE CREATOR

Why didst Thou not create my soul
From all eternity,
Since from eternity, dear Lord!
Thou always lovedst me?
For then to Thee a grateful love
My heart could have returned
From that first moment all unsought
Thy love for me thus burned.
I pine not now for the delights
Of paradise above,
But only to behold Thy face,
And gaze on Thee with love.

I long to be forever fixed
In that blest changeless state,
Where I might love Thee with a love
Immeasurably great.
I look around,—amazed, I cry,
Is it, alas! for this—
This lump of earth, this ant-hill vile—
Men lose eternal bliss?
To suffer or to die, my soul!
For if thou canst not gain
The battle to be fought on earth,
In heaven thou canst not reign.
God sees me—and he is my judge;
The sentence, heaven or hell;
And there where’er my doom decides,
Forever shall I dwell.

VARIOUS PRACTICES

I

RULES FOR LEADING A GOOD LIFE[3061]

1. In the morning, on rising from bed, make the Christian acts. Every day make mental prayer for half an hour; read at least for a quarter of an hour some spiritual book. To hear Mass. To make a visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Divine Mother. To say the Rosary. And in the evening to make the examination of conscience, with the act of contrition, and the Christian acts, together with the Litany of the Ever-Blessed Mary.

2. To go to confession and Communion at least every week, and oftener if possible, with the advice of your spiritual director.

3. To choose a good, learned, and pious confessor, and to be directed always by him, as well in your exercises of devotion, as in all affairs of importance; and not to leave him without a good reason.

4. To avoid idleness, bad companions, immodest conversations, and, above all, the occasions of sin, especially where there is danger of incontinency.

5. In temptations, of impurity particularly, to sign yourself immediately with the sign of the holy Cross, and to invoke the most holy names of Jesus and Mary as long as the temptation lasts.

6. When you commit any sin, to repent of it at once, and resolve to amend; and if it is a grievous sin, to confess it as soon as possible.

7. To hear sermons as often as you can, and to belong to some confraternity, with no other end than to attend to the affair of your eternal salvation.

8. To fast in honor of the Ever-Blessed Mary on Saturday, and on the vigils of her seven feasts, observing some other corporal mortification, according to the advice of your spiritual Father; to make the novenas of the

above-named feasts of Mary, as well as of the Nativity, Pentecost, and that of your holy patron.

9. In adverse circumstances, as in sickness, losses, persecutions, you must unite yourself in all things to the will of God, and be resigned; saying always, “This is (or has been) the will of God; may his will be done!”

10. To make the spiritual exercises every year in some religious house, or in some place apart; or at least to make them in your own house, applying yourself during those days as much as possible to prayer, spiritual reading, and to silence. And in the same way to make a day of retreat every month, by going to Communion, and by avoiding all conversation.

II

DEVOUT ACTS TO BE MADE EVERY DAY

I adore Thee, my God, Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons and one only God!

I humble myself in the abyss of my nothingness to the will of Thy infinite majesty.

I firmly believe all that Thou hast deigned to make known to me by means of the Holy Scripture and Thy holy Church, because Thou hast said so; and I am ready to give my life a thousand times for this faith.

I place all my hope in Thee. Whatever good I may have, whether spiritual or temporal, either in this life or in the next, I hope for from Thee, through the merits of Jesus Christ, O God, my life and my only hope!

I love Thee, Infinite Goodness, with all the affection of my heart and of my soul, because Thou dost merit all my love. I wish I knew how to love Thee as the angels, the saints, and just men love Thee. I unite my imperfect love to that which all the saints, Most Holy Mary, and Jesus Christ, bear to Thee.

My God, because Thou art the supreme good, infinitely worthy of being loved and served, I am sorry and repent of all my sins, detesting them as much as possible above every other evil. I resolve for the future rather to die than to consent to anything that may give Thee the slightest displeasure.

I offer Thee now and forever my body, my soul, and all my senses and faculties, my memory, my understanding, and my will. Do with me, Lord, and with all that belongs to me, what Thou pleasest. Give me Thy love and final perseverance, and grant that in all temptations I may always have recourse to Thee.

I resolve to employ myself entirely in those things which are pleasing to Thee, being ready to suffer any pain and labor in order to please Thee, saying always, Lord, may Thy will be done!

I desire that all should serve and love Thee. I would gladly spend my time in persuading all mankind to love and honor Thy Majesty.

I offer to Thy Majesty all the works I shall ever do, steeping them in the blood of Jesus, my Redeemer.

I intend to gain all the indulgences that I can in my actions this day, and to apply them by way of suffrage to the souls in purgatory.

I recommend to Thee all the souls in purgatory, as also all sinners; enlighten and strengthen these unhappy creatures, that they may know and love Thee.

I rejoice exceedingly that Thy happiness is infinite, and will never have an end.

I thank Thee for all the graces and benefits that Thou hast bestowed upon all mankind, but especially upon me, who have been more ungrateful than others.

My beloved Jesus, I take refuge within Thy sacred wounds: do Thou there defend me this day, and forever, from all temptations, till Thou shalt grant me to see Thee and love Thee eternally in paradise. Amen. This is my hope, and so may it be.

III

SPIRITUAL MAXIMS FOR A CHRISTIAN

Of what use will it be to gain the whole world and to lose one’s soul?

Everything has an end; but eternity has no end.

All may be lost, provided God be not lost.

No sin, however small, is a light evil.

If we desire to please God, we must deny ourselves.

That which is done for our own satisfaction is all loss.

In order to save ourselves we must be in constant fear of falling.

Let me die, so that I may please God.

The only evil that we ought to fear is sin. All that God wills is good, and therefore to be desired.

He who desires nothing but God is happy and contented with everything that happens.

I ought to imagine to myself that there are no others in the world but God and myself.

The whole world cannot satisfy our heart; God alone can satisfy it.

All good consists in loving God. And loving God consists in doing his will.

All our riches are in prayer. He who prays obtains everything that he can desire.

Let us consider that day lost on which we omit our mental prayer. “He who leaves off praying,” says St. Teresa, “casts himself into hell of his own accord.”

Let us not pass a day without reading some spiritual book.

Points of honor are the plague of spirituality.

To be humble of heart, and not merely in word, it is not sufficient to say that we are deserving of all contempt, but we must also be glad when we are despised. And what has a Christian learnt to do, if he cannot suffer an affront for God’s sake? When you are insulted, take it all cheerfully.

He who thinks of hell, which he has deserved, finds every trouble easy to bear.

He who loves poverty possesses all things. In the things of this world we must choose the worst; in the things of God we must choose the best.

An obedient soul is the delight of God.

True charity consists in doing good to those who do us evil, and in thus gaining them over.

Of what use are the riches and honors of this world at the hour of death?

It is a great grace of God to be called to his holy love.

God does not leave a single good desire unrewarded.

All attachment, even to good things (except to God), is bad.

Let us be grateful, and first of all to God. Let us therefore resolve to deny him nothing, making choice of those things which are most pleasing to him.

The most beautiful prayer is when in sickness we unite ourselves to the will of God.

A holy life and sensual pleasures cannot agree together.

He who trusts in himself is lost; he who trusts in God can do all things.

And what greater delight can a soul have than to know that it is pleasing God.

God is ready to give himself to those who leave all for his love.

The only way by which we can become saints is the way of suffering.

It is by aridity and temptations that God tries those who love him.

No one can be lost who loves God and trusts in him.

Let us beg of God to give us a tender devotion to his Divine Mother.

He who looks on Jesus crucified suffers everything in peace.

He who loves God most in this world is the happiest. All that is not done for God, turns to pain.

No kind of disquietude, although for a good end, comes from God.

It is enough that we do not stand still; we shall arrive in the end.

> He who desires only God is rich and happy: he is in want of nothing, and may laugh at all the world.
>
> Nothing can satisfy one whom God does not satisfy.
>
> God, God, and nothing more.
>
> We must overcome all to gain all.

IV

AN EPITOME OF THE VIRTUES IN WHICH A CHRISTIAN SOUL, THAT DESIRES TO LEAD A PERFECT LIFE AND BECOME A SAINT, SHOULD EXERCISE ITSELF

> It would be useful to read this epitome every time you make your day’s retreat, that you may see in what virtues you are wanting.

1. To desire always to increase in love towards Jesus Christ. Holy desires are wings with which souls fly to God. St. Aloysius Gonzaga made himself a saint in a short time, through the great desire he had of loving God; and as he knew he should never be able to love him as much as he was worthy of being loved, he consumed himself in ardent desires. On this account, St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi called St. Aloysius a martyr of love.

2. To meditate often on the Passion of Jesus Christ. St. Bonaventure said that the wounds of Jesus Christ are wounds which pierce every heart, and inflame them with holy love.

3. Often during the day to make acts of love towards Jesus Christ, beginning from the time you wake in the morning, and trying to make an act of love as you fall asleep. Acts of love, says St. Teresa, are the fuel with which the fire of divine love is kept burning in our hearts.

4. Always to ask Jesus Christ to give you his holy love. The grace of loving God, says St. Francis de Sales, is the grace which contains and brings along with it all the other graces; because he who truly loves God will endeavor to avoid anything that might be displeasing to him, and will study how to please him in all things. It is, therefore, necessary above all things to ask of God the grace to love him.

5. To frequent Holy Communion. A soul can do nothing that is more pleasing to God than to communicate in a state of grace. The reason of this

is, that love tends to perfect union with the object beloved; as then Jesus Christ loves a soul that is in grace with an immense love; he ardently desires to unite himself to it. This is what Holy Communion does; by it Jesus Christ is wholly united to the soul: *He that eats my flesh dwells in Me, and I in him.*[3062] Consequently the soul can perform no action that is dearer to Jesus Christ than that of receiving him in the Holy Eucharist. For this reason let spiritual souls endeavor to communicate many times in the week, and if possible every day, but always with the permission of their director; for Communions and mortifications done out of a person's own head lead to pride rather than spirituality. For the rest, the penitent should earnestly ask his director both for Communions and mortifications; because directors are induced to grant them, more or less frequently, according to the greater or less desire which they discover in their penitents.

6. To make during the day many spiritual Communions; at least three.

7. Often to visit the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar, at least once or twice a day; and in the visit, after the acts of faith, of thanksgiving, of love, and of contrition, to ask fervently for perseverance and holy love.

8. When disturbances, losses, affronts, or other adverse things happen, to have recourse to the ever-blessed Sacrament, at least in spirit, if you cannot go to the church.

9. Every morning on rising to offer yourself to God to suffer in peace, and to accept from his hands all the crosses that will befall you on that day; embracing also in peace all contradictions. "Fiat voluntas tua" is the word which is constantly in the mouths of the saints: Lord, may Thy will always be done!

10. To be glad, and to rejoice that God is infinitely happy and blessed. If we love God more than ourselves, as we are bound to love him, we ought to rejoice more at God's happiness than at our own.

11. To desire heaven and death, that we may be delivered from the danger in which we are of losing God, and to go and love Jesus Christ with all our

strength and forever, without the fear of losing him again.

12. Often to speak with others of the love which Jesus Christ has borne us, and of the love we owe to him.

13. To go to God without reserve, not denying him anything that we know to be pleasing to him; but rather choosing such things as are most agreeable to him.

14. To desire and endeavor to persuade all to love Jesus Christ.

15. Always to pray for the souls in purgatory, and for poor sinners.

16. To drive away from your heart all affections that have not God for their object.

17. Often to have recourse to the saints, and especially to the Ever-blessed Mary, that they may obtain for you the love of God.

18. To honor Mary in order to please God.

19. To do all your actions with the sole end of pleasing Jesus Christ; saying at the commencement of each action, O Lord, let it be all for Thee!

20. To offer yourself many times during the day to God and to Jesus Christ, as willing to suffer any pain for his love, and say: My Jesus, I give myself all to Thee; here I am, do with me what Thou wilt.

21. To be resolved to die a thousand times rather than commit a deliberate sin, even though only a venial one.

22. To deny yourself even lawful satisfactions; doing so at least once or twice, a day.

23. When we hear people talk of riches, honors, and amusements of the world, let us remember that all things have an end, and let us then say, My God, I wish only for Thee, and nothing more!

24. To make two hours of mental prayer, or at least one hour during the day.

25. To make use of all those external mortifications that obedience permits; but to pay particular attention to interior mortification, such as abstaining from gratifying our curiosity, from answering when we are reproached, from saying witty things, and the like, and never to do anything for your own satisfaction.

26. Whatever devout exercise you may perform, to do it as if it. were the last time you had to do it. To this end in your meditation you should often think of death; and when you go to bed, think that you will one day there expire.

27. Not to leave off your usual devotions, or any other good work, on account of any aridity or weariness that you may experience. He who begins to leave them off for a slight cause is in danger of giving them up entirely.

28. Not to leave undone any good action out of human respect. Not to complain in sickness of any want of attention on the part of the doctors, servants, or assistants, and to try and conceal even our sufferings as much as we can. To love solitude and silence, in order to be able to discourse only with God. And for this reason we must shun the conversations of this world.

29. To drive away sadness, preserving our tranquillity and a cheerful countenance in all events with a constant uniformity. one who wills what God wills should never be afflicted.

30. To recommend yourself often to spiritual persons.

31. Always to have recourse immediately to Jesus and Mary with great confidence in your temptations; continuing to pronounce the names of Jesus and Mary as long as the temptation lasts.

32. To have great confidence, first in the Passion of Jesus Christ, and then in the intercession of Mary; and to ask God every day to give you this confidence.

33. After a fault, not to be disturbed and never to despair, even though you should know yourself to be wanting in fidelity, and though you should fall again and again into the same fault; but to repent immediately, and to renew your promise of amendment, with confidence in God.

34. To render good to any one who does you evil, or at least to pray to the Lord for him.

35. To answer with meekness when any one says or does anything to injure you; and so you will gain him over to you. Moreover, when you feel yourself annoyed, it is well to be silent until you are composed, otherwise you will commit many faults without perceiving it.

36. When you have to correct any one, you should choose a time when neither you nor the person who is to be corrected are excited, otherwise the correction will prove more hurtful than useful.

37. To speak well of all; and to excuse the intention, when you cannot justify the action.

38. To help your neighbor as much as you can, especially one who has been opposed to you.

39. Not to say or do anything that may be displeasing to any one; and except it were necessary in order to please God rather than men.

40. And if sometimes you are wanting in charity towards any one, ask his pardon, or at least speak kindly to him.

41. To speak always with meekness and in a low voice.

42. To offer to God the contempt you meet with, and not to complain afterwards to others of it.

43. To observe carefully the rules given you by your director.

44. To consider and honor in your Superiors the person of Jesus Christ himself.

45. To love the most humble employments.

46. To choose the poorest things for yourself.

47. To obey without replying, and without showing repugnance; and, on the other hand, not to ask anything for your own satisfaction.

48. Not to speak of yourself, whether it be good or evil; sometimes to speak in disparagement of ourselves fosters pride.

49. To humble yourself even towards your inferiors.

50. Not to excuse yourself when you are reproved or calumniated, unless it should be absolutely necessary for the common good, or to avoid giving scandal to others.

51. To visit and assist the sick as much as possible, and especially the most abandoned.

52. Often to say to yourself, If I wish to become a saint, I must suffer; if I wish to please God, I must do his will, and not my own.

53. Always to renew your resolution of becoming a saint, and not to lose courage in whatever state of tepidity you may find yourself.

54. To renew each day the resolution that you have taken of advancing in perfection.

55. Let religious endeavor every day to renew the vows of their profession. The Doctors of the Church say that a person who renews his vows of religion gains a plenary indulgence, as he does the first time that he makes them.

56. The exercise which is most essential to be practised by a soul that desires to please God is to conform itself in all things to the divine will, and

to embrace with peace all things that are contrary to the senses in pains, sicknesses, affronts, contradictions, loss of property, the death of relatives or of other persons who are dear to us; and to receive them each day when we awake as coming from God. Tribulations are those blessed treasuries in which the saints find such stores of merits. We cannot give greater glory to God than by conforming ourselves in all things to his holy will. This is the continual practice of devout souls. And it is the end to be attained by mental prayer. St. Teresa says that "all that a person who gives himself up to prayer ought to seek is conformity to the divine will; and let him be sure that in this consists the highest perfection." This, then, must be our only intention in all our actions, in our meditations, and in our prayers; we must always pray, *O Lord, teach me to do Thy will.*[3063] *Tell me, Lord, what Thou dost desire of me, and I will do it all.*[3064] "Thy will be done:" such is the prayer continually on the lips of the saints. And this is all that God requires of us: *My son, give me thy heart.*[3065]

But perfection consists in conforming ourselves to the will of God in those things which are disagreeable to us. The Ven. F. Avila says, "It is of more use to say once, 'Blessed be God,' in any contradiction, than to thank him six thousand times when we are pleased." We must also be conformed to those crosses which come to us by means of others, as in calumniations, deceptions, and contempt, because it all comes from God. Not that the Lord then wills the fault of the person who offends us, but he does will that we should be humble and mortified: *Good things and evil are from God.*[3066] We call tribulations evils and misfortunes; and we make them so by suffering them with impatience; but if we received them with resignation, they would become graces and jewels to enrich our crown in heaven. In a word, he who is always united with the will of God becomes a saint, and enjoys even here on earth a perpetual peace: *Whatever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad.*[3067]

57. To recommend ourselves to the prayers of devout people: but still more to recommend ourselves to the saints in heaven, and especially to the Ever-blessed Mary, setting great value on devotion towards this divine Mother; and not omitting any opportunity of inducing others to practise it. Those who have a great confidence in the patronage of Mary ought to be very

grateful to God for it, for it is a great pledge of their salvation; and those who have it not, ought to pray that he would grant it to them.

V

PRAYER TO OBTAIN ALL HOLY VIRTUES

My Lord and my God, by the merits of Jesus Christ, I ask Thee first to enlighten me; make me know the vanity of the goods of this world, that there is no other good but to love Thee, the supreme and infinite good. Make me know my unworthiness, and how worthy Thou art of being loved by all, and especially by me for the love Thou hast borne me. Give me holy humility to embrace with cheerfulness all the contempt that I may receive from men. Give me a great sorrow for my sins. Give me the love of holy mortification, that by it I may curb my passions and punish my rebellious senses. Give me a love for the obedience I owe to my Superiors. Give me grace to direct all that I do to the sole end of pleasing Thee. Give me holy purity of mind and body, and a detachment from everything that does not tend to the love of Thee. Give me great confidence in the Passion of Jesus Christ, and in the intercession of the Ever-blessed Mary. Give me, above all, a great love towards Thee, and a perfect conformity to Thy divine will. I recommend to Thee also the souls of purgatory, my relatives, benefactors, and friends, and all those from whom I have received any affront or injury; I pray Thee shower down upon them all blessings. Finally, I recommend to Thee infidels, heretics, and all those who are in a state of sin. Since Thou, my God, art worthy of infinite love, make Thyself known and loved by all; but especially by me, who have been most ungrateful to Thee. I have offended Thee enough; make me love Thee exceedingly, and take me to Heaven, where I shall sing Thy mercies for all eternity. Blessed Mary, pray to Jesus for me! Amen.

VI

PRAYER TO OBTAIN HOLY PERSEVERANCE

My God, I thank Thee for having pardoned me, as I trust Thou hast, all the offences that I have committed against Thee. I love Thee above all things; and I am more sorry for having despised Thy infinite majesty than for any other evil that has happened to me. I resolve rather to die than ever to offend Thee again; but I fear lest through my weakness I should fall again, and lose Thy grace. Ah, by the merits of Jesus Christ, never permit me to fall again under Thy displeasure! And Thou, Jesus, my Redeemer, since Thou hast died on the cross to save me, never let me separate myself from Thee again. My Jesus, my Jesus, hear me! “Ne permittas me separari a Te; ne permittas me separari a Te.” Such is my hope in that blood which Thou hast shed for me with so much grief. And thou, Mary, my mother and my hope, pray for me; and when thou seest me assailed by any temptation, obtain for me that I may always have recourse immediately to thy Son and thee, saying, Help me, my Jesus: My mother, come to my aid, that I may not lose God. Thus I hope to die loving God and thee, in order to love thee eternally in paradise.

VII

PRAYER OF A DEVOUT SOUL TO MARY AND JESUS

My Queen and my Mother, if thou protect me I fear not that I shall go to hell; because thou dost interpose thy prayers and thy merits for those whom thou dost protect, and Jesus Christ knows not how to deny anything that thou dost ask him. My dear Lady, for the love thou hast for thy Son, pray to him, and have pity on me! And Thou, my Jesus, by the prayers and merits of Thy Mother, and by the blood which Thou hast shed for me, deliver me from hell; because in hell I cannot love Thee. From this hell I pray Thee to deliver me, by that compassion which forced Thee even to die on the Cross for the love of me. Jesus and Mary, you are my love and my hope!

VIII

PRAYERS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

1. TO OBTAIN THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS AND HOLY PERSEVERANCE

Behold, O Mother of God, at thy feet a miserable sinner, who has recourse to thee, and trusts in thee! O Mother of mercy, have pity on me! I hear thee called by all the refuge and the hope of sinners; thou art, then, my refuge and hope also. By thy intercession thou hast power to save me. Help me, for the love of Jesus Christ; lend thy hand to a fallen wretch, who recommends himself to thee, and who dedicates himself to thee as thy faithful servant. I offer myself, then, O Queen of Heaven, to serve thee all my life; accept me, and reject me not, as I deserve. O my Mother, in thy protection have I placed all my hopes. I bless and thank God a thousand times for having in his mercy given me this confidence in thee, which I consider as an earnest of my salvation. Ah, how many times have I not unhappily fallen because I had not recourse to thee! I hope now that, through the merits of Jesus Christ and thy prayers, these sins have been pardoned. I may still, notwithstanding, again lose the divine grace. Do thou, my Lady, protect me; never let me again become the slave of hell. Help me always. By thy help I know that I shall conquer; and I know that thou wilt surely assist me if I recommend myself to thee; but my fear is that, in the occasions of falling, I should omit to call upon thee, and so should be lost. This, then, is the grace I seek from thee, and which I beseech and conjure thee to obtain for me,—namely, that in the assaults of hell I should always have recourse to thee, and say, Mary, help me! help me, O Mary! my Mother, permit me not to lose my God!

2. TO OBTAIN A GOOD DEATH

O Mary! what death shall I die? When I now think of my sins, and of that moment in which I shall expire and be judged, I am confounded and tremble! O my Mother, in the blood of Jesus Christ, and in thy intercession, do I place my hopes! O comforter of the afflicted, abandon me not at that moment, fail not to console me in that great affliction! If thou help me not, I shall be lost. Ah, Lady, before death comes, obtain for me a great sorrow for my sins, a true amendment, and a constant fidelity to God during the remainder of my life. And when I come to the last stage of my existence, O Mary, my hope! help me in those moments of misery; and comfort me, so that I may not despair at the sight of my sins, which the devil will then put before me. Obtain for me that I may then invoke thee more frequently, that I may die with thy name and that of thy divine Son on my lips. Pardon my boldness if I ask thee even to come thyself to console me by thy presence before I expire. I am a sinner, it is true, and I am not worthy of such a favor; but I am thy servant; I love thee, and have great confidence in thee. O Mary, I shall expect thee; leave me not without consolation! At least, if I am unworthy of such a grace, assist me from heaven, that I may go forth from this life loving God and thee, and come to love you both eternally in paradise.

3. TO OBTAIN DELIVERANCE FROM HELL AND THE POSSESSION OF PARADISE

O most dear Lady! I thank thee that thou hast so many times delivered me from hell, which I have so often merited by my sins. I, a miserable wretch, was at one time condemned to that prison; already, perhaps at my first sin, the sentence would have been executed on me, if thou hadst not mercifully helped me. Without my even praying to thee, but out of thy pure compassion, thou didst restrain the divine justice, and then, overcoming my hardness of heart, thou didst encourage me to have confidence in thee. And, oh, into how many other sins should I not have fallen, in the many dangers which have occurred to me, if thou, most loving Mother, hadst not preserved me by the graces thou didst obtain for me. Ah, my Queen, keep me far from hell! O my Mother, leave me not to myself, for I shall then be lost, but make me always fly to thee! Save me, my hope! save me from sin, which can alone condemn me to hell. May I come to rejoice with thee in heaven for all eternity. I thank God above all things for having given me this confidence in the blood of Jesus Christ, and in thee. Yes, I hope that thou wilt save me; that thou wilt free me from sin, and wilt obtain for me light and strength to fulfil the divine will, and finally that thou wilt conduct me in safety to the gates of paradise. Thy servants have always had this hope, and none have been deceived. Neither shall I be. O Mary, it is so; thou must save me. Pray to thy Son (as I also pray to him by the merits of his passion), and he may ever keep and increase in me this confidence; and so I shall be saved.

IX

CONSECRATION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Most holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, I, N. N., although most unworthy of being thy servant, nevertheless, moved by thy wonderful compassion and by a desire to serve thee, choose thee this day, in presence of my angel guardian, and of all the heavenly court, for my special lady, advocate, and mother; and I firmly resolve to serve thee always, and to do everything in my power to make others serve thee also. I beseech thee, then, most merciful Mother, by the blood of thy Son, which was shed for me, to take me into the number of thy clients as thy servant forever. Protect me in my actions, and obtain for me grace so to measure my thoughts, words, and works, that I may never offend thy most pure eyes, nor those of thy divine Son, Jesus. Remember me, and abandon me not at the hour of my death.

X

PROTESTATION FOR A HAPPY DEATH

My God, being certain that I shall die, and not knowing when it will be, I intend now to prepare myself for death; and I therefore declare that I believe all that the Holy Church believes, and especially the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ, paradise and hell; because Thou, who art truth itself, hast revealed all these truths.

I deserve a thousand hells: but I hope in Thy mercy, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to obtain pardon, final perseverance, and the glory of Paradise.

I protest that I love Thee above all things, because Thou art the infinite good; and because I love Thee, I am more sorry that I have so often offended Thee than for any other evil, and I resolve rather to die than offend Thee again. I pray Thee rather to take away my life than to permit me to lose Thee by another sin.

I thank Thee, my Jesus, for all the sufferings Thou hast undergone for me, and for the many mercies Thou hast shown me, after I had so greatly offended Thee.

My beloved Lord, I rejoice in that Thou art infinitely happy, and that Thou art loved by so many souls in heaven and on earth. I desire that all should know and love Thee.

I protest that if any one has offended me, I pardon him for the love of Thee, O my Jesus; and I beg of Thee to do good to him!

I declare that I desire to receive the most holy sacraments, both in life and death: and I intend now to ask for absolution of my sins, in case I should not be able to give any sign of it at my death.

I accept my death, and all the pains that will accompany it, in union with the death and sorrows which Jesus suffered on the Cross. And I accept, my

God, all the pains and tribulations which Thou shalt send me before my death. Do with me, and with all that belongs to me, what Thou pleasest. Give me Thy love and holy perseverance, and I ask nothing more.

My Mother Mary, assist me always, but especially at my death; in the mean time, help me and keep me in the grace of God. Thou art my hope. Under thy mantle I will live and die. St. Joseph, St. Michael Archangel, my guardian angel, help me always, but especially in the hour of my death.

And Thou, my dear Jesus, who to obtain for me a happy death didst give Thyself to suffer so bitter a death, abandon me not in my last hour. From this time I embrace Thee, that I may die in Thy arms. I deserve hell, but I throw myself on Thy mercy, hoping in Thy blood to die in Thy friendship, and to receive Thy blessing when I shall see Thee first as my judge. Into Thy hands, wounded for my love, I commend my soul.[3068] I hope in Thee, that Thou wilt not then condemn me to hell. Ah, help me always, but especially at my death; grant me to die loving Thee, so that the last sigh of life may be an act of love, which shall transport me from this earth to love Thee forever in paradise.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my agony! Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give myself to you; do you receive my soul at that moment.

APPENDIX

THE MANNER OF MAKING A RETREAT

The spiritual exercises are made in public, in common, or in private. They are made in public, when all the people of a parish or of a town are invited without distinction to attend them, and then the exercises are properly called a mission. They are made in common when a certain number of persons—as, for example, the members of a confraternity, etc.—unite to make them together. Finally, the spiritual exercises are made in private when one makes them by one's self, and then they are called a retreat. In the first two, the exercises are directed by preachers. Here, however, we wish to give some supplementary instructions useful to persons who make a retreat in private.

1. THE ENDS OF A RETREAT

A retreat being only an extraordinary exercise of mental prayer, it has the same ends as has prayer. We make a retreat in order to be enlightened; to know, purify, and correct ourselves; to be united with God and to pray to him; to renew our spirit; to maintain ourselves in virtue and to increase in fervor; to obtain some special grace, as when there is question of knowing one's vocation; to embrace a state of life; to enter upon the duties of an important office; to undertake a dangerous voyage, etc.

2. THE PLACE

Strictly speaking, every one may make the spiritual exercises at home, if not in body, at least in spirit. But in order to be really in retreat, we must retire from all that may disturb silence and recollection, as St. Alphonsus explains this so well. The place most suitable is ordinarily a religious house; there we can find all desirable facilities.

3. ITS DURATION

Let us at first say, in general, that to keep up the fire of divine love in the soul, it is advisable to devote to the spiritual exercises at least an hour every day, a day in every month, and a week every year. This is the summing-up of all that the Saint teaches on this subject in all his works. The annual retreat should therefore last about eight days. The same thing holds good whenever we wish to make a regular retreat, though circumstances may exact of us a longer or a shorter time.

4. ORDER OF THE EXERCISES

Each one may regulate the exercises of the day to suit his own convenience.

To serve as an example, we give the following order:

THE MORNING.

5 or 5.30 A.M.

6 or 6.30 A.M.

7.30 A.M.

BEFORE DINNER.

8.30 A.M.

9 A.M.

10 A.M.

10.30 A.M.

11.30 A.M.

12. A.M.

AFTER DINNER.

1.30 P.M.

2 P.M.

3 P.M.

3.30 P.M.

4.30 P.M.

THE EVENING.

5 P.M.

6 P.M.

7 P.M.

8 P.M.

8.30 P.M.

We employ the intervals that remain free according to our devotion, in praying, in conversing intimately with God, in reading, in briefly noting down good thoughts or a good resolution, in examining our conscience in order to make a good confession, etc.

5. SILENCE AND RECOLLECTION

If we cannot keep strict silence during the whole retreat, as it is advisable for us to do, we should at least avoid everything that may disturb interior recollection, without which there would be no retreat. All mental strain is also hurtful; it is to the heart that God speaks in calmness and peace. A retreat is not a hardship, but a spiritual repose to which the Lord kindly invites us in order that we may sweetly commune with him: *Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little.—Mark,* 6:31.

6. THE MEDITATIONS

Each meditation should last at least half an hour, As for the subjects of meditation, let every one choose what best suits his own spiritual temperament. Besides the meditations on the eternal truths, mentioned above, the following are other plans of a retreat according to St. Alphonsus, the subjects of which are treated in the first two volumes:

I

1st DAY. True wisdom.
2d DAY. Value of time.
3d DAY. Abuse of the divine mercy.
4th DAY. Sentiments of a dying person who has neglected his conscience.
5th DAY. Judgment.
6th DAY. Pains of hell.
7th DAY. Confidence in the protection of the Blessed Virgin.
8th DAY. The love that Jesus Christ bears us, and our obligation to love him.

II

1st DAY. Malice of mortal sin.
2d DAY. Value of the grace of God.
3d DAY. Importance of salvation.
4th DAY. Happiness of him who loves Jesus Christ.
5th DAY. What advantage it is to meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ.
6th DAY. Fruits that are derived from frequent Communion.
7th DAY. Excellence of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin.
8th DAY. Necessity of perseverance in doing what is good.

7. MORTIFICATION

Prayer is the soul of the retreat; but in order to make prayer well, we must practise not only exterior, but interior, mortification; to this we must add, according to our means, corporal and spiritual alms, according to the advice given by the angel Raphael to Tobias: *Prayer is good with fasting and alms.*[3069]

8. THE SACRAMENTS

It would be well to abstain from going to Holy Communion during the first days of the retreat, in order to prepare ourselves for a good general confession, if we have not yet made one, or for a review of the faults committed since the last retreat. But we should consult our director in regard to this matter, and conform to his advice. We should also take care to consult him about penances that we wish to impose on ourselves, and about any other important point. The road of obedience is always the most sure and the most meritorious road to walk on.—ED.

In 1750, St. Alphonsus published the *Counsels concerning the Religious State,* followed by *Considerations on the Religious State,* having especially in view the young men who presented themselves to be admitted into the Congregation (Tannoia, book 2, ch. 34). In the *Counsels,* which we divide into five paragraphs instead of two, the author treats at first of the necessity of conforming to the designs of Divine Providence in the choice of a state of life, whatever it may be, and then enlarges upon vocation to religious perfection. To this little work, which is one of the first productions of the holy Author, we unite all that he afterwards wrote about this important matter, and we complete the collection by adding to it a short treatise on vocation to the priesthood, drawn from his well-known work entitled *Selva* (Volume XIII. Ch. 10).—ED.

The Choice of a State of Life, and the Vocation to the Religions State

Counsels Concerning A Religious Vocation

I

WE OUGHT TO CONFORM TO THE DESIGNS OF GOD IN THE CHOICE OF A STATE OF LIFE, WHATEVER IT MAY BE

It is evident that our eternal salvation depends principally upon the choice of our state of life. Father Granada calls this choice the chief wheel of our whole life. Hence, as when in a clock the chief wheel is deranged, the whole clock is also deranged, so in the order of our salvation, if we make a mistake as to the state to which we are called, our whole life, as St. Gregory Nazianzen says, will be an error.

If, then, in the choice of a state of life, we wish to secure our eternal salvation, we must embrace that to which God calls us, in which only God prepares for us the efficacious means necessary to our salvation. For, as St Cyprian says: “The grace of the Holy Spirit is given according to the order of God, and not according to our own will;”[3070] and therefore St. Paul writes, *Every one hath his proper gift from God.*”[3071] That is, as Cornelius a Lapide explains it, God gives to every one his vocation, and chooses the state in which he wills him to be saved. And this is the order of predestination described by the same apostle: *Whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified, . . . and them he also glorified.*[3072].[3073]

We must remark that in the world this doctrine of the vocation is not much studied by some persons. They think it to be all the same, whether they live in the state to which God calls them, or in that which they choose of their own inclination, and therefore so many live a bad life and damn themselves.

But it is certain that this is the principal point with regard to the acquisition of eternal life. He who disturbs this order and breaks this chain of salvation will not be saved. With all his labors and with all the good he may do, St. Augustine will tell him, “Thou runnest well, but out of the way,”[3074] that is, out of the way in which God has called you to walk for attaining to salvation. The Lord does not accept the sacrifices offered up to him from our own inclination, *But to Cain and his offerings he had no respect.*[3075] Rather he threatens with great chastisement those who, when he calls them, turn their backs on him in order to follow the whims of their own caprice. *Woe to you apostate children,* he says through Isaias, *that you would take counsel and not from me, and would begin a web and not by my spirit.* .[3076].[3077]

II

THE VOCATION TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE. HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO FOLLOW IT PROMPTLY

1 MISERY TO WHICH ONE EXPOSES ONE’S SELF BY NOT CORRESPONDING TO IT

The divine call to a more perfect life is undoubtedly a special grace, and a very great one, which God does not give to all; hence he has much reason to be indignant against those who despise it. How greatly would not a prince think himself offended, if he should call one of his vassals to serve him near his person, and this vassal should refuse to obey the call! And should God not resent such conduct? Oh, he resents it but too much, and threatens such persons by saying, *Woe to him that gainsayeth his maker.*[3078] The word *Woe* in Scripture signifies eternal damnation. The chastisement of the disobedient will begin even in this life, in which he will always be unquiet, for, says Job, *Who hath resisted Him and hath had peace?*[3079] Therefore he will be deprived of those abundant and efficacious helps necessary to lead a good life. For which reason Habert, a divine, writes, “He will with great difficulty be able to work out his salvation.”[3080] He will with great difficulty save himself; for, being like a member out of his proper place, he will with great difficulty be able to live well. “In the body of the Church,” adds the learned author, “he will be like a limb of the human body out of its place, which may be able to perform its functions, but only with difficulty and in an awkward manner.” Whence he concludes, “And though, absolutely speaking, he may be saved, he will with difficulty enter upon and advance in the road, and use the means of salvation.”[3081] The same thing is taught by St. Bernard[3082] and St. Leo.[3083] St. Gregory,[3084] writing to the Emperor Maurice, who by an edict had forbidden soldiers to become religious, says that this was an unjust law, which shut the gates of paradise to many, because many would save themselves in religion who would otherwise perish in the world.

Remarkable is the case related by F. Lancicius. There was in the Roman college a youth of great talents. Whilst he was making the spiritual exercises, he asked his confessor whether it was a sin not to correspond with the vocation to the religious life. The confessor replied that in itself it was no grievous sin, because this is a thing of counsel and not of precept, but that one would expose one's salvation to great danger, as it had happened to many, who for this reason were finally damned. He did not obey the call. He went to study in Macerata, where he soon began to omit prayer and holy Communion, and finally gave himself up to a bad life. Soon after, coming one night from the house of a wicked woman, he was mortally wounded by a rival; certain priests ran to his assistance, but he expired before they arrived, and, moreover, in front of the college. By this circumstance God wished to show that this chastisement came upon him for having neglected his vocation.

Remarkable also is the vision had by a novice, who, as F. Pinamonti relates in his treatise of the victorious vocation, had resolved on leaving his Order. He saw Christ on a throne in wrath, ordering his name to be blotted out of the book of life; by this vision he was so terrified that he persevered in his vocation.

How many other similar examples are there, not to be found in books! And how many unhappy youths shall we not see damned on the day of judgment for not having followed their vocation! Such are rebels to the divine light, as the Holy Ghost says: *They have been rebellious to the light, they have not known his ways,*[3085] and they will be justly punished by losing the light; and because they would not walk in the way shown them by the Lord, they shall walk without light in that chosen by their own caprice and perish. *Behold, I will utter my spirit to you.*[3086] Behold the vocation, but because they fail to follow it, God adds: *Because I called and you refused . . . you have despised all my counsel . . . I also will laugh in your destruction, and I will mock when that shall come upon you which you feared.*[3087] *Then shall they call upon me, and I will not hear: they shall rise in morning and shall not find me. Because they have hated instruction and received not the fear of the Lord. Nor consented to my counsel, but despised* *all my reproof.*[3088].[3089] And this signifies that God will not hear the prayers of him who has neglected to obey his voice. St. Augustine says, “They who have despised the will of God which invited them, shall feel the will of God when it becomes its own avenger.[3090]

2. WE MUST OBEY THE VOICE OF GOD WITHOUT DELAY

Whenever God calls to a more perfect state, he who does not wish to expose his eternal salvation to great danger must then obey, and obey promptly. Otherwise he will hear from Jesus Christ the reproach he made to that young man who, when invited to follow him, said, *I will follow Thee, Lord, but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house.*[3091] And Jesus replied to him that he was not fit for paradise: *No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.*[3092]

The lights which God gives are transient, not permanent, gifts. Whence St. Thomas says that the vocation of God to a more perfect life ought to be followed as promptly as possible.[3093] He proposes in his summary[3094] the question whether it be praiseworthy to enter religion without having asked the counsel of many and without long deliberation? He answers in the affirmative, saying that counsel and deliberation are necessary in doubtful things, but not in this matter Which is certainly good; because Jesus Christ has counselled it in the Gospel, since the religious state comprehends most of the counsels of Jesus Christ. How singular a thing it is, when there is question of entering religion to lead a life more perfect and more free from the dangers of the world, the men of the world say that it is necessary to deliberate a long time before putting such resolutions in execution, in order to ascertain whether the vocation comes from God or from the devil. But they do not talk thus when one is to accept of a place in the magistracy, of a bishopric, etc., where there are so many dangers of losing the soul. Then they do not say that many proofs are required whether there be a true vocation from God.

The saints, however, do not talk thus. St. Thomas says that if the vocation to religion should even come from the devil, we should nevertheless follow it, as a good counsel, though coming from an enemy. St. John Chrysostom, as quoted by the same St. Thomas, says that God, when he gives such vocations, wills that we should not defer even a moment to follow them.

Christ requires from us such an obedience that we should not delay an instant.[3095] And why this? Because as much as God is pleased to see in a soul promptitude in obeying him, so much he opens his hand and fills it with his blessings. On the contrary, tardiness in obeying him displeases him, and then he shuts his hand and withdraws his lights, so that in consequence a soul will follow its vocation with difficulty and abandon it again easily. Therefore, St. John Chrysostom says that when the devil cannot bring one to give up his resolution of consecrating himself to God, he at least seeks to make him defer the execution of it, and esteems it a great gain if he can obtain the delay of one day only, or even of an hour.[3096] Because, after that day or that hour, other occasions presenting themselves, it will be less difficult for him to obtain greater delay, until the individual who has been thus called, finding himself more feeble and less assisted by grace, gives way altogether and loses his vocation. Therefore St. Jerome gives to those who are called to quit the world this advice: “Make haste, I beseech you, and rather cut than loosen the cable by which your bark is bound fast to the land.”[3097] The saint wishes to say that as a man who should find himself in a boat on the point of sinking, would seek to cut the rope, rather than to loosen it, so he who finds himself in the midst of the world ought to seek to get out of it as promptly as possible, in order to free himself from the danger, which is so great in the world, of losing his own soul.[3098]

Let us also hear what St. Francis de Sales writes in His works, on religious vocation, because the whole of it will go to confirm what has already been said, and what will be said hereafter: “To have a sign of a true vocation, it is not necessary that our constancy be sensible, it suffices if it be in the superior part of our soul. And therefore we must not judge that a vocation is not a true one, if the individual thus called, before putting it in execution, does not feel any longer those sensible movements which he felt in the beginning. Even should he feel a repugnance and coldness, which sometimes bring him to waver, and make it appear to him that all is lost.

It is enough that the will remains constant in not abandoning the divine call, and also that there remains some affection for this call. To know whether God will have one become a religious, one ought not to expect that God himself should speak or send to one an angel from heaven to signify his will. And as little necessary is it that ten or twelve Doctors should examine whether the vocation is to be followed or not. But it is necessary to correspond with the first movement of the inspiration, and to cultivate it, and then not to grow weary if disgust or coldness should come on; for if one acts thus, God will not fail to make all succeed to his glory. Nor ought we to care much from what quarter the first movement comes. The Lord has many means to call his servants. Sometimes he makes use of a sermon, at other times of the reading of good books. Some, as St. Anthony and St. Francis, have been called by hearing the words of the Gospel; others by means of afflictions and troubles that came upon them in the world, and which suggested to them the motive for leaving it. These persons, although they come to God only because they are disgusted with the world or out of favor with it, nevertheless, failing not to give themselves to him with their whole will, become sometimes greater saints than those who entered religion with a more apparent vocation. Father Platus relates that a nobleman, riding one day on a fine horse, and striving to make a great display in order to please some ladies whom he saw, was thrown from the horse into the mire, from which he rose besmeared and covered with mud. He was so full of confusion at this accident that at the same moment he resolved to become a religious, saying, ‘Treacherous world, thou hast mocked me, but I will mock thee. Thou hast played me a game, I will play thee another; for I will have no more peace with thee, and from this hour I resolve to forsake thee and to become a friar.’ And, in fact, he became a religious, and lived in religion a holy life.”[3099]

III

MEANS TO BE EMPLOYED FOR PRESERVING A RELIGIOUS VOCATION IN THE WORLD

He, then, who wishes to be faithful to the divine call ought not only to resolve to follow it, but to follow it promptly, if he does not wish to expose himself to the evident danger of losing his vocation; and in case he should by necessity be forced to wait, he ought to use all diligence to preserve it, as the most precious jewel he could have.

The means to preserve vocation are three in number: secrecy, prayer, and recollection.

1. SECRECY

First, generally speaking, he must keep his vocation secret from everybody except his spiritual Father, because commonly the men of the world scruple not to say to young men, who are called to the religious state, that one may serve God everywhere, and therefore in the world also. And it is wonderful that such propositions come sometimes out of the mouth of priests, and even of religious; but of such religious only as have either become so without vocation, or do not know what vocation is. Yes, without doubt, he who is not called to the religious state may serve God in every place, but not he who is called to it, and then from his own inclination wishes to remain in the world; such a one, as I have said above, can with difficulty serve God and lead a good life.

It is especially necessary to keep the vocation secret from parents.

It was, indeed, the opinion of Luther, as Bellarmine relates,[3100] that children entering religion without the consent of their parents commit a sin. For, said he children are bound to obey their parents in all things. But this opinion has generally been rejected by Councils and the holy Fathers. The tenth Council of Toledo expressly says: “It is lawful for children to become religious without the consent of their parents, provided they have attained the age of puberty;” these are the words: “It shall not be lawful for parents to put their children in a religious order after they have attained their fourteenth year. After this age, it shall be lawful for children to take upon themselves the yoke of religious observance, whether it be with the consent of their parents, or only the wish of their own hearts.”[3101] The same is prescribed in the Council of Tribur,[3102] and is taught by St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Thomas, and others, with St. John Chrysostom, who writes in general: “When parents stand in the way in spiritual things, they ought not even to be recognized.”[3103]

Some Doctors then say that when a child called by God to the religious state could easily and securely obtain the consent of his parents, without any danger on their part of hindering him from following his vocation, it is becoming that he should seek to obtain their blessing. This doctrine could be held speculatively, but not so in practice, because in practice such a danger always exists. It will be well to discuss this point fully, in order to do away with certain pharisaical scruples which some entertain.

It is certain that in the choice of a state of life, children are not bound to obey parents. Thus the Doctors, with common accord, teach with St. Thomas, who says: “Servants are not bound to obey their masters, nor children their parents, with regard to contracting matrimony, preserving virginity, and such like things.[3104] Nevertheless, with regard to the state of marriage, F. Pinamonti, in his treatise on religious vocation, is justly of the opinion of Sanchez, Comminchio, and others, who hold that a child is bound to take counsel of his parents, because in such matters they may have more experience than the young. But speaking then of religious vocation, the above-mentioned Pinamonti wisely adds that a child is not bound at all to take counsel of his parents, because in this matter they have not any experience, and through interest are commonly changed into enemies, as St. Thomas also remarks, when speaking of religious vocation. “Frequently,” he says, “our friends according to the flesh are opposed to our spiritual good.”[3105] For fathers often prefer that their children should be damned with themselves, rather than be saved away from them. Whence St. Bernard exclaims, “O hard father, O cruel mother, whose consolation is the death of their son, who wish rather that we perish with them than reign without them!”[3106]

God, says a grave author, Porrecta, when he calls one to a perfect life, wishes one to forget one’s father, saying, *Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear; and forget thy people and thy father’s house.*[3107] “By this, then,” he adds, “the Lord certainly admonishes us that he who is called ought by no means to allow the counsel of parents to intervene.” “If God will have a soul, who is called by him, forget its father and its father’s house, without doubt he suggests by this, that he who is called to the religious state ought not, before he follows the call, to interpose the counsel of the carnal friends of his household.”[3108]

St. Cyril, explaining what Jesus Christ said to the youth mentioned above, *No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God,*[3109] comments on it and says that he who asks for time to confer with his parents in reference to his vocation is exactly the one who is declared by our Lord to be unfit for heaven. “In order to confer with his parents, he looks back who seeks for delay.”[3110] Whence St. Thomas absolutely advises those who are called to religion, to abstain from deliberating on their vocation with their relatives: “From this deliberation, the relatives of the flesh are before all to be excluded; for it is said, *Treat thy cause with thy friend* (Prov. 25:9); but the relatives of the flesh are in this affair not our friends, but our enemies, according to the saying of our Lord: *A man’s enemies are those of his household*[3111] (Matt. 10:36).

If, then, for following one’s vocation it would be a great error to ask the counsel of parents, it would be a greater one still to ask their permission, and to wait for it, for such a demand cannot be made without an evident danger of losing the vocation, as often as there is a probable fear that parents would exert themselves to prevent it. And, in fact, the saints, when they were called to leave the world, left their homes without giving their parents so much as an intimation of it. Thus acted St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Francis Xavier, St. Philip Neri, St. Louis Bertrand. And we know that the Lord has even by miracles approved of these glorious flights.

St. Peter of Alcantara, when he went to the monastery to become a religious, and was fleeing from the house of his mother, under whose obedience he had lived since the death of his father, found himself prevented by a wide river from advancing any farther. He recommended himself to God, and at the same instant saw himself transported to the other side.

Likewise, when St. Stanislaus Kostka fled from home, without the permission of his father, his brother set out after him in great haste in a carriage, but having almost overtaken him, the horses, in spite of all the violence used against them, would not advance a step farther, till turning towards the city, they began to run at full speed.

In like manner the Blessed Oringa of Waldrano, in Tuscany, being promised in marriage to a young man, fled from the house of her parents in order to consecrate herself to God; but the river Arno opposing itself to her course, after a short prayer she saw it divide and form, as it were, two walls of crystal, to let her pass through with dry feet.

Therefore, my very beloved brother, if you are called by God to leave the world, be very careful not to make your resolution known to your parents, and, content to be thus blessed by God, seek to execute it as promptly as you can, and without their knowledge, if you would not expose yourself to the great danger of losing your vocation. For, generally speaking, relatives, as has been said above, especially fathers and mothers, oppose the execution of such resolutions; and although they may be endowed with piety, interest and passion nevertheless render them so blind that under various pretexts they scruple not to thwart with all their might the vocation of their children.

We read in the life of Father Paul Segneri the younger that his mother, though a matron much given to prayer, left nevertheless no means untried to prevent her son from entering the religious state to which he was called. We also read in the life of Mgr. Cavalieri, Bishop of Troja, that his father, although a man of great piety, used every means to prevent his son from entering the Congregation of Pious Workmen (which, notwithstanding, he afterwards did), and even went so far as to bring against him a lawsuit in the ecclesiastical court. And how many other fathers, notwithstanding they were men of piety and prayer, have not in such cases been seen to change, and to become possessed, as it were, of the devil! For under no other circumstance does hell seem to employ more formidable arms than when there is question of preventing those who are called to the religious state from executing their resolution.

For this reason be also very careful not to communicate your design to your friends, who will not scruple to dissuade you from it, or at least to divulge the secret, so that the knowledge of it will easily come to the ears of your parents.[3112]

2. PRAYER

In the second place, it is necessary to know that these vocations are only preserved by prayer; he who gives up prayer will certainly give up his vocation. It is necessary to pray, and to pray much; and therefore let him who feels himself called, not omit to make every morning after rising an hour of mental prayer, or at least half an hour, in his own room, if he can do so there without molestation, and if not, in the church, and likewise half an hour in the evening.

Let him not neglect also to make every day, without fail, a visit to the Most Holy Sacrament, as also to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, in order to obtain the grace of perseverance in his vocation. Let him likewise not omit to receive Holy Communion thrice, or at least twice, a week.

His meditations ought almost always to be on this point of the vocation, considering how great a favor from God he has received in being thus called by him; how much more easily he will secure his eternal salvation, if he be faithful to God in following his vocation; and, on the contrary, to how great a danger of being damned he exposes himself if he be unfaithful. Let him then especially place before his eyes the hour of death, and consider the contentment that he will then feel if he shall have obeyed God, and the pains and the remorse he would experience if he should die in the world. To this end I shall add at the end of this some considerations on which he may make his mental prayer.

It is, moreover, necessary that all his prayers to Jesus and Mary, and especially those after Communion and in the visits, be directed to obtain perseverance. In all his prayers and Communions let him always renew the offering of himself to God, by saying, “Behold, O Lord! I am no more mine, I am Thine. Already have I given myself to Thee, and now I renew this my offering of my whole self. Accept of me and give me strength to be faithful to Thee and to retire as quickly as possible into Thy house.”

3. RECOLLECTION

In the third place, it is necessary that he be recollected, which will not be possible for him unless he withdraws from worldly conversations and amusements. What, in short, as long as we are in the world, is enough to cause the loss of vocation? A mere nothing. One day of amusement, a word from a friend, a passion we do not mortify, a little attachment, a thought of fear, a resentment we do not overcome, suffices to bring to nought all our resolutions of retiring from the world, or of giving ourselves entirely to God. Wherefore we ought to keep perfectly recollected, detaching ourselves from everything of this world. We ought during this time to think of nothing but prayer and frequenting the sacraments, and to be nowhere but at home and in church. Let him who will not do so, but distracts himself by pastimes, be persuaded that he will without doubt lose his vocation. He will remain with the remorse of not having followed it, but he certainly will not follow it. Oh, how many by neglecting these precautions have lost, first their vocation, and afterwards their souls!

IV

DISPOSITION REQUIRED FOR ENTERING RELIGION

He who feels himself to be called by God to a religious Institute in which reigns exact observance[3113] ought to know that the end of every regular observance is, to follow as exactly as possible the footsteps and examples of the most holy life of Jesus Christ, who led a life entirely detached and mortified, full of suffering and contempt. He, then, who resolves to enter such a holy state must at the same time resolve to enter it for the sake of suffering and denying himself in all things, as Jesus Christ himself has declared to those who wish perfectly to follow him. *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.*[3114] He, then, who wishes to enter religion must firmly establish within himself this resolution to go to suffer, and to suffer much, so that afterwards he may not give way to temptations, when, having entered, he feels depressed under the hardships and privations of the poor and mortified life which is there led.

Many, on entering Communities of exact observance take not the proper means of finding peace therein, and of becoming saints, because they only place before their eyes the advantages of the Community life, such as the solitude, the quiet, the freedom from the troubles caused by relatives, from strife and other disagreeable matters, and from the cares consequent on being obliged to think of one’s lodging, food, and clothing.

There is no doubt that every religious is only too much indebted to his Order, which delivers him from so many troubles, and thus procures for him so great a facility to serve God perfectly in peace, continually furnishing him with so many means for the welfare of his soul, so many good examples from his companions, so much good advice from his Superiors who watch for his benefit, so many exercises conducive to eternal salvation. All this is true; but with all this he must also, in order not to be deprived of so blessed a lot, resolve to embrace all the sufferings he may, on the other hand, meet with in the Order; for if he does not embrace them with love, he will never obtain that full peace which God gives to those who overcome themselves: *To him that overcomes I will give the hidden manna.*[3115] For the peace which God gives his faithful servants to taste is hidden; nor is it known by the men of the world, who, seeing their mortified life, know not how to envy them, but pity them and call them the unhappy ones of this earth. But "they see the cross, the unction they do not see,"[3116] says St. Bernard; they see their mortification, but they do not see the contentment that God gives them to enjoy.

It is true that in the spiritual life one has to suffer, but, says St. Teresa, when one resolves to suffer, the pain is gone. Nay, the pains themselves turn into joy. "My daughter," so the Lord said one day to St. Bridget, "the treasure of my graces seems to be surrounded with thorns; but for him who overcomes the first stings, all is changed into sweetness." And then those delights which God gives to his beloved souls to enjoy in their prayers, in their Communions, in their solitude; those lights, those holy ardors and embraces, that quiet of conscience, that blessed hope of eternal life, who can ever understand them, if he does not experience them? "One drop of the consolations of God," said St. Teresa, "is worth more than all the consolations and the pleasures of the world." Our most gracious God knows well how to give to him who suffers something for his sake, even in this valley of tears, the experience of the foretaste of the glory of the blessed; for in this is properly verified that which David says: *Thou who framest labor in commandment.*[3117] In the spiritual life, God, announcing pains, tediousness, death, seems to frame labor, but, in fact, afterwards it is not so; for spiritual life brings to them who entirely give themselves to God that peace which, as St. Paul says, *Surpasseth all understanding.*[3118] It surpasses all the pleasures of the world and of worldlings. Whence we see a religious more content in a poor cell than all the monarchs in their royal palaces. *O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet.*[3119]

But, on the other hand, he must be persuaded that he who does not resolve to suffer and to overcome himself in the things contrary to his inclinations, will never be able to enjoy this true peace, though he should have already entered religion. *To him that overcomes, I will give the hidden manna.*[3120] It is, then, necessary that he who wishes to be admitted into an

Order of exact observance should enter with a mind determined to overcome himself in everything, by expelling from his heart every inclination and desire that is not from God, nor for God, so that he must detach himself from all things, and especially from the four following: 1. From his comforts. 2. From his parents. 3. From self-esteem. 4. From his own will.

1. DETACHMENT FROM HIS COMFORTS

In religion, after the year of novitiate, one makes, besides the vows of chastity and obedience, also the vow of poverty, in consequence of which one can never possess anything as one’s individual property, not even a pin, no income, no money or other things. The Community will provide him with all that he needs. But the vow of poverty does not suffice to make one a true follower of Jesus Christ if one does not afterwards embrace with joy of spirit all the inconveniences of poverty. “Not poverty, but the love of poverty is a virtue,”[3121] says St. Bernard, and he means to say that for one to become a saint it is not enough to be poor only, if one does not love also the inconveniences of poverty. “Oh, how many would wish to be poor and similar to Jesus Christ!” says Thomas a Kempis; “they wish to be poor but without any want,”[3122] but so that they be in want of nothing. In a word, they would wish the honor and the reward of poverty, but not the inconveniences of poverty.

It is easy to understand that in religion no one will seek for things that are superfluous,—cloths of silk, costly food, furniture of value, and the like; but he may desire to have all things that are necessary, and these he may be unable to get. For then it is he gives proof that he truly loves poverty, when things that are needful,—such as his necessary clothing, bed-covering or food,—happen to be wanting, and yet he remains content and is not troubled. And what kind of poverty would that be to suffer if he were never in want of anything necessary? F. Balthasar Alvarez says that in order truly to love poverty we must also love the effects of poverty; that is, as he enumerates them, cold, hunger, thirst, and contempt.[3123]

In religion, every one ought not only to be content with that which is given to him, without ever asking for anything of which, through the neglect of the stewards, he should be in want, which would be a great defect, but he ought also to prepare himself sometimes to bear the want even of those simple things that the Rule allows. For it may happen that sometimes he is in want of clothes, coverings, linen, or such-like things, and then he has to be satisfied with that little which has been given him, without complaining or being disquieted at seeing himself in want even of what is necessary. He who has not this spirit, let him not think of entering religion, because this is a sign that he is not called there-to or that he has not the will to embrace the spirit of the Institute. He who goes to serve God in his house, says St. Teresa, ought to consider that he is going not to be well treated for God, but to suffer for God.

2. DETACHMENT FROM HIS PARENTS

He who wishes to enter religion must detach himself from his parents and forget them altogether. For, in religious houses of exact observance, detachment from parents is put in practice in the highest degree, in order perfectly to follow the doctrine of Jesus Christ, who said, *I came not to send peace, but the sword: I came to set a man at variance with his father,* etc.;[3124] and then added the reason: *A man's enemies shall be they of his own household.*[3125] And this is especially the case, as has been remarked above, in this point of religious vocation. When one's leaving the world is in question, there are no worse enemies than parents, who, either through interest or passion, prefer to become enemies of God, by turning their children away from their vocation, rather than to give their consent to it. Oh! how many parents shall we see in the valley of Josaphat damned for having made their children or nephews lose their vocation! and how many youths shall we see damned who, in order to please their parents, and by not detaching themselves from them, have lost their vocation and afterwards their souls! Whence Jesus declares to us, *If any man hate not his father, etc., he cannot be my disciple.*[3126] Let him, then, who wishes to enter a religious Order of perfect observance, and to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ, resolve to forget his parents altogether.

When any one has already entered religion, let him remember that he must practise then the same detachment from parents. Let him know that he cannot go to visit his parents in their own house, except in the case of some dangerous illness of his father or mother, or of some other urgent necessity, though always with the permission of the Superior. Otherwise to go to the house of one’s parents without the most express permission would be considered in religion as a most notable and scandalous fault. In religion it is also considered a great defect even to ask permission or to show a desire of seeing parents or of speaking with them.

St. Charles Borromeo said that when he visited the house of his parents he always, after his return, found himself less fervent in spirit. And thus, let him who goes to the house of his parents by his own will and not through a positive obedience to his Superiors, be persuaded that he will leave it either under temptation or be cold and lukewarm.

St. Vincent of Paul could only be induced once to visit his country and his parents, and this out of pure necessity; and he said that the love of home and country was a great impediment to his spiritual progress. He said also that many, on account of having visited their country, had become so tender towards their relatives that they were like flies, which being once entangled in a cobweb, cannot extricate themselves from it. He added, “For that one time that I went, though it was for a short time only, and though I took care to prevent in my relatives every hope of help from me, notwithstanding, I felt at leaving them such a pain that I ceased not to weep all along the road, and was for three months harassed by the thought of succoring them. Finally, God in his mercy took that temptation from me.”

Let him know, moreover, that no one may write to his parents without permission, and without showing the letter to the Superior. Otherwise, he would be guilty of a most grievous fault that is not to be tolerated in religion, and should be punished with severity; for from this might come a thousand disorders tending to destroy the religious spirit. Let especially the new-comer know that during the novitiate this is observed with the greatest rigor; for novices during their year of novitiate do not easily obtain permission to talk to their parents, or to write to them.

Finally, let him know that in case a subject should become sick, it would be a notable defect to ask or to show an inclination to go to his own house for his restoration to health, under the plea of being better taken care of, or of enjoying the benefit of his native air. The air of his own country becomes almost always, or rather always, hurtful, and pestilential to the spirit of the subject. And if he should ever say that he wishes to be cured at home in order not to subject the Order to expenses for remedies, let him know that the Order has charity enough to take sufficient care of the sick. As to the change of air, the Superiors will think of that; and if that of one house is not beneficial to him, they will send him to another. And as for remedies, they will even sell the books, if need be, to provide for the sick. And so let him be sure that divine Providence will not fail him. And if the Lord should decree against his recovery, he ought to conform to the will of God, without even mentioning the word “home.” The greatest grace that he who enters an Order can desire is to die, when God wills it, in the house of God, assisted by the brethren of his Order, and not in a secular house in the midst of his relatives.

3. DETACHMENT FROM SELF-ESTEEM

He must also be altogether detached from all self-esteem. Many leave their country, their comforts, and parents, but carry with them a certain esteem for themselves; but this is the most hurtful attachment of all. The greatest sacrifice that we can make to God is to give to him not only goods, pleasures, and home, but ourselves also, by leaving ourselves. This is that denying of one’s self which Jesus Christ recommends above all to his followers. And in order to deny one’s self, one must first place under foot all self-esteem, by desiring and embracing every imaginable contempt that he may meet with in religion; as, for instance, to see others, whom perhaps he thinks less deserving, preferred to himself, or to be considered unfit to be employed, or only employed in lower and more laborious occupations. He ought to know that in the house of God those charges are the highest and the most honorable that are imposed by obedience. God forbid that any one should seek for or aspire to any office or charge of pre-eminence. This would be a strange thing in religion, and he would be noted as proud and ambitious, and as such should be put in penance, and should especially be mortified in this point. Better would it be, perhaps, that a religious Order should be destroyed than that there should enter into it that accursed pest of ambition which, when it enters, disfigures the most exemplary Communities, and the most beautiful works of God.

But he ought to feel even consoled in spirit when he sees himself mocked and despised by his companions. I say consoled in spirit, for as to the flesh this will be impossible, nor need a subject be uneasy when he sees that he resents it; it is enough that the spirit embraces it, and that he rejoices at it in the superior part of the soul. Thus also seeing himself continually reprimanded and mortified by all, not only by Superiors, but also by equals and inferiors, he ought heartily, and with a tranquil mind, to thank those who thus reprimand him, and have the charity to admonish him, answering that he will be more attentive not to fall into that fault again.

One of the greatest desires of the saints in this world was to be contemned for the love of Jesus Christ. It was this that St. John of the Cross asked for, when Jesus Christ appeared to him with a cross on his shoulder, and said, “John, ask from me what thou wishest,” and St. John answered, “O Lord, to suffer and to be despised for Thee.”[3127] The Doctors teach, with St. Francis de Sales, that the highest degree of humility we can have is to be pleased with abjections and humiliations. And in this consists also one of the greatest merits we can have with God. One contempt suffered in peace for the love of God is of greater value in his sight than a thousand disciplines and a thousand fasts.

It is necessary to know that to suffer contempt either from Superiors or from companions is a thing unavoidable even in the most holy Communities. Read the lives of the saints, and you will see how many mortifications were encountered by St. Francis Regis, St. Francis of Jerome, Father Torres, and others. The Lord sometimes permits that even among saints there should exist, though without their fault, certain natural antipathies, or at least a certain diversity of character among subjects of the greatest piety, which will cause them to suffer many contradictions. At other times false reports will be spread and believed. God himself will permit this, in order that the subjects may have occasion to exercise themselves in patience and humility.

In short, he will gain little in religion and lose much who cannot quietly put up with contempt and contradiction; and, therefore, he who enters religion to give himself entirely to God ought to be ashamed not to know how to bear contempt when he appears before Jesus Christ, who was “filled with opprobriums”[3128] for love of us. Let every one be attentive to this, and resolve to be pleased in religion with all abjections, and to prepare himself to suffer many of them, for without the least doubt he will have many to bear. Otherwise, the disquiet caused by contradictions, and contempt badly borne with, might trouble him so much as to make him lose his vocation, and chase him out of religion. Oh, how many have lost their vocation on account of such impatience in humiliations! But of what service to the Order or to God can he be who does not know how to bear contempt for his sake? And how can one ever be said to be dead according to that promise which he made to Jesus Christ, on entering religion, to die to himself if he remained alive to resentment and disquiet, when he sees himself humbled? Out of the Order with such subjects, so attached to their own esteem! out with them! It is well for them to go as soon as possible, that they may not infect the rest also with their pride. In religion every one ought to be dead, and especially to his own self-esteem, otherwise it is better for him not to enter, or to depart again if he has already entered.

4. DETACHMENT FROM HIS OWN WILL

He who enters religion must altogether renounce his own will, consecrating it entirely to holy obedience. Of all things, this is the most necessary. What does it avail to leave comforts, parents, and honors, if we still carry into religion our own will? In this principally consists the denial of ourselves, the spiritual death, and the entire surrender of ourselves to Jesus Christ. The gift of the heart—that is, of the will—is what pleases him most, and what he wishes from the children of religion. Otherwise, if we do not entirely detach ourselves from our own will and renounce it in all, all mortifications, all meditations and prayers, and all other sacrifices, will be of little avail.

It is, then, evident that this is the greatest merit we can have before God, and this is the only and sure way of pleasing God in all things, so that then we can, each one of us, say what Jesus our Saviour said: *I do always the things that please Him.*[3129] Certainly, he who in religion lives without self-will may say and hope that in all that he does he pleases God, whether he studies or prays, or hears confessions, whether he goes to the refectory or to recreation, or to rest; for in religion not a step is made, not a breath drawn, but in obedience to the Rule, or to Superiors.

The world does not know, and even certain persons given to spirituality have little idea of, the great value of a Community life under obedience. It is true that outside of religious Communities there are to be found many persons who do much, and, may be, more than those who live under obedience; they preach, do penance, pray and fast, but in all this they consult more or less their own will. God grant that at the day of judgment they may not have to lament as those mentioned in Scripture: *Why have we fasted and Thou hast not regarded, have we humbled ourselves, and Thou hast not taken notice? Behold, in the day of your fast, your own will is found.*[3130] On which passage St. Bernard remarks: “Self-will is a great evil, for through it that which is good in itself may be for you no good at all.”[3131] This to be understood when in all these exercises we seek not God, but ourselves. On the contrary, he who does all by obedience is sure that in all he pleases God. The Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus said that she prized so much her vocation to religion principally for two reasons: the first was that in the monastery she enjoyed always the presence and company of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and the other was that there by obedience she entirely belonged to God, sacrificing to him her own will.

It is related by F. Rodriguez that after the death of Dositheus, the disciple of St. Dorotheus, the Lord revealed that in those five years he had lived under obedience, though by reason of his infirmities he could not practise the austerities of the other monks, yet by the virtue of obedience he had merited the reward of St. Paul the Hermit and of St. Anthony the Abbot.

He, then, who wishes to enter religion must resolve to renounce altogether his own will, and to will only what holy obedience wills. God preserve any religious from ever letting escape from his mouth the words, I will or I will not. But in all things, even when asked by Superiors what he desires, he should only answer, I wish that which holy obedience wills. And, provided there is no evident sin, he ought in every command imposed on him to obey blindly and without examination, because the duty of examining and deciding the doubts belongs not to him, but to his Superiors. Otherwise, if in obeying he does not submit his own judgment to that of the Superior, his obedience is imperfect. St. Ignatius of Loyola said that prudence in things of obedience is not required in subjects, but in Superiors; and if there is prudence in obeying, it is too bey without prudence. St. Bernard says, “Perfect obedience is indiscreet,”[3132] and in another place he says, “For a prudent novice to remain in the Congregation is an impossible thing;” and, adding the reason for it, he says, “To judge belongs to the Superior; and to obey, to the subject.”[3133]

But to make progress in this virtue of obedience, on which all depends, he must always keep his mind ready to do all that for which he feels the greatest repugnance, and, on the contrary, he must be prepared to bear it quietly when he sees that all he seeks or desires is refused to him. It will happen that when he wishes to be in solitude, to apply himself to prayer or study, he will be the most employed in exterior occupations. For though it is true that in religion one leads as much as possible a solitary life when at home, and that for this end there are many hours of silence,—the retreat each year of ten days in perfect silence, and of one day each month, besides the fifteen days before the receiving of the habit, and one of fifteen before the profession, when the vows are made,—nevertheless, if it is an Order of priests called to work and to be employed for the salvation of souls, the subject, if he is continually employed in this by obedience, ought to be content with the prayers and exercises of the Community; he must be prepared sometimes to go even without these when obedience will have it so, without either excusing himself or being disquieted, being well persuaded of that of which St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was so confident when she said that “all the things which are done through obedience are but so many prayers.”

V

TRIALS WHICH WE MUST EXPECT TO HAVE IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

When, then, any one has thus entered religion, however truly he may be called, and though he may have conquered all his passions and his earthly affections, let him not imagine that he will be exempt from other temptations and trials, which God himself will send him, such as tediousness, darkness, various fears, in order to establish him more firmly in his vocation. We must remember that even the saints, who have loved their vocation the most, have sometimes suffered great darkness with regard to it, and that it seemed to them as if they were deceived, and would not be able to save themselves in that state. So it happened with St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, the Venerable Mother Frances de Chantal. But by recommending themselves to God, that darkness was dissipated, and they recovered their peace of mind. Thus the Lord tries his most beloved children, as it was said to Tobias: *Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee*.[3134] And in the book of Deuteronomy, *The Lord, your God trieth you, that it may appear whether you love him or not*.[3135] Let each one therefore prepare himself to suffer in religion this obscurity. It will sometimes appear to him that he cannot bear the observance of the Order, that he will have no more peace of mind, or will not even be able to save himself. But, most of all, every one must be on his guard when the temptation presents specious scruples or pretexts of greater spiritual good, in order to make him abandon his vocation.

The principal remedies in such temptations are two in number.

FIRST REMEDY: TO HAVE RECOURSE TO GOD

The first is prayer, *Go ye to him and be enlightened.*[3136] For as it will not be possible for temptation to overcome him who has recourse to prayer, so he who does not recommend himself to God will surely be overcome by it. And let it be remarked that sometimes it will not suffice to have recourse to God once, or for a few days, to become victorious. Perhaps the Lord will permit the temptation to continue, even after we have prayed for several weeks, months, and even years; but let us be assured that he who ceases not to recommend himself to God will certainly be enlightened and victorious, and thereafter he will have more peace and be more firm in his vocation.

Until we have gone through that storm, which for the most part comes over all, let none of us think himself secure. Let us be persuaded, however, that in this time of temptation we ought not to expect a fervor, and a clearness of reason sufficient to tranquillize ourselves; for in the midst of this darkness we see nothing but confusion. We have nothing then to do but to say to the Lord, O Lord, help me! O Lord, help me! and also to have frequently recourse to Most Holy Mary, who is the mother of perseverance, confiding in that divine promise: *Ask and you shall receive.*[3137] And it is certain that he who, with the help of divine grace, is victorious in such a combat finds afterwards a double calm and peace in his vocation.

SECOND REMEDY: TO HAVE RECOURSE TO THE SUPERIORS

The second remedy, and a principal and necessary one in such temptations, is to communicate to the Superiors, or to the spiritual Father of the Community, the temptation which afflicts you, and this at once, before the temptation becomes strong. St. Philip Neri said that when a temptation is thus manifested it is half vanquished. On the contrary, there is in such a case no greater evil than to conceal the temptation from Superiors; for then, on the one hand, God withdraws his light because of the little fidelity shown by the subject in not disclosing it, and, on the other, whilst the mine is not sprung, the temptation gains strength. Whence it may be held for certain that he will surely lose his vocation who, when he is tempted against it, does not disclose his temptations.

And let it be understood that in religion the most dangerous temptations that hell can bring against a subject are those against vocation, in which, if it should succeed and conquer, by that one stroke it will have gained many victories; for when a subject has lost his vocation and left religion, what good will he any more be able to do in the service of God? Though the enemy may make him believe that out of religion he will have more peace and be able to do more good, nevertheless let him hold for certain that as soon as he is out of it he will feel such a remorse in his heart that he will nevermore have peace. And God grant that such a remorse may not torment him afterwards through all eternity in hell, into which, as has already been said, he who through his own fault loses his vocation falls so very easily. He will be so lukewarm and discouraged in doing good that he will not even have the courage to raise his eyes to heaven. It will be an easy thing for him to give up prayer altogether, because as often as he begins it he will feel a hell of remorse, hearing his conscience reproach him, and saying, “What hast thou done? Thou hast abandoned God; thou hast lost thy vocation; and for what? To follow thine own caprice, to please thy parents.” Let him be certain that he will have to hear this reproach through his whole life, and still more shall he hear it made to him at the hour of his death, when, in sight of eternity, instead of dying in the house of God, and in the midst of good brethren in religion, he will have to die outside of the Community, perhaps in his own house, in the midst of his relatives, to please whom he has displeased God. Let religious always beseech God to let them die rather than to permit that greatest of disgraces, the greatness of which they will better understand at the point of death and to their greater torment, because then there will be no more any remedy for their error. For him, then, who is tempted against his vocation, this is the best meditation he can make in the time of the temptation,—namely, to reflect what torment the remorse of having lost his vocation, and of having to die outside of religion, through his own caprice, through his own fault, will cause him at the hour of death.

CONCLUSION

Finally, let him who wishes to enter religion not forget to resolve to become a saint, and to suffer every exterior and interior pain, in order to be faithful to God, and not to lose his vocation. And if he be not resolved to this, I exhort him not to deceive the Superiors and himself, and not to enter at all, for this is a sign that he is not called, or, which is a still greater evil, that he wishes not to correspond, as he ought, with the grace of his vocation. Hence, with so bad a disposition it is better to remain without, in order to acquire a better disposition, to resolve to give himself entirely to God, and to suffer all for God. Otherwise he will do an injury both to himself and to the Order; for he will easily go back to the world, and then, being disgraced before the world, as well as before God, he will be guilty of a still further infidelity to his vocation, and will lose the confidence in the power of taking another step in the way of God. God only knows into what other misfortunes and sins he may afterwards fall.

On the other hand, a beautiful sight it is to see in religion souls wholly given to God, who live in the world as if out of the world, without any other thought than that of pleasing God.

In religion each one has to live only for eternal life. What happiness for us, if we spend these few days of our life for God! And to this he is most especially obliged who has perhaps already spent much of his life in the service of the world. Let us set eternity before our eyes, and then we shall suffer all with peace and joyfulness.

Let us thank God, who gives us so much light and so many means to serve him perfectly, since he has chosen us, from among so many, to serve him in religion, having bestowed on us the gift of his holy love. Let us make haste to please him in the practice of virtue, reflecting that, as St. Teresa said to her daughters, we have already by his grace done the principal thing necessary to become saints, by turning our backs on the world and all its goods, the least yet remains to be done, and we shall be saints. I hold it for certain that for those who die in religion, Jesus Christ has prepared a prominent place in paradise. On this earth we shall be poor, despised, and treated as fools, as imprudent men, but in the other life our lot will be changed.

Let us always recommend ourselves to our Redeemer hidden in the Sacrament, and to Most Holy Mary, because in religion all subjects must profess a most special love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and for the Immaculate Virgin Mary; and let us have great confidence. Jesus Christ has chosen us to be princes of his court, as we may confidently conclude from the protection he extends to all religious Orders, and to each member of them. *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?*[3138]

O Lord! finish Thy work, and, for Thy glory, grant us to be all Thine, so that all the members of Thy Orders may until the day of judgment, be pleasing to Thee, and gain over to Thee an immense number of souls. Amen. Amen.

Considerations for Those Who are Called to the Religious State

Consideration I

HOW THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL IS SECURED BY ENTERING THE RELIGIOUS STATE

To know how important is the eternal salvation of our soul, it suffices to have faith, and to consider that we have but one soul, and when that is lost, all is lost. *What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?*[3139] This great maxim of the Gospel has induced many youths either to shut themselves up in cloisters or to live in deserts, or by martyrdom to give up their lives for Jesus Christ. For, said they, what does it profit us to possess the whole world, and all the goods of this world, in this present life, which must soon finish, and then be damned and be miserable in that life to come, which will never end? All those rich men, all those princes and emperors, who are now in hell, what have they now of all they enjoyed in this life, but a greater torment and a greater despair? Miserable beings, they lament now and say, *All those things are passed like shadows.*[3140] For them all is passed like a shadow, like a dream, and that lamentation which is their lot has lasted already many years, and shall last throughout all eternity. *The fashion of this world passeth away.*[3141] This world is a scene which lasts but a short time; happy he who plays on this scene that part which will afterwards make him happy in the life which will never end. When he shall then be contented, honored, and a prince in paradise, so long as God shall be God, little will he care for having been in this world poor, despised, and in tribulation. For this end alone has God placed us on this earth, and keeps us here in life, not to acquire transitory but eternal goods: *The end is life everlasting.*[3142]

This is the sole end, which all men who live in the world ought to have in view. But the misfortune is, that in the world one thinks little or nothing of everlasting life. In the midst of the darkness of this Egypt, the greatest number of men bestow all their care on acquiring honor and pleasures; and this is the reason why so many perish. *With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in his heart.*[3143] How few are they who reflect on death, by which for us the scene is closed; on the eternity which awaits us; on what God has done for our sake! And thence it comes that these miserable beings live in blindness and at random, far from God, having their eyes, like the beasts, intent only on earthly things, without remembering God, without desiring his love, and without a thought of eternity. Therefore, they die afterwards an unhappy death, which will be the beginning of an eternal death and an endless misery. Having arrived there, they will open their eyes; but it will be only to lament for their own foolishness.

This is the great means of salvation which is found in religion, to wit: the continual meditation on the eternal truths. *Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.*[3144] In all well-regulated religious houses this is done every day, and even several times a day. And therefore in this light of divine things, which there shines continually, it is morally impossible to live, at least for a long time, far from God, and without keeping one's account ready for eternity.

PRAYER

O my God! how have I ever deserved this great mercy, that, having left so many others to live in the midst of the world, Thou hast willed to call me, who have offended Thee more than others, and deserved, more than they, to be deprived of Thy divine light, to enjoy the honor of living as a friend in Thy own house! O Lord! grant that I may understand this exceeding grace which Thou hast bestowed on me, that I may always thank Thee for it, as I purpose and hope to do always during my life and throughout eternity, and do not permit me to be ungrateful for it. Since Thou hast been so liberal towards me, and hast in Thy love preferred me to others, it is but just that more than others I should serve and love Thee. O my Jesus! Thou wouldst have me to be wholly Thine, and to Thee I give myself wholly. Accept me, and henceforward keep me as Thy own, since I am no more mine. Finish Thou the work which Thou hast begun. Thou hast called me to Thy house, because Thou wilt have me become a saint. Make me then what Thou wilt have me. Do it, O eternal Father! for the love of Jesus Christ, in whom is all my confidence. I love Thee, my sovereign good, I love Thee. O infinite goodness! I love Thee alone, and will love Thee forever. O Mary, my hope, come to my assistance, and obtain for me to be always faithful and thankful to my Lord.

Consideration II

THE HAPPY DEATH OF THE RELIGIOUS

Happy are the dead who die in the Lord.[3145] And who are those blessed dead who die in the Lord, but the religious, who at the end of their lives are found already dead to the world, having already detached themselves by their holy vows from the world and all its goods?

Consider, my brother, how content you will feel if, following your vocation, it will be your good fortune to die in the house of God. The devil will certainly represent to you that if you retire into the house of God, you may perhaps afterwards repent of having left your own house and your own country, and deprived your parents of that succor which they might have expected from you. But say to yourself: shall I, at the point of death, repent of having put my resolution in execution, or shall I be content? I beseech you, therefore, to imagine yourself now already at the point of death, about to appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ. Reflect what then, reduced to that state, you would wish to have done. Perhaps to have contented your parents, to have worked for your own family and your country, and then to die surrounded by brothers, and nephews, and relatives, after having lived in your own house with the title of pastor, of canon, of bishop, of a member of the cabinet, and after having done your own will? or rather, to die in the house of God, assisted by your good brethren in religion, who encourage you on the great passage to eternity, after having lived many years in religion, humbled, mortified, poor, far from parents, deprived of your own will, and under obedience, and detached from everything in the world,—all these things render death sweet and agreeable? “He who has been accustomed to deprive himself of the delights of the world,” says St. Bernard, “will not regret having done so when he has to leave it.”[3146] Pope Honorius II., when dying, wished that he had remained in his monastery, occupied in washing the plates, and had not been Pope. Philip 2 wished at his death that he had been a lay-brother in some religious order, intent on serving God, and had not been a king. Philip 3, also King of Spain, said when he was dying, “Oh that I had been in a desert, there to serve God, and that I had never been a monarch! for had such been the case, I should now appear with more confidence before the tribunal of Jesus Christ.”

When, then, hell tempts you about your vocation, think of the hour of death, and set before your eyes that all-important moment “upon which eternity depends.”[3147] Thus you will overcome all temptations; you will be faithful to God; and certainly you will not repent of it at the point of death, but will give thanks to the Lord, and die contented. Gerard, brother of St. Bernard, died singing, at the very thought of dying in the house of God.

Father Suarez, of the Company of Jesus, felt at his death so great consolation and sweetness at dying in religion that he said, “I never thought it was so sweet to die.”[3148]

Another good religious, of the same society, when at the point of death, laughed; and being asked why he laughed, answered: “And why should I not laugh? Has not Jesus Christ himself promised paradise to him who leaves everything for his sake? Was it not he who said, *Every one that has left house, or brethren, or father, etc., shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting?*[3149] I have left all for God; God is faithful, he cannot fail to fulfil his promises; and so,” he said, “why should I not rejoice and laugh, seeing myself assured of paradise?”

A certain lay-brother, who died some years ago, was asked, at his death, in which house he would rather be. He answered, “I desire nothing but to die and to be united with God.”

Father Januarius Sarnelli, a short time before his death, when conversing with God, uttered the following words: “O Lord, Thou knowest that all I have done, all I have thought, has been for Thy glory; now I wish to go to see Thee face to face, if it please Thee so;” then he said, “Come, I will begin a sweet agony;” and began to converse affectionately with God, and shortly after placidly expired, preserving the smile on his lips, and the body began to give forth a sweet odor, which, as they attested, was perceived for several days in the room in which he had died.

St. Bernard, then, speaking of the happy state of religious, had good reason to exclaim: “O secure life, in which death is expected without fear,

—ay, sweetly desired and devoutly accepted!”[3150]

PRAYER

O my Lord Jesus Christ! who, in order to obtain a happy death for me, hast chosen so bitter a death for Thyself; since Thou hast loved me to such an extent as to have chosen me to follow more closely Thy holy life, to have me thus more intimately united with Thy loving heart, bind me, I beseech Thee, wholly to Thee with the sweet cords of Thy love, that I may no more separate myself from Thee. O my beloved Redeemer! I wish to be grateful to Thee, and to correspond with Thy grace, but I fear my weakness may render me unfaithful; O my Jesus! do not permit this. Let me die rather than abandon Thee, or forget the peculiar affection Thou hast shown me.

I love Thee, O my dear Saviour! Thou art and shalt always be the only Lord of my heart and of my soul. I leave all and choose Thee alone for my treasure, O most pure Lamb of God, O my most ardent lover! *My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.*[3151] Be gone, ye creatures, my only good is my God, he is my love, my all. I love Thee, O my Jesus! and in loving Thee I will spend the remainder of my life, be it short, or be it long. I embrace Thee, I press Thee to my heart, and I wish to die united with Thee. I wish nothing else. Make me live always burning with Thy love, and when I shall have arrived at the end of my life, make me to expire in an ardent act of love towards Thee.

Immaculate Virgin Mary, obtain thou this grace for me, I hope it from thee.

Consideration III

THE ACCOUNT WHICH HE WILL HAVE TO RENDER TO JESUS CHRIST, ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, WHO DOES NOT FOLLOW HIS VOCATION

The grace of vocation to the religious state is not an ordinary grace; it is a very rare one, which God grants only to a few. *He hath not done so to every nation.*[3152] Oh, how much greater is this grace, to be called to a perfect life and to become one of the household of God, than if one were called to be the king of any kingdom on this earth! for what comparison can there be between a temporal kingdom of this earth and the eternal kingdom of heaven?

But the greater the grace is, the greater will be the indignation of the Lord against him who has not corresponded with it, and the more rigorous will be his judgment at the day of account. If a king were to call a poor shepherd to his royal palace, to serve him among the noblemen of his court, what would not be the indignation of this king were he to refuse such a favor, through unwillingness to leave his miserable stable and his little flock? God knows well the value of his graces, and therefore he chastises with severity those who despise them. He is the Lord; when he calls, he wishes to be obeyed, and obeyed promptly. When, therefore, by his inspiration, he calls a soul to a perfect life, if it does not correspond, he deprives it of his light, and abandons it to its own darkness. Oh, how many poor souls shall we see among the reprobate on the day of judgment for this very reason, that they were called and would not correspond!

Give thanks, then, to the Lord, who has invited you to follow him; but if you do not correspond, fear. Since God calls you to serve him nearer to his person, it is a sign that he wishes to save you. But he will have you to be saved in that path only which he indicates to you and has chosen for you. If you wish to save yourself on a road of your own choosing, there is great danger that you will not be saved at all; for if you remain in the world, when God wishes you to be a religious, he will not give you those efficacious helps prepared for you had you lived in his house, and without these you will not save yourself. *My sheep hear my voice.*[3153] He who will not obey the voice of God shows that he is not, and will not be, one of his sheep, but in the valley of Josaphat he will be condemned with the goats.

PRAYER

O Lord, Thou hast shown me such an excess of bounty as to choose me from among so many others, to serve Thee in Thy own house with Thy most beloved servants. I know how great is that grace, and how unworthy of it I have been. Behold, I am willing to correspond to so great a love. I will obey Thee. Since Thou hast been towards me so liberal as to call me when I did not seek Thee, and when I was so ungrateful, permit it not that I should offer to Thee that greater excess of ingratitude, to embrace again my enemy, the world, in which heretofore I have so oftentimes forfeited Thy grace and my eternal salvation, and thus to forsake Thee, who hast shed Thy blood and given Thy life for my sake. Since Thou hast called me, give me also the strength to correspond to the call. Already have I promised to obey Thee. I promise it again, but without the grace of perseverance I cannot be faithful to Thee. This perseverance I ask from Thee, and through Thy own merits it is that I wish it and hope to obtain it. Give me the courage to vanquish the passions of the flesh, through which the devil seeks to induce me to betray Thee. I love Thee, O my Jesus! to Thee I consecrate myself entirely. I am already Thine, I will be always Thine. O Mary, my mother and my hope, thou art the mother of perseverance. This grace is only dispensed through thy hands; do thou obtain it for me. In thee do I confide.

Consideration IV

THE TORMENT WHICH IN HELL WILL BE THE LOT OF HIM WHO IS DAMNED FOR HAVING LOST HIS VOCATION

The pain of having through one’s own fault lost some great good, or of having brought upon one’s self voluntarily some great evil, is a pain so great that even in this life it causes an insupportable torment. But what torment will that youth, called by the singular favor of God to the religious state, feel in hell when he then perceives that if he had obeyed God he would have attained a high place in paradise, and sees himself nevertheless confined in that prison of torments, without hope of remedy for this his eternal ruin! *Their worm dieth not.*[3154]

This will be that worm, which, living always, will always gnaw his heart by a continual remorse. He will say then, What a fool I was! I might have become a great saint. And if I had obeyed, I would certainly have become so; and now I am damned without remedy.

Miserable being! Then for his greater torment, on the day of judgment he will see and recognize at the right hand, and crowned as saints, those who have followed their vocation, and, leaving the world, have retired to the house of God, to which he also had been once called. And then will he see himself separated from the company of the blessed, and placed in the midst of that innumerable and miserable crew of the damned, for his disobedience to the voice of God.

We know well, as we have considered above, that to this most unhappy lot he exposes himself, who, in order to follow his own caprice, turns a deaf ear to the call of God. Therefore, my brother, you who have already been called to become a saint in the house of God, consider that you will expose yourself to a great danger should you lose your vocation through your own fault. Consider that this very vocation which God in his sovereign bounty has given you, in order, as it were, to take you out from among the populace and place you among the chosen princes of his paradise, will, through your own fault, should you be unfaithful to it, become an especial hell for you. Make your choice then, for God leaves it in your own hands, either to be a great king in paradise, or a reprobate in hell, more despairing than the rest.

PRAYER

No, my God, permit me not to disobey Thee and to be unfaithful. I see Thy goodness, and thank Thee for that instead of casting me away from Thy face, and banishing me into hell, as I have so often deserved, Thou callest me to become a saint, and preparest for me a high place in paradise. I see that I should deserve a double torment, should I not correspond with this grace, which is not given to all. I will obey Thee. Behold, I am Thine, and always will be Thine. I embrace with joy all the pains and discomforts of the religious life, to which Thou invitest me. And what are these pains in comparison with the eternal pains, which I have deserved? I was entirely lost through my sins; now I give myself entirely to Thee. Dispose of me and my life as Thou pleasest. Accept, O Lord! of one already condemned to hell, as I have been, to serve Thee and love Thee in this life and in the next. I will love Thee as much as I have deserved to be doomed to hate Thee in hell, O God, worthy of an infinite love! O my Jesus! Thou hast broken those chains by which the world held me bound; Thou hast delivered me from the servitude of my enemies. I will love Thee much, then, O my love! and for the love I bear Thee, I will always love Thee and obey Thee. Always will I thank Thee, O Mary, my advocate, who hast obtained this mercy for me. Help me, and suffer me not to be ungrateful to that God who has loved me so much. Obtain for me that I may die rather than be unfaithful to so great a grace. Thus I hope.

Consideration V

THE IMMENSE GLORY WHICH RELIGIOUS ENJOY IN HEAVEN

Consider, in the first place, that which St. Bernard says, that it is difficult for religious who die in the religious state to be damned. “From the cell to heaven the way is easy; one scarcely ever descends from his cell into hell.” And the reason which the saint adduces is, “because one scarcely ever perseveres in it until death, unless he be predestinated.”[3155] For a religious with difficulty perseveres until his death, if he be not of the number of the elect of paradise. Therefore, St. Laurence Justinian called the religious state the gate of paradise. “Of that heavenly city this is the gate.”[3156] And he said that “therefore the religious have a great sign of their predestination.”[3157]

Consider, moreover, that the reward of heaven, as the Apostle says, is “a crown of justice;”[3158] wherefore God, though he rewards us for our works more abundantly than we deserve, rewards us nevertheless in proportion to the works we have done. *He will render to every one according to his works.*[3159] From this consider how exceedingly great will be the reward which God will give in heaven to good religious, in consideration of the great merits they daily acquire.

The religious gives to God all his goods of this earth, and is content to be entirely poor, without possessing anything. The religious renounces all attachment to his parents, friends, and country, in order to unite himself more closely to God. The religious continually mortifies himself in many things which he would enjoy in the world. The religious, finally, gives to God his whole self, by giving him his will through the vow of obedience.

But the dearest thing that we have is our own will, and what God, of all other things, requires of us most is our heart; that is to say, our will. *My son, give Me thy heart.*[3160] He who serves God in the world will give him his possessions, but not himself; he will give him a part and not the whole, for he will give him indeed his goods by alms-deeds, his food by fasting, his blood by disciplines, etc.; but he will always reserve for himself his own will, fasting when he pleases, praying when he likes. But the religious, giving him his own will, gives himself and gives all, gives not only the fruits of the tree, but the whole tree itself. Whence he may then truly say to him, O Lord! having given Thee my will, I have nothing more to give to Thee.

And, therefore, in all that he does through obedience he is sure to do the will of God perfectly, and merits by all, not only when he prays, when he hears confessions, when he preaches, or fasts, or practises other mortifications, but also when he takes his food, when he sweeps his room, when he makes his bed, when he takes his rest, when he recreates himself; for, doing all this through obedience, in all he does the will of God. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi said that all that is done through obedience is a prayer. Hence, St. Anselm, speaking of those who love obedience, asserted that all that religious do is meritorious for them. St. Aloysius Gonzaga said that in religion one sails, as it were, in a vessel, in which he even advances who does not row.

Oh, how much more will a religious gain in one month by observing his Rule than a secular, with all his penance and prayers, in a year! Of that disciple of Dorotheus called Dositheus, it was revealed that for the five years he had lived under obedience, there was given to him in heaven the glory of St. Paul the Hermit and of St. Anthony the Abbot, both of whom had, for so many years, lived in the desert. Religious, it is true, have to suffer the inconveniences of regular observance: *Going, they went and wept*. But when are they called to the other life, they will go to heaven, but, *coming, they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves*.[3161] Whence they shall then sing, *The lines are fallen unto me in goodly places, for my inheritance is goodly to me*.[3162] These bonds which have bound me to the Lord have become for me exceedingly precious, and the glory they have acquired for me is exceedingly great.

PRAYER

Is it possible, O my God and my true lover! that Thou desirest so much my good, and to be loved by me, and that I, miserable that I am, desire so little to love and to please Thee? For what end hast Thou favored me with so many graces, and taken me out of the world? O my Jesus! I understand Thee. Thou lovest me much, Thou wilt have me love Thee much also, and be all Thine, in this life and in the next. Thou wishest that my love should not be divided with creatures, but wilt have it be wholly for Thyself, the only good, the only lovely one, and worthy of infinite love. Ah! my Lord, my treasure, my love, my all, yet I pant and truly desire to love Thee, and to love no other but Thee. I thank Thee for this desire Thou hast given me; preserve it in me, always increase it in me, and grant that I may please Thee, and love Thee on this earth as Thou desirest, so that I may come hereafter to love Thee face to face, with all my strength in paradise. Behold, this is all that I ask from Thee. Thee will I love, O my God! I will love Thee, and for Thy love I offer myself to suffer every pain. I will become a saint, not that I may enjoy great delight in heaven, but to please Thee much, O my beloved Lord! and to love Thee much forever. Graciously hear me, O eternal Father! for the love of Jesus Christ.

My Mother Mary, for the love of this thy Son, help thou me. Thou art my hope; from thee I hope every good.

Consideration VI

THE INTERIOR PEACE THAT GOD GIVES GOOD RELIGIOUS TO ENJOY

The promises of God cannot fail. God has said, *Every one that has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, . . . or lands for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting.*[3163] That is, the hundredfold on this earth, and life everlasting in heaven.

The peace of the soul is a good which is of greater value than all the kingdoms of the world. And what avails it to have the dominions of the whole world without interior peace? Better is it to be the poorest villager, and to be content, than to be the lord of the whole world, and to live a discontented life. But who can give this peace? The unquiet world? Oh no, peace is a good that is obtained only from God. "O God!" prays the Church, "give to Thy servants that peace which the world cannot give."[3164] Therefore he is called the God of all consolation. But if God be the sole giver of peace, to whom shall we suppose will he give that peace but to those who leave all, and detach themselves from all creatures, in order to give themselves entirely to their Creator? And therefore is it seen that good religious shut up in their cells, though mortified, despised, and poor, live a more contented life than the great ones of the world, with all the riches, the pomps, and diversions they enjoy.

St. Scholastica said that if men knew the peace that good religious enjoy, the whole world would become a monastery; and St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said that all, if they knew it, would scale the walls of the monasteries, in order to get into them. The human heart having been created for an infinite good, all creatures cannot content it, they being finite, imperfect, and few; God alone, who is an infinite good, can render it content. *Delight in the Lord and He will give thee the request of thy heart.*[3165] Oh no; a good religious united with God envies none of the princes of the world who possess kingdoms, riches, and honors. “Let the rich,” he will say with St. Paulinus, “have their riches, the kings have their kingdoms, to me Christ is my kingdom and my glory.”[3166] He will see those of the world foolishly glory in their displays and vanities; but he, seeking always to detach himself more from earthly things, always to unite himself more closely to his God, will live contented in this life, and will say, *Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will call upon the name of the Lord, our God.*[3167]

St. Teresa said that one drop of heavenly consolation is of greater value than all the pleasures of the world. Father Charles of Lorraine, having become a religious, said that God, by one moment of the happiness that he gave him to feel in religion, superabundantly paid him for all he had left for God. Hence his joyfulness was sometimes so great that, when alone in his cell, he could not help beginning to leap. The Blessed Seraphino of Ascoli, a Capuchin lay-brother, said that he would not exchange a foot length of his cord for all the kingdoms of the world.

Oh, what contentment does he find who, having left all for God, is able to say with St. Francis, “My God and my all!”[3168] and with that to see himself freed from the servitude of the world, from the thraldom of worldly fashion, and from all earthly affections. This is the liberty that is enjoyed by the children of God, such as good religious are. It is true that in the beginning, the deprivation of the conversations and pastimes of the world, the observances of the Community, and the rules, seem to be thorns; but these thorns, as our Lord said to St. Bridget, will all become flowers and delights to him who courageously bears their first sting, and he will taste on this earth that peace which, as St. Paul says, surpasseth ali the gratifications of the senses, and all the enjoyments of feasts, of banquets, and of the pleasures of the world: *The peace of God which surpasseth all understanding.*[3169] And what greater peace can there be than to know that one pleases God?

PRAYER

O My Lord and my God, my all! I know that Thou alone canst make me contented in this and in the next life. But I will not love Thee for my own contentment, I will love Thee only to content Thy heart. I wish this to be my peace, my only satisfaction during my whole life, to unite my will to Thy holy will, even should I have to suffer every pain in order to do this. Thou art my God, I am Thy creature. And what can I hope for greater than to please Thee, my Lord, my God, who hast been so partial in Thy love towards me? Thou, O my Jesus! hast left heaven to live for the love of me—a poor and mortified life. I leave all to live only for the love of Thee, my most blessed Redeemer. I love Thee with my whole heart; if only Thou wilt give me the grace to love Thee, treat me as Thou pleasest.

O Mary, Mother of my God! protect me and render me like to thee, not in thy glory, which I do not deserve, as thou dost, but in pleasing God, and obeying his holy will, as thou didst.

Consideration VII

THE DAMAGE DONE TO RELIGIOUS BY TEPIDITY

Consider the misery of that religious who, after having left his home, his parents, and the world with all its pleasures, and after having given himself to Jesus Christ, consecrating to him his will and his liberty, exposes himself at last to the danger of being damned, by falling into a lukewarm and negligent life, and continuing in it. Oh, no; not far from perdition is a lukewarm religious, who has been called into the house of God to become a saint. God threatens to reject such, and to abandon them if they do not amend. *But because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth.*[3170]

St. Ignatius of Loyola, seeing a lay-brother of his Order become lukewarm in the service of God, called him one day and said to him, Tell me, my brother, what did you come in religion to do? He answered, To serve God. O my brother! replied the saint, what have you said? If you had answered that you came to serve a cardinal, or a prince of this earth, you would be more excusable; but you say that you came to serve God, and do you serve him thus?

Father Nieremberg says that some are called by God to be saved only as saints, so that if they should not take care to live as saints, thinking to be saved as imperfect Christians, they will not be saved at all. And St. Augustine says that such are in most cases abandoned by God: “Negligent souls God is accustomed to abandon.”[3171] And how does he abandon them? By permitting them from lighter faults, which they see and do not mind, to fall into grievous, ones, and to lose divine grace and their vocation. St. Teresa of Jesus saw the place prepared for her in hell, had she not detached herself from an earthly, though not a grievously culpable, affection. *He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little.*[3172]

Many wish to follow Jesus Christ, but from afar, as St. Peter did, who, when his Master was arrested in the garden, says St. Matthew, *followed Him afar off*.[3173] But by doing so that will easily happen to them which happened to St. Peter; namely, that, when the occasion came, he denied Jesus Christ. A lukewarm religious will be contented with what little he does for God; but God, who called him to a perfect life, will not be contented, and, in punishment for his ingratitude, will not only deprive him of his special favors, but will sometimes permit his fall. “When you said, It is enough, then you perished,”[3174] says St. Augustine. The fig-tree of the Gospel was cast into the fire, only because it brought forth no fruit.

Father Louis de Ponte said, “I have committed many faults, but I have never made peace with them.” Miserable is that religious who, being called to perfection, makes peace with his defects. As long as we detest our imperfections, there is hope that we may still become saints; but when we commit faults and make little of them, then, says St. Bernard, the hope of becoming saints is lost. *He who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly.*[3175] Common graces do not suffice to make one a saint; extraordinary ones are necessary. But how shall God be liberal with his favors towards that one who acts sparingly and with reserve in his love towards him?

Moreover, to become a saint, one must have courage and strength to overcome all repugnances; and let no one ever believe, says St. Bernard, that he will be able to attain to perfection if he does not render himself singular among others in the practice of virtue. “What is perfect cannot but be singular.”[3176] Reflect, my brother, for what have you left the world and all? To become a saint. But that lukewarm and imperfect life which you lead, is that the way of becoming a saint? St. Teresa animated her daughters by saying to them, “My sisters, you have done the principal thing necessary to become saints; the least remains yet to be done.” The same I say to you; you have, perhaps, done the chief part already; you have left your country, your home, your parents, your goods, and your amusements; the least remains yet to be done, to become a saint; do it.

PRAYER

O my God! reject me not, as I deserve, for I will amend. I know well that so negligent a life as mine cannot satisfy Thee. I know that I have myself, by my lukewarmness, shut the door against the graces which Thou didst desire to bestow upon me. O Lord! do not yet abandon me, continue to be merciful towards me; I will rise from this miserable state. I will for the future be more careful to overcome my passions, to follow Thy inspirations, and never will I through slothfulness omit my duties, but I will fulfil them with greater diligence. In short, I will, from this time forward, do all I can to please Thee, and I will neglect nothing which I may know to be pleasing to Thee. Since thou, O my Jesus! hast been so liberal with Thy graces towards me, and hast deigned to give Thy blood and Thy life for me, there is no reason I should act with such reserve towards Thee. Thou art worthy of all honor, all love, and to please Thee one ought gladly to undergo every labor, every pain. But, O my Redeemer! Thou knowest my weakness, help me with Thy powerful grace; in Thee I confide. O immaculate Virgin Mary! thou who hast helped me to leave the world, help me to overcome myself and to become a saint.

Consideration VIII

HOW DEAR TO GOD IS A SOUL THAT GIVES ITSELF ENTIRELY TO HIM

God loves all those who love him: *I love them that love Me.*[3177] Many, however, give themselves to God, but preserve still in their hearts some attachment to creatures, which prevents them from belonging entirely to God. How, then, shall God give himself entirely to that one who, besides his God, loves creatures still? It is just that he should act with reserve towards those who act with reserve towards him. On the contrary, he gives himself entirely to those souls, who, driving from their hearts everything that is not God, and does not lead them to his love, and giving themselves to him without reserve, truly say to him, *My God and my all.*[3178] St. Teresa, as long as she entertained an inordinate affection, though not an impure one, could not hear from Jesus Christ what afterwards she heard, when, freeing herself from every attachment, she gave herself entirely to the divine love; namely, the Lord saying to her, "Now, because thou art all mine, I am all thine."

Consider that the Son of God has already given himself entirely to us: *A child is born to us, and a son is given to us.*[3179] He has given himself to us through the love he bears to us." *He hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.*[3180] It is, then, just, says St. John Chrysostom, that when a God has given himself to you, without reserve,—"he has given thee all, nothing has he left to himself,"[3181]—you also should give yourself to God, without reserve; and that always henceforth, burning with divine love, you should sing to him:

Thine wholly always will I be;
Thou hast bestowed Thyself on me,
Wholly I give myself to Thee.

St. Teresa revealed to one of her nuns, appearing to her after her death, that God loves a soul that, as a spouse, gives itself entirely to him, more than a thousand tepid and imperfect ones. From these generous souls, given entirely to God, is the choir of Seraphim completed. The Lord himself says that he loves a soul that attends to its perfection, so much that he seems not to love any other. *One is my dove, my perfect one is but one.*[3182] Hence Blessed Giles exhorts us, “One for one,”[3183] by which he wishes to say that this one soul we have we ought to give wholly, not divided, to that One who alone deserves all love, on whom depends all our good, and who loves us more than *all*. “Leave all and you shall find all,”[3184] says Thomas à Kempis. Leave all for God, and in God you will find all. “O soul!” concludes St. Bernard, “be alone, that you may keep yourself for him alone.”[3185] Keep yourself alone, give no part of your affections to creatures, that you may belong alone to Him who alone deserves an infinite love, and whom alone you ought to love.

PRAYER

My beloved to me and I to him.[3186] As then, O my God! Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me, I should be too ungrateful if I should not give myself entirely to Thee; since Thou wouldst have me belong wholly to Thee, behold, O my Lord! I give myself entirely to Thee. Accept me through Thy mercy, disdain me not. Grant that this my heart, which once loved creatures, may turn now wholly to Thy infinite goodness. “Let me henceforth die,” said St. Teresa, “let another than myself live in me. Let God live in me, and give me life. Let him reign, and let me be his slave, for my soul wishes no other liberty.” This my heart is too small, O God most worthy of love, and it is too little able to love Thee, who art deserving of an infinite love. I should then commit against Thee too great an injustice, should I still divide it by loving anything besides Thee. I love Thee, my God, above everything. I love only Thee; I renounce all creatures, and give myself entirely to Thee, my Jesus, my Saviour, my love, my all. I say, and always will say, *What have I in heaven, and besides Thee, what do I desire on earth? . . . Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.*[3187] I desire nothing, either in this life or in the next, but to possess the treasure of Thy love. I am unwilling that creatures should have any more a place in my heart; Thou alone must be its master. To Thee only shall it belong for the future. Thou only shalt be my God, my repose, my desire, all my love, “Give me only Thy love and Thy grace, and I am rich enough.”[3188] O most holy Virgin Mary! obtain for me this, that I may be faithful to God, and never recall the donation which I have made of myself to him.

Consideration IX

HOW NECESSARY IT IS, IN ORDER TO BECOME A SAINT, TO HAVE A GREAT DESIRE FOR SUCH A THING

No saint has ever attained to sanctity without a great desire. As wings are necessary to birds in order to fly, so holy desires are necessary to the soul in order to advance in the road of perfection. To become a saint, we must detach ourselves from creatures, conquer our passions, overcome ourselves, and love crosses. But to do all this, much strength is required, and we must suffer much. But what is the effect of holy desire? St. Laurence Justinian answers us: "It supplies strength, and makes the pain easier to be borne."[3189] Hence the same saint adds that he has already vanquished who has a great desire of vanquishing. "A great part of the victory is the desire of vanquishing."[3190] He who wishes to reach the top of a high mountain will never reach it if he has not a great desire to do so. This will give him courage and strength to undergo the fatigue of ascending, otherwise he will stop at the foot, wearied and discouraged.

St. Bernard asserts that we acquire perfection in proportion to the desire for it which we preserve in our heart. St. Teresa said that God loves generous souls that have great desires; for which reason the saint exhorted all in this way, "Let our thoughts be high. . . . for thence will come our good. We must not have low and little desires, but have that confidence in God that, if we make the proper efforts, we shall by little and little attain to that perfection which, with his grace, the saints have reached." In this way, the saints attained, in a short time, a great degree of perfection, and were able to do great things for God. *Being made perfect in a short time, he fulfilled a long time.*[3191] Thus St. Aloysius Gonzaga attained in a few years (he lived not over twenty-three years) such a degree of sanctity that St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, in an ecstasy, seeing him in heaven, said it seemed to her, in a certain way, that there was no saint in heaven who enjoyed a greater glory than Aloysius. She understood at the same time that he had arrived at so high a degree by the great desire he had cherished of being able to love God as much as he deserved, and that, seeing this beyond his reach, the holy youth had suffered on earth a martyrdom of love.

St. Bernard, being in religion, in order to excite his fervor, used to say to himself, “Bernard, for what did you come here?”[3192] I say the same to you: what have you come to do in the house of God? To become a saint? And what are you doing? Why do you lose the time? Tell me, do you desire to become a saint? If you do not, it is sure that you will never become one. If, then, you have not this desire, ask Jesus Christ for it; ask Mary for it; and if you have it, take courage, says St. Bernard, for many do not become saints, because they do not take courage. And so I repeat, let us take courage, and great courage. What do we fear? What inspires this diffidence in us? That Lord, who has given us strength to leave the world, will give us also the grace to embrace the life of a saint. Everything comes to an end. Our life, be it a contented or a discontented one, will also come to an end, but eternity will never terminate. Only that little we have done for God will console us in death and throughout eternity. The fatigue will be short, eternal shall be the crown, which is already, so to speak, before our eyes. How satisfied are the saints now with all they have suffered for God! If a sorrow could enter paradise, the Blessed would be sorry only for this, that they have neglected to do for God what they might have done more, but which now they are unable to do. Take courage, then, and be prompt, for there is no time to lose; what can be done to-day we may not be able to do tomorrow. St. Bernardine of Sienna said that one moment of time is of as great a value as God himself, for at every moment we may gain God, his divine grace, and higher degrees of merits.

PRAYER

Behold, O my God! here I am. *My heart is ready, O my God! my heart is ready.*[3193] See, I am prepared to do all that Thou shalt require from me. *O Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*[3194] Tell me, O Lord, what Thou desirest of me. I will obey Thee in all. I am sorry for having lost so much time in which I might have pleased Thee, and yet have not done so. I thank Thee that still Thou givest me time to do it. Oh, no, I will not lose any more time. I will and desire to become a saint, not to obtain from Thee a greater glory and more delights. I will become a saint, that I may love Thee more, and to please Thee in this life and in the next. Make me, O Lord! to love and please Thee as much as Thou desirest. Behold, this is all I ask from Thee, O my God! I will love Thee, I will love Thee; and, in order to love Thee, I offer myself to undergo every fatigue, and to suffer every pain. O my Lord! increase in me always this desire, and give me the grace to execute it. Of myself I can do nothing, but assisted by Thee I can do all. Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, graciously hear me. My Jesus, though the merits of Thy Passion, come to my succor. Or Mary, my hope! for the love of Jesus Christ, protect me.

Consideration X

THE LOVE WE OWE TO JESUS CHRIST IN Consideration OF THE LOVE HE HAS SHOWN TO US

In order to understand the love which the Son of God has borne to us, it is enough to consider what St. Paul says of Jesus Christ: *He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. . . . He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even to the death of the cross.*[3195] "He emptied himself." O God! what admiration has it caused, and will it, through all eternity, cause to the angels to see a God who became man for the love of man, and submitted himself to all the weaknesses and sufferings of man! *And the Word was made flesh.*[3196] What a cause of astonishment would it not be to see a king become a worm for the sake of worms! But an infinitely greater wonder it is to see a God made man, and after this to see him humbled unto the painful and infamous death of the cross, on which he finished his most holy life.

Moses and Elias, on Mount Thabor, speaking of his death, as it is related in the Gospel, called it an excess: *They spoke of His decease* (the Latin word is "excessus," which also means "excess") *that He should accomplish in Jerusalem.*[3197] Yea, says Bonaventure, it is with reason the death of Jesus Christ was called an excess, for it was an excess of suffering and of love, so much so that it would be impossible to believe it, if it had not already happened.[3198] It was truly an excess of love, adds St. Augustine, for to this end the Son of God wished to come on earth, to live a life so laborious and to die a death so bitter, namely, that he might make known to man how much he loved him. "Therefore Christ came, that man should know how much God loved him."[3199]

The Lord revealed to his servant Armella Nicolas that the love he bore to man was the cause of all his sufferings and of his death. If Jesus Christ had not been God, but only man and our friend, what greater love could he have shown us than to die for us? *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man* *lay down his life for his friends.*[3200] Ah, how, at the thought of the love shown us by Jesus Christ, the saints esteemed it little to give their life and their all for so loving a God! How many youths, how many noblemen, are there not, who have left their house, their country, their riches, their parents, and all, to retire into cloisters, to live only for the love of Jesus Christ! How many young virgins, renouncing their nuptials with princes and the great ones of the world, have gone with joyfulness to death, to render thus some compensation for the love of a God who had been executed on an infamous gibbet, and died for their sake!

This appeared to St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi to be foolishness; hence she called her Jesus a fool of love. In exactly the same manner the Gentiles, as St. Paul attests, hearing the death of Jesus Christ preached to them, thought it foolishness not possible to be believed. *We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness.*[3201] How is it possible, they said, that a God, most happy in himself, who is in want of nothing, should die for the sake of man, his servant? This would be as much as to believe that God became a fool for the love of men. Nevertheless, it is of faith that Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, did, for love of us, deliver himself up to death. *He hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.*[3202] The same Mary Magdalene had reason then to exclaim, lamenting the ingratitude of men towards so loving a God, "O love not known! O love not loved!" Indeed, Jesus Christ is not loved by men, because they live in forgetfulness of his love.

And, in fact, a soul that considers a God who died for its sake, cannot live without loving him. *The charity of Christ presseth us.*[3203] The soul will feel itself inflamed, and as if constrained to love a God who has loved it so much. Jesus Christ could have saved us, says F. Nieremberg, with only one drop of his blood; but it was his will to shed all his blood, and to give his divine life, that at the sight of so many sufferings and of his death we might not content ourselves with an ordinary love, but be sweetly constrained to love with all our strength a God so full of love towards us. *That they also who live may not live any more for themselves, but unto Him who died for them.*[3204]

PRAYER

Indeed, O my Jesus, my Lord, and my Redeemer! only too much hast Thou obliged me to love Thee; too much my love has cost Thee. I should be too ungrateful if I should content myself to love with reserve a God who has given me his blood, his life, and his entire self. Oh, Thou hast died for me, Thy poor servant; it is but just that I should die for Thee, my God, and my all. Yes, O my Jesus! I detach myself from all, to give myself to Thee. I put away from me the love of all creatures, in order to consecrate myself entirely to Thy love. *My beloved is chosen from among thousands.*[3205] I choose Thee alone out of all things for my good, my treasure, and my only love. I love Thee, O my love! I love Thee. Thou art not satisfied that I should love Thee a little only. Thou art not willing to have me love anything besides Thee. Thee I will please in all things, Thee will I love much; and Thou shalt be my only love. My God, my God, help me, that I may fully please Thee.

Mary, my queen, do thou also help me to love my God much. Amen. So I hope; so may it be.

Consideration XI

THE GREAT HAPPINESS WHICH RELIGIOUS ENJOY IN DWELLING IN THE SAME HOUSE WITH JESUS CHRIST IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

The Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus, foundress of a convent in Toulouse, said that she esteemed very much her lot as a religious, for two principal reasons. The first was, that religious, through the vow of obedience, belong entirely to God; and the second, that they have the privilege of dwelling always with Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. And in truth, if people of the world deem it so great a favor to be invited by kings, to dwell in their palaces; how much more favored should we esteem ourselves, who are admitted to dwell continually with the King of Heaven in his own house?

In houses of the religious, Jesus Christ dwells for their sake in the church, so that they can find him at all hours. Persons of the world can scarcely go to visit him during the day, and in many places only in the morning. But the religious finds him in the tabernacle, as often as he wishes, in the morning, in the afternoon, and during the night. There he may continually entertain himself with his Lord, and there Jesus Christ rejoices to converse familiarly with his beloved servants, whom, for this end, he has called out of Egypt, that he may be their companion during this life, hidden under the veil of the Most Holy Sacrament, and in the next unveiled in paradise. “O solitude,” it may be said of every religious house, “in which God familiarly speaks and converses with his friends!”[3206] The souls that love Jesus Christ much do not know how to wish for any other paradise on this earth than to be in the presence of their Lord, who dwells in this sacrament for the love of those who seek and visit him.

His conversation hath no bitterness, nor His company any tediousness.[3207] He finds tediousness in the company of Jesus Christ, who does not love him. But those who on this earth have given all their love to

Jesus Christ, find in the sacrament all their pleasure, their rest, their paradise, and therefore they keep their hearts always mindful to visit, as often as they can, their God in the sacrament, to pay their court to him, giving vent to their affections at the foot of the altar, offering him their afflictions, their desires of loving him, of seeing him face to face, and, in the mean time, of pleasing him in all things.

PRAYER

Behold me in Thy presence, O my Jesus! hidden in the sacrament, Thou art the self-same Jesus who for me didst sacrifice Thyself on the cross. Thou art he who lovest me so much, and who hast therefore confined Thyself in this prison of love. Amongst so many, who have offended Thee less than I, and who have loved Thee better than I, Thou hast chosen me, in Thy goodness, to keep Thee company in this house, where, having drawn me from the midst of the world, Thou hast destined me always to live united with Thee, and afterwards to have me nigh Thee to praise and to love Thee in Thy eternal kingdom. O Lord! I thank Thee. How have I deserved this happy lot? *I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than dwell in the tabernacles of sinners.*[3208] Happy indeed am I, O my Jesus! to have left the world; and it is my great desire to perform the vilest office in Thy house rather than dwell in the proudest royal palaces of men. Receive me, then, O Lord! to stay with Thee all my life long; do not chase me away, as I deserve. Be pleased to allow that, among the many good brothers who serve Thee in this house, I, though I am a miserable sinner, may serve Thee also. Many years already have I lived far from Thee. But now that Thou hast enlightened me to know the vanity of the world, and my own foolishness, I will not depart any more from Thy feet, O my Jesus! Thy presence shall animate me to fight when I am tempted. The nearness of Thy abode shall remind me of the obligation I am under to love Thee, and always to have recourse to Thee in my combats against hell. I will always keep near to Thee, that I may unite myself to Thee, and attach myself closer to Thee. I love Thee, O my God! hidden in this sacrament. Thou, for the love of me, remainest always on this altar. I, for the love of Thee, will always remain in Thy presence as much as I shall be able. There enclosed Thou always lovest me, and here enclosed I will always love Thee. Always, then, O my Jesus, my love, my all! shall we remain together,—in time in this house, and during eternity, in paradise. This is my hope, so may it be. Most holy Mary, obtain for me a greater love for the Most Holy Sacrament.

Consideration XII

THE LIFE OF RELIGIOUS RESEMBLES MOSTLY THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

The Apostle says that the eternal Father predestines to the kingdom of heaven those only who live conformably to the life of the incarnate Word. *Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son.*[3209] How happy, then, and secure of paradise should not religious be, seeing that God has called them to a state of life which of all other states is the most conformed to the life of Jesus Christ.

Jesus, on this earth, wished to live poor as the son and helpmate of a mechanic, in a poor dwelling, with poor clothing and poor food: *Being rich, He became poor for your sake, that through His poverty you might become rich.*[3210] Moreover, he chose a life the most entirely mortified, far from the delights of the world, and always full of pain and sorrow, from his birth to his death; hence by the prophet he was called *The man of sorrows.*[3211] By this he wished to give his servants to understand what ought to be the life of those who wish to follow him: *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.*[3212] According to this example, and to this invitation of Jesus Christ, the saints have endeavored to dispossess themselves of all earthly goods, and to load themselves with pains and crosses, in order thus to follow Christ, their beloved Lord.

Thus acted St. Benedict, who, being the son of the lord of Norcia, and a relative of the Emperor Justinian, and born amidst the riches and the pleasures of the world, while yet a youth of only fourteen years, went to live in a cavern on Mount Sublaco, where he received no other sustenance but a piece of bread brought him every day as an alms by the hermit Romanus.

So acted St. Francis of Assisi, who renounced in favor of his father the whole lawful portion of his inheritance, even to the shirt he had on his back, and, thus poor and mortified, consecrated himself to Jesus Christ. Thus St. Francis Borgia, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, the one being Duke of Candia, the other of Castiglione, left all their riches, their estates, their vassals, their country, their house, their parents, and went to live a poor life in religion.

So have done so many other noblemen and princes even of royal blood. Blessed Zedmerra, daughter of the King of Ethiopia, renounced the kingdom to become a Dominican nun. Blessed Johanna of Portugal renounced the kingdom of France and England, to become a nun. In the Benedictine Order alone, there are found twenty-five emperors, and seventy-five kings and queens, who left the world to live poor, mortified, and forgotten by the world, in a poor cloister. Ah! indeed, these and not the grandees of the world, are the truly fortunate ones.

At present, worldlings think these to be fools, but in the valley of Josaphat they shall know that they themselves have been the fools; and when they see the saints on their thrones crowned by God, they shall say, lamenting and in despair, *These are they whom we had sometime in derision, . . . we fools esteemed their life madness, but now they are numbered among the children of God, as their lot is among the saints.*[3213]

PRAYER

Ah! my Master, and my Redeemer, Jesus, I am then of the number of those fortunate ones whom Thou hast called to follow Thee. O my Lord! I thank Thee for this. I leave all; would that I had more to leave, that I might draw near to Thee, my king and my God, who for the love of me, and to give me courage by Thy example, hast chosen for Thyself a life so poor and so painful. Walk on, O Lord, I will follow Thee. Choose Thou for me what cross Thou wilt, and help me. I will always carry it with constancy and love. I regret that for the past I have abandoned Thee, to follow my lusts and the vanities of the world; but now I will leave Thee no more. Bind me to Thy cross, and if through weakness I sometimes resist, draw me by the sweet bonds of Thy love. Suffer it not that I should ever leave Thee again. Yes, my Jesus, I renounce all the satisfactions of the world; my only satisfaction shall be to continue to love Thee, and to suffer all that pleases Thee. I hope thus to come myself one day in Thy kingdom, to be united with Thee by that bond of eternal love, where, loving Thee in Thy revealed glory, I need no more fear to be loosed and separated from Thee. I love Thee, O my God, my all! and will always love Thee. Behold my hope, O Most Holy Mary! thou who, because the most conformed to Jesus, art now the most powerful to obtain this grace. Be thou my protectress!

Consideration XIII

THE ZEAL WHICH RELIGIOUS OUGHT TO HAVE FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS[3214]

He who is called to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer will never be a true follower of Jesus Christ, and will never become a saint, if he fulfils not the end of his vocation, and has not the spirit of the Institute, which is the salvation of souls, and of those souls that are the most destitute of spiritual succor, such as the poor people in the country.

This was truly the end for which our Redeemer came down from heaven, who protests, *The spirit of the Lord . . . hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor.*[3215] He sought no other proof of Peter's love for him but this, that he should procure the salvation of souls: *Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? . . . Feed my sheep.*[3216] He did not impose upon him, says St. John Chrysostom, penance, prayers, or other things, but only that he should endeavor to save his sheep: "Christ said not to him, throw your money away, practise fasting, fatigue your body with hard work, but he said, Feed my sheep."[3217] And he declares that he would look upon every benefit conferred on the least of our neighbors as conferred on himself. *Amen, I say to you, since you have done it unto one of these my least brethren, you have done it unto me.*[3218]

Every religious ought, therefore, with the utmost care, to entertain within himself this zeal, and this spirit of helping souls. To this end every one ought to direct his studies, and when he shall afterwards have been assigned to his work by his Superiors, he ought to give to it all his thoughts, and his whole attention. He could not call himself a true brother of this Congregation, who, through the desire of attending only to himself and of leading a retired and solitary life, would not accept with all affection such an employment, when imposed on him by obedience.

What greater glory can a man have than to be, as St. Paul says, a co-operator with God in this great work of the salvation of souls? He who loves the Lord ardently is not content to be alone in loving him, he would draw all to his love, saying with David, *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us extol his name together.*[3219] Hence St. Augustine exhorts all those who love God, “If you love God, draw all men to his love.”[3220]

A good ground to hope for his own salvation has he who with true zeal labors for the salvation of souls. “Have you saved a soul,” says St. Augustine, “then you have predestinated your own.”[3221] The Holy Ghost promises us, *When thou shalt have labored for the welfare of a poor man, and by thy labor shalt have filled him* (with divine grace), *the Lord will fill thee with light and peace.*[3222] In this—namely, in procuring the salvation of others—St. Paul placed his hope of eternal salvation, when he said to his disciples of Thessalonica, *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glory? Are not you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?*[3223]

PRAYER

O my Lord Jesus Christ! how can I thank Thee enough, since Thou hast called me to the same work that Thou didst Thyself on earth; namely, to go with my poor exertions and help souls to their salvation? How have I deserved this honor and this reward, after having offended Thee so grievously, and been the cause to others also of offending Thee? Yes, O my Lord! Thou callest me to help Thee in this great undertaking. I will serve Thee with all my strength. Behold, I offer Thee all my labor, and even my blood, in order to obey Thee. Nor do I by this aspire to satisfy my own inclination, or to gain applause and esteem from men; I desire nothing but to see Thee loved by all as Thou deservest. I prize my happy lot, and call myself fortunate, that Thou hast chosen me for this great work, in which I protest that I will renounce all praises of men and all self-satisfaction, and will only seek Thy glory. To Thee be all the honor and satisfaction, and to me only the discomforts, the blame, and the reproaches. Accept, O Lord! this offering, which I, a miserable sinner, who wish to love Thee and to see Thee loved by others, make of myself to thee, and give me strength to execute it.

Most Holy Mary, my advocate, who lovest souls so much, help me.

Consideration XIV

HOW NECESSARY TO RELIGIOUS ARE THE VIRTUES OF MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY

Our most lovely Redeemer Jesus willed to be called a lamb, for the very reason that he might show us how meek and humble he was himself. These were the virtues which he principally wished his followers should learn from him: *Learn from me, because I am meek and humble of heart.*[3224] And these virtues he principally requires of religious who profess to imitate his most holy life.

He who lives as a solitary in a desert has not so much need of these virtues; but for him who lives in a Community, it is impossible not to meet, now and then, with a reprimand from his Superiors, or something disagreeable from his companions. In such cases, a religious who loves not meekness will commit a thousand faults every day, and live an unquiet life. He must be all sweetness with everybody,—with strangers, with companions, and also with inferiors if he should ever become Superior; and if he be an inferior, he must consider that one act of meekness in bearing contempt and reproach is of greater value to him than a thousand fasts and a thousand disciplines.

St. Francis said that many make their perfection consist in exterior mortifications, and, after all, are not able to bear one injurious word. "Not understanding," he added, "how much greater gain is made by patiently bearing injuries."[3225] How many persons, as St. Bernard remarks, are all sweetness when nothing is said or done contrary to their inclination, but show their want of meekness when anything crosses them! And if anyone should ever be Superior, let him believe that one reprimand made with meekness will profit his subjects more than a thousand made with severity. *The meek are useful to themselves and to others,*[3226] as St. John Chrysostom teaches. In short, as the same saint said, the greatest sign of a virtuous soul is to see it meek on occasions of contradiction. A meek heart is the pleasure of the heart of God. *That which is agreeable to him is faith and meekness.*[3227] It would be well for a religious to represent to himself, in his meditations, all the contrarieties that may happen to him, and thus arm himself against them; and then, when the occasion happens, he ought to do violence to himself, that he may not be excited and break out in impatience. Therefore, he should refrain from speaking when his mind is disturbed, till he is certain that he has become calm again.

But to bear injuries quietly, it is above all necessary to have a great fund of humility. He who is truly humble is not only unmoved when he sees himself despised, but is even pleased, and rejoices at it in his spirit, however the flesh may resent it; for he sees himself treated as he deserves, and made conformable to Jesus Christ, who, worthy as he was of every honor, chose, for the love of us, to be satiated with contempt and injuries. Brother Juniper, a disciple of St. Francis, when an injury was done to him, held up his cowl, as if he expected to receive pearls falling from heaven. The saints have been more desirous of injuries than worldlings are covetous of applause and honor. And of what use is a religious who does not know how to bear contempt for God's sake? He is always proud, and only humble in name and a hypocrite, whom divine grace will repulse, as the Holy Ghost says: *God resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace.*[3228]

PRAYER

O my most humble Jesus, who, for the love of me, didst humble Thyself, and become obedient unto the death of the cross, how have I the courage to appear before Thee, and call myself Thy follower? for I see myself to be such a sinner and so proud that I cannot bear a single injury without resenting it. Whence can come such pride in me, who for my sins have so many times deserved to be cast forever into hell with the devils? Ah, my despised Jesus, help me and make me conformable to Thee. I will change my life. Thou, for love of me, hast borne so much contempt; I, for love of Thee, will bear every injury. Thou, O my Redeemer! hast rendered contempt too honorable and desirable, since Thou hast embraced it with so much love, during Thy own life. *Far be it from me to glory but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*[3229] O my most humble mistress Mary, mother of

God! thou who wast in all, and especially in suffering, the most conformed to thy Son, obtain for me the grace to bear in peace all injuries which henceforward shall be offered to me. Amen.

Consideration XV

HOW MUCH RELIGIOUS OUGHT TO CONFIDE IN THE PATRONAGE OF MARY

If it is true, and most true it is, that, according to the saying of St. Peter Damian, the divine mother, the most holy Mary, loves all men with such an affection that after God there is not, nor can there be, any one who surpasses or equals her in her love,—"She loves us with an invincible love,"[3230]—how much must we think this great queen loves religious, who have consecrated their liberty, their life, and their all to the love of Jesus Christ? She sees well enough that the life of such as these is more conformable to her own life, and to that of her divine Son; she sees them often occupied in praising her, and continually attentive to honor her by their novenas, visits, rosaries, fasts, etc. She beholds them often at her feet, intent on invoking her aid, asking graces of her, and graces all conformed to her holy desires; that is, the grace of perseverance in the divine service, of strength in their temptations, of detachment from this world, and of love towards God. Ah, how can we doubt that she employs all her power and her mercy for the benefit of religious, and especially of those who belong to this holy Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer in which, as it is well known, we make special profession of honoring the Virgin Mother by visits, by fasting on Saturdays, by special mortifications during her novenas, etc., and by everywhere promoting devotion to her by sermons and novenas in her honor!

She, the great mistress, is grateful. *I love those who love Me.*[3231] Yes, she is so grateful that, as St. Andrew of Crete says, "To him who does her the least service she is accustomed to return great favors."[3232] She promises liberally those who love her, and who promote her honor among others, to deliver them from sin: "Those that work by me shall not sin."[3233] She also promises to them paradise: “Those that explain me shall have life everlasting.”[3234]

For which reason we especially ought to thank God for having called us to this Congregation, where by the usages of the Community and the example of our companions, we are often reminded, and in some way constrained, to have recourse to Mary, and continually to honor this our most loving mother, who is called, and is, the joy, the hope, the life, and the salvation of those who invoke and honor her.

PRAYER

My most beloved, most lovely, and most loving queen, I always thank my Lord and thee, who hast not only drawn me, out of the world, but also called me to live in this Congregation, where a special devotion is practised to thee. Accept of me then, my mother, to serve thee. Among so many of thy beloved sons, do not scorn to let me serve thee also, miserable though I am. Thou after God shalt always be my hope and my love. In all my wants, in all my tribulations and temptations, I will always have recourse to thee; thou shalt be my refuge, my consolation. I am unwilling that any one except God and thee should comfort me in my combats, in the sadness and the tediousness of this life. For thy service I renounce all the kingdoms of the whole world. My kingdom on this earth shall be to serve, bless, and love thee, O my most lovely mistress! “whom to serve is to reign,”[3235] as St. Anselm says. Thou art the mother of perseverance; obtain for me to be faithful to thee until death. By so doing I hope, and firmly hope, one day to come where thou reignest, to praise and bless thee forever, to depart no more from thy holy feet. Jesus and Mary, I protest, with your loving servant Alphonsus Rodriguez, “my most sweet loves, let me suffer for you, let me die for you, let me be all yours, and not at all my own.”[3236]

PRAYER

(Taken from St. Thomas of Aquinas)

Grant me, O my God! to know Thy will, and to accomplish it perfectly to Thy glory. Give me the strength not to fail in prosperity, so as to exalt myself presumptuously; not to fail in adversity, so as to be cast down by it.

Let me feel joy or sorrow at nothing else, but what leads me to Thee, or separates me from Thee. Let me desire to please none, let me fear to displease none, but Thee. Let all the goods of the world be vile to me, and all Thy gifts dear to me, for the love of Thee, and be Thou dear to me above everything. Let all joy without Thee be tediousness to me, and let every fatigue which is for Thee be pleasing to me, so that outside of Thee I may wish for nothing. Grant that to Thee I may always direct all my thoughts and all my affections. Make me, O Lord, obedient without reply, poor without desire, chaste without defilement, patient without murmur, humble without simulation, joyous without dissipation, fearful without diffidence, diligent without solicitude, prudent without duplicity. Grant me the ability to do good without presumption, to reprove without becoming haughty, to edify my neighbor by my example without dissimulation. Give me a watchful heart, that vain thoughts may not carry me away from Thee; a noble heart, that is not bowed down by unworthy affections; a right heart, that is not moved by perverse intentions; a heart strong in tribulations; a heart free from earthly attachment. Give me to be enlightened in knowing Thee, diligent in seeking Thee, wise in finding Thee, persevering in pleasing Thee, grateful in thanking Thee. Finally, give me strength in this life to embrace every punishment due to my sins, and then, in the next, the grace forever to see Thee, possess Thee, and love Thee, face to face. Amen.

O Mary, my queen, my hope, and my mother! I love thee, I confide in thee. I beseech thee by the love of Jesus, by the joy thou didst feel in becoming his mother, and by the sorrow thou didst feel at his death, obtain of God for me a great sorrow for my sins and the pardon of them, perseverance in a good life, a pure love towards God with a perfect conformity to his holy will. Thou art the refuge of sinners, thou art then my refuge. To thee I recommend my soul and my eternal salvation. Receive me as thy servant, and as such protect me always, and especially at the time of my death. Thou with thy powerful intercession must save me; this is my hope, thus may it be!

Answer to a Young Man who asks Counsel on the Choice of a State of Life

I read in your letter that some time ago you felt inspired by God to become a religious, and that afterwards many doubts arose in your mind, and especially this one, that, without becoming a religious, you might sanctify yourself also in the world.

I will answer your letter briefly, for, should you wish to read something more complete, you can read a little work of mine, which has already been printed, under the title "Counsels concerning Religious Vocation," in which I have treated this matter more fully. Here I will only say, briefly, that this point of the choice of a state of life is of the greatest importance, as upon it depends our eternal salvation. He who chooses the state to which God calls him will save himself with facility, and for him who does not obey the divine call it will be difficult—yes, morally impossible—to save himself. The greatest number of those who are damned, are damned for not having corresponded to the call of God.

In order, therefore, that you may be able to choose that state, which will be the surest for attaining eternal salvation, consider that your soul is immortal, and that the only end for which God has placed you in this world was, not certainly that you may acquire money and honors on this earth, and thus live a comfortable and delightful life, but that by holy virtues you may merit eternal life.[3237] In the day of judgment it will avail you nothing to have advanced your family, and to have made a figure in the world; it will only avail you to have served and loved Jesus Christ, who is to be your judge.

You have a thought which tells you that you will also be able to sanctify yourself by remaining in the world. Yes, my dear sir, you will be able, but it is difficult, and if you are truly called by God to the religious state, and yet remain in the world, it is, as I have said above, morally impossible, because those helps will be denied you which God had prepared for you in religion, and without them you will not save yourself. To sanctify yourself it is necessary for you to employ the means,—such as, to avoid evil occasions, to remain detached from earthly goods, to live a life recollected in God; and to maintain this, it is necessary to receive the sacraments frequently, to make your meditation, your spiritual reading, and to perform other devout exercises, every day, otherwise it is impossible to preserve the spirit of fervor. Now, it is difficult, not to say impossible, to practise all this in the midst of the noise and the disturbances of the world; for family affairs, the necessities of the house, the complaints of parents, the quarrels and persecutions with which the world is so full, will keep your mind so occupied by cares and fears that you will barely be able in the evening to recommend yourself to God, and even this will be done with many distractions. You would wish to make your meditation, to read spiritual books, to receive Holy Communion often, to visit every day the Sacrament of the altar; but from all this you will be prevented by the affairs of the world, and the little you do will be imperfect, because it is done in the midst of a thousand distractions, and with coldness of heart. Your life will thus be always unquiet, and your death more unquiet still.

On one side, worldly friends will not fail to inspire you with a fear of embracing the religious life, as being a hard life and full of troubles. On the other, the world offers you amusements, money, and a contented life. Reflect well, and do not allow yourself to be led into error. Be persuaded that the world is a traitor that makes promises and does not care about the fulfilment of them. It offers you indeed all these earthly things, but suppose it should give them to you, could it also give you peace of soul? No, God only can give true peace. The soul is created only for God, to love him in this life and to enjoy him in the next, and therefore God only can content it. All the pleasures and riches of the earth cannot give true peace; nay, those who in this life abound the most with such goods are the most troubled and afflicted, as Solomon confesses who had them in abundance. *All*, says he, *is vanity and affliction of spirit.*[3238] If the world, with its goods, could make us happy, the rich, the great, the monarchs, who are in no want of wealth, honors, and amusements, would be fully contented. But experience shows how it is with these mighty ones of the earth; the greater they are, the greater are the vexations, fears, and afflictions they have to suffer. A poor

Capuchin lay-brother, who goes about girded with a cord over a sackcloth, who lives on beans, and sleeps in a small cell on a little straw, is more contented than a prince with all his gilded trappings and riches, who has every day a sumptuous table, and who goes half sick to bed under a rich canopy, unable to sleep on account of the anguish which drives sleep away. He is a fool who loves the world and not God, said St. Philip Neri; and if these worldlings live such an unquiet life, much more unquiet still will be their death, when the priest, at their side, will intimate to them that they are about to be chased away from this world, saying: "Depart hence, Christian soul, from this world. Embrace the crucifix, for this world is at an end for you."[3239] The misery is, that in the world they think little of God, and just as little of the next life, where they must remain forever. All, or almost all, their thoughts are given to the things of this earth, and this is the cause that their life is so unhappy, and their death still more.

Nevertheless, that you may ascertain what state you ought to embrace, imagine yourself at the point of death, and choose that one which you would then wish to have chosen. Should you have erred, by neglecting the divine call, in order to follow your own inclinations, and to live with more liberty, there will then be no longer time to remedy the error. Consider that everything here below will come to an end. *The fashion of this world passeth away.*[3240] The scenes of this world must finish for each one of us. Everything passes, and death draws near, and at every step we take we approach nearer to it, and, through death, nearer to eternity. For this we are born. *Man shall go into the house of his eternity.*[3241] Death will be upon us when we least think of it. Alas! when death draws near, what will then appear all the goods of this world, but the unreal pageantry of a theatre,—vanities, lies, and foolishness? And what profit will it then be, as Jesus Christ warns us, *if we should have gained the whole world and lost our souls?*[3242] It will help us only to die an unhappy death.

On the contrary, a young man who has left the world to give himself entirely to Jesus Christ, how contented will he feel, as he passes his days in the solitude of his cell, far from the tumult of the world and the dangers of losing God, which are in the world! In the monastery he will not have the entertainments of music, theatres, and balls, but he will have God to console him and to make him enjoy peace. I mean all that peace which is possible in this valley of tears, into which every one is sent to suffer, and to merit by his patience that full peace which is prepared for him in heaven. But in this life even, far from the pastimes of the world, one loving look cast from time to time on the crucifix, one “Deus meus, et omnia,” pronounced with affection, one “my God” said with a sigh of love, will console him more than all the pastimes and feasts of the world, which leave only bitterness behind them.

And if he lives content in such a life, more content will he be still at his death at having chosen the religious state. How much will it then console him to have spent his life in prayer, in spiritual reading, in mortification, and in other exercises of devotion, especially if he has been in an Order employed in saving souls by preaching and hearing confessions,—things which at his death will all increase his confidence in Jesus Christ, who is truly grateful and liberal in rewarding those who have labored for his glory!

But let us come to a conclusion with regard to your vocation. Since the Lord has called you to leave the world, and to be entirely his in religion, I tell you: Rejoice and tremble at the same time. Rejoice, on one hand, and always thank the Lord, because to be called by God to a perfect life is a grace which he does not give to all.[3243] On the other hand, tremble, because if you do not follow the divine call, you will put your eternal salvation in great danger. It is not my intention here to relate to you the many examples of young men who, because they made no account of their vocation, have lived a miserable life and died a horrible death. Hold for certain that, as God has called you, you will never have peace, if you remain in the world; and at your death you will be very unquiet, on account of the remorse that then will torment you, for having neglected to obey God, who had called you to the religious state.

At the end of your letter you express a wish to learn from me whether, in case you should not have the courage to enter religion, it would be better to marry, as your parents wish, or to become a secular priest. I answer: The married state I cannot recommend to you, because St. Paul does not counsel it to any one, except there be a necessity for it, arising out of habitual incontinence, which necessity, I hold for certain, does not exist in your case.

With regard, then, to the state of a secular priest,[3244] take notice that a secular priest has on him all the obligations of a priest, and all the distractions and dangers of a layman; for, living in the midst of the world, he cannot avoid the troubles which arise from his own household and from his parents, and cannot be free from the dangers to which his soul is exposed. He will have temptations in his own house, being unable to exclude women from it, whether relatives or servants, nor prevent other strangers from coming to see them. You should then stay there altogether retired in a separate room, and attend only to divine things. Now, this it is very difficult to practise; and therefore small, and very small, is the number of those priests who attend to their perfection in their own houses.

On the contrary, entering a monastery of strict observance, you will be freed from the disagreeable duty of thinking about your food and clothing, because there the Order provides you with all, there you will not have your parents to come and continually trouble you with all the disturbances that happen in their house; there no women enter to disturb your mind; and thus, far from the tumult of the world, you will have no one to hinder you in your prayers and your recollection.

I have said *a monastery of strict observance;* because if you want to enter another, where they live more freely, it is better for you to stay at home and attend there to the salvation of your soul as well as you can; for entering an Order where the spirit is relaxed, you expose yourself to the danger of being lost. Though you should enter with the resolution to attend to prayer and to the things of God only, yet, carried along by the bad example of your companions, and seeing yourself derided and even persecuted, if you do not live as they do, you will leave off all your devotions, and do as the others do, as experience shows it to be commonly the case. But should God give you the grace of vocation, be careful to preserve it, by recommending yourself often to Jesus and Mary in holy prayer. I know that if you resolve to give yourself entirely to God, the devil from that moment will increase his efforts to tempt you to fall into sin, and especially to make you entirely his, and to remain his.

I conclude by offering you the assurance of my respectful consideration; I pray the Lord to make you belong entirely to himself, and remain, etc.

Advice to a Young Person in Doubt About the State of Life which she Ought to Embrace[3245]

My dear Sister in Jesus Christ:

You are deliberating about the choice of a state of life. I see that you are agitated because the world wishes you to belong to itself, and to enter the married state; and, on the other hand, Jesus Christ wishes you to give yourself to him by becoming a nun in some convent of exact observance.

Remember that on the choice which you make your eternal salvation will depend. Hence, I recommend you, as soon as you read this advice, to implore the Lord, every day, to give you light and strength to embrace that state which will be most conducive to your salvation; that thus you may not afterwards, when your error is irreparable, have to repent of the choice you have made for your whole life, and for all eternity.

Examine whether you will be more happy in having for your spouse a man of the world, or Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the King of heaven; see which of them appears to you the better spouse, and then make your choice. At the age of thirteen, the holy virgin St. Agnes was, on account of her extraordinary beauty, sought after by many. Among the rest, the son of the Roman Prefect asked her for his spouse; but looking at Jesus Christ, who wished her to belong to him, she said, I have found a spouse better than you and all the monarchs of this world; therefore I cannot exchange him for any other. And rather than exchange him she was content to lose her life, and cheerfully suffered martyrdom for Jesus Christ. The holy virgin Domitilla gave a similar answer to the Count Aurelian; she, too, died a martyr, and was burned alive, because she would not forsake Jesus Christ. Oh, how happy do these holy virgins now feel in heaven, how happy will they feel for all eternity, at having made so good a choice! The same happy lot awaits you, and will await all young persons who renounce the world in order to give themselves to Jesus Christ.

In the next place, examine the consequences of the state of the person who chooses the world, and of the person who makes choice of Jesus Christ. The world offers earthly goods, riches, honors, amusements, and pleasures. On the other hand, Jesus Christ presents to you scourges, thorns, opprobrium, and crosses; for these were the goods which he chose for himself all the days of his mortal life. But then he offers you two immense advantages which the world cannot give—peace of soul in this life, and paradise in the next.

Moreover, before you decide on embracing any state, you must reflect that your soul is immortal; that is, that after the present life which will soon end, you must pass into eternity, in which you will receive that place of punishment or of reward which you will have merited by your works during life. Thus, you must remain for all eternity in the house either of eternal life or of eternal death, in which, after your departure from this world, it will be your lot first to dwell: you will be either forever saved and happy amid the joys of paradise, or forever lost and in despair in the torments of hell. In the mean time, consider that everything in this world must soon end. Happy all that are saved; miserable the soul that is damned. Keep always in mind that great maxim of Jesus Christ: “What will it profit a man to gain the whole world if he lose his own soul?” This maxim has sent so many from the world to shut themselves up in the cloister, or to live in the deserts; it has inspired so many young persons with courage to forsake the world in order to give themselves to God and to die a holy death.

On the other hand, consider the unhappy lot of so many ladies of fortune, so many princesses and queens, who in the world have been attended, praised, honored, and almost adored; but if they are damned, what do they now find in hell of so much riches, of so many pleasures, of so many honors enjoyed in this life, but pains and remorse of conscience, which will torment them forever, as long as God shall be God, without any hope of remedy for their eternal ruin.

But let us now cast a glance at the goods which the world gives in this life to its followers, and to the goods which God gives to her who loves him and forsakes the world for his sake. The world makes great promises; but do we not all see that the world is a traitor that promises what it never performs? But though it should fulfil all its promises, what does it give? It gives earthly goods, but does it give the peace and the life of happiness which it promises? All its goods delight the senses and the flesh, but do not content the heart and the soul. Our souls have been created by God for the sole purpose of loving him in this life, and of enjoying him in the next. Hence, all the goods of the earth, all its delights, and all its grandeurs, are outside the heart; they enter not into the soul, which God only can content. Solomon has even called all worldly goods vanities and lies, which do not content but rather afflict the soul. *Vanity of vanities and affliction of spirit.*[3246] This we know also from experience, for we see that the more a person abounds in these goods, the greater her anguish and misery of mind. If by its good the world gave content to the soul, great indeed should be the happiness of princesses and queens, who want neither amusements, nor comedies, nor festivities, nor banquets, nor splendid palaces, nor beautiful carriages, nor costly dresses, nor precious jewels, nor servants, nor ladies of honor to attend and pay homage to them. But no; they who imagine them to be happy are deceived. Ask them whether they enjoy perfect peace, if they are perfectly content, and they will answer: What peace? what content? They will tell you that they lead a life of misery, and that they know not what peace is. The maltreatment which they receive from their husbands, the displeasure caused by their children, the wants of the house, the jealousies and fears to which they are subject, make them live in the midst of continual anguish and bitterness. Married women may be called martyrs of patience, if they bear all with resignation; but unless they are patient and resigned, they will suffer a martyrdom in this world, and a more painful martyrdom in the next.

The remorse of conscience, though they had nothing else to suffer, keeps married persons in continual torment. Being attached to earthly goods, they reflect but little on spiritual things; they seldom approach the sacraments, and seldom recommend themselves to God; and, being deprived of these helps to a good life, they will scarcely be able to live without sin, and without continual remorse of conscience. Behold, then, how all the joys promised by the world become to married persons sources of bitterness, of fears, and of damnation. How many of them will say, Unhappy me, what will become of me after so many sins, after the life which I led, at a distance from God, always going from bad to worse? I would wish for retirement in order to spend a little time in mental prayer, but the affairs of the family and of the house, which is always in confusion, do not permit this. I would wish to hear sermons, to go to confession, to communicate often; I would wish to go often to the church, but my husband does not wish it. My unceasing occupations, the care of children, the frequent visits of friends, keep me confined to the house; and thus it is not without some difficulty that I can hear Mass at a late hour on festivals. How great was my folly in entering the married state, when I could become a saint in a convent! But all these lamentations only serve to increase their pain; because they see that it is no longer in their power to change the unhappy choice they have made of living in the world. And if their life is unhappy, their death will be much more miserable. At that awful hour they will be surrounded by servants, by their husbands, and children, bathed in tears; but instead of giving them relief, all these will be to them an occasion of greater affliction. And thus afflicted, poor in merits, and full of fears for their eternal salvation, they must go to present themselves to Jesus Christ to be judged by him. But, on the other hand, how great will be the happiness which a nun who has left the world for Jesus Christ will enjoy, living among so many spouses of God, and in a solitary cell, at a distance from the turmoils of the world, and from the continual and proximate danger of losing God, to which seculars are exposed. How much greater will be her consolation at death, after having spent her years in meditations, mortifications, and in so many spiritual exercises; in visits to the Holy Sacrament, in confessions, Communions, acts of humility, of hope, and love of Jesus Christ! And though the devil should endeavor to terrify her by the faults committed in her younger days, her Spouse, for whom she has left the world, will console her, and thus, full of confidence, she will die in the embraces of her crucified Redeemer, who will conduct her to heaven, that there she may enjoy eternal happiness.

Thus, my dear sister, since you must make choice of a state of life, make the choice now which you shall wish at death to have made. At death, every one who sees that for her the world is about to end says, Oh that I had led the life of a saint! Oh that I had left the world and given myself to God! But what is then done, is done, and nothing remains for her but to breathe forth her soul, and to go to hear from Jesus Christ the words, Come, blessed soul, and rejoice with me for eternity; or, Begone forever to hell at a distance from me. You, then, must choose the world or Jesus Christ. If you choose the world, you will probably sooner or later repent of the choice; hence, you ought to reflect well upon it. In the world the number of persons who are lost is very great; in religion, the number of those who are damned is very small. Recommend yourself to Jesus crucified, and to most holy Mary, that they may make you choose the state which is most conducive to your eternal salvation. If you wish to become a nun, resolve to become a saint; if you intend to lead a loose and imperfect life, like some religious, it is useless for you to enter a convent; you should then only lead an unhappy life and die an unhappy death. But if you resolve not to become a religious, I cannot advise you to enter the married state, for St. Paul does not counsel that state to any one, except in case of necessity, which I hope does not exist for you. At least remain in your own house and endeavor to become a saint. I entreat you to say the following prayer for nine days:

My Lord Jesus Christ, who hast died for my salvation, I implore Thee, through the merits of Thy passion, to give me light and strength to choose that state which is best for my salvation. And do thou, O my Mother, Mary, obtain this grace for me by thy powerful intercession.

Discourse to Pious Maidens[3247]

My dear Sisters in Jesus Christ:

I do not intend to explain the privileges and blessings acquired by those maidens who consecrate their virginity to Jesus Christ; I shall only glance at them.

EXCELLENCE OF VIRGINITY

First, they become in the eyes of God as beautiful as the angels of heaven.[3248] Baronius[3249] relates that upon the death of a holy virgin named Georgia, an immense multitude of doves was seen flying around her; and when the body was carried to the church, they ranged themselves along that part of the roof which corresponded to the situation of the corpse, and did not leave until she was buried. Those doves were thought to be angels who accompanied that virginal body.

Moreover, a maiden who leaves the world, and dedicates herself to Jesus Christ, becomes his spouse. In the Gospel, our Redeemer is called Father, or Master, or Shepherd of our souls; but, with regard to those virgins, he calls himself their spouse; they *went out to meet the bridegroom.*[3250]

When a young woman wishes to establish herself in the world, she will examine, if she be prudent, which of all her suitors is the most noble and the richest. Let us then learn from the Spouse in the sacred Canticles, who well knows—let us learn from her what manner of spouse is he whom consecrated virgins aspire to. Tell me, O sacred Spouse, what manner of spouse is he who makes you the most fortunate of women? *My beloved is white,* she says, *and ruddy, chosen among thousands.*[3251] He is all white, by reason of his purity; and ruddy, by reason of the love with which he burns. He is, in fine, so noble and so kind as to be the most amiable of spouses.

With reason, then, did the glorious virgin St. Agnes, as we learn from St. Ambrose, when it was proposed to her to marry the son of the Prefect of

Rome, reply that she had a much more advantageous match in view.[3252] When some ladies were endeavoring to persuade St. Domitilla to marry Count Aurelian, nephew of the Emperor Domitian, saying there was no obstacle, as he was willing that she should remain a Christian, the saint replied, Tell me, if a monarch and a clown both pretended to a maiden, which would she choose? Now I, should I marry Aurelian, would have to leave the King of Heaven; it would be folly—I will not do so. And thus, in order to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, to whom she had already consecrated her virginity, she was willing to be burned alive, a death which her barbarous suitor caused her to suffer.[3253]

Those spouses of Jesus Christ who leave the world for his sake, become his beloved; they are called the first fruits of the lamb: *The first fruits to God and to the Lamb*.[3254] Why the first fruits? Because, says Cardinal Ugone, as the first fruits are more grateful than any other to man, so virgins are dearer to God than any others. The divine spouse feeds amongst the lilies: *Who feeds amongst the lilies*.[3255] And what is meant by lilies, if not those devout maidens who consecrate their virginity to Jesus Christ? The Venerable Bede writes that the song of the virgins—that is, the glory which they give to God by preserving untouched the lily of their purity—is far more pleasing to him than the song of all the other saints. Wherefore the Holy Ghost says that there is nothing comparable to virginity.[3256] And hence, Cardinal Ugone remarks that dispensations are often granted from other vows, but never from the vow of chastity; and the reason is, because no other treasure can compensate for the loss of that. And it is for the same reason that theologians say, the Blessed Mother would have consented to forego the dignity of Mother of God, could it have been had only at the expense of her virginity.

Who on this earth can conceive the glory which God has prepared for his virgin spouses in paradise? Theologians say that virgins have in heaven their own “aureola,” or special crown of glory, which is refused to the other saints who are not virgins.

But let us come at once to the most important point in our discourse.

This young woman will say, Cannot I become holy in the married state? I do not wish to give you the reply in my own words; hear those of St. Paul, and you will see the difference between the married woman and the virgin:

And the unmarried woman, and the virgin, thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and in spirit; but she that is married, thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband.[3257] And the Apostle adds: *And I speak this for your profit, not for a snare, but for that which is decent, and which may give you power to attend upon the Lord without impediment.*[3258]

In the first place, I say that married persons can be holy in the spirit, but not in the flesh; on the contrary, virgins who have consecrated their virginity to Jesus Christ are holy both in soul and body. *Holy both in body and in spirit;* and mark those other words, *to attend upon the Lord without impediment.* Oh, how many obstacles have not married women to encounter in serving the Lord! And the more noble they are, the greater the obstacles. A woman, to become holy, must adopt the necessary means, which are, much mental prayer, constant use of the sacraments, and continual thought of God. But what time has a married woman for thinking upon God? *She that is married thinketh on the things of the world,*[3259] says St. Paul. The married woman has to think of providing her family with food and raiment. She has to think of rearing her children, of pleasing her husband and her husband's relatives; whence, as the Apostle says, her heart is divided between God, her husband, and her children. Her husband must be attended to; the children cry and scream, and are continually asking for a thousand things. What time can she have to attend to mental prayer, who can scarce attend to all the business of the house? How can she pray amid so many distracting thoughts and disturbances? Scarcely can she go to church, to recollect herself, and communicate upon the Sunday. She may have the good desire, but it will be difficult for her to attend to the things of God as she ought. It is true that in this want of opportunities she may gain merit, by resignation to the will of God, who requires of her, in that state, chiefly patience and resignation; but in the midst of so many distractions and annoyances, without prayer, without meditation, without frequenting the sacraments, it will be morally impossible for her to have that holy patience and resignation.

But would to God that married women had no other evil to contend with besides that of not always being able to attend to their sanctification as much as they should! The greater evil is the danger to which they are continually exposed of losing the grace of God, by reason of the intercourse which they must continually have with the relatives and friends of their husband, as well in their own houses as in the houses of others. Unmarried women do not understand this, but married women and those who have to hear their confessions know it well. Let us, however, now have done with the unhappy life which is led by married women, the illtreatment that they receive from their husbands, the disobedience of children, the wants of a family, the annoyance of mothers-in-law and relatives, the throes of childbirth, always accompanied by danger of death, not to mention the afflictions of jealousy, and scruples of conscience with regard to the rearing-up of their children,—all of this breeds a tempest under which poor married women have continually to groan; and God grant that in this tempest they may not lose themselves, so as to meet with hell in the other world, after having suffered a hell in this! Such is the unenviable lot of those maidens who choose the world!

But what! such a maiden replies, are there no married women holy? Yes, I answer, there are; but who are they? Such only as become holy through their sufferings, by suffering all from God without finding fault, and with continual patience. And how many married women are to be found in such a state of perfection? They are very rare; and if you find any, they are always in sorrow, that when they could have done so they did not consecrate themselves to Jesus Christ. Amongst all the devout married women I have known, I never knew one to be satisfied with her condition.

The greatest happiness, then, falls to the lot of those maidens who consecrate themselves to Jesus Christ. Those have to encounter none of the dangers which married women must necessarily be placed in. They are not bound to earth by love of children, or men, or dress, or gallantry, whilst married women are obliged to dress with pomp and ornaments, in order to appear with their equals and please their husbands. A maiden who has given herself to Jesus Christ requires only what dress will cover her; nay, she should give scandal if she were to wear any other, or make use of any ornaments. Moreover, virgins have no anxiety about house or children or relatives; their whole care is centred in pleasing Jesus Christ, to whom they have consecrated their soul, their body, and all their love; whence it is that they have more time, and a mind more disengaged for frequent prayer and Communion.

But let us now come to the excuses sometimes brought forward by those who are cold in the love of Jesus Christ.

Such a one will say, I should leave the world if I had some convent to go to, or, at least, if I could always spend my time in devotion at the church when I should please; but I could not remain at home, where I have bad brothers who illtreat me; and, on the other hand, my parents are unwilling to have me frequent the church. But, I ask you, is it in order to save yourself, or lead an easy life you leave the world? Is it to do your own will or the will of Jesus Christ? If you wish to become holy and serve Jesus Christ, I ask you another question: in what does holiness consist? Holiness does not consist in living in a convent, or spending the entire day in a church, but in being at confession and Communion as often as you can, in obedience, in doing everything assigned you at home, in being retired, in bearing labor and contempt. And if you were to be in a convent, how should you be employed? Do you imagine you should always be either in church or in your cell, or in the refectory, or at recreation? In the convent, although the Sisters have a time marked out for prayer, for Mass, and for Communion, they have also their hours appointed for the business of the house, and more especially the lay-sisters, who, as they do not attend in the choir, have nearly all the labor of the house, and consequently least time for prayer. All exclaim, Let us be in a convent, let us have a convent. How much more easy is it for devout girls to become holy in their own houses than in a convent! How many such have I known to regret having entered a convent, especially when the Community was large, the poor lay-sister in certain offices having scarcely time to say the rosary!

But, Father, such a girl will answer, I have at home a peevish father and mother; I have bad brothers; all of them use me ill; I cannot stand this. Well I say, and if you marry, will you not have to deal with mothers and sisters-in-law, and perhaps undutiful children, and perhaps a harsh husband? Oh, how many cruel husbands are there not, who when first married promised great things, but shortly afterwards ceased to be husbands, and became the tyrants of their wives, treating them not as companions but as slaves? Inquire of many married women whether this be not the fact. But, without going beyond your own home, you all know how your mothers fared. One thing, at least, is certain, that all you should have to suffer at home, after having given yourself to God, you should suffer for the love of Jesus Christ, and he knows how to make your cross sweet and light to you. But how dreadful is it not to suffer for the world's sake!—to suffer without merit! Courage, then! if Jesus Christ has called you to his love, and wishes to have you for his spouse, go on joyfully; it will be his care to afford you consolation even in the midst of sufferings. This, of course, will be only in case you truly love him, and live as his spouse.

MEANS TO PRESERVE VIRGINAL PURITY

Hear, then, for the last time, the means that you are to adopt in order to become holy, and live a true spouse of Jesus Christ; and these are, to practise the virtues becoming his spouse. We read in the Gospel[3260] that the kingdom of heaven is likened unto virgins. But to what virgins? Not to the foolish, but to the wise. The wise were admitted to the nuptials, but the door was shut in the face of the foolish; to whom the spouse said, I know you not[3261]—you are indeed virgins, but I do not acknowledge you for my spouses. The true spouses of Jesus Christ follow the spouse whithersoever he goeth. *These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.*[3262] What is the meaning of following the Lamb? St. Augustine[3263] says that it means the imitation of the Lamb both in body and mind. After you have consecrated your body to him, you must consecrate to him your whole heart, so that your heart may be entirely devoted to his love; and, therefore, you must adopt all the means that are necessary for making you belong entirely to Jesus Christ.

1. The first of those means is mental prayer, to which you must be most attentive. But do not imagine that, in order to pray thus, it is necessary for you to be in a convent, or remain all day in the church. It is true that at home there is much disturbance created by the persons there; nevertheless, those who wish can find time and place for prayer: this is in the morning before the others rise, and at night after the others have gone to bed. In order to pray, it is not necessary to be always on bended knees; you can pray whilst laboring, and even when walking out on business (should you have no other opportunity), by raising your soul to God, and thinking on the Passion of Jesus Christ, or any other pious subject.

2. The second means is, the frequentation of the sacraments of confession and Communion. With regard to confession, each one has to make choice of

a confessor, whom she is to obey in everything, otherwise she will never walk steadily in the way of perfection. As to Communion, she must not depend solely upon obedience; she must desire it, and ask for it. This divine food must be hungered after; Jesus Christ must be desired. It is frequent Communion that renders his spouses faithful to Jesus Christ, especially in the preservation of holy purity. The Most Holy Sacrament preserves the soul in every virtue; and it appears that its most special effect is to preserve untouched the chastity of virgins, according to that of the prophet, who calls this sacrament *the corn of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins*.[3264]

3. The third means is, retirement and caution: *As the lily amongst the thorns, so is my beloved amongst the daughters*.[3265] For a virgin to think of remaining faithful to Jesus Christ amid the conversations, the jests, and other amusements of the world, is useless; it is necessary that she preserve herself amid the thorns of abstinence and mortification, by using not only the greatest modesty and reserve in speaking with men, but even all austerity and penitential exercises when necessary. Such are the thorns which preserve the lilies; I mean young maidens, who otherwise should soon be lost. The Lord calls the cheeks of his spouse as beautiful as those of the turtle: *Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle dove's*.[3266] And why so? Because the turtle, by instinct, avoids the company of other birds, and always remains alone. That virgin, then, appears beautiful in the eyes of Jesus Christ who does all that she can to hide herself from the eyes of others. St. Jerome says that Jesus is a jealous spouse.[3267] Hence he is much displeased when he sees a virgin dedicated to him endeavoring to appear before men to please them. Pious maidens endeavor to appear repulsive, that they may not attract men. The Venerable Sister Catharine of Jesus, afterwards a Teresian nun, washed her face with the filthy water of tar, and then designedly exposed her face to the sun, that she might lose her complexion. St. Andregesina having, as we are told by Bollandus, been promised in marriage, prayed the Lord to deform her, and was heard, for she was immediately covered with a leprosy which caused every one to avoid her; and as soon as her suitor had ceased his offers, her former beauty was restored. It is related by James di Viatrico that there was a certain virgin in a convent whose eyes had inflamed a prince. The latter threatened to set fire to the monastery if she would not yield to him; but she plucked

out her eyes and sent them to him in a basin, the bearer of which was instructed to say, “Here are the darts which have wounded your heart—take them, and leave me my soul untouched.”[3268] The same author tells of St. Euphemia, that, having been promised by her father to a certain count, who left no means untried to obtain her, she, in order to free herself from his addresses, cut off her nose and lips, saying to herself, “Vain beauty, you shall never be to me an occasion of sin!” St. Antoninus tells something similar (and his account is confirmed by Baronius) of the Abbess Ebba, who, fearing an invasion of the barbarians, cut off her nose and upper lip to the teeth; and that all the other nuns, to the number of thirty, following her example, did the same. The barbarians came, and seeing them so deformed, set fire to the monastery through rage and burned them alive; and hence the Church, as Baronius tells us, has enrolled them among her martyrs. This is not allowable for others to do; those saints did so by the especial impulse of the Holy Ghost. But it sufficiently well answers the purpose of showing you what virgins who loved Jesus Christ have done to prevent men from seeking them. Devout virgins at present should at least move as modestly, and be seen as little as possible by men. Should it happen that a virgin should, by chance, and without any fault of hers, receive by violence any insult from men, be it known to you that after it she will remain as pure as before. St. Lucia made an answer of this kind to the tyrant who threatened to dishonor her. “If you do,” she said, “and I be so treated against my will, my crown shall be double.” It is the consent only that is hurtful; and know, moreover, that if a virgin be modest and reserved, men will have no inclination to interfere with her.

4. The fourth means of preserving purity is the mortification of the senses. St. Basil says, “A virgin should not be immodest in any respect,—in tongue, ears, eyes, touch, and still less in mind.”[3269] A virgin, in order to keep herself pure, must be modest in her speech, conversing seldom with men, and that only through necessity, and in few words. Her ears must be pure, by not listening to worldly conversations. Her eyes must be pure, by being either closed, or fixed upon the earth in the presence of men. She must be pure in touch, using therein all possible caution, both as regards herself and others. She must be pure in spirit, by resisting all immodest thoughts, through the help of Jesus and Mary. And to this end, she must

mortify herself with fasting, abstinence, and other penitential exercises; which things she must not practise without the consent of her confessor, otherwise they should injure her soul by making her proud. Those acts of penance must not be made without the confessor's permission, but they must be desired and sought for; for the confessor, if he does not see the penitent wishing for them, will not give them. Jesus is a spouse of blood, who espoused our souls upon the cross, whereon he shed all his blood for us. *A bloody spouse art thou to me.*[3270] Therefore those spouses who love him, love tribulation, infirmity, sorrows, ill-treatment, and injuries; and receive them not only with patience, but with joy. Thus may we understand that passage which says that *virgins follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.*[3271] They follow their spouse Jesus with joy and gladness whithersoever he goeth, even through sorrow and disgrace, as has been done by so many holy virgins, who have followed him to torments and to death, smiling and rejoicing.

5. Finally, Sisters, in order that you may obtain perseverance in this holy life, you must recommend yourselves often and much to Most Holy Mary, the Queen of Virgins. She is the mediatrix who negotiates those espousals, and brings virgins to espouse her Son. *After her shall virgins be brought to the King.*[3272] It is she, in fine, who obtains fidelity for those chosen spouses; for, without her assistance, they should be all unfaithful.

CONCLUSION

Come on, then, you who intend to live no longer for the world, but for Jesus Christ alone. (I address myself to those who feel themselves called by that divine Spouse to consecrate themselves to his love.) I do not wish that you should make any vow this morning, or oblige yourselves at once to perpetual chastity. You should do that when God inspires you, and your confessor is willing. I only desire you by a simple act, and without any obligation, to thank Jesus Christ for having called you to his love; and to offer yourselves to him henceforward for your entire lives. Say then to him:

O my Jesus, my God, and my Redeemer! who hast died for me, compassionate me who burn to call myself Thy spouse. I burn, because I see that Thou hast called me to that honor; nor do I know how to thank Thee for that grace. I should now have been in hell; and Thou, instead of chastising me, hast called me to be Thy spouse. Yes, my spouse, I leave the world, I leave all through love of Thee, and give myself entirely to Thee. What world?—what world do I speak of? My Jesus, henceforward Thou art to be my only good—my only love. I see that Thou wishest to have my entire heart, and I wish to resign it entirely to Thee. Receive me in Thy mercy, and do not reject me as I have deserved that Thou shouldst. Forget all the offences that I have given Thee, of which I repent with my whole soul; would that I had died before offending Thee! Pardon me; inflame me with Thy holy love, and give me Thy aid, in order that I may be faithful to Thee, and never leave Thee more. Thou, my spouse, hast given Thyself all to me. Behold! I give myself entirely to Thee. Mary, my Queen and my Mother, chain my heart to that of Jesus Christ; and fasten both hearts so that they be never sundered more.

I leave you now my blessing, in order that you may be so bound to Jesus Christ as never again to depart from him. Give your hearts now to Jesus Christ; say, Jesus, my spouse, henceforward I wish to love only Thee, and nothing else.

The Vocation to the Priesthood[3273]

I

NECESSITY OF A DIVINE VOCATION TO TAKE HOLY ORDERS

To enter any state of life, a divine vocation is necessary; for without such a vocation it is, if not impossible, at least most difficult to fulfil the obligations of our state, and obtain salvation. But if for all states a vocation is necessary, it is necessary in a particular manner for the ecclesiastical state. *He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber.*[3274] Hence he who takes holy orders without a call from God is convicted of theft, in taking by force a dignity which God does not wish to bestow upon him.[3275] And before him St. Paul said the same thing: *Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was. So Christ also did not glorify Himself that He might be made a high priest; but he that said unto Him: Thou art My Son, this day I have begotten Thee.*[3276]

No one, then, however learned, prudent, and holy he may be, can thrust himself into the sanctuary unless he is first called and introduced by God. Jesus Christ himself, who among all men was certainly the most learned and the most holy, *full of grace and truth,*[3277] *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,*[3278]—Jesus Christ, I say, required a divine call in order to assume the dignity of the priesthood.

In entering the sanctuary, even after God himself had called them to it, the saints trembled. When his bishop ordered St. Augustine to receive ordination, the saint through humility regarded the command as a chastisement of his sins.[3279] To escape the priesthood St. Ephrem of Syria feigned madness; and St. Ambrose pretended to be a man of a cruel disposition.

To avoid the priesthood, St. Ammonius the Monk cut off his ears, and threatened to pluck out his tongue, if the persons who pressed him to take holy orders should continue to molest him. In a word, St. Cyril of Alexandria says, “The saints have dreaded the dignity of the priesthood as a burden of enormous weight.”[3280] Can any one, then, says St. Cyprian, be so daring as to attempt of himself, and without a divine call, to assume the priesthood?[3281]

As a vassal who would of himself take the office of minister should violate the authority of his sovereign, so he who intrudes himself into the sanctuary without a vocation violates the authority of God. How great should be the temerity of the subject who, without the appointment, and even in opposition to the will of the monarch, should attempt to administer the royal patrimony, to decide lawsuits, to command the army, and to assume the viceregal authority? “Among you,” asks St. Bernard in speaking to clerics, “is there any one so insolent as, without orders and contrary to the will of the pettiest monarch, to assume the direction of his affairs?”[3282] And are not priests, as St. Prosper says, the administrators of the royal house?[3283] Are they not, according to St. Ambrose, the “leaders and rectors of the flock of Christ?”[3284] according to St. Chrysostom, the “interpreters of the divine judgments,”[3285] and according to St. Denis, the “vicars of Christ?”[3286] Will any one who knows all this dare to become the minister of God without a divine call?

To think of exercising royal authority is, according to St. Peter Chrysologus, criminal in a subject.[3287] To intrude into the house of a private individual, in order to dispose of his goods and to manage his business, would be considered temerity; for even a private individual has the right of appointing the administrators of his affairs. And will you, says St. Bernard, without being called or introduced by God, intrude into his house to take charge of his interests and to dispose of his goods?”[3288]

The Council of Trent has declared that the Church regards not as her minister, but as a robber, the man who audaciously assumes the priesthood without a vocation.[3289] Such priests may labor and toil, but their labors shall profit them little before God. On the contrary, the works which are meritorious in others shall deserve chastisement for them. Should a servant who is commanded by his master to take care of the house, through his own caprice labor in cultivating the vineyard, he may toil and sweat, but instead of being rewarded he shall be chastised by his master. Thus, in the first place, because they are not conformable to the divine will, the Lord shall not accept the toils of the man who, without a vocation, intrudes himself into the priesthood. *I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will not receive a gift of your hand.*[3290] In the end God will not reward, but will punish the works of the priest who has entered the sanctuary without a vocation. *What stranger soever cometh to it* (the tabernacle), *shall be slain.*[3291]

Whosoever, then, aspires to holy orders must, in the first place, carefully examine if his vocation is from God. “For,” says St. John Chrysostom, “the more sublime the dignity, the more should one assure one’s self of a divine vocation.”[3292] Now to know whether his call is from God, he should examine the marks of a divine vocation. He, says St. Luke, who wishes to build a tower, first computes the necessary expenses, in order to know if he has the means of completing the edifice.[3293]

II

MARKS OF A DIVINE VOCATION TO THE SACERDOTAL STATE

Let us now see what are the marks of a divine vocation to the sacerdotal state.

Nobility is not a mark of a divine vocation. To know, says St. Jerome, whether a person should become the guide of the people in what regards their eternal salvation, we must consider not nobility of blood, but sanctity of life.[3294] “When God wishes to raise any one to a dignity, he regulates his choice according to the sanctity of life, and not according to the titles of nobility.”[3295]

Nor is the will of parents a mark of a divine vocation. In inducing a child to take priesthood, they seek not his spiritual welfare, but their own interest, and the advancement of the family. “How many mothers,” says St. John Chrysostom, or the author of *The Imperfect Work*, have eyes only for the bodies of their children and disdain their souls! To see them happy here below is all that they desire; as for the punishments that perhaps their children are to endure in the next life, they do not even think of them.”[3296] Oh, how many priests shall we see condemned on the day of judgment for having taken holy orders to please their relatives!

Neither nobility of birth, nor the will of parents, is a mark of a vocation to the priesthood; nor is talent or fitness for the offices of a priest a sign of vocation; for along with talent, a holy life and a divine call are necessary. What, then, are the marks of a divine vocation to the ecclesiastical state?

1. PURITY OF INTENTION

The first is a good intention. It is necessary to enter the sanctuary by the door; but there is no other door than Jesus Christ: *I am the door of the* *sheep. . . . By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.*[3297] To enter, then, by the door, is to become a priest not to please relatives, nor to advance the family, nor for the sake of self-interest or self-esteem, but to serve God, to propagate his glory, and to save souls. “If any one,” says a wise theologian, the learned continuator of Tournely, “presents himself for Holy Orders without any vicious affection and with the sole desire to be employed in the service of God and in the salvation of his neighbor, he, we may believe, is called by God.”[3298] Another author asserts that he who is impelled by ambition, interest, or a motive of his own glory, is called not by God, but by the devil.[3299] “But,” adds St. Anselm, “he who enters the priesthood through so unworthy motives shall receive not a blessing, but a malediction, from God.”[3300]

2. SCIENCE AND TALENTS

The second mark is the talent and learning necessary for the fulfilment of the duties of a priest. Priests must be masters to teach the people the law of God. *For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth.*[3301] Sidonius Apollinarius used to say, “Ignorant physicians are the cause of many deaths.”[3302] An ignorant priest, particularly a confessor, who teaches false doctrines and gives bad counsels, will be the ruin of many souls; because, in consequence of being a priest, his errors are easily believed. Hence, Ivone Carnotensis has written: “No one should be admitted to Holy Orders unless he has given sufficient proofs of good conduct and learning.”[3303]

A priest must not only have a competent knowledge of all the rubrics necessary for the celebration of Mass, but must be also acquainted with the principal things which regard the sacrament of penance. It is true, every priest is not obliged to hear confessions, unless there is great necessity for his assistance in the district in which he lives; however, every priest is bound to be acquainted with what a priest must ordinarily know in order to be able to hear the confessions of dying persons; that is, he is bound to know when he has faculties to absolve, when and how he ought to give absolution to the sick, whether conditionally or absolutely; what obligation he ought to impose on them if they are under any censure. He should also know at least the general principles of moral theology.

3. POSITIVE GOODNESS OF CHARACTER

The third mark of an ecclesiastical vocation is positive virtue.

Hence, in the first place, the person who is to be ordained should be a man of innocent life, and should not be contaminated by sins. The Apostle requires that they who are to be ordained priests should be free from every crime.[3304] In ancient times, a person who had committed a single mortal sin could never be ordained, as we learn from the First Council of Nice.[3305] And St. Jerome says that it was not enough for a person to be free from sin at the time of his ordination, but that it was, moreover, necessary that he should not have fallen into mortal sin since the time of his baptism.[3306] It is true that this rigorous discipline has ceased in the Church, but it has been always at least required that he who had fallen into grievous sins should purify his conscience for a considerable time before his ordination. This we may infer from a letter to the Archbishop of Rheims, in which Alexander III. commanded that a deacon who had wounded another deacon, if he sincerely repented of his sin, might, after being absolved, and after performing the penance enjoined, be permitted again to exercise his order; and that if he afterwards led a perfect life, he might be promoted to priesthood.[3307] He, then, who finds himself bound by a habit of any vice cannot take any Holy Order without incurring the guilt of mortal sin. “I am horrified,” says St. Bernard,[3308] “when I think whence thou comest, whither thou goest, and what a short penance thou hast put between thy sins and thy ordination. However, it is indispensable that thou do not undertake to purify the conscience of others before thou purifiest thy own.” Of those daring sinners who, though full of bad habits, take priesthood, an ancient author, Gildas, says, “It is not to the priesthood that they should be admitted, but to the pillory.”[3309] They, then, says St. Isidore, who are still subject to the habit of any sin should not be promoted to Holy Orders.[3310]

But he who intends to ascend the altar must not only be free from sin, but must have also begun to walk in the path of perfection, and have acquired a habit of virtue. In our *Moral Theology,*[3311] we have shown in a distinct dissertation (and this is the common opinion) that if a person in the habit of any vice wish to be ordained, it is not enough for him to have the dispositions necessary for the sacrament of penance, but that he must also have the dispositions required for receiving the sacrament of Holy Orders;

otherwise he is unfit for both: and should he receive absolution with the intention of taking Orders without the necessary dispositions, he, and the confessor who absolves him, will be guilty of a grievous sin. For it is not enough for those who wish to take Holy Orders to have got out of the state of sin; they must also, according to the words of Alexander III.[3312]—cited in the preceding paragraph—have the true positive virtue necessary for the ecclesiastical state. From the words of the pontiff we learn that a person who has done penance may exercise an order already received, but he who has only done penance cannot take a higher order. The Angelic Doctor teaches the same doctrine: “Sanctity is required for the reception of Holy Orders, and we must place the sublime burden of the priesthood only upon walls already dried by sanctity; that is, freed from the malignant humor of sin.”[3313] This is conformable to what St. Denis wrote long before: “Let no one be so bold as to propose himself to others as their guide in the things of God, if he has not first, with all his power, transformed himself into God to the point of perfect resemblance to him.”[3314] For this St. Thomas adduces two reasons: the first is, that as he who takes orders is raised above seculars in dignity, so he should be superior to them in sanctity.[3315] The second reason is, that by his ordination a priest is appointed to exercise the most sublime ministry on the altar, for which greater sanctity is required than for the religious state.[3316]

Hence the Apostle forbade Timothy to ordain neophytes; that is, according to St. Thomas, neophytes in perfection as well as neophytes in age.[3317] Hence the Council of Trent, in reference to the words of Scripture, *And a spotless life in old age,*[3318] prescribes to the bishops to admit to ordination only those who show themselves worthy by a conduct full of wise maturity.[3319] And of this positive virtue, it is necessary, according to St. Thomas, to have not a doubtful but a certain knowledge.[3320] This, according to St. Gregory, is particularly necessary with regard to the virtue of chastity.[3321] With regard to chastity the Holy Pontiff required a proof of many years.[3322]

III

TO WHAT DANGERS ONE EXPOSES ONE’S SELF BY ENTERING HOLY ORDERS WITHOUT A VOCATION

From what has been said, it follows that he who takes Holy Orders without the marks of a vocation cannot be excused from the guilt of grievous sin. This is the doctrine of many theologians,—of Habert, of Natalis Alexander, and of the continuator of Tournely. And before them St. Augustine taught the same. Speaking of the chastisement inflicted on Core, Dathan, and Abiron, who, without being called, attempted to exercise the sacerdotal functions, the holy Doctor said: “God struck them that they might serve as an example, and thus to warn off him who would dare to assume a sacred charge. Indeed, this is the chastisement reserved for those who would thrust themselves into the office of bishop, priest, or deacon.”[3323] And the reason is, first, because he who thrusts himself into the sanctuary without a divine call cannot be excused from grievous presumption; secondly, because he will be deprived of the congruous and abundant helps without which, as Habert writes, he will be absolutely unable to comply with the obligations of his state,[3324] but will fulfil them only with very great difficulty He will be like a dislocated member, which can be used only with difficulty, and which causes deformity.[3325]

Hence Bishop Abelly writes: “He who of himself, without inquiring whether he has a vocation or not, thrusts himself into the priesthood will no doubt expose himself to the great danger of losing his soul; for he commits against the Holy Spirit that sin for which, as the Gospel says, there is hardly or very rarely any pardon.”[3326]

The Lord has declared that his wrath is provoked against those who wish to rule in his Church without being called by him. On this passage St. Gregory says, “It is by themselves and not by the will of the Supreme Head that they reign.”[3327] Divine vocation is entirely wanting to them, and they have followed only the ardor of vile cupidity, not certainly to accept, but to usurp this sublime dignity.[3328] How many intrigues, adulations, entreaties, and other means, do certain persons employ in order to procure ordination, not in obedience to the call of God, but through earthly motives? But woe to such men, says the Lord by the prophet Isaias: *Woe to you, apostate children, . . . that you would take counsel, and not of me*.[3329] On the day of judgment they shall claim a reward, but Jesus Christ shall cast them off. *Many will say to Me in that day, have we not prophesied in Thy name* (by preaching and teaching), *and cast out devils in Thy name* (by absolving penitent sinners), *and done many miracles in Thy name* (by correcting the wicked, by settling disputes, by converting sinners). *And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you; depart from me, you that work iniquity.*[3330] Priests who have not been called are indeed workmen and ministers of God, because they have received the sacerdotal character; but they are ministers of iniquity and rapine, because they have of their own will, and without vocation, intruded themselves into the sheep-fold. They have not, as St. Bernard says,[3331] received the keys, but have taken them by force. They toil, but God will not accept; he will, on the contrary, punish their works and labors, because they have not entered the sanctuary by the straight path. The labor of fools shall afflict them that know not how to go to the city.[3332] The Church, says St. Leo, receives only those whom the Lord chooses, and by his election makes fit to be his ministers.[3333] But, on the other hand, the Church rejects those whom, as St. Peter Damian has written, God has not called; for instead of promoting her welfare, they commit havoc among her members; and instead of edifying, they contaminate and destroy her children.[3334]

Whom He (the Lord) *shall choose, they shall approach to Him*.[3335] God will gladly admit into his presence all whom he has called to the priesthood, and will cast off the priest whom he has not chosen.[3336] St. Ephrem regards as lost the man who is so daring as to take the order of priesthood without a vocation. And Peter de Blois has written: “What ruin does not prepare for himself the bold man who of the sacrifice makes a sacrilege, and of life an instrument of death.”[3337] He who errs in his vocation exposes himself to greater danger than if he transgressed particular precepts; for if he violates a particular command, he may rise from his fault, and begin again to walk in the right path; but he who errs in his vocation mistakes the way itself. Hence the longer he travels in it, the more distant he is from his home. To him we may justly apply the words of St. Augustine: "You run well, but the wrong road."[3338]

It is necessary to be persuaded of the truth of what St. Gregory says, that our eternal salvation depends principally on embracing the state to which God has called us.[3339] The reason is evident; for it is God that destines, according to the order of his providence, his state of life for each individual, and, according to the state to which he calls him, prepares for him abundant graces and suitable helps. "In the distribution of his graces," says St. Cyprian, "the Holy Spirit takes into consideration his own plan and not our caprices."[3340] And according to the Apostle: *And whom He predestinated; them He also called. And whom He called, them He also justified.*[3341] Thus to vocation succeeds justification, and to justification, glory; that is, the attainment of eternal life. He, then, who does not obey the call of God, shall neither be justified nor glorified. Father Granada justly said that vocation is the main wheel of our entire life. As in a clock, if the main wheel be spoiled, the entire clock is injured, so, says St. Gregory Nazianzen, if a person err in his vocation, his whole life will be full of errors; for in the state to which God has not called him, he will be deprived of the helps by which he can with facility lead a good life.

Every one, says St. Paul, *hath his proper gift from God; one after this manner, and another after that.*[3342] The meaning of this passage, according to St. Thomas and other commentators, is, that the Lord gives to each one graces to fulfil with ease the obligations of the state to which he calls him. "God," says the Angelic Doctor, "gives to every man not only certain aptitudes, but also all that is necessary to exercise them."[3343] And in another place he writes: "God does not destine men to such or such a vocation without favoring them with gifts at the same time, and preparing them in such a way as to render them capable of fulfilling the duties of their vocation; for says St. Paul: *Our sufficiency is from God, who also hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament.*[3344] As each person, then, will be able to discharge with facility the office to which God elects him, so he will be unfit for the fulfilment of the office to which God does not call him. The foot which is given to enable us to walk cannot see; the eye, which is given to see is incapable of hearing; and how shall he who is not chosen by God to the priesthood be able to discharge its obligations?

It belongs to the Lord to choose the workmen who are to cultivate his vineyard: *I have chosen you . . . and have appointed you that you should go, and should bring forth fruit.*[3345] Hence the Redeemer did not say, Beg of men to go and gather the harvest; but he tells us to ask the master of the crop to send workmen to collect it.[3346] Hence he also said, *As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you.*[3347] When God calls, he himself, says St. Leo, gives the necessary helps.[3348] This is what Jesus Christ has said: *I am the door. By Me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and he shall go in, and go out, and shall find pastures.*[3349] "He shall go in:"[3350] what the priest called by God undertakes, he shall easily accomplish without sin, and with merit. *And shall go out:*[3351] he shall be in the midst of perils and occasions of sin, but with the divine aid he shall readily escape injury. *And shall find pastures:*[3352] finally, in consequence of being in the state in which God has placed him, he will be assisted in all the duties of his ministry by special graces, which will make him advance in perfection. Hence he will be able to say with confidence, *The Lord ruleth me: and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture.*[3353]

But priests whom God has not sent to work in his Church, he shall abandon to eternal ignominy and destruction. *I did not send prophets*, says the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah, *yet they ran.* He afterwards adds: *Therefore I will take you away, carrying you, and will forsake you . . . and I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame which shall never be forgotten.*[3354]

In order to be raised to the sublimity of the priesthood, it is necessary, as St. Thomas says, for a man "to be exalted and elevated by divine power above the natural order of things,"[3355] because he is appointed the sanctifier of the people, and the vicar of Jesus Christ. But in him who raises himself to so great a dignity shall be verified the words of the Wise Man: *There is that hath appeared a fool after he was lifted up on high.*[3356] Had he remained in the world, he should perhaps have been a virtuous layman; but having become a priest without a vocation, he will be a bad priest, and instead of promoting the interest of religion, he will do great injury to the Church. Of such priests the Roman Catechism says: "Such ministers are for the Church of God the gravest embarrassment and the most terrible scourge.”[3357] And what good can be expected from the priest who has entered the sanctuary without a vocation? “It is impossible.” says St. Leo, “that a work so badly begun should finish well.”[3358] St. Laurence Justinian has written: “What fruit, I ask, can come from a corrupted root?”[3359] Our Saviour has said, *Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.*[3360] Hence Peter de Blois writes that when God permits a person to be ordained without a vocation, the permission is not a grace but a chastisement. For a tree which has not taken deep root, when exposed to the tempest, shall soon fall and be cast into the fire.[3361] And St. Bernard says that he who has not lawfully entered the sanctuary shall continue to be unfaithful; and instead of procuring the salvation of souls, he shall be the cause of their death and perdition.[3362] This is conformable to the doctrine of Jesus Christ: *He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, . . . the same is a thief and a robber.*[3363]

Some may say, if they only were admitted to orders who have the marks of vocation which have been laid down as indispensable, there should be but few priests in the Church, and the people should be left without the necessary helps. But to this the Fourth Council of Lateran has answered: “It is much better to confer the priesthood on a small number of virtuous clerics than to have a large number of bad priests.”[3364] And St. Thomas says that God never abandons his Church so as to leave her in want of fit ministers to provide for the necessity of the people.[3365] St. Leo justly says that to provide for the wants of the people by bad priests would be not to save but to destroy them.[3366]

APPENDIX

MEANS TO BE ADOPTED IN ORDER TO KNOW ONE’S VOCATION

We collect and briefly indicate in this Appendix the principal means by which one may easily arrive at the knowledge of God’s designs relatively to the state of life that one should embrace.

I

It is, above all, of the highest importance that the heart be free from sin; the Lord loves to communicate himself to those who have a pure heart: *Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God.*[3367]

II

Let your conduct be well regulated. For this purpose, see the Rule of Life which St. Alphonsus offers you,[3368] and try to follow it faithfully.

III

Look upon the affair of choosing a state of life, in accordance with the will of God, as a matter of your greatest concern, since on the choice that you make depends your eternal salvation.

IV

Have a good intention and a sincere desire to know and to do the will of God, whatever it may be. It is, therefore, necessary that you hold yourself entirely detached and in a pious indifference in regard to all the states of life, in order not to put any obstacle in the way of the movements of grace, as you have seen above, page 299, n.[3369], 2, and 3.

V

Carefully avoid dissipation; at least, retire into the solitude of your heart, after the example of St. Catharine of Sienna, always remembering that God is near you, and that he wishes to speak to your heart. You will understand his voice the more quickly and the more distinctly, the less you communicate with the world.

VI

St. Alphonsus explains to you at length, in the letter quoted above (see page 285), the utility of a retreat. If it is not in your power to make it, either at home or in some religious house, where you may find all that you require for this purpose, try to supply its place by leading a retired life, and by frequently meditating on the Last Things. Nothing is more apt to enlighten you and to keep you in a good disposition.

VII

In your doubts consult a wise director, who, as the representative of God, may instruct you and guide you in a safe manner.

VIII

Let the grace of knowing your vocation and of faithfully corresponding to it be the only, or at least the principal, object that you have in view in all your exercises of piety,—in your meditations, Communions, prayer, mortifications, and all your good works.

IX

Ordinarily, the Lord does not delay to enlighten those who have recourse to him, especially in behalf of a cause so holy and so agreeable to his heart. If, however, he would leave you in uncertainty for a time more or less long, to try your fidelity, to purify you more, or to strengthen you and raise you to a very high perfection, take care not to relax in anything; humbly resign yourself, and wait with confidence and in peace for the break of day; for your Heavenly Father will surely hear you and your perseverance will not fail to be crowned with success.

X

While waiting for the Lord to enlighten you, do not be less faithful in fulfilling all your duties in the condition of life in which his divine Providence has placed you. It would be a great fault to neglect your actual duties in the expectation of a change; God would withdraw his hand, instead of stretching it forth to aid you.

XI

In general, the following are the principal signs of a true vocation:

1. A GOOD INTENTION; that is, the intention to embrace such a state only to please God and to arrive more surely at the haven of salvation.

2. THE INCLINATION and THE APTITUDE to exercise the duties proper to this state.

3. THE KNOWLEDGE of the duties that this state imposes, and the FIRM WILL to fulfil them till the end.

4. THAT THERE IS NO GRAVE IMPEDIMENT, such as the great poverty in which one might leave one’s father or one’s mother.

5. THE FAVORABLE ADVICE of a wise director. ED.

HYMN

SIGHS OF LOVE TO JESUS CHRIST

THE SOUL THAT GIVES ITSELF ALL TO JESUS.

World, thou art no more for me;
World, I am no more for thee;—
All affections, dear or sweet,
All are laid at Jesus' feet.
He has so enamoured me
Of his heavenly charity,
That no earthly goods inspire
Aught of love or vain desire.
Jesus, Love, be Thou my own;
Thee I long for,—Thee alone;
All myself I give to Thee,
Do whate'er Thou wilt with me.
Life without Thy love would be
Death, O Sovereign Good! to me.
Bound and held by Thy dear chains,
Captive now my heart remains.
O my Life! my soul from Thee
Can henceforth no longer flee;
By Thy loving arrows slain,
Now Thy prey it must remain.
If ungrateful worms like me
Merit not the love of Thee,
Thou, sweet Lord, hast well deserved
To be ever loved and served.
Then, O God, my heart inflame;

Give that love which Thou dost claim;
Payment I will ask for none,
Love demands but love alone.
God of Beauty, Lord of Light!
Thy good will is my delight;
Now henceforth Thy will divine
Ever shall in all be mine.
Come, O Jesus, I implore,
Pierce Thy heart, ’tis mine no more;
Kindle in my breast Thy fire,
That of love I may expire.
Ah! my Spouse, I love but Thee;
Thou my Love shalt ever be.
Thee I love; I love and sigh
For Thy love one day to die.

THE INCARNATION BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS CHRIST

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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The Centenary Edition

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

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Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

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Volume IV

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OR,

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APPROBATION

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Nicholas Mauron, Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled

“The Mysteries of the Faith—The Incarnation,” which is Vol. IV. the new and complete edition in English of the works of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, called “The Centenary Edition.”

ELIAS FRED. SCHAUER,

Sup. Prov. Baltimorensis.

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St. Alphonsus wrote the following little work in 1750; but his infirmities and his many duties did not permit him to publish it till the year 1758.

By a *Novena* we mean the nine days that precede a feast; the first day of the novena of Christmas is, therefore, the 16th of December.

These discourses may serve either for meditation or for spiritual reading. After the discourses will be found novenas of meditations and of prayers. There is also added a list of the indulgences attached to this exercise.—ED.

CONTENTS

INDEX

THE INCARNATION BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS CHRIST

CONTENTS

The Incarnation Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ

The Mysteries of the Faith
The Incarnation

Discourses for the Novena of Christmas

Discourse I
THE ETERNAL WORD IS MADE MAN

I

II

Discourse II
THE ETERNAL WORD BEING GREAT BECOMES LITTLE

I

II

Discourse III
THE ETERNAL WORD FROM BEING LORD BECAME A SERVANT

I

II

Discourse IV
THE ETERNAL WORD FROM BEING INNOCENT BECOMES AS IT WERE GUILTY

I

II

Discourse V
THE ETERNAL WORD FROM BEING STRONG BECAME WEAK

I

- II

Discourse VI
THE ETERNAL WORD FROM BEING HIS OWN HAS MADE HIMSELF OURS

- I
- II

Discourse VII
THE ETERNAL WORD FROM BEING HAPPY MADE HIMSELF AFFLICTED

- I
- II

Discourse VIII
THE EXTERNAL WORD FROM BEING RICH MADE HIMSELF POOR

- I
- II

Discourse IX
THE ETERNAL WORD FROM BEING HIGH MADE HIMSELF LOW

- I
- II

Discourse FOR CHRISTMAS NIGHT—THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

    - I
    - II
    - III

Discourse ON THE NAME OF JESUS

- I
- II
- III

EXAMPLES OF THE INFANT JESUS

- EXAMPLE I
- EXAMPLE II

- EXAMPLE III
- EXAMPLE IV
- EXAMPLE V
- EXAMPLE VI
- EXAMPLE VII
- EXAMPLE VIII
- EXAMPLE IX
- EXAMPLE X
- EXAMPLE XI
- EXAMPLE XII

Meditations for Every Day of Advent

MEDITATION I
FIRST SUNDAY
GOODNESS OF GOD IN THE WORK OF THE REDEMPTION

Meditation II
FIRST MONDAY
GRANDEUR OF THE MYSTERY OF INCARNATION

Meditation III
FIRST TUESDAY
THE LOVE OF GOD FOR MEN

Meditation IV
FIRST WEDNESDAY
THE WORD WAS MADE MAN IN THE FULNESS OF TIME

Meditation V
FIRST THURSDAY
THE ABASEMENT OF JESUS

Meditation VI
FIRST FRIDAY
JESUS ENLIGHTENS THE WORLD AND GLORIFIES GOD

Meditation VII
FIRST SATURDAY
THE SON OF GOD WAS LADEN WITH ALL OUR INIQUITIES

Meditation VIII
SECOND SUNDAY
GOD SENDS HIS SON TO DIE IN ORDER TO RESTORE US TO LIFE

Meditation IX
SECOND MONDAY
THE LOVE THAT THE SON OF GOD HAS SHOWN US IN THE REDEMPTION

Meditation X
SECOND TUESDAY
JESUS, THE MAN OF SORROWS, FROM THE WOMB OF HIS MOTHER

Meditation XI
SECOND WEDNESDAY
JESUS CHARGED WITH THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD

Meditation XII
SECOND THURSDAY
JESUS SUFFERS DURING HIS WHOLE LIFE

Meditation XIII
SECOND FRIDAY
JESUS WISHED TO SUFFER SO MUCH IN ORDER TO GAIN OUR HEARTS

Meditation XIV
SECOND SATURDAY
THE GREATEST SORROW OF JESUS

Meditation XV
SECOND SUNDAY
THE POVERTY OF THE INFANT JESUS

Meditation XVI
THIRD MONDAY
JESUS IS THE FOUNTAIN OF GRACE

Meditation XVII
THIRD TUESDAY
JESUS THE CHARITABLE PHYSICIAN OF OUR SOULS

Meditation XVIII
THIRD WEDNESDAY
WE SHOULD HOPE ALL THINGS FROM THE MERITS OF JESUS CHRIST

Meditations for the Novena for Christmas

Meditation I
DECEMBER 16
GOD HAS GIVEN US HIS ONLY SON TO SAVE US

Meditation II
DECEMBER 17
BITTERNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS IN THE WOMB OF HIS MOTHER

Meditation III
DECEMBER 18
JESUS MADE HIMSELF A CHILD TO GAIN OUR CONFIDENCE AND OUR LOVE

Meditation IV
DECEMBER 19
THE PASSION OF JESUS LASTED DURING HIS WHOLE LIFE

Meditation V
DECEMBER 20
JESUS OFFERED HIMSELF FOR OUR SALVATION FROM THE BEGINNING

Meditation VI
DECEMBER 21
JESUS A PRISONER IN THE WOMB OF MARY

Meditation VII
DECEMBER 22
THE SORROW THAT THE INGRATITUDE OF MEN HAS CAUSED JESUS

Meditation VIII
DECEMBER 23
THE LOVE OF GOD MANIFESTED TO MEN BY THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Meditation IX
DECEMBER 24
SAINT JOSEPH GOES TO BETHLEHEM WITH HIS HOLY SPOUSE

Meditations for the Octave of Christmas, and for the following Days until the Epiphany

Meditation I
DECEMBER 25
THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Meditation II
DECEMBER 26
JESUS IS BORN AN INFANT

Meditation III
DECEMBER 27
JESUS IN SWADDLING-CLOTHES

Meditation IV
DECEMBER 28
JESUS TAKING MILK

Meditation V
DECEMBER 29
JESUS LYING ON THE STRAW

Meditation VI
DECEMBER 30
JESUS SLEEPING

Meditation VII
DECEMBER 31
JESUS WEEPING

Meditation VIII
JANUARY 1
THE NAME OF JESUS

Meditation IX
JANUARY 2
THE SOLITUDE OF JESUS IN THE STABLE

Meditation X
JANUARY 3
THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE INFANT JESUS IN THE STABLE OF BETHLEHEM

Meditation XI
JANUARY 4
THE POVERTY OF THE INFANT JESUS

Meditation XII
JANUARY 5
THE ABASEMENT OF JESUS

Meditations for the Octave of the Epiphany

Meditation I
JANUARY 6
THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

Meditation II
JANUARY 7
THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Meditation III
JANUARY 8
THE FLIGHT OF JESUS INTO EGYPT

Meditation IV
JANUARY 9
THE DWELLING OF JESUS IN EGYPT

Meditation V
JANUARY 10
THE RETURN OF JESUS FROM EGYPT

Meditation VI
JANUARY 11
THE DWELLING OF JESUS AT NAZARETH

Meditation VII
JANUARY 12
THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

Meditation VIII
JANUARY 13
THE LOSS OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Other Mediations for the First Eight Days of Advent

Meditation I
THE LOVE THAT GOD HAS MANIFESTED TO US IN THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD

Meditation II
GOODNESS OF GOD THE FATHER AND OF GOD THE SON IN THE WORK OF THE REDEMPTION

Meditation III
MOTIVES OF CONFIDENCE THAT ARE GIVEN TO US BY THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD

Meditation IV
HAPPINESS OF HAVING BEEN BORN AFTER THE REDEMPTION AND IN THE TRUE CHURCH

Meditation V
JESUS HAS DONE AND SUFFERED EVERYTHING TO SAVE US

Meditation VI
THE SIGHT OF OUR SINS AFFLICTED JESUS FROM THE FIRST MOMENT OF HIS LIFE

Meditation VII
BAPTISMO HABEO BAPTIZARI; ET QUOMODO COARCTOR, USQUEDUM PERFICIATUR?

Meditation VIII
HAURIETIS AQUAS IN GAUDIO DE FONTIBUS SALVATORIS

Other Meditations for the Novena of Christmas

Meditation I
DECEMBER 16
THE LOVE THAT GOD HAS SHOWN TO US IN BECOMING MAN

Meditation II
DECEMBER 17
THE LOVE OF GOD IN BEING BORN AN INFANT

Meditation III
DECEMBER 18
THE LIFE OF POVERTY WHICH JESUS LED EVEN FROM HIS BIRTH

Meditation IV
DECEMBER 19
THE LIFE OF HUMILITY WHICH JESUS LED EVEN FROM HIS INFANCY

Meditation V
DECEMBER 20
THE LIFE OF SORROW WHICH JESUS LED EVEN FROM HIS BIRTH

Meditation VI
DECEMBER 21
THE MERCY OF GOD IN COMING DOWN FROM HEAVEN TO SAVE US BY HIS DEATH

Meditation VII
DECEMBER 22
THE JOURNEY OF INFANT JESUS TO EGYPT

Meditation VIII
DECEMBER 23
THE SOJOURN OF THE INFANT JESUS IN EGYPT AND IN NAZARETH

Meditation IX
DECEMBER 24
THE BIRTH OF THE INFANT JESUS IN THE CAVE OF BETHLEHEM

ANOTHER MEDITATION FOR THE FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION

ANOTHER MEDITATION FOR THE FEAST AT THE EPIPHANY

ANOTHER MEDITATION FOR THE FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS

HYMNS

  I
  ODE ON THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

  II
  THE MADONNA’S LULLABY

III
ST. JOSEPH ADDRESSING THE DIVINE CHILD JESUS

IV
TO THE INFANT JESUS IN THE CRIB

V
TO THE INFANT JESUS

THE WAY OF BETHLEHEM
STATIONSS OF THE INFANT JESUS

STATION I
THE SON OF GOD BECOMES AN INFANT

STATION II
JESUS IS BORN AN INFANT

STATION III
JESUS IS SUCKLED

STATION IV
JESUS IS WRAPPED IN SWADDLING-CLOTHES

STATION V
JESUS IS CIRCUMCISED

STATION VI
JESUS IS ADORED BY THE MAGI

STATION VII
JESUS IS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE

STATION VIII
JESUS FLEES INTO EGYPT

STATION IX
JESUS WITH HIS HANDS FREED FROM THE SWADDLING-CLOTHES

STATION X
JESUS BEGINS TO WALK

STATION XI
JESUS SLEEPS

STATION XII
JESUS IN FROM OF A FISHER

INDULGENCES ATTACHED TO THE EXERCISES OF PIETY IN HONOR OF THE INFANT JESUS

I
EVERY YEAR
NOVENA PREPARATORY TO CHRISTMAS-DAY

II
EVERY MONTH

III
EVERY DAY

IV
AT ALL TIMES

Darts of fire or Proofs that Jesus Christ has given us of His Love in the Work of Redemption

DARTS OF FIRE

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

IX

X

XI

XII

XIII

XIV

XV

XVI

XVII

- XVIII
- XIX
- XX
- XXI
- XXII
- XXIII
- XXIV
- XXV
- XXVI
- XXVII
- XXVIII
- XXIX
- XXX
- XXXI
- XXXII
- XXXIII
- XXXIV
- XXXV
- XXXVI
- XXXVII
- XXXVIII

HYMN
THE SOUL SIGHING FOR JESUS

PIOUS SENTIMENTS OF A SOUL THAT DESIRES TO BELONG ENTIRELY TO JESUS CHRIST

- I
  SENTIMENTS OF A LIVELY FAITH

- II
  SENTIMENTS OF CONFIDENCE
- III
  SENTIMENTS OF PENITENCE
- IV
  SENTIMENTS OF PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT
- V
  SENTIMENTS OF LOVE
- VI
  SENTIMENTS OF CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD
- VII
  DIVERSE AFFECTIONS

SIGHS OF LOVE TOWARDS GOD

- I
- II
- III
- IV
- V
- VI
- VII
- VIII
- IX
- X
- XI
- XII
- XIII
- XIV
- XV
- XVI

- XVII
- XVIII
- XIX
- XX
- XXI

ASPIRATIONS OF LOVE TO JESUS CHRIST

- I
- II
- III
- IV
- V
- VI
- VII
- VIII
- IX
- X
- XI
- XII
- XIII

MAXIMS FOR THE DIRECTION OF A SOUL THAT DESIRES TO ATTAIN PERFECTION IN THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

ACTS THAT THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD PERFORM EVERY MAN

MANNER OF MAKING MENTAL PRAYER

- I
- II
- III

SHORT EJACULATORY PRAYERS

HYMN
ASPIRATIONS TO JESUS

NOVENA TO THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS

  FIRST DAY
  THE GIVING OF THE GLORIOUS NAME OF JESUS

  OREMUS.

  LET US PRAY.

  SECOND DAY
  SWEETNESS OF THE NAME OF JESUS

  THIRD DAY
  SALUTARY OPERATION OF THE NAME OF JESUS

  FOURTH DAY
  EFFICACY OF THE NAME OF JESUS

  FIFTH DAY
  CONSOLATION AFFORDED BY THE NAME OF JESUS

  SIXTH DAY
  PEACE THAT IS GIVEN US BY THE NAME OF JESUS

  SEVENTH DAY
  STRENGTH OF THE NAME OF JESUS

  EIGHTH DAY
  POWER OF THE NAME OF JESUS

  NINTH DAY
  TRIUMPHS OF THE NAME OF JESUS

HYMN
TO THE INFANT JESUS

The Incarnation Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ

The Mysteries of the Faith

The Incarnation

Discourses for the Novena of Christmas

Discourse I

THE ETERNAL WORD IS MADE MAN

Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?

“I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?”—*Luke,* 12:49.

THE Jews solemnized a day called by them *dies ignis,*[3370] the day of fire, in memory of the fire with which Nehemias consumed the sacrifice, upon his return with his countrymen from the captivity of Babylon. Even so, and indeed with more reason, should Christmas-day be called the day of fire, on which a God came as a little child to cast the fire of love into the hearts of men.

I came to cast fire on the earth: so spoke Jesus Christ; and truly so it was. Before the coming of the Messias, who loved God upon earth? Hardly was he known in a nook of the world, that is, in Judea; and even there how very few loved him when he came! As to the rest of the world, some worshipped the sun, some the brutes, some the very stones, and others again even viler creatures still. But after the coming of Jesus Christ, the name of God became everywhere known, and was loved by many. After the Redeemer was born, God was more loved by men in a few years than he had before been in the lapse of four thousand years, since the creation of man.

It is a custom with many Christians to anticipate the arrival of Christmas a considerable time beforehand by fitting up in their homes a crib to represent the birth of Jesus Christ; but few there are who think of preparing their hearts, in order that the Infant Jesus may be born in them, and there find his repose. Among these few, however, we would be reckoned, in order that we too may be made worthy to burn with that happy flame which gives contentment to souls on this earth, and bliss in heaven.

Let us consider on this first day how the Eternal Word had no other end in becoming man than to inflame us with his divine love. Let us ask light of Jesus Christ and of his most holy Mother, and so let us begin.

I

Adam, our first parent, sins; ungrateful for the great benefits conferred on him, he rebels against God, by a violation of the precept given him not to eat of the forbidden fruit. On this account God is obliged to drive him out of the earthly paradise in this world, and in the world to come to deprive not only Adam, but all the descendants of this rebellious creature, of the heavenly and everlasting paradise which he had prepared for them after this mortal life.

Behold, then, all mankind together condemned to a life of pain and misery, and forever shut out from heaven. But hearken to God, who, as Isaias tells us in his fifty-second chapter, would seem, after our manner of understanding, to give vent to his affliction in lamentations and wailings: *And now what have I here,* saith the Lord, *for My people is taken away gratis.*[3371] "And now," says God, "what delight have I left in heaven, now that I have lost men, who were my delight?" *My delights were to be with the children of men.*[3372] But how is this, O Lord? Thou hast in heaven so many seraphim, so many angles; and canst Thou thus take to heart having lost men? Indeed, what need hast Thou of angles or of men to fill up the sum of Thy happiness? Thou hast always been, and Thou art in Thyself, most happy; what can ever be wanting to Thy bliss, which is infinite? "That is all true," says God; "but" (and these are the words of Cardinal Hugo on the above text of Isaias)—"but, losing man, I deem that I have nothing;[3373] I consider that I have lost all, since my delight was to be with men; and now these men I have lost, and, poor hapless creatures, they are doomed to live forever far away from me."

But how can the Lord call men his delight? Yes, indeed, writes St. Thomas, God loves man just as if man were his god, and as if without man he could not be happy; "as if man were the god of God himself, and without him he could not be happy."[3374] St. Gregory of Nazianzen adds, moreover, that God, for the love he bears to men, seems beside himself: "we are bold to say it, God is out of himself by reason of his immense love;"[3375] so runs the proverb, "Love puts the lover beside himself."

"But no," then said the Lord, "I will not lose man; straightway let there in behalf of man, and so rescue him from the hands of his enemies and from the eternal death due to him."

And here St. Bernard, in his contemplations on this subject, imagines a struggle to ensue between the justice and the mercy of God. Justice says: "I no longer exist if Adam be not punished; I perish if Adam die not."[3376] Mercy, on the other hand, says: "I am lost if man be not pardoned; I perish if he does not obtain forgiveness."[3377] In this contest the Lord decides, that in order to deliver man, who was guilty of death, some innocent one must die: "Let one die who is no debtor to death."[3378]

On earth, there was not one innocent. "Since, therefore," says the Eternal Father, "amongst men there is none who can satisfy My justice, let him come forward who will go to redeem man." The angles, the cherubim, the seraphim, all are silent, not one replies; one voice alone is heard, that of the Eternal Word, who says, *Lo, here am I; send Me*.[3379] "Father," says the only-begotten Son, "Thy majesty, being infinite, and having been injured by man, cannot be fittingly satisfied by an angel, who is purely a creature; and though Thou mightest accept of the satisfaction of an angel, reflect that, in spite of so great benefits bestowed on man, in spite of so many promises and threats, we have not yet been able to gain his love, because he is not yet aware of the love we bear him. If we would oblige him without fail to love us, what better occasion can we find than that, in order to redeem him, I, Thy Son, should go upon earth, should there assume human flesh, and pay by my death the penalty due by him. In this manner Thy justice is fully satisfied, and at the same time man is thoroughly convinced of our love!" "But think," answered the Heavenly Father—"think, O my Son, that in taking upon Thyself the burden of man's satisfaction, Thou wilt have to lead a life full of sufferings!" "No matter," replied the Son: "*Lo, here am I, send Me.*" "Think that Thou wilt have to be born in a cave, the shelter of the beasts of the field; thence Thou must flee into Egypt whilst still an infant, to escape the hands of those very men who, even from Thy tenderest infancy, will seek to take away Thy life." "It matters not: *Lo, here am I, send Me.*" "Think that, on Thy return to Palestine, Thou shalt there lead a life most arduous, most despicable, passing Thy days as a simple boy in a carpenter's shop." "It matters not: *Lo, here am I, send Me.*" "Think that when Thou goest forth to preach and to manifest Thyself, Thou wilt have indeed a few, but very few, to follow Thee; the greater part will despise Thee and call Thee impostor, magician, fool, Samaritan; and, finally, they will persecute

Thee to such a pass that they will make Thee die shamefully on a gibbet by dint of torments.” “No matter: *Lo, here am I, send Me.*”

The decree then being passed that the Divine Son should be made man, and so become the Redeemer of men, the Archangel Gabriel speeds on his way to Mary. Mary accepts him for her Son: *And the word was made flesh.*[3380] And thus behold Jesus in the womb of Mary; having now made his entry into the world in all humility and obedience, he says: “Since, O my Father, men cannot make atonement to Thy offended justice by their works and sacrifices, behold me, Thy Son, now clothed in mortal flesh, behold me ready to give Thee in their stead satisfaction with my sufferings and with my death!” *Wherefore when He cometh into the world He saith: Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not; but a body Thou hast fitted to me. . . . Then said I, Behold, I come. . . . It is written of Me that I should do Thy will.*[3381]

So, then, for us miserable worms, and to captivate our love, has a God deigned to become man? Yes, it is a matter of faith, as the Holy Church teaches us: *For us men, and for our salvation, He came down from heaven . . . and was made man.*[3382] Yes, indeed, so much has God done in order to be loved by us.

Alexander the Great, after he had conquered Darius and subdued Persia, wished to gain the affections of that people, and so went about dressed in the Persian costume. In like manner would our God appear to act; in order to draw towards him the affections of men, he clothed himself completely after the human fashion, and appeared made man: *in shape found as a man.*[3383] And by this means he wished to make known the depth of the love which he bore to man: *The grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men.*[3384]

Man does not love me, would God seem to say, because he does not see me. I wish to make myself seen by him and to converse with him, and so make myself loved: *He was seen upon earth, and conversed with men.*[3385]

The divine love for man was extreme, and so it had been from all eternity: *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee.*[3386] But heretofore it had not appeared how great and inconceivable it was. Then it truly appeared, when the Son of God showed himself a little one in a stable on a bundle of straw: *The goodness* *and kindness of God our Saviour appeared.*[3387] The Greek text reads: *The singular love of God towards men appeared.* St. Bernard says that from the beginning the world had seen the power of God in the creation, and his wisdom in the government of the world; but only afterwards, in the Incarnation of the Word, was seen how great was his mercy.[3388] Before God was seen made man upon earth, men could not conceive an idea of the divine goodness; therefore did he take mortal flesh, that, appearing as man, he might make plain to men the greatness of his benignity.[3389]

And in what manner could the Lord better display to thankless man his goodness and his love? Man, by despising God, says St. Fulgentius, put himself aloof from God forever; but as man was unable to return to God, God came in search of him on earth.[3390] And St. Augustine had already said as much: "Because we could not go to the Mediator, he condescended to come to us."[3391]

I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love.[3392] Men allow themselves to be drawn by love; the tokens of affection shown to them are a sort of chain which binds them, and in a manner forces them to love those who love them. For this end the Eternal Word chose to become man, to draw to himself by such a pledge of affection (a stronger than which could not possibly be found) the love of men: "God was made man, that God might be more familiarly loved by man."[3393] It seems that our Redeemer wished to signify this very thing to a devout Franciscan called Father Francis of St. James, as is related in the Franciscan Diary for the 15th of December. Jesus frequently appeared to him as a lovely infant: but the holy friar longing in his fervor to hold him in his arms, the sweet child always fled away; wherefore the servant of God lovingly complained of these departures. One day the divine Child again appeared to him; but how? He came with golden chains in his hands, to give him to understand that now he came to make him his prisoner, and to be himself imprisoned by him, nevermore to be separated. Francis, emboldened at this, fastened the chains to the foot of the Infant, and bound him round his heart; and, in good truth, from that time forward it seemed to him as if he saw the beloved Child in the prison of his heart made a perpetual prisoner. That which Jesus did with all men when he was made man; he wished with such a prodigy of love to be, as it were, enchained by us, and at the same time to enchain our hearts by obliging them to love him, according to the prophecy of Osee: *I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love.*[3394]

In divers ways, says St. Leo, had God already benefited man; but in no way has he more clearly exhibited the excess of his bounty than in sending him a Redeemer to teach him the way of salvation, and to procure for him the life of grace. “The goodness of God has imparted gifts to the human race in various ways; but it surpassed the ordinary bounds of its abundant kindness when, in Christ, mercy itself came down to those who were in sin, truth to those wandering out of the way, and life to those who were dead.”[3395]

St. Thomas asks why the Incarnation of the Word is called the work of the Holy Ghost: *And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost.*[3396] It is certain that all God’s works, styled by theologians *opera ad extra,* or external works, are the works of all the three divine Persons. And why, therefore, should the Incarnation be attributed solely to the Person of the Holy Ghost? The chief reason which the Angelic Doctor assigns for it is because all the works of divine love are attributed to the Holy Ghost, who is the substantial love of the Father and of the Son; and the work of the Incarnation was purely the effect of the surpassing love which God bears to man: “But this proceeded from the very great love of God, that the Son of God should assume flesh to himself in the womb of the Virgin.”[3397] And this the prophet would signify when he says, *God will come from the south;*[3398] that is, observes the Abbot Rupert, “From the great charity of God, he has shone upon us.”[3399] For this purpose, again writes St. Augustine, the Eternal Word came upon earth, to make known to man how dearly God loved him.[3400] And St. Laurence Justinian: “In no instance has he so clearly manifested his amiable charity to men as when God was made man.”[3401]

But what still more evinces the depth of the divine love towards the human race is, that the Son of God should come in search of him, whilst man was fleeing away from him. This the Apostle declares in these words, *Nowhere doth He take hold of the angles; but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold.*[3402] On which St. John Chrysostom thus comments: “He says not, he received, but he seized hold of; from the figure of those who are in pursuit of fugitives, that they may effect their capture.”[3403] Thus God came from heaven to arrest, as it were, ungrateful man in his flight from him. It is as if he had said, “O man! behold, it is nothing but the love of thee that has brought me on earth to seek after thee. Why wilt thou flee from me? Stay with me, love me; do not avoid me, for I greatly love thee.”

God came, then, to seek lost man; and that man might the more easily comprehend the love of this his God for him, and might surrender his love in return to one who so deeply loved him, he willed, the first time of his appearance under a visible form, to show himself as a tender infant, laid upon straw. “O blessed straw, fairer than roses or lilies,” exclaims St. Peter Chrysologus, “what favored land produced you? Oh, what an enviable lot is yours, to serve as a bed for the King of Heaven! But, alas!” continues the saint, “alas! you are but cold for Jesus; for you know not how to warm him in that damp cavern, where he is now shivering with cold; but you are fire and flames for us, since you supply us with a flame of love which rivers of water shall never quench.”[3404]

It was not enough, says St. Augustine, for the divine love to have made us to his own image in creating the first man Adam; but he must also himself be made to our image in redeeming us.[3405] Adam partook of the forbidden fruit, beguiled by the serpent, which suggested to Eve that if she ate of that fruit she should become like to God, acquiring the knowledge of good and evil; and therefore the Lord then said, *Behold, Adam is become one of us.*[3406] God said this ironically, and to upbraid Adam for his rash presumption; but after the Incarnation of the Word we can truly say, “Behold, God is become like one of us.”[3407]

“Look, then, O man,” exclaims St. Augustine, “thy God is made thy brother;”[3408] thy God is made like thee, a son of Adam, as thou art: he has put on thy selfsame flesh, has made himself passible, liable to suffer and to die as thou art. He could have assumed the nature of an angel; but no, he would take on himself thy very flesh, that thus he might give satisfaction to God with the very same flesh (though sinless) of Adam the sinner. And he even gloried in this, oftentimes styling himself the Son of man; hence we have every right to call him our brother.

It was an immeasurably greater humiliation for God to become man than if all the princes of the earth, than if all the angles and saints of heaven, with the divine Mother herself, had been turned into a blade of grass, or into a handful of clay; yes, for grass, clay, princes, angles, saints, are all creatures; but between the creature and God there is an infinite difference. Ah, exclaims St. Bernard, the more a God has humbled himself for us in becoming man, so much the more has he made his goodness known to us: “The smaller he has become by humility, the greater he has made himself in bounty.”[3409] But the love which Jesus Christ bears to us, cries out the Apostle, irresistibly urges and impels us to love him: *The charity of Christ presseth us.*[3410]

O God! did not faith assure us of it, who could ever believe that a God, for love for such a worm as man is, should himself become a worm like him? A devout author says, Suppose, by chance, that, passing on your way, you should have crushed to death a worm in your path; and then some one, observing your compassion for the poor reptile, should say to you, Well, now, if you would restore that dead worm to life, you must first yourself become a worm like it, and then must shed all your blood, and make a bath of it in which to wash the worm, and so it shall revive; what would you reply? Certainly you would say, And what matters it to me whether the worm be alive or dead, if I should have to purchase its life by my own death? And much more would you say so if it was not an inoffensive worm, but an ungrateful asp, which, in return for all your benefits, had made an attempt upon your life. But even should your love for that reptile reach so far as to induce you to suffer death in order to restore it to life, what would men say then? And what would not that serpent do for you, whose death had saved it, supposing it were capable of reason? But this much has Jesus Christ done for you, most vile worm; and you, with the blackest ingratitude, have tried oftentimes to take away his life; and your sins would have done so, were Jesus liable to die any more. How much viler are you in the sight of God than is a worm in your own sight! What difference would it make to God had you remained dead and forever reprobate in your sins, as you well deserved? Nevertheless, this God had such a love for you that, to release you from eternal death, he first became a worm like you; and then, to save you, would lavish upon you his heart’s blood, even to the last drop, and endure the death which you had justly deserved.

Yes, all this is of faith: *And the Word was made flesh.*[3411] *He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.*[3412] The Holy Church declares herself to be filled with terror at the idea of the work of redemption: *I considered Thy work, and was afraid.*[3413] And this the prophet said of old: *O Lord, I have heard Thy hearing, and was afraid. . . . Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy people; for salvation with Thy Christ.*[3414]

Hence St. Thomas terms the mystery of the Incarnation the miracle of miracles;[3415] a miracle above all comprehension, in which God showed how powerful was his love towards men, which of God made him man, of Creator a creature.[3416] The Creator, says St. Peter Damian, springs from the creature, of Lord it made him servant, of impassible subject to sufferings and to death: *He hath showed might in His arm.*[3417] St. Peter of Alcantara, one day hearing the Gospel sung which is appointed for the third Mass on Christmas-night—*In the beginning was the Word*—in reflecting on this mystery became so inflamed with divine love that, in a state of ecstasy, he was borne a considerable space through the air to the foot of the Blessed Sacrament. And St. Augustine says that his soul could feast forever on the contemplation of work of human redemption.[3418] For this reason it was that the Lord sent this saint, on account of his fervent devotion to this mystery, to inscribe these words on the heart of St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi: *And the Word was made flesh.*

II

Whosoever loves, has no other end in loving but to be loved again. God, then, having so dearly loved us, seeks nothing else from us, as St. Bernard remarks, but our love: “When God loves, he desires nothing else than to be loved.”[3419] Wherefore, he goes on with this admonition to each one of us: “He has made known his love, that he may experience thine.”[3420] O man, whoever thou art, thou hast witnessed the love which God has borne thee in becoming man, in suffering and dying for thee; how long shall it be before God shall know by experience and by deeds the love thou bearest him? Ah! truly every man at the sight of a God clothed in flesh, and choosing to lead a life of such durance, and to suffer a death of such ignominy, ought to be enkindled with love towards a God so loving. *Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and wouldst come down: the mountains would melt away at Thy presence, . . . the waters would burn with fire.*[3421] Oh that Thou wouldst deign, my God (thus cried out the prophet before the arrival of the

Divine Word upon earth), to leave the heavens, and descend here to become man amongst us! Ah, then, on beholding Thee like one of themselves, the mountains would melt away; men would surmount all obstacles, remove all difficulties, in observing Thy laws and Thy counsels; the waters would burn with fire! Oh, surely Thou wouldst enkindle such a furnace in the human heart that even the most frozen souls must catch the flame of Thy blessed love! And, in fact, after the Incarnation of the Son of God, how brilliantly has the fire of divine love shone to many loving souls! And it may be indeed asserted, without fear of contradiction, God was more beloved in one century after the coming of Jesus Christ than in the entire forty preceding centuries. How many youths, how many of the nobly born, and how many monarchs even, have left wealth, honors, and their very kingdoms, to seek the desert or the cloister, that there, in poverty and obscure seclusion, they might the more unreservedly give themselves up to the love of this their Saviour! How many martyrs have gone rejoicing and making merry on their way to torments and to death! How many tender young virgins have refused the proffered hands of the great ones of this world, in order to go and die for Jesus Christ, and so repay in some measure the affection of a God who stooped down to become incarnate and to die for love of them!

Yes, all this is most true; but now comes a tale for tears. Has this been the case with all men? Have all sought thus to correspond with this immense love of Jesus Christ? Alas, my God, the greater part have combined to repay him with nothing but ingratitude! And you also, my brother, tell me, what sort of return have you made up to time for the love your God has borne you? Have you always shown yourself thankful? Have you ever seriously reflected what those words mean, a God to be made man, to die for thee?

A certain man, while one day attending Mass without devotion, as too many do, at these concluding words of the last Gospel, *And the Word was made flesh,*[3422] made no external act of reverence; at the same instant a devil struck him a severe blow, saying, “Thankless wretch! thou hearest that a God was made man for thee, and dost thou not even deign to bend the knee? Oh, if God had done the like for me, I should be eternally occupied in thanking him!”

Tell me, O Christian! what more could Jesus Christ have done to win thy love? If the Son of God had engaged to rescue from death his own Father, what lower humiliation could he stoop to than to assume human flesh, and lay down his life in sacrifice for his salvation? Nay, I say more; had Jesus Christ been a mere man, instead of one of the divine Persons, and had wished to gain by some token of affection the love of his God, what more could lie have done he has done for thee? If a servant of thine had given for thy love his very life-blood, would he not have riveted thy heart to him, and obliged thee to love him in mere gratitude? And how comes it, then, that Jesus Christ, though he has laid down his life for thee, has still failed to win thy love?

Alas! men hold in contempt the divine love, because they do not, or, rather let us say, because they will not, understand what a treasure it is to enjoy divine grace, which, according to the Wise Man, is an infinite treasure: *An infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.*[3423] Men appreciate the good graces of a prince, of a prelate, of a nobleman, of a man of letters, and even of a vile animal; and yet these same persons set no store by the grace of God,—but renounce it for mere smoke, for a brutal gratification, for a handful of earth, for a whim, for nothing.

What sayest thou, my dear brother? Dost thou wish still to be ranked among these ungrateful ones? For, if thou dost not wish for God, says St. Augustine, if thou canst meet with something better than God: “Desire something better, if thou dost deserve something better.”[3424] Go, find thyself a prince more courteous, a master, a brother, a friend more amiable, and who has shown thee a deeper love. Go, seek for thyself one who is better qualified than God to make thee happy in the present life and in the life to come.

Whoever loves God has nothing to fear, and God cannot help loving in return one who loves him: *I love those who love me.*[3425] And what shall he be afraid of who is the beloved of God? *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?*[3426] So said David, and so said the sisters of Lazarus to our Blessed Lord: *He whom thou lovest is sick.*[3427] It was enough for them to know that Jesus Christ loved their brother, to convince them that he would do everything for his recovery.

But how, on the contrary, can God love those who despise his love? Come, then, let us once for all make the resolution to give the tribute of our love to a God who has so sincerely loved us. And let us continually beseech him to grant us the precious gift of his holy love. St. Francis de Sales says that this grace of loving God was the grace for which we ought to ask God more than for any other; because with divine love all good comes to a soul: *All good things come together with her.*[3428] This made St. Augustine say, "Love, and do whatever you like."[3429] Whoever loves a person avoids everything that may offend him, and always seeks what may give him most pleasure. Thus is it with one who really loves God; he can never deliberately do anything to offend him, but he studies in every possible manner to please him.

And in order the more quickly and the more surely to obtain this gift of divine love, let us have recourse to the foremost of God's lovers—I mean, to Mary his Mother, who was so inflamed with his holy love that the devils, as St. Bonaventure assures us, had not the boldness even to tempt her: "They were scared away by her burning charity, so that they dared not approach her."[3430] And Richard adds that even the seraphim themselves might descend from their lofty throne in heaven to take a lesson in love from the heart of Mary.[3431] And because, continues St. Bonaventure, the heart of Mary was a complete furnace of divine love, therefore all who love this Blessed Mother, and address themselves to her, will be inflamed by her with the same love; she will make them resemble herself.[3432]

If we wish to add to this discourse some example about the Infant Jesus, we may select one of those related at the end on page 164.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Let us say with St. Augustine, "O fire, ever burning, inflame me."[3433] O Word Incarnate, Thou wert made man to enkindle divine love in our hearts: and how couldst Thou have met with such a want of gratitude in the hearts of men? Thou hast spared nothing to induce them to love Thee; Thou hast even gone so far as to give Thy blood and Thy life for them: and how, then, can men still remain so ungrateful? Do they, perchance, not know it? Yes, they know it, and they believe that for them Thou hast come down from heaven to put on mortal flesh, and to load Thyself with our miseries; they know that for their love Thou hast led a painful life, and embraced an ignominious death; and how, then, can they live forgetful of Thee? They love relatives, friends; they love even animals: if from them they any token of good-will, they are anxious to repay it; and yet towards Thee alone are they so loveless and ungrateful. But, alas! in accusing them, I am my own accuser: I who have treated Thee worse than any one else. But Thy goodness encourages me, which I feel has borne with me so long, in order at length to pardon me, and to inflame me with Thy love, provided I will but repent and love Thee. Indeed, my God, I do wish to repent; and I grieve with my whole soul for God, I do wish to repent; and I grieve with my whole soul for having offended Thee; I wish to love Thee with my whole heart. I am well aware, my Redeemer, that my heart is no longer worthy of Thy acceptance, since it has forsaken Thee for the love of creatures; but, at the same time, I see that Thou art willing to have it, and with my entire will entire will I dedicate it and present it to Thee. Inflame it, then, wholly with Thy divine love, and grant that from this day forward it may never love any other but Thee, O infinite Goodness! worthy of an infinite love. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee, O sovereign Good! I love Thee, O only Love of my soul!

O Mary my Mother, thou who art the mother of fair love,[3434] do thou obtain for me this grace to love my God; I hope it of thee.

Discourse II

THE ETERNAL WORD BEING GREAT BECOMES LITTLE

Parvulus natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis.

"A child is born to us, and a son is given to us."—Is. 9:6

Plato said that Love is the loadstone of love.[3435] Hence comes the common proverb, as St. John Chrysostom remarks: "If you wish to be loved, love,"[3436] for certainly there is no more effectual means to secure for one's self the affections of another than to love him, and to make him aware that he is loved.

But, my Jesus, this rule, this proverb, holds good for others, holds good for all, but not for Thee. Men are grateful to all, but not to Thee. Thou art at a loss what further to do, to show men the love Thou bearest them; Thou hast positively nothing more to do, to allure the affections of men; yet, in point of fact, how many are there among mankind who love Thee? Alas! the greatest number, we may say, nearly all, not only do not love Thee, but they offend Thee and despise Thee.

And shall we stand in the ranks of these heartless wretches? God has not earned this at our hands; that God, so good, so tender of us, who being great, and of infinite greatness, has thought fit to make himself little in order to be loved by us. Let us seek light from Jesus and Mary.

I

To compass the idea of the immense love of God to men in becoming himself a man and a feeble child for our love, it would be necessary to comprehend his greatness. But what mind of man or angel can conceive the greatness of God, which is indeed infinite?

St. Ambrose says that to say God is greater than the heavens, than all kings, all saints, all angels, is to do an injury to God; just as it would be an injury to a prince to say that he was greater than a blade of grass, or a small fly. God is greatness itself, and all greatness together is but the smallest atom of the greatness of God.

David, contemplating the divine greatness, and seeing that he could not and never would be able to comprehend it, could only say, *O Lord, who is like to Thee?*[3437] O Lord, what greatness shall ever be found like to Thine? And how in truth should David ever be able to comprehend it, since his understanding was but finite, and God's greatness infinite? *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and of His greatness there is no end.*[3438] *Do I not fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord.*[3439] Thus all of us, according to our mode of understanding, are nothing but so many miserable little fishes, living in this immense ocean of the essence of God: *In Him we live, move, and be.*[3440]

What are we, then, in respect to God? And what are all men, all monarchs of earth, and even all saints and all angels of heaven, confronted with the infinite greatness of God? We are all like or even smaller than a grain of sand in comparison with the rest of the earth: *Behold,* says the prophet *roman, the Gentiles are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the smallest grain of a balance; behold, the islands are as little dust. . . . All nations are before Him as if they had no being at all.*[3441]

Now this God, so great, has become a little infant; and for whom? A child is born to us:[3442] for us he is born, And wherefore? St. Ambrose gives us the answer: "He is a little one, that you might be a perfect man; he is bound in swaddling-clothes, that you might be unbound from the fetters of death; he is on earth, that you might be in heaven."[3443]

Behold, then, the Immensity become an infant, whom the heavens cannot contain: see him imprisoned in poor rags, and laid in a narrow vile manger on a bundle of straw, which was at once his only bed and pillow. "See," says St. Bernard—"see power is ruled, wisdom instructed, virtue sustained. God taking milk and weeping, but comforting the afflicted!"[3444] A God Almighty so tightly wrapped in swathing-bands that he cannot stir! A God who knows all things, made mute and speechless! A God who rules heaven and earth needing to be carried in the arms! A God who feeds all men and animals, himself having need of a little milk to support him! A God who consoles the afflicted, and is the joy of paradise, himself weeps and moans and has to be comforted by another!

In fine, St. Paul says *that the Son of God, coming on earth, emptied Himself.*[3445] He annihilated himself, so to say. And why? To save man and to be loved by man. “Where Thou didst empty Thyself,” says St. Bernard, “there did mercy, there did charity, more brilliantly appear.”[3446] Yes, my dear Redeemer, in proportion as Thy abasement was great in becoming man and in being born an infant, so were Thy mercy and love shown to be greater towards us, and this with a view to win over our hearts to Thyself.

The Jews, although by so many signs and wonders they had a certain knowledge of the true God, were not, however, satisfied; they wished to behold him face to face. God found means to comply even with this desire of men; he became man, to make himself visible to them. “Knowing,” says St. Peter Chrysologus, “that mortals felt an anguish of desire to see him, God chose this method of making himself visible to them.”[3447] And to render himself still more attractive in our eyes, he would make his first appearance as a little child, that in this guise he might be the more charming and irresistible; he showed himself an infant, that he might make himself the more acceptable in our eyes, says the same St. Chrysologus.[3448] “Yes,” adds St. Cyril of Alexandria, “he abased himself to the humble condition of a little child in order to make himself more agreeable to our hearts.” “For our advantage was this emptying made.”[3449] For this indeed was the form most suitable to win our love.

The prophet Ezechiel rightly exclaimed that the time of Thy coming on earth, O Incarnate Word, should be a time of love, the season of lovers: *Behold, Thy time was the time of lovers.*[3450] And what object had God in loving us thus ardently, and in giving us so clear proofs of his love, other than that we might love him? “God loves only in order to be loved,”[3451] says St. Bernard. God himself had already said as much: *And now, O Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou fear and love Him?*[3452]

In order to force us to love him God would not commission others, but chose to come himself in person to be made man and to redeem us. St. John Chrysostom makes a beautiful reflection on these words of the apostle: *For nowhere doth He take hold of the angles, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold.*[3453] Why, asks the saint, did he not say *received,* but rather *apprehended?*[3454] Why did not St. Paul simply say that God assumed human flesh? Why would he affirm with marked emphasis that he took it, as it were, by force, according to the strict meaning of the word *apprehend?* He answers that he spoke thus, making use of the metaphor of those who give chase to the flying.[3455] By this he would convey the idea that God already longed to be loved by man, but man turned his back upon him, and cared not even to know of his love; therefore God came from heaven, and took human flesh, to make himself known in this way, and to make himself loved, as it were, by force by ungrateful man, who fled from him.

For this, then, did the Eternal Word become man; for this he, moreover, became an infant. He could, indeed, have appeared upon this earth a full-grown man, as the first man Adam appeared. No, the Son of God wished to present himself under the form of a sweet little child, that thus he might the more readily and the more forcibly draw to himself the love of man. Little children of themselves are loved at once, and to see them and to love them is the same thing. With this view, says St. Francis de Sales, the Eternal Word chose first to be seen among men as an infant, to conciliate to himself the love of all mankind.

St. Peter Chrysologus writes: "How should our Lord come, who wishes to drive away fear, to seek love? What breast so savage as not to soften before such a childhood? what hardness which it will not subdue, what love does it not claim? Thus, therefore, he would be born who willed to be loved and not feared."[3456] The saint would say that if our Redeemer had come to be feared and respected by men, he would have come as a full-grown man and with royal dignity; but because he came to gain our love, he chose to come and to show himself as an infant, and the poorest of infants, born in a cold stable between two animals, laid in a manger on straw, without clothing or fire to warm his shivering little limbs: "thus would he be born, who willed to be loved and not feared."[3457] Ah, my Lord! who was it that drew Thee from heaven to be born in a stable? It was love, the love Thou bearest toward men. Who took Thee from the right hand of Thy Father, where Thou sittest, and placed Thee in a manger? Who snatched Thee from Thy throne above the stars, and put Thee to lie on a little straw? Who changed Thy position from the midst of angles, to be placed betwixt a pair of beasts? It was all the work of love; Thou inflamest the seraphim, and dost Thou not shiver with cold? Thou supportest the heavens, and must

Thou be now carried in the arms? Thou providest food for men and beasts, and now dost Thou crave a little milk to sustain Thy life? Thou makest the seraphim happy, and now dost Thou weep and moan? Who has reduced Thee to such misery? Love has done it: “Thus would he be born who willed to be loved and not feared.”

Love then, love, O souls, exclaims St. Bernard, love now this little Child, for he is exceedingly to be loved “Great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised. The Lord is a little one, and exceedingly to be loved.”[3458] Yes, says the saint, this God was already existing from eternity, as he is now worthy of all praise and reverence for his greatness, as David has sung: *Great is the Lord and exceedingly to be praised.*[3459] But now that we behold him become a little infant, needing milk, and unable to stir himself, trembling with cold, moaning and weeping, looking for some one to take and warm and comfort him; ah, now indeed does he become the most cherished one of our hearts! “The Lord is a little one, and exceedingly to be loved!”

We ought to adore him as our God, but our love ought to keep pace with our reverence towards a God so amiable, so loving.

St. Bonaventure reminds us that “a child finds its delight with other children, with flowers, and to be in the arms.”[3460] The saint’s meaning is, that if we would please this divine Infant, we too must become children, simple and humble; we must carry to him flowers of virtue, of meekness, of mortification, of charity; we must clasp him in the arms of our love.

And, O man, adds St. Bernard, what more do you wait to see before you will give yourself wholly to God? See with what labor, with what ardent love, your Jesus has come down from heaven to seek you.[3461] Hearken, he goes on to say, how, scarcely yet born, his wailings call to you, as if he would say, O soul of mine, it is thee I am seeking; for thee, and to obtain thy love, I am come from heaven to earth. “Having scarcely quitted the Virgin’s womb, he calls thy beloved soul after the manner of infants, Ah, ah, my soul, my soul! I am seeking you; for you am I making this pilgrimage.”[3462]

O God, even the very brutes, if we do them a kindness, if we give them some trifle, are so grateful for it; they come near us, they do our bidding after their own fashion, and they show symptoms of gladness at our approach. And how comes it, then, that we are so ungrateful towards God, the same God who has bestowed his whole self upon us, who has descended from heaven to earth, has become an infant to save us and to be loved by us? Come, then, let us love the Babe of Bethlehem, is the enraptured cry of St. Francis; let us love Jesus Christ, who has sought in the midst of such sufferings to attach our hearts to him.

II

And for love of Jesus Christ, we ought to love our neighbors, even those who have offended us. The Messias is called by Isaias, *Father of the world to come.*[3463] now, in order to be the sons of this Father, Jesus admonishes us that we must love our enemies, and do good to those who injure us: *Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, . . . that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven.*[3464] And of this he himself set us the example on the cross, praying his Eternal Father to forgive those who were crucifying him.

"He who pardons his enemy," says St. John Chrysostom, "cannot but obtain God's pardon for himself;"[3465] and we have the divine assurance of it: *Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.*[3466] There was a certain religious, who otherwise had not led a very exemplary life, at the hour of death bewailed his sins, not without great confidence and joy, because, said he, "I have never avenged an injury done me;"[3467] as much as to say: It is true that I have offended the Lord, but he has engaged to pardon him who pardons his enemies; I have pardoned all who offended me, so then I am confident God will likewise pardon me.

But to speak with reference to all persons in general; how can we, sinners as we are, despair of pardon, when we think of Jesus Christ? For this very object the Eternal Word humbled himself so far as to take human flesh, that we might procure our pardon from God: *I am come, not to call the just, but sinners.*[3468] Hence we may address him in the words of St. Bernard: "Where Thou didst empty Thyself, there Thy mercy, there Thy charity, shone forth the more."[3469] And St. Thomas of Villanova gives us excellent encouragement, saying: "What art thou afraid of, O poor sinner? How shall He condemn thee, if thou be penitent, who died expressly that thou mightest not be condemned? How shall he reject thee, if thou desirest to retain him who came down from heaven to seek thee?"[3470]

Let not, then, the sinner be afraid, provided he will be no more a sinner, but will love Jesus Christ; let him not be dismayed, but have a full trust; if he abhor sin, and seek after God, let him not be sad, but full of joy: *Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.*[3471] The Lord has sworn to forget all injuries done to him, if the sinner is sorry for them: *If the wicked do penance . . . I will not remember all his iniquities.*[3472] And that we might have every motive for confidence, our Saviour became an infant: “Who is afraid to approach a child?”[3473] asks the same St. Thomas of Villanova.

“Children do not inspire terror or aversion, but attachment and love,”[3474] says St. Peter Chrysologus. It seems that children know not how to be angry; and if perchance at odd times they should be irritated, they are easily soothed; one has only to give them a fruit, a flower, or bestow on them a caress, or utter a kind word to them, and they have already forgiven and forgotten every offence.

A tear of repentance, one act of heart-felt contrition, is enough to appease the Infant Jesus. “You know the tempers of children,” pursues St. Thomas of Villanova; “a single tear pacifies them, the offence is forgotten. Approach, then, to Him while he is a little one, while would he seem to have forgotten his majesty.”[3475] He has put off his divine majesty, and appears as a child to inspire us with more courage to approach his feet.

“He is born an Infant,” says St. Bonaventure, “that neither his justice nor his power might intimidate you.”[3476] In order to exempt us from every feeling of distrust, which the idea of his power and of his justice might cause in us, he comes before us as a little babe, full of sweetness and mercy. “O God!” says Gerson, “Thou hast hidden Thy wisdom under a childish age, that it might not accuse us.”[3477] O God of mercy, lest Thy divine wisdom might reproach us with our offences against Thee, Thou hast hidden it under an infant’s form: “Thy justice under humility, lest it should condemn.”[3478] Thou hast concealed Thy justice under the most profound abasement, that it might not condemn us: Thy power under weakness, lest it should torment.”[3479] Thou hast disguised Thy power in feebleness, that it might not visit us with chastisement.

St. Bernard makes this reflection: “Adam, after his sin, on hearing the voice of God, *Adam, where art thou?*”[3480] was filled with dismay: *I heard Thy voice, and was afraid.*[3481] But, continues the saint, now, the Incarnate

Word being made man upon earth, has laid aside all semblance of terror:[3482] “Do not fear; he seeks thee, not to punish, but to save thee.[3483] Behold, he is a child, and voiceless; for the voice of a child will excite compassion rather than fear. The Virgin Mother wraps his delicate limbs in swaddling-clothes: and art thou still in alarm?”[3484] That God, who should punish thee, is born an infant, and has lost all accents to affright thee, since the accents of a child, being cries of weeping, move us sooner to pity than to fear; thou canst not apprehend that Jesus Christ will stretch out his hands to chastise thee, since his Mother is occupied in swathing them in linen bands.

“Be of good cheer, then, O sinners,” says St. Leo, “the birthday of the Lord is the birthday of peace and joy.”[3485] “The Prince of Peace”[3486] was he called by Isaias. Jesus Christ is a Prince, not of vengeance on sinners, but of mercy and of peace, constituting himself the mediator betwixt God and sinners. “If our sins,” says St. Augustine, “are too much for us, God does not despise his blood.”[3487] If we cannot ourselves make due atonement to the justice of God, at least the Eternal Father knows not how to disregard the blood of Jesus Christ, who makes payment for us.

A certain knight, called Don Alphonsus Albuquerque, making once a sea voyage, and the vessel being driven among the rocks by a violent tempest, already gave himself up for lost; but at that moment espying near him a little child, crying bitterly, what did he do? He seized him in his arms, and so lifting him towards heaven, “O Lord,” said he,” though I myself be unworthy to be heard, give ear at least to the cries of this innocent child, and save us.” At the same instant the storm abated, and he remained in safety. Let us miserable sinners do in like manner. We have offended God; already has sentence of everlasting death been passed upon us; divine justice requires satisfaction, and with right. What have we to do? To despair? God forbid! let us offer up to God this Infant, who is his own Son, and let us address him with confidence: O Lord, if we cannot of ourselves render Thee satisfaction for our offences against Thee, behold this Child, who weeps and moans, who is benumbed with cold on his bed of straw in this cavern; he is here to make atonement for us, and he pleads for Thy mercy on us. Be it that we are undeserving of pardon, the tears and sufferings of this Thy guiltless Son merit it for us, and he entreats Thee to pardon us.

This is what St. Anselm advises us to do; he says that Jesus Christ himself, from his earnest desire not to have us perish, animates each one of us who finds himself guilty before God with these words: O sinner, do not lose heart; if by thy sins thou hast unhappily become the slave of hell, and hast not the means to free thyself, act thus: take me, offer me for thyself to the Eternal Father, and so thou shalt escape death, thou shalt be in safety. "What can be conceived more full of mercy than what the Son says to us: Take me, and redeem thyself."[3488] This was, moreover, exactly what the divine Mother taught Sister Frances Farnese. She gave the Infant Jesus into her arms, and said to her: "Here is my Son for you; be careful to make your profit of him by frequently offering him to his heavenly Father."

And if we would still have another means to secure our forgiveness, let us obtain the intercession of this same divine Mother in our behalf; she is all-powerful with her blessed Son to promote the interests of repentant sinners, as St. John Damascene assures us. Yes, for the prayers of Mary, adds St. Antoninus, have the force of commands with her Son, in consideration of the love he bears her: "The prayer of the Mother of God has the force of a command."[3489] Hence, wrote St. Peter Damian, when Mary goes to entreat Jesus Christ in favor of one who is devout to her, "she appears to command (in a certain sense), not to ask, as a mistress, not a handmaid; for the Son honors her by denying her nothing."[3490] For this reason St. Germanus adds that the most holy Virgin, by the authority of mother which she exercises, or, rather, which she did exercise for a time over her Son upon earth, can obtain the pardon of the most abandoned sinner. "Thou, by the power of thy maternal authority, gainest even for the most enormous sinners the exceeding grace of pardon."[3491]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my sweet, amiable, and holy Child! Thou art at a loss what more to do to make Thyself beloved men. It is enough to say that from being the Son of God Thou wert made the Son of man, and that Thou chosest to be born among men like the rest of infants, only poorer and more meanly lodged than the rest, selecting a stable for Thy abode, a manger for Thy cradle, and a little straw for Thy couch. Thou didst desire thus to make Thy first appearance before us in the semblance of a poor child, that even from Thy very birth Thou mightest lose no time in attracting our hearts towards Thee; and so Thou didst go on through the remainder of Thy life, ever showing us fresh and more striking tokens of Thy love, so that at length Thou didst will to shed the last drop of Thy blood and die overwhelmed with shame upon the infamous tree of the cross. And how is it that Thou couldst have encountered such ingratitude from the majority of mankind; for I see few indeed that know Thee, and fewer still that love Thee? Ah, my dear Jesus, I too desire to be reckoned among this small number! In time past, it is true, I have not known Thee; but, heedless of Thy love, I have only sought my own gratifications, making no account whatever of Thee and of Thy friendship. But now I am conscious of the wrong I have done; I am sorry for it, I grieve over it with my whole heart. O my sweet Child and my God, forgive me for the sake of Thy infancy. I love Thee, and that so dearly, O my Jesus, that even if I knew that all mankind were about to rebel against Thee and to forsake Thee, yet I promise never to leave Thee, though it should cost me my life a thousand times. I am well aware that I am indebted to Thee for this light and this good resolution. I thank Thee for it, O my love! and I beseech Thee to preserve it to me by Thy grace. But Thou knowest my weakness, Thou knowest my past treasons; for pity's sake do not abandon me, or I shall fall away even worse than before. Accept of my poor heart to love Thee; there was a time when it cared not for Thee, but now it is enamoured of Thy goodness, O divine Infant! O Mary! O great Mother of the Incarnate Word! neither do Thou abandon me; for Thou art the mother of perseverance, and the stewardess of divine grace. Help me, then, and help me always; with thy aid, O my hope! I trust to be faithful to my God till death.

Discourse III

THE ETERNAL WORD FROM BEING LORD BECAME A SERVANT

Semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens

“He humbled himself, taking the form of a servant.”—Phil. 2:7, 8.

On considering the immense mercy of our God in the work of the human redemption, St. Zachary had good reason to exclaim, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of His people*.[3492] Blessed forever be God, who vouchsafed to come down upon earth and to be made man in order to redeem mankind. *That being delivered from the hands of our enemies, we may serve Him without fear.*[3493] In order that, loosened from the shackles of sin and of death, wherein our enemies held us fast bound and enthralled, we might fearlessly, and with the freedom of the children of God, love him and serve him during this life, and afterwards go and possess and enjoy him face to face in the kingdom of the blessed,—in that kingdom closed against us indeed, heretofore, but now thrown open to by our divine Saviour.

We were, in fact, all heretofore the slaves of hell; but what has the Eternal Word, our sovereign Lord, done to free us from that slavery? From being Lord he became a servant. Let us consider what a mercy and what an excessive love this has been; but first let us beg light of Jesus and Mary.

I

Almighty God is Lord of all that is, or that can be in the world: *In Thy power are all things; for Thou hast created all.*[3494] Who can ever deny God the sovereign dominion over all things, if he be the Creator and Preserver of all? *And He hath on His garment and on His thigh written King of kings and Lord of lords.*[3495] Maldonatus explains the words “on his thigh,” to mean here, “by his own very nature;” and the drift of it is, that to the monarchs of earth outward majesty is annexed by gift and favor of the supreme King, that is God; but God himself is King by his very nature; so that he cannot possibly be otherwise than King and Lord of all.

But this sovereign King, though he bore sway over the angels in heaven, and ruled all creatures, yet he did not rule over the hearts of mankind; mankind was groaning under the miserable tyranny of the devil. Yes, before the coming of Jesus Christ this tyrant was lord, and even made himself worshipped God, with incense and sacrifices, not only of their animals, but even of their own children and of their own lives; and he, their enemy and tyrant, what return did he make them—how did he treat them? He tortured their bodies with the most barbarous cruelty, he blinded their minds, and by a path of pain and misery conducted them down to everlasting torments. It was this tyrant that the divine Word came on purpose to overthrow, and release mankind from his wretched thraldom, in order that the unfortunate creatures, freed from the darkness of death, rescued from the bondage of this savage monster, and enlightened to know what was the true way of salvation, might serve their real and lawful Master, who loved them as a Father, and from slaves of Satan wished to make them his own beloved children: *That being delivered from the hands of our enemies, we might serve Him without fear.* The prophet Isaias had long ago foretold that our Redeemer should destroy the empire which Satan held over mankind: *And the sceptre of their oppressor Thou hast overcome.*[3496] And why did the prophet call him oppressor? Because, says St. Cyril,[3497] this heartless master exacts from the poor sinners who become his slaves heavy tribute, in the shape of passions, hatreds, disorderly affections, by means of which he binds them in a still faster servitude, while at the same time he scourges them. Our Saviour came, then, to release us from the slavery of this deadly foe; but how?—in what manner did he release us?—Let us learn from St. Paul what he did: *Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.*[3498] He was already, says the Apostle, the only-begotten Son of God, equal to his Father, eternal as his Father, almighty as his Father, immense, most wise, most happy, and sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, of angels and of men, no less than his Father; but for the love of man he stooped to take the lowly form of a servant, by clothing himself in human flesh, and likening himself to men; and since sin had made them vassals of the devil, he came in the form of man to redeem them, offering his sufferings and death in satisfaction to the divine justice for the punishment due to them. Ah! who would have believed it, if holy faith did not assure us of it? Who could ever have hoped for it?—who could ever have conceived it? But faith tells us and assures us that this supreme and sovereign Lord *emptied himself, taking the form of a servant.*

From his tenderest childhood, the Redeemer, by becoming a servant, was eager to begin and wrench from the devil that dominion which he had over man, according to the prophecy of Isaias: *Call his name, hasten to take away the spoils: Make haste to take away the prey.*[3499] “That is,” as St. Jerome explains it, “suffer the devil to reign no longer.”[3500] Behold Jesus, scarcely born, says the Venerable Bede, before he assumes the form and office of a servant, in order to gain us freedom from the slavery of hell, he causes himself to be enrolled as a subject of Cæsar, and pays him the tribute: “Scarcely born, he is registered in the census of Caesar, and for our liberation he himself is inscribed in the list of servitude.”[3501] Observe how, in token of his servitude, he begins to pay off our debts by his sufferings; how he allows himself to be wrapped in swaddling-clothes (a type of the cords which should bind him at a later day, to be led to death by cruel executioners). “God suffers himself,” says a certain author, “to be bound up in swaddling-bands, because he had come to unbind the world from its debts.”[3502] Behold him during the whole course of his after-life obeying with ready submission a simple Virgin and a man: *He was subject to them.*”[3503] Look at him as a servant in the poor cottage at Nazareth, employed by Mary and Joseph at one time in smoothing the wood to be worked upon by Joseph in his trade; at another time in collecting the scattered shavings for fuel; then in sweeping the house, in fetching water from the well, in opening or in closing the shop; in fine, says St. Basil, as Mary and Joseph were poor, and obliged to earn a livelihood by the work of their hands, Jesus Christ, in order to practise obedience, and to show towards them that reverence which as to Superiors he owed them, endeavored to render them all the services which lay in his power as man. “In his early age Jesus was subject to his parents, and obediently underwent every kind of bodily fatigue; for, as they were poor, they necessarily were obliged to labor. But Jesus showed his obedience by his submission to them, by undergoing every kind of labor."[3504] What! a God to serve! a God to sweep the house! a God to work! Ah, how the mere thought of this should inflame us all, and make us burn with love!

Subsequently, when our Saviour went forth to preach, he made himself the servant of all, declaring that he had come not to be served, but to serve all others: *The Son of Man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister.*[3505] As much as to say, according to the commentary of Cornelius à Lapide, "I have conducted myself, and still conduct myself, so as to show how I would willingly minister to all as the servant of all."[3506]

Hence Jesus Christ, says St. Bernard, at the close of his life, was not content to take the form of a simple servant, in order to be at the command of others, but even of a wicked servant, in order to be punished as a such, and so to pay off that punishment which was due to us as the servants of hell in chastisement of our sins. "Taking not only the form of a servant, that he might obey, but of a wicked servant that he might be chastised, and so pay the penalty of the servant's sin."[3507]

Behold, finally, says St. Gregory of Nyssa, how the Lord of all submits as an obedient subject to the unjust sentence of Pilate, and to the hands of his executioners, who barbarously torture and crucify him. "The Lord of all is obedient to the sentence of the judge, the king of all does not disdain to feel the hand of the executioners."[3508] St. Peter had said as much before: *He delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly.*[3509] And, like a servant, he is resigned to punishment, as if he had well deserved it: *When He was reviled, He did not revile; and when He suffered, He threatened not.*[3510] Thus did our God love us to such a pass, that for our love he chose to obey as a servant even unto death, and a death of such extreme bitterness and ignominy as the death of the cross: *Becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.*[3511] He obeyed, indeed, not as God, but as man, and as a servant, as he had made himself: *Taking the form of a servant and being made in the likeness of men.*[3512]

The world stood in admiration of that grand act of charity, which St. Paulinus performed in consenting to become a slave for the ransom of the son a poor widow. But what comparison does this bear with the charity of our Redeemer, who being God, and in order to rescue us from the slavery of the devil and from death, our just due, chose to become a servant, to be fast bound with cords, to be nailed to the cross, and there in the end to lay down his in a sea of sorrow and ignominy? In order, says St. Augustine, that the servant might become lord, God chose to become a servant.[3513]

“O amazing condescension of Thy bounty towards us! O inestimable tenderness of Thy charity!”[3514] exclaims the Holy Church. “That Thou mightest redeem the servant, Thou hast delivered up the Son.”[3515] Thou, then, O God of boundless majesty, hast been so fascinated with love for men, that to redeem these Thy rebellious servants Thou hast consented to condemn Thy only Son to death. But, O Lord, replies the holy man Job: *What is a man, that Thou shouldst magnify him? or why dost Thou set Thy heart upon him?*[3516] What is man, who is so vile, and has proved so ungrateful to Thee, that Thou shouldst make him so great, by honoring and loving him to such an excess? Tell me (he goes on to say), why are the salvation and happiness of man of so much importance to Thee? Tell me why Thou lovest him so much, that it would seem as if Thy heart was set no nothing else but to love and to make man happy?

II

Speed on, then, with gladness, O ye souls that love God and hope in God, speed on your way with gladness! What if Adam’s sin, and still more our own sins, have wrought sad ruin on us? let us understand that Jesus Christ, by the Redemption, has infinitely more than repaired our ruin: *Where sin abounded, grace did more abound.*[3517] Greater (says St. Leo) has been the acquisition which we have made by the grace of our Redeemer, than was the loss which we had suffered by the malice of the devil.[3518] Isaias had long ago prophesied that by means of Jesus Christ man should receive graces from God far surpassing the chastisement merited by his sins: *He hath received of the hand of the Lord double for all his sins.*[3519] It is in this sense that Adam the commentator explains this text, as we find in Cornelius à Lapide: “God hath so given remission of sins to the Church through Christ, that she hath received double (that is manifold blessings) instead of the punishments of sin which she deserved.” The Lord said: *I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.*[3520] I am come to give life to man, and a more abundant measure of life than what they had lost by sin. *Not as the offence, so also the gift.*[3521] Great had been the sin of man; but greater, says the Apostle, has been the gift of redemption, which has not only just sufficed for a remedy, but superabundantly: *and with Him plentiful redemption.*[3522] St. Anselm says, that the sacrifice of the life of Jesus Christ surpassed all the debts of sinners: “The life of that Man surpasses every debt which sinners owe.”[3523] For this reason the reason the Church styles the fault of Adam a happy one: “O happy fault, which deserved to have so great a Redeemer.”[3524] It is true that sin has clouded the mind to the knowledge of eternal truths, and has introduced into the soul the concupiscence of sensible goods, forbidden by the divine command; yes, but what helps and means has not Jesus Christ obtained for us by his merits, in order to procure us light and strength to vanquish all our enemies, and to advance in virtue? The holy sacraments, the Sacrifice of Mass, prayer to God through the merits of Jesus Christ,—ah! these are indeed arms and means sufficient, not only to gain the victory over all temptation and concupiscence, but even to run forward and fly in the way of perfection. It is certain that by these very means given to us, all the saints of the new law have become saints. Ours, then, is the fault, if we do not avail ourselves of them.

Oh, how much more are we bound to thank Almighty God for having brought us into life after the coming of the Messias! How much greater blessings have we received after the accomplishment of redemption by Jesus Christ! How did Abraham desire; how did the prophets and patriarchs of the Old Testament long to see the Redeemer born! But they saw him not. They deafened the heavens, so to speak, with their groans of desire and with their ardent prayers: *Drop down dew, ye heavens from above, and let the clouds rain the just,*[3525] was their incessant exclamation. Rain down, O heavens, and send us the Just One, to appease the wrath of that God whom we ourselves cannot appease, because we are all sinners: *send forth, O Lord, the Lamb, the Ruler of the earth.*[3526] send, O Lord the Lamb, who by sacrificing himself shall satisfy Thy justice for us, and so shall reign in the hearts of men, who are living on this earth the unhappy slaves of the devil: *Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy, and grant us Thy salvation.*[3527] Hasten and show us, O God of mercies, that greatest mercy which Thou hast already promised us, namely, our Saviour. Such were the aspirations and longing exclamations of the saints. But for all that during the space of four thousand years, they had not the happy lot to see the Messias born: We, however have had this happiness. But what are we doing? What knowledge have we, to take advantage of it? Do we know how to love this amiable Redeemer who is come at last, who has already ransomed us from the hands of our foes, has freed us by his own death from the hands of our foes, has freed us by his own death from the eternal death which we had deserved, has thrown open paradise for us, has provided us with so many sacraments, and with so many aids to serve him and sacraments, and with so many aids to serve him and love him in peace during this life, that we might go and enjoy him forever in the life to come? "He was," says St. Ambrose, "wrapped up in swaddling-clothes, that you might be loosed from snares; his poverty is my patrimony; the feebleness of the Lord is my strength; his tears have washed away my guilt."[3528] very great would be your ingratitude to your God, O Christian soul, if you were not to love him, after he has been pleased to be bound in swaddling-clothes, that you might be released from the chains of hell; after he has become poor, that you might be made partaker of his riches; after he has made himself weak to give you power over your enemies; after he has chosen to suffer and to weep, that by his tears your sins might be washed away.

But, O God! how few there are who show themselves grateful for so immense a love by faithfully loving this their Redeemer! Alas! the greater part of men, after so incomparable a benefit, after so many great mercies and so much love, still say God: Lord, we will not serve Thee; we would rather be slaves of the devil and condemned to hell than be Thy servants. Listen how God upbraids such thankless wretches: *Thou hast burs My bands, and thou saidst: I will not serve.*[3529] what say you my brother? have you too been one of these? But tell me, whilst living far from God and the slave of the devil, tell me, have you felt happy? Have you been at peace? Ah, no, the divine words can never fail: *Because thou didst not serve the Lord thy God with joy and gladness of heart, thou shalt serve thy enemy in hunger and thirst, and nakedness, and in want of all things.*[3530] since thou hast preferred to serve thy enemy rather than to serve thy God, behold how that tyrant has treated thee. He has made thee groan as a slave in chains, poor, afflicted, and deprived of every interior consolation. But come, rise up; God speaks to thee whilst thou mayest still be freed from the fetters of death which bind thee: *Loose the bonds from off thy neck, O captive daughter of sion.*[3531] Make haste while time is left, unbind thyself, poor soul, who hast become the voluntary slave of hell, strike off these cursed chains that hold thee fast as a prey for hell, and bind thyself instead with my chains of gold, chains of love, chains of peace, chains of salvation: *her bands are a healthful binding.*[3532] But in what manner are souls bound to God? Be love: *Have charity, which is the bond of perfection.*[3533] A soul that always walks by the single way of the fear of punishment, and from this single motive avoids sin, is always in great danger of making a relapse before long into sin; but he that attaches himself to God by love is sure not to lose him as long as he loves him; and for this reason we must continually beg God to grant us the gift of his holy love, always praying and saying; O Lord, keep me united with Thee, never suffer me to be separated from Thee and from Thy love. The fear which we ought rather to desire and beg of God is a filial fear, the fear of ever displeasing this our good Lord and Father. Let us also always have recourse to most holy Mary, our Mother, that she may obtain for us the grace to love nothing else but God, and that she would so closely unite us by love to her Blessed Son that we may never more see ourselves separated from him by sin.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my Jesus! Thou hast been pleased to become a servant for love of me, and in order to release me from the chains of hell; and not only the servant of Thy father, but of men and of executioners, even to the laying down of Thy life; and I, for the love of some wretched and poisonous pleasure, have so often forsaken thy service, and have become the slave of the devil. A thousand times over I curse those moments in which, by a wicked abuse of my free-will, I despised Thy grace, O infinite Majesty! In pity pardon me, and bind me to Thyself with those delightful chains of love with which Thou keepest Thy chosen souls in closest union with Thee. I love Thee. O Incarnate word; I love Thee, O my sovereign Good! I have now no other desire but to love Thee; and I have only one fear, that of seeing myself deprived of Thy love. O never suffer me to be separated from Thee again. I beseech Thee, O my Jesus! by all the sufferings of Thy life and of Thy death, do not suffer me ever more to leave thee; “Suffer me not to be separated from Thee, suffer me not to be separated from Thee.”[3534] Ah, my God, after all the favors Thou hast shown me, after pardoning me so repeatedly and when now Thou dost enlighten me with so clear a knowledge, and invitest me to love Thee with so tender an affection, if I should ever be so wretched as again to turn my back upon Thee, how could I presume ever to receive pardon afresh? and not rather be afraid that in that same instant Thou would cast me headlong into hell? Ah, never permit it; let me say again: “Suffer me not to be separated from Thee.”

O Mary, my refuge, thou hast hitherto been my sweet advocate; for it was thou that didst prevail on God still to wait for me and to pardon me with so much mercy; help me at present, obtain for me the grace to die, and to die a thousand times sooner than ever again to lose the grace of my God.

Discourse IV

THE ETERNAL WORD FROM BEING INNOCENT BECOMES AS IT WERE GUILTY

Consolamini, consolamini, popule meus, dicit Deus vester

“Be comforted, be comforted, my people, saith your God,”—Is. 40:1.

Previous to the coming of our Redeemer, the whole unhappy race of mankind groaned in misery upon this earth; all were children of wrath, nor was there one who could appease God, justly indignant at their sins: *Behold, Thou art angry and we have sinned: . . . there is none that riseth up, and taketh hold of Thee.*[3535] Yes, because it is God himself who has been offended by man; man, being nothing but a miserable creature, was unable, by whatever extent of chastisement, to make atonement for the injury offered to an infinite majesty: there was need of another god to satisfy the divine justice. But such a god did not exist, neither could there be found any besides the one God alone: on the other hand, the person offended could not make satisfaction to himself: so that ours was a desperate case.

But take comfort, take comfort, O men, saith the Lord by the mouth of Isaias: *Be comforted, be comforted, my people, saith your God; for her evil is come to an end.*[3536] And the reason is, because God himself hath discovered a way of saving man, while at the same time his justice and his mercy shall both be satisfied: *Justice and peace have kissed.*[3537] The Son of God has himself become man, has taken the form of a sinner, and loading his own shoulders with the burden of satisfying for mankind, he has made full compensation to the divine justice for the penalty merited by men, by the sufferings of his life and of his death; and thus the opposite claims of justice and of mercy have been paid.

Has Jesus Christ, then, from being innocent become guilty to free men from eternal death? that is to say, has he chosen to pass for a sinner? Yes, the love which he bears to mankind has brought him even to this pass. Let us consider him in this state: but let us first beg light of Jesus and Mary to profit by it.

I

What was Jesus Christ? He was, answers *St. Paul, holy, innocent, undefiled.*[3538] He was, to speak more correctly, sanctity itself, innocence itself, purity itself, since he was true Son of God, true God as his Father; and so dear to that the Father, that the Father there on the banks of the Jordan declared, that in that Son he found all his complacency. But this Son being bent upon freeing mankind from their sins and from the death incurred by them, what did he do? *He appeared to take away our sins*, says St. John.[3539] He presented himself before his heavenly Father, and offered himself to pay for mankind; and then the Father, as the Apostle tells us, sent him on earth to be clothed in human flesh, to take the appearance of sinful man, and to be made in all things like to sinners: *God sending His own son in the likeness of sinful flesh.*[3540] And then St. Paul adds: *And of sin hath condemned sin in the flesh.*[3541] And by this he means, according to the explanation of St. John Chrysostom and Theodoret, that the Father sentenced sin to be dethroned from the tyranny which it exercised over mankind, by dooming to death his own divine Son, who, though he assumed flesh that was to all seeming contaminated with sin, was nevertheless holy and innocent.

God, therefore, in order to save mankind and at the same time to answer the claims of his justice, was pleased to condemn his own son to a painful life and to a shameful death. And can this ever be true? It is of faith, and St. Paul assures us of it: *He spared not even His own Son; but delivered Him up for us all.*[3542] Jesus Christ himself affirms it to us: *God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son.*[3543] Celius Rodiginus relates, that there was a certain man, called Dœotarus, who had several sons, but loved one of them more than all the rest; insomuch that in order to leave him his whole fortune, he had the monstrous cruelty to murder all the others. But God has done quite the reverse; he has slain his well-beloved Son, his only Son, in order to give salvation to us vile and ungrateful worms: *God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son*

Let us weigh these words: *God so loved the world.* What? a God condescends to love men, miserable worms, that have been rebellious and ungrateful towards him, and to love them to such an extent ("the word *so* signifies the vehemence of love," says St. John Chrysostom), so as to give his only-begotten Son! that he chose to give them his very Son, and that only-begotten one whom be loved as much as himself! Not a servant, not an angel, not an archangel did he give, but his own Son,[3544] subjoins the same holy Doctor. But in what manner did he choose to give him? He gave him to us lowly, humbled, poor, despised; he gave him into the hands of slaves to be treated as a miscreant, and even to be put to death, covered with shame, on an infamous gibbet. O grace! O force of the love of a God! exclaims St. Bernard: "O grace! O the strength of love!"[3545] O God who would not be touched to hear of such an instance that a monarch to release his slave, was compelled to put his only one son to death,—that son who was all the love of his father, and was beloved by him as his very self? Had not God done this, says St. John Chrysostom, who could ever have imagined it or hoped for it? "What things the human mind could never have conceived, could never have hoped for, these things he has bestowed on us."[3546]

But, O Lord it seems like an injustice to sentence an innocent son to die for the purpose of saving a slave who has offeneded Thee. "According to all human reasoning," says Salvian, "one would certainly accuse that man of outrageous injustice who should kill an innocent son in order to free his servants from the death which they had deserved."[3547] Yet no with God this has not passed for injustice, because the Son made the spontaneous offerings of himself to the Father to satisfy for men: *He was offered, because it was His own will.*[3548] Behold, then, how Jesus voluntarily sacrifices himself as a victim of love for us; behold him, how as a mute lamb he puts himself into the hands of the shearer, and although innocent, he comes to suffer from men the greatest ignominies and torments, without even opening his mouth: *He shall be dumb as a lamb before His shearer, and He shall not open His mouth.*[3549] Behold, in fine, our loving Redeemer, who to save us chose to suffer death and the punishment deserved by us: *Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrow?*[3550] St.

Gregory Nazianzen says, “He refused not to suffer as guilty provided only that men might obtain salvation.”[3551]

Who has done this? asks St. Bernard. What has been the cause of this immense prodigy? A God to die for his creatures! Who has done this? Charity has done this.[3552] This has been wronght by the love which God bears to man. The saint pursues his meditation on the time when our amiable Redeemer was seized by the soldiers in the garden of Gethsemani, as is related by St. John: *And they bound Him.*[3553] And then he says to our Lord: “What hast Thou to do with chains?”[3554] My Lord he says, I beloved thee bound by this vile rabble as if thou wert a criminal, and they are about to drag Thee to an unjust death. But, O God, what have cords and chains to do with Thee? such things belongs to evil-doers, but not to Thee who art innocent, who art the Son of God, innocence itself, holiness itself. St. Laurence Justinian replies that the bonds which dragged Jesus Christ to death were not those that were fastened on him by the soldiers, but the love he bore towards men; and hereupon he exclaims: “O charity, how strong are thy bonds, by which even a God could be bound!”[3555]

The same St. Bernard goes on to consider the iniquitous sentence of Pilate, who condemned Jesus to the cross, after several times having declared him innocent; and then, turning himself to Jesus, he thus bewails himself before him: “What hast Thou done, O most innocent Saviour, that Thou receivest such a judgment?”[3556] Ah, my Lord, I hear this wicked judge condemning Thee to die upon the cross; and what evil hast Thou done? what crime hast Thou ever perpetrated to deserve such a death of torture and shame?—a death awarded to none but to the most guilty wretches? But he then resumes by replying: Ah, I now comprehend, O my Jesus! what crime it is of which Thou art guilty? It is of having loved mankind too dearly: “Thy love is Thy crime.”[3557] Yes, it is this love, more than Pilate, that condemns Thee to death; because it is to pay off the penalties due from mankind that Thou hast willed to suffer death.

As the time of the Passion of our Blessed Redeemer drew near, he besought his Father that he would hasten to glorify him, by permitting him to offer to him the sacrifice of his life: *Father, glorify Thy Son.*[3558] At this, St. John Chrysostom asks in astonishment, “What sayest Thou? Dost thou call these things glory?”[3559] A Passion and a death accompanied with such sufferings and shame, dost Thou call this Thy glory? And the saint then replies to his own question for Jesus Christ: “Yes, since it is for my beloved ones, I esteem it a glory.”[3560] Yes, so immense is the love I entertain for mankind that it makes me regard it my glory to suffer and die for their sake.

II

Say to the faint-hearted, Take courage, and fear not: behold your God will bring the revenge of recompense; God Himself will come and will save you.[3561] Fear not, then, says the prophet; be no more in despair, O poor sinners! What fear can you have not to be pardoned, when the Son of God comes down from heaven to save you? Has not he himself made compensation to God by the sacrifice of his life for that just vengeance which our sins demanded? If you cannot by your own works appease an offended God, behold one that can appease him; this very infant which you now see reposing on straw, trembling with cold, and weeping, he, with his tears, propitiates him.

You have no grounds for being any more sad, says St. Leo, on account of the sentence of death fulminated against you, now that life itself is born for you; “nor is there any lawful room for sadness, when it is the birthday of life.”[3562] And St. Augustine: “O sweet day for penitents, to-day sin is taken away, and shall the sinner despair?”[3563] If you are unable to render due satisfaction to the divine justice, look on Jesus who does penance for you; already does he commence to do it in this little cave; he will persevere in doing penance all his life, and finally bring it to a conclusion on the cross, to which (according to the saying of St. Paul) he will affix the decree of your condemnation, cancelling it with his own blood: *Blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross.*[3564]

The same apostle says that Jesus Christ, by dying for us, was made our justification: *He is made unto us wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption.*[3565] “Justice,” comments St. Bernard, “in the washing-away of sins.”[3566] Yes; for God, accepting on our behalf the torments and death of Jesus Christ, is obliged to pardon us by virtue of the compact made: *Him that knew no sin, for us He hath made sin, that we might be made the justice of God in Him.*[3567] The innocent one was made a victim for our sins, in order that forgiveness through his merits might of right belong to us. For this reason David prays God to save him, not only for his mercy's sake, but likewise for the sake of his justice: *Deliver me in Thy justice.*[3568]

The eagerness of God to save sinners was always immense. This eagerness led him to approach them with that cry: *Return, ye transgressors, to the heart.*[3569] Sinners, enter once more into your own hearts; think of the benefits you have received from me, on the love I have borne you, and offend me no more. *Turn ye to Me, and I will turn to you.*[3570] Turn back to me, and I will receive you in my embraces: *Why will you die, O house of Israel? Return ye and live.*[3571] My children, why will you destroy yourselves, and of your own free-will condemn yourselves to everlasting death? Return to me and you shall live.

In a word, his infinite mercy induced him to descend from heaven to earth to come and free us form eternal death: *Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high hath visited us.*[3572] But here we must be mindful of what St. Paul says: previously to God becoming man he reserved mercy for us; but he could not feel compassion for our miseries, because compassion implies some suffering, and God is incapable of suffering. Now, says the apostle, in order to be moved also with compassion for us the Eternal Word willed to become man, capable of suffering, and similar to other men who are afflicted with compassion, so that he might be able not only to save us, but also to compassionate us: *For we have not a High Priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin.*[3573] And in another passage: *It behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become merciful.*

Oh, what a tender compassion has Jesus Christ for poor sinners! This makes him say, that he is that shepherd who goes about seeking the lost sheep, and on finding it he arranges a festival, saying: *Rejoice with Me, because I have found My sheep that was lost. And He lays it upon His shoulders rejoicing;*[3574] and thus he carefully keeps possession of it in his fond embraces for fear he should again lose it. This, too, caused him to say that he is that loving Father who, whenever a prodigal son that has left him returns to his feet, does not thrust him away, but embraces him, kisses him, and as it were faints away for the consolation and fondness which he feels in beholding his repentance: *And running to him, He fell upon his neck and kissed him.*[3575] This causes him to say, *I stand at the gate and knock;*[3576] that is, that, although driven away from the soul by sin, he does not abandon her, but he places himself outside the door of her heart and knocks by his calls to gain readmittance. This made him say to his disciples, who with an indiscreet zeal would have called down vengeance on those who repulsed them: *You know not of what spirit you are.*[3577] You see that I have so much compassion on sinners; and do you desire vengeance on them? Go, go away, for you are not of my spirit. Finally, this compassion made him say: *Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.*[3578] Come to me, all you that are afflicted and tormented with the weight of your sins, and I will give you ease.

And, in fact, with what tenderness did our amiable Redeemer, the moment she repented, forgive Magdalene, and change her into a saint! With what kindness did he forgive the paralytic, and at the same moment restore him to bodily health! And with what sweet gentleness, above all, did he treat the woman taken in adultery! The priests brought that sinner before him, that he might condemn her; but Jesus turning towards her said: *Hath no man condemned thee? Neither will I condemn thee.* As if he would thereby say: None of those who conducted thee hither hath condemned thee, and how, then, shall I condemn thee, I who came to save sinners? *Go in peace, and sin no more.*[3579]

Oh no, let us not be afraid of Jesus Christ; but let us be afraid of our own obstinacy, if after offending him we will not listen to his voice, inviting us to be reconciled. *Who is he that shall condemn?* says the apostle: *Christ Jesus that died; who also maketh intercession for us.*[3580] If we persist in our obstinacy, Jesus Christ will be constrained to condemn us; but if we repent of the evil we have done, what fear need we have of Jesus Christ? Who has to pronounce on us sentence? Think (says St. Paul) that the self-same Redeemer has to sentence thee who died just that he might not condemn thee; that self-same one who, that he might pardon thee, hath given himself no pardon: “In order to redeem the servant, He hath not spared himself.”[3581] says St. Bernard.

Go, then, O sinner, go to the stable of Bethlehem, and thank the Infant Jesus, all shivering with cold for thy sake in that cave, moaning and weeping for thee on a bundle of straw; give thanks to this thy Redeemer, who has come down from heaven to call thee to himself and to save thee. If thou art desirous of pardon, he is waiting thee in that manger to pardon thee. Go quickly, then, and obtain thy pardon; and afterwards do not forget the excessive love which Jesus Christ has borne thee: *Forget not the kindness of thy surety.*[3582] Forget not (says the prophet) that high favor he has done thee by making himself surety for thy debts to God, in taking on himself the chastisement deserved by thee; do not forget it, and love him for it. And know further, that shouldst thou love him, thy past sins will not stand in the way of thy receiving from God those specially great and choice graces which he is wont to bestow on his most beloved souls: *All things work together unto good.*[3583] "Even sins," subjoins the gloss. Yes, even the remembrance of the sins we have committed contributes to the advantage of the sinner who bewails and detests them, because this very thing will conquer to make him more humble and more pleasing to God, when he sees how God has welcomed him into the arms of his loving mercies: *There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just.*[3584]

But of what sinner it is to be understood that he gives more joy heaven than a whole multitude of just ones? It is to be understood of that sinner who, out of gratitude to the divine goodness, devotes himself wholly and fervently to the love of God, after the example of a St. Paul, a St. Mary Magdalene, a St. Mary of Egypt, a St. Augustine, and a St. Margaret of Cortona. To this last saint in particular, who had formerly spent several years in sin, God revealed the place prepared for her in heaven, amongst the Seraphim; and even during her life he showed her many signal favors, insomuch that, beholding herself so favored, she one day said to God, "O Lord, how is it that Thou lavishest so many graces on me? Hast Thou, then, forgotten the sins I have committed against Thee?" And God thus answered her: And do you not know what I have before told you, that when a soul repents of its faults I no longer remember all the outrages it has been guilty of towards me?" This same thing he had long ago announced by his Prophet Ezechiel: *If the wicked do penance . . . I will not remember all his iniquities.*[3585]

Let us conclude. Our sins, then, do not prevent us from becoming saints; God offers us readily every assistance if we only desire it and ask it. What more remains? It remains for us to give ourselves entirely to God, and to devote to his love at least the remainder of our days in this life. Come, then, let us bestir ourselves; what are we doing? If we fail, we fail through ourselves, and not through God. Let us never be so unhappy as to turn all these mercies and loving calls of God into subjects of remorse and despair upon our death-bed, at that last moment when no more time is left to do anything; then the night sets in: *The night cometh, when no man can work.*[3586]

Let us recommend ourselves to the most holy Mary, who, as St. Germanus says, makes it her glory to turn the most abandoned sinners into saints, by procuring for them the grace of conversion, not in an ordinary, but in an extraordinary degree; and this she is well able to do, because what she asks of Jesus Christ she asks as a Mother: “But thou, powerful with God by thy maternal authority, obtainest a wonderful grace of reconciliation for sinners, even for those who have sinned enormously;”[3587] and she herself encourages us in those words put into her mouth by the Holy Church: *With me are riches . . . that I may enrich them that love me;*[3588] and elsewhere *In me is all grace of the way and of the truth, in me is all hope of life and of virtue.*[3589] Come to me all, she says, because you shall find with me every hope of saving yourselves, and of saving yourselves as saints.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my Redeemer and God! and who am I, that Thou shouldst have loved me, and still continuest to love me, so much? What hast Thou ever received from me that has obliged Thee so to love me? what, except slights and provocations, which were a reason for Thee to abandon me, and to banish me forever from Thy face? But, O Lord! I accept of every penalty except this. If Thou dost forsake me, and deprive me of Thy grace, I can nevermore love Thee. I have not the pretensions to escape punishment; but I wish to love Thee, and to love Thee exceedingly. I wish to love Thee as a sinner is bound to love Thee, who, after so many special favors, and so many marks of love received from Thee, has, in spite of all, so frequently turned his back upon Thee; who, for the sake of wretched momentary and poisonous gratifications, has renounced Thy grace and Thy love Pardon me, O my beloved Infant, for I am sorry with my whole heart for every single displeasure I have given Thee. But know that I shall not be content with a simple pardon; I desire also the grace to love Thee ardently; I wish to make compensation by my love as much as possible for the past ingratitude which I have shown Thee. An innocent soul loves Thee as innocent, and thanks Thee for having preserved it from the death of sin. I must love Thee as a sinner; that is, as one who has rebelled against Thee, as one condemned to hell, as often as I deserved it; and then so often graciously received back by Thee and re established in the way of salvation, and over and above enriched with lights, with helps, with invitations to become a saint. O Redeemer, and Redeemer again and again of my soul! my soul is now enamoured of Thee, and loves Thee. Thou hast loved me above measure, so that, overcome by Thy love, I could no longer resist its winning appeals, and at last I now surrender myself, and fix all my love on Thee. I love Thee, then, O infinite Goodness! I love Thee, O most lovable God! Do Thou never cease to enkindle more and more in my heart the flames and fiery darts of love. For Thy own glory cause Thyself to be greatly loved by one who has greatly offended Thee. Mary, my Mother, thou art the hope, the refuge of sinners; assist a sinner who desires to prove faithful to his God; help me to love him, and to love him exceedingly.

Discourse V

THE ETERNAL WORD FROM BEING STRONG BECAME WEAK

> Dicite pusillanimis: Confortamini, et nolite timere: . . . Deus ipse veniet, et salvabit vos
>
> “Say to the faint-hearted: Take courage, and fear not: God Himself will come and will save you.”—Isa. 35:4.

Isaias, speaking of the coming of the Redeemer, made this prediction: *The land that was desolate and impassable shall be glad, and the wilderness shall rejoice and shall flourish like the lily.*[3590] The Prophet had been speaking of the pagans (among whom were our unfortunate ancestors), who were living in heathendom, as in a desert land, void of a single man that knew and worshipped the true God, but peopled only with those who were slaves of the devil: a desert land and impassable, because there was no path of salvation known to these wretched people. And he foretold that the land, though so miserable then, would afterwards rejoice at the coming of the Messias, and would see itself filled with followers of the true God, strengthened by his grace against all the enemies of their salvation; and that it would blossom as the lily, by purity of morals and by the sweet odor of all holy virtues. Wherefore Isaias proceeds to say: *Say to the faint-hearted, Take courage, and fear not: God Himself will come and save you.*[3591] This very event, foretold by Isaias, has already happened. Let me, then, exclaim with gladness: Go on joyfully, O children of Adam! go on joyfully, be no more faint-hearted. Even though you perceive yourselves weak, and unable to stand against so many enemies, “Fear not; God himself will come and save you.”[3592] God himself has come earth, and has redeemed us, by imparting to you strength sufficient to combat and to vanquish every enemy of your salvation.

How did our Redeemer procure for us this strength? From being *strong* and omnipotent, he has become *weak.* He has taken on himself our weakness, and by so doing has communicated to us his strength. Let us see the truth of this. But let us first seek light of Jesus and Mary.

I

God is that strong one who alone can be called strong, because he is strength itself; and whoever is strong derives strength from him: *Strength is Mine, and by Me kings reign,*[3593] saith the Lord. God is that mighty one who can do whatsoever he will; and he can do this with ease; he has merely to wish it: *Behold, Thou hast made heaven and earth by Thy great power, and no word shall be hard to Thee.*[3594] By a nod he created heaven and earth out of nothing: *He spoke, and they were made.*[3595] And did he choose to do so, he could destroy the immense machinery of the universe by a single nod, as he created it: *At a beck He can utterly destroy the whole world.*[3596] We know already how, when it pleased him, he burnt five entire cities with a deluge of fire. We know how, previously to that, he inundated the whole earth with a deluge of waters, to the destruction of all mankind, with the sole exception of eight persons. *O Lord*, says the wise man: *who can ever resist the strength of your arm?*[3597]

Hence we may see the rashness of the sinner who wrestles against God, and carries his audacity so far as even to lift up his hand against the Almighty: *He hath stretched out his hand against the God, and hath strengthened himself against the Almighty.*[3598] Suppose we should see an ant make an assault upon a soldier, would we not think it rashness? But how much more rash is it for a man who makes an assault on the Creator himself, who scorns his precepts, disregards his threats, despises his grace, and declares himself his enemy!

But these rash and ungrateful men are the very men whom the Son of God has come to save, by making himself man, and by taking on himself the chastisement deserved by them, in order to obtain pardon for them. And then seeing that man from the wounds inflicted by sin continued very weak and powerless to resist the strength of his enemies, what did he do? From strong and almighty as he was, he became weak, and assumed to himself the bodily infirmities of man, in order to procure for man by His merits the strength of soul requisite to subdue the attacks of the flesh and of hell. And so, behold him made a little child, in need of milk to sustain his life, and so feeble that he cannot feed himself, that he cannot move himself.

The Eternal Word, in coming to be made man, wished to conceal his strength: *God will come from the south; there is His strength hid.*[3599] We find (says St. Augustine) Jesus Christ strong and feeble,—strong, since he created all thing; feeble, since we behold him made like us: “we find Jesus strong and weak, strong, by whom all things were made without labor. Would you see him weak? The Word was made flesh,”[3600] Now this strong one has chosen to become weak, says the saint, to repair by his weakness our infirmity, and so to obtain our salvation: *He hath built us by His strength, He hath sought us His infirmity.*[3601] For this reason he likens himself to the hen, when he speaks with Jerusalem: *How of ten would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings! and thou wouldst not.*[3602] St. Augustine remarks that the hen in rearing her chickens grows weak, and by this mark is known to be a mother; so was it with our loving Redeemer, by becoming infirm and weak, he made himself known for the father and mother of us poor weak creatures.

Behold him who governs the heavens (says St. Cyril) swathed in rags, and unable ever to stretch forth his little arms.[3603] Behold him in that journey which by his Father’s will he had to make into Egypt; he wished already to obey, but he cannot walk; Mary and Joseph are obliged to take turns in carrying him in their arms. And in their return from Egypt, as St. Bonaventure contemplates, they have frequently to stop and rest, because the divine child was now so much grown that he was too large to be carried in the arms; whilst, on the other hand, he was too small and feeble to make a long journey: “He is so large that he cannot be carried, and so small that he cannot walk alone.”[3604]

Look at him afterwards in the shop at Nazareth, growing towards manhood, how busily he toils and labors in helping Joseph at his trade of carpenter! Who can ever attentively consider Jesus, that beautiful youth, fatiguing and exhausting himself to bring into form some rough-hewn piece of wood, and not exclaim: But, most sweet youth, art Thou not that God, who by a mere nod didst create the world out of nothing? And how comes it that Thou hast labored now for a whole day, and bathed in sweat, to fashion this piece of wood; and even still Thy work remains unfinished? Who has reduced Thee to such a state of weakness? O holy faith! O divine love! O God! O God! how such a thought as this, if once well penetrated, would suffice, not only to inflame us, but to reduce us, so to speak, into ashes with the fire of love! Has a God, then, come to such a pass as this? and wherefore? To make himself loved by men!

Observe him, again, at the close of his life bound with cords in the garden, from which he cannot loose himself; tied in the prætorium to a pillar to undergo the scourging; see him with the cross on his shoulders, but too feeble to carry it, and therefore he frequently falls upon the road; see him fixed to the cross with nails, from which he can find no escape; behold him, finally, how for very exhaustion and weakness, he is already in his agony, draws near his end, and expires.

II

And for what reason did Jesus Christ become so weak? He made himself weak, as we said above, that so he might communicate his strength to us, and by this means conquer and subdue the power of hell: *The lion of the tribe of Juda hath prevailed.*[3605] David says that the will to save us and to free us from death is a part and property of God’s divine nature. Our God is the God of salvation: *And of the Lord, of the Lord are the issues from death.*[3606] On which passage Bellarmine makes this commentary: “This is proper to him, this is his very nature; our God is a saving God, and of our God are the issues of death—that is, the delivery from death.”[3607] Are we indeed weak? let us put our trust in Jesus Christ, and we shall be capable of all thing: *I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me,*[3608] said the Apostle. I am able for all things, not by my own strength, but by the strength which my Redeemer has obtained for me through his merits: *Have confidence, I have overcome the world.*[3609] Take courage, my children, Jesus Christ says to us; if you are unable to resist your enemies, *I have overcome the world;* and know that I have overcome it for you. My conquest was to give you the spoils; avail yourselves now of the arms which I leave you to defend yourselves, for you are sure to triumph.

What are the arms which Jesus Christ has left us? They are two, the use of the sacraments and prayer.

Everybody knows that by means of the sacraments, especially of penance and the Holy Eucharist, are imparted to us the graces which our Saviour has merited for us; and experience shows us every day that those who frequent the sacraments easily keep themselves in the grace of God. And, especially, how is he that often communicates strengthened in a wonderful manner to vanquish temptations! The Holy Eucharist is called bread, the heavenly bread, that we may understand how the Communion preserves the life of the soul, which is divine grace, just as earthly bread preserves the life of the body. For the same reason the Council of Trent calls Holy Communion a remedy which relieves us from venial and preserves us from mortal sins: “An antidote by which we are freed from daily faults, and are preserved from mortal sins.[3610] St. Thomas, speaking of the Holy Eucharist, says that the wound left by sin would remain incurable, were it not for this remedy which is given to us. “It would be incurable, were it not the medicine of God applied to cure us.”[3611] Moreover, Innocent III. says that the Passion of Jesus Christ delivers us from the chains of sin, and the Holy Communion delivers us from the will to sin: “The mystery of the Cross delivers us from the power of sin; the mystery of the Eucharist, from the will to sin.”[3612]

The other grand means of overcoming temptations is prayer offered to God through the merits of Jesus Christ: *Amen*, *Amen*, *I say to you* (said our Redeemer), *if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*”[3613] Whatsoever, then, we ask of God in the name of Jesus Christ, that is, through his merits, we shall certainly obtain it. And this, we see, happens coutinually; all those who are tempted and have recourse to God, and invoke him through Jesus Christ, invariably come off victorious; and, on the contrary, those who in temptation (especially of impurity) neglect to recommend them selves to God, fall miserably and perish. And then they excuse themselves by saying they are but of flesh, and are very weak. But how can they reasonably allege their weakness as an excuse, when they are able to acquire strength by having recourse to Jesus Christ (for it is enough to call with confidence on his Most Holy Name), and they will not do so? What excuse, I say, would that man have for having been vanquished by his enemy, who, when the requisite arms for his defence were presented him, had despised and refused them? Were such a man to allege his weakness, who would not instantly condemn him with these words,—And you, knowing as you did your own weakness, why did you not avail youself of the arms that were offered you?

St. Augustine says that the devil was put in chains by Jesus Christ; he can bark, but he cannot bite any one, except those who wish to be bitten. That man is really a fool (continues the saint) who allows himself to be bitten by a dog chained up: “Christ came and chained the devil. He is bound in chains like a dog. Foolish is the man whom a dog in chains bites. He can bark, he can make attempts; he can only bite him who wills so; for he does not extort our consent from us, but seeks it.”[3614] And in another passage he says that the Redeemer has given us every remedy to effect our cure; he that will not observe the laws and is put to death, dies because he wishes his own death. “As far as the physician is concerned, he came to heal; he destroys himself who will not observe the laws.”[3615] He that takes advantage of Jesus Christ is not weak; no, but he waxes strong on the strength of Jesus Christ. Jesus it is who, as St. Augustine says, not only cheers us on to the combat, but affords us help; if we fail, he is ready to succor us; and of his immense goodness he himself crowns us in the end: “He encourages you to fight, and helps you to conquer, and supports you if you languish, and crowns you victorious.”[3616] Isaias prophesied, *Then shall the lame man leap as a hart;*”[3617] that is, by the merits of the Redeemer, he who could not stir one step should skip over the hills as a swift hart: *And that which was dry land shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water;*[3618] he foretells that the most parched-up soil should teem with virtues: *In the dens where dragons dwelt before shall rise up the verdure of the reed and the bulrush;*[3619] and that in those souls in which devils formerly abode should be propagated the vigor of the reed,—namely, of humility, because, according to the commentary of Cornelius à Lapide, “the humble man is empty in his own eyes;”[3620] and of the bulrush,—namely, of charity, because, as the same commentator says, in certain places they use it for wicks to burn in lamps.

In a word, we find in Jesus Christ all grace, all strength, all help, whenever we have recourse to him: *In all things you are made rich in Him, so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace.*[3621] For this very end he was made man, and emptied himself: “*He emptied Himself.*”[3622] “He, as it were, reduced himself to nothing,” says a certain author; “He made himself empty of majesty, of glory, of strength."[3623] In a manner, he lowered himself to nothing; he put off his majesty, glory, and power, and took on himself ignominies and infirmities, to make over to us his worth and his virtues, that so he might be our light, our justice, our satisfaction, and our ransom: *Who is made unto us wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption.*[3624] And he remains ready at any moment to give health and strength to every one that asks him.

I saw one girt about the paps with a golden girdle.[3625] St. John saw the Lord with his breasts full of milk (that is, full of graces), and bound about with a girdle of gold: this signifies that Jesus Christ is, it were, hemmed round and compressed with the love he bears to man; and as the mother, whose breast is oversupplied with milk, seeks for children who may imbibe the nourishment and relieve her of the burden, so does he yearn for us to come and seek graces of him, and the necessary help to conquer our enemies, who strive to rob us of his friendship and of eternal salvation.

Oh, how bounteous and liberal is God with a soul that sincerely and resolutely seeks him! *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him.*[3626] Wherefore, if we do not become saints, the failure rests with us, because we do not resolve to wish for God alone: *The sluggard willeth and willeth not.*[3627] The lukewarm will and will not; and therefore they remain defeated, because they want the resolute will to please God alone. A resolute will overcomes everything; for when once a soul determines really to give itself wholly to God, God immediately gives it the hand and the strength to surmount all difficulties that may occur in the way of perfection. This was the splendid promise which Isaias signified to us in these words: *O, that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and wouldst come down; the mountains would melt away at Thy presence.*[3628] *The crooked shall become straight, and the rough ways plain.*[3629] At the coming of the Redeemer he will endow our souls with such a strength of good-will that will find levelled down the mountains of all the carnal appetites; and they will find the crooked ways made straight, and the rough ways plain; that is, the contempts and labors which formerly were so difficult and hard for men to bear will, by means of the grace given by Jesus Christ, and of the divine love which he enkindles in their hearts, be afterwards all made sweet and easy. Thus was it that St. John of God rejoiced at being beaten as a fool in a hospital; thus St. Lidwine was glad to find herself during so many years tied down to her bed by a body full of wounds and sores; thus St. Laurence exulted and mocked the tyrant, while scorching on a gridiron, and giving his life for Jesus Christ. And so likewise do so many souls enamoured of God find peace and contentment, not, indeed, in the pleasures and honors of the world, but in sufferings and insults.

Ah! let us beg Jesus Christ to impart to us that fire which he came on earth to enkindle; that so we may no longer find it difficult to despise goods of dirt, and to undertake great things for God. "He that loves, labors not,"[3630] says St. Augustine; the soul that loves God only finds it neither irksome nor painful to suffer, to pray, to mortify itself, to humble itself, and to detach itself from the pleasures of earth. The more it works and suffers, the more it is eager to do and to suffer: *Jealousy is hard as hell; the lamps thereof are fire and flames.*[3631] The flames of divine love are like the flames of hell, which never say it is enough. Nothing whatever satisfies a soul that loves God. As for hell no fire is sufficient, so for the loving soul its ardor is sufficient, so for the loving soul its ardor is never satisfied.

Let us ask this great gift through the intercession of Mary, by whose hands (as was revealed to St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi) divine love is bestowed upon souls. She is God's treasure, the treasurer of all graces (especially of divine love), as she was called by the Idiota, "The treasure and the treasurer of graces."[3632]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My sovereign God and Redeemer, I was lost; Thou hast ransomed me from hell. But, unhappy me! I have often afterwards lost myself anew, and Thou hast as often released me from eternal death: "I am Thine, save me."[3633] Since, as I hope, I am now Thine, suffer me never more to cast myself away by rebelling against Thee. I am resolved to suffer death, and a thousand deaths, rather than see myself ever again Thy enemy and the slave of the devil. But Thou knowest my weakness, Thou knowest my past treacheries. Thou must give me strength to resist the assaults which hell will make upon me. I know that I shall be assisted by Thee in temptation whenever I shall have recourse to Thee, since I have Thy promise for it: *Ask, and you shall receive.*[3634] *Every one that asketh receiveth.*[3635] But my fear is, lest in the moment of trial I should fail to recommend myself to Thee, and so be miserably overcome. This, therefore, is the grace which I most earnestly implore of Thee: grant me light and strength on all occasions to have recourse to Thee, and to invoke Thee whenever I am tempted; and, moreover, I entreat Thee to grant me Thy help, that I may always ask Thee for this grace. Grant it me by the merits of Thy Precious Blood. And thou, O Mary, obtain it for me by the love which thou bearest to Jesus Christ.

Discourse VI

THE ETERNAL WORD FROM BEING HIS OWN HAS MADE HIMSELF OURS

Parvulus natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis.

“A child is born to us, and a Son is given to us.”—Is. 11:6

Tell me, cruel Herod, why dost thou command so many innocent babes to be murdered and sacrificed to thy ambition of reigning? Art thou perchance afraid that the Messias lately born may rob thee of thy kingdom? “Why art thou so troubled, Herod?” asks St. Fulgentius. “This king who is born came not to vanquish kings by fighting, but to subdue them by dying,”[3636] This King, of whom thou art in such terror, is not come to conquer the monarchs of the earth by force of arms, but he is come to reign in the hearts of men by suffering and dying for their love. “He came, therefore” (concludes St. Fulgentius), “not that he might combat alive, but that he might triumph slain.”[3637] Our amiable Redeemer did not come to carry on war during his life, but to triumph over the love of men, when he should have laid down his life on the gibbet of the cross, as he himself said: *When I shall be lifted up, I will draw all things to Myself.*[3638]

But let us leave Herod aside, O devout souls, and let us come to ourselves. Why, then, did the Son of God come upon earth? was it to give himself to us? Yes, Isaias assures us of it: *A child is born to us, and a Son is given to us.*[3639] The love which this loving Saviour bears us, and the desire which he has to be loved by us, has induced him to do this. Being his own, he has become ours. Let us see it; but let us first ask light from the Most Holy Sacrament and from the divine Mother.

I

The greatest privilege of God, nay, the whole of God, is to be his own, that is, to exist of himself, and to depend on no one. All creatures, however grand and excellent they may be, are nothing in reality, because whatsoever they have, they have from God, who has created them and preserves them; and this in such a manner that if God were for a single moment to cease from preserving them, they would instantly lose their being and return to nothing. God, on the contrary, because he exists of himself, cannot fail; nor can there be any one to destroy him, or to diminish his greatness, his power, or his happiness. But St. Paul says that the Eternal Father has given the Son has given himself for us: *He delivered Him up for us all.*[3640] And that the Son has given himself for us: *Christ also hath loved, us and hath delivered Himself for us.*[3641] Has God, then, in giving himself for us, made himself ours? Yes, replies St. Bernard: “He is born, who belonged to himself;”[3642] he who wholly appertained to himself chose to be born for us and to become ours; love triumphs over God.[3643] This God, over whom none besides can rule, has, so to speak, yielded himself captive to love; love has gained the victory over him, and from being his own has reduced him into our possession: *God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son.*[3644] God has so loved men, says Jesus Christ, that he has even given them his only-begotten Son. And the Son himself, also through love, was pleased to give himself to men to be loved by them.

In divers ways had God already striven to win the hearts of men, at one time benefits, at another with threats, and again with promises; but he had still fallen short of his aim. His infinite love, says St. Augustine, made him devise the plan of giving himself entirely to us by the Incarnation of the Word, in order thus to oblige us to love him with our whole hearts. “Then love found out the plan of delivering up itself.”[3645] He could have sent an angel, a seraph, to redeem man; but, aware that man, had he been redeemed by a seraph, would have had to divide his heart, by partly loving his Creator and partly his redeemer, God, who would possess the entire heart and the entire love of man, “wished therefore to be” (says a pious author) “both our Creator and Redeemer;”[3646] as he was our Creator, so he would likewise become our Redeemer.

And behold him already arrived from heaven in a stable; as a child, born for us and given to us: *A child is born to us, and a Son is given to us.*[3647]

This was precisely what the angel signified when addressing the shepherds: *To-day is born to you a Saviour.*[3648] As much as to say: O ye men, go to the cave of Bethlehem; there adore the Infant, which you will find laid on the straw, in a manger, and shivering with cold; know that he is your God, who would not consent to send any one else to save you, but would come himself, that he might gain for himself all your love.

Yes, it was with the purpose of making himself loved that the Eternal Word came upon earth to converse among men: *He conversed with men.*[3649] If a king speaks a confidential word to one of his vassals, if he smiles upon him, or presents him with a flower, oh, how honored and happy does that vassal consider himself! How much more so, should the king seek his friendship; should he request his company every day at table; should he desire him to take up his residence in his own palace, and to abide always near him! Ah! my Great King, my beloved Jesus, as before the Redemption Thou couldst not assume man into heaven, whose gates remained closed by sin, Thou camest down upon earth to converse with men as their brothers, and to give Thyself wholly to them, from the excess of the love Thou bearest them! *He loved us and delivered Himself up for us.*[3650] Yes, exclaims St. Augustine this most loving and most merciful God, through his love to man, chose to give him not only his goods, but even his very self. “The most merciful God, through his love of man, poured out upon him not only his goods, but his whole self.”[3651]

Well, then, the affection which this sovereign Lord entertains towards us miserable worms is so immense that it induced him to give himself wholly to us, being born for us, living for us, and even offering up his life and all his blood for us, in order to prepare us a bath of salvation, and to wash us from all our sins: *He hath loved us and washed us in His own blood.*[3652] But, Lord (remonstrates the Abbot Guerric), this appears an extreme prodigality of Thyself, coming from the great anxiety Thou hast to be loved by mankind. “O God! if we may dare say so, prodigal of Himself through desire of man!”[3653] “And is it not so?” he continues: “how otherwise can we style this God than prodigal of himself who, in order to recover lost man, not only gives whatever he has, but even his own self?”[3654]

St. Augustine says that God, in order to captivate the love of men, has cast several darts of love into their hearts: “God knows how to take aim at love; he draws the arrow that he may make a lover."[3655] What are these arrows? They are all the creatures that we see around us; for God has created them all for man, that man might love him; hence the same saint says, "Heaven and earth and all things tell me to love Thee."[3656] It seemed to the saint that the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the plains, the seas, and the rivers spoke to him and said, Augustine, love God, because God has created us for thee, that thou mightest love him. When St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi held in her hand a beautiful fruit or flower, she declared that that fruit or flower was as a dart to her heart, which wounded her with the love of God; thinking as she did how from all eternity God had designed to create that flower that she might discover his love, and love him in return. St. Teresa, moreover, said that all the fair things which we see,—the lakes, the rivers, the flowers, the fruits, the birds,—all upbraid us with our ingratitude to God, for all are tokens of the love God bears us. It is related likewise of a pious hermit, that, walking in the country, and beholding the herbs and the flowers, he fancied they reproached him with his ingratitude; so that, as he went along, he struck them gently with his staff, saying to them: Hush, be silent, I understand you, no more! you upbraid me with my ingratitude, because God has created you in such beauty for my sake, that I might love him, and I love him not; oh, be silent, I hear you, enough, enough! And thus the good man pursued his way, giving vent to the ardors of love which he felt consuming his heart for God at the sight of those fair creatures.

Thus, then, all these creatures were so many darts of love to the heart of man; but God was not satisfied with these darts only; they were not enough to gain him the love of men: *He hath made me as a chosen arrow; in his quiver he hath hidden me.*[3657] On this passage Cardinal Hugo remarks, that as the sportsman keeps in reserve the best arrow for the last shot, in order to secure his prey; so did God among all his gifts keep Jesus in reserve till the fulness of time should come, and then he sent him as a last dart to wound with love the hearts of men: "The choicest arrow is reserved; so Christ was reserved in the bosom of the Father, until the fulness of time should come, and he was sent to wound the hearts of the faithful."[3658] Jesus, then, was the choice and reserved arrow, at the discharge of which, according as David had long ago foretold, entire nations should fall vanquished: *Thy arrows are* *sharp; under Thee shall people fall.*[3659] Oh, how many stricken hearts do I behold burning with love before the manger of Bethlehem! how many at the foot of the cross in Calvary! how many before the Holy Presence of the Blessed Sacrament on our altars!

St. Peter Chrysologus says that our Redeemer took many various forms to attract the love of man: "For our sake he showed himself under different forms, who remains in the one form of his majesty."[3660] That God, who is unchangeable, would appear now as a child in a stable, now as a boy in a workshop, now as a criminal on a scaffold, and now as bread upon the altar. In these varying guises Jesus chose to exhibit himself to us; but whatever character he assumed, it was always the character of a lover. Ah, my Lord, tell me, is there anything else left for Thee to devise in order to make Thyself loved? *Make known his inventions,* cried out Isaias.[3661] Go, O redeemed souls, said the prophet, go and publish everywhere the loving devices of this loving God, which he has thought out and executed to make himself loved by man; for after lavishing so many of his gifts upon them, he was pleased to bestow himself, and to bestow himself in so many ways: "If thou desirest a cure for thy wound" (says St. Ambrose), "he is a Physician;"[3662] if thou art infirm and wouldst be healed, behold Jesus, who heals thee by his Blood: "If thou be parched up with fever, he is a fountain;"[3663] if the impure flames of worldly affections trouble thee, behold the fountain to refresh thee with his consolations. "Dost thou fear death, he is life; dost thou long for heaven, he is the way; in fine, if thou dost not wish to die, he is the life; if thou wishest heaven, he is the way."[3664]

And not only has Jesus Christ given himself to all men in general, but he wished, moreover, to give himself to each one in particular. This was what caused St. Paul to say, *He loved me and delivered Himself for me.*[3665] St. John Chrysostom says that God has the same love for each one of us as he has for all men together.[3666] So that, my dear brother, it there had been no others in the world beside yourself, the Redeemer would have come for the sake of you alone, and would have given his blood and his life for you. And who can ever express or conceive (says St. Laurence Justinian) the love which God bears to each man? "Nor is it possible to express with what affection God is moved towards each one."[3667] This led St. Bernard to say also, in speaking of Jesus Christ, “Given wholly to me, and spent wholly for my interests.”[3668] This caused St. John Chrysostom also to say, “He gave himself entirely to us, he reserved nothing for himself.”[3669] He gave us his blood, his life, himself in the Blessed Sacrament; there remains nothing more to give us. In fine, says St. Thomas, after God has bestowed himself on us, what else remains for him to give us? “God had no room to extend himself further.”[3670] Wherefore after the work of the redemption, God has nothing more to give us, nothing more that he can do for the love of man.

II

So that every man should say, with St. Bernard, “I owe myself for myself; what can I return the Lord for himself?”[3671] I belong to God, and to God I must give back myself, for having created me and given me my being; but after I have given myself, what return shall I make to God for having given himself to me? We have, however, no need to disturb ourselves any longer; it is enough if we give our love to God, and God is satisfied. The kings of the earth glory in the possession of kingdoms and of wealth, Jesus Christ rests content with the sovereignty of our hearts; this he considers his principality; and this principality he sought to obtain by dying on the cross: *And the government is upon his shoulder.*[3672] By these words, “the government is upon his shoulder,”[3673] several interpreters, with St. Basil, St. Cyril, St. Augustine, and others, understand the cross which our Redeemer carried on his shoulders. This heavenly King, says Cornelius à Lapide, is a very different master from the devil: the devil burdens the backs of his subjects with heavy loads; Jesus, on the contrary, takes on his own shoulders the burdens of his kingdom, embracing the cross, on which he will die, in order to gain the mastery of our hearts: “The devil lays burdens on the shoulders of his subjects, Christ will bear the weight of his government on his shoulders; for he will carry the sceptre of his kingdom—that is, the cross—on his own shoulders, and will reign from the tree.”[3674] It is the remark of Tertullian that while earthly monarchs bear the sceptre and crown as symbols of royalty, Jesus Christ bore the Cross, which was the throne which he mounted to rule over our love: “Every king bears the symbol of his power on his shoulder, and a diadem on his head, or a sceptre in his hand. The king Jesus Christ alone bore his power on his shoulder, namely, the cross, that from it he might rule."[3675]

Hence, Origen says, if it be that Jesus Christ has given himself to each one, what great thing will a man do if he give himself wholly to Jesus Christ? "If Christ gave himself, will man do much in giving himself to God, who was the first to give himself to man?"[3676] Let us, then, with a good will give our heart and our love to this God, who, in order to gain it, has had to give his blood, his life, and his whole self: *If thou didst know the gift of God, and who He is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink.*[3677] Oh, if thou didst but know (said Jesus to the Samaritan woman) the grace which thou receivest from God, and who it is that asks of thee to drink! Oh, did the soul but understand what a favor it is when God requests us to love him in those words: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.*[3678] Should a subject hear his prince command him to love him, the bare mention of such a request would be enough to captivate him. And does not a God captivate us when he requires our heart? saying: *My son, give Me thy heart*[3679]

But this heart he will not have divided, he will have it whole and entire; he wishes us to love him with our whole heart: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart,*[3680] otherwise he is not content. For this end he has given us all his blood, his whole life, his whole self, in order that we may give our entire selves to him, and be wholly his. And let us understand that then we shall give our whole heart to God when we shall give him our will entirely, not wishing anything henceforward but what God wishes,—and he certainly only wishes our welfare and our happiness: *To this end Christ died and rose again, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living. Therefore whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.*[3681] Jesus was pleased to die for us; more than this he could not have done to win all our love, and to be the sole Lord of our heart: so that from this day forward we are bound to make known to heaven and to earth, in life and in death, that we are no longer our own, but that we belong solely and entirely to God.

Oh, how God longs to see, and how dearly he loves a heart that is wholly his! Oh, what delicate and loving caresses does God show, what good things, what delights, what glory does God prepare in Paradise for a heart that is wholly his!

The Venerable Father John Leonard of Lettera, a Dominican, one day beheld Jesus Christ under the appearance of a hunter, and traversing the forest of this earth with an arrow in his hand. The servant of God asked him what he was thus engaged about. Jesus answered that he was hunting after hearts. Who knows, I say, whether in this Novena the Infant Redeemer will have the success to hit and to make a prize of some hearts which he has been unable to wound and to capture!

Devout souls, if Jesus gain us, we shall also gain Jesus. The advantage of such an exchange is all on our side. “Teresa” (said the Lord one day to this saint), “up to this time you have not been all mine; now that you are all mine, be assured that I am all yours.” St. Augustine calls love “a bond which binds the lover with the loved one.”[3682] God has every wish to clasp us and unite us to himself; but it is also necessary for us to strive and unite ourselves to God. If we wish God to give entirely to us, it is likewise necessary for us to give ourselves entirely to him.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Oh! happy me, if, from this day forward, I shall be able always to say with the sacred spouse, *My Beloved to me and I to Him.*[3683] My God, my Beloved has given himself all to me; it is but reasonable for me to give myself all to my God, and to say. *What have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth?*[3684]

Oh, my beloved Infant, my dear Redeemer, since Thou hast come down from heaven to give Thyself to me, what else shall I go about seeking Good, my only treasure, the Paradise of souls? Be Thou, then, the sole Lord of my heart, do thou possess it wholly. May my heart obey Thee alone, and seek to please Thee alone! May my soul love Thee alone, and mayest Thou alone be its portion! Let others strive after and enjoy (if enjoyment can ever be found out of Thee) the goods and fortunes of this world; Thee alone do I desire, who art my fortune, my riches, my peace, my hope in this life and in eternity. Behold, then, my heart; I give it wholly to Thee; it is no longer mine own, but Thine. In the same manner as at Thy entrance into the world Thou didst offer to the Eternal Father, and present to him Thine entire will, as David has taught: *In the head of the book it is written of Me, that I should do Thy will; O my God, I have desired it;*[3685] so do I on this day offer to

Thee, my Saviour, my entire will. At one time it was rebellious against Thee, and with it I offended Thee; but for all the wicked consent by which I have miserably forfeited Thy friendship I am now heartily sorry, and I consecrate my entire will to Thee. *Lord, what will thou have me to do!*[3686] tell me what Thou desirest of me, for I am willing to do all. Dispose of me and of affairs as Thou wilt, for I accept of all, and in everything I resign myself to Thee. I know well that Thou willest what is best for me, and therefore I abandon my soul fully into Thy hands: *Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.*[3687] For pity's sake, help it and preserve it! and grant that it may be always and entirely Thine own, since Thou hast redeemed it with last drop of Thy blood: *Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.*[3688]

O happy thou, most holy Virgin Mary! thou wert wholly and always God's own,—all fair, all pure, and without spot: *Thou art all beautiful, and there is no stain in thee.*[3689] Thou alone, among all souls, wert styled by thy Spouse his dove, his perfect one: *One is My dove, My perfect one.*[3690] Thou art the garden closed against every imperfection and fault, and all laden with the flowers and fruits of virtue. Ah, my Queen and my Mother, thou who art so lovely in the eyes of God, take pity on my soul, which has become so deformed by sin. But if for the past I have not belonged to God, now I wish to be his, and his entirely. I wish to spend the remainder of my life solely in loving my Redeemer, who hast loved me so much; suffice it to say, who has given his entire self to me. O my hope, procure me strength to be grateful and faithful to him till death! Amen. This is my hope, so may it be!

Discourse VII

THE ETERNAL WORD FROM BEING HAPPY MADE HIMSELF AFFLICTED

Et erunt oculi tui videntes Præceptorem tuum

“And thy eyes shall see thy teacher.”—Isa. 30:20.

St. John says, *All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life.*[3691] Behold the three sinful loves which held dominion over man after the sin of Adam,—the love of pleasures, the love of riches, the love of honors, which generate human pride. The divine Word, to teach us, by his example, the mortification of the senses, by which the love of pleasures is subdued, from being happy became afflicted; to teach us detachment from the goods of this earth, from rich he became poor; and, finally, to teach us humility, which overcomes the love of honors, from being exalted he became humble. We will speak on these three points during these three last days of the Novena; to-day let us speak of the first.

Our Redeemer came, then, to teach us the love of the mortification of the senses more by the example of his life than by the doctrines which he preached; and, therefore, from happy, as he is and had always been from all eternity, he became afflicted. Let us see it, and let us ask light of Jesus and Mary.

I

The Apostle, speaking of the divine beatitude, calls God the only one happy and powerful: *The blessed and only mighty.*[3692] And with reason, because all the happiness which can be enjoyed by us his creatures is nothing more than the smallest participation of the infinite happiness of God. The blessed in heaven find therein their happiness; that is, in entering into the immense ocean of the happiness of God: *Enter Thou into the joy of thy Lord*.[3693] This is the paradise which God bestows on the soul at the moment it enters into possession of his eternal kingdom.

God, in creating man at the beginning, did not place him on earth to suffer, but put him into *the paradise of pleasure*.[3694] He put him in a place of delight, in order that he might pass thence to heaven, where he should enjoy for all eternity the glory of the blessed. But by sin unhappy man made himself unworthy of the earthly, and closed against himself the gates of the heavenly paradise, wilfully condemning himself to death and to everlasting misery. But the Son of God, in order to rescue man from such a state of ruin, what did he do? From blessed and most happy as he was, he chose to become afflicted and tormented. Our Redeemer could, indeed, have rescued us from the hands of our enemies without suffering. He could have come on earth and continued in his happiness, leading here below a pleasant life, receiving the honor justly due to him as King and Lord of all. It was enough, as far as regarded the redemption, that he should have offered to God one drop of blood, one single tear, to redeem the world and an infinity of worlds: "the least degree of the suffering of Christ" (says the Angelic Doctor) "would have sufficed for redemption, on account of the infinite of his Person."[3695] But no: "*Having joy set before Him, He endured the Cross*.[3696] He renounced all honors and pleasures and made choice on earth of a life all full of toils and ignominies. Yes, says St. John Chrysostom, any action whatever of the Incarnate Word sufficed for redemption; but it did not suffice for the love which he bore to man. "What was sufficient for redemption was not sufficient for love."[3697] And whereas he that loves desires to see himself loved in return, Jesus Christ, in order to be loved by man, was pleased to suffer exceedingly, and to choose for himself a life of continual suffering, to put man under an obligation of loving him. Our Lord revealed to St. Margaret of Cortona that in his whole life he never experienced the smallest degree of sensible consolation: *Great as the sea is Thy destruction*.[3698] The life of Jesus Christ was bitter as the sea, which is thoroughly bitter and salt, and contains not drop of water that is sweet. And therefore Isaias justly calls Jesus Christ a *Man of sorrows,*[3699] as though he had been capable on this earth of nothing but anguish and sorrows. St. Thomas says that the Redeemer did not simply take on himself sorrows, but that “He endured sorrow in its highest degree;”[3700] whereby he would signify he chose to be the most afflicted man that had ever been upon earth, or should ever be hereafter.

Yes, because this Man was born on purpose to suffer, therefore he assumed a body particularly adapted for suffering. On entering the womb of Mary, as the Apostle tells us, he said to his Eternal Father, when he cometh into the world he saith, *Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not; but a body Thou hast fitted to Me.*[3701] My Father, Thou hast rejected the sacrifices of men, because they were not able to satisfy Thy divine justice for the offences committed against Thee: Thou hast given me a body, as I requested of Thee; a body delicate, sensitive, and made purposely for suffering; I gladly accept of this body, and I offer it to Thee; because by enduring in this body all the pains which will accompany me through my life, and shall finally cause my death upon the cross, I purpose to propitiate Thee towards the human race, and thus to gain for myself the love of mankind.

And behold him scarcely entered into the world, when he already begins his sacrifice by beginning to suffer; but in a manner far different from that in which men suffer. Other children, while remaining in the womb of their mothers, do not suffer, because they are only in their natural place; and if they do suffer in some slight degree, at least they are unconscious of what they feel, since they are deprived of understanding; but Jesus, while an infant, endures for nine months the darkness of that prison, endures the pain of not being able to move, and is perfectly alive to what he endures. It is for this reason that Jeremias said, *A woman shall compass a man.*[3702] He foretold that a woman, which was Mary, should bear enclosed in her womb, not a child indeed, but a man; a child truly as to age: but a perfect man as to the use of reason, since Jesus Christ was full of wisdom from the first instance in his life: *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*.[3703] Whence St. Bernard said, “Jesus was a man while not yet as born, but in wisdom, not in age.”[3704] And St. Augustine, “The unspeakably Wise was in his wisdom a speechless Infant.”[3705]

He comes forth, then, from the prison of his mother’s womb, but for what? is it perhaps to enjoy himself? He comes forth to fresh suffering, for he chooseth to be born in the depth of winter, in a cavern, where beasts find stabling, and at the hour of midnight; and he is born in such poverty that he has no fire to warm him, nor clothes enough to screen him from the cold. “A grand pulpit is that manger,”[3706] says St. Thomas of Villanova. Oh, how well does Jesus teach us the love of suffering in the grotto of Bethlehem! “In the stable” (adds Salmeron) “all is vile to the sight, unpleasant to the hearing, offensive to the smell, hard and revolting to the touch.”[3707] Everything in the stable is painful: everything is painful to the sight, for one sees nothing but rugged and dark rocks; everything is painful to the hearing, for he hears only the cries of brute beasts; everything is painful to the smell, from the stench of the litter that is scattered around; and everything is painful to the touch, for his cradle is only a narrow manger, and his bed only a handful of straw. Look on this Infant God, how he lies bound up in swaddling-clothes, so that he cannot stir: “God endures,” said St. Zeno, “to be bound in swaddling-clothes, because he had come to pay the debts of the whole world.”[3708] And hereupon St. Augustine remarks, “O Blessed rags, with which we wipe away the filth of sins!”[3709] Observe him how he trembles with cold; how he weeps, to let us know that he suffers, and offers to the Eternal Father those first tears to release us from that endless wailing which we had deserved! “Blessed tears,” says St. Thomas of Villanova, “which blot out our iniquities?”[3710] O tears for most blessed, since they obtain for us the pardon of our sins!

And thus did the life of Jesus Christ continue always in affliction and sorrow. But a short time after he was born he was obliged to fly as an exile, and wander into Egypt to escape out of the hands of Herod. Then, in that barbarous country he passed many years of his childhood poor and unknown. Nor was the life which he led on his return from Egypt, dwelling at Nazareth, very different up to the time when he received death from the hands of the executioner on the cross in a sea of sorrows and infamy.

But, besides, we must also well understand here that the pains which Jesus Christ endured in his Passion, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the crucifixion, his agony, death, and all the other torments, and ignominies which he suffered at the end of his life, he also suffered at the beginning; because from the beginning he had always before his eyes the sad scene of all the torments which he would have to suffer when about to leave this earth, as he predicted by the mouth of David: *My sorrow is* *continually before me.*[3711] We hide from the sick man the knife or the fire with which he is to be cut or cauterized in order to regain his health; but Jesus would not have the instruments of his Passion, by which he was to lose his life, that he might gain for us eternal life, hidden from his sight; he desired always to have before his eyes the scourge, the thorns, the nails the cross, which were to drain all the blood from his veins, till he died of pure grief, deprived of all consolation.

One day Jesus Christ appeared to Sister Magdalene Orsini, who had been suffering a heavy affliction for a long time, under the form of a crucifix, to comfort her by the remembrance of his Passion, and to animate her to bear her cross with patience. She said to him: “But Thou, my Lord, wast only three hours on the cross, while I have suffered this pain for many years.” Then our Lord from the cross replied: “Ignorant creature that Thou art! from the first moment that I was in the womb of Mary I suffered all that I had afterwards to suffer in my death.” “Christ,” says Novarinus, “even in the womb of his mother, had the impression of the cross on his mind; so that no sooner was he born than he might be said to have the principality on his shoulders.”[3712] So, then, My Redeemer, throughout Thy whole life I shall find Thee nowhere but on the cross: “Lord, I find Thee nowhere but on the cross,” said Dragone Ostiense. Yes, for the cross on which Jesus Christ died was ever in his mind to torment him. Even whilst sleeping, says Bellarmine, the sight of the cross was present to the heart of Jesus: “Christ had his cross always before his eyes. When he slept, his heart watched; nor was it ever free from the sight of the cross.”

But it was not so much the sorrows of his Passion which saddened and embittered the life of our Redeemer, as the sight of all the sins which men would commit after his death. These were the cruel executioners which made him live in continual agony, oppressed by such an overwhelming grief that pain alone would have been enough to make him die of pure sorrow. Father Lessius says that the alone of the ingratitude of mankind would have been sufficient to make Jesus Christ die of grief a thousand times.

The scourges, the cross, death itself, were not hateful objects to him, but most dear, chosen, and desired by himself. He had offered himself spontaneously to suffer them: *He was offered because it was His own* *will.*[3713] He did not give his life against his will, but by his own election, as he tells us by St. John: *I lay down my life for My sheep.*[3714] This was indeed the chief desire of whole life, that the time of his Passion should arrive, that the redemption of mankind might be completed; for this reason he said on the night preceding his death: *With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer.*[3715] And before this time arrived he seemed to console himself by saying, *I have a baptism, wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!*[3716] I must be baptized with the baptism of my own blood; not indeed to wash my own soul, but those of my sheep, from the stains of their sin; and how ardently do I desire the arrival of the hour when I shall be bleeding and dead on the cross! St. Ambrose says that the Redeemer was not afflicted by the fear of death, but by the delay of our redemption: "Not from the fear of his death, but from the delay of our redemptiom."[3717]

In a sermon on the Passion, St. Zeno describes Jesus Christ choosing for himself the trade of a carpenter in this world; for as such was he known and called: *Is not this the carpenter, and the son of a carpenter?*[3718] Because carpenters are always handling wood nails, it would seem that Jesus exercising this trade took pleasure in such things, seeing that they represented to him better than anything else the nails and the cross by which he willed to suffer: "The Son of God took delight in this work, in which the wood and the nails continually reminded him of the cross that awaited him."[3719]

Thus (to return to the point) we see it was not so much the thought of his Passion that afflicted the heart of our Redeemer, as the ingratitude with which mankind would repay his love. It was this ingratitude which made him weep in the stable of Bethlehem; which caused him to sweat blood in his deadly agony in the garden of Gethsemane; which filled him with such sorrow that he says even that it alone was sufficient to make him die: *My soul is sorrowful, even to death;*[3720] and, finally, this ingratitude it was which caused him to die in desolation and deprived of all consolation on the cross; for, says F. Suarez, Jesus Christ wished rather to satisfy for the pain of loss due to man than for the pain of sense.[3721] Therefore the pains which our Lord suffered in his soul were much greater than all those he suffered in his body.

II

We then, also, by our sins contributed to make the whole life of our Saviour embittered and afflicted. But let us thank his goodness in giving us time to remedy the evil which has been done.

How, then are we to remedy it? By bearing patiently all the crosses which he sends us for our good. And he himself tells us how we can bear these troubles with patience: *Put me as a seal upon thy heart.*[3722] Put upon thy heart the image of me crucified; which means to say consider my example and the pains which I have suffered for thee, so shalt thou bear all crosses in peace. St. Augustine says that this heavenly physician made himself weak, that he might heal our weakness by his own infirmity: “Wondrous medicine! the physician deigns to become sick, to heal his patient by his own infirmity,”[3723] according to that which Isaias says, *By His bruises we are healed.*[3724] To heal our souls, which are weakened by sin, this medicine of suffering was the only one necessary; and Jesus Christ desired to be the first to taste it, that we who are the true sinners should not refuse to take it also: “The physician drinks first, that the sick man may not hesitate to drink also.”[3725]

Believing this, says St. Epiphanius, as true followers of Jesus Christ, we ought to thank him when he sends us crosses: “It is a virtue peculiar to a Christian to give thanks when in adversity.”[3726] And this is reasonable, because by sending us crosses he makes us like to himself. St. John Chrysostom makes an observation which is very consoling; he says that when we thank God for his benefits, we do but give him that which we owe him; but that when we suffer some pain with patience for his love, then God in a certain way becomes our debtor: “If you thank God for good things, you pay a debt; if you thank him for evil things, you make him your debtor.”[3727]

If thou wouldst render love to Jesus Christ, says St. Bernard, learn from him how thou must love him: “Learn from Christ how to love Christ.”[3728] Be happy to suffer something for that God who has suffered so much for thee. The desire of pleasing Jesus Christ, and of making known to him the love they bore him, was that which rendered the saints hungry and thirsty, not for honors and pleasures, but for sufferings and contempt. This made the Apostle say, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our*

Lord Jesus Christ.[3729] Being a happy companion of his crucified God, he desired no other glory than that of seeing himself on the cross. This was also what made St. Teresa say, “Either to suffer or to die;”[3730] as if she had said, My Spouse, if it is Thy will to draw me to Thyself by death, behold I am ready to come, and I thank Thee for it; but if Thou wilt leave me any longer on this earth, I cannot trust myself to remain without suffering: “Either to suffer or to die.” It was this that made St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi go still farther: “To suffer, and not to die;” by which she meant, My Jesus, I desire to be in heaven, that I may love Thee more; but I desire still more to suffer, that I may repay in part the love which Thou hast shown towards me by suffering so much for me. And the Venerable Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified, a Sicilian nun, was so enamoured of sufferings that she went so far as to say, “Truly paradise is beautiful; but one thing is wanting, because there is no suffering.” For the same reason also St. John of the Cross, when Jesus appeared to him with his cross on his shoulders, and said him, John, ask what thou wilt of me, would ask for nothing but sufferings and contempt: “Lord, that I may suffer and be despised for Thy sake.”

If, then, we have not the strength to desire and seek for sufferings, let us at least try to accept with patience those tribulations which God sends us for our good: “Where there is patience, there is God,”[3731] says Tertullian. Where is God? Give me a soul that suffers with resignation, there assuredly is God: *The Lord is night unto them that are of a contrite heart.*[3732] The Lord takes delight in being near to those that are in affliction. But what kind of afflicted people? it must be those who suffer in peace, and are resigned to the divine will. To such as these God gives true peace, which consists, as St. Leo says, in uniting our will to the will of God: “True Christian peace consists in not being separated from the will of God.”[3733] St. Bonaventure tells us that the divine will is like honey, which makes even bitter things sweet and pleasant. The reason is this, that he who obtains all that he wishes has nothing left to desire: “Blessed is he who has everything he desires,”[3734] says St. Augustine. Therefore he who wills nothing but what God wills is always happy; for, as everything happens by the will of God, the soul has always that which it wills.

And when God sends us crosses, not only let us be resigned, but let us also thank him, since it is a sign that he means to pardon our sins, and save us from hell, which we have deserved. He who has offended God must be punished; and therefore we ought always to beg of him to chastise us in this world, and not in the next. That sinner is to be pitied who does not receive his chastisement in this life, but, on the contrary, is prosperous. May God preserve us from that mercy of which Isaias speaks: *Let us have pity on the wicked.*[3735] "I do not want this mercy," says St. Bernard; "such pity is worse than any anger."[3736] The prayer of the saint was, Lord, I desire not this mercy; for it is more terrible than any chastisement. When God does not punish a sinner in this life, it is a sign that he waits to punish him in eternity, where the punishment will have no end. St. Laurence Justinian says:

"From the price thy Redeemer had to pay, learn the value of his gifts and the gravity of thy sin."[3737] When we see a God dead on the cross, we ought to consider the great gift which he has made us in giving us his blood to redeem us from hell, and at the same time to understand the malice of sin, which made the death of a God necessary to obtain pardon for us: "Nothing," says Dragone, "frightens me away from sin so strongly as the sight of Thy Son suffering so exceedingly cruel a death as its penalty."[3738] O eternal God! nothing terrifies me more than to see Thy Son punished by so cruel a death on account of sin.

Let us therefore be comforted, when we see ourselves afflicted by God for our sins in this world; for it is a sign that he will show mercy to us in the next. The thought alone of having displeased so good a God, if we love him, ought to be of more consolation to us when we see ourselves chastised and afflicted, than if we were prosperous, and filled with the consolations of this world. St. John Chrysostom says, "If a man loves God, he will have more consolation in being punished for having offended so merciful a Lord than if he were to escape unpunished."[3739] Any one who loves another (continues the saint) is more punished in thinking that he has grieved the person whom he loves than at the punishment he receives for his crime.

Let us, then, be consoled when we are suffering; and if these reflections are not sufficient to console us, let us go to Jesus Christ, and he will console us, as he has promised to all: *Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.*[3740] When we have recourse to our Lord, he will either deliver us from our affliction, or will give us strength to bear it patiently. And this is a greater grace then the former; because the tribulations which we bear with resignation, not only enable us to satisfy in this life for our debts, but also merit for us greater glory eternally in Paradise.

Let us also, when we are afflicted and in sorrow, go and seek Mary, who is called the Mother of mercy, the cause of our joy, the comfort of the afflicted. Let us go to this good Lady, who as Lanspergius says, never lets any one depart from her unconsoled and in sadness: “She holds the bosom of her compassion open to all; she permits no one to depart from her in sorrow.”[3741] St. Bonaventure says that it is her office to compassionate those who are in trouble: “To thee is the office of mercy committed.”[3742] Whence Richard of St. Laurence subjoins that he who invokes her will always find her ready to assist him.[3743] “And who has ever sought thy aid in vain? Who, O blessed one asked thy assistance and was neglected?”[3744]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi ordered two nuns, over whom she was Superior, to remain at the feet of the Holy Infant during the time of the Nativity, and there to imitate the service done to him by the animals in the stable; that is, that they should cherish the poor shivering Infant by the warmth of their praises, their thanksgivings and sighs of love which they were to pour out from their burning hearts. O my dear Redeemer, would that I also could fulfil that office! Yes, I praise Thee, my Jesus, I praise Thine infinite mercy, I praise Thine infinite charity, which makes Thee glorious both in heaven and earth; and I unite my voice to that of the Angel: *Glory to God in the highest.*[3745] I thank Thee in the name of all mankind; but I thank Thee especially for myself, a miserable sinner. What would have become of me, what hope could I have of pardon and salvation, if Thou, my Saviour, hadst not come down from heaven to save me? I praise Thee, then, I thank Thee, and I love Thee. I love Thee above all things, I love Thee more than myself, I love Thee with all my soul, and I give myself all to Thee. Receive, O Sacred Infant, these acts of love; if they are but cold, because coming from a frozen heart, do Thou inflame this poor heart of mine; a heart that has offended Thee, but is now penitent. Yes, my Lord, I repent above all things for having despised Thee hast loved me so much.

Now I desire nothing but to love, and do with me what Thou wilt. I was once a slave of hell; but now that I am free from those unhappy chains, I consecrate myself entirely to Thee; I give Thee my body, my goods, my life, my soul, my will, and my whole liberty. I desire no longer to belong to myself, but only to Thee, my only good. Ah, bind my heart to Thy feet, that it may no more stray from Thee. O most holy Mary! obtain for me the grace of living always bound to thy Son by the blessed chains of love. Tell him to accept me as the slave of his love. He grants all that you ask. Pray to him, pray to him, for me. This is my hope.

Discourse VIII

THE EXTERNAL WORD FROM BEING RICH MADE HIMSELF POOR

Excutere de pulvere, consurge, sede, Jerusalem

“Shake thyself from the dust; arise, sit up, O Jerusalem.”—Is. 52:2

Arise Christian soul, says the Prophet, shake off the dust of earthly affections: *Shake thyself from the dust;*[3746] *arise;*[3747] arise from the mire in which thou art lying in misery, and sit up: *Sit up, O Jerusalem,*[3748] sit as a queen, and rule over those passions which would deprive thee of eternal glory, and which expose thee to the danger of everlasting destruction.

But to attain this, what must the soul do? It must study and consider well the life of Jesus Christ, who, from being rich, as possessing all the riches of heaven and earth, made himself poor, despising all the goods of the world. It is impossible for any one to think of Jesus having become poor for his sake, and not at the same time to be moved to despise all for the love of him. Let us so consider him, and for this let us implore Jesus and Mary to enlighten us.

I

Everything that is in heaven and on earth is God’s. *The world is mine, and the fulness thereof.*[3749] But even this is little; heaven and earth are but the least portion of the riches of God. The riches of God are infinite, and can never fail, because his riches do not depend on others, but he, who is the Infinite Good, possesses them himself. Therefore it was that David said: *Thou art my God, for Thou hast no need of my goods.*[3750] Now this God, who is so rich, made himself poor by becoming man, that he might thereby make us poor sinners rich: *Being rich, He became poor for your sakes; that through his poverty you might be rich.*[3751]

What! a God become poor? And why? Let us understand the reason. The riches of this world can be nothing but dust and mire; but it is mire that so completely blinds men that they can no longer see which are the true riches. Before the coming of Jesus Christ, the world was full of darkness, because it was full of sin: *All flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.*[3752] Mankind had corrupted the law and reason, so that, living like brutes, intent only on acquiring the riches and pleasures of this world, they cared no more for the riches of eternity. But the divine mercy ordained that the very Son of God himself should come down to enlighten these blind creatures: *To them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death light is risen.*[3753]

Jesus was called the Light of the Gentiles: *A Light for the revelation of the Gentiles.*[3754] *The light shineth in darkness.*[3755] Thus did the Lord from the first promise to be himself our Master, and a Master who should be seen by us; who should teach us the way of salvation, which consists in the practice of all the virtues, and especially that of holy poverty: *And thy eyes shall see thy Teacher.*[3756] Moreover, this Master was not only to teach us by his words; but still more by the example of his life.

St. Bernard says that poverty was not to be found in heaven, it existed only on earth; but that man, not knowing its value, did not seek after it. Therefore the Son of God came down from heaven to this earth, and chose it for his companion throughout his whole life, that by his example he might also render it precious and desirable to us: “poverty was not found in heaven, but she was well known on earth, and men knew not her excellence. So the Son of God loved her, and came down from heaven to take her to himself, that we might learn to value her when we see how he regards her.”[3757] And behold our Redeemer as an Infant, who at the very beginning of his made himself a teacher of poverty in the cave of Bethlehem; which is expressly called by the same St. Bernard, “the School of Christ,”[3758] and by St. Augustine “the Grotto of Doctrine.”[3759]

For this end was it decreed by God that the edict of cæsar should come forth; namely, that his Son should not only be born poor, but the poorest of men, causing him to be born away from his own house, in a cave which was inhabited only by animals. Other poor people, who are born in their own house, have certainly more comforts in the way of clothes, of fire, and the assistance of persons who lend their aid, even if it is out of compassion.

What son of a poor person was ever born in a stable? In a stable only beasts are born. St. Luke relates how it happened. The time being come that Mary was to be delivered, Joseph goes to seek some lodging for her in Bethlehem. He goes about and inquires at every house, and he finds none. He tries to find one in an inn, but neither there does he find any: *There was no room for them in the inn.*[3760] So that Mary was obliged to take shelter and bring forth her Son in that cave where, notwithstanding all the concourse of people, there was no one; there were only two animals. When the sons of princes are born, they have warm rooms prepared for them, adorned with hangings, silver cradles, the finest clothes, and they are waited on by the highest nobles and ladies of the kingdom. The King of heaven, instead of a warm and beautiful room, has nothing but a cold grotto, whose only ornament is the grass that grows there; instead of a bed of feathers, he has nothing but a little hard sharp straw; instead of fine garments, he has but a few poor rough cold and damp rags: “The Creator of Angles” (writes St. Peter Damian) “is not said to have been clad in purple, but to have been wrapped in rags. Let worldly pride blush at the resplendent humility of the Saviour.”[3761] Instead of a fire, and of the attendance of great people, he has but the warm breath and the company of two animals; finally, in place of the silver cradle, he must lie in a vile manger. What is this, said St. Gregory of Nyssa, the King of kings, who fills heaven and earth his presence, finds no better place to be born in than a stable for beasts? “He who encompasses all things in his embrace is laid in the manger of brute cattle.”[3762] Yes, for this King of kings for sake wished to be poor, and the poorest of all. Even the children of the poor have milk enough provided for them, but Jesus Christ wished to be poor ever in this; for the milk of Mary was miraculous, and she received it not naturally, but from heaven, as the holy Church teaches us: “The Virgin gave him milk from a breast filled from heaven.”[3763] And God, in order to comply with the desire of his Son, who wished to be poor in everything, did not provide Mary with milk in abundance, but only with as much as would barely suffice to sustain the life of his Son; whence the same holy Church says: “He was fed on a little milk.”[3764]

And Jesus Christ, as he was born poor, so did he also continue in poverty all his life. Not only was he poor, but a beggar; for the word *egenus,* used by St. Paul, signifies in the Greek text a beggar; so that Cornelius à Lapide says, “It is evident that Christ was not only poor, but also a beggar.”[3765] Our Redeemer, after being born in such poverty, was obliged to fly from his own country into Egypt. In this journey, St. Bonaventure goes on to consider and compassionate the poverty of Mary and Joseph, who, travelling like poor people on so long a journey, and carrying the Holy Infant, must have suffered very much on account of their poverty: “what did they do for food?” (says the saint). “Where did they repose at night? how were they lodged?”[3766] What could they have had to eat except a little hard bread? Where could they have slept at night, in that desert, if not on the ground, in the open air, or under some tree? Who that met these great pilgrims on their way would ever have taken them for anything else than three poor beggars?

They arrive in Egypt; and any one may imagine how great must have been the poverty which for seven years they had to endure, being as they were without relatives and without friends. St. Basil says that they had scarcely enough to subsist on, procuring their food by the work of their hands: “They worked hard, in the sweat of their brow, to gain for themselves by such means the necessaries of life.”[3767] Ludolph of Saxony tells us that sometimes the Infant Jesus, constrained by hunger, went to ask Mary for a little bread, and that Mary sent him away, saying that there was not any: “Sometimes the Son asked bread to satisfy his hunger, but the Mother had it not to give.”[3768]

From Egypt they returned into Palestine to live again in Nazareth, and there Jesus continues his life of poverty. Here the house is poor and the furniture is poor: “A poor cottage scantily furnished; such was the dwelling which the Creator of the world chose for himself,” says St. Cyprain.[3769] In this cottage he lives as a poor man, gaining his livelihood by the sweat of his brow, in the same manner that all workmen and their children do; so that he was called and was believed by the Jews to be a simple workman: “Is not this the carpenter? Is not this the carpenter’s son!”[3770]

Finally then, the Redeemer comes forth to preach, and in these three last years of his life he changes not his fortune or his condition; but he lives in ever greater poverty than before, living on alms. Therefore he said to a certain man, who wished to follow him, in order to lead an easier life: *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of Man hath not* *where to lay His head.*[3771] He meant to say: Man, if thou hopest to better thy condition by becoming my follower, thou dost err, for I came on earth to teach poverty; and therefore have I made myself poorer than the foxes or the birds of the air, which have their holes and their nests; while I have not even a foot of ground belonging to me on this earth, where I may rest my head; and so would I have all my disciples to be: "Dost thou hope" (is the comment of Cornelius à Lapide on this text) "that in following me thou wilt increase thy riches? Thou art in error, for I, as the master of perfection, am poor, and such I wish my disciples to be."[3772] For it follows, says St. Jerome, that "the servants of Christ has nothing but Christ."[3773] The true servants of Christ neither have, nor desire to have, anything but Christ. In a word, Christ lived poor, and he at last died poor; for St. Joseph of Arimathea was obliged to give him a burial-place; and others, out of charity, provided the sheet in which to wrap his dead body.

II

Cardinal Hugo, meditating on the poverty, the contempt, and the pains to which it pleased our Redeemer to submit, says, "He made himself, as it were, a fool, and condescended to our miseries."[3774] God seems to have gone on to madness in his love for men, being willing to embrace so many miseries to obtain for them the riches of divine grace and eternal glory. And whoever says the same author, would have believed, if Christ had not done it, that while he was the master of all riches, he would have made himself so poor! that being Lord of all, he should have become a servant! that being the King of heaven, he should have chosen to be so despised! that being blessed, he should choose so many sufferings! "who condescend to poverty, —the lord to slavery the King to ignominy, the ever-blessed to suffering!"[3775]

There are, it is true, many princes in this world who delight in employing their riches for the relief of the poor; but where shall we find a king who, to alleviate the poverty of the poor, has made himself poor like them, as Jesus Christ did? It is related as a prodigious example of charity that the holy King Edward, seeing a beggar on the road, who was unable to move, and was there remaining utterly abandoned, took him up on his shoulders with great, tenderness, and carried him to the church. Yes, this was so great an act of charity that all the people were astonished at it; but Edward did not for this cease to be king, and he remained as rich as he was before. But the Son of God, the King of heaven and earth, to save the lost sheep, which was man, not only descended from heaven to seek him, not only put him on his shoulders, but laid aside his own majesty, his riches, and honors; he made himself poor, even the poorest among men; “He hid his purple under miserable garments,” says St. Peter Damian;[3776] he hid the purple, that is, the divine Majesty, beneath the clothes of a wretched carpenter’s boy: “He who enriches others” (says St. Gregory Nazianzen) “has no riches himself; he undergoes the poverty of my carnal nature, that I may obtain the wealth of his divine nature.”[3777] He who provides riches for the rich chose himself to be poor, that he might merit for us, not indeed earthly, miserable, and perishable riches, but divine riches, which are infinite and eternal, thus endeavoring by his example to detach us from the affection all earthly things, which brings us often into great danger of everlasting destruction. It is mentioned in the life of St. John Francis Regis, that his ordinary meditation was on the poverty of Jesus Christ.

Albertus Magnus tells us that Jesus Christ chose to be born in a stable, open to the public road, for two reasons: one, that we might understand more fully that we are all pilgrims in this world, and that we are only here in passing. “Thou art a stranger, look and pass by,”[3778] says St. Augustine. Any one who is lodging in a temporary place would not certainly bestow any affection on it, thinking that in a short time he will have to leave it. Oh! if men would always remember that they are but travellers in this world, and on their way to eternity, who would be found to attach himself to earthly riches, and, so doing, to run the risk of losing the riches of eternity? The other reason was, says Albertus Magnus, “to teach us to despise the world;”[3779] that by this example we might learn to despise the world, whose riches cannot satisfy our hearts. The world teaches its followers that happiness consists in the possession of riches, pleasures, and honors; but this deceitful world was condemned by the Son of God when he became man. *Now is the judgment of the world*.[3780] And this condemnation of the world began (according to St. Anselm and St. Bernard) in the stable of Bethlehem. Jesus Christ wished to be born there in poverty. “that through his poverty we might become rich;” that from his divine example we should pluck out of our hearts all affection to the things we posses here, and should give it to virtue and holy love. “Christ,” says Cassian, “began a new way; he loved that which the world hated, namely, poverty,”[3781]

Therefore the saints, after the example of the Saviour, have always sought to despoil themselves of everything, and to follow, like poor people, Jesus Christ, who was himself poor. St. Bernard says, “The poverty of Christ is richer than all the treasures of the world.”[3782] The poverty of Christ brings us greater riches than all worldly treasures; because it excites us in acquiring the riches of heaven and in despising those of the world. Hear what St. Paul said: *I court all things but as dung, that I may gain Christ.*[3783] When compared with the grace of Jesus Christ, the Apostle esteemed everything else as dung and filth. Look at St. Benedict, who, in the flower of his youth, left the riches and comfort of his father’s house, and went to live in a cave, and received a little bread as an alms from a monk called Romanus, who supported him in this way out of charity. See how St. Francis Borgia abandons all his riches, and goes to live like a poor man in the Society of Jesus. St. Anthony, abbot, sells his rich patrimony, distributes it to the poor, and then goes to dwell in a desert. Behold St. Francis of Assisi giving back even his shirt to his father, that he may live as a beggar all his life.

He who covets possessions, said St. Philip Neri, will never become a saint. And so it is; for the heart that is full of this world has no room for divine love: “Dost thou bring an empty heart?”[3784] This was what the monks of old chiefly required, in accepting those who came to join themselves to their company. And when they asked them, dost thou bring a heart void of all earthly affection? they meant to say, If thou dost not do so, thou canst never belong entirely to God: *For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.*[3785] The treasure of each one is anything that he loves and prizes. Once, when a certain rich man died, who was damned, St. Anthony of Padua published his damnation from the pulpit; and, as a sign of the truth of what he said, he told the people to go to the place where he had kept his money, and that they should find the heart of that wretched man in the midst of his money. And they did actually go, and they found his heart still warm in the midst of his money.

God cannot be the treasure of any one who retains affections for the goods of this life; therefore David prayed: *Create a clean heart in me, O God.*[3786] Lord, cleanse my heart from earthly affections, that I may be able to say that thou art the God of my heart, and my eternal riches: *The God of my heart, and my portion forever.*[3787] He, then, who really wishes to become a saint must drive away from his heart everything that is not God. What are treasures? what possessions? what riches? what is the use of these goods, if they do not satisfy the heart, and we must leave them so soon? *Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and moth consume . . . , but lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven.*[3788]

O what great happiness is prepared by God in heaven for those who love him! O what a treasure is the grace of God and divine love to those know it! *That I may enrich them that love me.*[3789] God contains in himself and brings with him riches and the reward: *Behold His reward is with Him,*[3790] says Isaias. It is God alone who is the reward of the blessed in heaven; he alone is sufficient to make them happy: *I am thy reward exceeding great.*[3791]

But he who would love God exceedingly in heaven must first love him very much on earth. According to the degree of love which we bear towards God when we finish the journey of life, will be the degree of love with which we shall continue to love God for all eternity. And if we wish to be certain of nevermore being separated from our Sovereign Good in this life, let us always bind ourselves more closely to him by the chains of love, and say with the sacred spouse: *I found Him whom my soul, loveth; I held Him; and I will not let Him go.*[3792] How did the spouse hold her beloved? "With the arms of love," replies the Abbot William. "Yes," says St. Ambrose, "God is held with the chains of love."[3793] God allows himself to be bound by us with chains of love. Happy, then, is the man who can with St. Paulinus: "Let the rich enjoy their riches, king their kingdoms; but let Christ be my riches and my kingdom."[3794] And with St. Ignatius: "Give me only Thy love and Thy grace, and I am rich enough."[3795] Lord, give me Thy grace and Thy holy love; may I love Thee, and be loved by Thee; and I am sufficiently rich: I desire nothing more; nor is there anything else that I could desire. "No one," says St. Leo, "need fear want who possesses all things in the Lord."[3796] Let us also never fail to have recourse to the divine Mother, and to love her, after God, above all things; for she herself assures us (in the words of the Holy Church) that she enriches with graces all those love her: “With me are riches . . . that I may enrich them that love me.”[3797]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dear Jesus, inflame me with Thy holy love; since for this end Thou didst come upon this earth. It is true that I am so wretched as to have often offended Thee, after the many special lights and graces which have been bestowed on me; I am no longer worthy to be consumed in those blessed flames with which the saints are inflamed, I ought rather to burn in the fire of hell; but now, being free that prison which I have deserved, I feel that Thou dost also turn towards me notwithstanding my ingratitude, and say, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.*[3798] I thank Thee, my God, that Thou dost again give me this sweet precept; and as Thou dost command me to love Thee, I will obey Thee, and will love Thee with my whole heart. Lord, I have hitherto been ungrateful and blind, because I have not been mindful of the love Thou hast borne me. But now Thou dost enlighten me again, and dost make me understand how much Thou hast done for my sake: now that I think that didst become man for me, that Thou didst take upon Thee my miseries; now that I see Thee trembling with cold on the straw, crying and weeping for me,—O my infant God, how can I live without loving Thee? Ah, my Love, pardon me for all the displeasure I have caused Thee. O God, how could I, knowing as I did by faith how much Thou hast suffered for me, how could I have offended Thee so much? But this straw that torments Thee, that vile manger in which Thou art lying, those tender cries which Thou dost put forth, those loving tears which Thou dost shed,—these all make me firmly hope for pardon and grace to love Thee for the rest of my life. I love Thee, O Incarnate Word; I love Thee, O Divine Child; and I give myself all to Thee. For the sake of those pains which Thou didst suffer in the stable of Bethlehem, accept, O my Jesus! this miserable sinner, who desires to love Thee. Help me, give perseverance; I hope for all things from Thee. O Mary! great Mother of this great Son, and most beloved by him, pray to him for me.

Discourse IX

THE ETERNAL WORD FROM BEING HIGH MADE HIMSELF LOW

Discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde

“Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.”—St. Matt. 11:29

Pride was the chief cause of the fall of our first parents, who, not being willing to submit themselves to the obedience of God, thereby caused their own ruin, and that of all the human race. But the mercy of God as a remedy against such destruction, decreed that his only-begotten Son should humble himself to take upon himself our flesh; and by the example of his life should induce men to love humility, and to detest pride, which renders them hateful in the sight of God and man. For this end is it that St. Bernard now invites us to visit the cave of Bethlehem, saying, “Let us go even to Bethlehem: there we have what to admire, what to love, and what to imitate.”[3799]

Yes; in that cave we have first of all cause to wonder.[3800] What! a God in a stable! a God on straw! that God who sits on the highest throne of the majesty of heaven: *I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated,*[3801] says Isaias; and then where do we see him? In a manger, unknown and abandoned, with none around him save a few poor shepherds and two animals!

“We have what to love;” we shall easily find one in whom to place our affection, seeing there a God, who is the Infinite Good, and who has chosen to debase himself by appearing to the world as poor Infant, thereby to make himself more endearing and pleasing in our eyes. As St. Bernard says again, “The more degraded he appears to me, the more dear is he to me.”[3802]

We shall lastly find what to imitate: “We have what to imitate.”[3803] We find Supreme Being, the King of heaven, become an humble poor little Infant, desirous in this way, from his very infancy, of teaching us by his example that which he was afterwards to tell us by word of mouth: “He proclaims by his example (says the same holy Abbot) what he is afterwards to teach by his mouth: learn of Me, for I am gentle and humble of heart.”[3804] Let us ask for light of Jesus and Mary.

I

Who does not know that God is the first, the highest in nobility, and the source whence all nobility proceeds? He is of an infinite greatness. He is independent; for he has not received his greatness from any other, but has always possessed it in himself. He is Lord of all, whom all creatures obey: *The winds and the sea obey Him.*[3805] Truly, therefore, does the Apostle say, that to God alone belong honor and glory: *To the only God be honor and glory.*[3806] But the Eternal Word, to provide a remedy for man’s disgrace, which was brought about by his pride, having made himself an example of poverty (as we considered in the last discourse), to detach man from worldly goods, desired also to make himself an example of humility, to free him from the vice of pride.

And in doing this, the first and greatest example of humility which he gave was making himself a man, and clothing himself with our miseries: *In habit found as a man.*[3807] Cassian says that any one puts on the dress of another man hides himself under the lowly dress of human flash. “He who is clothed hidden under his clothes; so the divine nature concealed itself beneath the clothing of flesh.”[3808] And St. Bernard: “The divine Majesty became small, in order that it might join itself to our earthly nature; and that God and clay, majesty and weakness, the extreme abasement and the highest grandeur, might be united in one person.”[3809] A God to unite himself to dust! greatness to misery! sublimity to wretchedness! But that which must make us wonder still more is, that not only did God choose to appear as creature, but a sinful creature, putting on sinful flesh: *God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.*[3810]

But the Son of God was not even contented to appear as a man, and as a sinful man: he desired further to choose the most lowly and humble life among men; so that Isaias called him the last, the most, the most humble of men: *Despised and the most abject of men.*[3811] Jeremias said that he should be covered with ignominy: *He shall be filled with reproaches.*[3812] And

David, that he should be made the scorn of men, and the outcast of the people: *The reproach of men, and the outcast of the people.*[3813] For such an end Jesus Christ wished to be born in the most abject way that could be imagined. What an ignominy for a man, even though he is poor, to be born in a stable! Who is there that is born in a stable? The poor are born in their huts, at least on beds of straw; stables are fit only for beasts and worms; and Son of God chose to be born on this earth like a worm: *I am a worm, and no man.*[3814] Yes, says St. Augustine, in such humility did the king of the universe choose to be born, in order to show us this majesty and power in his very humility, by which he could through his example make those men who are born full of pride love humility: “Such was the will of the Most High, who is also so humble, to show forth his majesty by very humility.”[3815]

An angle announced to the shepherds the birth of the Messias; and the signs which he gave them by which they might find him and recognize him were all signs of humility. When you shall find a child (said he) in a stable, wrapped up in rags, and lying in a manger on the straw, know that it is your Saviour: *And this shall be a sign unto you; you shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger.*[3816] I such a state is it that we find a God who is coming to this earth to destroy pride.

Then the life which Jesus Christ led in Egypt, where he was in exile, was in conformity with his birth. During the years he remained there, he lived as a stranger, unknown, and in poverty, in the midst of those barbarians. Who knew him there? who made any account of him?

He returned to Judea, and continued to live the same sort of life he had led in Egypt. He lived for thirty years in a shop, supposed, supposed by all to the son of a common workman, doing the work of a serving-boy, poor unseen, and despised. In that holy family there Chrysologus, “Joseph and Mary,” writes St. Peter Chrysologus, “have neither servant nor servant-maid: themselves are at once master and servant.”[3817] There was but one servant in that family, and he was the Son of God, who wished to become the Son of Man, that is, of Mary, that he might be an humble servant, and obey a man and a women as their servant: *And He was subject to them.*[3818]

After thirty years of hidden life, finally the time came that our Saviour was to appear in public to preach his heavenly doctrines, which he had come from heaven to teach us; and therefore it was necessary that he should make himself known as the true Son of God. But, O my God! how many were there that acknowledge and honored him as he deserved? Besides the few disciples who followed him, all the rest, instead of honoring him, despised him as a vile man and an impostor. Ah, then, then was verified in the fullest manner the prophecy of Simeon: *This child is set for a sign which shall be contradicted.*[3819] Jesus Christ was contradicted and despised by all: he was despised in his doctrine; for when he declared that he was the only-begotten Son of God, he was called a blasphemer, and as such was condemned to death; as the wicked Caiphas said, *He hath blasphemed; He is guilty of death.*[3820] He was despised in his wisdom; for he was esteemed a fool without sense: *He is mad: why hear you Him?*[3821] His morals were reproached as being scandalous,—they called him a glutton, a drunkard, and the friend of wicked people: *Behold a man that is a glutton, and a drinker of wine, a friend of publicans and sinners.*[3822] He was accused of being a sorcerer, and of having commerce with devils: *By the prince of the devils He casteth out devils.*[3823] He was called a heretic, and one possessed by the devil: *Do we not say well, that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?*[3824] A deceiver: *For that deceiver said,* etc.[3825] In fine, Jesus Christ was considered by all the people so wicked a man that there was no need of a tribunal to condemn him to be crucified: *If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to thee.*[3826]

At last the Saviour came to the end of his life and to his Passion; and, O God, what contempt and ill-treatment did he not receive in his Passion! He was betrayed and sold by one of his own disciples for thirty pieces of money, a less price than would be given for a beast. By another disciple he was denied. He was dragged through the streets of Jerusalem bound like a thief, abandoned by all, even by his few remaining disciples. He was treated shamefully as a slave, when he was scourged. He was struck on the face in public. He was treated as a fool, when Herod had a white garment put on him, that he might be thought a foolish person without any sense: “He despised him as ignorant,” says St. Bonaventure, “because he did not answer a word; as foolish, because He did not defend himself.”[3827] He was treated as a mock-king, when they put into his hand a piece of reed instead of a sceptre, a tattered red garment upon his shoulders instead of the purple, and a chaplet of thorns on his head for a crown; after thus deriding him, they saluted him: *Hail, King of the Jews!*[3828] and then they covered him with spitting and blows, *and spitting upon Him;*[3829] *and they gave Him blows.*[3830]

Finally, Jesus Christ willed to die; but by what death? by the most ignominious death, which was the death of the cross: *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.*[3831] Any one suffered the death of the cross at that time was considered the vilest and most wicked of criminals: *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*[3832] Therefore, the names of those who were crucified were always held as cursed and infamous; so that the Apostle wrote: *Christ is made a curse for us.*[3833] St. Athanasius, commenting on this passage, says: “He is called a curse, because he bore the curse for us.”[3834] Jesus took upon himself this curse, that he might save us from eternal malediction. But where, Lord, exclaims St. Thomas of Villanova, where is Thy beauty, where is Thy majesty in the midst of so much ignominy? “Where, O God, is Thy glory, where Thy majesty?”[3835] And he answer: “Ask not, God has gone out of Himself.”[3836] And the saint’s meaning was this: that we should not seek for glory and majesty in Jesus Christ, since he had come to give us an example of humility and manifest the love that he bears towards men; and that this love had made him, as it were, go out of himself.

II

In the fables of the pagans, it is related that the god Hercules, for the love which he bore to the king Augea, undertook to tame his horses; and that the god Apollo, out of love for Admetus, kept his flocks for him. These are inventions of imagination; but it is of faith that Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, for the love of men, humbled himself to be born in a stable, and to lead a contemptible life, and in the end to die by the hands of executioners on an infamous gibbet. “O grace! O power of love!” exclaims St. Bernard, “didst Thou, the most High, become the lowest of all!”[3837] O the strength of divine love! the greatest of all has made himself the lowest of all! “Who did this?” rejoins St. Bernard, “it was love, regardless of its dignity.[3838] Love triumphs over God.”[3839] Love does not consider dignity, when there is question of gaining for itself the person it loves. God, who can never be conquered by any one, has been conquered by love; for it was that love that compelled him to make himself man, and to sacrifice himself for the love of man in an ocean of sorrows and contempt. “He emptied Himself,” concludes the holy abbot, “that thou mayest know that it was through love that the Highest made himself equal to thee.”[3840] The divine Word, who is himself itself, humbled himself so far as to annihilate himself, that mankind might know how much he loved them.

Yes, says St. Gregory Nazianzen, because in no other way could he better show forth the divine love than by abasing himself, and taking upon himself the greatest misery and ignominy that men even suffer on this earth. “God could not otherwise declare his love for us than by descending for our sakes to what was most low.”[3841] Richard of St. Victor adds that man having had the boldness to offend the majesty of God, in order to expiate his guilt, the intervention of the most excessive humiliation was necessary: “For the expiation of sin, the humiliation of the highest to the lowest was necessary.”[3842] St. Bernard goes on to say, the more our God abased himself, so much the more did he show forth his goodness and love: “The lower he showed himself to be in human nature, the greater did he declare himself in goodness.”[3843]

Now, after a God has suffered so much for the love of man, will man have a repugnance to humble himself for the love of God? *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*[3844] He who is not humble, and who does not seek to imitate the humility of Jesus Christ, is not worthy of the name of Christian; for Jesus Christ, as St. Augustine says, came into the world in an humble way to put down pride. The pride of man was the disease which drew from heaven this divine physician, which loaded him with ignominies, and caused him to die on the cross Let the proud man, then, at least be ashamed when he sees that a God so humbled himself in order to cure him of pride: “Because of this very vice of pride, God came in humility. This disease drew him down from heaven, humbled him even to the form of a servant, overwhelmed with calumnies, hung him upon the cross. Blush, then, O man, to be proud, for whom God has become humble.”[3845] And St. Peter Damian writes: “To raise us, he lowered himself.”[3846] He chose to abase himself, that he might raise us out of the mire of our sins, and might place us in the company of the angels in heaven:

Lifting up the poor out of the dunghill, that He may place him with the princes of His people.[3847] “His abasement in our exaltation.”[3848] O the greatness of divine love! exclaims St. Augustine. For the sake of man, a God takes upon himself contempt, that he may share his honor with man. He makes himself familiar with grief and pain, that man may have salvation: he even suffers death, to obtain life for man. “O wondrous condescension! He comes to receive contempt, that he may confer honors; he comes to be satiated with grief, that he may give salvation; he comes to undergo death, that he may give life. .”[3849]

Jesus Christ, by choosing for himself so humble a birth, so despicable a life, and so ignominious a death, has ennobled and taken away all bitterness from contempt and opprobrium. It is for this that the saints in this world were always so fond and even desirous of being despised; they seemed not to be able to desire or seek for anything but to be despised and trodden underfoot for the love of Jesus Christ. When the divine Wood came upon this earth, well was that prophecy of Isaias fulfilled: *In the dens where dragons dwelt before shall rise up the verdure of the reed and the bulrush.*[3850] That where the demons, the spirits of pride, dwelt, there, at the sight of the humility of Jesus Christ, should arise the spirit of humility. “The verdure of the reed signifies humility,”[3851] says St. Ugo, commenting on this passage; the humble man is empty in his own eyes; the humble are not full of themselves, as the proud are, but empty, considering what is the truth, that all they have is the gift of God.

From this we may well understand that an humble soul is as dear to God as the proud heart is odious in his eyes. But is it possible, says St. Bernard, for people to be proud after seeing the life of Jesus Christ? “Through the divine majesty annihilates itself, a worm lifts itself up in pride!”[3852] Is it possible that a mere he sees the God of infinite majesty and purity humble himself so much, in order to teach us to be humble!

But let it be known that proud people do not get on with God. St. Augustine thus warns us: “Lift yourself up, and God will depart from you; humble yourself, and God will come to you.”[3853] The Lord flies from the proud; but, on the contrary, God cannot despise a heart that humbles itself, even though it should be a sinful One: *A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou will not despise.*[3854] God has promised to hear all who pray to him:

Ask, and it shall be given you. . . . For every one that asketh receiveth.[3855] But he has declared that he will not listen to the proud, as St. James tells us: *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*[3856] He resists the prayers of the proud, and does not listen to them; but he cannot deny any grace to the humble, whatever they may ask. In fact, St. Teresa said that the greatest graces she had ever received were those which were granted her when she more particularly humbled herself in the presence of God. The prayer of the humble penetrates into heaven by its own efficacy, without needing any one to present it; and it does not depart without obtaining from God that which it desires: *The prayer of him humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds; . . . and he will not depart till the Most High beholds.*[3857]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my despised Jesus! by Thy example Thou hast done too much to render reproaches and contempt sweet in the eyes of those that love Thee. But how is it, then, that instead of embracing them, as Thou hast done, when I received some little contempt from men, I behaved with so much pride, and took occasion from it to offend Thy infinite majesty, sinner and proud that I was? Ah, Lord, I see why it is; I did not know how to bear an affront patiently, because I did not know how to love Thee. If I had loved Thee truly, it would have been sweet and pleasing to me. But since Thou dost promise pardon to him who repents, I repent with all my heart of all the excesses of my life,—a life so unlike Thine. But I desire to amend; and therefore I promise Thee to be willing to suffer patiently from this day forward all the contempt to which I shall be subject, for Thy love, O my Jesus! who wast so much despised for the love of me. I understand that humiliations are precious mines by which Thou dost enrich souls with eternal treasures. I deserve other humiliations and other reproaches for having despised Thy grace; I deserve to be trampled on by the devils. But Thy merits are my hope. I will change my life, and will no longer displease Thee; henceforth I will seek for nothing but Thy divine pleasure. I have deserved many times to be sent to burn in hell-fire; Thou hast waited for me till now, and, as I hope, hast pardoned me; grant, therefore, that instead of burning in that unhappy flame, I may be inflamed with the blessed fire of Thy holy love. No, I will no longer live without loving Thee. Help me; let me not live any more ungrateful to Thee, as I have hitherto done. For the future I will love Thee only; I desire that my heart should belong to Thee alone. Ah, take possession of it, and keep it forever, that I may be always Thine, and Thou mayest be always mine; that I may love Thee; and Thou mayst love me forever. Yes, this is my hope, O my God! that I shall always love Thee, and that Thou wilt always love me. I believe in Thee, Infinite Goodness; I Love Thee, Infinite Goodness; I love Thee, and I will say always I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, and because I love Thee, I will do all I can to please Thee. Dispose of me as Thou wilt. All I ask is, that Thou wouldst give me grace to love Thee, and then do with me as Thou pleasest. Thy love is, and always shall be, my only treasure, my only desire, my only good, my only love. Mary, My hope, Mother of beautiful love, do thou help me in loving the God of love with all my heart and forever.

Discourse FOR CHRISTMAS NIGHT—THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

> Evangelizo vobis gaudium magnum . . . quia natus est vobis hodie Salvator.
>
> “I bring you good tidings of great joy, . . . for this day is born to you a Saviour.”—St Luke 2:10, 11.

I bring you good tidings of great joy.[3858] Thus said the angel to the shepherds, and thus do I say to you, O devout souls! on this night. I bring you tidings of great joy. And what tidings could be a greater joy to a nation of poor exiles, condemned to death, than for them to be told that their Saviour had come, not only to deliver them from death, but also to obtain for them permission to return to their country? And this is what I announce to you this night: *A Saviour is born to you.*[3859] Jesus Christ is born; and he is born for you, to deliver you from everlasting death, and to open to you heaven, which is our country, and from which we had been banished in punishment for our sins.

But in order that you should show your gratitude from this fourth, by loving your new-born Redeemer, allow me to set him before your eyes; let me show you where he was born, and where he may be found on this night, that you may go to him and thank him for so great a favor, and for his great love. Let us ask for light from Jesus and Mary.

I

Let me, then, briefly relate to you the history of the birth of King of the world, who came down from heaven for your salvation.

Octavius Augustus, the Emperor of Rome, wishing to know the strength of his empire, decreed that there be a general numbering of all his subjects; and for this purpose he ordered all the governors of the provinces—and, among the rest, Cyrinus, governor of Judea—to make every one come to enroll himself, and at the same time pay a certain tribute as a sign of vassalage: *There went out a decree . . . that the whole world should be* *enrolled.*[3860] As soon as this decree was promulgated, Joseph obeys immediately; he does not even wait till his holy spouse should be delivered, though she was near her time. I say he obeyed immediately, and set out on his journey with Mary, then pregnant with the divine Word, to go and enroll himself in the city of Bethlehem: *to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child.*[3861] The journey was a long one—for, according to some authors, it was ninety leagues; that is to say, four days—long and difficult, for they had to traverse mountains and steep paths, through the wind, the rain, and the cold.

When a king makes his first entry into a city of his kingdom, what honors are not prepared for him! what preparations are not made, and triumphal arches erected! Do thou then, O happy Bethlehem! prepare thyself to receive thy King with honor; for the prophet Micheas has told thee that he is coming to thee, and that he is Lord not only of all Judea, but of the whole world. And know, says the prophet, thou, out of all the cities of the earth, art the fortunate one that has been chosen by the King of heaven for his birthplace, that he may afterwards reign, not indeed in Judea, but in the hearts of men who live in Judea and in all the rest of the world: *And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Judea: out of thee shall He come forth that is to be ruler in Israel.*[3862] But behold these two illustrious pilgrims, Joseph and Mary, who bears within her womb the Saviour of the world, are about to enter into Bethlehem. They enter and go to the house of the imperial minister to pay the tribute, and to enroll themselves in the book as subjects of Cæsar, where they also inscribed the offspring of Mary, namely, Jesus Christ, who was the Lord of Cæsar and of all the princes of the earth. But who acknowledges them? Who goes before them to show them honor? who salutes them, and who receives them? *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.*[3863] They travel like poor people, and as such they are despised; they are treated even worse than the other poor, and are driven away. Yes; for *it came to pass when they were there her days were accomplished that she should be delivered.*[3864] Mary knew that the of her delivery was come, and that it was here, and on that night, that the Incarnate Word willed to be born, and to manifest himself to the world. She therefore told Joseph, and he hastened to procure some lodging in the houses of the townspeople, so as not to take his spouse to the inn to be delivered, as it was not a decent place for her to be in; besides which, it was then full of people. But he found not any one to listen to him; and very likely he was insulted, and called a fool by some of them, for taking his wife about at that time of night, and in such a crowd of people, when she was near her delivery; so that at last he was obliged, unless he would remain all night in the street, to take her to the public inn, where there were many other poor people lodging that night. He went there; but they were refused admittance even there, and they were told there was no room for them: *There was no room for them in the inn.*[3865] There was room for all, even for the lowest, but not for Jesus Christ.

That inn was a figure of those ungrateful hearts where many find room for miserable creatures, but not for God. How many love their relatives, their friends, even animals, but do not love Jesus Christ, and care neither for his grace nor his love! But the ever-blessed Mary said once to a devout soul: “It was the dispensation of God that neither I nor my Son should find a lodging amongst men, that those souls who love Jesus might offer themselves as a lodging-place, and might affectionately invite him to come into their hearts.”

But let us go on with the history. These poor travellers, then seeing themselves repulsed on every side, leave the city to try and find some place of refuge without its walls. They walk on in the dark; they go round about and examine, till at last they see a grotto, which was cut out of stone in the mountain under the city. Barradas, Bede, and Brocardus say that the place where Jesus Christ was a rock that had been excavated under the walls of Bethlehem, divided off from the city, and like a cavern, and which served as a stable for cattle. When they came to it, Mary said to Joseph: “There is no occasion to go any farther; let us go into this cave and remain there.” “What!” replied Joseph; “my spouse, dost thou not see that this cave is quite exposed: that it is cold and damp, that water is running down on all sides? Dost thou not see that it is no lodging for men, but it is a shed for beasts? How can you stop here all night, and be delivered here?” Then Mary said, “It is nevertheless true that this stable is the regal palace in which the Eternal Son of God desires to be born on earth.”

Oh, what must the angels have said when they saw the divine Mother enter into this cave to bring forth her saw the divine Mother enter into this cave to bring forth her Son! The sons of princes are born in rooms adorned with gold; they have cradles enriched with precious stones, fine clothes, a retinue of the first lords of the kingdom; and has the King of heaven nothing but a cold stable without a fire to be born in, some poor swaddling-clothes to cover him, a little straw for his bed, and a vile manger to lie in? “Where is the palace,” asks St. Bernard, “where is the throne?”[3866] Where, says the saint, is the court, where is the royal palace for this King of heaven? for I see nothing but two animals to keep him company, and a manger for cattle, where he must be laid. O happy grotto, that witnessed the birth of the divine Word! Happy manger, to have had the honor of receiving the Lord of heaven! Happy straw, which served as a bed to him who sits on the shoulders of the seraphim! Ah, when we think of the birth of Jesus Christ, and of the manner in which it took place, we ought all to be inflamed with love; and when we hear the names of cave, manger, straw, milk, tears, in reference to the birth of the Redeemer, these names ought to be so many incitements to our love, and arrows to wound our hearts. Yes, happy was that grotto, that crib, that straw; but still happier are those souls who love this amiable Lord with fervor and tenderness, and who receive him in the Holy Communion into hearts burning with love. Oh, with what desire and pleasure does Jesus Christ enter into and repose in a heart that loves him!

II

No sooner had Mary entered into the cavern than she began immediately to pray; and the hour of her delivery being come, she loosened her hair, out of reverence, spreading it over her shoulders; and behold she sees a great light, she feels in her heart a heavenly joy! She casts down her eyes; and O God! what does she see? She sees on the ground an infant, so tender and beautiful that he fills her with love; but he trembles, he cries, and stretches out his arms to show that he desires she should take him into her bosom: “I stretched forth my arms to seek the caresses of my mother,”[3867] according to the revelation of St. Bridget. Mary calls Joseph. “Come, Joseph,” she said, “come and see; for the Son of God is now born.” Joseph comes; and when he sees Jesus already born, he adores him in the midst of a torrent of sweet tears: “The old man entered, and, prostrating himself, wept for joy."[3868] Then the Blessed Virgin reverently took her beloved Son in her arms, and placed him in her bosom. She tried to warm him by the heat of her cheeks and of her bosom: "Pressing him to her cheeks and bosom, she warmed him with all the joy and tenderness of a mother's love."[3869]

Consider the devotion, the tenderness, the love which Mary felt at seeing in her arms and on her breast the Lord of the world, the Son of the Eternal Father, who had deigned even to become her Son, choosing her from amongst all women to be his Mother. Mary, now holding him to her bosom, adores him as God, kissing his feet as her king, and then his face as her Son. Then she hastily seeks to cover him, and wraps him up in swaddling-clothes. But, O God! how hard and rough are those clothes; for they are clothes of the poor, and they are cold and damp, and in that cave there is no fire to warm them by!

Come, ye monarchs and emperors, come, all ye princes of the world, come and adore your highest king, who for your love is now born; and born in such poverty in a cave. But who appears? No One. *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.*[3870] Ah! the Son of God has indeed come into the world; but the world will not know him.

But if men do not come, the angels draw near to adore their Lord. Thus did the Eternal Father ordain for the honor of his Son: *And let all the angels of God adore Him.*[3871] They come in great numbers and praise their God, singing with great joy, *Glory to God in the highest; and no earth peace to men of good-will.*[3872] Glory to the divine mercy, which, instead of chastising rebellious men, causes this same God to take upon himself their punishment, and so to save them. Glory to the divine wisdom, which has devised a means of satisfying his justice, and at the same time of delivering man from the death he had deserved. Glory to the divine power, destroying in so signal a manner the powers of hell, by the divine Word coming in poverty to suffer pains, contempt, and death; and thus to draw the hearts of men to himself, and to leave everything for his sake,—honors, riches, and life; as so many virgins and young men have done, and even nobles and princes, to show their gratitude for the love of this God. Finally, glory to the divine love, which induced God to become a little child, poor and lowly, to live a hard life, and to die a cruel death, in order to show man the love which he bears him, to gain his love in return. "In the stable we see power reduced to impotence, and wisdom become mad through excess of love."[3873]

We see, in this stable, says St. Laurence Justinian, the power of God, as it were, annihilated; we see God, who is wisdom itself, become as it were a fool through the excess of love which he bears to men.

III

Arise, all ye nobles and peasants; Mary invites all, rich and poor, just and sinners, to enter the cave of Bethlehem, to adore and to kiss the feet of her new-born Son. Go in, then, all ye devout souls; go and see the Creator of heaven and earth on a little hay, under the form of a little Infant; but so beautiful that he sheds all around rays of light. Now that he is born and is lying on the straw, the cave is no longer horrible, but is become a paradise. Let us enter; let us not be afraid.

Jesus is born; he is born for all, for each one who desires him: *I am the Flower of the field* (as he tells us in the Canticles) *and the Lily of the valley.*[3874] He calls himself the lily of the valley to show us that as he was born in so great humility, so it is only the humble who find him; therefore the angel did not go and announce the birth of Jesus Christ to Cæsar or to Herod, but to poor humble shepherds. He also calls himself the flower of the field, because he shows himself forth so as to be seen by all: *I am the Flower of the field;*[3875] upon which Cardinal Hugo commenting says, "Because I allow myself to be found by all." Flowers in gardens are shut up and enclosed between walls, nor is every one permitted to come and gather them; whereas the flowers of the field are open to all, and any one who likes may take them; and so does Jesus Christ desire to be accessible to all desire him.

Let us arise and enter, the door is open; "There are no satellites," says St. Peter Chrysologus, "to say that this is not the time."[3876] Monarchs are shut up in their palaces, and the palaces are surrounded with soldiers; it is not easy to have audiences with princes; those who would speak to them must expect to have their patience tried; they will often be sent away and told to come again,—that this is not the hour of audience. Jesus Christ does not do so; he remains in that cave; and he is there as little child, attracting all who come to seek him; and the cave is open without guards and without doors;

so that all may go in when they please to seek him and speak to him; and even to embrace this Infant King, if they love him and desire him.

Let every soul, then, enter. Behold and see that tender Infant, who is weeping as he lies in the manger on that miserable straw. See how beautiful he is; look at the light which he sends forth, and the love which he breathes; those eyes send out arrows which wound the hearts that desire him; the very stable, the very straw, cry out,[3877] says St. Bernard, and tell you to love him who loves you; to love God, who is infinite love; and who came down from heaven, and made himself a little child, and became poor, to make you understand the love he bears you, and to gain your love by his sufferings.

Come and say to him: “Ah, beautiful Infant! tell me whose child art Thou?” He replies: “My Mother is this pure and lovely Virgin who is standing by me.” And who is thy Father? “My Father,” he says, “is God.” How is this? Thou art the Son of God, and art so poor; and why? Who will acknowledge Thee in such a condition? Who will respect Thee? “No,” replies Jesus, “holy faith will make known who I am, and will make me loved by those souls whom I came to redeem and to inflame with my love.” I am not come, says he, to make myself feared, but to make myself loved; and therefore I wished to show myself to you for the first time as a poor and humble Infant, that, seeing to what my love for you has reduced me, you might love me the more. But tell me, my sweet Infant, why dost Thou turn Thine eyes on every side? What art Thou looking for? I hear Thee sigh; tell me wherefore are these sighs? O God! I hear Thee weep; tell me wherefore dost Thou weep? Yes, replies Jesus, I turn my eyes around; for I am seeking for some soul that desires me. I sigh out of desire to see myself near to a heart that burns for me, as I burn with love for it. But I weep; and it is because I do not see, or I see but few souls, who seek me and wish to love me.

EXHORTATION DURING THE KISSING OF THE FEET OF THE HOLY INFANT, WHICH IS A PRACTICE OBSERVED IN SOME CHURCHES.

Now then, O all ye devout souls, does Jesus invite you to come and kiss his feet this night. The shepherds who came to visit him in the stable of Bethlehem brought their gifts; you must also bring your gifts. What will you bring him? Listen to me; the most acceptable present you can bring him is that of a contrite and loving heart. Let each one then say to him before he comes:

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Lord, I should not have dared to approach Thee, seeing myself so deformed by my sins; but since Thou, my Jesus, dost invite me so courteously, and dost call me so lovingly, I will not refuse. After having so many times turned my back upon Thee, I will not add this fresh insult, namely, that of refusing this affectionate, this loving invitation, out of distrust. Say to him, Thou must know that I am poor, and that I have nothing to give Thee. I have nothing but this heart; this I now offer to Thee. It is true that this my heart offended Thee at one time; but now it is penitent, and I bring it to Thee penitent. Yes, O Infant! I repent of having offended Thee. I confess that I have been a traitor, cruel and ungrateful; that it is I who have caused Thee to suffer so much, and who have made Thee shed so many tears in the stable of Bethlehem; but Thy tears are my hope. I am a sinner, it is true, and I do not deserve to be pardoned; but I come before Thee, who, being God, hast become a little child to obtain pardon for me. Eternal Father, if I merit hell, look at the tears of Thy innocent Son; they invoke Thy pardon in my behalf. Thou dost deny nothing to the prayers of Thy Son. Listen to him, then, now that he asks Thee to pardon me on this night,—the night of joy, the night of salvation, the night of pardon. Ah, my Infant Jesus, I hope for pardon from Thee; but the forgiveness of my sins alone is not sufficient for me. On this night Thou dost grant great spiritual graces; I also desire that Thou shouldst bestow a great grace on me,—it is, the grace to love Thee. Now that I am about to approach Thy feet, inflame me wholly with Thy holy love, and bind me to thee; but bind me so effectually that I may nevermore be separated from Thee. I love Thee, O my God, who didst become a little child for my sake; but I love Thee very little; I desire to love Thee very much, and thou hast to enable me to do it. I come, then, to kiss Thy feet, and I offer Thee my heart; I leave it in Thy hands; I will have it no longer; do Thou change it, and keep it forever; do not give it back to me again; for if Thou dost, I fear lest it should betray Thee afresh.

Most holy Mary, thou who art the Mother of this great Son, but who art also my Mother, it is to thee that I consecrate my poor heart; present it to

Jesus; and he will not refuse to receive it, when presented by thee. Do thou, then, present it, and beg him to accept it.

Discourse ON THE NAME OF JESUS

Vocatum est nomen ejus Jesus

“His Name was called Jesus.”—St. Luke, 2:21

This great name of Jesus was not given by man, but by God himself; “Thy name of Jesus,” says St. Bernard, “was first preordained by God.”[3878] It was a new name: *A new Name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.*[3879] A new name, which God alone could give to him whom he destined for the Saviour of the world. A new and an eternal name; because, as our salvation was decreed from all eternity, so from all eternity was this name given to the Redeemer. Nevertheless this name was only bestowed on Jesus Christ in this world on the day of his circumcision: *And after eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus.*[3880] the Eternal Father wished at that time so honorable a name. Yes, while Jesus humbles himself, submitting in his circumcision to be branded with the mark of a sinner, it is just that his Father should honor him by giving him a name that exceeds the dignity and sublimity of any other name: *God hath given Him a Name which is above all names.*[3881] And he commands that this name should be adored by the angles, by men, and by devils: *That in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.*[3882] If, then, all creatures are to adore this great name, still more ought we sinners to adore it, since it was in our behalf that this name of Jesus, which signifies Saviour, was given to him; and for this end also he came down from heaven, namely, to save sinners: “For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and was made man.”[3883] We ought to adore him, and at the same time to thank God who has given him this name for our good; for it is this name that consoles us, defends us, and makes us burn with love. This will form the three points of our discourse. Let us consider them; but first let us beg for light from Jesus and Mary.

I

In the first place, the name of Jesus consoles us; for when we invoke Jesus, we find relief in all our afflictions. When we have recourse to Jesus, he wishes to console us, because he loves us; and he can do so, because he is not only man, but he is also the Omnipotent God; otherwise he could not properly have this great name of Saviour. The name of Jesus signifies that the bearer of it is of an infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite love; so that if Jesus Christ had not united in himself all these perfections, he could not have saved us: "If any one of these," says St. Bernard, "had been wanting, Thou couldst not call Thyself Saviour."[3884] Thus, when speaking of the circumcision, the saint says: "He was circumcised as being the Son of Abraham, he was called Jesus as being the Son of God."[3885] He is branded as man with the mark of sin, having taken upon himself the burden of atoning for sinners; and from his very infancy he began to satisfy for their crimes, by suffering and shedding his blood; but he is called Jesus, he is called the Saviour, inasmuch as he is the Son of God, because to God alone does the office of salvation belong.

The name of Jesus is said by the Holy Spirit to be like oil poured out: *Thy name is as oil poured out.*[3886] And so indeed it is, says St. Bernard; for as oil serves for light, for food, and for medicine, so especially the name of Jesus is light: "it is a light when preached."[3887] And how was it, says the saint, that the light in a short time so many Gentile nations knew the true God, and became his followers, if it was not through hearing the name of Jesus preached? "Whence, think you, shone forth in the whole world, so bright and so sudden, the light of faith, except from the preaching of the name of Jesus?"[3888] Through this name we have been happily made sons of the true light, that is, sons of the Holy Church; since we were so fortunate as to be born in the bosom of the Roman Church, in Christian and Catholic kingdoms,—a grace which has not been granted to the greater part of men, who are born amongst idolaters, Mahometans or heretics. Further, the name of Jesus is a food that nourishes our souls. "The thought of it is nourishment." This name gives strength to find peace and consolation even in the midst of the miseries and persecutions of this world. The holy Apostles rejoiced when they were ill treated and reviled, being comforted by the name of Jesus: *They went from the presence of the council rejoicing* *that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus.*[3889] It is light, it is food, and it is also medicine to those who invoke it: “when pronounced it soothes and anoints.”[3890] The holy Abbot says: “At the rising of the light of this name, the clouds disperse, the calm returns.”[3891] If the soul of any one is afflicted and in trouble, let him pronounce the name of Jesus, and immediately the tempest will cease and peace will return. Does any one fall into sin? Does he run in despair into the snares of death? Let him invoke the name of Life, and will he not at once return to life?[3892] If any one has been so wretched as to fall into sin, and feels diffident of pardon, let him invoke this name of Life, and he shall immediately be encouraged to hope for pardon, by calling on Jesus, who for this end was destined by the Father to be our Saviour,—namely, to obtain pardon for sinners. Euthymius says that if when Judas was tempted to despair, he had invoked the name of Jesus, he would not have given way to the temptation: “If he had invoked that name, he would not have perished.”[3893] Therefore, he adds, no sinner can perish through desperation, however lost he may be, who invokes his Holy Name, which is one of hope and salvation: “Despair is far oft where this name is invoked.”[3894]

But sinners leave off invoking this saving name, because they do not wish to be cured of their infirmities. Jesus Christ is ready to heal all our wounds; but if people cherish their wounds, and will not be healed, how can Jesus Christ heal them? The Venerable Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified, a Sicilian nun, once saw the Saviour, as it seemed, in a hospital, going round with medicines in his hand, to cure the sick people who were there; but there miserable people, instead of thinking him and begging him to come to them, drove him away. In like manner do many sinners, after they have of their own free-will poisoned their souls with sins, refuse the gifts of health, that is, the grace offered them by Jesus Christ, and thus remain lost through their infirmities.

But, on the other hand, what fear can that sinner have who has recourse to Jesus Christ, since Jesus offers himself to obtain our pardon from his Father, he having paid the penalty due from us his death? St. Laurence Justinian says: “He who had been offended, appointed himself as intercessor, and himself paid what was owing to him,”[3895] Therefore, adds the saint, “if thou art bound down by sickness, if sorrows weary thee, if thou art trembling with fear, invoke the name of Jesus."[3896] O poor man, whoever thou art, if thou art weighed down by infirmity or by grief and fear, call on Jesus, and he will console thee. It is enough that we pray to the Father in his name, and all we ask will be granted to us. This is the promise of Jesus himself, which he repeated many times, and which cannot fail: *If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you:*[3897] . . . *that whatsoever you shall ask of the father in My name, He may give it you.*[3898]

II

In the second place, we said that name of Jesus defends us. Yes, it defends us against all the deceits and assaults of our enemies. For this reason the Messias was called *the Mighty God;*[3899] and his name was called by the wise man a strong tower: *The name of the Lord is a strong tower;*[3900] that we may know that he who avails himself of this powerful name will not fear all the assaults of hell. St. Paul writes thus: *Christ humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.*[3901] Jesus Christ during his life humbled himself in obeying his Father, even to die on the cross; which is as much as to say, as St. Anselm remarks, he humbled himself so much that he could humble himself no more;[3902] and therefore his divine Father, as a reward for this humility and obedience of his Son, raised him to such a sublime dignity that he could have no higher: *For which cause God hath given Him a name which is above all names; that every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.*[3903] He has given him a name which is so great and powerful that it is venerated in heaven, on earth, and in hell. A name powerful in heaven, because it can obtain all graces for us; powerful on earth, because it can save all who invoke it with devotion; powerful in hell, because this name makes all the devils tremble. These rebel angles tremble at the sound of that most sacred name, because they remember that Jesus Christ was the Mighty One who destroyed the dominion and power they had before over man. They tremble, says St. Peter Chrysologus, because at that name they have to adore the whole majesty of God: "In this name the whole majesty of God is adored."[3904] Our Savior himself said, that through this powerful name his disciples should cast out devils: *In My name they shall cast out devils.*[3905] And, in fact, the Church in her exorcisms always makes use of this name in driving out the infernal spirits from those who are possessed. And priests who are assisting dying persons call to their aid the name of Jesus, to deliver them from the assaults of hell, which at that last moment are so terrible.

If we read the life of St. Bernardine of Sienna, we shall see how many sinners the saint converted, how many abuses he put an end to, and how many cities he sanctified, by trying when he preached to induce the people to invoke the name of Jesus. St. Peter says that there is no other name given to us by which we can find salvation but this ever-blessed name of Jesus: *For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved.*[3906] Jesus is he who has not only saved us once for all, but he continally preserves us from the danger of sin, by his merits, each time we invoke him with confidence: *Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do.*[3907]

In temptations, then, I repeat with St. Laurence Justinian, “whether you are tempted by the devil or are attacked by men, invoke the name of Jesus.”[3908] If the devils and men torment you and urge you to sin, call on Jesus, and you will be delivered; and if temptations do not cease to presecute you, continue to invoke Jesus, and you will never fall. Those who practise this devetion have experienced that they keep themselves safe, and that they always come off victorious.

Let us always add also the name of Mary, which is likewise terrible to hell, and we shall always be secure. “This short prayer—Jesus and Mary—is easy to remember,” says Thomes à Kempis, “and powerful to protect; is strong enough to deliver us from all the assaults of our enemies”[3909]

III

In the third place, the name of Jesus not only consoles us and preserves us from all evil, but it also inflames with holy love all those who pronounce it with devotion. The name of Jesus, that is, of Saviour, is a name which expresses in itself love, for it recalls to us how much Jesus Christ has done and suffered to save us. “The name of Jesus,” says St. Bernard, “places before thee all that God has done for the salvation of the human race.”[3910] So that a poious author said, with all the affection of his heart “O my Jesus, how much did it cost Thee to be Jesus, that is, my Saviour!”[3911]

St. Matthew writers, when speaking of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, *And they put over His head His cause written: This is Jesus the King of the Jews.*[3912] The eternal Father then so ordained that on the Cross on which our Redeemer died should be written, This is Jesus, the Saviour of the world. Pilate wrote this, not that he had judged him guilty because Jesus Christ took to himself the title of King; for Pilate made no account of this accusation: and at the same time that he condemned him he declared him innocent, and protested that he had no part in his death: *I am innocent of the blood of this just man.*[3913] why, then, did he gave him the title of king? He wrote it by the will of God, who thereby wished to say to us men, Do you know why my innocent Son is dying? He is dying because he is your Saviour; this divine pastor dies on his infamous tree in order to save you, his sheep. Therefore it was said in the sacred Canticles, *His name is as oil poured out.*[3914] St. Bernard explains this, saying, “that is, the effusion of the divinty.”[3915] In the redemption God himself, out of the love which he bore us, gave himself and communicated himself entirely to us: *He hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.*[3916] And, that he might be able to communicate himself to us, he took upon himself the burden of suffering the pains due by us. *He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows.*[3917] By this title. says St. Cyril of Alexandria, he desired to cancel the original decree of condemnation which had already been passed against us poor sinners: “By this affixed to his cross he blotted out the decree issued against the human race.”[3918] According to the word of the apostle, *Blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us.*[3919] Our loving Redeemer wished to deliver us from the maledication we had deserved, by making himself the object of the divine curse in taking all our sins upon him: *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*[3920]

Therefore it is not possible for a soul that is faithful to pronounce the name of Jesus, and to remember all that he has done to save us, and not be to inflamed with love towards one who was has loved us so much. “When I utter the name of Jesus,” says St. Bernard, “I see before me a man of meekness, humility, kindness, and mercy, who at the same time is the Almighty God, who heals and strengthens me.”[3921] When we say Jesus, we should imagine to ourselves that we see a man, meek, benignant, kind, and full of all virtues; and then we must think that he is our God, who, to cure wounds, chose to be despised, wounded, and even to die of pure grief on a cross. St. Ansalm, therefore, exhorts all who call themselves Christians to cherish the beautiful name of Jesus, to have it always in their hearts, that it may be their only food, their only consolation. “Let Jesus be ever in thy heart. Let him be thy food, thy delight, thy consolation.”[3922] Ah, says St. Bernard, it is he alone who experiences it, that can know what sweetness, what a paradise even in this valley of tears, it is truly to love Jesus.[3923]

“The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but his lov’d ones know.”

Well did St. Rose of Lima know this happiness, from whose mouth out such a burning flame of love, after she had received Holy Communion, that it burned the hands of those that gave her water (as was the custom) to drink after Communion. As also did St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, who, with a crucifix in her hand, cried out, burning with love, “O God of love! O God of love! even mad with love.” And St. Philip Neri, whose ribs were forced out to give room for his heart, which was burning with divine love, to beat more freely. St. Stanislaus Kostka, who was obliged to have his breast bathed with cold water to mitigate ardor with which he was burning for the love of Jesus. St. Francis Xavier, who for the same cause unclosed his bosom, saying, “Lord, it is enough; no more,” in this way decraring himself unable to bear the great flame that was burning in his heart.

Let us also try as much as we can to keep Jesus in our hearts by loving him, and to keep him on our lips by often calling on him. St. Paul says that the name of Jesus cannot be pronounced (that is, with devotion) except by the operation of the Holy Spirit: *And no man can say the Lord Jesus but by the Holy Ghost.*[3924] So that the Holy Spirit communicates himself to all those who devoutly pronounce the name of Jesus.

The name of Jesus is strange to same, and why is it? Because they love not Jesus. The saints have always on their lips this name of salvation and love. There is not a page in all the epistles of St. Paul in which he does not name Jesus many times. St. John also names him often. The blessed Henry Suso, the more to increase his love for this holy name, one day, with a sharp iron, engraved the name of Jesus on his bosom over his heart; and being all bathed in his blood, he said, Lord, I desire to write Thy name on my heart itself, but I cannot; Thou who canst do everything, imprint, I pray Thee, Thy sweet name on my heart, so that neither Thy name nor Thy love may ever be effaced from it. St. Jane of Chantal imprinted the name of Jesus on her heart with a hot iron.

Jesus Christ does not expect so much from us; he is satisfied if we keep him in our hearts by love, and if we often invoke him with affection. And as whatever he did and said during his life, he did it all for us, so it is but just that whatever we do, we should do it in the names of Jesus Christ, and for his love, as St. Paul exhorts us: *All whatsoever you do, in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*[3925] And if Jesus has died for us, we ought to be ready willingly to give our lives for the name of Jesus Christ, as the same apostle declared he was ready to do: *For I am ready, not only to be bound, but to die also in Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.*[3926]

Let us now come to the conclusion. If we are in affliction, let us invoke Jesus, and he will give us strength to withstand all our enemies. If, lastly, we are in aridity, and are cold in divine love, let us invoke Jesus, and he will inflame our hearts. Happy are they who have this most tender and holy name always on their lips! A name of peace, a name of hope, a name of salvation, and a name of love. And oh! happy shall we be if we are fortunate enough to die pronouncing the name of Jesus! But if we desire to breathe out our last sigh with this sweet name on our tongue, we must accustom ourselves to repeat it often during our life.

Let us also always add the beautiful name of Mary, which is also a name given from heaven, and is a powerful name which makes hell tremble; and is besides a sweet name, in that it reminds us of that Queen who, being the Mother of God, is also our Mother, the Mother of mercy, the Mother of love.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Since, then, O my Jesus! Thou art the Saviour who hast given Thy blood and Thy life for me, I pray Thee to write Thy adorable name on my poor heart; so that having it always imprinted in my heart by love, I may also have it ever on my lips, by invoking it in all my necessities. If the devil tempts me, Thy name will give me strength to resist him; if I lose confidence, Thy name will animate me to hope; if I am affliction, Thy name will comfort me, by reminding me of all Thou hast endured for me. If I find myself cold in Thy love, Thy name will inflame me by reminding me of the love Thou hast shown me, Hitherto I have fallen into so many sins, because I did not call on Thee; from henceforth Thy name shall be my defence, my refuge, my hope, my only consolation, my only love. Thus do I hope to live, and so do I hope to die, having Thy name always on my lips.

Most holy Virgin, obtain for me the grace of invoking the name of thy Son Jesus in all necessities, together with thine own, my Mother Mary; but let me invoke them always with confidence and love, so that I may be able also to say to thee as did the devout Alphonsus Rodriguez: “Jesus and Mary, may I suffer for you; may I die for you; may I be wholly yours, and in nothing my own!”[39][27] O my beloved Jesus! O Mary, may beloved Lady! give me the grace to suffer and to die for your love. I will be no longer mine own, but altogether yours: yours in life, and yours in death, when I hope by your help to expire saying, Jesus and Mary, help me! Jesus and Mary, I recommend myself to you; Jesus and Mary, I love you, and I give and deliver up to my whole soul.

EXAMPLES OF THE INFANT JESUS

EXAMPLE I

IT is related in the *Flowery Meadow* that a devout lady wished to know what souls were the deasert to Jesus. One day, whilst she was hearing Mass, at the elevation of the Sacred Host, she saw the Infant Jesus on the alter, and with him three young virgins. Jesus took the first, and caressed her very much. He went to the second, and, having taken her veil off her face, he struck her severely on the cheek, and turned his back upon her; but soon after, seeing the child looking sorrowful, he comforted her with all sorts of kindness. At last he approached the third; he seized her by the arm as if he were angry, struck her, and drove her away from him; but the more she saw herself ill-used and driven off, the more the tittle virgin humbled herself and followed him: and thus the vision ended. This devout devout woman, remaining in the church with great desire to know what was the meaning of the vision, Jesus appeared to her again, and told her that there are on the earth three sorts of souls that love him. Some love him; but their love is so weak that if they are not coaxed by spiritual pleasures they become uneasy, and are in danger of turning their backs upon him; and of these the first virgin was a figure. The second represented those souls who love him with a less feeble love, but who require to be comforted from time to time. The third was a figure of those more courageous souls who, although constantly desolate, and deprived of spiritual consolations, do not cease doing all they can to please their Lord; and these, he said, were the souls in which he took the greatest delight.

EXAMPLE II

Father Cagonolio relates, from Father Patrignani, that after having committed a great many sins, a certain nun arrived at such an excess of crime that having one day communicated, she drew from her mouth the sacred particle, placed it in a handkerchief, and afterwards, having shut herself up in a cell, she threw the Blessed Sacrament on the ground, and began to trample it under her feet. But lo! she casts her eyes down, and what does she see? She sees the Sacred Host changed into the form of a beautiful Infant, but all bruised and covered with blood, who said to her, “And what have I done to thee, that thou treatest me so ill?” Upon which the wretched creature, full of contrition and repentance, threw herself on her knees in tears, and said to him. “O my God, dost Thou ask me what Thou hast done to me? Thou hast loved me too much.” The vision disappeared, and the nun changed her whole life, and became a model of penance.

EXAMPLE III

It is related in the chronicles of the Cistercians that a certain monk of Brabant, who was travelling on Christmas-night, as he passed through a forest, heard a cry as it were of a new-born infant. He approached the place whence he heard the cries, and saw a beautiful infant in the middle of the snow, who was crying and trembling with the cold. Moved to compassion, the monk immediately dismounted from his horse, and, approaching the infant, said: “O my child, how is it that thou art thus abandoned to weep and die in the midst of this snow?” And he heard a voice answer him: “Alas! how can I help crying, whilst I see myself thus abandoned by all, and that no one receives me or has compassion upon me?” And having said this, he disappeared, giving us to understand that he was our Redeemer, who by this vision meant to reprove the ingratitude of men, who, having seen him born for their sake in a stable, leave him to cry there without even pitying him.

EXAMPLE IV

It is related by Bollandus that the most holy Mary appeared one day to the Blessed Coletta, whilst she was praying to her to intercede for sinners, and that she showed her Infant Son all torn and cut to pieces, “My daughter,” she said, “have compassion me and on my Son; behold how sinners treat him.”

EXAMPLE V

Pelbart relates that a certain soldier was full of vices; but he had a devout wife, who, not being able to reform him, recommended him at least not to omit saying every day a Hail Mary before some image of our Lady. One day, as he was going to commit sin, he passed by a church, which, by chance, he entered; and seeing an image of our Blessed Lady, he knelt down and said a Hail Mary; and what did he then see? he saw the Infant Jesus in the arms of Mary all covered with bleeding wounds. Upon which he said, “O God, what barbarian has thus ill-treated this innocent babe?” “It is you, sinner,” answered Mary: “it is you who thus ill-use my Son.” Then, full of contrition, he begged her to obtain for him pardon, calling her Mother of Mercy. She replied, “You sinners call me Mother of Mercy, but you do not cease to make me a mother of sorrows and of misery.” But the penitent did not lose courage, and continued to pray to Mary intercede for him. The Blessed Virgin turned to her Son, and asked him to pardon this sinner. Her Son seemed reluctant to do so; but then Mary said to him, “O my Son, I will not leave Thy feet if Thou dost not forgive this afflicted man, who has recommended himself to me.” Then Jesus said to her: “O my Mother, I never have refused you anything; do you desire the pardon of this sinner? let him be pardoned; and in token of the pardon which I grant him, I desire that he should come and kiss my wounds.” The sinner went up to the image, drew near, and whilst he was kissing them, the wounds were closed. Immediately on leaving the church, he asks pardon of his wife, and with mutual consent they both left the world, and became religious in two monasteries at the same time, and ended their lives by a holy death.

EXAMPLE VI

It is mentioned in the life of Brother Benedict Lopez that while he remained in the army he led a life stained with sins. One day he entered a church in Travancor, and saw an image of Mary with the Infant Jesus. Our Lord placed before his eyes his abandoned life. At the sight of his sins he almost despaired of pardon; but turning to Mary, with tears in his eyes, he commended himself to her; and he then perceived that the Holy Infant also was weeping, and that his tears were falling on the altar; so much so that it was observed by others, who hastened to collect them in a cloth. Soon after this, Benedict, full of contrition, forsook the world, and became a lay-brother in the Society of Jesus, in which he lived and died with the greatest devotion to the Sacred Infancy of Jesus Christ.

EXAMPLE VII

Father Patrignani relates that there was in Messina a youth of noble birth called Dominic Ansalone, who was in the habit of going often to a certain church to visit an image of Mary holding in her arms the Infant Jesus, of which he became quite enamoured. Now, it happened that when Dominic lay at the point of death he implored his parents with great earnestness to bring the image of the beloved Child into his room. His wishes were satisfied; full of delight, he placed it on his bed, and looking at it in the most loving manner, and now and then turning to the Infant, he said, “My Jesus, have pity on me!” then turning to the bystanders, “Behold,” he said, “behold how beautiful is my little Saviour!” On the last night of his life he called his parents, and in their presence he first said to the Holy Infant, “My Jesus, I leave Thee my heir!” And then he begged his father and mother to employ a certain small sum of money which he had, in having nine Masses celebrated after his death, and with the rest to make a handsome robe for his Infant heir. Before he died, he raised his eyes to heaven with a look of joy, and said, “Oh, how beautiful!—how beautiful is my Lord!” and saying this, he expired.

EXAMPLE VIII

It is related in the *Mirror of Examples* of a certain devout English boy, named Edmund,[3928] that being one day in the country with other children, as he was fond of prayer and solitude, he separated himself from them, and walked alone in a meadow, entertaining himself in devout aspirations and affections towards Jesus Christ. Behold, a beautiful Infant appeared to him, and saluted him with, “God bless you, My dear Edmund!” And then he asked him whether he knew who he was? Edmund answered that he did not. “What dost thou mean by not knowing me?” replied the heavenly Infant, “when I am always at thy side. If, then, thou desirest to know me, look at my forehead.” Edmund looked and read on his forehead these words:“Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” The Child then added, “This is my name; and I desire that in remembrance of the love I bear thee, thou shouldst every night sign thy forehead with this name, and it shall deliver thee from sudden death; as it will also deliver every one who shall do the same.” Edmund ever after signed himself with the name of Jesus. On one occasion the devil seized his hands, in order to prevent him from doing so; but he conquered him by prayer, and then constrained him to tell him what was the weapon which he most feared; the devil replied that it was those words with which he signed his forehead.

EXAMPLE IX

Father Nadasi relates that the devotion of sending about the image of the Infant Jesus to the nuns, each one having it one day, having been introduced into a monastery, one of these virgins whose turn it was, after having spent a long time in prayer, at the close of evening took the image and shut it up in a little closet. But she had hardly lain down to sleep when she heard the Holy Infant knocking at the door of the closet; she therefore got out of bed, and, having replaced the image on her little altar, she prayed again for a very long time. She then shut it up again, but the Infant again knocked; again she took it out and prayed. At last, weary with sleep, she went and rested herself on the bed, and slept till daybreak; and on awakening she blessed this night that had been passed in holy conversation with her Beloved.

EXAMPLE X

It is related in the *Dominican Diary* for the 7th October, that when St. Dominic was preaching at Rome there was there a sinner called the beautiful Catharine. She received a Rosary from the hands of the saint, and began to recite it; but she did not leave off her wicked course of life. One day Jesus appeared to her; first, in the shape of a young man, and afterwards the figure changed itself into that of a beautiful Infant, but with a crown of thorns upon his head and a cross on his shoulders, tears flowing from his eyes and blood from his body. He then said to her, It is enough; no more, Catharine; it is enough, do not offend me any more: see how much thou hast cost me since I began as an Infant to suffer for thee, and never left off suffering till my death. Catharine thereupon went immediately in search of St. Dominic, confessed to him, and, instructed by him, after having given all she had to the poor, and having shut herself up in a narrow cell, led a life of such fervor, and received such graces from the Lord, that the saint was struck with admiration. And at last, having been visited by most holy Mary, she died a most happy death.

EXAMPLE XI

The Venerable Sister Jane of Jesus and Mary, a Franciscan, whilst she was one day meditating on the Infant Jesus being persecuted by Herod, heard a great noise as of armed men pursuing some one, and then saw before her a beautiful boy looking much distressed, who seemed to be running away, and who said to her: “O Jane, help me and save me; I am Jesus of Nazareth; I am flying from sinners, who want to take my life away, and persecute me worse than Herod; do you save me.”

EXAMPLE XII

It is related in the life of Father Zucchi of the Society of Jesus, who was most devout to the Infant Jesus, and whose image he used in order to gain many souls to God, that one day he gave one of these little images to a lady, who, though perfectly innocent and good in her habits, yet was very far from having the idea of becoming a nun. The young lady accepted the gift; but smiling she said to him, What have I to do with this Infant? He answered, Nothing, but to put it on the spinet, on which you so frequently play. She did so; and having constantly this image before her eyes, she could not avoid often looking at it, and from looking at it she began to feel a small touch of devotion. Then she was inflamed with a desire to become better; so that the spinet was rather an occasion to her of prayer than of amusement. At last she resolved to leave the world and become a religious. Then, full of joy, she went and related to Father Zucchi that the Infant had drawn her to his love; and, disengaging her affections from earthly things, had taken entire possession of them himself. She became a religious, and gave herself up to a life of perfection.

Meditations for Every Day of Advent

MEDITATION I

FIRST SUNDAY

GOODNESS OF GOD IN THE WORK OF THE REDEMPTION

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto. . . . Et homo factus est

“And was incarnate of the Holy Ghost, and was made man.”—Symbol. Const.

Consider that God, having created the first man, in order that he might serve him and love him in this life, and be conducted afterwards to reign with him forever in Paradise, enriched him for this end with knowledge and grace. But ungrateful man rebelled against God, refusing him the obedience which he owed him in justice and gratitude; and thus, miserable sinner, was he left with all his posterity as a rebel, deprived of divine grace, and forever excluded from paradise. Behold, then, after this ruin, caused by sin, all men lost! All were living in blindness, or in the darkness of the shadow of death. The devil had dominion over them, and hell destroyed innumerable victims amongst them.

But God, seeing men reduced to this miserable state, was moved with pity, and resolved to save them. And how? He did not send an angel, a seraph; but to show to the world the immense love that he bore to these ungrateful worms, *He sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.*[3929] He sent his own Son to become man, and to clothe himself with the same flesh as sinful men, in order that, by his suffering and death, he might satisfy the divine justice for their crimes, and thus deliver them from eternal death; and, reconciling them with his divine Father, might obtain for them divine grace, and might render them worthy to enter into life eternal.

Consider, on the one hand, the immense ruin that sin brings upon souls, as it deprives them of the friendship of God and of Paradise, and condemns them to an eternity of pain. And, on the other hand, consider the infinite love which God showed in this great work of the incarnation of the Word, causing his only-begotten Son to sacrifice his divine life by the hands of executioners on a cross, in a sea of sorrows and of infamy, to obtain for us pardon and life eternal. Oh, in contemplating this great mystery and this excess of divine love, how can we do otherwise than exclaim: O infinite goodness! O infinite mercy! O infinite love! for a God to become man, and to die for me!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

But how is it my Jesus, that after Thou hast repaired this ruin of sin by Thy own death, I have so often wilfully renewed it again by the many offences I have committed against Thee? Thou hast saved me at so great a cost, and I have so often chosen to damn myself, in losing Thee, O infinite Good! But what Thou hast said gives me confidence that when the sinner who has turned his back upon Thee is converted to Thee, Thou wilt not refuse to embrace him: *Turn ye to Me, and I will turn to you.*[3930] Thou hast also said, *If any man shall . . . open to Me the door, I will come in to him.*[3931] Behold, Lord. I am one of these rebels, an ungrateful traitor, who have often turned my back upon Thee, and driven Thee from my soul; but now I repent with all my heart for having thus ill-used Thee and despised Thy grace; I repent of it, and love Thee above everything. Behold, the door of my heart is already open; enter Thou, but enter never to leave it again. I know well that Thou wilt never leave me, if I do not again drive Thee away; but this is my fear, and this is the grace which I ask of Thee, and which I hope always to ask; let me die rather than be guilty of this fresh and still greater ingratitude. My dearest Redeemer, I do not deserve to love Thee, after all the offences that I have committed against Thee; but for Thy own merits' sake I ask of Thee the gift of Thy holy love, and therefore I beseech Thee make me know the great good Thou art, the love Thou hast borne me, and how much Thou hast done to oblige me to love Thee. Ah, my God and Saviour, let me no longer live ungrateful to Thy great goodness. My Jesus, I will never leave Thee again; I have already offended Thee enough. It is only right that I should employ the remaining years of my life in loving Thee and pleasing Thee. My Jesus, my Jesus, help me; help a sinner that wishes to love Thee. O Mary, my Mother, thou hast all power with Jesus, seeing thou art his

Mother; beg of him to forgive me; beg of him to enchain me with his holy love. Thou art my hope; in thee do I confide.

Meditation II

FIRST MONDAY

GRANDEUR OF THE MYSTERY OF INCARNATION

Et verbum caro factum est.

“And the Word was made flesh.”—St. John, 1:14.

Our Lord sent St. Augustine to write upon the heart of St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi the words, *And the Word was made flesh.* Oh, let us also pray the Lord to enlighten our minds, and to make us understand what an excess and what a miracle of love this is, that the eternal Word, the Son of God, should have become man for the love of us.

The holy Church is struck with awe at the contemplation of this great mystery: *I considered Thy works and was afraid.*[3932] If God had created a thousand other worlds, a thousand times greater and more beautiful than the present, it is certain that this work would be infinitely less grand than the incarnation of the Word: *He hath showed might in His arm.*[3933] To execute the great work of the Incarnation, it required all the omnipotence and infinite wisdom of God, in order to unite human nature to a divine person, and that a divine person should so humble himself as to take upon him human nature. Thus God became man, and man became God; and hence, the divinity of the Word being united to the soul and body of Jesus Christ, all the actions of this Man-God became divine: his prayers were divine, his sufferings divine, his infant cries divine, his tears divine, his steps divine, his members divine, his very blood divine, which became, as it were, a fountain of health to wash out all our sins, and a sacrifice of infinite value to appease the justice of the Father, who was justly offended with men.

And who, then, are these men? Miserable, ungrateful, and rebellious creatures. And yet for these God becomes man; subjects himself to human miseries; suffers and dies to save these unworthy sinners: *He humbled*

Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.[3934] O holy faith! If faith did not assure us of it, who Would believe that a God of infinite majesty should abase himself so far as to become a worm like us, in order to save us at the cost of so much suffering and disgrace, and of so cruel and shameful a death?

"O grace! O power of love!"[3935] cries St. Bernard. O grace, which men could not even have imagined, if God himself had not thought of granting it to us! O divine love, which can never be fathomed! O mercy! O infinite charity, worthy only of an infinite bounty!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O soul, O body, O blood of my Jesus! I adore you and thank you; are my hope; you are the price paid to save me from hell, which I have so often merited. O my God! what a miserable and hopeless life would await me in eternity, if Thou, my Redeemer, hadst not thought of saving me by Thy sufferings and death! But how is it that souls, redeemed by Thee with so much love, knowing all this, can live without loving Thee, and can despise the grace which Thou hast acquired for them with so much suffering? And did not I also know all this? How, then, could I offend Thee, and offend Thee so often? But, I repeat it, Thy blood is my hope. I acknowledge, my Saviour, the great injuries that I have done to Thee. Oh that I had rather died a thousand times! Oh that I had always loved Thee! But I thank Thee that Thou yet givest me time to do so. I hope in the time that remains to me in this life, and for all eternity, to sing forever Thy praises for the mercies Thou hast shown me. I have deserved, on account of my sins, to be more and more in darkness; but Thou hast given me more and more light. I deserved that Thou shouldst abandon me; but Thou, with calls still more loving, didst come to me and seek me. I deserved that my soul should remain more hardened; but Thou hast softened and touched it with compunction, so that by Thy grace I now feel great sorrow for the offences that I have committed against Thee; I feel within me an ardent desire of loving Thee; I feel fully resolved to lose everything rather than Thy friendship; I feel a love towards Thee that makes me abhor everything that displeases Thee. And this sorrow, this desire, this resolution, and this love, who is it that gives them to me? It is Thou, O Lord, in Thy great mercy.

Therefore, my Jesus, this is proof that Thou hast pardoned me; it is a proof that Thou now lovest me, and that Thou willest me at all costs to be saved; Thou willest that I should be saved, and I will save myself principally to give Thee pleasure. Thou lovest me, and I also love Thee; but my love is but little. Oh, give me more love; Thou deservest more love from me, for I have received from Thee more special favors than others; I pray Thee, do Thou increase the flames of my love. Most holy Mary, obtain for me that the love of Jesus may consume and destroy in me every affection that has not God for its object. Thou dost listen to the prayers of all that call on thee; listen to me also, obtain for me and perseverance.

Meditation III

FIRST TUESDAY

THE LOVE OF GOD FOR MEN

Sic Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret.

“God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son.”—St. John, 3:16.

Consider that the eternal Father, in giving us his Son for a Redeemer, for victim and price of our ransom, could not have given us stronger motives for hope and love, to inspire us with confidence, and to oblige us to love him. In giving us his Son (says St. Augustine), he could give us nothing more. He desires that we should avail ourselves of this immense gift in order to gain for ourselves eternal salvation, and every grace that we want; whilst in Jesus we find all that we can desire; we find light, strength, peace, confidence, love, and eternal glory: for Jesus Christ is a gift which contains all the gifts that we can seek for or desire.

How hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?[3936] God having given us his beloved only-begotten Son, who is the fountain and treasure of all good, who need fear that he should deny us any favor that we ask of him? *Christ Jesus is of God made unto us wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption.*[3937] God hath given him to us in order that he might be to us ignorant and blind creatures light and wisdom, wherewith to walk in the way of salvation; in order that to us who are deserving of hell he might be justice, enabling us to aspire to paradise; that to us sinners he might be sanctification, to obtain for us holiness; that, finally, to us slaves of the devil he might be a ransom to purchase for us the liberty of the sons of God. In short, the Apostle says that with Jesus Christ we have been enriched with every good gift and every grace, if we ask it through his merits: *In all things you are made rich in Him, . . . so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace.*[3938]

And this gift which God has made us of his Son is a gift to each one of us; for he hath given him entirely to each of us, as if he had given him to each one alone, so that every one of may say: Jesus is all mine; his body is mine; his blood is mine; his life is mine; his sorrows, his death, his merits, are all mine. Wherefore St. Paul said, *He loved me and delivered Himself for me.*[3939] And every one may say the same thing: “My Redeemer has loved me; and for the love that he bore me he hath given himself entirely to me.”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O eternal God! who could ever have given us this treasure of infinite value, but Thou, who art a God of infinite love? O my Creator, what more couldst Thou have done to give us confidence in Thy mercy, and to put us under an obligation of loving Thee? O Lord, I have repaid Thee with ingratitude; but Thou hast said, *To them that love God all things work together unto good.*[3940] Therefore, notwithstanding the great number and the enormity of my sins, I will not despair of Thy bounty; rather let my transgressions serve to humble me the more whenever I meet with any insult; other insults and humiliations does he deserve who has had the temerity to offend Thy divine majesty. I wish that my sins may serve to reconcile me the more to the crosses which Thou shalt send me, that I may be more diligent to serve and honor Thee, in order to compensate for the injuries I have committed against Thee. O my God! I will always remember the displeasure I have caused Thee, in order that I may the more exalt Thy mercy, and be inflamed with love for Thee, who hast brought me back when I was flying from Thee, and who hast done me so much good after I had behaved so ill to Thee. I trust, O Lord! that Thou hast already forgiven me. I repent will always repent, of the outrages I have committed against Thee. I will endeavor to please Thee by making compensation by my love for the ingratitude I have shown Thee; but I depend upon Thee to help me; from Thee I hope to obtain the grace to fulfil this my desire. O my God! for Thy Glory’s sake, vouchsafe to grant that, as I have offended Thee much, I may also love Thee much. My God, my God, how can I ever leave off loving Thee, and separate myself again from Thy love! O Mary, my queen! do thou assist me; thou knowest my weakness; grant that I may have recourse to thee whenever the devil tries to separate me from God. My Mother, my hope, do thou help me.

Meditation IV

FIRST WEDNESDAY

THE WORD WAS MADE MAN IN THE FULNESS OF TIME

> Ubi venit plenitudo temporis misit Deus Filium suum.
>
> “When the fulness of time was come, God sent His son.”—Gal. 4:4.

Consider that God allowed four thousand years to pass, after the transgression of Adam, before he sent his Son upon earth to redeem the world. And in the mean time, oh, what fatal darkness reigned upon the earth! The true God was not known or adored, except in one small corner of the world. Idolatry reigned everywhere; so that devils and beasts and stones were adored as gods.

But let admire in this the divine Wisdom: he deferred the coming of the Redeemer in order to render his advent more welcome to man, in order that the malice of sin might be better known, as well as the necessity of a remedy and the grace of the Saviour. If Jesus Christ had come into the world immediately after the fall of Adam, the greatness of this favor would have been but slightly appreciated. Let us therefore thank the goodness of God for having sent us into the world after the great work of redemption was accomplished. Behold, the happy is come which was called the fulness of time: *When the fulness of time was come, God sent his Son, . . . that he might redeem them that were under the law.*[3941]

It is called *fulness*, on account of the fulness of grace which the Son of God came to communicate to men by the redemption of the world. Behold the angel who is sent as ambassador into the town of Nazareth to announce to the Virgin Mary the coming of the Word, who desires to become incarnate in her womb. The angel salutes her, calls her full of grace and blessed among women. The humble Virgin, chosen to be Mother of the Son of God, is troubled at these praises on account of her great humility: but the angel encourages her, and tells her that she has found grace with God; that is to say, the grace which brought peace between God and man, and the reparation of the ruin caused by sin. He then tells her that she must give her Son the name of Saviour: *Thou shalt call his name Jesus;*[3942]—and that this her Son is the very Son of God, who is to redeem the world, and thus to reign over the hearts of men. Behold, at last Mary consents to be the Mother of such a Son: *Be it unto me according to Thy word.*[3943] And the eternal Word takes flesh and becomes man: *And the Word was made flesh.*[3944]

Let us thank this Son, and let us also thank his Mother, who, in consenting to be the mother of such a Son, consented also to be the Mother of our salvation, and Mother also of sorrows, accepting at that time the deep abyss of sorrows that it would cost her be the Mother of a Son who was to come into the suffer die for man.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O divine Word, become man for me, though I behold Thee thus humbled and become a little infant in the womb of Mary, yet I confess and acknowledge Thee for my Lord and King, but a king of love. My dearest Saviour, since Thou hast come down upon earth and clothed Thyself with our miserable flesh, in order to reign over our hearts, I beseech Thee come and establish Thy reign in my heart also, which was once, alas, ruled over by Thine enemies, but is now, I hope, Thine, as I desire that it may be always Thine, and that from this day forth Thou mayest be its only Lord: *Rule Thou in the midst of Thy enemies.*[3945] Other kings reign by the strength of arms, but Thou comest to reign by the power of love; and therefore Thou dost not come with regal pomp, nor clothed in purple and gold, nor adorned with sceptre and crown, nor surrounded by armies of soldiers. Thou comest into the world to be born in a stable,—poor, forsaken, placed in a manger on a little straw, because thus Thou wouldst begin to reign in our hearts. Ah, my infant King, how could I so often rebel against Thee, and live so long Thy enemy, deprived of Thy grace, when, to oblige me to love Thee, Thou hast put off Thy divine majesty, and hast humbled Thyself even to appearing, first, as a babe in a cave; then as a servant in a shop; then as a criminal on a cross? Oh, happy me, if, now that I have freed (as I hope) from the slavery of Satan, I allow myself forever to be governed by Thee and by Thy love! O Jesus, my King, who art so amiable and so loving to our souls, take possession, I pray Thee, of mine; I give it, entirely to Thee; accept, it that it may serve Thee forever, but serve Thee only for love. Thy majesty deserves to be feared, but Thy goodness still more deserves to be loved. Thou art my King, and shalt be always the only object of my love; and the only fear I shall have will be the fear of displeasing Thee. This is what I hope. Do Thou help me with Thy grace. O Mary, our dear Lady! it is for thee to obtain for me that I may be faithful to this beloved King of my soul.

Meditation V

FIRST THURSDAY

THE ABASEMENT OF JESUS

Formam servi accipiens.

“Taking the form of a servant.”—Phil. 2:7.

The eternal Word descends on earth to save man; and whence does he descend? *His going out is from the end of heaven.*[3946] He descends from the bosom of his divine Father, where from eternity he was begotten in the brightness of the saints. And where does he descend? He descends into the womb of a Virgin, a child of Adam, which in comparison with the bosom of God is an object of horror; wherefore the Church sings, “Thou didst not abhor the Virgin’s womb.”[3947] Yes, because the Word being in the bosom of the Father is God like the Father,—is immense, omnipotent, most blessed and supreme Lord, and equal in everything to the Father. But in the womb of Mary he is a creature, small, weak, afflicted, a servant inferior to the Father, *taking the form of a servant.*”[3948]

It is related as a great prodigy of humility in St. Alexis that, although he was the son of a Roman gentleman, he chose to live as a servant in his father’s house. But how is the humility of this saint to be compared with the humility of Jesus Christ? Between the son and the servant of the father of St. Alexis there was, it is true, some difference; but between God and the servant of God there is an infinite difference. Besides, this Son of God having become the servant of his Father, in obedience to him, made himself also the servant of his creatures, that is to say, of Mary and Joseph: *And he was subject to them.*[3949] Moreover, he made himself even a servant of Pilate, who condemned him to death, and he was obedient to him and accepted it; he became a servant to the executioners, who scourged him, crowned him with thorns, and crucified him; and he humbly obeyed them all, and yielded himself into their hands.

O God! and shall we, after this, refuse to submit ourselves to the service of so loving a Saviour, who, to save us, has subjected himself to such painful and degrading slavery? And rather than be the servants of this great and so loving a Lord, shall we be content to be slaves of the devil, who does not love his servants, but hates them and treats them like a tyrant, making them miserable and wretched in this world and in the next? But if we have been guilty of this great folly, why do we not quickly give up this unhappy servitude? Courage, then, since we have been delivered by Jesus Christ from the slavery of hell; let us now embrace and bind around us with love those sweet chains, which will render us servants and lovers of Jesus Christ, and hereafter obtain for us the crown of the eternal kingdom amongst the blessed in Paradise.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My beloved Jesus, Thou art the Sovereign of heaven and earth; but for the love of me Thou hast made Thyself a servant even of the executioners who tore Thy flesh, pierced Thy head, and finally left Thee nailed on the cross to die of sorrow. I adore Thee as my God and Lord, and I am ashamed to appear before Thee, when I remember how often, for the sake of some miserable pleasure, I have broken Thy holy bonds, and have told Thee to Thy face that I would not serve Thee. Ah, Thou mayst justly reproach me: *Thou hast burst my bands, and thou saidst: I will not serve.*[3950] But still, O my Saviour, Thy merits and Thy goodness, which cannot despise a heart that repents and humbles itself, give me courage to hope for pardon: *A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*[3951] I confess, my Jesus, that I have offended Thee greatly; I confess that I deserve a thousand hells for the sins I have committed against Thee; chasten me as Thou seest fit, but do not deprive me of Thy grace and love. I repent above every other evil of having despised Thee. I love Thee with my whole heart. I propose from this day forth to desire to serve Thee and love Thee alone. I pray Thee bind me by Thy merits with the chains of Thy holy love, and never suffer that I see myself released from them again. I love Thee above everything, O my deliverer; and I would prefer being Thy servant to being master of the whole world. And of what avail would all the world be to him who lives deprived of Thy grace? “My sweetest Jesus, permit me not to separate myself from Thee, permit me not to separate myself from Thee.”[3952] This grace I ask of Thee, and I intend always to ask it; and I beg of Thee to grant me this day the grace to repeat continually to the end of my life this prayer: My Jesus, grant that I may never again separate myself from Thy love. I ask this favor of thee also, O Mary, my Mother: help me by thy intercession, that I may never separate myself again from my God.

Meditation VI

FIRST FRIDAY

JESUS ENLIGHTENS THE WORLD AND GLORIFIES GOD

Creative Dominus novum super terram.

“The Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth.”—Jer. 31:22

Before the coming of the Messias the world was buried in a dark night of ignorance and sins. The true God was hardly known, save in one single corner of the earth, that is to say, in Judea alone: *In Judea God is known.*[3953] But everywhere else men adored as gods devils, beasts, and stones. Everywhere there reigned the night of sin, which blinds souls, and fills them with vices, and hides from the sight of the miserable state in which they are living, as enemies of God and condemned to hell: *Thou hast appointed darkness, and it is might; in it shall all the beasts of the wood go about.*[3954]

From this darkness Jesus came to deliver the world: *To them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen.*[3955] He delivered it from idolatry by making known to them the light of the true God; and he delivered them from sin by the light of his doctrine and of his divine example: *For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil.*[3956] The prophet Jeremias foretold that God should create a new child to be the Redeemer of men: *The Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth.*[3957] This new child was Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God, who is the object of the love of all the saints in paradise, and is the love of the Father himself, who thus speaks of him: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*[3958] And this Son is he who made himself man. A new child, because he has given more glory and honor to God in the first moment of his creation than all the angles and saints together have given him, or shall give him for all eternity. And therefore did the angles at the birth of Jesus sing, *Glory to God in the highest.*[3959] The child Jesus has rendered more glory to God than all the sins of men have deprived him of.

Let us therefore, poor sinners, take courage; let us offer to the eternal Father this Infant; let us present to him the tears, the obedience, the humility, the death, and the merits of Jesus Christ, and we shall make compensation to God for all the dishonor that we have caused him by our offences.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My eternal God, I have dishonored Thee by so often preferring my will to Thine, and vile and miserable pleasures to Thy holy grace. What hope of pardon would there be for me, if Thou hadst not given me Jesus Christ on purpose that he might be the hope of us miserable sinners? *He is a propitiation for our sins.*[3960] Yes; for Jesus Christ, in sacrificing his life in satisfaction for the injuries we have done Thee, has given Thee more honor than we have dishonor by our sins. Receive me, therefore. O my Father, for the love of Jesus Christ. I repent, O infinite Goodness, of having outraged Thee: *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before Thee: I am not worthy to be called Thy son.*[3961] I am not worthy of forgiveness; but Jesus Christ is worthy to be heard favorably by Thee. He prayed once for me on the cross, *Father, forgive*[3962]; and even now in heaven he is constantly begging Thee to receive me as a son: *We have an advocate, Jesus Christ, who ever intercedes for us.*[3963] Receive an ungrateful son, who once forsook Thee, but now returns, resolved to desire to love Thee. Yes, my Father, I love Thee, and will always love Thee. O my Father, now that I know the love that Thou hast borne me, and the patience Thou hast shown me for so many years, I trust no longer to live without loving Thee. Give me a great love, that may make me constantly lament the displeasure I have given Thee, who art so good a Father; cause me ever to burn with love towards Thee, who art so loving a Father. My Father, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee! O Mary! God is my Father, and thou art my mother. Thou canst do all things with God; help me; obtain for me holy perseverance and his holy love.

Meditation VII

FIRST SATURDAY

THE SON OF GOD WAS LADEN WITH ALL OUR INIQUITIES

> Deus Filium suum mittens in similitudinem carnis peccati, et de peccato damnavit peccatum in carne.
>
> “God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, even of sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”—Rom. 8:3.

Consider the humble state to which the Son of God chose to abase himself; he not only vouchsafed to take upon him the form of a servant, but that of a sinful servant: *In the likeness of sinful flesh.*[3964] Therefore St. Bernard writes: “He not only assumed the form of a servant, that he might be under subjection, but even that of a wicked servant, that he might be beaten.”[3965] He not only would assume the condition of a servant to be subject to others, he who was Lord of all; but even the appearance of a criminal servant, to be punished as a malefactor, he who was the Saint of all saints. For this end he clothed himself with the same flesh of Adam which had been infected by sin. And although he did not contract the stain of sin, nevertheless he took upon himself all the miseries which human nature had contracted as a penalty for sin.

Our Redeemer, in order to obtain for us salvation, offered himself voluntarily to his Father to make satisfaction for our sins: *He was offered because it was His own will.*[3966] And his Father loaded him with all our crimse: *He hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*[3967] And thus behold the divine Word, innocent, most pure, and holy, behold him even from his infancy charged with all the blasphemies, with all the unsightliness, with all the sacrileges, and with all the crimes of men; become for the love of us the object of the divine malediction, on account of the sins for which he had bound himself to satisfy the divine justice. So that Jesus charged himself with as many maledictions as there have ever been, or ever shall be, mortal sins committed by all mankind. And thus he presented himself to his Father, when he came into the world, even from his birth, as a criminal and a debtor, guilty of all our sins, and as such was condemned by his Father to die as a malefactor accursed on a cross: *And of sin hath condemned sin in the flesh.*[3968]

Oh, if the eternal Father were capable of feeling sorrow, what anguish of mind would he not have felt at being obliged to treat as a criminal, and as the most villanous criminal in the world, this innocent Son, his beloved one, who was worthy of all his love! *Behold the Man,*[3969] said Pilate, when he showed him to the Jews covered with stripes, in order to move them to compassion towards this innocent one who had been thus ill-treated. *Behold the Man,* the eternal Father seems to say to us all, showing him to us in the stable of Bethlehem. This poor child (he says) whom you behold, laid on a manger for beasts, and stretched on straw, is my beloved Son, who is come into the world to take upon himself your sins and your sorrows; love him, therefore, because he is infinitely worthy of your love, and you are under infinite obligations to love him.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my innocent Saviour, mirror without spot, love of the eternal Father, chastisements and maledictions did not belong to Thee, but to me, a miserable sinner; but Thou wouldst show to the world the excess of love Thou didst bear us by sacrificing Thy life to obtain for us pardon and salvation, and paying by Thy sufferings the penalties which we had incurred by our sins. May all creatures praise and bless Thy mercy and Thy infinite bounty! I thank Thee on behalf of all men, but especially for myself; because as I have offended Thee more than others, so Thou hast suffered the pains which Thou didst endure more for me than for others, Accursed a thousand times be all those sinful pleasures which I have delighted in, and which have cost Thee so much sorrow! But since Thou hast paid the price of my ransom, I beseech Thee let not the blood which Thou has spilled for love of me be lost to me. I am sorry that I have despised Thee, O my love; but oh, grant me more sorrow; make me know the evil I have committed in offending Thee, my Redeemer and my God, who hast suffered so much to oblige me to love Thee! I love Thee, O infinite Bounty, but I desire to love Thee more; I desire to love Thee as much as Thou deservest to be loved. O my Jesus, do Thou cause Thyself to be loved both by me and by all men; for Thou dost indeed deserve to be loved. I pray Thee, enlighten the minds of those sinners who will not know Thee or will not love Thee; make them understand what Thou hast done for the love of them, and the ardent desire Thou hast for their salvation. Most holy Mary, pray to Jesus for me, and for all sinners; obtain for us light and grace to love thy Son, who has loved us so much.

Meditation VIII

SECOND SUNDAY

GOD SENDS HIS SON TO DIE IN ORDER TO RESTORE US TO LIFE

> Deus autem, qui dives est in mistericordia, propter nimiam charitatem suam qua dilexit nos, et cum essemus mortui peccatis, convivificavit nos in Christo.
>
> “But God (who is rich in mercy) for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ.—Eph. 2:4, 5.

Consider that sin is the death of the soul; because this enemy of God deprives us of divine grace, which is the life of the soul. We, therefore, miserable sinners, were already by our sins dead and condemned to hell. God, through the immense love which he bears to our souls, determined to restore us to life; and how did he do so? He sent his only-begotten Son into the world to die, in order that by his death he might restore us to life.

With reason therefore does the Apostle call this work of love *exceeding charity;*[3970] too much love; yes, indeed, for man could never have hoped to receive life in such a loving manner if God had not found this means of redeeming him: *Having obtained eternal redemption.*[3971] All men were therefore dead—there was no remedy for them. But the Son of God, through the bowels of his mercy, hath come down from heaven, *the Orient from on high*, and has given us life. Justly, therefore, does the Apostle call Jesus Christ our life: *When Christ shall appear, who is your life.*[3972] Behold our Redeemer, clothed with flesh and become an infant, says to us: *I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.*[3973] For this end he accepted death, that he might give us life. It is but reasonable, therefore, that we should live only to God, who has condescended to die for us: *Christ died, that they who live may not live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them.*[3974] It is reasonable that Jesus Christ should be the only sovereign of our heart since he has spent his blood and his life to gain it to himself: *To this end Christ died and rose again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*[3975] O my God! who would be so ungrateful a wretch as to believe as an article of faith that God died to secure his love, and yet refuse to love him, and, renouncing his friendship, choose voluntarily to make himself a slave of hell?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my Jesus! if Thou hadst not accepted and suffered death for me, I should have remained dead in my sins, without hope of salvation and without the power of ever loving Thee. But after Thou hast obtained life for me by Thy death, I have again many times voluntarily forfeited it by returning to sin. Thou didst die to gain my heart to Thyself, and I by my rebellion have made it a slave of the devil. I lost all reverence for Thee, and I said that I would no longer have Thee for my master. All this is true; but it is also true that Thou desirest not the death of the sinner, but that he should be converted and live; and therefore didst Thou die to give us life. I repent of having offended Thee, my dearest Redeemer; and do Thou pardon me through the merits of Thy passion; give me Thy grace; give me that life which Thou hast purchased for me by Thy death, and henceforth mayest Thou have entire dominion over my heart. Never let the devil have possession of it again; he is not my God, he does not love me, and has not suffered anything for me. In past times he was not the true sovereign, but the robber of my soul: Thou alone, my Jesus, art my true Lord, who hast created and redeemed me with Thy blood; Thou alone hast loved me, and oh, how much! It is therefore only just that I should be Thine alone during the life that remains to me. Tell me what Thou wouldst have me to do; for I will do it all. Chastise me as Thou wilt; I accept everything Thou sendest me; only spare me the chastisement of living without Thy love; make me love Thee, and then dispose of me as Thou wilt. Most holy Mary, my refuge and consolation, recommend me to thy Son: his death and thy intercession are all my hope.

Meditation IX

SECOND MONDAY

THE LOVE THAT THE SON OF GOD HAS SHOWN US IN THE REDEMPTION

Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.

“He hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.”—Eph. 5:2.

Consider that the eternal Word is that God who is so infinitely happy in himself that his happiness cannot be greater than it is, nor could the salvation of all mankind have added anything to it or have diminished it; and yet he has done and suffered so much to save us miserable worms that if his beatitude (as St. Thomas says) had depended on that of man, he could not have done or suffered more: “As if without him He could not be happy;”[3976] and, indeed, if Jesus Christ could not have been happy without redeeming us, how could he have humbled himself more than he has done, in taking upon himself our infirmities the miseries of infancy, the troubles of human life, and a death so barbarous and ignominious?

None but God was capable of loving to such an excess so wretched sinners as we are, and who were so unworthy of being loved. A devout author says: If Jesus Christ had permitted us to ask of him to give us the greatest proof of his love, who would have ventured to ask of him that he should become a child like unto us, that he should clothe himself with all our miseries, and make himself of all men the most poor, the most despised, and the most ill-treated, even to being put to death by the hands of executioners, and in the greatest torments upon an infamous gibbet, cursed and forsaken by all, even by his own Father, who abandoned his Son that he might not abandon us in our ruin?

But that which we should not have had the boldness even to think of, the Son of God has thought of and accomplished. Even from his childhood he has sacrificed himself for us to sufferings, to opprobrium, and to death: *He hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.*[3977] He hath loved us, and out of love hath given us himself, in order that we, by offering him as a victim to the Father, in satisfaction for our debts, might through his merits obtain from the divine goodness all the graces that we desire; a victim dearer to the Father than if we had offered him the lives of all men and of all the angels. Let us therefore continually offer to God the merits of Jesus Christ, and through them let us seek and hope for every good.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My Jesus, I should indeed do great injustice to Thy mercy and Thy love, if, after Thou hast given me so many proofs of the love Thou bearest me, and the desire Thou hast to save me, I should still distrust Thy mercy and Thy love. My beloved Redeemer, I am a poor sinner; but Thou hast said that Thou didst come to seek sinners: *I am not come to call the just, but sinners.*[3978] I am a poor infirm creature—Thou camest to cure the infirm, and Thou didst say, *They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick.*[3979] I was lost through my sins; but Thou didst come to save the lost: *The Son of man is come to save that which was lost.*[3980] What, then, can I fear, if I am willing to amend my life and to become Thine? I have only myself and my own weakness to fear; but my own weakness and poverty ought to increase my confidence in Thee, who hast declared Thyself to be the refuge of the destitute: *The Lord is become a refuge for the poor.*[3981] And Thou hast promised to grant their desires: *The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor.*[3982] Therefore I implore this favor of Thee, O my Jesus! give me confidence in Thy merits, and grant that I may always recommend myself to God through Thy merits. Eternal Father, save me from hell, and first from sin, for the love of Jesus Christ; for the merits of this Thy Son enlighten my mind to obey Thy will; give me strength against temptations; grant me the gift of Thy holy love; and, above all, I beseech Thee to give me the grace to pray to Thee to help me, for the love of Jesus Christ, who hast promised that Thou wilt grant to him who prays in his name whatever he asks of Thee. If I continue to pray to Thee in this way, I shall certainly be saved; but if I neglect it, I shall certainly be lost. Most holy Mary, obtain for me this great gift of prayer, and that I may persevere in recommending myself constantly to God, and also to thee, who dost obtain from God whatever thou willest.

Meditation X

SECOND TUESDAY

JESUS, THE MAN OF SORROWS, FROM THE WOMB OF HIS MOTHER

Virum dolorum et scientem infirmitatem.

“A man of sorrows, acquainted with infirmity.”—Is. 53:3.

Thus does the prophet Isaias designate our Lord Jesus Christ “the man of sorrows;” yes, because this man was created on purpose to suffer, and from his infancy began to endure the greatest sorrows that any man ever suffered. The first man, Adam, enjoyed for some time upon this earth the delights of the earthly paradise; but the second Adam, Jesus Christ, did not pass a moment of his life without sorrows and anguish; for even from a child he was afflicted by the foresight of all the sufferings and ignominy that he would have to endure during his life, and especially at his death, when he was to close that life immersed in a tempest of sorrow and opprobrium, as David had predicted: *I am come into the depth of the sea, and a tempest hath overwhelmed me.*[3983]

Even from the womb of Mary, Jesus Christ accepted obediently the sacrifice which his Father had desired him to make, even his Passion and death: *Becoming obedient unto death.*[3984] So that even from the womb of Mary he foresaw the scourage and presented to them his flesh; he foresaw the throns, and presented to them his head; he foresaw the blows, and presented to them his cheeks; he foresaw the nails, and presented to them his hands and his feet; he foresaw the cross, and offered his life. Hence it is true that even from his earliest infancy our blessed Redeemer every moment of his life suffered a continual martyrdom; and he offered it every moment for us to his eternal Father.

But what afflicted him most was the sight of the sins which men would commit even after this painful redemption. By his divine light he well knew the malice of every sin, and therefore did he come into the world to do away all sins; but when he saw the immense number which would be committed, the sorrow that the Heart of Jesus felt was greater than all the sorrows that all men ever suffered or ever will suffer upon earth.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My sweetest Redeemer, when shall I begin to be grateful to Thy infinite goodness? When shall I begin to acknowledge the love that Thou hast borne me, and the sorrows Thou hast endured for me? Hitherto, instead of love and gratitude, I have returned Thee offences and contempt; shall I then continue to live always ungrateful to Thee, my God, who hast spared nothing to acquire my love? No, my Jesus, it shall not be so. During that may yet remain to me I will be grateful to Thee; and Thou wilt I trust, help me to be so. If I have offended Thee, Thy sufferings and Thy death are my hope. Thou hast promised to forgive the penitent. I repent with my whole soul of having despised Thee. Fulfil, therefore, Thy promise, my Beloved, and forgive me. O dearest Infant, I behold Thee in the manger already nailed to Thy cross, which is constantly present to Thee, and which Thou dost already accept for me. O my crucified Infant! I thank Thee for it, and I love Thee. Stretched upon this straw, suffering already for me, and preparing Thyself even now to die for this love of me, Thou dost command and invite me to love Thee: *Love the Lord thy God.*[3985] And I desire nothing more than to love Thee. Since, therefore, Thou willest that I should love Thee, give me all that love that Thou requirest of me; love for Thee is Thy gift, and the greatest gift that Thou canst make to a soul. Accept, O my Jesus! for Thy lover a sinner who has so greatly offended Thee. Thou didst come from heaven to seek the lost sheep; Thou, therefore, seek me, and I will seek none other but Thee. Thou desirest my soul, and my soul desires nothing but Thee. Thou lovest him that loves Thee, and sayest, *Those that love Me I love.*[3986] I love Thee, do Thou also love me; and if Thou lovest me, bind me to Thy love; but bind me so that I may never again be able to disengage myself from Thee. Mary, my Mother, do thou help me. Let it be thy glory also to see thy Son loved by a miserable sinner, who has hitherto so greatly offended him.

Meditation XI

SECOND WEDNESDAY

JESUS CHARGED WITH THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD

Iniquitates eorum ipse portabit.

“He bore their iniquities.”—Is. 53:11.

Consider that the divine Word, in becoming man, chose not only to take the form of a sinner, but also to bear all the sins of men, and to satisfy for them as if they were his own: *He bore their iniquities.*[3987] Father Cornelius adds, “as if he had committed them himself.”[3988] Let us here reflect what an oppression and anguish the heart of Infant Jesus must have felt, who had already charged himself with the sins of the whole world, in finding that the divine justice insisted on his making a full satisfaction for them.

Well did our Lord know the malice of ever sin, whilst, through the divine light which accompanied him, he knew immeasurably more than all men and angels the infinite goodness of his Father, and how infinitely deserving he is of being revered and loved. And then he saw drawn up in array before him an innumerable number of transgressions which were to be committed by men and for which he was to suffer and die. Our Lord once showed to St. Catharine of Sienna the hideousness of one single venial sin; and such was the dread and sorrow of the saint that she fell senseless to the ground. What, then, must have been the sufferings of the Infant Jesus when, on his entrance into the world, he saw before him the immense array of all the crimes of men for which he was to make satisfaction!

And then he knew in particular every sin each one of us: “He had regard to every particular sin,”[3989] says St. Bernard of Sienna. And Cardinal Hugo says that the executioners “caused him exterior pain by crucifying him, but we interior pain by sinning against him.”[3990] He means that each one of our sins afflicted the soul of Jesus Christ more than crucifixion and death afflicted his body. Such is the beautiful recompense which has been rendered to our divine Saviour for his love by every one who remembers to have offended him by mortal sin.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My Beloved Jesus, I, who have offended Thee, am not worthy of Thy favors, but through the merit of that pain which Thou didst suffer, and which Thou didst offer up to God at the sight of my sins, and to satisfy divine justice for them, give me a share in that light by which Thou didst see their malice, and in that hatred with which Thou didst then abominate them. Can it then be true, my amiable Saviour, that ever since Thou wert an infant, and in every moment of Thy life, I have been a murderer of Thy sacred heart, and a murderer more cruel than all those who crucified Thee? And I have renewed and increased this suffering every time I have repeated my offences against Thee? O Lord! Thou hast indeed died to save me; but Thy death will not save me, if I do not on my part detest every evil, and have true sorrow for the sins I have committed against Thee. But even this sorrow must be given me by Thee. Thou givest it to him that asks it of Thee. I ask it of Thee through the merits of all the sufferings Thou didst endure on this earth; give me sorrow for my sins, but a sorrow that will correspond to my transgressions. Help me, O Lord! to make that act of contrition which I now intend to do. O eternal God, supreme and infinite Good! I, a miserable worm, have dared to lose respect for Thee, and to despise Thy grace; I detest above every evil and abhor the injuries I have committed against Thee; I repent of them with whole heart, not so much on account of hell, which I have deserved, as because I have offended Thy infinite goodness. I hope for pardon from Thee through the merits of Jesus Christ: and I hope also to obtain, together with Thy pardon the grace of loving Thee. I love Thee, O God, who art worthy of infinite love, Thee; and as Thy beloved St. Catharine of Genoa said to Thee, while she stood in spirit at Thy feet, O Thou cruified one, so will I also say to Thee now that I am standing also at Thy feet, My Lord, no more sins, no more sins! No, for Thou indeed dost not deserve to be offended, O my Jesus, but Thou only deservest to be loved. My blessed Redeemer, help me. My mother Mary, assist me, I pray thee; I only ask of thee to obtain for me that I may love God during the time that is left me in this life.

Meditation XII

SECOND THURSDAY

JESUS SUFFERS DURING HIS WHOLE LIFE

Dolor meus in conspectu meo semper.

“My sorrow is continually before me.”—Ps. 37:18.

Consider that all the sufferings and ignominy that Jesus endured in his life and death, all were present to him from the first moment of his life: *My sorrow is continually before me;”*[3991] and even from his childhood he began to offer them in satisfaction for our sins, beginning even then to fulfil his office of Redeemer. He revealed to one of his servants that from the commencement of his life even until his death, he suffered continually; and suffered so much for each of our sins that if he had as many lives as there are men, he would as many times have died of sorrow, if God had not preserved his life that he might suffer more.

Oh, what a martyrdom did the loving heart of Jesus constantly endure in beholding all the sins of men! *He beheld every single fault.*[3992] Even whilst he was in the womb of Mary every particular sin passed in review before Jesus, and each sin afflicted him immeasurably. St. Thomas says that this sorrow which Jesus Christ felt at the knowledge of the injury done his Father, and of the evil that sin would occasion to the souls that he loved, surpassed the sorrows of all the contrite sinners that ever existed, even of those who died of pure sorrow; because no sinner ever loved God and his own soul as much as Jesus loved his Father and our souls. Wherefore that agony which our Redeemer suffered in the garden at the sight of our sins was endured by him even from his mother’s womb: *I am poor, and in labors from my youth.*[3993] Thus through the mouth of David did our Saviour prophesy of himself, that all his life should be a continual suffering. From this St. John Chrysostom deduces that we ought not to afflict ourselves for anything but for sin alone; and that since Jesus was afflicted all his life long on account of our sins, so we who have committed them ought to feel a continual sorrow for them, remembering that we have offended God who has loved us so much. St. Margaret of Cortona never ceased to shed tears for her sins: one day her confessor said to her, “Margaret, no more tears; it is enough, our Lord has already forgiven thee.” “What,” answered the saint, “how can my tears and my sorrows suffice for the sins for which my Jesus was afflicted all his life long!”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Behold, my Jesus, at Thy feet the ungrateful sinner, the persecutor who kept Thee in continual affliction during all Thy life. But I will say to Thee with Isaias: *But Thou hast delivered my soul that it should not perish; Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.*[3994] I have offended Thee, I have pierced Thee through with all my sins; but Thou hast not refused to bear on Thy shoulders all my sins; I have voluntarily cast my soul into the fire of hell every time that I have consented to offend Thee gravely; and Thou, at the cost of Thy own blood, hast continually liberated me and prevented me from being entirely lost. My beloved Redeemer, I thank Thee. I could wish to die of sorrow when I think how I have abused Thy infinite goodness; forgive me, my Love, and come and take entire possession of my heart. Thou hast said that Thou wouldst not disdain to enter into the abode of him that opens to Thee, and to remain in his company: *If any man shall open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him.*[3995] If I have hitherto driven Thee away from me, I now love Thee, and desire nothing but Thy favor. Behold, the door is open, enter Thou into my heart, but enter never to depart from it again. I am poor; but if Thou enter Thou wilt make me rich. I shall always be rich as long as I possess Thee, the sovereign good. O Queen of Heaven, sorrowful Mother of this suffering Son, I have also been a cause of sorrow to thee, because thou hast participated, in great part, in the sufferings of Jesus: my Mother, do thou also forgive me, and obtain for me the grace to be faithful to thee, now that I hope my Jesus has returned into my soul.

Meditation XIII

SECOND FRIDAY

JESUS WISHED TO SUFFER SO MUCH IN ORDER TO GAIN OUR HEARTS

> Baptismo habeo baptizari; et quomodo coarctor usque dum perficiatur!
>
> “I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!”—St. Luke, 12:50.

Consider that Jesus suffered, even from the first moment of his life, and all for the love of us. During the whole of his life he had no other object in view, after the glory of God, than our salvation. He, as the Son of God, had no need to suffer in order to deserve Paradise; but whatever he suffered of pain, of poverty, of ignominy, he applied it all towards meriting for us eternal salvation. And even although he could have saved us without suffering, yet he chose to embrace a life of nothing but sufferings, poor, despised, and deprived of every comfort, with a death the most desolate and bitter that was ever endured by any martyr or penitent, only to make us understand the greatness of the love he bore us, and to gain our affections.

He lived thirty-three years, and he lived sighing after the hour in which he was to sacrifice his life, which he desired to offer up to obtain for us divine grace and eternal glory, in order that he might have us with him forever in paradise. It was this desire which made him say, *I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!*[3996] He desired to be baptized with his own blood, not to wash out his own sins, since he was innocent and holy, but the sins of men whom he loved so much: *He loved us, and washed us in his own blood.*[3997] Oh, excess of the love of God, which all the men and angels that ever existed will never arrive at understanding or praising as it deserves.

St. Bonaventure complains on considering the great ingratitude of men for so great love: “It is wonderful that the hearts of men do not break for love of Thee.”[3998] It is a wonder, says the saint, to see a God endure such sufferings, shedding tears in a stable, poor in a workshop, languishing on a cross; in short, afflicted and troubled the whole of his life for the love of men; and then to see these men, who not only do not burn with love towards such a loving God, but even have the boldness to despise his love and his grace. O Lord, how is it possible to know that a God should have given himself up to so much suffering for men, and yet that there should be men who can offend, and not love this merciful God!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My beloved Redeemer, I am also one of those ungrateful wretches who have repaid Thy immense love, Thy sorrows, and Thy death, with offences and contempt. O my dearest Jesus! how is it possible that, seeing as Thou didst the ingratitude that I should show Thee for all Thy mercies, Thou couldst yet love me so much, and resolve to endure so much contempt and suffering for me! But I will not despair. The evil is already done. Give me, therefore, O my Saviour, that sorrow which Thou hast merited for me by Thy tears; but let it be a sorrow equal to my iniquities. O loving heart of my Saviour, once so afflicted and desolate for my sake, and now all burning with love for me, I beseech Thee, change my heart, give me a heart that will make reparation for the offences I have committed against Thee, give me a love that will equal my ingratitude!

But I already feel a great desire of loving Thee. I give Thee thanks, my Saviour, because I see that Thy mercy has already changed my heart. I hate, above every evil, the insults I have offered Thee; I detest them, I abhor them. I now esteem Thy friendship above all the riches and kingdoms of the world. I desire to please Thee as much as is possible to me; I love Thee, who art infinitely amiable; but I see that this my love is too small. Do Thou increase the flame, give me more love. Thy love for me ought to be responded to by a greater degree of love by me, who have so much offended Thee, and who, instead of chastisement, have received so many special favors from Thee. O sovereign Good, permit me not to be any longer ungrateful for all the favors that Thou hast bestowed upon me: “I will die with love of the love of Thee," I will say with St. Francis, "who hast deigned to die for love of the love of me."[3999] Mary, my hope, help me; pray to Jesus for me!

Meditation XIV[4000]

SECOND SATURDAY

THE GREATEST SORROW OF JESUS

Quæ utilitas in sanguine meo, dum descendo in corruptionem?

“What profit is there in my blood, whilst I go down to corruption?”—Ps. 29:10.

Jesus Christ revealed to the Venerable Agatha of the Cross that whilst he was in his Mother’s womb, that which afflicted him more than any other sorrow was the hardness of the hearts of men, who should, after his Redemption, despise the graces which he came into the world to diffuse. And he had expressed this sentiment before, by the mouth of David, in the words just quoted, which are generally thus understood by the holy Fathers: *What profit is there in my blood, whilst I go down to corrupton?*[4001] St. Isidore explains *whilst I descend into corruption,* “whilst I descend to take the nature of man, so corrupted by vices and sins;” as if he had said, “O my Father, I am indeed going to clothe myself with human flesh, in order to shed my blood for men; but *what profit is there in my blood?*”—the greater part of the world will set no value on my blood, and will go on offending me, as if I had done nothing for the love of them.”

This sorrow was the bitter chalice which Jesus begged the Eternal Father to remove from him, saying: “*Let this chalice pass from Me.*”[4002] What chalice? The sight of the contempt with which his love was treated. This made him exclaim again on the cross: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?*[4003] Our Lord revealed to St. Catharine of Sienna, that this was the abandonment of which he complained—the knowledge, namely, that his Father would have to suffer that his Passion and his love should be despised by so many men for whom he died.

And this same sorrow tormented the Infant Jesus in the womb of Mary, the foresight of such a prodigality of sorrows, of ignominy, of blood-shedding, and of so cruel and ignominious a death, and all to so little purpose. The holy Child saw, even there, what the Apostle says, that many (indeed the greater number) should trample under foot his blood, and despise his grace, which this blood would obtain for them: *Treading under foot the Son of God, and offering an affront to the Spirit of grace.*[4004] But if we have been of the number of these ungrateful men, let us not despair; Jesus, at his birth, came to offer peace to men of good-will, as he made the angels sing: *And on earth peace to men of good-will.*[4005] Let us, then, change our will, repent of our sins, and resolve to love this good God, and we shall find peace, that is, the divine friendship.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my most amiable Jesus, how much have I too caused Thee to suffer during Thy lifetime! Thou hast shed Thy blood for me with so much sorrow and love, and what fruit hast Thou hitherto drawn from me but contempt, offences, and insults? But, my Redeemer, I will no longer afflict Thee; I hope that in future Thy Passion will produce fruit in me by Thy grace, which I feel is already assisting me. I will love Thee above every other good; and to please Thee, I am ready to give my life a thousand times. Eternal Father, I should not have the boldness to appear before Thee to implore either pardon or graces, but Thy Son has told me, that whatever grace I ask of Thee in his name Thou wilt grant it to me: *If ye shall ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it you.*[4006] I offer Thee, therefore, the merits of Jesus Christ, and in his name I ask of Thee first a general pardon of all my sins; I ask holy perseverance even unto death; I ask of Thee, above all, the gift of Thy holy love, that it may make me always live according to Thy divine will. As to my own will, I am resolved to choose a thousand deaths sooner than offend Thee, and to love Thee with my whole heart, and to do everything that I possibly can to please Thee. But in order to do all this, I beg of Thee, and hope to receive from Thee, grace to execute what I purpose. My Mother Mary, if thou wilt pray for me, I am safe. Oh, pray for me, pray; and cease not to pray till thou seest that I am changed, and made what God wishes me to be.

Meditation XV

SECOND SUNDAY

THE POVERTY OF THE INFANT JESUS

Invenientes infantem . . . positum in præsepio

“You shall find the infant laid in a manger.”—St. Luke, 2:16.

The Holy Church, in contemplating this great mystery and prodigy of a God being born in a stable, exclaims, full of admiration, “O great mystery! O wonderful sacrament! for animals to behold the Lord lying in a manger.”[4007]

In order to contemplate with tenderness and love the birth of Jesus, we must pray the Lord to give us a lively faith. If without faith we enter into the grotto of Bethlehem, we shall have nothing but a feeling of compassion at seeing an infant reduced to such a state of poverty that, being born in the depth of winter, he is laid in a manger of beasts, without fire, and in the midst of a cold cavern. But if we enter with faith, and consider what an excess of bounty and love it was in a God to humble himself to appear like a little child, wrapped in swadling-clothes, placed on straw, crying and shivering with cold, unable to move, depending for subsistence on his mother’s milk, how is it possible that we should not feel ourselves gently constrained to give all our affections to this Infant God, who has reduced himself to this state to make us love him! St. Luke says that the shepherds, after having visited Jesus in the manger, *returned glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen.*[4008] And yet what had they seen? Nothing more than a poor child trembling with cold on a little straw; but, being enlightened by faith, they recognized in this child the excess of divine love; and inflamed by this love they went on their way glorifying God, that they had the happiness to behold a God *who had emptied himself*[4009] and annihilated himself for the love of men.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my amiable and sweet Infant! although I behold Thee so poor and lying on straw, yet I confess and adore Thee as my Lord and Creator. I know what it was that reduced Thee to so miserable a state: it was the love that Thou didst bear me. But when I remember, O my Jesus! how I have treated Thee in times past, the injuries I have committed against Thee, I wonder in myself how Thou hast borne with me. Accursed sins, oh, what have you done! You have made me cause bitterness to the heart of my beloved Saviour. Oh, my dearest Redeemer, for the sake of the sufferings Thou didst endure and the tears Thou didst shed in the stable of Bethlehem, give me tears, give me a great sorrow, that may make me all my life long lament the displeasure I have caused Thee. Grant me a love for Thee, but such a love as may compensate for the offences I have committed against Thee. I love Thee, my Infant Saviour; I love Thee, my Infant God; I love Thee, my love, my life, my all. I promise Thee from this day forth to love none but Thee. Do Thou help me by Thy grace, without which I can do nothing. Mary, my hope, thou dost obtain whatever thou willest from thy Son, obtain for me his holy love; my Mother, hear me!

Meditation XVI

THIRD MONDAY

JESUS IS THE FOUNTAIN OF GRACE

Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris.

“You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour’s fountains.”—Isa. 12:3.

Consider the four fountains of grace that we have in Jesus Christ, as contemplated by St. Bernard.

The first is that of mercy, in which we can wash ourselves from all the filthiness of our sins. This fountain was formed for us by our Redeemer with his tears and his blood: *He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.*[4010]

The second fountain is that of peace and consolation in our tribulations: *Call upon me* (saith Jesus Christ) *in the day of trouble, and I will console thee.*[4011] *He that thirsteth, let him come to me.*[4012] He that thirsteth for true consolations even in this world, let him come to me, for I will satisfy him. He that once tastes the water of my love will forever disdain all the delights of the world: *But he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst forever.*[4013] And thoroughly contented will he be when he shall enter into the kingdom of the blessed, for the water of my grace shall raise him from earth to heaven. It will *become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting.*[4014] The peace which God gives to the souls that love him is not the peace that the world promises from sensual pleasures, which leave in the soul more bitterness than peace; the peace which God bestows exceeds all the pleasures of the senses: *Peace which surpasseth all understanding.*[4015] Blessed are those who long for this divine fountain. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice.*[4016]

The third fountain is that of devotion. Oh, how devout and ready to execute the divine will, and increasing every day in virtue, is he who constantly meditates on all that Jesus Christ has done for our sake! He will be like the tree planted by a stream of water: *He shall be like a tree that is planted near the running waters.*[4017]

The fourth fountain is that of love: *In my meditation a fire shall flame out.*[4018] It is impossible to meditate on the sufferings and ignominy borne by Jesus Christ for the love of us, and not to feel inflamed by that blessed fire which he came upon earth to enkindle. How true it is, then, that he who avails himself of these blessed fountains of Jesus Christ will always draw from them waters of joy and of salvation! *You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains.*[4019]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my sweet and dearest Saviour, how much do I not owe Thee! what an obligation hast Thou put upon me of loving Thee, since Thou hast done for me what no son would have done for his father, and no servant for his master! If Thou, therefore, hast loved me above every one else, it is only just that I should love Thee above all others. I could wish to die with sorrow at the thought that Thou hast suffered so much for me, and that Thou didst accept for my sake the most painful and ignominious death that it is possible for a man to endure; and yet I have so often despised Thy friendship. How many times hast Thou forgiven me, and I have despised Thee afresh? But Thy merits are my hope. I now esteem Thy grace above all the kingdoms of the world. I love Thee, and for Thy love I accept every sorrow, every kind of death. And if I am not worthy to die for Thy glory by the hand of executioners, I accept at least willingly that death which Thou hast allotted to me; and I accept it in the manner and at the time that Thou shalt choose. My dear Mother Mary, obtain for me the grace always to live and to die loving Jesus.

Meditation XVII

THIRD TUESDAY

JESUS THE CHARITABLE PHYSICIAN OF OUR SOULS

Orietur vobis . . . Sol justitiœ, et sanitas in pennis ejus.

“But unto you the sun of justice shall arise, and health in his wings.”—Mal. 4:2.

Your Physician will come, says the prophet, to cure the infirm; and he will come swiftly like the bird that flies, and like the sun, which on rising from the horizon, instantly sends its light to the other pole. But behold him, he is already come. Let us console ourselves, and return thanks to him.

St. Augustine says, “He descends to the bed of the sick;”[4020] that is to say, even to taking upon him our flesh, for our bodies are the beds of our infirm souls.

Other physicians, if they love their patients, do indeed use all their efforts to cure them; but what physician, in order to cure the sick man, ever took upon himself his disease? Jesus Christ has been that physician, who charged himself with our infirmities in order to cure them. Neither would he content himself with sending another in his place, but he chose to come himself to fulfil this charitable office, in order to gain to himself all our love: *He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows.*[4021] He chose to heal our wounds with his own blood, and by his death to deliver us from eternal death, which we had deserved; in short, he chose to swallow the bitter draught of a life of continual sufferings and a painful death, to obtain for us life, and deliver us from our many evils.

The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?[4022] said he to St. Peter. It was necessary, then, that Jesus Christ should suffer so many ignominies to heal our pride; that he should embrace such a life of poverty to cure our covetousness; that he should be overwhelmed in a sea of troubles, and even die of pure sorrow, to cure our eagerness after sensual pleasures.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

May Thy charity, O my Redeemer! be forever praised and blessed. And what would become of my soul, thus infirm and afflicted with the many sores of my sins, if I had not Thee, my Jesus, who both art able and willing to heal me? O blood of my Saviour, I trust in thee; wash me and cure me. I repent, O my love, of having offended Thee. Thou hast led a life of such tribulations, and hast died so bitter a death to prove to me the love Thou dost bear me. I would fain show Thee how much I love Thee; but what can I do who am so miserable and weak? O God of my soul! Thou art omnipotent; Thou canst heal me, and make me holy. Oh, kindle in me a great desire of pleasing Thee. I renounce all my pleasures to please Thee, my Redeemer, who dost deserve to be pleased at all costs. O sovereign Good! I esteem Thee and love Thee above every good; make me love Thee with all my heart, and always implore Thy love, I have hitherto offended Thee, and have not loved Thee, because I have not sought Thy love. I now beg of Thee this love, and the grace always to seek it. Oh, grant my prayer by the merits of Thy Passion. O Mary my Mother! thou art always prepared to hear the prayer of him that calls upon thee. Thou lovest him that loves thee. I love thee, my Queen; obtain for me the grace to love God, and I ask nothing more of thee.

Meditation XVIII

THIRD WEDNESDAY

WE SHOULD HOPE ALL THINGS FROM THE MERITS OF JESUS CHRIST

Proprio Filio suo non pepercit; sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum.

“He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.”—Rom. 8:32.

Consider that, since the Eternal Father has given us his own Son to be our mediator and advocate with him, and the victim in satisfaction for our sins, we cannot despair of obtaining from God whatever favor we ask of him, if we avail ourselves of the help of such a Redeemer. *How hath he not also, with Him, given us all things?*[4023] adds the Apostle. What can God deny us when he has not denied us his Son?

None of our prayers deserve to be heard or granted by the Lord, for we do not deserve graces but punishment for our sins; but Jesus Christ who intercedes for us, and offers for us all the sufferings of his life, his blood, and his death, does indeed deserve to be heard. The Father cannot refuse anything to so dear a Son, who offers him a price of infinite value. He is innocent; all that he pays to divine justice is to satisfy our debts; and the satisfaction he offers is infinitely greater than all the sins of men. It would not be just that a sinner should perish who repents of his sins, and offers to God the merits of Jesus Christ, who has already superabundantly atoned for him.

Let us therefore thank God, and hope all things from the merits of Jesus Christ.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

No, my God and my Father, I can no longer distrust Thy mercy; I cannot fear that Thou wilt refuse me the pardon of all the sins I have committed against Thee, and that Thou wilt withhold from me the graces necessary for my salvation, since Thou hast given me Thy Son, in order that I should offer him to Thee. Thou hast given me Jesus Christ on purpose to pardon me, and to render me capable of receiving Thy grace, and Thou hast commanded me to offer him to Thee, and to hope for salvation from Thee for his merits. Yes, my God, I will obey Thee, and I thank Thee. I offer Thee the merits of this Thy Son, and through them I hope for grace to remedy my weakness, and all the injuries that I have done myself by my sins. I repent, O infinite Goodness! of having offended Thee, and I love Thee above everything; and from this day forth I promise Thee to love none but Thee. But my promise will be of no avail if Thou dost not help me. For the love of Jesus Christ, give me light and strength to accomplish all Thy holy will. Trusting, therefore, in the merits of Jesus Christ, I hope that Thou wilt grant my prayer. Mary, my mother and my hope, I beseech thee also, for the love of Jesus Christ, to obtain for me this grace. O my Mother, listen to my prayer.

Meditations for the Novena for Christmas

Meditation I

DECEMBER 16

GOD HAS GIVEN US HIS ONLY SON TO SAVE US

> Dedi te in lucem gentium, ut sis salus mea usque ad extremum terræ
>
> “I have given Thee to be the light of the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation even to the farthest part of the earth.”—Isa. 49:6.

Consider that the Eternal Father addressed these words to the Infant Jesus at the instant of his conception: *I have given Thee to be the light of the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation.*[4024] My Son, I have given Thee to the world for the light and life of all people, in order that Thou mightest procure for them their salvation, which I have as much at heart as if it were my own. Thou must therefore employ Thyself entirely for the well-being of men: “Wholly given to man, Thou must be wholly spent in his service.”[4025] Thou must therefore, at Thy birth, suffer extreme poverty, in order that men may become rich, “that Thou mayest enrich them by Thy poverty.”[4026] Thou must be sold as a slave to acquire liberty for man; and Thou must be scourged and crucified as a slave to satisfy my justice for the punishment due to man. Thou must give Thy blood and Thy life to deliver man from eternal death; in short, Thou art no longer Thine own, but Thou belongest to man: *A child is born to us, a son is given to us.*[4027] Thus, my beloved Son, man will be constrained to love me, and to be mine, when he sees that I give Thee, my only-begotten one, entirely to him, and that there is nothing left for me to give him.

God so loved the world—(O infinite love! only worthy of an infinite God!)—*God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son.*[4028] The Infant Jesus, far from being sorrowful at this proposal, is pleased at it, accepts it with love, and exults in it: *He hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way;*[4029] and from the first moment of his incarnation he gives himself entirely to man, and embraces with pleasure all the sorrows and ignominy that he must suffer on earth for the love of man. These were (says St. Bernard) the mountains and hills that Jesus Christ had to pass with so many labors in order to save man: *Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills.*[4030]

Here consider that the divine Father, in sending his Son to be our Redeemer and mediator between himself and man, has in a certain sense bound himself to forgive us and love us, on account of the covenant he made to receive us into his favor, providing his Son satisfied for us his divine justice. On the other hand, the divine Word, having accepted the decree of his Father (who, by sending him to redeem us, has given him to us), has also bound himself to love us; not, indeed, for our own merits, but in order to fulfil the merciful will of his Father.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dearest Jesus, if it is true (as the law says) that dominion is acquired by gift, since Thy Father hath given Thee to me, Thou art mine; for me Thou wert born, to me hast Thou been given: *A child is born to us, a Son is given to us.*[4031] Therefore I may well say, “My Jesus and my all.”[4032] Since Thou art mine, everything that belongs to Thee is also mine. Of this I am assured by Thy Apostle: *How hath He not also with Him given us all things.*[4033] Thy blood is mine, Thy merits are mine, Thy grace is mine, Thy paradise is mine; and if Thou art mine, who shall be able to take Thee from me? “No man can take God away from me,”[4034] said with joy the abbot St. Anthony. So, from this day forth, will I also continually say. It is only through my own fault that I can lose Thee and separate myself from Thee; but if in past times I have abandoned Thee and lost Thee, O my Jesus, I now repent of it with all my soul, and I am resolved to lose my life and everything sooner than lose Thee, O infinite Good, and only love of my soul! I thank Thee, Eternal Father, for having given me Thy Son; and since Thou hast given him entirely to me, I, miserable sinner, give myself entirely to Thee. For the sake of this same Son, accept me, and bind me with the chains of love to this my Redeemer; but bind me so strongly that I also may be able to say, *Who shall separate me from the love of Christ?*[4035] What good shall there ever be in the in that shall separate me from my Jesus? And Thou, my

Saviour, if Thou art all mine, know that I am all Thine. Dispose of me, and of all that belongs to me, as shall best please Thee. And how can I refuse anything to a God who has not refused me his blood and his life? Mary, my Mother, do thou guard me with thy protection. I will no longer be my own. I will be all my Saviour's. Do thou help me to be faithful; I trust in thee.

Meditation II

DECEMBER 17

BITTERNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS IN THE WOMB OF HIS MOTHER

Hostiam et oblationem noluisti; corpus autem aptasti mihi

“Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldest not; but a body Thou hast fitted to Me.”—Heb. 10:5.

Consider the great bitterness with which the heart of the Infant Jesus must have felt itself afflicted and oppressed in the womb of Mary at first moment when his Father proposed to his consideration all the series of contempt, sorrow, and agonies which he was to suffer during his life, to deliver men from their miseries: *In the morning He wakeneth my ear,*[4036] *and I do not resist; I have given my body to the strickers.*[4037]

Thus did Jesus speak by the mouth of the prophet: *In the morning He wakeneth my ear;* that is to say, from the first moment of my conception my Father made me feel that it was his will that I should lead a life of sorrows, and in the end should be sacrified on the cross: *And I do not resist; I have given my body to the strikers.* And all this I accepted for your salvation, O ye souls of men, and from that time forth I gave up my body to the scourges, to the nails, and to the death of the cross.

Consider that whatever Jesus Christ suffered in his life and in his Passion, was all placed before him whilst he was yet in the womb of Mary, and he accepted everything that was proposed to him with delight; but in accepting all this, and in overcoming the natural repugnance of sense, O my God, what anguish and oppression did not the innocent heart of Jesus suffer! Well did he understand what he was first of all to endure, shut up for nine months in the dark prison of the womb of Mary; in suffering the shame and the sorrows of his birth, being born in a cold grotto that was a stable for beasts; in having afterwards to lead for thirty years an humble life in the shop of an artisan; in considering that he was to be treated by men as ignorant, as a slave, as a seducer, and as one guilty of death, and of the most infamous and painful death that ever was allotted to the most worthless of criminals.

All this did our dearest Redeemer accept every moment; but each moment that he accepted it he suffered at once all the pains and humiliations that he would afterwards have to endure even unto death. The very knowledge of his divine dignity made him feel still more the injuries that he would have to receive from men: *All the day long my shame is before me*.[4038] He had continually before his eyes his shame, especially that confusion which he should one day feel at seeing himself stripped naked, scourged, and suspended by three iron nails; and so to end his life in the midst of the insults and curses of those very men for whom he was to die: *Becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross*.[4039] And for what? To save us miserable and ungrateful sinners.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My beloved Redeemer, oh, how much did it cost Thee, even from Thy first entrance into the world, to raise me from the ruin which I have brought on myself by my sins! Thou hast consented to be treated as the lowest of slaves, in order to deliver me from the slavery of the devil, to whom I had willingly sold myself by sin; and yet, knowing all this, I have had the boldness to afflict continually Thy most amiable heart, which has loved me so much! But since Thou, who art so innocent, and art my God, hast accepted such a painful life and death, I accept for Thy love. O my Jesus, every trouble that shall come to me from Thy hands. I accept it and embrace it, because it comes from those hands which were once pierced through, in order to deliver me from the hell which I have so often deserved. Thy love, O my Redeemer! in offering Thyself to suffer so much for me, does more than oblige me to accept for Thy sake every sorrow, every humiliation. O my Lord! for Thy own merit’s sake, give me Thy holy love; Thy love will render all sufferings and ignominy sweet and pleasant to me. I love Thee above everything: I love Thee with my whole heart; I love Thee more than myself. But during Thy whole life how many and what great proofs of Thy love didst Thou not give me; and yet, ungrateful that I am, how many years have I not lived in the world without giving Thee any proofs of my love! I dread appearing before Thee when Thou shalt come to judge me, poor as I now am, without having done anything for the love of Thee. But what can I do without Thy grace? I can do nothing but pray that Thou wilt succor me; but even this prayer comes simply from Thy grace. O my Jesus! help me through the merits of Thy sufferings, and of the blood Thou hast shed for me. Most holy Mary, recommend me to thy Son, for the love that bearest him. Behold, I am one of those sheep for which thy Son has died.

Meditation III

DECEMBER 18

JESUS MADE HIMSELF A CHILD TO GAIN OUR CONFIDENCE AND OUR LOVE

> Parvulus natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis.
>
> “A child is born to us, and a son is given to us.”—Isa. 9:6.

Consider that after so many centuries, after so many prayers and sighs, the Messias, whom the holy patriarchs and prophets were not worthy to see, whom the nations sighed for, “the Desire of the eternal hills,” our Saviour, is come; he is already born, and has given himself entirely to us: *A child is born to us, and a son is given to us.*[4040]

The Son of God has made himself little, in order to make us great; he has given himself to us, in order that we may give ourselves to him; he is come to show us his love, in order that we may respond to it by giving him, ours. Let us, therefore, receive him with affection; let us love him, and have recourse to him in all our necessities.

“A child gives easily,”[4041] says St. Bernard; children readily give anything that is asked of them. Jesus came into the world a child, in order to show himself ready and willing to give us all good gifts: *In whom are hid all treasures.*[4042] *The Father hath given all things into His hands.*[4043] If we wish for light, he is come on purpose to enlighten us. If we wish for strength to resist our enemies, he is come to give us comfort. If we wish for pardon and salvation, he is come to pardon and save us. If, in short, we desire the sovereign gift of divine love, he is come to inflame our hearts with it; and, above all, for this very purpose, he has become a child, and has chosen to show himself to us worthy of our love, in proportion as he was poor and humble, in order to take away from us all fear, and to gain our affections. “So,” says St. Peter Chrysologus, “should he come who willed to drive away fear, and seek for love.”[4044]

Jesus has, besides, chosen to come as a little child to make us love him, not only with an appreciative but even with a tender love. All infants attract the tender affection of those who behold them; but who will not love, with all the tenderness of which they are capable, a God whom they behold as a little child, in want of milk to nourish him, trembling with cold, poor, abased, and forsaken, weeping and crying in a manger, and lying on straw? It was this that made the loving St. Francis exclaim: “Let us love the child of Bethlehem, let us love the child of Bethlehem.” “Come ye souls, and love a God who is become a child, and poor; who is so amiable, and who has come down from heaven to give himself entirely to you.”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my amiable Jesus! whom I have treated with so much contempt, Thou hast descended from heaven to save us from hell, and to give Thyself entirely to us; how can we, then, have so often despised Thee, and turned our backs upon Thee? O my God! how different is the gratitude of men towards their fellow-creatures! If any one makes them a gift, if any one comes from afar to pay them a visit, if any one shows them a particular mark of affection, they cannot forget it, and feel themselves obliged to repay their benefactors. And yet they are so ungrateful towards Thee, who art their God, and so worthy of their love, and who, for their sake, didst not refuse to give Thy blood and Thy love. But, alas! I have been worse than others in my conduct towards Thee, because I have been more loved by Thee, and more ungrateful towards Thee. Ah, if Thou hadst bestowed those graces with which I have been favored on a heretic, or an idolater, he would have become a saint; and yet I have done nothing but offend Thee. O my Saviour I pray Thee, forget the injuries I have committed against Thee. But Thou hast indeed said that when a sinner repents, Thou rememberest no longer the injuries Thou hast received from him: *All his iniquities I will not remember.*[4045] If in times past I have not loved Thee, in future I will do nothing else but love Thee. Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me, and I give Thee my whole will; O Lord, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee; and I will continually repeat to Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee! While I live, I will constantly say this; and when I die, I will yield my last breath with these sweet words on my lips, “My God, I love Thee;” and from the moment of my entrance into eternity, I will begin to love Thee with a love that shall last forever, without ever again ceasing to love Thee. And in the mean time, O my Lord! my only good and my only love, I intend to prefer Thy will to every pleasure of my own. Let the whole world offer itself to me; I will refuse it; for I will never cease to love that hath loved me so much; I will never again offend him who deserves from me an infinite love. Do Thou, O my Jesus! aid my desire with Thy grace. O Mary, my Queen! I acknowledge all the graces I have received from God through thy intercession; cease not, then, to intercede for me. Do thou obtain for me perseverance, thou who art the Mother of perseverance.

Meditation IV

DECEMBER 19

THE PASSION OF JESUS LASTED DURING HIS WHOLE LIFE

Dolor meus in conspectu meo semper.

“My sorrow is continually before me.”—Ps. 37:18.

Consider that in the first moment that the soul of Jesus Christ was created and united to his little body in the womb of Mary, the Eternal Father intimated to his Son his will that he should die for the redemption of the world; and in this same moment he presented to his view the entire dreadful scene of the sufferings he would have to endure, even unto death, in order to redeem mankind. He brought before him in that moment all the labors, contempt, and poverty that he would have to suffer during his whole life, as well in Bethlehem as in Egypt and in Nazareth; and then all the sufferings and ignominy of his Passion, the scourges, the thorns, the nails, and the cross; all the weariness, the sadness, the agonies, and the abandonment in which he was to end his life upon Calvary.

When Abraham was leading his son to death, he would not afflict him by giving him notice of it beforehand, even during the short time that was necessary for them to arrive at the mount. But the Eternal Father chose that his Incarnate Son, whom he had destined to be the victim of his justice in atonement of our sins, should suffer then all the pains to which he was to be subject during his life and at his death. Wherefore, from the first moment that he was in his mother’s womb, Jesus suffered continually that sorrow which he endured in the garden, and which was sufficient to have taken away his life (as he said, *My soul is sorrowful unto death*[4046]). So that from that time forth he felt most vividly, and endured the united weight of all the sorrows and contumely that awaited him.

The whole life, then, of our blessed Redeemer, and all the years that he spent, were a life and years of pains and tears: *My life is wasted with grief, and My years in sighs.*[4047] His divine heart never passed one moment free from suffering. Whether he watched or slept, whether he labored or rested, whether he prayed or spoke, he had continually before his eyes that bitter representation which tormented his holy soul more than all their sufferings tormented the holy martyrs. The martyrs have suffered; but, assisted by grace, they suffered with joy and fervor. Jesus Christ suffered; but he suffered with a heart full of weariness and sorrow; and he accepted all for the love of us.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O sweet, O amiable O loving Heart of Jesus! even from Thy infancy Thou wert full of bitterness, and Thou didst suffer agonies in the womb of Mary without consolation, and without having any one to look upon Thee and to console Thee by their sympathy. All this Thou didst suffer, O my Jesus! in order to satisfy for the eternal sorrow and agony which I deserved to endure in hell for my sins. Thou didst then suffer, deprived of all relief, to save me, who have had the boldness to forsake God, and to turn my back upon him, in order to satisfy my miserable inclinations. I thank Thee, O afflicted and loving Heart of my Lord! thank Thee, O affected and loving Heart of my Lord! I thank Thee, and I sympathize with Thee, especially when I see that whilst Thou dost suffer so much for the love of man, these very men do not even pity Thee. O love of God, O ingratitude of man! O men, O men, behold this little innocent lamb who is in agony for you, to satisfy the divine justice for the injuries you have committed against him. See how he prays and intercedes for you with his eternal Father; behold him and love him. O my Redeemer! how few are those who think of your sorrows and your love! O God, how few are those that love Thee! But unhappy me, for I also have lived so many years in forgetfulness of Thee! Thou hast suffered so much in order to be loved by me, and I have not loved Thee. Forgive me, my Jesus, forgive me, for I will amend my life and love Thee. Ah, wretched me, O Lord, if I still resist Thy grace, and in resisting it damn myself! All the mercies that Thou hast shown me, and, above all, Thy sweet voice, which now calls me to love Thee, would be my greatest punishment in hell.

My beloved Jesus, have pity on me, let me not live any longer ungrateful to Thy love; give me light, give me strength to conquer everything, in order to accomplish Thy will. Grant my prayer, I beseech Thee, for the merits of Thy Passion. In this is all confidence, and in thy intercession, O Mary! My dearest Mother, help me; it is thou who hast obtained for me all the favors I have received from God: I bless thee for them; but if thou dost not persevere in helping me, I shall persevere in being faithless, as I have been in times past.

Meditation V

DECEMBER 20

JESUS OFFERED HIMSELF FOR OUR SALVATION FROM THE BEGINNING

Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit.

“He was offered because it was His own will.”—Isa. 53:7.

The divine Word, from the first instant that he was made man and an infant in Mary’s womb, offered himself of his own accord to suffer and to die for the ransom of the world: *He was offered because it was His own will.*[4048] He knew that all the sacrifices of goats and bulls offered to God in times past had not been able to satisfy for the sins of men, but that it required a divine Person to pay the price of their redemption; wherefore he said, as the Apostle tells us, *When He cometh into the world He saith: Sacrifice and oblation Thou woudst not, but a body Thou hast fitted to me. . . . Then said I, Behold, I come.*[4049] “My Father,” said Jesus, “all the victims hitherto offered to Thee have not sufficed, nor could they suffice, to satisfy Thy justice; Thou hast given me this passible body, in order that by shedding my blood I might appease Thee and save men: ‘Behold, I come;’ here I am ready, I accept everything, and I submit myself in everything to Thy will.”

The inferior part felt repugnance, for it naturally was averse to this life and death, so full of sufferings and shame; but the rational part, which was entirely subordinate to the will of his Father, conquered and accepted everything; and Jesus began from that moment to suffer all the anguish and sorrows that he would have to suffer during all the years of his life. Thus did our Redeemer act from the very first moment of his entrance into the world.

But, O God! how have we conducted ourselves towards Jesus since we began, as adults, to know by the light of faith the sacred Mysteries of

Redemption? What thoughts, what designs, what goods have we loved! Pleasures, amusements, vengeance, sensuality; these are the goods that have engrossed the affections of our hearts. But if we have faith, we must at last change our life and our affections. Let us love a God who has suffered so much for us. Let us represent to ourselves the sufferings which the heart of Jesus endured for us, even from his infancy; for then we shall not be able to love anything else but that heart which hath loved us so much.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My Lord, wilt Thou know how I have behaved towards Thee during all my life? Ever since I began to have the use of reason, I began to despise Thy grace and Thy love. But Thou knowest it much better than I do; nevertheless, Thou hast borne with me, because Thou still carest for my welfare. I fled from Thee, and Thou didst follow after and call me. The very same love that made Thee come down from heaven to seek the lost sheep has made Thee bear with me and not forsake me. My Jesus, Thou now seekest me, and I seek Thee. I feel that Thy grace is assisting me: it assists me with the sorrow I feel for my sins, which I abhor above every other evil; it assists me by making me feel a great desire to love Thee and to please Thee. Yea, Lord, I will love Thee and please Thee as much as I can. On one side I feel afraid, it is true, at the thought of my frailty and the weakness which I have contracted by my sins; but Thy grace gives me a greater confidence, and causes me to hope in Thy merits; so that I can say, from the bottom of my heart: *I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.*[4050] If I am weak, Thou wilt give me strength against my enemies; if I am infirm, I hope that Thy blood will be my medicine; if I am a sinner, I hope Thou wilt make me a saint. I acknowledge that I have hitherto cooperated to my own ruin, because I have neglected, on dangerous occasions, to have recourse to Thee. But from this day forth, my Jesus and my hope, I will always have recourse to Thee; and from Thee I hope for every assistance and every good. I love Thee above all things, and I will always love Thee alone. Have pity on me, and help me through the merits of all those sufferings which from Thy infancy Thou hast endured for me. Eternal Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ accept of my love. If I have offended Thee, let the tears of the Infant Jesus, who is praying for me, appease Thy wrath: “Look on the face of Thy Christ.”[4051] I do not deserve favors, but this Thy guiltless Son deserves them, who offers Thee a life of sufferings, in order that Thou mayest be merciful to me. And thou, O Mary, Mother of mercy, cease not to intercede for me. Thou knowest how much I confide in thee; and I know well that thou dost not forsake him that has recourse to th

Meditation VI

DECEMBER 21

JESUS A PRISONER IN THE WOMB OF MARY

Factus sum sicut homo sine adjutorio, inter mortuos liber.

“I am become as a man without help, free among the dead.”—Ps. 87:5, 6.

Consider the painful life that Jesus Christ led in the womb of his Mother, and the long-confined and dark imprisonment that he suffered there for nine months. Other infants are indeed in the same state; but they do not feel the miseries of it, because they do not know them. But Jesus knew them well, because from the first moment of his life he had the perfect use of reason. He had his senses, but could not use them; eyes, but he could not see; a tongue, but he could not speak; hands, but he could not stretch them out; feet, but he could not walk;—so that for nine months he had to remain in the womb of Mary like a dead man shut up in the tomb: *I am become as a man without help, free among the dead.*[4052] He was free, because he had of his own free-will made himself a prisoner of love in this prison; but love deprived him of liberty, and bound him there so fast in chains that he could not move: “Free among the dead! oh, great patience of our Saviour!”[4053] says St. Ambrose, while he considered the sufferings of Jesus in the womb of Mary.

The womb of Mary was, therefore, to our Redeemer a voluntary prison, because it was a prison of love. But it was also not an unjust prison: he was indeed innocent himself, but he had offered himself to pay our debts and to satisfy for our crimes. It was therefore only reasonable for the divine justice to keep him thus imprisoned, and so begin to exact from him the due satisfaction.

Behold the state to which the Son of God reduces himself for the love of men! he deprives himself of his liberty and puts himself in chains, to deliver us from the chains of hell. What gratitude and love should we not show in return for the love and goodness of our deliverer and our surety, who, not by compulsion but only out of love, offered himself to pay, and has paid for us, our debts and our penalties by giving up his divine life! *Forget not the kindness of thy surety; for He hath given His life for thee.*[4054]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Forget not the kindness of thy surety.[4055] Yes, my Jesus, the prophet has reason to warn me not to forget the immense favor which Thou hast shown me. I was the debtor, I the criminal, and Thou the innocent one; Thou, O my God! hast chosen to satisfy for my sins by Thy sufferings and Thy death. But after all this kindness I have forgotten Thy favors and Thy love, and I have had the boldness to turn my back upon Thee, as if Thou hadst not been my Lord, and that Lord who has loved me so much. But if in times past I have forgotten Thy mercies, O my dear Redeemer! I will in future never forget them again. Thy sufferings and Thy death shall be the constant subjects of my thoughts, because they will always recall to my mind the love that Thou hast borne me. Cursed be the days in which, forgetting what Thou hast suffered for me, I have made so bad a use of my liberty. Thou hast given it to me to love Thee, and I have used it to despise Thee. But I now consecrate entirely to Thee this liberty which Thou hast given me. I beseech Thee, my Saviour, deliver me from the misery of seeing myself again separated from Thee, and again made the slave of Lucifer. I implore Thee to bind my poor soul to Thy feet by Thy holy love, so that it may never again be separated from Thee. Eternal Father, by the imprisonment of the infant Jesus in the womb of Mary, deliver me from the chains of sin and of hell. And thou, O Mother of God, help me! Thou hast in thy womb the Son of God imprisoned and confined; as, therefore, Jesus is thy prisoner, he will do everything that thou tellest him. Tell him to pardon me; tell him to make me holy. Help me, my Mother, for the sake of the favor and honor that Jesus Christ conferred upon thee by dwelling within thee nine months.

Meditation VII

DECEMBER 22

THE SORROW THAT THE INGRATITUDE OF MEN HAS CAUSED JESUS

In propria venit, et sui eum non receperunt.

“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.”—St. John 1:2.

In these days of the holy Nativity St. Francis of Assisi went about the highways and woods with sighs and tears and inconsolable lamentations. When asked the reason, he answered: How should I not weep when I see that love is not loved! I see a God become, as it were foolish, for the love of man, and man so ungrateful to this God! Now, if this ingratitude of man caused so great a sorrow to the heart of St. Francis, let us consider how much more it must have afflicted the heart of Jesus Christ.

He was hardly conceived in the womb of Mary when he saw the cruel return he was to receive from man. He had descended from heaven to enkindle the fire of divine love, and this desire alone had brought him down to this earth, to suffer there an abyss of sorrows and ignominies: *I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled*?[4056] And then he beheld an abyss of sins which men would commit after having seen so many proofs of his love. It was this, says St. Bernardine of Sienna, which made him feel an infinite sorrow: “And therefore he sorrowed infinitely.”[4057]

Even among us it is an insufferable sorrow for one man to see himself treated with ingratitude by another; for the blessed Simon of Cassia observes that ingratitude often afflicts the soul more than any pain afflicts the body: “Ingratitude often causes more bitter sorrow in the soul than pain causes in the body.”[4058] What sorrow, then, must our ingratitude have caused to Jesus, who was our God, when he saw that his benefits and his love would be repaid him by offences and injuries! *And they repaid Me evil for good, and hatred for My love.*[4059] But even at the present day it seems as if Jesus Christ was going about complaining: *I am become a stranger to My brethren.*[4060] For he sees that many neither love nor know him, as if he had not done them any good, nor had suffered anything for love of them. O God, what value do the majority of Christians even now set upon the love of Jesus Christ? Our blessed Redeemer once appeared to the blessed Henry Suso in the form of a pilgrim who went begging from door to door for a lodging, but every one drove him away with insults and injuries. How many, alas! are like those of whom Job speaks: *Who said to God, Depart from us. Whereas he had filled their houses with good things.*[4061]

We have hitherto united ourselves to these ungrateful wretches; but shall we always be like them? No; for that loving Infant does not deserve it, who came from heaven to suffer and die for us, in order that we might love him.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Is it, then, true, O my Jesus, that Thou didst descend from heaven to make me love Thee; didst come down to embrace a life of suffering and the death of the cross for my sake, in order that I might welcome Thee into my heart, and yet I have so often driven Thee from me, and said, "Depart from me, Lord;[4062] go away from me, Lord; for I do not want Thee?" O God, if Thou wert not infinite goodness, and hadst not given Thy life to obtain my pardon. I should not have courage to ask it of Thee; but I feel that Thou Thyself dost offer me peace: *Turn ye to me, saith the Lord, and I will turn to you.*[4063] Thou Thyself, whom I have offended, O my Jesus, hast made Thyself my intercessor: *He is the propitiation for our sins.*[4064] I will therefore not do Thee this fresh injury of distrusting Thy mercy. I repent with all my soul of having despised Thee, O sovereign Good! receive me into Thy favor for the sake of the blood which Thou hast shed for me: *Father, I am not worthy to be called Thy Son.*[4065] No, my Redeemer and my Father, I am no longer worthy to be Thy son, having so often renounced Thy love; but Thou dost make me worthy of Thy merits. I thank Thee, O my Father! I thank Thee and I love Thee. Ah, the thought alone of the patience with which Thou hast borne with me for so many years, and of the favors Thou hast conferred upon me after so many injuries that I have done

Thee, ought to make me live constantly on fire with Thy love. Come, then, my Jesus, for I will not drive Thee away any more, come and dwell in my poor heart. I love Thee, and will always love Thee; but do Thou inflame my heart every day more and more by the remembrance of the love Thou hast borne me. O Mary, my Queen and Mother, help me, pray to Jesus for me; make me during the days that are left me in this world live grateful to that God who has loved me so much, even after I have so greatly offended him.

Meditation VIII

DECEMBER 23

THE LOVE OF GOD MANIFESTED TO MEN BY THE BIRTH OF JESUS

> Apparuit gratia Dei Salvatoris nostri omnibus hominibus, erudiens nos, ut . . . pie vivamus in hoc sæculo, expectantes beatam spem et adventum gloriæ magni Dei et Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi.
>
> “The grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us that . . . we should live . . . godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”—Titus, 2:2.

Consider that by the grace that is said here to have appeared is meant the tender love of Jesus Christ towards men,—a love that we have not merited, which therefore is called “grace.”

This love was, however, always the same in God, but did not always appear. It was at first promised in many prophecies, and foreshadowed by many figures; but at the birth of the Redeemer this divine love indeed appeared, and manifested itself by the Eternal Word showing himself to man as an infant, lying on straw, crying and shivering with cold; beginning thus to make satisfaction for us for the penalties we have deserved, and so making known to us the affection which he bore us, by giving up his life for us: *In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us.*[4066] Therefore the love of our God appeared to all men.[4067]

But why is it, then, that all men have not known it, and that even at this day so many are ignorant of it? This is the reason: *The light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light.*[4068] They have not known him, and they do not know him, because they do not wish to know him, loving rather the darkness of sin than the light of grace.

But let us endeavor not to be of the number of these unhappy souls. If in past times we have shut our eyes to the light, thinking little of the love of

Jesus Christ, let us try, during the days that may remain to us in this life, to have ever before our eyes the sufferings and death of our Redeemer, in order to love him who hath loved us so much: *Looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*[4069] Thus may we justly expect, according to the divine promises, that paradise which Jesus Christ has acquired for us by his blood. At his first coming Jesus appeared as an infant, poor and humble, and showed himself on earth born in a stable, covered with miserable rags, and lying on straw; but at his second coming he will come on a throne of majesty: *We shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and majesty.*[4070] Blessed then will he be who shall have loved him, and miserable those who have not loved him.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my holy Infant! now I see Thee lying on straw, poor, afflicted, and forsaken; but I know that one day Thou wilt come to judge me, seated on a throne of splendor, and attended by the angels. Forgive me, I implore Thee, before Thou dost judge me. Then Thou wilt have to conduct Thyself as a just judge; but now Thou art my Redeemer, and the Father of mercy. I have been one of those ungrateful ones who have not known Thee, because I did not choose to know Thee, and therefore, instead of being inclined to love Thee by the consideration of the love Thou hast borne me, I have only thought of satisfying my own desires, despising Thy grace and Thy love. But into Thy sacred hands I commend my soul, which I have lost; do Thou save it: *Into Thy hands I commend my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.*[4071] In Thee do I place all my hopes, knowing that, to ransom me from hell, Thou hast given Thy blood and Thy life: *Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.*[4072] Thou didst not condemn me to death when I was living in sin, but hast waited for me with infinite patience, in order that, having come to myself, I might repent of having offended Thee, and might begin to love Thee, and that thus Thou mightest be able to forgive and save me. Yes, my Jesus, I will please Thee. I repent, above every other evil, of all the offences I have committed against Thee; I repent, and love Thee above all things. Do Thou save me in Thy mercy, and let it be my salvation to love Thee always in this life and in eternity. My dearest

Mother Mary, recommend me to thy Son. Do thou represent to him that I am thy servant, and that I have placed all my hope in thee. He hears thee, and refuses thee nothing.

Meditation IX

DECEMBER 24

SAINT JOSEPH GOES TO BETHLEHEM WITH HIS HOLY SPOUSE

> Ascendit autem et Joseph . . . , ut profiteretur cum Maria desponsata sibi uxore prægnante.
>
> “And Joseph also went up . . . to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child.”—St. Luke, 2:4

God had decreed that his Son should be born not in the house of Joseph, but in a cavern and stable of beasts, in the poorest and most painful way that a child can be born; and therefore he caused Cæsar to publish an edict, by which people were commanded to go and enroll themselves, every one in his own city whence he drew his origin.

When Joseph heard this order, he was much agitated as to whether he should take with him or leave behind the Virgin Mother, as she was now so near childbirth. My spouse and my lady, said he to her, on the one hand, I do not wish to leave you alone; on the other, if I take you with me, I am much afflicted at the thought of all that you will have to suffer during this long journey, and in such severe weather. My poverty will not permit me to conduct you with that comfort which you require. But Mary answers him, and tries to give him courage with these words: My Joseph, do not fear. I will go with you; the Lord will assist us. She knew, both by divine inspiration, and also because she was well versed in the prophecy of Micheas, that the divine Infant was to be born in Bethlehem. She therefore takes the swaddling-clothes, and other miserable garments already prepared, and departs with Joseph. *And Joseph also went up . . . to be enrolled with Mary.*[4073]

Let us now consider all the devout and holy discourses which these two holy spouses must have held together during this journey concerning the mercy, goodness, and love of the divine Word, who was shortly to be born, and to appear on the earth for the salvation of men. Let us also consider the praises, the benedictions, the thanks givings, the acts of humility and love, which these two illustrious pilgrims uttered on the way. This holy Virgin, so soon to become a mother, certainly suffered much in so long a journey, made in the middle of winter, and over rough roads; but she suffered with peace and with love. She offered to God all these her trials, uniting them to those of Jesus, whom she carried in her womb.

Oh, let us unite ourselves also, and let us accompany Mary and Joseph in the journey of our life; and, with them, let us accompany the King of Heaven, who is born in a cave, and makes his first appearance in the world as an infant, but as the poorest and most forsaken infant that ever was born amongst men. And let us beseech Jesus, Mary, and Joseph that, through the merits of the pains which they suffered in this journey, they would accompany us in the journey that we are making to eternity. Oh, blessed shall we be if, in life and in death, we keep company with these three great person ages, and are always accompanied by them!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My beloved Redeemer, I know that in this journey Thou wast accompanied by hosts of angels from heaven; but on this earth who was there that bore Thee company? Thou hadst but Joseph and Mary who carried Thee with her. Refuse not, O my Jesus! that I also accompany Thee. Miserable ungrateful sinner that I have been, I now see the injuries I have done Thee; Thou didst come down from heaven to make Thyself my companion on earth, and I by my frequent offences have ungratefully abandoned Thee! When I remember, O my Saviour! that for the sake of my own cursed inclinations I have often separated myself from Thee and renounced Thy friendship, I could wish to die of sorrow. But Thou didst come into the world to forgive me; therefore forgive me now, I beseech Thee, for I repent with all my soul of having so often turned my back upon Thee and forsaken Thee. I purpose and hope, through Thy grace, nevermore to leave or separate myself from Thee, O my only love! My soul has become enamoured of Thee, O my amiable Infant God! I love Thee, my sweet Saviour; and since Thou hast come upon earth to save me and to dispense to me Thy graces, I ask this one only grace of Thee, permit me not to be ever again separated from Thee. Unite me, bind me to Thyself, enchain me with the sweet cords of Thy holy love. O my Redeemer and my God, who will then have the heart to leave Thee, and to live without Thee, deprived of Thy grace? Most holy Mary, I come to accompany thee in this journey; and thou, O my Mother, cease not to accompany me in the journey that I am making to eternity. Do thou assist me always, but especially when I shall find myself at the end of my life, and near that moment on which will depend either my remaining always with thee to love Jesus in paradise, or my being forever separated from thee and hating Jesus in hell. My Queen, save me by thy intercession; and may my salvation be to love thee and Jesus forever, in time and in eternity. Thou art my hope; I hope everything from thee.

Meditations for the Octave of Christmas, and for the following Days until the Epiphany

Meditation I

DECEMBER 25

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

The birth of Jesus Christ caused a universal joy to the whole world. He was the Redeemer who had been desired and sighed after for so many years; and therefore he was called the desired of the nations, and the desire of the eternal hills. Behold him already come, and born in a little cave. Let us consider that this day the angel announces to us also the same great joy that he announced to the shepherds: *Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour.*[4074]

What rejoicing is there in a country when the first-born son is born to a king! But surely we ought to keep still greater festival when we see the Son of God born and come down from heaven to visit us, urged to this by the bowels of his mercy: *Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high hath visited us.*[4075] We were lost; and behold him who came to save us: *He came down from heaven for our salvation.*[4076] Behold the shepherd who came to save his sheep from death by giving his life for their sake: *I am the good shephred; the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.*[4077] Behold the Lamb of God, who came to sacrifice himself, to obtain for us the divine favor, and to become our deliverer, our life, our light, and even our food in the most Holy Sacrament!

St. Maximus says that for this reason, amongst others, Christ chose to be laid in the manger where the animals were fed, to make us understand that he has become man also to make himself our food: “In the manger, where the food of animals is placed, he allowed his limbs to be laid, thereby showing that his own body would be the eternal food of men.”[4078] Besides this, he is born every day in the Sacrament by means of the priests and the words of consecration; the altar is the crib, and there we go to feed ourselves on his flesh. Some one might desire to have the Holy Infant in his arms, as the aged Simeon had; but faith teaches us that, when we receive Communion, the same Jesus who was in the manger of Bethlehem is not only in our arms, but in our breasts. He was born for this purpose, to give himself entirely to us: *A child is born to us, a son is given to us.*[4079]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost; seek Thy servant.[4080]. O Lord, I am that sheep which, by following after my own pleasures and caprices, have miserably lost myself; but Thou, who art at once the shepherd and divine Lamb, art he who camest down from heaven to save me by sacrificing Thyself as a victim on the cross in satisfaction for my sins. *Behold, the Lamb of God; behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world*[4081]. If, therefore, I desire to amend my life, what need I fear? why should I not confide entirely in Thee, O my Saviour, who wert born on purpose to save me? *Behold, God is my Saviour; I will put my trust in him, and will not fear.*[4082] What greater proof couldst Thou give me of Thy mercy, O my dearest Redeemer, to inspire me with confidence, than to give me Thyself? O my dear Infant, how grieved am I that I have offended Thee! I have made Thee weep in the stable of Bethlehem. But since Thou art come to seek me, I throw myself at Thy feet; and although I behold Thee afflicted and humbled, lying upon straw in the manger, I acknowledge Thee for my supreme king and sovereign. I feel that Thy tender infant-cries invite me to love Thee, and demand my heart. Behold it, my Jesus; I present it to-day at Thy feet; change it and inflame it, O Thou who didst come into the world to inflame the hearts of men with Thy holy love. I feel as if I heard Thee say to me in Thy manger, *Love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*[4083] And I will answer, Ah, my Jesus, if I do not love Thee, who art my Lord and my God, whom shall I love? Thou callest Thyself mine, because Thou were born in order to give Thyself entirely to me; and shall I refuse to be Thine? No, my beloved Lord, I give myself entirely to Thee; I love Thee with my whole heart. I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, O sovereign Good, the one only love of my soul. I beseech Thee accept me this day, and permit me not evermore to cease to love Thee. O Mary, my Queen, I pray thee, through that consolation which thou didst enjoy the first kiss, beseech him to accept me for his servant, and to enchain me forever to himself by the gift of his holy love.

Meditation II

DECEMBER 26

JESUS IS BORN AN INFANT

Consider that the first sign which the angel gave to the shepherds whereby they might discover the new-born Messias was that they would find him under the form of an infant: *You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger.*[4084] The littleness of infants is a great attraction for love; but a still greater attraction must the littleness of the Infant Jesus be to us, who, being the incomprehensible God, has made himself small for the love us: “For our sake he became a little child.”[4085]

Adam came into the world at a full age; but the eternal Word chose to appear as an infant—*a child is born to us.*[4086]—that he might thus attract our hearts to himself with greater force: “so would he be born, who willed to be loved.”[4087] He came not into the world to inspire terror, but to be loved; and for this reason he preferred to show himself, at his first appearance, as a tender, weak infant. “Our Lord is great, and greatly to be praised,”[4088] says St. Peter Chrysologus. My Lord is great, and therefore he deserves highly to be praised for his divine majesty. But when the saint considered him as a little child in the stable of Bethlehem, he exclaimed with tenderness, “My Lord is a little child, and greatly to be loved.”[4089] My great and supreme God has made himself little for my sake.

Ah, how is it possible that any one can reflect with faith on a God become a little child, crying and wailing on the straw in a cave, and yet not love him, and invite all men to love him, as did St. Francis of Assisi, who said, “Let us love the child of Bethlehem, let us love the child of Bethlehem.”[4090] He is an infant; he does not speak, he only cries; but, O my God! are not these cries all voices of love, with which he invites us to love him, and demands our hearts!

Let us consider, besides, that infants also gain our affections because we consider them innocent; but all other infants are born with the infection of original sin; Jesus was born an infant, but he was born holy; “holy innocent, unpolluted.”[4091] My beloved, says the holy spouse, is all ruddy with love, and all white with innocence, without a spot of any sin: *My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.*[4092] In this Infant did the eternal Father find his delight, because, as St. Gregory says, “in him alone he found no fault.”[4093]

Let us miserable sinners comfort ourselves, because this divine Infant has come down from heaven to communicate his innocence to us by means of his Passion. His merits, if we only know how to apply them to ourselves, can change us from sinners into innocents and saints: in these merits let us place all our confidence; through them let us continually ask for graces from the eternal Father, and we shall obtain everything.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Eternal Father, I, a miserable sinner, worthy of hell, have nothing of my own to offer Thee in satisfaction for my sins; I offer Thee the tears, the sufferings, the blood, the death of this Infant, who is Thy Son; and through them I implore pity from Thee. If I had not this Son to offer Thee, I should be lost; there would be no longer any hope for me; but Thou hast given him to me for this purpose, in order that, in offering Thee his merits, I might have a good hope of my salvation. My ingratitude, O Lord, is great; but Thy mercy is still greater. And what greater mercy could I hope for from Thee, than that Thou shouldst give me Thy own Son for my Redeemer, and for the victim of my sins? For the love, therefore, of Jesus Christ, forgive me all the offences that I have committed against Thee, of which I repent with my whole heart, becuase by them I have offended Thee, O infinite Goodness. And for the sake of Jesus Christ, I ask of Thee holy perseverance. O my God, if I should again offend Thee, after Thou hast waited for me with so much patience; after Thou hast assisted me with so much light, and forgiven me with so much love,—I should indeed deserve a special hell for myself. O my Father, do not forsake me, I pray Thee. I tremble when I think of the number of times that I have betrayed Thee; how many times have I promised to love Thee, and then have again turned my back upon Thee? O my Creator, let me not have to lament the misfortune of seeing myself again deprived of Thy favor: “Permit me not to be separated from Thee; permit me not to be separated from Thee.”[4094] I repeat it, and will repeat it to my very last breath; and do Thou always give me the grace to repeat to Thee this prayer: “Permit me not to be separated from Thee.”[4095] My Jesus, my dearest Infant, enchain me with Thy love. I love Thee, and will always love Thee. Permit me not to be ever again separated from Thy love. I love thee too, my Mother; Oh, do thou also love me. And if thou lovest me, this is the favor I beg thee to obtain for me, that I may never cease to love my God.

Meditation III

DECEMBER 27

JESUS IN SWADDLING-CLOTHES

Imagine that you see Mary, having now brought forth her Son, taking him with reverence in her arms, adoring him as her God, and then wrapping him up in swaddling-clothes: *She wrapped Him up in swaddling-clothes.*[4096] The Holy Church says the same:

> "His limbs, wrapped in swaddling-clothes,
> The Virgin Mother binds."[4097]

Behold the Infant Jesus, who obediently offers his little hands and feet, and allows himself to be swaddled. Consider that every time the Holy Infant allowed himself to be swathed he thought of the cords with which he should one day be bound and led captive in the garden, and of those also with which he should be tied to the column, and of the nails which should fasten him to the cross; and thinking of these things, he willingly allowed himself to be bound, in order to deliver our souls from the chains of hell.

Bound, then, in these swaddling-clothes, and turning towards us, Jesus invites us to unite ourselves to him with the holy bonds of love. And turning to his eternal Father, he says: My Father, men have abused their liberty, and by rebelling against Thee have made themselves the slaves of sin; but I will make satisfaction for their disobedience, and will be bound and confined in these swaddling-clothes. Bound with these, I offer Thee my liberty, in order that man may be delivered from the slavery of the devil. I accept these swaddling-clothes; they are dear to me, because they are the symbols of the cords with which, from this moment forth, I offer myself to be one day bound and led to death for the salvation of men.

His bands are a healthful binding.[4098] The bands of Jesus were the healthful binding, to heal the wounds of our souls. Therefore, O my Jesus, Thou wouldst be bound in swaddling-clothes for the love of me. “O Love, how great is thy bond, which could bind a God.”[4099] O divine Love, Thou alone couldst make my God Thy prisoner. And shall I then, O Lord, refuse to allow myself to be bound by Thy holy love? Shall I for the future have the courage to detach myself from Thy sweet and amiable chains? And for what? To make myself a slave of hell? O my Lord, Thou remainest bound up in this manger for the love of me; I desire always to remain bound to Thee.

St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said that the bands that we ought to take should be a firm resolution of uniting ourselves to God by means of love; detaching ourselves at the same time from all affection for anything that is not God. For this reason, also, it seems that our loving Jesus has allowed himself to be, as it were, bound and made a prisoner in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, under the sacramental species, in order that he might behold his beloved souls made also prisoners of his love.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

And what fear can I have of Thy chastisement, O my beloved Infant, now that I see Thee bound in the swaddling-clothes, depriving Thyself, as it were, of the power of raising Thy hands to punish me? Thou dost give me to understand by these bands that Thou wilt not chastise me, if I will detach myself from the chains of my vices and bind myself to Thee. Yes, my Jesus, I will bind myself. I repent with all my heart of having separated myself from Thee, by abusing that liberty which Thou hast given me. Thou dost offer me a more desirable liberty; a liberty which delivers me from the chains of the devil, and places me among the children of God. Thou hast given Thyself up to be imprisoned in these swaddling-clothes for the love of me; I will be in future a prisoner of Thy infinite love. O blessed chains, O beautiful emblems of salvation, which bind souls to God, bind also my poor heart; but bind it so fast that it may never in future be able to disengage itself from the love of this sovereign Good. My Jesus, I love Thee; I bind myself to Thee; I give Thee my whole heart, my whole will. No, I never leave Thee again, my beloved Lord. O my Saviour, who, to pay my debts, wouldst not only be wrapped by Mary in swaddling-clothes, but even be bound as a criminal by the executioners, and thus bound wouldst go along the streets of Jerusalem, led to death as an innocent lamb to the slaughter-house; O Thou who wouldst be nailed to the cross, and didst not leave it until Thou hadst given up Thy life upon it,—I beseech Thee permit me not to be ever separated again from Thee, so that I should again find myself deprived of Thy favor and of Thy love. O Mary, who didst one day bind in swaddling-clothes this thy innocent Son, I pray thee, do thou bind me also, a miserable sinner; bind me to Jesus, so that I may never again separate myself from his feet, that I may always live and die bound to him, so that one day I may have the happiness to enter into that blessed country where I shall never be able and shall never be afraid of detaching myself from his holy love.

Meditation IV

DECEMBER 28

JESUS TAKING MILK

As soon as Jesus was swathed, he looked for and took milk from the breast of Mary. The spouse in the Canticles desired to see her little brother taking milk from his mother: *Who shall give thee to me for my brother, sucking the breast of my mother.*[4100] The spouse desired it, but did not see him; but we have had the happiness to see the Son of God made Man and become our brother, taking milk from the breasts of Mary. Oh, what a spectacle must it not have been to Paradise to see the divine Word become an infant sucking milk from a virgin who was his own creature!

He, then, who feeds all men and all animals upon the earth, is become so weak and so poor that he requires a little milk to sustain life! Sister Paula, the Camaldolese, in contemplating a little image of Jesus taking milk, felt herself immediately all inflamed with a tender love to God. Jesus took but little of this milk, and took it but seldom in the day. It was revealed to Sister Mary Anne, a Franciscan, that Mary only gave him milk three times in the day. O milk most precious to us, to be changed into blood in the veins of Jesus Christ, and so to be made by him a bath of salvation to cleanse our souls!

Let us consider also that Jesus took this milk in order to nourish the body which he wished to leave us as food in the Holy Communion. Therefore, my Blessed Redeemer, whilst Thou dost suck the breast of Mary, Thou art thinking of me; Thou art thinking of changing this milk into blood, to be shed afterwards at Thy death, as the price wherewith to ransom my soul, and as its food in the most Holy Sacrament, which is the salutary milk with which our Lord preserves our souls in the life of grace: “Christ is your milk,”[4101] says St. Augustine.

O beloved Infant, O my Jesus, let me also exclaim with the woman in the Gospel, *Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck.*[4102] Blessed art thou, O Mother of God, who hadst the happiness to give milk to the Incarnate Word! Oh, admit me, in company with this great Son, to take from thee the milk of a tender and loving devotion to the Infancy of Jesus, and to thyself, my dearest mother.

And I thank Thee, O divine Infant, who didst deign to stand in need of milk for Thy support in order to show me the love that Thou bearest me. This is what our Lord once gave St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi to understand that he had reduced himself to the necessity of taking milk in order to make us comprehend the love that he has for redeemed souls.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my sweet and most amiable Infant, Thou art the bread of heaven, and dost sustain the angels: Thou dost provide all creatures with food; and yet how art Thou reduced to the necessity of begging a little milk from a Virgin in order to preserve Thy life! O divine love, how couldst Thou reduce a God to such a state of poverty that he was in want of a little food? But I understand Thee, O my Jesus! Thou didst take milk from Mary in this stable to offer it to God changed into blood on the cross as a sacrifice, and in satisfaction for our sins. Give, O Mary! give all the milk thou canst to this Son, because every drop of this milk will serve to wash out the sins of my soul, and to nourish it afterwards in the Holy Communion. O my Redeemer! how can one not love Thee who believes what Thou hast done and suffered to save us? And I, how could I know this, and yet be so ungrateful to Thee? But Thy goodness is my hope; and this makes me sure that if I wish for Thy grace it is mine. I repent, O sovereign Good! of having offended Thee, and I love Thee above all things. Or, rather, I love nothing, I love and I will love only Thee; Thou art and shalt always be my only good, my only love. My beloved Redeemer, give me, I pray Thee, a tender devotion to Thy holy Infancy, such as Thou hast given to so many souls, who, meditating on Thee, as an Infant, forgetting all else, seem unable to think of anything but loving Thee. It is true that they are innocent, and I am a sinner; but Thou didst become a child to make Thyself loved even by sinners. I have been such; but now I love Thee with my whole heart, and I desire nothing but Thy love. O Mary, give me a little of that tenderness with which thou didst give suck to the Infant Jesus.

Meditation V

DECEMBER 29

JESUS LYING ON THE STRAW

Jesus is born in the stable at Bethlehem. His poor Mother has neither wool nor down to make a bed for the tender Infant. What does she do, then? She gathers together a small handful of straw into the manger, and puts it there for him to lie on: *And she laid Him in the manger.*[4103] But, O my God, how hard and painful is this bed for an infant just born; the limbs of a babe are so delicate, and especially the limbs of Jesus, which were formed by the Holy Spirit with a special delicacy, in order that they might be the more sensible to suffering: *A body Thou hast fitted to Me.*[4104]

Wherefore the hardness of such a bed must have caused him excessive pain,—pain and shame; for what child, even of the lowest of the people, is ever laid on straw as soon as he is born? Straw is only a fit bed for beasts; and yet the Son of God had none other on earth than a bed of miserable straw St. Francis of Assisi heard one day as he sat at table these words of the Gospel: *And laid Him in the manger;*[4105] and exclaimed, “What? my Lord was laid on the straw, and shall I continue to sit?” And thus he arose from his seat, threw himself on the ground, and there finished his scanty meal, mingling it with tears of tenderness as he contemplated the sufferings that the Infant Jesus endured whilst he lay on the straw.

But why did Mary, who had so earnestly desired the birth of this Son-why did she, who loved him so much, allow him to lie and suffer on this hard bed, instead of keeping him in her arms? This is a mystery, says St. Thomas of Villanova: “Nor would she have laid him in such a place, unless there had been some great mystery in it.”[4106] This great mystery has been explained by many in different ways, but the most pleasing explanation to me is that of St. Peter Damian: Jesus wished as soon as he was born to be placed on the straw, in order to teach us the mortification of our senses: “He laid down the law of martyrdom.”[4107] The world had been lost by sensual pleasures; through them had Adam and multitudes of his descendants till then been lost. The Eternal Word came from heaven to teach us the love of suffering; and he began as a child to teach it to us by choosing for himself the most acute sufferings that an infant can endure. It was, therefore, he himself who inspired his Mother to cease from holding him in her tender arms, and to replace him on the hard bed, that he might feel the more cold of the cave and the pricking of this rough straw.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Lover of souls, O my loving Redeemer! is not, then, the sorrowful Passion that awaits Thee, and the bitter death that is prepared for Thee on the cross, sufficient, but Thou must, even from the commencement of Thy life, even from Thy infancy, begin to suffer? Yes, because even as an infant Thou wouldst begin to be my Redeemer, and to satisfy the divine justice for my sins. Thou didst choose a bed of straw to deliver me from the fire of hell, into which I have so many times deserved to be cast. Thou didst cry and mourn on this bed of straw to obtain for me pardon from Thy Father. Oh, how these Thy tears afflict and yet console me! They afflict me from compassion at seeing Thee, an innocent babe, suffering so much for sins not Thy own; but they console me, because Thy sufferings assure me of my salvation, and of Thy immense love for me. But, my Jesus, I will not leave Thee alone to cry and to suffer. I myself will also weep; for I alone deserve to shed tears on account of the offences I have committed against Thee. I, who have deserved hell, will not refuse any suffering whatever, so that I may regain Thy favor, O my Saviour. Forgive me, I beseech Thee; receive me once more into Thy friendship, make me love Thee, and then chastise me as Thou wilt. Deliver me from eternal punishment, and then treat me as it shall please Thee. I do not seek for pleasures in this life; he does not deserve pleasure who has had the temerity to offend Thee, O infinite Goodness. I am content to suffer all the crosses Thou shalt send me; but, my Jesus, I will love Thee still. O Mary, who didst sympathize by thy sufferings with the sufferings of Jesus, obtain for me the grace to suffer all my trials with patience. Woe to me if, after so many sins, I do not suffer something in this life! And blessed shall I be if I have the happiness to accompany thee in thy sufferings, O my sorrowful Mother, and Thee, O my Jesus, always afflicted and crucified for love of me.

Meditation VI

DECEMBER 30

JESUS SLEEPING

Very short and painful were the slumbers of the Infant Jesus. A manger was his cradle, straw was his bed, and straw his pillow; so that Jesus was constantly interrupted in his sleep by the hardness of this rough and painful little bed, and by the severe cold of the cave. Notwithstanding all this, nature succumbing to its wants, the sweet babe from time to time slept amidst his sufferings.

But the sleep of Jesus differed very much from that of other children. The slumbers of other children are useful for the preservation of life, but not for the operations of the soul, because the soul, being buried in sleep with the senses, cannot then work; but such was not the sleep of Jesus Christ: *I sleep, and My heart watcheth.*[4108] His body was asleep, but his soul was watching; because in Jesus there was united the person of the Word, who could not sleep, nor be influenced by the slumber of the senses. The Holy Infant slept therefore; but while he slept he thought of all the sufferings he was to endure for our sake during all his life and at his death. He thought of the labors he was to undergo in Egypt and in Nazareth during his miserable and despised life; he thought more particularly on the scourges, the thorns, the ignominies, the agonies, and on that miserable death that he should at last suffer upon the cross; and whilst he was sleeping he offered all this to his Eternal Father to obtain for us pardon and salvation; so that whilst our Saviour was sleeping he was meriting for us and appeasing his Father, and obtaining graces for us.

Let us now beseech him, by the merit of his blessed slumbers, to deliver us from the deadly slumber of sinners who unhappily sleep in the death of sin, forgetful of God and of his love; and to give us instead the blessed sleep of the holy spouse, of which he said, *Stir not up, nor make the beloved to wake till she please.*[4109] This is the sleep that God gives to his beloved souls, which is none other, as St. Basil says, “but the most profound oblivion of all things;”[4110] and this is when the soul forgets all earthly things, to attend only to God and to the things that concern his glory.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My beloved and holy Infant, Thou sleepest, and oh, how do Thy slumbers enamour me! With others sleep is the emblem of death; but in Thee it is the sign of eternal life, because whilst Thou art sleeping Thou art meriting for me eternal salvation. Thou sleepest; but Thy heart sleeps not, it is thinking of suffering and dying for me. Whilst Thou art slumbering, Thou art praying for me, and obtaining for me from God the eternal rest of Paradise. But before Thou dost carry me (as I hope) to repose with Thee in heaven, I desire that Thou shouldst repose forever in my soul. There was a time, O my God! when I drove Thee away from me; but I trust that, by means of knocking so ofter at the door of my heart,—now by making it afraid, now by enlightening it, now by the voice of love,—Thou hast already obtained an entrance there. This, I say, is my hope, because I feel a great confidence that I have been forgiven by Thee; I feel a great confidence that I have been forgiven by Thee; I feel a great hatred and penitence for the offences I have committed against Thee,—penitence that causes me great sorrow; but a sorrow of peace, a sorrow that comforts me and makes me hope most assuredly for pardon from Thy goodness. I thank Thee, my Jesus, and I pray Thee never again to separate Thyself from my soul. I know indeed that Thou wilt not leave me, if I do not drive Thee away; but this is the favor I ask of Thee (and I pray Thee to give me Thy assistance that I may always seek it of Thee), that Thou wouldst not permit me ever to drive Thee from me. Make me forget everything, in order to think of Thee who hast always thought of me and of my welfare. Make me always love Thee in this life, so that I may breathe forth my soul in Thy arms, united to Thee, and may repose eternally in Thee without fear of losing Thee again. O Mary, assist me in life and in death, so that Jesus may always repose in me, and that I may always repose in Jesus.

Meditation VII

DECEMBER 31

JESUS WEEPING

The tears of the Infant Jesus were very different from those of other new-born babes: these weep through pain; Jesus did not weep from pain, but through compassion for us and through love: "They weep because of suffering, Christ because of compassion,"[4111] says St. Bernard. Tears are a great sign of love. Therefore did the Jews say when they saw the Saviour weeping for the death of Lazarus: *Behold how He loved him.*[4112] Thus also might the angels have said on beholding the tears of the Infant Jesus: "Behold how he loves them."[4113] Behold how our God loves men; since for the love of them we see him made man, become an Infant, and shedding tears.

Jesus wept and offered to his Father his tears to obtain for us the pardon of our sins. "These tears," says St. Ambrose, "washed away my sins;"[4114] by his cries and tears he implored mercy for us who were condemned to eternal death, and thus he appeased the indignation of his Father. Oh, how eloquently did the tears of this divine little one plead in our behalf! Oh, how precious were they to God! It was then that the Father caused the angels to proclaim that he made peace with men, and received them into his favor: *And on earth peace to men of good will.*[4115]

Jesus wept through love, but he also wept through sorrow at the thought that so many sinners, even after all his tears and the blood he should shed for their salvation, would yet continue to despise his grace. But who would be so hard-hearted, on seeing an Infant God weeping for our sins, as not to weep also, and to detest those sins that have made this loving Saviour shed so many tears? Oh, let us not increase the sorrows of this innocent babe; but let us console him by uniting our tears to his! Let us offer to God the tears of his Son, and let us beseech him for their sake to forgive us!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My beloved Infant, whilst Thou wert weeping in the stable of Bethlehem, Thou wert thinking of me; beholding even then my sins, which were the cause of Thy tears. And have I, then, O my Jesus! instead of consoling Thee by my love and gratitude at the thought of what Thou hast suffered to save me, have I increased Thy sorrow and the cause of Thy tears? If I had sinned less, Thou wouldst have wept less. Weep, oh, weep, for Thou hast cause to weep in seeing such great ingratitude of men to Thy great love. But since Thou weepest, weep also for me; Thy tears are my hope. I also will weep for the offences I have committed against Thee, O my Redeemer! I hate them, I detest them, I repent of them with my whole heart. I weep for all those days and those wretched nights of mine in which I lived as Thy enemy and deprived of Thy beautiful face; but what would my tears avail, O my Jesus, without Thine!

Eternal Father, I offer Thee the tears of the Infant Jesus; for their sake forgive me. And Thou, my dearest Saviour, offer to him all the tears that Thou didst shed for me during Thy life, and with them appease his anger against me. I beseech Thee also, O my Love, to soften my heart by these tears, and to inflame it with Thy holy love. Oh that I could from this day forth console Thee by my love for all the pain I have caused Thee by offending Thee! Grant, therefore, O Lord! that the days that remain to me in this life may not any more be spent in offending Thee, but only in weeping for the offences I have committed against Thee, and in loving Thee with all the affections of my soul. O Mary! I beseech thee, by that tender compassion which thou didst so often feel at the sight of the Infant Jesus in tears, obtain for me a constant sorrow for the offences which I have so ungratefully been guilty of against him.

Meditation VIII

JANUARY 1

THE NAME OF JESUS[4116]

The name of Jesus is a divine name, announced to Mary on the part of God by St. Gabriel: *and thou shalt call His name Jesus.*[4117] For that reason it was called *a name above all names.*[4118] And it was also called a name in which alone salvation is found: *whereby we must be saved.*[4119]

This great name is likened by the Holy Spirit unto oil: *Thy name is as oil poured out.*[4120] For this reason, says St. Bernard, that as oil is light, food, and medicine; so the name of Jesus is light to the mind, food to the heart, and medicine to the soul.

It is light to the mind. By this name the world was converted from the darkness of idolatry to the light of faith. We who have been born in these regions, where before the coming of Christ all our ancestors were Gentiles, should all have been in the same condition had not the Messias come to enlighten us. How thankful ought we not, then, to be to Jesus Christ for the gift of faith! And what would have become of us if we had been born in Asia, in Africa, in America, or in the midst of heretics and schismatics? He who believes not is lost: *He that believeth not shall be condemned.*[4121] And thus probably we also should have been lost.

The name of Jesus is also food that nourishes our hearts; yes, because this name reminds us of what Jesus has done to save us. Hence this name consoles us in tribulation, gives us strength to walk along the way of salvation, supplies us with courage in difficulties, and inflames us to love our Redeemer, when we remember what he has suffered for our salvation.

Lastly, this name is medicine to the soul, because it renders it strong against the temptations of our enemies. The devils tremble and fly at the invocation of this holy name, according to the words of the Apostle: *That at* *the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.*[4122] He who in temptation calls upon Jesus shall not fall; and he who constantly invokes him shall not fall, and shall be saved: *Praising, I will call upon the Lord; and I shall be saved from my enemies.*[4123] And who was ever lost, who when he was tempted invoked Jesus? He alone is lost who does not invoke his aid, or who, whilst the temptation continues, ceases to invoke him.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Oh, that I had always called upon Thee, my Jesus; for then I should never have been conquered by the devil! I have miserably lost Thy grace, because in temptation I have neglected to call Thee to my assistance. But now I hope for all things through Thy holy name: *I can do all things in Him who comforts me.*[4124] Write, therefore, O my Saviour, write upon my poor heart Thy most powerful name of Jesus, so that, by having it always in my heart by loving Thee, I may have it always on my lips by invoking Thee, in all the temptations that hell prepares for me, in order to induce me to become again its slave, and to separate myself from Thee. In Thy name I shall find every good. If I am afflicted, it will console me when I think how much more afflicted Thou hast been than I am, and all for the love of me; if I am disheartened on account of my sins, it will give me courage when I remember that Thou camest into the world to save sinners; if I am tempted, Thy holy name will give me strength, when I consider that Thou canst help me more than hell can cast me down; finally, if I feel cold in Thy love, it will give me fervor, by reminding me of the love that Thou bearest me. I love Thee, my Jesus! Thou art, and I trust Thou wilt always be, my only Love. To Thee do I give all my heart, O my Jesus! Thee alone will I love! Thee will I invoke as often as I possibly can. I will die with Thy name upon my lips; a name of hope, a name of salvation, a name of love. O Mary, if thou lovest me, this is the grace I beg of thee to obtain for me,—the grace constantly to invoke thy name and that of thy Son; obtain for me that these most sweet names may be the breath of my soul, and that I may always repeat them during my life, in order to repeat them at my death with my last breath. Jesus and Mary, help me; Jesus and Mary, I love you; Jesus and Mary, I recommend my soul to you.

Meditation IX

JANUARY 2

THE SOLITUDE OF JESUS IN THE STABLE

Jesus chose at his birth the stable of Bethlehem for his hermitage and oratory; and for this purpose he so disposed events as to be born out of the city in a solitary cave, in order to recommend to us the love of solitude and of silence. Jesus remains in silence in the manger; Mary and Joseph adore and contemplate him in silence. It was revealed to Sister Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament, a discalced Carmelite, who was called the Spouse of the Infant Jesus, that all that passed in the cave of Bethlehem, even the visit of the shepherds and the adoration of the holy Magi, took place in silence, and without a word.

Silence in other infants is impotence; but in Jesus Christ it was virtue. The Infant Jesus does not speak; but oh! how much his silence says! Oh, blessed is he that converses with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, in this holy solitude of the manger. The shepherds, though admitted there but for a very short time, came out from the stable all inflamed with love to God; for they did nothing but praise and bless him: *They returned, glorifying and praising God.*[4125] Oh, happy the soul that shuts itself up in the solitude of Bethlehem to contemplate the divine mercy, and the love that God has borne, and still bears, to men! *I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart.*[4126] There the divine Infant will speak, not to the ear, but to the heart, inviting the soul to love a God who hath loved her so much. When we see there the poverty of this wandering little hermit, who remains in that cold cave, without fire, with a manger for a crib, and a little straw for a bed; when we hear the cries, and behold the tears of this innocent Child, and consider that he is our God,—how is it possible to think of anything but of loving him! Oh, what a sweet hermitage for a soul that has faith in the stable of Bethlehem!

Let us also imitate Mary and Joseph, who, burning with love, remain contemplating the great Son of God clothed in flesh, and made subject to earthly miseries,—Wisdom become an infant that cannot speak,—the Great One become little,—the Supreme One become so abased,—the Rich One become so poor,—the Omnipotent so weak. In short, let us meditate on the divine majesty shrouded beneath the form of a little Infant, despised and forsaken by the world, and who does and suffers everything in order to make himself loved by men, and let us beseech him to admit us into this sacred retreat;—there stop, there remain, and never leave it again. “O solitude,” says St. Jerome, “in which God speaks and converses familiarly with his servants;[4127]” O beautiful solitude, in which God speaks and converses with his chosen souls, not as a sovereign, but as a friend, as a brother, as a spouse! Oh, what a paradise it is to converse alone with the Infant Jesus in the little grotto of Bethlehem!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dearest Saviour, Thou art the King of Heaven, the King of kings, the Son of God; and how is it, then, that I see Thee in this cave, forsaken by all? I see no one assisting Thee but Joseph and Thy holy Mother. I desire to unite myself also to them in keeping Thee company. Do not reject me. I do not deserve it; but I feel that Thou dost invite me by Thy sweet voice, speaking to my heart. Yes, I come, O my beloved Infant! I will leave all things to pass my whole life alone with Thee, my dear little hermit, the only love of my soul. Fool that I was, I have hitherto forsaken Thee and left Thee alone, O my Jesus, whilst I was seeking miserable and empoisoned pleasures from creatures; but now, enlightened by Thy grace, I desire nothing but to live in solitude with Thee, who didst will to live Thyself in solitude on this earth: *Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?*[4128] Ah, who will enable me to fly from this world, where I have so often found my ruin,—to fly, and to come and remain always with Thee, who art the joy of paradise and the true lover of my soul? Oh, bind me, I pray Thee, to Thy feet, so that I may no longer be separated from Thee, but may find my happiness in continually keeping company with Thee! Ah, by the merits of Thy solitude in the cave of Bethlehem, give me a constant interior recollection, so that my soul may become a solitary little cell, where I may attend to nothing but to conversing with Thee; where I may take counsel with Thee in all my thoughts and all my actions; where I may dedicate to Thee all my affections; where I may always love Thee, and sigh to leave the prison of this body to come and love Thee face to face in heaven. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness, and I hope always to love Thee, in time and in eternity. O Mary, thou who canst do all things, pray to him to enchain me with his love, and not to permit me ever again to lose his grace.

Meditation X

JANUARY 3

THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE INFANT JESUS IN THE STABLE OF BETHLEHEM

There are two principal occupations of a solitary,—to pray, and to do penance. Behold the Infant Jesus in the little grotto of Bethlehem giving us the example. He, in the crib which he chose for his oratory upon earth, never ceases to pray, and to pray continually, to the Eternal Father. There he constantly makes acts of adoration, of love, and of prayer.

Before this time the divine Majesty had been, it is true, adored by men and by angels; but God had not received from all these creatures that honor which the Infant Jesus gave him by adoring him in the stable where he was born. Let us, therefore, constantly unite our adorations to those of Jesus Christ when he was upon this earth.

Oh, how beautiful and perfect were the acts of love which the Incarnate Word made to his Father in his prayer! God had given to man the commandment to love him with all his heart and all his strength; but this precept had never been perfectly fulfilled by any man. The first to accomplish it amongst women was Mary, and amongst men the first was Jesus Christ, who fulfilled it in a degree infinitely superior to Mary. The love of the seraphim may be said to be cold in comparison with the love of this Holy Infant. Let us learn from him to love the Lord our God as he ought to be loved; and let us beseech him to communicate to us a spark of that pure love with which he loved the divine Father in the stable of Bethlehem.

Oh, how beautiful, perfect, and dear to God were the prayers of the Infant Jesus! At every moment he prayed to his Father, and his prayers were all for us and for each one of us in particular. All the graces that each one of us received from the Lord, and our being called to the true faith, our having had time given us for repentance, the lights, the sorrow for sins, the pardon of them, the holy desires, the victory over temptations, and all the other good acts that we have made, or shall make, of confidence, of humility, of love, of thanksgiving, of offering, of resignation,—all these Jesus has obtained for us, and all has been the effect of the prayers of Jesus. Oh, how much do we owe him! and how much ought we not to thank him and to love him!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dear Redeemer, how much do I owe Thee! If Thou hadst not prayed for me, in what a state of ruin should I find myself! I thank Thee, O my Jesus; Thy prayers have obtained for me the pardon of my sins, and I hope that they will also obtain for me perseverance unto death. Thou hast prayed for me, and I bless Thee with my whole heart for it; but I beseech Thee not to leave off praying. I know that Thou dost continue even in heaven to be our advocate: *We have an advocate, Jesus Christ;*[4129] and I know that Thou dost continue to pray for us: *Who also maketh intercession for us.*[4130] Continue therefore to pray; but pray, O my Jesus, more particularly for me, who am more in want of Thy prayers. I hope God has already pardoned me through Thy merits; but as I have already so often fallen, I may therefore fall again. Hell does not cease, and will not cease, to tempt me, in order to make me again lose Thy friendship. Ah, my Jesus, Thou art my hope; it is Thou that must give me fortitude to resist; from Thee I seek it, and of Thee I hope for it! But I will not content myself only with the grace not to fall again; I desire also the grace to love Thee exceedingly. My death approaches. If I were to die now, I should indeed hope to be saved; but I should love Thee but little in paradise, because I have hitherto loved Thee so little. I will love Thee much in the days that remain to me, that I may love Thee still more in eternity. O Mary, my Mother! do thou also pray, and beseech Jesus for me; thy prayers are all-powerful with thy Son, who loves thee so much. Thou dost so much desire that he should be loved, beseech him to give me a great love for his goodness, and let this love be constant and eternal.

Meditation XI

JANUARY 4

THE POVERTY OF THE INFANT JESUS

O God! who would not feel compassion if he saw a little prince, the son of a monarch, born in such poverty as to be left to lie in a damp, cold cavern, not having bed, servants, fire, or clothes sufficient to warm him? Ah, my Jesus, Thou art the Son of the Lord of heaven and earth, and yet Thou liest in this cold grotto without other cradle than a manger, with nothing but straw for Thy bed, and miserable rags to cover Thee. The angels stand round Thee and sing Thy praises, but they do not relieve Thy poverty. My dear Redeemer, the poorer Thou art, the more amiable Thou dost render Thyself in our eyes, because Thou hast embraced so great a poverty for this end, to make us love Thee more. If Thou hadst been born in a palace, if Thou hadst had a cradle of gold, if Thou hadst been assisted by the first princes of the earth, Thou wouldst have acquired more respect from men, but less love; but this stable where Thou dost sleep, these miserable rags that cover Thee, this straw that serves as Thy bed, this manger that is Thy only cradle,—oh, how do they attract our souls to love Thee, because Thou hast made Thyself thus poor in order to become more dear to us! “The viler he was for me,”[4131] says St. Bernard, “the dearer he is to me.” Thou hast made Thyself poor to enrich us with Thy riches; that is, with grace and glory: *He became poor, that through His poverty you might be rich.*[4132]

The poverty of Jesus Christ was for us great riches, inasmuch as it moves us to acquire the treasures of heaven and to despise those of earth. Ah, my Jesus! this Thy poverty has induced so many saints to leave all—riches, honors, and kingdoms—in order to become poor with Thee! Oh, detach me also, my Saviour, from all affection to earthly goods, so that I may be made worthy to acquire Thy holy love, and thus to possess Thee, who art the infinite Good!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Oh that I also could say to Thee, O holy Infant, with thy dear St. Francis, “My God and my All!”[4133] and with David, *What have I in heaven? and besides Thee, what do I desire upon earth? . . . God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever;*[4134] so that from this day forth I might desire no other riches but those of Thy love, and that my heart might be no more under the dominion of the vanities of the world, but that Thou alone, my love, mightest be its only Lord. But I even now wish to begin to say it: *God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.*[4135] Miserable that I was, I have hitherto only sought after worldly goods, and have found nothing but thorns and gall. I feel more satisfaction at finding myself at Thy feet, to thank Thee and love Thee, than I have ever experienced from all my sins. One fear alone afflicts me—the fear that Thou hast not yet forgiven me; but Thy promises of forgiveness to the penitent, the thought that Thou didst make Thyself poor for the love of me, that Thou art still calling me to love Thee; the tears, the blood Thou hast shed for me, the sorrows, the ignominy, the bitter death Thou hast endured for me,—all console me, and make me hope certainly for pardon. And supposing Thou hast not forgiven me, what shall I then do? Dost Thou desire that I should repent? I repent with my whole heart of having offended Thee, o my Jesus! Dost Thou desire that I should love Thee? I love Thee more than myself. Dost Thou desire that I should give up everything? Behold, I give up all and give myself to Thee; and I know that Thou dost accept me, otherwise I should not have sorrow, nor love, nor the desire to give myself to Thee. I give myself then to Thee, and Thou hast already accepted me. I love Thee, and Thou dost also love me. Do not permit that this love between Thee and me should evermore be interrupted. O my Mother Mary! do thou obtain for me the grace that I may always love Jesus, and that I may always be loved by him!

Meditation XII

JANUARY 5

THE ABASEMENT OF JESUS[4136]

The eternal Word descends on earth to save man; and whence does he descend? *His going out is from the end of heaven.*[4137] He descends from the bosom of his divine Father, where from eternity he was begotten in the brightness of the saints. And where does he descend? He descends into the womb of a virgin, a child of Adam, which in comparison with the bosom of God is an object of horror; wherefore the Church sings, “Thou didst not abhor the Virgin’s womb.”[4138] Yes, because the Word, being in the bosom of the Father, is God like the Father—is immense, omnipotent, most blessed and supreme Lord, and equal in everything to the Father. But in the womb of Mary he is a creature, small, weak, afflicted, a servant inferior to the Father, *Taking the form of a servant.*[4139]

It is related as a great prodigy of humility in St. Alexis that, although he was the son of a Roman gentleman, he chose to live as a servant in his father’s house. But how is the humility of this saint to be compared with the humility of Jesus Christ? Between the son and the servant of the father of St. Alexis there was, it is true, some difference; but between God and the servant of God there is an infinite difference. Besides, this Son of God having become the servant of his Father in obedience to him, made himself also the servant of his creatures; that is to say, of Mary and Joseph: *And he was subject to them.*[4140] Moreover, he made himself even a servant of Pilate, who condemned him to death, and he was obedient to him, and accepted it; he became a servant to the executioners, who scourged him, crowned him with thorns, and crucified him: and he humbly obeyed them all, and yielded himself into their hands.

O God! and shall we, after this, refuse to submit ourselves to the service of so loving a Saviour, who, to save us, has subjected himself to so painful and degrading a slavery? And rather than be the servants of this so great and so loving a Lord, shall we be content to be salves of the devil, who does not love his servants, but hates them and treats them like a tyrant, making them miserable and wretched in this world and in the next? But if we have been guilty of this great folly, why do we not quickly give up this unhappy servitude? Courage, then, since we have been delivered by Jesus Christ from the slavery of hell; let us now embrace and bind around us with love those sweet chains, and hereafter obtain for us the crown of the eternal kingdom amongst the blessed in Paradise.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My beloved Jesus, Thou art the Sovereign of heaven and earth; but for the love of me Thou hast made Thyself a servant even of the executioners who tore Thy flesh, pierced Thy head, and finally left Thee nailed on the cross to die of sorrow. I adore Thee as my God and Lord, and I am ashamed to appear before Thee when I remember how often, for the sake of some miserable pleasure, I have broken Thy holy bonds, and have told Thee to Thy face that I would not serve Thee. Ah, Thou mayest justly reproach me: *Thou hast burst my bands, and Thou saidst: I will not serve.*[4141] But still, O my Saviour, Thy merits and Thy goodness, which cannot despise a heart that repents and humbles itself, give me courage to hope for pardon: *A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou will not despise.*[4142] I confess, my Jesus, that I have offended Thee greatly; I confess that I deserve a thousands hells for the sins that I have committed against Thee; chasten me as Thou seest fit, but do not deprive me of Thy grace and love. I repent above every other evil for having despised Thee. I love Thee with my whole heart. I propose from this day forth to desire to serve Thee and love Thee alone. I pray Thee bind me by Thy merits with the chains of Thy holy love, and never suffer that I see myself released from them again. I love Thee above everything, O my Deliverer, and I would prefer being Thy servant to being master of the whole world. And of what avail would all the world be to him who lives deprived of Thy grace? *My sweetest Jesus, permit me not to separate myself from Thee, permit me not to separate* *myself from Thee*.[4143] This grace I ask of Thee, and I intend always to ask it; and I beg of Thee to grant me this day the grace to repeat continually to the end of my life this prayer: My Jesus, grant that I may never again separate myself from Thy love. I ask this favor of thee also, O Mary, my Mother: help me by thy intercession, that I may never separate myself again from my God.

Meditations for the Octave of the Epiphany

Meditation I

JANUARY 6

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

Jesus is born poor in a stable; the angels of heaven indeed acknowledge him, but men abandon and forsake him on earth. Only a few shepherds come and pay him homage. But our Redeemer was desirous communicating to us the grace of his redemption, and begins therefore to mainfest himself to the Gentiles, who knew him least. Therefore he sends a star to enlighten the holy Magi, in order that they may come and acknowledge and adore their Saviour. This was the first and sovereign grace bestowed upon us,—our vocation to the faith; which was succeeded by our vocation to grace, of which men were deprived.

Behold the wise men, who immediately, without delay, set off upon their journey. The star accompanies them as far as the cavern where the holy Infant lies: on their arrival they enter; and what do they find? *They found the child with Mary.*[4144] They find a poor maiden and a poor Infant wrapped in poor swaddling-clothes, without any one to attend on him or assist him. But, lo! on entering into the little shed these holy pilgrims feel a joy which they had never felt before; they feel their hearts chained to the dear little Infant which they behold. The straw, the poverty, the cries of their little Saviour,—oh, what darts of love! oh, what blessed flames are they to their enlightened hearts! The Infant looks upon them with a joyful countenance, and this is the mark of affection with which he accepts them amongst the first-fruits of his redemption.

The holy kings then look at Mary, who does not speak—she remains silent; but with her blessed countenance that breathes the sweetness of paradise she welcomes them, and thanks them for having been the first to come and acknowledge her son (as indeed he is) for their Sovereign Lord.

See also how, out of reverence, they adore him in silence, and acknowledge him for their God, kissing his feet, and offering him their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Let us also with the holy Magi adore our little King Jesus, and let us offer him all our hearts.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O amiable Infant! though I see Thee in this cavern lying on straw poor and despised, yet faith teaches me that Thou art my God, who camest down from heaven for my salvation. I acknowledge Thee, then, for my sovereign Lord and Saviour; but I have nothing, alas! to offer Thee. I have no gold of love, because I have loved creatures; I have my own caprices, but I have not loved Thee, O amiable infinite One! I have not the incense of prayer, because I have lived in a miserable state of forgetfulness of Thee. I have no myrrh of mortification, for I have often displeased Thy infinite goodness that I might not be deprived of my miserable pleasures. What then shall I offer Thee? I offer Thee my heart, filthy and poor as it is; do Thou accept it, and change it. Thou camest into the world for this purpose, to wash the hearts of men from their sins by Thy blood, and thus change them from sinners into saints. Give me, therefore, I pray Thee, this gold, this incense, and this myrrh. Give me the gold of Thy holy love; give me the spirit of holy prayer, give me the desire and strength to mortify myself in everything that displeases Thee. I am resolved to obey Thee and to love Thee; but Thou knowest my weakness, oh, give me the grace to be faithful to Thee! Most holy Virgin, thou who didst welcome with such affection and didst console the holy Magi, do thou welcome and console me also, who come to visit thy Son and to offer myself to him. O my Mother, I have great confidence in thy intercession! Do thou recommend me to Jesus. To thee do I intrust my soul and my will; bind it forever to the love of Jesus!

Meditation II

JANUARY 7

THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

The time having now come when, according to the law, Mary had to go to the Temple for her purification, and to present Jesus to the divine Father, behold she sets out in company with Joseph. Joseph carries the two turtle-doves that they are to offer to God, and Mary carries her dear Infant: she takes the Lamb of God to offer him to the Almighty, in token of the great sacrifice that this Son should one day accomplish on the cross.

Consider the holy Virgin entering the Temple; she makes an oblation of her Son on the part of the whole human race, and says: Behold, O Eternal Father, Thy beloved only-begotten One, who is Thy Son and mine also; I offer him to Thee as a victim to Thy divine justice, in order to appease Thy wrath against sinners. Accept him, O God of mercy! have pity on our miseries; for the love of this immaculate Lamb do Thou receive men into Thy grace.

The offering of Mary is joined to that of Jesus. Behold me (says also the holy Infant), behold me, O My Father; to Thee do I consecrate my whole life; Thou hast sent me into the world to save it by my blood; behold my blood my whole self. I offer myself entirely to Thee for the salvation of the world. *He delivered Himself . . . an oblation and a sacrifice to God.*[4145]

No sacrifice was ever so acceptable to God as this which his dear Son then made to him; who had become, even from his infancy, a victim and priest. If all men and angels had offered their lives, their oblation could not have been so dear to God as was this of Jesus Christ, because in this offering alone the Eternal Father received infinite honor and infinite satisfaction.

If Jesus offers his life to his Father for the love of us, it is just that we should offer him our life and our entire being. This is what he desires, as he signified to the blessed Angela da Foligno, saying to her, “I have offered myself for thee, in order that thou shouldest offer thyself to me.”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Eternal Father, I, a miserable sinner, who have deserved a thousand hells, present myself this day before Thee, O God of infinite majesty, and I offer Thee my poor heart. But, O God, what a heart is it that I offer Thee?—a heart that has never known how to love Thee, but has, on the contrary, so often offended Thee and so often betrayed Thee; but now I offer it to Thee full of penitence, and resolved to love Thee at all costs and to obey Thee in all things. Pardon me, and draw me entirely to Thy love. I do not deserve to be heard; but Thy infant Son, who offers himself to Thee in the Temple as a sacrifice for my salvation, merits for me this grace. I offer Thee this Thy Son his sacrifice, and in this I place all my hopes. I thank Thee, O my Father, for having sent him upon the earth to sacrifice himself for me. And I bless Thee, O Incarnate Word, Lamb of God, who didst offer Thyself to die for my soul. I love Thee, my dear Redeemer, and Thee alone will I love; for I find none but Thee that has offered and sacrificed his life to save me. It makes me shed tears to think how grateful I have been to others and how ungrateful to Thee alone; but Thou willest not my death, but that I should be converted and live. Yes, my Jesus, I turn to Thee, and repent with my whole heart of having offended Thee, and of having offended my God, who has thus sacrificed himself for me. Do Thou give me life, and that life shall consist in loving Thee, the sovereign Good; make me love Thee, I ask Thee nothing more. Mary, my Mother, thou didst offer at that time thy Son in the Temple even for me; do thou offer him again for me; and beseech the Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus, to accept me for thy perpetual servant. If I am thy servant, I shall also be the servant of thy Son.

Meditation III

JANUARY 8

THE FLIGHT OF JESUS INTO EGYPT

The angel appeared to St. Joseph in a dream, and informed him that Herod was seeking the Infant Jesus to destroy his life; wherefore he said, *Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt.*[4146] Behold, then, how Jesus is no sooner born than he is persecuted unto death. Herod is a figure of those miserable sinners who, as soon as they see Jesus Christ born again in their souls by the pardon of sin, persecute him to death by returning to their sins: *They seek the Child to destroy Him.*[4147]

Joseph immediately obeys the command of the angel without delay, and gives notice of it to his holy spouse. He then takes the few tools that he can carry, in order to make use of them in his trade, and to be able in Egypt to support his poor family. Mary at the same time puts together a little bundle of clothes for the use of the holy Child; and then she goes into her cell, kneels down first before her Infant Son, kisses his feet, and then with tears of tenderness says to him, O my Son and my God, hardly art Thou born and come into the world to save men, when these men seek Thee to put Thee to death. She then takes him; and the two holy spouses, shedding tears as they go, shut the door, and the same night set out on their journey.

Let us consider the occupations of these holy pilgrims during their journey. All their conversation is upon their dear Jesus alone, on his patience and his love; and thus they console themselves in the midst of the trials and inconveniences of so long a journey. Oh, how sweet it is to suffer at the sight of Jesus suffering! O my soul, says St. Bonaventure, do thou also keep company with these three poor holy exiles; and have compassion with them in the long, wearisome, and painful journey which they are making. And beseech Mary that she will give thee her divine Son to carry in thy heart.

Consider how much they must have suffered, especially in those nights which they had to pass in the desert of Egypt. The bare earth serves them for a bed in the cold open air. The Infant weeps, Mary and Joseph shed tears of compassion. O holy faith! who would not weep at seeing the Son of God become an infant, poor and forsaken, flying across a in desert in order to escape death?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dear Jesus, Thou art the King of Heaven, but now I behold Thee as an infant wandering over the earth; tell me whom art Thou in search of? I pity Thee when I see Thee so poor and humbled; but I pity Thee more when I see Thee treated with such ingratitude by those same men whom Thou camest to save. Thou dost weep; but I also weep, because I have been one of those who in times past have despised and persecuted Thee. But now I value Thy grace more than all the kingdoms of the world; forgive me, O my Jesus! all the evil I have committed against Thee, and permit me to carry Thee always in my heart during the journey of my life to eternity, even as Mary carried Thee in her arms during the flight into Egypt. My beloved Redeemer, I have many times driven Thee out of my soul; but now I hope that Thou hast again taken possession of it. I beseech Thee, do Thou bind it to Thyself with the sweet chains of Thy love. I will never again drive Thee from me. But I fear lest I should again abandon Thee, as I have done in past times. O my Lord! let me die rather than treat Thee with fresh and still more horrible ingratitude. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness; and I will always repeat to Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee; I love Thee; and so I hope to die saying, *God of my heart, and the God that art my portion forever.*[4148] O my Jesus! Thou art so good, so worthy of being loved, oh, do Thou make Thyself loved; make Thyself loved by all the sinners who persecute Thee; give them light, make them know the love Thou hast borne them and the love that Thou deservest since Thou goest wandering about the earth as a poor Infant, weeping and trembling with cold, and seeking souls to love Thee! O Mary, most holy Virgin, O dearest Mother and companion of the sufferings of Jesus, do thou help me always to carry and preserve in my heart thy Son, in life and in death!

Meditation IV

JANUARY 9

THE DWELLING OF JESUS IN EGYPT

Jesus chose to dwell in Egypt during his infancy, that he might lead a more hard and abject life. According to St. Anselm and other writers, the holy family lived in Heliopolis. Let us with St. Bonaventure contemplate the life that Jesus led during the seven years that he remained in Egypt, as it was revealed to St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi.

The house they live in is very poor, because St. Joseph has but little wherewith to pay rent; their bed is poor, their food poor; their life, in short, is one of strict poverty, for they barely gain their livelihood day by day by the work of their hands, and they live in a country where they are unknown and despised, having there neither relatives nor friends.

This holy family does indeed live in great poverty; but oh, how well-ordered are the occupations of these three sojourners! The holy Infant speaks not with his tongue; but in his heart he speaks indeed and continually to his heavenly Father, applying all his sufferings, and every moment of his life, for our salvation. Neither does Mary speak; but at the sight of that dear Infant she meditates on the divine love, and the favor that God has conferred upon her by choosing her for his Mother. Joseph also works in silence; and at the sight of the divine Child his heart is inflamed, while he thanks him for having chosen him for the companion and guardian of his life.

In this house Mary weans Jesus: at first she fed him from her breast, now she feeds him with her hands; she holds him on her lap, takes from the porringer a little bread soaked in water, and then puts it into the sacred mouth of her Son. In this house Mary made her Infant his first little garment; and when the time was come, she took off his swaddling-clothes, and began to put on this vestment. In this house the Child Jesus began to walk and speak. Let us adore the first steps that the Incarnate Word began to take in this house, and the first words of eternal life that he began to utter. Here he began also to do the work of a little servant-boy, occupying himself in all the little services that a child can render.

Ah, weaning! ah, little garment! ah, first steps! ah, lisping words! ah, little services of the little Jesus, how do you not wound and inflame the hearts of those who love Jesus and meditate on you! Behold a God trembling and falling, a God lisping, a God become so weak that he can occupy himself in nothing but in little household affairs, and unable even to lift a bit of wood, if too heavy for the strength of a child! O holy faith, enlighten us, and make us love this good Lord, who for the love of us has submitted himself to so many miseries! It is said that on the entrance of Jesus into Egypt all the idols of the country fell down; oh, let us pray to God that he will make us love Jesus from our hearts, since in that soul where the love of Jesus enters, all the idols of earthly affections are overthrown.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Holy Infant, who livest in this country of barbarians poor, unknown, and despised, I acknowledge Thee for my God and Saviour, and I thank Thee for all the humiliations and sufferings Thou didst endure in Egypt for the love of me. By Thy manner of life there Thou dost teach me to live as a pilgrim on this earth, giving me to understand that this is not my country; but that Paradise, which Thou hast purchased for me by Thy death is my home. Ah, my Jesus, I have been ungrateful to Thee because I have thought but little of what Thou hast done and suffered for me. When I think that Thou, the Son of God, didst lead a life of such tribulation upon this earth, so poor and neglected, how is it possible that I should go about seeking the amusements and good things of the earth? Take me, I pray Thee, my dear Redeemer, for Thy companion; admit me to live always united with Thee upon this earth, in order that united with Thee in heaven, I may love Thee there, and be Thy companion throughout eternity. Give me light, increase my faith. What goods, what pleasures, what dignities, what honors! All is vanity and folly. The only real riches, the only real good, is to possess Thee, who art the infinite Good. Blessed he who loves Thee! I love Thee, O my Jesus, and I seek none other but Thee. I desire Thee, and Thou desirest me. If I had a thousand kingdoms, I would renounce them all to please Thee, “my God and my All.”[4149] If in times past I have sought after the vanities and pleasures of this world, I now detest them, and am sorry that I have done so. My beloved Saviour, from this day forward Thou shalt be my only delight, my only love, my only treasure. Most holy Mary, pray to Jesus for me; beseech him to make me rich in his love alone, and I desire nothing else.

Meditation V

JANUARY 10

THE RETURN OF JESUS FROM EGYPT

After the death of Herod, and an exile of seven years, according to the common opinion of the Doctors, during which time Jesus lived in Egypt, the angel again appeared to St. Joseph, and commanded him to take the Holy Child and his Mother and return to Palestine. St. Joseph, consoled by this command, communicates it to Mary. Before their departure, these holy spouses courteously informed the friends whom they had made in the country. Joseph then collects the few instruments of his trade, Mary her little bundle of clothes, and taking by the hand the divine Child, they set out on their journey homewards, leading him between them.

St. Bonaventure considers that this journey was more fatiguing to Jesus than was the flight into Egypt, because he was now become too large for Mary and Joseph to carry him much in their arms; but at the same time the Holy Child, at his age, was not able to make a long journey; so that Jesus was obliged through fatigue frequently to stop and rest himself on the way. But Joseph and Mary, whether they walk or sit, always keep their eyes and thoughts fixed upon the beloved little Child, who was the object of all their love. Oh, with what recollection does that happy soul travel through this life who keeps before its eyes the love and the examples of Jesus Christ!

The holy pilgrims interrupt now and then the silence of this journey by some holy conversation; but with whom and of whom do they converse? They speak only with Jesus and of Jesus. He who has Jesus in his heart speaks only with Jesus or only speaks of him.

Consider again the pain that our little Saviour must have endured during the nights of this journey, in which he had no longer the bosom of Mary for his bed, as in his flight, but the bare ground; and for his food he had no more milk, but a little hard bread, too hard for his tender age. He was probably also afflicted by thirst in this desert, in which the Jews had been in such want of water that a miracle was necessary to supply them with it. Let us contemplate and lovingly adore all these sufferings of the Child Jesus.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Beloved and adored Child, Thou dost return to Thy country; but where, O God, where dost Thou return? Thou comest to that place where Thy countrymen prepare for Thee insults during life, and then scourges, thorns, ignominy, and a cross at Thy death. But all was already present to Thy divine eyes, O my Jesus! and yet Thou comest of Thy own will to meet that Passion which men prepare for Thee. But, my Redeemer, if Thou hadst not come to die for me, I could not go to love Thee in Paradise, but must have always remained far away from Thee. Thy death hath been my salvation. But how is it, Lord, that by despising Thy grace I have again condemned myself to hell, even after Thy death, by which Thou didst deliver me from it. I acknowledge that hell is but a slight punishment for me. But Thou hast waited to pardon me. I thank Thee for it, O my Redeemer, and I repent, and detest all the offences I have committed against Thee. O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver me from hell. Ah, if I were miserable enough to damn myself, how would my torments in hell be increased by the remorse caused by my having meditated during my life on the love that Thou hast borne me! It would not be so much the fire of hell as Thy love, O my Jesus, that would be my hell. But Thou didst come into the world to kindle the fire of Thy holy love; I desire to burn with this fire, and not with that which would keep me forever separated from Thee. I repeat, therefore, O my Jesus! deliver me from hell, because in hell I cannot love Thee. O Mary, my Mother! I hear it everywhere said and preached that those who love thee and trust in thee, provided they desire to amend their lives, will not go to hell. I love thee, my Lady, and I trust in thee; I will amend my life: O Mary, do thou remember to deliver me from hell!

Meditation VI

JANUARY 11

THE DWELLING OF JESUS AT NAZARETH

St. Joseph, on his return to Palestine, heard that Archelaus reigned in Judea instead of his father, Herod, wherefore he was afraid to go and live there; and being warned in a dream, he went to live in Nazareth, a city of Galilee, and there in a poor little cottage he fixed his dwelling. O blessed house of Nazareth, I salute and venerate you! There will come a time when you will be visited by the great ones of the earth: when the pilgrims find themselves inside your poor walls, they will never be satisfied with shedding tears of tenderness at the thought that within them the King of Paradise passed nearly all his life.

In this house, then, the Incarnate Word lived during the remainder of his infancy and youth. And how did he live? Poor and despised by men, performing the offices of a common working-boy, and obeying Joseph and Mary: *and He was subject to them.*[4150] O God, how touching it is to think that in this poor house the Son of God lives as a servant! Now he goes to fetch water; then he opens or shuts the shop; now he sweeps the room; now he collects the shavings for the fire; now he labors in assisting Joseph at his trade. O wonder! To see a God sweeping! A God serving as a boy! O thought that ought to make us all burn with holy love to our Redeemer, who has reduced himself to such humiliations in order to gain our love!

Let us adore all these servile actions of Jesus, which were all divine. Let us adore, above all, the hidden and neglected life that Jesus Christ led in the house of Nazareth! O proud men, how can you desire to make yourselves seen and honored, when you behold your God, who spends thirty years of his life in poverty, hidden and unknown, to teach us the love of retirement and of an humble and a hidden life!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my adorable Infant, I see Thee an humble servant-boy, working even in the sweat of Thy brow in this poor shop. I understand it all; Thou art serving and working for me. But since Thou dost employ Thy whole life for the love of me, so grant, I pray Thee, my dear Saviour, that I may employ all the rest of my life for Thy love. Look not at my past life: it has been a life of sorrow and tears both for me and for Thee,—a life of disorder, a life of sins. Oh, permit me at least to keep Thee company during the remainder of my days, and to labor and suffer with Thee in the shop of Nazareth, and afterwards to die with Thee on Calvary, embracing that death which Thou hast destined for me. My dear Jesus, my love, suffer me not to leave and forsake Thee again, as I have done in times past. Thou, my God, art suffering such poverty in a shop, hidden, unknown, and despised; and I, a vile worm, have gone about seeking honors and pleasures, and for the sake of these have separated myself from Thee, O sovereign Good! No, my Jesus, I love Thee; and because I love Thee, I will not remain any longer separated from Thee. I renounce all things, in order to unite myself to Thee, my hidden and despised Redeemer. Thy grace gives me more happiness than have all the vanities and pleasures of the world, for which I have so miserably forsaken Thee. Eternal Father, for the merits of Jesus Christ, unite me to Thyself by the gift of Thy holy love. Most holy Virgin, how blessed wert thou, who, being the companion of thy Son in his poor and hidden life, didst make thyself so like to thy Jesus! O my Mother, grant that I also, at least during the short remainder of my life, may endeavor to become like to thee and to my Redeemer.

Meditation VII

JANUARY 12

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

St. Luke, speaking of the residence of the Infant Jesus in the house at Nazareth, writes: *And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.*[4151] As Jesus grew in age, so did he increase in wisdom: not that he went on every year acquiring a greater knowledge of things, as is the case with us; for, from the first moment of his life, Jesus was full of all divine knowledge and wisdom: *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;*[4152] but it is said that he advanced, because every day as he advanced in age he manifested more and more his sublime wisdom.

Thus it is also said that he advanced in grace with God and men; with God, because all his divine actions, though they did not render him more holy or increase his merit,—since Jesus was from the first full of sanctity and merit, of whose fulness we have received all graces: *of his fulness we have all received;*[4153]—yet, nevertheless, these operations of the Redeemer were all sufficient in themselves to increase his grace and merit.

He advanced also in grace with men, increasing in beauty and amiability. Oh, how Jesus showed himself more and more amiable every day of his youth, showing more and more every day the claims he had upon men's love! With what delight did the holy youth obey Mary and Joseph! With What recollection of mind did he work! With what moderation did he take his food! With what modesty did he speak! With what sweetness and affability did he converse with all! With what devotion did he pray! In a word, every action, every word, every motion of Jesus, inflamed with love the hearts of all those who beheld him, and especially of Mary and of Joseph, who had the good fortune to see him always at their side. Oh, how these holy spouses remained always intent on contemplating and admiring all the operations, the words, and gestures of this Man-God!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Grow, my beloved Jesus, grow continually for me; grow to teach me Thy virtues by Thy divine examples; grow to consummate the great sacrifice on the cross, on which depends my eternal salvation! Grant also, my Saviour, that I too may grow more in Thy love and grace. Miserable that I have been, I have hitherto only increased in ingratitude towards Thee who hast loved me so much. O my Jesus, grant that in future it may be just the contrary with me; Thou knowest all my weakness, it is from Thee that I must receive light and strength. Make me know the claims which Thou hast to my love. Thou art a God of infinite beauty and of infinite majesty, who didst not refuse to come down upon this earth and become man for us, and for our sakes to lead an abject and painful life, and to end it by a most cruel death. And where can we ever find an object more amiable and more worthy of love than Thee? Fool that I was, in times past I refused to know Thee, and therefore I have lost Thee. I implore Thy pardon; I am heartily sorry, and I am determined to be entirely devoted to Thee in future. But do Thou assist me; remind me constantly of the life of suffering and the bitter death Thou hast endured for the love of me. Give me life and give me strength. When the devil presents to me forbidden fruit, grant me strength to despise it; and let me not for some vile momentary good risk losing Thee, O infinite Good. I love Thee, my Jesus, who hast died for me; I love Thee, infinite Goodness; I love Thee, O Beloved of my soul. O Mary, thou art my hope; through thy intercession I hope to obtain grace to love my God from this time forth and forever, and never to love any but God.

Meditation VIII

JANUARY 13

THE LOSS OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

St. Luke relates that Mary and Joseph went every year to Jerusalem on the Feast of the Pasch, and took the Infant Jesus with them. It was the custom, says the Venerable Bede, for the Jews to make this journey to the temple, or at least on their return home, the men separated from the women; and the children went at their pleasure, either with their fathers or their mothers. Our Redeemer, who was then twelve years old, remained during this solemnity for three days in Jerusalem. Mary thought he was with Joseph, and Joseph that he was with Mary: *Thinking that He was in the company.*[4154]

The Holy Child employed all these three days in honoring his eternal Father by fasts, vigils, and prayers, and in being present at the sacrifices, which were all figures of his own great sacrifice on the cross. If he took a little food, says St. Bernard, he must have procured it by begging; and if he took any repose, he could have had no other bed but the bare ground.

When Mary and Joseph arrived in the evening at their home, they did not find Jesus; wherefore, full of sorrow, they began to seek him amongst their relatives and friends. At last, returning to Jerusalem, the third day they found him in the Temple, disputing with the Doctors, who, full of astonishment, admired the questions and answers of this wonderful child. On seeing him, Mary said, *Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.*[4155]

There is not upon earth a sorrow like to that which is felt by a soul that loves Jesus, when she fears that Jesus Christ has withdrawn himself from her through some fault of hers. This was the sorrow of Mary and Joseph, which afflicted them so much during these days; for they perhaps feared, through their humility, as says the devout Lanspergius, that they had rendered themselves unworthy of the care of such a treasure. Wherefore, on seeing him, Mary said to him, in order to express to him this sorrow: *Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.*[4156] And Jesus answered, *Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?*[4157]

Let us learn from this mystery two lessons; the first, that we must leave all our friends and relatives when the glory of God is in question. The second, that God easily makes himself found by those who seek him: *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him.*[4158]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Mary, thou weepest because thou hast lost thy Son for a few days; he has withdrawn himself from thy eyes, but not from thy heart. Dost thou not see that that pure love with which thou lovest him keeps him constantly united and bound to thee? Thou knowest well that he who loves God cannot but be loved by God, who says, *I love those love Me;*[4159] and with St. John, *He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him.*[4160] Wherefore, then, dost thou fear? Wherefore dost thou weep? Leave these tears to me, who have so often lost God through my own fault, by driving him away from my soul. O my Jesus! how could I offend Thee thus with my eyes open, when I knew that by sinning I should lose Thee? But Thou willest not that the heart that seeks Thee should despair, but rather that it should rejoice: *Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.*[4161] If hitherto I have forsaken Thee, O my Love, I will now seek, and will seek none but Thee. And provided I possess Thy grace, I renounce all the goods and pleasures of this world; I renounce even my own life, Thou hast said that Thou lovest him who loves Thee; I love Thee, do Thou also love me. I esteem Thy love more than the dominion of the whole world. O my Jesus, I desire not to lose Thee any more; but I cannot trust to myself, I turst in Thee: *In Thee, O Lord, have I put my trust; I shall not be confounded forever.*[4162] I beseech Thee, do Thou bind me to Thee, and permit me not to be again separated from Thee. O Mary! through thee have I found my God, whom I had once lost; do thou obtain for me also holy perseverance;

wherefore I will also say to thee, with St. Bonaventure, *In thee, O Lady, have I hoped; let me not be confounded forever.*[4163]

Other Mediations for the First Eight Days of Advent[4164]

Meditation I

THE LOVE THAT GOD HAS MANIFESTED TO US IN THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD

Et Verbum caro factum est.

“And the Word was made flesh.”—John, 1:14.

I

God has created us to love him in this life, and afterwards to enjoy him in the next; but we ungratefully rebelled against God by sinning, and refused to obey him, and therefore we have been deprived of divine grace, and excluded from paradise, and besides condemned to the eternal pains of hell. Behold us, therefore, all lost; but this God, moved by compassion for us, resolved to send on earth a Redeemer, who should repair our great ruin.

II

But who shall this Redeemer be? Shall it be an angel, or a seraph? No; to show us the immense love that he bears us, God sends us his own Son: “*God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.*”[4165] He sent his only-begotten Son to clothe himself with the same flesh as we sinners, but without the stain of sin; and he willed that by his sufferings and his death he should satisfy the divine justice for our crimes, and should thus deliver us from eternal death, and render us worthy of divine grace and eternal glory.

I thank Thee, O my God, on behalf of all mankind; for, if Thou hadst not thought of saving us, I and all the world would have been lost forever.

III

Let us dwell here on the infinite love which our God has shown for us in this great work of the Incarnation of the Word, ordaining that his Son should come and sacrifice his life upon the Cross by the hands of executioners, in a sea of sorrows and of shame, to obtain for us pardon and eternal salvation. O infinite goodness! O infinite mercy! O infinite love! A God to become man and die for us poor worms!

I beseech Thee, my Saviour, make me know how much Thou hast loved me, in order that, at the sight of Thy loving-kindness, I may discover my own ingratitude. Thou hast delivered me by Thy death from perdition; and I, ungrateful that I am, have turned my back upon Thee, to ruin myself again! I repent with all my heart of having done Thee this great injury. O my Saviour! forgive me and save me in future from sin; do not suffer me again to lose Thy grace. I love Thee, O my dear Jesus; Thou art my hope and my love! O Mary, Mother of this great Son, recommend to him my soul!

Meditation II

GOODNESS OF GOD THE FATHER AND OF GOD THE SON IN THE WORK OF THE REDEMPTION

> Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est.
>
> “And became incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.”—Symb. Const.

I

God created Adam, and enriched him with gifts; but man, ungrateful, offended him by sinning, and thus both he and all we, his descendants, remained deprived of divine grace and paradise. Thus, then, all mankind was lost and without a remedy. Man had offended God, and therefore was incapable of giving him an adequate satisfaction; it was necessary then that a divine person should satisfy for man. What does the eternal Father to save lost man? He sent this same Son to become man, and clothe himself with the same flesh as sinful men, in order that by his death he might pay their debts to divine justice, and thus obtain for them a restoration to divine grace.

O my God, if Thy infinite bounty had not discovered this remedy, who of us could ever have asked it, or even imagined it?

II

O God, what a subject of wonder must not this great love which God showed to rebellious man have been to the angels! What must they have said when they saw the eternal Word become man, and assume the same flesh as sinful man, insomuch that this Word incarnate appeared to the whole world in the form of a sinful man, as were all others. O my Jesus, how much do we not owe Thee, and how much more than others am I not indebted to Thee, who have offended Thee so much more than others! If

Thou hadst not come to save me, what would have become of me for all eternity? Who could have saved me from the pains that I deserve? Mayest Thou be ever blessed and praised for so great love!

III

Thus, then, the Son of God comes from heaven on earth, and becomes man; he comes to live a life of suffering; he comes to die upon the cross for the love of man; and shall men who believe all this love any other object besides this incarnate God?

O Jesus my Saviour, I will love none other but Thee; Thou alone hast loved me, Thee alone will I love. I renounce all created goods; Thou alone art sufficient for me, O immense and infinite Good! If hitherto I have displeased Thee, I am now heartily sorry for it, and would wish that this sorrow might make me die, to compensate in some measure for the displeasure I have caused Thee. Oh, permit me not in future to be ever again ungrateful for the love Thou hast borne me. No, my Jesus, make me love Thee, and then treat me as Thou pleasest. O infinite Bounty, O infinite Love, I will only live henceforth to love Thee! O Mary, Mother of mercy, this one favor I ask of thee, obtain for me the grace of always, always loving God.

Meditation III

MOTIVES OF CONFIDENCE THAT ARE GIVEN TO US BY THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD

Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?

“How hath he not also, with him, given us all things?”—Rom. 8:32.

I

Consider, my soul, that the eternal Father, in giving us his beloved Son for our Redeemer, could have given us no stronger motives for confiding in his mercy and loving his infinite bounty; for he could have given us no more certain token of the desire he has for our good, and of the immense love which he bears us, inasmuch as in giving us his Son, he has nothing left to give us. Let all men, therefore, O eternal God, praise Thy infinite charity.

II

How hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?[4166] Since God has given us his Son, whom he loved as himself, how can we fear that he will deny us any other good that we ask of him? If, therefore, he has given us his Son, he will not refuse us pardon for the offences which we have committed against him, provided we detest them; he will not refuse us the grace to resist temptations, if we implore it of him; he will not refuse us his holy love, if we desire it; he will not, finally, refuse us Paradise, if we do not render ourselves unworthy of it by falling into sin. Behold how Jesus himself assures us of this: *If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[4167]

Encouraged, therefore, O my God, by this promise, I beg of Thee, for the love of Jesus Thy Son, to pardon me all the injuries that I have done Thee; give me holy perseverance in Thy grace until death; give me Thy holy love;

may I detach myself from everything to love Thee alone, O infinite Goodness; give me Paradise in order that I may come and love Thee there with all my strength, and forever, without fear of ever ceasing to love Thee.

III

In a word, the Apostle says that, having obtained Jesus Christ, we have been enriched with every good, so that there is no grace wanting to us: *In all things you are made rich in Him . . . , so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace.*[4168]

Yes, my Jesus, Thou art every good; Thou alone sufficest me; for Thee alone do I sigh; if once I drove Thee away from me by my sins, I repent of it now with my whole heart. Forgive me, and return to me, O Lord; and if Thou art already with me, as I hope, leave me not again, or, rather, suffer me not to drive Thee away from my soul again. My Jesus, my Jesus, my treasure, my love, my All, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, and will love Thee forever. O Mary, my hope, make me always to love Jesus.

Meditation IV

HAPPINESS OF HAVING BEEN BORN AFTER THE REDEMPTION AND IN THE TRUE CHURCH

> Ubi venit plenitudo temporis, misit Deus Filium suum . . . , ut eos qui sub lege erant, redimeret.
>
> "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent His Son . . . that he might redeem them who were under the law."—Gal. 4:4.

I

How thankful should we not be to Almighty God for having caused us to be born after the great work of man's redemption was accomplished! This is what is meant by *the fulness of time,*[4169] a time blessed by the fulness of grace, which Jesus Christ obtained for us by coming into the world. Miserable should we have been if, guilty as we are of manifold sins, we had lived on this earth before the coming of Jesus Christ.

II

Oh, what a miserable state were all men in before the coming of the Messias; the true God was hardly known even in Judea, and in every other part of the world idolatry reigned, so that our forefathers worshipped stones, and wood, and devils; they worshipped innumerable false gods, but the true God was neither loved nor known by them. Even now, how many countries are there in which there are scarcely any Catholics, and all the rest of the inhabitants are either infidels or heretics! and all these are certainly in the way to be lost. What obligation do we not owe to God for causing us to be born, not only after the coming of Jesus Christ, but also in countries where the true faith reigns!

I thank Thee, O Lord, for this. Woe to me if, after so many transgressions, it had been my lot to live in the midst of infidels or heretics!

I know, O my God, that Thou willest that I should be saved; and I, miserable wretch, have willed so many times to damn myself by losing Thy favor. Have pity, my Blessed Redeemer, on my soul, which has cost Thee so much.

III

God sent His Son that He might redeem them that were under the law.[4170] The slave therefore sins, and by sinning gives himself into the power of the devil, and his own Lord comes and ransoms him by his death.

O immense love, O infinite love of God towards man! O my Saviour, if Thou hadst not redeemed me by Thy death, what would have become of me? Of me, who so many times have deserved hell by my sins. Oh, if Thou, my Jesus, hadst not died for me, I should have lost Thee forever, and there would have been no hope for me of recovering Thy grace, or of seeing Thy beautiful face in paradise. My dearest Saviour, I thank Thee; and I hope to come to heaven, there to thank Thee for all eternity. I regret above every evil that of having despised Thee in times past. In future, I purpose to choose every trouble, every kind of death, rather than offend Thee. I beseech Thee, my Jesus, let me never do so; "never let me be separated from Thee, never let me be separated from Thee."[4171] I love Thee, O infinite Goodness! and I will always love Thee in this life, and in all eternity. O my queen and advocate, Mary, keep me always under thy protection, and deliver me from sin.

Meditation V

JESUS HAS DONE AND SUFFERED EVERYTHING TO SAVE US

Dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me.

“He loved me, and delivered Himself for me.”—Gal. 2:20.

I

If, therefore, my Jesus, Thou hast for love of me embraced a laborious life and a bitter death, I may, indeed, say that Thy death is mine, Thy sufferings are mine, Thy merits are mine, Thou Thyself art mine; since for me Thou hast given Thyself up to so great sufferings. Ah, my Jesus, there is no trouble that afflicts me more than the thought that once Thou wert mine, and that I have so often willingly lost Thee. Forgive me, and unite me to Thyself; suffer me not in future ever to offend Thee again. I love Thee with all my heart. Thou willest to be all mine; and I will be entirely Thine.

II

The Son of God being true God is infinitely happy; and yet, as St. Thomas says, he has done and suffered as much for man as if he could not be happy without him.[4172] If Jesus Christ had been obliged to earn for himself upon this earth his eternal beatitude, what could he have done more than to burden himself with all our weaknesses, and assume all our infirmities, and then end his life with a death so severe and ignominious? But no, he was innocent, he was holy, and was in himself blessed; whatever he did and suffered was all to gain for us divine grace and paradise, which we had lost.

Miserable is he that does not love Thee, my Jesus, and that does not pass his life enamoured with so much goodness.

III

If Jesus Christ had permitted us to ask him for the greatest proofs of his love, who would have dared to propose to him to become a child like one of us, to embrace all our miseries, to make himself of all men the most poor, the most despised, the most ill-used, even to dying in torments the infamous death of the cross, cursed and forsaken by all, even by his own Father? But that which we should not have dared even to think of, he has both thought of and done.

My beloved Redeemer, I beseech Thee to obtain for me that grace which Thou hast merited for me by Thy death. I love Thee, and am sorry for having offended Thee. Oh, take my soul into Thy hands; I will not let the devil have dominion over it any more; I desire that it may be entirely. Thine, since Thou hast bought it with Thy blood. Thou alone lovest me, and Thee alone will I love. Deliver me from the misery of living without Thy love, and then chastise me as Thou willest. O Mary, my refuge, the death of Jesus and thy intercession are my hopes.

Meditation VI

THE SIGHT OF OUR SINS AFFLICTED JESUS FROM THE FIRST MOMENT OF HIS LIFE

Dolor meus in conspectu meo semper.

“My sorrow is continually before me.”—Ps. 37:18.

I

All the afflictions and ignominies which Jesus Christ suffered in life and death, all were present to his mind from the first moment of his life.[4173] And he offered them all every moment of his life in satisfaction for our sins. Our Lord revealed to one of his servants that every sin of men gave him during his life so much sorrow that it would have sufficed to cause his death, if his life had not been preserved in order that he might suffer more. Behold, O my Jesus! what gratitude hast Thou received from men, and especially from me. Thou hast spent thirty-three years of life for my salvation, and I have done as much as I could, as far as it depended on me, to make Thee die with sorrow, as often as I have committed sin.

II

St. Bernardine of Sienna writes that Jesus Christ “had a particular regard to every single sin.”[4174] Each of our sins was present continually to our Saviour, even from his infancy, and afflicted him grievously. St. Thomas adds[4175] that this one sorrow of knowing all the injury which resulted to the Father from every sin, and all the evil which it occasioned to us, surpassed the sorrow of all the contrite sinners that ever were, even of those who died of pure contrition; because no sinner ever arrived at loving God and his own soul as Jesus Christ has loved the Father and our souls.

Therefore, my Jesus, if no man ever loved me more than Thou hast done, it it only just that I should love Thee above all men. Since, then, I can say that Thou alone hast really loved me, so will I love Thee alone.

III

That agony which Jesus suffered in the garden at the sight of our sins, for which he had taken upon himself to satisfy, he suffered from the time he was conceived in his mother’s womb. If, therefore, Jesus Christ passed a life full of tribulations for no other reason than on account of our sins, we ought not, during our life, to afflict ourselves for any other evils than for the sins which we have committed.

My beloved Redeemer, I could wish to die of sorrow at the thought of all the bitterness that I have caused Thee during my life. My Love, if Thou lovest me, give me such a sorrow as may take away my life, and so obtain for me Thy pardon, and the grace to love Thee with all my strength. I give Thee my whole heart; and if I do not know how to give it to Thee entirely, oh, do Thou take it Thyself, and inflame it with Thy holy love. O Mary, advocate of the wretched, I recommend myself to thee.

Meditation VII

BAPTISMO HABEO BAPTIZARI; ET QUOMODO COARCTOR, USQUEDUM PERFICIATUR?

> "I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?"—*Luke,* 12:50.
>
> The Desire that Jesus had to suffer for us.

I

Jesus could have saved us without suffering; but he chose rather to embrace a life of sorrow and contempt, deprived of every earthly consolation, and a death of bitterness and desolation, only to make us understand the love which he bore us, and the desire which he had that we should love him. He passed his whole life in sighing for the hour of his death, which he desired to offer to God, to obtain for us eternal salvation. And it was this desire which made him exclaim: *I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?*[4176] He desired to be baptized in his own blood, to wash out, not, indeed, his own, but our sins. O infinite Love, how miserable is he who does not know Thee, and does not love Thee!

II

This same desire caused him to say, on the night before his death, *With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you.* By which words he shows that his only desire during his whole life had been to see the time arrive for his Passion and death, in order to prove to man the immense love which he bore him. So much, therefore, O my Jesus, didst Thou desire our love, that to obtain it Thou didst not refuse to die. How could I, then, deny anything to a God who, for love of me, has given his blood and his life?

III

St. Bonaventure says that it is a wonder to see a God suffering for the love of men; but that it is a still greater wonder that men should behold a God suffering so much for them, shivering with cold as an infant in a manger, living as a poor boy in a shop, dying as a criminal on a cross, and yet not burn with love to this most loving God; but even go so far as to despise this love, for the sake of the miserable pleasures of this earth. But how is it possible that God should be so enamoured with men, and that men, who are so grateful to one another, should be so ungrateful to God?

Alas! my Jesus, I find myself also among the number of these ungrateful ones. Tell me, how couldst Thou suffer so much for me, knowing the injuries that I should commit against Thee? But since Thou hast borne with me, and even desirest my salvation, give me, I pray Thee, a great sorrow for my sins, a sorrow equal to my ingratitude. I hate and detest, above all things, my Lord, the displeasure which I have caused Thee. If, during my past life, I have despised Thy grace, now I value it above all the kingdoms of the earth. I love Thee with my whole soul, O God, worthy of infinite love, and I desire only to live in order to love Thee, Increase the flames of Thy love, and give me more and more love. Keep alive in my remembrance the love that. Thou hast borne me, so that my heart may always burn with love for Thee, as Thy heart burns with love for me. O burning heart of Mary, inflame my poor heart with holy love.

Meditation VIII

HAURIETIS AQUAS IN GAUDIO DE FONTIBUS SALVATORIS

“You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour’s fountains.”—*Isa.* 12:3.

Three Fountains of Grace that We have in Jesus Christ.

I

We have three fountains of grace in Jesus Christ. The first is the fountain of *mercy,* in which we may purify ourselves from all the filth of our sins. For this end did our blessed Redeemer form, for our good, this fountain out of his own blood. *He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.*[4177]

My dearest Saviour, how much do I owe Thee! Thou hast done for me what no servant would have done for his master, and no son for his father. No, I cannot cease to love Thee; for Thou hast, by Thy love, entailed on me the necessity of loving Thee.

II

The second fountain is that of *love*. He that meditates on the sufferings and degradations undergone by Jesus Christ, for the love of us, from his birth even until his death, must of necessity feel himself inflamed with that blessed fire which he came on earth to enkindle in the hearts of men. Thus it is that the waters of this fountain wash, and at the same time inflame, our souls. Grant, therefore, O my Jesus! that the blood which Thou hast shed for me may not only wash away all the sins which I have committed against Thee, but may also inflame me with holy ardor towards Thee. Make me forget everything, so that I may be intent only on loving Thee, my God, who art worthy of infinite love.

III

The third fountain is that of *peace.* This is what Jesus Christ meant when he said, *If any man thirst, let him come to Me.*[4178] He that desireth peace of mind, let him come to me, who am the God of peace. The peace which the Lord gives to the souls that love him is not the peace which the world promises in the pleasures of sense or in temporal goods which do not satisfy the heart of man. The peace which God gives to his servants is true peace, perfect peace, which satisfies the heart, and surpasses all the enjoyments that creatures can afford. *But he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst forever.*[4179] He that truly loves God leaves everything, despises everything, and seeks nothing but God. “Yes, my God, I desire Thee alone, and nothing else.” There was, indeed, a time when I sought for other goods besides Thee; but when I think of the injustice which I have done Thee, in preferring so vile and fleeting goods to Thee, I am ready to die of sorrow. I acknowledge the sin I have committed, and I grieve for it with my whole heart. I acknowledge also that Thou art worthy of all my love; and therefore I repeat, and hope always to repeat in this life and in the next, “My God, my God, I desire Thee alone, and nothing more; I desire Thee alone, and nothing more.” O Mary, thou wert the first lover of this God; oh, make me partake in thy love!

Other Meditations for the Novena of Christmas

CHAPLET TO BE RECITED BEFORE EVERY MEDITATION

1. My most sweet Jesus, who wert born in a cave and wert afterwards laid in a manger upon straw, have mercy upon us. *R.* Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy upon us. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father,* etc.

2. My most sweet Jesus, who wert presented and offered by Mary in the temple, to be afterwards one day sacrificed for us upon the cross, have mercy upon us. *R.* Have Mercy, O Lord, have mercy upon us. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father,* etc.

3. My most sweet Jesus, who wert persecuted by Herod and constrained to fly into Egypt, have mercy upon us. *R.* Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy upon us. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father,* etc.

4. My most sweet Jesus, who didst dwell in Egypt for seven years, poor, unknown, and despised by that barbarous nation, have mercy upon us. *R.* Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy upon us. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father,* etc.

5. My most sweet Jesus, who didst return to Thy country to be one day crucified there in the midst of two thieves, have mercy upon us. *R.* Have mercy O Lord, have mercy upon us. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father,* etc.

6. My most sweet Jesus, who at the age of twelve years didst remain in the temple to dispute with the Doctors, and after three days wert found by Mary, have mercy upon us. *R.* Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy upon us. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father,* etc.

7. My most sweet Jesus, who didst live concealed from the world for so many years in the shop at Nazareth, serving Mary and Joseph, have mercy upon us. *R.* Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy upon us. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father,* etc.

8. My most sweet Jesus, who for three years before Thy Passion didst go about preaching and teaching the way of salvation, have mercy upon us. *R.* Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy upon us. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father,* etc.

9. My most sweet Jesus, who for the love of us didst terminate Thy life by dying on the cross, have mercy upon us. *R.* Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy upon us. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father,* etc.

Meditation I

DECEMBER 16

THE LOVE THAT GOD HAS SHOWN TO US IN BECOMING MAN

Let us consider the immense love which God showed us in becoming man in order to procure us eternal life.

Our first parent, Adam, having sinned and rebelled against God, was driven out of paradise and condemned to everlasting death with all his descendants. But behold the Son of God, who, seeing man thus lost, in order to deliver him from death offers to take upon himself human flesh, and to die condemned as a malefactor upon the cross. But, my Son, we may suppose the Father saying to him: Consider what a life of humiliation and suffering Thou wilt have to lead upon earth. Thou wilt have to be born in a cold cave, and to be laid in a manger for beasts. Thou wilt have to fly as an infant into Egypt to escape from the hands of Herod. On Thy return from Egypt Thou wilt have to live in a shop as an humble servant, poor and despised. And, finally, worn out by sufferings, Thou wilt have to give up Thy life upon a cross, insulted and forsaken by all.—Father, all this matters not, replies the Son; I am content with enduring all, provided man is saved.

What should we say if a prince were to take compassion upon a dead worm, and were to choose to become a worm himself, and to make, as it were, a bath of his own blood, to die in order to restore the worm to life? But the eternal Word has done even more than this for us; for, being God, he has chosen to become a worm like us, and to die for us, in order to purchase for us the life of divine grace which we had lost. When he saw that all the gifts he had bestowed upon us could not secure to him our love, what did he do? He became man, and he gave himself entirely to us: “*The Word was made flesh, and gave Himself for us.*”[4180]

Man by despising God, says St. Fulgentius, separated himself from God; but God, through his love for man, came from heaven to seek him. And why did he come? He came in order that man might know how much God loved him, and that thus, out of gratitude at least, he might love him in return. Even the beasts, when they approach themselves to us, make us love them; and why, then, are we so ungrateful towards a God who descends from heaven to earth to make us love him?

One day, when a priest was saying these words in Mass, *Et verbum caro factum est*—“And the Word was made flesh”—a man who was present neglected to make an act of reverence; upon which the devil gave him a blow, saying, “Ah, ungrateful man! if God had done as much for me as he has done for thee, I should remain with my face always bent down to the ground returning thanks to him.”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O great Son of God! Thou hast become man in order to make Thyself loved by men; but where is the love that men bear to Thee? Thou hast given Thy blood and Thy life to save our souls; and why are we so ungrateful to Thee, that, instead of loving Thee, we despise with such ingratitude? Alas! I myself, Lord, have been one of those who more than others have thus illtreated Thee. But Thy Passion is my hope. Oh, for the sake of that love that induced Thee to assume human flesh, and to die for me upon the cross, forgive me all the offences I have committed against Thee. I love Thee, O Incarnate Word; I love Thee, O my God; I love Thee, O Infinite Goodness; and I repent of all the injuries I have done Thee. Would that I could die of sorrow for Thee! O my Jesus! grant me the gift of Thy love; let me not live any longer ungrateful for the affliction Thou hast borne me. I am determined to love Thee always. Give me holy perseverance. O Mary, Mother of God, and my Mother, obtain for me from thy Son the grace to love him always even unto death.

Meditation II

DECEMBER 17

THE LOVE OF GOD IN BEING BORN AN INFANT

The Son of God, in becoming man for our sake, might have appeared in the world at the age of a perfect man, as Adam appeared when he was created; but, as children generally attract to themselves greater love from those who take care of them, therefore he chose to appear upon earth as an infant; and as the poorest and most abject infant that ever was born. St. Peter Chrysologus writes: “Thus did our God choose to be born; because thus did he wish to be loved.” The prophet Isaias had already predicted that the Son of God was to be born an infant, and thus to give himself entirely to us through the love that he bore us: *A Child is born to us, a Son is given to us.*[4181]

O my Jesus, my supreme and true God! what can have attracted Thee from heaven to be born in a cave, if it be not the love that Thou bearest to man? What has drawn Thee from the bosom of Thy Father to lay Thyself down in a manger? What has brought Thee down from Thy throne above the stars, to stretch Thyself on a little straw? What, from the midst of the nine choirs of angels, has placed Thee between two animals? Thou dost inflame the seraphim with holy fire, and lo, Thou art trembling with cold in this stable! Thou dost give motion to the heavens and the sun, and now Thou canst not move without being carried in some one’s arms! Thou dost provide with food both man and beast, and dost Thou now require a little milk to sustain Thy life? Thou art the delight of heaven, and now how is it that I hear Thee weep and moan? Tell me who hath reduced Thee to such misery? “Who hath done this? Love hath done it,”[4182] says St. Bernard; the love that Thou bearest to man hath done it.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O dearest Infant! tell me what Thou earnest on earth to do? Tell me whom Thou art seeking? Ah, I understand Thee now; Thou art come in order to die for me, to deliver me from hell. Thou art come to seek me, a lost sheep, in order that I may no more fly from Thee, but love Thee. Ah, my Jesus, my treasure, my life, my love, my all; if I do not love Thee, whom then shall I love? Where can I find a father, a friend, a spouse more amiable than Thou, and who has loved me more than Thou hast done? I am sorry to have been so many years in the world, and yet not to have loved Thee; yea, rather to have offended and despised Thee. Forgive me, O my beloved Redeemer; for I repent of having treated Thee thus; I am sorry for it with all my heart. Pardon me, and give me Thy grace, that I may never again separate myself from Thee, and that I may love Thee constantly during the years that remain to me this life. My love, I give myself entrily to Thee; accept me, and do not reject me, though I deserve it. O Mary, thou art my advocate; thou dost obtain by thy prayers whatever thou wilt from thy Son; beg of him to forgive me, and to give me holy perseverance unto death.

Meditation III

DECEMBER 18

THE LIFE OF POVERTY WHICH JESUS LED EVEN FROM HIS BIRTH

It was ordained by God that at the time when his Son was born on this earth the decree of the emperor should be promulgated, obliging every one to go and enroll himself in the place of his birth. And thus it happened that Joseph had to go with his spouse to Bethlehem to enroll himself according to the decree of Cæsar. And now, the time of her delivery having arrived, Mary, having been driven from the other houses, and even from the common asylum for the poor, was obliged to remain that night in a cave, and there brought forth the King of Heaven. It is true that, if Jesus had been in Nazareth, he would equally have been born in a state of poverty; but then he would at least have had a dry room, a little fire, warm clothes, and more comfortable cradle. But no, he chose to be born in this cold cavern without a fire to warm him; he chose to have a manger for a cradle, and a little prickly straw for a bed, in order that he might suffer more.

Let us, then, enter into the cave of Bethlehem; but let us enter there with faith. If we go there without faith, we shall see nothing but a poor infant, who moves us to compassion at beholding him so beautiful, shivering and crying with cold, and with the prickling of the straw on which he lies. But if we enter in with faith, and consider that this Child is the Son of God, who for the love of us has come down to this earth and suffered so much to pay the penalty of our sins, how can it be possible not to thank him and love him?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my sweet Infant! how is it possible that, knowing how much Thou hast suffered for me, I can have been so ungrateful to Thee, and offended Thee so often? But these tears which Thou sheddest, this poverty which Thou hast chosen for the love of me, make me hope for the pardon of all the offences that I have committed against Thee. I repent, my Jesus, of having so often turned my back upon Thee; and I love Thee above all things, "my God and my All."[4183] My God, from this day forth Thou shalt be my only treasure and my only good. I will say to Thee, with St. Ignatius of Loyola, "Give me Thy love, give me Thy grace, and I am sufficiently rich." I wish for, I desire nothing else. Thou alone art sufficient for me, my Jesus, my life, my love.

Meditation IV

DECEMBER 19

THE LIFE OF HUMILITY WHICH JESUS LED EVEN FROM HIS INFANCY

All the marks that the angel gave to the shepherds to find the Saviour, who was just born, were marks of humility: *And this shall be a sign unto you; shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger.*[4184] This shall be the sign, said the angel, to find the newborn Messias: you will find him an infant, wrapped in poor ragged clothes, in a stable, lying on straw in a manger for animals. Thus would the King of Heaven, the Son of God, be born, because he came to destroy the pride which had the cause of man's ruin.

The prophets had already foretold that our Redeemer should be treated as the vilest man upon earth, and overwhelmed with insults. How much contempt had not Jesus to suffer from men! He was treated as a drunkard, as a magician, as a blasphemer, and a heretic. How many affronts did he endure during his Passion! He was forsaken by his own disciples; even one of them sold him for thirty pieces of silver, and another denied having ever known him. He was led through the streets bound like a criminal, scourged like a slave, treated like a madman, as a mock king; struck, spit upon in the face; and at length he was put to death on a cross, suspended between two thieves, as the greatest malefactor in the world.

Thus, says St. Bernard, the noblest of men is treated like the vilest of all. "But, my Jesus," adds the saint, "the viler Thou art, the dearer to me."[4185] The more Thou appearest to me humbled and despised, the more dear and worthy of love dost Thou become to me.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my sweet Saviour! Thou hast embraced so much contempt for the love of me, and I have not been able to bear a word of insult without thinking immediately of revenging myself of it,—I who so often have deserved to be trodden underfoot by the devils in hell! I am ashamed of appearing before Thee, a proud sinner that I am. O Lord! do not drive me from Thy presence, as I deserve. Thou hast said that Thou couldst not despise a heart that repents and humbles itself: I repent of all the offences I have committed against Thee. Forgive me, my Jesus; for I will not offend Thee any more. Thou hast suffered so many injuries for my sake, I will for Thy sake bear with all the injuries that may be offered me. I love Thee, my Jesus, despised for my sake; I love Thee, my Good, above every other good. Give me Thy help, that I may always love Thee, and suffer every insult for love of Thee. O Mary! recommend me to thy Son; pray to Jesus for me.

Meditation V

DECEMBER 20

THE LIFE OF SORROW WHICH JESUS LED EVEN FROM HIS BIRTH

Jesus Christ could have saved man without suffering and without dying; but no, he chose a life full of tribulations, in order to make us know how much he loved us. Therefore the prophet Isaias called him the Man of sorrows,[4186] because the life of Jesus Christ was to be a life full of sorrows. His Passion did not commence at the time of his death, but from the commencement of his life.

Behold him, as soon as he is born, laid in a stable, where for Jesus everything is a torment. His sense of smelling is tormented by the stench of the dung of the beasts that are lying there. His sense of touch is tormented by the pricking of the straw that serves him for a bed. Soon after his birth he is obliged to fly into Egypt, where he passed several years of his childhood poor and despised; the life which he led afterwards in Nazareth was not much better. Behold him at length terminating his life in Jerusalem, dying on cross by dint torments.

Thus, then, the life of Jesus was one continual suffering, and indeed a double suffering; for he had constantly before his eyes all the sorrows would afflict him until the day of his death. Sister Mary Magdalene Orsini, complaining one day before the crucifix, said to him: “O Lord, Thou didst remain on the cross for three hours, but I have suffered this pain for several years.” But Jesus answered her: “Oh, ignorant that thou art, what dost thou say? I suffered even from my Mother’s womb all the pains of my life and my death.” But all these sufferings did not so much afflict Jesus Christ—because he chose voluntarily to suffer them—as did the sight of our sins and our ingratitude for his great love. St. Margaret of Cortona was never satisfied with lamenting over the offences committed against God; wherefore her confessor said to her one day: “Margaret, cease crying, because God has already forgiven thee.” But she replied: “Ah, Father, how can I cease crying, when I know that my sins kept Jesus Christ in a state of affliction all his life?”

AFFECTION AND PRAYERS

O my sweet Love, have I then by my sins kept Thee in a state of affliction all Thy life long? Oh, tell me, then, what I can do, in order that Thou mayest forgive me; for I will leave nothing undone. I repent, O sovereign Good, of all the offences I have committed against Thee; I repent, and love Thee more than myself. I feel a great desire to love Thee; it is Thou that givest me this desire; give me, therefore, strengeth to love Thee ardently. It is also love Thee much. Oh, remind me constantly of the love Thou hast borne me, in order that my soul may always burn with the love of Thee; that it may think of Thee alone, desire Thee alone, and strive to please Thee alone. O God of love, I, who once was the slave of hell, now give myself entirely to Thee. Accept me in Thy mercy, and bind me with Thy love, my Jesus, from this day forth. I will love Thee in life; and in loving Thee I will die. O Mary, my Mother and my hope, help me to love thy dear Jesus and mine; this favor alone I desire and hope from thee.

Meditation VI

DECEMBER 21

THE MERCY OF GOD IN COMING DOWN FROM HEAVEN TO SAVE US BY HIS DEATH

St. Paul says, *The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared*.[4187] When, therefore, the Son of God made Man appeared upon earth, then was seen how great the goodness of God was towards us. St. Bernard writes that the power of God appeared first in the creation of the world, and his wisdom in sustaining it; but his mercy appeared to a still greater degree when he took human flesh to save lost man by his sufferings and death. And what greater mercy could the Son of God show us than to take upon him pains we have deserved?

Behold him a new-born infant, weak, and wrapped in swaddling-clothes in a manger; not able either to move or feed himself, he requires for his sustenance that Mary should feed him with a little milk. Behold him afterwards in the judgment-hall of Pilate, bound to a column by cords from head to foot. Behold him in the journey to Calvary, falling down as he goes along the road through weakness and the weight of the cross that he carries. Behold him finally nailed to that infamous tree, whereon he finishes his life by dint of suffering.

Jesus Christ wished to gain all the affections of our hearts by his love for us, and therefore he would not send an angel to redeem us, but he would come himself to save us by his Passion. If an angel had been our redeemer, man must have divided his heart, loving God as his Creator, and the angel as his redeemer; but God, who desired the whole heart of man, as he was his Creator, chose also to be his Redeemer.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my dear Redeemer; where should I be now, if Thou hadst not borne with me with so much patience, but hadst condemned me to death whilst yet in sin? Since, then Thou hast hitherto waited for me, my Jesus, forgive me speedily, before death surprises me whilst I am guilty of so many offences against Thee. I repent, O sovereign Good, of having thus despised Thee; I should like to die of sorrow for sins. Thou canst not forsake a soul that seeks Thee; if I have hitherto neglected Thee, I will henceforth seek Thee and love Thee. Yes, O my God! I love Thee above all things; I love Thee more than myself. Help me, Lord, to love Thee always during the remainder of my life; I ask nothing more; I ask this, and I hope it of Thee. Mary, my hope, do thou pray for me; if thou prayest for me, I am sure of grace.

Meditation VII

DECEMBER 22

THE JOURNEY OF INFANT JESUS TO EGYPT

The Son of God came from heaven to save mankind; but as soon as he was born, they began to persecute him even until death. Herod, fearing that this Infant would deprive him of his kingdom, tried to put him to death; wherefore St. Joseph was advised by the angel in a dream to take Jesus with his Mother and to fly into Egypt. Joseph promptly obeyed, and informed Mary of it; so he took the few implements of his trade that he possessed, in order that they might serve him to gain a livelihood in Egypt for himself and his poor family. Mary, on her part, added a small packet of clothes that were to serve for the Holy Infant; and then, drawing near to the crib, she said with tears to her sleeping child, "O my Son and my God, Thou art come down from heaven to save men, and hardly art Thou born when they seek Thee to take away Thy life." She then took him, and, continuing to weep, in the same night she and Joseph set off on their journey.

Let us consider how much these holy pilgrims must have suffered whilst they were making so long a journey, deprived of every comfort. The Infant was not yet able to walk; therefore first Mary and then Joseph were obliged by turns to carry him in their arms. During their journey through the desert of Egypt, their only bed at night was the bare earth in the open air. The Infant weeps with the cold, and Joseph and Mary weep also from compassion. And who would not weep, in seeing the Son of God, poor and persecuted, wandering about on the earth, that he may not be killed by his enemies?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, dearest Infant, Thou dost weep; and well mayest Thou weep, in seeing Thyself so persecuted by those men whom Thou hast so much loved. Alas, my God, I also have persecuted Thee by sins; but now I love Thee more than myself; and there is no sorrow that afflicts me more than the remembrance that I have despised Thee, my sovereign Good. Oh, forgive me, my Jesus, and permit me to carry Thee with me in my heart in all the journey of life that I have yet to make, and then to enter together with Thee into eternity. I have yet to make, and then to enter together with Thee into eternity. I have so often driven Thee from my soul by offending Thee; but now I love Thee above everything, and I repent above every other evil of having offended Thee. My beloved Lord, I will never leave Thee more; but do Thou give me strength to resist temptations; permit me not to separate myself any more from Thee; let me rather die than ever again lose Thy favor. O Mary, my hope, make me always live and die in the love of God.

Meditation VIII

DECEMBER 23

THE SOJOURN OF THE INFANT JESUS IN EGYPT AND IN NAZARETH

Our blessed Redeemer passed his first infancy in Egypt, leading there for seven years a life of poverty and contempt. Joseph and Mary were both strangers and unknown there, having there neither relatives nor friends; and they could hardly earn their daily bread by the labor of their hands. Their cottage was poor, their bed was poor, and their food was poor. In this miserable hut Mary weaned Jesus. First she had fed him from her breast; and afterwards with her hands she took from the porringer a little bread soaked in water, and then she put it in the sacred mouth of her Son. In this cottage she made him his first little garment; she took off his swaddling-clothes and began to dress him. In this cottage the Child Jesus began to take his first steps; but he kept falling many times and trembling, as it happens to other children. Here he began to utter his first words, but in stammering. O wonder! to what has not God reduced himself for the love of us! A God trembling and falling as he walks! a God stammering whilst he speaks!

Not unlike this was the poor and object life Jesus led on his return from Egypt to the house of Nazareth. Until the age of thirty he held no other office than that of a simple shop-boy, being obedient to Joseph and Mary. *And he was subject to them.*[4188] Jesus went to fetch the water; Jesus opened and shut up the shop; Jesus swept the house; he collected the fragments of wood for the fire, and worked all day, helping Joseph in his labors. O wonder! A God serving as a boy! a God sweeping the house! a God working and sweating to plane a piece of wood! And who is this? The omnipotent God, who by a nod created the world, and can destroy it when he pleases! Ought not the mere thought of this to move our hearts to love him? How sweet it must have been to observe the devotion with which Jesus said prayers, the patience with which he labored, the promptitude with which he obeyed, the modesty with which he took his food, and the sweetness and affability with which he spoke and conversed! Oh, every word, every action of Jesus was so holy that it filled every one with love for him; but especially Mary and Joseph, who were constantly observing him!

Meditation IX

DECEMBER 24

THE BIRTH OF THE INFANT JESUS IN THE CAVE OF BETHLEHEM

The edict of the Roman emperor having gone forth, by which every one was to go and enroll himself in his own country, Joseph and his spouse Mary departed, to go and enroll themselves in Bethlehem. O God! how much must the Blessed Virgin have suffered in this journey, which of four days, over mountainous roads, and in the winter, with cold, wind, and rain!

As soon as they arrived there, the time of her delivery was at hand; wherefore Joseph went about the town looking for a lodging, where Mary could bring forth her child. But, because they are poor, they are driven away by every one; they are even driven from the inn where the other poor had been received. They went away therefore from the town in the night; and having found a cave, Mary entered in there. But Joseph said to her: “My spouse, how can you pass the night in this damp, cold place? Do you see that this is a stable for animals?” But Mary answered: “O my Joseph! it is nevertheless true that this shed is the royal palace in which the Son of God chooses to be born.”

And behold, the hour of the birth being come, whilst the Holy Virgin was kneeling in prayer, she saw all at once the cave illuminated by a brilliant light; she cast her eyes upon the ground, and beheld the Son of God already born, a tender infant, crying and trembling with cold: whereupon she first adores him as her God; she then places him in her bosom, and wraps him in the poor swaddling-clothes which she had with her; and, finally, she lays him on a little straw in the manger. Behold, how the Son of the eternal Father chose to be born for the love of us.

St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi says that the souls enamoured of Jesus Christ ought to kneel in spirit at the feet of the Holy Child, and perform for him the same office that the beasts of the stable of Bethlehem did, which warmed Jesus with their breath; they should, therefore, warm him also with the sighs of love.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my adorable Infant! I should not have the boldness to prostrate myself at Thy feet, if I did not know that Thou Thyself invitest me to approach Thee. I am he who by my sins have caused Thee to shed so many tears in the stable of Bethlehem. But since Thou camest upon earth to forgive repentant sinners, forgive me also; for I repent with all my heart of having despised Thee, my Saviour, my God, who art so good, and hast loved me so much. Thou dost dispense great graces to so many souls during this sacred night; do Thou, therefore, console my soul also. The grace I desire is the grace to love Thee from this day forth with my whole heart. Oh, inflame me wholly with Thy holy love! I love Thee, my God, become a child for me. Oh, permit me not ever to cease from loving Thee. O Mary, my Mother, thou canst do all things by thy prayers; I ask thee only this, to pray to Jesus for me.

ANOTHER MEDITATION FOR THE FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION

I

Behold the eternal Father, having sent his Son to suffer and die for us, commands that on this day he should be circumcised, and should begin to shed his divine blood, which he was to shed for the last time on the day of his death upon the cross in a sea of contumely and sorrow. And wherefore? In order that this innocent Son should thus pay the penalties which we have deserved. “O admirable,” sings the Holy Church, “admirable condescension of divine pity towards us! O inestimable love of charity! to redeem Thy servant Thou hast given Thy Son to death!”

O eternal God, who could ever have bestowed upon us this infinite gift, but Thou who art infinite goodness and infinite love? O my Lord, if in giving me Thy Son Thou hast given me the dearest treasure Thou hast, it is but right that I should give myself entirely to Thee. Yes, my God, I give Thee my whole self; accept of me, I pray Thee, and let me never depart from Thee again.

II

Behold, on the other hand, the divine Son, who, full of humility and love towards us, embraces the bitter death destined for him in order to save us sinners from eternal death, and willingly begins on this day to make satisfaction for us to the divine justice with the price of his blood. *He humbled Himself,* says the Apostle, *becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.*[4189]

Thou, therefore, O my Jesus, hast accepted death for my sake; what, then, shall I do? shall I continue to offend Thee by my sins? No, my Redeemer, I will no longer be ungrateful to Thee. I am sorry from my heart that I have caused Thee so much bitterness in times past. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness, and for the future I will never cease to love Thee.

III

Our Redeemer said, *Greater love can no man have than to lay down his life for his friends.*[4190] But Thou, O my Jesus, says St. Paul, hast shown greater love than this towards us, by giving Thy life for us who Thy enemies.

Behold one of them, O Lord, at Thy feet. How many times have I, a miserable sinner, renounced Thy friendship because I would not obey Thee! I now see the evil I have done; forgive me, O my Jesus. Would that I could die of sorrow for my sins! I now love Thee with my whole soul, and I desire nothing else but to love Thee and to please Thee. O Mary, Mother of God and my Mother, pray to Jesus for me.

ANOTHER MEDITATION FOR THE FEAST AT THE EPIPHANY

I

The Son of God is born humble and poor in a stable. There indeed the angels of heaven acknowledge him, singing, *Glory to God in the highest;*[4191] but the inhabitants of the earth, for whose salvation Jesus was born, leave him neglected: only a few shepherds come acknowledge him, and confess him to be their Saviour. But our loving Redeemer desired from the very beginning to communicate to us the grace of redemption, and therefore he begins to make himself known even to the Gentiles, who neither knew him nor expected him. For this purpose he sends the star to give notice to the holy Magi, enlightening them at the same time with internal light, in order that they might come and acknowledge and adore him as their Redeemer. This was the first and sovereign grace bestowed upon us; our calling to the true faith.

O Saviour of the world, what would have become of us if Thou hadst not come to enlighten us? we should be like our forefathers, who worshipped as gods animals, stones, and wood, and consequently we should have been all damned. I give Thee thanks to-day on the part of all men

II

Behold, the Magi without delay set out on their journey; and by means of the star they arrive at the place where the Holy Infant is lying: *They found the child with Mary.*[4192] They find there only a poor maiden, and a poor infant wrapped in poor swaddling-clothes; on entering into that abode, which was a stable for beasts, they feel an interior joy, and their hearts are drawn towards this sweet infant. That straw, that poverty, those cries of their Infant Saviour, are all darts of love and fire to their enlightened hearts.

Yes, my Infant Jesus, the more humbled and poor I behold Thee, the more dost Thou inflame me with Thy love.

III

The Infant looks upon these holy pilgrims with a joyful countenance, and thus shows that he accepts these first-fruits of his redemption. The divine Mother is also silent, but by her smiling looks welcomes them, and thanks them for the homage done to her Son. They adore him also in silence, and acknowledge him for their Saviour and their God, offering him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

O Jesus, my Infant King! I also adore Thee, and offer Thee my miserable heart. Accept of it and change it. Make it wholly Thine own, so that it may love nothing but Thee. My sweet Saviour, save me, and let my salvation be to love Thee always and without reserve. O Mary, most holy Virgin! I hope for this grace from thee.

ANOTHER MEDITATION FOR THE FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS[4193]

I

The name of Jesus was given to the Incarnate Word not by men, but by God himself: *And his name shall be called Jesus,*[4194] that is, Saviour. A name of gladness, a name of hope, a name of love.

A name of *gladness,* because if the remembrance of past transgressions afflicts us, this name comforts us, reminding us that the Son of God became man for this purpose, to make himself our Saviour.

My beloved Saviour, Thou camest down from heaven to seek me, and I, a miserable sinner, have turned my back upon Thee and despised Thy grace and Thy love! But, notwithstanding this, Thou willest my salvation, O my Jesus! and I thank Thee for it and love Thee.

II

A name of *hope,* because he that prays to the Eternal Father in the name of Jesus may hope for every grace he asks for: *If you ask Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[4195]

O my God! trusting to this promise, in the name of Jesus I ask of Thee the pardon of my sins, holy perseverance, and the gift of Thy love. Grant, above all, that the remainder of my life may not be spent in displeasing Thee, but only in loving Thee and doing Thy will, as Thou deservest that I should do.

III

A name of *love.* St. Bernardine of Sienna says that the name of Jesus is a sign that represents to us how much God has done for the love of us. For the name of Jesus brings to our remembrance all the sufferings which Jesus has endured for us in his life and at his death. Wherefore a devout writer says to him, “O Jesus! how much hath it cost Thee to be Jesus,—that is to say, my Saviour!”[4196]

O my Jesus! I beseech Thee, do Thou write Thy name on my poor heart and on my tongue, in order that when I am tempted to sin, I may resist by invoking Thee; so that if I am tempted to despair, I may trust in Thy merits; and that if I feel myself tepid in loving Thee, Thy name may inflame my heart at the recollection of how much Thou hast loved me. Thy name, then, will always be my defence, my comfort, and the fire that shall keep me always inflamed with Thy love. Make me, therefore, always to call Thee my Jesus, and to live and die with Thy holy name on my lips, saying even with my last breath, “I love Thee, my Jesus; my Jesus, I love Thee.” O Mary, my Queen! make me when I am dying invoke thee continually, together with thy Son Jesus.

HYMNS

I

ODE ON THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

WHEN Jesus first appeared on earth
A babe in Bethlehem,
The winter midnight of his birth
Did fair as noontide seem;
Ne’er shone the stars so bright
As on that wondrous night:
Swift to the East the brightest of them all
Darts through the sky, the Magi kings to call.
Awakened by th’ unwonted light,
The startled songster birds
Broke the stillness of the night
With songs like angels’ words;
While chirping in the field,
The grasshoppers revealed
The joy of earth: “Jesus is born!” they cried;
“Our God is born!” the warbling birds replied.
Fresh, as when washed by summer showers,
Now bud the roses sweet;
And thousand, thousand fragrant flowers
The Infant Saviour greet;
While e’en the arid hay
That in the manger lay
Decked out with leaf and bloom the abode,
And kissed the infant members of its God.
In fair Engaddi’s flowery clime
Now blooms the fragrant vine,

And ripening grapes, ere nature’s time,
In purple clusters twine.
Sweet Babe! divinely fair!
Thou art Love’s cluster rare!
Coolness to burning lips Thou dost impart,
And warmth of love divine to frozen heart.
Now gentle peace reigned far and wide,
In joy and liberty;
The sheep and lion side by side
Were pastured happily;
The kid, with frolic gay,
Near tiger fierce can play,
And ox with savage bear secure from harm,
And lambkin near the wolf without alarm.
Joy, too, awoke at Jesus’ birth,
And roamed creation free,
In heaven, in every tribe of earth,
O’er every land and sea;
And many a sleeper smiled
As when a little child,
And felt his heart rebounding in his breast,
While dreams of gladness mingled with his rest.
The watchful shepherds kept by night
The flocks of Bethlehem.
When lo! an angel clothed in light
Appeared, and said to them,
“Good shepherds! do not fear,
Our gladsome tidings hear;
For peace and joy upon the world arise,
And sinful earth becomes a paradise!
“To you this day in Bethlehem
A Saviour king is born;
The long-expected,—to redeem
And save a world forlorn.
Then haste, and you will find

The Saviour of mankind,
An infant, swathed, and lying in a stall,
Amongst the poor, the poorest one of all."
The angel choirs in glittering throng
From heaven to earth descend,
And in one sweet melodious song
Their countless voices blend.
"Glory to God above!
Born is the King of Love!
Peace be, on earth, to men who have good will,
Let grateful concerts earth and heaven fill!"
Each shepherd's heart within his breast
Bounded with love inflamed,
And eagerly unto the rest
His ardor thus proclaimed:
"Why longer thus delay?
Come, haste, away, away!
For ah! I languish with desire untold
My Infant God and Saviour to behold!"
The shepherds o'er the hill-top hie,
Like herd of startled deer;
With joy they soon the cave descry,
And to the crib draw near;
They see that Infant sweet,
With Mary at his feet,
And looks of love all beaming from his eyes
Appear like rays of bliss from paradise.
Astonished, raptured, and enchained
At this great sight they saw,
Long time the shepherds thus remained
In solemn silent awe;
Then sweet and loving sighs
Deep from their hearts arise,
While mingled tears and words their love confess,
And in a thousand fervent acts express.

Then entering the poor abode,
With knees devoutly bent.
They humbly to the Infant God
Their simple gifts present;
And Jesus does not scorn
The poor and lowly-born,
But raising up to them his tiny hand,
He smiles a blessing on this humble band.
Then do the flames of heavenly fire,
Which in their bosoms glow,
Such tender confidence inspire
As love alone can know.
They venture to embrace
That Child of heavenly grace,
And on his hands and feet—O happiness!—
A thousand times their fervent lips they press.
Then in their pipes these joyful swains
Such heavenly music breathed,
And rivalling angelic strains,
With tuneful Mary wreathed
In sweetest harmony
Such soothing lullaby,
That slumber o’er the infant eyelids crept,
And Jesus closed his lovely eyes, and slept.
The lullaby these shepherds blest
To Jesus sung was this;
Which gently, softly, lulled to rest
The Infant God of bliss.
But while I now repeat
This cradle-song so sweet,
Think that with them beside the crib you kneel,
And pray the ardors of their love to feel.
“Gentle slumber, from above,
Hush to sleep your heavenly king,
Born an Infant for our love!

Hasten, sleep, soft slumbers bring!
“Lovely Jewel of my heart!
Would that I could be the sleep,
Softly, swiftly, to impart
Closing eyes and slumbers deep.
“But, if love of men to gain,
Thus a babe Thou deign’st to be,
Love alone can sing the strain,
Which can slumbers bring to Thee!
“Since, then, love has power on Thee.
Lo! my heart and soul are Thine!
Yes! I love Thee, love—but see!—
Sleep has closed those eyes divine.
“Thee, my God, alone I love!
Treasure! Beauty! Love, I . . .”
Then breaking off their loving strain,
All happy and content,
They hastened to their flocks again,
Rejoicing as they went;
But such a heavenly fire,
So ardent a desire
Of this dear Infant in their bosoms burns
That to their thoughts he evermore returns.
In hell alone, where mortal hate,
Despair, and terror dwell,
And in the hearts as obstinate
As demons loosed from hell,
The splendors of that night
Awakened strange affright;
Hardened in guilt, they trembled with dismay;
They hate the light which shows to heaven the way.
Jesus! Thou art a Sun of Love,
Whence beams of mercy dart;
Thy rays enlighten from above,
And warm the sinner’s heart.

Though black and hard his soul,
As changed to earthy coal,
Yet if repentant once he turns to Thee,
Thou show’st still more Thy loving clemency.
But, sweetest child, ah! Jesus, say,
Why flow those infant tears?
Yes, ’tis that I may wash away,
My sins of bygone years!
Alas! what have I done?
Unkind, ungrateful one!
I sinned, I sinned, yet still Thou lovedst me:
Would I had died ere I offended Thee!
Oh for a fountain flowing o’er
With tears both night and day,
My sins unnumbered to deplore,
And weep them all away
To bathe my Infant’s feet,
And by my sobs entreat
His mercy! Then, oh, grant me once to hear
The word *Thou art forgiven; do not fear!*
Thrice blest, thrice happy should I be
With this too favored lot!
All else on earth would seem to me
Not worth one care, one thought.
Thou Hope of the distressed,
Hear, Mary, my request!
Cease not to pray for this poor sinful one,
Who asks to love once more thy Blessed Son!

II

THE MADONNA’S LULLABY

Mary sings, the ravished heavens
Hush the music of their spheres;
Soft her voice, her beauty fairer

Than the glancing stars appears:
While to Jesus, slumbering nigh,
Thus she sings her lullaby:
“Sleep, my Babe, my God, my Treasure,
Gently sleep; but ah! the sight
With its beauty with delight;
I am dying with delight;
Thou canst not Thy mother see,
Yet Thou breathest flames to me.
“If within your lids unfolded,
Slumbering eyes, you seem so fair;
When upon my gaze you open,
How shall I your beauty bear?
Ah! I tremble when you wake,
Lest my heart with love should break.
Cheeks than sweetest roses sweeter,
Mouth where lurks a smile divine,
Though the kiss my Babe should waken.
I must press those lips to mine.
Pardon, Dearest, if I say
Mother’s love will take no nay.”
As she ceased, the gentle Virgin
Clasped the Infant to her breast,
And, upon his radiant forehead
Many a loving kiss impressed,
Jesus woke and on her face
Fixed a look of heavenly grace.
Ah! that look, those eyes, that beauty,
How they pierce the Mother’s heart!
Shafts of love from every feature
Through her gentle bosom dart.
Heart of stone! can I behold
Mary’s love, and still be cold?
Where, my soul, thy sense, thy reason?
When will these delays be o’er?

All things else, how fair so ever,
Are but smoke: resist no more!
Yes! ’tis done! I yield my arms
Captive to those double charms.
If, alas, O heavenly beauty!
Now so late those charms I learn,
Now at least, and ever, ever
With thy love my heart will burn,
For the Mother and the Child,
Rose and Lily undefiled.
Plant and fruit, and fruit and blossom.
I am theirs, and they are mine;
For no other prize I labor,
For no other bliss I pine.
Love can every pain requite,
Love alone is full delight.

III

ST. JOSEPH ADDRESSING THE DIVINE CHILD JESUS

Since Thou the name of Father hast bestowed
On me, my Jesus, let me call Thee Son.
My Son! I love—I love Thee; yes, my God!
Forever will I love Thee, dearest One!
Thou art my God! I humbly Thee adore;
But, as my Son, ah! bid me kiss Thy face,
And make my heart remain for evermore
Close bound with sweetest chains in Thy embrace!
Since Thou hast deigned to choose me here below
The nurse and guardian of Thy life to be,
My sweetest Love! my Good! ah! let me know
What willest Thou?—what dost Thou ask of me?
All, all I am, to Thee I now resign;
My love I consecrate to Thee alone;
And know, my heart is mine no more—’Tis Thine;

My very life I do not call my own.
Since Thou art pleased to share my humble home,
And be on earth companion of my love,
Well may I hope, dear Jesus, to become
Thy loved companion in Thy home above.

IV

TO THE INFANT JESUS IN THE CRIB

Oh, how I love Thee, Lord of Heaven above!
Too well hast Thou deserved to gain my love;
Sweet Jesus, I would die for love of Thee,
For Thou didst not disdain to die for me.
I leave Thee, faithless world,—farewell! depart!
This lovely Babe has loved and won my heart.
I love Thee, loving God, who from above
Didst come on earth, a Babe, to gain my love.
Thou tremblest, darling Child, and yet I see
Thy heart is all on fire with love for me:
Love makes Thee thus a child, my Saviour dear;
Love only brought Thee down to suffer here;
Love conquered Thee, Great God, love tied Thy hands,
A captive here for me, in swathing-bands;
And love, strong love, awaits Thy latest breath,
To make Thee die for me a cruel death.

V

TO THE INFANT JESUS

O King of Heaven! from starry throne descending,
Thou takest refuge in that wretched cave;
O God of bliss! I see Thee cold and trembling,
What pain it cost Thee fallen man to save!
Thou, of a thousand worlds the great Creator,
Dost now the pain of cold and want endure;
Thy poverty but makes Thee more endearing,

For well I know ’tis love has made Thee poor.
I see Thee leave Thy Heavenly Father’s bosom,
But whither has Thy love transported Thee?
Upon a little straw I see Thee lying:
Why suffer thus? ’Tis all for love of me.
But if it is Thy will for me to suffer,
And by these sufferings my heart to move,
Wherefore, my Jesus, do I see Thee weeping?
’Tis not for pain Thou weepest, but for love.
Thou weepest thus to see me so ungrateful;
My sins have pierced Thee to the very core;
I once despised Thy love, but now I love Thee,
I love but Thee; Then Jesus, weep no more.
Thou sleepest, Lord, but Thy heart ever watches,
No slumber can a heart so loving take;
But tell me, darling Babe, of what Thou thinkest,
“I think,” he says, “of dying for Thy sake.”
Is it for me that Thou dost think of dying!
What, then, O Jesus! can I but love Thee?
Mary, my hope! If I love him too little,—
Be not indignant,—love him thou for me.

It is not certain that this devotion is by St. Alphonsus; but the tradition in the Congregation of the most Holy Redeemer has always ascribed it to him. It is found in the Italian Directory of the Novices, which was certainly written by the saint, and which has always been used in the novitiate of the Congregation.—ED.

THE WAY OF BETHLEHEM

STATIONS OF THE INFANT JESUS

V. Incline unto my aid, O God.
R. O Lord, make haste to help me.
Glory be to the Father, etc.

STATION I

THE SON OF GOD BECOMES AN INFANT

O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,
Immortal glory be to Thee;
Praise to the Father infinite,
And Holy Ghost eternally.

CONSIDERATION

Consider that the Son of God, the Infinite Majesty, the Creator of the world, and who has need of no One, became incarnate to save lost man by his sufferings, and was for nine months enclosed as a little Infant in the most chaste womb of Mary.

AFFECTIONS

O most amiable Infant Jesus, God and Man, it was Thy burning love for me which urged Thee do all this I give Thee thanks; and I beseech Thee, by Thy Incarnation, to give me the grace to correspond to such great goodness.

O my sweetest Love, I am sorry that I have offended Thee. I desire to be always faithful in Thy service: enkindle in me Thy love; make me chaste and holy

O Mary, grant that I may belong entirely to thee and to thy Son Jesus.

Hail Mary, etc. Glory be to the Father, etc.

V. Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the Eternal Father.

R. And blessed are the breasts which gave suck to Christ our Lord.

O Jesus, ever sweetest Lord,
And ever loving still;
From this dear crib sweet drops of love
Into my heart distil.

STATION II

JESUS IS BORN AN INFANT

O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,
Immortal glory be to Thee;
Praise to the Father infinite,
And Holy Ghost eternally.

CONSIDERATION

Consider that Jesus at his birth has not even a wretched cabin, such as the poorest have; but is born in a cold cavern, and is laid in a manger upon straw.

AFFECTIONS

O most holy Infant Jesus, I thank Thee for this; and I beseech Thee, by Thy most poor and bitter birth, grant that I may reap the fruits of Thy coming on this earth.

O my sweetest Love, I am sorry that I have offended Thee. I desire to be always faithful in Thy service: enkindle in me Thy love; make me chaste and holy.

O Mary, grant that I may belong entirely to thee and to thy Son Jesus.

Hail Mary, etc. Glory be to the Father, etc.

V. Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the Eternal Father.

R. And blessed are the breasts which gave suck to Christ our Lord.

O Jesus, ever sweetest Lord,
And ever loving still;

From this dear crib sweet drops of love
Into my heart distil.

STATION III

JESUS IS SUCKLED

O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,
Immortal glory be to Thee;
Praise to the Father infinite,
And Holy Ghost eternally.

CONSIDERATION

Consider that God, Majesty itself, who gives food to men and beasts, is born an Infant, and has recourse to Mary for his food; and he, through whom not a sparrow hungers, is fed with a little milk.

AFFECTIONS

O most lovely Infant, Thou takest milk, to be changed into that flesh which one day is to be bruised and torn for me. I thank Thee for this goodness; and I beseech Thee by this purest milk, grant me grace to act always with a pure intention of pleasing Thee, even as Thou didst ever act with the sole aim of obtaining my eternal happiness.

O my sweetest Love, I am sorry that I have offended Thee. I desire to be always faithful in Thy service: enkindle in me Thy love; make me chaste and holy.

O Mary, grant that I may belong entirely to thee and to thy Son Jesus.

Hail Mary, etc. Glory be to the Father, etc.

V. Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the Eternal Father.

R. And blessed are the breasts which gave suck to Christ our Lord.

O Jesus, ever sweetest Lord,
And ever loving still;
From this dear crib sweet drops of love
Into my heart distil.

STATION IV

JESUS IS WRAPPED IN SWADDLING-CLOTHES

O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,
Immortal glory be to Thee;
Praise to the Father infinite,
And Holy Ghost eternally.

CONSIDERATION

Consider that the Infinite God, whom the heavens cannot contain, made an Infant for us, vouchsafed to be wrapped by Mary in swaddling-clothes, and covered with poor rags. And thus the hands and feet of God by swathing-bands are tied.

AFFECTIONS

O gentlest Infant, Thou art tied in swathing-bands to deliver my soul from the chains of sin and hell. I thank Thee; grant, by Thy holy humility, that, casting away every other bond, I may ever live bound and united to Thee.

O my sweetest Love, I am sorry that I have offended Thee. I desire always to be faithful in Thy service: enkindle in me Thy love; make me chaste and holy.

O Mary, grant that I may belong entirely to thee and to thy Son Jesus.

Hail Mary, etc. Glory be to the Father, etc.

V. Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the eternal Father.

R. And blessed are the breasts which gave suck to Christ our Lord.

O Jesus, ever sweetest Lord,
And ever loving still;
From this dear crib sweet drops of love
Into my heart distil.

STATION V

JESUS IS CIRCUMCISED

O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,

Immortal glory be to Thee;
Praise to the Father infinite,
And Holy Ghost eternally.

CONSIDERATION

Consider that the Infant Jesus, eight days after his birth, showed himself to be even then our Saviour, by shedding for us his divine blood in the Circumcision.

AFFECTIONS

O most merciful Infant God, I give Thee thanks; and I beseech Thee, by the pain which Thou didst feel, and by the blood which Thou didst shed in Thy Circumcision, grant me grace and power to pluck out of my heart, and to cast from it, all earthly affections.

O my sweetest love, I am sorry that I have offended Thee. I desire to be always faithful in Thy service: enkindle in me Thy love; make me chaste and holy.

O Mary, grant that I may belong entirely to thee and to thy Son Jesus.

Hail Mary, etc. Glory be to the Father, etc.

V. Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the eternal Father.

R. And blessed are the breasts which gave suck to Christ our Lord.

O Jesus, ever sweetest Lord,
And ever loving still;
From this dear crib sweet drops of love
Into my heart distil.

STATION VI

JESUS IS ADORED BY THE MAGI

O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,
Immortal glory be to Thee;
Praise to the Father infinite,
And Holy Ghost eternally.

CONSIDERATION

Consider that the Infant God is visited and adored by the Magi, who, though Gentiles, were enlightened by faith to acknowledge this Man-God for their Saviour, and offered him gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

AFFECTIONS

Most adorable Redeemer, I too have received from Thee this great gift of faith. I thank Thee for it; and I beseech Thee, by the glory of this Thy manifestation, grant that, like the Magi, I may correspond and be faithful to Thy grace.

O my sweetest love, I am sorry that I have offended Thee. I desire to be always faithful in Thy service: enkindle in me Thy love; make me chaste and holy.

O Mary, grant that I may belong entirely to thee and to thy Son Jesus.

Hail Mary, etc. Glory be to the Father, etc.

V. Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the eternal Father.

R. And blessed are the breasts which gave suck to Christ our Lord.

O Jesus, ever sweetest Lord,
And ever loving still;
From this dear crib sweet drops of love
Into my heart distil.

STATION VII

JESUS IS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE

O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,
Immortal glory be to Thee;
Praise to the Father infinite,
And holy Ghost eternally.

CONSIDERATION

Consider that the Virgin Mary, forty days after the birth of the Infant Jesus, carries him in her arms to the Temple, and, offering him to God for us, consents that by his Passion and Death he should become our Redeemer.

AFFECTIONS

O most loving Infant, for this one end didst Thou deliver Thyself up to death, to bestow on me eternal life. I give Thee thanks, and pray Thee, by this offering of Thyself, to make me constantly ready to mortify and die to myself for the love of Thee.

O my sweetest Love, I am sorry that I have offended Thee. I desire to be always faithful in Thy service: enkindle in me Thy love; make me chaste and holy.

O Mary, grant that I may belong entirely to thee and to thy Son Jesus.

Hail Mary, etc. Glory be to the Father, etc.

V. Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the eternal Father.

R. And blessed are the breasts which gave suck to Christ our Lord.

O Jesus, ever sweetest Lord,
And ever loving still;
From this dear crib sweet drops of love
Into my heart distil.

STATION VIII

JESUS FLEES INTO EGYPT

O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,
Immortal glory be to Thee;
Praise to the Father infinite,
And Holy Ghost eternally.

CONSIDERATION

Consider that Herod, fearing that Jesus would deprive him of his kingdom, plans his death; and therefore orders all the children of Bethlehem to be murdered. The most blessed Virgin, warned by an angel, takes the Infant Jesus into Egypt.

AFFECTIONS

O dearest Infant, what sufferings didst Thou not endure during this journey of a whole month and even longer, and that too in the depth of winter! How often wert Thou drenched with rain and stiffened with the cold! How many nights didst Thou pass in the open air!

I thank Thee; and beseech Thee by Thy flight to give me strength to avoid all the dangers of eternal death.

O my sweetest Love, I am sorry that I have offended Thee. I desire to be always faithful in Thy service: enkindle in me Thy love; make me chaste and holy.

O Mary, grant that I may belong entirely to Thee and to thy Son Jesus.

Hail Mary, etc. Glory be to the Father, etc.

V. Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the Eternal Father.

R. And blessed are the breasts which gave suck to Christ our Lord.

O Jesus, ever sweetest Lord,
And ever loving still;
From this dear crib sweet drops of love
Into my heart distil.

STATION IX

JESUS WITH HIS HANDS FREED FROM THE SWADDLING-CLOTHES

O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,
Immortal glory be to Thee;
Praise to the Father infinite,
And Holy Ghost eternally.

CONSIDERATION

Consider that the Infant Jesus, some months after his birth, is still swathed by the blessed Virgin, though his hands are freed from the swaddling-clothes.

AFFECTIONS

Most tender Infant, I imagine to myself that first moment when Thou didst join Thy little hands, and, lifting up Thy divine eyes to heaven, didst intercede with the Eternal Father in my behalf. I give Thee thanks; and beseech Thee to grant by the merits of Thy prayer that my prayers may be always pleasing and acceptable in Thy sight.

O my sweetest Love, I am sorry that I have offended Thee. I desire to be always faithful in Thy service: enkindle in me Thy love; make me chaste and holy.

O Mary, grant that I may belong entirely to thee and to thy Son Jesus.

Hail Mary, etc. Glory be to the Father, etc.

V. Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the Eternal Father.

R. And blessed are the breasts which gave suck to Christ our Lord.

O Jesus, ever sweetest Lord,
And ever loving still;
From this dear crib sweet drops of love
Into my heart distil.

STATION X

JESUS BEGINS TO WALK

O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,
Immortal glory be to Thee;
Praise to the Father infinite,
And Holy Ghost eternally.

CONSIDERATION

Consider that the Infant Jesus, now a little older, begins to walk, and plans out in his mind the journeys he would make in the surrounding country of Judæa to preach by his most holy words the way of salvation; and at the same time figures to himself the road to Calvary, which he would tread in going to die for us.

AFFECTIONS

O most loving Infant, I thank Thee; and beseech Thee by Thy first steps, grant me grace always to walk in the way which Thou hast pointed out to me.

O my sweetest Love, I am sorry that I have offended Thee. I desire to be always faithful in Thy service: enkindle in me Thy love; make me chaste and holy.

O Mary, grant that I may belong entirely to thee and to thy Son Jesus.

Hail Mary, etc. Glory be to the Father, etc.

V. Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the Eternal Father.

R. And blessed are the breasts which gave suck to Christ our Lord.

O Jesus, ever sweetest Lord,
And ever loving still;
From this dear crib sweet drops of love
Into my heart distil.

STATION XI

JESUS SLEEPS

O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,
Immortal glory be to Thee;
Praise to the Father infinite,
And Holy Ghost eternally.

CONSIDERATION

Consider that the Infant Jesus lies in a poor cradle in the little house of his Mother Mary, and takes his rest; and oftentimes the bare ground serves him as a bed.

AFFECTIONS

O most amiable Infant, even while sleeping Thy heart watches, and Thou wert loving me, and thinking upon me; and Thy heart was consoled with the good which Thou hadst bestowed, and would bestow, upon me. I thank Thee; and pray Thee, by Thy loving slumbers, to give me grace to live forever in loving Thee, who art the most loving Good.

O my sweetest Love, I am sorry that I have offended Thee. I desire to be always faithful in Thy service: enkindle in me Thy love; make me chaste and holy.

O Mary, grant that I may belong entirely to thee and to thy Son Jesus.

Hail Mary, etc. Glory be to the Father, etc.

V. Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the Eternal Father.

R. And blessed are the breasts which gave suck to Christ our Lord.

O Jesus, ever sweetest Lord,
And ever loving still;
From this dear crib sweet drops of love
Into my heart distil.

STATION XII

JESUS IN FROM OF A FISHER

O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,
Immortal glory be to Thee;
Praise to the Father infinite,
And Holy Ghost eternally.

CONSIDERATION

Consider to yourself the Infant Jesus represented in the form of a fisher, holding in his hands a rod, to which is attached the hook wherewith he will catch the hearts of men. When we think on his beauty, and on the love with which he seeks us, and on all that he has done to allure us to love, we must needs consecrate our hearts to his service.

AFFECTIONS

O Divine Infant, I give Thee thanks; and pray Thee by the zeal which Thou hast shown in endeavoring to draw my heart to Thee, give me the grace never to leave Thee more, and grant that, having continual recourse to Thee, I may become one with Thee, and never separate myself from Thee again.

O my sweetest Love, I am sorry that I have offended Thee. I desire to be faithful in Thy service: enkindle in me Thy love; make me chaste and holy.

O Mary, grant that I may belong entirely to thee and to thy Son Jesus.

Hail Mary, etc. Glory be to the Father, etc.

V. Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the Eternal Father.

R. And blessed are the breasts which gave suck to Christ our Lord.

O Jesus, ever sweetest Lord,
And ever loving still;
From this dear crib sweet drops of love
Into my heart distil.

PRAYER

I offer and present unto Thee, O most sweet Infant Jesus, the steps which I have made to venerate the mysteries of Thy Infancy, and the homage which I have paid Thee.

I pray Thee graciously to accept it, and to reward me with the virtues of childhood,—chastity, humility, and simplicity.

It is a joy and consolation to me when I behold Thee on the altar, surrounded with so many and so lovely flowers. I ardently desire and wish to see my heart in like manner adorned with the flowers of all holy virtues, that Thou mayest find Thy pleasure, and dwell in it; and may it be my lot to live in this world ever united to Thee, that, one with Thee, I may dwell in Thy presence in heaven for all eternity. Amen.

INDULGENCES ATTACHED TO THE EXERCISES OF PIETY IN HONOR OF THE INFANT JESUS[4197]

I

EVERY YEAR

NOVENA PREPARATORY TO CHRISTMAS-DAY

AN INDULGENCE OF THREE HUNDRED DAYS, every day, to all those who, with at least contrite heart and devotion, prepare themselves for this solemnity by a novena (from the 16th to the 25th of December) with pious exercises, prayers, acts of virtue, etc. (As the good works have not been determined, it seems to be sufficient for gaining this indulgence that we make every day a spiritual reading or a meditation, or say some prayer, such as the Chaplet, page.

A PLENARY INDULGENCE on Christmas-day, or on any day in its octave, to those who have made this novena, provided that, being truly penitent after confession and Communion, they pray devoutly (for instance, by saying five *Our Fathers and five Hail Marys*) for the welfare of the Church, and for the intention of the Holy Father.

These indulgences may be gained once more within the year by making the novena in honor of the Child Jesus, as directed above.

CHRISTMAS-DAY.

INDULGENCE OF A HUNDRED YEARS for each of the following offices which the faithful recite or at which they are present in any church, namely: The First Vespers, Matins and Lauds, the Mass (without doubt each of the three Masses), and the Second Vespers.

AN INDULGENCE OF FORTY YEARS, on the same conditions, for each of the following Hours: Prime, Tierce, Sext, None, and Complins.

II

EVERY MONTH

NOVENA FROM THE 16TH TO THE 24TH

AN INDULGENCE OF ONE YEAR for every day of the novena on which, with a contrite heart, we make, either in public or private, the following offering:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

I. *Offering.*—Eternal Father, I offer to Thy honor and glory, and for my own salvation, and for the salvation of the whole world, the mystery of the birth of our divine Saviour.

GLORY BE THE FATHER, ETC.

II. *Offering.*—Eternal Father, I offer to Thy honor and glory, and for my eternal salvation, the sufferings of the most holy Virgin and of St. Joseph in that long and weary journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. I offer Thee the Sorrows of their hearts when they found no place wherein to shelter themselves, when the Saviour of the world was to be born.

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER, ETC.

III. *Offering.*—Eternal Father, I offer to Thy honor and glory, and my eternal salvation, the sufferings of Jesus in the stable where he was born, and the cold he suffered, the swaddling-clothes which bound him, the tears that he shed, and his tender infant cries.

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER, ETC.

IV. *Offering.*—Eternal Father, I offer to Thy honor and glory, for my eternal salvation, the pain which the holy child Jesus felt in his tender body when he submitted to circumcision. I offer Thee that precious blood which then, for the first time, he shed for the salvation of the whole human race.

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER, ETC.

V. *Offering.*—Eternal Father, I offer to Thy honor and glory, and for my eternal salvation, the humility, mortification, patience, charity, all the virtues of the child Jesus; and I thank Thee, and I love Thee, and I bless Thee without end, for the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation of the divine Word.

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER, ETC.

Verbum caro factum est.	The Word was made flesh.
Et habitavit in nobis.	And dwelt amongst us.
OREMUS.	LET US PRAY.
Deus, cujus Unigenitus in substantia nostræ carnis apparuit: præsta, quæsumus, ut per eum, quem similem nobis foris agnovimus, intus reformari mereamur. Qui tecum vivit et regnat in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.	O God, whose only-begotten Son was made manifest to us in the substance of our flesh! grant, we beseech Thee, that through him, whom we acknowledge to be like unto ourselves, our souls may be inwardly renewed. Who liveth and reigneth with Thee for ever and ever. Amen.

THE 25TH OF THE MONTH.

A PLENARY INDULGENCE for those who, being truly contrite, after confession and Communion, are present in some church or public oratory at the pious exercise that is performed in honor of the Infant Jesus, recite the following prayer, to venerate the twelve mysteries of the holy infancy, and pray to the intention of his Holiness.

V. Deus, in adjutorium meum intende.	*V.* Incline unto my aid, O God.

R. Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.	*R.* O Lord, make haste to help me.
V. Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.	*V.* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
R. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.	*R.* As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen.
PATER NOSTER.	OUR FATHER.

1ST MYSTERY. THE INCARNATION

Jesu Infans dulcissime! e sinu Patris propter nostram salutem descendens, de Spiritu Sancto conceptus, Virginis uterum non horrens, et, Verbum caro factum, formam servi accipiens, miserere nostri.	Jesus, sweetest child, who' coming down from the bosom of the Father for our salvation, didst not disdain the womb of the Virgin, where, conceived by the Holy Ghost, Thou, the Word incarnate, didst take upon Thee the form of a servant: have mercy on us.
R. Miserere nostri, Jesu Infans! miserere nostri.	*R.* Have mercy on us, child Jesus, have mercy on us.
AVE MARIA.	HAIL MARY.

2. VISITATION

Jesu Infans dulcissime! per Virginem Matrem tuam visitans Elisabeth, Joannem Baptistam prœcursorem tuum Spritu Sancto replens, et adhuc in utero matris suæ sanctificans, miserere nostri.	Jesus, sweetest child, who in Thy virgin mother’s womb, didst visit St. Elizabeth, and fill Thy precursor, John the Baptist, with the Holy Ghost, sanctifying him from his mother’s womb: have mercy on us.
R. Miserere nostri, Jesu Infans! miserere nostri.	*R.* Have mercy on us, child Jesus, have mercy on us.
AVE MARIA.	HAIL MARY.

3. THE EXPECTATION

Jesu Infans dulcissime! novem mensibus in utero clausus, summis votis a Maria Virgine et a Sancto Joseph expectatus, et Deo Patri prosalute mundi oblatus, miserere nostri.	Jesus, sweetest child, who for nine months hidden in Thy mother’s womb, and awaited with eager expectation by the Virgin Mother Mary and by St. Joseph, wast by them offered to God the Father for the salvation of the world: have mercy on us.
R. Miserere nostri, Jesu Infans! miserere nostri.	*R.* Have mercy on us, child Jesus, have mercy on us.
AVE MARIA.	HAIL MARY.

4. THE BIRTH

Jesu Infans dulcissime! in	Jesus, sweetest child, born in

Bethlehem ex Virgine Maria natus, pannis involutus, in præsepio reclinatus, ab Angelis annuntiatus, et a pastoribus visitatus, miserere nostri.	Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary, wrapped in swaddling-clothes, laid in the manger, heralded by angels, visited by shepherds: have mercy on us.
R. Miserere nostri, Jesu Infans! miserere nostri.	*R.* Have mercy on us, child Jesus, have mercy on us.
AVE MARIA.	HAIL MARY.
Jesu, tibi sit gloria, *Qui natus es de Virgine,* *Cum Patre et almo Spiritu,* *In sempiterna sæcula!*	O Jesus, born of Virgin bright, Infinite glory be to Thee; Praise to the Father infinite, And Holy Ghost eternally.
AMEN.	AMEN.
Christus prope est nobis.	*V.* Christ is at hand.
Venite, adoremus.	*R.* Come, let us adore him.
PATER NOSTER.	OUR FATHER.

5. THE CIRCUMCISION

Jesu Infans dulcissime! in circumcisione post dies octo vulneratus, glorioso Jesu nomine vocatus, et in nomine simul et sanguine Salvatoris officio præsignatus, miserere nostri.	Jesus, sweetest child, wounded in the circumcision on the eighth day, called by the glorious name of Jesus, and, by Thy name and by Thy blood, foreshown as the Saviour of the world: have mercy on us.
R. Miserere nostri, Jesu Infans! miserere nostri.	*R.* Have mercy on us, child Jesus, have mercy on us.
AVE MARIA.	HAIL MARY.

6. THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

Jesu Infans dulcissime! stella duce tribus Magis demonstratus, in sinu Matris adoratus, et mysticis muneribus, auro, thure, et myrrha, donatus, miserere nostri.	Jesus, sweetest child, made known to three Magi by a star, adored on Mary’s bosom, honored with the mystical gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh: have mercy on us.
R. Miserere nostri, Jesu Infans! miserere nostri.	*R.* Have mercy on us, child Jesus, have mercy on us.
AVE MARIA.	HAIL MARY.

7. THE PRESENTATION

Jesu Infans dulcissime! in Templo a Matre Virgine præsentatus, inter brachia a	Jesus, sweetest child, presented in the temple by Thy Virgin Mother; Jesus, whom Simeon took into his arms and

Simeone amplexatus, et ab Anna prophetissa Israeli revelatus, miserere nostri.	embraced, and Anna the prophetess made known to Israel: have mercy on us.
R. Miserere nostri, Jesu Infans! miserere nostri.	*R.* Have mercy on us, child Jesus, have mercy on us.
AVE MARIA.	HAIL MARY.

8. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Jesu Infans dulcissime! ab iniquo Herode ad mortem quæsitus, a Sancto Joseph in Ægyptum cum matre deportatus, a crudeli cæde sublatus, et a præconiis martyrum Innocentium glorificatus, miserere nostri.	Jesus, sweetest child, whom Herod sought to slay, whom St. Joseph carried with Mary into Egypt, who was saved by flight from a cruel death, and glorified by the praises of the holy Innocents: have mercy on us.
R. Miserere nostri, Jesu Infans! miserere nostri.	*R.* Have mercy on us, child Jesus, have mercy on us.
AVE MARIA.	HAIL MARY.
Jesu, tibi sit gloria, *Qui natus es de Virgine,* *Cum Patre et almo Spiritu,* *In sempiterna sæcula!*	O Jesus, born of Virgin bright, Infinite glory be to Thee; Praise to the Father infinite, And Holy Ghost eternally.

AMEN.	AMEN.
Christus prope est nobis.	*V.* Christ is at hand.
Venite, adoremus.	*R.* Come, let us adore him.
PATER NOSTER.	OUR FATHER.

9. THE SOJOURN IN EGYPT

Jesu Infans dulcissime! in Ægypto cum Maria sanctissima et patriarcha Sancto Joseph usque ad obitum Herodis commoratus, miserere nostri.	Jesus, sweetest child, who, with Mary most holy and the patriarch St. Joseph, didst dwell in Egypt until the death of Herod: have mercy on us.
R. Miserere nostri, Jesu Infans! miserere nostri.	*R.* Have mercy on us, child Jesus, have mercy on us.
AVE MARIA.	HAIL MARY.

10. THE RETURN FROM EGYPT

Jesu Infans dulcissime! ex Ægypto cum parentibus in terram Israel reversus, multos labores in itinere perpessus, et in civitatem	Jesus, sweetest child, who didst return with Thy parents from Egypt into the land of Israel, who didst suffer many toils by the way, and

Nazareth ingerssus, miserere nostri.	enter the city of Nazareth: have mercy on us.
R. Miserere nostri, Jesu Infans! miserere nostri.	*R.* Have mercy on us, child Jesus, have mercy on us.
AVE MARIA.	HAIL MARY.

11. THE LIFE OF JESUS AT NAZARETH

Jesu Infans dulcissime! in sancta Nazarena domo subditus parentibus sanctissime commoratus, paupertate et laboribus fatigatus, in sapientiæ, œtatis, et gratiæ, profectu confortatus, miserere nostri.	Jesus, sweetest child, who didst live most holily in the blessed house of Nazareth, subject to Thy parents, spending Thy life in poverty and toil, and growing in wisdom, in age, and in grace: have mercy on us.
R. Miserere nostri, Jesu Infans! miserere nostri.	*R.* Have mercy on us, child Jesus, have mercy on us.
AVE MARIA.	HAIL MARY.

12. JESUS IN THE MIDST OF THE DOCTORS

Jesu Infans dulcissime! in Jerusalem duodennis ductus, a parentibus cum dolore quœsitus, et post triduum cum gaudio	Jesus, sweetest child, brought to Jerusalem when twelve years old, sought by Thy parents with much sorrow, and, after three days, found, to

inter Doctores inventus, miserere nostri.	their great joy, among the doctors: have mercy on us.
R. Miserere nostri, Jesu Infans! miserere nostri.	*R.* Have mercy on us, child Jesus, have mercy on us.
AVE MARIA.	HAIL MARY.
Jesu, tibi sit gloria,	O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,
Qui natus es de Virgine,	Infinite glory be to Thee;
Cum Patre et almo Spiritu,	Praise to the Father infinite,
In sempiterna sæcula.	And Holy Ghost eternally.
AMEN.	AMEN.
Christus prope est nobis.	*V.* Christ is at hand.
Venite, adoremus.	R. Come, let us adore him.
PATER NOSTER.	OUR FATHER.

VERSICLE FOR THE FEAST AND OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

V. Verbum caro factum est. Alleluia	*V.* The Word was made flesh. Alleluia.

R. Et habitavit in nobis. Alleluia	*R.* And dwelt amongst us. Alleluia

This versicle is also recited throughout the year, but the Alleluia is omitted.

FOR THE FEAST OF EPIPHANY AND ITS OCTAVE WE SAY:

V. Christus manifestavit se nobis. Alleluia.	*V.* Christ manifested himself to us. Alleluia.
R. Venite, adoremus. Alleluia	*R.* Come, let us adore him. Alleluia.
OREMUS.	LET US PRAY.
Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, Domine cœli et terræ, qui te revelas parvulis! concede, quæsumus, ut nos sacrosancta Filii tui Infantis Jesu mysteria digno honore recolentes, ac digna imitatione sectantes, ad Regnum cœlorum promissum parvulis pervenire valeamus. Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen	Almighty and everlasting God, Lord of heaven and earth, who dost reveal Thyself to little ones; grant us, we beseech Thee, to honor meekly the holy mysteries of Thy Son, the child Jesus, and to follow him humbly in our lives, so that we may come to the eternal kingdom promised by Thee to little ones. Through the same Jesus Christ Amen.

III

EVERY DAY

INDULGENCE OF THREE HUNDRED DAYS, once a day, if privately, with a contrite heart, we recite the aforesaid exercise in honor of the twelve mysteries of the Holy Infancy of Jesus.

A PLENARY INDULGENCE once a month to all the faithful who every day, at the sound of the bell in the morning, or at noon, or in the evening at sunset, shall devoutly say the *Angelus Domini* with the *Hail Mary* three times, on any day when, being truly penitent, after confession and Communion, they shall pray to the intention of the Church. This prayer is said kneeling during the week and standing on Saturday evenings and Sundays. During the Paschal time this prayer is replaced by the *Regina Cœli* with the proper versicle and prayer, and is recited every day standing; but if the faithful do not know it by heart they may the *Angelus* standing.

AN INDULGENCE OF A HUNDRED DAYS each time that the faithful, being truly contrite, recite the above-mentioned prayer in the manner indicated.

In regard to the recitation of the *Angelus,* we here subjoin the translation of a late decree published by Pope Leo XIII.:

To gain the indulgences which Benedict XIII. granted the faithful who recite the *Angelus Domini,* with the three *Hail Marys,* and which were extended by Benedict XIV. to all who, during the Paschal season, say the *Regina Cœli,* with the versicles and proper prayer, it was necessary to recite the *Hail Marys,* versicles, and prayer at the sound of the bell. It was further necessary to recite the *Angelus* and the *Hail Marys* on bended knees, except on Saturday evenings and Sundays, when they were said standing, and Paschal season, when the *Regina Cœli,* with its versicle and prayer, was likewise said standing. Recently, many pious men implored the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences to mitigate to some extent these two conditions. For the Angelus bell is not rung in all places, nor rung three times a day, nor at the same hours; and if rung it is not always heard and even if heard; the faithful may be prevented by reasonable cause from kneeling down just at that moment to say the prayer. Besides, there are any number of the faithful who know neither the *Angelus* nor the *Regina Cœli* by heart, and cannot even read it in print.

Wherefore, his Holiness Pope Leo XIII., in order not to have so many of the faithful deprived of these spiritual favors, owing to the non-fulfilment of the conditions, and in order to stir up in all an abiding and grateful remembrance of the mysteries of our Lord’s incarnation and resurrection, in an audience granted the under signed secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences on the 15th of March last, graciously granted that all the faithful (*a*) who say the *Angelus,* with the three *Hail Marys,* the *Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,* and the prayer *Pour forth, we beseech Thee,* though for reasonable cause they do not say them on bended knees, nor at the sound of the bell; or (*b*) who recite during Paschal time the *Regina Cœli,* with its versicle and prayer; or who say in the morning, about midday, and evening, five *Hail Marys* in a becoming manner with attention and devotion (in case they do not know the *Angelus* or the *Regina cœli* and cannot read it), may gain the indulgences mentioned above.

Given at the Secretariate of the same Congregation, Rome, April 3, 1884.

A Cardinal OREGLIA, a S. STEPHANO, *Prefect.*

F. DELLA VOLPE, *Secretary.*

IV

AT ALL TIMES

AN INDULGENCE OF FIFTY DAYS each time for saying to one another when meeting:

Laudetur Jesus Christus.	Praise be to Jesus Christ.
In sæcula. Amen.	Forever. Amen.

AN INDULGENCE OF TWENTY-FIVE DAYS granted every time to all those who devoutly invoke the most holy names of Jesus and Mary.

A PLENARY INDULGENCE, at the hour of death granted to all those who during life have had the pious practice of saluting one another and answering as above directed, or of frequently invoking the above-mentioned most holy names, provided they invoke then, at least with the heart, if they are unable to do so with their lips.

The same indulgences are granted to preachers, and to all those who exhort the faithful to salute one another in the manner prescribed, and to invoke frequently the most holy names of Jesus and Mary.

AN INDULGENCE OF ONE HUNDRED DAYS every time the faithful say this pious ejaculation:

My Jesus, mercy!

AN INDULGENCE OF ONE HUNDRED DAYS granted every time to all who with at least contrite heart and devotion recite these three ejaculations:

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my last agony.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, may I breathe forth my sou in peace with you.

AN INDULGENCE OF FIFTY DAYS granted every time to those who receite the following ejeculations:

Dulcissime Jesu, ne sis mihi Judex, sed Salvator.	My sweetest Jesus, be not my judge, but my Saviour.

A PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted once a year, on the feast of St. Jerome Emiliani (July 20), beginning from the first vespers and during the whole octave, on the day when, being truly penitent, after confession and Communion, they visit any church or public oratory and pray there for some time, to the intention of his Holiness.

Darts of fire or Proofs that Jesus Christ has given us of His Love in the Work of Redemption[4198]

To any one who considers the immense love which Jesus Christ has shown us in his life, and especially in his death, it is impossible not to be stirred up and excited to love a God who is so enamoured of our souls. St. Bonaventure calls the wounds of our Redeemer wounds which pierce the hardest hearts, and inflame divine love in the coldest souls.[4199]

Therefore, in this short examination of the love of Jesus Christ, let us consider, according to the testimony of the divine Scriptures, how much our loving Redeemer has done to make us understand the love that he bears us, and to oblige us to love him.

DARTS OF FIRE

I

Dilexit nos, et tradidit semctipsum pro nobis.

“He hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.”—Ephes. 5:2.

God had conferred so many blessings on men, thereby to draw them to love him; but these ungrateful men not only did not love him, but they would not even acknowledge him as their Lord. Scarcely in one corner of the earth, in Judea, was he recognized as God by his chosen people; and by them he was more feared than loved. He, however, who wished to be more loved than feared by us, became man like us, chose a poor, suffering, and obscure life, and a painful and ignominious death; and why? to draw our hearts to himself. If Jesus Christ had not redeemed us, he would not have been less great or less happy than he has always been; but he determined to procure our salvation at the cost of many labors and sufferings, as if his happiness depended on ours. He might have redeemed us without suffering; but no,—he willed to free us from eternal death by his own death; and though he was able to save us in a thousand ways, he chose the most humiliating and painful way of dying on the cross of pure suffering, to purchase the love of us, ungrateful worms of the earth. And what indeed was the cause of his miserable birth and his most sorrowful death, if not the love he had for us?

Ah, my Jesus, may that love which made Thee die for me on Calvary destroy in me all earthly affections, and consume me in the fire which Thou art come to kindle on the earth. I curse a thousand times those shameful passions which cost Thee so much pain. I repent, my dear Redeemer, with all my heart for all the offences I have committed against Thee. For the future I will rather die than offend Thee; and I wish to do all that I can to please Thee. Thou hast spared nothing for my love; neither will I spare anything for Thy love. Thou hast loved me without reserve; I also without reserve will love Thee. I love Thee, my only good, my love, my all.

II

> Sic Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret.
>
> “God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son.”—John, 3:16.

Oh, how much does that little word *so* mean! It means that we shall never be able to comprehend the extent of such a love as this which made a God send his Son to die, that lost man might be saved. And who would ever have been able to bestow on us this gift of infinite value but a God of infinite love?

I thank thee, O Eternal Father! for having given me Thy Son to be my Redeemer; and I thank Thee, O great Son of God, for having redeemed me with so much suffering and love. What would have become of me, after the many sins that I have committed against Thee, if Thou hadst not died for me? Ah, that I had died before I had offended Thee, my Saviour! Make me feel some of that detestation for my sins which Thou hadst while on earth and pardon me. But pardon is not sufficient for me, Thou dost merit my love; Thou hast loved me even to death, unto death will I also love Thee. I love Thee, O infinite goodness, with all my soul; I love Thee more than myself; in Thee alone will I place all my affections. Do thou help me; let me no longer live ungrateful to Thee, as I have done hitherto. Tell me what Thou wouldst have of me, for, by Thy grace, all, all will I do. Yes, my Jesus, I love thee my treasure, my life, my love, my all.

III

> Neque per sanguinem hircorum aut vitulorum, sed per proprium sanguinem introivit semel in sancta, æterna redemptions inventa.
>
> “Neither by the blood of goats or of calves, but by His own blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption.”—Heb. 9:12.

And of what worth would the blood of all goats or even of all men be, if they were sacrificed to obtain divine grace for us? It is only the blood of this Man-God which would merit for us pardon and eternal salvation. But if God himself had not devised this way to redeem us, as he did by dying to save us, who ever would have been able to think of it? His love alone designed it and executed it. Therefore holy Job did well to cry out to this God who loves man so much: *What is man, O Lord, that Thou dost so exalt him? why is Thy heart so intent upon him? what is man that Thou shouldst* *magnify him? or why dost Thou set Thy heart upon him?*[4200] Ah, my Jesus, one heart is but little with which to love Thee; if I loved Thee even with the hearts of all men, it would be too little. What ingratitude, then, would it be if I were to divide my heart between Thee and creatures! No, my love, Thou wouldst have it all, and well dost Thou deserve it; I will give it all to Thee. If I do not know how to give it Thee as I ought, take it Thyself, and grant that I may be able to say to Thee with truth, *God of my heart*.[4201] Ah, my Redeemer, by the merits of the abject and afflicted life that Thou hast willed to live for me, give me true humility, which will make me love contempt and an obscure life. May I lovingly embrace all infirmities, affronts, persecutions and interior sufferings, and all the crosses which may come to me from Thy hands. Let me love Thee, and then dispose of me as Thou wilt. O loving heart of my Jesus! make me love Thee by discovering to me the immense good that Thou art. Make me all Thine before I die. I love Thee, my Jesus, who art worthy to be loved. I love Thee with all my heart, I love Thee with all my soul.

IV

> Benignitas et humanitas apparuit Salvatoris nostri Dei.
>
> “The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared.”—Tit. 3:4.

God has loved man from all eternity. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love*.[4202] “But,” says St. Bernard, “before the Incarnation of the Word the divine Power appeared in creating the world, and the divine Wisdom in governing it; but when the Son of God became man, then was made manifest the love which God had for men.”[4203] And, in fact, after seeing Jesus Christ go through so afflicted a life and so painful a death, we should be offering him an insult if we doubted the great love which he bears us. Yes, he does surely love us; and because he loves us, he wishes to be loved by us. *And Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.*[4204]

Ah, my Saviour, when shall I begin to understand the love which Thou hast had for me? Hitherto, instead of loving Thee, I have repaid Thee with offences and contempt of Thy graces, but since Thou art infinite in goodness I will not lose confidence. Thou hast promised to pardon him who repents; for Thy mercy’s sake fulfil Thy promise to me. I have dishonored

Thee by putting Thee aside to follow my own pleasures; but now I grieve for it from the bottom of my soul, and there is no sorrow that afflicts me more than the remembrance of having offended Thee, my Sovereign Good; pardon me and unite me entirely to Thee by an eternal bond of love, that I may not leave Thee any more, and that I may only live to love Thee and to obey Thee. Yes, my Jesus, for Thee alone will I live, Thee only will I love. Once I left Thee for creatures, now I leave all to give myself wholly to Thee. I love Thee, O God of my soul, I love Thee more than myself. O Mary, Mother of God, obtain for me to the grace to be faithful to God till death.

V

> In hoc apparuit charitas Dei in nobis, quoniam Filium suum unigenitum misit Deus in mundum, ut vivamus per eum.
>
> “By this hath the charity of God appeared toward us, because God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live by Him.”—1 John, 4:9.

All men were dead by sin, and they would have remained dead if the eternal Father had not sent his Son to restore them to life by his death. But how? what is this? A God to die for man! A God! And who is this man? “Who am I?”[4205] says St. Bonaventure. “O Lord, why hast Thou loved me so much?”[4206] But it is in this that the infinite love of God shines forth. *By this hath the charity of God appeared.*[4207] The Holy Church exclaims on Holy Saturday, “O wonderful condescension of Thy mercy toward us! O inestimable affection of charity! that Thou mightest redeem a slave, Thou didst deliver up Thy Son.”[4208] O immense compassion! O prodigy! O excess of the love of God? to deliver a servant and a sinner from the death that he deserves, his innocent Son is condemned to die.

Thou, then, O my God, hast done this that we might live by Jesus Christ: *that we might live by Him.*[4209] Yes, indeed, it is but meet that we should live for him, who has given all his blood and his life for us. My dear Redeemer, in the presence of Thy wounds and of the cross on which I see Thee dead for me, I consecrate to Thee my life and my whole will. Ah, make me all Thine, for from this day forward I seek and desire none but Thee. I love Thee, infinite Goodness; I love Thee, infinite Love; while I live may I always repeat, *My God, I love Thee, I love Thee;* let my last words in death be, *My God, I love Thee, I love Thee.*

VI

Per viscera misericordiœ Dei nostri, in quibus visitavit nos Oriens ex alto.

“Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high hath visited us.”—Luke, 1:78.

Behold, the Son of God comes on earth to redeem us, and he comes stimulated alone by the bowels of his mercy. But, O God! if Thou hast compassion on lost man, is it not enough that Thou shouldst send an angel to redeem him? No, says the Eternal Word, I will come myself, that man may know how much I love him. St. Augustine writes: “For this reason chiefly did Jesus Christ come, that man should know how much God loves him.”[4210] But, my Jesus, even now that Thou hast come, how many men are there who truly love Thee? Wretch that I am, Thou knowest how I have hitherto loved Thee; Thou knowest what contempt I have had for Thy love. Oh that I might die of grief for it! I repent, my dear Redeemer, of having so despised Thee. Ah, pardon me, and at the same time give me grace to love Thee. Let me no longer remain unmindful of that great affection which Thou hast borne me. I love Thee now, but I love Thee but little. Thou dost merit an infinite love. Grant me at least that I may love Thee with all my strength. Ah, my Saviour, my joy, my life, my all, whom should I love if I love not Thee, the infinite Good? I consecrate all my wishes to Thy will; at the sight of the sufferings Thou hast undergone for me, I offer myself to suffer as much as it shall please Thee. *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*[4211] Deliver me from sin, and then dispose of me as Thou wilt. I love Thee, infinite Good, and I am content to receive any punishment, even to be annihilated, rather than to live without loving Thee.

VII

Et Verbum caro factum est.

“And the Word was made flesh.”—John, 1:14.

God sent the Archangel Gabriel to ask Mary’s consent that he should become her Son; Mary gives her consent, and behold the Word is made man. O wonderful prodigy! at which the heavens and all nature stand in astonishment! The Word made flesh! A God made man! What if we were to see a king become a worm, to save the life of a little worm of earth by his death?

So, then, my Jesus, Thou art my God, and not being able to die as God, Thou hast been pleased to become man capable of dying in order to give Thy life for me. My sweet Redeemer, how is it that, at the sight of such mercy and love Thou hast shown towards me, I do not die of grief? Thou didst come down from heaven to seek me, a lost sheep; and how many times have I not driven Thee away, preferring my miserable pleasures before Thee! But since Thou dost wish to have me, I leave all; I wish to be Thine, and I will have none other but Thee. Thee do I choose for the only object of my affections. *My Beloved to me, and I to Him.*[4212] Thou dost think of me, and I will think of none but Thee. Let me always love Thee, and may I never leave off loving Thee. Provided I can love Thee, I am content to be deprived of all sensible consolation, and even to suffer all torments. I see that Thou dost indeed wish me to be all Thine, and I wish to belong entirely to Thee. I know that everything in the world is a falsehood, a deceit, nothing but smoke, filth, and vanity. Thou alone art the true and only good; therefore Thou alone art sufficient for me. *My God, I wish for Thee alone, and nothing else;* God hear me, *for Thee alone do I wish, and nothing else.*

VIII

Semetipsum exinanivit.

“He emptied Himself.”—Phil. 2:7.

Behold the only-begotton Son of God, omnipotent and true God, equal to the Father, born a little Infant in a stable. *He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made to the likeness of men.*[4213] If any one would see a God annihilated, let him enter into the cave of Bethlehem, and he will find him as a little Infant, bound in swaddling-clothes, so that he cannot move, weeping and trembling with cold. Ah, holy faith, tell me whose Son is this poor child? Faith answers, he is the Son of God, and he is true God. And who has brought him to so miserable a condition? It was the love he had for men. And yet there are men to be found who do not love this God!

Thou, then, my Jesus, hast spent all Thy life amidst sorrows to make me understand the love Thou dost bear me, and I have spent my life in despising and displeasing Thee by my sins! Ah, make me know the evil I have committed, and the love which Thou desirest to have. But since Thou hast borne with me till now, permit me not to give Thee any more cause for sorrow. Inflame me altogether with Thy love, and remind me always of all Thou hast suffered for me, that from this day forth I may forget everything, and think of nothing but loving and pleasing Thee. Thou didst come on earth to reign in our hearts; take, then, from my heart all that could prevent Thee from possessing it entirely! Make my will to be wholy conformed to Thy will; may Thine be mine, and may it be the rule of all my actions and desires.

IX

Parvulus natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis.

“For a child is born to us, and a Son is given to us.”—Isa. 9:6.

Behold the end for which the Son of God will be born an Infant, to give himself to us from his childhood, and thus to draw to himself our love. Why (writes St. Francis de Sales) does Jesus take the sweet and tender form of an Infant, if it be not to stimulate us to love him and to confide in him? St. Peter Chrysologus had said before, “Thus he willed to be born, because he wished to be loved.”[4214]

Oh, dear child Jesus, my Saviour! I love Thee, in Thee do I trust, Thou art all my hope and all my love. What would have become of me if Thou hadst not come down from heaven to save me? I know the hell which would have awaited me for the offences I have offered Thee. Blessed be Thy mercy, because Thou art ever ready to pardon me if I repent of my sins. Yes, I repent with all my heart, my Jesus, of having despised Thee. Receive me into Thy favor, and make me die to myself to live only to Thee, my only good. Destroy in me, O thou consuming fire, everything that is displeasing in Thine eyes, and draw all my affections to Thee. I love Thee, O God of my soul, I love Thee, my treasure, my life, my all. I love Thee, and I wish to die saying, my God, I love Thee; and begin then to love Thee with a perfect love which shall have no end.

X

> Rorate, cœli, desuper, et nubes pluant Justum.—Emitte Agnum, Domine, dominatorem terrœ.—Salutare tuum da nobis.
>
> “Drop down dew, O ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just.”—“Send forth the Lamb, the Ruler of the earth.”Is. 45:8; 16:1.—“Grant us Thy salvation.”—Ps. 84:8.

Thus did the holy Prophets desire for so many years the coming of the Saviour. The same prophet Isaias said: *Oh, that Thou wouldst send the heavens, and wouldst come down: the mountains would melt away at Thy presence, . . . the waters would burn with fire.*[4215] Lord, he said, when men shall see that Thou hast come on earth out of love for them, the mountains shall be made smooth, that is, men in serving Thee will conquer all the difficulties that at first appeared to them insuperable obstacles. The waters would burn with fire, and the coldest hearts will feel themselves burning with Thy love, at the sight of Thee made man, and how well has this been verified in many happy souls!—in St. Teresa, in St. Philip Neri, St. Francis Xavier, who even in this life were consumed by this holy fire. But how many such are there? Alas! but too few.

Ah, my Jesus, amongst these few I wish also to be. How many years ought I not already be burning in hell, separated from Thee, hating and cursing Thee forever. But no, Thou hast borne with me with so much patience, that Thou mightest see me burn, not with that unhappy flame, but with the blessed fire of Thy love; for this end Thou hast given me so many illuminations, and hast so often wounded my heart while I was far from Thee; finally, Thou hast done so much that Thou hast forced me to love Thee by Thy sweet attractions. Behold, I am now Thine. I will be Thine always and altogether. It remains for Thee to make me faithful, and this I confidently hope from Thy goodness. O my God! who could ever have the heart to leave Thee again and to live even a moment without Thy love? I love Thee, my Jesus, above all things; but this is little. I love Thee more than myself, but this is little also; I love Thee with all my heart, and this also is little. My Jesus, hear me, give me more love, more love, more love. O Mary, pray to God for me.

XI

> Despectum, et novissimum virorum.

“Despised, and the most abject of men.”—Isa. 53:3.

Behold what was the life of the Son of God made man, the most abject of men. He was treated as the vilest, the least of men. To what extreme of meanness could the life of Christ be reduced greater than that of being born in a stable? of living as a servant in an unknown and despised shop? struck, treated as a mock king, having his face spit upon? and, finally, of dying condemned as a malefactor on an infamous gibbet?

St. Bernard exclaims, “Oh, lowest and highest!”[4216] A God, Thou art the Lord of all, and how art Thou contented to the most despised of all? And I, my Jesus, when I see Thee so humiliated for me, how can I wish to be esteemed and honored by all? A sinner to be proud! Ah, my despised Redeemer, may Thy example inspire me with love of contempt and of an obscure life; from this time forward I hope, with Thy help, to accept from my heart all opprobrium that I may have to suffer for the love of Thee, who hast endured so much for the love of me. Pardon me the pride of my past life, and give me love in its place. I love Thee, my despised Jesus. Go before me with Thy cross. I will follow Thee with mine, and I will not leave Thee till I die crucified for Thee, as Thou didst die crucified for me. My Jesus, my despised Jesus, I embrace Thee; in Thy embrace will I live and die.

XII

Virum dolorum.

“A man of sorrows.”—Isa. 53:3.

What was the life of Jesus Christ? A life of sorrows; a life of internal and external sorrows from the beginning to the end. But what most afflicted Jesus Christ during the course of his life was the sight of the sins and the ingratitude with which men repaid the pains he had suffered with so much love for us. This thought had made him the most afflicted amongst all men that had ever lived on the earth.

So, then, my Jesus, I also added to the affliction Thou didst suffer during the whole of Thy life by my sins. And why do I not also say, as did St. Margaret of Cortona, who, when exhorted by her confessor to calm her grief and not to weep any more because God had pardoned her, redoubled her tears and answered, “Ah, my Father, how can I leave off weeping when

I know that my sins afflicted my Jesus through the whole of his life?” Oh that I could die of grief, my Jesus, whenever I think of all the bitter anguish I have caused Thee every day of my life! Alas, how many nights have I slept deprived of Thy grace! How many times hast Thou pardoned me, and I have again turned my back upon Thee! My dear Lord, I repent above all things for having offended Thee. I love Thee with all my heart; I love Thee with all my soul. “Ah, my sweet Jesus, permit me not to be separated any more from Thee.”[4217] Let me die rather than betray Thee afresh. O Mary, Mother of perseverance, obtain for me the gift of holy perseverance.

XIII

Cum dilexisset suos, qui erant in mundo, in finem dilexit eos.

“Having loved his own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end.”—John, 13:1.

The love of friends increases at the time of death, when they are on the point of being separated from those they love; and it is then, therefore, that they try more than ever, by some pledge of affection, to show the love they bear to them. Jesus during the whole of his life gave us marks of his affection, but when he came near the hour of his death he wished to give us a special proof of his love. For what greater proof could this loving Lord show us than by giving his blood and his life for each of us? And not content with this, he left this very same body, sacrificed for us upon the cross, to be our food, so that each one who should receive it should be wholly united to him, and thus love should mutually increase.

O infinite goodness! O infinite love! Ah, my enamoured Jesus, fill my heart with Thy love, so that I may forget the world and myself, to think of nothing but loving and pleasing Thee. I consecrate to Thee my body, my soul, my will, my liberty. Up to this time I have sought to gratify myself to Thy great displeasure; I am exceedingly sorry for it, my crucified love; henceforth I will seek nothing but Thee, my God and my all.[4218] My God, Thou art my all, I wish for Thee alone and nothing more. Oh that I could spend myself all for Thee, who hast spent Thyself all for me! I love Thee, my only good, my only love. I love Thee, and abandon myself entirely to Thy holy will. Make me love Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

XIV

Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.

“My soul is sorrowful even unto death.”—Matt. 26:38.

These were the words that proceeded from the sorrowful heart of Jesus Christ in the garden of Gethsemani, before he went to die. Alas, whence came this extreme grief of his, which was so great that it was enough to kill him? Perhaps it was on account of the torments that he saw he should have to suffer? No; for he had foreseen these torments from the time of his incarnation. He had foreseen them, and had accepted them of his own free will: *He was offered because it was His own will.*[4219] His grief came from seeing the sins men would commit after his death. It was then, according to St. Bernardine of Sienna, that he saw clearly each particular sin of each one of us. He had regard to every individual sin.[4220]

It was not, then, my Jesus, the sight of the scourges, of the thorns, and of the cross which so afflicted Thee in the garden of Gethsemani; it was the sight of my sins, each one of which so oppressed Thy heart with grief and sadness that it made Thee agonize and sweat blood. This is the recompense I have Thee for the love Thou hast shown me by dying for me. Ah, let me share the grief Thou didst feel in the garden for my sins, so that the remembrance of it may make me sad for all my life. Ah, my sweet Redeemer, if I could but console Thee as much now by my grief and love as I then afflicted Thee! I repent, my Love, with all my heart for having preferred my own miserable satisfaction to Thee. I am sorry, and I love The above all things. Although I have despised Thee, yet I hear Thee ask for my love. Thou wouldst have me love Thee with all my heart: *Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.*[4221] Yes, my God, I love Thee with all my heart, I love Thee with all my soul. Do Thou give me the love Thou requirest of me. If I have hitherto sought myself, I will now seek none but Thee. And seeing that Thou hast loved me more than others, more than others will I love Thee. Draw me always more, my Jesus, to Thy by the odor of Thy ointments, which are the loving attractions of Thy grace. Finally, give me strength to correspond to so much love which God has borne to an ungrateful worm and traitor. Mary, Mother of mercy, help me by thy prayers.

XV

Comprehenderunt Jesum, et ligaverunt cum.

“They took Jesus and bound him.”—John, 18:12.

A God taken and bound! What could the angels have said at seeing their king with his hands bound, led between soldiers through the streets of Jerusalem! And what ought we to say at the sight of our God, who is content for our sake to be bound as a thief, to be presented to the judge who is to condemn him to death? St. Bernard laments, saying, “What hast Thou to do with chains?”[4222] What have malefactors and chains to do with Thee, O my Jesus, Thou who art infinite goodness and majesty? They should belong to us sinners, guilty of hell, and not to Thee who art innocent and the Holy of holies. St. Bernard goes on to say, on seeing Jesus guilty of death, “What hast Thou done, my innocent Saviour, that Thou shouldst be thus condemned?”[4223] O my dear Saviour, Thou art innocence itself; for what crime hast Thou been thus condemned? Ah, I will Thee, he replies: the crime Thou hast committed is the too great love Thou hast borne to men. Thy sin is love.[4224]

My beloved Jesus, I kiss the cords that bind Thee, for they have freed me from those eternal chains which I have deserved. Alas! how many times have I renounced Thy friendship and made myself a slave of Satan, dishonoring Thy infinite majesty! I grieve above all things for having so grievously insulted Thee. Ah, my God, bind my will to Thy feet with the sweet cords of Thy holy love, that it may wish for nothing but what is pleasing to Thee. May I take Thy will for the sole guide of my life. As Thou hast had so great care for my good, may I not care for anything but to love Thee. I love Thee, my sovereign Good; I love Thee, the only object of my affections. I know that Thou alone hast loved me truly, and Thee alone will I love. I renounce everything. Thou alone art sufficient for me.

XVI

Ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras, attritus est propter scelera nostra.

“But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins,”—Isa. 53:5.

One single blow suffered by this Man-God was sufficient for the sins of the whole world; but Jesus Christ was not satisfied with that; he wished to be *wounded and bruised*[4225] for our iniquities, which means to say, wounded and torn from head to foot, so that there should be no whole part remaining in his sacred body. Hence the same prophet him full of sores like a leper. *And we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted.*[4226]

O wounds of my sorrowful Jesus, you are all living evidences of the love which my Redeemer preserves for me; with tender words do you force me to love him for the many sufferings that he has undergone for the love of me. Ah, my sweet Jesus, when shall I give myself all to Thee, as Thou hast given Thyself all to me? I love Thee, my sovereign good. I love Thee, my God, lover of my soul. O God of love, give me love. By my love let me atone to Thee for the bitterness I have given Thee in times past. Help me to drive from my heart everything that does not tend to Thy love. Eternal Father, *look at the face of Thy Christ,*[4227] look at the wounds of Thy Son, which seek pity for me, and for their sake pardon me the outrages that I have committed against Thee; take my heart entirely to Thyself, that it may not love, seek, nor sigh after any other but Thee. I say to Thee, with St. Ignatius, “Give me only love of Thee and Thy grace and I am rich enough.”[4228] Behold this is all I ask of Thee, O God of my soul; give me Thy love, together with Thy grace, and I desire nothing else. O Mary, Mother of God, intercede for me.

XVII

Ave, Rex Judœorum.

“Hail, King of the Jews.”—Matt. 27:29.

Thus was our Redeemer scornfully saluted by the Roman soldiers. After having treated him as a false king, and having crowned him with thorns, they knelt before him and called him king of the Jews, and then, rising up with loud cries and laughter, they struck him and spit in his face. St. Matthew writes: *And platting a crown of thorns, they put it on His head. . . . And bowing the knee before Him, they mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews; and spitting upon Him they took the reed and struck His head.* And St. John adds, *And they gave Him blows.*[4229]

O my Jesus! this barbarous crown that encircles Thy head, this vile reed that Thou dost hold in Thy hand, this torn purple garment that covers Thee with ridicule, make Thee known indeed as a king, but a king of love. The Jews will not acknowledge Thee for their king, and they say to Pilate, *We* *have no King but Cæsar.*[4230] My beloved Redeemer, if others will not have Thee for their king, I accept Thee, and desire that Thou shouldst be the only King of my soul. To Thee do I consecrate my whole self; dispose of me as Thou pleasest. For this end hast Thou endured contempt, so many sorrows, and death itself, to gain our hearts and to reign therein by Thy love. *For this end Christ died, . . . that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*[4231] Make Thyself, therefore, master of my heart, O my beloved King, and reign and exercise Thy sway there forever. Formerly I refused Thee for my Lord, that I might serve my passions; now I will be all Thine and Thee alone will I serve. Ah, bind me to Thee by Thy love, and make me always remember the bitter death that Thou hast willed to suffer for me. Ah, my King, my God, my love, my all, what do I wish for if not for Thee alone!—*Thee, God of my heart, and my portion forever.*[4232] O God of my heart! I love Thee; Thou art my portion, Thou art my only good.

XVIII

Et bajulans sibi crucem, exivit in eum, qui dicitur Calvariæ, locum.

“And bearing His own Cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary.”—John, 19:17.

Behold the Saviour of the world has now set out on his Journey with his cross on his shoulders, going forth to die in torments for the love of men. The divine Lamb allows himself to be led without complaining, to be sacrificed upon the cross for our salvation. Go thou, also, my soul, accompany and follow thy Jesus, who goes to suffer death for thy love, to satisfy for thy sins. Tell me, my Jesus and my God, what dost Thou expect from men by giving Thy life for their sake? St. Bernard answers, Thou dost expect nothing but to be loved by them: “When God loves, he wishes for nothing but to be loved in return.”[4233]

Is it, then, my Redeemer, at so great cost that Thou hast desired to gain our love? And shall there be any among men who believe in Thee, and not love Thee? I comfort myself with the thought that Thou art the love of all the souls of the saints, the love of Mary, the love of Thy Father; but, O my God, how many are there who will not know Thee, and how many that know Thee and yet will not love Thee! Infinite Love, make Thyself known, make Thyself loved. Ah, that I could by my blood and my death make Thee loved by all! But alas that I have lived so many years in the world while I knew Thee, but did not love Thee! But now at last Thou hast drawn me to love Thee by Thy so great goodness. At one time I was so unhappy as to lose Thy grace; but the grief I now feel for it, the desire of being all Thine, and still more the death Thou hast suffered for me, give me a firm confidence, O my Love, that Thou hast already pardoned me, and that now Thou dost love me. Oh that I could die for Thee, my Jesus, as Thou hast died for me! Although no punishment awaited those who love Thee not, I would never leave off loving Thee, and I would do all I could to please Thee. Thou who givest me this good desire, give me strength to follow it out. My love, my hope, do not abandon me; make me correspond, during the remainder of my life to the especial love that Thou has borne me. Thou desirest to have me for Thine own, and I wish to be all for Thee. I love Thee, my God, my treasure, my all. I will live and die always repeating, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee.

XIX

> Quasi agnus coram tondente se, obmutescet, et non aperiet os suum.
>
> “And shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and He shall not open his mouth.”—Is. 53:7.

This was precisely the passage which the eunuch of Queen Candace was reading; but not understanding of whom it was written, St. Philip, inspired by God, entered the carriage in which the eunuch was, and explained to him that these words referred to our Redeemer Jesus Christ. Jesus was called a lamb because he was dragged into the prætorium of Pilate, and then led to death just like an innocent lamb. Therefore the Baptist calls him a lamb. *Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world.*[4234] A lamb who suffers and dies a victim on the cross for our sins. *Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows.*[4235] Miserable are those who do not love Jesus Christ during their life. In the last day the sight of this Lamb in his wrath will make them say to the mountains, *Fall upon us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.*[4236]

No, my divine Lamb, if in times past I have not loved Thee, now I will love Thee forever. Before, I was blind; but now that thou hast enlightened me, and hast made me know the great evil I have done in turning my back upon Thee, and the infinite love which is due to Thee for Thy goodness and for the love Thou hast borne me, I repent with all my heart for having offended Thee, and I love Thee above all things. O wounds, O blood of my Redeemer, how many souls have you not inflamed with love! inflame my soul also. Ah, my Jesus, continually call to my remembrance Thy Passion and the pains and ignominies that Thou hast suffered for me, that I may detach my affections from earthly goods and place them all on Thee, my only and infinite good. I love Thee, Lamb of God, sacrificed and annihilated on the cross for my sake. Thou hast not refused to suffer for me; I will not refuse to suffer for Thee whatever Thou requirest. I will no longer complain of the crosses that Thou dost send me. I ought to have been in hell these many years; how, then, can I complain? Give me grace to love Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt. *Who shall separate me from the love of Christ?*[4237] Ah, my Jesus, sin alone can separate me from Thy love. Ah, let not be; rather let me die a thousand times; this I beg of Thee by Thy sacred Passion. I beseech thee, O Mary, by thy sorrows deliver me from the death of sin.

XX

Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?

“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”—Matt. 27:46.

O God! who shall not compassionate the Son of God, who for love men is dying of grief on a cross? He is tormented externally in his body by the innumerable wounds, and internally he is so afflicted and sad that he seeks solace for his great sorrow from the Eternal Father; but his Father, in order to satisfy his divine justice, abandons him, and leaves him to die desolate and deprived of every consolation.

O desolate death of my dear Redeemer, Thou art my hope. O my abandoned Jesus, Thy merits make me hope that I shall not remain abandoned and separated from Thee forever in hell. I do not care to live in consolation on this earth; I embrace all the pains and desolations that Thou mayest send me. He is not worthy of consolation who by offending Thee has merited for himself eternal torments. It is enough for me to love Thee and to live in Thy grace. This alone do I beg of Thee, let me nevermore see myself deprived of Thy love. Let me be abandoned by all; do not Thou abandon me in this extremity. I love Thee, my Jesus, who didst die abandoned for me. I love Thee, my only good, my only hope, my only love.

XXI

> Crucifixerunt eum, et cum eo alios duos hinc et hinc, medium autem Jesum.
>
> “They crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst.”—John, 19:18.

The incarnate Word was called by the sacred spouse, *All lovely; such is my beloved.*[4238] At whatever period of his life Jesus Christ presents himself to us, he appears altogether desirable and most worthy of love, whether we see him as an infant in the stable, as a boy in the shop of St. Joseph, as a solitary meditating in the desert, or bathed in sweat as he walked about preaching throughout Judea. But in no other form does he appear more loving than when he is nailed to the cross on which the immense love he bears us forced him to die. St. Francis de Sales has said, the Mount of Calvary is the hill of lovers. All love which does not take its rise from the Passion of the Saviour is weak. How miserable is the death where there is no love of the Redeemer! Let us stop, then, and consider that this man, nailed to the tree of shame, is our true God, and that he is here suffering and dying for nothing but for the love of us.

Ah, my Jesus, if all men would stand still and contemplate Thee on the cross, believing with a lively faith, that Thou art their God, and that Thou hast died for their salvation, how could they live far from Thee and without Thy love? And how could I, knowing all this, have displeased Thee so often? If others have offended Thee, they have at least sinned in darkness; but I have sinned in the light. But these pierced hands, this wounded side, this blood, these wounds which I see in Thee, make me hope for pardon and Thy grace. I am grieved, I love Thee with all my heart; and my greatest grief is the remembrance of my having despised Thee. This grief, however, which I feel, is a sign that Thou hast pardoned me. O burning heart of my Jesus, inflame my poor heart with Thy love. O my Jesus, dead, consumed with sorrow for me, make me die consumed with sorrow for having offended Thee, and with the love Thou dost merit, I sacrifice myself entirely to Thee, who hast sacrificed entirely for me. O sorrowful Mother Mary, make me faithful in loving Jesus!

XXII

Et inclinato capite, tradidit spiritum.

“And bowing His head, He gave up the ghost.”—John. 19:30.

Behold, my Redeemer, to what Thy love for men has brought Thee—even to die of sorrow on a cross, drowned in a sea of grief and ignominy; as David had predicted of Thee. *I am come into the depth of the sea, and a tempest hath overwhelmed me.*[4239] St. Francis de Sales writes thus: “Let us contemplate this divine Saviour stretched on the cross, as upon the altar of his glory, on which he is dying of love for us. Ah, why, then, do we not in spirit throw ourselves upon him to die upon the cross with him who has chosen to die there for the love of us? I will hold him, and will burn in the flames of his love; one and the same fire shall devour this divine Creator and his miserable creature. My Jesus is all mine, and I am all his. I will live and die on his bosom. Neither life nor death shall ever separate me from my Jesus.”[4240]

Yes, my dear Redeemer, I hold fast to Thy cross; I kiss Thy pierced feet, touched with compassion and confounded at seeing the affection with which Thou hast died for me. Ah, accept me, and bind me to Thy feet, that I may no more depart from Thee, and may from this day forward converse with Thee alone, consult with Thee on all my thoughts; in a word, may I henceforth direct all my affections so as to seek nothing but to love Thee and please Thee, always longing to leave this valley of dangers to come and love Thee face to face with all my strength in Thy kingdom, which is a kingdom of eternal love. In the mean time let me always live, grieving for the offences I have committed against Thee, and always burning with love for Thee, who for love of me hast given Thy life. I love Thee, my Jesus, who hast died for me; I love Thee, O infinite lover; I love Thee, O infinite love; I love Thee, infinite goodness. O Mary, Mother of beautiful love, pray to my Jesus for me.

XXIII

Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit.

“He was offered because it was His own will.”—Isa. 53:7.

The incarnate Word, at the moment of his conception, saw before him all the souls that he was to redeem. Then thou also, my soul, wast presented with the guilt of all thy sins upon thee, and for thee did Jesus Christ accept all the pains that he suffered in life and death; and in doing so he obtained for thee thy pardon, and all the graces that thou hast received from God—the lights, the calls of his love, the helps to overcome temptations, the spiritual consolations, the tears, the compassionate feelings thou hast experienced when thinking of the love he had for thee, and the sentiments of sorrow in remembering how thou hast offended him.

Thou didst, then, my Jesus, from the very beginning of Thy life, take upon Thee all my sins, and didst offer Thyself to satisfy for them by Thy sufferings. By Thy death Thou hast delivered me from eternal death: *But Thou hast delivered my soul, that it should not perish; Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.*[4241] Thou, my love, instead of punishing me for the insults which I have added to those that Thou hadst already received, hast gone on adding to Thy favors and mercies towards me, in order to win my heart one day to Thyself. My Jesus, this day is come; I love Thee with all my soul. Who should love Thee if I do not? This is the first sin, my Jesus, that Thou hast to forgive me, that have been so many years in the world without loving Thee. But for the future I will do all I can to please Thee. I feel by Thy grace a great desire to live to Thee alone, and to detach myself from all created things, I have also a great compunction for the displeasure that I have caused Thee. This desire and this sorrow, I see, my Jesus, are all Thy gift. Continue, then, my weakness. Make me all Thine, as Thou hast made Thyself all mine. I love Thee, my only good; I love Thee, my only love; I love Thee, my treasure, my all; My Jesus, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee. Help me, O Mother of God.

XXIV

> Deus Filium suum mittens in similitudinem carnis peccati, et de peccato damnavit peccatum in carne. Christus nos redemit de maledicto legis factus pronobis maledictum, quia scriptum est: Maledictus omnis qui pendet in ligno.
>
> “God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, even of sin, hath condemned sin in the flesh.”—Rom. 8:3. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”—Gal. 3:13.

Hence we see that Jesus Christ willed to appear in the world as guilty and an acused man, hanging on the cross to deliver us from eternal malediction.

O eternal Father, for the love of this Son so dear to Thee, have pity on me! And Thou, Jesus, my Redeemer, who by Thy death hast liberated me from the slavery of sin in which I was born, and of the sins that I have committed since my baptism, ah, change the miserable chains which once bound me a slave to Satan into chains of gold, which may bind me to Thee with a holy love. Arise and show forth in me the efficacy of Thy merits, by changing me, a sinner, into a saint. I have deserved to be burning in hell for many years past: but I hope by Thy infinite mercy, for the glory of Thy death, to burn with Thy love, and to be all Thine. I wish that my heart should love none but Thee. *Thy kingdom come*. Reign, my Jesus, reign over my whole soul. May it obey Thee alone, seek Thee alone, desire Thee alone. Away from my heart, ye flames of divine love; come and remain alone to posses and consume me for that God of love who didst die consumed for me. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee, O infinite Sweetness and my true lover, I have no one who has loved me more than Thou; and therefore I give and consecrate myself to Thee, my treasure and my all.

XXV

Dilexit nos, et lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo.

“He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”—Apoc. 1:5.

So, then, my Jesus, in order to save my soul, Thou hast prepared a bath of Thine own blood wherein to cleanse it from the filth of its sins. If, then, our souls have been bought by Thy blood, *For you are bought with a great price*,[4242] it is a sign that Thou lovest them much; and as Thou dost love them, let us pray thus to Thee: *We therefore pray Thee to help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood*.[4243] It is true that by my sins I have separated myself from Thee, and have knowingly lost Thee. But remember, my Jesus, that Thou hast bought me with Thy blood. Ah, may this blood not have been given in vain for me, which was shed with so much grief and so much love.

By my sins I have driven Thee, my God, from my soul, and have merited Thy hatred; but Thou hast said that Thou wouldst forget the crimes of a repentant sinner. *But if he do penance . . . I will not remember all his* *iniquities.*[4244] Thou hast further said, *I love them that love me.*[4245] I pray Thee, therefore, my Jesus, to forget all the injuries that I have offered Thee, and love me; whilst I also will now love Thee more than myself, and repent above all things for having offended Thee. Ah, my beloved Lord, for the sake of that blood which Thou hast shed for the love of me, hate me no longer, but love me. It is not enough for me that Thou shouldst only forgive me the chastisement I deserve, I desire to love Thee and to be loved by Thee. O God, who art all love, all goodness, unite me and bind me to Thyself, and permit not that I should ever be separated from Thee any more, and that thus I should deserve Thy hatred. No, my Jesus, my love, let it not be, I will be all Thine, and I desire that Thou shouldst be all mine.

XXVI

> Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.
>
> "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death; even the death of the cross."—Phil. 2:8.

What great thing is that the martyrs have done in giving their lives for God, while God has humbled himself to the death of the cross for their love? To render a just return for the death of a God, it would not be sufficient to sacrifice the lives of all men; the death of another God for his love would alone compensate for it. O my Jesus! allow me, a poor sinner, to say to Thee, with Thy true lover St. Francis of Assissi, "May I die, O Lord, for the love of Thy love, as Thou didst deign to die for the love of my love."[4246]

Is it true, my Redeemer, that hitherto, for the love of my own pleasures, unhappy that I am! I have renounced Thy love? Would that I had died before, and had never offended Thee! I thank Thee that Thou givest me time to love Thee in this life, that I may afterwards love Thee throughout all eternity. Ah, remind me continually, my Jesus, of the ignominious death that Thou hast suffered for me, that I may never forget to love Thee in consideration of the love that Thou hast borne me. I love Thee, infinite goodness; I love Thee, my supreme good; to Thee I give myself entirely, and by that love which caused Thee to die for me, do Thou accept my love, and let me die, destroy me, rather than ever permit me to leave off loving Thee. I will say to Thee, with St. Francis de Sales, "O eternal Love, my soul seeks Thee, and chooses Thee for all eternity. Come, O Holy Spirit, inflame our hearts with Thy love. Either to love or to die. To die to all other affections, to live only to the love of Jesus.”[4247]

XXVII

Charitas enim Christi urget nos.

“The Charity of Christ presseth us.”—2 Cor. 5:14.

How tender and full of unction are the words with which St. Francis de Sales comments on this passage in his book of the divine love! “Hear Theotimus,” he says; “nothing forces and presses the soul of man so much as love. If a man knows that he is loved by any one, he feels himself forced to love him; but if a peasant is loved by a lord, he is still more strongly forced; and if by a monarch, how much more so! Know, then, that Jesus, the true God, has loved us so far as to suffer death, even the death of the cross for us. Is not this to have our hearts put under a press, and to feel them squeezed and crushed so as to force out our love with a violence which is all the stronger for being so loving.”

Ah, my Jesus, since Thou dost desire to be loved by me, remind me always of the love that Thou hast borne me, and of the pains Thou hast suffered to show me this love. May the remembrance of them be ever present in my mind and in the minds of all men, for it is impossible to believe what Thou hast suffered to oblige us to love, and yet not love Thee. Till now the cause of my negligent and wicked life has been, that I have not thought of the affection which Thou, my Jesus, hast had for me. All this time, however, I knew the great displeasure my sins gave Thee, and nevertheless I went on multiplying them. Every time I remember this I should wish to die of grief for it, and I should not now have courage to ask Thy pardon, if I did not know that Thou didst die to obtain forgiveness for me. Thou hast borne with me in order that at the sight of the wrong I have done Thee, and of the death that Thou hast suffered for me, my sorrow and love towards Thee should be increased. I repent, my dear Redeemer, with all my heart, for having offended Thee, and I love Thee with all my soul. After so many sings of Thy affection, and after the many mercies that Thou hast shown me, I promise Thee that I will love none but Thee. Thee will I love with all my strength; Thou art my Jesus, my love, my all. Thou art my love, because in Thee I have placed all my affections Thou art my all, because I will have none other but Thee. Grant, then, that always, both in life and death and through all eternity, I may ever call Thee my God, my love, and my all.

XXVIII

> Charitas enim Christ urget nos.
>
> “The charity of Christ presseth us.”—2 Cor. 5:14.

Let us consider anew the force of these words. The Apostle means to say that it is not so much the thought of all that Christ has suffered for us that should constrain us to love him, as the thought of the love that he has shown in wishing to suffer so much for us. This love made our Saviour say, while he was yet alive, that he was dying with the desire that the day of his death should draw near to make us know the boundless love that he had for us. *I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!*[4248] And the same love made him say the last night of his life. *With desire, I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer.*[4249]

So great, then, my Jesus, was the desire that Thou hadst to be loved by us, that all through Thy life Thou didst desire nothing but to suffer and to die for us, and so to put us under the necessity of loving Thee at least out of gratitude for so much love. Dost Thou so thirst for love? How is it, then, that we so little desire Thine. Alas, that I should have been up to this time so foolish! Not only have I not desired Thy love, but I have brought down upon myself Thy hatred by losing my respect for Thee. My dear Redeemer, I know the evil I have done, I detest it above all my other sins, and am sorry from the bottom of my heart. Now I desire Thy love more than all the goods of the world. My best and only treasure, I love Thee above all things, I love Thee more than myself, I love Thee with all my soul, and I desire nothing but to love Thee and to be loved by Thee. Forget, my Jesus, the offences that I have committed against Thee; do Thou also love me, and love me exceedingly, that I may exceedingly love Thee. Thou art my love, Thou art my hope, Thou knowest how weak I am; help me, Jesus, my love; help me, Jesus, my hope. Succor me also with thy prayers, O Mary, great Mother of God.

XXIX

Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.

"Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—John, 15:13.

What more, O my soul! could thy God do than to give his life in order to make thee love him? To give his life is the greatest mark of affection that a man can give to another man who is his friend. But what love must that have been which our Creator has shown to us, in choosing to die for us his creatures! This is what St. John was considering when he wrote: *In this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us.*[4250] Indeed, if faith did not teach us that a God has willed to die to show us his love, who would ever have been able to believe it?

Ah, my Jesus, I believe that Thou hast died for me, and therefore I confess that I deserve a thousand hells for having repaid with insults and ingratitude the love that Thou hast borne me in giving Thy life for me. I thank Thy mercy, which has promised to forgive those that repent. Trusting, then, in this sweet promise, I hope for pardon from Thee, repenting, as I do, with all my heart for having so often despised Thy love. But since Thy love has not abandoned me, overcome by Thy love I consecrate myself all to Thee. Thou, my Jesus, hast finished Thy life by dying in agony on a cross; and I consecrate to Thee my life, accepting with love all the sufferings that will come to me from Thy hand, both in life and in death. Softened and confounded at the great mercy that Thou hast used towards me, I hold fast Thy cross; at Thy feet will I thus live and die. Ah, my Redeemer, by the love that Thou hast borne me in dying for me, do not permit me ever to separate myself from Thee again. Make me always live and die in Thy embrace. My Jesus, my Jesus, I repeat, make me always live and die united with Thee.

XXX

Et ego, si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad me ipsum.

"I, if be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things unto Myself."—John, 12:32.

Thou hast said, then, my Saviour, that when hanging on the cross Thou wouldst draw all our hearts unto Thyself; why is it that for so many years my heart has gone far away from Thee? Ah, it is not Thy fault. How many times hast Thou called me to Thy love and I have turned a deaf ear? How many times too hast Thou pardoned me, and affectionately warned me by remorse of conscience not to offend Thee again, and I have repeated my offence? Ah, my Jesus, send me not to hell, because there I shall be cursing forever these graces which Thou hast given me; so that these graces, the illuminations Thou hast given me, Thy calls, Thy patience in bearing with me, the blood that Thou didst shed to save me, would be the most cruel of all the torments of hell. But now I hear Thee call me again, and Thou dost say to me, with the greatest love, as if I had never offended Thee: *Love the Lord Thy God with all thy heart.*[4251] Thou dost command me to love Thee, and to love thee with all my heart. But if Thou didst not command me, O Jesus! how could I live without loving Thee, after so many proofs of Thy love? Yes, I love Thee, my supreme good; I love Thee with all my heart. I love Thee because Thou dost command me to love Thee. I love Thee because Thou art worthy of infinite love. I love Thee, and desire nothing else but to love Thee, and nothing else do I fear except being separated from Thee, and living without Thy Love. Ah, my crucified love, permit not that I ever leave off loving Thee. Ever call to my remembrance the death that Thou hast undergone for me. Remind me of the endearments that Thou hast used towards me, and may the remembrance of them incite me more and more to love Thee, and to spend myself for Thee, who hast spent Thyself as a victim of love on the cross for me.

XXXI

> Qui etiam proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?
>
> “He that spared not His only Son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath He not also . . . given us all things?—Rom. 8:32.

What flames of love ought not these words enkindle in our hearts: *Delivered Him up for us all*[4252]! Divine justice, offended by our sins, must be satisfied; what therefore, does God do? To pardon us, he wills that his Son should be condemned to death, and should himself pay the penalty due from us: *He spared not His only Son.*[4253] O God! if the eternal Father were capable of suffering, what grief would he not have experienced in condemning to death, for the sins of his servants, his well-beloved and innocent Son! Let us imagine that we see the eternal Father, with Jesus dead in his arms, and saying, *For the wickedness of My people have I struck Him.*[4254] Rightly did St. Francis of Paula exclaim, in ecstasy of love, when meditating on the death of Jesus Christ, “O love! O love! O love!” On the other hand, with what confidence should not the following words inspire us: *How hath He not also, with Him, given us all things*[4255]? And how, my God, should I fear that Thou shouldst not give me pardon, perseverance, Thy love, Thy Paradise, and all the graces that I can hope for, now that Thou hast given me that which is most dear to Thee, even Thine own Son? I know what I must do to obtain every good from Thee,—I must ask for it for the love of Jesus Christ; of this Jesus Christ himself assures me: *Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[4256]

My supreme and eternal God, I have hitherto despised Thy majesty and goodness; now I love Thee above all things; and because I love Thee, I repent with all my heart of having offended Thee, and would rather accept any chastisement than evermore offend Thee. Pardon me, and grant me those graces which I now ask of Thee, confiding in the promise of Jesus Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ I beseech Thee to give me holy perseverance to death, give me a pure and perfect love towards Thee, give me an entire conformity to Thy holy will, give me finally Paradise. I ask for all, and hope for all, from Thee through the merits of Jesus Christ. I deserve nothing; I am worthy of punishment, not of graces, but Thou dost deny nothing to those who pray to Thee for the love of Jesus Christ. Ah, my good God, I see that Thou dost wish me to be all Thine; I also wish to be Thine, and will not fear that my sins should prevent me from being all Thine,—Jesus Christ has already satisfied for them,—and Thou, besides, art ready, for the love of Jesus Christ, to give me all that I desire. This is my desire and my request; my God, hear me! I wish to love Thee, to love Thee exceedingly; and to be altogether Thine. Most holy Mary, help me.

XXXII

> Nos autem prædicamus Christum crucifixum, Judæis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam.
>
> “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness.”—1 Cor. 1:23.

St. Paul assures us that the Gentiles, hearing it preached that the Son of God had been crucified for the salvation of mankind, reckoned it folly: *But unto the Gentiles foolishness;*[4257] as if they said, Who can believe such folly, that a God should have willed to die for the love of his creatures! “It seems a foolish thing,” says St. Gregory, “that a God should wish to die for the salvation of man.”[4258] St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, also rapt in love, exclaims in an ecstasy, Do you not know, my sisters, that my Jesus is nothing but love? rather he is mad with love. I say that Thou art mad with love, my Jesus, and I will always say so.

My beloved Redeemer, oh that I could possess the hearts of all men, and with them love Thee as Thou deservest to be loved! O God of love, why, after Thou hast shed all Thy blood in this world and given Thy life for the love of mankind,—why, I say, are there so few men who burn with Thy love? For this end didst Thou come, namely, to kindle in our hearts the fire of Thy love, and Thou desirest nothing but to see it enkindled. *I am come to cast fire on the earth*, *and what will I but that it be kindled?*[4259] I pray, then, with the Holy Church, in my name and in the name of every one living, kindle in them the fire of Thy love; enkindle them, enkindle them, enkindle them! My God, Thou art all goodness, all love, all infinite sweetness, boundless in love; make Thyself known to all, make Thyself loved. I am not ashamed of praying thus to Thee, although up to this time I have been more guilty than others in despising Thy love,—because now, enlightened by Thy grace, and wounded by the many arrows of love Thou hast shot forth from Thy burning and loving heart into my soul, I am determined no longer to be ungrateful to Thee as I have hitherto been; but I will love Thee with all my strength, I desire to burn with Thy love, and this Thou hast to grant me. I look not for sensible consolations in loving Thee; I do not deserve them, neither do I ask for them; it is enough for me to love Thee. I love Thee, my sovereign good; I love Thee, my God and my all.

XXXIII

> Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum . . . , et voluit conterere eum.
>
> “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. . . . And the Lord hath pleased to bruise Him.”—Isa. 53:6, 10.

Behold the extent of divine love towards man! The eternal Father loads the shoulders of his Son with our sins; *And He was pleased to bruise Him.*[4260] He willed that his own son should suffer with the utmost rigor all the punishment due to us, making him die on an ignominious cross overwhelmed with torments. The apostle is just, then, when speaking of this love, to call it too much love to ordain that we should receive life through the death of his beloved Son. *For His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ*[4261]

Thou hast, then, my God, loved me too much, and I have been too ungrateful in offending Thee and turning my back upon Thee. Ah, eternal Father, look upon Thine only-begotten, mangled and dead upon that cross for me, and for the love of him pardon me and draw my heart wholly to Thyself to love Thee. *A contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise*.[4262] For the love of Jesus Christ who died for our sins, Thou canst not despise a soul that humbles itself and repents. I know myself to be deserving of a thousand hells, but I repent with my whole heart for having offended Thee, the supreme Good. Reject me not, but have pity on me. But I am not content with a simple pardon; I desire that Thou shouldst give me a great love towards Thee, that I may compensate for all the offences that I have committed against Thee. I love Thee, infinite Goodness, I love Thee, O God of love. It is but little if I should die and annihilate myself for Thy sake. I desire to know how to love Thee as Thou deservest. But Thou knowest I can do nothing; do Thou make me grateful for the immense love that Thou hast had for me. I beg this of Thee for the love of Jesus, Thy Son. Grant that I may overcome everything in this life to please Thee, and that in death I may expire entirely united to Thy will, and so come to love Thee face to face with a perfect and eternal love in Paradise.

XXXIV

Ego sum Pastor bonus. Bonus Pastor animam suam dat pro ovibus suis.

I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep."—John, 10:2.

My Jesus, what dost Thou say? What shepherd would ever give his life for his sheep? Thou alone, because Thou art a God of infinite love, canst say, *And I lay down My life for My sheep.*[4263] Thou alone hast been able to show to the world this excess of love, that being our God and our supreme Lord, Thou hast yet willed to die for us. It was of this excess of love that Moses and Elias spoke on Mount Tabor: *They spoke of his decease that he should accomplish in Jerusalem.*[4264] Hence St. John exhorts us to love a God who was the first to love us: *Let us therefore love God because God first hath loved us.*[4265] As if he said, If we will not love this God for his infinite goodness, let us love him at least for the love that he has borne us in suffering willingly the pains that were due to us.

Remember, then, my Jesus, that I am one of those sheep for whom Thou hast given Thy life. Ah, cast on me one of those looks of pity with which Thou didst regard me once when Thou wast dying on the cross for me; look on me, change me, and save me. Thou hast called Thyself the loving Shepherd who, finding the lost sheep, takes it with joy and carries it on his shoulders, and then calls his friends to rejoice with him: *Rejoice with me, for I have found the sheep that was lost.*[4266] Behold, I am the lost sheep; seek me and find me: *have gone astray like a sheep that is lost; seek Thy servant.*[4267] If through my fault Thou hast not yet found me, take me now and unite me and bind me to Thee, that Thou mayest not lose me again. The bond must be that of Thy love; if Thou dost not bind me with this sweet chain Thou wilt again lose me. Ah, it is not Thou who hast been wanting in binding me by holy love; but I, an ungrateful wretch, who have continually fled from Thee. But now I pray Thee, by that infinite mercy which caused Thee to come down to the earth to find me. Ah, bind me; but bind me with a double chain of love, that Thou mayest not lose me again, and that I may no more lose Thee. I renounce all the goods and pleasures of the world, and offer myself to suffer every pain, every death, provided that I live and die always united to Thee. I love Thee, my sweet Jesus; I love Thee, my good Shepherd, who hast died for Thy lost sheep; but know that this sheep now loves Thee more than himself, and desires nothing but to love Thee and to be consumed by Thy love. Have pity on him, then, and permit him never again to be separated from Thee.

XXXV

Ego pono animam meam. . . . Nemo tollit eam a me, sed ego pono eam a meipso.

> “I lay down My life. . . . No one taketh it away from Me; but I lay it down of Myself.”—John, 10:17, 18.

Behold, then, the Word Incarnate, urged alone by the love that he preserves towards us, accepts the death of the cross to give to man the life that he had lost. Behold, says St. Thomas, a God does for man more than he could have done if man had been (so to speak) his God, and as if God could never have been happy without man. “As if,” these are the words of the saint, “man had been God’s god, as if God could not be happy without him.”[4268] We sinned, and by sinning merited eternal punishment; and what does Jesus do? He takes upon himself the obligation of satisfaction, and he pays for us by his sufferings and his death: *Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows*[4269]

Ah, my Jesus, since I have been the cause of all the bitterness and anguish that Thou didst suffer while living on this earth, I pray Thee make me share the grief that Thou didst feel for my sins, and give me confidence in Thy Passion. What would have become of me, my Lord, if Thou hadst not deigned to satisfy for me? O infinite Majesty, I repent with my whole heart for having outraged Thee; but I hope for pity from Thee, who art infinite Goodness. Arise, O Saviour of the world, and apply to my soul the fruit of Thy death, and from an ungrateful rebel make me become such a true son as to love Thee alone, and to fear nothing but to displease Thee. May that same love which made Thee die on the cross for me destroy in me all earthly affections. My Jesus, take my whole body to Thyself in such a way that it may only serve to obey Thee; take my heart, that it may desire nothing but Thy pleasure; take my whole will, that it may wish for nothing but what is according to Thy will. I embrace Thee and press Thee to my heart, my Redeemer. Ah, do not disdain to unite Thyself to me. I love Thee, O God of love. I love Thee, my only good. How could I have the heart to leave Thee again, now that Thou hast taught me how much Thou hast loved me, and how many mercies Thou hast shown me, changing the punishments that were due to me into graces and caresses? O holy Virgin, obtain for me the grace of being grateful to thy Son.

XXXVI

> Delens quod adversus nos crat chirographum decreti, quod erat contrarium nobis, et ipsum tulit de medio, affigens illud cruci.

> “Blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross.”—Coloss. 2:14.

The sentence was already recorded against us that was to condemn us to eternal death, as rebels of the offended Majesty of God. And what has Jesus Christ done? With his blood he has cancelled the writing of the condemnation, and, to deliver us from all fear, he has fastened it to his own cross, on which he died to satisfy for us to the divine justice. My soul, behold the obligation that thou art under to thy Redeemer; and hear how the Holy Spirit now reminds thee: *Forget not the kindness of thy surety.*[4270] Forget not the kindness of thy surety, who, taking upon himself thy debts, has paid them for thee; and behold, the pledge of the payment has been already fixed to the cross. When, therefore thou dost remember thy sins, look upon the cross, and have confidence; look on that sacred wood stained with the blood of the Lamb of God sacrificed for thy love, and hope in and love a God who has loved thee so much.

Yes, my Jesus, I hope everything from Thy infinite goodness. It is property of Thy divine nature to render good for evil to those who repent of their sins, are sorry for having committed them, and who love Thee. Yes, I am sorry above all things, my beloved Redeemer, for having so much despised Thy goodness, and, wounded by Thy love, I love Thee, and I ardently desire to please Thee in everything that is Thy will. Alas! when I was in sin, I was the servant of the devil, and he was my master. Now that I hope to remain in Thy grace, Thou alone, my Jesus, art the only Lord of my heart, and my only Love. Take possession of me, then; keep me always, possess me entirely; for Thine only do I desire to be. No, nevermore will I forget the pains that Thou hast suffered for me; so shall I be more and more inflamed, and increase in Thy love. I love Thee, my most dear Redeemer; I love Thee, O Word Incarnate; my treasure, my all, I love Thee, I love Thee.

XXXVII

> Si quis peccaverit, advocatum habemus apud Patrem Jesum Christum justum, et ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris.
>
> “But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just, and he is the propitiation for our sins.”—1 John, 2:1.

Oh, what great confidence do these words give to penitent sinners! Jesus Christ is in heaven, advocating their cause, and he is certain to obtain pardon for them. The devil, when a sinner has escaped from his chains, tempts him to be diffident of obtaining pardon. But St. Paul encourages him, saying, *Who is He that shall condemn? Jesus Christ that died, . . . who also maketh intercession for us.*[4271] The Apostle means to say, If we detest the sins that we have committed, why do we fear? Who is he who will condemn us? It is Jesus Christ, the same who died, that we might not be condemned, and who is now in heaven, where he is advocating our cause. He goes on to say, *Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?*[4272] As if he would say, But after we have been pardoned with so much love by Jesus Christ, and have been received into his grace, who could have the heart to turn his back upon him, and separate himself from his love?

No, my Jesus, I no longer rely upon myself so as to live separated from Thee and deprived of Thy love. I weep over the unhappy days when lived without Thy grace. Now I hope that Thou hast pardoned me I love Thee, and Thou lovest me. But Thou dost love with a boundless love, and I love Thee so little; give me more love. Infinite Goodness, I repent above all things for having hitherto so ill-treated Thee; now I love Thee above all things, I love Thee more than myself; and I take more delight, my God, in knowing that Thou art infinitely blessed than in my own happiness, because I love Thee better—being, as Thou art, worthy of infinite love—than myself, who deserve nothing but hell. My Jesus, I wish for nothing from Thee, but Thyself.

XXXVIII

Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.

“Come to Me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you.”—Matt. 11:28.

Let us listen to Jesus Christ, who from the cross to which he is nailed, and from the altar where he dwells under the sacramental species, calls us poor afflicted sinners to console us and enrich us with his graces. Oh, what two great mysteries of hope and love to us are the Passion of Jesus Christ and the Sacrament of the Eucharist!—mysteries which, if faith did not make us certain of them, would be incredible. That God should deign to shed even the very last drop of his blood! (for this is the signification of *effundetur*). *This is My Blood, . . . which shall be shed for many.*[4273] And why? To atone for our sins. But then to will to give his own body as food for our souls,—

that body which had already been sacrificed on the cross for our salvation! These sublime mysteries must surely soften the hardest hearts, and raise up the most desperate sinners. Finally, the Apostle says that in Jesus Christ we are enriched with every good, so that no grace is wanting to us: *In all things you are made rich in Him. . . . So that nothing is wanting to you in any grace.*[4274] It is enough that we invoke this God for him to have mercy on us; and he will abound in grace to all who pray to him, as the same Apostle assures us: *Rich unto all who call upon Him.*[4275]

If, then, my Saviour, I have reason to despair of pardon for the offences and treacheries that I have been guilty of towards Thee, I have still greater reason to trust in Thy goodness. My Father, I have forsaken Thee, like an ungrateful son; but I now return to Thy feet, full of sorrow and covered with confusion for the many mercies that Thou hast shown me; and I say with shame, *Father, I am not worthy to be called Thy son.*[4276] Thou hast said that there is rejoicing in heaven when a sinner is converted: *There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance.*[4277] Behold, I leave all and turn to Thee, my crucified Father; I repent with my whole heart for having treated Thee with such contempt as to turn my back upon Thee. Receive me again to Thy grace, and inflame with Thy holy love, so that I may never leave Thee again. Thou hast said, *I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.*[4278] Wherefore I hope to receive from Thee, not only Thy grace as I enjoyed it before I offended Thee, but grace more abundant, which shall make me become all on fire with Thy love. Oh that I could love Thee, my God, as Thou dost deserve to be loved! I love Thee above all things. I love Thee more than myself. I love Thee with all my heart; and I aspire after heaven, where I shall love Thee for all eternity. *What is there to me in heaven, and besides Thee what have I desired on earth? O God, God of my heart and my portion forever.*[4279] Ah, God of my heart, take and keep possession of all my heart, and drive from it every affection that does not belong to Thee. Thou art my only treasure, my only love. I wish for Thee alone, and nothing more. O Mary, my hope, by thy prayers draw me all to God.

HYMN

THE SOUL SIGHING FOR JESUS

This heart of mine is sighing,
And yet I know not why;
Its sighs with love are laden,
But whither do they fly?
My trembling heart, oh, tell me,
Wherefore these burning sighs
“I sigh for God, I languish
For Jesus,” it replies.
Sigh on, my heart, and cease not
With sighs of love to swell;
Spend all thy life in loving
Him who loves thee so well.
Sigh on, and let thy Jesus
Alone possess thy breast,
And all thy hope in Mary
With childlike spirit rest.
Send forth thy sighs like arrows
To wound thy conqu’ror’s heart,
Then hope for gifts the choicest
His goodness can impart.
My trembling sighs, ah, hasten,
To Jesus haste away;
Then at his feet take refuge,
And there forever stay.
Say that a heart all burning
With love has sent you there;
And ask what it shall bid you,

For he will grant its prayer.
To love with all its being
Is all the gift it sues;
Ask,—for to one that loves him
No prayer can God refuse.

PIOUS SENTIMENTS OF A SOUL THAT DESIRES TO BELONG ENTIRELY TO JESUS CHRIST

I

SENTIMENTS OF A LIVELY FAITH

O ye atheists, who believe not in God, fools that you are; if you do not believe that there is a God, tell me who created you? How can you imagine that there are creatures existing, without a previous power having created them? This world which you admire, governed as it is in so beautiful and constant an order,—could chance, which has neither order nor mind, ever have made it? Poor wretches! you try to persuade yourselves that the soul dies like the body; but, O God, what will you say, when in the next world you find that your souls are immortal, and that throughout eternity you will be unable to repair the ruin you have incurred?

But if you believe that there is a God, you must also believe that there is a true religion: and if you do not believe that the religion of the Roman Catholic Church is the true one, tell me which is the true one? Perhaps that of the Pagans, who admit many gods, and so destroy and deny all of them. Perhaps that of the Mahometans, which is a mixture of fables, of follies, and of contradictions; a religion invented by an infamous impostor, and framed rather for beasts than for men. Perhaps that of the Jews, who, indeed, had at one time the true faith; but because they rejected their expected Redeemer, who taught the new law of grace, they have lost their faith, their country, and all. Perhaps that of those heretics who, separating themselves from our Church, which was first founded by Jesus Christ, and to whom he promised that she should never fail, have confused all revealed dogmas in such a way that the belief of each one is contrary to that of his neighbor.

Ah! it is most evident that our faith is the only true one. Either there is faith, and then there can be no other true religion but ours; or there is no faith, and then all religions are false. But this cannot be; for if there is a God, there must be a true faith and a true religion.

But what much greater fools are those Christians who hold the true faith, and live as if they did not believe it! They believe that there is a God, a just Judge, that there is a paradise and an eternal hell; and yet they live as if there were no judgment, no heaven, no hell, no eternity, no God.

O God, how can Christians believe in Jesus Christ, believe in a God born in a stable, a God living obscurely in a shop for thirty years, working for his livelihood every day as a simple servant; in fine, how can they believe in a God nailed on a cross, and dying, consumed with grief; and not only not love him, but even make a mockery of him by their sins!

O holy faith, enlighten all those poor blind creatures who run to eternal perdition! But this light does ever shine forth and enlighten all men, both the faithful and unbelievers: *True light, which enlighteneth every man.*[4280] How is it, then, that so many are lost? O cursed sin, thou dost blind the minds of so many poor souls, who open their eyes when they enter eternity; but then they can no more remedy their error!

How is it, my Jesus, that so many of Thy servants have shut themselves up in caves and deserts, to attend only to their salvation; so many nobles and even princes have retired to the cloister, in order to live in poverty and unknown to the world, to make sure of their eternal salvation; so many martyrs have left all; so many tender virgins have renounced marriage with the highest nobles of the earth, and have embraced such torments as the rack, have braved the axe, the coat of mail, the red-hot gridirons, and the most cruel deaths, rather than lose Thy grace; while so many others live in sins and far from Thee for months and years?

I thank Thee, my Jesus, for the light Thou givest me, by which Thou makest me know that the goods of this world are but smoke, filth, vanity, and deceit, and that Thou art the true and only good.

My God, I thank Thee that Thou hast given me this faith, and that Thou hast made it so clear to us by the fulfilment of prophecies, by the truth of miracles, by the constancy of martyrs, by the sanctity of the doctrine, and by the wonderful propagation of the same throughout all the world; so that if it were not true, it would be impossible not to say that Thou hadst deceived us, in proving it to us by the numerous testimonies that Thou hast given us of it.

I believe all that the Church teaches me to believe, because Thou hast revealed all to us. Nor do I pretend to comprehend intellectually those mysteries which are above my mind; it is enough that Thou hast said so. I pray Thee to increase Thy faith in me.[4281]

II

SENTIMENTS OF CONFIDENCE

My Jesus, the sight of my sins makes me afraid; but the sight of Thee crucified animates and consoles me still more. Thou wilt not deny me pardon, since Thou hast given me Thy blood and Thy life. Wounds of Jesus, ye are my hope!

My dear Redeemer, at my death, in those last and more vehement assaults which hell will make against me, Thou must be my consolation. I hope that by the bitter death Thou didst undergo for me, Thou wilt make me die in Thy grace and burning with love to Thee. And by those three hours of agony which Thou didst suffer on the cross, give me the grace to suffer with resignation and for Thy love all the pains of my agony. And thou, Mary, by that grief which thou didst feel when Jesus thy Son expired, obtain for me the grace that my soul may expire while making an act of the love of God; and may come and love him, together with thee, for all eternity in Paradise.

My Jesus, by Thy merits I hope for the pardon of all the outrages that I have committed against Thee. How can I, my crucified Love, fear to obtain forgiveness, if Thou hast died in order to pardon me? How can I doubt Thy mercy, whilst it is that which made Thee come down from heaven to seek after my soul? How can I fear that Thou wilt deny me grace to love Thee, if Thou hast suffered so much to gain my heart? How can I fear that the sins which I have committed, and of which I repent with all my heart, may deprive me of Thy grace, if Thou hast shed all Thy blood to wash me from my sins, and to enable me to regain Thy friendship? I see that Thou dost give me an abhorrence of the insults I have offered Thee, Thou givest me light to know the vanity of the things of the world, Thou makest me know the love that Thou hast borne me, Thou givest me the desire of being all

Thine;—all these are signs that Thou dost desire to save me; and I desire to be saved, to come to heaven, where I shall praise Thy mercies forever.[4282] May the grief that I feel for having offended Thee remain always present to my mind, and may the desire of loving Thee with all my heart be fixed there too!

My beloved Redeemer, my Judge, when, at the point of death, I shall enter into Thy presence, ah, drive me not away from Thy face: *When Thou comest to judge, condemn me not.*[4283] Send me not to hell, because in hell I cannot love Thee. Ah, let not those wounds which Thou bearest imprinted in Thee as signs of the love that Thou hast borne me, be an eternal torment to me! Pardon me, then, before the hour of judgment shall come. Grant that, the first time I see Thee, Thy look may be one of mercy, and not of anger; declare me then to be Thy chosen sheep, and not lost goat.

> “Thou sufferedst upon the tree;
> Let not vain Thy labor be.”

Let not Thy blood have been wasted in my regard.

I am a sinner, it is true; but Thou sayest Thou desirest not the death of the sinner: *I desire not the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*[4284] I give up all, I renounce all the goods of this world,—pleasures, riches, dignities, honors. I see that they are all filth, lies, and poison; and I turn to Thee, my God. My crucified Jesus, Thee alone do I desire, and nothing more!

O God! Thou hast given Thy life, my dear Redeemer, to gain heaven for me; and I, by my accursed pleasures, have lost heaven, and Thee the Infinite Good. I am not worthy to come into that kingdom of saints; but Thy blood and Thy death encourage me to hope this. Yes, I hope and wish for heaven; I desire it, my Jesus, not in order to enjoy more, but to be able to love Thee better, and to be certain of loving Thee always.

When, my love and my all, shall I see myself embracing Thy feet, and kissing those wounds which have been the pledge of Thy love, and the cause of my salvation? I read, my Jesus, in my conscience, the sentence of death which I deserve for the offences that I have committed against Thee; but I read also upon Thy cross the sentence of pardon which Thou hast obtained for me by Thy death: *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall never be confounded.*[4285]

My dear Saviour, I hope Thou hast pardoned me all the past. When I call to mind the many times I have betrayed Thee, I tremble for the future; but this very fear increases my confidence, because, knowing my weakness, I see that I can no longer trust in myself nor in the resolutions I have taken, and therefore I hope in Thee alone to give me strength to be faithful.

I am terrified at the thought of not knowing whether I shall be saved or lost; but seeing Thee, Jesus, my Beloved, expiring on the cross for my salvation, I am animated by a sweet hope, which consoles me, and tells me that I shall love Thee without ceasing both in this life and in the next; it tells me that one day I shall find myself in the kingdom of love, where I shall be entirely and forever consumed with Thy love, without the fear of losing Thee again. At this moment I do not even know whether I am worthy of Thy love or Thy hatred; but I feel a great hatred of sin, I am disposed to suffer any death rather than lose Thy grace, I have a great desire to love Thee and to be all Thine; these are all Thy gifts, and they are signs that Thou lovest me. If, then, I have reason to fear on account of my sins, I have still greater reason to confide in Thy goodness through the mercies Thou dispensest to me. I abandon myself therefore into Thy hands,—those hands which were pierced and nailed to the Cross, to rescue me from hell: *Into Thy hands I commend my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God truth.*[4286]

The Apostle says: *He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?*[4287] If, then, O my Jesus, Thy Father has given Thee to us, and has sent Thee to die for us, how can we fear that he will refuse us pardon, his grace, perseverance, his love, and paradise? *With Him all things, all things without exception, has He given us.* Yes, my Redeemer, I hope all from the Blood Thou hast shed for me: *Help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy precious blood.*[4288]

O Queen of Heaven! O Mother of God, our hope, and the refuge of sinners, have pity on us![4289]

III

SENTIMENTS OF PENITENCE

My Jesus, by that hatred which Thou hadst for my sins in the garden of Gethsemani, give me a true sorrow for all the offences that I have committed against Thee. O my accursed sins, I hate and detest you; ye have made me lose the grace of my Lord. I repent, my Jesus, for having turned my back upon Thee. Would that I had suffered any evil, rather than ever have offended Thee!

Ah, my sweet Redeemer, when I remember all the displeasure that I have given Thee, I do not weep so much on account of the hell I have deserved, as on account of the love Thou hast borne me! Yes; because the fire of hell which I have deserved is not so great as the immense love that Thou hast shown me in Thy Passion. And how is it, O God, that, knowing that Thou, my Lord, didst allow Thyself to be bound for me, scourged for me, spit upon for me, hanged upon a cross to die for me,—how is it that I could have so often despised Thy grace, and turned my back upon Thee? I should wish to die of grief; I repent, and am sorry above all things.

I know the evil that I have done in separating myself from Thee, my Sovereign Good. I ought to have suffered any pain, any evil, any death, rather than to offend Thee; and what greater evil could I commit than that of voluntarily losing Thy grace? Ah, my Jesus, my greatest affliction is, that I have despised Thy infinite goodness!

I thank Thee, my Lord, for the sweet promise of pardon that Thou hast made to sinners, of forgetting the sins of those who repent of having offended Thee: *I will not remember any of their iniquities.*[4290] It is all the fruit of Thy Passion. O sweet Passion! O sweet mercy! O sweet love of Jesus Christ! Thou art my hope. What would have become of me, my Jesus, if Thou hadst not died, and paid the debt of my sins?

O God, I thought of offending Thee, whilst Thou thoughtest of using mercy towards me! After my sin, I thought not of repenting; but Thou didst think to call me. Finally, I have done all in my power to procure my own damnation; and Thou, so to say, hast done all Thou couldst not to see me damned. Thou art, then, an Infinite Good, and I have despised Thee; Thou art my Lord, and I have lost the respect due to Thee; Thou art infinite goodness, and I have turned my back upon Thee; Thou art worthy of infinite love, and hast loved me so much, and I have denied Thee my love, and displeased Thee so often. But Thou hast said that Thou canst not despise a heart that humbles itself and repents. Behold, I embrace Thy cross as a penitent; I repent with all my heart for having despised Thee. Receive me to Thy favor, for the sake of that blood which Thou hast shed for me.

O Mary, hope of sinners, do thou obtain pardon for me, perseverance, and the love of Jesus Christ!

IV

SENTIMENTS OF PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT

My Jesus, I love Thee, and firmly resolve to lose all rather than forfeit Thy grace. I am weak, but Thou art strong. Thy strength will make me strong against my enemies. This I hope through Thy Passion: *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?*[4291]

I am not afraid, my crucified Lord, of losing my possessions, my relatives, or even my life; I fear only to lose Thy friendship and Thy love. I am afraid that I may displease Thee, and may so see myself deprived of Thy grace. I pray Thee to keep alive in me this holy love; help me to conquer all, that I may please Thee in everything.

"Most sweet Jesus, never permit me to be separated from Thee." I am the work of Thy hands; I have been redeemed by Thy Blood; do not abandon me to the misfortune of losing Thy love, and of separating myself from Thee. Assist me always in the dangers which shall befall me, and make me ever have recourse to Thee in them. I have a great desire to be faithful to Thee, and to live alone for Thee during the remainder of my life; do Thou give me the necessary strength. This do I hope from Thee.

My Jesus, increase in me the fear of displeasing Thee. I am horrified at my former treachery to Thee. But Thy merits console me; and the many graces that Thou hast given me, these make me hope that Thou wilt not abandon me, now that I love Thee, since Thou hast shown me so much mercy while I thought not of loving Thee. I do not trust in my own strength,—I know well how little it is worth,—I confide altogether in Thy goodness; and I firmly hope nevermore to see myself separated from Thee.

Oh that I could be assured that I should never lose Thee again, and that I should always love Thee! But I resign myself to Thy divine will, which so disposes and ordains everything for my good, that I should live always in this uncertainty till death, to make me strive after a closer union with Thee, and to pray always, “Permit me nevermore to be separated from Thee.” Yes, my Jesus, I repeat it (and give me grace always to repeat it): “Let me never be separated from Thee! let me never be separated from Thee!”

My Redeemer, I will no more depart from Thee. If all men should leave Thee, I will not leave Thee, even if it should cost me my life. I protest that, even if there was neither a heaven nor a hell, I would not leave off loving Thee; because Thou, my Love, art worthy of infinite love, though there should be no reward for those who love Thee, nor any punishment for those who love Thee not.

Oh, if the years of my past life were to return, I would spend them all in loving Thee! But they will never return. I thank Thee for having waited for me, and for not having sent me to hell as I deserved. And since Thou hast waited for me, I consecrate the rest of my life to Thee: I wish that all my thoughts, my desires, and my affections should serve only to please Thee, and to fulfil Thy holy will.

My beloved Jesus, I will not wait till Thou shalt be given to me at the point of death to embrace Thee. I embrace Thee now, and press myself closely to Thy nailed feet. My crucified love, to obtain for me a good death, Thou hast condescended to die a most agonizing and sorrowful death. At that hour, when every one will abandon me, do not Thou abandon me, my Redeemer; permit me not to lose Thee, or to separate myself from Thee. Receive me into Thy sacred wounds; and may my soul there breathe itself out in loving sighs, that it may come where Thou art to love Thee forever.

V

SENTIMENTS OF LOVE

O most loving Pastor of Thy sheep! for Thou hast spent, not all Thy riches, but all Thy Blood for them. O the goodness! O the love! O the tenderness of a God for souls! Oh that I also, my Jesus, could give my blood and my life on a cross, or under the axe, for the love of Thee, who hast given Thy life on the cross for me! May all angels and men eternally praise Thy infinite charity towards men! Oh that by my death I could make all men love Thee! Graciously receive, my Lord, this my desire; and give me grace to suffer something for Thee before I die.

Ah, the martyrs have done but little, O Saviour of the world, in suffering torments, the rack, iron hooks, burning helmets, and in embracing the most cruel deaths for the love of Thee, their God, who didst die for the love of them. Thou hast died for me also; and what have I done as yet, during all my life, for Thy love? My Jesus, let me not die in this state. I love Thee; and I offer myself to suffer for Thee as much as Thou wilt. Accept this my offer, and give me strength to put it in execution.

My crucified Jesus! from Thy cross Thou didst foresee the offences I should commit against Thee; and, at the same time, Thou were procuring my pardon. Thou didst foresee my destruction, and didst prepare the remedy. Thou didst foresee my ingratitude, and Thou didst prepare for me remorse, fear, lights of salvation, calls to repentance, spiritual consolations, the tenderness and all the endearments of Thy charity. Thou didst vie with me to see which should conquer,—I in offending Thee, or Thou in redoubling Thy graces to me; I in provoking Thee to punish me, or Thou in drawing me to Thy love. When, my God, shall I have overcome all things to please Thee, who hast given Thy life for me? When shall I see myself detached from all, to be united to Thee and to Thy holy will? I desire it, and wish to perform it; but Thou must enable me to do so. I have not the strength to put it in effect. Thou hast promised to hear those that pray to Thee; I beseech Thee, with all my heart, not to let me live and die ungrateful for so much goodness.

O Word Incarnate! O Man of sorrows, born to live a life full of woes! O first and last of men!—first, because Thou art God, Lord of all; last, because in this world Thou wast contented to be ill-treated like the vilest of men,—even to suffer blows, spitting, mockeries, and curses from the very scum of the people. O divine lamb! O infinite love, and worthy of infinite love! who hast given Thy blood and Thy life for me, I love Thee, and I offer Thee my blood and my life; but what is the blood of a worm in comparison to the blood of a God?—the life of a sinner to the life of an Infinite Majesty?

My beloved Jesus, who, urged on by the bowels of Thy mercy, didst come on earth to seek us lost sheep, ah, do not cease to seek me in my misery till Thou hast found me! Remember that for me also Thou didst shed Thy blood.

O my Jesus! who for my love didst deign to be sacrificed on the cross, there to die consumed with grief, I love Thee; and I desire to sacrifice myself entirely to Thy love. Stretch forth one of Thy pierced hands, and raise me from the mire of my sins; heal the many wounds of my soul; burn, destroy in me all those affections which belong not to Thee. Thou canst do this; grant it, then, for the sake of Thy Passion. This do I hope.

Because Thou hast loved me, Thou hast not denied me Thy blood and Thy life: I, because I love Thee, will deny Thee nothing Thou dost require of me. Without reserve Thou hast given Thyself all to me in Thy Passion and in the Sacrament of the Altar; I, without reserve, give myself all to Thee. Tell me what Thou desirest of me, and by Thy help I will do it all.

O ye damned souls! speak, and say, from the prison in which you are, what torments you most in hell,—the fire that burns you, or the love which Jesus Christ has borne you? Ah, assuredly the hell of your hell is this: to see that a God came down from heaven to earth to save you, and you, shutting your eyes to the light, have chosen of your own free will to be lost, and to lose this infinite good, even your God, who will be yours no longer, nor will you ever be able to regain him.

Ah, my Jesus! my treasure, my life, my consolation, my love, my all! I thank Thee for the light that Thou givest me. I love Thee; and I fear nothing but to lose Thee, and to see myself deprived of the power to love Thee. Grant that I may love Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

My crucified Jesus! ah, break the chains of my inordinate affections, which prevent me from being wholly united to Thee, and bind me by the golden links of Thy love; but bind me so tightly, that I shall never be able to loose myself from Thee. The artifices of love that Thou hast used towards me were sufficient to bind me; but I do not see myself united to Thee as I would wish. Do Thou accomplish this; Thou alone canst do it. O love of my Jesus, Thou art my love and my hope! My Jesus, I desire Thy pure love, free from all interest of my own; and I care not if I am deprived of all personal satisfaction. Make me love Thee, and that alone is sufficient for me. I know, my Lord, that Thou desirest my love. This is why Thou hast not sent me to hell, and why for so many years Thou hast drawn near to me, and hast made these words sound in my ears: “Love Me, love me with all thy heart.” Tell me what I must do in order to please Thee fully. Behold me now; I give Thee my will, my liberty, my whole self: I know not what more to give Thee. In this world I desire neither pleasures nor honors; the only happiness and honor that I desire is to be all Thine. Do Thou accept me. Help me with Thy grace, and never abandon me: *Be Thou my helper; forsake me not. Do not Thou despise me O god, my Saviour.*[4292] My love and my Saviour, despise me not as I have deserved. Remember how much my soul has cost Thee, and save me. My salvation is to love Thee, and to love none but Thee."

My Jesus, I wish for none but Thee. Thou hast said that Thou lovest those that love Thee.[4293] I love Thee; do Thou also love me. There was a time when I saw myself hated by Thee for my sins; but now I detest them more than any other evil, and I love Thee above all things. Do Thou also love me, and hate me no more. I fear Thy hatred more than all the pains of hell.

My beloved Redeemer, I will say to myself, with St. Teresa: "Since I must live, may I live only for Thee. Let our own interests be put an end to. What can be a greater gain than to please Thee?"

VI

SENTIMENTS OF CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

My Jesus, every time that I say "Blessed be God," or "May the divine will be done," I intend to accept all that Thou hast ordained for me both in time and in eternity.

I desire no other office, no other habitation, no other clothing, no other food, no other health, but what it shall please Thee to send me.

I wish for no other employment, no other talent, no other fortune than that which Thou hast destined for me.

If Thou dost will that I should not succeed in my affairs; that my undertakings should fail; that my lawsuits should be lost; that my possessions should be taken away from me,—this also is my will.

If Thou wishest me to be despised, looked upon with ill-will, that others should be preferred to me, that I should be defamed and ill-treated even by my dearest friends,—this is my will also.

If Thou dost will that I should be made poor in all things, that I should be an exile from my country, imprisoned in a dungeon, and should be forced to live in continual sorrow and affliction,—this also is my will.

If Thou willest that I should be always ill, full of wounds, lame, obliged to remain in my bed abandoned by all,—this I desire also.

May all be as Thou pleasest, and as long as Thou pleasest. I put my very life into Thy hands, and accept whatever death Thou hast destined for me; and I also accept the death of my relatives and friends, and all that Thou shalt ordain.

I also unite my will to Thine in all that regards my spiritual welfare. I desire to love Thee in this life with all my strength, and to attain paradise, that I may love Thee as the seraphim love Thee; but I am content with that which Thou dost will for me. If Thou dost will to give me but one single degree of love, of grace, of glory, I wish for no more, because it is Thy will. I value more the fulfilment of Thy will than anything that I could gain for myself.

In fine, my God, dispose of me and of my affairs as it pleases Thee. Look not at my pleasure; for I desire nothing but what is in conformity to Thy will. Whether Thy treatment of me be harsh or kind, pleasant or unpleasant to me, I accept and embrace it, because both the one and the other come to me from Thy hand.

My Jesus, I accept besides, in an especial manner, my death, with all the pains which shall accompany it, according to Thy will, where Thou wilt, and at the time Thou wilt. I unite them, my Saviour, with Thy death; and I offer them to Thee in testimony of the love I bear Thee. I desire to die to please Thee, and to fulfil Thy holy will.

VII

DIVERSE AFFECTIONS

Oh, the unhappy state of a soul that is in sin and that has lost God! It lives on in wretchedness, but lives without God. God sees it, but no longer loves it; he hates and abhors it. There was then, my soul, a time when thou didst live without God. The sight of thee no longer rejoiced the heart of Jesus Christ, as it did when thou wast in his grace, but was hateful to him. The blessed Virgin regarded thee with compassion, but detested thy deformity. When hearing Mass thou didst see Jesus Christ in the consecrated Host, who had become thine enemy.

Ah, my God, despised and lost by me, pardon me, and let me again find Thee! I wished to lose Thee, but Thou wouldst not abandon me. And if Thou hast not yet returned to me, I pray Thee to come to me now that I repent with all my heart for having offended Thee. Let me be sensible of Thy return to me, by feeling a great sorrow for my sins, and great love towards Thee.

My beloved Lord, rather than see myself separated from Thee and deprived of Thy grace, I am content to suffer any punishment. Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, I pray Thee to give me grace nevermore to offend Thee till my death; may I die rather than turn my back Thee afresh.

Ah, my crucified Jesus, look on me with the same love with which Thou didst look on me when dying on the cross for me; look on me, and have pity on me; give me a general pardon for all the displeasure I have given Thee; give me holy perseverance; give me Thy holy love; give me a perfect conformity to Thy will; give me paradise, that I may love Thee there forever. I deserve nothing; but Thy wounds encourage me to hope for every good from Thee. Ah, Jesus of my soul, by that love which made Thee die for me, give me Thy love. Take away from me all affection to creatures, give me resignation in tribulation, and make Thyself the object of all my affections, that from this day forward I may love none other but Thee.

Thou hast created me, Thou hast redeemed me, Thou hast made me a Christian, Thou hast preserved me whilst I was in sin, Thou hast pardoned me many times; above all, instead of chastisements Thou hast increased Thy favors to me; who should love Thee, if I do not? Arise, and let Thy mercy triumph over me; and may the fire of love with which I burn for Thee be as great as the fire which should have devoured me in hell, O my Jesus, my love, my treasure, my paradise, my all!

O Incarnation, O Redemption, O Passion of Jesus Christ! O Calvary, O scourges, O thorns, O nails, O cross that did torment my Lord! O sweet names, which remind me of the love which a God has had for me, never depart from my mind and my heart; remind me always of the pains which Jesus my Redeemer has willed to suffer for me! O most sacred wounds, ye are the perpetual resting-place of my soul; ye are the blessed furnaces where it forever burns with divine love!

My beloved Jesus, I have deserved hell, and to be forever separated from Thee; I refuse not the fire nor the other pains of hell, if Thou for my just punishment dost will to send me there; but what I cannot consent to is, not to be able to love Thee any more. Let me love Thee, and then send me where Thou wilt. It is just that I should suffer for my sins; but it is not just that I should have to hate and curse him who has created me, who has redeemed me, and who has loved me so much: justice requires that I should love and bless Thee forever. I bless Thee, then, and Love; Thee, Jesus my love; and I hope to love and bless Thee for all eternity.

My sweet Redeemer, I know that Thou dost wish me to be wholly Thine. Ah, permit not that, from this day forward, creatures should have any part in that love which belongs altogether to Thee. Thou alone dost deserve all my affections, Thou alone art infinitely beautiful, Thou alone hast truly loved me; Thee alone, then, will I love, and I will do all that I can to please Thee. I renounce all,—pleasures, riches, honors, and all the creatures of the earth; Thou alone, my Jesus, art sufficient for me. Away from me, all earthly affections! Once upon a time you had a place in my heart; but then I was blind: now that God by his grace has enlightened me, and has made me know the vanity of this world and the love which he has borne me, and that he desires me to give him all my love, I will consecrate it to him alone. Yes, my Jesus, take possession of my whole heart; and if I know not how to give it to Thee entirely as Thou desirest, take it Thyself, and make it Thine own. I love Thee, my God, with all my heart; I love Thee more than myself; draw me,[4294] my Lord, all to Thee, and destroy in me the love of all created things.

O Paradise, O country of loving souls, O kingdom of love, O sure haven where God is loved for all eternity, and where there is no more fear of losing him! when shall I pass thy threshold, and see myself free from this miserable body, and delivered from the many enemies which continually try to deceive me in order to deprive me of divine grace? Ah, my crucified Jesus, discover to me the immense riches that Thou hast prepared for the souls that love Thee. Give me a great desire of possessing Paradise, so that, forgetting this world, I may there make my continual abode; and whilst I live, may I have no other desire than to come to see Thee and love Thee face to face in thy kingdom. I do not deserve this, and I know that at one time my name was written amongst those who were condemned to hell; but now that I am, as I hope, in Thy grace, I beseech Thee by that blood which Thou didst shed for me on the cross, to write me in the Book of Life. Thou hast died to gain Paradise for me: I wish for this, I ardently desire it, and I hope to attain it through Thy merits, that I may there ascend, to be consumed with Thy love by loving Thee with all my strength. There, forgetting myself and everything else, I shall think only of loving Thee, I shall desire nothing but to love Thee, and I shall do nothing but love Thee. O my Jesus, when shall this be? O Mary, Mother of God, by thy prayers bring me to Paradise. “Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thy eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile show unto us the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.”[4295]

SIGHS OF LOVE TOWARDS GOD

I

Lord, who am I, that Thou hast loved me so much, and that Thou shouldst so much desire to be loved by me?

O my God, worthy of infinite love! I love Thee, or rather, I should say, I love Thee not.

I love Thee above all things; more than my life, more than myself; but still I see that I love Thee too little.

O King of Heaven! make Thyself also King of my heart, possess me entirely.

II

I leave all, and turn to Thee. I embrace Thee, I press Thee to my soul; despise me not, immeasurable good; I love Thee.

Now that Thou hast united me to Thee, O my Jesus, how can I see myself separated from Thee? I love Thee, and will never cease to love Thee.

Unite Thyself to me, Lord; let not the corruption of my sins drive Thee away from me.

III

O God, O God! whom shall I love, if I love not Thee, my life, my love, my all?

Chosen among thousands.[4296] My God, Thee only, Thee alone do I choose for my love.

My Redeemer, I desire no other but Thee.

Oh that I might be wholly consumed for Thee, who wast entirely consumed for me!

Take possession, Lord, of my whole will, and do with me what Thou pleasest.

IV

O God not known! O God not loved! he is a fool that loves Thee not.

O my God! when I sinned I well knew that I was greatly displeasing Thee: have I done so? could I do so?

If I had died then, I should no longer have been able to love Thee. Now that I can, I will love Thee.

Lord, after having given me so many graces, permit me not to betray Thee again. Let me sooner die.

Thou hast borne with me, that I might love Thee. Yes, I will love Thee.

My God, Thou hast conquered me; I will withstand Thee no longer, I surrender myself to Thee.

V

O God! how many years have I not lost when I might have been loving Thee!

I consecrate to Thee, my God, the remainder of my life; and who can tell how long it may be?

VI

What are riches? what are honors? what are pleasures? God, God, I desire God alone.

O King of hearts, reign in my heart. Ah, draw me all to Thee!

Bind me, O God, to Thee, in such a way that I shall never be able to loose myself from Thee.

Thou wilt not leave me, I will not leave Thee. Then we shall always love each other, O my God, O my God.

VII

Ah, make me all Thine before I die, my Jesus, my love, my life, my treasure, my all.

Ah, my Jesus and my judge, the first time I see Thee may it be with a propitious countenance!

When shall I be able to say, “My God, my God, I cannot lose Thee any more?”

When, Lord, shall I see Thee as Thou art, and contemplate Thee face to face for all eternity with my whole strength?

Ah, my infinite Good, as long as I live, then, do I stand in danger of losing Thee.

My Jesus, what hast Thou not done to oblige me to love Thee? Yes, I will love Thee. I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee.

VIII

O Eternal Father! for the love of Jesus give me Thy love.

Permit one of the most ungrateful creatures that have ever lived on the earth to love Thee.

My God, I will love Thee exceedingly in this life, that I may love Thee exceedingly in the next.

IX

O my Jesus! Thou hast given Thyself all to me; I will give myself all to Thee.

What greater pleasure can I have than to please Thee, my God?

My beloved Jesus, I desire to love Thee as much as I have offended Thee.

X

I love Thee, Infinite Goodness; make me know the great good that I love.

My Jesus, Thou art the vine, I am one of Thy branches; keep me always united to Thee; never let me detach myself from Thee.

O my God, how much do I rejoice in that Thou art infinitely happy!

XI

Ah, Lord, where art Thou? Art Thou with me or not? Am I in Thy grace or not? Thou knowest that I love Thee, I love Thee; I love Thee more than myself.

Give me, my Jesus, that love which Thou requirest of me.

Oh that I had always loved Thee!

Oh, if I did but love Thee, my God, if I did but love Thee! I love Thee, but I love Thee too little.

Help me, Lord, to love Thee much, and to overcome all things to please Thee.

XII

I give Thee my will. I desire nothing but that which Thou desirest.

I seek not consolations from Thee; I desire only to please Thee, my God, my love, my all.

O infinite God! I am not worthy to love Thee; suffer me to love Thee.

I hope to love Thee forever, O Eternal God!

O my dear Jesus! Thou hast suffered so much for me;

I desire to suffer for Thee as much as it shall please Thee.

O God of my soul! I can trust myself no longer to live without loving Thee.

O will of God, Thou art all my love.

XIII

O Omnipotent God! make me a saint.

It will be for Thy glory, Lord, to make one who was Thine enemy become Thy loving servant.

Thou didst seek me, my God, while I was yet flying from Thee; Thou wilt not discard me now that I seek Thee.

My most loving Jesus, in order to pardon me Thou hast not pardoned Thyself.

I thank Thee for giving me time to love Thee. Yes, my God, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, and I will always love Thee.

O God worthy of infinite love, may I this day be entirely converted to Thee, my love, my all!

Chastise me as Thou wilt; but deprive me not of the power of loving Thee.

XIV

Divine Father, Thou hast given me Thy Son; I, a miserable creature, give myself to Thee. Accept me, for pity’s sake.

I desire, Lord, to make up for the offences I have committed against Thee, by doing all that I can to please Thee.

I desire to love Thee, my God, without interest, without ceasing, and without reserve.

XV

My Jesus, despised for me, may I be despised for Thee!

My tormented Jesus, grant that I may suffer for the love of Thee all the pains of this life.

I should wish, my Redeemer, to die for Thee, who didst die for me.

I resolve this day to give myself all to Thee.

Oh that all would love Thee as Thou deservest!

Grant, Lord, that I may leave undone nothing which I know to be pleasing to Thee.

Happy shall I be if I lose all to gain Thee, my God, my all.

O Jesus! sacrificed for me, I sacrifice to Thee my whole will.

O my God! when shall I be all Thine?

XVI

Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?[4297]

I will sing forever the mercies of the Lord.[4298]

Who shall separate me from the love of Christ?[4299]

O good Jesus! never permit me to be separated from Thee, never permit me to be separated from Thee![4300]

What have I in heaven? and, besides Thee, what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.[4301]

XVII

“May I die for the love of Thy love, who didst deign to die for the love of my love!”[4302]

“My love is crucified.”[4303]

“Give me but Thy love and Thy grace, and I am rich enough.”[4304]

“Let me die, Lord, that I may see Thee.”[4305]

XVIII

Ah, my Jesus, they who love. Thee not do not know Thee!

I love Thy pleasure, Lord, more than all the pleasures of the world.

My crucified Jesus, how is it that all are not captivated by Thee?

Thou hast died for me; oh that I could die for Thee, my Jesus, my love, my treasure, my all!

Lord, what shall I render to Thee for all Thou hast suffered for me?

XIX

Infinite Goodness, I esteem Thee above all things; I love Thee with all my heart; I give myself entirely to Thee. Accept my poor love, and give me more love. May I forget all, that I may remember only Thee, my love, my all

I would wish to love Thee worthily. Accept, O God, this my desire, and give me Thy love!

XX

I have offended Thee enough; now I desire to love Thee.

O God! O God! I am Thine, and Thou art mine.

May all be lost; but let not God be lost.

Let it cost what it will to gain God, he can never be dearly bought.

Thou alone, my Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me.

XXI

O Mary! look on me, and draw me all to God.

Most amiable mother, I love thee exceedingly.

O Mother! give me confidence in thee, and make me always to have recourse to thee.

O Mary! it is for thee to save me Thou canst make me holy: this is my hope. Have pity on me.

ASPIRATIONS OF LOVE TO JESUS CHRIST

I

My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me.

My love, do not permit me to separate myself from Thee. When shall I be able to say, “My God, I cannot lose Thee any more?”

II

Lord, who am I, that Thou shouldst desire so much to be loved by me?

And whom shall I love, if I love not Thee, my Jesus?

Here I am, Lord; dispose of me as Thou pleasest.

Give me Thy love; I ask nothing more.

Make me all Thine before I die.

III

Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ have pity on me.

My God, I wish for Thee alone, and nothing more.

IV

O my Jesus! would that I could be entirely spent for Thee, as Thou didst spend Thyself entirely for me!

If I had died while I was in sin, I could no more have loved Thee; now that I can love Thee, I will love Thee as much as I can.

To Thee do I consecrate all the remainder of my life.

I wish only, and I wish in all things, that which Thou dost desire.

V

When I see Thee for the first time, my Jesus, may it be with a look of mercy.

May I die rather than ever offend Thee again.

Thou wilt not leave me, I will not leave Thee; so shall our love endure in this world and in the next.

VI

I should be too ungrateful, O my Jesus, if I loved Thee but little, after so many graces.

Thou didst give Thyself all to me; I give myself all to Thee.

Thou lovest those that love Thee. I love Thee; do Thou also love me. If I love Thee but little, give Thou me the love Thou requirest of me.

What hast Thou not done to oblige me to love Thee? Make me conquer all things to please Thee.

VII

Accept the love of a soul which has offended Thee so deeply.

Show me the immense good Thou art, that I may love Thee exceedingly.

I desire to love Thee exceedingly in this life, that I may love Thee exceedingly in the next.

VIII

I hope to love Thee for all eternity. O Eternal God!

Oh that I had always loved Thee! Oh that I had died rather than have offended Thee!

I give Thee my will, my liberty; dispose of me as Thou pleasest.

May my only happiness be to please Thee, O Infinite Goodness.

O my God! I rejoice in that Thou art infinitely happy.

IX

Thou art omnipotent; make me a saint.

Thou hast sought me while I was fleeing from Thee:

Thou didst love me when I despised Thy love; abandon me not, now that I seek Thee and love Thee.

May I this day give myself wholly to Thee.

X

Send me any chastisement, but deprive me not of the power of loving Thee.

I thank Thee that Thou givest me time to love Thee. I love Thee, my Jesus, I love Thee; and I hope to die repeating, “I love Thee, I love Thee.”

XI

I desire to love Thee without reserve, and to do all that I know to be pleasing to Thee.

I love Thy good pleasure more than all the pleasures of the world.

I accept all the troubles that may happen to me, provided I love Thee, O my God. O my Jesus! that I could die for Thee, as Thou didst die for me!

XII

Oh that I could make all men love Thee as Thou deservest!

O will of God, thou art my love.

O God of love, give me love.

XIII

O Mary, draw me all to God.

O my Mother, make me always have recourse to thee. It is for thee to make me a saint. This is my hope.

MAXIMS FOR THE DIRECTION OF A SOUL THAT DESIRES TO ATTAIN PERFECTION IN THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

1. To desire ardently to increase in the love of Jesus Christ.

2. Often to make acts of love towards Jesus Christ. Immediately on waking, and before going to sleep, to make an act of love; seeking always to unite your own will to the will of Jesus Christ.

3. Often to meditate on his Passion.

4. Always to ask Jesus Christ for his love.

5. To communicate often, and many times in the day to make spiritual Communions.

6. Often to visit the Most Holy Sacrament.

7. Every morning to receive from the hands of Jesus Christ himself your own cross.

8. To desire Paradise and death, in order to be able to love Jesus Christ perfectly and for all eternity.

9. Often to speak of the love of Jesus Christ.

10. To accept contradictions for the sake of Jesus Christ.

11. To rejoice in the happiness of God.

12. To do that which is most pleasing to Jesus Christ, and not to refuse him anything that is agreeable to him.

13. To desire and to endeavor that all should love Jesus Christ.

14. To pray always for sinners and for the souls in purgatory.

15. To drive from your heart every affection that does not belong to Jesus Christ.

16. Always to have recourse to the most holy Mary, that she may obtain for us the love of Jesus Christ.

17. To honor Mary in order to please Jesus Christ.

18. To seek to please Jesus Christ in all your actions.

19. To offer yourself to Jesus Christ to suffer any pain for his love.

20. To be always determined to die rather than commit a wilful venial sin.

21. To suffer crosses patiently, saying, "Thus it pleases Jesus Christ."

22. To renounce your own pleasures for the love of Jesus Christ.

23. To pray as much as possible.

24. To practise all the mortifications that obedience permits.

25. To do all your spiritual exercises as if it were for the last time.

26. To persevere in good works in the time of aridity.

27. Not to do nor yet to leave undone anything through human respect.

28. Not to complain in sickness.

29. To love solitude, to be able to converse alone with Jesus Christ.

30. To drive away melancholy.

31. Often to recommend yourself to those persons who love Jesus Christ.

32. In temptation, to have recourse to Jesus crucified, and to Mary in her sorrows.

33. To trust entirely in the Passion of Jesus Christ.

34. After committing a fault, not to be discouraged, but to repent and resolve to amend.

35. To do good to those who do evil.

36. To speak well of all, and to excuse the intention when you cannot defend the action.

37. To help your neighbor as much as you can.

38. Neither to say nor to do anything that might vex him. And if you have been wanting in charity, to ask his pardon and speak kindly to him.

39. Always to speak with mildness and in a low tone.

40. To offer to Jesus Christ all the contempts and persecution that you meet with.

41. To look upon Superiors as the representatives of Jesus Christ.

42. To obey without answering and without repugnance, and not to seek your own satisfaction in anything.

43. To like the lowest employments.

44. To like the poorest things.

45. Not to speak either good or evil of yourself.

46. To humble yourself even towards inferiors.

47. Not to excuse yourself when you are reproved.

48. Not to defend yourself when found fault with.

49. To be silent when you are disquieted.

50. Always to renew your determination of becoming a saint, saying, “My Jesus, I desire to be all Thine, and Thou must be all mine.”

ACTS THAT THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD PERFORM EVERY MAN[4306]

ON RISING, AFTER HAVING MADE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

My God! I adore Thee, I love Thee with my whole heart.

I thank Thee for all Thy benefits, especially for having preserved me during the past night.

I offer Thee all my actions and sufferings of this day, in union with the actions of Jesus and Mary; and I make the intention of gaining all the indulgences that I can gain.

I purpose, O Lord! to avoid offending Thee this day, especially. . . .

IT IS GOOD TO MAKE A RESOLUTION, PARTICULARLY ABOUT THE FAULT INTO WHICH WE FALL THE OFTENEST.

I beg Thee, for the love of Jesus, to grant me the grace of perseverance.

I resolve to conform myself to Thy holy will, and particularly in those things that are contrary to my inclination, saying always, O Lord! Thy will be done. My Jesus, keep Thy hand over me this day! Most Holy Virgin Mary, take me beneath thy mantle. And do Thou, O Eternal Father, help me for the love of Jesus and Mary! O my angel guardian and my holy patron saints, assist me.

OUR FATHER, HAIL MARY, CREED; THREE HAIL MARYS IN HONOR OF THE PURITY OF MARY.

AT THE BEGINNING OF WORK OR STUDY.

O Lord! I offer Thee this work.

BEFORE MEALS.

O my God! bless this food and me, that I may commit no fault about it, and may all be for Thy glory.

AFTER MEALS.

I thank Thee, Lord, for having done good to one who was Thine enemy.

WHEN THE CLOCK STRIKES.

My Jesus, I love Thee; never permit me to offend Thee again, and let me never be separated from Thee.

IN ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES.

O Lord! since Thou hast so willed it, I will it also.

IN TIME OF TEMPTATION.

Frequent invocation of the holy names of Jesus and Mary.

WHEN CONSCIOUS OR DOUBTFUL OF HAVING SINNED, SAY AT ONCE:

O my God! I repent of having offended Thee. O Infinite goodness! I will do so no more.

And if you should sin grievously, go to confession as soon as possible. Before going to rest in the evening thank God for all the favors you have received; then make an examination of conscience. Afterwards make the Christian acts in the following manner:—

ACT OF FAITH

O my God, who art infallible truth, because Thou hast revealed it to Thy Church, I believe all that she proposes to my belief! I believe that Thou art my God, the Creator of all things; that Thou dost reward the just with an eternal paradise, and dost punish the wicked in hell for all eternity. I believe that Thou art one in essence, and three in persons, namely, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I believe in the Incarnation and death of Jesus Christ. I believe, in fine, all that the Holy Church believes. I thank Thee for having made me a Christian; and I protest that I will live and die in this holy faith.

ACT OF HOPE

O my God, confiding in Thy promises, because Thou art powerful, faithful, and merciful, I hope through the merits of Jesus Christ to obtain pardon of my sins, final perseverance, and the glory of paradise.

ACT OF LOVE AND CONTRITION

O my God, because Thou art infinite goodness, worthy of infinite love, I love Thee with all my heart above all things; and for the love of Thee I love my neighbor also. I repent with all my heart, and am sorry above all things for all my sins, because by them I have offended Thy infinite goodness. I resolve, by the help of Thy grace, which I beseech Thee to grant me now and always, rather to die than ever to offend Thee again. I purpose, also, to receive the holy Sacraments during my life, and at the hour of my death.

THESE THREE ACTS HAVE BEEN ENRICHED WITH INDULGENCES.[4307]

OTHER ACTS

I adore Thee, my God, I humble myself in the abyss of my nothingness to the will of Thy infinite majesty.

I firmly believe all that Thou hast deigned to make known to me by means of Thy holy Church; and I am ready to give my life a thousand times for this faith.

I place all my hope in Thee. Whatever good I may have, either in this life or in the next, I hope for from Thee, through the merits of Jesus Christ.

I love Thee, Infinite Goodness, with all the affection of my heart and of my soul, because Thou dost merit all my love. I unite my imperfect love to that which all the saints, most holy Mary, and Jesus Christ bear to Thee. Because Thou art the supreme good, I am sorry and repent of all my sins, detesting them as much as possible above every other evil. I resolve for the future rather to die than to consent to anything that may give Thee the slightest displeasure.

I offer Thee now and forever my body, my soul, and all my senses and faculties. Do with me, Lord, and with all that belongs to me, what Thou pleasest. Give me Thy love and final perseverance, and grant that in all temptations I may always have recourse to Thee.

I resolve to employ myself entirely in those things which are pleasing to Thee, being ready to suffer any pain and labor in order to please Thee.

I desire that all should serve and love Thee. I recommend to Thee all the souls in purgatory, as also all sinners; enlighten and strengthen these unhappy creatures, that may know and love Thee. I rejoice exceedingly that Thy happiness is infinite, and will never have an end.

I thank Thee for all the benefits that Thou hast bestowed upon mankind, but especially upon me, who have been more ungrateful than others.

My beloved Jesus, I take refuge within Thy sacred wounds: do Thou there defend me from all temptations, till Thou shall grant me to see Thee and love Thee eternally in paradise.

PRAYER OF ST. BONAVENTURE TO JESUS CHRIST, TO OBTAIN HIS HOLY LOVE

Most sweet Jesus, pierce the interior of my soul with the sweet wound of Thy love, that my soul may ever languish and be dissolved with Thy love and with the desire of possessing Thee, and long to quit this life, that it may come to be perfectly united to Thee in a blessed eternity. Grant that my soul may ever thirst after Thee, speak only to Thee, find Thee, and do all for Thy glory. Grant that my heart may be ever fixed on Thee who art my only hope, my riches, my peace, my refuge, my confidence, my treasure, and my inheritance.

A SHORT PRAYER TO JESUS CHRIST CRUCIFIED, TO OBTAIN A HAPPY DEATH

My Lord Jesus Christ, through that bitterness which Thou didst suffer on the cross, when Thy blessed soul was separated from Thy sacred body, have pity on my sinful soul, when it shall depart from my miserable body, and shall enter into eternity.

PRAYER TO THE EVER BLESSED VIRGIN, TO OBTAIN THE LOVE OF JESUS AND A HAPPY DEATH

O Mary! thou who so much desirest to see Jesus loved, if thou lovest me this is the favor which I now ask of thee, to obtain for me a great love for

Jesus Christ. Thou obtainest from thy Son whatever thou pleasest: pray, then, for me, and console me. Obtain for me a great love for thee, who of all creatures art the most loving and beloved of God. And through that grief which thou didst suffer on Calvary, when thou didst behold Jesus expire on the cross, obtain for me a happy death, that by loving Jesus and thee, my Mother, I may come to love thee forever in heaven.

MANNER OF MAKING MENTAL PRAYER

I

In the PREPARATION the following acts may be made:

My God, I believe that Thou art here present, and I adore Thee with all my heart.

I deserve at this moment to be burning in hell for my sins; O my God, I am sorry for having offended Thee; pardon me.

Eternal Father, grant me light in this meditation, that I may profit by it.

Then say a *Hail Mary* to the divine Mother, and a *Glory be to the Father,* etc., in honor of St. Joseph, of your guardian angel, and of your holy patron.

II

Then read the MEDITATION; yet whilst reading we should stop at those passages in which the soul finds that it is receiving nourishment; and we should try to produce acts of humility, of thanksgiving, especially of contrition and love, of resignation and self-offering. We should say:

O Lord! dispose of me as Thou pleasest; help me to know all that Thou requirest of me: I wish to please Thee in all things.

We should especially apply ourselves to making petitions, in asking God to grant us holy perseverance, his love, light, and strength, that we mostly need in order to do his holy will, and to pray always.

III

The CONCLUSION is made thus: We make the resolution to avoid some particular sin into which we fall the oftenest. We should finish by saying an *Our Father* and *Hail Mary,* and never forget, in meditation, to recommend to God the souls in Purgatory, and all poor sinners.

SHORT EJACULATORY PRAYERS

FOR THE TWELVE GREATEST SOLEMNITIES IN THE YEAR,—*SEVEN OF OUR LORD AND FIVE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN,*—WHICH MAY BE USED AT ANY OTHER TIME AND ON ANY DAY, ACCORDING TO EACH ONES DEVOTION.

FOR THE FEASTS OF OUR LORD

1. FOR THE HOLY NATIVITY OF OUR LORD.

Come, my Jesus, and be born in my heart!

2. FOR THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD.

May Thy name, O Jesus, be my joy!

3. FOR THE EPIPHANY.

With Thy Magi, O Jesus, I adore Thee, and love Thee.

4. FOR EASTER.

My Jesus, let me first suffer, and then rejoice with Thee.

5. FOR THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD.

Take my heart also with Thee into heaven.

6. FOR PENTECOST.

Holy Spirit, Light, Fervor, and Perseverance.

7. FOR THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

Jesus, our food! Jesus, our sweetness! Jesus, our joy!

FOR THE FEASTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

1. FOR THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

Most holy Virgin, free from sin, and full of grace, at the first moment of Thy existence may I be free from sin, and in the grace of God, at the last moment of my life!

2. FOR THE NATIVITY OF THE EVER-BLESSED VIRGIN.

Thy birth, O Blessed Virgin, was holy; may my death be holy!

3. FOR THE ANNUNCIATION.

O Virgin ever blessed, thou art raised to the sublime dignity of Mother of God; may I remain always faithful in his service!

4. FOR THE PURIFICATION.

Most holy Virgin, purer than the angels after thou hadst brought forth thy Son, may I be purified at least after I have sinned!

5. FOR THE ASSUMPTION.

Most holy Virgin, who didst die out of pure love, may I at least die with contrition!

Let all, all be devout to the most blessed Virgin; and, after God, let us honor the most holy Virgin.

Happy is the Christian who has the most blessed Virgin for him; and miserable is that Christian who has not the blessed Virgin on his side.

The most blessed Virgin can obtain everything from God, because she is his true Mother, and is so much beloved by him; and she will do everything for us, because she is our Mother also, and loves us so much.

Let us, therefore, always try to gain her friendship more and more; let us ingratiate ourselves with her more and more, by continually fostering in ourselves devotion towards her.

Every day let us say her Rosary.

Fast in her honor every Saturday.

Observe the novenas and the fast before all her principal feasts.

Practise some devotion also on all her smaller, even her smallest feasts.

And let us, besides, in all our necessities, in all our misfortunes, have recourse to her, have confidence in her; and through her security in life, security in death, security through all eternity.

It must be so; for do you know what takes place in heaven? The most blessed Virgin stands before her divine Son—*Mater stat ante Filium*—and she reminds him of the womb where he was enclosed for nine months, and the sacred breast at which she so often gave him suck. The Son places himself before his divine Father—*Filius stat ante Patrem*—and shows him his pierced side and those sacred wounds which he received for our sake—*ct ostendit Patrilatus et vulnera.* And at the sight of such sweet pledges of a Son's love, he can deny nothing to his divine Son,—all is obtained for us: *ibi nulla poterit esse repulsio, ubi sunt tot amoris insignia*—there can be no refusal where there are so many signs of love. It is thus that St. Bernard, himself so devout to the ever-blessed Virgin, encourages us.

But since the most blessed Virgin is also the Mother of fair love, as well as being true Mother of God—*Mater pulchræ dilectionis*—she obtains for us holy love; and through her means God himself fills our hearts with his holy love—*ignem sui amoris accendat Deus in cordibus nostris.*

Live, Jesus our love, and Mary our hope!

HYMN

ASPIRATIONS TO JESUS

Jesus, my sweetest Lord!
Jesus, my sweetest Lord!
My Good, my Spouse adored!
My God, O goodness infinite,
My life’s true life art Thou;
Flame of my heart, my Spouse most sweet,
My love to Thee I vow.

JESUS, MY SWEETEST LORD, ETC.

Jesus, for Thee I pine away.
My love, and my desire;
And, more enamoured day by day,
I burn with heavenly fire.

JESUS, MY SWEETEST LORD, ETC.

Ah, Jesus, I would ever weep
That I offended Thee;
Mine was ingratitude too deep,
And basest treachery.

JESUS, MY SWEETEST LORD, ETC.

My Jesus, when I call to mind
That such a wretch as I
Have crucified a God so kind,
I fain of grief would die.

JESUS, MY SWEETEST LORD, ETC.

O Thou my hope, make me remain
Faithful for evermore:
Better to die than be again
As I have been before.

JESUS, MY SWEETEST LORD, ETC.

While night and day my foes allure,
In Thee do I confide:
Take Thou and place my heart secure
Within Thy piercèd side.

JESUS, MY SWEETEST LORD, ETC.

With Thy sweet chains, O Jesus, bind
My rebel heart to Thee
Till death; my safety I will find
In such captivity.
Jesus, my sweetest Lord!
Jesus, my sweetest Lord!
My Good, my Spouse adored!

NOVENA TO THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS[4308]

FIRST DAY

THE GIVING OF THE GLORIOUS NAME OF JESUS

Consider, devout soul, that the holy name of Jesus is not a name invented by man, but it comes from God, who wished it to be made known by the archangel Gabriel, as St. Luke testifies: *His name was called Jesus . . . by the angel.*[4309]. St. Bernard[4310] also says that this name is not a simple figure of things, a shadow without reality, but it is a palpable truth. *Jesus* is a name that expresses perfectly the hypostatic union of the divine nature and of the human nature. The world could not have been saved by a pure God, because God is impassible, nor by a pure man, because man is limited and finite. This is the reason why the holy name *Jesus*, which signifies the same as Saviour, as the angel declares,[4311], has been given to the Son of God, made man through Mary, in order to show that both as God and man he accomplished the redemption of mankind by delivering them from the slavery of sin at the same time. In short, *Jesus* is a name that comprises infinity, eternity, immensity, wisdom, justice, mercy, and all the adorable perfections of God. What happiness for us to be reconciled with the eternal Father through the merits of this divine Mediator who has had the goodness to pay our debt at the cost of his precious blood!

Adorable Jesus! if Thou hast sacrificed Thyself to deliver Thy people from the hands of their enemies in order to acquire an eternal name, it would be but fair that this name should surpass and eclipse every other name, even that of the seraphim, as St. Paul says: *Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they*[4312]. And if the eternal Father has wished that this name should be that of his Son, mayest Thou grant that, having experienced on earth its happy effects, we may arrive at the complete happiness in heaven to praise Thee and to bless Thee for all eternity.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and *Glory be to the Father,* etc., nine times, in honor of the giving of the glorious name of Jesus. We finish with the following versicle and prayer:

Sit Nomen Domini bonedictum!	Blessed be the Name of the Lord!
Ex hoc nunc et usque in sæculum!	From henceforth and for evermore!
OREMUS.	LET US PRAY.
Deus, qui unigenitum Filium tuum constituisti humani generis Salvatorem, et Jesum vocari jussisti, concede propitius ut; cujus sanctum Nomen veneramur in terris, ejus quoque aspectu perfruamur in cœlis. Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.	God, who didst appoint Thine only-begotten Son Saviour of mankind, and didst command that he should be called Jesus, mercifully grant that we may enjoy the vision of him in heaven, whose holy Name we venerate on earth. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

SECOND DAY

SWEETNESS OF THE NAME OF JESUS

Consider, devout soul, that there is no name in the world that is equal to the name of Jesus in sweetness. “Nothing is sweeter to chant,” says St. Bernard, “nothing more agreeable to hear, nothing more charming to think of, than the name of Jesus, the Son of God.[4313]” To preach it, is to give light to the understanding, is to inflame the will; to think of it, is to feed the soul, is to excite its fervor; to call on it, is to win grace and unction. In fact, we see that if a Christian find himself weighed down by sadness, whether through the artifice of our common enemy or in consequence of some misfortune that has befallen him, as soon as the name of Jesus passes from his heart to his tongue, by the light of this divine name, darkness is dispersed, the mind becomes calm, the heart is strenghtened, the faculties brighten up, and everything returns to life. This is the reason why St. Paul, as soon as he received from the divine Word himself the commission to publish his glorious name, began to repeat it so often, not only in his discourses, but also in the Epistles that he addressed to the Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, Hebrews, and to all other nations. He knew by experience how sweet is the name of Jesus, what is its virtue to dispel the darkness of error and bring back men to the happy paths of perfect belief. Oh, how happy shall we be if in all our trials, on all sorrowful occasions, we take care to invoke the glorious name of Jesus, and while invoking it with our lips to consecrate our hearts to it! Then our soul will taste an ineffable sweetness, which we can never find here below.

Most amiable Jesus, Thou art the master of the angels, the Creator of the world, the sovereign of the universe.

Thou art my Lord and my God.[4314] I thank Thee for having wished to take this most holy name for our consolation, for our encouragement, and for our salvation; and as, in this valley of tears, we have recourse in our needs to Thy glorious name by sweetly invoking it, grant that we may finish our lives in peace while saying, Live Jesus! Live our Saviour!

Our Father, Hail Mary, and *Glory be to the Father,* etc., nine times, in honor of the sweetness of the name of Jesus; versicle and prayer as above.

THIRD DAY

SALUTARY OPERATION OF THE NAME OF JESUS

Consider, devout soul, that the name *Jesus* signifies nothing else than Saviour; and St. Peter[4315] assures us that the Eternal Father has not given to men any other name by which they may be saved amidst the snares of this deceitful world, than the adorable name of Jesus. It is this name that makes the truth of faith shine everywhere, and that calls all men from the depths of darkness to the adorable light of the Gospel. It is by virtue of this adorable name that the Apostle gave light to the blind, made the lame walk, healed the sick, raised the dead to life, and filled the whole world with astonishment. And if the Angel at first announced that Jesus would bring life into the world by delivering it from the cruel slavery into which Adam had plunged it, this good Saviour confirmed this promise himself when he declared[4316] that he had come so that his sheep might have life, and might have it more abundantly. By virtue of his name we see idolatry overthrown, to the great confusion of the pagan princes and priests, who did all in their power to maintain it. We see the Synagogue vanquished, to the shame of the Jews, who with threats of punishments had forbidden the Apostles[4317] to preach and invoke this powerful name. Ah! since in this world there is no good that is not due to the efficiency of the name of Jesus, let us acknowledge with humility and with love the source of all these riches; and if in the past we have been unfaithful, let us once for ail put an end to our ingratitude, and let us endeavor to repair all the wrong that we have done, and say:

O amiable and holy name of Jesus! may the seraphim of heaven give to Thee for me suitable thanks, and never cease to praise Thee by forever repeating that Thou dost merit all glory, all honor, and all power. My sweet Saviour, I hope to obtain, by virtue of Thy name, the salvation of my body and soul; I hope that with this glorious name in my heart and on my lips, victorious over the world and the flesh, I shall have the happiness to sing Thy praises and to bless the august Trinity for ever and ever.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and *Glory be to the Father,* etc., nine times, in honor of the salutary operation of the name of Jesus; versicle and prayer as above.

FOURTH DAY

EFFICACY OF THE NAME OF JESUS

Consider, devout soul, the efficacy of the adorable name of Jesus for the purpose of offering prayers pleasing to God, and of obtaining all that we ask of him. This name opens for us the way to arrive promptly at the feet of the Most High, and to have our prayers heard at once. The Gospel also attests that the prayers of Jesus himself have always been heard by virtue of his great name, and that he authorizes us to say, when speaking to God, “Our Father, who art in heaven.” In consideration of the name of Jesus, God looks with a favorable eye upon our petition; he accepts it kindly and grants it, because he sees that it bears his seal, and is marked with the precious blood of the Lamb that was immolated for us. For this reason Jesus exhorted the Apostles, and exhorts all, that we should ask in his name all that we ask of his Father, in order to be sure that we shall obtain it: *If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you.*[4318] It is enough for him to hear the petition; and he will bestow upon us the favors that have been asked of him in the name of his beloved Son, with whom he is well pleased, and who, in order to satisfy his offended justice, has shown himself obedient ever unto death. We should, then, know how to profit by the efficacious power of the holy name of Jesus; being sure that our prayers will be heard, we should, often, every hour of the day, repeat our prayers to the Eternal Father, and we shall advance in perfection on the road of the divine precepts, until we attain the happiness of seeing and possessing him for all eternity in heaven.

O Sweet Jesus, our love and our hope! since Thou hast deigned to assume mortal flesh, in order to open to us the gate of pardon, and to render our prayers efficacious by virtue of Thy glorious name, grant that, in order to obtain from the heavenly Father graces and gifts, our prayers for perseverance may be heard, so that, faithful to the divine law to the end of our lives, we may, with Thy holy name on our lips, pass from this valley of tears to the glory of paradise.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and *Glory be to the Father,* etc., nine times, in honor of the efficacy of the name of Jesus; versicle and prayer as above.

FIFTH DAY

CONSOLATION AFFORDED BY THE NAME OF JESUS

Consider, devout soul, that those who love Jesus are, by his sweet name, so much sustained and consoled in their afflictions and in all other evils that it is for them a happiness to suffer in order to be able to participate in these ineffable consolations. This, says St. Bernard,[4319] is the reason why the Spouse of the Canticles compares the name of Jesus to oil: *Thy name is as oil poured out;*[4320] for as oil gives light, food, and a remedy, so is the name of Jesus a light, food, and a remedy. All spiritual food without the name of Jesus is insipid and dry. No writing, however charming and interesting it may be, can be sweet nourishment to the heart if it does not contain the name of Jesus. If in the sermons, discussions, and conversations, the name of Jesus is not mentioned, the soul tastes no sweetness. The name of Jesus is honey to the mouth, melody to the ear, joy to the heart. This name rendered sweet the pains and torments of the martyrs, of the virgins, and of all the saints, so that when reduced to the last extremity, while invoking the name of Jesus, they were comforted; they forgot their sufferings. Why should we, then, be cast down in our tribulations, in the storms that arise against us to throw us, perhaps, into the abyss of despair, when the name of Jesus alone can lighten the weight that oppresses us, and can carry us to heaven? Have, therefore, recourse to Jesus, faithful soul; attach thyself to Jesus; he is a secure haven in which we need not fear to suffer shipwreck; he is the morning-star that guides us through the darkness to the way of salvation; he is the watchful sentinel that discovers the enemy and puts him to flight; in a word, he renders easy and sweet to you the yoke of the evangelical law.

O amiable name of Jesus! Thy devoted servants invoke Thee, since Thou art so prompt in coming to console them in their necessities. For pity's sake, my good Master, come also to give consolation to my soul, which, though sorely pressed on account of its combat with redoubtable enemies, and which, because of bad conduct, is perhaps far away from Thee, yet like the prodigal son hopes to find in Thee the clemency of a Father, and dares to say to Thee, with St. Anselm, O my Saviour! save me; save me, Jesus, and do not permit me to perish.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and *Glory be to the Father,* etc., nine times, in honor of the consolation that is afforded by the name of Jesus; versicle and prayer as above.

SIXTH DAY

PEACE THAT IS GIVEN US BY THE NAME OF JESUS

Consider, devout soul, that Jesus being the King of peace, whose presence was sought throughout the earth, as the Church proclaims in the Office,[4321] cannot but bring consolation to us. So, before his birth, in order to give a token that his coming was peaceful, his divine Providence wished that the whole world, under the reign of Cæsar Augustus, should be in perfect peace. And when he was born the voice of the angels chanted the heavenly song that was heard by the shepherds of Bethlehem: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.” On this passage of the Psalmist: *In His days shall justice spring up, and abundance appear,* Origen remarks that the coming of Jesus, our Saviour, brought peace to the whole world. In fact, he reconciled us with the Eternal Father, from whom original sin had separated us; he also quieted in us the inferior powers which in consequence of the same sin had revolted against the spirit; so that, says St. Bernard, by virtue of the name of Jesus, the transports of passion are appeased, the movements of concupiscence are repressed, and the soul finds itself brought back to the state it would have enjoyed had it persevered in original justice. This being the case, let us imitate St. Teresa, who, when asked by Jesus himself about her name, answered, without knowing him, “My name is Teresa of Jesus.” Let us also say that we belong to Jesus; in this way we shall enjoy a continual peace on earth, and while becoming peaceful, which quality makes us the chosen of God, we shall perpetuate it forever in heaven.

O amiable Jesus! Thou art truly the king of peace and of tranquillity; this we experience when we invoke Thee in our trials. In the midst of the sad vicissitudes that afflict and harass us in this valley of tears, it is only in Thy very holy name that we find calm, peace, and repose. Ah! grant that we may hereafter be more fervent in the practice of good works, and that by faithfully following in the footsteps of the good Shepherd, like humble and docile sheep, we may be delivered from the nocturnal incursions of the infernal wolves, and seek shelter and protection in the fold of Thy very sweet heart.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and *Glory be to the Father,* etc., nine times, in honor of the peace that is given by the name of Jesus; versicle and prayer as above.

SEVENTH DAY

STRENGTH OF THE NAME OF JESUS

Consider, devout soul, that Jesus, impelled by the ardor of his infinite love towards mankind, without leaving the bosom of his Father, clothed himself in our flesh, and came into the world to deliver us from its chains; that like an irresistible warrior he attacked man’s enemy, Satan, who had become the sole master of this world that groaned under his tyranny because of the transgression of the law of God; that, finally, he conquered it, crushed it, and snatched from its grasp, as he himself has said,[4322] the arms in which it had trusted, and divided the spoils of the conquered among his children, to whom he gave as their armor the sacraments and the sign of the cross. This victory made him so formidable to the demons of hell that his name alone causes all the powers of the abyss to tremble, and fills them with terror, as the Apostle says: *In the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.*[4323] When hearing this adorable name the angels of light prostrate themselves out of respect, to render homage and to testify their gratitude to their Redeemer; but the angels of darkness humble themselves by force, being compelled by virtue of the Most High to acknowledge their conqueror, notwithstanding the shame, the spite, and the rage that torment them. And as for ourselves, whom Jesus has principally redeemed, let us imitate the good angels in rendering on our knees due thanksgiving for the good he has done for us, and by remembering not only the profound veneration with which his glorious name should fill our hearts, but the firm hope he gives us to acquire by his merits a blessed life in eternity.

O Jesus! Thou who didst allow to shine forth the strength of Thy name, to deliver us from the servitude of sin and the slavery of the devil, deign now and always to preserve our souls from all unworthy subjection. Show that Thou art a perfect conqueror by preserving Thy conquest with vigilant care; protect it from the iniquitous robber, so that he may no longer attempt to take even partial possession of it. Grant that our souls may always be worthy of belonging entirely to Thee. We can do nothing of ourselves without the help of Thy grace; be Thou so good as to aid us, to protect us, and, prostrate at the feet of Thy throne, we shall gratefully sing forever of the strength of Thy glorious name.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and *Glory be to the Father,* etc., in honor of the strength of the name of Jesus; versicle and prayer as above.

EIGHTH DAY

POWER OF THE NAME OF JESUS

Consider, devout soul, that the glorious name of Jesus is wonderful in what regards the divine mysteries of his Incarnation, birth, life, Passion, death, resurrection, and ascension; all of which comprise things so profound and so sublime that the angels themselves cannot comprehend them, and that the Apostle[4324] has said that they are a scandal in the eyes of the Jews and folly in the eyes of the Gentiles, while we see in them a celestial light that shows us the wisdom and the love of God. Yet consider, also, that it is wonderful in regard to its power. Jesus is the Word of the Eternal Father, and as nothing has been done without him, says St. John,[4325] so nothing is preserved, nothing is governed independently of his power. It is by virtue of his name that the barbarians renounced idolatry to embrace the Gospel, the Apostles producing these marvellous conversions by the prodigies and miracles that astonished nature. It is by virtue of his name that the sun is resplendent, that the moon reflects its light, that the stars shine, that the planets follow their course, that men live on the earth, that the monarchs reign, that the humble are exalted, that the proud are humbled, mountains are levelled, that valleys are filled up; for the Eternal Father has placed all things in the hands of his Son.[4326] And which of us will not prostrate himself to adore this name that is so great, so majestic, that fills heaven and earth! Which of us will not render to him the homage that is due to him, when we know that it is owing to Jesus that we are Christians, and that in imitating him, we can aspire to the glory of paradise!

O Jesus, all-powerful and truly wonderful! If the eyes of our soul had not been opened and enlightened by the light of faith, which Thou hast taught us by Thy own mouth, how should we ever have been able to know Thy divine mysteries! Without this aid, we should have always been buried in the darkness of ignorance and in the shadows of death. May thanks be always given to our sweet Jesus, who has had compassion on us, and in opening to us the gates of heaven has constituted us heirs of the eternal kingdom! And if our heart is entirely filled with joy for having received so great gifts, may our tongue never cease to praise him who is the author of them.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and *Glory be to the Father,* etc., in honor of the power of the name of Jesus; versicle and prayer as above.

NINTH DAY

TRIUMPHS OF THE NAME OF JESUS

Consider, devout soul, that the name of Jesus did not triumph only over death and sin by despoiling hell of its power, but it also expelled from the height of the cross the devil, who had usurped the dominion over this world by drawing all things to himself. He not only triumphed over the persecutor, as he did over Saul on the road to Damascus, but he confounded his adversaries in Rome by means of St. Bernardine of Sienna and St. John Capistran. He also triumphed over the enemies of the faith in Hungary and Belgrade, where a small number of the faithful struck with consternation and vanquished the grand armies of the Ottoman Empire. The children of St. Francis, animated by the spirit and the example of this seraphic patriarch, were the first to revive the triumphs of the name of Jesus by erecting to it the first altar at Auxerre, in France, till the coming of St. Bernardine, who was proclaimed the principal author of the renewal of this devotion by the declaration of Pope Eugene IV.: *Characterem nominis Jesu ipse Bernardinus de novo adorandum invenerat.* “Bernardine has himself discovered the value of the name of Jesus, so that it might be venerated anew.” Finally, the office and the veneration of the holy name of Jesus were extended to the whole Catholic world; and if the Seraph of Assisi revived the fervor of souls towards the Passion of our Redeemer, the Saint of Sienna, his son, everywhere revived the devotion to the adorable name which was the origin of our redemption. To propagate this devotion Pope Sixtus V. granted an indulgence of a hundred days to those who salute each other with the words: “Praised be Jesus Christ,” and answering, “Forever.” Moreover, a plenary indulgence is granted to him who at the hour of death invokes the name of Jesus, if not with lips, at least in the heart. If, therefore, the glorious name of Jesus has done so much good for us, let us, after the example of St. Mechtilde, consecrate ourselves to him,—our heart, our faculties, our words, so that everything in them may breathe the sweetness of Jesus; and also our actions, that one may see shine in them the virtues that Jesus practised on earth—his humility, his patience, his charity, his zeal, his love. By this means we shall, after this life, be able to take part in the triumphs of Jesus in heaven.

O very amiable and very sweet Jesus, our God, our Saviour, our Father! how can we, miserable creatures that we are, respond to the love that Thou hast shown and that Thou dost not cease to show us? It is certain that Thou alone as God canst justly compensate Thyself, since before Thee we are as if we were not. And then, what have we that is not a gift of Thy bounty? Yes, O supreme good! all that we have comes from Thee; and as such we render it to Thee, in offering to Thee, in this novena that we celebrate in honor of Thy name, all that we are. But, knowing that our love is agreeable to Thee, we give Thee specially our whole heart which is the source of this love. Deign to receive it as belonging to Thee; and if it is not worthy of Thee, purify it of its imperfections and of its defects, so that we may see shine in it the name of Jesus, that, it loves only Jesus; that it thinks only of Jesus; and that, the superabundance of its affections communicating itself to our tongue, Jesus may be praised and blessed through all ages. Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and *Glory be to the Father,* etc., in honor of the triumphs of the name of Jesus; versicle and prayer as above.

HYMN[4327]

TO THE INFANT JESUS

Fair Child, how beautiful Thou art!
No greater can Thy sweetness be.
Thou hast possession of my heart;
It burns with love alone for Thee.
Thy littleness, O tender Child!
Is like a dart of love divine
That pierces with Thy sweetness mild,
To-day, this hardened heart of mine.
My only Good! Thy tears I see,
And Thou art trembling now with cold,
My heart that has been charmed by Thee
Is sad as I Thy grief behold.
Oh, may my heart Thy home e’er be,
My Love, my Conqueror Thou art.
Oh, take the food I offer Thee,
The food of love within my heart.

THE PASSION AND THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

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Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

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THE ASCETICAL WORKS

Volume V

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APPROBATION

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Nicholas Mauron, Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled “The Passion and the Death of Jesus Christ,” which is Vol. V. of the new and complete edition in English of the works of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, called “The Centenary Edition.”

ELIAS FRED. SCHAUER,

Sup. Prov. Baltimorensis.

BALTIMORE, MD., *October* 15, 1886.

THE fifth volume of the Ascetical Works is entirely devoted to the Passion of Jesus Christ. It consists of five parts, namely: 1. Reflections on the Passion. 2. The Simple Exposition of the Passion. 3. Considerations. 4. Meditations. 5. Other Exercises of Piety.

A short treatise on the Passion has been given in Volume II. The “Darts of Fire” has been inserted in Volume IV.—ED.

CONTENTS

INDEX

THE PASSION AND THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

CONTENTS

The Passion and the Death of Jesus Christ

INVOCATION OF JESUS AND MARY.

TO THE READER

INTRODUCTION

Reflections and Affections on the Passion of Jesus Christ

Chapter I
THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST IN BEING WILLING TO SATISFY THE DIVINE JUSTICE FOR OUR SINS

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

Chapter II
JESUS CHOSE TO SUFFER SO MUCH FOR US, IN ORDER THAT WE MAY UNDERSTAND THE GREAT LOVE HE HAS FOR US

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

Chapter III
JESUS, FOR LOVE OF US, CHOSE TO SUFFER THE PAINS OF HIS PASSION, EVEN FROM THE BEGINNING OF HIS LIFE

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

Chapter IV
THE GREAT DESIRE WHICH JESUS HAD TO SUFFER AND TO DIE FOR LOVE OF US

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

Chapter V
THE LOVE OF JESUS IN LEAVING HIMSELF FOR OUR FOOD BEFORE HIS DEATH

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

Chapter VI
THE BLOODY SWEAT AND AGONY SUFFERED BY JESUS IN THE GARDEN

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

Chapter VII
THE LOVE OF JESUS IN SUFFERING SO MUCH CONTEMPT IN HIS PASSION

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

IX

X

Chapter VIII
THE SCOURGING OF JESUS CHRIST

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

Chapter IX
THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

I

II

III

IV

Chapter X
“ECCE HOMO”—“BEHOLD THE MAN”

I

II

III

IV

Chapter XI
THE CONDEMNATION OF JESUS CHRIST, AND HIS JOURNEY TO CALVARY

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

Chapter XII
THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

Chapter XIII
THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS UPON HIS CROSS, AND HIS EATH

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

Chapter XIV
THE HOPE WHICH WE HAVE IN THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

Chapter XV
THE LOVE OF THE ETERNAL FATHER IN HAVING GIVEN US HIS SON

I

II

- III
- IV

Chapter XVI
THE LOVE OF THE SON OF GOD IN HAVING WILLED TO DIE FOR US

- I
- II
- III
- IV
- V
- VI

PRAYER OF ST. BONAVENTURE.

Simple Exposition of the Circumstances of the Passion of Jesus Christ

INTRODUCTION

Chapter I
JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM

- I
- II
- III

Chapter II
THE COUNCIL OF THE JEWS, AND THE TREACHERY OF JUDAS

- I
- II
- III

Chapter III
THE LAST SUPPER OF JESUS WITH HIS DISCIPLES.—THE WASHING OF THE FEET

- I
- II
- III

Chapter IV
THE INSTITUTION OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT

- I
- II

Chapter V
AGONY OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES

- I
- II
- III

Chapter VI
JESUS IS TAKEN AND BOUND.—FLIGHT OF THE DISCIPLES

- I
- II
- III

Chapter VII
JESUS IS PRESENTED TO THE HIGH-PRIESTS, AND IS CONDEMNED BY THEM TO DEATH

- I
- II
- III
- IV
- V

Chapter VIII
JESUS IS BROUGHT BEFORE PILATE, AFTERWARDS BEFORE HEROD; BARABBAS IS PREFERRED TO HIM

- I
- II
- III
- IV

V

Chapter IX
JESUS IS SCOURGED AT THE PILLAR

I

II

III

IV

Chapter X
JESUS IS CROWNED WITH THORNS AND TREATED AS A MOCK KING

I

II

III

Chapter XI
PILATE SHOWS JESUS TO THE PEOPLE, SAYING, “BEHOLD THE MAN”

I

II

III

IV

V

Chapter XII
JESUS IS CONDEMNED BY PILATE

I

II

Chapter XIII
JESUS CARRIES THE CROSS TO CALVARY

I

II

III

- IV
- V
- VI

Chapter XIV
JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

- I
- II
- III
- IV
- V
- VI
- VII
- VIII

Chapter XV
WORDS THAT JESUS SPOKE ON THE CROSS

- I
- II
- III
- IV
- V

Chapter XVI
DEATH OF JESUS

- I
- III
- IV
- V

Considerations on the Passion of Jesus Christ

INTRODUCTION

Chapter I
THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN GENERAL

- I
  NECESSITY OF A REDEEMER AND HIS QUALITIES—THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD—ERRORS OF THE JEWS—PROPHECIES
- II
  FIGURES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT—OTHER PROPHECIES—THANKS DUE TO THE FATHER AND TO THE SON
- III
  THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST IS OUR SALVATION. IT IS AN INSTRUCTION AND AN EXAMPLE; IT IS A MOTIVE OF CONFIDENCE AND OF LOVE

Chapter II
THE SEPARATE SUFFERINGS THAT JESUS CHRIST ENDURED AT HIS DEATH

- I
  PROPHECY OF ISAIAS—ABASEMENT OF THE PROMISED REDEEMER
- II
  HUMILIATIONS AND SUFFERINGS OF JESUS CHRIST
- III
  JESUS CHRIST SUFFERED VOLUNTARILY FOR US
- IV
  THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS WERE EXTREME
- V
  INTERIOR SUFFERINGS OF OUR SAVIOUR
- VI
  PATIENCE OF JESUS CHRIST—FRUITS OF HIS DEATH
- VII
  PROPHECIES OF DAVID—VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES
- VIII
  JESUS CHRIST IS THE TRUE MESSIAS—SUPERABUNDANCE OF HIS MERITS

Chapter III
THE SCOURGING, THE CROWNING WITH THORNS, AND THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST

- I
  THE SCOURGING

II
THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

III
JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS

IV
THE CRUCIFIXION

V
JESUS UPON THE CROSS

Chapter IV
THE INSULTS OFFERED TO JESUS CHRIST WHILE HE WAS HANGING UPON THE CROSS

I
AGONY OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

II
“IF THOU BE THE SON OF GOD, COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS”

III
“HE SAVED OTHERS, HIMSELF HE CANNOT SAVE.”

IV
“IF GOD LOVES HIM, LET HIM DELIVER HIM NOW.”

Chapter V
THE SEVEN WORDS SPOKEN BY JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS

I
PATER! DIMITTE ILLIS; NON ENIM SCIUNT QUID FACIUNT

II
AMEN DICO TIBI: HODIE MECUM ERIS IN PARADISE

III
MULIER, ECCE FILIUS TUUS. . . . ECCE MATER TUA

IV
DEUS MEUS! DEUS MEUS! UT QUID DERELIQUISTI ME?

V
SITIO

VI
CONSUMMATUM EST

VII
PATER! IN MANUS TUAS COMMENDO SPIRITUM MEUM

Chapter VI
THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

I
JESUS DIES, AND TRIUMPHS OVER DEATH

II
JESUS DEAD ON THE CROSS

III
THE FRUITS OF THE DEATH OF OUR SAVIOUR

Chapter VII
THE PRODIGIES WHICH HAPPENED AT THE DEATH OF CHRIST

I
MOURNING OF ALL NATURE—DARKNESS

II
THE RENDING OF THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE

III
THE EARTHQUAKE

IV
RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND CONVERSIONS

V
THE HEART OF JESUS IS PIERCED

VI
BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

Chapter VIII
THE LOVE SHOWN TO US BY JESUS CHRIST IN HIS PASSION

I
GOD SO LOVED MEN, THAT HE GAVE HIS OWN SON TO REDEEM THEM

II
THE SON OF GOD OFFERED HIMSELF FOR THE LOVE OF US

III
JESUS DIED NOT ONLY FOR US ALL, BUT FOR EACH ONE OF US

Chapter IX
THE GRATITUDE THAT WE OWE TO JESUS CHRIST FOR HIS PASSION

I
JESUS DIED FOR US; WE OUGHT TO LIVE AND DIE FOR HIM

II
WHAT IT IS TO LIVE AND DIE FOR JESUS

Chapter X
WE MUST PLACE ALL OUR HOPES IN THE MERITS OF JESUS CHRIST

I
JESUS CRUCIFIED IS OUR ONLY HOPE IN ALL OUR WANTS

II
THE HOPE THAT WE HAVE IN JESUS CHRIST THAT HE WILL PARDON OUR SINS

III
THE HOPE THAT WE HAVE IN JESUS CHRIST THAT HE WILL GRANT US FINAL PERSEVERANCE

IV
THE HOPE THAT WE HAVE IN JESUS CHRIST THAT HE WILL GRANT US ETERNAL HAPPINESS

Chapter XI
THE PATIENCE THAT WE MUST EXERCISE IN COMPANY WITH JESUS CHRIST, IN ORDER TO OBTAIN ETERNAL SALVATION

I
IT IS NECESSARY TO SUFFER, AND TO SUFFER WITH PATIENCE

II
THE SIGHT OF JESUS CRUCIFIED CONSOLES US AND SUSTAINS US IN SUFFERINGS

III
THE PASSION OF OUR SAVIOUR WILL GIVE US STRENGTH WHEN AT THE POINT OF DEATH

IV
CONFIDENCE IN JESUS CHRIST, AND LOVE FOR HIM

Meditations on the Passion of Jesus Christ for each Day of the Week

MEDITATION FOR SUNDAY
THE LOVE OF JESUS IN SUFFERING FOR US

I

II

- III

MEDITATION FOR MONDAY
THE SWEAT OF BLOOD, AND THE AGONY OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN

- I
- II
- III

MEDITATION FOR TUESDAY
JESUS IS MADE PRISONER, AND IS LED AWAY TO THE JEWS

- I
- II
- III
- IV
- V
- VI

MEDITATION FOR WEDNESDAY
THE SCOURGING OF JESUS CHRIST

- I
- II
- III

MEDITATION FOR THURSDAY
THE CROWNING WITH THORNS, AND THE WORDS “ECCE HOMO” (“BEHOLD THE MAN”)

- I
- II
- III

MEDITATION FOR FRIDAY
THE CONDEMNATION OF JESUS, AND THE JOURNEY TO CALVARY

- I
- II

    - III
    - IV
  - *MEDITATION FOR SATURDAY*
    THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF JESUS
    - I
    - II
    - III
- Eight Meditations Drawn from the Considerations on the Passion of Jesus Christ.
  - *FIRST MEDITATION*
    THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IS OUR CONSOLATION
  - *SECOND MEDITATION*
    THE GREAT OBLIGATIONS BY WHICH WE ARE BOUND TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST
  - *THIRD MEDITATION*
    JESUS A MAN OF SORROWS
  - *FOURTH MEDITATION*
    JESUS TREATED AS THE LAST OF MEN
  - *FIFTH MEDITATION*
    THE DESOLATE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST
  - *SIXTH MEDITATION*
    THE IGNOMINIES WHICH JESUS CHRIST SUFFERED IN HIS PASSION
  - *SEVENTH MEDITATION*
    JESUS ON THE CROSS
  - *EIGHTH MEDITATION*
    JESUS DEAD ON THE CROSS
- Fifteen Meditations on the Passion of Jesus Christ
  - *Meditation I*
    FOR SATURDAY BEFORE PASSION SUNDAY
    JESUS MAKES HIS TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM
    - I
    - II
    - III

Meditation II
FOR PASSION SUNDAY
JESUS PRAYS IN THE GARDEN

- I
- II
- III

Meditation III
FOR PASSION MONDAY
JESUS IS APPREHENDED, AND LED BEFORE CAIPHAS

- I
- II
- III

Meditation IV
FOR PASSION TUESDAY
JESUS IS LED BEFORE PILATE AND HEROD, AND THEN HAS BARABBAS PREFERRED BEFORE HIM

- I
- II
- III

Meditation V
FOR PASSION WEDNESDAY
JESUS IS SCOURGED AT THE PILLAR

- I
- II
- III

Meditation VI
FOR PASSION THURSDAY
JESUS IS CROWNED WITH THORNS, AND TREATED AS A MOCK KING

- I
- II
- III

Meditation VII
FOR PASSION FRIDAY
PILATE EXHIBITS JESUS TO THE PEOPLE, SAYING, “BEHOLD THE MAN!”

- I
- II
- III

Meditation VIII
FOR PASSION SATURDAY
JESUS IS CONDEMNED BY PILATE

- I
- II
- III

Meditation IX
FOR PALM SUNDAY
JESUS CARRIES THE CROSS TO CALVARY

- I
- II
- III

Meditation X
FOR HOLY MONDAY
JESUS IS PLACED UPON THE CROSS

- I
- II
- III

Meditation XI
FOR HOLY TUESDAY
JESUS UPON THE CROSS

- I
- II
- III

Meditation XII
FOR HOLY WEDNESDAY
THE WORDS SPOKEN BY JESUS UPON THE CROSS

- I
- II
- III

Meditation XIII
FOR HOLY THURSDAY
JESUS DIES UPON THE CROSS

- I
- II
- III

Meditation XIV
FOR GOOD FRIDAY
JESUS HANGING DEAD UPON THE CROSS

- I
- II
- III

Meditation XV
FOR HOLY SATURDAY
MARY PRESENT ON CALVARY AT THE DEATH OF JESUS

- I
- II
- III

Three Meditations on Paradise, for the Easter Festival

Meditation I
FOR EASTER SUNDAY
THE JOYS OF HEAVEN

- I
- II
- III

- *Meditation II*
  FOR EASTER MONDAY
  THE SOUL THAT LEAVES THIS LIFE IN THE STATE OF GRACE
    - I
    - II
    - III
- *Meditation III*
  FOR EASTER TUESDAY
  THE SIGHT OF GOD IS THAT IN WHICH THE HAPPINESS OF THE ELECT CONSISTS
    - I
    - II
    - III

Various Exercises for the Use of Persons devoted to the Passion of our Lord

- THE CLOCK OF THE PASSION
- GRADUS PASSIONIS D. N. JESU CHRISTI
- STEPS OF THE PASSION
- LITTLE CHAPLET OF THE FIVE WOUNDS OF JESUS CRUCIFIED
    - I
    - II
    - III
    - IV
    - V
- PRAYER TO JESUS CRUCIFIED, TO BE SAID EVERY DAY TO OBTAIN HIS HOLY LOVE
- PRAYERS TO JESUS
- WAY OF THE CROSS
    - MANNER OF PRACTISING THE EXERCISE OF THE WAY OF THE CROSS
    - FIRST STATION
      JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

- SECOND STATION
  JESUS IS MADE TO BEAR HIS CROSS
- THIRD STATION
  JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME UNDER HIS CROSS
- FOURTH STATION
  JESUS MEETS HIS AFFLICTED MOTHER
- FIFTH STATION
  THE CYRENIAN HELPS JESUS TO CARRY HIS CROSS
- SIXTH STATION
  VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS
- SEVENTH STATION
  JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME
- EIGHTH STATION
  JESUS SPEAKS TO THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM
- NINTH STATION
  JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME
- TENTH STATION
  JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS
- ELEVENTH STATION
  JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS
- TWELFTH STATION
  JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS
- THIRTEENTH STATION
  JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS
- FOURTEENTH STATION
  JESUS IS PLACED IN THE SEPULCHRE

HYMNS

- I
  THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST
- II
  TO JESUS IN HIS PASSION

The Passion and the Death of Jesus Christ

INVOCATION OF JESUS AND MARY.

O Saviour of the world, O Love of souls, O Lord most lovely of all beings! Thou by Thy Passion didst come to win to Thyself our hearts, by showing us the immense love that Thou didst bear to us in accomplishing a redemption which has brought to us a sea of benedictions, and which cost Thee a sea of pains and ignominies. It was principally for this end that Thou didst institute the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in order that we might have a perpetual memorial of Thy Passion: “That we might have forever a perpetual memorial of so great a benefit,” says St. Thomas, “He gives his body to be the food of the faithful,”[4328] which St. Paul had already said. *As often as you shall eat this bread, you shall show the death of the Lord.*[4329] Oh, how many holy souls hast Thou persuaded by these prodigies of love, consumed by the flames of Thy love, to renounce all earthly goods, in order to dedicate themselves entirely to loving Thee alone, O most amiable Saviour! O my Jesus! I pray Thee make me always remember Thy Passion; and grant that I also, a miserable sinner, overcome at last by so many loving devices, may return to love Thee, and to show Thee, by my poor love, some mark of gratitude for the excessive love which Thou, my God and my Saviour, hast borne to me. Remember, my Jesus, that I am one of those sheep of Thine, to save which Thou didst come down on the earth and didst sacrifice Thy divine life. I know that, after having redeemed me by Thy death, Thou hast not ceased to love me, and that Thou dost still bear to me the same love that Thou hadst for me when Thou didst die for my sake. Oh, permit me no longer to lead a life of ingratitude towards Thee, my God, who dost so much deserve to be loved, and hast done so much to be loved by me!

And thou, O most holy Virgin Mary, who didst take so great a part in the Passion of thy Son, obtain for me, I beseech thee, through the merits of thy sorrows, the grace to experience a taste of that compassion which thou didst so sensibly feel at the death of Jesus, and obtain for me also a spark of that love which wrought all the martyrdom of thy afflicted heart. Amen.

"Let my mind, O Lord Jesus Christ, I beseech Thee, be absorbed in the fiery and honeyed sweetness of Thy love, that I may die for love of the love of Thee, who wert pleased to die for love of the love of me."[4330]

TO THE READER

In my book on the *Glories of Mary,* I promised to write for you another that should treat of the love of Jesus Christ; but on account of my corporal infirmities, my Director would not permit me to keep my promise. I have been scarcely able to publish these short Reflections on the Passion of Jesus Christ. These Reflections, however, contain the gist of what I had gathered for my subject, withholding only what had reference to the Incarnation and birth of our Saviour, as I intended to compose from it a little work for the Novena of Christmas, which I shall afterwards publish, if I obtain permission. Nevertheless, I hope that the little work that I offer you to-day will be pleasing to you, especially since it will put before you, in regular order, the passages of Holy Scripture referring to the love that Jesus Christ showed us in his death; for there is nothing more apt to stimulate a Christian to the love of God than the word of God itself that is drawn from Holy Writ.

Let us, therefore, love Jesus Christ, who is our Saviour, our God, and our supreme good. This is the reason why I invite you to cast a glance at the Passion; for you will find therein all the motives that we can have to hope for eternal life and to love God; and in this our salvation consists.

All the saints cherished a tender devotion towards Jesus Christ in his Passion; this is the only means by which they sanctified themselves. Father Balthasar Alvarez, as we read in his life, used to say that one should not think of having done anything so long as one has not succeeded in constantly keeping in one’s heart Jesus crucified. His method of prayer consisted in placing himself at the feet of Jesus crucified, by meditating especially on his poverty, his humiliations, sorrows, and by listening to the lesson that our Lord made him hear from the height of the cross. You may also hope to sanctify yourself if you continue in like manner to consider what your divine Redeemer has done and suffered for you.

Ask him, without ceasing, to give you his love; and this grace you should never weary to ask from your Queen, the Blessed Virgin, who is called the Mother of beautiful love. And when you ask this great gift for yourself, ask it also for me, who have desired to contribute to your sanctification in offering you this little work. I promise to do the same thing for you in order that, one day, in paradise, we may embrace each other in a holy charity, and may recognize each other as devoted servants of our most amiable Saviour, finding ourselves united there in the society of the elect to see forever, face to face, and love for all eternity, Jesus, our Saviour and our love. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

HOW USEFUL IT IS TO MEDITATE ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

The lover of souls, our most loving Redeemer, declared that he had no other motive in coming down upon earth to become man than to enkindle in the hearts of men the fire of his holy love: *I am come to cast fire on earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?*[4331] And, oh, what beautiful flames of love has he not enkindled in so many souls, especially by the pains that he chose to suffer in his death, in order to prove to us the immeasurable love which he still bears to us!

Oh, how many souls, happy in the wounds of Jesus, as in burning furnaces of love, have been so inflamed with his love that they have not refused to consecrate to him their goods, their lives, and their whole selves, surmounting with great courage all the difficulties which they had to encounter in the observance of the divine law, for the love of that Lord who, being God, chose to suffer so much for the love of them! This was just the counsel that the Apostle gave us, in order that we might not fail, but make great advances in the way of salvation: *Think diligently upon Him who endureth such opposition from sinners against Himself, that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds.*[4332]

Wherefore St. Augustine, all inflamed with love at the sight of Jesus nailed on the cross, prayed thus sweetly: “Imprint, O Lord, Thy wounds in my heart, that I may read therein suffering and love: suffering, that I may endure for Thee all suffering; love, that I may despise for Thee all love.[4333] Write, he said, my most loving Saviour, write on my heart Thy wounds, in order that I may always behold therein Thy sufferings and Thy love. Yes, because, having before my eyes the great sufferings that Thou, my God, didst endure for me, I may bear in silence all the sufferings that it may fall to my lot to endure; and at the sight of the love which Thou didst exhibit for me on the cross, I may never love or be able to love any other than Thee.

And from what source did the saints draw courage and strength to suffer torments, martyrdom, and death, if not from the sufferings of Jesus crucified? St. Joseph of Leonessa, a Capuchin, on seeing that they were going to bind him with cords, for a painful incision that the surgeon was to make in his body, took into his hands his crucifix and said, "Why these cords? why these cords? Behold, these are my chains—my Saviour nailed to the cross for love of me. He, through his sufferings, constrains me to bear every trial for his sake." And thus he suffered the amputation without a complaint; looking upon Jesus, who, *as a lamb before his shearers, was dumb, and did not open His mouth.*[4334]

Who, then, can ever complain that he suffers wrongfully, when he considers Jesus, who was *bruised for our sins?*[4335] Who can refuse to obey, on account of some inconvenience, when Jesus *became obedient unto death?*[4336] Who can refuse ignominies, when they behold Jesus treated as a fool, as a mock king, as a disorderly person; struck, spit upon on his face, and suspended upon an infamous gibbet?

Who could love any other object besides Jesus when they see him dying in the midst of so many sufferings and insults, in order to captivate our love? A certain devout solitary prayed to God to teach him what he could do in order to love him perfectly. Our Lord revealed to him that there was no more efficient way to arrive at the perfect love of him than to meditate constantly on his Passion. St. Teresa lamented and complained of certain books which had taught her to leave off meditating on the Passion of Jesus Christ, because this might be an impediment to the contemplation of his divinity; and the saint exclaimed, "O Lord of my soul, O my Jesus crucified, my treasure! I never remember this opinion without thinking that I have been guilty of great treachery. And is it possible that Thou, my Lord, couldst be an obstacle to me in the way of a greater good? Whence, then, do all good things come to me, but from Thee?" And she then added, "I have seen that, in order to please God, and to induce him to grant us great graces, he wills that they should all pass through the hands of this most sacred humanity, in which his divine majesty declared that he took pleasure."[4337]

For this reason, Father Balthasar Alvarez said that ignorance of the treasures that we possess in Jesus was the ruin of Christians; and therefore his most favorite and usual meditation was on the Passion of Jesus Christ.

He meditated especially on three of the sufferings of Jesus,—his poverty, contempt, and pain; and he exhorted his penitents to meditate frequently on the Passion of our Redeemer, telling them that they should not consider that they had done anything at all, until they had arrived at retaining Jesus crucified continually present in their hearts.

"He who desires," says St. Bonaventure, "to go on advancing from virtue to virtue, from grace to grace, should meditate continually on the Passion of Jesus."[4338] And he adds that "there is no practice more profitable for the entire sanctification of the soul than the frequent meditation of the sufferings of Jesus Christ."[4339]

St. Augustine also said that a single tear shed at the remembrance of the Passion of Jesus is worth more than a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or a year of fasting on bread and water. Yes, because it was for this end that our Saviour suffered so much, in order that we should think of his sufferings; because if we think on them, it is impossible not to be inflamed with divine love: *The charity of Christ presseth us,*[4340] says St. Paul. Jesus is loved by few, because few consider the pains he has suffered for us; but he that frequently considers them cannot live without loving Jesus. "The charity of Christ presseth us." He will feel himself so constrained by his love that he will not find it possible to refrain from loving a God so full of love, who has suffered so much to make us love him.

Therefore the Apostle said that he desired to know nothing but Jesus, and Jesus crucified; that is, the love that he has shown us on the cross: *I judged not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*[4341] And, in truth, from what books can we better learn the science of the saints—that is, the science of loving God—than from Jesus crucified? That great servant of God, Brother Bernard of Corlione, the Capuchin, not being able to read, his brother religious wanted to teach him, upon which he went to consult his crucifix; but Jesus answered him from the cross, "What is reading? what are books? Behold, I am the book wherein thou mayst continually read the love I have borne thee." O great subject to be considered during our whole life and during all eternity! A God dead for the love of us! a God dead for the love of us! O wonderful subject!

St. Thomas Aquinas was one day paying a visit to St. Bonaventure, and asked him from what book he had drawn all the beautiful lessons he had written. St. Bonaventure showed him the image of the Crucified, which was completely blackened by all the kisses that he had given it, and said, “This is my book whence I receive everything that I write; and it has taught me whatever little I know.”

In short, all the saints have learned the art of loving God from the study of the crucifix. Brother John of Alvernia, every time that he beheld Jesus wounded, could not restrain his tears. Brother James of Tuderto, when he heard the Passion of our Redeemer read, not only wept bitterly, but broke out into loud sobs, overcome with the love with which he was inflamed toward his beloved Lord.

It was this sweet study of the crucifix which made St. Francis become a great seraph. He wept so continually in meditating on the sufferings of Jesus Christ, that he almost entirely lost his sight. On one occasion, being found crying out and weeping, he was asked what was the matter with him. “What ails me?” answered the saint. “I weep over the sorrows and insults inflicted on my Lord; and my sorrow is increased when I think of those ungrateful men who do not love him, but live without any thought of him.” Every time that he heard the bleating of a lamb, he felt himself touched with compassion at the thought of the death of Jesus, the Immaculate Lamb, drained of every drop of blood upon the cross for the sins of the world. And therefore this loving saint could find no subject on which he exhorted his brethren with greater eagerness than the constant remembrance of the Passion of Jesus.

This, then, is the book—Jesus crucified—which, if we constantly read it, will teach us, on the one hand, to have a lively fear of sin, and, on the other hand, will inflame us with love for a God so full of love for us; while we read in these wounds the great malice of sin, which reduced a God to suffer so bitter a death in order to satisfy the divine justice, and the love which our Saviour has shown us in choosing to suffer so much in order to prove to us how much he loved us.

Let us beseech the divine Mother Mary to obtain for us from her Son the grace that we also may enter into these furnaces of love, in which so many loving hearts are consumed, in order that, our earthly affections being there burned away, we also may burn with those blessed flames, which render souls holy on earth and blessed in heaven. Amen.

Reflections and Affections on the Passion of Jesus Christ

Chapter I

THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST IN BEING WILLING TO SATISFY THE DIVINE JUSTICE FOR OUR SINS

I

We read in history of a proof of love so prodigious that it will be the admiration of all ages.

There was once a king, lord of many kingdoms, who had one only son, so beautiful, so holy, so amiable, that he was the delight of his father, who loved him as much as himself. This young prince had a great affection for one of his slaves; so much so that, the slave having committed a crime for which he had been condemned to death, the prince offered himself to die for the slave; the father, being jealous of justice, was satisfied to condemn his beloved son to death, in order that the slave might remain free from the punishment that he deserved: and thus the son died a malefactor's death, and the slave was freed from punishment.

This fact, the like of which has never happened in this world, and never will happen, is related in the Gospels, where we read that the Son of God, the Lord of the universe, seeing that man was condemned to eternal death in punishment of his sins, chose to take upon himself human flesh, and thus to pay by his death the penalty due to man: *He was offered because it was His own will.*[4342] And his Eternal Father caused him to die upon the cross to save us miserable sinners: *He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.*[4343] What dost thou think, O devout soul, of this love of the Son and of the Father?

Thou didst, then, O my beloved Redeemer, choose by Thy death to sacrifice Thyself in order to obtain the pardon of my sins. And what return of gratitude shall I then make to Thee? Thou hast done too much to oblige me to love Thee; I should indeed be most ungrateful to Thee if I did not love Thee with my whole heart. Thou hast given for me Thy divine life; I, miserable sinner that I am, give Thee my own life. Yes, I will at least spend that period of life that remains to me only in loving Thee, obeying Thee, and pleasing Thee.

II

O men, men! let us love this our Redeemer, who, being God, has not disdained to take upon himself our sins, in order to satisfy by his sufferings for the chastisement which we have deserved: *Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows.*[4344]

St. Augustine says that our Lord in creating us formed us by virtue of his power, but in redeeming us he has saved us from death by means of his sufferings: “He created us in his strength; he sought us back in his weakness.”[4345]

How much do I not owe Thee, O Jesus my Saviour! Oh, if I were to give my blood a thousand times over,—if I were to spend a thousand lives for Thee,—it would yet be nothing. Oh, how could any one that meditated much on the love which Thou hast shown him in Thy Passion, love anything else but Thee? Through the love with which Thou didst love us on the cross, grant me the grace to love Thee with my whole heart. I love Thee, infinite Goodness; I love Thee above every other good; and I ask nothing more of Thee but Thy holy love.

“But how is this?” continues St. Augustine. How is it possible, O Saviour of the world, that Thy love has arrived at such a height that when I had committed the crime, Thou shouldst have to pay the penalty? “Whither has Thy love reached? I have sinned; Thou art punished.”[4346]

And what could it then signify to Thee, adds St. Bernard, that we should lose ourselves and be chastised, as we well deserved to be; that Thou shouldst choose to satisfy with Thy innocent flesh for our sins, and to die in order to deliver us from death! “O good Jesus, what doest Thou? We ought to have died, and it is Thou who diest. We have sinned and Thou sufferest. A deed without precedent, grace without merit, charity without measure.”[4347] O deed which never has had and never will have its match! O grace which we could never merit! O love which can never be understood!

III

Isaias had already foretold that our blessed Redeemer should be condemned to death, and as an innocent lamb brought to the sacrifice: *He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter.*[4348] What a cause of wonder it must have been to the angels, O my God, to behold their innocent Lord led as a victim to be sacrificed on the altar of the cross for the love of man! And what a cause of horror to heaven and to hell, the sight of a God extended as an infamous criminal on a shameful gibbet for the sins of his creatures!

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree): that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.[4349] "He was made a curse upon the cross," says St. Ambrose, "that thou mightest be blessed in the kingdom of God."[4350]

O my dearest Saviour! Thou wert, then, content, in order to obtain for me the blessing of God, to embrace the dishonor of appearing upon the cross accursed in the sight of the whole world, and even forsaken in Thy sufferings by Thy Eternal Father,—a suffering which made Thee cry out with a loud voice, *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*[4351] Yes, observes Simon of Cassia, it was for this end that Jesus was abandoned in his Passion in order that we might not remain abandoned in the sins which we have committed: "Therefore Christ was abandoned in his sufferings that we might not be abandoned in our guilt."[4352] O prodigy of compassion! O excess of love of God towards men! And how can there be a soul who believes this, O my Jesus, and yet loves Thee not?

IV

He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.[4353] Behold, O men, how far the love of Jesus for us has carried him, in order to cleanse us from the filthiness of our sins. He has even shed every drop of his blood that he might prepare for us in this his own blood a bath of salvation: "He offers his own blood," says a learned writer, "speaking better than the blood of Abel: for that cried for justice; the blood of Christ for mercy."[4354]

Whereupon St. Bonaventure exclaims, "O good Jesus, what hast Thou done?"[4355] O my Saviour, what indeed hast Thou done? How far hath Thy love carried Thee? What hast Thou seen in me which hath made Thee love me so much? “Wherefore hast Thou loved me so much? Why, Lord, why? What am I?”[4356] Wherefore didst Thou choose to suffer so much for me? Who am I that Thou wouldst win to Thyself my love at so dear a price? Oh, it was entirely the work of Thy infinite love! Be Thou eternally praised and blessed for it.

O all ye that pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like to My sorrow.[4357] The same seraphic Doctor, considering these words of Jeremias as spoken of our blessed Redeemer while he was hanging on the cross dying for the love of us, says, “Yes, Lord, I will attend and see if there be any love like unto Thy love.”[4358] By which he means, I do indeed see and understand, O my most loving Redeemer, how much Thou didst suffer upon that infamous tree; but what most constrains me to love Thee is the thought of the affection which Thou hast shown me in suffering so much, in order that I might love Thee.

V

That which most inflamed St. Paul with the love of Jesus was the thought that he chose to die, not only for all men, but for him in particular: *He loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.*[4359] Yes, he has loved me, said he, and for my sake he gave himself up to die. And thus ought every one of us to say; for St. John Chrysostom asserts that God has loved every individual man with the same love with which he has loved the world: “He loves each man separately with the same measure of charity with which he loves the whole world.”[4360] So that each one of us is under as great obligation to Jesus Christ for having suffered for every one, as if he had suffered for him alone.

For supposing, my brother, Jesus Christ had died to save you alone, leaving all others to their original ruin, what a debt of gratitude you would owe to him! But you ought to feel that you owe him a greater obligation still for having died for the salvation of all. For if he had died for you alone, what sorrow would it not have caused you to think that your neighbors, parents, brothers, and friends would be damned, and that you would, when this life was over, be forever separated from them? If you and your family had been slaves, and some one came to rescue you alone, how would you not entreat of him to save your parents and brothers together with yourself!

And how much would you thank him if he did this to please you! Say, therefore, to Jesus:

O my sweetest Redeemer! Thou hast done this for me without my having asked Thee; Thou hast not only saved me from death at the price of Thy blood, but also my parents and friends, so that I may have a good hope that we may all together enjoy Thy presence forever in paradise. O Lord! I thank Thee, and I love Thee, and I hope to thank Thee for it, and to love Thee forever in that blessed country.

VI

Who could ever, says St. Laurence Justinian, explain the love which the divine Word bears to each one of us, since it surpasses the love of every son towards his mother, and of every mother for her son? “The intense charity of the Word of God surpasses all maternal and filial love; neither can human words express how great his love is to each one of us!”[4361] So much so, that our Lord revealed to St. Gertrude that he would be ready to die as many times as there were souls damned, if they were yet capable of redemption: “I would die as many deaths as there are souls in hell.”[4362]

O Jesus, O treasure more worthy of love than all others! why is it that men love Thee so little? Oh! do Thou make known what Thou hast suffered for each of them, the love that Thou bearest them, the desire Thou hast to be loved by them, and how worthy Thou art of being loved. Make Thyself known, O my Jesus, make Thyself loved.

VII

I am the good shepherd, said our Redeemer; *the good shepherd gives his life for his sheep.*[4363] But, O my Lord, where are there in the world shepherds like unto Thee? Other shepherds will slay their sheep in order to preserve their own life. Thou, O too loving Shepherd, didst give Thy divine life in order to save the life of Thy beloved sheep. And of these sheep, I, O most amiable Shepherd, have the happiness to be one. What obligation, then, am I not under to love Thee, and to spend my life for Thee, since Thou hast died for the love of me in particular! And what confidence ought I not to have in Thy blood, knowing that it has been shed to pay the debt of my sins! *And thou shalt say in that day, I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord. Behold, God is my Saviour; I will deal confidently, and will not fear.*[4364] And how can I any longer mistrust Thy mercy, O my Lord, when I behold Thy wounds? Come, then, O sinners, and let us have recourse to Jesus, who hangs upon that cross as it were upon a throne of mercy. He has appeased the divine justice, which we had insulted. If we have offended God, he has done penance for us; all that is required for us is contrition for our sins. O my dearest Saviour, to what have Thy pity and love for me reduced Thee? The slave sins, and Thou, Lord, payest the penalty for him. If, therefore, I think of my sins, the thought of the punishment I deserve must make me tremble; but when I think of Thy death, I find I have more reason to hope than to fear. O blood of Jesus! thou art all my hope.

VIII

But this blood, as it inspires us with confidence, also obliges us to give ourselves entirely to our Blessed Redeemer. The Apostle exclaims, *Know you not that you are not your own? For you are bought with a great price.*[4365]

Therefore, O my Jesus, I cannot any longer, without injustice, dispose of myself, or of my own concerns, since Thou hast made me Thine by purchasing me through Thy death. My body, my soul, my life are no longer mine; they are Thine, and entirely Thine. In Thee alone, therefore, will I hope. O my God, crucified and dead for me, I have nothing else to offer Thee but this soul, which Thou hast bought with Thy blood; to Thee do I offer it. Accept of my love, for I desire nothing but Thee, my Saviour, my God, my love, my all. Hitherto I have shown much gratitude towards men; to Thee alone have I, alas! been most ungrateful. But now I love Thee, and I have no greater cause of sorrow than my having offended Thee. O my Jesus, give me confidence in Thy Passion; root out of my heart every affection that belongs not to Thee. I will love Thee alone, who dost deserve all my love, and who hast given me so much reason to love Thee. And who, indeed, could refuse to love Thee, when they see Thee, who art the beloved of the Eternal Father, dying so bitter and cruel a death for our sake? O Mary, O Mother of fair love, I pray thee, through the merits of thy burning heart, obtain for me the grace to live only in order to love thy Son, who, being in himself worthy of an infinite love, has chosen at so great a cost to acquire to himself the love of a miserable sinner like me. O love of souls, O my Jesus! I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee; but still I love Thee too little. Oh, give me more love, give me flames that may make me live always burning with Thy love! I do not myself deserve it; but Thou dost well deserve it, O infinite Goodness. Amen. This I hope, so may it be.

Chapter II

JESUS CHOSE TO SUFFER SO MUCH FOR US, IN ORDER THAT WE MAY UNDERSTAND THE GREAT LOVE HE HAS FOR US

I

“Two things,” says Cicero, “make us know a lover—that he does good to his beloved, and that he suffers torments for him; and this last is the greatest sign of true love.”[4366] God has indeed already shown his love to man by many benefits bestowed upon him; but his love would not have been satisfied by only doing good to man, as says St. Peter Chrysologus, if he had not found the means to prove to him how much he loved him by also suffering and dying for him, as he did by taking upon him human flesh: “But he held it to be little if he showed his love without suffering;”[4367] and what greater means could God have discovered to prove to us the immense love which he bears us than by making himself man and suffering for us? “In no other way could the love of God towards us be shown,”[4368] writes St. Gregory Nazianzen.

My beloved Jesus, how much hast Thou labored to show me Thy love, and to make me enamoured of Thy goodness! Great indeed, then, would be the injury I should do Thee if I were to love Thee but little, or to love anything else but Thee.

II

Ah, when he showed himself to us, a God, wounded, crucified, and dying, did he not indeed (says Cornelius à Lapide) give us the greatest proofs of the love that he bears us? “God showed his utmost love on the cross.”[4369] And before him St. Bernard said that Jesus, in his Passion, showed us that his love towards us could not be greater than it was: “In the shame of the

Passion is shown the greatest and incomparable love."[4370] The Apostle writes that when Jesus Christ chose to die for our salvation, then appeared how far the love of God extended towards us miserable creatures: *The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared.*[4371]

O my most loving Saviour! I feel indeed that all Thy wounds speak to me of the love that Thou bearest me. And who that had so many proofs of Thy love could resist loving Thee in return? St. Teresa was indeed right O most amiable Jesus, when she said that he who loves Thee not gives a proof that he does not know Thee.

III

Jesus Christ could easily have obtained for us salvation without suffering, and in leading a life of ease and delight; but no, St. Paul says, *having joy set before Him, He endured the cross.*[4372] He refused the riches, the delights, the honors of the world, and chose for himself a life of poverty, and a death full of suffering and ignominy. And wherefore? Would it not have sufficed for him to have offered to his eternal Father one single prayer for the pardon of man? for this prayer, being of infinite value, would have been sufficient to save the world, and infinite worlds besides. Why, then, did he choose for himself so much suffering, and a death so cruel, that an author has said very truly, that through mere pain the soul of Jesus separated itself from his body?[4373] To what purpose so much cost in order to save man? St. John Chrysostom answers, a single prayer of Jesus would indeed have sufficed to redeem us; but it was not sufficient to show us the love that our God has borne us: "That which sufficed to redeem us was not sufficient for love."[4374] And St. Thomas confirms this when he says, "Christ, in suffering from love, offered to God more than the expiation of the offence of the human race demanded."[4375] Because Jesus loved us so much, he desired to be loved very much by us; and therefore he did everything that he could, even unto suffering for us, in order to conciliate our love, and to show that there was nothing more that he could do to make us love him: "He endured much weariness," says St. Bernard, "that he might bind man to love him much."[4376]

IV

And what greater proof of love, says our Saviour himself, can a friend show towards the person he loves than to give his life for his sake? *Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*[4377] But Thou, O most loving Jesus, says St. Bernard, hast done more than this, since Thou hast given Thy life for us, who were not Thy friends, but Thy enemies, and rebels against Thee: "Thou hast a greater charity, Lord, in giving Thy life for Thy enemies."[4378] And this is what the Apostle observes when he writes, *He commendeth His charity towards us, because when as yet we were sinners, according to the time Christ died for us.*[4379]

Thou wouldst then die for me, Thy enemy, O my Jesus; and yet can I resist so much love? Behold, here I am; since Thou dost so anxiously desire that I should love Thee, I will drive away every other love from my breast, and will love Thee alone.

V

St. John Chrysostom says that the principal end Jesus had in his Passion was to discover to us his love, and thus to draw our hearts to himself by the remembrance of the pains that he has endured for us: "This was the principal cause of the Passion of our Lord; he wished it to be known how great was the love of God for man,—of God, who would rather be loved than feared."[4380] St. Thomas adds that we may, through the Passion of Jesus, know the greatness of the love that God bears to man: "By this man understands the greatness of the love of God to man."[4381] And St. John had said before, *In this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down his life for us.*[4382]

O my Jesus, Immaculate Lamb sacrificed on the cross for me! let not all that Thou hast suffered for me be lost, but accomplish in me the object of Thy great sufferings![4383] Oh, bind me entirely with the sweet chains of Thy love, in order that I may not leave Thee, and that I may nevermore be separated from Thee: "Most sweet Jesus, suffer me not to be separated from Thee; suffer me not to be separated from Thee."[4384]

VI

St. Luke relates that Moses and Elias on Mount Tabor, speaking of the Passion of Jesus Christ, called it an excess: *And they spoke of his excess that he should accomplish in Jerusalem.*[4385] "Yes," says St. Bonaventure, and rightly was the Passion of Jesus called an excess; for "it was an excess of suffering and an excess of love."[4386] And a devout author adds, "What more could he suffer that he has not endured? The excess of his love reached the highest point."[4387] Yes, indeed; for the divine law imposes on men no other obligation than that of loving their neighbors as themselves; but Jesus has loved man more than himself: "He loved these more than himself,"[4388] says St. Cyril.

Thou didst, then, O my beloved Redeemer,—I will say to Thee with St. Augustine,—love me more than Thyself, since to save me Thou wouldst lose Thy divine life,—a life infinitely more precious than the lives of all men and angels put together. Thou didst love me more than Thyself, because Thou wert willing to die for me.[4389]

O infinite God! exclaims the Abbot Guerric, Thou hast for the love of men (if it is lawful to say so) become prodigal of Thyself.[4390] "Yes, indeed," he adds, "since Thou hast not been satisfied with bestowing Thy gifts, but Thou hast also given Thyself to recover lost man."[4391] O prodigy, O excess of love, worthy only of infinite goodness!

"And who," says St. Thomas of Villanova, "will ever be able, Lord, to understand even in the slightest degree the immensity of Thy love in having loved us miserable worms so much that Thou didst choose to die, even upon a cross, for us?"[4392] "Oh, how this love," continues the same saint, "exceeds all measure, all understanding!"[4393]

VII

It is a pleasing thing to see a person beloved by some great man, and more so if the latter has the power of raising him to some great fortune; but how much more sweet and pleasing must it be to us to see ourselves beloved by God, who can raise us up to an eternity of happiness? Under the old law men might have doubted whether God loved them with a tender love; but after having seen him shed his blood on an infamous gibbet and die for us, how can we doubt his loving us with infinite tenderness and affection? O my soul, behold now thy Jesus, hanging from the cross all covered with wounds! behold how, by these wounds, he proves to thee the love of his enamoured heart: “The secrets of his heart are revealed through the wounds of his body,”[4394] says St. Bernard.

My dearest Jesus, it does indeed afflict me to see Thee dying with so dreadful sufferings upon an ignominious tree; but at the same time I am greatly consoled and inflamed with love for Thee, when I see by means of these wounds the love that Thou bearest me. O heavenly seraphs, what do you think of the love of my God, *who loved me and delivered Himself for me?*”[4395]

VIII

St. Paul says that when the Gentiles heard it preached that Jesus was crucified for the love of men, they thought it such nonsense that they could not believe it. *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews, indeed, a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness.*[4396] And how is it possible, said they, to believe that an omnipotent God, who wants nothing in order to be perfectly happy as he is, would choose to become man and die on a cross to save men? This would be the same, said they, as to believe that a God had become mad for love of men: *But unto the Gentiles foolishness.*[4397] And thus they refused to believe it. But faith teaches us that Jesus has really undertaken and accomplished this great work of redemption which the Gentiles esteemed and called folly. “We have seen,” says St. Laurence Justinian, “Eternal Wisdom, the only-begotten of God, become as it were a fool through the excessive love he bears man.”[4398] Yes, adds Cardinal Hugo, for it seemed nothing but a folly that a God should choose to die for men: “It seemed a folly that God should die for the salvation of men.”[4399]

The Blessed Giacopone, who in this world had been a man of letters, and afterwards became a Franciscan, seemed to have become mad through the love that he bore to Jesus Christ. One day Jesus appeared to him and said, Giacopone, why do you commit these follies? “Why,” he answered, because Thou hast taught them me. If I am mad,” said he, “Thou hast been more mad than I, in that Thou hast died for me. I am a fool, for Thou hast been a greater fool.”[4400]

Thus, also, St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, being in an ecstasy, exclaimed, “O God of love! O God of love! The love that Thou bearest to creatures, O my Jesus, is too great indeed.” And one day, when quite enraptured, she took an image of the Crucified, and began running about the monastery, crying, “O Love! Love! I shall never rest, my God, from calling Thee Love.” Then turning to the religious, she said, “Do you not know, my dear sisters, that Jesus Christ is nothing but love? He is even mad with love, and I will go on saying it continually.” And she added that she wished she could be heard by the whole universe when she called Jesus “Love,” in order that the love of Jesus might be known and loved by all. And she sometimes even began to ring the bell, in order that all the people in the world should come (as she desired, if it had been possible) to love her Jesus.

Yes, my sweetest Redeemer, permit me to say so, this Thy spouse was indeed right when she called Thee mad with love. And does it not indeed seem a folly that Thou shouldst choose to die for love of me, for so ungrateful a worm as I am, and whose offences Thou didst foresee, as well as the infidelities of which I should be guilty? But if Thou, my God, art thus become mad, as it were, for the love of me, how is it that I do not become mad for the love of a God? When I have seen Thee crucified and dead for me, how is it that I can think of any other than Thee? Yes, O my Lord, my sovereign good, more worthy of love than every other good, I love Thee more than myself. I promise for the future to love none other but Thee, and to think constantly on the love Thou hast shown me by dying in the midst of so many sufferings for me. O scourges, O thorns, O nails, O cross, O wounds, O sufferings, O death of my Saviour you irresistibly constrain me to love him who has so much loved me. O Incarnate Word, O loving God! my soul is enamoured with Thee. I would fain love Thee so much that I should find no pleasure but in pleasing Thee, my most sweet Lord; and since Thou dost so earnestly desire my love, I protest that I will only live for Thee. I desire to do whatever Thou wiliest of me. O my Jesus! I pray Thee, help me, and grant that I may please Thee entirely and continually in time and in eternity. Mary, my Mother, entreat Jesus for me, in order that he may grant me his holy love; for I desire nothing else in this world and in the next but to love Jesus. Amen.

Chapter III

JESUS, FOR LOVE OF US, CHOSE TO SUFFER THE PAINS OF HIS PASSION, EVEN FROM THE BEGINNING OF HIS LIFE

I

The divine Word came into the world and took upon him human flesh in order to make himself loved of man, and therefore he came with such a longing to suffer for our sake, that he would not lose a moment in beginning to torment himself, at least by apprehension. Hardly was he conceived in the womb of Mary, when he represented to his mind all the sufferings of his Passion; and, in order to obtain for us pardon and divine grace, he offered himself to his eternal Father to satisfy for us through his dolors all the chastisements due to our sins; and from that moment he began to suffer everything that he afterwards endured in his most bitter death.

O my most loving Redeemer! what have I hitherto done or suffered for Thee? If I could for a thousand years endure for Thy sake all the torments that all the martyrs have suffered, they would yet be nothing compared with that one first moment in which Thou didst offer Thyself and begin to suffer for me.

II

The martyrs did indeed suffer great pains and ignominy; but they only endured them at the time of their martyrdom. Jesus even from the first instant of his life continually suffered all the torments of his Passion; for, from the first moment, he had before his eyes all the horrid scene of torments and insults which he was to receive from men. Wherefore he said by the mouth of the prophet, *My sorrow is continually before me.*[4401] O my Jesus! Thou hast been so desirous to suffer for my sake that Thou wouldst even endure Thy sufferings before the time; and yet I am so desirous after the pleasures of this world. How many times have I offended Thee in order to please my body! O my Lord! through the merits of Thy sufferings, take away from me, I beseech Thee, all affection for earthly pleasures. For Thy love I desire to abstain from this satisfaction. [*Mention it.*]

III

God, in his compassion for us, does not generally reveal to us the trials that await us before the time when we are destined to endure them. If a criminal who is executed on a gibbet had had revealed to him from the first use of his reason the torture that awaited him, could he even have been capable of joy? If Saul from the beginning of his reign had had present to his mind the sword that was to pierce him, if Judas had foreseen the cord that was to suffocate him,—how bitter would their life have been!

Our kind Redeemer, even from the first instant of his life, had always present before him the scourges, the thorns, the cross, the outrages of his Passion, the desolate death that awaited him. When he beheld the victims which were sacrificed in the temple, he well knew that they were figures of the sacrifice which he, the Immaculate Lamb, would one day consummate on the altar of the cross. When he beheld the city of Jerusalem, he well knew that he was there to lose his life in a sea of sorrows and reproaches. When he saw his dear Mother, he already imagined that he saw her in an agony of suffering at the foot of the cross, near his dying self.

So that, O my Jesus, the horrible sight of all these evils kept Thee during the whole of Thy life continually tormented and afflicted before the time of Thy death. And Thou didst accept and suffer everything for my sake. O my agonizing Lord! the sight alone of all the sins of the world, especially of mine, by which Thou didst already foresee I should offend Thee, rendered Thy life more afflicted and painful than all the lives that ever have been or ever will be. But, O my God, in what barbarous law is it written that a God should have so great love for a creature, and yet that creature should live without loving his God, or rather should offend and displease him? O my Lord, make me know the greatness of Thy love, in order that I may no longer be ungrateful to Thee. Oh, if I but loved Thee, my Jesus,—if I really loved Thee,—how sweet it would be to me to suffer for Thee!

IV

Jesus appeared one day on the cross to Sister Magdalen Orsini, who had been suffering for some time from some great affliction, and animated her to suffer it in peace. The servant of God answered, “But, Lord, Thou didst only hang on the cross for three hours, whereas I have gone on suffering this pain for several years.” Jesus Christ then said to her reproachingly, “O ignorant that thou art, what dost thou mean? From the first moment that I was in my Mother’s womb, I suffered in my heart all that I afterwards endured on the cross.”

And I, my dear Redeemer, how can I, at the sight of such’ great sufferings which Thou didst endure for my sake, during Thy whole life, complain of those crosses which Thou dost send me for my good. I thank Thee for having redeemed me with so much love and such sufferings. In order to animate me to suffer with patience the pains of this life, Thou didst take upon Thyself all our evils. O my Lord, grant that Thy sorrows may be ever present to my mind, in order that I may always accept and desire to suffer for Thy love.

V

Great as the sea is Thy destruction.[4402] As the waters of the sea are all salt and bitter, so the life of Jesus Christ was full of bitterness and void of all consolation, as he himself declared to St. Margaret of Cortona. Moreover, as all the waters of the earth unite in the sea, so did all the sufferings of men unite in Jesus Christ; wherefore he said by the mouth of the Psalmist, *Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul. I am come into the depth of the sea, and a tempest hath overwhelmed Me.*[4403] Save me, O God, for sorrows have entered even the inmost parts of my soul, and I am left submerged in a tempest of ignominy and of sufferings, both interior and exterior.

O my dearest Jesus, my love, my life, my all, if I behold from without Thy sacred body, I see nothing else but wounds. But if I enter into Thy desolate heart, I find nothing but bitterness and sorrows, which made Thee suffer the agonies of death. O my Lord, and who but Thee, who art infinite goodness, would ever suffer so much, and die for one of Thy creatures? But because Thou art God, Thou dost love as a God alone can love, with a love which cannot be equalled by any other love.

VI

St. Bernard says, “In order to redeem the slave, the Father did not spare his own Son, nor did the Son spare himself.”[4404] O infinite love of God! On the one hand the eternal Father required of Jesus Christ to satisfy for all the sins of men: *The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*[4405] On the other hand, Jesus, in order to save men in the most loving way that he could, chose to take upon himself the utmost penalty due to divine justice for our sins. Wherefore, as St. Thomas asserts, he took upon himself in the highest degree all the sufferings and outrages that ever were borne.[4406] It was on this account that Isaias called him *a man of sorrows, despised, and the most abject of men.*[4407] And with reason; for Jesus was tormented in all the members and senses of his body, and was still more bitterly afflicted in all the powers of his soul; so that the internal pains which he endured infinitely surpassed his external sufferings. Behold him, then, torn, bloodless; treated as an impostor, as a sorcerer, a madman, abandoned even by his friends, and finally persecuted by all, until he finished his life upon an infamous gibbet. *Know you what I have done to you?*[4408]

O my Lord! I do indeed know how much Thou hast done and suffered for my sake; but Thou knowest, alas! that I have hitherto done nothing for Thee. My Jesus, help me to suffer something for Thy love before death overtakes me. I am ashamed of appearing before Thee; but I will no longer be ungrateful, as I have been so many years towards Thee. Thou hast deprived Thyself of every pleasure for me; I will for the love of Thee renounce all the pleasures of the senses. Thou hast suffered so many pains for me; I will for Thy sake suffer all the pains of my life and of my death as it shall best please Thee. Thou hast been forsaken; I will be content that all should forsake me, provided Thou dost not forsake me, O my only and sovereign good! Thou hast been persecuted; I accept whatever persecution may befall me. Finally, Thou hast died for me; I will die for I Thee. O my Jesus, my Treasure, my love, my all! I love Thee. Oh, give me more love! Amen.

Chapter IV

THE GREAT DESIRE WHICH JESUS HAD TO SUFFER AND TO DIE FOR LOVE OF US

I

Oh, how exceedingly tender, loving, and constraining was that declaration of our Blessed Redeemer concerning his coming into the world, when he said that he had come to kindle in souls the fire of divine love, and that his only desire was that this holy flame should be enkindled in the hearts of men: *I am come to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I but that it should be kindled?*[4409] He continued immediately to say that he was expecting to be baptized with the baptism of his own blood—not, indeed, to wash out his own sins, since he was incapable of sinning, but to wash out our sins, which he had come to satisfy by his sufferings: “The Passion of Christ is called baptism, because we are purified in his blood.”[4410] And therefore our loving Jesus, in order to make us understand how ardent was his desire to die for us, added, with sweetest expression of his love, that he felt an immense longing for the time of his Passion, so great was his desire to suffer for our sake. These are his loving words: *I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?*[4411]

O God. the lover of men, what more couldst Thou have said or done in order to put me under the necessity of loving Thee? And what good could my love ever do Thee, that Thou didst choose to die, and didst so much desire death in order to obtain it? If a servant of mine had only desired to die for me, he would have attracted my love; and can I then live without loving Thee with all my heart, my king and God, who didst die for me, and who hadst such a longing for death in order to acquire to Thyself my love?

II

Jesus, knowing that His hour was come that He should pass out of the world to the Father, having loved His own, . . . He loved them unto the end.[4412] St. John says that Jesus called the hour of his Passion *his* hour; because, as a devout commentator writes, this was the time for which our Redeemer had most sighed during his whole life; because by suffering and dying for men, he desired to make them understand the immense love that he bore to them: "That is the hour of the lover, in which he suffers for the object beloved:"[4413] because suffering for the beloved is the most fit way of discovering the love of the lover, and of captivating to ourself the love of the beloved.

O my dearest Jesus, in order to show me the great love Thou bearest me, Thou wouldst not commit the work of my redemption to any other than Thyself. Was my love, then, of such consequence to Thee that Thou wouldst suffer so much in order to gain it? Oh, what more couldst Thou have done if Thou hadst had to gain to Thyself the love of Thy divine Father? What more could a servant endure to acquire to himself the affections of his master than what Thou hast suffered in order that Thou mayest be loved by me, a vile, ungrateful slave?

III

But behold our loving Jesus already on the point of being sacrificed on the Altar of the Cross for our salvation, in that blessed night which preceded his Passion. Let us hear him saying to his disciples, in the last supper that he makes with them, *With desire have I desired to eat this pasch with you.*[4414] St. Laurence Justinian, considering these words, asserts that they were all words of love: "With desire have I desired; this is the voice of love."[4415] As if our loving Redeemer had said, O men, know that this night, in which my Passion will begin, has been the time most longed after by me during the whole of my life; because I shall now make known to you, through my sufferings and my bitter death, how much I love you, and shall thereby oblige you to love me in the strongest way it is possible for me to do. A certain author says that in the Passion of Jesus Christ the divine omnipotence united itself to love,—love sought to love man to the utmost extent that omnipotence could arrive at; and omnipotence sought to satisfy love as far as its desire could reach.

O sovereign God! Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me; and how, then, shall I not love Thee with my whole self? I believe,—yes, I believe Thou hast died for me; and how can I, then, love Thee so little as constantly to forget Thee, and all that Thou hast suffered for me? And why, Lord, when I think on Thy Passion, am I not quite inflamed with Thy love, and do I not become entirely Thine, like so many holy souls who, after meditating on Thy sufferings, have remained the happy prey of Thy love, and have given themselves entirely to Thee?

IV

The spouse in the Canticles said that whenever her Spouse introduced her into the sacred cellar of his Passion, she saw herself so assaulted on all sides by divine love that, all languishing with love, she was constrained to seek for relief to her wounded heart: *The king brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me. Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples; because I languish with love.*[4416] And how is it possible for a soul to enter upon the meditation of the Passion of Jesus Christ without being wounded, as by so many darts of love, by those sufferings and agonies which so greatly afflicted the body and soul of our loving Lord, and without being sweetly constrained to love him who loved her so much?

O Immaculate Lamb, thus lacerated covered with blood, and disfigured, as I behold Thee on this cross, how beautiful and how worthy of love dost Thou yet appear to me! Yes, because all these wounds that I behold in Thee are to me signs and proofs of the great love that Thou bearest to me. Oh, if all men did but contemplate Thee often in that state in which Thou wert one day made a spectacle to all Jerusalem, who could help being seized with Thy love? O my beloved Lord, accept me to love Thee, since I give Thee all my senses and all my will. And how can I refuse Thee anything, if Thou hast not refused me Thy blood, Thy life, and all Thyself?

V

So great was the desire of Jesus to suffer for us, that in the night preceding his death he not only went of his own will into the garden, where he knew that the Jews would come and take him, but, knowing that Judas the traitor was already near at hand with the company of soldiers, he said to his disciples, *Arise, let us go; behold he that will betray Me is at hand.*[4417] He would even go himself to meet them, as if they came to conduct him, not to the punishment of death, but to the crown of a great kingdom.

O my sweet Saviour, Thou dost, then, go to meet Thy death with such a longing to die, through the desire that Thou hast to be loved by me! And shall I not have a desire to die for Thee, my God, in order to prove to Thee the love that I bear Thee? Yes, my Jesus, who hast died for me, I do also desire to die for Thee. Behold, my blood, my life, I offer all to Thee. I am ready to die for Thee as Thou wilt, and when Thou wilt. Accept this miserable sacrifice which a miserable sinner offers to Thee, who once offended Thee, but now loves Thee more than himself.

VI

St. Laurence Justinian, in considering this word “I thirst,”[4418] which Jesus pronounced on the cross when he was expiring, says that this thirst was not a thirst which proceeded from dryness, but one that arose from the ardor of the love that Jesus had for us: “This thirst springs from the fever of his love.”[4419] Because by this word our Redeemer intended to declare to us, more than the thirst of the body, the desire that he had of suffering for us, by showing us his love: and the immense desire that he had of being loved by us, by the many sufferings that he endured for us: “This thirst proceeds from the fever of his love.” And St. Thomas says, “By this ‘I thirst’ is shown the ardent desire for the salvation of the human race.”[4420]

O God, enamoured of souls, is it possible that such an excess of goodness can remain without correspondence on our part? It is said that love must be repaid by love; but by what love can Thy love ever be repaid? It would be necessary for another God to die for Thee, in order to compensate for the love that Thou hast borne us in dying for us. And how, then, couldst Thou, O my Lord, say that Thy delight was to dwell with men, if Thou dost receive from them nothing but injuries and ill-treatment? Love made Thee, then, change into delights the sufferings and the insults that Thou hast endured for us. O my Redeemer, most worthy of love, I will no longer resist the stratagems of Thy love; I give Thee from henceforth my whole love. Thou art and shalt be always the only beloved one of my soul. Thou didst become man in order that Thou mayest have a life to devote to me; I would fain have a thousand lives, in order that I may sacrifice them all for Thee. I love Thee, O infinite goodness, and I will love Thee with all my strength. I will do all that lies in my power to please Thee. Thou, being innocent, hast suffered for me; I a sinner, who have deserved hell, desire to suffer for Thee as much as Thou willest. O my Jesus! assist, I pray Thee, by Thy merits, this desire which Thou dost Thyself give me. O infinite God, I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee. Mary, my Mother, intercede for me. Amen.

Chapter V

THE LOVE OF JESUS IN LEAVING HIMSELF FOR OUR FOOD BEFORE HIS DEATH

I

Jesus, knowing that His hour was come that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.[4421] Our most loving Redeemer, on the last night of his life, knowing that the much-longed-for time had arrived on which he should die for the love of man, had not the heart to leave us alone in this valley of tears; but in order that he might not be separated from us even by death, he would leave us his whole self as food in the Sacrament of the Altar; giving us to understand by this that, having given us this gift of infinite worth, he could give us nothing further to prove to us his love: *He loved them unto the end.*[4422] Cornelius à Lapide, with St. Chrysostom and Theophylact, interprets the words "unto the end" according to the Greek text, and writes thus: "He loved them with an excessive and supreme love."[4423] Jesus in this sacrament made his last effort of love towards men, as the Abbot Guerric says: "He poured out the whole power of his love upon his friends."[4424]

This was still better expressed by the holy Council of Trent, which, in speaking of the Sacrament of the Altar, says that our Blessed Saviour "poured out of himself in it, as it were, all the riches of his love towards us."[4425]

The angelical St. Thomas was therefore right in calling this Sacrament "a Sacrament of love, and a token of the greatest love that a God could give us."[4426] And St. Bernard called it "the love of loves."[4427] And St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi said that a soul, after having communicated, might say, "It is consummated;"[4428] that is to say, My God, having given himself to me in this Holy Communion, has nothing more to give me. This saint, one day asked one of her novices what she had been thinking of after Communion; she answered, “Of the *love of Jesus.*” “Yes,” replied the saint; “when we think of this love, we cannot pass on to other thoughts, but must stop upon love.”

O Saviour of the world, what dost Thou expect from men, that Thou hast been induced even to give them Thyself in food? And what can there be left to Thee to give us after this Sacrament, in order to oblige us to love Thee? Ah, my most loving God, enlighten me that I may know what an excess of goodness this has been of Thine, to reduce Thyself unto becoming my food in Holy Communion! If Thou hast, therefore, given Thyself entirely to me, it is just that I also should give myself wholly to Thee. Yes, my Jesus, I give myself entirely to Thee. I love Thee above every good, and I desire to receive Thee in order to love Thee more Come, therefore, and come often, into my soul, and make it entirely Thine. Oh that I could truly say to Thee, as the loving St. Philip Neri said to Thee when he received Thee in the Viaticum, “Behold my love, behold my love; give me my love.”

II

He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.[4429] St. Denis, the Areopagite, says that love always tends towards union with the object beloved. And because food becomes one thing with him who eats it, therefore our Lord would reduce himself to food, in order that, receiving him in Holy Communion, we might become of one substance with him: *Take ye and eat,* said Jesus; *this is My body.*[4430] As if he had said, remarks St. John Chrysostom, “Eat Me, that the highest union may take place.”[4431] O man, feed thyself on Me, in order that thou and I may become one substance. In the same way, says St. Cyril of Alexandria, as two pieces of melted wax unite together, so a soul that communicates is so thoroughly united to Jesus that Jesus remains in it, and it in Jesus. O my beloved Redeemer, exclaims, therefore, St. Laurence Justinian, how couldst Thou ever come to love us so much that Thou wouldst unite Thyself to us in such a way that Thy heart and ours should become but one heart? “Oh, how admirable is Thy love. O Lord Jesus, who wouldst incorporate us in such a manner with Thy body, that we should have but one heart with Thee.”[4432]

Well did St. Francis de Sales say, in speaking of Holy Communion: “In no action does our Saviour show himself more loving or more tender than in this one, in which, as it were, he annihilates himself and reduces himself to food in order to penetrate our souls, and unite himself to the hearts of his faithful ones.” So that, says St. John Chrysostom, “To that Lord on whom the angels even dare not fix their eyes, to him we unite ourselves, and we are made one body, one flesh.”[4433] “But what shepherd,” adds the saint, “feeds the sheep with his own blood? Even mothers give their children to nurses to feed them; but Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament feeds us with his own blood, and unites us to himself. What shepherd feeds his sheep with his own blood? And why do I say shepherd? There are many mothers who give their children to others to nurse; but this he has not done, but feeds us with his own blood.”[4434] In short, says the saint, because he loves us so ardently, he chose to make himself one with us by becoming our food. “He mixed himself with us, that we might be one; this they do whose love is ardent.”[4435]

O infinite love, worthy of infinite love, when shall I love Thee, my Jesus, as Thou hast loved me? O divine food, Sacrament of love, when wilt Thou draw me entirely to Thyself? Thou hast nothing left to do in order to make Thyself loved by me. I am constantly intending to begin to love Thee, I constantly promise Thee to do so; but I never begin. I will from this day begin to love Thee in earnest. Oh, do Thou enable me to do so. Enlighten me, inflame me, detach me from earth, and permit me not any longer to resist so many enticements of Thy love. I love Thee with my whole heart, and I will therefore leave everything in order to please Thee, my life, my love, my all. I will constantly unite myself to Thee in this Holy Sacrament, in order to detach myself from everything, and to love Thee only, my God. I hope, through Thy gracious assistance, to be enabled to do so.

III

St. Laurence Justinian says, “We have seen the All-wise made foolish by excess of love.”[4436] We have seen a God who is wisdom itself become a fool through the love he has borne to man. And is it not so? Does it not seem, exclaims St. Augustine, a folly of love, that a God should give himself as food to his creatures? “Does it not seem madness to say, Eat my flesh, drink my blood?”[4437] And what more could a creature have said to his Creator? “Shall I make bold to say that the Creator of all things was beside himself through the excess of his loving goodness?”[4438] Thus St. Denis speaks, and says, that God through the greatness of his love has almost gone out of himself; for, being God, he has gone so far as to become man, and even to make himself the food of men. But, O Lord, such an excess was not becoming Thy majesty. No, but love, answers St. John Chrysostom for Jesus, does not go about looking for reasons when it desires to do good and to make itself known to the object beloved; it goes, not where it is becoming, but where it is carried by its desire. “Love is unreasoning, and goes as it is led, and not as it ought.”[4439]

O my Jesus, how ought I not to be covered with shame when I consider that, having Thee before me, who art the infinite Good and lovely above every good, and so full of love for my soul, I have yet turned back to love vile and contemptible things, and for their sake have forsaken Thee. O my God, I beseech Thee, discover to me every day more and more the greatness of Thy goodness, in order that I may every day be more and more enamoured of Thee, and may labor more and more to please Thee. Ah, my Lord, what object more beautiful, more good, more holy, more amiable can I love besides Thee? I love Thee, infinite goodness, I love Thee more than myself, and I desire to live only that I may love Thee, who dost deserve all my love.

IV

St. Paul remarks also on the time which Jesus chooses to make us this gift of the most Holy Sacrament; a gift which surpasses all the other gifts which an Almighty God could make; as St. Clement says, “A gift surpassing all fulness.”[4440] And St. Augustine says, “Although omnipotent, he could give no more.”[4441] The Apostle remarks that *The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and, giving thanks, broke and said, Take ye and eat; this is my body which shall be delivered for you.*[4442] In that same night, then, when men were thinking of preparing torments and death for Jesus, our beloved Redeemer thought of leaving them himself in the Blessed Sacrament; giving us thereby to understand that his love was so great that, instead of being cooled by so many injuries, it was then more than ever yearning towards us. O most loving Saviour, how couldst Thou have so great love for men as to choose to remain with them on this earth to be their food, after they had driven Thee away from it with so much ingratitude!

Let us also remark the immense desire which Jesus had during all his life for the arrival of that night in which he had determined to leave us this great pledge of his love. For at the moment of his instituting this most sweet sacrament he said, *With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you;*[4443] words which discover to us the ardent desire which he had to unite himself to us in Communion through the love which he bore us: "This is the voice of most burning charity,"[4444] says St. Laurence Justinian. And Jesus still retains at the present time the same desire towards all the souls that love him. There is not a bee, said he one day to St. Matilda, that throws itself with such eagerness upon the flowers in order to suck out the honey, as I, through the violence of my love, hasten to the soul that desires me.[4445]

O lover, too full of love, there are no greater proofs left for Thee to give me in order to persuade me that Thou dost love me. I bless Thy goodness for it. O my Jesus, I beseech Thee, draw me entirely to Thyself. Make me love Thee henceforth with all the affections and tenderness of which I am capable. Let it suffice to others to love Thee with a love only appreciative and predominant, for I know that Thou wilt be satisfied with it; but I shall not be satisfied until I see that I love Thee also with all the tenderness of my heart, more than friend, more than brother, more than father, and more than spouse. And where indeed shall I find a friend, a brother, a father, a spouse, who will love me as much as Thou hast loved me, my Creator, my Redeemer, and my God? who for the love of me hast spent Thy blood and Thy life; and, not content with that, dost give Thyself entirely to me in this Sacrament of love. I love Thee, then, O my Jesus, with all the affections of my soul; I love Thee more than myself. Oh, help me to love Thee; I ask nothing more of Thee.

V

St. Bernard says that God loves us for no other reason than that he may be loved by us: "God only loved that he might be loved."[4446] And therefore our Saviour protested that he had come upon earth in order to make himself loved: *I am come to send a fire upon the earth.*[4447] And oh, what flames of holy love does Jesus kindle in souls in this most divine Sacrament! The Venerable Father Francis Olimpio, a Theatine, said that nothing was so fit to excite our hearts to love the sovereign good as the most Holy Communion. Hesychius called Jesus in the Sacrament a “divine fire.”[4448] And St. Catharine of Sienna, one day perceiving, in the hands of a priest, Jesus in the Sacrament under the appearance of a furnace of love, was full of astonishment that the whole world was not consumed by the fire. The Abbot Rupert, and St. Gregory of Nyssa said that the altar itself was the wine-cellar where the espoused soul is inebriated with the love of her Lord; so much so, that, forgetful of earth, it burns and languishes with holy love: *The king brought me,* says the spouse in the Canticles, *into the cellar of wine; he set in order charity in me. Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples; because I languish with love.*[4449]

O love of my soul, most Holy Sacrament; oh that I could always remember. Thee, to forget everything else, and that I could love Thee alone without interruption and without reserve! Ah, my Jesus, Thou hast knocked so frequently at the door of my heart, that Thou hast at last, I hope, entered therein. But since Thou hast entered there, drive away, I pray Thee, all its affections that do not tend towards Thyself. Possess Thyself so entirely of me, that I may be able with truth to say to Thee from this day forth, with the Prophet, *What have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire on earth? The God of my heart, and my portion forever.*[4450] Yes, O my God, what else do I desire but Thee upon earth or in heaven? Thou alone art and shalt always be the only Lord of my heart and my will; and Thou alone shalt be all my portion, all my riches, in this life and in the next.

VI

Go, said the Prophet Isaias—go, publish everywhere the loving inventions of our God, in order to make himself loved of men: *You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour’s fountains; and you shall say in that day, Praise ye the Lord, and call upon His name, make His inventions known among the people.*[4451] And what inventions has not the love of Jesus made in order to make himself loved by us? Even on the cross he has opened in his wounds so many fountains of grace, that to receive them it is sufficient to ask for them in faith. And, not satisfied with this, he has given us his whole self in the Most Holy Sacrament.

O man, says St. John Chrysostom, wherefore art thou so niggardly, and dost use so much reserve in thy love for that God who hath given his whole self to thee without any reserve? “He gave himself wholly to thee, reserving nothing for himself.”[4452] This is just, says the angelic Doctor, what Jesus has done in the Sacrament of the Altar, wherein “he has given us all that he is and all that he has.”[4453] Behold, adds St. Bonaventure, that immense God, “whom the world cannot contain, become our prisoner and captive”[4454] when we receive him into our breast in Holy Communion. Wherefore St. Bernard, transported with love when he considered this, exclaimed, My Jesus would make himself “the inseparable guest of my heart.”[4455] And since my God, he concludes, has chosen to “spend himself entirely for my sake,”[4456] it is reasonable that I should employ all that I am in serving and loving him.

Ah, my beloved Jesus, tell me, what more is there left for Thee to invent in order to make Thyself loved? And shall I, then, continue to live so ungrateful to Thee as I have hitherto done? My Lord, permit it not. Thou hast said, that he who feeds on Thy flesh in Communion shall live through the virtue of Thy grace: *He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me*.[4457] Since, then, Thou dost not disdain that I should receive Thee in Holy Communion, grant that my soul may always live the true life of Thy grace. I repent, O sovereign good, of having despised it in times past; but I bless Thee that Thon dost give me time to weep over the offences that I have committed against Thee, and to love Thee in this world. During the life that remains to me, I will place all my affections in Thee, and endeavor to please Thee as much as I possibly can. Help me, O my Jesus; forsake me not, I beseech Thee. Save me by Thy merits, and let my salvation be to love Thee always in this life and in eternity. Mary, my Mother, do thou also assist me.

Chapter VI

THE BLOODY SWEAT AND AGONY SUFFERED BY JESUS IN THE GARDEN

I

Behold, our most loving Saviour, having come to the Garden of Gethsemani, did of his own accord make a beginning of his bitter Passion by giving full liberty to the passions of fear, of weariness, and of sorrow to come and afflict him with all their torments: *He began to fear; and to be heavy,*[4458] *to grow sorrowful, and to be sad.*[4459]

He began, then, first to feel a great fear of death, and of the sufferings he would have soon to endure. *He began to fear;*[4460] but how? Was it not he himself that had offered himself spontaneously to endure all these torments? *He was offered because He willed it.*[4461] Was it not he who had so much desired this hour of his Passion, and who had said shortly before, *With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you?*[4462] And yet how is it that he was seized with such a fear of death, that he even prayed his Father to deliver him from it? *My Father, if it be possible let this chalice pass from Me.*[4463] The Venerable Bede answers this, and says, “He prays that the chalice may pass from him, in order to show that he was truly man.”[4464] He, our loving Saviour, chose indeed to die for us in order by his death to prove to us the love that he bore us; but in order that men might not suppose that he had assumed a fantastic body (as some heretics have blasphemously asserted), or that by virtue of his divinity he had died without suffering any pain, He therefore made this prayer to his heavenly Father, not indeed with a view of being heard, but to give us to understand that he died as man, and afflicted with a great fear of death and of the sufferings which should accompany his death.

O most amiable Jesus! Thou wouldst, then, take upon Thee our fearfulness in order to give us Thy courage in suffering the trials of this life. Oh, be Thou forever blessed for Thy great mercy and love! Oh, may all our hearts love Thee as much as Thou desirest, and as much as Thou deservest!

II

He began to be heavy.[4465] He began to feel a great weariness on account of the torments that were prepared for Him. When one is weary, even pleasures are painful. Oh, what anguish united to this weariness must Jesus Christ have felt at the horrible representation which then came before his mind, of all the torments, both exterior and interior, which, during the short remainder of his life, were so cruelly to afflict his body and his blessed soul! Then did all the sufferings he was to endure pass distinctly before his eyes, as well as all the insults that he should endure from the Jews and from the Romans; all the injustice of which the judges of his cause would be guilty towards him; and, above all, he had before him the vision of that death of desolation which he should have to endure, forsaken by all, by men and by God, in the midst of a sea of sufferings and contempt. And this it was that caused him so heavy grief that he was obliged to pray for consolation to his eternal Father. O my Jesus! I compassionate Thee, I thank Thee, and I love Thee.

And there appeared to Him an angel, . . . strengthening Him.[4466] Strength came, but, says the Venerable Bede, this rather increased than lightened his sufferings: “Strength did not diminish, but increased his sorrow.”[4467] Yes, for the angel strengthened him, that he might suffer still more for the love of men and the glory of his Father.

Oh, what sufferings did not this first combat bring Thee, my beloved Lord! During the progress of Thy Passion, the scourges, the thorns, the nails, came one after the other to torment Thee. But in the garden all the sufferings of Thy whole Passion assaulted Thee all together and tormented Thee. And Thou didst accept all for my sake and my good. O my God! how much I regret not having loved Thee in times past, and having preferred my own accursed pleasures to Thy will! I detest them now above every evil, and repent of them with my whole heart. O my Jesus! forgive me.

III

He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad.[4468] Together with this fear and weariness, Jesus began to feel a great melancholy and affliction of soul. But, my Lord, art Thou not he who didst give to Thy martyrs such a delight in suffering that they even despised their torments and death? St. Augustine[4469] said of St. Vincent that he spoke with such joy during his martyrdom that it seemed as if it were not the same person that suffered and that spoke. It is related of St. Laurence that whilst he was burning on the gridiron, such was the consolation he enjoyed in his soul that he defied the tyrant, saying, “Turn, and eat.”[4470] How, then, my Jesus, didst Thou, who gavest such great joy to Thy servants in dying, choose for Thyself such extreme sorrowfulness in Thy death?

O delight of paradise, Thou dost rejoice heaven and earth with Thy gladness; why, then, do I behold Thee so afflicted and sorrowful? Why do I hear Thee say that the sorrow that afflicts Thee is enough to take away Thy life? *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*[4471] O my Redeemer, why is this? Ah, I understand it all. It was less the thought of Thy sufferings in Thy bitter Passion, than of the sins of men that afflicted Thee; and amongst these, alas, were my sins, which caused Thee this great dread of death.

IV

He, the Eternal Word, as much as he loved his Father, so much did he hate sin, of which he well knew the malice; wherefore, in order to deliver the world from sin, and that he might no longer behold his beloved Father offended, he had come upon earth, and had made himself Man, and had undertaken to suffer so painful a death and Passion. But when he saw that, notwithstanding all his sufferings, there would yet be so many sins committed in the world, his sorrow for this, says St. Thomas, exceeded the sorrow that any penitent has ever felt for his own sins: “It surpassed the sorrow of all contrite souls;”[4472] and, indeed, it surpassed every sorrow that ever could afflict a human heart. The reason is, that all the sorrows that men feel are always mixed with some relief; but the sorrow of Jesus was pure sorrow without any relief: “He suffered pure pain without any admixture of consolation.”[4473]

Oh, if I loved Thee, my Jesus—if I loved Thee, the consideration of all that Thou hast suffered for me would render all sufferings, all contempt, and all vexations sweet to me. Oh, grant me, I beseech Thee, Thy love, in order that I may endure with pleasure, or at least with patience, the little Thou givest me to suffer. Oh, let me not die so ungrateful to all Thy loving-kindnesses. I desire, in all the tribulations that shall happen to me, to say constantly, My Jesus, I embrace this trial for Thy love; I will suffer it in order to please Thee.

V

We read in history that several penitents being enlightened by divine light to see the malice of their sins, have died of pure sorrow for them. Oh, what torment, then, must not the heart of Jesus endure at the sight of all the sins of the world, of all the blasphemies, sacrileges, acts of impurity, and all the other crimes which should be committed by men after his death, every one of which, like a wild beast, tore his heart separately by its own malice? Wherefore our afflicted Lord, during his agony in the garden, exclaimed, Is this, therefore, O men, the reward that you render me for my immeasurable love? Oh, if I could only see that, grateful for my affection, you gave up sin and began to love me, with what delight should I not hasten to die for you! But to behold, after all my sufferings, so many sins; after so much love, such ingratitude;—this is what afflicts me the most, makes me sorrowful even unto death, and makes me sweat pure blood: *And His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground.*[4474] So that, according to the Evangelist, this bloody sweat was so copious that it first bathed all the vestments of our Blessed Redeemer, and then came forth in quantity and bathed the ground.

Ah, my loving Jesus, I do not behold in this garden either scourges or thorns or nails that pierce Thee; how, then, is it that I see Thee all bathed in blood from Thy head to Thy feet? Alas, my sins were the cruel press which, by dint of affliction and sorrow, drew so much blood from Thy heart. I was, then, one of Thy most cruel executioners, who contributed the most to crucify Thee with my sins. It is certain that, if I had sinned less, Thou, my Jesus, wouldst have suffered less. As much pleasure, therefore, as I have taken in offending Thee, so much the more did I increase the sorrow of Thy heart, already full of anguish. How, then, does not this thought make me die of grief, when I see that I have repaid the love Thou hast shown me in Thy Passion by adding to Thy sorrow and suffering? I, then, have tormented this heart, so loving and so worthy of love, which has shown so much love to me. My Lord, since I have now no other means left of consoling Thee than to weep over my offences towards Thee, I will now, my Jesus, sorrow for them and lament over them with my whole heart. Oh, give me, I pray Thee, so great sorrow for them as may make me to my last breath weep over the displeasure I have caused Thee, my God, my Love my All.

VI

He fell upon His face.[4475] Jesus, beholding himself charged with the burden of satisfying for all the sins of the world, prostrated himself, with his face on the ground, to pray for men, as if he were ashamed to raise his eyes towards heaven, loaded as he was with such iniquities.

O my Redeemer, I behold Thee pale and worn out with sorrow; Thou art in the agony of death, and Thou dost pray: *And being in an agony, He prayed the longer.*[4476] Tell me, my Saviour, for whom dost Thou pray! Ah, Thou didst not pray so much for Thyself at that hour as for me! Thou didst offer to Thy Eternal Father Thy all-powerful prayers, united to Thy sufferings, to obtain for me, a wretched sinner, the pardon of my sins: *Who, in the days of His flesh, with a strong cry and tears, offering up prayers and supplications to Him that was able to save Him from death, was heard for His reverence.*[4477] O my beloved Redeemer! how is it possible that Thou couldst love so much one who has so grievously offended Thee? How couldst Thou embrace such sufferings for me, fore-seeing, as Thou didst, all the ingratitude of which I should be guilty towards Thee?

O my afflicted Lord! make me share in that sorrow which Thou didst then have for my sins. I abhor them at this present moment; and I unite this my hatred to the horror that Thou didst feel for them in the garden. O my Saviour, look not upon my sins, for hell itself would not be sufficient to expiate them, but look upon the sufferings that Thou hast endured for me! O love of my Jesus, Thou art my love and my hope. O my Lord, I love Thee with my whole soul, and will always love Thee. I beseech Thee, through the merits of that weariness and sadness which Thou didst endure in the garden, give me fervor and courage in all works that may contribute to Thy glory. Through the merits of Thy agony, grant me Thy assistance to resist all the temptations of the flesh and of hell. My God, grant me the grace always to commend myself to Thee, and always to repeat to Thee, with Jesus Christ: *Not as I will, but as Thou wiliest.*[4478] May Thy divine will, not mine, be ever done. Amen.

Chapter VII

THE LOVE OF JESUS IN SUFFERING SO MUCH CONTEMPT IN HIS PASSION

I

Bellarmine says that to noble spirits affronts cause greater pain than sufferings of body: "Noble spirits think more of ignominy than of pains of body."[4479] Because, if the former afflict the flesh, the latter afflict the soul, which, in proportion as it is more noble than the body, so much the more does it feel pain. But who could have ever imagined that the most noble personage in heaven and earth, the Son of God, by coming into the world to make himself Man for love of men, would have had to be treated by them with such reproaches and injuries as if he had been the lowest and most vile of all men? *We have seen Him despised and the most abject of men.*[4480] St. Anselm asserts that Jesus Christ was willing to suffer such and so great dishonors that it could not be possible for him to be more humbled than he was in his Passion: "He humbled himself so much, that he could not go beyond it."[4481]

O Lord of the world, Thou art the greatest of all kings; but Thou hast willed to be despised more than all men, in order to teach me the love of contempt. Because, then, Thou hast sacrificed Thine honor for love of me, I am willing to suffer for love of Thee every affront which shall be offered to me.

II

And what kind of affronts did not the Redeemer suffer in his Passion? He saw himself affronted by his own disciples. One of them betrays him, and sells him for thirty pieces. Another denies him many times, protesting publicly that he knows him not; and thus attesting that he was ashamed to have known him in the past. The other disciples, then, at seeing him taken and bound, all fly and abandon him: *Then His disciples leaving Him, all fled away.*[4482]

O my Jesus, thus abandoned, who will ever undertake Thy defence, if, when Thou art first taken, those most dear to Thee depart from and forsake Thee? But, my God, to think that this dishonor did not end with Thy Passion! How many souls, after having devoted themselves to follow Thee, and after having been favored by Thee with many graces and special signs of love, being then driven by some passion of vile interest, or human respect, or sordid pleasure, have ungratefully forsaken Thee!

Which of these ungrateful ones is found to turn and lament, saying, Ah, my dear Jesus, pardon me; for I will not leave Thee again. I will rather lose my life a thousand times than lose Thy grace, O my God, my love, my all.

III

Behold how Judas, arriving in the garden together with the soldiers, advances, embraces his Master, and kisses him. Jesus suffers him to kiss him; but, knowing already his evil intent, could not refrain from complaining of this most unjust treachery, saying, *Judas, betrayest Thou the Son of man with a kiss?*[4483] Then those insolent servants crowd around Jesus, lay hands upon him, and bind him as a villain: *The servants of the Jews apprehended Jesus, and bound Him.*[4484]

Ah me! what do I see? A God bound! By whom? By men; by worms created by himself. Angels of paradise, what say ye to it? And Thou, my Jesus, why dost Thou allow Thyself to be bound? What, says St. Bernard, have the bonds of slaves and of the guilty to do with Thee, who art the Holy of Holies, the King of kings, and Lord of lords? “O King of kings and Lord of lords what hast Thou to do with chains?”[4485]

But if men bind Thee, wherefore dost Thou not loosen and free Thyself from the torments and death which they are preparing for Thee? But I understand this. It is not, O my Lord, these ropes which bind Thee. It is only love which keeps Thee bound, and constrains Thee to suffer and die for us.

“O Charity,” exclaims St. Laurence Justinian, “how strong is Thy chain, by which God was able to be bound!”[4486] O divine Love, thou only wast able to bind a God, and conduct him to death for the love of men.

IV

“Look, O man,” says St. Bonaventure, “at these dogs dragging him along, and the Lamb, like a victim, meekly following without resistance. One seizes, another binds him; another drives, another strikes him.”[4487] They carry our sweet Saviour, thus bound, first to the house of Annas, then to that of Caiphas; where Jesus, being asked by that wicked one about his disciples and his doctrine, replied that he had not spoken in private, but in public, and that they who were standing round about well knew what he had taught. *I spoke openly; lo, these know what I said.*[4488] But at this answer one of those servants, treating him as if too bold, gave him a blow on the cheek: *One of the officers standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, Answerest Thou the high-priest thus?*[4489] Here exclaims St. Jerome: “Ye angels, how is it that ye are silent? How long can such patience withhold you in your astonishment?”[4490]

Ah, my Jesus, how could an answer so just and modest deserve such an affront in the presence of so many people? The worthless high-priest, instead of reproving the insolence of this audacious fellow, praises him, or at least by signs approves. And Thou, my Lord, sufferest all this to compensate for the affronts which I, a wretch, have offered to the divine Majesty by my sins. My Jesus, I thank Thee for it. Eternal Father, pardon me by the merits of Jesus.

V

Then the iniquitous high-priest asked him if he were verily the Son of God: *I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.*[4491] Jesus, out of respect for the name of God, affirmed that he was so indeed; whereupon Caiphas rent his garments, saying that he had blasphemed; and all cried out that he deserved death: *But they answering said, He is guilty of death.*[4492]

Yes, O my Jesus, with truth do they declare Thee guilty of death, since Thou hast willed to take upon Thee to make satisfaction for me, who deserved eternal death. But if by Thy death Thou hast acquired for me life, it is just that I should spend my life wholly, yea, and if need be lose it, for Thee. Yes, my Jesus, I will no longer live for myself; but only for Thee, and for Thy love. Succor me by Thy grace.

VI

Then they spat in His face and buffeted Him.[4493] After having proclaimed him guilty of death, as a man already given over to punishment, and declared infamous, the rabble set themselves to ill-treat him all the night through with blows, and buffets, and kicks, with plucking out his beard, and even spitting in his face, by mocking him as a false prophet and saying, *Prophesy to us, O Christ, who it is that struck Thee.*[4494] All this our Redeemer foretold by Isaias: *I have given My body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them: I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me and spit upon Me.*[4495] The devout Thauler[4496] relates that it is an opinion of St. Jerome that all the pains and infirmities which Jesus suffered on that night will be made known only on the day of the last judgment. St. Augustine, speaking of the ignominies suffered by Jesus Christ, says, “If this medicine cannot cure our pride, I know not what can.”[4497] Ah, my Jesus, how is it that Thou art so humble and I so proud? O Lord, give me light, make me know who Thou art, and who I am.

Then they spat in His face.[4498] “Spat!” O God, what greater affront can there be than to be defiled by spitting? “To be spit upon is to suffer the extreme of insult,”[4499] says Origen. Where are we wont to spit except in the most filthy place? And didst Thou, my Jesus, suffer Thyself to be spit upon in the face? Behold how these wretches outrage Thee with blows and kicks, insult Thee, spit on Thy face, do with Thee just what they will; and dost Thou not threaten nor reprove them? *When He was reviled, He reviled not; when He suffered, He threatened not; but delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly.*[4500] No, but like an innocent lamb, humble and meek, Thou didst suffer all without so much as complaining, offering all to the Father to obtain the pardon of our sins: *Like a lamb before the shearer, He shall be dumb, and shall not open His mouth.*[4501]

St. Gertrude one day, when meditating on the injuries done to Jesus in his Passion, began to praise and bless him; this was so pleasing to our Lord that he lovingly thanked her.

Ah, my reviled Lord, Thou art the King of heaven, the Son of the Most High; Thou surely deservest not to be ill-treated and despised, but to be adored and loved by all creatures. I adore Thee, I bless Thee, I thank Thee, I love Thee with all my heart. I repent of having offended Thee. Help me, have pity upon me.

VII

When it was day, the Jews conduct Jesus to Pilate, to make him condemn him to death; but Pilate declares him to be innocent: *I find no cause in this Man.*[4502] And to free himself from the importunities of the Jews who pressed on him, seeking the death of the Saviour, he sends him to Herod. It greatly pleased Herod to see Jesus Christ brought before him, hoping that in his presence, in order to deliver himself from death, he would have worked one of those miracles of which he had heard tell; wherefore he asked him many questions. But Jesus, because he did not wish to be delivered from death, and because that wicked one was not worthy of his answers, was silent, and answered him not. Then the proud king, with his court, offered him many insults, and making them cover him with a white robe, as if declaring him to be an ignorant and stupid fellow, sent him back to Pilate: *But Herod with his soldiers despised Him, and mocked Him, putting on Him a white robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.*[4503] Cardinal Hugo, in his Commentary, says, “Mocking him as if a fool, he clothed him with a white robe.”[4504] And St. Bonaventure, “He despised him as if impotent, because he worked no miracle; as if ignorant because he answered him not a word; as if idiotic, because he did not defend himself.”[4505]

O Eternal Wisdom, O divine Word! This one other ignominy was wanting to Thee, that Thou shouldst be treated as a fool bereft of sense. So greatly does our salvation weigh on Thee, that through love of us Thou wiliest not only to be reviled, but to be satiated with revilings; as Jeremias had already prophesied of Thee: *He shall give His cheek to him that striketh Him; He shall be filled with reproaches.*[4506] And how couldst Thou bear such love to men, from whom Thou hast received nothing but ingratitude and slights? Alas, that I should be one of these who have outraged Thee worse than Herod! Ah, my Jesus, chastise me not, like Herod, by depriving me of Thy voice. Herod did not recognize thee for what Thou art; I confess

Thee to be my God. Herod loved Thee not; I love Thee more than myself. Deny me not I beseech Thee, deny me not the voice of Thy inspiration, as I have deserved by the offences that I have committed against Thee. Tell me what Thou wilt have of me, for, by Thy grace, I am ready to do all that Thou wilt.

VIII

When Jesus had been led back to Pilate, the governor inquired of the people whom they wished to have released at that Passover, Jesus or Barabbas, a murderer. But the people cried out, *Not this Man, but Barabbas.*[4507] Then said Pilate, *What, then, shall I do with Jesus?*[4508] They answered, *Let Him be crucified.*[4509] But what evil hath this innocent one done? replied Pilate: *What evil hath he done?*[4510] They repeated, *Let Him be crucified.*[4511]

And even up to this time, O God, the greater part of mankind continue to say, *Not this Man, but Barabbas;*[4512] preferring to Jesus Christ some pleasure of sense, some point of honor, some outbreak of wounded pride.

Ah, my Lord, well knowest Thou that at one time I did Thee the same injury when I preferred my accursed tastes to Thee. My Jesus, pardon me, for I repent of the past, and henceforth I prefer Thee before everything. I esteem Thee, I love Thee more than any good; and am willing a thousand times to die rather than forsake Thee. Give me holy perseverance; give me Thy love.

IX

Presently we will speak of the other reproaches which Jesus Christ endured, until he finally died on the cross: *He endured the cross, despising the shame.*[4513] In the mean while let us consider how truly in our Redeemer was fulfilled what the Psalmist had foretold, that in his Passion he should become the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people: *But I am a worm, and no man; the reproach of men, and the abject of the people;*[4514] even to a death of ignominy, suffered at the hands of the executioner on a cross, as a malefactor between two malefactors: *And he was reputed with the wicked.*[4515]

O Lord, the most high, exclaims St. Bernard, become the lowest among men! O lofty one become vile! O glory of angels become the reproach of men! “O lowest and highest! O humble and sublime! O reproach of men and glory of angels!”[4516]

X

O grace, O strength of the love of God! continues St. Bernard. Thus did the Lord most high overall become the most lightly esteemed of all. “O grace, O power of love, did the highest of all thus become the lowest of all?” And who was it (adds the saint) that did this? “Who hath done this? Love.”[4517] All this hath the love which God bears towards men done, to prove how he loves us, and to teach us by his example how to suffer with peace contempt and injuries: *Christ suffered for us* (writes St. Peter), *leaving you an example, that you may follow His steps.*[4518] St. Eleazar, when asked by his wife how he came to endure with such peace the great injuries that were done him, answered, “I turn to look on Jesus enduring contempt, and say that my affronts are as nothing in respect to those which he my God was willing to bear for me.”

Ah, my Jesus, and how is it that, at the sight of a God thus dishonored for love of me, I know not how to suffer the least contempt for love of Thee? A sinner, and proud! And whence, my Lord, can come this pride? I pray Thee by the merits of the contempt Thou didst suffer, give me grace to suffer with patience and gladness all affronts and injuries. From this day forth I propose by Thy help nevermore to resent them, but to receive with joy all the reproaches that shall be offered me. Truly have I deserved greater contempt for having despised Thy divine majesty, and deserved the contempt of hell. Exceeding sweet and pleasant to me hast Thou rendered affronts, my beloved Redeemer, by having embraced so great contempt for love of me. Henceforth I propose, in order to please Thee, to benefit as much as possible whoever despises me; at least to speak well of and pray for him. And even now I pray Thee to heap Thy graces upon all those from whom I have received any injury. I love Thee, O infinite good, and will ever love Thee as much as I can. Amen.

Chapter VIII

THE SCOURGING OF JESUS CHRIST

I

Let us enter into the prætorium of Pilate, one day made the horrible scene of the ignominies and pains of Jesus: let us see how unjust, how shameful, how cruel, was the punishment there inflicted on the Saviour of the world. Pilate, seeing that the Jews continued to make a tumult against Jesus, as a most unjust judge condemned him to be scourged: *Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*[4519] The iniquitous judge thought by means of this barbarity to win for him the compassion of his enemies, and thus to deliver him from death: *I will chastise Him* (he said) *and let Him go.*[4520] Scourging was the chastisement inflicted on slaves only. Therefore, says St. Bernard, our loving Redeemer willed to take the form, not only of a slave, in order to subject himself to the will of others, but even of a bad slave in order to be chastised with scourges, and so to pay the penalty due from man, who had made himself the slave of sin: “Taking not only the form of a slave, that he might submit, but even of a bad slave, that he might be beaten and suffer the punishment of the slave of sin.”[4521]

O Son of God, O Thou great lover of my soul, how couldst Thou, the Lord of infinite majesty, thus love an object so vile and ungrateful as I am, as to subject Thyself to so much punishment, to deliver me from the punishment which was my due? A God scourged! It were a greater marvel that God should receive the lightest blow than that all men and all angels should be destroyed. Ah, my Jesus, pardon me the offences that I have committed against Thee, and then chastise me as shall please Thee. This alone is enough,—that I love Thee, and that Thou love me; and then I am content to suffer all the pains Thou willest.

II

As soon as he had arrived at the prætorium (as was revealed to St. Bridget), our loving Saviour, at the command of the servants, stripped himself of his garments, embraced the column, and then laid on it his hands to have them bound. O God, already is begun the cruel torture! O angels of heaven, come and look on this sorrowful spectacle; and if it be not permitted you to deliver your king from this barbarous slaughter which men have prepared for him, at least come and weep for compassion. And thou, my soul, imagine thyself to be present at this horrible tearing of the flesh of Thy beloved Redeemer. Look on him, how he stands,—thy afflicted Jesus,—with his head bowed, looking on the ground, blushing all over for shame, he awaits this great torture. Behold these barbarians, like so many ravening dogs, are already with the scourges attacking this innocent lamb. See how one beats him on the breast, another strikes his shoulders, another smites his loins and his legs; even his sacred head and his beautiful face cannot escape the blows. Ah me! already flows that divine blood from every part; already with that blood are saturated the scourges, the hands of the executioners, the column, and the ground. "He is wounded," mourns St. Peter Damian, "over his whole body, torn with the scourges; now they twine round his shoulders, now round his legs—streaks upon streaks, wounds added to fresh wounds."[4522] Ah, cruel men, with whom are you dealing thus? Stay—stay; know that you are mistaken. This man whom you are torturing is innocent and holy; it is myself who am the culprit; to me, to me, who have sinned, are these stripes and torments due. But you regard not what I say. And how canst Thou, O Eternal Father, bear with this great injustice? How canst Thou behold Thy beloved Son suffering thus, and not interfere in his behalf? What is the crime that he has ever committed, to deserve so shameful and so severe a punishment?

III

For the wickedness of My people have I struck Him.[4523] I well know, says the Eternal Father, that this my Son is innocent; but inasmuch as he has offered himself as a satisfaction to my justice for all the sins of mankind, it is fitting that I should so abandon him to the rage of his enemies.

Hast Thou, then, my adorable Saviour, in compensation for our sins, and especially for those of impurity,—that most prevalent vice of mankind,—

been willing to have Thy most pure flesh torn in pieces? And who, then, will not exclaim, with St. Bernard, “How unspeakable is the love of the Son of God towards sinners!”[4524]

Ah, my Lord, smitten with the scourge, I return Thee thanks for so great love, and I grieve that I am myself, by reason of my sins, one of those who scourge Thee. O my Jesus! I detest all those wicked pleasures which have cost Thee so much pain. Oh, how many years ought I not already to have been in the flames of hell! And why hast Thou so patiently awaited me until now? Thou hast borne with me, in order that at length, overcome by so many wiles of love, I might give myself up to love Thee, abandoning sin. O my beloved Redeemer! I will offer no further resistance to Thy loving affection; I desire to love Thee henceforth to the uttermost of my power. But Thou already knowest my weakness; Thou knowest how often I have betrayed Thee. Do Thou detach me from all earthly affections which hinder me from being all Thine own. Put me frequently in mind of the love which Thou hast borne me, and of the obligation which I am under of loving Thee. In Thee I place all my hopes, my God, my love, my all.

IV

St. Bonaventure sorrowfully exclaims, “The royal blood is flowing; bruise is superadded to bruise, and gash to gash.”[4525] That divine blood was already issuing from every pore; that sacred body was already become but one perfect wound; yet those infuriated brutes did not forbear to add blow to blow, as the Prophet had foretold: *And they have added to the grief of my wounds.*[4526] So that the thongs not only made the whole body one wound, but even bore away pieces of it into the air, until at length the gashes in that sacred flesh were such that the bones might have been counted: *The flesh was so torn away, that the bones could be numbered.*[4527] Cornelius à Lapide says that in this torment Jesus Christ ought, naturally speaking, to have died; but he willed, by his divine power, to keep himself in life, in order to suffer yet greater pains for love of us; and St. Laurence Justinian had observed the same thing before: “He evidently ought to have died. Yet he reserved himself unto life, it being his will to endure heavier sufferings.”[4528]

Ah, my most loving Lord, Thou art worthy of an infinite love; Thou hast suffered so much in order that I might love Thee. Oh, never permit me, instead of loving Thee, to offend or displease Thee more! Oh, what place in hell should there not be set apart for me, if, after having known the love that Thou hast borne towards such a wretch, I should damn myself, despising a God who had suffered scorn, smitings, and scourgings for me; and who had, moreover, after my having so often offended him, so mercifully pardoned me! Ah, my Jesus, let it not, oh, let it not be thus! O my God! how would the love and the patience which Thou hast shown towards me be there for me in hell, another hell even yet more full of torments!

V

Cruel in excess to our Redeemer was this torture of his scourging in the first place, because of the great number of those by whom it was inflicted; who, as was revealed to St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, were not fewer than sixty. And these, at the instigation of the devils, and even more so of the priests, who were afraid lest Pilate should, after this punishment, be minded to release the Lord, as he had already protested to them, saying, *I will therefore scourge Him, and let Him go,*[4529] aimed at taking away his life by means of this scourging. Again, all theologians agree with St. Bonaventure that, for this purpose, the sharpest implements were selected, so that, as St. Anselm declares, every stroke produced a wound; and that the number of the strokes amounted to several thousand, the flagellation being administered, as Father Crasset says, not after the manner of the Jews, for whom the Lord had forbidden that the number of strokes should ever exceed forty: *Yet so, that they exceed not the number of forty; lest thy brother depart shamefully torn;*[4530] but after the manner of the Romans, with whom there was no measure.

And so it is related by Josephus, the Jew, who lived shortly after our Lord, that Jesus was torn in his scourging to such a degree that the bones of his ribs were laid bare; as it was also revealed by the most Holy Virgin to St. Bridget, in these words: “I, who was standing by, saw his body scourged to the very ribs, so that his ribs themselves might be seen. And what was even yet more bitter still, when the scourges were drawn back, his flesh was furrowed by them.”[4531] To St. Teresa, Jesus revealed himself in his scourging; so that the saint wished to have him painted exactly as she had seen him, and told the painter to represent a large piece of flesh torn off, and hanging down from the left elbow; but when the painter inquired as to the shape in which he ought to paint it, he found, on turning round again to his picture, the piece of flesh already drawn.

Ah, my beloved and adored Jesus, how much hast Thou suffered for love of me! Oh, let not so many pangs, and so much blood, be lost for me!

VI

But from the Scriptures alone it clearly appears how barbarous and inhuman was the scourging of Jesus Christ.

For why was it that Pilate should, after the scourging, ever have shown him to the people, saying, *Behold the Man!*[4532] were it not that our Saviour was reduced to so pitiable a condition that Pilate believed the very sight of him would have moved his enemies themselves to compassion, and hindered them from any longer demanding his death?

Why was it that in the journey which Jesus, after this, made to Calvary, the Jewish women followed him with tears and lamentations? *But there followed Him a great multitude of the people, and women, who bewailed and lamented Him.*[4533] Was it, perhaps, because those women loved him and believed him to be innocent? No, the women, for the most part, agree with their husbands in opinion; so that they, too, esteemed him guilty; but the appearance of Jesus after his scourging was so shocking and pitiable as to move to tears even those who hated him; and therefore it was that the women gave vent to their tears and sighs.

Why, again, was it that in this journey the Jews took the cross from off his shoulders, and gave it the Cyrenian to carry? According to the most probable opinion, and as the words of St. Matthew clearly show, *they compelled him to bear His cross;*[4534] or, as St. Luke says, *And on him they laid the cross, that he might carry it after Jesus.*[4535] Was it, perhaps, that they felt pity for him and wished to lessen his pains? No, those guilty men hated him, and sought to afflict him to their uttermost. But, as the blessed Denis, the Carthusian, says, “they feared lest he should die upon the way,”[4536] seeing that our Lord, after the scourging, was so drained of blood and so exhausted in strength as to be scarcely able any longer to stand, falling down as he did on his road under the cross, and faltering as he went, so to speak, at every step, as if at the point of death; therefore, in order to take him alive to Calvary and see him dead upon the cross, according to their desire, that his name might ever after be one of infamy: *Let us cut him off,* said they, as the Prophet had foretold, *from the land of the living, and let his name be remembered no more.*[4537] This was the end for which they constrained the Cyrenian to bear the cross.

Ah, my Lord, great is my happiness in understanding how much Thou hast loved me, and that Thou dost even now preserve for me the same love that Thou didst bear me then, in the time of Thy Passion! But how great is my sorrow at the thought of having offended so good a God! By the merit of Thy scourging, O my Jesus, I ask Thy pardon, I repent, above every other evil, of having offended Thee; and I purpose rather to die than to offend Thee again. Pardon me all the wrongs that I have done Thee, and give me the grace ever to love Thee for the time to come.

VII

The Prophet Isaias has described more clearly than all the pitiable state to which he foresaw our Redeemer reduced. He said that his most holy flesh would have to be not merely wounded, but altogether bruised and crushed to pieces: *But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our transgressions.*[4538] For, as the Prophet goes on to say, the Eternal Father, the more perfectly to satisfy his justice, and to make mankind understand the deformity of sin, was not contented without beholding his Son pounded piecemeal, as it were, and torn to shreds by the scourges: *And the Lord willed to bruise Him in infirmity.*[4539] So that the blessed body of Jesus had to become like the body of a leper, all wounds from head to foot: *And we esteemed Him as a leper, and one smitten of God.*[4540]

Behold, then, O my lacerated Lord, the condition to which our iniquities have reduced Thee: “O good Jesus, it is ourselves who sinned; and dost Thou bear the penalty of it?”[4541] Blessed for evermore be Thy exceeding charity; and mayest Thou be beloved as Thou dost deserve by all sinners; and, above all, by me, who have done Thee more despite than others.

VIII

Jesus one day manifested himself under his scourging to Sister Victoria Angelini; and showing her his body one mass of wounds, said to her, “These wounds, Victoria, every one of them, ask thee for love.” “Let us love the Bridegroom,” said the loving St. Augustine, “and the more he is presented to us veiled under deformity, the more precious and sweet is he made to the bride.”[4542]

Yes, my sweet Saviour, I see Thee all covered with wounds; I look into Thy beautiful face; but, O my God, it no longer wears its beautiful appearance, but disfigured and blackened with blood, and bruises, and shameful spittings: *There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness: and we beheld Him, and esteemed Him not.*[4543] But the more I see Thee so disfigured, O my Lord, the more beautiful and lovely dost Thou appear to me. And what are these disfigurements that I behold but signs of the tenderness of that love which Thou dost bear towards me? I love Thee, my Jesus, thus wounded and torn to pieces for me; would that I could see myself too torn to pieces for Thee, like so many martyrs whose portion this has been! But if I cannot offer Thee wounds and blood, I offer Thee at least all the pains which it will be my lot to suffer. I offer Thee my heart; with this I desire to love Thee more tenderly even than I am able. And who is there that my soul should love more tenderly than a God, who has endured scourging and been drained of his blood for me? I love Thee, O God of love! I love Thee, O infinite goodness! I love Thee, O my love, my all! I love Thee, and I would never cease to say, both in this life and in the other, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee. Amen.

Chapter IX

THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

I

As the soldiers, however, perseveringly continued their cruel scourging of the innocent Lamb, it is related that one of those who were standing by came forward, and, taking courage, said to them, You have no orders to kill this man, as you are trying to do. And, saying this, he cut the cords wherewith the Lord was standing bound. This was revealed to St. Bridget: “Then a certain man, his spirit being moved within him, demanded, Are you going to kill him in this manner, uncondemned? and forthwith he cut his bonds.”[4544]

But hardly was the scourging ended, when those barbarous men, urged on and bribed by the Jews with money, as St. John Chrysostom avers, inflict upon the Redeemer a fresh kind of torture: *Then the soldiers of the governor taking Jesus into the prætorium, gathered together the whole band, and stripped Him, clothed Him in a purple robe, and platting a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand.*[4545] Behold how the soldiers strip him again; and, treating him as a mock king, place upon him a purple garment, which was nothing else but a ragged cloak, one of those that were worn by the Roman soldiers, and called a chlamys; in his hand they place a reed to represent a sceptre, and upon his head a bundle of thorns to represent a crown.

Ah, my Jesus, and art not Thou, then, true king of the universe? And how is it that Thou art now become king of sorrow and reproach? See whither love has brought Thee! O my most lovely God, when will that day arrive whereon I may so unite myself to Thee, that nothing may evermore have power to separate me from Thee, and I may no longer be able to cease to love Thee! O Lord, as long as I live in this world, I always stand in danger of turning my back upon Thee, and of refusing to Thee my love, as I have unhappily done in time past. O my Jesus, if Thou foreseeest that by continuing in life I should have to suffer this greatest of all misfortunes, let me die at this moment, while I hope that I am in Thy grace! I pray Thee, by Thy Passion, not to abandon me to so great an evil. I should indeed deserve it for my sins; but Thou dost deserve it not. Choose out any punishment for me rather than this. No, my Jesus, my Jesus, I would not see myself ever again separated from Thee.

II

And platting a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head.[4546] It was a good reflection of the devout Lanspergius,[4547] that this torture of the crown of thorns was one most full of pain; inasmuch as they everywhere pierced into the sacred head of the Lord, the most sensitive part, it being from the head that all the nerves and sensations of the body diverge; while it was also that torture of his Passion which lasted the longest, as Jesus suffered from the thorns up to his death, remaining, as they did, fixed in his head. Every time that the thorns on his head were touched, the anguish was renewed afresh. And the common opinion of authors agrees with that of St. Vincent Ferrer,[4548] that the crown was intertwined with several branches of thorns, and fashioned like a helmet or hat, so that it fitted upon the whole of the head, down to the middle of the forehead; according to the revelation made to St. Bridget: “The crown of thorns embraced his head most tightly, and came down as low as the middle of the forehead.”[4549]

And, as St. Laurence Justinian says, with St. Peter Damian, the thorns were so long that they penetrated even to the brain: “The thorns perforating the brain.”[4550] While the gentle Lamb let himself be tormented according to their will, without speaking a word, without crying out, but compressing his eyes together through the anguish, he frequently breathed forth, at that time, bitter sighs, as is the wont of one undergoing a torture which has brought him to the point of death, according as was revealed to the Blessed Agatha of the Cross: “He very often closed his eyes, and uttered piercing sighs, like those of one about to die.”[4551] So great was the quantity of the blood which flowed from the wounds upon his sacred head, that upon his face there was no appearance of any other color save that of blood, according to the revelation of St. Bridget: “So many streams of blood rushing down over his face, and filling his hair, and eyes, and beard, he seemed to be nothing but one mass of blood."[4552] And St. Bonaventure adds, that the beautiful face of the Lord was no longer seen, but it appeared rather the face of a man who had been scarified: "Then might be seen no longer the face of the Lord Jesus, but that of a man who had undergone excoriation."[4553]

O divine love! exclaims Salvian, I know not how to call Thee, whether sweet or cruel; seeming, as Thou dost, to have been at one and the same time both sweet and cruel too: "O love! what to call Thee I know not, sweet or cruel. Thou seemest to be both."[4554] Ah, my Jesus, true, indeed, it is that love makes Thee sweet, as regards us, showing Thee forth to us as so passionate a lover of our souls; but it makes Thee pitiless towards Thyself, causing Thee to suffer such bitter torments. Thou wast willing to be crowned with thorns to obtain for us a crown of glory in heaven: "He was crowned with thorns, that we may be crowned with the crown that is to be given to the elect in heaven."[4555] O my sweetest Saviour, I hope to be Thy crown in paradise, obtaining my salvation through the merits of Thy sufferings; there will I forever praise Thy love and Thy mercies: "The mercies of the Lord will I forever sing; yea, I will sing them forever."[4556]

III

Ah, cruel thorns, ungrateful creatures, wherefore do ye torment your Creator thus? But to what purpose, asks St. Augustine, dost thou find fault with the thorns? They were but innocent instruments—our sins, our evil thoughts, were the wicked thorns which afflicted the head of Jesus Christ: "What are the thorns but sinners?"[4557] Jesus having one day appeared to St. Teresa crowned with thorns, the saint began to compassionate him; but the Lord made answer to her: "Teresa, compassionate me not on account of the wounds which the thorns of the Jews produced; but commiserate me on account of the wounds which the sins of Christians occasion me." Thou, too, therefore, O my soul, didst then inflict torture upon the venerable head of thy Redeemer by thy many consentings to evil: *Know thou and behold how grievous and bitter it is for thee to have left the Lord thy God*.[4558] Open now thine eyes, and see, and bitterly bewail all thy life long the evil that thou hast done in so ungratefully turning thy back upon thy Lord and God.

Ah, my Jesus! no, Thou hast not deserved that I should have treated Thee as I have done. I have done evil; I have been in the wrong; I am sorry for it with all my heart. Oh, pardon me, and give me a sorrow which may make me bewail all my life long the wrongs that I have done Thee. My Jesus, my Jesus, pardon me, wishing, as I do, to love Thee forever.

IV

And bowing the knee before Him, they derided Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews: and spitting upon Him, they took a reed, and smote Him upon the head.[4559] St. John adds, *And they gave Him blows.*[4560] When those barbarians had placed upon the head of Jesus that crown of torture, it was not enough for them to press it down as forcibly as they could with their hands, but they took a reed to answer the purpose of a hammer, that so they might make the thorns penetrate the more deeply. They then began to turn him into derision, as if he had been a mock king; first of all saluting him on their bended knee as King of the Jews; and then, rising up, they spit into his face, and buffeted him with shouts and jests of scorn. Ah, my Jesus, to what art Thou reduced!

Had any one happened by chance to pass that place and seen Jesus Christ so drained of blood, clad in that ragged purple garment, with that sceptre in his hand, with that crown upon his head, and so derided and ill-treated by that low rabble, what would he ever have taken him to be but the vilest and most wicked man in the world! Behold the Son of God become at that time the disgrace of Jerusalem! O men, hereupon exclaims the Blessed Denis, the Carthusian, if we will not love Jesus Christ because he is good, because he is God, let us love him at least for the many pains which he has suffered for us: “If we love him not because he is good, because he is God, let us at least love him because he has suffered so many things for our salvation.”[4561]

Ah, my dear Redeemer, take back a rebellious servant who has run away from Thee, but who now returns to Thee in penitence. While I was fleeing from Thee and despising Thy love, Thou didst not cease from following after me to draw me back to Thyself; and therefore I cannot fear that Thou wilt drive me away now that I seek Thee, value Thee, and love Thee above everything. Make known to me what I have to do to please Thee; wishing, as I do, to do it all. O my most lovely God, I wish to love Thee in earnest; and I desire to give Thee no displeasure more. Aid me with Thy grace. Let me not leave Thee more. Mary, my hope, pray to Jesus for me. Amen.

Chapter X

“ECCE HOMO”—“BEHOLD THE MAN”

I

Pilate, seeing the Redeemer reduced to that condition, so moving, as it was, to compassion, thought that the mere sight of him would have softened the Jews. He therefore led him forth into the balcony; he raised up the purple garment, and, exhibiting to the people the body of Jesus all covered with wounds and gashes, he said to them, Behold the man: *Pilate went forth again to them, and saith to them: Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him. Jesus, therefore, went forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment; and he saith unto them, Behold the Man.*[4562] *Behold the Man!* as though he would have said, Behold the man against whom you have laid an accusation before me, and who wanted to make himself a king. I, to please you, have sentenced him, innocent although he be, to be scourged: “Behold the Man, not honored as a king, but covered with disgrace.”[4563] Behold him now, reduced to such a state that he wears the appearance of a man that has been flayed alive; and he can have but little life left in him. If, with all this, you want me to condemn him to death, I tell you that I cannot do so, as I find not any reason for condemning him. But the Jews on beholding Jesus thus ill-treated, waxed more fierce: *When, therefore, the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*[4564] Pilate, seeing that they could not be pacified, washed his hands in the presence of the people, saying, *I am innocent of the blood of this just Man; look you to it.*[4565] And they made answer, *His blood be upon us, and upon our children.*[4566]

O my beloved Saviour! Thou art the greatest of all kings; yet now I behold Thee the most reviled of all mankind. If this ungrateful people knows Thee not, I know Thee; and I adore Thee as my true King and Lord.

I thank Thee, O my Redeemer, for all the outrages that Thou hast suffered for me; and I pray Thee to give me a love for contempt and pains, since Thou hast so lovingly embraced them. I blush at having in time past loved honors and pleasures so much, that for their sake I have often gone so far as to renounce Thy grace and Thy love. I repent of this above every other evil. I embrace, O Lord, all the pains and ignominies that will come to me from Thy hands. Do Thou bestow upon me that resignation which I need. I love Thee, my Jesus, my love, my all.

II

But while Pilate from the balcony was exhibiting Jesus to that populace, at the self-same time the Eternal Father from heaven was presenting to us his beloved Son, saying, in like manner, *Behold the Man*. Behold this Man, who is my only-begotten Son, whom I love with the same love wherewith I love myself: *This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*[4567] Behold the Man, your Saviour, him whom I promised, and for whom you were anxiously waiting. Behold the Man, who is nobler than all other men, become the man of sorrows. Behold him, and see to what a pitiable condition he has reduced himself through the love which he has borne towards you, and in order to be, at least out of compassion, beloved by you again. Oh, look at him, and love him; and if his great worth move you not, at least let these sorrows and ignominies which he suffers for you move you to love him.

Ah, my God and Father of my Redeemer! I love Thy Son, who suffers for love of me; and I love Thee, who with so much love hast abandoned him to so many pains for me. Oh, look not on my sins by which I have so often offended Thee and Thy Son: *Look upon the face of Thy Christ.*[4568] Behold Thine only-begotten, all covered with wounds and shame in satisfaction for my faults; and for his merits pardon me, and never let me again offend Thee. *His blood be upon us.*[4569] The blood of this man, so dear unto Thee, who prays to Thee for us, and impetrates Thy mercy, let this descend upon our souls, and obtain for us Thy grace. O my Lord! I hate and abhor all that I have done that displeases Thee; and I love Thee, O infinite goodness, more than I love myself. For love of this Thy Son give me Thy love, to enable me to conquer every passion, and to undergo every suffering in order to please Thee.

III

Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and behold King Solomon in his crown, wherewith his mother crowned him on the day of his espousals, and on the day of the joy of his heart.[4570] Go forth, ye souls redeemed, ye daughters of grace, go forth to see your gentle king, on the day of his death, the day of his joy, for thereon he made you his spouses, giving up his life upon the cross, crowned by the ungrateful synagogue, his mother, with a crown; not indeed one of honor, but one of suffering and shame: “Go forth,” says St. Bernard, “and behold your king in a crown of poverty and misery.”[4571]

O most beautiful of all mankind! O greatest of all monarchs! O most lovely of all spouses! to what a state do I see Thee reduced, covered with wounds and contempt! Thou art a spouse, but a spouse of blood: *To me Thou art a spouse of blood;*[4572] it being by means of Thy I blood that Thou hast willed to espouse Thyself to our souls. Thou art a king, but a king of suffering and a king of love; it being by sufferings that Thou hast willed to gain our affections.

O most beloved spouse of my soul! would that I were continually recalling to my mind how much Thou hast suffered for me, that so I might never cease to love and please Thee! Have compassion upon me, who have cost Thee so much. In requital for so many sufferings endured by Thee, Thou are content if I love Thee. Yes, I do love Thee, infinite loveliness, I love Thee above everything; yet it is but little that I love Thee. O my beloved Jesus! give me more love, if Thou wouldst that I should love Thee more. I desire to have a very great love for Thee. So wretched a sinner as I am ought to have been burning in hell ever since the moment in which I first gravely offended Thee; but Thou hast borne with me even until this hour, because Thou dost not wish me to burn with that miserable fire, but with the blessed fire of Thy love. This thought, O God of my soul, sets me all in flame with the desire of doing all that I can to please Thee. Help me, O my Jesus; and since Thou hast done so much, complete the work, and make me wholly Thine.

IV

But the Jews going on to insult the governor, crying out, *Away with Him! away with Him! crucify Him!*[4573] Pilate said to them, *Shall I crucify your King?* and they made answer, *We have no king but Cæsar.*[4574] The worldly-minded, who love the riches, the honors, and the pleasures of earth, refuse to have Jesus Christ for their king; because, as far as this earth is concerned, Jesus was but a king of poverty, shame, and sufferings.

But if such as these refuse Thee, O my Jesus, we choose Thee for our only king, and we make our protestation that “we have no king but Jesus.”[4575] Yes, most lovely Saviour, *Thou art my king;*[4576] Thou art and hast forever to be my only Lord. True king, indeed, art Thou of our souls; for Thou hast created them, and redeemed them from the slavery of Satan: *Thy kingdom come.*[4577] Exercise, then, Thy dominion, and reign forever in our poor hearts; may they ever serve and obey Thee! Be it for others to serve the monarchs of earth, in hope of the good things of this world. Our desire it is to serve only Thee, our afflicted and despised king, in hope only of pleasing Thee, without any earthly consolations. Dear to us, from this day forth, shall shame and sufferings be, since Thou hast been willing to endure so much of them for love of us. Oh, grant us the grace to be faithful unto Thee; and to this end bestow upon us the great gift of Thy love. If we love Thee, we shall also love the contempt and the sufferings which were so much beloved by Thee; and we shall ask Thee for nothing but that which Thy faithful and loving servant St. John of the Cross asked of Thee: “Lord, to suffer and be despised for Thee; Lord, to suffer and be despised for Thee!”[4578] O Mary, my Mother, intercede for me. Amen.

Chapter XI

THE CONDEMNATION OF JESUS CHRIST, AND HIS JOURNEY TO CALVARY

I

Pilate was going on making excuses to the Jews, to the effect that he could not condemn that innocent One to death, when they worked upon his fears by telling him: *If thou lettest this Man go, thou art no friend of Cæsar*'s.[4579] And hence the miserable judge, blinded by the fear of losing Cæsar's favor after having so often recognized and declared the innocence of Jesus Christ, at last condemned him to die by crucifixion: *Then he delivered Him up to them, that He might be crucified.*[4580]

O my beloved Redeemer (St. Bernard hereupon bewails), what crime hast Thou committed that Thou shouldst have to be condemned to death, and that death the death of the cross? "What hast Thou done, O most innocent Saviour, that the judgment upon Thee should be such? Of what crime hast Thou been guilty?"[4581] Ah, I well understand, replies the saint, the reason for Thy death; I understand what has been Thy crime: "Thy crime is Thy love."[4582] Thy crime is the too great love which Thou hast borne to men; it is this, not Pilate, that condemns Thee to die. No, adds St. Bonaventure, I see no just reason for Thy death, O my Jesus, save the excess of the affection which Thou bearest to us: "I see no cause for death but the superabundance of love."[4583] Ah, so great an excess of love, goes on St. Bernard, how strongly does it constrain us, O loving Saviour, to consecrate all the affections of our hearts unto Thee! "Such love wholly claims for itself our love."[4584]

O my dear Saviour, the mere knowledge that Thou dost love me should be sufficient to make me live detached from everything, in order to study only how to love Thee and please Thee in all things: *Love is strong as* *death.*[4585] If love is as strong as death, oh, by Thy merits, my Saviour, grant me such a love for Thee as shall make me hold all earthly affections in abhorrence. Give me thoroughly to understand that all my good consists in pleasing Thee, O God, all goodness and all love! I curse that time in which I loved Thee not. I thank Thee for that Thou dost give me time in which to love Thee. I love Thee, O my Jesus, infinite in loveliness, and infinitely loving. With my whole self do I love Thee, and I assure Thee that I would wish to die a thousand deaths rather than ever again cease from loving Thee.

II

The unjust sentence of death is read over to Jesus, who stands condemned; he listens to it, and humbly accepts it. No complaint does he make of the injustice of the judge; no appeal does he make to Cæsar, as did St. Paul, but, all gentle and resigned, he submits himself to the decree of the Eternal Father, who condemns him to the cross for our sins: *He humbled Himself, being made obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross.*[4586] And, for the love which he bears to man, he is content to die for us: *He loved us, and gave Himself up for us.*[4587]

O my merciful Saviour, how much do I thank Thee! How deeply am I obliged to Thee! I desire, O my Jesus, to die for Thee, since Thou hast so lovingly accepted of death for me. But if it is not granted me to give Thee my blood and life at the hands of the executioner, as the Martyrs have done, I, at least, accept with resignation the death which awaits me; and I accept of it in the manner, and at the time, which shall please Thee. Henceforth do I offer it up to Thee in honor of Thy Majesty, and in satisfaction for my sins. I pray Thee, by the merits of Thy death, to grant me the happiness to die in Thy grace and love.

III

Pilate delivers over the innocent Lamb into the hands of those wolves, to do with him what they will: *But he delivered Jesus up to their will.*[4588] These ministers of Satan seize hold of him fiercely; they strip him of the purple garment, as is suggested to them by the Jews, and put his own raiment again upon him: *They stripped Him of the purple garment, and clothed Him in His own raiment, and led Him away to crucify Him.*[4589] And this they did, says St. Ambrose, in order that Jesus might be recognized, at least, by his apparel; his beautiful face being so much disfigured with blood and wounds, that in other apparel it would have been difficult for him to have been recognized as the person he was: “They put on him his own raiment, that he might the better be recognized by all; since, as his face was all bloody and disfigured, it would not have been an easy matter for all to have recognized him.”[4590] They then take two rough beams, and of them they quickly construct the cross, the length of which was fifteen feet, as St. Bonaventure says, with St. Anselm, and they lay it upon the shoulders of the Redeemer.

But Jesus did not wait, says St. Thomas of Villanova, for the executioner to lay the cross upon him; of his own accord he stretched forth his hands, and eagerly laid hold of it, and placed it upon his own wounded shoulders: “He waited not till the soldier should lay it upon him, but he grasped hold of it joyfully.”[4591] Come, he then said, come, my beloved cross; it is now three-and-thirty years that I am sighing and searching for thee. I embrace thee, I clasp thee to my heart, for thou art the altar upon which it is my will to sacrifice my life out of love for my flock.

Ah, my Lord, how couldst Thou do so much good to one who has done Thee so much evil? O God, when I think of Thy having gone so far as to die under torments to obtain for me the divine friendship, and that I have so often voluntarily lost it afterwards through my own fault, I would that I could die of grief! How often hast Thou forgiven me, and I have gone back and offended Thee again! How could I ever have hoped for pardon, were it not that I knew that Thou hast died in order to pardon me? By this Thy death, then, I hope for pardon, and for perseverance in loving Thee. I repent, O my Redeemer, of having offended Thee. By Thy merits, pardon me, who promise never to displease Thee more. I prize and love Thy friendship more than all the good things of this world. Oh, let it not be my lot to go back and lose it! Inflict me, O Lord, with any punishment rather than with this. O my Jesus, I am not I willing to lose Thee any more; no, I would sooner be I willing to lose my life: I wish to love Thee always.

IV

The officers of justice come forth with the criminals condemned; and in the midst of these also moves forward unto death the King of heaven, the only-begotten I Son of God, laden with his cross: *And bearing His own cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary.*[4592] Do ye too, O blessed Seraphim, sally forth from heaven, and come and accompany your Lord, who is going to Calvary, there to be executed, together with the malefactors, upon a gibbet of infamy.

O horrifying sight! A God executed! Behold that Messias who but a few days before had been proclaimed the Saviour of the world, and received with acclamations and benedictions by the people, who cried out, *Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord;*[4593] and, after all, to see him as, bound, ridiculed, and execrated by all, he moves along, laden with a cross, to die the death of a villain! A God executed for men! And shall we find any man who loves not this God?

O my Eternal Lover, late is it that I begin to love Thee: grant that during the remainder of my life, I may make amends for the time that I have lost. I know, indeed, that all that I can do is but little in comparison with the love which Thou hast borne me; but it is at least my wish to love Thee with my whole heart. Too great a wrong should I be doing Thee if, after so many kindnesses, I were to divide my heart in twain, and give a part of it to some object other than Thyself. From this day forth I consecrate unto Thee all my life, my will, my liberty: dispose of me as Thou pleasest. I beg paradise of Thee, that there I may love Thee with all my strength. I wish to love Thee exceedingly in this life, that I may love Thee exceedingly for all eternity Aid me by Thy grace: this I beg of Thee, and hope for, through Thy merits.

V

Imagine to thyself, O my soul, that thou meetest Jesus as he passes along in this sorrowful journey. As a lamb borne along to the slaughter-house, so is the loving Redeemer conducted unto death: *As a lamb He is led to the slaughter.*[4594] So drained of blood is he and wearied out with his torments, that for very weakness he can scarcely stand. Behold him, all torn with wounds, with that bundle of thorns upon his head, with that heavy cross upon his shoulders, and with one of those soldiers dragging him along by a rope. Look at him as he goes along, with body bent double, with knees all of a tremble, dripping with blood; and so painful is it to him to walk, that at every step he seems ready to die.

Put the question to him: O divine lamb, hast Thou not yet had Thy fill of sufferings? If it is by them that Thou dost aim at gaining my love, oh, let Thy sufferings end here, for I wish to love Thee as Thou dost desire. No, he replies, I am not yet content: then shall I be content when I see myself die for love of you. And whither, O my Jesus, art Thou going now? I am going, he answers, to die for you. Hinder me not: this only do I ask of, and recommend to, you, that, when you shall see me actually dead upon the cross for you, you will keep in mind the love which I have borne you; bear it in mind, and love me.

O my afflicted Lord, how dear did it cost Thee to make me comprehend the love which Thou hast had for me! But what benefit could ever have resulted to Thee from my love, that Thou hast been willing to expend Thy blood and Thy life to gain it? And how could I, after having been bound by so great love, have been able so long to live without loving Thee, and unmindful of Thy affection? I thank Thee, for that now Thou dost give me light to make me know how much Thou hast loved me. O infinite goodness I love Thee above every good. Would, too, that I had the power of offering a thousand lives in sacrifice unto Thee, willing as Thou hast been to sacrifice Thine own divine life for me. Oh, grant me those aids to love Thee which Thou hast merited for me by so many sufferings! Bestow upon me that sacred fire which Thou didst come to enkindle upon earth by dying for us. Be ever reminding me of Thy death, that I may never forget to love Thee.

VI

His government was upon His shoulder.[4595] The cross, says Tertullian,[4596] was precisely the noble instrument whereby Jesus Christ made acquisition of so many souls; since, by dying thereon, he paid the penalty due to our sins, and thus rescued us from hell, and made us his own. *Who His own Self bore our sins in His body upon the tree.*[4597]

If God, then, O my Jesus, burdened Thee with all the sins of men—*The Lord laid upon Him the iniquities of us all,*[4598]—I, with my own sins, added to the weight of the cross that Thou didst bear to Calvary. Ah, my sweetest

Saviour, Thou didst even then foresee all the wrongs that I should do Thee; yet, notwithstanding, Thou didst not cease to love me, or to prepare for me all the mercies that Thou hast since employed towards me. If, then, to Thee I have been dear, most vile and ungrateful sinner as I am, who have so much offended Thee, good reason is there why Thou shouldst be dear to me,—Thou, my God, infinite in beauty and goodness, who hast loved me so much. Ah, would that I had never displeased Thee! Now, my Jesus, do I know the wrong that I have done Thee. O ye accursed sins of mine, what have you done? You have caused me to sadden the loving heart of my Redeemer, that heart which has loved me so much. O my Jesus, forgive me, repenting, as I do, of having done despite unto Thee. Henceforth it is Thou who art to be the only object of my love. I love Thee, O infinite loveliness, with all my heart; and I resolve to love none else but Thee. Pardon me, O Lord, and give me Thy love; I ask Thee for nothing more: "Give me Thy love only together with Thy grace"[4599] (I say unto Thee with St. Ignatius), "and I am rich enough."

VII

If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and follow Me.[4600] Since, then, O my Redeemer, Thou dost go before me with Thy cross, innocent as Thou art, and dost invite me to follow Thee with mine, go forward, for I will not abandon Thee. If, in time past, I have abandoned Thee, I confess that I have done wrong. Give me now what Thou wilt, embracing it, as I do, whatsoever it be, and willing, as I am, to accompany Thee with it even unto death: *Let us go forth from the camp, bearing His reproach.*[4601] And how, O Lord, can it be possible for us not, for Thy love, to love sufferings and shame, loving them so much, as Thou hast done, for our salvation? But since Thou dost invite us to follow Thee, yea, it is our wish to follow Thee and to die with Thee: give us only the strength to carry it out. This strength we ask of Thee, and hope for by Thy merits. I love Thee, O my most lovely Jesus, I love Thee with all my soul, and I will never abandon Thee more; enough for me has been the time that I have gone astray from Thee. Bind me now to Thy cross. If I have despised Thy love, I repent of it with all my heart; and I now prize it above every good.

Ah, my Jesus, and who am I that thou wishest to have me for a follower of Thine, and commandest me to love Thee, and if I will not love Thee, threatenest me with hell? And why, I will say to Thee, with St. Augustine,[4602] shouldst Thou hold out to me the threat of eternal miseries? For what greater misery could befall me than that of not loving Thee, O most lovely God, my Creator, my Redeemer, my paradise, my all? I see that, as a just chastisement of my offences against Thee, I should have deserved to be condemned to the inability of ever loving Thee more; but because Thou dost still love me, Thou dost continue to command me to love Thee, evermore repeating to my heart, *Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*[4603] I thank Thee, O my love, for this sweet precept; and in order to obey Thee, I do love Thee with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my mind. I repent of not having loved Thee in time past. At this moment I would rather choose to undergo every suffering than live without loving Thee, and I purpose evermore to seek Thy love. Help me, O my Jesus, to be ever making acts of love towards Thee, and to depart out of this life while making an act of love, that so I may come to love Thee, face to face, in Paradise, where I shall ever after love Thee without imperfection and without interruption, with all my powers, for all eternity. O Mother of God, pray for me. Amen.

Chapter XII

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

I

Behold, here we are at the Crucifixion, at that last torture, which brought death to Jesus Christ; here we are at Calvary, converted into a theatre for the display of divine love, where a God departs this life in an ocean of sufferings: *And when they had come to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified Him there.*[4604] The Lord having, with great difficulty, at length reached the top of the Mount alive, they violently, for the third time, tear his clothes from off him, sticking, as they did, to the sores upon his wounded flesh, and they throw him down upon the cross. The divine lamb stretches himself out upon that bed of torment; he reaches forth to the executioners his hands and his feet to be nailed; and raising his eyes to heaven, he offers up to his Eternal Father the great sacrifice of his life for the salvation of men. After the nailing of one of his hands, the nerves shrink, so that they had need of main force and ropes, as was revealed by St. Bridget, to draw the other hand and the feet up to the places where they were to be nailed; and this occasioned so great a tension of the nerves and veins, that they broke asunder with a violent convulsion: “They drew my hands and my feet with a rope to the places of the nails, so that the nerves and veins were stretched out to the full and broke asunder;”[4605] inasmuch that all his bones might have been numbered, as David had already predicted: *They pierced My hands and My feet, they numbered all My bones.*[4606]

Ah, my Jesus, by what power was it that Thy hands I and Thy feet were nailed to this wood, but by the love Thou didst bear to men? Thou, by the pain of Thy pierced hands, wert willing to pay the penalty due to all the sins of touch that men have committed; and, by the pain of Thy feet, Thou wert willing to pay for all the steps by which we have gone our way to offend

Thee. O my crucified love, with these pierced hands give me Thy benediction! Oh, nail this ungrateful heart of mine to Thy feet, that so I may no more depart from Thee, and that this will of mine, which has so often rebelled against Thee, may remain ever steadily fixed in Thy love. Grant that nothing else but Thy love, and the desire of pleasing Thee may move me. Although I behold Thee suspended upon this gibbet, I believe Thee to be the Lord of the world, the true Son of God, and the Saviour of mankind. For pity's sake, O my Jesus, never abandon me again at any period of my life; and more especially at the hour of my death, in those last agonies and struggles with hell, do Thou assist me, and strengthen me to die in Thy love. I love Thee, my crucified love, I love Thee with all my heart.

II

St. Augustine says, there is no death more bitter than that of the cross: "Among all the different kinds of death, there was none worse."[4607] Because, as St. Thomas[4608] observes, those who are crucified have their hands and their feet pierced through, parts which, being entirely composed of nerves, muscles, and veins, are the most sensitive to pain; and the very weight of the body itself, which is suspended from them, causes the pain to be continuous and ever increasing in its intensity up to the moment of death.

But the pains of Jesus were far beyond all other pains; for, as the Angelic Doctor says, the body of Jesus Christ, being perfectly constituted, was more quick and sensitive to pain—that body which was fashioned for him by the Holy Spirit, expressly with a view to his suffering, as he had foretold; as the Apostle testifies, *A body thou hast fitted to Me*.[4609] Moreover, St. Thomas says that Jesus Christ took upon himself an amount of suffering so great as to be sufficient to satisfy for the temporal punishment merited by the sins of all mankind. Tiepoli tells us that, in the crucifixion, there were dealt twenty-eight strokes of the hammer upon his hands, and thirty-six upon his feet.

O my soul, behold thy Lord, behold thy life, hanging upon that tree: *And thy life shall be, as it were, hanging before thee.*[4610] Behold how, on that gibbet of pain, fastened by those cruel nails, he finds no place of rest. Now he leans his weight upon his hands, now upon his feet; but on what part soever he leans, the anguish increases He turns his afflicted head, now on one side, now on the other: if he lets it fall towards his breast, the hands, by the additional weight, are rent the more; if he lowers it towards his shoulders, the shoulders are pierced with the thorns; if he leans it back upon the cross, the thorns enter the more deeply into the head.

Ah, my Jesus, what a death of bitterness is this that Thou art enduring! O my crucified Redeemer, I adore Thee on this throne of ignominy and pain. Upon this cross I read it written that Thou art a king: *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*.[4611] But apart from this title of scorn, what is the evidence that Thou dost give of being a king? Ah, these hands transfixed with nails, this head pierced with thorns, this throne of sorrow, this lacerated flesh, make me well know that Thou art king, but king of love! With humility, then, and tenderness do I draw near to kiss Thy sacred feet, transfixed for love of me; I clasp in my arms this cross, on which Thou, being made a victim of love, wast willing to offer Thyself in sacrifice for me to the divine justice: *being made obedient unto death, the death of the cross*.[4612] O blessed obedience which obtained for us the pardon of our sins! And what would have become of me, O my Saviour, hadst Thou not paid the penalty for me! I thank Thee O my love, and by the merits of this sublime obedience do I pray Thee to grant me the grace of obedience in everything to the divine will. All that I desire paradise for is, that I may love Thee forever, and with all my strength.

III

Behold the King of heaven, who, hanging on that gibbet, is now on the point of giving up the ghost. Let us, too, ask of him, with the prophet: *What are those wounds in the middle of Thy hands?*[4613] Tell me, O my Jesus, what are these wounds in the middle of Thy hands? The Abbot Rupert makes answer for Jesus: “They are the memorials of charity, the price of redemption.”[4614] They are tokens, says the Redeemer, of the great love which I bear towards you; they are the payment by which I set you free from the hands of your enemies, and from eternal death.

Do thou, then, O faithful soul, love thy God, who hath had such love for thee; and if thou dost at any time feel doubtful of his love, turn thine eyes (says St. Thomas of Villanova)—turn thine eyes to behold that cross, those pains, and that bitter death which he has suffered for thee; for such proofs will assuredly make thee know how much thy Redeemer loves thee: “The cross testifies, the pains testify, the bitter death which he had endured for thee testifies this.”[4615] And St. Bernard adds that the cross cries out, every wound of Jesus cries out, that he loves us with a true love: “The cross proclaims, the wounds proclaim, that he truly loves.”[4616]

O my Jesus! how do I behold Thee weighed down with sorrow and sadness! Ah, too much reason hast Thou to think that while Thou dost suffer even to die of anguish upon this wood, there are yet so few souls that have the heart to love Thee! O my God! how many hearts are there at the present moment, even among those that are consecrated to Thee, who either love Thee not, or love Thee not enough! O beautiful flame of love, thou that didst consume the life of a God upon the cross, oh, consume me too; consume all the disorderly affections which live in my heart, and make me live burning and sighing only for that loving Lord of mine, who, for love of me, was willing to end his life, consumed by torments, upon a gibbet of ignominy! O my beloved Jesus! I wish ever to love Thee, and Thee alone, alone; my only wish is to love my love, my God, my all.

IV

Thine eyes shall behold thy teacher.[4617] It was promised to men that with their own eyes they should see their divine Master. The whole life of Jesus was one continuous example and school of perfection; but never did he better incalculate his own most excellent virtues than from the pulpit of his cross. There what an admirable instruction does he give us on patience, more especially in time of infirmity; for with what constancy does Jesus upon the cross endure with most perfect patience the pains of his most bitter death! There, by his own example, he teaches us an exact obedience to the divine precepts, a perfect resignation to God’s will; and, above all, he teaches us how we ought to love. Father Paul Segneri, the younger, wrote to one of his penitents, that she ought to keep these words written at the foot of the crucifix: “See what it is to love.” It seems as though our Redeemer from the cross said to us all, “See what it is to love,” whenever, in order to avoid something that is troublesome, we abandon works that are pleasing in his sight, or at times even go so far as to renounce his grace and his love.

He has loved us even unto death, and came not down from the cross till after having left his life thereon.

Ah, my Jesus, Thou hast loved me, even unto dying for me; and I too wish to love Thee even unto dying for Thee. How often have I offended and betrayed Thee in time past! O my Lord, revenge Thyself upon me; but let it be the revenge of pity and love. Bestow upon me such a sorrow for my sins as may make me live in continual grief and affliction through pain at having offended Thee. I protest my willingness to suffer every evil for the time to come, rather than displease Thee. And what greater evil could befall me than that of displeasing Thee, my God, my Redeemer, my hope, my treasure, my all.

V

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. But this He said, signifying what death He should die.[4618] Jesus Christ said that when he should have been lifted up upon the cross, he would, by his merits, by his example, and by the power of his love, have drawn towards himself the affection of all souls: “He drew all the nations of the world to his love, by the merit of his blood, by his example, and by his love.”[4619] Such is the commentary of Cornelius à Lapide. St. Peter Damian tells us the same: “The Lord, as soon as he was suspended upon the cross, drew all men to himself through a loving desire.”[4620] And who is there, Cornelius goes on to say, that will not love Jesus, who dies for love of us? “For who will not reciprocate the love of Christ, who dies out of love for us?”[4621] Behold, O redeemed souls (as Holy Church exhorts us), behold your Redeemer upon that cross, where his whole form breathes love, and invites you to love him: his head bent downwards to give us the kiss of peace, his arms stretched out to embrace us, his heart open to love us: “His whole figure” (as St. Augustine says) “breathes love, and challenges us to love him in return: his head bent downwards to kiss us, his hands stretched out to embrace us, his bosom open to love us.”[4622]

Ah, my beloved Jesus, how could my soul have been so dear in Thy sight, beholding, as Thou didst, the wrongs that Thou wouldst have to receive at my hands! Thou, in order to captivate my affections, wert willing to give me the extremest proofs of love. Come, ye scourges, ye thorns, nails, and cross, which tortured the sacred flesh of my Lord, come ye, and wound my heart; be ever reminding me that all the good that I have received, and all that I hope for, comes to me through the merits of his Passion. O Thou master of love, others teach by word of mouth, but Thou upon this bed of death dost teach by suffering; others teach from interested motives, Thou from affection, asking no recompense excepting my salvation. Save me, O my love, and let my salvation be the bestowal of the grace ever to love and please Thee; the love of Thee is my salvation.

VI

While Jesus was dying upon the cross, the men who were around him never ceased to torment him with reproaches and insults. Some said to him: *He saved others, Himself He cannot save.*[4623] Others: *If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross.*[4624] And Jesus, while these are outraging him, what is he doing upon the cross? He is, perhaps, praying the Eternal Father to punish them? No; he is praying him to pardon them: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*[4625] Yes, says St. Thomas; to show forth the immense love which he had for men, the Redeemer asked pardon of God for his very crucifiers: “To show forth the abundance of his charity, he asked pardon for his persecutors.”[4626] He asked it, and obtained it; for, when they had seen him dead, they repented of their sin: *They returned smiting their breasts.*[4627]

Ah, my dear Saviour, behold me at Thy feet: I have been one of the most ungrateful of Thy persecutors; do Thou for me likewise pray Thy Father to pardon me. True, indeed, it is that the Jews and the executioners knew not what they were doing when they crucified Thee; but I well knew that, in sinning, I was offending a God who had been crucified, and had died for me. But Thy blood and Thy death have merited, even for me, the divine mercy. I cannot feel doubtful of being pardoned, after I see Thee die to obtain pardon for me. Ah, my sweet Redeemer, turn towards me one of those looks of love wherewith Thou didst look upon me, when dying for me upon the cross! Look upon me and pardon me all the ungratefulness which I have shown to Thy love. I repent, O my Jesus, of having despised Thee. I love Thee with all my heart; and, at the sight of Thy example, because I love Thee, I love all those likewise who have offended me. I wish them all possible good, and I purpose to serve them, and to assist them to the utmost of my power, for love of Thee, O my Lord, who hast been willing to die for me, who have so much offended Thee.

VII

Remember me,[4628] said the good thief to Thee, O my Jesus; and he had the consolation of hearing these words from Thee: *This day thou shalt be with me in paradise.*[4629]

Be mindful of me, say I likewise unto Thee; be mindful, O Lord, that I am one of those sheep for whom Thou didst give Thy life. Give me, too, the consolation of making me feel that Thou dost forgive me, vouchsafing me a great sorrow for my sins. Do Thou, O great priest, who dost sacrifice Thyself for love of Thy creatures, have compassion upon me. From this day forth do I sacrifice to Thee my will, my senses, my satisfactions, and all my desires. I believe that Thou, my God, didst die, crucified, for me. Let Thy divine blood, I pray Thee, flow also upon me; let it wash me from my sins. Let it inflame me with holy love, and make me all Thine own. I love Thee, O my Jesus, and I wish that I could die, crucified, for Thee, who didst die, crucified, for me.

O Eternal Father, I have offended Thee; but behold Thy Son, who, hanging upon this tree, makes satisfaction to Thee for me with the sacrifice which he offers Thee of I his divine life. I offer Thee his merits, which are all f mine, for he has made them over to me; and, for love of this Thy Son, I pray Thee to have mercy upon me. The greatest mercy that I ask of Thee is, that Thou wouldst give me Thy grace, which, miserable wretch that I am, I have so often wilfully despised. I repent of having outraged Thee, and I love Thee, I love Thee, my God, my all; and, to please Thee, I am ready to endure every shame, every pain, every sorrow, and every death.

Chapter XIII

THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS UPON HIS CROSS, AND HIS EATH

I

St. Laurence Justinian says that the death of Jesus was the most bitter and painful of all the deaths that men have ever died; since the Redeemer died upon the cross without any, even the slightest, alleviation: “He was crucified wholly without any alleviation of suffering.”[4630] In the case of other sufferers, the pain is always mitigated, at all events, by some consoling thought; but the pain and sorrow of Jesus in his sufferings were pure pain, pure sorrow, without mitigation: “The extent of the suffering of Christ appears to us from the purity of its pain and sorrow,” says the Angelic Doctor.[4631] And hence St. Bernard, when contemplating Jesus dying upon the cross, utters this lamentation: O my Jesus, when I behold Thee upon this tree, I find nothing in Thee from head to foot but pain and sorrow. “From the sole of Thy foot to the crown of Thy head I find nothing but pain and grief.”[4632]

O my sweet Redeemer, O love of my soul, wherefore wouldst Thou shed all Thy blood? wherefore sacrifice Thy divine Life for an ungrateful worm like me? O my Jesus, when shall I so unite myself to Thee as nevermore to be able to separate myself from Thee, or to cease to love Thee? Ah, Lord, as long as I live in this world I stand in danger of denying to Thee my love, and of losing Thy friendship, as I have done in times past. O my dearest Saviour, if, by continuing in life, I shall have to suffer this great evil, by Thy Passion, I pray Thee, let me die at this moment, while, as I hope, I am in Thy grace. I love Thee, and I wish to love Thee always.

II

Jesus, by the mouth of the Prophet, made lamentation that, when dying upon the cross, he went in search of some one to console him, but found none: *And I looked for one that would comfort Me, and I found none.*[4633] The Jews and the Romans, even while he was dying, uttered against him their execrations and blasphemies. The Most Holy Mary—yes, she stood beneath the cross, in order to afford him some relief, had it been in her power to do so; but this afflicted and loving Mother, by the sorrow which she suffered through sympathy with his pains, only added to the affliction of this her Son, who loved her so dearly. St. Bernard says that the pains of Mary all went towards increasing the torments of the Heart of Jesus: "The Mother being filled with it, the ocean of her sorrow poured itself back upon the Son."[4634] So that the Redeemer, in beholding Mary sorrowing thus, felt his soul pierced more by the sorrows of Mary than by his own; as was revealed to St. Bridget by the Blessed Virgin herself: "He, on beholding me, grieved more for me than for himself."[4635] Whence St. Bernard says, "O good Jesus, great as are Thy bodily sufferings, much more dost Thou suffer in Thy Heart through compassion for Thy Mother."[4636] What pangs, too, must not those loving Hearts of Jesus and Mary have felt when the moment arrived in which the Son, before breathing his last, had to take his leave of the Mother! Behold what the last words were with which Jesus took his leave in this world of Mary: "Mother, behold Thy Son;" assigning to her John, whom, in his own place, he left her for a son.

O Queen of Sorrows, things given as memorials by a beloved son at the hour of his death, how very dear they are, and never do they slip away from the memory of a mother! Oh, bear it in mind that thy Son, who loved thee so dearly, has, in the person of John, left me, a sinner, to thee for a son. For the love which thou didst bear to Jesus, have compassion on me. I ask thee not the good things of earth; I behold thy Son dying in so great pains for me; I behold thee, my innocent Mother, enduring also for me so great sufferings; and I see that I, a miserable being, who deserve hell on account of my sins, have not suffered anything for love of thee—I wish to suffer something for thee before I die. This is the grace that I ask of thee; and, with St. Bonaventure, I say to thee, that if I have offended thee, justice requires that I should have suffering as a chastisement; and if I have been serving thee, it is but reason that I should have suffering as a reward: "O

Lady, if I have offended thee, wound my heart for justice’ sake; if I have served thee. I ask thee for wounds as my recompense.”[4637] Obtain for me, O Mary, a great devotion and a continual remembrance of the Passion of thy Son; and, by that pang which Thou didst suffer on beholding him breathe his last upon the cross, obtain for me a good death. Come to my assistance, O my Queen, in that last moment; make me die, loving and pronouncing the sacred names of Jesus and of Mary.

III

Jesus, seeing that he found no one to console him upon this earth, raised his eyes and his Heart to his Father, craving relief from him. But the Eternal Father, beholding the Son clad in the garment of a sinner, replied, No, my Son, I cannot give Thee consolation, now that Thou art making satisfaction to my justice for all the sins of men; it is fitting that I too should abandon Thee to Thy pains, and let Thee die without solace. And then it was that our Saviour, crying out with a loud voice, said, My God, my God, and why hast Thou too abandoned Me? *Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*[4638] In his explanation of this passage, the Blessed Denis, the Carthusian, says that Jesus uttered these words with a loud cry, to make all men understand the greatness of the pain and sorrow in which he died. And it was the will of the loving Redeemer, adds St. Cyprian, to die bereft of every consolation, to give proof to us of his love, and to draw to himself all our love: “He was left in dereliction, that he might show forth his love towards us, and might attract our love towards himself.”[4639]

Ah, my beloved Jesus, Thou art in the wrong to make Thy lamentation, saying, My God, why hast Thou abandoned me? “Why,” dost Thou say? And why, I will say to Thee, hast Thou been willing to undertake to pay our penalty? Didst Thou not know that for our sins we had already deserved to be abandoned by God? With good reason, then, is it that Thy Father hath abandoned Thee, and leaves Thee to die in an ocean of sufferings and griefs. Ah, my Redeemer, Thy dereliction gives me both affliction and consolation: it is afflicting to me to see Thee die in such great pain; but it is consoling, in that it encourages me to hope that, by Thy merits, I shall not remain abandoned by the divine mercy, according as I should deserve, for having myself so often abandoned Thee in order to follow my own humors. Make me understand that, if to Thee it was so hard to be deprived, even for a brief interval, of the sensible presence of God, what my pain would be if I were to be deprived of God forever. Oh, by this dereliction of Thine, suffered with so much pain, forsake me not, O my Jesus, especially at the hour of my death! Then, when all shall have abandoned me, do not Thou abandon me, my Saviour. Ah, my Lord, who wert so left in desolation, be Thou my comfort in my desolations! Already do I understand that, if I shall love Thee without consolation, I shall content Thy heart the more. But Thou knowest my weakness; help me by Thy grace, and then grant me perseverance, patience, and resignation.

IV

Jesus, drawing nigh unto death, said, "*Sitio,*" I thirst. Tell me, Lord, says Leo of Ostia, for what dost Thou thirst? Thou makest no mention of those immense pains which Thou dost suffer upon the cross; but Thou complainest only of thirst: "Lord, what dost Thou thirst for? Thou art silent about the cross, and criest out about the thirst."[4640] "My thirst is for your salvation,"[4641] is the reply which St. Augustine makes for him. O soul, says Jesus, this thirst of mine is nothing but the desire which I have for thy salvation. He, the loving Redeemer, with extremest ardor, desires our souls and therefore he panted to give himself wholly to us by his death. This was his thirst, wrote St. Laurence Justinian: "He thirsted for us, and desired to give himself to us."[4642] St. Basil of Seleucia says, moreover, that Jesus Christ, in saying that he thirsted, would give us to understand that he, for the love which he bore us, was dying with the desire of suffering for us even more than what he had suffered: "O that desire, greater than the Passion!"[4643]

O most lovely God! because Thou lovest us, Thou dost desire that we should desire Thee: "God thirsts to be thirsted for,"[4644] as St. Gregory teaches us. Ah, my Lord, dost Thou thirst for me, a most vile worm as I am? and shall I not thirst for Thee, my infinite God? Oh, by the merits of this thirst endured upon the cross, give me a great thirst to love Thee, and to please Thee in all things. Thou hast promised to grant us whatever we seek from Thee: *Ask, and ye shall receive.*[4645] I ask of Thee but this one gift—

the gift of loving Thee. I am, indeed, unworthy of it; but in this has to be the glory of Thy blood,—the turning of a heart into a great lover of Thee, which has, at one time, so greatly despised Thee; to make a perfect flame of charity of a sinner who is altogether full of mire and of sins. Much more than this hast Thou done in dying for me. Would that I could love Thee, O Lord infinitely good, as much as Thou dost deserve! I delight in the love which is borne Thee by the souls that are enamoured of Thee, and still more in the love Thou bearest towards Thyself. With this I unite my own wretched love. I love Thee, O Eternal God; I love Thee, O infinite loveliness. Make me ever to increase in Thy love; reiterating to Thee frequent acts of love, and studying to please Thee in everything, without intermission and without reserve. Make me, wretched and insignificant as I may be, make me at least to be all Thine own.

V

Our Jesus, now on the point of expiring, in dying accents said, *It is finished.*[4646] He, while uttering the aforesaid word, ran over in his mind the whole course of his life. He beheld all the fatigues he had gone through,—the poverty, the pains, the ignominies he had suffered; and he offered them all anew to his Eternal Father for the salvation of the world. Then, turning himself back again to us, it seems as if he repeated, “It is finished;” as though he had said, O men, all is consummated; all is fulfilled; your redemption is accomplished; the divine justice is satisfied; Paradise is opened; *and behold your time, the time of lovers.*[4647] It is time at last, O men, that you should surrender yourselves to my love. Love me, then; oh, love me; for there is nothing more that I can do in order to be loved by you. You see what I have done in order to gain your love. For you I have led a life which has been but one series of tribulations. At its close, before I died, I have been content to let myself be drained of blood, have my face spit upon, my flesh torn to pieces, my head crowned with thorns; until I suffered the pains of agony upon this cross, as you see me now. What is there that remains? It only remains for me to die for you. Yes, it is my will to die. Come, O death; I give thee leave to take away my life for the salvation of my flock. And do you, my flock, love me, love me; for I can do no more in order to make myself beloved by you.

“It is consummated” (says the Blessed Tauler): “all that justice exacted, all that charity demanded, all that could have been done to give proof of love.”[4648]

Oh, would that I too, my beloved Jesus, could say in dying, Lord, I have fulfilled all; I have accomplished all that Thou hast given me to do; I have borne my cross with patience; I have pleased Thee in all things. Ah, my God, were I now to die, I should not die content; for nothing of this could I say with truth. But am I always to live thus ungrateful to Thy love? Oh, grant me the grace to please Thee during the remainder of my life, that, when death shall come, I may by able to say to Thee, that from this time at least I have fulfilled Thy will. If in time past I have offended Thee, Thy death is my hope. For the future it is my wish not to betray Thee more; but from Thee it is that I hope for my perseverance. By Thy merits, O my Jesus, I ask and hope it from Thee.

VI

Behold Jesus, at length, actually dying. Behold him, my soul, how he is in his agony amid the last respirations of his life. Behold those dying eyes, that face so pale, that feebly palpitating heart, that body already wrapped in the arms of death, and that beautiful soul now on the point of leaving that wounded body. The sky shrouds itself in darkness; the earth quakes; the graves open. Alas, what portentous signs are these! They are signs that the Maker of the world is now dying.

Behold, in the last place, how our Redeemer, after having commended his blessed soul to his Eternal Father, first breathing forth from his afflicted Heart a deep sigh, and then bowing down his head in token of his obedience, and offering up his death for the salvation of men, at length, through the violence of the pain, expires, and delivers up his spirit into the hands of his beloved Father: *And crying out with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit; and saying this He gave up the ghost.*[4649]

Draw near, O my soul, to the foot of that holy altar whereon the Lamb of God is now lying dead, sacrificed for thy salvation. Draw near, and reflect that he is dead for the love which he has borne thee. Ask your dead Lord for what you wish, and hope for all. O Saviour of the world, O my Jesus, behold to what Thy love for men has at length reduced Thee! I thank Thee that Thou hast been willing, Thou, our God, to lose Thy life that we might not lose our souls. I thank Thee for all men, but especially for myself. And who is there more than I that has reaped the fruits of Thy death? I, through Thy merits, without even so much as knowing it, was, in the outset, by baptism, made a child of the Church; through Thy love I have been forgiven so often since, and have received so many special graces; through Thee I have the hope of dying in the grace of God, and of coming to love Thee in Paradise.

O my beloved Redeemer, how greatly am I obliged to Thee! Into Thy pierced hands I commend my poor soul. Make me well understand what love there must have been in a God who died for me: would that I could, O Lord, die for Thee! But what would the death of a wicked slave weigh against the death of his Lord and God? Would that I could, at least, love Thee as much as I am able; but without Thy help, O my Jesus, I can do nothing. Oh, help me! and, through the merits of Thy death, make me die to all earthly affections, that so I may love Thee only, who dost deserve all my love. I love Thee, O infinite goodness, I love Thee, my chief good; and, with St. Francis, I pray Thee: “May I die for the love of Thy love, who didst vouchsafe to die for the love of my love.” May I die to everything, out of gratitude, at least, for Thy great love, who hast vouchsafed to die, through Thy love for me, and in order to be beloved by me. O Mary, my Mother, intercede for me. Amen.

Chapter XIV

THE HOPE WHICH WE HAVE IN THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

I

Jesus is the only hope of our salvation: *There is no salvation in any other but Him.*[4650] I am the only door, says he; and he that shall enter in through me shall assuredly find life eternal: *I am the door; if any one enter by Me, he shall be saved.*[4651] And what sinner would ever have been able to hope for pardon if Jesus had not, by his blood and by his death, made satisfaction to the divine justice for us? *He shall bear their iniquities.*[4652] It is by this that the Apostle encourages us, saying, *If the blood of goats and of oxen sanctify such as are defiled to the cleansing of the flesh, how much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the Holy Ghost, offered Himself up to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God!*[4653] If the blood of goats and of bulls offered up in sacrifice removed from the Jews the outward defilements of the body, that so they could be admitted to the worship of the sanctuary, how much more shall the blood of Jesus Christ, who for love offered himself up as a satisfaction for us, remove the sins from our souls to enable us to serve our God Most High!

Our loving Redeemer, having come into the world for no other end but that of saving sinners, and beholding the sentence of condemnation already recorded against us for our sins, what was it that he did? He by his own death paid the penalty that was due to ourselves; and with his own blood cancelling the sentence of condemnation, in order that the divine justice might no more seek from us the satisfaction due, he nailed it to the same cross whereon he died: *Blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And the same he took out of the way,* *fastening it to the cross.*[4654] *Christ entered once into the holy place, having found for us eternal redemption.*[4655]

Ah, my Jesus, hadst Thou not found this mode of obtaining pardon for us, who would ever have been able to find it? It was with reason that David cried out, *Declare His ways.*[4656] Make known, O ye blessed, the loving contrivances which our God has employed in order to save us. Since, then, O my sweet Saviour, Thou hast had such a love for me, cease not from exercising mercy towards me. Thou, by Thy death, hast rescued me from the hands of Lucifer: into Thy hands do I consign my soul; it is for Thee to save it: *Into Thy hands I commend my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth.*[4657]

II

Little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin: but if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just, and He is the propitiation for our sins.[4658] Jesus Christ did not, with his death, bring to an end his intercession for us with the Eternal Father: even at the present moment he is acting as our advocate; and it seems as if he knew not what else to do in heaven, as St. Paul writes, but be moving the Father to exercise mercy towards us: *ever living to make intercession for us.*[4659] And the Apostle adds that this is the end for which our Saviour is ascended into heaven: *that He may now appear in the presence of God for us.*[4660] As rebels are driven away from the presence of their king, so should we sinners have nevermore been deemed worthy of admission into the presence of our God, even so much as to ask his pardon; but Jesus, as our Redeemer, makes appearance for us in the divine presence, and, through his merits, obtains for us the grace that we had lost.

You are come to Jesus the Mediator, and to the sprinkling of blood, which speaketh better than Abel.[4661] Oh, with how much greater effect does the blood of the Redeemer implore for us the divine mercy than did the blood of Abel plead for chastisement on Cain! My justice (said God to St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi) is transformed into mercy by the vengeance taken on the innocent flesh of Jesus Christ. The blood of this my Son pleads not with me for vengeance, like the blood of Abel, but pleads only for mercy and pity; and at the sound of this voice my justice cannot but rest appeased. This blood so binds its hands, that, so to speak, it cannot stir to take that vengeance upon sins which it used to take before.

Be not unmindful of the kindness of thy Surety.[4662] Ah, my Jesus, I was already incapable, after my sins, of making satisfaction to the divine justice, when Thou, by Thy death, wert willing to make satisfaction for me. Oh, what ingratitude would mine be now, were I to be unmindful of this Thy so great mercy! No, my Redeemer, never will I be unmindful of it; I desire to be ever thanking Thee for it, and to show forth my thankfulness by loving Thee, and doing all that I can to please Thee. Do Thou aid me by that grace which Thou hast, by so many sufferings, merited for me. I love Thee, my Jesus, my love, my hope!

III

Come, O my dove, into the clefts of the rock.[4663] Oh, what a safe place of refuge shall we ever find in the sacred clefts of the rock, in the wounds, that is to say, of Jesus Christ! “The clefts of the rock,” says St. Peter Damian, “are the Redeemer’s wounds; in these has our soul placed its hope.”[4664] There shall we be set free from that feeling of distrust which the sight of the sins that we have committed may produce; there shall we find weapons wherewith to defend ourselves when we shall be tempted to sin anew: *Have confidence, my children; I have overcome the world.*[4665] If you have not sufficient strength (our Saviour exhorts us) to resist the assaults of the world, that offers you its pleasures, place your confidence in me, for I have overcome it; and thus shall you likewise overcome. Pray the Eternal Father, said he, for the sake of my merits, to give you strength, and I promise you that he will grant you whatever you ask of him in my name: *Amen, amen, I say unto you, if you ask anything of the Father in My name, He will give it you.*[4666] And elsewhere he confirms to us the promise, saying that whatsoever grace we shall, for his love, ask of God, he himself, who is one with the Father, will give it us: *Whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in My name, that I will do: that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*[4667]

Ah, Father Eternal, trusting to the merits and to these promises of Jesus Christ, I ask not of Thee the good things of earth, but Thy grace alone. True it is that, after the wrongs I have done Thee, I should not deserve either pardon or grace; yet, if I deserve them not, Thy Son hath merited them for me, by offering up his blood and his life for me. For the love, then, of this Thy Son, grant me Thy pardon. Give me a great sorrow for my sins, and a great love towards Thee. Enlighten me to know how lovely is Thy goodness, and how great is the love which Thou hast borne me from all eternity. Make known to me Thy will, and give me strength to fulfil it perfectly. O Lord, I love Thee, and desire to do all that Thou dost desire of me.

IV

Oh, how great is the hope of salvation which the death of Jesus Christ imparts to us: *Who is He that shall condemn? Christ Jesus who died, who also maketh intercession for us.*[4668] Who is it, asks the Apostle, that has to condemn us? It is that same Redeemer who, in order not to condemn us to eternal death, condemned himself to a cruel death upon a cross. From this St. Thomas of Villanova encourages us, saying, What dost thou fear, sinner, if thou art willing to leave off thy sin? How should that Lord condemn thee, who died in order not to condemn thee? How should he drive thee away when thou returnest to his feet, he who came from heaven to seek thee when thou wert fleeing from him? “What art thou afraid of, sinner? How shall he condemn thee penitent, who dies that thou mayst not be condemned? How shall he cast thee off returning, who came from heaven seeking thee?”[4669] But greater still is the encouragement given us by this same Saviour of ours, when, speaking by Isaias, he says *Behold, I have graven thee upon My hands; thy walls are always before My eyes.*[4670] Be not distrustful, my sheep; see how much thou didst cost me. I keep thee engraven upon my hands, in these wounds which I have suffered for thee; these are ever reminding me to help thee, and to defend thee from thine enemies: love me and have confidence.

Yes, my Jesus, I love Thee, and feel confidence in Thee. To rescue me, yea, this has cost Thee dear; to save me will cost Thee nothing. It is Thy will that all should be saved, and that none should perish. If my sins cause me to dread, Thy goodness reassures me, more desirous as Thou art to do me good than I am to receive it. Ah, my beloved Redeemer, I will say to Thee with Job: *Even though Thou shouldst kill me, yet I will hope in Thee, and Thou wilt be my Saviour.*[4671] Wert Thou even to drive me away from

Thy presence, O my love, yet would not I leave off from hoping in Thee, who art my Saviour. Too much do these wounds of Thine and this blood encourage me to hope for every good from Thy mercy. I love Thee, O dear Jesus; I love Thee, and I hope.

V

The glorious St. Bernard one day, in sickness, saw himself before the judgment-seat of God, where the devil was accusing him of his sins, and telling him that he did not deserve paradise: “It is true that I deserve not paradise,” the saint replied; “but Jesus has a twofold title to this kingdom,—in the first place, as being by nature Son of God; in the next place, as having purchased it by his death. He contents himself with the first of these, and the second he makes over to me; and therefore it is that I ask and hope for paradise.” We, too, can say the same; for St. Paul tells us that the will of Jesus Christ to die, consumed by sufferings, had for its end the obtaining of paradise for all sinners that are penitent, and resolved to amend: *And, being perfected, He was made the cause of eternal salvation to all that obey Him.*[4672] And hence the Apostle subjoins: *Let us run to the fight proposed unto us, looking on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith, who, having joy proposed unto Him, under went the cross, despising the shame.*[4673] Let us go forth with courage to fight against our enemies, fixing our eyes on Jesus Christ, who, together with the merits of his Passion, offers us the victory and the crown.

He has told us that he is gone to heaven to prepare a place for us: *Let not your heart be troubled . . . ; for I go to prepare a place for you.*[4674] He has told, and is continually telling, his Father that, since he has consigned us to him, he wishes us to be with him in paradise: *Father, those whom Thou hast given Me, I will that where I am they also may be with Me.*[4675] “And what greater mercy could we have hoped for from the Lord, says St. Anselm, than for the Eternal Father to have said to a sinner, already for crimes condemned to hell, and with no means of delivering himself from its punishments, Take thou my Son, and offer him in thy stead?” And for the same Son to have said, Take me, and deliver thyself from hell? “What greater mercy can we imagine than that to one who, being a sinner, cannot redeem himself, God the Father should say, Accept of my only-begotten

Son, and deliver him over to be punished in thy stead; and that the Son should say, Take me and redeem thyself?”[4676]

Ah, my loving Father, I thank Thee for having given me this Thy Son for my Saviour; I offer to Thee his death; and, for the sake of his merits, I pray Thee for mercy. And ever do I return thanks to Thee, O my Redeemer, for having given Thy blood and Thy life to deliver me from eternal death. “We pray Thee, therefore, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.”[4677] Help, then, us, Thy rebellious servants, since Thou hast redeemed us at so great a cost. O Jesus, my one and only hope! Thou dost love me. Thou hast power to do all things: make me a saint. If I am weak, do Thou give me strength; if I am sick, in consequence of the sins I have committed, do Thou apply to my soul one drop of Thy blood, and heal me. Give me the love of Thee, and final perseverance, making me die in Thy grace. Give me paradise; through Thy merits do I ask it of Thee, and hope to obtain it. I love Thee, O my most lovely God, with all my soul; and I hope to love Thee always. Oh, help a miserable sinner, who is wishing to love Thee.

VI

Having, therefore, a great High-Priest, who hath penetrated the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high-priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but one tempted in all things like as we are, yet without sin.[4678] Since, says the Apostle, we have this Saviour, who has opened to us paradise, which was at one time closed to us by sin, let us always have confidence in his merits; because, from having of his goodness willed to suffer in himself also our miseries, he well knows how to compassionate us: *Let us, therefore, go with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.*[4679] Let us, then, go with confidence to the throne of the divine mercy, to which we have access by means of Jesus Christ, that so we may there find all the graces that we need. And how can we doubt, subjoins St. Paul, but that God, having given us his Son, has given us together with that Son all his goods: *He delivered Him up for us all; how hath He not, with Him, given us all things?*[4680] Cardinal Hugo comments on this: “He will give the lesser, that is to say eternal life, who hath given the greater, that is to say his own Son."[4681] That Lord will not deny us the lesser, which is eternal life, who has gone so far as to give us the greater, which is his own Son himself.

O my chief and only good! what shall I render Thee, miserable as I am, in return for so great a gift as that which Thou hast given me of Thy Son? To Thee will I, with David, say, *The Lord shall repay for me.*[4682] Lord, I have not where with to recompense Thee. That same Son of Thine can alone render Thee worthy thanks; let him thank Thee in my stead. O my most merciful Father! by the wounds of Jesus, I pray Thee to save me. I love Thee, O infinite goodness; and because I love Thee, I repent of having offended Thee. My God, my God, I wish to be all Thine own; accept of me for the sake of the love of Jesus Christ Ah, my sweet Creator, is it possible that Thou, after having given me Thy Son, shouldst deny me the good things that belong to Thee,—Thy grace, Thy love, Thy paradise?

VII

St. Leo declares that Jesus Christ, by his death, has brought us more good than the devil brought us evil in the sin of Adam: "We have gained greater things through the grace of Christ than we had lost through the envy of the devil."[4683] And this the Apostle distinctly says, when writing to the Romans: *Not as the offence so also is the gift. Where the offence abounded, grace did superabound.*[4684] Cardinal Hugo explains it: "The grace of Christ is of greater efficacy than is the offence."[4685] There is no comparison, says the Apostle, between the sins of man and the gift which God has made us in giving us Jesus Christ; great as was the sin of Adam, much greater by far was the grace which Jesus Christ, by his Passion, merited for us: *I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*[4686] I am come into the world, the Saviour protests, to the end that mankind, who were dead through sin, may receive through me not only the life of grace, but a life yet more abundant than that which they had lost by sin. Wherefore it is that Holy Church calls the sin happy which has merited to have such a Redeemer: "O happy fault, which deserved such and so great a Redeemer."[4687]

Behold, God is my Saviour, I will deal confidently, and will not fear.[4688] If, then, O my Jesus, Thou, who art an omnipotent God, art also my

Saviour, what fear shall I have of being damned? If, in time past, I have offended Thee, I repent of it with all my heart. From this time forth I wish to serve Thee, to obey Thee, and to love Thee. I firmly hope that Thou, my Redeemer, who hast done and suffered so much for my salvation, wilt not deny me any grace that I shall need in order to be saved: "I will act with confidence, firmly hoping that nothing necessary to salvation will be denied me by Him who has done and suffered so much for my salvation."[4689]

VIII

You shall draw water from the fountains of the Saviour, and you shall say in that day, Praise ye the Lord, and call upon His name.[4690] The wounds of Jesus Christ are now the blessed fountains from which we can draw forth all graces, if we pray unto him with faith: *And a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord, and shall water the torrent of thorns.*[4691] The death of Jesus, says Isaias, is precisely this promised fountain, which has bathed our souls in the water of grace, and, from being thorns of sins, has, by his merits, transformed them into flowers and fruits of life eternal. He, the loving Redeemer, made himself, as St. Paul tells us, poor in this world, in order that we, through the merit of his poverty, might become rich: *For your sakes He became poor, that, through His poverty, you might be rich.*[4692] By reason of sin we were ignorant, unjust, wicked, slaves of hell; but Jesus Christ, says the Apostle, by dying and making satisfaction for us, *is by God made for us Wisdom, Justice, Sanctification, and Redemption.*[4693] That is to say, as St. Bernard explains it, "Wisdom, in his preaching, justice in his absolving, sanctification in his conduct, redemption in his Passion."[4694] He has made himself our wisdom by instructing us, our justice by pardoning us, our sanctity by his example, and our redemption by his Passion, delivering us from the hands of Lucifer. In short, as St. Paul says, the merits of Jesus Christ have enriched us with all good things, so that we no more want for anything in order to be able to receive all graces: *In all things you are made rich; so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace.*[4695]

O my Jesus, my Jesus, what beautiful hopes does Thy Passion give me! O my beloved Saviour, how much do I owe Thee! Oh, would that I had never offended Thee! Oh, pardon me all the wrongs that I have done Thee;

inflame me fully with Thy love, and save me in eternity. And how can I be afraid of not receiving forgiveness, salvation, and every grace, from an omnipotent God who has given me all his blood? Ah, my Jesus, my hope, Thou, in order not to lose me, hast been willing to lose Thy life; I will not lose Thee, O infinite good. If, in time past, I have lost Thee, I repent of it; I wish, for the future, never to lose Thee more. It is for Thee to aid me, that I may not lose Thee again. O Lord, I love Thee, and I will love Thee always. Mary, thou, next after Jesus, art my hope: tell thy Son that thou dost protect me, and I shall be safe. Amen. So may it be.

Chapter XV

THE LOVE OF THE ETERNAL FATHER IN HAVING GIVEN US HIS SON

I

God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.[4696] God, says Jesus Christ, has loved the world to that degree that he has given it his own and only Son. In this gift there are three things demanding our consideration: Who is the giver, what is the thing given, and the greatness of the love wherewith he gives it? We are already aware that the more exalted the donor is, the more to be prized is the gift. One who receives a flower from a monarch will set a higher value on that flower than on a large amount of money. How much ought we not, then, to prize this gift, coming to us, as it does, from the hands of one who is God! And what is it that he has given us? His own Son. The love of this God did not content itself with having given us so many good things on this earth, until it had reached the point of giving us its whole self in the person of the Incarnate Word: "He gave us not a servant, not an Angel, but his own Son,"[4697] says St. John Chrysostom. Wherefore Holy Church exultingly exclaims, "O wondrous condecension of Thy mercy in our regard! O unappreciable love of charity! that Thou mightest redeem a slave, Thou deliveredst up Thy Son."[4698]

O infinite God, how couldst Thou condescend to exercise towards us so wondrous a compassion! Who shall ever be able to understand an excess so great as that, in order to ransom the slave, Thou wert willing to give us Thine only Son? Ah, my kindest Lord, since Thou hast given me the best that Thou hast, it is but just that I should give Thee the most that I can. Thou desirest of me my love: of Thee I desire nothing else, but only Thy love. Behold this miserable heart of mine; I consecrate it wholly to Thy love. Depart from my heart, all ye creatures; give room to my God, who deserves and desires to possess it wholly, and without companions. I love Thee, O God of love; I love Thee above everything: and I desire to love Thee alone, my Creator, my treasure, my all.

II

God hath given us his Son; and why? For love alone. Pilate, for fear of men, gave Jesus up to the Jews: *He delivered Him up to their will.*[4699] But the Eternal Father gave his Son to us for the love which he bore us: *He delivered Him up for us all.*[4700] St. Thomas says that “love has the nature of a first gift.”[4701] When a present is made us, the first gift that we receive is that of the love which the donor offers us in the thing that he gives: because, observes the Angelic Doctor, the one and only reason of every voluntary gift is love; otherwise, when a gift is made for some other end than that of simple affection, the gift can no longer rightly be called a true gift. The gift which the Eternal Father made us of his Son was a true gift, perfectly voluntary, and without any merit of ours; and therefore it is said that the Incarnation of the Word was effected through the operation of the Holy Spirit: that is, through love alone; as the same holy Doctor says: “Through God’s supreme love it was brought to pass, that the Son of God assumed to himself flesh.”[4702]

But not only was it out of pure love that God gave unto this his Son, he also gave him to us with an immensity of love. This is precisely what Jesus wished to signify when he said: *God so loved the world.*[4703] The word “so” (says St. John Chrysostom) signifies the magnitude of the love wherewith God made us this great gift: “The word ‘so’ signifies the vehemence of the love.”[4704] And what greater love could one who was God have been able to give us than was shown by his condemning to death his innocent Son in order to save us miserable sinners? *Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.*[4705] Had the Eternal Father been capable of suffering pain, what pain would he not, have then experienced, when he saw himself compelled by his justice to condemn that Son, whom he loved with the same love wherewith he loved himself, to die by so cruel a death in the midst of so many ignominies? *And the Lord willed to bruise Him in infirmity.*[4706] He willed to make him die consumed by torments and sufferings.

Imagine thyself, then, to behold the Eternal Father, with Jesus dead in his arms, and saying to us: This, O men, is my beloved Son, in whom I have found all my delights: *This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*[4707] Behold how I have willed to see him ill-treated on account of your iniquities: *For the wickedness of My people hare I smitten Him.*[4708] Behold how I have condemned him to die upon this cross, afflicted, and abandoned even by myself, who love him so much. This have I done in order that you may love me.

O infinite goodness! O infinite mercy! O infinite love! O God of my soul! since Thou didst will that the object most dear to Thy heart should die for me, I offer to Thee in my own behalf that great sacrifice of himself which this Thy Son made Thee; and for the sake of his merits I pray Thee to give me the pardon of my sins, Thy love, and Thy paradise. Great as are these graces which I ask of Thee, the offering which I present unto Thee is greater still. For the love of Jesus Christ, O my Father, pardon me and save me. If I have offended Thee in time past, I repent of it above every evil. I now prize Thee, and love Thee, above every good.

III

Ah, who but a God of infinite love could ever have loved us to such a degree? St. Paul writes: *But God, who is rich in mercy, on account of the too great love wherewith He loved us when we were dead in sins, quickened us together in Christ.*[4709] The Apostle calls too great this love which God showed us in giving to men, by means of the death of his Son, the life of grace which they had lost by their sins. But to God, who is love itself, this love was not too great: *God is love.*[4710] St. John says that herein he wished to make us see the extent to which the greatness of the love of a God towards us reached, in sending his own Son into the world to obtain for us, by his death, forgiveness and life eternal: *By this hath appeared the charity of God in us, because God hath sent His own only-begotten Son into the world, that we might have life through Him.*[4711]

By sin, we were dead to the life of grace; and Jesus, by his death, has brought us back to life. We were miserable, deformed objects of abomination; but God, by means of Jesus Christ, has rendered us pleasing and precious in his divine sight. *He hath made us* (wrote the apostle) *acceptable through His beloved Son.*[4712] He hath made us acceptable, i.e., "He hath made us pleasing," says the Greek text. And therefore St. John Chrysostom adds that were there to be a poor leper all covered with wounds and disfigurements, and any one were to heal his body of the leprosy, and make him beautiful and rich besides, how great would be the sense of obligation that he would retain towards this his benefactor! How much more, then, are we now beholden to God, since, when our souls were disfigured and hateful on account of our sins, he hath, by means of Jesus Christ, not only delivered us from our sins, but has made them beautiful and lovely besides: *He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*[4713] Cornelius à Lapide comments upon this: "He hath bestowed upon us every spiritual gift."[4714] God's blessing involves benefaction. The Eternal Father, then, in giving us Jesus Christ, hath loaded us with all gifts, not indeed earthly ones in the body, but spiritual ones in the soul: *In heavenly places;*[4715] giving us, together with his Son, a heavenly life in this world, and a heavenly glory in the other.

Give me, then, Thy blessings and Thy benefactions, O my most loving God, and may the benediction draw me wholly to Thy love: "Draw me by the chains of Thy love,"[4716] Let the love which Thou hast borne me make me enamoured of Thy goodness. Thou dost deserve an infinite love; I love Thee with all the love I can command; I love Thee above everything; I love Thee more than myself. I give Thee my whole will; and this is the grace that I ask of Thee: make me from this day forth to live and do everything according to Thy divine will, wherewith Thou desirest nothing but my good, and my eternal salvation.

IV

The King hath brought me into the cellar of wine; He hath set in order charity in me.[4717] My Lord, said the holy spouse, hath taken me into the cellar of wine; that is to say, hath placed before mine eyes all the benefits that he hath done me in order that I may be induced to love him: *He hath set in order charity in me.* A certain writer says that God, in order to gain our love, has, so to say, despatched against us an army of the graces of love. "He drew up charity against me like an armed host."[4718] But, says Cardinal Hugo, the gift of Jesus Christ to us was the reserved arrow of which Isaias prophesied: *He hath made me as a chosen arrow: in his quiver He hath hidden me.*[4719] As the hunter, says Hugo, keeps the best arrow in reserve to give the finishing stroke to his game, so did God, amongst all his other benefits, keep Jesus in reserve, until the time of grace had arrived, and then he sent him forth, as if to give the finishing stroke of love to the hearts of men: “The chosen arrow is kept in reserve: so was Christ kept in reserve in the bosom of the Father, until the fulness of time should come; and then he was sent forth to wound the hearts of the faithful.”[4720] St. Peter, wounded by this arrow, says St John Chrysostom,[4721] said to his Master: Lord, Thou knowest well that I love Thee: *Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.*[4722]

Ah, my God, I behold myself surrounded on all sides with the artifices of Thy love. I do, likewise, love Thee; and if I love Thee, I know that Thou too dost love me. And what power shall ever deprive me of Thy love? Sin only. But from this infernal monster it is for Thee, through Thy mercy, to deliver me. I am content to suffer every evil, the most cruel death, or even to be torn to pieces, sooner than offend Thee by mortal sin. But Thou already knowest my past falls: Thou knowest my weakness; help me, O my God, for love of Jesus Christ: *Despise not Thou the work of Thine hands,*[4723] I am the workmanship of Thy hands; Thou hast created me; despise me not. If I merit to be left to myself by reason of my sins, I merit nevertheless that Thou be merciful towards me for love of Jesus Christ, who hath sacrificed his life to Thee for my salvation. I offer up to Thee his merits, which all are mine; and, through them, I ask of Thee, and hope for, from Thee, the gift of holy perseverance, together with a good death; and meanwhile to live the remainder of my life entirely to Thy glory. Long enough have I offended Thee! I now repent of it with all my heart, and I wish to love Thee to the uttermost of my power. I desire no longer to offer resistance to Thy love: I surrender myself wholly unto Thee. Give me Thy grace, and Thy love, and then do with me what Thou wilt. I love Thee, O my God, and I wish, and I ask of Thee, to love Thee always. Oh, for the merits of Jesus Christ, hearken unto my prayer. Mary, my Mother, pray to God for me. Amen. So may it be.

Chapter XVI

THE LOVE OF THE SON OF GOD IN HAVING WILLED TO DIE FOR US

I

And behold Thy time was the time of lovers. . . . And Thou wast made exceeding beautiful.[4724] How deeply are we Christians indebted to the Lord, in that he has caused us to be born after the coming of Jesus Christ! Our time is no longer a time of fear, as was that of the Jews, but a time of love; having seen a God dead for our salvation, and in order to gain our love. It is of faith that Jesus has loved us, and for love of us has given himself over unto death: *Christ hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself up for us.*[4725] And where would ever have been the power to make an omnipotent God die, had not he of himself voluntarily willed to give his life for us? *I give My life . . . no one taketh it from Me; but I lay it down of Myself.*[4726] Wherefore St. John observes that Jesus, by his death, gave us the uttermost proof that he could have given us of his love: *Having loved His own, He loved them to the end.*[4727] Jesus, by his death, says a devout writer, gave us the greatest possible sign of his love, beyond which there remained for him nothing that he could do in order to show how much he loved us: “The highest proof of love was that which he showed forth at the end of his life upon the cross.”[4728]

O my beloved Redeemer, Thou hast for love given Thyself wholly unto me; for love I give myself wholly unto Thee. Thou for my salvation hast given Thy life; I for Thy glory wish to die, when and as Thou dost please. There was nothing more that Thou couldst do in order to gain my love; but I have ungratefully exchanged Thee away for nothing. I repent of it, O my Jesus, with all my heart. Pardon me through Thy Passion; and in token of pardon, help me to love Thee. Through Thy grace I feel within myself a great desire of loving Thee, and I resolve to be all Thine own; but I see my languidness and the betrayals of which I have been guilty. Thou alone canst help me and render me happy. Help me, then, O my love. Make me love Thee: I ask Thee for nothing more.

II

The Blessed Denis, the Carthusian, says that the Passion of Jesus Christ was called an excess—*And they spake of His excess, which he would accomplish in Jerusalem*[4729]—because it was an excess of mercy and of love: “The Passion of Jesus Christ is said to be an excess, because in it was shown forth an excess of love and of compassion.”[4730] O my God, and where is the believer that could live without loving Jesus Christ, if he were frequently to meditate upon his Passion? The wounds of Jesus, says St. Bonaventure, are all of them wounds of love. They are darts and flames which wound the hardest hearts, and kindle into a flame the most frozen souls: “O wounds that wound stony hearts, and set frozen minds on fire!”[4731] In order the more strongly to impress upon his heart a love towards Jesus in his Passion, the Blessed Henry Suso one day took a knife, and cut out in letters upon his breast the name of his beloved Lord. And when thus bathed in blood, he went into the church, and, prostrating himself before the crucifix, he said, Behold, O Lord, Thou only Love of my soul, behold my desire. I would gladly have written Thee deeper within my heart; but this I cannot do. Do Thou, who canst do all things, supply what is wanting in my powers, and imprint Thy adorable name in the lowest depths of my heart, that so it may no more be possible to cancel in it either Thy name or Thy love.

My Beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.[4732] O my Jesus, Thou art all white through Thy spotless innocence: but upon this cross Thou art also all ruddy with wounds suffered for me. I choose Thee for the one and only object of my love. And whom shall I love, if I love not Thee? What is there that I can find amongst all other objects more lovely than Thee, my Redeemer, my God, my all? I love Thee, O most lovely Lord. I love Thee above everything. Do Thou make me love Thee with all my affection, and without reserve.

III

"Oh, if thou didst know the mystery of the cross,"[4733] said St. Andrew to the tyrant. O tyrant (it was his wish to say), wert thou to understand the love which Jesus Christ has borne thee, in willing to die upon a cross to save thee, thou wouldst abandon all thy possessions and earthly hopes, in order to give thyself wholly to the love of this thy Saviour. The same ought to be said to those Catholics who, believing as they do, the Passion of Jesus, yet do not think of it. Ah, were all men to think upon the love which Jesus Christ has shown forth for us in his death, who would ever be able not to love him? It was for this end, says the Apostle, that he, our beloved Redeemer, died for us, that, by the love he displayed towards us in his death, he might become the possessor of our hearts: *To this end Christ died, and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living; therefore, whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's.*[4734] Whether, then, we die or live, it is but just that we belong wholly to Jesus, who has saved us at so great a cost. Oh, who is there that could say, as did the loving martyr St. Ignatius, whose lot it was to give his life for Jesus Christ, "Let fire, cross, beasts, and torments of every kind come upon me; let me only have fruition of Thee, O Christ."[4735] Let flames, crosses, wild beasts, and every kind of torture come upon me, provided only that I obtain and enjoy my Jesus Christ.

O my dear Lord! Thou didst die in order to gain my soul; but what have I done in order to gain Thee, O infinite good? Ah, my Jesus, how often have I lost Thee for nothing! Miserable that I was, I knew at the time that I was losing Thy grace by my sin; I knew that I was giving Thee great displeasure; and yet I committed it. My consolation is, that I have to deal with an infinite goodness, who remembers his offences no more when a sinner repents and loves him. Yes, my God, I do repent and love Thee. Oh, pardon me; and do Thou from this day forth bear rule in this rebellious heart of mine. To Thee do I consign it; to Thee do I wholly give myself. Tell me what Thou dost desire; wishing, as I do, to perform it all. Yes, my Lord, I wish to love Thee; I wish to please Thee in everything. Do Thou give me strength, and I hope to do so.

IV

Jesus has not, by dying, ceased to love us. He loves us, and seeks us with the self-same love wherewith he first of all came down from heaven to seek us and to die for us. That artifice of love, too, which was manifested by our Redeemer to St. Francis Xavier, while on his travels, is celebrated far and wide. In a storm at sea there came a wave which carried away from him his crucifix. As the saint, after landing, was standing upon the shore, sorrowing, and earnestly longing to recover, if he might, the image of his beloved Lord, behold he saw a crab coming towards him, holding up the crucifix between its claws. Then, going forward to meet it with tears of tenderness and love, he received it, and clasped it to his bosom.

Oh, with what love does Jesus go to that soul that seeks him—*The Lord is good . . . to the soul that seeketh Him*[4736]—to the soul that seeketh him, however, with true love! But can they think that they possess this true love who refuse the crosses which the Lord sends them? *Christ pleased not Himself.*[4737] "Christ," (as Cornelius à Lapide explains this passage) "served not his own will and convenience; but all this and his life itself did he expose for our salvation."[4738] Jesus, for love of us, sought not earthly pleasures; but he sought sufferings and death, all innocent though he was; yet what is there that we are seeking for love of Jesus Christ? St. Peter the Martyr was one day standing in his prison, complaining of an unjust acccusation which had been preferred against him, saying, "But, Lord, what have I done that I should have had to suffer this persecution?" When the crucifix made him this reply, "And I, what evil have I done that I should have had to be upon this cross?"

O my dear Saviour, Thou didst say, what evil hast Thou done? Too much hast Thou loved us; since for love of us Thou hast been willing to suffer so much. And shall we, who deserved hell for our sins, refuse to suffer that which Thou dost will for our good? Thou, my Jesus, art all love with whomsoever seeketh Thee. It is not Thy sweetnesses and consolations that I seek; I seek only Thyself and Thy will. Give me Thy love, and then do with me whatsoever Thou dost please. I embrace all the crosses which Thou wilt send me—poverty, persecutions, sickness, and pain. Deliver me only from the evil of sin, and then lay upon me every other evil. All will be but little in comparison with the evils which Thou hast suffered for love of me.

V

“That he might redeem a slave, the Father neither spared the Son, nor did the Son spare himself.”[4739] To liberate the slave, then, the Father hath not pardoned the Son, neither hath the Son pardoned himself. And after so great a love to men, will it be possible for there to be one who loves not this God, so loving as he is? The Apostle says that Jesus died for us all, to the end that we might live only to him and to his love: *Christ died for all, that they who live may no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them.*[4740] But, alas! the greater portion of mankind, although one who is God has died for them, live unto sin, unto the devil, and not unto Jesus Christ. It was said by Plato that “love is the magnet of love.”[4741] And Seneca replied, Do thou love, if thou wouldst be beloved: “If you would be loved, love.”[4742] And how does it happen that Jesus, who, by dying for men, would seem to have gone foolish, as it were, out of love for us—“It seemed foolish that the author of life should die for all,”[4743] says St. Gregory—how does it happen that he, after so many tokens of love on his part, has not been able to draw to himseif our hearts? How is it that, loving us so much, he has not yet been able to make himself beloved by us?

Oh that all men loved Thee, my most lovely Jesus! Thou art a God worthy of infinite love. But, my poor Lord.—give me leave so to call Thee,—Thou art so lovely, Thou hast done and suffered so much in order to be loved by men: and, after all, how many are they that do love Thee? I see almost all men applying themselves to the love—some of their parents, some of their friends, some of wealth, honors, or pleasures, and some even of dumb animals; but how many are they that love Thee, O infinite loveliness? O God, too few, indeed, they are; yet amongst these few I wish to be—I, miserable sinner as I am, who at one time also offended Thee by loving that which is but mire, going astray from Thee. But now I love Thee, and I prize Thee above every good: and Thee only do I wish to love. Do Thou pardon me, O my Jesus, and come to my assistance.

VI

God, then, O Christian, says St. Cyprian, rests content with thee, even to dying in order to gain thy love; and wilt not thou rest content with God, so that thou wilt love objects other than thy Lord? “God is content with thee, and wilt thou not be content with thy God?[4744] Ah, no; my beloved Jesus, I will not have any love in me which is not for Thee. I am content with Thee; I renounce all other loves: Thy love alone is enough for me. I hear Thee saying to me, *Put Me as a seal upon thy heart.*[4745] Yes, my crucified Jesus, I do set Thee, and do Thou, too, set Thyself, as a seal upon my heart, that it may remain closed against every other love which tends not to Thee. In time past I have given Thee displeasure by means of other loves; but, at the present moment, there is no pain that afflicts me excepting the remembrance of having, by my sins, lost my love of Thee. For the future, *Who shall separate me from the love of Christ?*[4746] Who shall ever again separate me from my love for Thee?

No, my most lovely Saviour, since Thou hast made me know the love which Thou hast borne me, I have not the heart to live any more without loving Thee. I love Thee, my crucified Love; I love Thee with all my heart; and I give unto Thee this soul of mine, which Thou hast so much sought and loved. Oh, by the merits of Thy death, which so painfully separated Thy blessed soul from Thy body, do Thou detach me from every love which can hinder me from being all Thine own, and from loving Thee with all my heart. Mary, my hope, do thou help me to love thy sweetest Son alone, that so I may be able with truth, throughout my whole life, ever to repeat, “My Love is crucified; my Love is crucified.”[4747] Amen.

PRAYER OF ST. BONAVENTURE.

O Jesus! who, for my sake, hast not pardoned Thyself, do Thou so impress upon me Thy Passion that, wheresoever I turn, I may behold Thy wounds, and find no repose but in Thee and in the contemplation of Thy sufferings. Amen.

Simple Exposition of the Circumstances of the Passion of Jesus Christ

ACCORDING TO THE NARRATION OF THE HOLY EVANGELISTS, WITH SOME REFLECTIONS AND AFFECTIONS[4748]

INTRODUCTION

St. Augustine says that there is nothing more conducive to the attainment of eternal salvation than to think every day on the pains which Jesus Christ has suffered for the love of us. “Nothing is more salutary than to think daily on what the Man-God has endured for us.”[4749] And before him, Origen said that sin cannot reign in the soul that frequently meditates on the death of the Saviour. “It is certain that, when the death of Christ is carried about in the soul, sin cannot reign in it.[4750] Besides, our Lord revealed to a holy solitary that there is no exercise better calculated to kindle in the heart the fire of divine love than the meditation on his Passion. Hence, Father Balthazar Alvarez used to say that ignorance of the treasures that we have in the Passion of Jesus Christ is the ruin of Christians. Hence, he would tell his penitents that they should not consider themselves to have done anything until they had succeeded in always keeping in the heart Jesus crucified. According to St. Bonaventure, the wounds of Jesus are wounds which soften the hardest hearts, and inflame the most frozen souls.[4751]

Hence, a learned author, Father Croiset,[4752] writes that there is nothing which unfolds to us the treasures contained in the sufferings of Jesus Christ better than the simple history of his Passion. To inflame a faithful soul with divine love, it is enough to reflect on the narration which the holy Evangelists have given of the sorrows of the Redeemer, and to view with the eyes of a Christian all that the Saviour has suffered in the three principal theatres of his Passion; that is, in the garden of Olives, in the city of Jerusalem, and on Mount Calvary. The contemplations which devout authors have made and written on the Passion are useful and beautiful; but certainly a single word from the Sacred Scriptures makes a greater impression on a Christian than a hundred and a thousand contemplations and revelations ascribed to certain holy souls; for the Scripture assures us that whatever they attest is certain with the certainty of divine faith.

Hence I have resolved, for the benefit and consolation of souls enamoured of Jesus Christ, to arrange in order, and to relate in simple language (adding a few brief reflections and affections) what the holy Evangelists say of the Passion of Jesus Christ. They supply abundant matter for the meditations of a hundred and a thousand years, and at the same time the most powerful motives to inflame us with holy charity towards our most loving Redeemer.

O God, how is it possible for a soul that has faith, and reflects on the sorrows and ignominies which Jesus Christ has suffered for us, not to burn with love for him, and not to conceive strong resolutions to become a saint, in order not to be ungrateful to so loving a God? Faith is necessary; for had not faith assured us of it, who could ever believe what a God has actually done for the love of us? *He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant.*[4753] Who, had he not the infallible assurance of faith, could, at the sight of Jesus, born in a stable, believe that he is the God who is adored by the angels in heaven? How, without the aid of faith, can he who beholds the Saviour flying into Egypt, in order to escape from the hands of Herod, believe that he is omnipotent? How could we, without the assurance of faith, believe that he whom we see sorrowful unto death in the Garden, is infinitely happy? or that he who was bound to a pillar, and suspended on a gibbet, is the Lord of the universe?

How great should be our astonishment if we saw a king become a worm, crawling along the earth, living in a filthy hole, and thence making laws, appointing ministers, and governing his kingdom? O holy faith, unfold to us who Jesus Christ is, who this man is, who appears as insignificant as the rest of men. *The Word was made flesh.*[4754] St. John assures us that he is the eternal Word, the only-begotten of God. And what sort of life has this Man-God led on earth? Behold it described by the prophet Isaias: *And we have seen him . . . despised and most abject of men, a man of sorrows.*[4755] He wished to be a man of sorrows; that is, he wished to be afflicted with all sorrows, and not to be for a moment free from pain. He was a man of sorrows and loaded with insults: *Despised and the most abject of men.* Yes, for Jesus was the most insulted and maltreated of all mortals, as if he had been the last and most contemptible of men. A God bound as a malefactor by the officers of justice! A God scourged as a slave! A God treated as a mock king! A God dying on an infamous gibbet!

How great the impression which these prodigies should make on him who believes them? How great the desire which they should infuse of suffering for Jesus Christ? St. Francis de Sales has said, “All the wounds of the Redeemer are, as it were, so many mouths which teach us how we ought to suffer for him. The science of the the saints consists in constantly suffering for Jesus; by constantly suffering for him we shall soon become saints. How ardent the love with which we shall be inflamed at the sight of the flames which are found in the bosom of the Redeemer? Oh, what a happiness to burn with the same fire with which our God burns? How delightful to be united to God with the chains of love!”

But why do so many Christians behold with indifference Jesus on the cross? During the holy week they are present at the celebration of his death, but without sentiments of tenderness or gratitude, and as if they commemorated an event which never happened, or which does not concern them. Perhaps they neither know nor believe what the Gospels relate of the Passion of Jesus Christ? I answer and say, that they know it and believe it, but they do not reflect on it. Ah! for those who believe and reflect on the Passion of the Redeemer, it is impossible not to burn with love for a God who suffers such torments, and dies for the love of them. *The charity of Christ presseth us.*[4756] The Apostle meant to say that, in thinking on the Passion of our Lord, we should consider not so much the sorrows and insults which he suffered as the love with which he bore them; for Jesus Christ wished to submit to such torments, not only to save us (since for our salvation a single petition offered by him to his Father would be sufficient), but also to make us understand the affection which he entertained for us, and thus gain our hearts. Ah! a soul that thinks of this love of Jesus Christ cannot but love him. *The charity of Christ presseth us.* It will feel itself bound and constrained, as it were by force, to consecrate all its affections to him. Hence Jesus Christ has died for us all, that we may live no longer to ourselves, but to this most loving Redeemer, who has sacrificed his divine life for our salvation.

O happy you, O loving souls, who frequently meditate on the Passion of Jesus! *You shall*, says Isaias, *draw waters with joy out of the Saviour’s* *fountains.*[4757] From the blessed fountains of the wounds of the Saviour you shall continually draw waters of love and confidence. And how can even the greatest sinner (if he repent of his sins) ever despair of the divine mercy at the sight of Jesus crucified, when he knows that the Eternal Father has placed on his beloved Son all our sins, that he might atone for them? *And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.*[4758] How, says St. Paul, can we be afraid that God will refuse us any grace after having given us his own Son? *He that spareth not even His own Son, but delivereth Him up for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all things?*[4759]

Chapter I

JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM

I

Behold thy king cometh to thee, meek and sitting on an ass, and a colt the foal of her that is used to the yoke.[4760] Our Redeemer, at the approach of the time of his Passion, sets out from Bethania for Jerusalem. Let us here consider the humility of Jesus Christ, who is the king of heaven, in condescending to enter that city sitting on an ass. O Jerusalem, behold thy king comes to thee in humility and meekness. Be not afraid that he comes to rule over thee and to take possession of thy riches; for he comes all love and mercy to save thee, and to purchase life for thee by his own death. The people, who for some time entertained a veneration for him on account of his miracles, and particularly of the last which he wrought, in raising Lazarus from the dead, go out to meet him. Some strewed their garments on the way before him, others spread out branches of trees to do him honor. Oh! who would have ever imagined that that Lord, who was received with so many honors, should have to appear in a few days with a cross on his shoulders, as a criminal condemned to death?

Didst Thou then, my dear Jesus, wish to make this glorious entry, that the greater the honor with which Thou wast received, the more ignominious might be Thy Passion and death? The praises which this ungrateful city now gives Thee will be changed into insults and maledictions. They now say, *Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*.[4761] Glory to Thee, O Son of David: be forever blessed, since Thou comest for our welfare in the name of the Lord. And afterwards they will raise their voice and exclaim, *Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him.*[4762] Pilate (they will say), take away this miscreant from before our eyes; crucify him, and do not leave him any longer in our sight. Now they spread their garments before Thee, and they will afterwards strip Thee of Thy clothes in order to scourge and crucify Thee. They now take branches of palm to spread them under Thy feet, and afterwards they will take branches of thorns to pierce Thy head. Now they pour so many benedictions upon Thee, and afterwards they will load Thee with contumely and blasphemies. Go then, my soul, and say to him with love and gratitude: *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*[4763] My beloved Redeemer, be forever blessed, since Thou art come to save us; if Thou hadst not come, we should be all lost.

II

And when he drew near the city, he wept over it.[4764] When Jesus approached the unhappy city of Jerusalem, he looked at it, and wept over its ingratitude and destruction.

Ah, my Lord, in weeping over the ingratitude of Jerusalem, Thou didst also weep over my ingratitude and the destruction of my soul. My beloved Redeemer, Thou didst weep at the sight of the injury that I have done myself in banishing Thee from my soul, and in constraining Thee to condemn me to hell after Thou hadst died for my salvation. Ah, leave weeping to me, for I alone should weep at the thought of the injury that I have offered to Thee, in offending Thee and separating myself from Thee after Thou hadst loved me so tenderly. Eternal Father, for the sake of the tears which Thy Son then shed over me, give me sorrow for my sins. And Thou, O loving and tender heart of my Jesus, have mercy on me, for I detest above all things the offences that I have given Thee, and I resolve to love nothing but Thee.

III

After his entry into Jerusalem, Jesus labored the entire day in preaching and curing the sick; but in the evening there was no one to invite him to sleep in his house; and therefore he was obliged to return to Bethania.

My sweet Lord, if others banish Thee, I will not banish Thee. There was once an unhappy time when I ungratefully banished Thee from my soul; but now I set a greater value on being united with Thee than on the possession of all the kingdoms of the earth. Ah, my God, who shall be able ever again to separate me from Thy love?

Chapter II

THE COUNCIL OF THE JEWS, AND THE TREACHERY OF JUDAS

I

The chief priests, therefore, and the Pharisees gathered a council and said: What do we, for this man doeth many miracles?[4765] Behold, at the very time that Jesus Christ was employed in working miracles for the benefit of all, the first personages of the city assembled to plan the death of the author of life. Behold what the impious Caiphas said: *It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole perish not.*[4766] From that day, says St. John, they sought a means of putting Jesus to death.

Ah, Jews, fear not: this your Redeemer does not fly away; no, he has come on earth to die, and by his death to deliver you and all men from eternal death!

II

But behold, Judas presents himself to the high priests and says: *What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you?*[4767] Oh, how great was the joy with which the Jews exulted through the hatred that they bore to Jesus Christ, when they saw that one of his own disciples offered to betray him, and to deliver him into their hands! Let us here consider the exultation of hell when a soul that has served Jesus Christ for several years betrays him for a miserable good or a vile pleasure. But, O Judas, since you wish to sell your God, at least demand the price which he is worth. He is an infinite good, and is therefore worth an infinite price. But, O God! you conclude the sale for thirty pieces of silver: *But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver.*[4768] Ah, my unhappy soul, leave Judas, and turn thy thoughts on thyself. Tell me for what price hast thou so often sold the grace of God to the devil?

Ah, my Jesus, I am ashamed to appear before Thee when I think of the injuries I have done Thee. How often have I turned my back upon Thee, and preferred to Thee some temporal interest, the indulgence of caprice, or a momentary and vile pleasure? I knew that by such a sin I should lose Thy friendship, and I have voluntarily exchanged it for nothing. Oh that I had been dead rather than have offered Thee so great an outrage! My Jesus, I repent with my whole heart; I would wish to die of sorrow for it.

III

Let us here consider the benignity of Jesus Christ, who, though he knew the appointment which Jesus had made, did not banish him from his presence when he saw him, nor look at him with an unfriendly eye, but admitted him into his society, and even to his table, and reminded him of his treachery, for the sole purpose of making him enter into himself. When he saw him obstinate, he even prostrated himself before him, and washed his feet in order to soften his heart.

Ah, my Jesus, I see that Thou dost treat me in the same manner. I have despised and betrayed Thee, and Thou dost not cast me off. Thou dost regard me with love, Thou dost admit me even to Thy table of the Holy Communion. My dear Saviour, oh that I had always loved Thee! And how shall I be ever again able to depart from Thy feet and renounce Thy love?

Chapter III

THE LAST SUPPER OF JESUS WITH HIS DISCIPLES.—THE WASHING OF THE FEET

I

Jesus knowing that his hour was come to pass out of this world to the Father; having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end.[4769] Knowing that the time of his death and departure from this world was come, and having hitherto loved men even to excess, he wished to give them the last and the greatest proof of his love. Behold him seated at table, all on fire with charity, turning to his disciples and saying, *With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you.*[4770] My disciples (and he then said the same to us all), know that I have desired nothing during my whole life but to eat this last supper with you; for after it I Shall go to sacrifice my life for your salvation.

Then, O my Jesus, dost Thou desire so ardently to give Thy life for us, Thy miserable creatures? Ah! this Thy desire inflames our hearts with a desire to suffer and die for the love of Thee, since Thou dost condescend to suffer and die for the love of us. O beloved Redeemer, make known to us what Thou willest from us: we are willing to please Thee in all things. We sigh to give Thee pleasure, to correspond at least in part to Thy great love for us. Increase always more and more this blessed flame within us: may it make us forget the world and ourselves, that from this day forward we may think only of pleasing Thy enamoured heart.

II

Behold at table the Paschal lamb, the figure of our Saviour; as the former was consumed at supper, so on the following day the world was to behold on the altar of the cross Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, consumed by torments. *He therefore leaning on the breast of Jesus.*[4771] Happy thou, O beloved John, who, leaning thy head on the bosom of Jesus, didst then understand the tenderness of the love of this loving Redeemer for the souls that love him! Ah my sweet Lord, Thou hast frequently favored me with a similar grace. Yes, I too have felt the tenderness of Thy affection for me, when Thou didst console me with celestial lights and spiritual sweetness; but, after all Thy favors, I have not been faithful to Thee. Ah, do not permit me to live any longer ungrateful to Thy goodness. I wish to be all Thine: accept me and assist me.

III

He riseth from supper, and layeth aside His garments, and having taken a towel girded Himself. After that He putteth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.[4772] My soul, behold thy Jesus, rising from the table, laying aside his garments, taking a white cloth and girding himself with it: he afterwards puts water into a basin, kneels down before his disciples, and begins to wash their feet. Then the sovereign of the universe, the only-begotten of God, humbles himself so as to wash the feet of his creatures. O angels, what do you say? It would have been a great favor if Jesus Christ had permitted them, as he did Magdalene, to wash his divine feet with their tears. But no; he wished to place himself at the feet of his servants in order to leave us at the end of his life this great example of humility, and this proof of the great love that he bears to men.

And, O Lord, shall we be always so proud as not to be able to bear a word of contempt, or the smallest inattention, without instantly feeling resentment, and thinking of seeking revenge, after we had by our sins deserved to be trampled on by the devils in hell? Ah, my Jesus, Thy example has rendered humiliations and insults amiable to us. I purpose henceforth to bear every injury and affront for the love of Thee.

Chapter IV

THE INSTITUTION OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT

I

And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread and blessed and broke it, and gave to His disciples and said, Take ye and eat, this is My body.[4773] After the washing of the feet, an act of humility the practice of which Jesus recommended to his disciples, he took his garments, and, sitting down again to table, wished to give men the last proof of the tender love that he had for them, and that was the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. He took for that purpose bread, consecrated it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take and eat, this is my body. He then recommended them as often as they should communicate to remember the death which he suffered for their sake. *As often as you shall eat this bread . . . you shall show the death of the Lord.*[4774] Jesus Christ did then, what a dying prince who tenderly loved his spouse would do: he selects among all his gems and jewels the most beautiful and costly; he then calls his spouse and says to her, O my dear spouse, I am going to die; and, that thou mayest not forget me, I leave thee this gem as a memorial of me.[4775] when thou dost look at it, remember me and the love I have borne thee. “No tongue,” says St. Peter of Alcantara, in his meditations, “is able to express the greatness of the love which Jesus bears to every soul. Hence, that his absence might not be an occasion of forgetting him, he left, before his departure from this world, to his spouse this Most Holy Sacrament, in which he himself remained, wishing that between them there should be no other pledge than himself to keep alive the remembrance of him.” We may then imagine how pleasing it is to Jesus Christ that we remember his Passion, since he has instituted the sacrament of the altar, that we may preserve a continual remembrance of the immense love which he has shown us in his death.

O my Jesus, O God enamoured of souls! has Thy affection for men enraptured Thee to such a degree as to make Thyself their food? Tell me what more remains for Thee to do in order to oblige us to love Thee? In the Holy Communion Thou givest Thyself to us entirely and without reserve: it is then but just that we give our whole being unreservedly to Thee. I wish to be all Thine, I wish to love nothing but Thee, my God. Thou hast said that he who eats Thy flesh lives only for Thee. *He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me.*[4776] Since then Thou hast so often permitted me to eat Thy flesh, make me die to myself that I may live only for Thee, only to serve Thee, and give Thee pleasure. My Jesus, I wish to fix all my affections in Thee: assist me to be faithful to Thee.

II

St. Paul remarks the time in which Jesus Christ instituted this great sacrament, and says, *The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said, Take ye and eat: this is My body.*[4777] O God, on the very night in which men were preparing to put him to death, the loving Redeemer prepared for us this bread of life and of love to unite us entirely to himself, as he declared when he said, *He that eateth My flesh abideth in Me, and I in him.*[4778]

O love of my soul, worthy of infinite love! Thou canst not give greater proofs of Thy affection and tender love for me. Ah, draw me entirely to Thyself: if I know not how to give Thee my whole heart, take it Thou to Thyself. Ah, my Jesus, when shall I be all Thine, as Thou dost make Thyself all mine when I receive Thee in this sacrament of love? Ah, enlighten me, and unfold to me always more and more Thy amiable qualities, which render Thee so worthy of love, that I may be always more and more enamoured of Thee, and may be wholly employed in pleasing Thee. I love Thee, O my sovereign good, my joy, my love, my all.

Chapter V

AGONY OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES

I

And a hymn being said, they went out to Mount Olivet. . . . Then Jesus came with them into a country place, which is called Gethsemani.[4779] As soon as they had said grace, Jesus leaves the supper room with his disciples, goes into the garden of Gethsemani, and begins to pray. But, alas, at the commencement of his prayer, he is assailed with a great fear, an oppressive tediousness, and an overwhelming sadness. *He began to fear and be heavy,*[4780] says St. Mark. St. Matthew adds, *He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad.*[4781] Hence our Redeemer, overwhelmed with sadness, said that his blessed soul was sorrowful even unto death. Then was presented before him the melancholy scene of all the torments and ignominies which were prepared for him. In his Passion these afflicted him one by one; but in the garden, the buffets, the spittle, the scourges, the thorns, the nails, and the reproaches which he was to suffer, came all together to torment him. He there embraced them all, but in embracing them, he trembled, he agonized, and prayed: *And being in an agony, He prayed the longer.*[4782] But, my Jesus, who compels Thee to submit to such torments? The love, he answers, which I bear to men constrains me to endure them. Ah, how great must have been the astonishment of heaven at the sight of omnipotence become weak, of the joy of paradise oppressed with sadness! A God afflicted! And why? To save men, his own creatures. In the garden he offered the first sacrifice: Jesus was the victim, love was the priest, and the ardor of his affection for men was the blessed fire with which the sacrifice was consummated.

II

My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me.[4783] Thus Jesus prayed. My Father, he says, if it be possible, save me from drinking this bitter chalice. But he prayed thus not so much to be delivered from the torments that he was to endure, as to make us understand the pain which he suffered and embraced for the love of us. He prayed thus, also, to teach us that in tribulations we may ask God to deliver us from them, but that we should at the same time conform entirely to his divine will, and say with him, *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*[4784] And during the whole time of his prayer he repeated the same petition. *Thy will be done. . . . And He prayed the third time, saying the self-same word.*[4785]

Yes, my Lord, for Thy sake, I embrace all the crosses which Thou wilt send me. Thou, an innocent, hast suffered for my sake, and shall I, a sinner, after having so often deserved hell, refuse to suffer in order to please Thee, and to obtain from Thee the pardon of my sins, and Thy grace? *Not as I will, but as Thou wilt: let not my will, but Thine, be always done.*

III

He fell flat on the ground.[4786] In his prayer in the garden, Jesus fell prostrate on the ground, because, seeing himself clothed with the sordid garment of all our sins, he felt, as it were, ashamed to raise his eyes to heaven.

My dear Redeemer, I would not dare to ask pardon for so many insults which I have committed against Thee, if Thy sufferings did not give me confidence. *Eternal Father, look on the face of Thy Christ:*[4787] look not on my iniquities, behold this, Thy beloved Son, trembling, agonizing, and sweating blood in order to obtain Thy pardon for me. *And his sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground.*[4788] Behold me, and have pity on me. But, my Jesus, in this garden there are not executioners to scourge Thee, nor thorns, nor nails to torture Thee; what, then, extracts so much blood from Thee? Ah! I understand Thee: it was not the foresight of Thy approaching sufferings that then afflicted Thee so grievously; for to these pains Thou didst spontaneously offer Thyself: *He was offered because it was His own will.*[4789] It was the sight of my sins; these were the cruel press which forced so much blood from Thy sacred veins. Hence, it was not the executioners, nor the nails, nor the thorns, that were cruel and barbarous in Thy regard: no, my sins, which made Thee so sorrowful in the garden, have been barbarous and cruel to Thee, my sweet Redeemer. Then, in Thy great affliction, I too have added to Thy sorrows, and have grievously afflicted Thee by the weight of my sins. Had I been guilty of fewer sins, Thou shouldst have suffered less. Behold, then, the return I have made for Thy love in dying for me. I have added to Thy great sufferings! My beloved Lord, I repent of having offended Thee, I am sorry for my sins, but my sorrow is not great; I would wish for sorrow that would take away my life. Ah! through the bitter agony which Thou didst suffer in the garden, give me a portion of that abhorrence which Thou didst then feel for my sins. And if my ingratitude was then a cause of affliction to Thee, grant that I may now please Thee by my love. Yes, my Jesus. I love Thee with my whole heart. I love Thee more than myself, and for Thy love I renounce all the pleasures and goods of this earth. Thou alone art, and shalt always be, my only good and my only love.

Chapter VI

JESUS IS TAKEN AND BOUND.—FLIGHT OF THE DISCIPLES

I

Rise up, let us go. Behold lie that will betray Me is at hand.[4790] Knowing that Judas, along with the Jews and soldiers who came to capture him, was at hand, the Redeemer, still bathed in the sweat of death, rises with a pallid countenance, but with a heart all on fire with love, and goes to meet his enemies, in order to deliver himself into their hands. On seeing them he said. *Whom do you seek?*[4791] Imagine, O my soul, that Jesus then said to thee, Tell me whom dost thou seek?

Ah! my Lord, and whom will I seek but Thee, who art come from heaven on earth to seek after me, and save me from perdition?

II

They took Jesus and bound Him.[4792] Alas, a God bound! What should we say if we saw a king taken and bound in chains by his own servants? And what do we say now that we see a God in the hands of the rabble? O blessed cords that bound my Redeemer, bind me also to him; but bind me so that I can nevermore withdraw myself from his love; bind my heart to his most holy will, so that henceforth I may wish only what he wishes.

Behold, O my soul, how one seizes his hands, another binds him, and others insult and strike him: the innocent Lamb permits them to bind and strike him as they please. He makes no effort to escape from their hands, he does not call for aid, he does not complain of so many injuries, nor does he ask why he is so maltreated. Behold the prediction of Isaias verified: *He was offered because it was his own will, and he opened not his mouth: he shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter.*[4793] He neither speaks nor complains; for he offered himself to the divine justice in order to make satisfaction and to die for us; and therefore he permits himself to be led as a sheep to the slaughter, without opening his mouth.

III

Behold him in chains, dragged from the garden, in the midst of a tumultuous crowd, and brought in haste before the high priest! And where are his disciples? What do they do? If they are unable to liberate him from the hands of enemies, they surely accompany him in order to defend his innocence before the judges, or at least to console him by their presence. But no, the Gospel says, *Then his disciples leaving him, all fled away.*[4794] How great was the pain which Jesus Christ felt at seeing himself forsaken and abandoned by his beloved disciples. Alas! Jesus then saw all those who, after having been specially favored by him, would afterwards abandon him, and ungratefully turn their back upon him. Ah, my Lord, I have been one of these unhappy souls, who having received so many graces, lights and calls, have ungratefully forgotten and forsaken Thee. Accept me for the sake of Thy mercy, now that I return to Thee with a penitent and sorrowful heart, never again to leave Thee. O treasure of life, O love of my soul!

Chapter VII

JESUS IS PRESENTED TO THE HIGH-PRIESTS, AND IS CONDEMNED BY THEM TO DEATH

I

But they holding Jesus, led him to Caiphas the high-priest, where the scribes and the ancients were assembled.[4795] Bound as a malefactor, our Saviour enters Jerusalem, where he was received a few days before with so much honor and applause. He passes, during the night, through the streets, amid torches and lanterns; and such were the noise and tumult that all the citizens were given to understand that some notorious malefactor was conducted in chains by the officers of justice. The people run to the windows, and ask, Who is the prisoner? They are told that he is Jesus of Nazareth, who has been proved to be a seducer, an impostor, and worthy of death. But what must have been the sentiments of contempt and indignation which all felt when they saw Jesus Christ, who was hailed before as the Messiah, now imprisoned as an impostor, by order of the judges? Oh! how each person changed his veneration into hatred, and through shame of having saluted a malefactor as the Messiah, repented of having treated him with honor. Behold the Redeemer presented, as if in triumph, before Caiphas, who waited for his arrival, and who was filled with joy when he saw him alone and abandoned by his disciples. Behold, O my soul, thy sweet Lord, bound as a criminal, standing with downcast countenance, all meekness and humility, before the haughty pontiff. Behold that beautiful countenance, which, in the midst of so much contempt and so many injuries, has not lost its natural renity and sweetness.

Ah, my Jesus, what shall I do, now that I see Thee surrounded, not by angels praising Thee, but by a vile rabble that hates and despises Thee? Will I continue to despise Thee as I have hitherto done? Ah, no; during the remainder of my life I wish to esteem and love Thee as Thou dost deserve, and I promise to love nothing but Thee. Thou shalt be my only love, my good, my all: *My God and my all.*[4796]

II

The impious high-priest interrogates Jesus regarding his disciples and doctrine, in order to find some grounds of condemnation against him. Jesus humbly answers: *I have spoken to the world. . . . Behold, they know what things I have said.*[4797] I have not spoken in secret, I have spoken in public; they who are present can bear witness to what I have said. He appeals to the testimony of his very enemies. But after an answer so just and meek, an insolent servant rushes forward through the crowd, and, as if to chastise him for his insolence to Caiphas, gives him a severe blow on the cheek, saying: *Is it thus thou answerest the high-priest?*[4798] And when he had said these things, one of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, *Answerest thou the high-priest so?* O God, how could an answer so humble and modest merit so gross an insult? The unworthy pontiff sees it, and instead of rebuking the guilty servant, remains silent, and by his silence approves of his conduct. On receiving the blow, Jesus, in order to show that he was not wanting in respect to the high-priest, said: *If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil: but if well, why strikest thou Me?*[4799]

Ah, my amiable Redeemer, Thou dost submit to all these affronts in order to atone for the insults that I have offered to the divine majesty by my sins. Ah, pardon me through the merit of the insults Thou hast suffered for my sake.

III

They sought false witnesses against Jesus, that they might put him to death, and they found not.[4800] They seek for false witnesses in order to condemn the Saviour, but find none; hence the high-priest endeavors again to discover in the words of Jesus grounds for declaring him guilty, and therefore says: *I adjure thee by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ the Son of God.*[4801] When asked in the name of God, he confessed the truth, saying, *I am. And you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming with the clouds of* *heaven.*[4802] I am; and you shall one day see me, not in the lowliness in which I now appear, but seated as on a throne of majesty, on the clouds of heaven, with power to judge all men. At these words the high-priest, instead of falling prostrate on his face to adore his God and his judge, rends his garments and exclaims. What further testimony do we require? Have you heard the blasphemy which he has spoken? *Then the high-priest rent his garment, saying. He hath blasphemed, what further need have we of witnesses? Behold now you have heard the blasphemy. What think you?*[4803] All the other priests immediately answered that he certainly deserved death: *But they answering said, He is guilty of death.*[4804]

Ah, my Jesus, Thy eternal Father pronounced the same sentence when Thou didst offer Thyself to atone for our sins. He then said: My Son, since Thou dost wish to make satisfaction for men, Thou art guilty of death, and shalt die.

IV

Then did they spit in his face and buffet him, and others struck his face with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee.[4805] Then they all begin to maltreat him, as a criminal already condemned to death, and deserving of all kinds of reproaches. Some spit in his face, others buffet him, and others strike him with their hands, and blindfolding him, *they,* says St. Mark, *began to spit on him, and cover his face.*[4806] They mock him as a false prophet, saying, Since Thou art a prophet, guess who it is that has struck Thee. St. Jerome has written that the ignominies and cruelties which our Lord suffered on that night were so manifold that they shall not be all known till the day of judgment.

Then, my Jesus, on that night Thou didst not repose; no, Thou wast the object of the derision and cruelty of that ferocious rabble. O men, how can you behold a God so humbled, and continue to indulge in pride? How can you behold your Redeemer suffering such torments for your sake, and not love him? O God! how can they who believe, and reflect on the pains and ignominies which, according to the narration of the Evangelists, Jesus has suffered for our sake, live without burning with love for a God so benignant and so enamoured of us?

V

The fall of Peter, who denied him, and even swore that he never knew him, added to the sufferings of Jesus. Go, my soul, go to that prison where my Lord is sorrowful, mocked, and abandoned; thank him, and console him by thy repentance, for thou also hast despised and derided him. Tell him that thou wouldst wish to die of sorrow, at the thought of having hitherto caused so much bitterness to the sweet heart of a God who has loved thee so tenderly. Tell him that now thou dost love him, and dost desire nothing else than to suffer and die for the love of him.

Ah, my Jesus, forget all the displeasure that I have given Thee, and look on me with that love with which Thou didst look on Peter after he denied Thee: after the look which Thou didst then cast upon him, he did not cease to bewail his sin until he ceased to live. O great Son of God, O infinite love, who dost suffer for the very men who hate and maltreat Thee. Thou art the glory of paradise; Thou wouldst have done great honor to men by merely permitting them to kiss Thy feet. But, O God! what has reduced Thee to such a degree of ignominy as to become sport of the vilest rabble? Tell me, O my Jesus, what I can do in order to compensate the honor which Thy enemies take from Thee by their insults and reproaches. I hear Thee answer: Bear insults for my sake, as I have borne them for the love of thee. Yes, my Redeemer, I wish to obey Thee. My Jesus, despised for the love of me, I am willing, and desire to be despised tor Thee as much as Thou pleasest.

Chapter VIII

JESUS IS BROUGHT BEFORE PILATE, AFTERWARDS BEFORE HEROD; BARABBAS IS PREFERRED TO HIM

I

And when the morning was come, the chief priests and the ancients of the people took counsel against Jesus, that they might put Him to death. And they brought Him bound, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate, the governor.[4807] In the morning the chief priests again declared him deserving of death, and then brought him before Pilate, in order to have him condemned to the death of the cross. After having asked many questions as well of the Jews as of our Redeemer, Pilate felt convinced that Jesus was innocent, and that the accusations were all calumnies. Hence he went out and told the Jews that he found no grounds for condemnation against him. *He went out again to the Jesus and said to them, I find no fault in Him.*[4808] But afterwards, seeing that the Jews were so intent on the death of Jesus, and hearing that he was from Galilee, Pilate, in order to get rid of his embarrassment, *sent Him away to Herod.*[4809]

II

Herod was delighted to see Jesus Christ in his court; he hoped that our Lord would perform some miracles in his presence. Hence he proposed many questions to him, but Jesus remained silent, and gave no answer, thus reproving the vain curiosity of the haughty ruler. *And he questioned Him in many words. But He answered him nothing.*[4810] Miserable the soul to whom the Lord speaks no longer!

My Jesus, this I have deserved, because I have been deaf to Thy merciful inspirations, by which Thou hast so often called me to Thy love. I have deserved that Thou shouldst speak to me no longer, and that Thou shouldst abandon me; but no, my dear Redeemer, have pity on me and speak to me. *Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.*[4811] Tell me what Thou willest from me; I wish to obey Thee, and to please Thee in all things.

III

But Herod felt indignant at the silence of Jesus; regarding him as a fool, he ordered him to be clothed, through decision, with a white garment, and despised him with all his court; after having thus treated him with contempt and mockery, he sent him back to Pilate. *And Herod with his army, let Him at nought; and mocked Him, putting on Him a white, garment, and sent Him back to Pilate.*[4812] Behold how Jesus, clothed with that mock garment, is led through the streets of Jerusalem.

O my despised Saviour, Thou wouldst submit even to the ignominy of being treated as a fool! O Christians, behold how the world treats the Eternal Wisdom! Happy the man who is lights in being treated by the world as a fool, and wishes to know nothing but Jesus crucified, loving suffering and insults, and saying, with St. Paul, *For I judge not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*[4813]

IV

The Jews had a right to demand of the Roman governor the liberation of a criminal at the Paschal solemnity. Hence Pilate proposed to them Jesus and Barabbas, saying, *Whom will that I release you, Barabbas or Jesus?*[4814] He felt certain that the people would prefer Jesus to Barabbas, who was a wicked man, a homicide, a public robber, and an object of universal abhorrence. But the people, instigated by the heads of the synagogue, instantly and without deliberation demanded Barabbas: *But they said Barabbas.*[4815] Being astonished and at the same time indignant at seeing so great a miscreant preferred to an innocent man. Pilate said, *What shall I then do with Jesus? They say all, Let Him be crucified.*[4816] Pilate then said, *What evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let Him be crucified.*[4817]

My Lord, this I have done when I have committed sin. I had then the choice of loving Thee or a vile pleasure; and I have answered, I wish for the pleasure, and care not to lose God. This I then said, O my Lord, but I now say that I prefer Thy grace before all the pleasures and riches of the world. O infinite good, O my Jesus! I love Thee above every other good; I wish for Thee and for nothing else.

V

As Jesus and Barabbas were proposed to the people, so it was proposed to the Eternal Father to save his Son or sinful man. The Eternal Father answered, Let my Son die and let sinful man be saved. This the Apostle has declared: *He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.*[4818] The Father would not spare his own Son, but consigned him to death for us all. Yes, said our Saviour, God has so loved the world that for its salvation he delivered up his only-begotten Son to torments and death, *God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son.*[4819] Hence, the Holy Church exclaims, “O wonderful condescension of Thy mercy in our regard! O inestimable love of charity! To redeem a slave Thou hast delivered up Thy Son!”[4820] O admirable condescension of Thy mercy, O my God! O inconceivable tenderness of love! To ransom a slave, Thou hast condemned Thy Son! O holy faith! How is it possible for him who believes this not to be all fire in loving a God who loves men so tenderly? Oh that we had always before our eyes this infinite charity of God!

Chapter IX

JESUS IS SCOURGED AT THE PILLAR

I

Then, therefore, Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.[4821] Seeing that the two means that he had taken of saving the innocent Jesus from the Jews—namely, sending him to Herod, and proposing him along with Barabbas—had failed, he tried another; he ordered the Saviour to be scourged, intending afterwards to dismiss him. *You have,* he said, *presented unto me this man . . . and behold, I, having examined Him before you, find no cause in this man. . . . No, nor Herod, neither. . . . I will chastise Him, therefore, and release Him.*[4822] You have accused this man as a criminal before me; but I find no guilt in him, neither has Herod found any. However, to satisfy you, I will chastise him and will afterwards release him. O God! what an injustice! He declares Jesus Christ perfectly innocent: I find no cause in this man; and afterwards condemns him to be chastised.

O my Jesus, Thou art innocent, but I am guilty; and since Thou dost wish to make satisfaction to the divine justice for my sins, it is not unjust; no, it is just that Thou be punished.

II

What, O Pilate, is the chastisement to which thou dost condemn this innocent? Dost thou condemn him to be scourged? Dost thou sentence an innocent man to a punishment so cruel and so shameful? Yes, he commanded him to be scourged. *Then therefore Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*[4823] Behold, O my soul, how, after this most iniquitous order, the officers of justice seize with fury the meek Lamb, conduct him amid shouts and yells of triumph to the hall, and bind him to the pillar. And what does Jesus do? With humble submission he accepts this painful and ignominious punishment in satisfaction for our sins. Behold how they take the lash in their hands, and when the signal is given, raise their arms, and begin to scourge every part of his sacred body. O executioners, you have erred; this man is not guilty, it is I that have deserved these scourges.

III

The virginal body of Jesus first appears all livid, and then begins to send forth blood from every member. Alas! the executioners, after having lacerated the whole body, continue without mercy to lash the wounds already inflicted, and to add pain to pain. *They have added to the grief of My wounds*[4824] O my soul, wilt thou be one of those who look with indifference on thy God torn with scourges? Reflect on his sufferings, but still more on the love with which thy sweet Lord submits to so excruciating a torture for thy sake. In his scourging, Jesus certainly thought of thee. O God! had he borne but a single stripe for thy sake, thou shouldst burn with love for him, and say, A God has suffered to be struck for my sake. But for the atonement of thy sins he has, as Isaias foretold, permitted all his flesh to be mangled *He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins.*[4825] Alas! says the same Prophet, the most beautiful of men no longer appears beautiful. *There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness; and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness.*[4826] The scourges have so deformed him that he can be no longer recognized: *His look was, as it were, hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed Him not.*[4827] He is reduced to such a degree of misery that he appears to be a leper covered with wounds from head to foot; such the manner in which God wished to see him maltreated and humbled: *And we have thought Him, as it were, a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted.*[4828] And why? Because this loving Redeemer wished to suffer the pains that were due to us. *Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows.*[4829]

Blessed forever be Thy mercy, O my Jesus, who didst voluntarily submit to torments in order to deliver me from eternal torments. Oh! miserable and unhappy the soul that loves not Thee, O God of love!

IV

But what does our amiable Saviour do while the executioners scourge him so cruelly? He neither speaks, nor complains, nor sighs; but patiently offers all to God to appease his anger against us. *Like a lamb without voice before his shearer, so openeth He not His mouth.*[4830]

Ah, my Jesus, innocent Lamb, these barbarians shear Thee not of wool, but of Thy skin and flesh. But behold the baptism of blood which Thou didst so ardently desire when Thou didst say, *I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straightened until it be accomplished?*[4831] Go, my soul, and wash thyself in the precious blood with which that fortunate floor is bathed. And, O my sweet Saviour, how can I any longer doubt of Thy love, when I see Thee wounded and mangled for my sake? I know that every wound in Thy body is a most certain testimony of the affection Thou hast for me. I hear every wound demanding my love. A single drop of Thy blood was sufficient to save me: but Thou dost wish to give me the entire of it without reserve, that I might give myself to Thee entirely and without reserve. Yes, my Jesus, I give my whole being to Thee without any reserve; assist me and help me to be faithful to Thee.

Chapter X

JESUS IS CROWNED WITH THORNS AND TREATED AS A MOCK KING

I

Then the soldiers of the governor taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto Him the whole band, and stripping Him, they put a scarlet cloak about Him: and platting a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand.[4832] Let us now consider the other torments which the soldiers inflicted on our tortured Lord. The entire band is assembled, they put on his shoulders a scarlet cloak (which was an old mantle worn by soldiers over their armor), in imitation of the purple, as the emblem of royalty: they then placed in his hand a reed for a sceptre, and for a crown they put on a wreath of thorns which surrounded the entire head. And because by the pressure of the hands the thorns did not enter sufficiently into his sacred head, which was already wounded by the scourges, they took a reed, and spitting in his face, beat with all their might the cruel crown into the head of Jesus. *And spitting on Him, they took the reed and struck His head.*[4833]

O thorns! O ungrateful creatures! what is it you do? Do you thus torment your Creator? But why reprove the thorns? O sinful thoughts of men! it was you that pierced the head of the Redeemer. Yes, my Jesus, by our criminal consent to sin we have formed Thy crown of thorns. I now detest this compliance with sin, and abhor it more than death or any other evil. To you, O thorns, consecrated with the blood of the Son of God, I again turn with an humble heart; ah, pierce this soul of mine, make it always sorrowful for having offended so good a God. And since Thou, O Jesus my love, hast suffered so much for me, detach me from creatures and from myself, so that I may be able to say with truth that I am no longer mine, that I belong to Thee alone, and am all Thine.

II

O my afflicted Saviour! O King of the world! to what do I see Thee reduced? I behold Thee a king of mockery and sorrow! In a word, I see Thee the laughing-stock of all Jerusalem! From the wounded head of our Lord, streams of blood flow down his face and breast. I am filled with astonishment, O my Jesus! at the cruelty of Thy enemies, who are not content with having, as it were, excoriated Thy flesh from head to foot, but still continue to torment Thee with fresh cruelties and insults; but I admire still more Thy meekness and Thy love in suffering and accepting all with so much patience for the love of us: *Who when He was reviled, did not revile: when He suffered, He threatened not; but delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly.*[4834] The prediction of Jeremias, that our Saviour would be satiated with sorrows and ignominies, is verified. *He shall give His cheek to him that striketh Him, He shall be filled with reproaches.*[4835]

III

But, O soldiers, are you not satisfied? *And bowing the knee before Him, they mocked Him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews.*[4836] St. John writes: *And they came to Him, and said, Hail king of the Jews; and they gave Him blows.*[4837] After having thus tormented him, and clothed him as a mock king, they kneel before him in derision, and say, We salute thee, O king of the Jews. Then, rising up, they laugh at him, mock him, and buffet him. O God! the sacred head of Jesus is all wounded by the punctures of the thorns, so that every motion produced the pangs of death. Thus every buffet and blow was to him a most cruel torment. Go, my soul, and do thou at least confess the Saviour to be what he really is, the Lord of the universe; and thank and love him as the King of sorrow and of love, since he suffers in order to be loved by Thee.

Chapter XI

PILATE SHOWS JESUS TO THE PEOPLE, SAYING, “BEHOLD THE MAN”

I

Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith to them, . . . Behold the man.[4838] When Jesus was brought before Pilate after the scourging and crowning with thorns, Pilate looked at him, and seeing him so mangled and deformed, felt persuaded that he would move the people to compassion by merely exposing him to their view. Hence he went forth to the balcony, bringing with him our afflicted Saviour, and said to the people, *Behold the man;* as if he said, O Jews, be content with what this innocent man has already suffered. *Behold the man;* behold the man whom you suspected of wishing to become your king: behold him, see the miserable condition to which he is reduced. What fear can you now have of him, when it is impossible for him to recover from his wounds? Let him go and die in his own house; he has but a short time to live.

II

Jesus therefore came forth, bearing the crown of thorns, and the purple garment.[4839] Behold, O my soul, on that balcony. Thy Lord bound and dragged by a soldier; behold him half naked, covered with wounds and blood, his flesh all torn; behold him clothed with a rag of purple which only excites derision, and carrying that barbarous crown which continues to torment him. Behold the state to which thy pastor is reduced, in order to find thee, his lost sheep.

Ah, my Jesus, in how many characters do men exhibit Thee, but all in order to add to Thy pain and ignominy! Ah, my sweet Redeemer, Thou dost excite the compassion of the beasts of the forest, and still Thou dost not find mercy. Behold the answer of the people: *When the chief priests therefore and the servants had seen Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him; crucify Him.*[4840] But what shall they say on the day of judgment, when they shall see him gloriously seated as a judge on a throne of light? But, alas, my Jesus, I too once said: *Crucify him, crucify him,* when I offended Thee by my sins. But, O God of my soul, I now am sorry for them above all things, and I love Thee above every good. Pardon me through the merits of Thy Passion, and grant that on the last day I may see Thee appeased, and not enraged against me.

III

Pilate showed Jesus to the Jews, saying, *Behold the man*, and, at the same time, the Eternal Father from heaven invited us to look at Jesus Christ in the miserable state to which he was reduced, and said, *Behold the man.* O men, this man whom you see tormented and despised is my beloved Son, who, for the love of you, and to atone for your sins, submits to such torments; look at him, thank him, and love him.

My God and my Father, Thou dost tell me to look at this Thy Son; but I pray Thee to look at him for me; look at him, and for the love of this Son have mercy on me.

IV

Seeing that Pilate, in spite of all their clamor, sought to save Jesus,[4841] the Jews, by exclaiming that, were he to release him, he would declare himself the enemy of Cæsar, endeavored to force him to condemn the Saviour. *The Jews cried out, saying, If thou release that man, thou art not Cæsar's friend; for whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.*[4842] Unfortunately for them, their efforts were successful. Pilate is afraid of losing the friendship of Cæsar, and therefore he brings Jesus Christ into the hall, and sits in judgment in order to pass sentence of condemnation upon him. *When Pilate had heard these words, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat.*[4843] But stung with remorse of conscience at the thought of condemning an innocent man, he again turns to the Jews, and says to them: *Behold your king.*[4844] Shall I condemn your king? *But they* *cried out, Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him.*[4845] The Jews exclaim with greater fury than before, What king? What king? Ah, Pilate, you always keep him before our eyes. Away with him, away with him; take him out of sight, and condemn him to die on a cross.

Ah, my Lord, incarnate Word, Thou art come from heaven on earth to converse with men, and to save them; but they cannot bear to see Thee any longer among them; they labor with all their might to put Thee to death, and to take Thee out of sight.

V

Pilate still resists, and says: *Shall I crucify your king?*[4846] *The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.*[4847] Ah, my adorable Jesus, they are unwilling to acknowledge Thee for their Lord, and say that they have no other king than Cæsar. I acknowledge Thee for my king and my God, and I protest that I wish for no other king in my heart than Thee, my Redeemer. Unhappy me! I have once submitted to the domination of my passions, and have banished Thee, my divine king, from my soul. I now wish that Thou alone reign in my heart; that Thou command, and that it obey. I will say to Thee, with St. Teresa: O lover, who lovest me more than I am able to conceive, grant that my soul may serve Thee more in conformity with Thy pleasure than its own. May this self die, and may another live in me. May he live and give me life. May he reign, and may I be his slave. May my soul wish for no other liberty; My Jesus, Thou art my only king, my only good, my only love.

Chapter XII

JESUS IS CONDEMNED BY PILATE

I

Then, therefore, he delivered Him to them to be crucified.[4848] Behold how Pilate, after having so often declared the innocence of Jesus, declares it again by washing his hands, and protesting that he is innocent of the blood of that just man, and that, should he die, the Jews must render an account of his death. *Pilate . . . taking water, washed his hands before the people, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it.*[4849] He then pronounces the sentence, and condemns Jesus to death. O injustice no longer known in the world! A judge condemns the accused, and at the same time declares him innocent! St. Luke says that Pilate delivered Jesus into the hands of the Jews, that they might treat him as they pleased. *Jesus was delivered up to their will.*[4850] This is what really happens when an innocent man is condemned. He is given over to the hands of his enemies, that they may take away his life by the death which is most pleasing to them. Unhappy Jews! you then said. *His blood be upon us and upon our children.*[4851] You have prayed for the chastisement; it has already come. Your nation bears, and shall bear to the end of the world, the punishment due to the shedding of that innocent blood.

II

Behold the unjust sentence of death is read in the presence of our condemned Lord. He listens to it, and, with entire resignation to the just decree of his Eternal Father, who condemns him to the cross, he humbly accepts it, not for the crimes falsely imputed to him by the Jews, but in atonement for our real sins, for which he offered to make satisfaction by his death. Pilate says on earth, Let Jesus die. And the Eternal Father from heaven confirms the sentence, saying, Let my Son die. The Son himself answers, Here I am; I obey; I accept death, and the death of the cross. *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*[4852]

My beloved Redeemer, Thou dost accept the death due to me, and by Thy death dost obtain life for me. I thank Thee for it, O my love, and I hope to go one day to praise Thy mercies forever in heaven: *The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever.*[4853] But since Thou, an innocent, dost accept the death of the cross, I, a sinner, cheerfully accept the death Thou dost appoint for me, and I accept it with all the pains that shall accompany it; and from this moment I offer it to Thy Eternal Father, in union with Thy holy death. Thou hast died for the love of me; I wish to die for the love of Thee. Ah, through the merits of Thy bitter death, grant me, O my Jesus, the happy lot of dying in Thy grace, and burning with Thy holy love.

Chapter XIII

JESUS CARRIES THE CROSS TO CALVARY

I

As soon as the sentence is proclaimed, the unhappy people raise a shout of exultation, and say: Rejoice, rejoice; Jesus is already condemned. Make haste, lose no time; prepare the cross, and put him to death before to-morrow which will be the Paschal solemnity. They instantly seize him; tear off the scarlet cloak, and put on his own clothes, that (says St. Ambrose) he might be recognized by the people as the impostor (as they called him), whom they had a few days before hailed as the Messiah. *They took off the cloak from Him, and put on His own garments, and led Him away to crucify Him.*[4854] They then take two large beams, make a cross, and insolently command him to carry it on his shoulders to the place of his execution. O God! what barbarity! to put so heavy a burden on a man who has been so tortured and exhausted of strength.

II

Jesus lovingly embraces the cross. *And bearing His own cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary.*[4855] Behold the officers of justice set out along with the criminals, and among these goes the Saviour loaded with the very altar on which he is to sacrifice his life. A devout author justly remarks that the Passion of Jesus Christ was, in all its circumstances, an object of astonishment and an excess, as it was called by Moses and Elias on Mount Thabor.[4856] Who would have ever imagined that the sight of Jesus covered with wounds should only serve to increase the rage of the Jews and their desire to see him crucified? What tyrant has ever made a criminal carry his own gibbet on his shoulders after he had been consumed by torments? It fills one with horror to think on the accumulation of cruelties, insults, and derisions which his enemies made Jesus suffer in less than half a day, from his capture till his death. The fetters, the buffets, the spittle, the mockery, the scourges, the thorns, the nails, the agony and death, succeed one after another without interruption. In a word, the Jews and Gentiles, the priests and the people, all united to make Jesus Christ (as Isaias had foretold) a man overwhelmed with insults and sorrows. The judge defends the innocence of Jesus, but the defence served only to add to the pain and ignominies of the Redeemer; for had Pilate at once condemned him to death, Jesus would not see Barabbas preferred before him, he would not have been treated as a fool, he would not have been so cruelly scourged and crowned with thorns.

III

But let us return to the consideration of the astonishing spectacle of the Son of God going to die for the very men who conduct him to death. Behold the prediction of Jeremias verified: *And I was as a meek lamb that is carried to be a victim.*[4857] Behold how they lead the innocent Saviour as a lamb to the slaughter. O ungrateful city, dost thou thus banish from thee thy Redeemer with so much contempt, after he had conferred so many favors upon thee? O God, such too is the ingratitude of the Christian, who, after being favored with many divine gifts, banishes Jesus from his soul by sin.

IV

The appearance of Jesus in the journey to Calvary was so pitiable that the women followed him weeping and lamenting over his sufferings. *And there followed Him a great multitude of people and of women who bewailed and lamented Him.*[4858] But the Redeemer turning to them, said, Weep not over me, but over your children: *For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry*?[4859] By these words he wished to give us to understand the great punishment which our sins deserve: for if he who was innocent and the Son of God, merely because he had offered to make satisfaction for our transgressions, was treated in this manner, how shall men be treated for their own sins?

V

Look at him, O my soul: see him moving along with his flesh all torn, carrying a crown of thorns on his head and a heavy cross on his shoulders, surrounded by enemies who load him with insults and maledictions. O God! his sacred body is all mangled, so that at every step the pain of his wounds is renewed. The cross torments him before he is fastened to it, for it presses on his wounded shoulders, and cruelly beats into his head the thorns of that barbarous crown. Alas, how great and manifold his pain at every step! But Jesus leaves not the cross; no, he does not leave it, because through it he wishes, as Isaias foretold, to reign in the hearts of men: *And the government is on His shoulders.*[4860]

Ah, my Jesus, with what sentiments of love for me didst Thou then go to Calvary, where Thou wast to consummate the great sacrifice of Thy life! My soul, do thou also embrace thy cross for the love of Jesus, who suffers so much for thy sake. See how he goes before with his cross, and invites thee to follow him with thine. *If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me.*[4861] My Jesus, I do not wish to leave Thee; I wish to follow Thee till death; but, through the merits of this painful journey, give me strength to carry with patience the crosses which Thou dost send me. Ah, Thou hast rendered sorrows and insults amiable by embracing them with so much love for our sake.

VI

They found a man of Cyrene, named Simon, him they forced to take up his cross.[4862] *And they laid the cross on him to carry after Jesus.*[4863] Was it through compassion that they unburdened Jesus of the cross, and placed it on the Cyrenian? No, it was through wickedness and hatred. Seeing that our Lord almost breathed forth his soul at every step, they began to fear that he would not reach Calvary alive; they wished not only that he should die, but also that he should die on the cross, that his memory might be forever infamous: for to die on a cross was the same as to be the object of universal malediction: *For he is accursed that hangeth on a tree.*[4864] Hence, in seeking the death of Jesus, they not only called on Pilate to put him to death, but always demanded his crucifixion: “Let him be crucified, crucify him, crucify him,” that his name might be so infamous on earth, that it would be no longer mentioned: *Let us cut him off from the land of the* *living, and let his name be remembered no more.*[4865] Hence they took the cross off his shoulders that he might reach Calvary alive; thus they gained their object, and saw him dying the shameful death of the cross. Ah, my despised Jesus, Thou art my hope and all my love.

Chapter XIV

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

I

As soon as Jesus arrived on Calvary, oppressed with pain and fatigue, they gave him to drink wine mixed with gall, which was ordinarily given to persons condemned to the death of the cross, in order to diminish their sensibility to pain. But because Jesus wished to die without comfort, he tasted, but would not drink it. *And they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall. And when he had tasted, he would not drink.*[4866] The people therefore formed a circle round Jesus; the soldiers took off his garments, which, because they were fastened to his wounded and mangled body, took with them pieces of flesh. They then threw him on the cross. Jesus stretched out his sacred hands, offered to the Eternal Father the great sacrifice of himself, and prayed him to accept it for our salvation.

II

Behold they took the nails and hammers, and piercing the hands and feet of the Saviour, they fastened him to the cross. The noise of the hammers resounded through the mountains, and was heard by Mary, who followed her Son, and had already arrived at the place of execution. O sacred hands, which by your touch have healed so many invalids, why are you now pierced on this cross? O sacred feet, so often wearied in seeking after lost sheep, why are you now transfixed with nails? Why do you suffer so intense a pain? When a nerve is punctured, the pain is so acute that it causes the swoons and spasms of death. How great, then, must have been the pain which Jesus suffered when his hands and feet—parts of the body which are full of bones and nerves—were pierced with the nails?

O my sweet Saviour, how dearly has my salvation, and Thy desire of gaining the love of me, a miserable worm, cost Thee! And I have so often ungratefully refused Thee my love, and have turned my back upon Thee.

III

Behold the cross is raised along with Jesus Christ who is fastened to it, and is let fall with violence into the hole prepared for it. It is then made fast in its place, and Jesus nailed, to it, hangs between two thieves, there to leave his life. *They crucified him, and with him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst.*[4867] This Isaias had foretold: *He was reputed with the wicked.*[4868] To the cross was affixed a paper, on which was written: *Jesus of Naazreth, King of the Jews.* The priests wanted Pilate to change the title, but he refused. God wished that all should know that the Jews put to death their true King and Messiah, whom they themselves had so long expected and sighed for.

IV

Jesus on the cross! Behold the proof of the love of a God. Behold the last appearance of the incarnate Word on earth. The first was in a stable: the last is on a cross: both display his love and infinite charity for men. Contemplating one day the love of Jesus in dying for us, St. Francis of Paul, wrapt in ecstasy and raised in the air, exclaimed three times, in a loud voice: “O God, charity! O God, charity! O God, charity!” By these exclamations the Lord wished, through the saint, to teach us that we shall never be able to comprehend the infinite love which this God has shown us in condescending to suffer such torments, and to die for our salvation. My soul, approach with an humbled and penitent heart that cross; kiss the altar on which thy loving Lord dies. Place thyself under his feet, that his divine blood may flow upon thee, and say to the Eternal Father (but in a sense different from that which the Jews intended). *His blood be upon us.*[4869] O Lord, may this blood descend on us, and wash us from our sins: this blood does not demand vengeance from Thee, as did the blood of Abel, but implores of Thee for us mercy and pardon. This Thy Apostle encourages us to hope for, saying, *You are come to Jesus, the Mediator of the New*

Testament, and to the sprinkling of blood, which speaketh better than that of Abel.[4870]

V

O God, how great the torture of our dying Saviour on the cross! Every member suffers pains; one member cannot assist another, for the hands and feet are fastened with nails. Alas! in every moment he suffers the pangs of death, so that it may be said that during the three hours of his agony, Jesus suffered as many deaths as he was moments on the cross. On that bed of pain, our afflicted Lord had not a moment of comfort or repose, He had at one time to rest on his hands, and at another on his feet; but wheresoever he rested, his sufferings were increased. In a word, that sacred body was suspended on his very wounds, so that the pierced hands and feet had to sustain the weight of the entire body.

O my dear Redeemer, if I look at Thy body I see nothing but wounds and blood, if I look at Thy heart; I behold it overwhelmed with affliction and desolation. I read on this cross that Thou art king; but what badges of royalty dost Thou wear? I see no other throne than a gibbet of infamy; I see no other purple than Thy flesh covered with blood and wounds; no other crown than this wreath of thorns which continues to torture Thee. Ah, all exhibit Thee as a king, not of majesty, but of love: the cross, the blood, the nails, the crown, are all so many proofs of love.

VI

Hence from the cross Jesus seeks not so much our compassion as our love. And if he seeks pity, he asks it only that it may induce us to love him. He merits our love on account of his own goodness; but, on the cross he appears to ask us to love him at least through compassion.

Ah, my Jesus, Thou hadst just reason to say, before the time of Thy Passion, that, when Thou shouldst be exalted on the cross, Thou wouldst draw all our hearts to Thee. *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself.*[4871] Oh, what darts of fire didst Thou cast at our hearts from this throne of love! Oh, how many happy souls hast Thou drawn to Thee from this cross, and rescued from the jaws of hell? Permit me, then, to say to Thee: Justly, O my Lord, have they caused Thee to die between two thieves, since by Thy love Thou hast snatched from Lucifer so many Christians who justly belonged to him on account of their sins One of these I hope to be. O wounds of my Jesus, O blessed furnaces of love! receive me, that I may burn not in the fire of hell, as I have deserved, but with the holy flames of love for that God who has condescended to die consumed by torments for my salvation.

VII

After the crucifixion of Jesus, the executioners cast lots for his garments, thus verifying the prediction of David: *They parted my garments amongst them, and upon my venture they cast lots.*[4872] They then sat down waiting for his death. My soul, do thou also sit at the foot of the cross, and under its saving shadow repose during thy whole life, that with the sacred spouse thou mayest be able to say, *I sat down under his shadow whom I desired.*[4873] Oh! how delightful the repose which the souls that love God enjoy amid the tumults of the world, the temptations of hell, and the terrors of the divine judgments at the sight of Jesus crucified!

VIII

In the midst of his bodily pains, and the desolation and sadness of his soul, our dying Jesus looked for some one who would console him. But, my Redeemer, there is no one to comfort Thee. Perhaps there are at least some to pity Thee, and weep at the sight of Thy bitter agony. But, alas! I hear some insult Thee, others mock Thee, and others blaspheme Thee. One says, *If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.*[4874] Another, *Vah! Thou that destroyest the temple of God . . . save thyself.*[4875] Others say, *He saved others; himself he cannot save.*[4876] O God, what criminal has been ever loaded with so many insults and reproaches while he was dying on a gibbet?

Chapter XV

WORDS THAT JESUS SPOKE ON THE CROSS

I

But what does Jesus do? What does he say at the sight of all the outrages which he received? He prays for them that maltreat him: *Father,* he says, *forgive them, for they know not what they do.*[4877] Jesus also prayed from the cross for us sinners. Let us then turn to the Eternal Father, and say to him with confidence:

O Father, hear the voice of this beloved Son, who implores Thee to pardon us. To grant us pardon is an act of mercy in our regard, because we do not deserve mercy; but it is an act of justice to Jesus Christ, who has superabundantly atoned for our sins. Thou hast obliged Thyself to pardon us through his merits, and to receive into favor all who repent of the offences that they have offered Thee. My Father, I repent with my whole heart of having offended Thee; and in the name of this Son, I ask Thy pardon. Pardon me, and receive me into Thy favor.

II

Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom.[4878] Thus the good thief prayed to Jesus dying on the cross, and Jesus answered: *Amen, I say to thee, This day thou shalt be with me in paradise.*[4879] Here was verified what the Lord said long before by the prophet Ezechiel, that when sinners repent of their transgressions, God pardons them, and forgets the insults that they have offered to him: *But if the wicked do penance . . . I will not remember all his iniquities.*[4880]

O immense mercy, O infinite goodness of my God! who will not love Thee? O my Jesus! forget the injuries I have done Thee, and remember the painful death Thou hast suffered for my salvation, and for the sake of that death bring me to Thy kingdom in the life to come, and grant that during this life Thy holy love may reign in me. May Thy love rule in my heart, and may it be my only lord, my only desire, my only love. Happy thief, who didst merit by thy patience to partake of the fruits of the death of Jesus. And happy me, O my Jesus! if I shall have the happiness to die loving Thee, and uniting my death to Thy holy death.

III

There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother.[4881] Behold, O my soul, Mary at the foot of the cross, transfixed with sorrow, and with her eyes fixed on her beloved and innocent Son, contemplating the external and internal pains in the midst of which he dies. She is perfectly resigned, and in peace offers to the Eternal Father the death of her Son for our salvation; but her compassion and love are to her a source of great affliction. O God! who would not pity a mother standing beside the gibbet on which a son dies before her eyes? But here we should consider who this mother and this Son are. Mary's love for her Son immensely surpassed the love of all mothers for their children. She loved Jesus, who was at the same time her Son and her God: a Son infinitely amiable, all beauty and sanctity; a Son who had been always respectful and obedient to her; a Son who had loved her so tenderly, and had, from eternity, chosen her for his mother. This was the mother who had to behold such a Son dying before her eyes on an infamous gibbet, without being able to afford him any comfort; who saw that even the agony which she suffered at the foot of the cross, through love to him, added to his sorrows.

O Mary, through the pain which thou didst suffer at the death of Jesus, have pity on me, and recommend me to thy Son. Listen to him on the cross, recommending me to thee, in the person of St. John: *Woman, behold thy Son.*[4882]

IV

And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? [4883] Jesus, agonizing on the cross, afflicted with pain of body and sadness of soul (for the sadness which assailed him in the garden, when he said, *My soul is sorrowful unto death,*[4884] did not leave him until his last breath), seeks for some one to console him, but finds none. *I looked for one who would grieve together with Me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort Me, and I found none*.[4885] He looks at his mother, and, as has been said, her presence gives him no consolation; the sight of her sorrows adds to his affliction. He looks about, and sees enemies on every side; hence, finding himself bereft of every comfort, he turns to his Eternal Father, to seek consolation. But the Father, seeing him charged with the sins of all men, for which he was then atoning to the divine justice on the cross, abandons him to a death of pure unmixed pain. Then it was that Jesus cried out with a loud voice, to show the intensity of his sufferings, and said, *My God, why hast Thou also forsaken me?* Hence the death of Jesus Christ was more painful than the death of all the martyrs, because it was full of desolation and bereft of all comfort.

But, my Jesus, why dost Thou complain after having voluntarily offered Thyself to so cruel a death? Ah! I understand Thee; Thou dost complain in order make us comprehend the intense pain with which Thou dost expire, and at the same time to encourage us to have confidence, and to practise resignation when we find ourselves in desolation and deprived of the sensible aid of the divine grace. My sweet Redeemer, Thy abandonment makes me hope that God, although I have betrayed him, will not abandon me. O my Jesus, how have I been able to live so long forgetful of Thee? I thank Thee for not having forgotten me. Ah! I entreat Thee to remind me always of the desolation to which Thou hast submitted for my sake, that I may never more forget Thee and the love Thou hast borne me.

V

Knowing that his sacrifice was consummated, the Saviour said that he was thirsty, and the soldiers applied to his mouth a sponge full of vinegar. *Afterwards, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst. . . . And they putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to his mouth.*[4886] The Scripture, which was to be fulfilled, is the text of David: *And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*[4887] But, O Lord, Thou art silent about the intense pains which hasten

Thy death, and dost Thou complain of thirst? Ah! the thirst of Jesus was very different from that which we imagine it to be. His thirst is the desire of being loved by the souls for whom he dies. Thus, my Jesus, Thou dost thirst after me, a miserable worm, and shall I not thirst after Thee, who art an infinite good? Ah, I long for Thee, I love Thee, I desire to please Thee in all things. Assist me, O Lord, to banish from my heart all earthly desires, and grant that nothing may reign in me but the desire to please Thee and to do Thy will. O holy will of God, blessed fountain that dost fill enamoured souls! fill me also, and be the object of all my thoughts and affections.

Chapter XVI

DEATH OF JESUS

I

The amiable Redeemer approaches the end of life. My soul, behold those eyes grow dim; that beautiful countenance becomes pale; that heart palpitates feebly; that sacred body is abandoned to death. *Jesus, therefore, when he had taken the vinegar, said, It is consummated.*[4888] When on the point of expiring, Jesus placed before his eyes all the sufferings of his life,—the poverty, fatigues, pains, and injuries which he had suffered,—and, again offering them all to his Eternal Father, he said. All is now accomplished—all is consummated. All that the prophets foretold of me is consummated; in a word, the sacrifice which God expected in order to be appeased with the world is perfectly consummated, and full satisfaction is made to the divine justice. *It is consummated,* said Jesus, turning to his Eternal Father: *It is consummated*, he said, at the same time turning to us. As if he had said, O men, I have done all that I can do, in order to save your souls and to gain your love. I have done my part; do you now do yours. Love me, and be not unwilling to love a God who has gone so far as to die for you.

Ah, my Jesus, that I also, at the hour of my death could say, at least for the part of my life which yet remains, *It is consummated.* Lord, I have accomplished Thy will: I have obeyed all Thy wishes! Give me strength, O my Jesus, for with Thy aid I purpose and hope to do Thy will in all things.

And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.[4889] These were the last words which Jesus spoke on the cross. Seeing that his blessed soul was about to be separated from his mangled body, he said, with perfect resignation to the divine will, and with filial confidence, Father, to Thee I recommend my spirit. As if he had said, My Father, I have no will; I do not wish either to live or die. If it is pleasing to Thee that I continue to suffer on this cross, behold, I am ready; into Thy hands I consign my spirit; do with it what Thou wilt. Oh that we also would say the same when we meet any cross, leaving ourselves to be guided by the Lord in all things, according to his good pleasure! This, says St. Francis de Sales, is that holy abandonment in God which constitutes all perfection. We ought to act in this manner particularly at the hour of death; but, in order to do it well then, we should practise it frequently during life.

Yes, my Jesus, in Thy hands I place my life and my death; in Thee I abandon myself entirely, and I recommend my soul to Thee now for the last moments of my life. Receive it into Thy wounds, as Thy Father received Thy spirit, when Thou didst expire on the cross.

III

But behold, Jesus dies. O angels of heaven, come, come to be present at the death of your God; and thou, O sorrowful mother of God, approach nearer to the cross, raise thy eyes to behold thy Son; look at him more steadfastly, for he is about to expire. Behold, the Redeemer already calls on death, and gives it permission to come and take away his life. O death, he says, perform thy office; take away my life and save my sheep. Behold, the earth trembles, the graves are opened, the veil of the Temple is rent in two; behold, in fine, how the violence of his pains deprives the dying Lord of strength, of the natural heat, of respiration; his body is abandoned to death; he bows down his head on his breast, he opens his mouth, and expires: *And bowing down His head, He gave up the ghost.*[4890] Go forth, O beautiful soul of my Saviour, go forth; go to open paradise, which has been hitherto shut against us; go to present thyself to the divine Majesty, and to obtain for us pardon and salvation. The crowd, turning to Jesus, on account of the loud voice in which he spoke these words, look at him with attention and in silence; they see him expire, and, observing that he is motionless, they exclaim, He is dead—he is dead. Mary hears this from all the bystanders, and she also says, Ah, my Son, Thou art dead.

IV

He is dead. O God, who is dead? The author of life, the only-begotten of God, the Lord of the world. O death which was the astonishment of heaven and of nature! A God to die for his creatures! O infinite charity! A God to sacrifice himself entirely! To sacrifice his delights, his honor, his blood, his life; and for whom? For ungrateful creatures. And to die in a sea of sorrows and insults, and in order to atone for our sins. My soul, raise thy eyes, and behold that crucified Man-God. Behold that divine Lamb sacrificed on that altar of pain; consider that he is the beloved Son of the Eternal Father, and consider he has died through the love he has borne thee. See how his arms are stretched out to embrace thee; his head bowed down to give thee the kiss of peace; his side opened to receive thee. What dost thou say? Does a God so good and so loving deserve to be loved? Listen to what the Lord says to thee from the cross: My Son, see if there is any one in this world who has loved thee more than I, thy God, have loved thee.

Ah, my God and my Redeemer, Thou, then, hast died, and died a death the most infamous and painful. And why? To gain my love. But what love of a creature can ever compensate the love of his Creator, who has died for him? O my adored Jesus, O love of my soul! how shall I be ever able to forget Thee? How shall I be able to love anything but Thee, after having seen Thee dying through pain on this cross in order to atone for my sins and to save my soul? How can I behold Thee dead, hanging on this tree, and not love Thee with all my strength? Can I think that my sins have reduced Thee to this condition, and not weep always with intense sorrow for the offences that I have committed against Thee?

V

O God, had the vilest of all men suffered for me what Jesus Christ has suffered; had I beheld a man torn with scourges, fastened to a cross, and made the laughing-stock of the people in order to save my life, could I remember his sufferings without feeling for him the tenderest affection? And were the likeness of my expiring lover brought before me, could I behold it with indifference, and say, Oh! the miserable man has died thus in torture for the love of me? Had he not loved me he would not have died for me. Alas, how many Christians keep a beautiful crucifix in their room, but only as a fine piece of furniture! They praise the workmanship and the expression of grief, but it makes as little impression on their hearts as if it were not the image of the incarnate Word, but of a man who was a stranger and unknown to them.

Ah, my Jesus, do not permit me to be one of them. Remember that Thou didst promise that when Thou wouldst be elevated on the cross, Thou wouldst draw all hearts to Thee. Behold, my heart, softened into tenderness by Thy death, will no longer resist Thy calls. Ah, draw all its affections to Thy love. Thou hast died for me, and I wish to live only for Thee. O sorrows of Jesus, O ignominies of Jesus, O death of Jesus, O love of Jesus! may you be fixed in my heart, and may the sweet remembrance of you remain there forever, to wound me continually, and to inflame me with love. O Eternal Father, behold Jesus dead for my sake, and, through the merits of this Son, show me mercy. My soul, be not diffident on account of the sins thou hast committed against God. It is the Father himself that has given the Son to the world for our salvation, and it is the Son that has voluntarily offered himself to atone for our sins. Ah, my Jesus, since to pardon me Thou hast not spared Thyself, behold me with the same affection with which Thou didst one day behold me, agonizing for me on the cross. Behold me and enlighten me; and pardon particularly my past ingratitude to Thee, in thinking so little of Thy Passion, and on the love Thou hast shown me in Thy sufferings. I thank Thee for the light which Thou givest me, in making me see in these wounds and lacerated members, as through so many lattices, Thy great and tender affection for me. Unhappy me, if, after this light, I should neglect to love Thee, or if I loved anything out of Thee. May I die (I will say with the enamoured St. Francis of Assisi) for the love of Thee, O my Jesus, who hast condescended to die for the love of me. O pierced heart of my Redeemer, O blessed dwelling of loving souls! do not disdain to receive also my miserable soul. O Mary, O mother of sorrows! recommend me to thy Son, whom thou dost hold lifeless in thy arms. Behold his lacerated flesh, behold his divine blood shed for me, and see in them how pleasing it is to him that thou shouldst recommend my salvation to him. My salvation consists in loving him; this love thou hast to obtain for me, but let it be a great and eternal love.

Commenting on the words of St. Paul, *The charity of Christ presseth us*,[4891] St. Francis de Sales says: “Since we know that Jesus, the true God, has loved us so as to suffer death, and the death of the cross, for our salvation, must not our hearts be under a press which squeezes and forces love from them by a violence which is strong in proportion as it is amiable?"[4892] The saint afterwards says that "the hill of Calvary is the mountain of lovers."[4893] He then adds: "Ah, why, then, do we not cast ourselves on Jesus crucified, in order to die on the cross with him who has voluntarily died upon it for the love of us? I will hold him, we ought to say, and will never forsake him; I will die with him, and will burn in the flames of his love. One and the same fire shall consume this divine Creator and his miserable creature. My Jesus gives himself to me, and I give myself entirely to him. I will live and die on his bosom; neither life nor death shall separate me from him. O eternal love! my soul seeks Thee, and chooses Thee for eternity. Ah! come, O Holy Ghost, and inflame our hearts with the love of Thee. Either to love or to die. To die to every other love, in order to live to that of Jesus. O Saviour of our souls! grant that we may sing for eternity: "Live Jesus; I love Jesus. Live Jesus, whom I love; I love Jesus, who lives forever and ever."[4894]

Let us, in conclusion, say: O Lamb of God, who hast sacrificed Thyself for our salvation! O victim of love, who hast been consumed by sorrows on the cross! Oh that I knew how to love Thee as Thou dost deserve to be loved! Oh that I could die for Thee, who hast died for me! By my sins I have been a cause of pain to Thee during Thy entire life; grant that I may please Thee during the remainder of my life, living only in Thee, my love, my all. O Mary, my mother, thou art my hope after Jesus; obtain for me the grace to love Jesus.

Considerations on the Passion of Jesus Christ[4895]

INTRODUCTION

How pleasing is it to Jesus Christ that we should often remember his Passion, and the shameful death which he suffered for us, can be well understood from his having instituted the most holy Sacrament of the Altar for this very end, that there might ever dwell in us the lively memory of the love which he bore to us in sacrificing himself on the cross for our salvation. Let us, then, recollect that on the night preceding his death he instituted this sacrament of love and, when he had distributed his body to the disciples, he said to them, and through them to all of us, that in receiving the Holy Communion we should bear in mind what great things he has suffered for us: *As often as ye shall eat this bread and drink this cup, ye shall show forth the Lord's death.*[4896] Therefore, in the Mass the Holy Church ordains that after the consecration the celebrant shall say, in the name of Jesus Christ, *As often as ye do this, ye shall do it in memory of Me.*[4897] And the angelic St. Thomas writes, "That the memory of the great things that he has done for us might ever remain with us, he left us his own body to be received as our food."[4898] The saint then goes on to say that through this sacrament is preserved the memory of the boundless love which Jesus Christ has shown us in his Passion.[4899]

If we were to endure injuries and stripes for the sake of a friend, and were then to learn that our friend, when he heard any one speak of what we had done, would not pay any heed to it, but turned the conversation, and said, "Let us talk of something else," what pain we should suffer at the sight of the neglect of the ungrateful man! And, on the other hand, how glad we should be to find that our friend admitted that he was under an eternal obligation to us, that he constantly bore it in mind, and spoke of it with affection and with tears. Therefore the saints, knowing how much it pleases Jesus Christ that we should often call to mind his Passion, have been almost perpetually occupied in meditating on the pains and insults which our loving Redeemer suffered during his whole life, and still more in his death.

St. Augustine writes that there is no more profitable occupation for the soul than to meditate daily on the Passion of the Lord.[4900] It was revealed by God to a holy anchorite, that there is no exercise more adapted to inflame the heart with divine love than the thought of the death of Jesus Christ. And to St. Gertrude, as Blosius[4901] records, it was revealed that as often as we look with devotion upon the crucifix, so often does Jesus look upon us with love. Blosius[4902] adds, that to consider or read of any portion of the Passion brings greater profit than any other devout exercise. Therefore St. Bonaventure writes, "O Passion worthy of love, which renders divine him who meditates upon it."[4903] And, speaking of the wounds of the Crucified, he calls them wounds which pierce the hardest hearts, and inflame the coldest souls with divine love.[4904]

It is related in the life of the Blessed Bernard of Corlione, a Capuchin, that when his brother religious desired to teach him to read, he went to take advice from Him who was crucified, and that the Lord replied to him, "What is reading? what are books? I who was crucified will be thy book, in which thou mayest read the love I bore thee." Jesus crucified was also the beloved book of St. Philip Benitius; and when the saint was dying, he desired to have his book given him. Those who stood by, however, did not know what book he wanted; but Brother Ubaldo, his confidential friend, offered to him the image of the Crucified, on which the saint said, "This is my book;" and, kissing the sacred wounds, breathed out his blessed soul.

For myself, in my spiritual works, I have often written of the Passion of Jesus Christ, but yet I think that it will not be unprofitable to devout souls if I here add many other points and reflections which I have read in various books, or which have occurred to myself; and I have determined to commit them to writing, both for the use of others, and especially for my own profit; for finding myself, now that I am putting together this little treatise, near to death, at the age of seventy-seven years, I have been desirous to prolong these considerations, by way of preparing myself for the great day of account. And, in fact, I make my own poor meditations on these very points; often and often reading some portion, in order that, whenever my last hour shall come, I may find myself occupied in keeping before my eyes Jesus crucified, who is my only hope, and thus I hope to breathe out my soul into his hands. Let us, then, begin the proposed reflections.

Chapter I

THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IN GENERAL

I

NECESSITY OF A REDEEMER AND HIS QUALITIES—THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD—ERRORS OF THE JEWS—PROPHECIES

Adam sinned and rebelled against God, and, being the first man and the progenitor of all men, he fell into a state of perdition, together with the whole human race. The injury was done to God; so that neither Adam nor all the rest of mankind, by all the sacrifices that they could have offered, even of their own life, could furnish a worthy satisfaction to the divine majesty which was offended. To appease this there was need that a divine person should satisfy the divine justice. Behold, then, the Son of God, who, moved to compassion for men, and excited by the bowels of his mercy, offered himself to take human flesh, and to die for men, that he might thus give to God a complete satisfaction for all their sins, and obtain for them the divine grace which they had lost.

Our loving Redeemer thus came into this life, and became man, in order that he might find a remedy for all the miseries which sin had brought upon men. At the same time, he chose to lead men to an observance of the divine precepts, and thus to the acquisition of eternal life, not only by his instructions, but also by the example of his own holy life. For this end Jesus Christ renounced all honors, delights, and riches, which he might have enjoyed upon this earth, and which belonged to him as Lord of the world; and he chose for himself a life of humility, poverty, and tribulation, until he died in anguish upon a cross.

The Jews were possessed with a delusion that the Messiah would come upon earth to triumph over all his enemies by force of arms, and that, having conquered them, and acquired the rule of all the earth, he would make his followers rich and glorious. But if the Messiah had been what the

Jews imagined him to be, a prince triumphant and honored by all men as the sovereign of all the earth, he would not have been the Redeemer promised by God, and predicted by the prophets. This he himself declared, when he replied to Pilate, *My kingdom is not of this world.*[4905] On this St. Fulgentius writes: "Why, Herod art thou thus troubled? This king who is born is not come to conquer kings in battle, but wonderfully to subdue them by his death."[4906]

The Jews had two false notions respecting the Redeemer whom they expected; the first was, the idea that the spiritual and eternal blessings with which the prophets foretold that the Messiah would enrich his people, were earthly and temporal blessings: *There shall be faith in thy days: the riches of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the Lord, that shall be thy treasure.*[4907] These were the blessings promised by the Redeemer: faith, the knowledge of virtue, and holy fear. These were the riches of the salvation which he had promised. Besides this, he promised that he would bring medicine for the penitent, pardon for sinners, and liberty to the captives of the devil: *He hath sent Me to bring tidings to those who are meek, that I should heal those who are contrite of heart, and preach pardon to the captives, and liberty to those who are in bondage.*[4908] The other delusion of the Jews was, that what was predicted by the prophets respecting the second coming of the Saviour when he should come to judge the world at the end of ages, was to be understood of his first coming. David wrote of the future Messiah, that he would conquer the princes of the earth, and beat down the pride of many, and with the force of his sword would subdue the whole earth: *The Lord, upon Thy right hand, shall beat down kings in the day of His wrath; He shall judge among the nations; He shall shatter the heads of many upon the earth.*[4909] And the prophet Jeremias wrote: *The sword of the Lord shall devour from the one end of the earth to the other.*[4910] But all this is to be understood of the second advent, when he shall come as a judge to condemn the wicked.

When the prophets spoke of the first advent, in which he would accomplish the work of redemption, they most clearly foretold that the Redeemer would live upon this earth a life of poverty and contempt. This was what was written by the prophet Zacharias, when speaking of the life of Jesus Christ: *Behold thy king cometh to thee as a just one, and the Saviour;*

He is poor, and sitteth upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.[4911] All this was specially fulfilled when he entered into Jerusalem sitting upon a young ass, and was honorably received as the desired Messiah, as St. John writes, *And Jesus found an ass and sat upon it, as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh to thee, sitting upon an ass's colt.*[4912] We know, also, that he was poor from the time of his birth, being born in Bethlehem, a place of no celebrity, and in a cave: *And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art little among the thousands of Judah; from thee cometh forth to Me He who is the ruler of Israel; and His going forth is from the beginning, and from the days of eternity.*[4913] This prophecy, also, is referred to by St. Matthew and St. John.[4914] Further, also, the prophet Osee writes: *From Egypt I have called My Son;*[4915] which was fulfilled when Jesus Christ was carried as an infant into Egypt, where he remained about seven years, as a stranger in the midst of a barbarous race, far from his kindred and friends, which was sufficient to make his life one of poverty. And so, also, he continued to live the life of the poor when he had returned to Judea. He himself had foretold, by the mouth of David, that throughout all his life he would remain poor and afflicted with toils: *I am poor, and in the midst of labors from my youth.*[4916]

Almighty God could not consider his justice sufficiently satisfied by all the sacrifices that men could offer, even of their own lives; and therefore he ordained that his own Son should take a human body, and become a victim worthy to reconcile him with men, and obtain salvation for them. *Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not, but a body hast Thou prepared for Me.*[4917] The only-begotten Son offered himself willingly to be a sacrifice for us, and came down on earth in order that he might accomplish the sacrifice with his death, and thus complete the redemption of man. *Then He said, Behold, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of Me, that I should do Thy will, O God!*[4918]

The Lord said, speaking to sinners, *Why should I strike you any more?*[4919] This God said in order that we should understand, that, however much he might punish those who offended him, their punishments would never be sufficient to make reparation to his offended honor; and therefore he committed it to his own Son to make satisfaction for the sins of men, because his Son alone could give worthy compensation to the divine justice.

Therefore he declared, by Isaias, speaking of Jesus being made a victim for our sins. *For the wickedness of My people I have stricken him.*[4920] Nor was he satisfied with a light satisfaction, but chose to see him consumed with torments: *The Lord willed to exhaust Him with weakness.*[4921]

O my Jesus, O victim of love, consumed by pangs upon the cross to atone for my sins, I am ready to die with grief when I think that I have so often despised Thee, after Thou hast so much loved me. Oh, suffer it not that I should continue longer ungrateful for Thy goodness. Draw me wholly to Thee; grant it through the merits of that blood which Thou hast poured forth for me.

II

FIGURES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT—OTHER PROPHECIES—THANKS DUE TO THE FATHER AND TO THE SON

When the divine Word offered himself to redeem mankind, there were before him two ways of redemption, the one of joy and glory, the other of pains and insults. At the same time, it was his will, not only by his coming to deliver man from eternal death, but also to call forth the love of all the hearts of men, and therefore he rejected the way of joy and glory, and chose that of pains and insults: *The joy being set before Him, He endured the cross.*[4922] In order that he might satisfy the divine justice for us, and, at the same time, inflame us with his holy love, he was willing to endure this burden of all our sins; that, dying upon a cross, he might obtain for us grace and the life of the blessed. This is what Isaias intended to express when he said: *He Himself hath borne our pains, and carried our sorrows.*[4923]

Of this there were two express figures in the Old Testament; the first was the annual ceremony of the scape-goat,[4924] which the high-priest represented as bearing all the sins of the people, and therefore all, loading it with curses, drove it into the desert, to be the object of the wrath of God.[4925] This goat was a figure of our Redeemer, who was willing to load himself with all the curses deserved by us for our sins; being made a curse for us, in order that he might obtain for us the divine blessing. Therefore the Apostle wrote in another place, *He made Him to be sin for us, who knew not sin, that we might be made the justice of God in Him.*[4926] That is, as St.

Ambrose and St. Anselm explain it, he made him to be sin who was innocence itself; that is, he presented himself to God as if he had been sin itself. In a word, he took upon himself the character of a sinner, and endured the pains due to us sinners, in order to render us just before God. The second type of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ offered to the Eternal Father for us upon the cross was, that brazen serpent[4927] fixed to a tree, by looking upon which the Jews who were bitten by fiery serpents were healed. Accordingly, St. John writes: *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that every one who believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*[4928]

We must here notice that in the Book of Wisdom, the shameful death of Jesus Christ is clearly foretold. Although the words of the passage referred to may apply to the death of every just man, yet, say Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Jerome, and many other holy Fathers, that they principally refer to the death of Christ. It is said: *If He is the true Son of God, He will accept Him, and deliver Him.*[4929] These words exactly correspond with what the Jews said when Jesus was upon the cross: *He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him, if He will have Him; for He said, I am the Son of God.*[4930] The Wise Man goes on to say. *Let us try Him with insults and torments* (that is, those of the cross), *and let us prove His patience; let us condemn Him to the most shameful death.*[4931] The Jews chose the death of the cross for Jesus Christ, because it is shameful, in order that his name might be forever infamous, and no more held in remembrance, according to the other text of Jeremias: *Let us cast wood into His bread, and wipe Him out from the land of the living, and His name shall be remembered no more.*[4932] How, then, can the Jews of the present day say that it is false that Christ was the promised Messiah, because his life was ended by a most shameful death, when the prophets themselves foretold that he should die with a most dishonorable death?

And Jesus accepted such a death. He died to pay the price of our sins; and therefore, as a sinner, he desired to be circumcised; to be redeemed with a price when he was presented in the temple; to receive the baptism of repentance from the Baptist; and lastly, in his Passion, to be nailed upon the cross to atone for our guilty wanderings: to atone for our avarice, by being stripped of his garments; for our pride, by the insults he endured; for our desires of power, by submitting himself to the executioner; for our evil thoughts, by his crown of thorns; for our intemperance, by the gall he tasted; and by the pangs of his body, for our sensual delights. Therefore, we ought continually, with tears of tenderness, to thank the Eternal Father for having given his innocent Son to death to deliver us from eternal death: *He spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all; and how shall He not also with Him give us all things?*[4933] Thus said St. Paul; and thus Jesus himself said, in the Gospel of St. John: *God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.*[4934] On this account, the holy Church exclaims on Holy Saturday, "Oh, wonderful is it which Thy love has done for us! O inestimable gift of love, that to redeem a servant, Thou shouldst give Thy Son."[4935] O infinite mercy, O infinite love of our God! O holy faith! How can he who believes and confesses this, live without burning with holy love for a God who is so loving, and so worthy of love?

O eternal God, look not upon me thus overwhelmed with sins; look upon Thy innocent Son hanging upon a cross, who offers Thee the many pangs and insults which he has suffered, that Thou mayst have mercy upon me. O God, most worthy of love, and my true lover, for the love of this Thy Son, so beloved by Thee, have mercy upon me. The mercy I ask is, that Thou shouldst give me Thy holy love. Oh, draw me wholly to Thyself, from the mire of my corruption. Burn up, O Thou consuming fire, all that Thou seest impure in my soul, and that hinders me from being wholly Thine.

Let us give thanks to the Father, and let us give equal thanks to the Son, that he has been willing to take upon him our flesh, and, together with it, our sins, to offer to God, by his Passion, a worthy satisfaction. It is on this account that the Apostle says that Jesus Christ has become our mediator; that is, that he has bound himself to pay our debts: *Jesus is made the mediator of a better testament.*[4936] As the mediator between God and man, he has established a covenant with God, by which he has bound himself to satisfy the divine justice for us; and, on the other hand, has promised to us eternal life on the part of God. Therefore, in anticipation of this, the Preacher warns us not to forget the grace of this divine surety, who, to obtain salvation for us, has been willing to sacrifice his life. *Forget not the grace of the Surety, for He hath given His soul for thee.*[4937] It is to give us the better assurance of pardon, says St. Paul, that Jesus Christ with his blood has blotted out the decree of our condemnation, in which the sentence of eternal death stands written against us, and has nailed it to the cross on which he died to satisfy the divine justice for us.[4938]

O my Jesus! by that love which caused Thee to give Thy blood and Thy life upon Calvary for me, make me die to all the affections of this world; make me forget everything, that I may not think of anything but to love Thee and give Thee pleasure! O my God, worthy of infinite love, Thou hast loved me without reserve, I desire to love Thee also without reserve. I love Thee, my greatest good; I love Thee, O my love, my all.

III

THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST IS OUR SALVATION. IT IS AN INSTRUCTION AND AN EXAMPLE; IT IS A MOTIVE OF CONFIDENCE AND OF LOVE

In a word, whatever blessing, whatever salvation, whatever hope we have, we have it all in Jesus Christ, and in his merits; as St. Peter says, *There is salvation in none other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.*[4939] Thus, there is no hope of salvation for us except through the merits of Jesus Christ; from which St. Thomas and all theologians[4940] conclude, that, since the promulgation of the Gospel, we are bound to believe explicitly, of necessity, not only by precept, but by the necessity of the truth, that it is only through the means of our Redeemer that we can be saved.

All the foundation, then, of our salvation consists in the redemption of man wrought out by the divine Word upon earth. We must, therefore, reflect that although the actions of Jesus Christ upon earth, being the acts of a divine person, were of an infinite merit, so that the least of them was enough to satisfy the divine justice for all the sins of men, yet nevertheless the death of Jesus Christ is the great sacrifice by which our redemption was completed; so that, in the holy Scriptures, the redemption of man is attributed chiefly to the death suffered by him upon the cross: *He humbled Himself, and was made obedient to death, even the death of the cross.*[4941] Wherefore the Apostle writes, that in receiving the Holy Eucharist, we ought to remember the Lord’s death: *As often as ye shall eat this bread and drink this cup, ye shall show forth the Lord’s death till He come.*[4942] But why does he mention the death of the Lord, and not his incarnation, birth, or resurrection? He speaks of his death because this was the suffering of greatest pain and greatest shame that Jesus Christ endured, and that completed our redemption.

Hence St. Paul says, *I have determined that I would know nothing among you, except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*[4943] The Apostle well knew that Jesus Christ was born in a cave; that, for thirty years, he inhabited a carpenter’s shop; that he had risen from the dead, and had ascended into heaven. Why, then, did he say that he would know nothing but Jesus crucified? Because the death suffered by Jesus Christ on the cross was that which most moved him to love him, and induced him to exercise obedience towards God and love towards his neighbor, which were the virtues most specially inculcated by Jesus Christ from the chair of his cross. St. Thomas, the angelic Doctor, writes: “In whatever temptation we fall, in the cross is our protection; there is obedience to God, love to our neighbor, patience in adversity; whence St. Augustine says, “The cross was not only the instrument of death to the sufferer, but his chair of teaching.”[4944]

O devout souls, let us labor to imitate the Spouse of the Canticles, who said, *I have sat under the shadow of Him whom I desired.*[4945] Let us place often before our eyes, especially on Fridays, Jesus dying on the cross; and let us rest there for a while, and contemplate with tender affection his sufferings, and the love which he bore to us, while he continued in agony upon that bed of pain. Let us also say, *I have sat under the shadow of Him whom I desired.* Oh, how sweet is the repose that is found by souls who love God in the midst of the tumult of this world, and in the temptations of hell, and even in fears of the divine justice, when they contemplate in solitude and silence our loving Redeemer, as he hangs in agony upon the cross, while his divine blood flows forth in drops from all his limbs, stricken and laid open with stripes, and thorns, and nails! Oh, how the desires of worldly honors, of earthly riches, of sensual pleasures, depart from our minds at the sight of Jesus crucified! Then does there breathe from that cross a heavenly gale, which sweetly detaches us from earthly things, and lights up in us a holy desire to suffer and die for love of him who has been willing to suffer and die for love of us.

O God, if Jesus Christ had not been what he really is, the Son of God, and true God, our Creator and supreme Lord, but a mere man, who would not be moved to compassion at the sight of a youth of noble blood, innocent and holy, dying through the strength of his torments upon a shameful tree, to atone for sins not his own, but those of his enemies themselves, and thus to deliver them from the death which was their due? How, then, is it that the affections of all hearts are not drawn to a God who died in a sea of insults and pains for love of his creatures? How can these creatures love anything but God? How can they think of anything but being grateful to him who is their so loving benefactor?

"Oh, if thou knewest the mystery of the cross!"[4946] said St. Andrew to the tyrant who sought to induce him to deny Jesus Christ because Jesus had been crucified as a malefactor. "Oh, if thou couldst understand, O tyrant, the love which Jesus Christ hath borne thee, in being willing to die upon the cross to make satisfaction for thy sins, and to obtain for thee eternal happiness, certainly thou wouldst not labor to persuade me to deny him; but thou thyself wouldst abandon everything that thou hast and hopest for upon this earth, in order to please and satisfy a God who has so loved thee." What have not so many saints and holy martyrs done, who have left all for Jesus Christ! Oh, shame unto us! how many young virgins have renounced the marriage of the great, royal riches, and all earthly delights, and have willingly sacrificed their life to return some recompense of love for that love which was shown to them by this crucified God! How is it, then, that the Passion of Jesus Christ makes so little impression upon so many Christians? It results from this, that they apply themselves so little to consider what Jesus Christ has suffered for love of us.

O my Redeemer, I have been of the number of these ungrateful ones! Thou hast sacrificed Thy life upon a cross that Thou mightest not see me perish, and have I repeatedly been willing to lose Thee, an infinite good, by losing Thy grace? At this time the devil would have me believe that it is impossible that I should be saved, by bringing my sins to my remembrance; but the sight of Thee crucified, O my Jesus, assures me that Thou wilt not drive me from Thy face, if I repent of having offended Thee, and desire to love Thee. Yea, I repent, and desire to love Thee with all my heart. I detest these accursed pleasures, which have caused me to lose Thy grace. I love Thee, O Thou who art infinitely worthy of love, and I desire ever to love Thee; and the memory of my sins will serve to inflame me the more in the love of Thee, who hast come to seek me when I fled from Thee. No; I desire to be separated from Thee no more, and not to cease to love Thee, O my Jesus.

O Mary, refuge of sinners, thou who hast so much shared in the sufferings of thy Son in his death, pray to him to pardon me, and to give me grace to love him.

Chapter II

THE SEPARATE SUFFERINGS THAT JESUS CHRIST ENDURED AT HIS DEATH

I

PROPHECY OF ISAIAS—ABASEMENT OF THE PROMISED REDEEMER

We now come to consider the separate sufferings which Jesus Christ endured in his Passion, and which had been foretold for many ages by the prophets, and especially by Isaias, in the fifty-third chapter of his prophecy. This prophet, as St. Irenæus, St. Justin, St. Cyprian, and others say, spoke so distinctly of the sufferings of our Redeemer that he seems to be another Evangelist. Hence St. Augustine says that the words of Isaias, which refer to the Passion of Jesus Christ, call rather for meditations and tears than for the explanations of sacred writers; and Hugo Grotius records that even the old Hebrews themselves could not deny that Isaias (especially in his fifty-third chapter) spoke of the Messiah promised by God Some have wished to apply the passages of Isaias to persons named in Scripture and not to Jesus Christ; but Grotius[4947] answers that no one can be found to whom these texts may be referred.

Isaias writes: *Who hath believed our report; and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*[4948] This was fulfilled, as St. John writes, when the Jews, notwithstanding all the miracles which they had seen wrought by Jesus Christ, which proved him to be truly the Messiah sent by God, would not believe in him: *When He did so many miracles before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaias the prophet might be fulfilled, when he said, Lord, who hath believed our report; and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*[4949] Who will believe, says Isaias, what has been heard by us; and who has recognized the arm, that is, the power of the Lord? In these words he foretold the obstinacy of the Jews in not choosing to believe in

Jesus Christ as their Redeemer. They fancied that this Messiah would exhibit upon earth great pomp, and the splendor of his greatness and power; and that, triumphing over all his enemies, he would thus load the people of the Jews with riches and honors; but no, the prophet adds these words to those above named: *He shall grow up as a slender plant before Him, and as a root out of a thirsty ground.*[4950] The Jews thought that the Saviour would appear like a cedar of Libanus; but Isaias foretold that he would show himself like an humble shrub, or a root which grows in an arid soil, stripped of all beauty and splendor: *There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness.*[4951]

He then goes on to describe the Passion of the Lord: *We have seen Him and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of Him.*[4952] We desired to recognize him, but we could not, for we have seen nothing but a man despised and vile upon the earth, and a man of sorrows: *Despised, and the most abject of men,—a man of sorrows; whereupon we esteemed Him not.*[4953]

Adam, through his pride in not obeying the divine commands, brought ruin upon all men; therefore the Redeemer, by his humility, chose to bring a remedy to this great evil, and was content to be treated as the lowest and most abject of men; that is, by being reduced to the lowest depths of humiliation. Therefore St. Bernard cried out, “O Thou who art lowest and highest; O Thou humble and lofty; O shame of men and glory of angels! None is loftier than he; none more humble.”[4954] If, then, adds the saint the Lord, who is higher than all things, has made himself the lowest of all things, every one of us ought to desire that all others should be preferred to him, and fear to be preferred to any.[4955] But I, O my Jesus, fear that any should be preferred to me, and desire to be preferred above all. O Lord, give me humility. Thou, O My Jesus, with such love, hast embraced contempt, to teach me to be humble, and to love a hidden and an abject life; and shall I desire to be esteemed by all, and to display myself in everything? O my Jesus! grant me Thy love; it will make me like to Thee. Let me no more live ungrateful to the love which Thou hast borne to me. Thou art almighty; make me humble, make me holy, make me all Thine own.

II

HUMILIATIONS AND SUFFERINGS OF JESUS CHRIST

Isaias also called Jesus Christ the man of sorrows. It is to Jesus crucified that the words of Jeremias are especially applicable: *Thy grief is great as the sea.*[4956] As all the waters of the rivers meet in the ocean, so in Jesus Christ are united all the pains of the sick, the penitential sufferings of anchorites, and all the pangs and contempts endured by martyrs. He was laden with sorrows both of soul and body. *Thou hast brought all Thy waves over me.*[4957] "O my Father!" said our Redeemer by the mouth of David, "Thou hast sent upon me all the waves of Thy wrath;" and therefore, in the hour of death, he said, that he died sunk in a sea of sorrow and shame: *I have come unto the depths of the sea, and the storm hath sunk me.*[4958] The Apostle writes that Almighty God, in commanding his Son to pay for our sins with his blood, desired thus to show how great was his justice: *Whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to the showing forth of His justice.*[4959]

To form a conception of what Jesus Christ suffered in his life, and still more in his death, we must consider what the same Apostle says in his letter to the Romans: *God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by sin condemned sin in the flesh.*[4960] Jesus Christ being sent by the Father to redeem man, clothed himself with that flesh which was infected with sin; and though he had not contracted the pollution of sin, nevertheless he took upon him the miseries contracted by human nature, as the punishment of sin; and he offered himself to the Eternal Father, to satisfy the divine justice for all the sins of men by his sufferings; he was offered because he himself willed it;[4961] and the Eternal Father, as Isaias writes, *laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.*[4962] Behold Jesus, therefore, laden with all the blasphemies, all the sacrileges, trespasses, thefts, cruelties, and abominable deeds which men have committed and will commit. Behold him, in a word the object of all the divine curses which men have deserved through their sins: *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*[4963]

Therefore St. Thomas writes that both the internal and outward pains of Jesus Christ exceeded all the pains which can be endured in this life.[4964] As for the external pains of the body, it is enough to know that Jesus Christ received from the Father a body prepared on purpose for suffering; and on this account he himself said, *A body hast Thou prepared for Me.*[4965] St.

Thomas remarks that our Lord suffered pains and torments in all his senses: he suffered in his sense of touch, because all his flesh was torn; he suffered in his taste, with gall and vinegar; he suffered in his hearing, through the blasphemies and mockeries that were offered to him; he suffered in his sight, at beholding his mother, who was present at his death. He suffered also in all his members: his head was tortured with thorns, his hands and feet with nails, his face with buffeting and spitting, and all his body with scourging, in the way that was foretold by lsaias, who said that the Redeemer would appear in his Passion like a leper, who has no sound portion in his body, and strikes horror into every one who sees him, as a man who is all wounds from head to foot. It is enough to say, that by such a sight of Jesus scourged, Pilate hoped to be allowed by the Jews to exempt him from death, when he showed him to the people from the balcony, saying, *Behold the Man.*[4966]

St. Isidore says that other men, when their pains are great and last long, through the very severity of the pain, lose all power of feeling it.[4967] But in Jesus Christ it was not so; his last sufferings were as bitter as his first, and the first stripes in his scourging were as torturing as the last; for the Passion of our Redeemer was not the work of man, but of the justice of God, who thought fit to chastise his Son with all the severity which the sins of all mankind deserved.

Thou, O my Jesus, Thou hast desired by Thy sufferings to take upon Thee the punishment due to my sins. Thus, if I had less offended Thee, Thou wouldst have suffered less in Thy death. And knowing this, can I live henceforward without loving Thee, and without mourning continually for the offences that I have committed against Thee? O my Jesus, I grieve that I have despised Thee, and I love Thee above everything. Oh, despise me not; receive me, that I may love Thee, since now I love Thee, and desire to love nothing but Thee. Too ungrateful should I be, if, after all the mercies Thou hast shown me, I should henceforth love anything but Thee.

III

JESUS CHRIST SUFFERED VOLUNTARILY FOR US

Observe how it was foretold by Isaias: *We have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one stricken by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*[4968] Jesus, full of love, of his own will, offered himself, without a reply, to accomplish his Father's will, whose will it was to behold him outraged by executioners at their own pleasure. *He was offered because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth: He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer.*[4969] As a lamb offers itself to be shorn without complaint, so our loving Redeemer in his Passion caused himself to be shorn, not of his wool, but of his very skin, without opening his mouth.

What obligation did he lie under to offer satisfaction for our sins? Yet he chose to take it upon him, that he might deliver us from eternal damnation; and therefore every one of us ought to give him thanks, and say, *Thou hast brought forth my soul, that it should not perish; Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.*[4970]

And thus Jesus voluntarily, through his own goodness, making himself the debtor for our debts, chose to sacrifice himself altogether, even to death in the pains of the cross, as he himself says in the Gospel of St. John: *I lay down My life; no one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.*[4971]

IV

THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS WERE EXTREME

St. Ambrose, writing of the Passion of our Lord, says that Jesus Christ has followers, but no equals.[4972] The saints have endeavored to imitate Jesus Christ in suffering, to render themselves like him; but who ever attained to equalling him in his sufferings? He truly suffered for us, more than all the penitents, all the anchorites, all the martyrs have suffered, because God laid upon him the weight of a rigorous satisfaction to the divine justice for all the sins of men: *The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*[4973] And, as St. Peter writes, Jesus bore all our sins upon the cross, to pay our punishment with his most holy body: *He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree.*[4974] St. Thomas writes that Jesus Christ, in redeeming us, not only accomplished the virtue and infinite merit which belonged to his sufferings, but chose to suffer a depth of pain which might be sufficient to satisfy abundantly and rigorously for all the sins of the human race.[4975] And St. Bonaventure writes: “He chose to suffer as much pain as if he himself had committed all our sins.”[4976] God himself thought right to aggravate the pains of Jesus Christ, until they were equal to the entire payment of all our debts; and thus the prophecy of of Isaias was fulfilled: *The Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity.*[4977]

When we read the lives of the martyrs, it seems at first as if some of them had suffered pains more bitter that those of Jesus Christ; but St. Bonaventure says that the pains of no martyr could ever equal in acuteness the pains of our Saviour, which were more acute than all other pains.[4978] In like manner, St. Thomas writes that the sufferings of Christ were the most severe pains that can be felt in this present life.[4979] Upon which St. Laurence Justinian writes that in each of the torments which our Lord endured, on account of the agony and intensity of the suffering, he suffered as much as all the tortures of martyrs.[4980] And all this was predicted by King David in a few words, when, speaking in the person of Christ, he said, *Thy wrath is strong over Me; Thy terrors have troubled Me.*[4981] Thus all the wrath of God, which he had conceived against our sins, poured itself out upon the person of Jesus Christ; and thus we must interpret what the Apostle said, *He was made a curse for us;*[4982] that is, the object of all the curses deserved by our sins.

V

INTERIOR SUFFERINGS OF OUR SAVIOUR

Hitherto, also, we have spoken only of the outward bodily pains of Jesus Christ. And who can ever explain and comprehend the inward pains of his soul, which a thousand times exceeded his outward pains? This inward torment was such that in the Garden of Gethsemani it caused a sweat of blood to pour forth from all his body, and compelled him to say that this was enough to slay Him: *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*[4983] And since this anguish was enough to cause death, why did he not die? St. Thomas answers that he did not die because he himself prevented his own death, being ready to preserve his life, in order to give it in a while upon the tree of the cross. This sorrow also, which most deeply afflicted Jesus Christ in the garden, afflicted him also throughout his whole life; since, from the first moment when he began to live, he had ever before his eyes the causes of his inward grief; among which the most afflicting was, the sight of the ingratitude of men towards the love which he showed them in his Passion.

Nevertheless, an angel came to comfort him in the garden, as St. Luke relates.[4984] Yet Venerable Bede says that this comfort, instead of lightening his pains, increased them.[4985] The angel, indeed, strengthened him to endure with greater constancy for the salvation of men; upon which Bede remarks that Jesus was then strengthened for suffering, by a representation of the greatness of the fruits of his Passion, without the least diminution of the greatness of his sufferings.[4986] Therefore the Evangelist relates that immediately after the appearance of the angel, Jesus Christ was in an agony, and sweated blood in such abundance that it fell to the ground.[4987]

St. Bonaventure further relates that the agony of Jesus then reached its height;[4988] so that our afflicted Lord, at the sight of the anguish that he must suffer at the termination of his life now come, was so terrified that he prayed his divine Father that he might be delivered from it: *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.*[4989] Yet he said this, not that he might be delivered from the pains, for he had already offered himself to suffer them,—*He was offered, because He Himself willed,*[4990]—but to teach us to understand the agony which he experienced in enduring this death so bitter to the senses; while in his will, in order to accomplish the will of his Father, in order to obtain for us the salvation he so ardently desired, he immediately added: *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*[4991] And he continued thus to pray and to resign himself for the space of three hours: *He prayed the third time, saying the same words.*[4992]

VI

PATIENCE OF JESUS CHRIST—FRUITS OF HIS DEATH

But let us follow the prophecy of Isaias. He foretold the blows, the buffetings. the spitting, and the other insults which Jesus Christ endured the night before his death from the hands of the executioners, who kept him in bondage in the palace of Caiphas, in order to take him the next morning to Pilate, and to make him condemn him to death. *I have given My body to the strikers, and My cheeks to them that plucked them; I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me and spit upon Me.*[4993] These insults are described by St. Mark, who adds that these soldiers, treating Jesus as a false prophet, in order to mock him, covered his face with a cloth, and then striking him with blows and buffetings, bade him prophesy who it was that smote him.[4994]

Isaias goes on to speak of the death of Jesus Christ: *He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter.*[4995] The eunuch of Queen Candace, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, reading this passage, asked of St. Philip, who, by a divine inspiration, had come to join himself with him, of whom these words were to be understood? and the saint then explained to him the whole mystery of the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ; upon which the eunuch, then enlightened by God, desired at once to be baptized.

Isaias then continues, and foretells the great fruits which the world would derive from the death of the Saviour, and says that from it great numbers of saints would be spiritually born: *Because His soul hath labored, He shall see and be filled; by His knowledge shall this my just servant justify many, and He shall bear their iniquities.*[4996]

VII

PROPHECIES OF DAVID—VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

David also predicted other circumstances more in detail respecting the Passion of Jesus Christ. Especially in the twenty-first Psalm he foretold that he should be pierced with nails in his hands and in his feet, so that they should be able to count all his bones.[4997] He foretold that before he should be crucified, his garments should be stripped off from him, and divided among the executioners;[4998] speaking of his outer garments alone, because the inner vestment, which was made without seam, was to be given by lot:

They parted My garments amongst them, and upon My vesture they cast lots. This prophecy is recalled both by St. Matthew and St. John.

David also foretold what St. Matthew thus relates respecting the blasphemies and mockeries of the Jews against Jesus Christ while he hung upon the cross: *They that passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, Vah, Thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save Thy own self; if Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.*[4999] *In like manner also, the chief priests, with the scribes and ancients, mocking, said, He saved others, Himself He cannot save; if He be the king of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God, let Him now deliver Him if He will have Him; for He said, I am the Son of God.* All this was in accordance with what David had foretold in the following words: *All they that saw Me have laughed Me to scorn; they have spoken with the lips and wagged the head. He hoped in the Lord, let Him deliver Him, let Him save Him, seeing He delighteth in Him.*[5000]

David further foretold the great pains which Jesus should suffer on the cross in seeing himself abandoned by all, and even by his own disciples, except St. John and the Blessed Virgin; while his beloved Mother, by her presence, did not lessen the sufferings of her Son, but rather increased them through the compassion that he felt for her, in seeing her thus afflicted by his death. Thus our suffering Lord, in the agonies of his bitter death, had none to comfort him. This also was foretold by David: *I looked for one that would grieve together with Me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort Me, and I found none.*[5001] The greatest suffering, however, of our afflicted Redeemer consisted in his beholding himself abandoned by his Eternal Father, upon which he cried out, according to the prophecy of David, *O God, my God, look upon me; why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from My salvation are the words of My sins;*[5002] as though he had said, “O my Father, the sins of men, which I call my own, because I have taken them upon me, forbid me to be delivered from these sufferings which are ending my life; and why hast Thou, O my God, abandoned me in this my great agony?” To these words of David correspond the words which St. Matthew records as uttered by Jesus upon the cross a little while before his death: *Eli.*

Eli, lamma sabachthani? that is, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?[5003]

VIII

JESUS CHRIST IS THE TRUE MESSIAS—SUPERABUNDANCE OF HIS MERITS

From all this it clearly appears how unjustly the Jews refuse to recognize Jesus Christ as their Messiah and Saviour, because he died so shameful a death. They do not perceive that if, instead of dying as a malefactor upon the cross, Jesus Christ had died a death accounted honorable and glorious by men, he would not have been that Messiah who was promised by God and predicted by the prophets, who, so many ages before, had foretold that our Redeemer should die a death loaded with insults: *He shall give His cheek to the smïter, He shall be overwhelmed with insults.*[5004] All these humiliations, and all the sufferings of Jesus Christ, already foretold by the prophets, were not understood even by his disciples until after his resurrection and ascension into heaven: *These things His disciples did not understand at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him.*[5005]

In a word, by the Passion of Jesus Christ, which was accompanied by so great sufferings and so great ignominy, that which David wrote was fulfilled: *Justice and peace have kissed each other.*[5006] They kissed each other, because, by the merits of Jesus Christ, men obtained peace with God, while, at the same time, the divine justice was more than abundantly satisfied by the death of the Redeemer. We say, *more than abundantly,* because to save us, it was not actually necessary that Jesus Christ should endure so many sufferings and insults. One single drop of blood, one single prayer, would have been sufficient (so to say) to save the whole world; while, in order to strengthen our hopes, and to inflame our love, he thought fit that our redemption should not only be sufficient, but more than abundant, as David foretold: *Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plentiful redemption.*[5007]

This had also been clearly announced by Job, when, speaking in the person of Christ, he said, *Oh that my sins were weighed, and my calamities which I suffer in a balance! As the sand of the sea, it would appear very* *heavy.*[5008] Here Jesus, by the mouth of Job, calls our sins his sins, because he had bound himself to make satisfaction for us, in order to make his justice ours, as St. Augustine expresses it.[5009] On this account the gloss upon the text quoted from Job contains this remark: “In the balance of the divine justice the Passion of Christ outweighs the sins of human nature.”[5010] All the lives of men would not have been sufficient to make satisfaction for a single sin; but the pains of Jesus Christ have paid for all our sins: *He is the propitiation of our sins.*[5011] Therefore, St. Laurence Justinian encourages every sinner who truly repents to hope confidently for pardon through the merits of Jesus Christ, saying to them, “Measure thy sins by the afflictions of Christ the sufferer;”[5012] meaning thereby to say, “O sinner, measure not thy guilt by thy contrition, for all thy works cannot obtain thee pardon; measure it by the pains of Jesus Christ, and from them hope for pardon, for thy Redeemer hath abundantly paid thy debt.”

O Saviour of the world! in Thy flesh, torn with scourgings, with thorns, and with nails, I comprehend the love Thou hast borne me, and my ingratitude in having so injured Thee after such love; but Thy blood is my hope, for, with the price of that blood, Thou hast redeemed me from hell as often as I have deserved it. O God! what would become of me through all eternity, if Thou hadst not determined to save me by Thy death! Miserable man that I am, I have well known that, by losing Thy grace, I condemned myself to live forever in despair, and far from Thee in hell; and yet I have repeatedly dared to turn my back upon Thee. But yet I turn to say. Thy blood is my hope. Oh that I had died, and not offended Thee! O infinite goodness! I deserved to continue blind, and Thou hast enlightened me with new light; I deserved to continue still more hardened, and Thou hast given me tenderness and compunction; wherefore I now abhor the offences I have committed against Thee more than death, and I feel a great desire to love Thee. These graces, which I have received from Thee, assure me that Thou hast now pardoned me, and desirest to save me. O my Jesus! who could cease to love Thee henceforth, or could love anything apart from Thee? I love Thee, O my Jesus, and I trust in Thee; increase in me this confidence and this love, that henceforth I may forget everything, and think of nothing but loving Thee and giving Thee pleasure.

O Mary, Mother of God, obtain for me the grace of being faithful to thy Son and my Redeemer.

Chapter III

THE SCOURGING, THE CROWNING WITH THORNS, AND THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST

I

THE SCOURGING

St. Paul writes respecting Jesus Christ: *He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant.*[5013] On this text St. Bernard remarks, “He took not only the form of a servant, that he might obey, but that of a slave, that he might be beaten.”[5014] Our Redeemer, who is the Lord of all, was willing not only to take upon him the condition of a servant, but even that of a bad servant, that he might be punished as a malefactor, and thus make satisfaction for our sins.

It is certain that the scourging was the most cruel of the tortures that shortened the life of our Redeemer; for the great effusion of blood (already foretold by him, when he said, *This is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many*[5015]) was the principal cause of his death. It is true that this blood was first poured forth in the garden, and was also poured forth in the crowning with thorns, and by the driving-in of the nails; but the largest portion was shed in the scourging, which was also a cause of great shame and insult to Jesus Christ, because this was a punishment inflicted only on slaves. On this account, also, the tyrants who condemned the holy martyrs to death scourged them after their condemnation, and then slew them; while our Lord was scourged before he was condemned to death. He had himself particularly predicted the scourging to his disciples during his life: *He shall be given up to the Gentiles, and mocked and scourged.*[5016] Thus he signified to them the great anguish which this torture would inflict upon him.

It was revealed to St. Bridget that one of the executioners first commanded Jesus Christ to strip himself of his garments. He obeyed, and then embraced the pillar to which he was bound, and was then so cruelly scourged that his whole body was lacerated.[5017] The revelation stated that the stripes not only struck him, but ploughed into his most holy flesh. He was so torn open that, as the same revelation declares, his ribs appeared laid bare.[5018] With this agrees what was written by St. Jerome: “The stripes cut the most holy body of God;”[5019] and also what St. Peter Damian wrote, that the executioners exhausted themselves with fatigue[5020] in scourging our Lord. All this was already foretold by Isaias in the words, *He was bruised for our iniquities;*[5021] the word bruised signifying the same as being broken to pieces, or as being pounded in a mortar.

Behold me, O my Jesus! I am one of Thy most cruel executioners, who have scourged Thee with my sins; have pity upon me. O my loving Saviour! a heart is too little with which to love Thee. I desire no longer to live for myself, I desire to live only for Thee, my love, my all. Wherefore I say to Thee, with St. Catharine of Genoa, “O love! O love! let there be no more sins. It is enough that I have already offended Thee so much! now I hope to be wholly Thine, and with Thy grace I desire to be ever Thine through all eternity.”

II

THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

The divine Mother revealed to the same St. Bridget that the crown of thorns surrounded the whole sacred head of her Son, as low down as the middle of his forehead; and that the thorns were driven in with such violence that the blood gushed out in streams over all his countenance, so that the whole face of Jesus Christ appeared covered with blood.[5022]

Origen writes that this crown of thorns was not taken from the head of the Lord until he had expired upon the cross.[5023] In the mean time, as the inner garment of Christ was not sewed together, but woven all in one piece, on this account it was not divided among the soldiers, like his outer garments, but it was given by lot, as St. John writes: *The soldiers, therefore, when they had crucified Him, took His garments, and made four parts, to* *every soldier a part, and also His coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said then one to another: Let us not cut it; but let us cast lots for it, whose it shall be.*[5024] As this garment, then, must have been drawn off over the head, many authors write, with great probability, that when Jesus was stripped of it, the crown of thorns was taken from his head, and was replaced before he was nailed to the cross.

In the book of Genesis it is written: *Cursed is the earth in thy work; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.*[5025] This curse was inflicted by God upon Adam and upon all his posterity; and by the earth here spoken of we must understand, not only the material earth, but the flesh of man, which, being infected by the sin of Adam, brings forth only the thorns of sin. In order to remedy this infection, says Tertullian, it was necessary that Jesus Christ should offer to God in sacrifice this great torment of the crowning with thorns.[5026]

This torture also, besides being in itself most acute, was accompanied by blows and spitting, and by the mockings of the soldiers, as St. Matthew and St. John relate: *And plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand. And bowing the knee before Him, they mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And spitting upon Him, they took the reed, and struck His head.*[5027] *And the soldiers plaiting a crown of thorns, put it upon His head; and they put on Him a purple garment. And they came to Him and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they gave Him blows.*[5028]

O my Jesus! what thorns have I added to this crown with my sinful thoughts to which I have consented! I would I could die with grief! Pardon me, through the merit of this grief, which Thou didst then accept in order to pardon me. O my Lord, thus bruised and thus despised! Thou hast laden Thyself with all these pains and mockeries in order to move me to have compassion upon Thee, that, at least through compassion, I may love Thee, and no more displease Thee. It is enough, O my Jesus; cease to suffer more: I am convinced of the love that Thou bearest to me, and I love Thee with all my heart. But now I see that it is not enough for Thee; Thou art not satisfied with thorns, until Thou findest Thyself dead with anguish upon the cross. O goodness! O infinite love! Miserable is the heart that loves Thee not.

III

The cross began to torture Jesus Christ before he was nailed upon it; for after he was condemned by Pilate, the cross on which he was to die was given to him to carry to Calvary, and, without refusing, he took it upon his shoulders.[5029] Speaking of this, St. Augustine writes: "If we regard the wickedness of his tormentors, the insult was great; if we regard the love of Jesus, the mystery is great;[5030] for in carrying the cross, our Captain then lifted up the standard under which his followers upon this earth must be enrolled and must fight, in order to be made his companions in the kingdom of heaven."

St. Basil, speaking of the passage in Isaias, *A child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon His shoulder,*[5031] says "that earthly tyrants load their subjects with unjust burdens, in order to increase their own power; but Jesus Christ chose to take upon himself the burden of the cross, and to carry it, in order to leave life to us therein, that he might obtain salvation for us." He further remarks that the kings of the earth found their sovereignties in the force of arms and in the heaping-up of riches; but Jesus Christ founded his sovereignty in the insults of the cross,—that is, in humbling himself and in suffering,—and on this account he willingly accepted it, and carried it on that painful journey, in order, by his example, to give us courage to embrace with resignation every cross, and thus to follow him. Wherefore, also, he said to his disciples, *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.*[5032]

It is useful here to note the beautiful expressions applied to the cross by St. John Chrysostom:

He calls it *the hope of the despairing;*[5033] for what hope of salvation would sinners have were it not for the cross on which Jesus Christ died to save them?

The guide of the voyager;[5034] for the humiliation of the cross (that is, of tribulation) is the cause which, in this life that is like a sea of dangers, gives us grace to keep the divine law, and to amend ourselves after our trangressions; as the prophet says, *It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I might learn Thy justifications.*[5035]

The counsellor of the just;[5036] because in adversities the just learn wisdom, and gain motives for uniting themselves more closely to God.

The rest of the troubled;[5037] for where can the troubled find relief but in beholding that cross on which their Redeemer and God died of pain for love of them?

The glorying of the martyrs;[5038] because in this consists the glory of the holy martyrs, that they were able to unite their deaths to the pains and death which Jesus Christ suffered on the cross; as St. Paul says, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*[5039]

The physician of the sick;[5040] and great indeed is the remedy of the cross to those who are sick in spirit; tribulations make them repent, and detach them from the world.

The fount for the thirsty;[5041] the cross, that is, suffering for Jesus Christ, being the desire of the saints, as St. Teresa was wont to say, “Oh that I might suffer! oh that I might die!” and as St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi said, “May I suffer, and not die;” meaning that she would refuse to die and to go to rejoice in heaven, in order that she might continue to suffer upon this earth.

Finally, to speak of all alike, both the just and sinners, every one has his own cross. The just, though they enjoy peace of conscience, yet all have their vicissitudes; at one time they are comforted by visits of divine mercy, at another they are afflicted by bodily vexations and infirmities, and especially by desolation of spirit, by darkness and weariness, by scruples and temptations, and by fears for their own salvation. Much heavier are the crosses of sinners, through remorse of conscience, through the terrors of eternal punishment, which from time to time affright them, and through the pains they suffer when things go wrong with them. The saints, when adversities befall them, unite themselves with the divine will, and suffer them with patience; but how can the sinner calm himself by recollecting the divine will, when he is living at enmity with God? The pains of the enemies of God are unmixed pains, pains without relief. Wherefore St. Teresa was wont to say “that he who loves God embraces the cross, and thus does not feel it; while he who does not love him drags the cross along by force and thus cannot but feel it.”

IV

THE CRUCIFIXION

It was revealed to St. Bridget that when the Saviour saw himself laid upon the cross, he stretched out his right hand to the place where it was to be nailed.[5042] They then immediately nailed the other hand, and then his sacred feet; and Jesus Christ was left to die upon this bed of anguish. St. Augustine says that the punishment of the cross was a most bitter torment, because, upon the cross, death itself was prolonged, lest the pain should I be speedily ended.[5043]

O God! what horror must then have smitten heaven, at the sight of the Son of the Eternal Father crucified between two thieves! Such, in truth, was the prophecy of Isaias: *He was reputed with the wicked.*[5044] Therefore St. John Chrysostom, contemplating Jesus upon the cross, cried out, full of amazement and love, "I see him in the midst, in the holy Trinity; I see him in the midst, between Moses and Elias; I see him in the midst, between two thieves."[5045] As though he had said, "I see my Saviour first in heaven between the Father and the Holy Ghost; I see him upon the Mount Tabor, between two saints, Moses and Elias; how, then, can I see him crucified upon Calvary between two thieves?" How could this come to pass, but through the divine decree, that thus he must die, to satisfy by his death for the sins of men, and to save from death, as Isaias had foretold: *He was reputed with the wicked, and He hath borne the sins of many.*[5046]

The same prophet also asks, *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra; this beautiful one in His robe, walking in the greatness of His strength?*[5047] (Edom signifying a red color, though somewhat dark, as is explained in Gen. 25:30); and he gives the answer, *I that speak justice, and am a defender to save.*[5048] The person who thus replies is, according to the interpreters, Jesus Christ, who says, I am the promised Messiah, who am come to save men, by triumphing over their enemies.

Then, further, he is again asked, *Why is Thy apparel red, and Thy garments like theirs that that tread in the wine-press?*[5049] And he answers, *I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with Me.*[5050] Tertullian, St. Cyprian, and St. Augustine explain the winepress to mean the Passion of Jesus Christ, in which his garments—that is, his most holy flesh—was covered with blood and wounds, according to what St. John wrote: *He was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood;*

and His name is called the Word of God.[5051] St. Gregory, explaining the expression *I have trodden the wine-press alone*, says, “He trod the wine-press, and was himself trodden.”[5052] He trod it, because Jesus Christ, by his Passion, overcame the devil; he was trodden, because, in his Passion, his body was bruised and broken, as the grapes are broken in the wine-press, and, as Isaias expresses it in another text, *The Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity.*[5053]

And now behold this Lord, who was fairest among men,[5054] appears on Calvary with his form so disfigured by torments, that it struck horror into all who saw it. Yet this deformity makes him seem more beautiful in the eyes of souls that love him, because these wounds, these marks of the scourging, this lacerated flesh, are all tokens and proofs of the love he bears them; upon which the poet Petrucci beautifully sings, “O Lord, if Thon sufferest scourgings for us, to the souls that are bound to Thee, the more deformed Thou art, the more fair dost Thou appear.”

St. Augustine adds, “He hung in deformity upon the cross, but his deformity is our beauty.”[5055] And truly so, because this deformity of Jesus crucified was the cause of the beauty of our souls, which, when they were deformed, were washed with his divine blood, and became fair and lovely, according to what St. John wrote, *Who are these that are clothed in white garments? These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*[5056] All the saints, as being children of Adam (with the exception of the Blessed Virgin), were at one time covered with a foul garment, and soiled with Adam’s sin and with their own; but being washed with the blood of the Lamb, they became white and agreeable in the sight of God.

Well, then, didst Thou say, O my Jesus, that, when Thou shouldst be lifted up upon the cross, Thou wouldst draw everything unto Thee;[5057] “and this he said, signifying by what death he should die.” Truly Thou hast left undone nothing to draw all hearts unto Thee. Many are the happy souls who, in seeing Thee crucified and dying for love of them, have abandoned everything—possessions, dignities, country, and kindred, even to the embracing of torments and death—in order to give themselves wholly to Thee. Unhappy they who resist Thy graces, which Thou hast gained for them with Thy great labors and sorrows. O my God, this will be their great torment in hell, to think that they have lost a God who, to draw them to love him, gave his life upon a cross, that of their own choice they have perished, and that there will be no remedy for their ruin through all eternity. O my Redeemer, I have already deserved to fall into this ruin, through the sins I have committed against Thee. Alas, how often have I resisted Thy grace, which sought to draw me unto Thee, and, in order to cleave to my own inclinations, have despised Thy love, and turned my back upon Thee! Oh that I had died before I had offended Thee! Oh that I had ever loved Thee! I thank Thee, O my love, that Thou hast borne with me with so much patience, and that, instead of abandoning me, as I deserved, Thou hast repeated Thy calls, and increased Thy lights and Thy loving impulses upon me. *I will sing the mercies of God forever.*[5058] Oh, cease not, my Saviour and my hope, to continue to draw me, and to multiply Thy graces upon me, that I may love Thee in heaven with more fervor, remembering the many mercies that Thou hast shown me, after all the offences that I have committed against Thee. I hope for all, through that precious blood which Thou hast shed for me, and that bitter death which Thou hast endured for me.

O holy Virgin Mary, protect me; pray to Jesus for me.

V

JESUS UPON THE CROSS

Jesus upon the cross was a spectacle which filled heaven and earth with amazement, at the sight of an Almighty God, the Lord of all, dying upon an infamous gibbet, condemned as a malefactor between two other malefactors. It was a spectacle of justice, in displaying the Eternal Father, in order that his justice might be satisfied; punishing the sins of men in the person of his only-begotten Son, loved by him as himself. It was a spectacle of mercy, displaying his innocent Son dying a death so shameful and so bitter, in order to save his creatures from the punishment that was due to them. Especially was it a sight of love, in displaying a God who offered and gave his life to redeem from death his slaves and enemies.

It is this spectacle which ever was and ever will be the dearest object of the contemplations of the saints, through which they have counted it little to strip themselves of all earthly pleasures and goods, and to embrace with desire and joy both pain and death, in order to make some return of gratitude to a God who died for love of them.

Comforted by the sight of Jesus derided upon the cross, the saints have loved contempt more than worldly people have loved all the honors of the world. At the sight of Jesus naked and dying upon the cross, they have sought to abandon all the good things of this earth. At the sight of him all wounded upon the cross, while the blood flowed forth from all his limbs, they have learnt to abhor sensual pleasures, and have sought to afflict their flesh as much as they could, in order to accompany with their own sufferings the sufferings of the Crucified. At the sight of the obedience and conformity of will retained by Jesus Christ to the will of his Father, they have labored to conquer all those appetites which were not conformed to the divine pleasure; while many, though occupied in works of piety, yet, knowing that to be deprived of their own will was the sacrifice the most welcome to the heart of God which they could offer, have entered into some religious Order, to lead a life of obedience, and subject their own will to that of others. At the sight of the patience of Jesus Christ, in being willing to suffer so many pains and insults for the love of us, they have received with satisfaction and joy injuries, infirmities, persecutions, and the torments of tyrants. At the sight of the love which Jesus Christ has shown to us in sacrificing to God his life upon the cross for us, they have sacrificed to Jesus Christ all they possessed,—their property, their pleasures, their honors, and their life.

How is it, then, that so many Christians, although they know by faith that Jesus Christ died for love of them, instead of devoting themselves wholly to love and serve him, devote themselves to offend and despise him for the sake of brief and miserable pleasures? Whence comes this ingratitude? It comes from their forgetfulness of the Passion and death of Jesus Christ. And, O my God, what will be their remorse and shame at the day of judgment, when the Lord shall reproach them with all that he has done and suffered for them?

Let us not, then, cease, O devout souls, ever to keep before our eyes Jesus crucified, and dying in the midst of torments and insults through love of us. From the Passion of Jesus Christ all the saints have drawn those flames of love which made them forget all the good things of this world, and even their own selves, to give themselves up wholly to love and please this divine Saviour, who has so loved men that it seems as if he could not have done more in order to be loved by them. In a word, the cross, that is, the Passion of Jesus Christ, is that which will gain for us the victory over all our passions and all the temptations that hell will hold out to us, in order to separate us from God. The cross is the road and ladder by which we mount to heaven. Happy he who embraces it during his life, and does not put it off till the hour of death. He that dies embracing the cross has a sure pledge of eternal life, which is promised to all those who follow Jesus Christ with their cross.

O my crucified Jesus! to make Thyself loved by men Thou has spared nothing; Thou hast even given Thy life with a most painful death; how, then, can men who love their kindred, their friends, and even animals from whom they receive any token of affection, be so ungrateful to Thee as to despise Thy grace and Thy love, for the sake of miserable and vain delights! Oh, miserable that I am, I am one of those ungrateful beings who, for things of no worth, have renounced Thy friendship, and have turned my back upon Thee. I have deserved that Thou shouldst drive me from Thy face, as I have often banished Thee from my heart. But I know that Thou dost not cease to ask my heart of me: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.*[5059] Yea, O my Jesus, as Thou desirest that I should love Thee and offerest me pardon, I renounce all creatures, and henceforth I desire to love Thee alone, my Creator and my Redeemer. Thou dost deserve to be the only object of my soul's love.

O Mary, Mother of God, and refuge of sinners, pray for me; obtain for me the grace of loving God, and I ask for nothing more.

Chapter IV

THE INSULTS OFFERED TO JESUS CHRIST WHILE HE WAS HANGING UPON THE CROSS

I

AGONY OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

Pride, as we have said, was the cause of the sin of Adam, and, consequently, of the ruin of the human race. On this account Jesus Christ came to repair this ruin by his own humiliation; not refusing to embrace the shame of all the insults that his enemies offered him, as he had himself predicted by David: *Since for thy sake I have endured reproach, confusion hath covered My face*.[5060] The whole life of our Redeemer was filled with shame and insults which he received from men; and he did not refuse to accept them, even to the extent of death itself, in order to deliver us from eternal shame: *Who, having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame*.[5061]

O God, who would not mourn with pity, and love Jesus Christ, if he would consider that he suffered for the three hours during which his crucifixion lasted, and he was in agonies upon the cross? Every one of his limbs was stricken and tormented, and one could not relieve the other. The afflicted Lord on that bed of pain could not move, being fastened with nails in his hands and feet; all his most sacred flesh was full of wounds, while those of his hands and feet were most painful, and were compelled to sustain his whole body; so that wheresoever he rested upon that cross, whether on his hands or his feet, there his pains increased. It may be truly said, that in those three hours of agony Jesus suffered as many deaths as he passed moments upon the cross. O innocent Lamb, who hast suffered such things for me, have mercy upon me! Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me![5062]

Yet these outward pains of the body were the least bitter; the inward pains of the soul were far geater. His blessed soul was all desolate, and deprived of every drop of consolation and sensible relief; all was weariness, sorrow, and afflictions. This he uttered in the words, *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*[5063] Drowned in this sea of inward and outward griefs, our Saviour, so worthy of our love, thought fit to end his life, as he had foretold by the mouth of David: *I have come into the depths of the sea, and the storm hath sunk Me.*[5064]

II

“IF THOU BE THE SON OF GOD, COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS”

Behold also, that, at the very time when he was thus in agonies upon the cross, and was drawing near to death, all they who stood near him, priests, scribes, elders, and soldiers, wearied themselves in adding to his pangs with insults and mockeries. St. Matthew writes, *They that passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads.*[5065] This was already prophesied by David, when he wrote, in the person of Christ, *All they that saw Me reviled Me, they spoke with their lips, and wagged their head.*[5066]

They who passed before him said, *Vah, Thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save Thy own self; if Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.*[5067] Thou hast boasted, they said, that Thou wouldst destroy the temple, and rebuild it in three days. Yet Jesus had not said that he could destroy the material temple, and raise it again in three days; but he had said: *Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again.*[5068] With these words he indeed intended to express his own power; but he really (as Euthymius and others explain it) spoke allegorically, foretelling that, through the act of the Jews, his soul would be one day separated from his body, but that in three days it would rise again.

They said, *Save Thyself.*[5069] O ungrateful men! If this great Son of God, when he was made man, had chosen to save himself, he would not voluntarily have chosen death.

If Thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross;[5070] yet, if Jesus had come down, he would not have accomplished our redemption by his death; we could not have been delivered from eternal death. “He would not come down," says St. Ambrose, "lest when he came down, I should die."[5071] Theophylact writes, that they who said this spoke by the instigation of the devil, who sought to hinder the salvation which was about to be accomplished by Jesus by means of the cross.[5072] And then he adds that the Lord would not have mounted the cross, if he had been willing to come down from it without accomplishing our redemption.[5073] Also St. John Chrysostom says that the Jews uttered this insult in order that Jesus might die insulted as an impostor in the sight of all men, and be proved unable to deliver himself from the cross, after he had boasted that he was the Son of God.[5074]

St. John Chrysostom also remarks that the Jews ignorantly said, *If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross;* for if Jesus had come down from the cross before he had died, he would not have been that Son of God who was promised, and who was to save us by his death. On this account, says the saint, he did not come down from the cross until he was dead, because he had come for the very purpose of giving his life for our salvation.[5075] St. Athanasius makes the same remark, saying that our Redeemer chose to be known as the true Son of God, not by coming down from the cross, but by continuing upon it till he was dead.[5076] And thus it was foretold by the prophets that our Redeemer must be crucified and die, as St. Paul wrote, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, that cursed is every one who hangeth on a tree.*[5077]

III

"HE SAVED OTHERS, HIMSELF HE CANNOT SAVE."

St. Matthew goes on to relate the other insults which the Jews offered to Jesus Christ: *He saved others, Himself He cannot save.*[5078]

Thus they treated him as an impostor, by referring to the miracles which had been wrought by him in the restoration of the dead to life, and by treating him as one who was unable to save his own life.

St. Leo replies to them, that this was not the proper hour for Jesus to display his divine power; and that he would not hinder the redemption of man in order to confound their blasphemies.[5079]

St. Gregory suggests another motive why Jesus would not descend from the cross: “If he had then come down, he would not have shown to us the virtue of patience.”[5080] Truly could Jesus Christ deliver himself from the cross and from these insults; yet this was not the time for making a display of his power, but to teach us patience in our toils, in order that we may fulfil the divine pleasure; and therefore Jesus would not deliver himself from death before he had fulfilled his Father’s will, and in order that he might not deprive us of this great example of patience. “Because he taught patience, he laid aside his power,”[5081] says St. Augustine.

The patience which Jesus Christ exercised in enduring the shame of all the insults which were offered him by the Jews obtained for us grace to endure with patience and peace of mind all the humiliations and persecutions of the world. Therefore St. Paul, speaking of the journey of Jesus Christ to Calvary when he carried the cross, thus exhorts us to accompany him, *Let us, therefore, go forth to meet him without the camp. bearing his reproach.*[5082] The saints, when they received injuries, did not think of revenging themselves, nor were they disturbed; they were even comforted at seeing themselves despised, as Jesus Christ was despised. Therefore let us not fear to embrace, for the love of Jesus Christ, all the insults that were offered to him, since Jesus Christ has suffered so many insults for love of us.

O my Redeemer, for the time past I have not done this. For the future I desire to suffer everything for love of Thee: give me strength to put my desires into execution.

IV

“IF GOD LOVES HIM, LET HIM DELIVER HIM NOW.”

The Jews, not satisfied with the injuries and blasphemies which they had offered to Jesus Christ, reproached him with the name of his Father, saying, *He trusted in God, let Him now deliver Him, if He will have Him; for He said, I am the Son of God.*[5083] This sacrilegious expression of the Jews was already foretold by David, when he said in the name of Christ, *All they that saw Me derided Me; they spoke with their lips, and shook their head, saying, He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him, let Him save Him; for He* *desireth Him.*[5084] These very men who thus spoke were called bulls, dogs, and lions, by David in the same Psalm: *Fat bulls encompassed me. Many dogs surrounded me. Save me from the mouth of the lion.*[5085] Thus, when the Jews said, *Let Him now deliver Him, if He will have Him,*[5086] they truly showed that they were these bulls, dogs, and lions which had been foretold by David.

These very same blasphemies, which were one day to be spoken against the Saviour and against God, were already foretold by the Wise Man with even more exactness: *He declares that He has the knowledge of God, and calls Himself the Son of God, and He glories that He has God for His Father. If he is the true Son of God, let Him accept Him, and deliver Him from the hands of His adversaries. Let us try Him with insults and torments, that we may know His reverence, and prove His patience; let us condemn Him to a most shameful death.*[5087]

The chief priests were stirred up by envy and hatred against Jesus Christ thus to insult him; but, at the same time, they were not exempt from the fear of some great punishment, as they could not deny the miracles wrought by the Lord. Wherefore all the priests and chiefs of the synagogue continued disturbed and in terror, and therefore desired to be present at his death, in order to be freed from this fear which tormented them. Seeing him then fastened upon the cross, and that he was not delivered from it by his Father, they proceeded with increased audacity to taunt him with his impotence and his persuasion that he was the Son of God. They said, “He trusted in God, that he was his Father; why, then, does not God deliver him if he loves him as his Son?” But grievously were these malicious men in error, for God did truly love Jesus Christ, and loved him as his Son; and he loved him on this very account, that Jesus was sacrificing his life upon the cross for the salvation of men, in order to obey his Father. This Jesus himself had said, *I lay down My life for My sheep . . . therefore hath the Father loved Me, because I lay down My life.*[5088] The Father had already destined him to be the victim of this great sacrifice, which would bring to him an infinite glory, as the God-man would be sacrificed, and which would ensure the salvation of all men; but if the Father had delivered him from death, the sacrifice would have been imperfect, and then the Father would have been deprived of that glory, while men would have been deprived of their salvation.

Tertullian writes that all the insults that were offered to Jesus Christ were a secret remedy for our pride; for these injuries, which were unjust, and unworthy of him, were nevertheless necessary to our salvation,[5089] and worthy of a God who chose to suffer so much in order to save man. And then, speaking of the reproaches laid against Jesus, he adds: “Of him they were unworthy, but to us they were necessary, and therefore they were worthy of God, because nothing is so worthy of God as the salvation of man.”[5090]

Let us, therefore, who boast that we are disciples of Jesus Christ, be ashamed of angrily resenting the injuries which we receive from men, because a God made man suffered the same for our salvation with so much patience. And let us not be ashamed of imitating Jesus Christ in pardoning those who offend us, as he himself declares that in the day of judgment he will be ashamed of those who in this life have been ashamed of him.[5091]

O my Jesus! how can I grieve for any insults that I may receive, who have so often deserved to be trodden under foot by the devils in hell! Oh, by the merits of all the insults which Thou didst suffer in Thy Passion, give me grace to suffer with patience all the insults which may be offered to me, through love of Thee, who hast embraced so many for love of me. I love Thee above everything, and desire to suffer for Thee, who hast suffered so much for me. I hope for everything from Thee, who hast bought me with Thy blood. And I also hope in thy intercession, O my mother Mary.

Chapter V

THE SEVEN WORDS SPOKEN BY JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS

I

PATER! DIMITTE ILLIS; NON ENIM SCIUNT QUID FACIUNT[5092]

> “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

O loving tenderness of Jesus towards men! St. Augustine says that when the Saviour was injured by his enemies, he besought pardon for them; for he thought not so much of the injuries he received from them, and the death they inflicted upon him, as upon the love which brought him to die for them.[5093]

But some may say, Why did Jesus pray to the Father to pardon them, when he himself could have forgiven their injuries? St. Bernard replies that he prayed to the Father, not because he could not himself forgive them, but that he might teach us to pray for them that persecute us.[5094] The holy abbot says also in another place: “O wonderful thing! He cries, Forgive; they cry, Crucify.”[5095] Arnold of Chartres remarks that while Jesus was laboring to save the Jews, they were laboring to destroy themselves; but the love of the Son had more power with God than the blindness of this ungrateful people.[5096] St. Cyprian writes, “Even he who sheds the blood of Christ is made to live by the blood of Christ.”[5097] Jesus Christ, in dying, had so great a desire to save all men, that he made even those enemies who shed his blood with torments partakers of that blood.[5098] Look, says St. Augustine, at thy God upon his cross; see how he prays for them that crucify him; and then deny pardon to thy brother who has offended thee!

St. Leo writes[5099] that it was through this prayer of Christ that so many thousands of Jews were converted at the preaching of St. Paul, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles; whilst (says St. Jerome) God did not will that the prayer of Jesus Christ should continue without effect, and therefore at the very, time he caused many of the Jews to embrace the faith. But why were they not all converted? I reply that the prayer of Jesus Christ was conditional, and that they who were converted were not of the number of those of whom it was said, *Ye have resisted the Holy Ghost.*[5100]

In this prayer Jesus Christ further included all sinners; so that we all may say to God:

O Eternal Father, hear the prayer of Thy beloved Son, who prayed to Thee to pardon us. We deserve not this pardon, but Jesus Christ has merited it, who by his death has more than abundantly satisfied for our sins: No, my God, I would not be obstinate like the Jews; I repent, O my Father, with all my heart, for having offended Thee, and through the merits of Jesus Christ I ask for pardon. And Thou, O my Jesus, Thou dost know that I am poor and sick, and lost through my sins; but Thou hast come from heaven on purpose to heal the sick, and to save the lost, when they repent of having offended Thee. Of Thee Isaias said, *He came to save that which had perished.*[5101] And of Thee St. Matthew writes, *The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.*[5102]

II

AMEN DICO TIBI: HODIE MECUM ERIS IN PARADISE[5103]

“Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.”

St. Luke writes that of the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus Christ, one continued obstinate, the other was converted; and seeing his miserable companion blaspheming Jesus Christ, and saying, *If Thou art the Christ, save Thyself and us,* he turned and reproved him, saying that they were deservedly punished, but that Jesus was innocent. Then he turned to Jesus himself and said, *Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom;* by which words he recognized Jesus Christ as his true Lord and the king of heaven. Jesus then promised him paradise on that very day; *Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise.*[5104] A learned author writes that, in conformity with this promise, the Lord, on that very day, immediately after his death, showed himself openly, and rendered the repentant thief blessed, though he did not confer on him all the delight of heaven before he entered there.

Arnold of Chartres, in his treatise on the seven words, remarks upon all the virtues which the good thief exercised at the time of his death: “He believed, he repented, he confessed, he preached, he loved, he trusted, he prayed.”[5105]

He exercised faith when he said, *When Thou comest into Thy kingdom;* believing that Jesus Christ, after his death, would enter into his glorious kingdom. He believed, says St. Gregory, that he whom he saw dying was about to reign.[5106]

He exercised penitence together with the confession of his sins, saying, *We indeed justly; for we received the due reward of our deeds.* St. Augustine observes that before his confession he had not boldness to hope for pardon; he did not dare to say *Remember me,* until, by the confession of his guilt, he had thrown off the burden of his sins.[5107] On this St. Athanasius exclaims, O blessed thief, thou hast stolen a kingdom by that confession![5108]

This holy penitent also exercised other noble virtues; he preached, declaring the innocence of Jesus Christ, *This man hath done no evil.* He exercised love to God, receiving death with resignation, as the punishment due to his sins, saying, *We receive the due reward of our deeds.* Hence St. Cyprian, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine do not scruple to call him a martyr; and Silveira says[5109] that this happy thief was a true martyr, as the executioners broke his legs with increased fury, because he had declared the innocence of Jesus; and that the saint willingly accepted this torment for the love of his Lord.

Let us also in this circumstance remark the goodness of God, who always gives us more than we ask for, as St. Ambrose says, “The Lord always grants more than we ask; the thief prayed that Jesus would remember him, and Jesus said, *To-day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.*[5110] St. John Chrysostom further remarks that no one merited the possession of paradise before this thief.[5111] Thus is confirmed what God said by Ezechiel, that, when the sinner heartily repents of his sins, God pardons him in the same way as if he had forgotten all the sins he had committed.[5112] And Isaias gives us to understand that God is so urgent for our good, that when we pray he instantly hears us.[5113] St. Augustine says that God is ever prepared to embrace penitent sinners.[5114]

And thus it was that the cross of the wicked thief, being endured with impatience, became to him a precipice leading to hell; while the cross endured with patience by the good thief became to him a ladder to paradise. Happy wert thou, O holy thief, who hadst the fortune to unite thy death to the death of thy Saviour.

O my Jesus! henceforth I sacrifice to Thee my life, and I seek for grace to enable me, at the hour of my death, to unite the sacrifice of my life to that which Thou didst offer to God upon the cross, and through which I hope to die in Thy grace, and, loving Thee with pure love stripped of every earthly affection, to attain to love Thee with all my powers through all eternity.

III

MULIER, ECCE FILIUS TUUS. . . . ECCE MATER TUA[5115]

“Woman, behold thy son. . . . Behold thy mother.”

We read in St. Mark that on Calvary there were present many women, who watched Jesus on the cross, but from afar off, among whom was Mary Magdalen.[5116] We believe, also, that among these holy women was the divine mother also; while St. John says that the Blessed Virgin stood, not afar off, but close to the cross, together with Mary of Cleophas and Mary Magdalen.[5117] Euthymius attempts to reconcile this discrepancy, and says that the Holy Virgin, seeing her son drawing nearer to death, came from among the rest of the women close up to the cross, overcoming her fear of the soldiers who surrounded it, and enduring with patience all the insults and repulses which she had to suffer from these soldiers who watched the condemned, in order that she might draw near her beloved Son.[5118] Thus also a learned author, who wrote the life of Jesus Christ, says, “There were his friends, who watched him from afar; but the Holy Virgin, the Magdalen, and another Mary stood close to the cross, with John; wherefore Jesus, seeing his mother and John, spoke to them the words above mentioned. Truly it was the mother who not even in the terror of death deserted her Son.[5119] Some other mothers fly when they see their children dying; their love does not suffer them to be present at their death without the power of relieving them; but the holy mother, the nearer her Son approached to death, the nearer she drew to his cross."

The afflicted mother thus was standing close to the cross; and as the Son sacrificed his life, so she offered her pangs for the salvation of men, sharing with perfect resignation all the pains and insults which her Son suffered in his death. A writer says that they who would describe her fainting at the foot of the cross dishonor the constancy of Mary. She was the strong woman, who neither fainted nor wept, as St. Ambrose writes: "I read of her standing, but not of her weeping."[5120]

The pain which the Holy Virgin endured in the Passion of her Son exceeded all the pains which a human heart can endure; but the grief of Mary was not a barren grief, like that of other mothers who behold the sufferings of their children; it was a fruitful grief, since through the merits of her so great grief, and through her love (according to the opinion of St. Augustine), as she was the natural mother of our head Jesus Christ,[5121] so she then became the spiritual mother of us who are his faithful members, in co-operating with him by her love in causing us to be born, and to be the children of the Church.

St. Bernard writes that upon Mount Calvary both of these two great martyrs, Jesus and Mary, were silent, because the great pain that they endured took from them the power of speaking.[5122] The mother looked upon her Son in agony upon the cross, and the Son looked upon the mother in agony at the foot of the cross, and torn with compassion for the pains he suffered.

Mary and John then stood nearer to the cross than the other women, so that they could more easily hear the words and mark the looks of Jesus Christ in so great a tumult. St. John writes: *When Jesus then saw His mother and the disciple standing, whom He loved, he saith to His mother: Woman, behold thy son.*[5123] But if Mary and John were accompanied by other women, why is it said that Jesus beheld his mother and the disciple, as if the other women had not been perceived by him? St. John Chrysostom writes that love always makes us look more closely at the object of our love.[5124] And St. Ambrose in a similar way writes, It is natural that we should see those we love before any others.[5125] The Blessed Virgin revealed to St. Bridget that in order that Jesus might look upon Mary, who stood by the side of the cross, he was obliged first to compress his eyebrows in order to remove the blood from his eyes, which prevented him from seeing.[5126]

Jesus said to her, Woman, behold thy son! with his eyes pointing out St. John, who stood by his side. But why did he call her *woman*, and not *mother?* He called her "woman," we may say, because, drawing now near to death, he spoke as if departing from her, as if he had said, Woman, in a little while I shall be dead, and thou wilt have no Son upon earth; I leave thee, therefore, John, who will serve and love thee as a son. And from this we may understand that St. Joseph was already dead, since if he had been still alive he would not have been separated from his wife.

All antiquity asserts that St. John was ever a virgin, and specially on this account he was given as a son to Mary, and honored in being made to occupy the place of Jesus Christ; on which account the holy Church sings, "To him a virgin He commended his Virgin Mother."[5127] And from the moment of the Lord's death, as it is written, St. John received Mary into his own house, and assisted and obeyed her throughout her life, as if she had been his own mother.[5128] Jesus Christ willed that this beloved disciple should be an eye-witness of his death, in order that he might more confidently bear witness to it in his Gospel, and might say, *He that saw it has borne witness;*[5129] and in his Epistle, *What we have seen with our eyes, that we both testify and make known to you.*[5130] And on this account the Lord, at the time when the other disciples abandoned him, gave to St. John strength to be present until his death in the midst of so many enemies.

But let us return to the holy Virgin, and examine more deeply the reason why Jesus called Mary *woman,* and not *mother.* By this expression he desired to show that she was the great woman foretold in the Book of Genesis, who would crush the serpent's head: *I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.*[5131] It is doubted by none that this woman was the Blessed Virgin Mary, who, by means of her Son, would crush the head of Satan,—if it be not more correct to say that her Son, by means of her who would bear him, would do this. Naturally was Mary the enemy of the serpent, because Lucifer was haughty, ungrateful, and disobedient, while she was humble, grateful, and obedient. It is said, *She shall crush thy head,* because Mary, by means of her Son, beat down the pride of Lucifer, who lay in wait for the heel of Jesus Christ, which means his holy humanity, which was the part of him which was nearest to the earth; while the Saviour by his death had the glory of conquering him, and of depriving him of that empire which, through sin, he had obtained over the human race.

God said to the serpent, *I will put enmities between thy seed and the woman.* This shows that after the fall of man, through sin, notwithstanding all that would be done by the redemption of Jesus Christ, there would be two families and two posterities in the world, the seed of Satan signifying the family of sinners, his children corrupted by him, and the seed of Mary signifying the holy family, which includes all the just, with their head Jesus Christ. Hence Mary was destined to be the mother both of the head and of the members, namely, the faithful. The Apostle writes: *Ye are all one in Christ Jesus; and if ye are Christ's, then ye are the seed of Abraham.*[5132] Thus, Jesus Christ and the faithful are one single body, because the head cannot be divided from the members, and these members are all spiritual children of Mary, as they have the same spirit of her Son according to nature, who was Jesus Christ. Therefore, St. John was not called *John,* but the disciple beloved by the Lord, that we might understand that Mary is the mother of every good Christian who is beloved by Jesus Christ, and in whom Jesus Christ lives by his Spirit. This was expressed by Origen, when he said, "Jesus said to Mary, Behold thy son, as if he had said, This is Jesus, whom thou hast borne, for he who is perfected lives no more himself, but Christ lives in him."[5133]

Denis the Carthusian writes that in the Passion of Jesus Christ the breast of Mary was filled with the blood which flowed from his wounds, in order that with it she might nourish her children. And he adds that this divine mother by her prayers and merits, which she especially acquired by sharing in the death of Jesus Christ, obtained for us a participation in the merits of the Passion of the Redeemer.[5134]

O suffering Mother! Thou knowest that I have deserved hell; I have no hope of being saved, except by sharing the merits of the death of Jesus Christ; Thou must pray for me, that I may obtain this grace; and I pray thee to obtain it for me by the love of that Son whom thou sawest bow his head and expire on Calvary before thy eyes. O queen of martyrs, O advocate of sinners, help me always, and especially in the hour of my death! Even now I seem to see the devils, who, in my last agony, will strive to make me despair at the sight of my sins; oh! abandon me not then, when thou seest me thus assaulted; help me with thy prayers, and obtain for me confidence and holy perseverance. And because then, when my speech is gone, and perhaps my senses, I cannot invoke thy name, and that of thy Son, I now call upon thee; Jesus and Mary, I recommend my soul unto you.

IV

DEUS MEUS! DEUS MEUS! UT QUID DERELIQUISTI ME?[5135]

> “Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

St. Matthew writes that Jesus uttered these words with a loud voice. Why did he thus utter them? Euthymius says that he thus cried out in order to show us his divine power, inasmuch as, though he was on the point of expiring, he was able thus to cry aloud, a thing which is impossible to dying men, through their extreme exhaustion. Also, he thus cried out in order to show us the anguish in which he died. It might, perhaps, have been said that as Jesus was both God and man, by the power of his divinity he had diminished the pains of his torments; and in order to prevent this idea, he thought fit in these words to declare that his death was more bitter than that which any man had endured, and that while the martyrs in their torments were comforted with divine sweetness, he, the king of martyrs, chose to die deprived of every consolation, satisfying the utmost rigor of the divine justice for all the sins of men. And therefore Silveira remarks that Jesus called his Father God, and not Father, because he was then regarding him as a Judge, and not as a son regards his father.[5136]

St. Leo writes that this cry of the Lord was not a lamentation, but a doctrine,[5137] because he thus desired to teach us how great is the wickedness of sin, which, as it were, compelled God to abandon his beloved Son without a comfort, because he had taken upon him to make satisfaction for our sins. At the same time, Jesus was not abandoned by the divinity, nor deprived of the glory which had been communicated to his blessed soul from the first moment of his creation; but he was deprived of all that sensible relief by which God is wont to comfort his faithful servants in their sufferings; and he was left in darkness, fear, and bitterness, pangs which were deserved by us. This deprivation of the sensible consciousness of the divine presence was also endured by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemani; but that which he suffered on the cross was greater and more bitter.

O Eternal Father, what offence had this Thy innocent and most obedient Son ever given Thee, that Thou shouldst punish him with a death so bitter? Look at him as be hangs upon this cross, with his head tortured with thorns, as he hangs upon the three iron nails, and is supported by his own wounds! All have abandoned him, even his own disciples, all deride him upon the cross, and blaspheme him; and why hast Thou abandoned him, who hast so greatly loved him? We must understand that Jesus had taken upon himself the sins of the world, although he was himself the most holy of all men, and even sanctity itself; since he had taken upon himself to satisfy for all our sins, he seemed the greatest of all sinners; and having thus made himself guilty for all, he offered himself to pay the price for all. Because we had deserved to be abandoned forever in hell to eternal despair, therefore he chose to be given up to a death deprived of every relief, that thus he might deliver us from eternal death.

Calvin, in his commentary on St. John, blasphemously asserts that Jesus Christ, in order to appease his Father, experienced all the wrath which God feels towards sinners, and felt all the pains of the damned, and particularly that of despair. O blasphemy and shocking thought! How could he satisfy for our sins by committing a sin so great as that of despair? And how could this despair, which Calvin imagines, be reconciled with the other words which Jesus uttered, *Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit?*[5138] The truth is, as St. Jerome and others explain it, that our Saviour uttered this lamentation to show not his own despair, but the bitterness which he endured in a death without consolation. And, further, despair could only have been produced in Jesus Christ by a knowledge that he was hated by God; but how could God hate that Son who, to obey his will, had offered himself to satisfy for the sins of men? It was this very obedience in return for which the Father looked upon him, and granted him the salvation of the human race, as the Apostle writes, *Who in the days of His flesh, offering with loud crying and tears, prayers and supplications to Him who could save Him from death, was heard because of His reverence.*[5139]

Further, this abandonment of Jesus Christ was the most dreadful suffering in all his Passion; for we know that after suffering so many bitter pangs without complaining, he lamented over this; he cried with a loud voice, and with many tears and prayers, as St. Paul tells us. Yet all these prayers and tears were poured forth in order to teach us how much he suffered to obtain the divine mercy for us; and to enable us at the same time to comprehend how dreadful a punishment it would be to a guilty soul to be driven from God, and to be deprived forever of his love, according to the divine threat, *I will cast them forth form My house, I will not further love them.*[5140]

St. Augustine also says that Jesus Christ was agitated at the sight of his death, but that he was so for the comfort of his servants; in order that if ever they should find themselves disturbed at their own death, they should not suppose themselves reprobates, or abandon themselves to despair, because even he was disturbed at the sight of death.[5141]

Therefore, let us give thanks to the goodness of our Saviour for having been willing to take upon himself the pains which were due to us, and thus to deliver us from eternal death; and let us labor henceforth to be grateful to this our deliverer, banishing from our hearts every affection which is not for him. And when we find ourselves desolate in spirit, and deprived of the sense of the divine presence, let us unite our desolation to that which Jesus Christ suffered in his death. Sometimes he hides himself from the souls that he most loves, but he does not really leave their hearts; he aids them with his inward grace. He is not offended, if in such an abandonment we say, as he himself said in the garden to his divine Father, *O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.*[5142] But at the same time we must add, *Yet, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*[5143] And if the desolation continues, we must continue the same acts of conformity to the divine will, as he himself repeated them for the three hours during which he prayed in the garden.[5144] St. Francis de Sales says that Jesus is as worthy of love when he hides himself as when he makes himself seen. Further, he who has deserved hell, and finds himself out of it, should say only, *I will bless the Lord at all times.*[5145] O Lord, I do not deserve consolations; grant that through Thy grace I may love Thee, and I am content to live in desolation as long as it pleases Thee. If the damned could thus in their pains unite themselves to the divine will, hell would be no longer hell to them.

But Thou, O Lord, remove not Thy help to a distance from Me; look towards my defence.[5146] O my Jesus, through the merits of Thy desolate death, deprive me not of Thy help in that great struggle which, in the hour of my death, I must maintain with hell. At that hour all things of earth will have deserted me and cannot help me; do not Thou abandon me, who hast died for me, and canst alone help me in that extremity. Do this through the merits of those pains which Thou didst suffer in Thy abandonment, by which Thou hast merited for us that we should not be abandoned by the divine grace, as we have deserved through our sins.

V

SITIO[5147]

“I thirst.”

St. John writes, *Jesus then, knowing that all things were accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst.*[5148] Scripture here refers to the words of David, *They gave Me gall to eat, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.*[5149]

Severe was this bodily thirst, which Jesus Christ endured on the cross through his loss of blood, first in the garden, and afterwards in the hall of judgment, at his scourging and crowning with thorns; and, lastly, upon the cross, where four streams of blood gushed forth from the wounds of his pierced hands and feet as from four fountains. But far more terrible was his spiritual thirst, that is, his ardent desire to save all mankind, and to suffer still more for us, as Blosius says, in order to show us his love.[5150] On this St. Laurence Justinian writes: “This thirst came from the fount of love.”[5151]

O my Jesus! Thou hast thus desired to suffer for me; and I, when my sufferings at all increase, become so impatient that I am insupportable both to others and to myself. O my Jesus! through the merits of Thy patience, make me patient and resigned in the sicknesses and crosses which befall me; make me like Thyself before I die.

VI

CONSUMMATUM EST[5152]

“It is consummated.”

St. John writes, *Jesus, therefore, when He had taken the vinegar said, It is consummated.*[5153] At this moment Jesus, before breathing out his soul, placed before his eyes all the sacrifices of the old law (which were all figures of the sacrifice upon the cross), all the prayers of the patriarchs, and all the prophecies which had been uttered respecting his life and his death, all the injuries and insults which it was predicted that he would suffer; and, seeing that all was accomplished, he said, *It is consummated.*

St. Paul encourages us to run generously and encounter with patience the struggle which awaits us in this life with our enemies, in order to obtain salvation: *Let us run with patience to the contest which is set before us, looking to Jesus the author and the consummation of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross.*[5154] The Apostle thus exhorts us to resist temptations with patience unto the end, after the example of Jesus Christ, who would not come down from the cross while life remained. On this St. Augustine says, “What did he teach thee, who, when he hung upon the cross, would not come down, but that thou shouldst be strong in thy God?”[5155] Jesus thought fit to complete his sacrifice even to death, in order to convince us that the reward of glory is not given by God except to those who persevere to the end, as he teaches us in St. Matthew: *He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved.*[5156]

Therefore, when, through inward passions, or the temptations of the devil, or the persecutions of men, we feel ourselves disturbed and excited to lose our patience, and to abandon ourselves to displeasing God, let us cast our eyes on Jesus crucified, who poured forth all his blood for our salvation, and let us reflect that we have not yet poured forth one drop of blood for love of him: *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*[5157] When, therefore, we are called to yield up any point of human esteem, to abstain from any resentful feeling, to deprive ourselves of any satisfaction, or of anything we are curious to see, or to do anything which is unpleasant to our tastes, let us be ashamed to deny this gift to Jesus Christ. He has treated us without holding anything back; he has given his own life, and all his blood; let us, then, be ashamed to treat him with any reserve.

Let us oppose to our enemies all the resistance that we are bound to make, and hope for victory from the merits of Jesus Christ alone, by means of which alone the saints, and especially the holy martyrs, have overcome torments and death: *In all things we overcome, through Him who loved us.*[5158] Therefore, when the devil paints to our thoughts any obstacles which, through our weakness, seem extremely difficult to overcome, let us turn our eyes to Jesus crucified, and, wholly trusting in his help and merits, let us say, with the Apostle, *I can do all things through Him that strengthens me.*[5159] By myself I can do nothing, but by the help of Jesus I can do everything.

Thus let us animate ourselves to endure the tribulations of the present life, by the sight of the pains of Jesus on the cross. Behold, says the Lord from this cross—behold the multitude of the pains and the wrongs which I suffer for thee upon this tree. My body hangs by three nails, and rests alone upon my very wounds. The people who surround me blaspheme me and afflict me, and my spirit within me is more afflicted than my body. I suffer all for love of thee; behold the affection I bear thee, and love me; and be not wearied at suffering anything for me, who, for thee, have lived a life so afflicted, and now am dying so bitter a death.

O my Jesus! Thou hast placed me in the world that I might serve Thee and love Thee; Thou hast given me so many lights and graces that I might be faithful to Thee; but, in my ingratitude, how often, in order that I might not deprive myself of my own satisfaction—how often have I been willing to lose Thy grace and turn my back upon Thee! Oh, through Thy desolate death, which Thou didst accept for my sake, give me strength to be grateful to Thee for what remains to me of life, while from this day forth I intend to drive from my heart every affection which is not for Thee, my God, my love, and my all.

Mary, my mother, help me to be faithful to thy Son, who has so much loved me.

VII

PATER! IN MANUS TUAS COMMENDO SPIRITUM MEUM[5160]

> “Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.”

Eutychius writes that Jesus uttered these words with a loud voice, to make all men understand that he was the true Son of God, calling God his

Father.[5161] But St. John Chrysostom writes that he cried with a loud voice to teach us that he did not die of necessity, but of his own free will,[5162] uttering so strong a voice at the very moment when he was about to end his life. This was in comformity with what Jesus had said during his life, that he voluntarily sacrificed his life for his sheep, and not through the will and malice of his enemies: *I lay down my life for my sheep. . . . No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.*[5163]

St. Athanasius adds that Jesus Christ, in thus recommending himself to the Father, recommended at the same time all the faithful, who through him would obtain salvation, since the head with the members form one single body.[5164] On which the saint remarks that Jesus then intended to repeat the prayer that he had before offered: *O holy Father, keep them in Thy name, that they may be one, as We are one.* And then he added, *Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given me should be where I am, and that they should be with me.*[5165]

This made St. Paul say, *I know in whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him until that day.*[5166] Thus the Apostle wrote, while he was in prison, suffering for Jesus Christ, into whose hands he committed the deposit of his sufferings and of all his hopes, knowing how grateful and faithful he is to those who suffer for his love.

David placed all his hope in the future Redeemer when he said, *Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.*[5167] And how much more ought not we to trust in Jesus Christ, who has now completed our redemption? Let us say with great courage, *Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord; into Thy hands I commend my spirit. Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.* Great comfort do these words bring to the dying at the moment of death, against the temptations of hell, and their fears on account of their sins.

But, O Jesus, my Redeemer! I would not wait for death to recommend my soul to Thee; I commend it to Thee now; suffer me not to turn my back upon Thee again. I see that my past life has only served to dishonor Thee; suffer me not to continue to displease Thee for my days that yet remain. O Lamb of God, sacrificed upon the cross, and dead for me as a victim of love, and consumed by all griefs, grant by the merits of Thy death that I may love Thee with all my heart, and be wholly Thine while life remains. And when I shall reach the end of my days, grant me to die glowing with love for Thee. Thou hast died through love of me: I would die for love of Thee. Thou hast given Thyself wholly to me; I give myself wholly to Thee: *Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.* Thou hast poured forth all Thy blood; Thou hast given Thy life to save me; suffer not that through my fault all should be lost unto me. O my Jesus, I love Thee, and I hope through Thy merits that I shall love Thee forever. *In Thee, O Lord, I have hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.*[5168]

O Mary, mother of God, I trust in thy prayers; pray that I may live and die faithful to thy Son. To thee I would say, with St. Bonaventure, “In thee, O Lady, I have hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.”

Chapter VI

THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

I

JESUS DIES, AND TRIUMPHS OVER DEATH

St. John writes that our Redeemer, before he breathed his last, bowed his head.[5169] He bowed his head as a sign that he accepted death with full submission from the hands of his Father, and thus accomplished his humble obedience: *He humbled himself, and was made obedient to death, even the death of the cross.*[5170]

Jesus upon the cross, with his hands and feet nailed upon it, could move no part of his body except his head. St. Athanasius says that death did not dare to approach to take away life from the author of life; wherefore it was needed that he himself, by bowing his head (which alone he then could move), should call death to approach and slay him.[5171] On St. Matthew's words, *Jesus again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost,*[5172] St. Ambrose remarks that the Evangelist used the expression *yielded up* to show that Jesus did not die of necessity, or through the violence of the executioners, but because he voluntarily chose to die.[5173] He chose willingly to die, to save man from the eternal death to which he was condemned.

This was already foretold by the prophet Osee in the words, *I will deliver them from the hand of death, from death I will redeem them. O death, I will be thy death; O hell, I will be thy bite.*[5174] This is testified by the holy Fathers St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Gregory; and St. Paul, as we have seen, applies the prophecy literally to Jesus Christ, who, with his death delivered us from death, that is, from hell. In Hebrew also (as the interpreters explain) the word *sheol,* which is rendered *death,* properly signifies *hell.*

How, then, was Jesus Christ the death of death? *O death, I will be thy death!* Because by his death our Saviour conquered death, and destroyed the death which had resulted from sin. Therefore the Apostle writes, *Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is thy victory? Where, O death, is thy sting? The sting of death is sin.*[5175] Jesus, the divine Lamb, by his death destroyed sin, which was the cause of our death; and this was the victory of Jesus, since by dying he banished sin from the world, and consequently delivered it from eternal death, to which all the human race was subjected.

To this corresponds that other text of the Apostle, *That through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.*[5176] Jesus destroyed the devil, that is, the power of the devil, who, through sin, had the power of death; that is, who had power to inflict temporal and eternal death on all the sons of Adam who were corrupted with sin. This was the victory of the cross, on which Jesus, the author of life, dying, by his death acquired life for us. Whence the Church sings of the cross that by it “Life endured death, and by death brought forth life.”[5177]

And all this was the work of the divine love, which brought this Priest to sacrifice to the Eternal Father the life of his only-begotten Son for the salvation of men; for which reason the Church also sings, “The Priest, who is love, sacrifices the limbs of his tender body.”[5178]

And therefore St. Francis de Sales cries out, “Let us look upon this divine Saviour stretched upon the cross, as upon the altar of his love, where he dies for love of us. Ah, why do we not cast ourselves in spirit upon the same, that we may die upon the cross with him who has been willing to die for love of us?”[5179]

Yes, O my sweet Redeemer, I embrace Thy cross; and holding it in my embrace, I would live and die ever lovingly kissing Thy feet, wounded and pierced for me.

II

JESUS DEAD ON THE CROSS

But before going farther, let us stay to contemplate our Redeemer now dead upon the cross. Let us first say to his divine Father:

“Eternal Father, look upon the face of Thy Christ,”[5180] look upon this Thy only-begotten Son, who, in order to satisfy Thy will that lost man should be saved, came down upon earth, took human nature, and with that flesh took upon him all our miseries, save sin. In a word, he made himself man, and lived all his life among men, as the poorest, the most despised, the most troubled of all; in the end he was condemned to death, as Thou seest him, after these very men had torn his flesh with scourgings, wounded his head with thorns, and pierced his hands and feet with nails upon the cross. Thus he died on this tree of unmixed anguish, despised as the vilest of men, derided as a false prophet, blasphemed as a sacrilegious impostor for having said that he was Thy Son, and condemned to die as one of the most guilty of malefactors. Thou Thyself didst give him up to endure this terrible and desolate death, depriving him of all relief. Tell us, what fault did Thy beloved Son commit that he should deserve so horrible a punishment? Thou knowest his innocence and his sanctity; why hast Thou thus treated him? I hear Thee reply, “For the wickedness of my people have I stricken him.”[5181] No, he did not deserve, he could not deserve, any punishment, being innocence and holiness itself; the punishment was due to you for your sins by which you deserved eternal death; and that I might not see you, the beloved creatures of my hand lost eternally, to deliver you from so dreadful a destruction, I gave up this my Son to so mournful a life, and to so bitter a death. Think, O men, to what an excess I have loved you. *God so loved the world,* says St. John, *that He gave His only-begotten Son.*[5182]

Let me now return to Thee, O Jesus, my Redeemer. I behold Thee upon this cross, pale and desolate; Thou speakest no more, nor breathest, for Thou art no longer alive; Thou hast no more blood, for Thou hast poured it all forth, as Thou didst Thyself foretell: *This is My blood of the new covenant which is shed for many.*[5183] Thou hast no longer life, for Thou hast given it in order to give life to my soul, which was dead through its sins. But why didst Thou destroy Thy life and pour forth Thy blood for us miserable sinners? Behold, St. Paul tells us: *He loved us and gave Himself for us.”*[5184]

III

THE FRUITS OF THE DEATH OF OUR SAVIOUR

Thus this divine Priest, who was both priest and victim, sacrificing his life for the salvation of the men he loved, completed the great sacrifice of the cross, and accomplished the work of human redemption.

Jesus Christ, by his death, stripped our death of its terrors; until this it was but the punishment of rebels; but by grace and the merits of our Saviour it became a sacrifice so dear to God that when we unite it to the death of Jesus, it makes us worthy to enjoy the same glory that God enjoys, and to hear him one day say to us, as we hope, *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*.[5185]

Thus death, which was an object of pain and dread, was changed by the death of Jesus into a passage from a state of peril, of eternal misery, into one of security, of eternal blessedness, and from the miseries of this life to the boundless delights of paradise.

Therefore the saints have ever regarded death with joy and desire, and no longer with fear. St. Augustine says that they who love the crucified one "live with patience and die with joy."[5186] And common experience shows that they who in life have been most troubled with persecutions, temptations, scruples, or other painful events, in death are most comforted by the crucified one, conquering with great peace of mind all the terrors and pains of death. And if it has sometimes happened that some saints, as we read in their lives, have died in great fear of death, the Lord has permitted this in order to increase their merits; because the sacrifice that they made, the more painful it was to themselves, the more acceptable was it to God, and the more profitable to them for eternity.

Oh, how much harder was the death of the faithful of old before the death of Jesus Christ! Then, when the Saviour was not yet come, they sighed for his coming, they waited for his promise, but they knew not when it would be fulfilled; the devil had great power upon earth; heaven was closed to men. But after the death of the Redeemer, hell was conquered, divine grace was given to souls, God was reconciled to men, and the country of Paradise was opened to all those who die innocent, or who have expiated their sins by repentance. And if some who die in grace do not immediately enter heaven, this only results from the faults of which they are not yet cleansed; and death merely bursts their bonds, in order that they may go free to unite themselves perfectly to God, from whom they are far away in this land of banishment.

Let us, then, take heed, O Christian souls, while we are in this exile, not to look at death as a misfortune, but as the end of our pilgrimage, which is full of difficulties and dangers, and as the beginning of our eternal happiness, which we hope one day to attain through the merits of Jesus Christ. And with this thought of heaven, let us detach ourselves as much as possible from earthly things, which may cause us to lose heaven, and give us over to eternal pains. Let us offer ourselves to God, declaring that we wish to die when it pleases him, and to accept death in the manner and at the time which he has appointed; ever praying him that, through the merits of Jesus Christ, he will cause us to depart from this life in his grace.

O my Jesus and my Saviour, who, to obtain for me a happy death, hast chosen for Thyself a death so painful and desolate, I abandon myself into the arms of Thy mercy. For many years passed I have deserved to be in hell, for the sins that I have committed against Thee, and to be separated from Thee forever. But Thou, instead of punishing me as I deserved, hast called me to repentance, and I hope that now Thou hast pardoned me; but if Thou hast not already pardoned me through my fault, pardon me now that in sorrow I ask for mercy at Thy feet. O my Jesus! I could die of grief when I think of the injuries that I have offered to Thee! “O blood of the innocent one, wash away the penitent’s sins!” Pardon me, and give me help to love Thee with all my strength till death; and when I shall reach the end of my life, make me to die burning with love for Thee, that I may go on to love Thee forever. Jesus, henceforth I unite my death to Thy holy death, through which I hoped to be saved. *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.*[5187]

O thou great mother of God! next to Jesus thou art my hope. “In thee, O Lady, I have hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.”

Chapter VII

THE PRODIGIES WHICH HAPPENED AT THE DEATH OF CHRIST

I

MOURNING OF ALL NATURE—DARKNESS

It is reported (as Cornelius à Lapide relates) that St. Dionysius the Areopagite, being at the time at Heliopolis in Egypt, at the time of the death of Jesus Christ exclaimed, “Either the God of nature is suffering, or the fabric of the world is being dissolved.”[5188] Others, such as Syncellus and Suidas, relate the story differently, and state that he said, “God, unknown, is suffering in the flesh, and therefore the universe is hidden in this darkness.”[5189]

Eusebius[5190] writes that Plutarch, being in the isle of Praxos, heard a voice say, “The great Pan is dead;”[5191] and immediately afterwards heard a cry of many persons wailing. Eusebius considers that *Pan* means the devil, who being, as it were, killed by the death of Jesus, was stripped of the power he had possessed over men; but Barrada[5192] thinks that it means Jesus Christ himself, because in Greek the word *Pan* means *All*, which Jesus Christ, being the Son of God, and truly God, really was; that is, all that is good.

What we have in the Gospels is, that on the day of the death of the Saviour, the whole earth was covered with darkness, from the sixth to the ninth hour. And when Jesus breathed his last, the veil of the temple was rent, and a great earthquake shook the mountains.[5193]

Speaking of the darkness, St. Jerome says that this darkness was foretold by the prophet Amos in these words: *It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that the sun shall go down at mid-day; and I will make the earth dark in the day of light.*[5194] On which St. Jerome remarks that the sun seemed to have withdrawn its light, in order that the enemies of Jesus Christ might not rejoice in it;[5195] and that the sun hid itself, because it dared not look upon the Lord hanging on the cross.[5196] But St. Leo more justly says that then all creatures groaned, when the Creator hung upon the cross.[5197] With this Tertullian agrees, saying that from the sixth hour the world was darkened, and celebrated the obsequies of the Lord.[5198]

St. Athanasius, St. Chrysostom, and St. Thomas remark that this darkness was altogether miraculous, because it could not have happened as an eclipse of the sun, by the interposition of the moon between the earth and the sun, as this eclipse always takes place at the new moon, and not the full moon, as astronomers say. And, further, as the sun is much larger than the moon, the moon could not hide the whole of its light; while the Gospel relates that darkness was spread over the whole earth. Further still, even if the moon could have darkened the whole light of the sun, we know that the course of the sun is so swift that such darkness could only have lasted a few minutes, while the Gospel relates that it lasted from the sixth to the ninth hour.

This miraculous darkness Tertullian especially pointed out, in his Apology to the heathen, reminding them that in their own archives this prodigy of the darkness of the sun was recorded.[5199] Eusebius, confirming this statement, relates in his chronicle the words of Phlegon, the freedman of Augustus, an author of that period, who thus writes: “In the fourth year of the second Olympiad, the sun was completely darkened, more than at any other recorded time; and night came on at the sixth hour, so that the stars were visible.”[5200]

II

THE RENDING OF THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE

In the Gospel of St. Matthew it is said, *The veil of the temple was rent in two parts, from the top to the bottom.*[5201] The Apostle writes[5202] that in the temple, as in the tabernacle, there was the Holy of Holies, where was the ark of the covenant, which contained the manna, the rod of Aaron, the tables of the law; and this ark was the Propitiatory. Into the first tabernacle, which was outside the Holy of Holies, and was covered with the first veil, the priests went to offer sacrifices; and the priest who sacrificed, dipping his finger into the blood of the victim that was offered, sprinkled the veil seven times.[5203] But into the second tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, which was always shut, and covered with the second veil, the high-priest went solemnly once a year, carrying the blood of the victim which was sacrificed by himself.[5204]

The whole was a mystery: the sanctuary ever closed, represented the separation of men from the divine grace, which they would never have received but for the sacrifice of himself which Jesus Christ was one day to offer, and which was typified in all the old sacrifices; and therefore he is called by St. Paul, a High-Priest of good things to come, who by a more perfect tabernacle, that is, by his own sacred body, would enter into the Holy of Holies of the presence of God, as the mediator between God and men: offering the blood, not of goats and calves, but his own blood, with which he completed the work of human redemption, and thus opened to us the way of heaven.[5205]

The Apostle says, he was a Priest of good things to come, unlike the high-priest Aaron, who obtained present and earthly blessings; while Jesus Christ came to obtain for us future blessings, which are heavenly and eternal. He says, also, that he came by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, which was the sacred humanity of the Lord, which was the tabernacle of his divinity; it was not made with hands, because the body of Jesus was not formed by the work of man, but by the Holy Ghost. Nor did he come with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood; for the blood of goats and calves effected merely a carnal purification, while the blood of Jesus effected the purification of the soul by the remission of sins. It is said, also, that he entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption; which implies that this redemption could never have been obtained by ourselves, nor expected except from the divine promises: it was the work of the divine goodness; and it is called eternal, because, while the high-priest of the Hebrews went into the Holy of Holies once every year, Jesus Christ, once only accomplishing the sacrifice of his death, merited for us an eternal redemption, which would be sufficient to atone for all our sins; as the same Apostle writes, *By one offering He perfected forever those who are sanctified.*[5206]

The Apostle adds, *And therefore he is the Mediator of the New Testament.*[5207] Moses was the mediator of the Old Testament, that is, the old covenant, which had no power to obtain for men reconciliation with God and salvation; for, as St. Paul explains in another place, the old law made nothing perfect.[5208] But by the new covenant, Jesus Christ, fully satisfying the divine justice for the sins of men, by his merits obtained for men pardon and the divine grace. The Jews were offended at perceiving that the Messiah had wrought the redemption of man by so shameful a death; saying that they had read in the law that the Messiah would not die, but live forever.[5209] But they were completely in error; for death was the means by which Jesus Christ made himself the Mediator and Saviour of men, since by the death of Jesus Christ the promise of the eternal inheritance was made to those who are called.[5210] Therefore St. Paul exhorts us to place all our hopes in the merits of the death of Jesus Christ: *Having a confidence in the entering into the Holies by the blood of Christ, a new and living way which He hath dedicated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.*[5211] We, he says, have a strong foundation for our hope of eternal life in-the blood of Jesus Christ, who has opened to us the new way to paradise. He calls it a *new* way, because it was trodden by no one before; while Jesus, by treading it, has opened it to us through his flesh, which was sacrificed on the cross, of which the veil was a figure; because (as St. John Chrysostom writes), as when the veil was rent, the Holy of Holies continued open, so the body of Christ, when torn in his Passion, opened to us the heaven which was closed. The Apostle therefore exhorts us to go with confidence to the throne of grace to obtain the divine mercy.[5212] This throne of grace is Jesus Christ, to whom, when we miserable sinners go in the midst of the dangers of destruction in which we stand, we find that mercy which we do not deserve.

Let us return to the text quoted from St, Matthew, *Jesus, crying with a loud voice, yielded up His spirit; and behold the veil of the temple was rent in two parts, from the top to the bottom.* This rending took place at the moment of the death of Jesus Christ, which, as was remarked by all the priests and the people, could not have taken place except as a supernatural prodigy; for by the mere shaking of the earthquake the veil would not thus have been torn from the top to the bottom. It took place in order to show that God no longer desired to keep this sanctuary closed, as it had been commanded by the law, but that he himself desired to be henceforth the sanctuary opened by means of Jesus Christ.

St. Leo writes[5213] that the Lord, by this rending, showed us plainly that the old priesthood was ended, and the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ was begun; and that the old sacrifices were abolished, and a new law set up, according to what the Apostle says: *A change being made in the priesthood, it is necessary that there should be also a change in the law.*[5214] And by this we are assured that Jesus Christ is the founder both of the first law and of the second: and that the old law, the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the old sacrifices had regard to the sacrifice of the cross, which was to accomplish the redemption of man. And thus everything which had been obscure or mysterious in the old law, in the sacrifices, festivals, and promises, became clear through the death of the Saviour. Lastly, Euthymius says that the rent veil showed that the wall which divided heaven and earth was taken away, so that the way for man to reach heaven lay open without any obstacle.[5215]

III

THE EARTHQUAKE

It is further said in the Gospel, *The earth was shaken, and the rocks cleft asunder.*[5216] It is reported that at the death of Jesus Christ there happened a trembling so great and universal that it shook the whole globe of the earth, as Paul Orosius writes.[5217] Didymus[5218] also says that the earth was then shaken to its centre. Further, Phlegon, as quoted by Origen and by Eusebius,[5219] says that in the year 33 after the birth of Christ, many buildings were thrown down by this earthquake at Nice in Bithynia. Pliny also, who lived in the time of Tiberius, under whom Christ was put to death, and Suetonius, attest that at this time twelve cities in Asia were prostrated by this earthquake; and thus the learned believe that the prophecy of Aggeus was fulfilled, *Yet a little while, and I will move the heaven and the earth.*[5220] Upon this St. Paulinus writes that Jesus Christ, though fixed upon the cross, to show who he was, even from his cross struck terror into the world.[5221]

Agricomius[5222] relates that even to his day the signs of this earthquake were visible on the left side of Mount Calvary, where there was a fissure large enough to contain a man’s body, and so deep that the bottom could not be reached. Baronius,[5223] writing upon A.D. 34, says that in many other places the mountains were laid open by the earthquake; especially at the present time there is to be seen at Gaeta a hill of rock which, it is said, was split open from the top to the bottom at the time of our Lord’s death; and it is clear that the aperture was prodigiously large, for the sea flows through it, and another portion of the hill is enlarged in an equal proportion. The same tradition is attached to Mount Colombo, near Rieti; to Monserrat in Spain; and to several mountains in Sardinia near Cagliari; while still more remarkable is that which happened to Mount Alvernia in Tuscany, where St. Francis received the gift of the sacred *stigmata*, and where large masses of rock heaped one upon another are to be seen, of which it is said that it was revealed to St. Francis by an angel that these rocks were thus thrown together at the death of Jesus Christ, as Wading[5224] relates.

St. Ambrose on this exclaims, “O Jewish hearts, harder than rocks! the mountains are cleft, but the hearts of these men are hardened.”[5225]

IV

RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND CONVERSIONS

St. Matthew goes on to describe the prodigies which happened at the death of Christ, and says, *The graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many.*[5226] Upon this, St. Ambrose says “What else is meant by this opening of the graves, but the resurrection of the dead?”[5227] Thus the opening of the graves signified the discomfiture of death, and the restoration of life to man by the resurrection.

St. Jerome, Venerable Bede, and St. Thomas say that though the graves were opened at the death of Christ, yet the dead did not rise till after the resurrection of the Lord.[5228] And this is conformable to what the Apostle says when he calls Christ the first begotten of the dead, and the first of them that rise.[5229] For it was not fitting that any man should rise before Him who had triumphed over death.

It is said in St. Matthew that many saints then arose, and, leaving the graves, appeared to many. These were the just, who had believed and hoped in Jesus Christ; and God desired thus to honor them, as a reward for their faith and confidence in the future Messiah, according to the prediction of Zacharias, *Thou also, by the blood of Thy testament, hast sent forth Thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water;*[5230] that is, from what is called Limbo by the Fathers, in which there was none of the water of joy.

St. Matthew goes on to say that the centurion, and the other soldiers who were under him, who had put the Saviour to death, though the Jews continued obstinately to rejoice in his death, were themselves moved with the miracles of the darkness and earthquake, and recognized him as the Son of God.[5231] These soldiers were the first-fruits of the Gentiles, who embraced the faith of Jesus Christ after they had put him to death, though, through his merits, they had grace to understand their sin and to hope for pardon.

St. Luke adds that all the others who had either taken part in or applauded the death of Jesus Christ, when they saw the prodigies, smote their breasts in sign of repentance, and returned home.[5232] And then, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, many other Jews, being touched by the preaching of St. Peter, asked of him what they should do to be saved; and St. Peter bade them repent and be baptized; and they who received his words and were baptized were about three thousand.[5233]

V

THE HEART OF JESUS IS PIERCED

The soldiers then came, and broke the legs of the two thieves; but when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, and abstained from doing the same to him. One of them, however, with a spear pierced his side, from which immediately came forth blood and water.[5234]

St. Cyprian says that the spear pierced straight into the heart of Jesus Christ; and the same thing was revealed to St. Bridget.[5235] From which we understand that, as both blood and water flowed forth, the spear, in order to strike the heart, must first have pierced the pericardium.

St. Augustine says that St. John used the words *opened the side,* because in the heart of the Lord the way of life was opened, whence came forth the sacraments, by means of which we enter upon eternal life.[5236] Further, it is said that the blood and water which came from the side of Jesus were figures of the sacraments; the water, of baptism, which is the first of the sacraments; and the blood, of the Eucharist, which is the greatest.

St. Bernard further says that, by receiving this visible stroke, Jesus Christ wished to signify the invisible stroke of love, by which his heart was pierced for us.[5237]

St. Augustine also, speaking of the Eucharist, says that the holy sacrifice of the Mass at this day is not less efficacious before God than the blood and water which flowed on that day from the side of Jesus Christ.[5238]

VI

BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

We will conclude this chapter with some reflections on the burial of Jesus Christ.

Jesus came into the world, not only to redeem us, but by his own example to teach us all virtues, and especially humility and holy poverty, which is inseparably united with humility. On this account he chose to be born in a cave; to live, a poor man, in a workshop for thirty years; and finally to die, poor and naked, upon a cross, seeing his garments divided among the soldiers before he breathed his last; while after his death he was compelled to receive his winding-sheet for burial as an alms from others. Let the poor be consoled, thus seeing Jesus Christ, the King of heaven and earth, thus living and dying in poverty in order to enrich us with his merits and gifts; as the Apostle says, *For your sake He became poor, when He was rich, that by His poverty you might be rich.*[5239] For this cause the saints, to become like Jesus in his poverty, have despised all earthly riches and honors, that they might go one day to enjoy with Jesus Christ the riches and honors prepared by God in heaven for them that love him; of which blessings the Apostle says that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the mind of man to conceive what God has prepared for them that love him.[5240]

Jesus Christ, then, rose with the glory of possessing all power in heaven and earth, not as God alone, but as a man; wherefore all angels and men are subject to him. Let us rejoice in thus seeing in glory our Saviour, our Father, and the best friend that we possess. And let us rejoice for ourselves, because the resurrection of Jesus Christ is for us a sure pledge of our own resurrection, and of the glory that we hope one day to have in heaven, both in soul and in body. This hope gave courage to the holy martyrs to suffer with gladness all the evils of this life, and the most cruel torments of tyrants. We must rest assured, however, that none will rejoice with Jesus Christ but they who are willing to suffer in this world with him; nor will he obtain the crown who does not fight as he ought to fight. *He that striveth in a wrestling is not crowned unless he has striven lawfully.*[5241] At the same time let us be sure of what the same Apostle says, that all the sufferings of this life are short and light in comparison with the boundless and eternal joys which we hope to enjoy in Paradise.[5242] Let us labor the more to continue in the grace of God, and continually to pray for perseverance in his favor; for without prayer, and that persevering, we shall not obtain this perseverance; and without perseverance we shall not obtain salvation.

O sweet Jesus, worthy of all love, how hast Thou so loved men that, in order to show Thy love, Thou hast not refused to die wounded and dishonored upon an infamous tree! O my God, how is it that there are so few among men who love Thee with their heart? O my dear Redeemer, of these few I would be one! Miserable that I am, for my past life I have forgotten Thy love, and given up Thy grace for miserable pleasures. I know the evil I have done; I grieve for it with all my heart; I would die for grief. Now, O my beloved Redeemer, I love Thee more than myself; and I am ready to die a thousand times rather than lose Thy friendship. I thank Thee for the light Thou hast given me. O my Jesus, my hope, leave me not in my own hands; help me until my death.

O Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.

Chapter VIII

THE LOVE SHOWN TO US BY JESUS CHRIST IN HIS PASSION

I

GOD SO LOVED MEN, THAT HE GAVE HIS OWN SON TO REDEEM THEM

St. Francis de Sales called Mount Calvary "the mountain of lovers," and says that the love which springs not from the Passion is weak;[5243] meaning, that the Passion of Jesus Christ is the most powerful incentive to inflame us to love our Saviour. To be able to comprehend a part (for to comprehend the whole is impossible) of the great love which God has shown us in the Passion of Jesus Christ, it is sufficient to glance at what is said of it in the divine Scriptures, of which I shall here set forth some of the principal passages. Nor let any one complain that I thus repeat the texts which I have already repeated several times in my other works when speaking of the Passion. Many writers of mischievous books constantly repeat their immodest jests, in order the more to excite the passions of their thoughtless readers; and shall it not be permitted to me to repeat those holy texts which most inflame souls with divine love?

Speaking of this love, Jesus himself said, *God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.*[5244] The word *so* expresses much. It teaches us that when God gave his only-begotten Son, he displayed to us a love which we can never attain to comprehend. Through sin we were all dead, having lost the life of grace; but the Eternal Father, in order to make known his goodness to the world, and to show us how much he loved us, chose to send on earth his Son, that by his death he might restore to us the life we had lost. *In this appeared the love of God to us, in that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live by Him.*[5245] Thus, in order to pardon us, God refused that pardon to his own Son, desiring that he should take upon him to satisfy the divine justice for all our faults; *He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.*[5246] The words *delivered up* are used because God gave him into the hands of the executioners, that they might load him with insults and pains, until he died of agony on a shameful tree. Thus he first loaded him with all our sins. *The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all.* And then he chose to see him consumed with the most bitter inward and outward pangs and afflictions: *For the wickedness of My people I have stricken Him. The Lord bruised Him in infirmity.*[5247]

St. Paul, considering this love of God, goes on to say: *On account of the too great love with which He loved us, when we were dead in sins, He raised us up in Christ.*[5248] The Apostle calls it his *too great love.* Could there be anything indeed in excess in God? Yes; by this he means us to understand that God has done such things for us, that if faith had not assured us of them, none could have believed them. And therefore the Church cries out in astonishment, "Oh, wonderful is that which Thy love towards us has thought fit to do! O inestimable Love of love! that Thou mightest redeem Thy servant, Thou hast delivered up Thy Son."[5249] Remark here the expression of the Church, *Love of love;* for the love of God to us is more than that he has shown to any other creatures. God, being love itself,[5250] as St. John says, he loves all his creatures; *Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest nothing that Thou hast made.*[5251] But the love that he bears to man seems to be that which is the dearest and most beloved to him, for it appears as though, in love, he had preferred man to the angels, since he has been willing to die for men and not for the fallen angels.

II

THE SON OF GOD OFFERED HIMSELF FOR THE LOVE OF US

Speaking, then, of the love of the Son of God for man, let us remember that when he saw on one side man lost through sin, and on the other the divine justice requiring a perfect satisfaction for the offences committed by man, who was himself unable to offer such a satisfaction, he voluntarily offered himself to make satisfaction: *He was offered, because he willed it.*[5252] And this humble lamb gave himself to the torturers, suffering them to lacerate his flesh, and to lead him to death, without lamenting or opening his mouth, as it was foretold: *He shall be brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep is dumb before its shearer, and openeth not its mouth.*[5253] St. Paul writes that Jesus Christ accepted the death of the cross to obey his Father.[5254] But let us not imagine that the Redeemer was crucified solely to obey his Father, and not with his own full will; he freely offered himself to this death, and of his own will chose to die for man, moved by the love he bore him, as he himself declares by St. John: *I lay down My life; no man will take it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself*.[5255] And he said that it was the work of the Good Shepherd, to give his life for his sheep.[5256] And why was this? what obligation was there on the shepherd to give his life for the sheep? *He loved us, and gave Himself for us.*[5257]

This, indeed, our loving Redeemer himself declared, when he said, *If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto Me;*[5258] thereby showing the kind of death that he would die upon the cross, as the Evangelist himself explains it: *He said this, signifying by what death He would die.*[5259] On these words St. John Chrysostom remarks, that he draws them as it were from the hands of a tyrant.[5260] By his death he draws us from the hands of Lucifer, who, as a tyrant, keeps us enchained as his slaves, to torment us after our death forever in hell.

Miserable had we been if Jesus Christ had not died for us! We should all have been imprisoned in hell. For us who had deserved hell, it is a great motive to us to love Jesus Christ, to think, that by his death, he has delivered us from this hell, by pouring forth his blood.

Let us, then, in passing, glance at the pains of hell, where at this hour are so many wretched souls. Oh, miserable beings! there they are sunk in a sea of fire, where they endure ceaseless agony, since in this fire they experience pains of all kinds. There they are given into the hands of devils, who, full of fury, are busied only in tormenting these miserable condemned ones. There, still more than by the fire and the other tortures, are they tormented by remorse of conscience in recollecting the sins of their life, which were the cause of their damnation. There they see the way of escape from this abyss of torments ever closed. There they find themselves forever excluded from the company of the saints, and from their country, heaven, for which they were created. But what most afflicts them, and constitutes their hell, is to see themselves abandoned by God, and condemned to be unable evermore to love him, and to look upon themselves with hatred and madness.

From this hell Jesus Christ has delivered us, redeeming us not with gold or any earthly good thing, but by giving his own life and blood upon the cross.[5261] The kings of the earth send their subjects to die in war to preserve their own security; Jesus Christ chose himself to die, in order to give safety to his creatures.

III

JESUS DIED NOT ONLY FOR US ALL, BUT FOR EACH ONE OF US

Behold Jesus, then, presented by the scribes and priests to Pilate as a malefactor, that he might judge him and condemn him to the death of the cross; and see how they follow him, in order to see him condemned and crucified. Oh, marvellous thing, cries St. Augustine, to see the judge judged; to see justice condemned; to see life dying![5262] And for what cause were these marvels accomplished, except through the love which Jesus Christ bore to men? *He loved us, and gave Himself for us.*[5263] Oh that these words of St. Paul were ever before our eyes! Truly then would every affection for earthly things depart from our heart, and we should think only of loving our Redeemer, reflecting that it was love which brought him to pour forth all his blood, to make for us a bath of salvation. *He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.*[5264] St. Bernardine of Sienna says that Jesus Christ from the cross looked at every single sin of every one of us, and offered his blood for every one of them.[5265] In a word, love brought the Lord of all to appear the most vile and low of all things upon earth.

“O power of love!” cries St. Bernard; “the Supreme God of all is made the lowest of all! Who hath done this? Love, forgetting its dignity, powerful in its affections. Love triumphs over divinity.”[5266] Love hath done this, because, in order to make itself known to the beloved, it hath brought the loving one to lay aside his dignity, and to do that alone which aids and pleases the beloved. Therefore, St. Bernard says that God, who can be conquered by none, causes himself to be conquered by the love which he bore for men.

We must further reflect that whatever Jesus Christ suffered in his Passion, he suffered for each one of us individually; on which account St. Paul says, *I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself for me.*[5267] And what the Apostle said, every one of us may say; wherefore St. Augustine writes that man was redeemed at such a price that he seems to be of equal value with God.[5268] The saint also goes on to say, “Thou hast loved me, not as Thyself, but more than Thyself, since, to deliver me from death, Thou hast been willing to die for me.”[5269]

But since Jesus could have saved us by a single drop of his blood, why did he pour it all forth in torments, even so as to die of mere agony upon the cross? “Yes,” says St. Bernard, “what a drop might have done, he chose to do with a stream, in order to show us the excessive love he bore us.”[5270] He calls it *excessive,* as Moses and Elias on Mount Thabor called the Passion of the Redeemer an excess,—an excess of mercy and love; *They spoke of His excess, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*[5271] St. Augustine, speaking of the Passion of our Lord, says “that his mercy exceeded the debt of our sins.”[5272] Thus, the value of the death of Jesus Christ being infinite, infinitely exceeded the satisfaction due by us for our sins to the divine justice. Truly had the Apostle cause to say, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*[5273] And what St. Paul says, we may all say; what greater glory can we have, or hope for in the world, than to see a God dying for love of us?

O Eternal God, I have dishonored Thee by my sins; but Jesus, by making satisfaction for me by his death, has more than abundantly restored the honor due to Thee; for the love of Jesus, then, have mercy upon me. And Thou, my Redeemer, who hast died for me, in order to oblige me to love Thee, grant that I may love Thee. For, having despised Thy grace and Thy love, I have deserved to be condemned to be able to love Thee no more. But, O my Jesus, give me every punishment but this. And therefore, I pray Thee, consign me not to hell, for in hell I cannot love Thee. Cause me to love Thee, and then chastise me as Thou wilt. Deprive me of everything, but not of Thyself. I accept every infirmity, every ignominy, every pain that Thou willest me to suffer; it is enough that I love Thee. Now, I know, by the light Thou hast given me, that Thou art most worthy of love, and hast so much loved me: I trust to live no longer without loving Thee. For the time past I have loved creatures, and have turned my back upon Thee, the infinite good; but now I say to Thee, that I would love Thee alone, and nothing else. O my beloved Saviour, if Thou seest that at any future time I should cease to love Thee, I pray Thee to cause me first to die; and I shall be content to die before I am separated from Thee.

O holy Virgin Mary and Mother of God, help me with thy prayers; obtain for me, that I may never cease to love my Jesus, who died for me and thee, my queen, who hast already obtained for me so many mercies.

Chapter IX

THE GRATITUDE THAT WE OWE TO JESUS CHRIST FOR HIS PASSION

I

JESUS DIED FOR US; WE OUGHT TO LIVE AND DIE FOR HIM

St. Augustine says that Jesus Christ, having first given his life for us, has bound us to give our life for him; and, further, that when we go to the Eucharistic table to communicate, as we go to feed there upon the body and blood of Jesus Christ, we ought also, in gratitude, to prepare for him the offering of our blood and of our life, if there is need for us to give either of them for his glory.[5274]

Full of tenderness are the words of St. Francis de Sales on this text of St. Paul: *The charity of Christ presseth us*.[5275] To what does it press us? To love him. But let us hear what St. Francis de Sales says: “When we know that Jesus has loved us even to death, and that the death of the cross, is not this to feel our hearts constrained by a violence as great as it is full of delight?”[5276] And then he adds, “My Jesus gives himself wholly to me, and I give myself wholly to him; I will live and die upon his breast, and neither death nor life shall ever separate me from him.”

St. Peter, in order that we might remember to be ever grateful to our Saviour, reminds us that we were not redeemed from the slavery of hell with gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, which he sacrificed for us, as an innocent lamb, upon the altar of the cross.[5277] Great, therefore, will be the punishment of those who are thankless for such a blessing, if they do not correspond to it. It is true that Jesus came to save all men who were lost;[5278] but it is also true what was said by the Venerable Simeon, when Mary presented the child Jesus in the temple: *Behold, this child is placed for the fall and the rising again of many in Israel, and as a* *sign which shall be spoken against.*[5279] By the words *for the rising again* he expresses the salvation which all believers should receive from Jesus Christ, who by faith should rise from death to the life of grace. But first, by the words *he is set for the fall*, he foretells that many shall fall into a greater ruin by their ingratitude to the Son of God, who came into the world to become a contradiction to his enemies, as the following words imply: *He shall be a sign which shall be spoken against;* for Jesus Christ was set up as a sign, against which were hurled all the calumnies, the injuries, and the insults which the Jews devised against him. And this sign is spoken against not only by the Jews of the present day, who deny him to be the Messiah, but by those Christians who ungratefully return his love with offences, and by neglecting his commands.

Our Redeemer, says St. Paul, went so far as to give his life for us, in order to make himself the Lord of all our hearts, by displaying to us his love in dying for us. *For this Christ both died and rose again, that He might be Lord of the dead and of the living.*[5280] No, writes the Apostle, we are no longer our own, since we have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. *Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*[5281] Wherefore, if we do not love him and obey his precepts, of which the first is that we should love him, we are not only ungrateful, but unjust, and deserve a double punishment. The obligation of a slave rescued by Jesus Christ from the hands of the devil is, to devote himself wholly to love and serve him, whether he live or die.

St. John Chrysostom makes an excellent reflection upon the above-quoted text of St. Paul, saying that God has more care for us than we have for ourselves; and therefore regards our life as his own riches, and our death as his own loss; so that if we die, we die not to ourselves, but also to God.[5282] Oh, how great is our glory while we live in this valley of tears, in the midst of so many dangers of perishing, that we should be able to say, "We are the Lord's," we are his possession; he will take care to preserve us in his grace in this life, and to keep us with himself throughout eternity in the life that is to come!

II

WHAT IT IS TO LIVE AND DIE FOR JESUS

Jesus Christ, then, died for every one of us, in order that every one of us might live only to his Redeemer, who died for love of him. *Christ died for us all, that both they who live should live no longer to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again.*[5283] He that lives for himself directs all his desires, fears, and pains, and places all his happiness in himself. But he that lives to Jesus Christ places all his desires in loving and pleasing him; all his joys in gratifying him; all his fears are that he should displease him. He is only afflicted when he sees Jesus despised, and he only rejoices in seeing him loved by others. This it is to live to Jesus Christ, and this he justly claims from us all. To gain this he has bestowed all the pains which he suffered for love of us.

Does he ask too much in this? No, says St. Gregory, he cannot ask too much, when he has given such tokens of his love to us, that he seems to have become a fool for our sake.[5284] Without reserve he has given himself wholly for us; he has, therefore, a right to require that we should give ourselves wholly to him, and should fix all our love upon him; and if we take from him any portion of it, by loving anything either apart from him or not for his sake, he has reason to complain of us; for then we do not love him as we should, says St. Augustine.[5285]

And what but creatures can we love except Jesus Christ? And, in comparison with Jesus Christ, what are creatures but worms of the earth, dust, smoke, and vanity? To St. Clement, Pope, was offered a heap of silver, gold, and gems, if he would renounce Jesus Christ: the saint, however, gave only a sigh, and then exclaimed, “O my Jesus, Thou infinite good! how dost Thou endure to be esteemed by men as less than the rubbish of this earth?” “No,” says St. Bernard, “it was not rashness which made the martyrs encounter hot irons, nails, and the most cruel deaths; it was love for Jesus Christ, when they saw him dead upon the cross.”[5286] For us all the example of St. Mark and St. Marcellian is of value, who, when they were fastened with nails through their hands and feet, were rebuked by the tyrants as fools for suffering so cruel a torment rather than renounce Jesus Christ; while they replied that they had never known greater delights than they now experienced when transfixed with these nails.[5287] And all saints, in order to give pleasure to Jesus Christ, who was thus tormented and despised for our sake, gladly embrace poverty, persecutions, contempt, infirmities, pains, and death. Souls betrothed to Jesus Christ upon the cross know nothing more glorious to them than to bear the signs of the crucified, which are his sufferings.

Let us hear what St. Augustine says to us: “To you it is not lawful to love a little; let him who was wholly fixed upon the cross for you be wholly fixed in your hearts.”[5288] Let us, therefore, unite ourselves wholly to St. Paul, and say with him, *I am crucified with Christ. I live, and yet not I, for Christ liveth in me, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.*[5289] On this St. Bernard remarks, “It is as if he had said, To all other things I am dead; I have no sensation, I pay no regard; but the things which are of Christ, these find me a living man, and prepared to act upon them.[5290] Therefore St. Paul says, *To me to live is Christ;*[5291] meaning by these brief words, “Jesus Christ is my life, for he is all my thoughts, all my intentions, all my hope, all my desire, because he is all my love.” “It is a sure promise; if we are dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us.” The kings of the earth, after a victory over their enemies, confer a part of all they have gained upon those who have fought on their side. Thus does Jesus Christ on the day of judgment; he gives a share of the blessings of heaven to all who have toiled and suffered for his glory.

The Apostle says, *If we are dead with Him, we shall also live with Him.*[5292] To die with Christ means the denial of ourselves, that is, of our own inclinations, which, if we do not deny, we shall come to deny Jesus Christ, who will justly deny us on the day of account. And here we must remark, that we not only deny Jesus Christ when we deny the faith, but also when we refuse to obey him in anything he desires of us; as, for example, when, for love of him, we will not forgive an injury we have received, when we give way to the love of vain honor, when we will not break through a friendship which imperils the friendship of Jesus Christ, or yield to the fear of being counted ungrateful, while our first gratitude is due to Jesus Christ, who has given his blood and life for us, which no creature whatever has done for us.

O divine love! how is it that thou art despised by men? O man! look at this cross of the Son of God, who, as an innocent lamb, sacrifices himself to pay for thy sins, and thus to gain thy love! Look at him, look at him and love him!

O my Jesus, O infinitely lovely! grant that I may no longer live ungrateful to so great a good! For the past I have lived in forgetfulness of Thy love, and of all Thou hast suffered for me; but henceforth I would think of nothing but loving Thee. O wounds of Jesus, stricken with love! O blood of Jesus, inebriated with love! O death of Jesus! cause me to die to every love which is not love for him. O Jesus! I love Thee above everything. I love Thee with all my soul; I love Thee more than myself. I love Thee, and because I love Thee, I would die of grief because I have so often turned my back upon Thee, and have despised Thy grace. By Thy merits, O my crucified Saviour, give me Thy love, and make me all Thine own.

O Mary, my hope! make me love Jesus Christ, and I ask nothing more.

Chapter X

WE MUST PLACE ALL OUR HOPES IN THE MERITS OF JESUS CHRIST

I

JESUS CRUCIFIED IS OUR ONLY HOPE IN ALL OUR WANTS

There is no salvation in any other.[5293] St. Peter says that all our salvation is in Jesus Christ, who, by means of the cross, where he sacrificed his life for us, opened us a way for hoping for every blessing from God, if we would be faithful to his commands.

Let us hear what St. John Chrysostom says of the cross: “The cross is the hope of Christians, the staff of the lame, the comfort of the poor, the destruction of the proud, the victory over the devils, the guide of youth, the rudder of sailors, the refuge of those who are in danger, the counsellor of the just, the rest of the afflicted, the physician of the sick, the glory of martyrs.”[5294] The cross, that is, Jesus crucified, is—

The *hope* of the faithful, because if we had not Jesus Christ we should have no hope of salvation.

It is the *staff* of the lame, because we are all lame in our present state of corruption. We should have no strength to walk in the way of salvation except that which is communicated to us by the grace of Jesus Christ.

It is the *comfort* of the poor, which we all are, for all we have we have from Jesus Christ.

It is the *destruction* of the proud, for the followers of the Crucified cannot be proud, seeing him dead as a malefactor upon the cross.

It is *victory* over the devils, for the very sign of the cross is sufficient to drive them from us.

It is the *instructor* of the young, for admirable is the teaching which they who are beginning to walk in the ways of God learn from the cross.

It is the *rudder* of mariners, and guides us through the storms of this present life.

It is the *refuge* of those in danger, for they who are in peril of perishing, through temptations of strong passions, find a secure harbor by flying to the cross.

It is the *counsellor* of the just, for how many saints learn wisdom from the cross, that is, from the troubles of this life.

It is the *rest* of the afflicted, for where can they find greater relief than in contemplating the cross, on which a God suffers for love of them?

It is the *physician* of the sick, for when they embrace it, they are healed of the wounds of the soul.

It is the *glory* of martyrs, for to be made like Jesus Christ, the King of Martyrs, is the greatest glory they can possess.

In a word, all our hopes are placed in the merits of Jesus Christ. The Apostle says, *I know how to be humbled, and I know how to abound; how to be satisfied, and how to hunger; how to abound, and how to suffer poverty. I can do all things in Him who strengthens me.*[5295] (In the Greek text, *In Christ who is strengthening me.*[5296]) Thus St. Paul, instructed by the Lord, says, I know how I ought to conduct myself: when God humbles me, I resign myself to his will; when he exalts me, to him I give all the honor; when he gives me abundance, I thank him; when he makes me endure poverty, still I bless him; and I do all this not by my own strength, but by the strength of the grace which God gives me. For he that trusts in Jesus Christ is strengthened with invincible power.

The Lord, says St. Bernard, makes those who hope in him all-powerful.[5297] The saint also adds that a soul which does not presume upon its own strength, but is strengthened by the Word, can govern itself, so that no evil shall have power over it;[5298] and that no force, no fraud, no snare can cast it down.[5299]

The Apostle prayed thrice to God that the impure temptations which troubled him might be driven away, and he was answered, *My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is accomplished in weakness.*[5300] How is this that the virtue of perfection consists in weakness? St. Thomas, with St. Chrysostom, explains it, that the greater our weakness and inclination to evil, the greater is the strength given us by God. Therefore, St. Paul himself says, *I will gladly, therefore, glory in my infirmities, that the strength of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore, I take pleasure in my infirmities, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.*[5301]

For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to those who are saved it is the power of God.[5302] Thus St. Paul warns us not to follow after worldly men, who place their trust in riches, in their relatives and friends in the world, and account the saints fools for despising those earthly helps; yet men ought to place all their hopes in the love of the cross,—that is, of Jesus crucified, who gives every blessing to those who trust in him. We must further remark that the power and strength of the world is altogether different from that of God; it is exercised in worldly riches and honors, but the latter in humility and endurance. Wherefore St. Augustine says that our strength lies in knowing that we are weak, and in humbly confessing what we are.[5303] And St. Jerome says, that this one thing constitutes the perfection of the present life, that we should know that we are imperfect.[5304] For then we distrust our own strength, and abandon ourselves to God, who protects and saves those who trust in him. *He is the protector of all who hope in Him,* says David. *Thou savest those who hope in Thee.*[5305] *He that trusts in the Lord is like the Mount Sion, which is never removed.*[5306] Therefore St. Augustine reminds us that, when we are tempted, we must hasten and abandon ourselves in Jesus Christ, who will not suffer us to fall, but will embrace and hold us up, and thus remedy our weakness.[5307]

When Jesus Christ took upon himself the weaknesses of humanity, he merited for us a strength which conquers our weakness: *For in that He Himself hath suffered and been tempted, He is powerful to help those who are tempted.*[5308] How is this, that the Saviour in being himself tempted, became able to strengthen us in our temptations? It is meant that Jesus Christ, by being afflicted by temptations, became more ready to feel for us and help us when we are tempted. To this corresponds that other text of the same Apostle, *We have not a High Priest who cannot feel compassion for our infirmities; but was in all things tempted like us, though without sin. Therefore let us go with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in the help we need.*[5309]

Jesus himself, in enduring fears, weariness, and sorrows, as the Evangelists bear witness, speaking especially of the afflictions that he endured in the garden of Gethsemani the night before he suffered,[5310] has merited for us a courage to resist the threats of those who would corrupt us, a strength to overcome the weariness we experience in prayer, in mortifications, and other devout exercises, and a power of enduring with peace of mind that sadness which afflicts us in adversity.

We must also know that he himself in the garden, at the sight of all the pains and the desolate death that he was about to endure, chose to suffer this human weakness. *The spirit indeed is ready, but the flesh is weak;*[5311] and he prayed to his divine Father that, if it were possible, the cup might pass from him.[5312] But immediately he added, *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*[5313] And for the whole time that he continued praying in the garden, he repeated the same prayer, *Thy will be done;* and the third time he prayed, saying the same thing. With those words, *Thy will be done,*[5314] Jesus Christ merited and obtained for us resignation in all adversity, and gained for his martyrs and confessors a strength to resist all the persecutions and torments of tyrants. “This world,” says St. Leo, “inflamed all the confessors, it crowned all the martyrs.”[5315]

Thus also by the horror that he experienced through our sins, which caused him to fall into a bitter agony in the garden,[5316] he merited for us contrition for our sins. By the abandonment by the Father which he suffered on the cross, he merited for us strength to retain our courage in all desolations and darknesses of spirit. By bowing his head in death upon the cross, in obedience to the will of the Father,[5317] he merited for us all the victories which we gain over passions and temptations; and patience in the pains of life, and especially in the bitternesses and straits which we endure in death. In a word, St. Leo writes that Jesus Christ came to take our infirmities and distresses, in order to communicate to us his strength and constancy.[5318]

St. Paul says, that though he was the Son of God, he learned obedience in the things that he suffered;[5319] from which we are to understand, not that Jesus in his Passion learned the virtue of obedience, and did not know it beforehand, but, as St. Anselm says, he learned not only by the knowledge which he had before, but by actual experience, how grievous was the death he endured in order to obey his Father. And at the same time he experienced how great is the merit of obedience, for by this he obtained for himself the utmost height of glory, which is the seat at his Father's right hand, and eternal salvation for us. Therefore the Apostle adds, *Being perfected, He became the cause of eternal life to all them that obey Him.*[5320] He says, *being perfected,* because, having completely fulfilled all obedience, by suffering patiently what he endured in his Passion, Jesus Christ became the cause of eternal life to all those who obediently suffer with patience the troubles of this present life.

By this patience of Jesus Christ the holy martyrs were animated and strengthened to embrace with patience the most cruel torments that the cruelty of tyrants could devise; and not only with patience, but with joy and desire to suffer for the love of Jesus Christ. In the celebrated letter which St. Ignatius the martyr wrote to the Romans after he had been condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts, and before he went to the place of his martyrdom, we read, "Suffer me, my children, to be ground down by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may become corn for my Redeemer. I seek only him who died for me. He who is the only object of my love was crucified for me, and the love I bear to him makes me desire to be crucified for him." St. Leo[5321] writes of St. Laurence the martyr, that when he lay upon the gridiron, the flames which burned him without were less hot than the fire that burned within him. Eusebius[5322] and Palladius[5323] relate of St. Potamena, a virgin of Alexandria, that when she was condemned to be thrown in a caldron of boiling pitch, that she might suffer the more for the love of her crucified Spouse, she prayed the tyrant to have her thrust in little by little, that her death might become more torturing; and she had her desire, for they began by thrusting her feet into the pitch, so that she was for three hours in this torment, and did not die till the pitch reached her neck. Such was the patience, such the fortitude which the martyrs gained from the Passion of Jesus Christ.

It was this courage which the Crucified infuses into those who love him, that made St. Paul say, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or hunger, or nakedness, or perils, or persecution, or the sword?*[5324] And at the same time he says, *In all these things we are conquerors through Him who loved us.*[5325] The love of the martyrs for Jesus

Christ was unconquerable, because it gained its strength from him who is unconquerable, who strengthened them to suffer. And let us not imagine that the torments of the martyrs were miraculously deprived of their power of torturing, or that their heavenly consolations lulled the pains of the torments; this perhaps may sometimes have happened, but ordinarily they truly felt all their pains, and many through weakness yielded to the pangs; so that in the case of those who were constant in suffering, their patience was entirely the gift of God, who gave them their strength.

The first object of our hopes is eternal blessedness, that is, the blessedness of God,—the *fruition of God*, as St. Thomas teaches.[5326] And all the means which are necessary for obtaining this salvation, which consists in the enjoyment of God,—such as the pardon of our sins, final perseverance in divine grace, and a good death,—we must hope for, not from our own strength, nor our good resolutions, but solely from the merits and grace of Jesus Christ. That our confidence, therefore, may be firm, let us believe with infallible certainty that we must look for the accomplishment of all these means of salvation only from the merits of Jesus Christ.

II

THE HOPE THAT WE HAVE IN JESUS CHRIST THAT HE WILL PARDON OUR SINS

And first, in speaking of the pardon of sins, we must remember that for this very end our Redeemer came upon earth, that he might pardon sinners: *The Son of Man came to save that which was lost.*[5327] Therefore the Baptist, when he showed to the Jews that their Messiah was already come, said, *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.*[5328] As it was foretold by Isaias, *As a sheep before her shearers, He shall be dumb;*[5329] and also by Jeremias, *I am as a lamb that is carried to be a victim.*[5330] And first, he was foreshadowed by Moses in the paschal lamb, and by the sacrifice of a lamb to God under the law every morning, and by other evening sacrifices. All these lambs, however, could not take away a single sin; they served only to represent the sacrifice of the divine Lamb Jesus Christ, who with his blood would wash our souls, and thus free them both from the stain of sin and from the eternal punishment of sin, for this is implied by the words *take away;* taking upon himself the duty of satisfying the divine justice for us by his death, according to what Isaias wrote, *The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.*[5331] Wherefore St. Cyril writes, “One is slain for all, and the whole human race is restored to God the Father.”[5332] By dying, Jesus desired to regain for God all mankind who were lost.

Oh, how great is the debt we owe to Jesus Christ! If a criminal condemned to death were already standing at the gibbet with the rope around his neck, and a friend were to come and take the rope, and bind it round himself, and die in place of the guilty man, how great would be his obligation to love him! This is what Jesus Christ has done; He has been willing to die on the cross to deliver us from eternal death.

Jesus *bore our sins,* says St. Peter, *in His body on the tree, that, being dead to sin, we might live to justice; by whose stripes we were healed.*[5333] “What can be more wonderful,” cries St. Bonaventure, “than that wounds should heal, and death give life?”[5334] St. Paul says that God *has graced us in His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which have superabounded in us.*[5335] And this resulted from the covenant made by Jesus Christ with his divine Father, that he would pardon us our offences, and receive us into his favor for the sake of the Passion and death of his Son.

And in this sense the Apostle called Jesus Christ the mediator of the New Testament. In the Holy Scriptures the word *Testament* has two senses; that of a *covenant,* or an agreement between two parties formerly disagreed; and that of a *promise,* or disposition by will, by which the testator leaves an inheritance to his heirs; and this testament is not valid until the testator’s death. We have formerly spoken of the Testament as a promise; we now speak of it as a covenant, in the sense in which the Apostle uses it when he calls Jesus Christ the Mediator of the New Testament.[5336]

Man, by reason of his sin, was a debtor to the divine justice, and an enemy of God; the Son of God came on earth and took man’s flesh; and thus, being God and man, he became a mediator between God and man, acting on behalf of both; and in order that he might bring about peace between them, and obtain for man the divine grace, he offered himself to pay with his blood and his death the debt due by man. This was the reconciliation prefigured in the Old Testament by all the sacrifices and symbols ordained by God, such as the tabernacle, the altar, the veil, the candlestick, the censer, the ark, wherein were contained the rod and the tables of the law. All these things were signs and figures of the promised redemption: and because this redemption was to be accomplished by the blood of Jesus Christ, therefore God appointed that all the sacrifices should be offered with the pouring-forth of the blood of the animals (which was a figure of the blood of the Lamb of God), while all the instruments above named were sprinkled with the blood: *Wherefore, not even the Old Testament was dedicated without blood.*[5337]

St. Paul says that the first Testament—that is, the first alliance, covenant, or mediation—which was accomplished by the old law, and which prefigured the mediation of Jesus Christ under the old law, was celebrated with the blood of goats and calves; and that with this blood were sprinkled the book, the people, the tabernacle, and all the sacred vessels: *When the commandment of the law of Moses was read to all the people, the priest taking the blood of calves and goats with water and with scarlet wool*[5338] (the scarlet wool signified Jesus Christ, for as wool is by nature white, and becomes red by being dyed, thus Jesus, who was white by nature and innocence, appeared on the cross all red with blood, being condemned as a malefactor, and thus fulfilled in himself the words of the Spouse in the Canticles, *My beloved is white and is ruddy*)[5339] *and with hyssop* (a lowly herb, which expressed the humility of Jesus Christ), *sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded; and in like manner he sprinkled the tabernacle and all the vessels of ministration with blood.*[5340] *For all things are purged with blood according to the law, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.*[5341] The Apostle repeats the word *blood* several times, in order to fix in the hearts of the Jews, and of all men, that without the blood of Jesus Christ we have no hope of pardon for our sins. As, then, in the old law, by the blood of the victims the outward defilement of sin was taken away, and the temporal punishment due to them was remitted; so, in the new law, the blood of Jesus Christ washes away the inward stain of sin, according to St. John’s words, *He loved us, and washed us with His own blood.*[5342]

St. Paul thus explains the whole truth in the same chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. *Christ being a High Priest of coming good things, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, neither by the blood of goats, but by His own blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption.*[5343] The high-priest entered by the tabernacle into the Holy of Holies, and, by sprinkling the blood of animals, purged sinners from their outward defilement and from temporal punishment; for in order to the pardon of the sin, and for their liberation from eternal punishment, contrition, faith, and hope in the coming Messiah, who was about to die to obtain pardon for them, were absolutely necessary for the Jews. Jesus Christ, on the other hand, by means of his own body (which was the greater and more perfect tabernacle spoken of by the Apostle), which was sacrificed on the cross, entered into the Holy of Holies of heaven, which was closed to us, and opened it to us by means of this redemption.

Therefore St. Paul, in order to encourage us to hope for the pardon of all our sins, by trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ, goes on to say: *If the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkled on the unclean, sanctifies to the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, by the Holy Spirit, offered Himself without stain to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God!*[5344] This he says because Jesus offered himself to God without shadow of sin, for otherwise he would not have been a worthy mediator, fit to reconcile God with sinful man, nor would his blood have had virtue to purge our consciences from dead works—that is, from sins, from the works without merit, and deserving of eternal punishment, to serve the living God. God pardons us for no other end than that for the rest of our life we should devote it wholly to loving and serving him.

Finally, the Apostle concludes, *Therefore He is the mediator of the new covenant.* Because our Redeemer, through the boundless love he bore us, was willing by the price of his blood, to deliver us from eternal death, therefore he obtained for us from God pardon, grace, and eternal blessedness, if we are faithful to love him until death. This was the mediation or covenant accomplished between Jesus Christ and God, by the terms of which pardon and salvation are promised us.

This promise of pardon for our sins by the blood of Jesus Christ was confirmed to us by Jesus himself the day before his death, when, leaving to us the sacrament of the Eucharist, he said, *This is My blood of the new covenant, which shall be poured forth for many for the remission of sins.*[5345] He says, *poured forth*, because in the sacrifice which was at hand he was about to shed not only a part, but the whole of his blood, to satisfy for our sins, and obtain pardon for us. Therefore he desired that the sacrifice should be renewed every day at every Mass that is celebrated, in order that his blood might continually plead in our favor. And therefore he is called a priest after the order of Melchisedech: *Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedech.*[5346] Aaron offered sacrifices of animals, but Melchisedech offered bread and wine, which was a figure of the sacrifice of the altar, in which our Saviour, under the species of bread and wine, offered at his last supper his body and blood to God, as he was about to sacrifice it on the following day in his Passion; and which he constantly offers by the hands of his priests, renewing by them the sacrifice of the cross. Therefore David called Jesus Christ an eternal priest, as St. Paul explains it, saying, *He that remaineth forever hath an eternal priesthood.*[5347] The ancient priests came to an end by their death, but Jesus, being eternal, has an eternal priesthood. But how does he exercise his priesthood in heaven? The Apostle explains this, adding, *Wherefore he is able to save forever those who come to God by Him, ever living to intercede for us.*[5348] The great sacrifice of the cross, represented still in that of the altar, has power forever to save those who, by means of Jesus Christ (being rightly prepared by faith and good works), approach to God; and this sacrifice, as St. Ambrose and St. Augustine write, Jesus, as man, continues to offer to the Father for our benefit, performing there, as he did on earth, the office of our advocate and mediator, and also of our priest, which is to intercede for us.

St. John Chrysostom says that the wounds of Jesus Christ are so many mouths,[5349] which continually implore from God pardon for us sinners. Oh, how much better, says St. Paul, does the blood of Jesus Christ plead for us in calling down the divine mercy than the blood of Abel,[5350] which called for vengeance against Cain! In the revelations of St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi it is recorded that one day God spoke to her as follows: “My justice is changed into mercy through the vengeance that was taken upon the innocent flesh of Jesus Christ. The blood of my Son does not call for vengeance like the blood of Abel, but for mercy only, and at this voice my justice is necessarily appeased. The blood binds my hands, so that they cannot move to take that revenge upon sins which they would otherwise have taken."

St. Augustine writes that God has promised us the remission of our sins and eternal life, but he has done more than he promised.[5351] To give us pardon and paradise cost Jesus Christ nothing, but to redeem us cost him his blood and his life. The Apostle St. John exhorts us to flee from sin; and, in order that we may not despair of pardon for the sins we have committed, if we have a firm resolution not to commit them again, he gives us courage to hope for pardon, saying that we have to do with Jesus Christ, who not only died to pardon us, but, since his death, is become our advocate with the divine Father.[5352] To our sins were due disgrace with God and eternal damnation; but the Passion of our Saviour has acquired for us grace and eternal salvation; and justice itself requires this, since, on account of his merits, the Eternal Father has promised to pardon and save us if we are only disposed to receive his grace and to obey his commands, as St. Paul writes, *Being made perfect, He is the cause of eternal salvation to all that obey Him*.[5353] Wherefore the Apostle exhorts us to run with patience the race that is before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of faith; who, for the sake of the joy that was before him, endured the cross, and despised shame.[5354]

O precious blood! Thou art my hope. O blood of the innocent one! wash the stains of the guilty.[5355] O my Jesus! my foes having betrayed me into offending Thee, now tell me that I have no more hope of salvation in Thee; many say unto my soul, There is no salvation for him in his God.[5356] But I trust in Thy blood that Thou hast shed for me. I will say with David, Thou, O Lord, wilt lift me up.[5357] My foes terrify me, and say that if I go to Thee, after so many sins, Thou wilt drive me from Thee; but I read in St. John Thy promise, that him who cometh to Thee, Thou wilt not cast out.[5358] To Thee, therefore, I come, full of confidence. We pray Thee, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.[5359] Thou, O my Saviour, who hast poured forth all Thy blood in such agonies, and with such love, that Thou mightest not see me perish, do Thou have mercy on me, pardon me, and save me.

III

THE HOPE THAT WE HAVE IN JESUS CHRIST THAT HE WILL GRANT US FINAL PERSEVERANCE

To obtain perseverance in good, we must not trust in our resolutions and in the promises we have made to God; if we trust in our own strength, we are lost. All our hope of preserving the grace of God must be placed in the merits of Jesus Christ, and thus, trusting in his help, we shall persevere till death, though we were attacked by all our enemies in earth and hell. Sometimes we find ourselves so cast down in mind, and so assaulted by temptations, that we seem almost lost; let us not then lose courage, nor abandon ourselves to despair; let us go to the Crucified, and he will hold us up.

The Lord permits his saints sometimes to find themselves in tempests and fears. St. Paul says that the afflictions and terrors which he suffered in Asia were so overpowering that he became weary of life;[5360] meaning that he was so, so far as he depended on his own strength, in order to teach us that God, from time to time, leaves us in desolations, in order that we may know our misery, and, distrusting ourselves, may humbly have recourse to his goodness, and gain from him strength not to fall.[5361] More clearly he expresses the same in another place, *We are cast down, but we perish not.*[5362] We find ourselves oppressed with sadness and passions, but do not abandon ourselves to despair; we are tossed about on the water, but do not sink, because the Lord, by his grace, gives us strength against our enemies. But the Apostle exhorts us ever to bear before our eyes that we are weak, and prone to lose the treasure of divine grace, and that all our strength for preserving it comes not from ourselves but from God: *We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the loftiness of the power may be of God, and not of ourselves.*[5363]

Let us, then, be firmly persuaded that in this life we must ever beware of placing any confidence in our own works. Our strongest armor with which we shall ever win the victory over the assaults of hell is prayer. This is the armor of God of which St. Paul speaks: *Put on the armor of God, that ye* *may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in high places. Therefore, take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one; and take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit* (which is the word of God), *by all prayer and supplication, praying at all times in the Spirit.*[5364]

Let us pause and weigh well these various expressions.

Stand, having your loins girt about with truth.[5365] There the Apostle alludes to the military girdle with which soldiers gird themselves as a token of the fidelity which they have sworn to their sovereign. The girdle which the Christian must put on is the possession of the truth of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in accordance with which we must repress all inordinate passions, especially those of impurity, which are the most dangerous of all.

Having on the breastplate of justice.[5366] The Christian's breastplate is a good life, without which he will have little strength to resist the assaults of his foes.

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.[5367] The military shoes which the Christian ought to wear, in order that he may go speedily where it is necessary, unlike those whose feet are bare, and who walk slowly, is the possession of a mind prepared to embrace in practice, and to teach by example, the holy maxims of the Gospel.

In all things taking the shield of faith.[5368] The shield with which the soldier of Christ must defend himself against the fiery darts (that is, darts which pierce like fire) of the enemy is a steady faith, strengthened with holy hope, and especially with divine charity. *The helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit.*[5369] The helmet, as St. Anselm teaches us, is the hope of eternal salvation; and, lastly, the sword of the Spirit, our spiritual sword, is the divine word, by which God repeatedly promises to hear those who pray to him. *Seek, and it shall be given you.*[5370] *He that seeketh, receiveth.*[5371] *Call to Me, and I will hear thee.*[5372] *Call Me, and I will deliver thee.*[5373]

Wherefore the Apostle continues, *By all prayer and supplication, praying at all times in the spirit; and in the same watching with all instance and supplication for all the saints.*[5374] Thus, prayer is the most powerful of the arms with which the Lord gives us victory over our evil passions and the temptations of hell; but this prayer must be made *in the spirit;* that is, not with the mouth only, but with the heart. Moreover, it must last through our life,—"at all times;" for as the struggle endures, so must our prayers. It must be urgent and repeated; if the temptation does not yield at the first prayer, we must repeat it a second, third, or fourth time; and if it still continues, we must add sighs, tears, importunity, vehemence, as if we would do violence to God, that he may give us the grace of victory. This is what the Apostle's words, "with all instance and supplication," mean. The Apostle adds, "for all saints," which means that we are not to pray for ourselves alone; but for the perseverance of all the faithful who are in the grace of God, and especially of priests, that they may labor for the conversion of unbelievers and all sinners, repeating in our prayers the words of Zacharias, *To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death.*[5375]

It is of great use for resisting our enemies in spiritual combats, to anticipate them in our meditations, by preparing ourselves to do violence to them to our utmost power, on all occasions when they may suddenly come upon us. Thus the saints have been able to preserve the greatest mildness, or at least not to reply by a single word, and not to be disturbed when they have received a great injury, a violent persecution, a severe pang in body or in mind, the loss of property of great value, the death of a much-loved relative. Such victories are ordinarily not acquired without the aid of a life of long discipline, without frequenting sacraments, and a continual exercise of meditation, spiritual reading, and prayer. Therefore these victories are with difficulty obtained by those who have not taken great heed to avoid dangerous occasions, or who are attached to the vanities or pleasures of the world, and practise very little the mortification of the senses; by those, in a word, who live a soft and easy life. St. Augustine says that in the spiritual life, "first, pleasures are to be conquered, then pains;"[5376] meaning that a person who is given to seek the pleasures of the senses will scarcely resist a great passion or temptation which assails him; a man who loves too much the esteem of the world will scarcely endure a grave affront without losing the grace of God.

It is true that we must look for all our strength to live without sin, and to do good works, not from ourselves, but from the grace of Jesus Christ; but we must take great care not to make ourselves weaker than we are by nature through our own fault. The defects of which we take no account will cause the divine light to fail, and the devil will become stronger against us. For example, a desire to display to the world our learning, rank, or vanity in dress, or the seeking of any superfluous pleasure, or resentment at every inattentive word or action, or a wish to please every one, though at the loss of our spiritual profit, or neglect of works of piety through the fear of man, or little acts of disobedience towards our Superiors, little murmurings, trifling but cherished aversions, trivial falsehoods, slight attacks upon our neighbor, loss of time in gossip, or the indulgence of curiosity,—in a word, every attachment to earthly things, and every act of inordinate self-love, can serve as a help to our enemy to drag us over some precipice; or, at least, this defect deliberately consented to will deprive us of that abundance of divine help without which we may find ourselves fallen into ruin.

We grieve when we find ourselves so dry in spirit and desolate in prayer, in Communions, and in all our devout exercises; but how can God make us enjoy his presence and loving visits while we are thus niggardly and inattentive to him? *He that sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly.*[5377] If we cause him so much displeasure, how can we expect to enjoy his heavenly consolations? If we do not detach ourselves in everything from earth, we shall never wholly belong to Jesus Christ, and where shall we go to protect ourselves? Jesus, by his humility, merited for us the grace of conquering pride; by his poverty he merited strength for us to despise earthly goods; and by his patience, constancy in overcoming slights and injuries. “What pride,” writes St. Augustine, “could have been healed, if not healed by the humility of the Son of God? what avarice, except by the poverty of Christ? what anger, except by the Saviour’s patience?”[5378] But if we are cold in the love of Jesus Christ, and neglect to pray continually to him to help us, and nourish in our hearts any earthly affection, with difficulty shall we persevere in a good life. Let us pray, let us pray always. With prayer we shall obtain every thing.

O Saviour of the world! O my only hope! by the merits of Thy Passion, deliver me from every impure desire which may hinder me from loving Thee as I ought. May I be stripped of all desires that savor of the world; grant that the only object of my desires may be Thyself, who art the sovereign good, and the only good that is worthy of love. By Thy sacred wounds heal my infirmities, give me grace to keep far from my heart every love which is not for Thee, who deservest all my love. O Jesus, my love! Thou art my hope. O sweet words! sweet consolation! Jesus, my love, Thou art my hope!

IV

THE HOPE THAT WE HAVE IN JESUS CHRIST THAT HE WILL GRANT US ETERNAL HAPPINESS

And therefore He is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of His death . . . they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance.[5379] Here St. Paul speaks of the New Testament not as a covenant, but as a promise, or testamentary disposition, by which Jesus Christ left us heirs of the kingdom of heaven. And because a testament is not in force until the death of the testator, therefore it was necessary that Jesus Christ should die, that we might become his heirs, and enter into the possession of paradise. Wherefore the Apostle adds, *For where there is a testament, the death of the testator must of necessity come in. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is as yet of no strength whilst the testator liveth.*[5380]

Through the merits of Jesus Christ our mediator we have received grace in baptism to become the sons of God; unlike the Jews, who, under the old covenant, though they were the elect, were yet all servants. Whence the Apostle writes, *For there are two covenants, of which one on Mount Sina engendereth to bondage.*[5381] The first mediation was made with God by Moses on Mount Sina, when God, through Moses, promised to the Jews the abundance of temporal blessings, if they observed the laws which he gave them; but this mediation, says St. Paul, only produced servants, unlike the mediation of Jesus Christ, which produces sons: *We, brethren, like Isaac, are the children of promise.*[5382] If, then, being Christians, we are the sons of God, by consequence, says the Apostle, we are also heirs;[5383] for a portion of the father's inheritance is given to all sons, and this is the inheritance of eternal glory in paradise, which Jesus Christ has merited for us by his death.

St. Paul nevertheless adds, in the same place, *If we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified with Him.*[5384] It is true that, by our sonship to God, which Jesus Christ has obtained for us by his death, we have acquired a right to paradise; but this is on the supposition that we are faithful to correspond to the divine grace by our good works, and especially by holy patience. Therefore the Apostle says that in order to obtain eternal glory, as Jesus Christ has obtained it, we must suffer upon earth as Jesus Christ suffered. He goes before, as our captain, with his cross; under this standard we must follow him, each bearing his own cross, as the same Lord admonishes us, *He that will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me*.[5385]

St. Paul also exhorts us to suffer with courage, stengthened by the hope of paradise, reminding us that the glory which will be given us in the next life will be infinitely greater than all our sufferings, if we suffer here with good will, in order to fulfil the divine pleasure: *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us.*[5386] What beggar would be so foolish as not to give gladly all his rags for a great kingdom? We do not as yet enjoy this glory, because we are not yet saved, not having finished our life in the grace of God; but hope in the merits of Jesus Christ, says St. Paul, will save us: *We are saved by hope.*[5387] He will not fail to give us every help to save us, if we are faithful to him, and continue to pray; and the promise of Jesus Christ assures us that he hears every one who prays: *Every one that seeketh, receiveth.*[5388] Some one will say, I fear, not that God will refuse to hear me, if I pray to him, but I fear for myself, that I should not know how to pray as I ought. No, says St. Paul, fear not this, for when we pray, God himself aids our weakness, and makes us pray so as to be heard. *The Spirit helpeth our infirmity, and asketh for us.*[5389] He asks, explains St. Austin, that is, he helps us to ask.[5390]

The Apostle would still further increase our confidence; he says, *We know that all things work together for good to those that love God.*[5391] By this he teaches us that shame, sickness, poverty, persecutions, are not evils, as men of the world account them; for God turns them all into blessings and glory for those who suffer with patience. Finally, he says, *Those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son.*[5392] With these words he would persuade us that, if we would be saved, we must resolve to suffer everything rather than lose the divine grace, for no one can be admitted to the glory of the blessed, unless at the day of judgment his life be found conformed to the life of Jesus Christ.

And that sinners may not, through these words, abandon themselves to despair on account of their guilt, St. Paul encourages them to hope for pardon, telling them that for this end the Eternal Father has not spared his own son, who was offered to satisfy for our sins, but gave him up to death,[5393] that he might pardon us sinners; and still further to increase the hope of penitent sinners, he says, *Who is he that shall condemn? Is it Jesus Christ who died?*[5394] as though he had said, Sinners, you who detest your sins, why do you fear to be condemned to hell? Tell me who is your judge,—who is to condemn you? Is it not Jesus Christ? How, then, can you fear that you will be condemned to death by this loving Redeemer, who, that he might not condemn you, has been willing to condemn himself to die as a malefactor upon the infamous gibbet of the cross? He speaks, indeed, of those sinners who, being contrite, have washed their souls in the blood of the Lamb, according to the words of St. John.[5395]

O my Jesus! if I look at my sins, I am ashamed to seek for paradise, after the many times that I have openly renounced Thee, for the sake of short and miserable pleasures; but looking to Thee upon this cross, I cannot cease to hope for paradise, knowing that Thou hast been willing to die upon this tree to atone for my sins, and to obtain for me this paradise which I had despised. O my sweet Redeemer! I hope, through the merits of Thy death, that Thou hast already pardoned me the sins I have committed against Thee, for which I repent, and now I would rather die for grief of them; and yet, O my God, I see that, with all that Thou hast pardoned me, it will ever be true, that, in my ingratitude, I have had the heart to cause Thee so much displeasure, who hast so much loved me. But what is past is past. At least for the rest of my life, O my Lord, I would love Thee with all my powers; I would live only for Thee; I would be wholly Thine; wholly, wholly, wholly Thine. But Thou must accomplish this. Detach me from every earthly thing, and give me light and strength to seek Thee alone, my only good, my love, my all.

O Mary, hope of sinners! thou must help me with thy prayers. Pray, pray for me, and cease not to pray, until thou seest me wholly given to God.

Chapter XI

THE PATIENCE THAT WE MUST EXERCISE IN COMPANY WITH JESUS CHRIST, IN ORDER TO OBTAIN ETERNAL SALVATION

I

IT IS NECESSARY TO SUFFER, AND TO SUFFER WITH PATIENCE

To speak of patience and suffering is a thing neither practised nor understood by those who love the world. It is understood and practised only by souls who love God. “O Lord,” said St. John of the Cross to Jesus Christ, “I ask nothing of Thee but to suffer and to be despised for Thy sake.” St. Teresa frequently exclaimed, “O my Jesus, I would either suffer or die.” St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was wont to say, “I would suffer and not die.” Thus speak the saints who love God, because a soul can give no surer mark to God of love for him than voluntarily to suffer to please him. This is the great proof which Jesus Christ has given of his love to us. As God he loved us in creating us, in providing us so many blessings, in calling us to enjoy the same glory that he himself enjoys; but in nothing else has he more fully shown how much he loves us than in becoming man, and embracing a painful life, and a death full of pangs and ignominies, for love of us. And how shall we show our love for Jesus Christ? By leading a life full of pleasures and earthly delights?

Let us not think that God delights in our pains; the Lord is not of so cruel a nature as to be delighted to see us, his creatures, groan and suffer. He is a God of infinite goodness, who desires to see us fully content and happy, so that he is full of sweetness, affability, and compassion to all who come to him.[5396] But our unhappy condition, as sinners, and the gratitude we owe to the love of Jesus Christ, require that, for his love, we should renounce the delights of this earth, and embrace with affection the cross which he gives us to carry during this life, after him who goes before, bearing a cross far heavier than ours; and all this in order to bring us, after our death, to a blessed life, which will never end. God, then, has no desire to see us suffer, but, being himself infinite justice, he cannot leave our faults unpunished; so that, in order that they may be punished, and yet we may one day attain eternal happiness, he would have us purge away our sins with patience, and thus deserve to be eternally blessed. What can be more beautiful and sweet than this rule of divine Providence, that we see at once justice satisfied, and ourselves saved and happy?

All our hopes, then, we must derive from the merits of Jesus Christ, and from him we must hope for all aid to live holily, and save ourselves; and we cannot doubt that it is his desire to see us holy: *This is the will of God, your sanctification.*[5397] But true as this is, we must not neglect to do our part to satisfy God for the injuries we have done to him, and to attain with our good works to eternal life. This the Apostle expressed when he said, *I fill up that which is wanting of the Passion of Christ in my flesh.*[5398] Was the Passion of Christ, then, not complete, not enough alone to save us? It was most complete in its value, and most sufficient to save all men; nevertheless, in order that the merits of the Passion may be applied to us, says St. Teresa, we must do our part, and suffer with patience the crosses which God sends us, that we may be like our head, Jesus Christ, according to what the Apostle writes to the Romans: *Whom He foreknew, them He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.*[5399] Still we must ever remember, as the Angelic Doctor warns us, that all the virtue of our good works, satisfactions, and penances, is communicated to them by the satisfaction of Jesus Christ: *The satisfaction of man has its efficacy from the satisfaction of Christ.*[5400] And thus we reply to the Protestants, who call our penances injurious to the Passion of Jesus Christ, as if it were not sufficient to satisfy for our sins.

What we say is, that in order that we may be partakers in the merits of Jesus Christ, it is necessary that we labor to fulfil the divine precepts, even by doing violence to ourselves, in order that we may not yield to the temptations of hell. And this is what our Lord meant when he said, *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent seize upon it.*[5401] It is necessary, when occasions occur, that we do violence to ourselves by continence, by the mortification of our senses, that we may not be conquered by our enemies. And when we find ourselves guilty through the sins we have committed, we must do violence to God with our tears, says St. Ambrose, in order to obtain pardon.[5402] And then, to console us, the saint adds, “O blessed violence, which is not punished with the wrath of God, but is welcomed and rewarded with mercy!”[5403] The more violent any man is with Christ, the more religious is he accounted by Christ. For we must first rule over ourselves by conquering our passions, that we may one day seize upon heaven, which our Saviour has merited for us.[5404] And therefore we must do violence to ourselves by suffering contradictions and persecutions, and by conquering the temptations and passions which, without violence, are never conquered.

God teaches us that, in order not to lose our souls, we must be prepared to suffer the agonies of death, and to die; but, at the same time, he says that for him who is thus prepared he himself will fight, and will destroy his enemies.[5405] St. John saw before the throne of God a great multitude of saints clothed in white garments (because into heaven nothing defiled can enter), and he beheld that every one of them bore in his hand a palm, the token of martyrdom.[5406] What, then, are all the saints martyrs? Yes, Lord, all grown-up persons who are saved must either be martyrs in blood or martyrs in patience, in conquering the assaults of hell and the inordinate desires of the flesh. Bodily pleasures send innumerable souls to hell, and, therefore, we must resolve with courage to despise them. Let us be assured that either the soul must tread the body under foot, or the body the soul.

We must, then (I repeat), do ourselves violence in order to be saved. But this violence is such (it will be said by some one) that I cannot do it of myself, if God does not give it me through his grace. To such a one St. Ambrose says, “If you look to yourself, you can do nothing; but if you trust in God, strength will be given you.”[5407] But, in doing this, we must suffer, and it is impossible to avoid it; if we would enter into the glory of the Blessed, says the Scripture, we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God.[5408] Thus St. John, beholding the glory of the saints in heaven, heard a voice saying, *These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their garments, and have made them white in* *the blood of the Lamb.*[5409] It is true that they all attained heaven by being washed in the blood of the Lamb, but they all went there after suffering great tribulation.

Be assured, St. Paul wrote to his disciples, that God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able.[5410] God has promised to give us sufficient help to conquer every temptation, if only we ask him. *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find.*[5411] He cannot, therefore, fail of his promise. It is a fatal error of the heretics to say that God commands things which it is impossible for us to observe. The Council of Trent says: *God does not command impossible things; but when He commands, He bids us do what we can, and seek help for what we cannot do, and He will help us.*[5412] St. Ephrem writes, "If men do not put upon their beasts a greater burden than they can bear, much less does God lay greater temptations upon men than they can endure."[5413]

Thomas à Kempis writes, "The cross everywhere awaits thee; it is needful for thee everywhere to preserve patience, if thou wouldst have peace. If thou willingly bearest the cross, it will bear thee to thy desired end."[5414] In this world, we all of us go about seeking peace; and would find it without suffering; but this is not possible in our present state; we must suffer; the cross awaits us wherever we turn. How, then, can we find peace in the midst of these crosses? By patience, by embracing the cross, which presents itself to us. St. Teresa says "that he who drags the cross along with ill-will feels its weight, however small it is; but he who willingly embraces it, however great it is, does not feel it."

The same Thomas à Kempis says, "Which of the saints is without a cross? The whole life of Christ was a cross and a martyrdom, and dost thou seek for pleasure?"[5415] Jesus, innocent, holy, and the Son of God, was willing to suffer through his whole life, and shall we go about seeking pleasures and comforts? To give us an example of patience, he chose a life full of ignominies and pains within and without; and shall we wish to be saved without suffering, or to suffer without patience, which is a double suffering, and without fruit, and with increase of pain? How can we think to be lovers of Jesus Christ, if we will not suffer for love of him who has so much suffered for love of us? How can he glory in being a follower of the Crucified who refuses or receives with ill-will the fruits of the cross, which are sufferings, contempt, poverty, pains, infirmities, and all things that are contrary to our self-love?

II

THE SIGHT OF JESUS CRUCIFIED CONSOLES US AND SUSTAINS US IN SUFFERINGS

Let us not lose courage, but keep our eyes ever fixed on the crucified one, because from him we shall draw strength to endure the evils of this life not only with patience, but even with joy and gladness, as the saints have done: *Ye shall draw waters in joy from the fountains of the Saviour;*[5416] that is, says St. Bonaventure, from the wounds of Jesus Christ.[5417] Therefore, the saint exhorts us ever to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus dying upon the cross, if we would live always united to God.[5418] "Devotion," says St. Thomas, "consists in being ready to accomplish in ourselves whatever God demands of us."[5419]

Observe the excellent advice which St. Paul gives us, that we may live ever united with God, and may patiently endure the troubles of this present life: *Think diligently upon Him who endured contradiction against Himself for sinners, that ye be not weary and faint in your minds.*[5420] He says, *think diligently;* for in order to suffer with resignation and peace present troubles, it is not enough to give a hasty glance, a few times in the year, at the Passion of Jesus Christ; we must often think of it, and every day turn our eyes to the pain which the Lord suffered for love of us. And what were the pains he suffered? The Apostle says, *He endured such contradiction.* The contradiction which Jesus Christ endured from his enemies was such as to make him, as it had been foretold by the Prophet, the vilest of men, and the man of sorrows,[5421] until he died of agony, and overwhelmed with insults, upon a gibbet belonging to the most reprobate. And why did Jesus Christ embrace this load of pains and insults? *That ye might not be weary and faint in your minds;* that seeing how much a God has been willing to endure, in order to give us an example of patience, we might be patient, and endure all to be delivered from our sins.

Thus the Apostle goes on to encourage us, saying, *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*[5422] Think, he says, that Christ poured forth for you all his blood in his Passion through torments, and that the holy martyrs, after the example of him, their king, have courageously endured hot plates, and iron nails, which have torn open their very bowels; but you have not shed a single drop of blood for Jesus Christ, while we ought to be ready to give our life rather than offend God, as St. Edmund said, "I would rather leap into a burning pile than commit a sin against my God."[5423] And thus St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, said, "If I must either endure all the bodily pains of hell, or else commit a sin, rather than commit it I would choose hell."[5424]

The infernal lion ceases not through all our life to go about seeking to devour us; therefore St. Peter tells us that, by thinking of the Passion of Christ, we ought to arm ourselves against his attacks.[5425] St. Thomas says that the mere recollection of the Passion is a great defence against all the temptations of hell.[5426] And St. Ambrose, or some other saint, says, "If there had been any better way of salvation for men than the way of suffering, Christ would have shown it to us both by word and example;[5427] but now, going before us with the cross upon his shoulders, he has shown us that there is no better way of obtaining salvation than suffering with patience and resignation; and he himself has given us the example in his own person.

St. Bernard says that when we look upon the afflictions of the Lord, we will find our own lighter to bear.[5428] And in another place, "What more can be given to thee, since thou hast the bitternesses of thy Lord?"[5429] St. Eleazar, being one day asked by his good wife, Delphina, how he bore so many injuries with a calm mind, replied, "When I see myself injured, I think on the injuries of my crucified Saviour, and cease not to think of them until I calmed."[5430] "Sweet is the ignominy of the cross to him who is not ungrateful to the Crucified," says St. Bernard.

To souls that desire to be grateful to Jesus Christ, the contempt they receive is not displeasing, but welcome.[5431] Who will not gladly embrace opprobrium and ill-treatment when he thinks of the ill-treatment which Jesus endured in the commencement of his Passion, when, in the house of Caiphas, he was on that night struck with blows and stripes, spit upon in the face, and, with a cloth spread before his eyes, derided as a false prophet?[5432]

And how did it ever happen that the martyrs endured with such patience the torments of executioners? They were torn with iron, they were burned upon hot gratings. Were they not made of flesh and blood, or had they lost all sense? No; when the martyr sees his blood, he thinks not of his own wounds, but of those of his Redeemer; he does not feel pain; not that there is no pain, but that for Christ’s sake it is contemned. There is nothing so bitter, even to death, which is not sweetened by the death of Christ.[5433]

The Apostle writes that through the merits of Jesus Christ we are all made rich.[5434] But Jesus Christ chooses that, in order to obtain the graces we desire, we should ever have recourse to God with prayer, and beseech him to hear us through the merits of his Son; and Jesus himself promises that whatever we ask the Father in his name, he will give it us. Thus did the martyrs; when the pain of their torments was too sharp and bitter, they went to God, and God gave them patience to endure. The martyr St. Theodore, in the midst of all the cruelties inflicted on him, feeling at one time a most terrible torture from the balls of hot chalk which the tyrant had put upon the wounds they had caused him, besought Jesus Christ to give him strength to suffer, and thus remained conqueror, ending his life in the torments.

We need not fear the attacks we must endure from the world and from hell; if we take heed ever to have recourse to Jesus Christ with prayer, he will obtain for us every blessing;[5435] he will obtain for us patience in all our labors, perseverance, and, in the end, will grant us a good death.

III

THE PASSION OF OUR SAVIOUR WILL GIVE US STRENGTH WHEN AT THE POINT OF DEATH

Great is the bitterness we endure at the point of death; Jesus Christ only can give us constancy to suffer with patience and meritoriously. Especially great are then the temptations of hell, which vehemently strive to destroy us, seeing us near our end. Rinaldus relates that St. Eleazar, at the point of death, endured horrible attacks from the devils, after leading a most holy life, so that he said, “Great are the temptations of hell at this moment, but Jesus Christ, by the merits of his Passion, destroys all their power.”[5436] St. Francis desired that at the hour of his death the Passion should be read to him. In like manner, St. Charles Borromeo, seeing himself near death, had himself taken near the images of the Passion, that in sight of these he might breathe out his blessed soul.

St. Paul writes that Jesus Christ chose to endure death, that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death; that is, the devil; and might deliver those who, through fear of death, were through their whole life subject to bondage.[5437] And he adds, *Wherefore it was necessary that He should be in all things like His brethren, that He might be merciful. For in that He Himself suffered, and was tempted, He is able to succor those who are tempted.*[5438] He chose to take on him all the circumstances and passions of human nature (except ignorance, concupiscence, and sin); and wherefore? That he might be merciful, that by taking on himself our miseries, he might be more compassionate to us, because misery is much better known by experience than by reflection; and thus he became more ready to help us when we are tempted during life, and especially at the hour of death. To this the saying of St. Augustine refers, “If you are disturbed at the time of death, do not think yourself a reprobate, nor give yourself up to despair; for Christ himself was thus disturbed at the prospect of his own death.”[5439]

Hell, therefore, at the time of our death, will put forth all its strength to make us distrust the divine mercy, by placing before our eyes all the sins of our life; but the memory of the death of Jesus Christ will give us courage to trust in his merits, and not to fear death. St. Thomas remarks on St. Paul’s words, *Christ, by death, took away the fear of death:* “When a man reflects that the Son of God chose to die, he does not fear death.”[5440] To the Gentiles death was an object of the greatest terror, because they thought that with death every blessing ceased; but the death of Jesus Christ gives us a firm hope that, dying in the grace of God, we shall pass from death to eternal life. Of this hope St. Paul gives us a sure confidence, saying that the Eternal Father did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; and how has he not with him given us all things?[5441] Forgiving us Jesus Christ, he gives us pardon, final perseverance, his love, a good death, eternal life, and every blessing.

Thus, when the devil frightens us in life or in death, by representing to us the sins of our youth, let us answer him with St. Bernard, “What is wanting to me of myself, I take to myself from the bowels of my Lord.”[5442] St. Paul writes, *It is God who justifieth; who is He that shall condemn? It is Jesus Christ who died, and who also is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.*[5443] These words of the Apostle are of great comfort to us sinners; it is God who justifies us sinners, and pardons us with his grace; and if God makes us just, who can condemn us as guilty. Will Jesus Christ, who died for us, and gave himself for our sins, that he might redeem us from the present evil world?[5444]

He burdened himself with our sins, and gave himself to death to deliver us from this wicked world, and to bring us with himself to his kingdom, where (as St. Paul goes on to say) he performs the office of our advocate, and intercedes for us with the Father. St. Thomas explains this, saying that Jesus Christ intercedes for us in heaven, by presenting to his Father his wounds which he endured for love of us. And St. Gregory does not hesitate to assert (in opposition to what some say) that the Redeemer, as truly man, ever after his death, prays for the Church militant, that we may be faithful to him: "Christ daily prays for his Church."[5445] And St. Gregory Nazianzen before had said, "He intercedes, that is, he prays for us in the way of meditation."[5446] And St. Augustine,[5447] on the thirty-ninth Psalm, says that Jesus prays for us in heaven, not that he may now obtain for us any fresh grace, for during his life he obtained all that he could obtain; but he prays, inasmuch as he begs of the Father, through his merits, the salvation already obtained and promised to us. And though to Christ all power is committed by the Father, yet, as man, he only possesses this power as depending upon God. For the rest, the Church is not accustomed to ask him to intercede for us, because she regards that which is most exalted in him, that is, his divinity; and therefore she prays to him as God to grant her what she asks.

IV

CONFIDENCE IN JESUS CHRIST, AND LOVE FOR HIM

But let us return to the confidence we ought to have in Jesus Christ for our salvation. St. Augustine encourages us, saying that this Lord, who has delivered us from death by shedding all his blood, desires not that we should perish; and that if our sins separate us from God, and make us worthy of being rejected, our Saviour, on the other hand, cannot reject the price of the blood which he has shed for us.[5448] Let us, then, follow with boldness the counsel of St. Paul, who says, *Let us run with patience the race that is put before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of faith; who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross and despised the shame.*[5449] He says, “Let us run with patience the race before us,” because it profits little to begin, if we do not struggle to the end; while patience in enduring labor will obtain for us the victory, and the crown that is promised to him who conquers.

This patience will be the cuirass which will defend us from the swords of our foes; but how shall we obtain it? “By looking,” says the Apostle, “to Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith,” who, says St. Augustine, despised all earthly goods, that he might show that they are to be despised; who endured all earthly evils, which he taught us were to be endured, that in these we might neither seek happiness nor fear unhappiness.[5450] Then with his glorious resurrection he animated us not to fear death; because, if we are faithful to him even to death, after it we shall obtain eternal life, which is free from all evil, and full of every good thing. This is signified by the Apostle’s words, “Jesus, the author and finisher of faith;” for Jesus Christ is the author of the faith, in teaching us what to believe, and giving us grace to believe it; and so also is he the finisher of faith, by promising that we shall one day enjoy that blessed life which now he teaches us to believe in. And that we may be sure of the love which this Saviour bears to us, and of the will he has that we should be saved, St. Paul adds, “Who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross;” on which words St. John Chrysostom remarks that Jesus might have saved us by leading a life of joy upon earth; but that to make us more certain of the love he bears to us, he chose a life of pain, and a death of shame, dying as a malefactor upon a cross.

Let us, then, give ourselves, O souls that love the Crucified, for the life that remains to us, to love this loving Redeemer, so worthy of love, to our utmost power; and also to suffer for him, because he has been willing to suffer for love of us; and let us not cease to ask him continually to grant us the gift of his holy love. Happy are we if we attain to a great love for Jesus Christ! The Venerable Father Vincent Carafa, an eminent servant of God, in a letter which he wrote to some studious and devout young men, said as follows: “To reform ourselves in our whole life, we must give all our study to the exercise of the divine love; the love of God alone, when it enters a heart, and obtains possession of it, purifies it from all inordinate love, and makes it at once obedient and pure.” St. Augustine says, a pure heart is a heart emptied of every desire; and St. Bernard, he that loves, loves and desires nothing more; meaning that he who loves God desires nothing but to love him, and banishes from his heart everything which is not God. And thus it is that, from being empty, the heart becomes full, that is, full of God, who brings with himself every good thing; and then earthly blessings, finding no place in such a heart, have no power to move it. What power can earthly pleasures have over us if we enjoy divine consolations? What power is there in ambition for vain honors, and the desire of earthly riches, if we have the honor of being loved by God, and begin to possess in part the riches of paradise? To measure, therefore, the advance we have made in the ways of God, let us observe what advance we have made in loving him; whether we often during the day make acts of love towards God; often speak of the love of God; whether we take pains to produce it in others; whether we perform our devotions solely to please God; whether we suffer with full resignation all adversities, infirmities, pains, poverty, slights, and persecutions, in order to please God. The saints say that a soul that truly loves God ought not more to breathe than to love, since the life of the soul, both in time and eternity, consists in the love of our sovereign good, which is God.

But let us be sure that we shall never attain to a great love for God, except through Jesus Christ, and unless we have a special devotion to his Passion, by which he procured the divine grace for us. The Apostle writes, *Through Him we have access to the Father.*[5451] The way to ask for grace would be closed to us sinners, were it not for Jesus Christ. He opens the gate to us, he introduces us to the Father, and, by the merits of his Passion, he obtains for us from the Father pardon for our sins, and all the graces that we receive from God. Miserable we should be if we did not possess Jesus Christ. And who can ever sufficiently praise and thank the love and goodness which this merciful Redeemer has shown to us poor sinners, in being willing to die to deliver us from eternal death? *Scarcely,* says the

Apostle, *will any die for a just man, but for a good man perhaps some would dare to die; but when we were sinners, Christ died for us.*[5452]

Wherefore the Apostle teaches us that if we are resolved to seek the love of Jesus Christ at all costs, we ought to expect from him every help and favor; and he thus reasons, *For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.* He thus warns those who love Jesus Christ, that they do injustice to the love which this our merciful Saviour bears to us, if they fear that he will deny them any of the graces necessary to salvation and to make them holy. And that our sins may not not cause us to fail in trusting him, St. Paul goes on to say, *For not according to the fault so is the gift; for if by the fault of one man many have died, much more has the grace and gift of God abounded by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, to many more;*[5453] giving us to understand that the gift of grace obtained by the Redeemer through his Passion brings us blessings far greater than the loss we sustained in the sin of Adam; for the merits of Christ have a greater power to cause us to be loved by God than the sin of Adam had to make him hate us. “We obtained,” say St. Leo, “greater things by the unspeakable grace of Christ than we lost by the malice of the devil.”[5454]

Let us, then, conclude. O devout souls, let us love Jesus Christ; let us love this Redeemer who is so worthy of being loved, and has so loved us that it seems as if he could not have done more to gain our love. It is enough for us to know that, for love of us he has been willing to die, consumed by griefs upon a cross; and, not satisfied with this, has left us himself in the sacrament of the Eucharist, where he gives us for food the very same body which he sacrificed for us, and gives us to drink the very same blood that he poured forth for us in his Passion. Most ungrateful shall we be to him, not merely if we offend him, but if we love him little, and do not consecrate to him all our love.

O my Jesus, may I be all consumed with love for Thee, as Thou wast all consumed for me! And since Thou hast so much loved me, and bound me to love Thee, help me now not to be ungrateful to Thee; and most ungrateful should I be if I loved anything apart from Thee. Thou hast loved me without reserve; without reserve I also would love Thee. I leave all, I renounce all, to give myself wholly to Thee, and to have in my heart no love but Thine.

Accept my love in pity, without taking account of the offences that I have committed against Thee during the time past. Behold, I am one of the sheep for whom Thou hast shed Thy blood; we therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.[5455] Forget, O my dear Saviour, the many offences that I have committed against Thee. Chastise me as Thou wilt, deliver me only from the punishment of not being able to love Thee, and then do with me whatever pleases Thee. Deprive me of everything, O my Jesus, but deprive me not of Thyself, my only good. Teach me to know what Thou wilt have from me, that, by Thy grace, I may fulfil all Thy will. Make me forget everything, that I may remember Thee alone, and all the pains Thou hast suffered for me. Grant that I may think of nothing but of pleasing Thee, and loving Thee. Look upon me with that love with which Thou didst look upon me at Calvary, when dying for me upon the cross, and hear me. In Thee I place all my hopes, O my Jesus, my God, and my all.[5456]

O holy Virgin Mary, my mother and my hope, recommend me to thy Son, and obtain for me faithfulness to love him until my death.

Meditations on the Passion of Jesus Christ for each Day of the Week[5457]

MEDITATION FOR SUNDAY

THE LOVE OF JESUS IN SUFFERING FOR US

I

The time since the coming of Jesus Christ is no longer a time of fear, but a time of love, as the prophet foretold: *Thy time is a time of lovers,*[5458] because a God has been seen to die for us: *Christ hath loved us, and hath given Himself up for us.*[5459] Under the old law, before the Word was made flesh, man might, so to speak, have doubted whether God loved him with a tender love; but after having seen him suffer a bloody and ignominious death for us on a cross of infamy, we can no longer possibly doubt that he loves us with the utmost tenderness. And who will ever arrive at comprehending what was the excess of the love of the Son of God in being willing to pay the penalty of our sins? And yet this is "of faith." *Truly He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our iniquities; He was bruised for our sins.*[5460] All this was the work of the great love which he bears us: *He hath loved us, and hath washed us in His blood.*[5461] In order to wash us from the defilements of our sins, he was willing to empty his veins of all his blood, to make of it for us, as it were, a bath of salvation. O infinite mercy! O infinite love of a God!

Ah, my Redeemer, too surely hast Thou obliged me to love Thee; too surely should I be ungrateful to Thee, if I did not love Thee with my whole heart. My Jesus, I have despised Thee, because I have lived in forgetfulness of Thy love; but Thou hast not forgotten me. I have turned my back on Thee; but Thou hast come near to me. I have offended Thee, and Thou hast so many times forgiven me. I have returned to offend Thee; Thou hast returned to pardon me. Ah, my Lord, by that affection with which Thou didst love me on the cross, bind me tightly to Thee by the sweet chains of Thy love; but bind me in such wise that I may nevermore see myself separated from Thee. I love Thee, O my chief good, and I desire to love Thee ever for the time to come.

II

That which ought most to inflame our love for Jesus Christ is not so much the death, the sorrows, and the ignominies which he suffered for us, as the end which he had in view in suffering for us so many and so great pains; and that was, to show us his love and to win our hearts: *In this have we known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us.*[5462] For it was not absolutely necessary in order to save us that Jesus should suffer so much and die for us; it were enough that he should pour forth but one drop of blood, should shed but one tear only for our salvation; this drop of blood, this tear shed by a Man-God, were sufficient to save a thousand worlds: but he willed to pour out all his blood, he willed to lose his life in a sea of sorrows and contempt, to make us understand the great love which he has for us, and to oblige us to love him. *The charity of Christ urgeth us,* says St. Paul.[5463] He says not the Passion or the death, but the love of Jesus Christ constrains us to love him.

And what were we that Thou, O Lord, wert willing at so great a price to purchase our love? *Christ died for all, that they too who live should not now live to themselves, but to Him who died for them.*[5464] Hast Thou, then, my Jesus, died for us, that we might live wholly for Thee alone, and for Thy love? But, my poor Lord (permit me so to call Thee), Thou art so full of love that Thou hast suffered so much in order to be loved by men. But, after all, what is the number of those who love Thee? I see all these intent on loving,—some their riches, some honors, some pleasures, some their relatives, some their friends, some, in fine, the beasts; but of those who truly love Thee, who alone art worthy of love, oh, how few such do I see! O God, how few they are! Among these few, nevertheless, I too desire to be, who at one time, just like the rest, offended Thee by loving filth; now, however, I love Thee above every other good. O my Jesus! the pain which Thou hast suffered for me urgently obliges me to love Thee; but that which the more binds me to Thee and enkindles me to love Thee, is hearing of the love which Thou hast shown in suffering so much, to the end that Thou mayest be loved by me. Yes, O my Lord, most worthy of love; Thou, through love, hast given Thyself wholly to me; I, through love, give myself wholly to Thee. Thou for love of me didst die; I for love of Thee am willing to die when and as it shall please Thee. Accept of my loving Thee, and help me by Thy grace to do so worthily.

III

There is no means which can more surely kindle in us divine love than to consider the Passion of Jesus Christ. St. Bonaventure says that the wounds of Jesus Christ, because they are wounds of love, are darts which wound hearts the most hard, are flames which set on fire souls the most cold: “O wounds, wounding stony hearts, and inflaming frozen minds!”[5465] It is impossible that a soul which believes and thinks on the Passion of the Lord should offend him and not love him, nay, rather that it should not run into a holy madness of love, at seeing a God, as it were, mad for love of us: “We have seen,” says St. Laurence Justinian, “Wisdom infatuated by too much love.”[5466] Hence it is that the Gentiles, as the Apostle says, when hearing him preach the Passion of Jesus crucified, thought it a folly: *We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews indeed a scandal, but to the Gentiles foolishness.*[5467] How is it possible (said they) that a God, almighty and most happy, such as he who is preached to us, could have been willing to die for his creatures?

Ah, God enamoured of men! how is it possible (let us say this who by faith believe that he really died for love of us),—how is it possible that a goodness so great, that such a love, should remain so badly corresponded to by men? It is wont to be said that love is repaid with love; but Thy love—with what manner of love can it be ever repaid? It would be necessary that another God should die for Thee, to make recompense for the love which Thou hast borne towards us in dying for us. O cross, O wounds, O death of Jesus! you bind me closely to love him. O God, eternal and infinitely worthy of love, I love Thee, I desire to live only for Thee, only to please Thee; tell me what Thou willest of me, and I will wholly to do it. Mary, my hope, pray to Jesus for me.

MEDITATION FOR MONDAY

THE SWEAT OF BLOOD, AND THE AGONY OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN

I

Our loving Redeemer, as the hour of his death was approaching, went away into the garden of Gethsemani, in which of his own self he made a beginning of his own most bitter Passion, by giving free way to fear and weariness and sorrow, which came to torment him: *He began to fear, and to be heavy; to grow sorrowful, and to be sad.*[5468] He began, then, to feel a great fear and weariness of death, and of the pains which must accompany it. At that moment there were represented to his mind most vividly the scourges, the thorns, the nails, the cross, which then, not one after the other, but all together, came to afflict him; and specially there stood before him that desolate death which he must endure, abannoned by every comfort, human and divine; so that, terrified by the sight of the horrid apparatus of such torments and ignominies, he besought his Eternal Father to be freed from them: *My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me.*[5469] But how is this? Was it not this same Jesus who had so much desired to suffer and die for men, saying, *I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?*[5470] How, then, does he fear these pains and this death? Nay, it was with good-will he was going to die for us: but to the end we might not suppose that through any virtue of his divinity he could die without pain, for this it was he made this prayer to his Father, to make us know that he not only died for love of us, but that the death he died was so tormenting as to terrify him greatly.

II

And then to torment the Lord thus afflicted was added a great sorrowfulness—such that, as he said, it was enough to cause death: *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*[5471] But, Lord, to deliver Thyself from the death which men are preparing for Thee is in Thy hands, if it so please Thee; why, then, afflict Thyself? Ah, it was not so much the torments of his Passion as our sins which afflicted the heart of our loving Saviour. He had come on earth to take away our sins; but then, seeing that, after all his Passion, there would yet be committed such iniquities in the world, this was the pang which before dying reduced him to death, and made him sweat living blood in such abundance that the ground all round about him was bathed therewith: *And His sweat became as drops of blood running down on the earth.*[5472] Yes, this precisely it was,—because Jesus then saw before him all the sins which men were going to commit after his death, all the hatred, the impurities, thefts, blasphemies, sacrileges; and because then each sin, with its own malice, came like a cruel wild beast to rend his heart. So that he seemed to be saying, Is this, then, O men, the recompense which you make to my I love? Ah, if I could see you grateful to me, with what gladness should I now go to die; but to see, after so many pains of mine, so many sins; after so great love, so great ingratitude,—this it is which causes me to sweat blood.

Were they then my sins, my beloved Jesus, which in that hour so greatly afflicted Thee? If, then, I bad sinned less, Thou wouldst have suffered less. The more pleasure I have taken in offending Thee, so much the more horror I then caused Thee. How is it that I do not die of grief in thinking that I have repaid Thy love by increasing Thy pain and sorrow? Have I, then, afflicted that heart which has so much loved me? With creatures I have been grateful enough; with Thee only have I been ungrateful. My Jesus, pardon me; I repent with all my heart.

III

At seeing himself burdened with our sins, Jesus *fell down on His face.*[5473] He prostrated himself with his face on the earth, as ashamed to lift up his eyes to heaven, and lying in the agony of death he prayed a long time: *Being in an agony, He prayed.*[5474]

At that time, my Lord, Thou didst pray for me to the Eternal Father to pardon me, offering Thyself to die in satisfaction for my sins. O my soul, how is it that thou dost not surrender thyself to such great love? How, believing this, canst thou love aught else than Jesus? Come! cast thyself at the feet of thy Saviour in his agony, and say to him, my dear Redeemer, how is it that Thou couldst love one who had so offended Thee? How couldst Thou suffer death for me, seeing my ingratitude? Make me, I pray Thee, partaker of this sorrow which Thou didst feel in the garden. Now I abhor all my sins, and unite this abhorrence to that which Thou then hadst for them. O love of my Jesus, Thou art my love! Lord, I love Thee, and for love of Thee I offer myself to suffer every pain, any death. Ah, by the merits of the agony which Thou didst suffer in the garden, give me holy perseverance! Mary, my hope, pray to Jesus for me.

MEDITATION FOR TUESDAY

JESUS IS MADE PRISONER, AND IS LED AWAY TO THE JEWS

I

Judas arrives at the garden, and when he had betrayed his master with a kiss, there fell on Jesus those insolent servants, and bound him as a malefactor: *They took Jesus and bound Him.*[5475] A God bound? and wherefore? and by whom? By his own very creatures. Angels of heaven, what say you to this?

And Thou, my Jesus, why cause Thyself to be bound? “O King of kings” (mourns St. Bernard), “what hast Thou to do with chains?”[5476] What can the bonds of slaves and of the guilty have to do with Thee, the King of kings, and the Saint of saints? But if men dare to bind Thee, Thou who art Almighty, why dost Thou not deliver and free Thyself from the torments which these barbarous men provide for Thee? Ah, but it is not these ropes which tie Thee. Thy love towards us it is which binds Thee and condemns Thee to death.

II

Look, O man, says St. Bonaventure,[5477] how these dogs illtreat Jesus: one drags him, another pushes him, another binds him, another smites him. And look how Jesus, like to a gentle lamb, without resistance suffers himself to be led to the sacrifice. And you, disciples, what are you doing? Why do you not run up to rescue him out of the hands of his enemies? Why at least do you not accompany him to defend his innocence before his judges? Ah, my God, even his disciples too, at seeing him taken and bound, take to flight and abandon him: *Then His disciples leaving Him all fled.*[5478]

O my Jesus, thus abandoned, who shall ever undertake Thy defence, if these Thy most dear disciples forsake Thee? But, alas! to think that this injury ended not with Thy Passion! How many souls after having consecrated themselves to follow Thee, and after having received from Thee many special graces, have through some passion of vile interest, or human respect, or defiling pleasure, abandoned Thee! Unhappy me, of the number of these ungrateful ones am I. My Jesus, pardon me, for I wish nevermore to leave Thee. I love Thee, and desire sooner to lose my life than ever again to lose Thy grace.

III

When brought before Caiphas, Jesus was questioned by him about his disciples and his doctrine. Jesus answered that he had not spoken in private but in public, and that those very persons who were standing round him well knew what he had taught: *I spoke openly to the world: . . . lo, these know what I said.*[5479] But at this answer one of the servants, treating him as if too bold, gave him a horrible blow on the cheek, saying to him, *Dost Thou answer the high-priest so?*[5480] O the patience of my Lord! How did an answer so gentle deserve an insult so great in the presence of so many people and of the high-priest himself, who, instead of reproving this insolent servant, rather by his silence applauds him?

Ah, my Jesus, Thou didst suffer all this to pay the penalty for those affronts which I in my rashness have done to Thee. My Love, I thank Thee for it. O Eternal Father, pardon me through the merits of Jesus. My Redeemer, I love Thee more than myself.

IV

Next, the iniquitous high-priest asked him whether he were truly the Son of God. Jesus, through respect for the divine name, affirmed that this was the truth; and then Caiphas rent his clothes, saying that Jesus had blasphemed, and they all cried out that he was worthy of death: *But they answering said, He is guilty of death.*[5481]

Yes, my Saviour, truly art Thou guilty of death, since Thou art bound to make satisfaction for me who am guilty of eternal death. But because Thou by Thy death hast acquired life for me, it is but just that I should spend my life wholly for Thee. I love Thee, and desire nothing else than to love Thee. And since Thou, who art the greatest of all kings, wert willing, through love of me, to be despised more than all men, I, for love of Thee, am willing to suffer every affront which can befall me. Give me, I pray Thee, strength to bear them through the merits of the insults done to Thee.

V

The council of priests having declared Jesus Christ guilty of death, the rabble set itself to illtreat him all the night through with blows and kicks, and spitting on him as a man already declared infamous: *Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him.*[5482] And then they mocked Him, saying, *Prophesy to us, O Christ, who it is that struck Thee.*[5483]

Ah, my dear Jesus, these buffet Thee, and spit in Thy face, and Thou art silent; and as a lamb without complaining Thou sufferest all for us: *As a lamb before the shearer He shall be dumb, and shall not open His mouth.*[5484] But if these know Thee not, I confess Thee for my God and Lord, and protest that I well understand that how much soever Thou innocently sufferest, it is all for love of me. I thank Thee for it, my Jesus, and love Thee with all my heart.

VI

When day was come they led Jesus Christ to Pilate to have him condemned. Pilate, nevertheless, declared him innocent; but to rid himself of the Jews, who followed to make a tumult, he sent him to Herod, who, desiring to see some miracle through mere curiosity, began to question him about divers things. But Jesus, not deigning to answer this wicked one, was silent and gave him no answer. Wherefore this proud one offered him many insults, and especially made them clothe him as a madman in a white robe.

O eternal wisdom! O my Jesus! there lacked only this other injury, that Thou shouldst be treated as a fool. O God! that even I in time past should have, like Herod, thus despised Thee! Do not, I pray Thee, chastise me, as Thou didst Herod, by depriving me of Thy voice. Herod knew Thee not for what Thou art; but I confess Thee for my God: Herod repented not of having injured Thee; but I repent of it with all my heart: Herod loved Thee not; but I love Thee above everything. Ah, deny me not the voice of Thy inspirations. Tell me what Thou wouldst have of me, for by Thy grace I am willing to do all. Mary, my hope, pray to Jesus for me.

MEDITATION FOR WEDNESDAY

THE SCOURGING OF JESUS CHRIST

I

Pilate, seeing that the Jews ceased not to demand the death of Jesus, condemned him to be scourged: *Then therefore Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*[5485] The unjust judge thought by this to quiet his enemies; but this resource turned out the more grievous for Jesus Christ. The Jews, however, discovering that Pilate after thus punishing him wished to let him go free,—as indeed he had already sufficiently indicated, *I will chastise Him therefore, and release Him; I will chastise Him therefore, and let Him go,*[5486]—they bribed the executioners to scourge him to such a degree that he might die under the torment. Enter, O my soul, into the judgment-hall of Pilate, made on this day the horrible theatre of the pain and ignominies of thy Redeemer, and see how Jesus, when he had arrived there, of his own accord strips himself of his clothes (as was revealed to St. Bridget)[5487] and embraces the column; thereby giving to men a most clear testimony how voluntarily he submitted for their sake to pains the most unmerciful, and how much he loved them. Look how this innocent Lamb goes with head bent down, and, as if all blushing through modesty, awaits this great torment. Lo, how these barbarians, like rabid dogs, already fly at him! Behold there these pitiless executioners; look how among them one strikes his breast, another his shoulders, another his thighs, and another other parts of his body; even his sacred head and beautiful face escape not from the blows. Alas! already flows that divine blood from every part; already are the scourges saturated with blood, and the hands of the executioners, the column, and even the earth. O God! the smiters, no longer finding any whole part to strike, add wound to wound, and lacerate all over that most holy Flesh; *And they have added to the grief of My wounds.*[5488] O my soul! how couldst thou offend a God who was scourged for thee? And Thou, my

Jesus, how couldst Thou suffer so much for one so ungrateful? O wounds of Jesus! you are my hope. O my Jesus! Thou art the only love of my soul.

II

Exceedingly tormenting was this scourging for Jesus Christ, because there were sixty executioners (as was revealed to St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi) succeeding one another. The scourges chosen for this work were the most severe, and every blow made a wound. The strokes, besides, reached to many thousand; so that even the very bones of the sides of our Lord were laid bare, as was revealed to St. Bridget.[5489] In a word, such was the havoc they made that Pilate thought to be able to move even his enemies to compassion; wherefore he showed him to them on the balcony, saying, *Behold the man.*[5490] And well did the prophet Isaias foretell to us the pitiful state to which our Saviour was to be reduced by His scourging, saying that his flesh was to be all rent: *He was bruised for our sins;*[5491] and his blessed body to become like the body of one leprous—all sores: *And we accounted Him one leprous.*[5492]

Ah, my Jesus, I thank Thee for Thy great love. It grieves me that I too joined in scourging Thee. I curse all my sinful pleasures which cost Thee so much pain. Make me often remember, O Lord, the love which Thou hast borne me, to the end that I may love Thee, and never offend Thee any more. Alas, what a special hell should there be for me if, after having known Thy love, and after Thou hast so often forgiven me, I should miserably offend Thee afresh, and damn myself! Ah! this very love and pity would be for me another hell still more tormenting. No, my love, permit it not. I love Thee, O my highest Good. I love Thee with all my heart, and will love Thee forever.

III

To pay the penalty, then for our crimes, and specially of impurity, Jesus was willing to suffer this great torment in his innocent flesh: *He was wounded for our iniquities.*[5493]

Is it we, then, O Lord, who have offended God, and Thou who hast been willing to pay the penalty? Forever blessed be Thine infinite charity. What would have been my lot, my Jesus, if Thou hadst not made satisfaction for me? Oh that I had never offended Thee! But if by sinning I have despised Thy love, now I have no other desire than to love Thee and to be loved by Thee. Thou hast said that Thou lovest him who loveth Thee. I love Thee above everything; I love Thee with my whole soul: do Thou make me worthy of Thy love. Yes, I hope that Thou hast already pardoned me, and that at present Thou of Thy goodness lovest me. Ah, my dear Redeemer, bind me ever more indissolubly to Thy love: suffer me not to separate myself ever from Thee. Lo, I am all Thine; chastise me as Thou wiliest, but permit me not to remain deprived of Thy love. Make me to love Thee, and then dispose of me as pleaseth Thee. Mary, my hope, pray to Jesus for me.

MEDITATION FOR THURSDAY

THE CROWNING WITH THORNS, AND THE WORDS “ECCE HOMO” (“BEHOLD THE MAN”)

I

Not content with having horribly torn the flesh of the sacred body of Jesus Christ with the scourging, these barbarous servants, instigated by devils and by the Jews, wished to treat him as a mock king, and put upon his back a ragged scarlet robe to imitate a royal mantle, a reed in his hand by way of sceptre, and on his head a bundle of thorns plaited together instead of a crown: and in order that this crown might be not only for a mockery, but also cause him great pain, with that same reed (as St. Matthew says, *And they took the reed and struck His head*)[5494] they struck the thorns till they pierced far into his head; insomuch that the thorns, as says St. Peter Damian,[5495] penetrated to the very brain, and so copious was the blood which flowed from the wounds that, as it was revealed to St. Bridget,[5496] it filled the beard, the eyes, and all the hair of Jesus Christ. This torment of the crowning was very painful to him, and was also the longest, since the pain of it was prolonged even till his death: and every time that the crown on his head came to be touched, the torture was always renewed.

Ah, ungrateful thorns, what are you doing? Is it thus that you torment your Creator? But what thorns? O my soul! it was thou, with thy depraved consenting to sin, who didst wound the head of thy Lord.

My dear Jesus, Thou art the king of heaven; but now Thou art become the king of reproaches and sufferings. Behold whither the love of Thy little sheep has brought Thee. O my God! I love Thee; but, alas! as long as I live I stand in peril of forsaking and denying Thee, my love, as I have done in time past. My Jesus, if Thou seest that I would ever turn to offend Thee, let me, I pray Thee, die now, since I hope to die in Thy grace. Suffer me not, I beseech Thee, ever to lose Thee again; by my faults I should worthily deserve this misfortune, but of a surety Thou deservest not to be abandoned anew by me. No, my Jesus, I desire nevermore to lose Thee.

II

This vile crowd, not content with having so barbarously crowned Jesus Christ, wished to mock him, and to multiply fresh insults and torments; and so they bent the knee before him, and deridingly saluted him, “Hail, King of the Jews;” they spat in his face, they struck him with the palms of their hands; with cries and ridicule and contempt they vilely insult him: *And bending the knee before Him, they mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews; and spitting on Him, they gave Him blows.*[5497] Ah, my Lord, to what art Thou reduced? O God, if any one had chanced to pass that way, and had seen this man thus disfigured, covered with these purple rags, with this sceptre in his hand, with this crown on his head, thus derided and illtreated by this rabble, for what could he ever have accounted him but for a man the most infamous and wicked in all the world. Behold, then, the Son of God become the mockery of Jerusalem!

Ah, my Jesus, if I look on Thy body without, I see nothing but wounds and blood. If within, in Thy heart, I find nothing else but bitterness and anguish, which make Thee suffer the agonies of death. Ah, my God, who but infinite goodness, such as Thou art, could ever have humbled himself to suffer so much for his creatures?—but creatures beloved of God, because Thou art God. These wounds which I see in Thee are all tokens of the love which Thou bearest to us. Oh, if all men could have contemplated Thee in the condition in which on that day Thou wast a spectacle of sorrow and reproach to all Jerusalem, who would not have been seized by love of Thee? Lord, I love Thee, and give myself wholly to Thee. Behold, my blood, my life, all I offer Thee. Behold me ready to suffer and die as it pleaseth Thee. And what can I deny to Thee who hast not denied to me Thy blood and life? Deign to accept the sacrifice which a miserable sinner makes of himself, who now loves Thee with all his heart.

III

Pilate, when Jesus was brought back to him, showed him from a balcony to the people, saying, *Behold the man.*[5498] As though he would say, Behold that man whom you have brought before my tribunal, accusing him of having pretended to make himself a king; behold, this fear is at an end. Now that you have reduced him, as you see, to such a state that but little life can remain in him, suffer him to go and die in his own house; oblige me not to condemn one innocent. But the Jews, being infuriated, as they had at first cried out in their frenzy, *His blood be upon us,*[5499] so now they cried out, *Crucify Him, crucify Him. . . . Away, away with Him; crucify Him.*[5500] But just as then Pilate was from the balcony showing Jesus to the people, so the Eternal Father from heaven was pointing out to us his Son, saying in like manner, Behold the man! He who was promised by me as your Redeemer, and was by you so much desired; he who is my only Son, beloved by me even as myself. Behold him, for the love of you, become man, the most afflicted and despised among all men. Ah, meditate, on him, and love him.

Ah, my God! be it so that I look upon Thy Son, and love him; but do Thou, too, look on him, and, by the merit of his sorrows and insults, pardon me all the offences which I have done against Thee. *His blood be upon us.* Let the blood of this Man-God, who is Thy Son, descend upon our souls, and obtain for us Thy mercy. I repent, O infinite goodness, of having offended Thee, and I love Thee with all my heart. But Thou knowest my weakness; help me; O Lord, have pity on me. Mary, my hope, pray to Jesus for me.

MEDITATION FOR FRIDAY

THE CONDEMNATION OF JESUS, AND THE JOURNEY TO CALVARY

I

Pilate at length, through fear of losing the favor of Cæsar, after having so many times declared Jesus innocent, condemns him to die on the cross. O my most innocent Saviour! (laments St. Bernard) and what crime hast Thou committed, that Thou must be condemned to death? “What hast Thou done, O most innocent Saviour, that Thou shouldst be thus judged?”[5501] But I well understand (replies the saint) the sin which Thou hast committed: “Thy sin is Thy love.”[5502] Thy crime is the too great love which Thou hast borne to us. This, rather than Pilate, condemns Thee to death.

The unjust sentence is read; Jesus hears it, and altogether resigned accepts it, submitting himself to the will of the Eternal Father, which wills him to die, and to die on the cross, for our sins: *He humbled Himself, made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*[5503]

Ah, my Jesus, if Thou who wast innocent didst accept death for love of me, I, a sinner, for love of Thee, accept my death in such time and manner as it shall please Thee.

II

When the sentence had been read, they drag off with fury this innocent divine Lamb; they put his own garments on him again and, taking the cross, composed of two rough beams, present it to him. Jesus waits not for them to lay it on him, but of himself embraces it, kisses and lays it upon his wounded shoulders, saying, Come, my beloved cross, three-and-thirty years I have been going about seeking thee; on thee I desire to die for the love of my little flock.

Ah, my Jesus! what more couldst Thou possibly have done to lay on me the necessity of loving Thee? If one of my servants only had offered himself to die for me, surely he would have won my love; and how, then, can I have lived so long a time without having loved Thee, knowing that Thou, my sovereign and only Lord, didst die to pardon me? I love Thee, O my chief Good, and because I love Thee I repent of having offended Thee.

III

Those who had been condemned issued from the tribunal and go on the way to the place of punishment; amongst them goes also the King of heaven, with his cross on his shoulders: *And bearing His cross, He went forth to the place which is called Calvary.*[5504] Go forth also, ye seraphim, from paradise, and come to accompany your Lord, who is going to the mount, to be there crucified. What a sight! A God who goes to be crucified for men! My soul, look, I pray thee, on thy Saviour, who goes to die for thee. Look on him, how he goes with head bent down, with trembling knees, all torn with wounds and dropping with live blood, with that bundle of thorns on his head, and with that load of wood on his shoulders. God! he walks with such difficulty that it seems as if at every step he would breathe forth his soul. O Lamb of God! (say thou to him) whither goest Thou? I go (he answers) to die for thee. When thou shalt see me now dead, remember (he says to thee) the love I bore to thee; remember it and love me. Ah, my Redeemer, how can I have lived for the past so forgetful of Thy love? O my sins! you have caused bitterness to the heart of my Lord, the heart which has loved me so much. My Jesus, I repent of the wrong which I have done Thee; I thank Thee for the patience which Thou hast shown me, and I love Thee. I love Thee with all my soul, and desire to love Thee alone. Remind me ever, I pray Thee, of the love Thou hast borne me, so that I may nevermore forget to love Thee.

IV

Jesus Christ goes up Calvary, and invites us to follow him.

Yes, my Lord, Thou who art innocent goest before me with Thy cross. Walk on, for I will not leave Thee. Give me that cross which Thou wiliest, that I may embrace it, and with it I am willing to follow Thee even unto death. I wish to die together with Thee, who hast died for me. Thou commandest me to love Thee and I desire nothing else than to love Thee. My Jesus, Thou art, and shalt ever be, my only Love. Assist me to be faithful to Thee. Mary, my hope, pray to Jesus for me.

MEDITATION FOR SATURDAY

THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF JESUS

I

Lo, we are on Calvary! made the theatre of divine love, where a God dies for us in a sea of sorrows. When Jesus had arrived there, they violently strip off his garments cleaving to his torn flesh, and cast him on the cross. The divine Lamb stretches himself out on this bed of death, presents his hands to the executioners, and offers to the Eternal Father the great sacrifice of his life for the salvation of men. Behold, now they nail him to the cross and raise him on it. Look, my soul, on thy Saviour, who, fastened by three hard nails, hangs from the cross, where he can find neither room nor rest. At one time he leans on his hands, at another on his feet; but where he leans, there the pain is increased.

O my Jesus! and what a bitter death is this which Thou diest? I see written over the cross, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*.[5505] But except this title of scorn, what token dost Thou show of being a king? Ah, indeed, this throne of tortures, these hands pierced with nails, this head transfixed, this flesh all torn, may well make Thee known for a king, but a king of love. I draw near, then, with tenderness, to kiss these wounded feet. I embrace this cross, where Thou, made a victim of love, wouldst die a sacrifice for me. Ah, my Jesus, what would have become of me if Thou hadst not satisfied the divine justice? I thank Thee, and I love Thee.

II

Whilst hanging on the cross, Jesus has no one who can console him. Among those who stand around him, some are blaspheming, some are deriding him; some say, *If Thou art the Son of God, descend from the cross;*[5506] others, *He saved others, Himself He cannot save.*[5507] And he receives no compassion even from those who are his very companions in punishment; nay, rather, one of them joins those others in blaspheming him: *One of the thieves who were hanging with Him, blasphemed Him.*[5508] There stood, it is true, below the cross, Mary assisting with love her dying Son. But the sight of this mother in her sorrows, so far from consoling Jesus, afflicted him so much the more, at seeing the pain which she endured for love of him. So, then, our Redeemer, finding no comfort here on earth, turned himself to the Eternal Father in heaven above. But the Father, seeing him covered with all the sins of mankind, for which he was making satisfaction, said, No, my Son, I cannot console Thee. It is meet that even I too should abandon Thee to Thy pains, and leave Thee to die without comfort. And then it was that Jesus cried out, *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?*[5509]

Ah, my Jesus, how do I see Thee in pains and sorrow? Ah, too good reason hast Thou for Thy grief, to think that Thou art suffering in order to be loved by men, and yet that there should be found so few to love Thee. O sweet flames of love, which are consuming the life of a God, consume in me, I pray you, all earthly affections, and make me burn only with love for that Lord who was willing for love of me to lay down his life on an infamous gibbet. But Thou, O Lord, how couldst Thou die for me, foreseeing the injuries which I should afterwards do to Thee? Avenge Thyself, I pray Thee, now on me, but avenge Thyself for my salvation; grant to me such a sorrow that it shall always make me sorry for the vexations which I have given Thee. Come, scourges, thorns, nails, and cross, which are so grievously tormenting my Lord, come and wound my heart, and ever remind me of the love which he has borne to me. Save me, my Jesus, and let this saving be to give me the grace of loving Thee,—to love Thee and my own salvation.

III

The Redeemer, now nigh to expiring, with dying breath said, *It is consummated.*[5510] As if he had said, O men, all has been completed and done for your redemption. Love me, then, since I have nothing more that I can do to make you love me. My soul, look up at thy Jesus who is now going to die. Look at those eyes growing dim, that face grown pale, that heart which is beating with languid pulse, that body which is now abandoning itself to death; and look at that beautiful soul which is just on the point of forsaking that sacred body. The heavens are darkened, the earth trembles, the sepulchres are opened; signs that now the maker of the world is about to die. Lo, at last Jesus, after having commended his blessed soul to his Father, first giving a deep sigh from his afflicted heart, and then bowing his head in sign of the offering of his life which at this moment he renewed for our salvation, at length, by the violence of his sorrow, expires and renders up his spirit into the hand of his beloved Father. Approach up hither, my soul, to this cross. Embrace the feet of thy dead Saviour, and think that he is dead through the love which he bore to thee.

Ah, my Jesus, to what has Thy affection towards me reduced Thee? And who, more than I, has enjoyed the fruits of Thy death? Make me, I beseech Thee, understand what love that must have been that a God should die for me, to the end that from this day forth I may love none other than Thee. I love Thee, O greatest Good; O true lover of my soul, into Thy hands I here commend it. I beseech Thee, by the merits of Thy death, make me to die to all earthly loves, in order that I may love Thee alone, who art alone worthy of all my love. Mary, my hope, pray to Jesus for me.

Hail, Jesus, our Love, and Mary, our hope!

“O riven Heart! O Love for me now crucified!
Give to my soul repose within Thy wounded side.”

Eight Meditations Drawn from the Considerations on the Passion of Jesus Christ.[5511]

FIRST MEDITATION

THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST IS OUR CONSOLATION

Who can ever give us so much consolation in this valley of tears as Jesus crucified? What can sweeten the punctures of remorse, arising from the remembrance of our past sins, better than the consideration that Jesus Christ has voluntarily suffered death in order to atone for our sins? *He*, says the Apostle, *gave Himself for our sins.*[5512]

In all the persecutions, calumnies, insults, spoliations of property and honors, which happen to us in this life, who is better able to give us strength to bear them with patience and resignation than Jesus Christ, who was despised, calumniated, and poor; who died on a cross, naked, and abandoned by all?

What more consoling in infirmities than the sight of Jesus crucified? In our sickness we find ourselves on a comfortable bed; but when Jesus was sick on the cross on which he died, he had no other bed than a hard tree, to which he was fastened by three nails; no other pillow on which to rest his head than the crown of thorns, which continued to torment him till he expired.

In our sickness, we have around our bed friends and relatives to sympathize with us and to divert us. Jesus died in the midst of enemies, who insulted and mocked him as a malefactor and seducer, even when he was in the very agony of death. Certainly, there is nothing so well calculated as the life of Jesus crucified to console a sick man in his sufferings, particularly if he finds himself abandoned by others. Ah, to unite, in his infirmity, his own pains to the pains of Jesus Christ is the greatest comfort that a poor sick man can enjoy.

In the anguish caused at death by the assaults of hell, the sight of past sins, and the account to be rendered in a short time at the divine tribunal, the only consolation which a dying Christian, combating with death, can have consists in embracing the crucifix, saying, My Jesus and my Redeemer, Thou art my love and my hope.

In a word, all the graces, lights, inspirations, holy desires, devout affections, sorrow for sins, good resolutions, divine love, hope of paradise, that God bestows upon us, are fruits and gifts which come to us through the Passion of Jesus Christ.

Ah, my Jesus, if Thou, my Saviour, hadst not died for me, what hope could I, who have so often turned my back upon Thee and so often deserved hell, entertain of going to behold Thy beautiful countenance in the land of bliss, among so many innocent virgins, among so many holy martyrs, among the apostles and seraphs? It is Thy Passion, then, that makes me hope, in spite of my sins, that I too will one day reach the society of the saints and of Thy holy mother, to sing Thy mercies, and to thank and love Thee forever in paradise. Such, O Jesus, my hope. “*The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever.*[5513] Mary, mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.

SECOND MEDITATION

THE GREAT OBLIGATIONS BY WHICH WE ARE BOUND TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST

Forget not the kindness of thy surety; for He hath given His life for thee.[5514] By this surety, commentators commonly understand Jesus Christ, who, seeing that we were unable to atone to the divine justice, *offered Himself because it was His own will.*[5515] He offered to make satisfaction for us, and he actually paid our debts by his blood and by his death. *He hath given His life for thee.*

To repair the insults which we offered to the divine majesty, the sacrifice of the life of all men was not sufficient: God alone could atone for an injury done to a God; and this Jesus Christ has accomplished. *By so much,* says St. Paul, *is Jesus made a surety of a better testament.*[5516] By making satisfaction, as his surety, in behalf of man, our Redeemer, says the Apostle, obtained by his merits a new compact,—that if man should observe the law, God would grant him grace and eternal life. This is precisely what Jesus Christ himself expressed in the institution of the Eucharist when he said, *This chalice is the new testament in my blood.*[5517] By these words he meant, that the chalice of his blood was the instrument or written security by which was established the new covenant between God and Jesus Christ, that to men who were faithful to him should be given the gift of grace and of eternal life.

Hence, by suffering the penalties due to us, the Redeemer, through the love which he bore us, made in our behalf a rigorous atonement to the divine justice. *Surely,* says the Prophet, *He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows.*[5518] And all this was the fruit of his love. *Christ hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.*[5519] St. Bernard says that to pardon us, Jesus Christ has not pardoned himself. “To redeem a slave he spared not himself.”[5520] O miserable Jews, why do you wait for the

Messiah promised by the Prophets? He has already come: you have murdered him; but, in spite of your guilt, your Redeemer is ready to pardon you; for he has come to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel: *The Son of Man came to save that which was lost.*[5521]

St. Paul has written that, to deliver us from the malediction due to our sins, Jesus Christ has charged himself with all the maledictions which we merited; and therefore he wished to suffer the death of the accursed, that is, the death of the cross: *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*[5522]

What a source of glory would it be to a poor peasant, captured by pirates, and reduced to slavery, to be ransomed by his sovereign at the cost of a kingdom! But how much greater glory do we derive from having been redeemed by Jesus Christ at the expense of his own blood, a single drop of which is worth more than a thousand worlds! *You were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled.*[5523] Hence, St. Paul tells us that we commit an act of injustice against our Saviour if we dispose of ourselves according to our own, and not according to his, will, or if we reserve anything to ourselves, or, what is worse, if we indulge our inclinations so as to offend our God. For we belong not to ourselves, but to Jesus Christ who has purchased us with a great price. *Know you not that . . . you are not your own? For you are bought with a great price.*[5524]

Ah, my Redeemer, if I had shed all my blood for Thee, and even given for Thee a thousand lives, what compensation would it be for the love of Thee, who hast given Thy blood and Thy life for me? Give me strength, O my Jesus, to be entirely Thine during the remainder of my life.

THIRD MEDITATION

JESUS A MAN OF SORROWS

The Prophet Isaias called our Saviour *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity.*[5525] Contemplating the sorrows of Jesus Christ, Salvian exclaimed, “O love, I know not whether to call Thee sweet or severe: Thou dost appear to be both.”[5526] O love of my Jesus, I know not what to call Thee. Thou hast indeed been sweet towards us in loving us after so much ingratitude; but to Thyself Thou has been cruel to excess, in choosing a life so full of pains, and in suffering a death so full of bitterness, for the purpose of atoning for our sins.

St. Thomas, the Angelic Doctor, writes that, to save us from hell, Jesus Christ assumed extreme pain and extreme ignominy.[5527] To satisfy the divine justice, it would be enough for him to have suffered any pain; but no, he wished to submit to the most galling insults and to the sharpest pains, in order to make us comprehend the malice of our sins, and the love with which his heart was inflamed for us.

He assumed extreme pain; hence, as we read in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, he said, *A body Thou hast fitted to me.*[5528] The body which God gave to Jesus Christ was made on purpose for suffering, and therefore his flesh was most sensitive and delicate. *Sensitive*, or capable of feeling pain in the most lively manner; *delicate*, or so tender that every stroke which it received left a wound: in a word, his sacred body was made on purpose for suffering.

Besides, all the sorrows that Jesus Christ suffered till he expired on the cross were always present to his mind from the first moment of his incarnation. He saw them all, and cheerfully embraced them, in order to accomplish the will of his Father, who wished that he should be offered in sacrifice for our salvation. *Then, I said, Behold, I come: in the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will, O God.*[5529] As if he said:

Behold me, O my God; I cheerfully offer myself to Thee without reserve. This, according to the Apostle, was the oblation which obtained for us the divine grace. *In the which will we are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once*.[5530]

But what, O my Redeemer, induces Thee to sacrifice Thy life amid so many sorrows for our salvation. St. Paul answers: to this he was led by the love which he bore us: *Christ hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.*[5531] *He hath delivered Himself:* love has induced him to give up his back to the scourges, his head to the thorns, his face to the spittle and buffets, his hands and feet to the nails, and his life to death.

Let him who wishes to see a man of sorrows look at Jesus Christ. Behold him hanging on three nails; behold the entire weight of his body sustained by the wounds in his hands and feet; each member suffers its proper torment without any mitigation of pain. The three hours during which Jesus remained on the cross are justly called the three hours of the Saviour’s agony; for during these three hours he suffered a continual agony and sorrow, which gradually brought him to death, and in the end took away his life; this man of sorrows died of pure pain.

And what Christian, O my Jesus, can believe that Thou hast died for him on the cross, and not love Thee? And how have I been able to live so many years in such forgetfulness of Thee, as to offend so often and so grievously a God who has loved me so intensely? Oh that I had died before I had ever offended Thee! O love of my soul! O my Redeemer! Oh that I could die for Thee, who hast died for me! I love Thee, O my Jesus, and I wish to love nothing but Thee.

FOURTH MEDITATION

JESUS TREATED AS THE LAST OF MEN

We have seen Him, says the Prophet Isaias, *despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows.*[5532] This great prodigy was once seen on earth; the Son of God, the king of heaven, the Lord of the whole world, despised as the most abject of all men.

St. Anselm[5533] says that Jesus Christ wished to be humbled and despised in such a manner that it would be impossible for him to endure greater humiliations or contempt. He was treated as a person of mean condition. *Is not this,* said the Jews, *the carpenter's son?*[5534] He was despised on account of his country: *Can anything good come from Nazareth?*[5535] He was held up as a madman: *He is mad; why hear you Him.*[5536] He was considered to be a glutton and a friend of wine: *Behold a man that is a glutton and a drinker of wine.*[5537] He was called a sorcerer: *By the prince of devils He casteth out devils.*[5538] And also a heretic: *Do we not say well that Thou art a Samaritan?*[5539]

But during his Passion he suffered still greater insults. He was treated as a blasphemer: when he declared that he was the Son of God, Caiphas said to the other priests, *Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy: what think you? But they answering said, He is guilty of death.*[5540] As soon as he was declared guilty of blasphemy, some began to spit in his face, and others to buffet him.[5541] Then, indeed, was fulfilled the prediction of Isaias: *I have given My body to the strikers, and My cheeks to them that plucked them; I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me and spit upon Me.*[5542] He was next treated as a false prophet: *Prophesy unto us, O Christ; who is he that struck Thee?*[5543] The injury done him by his disciple Peter, who denied him three times, and swore that he had never known him, added to the pain which our Saviour suffered from the ignominies of that night.

Let us, O devout souls, go to our afflicted Lord, in that prison in which he is abandoned by all, and accompanied only by his enemies, who contend with each other in insulting and maltreating him. Let us thank him for all that he suffers for us with so much patience: and let us console him by acts of sorrow for the insults that we have offered to him; for, we too have treated him with contempt, and by our sins we have denied him, and declared that we knew him not.

Ah, my amiable Redeemer, I would wish to die of grief at the thought of having given so much pain to Thy heart, which has loved me so ardently. Ah, forget the great offences I have offered Thee, and look at me with that loving look which Thou didst cast on Peter after he denied Thee, and which made him bewail his sins unceasingly till death. O great Son of God, O infinite love, who dost suffer for the very men that hate and maltreat Thee, Thou art adored by the angels Thou art infinite majesty; Thou wouldst confer a great honor on men by permitting them to kiss Thy feet. But, O God, how hast Thou borne on that night to be made an object of mockery to so vile a rabble? My despised Jesus, make me suffer contempt for Thy sake. How can I refuse insults, when I see that Thou, my God, hast borne so many for the love of me? Ah, my crucified Jesus, make me know Thee and love Thee.

Alas! what a pity to see the contempt with which men treat the Passion of Jesus Christ! How few are there, even among Christians, who reflect on the sorrows and ignominies which this Redeemer has endured for our sake. We barely remember in a passing way the Passion of Jesus Christ, during the last days of Holy Week, when the Church renews the remembrance of his death by its mournful chant, by the nakedness of its altars, the darkness of its temples, and by the silence of its bells. But, during the rest of the year, we think as little of the Passion of the Redeemer as if it were a fable, or as if he had died for others and not for us. O God! how great must be the torture of the damned in hell when they see all that a God has suffered for their salvation, and that they have voluntarily brought themselves to perdition!

My Jesus, do not permit me to be among the number of the unhappy damned. No; I will never cease to think of the love which Thou hast shown me in bearing so many torments and ignominies for me. Help me to love Thee, and always to remember the love that Thou hast borne me.

FIFTH MEDITATION

THE DESOLATE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

The life of our loving Redeemer was all full of desolation, and bereft of every comfort. The life of Jesus was that great ocean which was all bitter, without a single drop of sweetness or consolation: *For great as the sea is thy destruction.*[5544] This is what was revealed by our Lord to St. Margaret of Cortona, when he said to her that in his whole life he never experienced sensible consolation.

The sadness which he felt in the garden of Gethsemani was so great that it was sufficient to take away his life. *My soul,* he said, *is sorrowful even unto death.*[5545] This sadness afflicted him not only in the garden, but it always filled his soul with desolation, from the first moment of his conception: for, all the pains and ignominies which he was to suffer until death were always present to him.

But the extreme affliction which he suffered during his whole life arose not so much from the knowledge of all the sufferings he was to endure in his life, and especially at death, as from the sight of all the sins which men would commit after his death. He came to abolish sin, and to save souls from hell by his death; but, after all his cruel sufferings, he saw all the sins which men would commit; and the sight of each sin, being clearly before his mind while he lived here below, was to him, as St. Bernadine of Sienna writes, a source of immense affliction.[5546] This was the sorrow which was always before his eyes, and kept him always in desolation: *My sorrow is continually before me.*[5547] St. Thomas teaches that the sight of the sins of men, and of the multitude of souls that would bring themselves to perdition, excited in Jesus Christ a sorrow which surpassed the sorrow of all penitents, even of those who died of pure grief. The holy martyrs have suffered great torments; they have borne to be tortured with iron hooks, and nails, and red-hot plates: but God always sweetened their pains by interior consolations.

But no martyrdom has been more painful than that of Jesus Christ; for his pain and sadness were pure, unmitigated pain and sorrow, without the smallest comfort. “The greatness of Christ’s suffering,” says the Angelic Doctor, “is estimated from the pureness of his pain and sadness.”[5548]

Such was the life of our Redeemer, and such his death, all full of desolation. Dying on the cross bereft of all comfort, he sought some one to console him, but he found none. *I looked for one . . . that would comfort Me, and I found none.*[5549] He found only scoffers and blasphemers, who said to him: *If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. He saved others, Himself He cannot save.*[5550] Hence, our afflicted Lord, finding himself abandoned by all, turned to his Eternal Father: but seeing that his Father too had abandoned him, he cried out with a loud voice, and sweetly complained of his Father’s abandonment, saying, *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?*[5551]

Thus our Saviour terminated his life, dying, as David had foretold, immersed in a tempest of ignominies and sorrows: *I am come into the depth of the sea, and a tempest hath overwhelmed Me.*[5552]

When we are in desolation, let us console ourselves by the desolate death of Jesus Christ: let us offer him our desolation in union with that which he, an innocent God, suffered on Calvary for the love of us.

Ah, my Jesus! who will not love Thee when he sees Thee die in such desolation, consumed by sorrows, in order to pay our debts? Behold me: I am one of the executioners, who have, by my sins, so grievously afflicted Thee during Thy whole life. But, since Thou dost invite me to repentance, grant that I may feel at least a part of that sorrow which Thou didst feel during Thy Passion, for my sins. How can I, who have, by my sins, so much afflicted Thee during Thy life, seek after pleasures? No, I do not ask for pleasures and delights; I ask of Thee tears and sorrow: make me, during the remainder of my life, weep continually for the offences that I have given Thee. I embrace Thy feet, O my crucified and desolate Jesus: in embracing them, I wish to die. O afflicted Mary, pray to Jesus for me.

SIXTH MEDITATION

THE IGNOMINIES WHICH JESUS CHRIST SUFFERED IN HIS PASSION

The greatest ignominies that Jesus Christ suffered were those which were offered to him in his Passion. In the first place, he then bore to see himself abandoned by his beloved disciples; one of them betrayed him, another denied him, and when he was captured in the garden all fled and abandoned him: *Then His disciples leaving Him, all fled away.*[5553] Afterwards the Jews presented him to Pilate as a malefactor who deserved to be crucified. *If,* said they, *He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to thee*.[5554] Herod treated him as a fool: *Herod,* says St. Luke, *with his army, set Him at nought and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment.*[5555]

Barabbas, a robber and murderer, was preferred before him. When Pilate gave the Jews the choice of rescuing Jesus Christ or Barabbas from death, they exclaimed, *Not this man, but Barabbas.*[5556] He was chastised with the lash, a punishment inflicted only on slaves: *Then, therefore,* says John, *Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*[5557] He was treated as a mock king; for after having through mockery crowned him with thorns, they salute him as king and spit in his face: *They mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews. And spitting upon Him, they took the reed, and struck His head.*[5558] He was afterwards, as Isaias had foretold, condemned to die between two malefactors: *He was reputed with the wicked.*[5559]

Finally, he died on the cross: that is the most opprobrious death which was then inflicted on malefactors, for the man whom the Jews condemned to the death of the cross was, as we read in Deuteronomy,[5560] said to be an object of malediction to God and man. Hence, St. Paul has said, *Being made a curse for us* (that is, a mere curse), *for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*[5561] Our Redeemer, says the same Apostle, renouncing the life of splendor and happiness which he might enjoy on this earth, chose for himself a life full of tribulations, and a death accompanied with so much shame: *Who, having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame.*[5562]

Thus in Jesus Christ was fulfilled the prediction of Jeremias, that he should live and die saturated with opprobrium. *He shall give His cheek to him that striketh Him, He shall be filled with reproaches.*[5563] Hence St. Bernard exclaims, O grandeur! O abasement![5564] Behold the Lord, who is exalted above all, become the most contemptible of all. The holy Doctor then concludes that all this proceeded from the love which Jesus Christ bore us.[5565]

O my Jesus! save me; do not permit me, after being redeemed by Thee with so much pain and so much love, to lose my soul and go to hell, there to hate and curse the very love which Thou hast borne me. This hell I have indeed so often deserved; for, though Thou couldst do nothing more than Thou hast done to oblige me to love Thee, I have done everything in my power to compel Thee to chastise me. But since, in Thy goodness, Thou hast waited for me, and even still dost continue to ask me to love Thee, I wish to love Thee: I wish henceforth to love Thee with my whole heart and without reserve. Give me strength to make this wish effective. O Mary, mother of God, assist me by thy prayers.

SEVENTH MEDITATION

JESUS ON THE CROSS

Jesus on the cross! What a spectacle to the angels in heaven to see a God crucified! And what sentiments should we conceive at the sight of the king of heaven hanging on a gibbet, covered with wounds, agonizing, and dying of pure unmitigated pain!

O God! why does this divine Saviour, this innocent and saint, suffer such torments? Ah, he suffers them to expiate the sins of men. And who has ever seen such an example: the Lord suffering for his slaves, the shepherd dying for his sheep, the Creator immolated and offered as a holocaust for his creatures.

Jesus on the cross! Behold the man of sorrows[5566] foretold by Isaias. Behold him on that infamous tree, full of exterior and interior sorrows. In his body he is torn with scourges, thorns, and nails: blood flows from every wound, and each member suffers its proper torment. In his soul he is afflicted with sadness and desolation; he is abandoned by all, even by his very Father. But what tormented him most severely was the horrid sight of all the sins that the very men, redeemed by his blood, would commit after his death.

Ah, my Redeemer, among these ungratful men Thou didst see me, and all my sins. Then I too had a great part in all Thy afflictions on the cross, when Thou wast dying for me. Oh that I had been dead, and had never offended Thee!

My Jesus and my hope! death terrifies me, because I know that I shall then have to render an account of all the insults that I have offered to the love which Thou hast borne me. But Thy death encourages me, and makes me hope for pardon. I am sorry with my whole heart for having insulted Thee. If I have not hitherto loved Thee, I now wish to love Thee during all the remaining days of my life, and I wish to do and suffer all things in order to please Thee. O my Redeemer, who died on a cross for me, assist me.

Lord Thou hast said that when Thou wouldst be exalted on the cross, Thou wouldst draw all hearts to Thee. *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself.*[5567] By dying on the cross for us, Thou hast already drawn to Thy love so many who, for Thy sake, have forsaken all things, their goods, their country, their relatives, and their life. Ah, draw also my poor heart, which, through Thy grace, now pants to love Thee; do not permit me to love mire, as I have hitherto done. O my Redeemer, that I could see myself stripped of every wordly affection, so as to forget all things, to remember only Thee, and to love Thee alone! I hope for all things from Thy grace. Thou knowest my inability to do any good: through the love which made Thee submit to so cruel a death on Calvary for my sake, I pray Thee to assist me. O death of Jesus, O love of Jesus, take possession of all my thoughts and affections, and grant that, for the future, to please Thee, O Jesus, may be the sole object of all my thoughts and desires. O most amiable Lord, hear my prayer, through the merits of Thy death.

Do thou too, O Mary, who art the mother of mercy, hear me: pray to Jesus for me. Thy prayers can make me a saint. Such my hope.

EIGHTH MEDITATION

JESUS DEAD ON THE CROSS

O Christian, lift up your eyes, and behold Jesus dead on that gibbet: look at his body full of wounds, streaming blood. Faith teaches you that he is your Creator, your Saviour, your life, your deliverer; and that he, whose love for you exceeds the love of all others, is the only being that can make you happy.

Yes, my Jesus, I believe it; Thou hast loved me from eternity, without any merit of mine; and even with the foreknowledge of my frequent ingratitude, Thou hast, through Thy own goodnes, given me existence. Thou art my Saviour, who, by Thy death, hast delivered me from hell, which I have so often deserved. Thou art my life, by the grace which Thou hast given me, without which I should have remained dead in hell. Thou art my Father, and a loving Father, who hast pardoned me with so much mercy the many insults that I have offered Thee. Thou art my treasure, enriching me with so many lights and favors, instead of chastising me as I deserved. Thou art my hope; for I can hope for no good from any one but from Thee. Thou art my true and only lover: it is enough to say that Thou hast even died for me. In fine, Thou art my God, my sovereign good, my all.

O men, O men, let us love Jesus Christ, let us love a God who sacrificed himself entirely for the love of us. He has sacrificed the honors which were due to him on this earth, he has sacrificed all the riches and pleasures that he could have enjoyed, and was content to lead an abject life in poverty and tribulations; and finally in order to atone by his sufferings for our sins, he has voluntarily sacrificed his blood and his life, dying in an ocean of sorrows and ignominies.

Son, exclaims the Redeemer from the cross to each of us,—son, what more could I do than die for you, in order to gain your love? See if any one in this world has loved you more than I, your Lord and God, have loved you. Love me, then, at least in return for the love which I have borne you.

Ah, my Jesus, how can I remember that my sins have made Thee die through pain on an infamous gibbet, and not weep unceasingly for having thus despised Thy love? And how can I behold Thee hanging on this cross for my sake, and not love Thee with all my strength?

But, O Lord, how does it happen that Thou hast died for all, that no one might live any longer to himself, and that afterwards, instead of living, only to love Thee and give Thee glory, I have lived only to afflict and dishonor Thee? *Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again.*[5568]

Ah, my crucified Lord, forget the insults that I have given Thee; I am sincerely sorry for them: draw me, by Thy grace, entirely to Thyself. I wish to live no longer to myself, but only to Thee, who hast loved me so tenderly, and who dost merit all my love. I give Thee myself and all that I possess, without reserve. I renounce all the honors and pleasures of this life, and I offer myself to suffer for Thy sake whatsoever Thou pleasest. I entreat Thee, who dost give me this good will, to grant me strength to execute it. O Lamb of God, immolated on the cross, O victim of love, O enamoured God, that I could die for Thee as Thou hast died for me!

O Mary, mother of God! obtain for me the grace to sacrifice all the remaining moments of my life to the love of Thy most amiable Son.

Fifteen Meditations on the Passion of Jesus Christ

TO BE MADE DURING THE FIFTEEN DAYS BEGINNING ON THE SATURDAY BEFORE PASSION SUNDAY, AND ENDING ON HOLY SATURDAY

Meditation I

FOR SATURDAY BEFORE PASSION SUNDAY

JESUS MAKES HIS TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

I

The time of his Passion being now at hand, our Redeemer departs from Bethany to go to Jerusalem. On drawing nigh to that ungrateful city, he beheld it, and wept: *Beholding the city, He wept over it.*[5569] He wept because he foresaw its ruin, which would be the consequence of the stupendous crime of taking away the life of the Son of God, of which that people would shortly become guilty. Ah, my Jesus, when Thou wert then weeping over that city Thou wert weeping also over my soul, beholding the ruin which I have brought upon myself by my sins, constraining Thee to condemn me to hell, even after Thy having died to save me. Oh, leave it to me to weep over the great evil of which I have been guilty in despising Thee, the greatest of all good, and do Thou have mercy upon me.

II

Jesus Christ enters the city: the people go forth to meet him; they receive him with acclamations and rejoicings; and, in order to do him honor, some of them strew branches of palms along the road, whilst others spread out their garments for him to pass over. Oh, who would ever then have said that that Lord, now recognized as the Messias, and welcomed with so many demonstrations of respect, the next time that he appeared along the self-same ways would be under sentence of death, and with a cross upon his shoulders? Ah, my beloved Jesus, these people now receive Thee with acclamations, saying, *Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that* *cometh in the name of the Lord!*[5570] Glory to the Son of David! Blessed be he who cometh in the name of God for our salvation! And then they will raise their voices insultingly to Pilate to take Thee out of the world, and cause Thee to die upon a cross: *Away with Him! away with Him! crucify Him!*[5571] Go, my soul, and do Thou too lovingly say to him, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!* Blessed forever be Thou that art come, O Saviour of the world! for, otherwise, we had all been lost. O my Saviour, save me!

III

When the evening, however, was come, after all those acclamations, there was no one found who would invite him to lodge in his house; so that he was obliged to retrace his steps to Bethany.

O my beloved Redeemer, if others will not give Thee a welcome, I desire to welcome Thee into my poor heart. At one time, I, unhappily, expelled Thee from my soul; but I now prize to have Thee with me more than the possession of all the treasures of earth. I love Thee, O my Saviour; what power shall ever be able to separate me from my love of Thee? Sin only; but from this sin it is Thine to deliver me, by Thy help, O my Jesus; and thine too, by thy intercession, O Mary, my Mother.

Meditation II

FOR PASSION SUNDAY

JESUS PRAYS IN THE GARDEN

I

Jesus, knowing that the hour of his Passion had now come, after having washed the feet of his disciples and instituted the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar,—wherein he left us his whole self,—goes to the Garden of Gethsemani, whither he knew already that his enemies would come to take him. He there betakes himself to prayer, and lo! he finds himself assailed by a great dread, by a great repugnance, and by a great sadness: *He began to be afraid, to be weary, and sorrowful.*[5572] There came upon him, first, a great dread of the bitter death which he would have to suffer on Calvary, and of all the anguish and desolations by which it would be accompanied. During the actual course of his Passion, the scourges, the thorns, the nails, and the rest of his tortures came upon him but one at a time; whereas, in the garden, they all came upon him together at once, crowding into his memory in order to torment him. For his love of us he embraced them all; but in embracing them, he trembles and is in agony: *Being in an agony, He prayed the longer.*[5573]

II

There comes upon him, moreover, a great repugnance to that which he has to suffer; so that he prays his Father to deliver him from it: *My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass away from Me.*[5574] He prayed thus to teach us that in our tribulations we may indeed beg of God to deliver us from them; but we ought at the same time to refer ourselves to his will, and to say, as Jesus then said, *Not, however, as I will, but as Thou wilt.*[5575] Yes, my

Jesus, Thy will, not mine, be done. I embrace all the crosses that Thou wilt send me. Thou, innocent as Thou art, hast suffered so much for love of me; it is but just that I, who am a sinner, and deserving of hell, should suffer for love of Thee that which Thou dost ordain.

III

There came upon him, likewise, a sadness so great that it would have been enough to cause him to die, had he not, of himself, kept death away, in order to die for us after having suffered more: *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*[5576] This great sadness was occasioned by the sight of the future ungratefulness of men, who, instead of corresponding to so great a love on his part, would offend him by so many sins, the sight of which caused him to sweat in streams of blood: *And his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground.*[5577]

So, then, O my Jesus, it is not the executioners, the scourges, the thorns, or the cross that have been so cruel: the cruelty lies in my sins, which afflicted Thee so much in the garden. Do Thou give me, then, a share of that sorrow and abhorrence which Thou didst experience in the garden, that so, even to my death, I may bitterly weep for the offences that I have given Thee. I love Thee, O my Jesus: do Thou receive with kindness a sinner who wishes to love Thee. Recommend me, O Mary, to this thy Son, who is in affliction and sadness for love of me.

Meditation III

FOR PASSION MONDAY

JESUS IS APPREHENDED, AND LED BEFORE CAIPHAS

I

The Lord, knowing that the Jews who were coming to take him were now at hand, rose up from prayer, and went to meet them; and so, without reluctance, he lets them take him and bind him: *They apprehended Jesus, and bound Him.*[5578] O amazement! A God bound as a criminal by his own creatures! Behold, my soul, how some of them seize hold of his hands; others put the handcuffs on him; and others smite him; and the innocent Lamb lets himself be bound and struck at their will, and says not a word: *He was offered because it was His own will, and opened not his mouth, He is led as a sheep to the slaughter.*[5579] He neither speaks nor utters complaint, since he had himself already offered himself up to die for us; and, therefore, did that Lamb let himself be bound and led to death without opening his mouth.

II

Jesus enters Jerusalem bound. Those who were asleep in their beds, at the noise of the crowd passing by, awake, and inquire who that might be whom they are taking along in custody; and they are told in reply, “It is Jesus of Nazareth, who has been found out to be an impostor and seducer.” They bring him up before Caiphas, who is pleased at seeing him, and asks him about his disciples, and about his doctrine Jesus replies that he has spoken openly; so that he calls upon the Jews themselves, who were standing around him, to bear their testimony as to what lie has said: *Behold, these know what I have said.*[5580] But upon this reply, one of the officials of the court gives him a blow in the face, saying, *Dost Thou answer the high-priest so?*[5581] But, O God, how does a reply, so humble and gentle, deserve so great an insult?

Ah, my Jesus, Thou dost suffer it all in order to pay the penalty of the insults that I have offered to Thy heavenly Father.

III

The high-priest, in the next place, conjures him, in the name of God, to say whether he be truly the Son of God. Jesus answered in the affirmative, that such he was; and Caiphas, on hearing this, instead of prostrating himself upon the floor to adore his God, rends his garments, and, turning to the other priests, says, *What more need have we of witnesses? Behold, ye have now heard His blasphemy: what is your opinion?* And they unanimously replied, *He is guilty of death.*[5582] And then, as the Evangelists relate, they all began to spit in his face, and to abuse him, and slapping him with their hands, and striking him with their fists; and then, tying a piece of cloth over his face, they turned him into ridicule, saying, *Prophesy to us. Thou Christ; who is it that smote Thee?* Thus writes St. Matthew. And St. Mark writes, *And some began to spit upon Him, and to cover His face, and to deal upon Him blows, and to say to Him, Prophesy. And the officers did smite Him with the palms of their hands.*[5583]

Behold Thyself, O my Jesus, become, upon this night, the butt of the rabble. And how can men see Thee in such humiliation for love of them, and not love Thee? And how have I been able to go so far as to outrage Thee by so many sins, after that Thou hast suffered so much for me? Forgive me, O my love, for I will not displease Thee more. I love Thee, my supreme Good, and I repent above every other evil of having despised Thee. O Mary, my Mother, pray thy ill-treated Son to pardon me.

Meditation IV

FOR PASSION TUESDAY

JESUS IS LED BEFORE PILATE AND HEROD, AND THEN HAS BARABBAS PREFERRED BEFORE HIM

I

The morning being come, they lead Jesus to Pilate, that he may pronounce upon him the sentence of death. But Pilate is aware that Jesus is innocent, and, therefore, he tells the Jews that he can find no reason why he should condemn him. However, on seeing them obstinate in their desire for his death, he referred him to the court of Herod. Herod, on seeing Jesus before him, desired to see some one of the Lord's great miracles, of which he had heard accounts, wrought in his presence, The Lord would not vouchsafe so much as an answer to the questions of that audacious man. Alas for that poor soul to which God speaks no more!

O my Redeemer, such, too, were my deserts, for not having obeyed so many calls of Thine; I deserved that Thou shouldst not speak to me more, and that Thou shouldst leave me to myself: but no, my Jesus, Thou hast not abandoned me yet. Speak to me, then: *Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth;*[5584] tell me what Thou desirest of me, for I will do all to please Thee.

II

Herod, seeing that Jesus gave him no answer, drove him away from his house with scorn, turning him into ridicule with all the persons of his court; and in order to load him with the greater contempt, he had him clothed in a white garment, so treating him like a fool; and thus he sent him back again to Pilate: *He despised and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment,* *and sent Him again to Pilate.*[5585] Behold how Jesus, clad in that robe which makes him a laughing-stock, is borne on along the streets of Jerusalem. O my despised Saviour, this additional wrong, of being treated as a fool, was still wanting to Thee! If, then, the divine wisdom is so treated by the world, happy is he who cares nothing for the world's approbation, and desires nothing but to know Jesus crucified, and to love sufferings and contempt, saying, with the Apostle: *For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*[5586]

III

The Jews had the right of demanding from the Roman Governor the liberation of a criminal on the feast of the Passover. Pilate, therefore, asked the people which of the two they would wish to have liberated, Jesus or Barabbas: *Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas or Jesus?*[5587] Barabbas was a wicked wretch, a murderer, a thief, and held in abhorrence by all: Jesus was innocent; but the Jews cry aloud for Barabbas to to live, and for Jesus to die.

Ah, my Jesus, so too have I said, whenever I have deliberately offended Thee for some satisfaction of my own, preferring before Thee that miserable pleasure of mine, and, in order not to lose it, contenting myself to lose Thee, O infinite Good. But now I love Thee above every other good, and more than my life itself. Have compassion upon me, O God of mercy. And do thou, O Mary, be my advocate.

Meditation V

FOR PASSION WEDNESDAY

JESUS IS SCOURGED AT THE PILLAR

I

Then, Pilate, therefore, took Jesus and scourged Him.[5588] O thou unjust judge, thou hast declared him innocent, and then thou dost condemn him to so cruel and so ignominious a punishment! Behold, now, my soul, how, after this unjust decree, the executioners seize hold of the divine Lamb; they take him to the pretorium, and bind him with ropes to the pillar.

O ye blessed ropes that bound the hands of my sweet Redeemer to that pillar, bind likewise this wretched heart of mine to his divine heart, that so I may, from this day forth, neither seek for, nor desire, anything but what he doth wish.

II

Behold how they now lay hold of the scourges, and, at a given sign, begin to strike, in every part, that sacred flesh, which at first assumes a livid appearance, and then is covered all over with blood, that flows from every pore. Alas, the scourges and the executioners' hands are all now dyed in blood; and with blood is the ground all drenched. But, O God, through the violence of the blows, not only does the blood, but pieces of the very flesh, of Jesus Christ go flying through the air. That divine body is already but one mass of wounds; and yet do those barbarians continue to add blow to blow and pain to pain. And all this while, what is Jesus doing? He speaks not; he complains not; but patiently endures that great torture in order to appease the divine justice, that was wroth against us: *As a lamb before the shearer is* *dumb, so opened He not His mouth.*[5589] Go quickly, O my soul, go and wash thyself in that divine blood.

My beloved Saviour, I behold Thee all torn in pieces for me; no longer, therefore, can I doubt that Thou dost love me, and love me greatly, too. Every wound of Thine is a sure token on Thy part of Thy love, which with too much reason demands my love. Thou, O my Jesus, dost, without reserve, give me Thy blood; it is but just that I, without reserve, should give Thee all my heart. Do Thou, then, accept of it, and make it to be ever faithful.

III

O my God, had Jesus Christ not suffered more than a single blow for love of me, I ought yet to have been burning with love for him, saying, A God hath been willing to be struck for me! But no: he contented not himself with a single blow; but, to pay the penalty due to my sins, he was willing to have his whole body torn to shreds, as Isaias had already foretold: *He was bruised for our iniquities;*[5590] and that even until he looked like a leper covered with wounds from head to foot: *And we thought Him to be, as it were, a leper.*[5591] While, then, O my soul, Jesus was being scourged, he was thinking of thee, and offering to God those bitter sufferings of his, in order to deliver thee from the eternal scourges of hell. O God of love, how have I been able to live so many years, in time past, without loving Thee? O ye wounds of Jesus, wound me with love towards a God who has loved me so much! O Mary, O Mother of graces, do thou gain for me this love!

Meditation VI

FOR PASSION THURSDAY

JESUS IS CROWNED WITH THORNS, AND TREATED AS A MOCK KING

I

When the soldiers had finished the scourging of Jesus Christ, they all assembled together in the pretorium, and, stripping his own clothes off him again, in order to turn him into ridicule, and to make him into a mock king, they put upon him an old ragged mantle, of a reddish color, to represent the royal purple; in his hand a reed, to represent a sceptre; and upon his head a bundle of thorns, to represent a crown, but fashioned like a helmet, so as to fit close upon the whole of his sacred head. *Stripping Him, they put a scarlet cloak about Him, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand.*[5592] And when the thorns, by the pressure of their hands alone, could not be made to penetrate deeper into that divine head which they were piercing, with the self-same reed, and with all their might, they battered down that barbarous crown: *And spitting upon Him, they took the reed, and struck His head.*[5593] O ungrateful thorns, do you thus torture your Creator? But what thorns? what thorns? You, ye wicked thoughts of mine; it is you that have pierced the head of my Redeemer.

I detest, O my Jesus, and I abhor, more than I do death itself, the evil consent by which I have so often grieved Thee, my God, who art so good. But since Thou dost make me know how much Thou hast loved me, Thee alone will I love, Thee alone.

II

O my God! how the blood is now streaming down from that pierced head over the face and the breast of Jesus!

And Thou, my Saviour, dost not even utter a complaint of such unjust cruelties! Thou art the King of heaven and of earth; but now my Jesus, Thou art brought down so low as to appear before us a king of derision and of sorrows, being made the laughing-stock of all Jerusalem. But the prophecy of Jeremias had to be fulfilled, that Thou wouldst one day have Thy fill of sorrows and shame: *He will give His cheek to the smiter, He will be satiated with reproaches.*[5594] O Jesus, my love! in time past I have despised Thee; but now I prize Thee, and I love Thee with all my heart, and I desire to die for love of Thee.

III

But no; these men for whom Thou art suffering have not yet their fill of torturing and making game of Thee. After having thus tortured Thee, and dressed Thee up as a mock king, they bend their knee before Thee, and scornfully address Thee: *Hail to Thee, O King of the Jews.* And then, with shouts of laughter, they deal out more blows upon Thee, thus rendering twofold the anguish of the head already pierced by the thorns: *And bowing the knee before Him, they derided Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews; and they gave Him blows.*[5595] Do thou at least go, O my soul, and recognize Jesus for what he is, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and return thanks to him, and love him, now that thou beholdest him become, for love of Thee, the king of sorrows. O my Lord, keep not in Thy remembrance the griefs which I have caused Thee. I now love Thee more than myself. Thou only dost deserve all my love, and, therefore, Thee only do I wish to love. I fear, on account of my weaknesses; but it is for Thee to give me the strength to execute my desire. And thou, too, O Mary, must help me by thy prayers.

Meditation VII

FOR PASSION FRIDAY

PILATE EXHIBITS JESUS TO THE PEOPLE, SAYING, “BEHOLD THE MAN!”

I

Jesus having again been brought and set before Pilate, he beheld him so wounded and disfigured by the scourges and the thorns that he thought, by showing him to them, to move the people to compassion. He therefore went out into the portico, bringing with him the afflicted Lord, and said, *Behold the Man!*[5596] As though he would say. Go now, and rest content with that which this poor innocent one has already suffered. Behold him brought to so low a state that he cannot long survive. Go your way, and leave him, for he can but have a short time to live. Do thou too, my soul, behold thy Lord in that portico, bound and half naked, covered only with wounds and blood; and consider to what thy Shepherd has reduced himself, in order to save thee, a sheep that was lost.

II

At the same time that Pilate is exhibiting the wounded Jesus to the Jews, the Eternal Father is from heaven inviting us to turn our eyes to behold Jesus Christ in such a condition, and in like manner says to us, *Behold the Man!* O men, this man whom you behold thus wounded and set at naught, he is my beloved Son, who is suffering all this in order to pay the penalty of your sins; behold him, and love him. O my God and my Father, I do behold Thy Son, and I thank him, and love him, and hope to love him always; but do Thou, I pray Thee, behold him also, and for love of this Thy Son have mercy upon me; pardon me, and give me the grace never to love anything apart from Thee.

III

But what is it that the Jews reply, on their beholding that king of sorrows? They raise a shout and say, *Crucify, crucify Him!*[5597] And seeing that Pilate, notwithstanding their clamor, was seeking a means to release him, they worked upon his fears by telling him: *If thou release this Man, thou art not Cæsar's friend.*[5598] Pilate still makes resistance, and replies, *Shall I crucify your King?* And their answer was, *We have no king but Cæsar.*[5599]

Ah, my adorable Jesus, these men will not recognize Thee for their King, and tell Thee that they wish for no other king but Cæsar. I acknowledge Thee to be my King and God; and I protest that I wish for no other king of my heart but Thee, my love, and my one and only good. Wretch that I am! I at one time refused Thee for my King, and declared that I did not wish to serve Thee; but now I wish Thee alone to have dominion over my will. Do Thou make it obey Thee in all that Thou dost ordain. O will of God, thou art my love. Do thou, O Mary, pray for me. Thy prayers are not rejected.

Meditation VIII

FOR PASSION SATURDAY

JESUS IS CONDEMNED BY PILATE

I

Behold, at last, how Pilate, after having so often declared the innocence of Jesus, declares it now anew, and, protesting that he is innocent of the blood of that just man,—*I am innocent of the Blood of this Just Man,*[5600] after all this he pronounces the sentence, and condemns him to death. Oh, what injustice—such as the world has never seen! At the very time that the judge declares the accused one to be innocent, he condemns him. Ah, my Jesus Thou dost not deserve death; but it is I that deserve it. Since, then, it is Thy will to make satisfaction for me, it is not Pilate, but Thy Father himself, who justly condemns Thee to pay the penalty that was my due. I love Thee, O Eternal Father, who dost condemn Thine innocent Son in order to liberate me, who am the guilty one. I love Thee, O Eternal Son, who dost accept of the death which I, a sinner, have deserved.

II

Pilate, after having pronounced sentence upon Jesus, delivers him over to the hands of the Jews, to the end that they may do with him whatsoever they please: *He delivered Jesus up to their will.*[5601] Such truly is the course of things. When an innocent one is condemned, there are no limits to the punishment; but he is left in the hands of his enemies, that they may make him suffer and die according to their own pleasure. Poor Jews! you then imprecated chastisement upon yourselves in saying, *His Blood be upon us, and upon our children;*[5602] and the chastisement has come: you now endure, you miserable men, and will endure, even to the end of the world, the penalty of that innocent blood.

Do Thou, O my Jesus, have mercy upon me, who by my sins have also been a cause of Thy death. But I do not wish to be obstinate, and like the Jews; I wish to bewail the evil treatment that I have given Thee, and I wish to love Thee—always, always, always!

III

Behold, the unjust sentence of death upon a cross is read over in the presence of the condemned Lord. He listens to it; and, all-submissive to the will of the Father, be obediently and humbly accepts it: *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross.*[5603] Pilate says on earth, “Let Jesus die;” and the Eternal Father, in like manner, says from heaven, “Let my Son die;” and the Son himself makes answer, “Behold me! I obey; I accept of death, and death upon a cross.”

O my beloved Redeemer! Thou dost accept of the death that was my due. Blessed for evermore be Thy mercy: I return Thee my most hearty thanks for it. But since Thou who art innocent dost accept of the death of the cross for me, I, who am a sinner, accept of that death which Thou dost destine to be mine, together with all the pains that shall accompany it; and from this time forth I unite it to Thy death, and offer it up to Thy Eternal Father. Thou hast died for love of me, and I wish to die for love of Thee. Ah, by the merits of Thy holy death, make me die in Thy grace, and burning with holy love for Thee. Mary, my hope, be mindful of me.

Meditation IX

FOR PALM SUNDAY

JESUS CARRIES THE CROSS TO CALVARY

I

The sentence upon our Saviour having been published, they straightway seize hold of him in their fury: they strip him anew of that purple rag, and put his own raiment upon him, to lead him away to be crucified on Calvary,—the place appropriated for the execution of criminals: *They took off the cloak from Him, and put on Him His own garments, and led Him away to crucify Him.*[5604] They then lay hold of two rough beams, and quickly make them into a cross, and order him to carry it on his shoulders to the place of his punishment. What cruelty, to lay upon the criminal the gibbet on which he has to die!

But this is Thy lot, O my Jesus, because Thou hast taken my sins upon Thyself.

II

Jesus refuses not the cross; with love he embraces it, as being the altar whereon is destined to be completed the sacrifice of his life for the salvation of men: *And, bearing His own Cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary.*[5605] The condemned criminals now come forth from Pilate's residence, and in the midst of them there goes also our condemned Lord. O that sight, which filled both heaven and earth with amazement! To see the Son of God going to die for the sake of those very men from whose hands he is receiving his death! Behold the prophecy fulfilled: *And I was as a meek lamb, that is carried to be a victim.*[5606] The appearance that Jesus made on this journey was so pitiable that the Jewish women, on beholding him, followed him in tears: *They bewailed and lamented Him.*[5607]

O my Redeemer! by the merits of this sorrowful journey of Thine, give me strength to bear my cross with patience. I accept of all the sufferings and contempts which Thou dost destine for me to undergo. Thou hast rendered them lovely and sweet by embracing them for love of us: give me strength to endure them with calmness.

III

Behold my soul, now that thy condemned Saviour is passing, behold how he moves along, dripping with blood that keeps flowing from his still fresh wounds, crowned with thorns, and laden with the cross. Alas, how at every motion is the pain of all his wounds renewed! The cross, from the first moment, begins its torture, pressing heavily upon his wounded shoulders, and cruelly acting like a hammer upon the thorns of the crown. O God! at every step, how great are the sufferings! Let us meditate upon the sentiments of love wherewith Jesus, in this journey, is drawing nigh to Calvary, where death stands awaiting him.

Ah, my Jesus, Thou art going to die for us. In time past I have turned my back upon Thee, and would that I could die of grief on this account! but for the future I have not the heart any more to leave Thee, O my Redeemer, my God, my love, my all! O Mary, my Mother, do thou obtain for me strength to bear my cross in peace.

Meditation X

FOR HOLY MONDAY

JESUS IS PLACED UPON THE CROSS

I

No sooner had the Redeemer arrived, all suffering and wearied out, at Calvary, than they strip him of his clothes,—that now stick to his wounded flesh,—and then cast him down upon the cross. Jesus stretches forth his holy hands, and at the same time offers up the sacrifice of his life to the Eternal Father, and prays of him to accept it for the salvation of mankind. In the next place, the executioners savagely lay hold of the nails and hammers, and, nailing his hands and his feet, they fasten him to the cross. O ye sacred hands, which by a mere touch have so often healed the sick, wherefore are they now nailing you upon this cross? O holy feet, which have encountered so much fatigue in your search after us lost sheep, wherefore do they now transfix you with so much pain? When a nerve is wounded in the human body, so great is the suffering, that it occasions convulsions and fits of fainting: what, then, must not the suffering of Jesus have been, in having nails driven through his hands and feet, parts which are most full of nerves and muscles!

O my sweet Saviour! so much did the desire of seeing me saved and of gaining my love cost Thee! And I have so often ungratefully despised Thy love for nothing; but now I prize it above every good.

II

The cross is now raised up, together with the Crucified, and they let it fall with a shock into the hole that had been made for it in the rock. It is then made firm by means of stones and pieces of wood; and Jesus remains hanging upon it, to leave his life thereon. The afflicted Saviour, now about to die upon that bed of pain, and finding himself in such desolation and misery, seeks for some one to console him, but finds none. Surely, my Lord, those men will at least compassionate Thee, now that Thou art dying! But no; I hear some outraging Thee, some ridiculing Thee, and others blaspheming Thee, saying to Thee, “Come down from the cross if Thou art the Son of God. He has saved others, and now he cannot save himself.”[5608] Alas, you barbarians, he is now about to die, according as you desire; at least torment him not with your revilings.

III

See how much thy dying Redeemer is suffering upon that gibbet! Each member suffers its own pain, and the one cannot come to the help of the other. Alas, how does he experience in every moment the pains of death! Well may it be said that in those three hours during which Jesus was suffering his agony upon the cross he suffered as many deaths as were the moments that he remained there. He finds not there even the slightest relief or repose, whether he lean his weight upon his hands or upon his feet; wheresoever he leans the pain is increased, his most holy body hanging suspended, as it does, from his very wounds themselves. Go, my soul, and tenderly draw nigh to that cross, and kiss that altar, whereon thy Lord is dying a victim of love for thee. Place thyself beneath his feet, and let that divine blood trickle down upon thee.

Yes, my dear Jesus, let this blood wash me from all my sins, and set me all on fire with love towards Thee, my God, who hast been willing to die for love of me. Do thou, O suffering Mother, who dost stand at the foot of the cross, pray to Jesus for me.

Meditation XI

FOR HOLY TUESDAY

JESUS UPON THE CROSS

I

Jesus on the cross! Behold the proof of the love of a God; behold the final manifestation of himself, which the Word Incarnate makes upon this earth,—a manifestation of suffering indeed, but, still more, a manifestation of love. St. Francis of Paola, as he was one day meditating upon the divine Love in the person of Jesus Crucified, rapt in ecstasy, exclaimed aloud three times, in these words, “O God—Love! O God—Love! O God—Love!” wishing hereby to signify that we shall never be able to comprehend how great has been the divine love towards us, in willing to die for love of us.

II

O my beloved Jesus! if I behold Thy body upon this cross, nothing do I see but wounds and blood; and then, if I turn my attention to Thy heart, I find it to be all afflicted and in sorrow. Upon this cross I see it written that Thou art a king; but what tokens of majesty dost Thou retain? I see not any royal throne save that of this tree of infamy; no other purple do I behold save Thy wounded and bloody flesh; no other crown save this band of thorns that tortures Thee. Ah, how it all declares Thee to be king of love! yes, for this cross, these nails, this crown, and these wounds are, all of them, tokens of love.

III

Jesus, from the cross, asks us not so much for our compassion as for our love; and, if even he does ask our compassion, he asks it solely in order that the compassion may move us to love him. As being infinite goodness, he already merits all our love; but when placed upon the cross, it seems as if he sought for us to love him, at least out of compassion.

Ah, my Jesus, and who is there that will not love Thee, while confessing Thee to be the God that Thou art, and contemplating Thee upon the cross? Oh, what arrows of fire dost Thou not dart at souls from that throne of love! Oh, how many hearts hast Thou not drawn to Thyself from that cross of Thine! O wounds of my Jesus! O beautiful furnaces of love! admit me, too, amongst yourselves to burn, not indeed with that fire of hell which I have deserved, but with holy flames of love for that God who has been willing to die for me, consumed by torments. O my dear Redeemer! receive back a sinner, who, sorrowing for having offended Thee, is now earnestly longing to love Thee. I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, O infinite goodness, O infinite love. O Mary, O Mother of beautiful love! obtain for me a greater measure of love, to consume me for that God who has died consumed of love for me.

Meditation XII

FOR HOLY WEDNESDAY

THE WORDS SPOKEN BY JESUS UPON THE CROSS

I

While Jesus upon the cross is being outraged by that barbarous populace, what is it that he is doing? He is praying for them, and saying, *O My Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*[5609] O Eternal Father, hearken to this Thy beloved Son, who, in dying, prays Thee to forgive me too, who have outraged Thee so much. Then Jesus, turning to the good thief, who prays him to have mercy upon him, replies: *To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise*. Oh, how true is that which the Lord spake by the mouth of Ezechiel, that when a sinner repents of his faults, he, as it were, blots out from his memory all the offences of which he has been guilty: *But if the wicked do penance . . . I will not remember all his iniquities.*[5610]

Oh, would that it were true, my Jesus, that I had never offended Thee! But, since the evil is done, remember no more, I pray Thee, the displeasures that I have given Thee; and, by that bitter death which Thou hast suffered for me, take me to Thy kingdom after my death; and, while I live, let Thy love ever reign within my soul.

II

Jesus, in his agony upon the cross, with every part of his body full of torture, and deluged with affliction in his soul, seeks for some one to console him. He looks towards Mary; but that sorrowing Mother only adds by her grief to his affliction. He casts his eyes around him and there is no one that gives him comfort. He asks his Father for consolation; but the Father, beholding him covered with all the sins of men, even he too abandons him; and then it was that Jesus cried out with a loud voice: *Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*[5611] My God, my God, and why hast Thou also abandoned me? This abandonment by the Eternal Father caused the death of Jesus Christ to be more bitter than any that has ever fallen to the lot of either penitent or martyr; for it was a death of perfect desolation, and bereft of every kind of relief.

O my Jesus! how is it that I have been able to live so long a time in forgetfulness of Thee? I return Thee thanks that Thou hast not been unmindful of me. Oh, I pray Thee ever to keep me in mind of the bitter death which Thou hast embraced for love of me, that so I may never be unmindful of the love which Thou hast borne me!

III

Jesus then, knowing that his sacrifice was now completed, said that he was thirsty: *He said, I thirst.*[5612] And the executioners then reached up to his mouth a sponge, filled with vinegar and gall.

But, Lord, how is it that Thou dost make no complaint of those many pains which are taking away Thy life, but complainest only of Thy thirst? Ah, I understand Thee, my Jesus; Thy thirst is a thirst of love; because Thou lovest us, Thou dost desire to be beloved by us. Oh, help me to drive away from my heart all affections which are not for Thee; make me to love none other but Thee, and to have no other desire save that of doing Thy will. O will of God! Thou art my love. O Mary, my Mother! obtain for me the grace to wish for nothing but that which God doth will.

Meditation XIII

FOR HOLY THURSDAY

JESUS DIES UPON THE CROSS

I

Behold how the loving Saviour is now drawing nigh unto death. Behold, O my soul, those beautiful eyes growing dim, that face become all pallid, that heart all but ceasing to beat, and that sacred body now disposing itself to the final surrender of its life. After Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, *It is consummated.*[5613] He then passed over in review before his eyes all the sufferings that he had undergone during his life, in the shape of poverty, contempt, and pain; and then offering them all up to the Eternal Father, he turned to him and said, *It is finished.* My Father, behold by the sacrifice of my death, the work of the world's redemption, which Thou hast laid upon me, is now completed. And it seems as though, turning himself again to us, he repeated, *It is finished;* as if he would have said, O men, O men, love me, for I have done all; there is nothing more that I can do in order to gain your love.

II

Behold now, lastly, Jesus dies. Come, ye angels of heaven, come and assist at the death of your King. And thou, O sorrowing Mother Mary, do thou draw nearer to the cross, and fix thine eyes yet more attentively on thy Son, for he is now on the point of death. Behold him, how, after having commended his spirit to his Eternal Father, he calls upon death, giving it permission I to come to take away his life. Come, O death, says he to it, be quick and perform thine office; slay me, and save my flock. The earth now trembles, the graves open, the veil of the temple is rent in twain. The strength of the dying Saviour is failing through the violence of the sufferings; the warmth of his body is gradually diminishing; he gives up his body to death; he bows his head down upon his breast, he opens his mouth and dies: *And bowing His head, He gave up the ghost.*[5614] The people behold him expire, and, observing that he no longer moves, they say, he is dead, he is dead; and to them the voice of Mary makes echo, while she too says, “Ah, my Son, Thou art, thon, dead.”

III

He is dead! O God! who is it that is dead? The author of life, the only-begotten Son of God, the Lord of the world,—he is dead. O death! thou wert the amazement of heaven and of all nature. O infinite love! A God to sacrifice his blood and his life! And for whom? For his ungrateful creatures; dying in an ocean of sufferings and shame, in order to pay the penalty due to their sins. Ah, infinite goodness! O infinite love!

O my Jesus! Thou art, then, dead, on account of the love which Thou hast borne me! Oh, let me never again live, even for a single moment, without loving Thee! I love Thee, my chief and only good; I love Thee, my Jesus,—dead for me! O my sorrowing Mother Mary! do thou help a servant of thine, who desires to love Jesus.

Meditation XIV

FOR GOOD FRIDAY

JESUS HANGING DEAD UPON THE CROSS

I

Raise up thine eyes, my soul, and behold that crucified man. Behold the divine Lamb now sacrificed upon that altar of pain. Consider that he is the beloved Son of the Eternal Father; and consider that he is dead for the love that he has borne thee. See how he holds his arms stretched out to embrace thee; his head bent down to I give the kiss of peace; his side open to receive thee into his heart. What dost thou say? Does not a God so loving deserve to be loved? Listen to the words he addresses to thee from that cross: “Look, my son, and see whether there be any one in the world who has loved thee more than I have.”

No, my God, there is none that has loved me more than Thou. But what return shall I ever be able to make to a God who has been willing to die for me? what love from a creature will ever be able to recompense the love of his Creator, who died to gain his love?

II

O God! had the vilest one of mankind suffered for me what Jesus Christ has suffered, could I ever refrain from loving him? Were I to see any man torn to pieces with scourges and fastened to a cross in order to save my life, could I ever bear it in mind without feeling a tender emotion of love? And were there to be brought to me the portrait of him, as he lay dead upon the cross, could I behold it with an eye of indifference, when I considered: “This man is dead, tortured thus, for love of me. Had he not loved me, he would not so have died.”

Ah, my Redeemer, O love of my soul! How shall I ever again be able to forget Thee? How shall I ever be able to think that my sins have reduced Thee so low, and not always bewail the wrongs that I have done to Thy goodness? How shall I ever be able to see Thee dead of pain on this cross for love of me, and not love Thee to the uttermost of my power?

III

O my dear Redeemer! well do I recognize in these Thy wounds, and in Thy lacerated body, as it were through so many lattices, the tender affection which Thou dost retain for me. Since, then, in order to pardon me, Thou hast not pardoned Thyself, oh, look upon me now with the same love wherewith Thou didst one day look upon me from the cross, whilst Thou wert dying for me. Look upon me and enlighten me, and draw my whole heart to Thyself, that so, from this day forth, I may love none else but Thee. Let me not ever be unmindful of Thy death. Thou didst promise that, when raised up upon the cross, Thou wouldst draw all our hearts to Thee. Behold this heart of mine, which, made tender by Thy death, and enamoured of Thee, desires to offer no further resistance to Thy calls. Oh, do Thou draw it to Thyself, and make it all Thine own! Thou hast died for me, and I desire to die for Thee; and if I continue to live, I will live for Thee alone. O pains of Jesus, O ignominies of Jesus, O death of Jesus, O love of Jesus! fix yourselves within my heart, and let the remembrance of you abide there always, to be continually smiting me, and inflaming me with love. I love Thee, O infinite goodness; I love Thee, O infinite love. Thou art, and shalt ever be, my one and only love. O Mary, Mother of love, do thou obtain me love.

Meditation XV

FOR HOLY SATURDAY

MARY PRESENT ON CALVARY AT THE DEATH OF JESUS

I

There stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother.[5615] We observe in this the Queen of Martyrs, a sort of martydom more cruel than any other martyrdom,—that of a mother so placed as to behold an innocent Son executed upon a gibbet of infamy: “she stood.” Ever since Jesus was apprehended in the garden, he has been abandoned by his disciples; but Mary abandons him not. She stays with him till she sees him expire before her eyes: “she stood close by.” Mothers, in general, flee away from the presence of their sons when they see them suffer, and cannot render them any assistance: content enough would they be themselves to endure their sons’ sufferings; and, therefore, when they see them suffering without the power of succoring them, they have not the strength to endure so great a pain, and consequently flee away, and go to a distance. Not so Mary. She sees her Son in torments; she sees that the pains are taking his life away; but she flees not, nor moves to a distance. On the contrary, she draws near to the cross whereon her Son is dying.

O sorrowing Mary! disdain me not for a companion to assist at the death of thy Jesus and mine.

II

She stood near to the cross. The cross, then, is the bed whereon Jesus leaves his life; a bed of suffering, where this afflicted Mother is watching Jesus, all wounded as he is with scourges and with thorns. Mary observes how this her poor Son, suspended from those three iron nails, finds neither a position nor repose. She would wish to give him some relief; she would wish, at least, since he has to die, to have him die in her arms. But nothing of all this is allowed her. Ah, cross! she says, give me back my Son! Thou art a malefactor’s gibbet; whereas my Son is innocent.

But grieve not thyself, O Mother. It is the will of the Eternal Father that the cross should not give Jesus back to thee until after he has died and breathed his last. O Queen of Sorrows! obtain for me sorrow for my sins.

III

There stood by the cross His Mother! Meditate, my soul, upon Mary, as she stands at the foot of the cross watching her Son. Her Son! but, O God, what a Son! a Son who was, at one and the same time, her Son and her God! a Son who had from all eternity chosen her to be his Mother, and had given her a preference in his love before all mankind and all the angels! A Son so beautiful, so holy, and so lovely; a Son who had been ever obedient unto her; a Son who was her one and only love, being as he was both her Son and God. And this Mother had to see such a Son die of pain before her very eyes!

O Mary, O Mother, most afflicted of all mothers! I compassionate thy heart, more especially when thou didst behold thy Jesus surrender himself up upon the cross, open his mouth, and expire; and, for love of this thy Son, now dead for my salvation, do thou recommend unto him my soul.

And do Thou, my Jesus, for the sake of the merits of Mary’s sorrows, have mercy upon me, and grant me the grace of dying for Thee, as Thou hast died for me: “May I die, O my Lord” (will I say unto Thee, with St. Francis of Assisi), “for love of the love of Thee, who hast vouchsafed to die for love of the love of me.”

Three Meditations on Paradise, for the Easter Festival

Meditation I

FOR EASTER SUNDAY

THE JOYS OF HEAVEN

I

Oh, happy are we if we suffer with patience on earth the troubles of this present life! Distress of circumstances, fears, bodily infirmities, persecutions, and crosses of every kind, will one day all come to an end; and if we be saved, they will all become for us subjects of joy and glory in paradise: *Your sorrow* (says the Saviour, to encourage us) *shall be turned into joy.*[5616] So great are the delights of paradise, that they can neither be explained nor understood by us mortals: *Eye hath not seen* (says the Apostle), *nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for those who love Him.*[5617] Beauties like the beauties of paradise, eye hath never seen; harmonies like unto the harmonies of paradise, ear hath never heard; nor hath ever human heart gained the comprehension of the joys which God hath prepared for those that love him. Beautiful is the sight of a landscape adorned with hills, plains, woods, and views of the sea. Beautiful is the sight of a garden abounding with fruit, flowers, and fountains. Oh, how much more beautiful is paradise!

II

To understand how great the joys of paradise are, it is enough to know that in that blessed realm resides a God omnipotent, whose care is to render happy his beloved souls. St. Bernard says that paradise is a place where “there is nothing that thou wouldst not, and everything that thou wouldst.” There shalt thou not find anything displeasing to Thyself, and everything thou dost desire thou shalt find: “There is nothing that thou wouldst not.” In paradise there is no night; no seasons of winter and summer; but one perpetual day of unvaried serenity, and one perpetual spring of unvaried delight. No more persecutions, no jealousies are there; for there do all in sincerity love one another, and each rejoices in each other’s good, as if it were his own. No more bodily infirmities, no pains are there, for the body is no longer subject to suffering; no poverty is there, for every one is rich to the full, not having anything more to desire; no more fears are there, for the soul being confirmed in grace can sin no more, nor lose that supreme good which it possesses.

III

“There is everything that thou wouldst.”[5618] In paradise thou shalt have whatsoever thou desirest. There the sight is satisfied in beholding that city so beautiful, and its citizens all clothed in royal apparel, for they are all kings of that everlasting kingdom. There shall we see the beauty of Mary, whose appearance will be more beautiful than that of all the angels and saints together. We shall see the beauty of Jesus, which will immeasurably surpass the beauty of Mary. The smell will be satisfied with the perfumes of paradise. The hearing will be satisfied with the harmonies of heaven and the canticles of the blessed, who will all with ravishing sweetness sing the divine praises for all eternity.

Ah, my God, I deserve not paradise, but hell; yet Thy death gives me a hope of obtaining it. I desire and ask paradise of Thee, not so much in order to enjoy, as in order to love Thee everlastingly, secure that it will never more be possible for me to lose Thee. O Mary, my Mother, O Star of the Sea, it is for thee, by thy prayers, to conduct me to paradise.

Meditation II

FOR EASTER MONDAY

THE SOUL THAT LEAVES THIS LIFE IN THE STATE OF GRACE

I

Let us imagine to ourselves a soul that, on departing out of this world, enters eternity in the grace of God. All full of humility and of confidence, it presents itself before Jesus, its judge and Saviour. Jesus embraces it, gives it his benediction, and causes it to hear those words of sweetness: *Come, my spouse, come, thou shalt be crowned.*[5619] If the soul have need of being purified, he sends it to purgatory, and, all resigned, it embraces the chastisement, because itself wishes not to enter into heaven, that land of purity, if it is not wholly purified. The Guardian Angel comes to conduct it to purgatory; it first returns him thanks for the assistance he has rendered it in its lifetime, and then obediently follows him.

Ah, my God, when will that day arrive on which I shall see myself out of this world of perils, secure of never being able to lose Thee more? Yes, willingly will I go to the purgatory which shall be mine; joyfully will I embrace all its pains; sufficient will it be for me in that fire to love Thee with all my heart, since there I shall love none else but Thee.

II

The purgation over, the angel will return and say to it, Come along, beautiful soul, the punishment is at an end; come, and enjoy the presence of thy God, who is awaiting thee in paradise. Behold, the soul now passes beyond the clouds, passes beyond the spheres and the stars, and enters into heaven. O God, what will it say on entering into that beautiful country, and casting its first glance on that city of delights? The angels and saints, and especially its own holy advocates, will go to meet it, and with jubilation will they welcome it, saying, Welcome, O companion of our own; welcome!

Ah, my Jesus, do Thou make me worthy of it.

III

What consolation will it not feel in meeting there with relatives and friends of its own who have previously entered into heaven! But greater by far will be its joy in beholding Mary its Queen, and in kissing her feet, while it will thank her for the many kindnesses she has done it. The Queen will embrace it, and will herself present it unto Jesus, who will receive it as a spouse. And Jesus will then present it to his divine Father, who will embrace and bless it, saying, *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*[5620] And thus will lie beatify it with the same beatitude that he himself enjoys. Ah, my God, make me love Thee exceedingly in this life, that I may love Thee exceedingly in eternity. Thou art the object most worthy of being loved; Thou dost deserve all my love; I will love none but Thee. Do Thou help me by Thy grace. And Mary, my Mother, be thou my protectress.

Meditation III

FOR EASTER TUESDAY

THE SIGHT OF GOD IS THAT IN WHICH THE HAPPINESS OF THE ELECT CONSISTS

I

The beauties of the saints, the heavenly music, and all the other delights of paradise, form but the lesser portion of its treasures. The possession which gives to the soul its fulness of bliss is that of seeing a loving God face to face. St. Augustine says that were God to let his beautiful face be seen by the damned, hell with all its torments would become to them a paradise. Even in this world, when God gives a soul in prayer a taste of his sweet presence, and by a ray of light discovers to it his goodness and the love which he bears it, so great is the contentment that the soul feels itself dissolve and melt away in love; and yet, in this life, it is not possible for us to see God as he is; we behold him obscured as if through a thick veil. What, then, will it be, when God shall take away that veil from before us, and shall cause us to behold him face to face openly?

O Lord! for having turned my back upon Thee, no more should I be worthy to behold Thee; but, relying on Thy goodness, I hope to see Thee, and to love Thee in paradise forever. I speak thus, because I am speaking with a God who has died in order to give paradise to me.

II

Although the souls that love God are the most happy in this world, yet they cannot, here below, enjoy a happiness full and complete; that fear, which arises from not knowing whether they be deserving of the love or the hatred of their beloved Saviour, keeps them, as it were, in perpetual suffering. But in paradise the soul is certain that it loves God, and is loved by God; and it sees that that sweet tie of love which holds it united with God will never be loosened throughout all eternity. The flames of its love will be increased by the clearer knowledge which the soul will then possess of what the love of God has been in being made man, and having willed to die for it; and in having, moreover, given himself to it in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Its love will be increased by then beholding, in all their distinctness, the graces which he has given it, in order to lead it to heaven; it will see that the crosses sent to it in lifetime have all been artifices of his love to render it happy. It will see, besides, the mercies he has granted it, the many lights and calls to penance. From the summit of that blessed Mount will it behold the many lost souls now in hell for sins less than its own, and it will behold itself now saved, possessed of God, and certain that it can nevermore lose him throughout all eternity.

My Jesus, my Jesus, when will that too happy day for me arrive?

III

The happiness of the blessed soul will be perfected by knowing with absolute certainty that that God whom it then enjoys it will have to enjoy for all eternity. Were there to be any fear in the blessed that they might lose that God whom they now enjoy, paradise would no more be paradise. But no; the blessed soul is certain, with the certainty which it has of the existence of God, that that supreme good which it enjoys, it will enjoy forever. That joy, moreover, will not grow less with time; it will be ever new. The blessed one will be ever happy, and ever thirsting for that happiness; and, on the other hand, while ever thirsting, will be ever satiated. When, therefore, we see ourselves afflicted with the troubles of this life, let us lift up our eyes unto heaven, and console ourselves by saying, Paradise. The sufferings will one day come to an end; nay, they will themselves become objects over which to rejoice. The saints await us; the angels await us; Mary awaits us; and Jesus stands with the crown in his hand wherewith to crown us if we shall be faithful to him.

Ah, my God, when will come that day on which I shall arrive at possessing Thee, and be able to say unto Thee, My love, I cannot lose Thee more? O Mary, my hope, never cease from praying for me, until thou dost see me safe at thy feet in paradise!

Various Exercises for the Use of Persons devoted to the Passion of our Lord

THE CLOCK OF THE PASSION

P.M.	
5 to 7	Jesus, having taken leave of Mary, celebrates his last supper.
8	Jesus washes the feet of the apostles, and institutes the Most Holy Sacrament.
9	Discourse of Jesus; he goes to the Garden of Olives.
10	Prayer of Jesus in the garden.
11	Agony.
Midnight.	The sweating of blood.
1	Jesus is betrayed by Judas, and is bound.
2	Jesus is led before Annas.
3	Jesus is taken before Caiphas, and receives a blow in the face.
4	Jesus is blindfolded, struck, and scoffed at.
5	Jesus is led to the council, and declared guilty of death.
6	Jesus is taken to Pilate, and accused.

7 Jesus is mocked by Herod.

8 Jesus is conducted to Pilate, and Baraboas is preferred to him.

9 Jesus is scourged at the pillar.

10 Jesus is crowned with thorns, and exhibited to the people.

11 Jesus is condemned to death, and goes to Calvary.

Midday. Jesus is stripped and crucified.

1 Jesus prays for his murderers.

2 Jesus recommends his spirit to his Father.

3 Jesus dies.

4 Jesus is pierced with a lance.

5 Jesus is taken down from the cross, and delivered over to his Mother,

6 Jesus is buried, and left in the sepulchre.

GRADUS PASSIONIS D. N. JESU CHRISTI

I. *Jesu dulcissime, in horto mœste Patrem orans et in agonia posite, sanguineum sudorem effundens: miserere nobis.*

R. *Miserere nostri, Domine, miserere nostri.*

(*Sic respondetur ad omnes ceteros gradus.*)

II. *Jesu dulcissime, osculo traditoris in manus impiorum tra dite et tanquam latro capte et ligate, et a discipulis derelicte: miserere nobis.*

III. *Jesu dulcissime, ab iniquo Judæorum concilio reus mortis acclamate, ad Pilatum tamquam malefactor ducte, ab iniquo Herode sprete et deluse: miserere nobis.*

IV. *Jesu dulcissime, vestibus denudate, et in columna crudelissime flagellate: miserere nobis.*

V. *Jesu dulcissime, spinis coronate, colaphis cæse, arundine percusse, facie velate, veste purpurea circumdate, multipliciter derise et opprobriis saturate: miserere nobis.*

VI. *Jesu dulcissime, latroni Barabbæ postposite, a Judæis reprobate, et ad mortem crucis injuste condemnate: miserere nobis.*

VII. *Jesu dulcissime, ligno crucis onerate, et ad locum supplicii tamquam ovis ad occisionem ducte: miserere nobis.*

VIII. *Jesu dulcissime, inter latrones deputate, blasphemate et derise, felle et aceto potate, et horribilibus tormentis ab hora sexta usque ad horam nonam in ligno cruciate: miserere nobis.*

IX. *Jesu dulcissime, in patibulo crucis mortue, et coram tua sancta Matre lancea perforate, simul sanguinem et aquam emittens: Miserere nobis.*

X. *Jesu dulcissime, de cruce deposite et lacrymis mœstissimæ Virginis Matris tuæ perfuse: miserere nobis.*

XI. *Jesu dulcissime, plagis circumdate, quinque vulneribus signate, aromatibus condite et in sepulcro reposite: miserere nobis.*

V. *Vere languores nostros ipse tulit.*

R. *Et dolores nostros ipse portavit.*

OREMUS

Deus, qui pro redemptione mundi nasci voluisti, circumcidi, a Judæis reprobari, a Juda traditore osculo tradi, vinculis alligari, sicut agnus innocens ad victimam duci, atque conspectibus Annæ. Caiphæ, Pilati et Herodis indecenter offerri; a falsis testibus accusari, flagellis et colaphis cædi, opprobriis vexari, conspui, spinis coronari arundine percuti, facie velari, vestibus spoliari, cruci clavis affigi, in cruce levari, inter latrones deputari, felle et aceto potari et lancea vulnerari. Tu, Domine, per has sanctissimas pænas, quas ego indignus recolo, et per sanctissimam crucem et mortem tuam, libera me a pænis inferni, et perducere digneris, quo perduxisti latronem tecum crucifixum. Qui, cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas in sæcula sæ c ulorum. Amen.

[Translation.]

STEPS OF THE PASSION

My sweetest Jesus, who, while praying in the garden, didst sweat blood, wast in agony, and didst suffer a sorrow so great as to suffice to cause Thee death, have mercy on us.

R. Mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

My sweetest Jesus, who wast betrayed by Judas with a kiss, and delivered over into the hands of Thine enemies, and then wast taken prisoner by them and bound, and abandoned by Thy disciples, have mercy on us.

R. Mercy on us, O Lord, etc.

My sweetest Jesus, declared by the council of the Jews guilty of death, and in the house of Caiphas blindfolded with a piece of cloth, and then buffeted, spit at, and derided, have mercy on us.

R. Mercy on us, O Lord, etc.

My sweetest Jesus, led away as a malefactor to Pilate, and then turned by Herod into ridicule, and treated as a madman, have mercy on us.

R. Mercy on us, O Lord, etc.

My sweetest Jesus, stripped of Thy garments, and bound to the pillar, and so cruelly scourged, have mercy on us.

R. Mercy on us, O Lord, etc.

My sweetest Jesus, crowned with thorns, covered with a red mantle, buffeted, and in mockery saluted as King of the Jews, have mercy on us.

R. Mercy on us, O Lord, etc.

My sweetest Jesus, rejected by the Jews, and placed after Barabbas, and then unjustly condemned by Pilate to die upon a cross, have mercy on us.

R. Mercy on us, O Lord, etc.

My sweetest Jesus, laden with the wood of the cross, and as an innocent Lamb led away unto death, have mercy on us.

R. Mercy on us, O Lord, etc.

My sweetest Jesus, nailed upon the cross, placed between two thieves, ridiculed and blasphemed, and for three hours in an agony of the most horrible torments, have mercy on us.

R. Mercy on us, O Lord, etc.

My sweetest Jesus, dead upon the cross, and in sight of Thy holy Mother, transfixed in Thy side with the spear, from whence there issued forth blood and water, have mercy on us.

R. Mercy on us, O Lord, etc.

My sweetest Jesus, taken down from the cross, and placed in the bosom of Thine afflicted Mother, have mercy on us.

R. Mercy on us, O Lord, etc.

My sweetest Jesus, who, torn with stripes and stamped with Thy five wounds, wast laid in the sepulchre, have mercy on us.

R. Mercy on us, O Lord, etc.

V. Surely he hath borne our infirmities.

R. And he hath carried our sorrows.

LET US PRAY

O God, who, for the redemption of the world, didst will to be born, to be circumcised, rejected by the Jews, betrayed by the traitor Judas with a kiss, bound with cords, led as an innocent Lamb to the sacrifice, and with so many insults taken before Annas, Caiphas, Pilate, and Herod, accused by false witnesses, beaten with scourges and buffetings, overwhelmed with ignominies, spit upon, crowned with thorns, smitten with the reed, blindfolded, stripped of Thy raiment, fastened with nails to the cross lifted up on the cross, numbered amongst thieves, with gall and vinegar given Thee to drink, and wounded with the spear,—do Thou, Lord, by these sacred pains, which I, unworthy, venerate, and by Thy holy cross and death, deliver me from hell, and vouchsafe to conduct me whither Thou didst conduct the thief that was crucified with Thee: Thou, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen. So do I hope; and so may it be.

LITTLE CHAPLET OF THE FIVE WOUNDS OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

I

O my Lord Jesus Christ, I adore the wound in Thy left foot. I thank Thee for having suffered it for me with so much sorrow and with so much love. I compassionate Thy pain, and that of Thine afflicted Mother. And, by the merit of this sacred wound, I pray Thee to grant me the pardon of my sins, of which I repent with all my heart, because they have offended Thine infinite goodness. O sorrowing Mary, pray to Jesus for me.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory, etc.

By all the wounds which Thou didst bear
With so much love and so much pain,
Oh, let a sinner’s prayer
Thy mercy, Lord, obtain!

II

O my Lord Jesus Christ, I adore the wound in Thy right foot. I thank Thee for having suffered it for me with so much sorrow and with so much love. I compassionate Thy pain, and that of Thine afflicted Mother. And, by the merit of this sacred wound, I pray Thee to give me the strength not to fall into mortal sin for the future, but to persevere in Thy grace unto my death. O sorrowing Mary, pray to Jesus for me.

Our Father, etc.

By all the wounds which Thou didst bear
With so much love and so much pain,
Oh, let a sinner’s prayer
Thy mercy, Lord, obtain!

III

O my Lord Jesus Christ, I adore the wound in Thy left hand. I thank Thee for having suffered it for me with so much sorrow and with so much love. I compassionate Thy pain, and that of Thine afflicted Mother. And, by the merit of this sacred wound, I pray Thee to deliver me from hell, which I have so often deserved, where I could never love Thee more. O sorrowing Mary, pray to Jesus for me.

Our Father, etc.

By all the wounds which Thou didst bear
With so much love and so much pain,
Oh, let a sinner's prayer
Thy mercy, Lord, obtain!

IV

O my Lord Jesus Christ! I adore the wound in Thy right hand. I thank Thee for having suffered it for me with so much sorrow and with so much love. I compassionate Thy pain, and that of Thy most afflicted Mother. And, by the merit of this sacred wound, I pray Thee to give me the glory of paradise, where I shall love Thee perfectly, and with all my strength. O sorrowing Mary! pray to Jesus for me.

Our Father, etc.

By all the wounds which Thou didst bear
With so much love and so much pain,
Oh, let a sinner's prayer
Thy mercy, Lord, obtain!

V

O my Lord Jesus Christ! I adore the wound in Thy side. I thank Thee for having willed, even after Thy death, to suffer this additional injury, without pain indeed, yet with consummate love. I compassionate Thine afflicted Mother, who alone felt all its pain. And, by the merit of this sacred wound, I pray Thee to bestow upon me the gift of holy love for Thee, that so I may ever love Thee in this life, and in the other, face to face, for all eternity, in paradise. O sorrowing Mary, pray to Jesus for me.

Our Father, etc.

By all the wounds which Thou didst bear
With so much love and so much pain,
Oh, let a sinner’s prayer
Thy mercy, Lord, obtain!

PRAYER TO JESUS CRUCIFIED, TO BE SAID EVERY DAY TO OBTAIN HIS HOLY LOVE

My crucified love, and my most sweet Jesus, I believe in Thee, and confess Thee to be true Son of God and Saviour of the world! I adore Thee from the abyss of my misery, and thank Thee for the death which Thou didst suffer, to obtain for me the life of divine grace. O most faithful of all friends! O most loving of all fathers! O kindest of all masters! my beloved Redeemer, to Thee I am indebted for my salvation, for my soul, my body, and my whole self. Thou hast delivered me from hell; through Thee I have received the pardon of my sins; through Thee do I hope for paradise. But my ingratitude is so great that, instead of loving Thee, after so many mercies and special endearments of love, I have only offended Thee afresh. I confess that I deserve not to be allowed to love Thee any more. But no, my Jesus, choose some other punishment for me, and not this. If I have despised Thee up to this time, now I love Thee, and I desire to love Thee with all my heart. Thou knowest very well that without Thy help I can do nothing. Since, then, Thou dost command me to love Thee, and dost offer me Thy grace, provided I ask it in Thy name, confiding in Thy goodness, and in the promise Thou hast made me, saying, *Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that I will do,*[5621]—I present myself; poor as I am, before the throne of Thy mercy; and by the merits of Thy Passion, I ask Thee first to pardon all my sins, of which I repent with all my soul, because by them I have offended Thee, who art infinite goodness. Pardon me, then, and at the same time, give me holy perseverance till death; grant me also the gift of Thy holy love.

Ah, my Jesus, my hope, and my only love! my life, my treasure, my all! shed over my soul that light of truth and that fire of love which Thou didst come to bring into the world. Enlighten me to know every day better why Thou shouldst be loved, and to see the immense love Thou hast shown me in suffering and dying for me. Ah, grant that the same love may be in me as that with which Thy eternal Father loves Thee. And as he is in Thee, and is one with Thee, so may I, by means of a true love, be in Thee, and, by a perfect union of will, become one with Thee. Grant me, then, O my Jesus, the grace of loving Thee with all my affections, that I may love Thee always, and ever beg the grace to love Thee; so that, ending my life in Thy love, I may come to love Thee in heaven with a purer and more perfect love, never to cease loving Thee, and to possess Thee for all eternity!

O Mother of beautiful love, most blessed Virgin, my advocate, my mother, my hope after Jesus,—who art of all creatures the most loving towards God, and desirest nothing but that he should be loved by all,—ah, for the love of this Son dying before thine eyes for my salvation, pray for me, and obtain for me the grace to love him always, and with all my heart! I ask it of thee, and from thee do I hope to obtain it. Amen.

PRAYERS TO JESUS

BY THE MERIT OF EACH PARTICULAR PAIN WHICH HE SUFFERED IN HIS PASSION

O my Jesus! by that humiliation which Thou didst practise in washing the feet of Thy disciples, I pray Thee to bestow upon me the grace of true humility, that I may humble myself to all, especially to such as treat me with contempt.

My Jesus, by that sorrow which Thou didst suffer in the garden, sufficient, as it was, to cause Thy death, I pray Thee to deliver me from the sorrow of hell, from, living for evermore at a distance from Thee, and without the power of ever loving Thee again.

My Jesus, by that horror which Thou hadst of my sins, which were then present to Thy sight, give me a true sorrow for all the offences which I have committed against Thee.

My Jesus, by that pain which Thou didst experience at seeing Thyself betrayed by Judas with a kiss, give me the grace to be ever faithful unto Thee, and nevermore to betray Thee, as I have done in time past.

My Jesus, by that pain which Thou didst feel at seeing Thyself bound like a culprit to be taken before the judges, I pray Thee to bind me to Thyself by the sweet chains of holy love, that so I may nevermore see myself separated from Thee, my only good.

My Jesus, by all those insults, buffetings, and spittings which Thou didst on that night suffer in the house of Caiphas, give me the strength to suffer in peace, for love of Thee, all the affronts which I shall meet with from men.

My Jesus, by that ridicule which Thou didst receive from Herodin being treated as a fool, give me the grace to endure with patience all that men shall say of me, treating me as base, senseless, or wicked.

My Jesus, by that outrage which Thou didst receive from the Jews in seeing Thyself placed after Barabbas, give me the grace to suffer with patience the dishonor of seeing myself placed after others.

My Jesus, by that pain which Thou didst suffer in Thy most holy body when Thou wast so cruelly scourged, give me the grace to suffer with patience all the pains of my sicknesses, and especially those of my death.

My Jesus, by that pain which Thou didst suffer in Thy most sacred head when it was pierced with the thorns, give me the grace never to consent to thoughts displeasing unto Thee.

My Jesus, by that act of Thine by which Thou didst accept of the death of the cross, to which Pilate condemned Thee, give me the grace to accept of my death with resignation, together with all the other pains which shall accompany it.

My Jesus, by the pain which Thou didst suffer in carrying Thy cross on Thy journey to Calvary, give me the grace to suffer with patience all my crosses in this life.

My Jesus, by that pain which Thou didst suffer in having the nails driven through Thy hands and Thy feet, I pray Thee to nail my will unto Thy feet, that so I may will nothing save that which Thou dost will.

My Jesus, by the affliction which Thou didst suffer in having gall given Thee to drink, give me the grace not to offend Thee by intemperance in eating and drinking.

My Jesus, by that pain which Thou didst experience in taking leave of Thy holy Mother upon the cross, deliver me from an inordinate love for my relatives, or for any other creature, that so my heart may be wholly and always Thine.

My Jesus, by that desolation which Thou didst suffer in Thy death in seeing Thyself abandoned by Thy Eternal Father, give me the grace to suffer all my desolations with patience, without ever losing my confidence in Thy goodness.

My Jesus, by those three hours of affliction and agony which Thou didst suffer when dying upon the cross, give me the grace to suffer with resignation, for love of Thee, the pains of my agony at the hour of death.

My Jesus, by that great sorrow which Thou didst feel when Thy most holy soul, when Thou wast expiring, separated itself from Thy most sacred body, give me the grace to breathe forth my soul in the hour of my death, offering up my sorrow then to Thee, together with an act of perfect love, that so I may go to love Thee in heaven, face to face, with all my strength, and for all eternity.

And thee, most holy Virgin, and my Mother Mary, by that sword which pierced thine heart when thou didst behold thy Son bow down his head and expire, do I pray to assist me in the hour of my death, that so I may come to praise thee and to thank thee in paradise for all the graces that thou hast obtained for me from God.

WAY OF THE CROSS

Among the devotional exercises which have for their object meditation on the Passion, the cross, and the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the sovereign means for the conversion of sinners, for the renovation of the tepid, and for the sanctification of the just, one of the chief has ever been the exercise of the Way of Calvary, commonly called the Way of the Cross. This devotion, continued in an unbroken tradition from the time Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, arose, first in Jerusalem, amongst the Christians who dwelt there, out of veneration for those sacred spots which were sanctified by the sufferings of our divine Redeemer. From that time, as we learn from St. Jerome, Christians were wont to visit the holy places in crowds; and the gathering of the faithful, he says, even from the farthest corners of the earth, to visit the holy places, continued to his own times.

From Jerusalem this devout exercise began to be introduced into Europe by various pious and holy persons who had travelled to the Holy Land to satisfy their devotion. Amongst others, we read of the Blessed Alvarez, of the Order of Friars Preachers, who, after he returned to his own convent of St. Dominic, in Cordova, built several little chapels, in which he represented, station by station, the principal events which took place on our Lord’s way to Mount Calvary. Afterward, more formally, the Fathers Minorite Observants of the Order of St. Francis, as soon as ever, on the foundation of their Order, they were introduced into the Holy Land, and more especially from the time when, in the year 1342, they had their house in Jerusalem, and the custody of the sacred places, began, both in Italy and elsewhere, in short, throughout the whole Catholic world, to spread the devotion of the Way of the Cross. This they effected by erecting, in all their own churches, fourteen separate stations, in visiting which the faithful, like the devout pilgrims who go in person to visit the holy places in Jerusalem, do themselves also make this journey in spirit, whilst they meditate on all that our Lord Jesus Christ vouchsafed to suffer for our eternal salvation at those holy places, in the last hours of his life.

This excellent devotion has met with the repeated approvals of the holy Church; in the Constitutions, for instance, of the venerable pontiff Innocent XI.; Innocent XII.; of the two Benedicts, XIII. and XIV.; and of Clement XII. By this last Pope it was extended to the whole Catholic world; and it is now in constant use with persons of every condition, being, moreover, enriched with most numerous indulgences. For instance, those who perform devoutly the Way of the Cross may gain all the indulgences which have been granted by the Popes to the faithful who visit in person the sacred places in Jerusalem. All, however, who wish to gain these indulgences by means of this devotion must bear in mind that it is indispensably required of them to meditate, according to their ability, on the Passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and to go from one station to the other, so far as the number of persons engaged in the devotion, and the confined space where the fourteen stations are erected, will admit. This is evident from the Apostolical Constitutions above named. And from this it follows that the recitation at each of the stations of the words “We adore Thee, Christ,” etc., the *Our Father,* the *Hail Mary,* and “Have mercy on us, O Lord,” is nothing more than a pious and praiseworthy custom, introduced by devout persons into the devotion of the Way of the Cross. This the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences declared, in the instructions for performing the exercises of the Way of the Cross, Nos. VI. and IX., published by the order and with the approbation of Clement XII., April 3, 1731, and Benedict XIV., May 10, 1742.

All, however, who are sick, all who are in prison or at sea, or *in partibus infidelium,* or are prevented in any other way from visiting the stations of the Way of the Cross erected in churches or public oratories, may gain these indulgences by saying, with at least contrite heart and devotion, the *Our Father,* the *Hail Mary,* and the *Glory be to the Father,* each fourteen times; and at the end of these the *Our Father,* the *Hail Mary* and the *Glory be to the Father* each five time; and again one *Our Father,* one *Hail Mary,* and one *Glory be the Father* for the Sovereign Pontiff, holding in their hands the while a crucifix of brass, or of any other solid substance, which has been blessed by the Father General of the Order of the Friars Minor Observants, or else by the Father-Provincial or by any Father-Guardian, subject to the said Father General, or by a priest who has the faculties to bless such a crucifix. This favor was granted by Pope Clement XIV., Jan. 26, 1773, at the prayer of the Reformed Minorites of the Retreat of St. Bonaventure, in Rome, who keep this decree in their archives.

It is also to be observed that these crucifixes, thus indulgenced, after they have been blessed, cannot be sold, or given away, or lent to any one for the purpose of enabling them to gain the indulgences of the Way of the Cross, as appears from the decrees to this effect of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences. ED.

MANNER OF PRACTISING THE EXERCISE OF THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Let each one, kneeling before the high altar, make an act of contrition, and form the intention of gaining the indulgences, whether for himself or for the souls in purgatory. Then say: My Lord Jesus Christ, Thou hast made this journey to die for me with love unutterable, and I have so many times unworthily abandoned Thee; but now I love Thee with my whole heart, and because I love Thee I repent sincerely for having ever offended Thee. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany Thee on this journey. Thou goest to die for love of me; I wish also, my beloved Redeemer, to die for love of Thee. My Jesus, I will live and die always united to Thee.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company,
I wish to die with Thee.

FIRST STATION

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider that Jesus, after having been scourged and crowned with thorns, was unjustly condemned by Pilate to die on the cross.

My adorable Jesus, it was not Pilate, no, it was my sins, that condemned Thee to die. I beseech Thee, by the merits of this sorrowful journey, to assist my soul in its journey towards eternity. I love Thee, my beloved

Jesus; I love Thee more than myself; I repent with my whole heart of having offended Thee. Never permit me to separate myself from Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be, etc.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company,
I wish to die with Thee.

SECOND STATION

JESUS IS MADE TO BEAR HIS CROSS

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider that Jesus, in making this journey with the cross on his shoulders, thought of us, and offered for us to his Father the death that he was about to undergo.

My most beloved Jesus, I embrace all the tribulations that Thou hast destined for me until death. I beseech Thee, by the merits of the pain Thou didst suffer in carrying Thy cross, to give me the necessary help to carry mine with perfect patience and resignation. I love Thee, Jesus, my love; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to separate myself from Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be, etc.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company,
I wish to die with Thee.

THIRD STATION

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME UNDER HIS CROSS

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider this first fall of Jesus under his cross. His flesh was torn by the scourges, his head crowned with thorns, and he had lost a great quantity of blood. He was so weakened that he could scarcely walk, and yet he had to carry this great load upon his shoulders. The soldiers struck him rudely, and thus he fell several times in his journey.

My beloved Jesus, it is not the weight of the cross, but of my sins which has made Thee suffer so much pain. Ah, by the merits of this first fall, deliver me from the misfortune of falling into mortal sin. I love Thee, O my Jesus, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be, etc.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company.
I wish to die with Thee.

FOURTH STATION

JESUS MEETS HIS AFFLICTED MOTHER

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider the meeting of the Son and the Mother, which took place on this journey. Jesus and Mary looked at each other, and their looks became as so many I arrows to wound those hearts which loved each other so tenderly.

My most loving Jesus, by the sorrow Thou didst experience in this meeting, grant me the grace of a truly devoted love for Thy most holy Mother. And thou, my Queen, who wast overwhelmed with sorrow, obtain for me by thy intercession a continual and tender remembrance of the Passion of thy Son. I love Thee, Jesus, my love; I repent of ever having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be, etc.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die

For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company,
I wish to die with Thee.

FIFTH STATION

THE CYRENIAN HELPS JESUS TO CARRY HIS CROSS

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider that the Jews, seeing that at each step Jesus, from weakness, was on the point of expiring, and fearing that he would die on the way, when they wished him to die the ignominious death of the cross, constrained Simon the Cyrenian to carry the cross behind our Lord.

My most sweet Jesus, I will not refuse the cross as the Cyrenian did; I accept it, I embrace it. I accept in particular the death that Thou hast destined for me, with all the pains which may accompany it; I unite it to Thy death, I offer it to Thee. Thou hast died for love of me; I will die for love of Thee, and to please Thee. Help me by Thy grace. I love Thee, Jesus, my love; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be, etc.

Dear Jesus Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company,
I wish to die with Thee.

SIXTH STATION

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider that the holy woman named Veronica, seeing Jesus so afflicted, and his face bathed in sweat and blood, presented him with a towel, with which he wiped his adorable face, leaving on it the impression of his holy countenance.

My most beloved Jesus, Thy face was beautiful before, but in this journey it has lost all its beauty, and wounds and blood have disfigured it. Alas! my soul also was once beautiful, when it received Thy grace in baptism; but I have disfigured it since by my sins; Thou alone, my Redeemer, canst restore it to its former beauty. Do this by Thy Passion, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be, etc.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company,
I wish to die with Thee.

SEVENTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

V. We adore Thee. O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider the second fall of Jesus under the cross,—a fall which renews the pain of all the wounds of the head and members of our afflicted Lord.

My most gentle Jesus, how many times Thou hast pardoned me, and how many times have I fallen again, and begun again to offend Thee! Oh, by the merits of this new fall, give me the necessary helps to persevere in Thy grace until death. Grant that in all temptations which assail me I may always commend myself to Thee. I love Thee, Jesus, my love, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be, etc.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company,
I wish to die with Thee.

EIGHTH STATION

JESUS SPEAKS TO THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider that those women wept with compassion at seeing Jesus in so pitiable a state, streaming with blood, as he walked along. But Jesus said to them, “Weep not for me, but for your children.”

My Jesus, laden with sorrows, I weep for the offences that I have committed against Thee, because of the pains which they have deserved, and still more because of the displeasure which they have caused Thee, who hast loved me so much. It is Thy love, more than the fear of hell, which causes me to weep for my sins. My Jesus, I love Thee more than myself; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be, etc.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company,
I wish to die with Thee.

NINTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider the third fall of Jesus Christ. His weakness was extreme, and the cruelty of his executioners excessive, who tried to hasten his steps when he had scarcely strength to move.

Ah, my outraged Jesus, by the merits of the weakness that Thou didst suffer in going to Calvary, give me strength sufficient to conquer all human respect and all my wicked passions, which have led me to despise Thy friendship. I love Thee, Jesus, my love, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be, etc.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:

Ah! let me bear Thee company,
I wish to die with Thee.

TENTH STATION

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider the violence with which the executioners stripped Jesus. His inner garments adhered to his torn flesh, and they dragged them off so roughly that the skin came with them. Compassionate your Saviour thus cruelly treated, and say to him: My innocent Jesus, by the merits of the torment that Thou hast felt, help me to strip myself of all affection to things of earth, in order that I may place all my love in Thee, who art so worthy of my love. I love Thee, O Jesus, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be, etc.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company,
I wish to die with Thee.

ELEVENTH STATION

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider that Jesus, after being thrown on the cross, extended his hands, and offered to his Eternal Father the sacrifice of his life for our salvation. These barbarians fastened him with nails; and then, raising the cross, leave him to die with anguish on this infamous gibbet.

My Jesus, loaded with contempt, nail my heart to Thy feet, that it may ever remain there to love Thee, and never quit Thee again. I love Thee more than myself; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend

Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be, etc.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company,
I wish to die with Thee.

TWELFTH STATION

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider that thy Jesus, after three hours’ agony on the cross, consumed at length with anguish, abandons himself to the weight of his body, bows his head, and dies.

O my dying Jesus, I kiss devoutly the cross on which Thou didst die for love of me. I have merited by my sins to die a miserable death; but Thy death is my hope. Ah, by the merits of Thy death, give me grace to die, embracing Thy feet and burning with love to Thee. I commit my soul into Thy hands. I love Thee with my whole heart; I repent of ever having offended Thee. Permit not that I ever offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be, etc.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company,
I wish to die with Thee,

THIRTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider that, our Lord having expired, two of his disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus, took him down from the cross, and placed him in the arms of his afflicted mother, who received him with unutterable tenderness and pressed him to her bosom.

O Mother of sorrow for the love of this Son, accept me for thy servant, and pray to him for me. And Thou, my Redeemer, since Thou hast died for me, permit me to love Thee; for I wish but Thee, and nothing more. I love Thee, my Jesus, and I repent of ever having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be, etc.

Dear Jesus Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company,
I wish to die with Thee.

FOURTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS PLACED IN THE SEPULCHRE

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider that the disciples carried the body of Jesus to bury it, accompanied by his holy Mother, who arranged it in the sepulchre with her own hands. They then closed the tomb, and all withdrew.

Ah, my buried Jesus, I kiss the stone that encloses Thee. But Thou didst rise again the third day. I beseech Thee, by Thy resurrection, make me rise glorious with Thee at the last day, to be always united with Thee in heaven, to praise Thee, and love Thee forever. I love Thee, and I repent of ever having offended Thee. Permit not that I ever offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be, etc.

Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die
For very love of me:
Ah! let me bear Thee company,
I wish to die with Thee.

After this, return to the high altar, and say, *Our Father, Hail Mary,* and *Glory be,* etc., five times, in honor of the Passion of Jesus Christ, to gain the other indulgences granted to those who recite them.[5622]

HYMNS

I

THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST

O ruthless scourges, with what pain you tear
My Saviour’s flesh, so innocent and fair!
Oh, cease to rend that flesh divine,
My loving Lord torment no more;
Wound rather, wound this heart of mine,
The guilty cause of all he bore.
Ye cruel thorns, in mocking wreath entwin’d
My Saviour’s brow in agony to bind,
Oh, cease to rend that flesh divine,
My loving Lord torment no more;
Wound rather, wound this heart of mine,
The guilty cause of all he bore.
Unpitying nails, whose points, with anguish fierce,
The hands and feet of my Redeemer pierce!
Oh, cease to rend that flesh divine,
My loving Lord torment no more;
Wound rather, wound this heart of mine,
The guilty cause of all he bore.
Unfeeling lance, that dar’st to open wide
The sacred temple of my Saviour’s side!
Oh, cease to wound that flesh divine,
My loving Lord insult no more;
Pierce rather, pierce this heart of mine,
The guilty cause of all he bore.

II

TO JESUS IN HIS PASSION

My Jesus! say, what wretch has dar’d
Thy sacred hands to bind?
And who has dar’d to buffet so
Thy face so meek and kind?
’Tis I have thus ungrateful been,
Yet, Jesus, pity take!
Oh, spare and pardon me, my Lord,
For Thy sweet mercy’s sake!
My Jesus! who with spittle vile
Profan’d Thy sacred brow?
Or whose unpitying scourge has made
Thy precious blood to flow?
’Tis I have thus ungrateful been;
Yet, Jesus, pity take!
Oh, spare and pardon me, my Lord,
For Thy sweet mercy’s sake!
My Jesus! whose the hand that wove
That cruel thorny crown?
Who made that hard and heavy cross
That weighs Thy shoulders down?
’Tis I have thus ungrateful been,
Yet, Jesus, pity take!
Oh, spare and pardon me, my Lord,
For Thy sweet mercy’s sake!
My Jesus! who has mock’d Thy thirst
With vinegar and gall!
Who held the nails that pierc’d Thy hands,
And made the hammer fall?
’Tis I have thus ungrateful been,
Yet, Jesus, pity take!
Oh, spare and pardon me, my Lord,
For Thy sweet mercy’s sake?
My Jesus! say, who dar’d to nail

Those tender feet of Thine?
And whose the arm that rais'd the lance
To pierce that heart divine?
'Tis I have thus ungrateful been,
Yet, Jesus, pity take!
Oh, spare and pardon me, my Lord,
For Thy sweet mercy's sake!
And, Mary! who has murder'd thus
Thy lov'd and only One?
Canst thou forgive the blood-stain'd hand
That robb'd thee of thy Son?
'Tis I have thus ungrateful been
To Jesus and to thee;
Forgive me for thy Jesus' sake,
And pray to him for me.

CANTATA ON THE PASSION

THE SOUL AND THE REDEEMER

THE SOUL.

Tell me, thou judge iniquitous, ah! tell me why
Thou didst so oft my Saviour's innocence proclaim,
And yet, at length, condemn him to a death of shame,
Like vilest criminal upon a cross to die?
Of what avail the barb'rous scourges, cruel blows,
If, in thy heart, thou didst his future death decree?
Why not at once have doom'd him to the bitter tree
When the first cry of hate from surging crowds arose?
Since well thou knewest thou wouldst sentence him to die,
Why not at once make known his cruel destiny?
But what do I behold? an angry crowd draws near,
Confused cries are heard, and threat'ning groans resound;
Nearer still and nearer there comes a thrilling sound.
What is this clam'rous music breaking on mine ear?

Ah! it is the trumpet, whose shrill discordant breath
Proclaims aloud the sentence of my Saviour’s death.
Now, alas! I see him: along the rugged road
Painfully he’s toiling with tott’ring step and slow,
Wounded, sore, and bleeding, he bears the heavy load
Laid upon his shoulder by his relentless foe.
At ev’ry painful step he makes
Fresh blood-drops mark the way he takes.
A cross of wood
Upon his wounded shoulder rests;
His bruised flesh is staining it with blood:
His venerable head a mocking crown adorns;
His aching brows are pierc’d with long and cruel thorns.
’Tis Thy unfathom’d love, my dearest Lord,
That makes Thee wear this crown of mockery.
Where goest Thou, my God ador’d?

THE REDEEMER.

I go to die for thee.

THE SOUL.

Dear Lord, it is for me
Thou goest forth to die?
How gladly, then, would I
Lay down my life for Thee!

THE REDEEMER.

Peace! till thy dying breath
Think on My love for thee;
After My bitter death
Forever love thou Me.
Remain, my turtle dove!
For My Heart give me thine;
My faithful one! be Mine,

And pledge Me all thy love.

THE SOUL.

My Lord! I Thee adore,
To Thee my heart I bring.
I’m Thine, my treasur’d King,
I’m Thine for evermore!

The original text of this cantata was discovered in London in the year 1859, the words and music being by St. Alphonsus, who, we are assured, composed them in 1760, with corrections made with his own hand. We here give the entire text, such as has been published in London by M. J. Philip. —Ed.

L’ ANIMA E IL REDENTORE

ANIMA.

Giudice ingiusto e iniquo!
Dopo she tu più volte
Dichiaravi innocente il mio Signore,
give Or così lo condanni
give A morir da ribaldo in una croce!
Barbaro! a che servivn
Condannario a flagelli,
Se condannarlo a morte poscia volevi?
give Meglio, alle prime voci
Dè suoi nemici,
give Condannato l’ avresti a quella morte
A cui, malvagio, lo destini e inandi.
Ma oimè! qual misto
D‘armi, di grida e pianti,
Rumor confuso io sento!
E quale mai è questo
Suono ferale e mesto?
Ahinè! quest’ è la tromba
Che forse publieando

Va la condanna
Del mio Signore a morte!
Ma, Oh Dio! ecco, ahi dolore!
Il mio Gesù afflitto,
Versando sangue e con tremante passo.
Appena, ahimè! può camminare! e intanto
Del suo divino sangue
Segna la terra dov’ ei posa il piede!
Una pesante croce preme
Le sue piagate e tormentate spalle;
E barbara corona,
D‘acute spine intesta,
Il venerande capo
Circonda!—Ah! mio Signore! l’amore
Rè ti fecè di scherno e di dolore!
Dove, Gesù, ten vai?

REDENTORE.

Vado per te a morir.

ANIMA.

Dunque per me a morire.
Ten vai, mio caro Dio!
Voglio venire anch’ io,
Voglio morir con te.

REDENTORE.

Tu resta in pace, e intendi
L’ amor che io ti porto;
E quando sarò morto,
Ricordati di me.
Restane dunque, o cara!
E in segno dell’ amore,
Donami tutto il core

E serbami la fè

ANIMA.

Sì mio Tesor, mio Bene!
Tutto il mio cor ti dono;
E tutta quant' io sono,
Tutta son tua, mio Rè!

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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The Centenary Edition

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

EDITED BY

REV. EUGENE GRIMM,

Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

THE ASCETICAL WORKS

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APPROBATION

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Nicholas Mauron, Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled “The Holy Eucharist,” etc., which is Vol. VI. of the new and complete edition in English of the works of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, called “The Centenary Edition.”

Elias Fred. Schauer,

Sup. Prov. Baltimorensis.

Baltimore, Md., *January* 16, 1887.

CONTENTS

INDEX

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

- CONTENTS
- The Holy Eucharist
  - NOTICE
- The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ with a short explanation of The Prayers of the Mass
    - I
THE SACRIFICES OF THE OLD LAW WERE FIGURES OF THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST
    - II
FULFILMENT OF THE PROPHETIC FIGURES
  - SHORT EXPLANATION OF THE PRAYERS OF MASS
    - FIRST PART
THE PREPARATION THAT IS MADE AT THE FOOT OF THE ALTAR
    - SECOND PART
FROM THE INTROIT TO THE CREDO
    - THIRD PART
THE OFFERTORY AND THE PREFACE
    - FOURTH PART
THE CANON
    - FIFTH PART
FROM THE PRAYER “LIBERA NOS” TILL THE COMMUNION
    - SIXTH PART
THANKSGIVING
  - HEARING MASS
  - PIOUS EXERCISE TO ACQUIRE THE PROPER DISPOSITION FOR MAKING A GOOD CONFESSION
    - MOTIVES OF CONTRITION

- I
  THE GREATNESS AND SANCTITY OF GOD
- II
  THE BENEFITS OF GOD
- III
  THE PRESENCE OF GOD

ACTS FOR HOLY COMMUNION

- I
  PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION
- II
  THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION
- PRAYERS TO WHICH INDULGENCES ARE ATTACHED

LOVING ASPIRATIONS TO JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

- BEFORE COMMUNION
  - I
  - II
  - III
  - IV
  - V
  - VI
  - VII
  - VIII
  - IX
  - X
  - XI
  - XII
- AFTER COMMUNION
  - I

        - II
        - III
        - IV
        - V
        - VI
        - VII
        - VIII
        - IX
        - X
        - XI
        - XII
        - XIII
        - XIV
    - HYMNS
        - I HOLY COMMUNION
        - II TO JESUS AFTER COMMUNION
- Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin
    - TO MARY THE EVER-IMMACULATE VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD
    - TO THE READER
    - INTRODUCTION
        - I THE VISIT TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT
        - II THE VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN
        - III SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

MANNER OF MAKING THE VISITS

VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

FIRST VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

SECOND VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

THIRD VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

FOURTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

FIFTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

SIXTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

SEVENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

EIGHTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

NINTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

ELEVENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWELFTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

THIRTEENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

FOURTEENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

FIFTEENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

SIXTEENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

SEVENTEENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

EIGHTEENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

NINETEENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTIETH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-FIRST VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-SECOND VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-THIRD VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-FOURTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-FIFTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-SIXTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-SEVENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-EIGHTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-NINTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

THIRTIETH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

THIRTY-FIRST VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

HYMNS

I
JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT ENCLOSED IN THE TABERNACLE

II
THE VISIT TO JESUS ON THE ALTAR

Meditations for the Octave of Corpus Christi

Meditation I
THE LOVE OF JESUS IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT

Meditation II
JESUS REMAINS ON THE ALTAR, THAT EVERY ONE MAY BE ABLE TO FIND HIM

Meditation III
THE GREAT GIFT WHICH JESUS HAS MADE US BY GIVING HIMSELF TO US IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Meditation IV
THE GREAT LOVE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN US IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Meditation V
THE UNION OF THE SOUL WITH JESUS IN THE HOLY COMMUNION

Meditation VI
THE DESIRE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS TO UNITE HIMSELF TO US IN THE HOLY COMMUNION

Meditation VII
HOLY COMMUNION OBTAINS FOR US PERSEVERANCE IN DIVINE GRACE

Meditation VIII
PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION AND THANKSGIVING AFTER IT

Novena to the Sacred heart of Jesus

MEDITATIONS

Meditation I
THE AMIABLE HEART OF JESUS

Meditation II
THE LOVING HEART OF JESUS

Meditation III
THE HEART OF JESUS CHRIST PANTING TO BE LOVED

Meditation IV
THE SORROWFUL HEART OF JESUS

Meditation V
THE COMPASSIONATE HEART OF JESUS

Meditation VI
THE GENEROUS HEART OF JESUS

Meditation VII
THE GRATEFUL HEART OF JESUS

Meditation VIII
THE DESPISED HEART OF JESUS

Meditation IX
THE FAITHFUL HEART OF JESUS

AFFECTIONS OF LOVE TOWARDS THE HEART OF JESUS

HYMNS ON THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

I
THE LOVING SPOUSE

II
THE LOVING SPOUSE IN THE HEART OF JESUS

The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ

INTRODUCTION

I
HOW DESERVING JESUS CHRIST IS OF OUR LOVE, ON ACCOUNT OF THE LOVE HE HAS SHOWN US IN HIS PASSION

II
HOW MUCH JESUS CHRIST DESERVES TO BE LOVED BY US, ON ACCOUNT OF THE LOVE HE HAS SHOWN US IN INSTITUTING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

III
THE GREAT CONFIDENCE WE OUGHT TO HAVE IN THE LOVE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN US AND IN ALL HE HAS DONE FOR US

IV
HOW MUCH WE ARE OBLIGED TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST

Chapter I
CHARITAS IS PATIENT
(CHARITAS PATIENS EST.—1 COR. 13:4.)

Chapter II
CHARITY IS KIND
(CHARITAS BENIGNA EST.)

Chapter III
CHARITY ENVIETH NOT
(CHARITAS NON ÆMULATUR.)

Chapter IV
CHARITY DEALETH NOT PERVERSELY
(CHARITAS NON AGIT PERPERAM.)

I
LUKEWARMNESS

II
REMEDIES AGAINST LUKEWARMNESS

1. DESIRE OF PERFECTION

2. RESOLUTION

3. MENTAL PRAYER

4. FREQUENT COMMUNION

5. PRAYER

Chapter V
CHARITY IS NOT PUFFED UP
(CHARITAS NON INFLATUR.)

Chapter VI
CHARITY IS NOT AMBITIOUS
(CHARITAS NON EST AMBITIOSA.)

Chapter VII
CHARITY SEEKETH NOT HER OWN
(CHARITAS NON QUŒRIT QUŒ SUA SUNT.)

Chapter VIII
CHARITY IS NOT PROVOKED TO ANGER
(CHARITAS NON IRRITATUR.)

Chapter IX
CHARITY THINKETH NO EVIL, REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICETH WITH THE TRUTH
(CHARITAS NON COGITAT MALUM, NON GAUDET SUPER INIQUITATE, CONGAUDET AUTEM VERITATI.)

I
THE NECESSITY OF CONFORMING TO THE WILL OF GOD

II
OBEDIENCE

Chapter X
CHARITY BEARETH ALL THINGS
(CHARITAS OMNIA SUFFERT.)

I
PATIENCE IN SICKNESS

II
PATIENCE IN POVERTY

III
PATIENCE UNDER CONTEMPT

Chapter XI
CHARITY BELIEVETH ALL THINGS
(CHARITAS OMNIA CREDIT.)

Chapter XII
CHARITY HOPETH ALL THINGS
(CHARITAS OMNIA SPERAT.)

Chapter XIII
CHARITY BEARETH ALL THINGS
(CHARITAS OMNIA SUSTINET.)

I
TEMPTATIONS

II
DESOLATIONS

ABSTRACT OF THE VIRTUES TREATED OF IN THIS WORK, TO BE PRACTISED BY HIM WHO LOVES JESUS CHRIST

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

IX

X

XI

XII

NOVENA TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

MEDITATIONS

MEDITATION I
LOVE IS A FIRE THAT INFLAMES THE HEART

MEDITATION II
LOVE IS A LIGHT THAT ENLIGHTENS THE SOUL

MEDITATION III
LOVE IS A FOUNTAIN THAT SATISFIES

MEDITATION IV
LOVE IS A DEW WHICH FERTILIZES

MEDITATION V
LOVE IS A REPOSE THAT REFRESHES

MEDITATION VI
LOVE IS THE VIRTUE WHICH GIVES US STRENGTH

MEDITATION VII
LOVE CAUSES GOD TO DWELL IN OUR SOULS

MEDITATION VIII
LOVE IS A BOND WHICH BINDS

MEDITATION IX
LOVE IS A TREASURE CONTAINING EVERY GOOD

MEDITATION X
THE MEANS OF LOVING GOD AND OF BECOMING A SAINT

Pions Exercise to obtain the Seven Gifts of the holy Ghost

OREMUS.

LET US PRAY.

FIRST PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF THE FEAR OF THE LORD

SECOND PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF PIETY

THIRD PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE

FOURTH PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF FORTITUDE

FIFTH PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF COUNSEL

SIXTH PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING

SEVENTH PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF WISDOM

HUMBLE SUPPLICATION

OREMUS.

LET US PRAY.

HYMN
TO THE HOLY GHOST

THE SOUL ALL FOR GOD

The Holy Eucharist

NOTICE

I ACKNOWLEDGE to have drawn this little treatise on the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ from a work composed by a learned French author.[5623] His work is complete and somewhat diffuse. I have composed and have published this abridgment because of the profit that may be derived from it, not only by the priests who say Mass, but by the faithful who are present at it.

My little work bears the title “The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ,” for, although we distinguish by different names the Sacrifice of the Cross from the Sacrifice of the Altar, yet it is substantially the same sacrifice. In fact, we find at the altar the same victim and the same priest that one day offered himself on the cross. The Sacrifice of the Altar is a continuation or a renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross, and differs from it only in the manner in which it is offered.

The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ with a short explanation of The Prayers of the Mass

IN the two preceding volumes we have been considering that the Son of God, not content with becoming man and immolating himself for our salvation, in order to satisfy the love that he bore us, also wished to create for himself an entirely new life of love by instituting the Holy Eucharist expressly for the purpose of giving himself to us in three different ways; namely, as a victim of of an infinite price in the Holy Sacrifice; as the food of our souls in Holy Communion; and, in the holy tabernacle, as a perpetual companion of our exile here upon earth.

After having paid our homage to our Saviour in his sacrament of love, we honor with a special worship his divine heart, which is regarded as the seat of his immense love for us.

Now, as God loves only in order to be loved, we are led by the foregoing considerations to the practice of the love of Jesus Christ.

We conclude by speaking of the devotion that is due to the Holy Spirit, who is the love that is consubstantial with the Father and the Son, through whom God loves us, and through whom we love God.

Such are the contents of this volume, which is Volume VI. of the ascetical works.

We place at the beginning of this volume a short treatise entitled “The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ,” because the Sacrifice of the Altar is intimately connected with the Sacrifice of the Cross, the latter being the subject considered in the last volume, and because the Sacrifice of the Altar completes the Sacrifice of the Cross by Holy Communion.

St. Alphonsus wrote this little work in his retreat in the year 1776, when he was eighty years of age, and published it with his work called the *Victories of the Martyrs.*

Ed.

I

THE SACRIFICES OF THE OLD LAW WERE FIGURES OF THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST

All the sacrifices of the old law were figures of the sacrifice of our divine Redeemer, and there were four kinds of these sacrifices; namely, the sacrifices of peace, of thanksgiving, of expiation, and of impetration.

1. The *sacrifices of peace* were instituted to render to God the worship of adoration that is due to him as the sovereign master of all things. Of this kind were the holocausts.

2. The *sacrifices of thanksgiving* were destined to give thanks to the Lord for all his benefits.

3. The *sacrifices of expiation* were established to obtain the pardon of sin. This kind of sacrifice was specially represented in the Feast of the Expiation by the emissary-goat,[5624] which, having been laden with all the sins of the people, was led forth out of the camp of the Hebrews, and afterwards abandoned in the desert to be there devoured by ferocious beasts. This sacrifice was the most expressive figure of the sacrifice of the cross. Jesus Christ was laden with all the sins of men, as Isaias had foretold: *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*[5625] He was afterwards ignominiously led forth from Jerusalem, whither the Apostle invites us to follow him by sharing in his opprobrium: *Let us go forth therefore to him without the camp, bearing his reproach.*[5626] He was abandoned to ferocious beasts; that is to say, to the Gentiles, who crucified him.

4. Finally, the *sacrifices of impetration* had for their object to obtain from God his aid and his grace.

Now, all these sacrifices were abolished by the coming of the Redeemer, because only the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which was a perfect sacrifice, while all the ancient sacrifices were imperfect, was sufficient to expiate all the sins, and merit for man every grace. This is the reason why the Son of God on entering the world said to his Father: *Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not; but a body Thou hast fitted to me. Holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I: Behold, I come; in the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do Thy will, O God.*[5627] Hence, by offering to God the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we can fulfil all our duties towards his supreme majesty, and provide for all our wants; and by this means we succeed in maintaining a holy intercourse between God and ourselves.

We must also know that the Old Law exacted five conditions in regard to the victims which were to be offered to God so as to be agreeable to him; namely, sanctification, oblation, immolation, consumption, and participation.

1. The victim had to be *sanctified,* or consecrated to God, so that there might not be offered to him anything that was not holy nor unworthy of his majesty. Hence, the animal destined for sacrifice had to be without stain, without defect; it was not to be blind, lame, weak, nor deformed, according to what was prescribed in the Book of Deuteronomy.[5628] This condition indicated that such would be the Lamb of God, the victim promised for the salvation of the world; that is to say, that he would be holy, and exempt from every defect. We are thereby instructed that our prayers and our other good works are not worthy of being offered to God, or at least can never be fully agreeable to him, if they are in any way defective. Moreover, the animal thus sanctified could no longer be employed for any profane usage, and was regarded as a thing consecrated to God in such a manner that only a priest was permitted to touch it. This shows us how displeasing it is to God if persons consecrated to him busy themselves without real necessity with the things of the world, and thus live in distraction and in neglect of what concerns the glory of God.

2. The victim had to be *offered* to God; this was done by certain words that the Lord himself had prescribed.

3. It had to be *immolated,* or put to death; but this immolation was not always brought about by death, properly so called; for the sacrifice of the loaves of proposition, or show-bread, was accomplished, for example, without using iron or fire, but only by means of the natural heat of those who ate of them.

4. The victim had to be *consumed.* This was done by fire. The sacrifice in which the victim was entirely consumed by fire was called holocaust. The latter was thus entirely annihilated in order to indicate by this destruction the unlimited power that God has over all his creatures, and that as he created them out of nothing, so he can reduce them to the nothingness from which they came. In fact, the principal end of the sacrifice is to

acknowledge God as a sovereign being, so superior to all things that everything before him is purely nothing; for all things are nothing in presence of him who possesses all things in himself. The smoke that came from this sacrifice and arose in the air signified that God received it as a sweet odor,—that is to say, with pleasure,—as is written of the sacrifice of Noe: *Noe . . . offered holocausts upon the altar; and the Lord smelled a sweet savor.*[5629]

5. All the people, together with the priest, had to be partakers of the victim. Hence, in the sacrifices, excepting the holocaust, the victim was divided into three parts, one part of which was destined for the priest, one for the people, and one for the fire. This last part was regarded as belonging to God, who by this means communicated in some manner with those who were partakers of the victim.

These five conditions are found reunited in the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb. The Lord had commanded Moses[5630] that, on the tenth day of the month on which the Jews had been delivered from the slavery of Egypt, a lamb of one year and without blemish should be taken and separated from the flock; and thus were verified the conditions enumerated above, namely: 1. The separation of the lamb signified that it was a victim *consecrated* to God; 2. This consecration was succeeded by the *oblation,* which took place in the Temple, where the lamb was presented; 3. On the fourteenth day of the month the *immolation* took place, or the lamb was killed; 4. Then the lamb was roasted and divided among those present; and this was the partaking of it, or communion; 5. Finally, the lamb having been eaten, what remained of it was *consumed* by fire, and thus was the sacrifice consummated.

II

FULFILMENT OF THE PROPHETIC FIGURES

The Sacrifice of our Lord, as we have said, was a perfect sacrifice, of which those sacrifices of the Old Law were but signs, imperfect figures, and what the Apostle calls *weak and needy elements.*[5631] The sacrifice offered by Jesus Christ really fulfilled all the conditions mentioned above. The first condition, which is the *sanctification,* or the consecration of the victim, was accomplished in the Incarnation of the Word by God the Father himself, as is mentioned in the Gospel of St. John: *Whom the Father hath sanctified.*[5632] Likewise, when announcing to the Blessed Virgin that she was chosen to be the Mother of the Son of God, the Angel said: *The Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*[5633] Thus this divine victim, who was to be sacrificed for the salvation of the world, had already been sanctified by God, when he was born of Mary. From the first moment in which the Eternal Word took a human body, he was consecrated to God to be the victim of the great sacrifice that was to be accomplished on the Cross for the salvation of men. In regard to this our Lord said to his Father: *But a body Thou hast fitted to me . . . that I should do Thy will, O God.*[5634]

The second condition, or the *oblation*, was also fulfilled at the moment of the Incarnation, when Jesus Christ voluntarily offered himself to atone for the sins of men. Knowing that divine justice could not be satisfied by all the ancient sacrifices, nor by all the works of men, he offered himself to atone for all the sins of men, and hence he said to God, *Sacrifices, and oblations, and holocausts for sin, Thou wouldst not. . . . Then said I, Behold, I come to do Thy will, O God.*[5635] Then the Apostle adds immediately, *In which will we are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once.*[5636] This last text is remarkable. Sin had rendered all men unworthy of being offered to God and of being accepted by him, and, therefore, it was necessary that Jesus Christ should offer himself for us in order to sanctify us by his grace, and to make us worthy of being accepted by God. And this offering which our Lord then made of himself did not limit itself to that moment, but it only then began; it always has continued since, and it will continue forever. It is true it will cease on earth at the time of Antichrist: the Sacrifice of the Mass is to be suspended for twelve hundred and ninety days; that is, for three years six months and a half, according to the prophecy of Daniel: *And from the time when the continual sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination unto desolation shall be set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred ninety days.*[5637] Yet the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ will never cease, since the Son of God will always continue to offer himself to his Father by an eternal sacrifice, for he himself is the priest and the victim, but an eternal victim and an eternal priest, not according to the order of Aaron, of which the priesthood and the sacrifice were temporary, imperfect, and inadequate to appease the anger of God against rebellious man, but according to the order of Melchisedech, as David predicted: *Thou art a priest according to the order of Melchisedech.*[5638] The priesthood of Jesus Christ will, therefore, be eternal, since, even after the end of the world, he will always continue to offer in heaven this same victim that he once offered on the Cross for the glory of God and for the salvation of mankind.

The third condition of the sacrifice—namely, the *immolation* of the victim—was evidently accomplished by the death of our Lord on the Cross.

There remains for us yet to verify, in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the two other conditions requisite to render a sacrifice perfect—that is, the *consumption* of the victim and the *partaking* of it.

It is then asked, What was this consumption of the victim in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ? for although his body was by death separated from his holy soul, yet it was not consumed, nor destroyed.

The anonymous author of whom I spoke in the beginning, says that this fourth condition was fulfilled by the resurrection of our Lord; for, then, his adorable body was divested of all that is terrestrial and mortal, and was clothed in divine glory. He adds that it is this glory that Jesus Christ asked of his Father before his death: *And now glorify Thou me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee.*[5639] Our Lord did not ask this glory for his divinity, since he possessed it from all eternity as being the Word equal to the Father; but he asked it for his humanity, and he obtained it at his resurrection, by which he entered in a certain manner into his divine glory.

In speaking of the fifth condition, which is, the *partaking* of the victim, or Communion, the same author says that it is also fulfilled in heaven, where all the blessed are partakers of the victim of the Sacrifice that Jesus Christ continues to offer to God while offering himself.

These two reflections, made by the author to explain the two last conditions of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, are wise and ingenious; but for myself I think that the two conditions of which there is question, namely, the consumption and Communion, are manifestly fulfilled in the Sacrifice of the Altar, which, as has been declared by the Council of Trent, is the same as that of the Cross. In fact, the Sacrifice of the Mass, instituted by our Lord before his death, is a continuation of the Sacrifice of the Cross. Jesus Christ wished that the price of his blood, shed for the salvation of men, should be applied to us by the Sacrifice of the Altar; in which the victim offered is the same, though it is there offered differently from what it is on the Cross, that is, without the shedding of blood. These are the words of the Council of Trent: “Although Christ our Lord was to offer himself once to his Eternal Father on the altar of the Cross by actually dying to obtain for us eternal redemption, yet as his priesthood was not to become extinct by his death, in order to leave his Church a visible sacrifice suited to the present condition of men, a sacrifice which might at the same time represent to us the bloody sacrifice consummated on the Cross, preserve the memory of it to the end of the world, and apply the salutary fruits of it for the remission of the sins which we daily commit; at his last supper, on the very night on which he was betrayed, giving proof that he was established a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech, he offered to God the Father his body and blood, under the appearances of bread and wine, and, under the same symbols, gave them to the apostles, whom he constituted at the same time priests of the New Law. By these words, ‘Do ye this in remembrance of me,’ he commissioned them and their successors in the priesthood to consecrate and offer his body and blood, as the Catholic Church has always understood and taught.”[5640] And further on the Council declares that the Lord, appeased by the oblation of the Sacrifice of Mass, grants us his graces and the remission of sins. It says: “It is one and the same victim; the one that offers sacrifice is the same one who, after having sacrificed himself on the Cross, offers himself now by the ministry of the priest; there is no difference except in the manner of offering.”[5641]

Jesus Christ has, then, paid the price of our redemption in the Sacrifice of the Cross. But he wishes that the fruit of the ransom given should be applied to us in the Sacrifice of Altar, being himself in both the chief sacrificer, who offers the same victim, namely, his own body and his own blood;—with this difference only, that on the Cross his blood was shed, while it is not shed at the altar. Hence the Roman catechism[5642] teaches that the Sacrifice of the Mass does not serve only to praise God and to thank him for the gifts that he has granted us, but it is a true propitiatory sacrifice, by which we obtain from the Lord pardon for our sins and the graces of which we stand in need. Because the fruit of the death of Jesus Christ is applied to us by the Sacrifice of the Altar, the Church expresses herself thus in her prayers: “As often as the memory of the Sacrifice of the Cross is celebrated, so often is accomplished the work of our redemption.”[5643]

Now, in the Mass we find not only the three essential parts of the Sacrifice of the Cross,—that is, the sanctification and oblation of the victim, as also the immolation, which is here done mystically, the consecration of the body and that of the blood taking place separately,—but we also find the two other parts of the sacrifice; namely, the destruction or consumption, communion or partaking, of the victim. The destruction or consumption is accomplished by the natural heat of those who receive the consecrated Host. Communion or partaking of the victim consists in the distribution of the Holy Eucharist to the faithful who approach the altar for this purpose.

In this manner we clearly see realized in the Sacrifice of the Altar the five conditions required in the ancient sacrifices, all of which were signs and figures of the great Sacrifice of our Lord.[5644]

SHORT EXPLANATION OF THE PRAYERS OF MASS

Mass is rightly divided into six parts. The first part is the preparation for the sacrifice; and this is made at the foot of the altar. The second part extends from the Introit to the Credo, inclusively—and was formerly called the Mass of the Catechumens, who had to leave the church after the Credo. The third part contains the Offertory and the Preface. The fourth part comprises the Canon with the *Pater Noster;* for the Canon in olden times finished with the *Pater Noster,* as a learned author concludes from a passage in the writings of St. Gregory the Great.[5645] The fifth part begins with the prayer *Libera nos, quæsumus, Domine* ("Deliver us, O Lord, we beseech Thee"), which is a preparation for Communion, and includes Communion. The sixth and last part comprises under the form of thanksgiving the rest of the Mass.

FIRST PART

THE PREPARATION THAT IS MADE AT THE FOOT OF THE ALTAR

In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen ("In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen").

In order to sacrifice a victim one must have the power over its life and death; but as God only has the power over the life of his incarnate Son, who is the victim of the Sacrifice of the Mass, the priest needs divine authority in order to be able to offer Jesus Christ to his heavenly Father. Yet as he is invested with the authority that belongs to the priesthood, he says, in union with Jesus Christ, who is the principal one that offers that sacrifice, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; thus declaring that he offers the sacrifice by the authority of the three Persons.

The priest afterwards recites the antiphon *Introibo ad altare Dei* ("I will go unto the altar of God"), and the psalm *Judica me Deus* ("Judge me, O God"). He implores the help of God against the enemies who are laying snares for him. Then expressing the pain that he feels of seeing himself, as it were, rejected by the Lord, he begs him to assist him with his light, and to console him with the graces that he promised by leading him into his tabernacle. Finally, he reproaches himself for indulging in fear, for why should he be troubled when he has with him his God in whom he should confide?

Innocent III.[5646] attests that the recitation before Mass of the psalm *Judica me* was the custom of his time, that is, in the twelfth century; and Cardinal Lambertini, afterwards Benedict XIV.,[5647] assures us that it was recited before the eighth century. The psalm is concluded with the *Gloria Patri*. It was Pope St. Damasus who ordained that each psalm should be concluded in this manner. It is, however, believed that the *Gloria Patri* was introduced by the Council of Nice, or, as we are told by Baronius[5648] and St. Basil, even by the Apostles, the Council of Nice having added only these words, *Sicut erat,* etc.

Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini (“Our help is in the name of the Lord”). Affrighted by the grandeur of the act he is about to perform, and by the thought of his unworthiness, the priest asks God’s help in the name of Jesus Christ; and acknowledging himself guilty, he accuses himself of his sins, not only before God, but before the Blessed Virgin and all the saints, who on the last day, with Jesus Christ, will pronounce judgment upon sinners.

Deus, tu conversus, vivificabis nos (“Thou, O Lord,” says the priest, “wilt turn and bring us to life”). The sinner remains in death so long as God in his goodness does not come to restore to him the life of grace. Then he implores anew the divine mercy: *Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam* (“Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy”); and supplicates the Lord to hear him: *Domine, exaudi orationem meam* (“O Lord, hear my prayer”).

Before leaving the people to go up to the altar, the priest says to them, *Dominus vobiscum* (“The Lord be with you”). By these words he wishes and asks that Jesus Christ may grant to the people as well as to himself the effects of the prayers that he has said; and the server expresses to him the same wish when answering for all the people: *Et cum spiritu tuo* (“And with Thy spirit”). These reciprocal wishes indicate the union of faith in Jesus Christ that exists between the priest and the people.

Aufer a nobis, etc. (“Take away from us our iniquities, etc.”). In going up the steps of the altar, the priest begs the Lord to deliver him from all iniquities, in order that he may approach the Holy of Holies with a pure heart; that is to say, in order that he may worthily offer up the great sacrifice.

Oramus te, Domine, per merita Sanctorum tuorum, etc. (“We beseech Thee, O Lord, by the merits of Thy saints, etc.”). Having reached the altar, he kisses it, to unite himself to Jesus Christ, represented by the altar; and, through the merits of the holy martyrs whose relics are therein enclosed, he conjures our Lord to deign to pardon him all his sins.

From the first ages the Church was accustomed to offer up the Eucharistic sacrifice on the tombs of the martyrs who had sacrificed their lives for God, and who for this reason have always been particularly honored in the Church. During the first period of the Church there were no other festivals than those of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, those of the Blessed Virgin, and the anniversaries of the martyrs. However, it is not to the saints, but only to God that altars are erected, “and,” as St. Augustine says, “we have not erected an altar to the martyr, Stephen, but with the relics of the martyr Stephen we have erected an altar to God.”[5649]

SECOND PART

FROM THE INTROIT TO THE CREDO

It is usually in the Introit that the Church proposes the subject of the feast that is celebrated. Mention is therein made of some divine mystery, of the Blessed Virgin, or of some other saint whom the Church honors on that day, so that we simply render this honor to the saint, since the sacrifice, as we have said, is offered only to God. It is asserted that the author of the Introit is St. Gregory the Great, as may be seen in the works of Benedict XIV.[5650]

Kyrie, eleison; Christe, eleison. These are Greek words that mean “Lord, or Christ, have mercy.” This prayer is addressed three times to the Father, three times to the Son, and three times to the Holy Ghost. Durand[5651] says that Mass was begun to be said in Greek in the Oriental Church at the time of the Emperor Adrian I., about the year 140. Pope St. Sylvester ordered that, after the example of the Greeks, the *Kyric eleison* should be said in the

Latin Church. According to Cardinal Bellarmine[5652] this custom was introduced into Italy about a hundred and fifty years before St. Gregory. Thereby is shown the union that exists between the Greek and the Latin Church.

Gloria in excelsis Deo, etc. ("Glory be to God on high, etc."). This canticle or prayer is formed of the words that the celestial choirs used when the Angel came to announce to the shepherds the birth of the Saviour; "Glory to God in the highest: and on earth peace to men of good will."[5653] The remaining words were added by the Church. In it God is thanked for his glory, because God has used our salvation for his glory by saving us through Jesus Christ, who, in offering himself as a sacrifice to his Father, has procured salvation for men, and has given, at the same time, infinite glory to God. Then the Church, addressing herself to Jesus Christ, asks him by the merits of his sacrifice to have pity on us; and she concludes by proclaiming him: *Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen* ("For Thou only art holy; Thou only art Lord; Thou only, O Jesus Christ, art Most High in the glory of God the Father. Amen"). For our Saviour, who sacrifices himself as a victim, is at the same time God, equal to Him to whom the sacrifice is offered.

Then follows the prayer or Collect, thus called because the priest, performing the office of mediator between God and men, collects all the prayers of the people, and presents them to God. The Collect is said in a suppliant manner, with outstretched and raised hands. In these prayers are asked of God the graces that have reference to the mystery of the day: for example, at Easter, the grace to rise with Jesus Christ, and at the Ascension to dwell with him in spirit in heaven; or we ask for those graces that we wish to obtain through the intercession of the saint whose feast we are celebrating. But all these prayers are concluded with the name of Jesus Christ: *Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum* ("Through our Lord Jesus Christ"). Because all the graces that we obtain are given to us chiefly in view of the merits of Jesus Christ. It is not true, as the innovators say, that we offer the Sacrifice of the Altar to the saints. It is altogether false; for we know very well that the sacrifice, being a cult or worship that is due to the sovereign Lord of the universe, can be offered only to God; and if at the

Mass we make mention of the saints, we do so only because of the favors that they have received from God, to whom they acknowledge they are indebted for all the happiness that they possess.

Here follow the Epistle and the Gospel. While listening to the reading of the Epistle, we must hear it as if it is God himself who speaks by the mouth of his prophets and apostles.

The Epistle is followed by the Gradual, which, according to Bellarmin, was sung in former times while the deacon ascended the steps of the *ambo*—an elevated pulpit—to read the Gospel. The Gradual was followed by the *Alleluia,* a Hebrew word that signifies *Praise the Lord.* But in Lent the *Alleluia,* which expresses joy, is replaced by the Tract, which Abbot Rupert calls the *lamentation of penitents* (*Pœnitentium lamentum*).

The priest then leaving the left side of the altar, which represents the Jewish people, passes to the right side, which represents the Gentiles, who accepted the Gospel that was rejected by the Jews. We should listen to the Gospel as if we heard the words of our divine Saviour instructing us himself, and we should at the same time ask him for the necessary help to put in practice what he teaches. It is an ancient custom to stand during the reading of the Gospel, to show that we are ready to follow the precepts and counsels that our Lord points out to us.

Credo ("I believe"). While the priest is reciting the symbol, we should renew our faith in all the mysteries and all the dogmas that the Church teaches. By the *symbol* was formerly understood a military sign, a mark by which many recognize one another, and are distinguished from one another: this at present distinguishes believers from unbelievers. Benedict XIV.[5654] tells us that at Rome the recitation of the symbol during Mass was begun only in the eleventh century.

THIRD PART

THE OFFERTORY AND THE PREFACE

The Offertory embraces everything from the *Dominus vobiscum* till the Preface. In offering the bread and wine the priest calls them *the immaculate Host, the Chalice of salvation.* We should not be astonished at this; for all the prayers and all the ceremonies before and after the consecration have reference to the divine Victim. It is at the moment of consecration that the Victim presents himself to God, that he offers himself to him, and that the sacrifice is offered; but as these different acts cannot be explained at the same time, they are explained one after the other. The priest then offers by anticipation the bread prepared for the sacrifice, and while saying, *Suscipe, sancte Pater, hanc immaculatam Hostiam,* etc. ("Accept, O holy Father, this immaculate Host, etc."); and he offers the wine as if it had already been consecrated, by saying, *Offerimus tibi, Domine, Calicem salutaris,* etc. ("We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the Chalice of salvation, etc."); because this wine, being afterwards changed into the blood of Jesus Christ, becomes our salvation. St. Augustine says that as at the Eucharistic Table our Saviour offers us to eat and to drink his body and his blood, we should also offer to him our body and our blood by giving ourselves entirely to him, being ready to sacrifice our life for his glory, should it be necessary. These are the beautiful words of the holy Doctor: "You know what this banquet is, and what nourishment is offered you at this table. Since Jesus Christ gives entirely his body and his blood, let no one approach without giving himself entirely to the Lord."[5655]

A little water is mixed with the wine to represent the mixture or the union that takes place in the Incarnation of the Word between the divinity and the humanity, and also to represent the intimate union that is effected in the sacramental Communion between Jesus Christ and the person who communicates—a union which St. Augustine calls *Mixtura Dei et hominis* ("A mixture of God and of man"). Hence the priest, in the prayer which he recites while mixing the water with the wine, beseeches God to grant that, as his divine Son became partaker of our humanity, we may be made partakers of his divinity. The Council of Trent declares that this mingling of water and of wine in the chalice is prescribed: "The holy Synod admonishes that it is enjoined on the priests by the Church that they should mix water with the wine that is to be offered in the chalice, as it is believed that the Lord has done the same thing."[5656] However, this is only an ecclesiastical, not a divine precept.

Offerimus tibi, Domine, Calicem salutaris, etc. ("We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the Chalice of salvation, etc."). The chalice of salvation is offered to the Lord, so that it may arise in his divine presence as an agreeable odor, for our salvation and for the salvation of the whole world. Cardinal Bona,[5657] in his Liturgy, assures us that neither in the *Sacramentarium* of St. Gregory, nor in other authors, is any prayer found for the offering of the bread and of the wine; however, the same Cardinal says that in the ancient Liturgy which he caused to be published we find the prayers that were recited by the clergy as well as by the faithful when the latter presented to the priest their offerings. Moreover, our French author says that the prayers recited at present by the priest at the oblation of the bread and of the wine have reference to the offerings which the faithful formerly made, not at the altar, but at the balustrade of the choir.

In spiritu humilitatis et in animo contrito suscipiamur a te, Domine, etc. ("In the spirit of humility, and with a contrite heart, let us be received by Thee, O Lord, etc."). The priest presents himself before our Lord with an humble and a contrite heart, and begs him to bless the great sacrifice that is about to be offered: *Veni, Sanctificator,* etc. ("Come, O Sanctifier, etc.").

Then he goes to wash his hands, out of respect for this divine sacrifice, while reciting the psalm *Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas,* etc. ("I will wash my hands among the innocent, etc.").

Suscipe, Sancta Trinitas, etc. ("Receive, O Holy Trinity, etc."). By this prayer the priest offers to God Jesus Christ as a victim already immolated by his death on the Cross. Heretics calumniate us when they affirm that we offer to God two different sacrifices, namely, the sacrifice of the Cross and that of the altar. We reply to them that there are not two sacrifices, since, as we have already explained elsewhere, the sacrifice of the altar is a memorial of the sacrifice of the Cross; it is really the same sacrifice as that of the Cross, Jesus Christ being there the principal offerer and the victim that is offered.

Orate, fratres, etc. ("Brethren, pray, etc."). By these words the priest exhorts the people to supplicate the Lord to receive this sacrifice for the glory of his name and the good of the faithful. The server then answers in the name of the people by praying to God to accept this sacrifice: *Suscipiat Dominus Sacrificium de manibus tuis,* etc. ("May the Lord receive this sacrifice from thy hands, etc.").

Then follows the *Secret,* a prayer that refers to the offerings made by the people, namely, of the bread and wine that are to be changed into the body and the blood of Jesus Christ. The Church asks the Lord to bless them and to render them profitable, not only to those who present them, but to all the faithful, just as may be seen in the Secret of the fifth Sunday after Pentecost: “Mercifully receive, O Lord, these offerings of thy servants; that what each hath offered to the honor of thy name, may avail to the salvation of all.”[5658] Thus the Offertory is concluded.

Before passing to the Canon, the priest reads the Preface, in which he exhorts the faithful to raise their hearts to God: *Sursum corda* (“Lift up your hearts”). The people answer that they have already done so: *Habemus ad Dominum* (“We have lifted them to the Lord”). And the priest continues by inviting them to unite with him in thanking the Lord: *Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro* (“Let us give thanks to our Lord God”). He afterwards says that it is just and salutary to render thanks through Jesus Christ, who alone can worthily give thanks for the eternal salvation and for so many benefits granted to men and also to angels, who also give thanks to God through Jesus Christ for all the gifts that they have received. The priest entreats the Lord to accept our prayers united with those of the angels, who celebrate his glory by repeating without ceasing the canticle, *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth!*[5659] (“Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts!”); and he concludes by repeating the words used by the Jewish people in their acclamations at the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem: *Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini! Hosanna in excelsis!*[5660] (“Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”)

FOURTH PART

THE CANON

Te igitur, clementissime Pater, etc. (“We therefore humbly pray and beseech Thee, most merciful Father, etc.”). Here begins what we call the *Canon* of the Mass, which the Council of Trent declares to be free from every error,[5661] since it is composed of the very words of our Lord, of the traditions of the apostles, and of pious regulations of the Holy See.[5662] The Canon is very ancient: it was already in use in the fourth century, according to the testimony of St. Ambrose.[5663] The priest first prays to his heavenly

Father in the name of the whole Church, and through the merits of Jesus Christ, to accept and to bless the offerings that are made to him, and that are called gifts without spot: *Hœc dona, hœc munera, hœc sancta sacrificia illibata* ("These gifts, these presents, these holy unspotted sacrifices"). These words apply not only to the bread and the wine that have been offered, but refer by anticipation to the body and the blood of Jesus Christ, into which the bread and the wine are soon to be changed; hence they are called unspotted sacrifices. Innocent III. refers these last words to the purity of the heart and of the body with which the priest should celebrate Mass: "We call them by this name because of the purity of heart and of body with which the priest should offer them."[5664] But this is rather a spiritual and mystical reflection, the proper explanation is that which precedes it above.

The Holy Sacrifice is, before all, offered for the Catholic Church by praying to God that he may preserve her in peace, may defend her, maintain her in unity, and govern her through the ministry of the pastors, by communicating to them his Holy Spirit. It must be observed that the prayers of the Church, during the Holy Sacrifice, should be addressed to God the Father, as was ordained by the Third Council of Carthage: "During the August Function the prayer should be addressed to God the Father."[5665] It does not follow that the other divine Persons should be excluded from these prayers; but they are considered together in the Person of the Father, their first principle, and this is the reason why the Church is accustomed to pray to the Father, with the Son, in the Holy Ghost.

At the first *Memento,* the priest recommends, at first, all those persons for whom he wishes most especially to pray; then he recommends all those who, happening to be present, offer with him the Holy Sacrifice; finally, he recommends all their relatives and friends. He says: 1. *Pro quibus tibi offerimus, vel qui tibi offerunt* ("For whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee"). It must be remarked that the disjunctive particle *vel,* "or," is sometimes conjunctive, and that it is probable that it is here taken in this last sense according to St. Gregory, as we are told by Benedict XIV. Moreover, it must be observed that there is a great difference between sacrificing and offering: to the priest alone belongs the right to sacrifice, whilst all those who are present may offer the sacrifice. 2. *Quorum tibi fides cognita est, et nota devotio* ("Whose faith is known, and devotion apparent unto Thee”). By these words we are to understand that in order to participate in the fruit of the sacrifice we must have faith and devotion, which spring from charity. 3. *Pro redemptione animarum suarum* (“For the redemption of their souls”). The first effect of the sacrifice of the Cross, which is applied to us by the sacrifice of the altar, is to become free from the power of the devil. 4. *Pro spe salutis et incolumitatis suœ* (“For the hope of their safety and salvation”). These words comprise all the spiritual and temporal graces that God grants to us by virtue of this sacrifice, through which alone we can render to God the thanks that we owe him.

Communicantes et memoriam venerantes, etc. (“Communicating with the saints and honoring the memory, etc.”). This prayer is said in order to enter into communion with the Church triumphant. Thereby we honor, in the first place, the memory of the Mother of God, then that of the apostles, then that of the martyrs and of all the other saints, through the merits and the intercession of whom we beg our Lord’s protection in all our necessities. We who are travellers upon earth form only one body with the saints who are in heaven, and united with them in the same spirit, we offer to God the same sacrifice.

Hanc igitur oblationem, etc. (“We therefore beseech Thee, O Lord, graciously to accept this oblation, etc.”). The priest spreads his hands over the bread and the wine, and, through the merits of Jesus Christ, who redeemed us from the power of the devil, he prays to the Eternal Father favorably to accept this offering that his servants and his whole family make to him. He also asks God to help us to enjoy peace in this life, to preserve us from hell, and to admit us among the number of the elect: *Et in electorum tuorum jubeas grege numerari* (“And number us in the flock of Thine elect”). Estius observes that by these last words we do not ask of God predestination, as if God could change his eternal decrees, but we ask of him the effects of predestination, that he may draw us to himself and conduct us to eternal happiness.[5666] In the Old Law he who offered sacrifice placed his hands on the victim to signify that just as this animal was soon to lose its life by immolation, so he also offered up his own life to God. It is with the same spirit of sacrifice that every priest should offer himself to God, when he spreads his hands over the host and the chalice.[5667]

Quam oblationem tu, Deus in omnibus, quæsumus, benedictam, adscriptam, ratam, rationabilem, acceptabilemque facere digneris; ut nobis corpus et sanguis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi (“Which oblation do Thou, O God, vouchsafe in all respects to make blessed, approved, ratified, reasonable, and acceptable, that it may become to us the body and blood of Thy most beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord”). In this prayer the priest asks God to cause this oblation to be blessed (*benedictam*), that by this blessing the bread and the wine may be changed into the body and the blood of Jesus Christ; that it may be admitted (*adscriptam*),—that is, substracted from all profane usage and wholly consecrated to the divine Majesty; ratified (*ratam*), that is, approved as a perfect sacrifice; reasonable or rational (*rationabilem*),—this includes an allusion to a passage in the Epistle to the Romans, in which St. Paul says: “I beseech you . . . that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service;”[5668] acceptable (*acceptabilem*),—that is, altogether agreeable and worthy of being received, differently from the victims and the oblations of the Hebrew people, which were not sufficient to appease the divine justice incensed against sinners; and, finally, *Ut nobis corpus et sanguis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui* (“That it may become to us the body and blood of Thy most beloved Son”). The priest, according to St. Thomas, does not thereby ask that the consecration be accomplished, but that it be profitable to us.[5669]

Qui, pridie quam pateretur, etc. (“Who the day before he suffered,” etc.). Here the priest, renewing the memory of the Passion of Jesus Christ, relates what the Lord did on the evening before his death, when he instituted the Sacrament and the sacrifice of his body and blood. Then the priest does the same thing, and consecrates by pronouncing the very words used by Jesus Christ, as St. Ambrose remarks: “He uses not his own words, but the very words of Jesus Christ.”[5670]

The form of the consecration is taken from St. Matthew: *Hoc est corpus meum* (“This is my body”).[5671] These words need no explanation, since they themselves declare what mystery is accomplished, namely, the change of the bread into the body of Jesus Christ.

The form of the consecration of the chalice is as follows: *Hic est enim calix Sanguinis mei, novi et æterni Testamenti, mysterium fidei, qui pro* *vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum* ("For this is the chalice of my blood of the new and eternal testament, the mystery of faith, which shall be shed for you, and for many, to the remission of sins"). These words the Church has taken from different texts of the Gospel, partly from St. Luke, partly from St. Matthew. St. Luke says: *This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you.*[5672] St. Matthew: *For this is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins.*[5673] The word *æterni*, "everlasting," is found in St. Paul: *In the blood of the everlasting testament.*[5674] The other words, *Mystery of faith,* the Roman catechism declares are taught by sacred tradition, which is the guardian of Catholic truths. This divine mystery is called *Mystery of faith,* not to exclude the reality of the blood of Jesus Christ, but to show that in it the faith shines forth in a wonderful manner, and triumphs over all the difficulties that may be raised by human reason, since it is here, says Innocent III.,[5675] that we see one thing and believe another. We believe, he adds, that the form that we read in the Canon was received from Jesus Christ by the Apostles, and that they transmitted it to their successors.[5676] The Roman catechism,[5677] moreover, says, that the words of consecration should be thus understood: It is my blood that is contained in the chalice of the New Testament. This signifies that men receive no longer the figure of the blood of Jesus Christ, as was the case in the Old Law; but they really receive the true blood of the New Testament. The words *Pro vobis et pro multis* ("For you and for many") are used to distinguish the virtue of the blood of Christ from its fruits; for the blood of our Saviour is of sufficient value to save all men, but its fruits are applicable only to a certain number and not to all, and this is their own fault. Or, as the theologians say, this precious blood is (in itself) sufficiently (*sufficienter*) able to save all men, but (on our part) effectually (*efficaciter*) it does not save all—it saves only those who co-operate with grace. This is the explanation of St. Thomas, as quoted by Benedict XIV.[5678]

The consecration is followed by the elevation of the host and of the chalice: this is done, writes Sassi, in order to prove the truth of the Eucharist which was attacked by Berengarius at the beginning of the twelfth century. The same truth is again professed at the second elevation shortly before the *Pater noster,* when the priest says, *Omnis honor et gloria* ("All honor and glory”). It was also at the time of the heresy of Berengarius that the custom was introduced of ringing the bell at the elevation of the Host and of the chalice.

Hæc quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis (“As often as ye do these things, ye shall do them in remembrance of me”). After the two consecrations the priest repeats the words of Jesus Christ, by which our Saviour commanded his Apostles and their successors to do, in memory of his Passion, what he had just done himself in their presence.

Unde et memores, Domine, etc. (“Wherefore, O Lord, . . . calling to mind,” etc.). Here the priest calls to mind the Passion of our Lord, his resurrection, and ascension. He offers to the divine majesty in the name of the Church the consecrated victim, which he calls a *pure* Host, exempt from every sin; *holy,* being united with the divinity in the person of the Word; *immaculate,* without any stain; and then, “The holy bread of eternal life, and the chalice of everlasting salvation.” While pronouncing these words he blesses the bread and the chalice with the sign of the cross. On this subject Luther turns to ridicule the Roman Church by asking how the priest blesses Jesus Christ—how the creature blesses the Creator. We answer here that the priest blesses the Host, not by his own authority, nor in his own name, but in the name and by the authority of the Eternal Father, who alone can bless Jesus Christ as man and as victim. Such is the answer given on this point by Innocent III. St. Thomas answers differently by saying that after the consecration the priest does not make the sign of the cross to bless, but only to remind us of the power of the cross and of the death of our Lord.[5679]

Supra quæ propitio, etc. (“Upon which vouchsafe to look,” etc.). The priest then prays to the Lord that he may accept with pleasure this sacrifice, just as he accepted the offerings of Abel, the sacrifice of Abraham, and that of Melchisedech. In recalling to mind the sacrafice of Abel, of Abraham, and of Melchisedech, we regard less the value of the things offered than the sanctity of those who offered them, because they were holy men. Conquently, if God, because of his sanctity, favorably received their sacrifice, how much more should please him the sacrifice of the Saint of saints—of our Lord Jesus Christ! But the most decisive reason on account of which the Church makes special mention of these three sacrifices is, because they represented in an excellent manner the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Supplices te rogamus, etc. ("We most humbly beseech Thee," etc.). The priest continues humbly to ask the Saviour that the consecrated Host be presented to his divine Majesty through the hands of his holy Angel, in order that all those who are going to receive the body and the blood of his adorable Son may be filled with blessings and all celestial gifts through the merits of Jesus Christ. By the Angel of whom mention is made in this prayer, we may understand the Angel who presides at the Sacrifice of the Altar, or, as our French author says, we may understand Jesus Christ himself, who is preeminently the Holy Angel, called in Scripture the Angel of the Great Counsel. But the explanation of St. Thomas seems to be the most natural. The priest, he says, speaks for the Church, and asks that the Angel who presides at the divine mysteries may present to God the prayers of the celebrant and of the people.[5680]

Memento etiam, Domine, etc. ("Be mindful, O Lord," etc.). The priest asks the Lord to remember his servants who have passed to the other life and are slumbering in the sleep of peace, and to grant them a place of refreshment, light, and peace, through the merits of Jesus Christ. When the charity of the souls that depart from this life is not sufficient to purify them, the fire of purgatory will supply this defect. Yet the charity of the Saviour supplies it best by means of the Eucharistic sacrifice, which procures for these holy souls great mitigation of their sufferings, and often deliverance from their torments. The Council of Trent says: "The souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar."[5681] And it adds[5682] that this is a tradition of the Apostles. St. Augustine exhorts us to offer the sacrifice for all the dead, in case the souls that we recommend cannot receive our help.

Nobis quoque peecatoribus, etc. ("And to us sinners," etc.). Here the Church prays for sinners, in order that God may vouchsafe, in his mercy, to permit them to enter the society of the saints; and she asks this grace through the merits of Jesus Christ. She then adds:

Per quem hœc omnia semper bona creas, etc. ("By whom, O Lord, Thou dost always create," etc.). By the Word Thou hast created this bread and wine, and now, by the same Word, Thou hast sanctified (*sanctificas*) them by reserving them for the sacrifice. Thou hast quickened them (*vivificas*) by changing them into the body and the blood of Jesus Christ; Thou hast *blessed* (*benedicis*) them and transformed them into a source of benediction for the Church of Christ; and, finally, *Thou hast given us all these good things* (*et præstas nobis*) by distributing them to the faithful in Holy Communion. And all these favors the Church asks through the merits of Jesus Christ: *Per ipsum,* that is, through him; *cum ipso,* in union with our Saviour; *in ipso,* in him as the members are in the body, since God recognizes as his own only those who are united with Jesus Christ.

THE PATER NOSTER

Oremus. Præceptis salutaribus moniti, etc. ("Instructed by Thy saving precepts, etc."). The Church militant regards herself as entirely composed of sinners; she thinks herself unworthy to call God her Father, and to address to him the seven petitions, which in the name of the faithful she is going to address to him by reciting the *Pater noster,* ("Our Father"). Hence she protests that she only dares to address to God this prayer because God himself has commanded her to do so. She then teaches us that we may venture to present to God the seven petitions which contain the whole economy of our salvation, because it is pleasing to him and he himself gives us the command. We are so miserable, and our mind is so limited, that we do not even know what graces we should ask of God in behalf of our own salvation. Regarding our poverty and our insufficiency, Jesus Christ himself deigned to compose our prayer or to indicate the subjects on which we should address Almighty God. He instructs us to say:

Pater noster, qui es in cœlis ("Our Father, who art in heaven, etc.). The Apostle St. John says: *Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called, and should be the sons of God.*[5683] It is assuredly only by the effect of extreme love that we worms of the earth have been enabled to become the children of God, not by nature, but by adoption; and such is the immense grace that the Son of God has obtained for us by becoming man; for St. Paul says: *You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba* (*Father*).[5684] Can a subject wish for greater happiness than to be adopted by his king? or a creature to be adopted by its Creator? This is what God has done for us; and he wishes that we should address to him with filial confidence the following prayer:

1. *Sanctificetur nomem tuum* ("Hallowed be Thy name"). God cannot possess a greater sanctity than that which he possesses from all eternity, because he is infinite; hence what we ask in this prayer is merely that God may make known in every place his holy name, and that he may make himself loved by all men: by unbelievers, who know him not; by heretics, who do not know him in the right manner; and by sinners, who know him but do not love him.

2. *Adveniat regnum tuum* ("Thy kingdom come"). Two kinds of dominion God exercises over our souls—the dominion of grace and the dominion of glory. By these words we ask for both, namely, that the grace of God may reign among us in this life, that it may direct and govern us, so that one day we may be judged worthy of glory, and may have the happiness to possess God and be possessed by him for all eternity.

3. *Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in cœlo, et in terra* ("Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven"). The whole perfection of a soul consists in the perfect accomplishment of the will of God, as is done by the blessed in heaven. Hence Jesus Christ wishes us to ask the grace to accomplish the will of God upon earth, as the angels and saints accomplish it in heaven.

4. *Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie* ("Give us this day our daily bread"). Such is the text as we find it in St. Luke.[5685] By this prayer we ask God for the temporal goods of which we stand in need to sustain our present life. The words "Our daily bread" teach us that we should ask for this kind of goods with moderation, after the example of Solomon, who asked only what was necessary: *Give me only the necessaries of life.*[5686] It is to be remarked that in the Gospel of St. Matthew, instead of the *daily bread,* we read, *Give us this day our supersubstantial*[5687] *bread.*[5688] By this supersubstantial bread we must understand, according to the explanation given by the Roman catechism, Jesus Christ himself in the Sacrament of the Altar, that is, in Holy Communion. We ask this heavenly bread every day, *Give us this day,* because every good Christian should communicate every day, if not really at least spiritually, as we are exhorted by the Council of Trent.

5. *Et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris* ("And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us"). To eat worthily of this heavenly bread, we must be free from mortal sin, or at least be washed of it by the blood of the Lamb in the sacrament of penance. We say, *free from mortal sin;* but it must be observed that if anyone should communicate with an actual affection for some venial sin, he could not be said to communicate without offering some indignity to our Lord—at least if he communicates often.

6. *Et ne nos inducas in tentationem* ("And lead us not into temptation"). How are these words to be understood? Does God sometimes tempt us—does he lead us into temptation? No; for St. James says: *God is not a tempter of evils, and He tempteth no man.*[5689] This text we must understand as we do that of Isaias: *Blind the heart of this people . . . lest they see.*[5690] God never blinds any sinner, but he often refuses to grant to some, in punishment for their ingratitude, the light that he would have given them had they remained faithful and grateful. Hence when it is said that God makes any one blind, it is meant that he withholds the light of his grace. This, therefore is the sense of the prayer, *and lead us not into temptation;* we ask God not to permit us to have the misfortune of being in those occasions of sin in which we might fall. Hence we should always watch and pray as the Lord exhorts us to do, in order not to fall into, temptation: *Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation.*[5691] To enter into temptation means the same as to find one's self in the danger of falling into sin; we should therefore often say to God, *Lord, lead us not into temptation.*

7. *Sed libera nos a malo* ("But deliver us from evil"). There are three kinds of evils from which we should ask the Lord to deliver us—the temporal evils of the body, the spiritual evils of the soul, and the eternal evils of the next life. As for the temporal evils of this life, we ought always to be disposed to receive with resignation those that God sends us for the good of our souls, such as poverty, sickness, and desolation; and when we ask God to deliver us from temporal evils we should always do so on condition that they are not necessary nor useful for our salvation. But the true evils from which we should absolutely pray to be delivered are spiritual evils, sins, which are the cause of eternal evils. Moreover, let us be convinced of this infallible truth, that in the present state of corrupt nature

we cannot be saved unless we pass through the many tribulations with which this life is filled: *Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.*[5692]

The priest finishes the Lord's prayer with the word *Amen,* which he pronounces in a low voice, because he represents the person of Jesus Christ, who is the foundation of all the divine promises.[5693] This word is a summary of all the petitions that have been made—petitions the repetition of which pleases the Lord, for the more we pray to God the more he will hear our prayers. The great people of this world are not pleased when they are importuned by petitions; but this importunity is pleasing to God, says St. Jerome.[5694] Cornelius à Lapide even assures us that God wishes that we should persevere in this importunity in our prayers.[5695]

FIFTH PART

FROM THE PRAYER "LIBERA NOS" TILL THE COMMUNION

Immediately after the *Pater noster* the priest recites the prayer *Libera nos, quæsumus, Domine* ("Deliver us, O Lord"), by which he asks the Lord for himself and for all the faithful to grant, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, of the apostles and of all the saints, a continual peace during the days of the present life, so that his divine mercy may preserve them from every sin and from all confusion.

He then says, *Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum* ("May the peace of the Lord be always with you"). He wishes the peace of the Lord for all his brethren, who answer him with the same wish: *Et cum spiritu tuo* ("And with thy spirit"). He makes at the same time upon the chalice, with the particle of the Host which he holds in his hand, three signs of the cross, which indicates, according to St. Thomas,[5696] the three days that Jesus Christ spent in the tomb.

The priest then drops the sacred particle into the chalice and says these words: *Hæc commixtio et consecratio Corporis et Sanguinis Domini nostri Jesu Christi fiat accipientibus nobis in vitam æternam!* ("May this mixture and consecration of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be to us that receive it effectual to eternal life"). Explaining these words, *Consecratio . . . fiat,* Bellarmin says that we do not here ask that the consecration should take place, but that it be profitable for eternal life to those who are about to receive Jesus Christ in Holy Communion.[5697] This mixture of the holy species represents the union of the divinity with the humanity which was at first effected in the womb of Mary through the Incarnation of the Word, and which is renewed in the souls of the faithful when they receive him in the Eucharistic Communion.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi (“Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world”). Before Communion the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, as the victim of the sacrifice, is invoked, and is invoked three times, to point out the need that we have of his grace, in order to be reconciled with God and to receive his peace.

Here follow the three prayers that precede Communion.

In the first prayer—*Domine Jesu Christe, qui dixisti Apostolis tuis, Pacem relinquo vobis* (“Lord Jesus Christ, who said to Thy Apostles, I leave you peace”)—prayer is offered to God that he may vouchsafe to grant peace to the Church in consideration of her faith, and keep her in union, according to his will, by delivering her from the division produced by false doctrines, and from all that is contrary to the divine will.—And here the Church has introduced the custom that the faithful should give one another the kiss of peace, to remind them that their hearts should be united in charity. Before giving the kiss of peace, the priest kisses the altar, to show that he cannot give the peace unless he has first received it from Jesus Christ, who is represented by the altar.

In the second prayer, *Domine Jesu Christe, Fili Dei vivi*, the priest asks Jesus Christ, by virtue of his adorable body and blood, to deliver him from all evils, and to keep him always united with him.

In the third prayer he beseeches the Lord that this Communion may not turn to his condemnation, but may be for the salvation of his soul and body.—The Holy Eucharist protects the soul against temptations and passions; it extinguishes the fire of concupiscence that burns in our bodies, and is a powerful remedy against the death of the soul.

After these prayers the priest says, while invoking the name of the Lord, *Panem cœlestem, accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo* (“I will take the bread of heaven, and call upon the name of our Lord”). In order that the earthly food may be of benefit to us, we must eat it when we are hungry; in like manner, in order that Communion may produce in us much fruit, we should receive it with great desire to possess Jesus Christ and to love him ardently. As John Gerson says, we ought, at the moment in which we are about to receive Jesus, invoke him anew, in order to obtain the grace to receive him with great profit to our souls.

Corpus (Sanguis) Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam æternam ("May the Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting"). While pronouncing these words the priest receives the body and the blood of Jesus Christ. This prayer recalls to our mind that this precious body and blood are given to us as a pledge of eternal life, and as a *viaticum* in order to pass from this exile to our heavenly country. Hence when we receive Communion we ought to be so disposed as if we had to leave the earth at once, to enter eternity.

SIXTH PART

THANKSGIVING

Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ. retribuit mihi? ("What shall I render to the Lord for all he hath rendered unto me?") The priest says, *For all, etc.,* because he who receives Jesus Christ in Communion receives all the gifts and all the goods that one can desire, according to the words of St. Paul: *How hath He not also, with Him, given us all things.*[5698] He says, *What shall I render?* because man is not capable of thanking God as he should thank him. Jesus Christ only can worthily thank the Eternal Father for the gifts that he bestowed upon men. The priest therefore adds: *Calicem salutaris accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo* ("I will take the chalice of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord"). He supplicates the Divine Redeemer to thank the heavenly Father for himself and for all men.

After having taken the precious blood he renews his thanks to God in the following words: *Quod ore sumpsimus, Domine, pura mente capiamus, et de munere temporali fiat nobis remedium sempiternum* ("Grant, O Lord, that what we have taken with our mouth we may receive with a pure mind, that of a temporal gift it may become to us an eternal remedy"). By this prayer the Church makes us ask God that, as our mouth has received this divine food and drink, our hearts may also receive them, so that they may be for us an eternal remedy that may forever heal us of all our infirmities.

Finally the priest says, *Corpus tuum, Domine, quod sumpsi, et Sanguis quem potavi, adhæreat visceribus meis* (“May Thy body, O Lord, which I have received, and the blood which I have drunk, cleave to my bowels”). In this prayer, and in the last prayer called Post-communion, he asks, through the merits of Jesus Christ in this mystery, and through the intercession of the saint whose memory is celebrated, that this divine Saviour may always preserve him in this intimate union with him, and that no stain may rest on his soul, which has been nourished by a sacrament so holy and so pure.

Ite, Missa est (“Go, the Mass is ended”); or, *Benedicamus Domino* (“Let us bless the Lord”). It is with these words that the priest dismisses the people, just as if he said, The Sacrifice is accomplished; and those who are present while thanking God by the mouth of the server, say, *Deo Gratias* (“Thanks be to God”). “To give thanks to God,” says St. Augustine, “is to acknowledge that all good things come from God, and to thank him for them.”[5699]

The priest afterwards passes to the right side of the altar, and recites the Gospel of St. John: *In principio erat Verbum* (“In the beginning was the Word”). William de Bury says that it was St. Pius V. who ordained that this Gospel should always be recited at the end of Mass; as formerly some said it, and others omitted it.

This explanation of the prayers of Mass may be serviceable to all—to the faithful as well as to priests.

HEARING MASS[5700]

In order to hear Mass with devotion, it is necessary to know that the sacrifice of the altar is the same as that which was once offered on Calvary, with this difference, that on Calvary the blood of Jesus Christ was really shed, but on the altar it is shed only in a mystical manner. Had you been present on Calvary, with what devotion and tenderness would you have attended that great sacrifice! Enliven your faith, then, and consider that the same action is performed on the altar, and that the same sacrifice is offered not only by the priest, but also by all who attend Mass. Thus, all perform, in a certain manner, the office of priests during the celebration of the Mass, in which the merits of the Passion of our Saviour are applied to us in a particular manner.

It is, moreover, necessary to know that the sacrifice of the Mass has been instituted for four ends. 1. To honor God. 2. To satisfy for our sins. 3. To thank God for his benefits. 4. To obtain the divine graces. Thence arise the following considerations which may aid us to hear Mass with great fruit:

1. By the oblation of the person of Jesus Christ, God and man, to the Eternal Father, we give to God infinite honor; we give him greater honor than he would receive from the oblation of the lives of all men and all angels.

2. By the oblation of Jesus Christ in the Mass, we offer to God a complete satisfaction for all the sins of men, and especially for the sins of those who are present at Mass; to whom is applied the same divine blood, by which the human race was redeemed on Calvary. Thus, by each Mass more satisfaction is made to God than by any other expiatory work. But although the Mass is of infinite value, God accepts it only in a finite manner, according to the dispositions of those who attend the holy sacrifice, and, therefore, it is useful to hear several Masses.

3. In the Mass we render to God an adequate thanksgiving for all the benefits that he has bestowed upon us.

4. During the Mass we can obtain all the graces that we desire for ourselves and for others. We are unworthy of receiving any grace from God, but Jesus Christ has given us the means of obtaining all graces, if, while we offer him to God in the Mass, we ask them of the Eternal Father in his name, for then Jesus himself unites with us in prayer. If you knew that while you pray to the Lord, the divine Mother, along with the whole of paradise, united with you, with what confidence would you pray? Now when you ask of God any grace during the Mass, Jesus (whose prayers are more efficacious than the prayers of all who are in heaven) prays for you, and offers in your behalf the merits of his Passion.

You will do well, then, to divide the Mass into four parts, as follows:

1. FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE GOSPEL

Offer the sacrifice of the Mass to honor God, saying:

My God, I adore Thy majesty. I would wish to honor Thee as much as Thou deservest; but what honor can I, a miserable sinner, give Thee? I offer Thee the honor which Jesus renders to Thee on this altar.

2. FROM THE GOSPEL TO THE ELEVATION

Offer the sacrifice in satisfaction for your sins, saying: Lord, I detest above every evil all the offences that I have given Thee: I am sorry for them above all things, and in satisfaction for them I offer Thy Son, who sacrifices himself again for us on this altar, and through his merits I pray Thee to pardon me, and to give me holy perseverance.

3. FROM THE ELEVATION TO THE COMMUNION

Offer Jesus to the Eternal Father in thanksgiving for all the graces that he has bestowed upon you, saying:

Lord, I am unable to thank Thee; I offer Thee the blood of Jesus Christ in this Mass, and in all the Masses that are at this moment celebrated throughout the world.

4. FROM THE COMMUNION TO THE END

You will ask with confidence the graces that you need, and particularly sorrow for your sins, the gift of perseverance, and of the divine love; and you will recommend to God, in a special manner, the persons with whom you live, your relatives, poor sinners, and the souls in purgatory. I do not find it amiss if you recite vocal prayers during Mass,[5701] but I desire that you should not fail at the same time to fulfil the four duties to God that I have pointed out to you; namely, honor, expiation, thanksgiving, and prayer. I desire you to hear as many Masses as possible. Every Mass heard in this manner will obtain for you a treasure of merits.

PIOUS EXERCISE TO ACQUIRE THE PROPER DISPOSITION FOR MAKING A GOOD CONFESSION[5702]

PREPARATION

To prepare ourselves well for confession, we should retire from every external source of distraction, go either to a church or an oratory, place ourselves in the presence of God, and make the following act:

ACT OF ADORATION

Supreme and adorable Majesty, God of heaven and earth, I firmly believe that Thou art present, and that Thou seest me and knowest the dispositions of my heart. I adore Thee and render Thee my humble homage, acknowledging Thee for my God, my Creator, and my Sovereign Redeemer. In testimony of this my faith, I prostrate my soul and body before the throne of Thy Infinite Majesty, and offer Thee the adoration which is due to Thee alone.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

We ought to represent confession to ourselves as the last one of our life, and dispose ourselves to make it as one would do who is at the point of death. We should ask God for the grace to make well the examination of conscience, and for the necessary light to know well our sins. Hence let us recite the *Veni Creator Spiritus.*

O Father of lights! who enlightenest every man that comes into the world, send into my heart a ray of light, of love, and of sorrow, that I may know, detest, and confess the sins which I have committed against Thee.

PRAYER BEFORE THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Mother of my God, who art so charitable to sinners that desire to repent, assist me by thy intercession.—My guardian angel, who hast been a spectator of all my crimes, help me to discover the sins which I have committed against my God.—All ye saints of heaven, pray for me, that I may bring forth fruits of penance. Amen.

OFFERING OF THE EXAMINATION

Jesus, my God and Saviour, I offer Thee the examination which I am going to make, that Thy divine justice may be glorified in it. I look to Thee with confidence for the grace to do it well. Thus, therefore, in the spirit of charity, in order to please Thee, and to accomplish Thy holy will, together with every intention that can procure Thee the greatest honor and glory, I undertake it.

Here the penitent must begin the examination of his conscience. But it must be observed by persons of a timorous disposition, who often approach the sacraments, that their examination ought to be short and unaccompanied with disquietude and scrupulosity. It is sufficient for persons of this description to take a momentary view of the faults into which they are accustomed to fall, and then principally to apply themselves to acts of devotion and contrition, which are always the most essential dispositions for this sacrament, and from which they may easily suffer their minds to be diverted by yielding to fears and anxiety. As for those who seldom approach the sacrament, it is their duty to employ sufficient time to make a diligent examination of their consciences, and to call to mind as nearly as possible, by reading over leisurely and attentively the commandments of God and of the Church, together with the seven capital sins, the duties of their state of life, and see in what they have failed in thought, word, or deed. If they cannot call to mind the precise number of their sins, they must consider how often in the day or week they have sinned in each particular kind, and their confession of them in this manner will satisfy the divine justice, which never obliges us to do what is morally impossible.

We should take care to examine ourselves especially about the fault to which we are inclined, and about the means that we should adopt to amend ourselves.

MOTIVES OF CONTRITION

I

THE GREATNESS AND SANCTITY OF GOD

Reflect, that sin, however trifling it may be, greatly offends Almighty God, and is an insult to the infinite perfections of him whose greatness knows no limits, and who is consequently deserving of infinite love. By sin you displease one who loves you most tenderly. Oh! reflect well on this, and you will discover how base, how cruel, how unreasonable it is to offend him. But, alas! we shall never, during this life, be able fully to comprehend the entire malice even of a venial sin, or know what punishment he deserves who commits it.

AN ACT OF CONTRITION

O my infinitely amiable God! I acknowledge that my sins are multiplied beyond the number of the hairs of my head, or the grains of sand on the sea-shore. But, if I had committed only one, in committing it I have offended Thy infinite perfections. Oh! why then is not my heart penetrated with infinite grief and regret? I have sinned against Thy goodness, which I ought ever to have loved. I have preferred a vile creature, a petty honor, a miserable pleasure, some vain interest, to Thy sovereign majesty, which I ought to have adored, served, and honored. Ah! my God, pardon my sins. O infinite beauty, infinite goodness! how could I have the audacity to insult and despise Thee? But I now heartily repent of my ingratitude and disloyalty; I wish sincerely that I had never offended Thee, and resolve never to offend Thee again. Yes, I had rather sacrifice all that I possess, and forfeit my honor and my life, than ever more offend so good a God.

II

THE BENEFITS OF GOD

Reflect that God is our sovereign benefactor, who has bestowed upon us innumerable benefits, both general and particular. He has drawn us out of nothing, and formed us to his own image and likeness, without having any need at all of us: we are continually dependent upon him for our preservation. He has redeemed us with the price of the blood of his Son; he has made us Christians in preference to thousands of others whom he has left in the darkness of infidelity; he has borne with us in our sins until the present time; he has given us many and easy means of saving our souls; and still we repay all his mercies with ingratitude. He has created all creatures for our benefit, and the only use which we make of them is to offend him.

AN ACT OF CONTRITION

Oh! how great has been my ingratitude! there is, there can be, none equal to it. O my amiable Saviour! is this the recompense that I have made Thee, for having drawn me out of the abyss of nothing, in which I should still be, were it not for Thee? is this the value that I set upon the precious blood of Thy veins spilt with so much pain and so much love for me? Ungrateful creature that I am! who will give sighs to my heart and tears to my eyes, that I may bewail, as I ought, the insults which I have offered to my God, my sovereign benefactor? O God of goodness! have mercy on me. I greatly desire, and firmly resolve, never to offend Thee more. Ah! why was I born to receive so many benefits from my God, and still to offend him so often and so grievously as I have done? How could I employ in offending him the hands, the feet, the tongue, the ears, the heart which he gave me to use in his service? O unhappy eyes! O criminal hands! O unfaithful heart! you, by your sins, have been the cause of the pains, the torments, and the cruel death which the Son of God suffered upon the cross.

III

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Reflect that the Most Blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the only and almighty God, is everywhere present, that he sees all things, knows all things, and penetrates the inmost and most secret thoughts of our heart. He is that divine and infinite Majesty before whom the highest seraphim tremble with a holy fear, and veil their faces through respect; and we have the audacity to sin in his presence; to say, to do, and to think what, if known, would cover us with confusion before the meanest of men. Reflect, moreover, that this God, before whom we sin, is our sovereign Judge, who at the moment of our death will inevitably pass sentence upon the thoughts, the words, the actions, of which we may be found guilty.

AN ACT OF CONTRITION

Supreme and just Judge of the living and the dead, Thou who seest and knowest all things, even those very secrets that pass in the interior of my heart, and which I would not have known to any creature upon earth, is it possible that I should dare to appear in Thy presence, after having been so unfaithful to Thee? Alas! 1cannot fly from Thee, because Thou art present everywhere: I cannot hide myself from Thy view, because Thou seest all things. Ah! has not my insolence been insupportable in having dared, in the presence of Thy exalted majesty, before whom the purest angels cover their faces, to do what I would not have done before the meanest and the last of men? O my God! have mercy on me: I detest, with my whole heart, all my sins for the love of Thee.

ANOTHER ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God! I am covered with shame and confusion, when I reflect that I have lived in Thy presence with so little regard and respect, and that I have so often broken the protestations that I have made never to offend Thee more. O God! if I had made so many promises to any creature upon earth, how much should I feel ashamed at having broken my word! But, where Thou art concerned, I pay little regard to my resolutions, since I daily insult Thee before Thy eyes. Oh! how great is Thy goodness in having borne with me so long! O God of my heart! since Thou hast dealt mercifully with me in the course of my most heinous crimes, do not withdraw Thy mercy, now that I repent of all my disloyalties.

OFFERING OF THE HOLY MASS TO OBTAIN REMISSION OF SINS

Heavenly Father, Father of mercy and God of consolation, who does comfort us in all our pains, accept, I beseech Thee, this sacrifice of the body and blood of Thy only Son, which I offer Thee to-day in union with the Church militant and the Church triumphant, in memory of the Passion, the resurrection, and the ascension of my Saviour, and in honor of the Blessed Virgin and of all the heavenly court, in order to satisfy for my sins and those of all men. Behold, O my God, on this altar Thy well-beloved Son, the one object of Thy complacency; listen to the voice of his wounds; consider the precious tears which from his cross he shed, whilst he prayed so humbly for me, his faithless murderer, but now a penitent sinner. Behold his heart burning with so pure, so ardent a love; and in consideration of his merits, deliver us from all the evils that we have deserved on account of our sins. Yes, O merciful Father! pardon us for the love of Jesus Christ who is our advocate and mediator, and who makes satisfaction for us, whilst together with the Holy Ghost he renders Thee all glory and all honor forever and ever. Amen.

ACTS FOR HOLY COMMUNION[5703]

I

PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION

St. Francis de Sales says,[5704] that our Saviour can never be seen more amiable and more tender, in all that he has done for us, than in the Holy Communion, in which he, so to say, annihilates himself and becomes food, that he may unite himself to the hearts and bodies of his faithful. Therefore the learned Gerson used also to say, that there was no means more efficacious than the Holy Communion whereby to enkindle devotion and the holy love of God in our souls.

And, indeed, if we speak of doing something agreeable to God, what can a soul do more agreeable to him than to receive Communion? St. Denis teaches us that love always tends towards perfect union; but how can a soul be more perfectly united with Jesus than in the manner of which he speaks himself, saying: *He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him.*[5705] St. Augustine says, that if every day you receive this sacrament, Jesus will be always with you, and you will always advance in divine love.

Again, if there is question of healing our spiritual infirmities, what more certain remedy can we have than the Holy Communion, which is called by the sacred Council of Trent "a remedy whereby we may be freed from daily faults, and be preserved from mortal sins."[5706]

Whence does it come, asks Cardinal Bona, that in so many souls we see so little fruit with so frequent Communions, and that they constantly relapse into the same faults? He replies: "The fault is not in the food, but in the disposition of him who receives."[5707] *Can a man,* says Solomon, *hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn?*[5708] *God is a consuming fire.*[5709] He comes himself in the Holy Communion to enkindle this divine fire; how is it, then, says William of Paris, that we see so diabolical a miracle as that souls should remain cold in divine love in the midst of such flames?

All comes from the want of proper dispositions, and especially from want of preparation. Fire immediately inflames dry but not green wood; for this latter is not disposed to burn. The saints derived great benefit from their Communions, because they prepared themselves with very great care. St. Aloysius Gonzaga devoted three days to his preparation for Holy Communion, and three days he spent in thanksgiving to his Lord.

To prepare well for Holy Communion, a soul should be disposed on two main points: it should be detached from creatures, and have a great desire to advance in divine love.

1. In the first place, then, a soul should detach itself from all things, and drive everything from its heart which is not God. *He that is washed,* saith Jesus, *needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly;*[5710] which signifies, as St. Bernard explains it, that in order to receive this sacrament with great fruit, we should not only be cleansed from mortal sins, but our feet also should be washed, that is, free from earthly affections; for being in contact with the earth, they excite a sort of repugnance in God, and soiling the soul, prevent the effects of the Holy Communion.

St. Gertrude asked our Lord what preparation he required of her for the Holy Communion; and he replied: “I only ask that thou shouldst come empty of thyself, to receive me.”[5711]

2. In the second place, it is necessary, in the Holy Communion, to have a great desire to receive Jesus Christ and his holy love. In this sacred banquet, says Gerson,[5712] only those who are famishing receive their fill; and the most blessed Virgin Mary had already said the same thing: *He hath filled the hungry with good things*.[5713] As Jesus, writes the Venerable Father Avila,[5714] only came into this world after he had been much and long desired, so does he only enter a soul that desires him; for it is not becoming that such food should be given to him who has a loathing for it. Our Lord one day said to St. Matilda: “No bee flies with such impetuosity to flowers, to suck their honey, as I fly to souls in the Holy Communion, driven by the violence of my love.”[5715] Since, then, Jesus Christ has so great a desire to come into our souls, it is right that we also should have a great desire to receive him and his divine love by the Holy Communion. St. Francis de

Sales teaches us that the principal object which a soul should have in view in communicating should be, to advance in the love of God; since he who for love alone gives himself to us should be received for love.

ACTS BEFORE COMMUNION

1. AN ACT OF FAITH

Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills.[5716] Ah, my most amiable Saviour, over how many, what rough and craggy mountains, hast Thou had to pass in order to come and unite Thyself to me by means of this most holy sacrament! Thou, from being God, hadst to become man; from being immense, to become a babe; from being Lord, to become a servant. Thou hadst to pass from the bosom of Thy Eternal Father to the womb of a Virgin; from heaven into a stable; from a throne of glory to the gibbet of a criminal. And on this very morning Thou wilt come from Thy seat in heaven to dwell in my bosom.

Behold He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices.[5717] Behold, O my soul, thy loving Jesus, burning with the same love with which he loved thee when dying for thee on the Cross, is now concealed in the Most Blessed Sacrament under the sacred species; and what is he doing? *Looking through the lattices.* As an ardent lover, desirous to see you correspond to his love, from the Host, as from within closed lattices, whence he sees without being seen, he is looking at you, who are this morning about to feed upon his divine flesh; he observes your thoughts, what it is that you love, what you desire, what you seek for, and what offerings you are about to make him.

Awake, then, my soul, and prepare to receive thy Jesus; and, in the first place, by faith, say to him: So, then, my beloved Redeemer, in a few moments Thou art coming to me? O hidden God, unknown to the greater part of men, I believe, I confess, I adore Thee in the Most Holy Sacrament as my Lord and Saviour! And in acknowledgment of this truth I would willingly lay down my life. Thou comest to enrich me with Thy graces and to unite Thyself entirely to me; how great, then, should be my confidence in this Thy so loving visit!

2. AN ACT OF CONFIDENCE

My soul, expand thy heart. Thy Jesus can do Thee every good, and, indeed, loves thee. Hope thou for great things from this thy Lord, who, urged by love, comes all love to thee.

Yes, my dear Jesus, my hope, I trust in Thy goodness, that, in giving Thyself to me this morning, Thou wilt enkindle in my poor heart the beautiful flame of Thy pure love, and a real desire to please Thee; so that, from this day forward, I may never will anything but what Thou willest.

3. AN ACT OF LOVE

Ah, my God, my God, true and only love of my soul, and what more couldst Thou have done to be loved by me? To die for me was not enough for Thee, my Lord; Thou wast pleased to institute this great sacrament in order to give Thyself all to me, and thus bind and unite Thyself heart to heart with so loathsome and ungrateful a creature as I am. And what is more, Thou Thyself invitest me to receive Thee, and desirest so much that I should do so! O boundless love! incomprehensible love! infinite love! a God would give himself all to me!—My soul, believest thou this? And what doest thou? what sayest thou? O God, O God, O infinite amiability, only worthy object of all love, I love Thee with my whole heart, I love Thee above all things, I love Thee more than myself, more than my life! Oh, could I but see Thee loved by all! Oh, could I but cause Thee to be loved by all hearts as much as Thou deservest! I love Thee, O most amiable God, and I unite my miserable heart in loving Thee to the hearts of the Seraphim, to the heart of the most blessed Virgin Mary, to the Heart of Jesus, thy most loving and beloved Son. So that, O Infinite Good, I love Thee with the love with which the saints, with which Mary, with which Jesus love Thee. And I love Thee only because Thou art worthy of it, and to give Thee pleasure. Depart, all earthly affections, that are not for God, depart from my heart. Mother of fair love, most holy Virgin Mary, help me to love that God whom Thou dost so ardently desire to see loved!

4. AN ACT OF HUMILITY

Then, my soul, thou art even now about to feed on the most sacred flesh of Jesus! And art thou worthy? My God, and who am I, and who art Thou? I indeed know and confess who Thou art that givest Thyself to me; but dost Thou know what I am who am about to receive Thee? And is it possible, O my Jesus, that Thou who art infinite purity desirest to come and reside in this soul of mine, which has been so many times the dwelling of Thy enemy, and soiled with so many sins? I know, O my Lord, Thy great Majesty and my misery; I am ashamed to appear before Thee. Reverence would induce me to keep at a distance from Thee; but if I depart from Thee, O my life, whither shall I go? to whom shall I have recourse? and what will become of me? No, never will I depart from Thee; nay, even I will ever draw nearer and nearer to Thee. Thou art satisfied that I should receive Thee as food, Thou even invitest me to this. I come then, O my amiable Saviour, I come to receive Thee this morning, all humbled and confused at the sight of my defects; but full of confidence in Thy tender mercy, and in the love which Thou bearest me.

5. AN ACT OF CONTRITION

I am indeed grieved, O God of my soul, for not having loved Thee during the time past; what is still worse, so far from loving Thee, and to gratify my own inclinations, I have greatly offended and outraged Thy infinite goodness: I have turned my back upon Thee, I have despised Thy grace and friendship; in a word, O my God, I was deliberate in my will to lose Thee. Lord, I am sorry, and grieve for it with my whole heart. I detest the sins which I have committed, be they great or small, as the greatest of all my misfortunes, because I have thereby offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness. I trust that Thou hast already forgiven me; but if Thou hast not yet pardoned me, oh, do so before I receive Thee: wash with Thy blood this soul of mine, in which Thou art so soon about to dwell.

6. AN ACT OF DESIRE

And now, my soul, the blessed hour has arrived in which Jesus will come and take up his dwelling in thy poor heart. Behold the King of Heaven, behold thy Redeemer and God, who is even now coming; prepare thyself to receive him with love, invite him with the ardor of thy desire.

Come, O my Jesus, come to my soul, which desires Thee. Before Thou givest Thyself to me, I desire to give Thee, and I now give Thee, my miserable heart; do Thou accept it, and come quickly to take possession of it. Come, my God! hasten; delay no longer. My only and Infinite Good, my treasure, my life, my Paradise, my love, my all, my wish is to receive Thee with the love with which the most holy and loving souls have received Thee; with that with which the most blessed Virgin Mary received Thee; to their Communions I unite this Communion of mine.

Most holy Virgin and my Mother Mary, behold, I already approach to receive thy Son. Would that I had the heart and love with which thou didst communicate! Give me this morning thy Jesus, as thou didst give him to the shepherds and to the kings. I intend to receive him from thy most pure hands. Tell him that I am thy servant and thy client; for he will thus look upon me with a more loving eye, and now that he is coming, will press me more closely to himself.

II

THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION

There is no prayer more agreeable to God, or more profitable to the soul, than that which is made during the thanksgiving after Communion. It is the opinion of many grave writers (Suarez, Cajetan, Valentia, De Lugo, and others), that the Holy Communion, so long as the sacramental species lasts, constantly produces greater and greater graces in the soul, provided the soul is then constant in disposing itself by new acts of virtue. The Council of Florence,[5718] in the decree of Eugenius IV. to the Armenians, teaches that the Blessed Sacrament produces the same effect in the soul as material food, which, when it enters the body, takes effect according to the state in which it finds it.

For this reason, holy souls endeavor to remain as long as possible in prayer after Communion. The Venerable Father Avila, even when he was given his missions, used to remain for at least two hours in prayer. Father Balthasar Alvarez used to say, that we should set great value on the time after Communion, imagining that we hear from the lips of Jesus Christ himself the words that he addressed to his disciples: *But Me you have not always with you.*[5719]

It is not advisable, as many do, to begin to read immediately after Communion: it is then better to spend at least a short time in producing holy affections, and in conversing with Jesus, who is then within us, and in repeating many times words of tenderness, or some feeling prayer. Jesus Christ repeated the same prayer in the garden three times: *And He prayed the third time, saying the self-same word.*[5720] In affections and prayers it is, then, that the soul should entertain itself with Jesus after Communion; for we must know, that the acts formed in prayer after Communion are far more precious and meritorious in the sight of God than when made at another time; for the soul being then united with Jesus, the value of the acts is increased by the presence of Jesus. We should, moreover, know, that after Communion Jesus Christ is more disposed to grant graces. St. Teresa says, that after Communion Jesus places himself in the soul as on a throne of grace, and then says: *What willest thou that I should do for thee?*[5721] meaning, O soul, I am come for the express purpose of granting thee graces: ask me what thou wilt, and as much as thou willest, thou shalt receive all.

Oh, what treasures of grace would you receive, devout soul, if you only entertained yourself with Jesus for an hour, or at least half an hour, after Communion! For this purpose you can read the following acts. After your prayer is ended be also careful during the whole day on which you have communicated to keep yourself united by affections and prayers with Jesus, whom you have received.

ACTS AFTER COMMUNION

1. AN ACT OF FAITH

Behold, my God is even now come to visit me; my Saviour to dwell in my soul. My Jesus is even now within me. He is come to make himself mine, and at the same time to make me his. So that Jesus is mine, and I belong to Jesus: Jesus is all mine, and I am all his.

O Infinite Goodness! O Infinite Mercy! O Infinite Love! that a God should come to unite himself to me, and to make himself all mine! My soul, now that thou art thus closely bound to Jesus, that thou art thus one with him, what doest thou? Hast thou nothing to say to him; dost thou not converse with thy God, who is with thee? Ah, yes, renew thy faith; remember that the angels now surround thee adoring their God, who is within thy breast; do thou also adore thy Lord within thyself. Enter into thyself, and banish thence every other thought. Unite all thy affections, and, clinging closely to thy God, say:

2. AN ACT OF WELCOME

Ah, my Jesus, my love, my infinite good, my all, be ever welcome in the poor dwelling of my soul! Ah, my Lord, where art thou! to what a place art Thou come! Thou hast entered my heart, which is far worse than the stable in which Thou wast born; it is full of earthly affections, of self-love, and of inordinate desires. And how couldst Thou come to dwell there? I would address Thee with St. Peter: *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.*[5722] Yes, depart from me, O Lord, for I am indeed unworthy to receive a God of infinite goodness; go and find repose in those pure souls who serve Thee with so much love. But no, my Redeemer; what do I say? Leave me not; for if Thou departest, I am lost. I embrace Thee, my life; I cling to Thee. Mad indeed have I been in having separated myself from Thee for the love of creatures; and in my ingratitude I drove Thee from me. But now I will never more separate myself from Thee, my treasure; I desire to live and die ever united to Thee. Most blessed Virgin Mary, Seraphim, and all souls, do ye who love God with pure love lend me your affections, that I may worthily attend on my beloved Lord.

3. AN ACT OF THANKSGIVING

My God and Lord, I thank Thee for the grace which Thou hast this morning bestowed upon me, of coming to dwell in my soul; but I would wish to thank Thee in a manner worthy of Thee and of the great favor which Thou hast done me. But what do I say? how can so miserable a creature as I am ever worthily thank Thee?

Father Segneri says, that the feeling most becoming a soul that communicates is that of wondering astonishment at the thought, and to repeat, “A God is united to me; a God is mine!” David said, *What shall I* *render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me.*[5723] But I! what return shall I make to Thee, my Jesus, who, after having given me so many of Thy good things, hast this morning, moreover, given me Thyself? My soul, bless, then, and thank thy God as best thou canst. And thou, my Mother Mary, my holy advocates, my guardian angel, and all ye souls who love God, *Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what great things He hath done for my soul.*[5724] Come and bless and thank my God for me, admiring and praising the indeed great graces which he has granted me.

4. AN ACT OF OBLATION

My Beloved to me, and I to Him.[5725] Should a king go to visit a poor shepherd in his hut, what can the shepherd offer him other than his whole hut, such as it is? Since, then, O Jesus, my divine king, Thou hast come to visit the poor house of my soul, I offer and give Thee this house and my entire self, together with my liberty and will: *My Beloved to me, and I to Him.* Thou hast given Thyself all to me; I give myself all to Thee. My Jesus, from this day forward I will be no longer mine; I will be Thine, and all Thine. May my senses be Thine, that they may only serve me to please Thee. And what greater pleasure, says St. Peter of Alcantara, can be found, than that of pleasing Thee, most amiable, most loving, most gracious God? I at the same time give Thee all the powers of my soul, and I will that they shall be all Thine; my memory I will only use to recall to mind Thy benefits and Thy love; my understanding I will only use to think of Thee, who always thinkest of my good; my will I will only use to love Thee, my God, my all, and to will only that which Thou willest.

My most sweet Lord, I offer, then, and consecrate to Thee this morning all that I am and have—my senses, my thoughts, my affections, my desires, my pleasures, my inclinations, my liberty; in a word, I place my whole body and soul in Thy hands.

Accept, O Infinite Majesty, the sacrifice of the hitherto most ungrateful sinner Thou hast ever had on earth; but who now offers and gives himself all to Thee. Do with me and dispose of me, O Lord, as Thou pleasest.

Come, O consuming fire, O divine love! and consume in me all that is mine, and that is displeasing in Thy most pure eyes, so that henceforward I may be all Thine, and may live only to execute, not Thy commands and counsels only, but also all Thy holy desires and Thy good pleasure. Amen.

O most holy Mary, do thou present this offering of mine to the Most Blessed Trinity with thine own hands; and do thou obtain their acceptance of it, and that they may grant me the grace to be faithful unto death. Amen, amen, amen.

5. AN ACT OF PETITION

O my soul, what art thou doing? The present is no time to be lost: it is a precious time, in which thou canst receive all the graces that thou askest. Seest thou not the Eternal Father, who is lovingly beholding thee? for within thee he sees his beloved Son, the dearest object of his love. Drive, then, far from thee all other thoughts; rekindle thy faith, enlarge thy heart, and ask for whatever thou willest.

Hearest thou not Jesus himself who thus addresses thee: *What wilt thou that I should do to thee?*[5726] O soul, tell me, what dost thou desire of me? I am come for the express purpose of enriching and gratifying thee; ask with confidence, and thou wilt receive all.

Ah! my most sweet Saviour, since Thou hast come into my heart in order to grant me graces, and desirest that I should ask Thee for them, I ask Thee not for the goods of the earth—riches, honors, or pleasures; but grant me, I beseech Thee, intense sorrow for the displeasure that I have caused Thee; impart to me so clear a light, that I may know the vanity of this world, and how deserving Thou art of love. Change this heart of mine, detach it from all earthly affections; give me a heart conformable in all things to Thy holy will, that it may seek only that which is more pleasing to Thee, and have no other desire than Thy holy love: *Create a clean heart in me, O God.*[5727]

I deserve not this; but Thou, my Jesus, deservest it, since Thou art come to dwell in my soul: I ask it of Thee through Thy merits, and those of Thy most holy Mother, and by the love which Thou bearest to Thy Eternal Father.

Here pause, to ask Jesus for some other particular grace for yourself and for your neighbors. Do not forget poor sinners, or the souls in Purgatory; and pray also for me, who composed this little book for your good.

Eternal Father, Jesus Christ himself, Thy Son, has said, *Amen, amen, I say to you, If you ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it you.*[5728] For the love, then, of this Son, whom I now hold within my breast, do Thou graciously hear me and grant my petition.

Amores mei dulcissimi, Jesu et Maria! pro vobis patiar, pro vobis moriar; sim totus vester, sim nihil meus.[5729] ("My most sweet Loves, Jesus and Mary, may I suffer for you, may I die for you; may I be all yours, and in nothing my own!')

PRAYERS TO WHICH INDULGENCES ARE ATTACHED

May the Most Blessed Sacrament be ever thanked and praised!

Blessed be the holy and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary!

Anima Christi, sanctifica me;
Corpus Christi, salva me;
Sanguis Christi, inebria me;
Aqua lateris Christi, munda me;
Passio Christi, conforta me.
O bone Jesu! exaudi me;
Intra vulnera tua, absconde me;
Ab hoste maligno defende me;
In hora mortis meae, voca me;
Et jube me venire ad te;
Ut cum Sanctis et Angelis tuis collaudem te,
Per infinita sæcula sæculorum. Amen.
Soul of Christ, sanctify me;
Body of Christ, protect me;
Blood of Christ, inebriate me;
Water of the side of Christ, purify me;
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear Thou me;
Within Thy wounds, oh, hide me;
Suffer me not to leave Thee;
From the evil one defend me;

In my last hour call Thou me;
Bid me, oh, bid me, come to Thee;
With saints and angels may I praise Thee,
Through endless ages of eternity. Amen.

LOVING ASPIRATIONS TO JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

They can be used either before or after Communion, or in visiting the Blessed Sacrament

BEFORE COMMUNION

I

> *Egredimini et videte, filiæ Sion, regem Salomonem in diademate, quo coronavit illum mater sua in die desponsationis illius*[5730]—“Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see king Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals.”

O daughters of grace, O ye souls who love God quit the darkness of earth, and behold Jesus, your king, crowned with a crown of thorns; the crown of contempt and suffering with which the impious synagogue, his mother crowned him on the day of his espousals,—that is to say, on the day of his death, by means of which he espoused himself on the Cross to our souls. Go forth again, and behold him all full of compassion and love, now that he comes to unite himself to thee in this sacrament of love.

Has it indeed, then, cost Thee so much, my beloved Jesus, before Thou couldst come and unite Thyself to souls in this most sweet Sacrament? Wert Thou indeed obliged to suffer so bitter and ignominious a death? Oh, come, then, without delay, and unite Thyself to my soul also. It was at one time Thy enemy by sin; but now Thou desirest to espouse it by Thy grace. Come, O Jesus, my spouse, for never more will I betray Thee; I am determined to be ever faithful to Thee. As a loving spouse, my whole thought shall be to find out Thy pleasure. I am determined to love Thee without reserve; I desire to be all Thine, my Jesus,—all, all, all.

II

> *Fasciculus myrrhæ Dilectus meus mihi, inter ubera mea commorabitur*—“A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me; he shall abide between my breasts.”[5731]

The myrrh plant, when pricked, sends forth tears, and a healthful liquor from the wounds. Before his Passion, our Jesus determined to pour forth his divine blood from his wounds in so painful a way, to give it afterwards all to us for our salvation in this bread of life.

Come, then, O my beloved bundle of myrrh, O my enamored Jesus; Thou art indeed a subject of grief and pity to me when I consider Thee all wounded for me on the Cross: but then, when I receive Thee in this most sweet Sacrament, Thou becomest indeed to me more sweet and delicious than a bunch of the choicest grapes can be to one who is parched with thirst: *A cluster of cypress my Love is to me, in the vineyards of Engaddi.*[5732] Come, then, to my soul, and revive and satiate me with Thy holy love Ah, what sweetness do I feel in my soul at the thought, that I have to receive within myself that same Saviour of mine who for my salvation was pleased to be drained of all his blood, and sacrificed on a cross! *He shall abide between my breasts.* No, my Jesus, never more will I drive Thee hence; and Thou shalt never more have to leave me. I am determined ever to love Thee, and to be always united and closely bound up with Thee. I will always belong to Jesus, and Jesus will be always mine: forever, forever, forever *He shall abide between my breasts.*

III

> *Dum esset Rex in accubitu suo, nardus mea dedit odorem suum*[5733]—“While the King was at His repose my spikenard sent forth the odor thereof.”

When Jesus comes to dwell in a soul in the Holy Communion, oh, how clearly does she see and know her own nothingness by the bright light which the king of heaven brings with him! As the spikenard is the most lowly amongst plants, so does the soul confess itself the most vile of all creatures; and when thus humbled, oh, how sweet is the odor which she breathes forth to her beloved king! and for this reason he invites her to unite herself to him in closer and closer bonds.

If, then, my soul, thou desirest that thy Jesus should repose in thee, consider thy own nothingness. Who art thou? what dost thou deserve? Humble thyself as thou shouldst do, by casting away from thyself all self-esteem which may keep Jesus at a distance from thee, or prevent him from coming to repose in thee.

Come to me, my dear Redeemer, come; and by thy divine light make me to see my own lowliness, my misery, my nothingness, that Thou mayest be enabled to repose in me with satisfaction to Thyself, to separate Thyself no more from me.

IV

Sentite de Domino in bonitate[5734]—“Think of the Lord in goodness.”

My soul, why art thou so timid and fearful at the sight of the goodness and infinite love of thy Lord? why such distrust? Now that thou art made worthy to receive within thee Jesus Christ, let thy sentiments correspond to this grace, by confiding in that goodness of God, who gives thee all himself. Truly his judgments are terrible, but they are terrible only to the proud and to the obstinate; but to the humble and penitent, who desire to love and please him, his judgments are all mercy and love, emanating from a heart full of compassion and kindness. So that David, considering these judgments of God, superabounds with hope: *I have more than hoped in Thy judgments.* These judgments made him happy and consoled him: *Thy judgments are delightful; I remembered Thy judgments, and was comforted.*[5735] Ah! our great God is only too loving and generous to those who seek him with love: *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him.*[5736] How good is God to those who seek to unite their will to the divine will: *How good is God to Israel, to those that are of a right heart.*[5737]

My God, my love, my hope, my all, I desire Thee, and Thee alone,—to love Thee, to please Thee, and to do Thy will in all things. Let me always find Thee; make me agreeable to Thee; and never let me leave Thee again. So be it. Amen, amen.

V

Vox Dilecti mei pulsantis: Aperi mihi, soror mea, amica mea, columba mea, immaculata mea[5738]—“The voice of my Beloved knocking: Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled.”

Such are the words which Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament speaks to those who love and desire him. Open to me, he says, O soul, thy heart, and there I will come to unite myself to thee; so that, being one with me, thou mayest become my sister by resemblance, my friend by participation in my riches, my dove by the gift of simplicity, my undefiled by the gift of purity, which I shall communicate to thee. And then he goes on to say, Open to me, *for my head is full of dew and my locks of the drops of the night*. As if he said: Consider, my beloved, that I have waited for thee all the night of the bad life thou hast led in the midst of darkness and error. Behold, now, instead of bringing scourges to chastise thee, I come in the Blessed Sacrament, with my hair full of heavenly dew, to extinguish in thee all impure desires towards creatures, and to kindle in Thee the happy fire of my love. Come, then, O my beloved Jesus, and work in me what Thou wilt. I renounce the love of all things, in order to be all Thine, and that Thou mayest make me as Thou wouldst have me, entirely united to Thy will.

VI

> *Veniat Dilectus meus in hortum suum, et comedat fructum pomorum suorum*[5739]—“Let my beloved come into His garden, and eat the fruit of His apple-trees.”

Cornelius à Lapide says that this is precisely the invitation that a soul desirous of the Holy Communion makes to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Come, my beloved, she says, into my poor heart, which at one unhappy time did not belong to Thee; but which now, by the help of Thy grace, has returned to Thee: *Come and eat the fruit of Thy apple-trees*. Come and taste in me those virtues which Thou dost bring with Thyself when Thou comest to me. O my Lord, at least for the honor of Thy majesty, purify my heart, adorn it, inflame it with Thy love, and make it beautiful in Thy sight, that it may be a worthy dwelling-place for Thee.

VII

> *Ad ubera portabimini*[5740]—“You shall be carried at the breasts.”

It is thus that Jesus from the sacred altars invites our souls. Come, he says, and suck my divine milk, which I give you in this Sacrament, wherein I offer you my own blood to drink. But what shepherd, says St. John Chrysostom,[5741] ever feeds his sheep with his own blood? Even mothers give their children to nurses to be fed. But Thou, O divine Pastor, art so enamored of our souls as to wish to nourish them with Thine own blood. St.

Catharine of Sienna, then, did well in approaching the Holy Communion as if panting to suck the divine milk, in the same way as an infant presses anxiously to suck the milk from its mother's breast. And well might the Sacred Spouse say to her Beloved, *Thy breasts are better than wine,*[5742] signifying that she esteemed the milk of this sacrament, as the sacred interpreters explain it, above all the pleasures of the world, which are transitory and vain, as are transitory and vain also the joys and pleasures of wine.

O my beloved Jesus, since Thou wilt feed me this morning with Thine own blood in the Holy Communion, it is but reasonable that I should willingly renounce all the delights and pleasures which the world might give me. Yes, I give them all up; I protest that I choose rather to suffer all evils united to Thee, than to enjoy all the goods of the world away from Thee. It is sufficient happiness for me to please Thee, who art worthy of all that we can do to please Thee. I will say, then, with St. Ignatius of Loyola, give me, I pray Thee, but Thy love and Thy grace; that is sufficient for me, and I am contented.

VIII

> *Comedite, amici, et bibite, et inebriamini, charissimi*[5743]—"Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved."

The "friends," that is beginners, who scarcely enjoy the divine friendship, when they receive the Holy Communion, feed indeed on the flesh of Jesus Christ, but they eat with labor; while those who are on the way to perfection eat with less difficulty. But by the "dearly beloved" are meant the perfect, who, inebriated with holy love, live almost out of the world, forgetting all things, even themselves, and think only how they may love and please their God.

My beloved Jesus, I am not yet perfect; but Thou canst make me perfect. I am not dear to Thee, and it is my own fault, because I have been ungrateful and unfaithful; but Thou canst make me become so, by inebriating me this morning with Thy love. *Thy kingdom come.*[5744] Come, my beloved Lord, and take possession of my whole soul. Establish Thy kingdom in me; so that Thou alone mayest reign in me, that Thy love alone may command me, and that Thy love only may I obey. Inebriate me, inebriate me entirely; make me forget all creatures, myself, my interests, and all, that I may love nothing but Thee, my God, my treasure, all my good, my all; may I sigh for Thee alone, seek Thee alone, think of Thee alone, and please Thee alone. Do this by the merits of Thy Passion. This only do I ask of Thee; this I hope.

IX

> *Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis; quia amore langueo*[5745]—“Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples: because I languish with love.”

The languor of the soul is when, forgetful of herself and her affairs, she thinks only of seeking refreshment for her languishing love by holy desires, which are the flowers, and by good works, which are the fruits of divine love.

O my God, O Blessed Sacrament, since Thou wilt have me to be all Thine, make me what Thou wouldst have me. Make me forget everything that does not belong to Thy love. Increase in me always more and more the desire of pleasing Thee. Grant that these flowers may not always remain flowers; make them also become fruits, by my doing and suffering something for Thee, who hast done and suffered only too much for me. O God, O God of my soul, make Thyself loved, but really loved, by me,—not only in word, but in deed,—before death comes upon me.

X

> *Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus, electus et millibus*[5746]—“My Beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.”

Our beloved Jesus is all white by his purity, and all red by the flames of his divine love.

My spotless Lamb, all burning with love for me, when shall I make myself like to Thee, pure as Thou art, O lily; burning with love of Thee as Thou dost burn with love of me? Yes, I do renounce all other love, and choose for myself Thy sweet love, my God, my all. Begone, ye creatures! what do you want with me? Go and enjoy the love of those who seek you. I wish only for my God; for God alone will I keep all my heart and all my affections.

XI

> *Benignitas et humanitas apparuit Salvatoris nostri Dei*[5747]—“The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared.”

St. Paul says that God, by making himself man, showed the world how far his goodness towards us went. But by giving himself in this sacrament, he makes us know the depth of the tenderness of his love towards our souls. “Does it not seem madness to say, Eat my flesh, and drink my blood?” St. Augustine says, does it not seem a madness, Jesus Christ saying to us, as he said in that blessed night,[5748] *Take and eat, this is My body?*[5749] O men, he says, to make you understand how much I love you, I will that you should come and feed on my very flesh. O holy faith! And who among us would have been able to demand so much? Who could have even thought of it, if Jesus had not thought it and done it? Some of the followers of Jesus Christ, when they heard that from his mouth, that is, that he wished to give them his body to eat, said that this was too hard a thing, and that they could neither believe nor hear it: *This saying is hard, and who can hear it?*[5750] And they went so far as to leave him, because they would not believe it: but yet it is of faith that so it is. But what else does Jesus Christ ask of us, by all this he has done for us, but that we should love him? as the Lord had once before instructed his people: *And now, Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou . . . love Him and serve Him with all thy heart?*[5751]

O my most loving Jesus, what dost Thou not give, what dost Thou not promise to those that love Thee? Thou dost promise them Thy love: *I love those that love Me.*[5752] Thou dost promise them Thy caresses, even when they have already turned their backs upon Thee: *Turn ye to Me, and I will turn to you.*[5753] Thou dost promise to come with the Father and the Holy Spirit to abide forever in their souls: *He who loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, . . . and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.*[5754] And what more hast Thou to promise and to give, to entice men to love Thee? My dearest Lord, I see how it is; Thou dost wish also to be loved by me: yes, I love Thee with all my heart; and if I do not love Thee, do Thou teach me to love Thee; make me to love Thee, and to love Thee above all things: “Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt.”[5755]

XII

> *Nolite me considerare quod fusca sim, quia decoloravit me sol*[5756]—"Do not consider me, that I am brown; for the sun has discolored me."

The heat of my passions, said the Sacred Spouse (and still more ought I to say it, O my dear Jesus), has deformed and blackened me: *I am black, but beautiful.*[5757] But I am black by my own works; I am beautiful by Thy merits, O my Redeemer. I was black at one time, when I was alone and separated from Thee; but now that I am united to Thee, Thy grace, Thy beauty, Thy love has made me beautiful.

Yes, my Jesus, so do I hope. Mayest Thou be blessed forever. Never permit me to lose Thee again, and to return to my former depravity. I love Thee, O infinite beauty; I wish also that my soul should be beautiful, always beautiful, that it may be always pleasing in Thy divine sight, and that Thou mayest always love it.

AFTER COMMUNION

I

> *Trahe me: post te curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum*[5758]—"Draw me: we will run after *Thee* to the odor of Thy ointments."

Since, then, O my dear Jesus, I cannot, while in this life, ascend to Thee, Thou hast willed to descend to me, to unite Thyself to me in this sacrament of love. Draw me, my Lord, all to Thee. I do not wish to draw Thee to me, that Thou shouldst do my pleasure; but I desire that thou shouldst draw me so entirely to Thee by Thy sweet attractions, that I may not be able to desire or do anything else but Thy most holy will. It is just that my inclinations should yield to Thy disposition. Take me up wholly to Thyself; and so united, I shall be free from earthly affections, and shall run with Thee in the path of virtue, and be able to repose peacefully in Thy divine will both in this life and in the next: *In peace, in the self-same I will sleep, and I will rest.*[5759]

II

> *Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem*[5760]—“The King brought me into the cellar of wine, and set in order charity in me.”

It is precisely by this cellar of wine that St. Bonaventure understands the Holy Communion which introduces and then unites the soul to its divine king, and gives it to taste that wine of love which destroys the desire of created things; infuses a well-regulated love, that is just towards itself, charitable towards its neighbor, supreme towards God, loving him above all things, who above all things deserves to be loved.

O Jesus, my king, only Lord of my heart, Thou hast already brought me into the beautiful cellar of Thy love, that is, into Thyself, uniting me to Thee by means of this sacrament of love. Yes, my Lord, I already feel my heart changed. I feel a holy desire, which gives me peace, and makes me loathe all impure affections, and enkindles in me the pure love of Thee. O my Jesus, since Thou hast given me an entrance to this beautiful cellar, let me no more depart from it. Since Thou hast united Thyself to me, do not leave me again. Detach me from the love of all creatures. Unite me to Thee continually more and more on this earth, that I may one day come to be perfectly united to Thee in heaven; where I shall love Thee face to face with all my strength, without interruption and without imperfection throughout all eternity.

III

> *Dilectus meus descendit ad hortum suum, . . . ut pascatur in hortis, et lilia colligat*[5761]—“My Beloved is gone down into His garden . . . to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.”

My sweet Saviour, since Thou dost descend from heaven to come into my soul, by Thy grace do Thou make it become Thy garden, that Thou mayest gather in it lilies and fruits which are agreeable to Thee. Pardon me, if I have offended Thee. Receive me, if I have left Thee, now that I return penitent to Thee. Give me that purity which Thou dost desire to see in me. Give me strength to do what Thou desirest. Grant me Thy true love, and then shall I become pleasing to Thee. I sacrifice to Thee all my inclinations, and I desire and wish for nothing but to please Thee.

IV

> *Totus desiderabilis, talis est Dilectus meus*[5762]—“He is all lovely; such is my Beloved.”

Jesus, to those souls who love him as spouses, makes himself altogether desirable, whether he chastises or consoles them, whether he appears near or distant, because he does it all for love, and that he may be loved.

Treat me, then, O my Jesus, as Thou wilt, I will always love Thee; whether Thou dost give me sweetnesses or tribulations, I know that all will come to me from Thy loving heart, and that all will be for my greater good. *My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready.*[5763] Behold, my will is ready, O Lord, to accept all that Thou shalt ordain. *I will bless the Lord at all times.*[5764] At all times, whether prosperous or adverse, I will bless Thee, and love Thee, O my Creator. I neither seek nor merit any consolation from Thee; for I have given Thee nothing but bitterness by my sins: I seek only Thy good pleasure. Provided Thou art satisfied, I shall be content with any punishment. My Jesus, my Jesus, whether far off or near, Thou shalt always be desirable to me, always dear; whether Thou dost console or afflict me, I will always love Thee, always thank Thee.

V

> *Quæ est ista quæ ascendit de deserto, deliciis affluens, innixa super Dilectum suum?*[5765]—“*Who* is this that cometh up from the desert flowing with delights, leaning upon her Beloved?”

Who, then, are those souls who, living on the earth, esteem it a desert? so that, detached from visible things, they live only to God; as if there was no one else but God, whom alone they love and desire to please. And in this way they almost go out of the world, and raise themselves above it; enjoying the delights which are experienced by those who wish for God alone, and who place in God all their hopes. Who, then, are these faithful souls, if not those who often and with pure love unite themselves to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament?

Yes, my God, such do I also desire to be by the means of Thy grace, detached from all things, and to be all Thine. Henceforth the world shall be to me a desert, where, flying from all attachment to creatures, I will think of nothing but Thee; as if Thou and I were the only persons there. In Thee alone will I put all my confidence, all my love, O God, O beloved God, my hope, my love, my all.

VI

> *Si murus est, œdificemus super eum propugnacula argentea; si ostium est, compingamus illud tabulis cedrinis!*[5766]—“If she be a wall, let us build upon it bulwarks of silver; if she be a door, let us join it together with boards of cedar.”

This is precisely what Jesus does when he comes to a soul in the Holy Communion. He sees that she is a wall too weak to be able to resist the assaults of hell; therefore, by the virtue of the sacrament, he fortifies her with bulwarks of silver, that is, with his divine light. He sees that she is a door inclined easily to be corrupted, and he renews it, adjusting her with planks of strength and perseverance, as is signified by cedar, which is a strong and incorruptible wood; that is, with the gifts of holy fear, with detachment from creatures, with the love of prayer, with supplications, with holy desires, and still more with the gift of divine love, which are the support of holy perseverance: *Bread strengthens man’s heart.*[5767] Jesus teaches us, that as earthly bread preserves the life of the body, so the heavenly bread of the Holy Communion preserves the life of the soul: *He that eateth Me, the same shall live by Me.*[5768] *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in Me and I in him.*[5769] Such are the gracious promises which Jesus makes to him who receives him in the Blessed Sacrament.

Ah, my Jesus! who is weaker and more unfaithful than I? Thou knowest well how many times I have yielded to my enemies, and how many times they have seized the gate, that is, my will, by which they have entered to ruin me by causing me to lose Thy friendship. Oh, fortify me with Thy light and strength, that I may no more lose Thee or drive Thee from me! My Lord and my dear Redeemer, if I am to turn back and offend Thee again, oh, let me die now, while I hope that I am in Thy grace and united to Thee! I trust not myself; no, nor will I ever, my dear Jesus, live without Thee. But as long as I live, I am in danger of changing my will and betraying Thee, as I have done before: do Thou help me. Help me also, most holy Mary; have pity on me: thou who art the Mother of perseverance, obtain for me this gift from thy Jesus. Of thee I seek it, of thee I hope it, of thee I ask it.

VII

> *Inveni, quem diligit anima mea; tenui eum, nec dimittam!*[5770]—“I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and I will not let Him go.”

So ought every soul to say who is united with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament: Creatures, depart from me; go out altogether from my heart. I loved you once, because I was blind; now I love you not, nor can I ever love you again. I have found another good, infinitely more delightful than you; I have found in myself my Jesus, who has enamoured me by his beauty; to this love I have given myself entirely. He has already accepted me, so that I am no longer my own. Creatures, farewell: I am not, nor shall I ever again be yours; but I am and shall be always Christ’s. He, too, is mine, and will always be mine: *I held Him, and I will not let Him go.*[5771] Now I have pressed him to my heart, receiving him in the Holy Communion; for the future I will hold him with my love, and will not let him leave me any more.

Permit me, sweet Saviour, to embrace Thee so closely, that I may never more be separated from Thee. Behold, I press Thee to myself, my Jesus; I love Thee, I love Thee; and, oh, that I could love Thee worthily. I wish that my only happiness and repose should be to love Thee and please Thee. Do Thou command all creatures to leave me, and not to disturb me; say to them, *I adjure you, do not arouse or waken My love.*[5772] Ah, if I do not wish it, creatures cannot enter in to disturb and divide me from Thee. Strengthen, then, my will, unite my miserable heart to Thy divine heart, that it may always will what Thou wilt. Do this, Lord, by Thy merits. Amen, amen. So do I hope; so may it be.

VIII

> *Surge, aquilo, et veni, auster; perfla hortum meum, et fluant aromata illius*[5773]—“Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind, blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow.”

Fly from me, O north wind! hurtful and cold wind of earthly affections; and come, thou soft, warm breeze of the sacred love of the Holy Spirit, which comes from the Heart of my Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Do thou alone breathe through my soul, which has been chosen by Jesus for his garden of delights. Blow; for by thy breath how many fresh and sweet odors of holy virtues shalt thou draw forth from me! My Jesus, my Jesus, Thou canst do this; and this do I hope from Thee.

IX

> *Messui myrrham meam cum aromatibus meis, comedi favum cum melle me.*[5774]—“I have gathered my myrrh, with my aromatical spices: I have eaten the honeycomb with my honey.”

A soul which has received Jesus must be careful to gather myrrh, that it may always offer the sweet odor of those virtues which arise from mortification. *I have eaten honeycomb with my honey.* In like manner, the soul that loves God alone is not satisfied with the honey, but will also have the honeycomb; therefore it says to Jesus: O Lord, Thy consolations are not sufficient for me, unless Thou givest me Thyself, who art the fountain of consolation; the fruits of love are not enough for me, if Thou dost not give me also Thyself, who art the object of my love. Truly Thou alone wilt suffice for me; I am ready to renounce all Thy delights, provided I possess Thee alone, my God, and my only good. I love Thee, not to please myself, but to please Thee; for Thou dost desire to be loved by me, and Thou art worthy of all our love, whether Thou dost console or try us.

X

> *Nihil mihi deerit; in loco pascuæ ibi me collocavit*[5775]—“He hath set me in a place of pasture, and I shall want nothing.”

Ah, my beloved Jesus! since Thou dost invite me in this feast of love to feed on Thy divine flesh, what more can I ever want? *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?*[5776] Whom shall I fear, if Thou, O God omnipotent, art my light and my salvation? I give myself all to Thee. Accept me, and then do with me what Thou wilt; chastise me, show Thine indignation towards me when Thou wilt; kill me, destroy me, and I will say always, with Job: *Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him.*[5777] Whilst I am Thine, and Thou lovest me, I am content to be treated by Thee with every hardship; to be even annihilated, if it so pleases Thee.

XI

> *In manibus meis descripsi te; muri tui coram oculis meis semper*[5778]—"I have graven thee in My hands; thy walls are always before My eyes."

See the loving care that God takes of a soul that he wishes to have to himself. He carries it written in his hands, so that he may never forget it, and says, that sooner would a mother forget her own son than he a soul in grace: *And if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee.*[5779] *And thy walls are always before My eyes.* His eyes are always open, to watch over that soul, so that its enemies do it not harm: *Thou hast crowned us, as with a shield of Thy good-will.*[5780] Our good God surrounds us with the protection of his good-will, wholly solicitous for our good; and so he delivers us from all dangers. Ah, my God! infinite goodness, who more than any other lovest me and desirest my good, I abandon myself entirely to Thee. Should every other hope fall me, Thou wilt never fail me. I know that I also must co-operate by obeying Thy holy will. *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*[5781] Nothing else can I say; behold me ready and determined, my sweet Saviour, to do what Thou pleasest: *Thy will be done.*[5782] Nothing else do I desire but to accomplish Thy will. But do Thou help me, otherwise I shall do no good at all. Teach me not only to know, but also to do, all that pleases Thee: *teach me to do Thy will.*[5783] Eternal Father, grant that I may be able to say with truth, as Thy Jesus did whilst he was on earth: *I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.*[5784] My God! this I desire, this I pray for, and this I hope, through the merits of Thy Son and the most holy Mary.

XII

> *Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi*[5785]—"My son, give Me thy heart."

O my soul, behold this is all that thy Lord asks of thee; when he comes to visit thee, he would have thy heart and thy will. He gives himself to thee without reserve; it is but reasonable that thou shouldst also give him all thyself without reserve, taking care to follow his will in all things: *For the Lord will return to rejoice over thee in all good things.*[5786] Act in such a manner as that Jesus, when he comes to thee again, may find that thou hast executed all his designs. My Jesus! I wish to please Thee; help Thou my desire. Give me strength, and do with me whatsoever Thou pleasest.

XIII

Quid est quod debui ultra facere vineæ meæ, et non feci ei?[5787]—“What is there that I ought to do to my vineyard, that I have not done to it?”

My soul, hear what thy God says to thee: What ought I to do more for thee than I have done? For love of thee I became man: *I am the Word made flesh.*[5788] Instead of Lord, I have become servant: *taking the form of a servant.*[5789] I went so far as to be born in a stable, like a worm—for worms are born in stables: *I am a worm, and no man.*[5790] I died for thee, I died upon the tree of shame: *I was made obedient to death, even the death of the Cross.*[5791] What remained more for me to do, but to give my life for thee? *Greater love than this no man hath, that he should lay down his life for his friends.*[5792] But my love has invented and done more for thee. After my death, I have chosen to leave myself in the Most Blessed Sacrament, to give my whole self as food. Tell me what more could I have done to gain thy love?

It is true, my Lord and my Redeemer; what can I answer? I have nothing to say. Thou hast been too good to me, and I have been too ungrateful towards Thee. I wonder at Thy immense goodness; I see my own baseness, and I throw myself at Thy feet, and say: Have pity on me, my Jesus, though I have repaid Thy love with so much ingratitude. Avenge Thyself, therefore, I pray Thee, avenge Thyself upon me, and chastise me; but do not abandon me; chastise me and change me. Let me not live any longer ungrateful to Thee. Grant that I may love Thee at least out of gratitude, and that before I die I may make Thee some recompense for Thy love.

XIV

Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum[5793]—“Put Me as a seal upon thy heart.”

Yes, my beloved Jesus, since I have consecrated to Thee my whole heart, it is but just that I should put Thee as a seal of love upon it, to close the entrance against any other affection; and thus to make known to all that my heart is Thine, and that Thou alone possessest dominion over it. But, my Lord, what dost Thou hope from me, if Thou dost not do the work Thyself? I can do nothing but give Thee my poor heart, that Thou mayest dispose of me according to Thy pleasure. Behold, I give it all to Thee, I consecrate it to Thee, I sacrifice it to Thee. Do Thou possess it forever; I will no longer have any part in it. If Thou lovest it, mayest Thou be able to preserve it for

Thyself. Leave it no longer in my hands, lest I should again take it from Thee. O God most gracious, O infinite love, since Thou hast so constrained me to love Thee, I pray Thee, make Thyself loved, make Thyself loved by me. I only wish to live that I may love Thee, I only wish to love Thee in order to please Thee. Thou who dost work miracles to be able to enter into my heart in this sacrament, work also this one, make my heart all Thine; but all, all, all, without division, without reserve, so that I may say, both in this life and in eternity, that Thou art the only Lord of my heart, and my only treasure: *God is the God of my heart, and my portion forever.*[5794]

Most holy Mary, my Mother and my hope, do thou help me, and I shall certainly be heard. Amen, amen. This I wish, this I hope. So be it.

HYMNS

I

HOLY COMMUNION

MY soul, what dost thou? Answer me—
Love God, who loves thee well:—
Love only does he ask of thee,
Canst thou his love repel?
See, how on earth for love of thee,
In lowly form of bread,
The sovereign good and majesty
His dwelling-place has made.
He bids thee now his friendship prove,
And at his table eat;
To share the bread of life and love,
His own true flesh thy meat.
What other gift so great, so high,
Could God himself impart?
Could love divine do more to buy
The love of thy poor heart?
Though once, in agonies of pain,
Upon the cross he died,
A love so great, not even then
Was wholly satisfied.
Not till the hour when he had found
The sweet, mysterious way
To join his heart in closest bond
To thy poor heart of clay.
How, then, amid such ardent flame,
My soul, dost thou not burn?

Canst thou refuse, for very shame,
A loving heart’s return?
Then yield thy heart, at length, to love
That God of charity,
Who gives his very self to prove
The love he bears to thee.

II

TO JESUS AFTER COMMUNION

O bread of heaven! beneath this veil
Thou dost my very God conceal;
My Jesus, dearest treasure, hail!
I love Thee, and adoring kneel:
The loving soul by Thee is fed
With Thy own self in form of bread!
O food of life! Thou who dost give
The pledge of immortality!
I live;—no, ’tis not I that live,
God gives me life, God lives in me:
He feeds my soul, he guides my ways
And every grief with joy repays.
O bond of love! that dost unite
The servant to his loving Lord!
Could I dare live, and not requite
Such loving—then death were meet reward:
I cannot live, unless to prove
Some love for such unmeasured love.
O mighty fire! thou that dost burn
To kindle every mind and heart!
For Thee my frozen soul doth yearn:
Come, Lord of love, Thy warmth impart.
If thus to speak too bold appear,
’Tis love like Thine has banished fear.
O sweetest dart of love divine!

If I have sinned, then vengeance take:
Come, pierce this guilty heart of mine,
And let it die for his dear sake
Who once expired on Calvary,
His heart pierced through for love of me.
My dearest good! who dost so bind
My heart with countless chains to Thee!
O sweetest love, my soul shall find
In Thy dear bonds true liberty,
Thyself Thou hast bestowed on me,
Thine, Thine forever I will be!
Beloved Lord! in heaven above,—
There, Jesus, Thou awaitest me
To gaze on Thee with changeless love.
Yes, thus I hope,—thus shall it be:
For how can he deny me heaven,
Who here on earth himself hath given?

Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin

THIS treatise, called the Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin, is the first work that St. Alphonsus published: this was in the year 1745. This first-born of his pen has met from its appearance with marvellous success, not only in Italy, but in Europe and the whole Catholic world. During the lifetime of the holy author it was translated into nearly every language. After more than a century the reputation that it has enjoyed instead of diminishing has ever increased. Our saint also composed other acts for Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin. These are to be found in Volume XVI.—ED.

TO MARY THE EVER-IMMACULATE VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD

MY most holy Queen,—On the point of publishing the present little work, in which I treat of the love of thy Son, I know not to whom I can better dedicate it than to thee, my most beloved Mother, who, amongst all creatures, art his most tender lover. I believe that by this little offering which I present to thee, and which is composed for the sole purpose of inflaming souls more and more with the love of Jesus Christ,—I believe, I say, that by it I shall greatly please thee, who desirest to see him loved by all as he deserves. To thee, then, I consecrate it, such as it is; do thou graciously accept and protect it; not indeed that I may receive the praises of men, but that all who read it may for the future correspond, by their greater devotion and affection, with the tender and excessive love which our most sweet Saviour has been pleased to show us in his Passion, and in the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament. As such, I place it at thy feet, and beseech thee to accept the gift as wholly thine, as also the giver, who has long since placed all his hopes in thee, and wishes and hopes always to call himself, and to rejoice in being,

Most gracious Lady,
Thy most loving, though most unworthy servant,
Alphonsus de Liguori,
Of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TO THE READER

I BEG, my dear reader, that you will not despise this little book, though written with the utmost simplicity. I have composed it in a style very simple, because I believe that it will thus more likely promote devotion amongst all classes of persons. I also beg that whether I am living or dead you will recommend me to the Most Holy Sacrament each time that you use it; and on my part I promise to pray for all who do me this act of charity, every time I offer up the Most Holy Sacrifice.

INTRODUCTION

I

THE VISIT TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT

OUR holy faith teaches us, and we are bound to believe, that in the consecrated Host Jesus Christ is really present under the species of bread. But we must also understand that he is thus present on our altars as on a throne of love and mercy, to dispense graces and there to show us the love which he bears us, by being pleased to dwell night and day hidden in the midst of us.

It is well known that the Holy Church instituted the festival of Corpus Christi with a solemn octave, and that she celebrates it with the many usual processions, and so frequent expositions of this Most Holy Sacrament, that men may thereby be moved gratefully to acknowledge and honor this loving presence and dwelling of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, by their devotions, thanksgivings, and the tender affections of their souls. O God! how many insults and outrages has not this amiable Redeemer had, and has he not daily, to endure in this sacrament on the part of those very men for whose love he remains upon their altars on earth! Of this he indeed complained to his dear servant Sister Margaret Alacoque, as the author of the *Book of Devotion to the Heart of Jesus* relates. One day, as she was in prayer before the Most Holy Sacrament, Jesus showed her his heart on a throne of flames, crowned with thorns, and surmounted by a cross, and thus addressed her: “Behold that heart which has loved men so much, and which has spared itself nothing; and has even gone so far as to consume itself, thereby to show them its love; but in return the greater part of men only show me ingratitude, and this by the irreverences, tepidity, sacrileges, and contempt which they offer me in this sacrament of love; and that which I feel the most acutely is, that they are hearts consecrated to me.” Jesus then expressed his wish, that the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi should be dedicated as a particular festival in honor of his adorable heart;

and that on that day all souls who loved him should endeavor, by their homage, and by the affections of their souls, to make amends for the insults which men have offered him in this sacrament of the Altar; and at the same time he promised abundant graces to all who should thus honor him.

We can thus understand what our Lord said of old by his prophet, that his delight is to be with the children of men;[5795] since he is unable to tear himself from them even when they abandon and despise him. This also shows us how agreeable all those souls are to the heart of Jesus who frequently visit him, and remain in his company in the churches in which he is, under the sacramental species. He desired St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi to visit him in the Most Blessed Sacrament thirty-three times a day; and this beloved spouse of his faithfully obeyed him, and in all her visits to the altar approached it as near as she possibly could, as we read in her life.

But let all those devout souls who often go to spend their time with the Most Blessed Sacrament speak;—let them tell us the gifts, the inspirations which they have received, the flames of love which are there enkindled in their souls, the paradise which they enjoy in the presence of this hidden God.

The servant of God and great Sicilian missionary Father, Louis La Nusa, was, even in his youth and as a layman, so enamoured of Jesus Christ, that he seemed unable to tear himself from the presence of his beloved Lord. Such were the joys which he there experienced, that his director commanded him, in virtue of obedience, not to remain there for more than an hour. The time having elapsed, he showed in obeying (says the author of his life), that in tearing himself from the bosom of Jesus Christ he had to do himself just such violence as a child that has to detach itself from its mother’s breast in the very moment in which it is satiating itself with the utmost avidity; and when he had to do this, we are told that he remained standing with his eyes fixed on the altar, making repeated inclinations, as if he knew not how to quit his Lord, whose presence was so sweet and gracious to him. To St. Aloysius it was also forbidden to remain in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament; and as he used to pass before it, finding himself drawn, so to speak, by the sweet attractions of his Lord, and almost forced to remain there, he would, with the greatest effort, tear himself away, saying, with an excess of tender love: *Depart from me, O*

Lord, depart![5796] There it was also that St. Francis Xavier found refreshment in the midst of his many labors in India; for he employed his days in toiling for souls, and his nights in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament. St. John Francis Regis did the same thing; and sometimes finding the church closed, he endeavored to satisfy his longings by remaining on his knees outside the door, exposed to the rain and cold, that at least at a distance he might attend upon his comforter concealed under the sacramental species. St. Francis of Assisi used to go to communicate all his labors and undertakings to Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament. But tender indeed was the devotion of St. Wenceslaus, duke of Bohemia, to the Most Holy Sacrament. This holy king was so enamoured of Jesus there present, that he not only gathered the wheat and grapes, and made the hosts and wine with his own hands, and then gave them to be used in the Holy Sacrifice, but he used, even during the winter, to go at night to visit the church in which the Blessed Sacrament was kept. These visits enkindled in his beautiful soul such flames of divine love, that their ardor imparted itself even to his body, and took from the snow on which he walked its wonted cold; for it is related that the servant who accompanied him in these nightly excursions, having to walk through the snow, suffered much from the cold. The holy king, on perceiving this, was moved to compassion, and commanded him to follow him, and only to step in his footmarks; he did so, and never afterwards felt the cold.

In the visits you will read other examples of the tender affection with which souls inflamed with the love of God loved to dwell in the presence of the Most Holy Sacrament. But you will find that all the saints were enamoured of this most sweet devotion; since, indeed, it is impossible to find on earth a more precious gem, or a treasure more worthy of all our love, than Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament. Certainly amongst all devotions, after that of receiving the sacraments, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament holds the first place, is the most pleasing to God, and the most useful to ourselves. Do not then, O devout soul, refuse to begin this devotion; and forsaking the conversation of men, dwell each day, from this time forward, for at least half or quarter of an hour, in some church, in the presence of Jesus Christ under the sacramental species. *Taste and see how sweet is the Lord.*[5797] Only try this devotion, and by experience you will see the great benefit that you will derive from it. Be assured that the time you will thus spend with devotion before this most divine Sacrament will be the most profitable to you in life, and the source of your greatest consolation in death and in eternity. You must also be aware, that in a quarter of an hour's prayer spent in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, you will perhaps gain more than in all the other spiritual exercises of the day. It is true, that in every place God graciously hears the petitions of those who pray to him, having promised to do so: *Ask, and you shall receive;*[5798] yet the disciple tells us that Jesus dispenses his graces in greater abundance to those who visit him in the Most Holy Sacrament. Blessed Henry Suso used also to say that Jesus Christ hears the prayers of the faithful more graciously in the sacrament of the altar than elsewhere. And where, indeed, did holy souls make their most beautiful resolutions, but prostrate before the Most Holy Sacrament? Who knows but that you also may one day, in the presence of the tabernacle, make the resolution to give yourself entirely to God? In this little book I feel myself bound, at least out of gratitude to my Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, to declare, that through the means of this devotion of visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament, which I practised, though with so much tepidity and in so imperfect a manner, I abandoned the world, in which, unfortunately, I lived until I was six-and-twenty years of age. Fortunate indeed will you be if you can detach yourself from it at an earlier period, and give yourself without reserve to that Lord who has given himself without reserve to you. I repeat it, that indeed you will be blessed, not only in eternity, but even in this life. Believe me, all is folly: feasts, theatres, parties of pleasure, amusements,—these are the goods of the world, but goods which are filled with the bitterness of gall and with sharp thorns. Believe me, who have experienced this and now weep over it. Be also assured that Jesus Christ finds means to console a soul that remains with a recollected spirit before the Most Blessed Sacrament, far beyond what the world can do with all its feasts and pastimes. Oh, how sweet a joy it is to remain with faith and tender devotion before an altar, and converse familiarly with Jesus Christ, who is there for the express purpose of listening to and graciously hearing those who pray to him; to ask his pardon for the displeasures which we have caused him; to represent our wants to him, as a friend does to a friend in whom he places all his confidence; to ask him for his graces, for his love, and for his kingdom; but above all, oh, what a heaven is it there to remain making acts of love towards that Lord who is on the very altar praying to the Eternal Father for us, and is there burning with love for us. Indeed that love it is which detains him there, thus hidden and unknown, and when he is even despised by ungrateful souls! But why should we say more? “Taste and see.”

II

THE VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

And now as to the visits to the Most Blessed Virgin, the opinion of St. Bernard is well known, and generally believed: it is, that God dispenses no graces otherwise than through the hands of Mary: “God wills that we should receive nothing that does not pass through Mary’s hands.”[5799] Hence Father Suarez declares that it is now the sentiment of the universal Church, that “the intercession of Mary is not only useful, but even necessary to obtain graces.”[5800].[5801] And we may remark that the Church gives us strong grounds for this belief, by applying the words of the Sacred Scripture to Mary, and making her say: *In me is all hope of life and of virtue. Come over to me, all ye that desire me.*[5802] Let all come to me; for I am the hope of all that you can desire. Hence she then adds: *Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors.*[5803] Blessed is he who is diligent in coming every day to the door of my powerful intercession; for by finding me he will find life and eternal salvation: *He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.*[5804] Hence it is not without reason that the Holy Church wills that we should all call her our common hope, by saluting her, saying, “Hail, our hope!”

“Let us then,” says St. Bernard (who went so far as to call Mary “the whole ground of his hope”), “seek for graces, and seek them through Mary.”[5805] Otherwise, says St. Antoninus, if we ask for graces without her intercession, we shall be making an effort to fly without wings, and we shall obtain nothing: “He who asks without her as his guide, attempts to fly without wings.”[5806]

In Father Auriemma's little book, *Affetti Scambievoli,*[5807] we read of innumerable favors granted by the Mother of God to those who practised this most profitable devotion of often visiting her in her churches or before some image. We read of the graces which she granted in these visits to Blessed Albert the Great, to the Abbot Rupert, to Father Suarez, especially when she obtained for them the gift of understanding, by which they afterwards became so renowned throughout the Church for their great learning: the graces which she granted to the Venerable John Berchmans of the Society of Jesus, who was in the daily habit of visiting Mary in a chapel of the Roman college; he declared that he renounced all earthly love, to love no other after God than the Most Blessed Virgin, and had written at the foot of the image of his beloved Lady: "I will never rest until I shall have obtained a tender love for my Mother:"[5808] the graces which she granted to St. Bernardine of Sienna, who in his youth also went every day to visit her in a chapel near the city-gate, and declared that that Lady had ravished his heart. Hence he called her his beloved, and said that he could not do less than often visit her; and by her means he afterwards obtained the grace to renounce the world, and to become what he afterwards was, a great saint and the apostle of Italy.

Do you, then, be also careful always to join to your daily visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament a visit to the most holy Virgin Mary in some church, or at least before a devout image of her in your own house. If you do this with tender affection and confidence, you may hope to receive great things from this most gracious Lady, who, as St. Andrew of Crete says, always bestows great gifts on those who offer her even the least act of homage.[5809]

Mary, Queen of sweetest hope,
Who can e'er forget thee?
By thy mercy, by thy love,
Have pity, Queen, on me?

III

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

As in all the following visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament a spiritual Communion is recommended, it will be well to explain what it is, and the great advantages which result from its practice. A spiritual Communion, according to St. Thomas,[5810] consists in an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, and in lovingly embracing him as if we had actually received him.

How pleasing these spiritual Communions are to God, and the many graces which he bestows through their means, was manifested by our Lord himself to Sister Paula Maresca, the foundress of the convent of St. Catharine of Sienna in Naples, when (as it is related in her life) he showed her two precious vessels, the one of gold, the other of silver. He then told her that in the gold vessel he preserved her sacramental Communions, and in the silver one her spiritual Communions. He also told Blessed Jane of the Cross that each time that she communicated spiritually she received a grace of the same kind as the one that she received when she really communicated. Above all, it will suffice for us to know that the holy Council of Trent[5811] greatly praises spiritual Communions, and encourages the faithful to practise them.

Hence all devout souls are accustomed often to practise this holy exercise of spiritual Communion. Blessed Agatha of the Cross did so two hundred times a day. And Father Peter Faber, the first companion of St. Ignatius, used to say that it was of the highest utility to make spiritual Communions, in order to receive the sacramental Communion well.

All those who desire to advance in the love of Jesus Christ are exhorted to make a spiritual Communion at least once in every visit that they pay to the Most Blessed Sacrament, and at every Mass that they hear; and it would even be better on these occasions to repeat the Communions three times, that is to say, at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. This devotion is far more profitable than some suppose, and at the same time nothing can be easier to practise. The above-named Blessed Jane of the Cross used to say, that a spiritual Communion can be made without any one remarking it, without being fasting, without the permission of our director, and that we can make it at any time we please: an act of love does all.

MANNER OF MAKING THE VISITS[5812]

ACTS TO BE MADE BEFORE EACH VISIT TO THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, who, for the love which Thou bearest to men, remainest night and day in this Sacrament full of compassion and of love, awaiting, calling, and welcoming all who come to visit Thee: I believe that Thou art present in the Sacrament of the Altar: I adore Thee from the abyss of my nothingness, and I thank Thee for all the graces which Thou hast bestowed upon me, and in particular for having given me Thyself in this Sacrament, for having given me Thy most holy Mother Mary for my advocate, and for having called me to visit Thee in this church.

I now salute Thy most loving Heart; and this for three ends: 1. In thanksgiving for this great gift; 2. To make amends to Thee for all the outrages which Thou receivest in this Sacrament from all Thine enemies; 3. I intend by this visit to adore Thee in all the places on earth in which Thou art present in this Sacrament, and in which Thou art the least revered and the most abandoned.

My Jesus, I love Thee with my whole heart. I grieve for having hitherto so many times offended Thy infinite goodness. I purpose by Thy grace never more to offend Thee for the time to come; and now, miserable and unworthy though I be, I consecrate myself to Thee without reserve; I give Thee and renounce my entire will, my affections, my desires, and all that I possess. From henceforward do Thou dispose of me and of all that I have as Thou pleasest. All that I ask of Thee and desire is Thy holy love, final perseverance, and the perfect accomplishment of Thy will.

I recommend to Thee the souls in purgatory; but especially those who had the greatest devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. I also recommend to Thee all poor sinners.

In fine, my dear Saviour, I unite all my affections with the affections of Thy most loving Heart; and I offer them, thus united, to Thy Eternal Father, and beseech him in Thy name to vouchsafe, for Thy love, to accept and grant them.

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus, I believe that Thou art truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love Thee above all things, and I desire to possess Thee within my soul. Since I am unable now to receive Thee sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace Thee as being already there, and unite myself wholly to Thee; never permit me to be separated from Thee.

A SHORTER ACT

I believe that Thou, O Jesus, art in the Most Holy Sacrament! I love Thee and desire Thee! Come into my heart. I embrace Thee; oh, never leave me!

“May the burning and most sweet power of Thy love, O Lord Jesus Christ, I beseech Thee, absorb my mind, that I may die through love of Thy love, who wast graciously pleased to die through love of my love.”[5813]—*St. Francis of Assisi.*

“O love not loved! O love not known!”—*St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi.*

“O my spouse, when wilt Thou take me to Thyself?”—*St. Peter of Alcantara.*

Jesus, my good, my sweetest love,
Strike and inflame this heart of mine,
Make it all fire for love of Thee!

Hail to the love of Jesus, our life, and our all! Hail to Mary, our hope! Amen.

After the spiritual Communion, you will then make a visit to some image of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Read the visit of the day, and finish by the following prayer, thereby to obtain the most powerful patronage of Mary:

Most holy Immaculate Virgin and my Mother Mary, to thee who art the Mother of my Lord, the Queen of the world, the advocate, the hope, the refuge of sinners, I have recourse to-day,—I, who am the most miserable of all. I render thee my most humble homages, O Great Queen, and I thank thee for all the graces thou hast conferred on me until now, particularly for having delivered me from hell, which I have so often deserved. I love thee, O most amiable Lady; and for the love which I bear thee, I promise to serve thee always, and to do all in my power to make others love thee also. I place in thee all my hopes; I confide my salvation to thy care. Accept me for thy servant, and receive me under thy mantle, O Mother of mercy. And since thou art so powerful with God, deliver me from all temptations, or rather obtain me the strength to triumph over them until death. Of thee I ask a perfect love for Jesus Christ. From thee I hope to die a good death. O my Mother, by the love which thou bearest to God, I beseech thee to help me at all times, but especially at the last moment of my life. Leave me not, I beseech thee, until thou seest me safe in heaven, blessing thee, and singing thy mercies for all eternity. Amen. So I hope. So may it be.

VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

FOR EACH DAY OF THE MONTH

FIRST VISIT[5814]

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Say preliminary prayer, *My Lord Jesus Christ*, etc., page 123.

Behold the source of every good, Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, who says, *If any man thirst, let him come to Me.*[5815] Oh, what torrents of grace have the saints drawn from the fountain of the Most Blessed Sacrament! for there Jesus dispenses all the merits of his Passion, as it was foretold by the Prophet: *You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains.*[5816] The Countess of Feria, that illustrious disciple of the Venerable Father John d'Avila, afterwards a poor Clare, and surnamed the spouse of the Most Blessed Sacrament from her long and frequent visits to it, on being asked how she employed the many hours thus passed in the presence of the Holy of holies, answered: "I could remain there for all eternity. And is not there present the very essence of God, who will be the food of the blessed? Good God! am I asked what I do in his presence? Why am I not rather asked, what is not done there? We love, we ask, we praise, we give thanks. We ask, what does a poor man do in the presence of one who is rich? What does a sick man do in the presence of his physician? What does a man do who is parched with thirst in the presence of a clear fountain? What is the occupation of one who is starving, and is placed before a splendid table?"

O my most amiable, most sweet, most beloved Jesus, my life, my hope, my treasure, the only love of my soul; oh, what has it cost Thee to remain thus with us in this Sacrament! Thou hadst to die, that Thou mightest thus dwell amongst us on our altars; and then, how many insults hast Thou not had to endure in this Sacrament, in order to aid us by Thy presence! Thy love, and the desire which Thou hast to be loved by us, have conquered all.

Come then, O Lord! come and take possession of my heart; close its doors forever, that henceforward no creature may enter there, to divide the love which is due to Thee, and which it is my ardent desire to bestow all on

Thee. Do Thou alone, my dear Redeemer, rule me; do Thou alone possess my whole being; and if ever I do not obey Thee perfectly, chastise me with rigor, that thenceforward I may be more watchful to please Thee as Thou willest. Grant that I may no longer seek for any other pleasure than that of giving Thee pleasure; that all my pleasure may be to visit Thee often on Thy altar; to entertain myself with Thee, and to receive Thee in Holy Communion. Let all who will, seek other treasures; the only treasure that I love, the only one that I desire, is that of Thy love; for this only will I ask at the foot of the altar. Do Thou make me forget myself, that thus I may only remember Thy goodness. Ye blessed seraphim, I envy you, not for your glory, but for the love which you bear to your and my God; oh, do you teach me what I must do to love him, and to please him.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, I will love Thee only; Thee only do I desire to please.

Then follows the Spiritual Communion, page 124, after which the visit should be paid to the ever-blessed Mary, the Mother of God, before her image.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY[5817]

In our Mother Mary we have another fountain, which is indeed fruitful to us. She is so rich in good things and in graces, says St. Bernard, that there is no one in the world who does not participate in them: “Of her fulness we have all received.”[5818] The Most Blessed Virgin Mary was filled by God with grace, and as such was saluted by the angel, “Hail, full of grace;” not for herself alone, but also for us. St. Peter Chrysologus adds, that she received that great abyss of grace, that she might then impart it to all who are devout to her: “The Blessed Virgin received this grace, that she might give in return salvation to all.”[5819]

Ejaculatory prayer. Cause of our joy, pray for us![5820]

(From the Naples Edition.)

PRAYER OF ST. EPHREM

Most pure and immaculate Virgin! divine Mary, Mother of God! thou art elevated in dignity above all the saints; thou art the hope of our fathers and the joy of the elect. Through thee, as the Mother of Jesus, we have been reconciled with God. O great Queen! have compassion on us, and grant us an asylum in the arms of thy mercy. We dedicate and consecrate ourselves to thy service; suffer not the devil to draw us with him into eternal flames.

Ejaculatory prayer. Cause of our joy, pray for us.[5821]

The usual prayer, page 125.

SECOND VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123

The devout Father Nieremberg says, that bread being a food which is consumed by eating, and which keeps when preserved for use, Jesus was pleased to dwell on earth under its species, that he might thus not only be consumed by uniting himself to the souls of his lovers by means of the Holy Communion, but also that he might be preserved in the tabernacle, and be present with us, and thus remind us of the love which he bears us. St. Paul says: *He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant.*[5822] But what must we say when we see him "taking the form of bread"? "No tongue would suffice," says St. Peter of Alcantara, "to proclaim the greatness of the love which Jesus bears to every soul that is in a state of grace. In order, therefore, that his absence might not be to them an occasion of forgetting him, this most sweet Spouse, when he was pleased to quit this life, left as a memorial this Most Blessed Sacrament, in which he himself remained. He did not wish that between these souls and himself any other pledge but himself should remain, whereby to keep alive their remembrance of him."

Since, then, my Jesus, Thou art enclosed in this tabernacle to receive the supplications of miserable creatures who come to seek an audience of Thee, listen this day to the petition addressed to Thee by the most ungrateful sinner living on earth. I come repentant to Thy feet; for I now know the evil which I have committed in giving Thee displeasure. My first prayer and desire, then, is, that Thou wilt be pleased to pardon me all the sins that I have committed against Thee. Ah, my God, would that I had never offended Thee! After this I must tell Thee my next desire. Now that I have found out Thy sovereign goodness, I have become enamoured of Thee; I feel an ardent desire to love Thee and to please Thee; but I have not the strength to do this unless Thou helpest me. Manifest, O great Lord, Thy supreme power, and Thy immense goodness to the whole court of heaven; change me from a great rebel, such as I have hitherto been to Thee, into a great lover of Thee. Thou canst do so, and I know that such is Thy will; supply all that is wanting in me, that thus I may be enabled to love Thee much—at least that I may love Thee as much as I have offended Thee. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee above all things; I love Thee more than my life, my God, my love, my all!

Ejaculatory prayer. My God and my all.

Spiritual Communion, page 124

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Let us go with confidence to the throne of grace: that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.[5823] St. Antoninus says,[5824] that Mary is this throne, from which God dispenses all graces.

O most amiable Queen, since thou hast so great a desire to help sinners, behold a great sinner who has recourse to thee; help me much, and help me without delay!

Ejaculatory Prayer. Sole refuge of sinners, have mercy on me.[5825]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. EPHREM

O Queen of the universe and most bountiful sovereign! thou art the great advocate of sinners, the sure port of those who have suffered shipwreck, the resource of the world, the ransom of captives, the solace of the weak, the consolation of the afflicted, the refuge and salvation of every creature. O full of grace enlighten my understanding, and loosen my tongue, that I may recount thy praises, and sing to thee the angelical salutation, which thou so justly deservest. Hail, thou who art the peace, the joy, the consolation of the whole world! Hail, paradise of delight, the assured asylum of all who are in danger, the source of grace, the mediatrix between God and man!

Ejaculatory Prayer. Refuge of sinners, take pity on me.

The usual prayer, page 125.

THIRD VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123

And My delights were to be with the children of men.[5826] Behold our Jesus, who, not satisfied with dying on earth for our love, is pleased even after his death to dwell with us in the Most Holy Sacrament, declaring that he finds his delights among men. “O men,” exclaims St. Teresa, “how can you offend a God who declares that it is with you that he finds his delights!” Jesus finds his delights with us; and shall we not find ours with Jesus? And we especially who have had the honor to dwell in his palace? How greatly do those vassals esteem themselves honored to whom the king assigns an abode in his own residence! Behold the palace of the King; it is this house in which we dwell with Jesus Christ. Let us, then, learn to thank him for it, and to avail ourselves of conversing with Jesus Christ.

Behold me, then, O my Lord and God, before this altar, on which Thou dost reside night and day for my sake. Thou art the source of every good; Thou art the healer of every ill; Thou art the treasure of every poor creature. Behold now at Thy feet a sinner, who is of all the poorest and most infirm, and who asks Thy mercy; have pity upon me! Now that I see Thee in this Sacrament, come down from heaven upon earth only to do me good; I will not be disheartened at the sight of my misery. I praise Thee, I thank Thee, I love Thee; and if Thou willest that I should ask Thee for an alms, I will ask for this. O listen to me: I desire never more to offend Thee; and I desire that Thou shouldst give me light and grace to love Thee with all my strength. Lord, I love Thee with my whole soul; I love Thee with all my affections. Do Thou grant that I may thus speak with truth; and that I may speak in the same way during life and for all eternity. Most holy Virgin Mary, my holy patron saints, ye angels and all ye blessed spirits of paradise, help me to love my most amiable God.

Ejaculatory Prayer. O Good Shepherd, true bread, Jesus, have mercy on us: do Thou feed us; do Thou guard us; do Thou show us good things in the land of the living![5827]

Spiritual Communion, page 124

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Her bands are a healthful binding.[5828] The devout Pelbart says[5829] that devotion to Mary is a chain of predestination. Let us beseech our sovereign Lady to bind us always more closely by the chains of love to confidence in her protection.

Ejaculatory Prayer. O clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary.[5830]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. GERMANUS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Most holy Virgin! who art the greatest consolation that I receive from God, thou who art the heavenly dew which assuages all my pains, thou who art the light of my soul when it is enveloped in darkness, thou who art my guide in unknown paths, the support of my weakness, my treasure in poverty, my remedy in sickness, my consolation in trouble, my refuge in misery, and the hope of my salvation; hear my supplications, have pity on me, as becomes the mother of so good a God, and obtain for me a favorable reception of all my petitions at the throne of mercy.[5831]

Ejaculatory Prayer. O merciful, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary.

The usual prayer, page 125.

FOURTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123

Her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness.[5832] Friends on earth find such pleasure in being together, that they lose entire days in each other's company: with Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, those who love him not, get weary. After her death, St. Teresa, who was already in heaven, said to a nun: "Those who are in heaven and those who are on earth should be one and the same in purity and in love; we enjoying, and you suffering; and that which we do in heaven with the divine Essence, you should do on earth with the Most Blessed Sacrament."[5833] Behold, then, our paradise on earth;—the Most Blessed Sacrament.

O immaculate Lamb, sacrificed for us upon the cross, remember that I am one of those souls that Thou hast redeemed by so many sufferings, and by Thy death. Grant that Thou mayest be mine, and that I may never lose Thee, since Thou hast given Thyself to me, and givest Thyself every day, sacrificing Thyself for my love on the altar; and grant that I may be all Thine. I give myself to Thee without reserve, that Thou mayest dispose of me as Thou pleasest. I give Thee my will; chain it with the sweet bonds of Thy love, that it may forever be the slave of Thy most holy will. I wish no longer to live for the satisfaction of my desires, but only to please Thy goodness. Destroy in me all that does not please Thee; grant me the grace never to have any other thought than to please Thee, any other desire than that which Thou desirest. I love Thee, O my dear Saviour, with my whole heart; I love Thee because Thou desirest that I should love Thee; I love Thee because Thou art indeed worthy of my love. I grieve that I love Thee not as much as Thou deservest. I desire, Lord, to die for Thy love; accept my desire and give me thy love. Amen.

Ejaculatory Prayer. O good pleasure of my God, I sacrifice myself all to Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Mary says: *I am the Mother of fair love;*[5834] that is to say, she is the Mother of that love which beautifies souls. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi saw the Most Blessed Virgin Mary going about dispensing a sweet liquid, which was divine love. This gift is dispensed only by Mary; from Mary let us seek it.

Ejaculatory Prayer. My Mother, my hope, make me belong wholly to Jesus.

[From the Naples Edition]

PRAYER OF ST. GERMANUS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

O sovereign Queen! thou art our defence and our joy. Make me worthy to share with thee the happiness which thou enjoyest in heaven. Yes, my refuge, my defence, my strength, my hope, obtain for me, by thy powerful intercession, a place with thee in paradise. Being the mother of God, thou canst obtain it if thou pleasest.[5835] O Mary! thou art all-powerful in saving sinners, and, being the Mother of mercy, thou canst want no inducement to save them by thy intercession.[5836]

Ejaculatory Prayer. O my Mother and my hope! obtain for me the grace to be devoted entirely to Jesus.

The usual prayer, page 125.

FIFTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

The sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself, where she may lay her young ones! Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.[5837] The sparrow, says David, finds a dwelling in houses; turtle-doves in nests; but Thou, my king and my God, hast made Thyself a nest and found a dwelling on earth on our altars, that we might find Thee, and that Thou mightest dwell amongst us.

Lord, we cannot but say, that Thou art too much enamoured of men; Thou no longer knowest what to do to gain their love. But do Thou, my most amiable Jesus, give us the grace that we also may be passionately enamoured of Thee. It would indeed be unreasonable were we cold in our love towards a God who loves us with such affection. Draw us to Thee by the sweet attractions of Thy love; make us understand the endearing claims which Thou hast on our love.

O infinite Majesty and infinite Goodness, Thou lovest men so much, Thou hast done so much that Thou mightest be loved by men: how is it, then, that amongst men there are so few who love Thee? I will no longer be as I have hitherto been, of the unhappy number of those ungrateful creatures: I am resolved to love Thee as much as I can, and to love no other than Thee: Thou deservest it; Thou commandest me with so much earnestness to do so, I am resolved to satisfy Thee. Grant, O God of my soul, that I may fully satisfy Thee. I entreat Thee to grant me this favor by the merits of Thy Passion, and I confidently hope for it. Bestow the goods of the earth on those who desire them; I desire and seek the great treasure of Thy love alone. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee, infinite Goodness. Thou art all my riches, my whole satisfaction, my entire love.

Ejaculatory Prayer. My Jesus, Thou hast given Thy whole self to me; I give my whole self to Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

My Lady, St. Bernard calls thee “the ravisher of hearts.”[5838] He says that thou goest about stealing hearts by the charms of thy beauty and goodness. Steal also my heart and will, I beseech thee: I give them wholly to thee; offer them to God with thine own.

Ejaculatory Prayer. Mother most amiable, pray for me![5839]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD.

We look up to thee, O Queen of the world, for protection. After a life of so much sin and ingratitude, we have to appear before our Judge, and who shall appease his wrath? No one is so well qualified to do this as thyself, who didst love him so tenderly, and was so tenderly loved by him. O Mother of mercy, open then thy ears to our sighs and prayers. Thou dost not look with disdain on the sinner, however enormous his crimes may have been; if with sincere repentance he cries out to thee and entreats thy intercession, thou despisest him not. Thou animatest and consolest him, and dost not abandon him, until thou hast reconciled him with his Judge.[5840]

We fly, therefore, to thy protection, entreating thee to appease the indignation of thy Son, and to restore us to His grace.

Ejaculatory Prayer. O Mary! show thyself a mother to us.

The usual prayer, page 125.

SIXTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.[5841]—Jesus Christ says, that where a person esteems his treasure to be, there also he keeps his affections. Therefore the saints, who neither esteem nor love any other treasure than Jesus Christ, centre their hearts and all their love in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

My most amiable Jesus, hidden under the sacramental veils, who for the love which Thou bearest me remainest night and day imprisoned in this tabernacle, draw, I beseech Thee, my whole heart to Thee, that I may think of none but Thee, that I may love and seek and hope for Thee alone. Do this by the merits of Thy Passion, through which I seek and hope for it.

Ah, my sacramental Lord and divine Lover, how amiable and tender are the inventions of Thy love to gain the love of souls! O Eternal Word, Thou, in becoming man, wast not satisfied with dying for us; Thou hast also given us this sacrament as a companion, as food, and as a pledge of heaven. Thou reducest Thyself so as to appear amongst us, at one time as an infant in a stable, at another as a poor man in a workshop, then as a criminal on a gibbet, and now as bread on an altar. Tell me, couldst Thou invent other means to win our love?

O infinite goodness, when shall I really begin to correspond with such refinements of love? Lord, I will only live to love Thee alone. And of what use is life to me, if I do not spend it wholly in loving and pleasing Thee, my beloved Redeemer, who hast poured out Thy whole life for me? And what have I to love, if it is not Thee, who art all beauty, all condescension, all goodness, all loving, all worthy of love? May my soul live only to love Thee; may the sole remembrance of Thy love dissolve my soul with love; may the very names of crib, and cross, and sacrament inflame it with the desire to do great things for Thee, O my Jesus, who hast indeed done and suffered great things for me!

Ejaculatory Prayer. Grant, my Lord, that before I die I may do something for Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

As a fair olive-tree in the plain.[5842] I am, says Mary, the beautiful olive-tree from which the oil of mercy always flows. And I stand in the plain, that all may see me, and that all may have recourse to me. “Remember (let us say in the words of the prayer of St. Bernard), O most compassionate Mary, that it has never been heard of in any age, that any one having recourse to thy protection was abandoned by thee.”[5843] Most merciful Queen, such a thing was never heard of, that any one having recourse to thy aid was abandoned: I will not be the first unfortunate creature who, having recourse to thee, was abandoned.

Ejaculatory Prayer. O Mary, grant me the grace always to have recourse to thee!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD

O Mary! thou art the only woman on whom the Saviour of the world has poured the treasures of his grace without measure; hence we are taught to honor thy chaste womb as the temple of God, wherein he was pleased to begin the great work of our redemption, the reconciliation of God with man. Thou, O mother of God, art that spiritual garden, whose fruit is never gathered by the hands of sinners. Thou art that hallowed soil where God has planted all the flowers which adorn his church, and amongst the rest, the holy virtues of humility, purity, and charity, which are greater ornaments to the souls of men than violets, lilies, and roses are to the earth. Thou art the paradise of God, whence flows the stream of living water to moisten the earth. Oh, what benefits were bestowed on the world through thee, when thou wast selected to be the fortunate channel of so many graces!

Ejaculatory Prayer. Hail! our life, our sweetness, and our hope.[5844]

The usual prayer, page 125.

SEVENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.[5845] Thus our loving shepherd, who has given his life for us who are His sheep, would not separate himself from us by death. Behold me, he says, beloved sheep; I am always with you; for you I have remained on earth in this Sacrament; here you find me whenever you please, to help and console you by my presence: I will not leave you until the end of the world, as long as you are on earth. The Bride-groom, says St. Peter of Alcantara, wished to leave his bride company, that she might not remain alone during so long an absence; and therefore he left this Sacrament, in which he himself, the best companion he could leave her, remains.

My sweetest Lord, my most amiable Saviour, I am now visiting Thee on this altar; but Thou returnest me the visit with far other love when Thou enterest my soul in the Holy Communion. Thou art then not only present to me, but Thou becomest my food; Thou unitest and givest Thy whole self to me, so that I can then say with truth, My Jesus, Thou art now all mine. Since, then, Thou givest Thyself all to me, it is reasonable that I should give myself all to Thee. I am a worm, and Thou art God. O God of love! O love of my soul! when shall I find myself all Thine, in deeds, and not only in words? Thou canst do this; by the merits of Thy blood increase my confidence, that I may at once obtain this grace of Thee, that I may find myself all Thine, and in nothing mine own. Thou graciously nearest, O Lord, the prayers of all; hear now the prayers of a soul that indeed desires really to love Thee. I desire to love Thee with all my strength, I desire to obey Thee in all that Thou willest, without self-interest, without consolations, without reward. I wish to serve Thee through love, only to please Thee, only to content Thy heart, which is so passionately enamoured of me. My reward will be to love Thee. O beloved Son of the eternal Father, take possession of my liberty, of my will, of all that I possess, and of my entire self, and give me Thyself. I love Thee, I seek after Thee, I sigh after Thee; I desire Thee, I desire Thee, I desire Thee!

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, make me all Thine own!

Spiritual Communion, page 124

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

O our own most amiable Lady, the whole Church proclaims and salutes thee as "our hope"! Thou, then, who art the hope of all, be also my hope. St. Bernard called thee "the whole ground of his hope,"[5846] and said: "Let him who despairs hope in thee."[5847] Thus also will I address thee: My own Mary, thou savest even those who are in despair; in thee I place all my hope.

Ejaculatory prayer. Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD

O Blessed Queen! it is of thee the prophet speaks when he says, "Who is she that riseth like the day-star, beautiful as the moon, brilliant as the sun?"[5848] Yes, thou didst appear in the world like the bright day-star, preceding by the light of thy sanctity the coming of the Sun of Justice. The day on which thou camest into the world may well be styled a day of salvation and a day of grace. Thou art beautiful as the moon; because as none of the celestial bodies so nearly resembles the sun as it does, so there is no creature whose perfections so nearly approach to those of God as thy own. The moon enlightens the night by reflecting the rays of the sun, and thou enlightenest our darkness by the splendor of those virtues with which God has adorned thee. But thou art even more beautiful than the moon, because in thee is found neither spot nor shade; thou art brilliant like the sun; I mean that divine Sun who created the one which enlightens the earth, for, as he in his humanity is the most resplendent among men, so art thou the brightest amongst women.[5849]

Ejaculatory prayer. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners.[5850]

The usual prayer, page 125.

EIGHTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

To every soul that visits Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, he addresses the words which he said to the Sacred Spouse: *Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come.*[5851] Thou, O soul, that visitest me, “arise” from thy miseries; I am here to enrich thee with graces. “Make haste,” approach, come near me; fear not my majesty, which has humbled itself in this Sacrament in order to take away thy fear, and to give thee confidence. “My beloved,” thou art no longer my enemy, but my friend; since thou lovest me and I love thee. “My beautiful one,” my grace has made thee fair. “And come,” draw near and cast thyself into my arms, and ask me with the greatest confidence for whatever thou willest.

St. Teresa says that this great king of glory has disguised himself in the Sacrament under the species of bread, and that he has concealed his majesty to encourage us to approach his divine heart with greater confidence. Let us, then, draw near to Jesus with great confidence and affection; let us unite ourselves to him, and let us ask him for graces.

O Eternal Word made man, and present for my sake in this Sacrament, what joy should be mine now that I stand in Thy presence, who art my God, who art infinite majesty and infinite goodness, and hast so tender an affection for my soul! Ye souls who love God, wherever you may be, either in heaven or on earth, love him for me also. Mary, my Mother, help me to love him. And Thou, most beloved Lord, make Thyself the object of all my love. Make Thyself the Lord of my entire will; possess my entire self. I consecrate my whole mind to Thee, that it may always be occupied with the thought of Thy goodness; I also consecrate my body to Thee, that it may help me to please Thee; I consecrate my soul to Thee, that it may be all Thine. Would, O beloved of my soul, that all men could know the tenderness of the love which Thou bearest them, that all might live only to honor Thee and to please Thee, as Thou desirest and deservest. Grant that at least I may always live enamoured of Thy infinite beauty. From this day forward my desire is to do all that I can to be pleasing to Thee. I now resolve to abandon everything, be it what it may, as soon as I perceive that it displeases Thee, however much it may cost me, even should it be necessary for this purpose to lose all, or even to lay down my life. Fortunate indeed shall I be, if I lose all to gain Thee, my God, my treasure, my love, my all!

Ejaculatory prayer. Jesus, my love, take all that I have; take full possession of me!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Whoever is a little one, let him come to me.[5852] Mary invites all children who need a mother to have recourse to her, as to the most loving of all mothers. The devout Nieremberg says, that the love of all mothers is a shadow in comparison with the love which Mary bears to each one of us.[5853] My Mother, mother of my soul, thou who lovest me, and desirest my salvation more than any other after God, O Mother, "show thyself a Mother."[5854]

Ejaculatory prayer. My Mother, grant that I may always remember thee!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD.

Sweet and amiable Mary, no one can pronounce thy name without feeling the greatest desire of loving thee; and they who love thee cannot call thee to mind without being animated to love thee more. Pray for us to thy divine Son that he would vouchsafe to strengthen our weakness: no one is better entitled to speak in our favor to thy God and ours, than thyself, who art nearest to him. Intercede, then, for us, O blessed Mother, because thy Son hears thee, and thou canst obtain whatever thou askest.[5855]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, obtain for me the grace to have continual recourse to thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

NINTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, page 123.

St. John says that he saw our Lord girt up with a golden girdle, which supported his breasts: *I saw the Son of Man girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*[5856] Thus also is Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar, with his breasts all filled with milk; that is to say, with the graces which, in his mercy, he desires to bestow upon us. And as a mother, whose breasts are overcharged with milk, goes about seeking for children who may draw it off, and relieve her of its weight,[5857] so also does he call out to us, *You shall be carried at the breasts.*[5858]

The Venerable Father Alvarez saw Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with his hands filled with graces, and seeking to whom he might dispense them. Of St. Catharine of Sienna it is related, that when she approached the Most Holy Sacrament, she did so precisely with the same loving avidity with which a child flies to its mother's breast.

O most beloved and only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, I know that Thou art the object most worthy of being loved. I desire to love Thee as much as Thou deservest to be loved, or at least as much as a soul can ever desire to love Thee. I fully understand that I, who am a traitor, and so great a rebel to Thy love, deserve not to love Thee, neither do I deserve to approach Thee so near as I now am in this church. But I feel that Thou, for all this, seekest my love; I hear Thee say, *My son, give me thy heart.*[5859] *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*[5860] I understand that it is for this end that Thou hast spared my life, and not sent me to hell, that I might be converted and turn all my affections to Thee. Since, then, Thou art pleased that even I should love Thee, oh, yes, my God, I will do so. Behold me: to Thee I yield myself up; I give myself to Thee; I love Thee. O God! all goodness, all love, I choose Thee for the only king and lord of my poor heart. Thou desirest it, and my will is to give it to Thee: it is cold, it is loathsome; but if Thou acceptest it, Thou wilt change it. Change me, my Lord, change me; I no longer have courage to live as I have hitherto done, un grateful, and with so little love towards Thy infinite goodness, which loves me so much, and deserves an in finite love. Enable me to supply from this day forward for all the love which I have hitherto failed to bear Thee.

Ejaculatory Prayer. My God, my God, I will love Thee, I will love Thee, I will love Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

In all things like to her Son Jesus is his Mother Mary; and as she is the Mother of mercy, she is thrice happy when she helps and consoles the miserable. So great is the desire of this Mother to bestow graces on all, that Bernardine de Bustis says, that “she desires more to do us good, and to impart to us graces, than we can desire to receive them.”[5861]

Ejaculatory prayer. Hail, our hope![5862]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. JOHN DAMASCENE

Hail! Mary, the hope of Christians. Hear the petition of a sinner, who wishes to love thee with the greatest tenderness, and to honor thee as thou deservest, and who reposes in thee, next to God, his hope of salvation. Being indebted to thee for the preservation of my life, I entreat thee to restore me to the grace of thy divine Son. Thou art the surest pledge of my salvation; deliver me, then, by thy prayers, from the heavy load of my sins. Disperse the darkness of my understanding; banish every inordinate affection from my heart; repress the temptations of my spiritual enemies, and so order my life that, under thy protection, I may arrive at eternal repose in heaven.[5863]

Ejaculatory prayer. O my Mother, obtain for me the grace that I may always remember thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

TENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

O foolish ones of the world, says St. Augustine, miserable creatures, where are you going to satisfy your hearts? Come to Jesus; for by him alone can that pleasure which you seek be bestowed. “Unhappy creatures, whither are you going? The good you seek for comes from him.”[5864] My soul, be not of the number of these foolish ones; seek God alone: “seek for that one good in which are all good things.”[5865] And if thou desirest soon to find him, behold, he is close to thee; tell him what thou desirest, since for this end it is that he is in the ciborium, to console thee, and to grant thy prayer. St. Teresa says that all are not allowed to speak to their king: the most that can be hoped for is to communicate with him through a third person. To converse with Thee, O King of glory, no third person is needed; Thou art always ready in the Sacrament of the Altar to give audience to all. All who desire Thee always find Thee there, and converse with Thee face to face. And even if any one at length succeeds in speaking with a king, how many difficulties has he had to overcome before he can do so! Kings grant audiences only a few times in the year; but Thou, in this Sacrament, grantest audience to all night and day, and whenever we please.

O Sacrament of love, Thou who, whether Thou givest Thyself in the Communion, or dwellest on the altar, knowest, by the tender attractions of Thy love, how to draw so many hearts to Thyself, who, enamoured of Thee, and filled with amazement at the sight of such love, burn with joy, and think always of Thee; draw also my miserable heart to Thyself; for it desires to love Thee, and to live enslaved by Thy love. For my part, I now and henceforward place all my interests, all my hopes, and all my affections, my soul, my body,—I place all in the hands of Thy goodness. Accept me, O Lord, and dispose of me as Thou pleasest. I will never again complain, O my love, of Thy holy dispensations; I know that, as they all take their source in Thy loving heart, they all will be full of love, and for my good. It is enough for me to know that Thou willest them; I will them also in time and in eternity. Do all that Thou willest in me and with me; I unite my entire self to Thy will, which is all holy, all good, all beautiful, all perfect, all loving. O will of my God, how dear art thou to me! My will is ever to live and die united to and bound up with Thee. Thy pleasure is my pleasure. I will that Thy desires shall also be my desires. My God, my God, help me; make me henceforward live for Thee alone; make me will only what Thou willest, and make me live only to love Thy amiable will. Grant that I may die for Thy love, since Thou hast died and become food for me. I curse those days in which I did my own will, so much to Thy displeasure. I love thee, O will of God, as much as I love God, since thou art one with him. I love Thee, then, with my whole heart, and give myself all to Thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. O will of God, thou art my love!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The great Queen says, *With me are riches . . . that I may enrich them that love me.*[5866] Let us love Mary, if we would be rich in graces. The writer who calls himself “the Idiot” styles her “the treasurer of graces.”[5867] Blessed is he who has recourse to Mary with love and confidence. My Mother, my hope, thou canst make me a saint; from thee I hope for this favor.

Ejaculatory prayer. Mother most amiable, pray for me![5868]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. ANDREW OF JERUSALEM

Hail! Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with thee. Hail! source of our joy. Through thee, as the Mother of Jesus, the sentence of our condemnation has been revoked, and changed into a judgment of benediction. Hail, temple of the Deity’s glory, sacred dwelling of the King of Heaven; thou art the reconciliation of God with man. Hail, Mother of our bliss; thou art truly blessed, because thou wast the only one amongst women found worthy to be the Mother of thy Creator. All nations call thee blessed.[5869] If I place my confidence in thee I shall be saved. Under thy protection I have nothing to fear, because, in being devoted to thee, I hold in my hand the most assured arms of salvation, which the Almighty grants only to those whom he wishes in a special manner to save.

Ejaculatory Prayer. We fly to thy protection, O sacred Mother of God!

The usual prayer, page 125.

ELEVENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

“Let us be careful,” says St. Teresa, “never to be at a distance from Jesus our beloved Shepherd, nor to lose sight of him; for the sheep which are near their shepherd are always more caressed and better fed, and always receive some choice morsels of that which he himself eats. If by chance the shepherd sleeps, still the lamb remains near him, and either waits until his slumber ends, or itself awakens him; and it is then caressed with new favors.”

My Redeemer, present in this Most Holy Sacrament, behold me near Thee: the only favor which I ask of Thee is, fervor and perseverance in Thy love. I thank thee, O holy faith; for thou teachest and assurest me that in the divine Sacrament of the Altar, in that heavenly bread, bread does not exist; but that my Lord Jesus Christ is all there, and that he is there for love of me. My Lord and my all, I believe that Thou art present in the Most Holy Sacrament; and though unknown to eyes of flesh, by the light of holy faith I discern Thee in the consecrated Host, as the monarch of heaven and earth, and as the Saviour of the world. Ah, my most sweet Jesus! as Thou art my hope, my salvation, my strength, my consolation, so also I will that Thou shouldst be all my love, and the only subject of all my thoughts, of my desires, and of my affections. I rejoice more in the supreme happiness which Thou enjoyest, and wilt enjoy forever, than in any good thing which I could ever have in time or in eternity. My supreme satisfaction is, that Thou, my beloved Redeemer, art supremely happy, and that Thy happiness is infinite. Reign, reign, my Lord, over my whole soul; I give it all to Thee; do Thou ever possess it. May my will, my senses, and my faculties be all servants of Thy love, and may they never in this world serve for anything else than to give Thee satisfaction and glory. Such was thy life, O first lover and Mother of my Jesus! Most holy Mary, do thou help me; do thou obtain for me the grace to live henceforward, as thou didst always live, in the happiness of belonging to God alone.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, may I be all Thine, and be Thou all mine!

Spiritual Communion, page 124

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Blessed is the man . . . that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors.[5870] Blessed is he who, like the poor who stand before the gates of the rich, is careful to seek for the alms of graces before the doors of the mercy of Mary! And thrice blessed is he who moreover seeks to imitate the virtues which he remarks in Mary, and more especially her purity and humility!

Ejaculatory prayer. My hope, help me!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. ANDREW OF CRETE OR OF JERUSALEM.

Mother of mercy! appease the anger of thy Son. Whilst thou wast upon earth, thou didst occupy only a small portion of it: but being now seated in the highest heavens, we look up to thee as the general mediatrix of all nations. We entreat thee, O sacred Virgin! to grant us the assistance of thy prayers, which are more desirable and more precious than all the treasures of the earth. Thy prayers move the Almighty to pardon our sins, and obtain for us the most abundant graces, to enable us to practise the virtues of a Christian life; they arrest the progress of our enemies, frustrate their designs, and triumph over the efforts of their malice.[5871]

Ejaculatory prayer. Mary! thou art my consolation, and, after Jesus, the foundation of my hope.[5872]

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWELFTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123

God is charity; and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.[5873] He who loves Jesus dwells with Jesus, and Jesus with him. *If any one love Me . . . My Father will love him; and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.*[5874] When St. Philip Neri received the Holy Communion as Viaticum, on seeing the Most Blessed Sacrament enter his room, he exclaimed: “Behold my love! behold my love!” Let each one of us, then, say, here in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament: Behold my love! behold the object of all my love for my whole life and for all eternity!

Since, then, my Lord and my God, Thou hast said in the Gospel that he who loves Thee will be beloved by Thee, and that Thou wilt come and dwell in him, and never more leave him, I love Thee above every other good: do Thou, then, also love me; for I, indeed, esteem being loved by Thee above all the kingdoms of the world. Come and fix Thy dwelling in the poor house of my soul in such a way that Thou mayest no more depart from me; or rather, so that I may never more drive Thee from me. Thou dost not go, if Thou art not expelled; but as I have already done this, so I might do again. Ah, never allow such a fresh act of wickedness, such horrible ingratitude, to be perpetrated in the world, as that I, who have been so especially favored by Thee, and who have received so many graces, should again drive Thee from my soul! But this might happen. I therefore, my Lord, desire death, if it so pleases Thee; that by dying united to Thee, I may live united to Thee forever. Yes, my Jesus; for this I hope. I embrace Thee; I press Thee to my poor heart; grant that I may always love Thee, and always be beloved by Thee. Yes, my most amiable Redeemer, I will always love

Thee; and Thou wilt always love me. I trust that our love will ever be mutual, O God of my soul, and this for all eternity. Amen.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, I desire always to love Thee, and always to be beloved by Thee.

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

They that work by me shall not sin.[5875] He, says Mary, who endeavors to honor me shall persevere to the end. *They that explain me shall have life everlasting;*[5876] and those who endeavor to make me known and loved by others will be of the number of the elect. Promise, then, that whenever you can, be it in public or in private, you will speak of the glories of Mary, and of devotion to her.

Ejaculatory prayer. Vouchsafe that I may praise Thee, most sacred Virgin![5877]

[According to the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. ILDEFONSUS.

O my Sovereign, and Mother of my God, thou art blessed amongst all women, pure amongst all virgins, and queen of all the heavenly host; all nations pronounce thee blessed. Vouchsafe that I may publish as much as possible thy greatness, that I may love thee to the utmost of my power, and that I may serve thee with all the capacity of my soul.

Ejaculatory prayer. Vouchsafe that I may praise thee, O blessed Virgin.[5878]

The usual prayer, page 125.

THIRTEENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

My eyes and my heart shall be there always.[5879] Behold, Jesus has verified this beautiful promise in the Sacrament of the Altar, wherein he dwells with us night and day.

My Lord, would it not have been enough hadst Thou remained in this Sacrament only during the day, when Thou couldst have had adorers of Thy presence to keep Thee company; but why remain also the whole night, when the churches are all closed, and when men retire to their homes, leaving Thee quite alone? Ah, yes! I already understand Thee: love has made Thee our prisoner; the excessive love which Thou bearest us has so bound Thee down on earth, that neither night nor day canst Thou leave us. Ah, most amiable Saviour, this refinement of love alone should oblige all men ever to stay with Thee in the sacred ciboriums, and to remain with Thee until forcibly compelled to leave Thee; and when they do so, they should all leave at the foot of the altar their hearts and affections inflamed with love towards an Incarnate God, who remains alone and enclosed in a tabernacle, all eyes to see and provide for them in their necessities, and all heart to love them, and who awaits the coming day to be again visited by his beloved souls.

Yes, my Jesus, I will please Thee; I consecrate my whole will and all my affections to Thee. O infinite Majesty of God, Thou hast left Thyself in this divine Sacrament, not only that Thou mightest be present with us and near us, but principally to communicate Thyself to Thy beloved souls. But, Lord, who will presume to approach Thee to feed upon Thy flesh? and who, on the other hand, can keep at a distance from Thee? For this purpose Thou concealest Thyself in the consecrated Host, that Thou mayest enter into us and possess our hearts. Thou burnest with the desire of being received by us, and Thou rejoicest in being there united with us. Come, then, my Jesus, come; I desire to receive Thee within myself, that Thou mayest be the God of my heart and of my will. All that is within me I yield, my dear Redeemer, to Thy love; satisfactions, pleasures, self-will, all I give up to Thee. O Love, O God of love, reign, triumph over my entire self; destroy and sacrifice all in me which is mine and not Thine. Permit not, O my Love, that my soul, which, having received Thee in the Holy Communion, is filled with the Majesty of God, should again attach itself to creatures. I love Thee, my God, I love Thee; and I will love Thee alone and forever.

Ejaculatory prayer. Draw me by the chains of Thy love![5880]

Spiritual Communion, page 125.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

St. Bernard exhorts us, saying: “Let us seek for grace, and let us seek it by Mary.”[5881] “She,” says St. Peter Damian, “is the treasure of divine graces.”[5882] She can enrich us, and she desires to do so. She therefore invites and calls us, saying: *Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me.*[5883] Most amiable Lady, most exalted Lady, most gracious Lady, look on a poor sinner who recommends himself to Thee, and who places all his confidence in Thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God![5884]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. ILDEFONSUS

Most humble handmaid of thy divine Son! I prostrate myself before thee, conjuring thee to obtain pardon of my sins, that I may be cleansed from all the imperfections of my life. I entreat thee to procure me the grace of being always united to God and to thee, and to be ever a faithful servant of thy Son and of thee: of thy Son, as my Lord and my Redeemer; and of thee, as the cause of my redemption: for if he has paid the price of my redemption, it was with the body which he received from thee.[5885]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! obtain for me confidence in thy intercession, and the grace that I may continually have recourse to thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

FOURTEENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Most amiable Jesus, I hear Thee say from this tabernacle in which Thou art present, *This is my rest forever and ever; here will I dwell, for I have chosen it.*[5886] Since, then, Thou hast chosen Thy dwelling on our altars in the midst of us, remaining there in the Most Holy Sacrament, and since Thy love for us makes Thee there find Thy repose, it is but just that our hearts also should ever dwell with Thee in affection, and should find all pleasure and repose in Thee. Blessed are you, O loving souls, who can find no sweeter repose in the world than in remaining near to your Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament! And blessed should I be, my Lord, did I from this time forward find no greater delight than in remaining always in Thy presence, or in always thinking of Thee, who in the Most Holy Sacrament art always thinking of me and of my welfare.

Ah, my Lord! and why have I lost so many years, in which I have not loved Thee? O miserable years, I curse you; and I bless Thee, O infinite patience of my God, for having for so many years borne with me, though so ungrateful to Thy love. And still, notwithstanding this ingratitude, Thou waitest for me: and why, my God, why? It is, that one day, overcome by Thy mercies and by Thy love, I may yield wholly to Thee. Lord, I will no longer resist, I will no longer be ungrateful. It is but just that I should consecrate to Thee the time, be it long or short, which I have still to live. I hope for Thy help, O my Jesus, to become entirely Thine. Thou didst favor me so much when I fled from Thee and despised Thy love; how much more may I now hope that Thou wilt favor me, now that I seek and desire to love Thee! Give me, then, the grace to love Thee, O God, worthy of infinite love. I love Thee with my whole heart; I love Thee above all things; I love Thee more than myself, more than my life. I am sorry for having offended

Thee, O infinite goodness: pardon me; and with Thy pardon grant me the grace to love Thee much in this life until death, and in the next life for all eternity. O Almighty God, show the world the greatness of Thy power, in the prodigy of a soul ungrateful as mine has been becoming one of Thy greatest lovers. Do this by Thy merits, my Jesus. It is my ardent desire, and I resolve thus to love Thee during my whole life: do Thou, who inspirest me with this desire, give me also the strength to accomplish it.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, I thank Thee for having waited for me until now!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

St. Germanus, addressing the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, says: “No one is saved but through thee; no one is delivered from evils but through thee; there is no one on whom any gift is bestowed but through thee.”[5887] Therefore, my Lady and my hope, if thou dost not help me I am lost, and shall be unable to bless thee in heaven. But, Lady, I hear all the saints say that thou never abandonest those who have recourse to thee. He only is lost who has not recourse to thee. I, then, miserable creature that I am, have recourse to thee, and in thee place all my hopes.

Ejaculatory prayer, in the words of St. Bernard. Mary is my whole confidence; she is the whole ground of my hope![5888]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. ANSELM.

We entreat thee, most Sacred Virgin, by that fulness of grace, whereby thou wast elevated to the highest degree of dignity and glory which a pure creature can possibly attain, that thou wouldst procure for us a fellowship with thee in glory. Pray for us, that we may obtain that happiness, to purchase which for us God vouchsafed to become man in thy immaculate womb. Be not deaf to our supplications; whatever thou askest of thy Son, he will grant to us: if thou desirest our salvation, and prayest for it, we are sure to be saved. But if thou dost shut the bowels of thy mercy against us; if thou, who art the Mother of clemency. dost not take pity on us, what will be our lot when thy Son shall appear in judgment?

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! behold our danger, and have compassion on us.

The usual prayer, page 125

FIFTEENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?[5889] Father Francis Olimpio, the Theatine, used to say that there was nothing on earth which enkindled so ardent flames of divine love in the hearts of men as the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Hence our Lord showed himself to St. Catharine of Sienna in this Blessed Sacrament as a furnace of love, from which issued forth torrents of divine flames, spreading themselves over the whole earth: so much so, indeed, that the saint, in perfect astonishment, wondered how it was possible that men could live without burning with love for such love on the part of God towards them.

My Jesus, make me burn with the desire of Thee; grant that all my thoughts, and sighs, and desires, and seekings, may be for Thee alone. Oh, happy should I be, did this Thy heavenly fire fully possess me, and as I advance in years, gradually consume all earthly affections in me!

O divine Word! O my own Jesus! I see Thee all sacrificed, all annihilated, and so to say destroyed on the altar, for my love. It is, then, but right that, as Thou sacrificest Thyself as a victim of love for me, I at least should consecrate myself wholly to Thee. Yes, my God and my sovereign Lord, I now sacrifice to Thee my whole soul, my entire self, my whole will and my whole life. I unite this poor sacrifice of mine, O Eternal Father, to the infinite sacrifice of himself which Jesus, Thy Son and my Saviour, once offered to Thee on the cross, and which he now offers to Thee so many times every day on our altars. Accept it, then, through the merits of Jesus; and grant me the grace to renew it every day of my life, and to die sacrificing my whole self to Thy honor. I desire the grace granted to so many martyrs, to die for Thy love. But if I am unworthy of so great a grace, grant at least, my Lord, that I may sacrifice my life to Thee, together with my entire will, by accepting the death which Thou sendest me. Lord, I desire this grace; I desire to die with the intention of honoring and pleasing Thee thereby: and from this moment I sacrifice my life to Thee; and I offer Thee my death, when or wheresoever it may take place.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, I desire to die in order to please Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Allow me also, my most sweet Queen, to call thee, with thine own St. Bernard, "the whole ground of my hope,"[5890] and to say with St. John Damascene, "I have placed my whole hope in thee."[5891] Thou hast to obtain for me the forgiveness of my sins; thou, perseverance until death; thou, deliverance from purgatory. All who are saved obtain salvation through thee: thou, then, O Mary, hast to save me: "He will be saved whom thou willest."[5892] Will, then, my salvation, and I shall be saved. But thou savest all who invoke thee; behold, then, I invoke thee, and say:

Ejaculatory prayer. O salvation of those who invoke Thee, save me![5893]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. ANSELM.

Help us, O Queen of mercy! without regarding the multitude of our sins. Remember, that our Creator assumed from thee a human body, not to condemn, but to save sinners. Hadst thou been chosen to be the Mother of God for thy own benefit alone, thou mightest then be said to have no particular interest in our salvation; but God clothed himself in thy form for the sake of all mankind. Help us, therefore, and protect us: thou knowest the need which we have of thy assistance, and we earnestly recommend ourselves to thy prayers. Pray that we may not be eternally lost, but with thee may serve and love Jesus Christ forever.[5894]

The usual prayer, page 125.

SIXTEENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Had men but always recourse to the Most Blessed Sacrament to seek from it the remedy for their ills, they certainly would not be so miserable as they are. The prophet Jeremias, lamenting, exclaimed: *Is there no balm in Galaad? or is there no physician there?*[5895] Galaad, a mountain of Arabia, rich in aromatical spices, according to venerable Bede, is a figure of Jesus Christ, who in this Sacrament keeps in readiness all the remedies for our woes. Why, then, our Redeemer seems to ask, do you complain of your misfortunes, O sons of Adam, when you have the physician and the remedy for them all in this Sacrament? *Come to Me, and I will refresh you.*[5896] I will, then, address Thee in the words of the sisters of Lazarus: *Behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.*[5897] Lord, I am that miserable creature whom Thou lovest; my soul is all wounded by the sins which I have committed; my divine physician, I come to Thee, that Thou mayest heal me; if Thou wilt, Thou canst cure me: *Heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee.*[5898] Draw me wholly to Thyself, my most sweet Jesus, by the all-winning attractions of Thy love. Far rather would I be bound to Thee than become the Lord of the whole earth. I desire nothing else in the world but to love Thee. I have but little to give Thee; but could I gain possession of all the kingdoms of the world, I would do so, that I might renounce them all for Thy love. For Thee, then, I renounce what I can; I give up all relatives, all comforts, all pleasures, and even spiritual consolations: for Thee I renounce my liberty and my will. On Thee I desire to bestow all my love. I love Thee, infinite goodness; I love Thee more than myself, and I hope to love Thee for all eternity.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, I give myself to Thee: do Thou accept me!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

My Lady, though didst say to St. Bridget: “However much a man sins, if he returns to me with a real purpose of amendment, I am instantly ready to welcome him: neither do I pay attention to the greatness of his sins, but to the intention alone with which he comes. I do not disdain to anoint and heal his wounds; for I am called, and truly am, the Mother of mercy.”[5899] Since, then, thou hast both the power and the will to heal me, behold, I have recourse to thee, O heavenly physician; heal the many wounds of my soul: with a single word addressed by thee to thy Son I shall be restored.

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, have pity on me!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. PETER DAMIAN.

O holy Virgin! come to the assistance of those who call upon thee: cast a look of pity on us. Hast thou, in the close alliance thou holdest with the Deity, forgotten thy fellow-creatures? Ah! certainly not. Thou knowest too well the misery of our condition, and the dangers to which we are exposed, and it would ill become clemency and compassion like thine to forget us. Exert thy influence in our behalf. Nothing is impossible to thee, and thou canst, by thy prayers, obtain for the most grievous sinner, the sweet hope of salvation. The greater thy power is, the greater ought also to be thy mercy.[5900]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! thou canst by thy intercession cleanse me from my sins, and I look for this favor from thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

SEVENTEENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Loving souls can find no greater delight than to be in the company of those whom they love. If we, then, love Jesus Christ much, behold we are now in his presence. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament sees us and hears us: shall we, then, say nothing to him? Let us console ourselves in his company; let us rejoice in his glory, and in the love which so many enamoured souls bear him in the Most Holy Sacrament. Let us desire that all should love Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, and consecrate their hearts to him; at least let us consecrate all our affections to him. He should be all our love and our whole desire. Father Salesius, of the Society of Jesus, felt consolation in only speaking of the Most Blessed Sacrament; he could never visit it enough. When called to the parlor, on returning to his room, when going about the house, he always profited by these occasions to repeat his visits to his beloved Lord; so much so, that it was remarked that scarcely an hour of the day passed without his visiting him. At length he obtained the favor to die by the hands of heretics while defending the truth of the real presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

Oh, had I but the happiness to die for so noble a cause as the defence of this Sacrament, in which, O most amiable Jesus, Thou hast taught us the tenderness of the love which Thou bearest us! But since, my Lord, Thou workest so many miracles in this Sacrament, work this one also: draw my entire self to Thee. Thou indeed desirest that I should be all Thine, and Thou dost also indeed deserve that I should be so. Give me the strength to love Thee with all the affection of my soul. Give the goods of this world to whomsoever Thou willest. I renounce them all: I sigh after and desire Thy love alone; this alone do I now and will always seek. I love Thee, my Jesus; grant me the grace always to love Thee, and grant me this alone.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, when shall I really love Thee?

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

My most sweet Queen, how pleasing to me is that beautiful name by which thy devout clients address thee: "Most amiable Mother!"[5901] Yes, my Lady, thou art truly and indeed amiable. Thy beauty has captivated thy Lord himself: *And the king shall greatly desire thy beauty*.[5902] St. Bernard says that thy very name is so amiable to thy lovers, that when they pronounce or hear it they are inflamed with a fresh desire to love thee: "O sweet, O pious, O exceedingly amiable Mary! Thou canst not be named without inflaming, neither can thy name be heard without enkindling, the affections of those who love thee."[5903] It is, then, reasonable, my most amiable Mother, that I should love thee. But I am not satisfied with only loving thee: I desire in the first place on earth, and then in heaven, to be, after God, thy greatest lover. If my desire is presumptuous, it is thou thyself who art to blame, on account of thy amiability, and the special love which thou hast shown me. If thou wert less amiable, my desire to love thee would be less. Accept, then, O Lady, this my desire; and in token that thou hast accepted it, do thou obtain me from God this love for which I ask thee, since he is so well pleased with the love which is borne thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. My most amiable Mother, I love thee much.

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. DAMIAN.

O Mother of God! cast upon us one look of compassion. I know that thou art full of goodness, and that thou lovest us in a measure that surpasses all other love. How often dost thou appease the anger of our Judge, when the hand of his justice is raised to strike us? All the treasures of mercy are in thy hands, and thou seekest every opportunity to save miserable sinners and to make them partakers of thy glory. Ah! never cease to interest thyself in our regard, that we may one day arrive at the happiness of seeing Thee in heaven; as the greatest good that we can enjoy, next to that of seeing God, is to see thee, to love thee, and to be under thy protection. Since thy Son desires to honor thee by refusing nothing that thou askest, hear our prayer, and intercede in our behalf.[5904]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! I love thee as the most amiable of the works of God, and place my confidence in thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

EIGHTEENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

One day Jesus will be seated on a throne of majesty in the valley of Josaphat; but now, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, he is seated on a throne of love. Did a king, to show his love for a poor shepherd, go and live in his village, how great would be the ingratitude of this peasant did he not often go to visit him, knowing the king’s wish to see him, and that for this purpose he had come to reside there!

Ah, my Jesus, for love of me Thou dwellest in the Sacrament of the Altar. Could I, then, do so, my desire would be to remain night and day in Thy presence. If the angels, O my Lord, filled with astonishment at the love which Thou bearest us, remain always around Thee, it is but reasonable that I, seeing Thee for my sake on this altar, should endeavor to please Thee, at least by remaining in Thy presence, to praise the love and goodness which Thou hast for me: *I will sing praise to Thee in the sight of the angels; I will worship towards Thy holy temple, and I will give glory to Thy name: for Thy mercy and for Thy truth.*[5905]

O God, present in this Most Holy Sacrament, O bread of angels, O heavenly food, I love Thee; but Thou art not, neither am I, satisfied with my love. I love Thee; but I love Thee too little. Do Thou, my Jesus, make known to me the beauty, the immense goodness which I love: make my heart banish from itself all earthly affections, and give place to Thy divine love. To fill me with Thy love, and to unite Thyself all to me, Thou descendest every day from heaven on our altars: it is, then, but just that I should think of nothing else but of loving, adoring, and pleasing Thee. I love Thee with my whole soul, I love Thee with all my affections. If Thou art graciously pleased to make me a return for this love, increase my love;

render its flames more ardent; that thus I may always love Thee more, and desire more and more to please Thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. Jesus, my love, give me love!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

As poor sick persons, who on account of their miseries are abandoned by all, find shelter in the public hospitals; so also do the most miserable sinners, who, although discarded by all, find protection in the mercy of Mary, by whom they are never rejected; for God has placed her in the world as a receptacle and as a public hospital for sinners, as St. Basil of Seleucia gives us to understand.[5906] Hence St. Ephrem also calls her “the asylum of sinners.”[5907] Therefore, my Queen, if I have recourse to thee, thou canst not reject me on account of my sins; nay, even the more wretched I am, the greater is the claim which I have upon thy protection, since God has created thee as the refuge of the most miserable. Therefore to thee I have recourse, O Mary; I place myself under thy mantle. Thou art the refuge of sinners; thou art, then, my refuge, the hope of my salvation. If thou reject me, to whom shall I have recourse?

Ejaculatory prayer. Mary, my refuge, save me!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD.

O sovereign queen! on thee the Almighty has bestowed the perfection of all graces. Thou art styled full of grace, because the Holy Ghost has given it to thee in its greatest plenitude. We entreat thee to impart to us a portion of the fulness which thou hast received. Remember our necessities, and hear our prayers. Make us partakers of the riches and abundance which thou possessest. All nations call thee blessed; the whole hierarchy of heaven sings thy praises, and we, who are upon earth, cry out to thee. Receive our homage, O full of grace! Mother of God, our sovereign and our queen, the Lord is with thee; make intercession for us.[5908]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! look down upon us, and draw our hearts to God.

The usual prayer, page 125.

NINETEENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

It is sweet to every one to be in the company of a dear friend; and shall we not find it sweet, in this valley of tears, to remain in the company of the best friend we have, and who can do us every kind of good; who loves us with the most tender affection, and therefore dwells always with us? Behold, in the Most Blessed Sacrament we can converse at pleasure with Jesus, we can open our hearts to him, we can lay our wants before him, and we can ask him for his graces; in a word, in this Sacrament we can treat with the King of Heaven, in all confidence and without restraint. Joseph was only too happy when, as the sacred Scripture tells us, God descended by his grace into his prison to comfort him: *She went down with him into the pit, and in bands she left him not.*[5909] But we are yet more highly favored; for we have always with us in this land of miseries our God made Man, who, by his real presence, is with us all the days of our life, and comforts and helps us with the greatest affection and compassion. What a consolation it is to a poor prisoner to have an affectionate friend, who keeps him company, consoles him, gives him hope, succors him, and thinks of relieving him in his misery! Behold our good friend Jesus Christ, who in this Sacrament encourages us, saying: *Behold, I am with you all days.*[5910] Behold me, he says, all thine: I am come from heaven into thy prison expressly to console thee, to help thee, to deliver thee. Welcome me, and do so always; cling to me and thus thou wilt never feel thy miseries; and afterwards thou wilt come with me to my kingdom, where I shall make thee perfectly happy.

O God, O incomprehensible ocean of love, since Thy condescension towards us is so great, that in order to dwell near us Thou descendest upon our altars, I propose often to visit Thee; I am determined, as often as I possibly can, to enjoy Thy most sweet presence, which is the beautitude of the saints in heaven. Oh, could I but always remain in Thy presence, to adore Thee and to make Thee acts of love! Arouse, I beseech Thee, my soul, when through tepidity or worldly affairs it neglects to visit Thee. Enkindle in me a great desire always to remain near Thee in this Sacrament. Ah, my loving Jesus, would that I had always loved Thee! would that I had always pleased Thee! I console myself that I still have time to do so, not only in the next life, but also in this. I am determined to do so; I am determined to love Thee indeed, my sovereign good, my love, my treasure, my all. I will love Thee with all my strength.

Ejaculatory prayer. My God, help me to love Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The devout Bernardine de Bustis says: “O sinner, whoever you may be, despair not; but with confidence have recourse to this Lady: you will find her hands filled with mercies and graces.”[5911] “And know also,” he adds, “that this most compassionate Queen has a greater desire to do you good than you can have to be succored by her.”[5912] I will ever, O my Lady, thank God for having taught me to know thee. Unfortunate indeed should I be, did I not know thee, or did I forget thee. Ill would it fare with my salvation. But, my Mother, I bless thee, I love thee; and so great is my confidence in thee, that I place my whole soul in thy hands.

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, blessed is he who knows thee, and puts his trust in thee!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF THE ABBOT OF CELLES.

Draw me after thee, O Virgin Mary! that I may run in the odor of thy perfumes. Draw me because I am impeded by the weight of my sins, and by the malice of my enemies. As no one can go to thy divine Son who is not conducted by his heavenly Father, so I presume also to say, that no one can approach this same Jesus but through thy intercession. Thou art the teacher of true wisdom: through thee sinners obtain grace because thou art their advocate; thou promisest to obtain help for those who honor thee, because thou art the treasure of God and the depository of all his graces.[5913]

Ejaculatory prayer. O thou, who art the salvation of those who invoke thee, save me.[5914]

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTIETH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

The prophet Zacharias says: *In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for the washing of the sinner.*[5915] Jesus in the Holy Sacrament is the fountain foretold by the prophet as open to all, and to which we can go whenever we please, to wash our souls from all the stains of sin which are daily contracted. When any one falls into some fault, what more beautiful remedy is there than to have immediate recourse to the Most Blessed Sacrament?

Yes, my Jesus, I resolve always to do this; for I know that the waters of this fountain of Thine not only cleanse me, but also give me light, and strengthen me not to fall, and enable me cheerfully to bear contradictions, and also inflame me with Thy love. I know that for this end it is that Thou awaitest my visits, and recompensest those of Thy lovers with so many graces. My Jesus, delay not; but wash me now from all the defects that I have committed this day, and for which I am grieved because they have displeased Thee; strengthen me against relapse by giving me a great desire to love Thee much. Oh, could I but always dwell near Thee, as did Thy faithful servant Mary Diaz, who lived in the time of St. Teresa, and had permission from the Bishop of Avila to inhabit the tribune of a church, where she remained almost always in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament, which she called her neighbor, and which she only left to go to confession and Communion. When the Venerable Brother Francis of the Infant Jesus, of the Order of the Discalced Carmelites, passed before a church in which the Blessed Sacrament was kept, he could not refrain from entering to visit it, saying: “That it was not becoming for a friend to pass before the door of a friend without entering, at least to salute him and exchange a word." But a word did not satisfy him; he always remained as long as obedience allowed him in the presence of his beloved Lord.

My only and infinite good, I see that Thou hast instituted this Sacrament, and that Thou remainest on this altar, to be loved by me; and that for this end Thou hast given me a heart capable of loving Thee much. Why is it, then, that I am so ungrateful as not to love Thee? or that I love Thee so little? Now it is not just that such goodness as Thou art should be so little loved. The love, at least, which Thou bearest me, deserves other and greater love on my part. Thou art an infinite God, and I am a miserable worm. It would be little, did I die for Thee, or wear myself out for Thee, who didst die for me, and dost sacrifice Thy entire self for me every day on the altar. Thou deservest to be much loved; I will love Thee much: help me, my Jesus, help me to love Thee, and to do that which pleases Thee so much, and which Thou so earnestly seekest of me.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Beloved to me, and I to my Beloved![5916]

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

My most sweet, most compassionate, most amiable Queen, oh, how great is the confidence with which St. Bernard inspires me when I have recourse to thee! He says that thou dost not go examining the merits of those who have recourse to thy compassion; but that thou offerest thyself to help all who pray to thee: "Mary does not discuss merits, but shows herself ready to hear and welcome all."[5917] Therefore, if I pray to thee, thou dost graciously hear me. Well, then, listen to what I have to ask thee: I am a poor sinner, deserving of a thousand hells. I wish to change my life; I wish to love my God, whom I have so greatly offended. I dedicate myself to thee as thy slave; to thee I give myself, miserable as I am; save, then, a poor creature who is no longer his own, but thine. My Lady, dost thou understand me? Yes; I trust that thou hast understood me, and graciously heard my prayer.

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, I am thine; save me![5918]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF THE ABBOT OF CELLES.

Most sweet Virgin, thou hast found grace and favor with God, in having been preserved from original sin, filled with the Holy Ghost, and chosen to be the Mother of the Son of God. Thou holdest in thy hands all the treasures of grace, not only for thy own benefit, but also for ours; and thou failest not to distribute them according to our necessities, Thou assistest the good, by obtaining for them grace to persevere, and thou helpest the wicked by preparing them to receive the divine mercy; thou aidest the dying by defending them against the snares of the devil, and, after death, thou receivest their souls, and conductest them to the mansions of the blessed.[5919]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! happy is he who serves thee and trusts in thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTY-FIRST VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Wheresoever the body shall be, thither will the eagles also be gathered together.[5920] The saints generally understand by this body that of Jesus Christ; and by the eagles, souls who, being detached from creatures, rise above the things of the earth, and fly towards heaven, after which they always sigh in thought and affection, and where they constantly dwell. These eagles also find their paradise on earth wherever they find Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament; so much so, indeed, that they seem never to tire hovering around him. If eagles, says St. Jerome,[5921] on scenting a dead body go from afar to seek it, how much more should we run and fly to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, as to the most delicious food of our hearts! Hence saints in this valley of tears have always as parched harts run to this fountain of paradise. Father Balthasar Alvarez, of the Society of Jesus, in whatever occupation he was engaged, used often to cast his eyes towards the place in which he knew that the Blessed Sacrament was; he often visited it, and even spent entire nights before it. He used to weep when he saw the palaces of the great ones of this world filled with people, who courted a man from whom they hoped for some miserable earthly good, and the churches so abandoned, in which the supreme sovereign of the world dwells, and remains with us as on a throne of love, rich in immense and eternal treasures. He used also to say, that religious persons were indeed fortunate, because in the very houses in which they reside, they can, whenever they please, either night or day, visit this great Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament; and this lay people cannot do.

Since, then, my most loving Lord, notwithstanding that Thou seest me as a leper, and so ungrateful to Thy love, Thou invitest me to approach Thee, I will not be discouraged at the sight of my miseries: I come and approach

Thee; but do Thou wholly change me. Drive from me every love which is not for Thee, every desire which displeases Thee, every thought which does not tend toward Thee. My Jesus, my love, my treasure, my all, I am determined to please Thee alone. I will give pleasure only to Thee. Thou alone deservest all my love; Thee only will I love with my whole heart. Detach me from everything, my Lord, and bind me to Thyself alone; but bind me so firmly, that I may never more be able to separate myself from Thee, either in this life or in the next.

Ejaculatory prayer. My most sweet Jesus, never allow me to be separated from Thee![5922]

Spiritual Communion, page 124

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Denis, the Carthusian, calls the Most Blessed Virgin “the advocate of all the wicked who have recourse to her.”[5923]

Since, then, O great Mother of God, thy office is to defend the causes of the most guilty criminals who have recourse to thee, behold me now at thy feet; to thee I have recourse, and I address thee in the words of St. Thomas of Villanova: “O gracious advocate, fulfil thy charge.”[5924] Now quickly enter upon thy office, undertake my cause: it is true that I have indeed been guilty before my Lord, having offended him, after the many benefits and graces he has conferred upon me; but the evil is done; thou canst save me. Thou hast only to tell thy God that thou defendest me, and then I shall be forgiven, and shall be saved.

Ejaculatory prayer. My dear Mother, thou hast to save me!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF WILLIAM BISHOP OF PARIS.

I address my petitions to thee, O Mother of God! whom the whole Church styles the Mother of mercy. Canst thou, whose prayers are always acceptable to God, refuse thy intercession in behalf of sinners? Justly does St. Bernard say, that we may cease to call thee the Mother of Mercy, if any one ever invokes thee in the hour of need, without experiencing thy assistance. Thou wilt not, therefore, exclude me from a share in thy compassion. Thou wilt intercede for me with more earnestness than I can for myself; and thou wilt procure more abundant graces than I could presume to ask. O Mother of mercy! can that clemency, which never abandoned any one, refuse me its assistance in the danger to which I am exposed of being eternally lost?[5925]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! I am thine: save me.[5926]

The usual prayer, page 125

TWENTY-SECOND VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

The Spouse in the sacred Canticles went about seeking for her Beloved; and not finding him, she asked all whom she met: *Have you seen Him whom my soul loveth?*[5927] Jesus was not then on earth; but now, if a soul that loves him seeks him, she can always find him in the Most Blessed Sacrament. The Venerable Father John Avila used to say, that amongst all sanctuaries he could neither find nor desire a more delightful one than a church in which the Most Blessed Sacrament is reserved.

O infinite love of my God, worthy of infinite love! And how couldst Thou, my Jesus, ever abase Thyself so far as, in order to dwell amongst men, and to unite Thyself to their hearts, to humble Thyself to such a degree as to conceal Thyself under the species of bread? O incarnate Word, Thou art supreme in Thy humility, because Thou art supreme in Thy love! How can I do otherwise than love Thee with my entire self, knowing as I do how much Thou hast done to captivate my love? I love Thee much; and therefore I give Thy good pleasure the preference above every interest and every satisfaction of my own. My pleasure is to give Thee pleasure, my Jesus, my God, my love, my all. Make me hunger to be continually in Thy presence in the Blessed Sacrament, to receive Thee into myself, and to keep Thee company. I should be indeed ungrateful did I not accept so sweet and gracious an invitation. Ah, Lord, annihilate in me all affection for created things! Thou willest that Thou alone, my Creator, shouldst be the object of all my sighs, of all my love. I love Thee, most amiable goodness of my God. I ask nothing of Thee but Thyself. I desire not my own pleasure; Thy pleasure is all my desire, and sufficient for me. Accept, my Jesus, this good desire of a sinner who wishes to love Thee. Help me by Thy grace. Grant that I, a miserable slave of hell, may from this day forward be the happy slave of Thy love.

Ejaculatory prayer. I love Thee, Jesus, my treasure, above every other treasure!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

My most sweet Lady and Mother, I am a vile rebel to thy great Son; but I come repentant to thy mercy, that thou mayest obtain for me pardon. Say not that thou canst not do so; for St. Bernard calls thee "the minister of propitiation."[5928] To thee also it belongs to succor those who are in dangers, St. Ephrem calling thee "the helper of those in peril."[5929] My Lady, who is in greater danger than I am? I have lost God: it is certain that I have been condemned to hell. I know not whether God has yet pardoned me. I may again lose him. But thou canst obtain me all; and from thee I hope for every good, for forgiveness, perseverance, and heaven. I hope to be one of those who, in the kingdom of the blessed, will most praise thy mercies, O Mary, for having saved me by thy intercession.

Ejaculatory prayer. I will sing the mercies of Mary for all eternity; I will sing them forever and ever! Amen, amen.[5930]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF WILLIAM, BISHOP OF PARIS.

O Mother of God! thy goodness never despises the sinner who recommends himself to thy patronage, however enormous his crimes may have been: and hence the Church justly calls thee her advocate and the refuge of sinners. Let not, then, my crimes prevent thee from fulfilling this office of mercy, whereby thou becomest the mediatrix of peace, the hope and secure asylum of all who are in affliction. Let it not be said that the Mother of God, who, for the sake of the world, brought forth the source of mercy, can refuse to look down with pity on any wretch that flies to her for assistance. Thou art employed as the mediatrix between God and man: let me experience a share of thy great compassion."[5931]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, my loving Mother, may I, under God, owe my salvation to thee!

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTY-THIRD VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Many Christians submit to great fatigue, and expose themselves to many dangers, to visit the places in the Holy Land where our most loving Saviour was born, suffered, and died. We need not undertake so long a journey, or expose ourselves to so many dangers; the same Lord is near us, and dwells in the church, only a few steps distant from our houses. If pilgrims, says St. Paulinus,[5932] consider it a great thing to bring back a little dust from the crib, or from the holy sepulchre in which Jesus was buried, with what ardor should not we visit the Most Blessed Sacrament, where the same Jesus is in person, and where we can go without encountering so much fatigue and so many dangers! A religious person, to whom God had given great love for the Most Blessed Sacrament, amongst other things wrote as follows in a letter: “I see that every good thing that I have comes to me from the Most Blessed Sacrament. I have given and consecrated my whole self to Jesus in this Sacrament. I see innumerable graces, which are not granted because people do not go to this divine Sacrament. I see the great desire that our Lord has to dispense his graces in the Sacrament. O holy mystery! O sacred Host! Where is it that God manifests his power the most, if it is not in this Host? For this Host contains all that God has ever done for us. Let us not envy the blessed who are in heaven, since on earth we have the same Lord, with greater wonders of his love. Induce all with whom you speak to devote themselves to the Most Blessed Sacrament. I speak thus because this Sacrament enraptures my soul. Nor can I cease to speak of the Most Blessed Sacrament, which deserves so greatly to be loved. I know not what to do for Jesus in this Sacrament.” Thus the letter ends.

O ye Seraphim, who remain sweetly burning with love around your and my Lord; though it is not indeed for love of you but of me that this King of

Heaven is pleased to be present in this Sacrament—O loving Angels, let me also burn with love; and do you enkindle your love in me, that with you I also may burn! O my Jesus, teach me to know the greatness of the love which Thou bearest to men, that at the sight of so great love my desire to love Thee and please Thee may go on always increasing! I love Thee, most amiable Lord, and will always love Thee; and this alone to please Thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee, and I give myself to Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Most amiable Virgin, St. Bonaventure calls thee, "the Mother of orphans;"[5933] and St. Ephrem, moreover, calls thee "the receiver of orphans."[5934] Alas, these wretched orphans are no others than poor sinners who have lost God! Behold, then, I have recourse to thee, most holy Mary. I have lost my Father; but thou art my Mother, who must enable me to recover him. In this my so great misfortune I call thee to my aid; do thou succor me. Shall I remain disconsolate? No; for Innocent III., speaking of thee, asks, "Whoever called upon her, and was not graciously heard by her?"[5935] And whoever prayed to thee, and was not heard and helped by thee? Who was ever lost who had recourse to thee? He alone is lost who has not recourse to thee. Then, my Queen, if thou desirest my salvation, enable me always to invoke and confide in thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. My own most holy Mary, give me confidence in thee!

[From the Naples Edition.]

I shall say with St. Augustine, Remember, O Mary, full of goodness! that no sinner has ever been heard of that has had recourse to thy protection and been abandoned by thee. Let us, then, says St. Bernard, seek for grace through the means of Mary, because she can obtain what she asks, and her demands never meet with a refusal.[5936] O Mother of God! thou prayest for all; vouchsafe to pray for me, who am the greatest of sinners[5937], and therefore have the greatest need of thy intercession.[5938]

Ejaculatory prayer. I fly to thy protection, O sacred Mother of God!

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTY-FOURTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Verily Thou art a hidden God.[5939] In no other work of divine love are these words so fully verified as in this adorable mystery of the Most Holy Sacrament, where our God is entirely hidden. When the Eternal Word took flesh, he hid his divinity, and appeared as a man on earth; but remaining with us in this Sacrament, he hides even his humanity, and, as remarks St. Bernard, appears only under the form of bread, to show thereby the tenderness of the love which he bears us: “The divinity is hid, the humanity is hid; the bowels of charity alone appear.”[5940] O my Beloved Redeemer, at the sight of the excessive tenderness Thou hast for men, I am beside myself, my Lord, and know not what to say. In this Sacrament Thou goest so far for their love as to hide Thy majesty and lower Thy glory; Thou goest so far as even to consume and annihilate Thy divine life. And whilst Thou art on the altar Thou seemest to have nothing else to do than to love men, and to show them the love which Thou bearest them. And what gratitude do they show Thee in return, O great Son of God?

O Jesus, O too great a lover of men, allow me to say so, for I see that Thou preferrest their advantage to Thine own glory. And didst Thou not know to how much contempt this loving design of Thine would expose Thee? I see, and before me Thou didst see it full well Thyself, that the greater part of men adore Thee not, neither will they acknowledge Thee for what Thou art in this Sacrament. I know that these very men have gone so far as to trample on the consecrated Hosts, that they have thrown them on the ground, into water, and into fire. And I see the greater part even of those who believe in Thee, O God, who, so far from repairing so many outrages by the homage of their devotion, either come to the church to offend Thee still more by their irreverences, or else abandon Thee on Thy altar, and sometimes even leave it unprovided with a lamp or the necessary ornaments!

Oh, could I, my most sweet Saviour, but wash with my tears, or even with my blood, those unhappy places in which, in this Sacrament, Thy love and Thy enamoured heart have been so greatly outraged! But if so much is not granted me, I desire at least, my Lord, and determine, to visit Thee often, in order to adore Thee as I now adore Thee, and this in compensation for the insults which Thou receivest in this most divine mystery. Accept, O Eternal Father, this scanty honor, which I, the most miserable of men, now offer Thee in reparation of the outrages offered to Thy Son in the Most Holy Sacrament; accept it in union with that infinite honor which Jesus Christ gave Thee on the cross, and which he daily gives Thee in the Most Blessed Sacrament. O my Sacramental Jesus, would that I could fill all men with love for the Most Blessed Sacrament!

Ejaculatory prayer. O amiable Jesus, make Thyself known, make Thyself loved!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

My most powerful Lady, in the midst of my misgivings as to my eternal salvation, how great is the confidence which I feel when I have recourse to thee; and when I think that thou, my Mother, art, on the one hand, so rich in graces, that St. John Damascene calls thee "a sea of graces;"[5941] St. Bonaventure, "the assemblage of graces,"[5942] that is, the source in which all graces are congregated; St. Ephrem, "a fountain of grace and of all consolation;"[5943] and St. Bernard, "the fulness of every good;"[5944]—and when, on the other hand, I reflect that thy desire to do us good is so great, that thou esteemest thyself offended, as St. Bonaventure says, by him who does not ask thee for thy graces: "they sin against thee, O Lady," he says, "who do not ask of thee;"[5945]—O most rich, O most wise, and most merciful Queen, I see that thou knowest far better than I do the wants of my soul, and that thou lovest me far more than I can love thee! Know, then, the grace for which I now ask thee; obtain me the grace which thou knowest to be the most expedient for my soul. Ask this favor from God, and I am satisfied.

Ejaculatory prayer. My God, grant me the graces which Mary asks Thee for me!

[From the Naples Edition.]

Let us go, says St. Paul, to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy in the time of need.[5946] Thou, divine Mary, art this throne of grace,[5947] from which God dispenses all his blessings. Most amiable Queen, thy delight is to assist those who are in the wretched state of sin: behold, then, at thy feet a grievous sinner, imploring the aid of thy prayers. Help me to the utmost of thy power, and without delay: the wonders of thy mercy will be enhanced by saving one that has deserved a thousand hells. Thy Son cannot withstand thy intercession. I entreat thee, therefore, by the love which thou entertainest for Jesus, to procure pardon for me for the past, and grace to lead a holy life for the future. O Mary, thou art my strength, and the ground of my hope.[5948]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, cast a look of compassion on me.

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTY-FIFTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

St. Paul praises the obedience of Jesus Christ, saying, that he obeyed his Eternal Father even to death: *becoming obedient even unto death.*[5949] But in this sacrament he has gone still farther; for here he has been pleased to become obedient, not only to his Eternal Father, but also to man; and not only to death, but as long as the world shall last; so that we can say: “He has become obedient even unto the consummation of the world.” He, the King of Heaven, comes down from heaven in obedience to man, and then seems to dwell and converse there, in order to obey men: *And I do not resist.*[5950] There he remains without moving himself; he allows himself to be placed where men will, be it for exposition in the remonstrance, or to be enclosed in the tabernacle. He allows himself to be carried wheresoever he is borne, be it into houses or through the streets; he allows himself to be given in Communion to whomsoever he is administered, be they just or sinners. St. Luke says that whilst he dwelt on earth he obeyed the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph; but in this Sacrament he obeys as many creatures as there are priests on earth: *and I do not resist.*

Permit me now to address Thee, O most loving Heart of my Jesus, from which indeed all the Sacraments flowed forth, but principally this Sacrament of love. I would gladly give Thee as much glory and honor as Thou givest in the Holy Sacrament in our churches to the Eternal Father. I know that on this altar Thou still lovest me with that same love with which Thou didst love me when Thou didst close Thy divine life in the midst of so much anguish on the cross. O divine Heart, enlighten all those who know Thee not with the knowledge of Thyself! Through Thy merits deliver from purgatory, or at least relieve, the pains of the afflicted souls, who are already Thy spouses for all eternity. I adore Thee, I thank Thee, I love Thee, in union with all souls who at this moment love Thee, be they on earth or in heaven. O most pure Heart, purify my heart from all attachment to creatures, and fill it with Thy holy love! O most sweet Heart, possess my whole heart, so that henceforward it may be all Thine, and always be enabled to say: *Who, then, shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord?*[5951] Write, O most sacred Heart, upon my heart all the bitter sorrows, which for so many years Thou didst endure on earth with so much love for me, that, on seeing them, I may henceforward desire, or at least endure with patience, all the sorrows of this life. Most humble Heart of Jesus, give me a share of Thy humility. Most meek Heart, impart Thy sweetness to me. Take from my heart all that displeases Thee; convert it wholly to Thee, so that I may no longer will or desire other than what Thou willest. In a word, grant that I may live only to obey Thee, only to love Thee, only to give Thee pleasure. I know that I, indeed, owe Thee much; and that Thou hast indeed placed me under great obligations: it will be but little if I consume and wear myself out for Thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. O Heart of Jesus, Thou art the sole Lord of my heart!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

St. Bernard says, that Mary is that heavenly ark, in which if we take timely refuge, we shall certainly be delivered from the shipwreck of eternal damnation: “She is the ark in which we escape shipwreck.”[5952] The ark in which Noe escaped from the general wreck of the world was indeed a type of Mary. But Hesychius says, that Mary is a more spacious, stronger, and more compassionate ark.[5953] Only a few men and a few beasts were received and saved by the former; but Mary, our ark, receives all who take refuge under her mantle, and with certainty saves them all. Unfortunate should we be had we not Mary! But still, my Queen, how many are lost! and why? Because they have not recourse to thee. And who would ever be lost had he recourse to thee?

Ejaculatory prayer. Grant, most holy Mary, that we may all and always have recourse to thee!

[From the Naples Edition.]

O my sovereign Queen! thou art the treasure of God,[5954] and in thy hands are deposited those stores of mercy which he wishes to bestow upon us. Thou hast said, by the mouth of the prophet, that thou holdest in thy hands the treasures of heaven, to enrich those who love thee.[5955] My loving Mother, I am an unfortunate sinner, and in the greatest need of help. Remember that I love thee with all my heart; yes, next to God, there is no object that I love so much as thee, because I know that this is due to thy unrivalled perfections. Have pity on me, and forsake me not; help me during life, and help me at the hour of death, that I may one day arrive at the enjoyment of thy happy society in the kingdom of heaven.[5956]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! all my hopes are directed towards thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTY-SIXTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Rejoice, and praise, O thou habitation of Sion; for great is He that is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of Israel.[5957] O God, and what joy ought not we men to conceive, what hopes and what affections, in knowing that in the midst of our land, in our churches, near our houses, the Holy of holies, the true God, dwells and lives in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar! He who by his presence alone renders the saints in heaven blessed! He who is love itself. “It is not so much that he has love, as that he is love itself,”[5958] says St. Bernard. This Sacrament is not only a sacrament of love, but is love itself; it is God himself, who, for the immense love which he bears his creatures, calls himself, and is, love itself: *God is love.*[5959]

But I hear Thee complain, O my Sacramental Jesus: *I was a stranger, and you took Me not in;*[5960] that Thou camest on earth to be our guest for our good, and that we have not welcomed Thee. Thou art right, Lord, Thou art right; and I am one of these ungrateful creatures who have left Thee alone, without even visiting Thee. Chastise me as Thou pleasest; but not by depriving me of Thy presence, which is the chastisement I deserve: no, I will repair my fault, and the indignities which I have heaped upon Thee. From this day forward I will not only visit Thee often, but will remain with Thee for as long a time as I can. O most compassionate Saviour, be pleased to make me faithful to Thee; and grant that I may also, by my example, excite others to keep Thee company in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I hear the Eternal Father, who says: *This is my beloved Son: in whom I am well pleased.*[5961] A God, then, finds all his complacency in Thee; and shall not I, a miserable worm, find mine in dwelling with Thee in this valley of tears! O consuming fire, destroy in me all affections for earthly things; for they alone can render me unfaithful, and take me away from Thee. Thou canst do so, if Thou wilt: *Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.*[5962] Thou hast already done so much for me, do this also: banish from my heart all love which does not tend towards Thee. Behold, I give myself all to Thee: I now dedicate the whole remainder of my life to the love of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Thou, O Sacramental Jesus, hast to be my comfort, my love in life, and at the hour of my death, when Thou wilt come to be my Viaticum and my guide to Thy blessed kingdom. Amen, amen. So do I hope; so may it be!

Ejaculatory prayer. When, O my Jesus, shall I behold Thy beautiful face!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

In thee, our own most holy Mother, we find the remedy for all our woes; in thee we find strength in our weakness; for St. Germanus calls thee the “strength itself of our weakness.”[5963] In thee we find a door by which to make our exit from the slavery of sin; for St. Bonaventure calls thee “the gate of liberty.”[5964] In thee we find our certain peace; for the same saint calls thee “the safe repose of men.”[5965] In thee we find relief in our miserable life. Thou art “the solace of our pilgrimage,”[5966] as St. Laurence Justinian calls thee. In thee, in a word, we find divine grace and God himself, for St. Bonaventure calls thee “the throne of God’s grace;”[5967] and St. Proclus, “the bridge by which God descends to men;”[5968] that happy bridge by which God, who had been driven to a distance by our sins, returns to dwell by his grace in our souls.

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, thou art my strength, my deliverance, my peace, and salvation!

[From the Naples Edition.]

O Mary! I will say to thee in the words of thy servant St. Bernard:[5969] thou art the queen of mercy. And who are the subjects of thy mercy but such as are in misery and affliction? Yes, thou art truly the queen of mercy, and I, the most wretched of sinners, am thy subject. I, therefore, of all, am the best entitled to thy compassion. Turn then, O my advocate, those eyes of mercy towards me, and after my days of exile, show me Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb.[5970]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, my refuge, pray for me to Jesus.

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTY-SEVENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

The holy Church sings in the Office of the Most Blessed Sacrament: “There is no other country, however great, whose gods are nigh it as our God is nigh to us.”[5971] When the Gentiles heard how far our God carried his works of love, they exclaimed: Oh, how good a God is this God of the Christians! And, indeed, although the Gentiles imagined their gods according to their own caprices,—yet, if you read history, you will never find in all their fables, and. among the many gods they invented, that they went so far as even to imagine a god as enamoured of men as is our true God; who, to show his love for his adorers, and to enrich them with graces, has worked such a prodigy of love as to become their constant companion, and to remain night and day concealed on their altars, seeming as if he knew not how to separate himself from them, even for a moment: *He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works.*[5972]

Thou, then, my most sweet Jesus, hast been pleased to work the greatest of Thy miracles in order to satisfy the excessive desire which Thou hast to remain always near and present to us. Why, then, do men fly from Thy presence? And how can they live for so long a time at a distance from Thee, or visit Thee so seldom? How is it that when in Thy presence they get so weary that a quarter of an hour appears an age? Oh, patience of my Jesus, how great art Thou! Yes, my Lord, I understand Thee; Thy patience is great, because the love Thou bearest to men is great: and this it is which, so to say, forces Thee to dwell always in the midst of creatures so ungrateful.

Ah, my God, who, because Thou art infinite in perfections art also infinite in love, permit not that I should for the future be, as I have hitherto been, of the number of these ungrateful ones. Grant me a love equal to Thy merits and to my own obligations. At one time I also was weary in Thy presence, either because I loved Thee not, or because I loved Thee too little; but if by Thy grace I am enabled to love Thee much, I shall no longer find it tedious to remain even for whole days and nights at Thy feet in the Most Holy Sacrament. O Eternal Father, I offer Thee Thine own Son himself; accept him for me, and through his merits give me so ardent and tender a love towards the Most Blessed Sacrament, that, constantly turning towards some church in which he dwells, I may think of, and desire with longing anxiety, the time when I may be able to go and entertain myself in his presence.

Ejaculatory prayer. My God, for the love of Jesus, give me a great love towards the Most Blessed Sacrament!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Mary is that tower of David, of which the Holy Ghost says in the sacred Canticles: *It is built with bulwarks; a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the armor of valiant men.*[5973] A tower built with a thousand fortresses, and containing a thousand shields and weapons, for the benefit of those who have recourse to it. Thou art, then, according to an expression of St. Ignatius, martyr, O most holy Mary, a most powerful defence for all those who are engaged in battle.[5974] Oh, how constantly are my enemies attacking me, in order to deprive me of the grace of God and of thy protection, my most dear Lady! But thou art my strength. Thou, indeed, dost not disdain to battle for those who trust in thee; for St. Ephrem calls thee "the bulwark of all who confide in thee."[5975] Do thou, then, defend and fight for me, who have such great hope and confidence in thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. Mary, Mary, thy name is my defence!

[From the Naples Edition.]

My queen! thou hast said to thy servant St. Bridget, that as often as a man sins, if he returns to thee with sincere repentance, thou wilt receive him and restore him to the friendship of God; that thou dost not consider the greatness of his crimes, but the sincerity of his repentance; and that thou art ever ready to apply a cure to his wounds, because thou art in reality, as in name, the Mother of mercy.[5976] Since, therefore, thou rejectest no sinner who approaches thee with a sincere detestation of his crimes, and since thou hast both the power and the will to heal him, behold, I present myself before thee, and beseech thee to apply thy celestial remedies to the deep wounds or my soul. Thy Son can refuse thee nothing: entreat him, then, to pardon me and to grant me his love.[5977]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! my hope, I expect all through thee.

The usual prayer, page 125

TWENTY-EIGHTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

God, having given us his own Son, says St. Paul, what good thing is there that we can fear he might deny us! *How hath He not also with Him given us all things?*[5978] We know, indeed, that all that the Eternal Father has he has given to Jesus Christ. *The Father has given Him all things into His hands.*[5979] Let us, then, ever thank the goodness, the mercy, the liberality of our most loving God, who has been pleased to make us rich in all good things, and in every grace, by giving us Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar: *In all things you are made rich in Him, . . . so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace.*[5980]

Therefore, O Saviour of the world, O Incarnate Word, if I desire to have Thee, I can really think that Thou art mine, and all mine. But can I at the same time say that I am all Thine, as Thou desirest? Ah, my Lord, prevent it; and never let the world witness such disorder and such ingratitude, as that I should not be Thine when Thou desirest me! Ah, no; let it never be! If it has been so hitherto, let it never be so again. I now, with the utmost determination, consecrate myself entirely to Thee; for time and eternity I consecrate my life, my will, my thoughts, my actions, my sufferings, to Thee. Behold me Thine; as a victim consecrated to Thee, I bid farewell to all creatures, and offer my whole self to Thee. Consume me with the flames of Thy divine love. No, I am determined that creatures shall no longer share my heart. The proofs which Thou hast given me of the love which Thou bearest me, even at a time when I did not love Thee, make me hope that Thou certainly acceptest me now that I love Thee, and out of love give myself to Thee.

Eternal Father, I now offer Thee all the virtues, the actions, the affections, of the Heart of Thy dear Jesus. Accept them, and by his merits, which are all mine,—for he has given them to me,—grant me the graces which Jesus asks Thee for me. With these merits I thank Thee for the many mercies which Thou hast shown me; with these I satisfy for what I owe Thee for my sins; through these I hope for every grace from Thee,—pardon, perseverance, Paradise, and above all, the crowning gift of Thy pure love. I well see that to all these gifts I myself place impediments; but do Thou also remedy this. I ask it of Thee in the name of Jesus Christ, who has promised: *Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do.*[5981] Then Thou canst not refuse me. Lord, my only desire is to love Thee, to give myself to Thee without reserve, and no longer to be ungrateful to Thee, as I have hitherto been. Behold me, and graciously hear me; grant that this may be the day of my entire conversion to Thee, so that I may never more cease to love Thee. I love Thee, my God! I love Thee, Infinite Goodness! I love Thee, my love, my paradise, my good, my life, my all!

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, who art all mine, Thou desirest me, and I desire Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

What relief do I feel in my miseries, and what consolation in my tribulations, what strength do I not find in the midst of temptations, when I remember and call thee to my aid, O my most sweet and most holy Mother Mary! Yes, indeed, you were right, O ye saints, in calling my Lady “the haven of those who are in tribulation,”[5982] with St. Ephrem; “the repairer of our calamities,”[5983] and “the solace of the miserable,”[5984] with St. Bonaventure; and “the rest from our mournings,”[5985] with St. Germanus. My own Mary, do thou console me. I see myself loaded with sins, and surrounded by enemies; without virtue, and cold in my love towards God. Comfort me, comfort me; and let my consolation be to make me begin a new life—a life which will be really pleasing to thy Son and to thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. Change me, O Mary my Mother: change me; thou canst do it.

[From the Naples Edition.]

O Mary, how lovely is the name given to thee by thy faithful servants: *most amiable Mother.*[5986] Yes, thou art truly amiable: thy beauty and thy goodness have won the heart of the King of kings, even of God himself. He has said to thee, *How beautiful thou art, my beloved;* and again, *Thou art all beautiful, and there is no spot in thee.*[5987] If, then, thou art so dear to God, how can I, a miserable sinner, and indebted to thee for so many benefits, refuse to love thee? I love thee, therefore, my most amiable Queen, and I desire to be of the number of thy most devoted lovers. Accept my desire, and obtain for me from God the love which I ask, since nothing is more pleasing to him than to love thee.[5988]

Ejaculatory prayer. O my amiable Mother, grant that I may love thee with the greatest ardor.

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTY-NINTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock.[5989] O most loving shepherd, who, not satisfied with sacrificing Thyself once to death on the altar of the cross for the love of Thy sheep, hast moreover been pleased to hide Thyself in this divine Sacrament on the altars of our churches, to be always near, and to knock at the doors of our hearts, and thus obtain Thy admission! Ah, did I but know how to enjoy Thy nearness to me as did the Sacred Spouse in the Canticles, who says: *I sat down under His shadow, whom I desired.*[5990] Ah, did I but love Thee, did I but really love Thee, my most amiable Sacrament, I also should wish never to leave the foot of a tabernacle either night or day; and fixing myself near Thy Majesty, concealed under the apparent shadow of the sacred species, I also should find those divine sweetnesses and that happiness which souls enamoured of Thee there find. Ah, do Thou be graciously pleased to draw me by the odor of Thy beauties, and of the immense love which Thou manifestest in this Sacrament: *Draw me: we will run after Thee to the odor of Thy ointments.*[5991] Yes, my Saviour, I will leave creatures and all earthly pleasures, to run after Thee in this Sacrament: *As olive-plants, round about Thy table.*[5992] Oh, what abundant fruits of virtues do those happy souls, like olive-plants, bring forth to God, who assist with love before the sacred tabernacle! But I am ashamed to appear before Thee, O my Jesus, so naked and so devoid of all virtues. Thou hast commanded that all who approach the altar to honor Thee should present a gift: *Thou shalt not appear empty before Me.*[5993] What, then, am I to do? Am I no more to appear before Thee? Ah, no; this would not please Thee. Poor as I am, I will approach Thee; and do Thou provide me with the gifts which Thou desirest. I see that Thou dwellest in the Sacrament, not only to reward Thy lovers, but also to provide for the poor out of Thy riches.

Be it so, then; let us now begin. I adore Thee, O King of my heart, and true lover of men. O shepherd, loving Thy sheep beyond all bounds, to this throne of Thy love I now approach; and having nothing else to present to Thee, I offer Thee my miserable heart, that it may be entirely consecrated to Thy love and to Thy good pleasure. With this heart I can love Thee, and I will love Thee as much as I can. Draw it, then, to Thyself, and bind it wholly to Thy will, so that, filled with consolation, it may be able from henceforth to say, as Thy dear disciple said, that it is bound by the chains of Thy love: *I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ.*[5994] Unite me, my Lord, entirely to Thyself, and make me forget myself, that I may have the happiness one day to lose all things, and even myself, to find Thee alone, and to love Thee forever. I love Thee, my Sacramental Lord; to Thee do I bind myself, to Thee do I unite myself; make me find Thee, make me love Thee, and never more separate Thyself from me.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

St. Bernard calls Mary “the royal road of the Saviour;”[5995] the safe road by which to find the Saviour and salvation. Since, then, it is true, O Queen, that thou art, as the same saint says, “the chariot in which our souls go to God,”[5996]—the one who guides us to him,—ah, Lady, thou must not suppose that I shall advance towards God, if thou dost not carry me in thine arms! Carry me, carry me; and if I resist, carry me by main force; do all the violence that thou canst by the sweet attractions of thy charity to my soul and to my rebellious will, that they may leave creatures, to seek for God alone and his divine will. Show the court of heaven the greatness of thy power. After so many wonders of thy mercy, show this one more: make a poor creature who is far from God wholly his.

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, thou canst make me a saint; I hope for this grace from thee!

[From the Naples Edition.]

O charitable Queen, thou art styled by thy servants *the advocate of sinners.*[5997] Since, then, thou art employed in defending sinners, who place themselves under thy protection, I fly to thee, and address thee in the language of one of thy most devoted servants, St. Thomas of Villanova: O loving advocate, exercise thy office in my behalf; undertake my defence.[5998] It is true that I have been a rebel to thy beloved Son; but the evil is committed: save me, then, from the dreadful consequence of my rebellion. If thou tell thy divine Son that thou hast taken me under thy protection, I shall be pardoned and saved.[5999]

Ejaculatory prayer. O my Mother, my dear Mother, save me.

The usual prayer, page 125.

THIRTIETH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Why hidest Thou Thy face?[6000] Job feared when he saw that God hid his face: but to know that Jesus Christ veils his majesty in the Most Blessed Sacrament should not inspire us with fear, but rather with greater love and confidence; since it is precisely to increase our confidence, and with greater evidence to manifest his love, that he remains on our altars concealed under the appearance of bread. Novarinus says "that whilst God hides his face in this Sacrament, he discloses his love."[6001] And who would ever dare approach him with confidence, and lay bare before him his affections and desires, did this King of heaven appear on our altars in the splendor of his glory?

Ah, my Jesus! what loving invention was this of the Most Blessed Sacrament, to hide Thyself under the appearance of bread, in order to make Thyself loved and that Thou mightest be found on earth by all who desire Thee! The prophet was right in saying that men should speak and raise their voices throughout the world, in order to make known to all men to what an excess the inventions of the love of our good God go for us: *Make His works known among the people.*[6002] O most loving Heart of my Jesus, worthy to possess the hearts of all creatures,—Heart all and ever full of flames of most pure love! O consuming fire, consume me all, and give me a new life of love and grace! Unite me to Thyself in such a way that I may never more be separated from Thee. O Heart open to be the refuge of souls, receive me! O Heart, which on the cross was so agonized for the sins of the world, give me true sorrow for my sins! I know that in this Sacrament Thou preservest the same sentiments of love for me which Thou hadst for me when dying on Calvary; and therefore Thou hast an ardent desire to unite me wholly to Thyself. And is it possible that I should any longer resist yielding up my entire self to Thy love and to Thy desire? Ah, by Thy merits, my beloved Jesus, be pleased Thyself to wound me, to bind me, to force me, to unite me in all things to Thy Heart. I am now determined by Thy grace to give Thee all the pleasure that I possibly can, by trampling under foot all human respect, inclinations, repugnances, all my tastes and conveniences, which may prevent me from entirely pleasing Thee. Do Thou, my Lord, so help me, that I may execute this determination in such a way, that henceforward all my works, opinions, and affections, may be all in conformity with Thy good pleasure. O love of God, do Thou drive all other loves from my heart! O Mary, my hope, thou art all-powerful with God, obtain me the grace to be a faithful servant of the pure love of Jesus until death. Amen, amen. So I hope: so may it be in time and in eternity!

Ejaculatory prayer. Who shall separate me from the love from Christ![6003]

Spiritual Communion page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

St. Bernard affirms, that the love of Mary towards us cannot be greater or more powerful than it is; hence by her affection she is always abundant in her compassion for us, and by her power she is plentiful in the relief she affords us: “The most powerful and compassionate charity of the Mother of God abounds in tender compassion, and in kind relief: she is equally rich in both.”[6004]

So that, my most pure Queen, thou art rich in power, and rich in compassion; thou art able to save, and desirest to save all. I therefore beseech thee, now and always, in the words of the devout Blosius, saying: “O Lady! protect me in my combats, and confirm me when I am wavering.”[6005] O most holy Mary, in this great battle in which I am now engaged with hell, do thou always help me; but when thou seest me wavering and likely to fall, O my Lady! do thou then extend thy hand with greater promptitude, and sustain me with greater vigor. O God! how many temptations have I still to overcome before my death! Mary, my hope, my refuge, my strength, do thou protect me, and never allow me to lose the grace of God. And on my part I resolve always and instantly to have recourse to thee in all temptations, saying:

Ejaculatory prayer. Help me, Mary! Mary, help me!

[From the Naples Edition.]

O Mary, we are taught by thy servant St. Bonaventure to regard thee as *the Mother of orphans.*[6006] Those unfortunate sinners, who have lost God, their Father, are orphans indeed. I fly then to thee, O merciful Mother: I have by my sins lost my Father; all my hope rests in thee, who still remainest as my Mother. I feel fresh confidence arise within me when I hear Innocent III. ask, Who has ever called on Mary without being heard?[6007] Who was ever lost that had sincere recourse to her? I fly, therefore, to thy holy protection; have compassion on me; help me, and do not forsake me.[6008]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mother of my God, augment daily my confidence in thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

THIRTY-FIRST VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, page 123.

Oh, how beautiful a sight was it to behold our sweet Redeemer on that day when, fatigued by his journey, he sat down, all engaging and loving, beside the well to await the Samaritan woman, that he might convert and save her! *Jesus, therefore, sat thus on the well.*[6009] It is precisely thus that this same Lord seems sweetly to dwell with us all the day long, having come down from heaven upon our altars as upon so many fountains of graces, where he awaits and invites souls to keep him company, at least for a while, that he may thus draw them to his perfect love. From every altar on which Jesus remains in the Most Holy Sacrament he seems to speak and address all, saying: O men! why do you fly my presence? Why do you not come and draw near to me, who love you so much, and who remain thus annihilated for your sake? Why do you fear? I am not now come on earth to judge; but I have hid myself in this Sacrament of love only to do good, and to save all who have recourse to me: *I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.*[6010]

Let us, then, understand, that as Jesus Christ in heaven is *always living to make intercession for us,*[6011] so in the Sacrament of the Altar he is continually, both night and day, exercising the compassionate office of our Advocate; offering himself as a victim for us to the Eternal Father, thus to obtain for us his mercies and innumerable graces. Therefore the devout Thomas à Kempis says, that we ought to approach and converse with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament without the fear of chastisement, and unrestrained, as to a beloved friend, "as one who loves speaks to his beloved, as a friend to a friend."[6012]

Since, then, Thou thus givest me permission, let me, O my hidden King and Lord, now open my heart to Thee with confidence, and say: O my

Jesus! O enamoured of souls, I well know the injustice that men do Thee. Thou lovest them, and art not beloved by them; Thou doest good, and receivest contempt; Thou desirest to make them hear Thy voice, and they give Thee no ear; Thou offerest them Thy graces, and they refuse them. Ah, my Jesus! and is it true that I also at one time joined these ungrateful creatures in thus displeasing Thee? O God, it is but too true? But I am determined to amend, and to endeavor during the time that I still have to live, to make up for the displeasure which I have caused Thee, by doing all that I possibly can to please Thee and to give Thee pleasure. Tell me, Lord, what Thou askest of me, I will execute all without any reserve: make it known to me by the means of holy obedience, and I hope to do it. My God, I now resolutely promise Thee that I will never, from this day forward, omit anything which I know to be, rather than another, pleasing to Thee, even were I thereby to lose all—parents, friends, esteem, health, and even life. Let all perish, provided Thou art pleased. Happy is that loss, when all is lost and sacrificed to satisfy Thy heart, O God of my soul! I love Thee, O sovereign good, worthy of love above every other good; and in loving Thee I unite my poor heart to all the hearts with which the seraphim love Thee; I unite it to the heart of Mary, to the Heart of Jesus. I love Thee with my entire self; Thee alone will I love, and Thee alone will I always love.

Ejaculatory prayer. My God, my God! I am Thine, and Thou art mine!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Blessed Amadeus says that our most blessed Queen, Mary, is always in the divine presence, acting as our advocate, and interposing with God by her prayers, which are most powerful: “The most blessed Virgin stands before the face of her Creator, interceding with her most powerful prayers for us. For,” he adds, “she well sees our miseries and our dangers, and the most clement and sweet Lady compassionates and succors us with a mother’s love.”[6013]

Thou, my advocate and my most loving Mother, thou even now seest the miseries of my soul; thou seest my dangers, and prayest for me. Pray, pray, and cease not to pray, until thou seest me saved and thanking thee in heaven. The devout Blosius tells me that thou, O most sweet Mary, art, after

Jesus, the certain salvation of those who are thy faithful servants.[6014] Ah! this grace I now ask thee: grant me the happy lot of being thy faithful servant until death; that after death I may go to bless thee in heaven, where I shall be certain never more, as long as God is God, to leave thy sacred feet.

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, my Mother, grant that I may be ever thine!

[From the Naples Edition.]

O Mary, thou art the tower of David, and therefore art able to defend those who take refuge under thee. Protect all who are engaged in the contest. I experience continual assaults from my enemies, who are striving to deprive me of the grace of God, and to withdraw me from thy protection. But thou art the fortress and the bulwark of our hope; thou dost not disdain to fight in behalf of those who trust in thee. O Mary, defend me, then, against all my enemies, and fight my battles for me, because I rely with confidence on thee.[6015]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, thou art my protectress.

The usual prayer, page 125.

My Good, my God, all mine Thou art;

Myself I give Thee, all my heart;

For Thee, and Thee alone, I sigh.

What have I in heaven? and besides Thee, what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.[6016]

HYMNS

I

JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT ENCLOSED IN THE TABERNACLE

O FLOWERS, O happy flowers, which day and night
So near to my own Jesus silent stay,
And never leave him, till before his sight
At length your life in fragrance fades away!
Could I, too, always make my dwelling-place
In that dear spot to which your charms you lend.
Oh, what a blessed lot were mine! what grace,
Close to my truest Life, my life to end!
O lights! O happy lights, which burn away,
The presence of our Jesus to proclaim;
Ah! could I see my heart become one day
Like you, all fire of love and burning flame,
Then, as you waste away, so would I die,
Like you, consumed with fire of love divine;
Oh! how I envy you! How blest were I
Could I but change your happy lot with mine!
O sacred pyx! thou art more favored still,
For thou my love concealed dost here enclose;
What nobler, happier part could creature fill?
In thee thy very God deigns to repose!
Ah! were thy office but for one brief day
On this my poor and frozen breast bestow’d,
Then would my heart be melted all away,
Of love and fire become the blest abode!
But ah, sweet flowers, bright lights, and pyx so blest!
Far, far more fortunate than you am I,

When my Belovèd comes within my breast,
All loving like a tender lamb to lie;
And I, poor worm, in this frail host receive
My good, my all, the God of Majesty!
Why then not burn? my life why then not give,
Since here my treasure gives himself to me?
Away, like fluttering moth around the light,
My raptured soul, about thy Jesus fly,
Inflamed with faith and love; and at the sight
Of thy belovèd ever burn and sigh!
And when the hour arrives, and he is thine
Whose very sight make Paradise above,
Oh, press him to thy heart with fire divine,
And say thou wilt but love, love, only love!

II

THE VISIT TO JESUS ON THE ALTAR

WHEN the loving Shepherd,
Ere he left the earth,
Shed, to pay our ransom,
Blood of priceless worth,—
These his lambs so cherish’d,
Purchased for his own,
He would not abandon
In the world alone.
Ere he makes us partners
Of his realm on high,
Happy and immortal
With him in the sky,—
Love immense, stupendous,
Makes him here below
Partner of our exile
In this world of woe.
Lest one heart that loves him

E’er should sigh with pain,
Pining for his presence,
Seeking him in vain,—
He on earth would tarry
Near to every one,
That each heart might find him
On his altar-throne.
Yes, upon that altar,
Captive in his cell,
Burning with affection,
Jesus deigns to dwell.
Thence he seeks to kindle
With his heavenly fires
Every heart that truly
To his love aspires.
How that fire enkindles,
Piercing like a dart,
He alone is witness
Who has felt its smart;
Though the heart approaches
Cold as falling snow,
Soon it melts and kindles
From the furnace glow.
Say, ye souls enamour’d,
What blest flames you feel:
Say, what fiery arrows
Pierce you as you kneel,
When you come to worship
Where your Jesus lies,
All your love awaiting,
Hid from mortal eyes.
Jesus, food of angels!
Monarch of the heart,
Oh, that I could never
From Thy face depart!

Yes, Thou ever dwellest
Here for love of me,
Hidden Thou remainest,
God of Majesty!
Soon I hope to see Thee,
And enjoy Thy love,
Face to face, sweet Jesus,
In Thy heaven above.
But on earth an exile
My delight shall be,
Ever to be near Thee,
Veiled for love of me.

Meditations for the Octave of Corpus Christi

Meditation I

THE LOVE OF JESUS IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT

OUR most loving Redeemer, knowing that he must leave this earth and return to his Father as soon as he should have accomplished the work of our redemption by his death, and seeing that the hour of his death was now come,—*Jesus knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world unto the Father,*[6017]—would not leave us alone in this valley of tears, and therefore what did he do? He instituted the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which he left us his whole self. “No tongue,” said St. Peter of Alcantara, “is able to declare the greatness of the love that Jesus bears to every soul: and therefore this Spouse, when he would leave this earth, in order that his absence might not cause us to forget him, left us as a memorial this Blessed Sacrament, in which he himself remained; for he would not that there should be any other pledge to keep alive our remembrance of him than he himself.” Jesus, therefore, would not be separated from us by his death; but he instituted this Sacrament of love in order to be with us even to the end of the world: *Behold I am with you even to the consummation of the world.*[6018] Behold him, then, as faith teaches us,—behold him on so many altars shut up as in so many prisons of love, in order that he may be found by every one that seeks him. But, O Lord, says St. Bernard, this does not become Thy majesty. Jesus Christ answers, It is enough that it becomes my love.

They feel great tenderness and devotion who go to Jerusalem and visit the cave where the Incarnate Word was born, the hall where he was scourged, the hill of Calvary on which he died, and the sepulchre where he was buried; but how much greater ought our tenderness to be when we visit an altar on which Jesus remains in the Most Holy Sacrament! The Ven. Father John Avila used to say, that of all sanctuaries there is not one to be found more excellent and devout than a church where Jesus is sacramentally present.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my beloved Jesus, O God, who hast loved men with so exceeding love! what more canst Thou do to make Thyself loved by these ungrateful men? Oh, if men loved Thee, all the churches would be continually filled with people prostrate on the ground adoring and thanking Thee, and burning with love for Thee at seeing Thee with the eyes of faith hidden in a tabernacle. But no; men, forgetful of Thee and of Thy love, are ready enough to court a man from whom they hope for some miserable advantage, while they leave Thee, O my Lord, abandoned and alone. Oh that I could by my devotion make reparation for such ingratitude! I am sorry that I also have hitherto been, like them, careless and ungrateful. But for the future I will not be so any longer, and I will devote myself to Thy service as much as I possibly can. Do Thou inflame me with Thy holy love, so that from this day forth I may live only to love and to please Thee. Thou deservest the love of all hearts. If at one time I have despised Thee, I now desire nothing but to love Thee. O my Jesus, Thou art my love and my only good, "my God and my all."[6019]

Most holy Virgin Mary, obtain for me, I pray thee, a great love for the Most Holy Sacrament.

Meditation II

JESUS REMAINS ON THE ALTAR, THAT EVERY ONE MAY BE ABLE TO FIND HIM

St. Teresa said, that in this world it is impossible for all subjects to speak to the king. As for the poor, the most they can hope for is, to speak with him by means of some third person. But to speak with Thee, O King of Heaven, there is no need of third persons; for every one that wishes can find Thee in the Most Holy Sacrament, and can speak to Thee at his pleasure and without restraint. For this reason, said the same saint, Jesus Christ has concealed his majesty in the Sacrament, under the appearance of bread, in order to give us more confidence, and to take away from us all fear of approaching him.

Oh, how Jesus seems continually to exclaim from the altar: *Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.*[6020] Come, he says, come, ye poor: come, ye infirm; come, ye afflicted; come, ye just and ye sinners, and you shall find in me a remedy for all your losses and afflictions: such is the desire of Jesus Christ; to console every one who has recourse to him, he remains day and night on our altars, that he maybe found by all, and that he may bestow favors upon all. Hence the saints experienced in this world such pleasure in remaining in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, that days and nights appeared to them as moments. The Countess of Feria having become a nun of the Order of St. Clare, was never wearied of remaining in the choir in sight of the tabernacle: being asked one day what she was doing so long before the Most Holy Sacrament, she answered with surprise: “What do I do before the Blessed Sacrament? what do I do? I return thanks, I love and I pray!” St. Philip Neri being in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, exclaimed: “Behold my love, behold all my love?” Ah, if Jesus were thus our whole love, days and nights in his presence would appear also to us as moments.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my Jesus, from this day forward I also hope to say always to Thee, when I come to visit Thee on Thy altars: “Behold my love, behold all my love!” Yes, my beloved Redeemer, I will love none other but Thee; I desire that Thou shouldst be the only love of my soul. I seem to die of sorrow when I think that hitherto I have loved creatures and my own pleasures more than Thee, and have turned my back upon Thee, the sovereign good. But Thou wouldst not have me lost, and therefore hast Thou borne with me with so much patience; and instead of chastising me, Thou hast pierced my heart with so many darts of love, that I could no longer resist Thy kindness, but have given myself up to Thee; I see that Thou wouldst have me to be entirely Thine. But since Thou wouldst have it to be so, do Thou make me so Thyself; for it is Thou who must do it. Do Thou detach my heart from all earthly affections and from myself, and grant that I may seek none other but Thee, that I may think of none but Thee, that I may speak of none but Thee, and that I may only desire and sigh to burn with love for Thee, and to live and die for Thee alone. O love of my Jesus, come and occupy my whole heart, and expel from it all other love but that of God! I love Thee, O Jesus in the Sacrament, I love Thee, my treasure, my love, my all.

O Mary, my hope, pray for me, and make me belong entirely to Jesus.

Meditation III

THE GREAT GIFT WHICH JESUS HAS MADE US BY GIVING HIMSELF TO US IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

The love of Jesus Christ was not satisfied with sacrificing for us his divine life in the midst of a sea of ignominies and torments, in order to prove to us the affection that he bore us; but besides all this, in order to oblige us to love him more, on the night before his death he would leave us his whole self as our food in the Holy Eucharist. God is omnipotent; but after he has given himself to a soul in this Sacrament of love, he has nothing more to give her. The Council of Trent says, that Jesus, in giving himself to us in the Holy Communion, pours forth, as it were, all the riches of his infinite love in this gift: “He has, as it were, poured forth the treasures of his love towards man.”[6021] How would that vassal esteem himself honored, writes St. Francis de Sales, were his prince, whilst he was at table, to send him a portion of his own dish; and what would it be if this portion were a piece torn out from his own arm? Jesus in the Holy Communion gives us for our food, not only a portion of his own meal and of his most sacred flesh, but all his body: *Take and eat, this is My Body.*[6022] And together with his body he gives us also his soul and his divinity; so that, as St. Chrysostom says, our Lord, in giving himself to us in the Blessed Sacrament, gives us all that he has, and nothing more remains for him to give us: “He gave all to Thee, and left nothing for himself.” O wonderful prodigy of divine love, that God, who is the Lord of all, makes himself entirely ours!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my dear Jesus, what more canst Thou do to make us love Thee? Oh, make us understand what an excess of love Thou hast shown us in reducing Thyself to food, in order to unite Thyself thus to us poor sinners! Thou, therefore, my dear Redeemer, hast had so much affection for me, that Thou hast not refused to give Thyself again and again entirely for me in Holy Communion. And yet I have had the courage to drive Thee so many times away from my soul! But Thou canst not despise an humble and a contrite heart. Thou didst become man for my sake, Thou didst die for me, Thou didst even go so far as to become my food; and what more can there remain for Thee to do to gain my love? Oh, that I could die with grief every time that I remember to have thus despised Thy grace! I repent, O my love, with my whole heart for having offended Thee. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! I love Thee, O infinite love! I desire nothing but to love Thee, and I fear nothing but to live without Thy love. My beloved Jesus, do not refuse to come for the future into my soul. Come, because I would rather die a thousand times than drive Thee away again, and I will do all I can to please Thee. Come and inflame my whole soul with Thy love. Grant that I may forget everything, to think only of Thee, and to aspire to Thee alone, my sovereign and my only good.

O Mary, my Mother, pray for me; and by thy prayers make me grateful for all the love of Jesus towards me.

Meditation IV

THE GREAT LOVE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN US IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Jesus, knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father: having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.[6023] Jesus, knowing that the hour of his death was come, desired to leave us, before he died, the greatest pledge of his affection that he could give us; and this was the gift of the Most Holy Sacrament: *He loved them to the end;* which St. Chrysostom explains, "He loved them with extreme love." He loved men with the greatest love with which he could love them, by giving them his whole self. But at what time, did Jesus institute this great Sacrament, in which he has left us himself? On the night preceding his death: *The same night in which He was betrayed* (writes the Apostle), *He took bread; and giving thanks, broke and said, Take ye and eat; this is My Body.*[6024] At the very time that men were preparing to put him to death, he gave them this last proof of his love. The marks of affection which we receive from our friends at the time of their death remain more deeply impressed on our hearts; for this reason did Jesus bestow on us this gift of the Blessed Sacrament just before his death. With reason, then, did St. Thomas call this gift "a sacrament and pledge of love;"[6025] and St. Bernard, "the love of loves;"[6026] because in this Sacrament Jesus Christ united and accomplished all the other acts of love which he had shown us. Hence St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi called the day on which Jesus instituted this Sacrament "the day of love."

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O infinite love of Jesus, worthy of being loved with a like infinite love! Thou, my Lord, dost love men so much; how is it, then, that men love Thee so little in return? What more couldst Thou do to make Thyself loved by them? O my Jesus, Thou art so amiable and so loving; make Thyself, I pray Thee, known; make Thyself loved. When shall I love Thee as Thou hast love me? Oh, discover to me more and more the greatness of Thy mercy, in order that I may burn ever more and more with Thy love, and always seek to please Thee. O beloved one of my soul, would that I had always loved Thee! Alas, there was a time when I not only did not love Thee, but despised Thy grace and Thy love! I am consoled by the sorrow which I feel for it, and I hope for pardon through Thy promise to forgive him that repents of his sins. To Thee, O my Saviour, do I turn all my affections; help me, through the merits of Thy Passion, to love Thee with my whole strength. Oh, that I could die for Thee, as Thou didst die for me!

O Mary, my Mother, do thou obtain for me the grace henceforth to love God alone.

Meditation V

THE UNION OF THE SOUL WITH JESUS IN THE HOLY COMMUNION

St. Dionysius the Areopagite says that the principal effect of love is to tend to union. For this very purpose did Jesus institute the Holy Communion, that he might unite himself entirely to our souls. He had given himself to us as our master, our example, and our victim; it only remained for him to give himself to us as our food, that he might become one with us; as food becomes one with the person that eats it. This he did by instituting this Sacrament of love: “The last degree of love” (says St. Bernardine of Sienna) “is when he gave himself to us to be our food; because he gave himself to be united with us in every way, as food and he who takes it are mutually united.”[6027]

So that Jesus Christ was not satisfied with uniting himself to our human nature; but he would, by this Sacrament, find a way of uniting himself also to each one of us, so as to make himself wholly one with him who receives him. Hence St. Francis de Sales writes: “In no other action can our Saviour be considered more tender or more loving than in this, in which he, as it were, annihilates himself, and reduces himself to food, that he may penetrate our souls, and unite himself to the hearts of his faithful.”[6028] Because Jesus loved us ardently, he desired to unite himself to us in the Holy Eucharist, in order that we might become the same thing with him; thus writes St. Chrysostom: “He mingled himself with us, that we might be one; for this belongs to those who love greatly.”[6029] Thou wouldst, in short, O God of love, that our hearts and Thine should form but one heart. “Thou wouldst that we should have one heart with Thee,” said St. Laurence Justinian.[6030]

And Jesus himself said this: *He that eateth My flesh abideth in Me, and I in him.*[6031] He, therefore, that communicates, abides in Jesus, and Jesus abides in him; and this union is not of mere affection, but it is a true and real union. As two wax tapers, when melted, says St. Cyril of Alexandria,[6032] unite themselves into one, so he that communicates becomes one with Jesus Christ. Let us, therefore, imagine, when we communicate, that Jesus Christ says to us that which he said one day to his beloved servant, Margaret of Ypres: “Behold, O my daughter, the beautiful union between me and thee; come, then, love me, and let us remain constantly united in love, and never more be separated.”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my Jesus, this is what I seek of Thee, and what I will always seek for from Thee in the Holy Communion: “Let us be always united, and never more be separated.” I know that Thou wilt not separate Thyself from me, if I do not first separate myself from Thee. But this is my fear, lest I should in future separate myself from Thee by sin, as I have done in times past. O my blessed Redeemer, permit it not: “Suffer me not to be separated from Thee.” As long as I am alive, I am in danger of this; oh, through the merits of Thy death, I beseech Thee let me die, rather than repeat this great injury against Thee. I repeat it, and pray Thee to grant me Thy grace always to repeat: “Suffer me not to be separated from Thee; suffer me not to be separated from Thee.”[6033] O God of my soul, I love Thee; I love Thee, and will always love Thee, and will love Thee alone. I protest before heaven and earth that I desire Thee alone, and nothing but Thee. O my Jesus, hear me; I desire Thee alone, and nothing but Thee.

O Mary, Mother of mercy, pray for me now; and obtain for me the grace never more to separate myself from Jesus, and to love only Jesus.

Meditation VI

THE DESIRE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS TO UNITE HIMSELF TO US IN THE HOLY COMMUNION

Jesus knowing that His hour was come.[6034] This hour, which Jesus called "His hour," was the hour of that night in which his Passion was to begin. But why did he call so sad an hour his hour? Because this was the hour for which he had sighed during his whole life, having determined to leave us in this night the Holy Communion, by which he desired to unite himself entirely to the souls whom he loved, and for whom he was soon to give his blood and his life. Behold how he spoke on that night to his disciples: *With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you.*[6035] By which words he would express to us the desire and anxiety that he had to unite himself to us in this Sacrament of love. *With desire have I desired:* these words, said St. Laurence Justinian, were words which came from the Heart of Jesus, which was burning with infinite love: "This is the voice of the most ardent charity."[6036]

Now the same flame which burnt then in the Heart of Jesus burns there at present; and he gives the same invitation to all of us to-day to receive him as he did then to his disciples. *Take ye and eat; this is My Body.*[6037] And to allure us to receive him with affection, he promises Paradise to us: *He that eateth My flesh hath everlasting life.*[6038] And if we refuse to receive him, he threatens us with death: *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, you shall not have life in you.*[6039]

These invitations, promises, and threats, all arise from the desire of Jesus Christ to unite himself to us in Holy Communion, through the love that he bears us. "There is not a bee," said our Lord to St. Mechtilde, "which seeks the honey out of the flowers with such eagerness of delight, as I have to enter into the souls that desire me."[6040] Jesus, because he loves us, desires to be loved by us; and because he desires us he will have us desire him.

“God thirsts to be thirsted after,”[6041] writes St. Gregory. Blessed is that soul that approaches Holy Communion with a great desire to be united to Jesus Christ.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My adorable Jesus, Thou canst not give us greater proofs of Thy love, to show us how much Thou lovest us. Thou hast given Thy life for us; Thou hast bequeathed Thyself to us in the Holy Sacrament, in order that we may come and nourish ourselves with Thy flesh; and Thou art most anxious that we should receive Thee. How, then, can we behold all these proofs of Thy love, and not burn with love for Thee? Begone, ye earthly affections, begone from my heart; it is you that hinder me from burning with love for Jesus as he burns with love for me. And what other pledges of Thy love can I expect, O my Redeemer, than those which Thou hast already given me? Thou hast sacrificed Thy whole life for the love of me; Thou hast embraced for my sake a most bitter and infamous death; Thou hast for my sake reduced Thyself almost to annihilation, by becoming food in the Holy Eucharist in order to give Thyself entirely to us. O Lord, let me no longer live ungrateful for such great goodness. I thank Thee for having given me time to bewail the offences I have committed against Thee, and to love Thee during the days that remain to me in this life. I repent, O sovereign good, for having hitherto despised Thy love. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! I love Thee, O infinite treasure! I love Thee, O infinite love who art worthy of infinite love! Oh, help me, my Jesus, to discard from my heart all affections that are not directed to Thee; so that from this day forward I may not desire, nor seek, nor love any other but Thee. My beloved Lord, grant that I may always find Thee, grant that I may always love Thee. Do Thou take possession of my whole will, in order that I may never desire anything but what is pleasing to Thee. My God, my God, whom shall I love, if I love not Thee, who art the supreme good? I do indeed desire Thee, and nothing more. O Mary, my Mother, take my heart into thy keeping, and fill it with pure love for Jesus Christ.

Meditation VII

HOLY COMMUNION OBTAINS FOR US PERSEVERANCE IN DIVINE GRACE

When Jesus comes to the soul in Holy Communion, he brings to it every grace, and specially the grace of holy perseverance. This is the principal effect of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, to nourish the soul that receives it with this food of life, and to give it great strength to advance unto perfection, and to resist those enemies who desire our death. Hence Jesus calls himself in this Sacrament heavenly bread: *I am the living Bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever.*[6042] Even as earthly bread sustains the life of the body, so this heavenly bread sustains the life of the soul, by making it persevere in the grace of God.

Therefore the Council of Trent teaches that Holy Communion is that remedy which delivers us from daily faults and preserves us from mortal sins.[6043] Innocent III. writes[6044] that Jesus Christ by his Passion delivers us from sins committed, and by the Holy Eucharist from sins which we might commit. Therefore St. Bonaventure says that sinners must not keep away from Communion because they have been sinners; on the contrary, for this very reason they ought to receive it more frequently; because “the more infirm a person feels himself, the more he is in want of a physician.”[6045]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Miserable sinner that I am, O Lord, wherefore do I lament my weakness when I consider my many falls from grace? How was it possible that I should have resisted the assaults of the devil while I stayed away from Thee, who art my strength? If I had oftener approached the Holy Communion, I should not have been so often overcome by my enemies. But in future it shall not be so: *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.*[6046] No, I will no longer rely on my own resolution. Thou alone art my hope, O my Jesus; Thou wilt give me strength, that I may no more fall into sin. I am weak; but Thou, by Holy Communion, wilt make me strong against every temptation: *I can do all things in Him who strengthened me.*[6047] Forgive me, O my Jesus, all the offences I have committed against Thee, of which I repent with my whole heart. I resolve rather to die than ever to offend Thee again; and I trust, in Thy Passion, that Thou wilt give me Thy help to persevere in Thy grace to the end of my life: *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.*

And with St. Bonaventure I will say the same to thee, O Mary, my Mother: “In thee, O Lady, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.”

Meditation VIII

PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION AND THANKSGIVING AFTER IT

Cardinal Bona asks wherefore it happens that so many souls, after so many Communions, make so little advance in the way of God? and he answers: “The fault is not in the food, but in the disposition of him who eats it;”[6048] that is to say, in the want of due preparation on the part of the communicant. Fire soon burns dry wood, but not that which is green, because the latter is not fit to burn. The saints derived great profit from their Communions, because they were very careful in their preparation for it.

There are two principal things which we should endeavor to obtain in order to prepare ourselves for Holy Communion.

The first is, detachment from creatures, by driving from our heart everything that is not of God and for God. Although the soul may be in a state of grace, yet if the heart is occupied by earthly affections the more there is of earth in the soul, so much less room will there be for divine love. St. Gertrude once asked our Lord what preparation he required of her for Holy Communion, and Jesus answered her: “I require none other from thee than that thou shouldst come to receive me void of thyself.”[6049]

The second thing that is necessary in order to reap great fruit from Communion is, the desire to receive Jesus Christ with the view of loving him more. Gerson[6050] says that at this banquet none are satiated but those who feel great hunger. Hence St. Francis de Sales writes, that the principal intention of a soul in receiving Communion should be to advance in the love of God. “He” (says the saint) “should be received for love, who out of pure love alone gives himself to us.”[6051] And therefore Jesus said to St. Mechtilde: “When thou art going to communicate, desire all the love that any soul ever had for me, and I will receive it according to thy desire, as if it were thine own.”[6052]

It is also necessary to make a thanksgiving after Communion. There is no prayer more dear to God than that which is made after Communion. We must occupy this time in acts of love and prayers. The devout acts of love which we then make have greater merit in the sight of God than those which we make at other times, because they are then animated by the presence of Jesus Christ, who is united to our souls. And as to prayers, St. Teresa says that Jesus, after Communion, remains in the soul as on a throne of grace, and says to it: *What wilt thou that I should do for thee*?[6053] Soul, I am come from heaven on purpose to bestow graces upon thee; ask me what thou wilt, and as much as thou wilt, and thou shalt be heard. Oh, what treasures of grace do they lose who pray but a short time to God after Holy Communion!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYER

O God of love, dost Thou, then, so much desire to dispense Thy favors to us, and yet are we so little anxious to obtain them? Oh, what sorrow we shall feel at the hour of death, when we think of this negligence, so pernicious to our souls! O my Lord, forget, I beseech Thee, all that is past; for the future, with Thy help, I will prepare myself better, by endeavoring to detach my affections from everything that prevents me from receiving all those graces which Thou desirest to bestow upon me. And after Communion I will lift up my heart to Thee as much as I can, in order to obtain Thy help that I may advance in Thy love,—oh, grant me grace to accomplish this. O my Jesus, how negligent have I hitherto been in loving Thee! The time which Thou in Thy mercy mayest yet allot to me in this life, is the time to prepare myself for death, and to make amends by my love for the offences I have committed against Thee. I will spend it entirely in lamenting my sins and in loving Thee. I love Thee, my Jesus, my love; I love Thee, my only Good; have pity on me, and do not forsake me.

And thou, O Mary, my hope, do not cease to help me by thy holy intercession!

Novena to the Sacred heart of Jesus[6054]

NOTICE ON THE DEVOTION TO THE ADORABLE HEART OF JESUS

THE devotion of all devotions is love for Jesus Christ, and frequent meditation on the love which this amiable Redeemer has borne and still bears to us.

A devout author laments, and most justly, the sight of so many persons who pay much attention to the practice of various devotions, but neglect this; and of many preachers and confessors, who say a great many things, but speak little of love for Jesus Christ: whereas love for Jesus Christ ought to be the principal, indeed the only, devotion of a Christian; and therefore the only object and care of preachers and confessors towards their hearers and penitents ought to be to recommend to them constantly, and to inflame their hearts with, the love of Jesus Christ. This neglect is the reason why souls make so little progress in virtue, and remain grovelling in the same defects, and even frequently relapse into grievous sins, because they take but little care, and are not sufficiently admonished to acquire the love of Jesus Christ, which is that golden cord which unites and binds the soul to God.

For this sole purpose did the Eternal Word come into this world, to make himself loved: *I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?*[6055] And for this purpose also did the Eternal Father send him into the world, in order that he might make known to us his love, and thus obtain ours in return; and he protests that he will love us in the same proportion as we love Jesus Christ: *For the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me.*[6056] Moreover, he gives us his graces as far as we ask for them in the name of his Son: *If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[6057] And he will admit us to the eternal beatitude in so far only as he finds us conformable to the life of Jesus Christ: *For whom he foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son.*[6058] But we shall never acquire this conformity, nor even ever desire it, if we are not attentive to meditate upon the love which Jesus Christ has borne to us.

For this same purpose it is related in the life of the Venerable Sister Margaret Alacoque, a nun of the Order of the Visitation, that our Saviour revealed to this his servant his wish that in our times the devotion and feast of his Sacred Heart should be established and propagated in the Church, in order that devout souls should by their adoration and prayer make reparation for the injuries his heart constantly receives from ungrateful men when he is exposed in the Sacrament upon the Altar. It is also related in the life of the same venerable sister, written by the learned Monseigneur Languet, Bishop of Sens, that while this devout virgin was one day praying before the Most Holy Sacrament, Jesus Christ showed her his heart surrounded by thorns, with a cross on the top and in a throne of flames; and then he said thus to her: “Behold the heart that has so much loved men, and has spared nothing for love of them, even to consuming itself to give them pledges of its love, but which receives from the majority of men no other recompense but ingratitude, and insults towards the Sacrament of love; and what grieves me most is, that these hearts are consecrated to me.” And then he desired her to use her utmost endeavors in order that a particular feast should be celebrated in honor of his divine heart on the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi. And this for three reasons: 1. In order that the faithful should return thanks to him for the great gift which he has left them in the adorable Eucharist; 2. In order that loving souls should make amends by their prayers and pious affections for the irreverences and insults which he has received and still receives from sinners in this Most Holy Sacrament; 3. In order that they might make up also for the honor which he does not receive in so many churches where he is so little adored and reverenced. And he promised that he would make the riches of his Sacred Heart abound towards those who should render him this honor, both on the day of this feast, and on every other day when they should visit him in the Most Holy Sacrament.

This devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ is nothing more than an exercise of love towards this amiable Saviour. But as to the principal object of this devotion, the *spiritual* object is the love with which the heart of Jesus Christ is inflamed towards men, because love is generally attributed to the heart, as we read in many places of Scripture: *My son, give Me thy* *heart.*[6059] *My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God.*[6060] *The God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.*[6061] *The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.*[6062] But the *material* or sensible object is the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, not taken separately by itself, but united to his sacred humanity, and consequently to the divine Person of the Word.

This devotion in the course of a short time has been so extensively propagated, that besides having been introduced into many convents of holy virgins, there have been about four hundred confraternities erected of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, established with the authority of the Prelates in France, in Savoy, in Flanders, in Germany, in Italy, and even in many heathen countries; and these confraternities have also been enriched by the Holy See with many indulgences, and also with the faculty of erecting chapels and churches with the title of the Sacred Heart, as appears from the brief of Clement X. in the year 1674, mentioned by Father Eudes in his book (page 468), and referred to by Father Gallifet, of the Company of Jesus, in his work on the "Excellence of the devotion to the Heart of Jesus.

And many devout persons hope that the Holy Church may some day grant permission for the Office, and proper Mass, in honor of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. We know, indeed, that even in the year 1726 this request was made through the medium of the same Father Gallifet, who was the postulator of it; he explained that the Sacred Heart of Jesus deserved this special veneration, because it was the sensible origin and the seat of all the affections of the Redeemer, and especially that of love; and because it was also the centre of all the interior sorrows which he suffered during his life. But, as far as my weak judgment goes, I believe that this good religious did not obtain his petition because he urged it upon grounds which were dubiously tenable. It was therefore justly objected to his views that it was a great question as to whether the affections of the soul were found in the heart or in the brain; and even the most modern philosophers, with Louis Muratori in his moral philosophy, adopt the second opinion, viz., of the brain. And that therefore, as there had been no judgment pronounced concerning this disputed point by the Church, which prudently abstains from such decisions, the request made was not to be granted, inasmuch as it was ground on an uncertain opinion of the ancients. And it was moreover said, that as this special motive for the veneration of the Sacred Heart had failed, it would not be right to grant the petition for the Office and Mass; because otherwise this might be a precedent for similar requests in favor of the most holy side, of the tongue, the eyes, and other members of Jesus Christ's body. This is the substance of what I find recorded in the celebrated work on the canonization of the saints, of Benedict XIV., of blessed memory.[6063]

But the hope we entertain that this concession will some day be granted in favor of the heart of our Lord, is not built upon the above-mentioned opinion of the ancients, but on the common opinion of philosophers, both ancient and modern, that the human heart, even though it may not be the seat of the affections and the principle of life, is, notwithstanding, as the most learned Muratori writes in the same place, "One of the primary fountains and organs of the life of man." For the generality of modern physicians agree in saying that the fountain and the principle of the circulation of the blood is the heart, to which are attached the veins and arteries; and therefore there is no doubt that the other parts of the body receive their principle of motion from the heart. If, therefore, the heart is one of the "primary fountains" of human life, it cannot be doubted that the heart has a principal share in the affections of man. And, indeed, one may observe from experience, that the internal affections of sorrow and love produce, a much greater impression on the heart than on all the other parts of the body. And especially with regard to love, without naming many other saints, it is recorded of St. Philip Neri, that in his fervors of love towards God, heat came forth from his heart so that it might be felt on his chest, and his heart palpitated so violently that it beat against the head of any one that approached him; and by a supernatural prodigy our Lord enlarged the ribs of the saint round his heart, which, agitated by the ardor he felt, required a greater space to be able to move. St. Teresa herself writes in her life,[6064] that God sent several times an angel to pierce her heart, so that she remained afterwards inflamed with divine love, and felt herself sensibly burning and fainting away,—a thing to be well pondered on, as we perceive from this that the affections of love are in a special manner impressed by God in the hearts of the saints; and the Church has not objected to grant to the Discalced Carmelites the proper Mass in honor of the wounded heart of St. Teresa.

It may be added, that the Church has declared worthy of particular veneration the instruments of the Passion of Christ, such as the lance, the nails, and the crown of thorns, granting a particular Office and Mass for their special veneration, as is mentioned by Benedict XIV. in the work and place referred to, where he quotes particularly the words of Innocent VI., who granted the Office for the lance and the nails of our Lord, and these are the words: "We think it right that a special feast were celebrated in honor of the special instruments of his Passion, and particularly in those countries in which those instruments are said to be, and that we should encourage the faithful servants of Christ in devotion to them by concession of the divine Offices."[6065] If, therefore, the Church has judged it right to venerate by a special Office the lance, the nails, the thorns, because they came in contact with those parts of Christ's body which were particularly tormented in the Passion, how much more have we not reason to hope that a special Office may be granted in honor of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, which had such a great share in his affections, and in the immense internal sorrows that he suffered in seeing the torments that were prepared for him, and the ingratitude which, after all his love for them, would be shown him by men? This was the cause of the bloody sweat which our Lord afterwards endured in the Garden, because such a sweat can only be explained by a strong compression of the heart, by which the blood, being impeded in its course, was forced to diffuse itself through the exterior parts; and this compression of the Heart of Jesus Christ could not arrive from any other cause than from the internal pains of fear, of weariness, and of sorrow, according as the Evangelists write: *He began to fear, and to be heavy and sad*.[6066]

But, however this may be, let us now endeavor to satisfy the devotion of souls enamoured of Jesus Christ, who are desirous to honor him in the most Holy Sacrament, by a Novena of holy meditations and affections to his Sacred Heart.[6067]

MEDITATIONS

Meditation I

THE AMIABLE HEART OF JESUS

He who shows himself amiable in everything must necessarily make himself loved. Oh, if we only applied ourselves to discover all the good qualities by which Jesus Christ renders himself worthy of our love, we should all be under the happy necessity of loving him. And what heart among all hearts can be found more worthy of love than the Heart of Jesus?

A heart all pure, all holy, all full of love towards God and towards us; because all his desires are only for the divine glory and our good. This is the heart in which God finds all his delight. Every perfection, every virtue reign in this heart;—a most ardent love for God, his Father, united to the greatest humility and respect that can possibly exist; a sovereign confusion for our sins, which he has taken upon himself, united to the extreme confidence of a most affectionate Son; a sovereign abhorrence of our sins, united to a lively compassion for our miseries; an extreme sorrow, united to a perfect conformity to the will of God.

In Jesus is found everything that there can be most amiable. Some are attracted to love others by their beauty, others by their innocence, others by living with them, others by devotion. But if there were a person in whom all these and other virtues were united, who could help loving him? If we heard that there was in a distant country a foreign prince who was handsome, humble, courteous, devout, full of charity, affable to all, who rendered good to those who did him evil; then, although we knew not who he was, and though he knew not us, and though we were not acquainted with him, nor was there any possibility of our ever being so, yet we should be enamoured of him, and should be constrained to love him. How is it, then, possible that Jesus Christ, who possesses in himself all these virtues, and in the most perfect degree, and who loves us so tenderly, how is it possible that he should be so little loved by men, and should not be the only object of our love?

O my God, how is it that Jesus, who alone is worthy of love, and who has given us so many proofs of the love that he bears us, should be alone, as it were, the unlucky one with us, who cannot arrive at making us love him; as if he were not sufficiently worthy of our love! This is what caused floods of tears to St. Rose of Lima, St. Catharine of Genoa, St. Teresa, St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, who, on considering the ingratitude of men, exclaimed, weeping. “Love is not loved, Love is not loved.”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my amiable Redeemer, what object more worthy of love could Thy Eternal Father command me to love than Thee? Thou art the beauty of paradise, Thou art the love of Thy Father, Thy heart is the throne of all virtues. O amiable heart of my Jesus, Thou dost well deserve the love of all hearts; poor and wretched is that heart which loves Thee not! Thus miserable, O my God, has my heart been during all the time in which it hath not loved Thee. But I will not continue to be thus wretched; I love Thee, I will always continue to love Thee. O my Jesus. O my Lord, I have hitherto forgotten Thee, and now what can I expect? That my ingratitude will oblige Thee to forget me entirely, and forsake me forever? No, my Saviour, do not permit this. Thou art the object of the love of God; and shalt Thou not, then, be loved by a miserable sinner, such as I am, who have been so favored and loved by Thee? O lovely flames that burnt in the loving heart of my Jesus, enkindle in my poor heart that holy fire which Jesus came down from heaven to kindle on earth. Consume and destroy all the impure affections that dwell in my heart, and prevent it from being entirely his. O my God, grant that it may only exist to love Thee, and Thee alone, my dearest Saviour. If at one time I despised Thee, Thou art now the only object of my love. I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, and I will never love any one else but Thee. My beloved Lord, do not disdain to accept the love of a heart which has once afflicted Thee by my sins. Let it be Thy glory to exhibit to the angels a heart now burning with the love of Thee, which hitherto shunned and despised Thee.

Most holy Virgin Mary, my hope, do thou assist me, and beseech Jesus to make me, by his grace, all that he wishes me to be.

Meditation II

THE LOVING HEART OF JESUS

Oh, if we could but understand the love that burns in the heart of Jesus for us! He has loved us so much, that if all men, all the angels, and all the saints were to unite, with all their energies, they could not arrive at the thousandth part of the love that Jesus bears to us. He loves us infinitely more than we love ourselves.

He has loved us even to excess: *They spoke of His decease* (*excess*) *which He was to accomplish in Jerusalem.*[6068] And what greater excess of love could there be than for God to die for his creatures? He has loved us to the greatest degree: *Having loved His own . . . He loved them unto the end;*[6069] since, after having loved us from eternity,—for there never was a moment from eternity when God did not think of us and did not love each one of us: *I have loved thee with an everlasting love,*[6070]—for the love of us he made himself man, and chose a life of sufferings and the death of the cross for our sake. Therefore he has loved us more than his honor, more than his repose, and more than his life; for he sacrificed everything to show us the love that he bears us. And is not this an excess of love sufficient to stupefy with astonishment the angels of paradise for all eternity?

This love has induced him also to remain with us in the Holy Sacrament as on a throne of love; for he remains there under the appearance of a small piece of bread, shut up in a ciborium, where he seems to remain in a perfect annihilation of his majesty, without movement, and without the use of his senses; so that it seems that he performs no other office there than that of loving men. Love makes us desire the constant presence of the object of our love. It is this love and this desire that makes Jesus Christ reside with us in the Most Holy Sacrament. It seemed too short a time to this loving Saviour to have been only thirty-three years with men on earth; therefore, in order to show his desire of being constantly with us, he thought right to perform the greatest of all miracles, in the institution of the Holy Eucharist. But the work of redemption was already completed, men had already become reconciled to God; for what purpose, then, did Jesus remain on earth in this Sacrament? Ah, he remains there because he cannot bear to separate himself from us, as he has said that he takes a delight in us.

Again, this love has induced him even to become the food of our souls, so as to unite himself to us, and to make his heart and ours as one: *He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me and I in him.*[6071] O wonder! O excess of divine love! It was said by a servant of God, If anything could shake my faith in the Eucharist, it would not be the doubt as to how the bread could become flesh, or how Jesus could be in several places and confined into so small a space, because I should answer that God can do everything; but if I were asked how he could love men so much as to make himself their food, I have nothing else to answer but that this is a mystery of faith above my comprehension, and that the love of Jesus cannot be understood. O love of Jesus, do Thou make Thyself known to men and do Thou make Thyself loved!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O adorable heart of my Jesus, heart inflamed with the love of men, heart created on purpose to love them, how is it possible that Thou canst be despised, and Thy love so ill corresponded to by men? Oh, miserable that I am, I also have been one of those ungrateful ones that have not loved Thee. Forgive me, my Jesus, this great sin of not having loved Thee, who art so amiable, and who hast loved me so much that Thou canst do nothing more to oblige me to love Thee. I feel that I deserve to be condemned not to be able to love Thee, for having renounced Thy love, as I have hitherto done. But no, my dearest Saviour, give me any chastisement, but do not inflict this one upon me. Grant me the grace to love Thee, and then give me any affliction Thou pleasest. But how can I fear such a chastisement, whilst I feel that Thou continuest to give me the sweet, the pleasing precept of loving Thee, my Lord and my God? *Love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*[6072] Yes, O my God, Thou wouldst be loved by me, and I will love Thee; indeed I will love none but Thee, who hast loved me so much. O Love of my Jesus, Thou art my Love. O burning heart of my Jesus, do thou inflame my heart also. Do not permit me in future, even for a single moment, to live without Thy love; rather kill me, destroy me; do not let the world behold the spectacle of such horrid ingratitude as that I, who have been so beloved by Thee, and received so many favors and lights from Thee, should begin again to despise Thy love. No, my Jesus, do not permit this. I trust in the blood that Thou hast shed for me, that I shall always love Thee, and that Thou wilt always love me, and that this love between Thee and me will not be broken off for eternity.

O Mary, Mother of fair love, thou who desirest so much to see Jesus loved, bind me, unite me to thy Son; but bind me to him, so that we may never again be separated.

Meditation III

THE HEART OF JESUS CHRIST PANTING TO BE LOVED

Jesus has no need of us; he is equally happy, equally rich, equally powerful with or without our love; and yet, as St. Thomas says,[6073] he loves us so, that he desires our love as much as if man was his God, and his felicity depended on that of man. This filled holy Job with astonishment: *What is man that Thou shouldst magnify him? or why dost Thou set Thy heart upon him?*[6074]

What! can God desire or ask with such eagerness for the love of a worm? It would have been a great favor if God had only permitted us to love him. If a vassal were to say to his king, "Sire, I love you," he would be considered impertinent. But what would one say if the king were to tell his vassal, "I desire you to love me"? The princes of the earth do not humble themselves to this; but Jesus, who is the King of Heaven, is he who with so much earnestness demands our love: *Love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*[6075] So pressingly does he ask for our heart: *My son, give Me thy heart.*[6076] And if he is driven from a soul, he does not depart, but he stands outside of the door of the heart, and he calls and knocks to be let in: *I stand at the gate and knock.*[6077] And he beseeches her to open to him, calling her sister and spouse: *Open to Me, My sister, My love.*[6078] In short, he takes a delight in being loved by us, and is quite consoled when a soul says to him, and repeats often, "My God, my God, I love Thee."

All this is the effect of the great love he bears us. He who loves necessarily desires to be loved. The heart requires the heart; love seeks love: "Why does God love, but that he might be loved himself,"[6079] said St. Bernard; and God himself first said, *What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou fear the Lord thy God, . . . and love Him?*[6080] Therefore he tells us that he is that Shepherd who, having found the lost sheep, calls all the others to rejoice with him: *Rejoice with Me, because I have found My* *sheep that was lost.*[6081] He tells us that he is that Father who, when his lost son returns and throws himself at his feet, not only forgives him, but embraces him tenderly. He tells us that he that loves him not is condemned to death: *He that loveth not abideth in death.*[6082] And, on the contrary, that he takes him that loves him and keeps possession of him: *He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.*[6083] Oh, will not such invitations, such entreaties, such threats, and such promises move us to love God, who so much desires to be loved by us?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dearest Redeemer, I will say to Thee, with St. Augustine, Thou dost command me to love Thee, and dost threaten me with hell if I do not love Thee; but what more dreadful hell, what greater misfortune, can happen to me than to be deprived of Thy love! If, therefore, Thou desirest to frighten me, Thou shouldst threaten me only that I should live without loving Thee; for this threat alone will frighten me more than a thousand hells. If, in the midst of the flames of hell, the damned could burn with Thy love, O my God, hell itself would become a paradise; and if, on the contrary, the blessed in heaven could not love Thee, paradise would become hell. Thus St. Augustine expresses himself.

I see, indeed, my dearest Lord, that I, on account of my sins, did deserve to be forsaken by Thy grace, and at the same time condemned to be incapable of loving Thee; but still I understand that Thou dost continue to command me to love Thee, and I also feel within me a great desire to love Thee. This my desire is a gift of Thy grace, and it comes from Thee. Oh, give me also the strength necessary to put it in execution, and make me, from this day forth, say to Thee earnestly, and from the bottom of my heart, and to repeat to Thee always, My God, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee. Thou desirest my love; I also desire Thine. Blot out, therefore, from thy remembrance, O my Jesus, the offences that in past times I have committed against Thee; let us love each other henceforth forever. I will not leave Thee, and Thou wilt not leave me. Thou wilt always love me, and I will always love Thee. My dearest Saviour, in Thy merits do I place my hope; oh, do Thou make Thyself to be loved forever, and loved greatly, by a sinner who has offended Thee greatly.

O Mary, Immaculate Virgin, do thou help me, do thou beseech Jesus for me.

Meditation IV

THE SORROWFUL HEART OF JESUS

It is impossible to consider how afflicted the heart of Jesus was for love of us and not to pity him. He himself tells us that his heart was overwhelmed with such sorrow, that this alone would have sufficed to take his life away, and to make him die of pure grief, if the virtue of his divinity had not, by a miracle, prevented his death: *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*[6084]

The principal sorrow which afflicted the heart of Jesus so much was not the sight of the torments and infamy which men were preparing for him, but the sight of their ingratitude towards his immense love. He distinctly foresaw all the sins which we should commit after all his sufferings and such a bitter and ignominious death. He foresaw, especially, the horrible insults which men would offer to his adorable heart, which he has left us in the Most Holy Sacrament as a proof of his affection. O my God, what affronts has not Jesus Christ received from men in this Sacrament of love? One has trampled him under foot, another has thrown him into the gutters, others have availed themselves of him to pay homage to the devil!

And yet the sight of all these insults did not prevent him from leaving us this great pledge of his love. He has a sovereign hatred of sin; but still it seems as if his love towards us had overcome the hatred he bore to sin, since he was content to permit these sacrileges, rather than to deprive the souls that love him of this divine food. Shall not all this suffice to make us love a heart that has loved us so much?

Has not Jesus Christ done enough to deserve our love? Ungrateful that we are, shall we still leave Jesus forsaken on the altar, as the majority of men do? And shall we not unite ourselves to those few souls who acknowledge him, and melt with love more even than the torches melt away which burn round the ciborium? The heart of Jesus remains there, burning with love for us; and shall we not, in his presence, burn with love for Jesus?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My adorable and dearest Jesus, behold at Thy feet one who has caused so much sorrow to Thy amiable heart. O my God, how could I grieve this heart, which has loved me so much, and has spared nothing to make itself loved by me? But console Thyself, I will say, O my Saviour, for my heart having been wounded, through Thy grace, with Thy most holy love, feels now so much regret for the offences I have committed against Thee, that it would fain die of sorrow. Oh, who will give me, my Jesus, that sorrow for my sins which Thou didst feel for them in Thy life! Eternal Father, I offer Thee the sorrow and abhorrence Thy Son felt for my sins; and, for his sake, I beseech Thee to give me so great a sorrow for the offences I have committed against Thee, that I may lead an afflicted and sorrowful life at the thought of having once despised Thy friendship. And Thou, O my Jesus, do Thou give me, from this day forth, such a horror of sin, that I may abhor even the lightest faults, considering that they displease Thee, who dost not deserve to be offended much or little, but dost deserve an infinite love. My beloved Lord, I now detest everything that displeases Thee, and in future I will love only Thee, and that which Thou lovest. Oh, help me, give me the strength, give me the grace to invoke Thee constantly, O my Jesus, and always to repeat to Thee this petition: My Jesus, give me Thy love, give me Thy love, give me Thy love.

And thou, most holy Mary, obtain for me the grace to pray to thee continually, and to say to thee, O my Mother, make me love Jesus Christ.

Meditation V

THE COMPASSIONATE HEART OF JESUS

Where shall we ever find a heart more compassionate or tender than the heart of Jesus, or one that had a greater feeling for our miseries?

This pity induced him to descend from heaven to this earth; it made him say that he was that good shepherd who came to give his life to save his sheep. In order to obtain the pardon of our sins, he would not spare himself, but would sacrifice himself on the Cross, that by his sufferings he might satisfy for the chastisement that we have deserved. This pity and compassion makes him say even now: *Why will ye die, O house of Israel? return ye, and live.*[6085] O men, he says, my poor children, why will you damn yourselves by flying from me? Do you not see that by separating yourselves from me you are hastening to eternal death? I desire not to see you lost; do not despair; as often as you wish to return, return, and you shall recover your life: *Return, and live.*

This compassion even makes him say that he is that loving Father who, though he sees himself despised by his son, yet, if that son returns a penitent, he cannot reject him, but embraces him tenderly and forgets all the injuries He has received: *I will not remember all his iniquities.*[6086] It is not thus that men behave; for though they may forgive, yet they nevertheless retain the remembrance of the offence received, and feel inclined to revenge themselves; and even if they do not revenge themselves, because they fear God, at least they always feel a great repugnance against conversing and entertaining themselves with those persons who have vilified them.

O my Jesus, Thou dost pardon the penitent sinners, and dost not refuse in this world to give them everything in Holy Communion during their life, and everything in the other world, even in heaven, with eternal glory, without retaining the slightest repugnance towards being united to the soul that has offended Thee, for all eternity. Where, then, is there to be found a heart so amiable and compassionate as Thine, O my dearest Saviour?

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O compassionate heart of my Jesus, have pity on me: “Most sweet Jesus, have mercy on me.” I say so now, and beseech Thee to give me the grace always to say to Thee, “Most sweet Jesus, have mercy on me.” Even before I offended Thee, O my Redeemer, I certainly did not deserve any of the favors Thou hast bestowed upon me. Thou hast created me, Thou hast given me so much light and knowledge; and all without any merit of mine. But after I had offended Thee, I not only did not deserve Thy favor, but I deserved to be forsaken by Thee and cast into hell. Thy compassion has made Thee wait for me and preserve my life even when I had offended Thee. Thy compassion has enlightened me, and offered me pardon; it has given me sorrow for my sins, and the desire of loving Thee; and now I hope from Thy mercy to remain always in Thy grace. O my Jesus, cease not to show Thy compassion towards me. The mercy which I implore of Thee is that Thou wouldst grant me light and strength to be no longer ungrateful towards Thee. No, O my love, I do not expect that Thou shouldst again forgive me, if I again turn my back towards Thee; this would be presumption, and would prevent Thee from showing mercy to me any more. For what pity could I expect any more from Thee if I were so ungrateful as to despise Thy friendship again, and to separate myself from Thee. No, my Jesus, I love Thee, and I will always love Thee; and this is the mercy which I hope for and seek from Thee: “Permit me not to be separated from Thee, permit me not to be separated from Thee.”[6087]

And I beseech thee also, O Mary my Mother, permit me not to be ever again separated from my God.

Meditation VI

THE GENEROUS HEART OF JESUS

It is the characteristic of good-hearted people to desire to make everybody happy, and especially those most distressed and afflicted. But who can ever find one who has a better heart than Jesus Christ? He is infinite goodness, and has therefore a sovereign desire to communicate to us his riches: *With Me are riches,. . . . that I may enrich them that love Me.*[6088]

He for this purpose made himself poor, as the Apostle says, that he might make us rich: *He became poor for your sakes, that through His poverty you might be rich.*[6089] For this purpose also he chose to remain with us in the most Holy Sacrament, where he remains constantly with his hands full of graces, as was seen by Father Balthazar Alvarez, to dispense them to those who come to visit him. For this reason also he gives himself wholly to us in Holy Communion, giving us to understand from this that he cannot refuse us any good gifts, since he even gives himself entirely to us: *How hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?*[6090]

For in the heart of Jesus we receive every good, every grace that we desire: *In all things you are made rich in Christ, . . . so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace.*[6091] And we must understand that we are debtors to the heart of Jesus for all the graces we have received—graces of redemption, of vocation, of light, of pardon, the grace to resist temptations, and to bear patiently with contradictions; for without his assistance we could not do anything good: *Without me you can do nothing.*[6092]

And if hitherto, says our Saviour, you have not received more graces, do not complain of me, but blame yourself, who have neglected to seek them of me: *Hitherto you have not asked anything; . . . ask, and you shall receive.*[6093] Oh, how rich and liberal is the heart of Jesus towards every one that has recourse to him! *Rich unto all that call upon Him.*[6094] Oh, what great mercies do those souls receive who are earnest in asking help of Jesus

Christ. David said, *For Thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild, and plenteous to all who call upon Thee.*[6095] Let us therefore always go to this heart, and ask with confidence, and we shall obtain all we want.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my Jesus, Thou hast not refused to give me Thy blood and Thy life, and shall I refuse to give Thee my miserable heart? No, my dearest Redeemer, I offer it entirely to Thee. I give Thee all my will; do Thou accept it, and dispose of it at Thy pleasure. I can do nothing, and have nothing; but I have this heart which Thou hast given me, and of which no one can deprive me. I may be deprived of my goods, my blood, my life, but not of my heart. With this heart I can love Thee; with this heart I will love Thee. I beseech Thee, O my God, teach me a perfect forgetfulness of myself; teach me what I must do to arrive at Thy pure love, of which Thou in Thy goodness hast inspired me with the desire. I feel in myself a determination to please Thee; but in order to put my resolve into execution, I expect and implore help from Thee. It depends on Thee, O loving heart of Jesus, to make entirely Thine my poor heart, which hitherto has been so ungrateful, and through my own fault deprived of Thy love. Oh, grant that my heart may be all on fire with the love of Thee, even as Thine is on fire with the love of me. Grant that my will may be entirely united to Thine, so that I may will nothing but what Thou willest, and that from this day forth Thy holy will may be the rule of all my actions, of all my thoughts, and of all my desires. I trust, O my Saviour, that Thou wilt not refuse me Thy grace to fulfil this resolution which I now make prostrate at Thy feet, to receive with submission whatever Thou mayest ordain for me and my affairs, as well in life as in death. Blessed art thou, O Immaculate Mary, who hadst thy heart always and entirely united to the heart of Jesus; obtain for me, O my Mother, that in future I may wish and desire that which Jesus wills and thou willest.

Meditation VII

THE GRATEFUL HEART OF JESUS

The heart of Jesus is so grateful, that it cannot behold the most trifling works done for the love of him—our smallest word spoken for his glory, a single good thought directed towards pleasing him—without giving to each its own reward. He is besides so grateful, that he always returns a hundredfold for one: *You shall receive a hundredfold*.[6096]

Men, when they are grateful, and recompense any benefit done to them, recompense it only once; they, as it were, divest themselves of all the obligation, and then they think no more of it. Jesus Christ does not do thus with us; he not only recompenses a hundredfold in this life every good action that we perform to please him, but in the next life he recompenses it an infinite number of times throughout eternity. And who will be so negligent as not to do as much as he can to please this most grateful heart?

But, O my God, how do men try to please Jesus Christ? Or rather, I will say, how can we be so ungrateful towards this our Saviour? If he had only shed a single drop of blood, or one tear alone for our salvation, yet we should be under infinite obligation to him; because this drop and this tear would have been of infinite value in the sight of God towards obtaining for us every grace. But Jesus would employ for us every moment of his life. He has given us all his merits, all his sufferings, all his ignominies, all his blood, and his life; so that we are under, not one, but infinite, obligations to love him.

But alas! we are grateful even towards animals: if a little dog shows us any sign of affection, it seems to constrain us to love it. How, then, can we be so ungrateful towards God? It seems as if the benefits of God towards men change their nature, and become ill-usage; for, instead of gratitude and love, they obtain nothing but offences and injuries. Do Thou, O Lord, enlighten these ungrateful ones, to know the love that Thou bearest them.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my beloved Jesus, behold at Thy feet an ungrateful sinner. I have been grateful indeed towards creatures; but to Thee alone I have been ungrateful—to Thee, who hast died for me, and hast done the utmost that Thou couldst do to oblige me to love Thee. But the thought that I have to do with a heart full of goodness and infinite in mercy, of one who proclaims that he forgives all the offences of the sinner who repents and loves him, consoles me and gives me courage. My dearest Jesus, I have in times past offended Thee and despised Thee; but now I love Thee more than everything—more than myself. Tell me what Thou wouldst have me to do; for I am ready to do everything with Thy help. I believe that Thou hast created me. Thou hast given Thy blood and Thy life for the love of me. I believe also that for my sake Thou dost remain in the Blessed Sacrament; I thank Thee for it, O my love. Oh, permit me not to be ungrateful in future for so many benefits and proofs of Thy love. Oh, bind me, unite me to Thy heart; and permit me not, during the years that remain to me, to offend Thee or grieve Thee any more. I have displeased Thee sufficiently. O my Jesus, it is time that I should love Thee now. Oh, that those years that I have lost would return! But they will return no more, and the life that remains for me may be short; but whether it be short or long, my God, I desire to spend it all in loving Thee, my sovereign good, who dost deserve an eternal and infinite love.

O Mary, my Mother, let me never again be ungrateful to thy Son. Pray to Jesus for me.

Meditation VIII

THE DESPISED HEART OF JESUS

There is not a greater sorrow for a heart that loves, than to see its love despised; and so much the more when the proofs given of this love have been great, and, on the other hand, the ingratitude great.

If every human being were to renounce all his goods, and to go and live in the desert, to feed on herbs, to sleep on the bare earth, to macerate himself with penances, and at last give himself up to be murdered for Christ's sake, what recompense could he render for the sufferings, the blood, the life that this great Son of God has given for his sake? If we were to sacrifice ourselves every moment unto death, we should certainly not recompense in the smallest degree the love that Jesus Christ has shown us, by giving himself to us in the most Holy Sacrament. Only conceive that God should conceal himself under the species of bread to become the food of one of his creatures!

But, O my God, what recompense and gratitude do men render to Jesus Christ? What but ill-treatment, contempt of his laws and his maxims,—injuries such as they would not commit towards their enemy, or their slave, or the greatest villain upon earth. And can we think of all these injuries which Jesus Christ has received, and still receives every day, and not feel sorrow for them? and not endeavor, by our love, to recompense the infinite love of his divine heart, which remains in the most Holy Sacrament, inflamed with the same love towards us, and anxious to communicate every good gift to us, and to give himself entirely to us, ever ready to receive us into his heart whenever we go to him? *Him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out.*[6097]

We have been accustomed to hear of the Creation, Incarnation, Redemption, of Jesus born in a stable, of Jesus dead on the Cross. O my God, if we knew that another man had conferred on us any of these benefits, we could not help loving him. It seems that God alone has, so to say, this bad luck with men, that, though he has done his utmost to make them love him, yet he cannot attain this end, and, instead of being loved, he sees himself despised and neglected. All this arises from the forgetfulness of men of the love of God.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Heart of Jesus, abyss of mercy and love, how is it that, at the sight of the goodness Thou hast shown me, and of my ingratitude, I do not die of sorrow? Thou, O my Saviour, after having given me my being, hast given me all Thy blood and Thy life, giving Thyself up, for my sake, to ignominy and death; and, not content with this, Thou hast invented the mode of sacrificing Thyself every day for me in the Holy Eucharist, not refusing to expose Thyself to the injuries which Thou shouldst receive, and which Thou didst foresee, in this Sacrament of love. O my God, how can I see myself so ungrateful to Thee without dying with confusion! O Lord, put an end, I pray Thee, to my ingratitude, by wounding my heart with Thy love, and making me entirely Thine. Remember the blood and the tears that Thou hast shed for me, and forgive me. Oh, let not all Thy sufferings be lost upon me. But though Thou hast seen how ungrateful and unworthy of Thy love I have been, yet Thou didst not cease to love me even when I did not love Thee, nor even desire that Thou shouldst love me; how much rather, then, may I not hope for Thy love, now that I desire and sigh after nothing but to love Thee, and to be loved by Thee. Oh, do Thou fully satisfy this my desire; or rather this Thy desire, for it is Thou that hast given it to me. Grant that this day may be the day of my thorough conversion; so that I may begin to love Thee, and may never cease to love Thee, my sovereign good. Make me die in everything to myself, in order that I may live only to Thee, and that I may always burn with Thy love.

O Mary, thy heart was the blessed altar that was always on fire with divine love: my dearest Mother, make me like to thee; obtain this from thy Son, who delights in honoring thee, by denying thee nothing that thou askest of him.

Meditation IX

THE FAITHFUL HEART OF JESUS

Oh, how faithful is the beautiful heart of Jesus towards those whom he calls to his love: *He is faithful who hath called you, who also will perform.*[6098]

The faithfulness of God gives us confidence to hope all things, although we deserve nothing. If we have driven God from our heart, let us open the door to him, and he will immediately enter, according to the promise he has made: *If any one open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him.*[6099] If we wish for graces, let us ask for them of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, and he has promised us that we shall obtain them: *If you shall ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[6100] If we are tempted, let us trust in his merits, and he will not permit our enemies to strive with us beyond our strength: *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able.*[6101]

Oh, how much better it is to have to do with God than with men! How often do men promise and then fail, either because they tell lies in making their promises, or because, after having made the promise, they change their minds: *God is not as man,* says the Holy Spirit, *that He should lie; or as the son of man, that He should be changed.*[6102] God cannot be unfaithful to his promises, because, being truth itself, he cannot lie; nor can he change his mind, because all that he wills is just and right. He has promised to receive all that come to him, to give help to him that asks it, to love him that loves him; and shall he then not do it? *Hath He said, then, and will He not do it?*[6103]

Oh, that we were as faithful with God as he is with us! Oh, how often have we, in times past, promised him to be his, to serve him and love him; and then have betrayed him, and, renouncing his service, have sold ourselves as slaves to the devil! Oh, let us beseech him to give us strength to be faithful to him for the future! Oh, how blessed shall we be if we are faithful to Jesus Christ in the few things that he commands us to do; he will, indeed, be faithful in remunerating us with infinitely great rewards; and he will declare to us what he has promised to his faithful servants: *Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*[6104]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Oh, that I had been as faithful towards Thee, my dearest Redeemer, as Thou hast been faithful to me. Whenever I have opened my heart to Thee, Thou hast entered in, to forgive me and to receive me into Thy favor; whenever I have called Thee, Thou hast hastened to my assistance. Thou hast been faithful with me, but I have been exceedingly unfaithful towards Thee. I have promised Thee my love, and then have many times refused it to Thee; as if Thou, my God, who hast created and redeemed me, wert less worthy of being loved than Thy creatures and those miserable pleasures for which I have forsaken Thee. Forgive me, O my Jesus. I know my ingratitude, and abhor it. I know that Thou art infinite goodness, who deservest an infinite love, especially from me, whom Thou hast so much loved, even after all the offences I have committed against Thee. Unhappy me if I should damn myself; the graces Thou hast vouchsafed to me, and the proofs of the singular affection which Thou hast shown me, would be, O God, the hell of hells to me. Ah, no, my love, have pity on me; suffer me not to forsake Thee again, and then by damning myself, as I should deserve, continue to repay in hell with injuries and hatred the love that Thou hast borne me. O loving and faithful heart of Jesus, inflame, I beseech Thee, my miserable heart, so that it may burn with love for Thee, as Thine dost for me. My Jesus, it seems to me that now I love Thee; but I love Thee but little. Make me love Thee exceedingly, and remain faithful to Thee until death. I ask of Thee this grace, together with that of always praying to Thee for it. Grant that I may die rather than ever betray Thee again.

O Mary, my Mother, help me to be faithful to thy Son.

AFFECTIONS OF LOVE TOWARDS THE HEART OF JESUS[6105]

O AMIABLE Heart of my Saviour! thou art the seat of all virtues, the source of all graces, the burning furnace in which are inflamed all holy souls. Thou art the object of all God’s love; thou art the refuge of the afflicted, and the abode of the souls that love thee. O heart worthy of reigning over all hearts, and of possessing the affection of all hearts! O heart that was wounded for me on the Cross by the lance of my sins, and that remained afterwards continually wounded for me on the altar in the Blessed Sacrament, but not by any other lance than that of the love that thou entertainest for me! O loving heart, that loves men with so much tenderness, and that is so little loved by men! do thou apply a remedy to so great an ingratitude, inflame thou our hearts with a true love for thee. Ah! why can I not go all over the world to make known the graces, the sweetness, the treasures that thou dispensest to those who truly love thee? Accept the desire that I have of seeing all hearts burning with love for thee. O divine heart! be thou my consolation in trials, my repose in labors, my solace in anxieties, my haven in tempests. I consecrate to thee my body and my soul, my heart and my life, together with all that I am. I unite to thine all my thoughts, all my affections, all my desires. O eternal Father! I offer Thee the pure affections of the heart of Jesus. If Thou dost reject mine, Thou canst not reject those of Thy Son, who is sanctity itself; may they supply what is wanting in me, and may they render me pleasing in Thy eyes!

St. Catharine of Genoa was one day permitted to see the heart of Jesus in his breast, and she saw it all on fire.

One day our Lord deigned to approach St. Mechtilde, and she heard the heart of Jesus palpitating violently, as if some one had struck him blows on the breast. The Lord told her that his heart had thus palpitated from his infancy, on account of the love with which it was inflamed for mankind.

Father Nieremberg also assures us that if Jesus had left to his love for us the liberty of producing its own effects, he would have died of love in his infancy.

Jesus said to St. Gertrude: “Were it expedient, I would for thee alone suffer all that I have suffered for the whole world.”[6106] And to St. Mechtilde: “My love for souls is yet the same as that love which I bore them at the time of my Passion; I would die as many times as there are souls to save.”

St. Carpus appeared as if he desired to condemn to the abyss all sinners. Jesus said to him: “For my part, O Carpus, I am still ready to allow myself to be crucified for man.”[6107]

St. John of the Cross said: “Jesus loves each one of us as much as he loves all men.”

HYMNS ON THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS[6108]

I

THE LOVING SPOUSE

FLY, my soul, ah, fly away
To Jesus’ heart so kind;
There love’s captive thou shalt stay,
And truest freedom find.
See, thy foes are all around;
Thou art pursued, poor thing!
Safety in the ark is found,
Then thither, dove, take wing.
Why delay? The world is woe,
And care, and cold deceit;
God alone can joy bestow,
And happiness complete.
Give me, Lord, a place to dwell
Within Thy heart so meek;
This shall be my prison cell,
Where true repose I seek.
All on earth I now disdain,
And for Thy love resign;
This the fruit of every pain,
To bind my heart to Thine.
If within Thy heart divine
To die my lot should be,
Oh, what happy death were mine!
Such death were life to me.

II

THE LOVING SPOUSE IN THE HEART OF JESUS

I DWELL a captive in this heart,
On fire with love divine;
’Tis here I live alone in peace,
And constant joy is mine.
It is the Heart of God’s own Son,
In his humanity,
Who, all enamoured of my soul,
Here burns with love of me.
Here, like the dove within the ark,
Securely I repose;
Since now the Lord is my defence,
I fear no earthly foes.
Now I have found this happy home,
God’s love alone I prize;
All else is torment to my heart,
The world I now despise.
What though I suffer, still in love
I ever true will be;
My love of God shall deeper grow
When crosses fall on me.
Then he who longs with me to seek
Repose within this nest,
All love that is not love for God,
Must banish from his breast.
Ye haughty lovers of the world,
Full of self-love, depart!
Away, away! no place is found
For you within this heart.
Each vile and earthly chain impedes
The soul’s true heavenward flight;
All, all the heart belongs to God,
Love claims his sovereign right.
From ev’ry bond of earth, dear Lord,

Thy grace has set me free;
My soul, delivered from the snare,
Enjoys true liberty.
I cannot love Thee as I ought,
This pains me, this alone;
For all my love must have an end;
Thy goodness, Lord, has none.
One thought brings comfort to my heart—
I love a good so great,
That though I love him all I can,
More love he merits yet.
Naught more can I desire than this,
To see his face in heaven;
And this I hope, since he on earth
His heart in pledge has given.

The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ

WE have here one of the masterpieces of St. Alphonsus,—a book that speaks to all hearts, that reveals to every Christian soul its true wants and the true means to satisfy them. One cannot read this book without becoming better; nor can one grow tired in reading it again and again. It is indeed a very highly-prized and widely-spread work. It was published in 1768. (Tannoia, B. 3, ch. 41, 42.)

The holy bishop, developing the celebrated text of St. Paul on the qualities of true charity, explains in thirteen chapters the principal virtues that we ought to practise and the defects that we ought to avoid in order to render to our Lord love for love. He treats of patience in general (Chap. I.), and in particular in sicknesses, poverty, and contempt (Chap. X.); of meekness (Chaps. II. and VIII.); of purity of intention (Chap. III.); of tepidity, and the remedies against this vice, namely, the desire of perfection, the determination to attain perfection, mental prayer, frequent communion, and prayer (Chap. IV.); of humility (Chap. V.); of ambition and vain-glory (Chap. VI.); of detachment from all things, especially when there is question of following one's vocation (Chap. VII.); of conformity to the will of God, and of obedience (Chap. IX.); of faith (Chap. XI.); of hope (Chap. XII.); and, finally, of temptations, and spiritual desolation (Chap. XIII.). The work is concluded by a summary of virtues that are to be practised.—ED.

INTRODUCTION

I

HOW DESERVING JESUS CHRIST IS OF OUR LOVE, ON ACCOUNT OF THE LOVE HE HAS SHOWN US IN HIS PASSION

THE whole sanctity and perfection of a soul consists in loving Jesus Christ, our God, our sovereign good, and our Redeemer. Whoever loves me, says Jesus Christ himself, shall be loved by my Eternal Father: *My Father loves you because you have loved Me.*[6109] Some, says St. Francis de Sales,[6110] make perfection consist in an austere life; others in prayer; others in frequenting the Sacraments; others in alms-deeds. But they deceive themselves: perfection consists in loving God with our whole heart. The Apostle wrote: *Above all things, . . . have charity, which is the bond of perfection.*[6111] It is charity which keeps united and preserves all the virtues that render a man perfect. Hence St. Augustine said: “Love God, and do whatever you please;”[6112] because a soul that loves God is taught by that same love never to do anything that will displease him, and to leave nothing undone that may please him.

But perhaps God does not deserve all our love? *He has loved us with an everlasting love.*[6113] O man, says the Lord, behold I was the first to love thee. Thou wast not yet in the world, nay, the world itself was not, and I already loved thee. As long as I am God, I loved thee; as long as I have loved myself, I have also loved thee. With good reason, therefore, did St. Agnes, that young holy virgin, reply to those who wished to unite her to an earthly spouse: “I am engaged to another lover.”[6114] “Go,” said she, “O lovers of this world, cease to sue my love; my God was the first to love me. He has loved me from all eternity: it is but just, then, for me to give him all my affections, and to love none other but him.”

As Almighty God knew that man is won by kindness, he determined to lavish his gifts upon him, and so take captive the affections of his heart. For this reason he said, *I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands* *of love.*[6115] I will catch men by those very snares by which they are naturally caught, that is, by the snares of love. And such exactly are all the favors of God to man. After having given him a soul created in his own image, with memory, understanding, and will, and a body with its senses, he created heaven and earth for him, yes, all that exists, all for the love of man,—the firmament, the stars, the planets, the seas, the rivers, the fountains, the hills, the plains, metals, fruits, and a countless variety of animals: and all these creatures that they might minister to the uses of man, and that man might love him in gratitude for so many admirable gifts.

"Heaven and earth, and all things, tell me to love Thee,"[6116] says St. Augustine. "My Lord," he said, "whatever I behold on the earth, or above the earth, all speak to me, and exhort me to love Thee; because all assure me that Thou hast made them for the love of me."

The Abbot de Rancé, founder of La Trappe, when from his hermitage he stood and surveyed the hills, the fountains, the birds, the flowers, the planets, and the skies, felt himself animated by each one of these creatures to love that God who had created all through love to him.

In like manner St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, when she held any beautiful flower in her hand, was enkindled by the sight of it with love to God; and she would say: "And God, then, has thought from all eternity of creating this flower for love of me!" Thus did that flower become, as it were, a dart of love, which sweetly wounded her, and united her more and more to her God.

On the other hand, St. Teresa, at the sight of trees, fountains, rivers, lakes, or meadows, declared that all these fair things upbraided her for her ingratitude in loving so coldly a God who created them that he might be loved by her.

To the like purpose is it related of a pious hermit, that when walking through the country, it seemed to him that the plants and flowers in his path reproached him for the cold return of love he made to God; so that he went along gently striking them with his staff, and saying to them: "Oh, be silent, be silent; you call me an ungrateful wretch; you tell me God has made you for love of me, and yet I do not love him; but now I understand you, be silent, be silent; do not reproach me more."

But God was not satisfied with giving us so many beautiful creatures. He has gone to such lengths to gain our love, as to give himself to us. The Eternal Father did not hesitate to give us even his only-begotten Son: *For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son.*[6117]When the Eternal Father saw that we were all dead, and deprived of his grace by sin, what did he do? for the immense love, nay, as the Apostle writes, for the too great love he bore us, he sent his beloved Son to make atonement for us; and so to restore to us that life which sin had robbed us of: Who *through his exceeding charity with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ.*[6118] And in granting us his Son (not sparing his Son, that he might spare us), he has granted us every good together with him, his grace, his love, and paradise, since assuredly all these gifts are much less than that of his Son: *He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all things.*[6119]

And so, likewise, the Son, through his love towards us, has given himself wholly to us: *Who loved me, and delivered Himself for me.*[6120] In order to redeem us from everlasting death, and to recover for us the divine grace and heaven which we had forfeited, he became man, and put on flesh like our own: *And the Word was made flesh.*[6121] Behold, then, a God reduced to nothingness: *But emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, . . . and in habit found as a man.*[6122] Behold the sovereign of the world humbling himself so low as to assume the form of a servant, and to subject himself to all the miseries which the rest of men endure.

But what is more astonishing still is, that he could very well have saved us without dying and without suffering at all; but no: he chose a life of sorrow and contempt, and a death of bitterness and ignominy even to the expiring on a cross,—the gibbet of infamy, the award of vilest criminals: *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.*[6123] But why, if he could have ransomed us without suffering, why should he choose to die, and to die on a cross? To show us how he loved us. *He loved us, and delivered Himself for us.*[6124] He loved us, and because he loved us, he delivered himself up to sorrows, and ignominies, and to a death more cruel than ever any man endured in this world.

Hence that great lover of Jesus Christ, St. Paul, took occasion to say: *The charity of Christ presseth us.*[6125] Wishing to show us by these words that it is not so much the sufferings themselves of Jesus Christ as his love in enduring them, that obliges us, and, as it were, constrains us to love him. Let us hear what St. Francis de Sales says on this text: "When we remember that Jesus Christ, true God, has loved us to such an excess as to suffer death, and the death of the cross, for us, our hearts are, as it were, put in a wine-press, and suffer violence, until love be extorted from them, but a violence which, the stronger it is, becomes the more delightful."[6126] He then goes on to say, "Ah! why do we not therefore cast ourselves on Jesus crucified, to die on the cross with him, who has chosen to die for love of us? I will hold him (should we say), and I will never let him go; I will die with him, and will be consumed in the flames of his love. One flame shall consume this divine Creator and his miserable creature. My Jesus gives himself unreservedly to me, and I give myself unreservedly to him. I will live and die on his loving breast; neither life nor death shall ever separate me from him. O eternal love, my soul longs after Thee, and makes choice of Thee forever. Come, O Holy Spirit, and inflame our hearts with love. O love, O death, to die to all other loves, to live solely to that of Jesus Christ! O Redeemer of our souls, grant that we may eternally sing, Live, Jesus! I love Jesus; live, Jesus, whom I love! yes, I love Jesus, who reigns for evermore"[6127]

The love of Jesus Christ towards men created in him a longing desire for the moment of his death, when his love should be fully manifested to them; hence he was wont to say in his lifetime: *I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!*[6128] I have to be baptized in my own blood; and how do I feel myself straitened with the desire that the hour of my Passion may soon arrive; for then man will know the love which I bear him! Hence St. John, speaking of that night in which Jesus began his Passion, writes: *Jesus knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end.*[6129] The Redeemer called that hour *His own hour,* because the time of his death was the time desired by him; as it was then that he wished to give mankind the last proof of his love, by dying for them upon a cross overwhelmed by sorrows.

But what could have ever induced a God to die as a malefactor upon a cross between two sinners, with such insult to his divine majesty? “Who did this?” asks St. Bernard; he answers, “It was love, careless of its dignity.”[6130] Ah, love indeed, when it tries to make itself known, does not seek what is becoming to the dignity of the lover, but what will serve best to declare itself to the object loved. St. Francis of Paula therefore had good reason to cry out at the sight of a crucifix, “O charity, O charity, O charity!” And in like manner, when we look upon Jesus on the cross, we should all exclaim, O love, O love, O love!

Ah, if faith had not assured us of it, who could ever have believed that a God, almighty, most happy, and the Lord of all, should have condescended to love man to such an extent that he seems to go out of himself for the love of him? We have seen Wisdom itself, that is the Eternal Word, become foolish through the excessive love he bore to man! So spoke St. Laurence Justinian: “We see Wisdom itself infatuated through excess of love.”[6131] St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said the same: One day, being in ecstasy, she took a wooden crucifix in her hands, and then cried out: “Yes, my Jesus, Thou art mad with love: I repeat it, and I will say it forever: My Jesus, thou art mad with love.” But no, says St. Denis the Areopagite; “no, it is not madness, but the ordinary effect of divine love, which makes him who loves go out of himself, in order to give himself up entirely to the object of his love: divine love causes ecstasy.”[6132]

Oh, if men would only pause and consider, looking at Jesus on the cross, the love that he has borne each one of them! “With what love,” says St. Francis de Sales, “would not our souls become enkindled at the sight of those flames which are in the Redeemer’s breast! And oh, what happiness, to be able to be consumed by that same fire with which our God burns for us! What joy, to be united to God by the chains of love!” St. Bonaventure called the wounds of Jesus Christ, wounds which pierce the most senseless hearts, and which inflame the most icy souls.[6133] How many darts of love come forth from those wounds, to wound the hardest hearts! Oh, what flames issue from the burning heart of Jesus Christ to inflame the coldest souls! And chains, how many, from that wounded side, to bind the most stubborn wills!

The Venerable John of Avila, who was so possessed with the love of Jesus Christ that he never failed in any of his sermons to speak of the love which Jesus Christ bears towards us, in a treatise on the love which this most loving Redeemer has for men, has expressed himself in sentiments so full of the fire of devotion, and of such beauty, that I desire to insert them here. He says as follows:

“Thou, O Redeemer, hast loved man in such a manner, that whoso reflects upon this love cannot do less than love Thee; for Thy love offers violence to hearts: as the Apostle says: *The charity of Christ presseth us.*[6134] The source of the love of Jesus Christ for men is his love for God. Hence he said on Maunday Thursday, *That the world may know that I love the Father, arise, let us go hence.*[6135] But whither? To die for men upon the cross.”

“No human intellect can conceive how strongly this fire burns in the heart of Jesus Christ. As he was commanded to suffer death once, so, had he been commanded to die a thousand times, his love had been sufficient to endure it. And if what he suffered for all men had been imposed upon him for the salvation of one single soul, he would have done the same for each in particular as he did for all. And as he remained three hours upon the cross, so, had it been necessary, his love would have made him remain there even to the day of judgment. So that Jesus Christ loved much more than he suffered. O divine love, how far greater wert thou than thou outwardly seemedst to be; for though so many wounds and bruises tell us of great love, still they do not tell all its greatness. There was far more within than that which appeared externally. That was but as a spark which bounded forth from the vast ocean of infinite love. This is the greatest mark of love, to lay down our life for our friends. But this was not a sufficient mark for Jesus Christ wherewith to express his love.”

“This is the love which causes holy souls to lose themselves, and to stand amazed, when once they have been allowed to know it. From it spring those burning sentiments of ardor, the desire of martyrdom, joy in sufferings, exultation under the storms of distress, the force to walk on burning coals as if they were roses, a thirst for sufferings, rejoicing in that which the world dreads, embracing that which it abhors. St. Ambrose says that the soul which is espoused to Jesus Christ upon the cross, thinks nothing so glorious as to bear upon itself the marks of the crucified one.”

“But how, O my lover, shall I repay this your love! It is right that blood should be compensated by blood. May I behold myself dyed in this blood and nailed to this cross! O holy cross, receive me also! O crown of thorns, enlarge thyself, that I too may place thee on my head! O nails, leave those innocent hands of my Lord, and come and pierce my heart with compassion and with love! For Thou, my Jesus, didst die, as St. Paul says, in order to gain dominion over the living and the dead, not by means of chastisements, but by love:” *For to this end Christ died and rose again: that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*[6136]

“O robber of hearts, the strength of Thy love has broken the exceeding hardness of our hearts! Thou hast inflamed the whole world with Thy love. O most loving Lord, inebriate our hearts with this wine, consume them with this fire, pierce them with this dart of Thy love! Thy Cross is indeed an arrow which pierces hearts. May all the world know that my heart is smitten! O sweetest love, what hast Thou done? Thou hast come to heal me, and Thou hast wounded me. Thou hast come to teach me, and Thou hast made me well-nigh mad. O madness full of wisdom, may I never live without you! All, O Lord, that I behold upon the cross invites me to love Thee: the wood, the figure, the wounds of Thy body; and above all, Thy love, engages me to love Thee, and never to forget Thee more.”[6137]

But in order to arrive at the perfect love of Jesus Christ, we must adopt the means. Behold, then, the means which St. Thomas Aquinas gives us:[6138]

1. To have a constant remembrance of the benefits of God, both general and particular.

2. To consider the infinite goodness of God, who is ever waiting to do us good, and who ever loves us, and seeks from us our love.

3. To avoid even the smallest thing that could offend him.

4. To renounce all the sensible goods of this world, riches, honors, and sensual pleasures.

Father Tauler[6139] says that meditation on the sacred Passion of Jesus Christ is a great means also for acquiring his perfect love.

Who can deny that, of all devotions, devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ is the most useful, the most tender, the most agreeable to God, one that gives the greatest consolation to sinners, and at the same time most powerfully enkindles loving souls? Whence is it that we receive so many blessings, if it be not from the Passion of Jesus Christ? Whence have we hope of pardon, courage against temptations, confidence that we shall go to heaven? Whence are so many lights to know the truth, so many loving calls, so many spurrings to change our life, so many desires to give ourselves up to God, except from the Passion of Jesus Christ? The Apostle therefore had but too great reason to declare him to be excommunicated who did not love Jesus Christ. *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.*[6140]

St. Bonaventure says there is no devotion more fitted for sanctifying a soul than meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ; whence he advises us to meditate every day upon the Passion, if we would advance in the love of God. “If you would make progress, meditate daily on the Passion of the Lord; for nothing works such an entire sanctification in the soul, as the meditation of the Passion of Christ.”[6141] And before him St. Augustine, as Bustis relates, said, that one tear shed in memory of the Passion is worth more than to fast weekly on bread and water for a year.[6142] Wherefore the saints were always occupied in considering the sorrows of Jesus Christ: it was by this means that St. Francis of Assisi became a seraph. He was one day found by a gentleman shedding tears, and crying out with a loud voice: being asked the cause, “I weep,” he answered, “over the sorrows and ignominies of my Lord: and what causes me the greatest sorrow is, that men, for whom he suffered so much, live in forgetfulness of him.” And on saying this he wept the more, so that this gentleman began also himself to weep. When the saint heard the bleating of a lamb, or saw anything which reminded him of the Passion of Jesus, he immediately shed tears. On another occasion, being sick, some one told him to read some pious book. “My book,” he replied, “is Jesus crucified.” Hence he did nothing but exhort his brethren to be ever thinking of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Tiepoli writes: “He who becomes not inflamed with the love of God by looking on Jesus dead upon the cross, will never love at all.”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Eternal Word! Thou hast spent three-and-thirty years in labors and fatigues; Thou hast given Thy life and Thy blood for man’s salvation; in short, Thou hast spared nothing to make men love Thee; and how is it possible that there should be those who know this, and yet do not love Thee? O God, amongst these ungrateful ones I also may be numbered! I see the wrong I have done Thee; O my Jesus, have pity upon me! I offer Thee this ungrateful heart—ungrateful it is true, but penitent. Yes, I repent above every other evil, O my dear Redeemer, for having despised Thee! I repent, and I am sorry with my whole heart. O my soul, love a God who is bound like a criminal for thee; a God scourged like a slave for thee; a God made a mock-king for thee; a God, in short, dead upon a cross, as the vilest outcast for thee! Yes, my Saviour, my God, I love Thee, I love Thee! Bring continually to my remembrance, I beseech Thee, all that Thou hast suffered for me, so that I may never more forget to love Thee. O cords that bound my Jesus, bind me to Jesus; thorns that crowned my Jesus, pierce me with the love of Jesus; nails that transfixed my Jesus, nail me to the Cross of Jesus, that I may live and die united to Jesus. O blood of Jesus, inebriate me with his holy love! O death of Jesus, make me die to every earthly affection! Pierced feet of my Lord, I embrace you; deliver me from hell, which I have deserved; my Jesus, in hell I could no more love Thee, and yet I desire to love Thee always. Save me, my dearest Saviour; bind me to Thyself, that I may never again lose Thee.

O Mary, refuge of sinners, and Mother of my Saviour! help a sinner who wishes to love God, and who recommends himself to thee; succor me for the love thou bearest to Jesus Christ.

II

HOW MUCH JESUS CHRIST DESERVES TO BE LOVED BY US, ON ACCOUNT OF THE LOVE HE HAS SHOWN US IN INSTITUTING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

Jesus, knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father: having loved His own . . . He loved them unto the end.[6143] Our most loving Saviour, knowing that his hour was now come for leaving this earth, desired, before he went to die for us, to leave us the greatest possible mark of his love; and this was the gift of the most Holy Sacrament.

St. Bernardine of Sienna remarks, that men remember more continually and love more tenderly the signs of love which are shown to them in the hour of death.[6144] Hence it is the custom that friends, when about to die, leave to those persons whom they have loved some gift, such as a garment or a ring, as a memorial of their affection. But what hast Thou, O my Jesus, left us, when quitting this world, in memory of Thy love? Not, indeed, a garment or a ring, but Thine own body, Thy blood, Thy soul, Thy divinity, Thy whole self, without reserve. “He gave thee all,” says St. John Chrysostom; “He left nothing for himself.”[6145]

The Council of Trent says,[6146] that in this gift of the Eucharist Jesus Christ desired, as it were, to pour forth all the riches of the love he had for men. And the Apostle observes, that Jesus desired to bestow this gift upon men on the very night itself when they were planning his death: *The same night in which He was betrayed, He took bread; and giving thanks, broke and said: Take ye, and eat: this is My body.*[6147] St. Bernardine of Sienna says, that Jesus Christ, burning with love for us, and not content with being prepared to give his life for us, was constrained by the excess of his love to work a greater work before he died; and this was to give his own body for our food.[6148]

This Sacrament, therefore, was rightly named by St. Thomas, “*the* Sacrament of love, the pledge of love.”[6149] Sacrament of love; for love was the only motive which induced Jesus Christ to give us in it his whole self. Pledge of love; so that if we had ever doubted his love, we should have in this sacrament a pledge of it: as if our Redeemer, in leaving us this gift, had said: O souls, if you ever doubt my love, behold, I leave you myself in this Sacrament: with such a pledge, you can never any more doubt that I love you, and love you to excess. But more, St. Bernard calls this sacrament “the love of loves;”[6150] because this gift comprehends all the other gifts bestowed upon us by our Lord,—creation, redemption, predestination to glory; so that the Eucharist is not only a pledge of the love of Jesus Christ, but of paradise, which he desires also to give us. “In which,” says the Church, “a pledge of future glory is given us.”[6151] Hence St. Philip Neri could find no other name for Jesus Christ in the Sacrament save that of "love;" and so, when the holy Viaticum was brought to him, he was heard to exclaim, "Behold my love; give me my love."

The prophet Isaias[6152] desired that the whole world should know the tender inventions that our God has made use of, wherewith to make men love him. And who could ever have thought—if he himself had not done it—that the Incarnate Word would hide himself under the appearances of bread, in order to become himself our food? "Does it not seem folly," says St. Augustine, "to say, Eat my flesh; drink my blood?"[6153] When Jesus Christ revealed to his disciples the sacrament he desired to leave them, they could not bring themselves to believe him; and they left him, saying: *How can this Man give us His flesh to eat? . . . This saying is hard, and who can hear it?*[6154] But that which men could neither conceive nor believe, the great love of Jesus Christ hath thought of and accomplished. *Take ye, and eat,* said he to his disciples before he went to die; and through them to us all. Receive and eat: but what food shall that be, O Saviour of the world, which Thou desirest to give us before Thou diest? *Take ye, and eat; this is my body.*[6155] This is not earthly food; it is I myself who give myself entirely to you.

And oh, with what desire does Jesus Christ pant to come into our souls in the Holy Communion! *With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with yon before I suffer.*[6156] So he spoke on that night in which he instituted this sacrament of love. *With desire I have desired:* so did the excessive love which he bore us cause him to speak, as St. Laurence Justinian remarks: "These are the words of most burning love."[6157] And in order that every one might easily receive him, He desired to leave himself under the appearance of bread; for if he had left himself under the appearance of some rare or very costly food, the poor would have been deprived of him; but no, Jesus would hide himself under the form of bread, which costs but little, and can be found everywhere, in order that all in every country might be able to find him and receive him.

In order, then, to excite us to receive him in the Holy Communion, he not only exhorts us to do so by so many invitations,—*Come, eat My bread; and drink the wine which I have mingled for you;*[6158] *Eat, O friends, and drink,*[6159] speaking of this heavenly bread and wine,—but he even gives us a formal precept: *Take ye, and eat; this is My body.* And more than this; that we may go and receive him, he entices us with the promise of paradise. *He that eateth My flesh hath everlasting life. He that eateth this bread shall live forever.*[6160] And still more, he threatens us with hell, and exclusion from paradise, if we refuse to communicate. *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, you shall not have life in you.*[6161] These invitations, these promises, these threats, all proceed from the great desire he has to come to us in this sacrament.

But why is it that Jesus Christ so desires that we should receive him in the Holy Communion? Here is the reason. St. Denis says that love always sighs after and tends to union, and so also says St. Thomas, “Lovers desire of two to become one.”[6162] Friends who really love each other would like to be so united as to become one person. Now this is what the infinite love of God for man has done; that he would not only give us himself in the eternal kingdom, but even in this life would permit men to possess him in the most intimate union, by giving them himself, whole and entire, under the appearances of bread in the sacrament. He stands there as though behind a wall; and from thence he beholds, as it were, through a closed lattice: *Behold He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices.*[6163] It is true, we do not see him; but he sees us, and is there really present: he is present, in order that we may possess him: but he hides himself from us to make us desire him: and as long as we have not reached our true country, Jesus desires to give himself wholly to us, and to remain united with us.

He could not satisfy his love by giving himself to the human race by his Incarnation and by his Passion, dying for all men upon the cross; but he desired to find out a way whereby he might give himself entirely to each one of us in particular; and for this end he instituted the Sacrament of the Altar, in order to unite himself wholly to each: *He that cateth My flesh,* he said, *abideth in me and I in him.*[6164] In Holy Communion Jesus unites himself to the soul, and the soul to Jesus; and this is not a union of mere affection, but it is a true and real union. Hence St. Francis de Sales says: “In no other action can the Saviour be considered more tender or more loving than in this, in which he annihilates himself, so to say, and reduces himself to food, in order to penetrate our souls, and to unite himself to the hearts of his faithful.”[6165] St. John Chrysostom says, that Jesus Christ, through the ardent love which he bore us, desired so to unite himself to us, as to become one and the same thing with us. “He mingled himself with us, that we might be one thing; for this is the property of those who ardently love.”[6166]

“It was Thy wish, in short,” says St. Laurence Justinian, “O God, enamoured of our souls, to make, by means of this sacrament, Thine own heart, by an inseparable union, one and the same heart with ours!”[6167] St. Bernardine of Sienna adds, that “the gift of Jesus Christ to us as our food was the last step of his love; since he gives himself to us in order to unite himself wholly to us; in the same way as food becomes united with him who partakes of it.”[6168] Oh, how delighted is Jesus Christ to be united with our souls! He one day said to his beloved servant, Margaret of Ypres, after Communion, “See, my daughter, the beautiful union that exists between me and thee: come, then, love me; and let us remain ever united in love, and let us never separate again.”

We must, then, be persuaded that a soul can neither do, nor think of doing, anything which gives greater pleasure to Jesus Christ than to communicate frequently, with dispositions suitable to the great guest whom she has to receive into her heart. I have said *suitable,* not indeed *worthy* dispositions; for if worthy were necessary, who could ever communicate? Another God would alone be worthy to receive God. By *suitable,* I mean such dispositions as become a miserable creature, clothed with the unhappy flesh of Adam. Ordinarily speaking, it is sufficient if a person communicates in a state of grace, and with a great desire of growing in the love of Jesus Christ. St. Francis de Sales said, “It is by love alone that we must receive Jesus Christ in the Communion, since it is through love alone that he gives himself to us.”[6169] For the rest, with regard to the number of times a person should communicate, in this he should be guided by the advice of his spiritual Father. Nevertheless, we should be aware that no state of life or employment, neither the married state nor business, prevents frequent Communion, when the director thinks it advisable, as Pope Innocent XI. has declared in his decree of 1679, when he says, “Frequent Communion must be left to the judgment of the confessors. . . . who, for lay persons in business, or in the marriage state, must recommend it according as they see it will be profitable for their salvation.”[6170]

We must next understand that there is nothing from which we can derive such profit as from the Communion. The Eternal Father has made Jesus Christ the possessor of all his own heavenly treasures. *The Father hath given all things into His hands.*[6171] Hence, when Jesus Christ comes to a soul in Holy Communion, he brings with him boundless treasures of grace; and consequently after Communion we can justly say, *Now all good things came to me together with it.*[6172] St. Denis says, that the Sacrament of the Eucharist is far more powerful for the sanctification of souls than all other spiritual means of grace;[6173] and St. Vincent Ferrer, that one Communion does more for the soul than a week's fasting on bread and water.

In the first place, as the Council of Trent teaches, Communion is that great remedy which frees us from venial, and preserves us against mortal sins.[6174] It is said "from daily faults;" because according to St. Thomas,[6175] a man is excited by means of this sacrament to make acts of love, by which venial sins are forgiven. And it is said that "we are preserved from mortal sins, because Communion increases grace, which will preserve us from great faults. Hence Innocent III. says, that Jesus Christ delivered us from the power of sin by his Passion, but that by the Eucharist he delivers us from the power of sinning.[6176]

This Sacrament, moreover, above all others, inflames our souls with divine love. *God is love.*[6177] And he is a fire which consumes all earthly affections in our hearts. *He is a consuming fire.*[6178] And for this very purpose, namely, to enkindle this fire, the Son of God came upon earth. *I am come to send fire on the earth;* and he added, that he desired nothing but to see this fire enkindled in our souls: *And what will I but that it be kindled?*[6179] And oh, what flames of love does not Jesus Christ light up in the heart of every one who receives him devoutly in this sacrament! St. Catharine of Sienna once saw the Host in a priest's hand appearing as a globe of fire; and the saint was astonished that the hearts of all men were not burned up, and, as it were, reduced to ashes by such a flame. Such brilliant rays issued from the face of St. Rose of Lima after Communion, as to dazzle the eyes of those who saw her; and the heat from her mouth was so intense, that a hand held near it was scorched. It is related of St. Wenceslaus, that by merely visiting the churches where the Blessed Sacrament was kept, he was inflamed by such an ardor, that his servant who accompanied him did not feel the cold, if when walking on the snow he trod in the footsteps of the saint.

St. John Chrysostom says that the most Holy Sacrament is a burning fire; so that when we leave the altar we breathe forth flames of love, which make us objects of terror to hell.[6180] The spouse of the Canticles says: *He brought me into the cellar of wine, He set in order charity in me.*[6181] St. Gregory of Nyssa says that Communion is precisely this cellar of wine, in which the soul becomes so inebriated with divine love, that it forgets and loses sight of creatures; and this is that languishing with love of which the spouse again speaks: *Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples, because I languish with love.*[6182]

Some one will say: “But this is the very reason why I do not communicate frequently, because I see that I am so cold in the love of God.” Gerson answers such a one by saying: “Do you, therefore, because you are cold, willingly keep away from the fire? Rather, because you feel yourself cold, should you so much the more frequently approach this sacrament, if you really desire to love Jesus Christ.” “Although it be with lukewarmness,” wrote St. Bonaventure, “still approach, trusting in the mercy of God. The more one feels himself sick, the greater need has he of a physician.”[6183] In like manner, St. Francis de Sales: “Two sorts of persons ought to go frequently to Communion: the perfect, in order to remain so; and the imperfect, in order to be become perfect.”[6184] But for frequent Communion, it is at least necessary to have a great desire to become a saint and to grow in the love of Jesus Christ. Our Lord said once to St. Matilda: “When you go to Communion desire all the love which a soul has ever had for me, and I will receive your love according to your desire.”[6185]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O God of love, O infinite lover, worthy of infinite love, tell me what more canst Thou invent to make us love Thee? It was not sufficient for Thee to become man, and to subject Thyself to all our miseries; not sufficient to shed all Thy blood for us in torments, and then to die overwhelmed with sorrow, upon a cross destined for the most shameful malefactors. Thou didst, at last, oblige Thyself to be hidden under the species of bread and wine, to become our food, and so united with each one of us. Tell me, I repeat, what more canst Thou invent to make Thyself loved by us? Ah, wretched shall we be if we do not love Thee in this life! And when we shall have entered into eternity, what remorse shall we not feel for not having loved Thee! My Jesus, I will not die without loving Thee, and loving Thee exceedingly! I am heartily sorry, and am pained for having so greatly offended Thee. But now I love Thee above all things. I love Thee more than myself, and I consecrate to Thee all my affections. Do Thou, who inspirest me with this desire, give me also grace to accomplish it. My Jesus, my Jesus, I desire nothing of Thee but Thyself. Now that Thou hast drawn me to Thy love, I leave all, I renounce all, and I bind myself to Thee: Thou alone art sufficient for me.

O Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me, and make me a saint! Add this also to the many wonders thou hast done in changing sinners into saints.

III

THE GREAT CONFIDENCE WE OUGHT TO HAVE IN THE LOVE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN US AND IN ALL HE HAS DONE FOR US

David placed all his hope of salvation in his future Redeemer, and said: *Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.*

But how much more ought we to place our confidence in Jesus Christ, now that he has come, and has accomplished the work of redemption! Hence each one of us should say, and repeat again and again with greater confidence: *Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.*[6186]

If we have great reason to fear everlasting death on account of our sins against God, we have, on the other hand, far greater reason to hope for everlasting life through the merits of Jesus Christ, which are infinitely more powerful for our salvation than our sins are for our damnation. We have sinned, and have deserved hell; but the Redeemer has come to take upon himself all our offences, and to make satisfaction for them by His sufferings: *Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows.*[6187]

In the same unhappy moment in which we sinned, God had already written against us the sentence of eternal death; but what has our merciful Redeemer done? *Blotting out the handwriting of the decree which was against us, . . . the same He took out of the way, fastening it to the cross.*[6188] He cancelled by his blood the decree of our condemnation, and then fastened it to the cross, in order that, when we look at the sentence of our damnation for the sins we have committed, we may at the same time see the cross on which Jesus Christ died and blotted out this sentence by his blood, and so regain hope of pardon and everlasting life.

Oh, how far more powerfully does the blood of Jesus Christ speak for us, and obtain mercy for us from God, than did the blood of Abel speak against Cain! *You are come to Jesus the mediator of the New Testament, and to the sprinkling of blood, which speaketh better than that of Abel.*[6189] As if the Apostle had said, "O sinners, happy are you to be able, after you have sinned, to have recourse to Jesus crucified, who has shed all his blood, in order to become the mediator of peace between sinners and God, and to obtain pardon for them! Your iniquities cry out against you, but the blood of the Redeemer pleads in your favor; and the divine justice cannot but be appeased by the voice of this precious blood."

It is true that we shall have to render a rigorous account to the Eternal Judge of all our sins. But who is to be our Judge? *The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.*[6190] Let us comfort ourselves, the Eternal Father has committed our judgment to our own Redeemer. Therefore St. Paul encourages us, saying, *Who is he that shall condemn? Christ Jesus who died, . . . who also maketh intercession for us.*[6191] Who is the judge to condemn us? It is that same Saviour who, in order not to condemn us to everlasting death, vouchsafed himself to be condemned and to die; and not content with this, at this moment intercedes with his Father for our salvation. Hence St. Thomas of Villanova says: "What do you fear, O sinner, if you detest your sin? How will he condemn you, who died in order not to condemn you? how will he cast you from him, if you return to his feet, he who came from heaven to seek you at the very time you were flying from him?"[6192]

And if we fear on account of our frailty to fall under the assaults of our enemies, against whom we must continually wage war, behold what we have to do, as the Apostle admonishes us: *Let us run to the fight proposed unto us: looking on Jesus the author and finisher of faith, who having joy proposed unto Him, underwent the cross, despising the shame.*[6193] Let us go out to the battle with great courage, looking at Jesus crucified, who from his cross offers us his assistance, the victory, and crown. In past times we fell into sin because we left off looking at the wounds and the pains endured by our Redeemer, and so we did not have recourse to him for help. But if for the future we set before our eyes all he has suffered for love of us, and how he ever stands ready to assist us when we have recourse to him, it is certain that we shall not be conquered by our enemies. St. Teresa said, with her wonted generosity, "I do not understand the fears of certain persons, who say, The devil, the devil, so long as we can say, God, God, and make Satan tremble."[6194] On the other hand, the saint assures us, that if we do not place all our confidence in God, all our own exertions will be of little or no avail. "All our exertions," these are her own words, "are of little use, if we do not give up entirely all trust in ourselves, and place it altogether in God."[6195] Oh, what two great mysteries of hope and love for us are the Passion of Jesus Christ and the Sacrament of the Altar!—mysteries, which we could have never believed, had not faith assured us of them. That God Almighty should deign to become man, shed all his blood, and die of sorrow upon a cross, and why? To pay for our sins, and gain salvation for us rebellious worms! And then his own very body, once sacrificed upon the Cross for us, this he vouchsafes to give us for our food, in order to become wholly united with us! O God, how should not these two mysteries consume with love the hearts of all men! And what sinner is there, be he ever so abandoned, who can despair of pardon, if he repent of the evil he has done, when he sees a God so full of love for men, and so inclined to do them good? Hence St. Bonaventure, full of confidence, said, "I will have great confidence, firmly hoping that he who has done and suffered so much for my salvation will deny me nothing that I have need of."[6196] How can he refuse to give me the graces necessary for my salvation, who has done and suffered so much to save me?

Let us go therefore (the Apostle exhorts us) *with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.*[6197] The throne of grace is the cross on which Jesus sits to dispense graces and mercy to all who come to him. But we must quickly have recourse to him, if we would find seasonable aid for our salvation: for there will come a time perhaps when we shall no longer be able to find it. Let us go quickly then and embrace the cross of Jesus Christ, and let us go with great confidence. Let us not be frightened by the sight of our miseries; in Jesus crucified we shall find all riches, all grace: *In all things you are made rich in Him, . . . so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace.*[6198] The merits of Jesus Christ have enriched us with all the divine treasures, and have made us capable of every grace we can desire.

St. Leo says, “that Jesus has brought us by his death more good than the devil has done us harm by sin.”[6199] And by these words he explains what St. Paul said before him, *that the gift of redemption is greater than sin:* grace has overcome the offence. *Not as the offence, so also is the gift: where sin abounded, grace hath abounded more.*[6200] From this the Saviour encourages us to hope for every favor and every grace through his merits. And see how he teaches us the way to obtain all we want from his Eternal Father: *Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[6201] Whatever you desire, he says, ask for it of the Father in my name, and I promise you that you shall be heard. And indeed how shall the Father be able to deny us, when he has given us his only-begotten Son, whom he loves as himself? *He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?*[6202] The Apostle says *all things;* so that no grace is excepted, neither pardon, nor perseverance, nor holy love, nor perfection, nor paradise, “all, all, he has given us.” But we must pray to him. God is all liberality to those who call upon him: *Rich unto all that call upon Him.*[6203]

I will again quote here many other beautiful thoughts of the Venerable John of Avila, which he has left us in his letters, on the great confidence we should have in the merits of Jesus Christ:

“Do not forget that Jesus Christ is the mediator between the Eternal Father and ourselves; and that we are beloved by him, and united to him by so strong bonds of love that nothing can break them, so long as a man does not himself dissolve them by some mortal sin. The blood of Jesus cries out, and asks mercy for us; and cries out so loudly that the noise of our sins is not heard. The death of Jesus Christ hath put to death our sins: *O Death, I* *will be thy death!*[6204] Those who are lost are not lost for want of means of satisfaction, but because they would not avail themselves of the sacraments as the means of profiting by the satisfaction made by Jesus Christ.

"Jesus has taken upon himself the affair of remedying our evils, as if it had been personally his own affair. So that he has called our sins his own, although he did not commit them, and has sought pardon for them; and with the most tender love has prayed, as if he were praying for himself, that all who should have recourse to him might become objects of love. And as he sought, so he found, because God has so ordained that Jesus and ourselves should be so united in one, that either he and we should be loved, or he and we hated: and since Jesus is not or cannot be hated, in the same way, if we remain united by love to Jesus, we shall be also loved. By his being loved by God, we are also loved, seeing that Jesus Christ can do more to make us loved than we can do to make ourselves hated; since the Eternal Father loves Jesus Christ far more than he hates sinners.

"Jesus said to his Father: *Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me.*[6205] Love has conquered hatred; and thus we have been pardoned and loved, and are secure of never being abandoned, so strong is the tie of love that binds us. The Lord said by Isaias: *Can a woman forget her infant? And if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven Thee in My hands.*[6206] He has graven us in his hands with his own blood. Thus we should not trouble ourselves about anything, since everything is ordained by those hands which were nailed to the cross in testimony of the love he bears us.

"Nothing can so trouble us on which Jesus Christ cannot reassure us. Let the sins I have committed surround me, let the devils lay snares for me, let fears for the future accuse me, by demanding mercy of the most tender Jesus Christ, who has loved me even until death, I cannot possibly lose confidence; for I see myself so highly valued, that God gave himself for me. O my Jesus, sure haven for those who seek Thee in time of peril! O most watchful Pastor, he deceives himself who does not trust in Thee, if only he has the will to amend his life! Therefore Thou hast said: I am here, fear not; I am he who afflicts and who consoles. Some from time to time I place in desolations, which seem equal to hell itself; but after a while I bring them out and console them. I am thine advocate, who have made thy, cause my own. I am thy surety, who am come to pay thy debts. I am thy Lord, who have redeemed thee with my blood, not in order to abandon thee, but to enrich thee, having bought thee at a great price. How shall I fly from him who seeks me, when I went forth to meet those who sought to outrage me? I did not turn away my face from him who struck me; and shall I from him who would adore me? How can my children doubt that I love them, seeing that out of love to them I placed myself in the hands of my enemies? Whom have I ever despised that loved me? Whom have I ever abandoned that sought my aid? Even I go seeking those that do not seek me."[6207]

If you believe that the Eternal Father has given you his Son, believe also that he will give you everything else which is infinitely less than his Son. Do not think that Jesus Christ is forgetful of you, since he has left you, as the greatest memorial and pledge of his love, himself in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my Jesus, my love, what joyful hope does Thy Passion give me! How can I possibly fear not to receive from an Almighty God who has given me all his blood, the pardon of my sins, paradise, and all other graces that I require! Ah, my Jesus, my hope and my love, Thou, in order that I might not perish, didst give Thy life; I love Thee above every good, my Redeemer and my God. Thou gavest Thyself entirely to me; I give Thee my whole will, and with it I repeat that I love Thee, and I will always say, I love Thee, I love Thee. So I always desire to say in this life so I wish to die, breathing forth my last sigh with this dear word on my lips, My God, I love Thee; and from that moment I may commence a love towards Thee which shall last forever, and without cessation for all eternity. I love Thee, then; and because I love Thee, I repent above all things for having offended Thee. In order not to lose a passing satisfaction, I have been willing, wretch that I am, to lose Thee so often, O infinite good! This thought torments me more than any pain: but it is a consolation to me to think that I have to do with infinite goodness, that knows not how to despise a heart that truly loves. Oh, that I could die for Thee, who didst die for me! My dear Redeemer, I surely hope of Thee eternal salvation in the life to come, and in this life I hope for holy perseverance in Thy love; and therefore I propose always to ask it of Thee. And do Thou, by the merits of Thy death, give me perseverance in praying to Thee. This too I ask and hope of thee, O Mary my Queen!

IV

HOW MUCH WE ARE OBLIGED TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ as God has a claim on all our love; but by the love which he has shown us, he wished to put us, so to speak, under the necessity of loving him, at least in gratitude for all that he has done and suffered for us. He has greatly loved us, that we might love him greatly. "Why does God love us, but that he may be loved?"[6208] wrote St. Bernard. And Moses had said the same before him: *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou fear the Lord thy God . . . and love Him?*[6209] Therefore the first command which he gave us was this: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with Thy whole heart.*[6210] And St. Paul says, that love is the fulfilling of the law: *Love is the fulfilling of the law.*[6211] For "fulfilling" the Greek text has the "embracing of the law;"[6212] love embraces the entire law.

Who, indeed, at the sight of a crucified God dying for our love can refuse to love him? Those thorns, those nails, that cross, those wounds, and that blood, call upon us, and irresistibly urge us, to love him who has loved us so much. One heart is too little wherewith to love this God so enamoured of us. In order to requite the love of Jesus Christ, it would require another God to die for his love. "Ah, why," exclaims St. Francis de Sales, "do we not throw ourselves on Jesus Christ, to die on the cross with him who was pleased to die there for the love of us?"[6213] The Apostle clearly impresses on us that Jesus Christ died for us for this end, that we might no longer live for ourselves, but solely for that God who died for us: *Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them.*[6214]

And the recommendation of Ecclesiasticus is here in point: *Forget not the kindness of thy surety; for He hath given His life for thee.*[6215] Be not unmindful of him who has stood surety for thee; who, to satisfy for thy sins, was willing to pay off, by his death, the debt of punishment due from thee. Oh, how desirous is Jesus Christ that we should continually remember his

Passion! and how it saddens him to see that we are so unmindful of it! Should a person endure for one of his friends affronts, blows, and imprisonment, how afflicting would it be for him to know that that friend afterwards never gave it a thought, and cared not even to hear it spoken of! On the contrary, how gratified would he be to know that his friend constantly spoke of it with the warmest gratitude, and often thanked him for it. So it is pleasing to Jesus Christ when we preserve in our minds a grateful and loving recollection of the sorrows and death which he underwent for us. Jesus Christ was the desire of all the ancient Fathers; he was the desire of all nations before he was yet come upon earth. Now, how much more ought he to be our only desire and our only love, now that we know that he is really come, and are aware how much he has done and suffered for us,—so that he even died upon the cross for love of us!

For this purpose he instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist on the day preceding his death, and gave us the injunction, that as often as we should be nourished with his most sacred flesh, we should be mindful of his death: *Take ye, and cat; this is My body. . . . This do for a commemoration of Me,* etc. *For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come.*[6216] Wherefore the holy Church prays: "O God! who under this wonderful Sacrament hast left us a memorial of Thy Passion,"[6217] etc. And she also sings: "O sacred banquet, in which Christ is taken, the memory of his Passion is renewed,"[6218] etc. Hence we may gather how pleasing to Jesus Christ are they who think frequently of his Passion, since it was for this very purpose that he left himself in the holy Sacrament upon our altars, in order that we might bear in continual and grateful remembrance all that he suffered for us, and by this means evermore increase our love towards him. St. Francis de Sales called Mount Calvary "the mountain of lovers." It is impossible to remember that mount and not love Jesus Christ, who died there for love of us.

O God! and how is it that men do not love this God who has done so much to be loved by men! Before the Incarnation of the Word, man might have doubted whether God loved him with a true love; but after the coming of the Son of God, and after his dying for the love of men, how can we possibly doubt of his love? "O man," says St. Thomas of Villanova, "look on that cross, on those torments, and that cruel death, which Jesus Christ has suffered for thee: after so great and so many tokens of his love, thou canst no longer entertain a doubt that he loves thee, and loves thee exceedingly.” And St. Bernard says, that “the cross and every wound of our Blessed Redeemer cry aloud to make us understand the love he bears us.”[6219]

In this grand mystery of man’s redemption, we must consider how Jesus employed all his thoughts and zeal to discover every means of making himself loved by us. Had he merely wished to die for our salvation, it would have been sufficient had he been slain by Herod with the other children; but no, he chose before dying to lead, during thirty-three years, a life of hardship and suffering; and during that time, with a view to win our love, he appeared in several different guises. First of all, as a poor child born in a stable; then as a little boy helping in the workshop; and finally, as a criminal executed on a cross. But before dying on the cross, we see him in many different states, one and all calculated to excite our compassion, and to make himself loved: in agony in the garden, bathed from head to foot in a sweat of blood; afterwards, in the court of Pilate, torn with scourges; then treated as a mock-king, with a reed in his hand, a ragged garment of purple on his shoulders, and a crown of thorns on his head; then dragged publicly through the streets to death, with the cross upon his shoulders; and at length, on the hill of Calvary, suspended on the cross by three iron nails. Tell me, does he merit our love or not, this God who has vouchsafed to endure all these torments, and to use so many means in order to captivate our love? Father John Rigouleux used to say: “I would spend my life in weeping for love of a God whose love induced him to die for the salvation of men.”

“Love is a great thing,”[6220] says St. Bernard. A great thing, a precious thing is love. Solomon, speaking of, the divine wisdom, which is holy charity, called it an infinite treasure; because he that possesses charity is made partaker of the friendship of God: *For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.*[6221]

The angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, says, that charity is not only the queen of all virtues, but that, wherever she reigns, she draws along with her, as it were, in her train, all other virtues, and directs them all so as to bring us in closer union with God; but charity is properly that which unites us with God. As St. Bernard tells us: “Charity is a virtue uniting us with God.”[6222] And, indeed, it is over and over again signified in the holy Scriptures, that God loves whoever loves him: *I love them that love Me.*[6223] *If any one loves me . . . My Father will love Him; and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.*[6224] *He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him.*[6225] Behold the beautiful union which charity produces; it unites the soul to God. Moreover, love supplies strength to practise and to surfer everything for God: *Love is strong as death.*[6226] St. Augustine writes: “Nothing is so hard that cannot be subdued by the fire of love.”[6227] Wherefore the saint says, that where we love, either the labor is not felt, or if felt, the labor itself is loved: “In that which is loved, either there is no labor, or the labor is loved.”[6228]

Let us hear from St. John Chrysostom what are the effects of divine love in those souls in which it reigns: “When the love of God has taken possession of a soul, it produces an insatiable desire to work for the beloved; insomuch that however many and however vast the works which she does, and however prolonged the duration of her service, all seems nothing in her eyes, and she is afflicted at doing so little for God; and were it permitted her to die and consume herself for him, she would be most happy. Hence it is that she esteems herself an unprofitable servant in all that she does; because she is instructed by love to know what God deserves, and sees by this clear light all the defects of her actions, and finds in them motives for confusion and pain, well aware how mean is all that she can do for so great a Lord.” “Oh! how those persons delude themselves,” says St. Francis de Sales, “who place virtue in anything else but in loving God! Some,” writes the saint, “put perfection in austerities, others in alms, others in prayer, others in frequenting the holy sacraments. For my part, I know of no other perfection than that of loving God with our whole heart; because all the other virtues, with out love, are but a mere heap of stones. And if we do not perfectly enjoy this holy love, the fault lies with us, because we do not, once for all, come to the conclusion of giving up ourselves wholly to God.”[6229]

Our Lord said one day to St. Teresa, “Everything which does not give pleasure to me is vanity.” Would that all understood well this great truth!

For the rest, one thing is necessary.[6230] It is not necessary to be rich in this world, to gain the esteem of others, to lead a life of ease, to enjoy dignities, to have a reputation for learning; it is only necessary to love God and to do his will. For this single end has he created us, for this he preserves our life; and thus only can we gain admittance into Paradise. *Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm.*[6231] The Lord thus speaks to all his espoused souls. Put me as a seal upon thy heart and upon thine arm, in order that all thy desires and actions may tend to me; upon thy heart, that no other love but mine may enter there upon thine arm, in order that all thou dost may have me for its sole object. Oh, how quickly does that soul speed onwards to perfection, that in all its actions regards but Jesus crucified, and has no other pretension than to gratify him!

To acquire, then, a true love of Jesus Christ should be our only care. The masters of spiritual life describe the marks of true love. Love, say they, is *fearful,* and its fear is none other than that of displeasing God. It is *generous,* because, trusting in God, it is never daunted even at the greatest enterprises for his glory. It is *strong,* because it subdues all its evil appetites, even in the midst of the most violent temptations, and of the darkest desolations. It is *obedient,* because it immediately flies to execute the divine will. It is *pure,* because it loves God alone, and for the sole reason that he deserves to be loved. It is *ardent,* because it would inflame all mankind, and willingly see them consumed with divine love. It is *inebriating,* for it causes the soul to live as it were out of itself, as if it no longer saw, nor felt, nor had any more senses left for earthly things, bent wholly on loving God. It is *unitive,* by producing a strict union between the will of the creature and the will of the Creator. It is *longing,* for it fills the soul with desires of leaving this world, to fly and unite itself perfectly with God in its true and happy country, where it may love him with all its strength.

But no one teaches us so well the real characteristics and practice of charity as the great preacher of charity, St. Paul. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, he says, in the first place, that without charity man is nothing, and that nothing profits him: *If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing, And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*[6232] So that even should a person have faith strong enough to remove mountains, like St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, but had not charity, it would profit him nothing. Should he give all his goods to the poor, and even willingly suffer martyrdom, but remain void of charity,—should he do it, that is, for any other end than that of pleasing God, it would profit him nothing at all. Then St. Paul gives us the marks of true charity, and at the same time teaches us the practice of those virtues which are the daughters of charity; and he goes on to say: *Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up, is not ambitious; seeketh not her own; is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*[6233]

Let us therefore, in the present book, proceed to consider these holy practices, that we may thus see if the love which we owe to Jesus Christ truly reigns within us; as likewise that we may understand in what virtues we should chiefly exercise ourselves, in order to persevere and advance in this holy love.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O most lovely and most loving Heart of Jesus, miserable is the heart which does not love Thee! O God, for the love of men Thou didst die on the cross, helpless and forsaken, and how then can men live so forgetful of Thee? O love of God! O ingratitude of man! O men, O men! do but cast one look on the innocent Son of God, agonizing on the cross, and dying for you, in order to satisfy the divine justice for your sins, and by this means to allure you to love him. Observe how, at the same time, he prays his eternal Father to forgive you. Behold him, and love him. Ah, my Jesus, how small is the number of those that love Thee! Wretched too am I; for I also have lived so many years unmindful of Thee, and have grievously offended Thee, my beloved Redeemer! It is not so much the punishment I have deserved that makes me weep, as the love which Thou hast borne me. O sorrows of Jesus! O ignominies of Jesus! O wounds of Jesus! O death of Jesus! O love of Jesus! rest deeply engraved in my heart, and may your sweet recollection be forever fixed there, to wound me and inflame me continually with love. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee, my sovereign good; I love Thee, my love and my all; I love Thee, and I will love Thee forever. Oh, suffer me never more to forsake Thee, never more to lose Thee! Make me entirely Thine; do so by the merits of Thy death. In this I firmly trust.

And I have a great confidence also in thy intercession, O Mary, my Queen; make me love Jesus Christ and make me also love thee, my Mother and my hope!

Chapter I

CHARITY IS PATIENT

(CHARITAS PATIENS EST.—1 COR. 13:4.)

> *“Si quis non amat Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, sit anathema!”*
>
> “If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema!”—1 Cor. 16:22.
>
> “Charitas patiens est, benigna est; charitas non æmulatur, non agit perperam, non inflatur, non est ambitiosa, non quærit quæ sua sunt, non irritatur; non cogitat malum, non gaudet super iniquitate, congaudet autem veritati; omnia suffert, omnia credit, omnia sperat, omnia sustinet.”
>
> “Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger; thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.”—1 Cor. 13:4–7.

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST LOVES SUFFERINGS

THIS earth is the place for meriting, and therefore it is a place for suffering. Our true country, where God has prepared for us repose in everlasting joy, is paradise. We have but a short time to stay in this world; but in this short time we have many labors to undergo: *Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries.*[6234] We must suffer, and all must suffer; be they just, or be they sinners, each one must carry his cross. He that carries it with patience is saved; he that carries it with impatience is lost. St. Augustine says, the same miseries send some to paradise and some to hell: “One and the same blow lifts the good to glory, and reduces the bad to ashes.”[6235] The same saint observes, that by the test of suffering the chaff in the Church of God is distinguished from the wheat: he that humbles himself under tribulations, and is resigned to the will of God, is wheat for paradise; he that grows haughty and is enraged, and so forsakes God, is chaff for hell.

On the day when the cause of our salvation shall be decided, our life must be found conformable to the life of Jesus Christ, if we would enjoy the happy sentence of the predestined: *For whom He foreknew He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son.*[6236] This was the end for which the Eternal Word descended upon earth, to teach us, by his example, to carry with patience the cross which God sends us: *Christ suffered for us* (wrote St. Peter), *leaving you an example, that you should follow His steps.*[6237] So that Jesus Christ suffered on purpose to encourage us to suffer. O God! what a life was that of Jesus Christ! A life of ignominy and pain. The Prophet calls our Redeemer *despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows.*[6238] A man held in contempt, and treated as the lowest, the vilest among men, a man of sorrows; yes, for the life of Jesus Christ was made up of hardships and afflictions.

Now, in the same manner as God has treated his beloved Son, so, does he treat every one whom he loves, and whom he receives for his son: *For whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth; and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.*[6239] For this reason he one day said to St. Teresa: “Know that the souls dearest to my Father are those who are afflicted with the greatest sufferings.”[6240] Hence the saint said of all her troubles, that she would not exchange them for all the treasures in the world. She appeared after her death to a soul, and revealed to her that she enjoyed an immense reward in heaven, not so much for her good works, as for the sufferings which she cheerfully bore in this life for the love of God; and that if she could possibly entertain a wish to return upon earth, the only reason would be in order that she might suffer more for God.

He that loves God in suffering earns a double reward in paradise. St. Vincent of Paul[6241] said that it was a great misfortune to be free from suffering in this life. And he added, that a congregation or an individual that does not suffer, and is applauded by all the world, is not far from a fall. It was on this account that St. Francis of Assisi, on the day that he had suffered nothing for God, became afraid lest God had forgotten him. St. John Chrysostom[6242] says, that when God endows a man with the grace of suffering, he gives him a greater grace than that of raising the dead to life; because in performing miracles man remains God’s debtor; whereas in suffering, God makes himself the debtor of man. And he adds,[6243] that whoever endures something for God, even had he no other gift than the strength to suffer for the God whom he loves, this would procure for him an immense reward. Wherefore he affirmed, that he considered St. Paul to have received a greater grace in being bound in chains for Jesus Christ, than in being rapt to the third heaven in ecstasy.

But patience has a perfect work.[6244] The meaning of this is, that nothing is more pleasing to God than to see a soul suffering with patience all the crosses sent her by him. The effect of love is to liken the lover to the person loved. St. Francis de Sales said, “All the wounds of Christ are so many mouths, which preach to us that we must suffer for him. The science of the saints is to suffer constantly for Jesus; and in this way we shall soon become saints.” A person that loves Jesus Christ is anxious to be treated like Jesus Christ,—poor, persecuted, and despised. St. John beheld all the saints clothed in white, and with palms in their hands: *Clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.*[6245] The palm is the symbol of martyrs, and yet all the saints did not suffer martyrdom;—why, then, do all the saints bear palms in their hands? St. Gregory replies, that all the saints have been martyrs either of the sword or of patience; so that, he adds, “we can be martyrs without the sword, if we keep patience.”[6246]

The merit of a soul that loves Jesus Christ consists in loving and in suffering. Hear what our Lord said to St. Teresa: “Think you, my child, that merit consists in enjoyment? No, it consists in suffering and in loving. Look at my life, wholly embittered with afflictions. Be assured, my child, that the more my Father loves any one, the more sufferings he sends him; they are the standard of his love. Look at my wounds; your torments will never reach so far. It is absurd to suppose that my Father favors with his friendship those who are strangers to suffering.”[6247] And for our consolation St. Teresa makes this remark: “God never sends a trial, but he forthwith rewards it with some favor.”[6248] One day Jesus Christ appeared to the blessed Baptista Varani,[6249] and told her of three special favors which he is wont to bestow on cherished souls: the first is, not to sin; the second, which is greater, to perform good works; the third, and the greatest of all, to suffer for his love. So that St. Teresa[6250] used to say, whenever any one does something for God, the Almighty repays him with some trial. And therefore the saints, on receiving tribulations, thanked God for them. St.

Louis of France, referring to his captivity in Turkey, said: “I rejoice, and thank God more for the patience which he accorded me in the time of my imprisonment, than if he had made me master of the universe.” And when St. Elizabeth, princess of Thuringia, after her husband’s death, was banished with her son from the kingdom, and found herself homeless and abandoned by all, she went to a convent of the Franciscans, and there had the *Te Deum* sung in thanksgiving to God for the signal favor of being allowed to suffer for his love.

St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say, “All suffering is slight to gain heaven.” And the Apostle had already said the same: *The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.*[6251]

It would be a great gain for us to endure all the torments of all the martyrs during our whole lives, in order to enjoy one single moment of the bliss of paradise; with what readiness, then, should we embrace our crosses, when we know that the sufferings of this transitory life will gain for us an everlasting beatitude! *That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.*[6252] St. Agapitus, while still a mere boy in years, was threatened by the tyrant to have his head covered with a red-hot helmet; on which he replied, “And what better fortune could possibly befall me, than to lose my head here, to have it crowned hereafter in heaven?” This made St. Francis exclaim:

“I look for such a meed of bliss,
That all my pains seem happiness.”

But whoever desires the crown of paradise must needs combat and suffer: *If we suffer, we shall also reign.*[6253] We cannot get a reward without merit; and no merit is to be had without patience: *He is not crowned, except he strive lawfully.*[6254] And the person that strives with the greatest patience shall have the greatest reward. Wonderful indeed! When the temporal goods of this world are in question, worldlings endeavor to procure as much as they can; but when it is a question of the goods of eternal life, they say, “It is enough if we get a little corner in heaven!” Such is not the language of the saints: they are satisfied with anything whatever in this life, nay more, they strip themselves of all earthly goods; but concerning eternal goods, they strive to obtain them in as large a measure as possible. I would ask which of the two act with more wisdom and prudence?

But even with regard to the present life, it is certain that he who suffers with most patience enjoys the greatest peace. It was a saying of St. Philip Neri,[6255] that in this world there is no purgatory; it is either all paradise or all hell: he that patiently supports tribulations enjoys a paradise; he that does not do so, suffers a hell. Yes, for (as St. Teresa writes) he that embraces the crosses sent him by God feels them not. St. Francis de Sales, finding himself on one occasion beset on every side with tribulations, said, “For some time back the severe oppositions and secret contrarieties which have befallen me afford me so sweet a peace, that nothing can equal it; and they give me such an assurance that my soul will ere long be firmly united with God, that I can say with all truth that they are the sole ambition, the sole desire of my heart.”[6256] And indeed peace can never be found by one who leads an irregular life, but only by him who lives in union with God and with his blessed will. A certain missionary of a religious Order, while in the Indies, was one day standing to witness the execution of a person under sentence of death, and already on the scaffold: the criminal called the missionary to him, and said, “You must know, Father, that I was once a member of your Order; whilst I observed the rules I led a very happy life; but when, afterwards, I began to relax in the strict observance of them, I immediately experienced pain in everything; so much so, that I abandoned the religious life, and gave myself up to vice, which has finally reduced me to the melancholy pass in which you at present behold me.” And in conclusion he said, “I tell you this, that my example may be a warning to others.” The Venerable Father Louis da Ponte said, “Take the sweet things of this life for bitter, and the bitter for sweet; and so you will be in the constant enjoyment of peace. Yes, for though the sweet are pleasant to sense, they invariably leave behind them the bitterness of remorse of conscience, on account of the imperfect satisfaction which, for the most part, they afford; but the bitter, when taken with patience from the hand of God, become sweet, and dear to the souls who love him.”

Let us be convinced that in this valley of tears true peace of heart cannot be found, except by him who endures and lovingly embraces sufferings to please Almighty God: this is the consequence of that corruption in which all are placed through the infection of sin. The condition of the saints on earth is to suffer and to love; the condition of the saints in heaven is to enjoy and to love. Father Paul Segneri the younger, in a letter which he wrote one of his penitents to encourage her to suffer, gave her the counsel to keep these words inscribed at the foot of her crucifix: " 'Tis thus one loves." It is not simply by suffering, but by desiring to suffer for the love of Jesus Christ, that a soul gives the surest signs of really loving him. And what greater acquisition (said St. Teresa) can we possibly make than to have some token of gratifying Almighty God?[6257] Alas, how ready are the greatest part of men to take alarm at the bare mention of crosses, of humiliations, and of afflictions! Nevertheless, there are many souls who find all their delight in suffering, and who would be quite disconsolate did they pass their time on this earth without suffering. The sight of Jesus crucified (said a devout person) renders the cross so lovely to me, that it seems to me I could never be happy without suffering; the love of Jesus Christ is sufficient for me for all. Listen how Jesus advises every one who would follow him to take up and carry his cross: *Let him take up his cross, and follow Me.*[6258] But we must take it up and carry it, not by constraint and against our will, but with humility, patience, and love.

Oh, how acceptable to God is he that humbly and patiently embraces the crosses which he sends him! St. Ignatius of Loyola said, "There is no wood so apt to enkindle and maintain love towards God as the wood of the cross;" that is, to love him in the midst of sufferings. One day St. Gertrude asked our Lord what she could offer him most acceptable, and he replied, "My child, thou canst do nothing more gratifying to me than to submit patiently to all the tribulations that befall thee." Wherefore the great servant of God, Sister Victoria Angelini, affirmed that one day of crucifixion was worth a hundred years of all other spiritual exercises. And the Venerable Father John of Avila said, "One 'blessed be God' in contrarieties is worth more than a thousand thanksgivings in prosperity." Alas, how little men know of the inestimable value of afflictions endured for God! The Blessed Angela of Foligno said, "that if we knew the just value of suffering for God, it would become an object of plunder;" which is as much as to say, that each one would seek an opportunity of robbing his neighbor of the occasions of suffering. For this reason St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, well aware as she was of the merit of sufferings, sighed to have her life prolonged rather than to die and go to Heaven, “because,” said she, “in Heaven one can suffer no more.”

A soul that loves God has no other end in view but to be wholly united with him; but let us learn from St. Catharine of Genoa what is necessary to be done to arrive at this perfect union: “To attain union with God, adversities are indispensable; because by them God aims at destroying all our corrupt propensities within and without. And hence all injuries, contempts, infirmities, abandonment of relatives and friends, confusions, temptations, and other mortifications, all are in the highest degree necessary for us, in order that we may carry on the fight, until by repeated victories we come to extinguish within us all vicious movements, so that they are no longer felt; and we shall never arrive at divine union until adversities, instead of seeming bitter to us, become all sweet for God’s sake.”

It follows, then, that a soul that sincerely desires to belong to God must be resolved, as St. John of the Cross[6259] writes, not to seek enjoyments in this life, but to suffer in all things; she must embrace with eagerness all voluntary mortifications, and with still greater eagerness those which are involuntary, since they are the more welcome to Almighty God.

The patient man is better than the valiant.[6260] God is pleased with a person who practises mortification by fasting, hair-cloths, and disciplines, on account of the courage displayed in such mortifications; but he is much more pleased with those who have the courage to bear patiently and gladly such crosses as come from his own divine hand. St. Francis de Sales said, “Such mortifications as come to us from the hand of God, or from men by his permission, are always more precious than those which are the offspring of our own will; for it is a general rule, that wherever there is less of our own choice, God is better pleased, and we ourselves derive greater profit.”[6261] St. Teresa taught the same thing: “We gain more in one day by the oppositions which come to us from God or our neighbor than by ten years of mortifications of self-infliction.”[6262] Wherefore St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi made the generous declaration, that there could not be found in the whole world an affliction so severe, but what she would gladly bear with the thought that it came from God; and, in fact, during the five years of severe trial which the saint underwent, it was enough to restore peace to her soul to remember that it was by the will of God that she so suffered. Ah, God, that infinite treasure is cheaply purchased at any cost! Father Hippolytus Durazzo used to say, “Purchase God at what cost you will, he can never be dear.”

Let us then beseech God to make us worthy of his love; for if we did but once perfectly love him, all the goods of this earth would seem to us but as smoke and dirt, and we should relish ignominies and afflictions as delights. Let us hear what St. John Chrysostom says of a soul wholly given up to Almighty God: “He who has attained the perfect love of God seems to be alone on the earth,—he no longer cares either for glory or ignominy,—he scorns temptations and afflictions,—he loses all relish and appetite for created things. And as nothing in this world brings him any support or repose, he goes incessantly in search of his beloved without ever feeling wearied; so that when he toils, when he eats, when he is watching, or when sleeping, in every action and word, all his thoughts and desires are fixed upon finding his beloved; because his heart is where his treasure is.”[6263]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dear and beloved Jesus, my treasure, I have deserved by my offences never more to be allowed to love Thee; but by Thy merits, I entreat Thee, make me worthy of Thy pure love. I love Thee above all things; and I repent with my whole heart, of having ever despised Thee, and driven Thee from my soul; but now I love Thee more than myself; I love Thee with all my heart, O infinite good! I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, and I have not a wish besides that of loving Thee perfectly; nor have I a fear besides that of ever seeing myself deprived of Thy love. O my most loving Redeemer, enable me to know how great a good Thou art, and how great is the love Thou hast borne me in order to oblige me to love Thee! Ah, my God, suffer me not to live any longer unmindful of so much goodness! Enough have I offended Thee, I will never leave Thee again; I wish to employ all the remainder of my days in loving Thee, and in pleasing Thee. My Jesus, my Love, lend me Thine aid; help a sinner who wishes to love Thee and to be wholly Thine own.

O Mary my hope, thy Son hears thee; pray to him in my behalf, and obtain for me the grace of loving him perfectly!

Chapter II

CHARITY IS KIND

(CHARITAS BENIGNA EST.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST LOVES MEEKNESS

THE spirit of meekness is peculiar to God: *My spirit is sweet above honey.*[6264] Hence it is that a soul that loves God loves also all those whom God loves, namely, her neighbors; so that she eagerly seeks every occasion of helping all, of consoling all, and of making all happy as far as she can. St. Francis de Sales, who was the master and model of holy meekness, says, “Humble meekness is the virtue of virtues, which God has so much recommended to us; therefore we should endeavor to practise it always and in all things.”[6265] Hence the saint gives us this rule: “What you see can be done with love, do it; and what you see cannot be done without offence, leave it undone.”[6266] He means, when it can be omitted without offending God; because an offence of God must always, and as quickly as possible, be prevented by him who is bound to prevent it.

This meekness should be particularly observed towards the poor, who, by reason of their poverty, are often harshly treated by men. It should likewise be especially practised towards the sick who are suffering under infirmities, and for the most part meet with small help from others. Meekness is more especially to be observed in our behavior towards enemies: *Overcome evil with good.*[6267] Hatred must be overcome by love, and persecution by meekness; thus the saints acted, and so they conciliated the affections of their most exasperated enemies.

“There is nothing,” says St. Francis de Sales, “that gives so much edification to our neighbor as meekness of behavior.”[6268] The saint, therefore, was generally seen smiling, and with a countenance beaming with charity, which gave a tone to all his words and actions. This gave occasion to St. Vincent of Paul[6269] to declare that he never knew a kinder man in his life. He said further, that it seemed to him that in his lordship of Sales was a true likeness of Jesus Christ. Even in refusing what he could not in conscience comply with, he did so with such sweetness, that all, though unsuccessful in their requests, went away satisfied and well-disposed towards him. He was gentle towards all, towards Superiors, towards equals and inferiors, at home and abroad; in contrast with some, who, as the saint used to say, "seemed angels abroad, but were devils at home."[6270] Moreover, the saint, in his conduct towards servants, never complained of their remissness; at most he would give them an admonition, but always in the gentlest terms. And this is a thing most praiseworthy in Superiors.

The Superior should use all kindness towards those under him. When telling them what they have to do, he should rather request than command. St. Vincent of Paul said: "A Superior will never find a better means of being readily obeyed than meekness." And to the same effect was the saying of St. Jane Frances of Chantal: "I have tried various methods of governing, but I have not found any better than that of meekness and forbearance."[6271]

And more than this, the Superior should be kind even in the correction of faults. It is one thing to correct with firmness, and another with harshness; it is needful at times to correct with firmness, when the fault is serious, and especially if it be repeated after the subject has already been admonished of it; but let us always be on our guard against harsh and angry correction; he that corrects with anger does more harm than good. This is that bitter zeal reproved by St. James. Some make a boast of keeping their family in order by severity, and they say it is the only successful method of treatment; but St. James speaks not so: *But if you have bitter zeal. . . . glory not.*[6272] If on some rare occasion it be necessary to speak a cross word, in order to bring the offender to a proper sense of his fault, yet in the end we ought invariably to leave him with a gentle countenance and a word of kindness. Wounds must be healed after the fashion of the good Samaritan in the Gospel, with wine and oil: "But as oil," said St. Francis de Sales, "always swims on the surface of all other liquors, so must meekness prevail over all our actions." And when it occurs that the person under correction is agitated, then the reprehension must be deferred till his anger has sub sided, or else we should only increase his indignation. The Canon Regular St. John said: “When the house is on fire, one must not cast wood into the flames.”

You know not of what spirit you are.[6273] Such were the words of Jesus Christ to his disciples James and John, when they would have brought down chastisements on the Samaritans for expelling them from their country. Ah, said the Lord to them, and what spirit is this? this is not my spirit, which is sweet and gentle; for I am come not to destroy but to save souls: *The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save.*[6274] And would you induce me to destroy them? Oh, hush! and never make the like request to me, for such is not according to my spirit. And, in fact, with what meekness did Jesus Christ treat the adulteress! *Woman,* said He, *hath no man condemned thee? Neither will I condemn thee! Go, and now sin no more.*[6275] He was satisfied with merely warning her not to sin again, and sent her away in peace. With what meekness, again, did he seek the conversion of the Samaritan woman, and so, in fact, converted her! He first asked her to give him to drink; then he said to her: *If thou didst know who He is that saith to thee, Give me to drink!* and then he revealed to her that he was the expected Messiah. And, again, with what meekness did he strive to convert the impious Judas, admitting him to eat of the same dish with him, washing his feet and admonishing him in the very act of his betrayal: Judas, and dost thou thus betray me with a kiss? *Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?*[6276] And see how he converted Peter after his denial of him! *And the Lord turning, looked on Peter.*[6277] On leaving the house of the high-priest, without making him a single reproach, he cast on him a look of tenderness, and thus converted him; and so effectually did he convert him, that during his whole life long Peter never ceased to bewail the injury he had done to his Master.

Oh, how much more is to be gained by meekness than by harshness! St. Francis de Sales said there was nothing more bitter than the bitter almond, but if made into a preserve, it becomes sweet and agreeable: thus corrections, though in their nature very unpleasant, are rendered pleasant by love and meekness, and so are attended with more beneficial results. St. Vincent of Paul said of himself, that in the government of his own congregation he had never corrected any one with severity, except on three occasions, when he supposed there was reason to do so, but that he regretted it ever afterwards, because he found it turned out badly; whereas he had always admirably succeeded by gentle correction.[6278]

St. Francis de Sales obtained from others whatever he wished by his meek behavior; and by this means he managed to gain the most hardened sinners to God. It was the same with St. Vincent of Paul, who taught his disciples this maxim: “Affability, love, and humility have a wonderful efficacy in winning the hearts of men, and in prevailing on them to undertake things most repugnant to nature.” He once gave a great sinner to the care of one of his Fathers, to bring him to sentiments of true repentance; but that Father, in spite of all his endeavors, found his labor fruitless, so that he begged the saint to speak a word to him. The saint accordingly spoke with him, and converted him. That sinner subsequently declared that the singular sweetness of Father Vincent had worked upon his heart. Wherefore it was that the saint could not bear his missionaries to treat sinners with severity; and he told them that the infernal spirit took advantage of the strictness of some to work the greater ruin of souls.

Kindness should be observed towards all on all occasions and at all times. St. Bernard remarks,[6279] that certain persons are gentle as long as things fall out to their taste; but scarcely do they experience some opposition or contradiction than they are instantly on fire, like Mount Vesuvius itself. Such as these may be called burning coals, but hidden under the embers. Whoever would become a saint, must, during this life, resemble the lily among thorns, which, however much it may be pricked by them, never ceases to be a lily; that is, it is always equally sweet and serene. The soul that loves God maintains an imperturbable peace of heart; ands he shows this in her very countenance, being ever mistress of herself, alike in prosperity and adversity, according to the lines of Cardinal Petrucci:

> “Of outward things he views the varying guise,
> While in his soul’s most inmost depth
> Undimmed God’s image lies.”

Adversity brings out a person’s real character. St. Francis de Sales very tenderly loved the Order of the Visitation, which had cost him so much labor. He saw it several times in imminent danger of dissolution on account of the persecutions it underwent; but the saint never for a moment lost his peace, and was ready, if such was the will of God, to see it entirely destroyed; and then it was that he said: “For some time back the trying oppositions and secret contrarieties which have befallen me afford me so sweet a peace, that nothing can equal it; and they give me such an earnest of the immediate union of my soul with God, that, in truth, they form the sole desire of my heart.”[6280]

Whenever it happens that we have to reply to some one who insults us, let us be careful to answer with meekness: *A mild answer breaketh wrath.*[6281] A mild reply is enough to quench every spark of anger. And in case we feel irritated, it is best to keep silence, because then it seems only just to give vent to all that rises to our lips; but when our passion has subsided, we shall see that all our words were full of faults.

And when it happens that we ourselves commit some fault, we must also practise meekness in our own regard. To be exasperated at ourselves after a fault is not humility, but a subtle pride, as if we were anything else than the weak and miserable things that we are. St. Teresa said: “The humility that disturbs does not come from God, but from the devil.”[6282] To be angry at ourselves after the commission of a fault is a fault worse than the one committed, and will be the occasion of many other faults; it will make us leave off our devotions, prayers, and communions; or if we do practise them, they will be done very badly. St. Aloysius Gonzaga said that we cannot see in troubled waters, and that the devil fishes in them. A soul that is troubled knows little of God and of what it ought to do. Whenever, therefore, we fall into any fault, we should turn to God with humility and confidence, and craving his forgiveness, say to him, with St. Catharine of Genoa: “O Lord, this is the produce of my own garden! I love Thee with my whole heart, and I repent of the displeasure I have given Thee! I will never do the like again: grant me Thy assistance!”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O blessed chains that bind the soul with God, oh, enfold me still closer, and in links so firm that I may never be able to loosen myself from the love of my God! My Jesus, I love Thee; O treasure, O life of my soul, to Thee I cling, and I give myself wholly unto Thee! No, indeed, my beloved Lord, I wish never more to cease to love Thee. Thou who, to atone for my sins, didst allow Thyself to be bound as a criminal, and so bound to be led to death through the streets of Jerusalem,—Thou who didst consent to be nailed to the cross, and didst not leave it until life itself had left Thee, oh, suffer me never to be separated from Thee again; I regret above every other evil, to have at one time turned my back upon Thee, and henceforth I purpose by Thy grace to die rather than to give Thee the slightest displeasure. O my Jesus, I abandon myself to Thee. I love Thee with my whole heart; I love Thee more than myself. I have offended Thee in times past; but now I bitterly repent of it, and I would willingly die of grief. Oh, draw me entirely to Thyself! I renounce all sensible consolations; I wish for Thee alone, and nothing more. Make me love Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

O Mary, my hope, bind me to Jesus; and grant me to live and die in union with him, in order to come one day to the happy kingdom, where I shall have no more fear of ever being separated from his love!

Chapter III

CHARITY ENVIETH NOT

(CHARITAS NON ÆMULATUR.)

THE SOUL THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST DOES NOT ENVY THE GREAT ONES OF THIS WORLD, BUT ONLY THOSE WHO ARE GREATER LOVERS OF JESUS CHRIST

ST. GREGORY explains this next characteristic of charity in saying, that as charity despises all earthly greatness, it cannot possibly provoke her envy. "She envieth not, because, as she desireth nothing in this world, she I cannot envy earthly prosperity."[6283]

Hence we must distinguish two kinds of envy, one evil and the other holy. The evil kind is that which envies and repines at the worldly goods possessed by others on this earth. But holy envy, so far from wishing to be like, rather compassionates the great ones of the world, who live in the midst of honors and earthly pleasures. She seeks and desires God alone, and has no other aim besides that of loving him as much as she can; and therefore she has a pious envy of those who love him more than she does, for she would, if possible, surpass the very seraphim in loving him.

This is the sole end which pious souls have in view on earth—an end which so charms and ravishes the heart of God with love, that it causes him to say: *Thou hast wounded My heart, My sister; My spouse, thou hast wounded My heart with one of thy eyes.*[6284] By "one of thy eyes" is meant that one end which the espoused soul has in all her devotions and thoughts, namely, to please Almighty God. Men of the world look on things with many eyes, that is, have several inordinate views in their actions; as, for instance, to please others, to become honored, to obtain riches, and if nothing else, at least to please themselves; but the saints have but a single eye, with which they keep in view, in all that they do, the sole pleasure of God; and with David they say: *What have I in heaven, and besides Thee* *what do I desire upon earth?*[6285] What do I wish, O my God, in this world or in the next, save Thee alone? Thou art my riches, Thou art the only Lord of my heart. “Let the rich,” said St. Paulinus, “enjoy their riches, let the kings enjoy their kingdoms, Thou, O Christ, art my treasure and my kingdom!”[6286]

And here we must remark, that we must not only perform good works, but we must perform them well. In order that our works may be good and perfect, they must be done with the sole end of pleasing God. This was the admirable praise bestowed on Jesus Christ: *He hath done all things well.*[6287] Many actions may in themselves be praiseworthy, but from being performed for some other purpose than for the glory of God, they are often of little or no value in his sight. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, “God rewards our actions by the weight of pure intention.”[6288] As much as to say, that according as our intention is pure, so does the Lord accept of and reward our actions. But, O God, how difficult it is to find an action done solely for Thee! I remember a holy old man, a religious, who had labored much in the service of God, and died in the reputation of sanctity; now one day, as he cast a glance back at his past life, he said to me in a tone of sadness and fear, “Wo is me! when I consider all the actions of my past life, I do not find one done entirely for God.” Oh, this accursed self-love, that makes us lose all or the greater part of the fruit of our good actions! How many in their most holy employments, as of preaching, hearing confessions, giving missions, labor and exert themselves very much, and gain little or nothing because they do not regard God alone, but worldly honor, or self-interest, or the vanity of making an appearance, or at least their own inclination!

Our Lord has said, *Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven.*[6289] He that works for his own gratification already receives his wages: *Amen I say to you, they have received their reward.*[6290] But a reward, indeed, which dwindles into a little smoke, or the pleasure of a day that quickly vanishes, and confers no benefit on the soul. The Prophet Aggeus says, that whoever labors for anything else than to please God, puts his reward in a sack full of holes, which, when he comes to open, he finds entirely empty: *And he that hath earned wages, put them into a bag with* *holes.*[6291] And hence it is that such persons, in the event of their not gaining the object for which they entered on some undertaking, are thrown into great trouble. This is a sign that they had not in view the glory of God alone. He that undertakes a thing solely for the glory of God, is not troubled at all, though his undertaking may fail of success; for, in truth, by working with a pure intention, he has already gained his object, which was to please Almighty God.

The following are the signs which indicate whether we work solely for God in any spiritual undertaking. 1. If we are not disturbed at the failure of our plans, because when we see it is not God's will, neither is it any longer our will. 2. If we rejoice at the good done by others, as heartily as if we ourselves had done it. 3. If we have no preference for one charge more than for another, but willingly accept that which obedience to Superiors enjoins us. 4. If after our actions we do not seek the thanks or approbation of others, nor are in any way affected if we be found fault with or scolded, being satisfied with having pleased God. And if when the world applauds us we are not puffed up, but meet the vain glory, which might make itself felt, with the reply of the venerable John of Avila: "Get away, thou comest too late, for all has been already given to God."

This is to enter into the joy of the Lord; that is, to enjoy the enjoyment of God, as is promised to his faithful servants: *Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things,. . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*[6292] And if it falls to our lot to do something pleasing to God, what more, asks St. John Chrysostom, can we desire? "If thou art found worthy to perform something that pleases God, dost thou seek other recompense than this?"[6293] The greatest reward, the brightest fortune, that can befall a creature, is to give pleasure to his Creator.

And this is what Jesus Christ looks for from a soul that loves him: *Put me,* he says, *as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm.*[6294] He desires us to place him as a seal on our heart and on our arm: on our heart, in order that whatever we intend doing, we may intend solely for the love of God; on our arm, in order that whatever we do, all may be done to please God; so that God may be always the sole end of all our thoughts and of all our actions. St. Teresa said, that he who would become a saint must live free from every other desire than that of pleasing God; and her first daughter, the

Venerable Beatrice of the Incarnation, said, “No sum whatever could repay the slightest thing done for God.”[6295] And with reason; for all things done to please God are acts of charity which unite us to God, and obtain for us everlasting rewards.

Purity of intention is called the heavenly alchemy by which iron is turned into gold; that is to say, the most trivial actions (such as to work, to take one’s meals, to take recreation or repose), when done for God, become the gold of holy love. Wherefore St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi believes for certain that those who do all with a pure intention, go straight to Paradise, without passing through purgatory. It is related (in the *Spiritual Treasury*) that it was the custom of a pious hermit, before setting about any work, to pause a little, and lift his eyes to heaven; on being questioned why he did so, he replied, “I am taking my aim.” By which he meant, that as the archer, before shooting his arrow, takes his aim, that he may not miss the mark, so before each action he made God his aim, in order that it might be sure of pleasing him. We should do the same; and even during the performance of our actions, it is very good for us from time to time to renew our good intention.

Those who have nothing else in view in their undertakings than the divine will, enjoy that holy liberty of spirit which belongs to the children of God; and this enables them to embrace everything that pleases Jesus Christ, however revolting it may be to their own self-love or human respect. The love of Jesus Christ establishes his lovers in a state of total indifference; so that all is the same to them, be it sweet or bitter; they desire nothing for their own pleasure, but all for the pleasure of God. With the same feelings of peace, they address themselves to small and great works; to the pleasant and the unpleasant: it is enough for them if they please God.

Many, on the other hand, are willing to serve God, but it must be in such an employment, in such a place, with such companions, or under such circumstances, or else they either quit the work, or do it with an ill-will. Such persons have not freedom of spirit, but are slaves of self-love; and on that account gain very little merit by what they do; they lead a troubled life, because the yoke of Jesus Christ becomes a burden to them. The true lovers of Jesus Christ care only to do what pleases him; and for the reason that it pleases him, when he wills, and where he wills, and in the manner he wills:

and whether he wishes to employ them in a state of life honored by the world, or in a life of obscurity and insignificance. This is what is meant by loving Jesus Christ with a pure love; and in this we ought to exercise ourselves, battling against the craving of our self-love, which would urge us to seek important and honorable functions, and such as suit our inclinations.

We must, moreover, be detached from all exercises, even spiritual ones, when the Lord wishes us to be occupied in other works of his good pleasure. One day, Father Alvarez, finding himself overwhelmed with business, was anxious to get rid of it, in order to go and pray, because it seemed to him that during that time he was not with God; but our Lord then said to him: "Though I do not keep thee with me, let it suffice thee that I make use of thee."[6296] This is a profitable lesson for those who are sometimes disturbed at being obliged, by obedience or by charity, to leave their accustomed devotions; let them be assured that such disturbances on like occasions do not come from God, but either from the devil or from self-love. "Give pleasure to God, and die." This is the grand maxim of the saints.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my Eternal God, I offer Thee my whole heart; but what sort of heart, O God, is it that I offer Thee? A heart, created, indeed, to love Thee; but which, instead of loving Thee, has so many times rebelled against Thee. But behold, my Jesus, if there was a time when my heart rebelled against Thee, now it is deeply grieved and penitent for the displeasure it has given Thee. Yes, my dear Redeemer, I am sorry for having despised Thee; and I am determined to do all to obey Thee, and to love Thee at every cost. Oh, draw me wholly to Thy love; do this for the sake of the love which made Thee die for me on the cross. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee with all my soul; I love Thee more than myself, O true and only lover of my soul; for I find none but Thee who have sacrificed their life for me. I weep to think that I have been so ungrateful to Thee. Unhappy that I am! I was already lost; but I trust that by Thy grace Thou hast restored me to life. And this shall be my life, to love Thee always, my sovereign good. Make me love Thee, O infinite love, and I ask Thee for nothing more!

O Mary my mother, accept of me for thy servant, and gain acceptance for me with Jesus thy Son.

Chapter IV

CHARITY DEALETH NOT PERVERSELY

(CHARITAS NON AGIT PERPERAM.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST AVOIDS LUKEWARMNESS, AND SEEKS PERFECTION; THE MEANS OF WHICH ARE: 1. DESIRE; 2. RESOLUTION; 3. MENTAL PRAYER; 4. COMMUNION; 5. PRAYER

ST. GREGORY, in his explanation of these words, “dealeth not perversely,” says that charity, giving herself up more and more to the love of God, ignores whatever is not right and holy.[6297] The Apostle had already written to the same effect, when he calls charity a bond that unites the most perfect virtues together in the soul. *Have charity, which is the bond of perfection.*[6298] And whereas charity delights in perfection, she consequently abhors that lukewarmness with which some persons serve God, to the great risk of losing charity, divine grace, their very soul, and their all.

I

LUKEWARMNESS

It must be observed that there are two kinds of tepidity or lukewarmness: the one unavoidable, the other avoidable.

I.—From the lukewarmness that is *unavoidable,* the saints themselves are not exempt; and this comprises all the failings that are committed by us without full consent, but merely from our natural frailty. Such are, for example, distractions at prayers, interior disquietudes, useless words, vain curiosity, the wish to appear, tastes in eating and drinking, the movements of concupiscence not instantly repressed, and such like. We ought to avoid these defects as much as we possibly can; but, owing to the weakness of our nature, caused by the infection of sin, it is impossible to avoid them altogether. We ought, indeed, to detest them after committing them, because they are displeasing to God; but, as we remarked in the preceding chapter, we ought to beware of making them a subject of alarm or disquietude. St. Francis de Sales writes as follows: “All such thoughts as create disquietude are not from God, who is the prince of peace; but they proceed always from the devil, or from self-love, or from the good opinion which we have of ourselves.”[6299] Such thoughts, therefore, as disturb us, must be straightway rejected, and made no account of.

It was said also by the same saint, with regard to indeliberate faults, that as they were involuntarily committed, so are they cancelled involuntarily. An act of sorrow, an act of love, is sufficient to cancel them. The Venerable Sister Mary Crucified, a Benedictine nun, saw once a globe of fire, on which a number of straws were cast, and were all forthwith reduced to ashes. She was given to understand by this figure that one act of divine love, made with fervor, destroys all the defects that we may have in our soul. The same effect is produced by the holy Communion; according to what we find in the Council of Trent, where the Eucharist is called “an antidote by which we are freed from daily faults.”[6300] Thus the like faults, though they are indeed faults, do not hinder perfection—that is, our advancing toward perfection; because in the present life no one attains perfection before he arrives at the kingdom of the blessed.

II. The tepidity, then, that does hinder perfection is that tepidity which is avoidable when a person commits deliberate venial faults; because all these faults committed with open eyes can effectually be avoided by the divine grace, even in the present life. Wherefore St. Teresa said: “May God deliver you from deliberate sin, however small it may be.”[6301] Such, for example, are wilful untruths, little detractions, imprecations, expressions of anger, derisions of one’s neighbor, cutting words, speeches of self-esteem, animosities nourished in the heart, inordinate attachments to persons of a different sex. “These are a sort of worm” (wrote the same saint) “which is not detected before it has eaten into the virtues.”[6302] Hence, in another place, the saint gave this admonition: “By means of small things the devil goes about making holes for great things to enter.”[6303]

We should therefore tremble at such deliberate faults; since they cause God to close his hands from bestowing upon us his clearer lights and stronger helps, and they deprive us of spiritual sweetnesses; and the result of them is to make the soul perform all spiritual exercises with great weariness and pain; and so, in course of time, she begins to leave off prayer, Communions, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and novenas; and, in fine, she will probably leave off all, as has not unfrequently been the case with many unhappy souls.

This is the meaning of that threat which our Lord makes to the tepid: *Thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot: but because thou art lukewarm . . . I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth.*[6304] How wonderful! He says, *I would thou wert cold!* What! and is it better to be cold, that is, deprived of grace, than to be tepid? Yes, in a certain sense it is better to be cold; because a person who is cold may more easily change his life, being stung by the reproaches of conscience; whereas a tepid person contracts the habit of slumbering on in his faults, without bestowing a thought, or taking any trouble to correct himself; and thus he makes his cure, as it were, desperate. St. Gregory says, “Tepidity, which has cooled down from fervor, is a hopeless state.”[6305] The Ven. Father Louis da Ponte said that he had committed many defects in the course of his life; but that he never had made a truce with his faults. Some there are who shake hands with their faults, and from that springs their ruin; especially when the fault is accompanied with some passionate attachment of self-esteem, of ambition, of liking to be seen, of heaping up money, of resentment against a neighbor, or of inordinate affection for a person of different sex. In such cases there is great danger of those hairs, as it were, becoming chains, as St. Francis of Assisi said, which will drag down the soul to hell. At all events, such a soul will never become a saint, and will forfeit that beautiful crown, which God had prepared for her, had she faithfully corresponded to grace. The bird no sooner feels itself loosed from the snare than it immediately flies; the soul, as soon as she is loosed from earthly attachments, immediately flies to God; but while she is bound, though it be but by the slightest thread, it is enough to prevent her from flying to God. Oh, how many spiritual persons there are who do not become saints, because they will not do themselves the violence to break away from certain little attachments!

All the evil arises from the little love they have for Jesus Christ. Those who are puffed up with self-esteem; those who frequently take to heart occurrences that fall out contrary to their wishes; who practise great indulgence towards themselves on account of their health; who keep their heart open to external objects, and the mind always distracted, with an eagerness to listen to, and to know, so many things that have nothing to do with the service of God, but merely serve to gratify private curiosity; who are ready to resent every little inattention from others, and consequently are often troubled, and grow remiss in prayer and recollection. One moment they are all devotion and joy, the next all impatience and melancholy, just as things happen, according to or against their humor; all such persons do not love Jesus Christ, or love him very little, and cast discredit on true devotion.

But suppose any one should find himself sunk in this unhappy state of tepidity, what has he to do? Certainly it is a hard thing for a soul grown lukewarm to resume her ancient fervor; but our Lord has said, that what man cannot do, God can very well do. *The things that are impossible with man, are possible with God.*[6306] Whoever prays and employs the means is sure to accomplish his desire.

II

REMEDIES AGAINST LUKEWARMNESS

The means to cast off tepidity, and to tread in the path of perfection, are five in number: 1. The desire of perfection; 2. The resolution to attain it; 3. Mental prayer; 4. Frequent Holy Communion; 5. Prayer.

1. DESIRE OF PERFECTION

The first means, then, is the desire of perfection. Pious desires are the wings which lift us up from earth; for, as St. Laurence Justinian says, desire “supplies strength, and renders pain more light:”[6307] on the one hand it gives strength to walk towards perfection, and on the other hand it lightens the fatigue of the journey. He who has a real desire of perfection fails not to advance continually towards it; and so advancing, he must finally arrive at it. On the contrary, he who has not the desire of perfection will always go backwards, and always find himself more imperfect than before. St.

Augustine says, that “not to go forward in the way of God is to go backward.”[6308] He that makes no efforts to advance will find himself carried backward by the current of his corrupt nature.

They, then, who say “God does not wish us all to be saints” make a great mistake. Yes, for St. Paul says, *This is the Will of God, your sanctification.*[6309] God wishes all to be saints, and each one according to his state of life: the religious as a religious; the secular as a secular; the priest as a priest; the married as married; the man of business as a man of business; the soldier as a soldier; and so of every other state of life.

Most beautiful, indeed, are the instructions which my great patroness St. Teresa gives on this subject. She says, in one place, “Let us enlarge our thoughts; for hence we shall derive immense good.” Elsewhere she says: “We must beware of having poor desires; but rather put our confidence in God, in order that, by forcing ourselves continually onwards, we may by degrees arrive where, by the divine grace, so many saints have arrived.”[6310] And in confirmation of this she quoted her own experience, having known how courageous souls make considerable progress in a short period of time. “Because,” said she, “the Lord takes as much delight in our desires, as if they were put into execution.” In another place she says: “Almighty God does not confer extraordinary favors, except where his love has been earnestly sought after.”[6311] Again, in another passage, she remarks: “God does not fail to repay every good desire even in this life,[6312] for he is the friend of generous souls, provided only they do not trust in themselves.”[6313] This saint herself was endowed with just such a spirit of generosity; so that she once even said to our Lord, that were she to behold others in paradise enjoying him more than herself, she should not care; but were she to behold any one loving him more than she should love him, this she declared she knew not how she could endure.[6314]

We must, therefore, have a great courage: *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him.*[6315] God is surpassingly good and liberal towards a soul that heartily seeks him. Neither can past sins prove a hindrance to our becoming saints, if we only have the sincere desire to become so. St. Teresa remarks: “The devil strives to make us think it pride to entertain lofty desires, and to wish to imitate the saints; but it is of great service to encourage ourselves with the desire of great things, because, although the soul has not all at once the necessary strength, yet she nevertheless makes a bold fight, and rapidly advances."[6316]

The Apostle writes: *To them that love God, all things work together unto good.*[6317] And the gloss or ancient commentary adds "even sins;"[6318] even past sins can contribute to our sanctification, inasmuch as the recollection of them keeps us more humble, and more grateful, when we witness the favors which God lavishes upon us, after all our outrages against him. I am capable of nothing (the sinner should say), nor do I deserve anything; I deserve nothing but hell; but I have to deal with a God of infinite bounty, who has promised to listen to all that pray to him. Now, as he has rescued me from a state of damnation, and wishes me to become holy, and now proffers me his help, I can certainly become a saint, not by my own strength, but by the grace of my God, who strengthens me: *I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.*[6319] When, therefore, we have once good desires, we must take courage, and trusting in God, endeavor to put them in execution; but if afterwards we encounter any obstacle in our spiritual enterprises, let us repose quietly on the will of God. God's will must be preferred before every good desire of our own. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi would sooner have remained void of all perfection than possess it without the will of God.

2. RESOLUTION

The second means of perfection is the resolution to belong wholly to God. Many are called to perfection; they are urged on towards it by grace, they conceive a desire of it; but because they never really resolve to acquire it, they live and die in the ill-order of their tepid and imperfect life. The desire of perfection is not enough, if it be not followed up by a stern resolve to attain it. How many souls feed themselves on desires alone, but never make withal one step in the way of God! It is of such desires that the wise man speaks when he says: *Desire's kill the slothful.*[6320] The slothful man is ever desiring, but never resolves to take the means suitable to his state of life to become a saint. He says: "Oh, if I were but in solitude, and not in this house! Oh, if I could but go and reside in another monastery, I would give myself entirely up to God!" And meanwhile he cannot support a certain companion; he cannot put up with a word of contradiction; he is dissipated about many useless cares; he commits a thousand faults of gluttony, of curiosity, and of pride; and yet he sighs out to the wind: “Oh, if I had but!” or “Oh, if I could but!” etc. Such desires do more harm than good; because some regale themselves upon them, and in the meantime go on leading a life of imperfection. It was a saying of St. Francis de Sales: “I do not approve of a person who, being engaged in some duty or vocation, stops to sigh for some other kind of life than is compatible with his actual position, or for other exercises unfitted for his present state; for it merely serves to dissipate his heart, and makes him languish in his necessary duties.”[6321]

We must, therefore, desire perfection, and resolutely take the means towards it. St. Teresa says: “God only looks for one resolution on our part, and will afterwards do all the rest himself:[6322] the devil has no fear of irresolute souls.”[6323] For this reason mental prayer must be used, in order to take the means which lead to perfection. Some make much prayer, but never come to a practical conclusion. The same saint said: “I would rather have a short prayer, which produces great fruits, than a prayer of many years, wherein a soul never gets further than resolving to do something worthy of Almighty God.”[6324] And elsewhere she says: “I have learned by experience that whoever, at the beginning, brings himself to the resolution of doing some great work, however difficult it may be, if he does so to please God, he has no reason to be afraid.”

The first resolution must be to make every effort, and to die rather than commit any deliberate sin whatever, however small it may be. It is true that all our endeavors, without the divine assistance, cannot enable us to vanquish temptations; but God wishes us on our part frequently to use this violence with ourselves, because then he will afterwards supply us with his grace, will succor our weakness, and enable us to gain the victory. This resolution removes from us every obstacle to our going forward, and at the same time gives us great courage, because it affords us an assurance of being in the grace of God. St. Francis de Sales writes: “The best security we can possess in this world of being in the grace of God, consists not indeed in feeling that we have his love, but in a pure and irrevocable abandonment of our entire being into his hands, and in the firm resolution of never consenting to any sin, either great or small.”[6325] This is what is meant by being of a delicate conscience. Be it observed, that it is one thing to be of a delicate conscience, and another to be of a scrupulous conscience. To be of a delicate conscience is requisite to become a saint; but to be scrupulous is a defect, and does harm; and on this account we must obey our directors, and rise above scruples, which are nothing else but vain and unreasonable alarms.

Hence it is necessary to resolve on choosing the best, not only what is agreeable to God, but what is most agreeable to him, without any reserve. St. Francis de Sales says: “We must start with a strong and constant resolution to give ourselves wholly to God, and protest to him that for the future we wish to be his without any reserve, and then we must afterwards often renew this same resolution.”[6326] St. Andrew Avellini made a vow to advance daily in perfection. It is not necessary for every one who wishes to become a saint to make it the matter of a vow; but he must endeavor everyday to make some steps forward in perfection. St. Laurence Justinian has written: “When a person is really making way, he feels in himself a continual desire of advancing; and the more he improves in perfection, the more this desire increases; because as his interior light increases each day more and more, he seems to himself always to be wanting in every virtue, and to be doing no good at all; and if, perchance, he is aware of some good he does, it always appears to him very imperfect, and he makes small account of it. The consequence is, he is continually laboring to acquire perfection without ever feeling wearied.”

And we must begin quickly, and not wait for the morrow. Who knows whether we shall afterwards find time or not! Ecclesiastes counsels us: *Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly.*[6327] What thou canst do, do it quickly, and defer it not; and he adduces the reason why: *For neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening.*[6328] Because in the next life there is no more time to work, nor freewill to merit, nor prudence to do well, nor wisdom or experience to take good counsel by, for after death what is done is done.

A nun of the convent of Torre de Specchi in Rome, whose name was Sister Bonaventura, led a very lukewarm sort of life. There came a religious, Father Lancicius, to give the spiritual exercises to the nuns, and Sister Bonaventura, feeling no inclination to shake off her tepidity, began to listen to the exercises with no good will. But at the very first sermon she was won by divine grace, so that she immediately went to the feet of the Father who preached, and said to him, with a tone of real determination, “Father, I wish to become a saint, and quickly a saint.” And, by the assistance of God, she did so; for she lived only eight months after that event, and during that short time she lived and died a saint.

David said: *And I said, now have I begun.*[6329] So likewise exclaimed St. Charles Borromeo: “To-day I begin to serve God.” And we should act in the same way as if we had hitherto done no good whatever; for, indeed, all that we do for God is nothing, since we are bound to do it. Let us therefore each day resolve to begin afresh to belong wholly to God. Neither let us stop to observe what or how others do. They who become truly saints are few. St. Bernard says: “One cannot be perfect without being singular.”[6330] If we would imitate the common run of men, we should always remain imperfect, as for the most part they are. We must overcome all, renounce all, in order to gain all. St. Teresa said: “Because we do not come to the conclusion of giving all our affection to God, so neither does he give all his love to us.”[6331] Oh, God, how little is all that is given to Jesus Christ, who has given his blood and his life for us! “However much we give,” says the same saint, “is but dirt, in comparison of one single drop of blood shed for us by our Blessed Lord.”[6332] The saints know not how to spare themselves, when there is a question of pleasing a God who gave himself wholly, without reserve, on purpose to oblige us to deny him nothing. St. John Chrysostom wrote: “He gave all to thee, and kept nothing for himself.”[6333] God has bestowed his entire self upon thee; there is, then, no excuse for thee to behave reservedly with God. He has even died for us all, says the Apostle, in order that each one of us may live only for him who died for us: *Christ died for all; that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them.*[6334]

3. MENTAL PRAYER

The third means of becoming a saint is *mental prayer.* John Gerson writes:[6335] “That he who does not meditate on the eternal truths cannot, without a miracle, lead the life of a Christian. The reason is, because without mental prayer light fails us, and we walk in the dark. The truths of faith are not seen by the eyes of the body, but by the eyes of the mind, when we meditate; he that fails to meditate on them, fails to see them, and therefore walks in the dark; and being in the dark, he easily grows attached to sensible things, for the sake of which he then comes to despise the eternal." St. Teresa wrote as follows to the Bishop of Osma: "Although we seem to discover in ourselves no imperfections; yet, when God opens the eyes of the soul, which he is wont to do in prayer, then they plainly appear."[6336] And St. Bernard had before said, that he who does not meditate "does not abhor himself, merely because he does not know himself."[6337] "Prayer," says the saint, "regulates the affections, directs the actions,"[6338] keeps the affections of the soul in order, and directs all our actions to God; but without prayer the affections become attached to the earth, the actions conform themselves to the affections, and in this manner all runs into disorder.

We read of an awful example of this in the life of the Venerable Sister Mary Crucified of Sicily. Whilst this servant of God was praying, she heard a devil making a boast that he had succeeded in withdrawing a religious from the community-prayer; and she saw in spirit, that after this omission the devil tempted her to consent to a grievous sin, and that she was on the point of yielding. She forthwith accosted her, and by a timely admonition prevented her from falling. Abbé Diodès said, that whoever leaves off prayer "very shortly becomes either a beast or a devil."[6339]

He therefore that leaves off prayer will leave off loving Jesus Christ. Prayer is the blessed furnace in which the fire of holy love is enkindled and kept alive: *And in my meditation a fire shall flame out.*[6340] It was said by St. Catharine of Bologna: "The person that foregoes the practice of prayer cuts that string which binds the soul to God." It follows that the devil, finding the soul cold in divine love, will have little difficulty in inducing her to partake of some poisonous fruit or other. St. Teresa said, on the contrary, "Whosoever perseveres in prayer, let him hold for a certainty, that with however many sins the devil may surround him, the Lord will eventually bring him into the haven of salvation."[6341] In another place she says, "Whoever halts not in the way of prayer arrives sooner or later."[6342] And elsewhere she writes, "that it is on this account that the devil labors so hard to withdraw souls from prayer, because he well knows that he has missed gaining those who faithfully persevere in prayer." Oh, how great are the benefits that flow from prayer! In prayer we conceive holy thoughts, we practise devout affections, we excite great desires, and form efficacious resolutions to give ourselves wholly to God; and thus the soul is led for his sake to sacrifice earthly pleasures and all disorderly appetites. It was said by St. Aloysius Gonzaga: “There will never be much perfection without much prayer.” Let him who longs for perfection mark well this notable saying of the saint.

We should not go to prayer in order to taste the sweetness of divine love; whoever prays from such a motive will lose his time, or at least derive little advantage from it. A person should begin to pray solely to please God, that is, solely to learn what the will of God is in his regard, and to beg of him the help to put it in practice. The Venerable Father Antony Torres said: “To carry the cross without consolation makes souls fly to perfection. Prayer unattended with sensible consolations confers greater fruit on the soul. But pitiable is the poor soul that leaves off prayer, because she finds no relish in it.” St. Teresa said: “When a soul leaves off prayer, it is as if she cast herself into hell without any need of devils.“[6343]

It results, too, from the practice of prayer, that a person constantly thinks of God. “The true lover” (says St. Teresa) “is ever mindful of the beloved one. And hence it follows that persons of prayer are always speaking of God, knowing, as they do, how pleasing it is to God that his lovers should delight in conversing about him, and on the love he bears them, and that thus they should endeavor to enkindle it in others.”[6344] The same saint wrote: “Jesus Christ is always found present at the conversations of the servants of God, and he is very much gratified to be the subject of their delight.”[6345]

Prayer, again, creates that desire of retiring into solitude, in order to converse alone with God, and to maintain interior recollection in the discharge of necessary external duties; I say *necessary,* such as the management of one’s family, or of the performance of duties required of us by obedience; because a person of prayer must love solitude, and avoid dissipation in superfluous and useless affairs, otherwise he will lose the spirit of recollection, which is a great means of preserving union with God: *My sister, my spouse is a garden enclosed.*[6346] The soul espoused to Jesus Christ must be a garden closed against all creatures, and must not admit into her heart other thoughts, nor other business, but those of God or for God. Hearts thrown open never become saints. The saints, who have to labor in gaining souls to God, do not lose their recollection in the midst of all their labors, either of preaching, confessing, reconciling enemies, or assisting the sick. The same rule holds good with those who have to apply to study. How many from excessive study, and a desire to become learned, become neither holy nor learned, because true learning consists in the science of the saints; that is to say, in knowing how to love Jesus Christ; whereas, on the contrary, divine love brings with it knowledge and every good: *All good things came to me together with her,*[6347] that is, with holy charity. The Venerable John Berchmans had an extraordinary love for study, but by his great virtue he never allowed study to interfere with his spiritual interests. The Apostle exhorts us: *Not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise but to be wise unto sobriety.*[6348] A priest especially must have knowledge; he must know things, because he has to instruct others in the divine law: *For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth.*[6349] He must have knowledge, *but unto sobriety.* He that leaves prayer for study shows that in his study he seeks himself, and not God. He that seeks God leaves study (if it be not absolutely necessary), in order not to omit prayer.

Besides, the greatest evil is, that without mental prayer we do not pray at all. I have spoken frequently in my spiritual works of the necessity of prayer, and more especially in a little volume entitled, *On Prayer, the great Means, etc.;* and in the present chapter also I will briefly say a few other things. It will be sufficient then to quote here the opinion of the Venerable Palafox, Bishop of Osma, in his remarks on the letters of St. Teresa: “How can charity last, unless God grant us perseverance? How will the Lord grant us perseverance unless we ask it of him? And how shall we ask it of him except by prayer? Without prayer there is no communication with God for the preservation of virtue.”[6350] And so it is, because he that neglects mental prayer sees very little into the wants of his soul, he knows little of the dangers of his salvation, of the means to be used in order to overcome temptations; and so, understanding little of the necessity of prayer, he leaves off praying, and will certainly be lost.

Then as regards subjects for meditation, nothing is more useful than to meditate on the Four Last Things—death, judgment, hell, and heaven; but it is of especial advantage to meditate on death, and to imagine ourselves expiring on the bed of sickness, with the crucifix in our hands, and on the point of entering into eternity. But above all, to one that loves Jesus Christ, and is anxious always to increase in his love, no consideration is more efficacious than that of the Passion of the Redeemer. St. Francis de Sales calls "Mount Calvary the mountain of lovers." All the lovers of Jesus Christ love to abide on this mountain, where no air is breathed but the air of divine love. When we see a God dying for our love, and dying in order to gain our love (*He loved us, and delivered Himself up for us*[6351]), it is impossible not to love him ardently. Such darts of love continually issue forth from the wounds of Christ crucified as pierce even hearts of stone. Oh, happy is he who is ever going during this life to the heights of Calvary! O blessed Mount! O lovely Mount! O beloved Mount! and who shall ever leave thee more! A Mount that sends forth flames to enkindle the souls that perseveringly abide upon thee!

4. FREQUENT COMMUNION

The fourth means of perfection, and even of perseverance in the grace of God, is frequently to receive the Holy Communion, of which we have already spoken in the Introduction, § II., page 275, where we affirmed that a soul can do nothing more pleasing to Jesus Christ than to receive him often in the Sacrament of the Altar. St. Teresa said: "There is no better help to perfection than frequent Communion: oh, how admirably does the Lord bring such a soul to perfection!" And she adds, that, ordinarily speaking, they who communicate most frequently are found further advanced in perfection; and that there is greater spirituality in those communities where frequent Communion is the custom. For this reason it is that, as we find declared in a decree of Innocent XI., in 1679, the holy Fathers have so highly extolled, and so much promoted, the practice of frequent and even of daily Communion. Holy Communion, as the Council of Trent tells us, delivers us from daily faults, and preserves us from mortal ones. St. Bernard asserts[6352] that Communion represses the movements of anger and incontinence, which are the two passions that most frequently and most violently assail us. St. Thomas says,[6353] that Communion defeats the suggestions of the devil. And finally, St. John Chrysostom says, that Communion pours into our souls a great inclination to virtue, and a promptitude to practise it; and at the same time imparts to us a great peace, by which the path of perfection is made very sweet and easy to us. Besides, there is no sacrament so capable of kindling the divine love in souls as the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which Jesus Christ bestows on us his whole self, in order to unite us all to himself by means of holy love. Wherefore the Venerable Father John of Avila said: “Whoever deters souls from frequent Communion does the work of the devil.” Yes; for the devil has a great horror of this sacrament, from which souls derive immense strength to advance in divine love.

But the proper preparation is requisite to communicate well The first preparation, or, in other terms, the remote preparation, to be able to go to Communion daily, or several times in the week, is: 1. To keep free from all deliberate affection to sin—that is, to sin committed, as we say, with the eyes open. 2. The practice of much mental prayer. 3. The mortification of the senses and of the passions. St. Francis de Sales[6354] teaches as follows: “Whoever has overcome the greatest part of his bad inclinations, and has arrived at a notable degree of perfection, can communicate every day.” The angelic Doctor St. Thomas says,[6355] that any one who knows by experience that his soul derives an increase of divine love from the Holy Communion may communicate daily. Hence Innocent XI., in the above-mentioned decree, said that the greater or less frequency of Holy Communion must rest on the decision of the confessor who ought to be guided in this matter by the profit which he sees accrue to the souls under his direction. In the next place, the proximate preparation for Communion is that which is made on the morning itself of Communion, for which there is need of at least half an hour of mental prayer.

To reap also more abundant fruit from Communion, we must make a long thanksgiving. Father John of Avila said that the time after communion is “a time to gain treasures of graces.” St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi used to say that no time can be more calculated to inflame us with divine love than the time immediately after our Communion. And St. Teresa says: “After Communion let us be careful not to lose so good an opportunity of negotiating with God. His divine majesty is not accustomed to pay badly for his lodging, if he meets with a good reception."[6356]

There are certain pusillanimous souls, who, on being exhorted to communicate more frequently, reply: "But I am not worthy." But, do you not know, that the more you refrain from Communion, the more unworthy you become of it? Because, deprived of Holy Communion, you will have less strength, and will commit many faults. Well, then, obey your director, and be guided by him: faults do not forbid Holy Communion, when they are not committed with full will; besides, among your failings, the greatest is, not to submit to what your spiritual Father says to you.

"But in my past life I was very bad." And I reply, that you must know, that he who is weakest has most need of the physician and of medicine. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is our physician and medicine as well. St. Ambrose said: "I, who am always sinning, have always need of medicine."[6357] You will then say, perhaps: "But my confessor does not tell me to communicate oftener." If, then, he does not tell you to do so, ask his permission to communicate oftener. Should he deny you, obey him; but in the mean time make him the request. "It would seem pride." It would be pride if you were to wish to communicate against his will, but not when you ask his consent with humility. This heavenly bread requires hunger. Jesus loves to be desired, says a devout author; "He thirsts to be thirsted for."[6358] And what a thought is this: "To-day I have communicated, and to-morrow I have to communicate." Oh, how such a reflection keeps the soul attentive to avoid all defects and to do the will of God! "But I have no devotion." If you mean sensible devotion, it is not necessary, neither does God always grant it even to his most beloved souls. It is enough for you to have the devotion of a will determined to belong wholly to God, and to make progress in his divine love. John Gerson says,[6359] that he who abstains from Communion because he does not feel that devotion which he would like to feel, acts like a man who does not approach the fire because he does not feel warm.

Alas, my God, how many souls, for want of applying themselves to lead a life of greater recollection and more detachment from earthly things, care not to seek Holy Communion! and this is the true cause of their not wishing to communicate more frequently. They are well aware that to be wishing always to appear, to dress with vanity, to be fond of nice eating and drinking, of bodily comforts, of conversations and amusements, does not harmonize with frequent Communion; they know that more prayer is required, more mortification, as well internal as external, more seclusion; and on this account they are ashamed to approach the altar more frequently. Without doubt, such souls are right to refrain from frequent Communion as long as they find themselves in that unhappy state of lukewarmness; but whoever is called to a more perfect life should lay aside this lukewarmness, if he would not greatly risk his eternal salvation.

It will be found likewise to contribute very much to keep fervor alive in the soul, often to make a *spiritual Communion*, so much recommended by the Council of Trent,[6360] which exhorts all the faithful to practise it. The spiritual Communion, as St. Thomas says,[6361] consists in an ardent desire to receive Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament; and therefore the saints were careful to make it several times in the day. The method of making it is this: “My Jesus, I believe that Thou art really present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love Thee, and I desire Thee; come to my soul. I embrace Thee; and I beseech Thee never to allow me to be separated from Thee again.” Or more briefly thus: “My Jesus, come to me; I desire Thee; I embrace Thee; let us remain ever united together.” This spiritual Communion may be practised several times a day: when we make our prayer, when we make our visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and especially when we attend Mass at the moment of the priest’s Communion. The Dominican Sister Blessed Angela of the Cross said: “If my confessor had not taught me this method of communicating spiritually several times a day, I should not have trusted myself to live.”

5. PRAYER

The fifth and most necessary means for the spiritual life, and for obtaining the love of Jesus Christ, is *prayer*. In the first place, I say that by this means God convinces us of the great love he bears us. What greater proof of affection can a person give to a friend than to say to him, “My friend, ask anything you like of me, and I will give it you?” Now, this is precisely what our Lord says to us: *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find*.[6362] Wherefore prayer is called all-powerful with God to obtain every blessing: “Prayer, though it is one, can effect all things,” as Theodoret says;[6363] whoever prays, obtains from God whatever he chooses. The words of David are beautiful: *Blessed be God who hath not turned away my prayer nor his mercy from me.*[6364] Commenting on this passage, St. Augustine says, “As long as thou seest thyself not failing in prayer, be assured that the divine mercy will not fail thee either.” And St. John Chrysostom: “We always obtain, even while we are still praying.”[6365] When we pray to God he grants us the grace we ask for, even before we have ended our petition. If then we are poor, let us blame only ourselves, since we are poor merely because we wish to be poor, and so we are undeserving of pity. What sympathy can there be for a beggar, who, having a very rich master, and one most desirous to provide him with everything if he will only ask for it, nevertheless chooses still to continue in his poverty sooner than ask for what he wants? “Behold,” says the Apostle, “our God is ready to enrich all who call upon him:” *Rich unto all that call upon Him.*[6366]

Humble prayer, then, obtains all from God; but we must be persuaded at the same time, that if it be useful, it is no less necessary for our salvation. It is certain that we absolutely require the divine assistance, in order to overcome temptations; and sometimes, in certain more violent assaults, the sufficient grace which God gives to all, might possibly enable us to resist them; but on account of our inclination to evil, it will not ordinarily be sufficient, and we shall stand in need of a special grace. Whoever prays obtains this grace; but whoever prays not, obtains it not, and is lost. And this is more especially the case with regard to the grace of *final perseverance,* of dying in the grace of God, which is the grace absolutely necessary for our salvation, and without which we should be lost forever. St. Augustine[6367] says of this grace, that God only bestows it on those who pray. And this is the reason why so few are saved, because few indeed are mindful to beg of God this grace of perseverance.

In fine, the holy Fathers say, that prayer is necessary for us, not merely as a *necessity of precept* (so that divines say, that he who neglects for a month to recommend to God the affair of his salvation is not exempt from mortal sin), but also as a *necessity of means,* which is as much as to say, that whoever does not pray cannot possibly be saved. And the reason of it is, in short, because we cannot obtain eternal salvation without the help of divine grace, and this grace Almighty God only accords to those who pray. And because temptations, and the dangers of falling into God's displeasure, continually beset us, so ought our prayers to be continual. Hence St. Thomas declares that continual prayer is necessary for a man to save himself: "Unceasing prayer is necessary to man, that he may enter heaven."[6368] And Jesus Christ himself had already said the same thing: *We ought always to pray, and not to faint.*[6369] And afterwards the Apostle: *Pray without ceasing.*[6370] During the interval in which we shall cease to pray, the devil will conquer us. And though the grace of perseverance can in no wise be merited by us, as the Council of Trent teaches us,[6371] nevertheless St. Augustine says, "that in a certain sense we can merit it by prayer."[6372] The Lord wishes to dispense his grace to us, but he will be entreated first; nay more, as St. Gregory remarks, he wills to be importuned, and in a manner constrained by our prayers: "God wishes to be prayed to,—he wishes to be compelled,—he wishes to be, as it were, vanquished by our importunity."[6373] St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, "that when we ask graces of God, he not only hears us, but in a certain sense thanks us." Yes, because God, as the infinite goodness, in wishing to pour out himself upon others, has, so to speak, an infinite longing to distribute his gifts; but he wishes to be besought: hence it follows, that when he sees himself entreated by a soul, he receives so much pleasure, that in a certain sense he thanks that soul for it.

Well, then, if we wish to preserve ourselves in the grace of God till death, we must act the mendicant, and keep our mouths open to beg for God's help, always repeating, "My Jesus, mercy; never let me be separated from Thee; O Lord, come to my aid; My God, assist me!" This was the unceasing prayer of the ancient Fathers of the desert: "Incline unto my aid, O God: O Lord, make haste to help me![6374] O Lord, help me, and help me soon; for if Thou delayest Thy assistance, I shall fall and perish!" And this above all must be practised in the moment of temptation; he who acts otherwise is lost.

And let us have a great faith in prayer. God has promised to hear him that prays: *Ask, and you shall receive.*[6375] How can we doubt, says St. Augustine, since God has bound himself by express promise, and cannot fail to grant us the favors we ask of him? "By promising he has made himself our debtor."[6376] In recommending ourselves to God, we must have a sure confidence that God hears us, and then we shall obtain whatever we want. Behold what Jesus Christ says: *All things, whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.*[6377]

"But," some one may say, "I am a sinner, and do not deserve to be heard." But Jesus Christ says: *Every one that asketh, receiveth.*[6378] Every one, be he just, or be he a sinner. St. Thomas teaches us that the efficacy of prayer to obtain graces does not depend on our merits, but on the mercy of God, who has promised to hear every one who prays to him.[6379] And our Redeemer, in order to remove from us all fear when we pray, said: *Amen, amen, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[6380] As though he would say: Sinners, you have no merits of your own to obtain graces, wherefore do in this manner; when you would obtain graces, ask them of my Father in my name; that is, through my merits and through my love; and then ask as many as you choose, and they shall be granted to you. But let us mark well those words, "In My name;" which signify (as St. Thomas explains it), "in the name of the Saviour;" or, in other words, that the graces which we ask must be graces which regard our eternal salvation; and consequently we must remark that the promise does not regard temporal favors; these our Lord grants, when they are profitable for our eternal welfare; if they would prove otherwise, he refuses them. So that we should always ask for temporal favors, on condition that they will benefit our soul. But should they be spiritual graces, then they require no condition; but with confidence, and a sure confidence, we should say: "Eternal Father, in the name of Jesus Christ deliver me from this temptation: grant me holy perseverance, grant me Thy love, grant me heaven." We can likewise ask these graces of Jesus Christ in his own name; that is, by his merits, since we have his promise also to this effect: *If you shall ask Me anything in My name, that I will do.*[6381]

And whilst we pray to God, let us not forget to recommend ourselves at the same time to Mary, the dispenser of graces. St. Bernard says, that it is Almighty God who bestows the graces; but he bestows them through the hands of Mary: "Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary; because what she seeks she finds, and cannot be refused."[6382] If Mary prays for us, we are safe; for every petition of Mary is heard, and she can never meet with a repulse.

O Jesus, my love, I am determined to love Thee as much as I can, and I wish to become a saint; and I wish to become a saint for this reason, in order to give Thee pleasure, and to love Thee exceedingly in this life and the next! I can do nothing of myself, but Thou canst do all things; and I know that Thou wishest me to become a saint. I see already that by Thy grace my soul sighs only for Thee, and seeks nothing else but Thee. I wish to live no more for myself; Thou desirest me to be wholly Thine, and I desire to be wholly Thine. Come, and unite me to Thyself, and Thyself to me. Thou art infinite goodness; Thou art he who hast loved me so much; Thou art, indeed, too loving and too lovely; how, then, can I love anything but Thee? I prefer Thy love before all the things of this world; Thou art the sole object, the sole end of all my affections. I leave all to be occupied solely in loving Thee, my Redeemer, my Comforter, my hope, my love, and my all. I will not despair of becoming a saint on account of the sins of my past life; for I know, my Jesus, that Thou didst die in order to pardon the truly penitent. I love Thee now with my whole heart, with my whole soul; I love Thee more than myself, and I bewail, above every other evil, ever having had the misfortune to despise Thee, my sovereign good. Now I am no longer my own, I am Thine; O God of my heart, dispose of me as Thou pleasest. In order to please Thee, I accept of all the tribulations Thou mayest choose to send me—sickness, sorrow, troubles, ignominies, poverty, persecution, desolation—I accept all to please Thee: in like manner I accept of the death Thou hast decreed for me, with all the anguish and crosses which may accompany it: it is enough if Thou grantest me the grace to love Thee exceedingly. Lend me Thy assistance; give me strength henceforth to compensate, by my love, for all the bitterness that I have caused Thee in past time, O only love of my soul!

O Queen of Heaven, O Mother of God, O great advocate of sinners, I trust in thee!

Chapter V

CHARITY IS NOT PUFFED UP

(CHARITAS NON INFLATUR.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST IS NOT VAIN OF HIS OWN WORTH, BUT HUMBLES HIMSELF, AND IS GLAD TO BE HUMBLED BY OTHERS

A PROUD person is like a balloon filled with air, which seems, indeed, great; but whose greatness, in reality, is nothing more than a little air; which, as soon as the balloon is opened, is quickly dispersed. He who loves God is humble, and is not elated at seeing any worth in himself; because he knows that whatever he possesses is the gift of God, and that of his own he has only nothingness and sin; so that this knowledge of the divine favors bestowed on him humbles him the more; whilst he is conscious of being so unworthy, and yet so favored by God.

St. Teresa says, in speaking of the especial favors she received from God: "God does with me as they do with a house, which, when about to fall, they prop up with supports." When a soul receives a loving visit from God, and feels within herself an unwonted fervor of divine love, accompanied with tears, or with a great tenderness of heart, let her beware of supposing that God so favors her, in reward for some good action; but let her then humble herself the more, concluding that God caresses her in order that she may not forsake him; otherwise, were she to make such favors the subject of vain complacency, imagining herself more privileged, because she receives greater gifts from God than others, such a fault would induce God to deprive her of his favors. Two things are chiefly requisite for the stability of a house—the foundation and the roof; the foundation in us must be humility, in acknowledging ourselves good for nothing, and capable of nothing; and the roof is the divine assistance, in which alone we ought to put all our trust.

Whenever we behold ourselves unusually favored by God, we must humble ourselves the more. When St. Teresa received any special favor, she used to strive to place before her eyes all the faults she had ever committed; and thus the Lord received her into closer union with himself: the more a soul confesses herself undeserving of any favors, the more God enriches her with his graces. Thais, who was first a sinner and then a saint, humbled herself so profoundly before God that she dared not even mention his name; so that she had not the courage to say, “My God;” but she said, “My Creator, have mercy on me!”[6383] And St. Jerome writes, that in recompense for such humility, she saw a glorious throne prepared for her in heaven. In the life of St. Margaret of Cortona we read the same thing; that, when our Lord visited her one day with greater tokens of tenderness and love, she exclaimed: “But, O Lord, hast Thou then forgotten what I have been? Is it possible that Thou canst repay all my outrages against Thee with so exquisite sweetness?” And God replied, that when a soul loves him, and cordially repents of having offended him, he forgets all her past infidelities; as, indeed, he formerly spoke by the mouth of Ezechiel: *But if the wicked do penance. . . . I will not remember all his iniquities.*[6384] And in proof of this, he showed her a high throne, which he had prepared for her in heaven in the midst of the seraphim. Oh, that we could only well comprehend the value of humility! A single act of humility is worth more than all the riches of the universe.

It was the saying of St. Teresa, “Think not that thou hast advanced far in perfection, till thou considerest thyself the worst of all, and desirest to be placed below all.” And on this maxim the saint acted, and so have done all the saints; St. Francis of Assisi, St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, and the rest, considered themselves the greatest sinners in the world, and were surprised that the earth sheltered them, and did not rather open under their feet to swallow them up alive; and they expressed themselves to this effect with the sincerest conviction, The Venerable Father John of Avila, who, from his earliest infancy had led a holy life, was on his deathbed; and the priest who came to attend him said many sublime things to him, taking him for what indeed he was, a great servant of God and a learned man; but Father Avila thus spoke to him: “Father, I pray you to make the recommendation of my soul, as of the soul of a criminal condemned to death; for such I am.” This is the opinion which saints entertain of themselves in life and death.

We, too, must act in this manner, if we would save our souls, and keep ourselves in the grace of God till death, reposing all our confidence in God alone. The proud man relies on his own strength, and falls on that account; but the humble man, by placing all his trust in God alone, stands firm and falls not, however violent and multiplied the temptations may be; for his watchword is: *I can do all things in Him that strengthened me.*[6385] The devil at one time tempts us to presumption, at another time to diffidence; whenever he suggests to us that we are in no danger of falling, then we should tremble the more; for were God but for an instant to withdraw his grace from us, we are lost. When, again, he tempts us to diffidence, then let us turn to God, and thus address him with great confidence: *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, I shall never be confounded.*[6386] My God, in Thee I have put all my hopes; I hope never to meet with confusion, nor to be bereft of Thy grace. We ought to exercise ourselves continually, even to the very last moments of our life, in these acts of diffidence in ourselves and of confidence in God, always beseeching God to grant us humility.

But it is not enough, in order to be humble, to have a lowly opinion of ourselves, and to consider ourselves the miserable beings that we really are; the man who is truly humble, says Thomas à Kempis,[6387] despises himself, and wishes also to be despised by others. This is what Jesus Christ so earnestly recommends us to practise, after his example: *Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.*[6388] Whoever styles himself the greatest sinner in the world, and then is angry when others despise him, plainly shows humility of tongue, but not of heart. St. Thomas Aquinas says, that a person who resents being slighted may be certain that he is far distant from perfection, even though he should work miracles. The divine Mother sent St. Ignatius Loyola from heaven to instruct St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi in humility; and behold the lesson which the saint gave her: “Humility is a gladness at whatever leads us to despise ourselves.”[6389] Mark well, a *gladness;* if the feelings are stirred with resentment at the contempt we receive, at least let us be glad in spirit.

And how is it possible for a soul not to love contempt, if she loves Jesus Christ, and beholds how her God was buffeted and spit upon, and how he suffered in his Passion! *Then did they spit in His face and buffeted Him; and others struck His face with the palms of their hands.*[6390] For this purpose our Redeemer wishes us to keep his image exposed on our altars, not indeed representing him in glory, but nailed to the cross, that we might have his ignominies constantly before our eyes; a sight which made the saints rejoice at being vilified in this world. And such was the prayer which St. John of the Cross addressed to Jesus Christ, when he appeared to him with the cross upon his shoulders: “O Lord, let me suffer, and be despised for Thee!”[6391] My Lord, on beholding Thee so reviled for my love, I only ask of Thee to let me suffer and be despised for Thy love.

St. Francis de Sales said,[6392] “To support injuries is the touchstone of humility and of true virtue.” If a person pretending to spirituality practises prayer, frequent Communion, fasts, and mortifies himself, and yet cannot put up with an affront, or a biting word, of what is it a sign? It is a sign that he is a hollow cane, without humility and without virtue. And what indeed can a soul do that loves Jesus Christ, if she is unable to endure a slight for the love of Jesus Christ, who has endured so much for her? Thomas à Kempis, in his golden little book of the Imitation of Christ, writes as follows: “Since you have such an abhorrence of being humbled, it is a sign that you are not dead to the world, have no humility, and that you do not keep God before your eyes. He that has not God before his eyes, is disturbed at every syllable of censure that he hears.”[6393] Thou canst not endure cuffs and blows for God; endure at least a passing word.

Oh, what surprise and scandal does that person occasion, who communicates often, and then is ready to resent every little word of contempt! On the contrary, what edification does a soul give that answers contempts with words of mildness, spoken in order to conciliate the offender; or perhaps makes no reply at all, nor complains of it to others, but continues with placid looks, and without showing the least sign of indignation! St. John Chrysostom says, that a meek person is not only serviceable to himself but likewise to others, by the good example he sets them of meekness in bearing contempt: “The meek man is useful to himself and to others.”[6394] Thomas à Kempis mentions, with regard to this subject, several things in which we should practise humility; he says as follows: “What others say shall command an attentive hearing, and what you say shall be taken no notice of. Others shall make a request and obtain it; you shall ask for something and meet with a refusal. Others shall be magnified in the mouths of men, and on you no one shall bestow a word. Such and such an office shall be conferred on others, but you shall be passed by as unfit for anything. With such like trials the Lord is wont to prove his faithful servant; and to see how far he has learned to overcome himself and to hold his peace. Nature, indeed, will at times not like it; but you will derive immense profit thereby, if you support all in silence."[6395]

It was a saying of St. Jane of Chantal, that "a person who is truly humble takes occasion from receiving some humiliation to humble himself the more."[6396] Yes, for he who is truly humble never supposes himself humbled as much as he deserves. Those who behave in this manner are styled *blessed* by Jesus Christ. They are not called blessed who are esteemed by the world, who are honored and praised, as noble, as learned, as powerful; but they who are spoken ill of by the world, who are persecuted and calumniated; for it is for such that a glorious reward is prepared in heaven, if they only bear all with patience: *Blessed are you when they shall revile you and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly for My sake: be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.*[6397]

The grand occasion for practising humility is when we receive correction for some fault from Superiors or from others. Some people resemble the hedgehog: they seem all calmness and meekness as long as they remain untouched; but no sooner does a Superior or a friend touch them, by an observation on something which they have done imperfectly, than they forthwith become all prickles, and answer warmly, that so and so is not true, or that they were right in doing so, or that such a correction is quite uncalled for. In a word, to rebuke them is to become their enemy; they behave like a person who raves at the surgeon for paining them in the cure of their wounds. "He is angry with the surgeon,"[6398] writes St. Bernard. "When the virtuous and humble man is corrected for a fault," says St. John Chrysostom, "he grieves for having committed it; the proud man on the other hand, on receiving correction, grieves also; but he grieves that his fault is detected; and on this account he is troubled, gives answers, and is angry with the person who corrects him." This is the golden rule given by St. Philip Neri, to be observed with regard to receiving correction:

"Whoever would really become a saint must never excuse himself, although what is laid to his charge be not true."[6399] And there is only one case to be excepted from this rule, and that is when self-defence may appear necessary to prevent scandal. Oh, what merit with God has that soul that is wrongfully reprehended, and yet keeps silence, and refrains from defending itself! St. Teresa said: "There are occasions when a soul makes more progress and acquires a greater degree of perfection by refraining from excusing herself than by listening to ten sermons; because by not excusing herself she begins to obtain freedom of spirit, and to be heedless whether the world speaks well or ill of her."

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Incarnate Word! I entreat Thee, by the merits of Thy holy humility, which led Thee to embrace so many ignominies and injuries for our love, deliver me from all pride, and grant me a share of Thy humility. And what right have I to complain of any affront whatever that may be offered me, after having so often deserved hell? O my Jesus, by the merit of all the scorn and affronts endured for me in Thy Passion, grant me the grace to live and die humbled on this earth, as Thou didst live and die humbled for my sake. For Thy love I would willingly be despised and forsaken by all the world; but without Thee I can do nothing. I love Thee, O my sovereign good; I love Thee, O beloved of my soul! I love Thee; and I hope, through Thee, to fulfil my purpose of suffering all for Thee,—affronts, betrayals, persecutions, afflictions, dryness, and desolation; enough is it for me if Thou dost not forsake me, O sole object of the love of my soul. Suffer me never more to estrange myself from Thee. Enkindle in me the desire to please Thee. Grant me fervor in loving Thee. Give me peace of mind in suffering for Thee. Give me resignation in all contradictions. Have mercy on me. I deserve nothing; but I fix all my hopes in Thee, who hast purchased me with Thine own blood.

And I hope all from thee, too, O my Queen and my Mother Mary, who art the refuge of sinners!

Chapter VI

CHARITY IS NOT AMBITIOUS

(CHARITAS NON EST AMBITIOSA.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST DESIRES NOTHING BUT JESUS CHRIST

HE that loves God does not desire to be esteemed and loved by his fellow-men: the single desire of his heart is to enjoy the favor of Almighty God, who alone forms the object of his love. St. Hilary writes, that all honor paid by the world is the business of the devil.[6400] And so it is; for the enemy traffics for hell, when he infects the soul with the desire of esteem; because, by thus laying aside humility, she runs great risks of plunging into every vice. St. James writes, that as God confers his graces with open hands upon the humble, so does he close them against the proud, whom he resists. *God resists the proud, and gives His grace to the humble.*[6401] He says he *resists* the proud, signifying that he does not even listen to their prayers. And certainly, among the acts of pride we may reckon the desire to be honored by men, and self-exaltation at receiving honors from them.

We have a frightful example of this in the history of Brother Justin the Franciscan, who had even risen to a lofty state of contemplation; but because perhaps—and indeed without a perhaps—he nourished within himself a desire of human esteem, behold what befell him. One day Pope Eugenius IV. sent for him; and on account of the great opinion he had of his sanctity, showed him peculiar marks of honor, embraced him, and made him sit by his side. Such high honors filled Brother Justin full of self-conceit; on which St. John Capistran said to him, “Alas, Brother Justin, thou didst leave us an angel, and thou returnest a devil!” And in fact, the hapless Brother becoming daily more and more puffed up with arrogance, and insisting on being treated according to his own estimate of himself, he at last murdered a brother with a knife; he afterwards became an apostate, and fled into the kingdom of Naples, where he perpetrated other atrocities; and there he died in prison, an apostate to the last.

Hence it is that a certain great servant of God wisely said, that when we hear or read of the fall of some towering cedars of Libanus, of a Solomon, a Tertullian, an Osius, who had all the reputation of saints, it is a sign that they were not given wholly to God; but nourished inwardly some spirit of pride and so fell away. Let us therefore tremble, when we feel arise within us an ambition to appear in public, and to be esteemed by the world; and when the world pays us some tribute of honor, let us beware of taking complacency in it, which might prove the cause of our utter ruin.

Let us especially be on our guard against all ambitious seeking of preference, and sensibility in points of honor. St. Teresa said, "Where punctiliousness prevails, there spirituality will never prevail."[6402] Many persons make profession of a spiritual life, but they are worshippers of self. They have the semblance of certain virtues, but they are ambitious of being praised in all their undertakings; and if nobody else praises them, they praise themselves: in short, they strive to appear better than others; and if their honor be touched, they lose their peace, they leave off Holy Communion, they omit all their devotions, and find no rest till they imagine they have got back their former standing. The true lovers of God do not so behave. They not only carefully shun every word of self-esteem and all self-complacency, but, further, they are sorry at hearing themselves commended by others, and their gladness is to behold themselves held in small repute by the rest of men.

The saying of St. Francis of Assisi is most true: "What I am before God, that I am." Of what use is it to pass for great in the eyes of the world, if before God we be vile and worthless? And on the contrary, what matters it to be despised by the world, provided we be dear and acceptable in the eyes of God? St. Augustine thus writes: "The approbation of him who praises neither heals a bad conscience, nor does the reproach of one who blames wound a good conscience."[6403] As the man who praises us cannot deliver us from the chastisement of our evil doings, so neither can he who blames us rob us of the merit of our good actions. "What does it matter," says St. Teresa, "though we be condemned and reviled by creatures, if before Thee, O God! we are great and without blame?” The saints had no other desire than to live unknown, and to pass for contemptible in the estimation of all. Thus writes St. Francis de Sales: “But what wrong do we suffer when people have a bad opinion of us, since we ought to have such of ourselves? Perhaps we know that we are bad, and yet wish to pass off for good in the estimation of others.”[6404]

Oh, what security is found in the hidden life for such as wish cordially to love Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ himself set us the example, by living hidden and despised for thirty years in a workshop. And with the same view of escaping the esteem of men, the saints went and hid themselves in deserts and in caves. It was said by St. Vincent of Paul,[6405] that a love of appearing in public, and of being spoken of in terms of praise, and of hearing our conduct commended, or that people should say that we succeed admirably and work wonders, is an evil which, while it makes us unmindful of God, contaminates our best actions, and proves the most fatal drawback to the spiritual life.

Whoever, therefore, would make progress in the love of Jesus Christ, must absolutely give a death-blow to the love of self-esteem. But how shall we inflict this blow? Behold how St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi instructs us: “That which, keeps alive the appetite for self-esteem is the occupying a favorable position in the minds of all; consequently the death of self-esteem is to keep one’s self hidden, so as not to be known to any one. And till we learn to die in this manner, we shall never be true servants of God.”[6406]

In order, then, to be pleasing in the sight of God, we must avoid all ambition of appearing and of making a parade in the eyes of men. And we must shun with still greater caution the ambition of governing others. Sooner than behold this accursed ambition set foot in the convent, St. Teresa[6407] declared she would prefer to have the whole convent burned, and all the nuns with it. So that she signified her wish, that if ever one of her religious should be caught aiming at the Superiorship, she should be expelled from the community, or at least undergo perpetual confinement. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, “The honor of a spiritual person consists in being put below all, and in abhorring all superiority over others. The ambition of a soul that loves God should be to excel all others in humility, according to the counsel of St. Paul: *In humility let each esteem others* *better than themselves.”*[6408] In a word, he that loves God must make God the sole object of his ambition.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My Jesus, grant me the ambition of pleasing Thee, and make me forget all creatures and myself also. What will it profit me to be loved by the whole world, if I be not loved by Thee, the only love of my soul! My Jesus, Thou camest into the world to win our hearts; if I am unable to give Thee my heart, do Thou please to take it and replenish it with Thy love, and never allow me to be separated from Thee any more. I have, alas! turned my back upon Thee in the past; but now that I am conscious of the evil I have done, I grieve over it with my whole heart, and no affliction in the world can so distress me, as the remembrance of the offences that I have so often committed against Thee. I am consoled to think that Thou art infinite goodness, that Thou dost not disdain to love a sinner who loves Thee. My beloved Redeemer, O sweetest love of my soul, I have heretofore slighted Thee; but now at least I love Thee more than myself! I offer Thee myself and all that belongs to me. I have only the one wish to love Thee, and to please Thee. This forms all my ambition; accept of it, and be pleased to increase it, and exterminate in me all desire of earthly goods. Thou art indeed deserving of love, and great indeed are my obligations of loving Thee. Behold me then, I wish to be wholly Thine; and I will suffer whatever Thou pleasest, Thou who for love of me didst die of sorrow on the cross! Thou wishest me to be a saint; Thou canst make me a saint; in Thee I place my trust.

And I also confide in thy protection, O Mary, great Mother of God!

Chapter VII

CHARITY SEEKETH NOT HER OWN

(CHARITAS NON QUŒRIT QUŒ SUA SUNT.)

HE THAT LOVETH JESUS CHRIST SEEKS TO DETACH HIMSELF FROM EVERY CREATURE

WHOEVER desires to love Jesus Christ with his whole heart must banish from his heart all that is not God, but is merely self-love. This is the meaning of those words, “seeketh not her own;” not to seek ourselves, but only what pleaseth God. And this is what God requires of us all, when he says: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*[6409] Two things are needful to love God with our whole heart: 1. To clear it of earth. 2. To fill it with holy love. It follows, that a heart in which any earthly affections linger can never belong wholly to God. St. Philip Neri[6410] said, “that as much love as we bestow on the creature, is so much taken from the Creator.” In the next place, how must the earth be purged away from the heart? Truly by mortification and detachment from creatures. Some souls complain that they seek God, and do not find him; let them listen to what St. Teresa says: “Wean your heart from creatures, and seek God, and you will find him.”[6411]

The mistake is, that some indeed wish to become saints, but after their own fashion; they would love Jesus Christ, but in their own way, without forsaking those diversions, that vanity of dress, those delicacies in food: they love God, but if they do not succeed in obtaining such or such an office, they live discontented; if, too, they happen to be touched in point of esteem, they are all on fire; if they do not recover from an illness, they lose all patience. They love God; but they refuse to let go that attachment for the riches, the honors of the world, for the vainglory of being reckoned of good family, of great learning, and better than others. Such as these practise prayer, and frequent Holy Communion; but inasmuch as they take with them hearts full of earth, they derive little profit. Our Lord does not even speak to them, for he knows that it is but a waste of words. In fact, he said as much to St. Teresa on a certain occasion: “I would speak to many souls, but the world keeps up such a noise about their ears, that my voice would never be heard by them. Oh, that they would retire a little from the world!” Whosoever, then, is full of earthly affections cannot even so much as hear the voice of God that speaks to him. But unhappy the man that continues attached to the sensible goods of this earth; he may easily become so blinded by them as one day to quit the love of Jesus Christ; and for want of forsaking these transitory goods he may lose God, the infinite good, forever. St. Teresa said: “It is a reasonable consequence, that he who runs after perishable goods should himself perish.”

St. Augustine[6412] informs us that Tiberius Cæsar desired that the Roman senate should enrol Jesus Christ among the rest of their gods; but the senate refused to do so, on the ground that he was too proud a God, and would be worshipped alone without any companions. It is quite true: God will be alone the object of our adoration and love; not indeed from pride, but because it is his just due, and because too of the love he bears us. For as he himself loves us exceedingly, he desires in return all our love; and is therefore jealous of any one else sharing the affections of our hearts, of which he desires to be the sole possessor: “Jesus is a jealous lover,”[6413] says St. Jerome; and he is unwilling therefore for us to fix our affections on anything but himself. And whenever he beholds any created object taking a share of our hearts, he looks on it as it were with jealousy, as the Apostle St. James says, because he will not endure a rival, but will remain the sole object of all our love: *Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain: To envy doth the Spirit covet which dwelleth in you?*[6414] The Lord in the sacred Canticles praises his spouse, saying: *My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed.*[6415] He call her “a garden enclosed,” because the soul that is his spouse keeps her heart shut against every earthly love, in order to preserve all for Jesus Christ alone. And does Jesus Christ perchance not deserve all our love? Ah, too much, too much has he deserved it, both for his own goodness and for his love towards us. The saints knew this well, and for this reason St. Francis de Sales said: “Were I conscious of one fibre in my heart that did not belong to God, I would forthwith tear it out.”[6416]

David longed to have wings free from all lime of worldly affections, in order to fly away and repose in God: *Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?*[6417] Many souls would wish to see themselves released from every earthly trammel to fly to God, and would in reality make lofty flights in the way of sanctity, if they would but detach themselves from everything in this world; but whereas they retain some little inordinate affection, and will not use violence with themselves to get rid of it, they remain always languishing on in their misery, without ever so much as lifting a foot from the ground. St. John of the Cross said: “The soul that remains with her affections attached to anything, however small, will, notwithstanding many virtues which she may possess, never arrive at divine union; for it signifies little whether the bird be tied by a slight thread or a thick one; since, however slight it may be, provided she does not break it, she remains always bound, and unable to fly. Oh, what a pitiful thing it is to see certain souls, rich in spiritual exercises, in virtues and divine favors; yet, because they are not bold enough to break off some trifling attachment, they cannot attain to divine union, for which it only needed one strong and resolute flight to break effectually that fatal thread! Since, when once the soul is emptied of all affection to creatures, God cannot help communicating himself wholly to her.”[6418]

He who would possess God entirely must give himself up entirely to God: *My beloved to me and I to him,*[6419] says the Sacred Spouse. My beloved has given himself entirely to me, and I give myself entirely to him. The love which Jesus Christ bears us causes him to desire all our love; and without all he is not satisfied. On this account we find St. Teresa thus writing to the Prioress of one of her convents: “Endeavor to train souls to a total detachment from everything created, because they are to be trained for the spouses of a king so jealous, that he would have them even forget themselves.” St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi took a little book of devotion from one of her novices, merely because she observed that she was too much attached to it. Many souls acquit themselves of the duty of prayer, of visiting the Blessed Sacrament, of frequenting Holy Communion; but nevertheless they make little or no progress in perfection, and all because they keep some fondness for something in their heart; and if they persist in living thus, they will not only be always miserable, but run the risk of losing all.

We must, therefore, beseech Almighty God, with David, to rid our heart of all earthly attachments: *Create a clean heart in me, O God.*[6420] Otherwise we can never be wholly his. He has given us to understand very plainly, that whoever will not renounce everything in this world, cannot be his disciple: *Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be my disciple.*[6421] For this reason the ancient Fathers of the desert were accustomed first to put this question to any youth who desired to associate himself with them: "Dost thou bring an empty heart, that the Holy Spirit may fill it?" Our Lord said the same thing to St. Gertrude, when she besought him to signify what he wished of her: "I wish nothing else, he said, but to find a heart devoid of creatures."[6422] We must therefore say to God with great resolution and courage: O Lord, I prefer Thee to all; to health, to riches, to honors and dignities, to applause, to learning, to consolations, to high hopes, to desires, and even to the very graces and gifts which I may receive of Thee! In short, I prefer Thee to every created good which is not Thee, O my God. Whatever benefit Thou grantest me, O my God, nothing besides Thyself will satisfy me. I desire Thee alone, and nothing else.

When the heart is detached from creatures, the divine love immediately enters and fills it. Moreover, St. Teresa said: "As soon as evil occasions are removed, the heart forthwith turns herself to love God." Yes, for the human heart cannot exist without loving; it must either love the Creator or creatures: if it does not love creatures, then assuredly it will love God. In short, we must leave all in order to gain all. "All for all,"[6423] says Thomas à Kempis. As long as St. Teresa cherished a certain affection, though pure, towards one of her relatives, she did not wholly belong to God; but when afterwards she summoned courage, and resolutely cut off the attachment, then she deserved to hear these words from Jesus: "Now, Teresa, thou art all mine, and I am all thine."[6424] One heart is quite too small to love this God, so loving and so lovely, and who merits an infinite love; and shall we then think of dividing this one little heart between creatures and God? The Venerable Louis da Ponte felt ashamed to speak thus to God: "O Lord, I love Thee above all things, above riches, honors, friends, relatives;" for it seemed to him as much as to say: "O Lord, I love Thee more than dirt, than smoke, and the worms of the earth!"

The Prophet Jeremias says, that the Lord is all goodness towards him who seeks him: *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him.*[6425] But he understands it of a soul that seeks God alone. O blessed loss! O blessed gain! to lose worldly goods, which cannot satisfy the heart and are soon gone, in order to obtain the sovereign and eternal good, which is God! It is related that a pious hermit, one day while the king was hunting through the wood, began to run to and fro as if in search of something; the king, observing him thus occupied, inquired of him who he was and what he was doing; the hermit replied: "And may I ask your majesty what you are engaged about in this desert?" The king made answer: "I am going in pursuit of game." And the hermit replied: "I, too, am going in pursuit of God." With these words he continued his road and went away. During the present life this must likewise be our only thought, our only purpose, to go in search of God in order to love him, and in search of his will in order to fulfil it, ridding our heart of all love of creatures. And whenever some worldly good would present itself to our imaginations to solicit our love, let us be ready prepared with this answer: "I have despised the kingdom of this world, and all the charms of this life, for the sake of the love of my Lord Jesus Christ."[6426] And what else are all the dignities and grandeurs of this world but smoke, filth, and vanity, which all disappear at death? Blessed he who can say: "My Jesus, I have left all for Thy love; Thou art my only love; Thou alone art sufficient for me."

Ah, when once the love of God takes full possession of a soul, she of her own accord (supposing always, of course, the assistance of divine grace) strives to divest herself of everything that could prove a hindrance to her belonging wholly to God. St. Francis de Sales remarks that when a house catches fire, all the furniture is thrown out of the window;[6427] meaning thereby, that when a person gives himself entirely to God, he needs no persuasion of preachers or confessors, but of his own accord seeks to get rid of every earthly affection. Father Segneri the younger called divine love a robber, which happily despoils us of all, that we may come into possession of God alone. A certain man, of respectable position in life, having renounced everything in order to become poor for the love of Jesus Christ, was questioned by a friend how he fell into such a state of poverty; he took from his pocket a small volume of the Gospels, and said: “Behold, this is what has stripped me of all.” The Holy Spirit says: *If a man shall give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing.*[6428] And when a soul fixes her whole love in God, she despises all, wealth, pleasures, dignities, territories, kingdoms, and all her longing is after God alone; she says, again and again: “My God, I wish for Thee only, and nothing more.” St. Francis de Sales writes:[6429] “The pure love of God consumes everything which is not God, to convert all into itself; for whatever we do for the love of God is love.”

The Sacred Spouse said: *He brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me.*[6430] This cellar of wine, writes St. Teresa, is divine love, which, on taking possession of a soul, so perfectly inebriates it as to make it forgetful of everything created. A person intoxicated is, as it were, dead in his senses; he does not see, nor hear, nor speak; and so it happens to the soul inebriated with divine love. She has no longer any sense of the things of the world; she wishes to think only of God, to speak only of God; she recognizes no other motive in all her actions but to love and to please God. In the sacred Canticles the Lord forbids them to awake his beloved, who sleeps: *Stir not up, nor make the beloved to awake, till she please.*[6431] This blessed sleep, enjoyed by souls espoused to Jesus Christ, says St. Basil, is nothing else than “the utter oblivion of all things,”[6432] a virtuous and voluntary forgetfulness of every created thing, in order to be occupied solely with God, and to be able to exclaim with St. Francis, “My God and my all.”[6433] My God, what are riches, and dignities, and goods of the world, compared with Thee! Thou art my all and my every good. “My God and my all.” Thomas à Kempis writes,[6434] “Oh, sweet word! It speaks enough for him who understands it; and to him who loves, it is most delicious to repeat again and again: My God and my all, my God and my all!”

DETACHMENT FROM RELATIVES, ABOVE ALL, IN REGARD TO ONE’S VOCATION

Wherefore, to arrive at perfect union with God, a total detachment from creatures is of absolute necessity. And to come to particulars, we must divest ourselves of all inordinate affection towards relatives. Jesus Christ says: *If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.*[6435] And wherefore this hatred to relatives? because generally, as regards the interests of the soul, we cannot have greater enemies than our own kindred: *And a man's enemies shall be those of his own household.*[6436] St. Charles Borromeo declared that he never went to pay a visit to his family without returning cooled in fervor. And when Father Antony Mendoza was asked why he refused to enter the house of his parents, he replied, "Because I know, by experience, that nowhere is the devotion of religious so dissipated as in the house of parents."

When, moreover, the choice of a state of life is concerned, it is certain that we are not obliged to obey our parents, according to the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas.[6437] Should a young man be called to the religious life, and find opposition from his parents, he is bound to obey God, and not his parents, who, as the same St. Thomas says, with a view to their own interests and private ends, stand in the way of our spiritual welfare. "Friends of flesh and blood are oftentimes opposed to our spiritual profit."[6438] And they are content, says St. Bernard,[6439] to have their children go to eternal perdition, rather than leave home. It is surprising, in this matter, to see some fathers and mothers, even though fearing God, yet so blinded by mistaken fondness, that they use every effort, and exhaust every means, to hinder the vocation of a child who wishes to become a religious. This conduct, however (except in very rare cases), cannot be excused from grievous sin.

But some one may say: What, then, and if such a youth does not become a religious, can he not be saved? Are, then, all who remain in the world cast away? I answer: Those whom God does not call into religion may be saved in the world by fulfilling the duties of their state; but those who are called from the world, and do not obey God, may, indeed, possibly be saved; but they will be saved with difficulty, because they will be deprived of those helps which God had destined for them in religion, and for want of which they will not accomplish their salvation. The theologian Habert writes, that he who disobeys his vocation remains in the Church like a member out of joint, and cannot discharge his duty without the greatest pain; and so will hardly effect his salvation. Whence he draws this conclusion: "Although, absolutely speaking, he can be saved, yet he will enter on the way, and employ the means of salvation with difficulty."[6440]

The choice of a state of life is compared by Father Lewis of Grenada to the mainspring in a watch: if the mainspring be broken, the whole watch is out of order; and the same holds good with regard to our salvation—if the state of life be out of order, the whole life is out of order too. Alas, how many poor youths have lost their vocation through their parents, and have afterwards come to a bad end, and have themselves proved the ruin of their family! There was a certain youth who lost his religious vocation at the instigation of his father; but in course of time, conceiving a great dislike of this same father, he killed him with his own hand, and was executed for the crime. Another young man, whilst pursuing his studies in the seminary, was also called by God to leave the world; heedless of his vocation, he first left off the devout life he was leading, prayer, Holy Communion, etc.; then he gave himself up to vice; and eventually, as he was one night leaving a house of ill-fame, where he had been, he was murdered by his rival. Several priests ran to the spot, but they found him already dead. And, oh, what a sad catalogue of like examples could I here add!

But to return to our subject. St. Thomas advises those who are called to a more perfect life not to take their parents' advice, because they would be their enemies in such a case.[6441] And if children are not bound to take the advice of their parents on their vocation, they are under less obligation of asking or waiting for their permission, particularly when they have reason to fear that they would unjustly refuse their consent, or prevent them from fulfilling their designs. St. Thomas of Aquinas, St. Peter of Alcantara, St. Francis Xavier, St. Louis Bertrand, and many others, embraced a religious state without even acquainting their parents.

SANCTITY REQUIRED TO ENTER HOLY ORDERS

Again, it must be observed that as we are very much exposed to be lost when to please our relatives we do not follow the divine vocation, so we also endanger our salvation when not to displease them we embrace the ecclesiastical state without being called to it by God. Now, a true vocation to this sublime dignity is distinguished by three signs, namely—the requisite knowledge, the intention of applying one's self only to God's service, and positive goodness of life. We shall here speak only of this last condition.

The Council of Trent has prescribed to bishops to raise to Holy Orders only those whose irreproachable conduct has been proved.[6442] This is a rule that Canon Law had already established.[6443] Although this is directly understood of the external proof that the bishop should have in regard to the irreproachable conduct of the aspirants to the priesthood, yet one cannot doubt that the Council requires not only external irreproachableness, but even with greater reason, interior irreproachableness, without which the former would be illusory. The Council also adds that those only are to be admitted to Holy Orders who show themselves worthy by a wise maturity.[6444] We, moreover, know that the Council prescribes for this end the keeping of the interstices, that is, of an interval of time between the different degrees of Holy Orders.[6445]

St. Thomas gives a reason for such a regulation: it is this, that in receiving Holy Orders one is destined to the most sublime ministry,—that of serving Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar. Hence the angelic Doctor adds that the sanctity of ecclesiastics ought to surpass that of the religious.[6446] He elsewhere explains that sanctity is required not only in those who are ordained, but also in the subject who presents himself to be admitted to Holy Orders, and he shows the difference that exists in this respect between the religious and the ecclesiastical state. For in religion one purifies one’s self of one’s vices, whilst to receive Holy Orders it is necessary that one has already led a pure and holy life.[6447] The holy Doctor also says in another place that the candidates for Holy Orders ought to be raised above the simple faithful by their virtue as well as by the dignity of their functions.[6448] And this merit he requires before ordination, for he calls it necessary not only in order to exercise well the ecclesiastical functions, but also to be worthily admitted among the number of the ministers of Jesus Christ.[6449] He finally concludes with these words: “In the reception of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the candidates receive a more abundant outpouring of grace in order thus to be in a position to advance to a higher perfection.”[6450] By these last words, “to advance to a higher perfection,” the saint declares that the grace of the sacrament, far from being useless, will dispose the subject by an increase of strength to obtain still greater merits; but he expresses, at the same time, how necessary it is for the candidate to prepare himself in a state of grace that is sufficient in order that he may be judged worthy of entering the sanctuary.

In my *Moral Theology*[6451] I have given on this point a long dissertation to establish that those cannot be excused from mortal sin who without having been sufficiently tried by a holy life receive a Holy Order; since they raise themselves to this sublime state without a divine vocation; for one cannot regard those as having been called by God who have not yet succeeded in overcoming a bad habit, especially the habit of offending against chastity. And whenever among those one might be found who is disposed by repentance to receive the Sacrament of Penance, he would nevertheless not be in a condition to receive Holy Orders, for in his case there must be more holiness of life manifested during a long trial. Otherwise the candidate would not be exempt from mortal sin on account of the grave presumption that he wished to intrude into the holy ministry without a vocation. Hence St. Anselm says: “Those who thus thrust themselves into Holy Orders and have in view only their own interests are robbers who arrogate to themselves the grace of God; instead of benediction they would receive God’s malediction.”[6452] As Bishop Abelly remarks, they would expose themselves to the great danger of being lost forever: “Whoever deliberately and without troubling himself whether or not he had a vocation would thrust himself into the priesthood, would without doubt plainly expose himself to eternal perdition.”[6453] Soto holds the same opinion when he asserts, in speaking of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, that positive sanctity in the candidate is of divine precept: “Assuredly,” he says, “this sanctity is not essential to the sacrament, though it is altogether necessary by a divine precept. . . . Now, the sanctity that should characterize the candidates to Holy Orders does not consist in the general disposition required for the reception of the other sacraments, and sufficient in order that the sacrament may not be impeded. For, in the Sacrament of Holy Orders, one receives not only grace, but one is raised to a much more sublime state. Hence in the candidates there must be great purity of life and perfect virtue.”[6454] Thomas Sanchez, Holzmann, the school of Salamanca, are also of the same opinion. Thus, what I have advanced is not only the opinion of one theologian, but it is the common teaching based upon what is taught by St. Thomas.

If any one receive Holy Orders without having led the requisite good life, not only would he himself commit a mortal sin, but also the bishop who confers them upon him without having been morally certain, by sufficient proofs, of the good conduct of the candidate. The confessor also would be guilty of mortal sin, because he gives absolution to one who, addicted to a bad habit, wishes to be ordained without having given evidence during a considerable time of a positively good life. Finally, parents also sin grievously because, though knowing the wicked conduct of their son, they yet try to induce him to take Holy Orders in order that afterwards he may become the support of the family. Jesus Christ instituted the ecclesiastical state, not to aid the houses of seculars, but to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Some imagine the ecclesiastical state to be an honorable and a remunerative employment or trade; but they deceive themselves. Hence, when parents ask the bishop to ordain one of their children who is ignorant, and whose conduct has been bad, alleging that their family is poor, and that they know not how otherwise to extricate themselves from their embarrassment, the bishop must say to them: This I cannot do; the ecclesiastical state is not established to give assistance to poor families, but to promote the good of the church. They should be sent away without listening to them any longer; for such persons ordinarily bring ruin not only upon their own souls, but upon their family and their country.

As for the priests who live with their parents, if they are solicited to occupy themselves less with the functions of their ministry than the interests and advancement of their families, they should answer what Jesus Christ one day said, for our own edification, to his holy mother: *Did you not know that I must be about my father's business?*.[6455] I am a priest; my duty it is not to amass wealth and procure honors, nor to govern the house, but to live in retirement, to meditate, to study, and to work for the salvation of souls. When it is absolutely necessary to aid one's family, one ought to do so as much as possible without neglecting one's principal care, which is, to apply one's self to one's own sanctification, and that of others.

DETACHMENT FROM HUMAN RESPECT AND FROM SELF-WILL

Moreover, any one that would belong wholly to God must be free of all human respect. Oh, how many souls does this accursed respect keep aloof from God, and even separate them from him forever! For instance, if they hear mention made of some or other of their failings, oh, what do they not do to justify themselves, and to convince the world that it is a calumny! If they perform some good work, how industrious are they to circulate it everywhere! They would have it known to the whole world, in order to be universally applauded. The saints behave in a very different way: they would rather publish their defects to the whole world, in order to pass in the eyes of all for the miserable creatures which they really are in their own eyes; and, on the contrary, in practising any act of virtue, they prefer to have God alone know of it; for their only care is to be acceptable to him. It is on this account that so many of them were enchanted with solitude, mindful, as they were, of the words of Jesus Christ: *But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth.*[6456] And again: *But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber; and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret.*[6457]

But of all things, self-detachment is most needful; that is, detachment from self-will. Only once succeed in subduing yourself, and you will easily triumph in every other combat. *Vince teipsum,* “Conquer thyself,” was the maxim which St. Francis Xavier inculcated on all. And Jesus Christ said: *If any one would come after Me, let him deny himself.*[6458] Behold in small compass all that we need practise to become saints; to deny ourselves, and not to follow our own will: *Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own will.*[6459] And this is the greatest grace, said St. Francis of Assisi, that we can receive from God: the power, namely, to conquer ourselves by denying self-will. St. Bernard writes, that if all men would resist self-will, none would ever be damned: “Let self-will cease, and there will be no hell.”[6460] The same saint writes, that it is the baneful effect of self-will to contaminate even our good works: “Self-will is a great evil, since it renders thy good works no longer good.”[6461] As, for instance, were a penitent obstinately bent on mortifying himself, or on fasting, or on taking the discipline against the will of his director; we see that this act of penance, done at the instigation of self-will, becomes very defective.

Unhappy the man that lives the slave of self-will! for he shall have a yearning for many things, and shall not possess them; while, on the other hand, he will be forced to undergo many things distasteful and bitter to his inclinations: *From whence are wars and contentions among you? Are they not hence? From your concupiscences, which war in your members? You covet, and have not.*[6462] The first war springs from the appetite for sensual delights. Let us take away the occasion; let us mortify the eyes; let us recommend ourselves to God, and the war will be over. The second war arises from the covetousness of riches: let us cultivate a love of poverty, and this war will cease. The third war has its source in ambitiously seeking after honors: let us love humility and the hidden life, and this war too will be no more. The fourth war, and the most ruinous of all, comes from self-will: let us practise resignation in all things which happen by the will of God, and the war will cease. St. Bernard tells us that whenever we see a person troubled, the origin of his trouble is nothing else but his inability to gratify self-will. "Whence comes disquiet," says the saint, "except that we follow self-will?"[6463] Our Blessed Lord once complained of this to St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, in these words: "Certain souls desire my Spirit, but after their own fancy; and so they become incapable of receiving it."

We must therefore love God in the way that pleases God, and not that pleases us. God will have the soul divested of all, in order to be united to himself, and to be replenished with his divine love. St. Teresa[6464] writes as follows: "The prayer of union appears to me to be nothing more than to die utterly, as it were, to all things in this world, for the enjoyment of God alone. One thing is certain, that the more completely we empty ourselves of creatures, by detaching ourselves from them for the love of God, the more abundantly will he fill us with himself, and the more closely shall we be united with him." Many spiritual persons would attain to union with God; but then they do not desire the contrarieties which God sends them: they fret at having to suffer from ill-health, from poverty, from affronts; but, for want of resignation, they will never come to a perfect union with God. Let us hear what St. Catharine of Genoa said: "To arrive at union with God, the contrarieties which God sends us are absolutely necessary; his purpose is, to consume in us, by means of them, all irregular movements, both within and without. And hence all contempt, ailments, poverty, temptations, and other trials, are all indispensable, to give us the opportunity of fighting; that so, by the way of victory, we may eventually extinguish all inordinate movements, so as to be no more sensible of them; furthermore, until we begin to find contradictions sweet for God's sake, instead of bitter, we shall never arrive at divine union."

I here subjoin the practice of it, taught by St. John of the Cross. The saint says, that in order to perfect union, "a thorough mortification of the senses and of the appetites is necessary. On the part of the senses, every single relish that presents itself to them, if it be not purely for the glory of God, should forthwith be rejected for the love of Jesus Christ; for example, should you have a desire to see or hear something in no wise conducive to the greater glory of God, then refrain from it. As to the appetites also, endeavor to force ourselves always to choose the worst, the most disagreeable, or the poorest, without fostering any other wish than to suffer and to be despised."[6465]

In a word, he that truly loves Jesus Christ loses all affection for things of earth, and seeks to strip himself of all, in order to keep himself united with Jesus Christ alone. Jesus is the object of all his desires, Jesus the subject of all his thoughts; for Jesus he continually sighs; in every place, at every time, on every occasion, his sole aim is to give pleasure to Jesus. But to reach this point, we must study unceasingly to rid the heart of every affection which is not for God. And, I ask, what is meant by giving the soul entirely to God? It means, first, to shun whatever may be displeasing to God, and to do what is most pleasing to him; secondly, it means to accept unreservedly all that comes from his hands, how hard or disagreeable soever it may be; it means, thirdly, to give the preference in all things to the will of God over our own: this is what is meant by belonging wholly to God.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my God and my all! I cannot help feeling that, in spite of all my ingratitude and remissness in Thy service, Thou still invitest me to love Thee. Behold me, then; I will resist Thee no longer. I will leave all to be wholly Thine. I will no more live for myself: Thy claims on my love are too strong. My soul is enamoured of Thee; my Jesus, it sighs after Thee. And how can I possibly love anything else, after seeing Thee die of sufferings on a cross in order to save me! how could I behold Thee dead, and exhausted with torments, and not love Thee with my whole heart? Yes, I love Thee indeed with all my soul; and I have no other desire but to love Thee in this life and for all eternity. My love, my hope, my courage, and my consolation, give me strength to be faithful to Thee; grant me light, and make known to me from what I ought to detach myself; supply me too with a strong will to obey Thee in all things. O love of my soul! I offer myself, and deliver myself up entirely, to satisfy the desire which Thou hast to unite Thyself to me, that I may be wholly united with Thee, my God and my all. Oh, come then, my Jesus; come and take possession of my whole self, and occupy all my thoughts and all my affections. I renounce all my appetites, all my comforts, and all created things; Thou alone art sufficient for me. Grant me the grace to think only of Thee, to desire only Thee, to seek only Thee, my beloved and my only good!

O Mary, Mother of God, obtain for me holy perseverance!

Chapter VIII

CHARITY IS NOT PROVOKED TO ANGER

(CHARITAS NON IRRITATUR.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST IS NEVER ANGRY WITH HIS NEIGHBOR

THE virtue not to be angry at the contrarieties that happen to us is the daughter of meekness. We have already spoken at length of the acts which belong to meekness in preceding chapters; but since this is a virtue which requires to be constantly practised by every one living among his fellow-men, we will here make some remarks on the same subject more in particular, and more adapted for practice.

Humility and meekness were the favorite virtues of Jesus Christ; so that he bade his disciples learn of him to be meek and humble: *Learn of Me, for I am meek ana humble of heart.*[6466] Our Redeemer was called the Lamb,—*Behold the Lamb of God,*[6467]—as well in consideration of his having to be offered in sacrifice on the cross for our sins, as in consideration of the meekness exhibited by him during his entire life, but more especially at the time of his Passion. When in the house of Caiphas he received a blow from that servant, who at the same time upbraided him with presumption in those words: *Answerest thou the high-priest so?* Jesus only answered: *If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou me?.*[6468] He observed the same invariable meekness of conduct till death. While on the cross, and made the object of universal scorn and blasphemy, he only besought the Eternal Father to forgive them: *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*[6469]

Oh, how dear to Jesus Christ are those meek souls who, in suffering affronts, derisions, calumnies, persecutions, and even chastisement and blows, are not irritated against the person that thus injures or strikes them:

The prayer of the meek hath always pleased thee.[6470] God is always pleased with the prayers of the meek; that is to say, their prayers are always heard. Heaven is expressly promised to the meek: *Blessed are the meek, for they shalt possess the land.*[6471] Father Alvarez said that paradise is the country of those who are despised and persecuted and trodden under foot. Yes, for it is for them that the possession of the eternal kingdom is reserved, and not for the haughty, who are honored and esteemed by the world. David declares that the meek shall not only inherit eternal happiness, but shall likewise enjoy great peace in the present life: *The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight in abundance of peace.*[6472] It is so, because the saints harbor no malice against those who ill-treat them, but rather love them the more; and the Lord, in reward for their patience, gives them an increase of interior peace. St. Teresa said: “I seem to experience a renewed love towards those persons who speak ill of me.”[6473] This gave occasion to the Sacred Congregation to say of the saint, that “even affronts themselves supplied her with the food of charity.”[6474] Offences became a fresh reason for her to love the person who had offended her. No one can have such meekness as this, if he has not a great humility and a low opinion of himself, so as to consider himself worthy of every kind of contempt; and hence we see, on the contrary, that the proud are always irritable and vindictive, because they have a high conceit of themselves, and esteem themselves worthy of all honor.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.[6475] We must, indeed, die in the Lord to be blessed, and to enjoy that blessedness even in the present life: we mean, such happiness as can be had before entering heaven, which, though certainly much below that of heaven, yet far surpasses all the pleasures of sense in this world: *And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts;*[6476] so wrote the Apostle to his disciples. But to gain this peace, even in the midst of affronts and calumnies, we must be dead in the Lord: a dead person, how much soever he may be ill-treated and trampled on by others, resents it not; in like manner, he who is meek, like a dead body, which no longer sees or feels, should endure all the outrages committed against him. Whoever loves Jesus Christ from his heart easily attains to this; because, as he is conformed in all things to his will, he accepts with equal composure and peace of mind prosperous and adverse occurrences, consolations and afflictions, injuries and courtesies. Such was the conduct of the Apostle; and he says, therefore: *I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation.*[6477] Oh, happy the man who reaches this point of virtue! he enjoys a continual peace, which is a treasure precious beyond all other goods of this world. St. Francis de Sales said: "Of what value is the whole universe in comparison with peace of heart?"[6478] And, in truth, of what avail are all riches and all the honors of the world to a man that lives in disquiet, and whose heart is not at peace?"

In short, in order to remain constantly united with Jesus Christ, we must do all with tranquillity, and not be troubled at any contradiction that we may encounter. *The Lord is not in the earthquake.*[6479] The Lord does not abide in troubled hearts. Let us listen to the beautiful lessons given on this subject by that master of meekness St. Francis de Sales: "Never put yourself in a passion, nor open the door to anger on any pretext whatever; because, when once it has gained an entrance, it is no longer in our power to banish it, or moderate it, when we wish to do so. The remedies against it are: 1. To check it immediately, by diverting the mind to some other object, and not to speak a word. 2. To imitate the Apostles when they beheld the tempest at sea, and to have recourse to God, to whom it belongs to restore peace to the soul. 3. If you feel that, owing to your weakness, anger has already got footing in your breast, in that case do yourself violence to regain your composure, and then try to make acts of humility and of sweetness towards the person against whom you are irritated; but all this must be done with sweetness and without violence, for it is of the utmost importance not to irritate the wounds."[6480] The saint said that he himself was obliged to labor much during his life to overcome two passions which predominated in him, namely, anger and love: to subdue the passion of anger, he avowed it had cost him twenty-two years' hard struggle. As to the passion of love, he had succeeded in changing its object, by leaving creatures, and turning all his affections to God. And in this manner the saint acquired so great an interior peace, that it was visible even in his exterior; for he was invariably seen with a serene countenance and a smile on his features.

From whence are wars? . . . Are they not from your concupiscences?[6481] When we are made angry by some contradiction, we fancy we shall find relief and quiet by giving vent to our anger in actions, or at least in words:

but we are mistaken, it is not so; for after having done so, we shall find that we are much more disturbed than before. Whoever desires to persevere in uninterrupted peace, must beware of ever yielding to ill-humor. And whenever any one feels himself attacked by this ill-humor, he must do his utmost to banish it immediately; and he must not go to rest with it in his heart, but must divert himself from it by the perusal of some book, by singing some devout canticle, or by conversing on some pleasant subject with a friend. The Holy Spirit says: *Anger resteth in the bosom of a fool.*[6482] Anger remains a long time in the heart of fools, who have little love for Jesus Christ; but if by stealth it should ever enter into the hearts of the true lovers of Jesus Christ, it is quickly dislodged, and does not remain. A soul that cordially loves the Redeemer never feels in a bad humor, because, as she desires only what God desires, she has all she wishes for, and consequently is ever tranquil and well-balanced. The divine will tranquillizes her in every misfortune that occurs; and thus she is able at all times to observe meekness towards all. But we cannot acquire this meekness without a great love for Jesus Christ. In fact, we know by experience that we are not meeker and gentler towards others, except when we feel an increased tenderness towards Jesus Christ.

But since we cannot constantly experience this tenderness, we must prepare ourselves, in our mental prayer, to bear the crosses that may befall us. This was the practice of the saints; and so they were ever ready to receive with patience and meekness injuries, blows, and chastisements. When we meet with an insult from our neighbor, unless we have frequently trained ourselves beforehand, we shall find it extremely difficult to know what course to take, in order not to yield to the force of anger; in the very moment, our passion will make it appear but reasonable for us to retort boldly the audacity of the person who affronts us, but St. John Chrysostom says that it is not the right way to quench the fire which is raging in the mind of our neighbor by the fire of an indignant reply; to do so will only enkindle it the more: “One fire is not extinguished by another.”[6483]

Some one may say: But why should I use courtesy and gentleness towards an impertinent fellow, that insults me without cause? But St. Francis de Sales replies: “We must practise meekness, not only with reason, but against reason.”[6484]

We must therefore endeavor, on such occasions, to make a kind answer; and in this way we shall allay the fire: *A mild answer breaketh wrath.*[6485] But when the mind is troubled, the best expedient will be to keep silence. St. Bernard writes: “The eye troubled by anger sees not straight.”[6486] When the eye is dimmed with passion, it no longer distinguishes between what is and what is not unjust; anger is like a veil drawn over the eyes, so that we can no longer discern betwixt right and wrong; wherefore we must, like St. Francis de Sales, make a compact with our tongue: “I have made a covenant with my tongue,” he wrote, “never to speak while my heart is disturbed.”

But there are moments when it seems absolutely necessary to check insolence with severe words. David said: *Be angry, and sin not.*[6487] Occasions do exist, therefore, when we may be lawfully angry, provided it be without sin. But here is just the matter: speculatively speaking, it seems expedient at times to speak and reply to some people in terms of severity, in order to make an impression on them; but in practice it is very difficult to do this without some fault on our part; so that the sure way is always to admonish, or to reply, with gentleness, and to scrupulously guard against all resentment. St. Francis de Sales said: “I have never been angry without afterwards repenting of it.” And when, for some reason or other, we still feel warm, the safest way, as I said before, is to keep silence, and reserve the remonstrance till a more convenient moment, when the heart is cooled down.

We ought particularly to observe this meekness when we are corrected by our Superiors or friends. St. Francis de Sales again writes: “To receive a reprimand willingly, shows that we love the virtue opposed to the fault for which we are corrected; and consequently this is a great sign of progress in perfection.”[6488]

We must besides practise meekness towards ourselves. It is a delusion of the devil, to make us consider it a virtue to be angry with ourselves for committing some fault; far from it, it is a trick of the enemy to keep us in a state of trouble, that so we may be unfit for the performance of any good. St. Francis de Sales said: “Hold for certain that all such thoughts as create disquiet are not from God, who is the Prince of peace, but proceed either from the devil, or from self-love, or from the good opinion we have of ourselves. These are the three scources from which all our troubles spring.

When, therefore, any thoughts arise which throw us into trouble, we must immediately reject and despise them."[6489]

Meekness is also more especially necessary when we have to correct others. Corrections made with a bitter zeal often do more harm than good, especially when he who must be corrected is himself excited: in such cases the correction should be put off, and we must wait until he is cool. And we ourselves ought no less to refrain from correcting while we are under the influence of ill-temper; for then our admonition will always be accompanied with harshness; and the person in fault, when he sees that he is corrected in such a way, will take no heed of the admonition, considering it the mere effect of passion. This holds good as far as concerns the good of our neighbor; as concerns our personal advantage, let us show how dearly we love Jesus Christ, by patiently and gladly supporting every sort of ill-treatment, injury, and contempt.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my despised Jesus, O love, O joy of my soul, Thou hast by Thy example made contempt most acceptable to Thy lovers! I promise Thee, from this day forward, to submit to every affront for the love of Thee, who for love of me didst submit on earth to every species of revilement from men. Do Thou grant me strength to keep this promise. Enable me to know and to perform whatever Thou desirest at my hands. My God and my all, I crave no other good than Thyself, who art infinite good! O Thou who takest my interests so much too heart, grant that my only care may be to gratify Thee! Grant that all my thoughts may be occupied in avoiding whatever may offend Thee, and in promoting whatever may contribute to Thy good pleasure. Ward off every occasion that may draw me from Thy love. I strip myself of my liberty, and consecrate it entirely to Thy good will. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! I love Thee, O my delight! O Word incarnate, I love Thee more than myself! Take pity on me, and heal whatever wounds remain in my poor soul from its past disloyalties towards Thee. I resign myself wholly into Thy arms, O my Jesus; I will be wholly Thine; I will suffer everything for love of Thee; and I ask of Thee nothing but Thyself!

O Holy Virgin and my Mother Mary, I love thee, and I rely on thee; succor me by thy powerful intercession!

Chapter IX

CHARITY THINKETH NO EVIL, REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICETH WITH THE TRUTH

(CHARITAS NON COGITAT MALUM, NON GAUDET SUPER INIQUITATE, CONGAUDET AUTEM VERITATI.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST ONLY WISHES WHAT JESUS CHRIST WISHES

CHARITY and truth always go together; so that charity, conscious that God is the only and the true good, detests iniquity, which is directly opposed to the divine will, and takes no satisfaction but in what pleases Almighty God. Hence the soul that loves God is heedless of what people say of it, and only aims at pleasing God. The Blessed Henry Suso said: “That man stands well with God who strives to conform himself to the truth, and for the rest is utterly indifferent to the opinion or treatment of mankind.”

As we have already more than once asserted, the sanctity and perfection of a soul consists in renouncement of self and in submission to the will of God; but now it will be well to enter more into detail.

I

THE NECESSITY OF CONFORMING TO THE WILL OF GOD

If, then, we would become saints, our whole endeavor must be, never to follow our own will, but always the will of God; the substance of all the precepts and divine counsels is comprised in doing and suffering what God wills, and in the manner he wills it. Let us, therefore, entreat the Lord to bestow on us a holy liberty of spirit; liberty of spirit leads us to embrace whatever is pleasing to Jesus Christ, regardless of all feelings of repugnance arising from self-love and human respect. The love of Jesus Christ makes those who love him utterly indifferent; so that all things are alike to them, whether bitter or sweet: they do not wish for anything that pleases themselves, but only for that which is pleasing to God; they employ themselves in little and great things, be they pleasant or unpleasant, with the same peace of mind; it is enough for them if they please God.

St. Augustine says: “Love, and do what you like.”[6490] Whoever really loves God seeks only to please him; and in this is all his pleasure. St. Teresa says: “He that seeks but the gratification of one he loves, is gratified with all that pleases that person. Love in its perfection produces this result; it makes a person heedless of all private interests and self-satisfaction, and concentrates all his thoughts on endeavoring to please the person beloved, and to do all he can to honor him himself, and to make him honored by others. O Lord, all our ills come from not keeping our eyes fixed on Thee! Were we solely intent on advancing, we should soon come to the end of our journey; but we fall and stumble a thousand times, and we even lose our way, for want of looking attentively to the right path.” Here we may see what should be the single aim of all our thoughts, actions, desires, and of all our prayers, namely, the pleasure of God; our way to perfection must be this, to walk according to the will of God.

God wishes us to love him with our whole heart: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*[6491] That person loves Jesus Christ with his whole heart who says to him with the Apostle: *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*[6492] Lord, signify to me what Thou wilt have me do; for I desire to perform all. And let us be persuaded that whilst we desire what God desires, we desire what is best for ourselves; for assuredly God only wishes what is best for us. St. Vincent of Paul said: “Conformity with the will of God is the treasure of a Christian and the remedy for all evils; since it comprises abnegation of self and union with God and all virtues.” In this, then, is all perfection: *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?* Jesus Christ promises us, *not a hair of your head shall perish.*[6493] Which is as much as to say, that the Lord rewards us for every good thought we have of pleasing him, and for every tribulation embraced with patience in conformity to his holy will. St. Teresa said, “The Lord never sends a trial, without remunerating it with some favor as often as we accept it with resignation.”[6494]

But our conformity to the divine will must be entire, without any reserve, and constant without withdrawal. In this consists the height of perfection; and to this (I repeat) all our works, all our desires, and all our prayers ought to tend. Some souls given to prayer, on reading of the ecstasies and raptures of St. Teresa and St. Philip Neri, come to wish to enjoy themselves these supernatural unions. Such wishes must be banished as contrary to humility; if we really desire to be saints, we must aspire after true union with God, which is to unite our will entirely to the will of God. St. Teresa[6495] said, "Those persons are deceived who fancy that union with God consists in ecstasies, raptures, and sensible enjoyments of him. It consists in nothing else than in submitting our will to the will of God; and this submission is perfect when our will is detached from everything, and so completely united with that of God, that all its movements depend solely on the will of God. This is the real and essential union which I have always sought after, and continually beg of the Lord." And then she adds: "Oh, how many of us say this, and seem to ourselves to desire nothing besides this; but, miserable creatures that we are, how few of us attain to it!" Such, indeed, is the undeniable truth; many of us say: O Lord! I give Thee my will, I desire nothing but what Thou desirest; but, in the event of some trying occurrence, we are at a loss how to yield calmly to the divine will. And this is the source of our continually complaining that we are unfortunate in the world, and that we are the butt of every misfortune; and so of our dragging on an unhappy life.

If we were conformed to the divine will in every trouble, we should undoubtedly become saints, and be the happiest of mankind. This, then, should form the chief object of our attention, to keep our will in unbroken union with the will of God in every occurrence of life, be it pleasant or unpleasant. It is the admonition of the Holy Spirit. *Winnow not with every wind*.[6496] Some people resemble the weathercocks, which turn about every wind that blows; if the wind is fair and favorable to their desires, they are all gladness and condescension; but if there blow a contrary wind, and things fall out against their desires, they are all sadness and impatience; this is why they do not become saints, and why their life is unhappy, because, in the present life, adversity will always befall us in a greater measure than prosperity. St. Dorotheus said, that to receive from the hands of God whatever happens is a great means to keep ourselves in continual peace and tranquillity of soul. And the saint relates, that on this account the ancient Fathers of the desert were never seen angry or melancholy, because they accepted whatever happened to them joyfully, as coming from the hands of God. Oh, happy the man who lives wholly united and abandoned to the divine will! he is neither puffed up by success nor depressed by reverses; for he well knows that all alike comes from the self-same hand of God; the will of God is the single rule of his own will; thus he only does what God wishes him to do, and he only desires what God does. He is not anxious to do many things, but to accomplish with perfection what he knows to be acceptable to God. Accordingly, he prefers the minutest obligations of his state of life to the most glorious and important actions, well aware that in the latter self-love may find a great share, whereas in the former there is certainly the will of God.

Thus we, too, shall be happy when we receive from God all the dispositions of his Providence in the spirit of perfect conformity to his divine will, utterly regardless whether or not they coincide with our private inclinations. The saintly Mother de Chantal said: “When shall we come to relish the divine will in every event that happens, without paying attention to anything else but the good pleasure of God, from whom it is certain that prosperity and adversity proceed alike from motives of love and for our best interests? When shall we resign ourselves unreservedly into the arms of our most loving heavenly Father, intrusting him with the care of our persons and our affairs, and reserving nothing for ourselves but the sole desire of pleasing God?” The friends of St. Vincent of Paul said of him while he was still on earth: “Vincent is always Vincent.” By which they meant to say, that the saint was ever to be seen with the same smiling face, whether in prosperity or in adversity; and was always himself, because, as he lived in the total abandonment of himself to God, he feared nothing and desired nothing but what was pleasing to God. St. Teresa said: “By this holy abandonment that admirable liberty of spirit is generated, which those who are perfect possess, wherein they find all the happiness in this life which they can possibly desire; inasmuch as, fearful of nothing, and desirous or wanting for nothing in the things of this world, they possess all.”[6497]

Many, on the other hand, fabricate a sort of sanctity according to their own inclinations; some, inclined to melancholy, make sanctity consist in living in seclusion; others, of a busy temperament, in preaching and in making up quarrels; some, of an austere nature, in penitential inflictions and macerations; others, who are naturally generous, in distributing alms; some in saying many vocal prayers; others in visiting sanctuaries; and all their sanctity consists in such or the like practices. External acts are the fruit of the love of Jesus Christ; but true love itself consists in a complete conformity to the will of God; and as a consequence of this, in denying ourselves and in preferring what is most pleasing to God, and solely because he deserves it.

Others wish to serve God; but it must be in that employment, in that place, with those companions, and in such circumstances; or else they either neglect their duty, or at least do it with a bad grace: such as these are not free in spirit, but are slaves of self-love, and on that account reap little merit even from what they perform; moreover, they live in perpetual disquiet, since their attachment to self-will makes the yoke of Jesus Christ become heavy to them. The true lovers of Jesus Christ love only that which is pleasing to Jesus Christ, and for the sole reason that it does please him; and they love it when it pleases Jesus Christ, where it pleases him, and how it pleases him; whether he chooses to employ them in honorable functions, or in mean and lowly occupations; in a life of notoriety in the world, or in one hidden and despised. This is the real drift of what is meant by the pure love of Jesus Christ; hence we must labor to overcome the cravings of our self-love, which seeks to be employed in those works only that are glorious, or that are according to our own inclinations. And what will it profit us to be the most honored, the most wealthy, the greatest in this world, without the will of God? The Blessed Henry Suso said, “I would rather be the vilest insect on earth by the will of God, than a seraph in heaven by my own will.”

Jesus Christ said: *Many shall say: Lord, we have cast out devils and done great wonders in Thy name: Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and cast out devils in Thy name, and done many miracles in Thy name?*[6498] But the Lord will answer them: *I never knew you; depart from Me, you that work iniquity.*[6499] Depart from me; I never acknowledged you for my disciples, because you preferred to follow your own inclinations rather than my will. And this is especially applicable to those priests who labor much for the salvation or perfection of others, while they themselves continue to live on in the mire of their imperfections. Perfection consists: *First,* in a true contempt of one's self. *Secondly,* in a thorough mortification of our own appetites. *Thirdly,* in a perfect conformity to the will of God: whosoever is wanting in one of these virtues is out of the way of perfection. On this account a great servant of God said, it was better for us in our actions to have the will of God rather than his glory as their sole end; for in doing the will of God, we at the same time promote his glory; whereas in proposing to ourselves the glory of God, we frequently deceive ourselves, and follow our own will under pretext of glorifying God. St. Francis de Sales said: "There are many who say to the Lord: I give myself wholly to Thee without reserve; but few indeed, in point of fact, practically embrace this abandonment. It consists in a certain indifference in accepting all kinds of events, just as they fall out according to the order of divine Providence, afflictions as well as consolations, slights and injuries as well as honor and glory."[6500]

It is therefore in suffering, and in embracing with cheerfulness whatever cuts against the grain of our own inclinations, that we can discover who is a true lover of Jesus Christ. Thomas à Kempis says "that he is not deserving of the name of lover who is not ready to endure all things for his beloved, and to follow in all things the will of his beloved."[6501] On the contrary, Father Balthazar Alvarez said, that whoever quietly resigns himself to the divine will in troubles "travels to God post-haste." And the saintly Mother Teresa said: "What greater acquisition can we make, than to have some proof that we are pleasing God?" And to this I add, that we cannot have a more certain proof of this, than by peacefully embracing the crosses which God sends us. We please God by thanking him for his benefits on earth; but, says Father John of Avila, one "blessed be God" uttered in adversity is worth six thousand acts of thanksgiving in prosperity.

And here we must observe, that we must receive with resignation not merely the crosses which come directly from God; for instance, ill-health, scanty talents, accidental reverses of fortune; but such, moreover, as come indirectly from God, and directly from our fellow-men; for instance, persecutions, thefts, injuries; for all, in reality, come from God. David was one day insulted by one of his vassals called Semei, who not only upbraided him with words of contumely, but even threw stones at him. One of the courtiers would have forthwith avenged the insult by cutting off the head of the offender; but David replied: *Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bid him curse David;*[6502] or, in other words, God makes use of him to chastise me for my sins, and therefore he allowed him to pursue me with injuries.

Wherefore St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, that all our prayers should have for their end to obtain from God the grace to follow his holy will in all things. Certain souls, greedy of spiritual dainties in prayer, go in search only of these banquets of sweet and tender feelings; but courageous souls that seek sincerely to belong wholly to God, ask him only for light to understand his will, and for strength to put it in execution. In order to attain to purity of love, it is necessary to submit our will in all things to the will of God: “Never consider yourselves,” said St. Francis de Sales, “to have arrived at the purity which you ought to have, as long as your will is not cheerfully obedient, even in things the most repulsive, to the will of God.” “Because,” as St. Teresa remarks, “the giving up of our will to God draws him to unite himself to our lowliness.”[6503] But this can never be obtained, except by means of mental prayer and of continual petitions addressed to the divine majesty, nor without a cordial desire to belong entirely to Jesus Christ without reserve.

O most amiable Heart of my divine Saviour, Heart enamoured of mankind, since Thou lovest us with such a depth of tenderness; O Heart, in fine, worthy to rule over and possess all our hearts, would that I could make all men comprehend the love Thou bearest them, and the tender caresses Thou dost lavish on those who love Thee without reserve! O Jesus my love, be pleased to accept the offering and the sacrifice which I this day make to Thee of my entire will! Acquaint me with what Thou wouldst have me to do; for I am determined to do all by the help of Thy grace.

II

OBEDIENCE

Now what is the surest way to know and ascertain what God requires of us? There is no surer way than to practise obedience to our Superiors and directors. St. Vincent of Paul said: “The will of God is never better complied with than when we obey our Superiors.” The Holy Ghost says: *Much better is obedience than the victims of fools.*[6504] God is more pleased with the sacrifice which we make to him of our own will, by submitting it to obedience, than with all other sacrifices which we can offer him; because in other things, as in alms-deeds, fastings, mortifications, and the like, we give of what is ours to God, but in giving him our will we present him ourselves: when we give him our goods, our mortifications, we give him part; but when we give him our will, we give him everything. So that when we say to God, O Lord, make me know by means of obedience what Thou requirest of me, for I wish to comply with all, we have nothing more to offer him.

Whoever, therefore, gives himself up to obedience, must needs detach himself totally from his own opinion. “What though each one,” says St. Francis de Sales, “has his own opinions, virtue is not thereby violated; but virtue is violated by the attachment which we have to our own opinions.”[6505] But alas! this attachment is the hardest thing to part with; and hence there are so few persons wholly given to God, because few render a thorough submission to obedience. There are some persons so fondly attached to their own opinion, that, on receiving an obedience, although the thing enjoined suit their inclination, yet, from the very fact that it is commanded, they lose all fancy for it, all wish to discharge it; for they find no relish in anything but in following the dictates of their individual will. How different is the conduct of saints! their only happiness flows from the execution of what obedience imposes on them. The saintly Mother Jane Frances de Chantal once told her daughters that they might spend the recreation-day in any manner they chose. When the evening came, they all went to her, to beg most earnestly that she would never again grant them such a permission; for they had never spent such a wearisome day as that on which they had been set free from obedience.

It is a delusion to think that any one can be possibly better employed than in the discharge of what obedience has imposed. St. Francis de Sales says: “To desert an occupation given by obedience in order to unite ourselves to

God by prayer, by reading, or by recollection, would be to withdraw from God to unite ourselves to our own self-love."[6506] St. Teresa adds, moreover, that whoever performs any work, even though it be spiritual, yet against obedience, assuredly works by the instigation of the devil, and not by divine inspiration, as he perhaps flatters himself; "because," says the saint, "the inspirations of God always come in company with obedience." To the same effect she says elsewhere; "God requires nothing more of a soul that is determined to love him than obedience."[6507] "A work done out of obedience," says Father Rodriguez, "outweighs every other that we can imagine." To lift up a straw from the ground out of obedience is of greater merit than a protracted prayer, or a discipline to blood, through our own will. This caused St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi to say, that she would rather be engaged in some exercise from obedience than in prayer; "because," said she, "in obedience I am certain of the will of God, whereas I am by no means so certain of it in any other exercise."[6508] According to all spiritual masters, it is better to leave off any devout exercise through obedience, than to continue it without obedience. The Most Blessed Virgin Mary revealed once to St. Bridget,[6509] that he who relinquishes some mortification through obedience reaps a twofold profit; since he has already obtained the merit of the mortification by the good-will to do it, and he also gains the merit of obedience by foregoing it. One day the famous Father Francis Arias went to see the Venerable Father John of Avila, his intimate friend, and he found him pensive and sad; he asked him the reason, and received this answer: "O happy you, who live under obedience, and are sure of doing the will of God. As for me, who shall warrant me whether I do a thing more pleasing to God in going from village to village, catechizing the poor peasants, or in remaining stationary in the confessional, to hear everyone that presents himself? Whereas he that is living under obedience is always sure that whatever he performs by obedience is according to the will of God, or rather that it is what is most acceptable to God." Let this serve as a consolation for all those who live under obedience.

For obedience to be perfect, we must obey with the *will* and with the *judgment.* To obey with the *will* signifies to obey willingly, and not by constraint, after the fashion of slaves; to obey with the *judgment* means to conform our judgment to that of the Superior, without examining what is commanded. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi remarks on this: “Perfect obedience demands a soul without judgment.” To the like purpose, St. Philip Neri said that, in order to obey with perfection, it was not enough to execute the thing commanded, but it must be done without reasoning on it; taking it for certain that what is commanded us is for us the most perfect thing we can do, although the opposite might be better before God.[6510]

This holds good not merely for religious, but likewise for seculars living under obedience to their spiritual directors. Let them request their director to prescribe them rules for the guidance of their affairs, both spiritual and temporal; and so they will make sure of doing what is best. St. Philip Neri said: “Let those who are desirous of progressing in the way of God submit themselves to a prudent confessor, whom they should obey as in God’s place. By so doing, we are certain of not having to render an account to God of the actions we perform.”[6511]

He said, moreover, “that we must place faith in the confessor, because the Lord will not permit him to err; that nothing is so sure of cutting off all the snares of the devil as to do the will of others in the performance of good; and that there is nothing more dangerous than to wish to direct ourselves according to our private fancy.” In like manner, St. Francis de Sales says, in speaking of the direction of the spiritual Father as a means of walking securely in the path of perfection, “This is the maxim of all maxims.”[6512] “Seek as you will,” says the devout Avila, “you will never so surely find the will of God as in the way of this humble obedience, so much recommended and so practised by all the ancient servants of God.” The same thing is affirmed by St. Bernard, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Antoninus, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, John Gerson, and all theologians and masters of the spiritual life; and St. John of the Cross said, that to call this truth in question is almost to doubt of the faith. The words of the saint are, “not to be satisfied with what the confessor says, is arrogance, and a want of faith.”

Among the maxims of St. Francis de Sales are the two following, most consolatory for scrupulous souls: “First, a truly obedient soul was never yet lost; secondly, we ought to be satisfied on being told by our spiritual director that we are going on well, without seeking to be convinced of it ourselves.” It is the teaching of many Doctors, as of Gerson, St. Antoninus, Cajetanus, Navarrus, Sanchez, Bonacina, Cordovius, Castropalao, and the

Doctors of Salamanca, with others, that the scrupulous person is bound, under strict obligation, to act in opposition to scruples, when from such scruples there is reason to apprehend grievous harm happening to soul or body, such as the loss of health, or of intellect; wherefore scrupulous persons ought to have greater scruple at not obeying the confessor than at acting in opposition to their scruples.

To sum up, therefore, all that has been said in this chapter, our salvation and perfection consist: 1. In denying ourselves; 2. In following the will of God; 3. In praying him always to give us strength to do both one and the other.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

What have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.[6513] My beloved Redeemer, infinitely amiable, since Thou hast come down from heaven to give Thyself wholly to me, what else shall I seek for on earth or in heaven besides Thee, who art the sovereign good, the only good worthy to be loved? Be Thou, then, the sole Lord of my heart, do Thou possess it entirely: may my soul love Thee alone, obey Thee alone, and seek to please no other than Thee. Let others enjoy the riches of this world, I wish only for Thee: Thou art and shalt ever be my treasure in this life and in eternity Wherefore I give Thee, O my Jesus, my whole heart and all my will. It was at one time, alas! a rebel against Thee; but now I dedicate it wholly to Thee. *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*[6514] Tell me what Thou requirest of me, and lend me Thy assistance; for I wiil leave nothing undone. Dispose of me, and of all that concerns me, as Thou pleasest; I accept of all, and resign myself to all. O Love deserving of infinite love, Thou hast loved me so as even to die for me; I love Thee with my whole heart, I love Thee more than myself, and into Thy hands I abandon my soul. On this very day I bid farewell to every worldly affection, I take leave of everything created, and I give myself without reserve to Thee; Through the merits of Thy Passion receive me, and make me faithful unto death. My Jesus, my Jesus, from this day forward I will live only for Thee, I will love none but Thee, I will seek nothing else than to do Thy blessed will.

Aid me by Thy grace, and aid me, too, by thy protection, O Mary my hope.

Chapter X

CHARITY BEARETH ALL THINGS

(CHARITAS OMNIA SUFFERT.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST BEARS ALL THINGS FOR JESUS CHRIST, AND ESPECIALLY ILLNESSES, POVERTY, AND CONTEMPT

IN Chapter I. we spoke of the virtue of patience in general. In this we will speak of certain matters in particular, which demand the especial practice of patience.

Father Balthazar Alvarez[6515] said that a Christian need not imagine himself to have made any progress until he has succeeded in penetrating his heart with a lasting sense of the sorrows, poverty, and ignominies of Jesus Christ so as to support with loving patience every sort of sorrow, privation, and contempt, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

I

PATIENCE IN SICKNESS

In the first place, let us speak of bodily infirmities, which, when borne with patience, merit for us a beautiful crown.

St. Vincent de Paul said: “Did we but know how precious a treasure is contained in infirmities, we should accept of them with joy as the greatest possible blessings.” Hence the saint himself, though constantly afflicted with ailments, that often left him no rest day or night, bore them with so much peace and such serenity of countenance that no one could guess that anything ailed him at all. Oh, how edifying is it to see a sick person bear his illness with a peaceful countenance, as did St. Francis de Sales! When he was ill, he simply explained his complaint to the physician, obeyed him exactly by taking the prescribed medicines, however nauseous; and for the rest he remained at peace, never uttering a single complaint in all his sufferings. What a contrast to this is the conduct of those who do nothing but complain even for the most trifling indisposition, and who would like to have around them all their relatives and friends to sympathize with them! Far different was the instruction of St. Teresa to her nuns: “My sisters, learn to suffer something for the love of Jesus Christ, without letting all the world know of it.”[6516] One Good Friday Jesus Christ favored the Venerable Father Louis da Ponte with so much bodily suffering, that no part of him was exempt from its particular pain: he mentioned his severe sufferings to a friend; but he was afterwards so sorry at having done so, that he made a vow never again to reveal to anybody whatever he might afterwards suffer. I say “he was favored;” for, to the saints, the illnesses and pains which God sends them are real favors. One day St. Francis of Assisi lay on his bed in excruciating torments; a companion said to him: “Father, beg God to ease your pains, and not to lay so heavy a hand upon you.” On hearing this, the saint instantly leaped from his bed, and going on his knees, thanked God for his sufferings; then, turning to his companion, he said: “Listen, did I not know that you so spoke from simplicity, I would refuse ever to see you again.”[6517]

Some one that is sick will say, it is not so much the infirmity itself that afflicts me, as that it disables me from going to church to perform my devotions, to communicate, and to hear Holy Mass; I cannot go to choir to recite the divine Office with my brethren; I cannot celebrate Mass; I cannot pray; for my head is aching with pain, and is light almost to fainting. But tell me now, if you please, why do you wish to go to church or to choir? why would you communicate and say or hear Holy Mass? is it to please God? but it is not now the pleasure of God that you say the Office, that you communicate, or hear Mass; but that you remain patiently on this bed, and support the pains of this infirmity. But you are displeased with my speaking thus; then you are not seeking to do what is pleasing to God, but what is pleasing to yourself. The Venerable John of Avila wrote as follows to a priest who so complained to him: “My friend, busy not yourself with what you would do if you were well, but be content to remain ill as long as God thinks fit. If you seek the will of God, what matters it to you whether you be well or ill?”[6518]

You say you are unable even to pray, because your head is weak. Be it so: you cannot meditate; but why cannot you make acts of resignation to the will of God? If you would only make these acts, you could not make a better prayer, welcoming with love all the torments that assail you. So did St. Vincent of Paul: when attacked by a serious illness, he was wont to keep himself tranquilly in the presence of God, without forcing his mind to dwell on any particular subject; his sole exercise was to elicit some short acts from time to time, as of love, of confidence, of thanksgiving, and more frequently of resignation, especially in the crisis of his sufferings. St. Francis de Sales made this remark: "Considered in themselves, tribulations are terrifying; but considered in the will of God, they are lovely and delightful."[6519] You cannot say prayers; and what more exquisite prayer than to cast a look from time to time on your crucified Lord, and to offer him your pains, uniting the little that you endure to the overwhelming torments that afflicted Jesus on the cross!

There was a certain pious lady lying bedridden with many disorders; and on the servant putting the crucifix into her hand, and telling her to pray to God to deliver her from her miseries, she made answer: "But how can you desire me to seek to descend from the cross, whilst I hold in my hand a God crucified? God forbid that I should do so. I will suffer for him who chose to suffer torments for me incomparably greater than mine." This was, indeed, precisely what Jesus Christ said to St. Teresa when she was laboring under serious illness; he appeared to her all covered with wounds, and then said to her: "Behold, my daughter, the bitterness of my sufferings, and consider if yours equal mine."[6520] Hence the saint was accustomed to say, in the midst of all her infirmities: "When I remember in how many ways my Saviour suffered, though he was innocence itself, I know not how it could enter my head to complain of my sufferings." During a period of thirty-eight years, St. Lidwine was afflicted with numberless evils—fevers, gout in the feet and hands, and sores, all her lifetime; nevertheless, from never losing sight of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, she maintained an unbroken cheerfulness and joy. In like manner, St. Joseph of Leonessa, a Capuchin, when the surgeon was about to amputate his arm, and his brethren would have bound him, to prevent him from stirring through vehemence of pain, seized hold of the crucifix and exclaimed: "Wherefore bind me?—wherefore bind me?

behold who it is that binds me to support every suffering patiently for love of him;" and so he bore the operation without a murmur. St. Jonas the Martyr, after passing the entire night immersed in ice by order of the tyrant, declared next morning that he had never spent a happier night, because he had pictured to himself Jesus hanging on the cross; and thus, compared with the torments of Jesus, his own had seemed rather caresses than torments.

Oh, what abundance of merits may be accumulated by patiently enduring illnesses! Almighty God revealed to Father Balthazar Alvarez the great glory he had in store for a certain nun, who had borne a painful sickness with resignation; and told him that she had acquired greater merit in those eight months of her illness than some other religious in many years. It is by the patient endurance of ill-health that we weave a great part, and perhaps the greater part, of the crown that God destines for us in heaven. St. Lidwine had a revelation to this effect. After sustaining many and most cruel disorders, as we mentioned above, she prayed to die a martyr for the love of Jesus Christ; now as she was one day sighing after this martyrdom, she suddenly saw a beautiful crown, but still incomplete, and she understood that it was destined for herself; whereupon the saint, longing to behold it completed, entreated the Lord to increase her sufferings. Her prayer was heard, for some soldiers came shortly after, and ill-treated her, not only with injurious words, but with blows and outrages. An angel then appeared to her with the crown completed, and informed her that those last injuries had added to it the gems that were wanting; and shortly afterwards she expired.

Ah, yes! to the hearts that fervently love Jesus Christ, pains and ignominies are most delightful. And thus we see the holy martyrs going with gladness to encounter the sharp prongs and hooks of iron, the plates of glowing steel and axes. The martyr St. Procopius thus spoke to the tyrant who tortured him: "Torment me as you like; but know at the same time, that nothing is sweeter to the lover of Jesus Christ than to suffer for his sake."[6521] St. Gordius, Martyr, replied in the same way to the tyrant who threatened him death: "Thou threatenest me with death; but I am only sorry that I cannot die more than once for my own beloved Jesus."[6522] And I ask, did these saints speak thus because they were insensible to pain or weak in intellect? "No," replies St. Bernard; "not insensibility, but love caused this."[6523] They were not insensible, for they felt well enough the torments inflicted on them; but since they loved God, they esteemed it a great privilege to suffer for God, and to lose all, even life itself, for the love of God.

Above all, in time of sickness we should be ready to accept of death, and of that death which God pleases. We must die, and our life must finish in our last illness; nor do we know which will be our last illness. Wherefore in every illness we must be prepared to accept that death which God has appointed for us. A sick person says: "Yes; but I have committed many sins, and have done no penance. I should like to live, not for the sake of living, but to make some satisfaction to God before my death." But tell me, my brother, how do you know that if you live longer you will do penance, and not rather do worse than before? At present you can well cherish the hope that God has pardoned you; what penance can be more satisfactory than to accept of death with resignation, if God so wills it? St. Aloysius Gonzaga, at the age of twenty-three, gladly embraced death with this reflection: "At present," he said, "I am, as I hope, in the grace of God. Hereafter, I know not what may befall me; so that I now die contentedly, if God calls me to the next life."[6524] It was the opinion of Father John of Avila that every one, provided he be in good dispositions, though only moderately good, should desire death, to escape the danger, which always surrounds us in this world, of possibly sinning and losing the grace of God.

Besides, owing to our natural frailty, we cannot live in this world without committing at least venial sins; this should be a motive for us to embrace death willingly, that we may never offend God any more. Further, if we truly love God, we should ardently long to go to see him, and love him with all our strength in Paradise, which no one can do perfectly in this present life; but unless death open us the door, we cannot enter that blessed region of love. This caused St. Augustine, that loving soul, to cry out: "Oh, let me die, Lord, that I may behold Thee!"[6525] O Lord, let me die, otherwise I cannot behold and love Thee face to face.

II

PATIENCE IN POVERTY

In the second place, we must practise patience in the endurance of poverty. Our patience is certainly very much tried when we are in need of temporal goods. St. Augustine said: “He that has not God, has nothing; he that has God, has all.”[6526] He who possesses God, and remains united to his blessed will, finds every good. Witness St. Francis, barefooted, clad in sackcloth, and deprived of all things, yet happier than all the monarchs of the world, by simply repeating, “My God and my all.”[6527] A poor man is properly he that has not what he desires; but he that desires nothing, and is contented with his poverty, is in fact very rich. Of such St. Paul says: *Having nothing, yet possessing all things.*[6528] The true lovers of God have nothing, and yet have everything; since, when temporal goods fail them, they exclaim: “My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me;” and with this they rest satisfied. Not only did the saints maintain patience in poverty, but sought to be despoiled of all, in order to live detached from all, and united with God alone. If we have not courage enough to renounce all worldly goods, at all events let us be contented with that state of life in which God has placed us; let our solicitude be not for earthly goods, but for those of Paradise, which are immeasurably greater, and last forever; and let us be fully persuaded of what St. Teresa says: “The less we have here, the more we shall have there.”[6529]

St. Bonaventure said that temporal goods were nothing more than a sort of bird-lime to hinder the soul from flying to God. And St. John Climacus[6530] said, that poverty, OR the contrary, is a path which leads to God free of all hindrances. Our Lord himself said: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*[6531] In the other Beatitudes, the heaven of the life to come is promised to the meek and to the clean of heart; but to the poor, heaven (that is, heavenly joy) is promised even in this life: *theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Yes, for even in the present life the poor enjoy a foretaste of paradise. By the poor in spirit are meant those who are not merely poor in earthly goods, but who do not so much as desire them; who, having enough to clothe and feed them, live contented, according to the advice of the Apostle: *But having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content.*[6532] Oh, blessed poverty (exclaimed St. Laurence Justinian), which possesses nothing and fears nothing; she is ever joyous and ever in abundance, since she turns every inconvenience into advantage for the soul.[6533] St. Bernard said: “The avaricious man hungers after earthly things as a beggar, the poor man despises them as a lord.”[6534] The miser is always hungry as a beggar, because he is never satiated with the possessions he desires; the poor man, on the contray, despises them all as a rich lord, inasmuch as he desires nothing.

One day Jesus Christ thus spoke to the Blessed Angela of Foligno: “If poverty were not of great excellence, I would not have chosen it for myself, nor have bequeathed it to my elect.” And, in fact, the saints, seeing Jesus poor, had therefore a great affection for poverty. St. Paul says, that the desire of growing rich is a snare of Satan, by which he has wrought the ruin of innumerable souls: *They that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition.*[6535] Unhappy beings who, for the sake of vile creatures of earth, forfeit an infinite good, which is God! St. Basil the Martyr was quite in the right, when the Emperor Licinius proposed to make him the chief among his priests, if he would renounce Jesus Christ; he was right, I say, to reply: “Tell the emperor, that were he to give me his whole kingdom, he would not give me as much as he would rob me of, by depriving me of God.”[6536] Let us be content then with God, and with those things which he gives us, rejoicing in our poverty, when we stand in need of something we desire, and have it not; for herein consists our merit. “Not poverty,” says St. Bernard, “but the love of poverty, is reckoned a virtue.”[6537] Many are poor, but from not loving their poverty, they merit nothing; therefore St. Bernard says, that the virtue of poverty consists not in being poor, but in the love of poverty.

This love of poverty should be especially practised by religious who have made the vow of poverty. “Many religious,” says the same St. Bernard, “wish to be poor; but on the condition of wanting for nothing.”[6538] “Thus,” says St. Francis de Sales, “they wish for the honor of poverty, but not the inconveniences of poverty.”[6539] To such persons is applicable the saying of the Blessed Salomea, a nun of St. Clare: “That religious shall be a laughing-stock to angels and to men, who pretends to be poor, and yet murmurs when she is in want of something.” Good religious act differently; they love their poverty above all riches. The daughter of the Emperor Maximilian II., a discalced nun of St. Clare, called Sister Margaret of the Cross, appeared on one occasion before her brother, the Archduke Albert, in a patched-up habit, who evinced some astonishment, as if it were unbecoming her noble birth; but she made him this answer: “My brother, I am more content with this torn garment than all monarchs with their purple robes.” St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said: “O happy religious! who, detached from all by means of holy poverty, can say, *The Lord is the portion of my inheritance.*[6540] “My God, Thou art my portion and all my good.”[6541] St. Teresa, having received a large alms from a certain merchant, sent him word that his name was written in the Book of Life, and that, in token of this, he should lose all his possessions; and the merchant actually failed, and remained in poverty till death. St. Aloysius Gonzaga said that there could be no surer sign that a person is numbered among the elect, than to see him fearing God, and at the same time undergoing crosses and tribulations in this life.

The bereavement of relatives and friends by death be longs also, in some measure, to holy poverty; and in this we must especially practise patience. Some people, at the loss of a parent or friend, can find no rest; they shut themselves up to weep in their chamber, and giving free vent to their sorrow, become insupportable to all around them, by their want of patience. I would ask these persons, for whose gratification they thus lament and shed tears? For that of God? Certainly not; for God’s will is, that they should be resigned to his dispensations. For that of the soul departed? By no means: if the soul be lost, she abhors both you and your tears; if she be saved, and already in heaven, she would have you thank God on her part; if still in purgatory, she craves the help of your prayers, and wishes you to bow with resignation to the divine will, and to become a saint, in order that she may one day enjoy your society in paradise. Of what use, then, is all this weeping? On one occasion, the Venerable Father Joseph Caracciolo, the Theatine, was surrounded by his relatives, who were all bitterly lamenting the death of his brother, whereupon he said to them: “Come, come! let us keep these tears for a better purpose, to weep over the death of Jesus Christ, who has been to us a father, a brother, and spouse, and who died for love of us.” On such occasions we must imitate Job, who, on hearing the news of the death of his sons, exclaimed, with full resignation to the Divine will, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;* God gave me my sons, and

God hath taken them away. *As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord;*[6542] it hath pleased God that such things should happen, and so it pleaseth me; wherefore may he be blessed by me forever.

III

PATIENCE UNDER CONTEMPT

In the third place, we must practise patience, and show our love to God, by tranquilly submitting to contempt.

As soon as a soul delivers herself up to God, he sends her from himself, or through others, insults and persecution. One day an angel appeared to the Blessed Henry Suso and said to him, “Henry, thou hast hitherto mortified thyself in thy own way; henceforth thou shalt be mortified after the pleasure of others.” On the day following, as he was looking from a window on the street, he saw a dog shaking and tearing a rag which it held in its mouth; at the same moment a voice said to him, “So hast thou to be torn in the mouths of men.” Forthwith the Blessed Henry descended into the street and secured the rag, putting it by to encourage him in his coming trials.[6543]

Affronts and injuries were the delicacies the saints earnestly longed and sought for. St. Philip Neri, during the space of thirty years, had to put up with much ill-treatment in the house of St. Jerome at Rome; but on this very account he refused to leave it, and resisted all the invitations of his sons to come and live with them in the new Oratory, founded by himself, till he received an express command from the Pope to do so. So St. John of the Cross was prescribed change of air for an illness which eventually carried him to the grave; now, he could have selected a more commodious convent, of which the Prior was particularly attached to him; but he chose instead a poor convent, whose Prior was his enemy, and who, in fact, for a long time, and almost up to his dying day, spoke ill of him, and abused him in many ways, and even prohibited the other monks from visiting him. Here we see how the saints even sought to be despised. St. Teresa wrote this admirable maxim: “Whoever aspires to perfection must beware of ever saying: *They had no reason to treat me so.* If you will not bear any cross but one which is founded on reason, then perfection is not for you.” Whilst St. Peter Martyr was complaining in prison of being confined unjustly, he received that celebrated answer from the Crucifix: our Lord said to him, “And what evil have I done, that I suffer and die on this cross for men?” Oh, what consolation do the saints derive in all their tribulations from the ignominies which Jesus Christ endured! St. Eleazar, on being asked by his wife how he contrived to bear with so much patience the many injuries which he had to sustain, and that even from his own servants, replied: “I turn my looks on the outraged Jesus, and I discover immediately that my affronts are a mere nothing in comparison with what he suffered for my sake; and thus God gives me strength to support all patiently.”

In fine, affronts, poverty, torments, and all tribulations, serve only to estrange further from God the soul that does not love him; whereas, when they befall a soul in love with God, they become an instrument of closer union and more ardent love of God: *Many waters cannot quench charity.*[6544] However great and grievous troubles may be, so far from extinguishing the flames of charity, they only serve to enkindle them the more in a soul that loves nothing else but God.

But wherefore does Almighty God load us with so many crosses, and take pleasure in seeing us afflicted, reviled, persecuted, and ill-treated by the world? Is he, perchance, a tyrant, whose cruel disposition makes him rejoice in our suffering? No: God is by no means a tyrant, nor cruel; he is all compassion and love towards us; suffice it to say, that he has died for us. He indeed does rejoice at our suffering, but for our good; inasmuch as, by suffering here, we are released hereafter from the debt of torments justly due from us to his divine justice; he rejoices in them, because they detach us from the sensual pleasures of this world: when a mother would wean her child, she puts gall on the breast, in order to create a disgust in the child; he rejoices in them, because we give him, by our patience and resignation in bearing them, a token of our love; in fine, he rejoices in them, because they contribute to our increase of glory in heaven. Such are the reasons for which the Almighty, in his compassion and love towards us, is pleased at our suffering.

Let us now draw this chapter to a conclusion. That we may be able to practise patience to advantage in all our tribulations, we must be fully persuaded that every trial comes from the hands of God, either directly, or indirectly through men; we must therefore render God thanks whenever we are beset with sorrows, and accept, with gladness of heart, of every event, prosperous or adverse, that proceeds from him, knowing that all happens by his disposition for our welfare: *To them that love God all things work together unto good.*[6545] In addition to this, it is well in our tribulations to glance a moment at that hell which we have formerly deserved: for assuredly all the pains of this life are incomparably smaller than the awful pains of hell. But above all, prayer, by which we gain the divine assistance, is the great means to suffer patiently all affliction, scorn, and contradictions; and is that which will furnish us with the strength which we have not of ourselves. The saints were persuaded of this; they recommended themselves to God, and so overcame every kind of torments and persecutions.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Lord, I am fully persuaded that without suffering, and suffering with patience, I cannot win the crown of Paradise. David said: *From Him is my patience.*[6546] And I say the same; my patience in suffering must come from Thee. I make many purposes to accept in peace of all tribulations; but no sooner are they at hand than I grow sad and alarmed; and if I suffer, I suffer without merit and without love, because I know not how to suffer them so as to please Thee. O my Jesus, through the merits of Thy patience in bearing so many afflictions for love of me, grant me the grace to bear crosses for the love of Thee! I love Thee with my whole heart, O my dear Redeemer! I love Thee, my sovereign good! I love Thee, my own love, worthy of infinite love. I am grieved at any displeasure I have ever caused Thee, more than for any evil whatever. I promise Thee to receive with patience all the trials Thou mayest send me; but I look to Thee for help to be faithful to my promise, and especially to be enabled to bear in peace the throes of my last agony and death.

O Mary, my Queen, vouchsafe to obtain for me a true resignation in all the anguish and trials that await me in life and death.

Chapter XI

CHARITY BELIEVETH ALL THINGS

(CHARITAS OMNIA CREDIT.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST BELIEVES ALL HIS WORDS

WHOEVER loves a person, believes all that proceeds from the lips of that person; consequently, the more a soul loves Jesus Christ, the more lively and unshaken is her faith. When the good thief beheld our Redeemer, though he had done no ill, suffering death upon the cross with such patience, he began at once to love him; under the influence of this love, and of the divine light which then broke upon his soul, he believed that this was truly the Son of God, and begged not to be forgotten by him when he should have passed into his kingdom.

Faith is the foundation of charity; but faith afterwards receives its perfection from charity. His faith is most perfect whose love of God is most perfect. Charity produces in man not merely the faith of the understanding, but the faith of the will also: those who believe only with the understanding, but not with the will, as is the case with sinners who are perfectly convinced of the truths of the faith, but do not choose to live according to the divine commandments,—such as these have a very weak faith; for had they a more lively belief that the grace of God is a priceless treasure, and that sin, because it robs us of this grace, is the worst of evils, they would assuredly change their lives. If, then, they prefer the miserable creatures of this earth to God, it is because they either do not believe, or because their faith is very weak. On the contrary, he who believes not only with the understanding, but also with the will, so that he not only believes, but has the will to believe in God, the revealer of truth, from the love he has for him, and rejoices in so believing,—such a one has a perfect faith, and consequently seeks to make his life conformable to the truths that he believes.

Weakness of faith, however, in those who live in sin, does not spring from the obscurity of faith; for though God, in order to make our faith more meritorious, has veiled the objects of faith in darkness and secresy, he has at the same time given us so clear and convincing evidence of their truth, that not to believe them would argue not merely a lack of sense, but sheer madness and impiety. The weakness of the faith of many persons is to be traced to their wickedness of living. He who, rather than forego the enjoyment of forbidden pleasures, scorns the divine friendship, would wish there were no law to forbid, and no chastisement to punish, his sin; on this account he strives to blind himself to the eternal truths of death, judgment, and hell, and of divine justice; and because such subjects strike too much terror into his heart, and are too apt to mix bitterness in his cup of pleasure, he sets his brain to work to discover proofs, which have at least the look of plausibility; and by which he allows himself to be flattered into the persuasion that there is no soul, no God, no hell, in order that he may live and die like the brute beasts, without laws and without reason.

And this laxity of morals is the source whence have issued, and still issue daily, so many books and systems of Materialists, Indifferentists, Politicists, Deists, and Naturalists; some among them deny the divine existence, and some the divine Providence, saying that God, after having created men, takes no further notice of them, and is heedless whether they love or hate him whether they be saved or lost; others, again, deny the goodness of God, and maintain that he has created numberless souls for hell, becoming himself their tempter to sin, that so they may damn themselves, and go into everlasting fire, to curse him there forever.

Oh, ingratitude and wickedness of men! God has created them in his mercy, to make them eternally happy in heaven; he has poured on them so many lights, benefits, and graces, to bring them to eternal life; for the same end he has redeemed them at the price of so many sorrows and sufferings; and yet they strive to deny all, that they may give free rein to their vicious inclinations! But no: let them strive as they will, the unhappy beings cannot wrest themselves from remorse of conscience, and the dread of the divine vengeance. On this subject I have latterly published a work, entitled *The Truth of Faith,* in which I have clearly shown the inconsistency of all these systems of modern unbelievers. Oh, if they would but once forsake sin, and apply themselves earnestly to the love of Jesus Christ, they would then most certainly cast away all doubts about things of faith, and firmly believe all the truths that God has revealed!

The true lover of Jesus Christ keeps the eternal truths constantly in view, and orders all his actions according to them. Oh, how thoroughly does he who loves Jesus Christ understand the force of that saying of the Wise Man, *Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity;*[6547] that all earthly greatness is mere smoke, dirt, and delusion; that the soul's only welfare and happiness consists in loving its Creator, and in doing his blessed will; that we are, in reality, no more than what we are before God; that it is of no use to gain the whole world, if the soul be lost; that all the goods in the world can never satisfy the human heart, but only God himself; and, in fine, that we must leave all in order to gain all.

Charity believeth all things.[6548] There are other Christians,—though not so perverse as the class we have mentioned, who would fain believe in nothing, that they may give full scope to their unruly passions, and live on undisturbed by the stings of remorse,—there are others, I say, who believe, indeed, but their faith is languid; they believe the most holy mysteries of religion, the truths of Revelation contained in the Gospel, the Trinity, the Redemption, the holy Sacraments, and the rest; still they do not believe all. Jesus Christ has said: *Blessed are the poor; blessed are the sorrowful; blessed are the mortified; blessed are those whom men persecute, calumniate, and curse. Blessed are the poor; blessed are they that hunger; blessed are they that suffer persecution; blessed are you when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you.*[6549] This is the teaching of Jesus Christ in the Gospel. How, then, can it be said, that those believe in the Gospel who say: "Blessed are those who have money; blessed are those who suffer nothing; blessed are those who can take their amusements; pitiable is the man that suffers persecution and ill-treatment from others"? We must certainly say of such as these, that either they do not believe the Gospel, or that they believe only a part of it. He who believes it all esteems it his highest fortune, and a mark of the divine favor in this world, to be poor, to be sick, to be mortified, to be despised and ill-treated by men. Such is the belief, and such the language, of one who believes all that is said in the Gospel, and has a real love for Jesus Christ.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My beloved Redeemer, O life of my soul, I firmly believe that Thou art the only good worthy of being loved. I believe that Thou art the greatest lover of my soul, since through love alone Thou didst die, overwhelmed with sorrows for love of me. I believe there is no greater blessing in this world, or in the next, than to love Thee, and to do Thy adorable will. All this I believe most firmly; so that I renounce all things, that I may belong wholly to Thee, and that I may possess Thee alone. Help me, through the merits of Thy sacred Passion, and make me such as Thou wouldst have me to be. I believe in Thee, O infallible truth! I trust in Thee, O infinite mercy! I love Thee, O infinite goodness! O infinite love, I give myself wholly to Thee, who hast wholly given Thyself to me in Thy Passion, and in the holy Sacrament of the Altar.

And I recommend myself to Thee, O Mary, refuge of sinners, and Mother of God!

Chapter XII

CHARITY HOPETH ALL THINGS

(CHARITAS OMNIA SPERAT.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST HOPES FOR ALL THINGS FROM HIM

HOPE increases charity, and charity increases hope.

Hope in the divine goodness undoubtedly gives an increase to our love of Jesus Christ. St. Thomas says, that in the very moment when we hope to receive some benefit from a person, we begin also to love him.[6550] On this account, the Lord forbids us to put our trust in creatures: *Put not your trust in princes.*[6551] Further, he pronounces a curse on those who do so: *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.*[6552] God does not wish us to trust in creatures, because he does not wish us to fix our love upon them. Hence St. Vincent of Paul said: “Let us beware of reposing too much confidence in men; for when God beholds us thus leaning on them for support, he himself withdraws from us.” On the other hand, the more we trust in God, the more we shall advance in his holy love: *I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart.*[6553] Oh, how rapidly does that soul advance in perfection that has her heart dilated with confidence in God! She flies rather than runs; for by making God the foundation of all her hope, she flings aside her own weakness, and borrows the strength of God himself, which is communicated to all who place their confidence in him: *They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*[6554] The eagle is the bird that soars nearest the sun; in like manner, the soul that has God for her trust becomes detached from the earth, and more and more united to God by love.

Now as hope increases the love of God, so does love help to increase hope; for charity makes us the adopted sons of God. In the natural order we are the work of his hands; but in the supernatural order we are made sons of God, and partakers of the divine nature, through the merits of Jesus Christ; as the Apostle St. Peter writes: *That by these you may be made partakers of the Divine nature.*[6555] And if charity makes us the sons of God, it consequently makes us heirs of heaven, according to St. Paul: *And if sons, heirs also.*[6556] Now a son claims the right of abiding under the paternal roof; an heir is entitled to the property; and thus charity increases the hope of Paradise: so that the souls that love God cry out incessantly, "Thy kingdom come, Thy kingdom come!"[6557] Moreover, God loves those who love him: *I love them that love Me.*[6558] He showers down his graces on those that seek him by love: *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him.*[6559] Consequently, the soul that loves God most has the greatest hope in his goodness. This confidence produces that imperturbable tranquillity in the saints which makes them always joyful and full of peace, even amid the severest trials; for their love of Jesus Christ, and their persuasion of his liberality towards those who love him, leads them to trust solely in him; and thus they find a lasting repose. The sacred spouse abounded with delights, because she loved none but her Spouse, and leaned entirely on him for support; she was full of contentment, since she well knew how generous her beloved is towards all that love him; so that of her it is written: *Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her Beloved?*[6560] These words of the Wise Man are most true: *All good things come to me together with her.*[6561] With charity, all blessings are introduced into the soul.

The primary object of Christian hope is God, whom the soul enjoys in the kingdom of heaven. But we must not suppose that the hope of enjoying God in Paradise is any obstacle to charity; since the hope of Paradise is inseparably connected with charity, which there receives its full and complete perfection. Charity is that infinite treasure, spoken of by the Wise Man, which makes us the friends of God: *An infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.*[6562] The angelic Doctor St. Thomas says, that friendship is founded on the mutual communication of goods; for as friendship is nothing more than a mutual love between friends, it follows that there must be a reciprocal interchange of the good which each possesses.[6563] Hence the saint says: “If there be no communication, there is no friendship.” On this account Jesus Christ says to his disciples: *I have called you friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you.*[6564] Since he had made them his friends, he had communicated all his secrets to them.

St. Francis de Sales says: “If, by a supposition of what is impossible, there could be an infinite good (that is a God) to whom we belonged in no way whatever, and with whom we could have no union or communication, we should certainly esteem him more than ourselves; so that we might feel great desire of being able to love him; but we should not actually love him, because love is built upon union; for love is a friendship, and the foundation of friendship is to have things in common; and its end is union.”[6565] Thus St. Thomas teaches us that charity does not exclude the desire of the reward prepared for us in heaven by Almighty God; on the contrary, it makes us look to it as the chief object of our love, for such is God, who constitutes the bliss of paradise; for friendship implies, that friends rejoice with one another.[6566]

The Spouse in the Canticles refers to this reciprocal interchange of goods, when she says: *My Beloved to me and I to Him.*[6567] In heaven the soul belongs wholly to God, and God belongs wholly to the soul, according to the measure of her capacity and of her merits. But from the persuasion which the soul has of her own nothingness in comparison with the infinite attractions of Almighty God, and aware consequently that the claims of God on her love are beyond measure greater than her own can be on the love of God, she is therefore more anxious to procure the divine pleasure than her own enjoyment; so that she is more gratified by the pleasure which she affords Almighty God by giving herself entirely to him, than by God’s giving himself entirely to her; but at the same time she is delighted when God thus gives himself to her, inasmuch as she is thereby animated to give herself up to God with a greater intensity of love. She indeed rejoices at the glory which God imparts to her, but for the sole purpose of referring it back to God himself, and of thus doing her utmost to increase the divine glory. At the sight of God in heaven the soul cannot help loving him with all her strength; on the other hand, God cannot hate any one that loves him: but if (supposing what is impossible) God could hate a soul that loves him, and if a beatified soul could exist without loving God, she would much rather endure all the pains of hell, on condition of being allowed to love God as much as he should hate her, than to live without loving God, even though she could enjoy all the other delights of Paradise. So it is; for that conviction which the soul has of God's boundless claims upon her love gives her a greater desire to love God than to be loved by him.

Charity hopeth all things.[6568] St. Thomas, with the Master of the Sentences, defines Christian hope to be a "sure expectation of eternal happiness."[6569] Its certainty arises from the infallible promise of God to give eternal life to his faithful servants. Now charity, by taking away sin, at the same time takes aways all obstacles to our obtaining the happiness of the blessed; hence the greater our charity, the greater also and firmer is our hope hope, on the other hand, can in no way interfere with the purity of love, because, according to the observation of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, love tends naturally to union with the object beloved; or, as St. Augustine asserts in stronger terms, love itself is like a chain of gold that links together the hearts of the lover and the loved. "Love is as it were a kind of bond uniting two together."[6570] And as this union can never be effected at a distance, the person that loves always longs for the presence of the object of his love. The sacred spouse languished in the absence of her beloved, and entreated her companions to acquaint him with her sorrow, that he might come and console her with his presence: *I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell Him that I languish with love*.[6571] A soul that loves Jesus Christ exceedingly cannot but desire and hope, as long as she remains on earth, to go without delay and be united to her beloved Lord in heaven.

Thus we see that the desire to go and see God in heaven, not so much for the delight which we shall experience in loving God, as for the pleasure which we shall afford God by loving him, is pure and perfect love. Nor is the joy of the blessed in heaven any hindrance to the purity of their of their love; such joy is inseparable from their love; but they take far more satisfaction in their love of God than in the joy that it affords them. Some one will perhaps say: But the desire of a reward is rather a love of concupiscence than a love of friendship. We must therefore make a distinction between temporal rewards promised by men and the eternal rewards of paradise promised by God to those who love him: the rewards given by man are distinct from their own persons and independent of them, since they do not bestow themselves, but only their goods, when they would remunerate others; on the contrary, the principal reward which God gives to the blessed is the gift of himself: *I am thy reward exceeding great.*[6572] Hence to desire heaven is the same thing as to desire God, who is our last end.

I wish here to propose a doubt, which may rise in the mind of one who loves God, and strives to conform himself in all things to his blessed will. If it should be ever revealed to such a one that he would be eternally lost, would he be obliged to bow to it with resignation, in order to practise conformity with the will of God? St. Thomas says no; and further, that he would sin by consenting to it, because he would be consenting to live in a state that involves sin, and is contrary to the last end for which God created him; for God did not create souls to hate him in hell, but to love him in heaven: so that he does not wish the death even of the sinner, but that all should be converted and saved. The holy Doctor says that God wishes no one to be damned except through sin; and therefore, a person, by consenting to his damnation, would not be acting in conformity with the will of God, but with the will of sin.[6573] But suppose that God, foreseeing the sin of a person, should have decreed his damnation, and that this decree should be revealed to him, would he be bound to consent to it? In the same passage the saint says, By no means; because such a revelation must not be taken as an irrevocable decree, but made merely *by way of communication,* as a threat of what would follow if he persists in sin.

But let every one banish such baneful thoughts from his mind, as only calculated to cool his confidence and love. Let us love Jesus Christ as much as possible here below; let us always be sighing to go hence and to behold him in paradise, that we may there love him perfectly; let us make it the grand object of all our hopes, to go thither to love him with all our strength. We are commanded even in this life to love God with our whole strength: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength;*[6574] but the angelical Doctor[6575] says that man cannot perfectly fulfil this precept upon earth; only Jesus Christ, who was both God and man, and the most holy Mary, who was full of grace and free from original sin, perfectly fulfilled it. But we miserable children of Adam, infected as we are with sin, can not love God without some imperfection; and it is in heaven alone, when we shall see God face to face, that we shall love him, nay more, that we shall be necessitated to love him with all our strength.

Behold, then, the scope of all our desires and aspirations, of all our thoughts and ardent hopes; to go and enjoy God in heaven, in order to love him with all our strength, and to rejoice in the enjoyment of God. The blessed certainly rejoice in their own felicity in that kingdom of delights; but the chief source of their happiness, and that which absorbs all the rest, is to know that their beloved Lord possesses an infinite happiness; for they love God incomparably more than themselves. Each one of the blessed has such a love for him, that he would willingly forfeit all happiness, and undergo the most cruel torments, rather than that God should lose (if it were possible for him to lose) one, even the least particle of his happiness. Hence the sight of God's infinite happiness, and the knowledge that it can never suffer diminution for all eternity, constitutes his paradise. This is the meaning of what our Lord says to every soul on whom he bestows the possession of eternal glory: *Enter into the joy of thy Lord.*[6576] It is not the joy that enters into the blessed soul, but the soul that enters into the joy of God, since the joy of God is the object of the joy of the blessed. Thus the good of God will be the good of the blessed; the riches of God will be their riches, and the happiness of God will be their happiness.

On the instant that a soul enters heaven, and sees by the light of glory the infinite beauty of God face to face, she is at once seized and all consumed with love. The happy soul is then as it were lost and immersed in that boundless ocean of the goodness of God. Then it is that she quite forgets herself, and inebriated with divine love, thinks only of loving her God: *They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy House.*[6577] As an intoxicated person no longer thinks of himself, so a soul in bliss can only think of loving and affording delight to her beloved Lord; she desires to possess him entirely, and she does in fact possess him, without fear of losing him any more; she desires to give herself wholly to him, at every moment, and she does indeed possess him for every moment she offers herself to God without reserve, and God receives her in his loving embraces, and so holds her, and shall hold her in the same fond embraces for all eternity.

In this manner the soul is wholly united to God in heaven, and loves him with all her strength; her love is most perfect and complete, and though necessarily finite, since a creature is not capable of infinite love, it nevertheless renders her perfectly happy and contented, so that she desires nothing more. On the other hand, Almighty God communicates himself, and unites himself wholly to the soul, filling her with himself proportionately to her merits; and this union is not merely by means only of his gifts, lights, and loving attractions, as is the case during the present life, but by his own very essence. As fire penetrates iron, and seems to change it into itself, so does God penetrate the soul and fill her with himself; and though she never loses her own being, yet she becomes so penetrated and absorbed by that immense ocean of the divine substance, that she remains, as it were, annihilated, and as if she ceased to exist. The Apostle prayed for this happy lot for his disciples when he said: *That you may be filled unto all the fulness of God.*[6578]

And this is the last end, which the goodness of God has appointed for us in the life to come. Hence the soul can never enjoy perfect repose on earth; because it is only in heaven that she can obtain perfect union with God. It is true that the lovers of Jesus Christ find peace in the practice of perfect conformity with the will of God; but they cannot in this life find complete repose; this is only obtained when our last end is obtained; that is, when we see God face to face, and are consumed with his divine love; and as long as the soul does not reach this end, she is ill at ease, and groans and sighs, saying: *Behold, in peace is my bitterness most bitter.*[6579] Yes, O my God, I live in peace in this valley of tears, because such is Thy will; but I cannot help feeling unspeakable bitterness at finding myself at a distance from Thee, and not yet perfectly united with Thee, who art my centre, my all, and the fulness of my repose!

For this reason the saints, though they were all inflamed with the love of God, did nothing but sigh after paradise. David cried out: *Wo is me, that my sojourning is prolonged!*[6580] *I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear.*[6581] St. Paul said of himself: *Having a desire to be with Christ.*[6582] St. Francis of Assisi said:

“I look for such a meed of bliss,
That all my pain seems happiness.”[6583]

These were all so many acts of perfect charity. The angelic Doctor teaches us, that the highest degree of charity that a soul can reach upon earth, is to desire intensely to go and be united with God, and to enjoy him in heaven.[6584] But, as we have already seen, this enjoyment of God in heaven does not consist so much in the fruition of the delights there lavished on her by Almighty God, as in the pleasure she takes in the happiness of God himself, whom she loves incomparably more than herself.

The holy souls in purgatory feel no pain more acutely than that of their yearning to possess God, from whom they remain still at a distance. And this sort of pain will afflict those especially who in their lifetime had but little desire of paradise. Cardinal Bellarmine[6585] also says, that there is a certain place in purgatory called, prison of honor,[6586] where certain souls are not tormented with any pain of sense, but merely with the pain of privation of the sight of God; examples of this are related by St. Gregory, Venerable Bede, St. Vincent Ferrer, and St. Bridget; and this punishment is not for the commission of sin, but for coldness in desiring heaven. Many souls aspire to perfection; but for the rest, they are too indifferent whether they go to enjoy the sight of God, or continue on earth. But eternal life is an inestimable good, that has been purchased by the death of Jesus Christ; and God punishes such souls as have been remise during life in their desires to obtain it.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O God, my Creator and my Redeemer, Thou hast created me for heaven; Thou hast redeemed me from hell to bring me into heaven; and I have so many times, in Thy very face, renounced my claim to heaven by my sins, and have remained contented in seeing myself doomed to hell! But blessed forever be Thy infinite mercy, which, I would fain hope, has pardoned me, and many a time rescued me from perdition. Ah, my Jesus, would that I had never offended Thee! would that I had always loved Thee! I am glad that at least I have still time to do so. I love Thee! O love of my soul, I love Thee with my whole heart; I love Thee more than myself! I see plainly that Thou wishest to save me, that I may be able to love Thee for all eternity in that kingdom of love. I thank Thee, and beseech Thee to help me for the remainder of my life, in which I wish to love Thee most ardently, that I may ardently love Thee in eternity. Ah, my Jesus, when will the day arrive that shall free me from all danger of losing Thee, that shall consume me with love, by unveiling before my eyes Thy infinite beauty, so that I shall be under the necessity of loving Thee? Oh, sweet necessity! oh, happy and dear and most desired necessity, which shall relieve me from all fear of evermore displeasing Thee, and shall oblige me to love Thee with all my strength! My conscience alarms me, and says: “How canst Thou presume to enter heaven?” But, my dearest Redeemer, Thy merits are all my hope.

O Mary, Queen of Heaven, thy intercession is all-powerful with God, in thee I put my trust!

Chapter XIII

CHARITY BEARETH ALL THINGS

(CHARITAS OMNIA SUSTINET.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST WITH A STRONG LOVE DOES NOT CEASE TO LOVE HIM IN THE MIDST OF ALL SORTS OF TEMPTATIONS AND DESOLATIONS

IT is not the pains of poverty, of sickness, of dishonor and persecution, which in this life most afflict the souls that love God, but temptations and desolations of spirit. Whilst a soul is in the enjoyment of the loving presence of God, she is so far from grieving at all the afflictions and ignominies and outrages of men, that she is rather comforted by them, as they afford her an opportunity of showing God a token of her love; they serve, in short, as fuel to enkindle her love more and more. But to find herself solicited by temptations to forfeit the divine grace, or in the hour of desolation to apprehend having already lost it, oh, these are torments too cruel to bear for one who loves Jesus Christ with all her heart! However, the same love supplies her with strength to endure all patiently, and to pursue the way of perfection, on which she has entered. And, oh, what progress do those souls make by means of these trials, which God is pleased to send them in order to prove their love!

I

TEMPTATIONS

Temptations are the most grievous trials that can happen to a soul that loves Jesus Christ; she accepts with resignation of every other evil, as calculated only to bind her in closer union with God; but temptations to commit sin would drive her, as we said above, to a separation from Jesus Christ; and on this account they are more intolerable to her than all other afflictions.

We must know, however, that although no temptation to evil can ever come from God, but only from the devil or our own corrupt inclinations: *for God is not a tempter of evils, and he tempteth no man;*[6587] nevertheless, God does at times permit his most cherished souls to be the most grievously tempted.

In the first place, in order that from temptations the soul may better learn her own weakness, and the need she has of the divine assistance not to fall. Whilst a soul is favored with heavenly consolations, she feels as if she were able to vanquish every assault of the enemy, and to achieve every undertaking for the glory of God. But when she is strongly tempted, and is almost reeling on the edge of the precipice, and just ready to fall, then she becomes better acquainted with her own misery and with her inability to resist, if God did not come to her rescue. So it fared with St. Paul, who tells us that God had suffered him to be troubled with a temptation to sensual pleasure, in order to keep him humble after the revelations with which God had favored him: *And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me.*[6588]

Besides, God permits temptations with a view to detach us more thoroughly from this life; and to kindle in us the desire to go and behold him in heaven. Hence pious souls, finding themselves attacked day and night by so many enemies, come at length to feel a loathing for life, and exclaim: *Wo is me, that my sojourning is prolonged!*[6589] And they sigh for the moment when they can say: *The snare is broken and we are delivered.*[6590] The soul would willingly wing her flight to God; but as long as she lives upon this earth she is bound by a snare which detains her here below, where she is continually assailed with temptations; this snare is only broken by death: so that the souls that love God sigh for death, which will deliver them from all danger of losing him.

Almighty God, moreover, allows us to be tempted, to make us richer in merits; as it was said to Tobias: *And because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptations should prove thee.*[6591] Thus a soul need not imagine herself out of God’s favor because she is tempted, but should make it rather a motive of hope that God loves her. It is a delusion of the devil to lead some pusillanimous persons to suppose that temptations are sins that contaminate the soul. It is not bad thoughts that make us lose God, but the consenting to them; let the suggestions of the devil be ever so violent, let those filthy imaginations which overload our minds be ever so lively, they cannot cast the least stain on our souls, provided only we yield no consent to them; on the contrary, they make the soul purer, stronger, and dearer to Almighty God. St. Bernard says, that every time we overcome a temptation we win a fresh crown in heaven: "As often as we conquer, so often are we crowned."[6592] An angel once appeared to a Cistercian monk, and put a crown into his hands, with orders that he should carry it to one of his fellow-religious, as a reward for the temptation that he had lately overcome.

Nor must we be disturbed if evil thoughts do not forthwith disappear from our minds, but continue obstinately to persecute us; it is enough if we detest them, and do our best to banish them. God is faithful, says the Apostle; he will not allow us to be tempted above our strength: *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.*[6593] Thus a person, so far from losing anything by temptations, derives great profit from them. On this account God frequently allows the souls dearest to him to undergo the severest temptations, that they may turn them into a source of greater merit on earth, and of greater glory in heaven. Stagnant water soon grows putrid; a soul left at ease, without any struggle or temptation, stands in great danger of perishing from some self-conceit of her own merit; she perhaps imagines herself to have already attained to perfection, and therefore has little fear; and consequently takes little pains to recommend herself to God and to secure her salvation; but when, on the contrary, she is agitated by temptations, and sees herself in danger of rushing headlong into sin, then she has recourse to God; she goes to the divine Mother; she renews her resolution rather to die than to sin; she humbles herself, and casts herself into the arms of the divine mercy: in this manner, as experience shows us, the soul acquires fresh strength and closer union with God.

This must not, however, lead us to seek after temptations; on the contrary, we must pray to God to deliver us from temptations, and from those more especially by which God foresees we should be overcome; and this is precisely the object of that petition of the Our Father: *Lead us not into temptation;*[6594] but when, by God's permission, we are beset with temptations, we must then, without either being alarmed or discouraged by those foul thoughts, rely wholly on Jesus Christ, and beseech him to help us; and he, on his part, will not fail to give us the strength to resist. St. Augustine says: "Throw thyself on him, and fear not; he will not withdraw to let thee fall."[6595]

REMEDIES AGAINST TEMPTATIONS

Let us come now to the means which we have to employ in order to vanquish temptations. Spiritual masters prescribe a variety of means; but the most necessary, and the safest (of which only I will here speak), is to have immediate recourse to God with all humility and confidence, saying: *Incline unto my aid, O God; O Lord, make haste to help me.*[6596] This short prayer will enable us to overcome the assaults of all the devils of hell; for God is infinitely more powerful than all of them. Almighty God knows well that of ourselves we are unable to resist the temptations of the infernal powers; and on this account the most learned Cardinal Gotti remarks, "that whenever we are assailed, and in danger of being overcome, God is obliged to give us strength enough to resist as often as we call upon him for it."[6597]

And how can we doubt of receiving help from Jesus Christ, after all the promises that he has made us in the Holy Scriptures? *Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.*[6598] Come to me, ye who are wearied in fighting against temptations, and I will restore your strength. *Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt honor Me.*[6599] When thou seest thyself troubled by thine enemies, call upon me, and I will bring thee out of the danger, and thou shalt praise me. *Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall hear: thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am.*[6600] Then shalt thou call upon the Lord for help, and he will hear thee: thou shalt cry out, Quick, O Lord, help me! and he will say to thee, Behold, here I am; I am present to help thee. *Who hath called upon Him, and He despised him?*[6601] And who, says the prophet, has ever called upon God, and God has despised him without giving him help? David felt sure of never falling a prey to his enemies, whilst he could have recourse to prayer; he says: *Praising, I will call upon the Lord: and I shall be saved* *from my enemies.*[6602] For he well knew that God is close to all who invoke his aid: *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him.*[6603] And St. Paul adds, that the Lord is by no means sparing, but lavish of graces towards all that pray to him: *Rich unto all that call upon Him.*[6604]

Oh, would to God that all men would have recourse to him whenever they are tempted to offend him; they would then certainly never commit sin! They unhappily fall, because, led away by the cravings of their vicious appetites, they prefer to lose God, the sovereign good, than to forego their wretched short-lived pleasures. Experience gives us manifest proofs that whoever calls on God in temptation does not fall; and whoever fails to call on him as surely falls: and this is especially true of temptations to impurity. Solomon himself said that he knew very well he could not be chaste, unless God gave him the grace to be so; and he therefore invoked him by prayer in the moment of temptation: *And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, . . . I went to the Lord and besought Him.*[6605] In temptations against purity (and the same holds good with regard to those against faith), we must take it as a rule never to strive to combat the temptation hand to hand; but we must endeavor immediately to get rid of it indirectly by making a good act of the love of God or of sorrow for our sins, or else by applying ourselves to some indifferent occupation calculated to distract us. At the very instant that we discover a thought of evil tendency, we must disown it immediately, and (so to speak) close the door in its face, and deny it all entrance into the mind, without tarrying in the least to examine its object or errand. We must cast away these foul suggestions as quickly as we would shake off a hot spark from the fire.

If the impure temptation has already forced its way into the mind, and plainly pictures its object to the imagination, so as to stir the passions, then, according to the advice of St. Jerome, we must burst forth into these words: “O Lord, Thou art my helper.”[6606] As soon, says the saint, as we feel the sting of concupiscence, we must have recourse to God, and say: “O Lord, do Thou assist me;” we must invoke the most holy names of Jesus and Mary, which possess a wonderful efficacy in the suppression of temptations of this nature. St. Francis de Sales says, that no sooner do children espy a wolf than they instantly seek refuge in the arms of their father and mother; and there they remain out of all danger. Our conduct must be the same: we must flee without delay for succor to Jesus and Mary, by earnestly calling upon them. I repeat that we must instantly have recourse to them, without giving a moment's audience to the temptation, or disputing with it. It is related in the fourth paragraph of the *Book of Sentences of the Fathers*,[6607] that one day St. Pacomius heard the devil boasting that he had frequently got the better of a certain monk on account of his lending ear to him, and not turning instantly to call upon God. He heard another devil, on the contrary, utter this complaint: As for me, I can do nothing with my monk, because he never fails to have recourse to God, and always defeats me.

Should the temptation, however, obstinately persist in attacking us, let us beware of becoming troubled or angry at it; for this might put it in the power of our enemy to overcome us. We must, on such occasions, make an act of humble resignation to the will of God, who thinks fit to allow us to be tormented by these abominable temptations; and we must say: O Lord, I deserve to be molested with these filthy suggestions, in punishment of my past sins; but Thou must help to free me. And as long as the temptation lasts, let us never cease calling on Jesus and Mary. It is also very profitable, in the like importunity of temptations, to renew our firm purpose to God of suffering every torment, and a thousand deaths, rather than offend him; and at the same time we must invoke his divine assistance. And even should the temptation be of such violence as to put us in imminent risk of consenting to it, we must then redouble our prayers, hasten into the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, cast ourselves at the feet of the crucifix, or of some image of our Blessed Lady, and there pray with increased fervor, and cry out for help with groans and tears. God is certainly ready to hear all who pray to him; and it is from him alone, and not from our own exertions, that we must look for strength to resist; but sometimes Almighty God wills these struggles of us, and then he makes up for our weakness, and grants us the victory. It is an excellent practice also, in the moment of temptation, to make the sign of the cross on the forehead and breast. It is also of great service to discover the temptation to our spiritual director. St. Philip Neri used to say, that a temptation disclosed is half overcome.

Here it will be well to remark, what is unanimously admitted by all theologians, even of the rigorist school, that persons who have during a considerable period of time been leading a virtuous life, and live habitually in the fear of God, whenever they are in doubt, and are not certain whether they have given consent to a grievous sin, ought to be perfectly assured that they have not lost the divine grace; for it is morally impossible that the will, confirmed in its good purposes for a considerable lapse of time, should on a sudden undergo so total a change as at once to consent to a mortal sin without clearly knowing it; the reason of it is, that mortal sin is so horrible a monster that it cannot possible enter a soul by which it has long been held in abhorrence, without her being fully aware of it. We have proved this at length in our Moral Theology.[6608] St. Teresa said: No one is lost without knowing it; and no one is deceived without the will to be deceived.[6609]

Wherefore, with regard to certain souls of delicate conscience, and solidly rooted in virtue, but at the same time timid and molested with temptations (especially if they be against faith or chastity), the director will find it sometimes expedient to forbid them to discover them or make any mention of them; because, if they have to mention them they are led to consider how such thoughts got entrance into their minds, and whether they paused to dispute with them, or took any complacency in them, or gave any consent to them; and so, by this too great reflection, those evil imaginations make a still deeper impression on their minds, and disturb them the more. Whenever the confessor is morally certain that the penitent has not consented to these suggestions, the best way is to forbid him to speak any more about them. And I find that St. Jane Frances de Chantal acted precisely in this manner. She relates of herself, that she was for several years assailed by the most violent storms of temptation, but had never spoken of them in confession, since she was not conscious of having ever yielded to them; and in this she had only followed faithfully the rule received from her director. She says, “I never had a full conviction of having consented.”[6610] These words give us to understand that the temptations did produce in her some agitation from scruples; but in spite of these, she resumed her tranquillity on the strength of the obedience imposed by her confessor, not to confess similar doubts. With this exception, it will be generally found an admirable means of quelling the violence of temptations to lay them open to our director, as we have said above.

But I repeat, the most efficacious and the most necessary of all remedies against temptations, is that remedy of all remedies, namely, to pray to God for help, and to continue praying as long as the temptation continues. Almighty God will frequently have decreed success, not to the first prayer, but to the second, third, or fourth. In short, we must be thoroughly persuaded that all our welfare depends on prayer: our amendment of life depends on prayer; our victory over temptations depends on prayer; on prayer depends our obtaining divine love, together with perfection, perseverance, and eternal salvation.

There may be some who, after the perusal of my spiritual works, will accuse me of tediousness in so often recommending the importance and necessity of having continual recourse to God by prayer. But I seem to myself to have said not too much, but far too little. I know that day and night we are all assailed with temptations from the infernal powers, and that Satan lets slip no occasion of causing us to fall. I know that, without the divine help, we have not strength to repel the assaults of the devils; and that therefore the Apostle exhorts us to put on the armor of God: *Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness.*[6611] And what is this armor with which St. Paul warns us to clothe ourselves in order to conquer our enemies? Behold of what it consists: *By all prayer and supplication, praying at all times in the spirit, and in the same watching with all instance.*[6612] This armor is constant and fervent prayer to God, that he may help us to gain the victory. I know, moreover, that in every page of the Holy Scriptures, both in the Old and the New Testament, we are repeatedly admonished to pray: *Call upon Me, and I will deliver thee.*[6613] *Cry to Me, and I will hear thee.*[6614] *We ought always to pray, and not to faint.*[6615] *Ask, and you shall receive.*[6616] *Watch and pray.*[6617] *Pray without ceasing.*[6618] So that I think, far from having spoken too much on prayer, I have not said enough.

I would urge it on all preachers, to recommend nothing so much to their audience as prayer; on confessors, to insist on nothing so earnestly with their penitents as prayer; on spiritual writers, to treat on no subject more copiously than on prayer. But it is a source of grief to my heart, and it seems to me a chastisement of our sins, that so many preachers, confessors, and authors speak so little of prayer. There is no doubt that sermons, meditations, Communions, and mortifications are great helps in the spiritual life; but if we fail to call upon God by prayer in the moment of temptation, we shall fall, in spite of all the sermons, meditations, Communions, penances, and virtuous resolutions. If, then, we really wish to be saved, let us always pray, and commend ourselves to Jesus Christ, and most of all when we are tempted; and let us not only pray for the grace of holy perseverance, but at the same time for the grace to pray always. Let us, likewise, take care to recommend ourselves to the divine Mother, who, as St. Bernard says, is the dispenser of graces: “Let us seek for graces, and let us seek them through Mary.”[6619] For the same saint assures us that it is the will of God, that not a single grace should be dealt to us except through the hands of Mary: “God has willed us to receive nothing that has not passed through the hands of Mary.”[6620]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Jesus, My Redeemer, I trust in Thy blood, that Thou hast forgiven me all my offences against Thee; and I fondly hope to come one day to bless Thee for it eternally in heaven: *The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever.*[6621] I plainly see now that I have over and over again fallen in times past, from the want of entreating Thee for holy perseverance. I earnestly beg Thee at this present moment to grant me perseverance: “Never suffer me to be separated from Thee.”[6622] And I purpose to make this prayer to Thee always; but especially when I am tempted to offend Thee. I indeed make this resolution and promise; but what will it profit me thus to resolve and promise, if Thou dost not give me the grace to run and cast myself at Thy feet? By the merits, then, of Thy sacred Passion, oh, grant me this grace, in all my necessities to have recourse to Thee.

O Mary, my Queen, and my Mother, I beseech thee, by thy tender love for Jesus Christ, to procure me the grace of always fleeing for succor, as long as I live, to thy blessed Son and to thee.

II

DESOLATIONS

St. Francis de Sales says: “It is a mistake to estimate devotions by the consolations which we feel. True devotion in the way of God consists in having a determined will to execute all that is pleasing to God.”[6623] Almighty God is wont to make use of aridities in order to draw closer to him his most cherished souls. Attachment to our own inordinate inclinations is the greatest obstacle to true union with God; and when, therefore, God intends to draw a soul to his perfect love, he endeavors to detach her from all affection to created goods. Thus his first care is to deprive her of temporal goods, of worldly pleasures, of property, honors, friends, relatives, and bodily health; by the like means of losses, troubles, neglects, bereavements, and infirmities, he extirpates by degrees all earthly attachment, in order that the affections may be set on him alone.

With a view to produce a fondness for spiritual things, God regales the soul at first with great consolations, with an abundance of tears and tenderness; she is thus easily weaned from the gratifications of sense, and seeks further to mortify herself with works of penance, fasts, haircloths, and disciplines; at this stage the director must keep a check on her, and not allow her to practise mortifications—at least not all those for which she asks permission—because, under the spur of this sensible devotions, a soul might easily ruin her health by indiscretion. It is a subtle artifice of the devil, when he beholds a person giving himself up to God, and receiving the consolations and caresses which God generally gives to beginners, to do his utmost to plunge him into the performance of immoderate penances, so as utterly to destroy his health; so that afterwards, by reason of bodily weakness, he not only gives up the mortifications, but prayer, Communion, and all exercises of devotion, and eventually sinks back into his old way of living. On this account, the director should be very sparing in allowing mortifications to those who are only just entering upon the spiritual life, and who desire to practise bodily mortifications; let him exhort them to practise rather interior mortification, by bearing patiently with affronts and contradictions, by obedience to Superiors, by bridling the curiosity to see, to hear, and the like; and let him tell them, that when they have acquired the good habit of practising these interior mortifications, they will then be sufficiently perfect to proceed to the external ones. For the rest, it is a serious error to say, as some say, that external mortifications are of little or no use. Without doubt, interior mortification is most requisite for perfection; but it does not follow from this that external mortifications are unnecessary. St. Vincent of Paul declared that the person who does not practise external mortifications will be neither mortified interiorly nor exteriorly. And St. John of the Cross declared that the director who despised external mortifications was unworthy of confidence, even though he should work miracles.

But to come back to our point. The soul then, in the commencement of her conversion to God, tastes the sweetness of those sensible consolations with which God seeks to allure her, and by them to wean her from earthly pleasures; she breaks off her attachment to creatures, and becomes attached to God. Still, her attachment is imperfect, inasmuch as it is fostered more by that sensibility of spiritual consolations than by the real wish to do what is pleasing to God; and she deceives herself by believing that the greater the pleasure she feels in her devotions, the more she loves Almighty God. The consequence of this is, that if this food of spiritual consolations is stopped, by her being taken from her ordinary exercises of devotion, and employed in other works of obedience, charity, or duties of her state, she is disturbed, and takes it greatly to heart: and this is a universal defect in our miserable human nature, to seek our own satisfaction in all that we do. Or again, when she no longer finds this sweet relish of devotion in her exercises, she either forsakes them, or lessens them; and continuing to lessen them from day to day, she at length omits them entirely. And this misfortune befalls many souls who, when called by Almighty God to love him, enter upon the way of perfection, and as long as spiritual sweetness lasts, make a certain progress; but alas! when this is no longer tasted, they leave off all, and resume their former ways. But it is of the highest importance to be fully persuaded that the love of God and perfection do not consist in feelings of tenderness and consolation, but in overcoming self-love, and in following the divine will. St. Francis de Sales says: “God is as worthy of our love when he afflicts us as when he consoles us.”

Amid these consolations, it requires no remarkable degree of virtue to forego sensual delights, and to endure affronts and contradictions. The soul in the midst of these sweetnesses can endure all things; but this endurance comes far more frequently from those sensible consolations than from the strength of true love of God. On this account the Lord, with a view to give her a solid foundation in virtue, retires from her, and deprives her of that sensible devotion, that he may rid her of all attachment to self-love, which was fed by such consolations. And hence it happens, that whereas formerly she felt a joy in making acts of offering, of confidence, and of love, now that the vein of consolations is dried up, she makes these acts with coldness and painful effort; and finds a weariness in the most pious exercises, in her prayers, spiritual readings, and Communions; she even finds in them nothing but darkness and fears, and all seems lost to her. She prays and prays again, and is overwhelmed with sadness, because God seems to have abandoned her.

Let us come now to the practice of what we are to do on our part in the like circumstances. When Almighty God in his mercy deigns to console us with his loving visitations, and to let us feel the presence of his grace, it is not good to reject the divine consolations, as some false mystics advise: let us thankfully receive them; but let us beware of settling down on them, and seeking delight in those feelings of spiritual tenderness. St. John of the Cross calls this a “spiritual gluttony,” which is faulty and displeasing to God. Let us strive in such moments to banish from our mind the sensible enjoyment of these sweetnesses: and let us be especially on our guard against supposing that these favors are a token of our standing better with God than others; for such a thought of vanity would oblige God to withdraw himself from us altogether, and to leave us in our miserries. We must certainly at such times return most fervent thanks to God, because such spiritual consolations are signal gifts of the divine bounty to our souls, far greater than all the riches and honors of this world; but let us not seek then to regale ourselves on these sensible sweetnesses, but let us rather humble ourselves by the remembrance of the sins of our past life. For the rest, we must consider this loving treatment as the pure result of the goodness of God; and that perhaps it is sent as the forerunner of some great tribulation soon to befall us, in order that we may be strengthened by these consolations to endure all with patience and resignation. We should therefore take the occasion of offering ourselves to suffer every pain, internal or external, that may happen to us,—every illness, every persecution, every spiritual desolation, saying: O my Lord, I am here before Thee; do with me, and with all that belongs to me, whatever Thou wilt;

grant me the grace to love Thee and perfectly to accomplish Thy holy will, and I ask no more!

When a soul is morally certain of being in the grace of God, although she may be deprived of worldly pleasures, as well as of those which come from God, she nevertheless rests satisfied with her state, conscious, as she is, of loving God, and of being loved by him. But God, who wishes to see her purified and divested of all sensible satisfaction, in order to unite her entirely to himself by means of pure love, what does he do? He puts her in the crucible of desolation, which is more painful to bear than the most severe trials, whether internal or external; she is left in a state of uncertainty if she be in the grace of God or not, and in the dense darkness that shrouds her, there seems no prospect of her evermore finding God. Almighty God, moreover, will sometimes permit her to be assailed by violent sensual temptations, accompanied by irregular movements of the inferior part, or perhaps by thoughts of unbelief, of despair, and even of hatred of God, when she imagines herself cast off by him, and that he no longer hears her prayers. And as, on the one hand, the suggestions of the devil are vehement, and the motions of concupiscence are excited, and, on the other, the soul finds herself in this great darkness, she can no longer sufficiently distinguish whether she properly resists or yields to the temptations, though her will resolutely refuses all consent. Her fears of having lost God are thus very much increased; and from her fancied infidelity in struggling against the temptations, she thinks herself deservedly abandoned by God. The saddest of all calamities seems to have befallen her,—to be able no longer to love God, and to be hated by him. St. Teresa passed through all these trials, and declares that during them solitude had no charms for her, but, on the contrary, filled her with horror; while prayer was changed for her into a perfect hell.

When a soul that loves God finds herself in this state, she must not lose courage; and neither must he who directs her become alarmed. Those sensual movements, those temptations against faith, those feelings of distrust, and those attacks which urge her to hate Almighty God, are fears, are tortures of the soul, are efforts of the enemy; but they are not voluntary, and therefore they are not sins. The sincere lover of Jesus Christ resists valiantly on such occasions, and withholds all consent to such suggestions; but because of the darkness which envelops her, she knows not how to distinguish, her soul is thrown into confusion, and the privation of the presence of divine grace makes her fearful and sad. But it can be soon discovered that in these souls, thus tried by God, all is dread and apprehension, but not truth: only ask them, even in their state of desolation, whether they would willingly commit one single deliberate venial sin; they will answer, that they are ready to suffer not one, but a thousand deaths, rather than be guilty of such displeasure to Almighty God.

It is necessary, therefore, to make this distinction, that it is one thing to perform an act of virtue, such as to repel a temptation, to trust in God, to love God, and to will what he wills; and it is another thing to have the consciousness of really making these good acts. This consciousness of doing good contributes to our pleasure; but the profit consists in the first point, that is, in actually doing good. With the first God is satisfied, and deprives the soul of the latter—that is, of the consciousness of doing good, in order thus to remove from her all self-satisfaction, which adds nothing to the merit of the action; for our Lord seeks more our real advantage than our own satisfaction. St. John of the Cross wrote the following words of comfort to a desolate soul: “You were never in a better state than at present; for you were never so deeply humbled, and so cut off from all attachment to this world, and at the same time you were never so thoroughly impressed with the conviction of your own wickedness. Neither were you ever so divested and purified of all self-seeking as now.”[6624] Let us, then, not believe that when we feel a greater tenderness of devotion we are more beloved by God; for perfection does not consist in that, but in the mortification of our own will, and in its union with the will of God.

Wherefore, in this state of desolation the soul must not heed the devil, when he suggests that God has abandoned her; nor must she leave off prayer. This is the object at which the devil is aiming, in order afterwards to drag her down some precipice. St. Teresa writes: “The Lord proves his true lovers by dryness and temptations. What though the dryness should be of lifelong duration, let the soul never relax in prayer; the time will arrive when all will be abundantly repaid.”[6625] In such a state of suffering, a person should humble himself by the reflection that his offences against God are undeserving of any milder treatment: he should humble himself, and be fully resigned to the divine will, saying: O my Lord, behold me at

Thy feet; if it be Thy will that I should remain thus desolate and afflicted for my whole life, and even for all eternity, only grant me Thy grace and the gift of Thy love, and do with me whatever Thou wilt.

It will be useless then, and perhaps a source of greater disquiet, to wish to assure yourself that you are in the grace of God, and that what you experience is only a trial, and not abandonment on the part of God. At such times it is not the will of God that you should have this assurance; and he so wills it for your greater advantage, in order that you may humble yourself the more, and increase your prayers and acts of confidence in his mercy. You desire to see, and God wills that you should not see. For the rest, St. Francis de Sales says: “The resolution not to consent to any sin, however small, is a sure sign that we are in God’s grace.”[6626] But a soul in profound desolation cannot even clearly discern this resolution; nevertheless, in such a state she must not aim at feeling what she wills; it is enough to will with the point of the will. In this manner she should entirely abandon herself into the arms of the divine goodness. Oh, how do such acts of confidence and resignation ravish the heart of God, when made in the midst of the darkness of desolation! Ah, let us simply trust in a God, who (as St. Teresa says) loves us far better than we love ourselves.

Let these souls, then, so dear to God, and who are resolutely determined to belong entirely to him, take comfort, although at the same time they see themselves deprived of every consolation. Their desolation is a sign of their being very acceptable to God, and that he has for them a place prepared in his heavenly kingdom, which overflows with consolations as full as they are lasting. And let them hold for certain, that the more they are afflicted in the present life, so much the more they shall be consoled in eternity: *According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, Thy comforts have given joy to my soul.*[6627]

EXAMPLE

For the encouragement of souls in desolation, I will here mention what is related in the life of St. Jane Frances de Chantal.

For the space of forty years she was tormented by the most fearful interior trials, by temptations, by fears of being in enmity with God, and of being even quite forsaken by him. Her afflictions were so excruciating and unremitting, that she declared her sole ray of comfort came from the thought of death. Moreover she said: “I am so furiously assaulted, that I know not where to hide my poor soul. I seem at times on the point of losing all patience, and of giving up all as utterly lost.” “The tyrant of temptation is so relentless,” she says, “that any hour of the day I would gladly barter it with the loss of my life; and sometimes it happens that I can neither eat nor sleep.”[6628]

During the last eight or nine years of her life, her temptations became still more violent. Mother de Chatel said that her saintly Mother de Chantal suffered a continual interior martyrdom night and day, at prayer, at work, and even during sleep; so that she felt the deepest compassion for her. The saint endured assaults against every virtue (except chastity), and had likewise to contend with doubts, darkness, and disgusts. Sometimes God would withdraw all lights from her, and seem indignant with her, and just on the point of expelling her from him; so that terror drove her to look in some other direction for relief: but failing to find any, she was obliged to return to look on God, and to abandon herself to his mercy. She seemed each moment ready to yield to the violence of her temptations. The divine assistance did not indeed forsake her; but it seemed to her to have done so, since, instead of finding satisfaction in anything, she found only weariness and anguish in prayer, in reading spiritual books, in Communion, and in all other exercises of piety. Her sole resource in this state of dereliction was to look upon God, and to let him do his will.

The saint said: “In all my abandonments my mere life is a new cross to me, and my incapability of action adds considerably to its heaviness.” And it was therefore that she compared herself to a sick person overwhelmed with sufferings, unable to turn from one side to the other, speechless, so as not to be able to express his ills, and blind, so as not to discern whether the attendants are administering to him medicine or poison. And then, weeping bitterly, she added, “I seem to be without faith, without hope, and without love for my God.” Nevertheless, the saint maintained throughout her serenity of countenance and affability in conversation, and kept her looks fixedly bent towards God, in the bosom of whose blessed will she constantly reposed. Wherefore St. Francis de Sales, who was her director, and knew well what an object of predilection her beautiful soul was to

Almighty God, wrote thus of her: “Her heart resembled a deaf musician, who, though he may sing most exquisitely, can derive no pleasure from it himself.” And to herself he wrote as follows: “You must endeavor to serve your Saviour solely through love of his blessed will, utterly deprived of consolations, and overwhelmed by a deluge of fears and sadness.”[6629] It is thus that the saints are formed:

“Long did the chisels ring around,
Long did the mallet’s blows rebound,
Long work’d the head and toil’d the hand,
Ere stood thy stones as now they stand.”[6630]

The saints of whom the Church sings are precisely these choice stones, which are reduced to shapeliness and beauty by the strokes of the chisel,—that is, by temptations, by fears, by darkness, and other torments, internal and external,—till at length they are made worthy to be enthroned in the blessed kingdom of Paradise.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Jesus, my hope, my love and only love of my soul, I deserve not Thy consolations and sweet visitations; keep them for those innocent souls that have always loved Thee; sinner that I am, I do not deserve them, nor do I ask for them: this only do I ask, give me grace to love Thee, to accomplish Thy adorable will during my whole life; and then dispose of me as Thou pleasest! Unhappy me! far other darkness, other terrors, other abandonments would be due to the outrages which I have done Thee: hell were my just award, where, separated from Thee forever, and totally abandoned by Thee, I should shed tears eternally, without ever being able to love Thee more. But no, my Jesus, I accept of every punishment; only spare me this. Thou art deserving of an infinite love; Thou hast placed me under an excessive obligation of loving Thee; oh, no, I cannot trust myself to live and not love Thee! I do love Thee, my sovereign good; I love Thee with my whole heart; I love Thee more than myself; I love Thee, and have no other desire than to love Thee. I own that this my good-will is the pure effect of Thy grace; but do Thou, O my Lord, perfect Thy own work; withdraw not Thy helping hand till death! Oh, never for a moment leave me in my own hands; give me strength to vanquish temptations and to overcome myself; and for this end give me grace always to have recourse to Thee! I wish to belong wholly to Thee; I give Thee my body, my soul, my will, and my liberty; I will no longer live for myself, but for Thee alone, my Creator, my Redeemer, my love, and my all: my God and my all.[6631] I desire to become a saint, and I hope this of Thee. Afflict me as Thou wilt, deprive me of all; only deprive me not of Thy grace and of Thy love.

O Mary, the hope of sinners, great is thy power with God; I confide fully in thy intercession: I entreat thee by thy love of Jesus Christ, help me, and make me a saint!

ABSTRACT OF THE VIRTUES TREATED OF IN THIS WORK, TO BE PRACTISED BY HIM WHO LOVES JESUS CHRIST

I

We must patiently endure the tribulations of this life—ill-health, sorrows, poverty, losses, bereavement of kindred, affronts, persecutions, and all that is disagreeable. Let us invariably look on the trials of this world as signs of God’s love towards us, and of his desire to save us in the world to come. And let us, moreover, be fully persuaded that the involuntary mortifications which God himself sends us are far more pleasing to him than those which are the fruit of our own choice.

In sickness let us endeavor to resign ourselves entirely to the will of God; no devout exercise is more acceptable to him than this. If at such times we are unable to meditate, let us fix our eyes on our crucified Lord, and offer him our sufferings in union with all that he endured for us upon the cross. And when we are told that we are about to die, let us accept the tidings with tranquility and in the spirit of sacrifice; that is, with the desire to die, in order to give pleasure to Jesus Christ: it was the like desire that gave all the merit to the death of the martyrs. We should then say: O Lord, behold me here with no other will but Thine own blessed will; I am willing to suffer as much as Thou pleasest; I wish to die whenever Thou wilt. Nor should we then wish to have our life prolonged, in order to do penance for our sins; to accept death with perfect resignation outweighs all other penance.

We must likewise practise conformity to the will of God in bearing poverty and the various inconveniences which accompany it: cold, hunger, fatigue, contempt, and scorn.

Nor should we be less resigned to losses, whether of property or of relatives and friends, on whom our ease and happiness depended. Let us acquire the good habit of saying in every adversity: God hath so willed it, and so I will it likewise. And at the death of our relatives, instead of wasting time in fruitless tears, let us employ it in praying for their souls; and offer to Jesus Christ, in their behalf, the pain of our bereavement.

Let us, moreover, force ourselves to endure scorn and insult with patience and tranquillity. Let us answer terms of outrage and injury with words of gentleness; but as long as we feel ourselves disturbed, the best plan is to keep silence, till the mind grows tranquil. Meanwhile let us not be fretfully speaking to others of the affront we have received, but in silence offer it to Jesus Christ, who endured so much for us.

II

Behave kindly to all, to Superiors and inferiors, to the high-born and peasant, to relatives and strangers; but more especially to the poor and infirm, and, above all, to those who regard us with an evil eye.

Gentleness in the correction of faults is more efficacious than any other means or reasons that may be employed. Be therefore on your guard against correcting in a fit of passion; for then harshness is sure to be mingled with it, either in word or action. Beware likewise of correcting the person in fault while he is excited; for in like cases the result is exasperation instead of improvement.

III

Envy not the great ones of this world then riches, honors, dignities, or applause given them by men; but envy rather those who most love Jesus Christ, who undoubtedly enjoy greater happiness than the first monarchs of the earth. Return thanks to the Lord for enlightening you to discover the vanity of all wordly things, for the sake of which so many unhappily perish.

IV

In all our actions and thoughts let us seek only the pleasure of Almighty God, and not our private satisfaction; and let us therefore lay aside all disquietude when our efforts are attended with failure. And when we succeed, let us be no less cautious against seeking the thanks and approbation of men; should they murmur against us, let us pay no attention to this; our consolation will be to have striven to please God, and not men.

V

The chief means of perfection are:

1. To avoid all deliberate sin, however small. Should we, however, happen unfortunately to commit a fault, let us refrain from becoming angry and impatient with ourselves: we must, on such occasions, quietly repent of it; and while we make an act of love to Jesus Christ, and beg his help, we must promise him not to repeat the fault.

2. To have an earnest desire to acquire the perfection of the saints, and to suffer all things to please Jesus Christ; and if we have not this desire, to beseech Jesus Christ, through his bounty, to grant it us; since, as long as we do not feel a sincere desire of becoming saints, we shall never make one step forward in the way of perfection.

3. To have a firm resolution of arriving at perfection: whoever is wanting in this resolution, works but languidly, and in the occasion does not overcome his repugnances; whereas a resolute soul, by the divine aid, which never fails her, surmounts every obstacle.

4. To make make daily two hours’ or at least one hours’ mental prayer; and, except in case of urgent necessity, never to relinquish it for the sake of any weariness, dryness, or trouble that we may experience.

5. To frequent Holy Communion several times a week, in obedience to the counsel of our director; for frequent Communion should not be practised against the consent of our director. The same rule holds good with regard to external mortifications, such as fasting, wearing the cilice, taking the discipline, and the rest; mortifications of this kind, when practised without obedience to our spiritual director, will either destroy health or produce vainglory. So that it is necessary for each one to have his own director, so that all may be regulated in obedience to him.

6. To pray continually, by having recourse to Jesus Christ in all our necessities, by invoking likewise the intercession of our Angel Guardian, of our Holy Patrons, and most particularly of the divine Mother, through whose hands Almighty God bestows all graces upon us. It has already been shown, at the end of Chapter IV., that our welfare entirely depends on prayer. We must especially not pass a day without begging God to grant us the gift of perseverance in his grace; whosoever asks for this perseverance obtains it, but he that does not ask for it obtains it not, and is damned: we

must pray, too, that Jesus Christ may grant us his holy love and perfect conformity with his divine will. Neither should we forget to pray for every grace through the merits of Jesus Christ. We must first make these prayers when we rise in the morning, and afterwards repeat them in our meditation, at Holy Communion, at the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and again in the evening at the examination of conscience. We must particularly cry to God for help in the time of temptation, and more especially in temptations against purity, when we should not cease to call for succor on the holy names of Jesus and Mary. He that prays, conquers; he that prays not, is conquered.

VI

With respect to humility, not to pride ourselves on riches, honors, high birth, talents, or any other natural advantage, and still less on any spiritual gift, reflecting that all are the gifts of God. To consider ourselves the worst of all, and consequently to delight in being despised by others; and not to act as some do, who declare themselves the worst of men, and at the same time wish to be treated as the best. Moreover, to receive corrections humbly, and without attempts to excuse ourselves, and this even though blamed wrongfully; except when to defend ourselves would be necessary in order to prevent others being scandalized.

Much more ought we to banish all desire of appearing in public, and of being honored by the world. The maxim of St. Francis should never be out of our sight: “We are just what we are before God.” It would be still worse for a religious to covet posts of honor and superiority in his community. The true honor of a religious is to be the most humble of all; and he is the humblest of all who most joyfully embraces humiliations.

VII

Detach your heart from all creatures. Whoever continues bound by the slightest fondness to things of earth can never rise to a perfect union with God.

To detach ourselves especially from an undue affection for our relatives. It was said by St. Philip Neri, that “whatever affection we bestow on creatures is so much taken from God."[6632] In deciding on a state of life, we must be quite unbiased by the advice of parents, who generally keep their own interests in view, rather than our real welfare.

Cast away all considerations of human respect, and of the vain esteem of men; and, above all, be detached from self-will. We must leave all, in order to gain all. "All for all,"[6633] writes Thomas à Kempis.

VIII

Not to give way to anger, whatever happens; but if perchance the sparks of passion are suddenly lighted in our breasts, let us call on God, and refrain from acting or speaking till we are sure that our anger is appeased. We shall find it of great service to arm ourselves in prayer against every chance of irritation that may befall us, in order not then to give way to culpable resentment; we should always remember that saying of St. Francis de Sales: "I never remember to have been angry without afterwards regretting it."

IX

All sanctity consists in loving God, and all love of God consists in doing his blessed will. We must, therefore, bow with resignation to all the dispositions of divine Providence without reserve; and so cheerfully submit to the adversity as well as prosperity which God sends, to the state of life in which God places us, to the sort of health which God bestows on us: and this should be the grand aim of all our prayers, namely, that God would enable us to fulfil his holy will in all things. And in order to be certain of the divine will, the religious must depend on obedience to his Superior, and those who are in the world to their confessor; for nothing is more certain than that saying of St. Philip Neri: "We shall have no account to render to God of what is done through obedience." Which is to be understood, of course, as long as there is no evident sin in the command.

X

There are two remedies against temptations: *resignation* and *prayer. Resignation,* for though temptations do not come from God, yet he permits them for our good. Wherefore beware of yielding to vexation, however annoying the temptations may be; be resigned to the will of God, who allows them; and take up the arms of prayer, which are the most powerful and the most certain to overcome our enemies. Bad thoughts, however filthy and abominable, are not sins; it is only the consenting to them which makes the sin. We shall never be overcome as long as we call on the holy names of Jesus and Mary. During the assaults of temptation, it is of service to renew our resolution to suffer death rather than to offend God; it is also a good practice repeatedly to sign ourselves with the sign of the cross, and with holy water; it is of great help, too, to discover the temptation to the confessor. But prayer is the most necessary remedy, and continual cries for help to Jesus and Mary.

XI

Then as to spiritual desolations, there are two acts in which we ought principally to exercise ourselves: 1st, to humble ourselves, with the sincere avowal that we deserve no better treatment; 2d, to resign ourselves to the will of God, and to abandon ourselves into the arms of his divine goodness. When God favors us with consolations, let us prepare ourselves for coming trials, which generally follow consolations. If it please God to leave us in desolation, let us be humble and fully resigned to his divine will, and we shall thus reap far greater advantage from desolations than from consolations.

XII

In order to live always well, we must store up deeply in our minds certain general maxims of eternal life, such as the following:

All passes away in this life, whether it be joy or sorrow; but in eternity nothing passes away.

What good is all the greatness of this world at the hour of death?

All that comes from God, whether it be adverse or prosperous, all is good, and is for our welfare.

We must leave all, to gain all.

There is no peace to be found without God.

To love God and save one’s soul is the one thing needful.

We need only be afraid of sin.

If God be lost, all is lost.

He that desires nothing in this world is master of the whole world.

He that prays is saved, and he that prays not is damned.

Let me die, and give God pleasure.

God is cheap at any cost.

Every pain is slight to him who has deserved hell.

He bears all who looks on Jesus crucified.

Everything becomes a pain that is not done for God.

Whoever wishes for God alone is rich in every good.

Happy the man who can say: “My Jesus, I desire Thee alone, and nothing more!”

He that loves God, finds pleasure in everything; he that loves not God, finds no true pleasure in anything.

NOVENA TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

CONSISTING OF MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE NOVENA, BEGINNING WITH THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION, TILL THE EVE OF PENTECOST INCLUSIVELY

The Novena to the Holy Spirit is the chief of all the Novenas, because it was the first that was ever celebrated, and that by the holy Apostles and the most holy Mary in the supper-room, and distinguished by so many remarkable wonders and gifts; principally by the gift of the same Holy Spirit, a gift merited for us by the Passion of Jesus Christ himself. Jesus himself made this known to us, when he said to his disciples, that if he did not die, he could not send us the Holy Ghost: *If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.*[6634] We know well by faith that the Holy Ghost is the love that the Father and the Eternal Word bear one to the other; and therefore the gift of love, which the Lord infuses into our souls, and which is the greatest of all gifts, is particularly attributed to the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says: *The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.*[6635] In this Novena, therefore, we must consider, above all, the great value of divine love, in order that we may desire to obtain it, and endeavor, by devout exercises, and specially by prayer, to be made partakers of it, since God has promised it to him who asks for it with humility: *Your Father from heaven will give the good Spirit to them that ask Him.*[6636]

MEDITATIONS

MEDITATION I

LOVE IS A FIRE THAT INFLAMES THE HEART

God had ordered, in the ancient law, that there should be a fire kept continually burning on his altar: *The fire on the altar shall always burn.*[6637] St. Gregory[6638] says, that the altars of God are our hearts, where he desires that the fire of his divine love should always be burning; and therefore the Eternal Father, not satisfied with having given us his Son Jesus Christ, to save us by his death, would also give us the Holy Ghost, that he might dwell in our souls, and keep them constantly on fire with love.

And Jesus himself declared, that he had come into the world on purpose to inflame our hearts with this holy fire, and that he desired nothing more than to see it kindled: *I am come to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?*[6639] Forgetting, therefore, the injuries and ingratitude he received from men on this earth, when he had ascended into heaven he sent down upon us the Holy Spirit. O most loving Redeemer, Thou dost, then, love us as well in Thy sufferings and ignominies as in Thy kingdom of glory! Hence it was that the Holy Ghost chose to appear in the supper-room under the form of tongues of fire: *And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were of fire.*[6640] And hence the Church teaches us to pray: "May the Holy Ghost, we beseech Thee, O Lord, inflame us with that fire which our Lord Jesus Christ came to cast upon the earth, and which he ardently desired should be enkindled."[6641]

This was the holy fire which has inflamed the saints to do so great things for God, to love their enemies, to desire contempt, to deprive themselves of all earthly goods, and to embrace with delight even torments and death. Love cannot remain idle, and never says, "It is enough." The soul that loves God, the more she does for her beloved, the more she desires to do, in order to please him, and to attract to herself his affections the more.

This holy fire is enkindled by mental prayer: *In my meditation a fire shall flame out.*[6642] If, therefore, we desire to burn with love towards God, let us love prayer; this is the blessed furnace in which this divine ardor is enkindled.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my God, hitherto I have done nothing for Thee, who hast done such great things for me! Alas! my coldness deserves that Thou shouldst "vomit me out of Thy mouth." O Holy Spirit, I beseech Thee, "warm what is cold,"[6643] deliver me from this coldness, and enkindle within me an earnest desire of pleasing Thee. I now renounce all my worldly gratifications; and I will rather die than give Thee the least displeasure. Thou didst appear in the shape of fiery tongues; I consecrate my tongue to Thee, that it may never offend Thee more. Thou didst give it me, O my God, to praise Thee with; and I have made use of it to offend Thee, and to draw others also into sinning against Thee. I repent of this with my whole soul. Oh, for the love of Jesus Christ, who, during his life on earth, honored Thee so much with his tongue, grant that I also may from this day forth honor Thee constantly, by celebrating Thy praises, by frequently invoking Thy aid, and by speaking of Thy goodness and the infinite love which Thou deservest! I love Thee, my sovereign good, I love Thee, O God of love! O Mary, thou art the most dear spouse of the Holy Ghost, obtain for me this holy fire!

MEDITATION II

LOVE IS A LIGHT THAT ENLIGHTENS THE SOUL

One of the greatest evils that the sin of Adam has produced in us, is that darkening of our reason by means of the passions which cloud our mind. Oh, how miserable is that soul that allows itself to be ruled by any passion! Passion, is as it were, a vapor, a veil which prevents us from seeing the truth. How can he fly from evil, who does not know what is evil? Besides, this obscurity increases in proportion as our sins increase. But the Holy Spirit, who is called “most blessed light,”[6644] is he who not only inflames our hearts to love him, through his divine splendor, but also dispels our darkness, and shows us the vanity of earthly things, the value of eternal goods, the importance of salvation, the price of grace, the goodness of God, the infinite love which he deserves, and the immense love which he bears us. *The sensual man perceiveth not those things that are of the Spirit of God.*[6645] A man who is absorbed in the pleasures of earth knows little of these truths, and therefore, unfortunate that he is, he loves what he ought to hate, and hates what he ought to love. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi exclaimed: O love not known! O love not loved!” And therefore St. Teresa said that God is not loved because he is not known. Hence the saints were always seeking light from God: *Send forth Thy light;*[6646] *illuminate my darkness;*[6647] *open Thou my eyes.*[6648] Yes: because without light we cannot avoid precipices, nor can we find God.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O holy and divine Spirit, I believe that Thou art really God, but one only God with the Father and the Son. I adore Thee, and acknowledge Thee as the giver of all those lights by which Thou hast made known to me the evil which I have committed in offending Thee, and the obligation which I am under of loving Thee. I thank Thee for them, and I repent with my whole heart of having offended Thee. I have deserved that Thou shouldst abandon me in my darkness; but I see that Thou hast not yet forsaken me. Continue, O eternal Spirit, to enlighten me, and to make me know more and more Thy infinite goodness; and give me strength to love Thee for the future with my whole heart. Add grace to grace; so that I may be sweetly overcome, and constrained to love none other but Thee. I implore this of Thee, through the merits of Jesus Christ. I love Thee, my sovereign good; I love Thee more than myself. I desire to be entirely Thine; do Thou accept me, and suffer me not to be separated from Thee any more. O Mary, my Mother, do thou always assist me by thy intercession!

MEDITATION III

LOVE IS A FOUNTAIN THAT SATISFIES

Love is also called a living fountain: “a living fountain, fire, and charity.”[6649] Our Blessed Redeemer said to the Samaritan woman: *But he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst for ever.*[6650] Love is the water which satisfies our thirst; he who loves God really with his whole heart neither seeks nor desires anything else; because in God he finds every good. Wherefore, satisfied with God, he often joyfully exclaims, “My God and my all!” My God, Thou art my whole good.

But the Almighty complains that many souls go about seeking for fleeting and miserable pleasures from creatures, and leave him, who is the infinite good and fountain of all joy: *They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.*[6651] Wherefore God, who loves us, and desires to see us happy, cries out and makes known to all: *If any thirst, let them come to me.*[6652] He who desires to be happy, let him come to me; and I will give him the Holy Ghost, who will make him blessed both in this life and the next. *He that believeth in Me* (he goes on to say), *as the Scripture saith, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*[6653] He therefore, that believes in Jesus Christ, and loves him, shall be enriched with so much grace, that from his heart (the heart, that is, the will), shall flow many fountains of holy virtues, which shall not only serve to preserve his own life, but also to give life to others. And this water was the Holy Ghost, the substantial love which Jesus Christ promised to send us from heaven after his ascension: *Now this He said of the Spirit, which they should receive who believed in Him, for as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*[6654]

The key which opens the channels of this blessed water is holy prayer, which obtains every good for us in virtue of the promise, *Ask, and you shall receive.*[6655] We are blind, poor, and weak; but prayer obtains for us light, strength, and abundance of grace. Theodoret said: “Prayer, though but one, can do all things.”[6656] He who prays receives all he wishes. God desires to give us his graces; but he will have us pray for them.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Lord, give me this water.[6657] O my Jesus, with the Samaritan woman, I beseech Thee, give me this water of Thy love, which may make me forget the earth, to live only for Thee, O amiable, infinite one. “Water that which is dry.” My soul is a barren soil, which produces nothing but the weeds and thorns of sin; oh, do Thou water it with Thy grace, so that it may bring forth some fruits to Thy glory, before death takes me out of this world. O fountain of living water, O sovereign good, how many times have I left Thee for the puddles of this earth, which have deprived me of Thy love! Oh, would that I had died before I offended Thee! But for the future I will seek after nothing but Thee, O my God. Do Thou assist me, and enable me to be faithful to Thee. Mary, my hope, do thou keep me always under thy protection!

MEDITATION IV

LOVE IS A DEW WHICH FERTILIZES

Thus does Holy Church teach us to pray: “May the infusion of the Holy Ghost cleanse our hearts, and fertilize them by the interior sprinkling of his dew."[6658] Love fertilizes the good desires, the holy purposes, and the good works of our souls: these are the flowers and fruits which the grace of the Holy Spirit produces. Love is also called dew, because it cools the heart of bad passions and of temptations. Therefore the Holy Ghost is also called refreshment and cooling in the heat: "In heat refreshment and pleasing coolness."[6659] This dew descends into our hearts in the time of prayer. A quarter of an hour's prayer is sufficient to appease every passion of hatred or of inordinate love, however ardent it r may be: *He brought me into the cellar of wine, He set in order charity in me.*[6660] Holy meditation is this cellar where love is set in order, so that we love our neighbor as ourselves, and God above everything. He who loves God loves prayer; and he that loves not prayer will find it morally impossible to overcome his passions.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O holy and divine Spirit, I will no longer live to myself; but I will spend all the days that remain for me in this life in loving Thee and pleasing Thee. Therefore I beseech Thee to grant me the gift of prayer. Do Thou descend into my heart, and teach me to pray as I ought. Give me strength not to leave it off through weariness in times of aridity; and give me the spirit of prayer, that is to say, the grace constantly to pray to Thee, and to use those prayers which are dearest to Thy Sacred Heart. I was once lost through my sins; but I see, from all the kindnesses I have received from Thee, that Thou willest that I should be saved and become a saint; and I desire to become a saint to give Thee pleasure, and that I may love Thy infinite goodness more and more. I love Thee, O my sovereign good, my love, my all; and because I love Thee I give myself entirely to Thee. O Mary, my hope, do thou protect me!

MEDITATION V

LOVE IS A REPOSE THAT REFRESHES

Love is also called, "in labor rest, in mourning comfort."[6661] Love is repose that refreshes; because the principal office of love is to unite the will of the lover to that of the beloved one. To a soul that loves God, in every affront that it receives, in every sorrow that it endures, in every loss that happens to it, the knowledge that it is the will of its beloved that it should suffer these trials is enough to comfort it. It finds peace and contentment in all tribulations by merely saying, This is the will of my God. This is that peace which surpasses all the pleasure of sense: *The peace of God which surpasseth all understanding.*[6662] St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, by merely saying, “The will of God,” was always filled with joy.

In this life every one must carry his cross; but St. Teresa says, that the cross is heavy for him that drags it, not for him that embraces it. Thus our Lord knows well how to strike and how to heal: *He woundeth, and cureth,* says Job.[6663] The Holy Spirit, by his sweet unction, renders even ignominies and torments sweet and pleasant: *Yea, Lord; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.*[6664] Thus ought we to say in all adversities that happen to us: *So be it done, Lord, because so hath it pleased Thee.* And when the fear of any temporal evil that may befall us alarms us, let us always say: “Do what Thou wilt, my God; whatever Thou doest, I accept it all, henceforth.” And thus it is a very good thing to offer one’s self constantly during the day to God, as did St. Teresa.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my God, how often, for the sake of doing my own will, have I opposed myself to Thy will and despised it! I regret this evil more than every other evil. O Lord, from this day forward I will love Thee with my whole heart: *Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth.*[6665] Tell me what Thou wouldst have me to do, I will do it all. Thy will shall be my only desire, my only love. O Holy Spirit, help my weakness. Thou art goodness itself; how can I love any other but Thee? Oh, do Thou draw all my affections to Thyself by the sweetness of Thy holy love. I renounce everything, to give myself entirely to Thee. Do Thou accept me and help me. O Mary, my Mother, I trust in thee!

MEDITATION VI

LOVE IS THE VIRTUE WHICH GIVES US STRENGTH

Love is strong as death.[6666] As there is no created strength that can resist death, so there is no difficulty for a loving soul that love cannot overcome.

When there is question of pleasing its beloved, love conquers all,—losses, contempt, and sorrow: “Nothing is so hard, but that the fire of love can conquer it.”[6667]

This is the most certain mark whereby to know if a soul really loves God, if it is as faithful in love when things are adverse as when they are prosperous. St. Francis de Sales said, that “God is quite as amiable when he chastises as when he consoles us, because he does all for love.”[6668] Indeed, when he strikes us most in this life, then it is that he loves us most. St. John Chrysostom[6669] esteemed St. Paul in chains more fortunate than St. Paul rapt up into the third heaven.

Hence the holy martyrs, in the midst of their torments, rejoiced and thanked the Lord, as for the greatest favor that could fall to their lot—that of having to suffer for his love. And other saints, where there were wanting tyrants to afflict them, became their own executioners, by the penances which they inflicted upon themselves in order to please God. St. Augustine says, that “For that which men love, either no labor is felt, or the labor itself is loved.”[6670]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O God of my soul, I say that I love Thee; and yet what do I do for Thy love? Nothing. This shows, therefore, that either I do not love Thee, or I love Thee too little. Send me therefore, O my Jesus, Thy Holy Spirit, that he may come and give me strength to suffer for Thy love, and to do something for the love of Thee before death overtakes me. O my beloved Redeemer, let me not die cold and ungrateful as I have hitherto been to Thee. Grant me strength to love suffering, after so many sins whereby I have deserved hell. O my God, who art all goodness and love, Thou desirest to dwell in my heart from which I have so often expelled Thee; come, then, dwell within it, take possession of it, and make it entirely Thine. I love Thee, O my Lord; and if I love Thee, Thou art already with me, as St. John assures me: *He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him.*[6671] Since, therefore, Thou art with me, increase the flames, increase the chains, so that I may neither seek nor love anything else but Thee; and thus bound, may never be separated from Thy love. I desire to be Thine, O my Jesus, and entirely Thine. O Mary, my Queen and Advocate, obtain for me love and perseverance!

MEDITATION VII

LOVE CAUSES GOD TO DWELL IN OUR SOULS

The Holy Ghost is called “Sweet guest of the soul.” This was the great promise made by Jesus Christ to those who love him, when he said: *If you love Me, I will pray My Father, and He will send you the Holy Spirit, that He may always dwell in you. If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever.*[6672] For the Holy Spirit never forsakes a soul, says the Council of Trent, if he is not driven away from it: “He does not forsake, unless he be first forsaken.”[6673]

God, then, dwells in a soul that loves him; but he declares that he is not satisfied if we do not love him with our whole heart. St. Augustine tells us, that the Roman senate would not admit Jesus Christ into the number of their gods, because they said that he was a proud god, who would have none other beloved but himself. And so it is: he will have no rivals in the heart that loves him; and when he sees that he is not the only object loved, he is jealous (so to say), according to what St. James writes, of those creatures who divide with him the heart which he desires to have all to himself: *Do you think the Scripture saith in vain: To envy doth the spirit covet which dwelleth in you?*[6674] In short, as St. Jerome says, “Jesus is jealous.”[6675] Hence the heavenly Spouse praises that soul which, like the turtle-dove, lives in solitude and hidden from the world: *Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle-doves.*[6676] Because he does not choose that the world should take a part of that love which he desires to have all to himself, therefore he also praises his Spouse by calling her “a garden enclosed:” *My sister, My spouse, is a garden enclosed.*[6677] A garden closed against all earthly love. Do we doubt that Jesus deserves our whole love? “He gave himself wholly to thee,” says St. John Chrysostom; “He left nothing for himself.”[6678] He has given thee all his blood and his life; there remains nothing more for him to give thee.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my God, I see that Thou desirest to have me entirely for Thine own. I have oftentimes driven Thee from my soul, and yet Thou hast not disdained to return to me and reunite Thyself to me again. Oh, do Thou now take possession of my whole self. I give myself this day entirely to Thee; accept of me, O my Jesus, and let me never for the future live one moment deprived of Thy love. Thou seekest me, and I seek none other but Thee. Thou desirest my soul, and my soul desires none but Thee. Thou lovest me, and I love Thee; and since Thou lovest me, bind me to Thyself, so that I may never more be separated from Thee. O Queen of heaven, I trust in thee!

MEDITATION VIII

LOVE IS A BOND WHICH BINDS

As the Holy Spirit, who is uncreated love, is the indissoluble bond which binds the Father to the Eternal Word, so he also unites the soul to God. “Charity is a virtue,” says St. Augustine, “uniting us to God.”[6679] Hence, full of joy, St. Laurence Justinian exclaims: O love, thy bond has such strength, that it is able to bind even God, and unite him to our souls: “O love, how strong is thy bond, which could bind God!”[6680]

The bonds of the world are bonds of death; but the bonds of God are bonds of life and salvation: *Her bonds are a healthful binding.*[6681] Yes, because the bonds of God by means of love unite us to God, who is our true and only life.

Before the coming of Jesus Christ men fled away from God, and being attached to the earth, refused to unite themselves to their Creator; but the loving God has drawn them to himself by the bonds of love, as he promised by the prophet Osee: *I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love.*[6682] These bands are the benefits, the lights, the calls to his love, the promises of paradise, which he makes to us; but above all, the gift which he has bestowed upon us of Jesus Christ in the Sacrifice of the Cross and in the Sacrament of the Altar, and finally, the gift of his Holy Spirit. Therefore the prophet exclaims: *Loose the bonds from off thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.*[6683] O my soul, thou who art created for heaven, loose thyself from the bonds of earth, and unite thyself to God by the bonds of holy love: *Have charity, which is the bond of perfection.*[6684] Love is a bond which unites to herself all other virtues, and makes the soul perfect. “Love, and do what you will,”[6685] said St. Augustine. Love God, and do what thou wilt; because he who loves God tries to avoid causing any displeasure to his beloved, and seeks in all things to please him.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dearest Jesus, how much hast Thou not done to oblige me to love Thee, and how much hath it cost Thee to gain to Thyself my love! Ah, I should be too ungrateful if I loved Thee little, or divided my heart between Thy creatures and Thyself, after Thou hast given me Thy blood and Thy life. I will detach myself from everything, and in Thee alone will I place all my affections. But I am weak in carrying out this my desire; O Thou who hast inspired me with it, do Thou give me strength to execute it. Pierce my poor soul, O dearest Jesus, with the sweet dart of Thy love, so that I may ever languish with desire of Thee, and be dissolved with the love of Thee; that I may seek Thee alone, desire only Thee, and find none but Thee. My Jesus, I desire Thee, and Thee alone. Make me repeat continually in this life, and especially at the hour of my death, “Thee alone do I desire, and nothing else.” O Mary, my Mother, obtain for me that henceforth I may desire nothing but God.

MEDITATION IX

LOVE IS A TREASURE CONTAINING EVERY GOOD

Love is that treasure of which the Gospel says that we must leave all to obtain it; yes, because love makes us partakers of the friendship of God: *An infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.*[6686] O man, says St. Augustine, wherefore, then, goest thou about seeking for good things? seek that one good alone in which all other good things are contained. But we cannot find God, who is this sovereign good, if we do not forsake the things of the earth. St. Teresa writes, “Detach thy heart from creatures, and thou shalt find God.”[6687]

He that finds God finds all that he can desire: *Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart.*[6688] The human heart is constantly seeking after good things that may render it happy; but if it seeks them from creatures, how much soever it may acquire, it will never be satisfied with them; but if it seeks God alone, God will satisfy all its desires. Who are the happiest people in this world, if it be not the saints? And why? Because they desire and seek only God.

A certain prince, as he was going out hunting, saw a solitary who was running about in the forest, and asked him what he was doing in that desert. The solitary replied, “And thou, O prince, what art thou seeking?” The prince said, “I am going out in search of wild beasts.” “And I,” said the hermit, “am going out in search of God.” The tyrant offered gold and gems to St. Clement, in order to persuade him to renounce Jesus Christ; the saint exclaimed, with a sigh, “Alas, is God put into competition with a little dirt? Blessed is he who knows this treasure of divine love, and strives to obtain it. He who obtains it will of his own accord divest himself of everything else, that he may have nothing else but God.” “When the house is on fire,” says St. Francis de Sales, “all the goods are thrown out of the window.”[6689] And Father Paul Segneri the Younger, a great servant of God, used to say, that love is a thief, which robs us of all earthly affections; so that we can say, “And what else do I desire, but Thee alone, O my Lord?”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my God, hitherto I have not sought Thee, but myself and my own pleasures; and for the sake of these I have turned my back upon Thee, my sovereign good. But I am comforted by these words of Jeremias, *The Lord is good to the soul that secketh Him.*[6690] They tell me that Thou art all goodness towards him who seeks Thee. My beloved Saviour, I know the evil that I have committed in forsaking Thee, and I repent of it with my whole heart. I know that Thou art an infinite treasure. I will not abuse this light; I will forsake all, and choose Thee for my only love. My God, my love, my all, I love Thee, I desire Thee, I sigh after Thee. Come, O Holy Spirit, and destroy in me by Thy sacred fire every affection which has not Thee for its object. Grant that I may be all Thine, and that I may conquer everything to please Thee. O Mary, my advocate and Mother, do thou help me by thy prayers!

MEDITATION X

THE MEANS OF LOVING GOD AND OF BECOMING A SAINT

The more we love God, the more holy do we become. St. Francis Borgia says that it is prayer that introduces divine love into the human heart; and it is mortification that withdraws the heart from the earth, and renders it capable of receiving this holy fire. The more there is of the earth in the heart, the less room there is for holy love: *Wisdom is not to be found in the land of them that live in delights.*[6691] Hence the saints have always sought to mortify as much as possible their self-love and their senses. The saints are few; but we must live with the few, if we will be saved with the few: “Live with the few,” writes St. John Climacus, “if you would reign with the few.”[6692] And St. Bernard says, “That cannot be perfect which is not singular.”[6693] He who would lead a perfect life must lead a singular life.

But before all, in order to become saints, it is necessary to have the desire to be saints; we must have the desire and the resolution. Some are always desiring, but they never begin to put their hands to the work. “Of these irresolute souls,” says St. Teresa, “the devil has no fear.” On the other hand, the saint said, “God is a friend of generous souls.” The devil tries to make it appear to us to be pride to think of doing great things for God. It would indeed be pride in us, if we thought of doing them, trusting in our own strength; but it is not pride to resolve to become saints, trusting in God, and saying, *I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.*[6694]

We must therefore be of good courage, make strong resolutions, and begin. Prayer can do everything. What we cannot do by our own strength, we shall do easily with the help of God, who has promised to give us whatever we ask of him: *You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.*[6695]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dearest Redeemer, Thou desirest my love, and commandest me to love Thee with my whole heart. Yes, my Jesus, I desire to love Thee with my whole heart. O my God, I will say to Thee, trusting in Thy mercy, my past sins do not make me fear, because I now hate them and detest them above every other evil; and I know that Thou dost forget the offences of a soul that is penitent and loves Thee. Indeed, because I have offended Thee more than others, I will also love Thee more than others, with the help that I hope to obtain from Thee. O my Lord, Thou desirest that I should be a saint; and I desire to become a saint to please Thee. I love Thee, O infinite goodness. To Thee do I give myself entirely. Thou art my only good, my only love. Accept of me, O my beloved, and make me entirely Thine, and suffer me not to offend Thee any more. Grant that I may be wholly consumed for Thee, as Thou hast wholly consumed Thyself for me, O Mary, the most loving and most beloved spouse of the Holy Spirit, obtain for me love and fidelity!

Pions Exercise to obtain the Seven Gifts of the holy Ghost[6696]

Spiritus Sancti gratia illuminet sensus et corda nostra. Amen.	May the grace of the Holy Spirit enlighten our minds and hearts. Amen.
Veni, Creator Spiritus!	Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come,
Mentes tuorum visita;	From Thy bright heavenly throne;
Imple, superna gratia,	Come, take possession of our souls,
Quœ tu creasti pectora.	And make them all Thy own.
Qui diceris Paraclitus,	Thou who art called the Paraclete,
Altissimi Donum Dei;	Best gift of God above;
Fons vivus, Ignis, Charitas,	The living spring, the living fire,
Et spiritalis Unctio.	Sweet unction and true love.
Tu septiformis munere,	Thou who art sevenfold in Thy grace,
Digitus Paternœ dexterœ;	Finger of God’s right hand;
Tu rite Promissum Patris,	His promise teaching little ones
Sermone ditans guttura.	To speak and understand.
Accende lumen sensibus,	Oh! guide our minds with Thy blest light,
Infunde amorem cordibus;	With love our hearts inflame;
Infirma nostri corporis,	And with Thy strength, which ne’er decays,
Virtute firmans perpeti.	Confirm our mortal frame.
Hostem repellas longius,	Far from us drive our hellish foe,
Pacemque dones protinus;	True peace unto us bring;
Ductore sic te prœvio,	And through all perils lead us safe,

Vitemus omne noxium.	Beneath Thy sacred wing.
Per te sciamus da Patrem;	Through Thee may we the Father know;
Noscamus atque Filium,	Through Thee the Eternal Son,
Teque, utriusque Spiritum,	And Thee, the Spirit of them both;
Credamus omni tempore.	Thrice blessed Three in One.
Deo Patri sit gloria	All glory to the Father be
Ejusque soli Filio,	With his coequal Son,
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,	The like to Thee, great Paraclete,
Nunc et per omne saculum. Amen.	While endless ages run. Amen.
Emitte Spiritum tuum, et creabuntur.	Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created.
Et renovabis faciem terrœ.	And shalt renew the face of the earth.
OREMUS.	LET US PRAY.
Adsit nobis, quæsumus, Domine, virtus Spiritus Sancti, quæ et corda nostra clementer expurget et ab omnibus tueatur adversis. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.	Assist us, O Lord, we beseech Thee, with the power of Thy Holy Spirit, that our hearts may be purified according to Thy mercy, and we be defended from all adversities. Amen.
Deus, in adjutorium meum intende.—Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.	Incline unto my aid, O God!—O Lord! make haste to help me.
Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.—Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.	Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.—As it was in the beginning, is now, and

ever shall be, world without end. Amen

FIRST PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Holy Spirit, divine consoler! I adore Thee as my true God, just as I adore God the Father and God the Son. I bless Thee by uniting myself to the blessings that Thou dost receive from the angels and the seraphs. I offer Thee my whole heart, and I render Thee heartfelt thanks for all the benefits that Thou hast bestowed and dost unceasingly bestow upon the world. Thou who art the author of all supernatural gifts, and who didst enrich with immense favors the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, I beseech Thee to visit me by Thy grace and Thy love, and to grant me the gift of Thy holy Fear in order that it may prevent me from falling any more into my past infidelities, for which I now ask you a thousand times to forgive me.

One *Our Father*, one *Hail Mary*, and the *Glory be to the Father* three times.

SECOND PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF PIETY

Holy Spirit, divine consoler! I adore Thee as my true God, just as I adore God the Father, and God the Son. I bless Thee by uniting myself to the blessings that Thou dost receive from the angels and the seraphs. I offer Thee my whole heart, and I render Thee heartfelt thanks for all the benefits that Thou hast bestowed and dost unceasingly bestow upon the world. Thou who art the author of all supernatural gifts, and who didst enrich with immense favors the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, I beseech Thee to visit me by Thy grace and Thy love, and to grant me the gift of piety, in order that I may in future serve Thee with greater fervor, follow with greater promptness Thy holy inspirations, and observe with greater exactness Thy holy precepts.

One *Our Father*, one *Hail Mary*, and the *Glory be to the Father* three times.

THIRD PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE

Holy Spirit, divine consoler, I adore Thee as my true God, just as I adore God the Father and God the Son. I bless Thee by uniting myself to the blessings that Thou dost receive from the angels and the seraphs. I offer Thee my whole heart, and I render Thee heartfelt thanks for all the benefits that Thou hast bestowed and dost unceasingly bestow upon the world. Thou who art the author of all supernatural gifts, and who didst enrich with immense favors the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, I beseech Thee to visit me by Thy grace and Thy love, and to grant me the gift of Knowledge in order that I may be able to know well the things of God, and that enlightened by Thy holy instructions I may steadily walk in the way of my eternal salvation.

One *Our Father*, one *Hail Mary*, and the *Glory be to the Father* three times.

FOURTH PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF FORTITUDE

Holy Spirit, divine consoler! I adore Thee as my true God, just as I adore God the Father and God the Son. I bless Thee by uniting myself to the blessings that Thou dost receive from the angels and seraphs. I offer Thee my whole heart, and I render Thee heartfelt thanks for all the benefits that Thou hast bestowed and dost unceasingly bestow upon the world. Thou who art the author of all supernatural gifts, and who didst enrich with immense favors the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. I beseech Thee to visit me by Thy grace and Thy love, and to grant me the gift of Fortitude, in order that I may be able courageously to overcome all the attacks of the devil, and escape all the dangers of the world that stand in the way of my eternal salvation.

One *Our Father*, one *Hail Mary*, and the *Glory be to the Father* three times.

FIFTH PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF COUNSEL

Holy Spirit, divine consoler! I adore Thee as my true God, just as I adore God the Father and God the Son. I bless Thee by uniting myself to the blessings that Thou dost receive from the angels and seraphs. I offer Thee my whole heart, and I render Thee heartfelt thanks for all the benefits that Thou hast bestowed and dost unceasingly bestow upon the world. Thou who art the author of all supernatural gifts, and who didst enrich with immense favors the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, I beseech Thee to visit me by Thy grace and Thy love, and to grant me the gift of Counsel in order that I may be able to choose what is most suitable to my spiritual advancement, and to discover all the snares and artifices of the evil spirit who tempts me.

One *Our Father*, one *Hail Mary*, and the *Glory be to the Father* three times.

SIXTH PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING

Holy Spirit, divine consoler! I adore Thee as my true God, just as I adore God the Father and God the Son. I bless Thee by uniting myself to the blessings that Thou dost receive from the angels and the seraphs. I offer Thee my whole heart, and I render Thee heartfelt thanks for all the benefits that Thou hast bestowed and dost unceasingly bestow upon the world. Thou who art the author of all supernatural gifts, and who didst enrich with immense favors the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. I beseech Thee to visit me by Thy grace and Thy love, and to grant me the gift of Understanding, in order that I may be able to understand the divine mysteries, and by the contemplation of heavenly things may detach my thoughts and affections from all the vanities of this miserable world.

One *Our Father*, one *Hail Mary*, and the *Glory be to the Father* three times.

SEVENTH PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF WISDOM

Holy Spirit, divine consoler! I adore Thee as my true God, just as I adore God the Father and God the Son. I bless Thee by uniting myself to the blessings that Thou dost receive from the angels and the seraphs. I offer Thee my whole heart, and I render Thee heartfelt thanks for all the benefits that Thou hast bestowed and dost unceasingly bestow upon the world. Thou who art the author of all supernatural gifts, and who didst enrich with immense favors the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. I beseech Thee to visit me by Thy grace and Thy love, and to grant me the gift of Wisdom, in order that I may be able to direct all my actions by referring them to God as my last end, so that by loving and serving Thee in this life as I ought to do, I may have the happiness of eternally possessing Thee in the next.

One *Our Father,* one *Hail Mary,* and the *Glory be to the Father* three times.

HUMBLE SUPPLICATION

Holy Spirit, divine Paraclete, Father of the poor, consoler of the afflicted, light of hearts, sanctifier of souls! behold me prostrate in Thy presence; I adore Thee with the most profound submission, and I repeat a thousand times with the seraphs who are before Thy throne: Holy, Holy, Holy! I firmly believe that Thou art eternal, consubstantial with the Father and the Son. I hope that by Thy goodness Thou wilt sanctify and save my soul. I love Thee, O God of love! I love Thee more than all the things of this world; I love Thee with all my affections, because Thou art infinite goodness that alone dost merit all love; and since, insensible as I have been to Thy holy inspirations, I have been so ungrateful as to offend Thee by so many sins, I ask Thee a thousand pardons for them, and I supremely regret having ever displeased Thee, O sovereign good! I offer Thee my heart cold as it is, and I supplicate Thee to let a ray of Thy light and a spark of Thy fire enter therein to melt the hardened ice of my iniquities. Thou who hast filled with immense graces the soul of Mary, and inflamed with a holy zeal the hearts of the apostles, vouchsafe also to set on fire my heart with Thy love. Thou art a divine Spirit; fortify me against evil spirits: Thou art a fire; enkindle in me the fire of Thy love: Thou art a light; enlighten me so that I may know eternal things: Thou art a dove; give me great purity of heart: Thou art a breath that is full of sweetness; dissipate the storms that my passions raise up against me: Thou art a tongue; teach me the manner of praising Thee without ceasing: Thou art a cloud; cover me with the shadow of Thy protection: and if, finally, Thou art the author of all heavenly gifts, ah, I beseech Thee to grant them to me: vivify me by Thy grace, sanctify me by Thy charity, govern me by Thy wisdom, adopt me by Thy bounty as Thy child, and save me by Thy infinite mercy, so that I may never cease to bless Thee, to praise Thee, to love Thee, at first during my life on this earth, and afterwards for all eternity in heaven. Amen.

Veni, Sancte Spiritus!	Holy Spirit! Lord of light!

Et emitte cœlitus.	From Thy clear celestial height,
Lucis tuæ radium.	Thy pure, beaming radiance give.
Veni, Pater pauperum!	Come, Thou Father of the poor!
Veni, Dator munerum!	Come, with treasures which endure!
Veni, Lumen cordium!	Come, Thou light of all that live!
Consolator optime,	Thou, of all consolers best,
Dulcis Hospes animæ,	Visiting the troubled breast,
Dulce Refrigcrium!	Dost refreshing peace bestow.
In labore Requies,	Thou in toil are comfort sweet;
In cœtu Temperies,	Pleasant coolness in the heat;
In fletu Solatium.	Solace in the midst of woe.
O Lux beatissima!	Light immortal! light divine!
Reple cordis intima	Visit Thou these hearts of Thine,
Tuorum fidelium.	And our inmost being fill.
Sine tuo nomine,	If Thou take Thy grace away,
Nihil est in homine,	Nothing pure in man will stay;
Nihil est innoxium.	All his good is turn’d to ill.
Lava quod est sordidum,	Heal our wounds—our strength renew;
Riga quod est aridum,	On our dryness pour Thy dew;
Sana quod est saucium.	Wash the stains of guilt away.
Flecte quod est rigidum,	Bend the stubborn heart and will;
Fove quod est frigidum,	Melt the frozen, warm the chill;
Rege quod est devium,	Guide the steps that go astray.
Da tuis fidelibus,	Thou, on those who evermore
In te confidentibus,	Thee confess and Thee adore,
Sacrum septenarium.	In Thy sevenfold gifts descend;

Da virtutis meritum	Give them comfort when they die;
Da salutis exitum,	Give them life with Thee on high;
Da perenne gaudium. Amen.	Give them joys which never end. Amen.
Emitte Spiritum tuum et creabuntur.	Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created.
Et renovabis faciem terrœ.	And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.
Domine exaudi orationem meam.	O Lord, hear my prayer.
Et clamor meus ad te veniat.	And let my cry come unto Thee.
OREMUS.	LET US PRAY.
Deus qui charitatis dona per gratiam Sancti. Spiritus tuorum cordibus fidelium infudis ti! da famulis tuis, pro quibus tuam deprecamur clementiam, salutem mentis et corporis, ut te tota virtute diligant, et, quœ tibi placita sunt, tota dilectione perficiant. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.	O God, who by the grace of the Holy Spirit hast infused the gifts of charity into the hearts of Thy faithful! give to Thy servants, for whom we implore Thy clemency, health of soul and of body, in order that they may love Thee with all their strength, and may accomplish with all their heart what is pleasing to Thee. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN

TO THE HOLY GHOST

THE SOUL ALL FOR GOD

BEGONE, ye vain hopes, ye attachments of earth;
Give your joys to such souls as no higher can soar;
Away, far away from my mem’ry begone,
For I seek you no longer, esteem you no more;
O God of my heart! make me love Thee alone.
Adieu, every creature; I leave you with joy;
I no longer am yours—nay, I am not my own:
I belong but to God, from all else I am free;
I am thine, dearest Jesus,—all Thine,—Thine alone;
My best-beloved good! let me cling but to Thee.
O amiable Lord! let Thy sweet holy love
Now possess my whole being and reign over me;
Let Thy love in my heart every passion restrain;
In that heart which was once so rebellious to Thee,
O amiable Lord! come, establish Thy reign.
O heavenly dew! that so sweetly dost fall,
Of passions unholy Thou calmest the glow;
Ah! make me forever enamour’d of Thee,
And live to seek only my God here below.
O heavenly dew! descend gently on me.
O fire all divine.! who with heavenly flames
Dost those souls where Thou glowest make holy and blest,
Come Thou to my heart, make it worthy to burn
With Thy holiest ardors; inflame my breast;
O fire all divine! for Thy ardors I yearn.

O infinite love! Ah, how blessed is he
Who beholds Thy sweet face there in heaven above!
Oh! when shall I too come Thy beauty to see,
And enjoy Thee forever in transports of love!
O infinite love! haste to draw me to Thee.

THE GLORIES OF MARY

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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The Centenary Edition

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

EDITED BY

REV. EUGENE GRIMM,

Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

THE ASCETICAL WORKS

Volume VII & VIII

THE GLORIES OF MARY

NEW REVISED EDITION

P. J. KENEDY & SONS

44 BARCLAY STREET, NEW YORK

This new and improved translation of “The Glories of Mary,” having been duly examined, is hereby approved of.

X JOHN,

Archbishop of New York.

New York, Jan. 21st, 1852.

1888,

BY

P. J. KENEDY.

CONTENTS

- INDEX
- THE GLORIES OF MARY
  - CONTENTS
  - The Glories of Mary
    - PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION
    - PROTEST OF THE AUTHOR
    - PETITION OF THE AUTHOR TO JESUS AND MARY
    - TO THE READER
    - *INTRODUCTION* WHICH OUGHT TO BE READ
    - *PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN* TO OBTAIN A GOOD DEATH
  - PART I On the Salve Regina
    - *Chapter I* *SALVE REGINA, MATER MISERICORDIÆ* HAIL QUEEN, MOTHER OF MERCY.
      - SECTION I OF THE GREAT CONFIDENCE WE SHOULD HAVE IN MARY, BECAUSE SHE IS THE QUEEN OF MERCY
        - EXAMPLE
        - PRAYER
      - SECTION II HOW MUCH GREATER SHOULD BE OUR CONFIDENCE IN MARY BECAUSE SHE IS OUR MOTHER
        - EXAMPLE
        - PRAYER

SECTION III
HOW GREAT IS THE LOVE OF OUR MOTHER FOR US

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

SECTION IV
MARY IS ALSO MOTHER OF PENITENT SINNERS

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Chapter II
VITA, DULCEDO
OUR LIFE, OUR SWEETNESS.

SECTION I
MARY IS OUR LIFE, BECAUSE SHE OBTAINS FOR US THE PARDON OF OUR SINS

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

SECTION II
MARY IS AGAIN OUR LIFE, BECAUSE SHE OBTAINS FOR US PERSEVERANCE

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

SECTION III
DULCEDO:—SWEETNESS

MARY RENDERS DEATH SWEET TO HER SERVANTS

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Chapter III
SPES NOSTRA SALVE
HAIL, OUR HOPE.

SECTION I
MARY IS THE HOPE OF ALL

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

SECTION II
MARY THE HOPE OF SINNERS

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Chapter IV
AD TE CLAMAMUS EXULES FILII HEVÆ
TO THEE DO WE CRY, POOR BANISHED CHILDREN OF EVE.

SECTION I
HOW READY MARY IS TO SUCCOR THOSE WHO CALL UPON HER

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

SECTION II
NOW POWERFUL IS MARY IN PROTECTING THOSE WHO INVOKE HER IN TEMPTATIONS OF THE DEVIL

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Chapter V
AD TE SUSPIRAM US GEMENTES ET FLENTES IN HAC LACRYMARUM VALLE
TO THEE DO WE SEND UP OUR SIGHS, GROANING AND WEEPING IN THIS VALLEY OF TEARS

SECTION I
THE NEED WE HAVE OF THE INTERCESSION OF MARY FOR OUR SALVATION

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

SECTION II
THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Chapter VI
EJA ERGO ADVOCATA NOSTRA
AH, THEN, OUR ADVOCATE.

SECTION I
MARY IS AN ADVOCATE POWERFUL TO SAVE ALL

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

SECTION II
MARY IS A MERCIFUL ADVOCATE, WHO DOES NOT REFUSE TO DEFEND THE CAUSE OF THE MOST MISERABLE SINNERS

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

SECTION III
MARY IS THE PEACE-MAKER BETWEEN SINNERS AND GOD

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Chapter VII
ILLOS TUOS MISERICORDES OCULOS AD NOS CONVERTE
TURN THY EYES OF MERCY TOWARDS US.

SECTION I
MARY IS ALL EYES TO PITY AND RELIEVE OUR MISERIES

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Chapter VIII
ET JESUM BENEDICTUM FRUCTUM VENTRIS TUI NOBIS POST HOC EXILIUM OSTENDE
AND AFTER THIS OUR EXILE, SHOW US THE BLESSED FRUIT OF THY WOMB, JESUS.

SECTION I
MARY RESCUES HER SERVANTS FROM HELL

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

SECTION II
MARY ASSISTS HER SERVANTS IN PURGATORY

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

SECTION III
MARY CONDUCTS HER SERVANTS TO PARADISE

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Chapter IX
O CLEMENS! O PIA!
OH CLEMENT! OH MERCIFUL!

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Chapter X
O DULCIS VIRGO MARIA
OH SWEET VIRGIN MARY!

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

SOME DEVOUT PRAYERS OF VARIOUS SAINTS TO THE HOLY MOTHER

PRAYER OF ST. EPHREM

PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD

PRAYER OF ST. GERMANUS

PRAYER OF THE ABBOT OF CELLES

SURNAMED THE IDIOT

PRAYER OF ST. METHODIUS

PRAYER OF ST. JOHN DAMASCENE

PRAYER OF ST. ANDREW OF CANDIA, OR OF JERUSALEM

PRAYER OF ST. ILDEPHONSUS

PRAYER OF ST. ATHANASIUS

PRAYER OF ST. ANSELM

PRAYER OF ST. PETER DAMIAN

PRAYER OF ST. WILLIAM, BISHOP OF PARIS

PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY

TO BE SAID EVERY DAY AT THE END OF THE VISIT

PART II

Discourses on the Seven Principal Feasts of Mary and Her Dolors

Discourse I
ON THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Discourse II
ON THE BIRTH OF MARY

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Discourse III
ON THE PRESENTATION OF MARY

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Discourse IV
ON THE ANNUNCIATION OF MARY

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Discourse V
ON THE VISITATION OF MARY

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Discourse VI
ON THE PURIFICATION OF MARY

EXAMPLE

PRAYER

Discourse VII
ON THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY

- EXAMPLE
- PRAYER

Discourse VIII
ANOTHER DISCOURSE ON THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY

- EXAMPLE
- PRAYER

Discourse IX
ON THE DOLORS OF MARY

- EXAMPLE
- PRAYER

Reflections
On Each of the Seven Dolors of Mary in Particular

ON THE FIRST DOLOR
OF ST. SIMEON’S PROPHECY

- EXAMPLE
- PRAYER

ON THE SECOND DOLOR
OF THE FLIGHT OF JESUS INTO EGYPT

- EXAMPLE
- PRAYER

ON THE THIRD DOLOR
OF THE LOSS OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

- EXAMPLE
- PRAYER

ON THE FOURTH DOLOR
OF THE MEETING OF MARY WITH JESUS, WHEN HE WENT TO DEATH

- EXAMPLE
- PRAYER

ON THE FIFTH DOLOR
OF THE DEATH OF JESUS
- EXAMPLE
- PRAYER

ON THE SIXTH DOLOR
THE PIERCING OF THE SIDE OF JESUS, AND HIS DESCENT FROM THE CROSS
- EXAMPLE
- PRAYER

ON THE SEVENTH DOLOR
THE BURIAL OF THE BODY OF JESUS
- EXAMPLE
- PRAYER

Of the Virtues of the Most Holy Mary

Section I
OF THE HUMILITY OF MARY

Section II
OF THE CHARITY OF MARY TOWARDS GOD

Section III
OF THE CHARITY OF MARY FOR HER NEIGHBOR

Section IV
OF THE FAITH OF MARY

Section V
OF THE HOPE OF MARY

Section VI
OF THE CHASTITY OF MARY

Section VII
OF THE POVERTY OF MARY

Section VIII
OF THE OBEDIENCE OF MARY

Section IX
OF THE PATIENCE OF MARY

Section X
OF THE PRAYER OF MARY

Various Practices of Devotion to the Divine Mother

Devotion I
OF THE “HAIL MARY”

Devotion II
OF NOVENAS

Devotion III
OF THE ROSARY AND OFFICE

Devotion IV
OF FASTING

Devotion V
OF VISITING THE IMAGES OF MARY

Devotion VI
OF THE SCAPULAR

Devotion VII
OF ENTERING INTO THE CONFRATERNITIES OF MARY

Devotion VIII
OF ALMS IN HONOR OF MARY

Devotion IX
OF FREQUENT RECOURSE TO MARY

TENTH AND LAST DEVOTION

Various Additional Examples Appertaining to the Most Holy Mary

NOVENA OF MEDITATIONS
FOR THE NINE DAYS PRECEDING THE FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION OF MARY, WHICH COMMENCES ON THE 24TH OF JANUARY

FIRST DAY

SECOND DAY

THIRD DAY

FOURTH DAY

FIFTH DAY

SIXTH DAY

SEVENTH DAY

EIGHTH DAY

NINTH DAY

MEDITATIONS

MEDITATION
FOR THE DAY OF THE PURIFICATION OF MARY AND THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS

MEDITATION
FOR THE DAY OF THE ANNUNCIATION TO MARY

MEDITATION FOR THE SECOND DAY OF JULY
ON THE FEAST OF THE VISITATION OF MARY

MEDITATION FOR THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF AUGUST
ON THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY INTO HEAVEN

MEDICATION FOR THE EIGHTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER
ON, THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF MARY

MEDITATION FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF NOVEMBER
ON THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF MARY

MEDITATION FOR THE EIGHTH DAY OF DECEMBER
ON THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

PRAYERS TO THE DIVINE MOTHER FOR EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK

SUNDAY
PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY TO OBTAIN THE PARDON OF SINS

MONDAY
PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY TO OBTAIN HOLY PERSEVERANCE

TUESDAY
PRAYER TO MARY MOST HOLY TO OBTAIN A GOOD DEATH

WEDNESDAY
PRAYER TO MARY MOST HOLY TO OBTAIN DELIVERANCE FROM HELL

THURSDAY
PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY TO OBTAIN PARADISE

FRIDAY
PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY TO OBTAIN LOVE TOWARDS HER AND

JESUS CHRIST

SATURDAY
PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY TO OBTAIN HER PATRONAGE

LITTLE ROSARY OF THE SEVEN DOLORS OF MARY
INCLINE UNTO MINE AID, OH GOD, &C.

A LITTLE ROSARY OF THE IMMACULATE MARY
WHICH IS RECITED IN SOME CHURCHES

PRAYERS

DEDICATION OF ONESELF TO MARY

DEDICATION OF A FAMILY TO MARY

PRAYER OF ST. EPHREM TO MARY, ABBREVIATED

PRAYER OF ST. THOMAS OF AQUIN

PRAYER OF ST. BLOSIUS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

ANOTHER PRAYER

EJACULATIONS TO THE MOST HOLY MARY

ACCLAMATIONS IN PRAISE OF MARY

The Glories of Mary

PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION

THE edition of the “Glories of Mary” now presented to the Catholic public of America is the first complete translation of the work ever made into the English language. We trust that it will be found to retain the spirit of the learned and saintly author, and that it will be welcomed by the faithful in this country with the same delight which it has universally called forth in Catholic Europe.

PROTEST OF THE AUTHOR

IN obedience to the decrees of Urban VIII., of holy memory, I protest that I do not intend to attribute any other than purely human authority to all the miracles, revelations, graces, and incidents contained in this book; neither to the titles holy or blessed applied to the servants of God not yet canonized; except in cases where these have been confirmed by the holy Roman Catholic Church, and by the holy Apostolic See, of whom I profess myself an obedient son; and therefore to their judgment I submit myself and whatever I have written in this book.

PETITION OF THE AUTHOR TO JESUS AND MARY

MY most loving Redeemer and Lord Jesus Christ, I thy poor servant, knowing how pleasing to thee are those who seek to glorify thy most holy mother, whom thou lovest so much, and dost so much desire to see loved and honored by all men, I propose to publish this book of mine which treats of her glories. I know not to whom I could commend it but to thee, who hast so much at heart the glory of this mother. To thee, then, I present and dedicate it. Receive this little offering of my love for thee and thy beloved mother. Take it under thy protection, and pour into the hearts of those who read it the light of confidence in this immaculate Virgin, and the warmth of a burning love for her, in whom thou hast placed the hope and refuge of all the redeemed. And for the reward of this, my poor effort, give me, I pray thee, that love for Mary with which I have desired to inflame, by this my little work, the hearts of all those who read it.

To thee also I appeal, oh my sweetest Lady and mother Mary. Thou knowest that in thee, next to Jesus, I have placed all hope of my eternal salvation, since all the good I have received, my conversion, my vocation to leave the world, and whatever other graces have been given me by God, I acknowledge them all as coming through thee. Thou knowest that to see thee loved by all as thou dost deserve, and to offer thee some token of gratitude, I have always sought to proclaim thee everywhere, in public and in private, and to inspire all men with a sweet and salutary devotion to thee. I hope to continue to do so for the remainder of my life, even to my last breath. But I see by my advanced age and declining health that the end of my pilgrimage and my entrance into eternity are drawing near; therefore, I hope to give to the world, before my death, this little book of mine which may continue to proclaim thee for me, and also may excite others to publish thy glories and the great mercy which thou dost exercise towards thy devoted servants. I hope, my most beloved queen, that this my poor offering, although it falls so far short of thy merit, may be pleasing to thy grateful heart, since it is wholly a gift of love. Extend, then, that most kind hand of thine with which thou hast delivered me from the world and from hell, and accept it and protect it as belonging to thee. But I ask this reward for my little offering, that henceforth I may love thee more, and that all into whose hands this work shall fall, may be inflamed with thy love, so that immediately their desire may increase to love thee, and see others love thee also; and that they may engage with all ardor in proclaiming and promoting, as far as possible, thy praise, and confidence in thy most holy intercession. Thus I hope, thus may it be.

TO THE READER

IN order that this little work of mine may not be exposed to censure from very fastidious critics, I have thought it best to place in a clearer light some of the propositions which it contains, and which may seem too bold, or perhaps obscure. I here enumerate some of them, and if others, my dear reader, should come under your eye, I pray you to consider them as meant and spoken by me according to the sense of true and sound theology, and of the holy Roman Catholic Church, whose obedient son I profess myself. In the introduction, page 19, referring to chap. 5th of the book, I have said that God has ordained that all graces should come to us through the hands of Mary. Now this is a very consoling truth for souls tenderly attached to the most holy Mary, and for poor sinners who desire to be converted. Nor should this appear to any one inconsistent with sound theology, since its author, St. Augustine, puts it forth as a general statement, that Mary has shared, by means of her charity, in the spiritual birth of all the members of the Church.[6697]

A well-known author, whom no one will suspect of exaggeration or of fanciful and overheated devotion, adds, that as Jesus Christ really formed his Church on Calvary, it is plain that the holy Virgin really co-operated with him, in a peculiar and excellent manner, in its formation.[6698] And for the same reason it may be said, that if she brought forth Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, without pain, she did not bring forth the body of this head without pain. Hence she commenced on Calvary to be, in a particular manner, mother of the whole Church. To say all in a few words, Almighty God, in order to glorify the mother of the Redeemer, has ordained that her great charity should intercede for all those for whom her divine Son offered and paid the superabundant ransom of his precious blood, in which alone is our *salvation, life* and *resurrection.* It is on the basis of this docrine and whatever belongs to it that I have undertaken to establish my propositions,[6699] which the saints in their affecting colloquies with Mary, and in their fervent discourses concening her, have not hesitated to assert: when an ancient father, quoted by the celebrated Vincenzo Contensone, has written: The fulness of grace was in Christ as the head from which it flows, but in Mary as the neck through which it is transmitted.[6700] This is plainly taught by the angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, who confirms all the foregoing in these words: The blessed Virgin is called full of grace in three ways . . . The third, in reference to its overflowing upon all men. For great is it in each saint if he hath enough of grace for the salvation of many; but this would be the greatest, if he had enough for the salvation of all men; and it is so with Christ and the blessed Virgin, for in every danger we may obtain salvation through the glorious Virgin. Hence, cant. 4, v. 4 *a thousand bucklers*—that is, remedies against dangers—*hang upon her;* "Mille clypei pendent ex ea." Hence in every virtuous work we can have her aid, and, therefore, she herself says, In me is all hope of life and of virtue: "*In me omnis spes vitæ et virtutis.*"[6701]—Eccli. 24:25.

INTRODUCTION

WHICH OUGHT TO BE READ

MY dear reader and brother in Mary, since the devotion which has urged me to write, and now moves you to read this book, renders us both happy children of this good mother, if you ever should hear any one say that I could have spared this labor, there being so many learned and celebrated books that treat of this subject, answer him, I pray you, in the words of Francone the abbot, which we find in the Library of the Fathers, that the praise of Mary is a fountain so full that the more it extends, the fuller it becomes, and the fuller it becomes the more it extends;[6702] which signifies, that the blessed Virgin is so great and sublime, that the more we praise her, the more there is to praise. So that St. Augustine says: All the tongues of men, even if all their members were changed to tongues, would not be sufficient to praise her as she deserves.[6703]

I know that there are innumerable books, both great and small, which treat of the glories of Mary; but as these are rare or voluminous, and not according to my plan, I have endeavored to collect in a small space, from all the authors at my command, the most select and pithy sentences of the Fathers and theologians, in order to give devout persons an opportunity, with little effort or expense, to inflame their ardor by reading of the love of Mary, and especially, to present materials to priests which may enable them to excite by their sermons devotion to the divine mother.

Worldly lovers are accustomed to mention frequently and to praise the persons beloved, that these may be praised and applauded also by others; then how poor must we suppose the love of those to be who boast of being lovers of Mary, but who seldom remember to speak of her, and inspire the love of her also in others! Not so the true lovers of our most lovely Lady: they would praise her everywhere, and see her loved by all the world; and therefore in public and in private, wherever it is in their power, they endeavor to kindle in the hearts of all, those blessed flames of love with which theirs are burning for their beloved queen.

But that every one may be persuaded of how great benefit it is to himself and the people to promote devotion to Mary, let us hear what the Fathers say of it. St. Bonaventure declares that those who are devoted to publishing the glories of Mary, are secure of paradise; and Richard of St. Laurence confirms this by saying, that to honor the queen of angels is to acquire life everlasting;[6704] since our most grateful Lady, adds the same author, pledges herself to honor in the other life him who promises to honor her in this;[6705] and is there any one ignorant of the promise made by Mary herself to those who engage in promoting the knowledge and love of her upon the earth? “They that explain me shall have life everlasting,”[6706] as the holy Church applies it on the festival of her Immaculate Conception. Exult, exult! oh my soul! said St. Bonaventure, who was so assiduous in proclaiming the praises of Mary, and rejoice in her, because many good things are prepared for those who praise her; and since all the Holy Scriptures, he added, speak in praise of Mary, let us endeavor always with heart and tongue to celebrate this our divine mother, that we may be conducted by her to the kingdom of the blessed.[6707]

We are told in the revelations of St. Bridget, that the blessed Emingo, Bishop, being accustomed to begin his sermons with the praises of Mary, the Virgin herself appeared one day to the saint, and said to her: “Tell that prelate who is accustomed to commence his discourses with my praises, that I will be his mother, and that I will present his soul to God, and that he shall die a good death;”[6708] and he indeed died like a saint, in prayer and in celestial peace. Mary appeared before his death to another religious, a Dominican, who was accustomed to terminate his sermons by speaking of her. She defended him from the assaults of the demons, comforted him, and bore away with her his happy soul.[6709]

The devout Thomas à Kempis represents Mary as commending to her Son those who publish her praise, and saying, “Oh, my Son, have compassion on the souls of thy lovers, and of those who speak in my praise.[6710]

As far as the advantage of the people is concerned, St. Anselm says, that the sacred womb of Mary having been made the way of salvation for sinners, sinners cannot but be converted and saved by discourses in praise of Mary.[6711] If the assertion is true and incontrovertible, as I believe it to be, and as I shall prove, in the fifth chapter of this book, that all graces are dispensed by the hand of Mary alone, and that all those who are saved, are saved solely by means of this divine mother; it may be said, as a necessary consequence, that the salvation of all depends upon preaching Mary, and confidence in her intercession. We know that St. Bernard of Sienna sanctified Italy; St. Dominic converted many provinces; St. Louis Bertrand, in all his sermons, never failed to exhort his hearers to practise devotion towards Mary; and many others also have done the same.

I find that Father Paul Segneri, the younger, a celebrated missionary, in every mission preached a sermon on devotion to Mary, and this he called his favorite sermon. And we can attest, in all truth, that in our missions, where we have an invariable rule not to omit the sermon on our Lady, no discourse is so profitable to the people, or excites more compunction among them, than that on the mercy of Mary. I say *on the mercy of Mary:* for St. Bernard says, we may praise her humility, and marvel at her virginity; but being poor sinners, we are more pleased and attracted by hearing of her mercy; for to this we more affectionately cling, this we more often remember and invoke.[6712] Therefore in this little book, leaving to other authors the description of the other merits of Mary, I have confined myself especially to treating of her great compassion and her powerful intercession; having collected, as far as possible, with the labor of years, all that the holy Fathers and the most celebrated authors have said of the mercy and power of Mary; and because these attributes of the blessed Virgin are wonderfully set forth in the great prayer of the *Salve Regina,* approved by the Church and required by her to be recited the greater part of the year by all the clergy, secular and regular, I have undertaken, in the first place, to explain in separate discourses this most devout prayer. Besides this, I believed it would be acceptable to the servants of Mary, if I added discourses on her principal festivals and upon the virtues of our divine mother, placing at the conclusion of them the practices of devotion most in use among her servants, and approved by the Church.

Devout reader, if this little work of mine pleases you, as I hope it will, I pray you to commend me to the holy Virgin, that I may obtain great confidence in her protection. Ask for me this grace, and I will ask the same for you, whoever you may be, who bestow on me this charity. Oh, blessed is he who clings with love and confidence to those two anchors of salvation, Jesus and Mary! He certainly will not be lost. Let us both say, oh my reader, with the devout Alphonso Rodriguez: Jesus and Mary, my sweet loves, for you I will suffer, for you I will die; may I be wholly yours, may I be in nothing my own.[6713] May we love Jesus and Mary, and become saints, since we can aspire and hope for no greater happiness than this. Farewell, till we meet in heaven at the feet of this sweet mother and her dearly beloved Son, to praise them, to thank them, and love them, in their immediate presence through all eternity. Amen.

PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

TO OBTAIN A GOOD DEATH

OH Mary, sweet refuge of miserable sinners, at the moment when my soul departs from this world, my sweetest mother, by the grief that thou didst endure when thou wast present at the death of thy Son upon the cross, then assist me with thy mercy. Keep far from me my infernal enemies, and come thyself to take my soul and present it to my eternal Judge. Do not abandon me, oh my queen. Thou, next to Jesus, must be my comfort in that dreadful moment. Entreat thy Son that in his goodness, he will grant me the favor to die clasping thy feet, and to breathe out my soul in his sacred wounds, saying, Jesus and Mary, I give you my heart and my soul.

PART I

On the Salve Regina

It treats of the various and abundant graces which the mother of God bestows on her devoted servants, in several discourses of the Salve Regina.

Chapter I

SALVE REGINA, MATER MISERICORDIÆ

HAIL QUEEN, MOTHER OF MERCY.

SECTION I

OF THE GREAT CONFIDENCE WE SHOULD HAVE IN MARY, BECAUSE SHE IS THE QUEEN OF MERCY

THE Holy Church justly honors the great Virgin Mary, and would have her honored by all men with the glorious title of queen, because she has been elevated to the dignity of mother of the King of kings. If the Son is king, says St. Athanasius, his mother must necessarily be considered and entitled queen.[6714] From the moment that Mary consented, adds St. Bernardine of Sienna, to become the mother of the Eternal Word, she merited the title of queen of the world and all creatures.[6715] If the flesh of Mary, says St. Arnold, abbot, was the flesh of Jesus, how can the mother be separated from the Son in his kingdom? Hence it follows that the regal glory must not only be considered as common to the mother and the Son, but even the same.[6716]

If Jesus is the king of the whole world, Mary is also queen of the whole world:[6717] therefore, says St. Bernardine of Sienna, all creatures who serve God ought also to serve Mary; for all angels and men, and all things that are in heaven and on earth being subject to the dominion of God, are also subject to the dominion of the glorious Virgin.[6718] Hence Guerric, abbot, thus addresses the divine mother: Continue, Mary, continue in security to reign; dispose, according to thy will, of every thing belonging to thy Son, for thou, being mother and spouse of the King of the world, the kingdom and power over all creatures is due to thee as queen.[6719]

Mary, then, is queen; but let all learn for their consolation that she is a mild and merciful queen, desiring the good of us poor sinners. Hence the holy Church bids us salute her in this prayer, and name her the *Queen of Mercy*. The very name of queen signifies, as blessed Albertus Magnus remarks, compassion, and provision for the poor; differing in this from the title of empress, which signifies severity and rigor. The greatness of kings and queens consists in comforting the wretched as Seneca says.[6720] So that whereas tyrants, in reigning, have only their own advantage in view, kings should have for their object the good of their subjects. Therefore at the consecration of kings their heads are anointed with oil, which is the symbol of mercy, to denote that they, in reigning, should above all things cherish thoughts of kindness and beneficence towards their subjects.

Kings should then principally occupy themselves with works of mercy, but not to the neglect of the exercise of justice towards the guilty, when it is required. Not so Mary, who, although queen, is not queen of justice, intent upon the punishment of the guilty, but queen of mercy, solely intent upon compassion and pardon for sinners. Accordingly, the Church requires us explicitly to call her queen of mercy. The High Chancellor of Paris, John Gerson, meditating on the words of David, “These two things have I heard, that power belongeth to God, and mercy to thee, O Lord,”[6721] says, that the kingdom of God consisting of justice and mercy, the Lord has divided it: he has reserved the kingdom of justice for himself, and he has granted the kingdom of mercy to Mary, ordaining that all the mercies which are dispensed to men should pass through the hands of Mary, and should be bestowed according to her good pleasure.[6722] St. Thomas confirms this in his preface to the Canonical Epistles, saying that the holy Virgin, when she conceived the divine Word in her womb, and brought him forth, obtained the half of the kingdom of God by becoming queen of mercy, Jesus Christ remaining king of justice.[6723]

The eternal Father constituted Jesus Christ king of justice, and therefore made him the universal judge of the world; hence the prophet sang: “Give to the king thy judgment, Oh God; and to the king’s son thy justice.”[6724] Here a learned interpreter takes up the subject, and says: Oh Lord, thou hast given to thy Son thy justice, because thou hast given to the mother of the king thy mercy.[6725] And St. Bonaventure happily varies the passage above quoted by saying: Give to the king thy judgment, Oh God, and to his mother thy mercy.[6726] Ernest, Archbishop of Prague, also says, that the eternal Father has given to the Son the office of judging and punishing, and to the mother the office of compassionating and relieving the wretched.[6727] Therefore the Prophet David predicted that God himself, if I may thus express it, would consecrate Mary queen of mercy, anointing her with the oil of gladness,[6728] in order that all of us miserable children of Adam might rejoice in the thought of having in heaven that great queen, so full of the unction of mercy and pity for us; as St. Bonaventure says: Oh Mary, so full of the unction of mercy and the oil of pity, that God has anointed thee with the oil of gladness![6729]

And how well does blessed Albertus Magnus here apply the history of Queen Esther, who was indeed a type of Our Queen Mary! We read in the 4th chap. of the Book of Esther, that in the reign of King Assuerus, there went forth, throughout his kingdom, a decree commanding the death of all the Jews. Then Mardochai, who was one of the condemned, committed their cause to Esther, that she might intercede with the king to obtain the revocation of the sentence. At first Esther refused to take upon herself this office, fearing that it would excite the anger of the king more. But Mardochai rebuked her, and bade her remember that she must not think of saving herself alone, as the Lord had placed her upon the throne to obtain salvation for all the Jews: “Think not that thou mayest save thy life only, because thou art in the king’s house, more than all the Jews.”[6730] Thus said Mardochai to Queen Esther, and thus might we poor sinners say to our Queen Mary, if she were ever reluctant to intercede with God for our deliverance from the just punishment of our sins. Think not that thou mayest save thy life only, because thou art in the king’s house, more than all men. Think not, oh Lady, that God has exalted thee to be queen of the world, only to secure thy own welfare; but also that thou, being so greatly elevated, mayest the more compassionate and the better relieve us miserable sinners. Assuerus, when he saw Esther before him, affectionately inquired of her what she had come to ask of him: “What is thy petition?” Then the queen answered, “If I have found favor in thy sight, oh king, give me my people for which I request.”[6731] Assuerus heard her, and immediately ordered the sentence to be revoked. Now, if Assuerus granted to Esther, because he loved her, the salvation of the Jews, will not God graciously listen to Mary, in his boundless love for her, when she prays to him for those poor sinners who recommend themselves to her and says to him: If I have found favor in thy sight, oh King, my King and my God, if I have ever found favor with Thee (and well does the divine mother know herself to be the blessed, the fortunate, the only one of the children of men who found the grace lost by man; she knows herself to be the beloved of her Lord, more beloved than all the saints and angels united), give me my people for which I request: if thou lovest me, she says to him, give me, oh my Lord, these sinners in whose behalf I entreat Thee. Is it possible that God will not graciously hear her? Is there any one who does not know the power of Mary's prayers with God? The law of clemency is on her tongue.[6732] Every prayer of hers is as a law established by our Lord, that mercy shall be exercised towards those for whom Mary intercedes. St. Bernard asks, Why does the Church name Mary *Queen of Mercy?* and answers, Because we believe that she opens the depths of the mercy of God, to whom she will, when she will, and as she will; so that not even the vilest sinner is lost, if Mary protects him.[6733]

But it may, perhaps, be feared that Mary disdains interposing in behalf of some sinners, because she finds them so laden with sins? Perhaps the majesty and sanctity of this great queen should alarm us? No, says St. Gregory, in proportion to her greatness and holiness are her clemency and mercy towards sinners who desire to amend, and who have recourse to her.[6734] Kings and queens inspire terror by the display of their majesty, and their subjects fear to enter their presence; but what fear, says St. Bernard, can the wretched have of going to this queen of mercy since she never shows herself terrible or austere to those who seek her, but all sweetness and kindness?[6735] Mary not only gives, but she herself presents to us milk and wool: the milk of mercy to inspire us with confidence, and wool to shield us from the thunderbolts of divine justice!

Suetonius narrates of the Emperor Titus, that he never could refuse a favor to any one who asked it, and that he even sometimes promised more than he could perform; and he answered to one who admonished him of this, that a prince should not dismiss any one from his presence dissatisfied. Titus said this, but, in reality, was perhaps often either guilty of falsehood, or failed in his promises. But our queen cannot lie, and can obtain whatever she wishes for her devoted servants. She has a heart so kind and compassionate, says Blosius, that she cannot send away dissatisfied any one who invokes her aid.[6736] But, as St. Bernard says, how couldst thou, oh Mary, refuse succor to the wretched, when thou art queen of mercy? and who are the subjects of mercy, if not the miserable? Thou art the queen of mercy, and I the most miserable of all sinners; if I, then, am the first of thy subjects, then thou shouldst have more care of me than of all others.[6737]

Have pity on us, then, oh queen of mercy, and give heed to our salvation; neither say to us, oh most holy Virgin, as St. Gregory of Nicomedia would add, that thou canst not aid us because of the multitude of our sins, when thou hast such power and pity that no number of sins can ever surpass it! Nothing resists thy power, since thy Creator and ours, while he honors thee as his mother, considers thy glory as his own, and exulting in it, as a Son, grants thy petitions as if he were discharging an obligation.[6738] By this he means to say, that though Mary is under an infinite obligation to her Son for having elected her to be his mother yet it cannot be denied that the Son also is greatly indebted to his mother for having given him his human nature; whence Jesus, as if to recompense Mary as he ought, while he enjoys this his glory, honors her especially by always graciously listening to her prayers.

How great then should be our confidence in this queen, knowing how powerful she is with God, and at the same time how rich and full of mercy; so much so that there is no one on earth who does not share in the mercies and favors of Mary! This the blessed Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget: “I am,” she said to her, “the queen of heaven and the mother of mercy; I am the joy of the just, and the gate of entrance for sinners to God; neither is there living on earth a sinner who is so accursed that he is deprived of my compassion; for everyone, if he receives nothing else through my intercession, receives the grace of being less tempted by evil spirits than he otherwise would be; no one, therefore,” she added, “who is not entirely accursed” (by which is meant the final and irrevocable malediction pronounced against the damned), “is so entirely cast off by God that he may not return and enjoy his mercy if he invokes my aid. I am called by all the mother of mercy, and truly the mercy of God towards men has made me so merciful towards them." And then she concluded by saying, "Therefore he shall be miserable, and forever miserable in another life, who in this, being able, does not have recourse to me, who am so compassionate to all, and so earnestly desire to aid sinners."[6739]

Let us then have recourse, let us always have recourse to this most sweet queen, if we would be sure of our salvation; and if the sight of our sins terrifies and disheartens us, let us remember that Mary was made queen of mercy for this very end, that she might save by her protection the greatest and most abandoned sinners who have recourse to her. They are to be her crown in heaven, as her divine spouse has said: "Come from Libanus, my spouse, come from Libanus, come; thou shalt be crowned from the dens of the lions, from the mountains of the leopards."[6740] And what are these dens of wild beasts and monsters, if not miserable sinners, whose souls become dens of sins, the most deformed monsters? Now, by these same sinners, as Rupert, the abbot, remarks, who are saved by thy means, oh great Queen Mary, thou wilt be crowned in. heaven; for their salvation will be thy crown, a crown indeed worthy and fit for a queen of mercy;[6741] and let the following example illustrate this.

EXAMPLE

We read in the life of sister Catherine, an Augustinian nun, that in the place where that servant of God lived, there lived also a woman named Mary, who, in her youth, was a sinner, and obstinately persevered in her evil courses, even to extreme old age. For this she was banished by her fellow-citizens, forced to live in a cave beyond the limits of the place, and died in a state of loathsome corruption, abandoned by all, and without the sacraments; and on this account was buried in a field, like a beast. Now sister Catherine, who was accustomed to recommend very affectionately to God the souls of those who had departed this life, after learning the miserable death of this poor old woman, did not think of praying for her, as she and every one else believed her already among the damned. Four years having past, a soul from purgatory one day appeared to her, and said, "Sister Catherine, how unhappy is my fate! you commend to God the souls of all those who die, and for my soul alone you have had no pity." "And who are you?" said the servant of God. "I am," answered she, "that poor

Mary who died in the cave.” “How! are you saved?” exclaimed sister Catherine. “Yes, I am saved,” she said, “by the mercy of the Virgin Mary.” “And how?” “When I saw death drawing near, finding myself laden with sins, and abandoned by all, I turned to the mother of God and said to her, Lady, thou art the refuge of the abandoned, behold me at this hour deserted by all; thou art my only hope, thou alone canst help me; have pity on me. The holy Virgin obtained for me the grace of making an act of contrition; I died and am saved, and my queen has also obtained for me the grace that my pains should be abridged, and that I should, by suffering intensely for a short time, pass through that purification which otherwise would have lasted many years. A few masses only are needed to obtain my release from purgatory. I pray thee cause them to be offered for me, and I promise to pray God and Mary for thee.” Sister Catherine immediately caused those masses to be said for her, and that soul, after a few days, appeared to her again, more brilliant than the sun, and said to her, “I thank thee, sister Catherine: behold I am now going to paradise to sing the mercy of God and pray for thee.”

PRAYER

Oh Mother of my God and my Lady Mary, as a poor wounded and loathsome wretch presents himself to a great queen, I present myself to thee, who art the queen of heaven and earth. From the lofty throne on which thou art seated, do not disdain, I pray thee, to cast thy eye upon me, a poor sinner. God hath made thee so rich in order that thou mayest succor the needy, and hath made thee queen of mercy that thou mayest help the miserable, look upon me, then, and have pity on me. Look upon me, and do not leave me until thou hast changed me from a sinner into a saint. I see I merit nothing, or rather I merit for my ingratitude to be deprived of all the graces which, by thy means, I have received from the Lord. But thou, who art the mother of mercy, dost not require merits, but miseries, that thou mayest succor those who are in need; and who is more poor and more needy than I?

Oh glorious Virgin, I know that thou, being queen of the universe, art also my queen; and I, in a more especial manner, would dedicate myself to thy service: that thou mayest dispose of me as seemeth best to thee. Therefore I say to thee with St. Bonaventure, Oh, Lady, I submit myself to thy control, that thou mayest rule and govern me entirely. Do not leave me to myself.[6742] Rule me, oh my queen, and do not leave me to myself. Command me, employ me as thou wilt, and punish me if I do not obey thee, for very salutary will be the punishments that come from thy hand. I would esteem it a greater thing to be thy servant than Lord of the whole earth. *Thine I am, save me!*[6743] Accept me, oh Mary, for thy own and attend to my salvation, as I am thine own. I no longer will be my own, I give myself to thee. And if hitherto I have so poorly served thee, having lost so many good occasions of honoring thee, for the time to come I will unite myself to thy most loving and most faithful servants. No one from this time henceforth shall surpass me in honoring and loving thee, my most lovely queen. This I promise, and I hope to perform with thy assistance. Amen."

SECTION II

HOW MUCH GREATER SHOULD BE OUR CONFIDENCE IN MARY BECAUSE SHE IS OUR MOTHER

Not by chance, nor in vain, do the servants of Mary call her mother, and it would seem that they cannot invoke her by any other name, and are never weary of calling her mother; mother, indeed, for she is truly our mother, not according to the flesh, but the spiritual mother of our souls and of our salvation. Sin, when it deprived our souls of divine grace, also deprived them of life. Hence, when they were dead in misery and sin, Jesus our Redeemer came with an excess of mercy and love to restore to us, by his death upon the cross, that lost life, as he has himself declared: "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly."[6744] *More abundantly,* because, as the theologians teach us, Jesus Christ by his redemption brought us blessings greater than the injury Adam inflicted upon us by his sin; he reconciled us to God, and thus became the father of our souls, under the new law of grace, as the prophet Isaiah predicted: "The Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace."[6745] But if Jesus is the father of our souls, Mary is the mother; for, in giving us Jesus, she gave us the true life; and offering upon Calvary the life of her Son for our salvation, she then brought us forth to the life of divine grace.

At two different times, then as the holy Fathers show us, Mary became our spiritual mother; the first when she was found worthy of conceiving in her virginal womb the Son of God, as the blessed Albertus Magnus says.

St. Bernardine of Sienna more distinctly teaches us that when the most holy Virgin, on the annunciation of the angel, gave her consent to become mother of the eternal Word, which he awaited before making himself her Son, she by this consent even from that time demanded of God, with lively affection, our salvation; and she was so earnestly engaged in obtaining it, that from that time she has borne us, as it were, in her womb, as a most loving mother.[6746]

St. Luke says, speaking of the birth of our Saviour, that Mary "brought forth her first-born son."[6747] Therefore, says a certain writer, if the evangelist affirms that Mary brought forth her first-born, is it to be supposed that she afterwards had other children? But the same author adds: If it is of faith that Mary had no other children according to the flesh except Jesus, then she must have other spiritual children, and these we are.[6748] Our Lord revealed this to St. Gertrude, who, reading one day the passage of the Gospel just quoted, was troubled, not knowing how to understand it, that Mary being mother of Jesus Christ alone, it could be said that he was her first-born. And God explained it to her, by telling her that Jesus was her first-born according to the flesh, but men were her second-born according to the spirit.

And this explains what is said of Mary in the holy Canticles: "Thy belly is as a heap of wheat, set about with lilies."[6749] St. Ambrose explains this and says: Although in the pure womb of Mary there was only one grain of wheat, which was Jesus Christ, yet it is called a heap of grain, because in that one grain were contained all the elect, of whom Mary was to be the mother.[6750] Hence, William the Abbot wrote, Mary, in bringing forth Jesus, who is our Saviour and our life, brought forth all of us to life and salvation.[6751]

The second time in which Mary brought us forth to grace was, when on Calvary, she offered to the eternal Father with so much sorrow of heart the life of her beloved Son for our salvation. Wherefore, St. Augustine asserts, that, having then co-operated by her love with Christ in the birth of the faithful to the life of grace, she became also by this co-operation the spiritual mother of us all, who are members of our head, Jesus Christ.[6752] This is also the meaning of what is said of the blessed Virgin in the sacred Canticles: “They have made me the keeper in the vineyards; my vineyard I have not kept.”[6753] Mary, to save our souls, was willing to sacrifice the life of her Son,[6754] as William the Abbot remarks. And who was the soul of Mary, but her Jesus, who was her life and all her love? Wherefore St. Simeon announced to her that her soul would one day be pierced by a sword of sorrow;[6755] which was the very spear that pierced the side of Jesus, who was the soul of Mary. And then she in her sorrow brought us forth to eternal life; so that we may all call ourselves children of the dolors of Mary. She, our most loving mother, was always and wholly united to the divine will; whence St. Bonaventure remarks, that when she saw the love of the eternal Father for men, who would have his Son die for our salvation, and the love of the Son in wishing to die for us, she too, with her whole will, offered her Son and consented that he should die that we might be saved, in order to conform herself to that exceeding love of the Father and Son for the human race.[6756]

It is true that, in dying for the redemption of the world, Jesus wished to be alone. I have trodden the wine-press alone,[6757] “Torcular calcavi solus.” But when God saw the great desire of Mary to devote herself also to the salvation of men, he ordained that by the sacrifice and offering of the life of this same Jesus, she might co-operate with him in the work of our salvation, and thus become mother of our souls. And this our Saviour signified, when, before expiring, he saw from the cross his mother and the disciple St. John both standing near him, and first spoke to Mary: Behold thy son, “Ecce filius tuus;”[6758] as if he said to her: Behold the man who, by the offering thou hast made of my life for his salvation, is already born to grace. And then turning to the disciple, he said: Behold thy mother, “Ecce mater tua.”[6759] By which words, says St. Bernardine of Sienna, Mary was then made mother not only of St. John, but of all men, for the love she bore them.[6760] On this account, as Silveira observes, St. John himself, when recording this fact in his Gospel, wrote, “After that he said to the disciple: “Behold thy mother.”[6761] Let it be remarked that Jesus Christ did not say this to John, but to the disciple, to signify that the Saviour appointed Mary for common mother of all those who, being Christians, bear the name of his disciples.[6762]

I am the mother of fair love,[6763] “Ego sum mater pulchræ dilectionis,” said Mary; because her love, as an author remarks, which renders the souls of men beautiful in the eye of God, prompts her, as a loving mother, to receive us for her children.[6764] And as a mother loves her children, and watches over their welfare, so thou, oh our most sweet queen, lovest us, and dost procure our happiness, says St. Bonaventure.[6765]

Oh, happy those who live under the protection of a mother so loving and so powerful! The prophet David, although Mary was not yet born, besought of God salvation, by dedicating himself to Mary as her son, and thus prayed: “Save the son of thy handmaid.”[6766] “Whose handmaid?” asks St. Augustine,[6767] “she who says: Behold the handmaid of the Lord.”[6768] And who, says Cardinal Bellarmine, who would dare to snatch these children from the bosom of Mary, where they have taken refuge from their enemies? What fury of hell or of passion can conquer them, if they place their trust in the protection of this great mother?[6769] It is narrated of the whale, that when she sees her young in peril, from the tempest or their pursuers, she opens her mouth and receives them into her bowels. Just so, says Novarino, does this compassionate mother of the faithful, when the tempest of the passions is raging. She then, with maternal affection, protects them as it were in her bowels, and continues to shelter them until she has placed them in the secure haven of paradise.[6770] Oh, most loving mother! Oh, most compassionate mother, be ever blessed! and may that God be ever blessed, who has given us thee as a mother, and as a secure refuge in all the dangers of this life. The blessed Virgin herself revealed this to St. Bridget, saying: “As a mother who sees her son exposed to the sword of the enemy, makes every effort to save him, thus do I, and will I ever do for my children, sinful though they be, if they come to me for help.”[6771] Behold, then, how in every battle with hell we shall always conquer, and certainly conquer, if we have recourse to the mother of God and our mother, always repeating: “We fly to thy protection, oh holy mother of God; we fly to thy protection, oh holy mother of God.”[6772] Oh, how many victories have the faithful obtained over hell, by having recourse to Mary with this short but powerful prayer!

That great servant of God, Sister Mary of the Crucifixion, a Benedictine nun, by this means always conquered the evil spirits.

Be joyful then, all ye children of Mary; remember that she adopts as her children all those who wish her for their mother. Joyful; for what fear have you of being lost when this mother defends and protects you? Thus says St. Bonaventure: Every one who loves this good mother and trusts in her protection, should take courage and repeat: What do you fear, oh my soul? The cause of thy eternal salvation will not be lost, as the final sentence depends upon Jesus, who is thy brother, and upon Mary who is thy mother.[6773] And St. Anselm full of joy at this thought, exclaims, in order to encourage us: Oh, blessed confidence! Oh, secure refuge! The mother of God is my mother also. With what certainty may we hope, since our salvation depends upon the sentence of a good brother and of a kind mother![6774] Hear, then, our mother who calls us, and says to us; “Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me.”[6775] Little children have always on their lips the word mother, and in all the dangers to which they are exposed, and in all their fears, they cry mother, Ah, most sweet Mary! Ah, most loving mother! this is exactly what thou dost desire; that we become little children, and always call upon thee in our dangers, and always have recourse to thee, for thou wishest to aid and save us, as thou hast saved all thy children who have had recourse to thee.

EXAMPLE

In the history of the foundations of the Company of Jesus, in the kingdom of Naples, is related the following story of a noble youth of Scotland, named William Elphinstone. He was a relation of King James. Born a heretic, he followed the false sect to which he belonged; but enlightened by divine grace, which showed him his errors, he went to France, where, with the assistance of a good Jesuit father, who was like himself a Scotchman, and still more by the intercession of the blessed Virgin, he at length saw the truth, abjured heresy, and became a Catholic. He went afterwards to Rome, where a friend of his found him one day very much afflicted, and weeping. He asked him the cause, and he answered, that in the night his mother had appeared to him and said: “My son, it is well for thee that thou hast entered the true Church; I am already lost, because I died in heresy.” From that time he became more fervent in his devotion to Mary, chose her for his mother, and by her was inspired to become a religious. He made a vow to do so, but being ill, he went to Naples to restore his health by a change of air. But the Lord ordered it so that he should die in Naples, and die a religious; for, having become dangerously ill soon after his arrival there, he by prayers and tears obtained from the superiors admittance, and when about receiving the viaticum, he made his vows in presence of the blessed sacrament, and was enrolled in the society. After this, in the tenderness of his feelings, he gave thanks to his mother Mary for having rescued him from heresy, and brought him to die in the true Church, and in a religious house in the midst of his brethren. Therefore, he exclaimed: “Oh! how glorious it is to die in the midst of so many angels!” Being exhorted to take a little rest, he answered: “Ah, this is not the time to rest when the end of my life is drawing near.” Before dying, he said to the persons present: “Brethren, do you not see the angels of heaven around me?” One of the religious having heard him murmuring something to himself, asked him what he had said. He answered, that his angel-guardian had revealed to him that he should be in purgatory but a short time, and would soon enter paradise. Then he began again to talk with his sweet mother Mary, and repeating the word, mother, mother, he tranquilly expired, like a child falling asleep in the arms of its mother. Soon after, it was revealed to a devout religious that he had already entered paradise.

PRAYER

Oh, my most holy mother, how is it possible that, having so holy a mother, I should be so wicked? A mother so inflamed with love to God, and that I should so love creatures? A mother so rich in virtue, and that I should be so poor? Oh, my most amiable mother! I no longer deserve, it is true, to be thy son, because by my bad life I have rendered myself unworthy. I am content if thou wilt accept me as thy servant. I am ready to renounce all the kingdoms of the earth, to be admitted among the lowest of thy servants. Yes, I am content, but do not forbid me to call thee my mother. This name wholly consoles me, melts me, and reminds me of my obligation to love thee. This name encourages me to confide in thee. When I am the most terrified at the thought of my sins and of the divine justice, I feel myself comforted by the remembrance that thou art my mother. Permit me, then, to call thee my mother, my sweetest mother. Thus I call thee, and thus I will ever call thee. Thou, next to God, shalt always be my hope, my refuge, and my love, in this valley of tears. And thus I hope to die, commending my soul, at the last moment, into thy sacred hands, saying: “My mother, my mother Mary, help me, have pity on me.” Amen.

SECTION III

HOW GREAT IS THE LOVE OF OUR MOTHER FOR US

IF, then, Mary is our mother, let us consider how much she loves us. The love of parents for their children is a necessary love, and for this reason, as St. Thomas observes,[6776] children are commanded in the divine law to love their parents; but there is no command, on the other hand, given to parents to love their children, for love towards one’s own offspring is a love so deeply planted in the heart by nature herself, that even the wild beasts, as St. Ambrose says, never fail to love their young.[6777] It is said that even tigers, hearing the cry of their whelps when they are taken by the hunters, will plunge into the sea to swim after the vessels where they are confined. If, then, says our most loving mother Mary, even tigers cannot forget their young, how can I forget to love you, my children? And, she adds, even if it should happen that a mother could forget her child, it is not possible that I can forget a soul which is my child.[6778]

Mary is our mother, not according to the flesh, but by love: “I am the mother of fair love.”[6779] Hence she becomes our mother only on account of the love she bears us; and she glories, says a certain author, in being the mother of love; because, having taken us for her children, she is all love towards us.[6780] Who can describe the love of Mary for us miserable creatures? Arnold of Carnotensis says that, at the death of Jesus Christ, she ardently desired to die with her Son for our sake.[6781] So that, as St. Ambrose adds, when her Son hung dying on the cross, Mary offered herself to his murderers, that she might give her life for us.[6782]

But let us consider the reasons of this love, for thus we shall better understand how this good mother loves us. The first reason of the great love that Mary bears to men, is the great love she bears to God. Love to God and man is contained in the same precept, as St. John has written: “This commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God, love also his brother;”[6783] so that one increases as the other increases. Hence what have the saints not done for love of the neighbor, because they have loved God so much? They have gone so far as to expose and lose liberty and even life for his salvation. Let us read what St. Francis Xavier did in India, where, for the sake of the souls of those barbarians, he climbed mountains, and exposed himself to innumerable dangers to find those wretched beings, in the caverns where they dwelt like wild beasts, and to lead them to God. St. Francis de Sales, to convert the heretics of the province of Chablais, risked his life by crossing a river every day for a year, on his hands and knees, upon a frozen beam, that he might go to the other side to preach to those stubborn men. St. Paulinus became a slave, to obtain liberty for the son of a poor widow. St. Fidelis, to bring the heretics of a certain place back to God, willingly consented, in preaching to them, to lose his life. The saints, then, because they have loved God so much, have done much for love of the neighbor. But who has loved God more than Mary? She loved God more, in the first moment of her life, than all the saints and angels have loved him in the whole course of theirs; as we shall consider at length, when we speak of the virtues of Mary. She herself revealed to sister Mary of the Crucifixion,[6784] that the fire of love with which she burned for God was so great, that it would in a moment inflame heaven and earth; and that, in comparison to it, all the flames of the burning love of the seraphim were as cool breezes. Therefore, as there is none among the blessed spirits who loves God more than Mary; so there is, and can be none, except God, who loves us more than this our most loving mother. If the love of all mothers for their children, of all husbands for their wives, and of all saints and angels for their devoted servants, were united, it would not be so great as the love that Mary bears to one soul alone. Father Nierembergh says that the love which all mothers have borne to their children is a shadow when compared with the love which Mary bears to any one of us. Truly she alone loves us more, he adds, than all the angels and saints united.

Moreover, our mother loves us much, because we have been commended to her as children by her beloved Jesus, when, before expiring, he said to her: “Woman, behold thy son;”[6785] signifying by the person of John, all men, as we have before remarked. These were the last words of her Son to her. The last remembrances left by beloved friends at the moment of their death are greatly valued, and the memory of them is never lost. Moreover, we are children extremely dear to Mary, because we cost her so much suffering. Those children are much dearer to a mother whose lives she has preserved;—we are those children, for whom, that we may have the life of grace, Mary suffered the pain of sacrificing the dear life of her Jesus; submitting, for our sake, to see him die before her eyes in cruel torments. By this great offering of Mary we were then born to the life of divine grace. So, then, we are children very dear to her, because we were redeemed at such a cost of suffering. Accordingly, as we read of the love which the eternal Father has manifested for men by giving his own Son to death for us, "God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son:"[6786] as St. Bonaventure remarks, it may be said of Mary also, that she so loved us as to give her only-begotten Son.[6787] And when did she give him to us? She gave him to us, says Father Nieremberg, when first she consented to his death; she gave him to us, when others deserted him through hatred or through fear, and she alone could have defended, before the judges, the life of her Son. We can easily believe that the words of so wise and tender a mother would have had a great power, at least with Pilate, to induce him to abstain from condemning to death a man whom he knew and declared innocent. But no, Mary would not utter even one word in favor of her Son, to prevent his death, upon which our salvation depended; finally, she gave him to us again at the foot of the cross, in those three hours when she was witnessing his death; because then, at every moment, she was offering up for us his life, with the deepest grief, and the greatest love for us, at the cost of great trouble and suffering, and with such firmness, that if executioners had been wanting, as St. Anselm and St. Antoninus tell us, she herself would have crucified him in obedience to the will of the Father, who had decreed he should die for our salvation. And if Abraham showed a similar fortitude in consenting to sacrifice his son with his own hands, we must believe that Mary would certainly have done the same, with more resolution, as she was holier, and more obedient than Abraham. But to return to our subject. How grateful should we be to Mary, for an act of so much love! for the sacrifice she made of the life of her Son, in the midst of so much anguish, to obtain salvation for us all! The Lord, indeed, rewarded Abraham for the sacrifice he was prepared to make to him of his son Isaac; but what can we render to Mary for the life of her Jesus, as she has given us a Son more noble and beloved than the son of Abraham? This love of Mary, says St. Bonaventure, greatly obliges us to love her, seeing that she has loved us more than any other created being loves us, since she has given for us her only Son, whom she loved more than herself.[6788]

And from this follows another reason why we are so much beloved by Mary: because she knows that we have been purchased by the death of Jesus Christ. If a mother should see a servant redeemed by a beloved son of hers, by twenty years of imprisonment and suffering, for this reason alone how much would she esteem that servant! Mary well knows that her Son came upon earth solely to save us miserable sinners, as he himself declared: “I have come to save what was lost.”[6789] And to save us he has consented to lay down his life for us: “Becoming obedient unto death.”[6790] If Mary, then, had little love for us, she would slightly value the blood of her Son, which was the price of our salvation. It was revealed to St. Elizabeth, the nun, that Mary, from the time she was in the temple, was always praying that God would quickly send his Son to save the world. Now, how much more certainly must we believe that she loves us, after she has seen us so greatly prized by her Son, that he deigned to purchase us at such a cost!

And because all men have been redeemed by Jesus, Mary loves and favors all. She was seen by St. John clothed with the sun: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun.”[6791] She is said to be clothed with the sun, because, as “There is no one that can hide himself from his heat,”[6792] so there is no one living on the earth who is deprived of the love of Mary. From the heat of the sun, as it is explained by the venerable Raymond Jordan, who through humility called himself the Idiot, that is, from the love of Mary.[6793] And who, says St. Anthony, can comprehend the care which this loving mother has of us all? Therefore, to all she offers and dispenses her mercy.[6794] For our mother has desired the salvation of all, and has co-operated with her Son in the salvation of all.

It is certain that she is concerned for the whole human race, as St. Bernard affirms;[6795] hence the practice of some devout servants of Mary is very useful, who, as Cornelius à Lapide relates, have the habit of praying our Lord to grant them those graces which the blessed Virgin is seeking for them, using these words: “Oh Lord, give me what the most holy Virgin Mary is asking for me.”[6796] And this is well, as à Lapide adds, for our mother desires greater things for us than we think of asking for ourselves.[6797] The devout Bernardine de Bustis says, that Mary is more desirous to do us good, and bestow favors upon us, than we are to receive them.[6798] Therefore blessed Albertus Magnus applies to Mary the words of wisdom: “She preventeth them that covet her, so that she first showeth herself unto them.”[6799] So great is the love, says Richard of St. Laurence, which this good mother bears us, that when she perceives our necessities, she comes to relieve them. She hastens before she is invoked.[6800]

If Mary, then, is good to all, even to the ungrateful and negligent, who have but little love for her, and seldom have recourse to her, how much more loving must she not be to those who love her and often invoke her! “She is easily seen by them that love her.”[6801] Oh, how easy it is, exclaims the same blessed Albertus, for those who love Mary to find her, and find her full of love and pity! “I love them that love me,”[6802] she assures us, and declares that she cannot but love those who love her. And although our most loving lady loves all men as her children, yet, says St. Bernard, she recognizes and loves especially those who most tenderly love her. Those happy lovers of Mary, as the Idiot asserts, are not only loved, but served by her.[6803]

Leonard the Dominican, as we read in the chronicles of his order, who was accustomed to recommend himself two hundred times a day to this mother of mercy, when he was on his death-bed, saw one beautiful as a queen by his side, who said to him: “Leonard, do you wish to die and come to my Son and me?” “Who are you?” answered the religious. “I am the mother of mercy,” replied the Virgin; “you have many times invoked me, and now I come to take you: let us go to paradise.” On that same day Leonard died, and we hope that he followed her to the kingdom of the blessed.

“Ah, most sweet Mary, blessed is he who loves you!” the venerable brother John Berchmans, of the society of Jesus, used to say: “If I love Mary, I am sure of perseverance, and I shall obtain from God whatsoever I wish.” And this devout youth was never satisfied with renewing his intention, and often repeated to himself: “I will love Mary, I will love Mary.”

Oh, how much this our good mother exceeds all her children in affection, even if they love her to the extent of their power! “Mary is always more loving than her lovers,” says St. Ignatius, martyr.[6804] Let us love her as much as St. Stanislaus Kostka, who loved this his dear mother so tenderly, that when he spoke of her, every one who heard him desired to love her also; he invented new titles by which he honored her name; he never commenced an action without first turning to her image and asking her blessing; when he recited her office, her rosary, and other prayers, he repeated them with such affectionate earnestness, that he seemed speaking face to face with Mary; when he heard the Salve Regina sung, his soul and even his countenance was all on fire; when asked one day by a father of the society, as they were going together to visit an altar of the blessed Virgin, how much he loved her, “Father,” he answered, “what can I say more than she is my mother?” And that father tells us how the holy youth spoke these words with such tender emotion of voice, countenance, and heart, that he appeared not a man, but an angel discoursing the love of Mary.

Let us love her as much as blessed Hermann, who called her his beloved spouse, whilst he also was honored by Mary with the same name. As much as St. Philip Neri, who felt wholly consoled in merely thinking of Mary, and on this account named her his delight. As much as St. Bonaventure, who not only called her his lady and mother, but, to show the tender affection he bore her, went so far as to call her his heart and his soul: “Hail, lady, my mother; yea, my heart, my soul.”[6805] Let us love her as much as her great lover St. Bernard, who loved his sweet mother so much, that he called her “the ravisher of hearts:”[6806] whence the saint, in order to express to her the ardent love he bore her, said to her, “Hast thou not stolen my heart?”[6807] Let us name her our beloved mistress, as St. Bernardine of Sienna named her, who went every day to visit her before her sacred image, in order to declare his love in the tender colloquies he held with his queen. When he was asked where he went every day, he answered that he went to find his beloved. Let them love her as much as St. Louis of Gonzaga, who burned continually with so great love of Mary, that as soon as he heard the sound of the sweet name of his dear mother, his heart kindled, and a flame perceptible to all, lighted up his countenance. Let us love her like St. Francis Solano, who, distracted by a holy passion for Mary, sometimes went with a musical instrument to sing of love before her altar, saying that, like earthly lovers, he was serenading his beloved queen.

Let us love her as so many of her servants have loved her, who had no way left of manifesting their love to her. Father Jerome of Trexo, of the Society of Jesus, delighted in calling himself the slave of Mary, and as a mark of his servitude went often to visit her in a church: and what did he do there? He watered the church with the tears of that tender love which he felt for Mary; then he wiped them with his lips, kissing that pavement a thousand times, remembering that it was the house of his beloved mistress. Father Diego Martinez, of the same society, who, on account of his devotion to our Lady, on the feasts of Mary, was carried by angels to heaven, that he might see with how much devotion they were celebrated there, said, “Would that I had all the hearts of the angels and the saints to love Mary as they love her. Would that I had the lives of all men, to devote them all to the love of Mary!” Let others love her as Charles the son of St. Bridget loved her, who said that he knew of nothing in the world which gave him so much consolation as the thought of how much Mary was beloved by God; and he added, that he would accept every suffering rather than that Mary should lose, if it were possible for her to lose it, the least portion of her greatness; and if the greatness of Mary were his, he would renounce it in her behalf, because she was more worthy of it. Let us desire to sacrifice our life in testimony of our love to Mary, as Alphonso Rodriguez desired to do. Let us, like Francesco Binanzio, a religious, and Radagunde, wife of King Clotaire, engrave with sharp instruments of iron upon our breast the sweet name of Mary. Let us, with red-hot iron, impress upon our flesh the beloved name, that it may be more distinct and more enduring, as did her devoted servants Battista Archinto and Agostino d’Espinosa, both of the Company of Jesus.

If, then, the lovers of Mary imitate, as much as possible, those lovers who endeavor to make known their affection to the person beloved, they can never love her so much as she loves them. I know, oh Lady, said St. Peter Damian, how loving thou art, and that thou lovest us with unconquerable love.[6808] The venerable Alphonso Rodriguez, of the Society of Jesus, was once standing before an image of Mary; and there burning with love for the most holy Virgin, broke forth into these words: “My most amiable mother, I know that thou lovest me, but thou dost not love me so much as I love thee.” Then Mary, as if wounded in her love, spoke to him from that image and said: “What dost thou say—what dost thou say, oh Alphonso? Oh, how much greater is the love I bear thee than the love thou bearest me! Know that the distance from heaven to earth is not so great as from my love to thine.”

With how much reason, then, did St. Bonaventure exclaim: Blessed are those whose lot it is to be faithful servants and lovers of this most loving mother![6809] For this most grateful queen is never surpassed in love by her devoted servants.[6810] Mary, in this respect, imitating our loving Redeemer Jesus Christ, makes by her favors a twofold return to him who loves her. I will exclaim, then, with the enamored St. Anselm: May my heart languish, may my soul melt with your never-failing love.[6811] May my heart always burn and my soul be consumed with love for you, oh Jesus, my beloved Saviour, oh my dear mother Mary. Grant then, oh Jesus and Mary, since without your grace I cannot love you, grant to my soul, not through my merits, but through yours, that I may love you as you deserve. Oh, God! the lover of men, thou hast died for thy enemies, and canst thou deny to him who asks it, the grace of loving thee and thy mother?[6812]

EXAMPLE

It is narrated by Father Auriemma,[6813] that a poor shepherdess loved Mary so much that all her delight was to go to a little chapel of our lady, on a mountain, and there in solitude, while her sheep were feeding, to converse with her beloved mother and pay her devotion to her. When she saw that the figure of Mary, in relief, was unadorned, she began, by the poor labor of her hands, to make a drapery for it. Having gathered one day some flowers in the fields, she wove them into a garland, and then ascending the altar of that little chapel, placed it on the head of the figure, saying: “Oh, my mother, I would that I could place on thy head a crown of gold and gems; but as I am poor, receive from me this poor crown of flowers, and accept it as a token of the love I bear thee.” Thus this devout maiden always endeavored to serve and honor her beloved Lady. But let us see how our good mother, on the other hand, rewarded the visits and the affection of her child. She fell ill, and was near her end. It happened that two religious passing that way, weary with travelling, stopped to rest under a tree; one fell asleep and the other watched, but both had the same vision. They saw a company of beautiful virgins, and among them there was one who, in loveliness and majesty, surpassed the rest. One of the brothers addressed her, and said: “Lady, who art thou? and where art thou going?” “I am the mother of God,” she replied, “and I am going to the neighboring village, with these holy virgins, to visit a dying shepherdess, who has many times visited me.” She spoke thus and disappeared. These two good servants of God proposed to each other to go and visit her also. They went towards the place where the dying maiden lived, entered a small cottage, and there found her lying upon a little straw. They saluted her, and she said to them: “Brothers, ask of God that he may permit you to see the company that surrounds me.” They were quickly on their knees, and saw Mary, with a crown in her hand by the side of the dying girl, consoling her. Then those holy virgins began to sing, and with that sweet music the blessed soul was released from the body. Mary crowned her, and took her soul with her to paradise.

PRAYER

Oh Lady, Ravisher of hearts! I would exclaim with St. Bonaventure; who, with the love and favor thou dost bestow upon thy servants, dost ravish their hearts; take my miserable heart also, which desires so earnestly to love thee. Thou, oh my mother, with thy beauty hast enamored a God, and hast drawn him from heaven into thy bosom, and shall I live without loving thee? No. I will say to thee with thy loving child John Berchmans: “I will never rest until I have attained a tender love for my mother Mary.”[6814] No, I will not rest until I am certain of having obtained a love—a constant and tender love for thee, my mother, who hast loved me with so much tenderness even when I was so ungrateful towards thee. And where should I now be if thou, oh Mary, hadst not loved me, and obtained so many favors for me? If then thou hast loved me so much when I did not love thee, how much more may I confide in thy goodness, now that I love thee? I love thee, oh my mother, and would wish for a heart capable of loving thee, for all those unhappy beings who do not love thee. Would that my tongue could praise thee with the power of a thousand tongues, in order to make known thy greatness, thy holiness, thy mercy, and thy love, with which thou lovest those who love thee. If I had riches, I would employ them all for thy honor; if I had subjects, I would make them all thy lovers; for thee and for thy glory I would give my life, if it were required. I love thee, oh my mother, but at the same time I fear that thou dost not love me, for I have heard that love makes lovers like those they love.[6815] If then I find myself so unlike to thee, it is a proof that I do not love thee. Thou so pure, I so unclean; thou so humble, I so proud; thou so holy, I so sinful. But this, oh Mary, is to be thy work; since thou lovest me, make me like unto thyself. Thou hast the power to change the heart; take then mine and change it. Let the world see what thou canst do for those who love thee. Make me holy—make me worthy of thy Son. Thus I hope; thus may it be.

SECTION IV

MARY IS ALSO MOTHER OF PENITENT SINNERS

MARY assured St. Bridget that she was mother not only of the just and innocent, but also of sinners, provided they wish to amend.[6816] When a sinner becomes penitent, and throws himself at her feet, he finds this good mother of mercy more ready to embrace and aid him than any earthly mother could be. This St. Gregory wrote to the princess Matilda: “Desire to cease from sin, and I confidently promise you you will find Mary more prompt than an earthly mother in thy behalf.”[6817] But whoever aspires to be the son of this great mother, must first leave off sinning, and then let him hope to be accepted as her son. Richard, commenting upon the words, “Then rose up her children,”[6818] remarks, that first comes the word rose up, *surrexerunt*, and then children, *filii;* because he cannot be a son of Mary who does not first rise from the iniquity into which he has fallen.[6819] For, says St. Peter Chrysologus, he who does works contrary to those of Mary, by such conduct denies that he wishes to be her son.[6820] Mary is humble, and will he be proud? Mary is pure, and will he be impure? Mary is full of love, and will he hate his neighbor? He proves that he is not, and does not wish to be the son of this holy mother, when he so much disgusts her with his life. The sons of Mary, repeats Richard of St. Laurence, are her imitators in chastity, humility, meekness, mercy.[6821] And how can he who so much disgusts her with his life, dare to call himself the son of Mary? A certain sinner once said to Mary, "Show thyself a mother;"[6822] but the Virgin answered him, "Show thyself a son."[6823] Another, one day, invoked this divine mother, calling her mother of mercy. But Mary said to him, "When you sinners wish me to aid you, you call me mother of mercy, and yet by your sins make me the mother of misery and grief." "He is cursed of God that angereth his mother."[6824] His mother—that is, Mary, remarks Richard.[6825] God curses every one who afflicts this his good mother, by his bad life or his wilfulness.

I have said wilfulness, for when a sinner, although he may not have left his sins, makes an effort to quit them, and seeks the aid of Mary, this mother will not fail to assist him, and bring him to the grace of God. This St. Bridget once learned from Jesus Christ himself, who, speaking with his mother, said: "Thou dost aid those who are striving to rise to God, and dost leave no soul without thy consolation."[6826] While the sinner, then, is obstinate, Mary cannot love him; but if he finds himself enchained by some passion which makes him a slave of hell, and will commend himself to the Virgin, and implore her with confidence and perseverance to rescue him from his sin, this good mother will not fail to extend her powerful hand, she will loose his chains, and bring him to a state of safety. It is a heresy, condemned by the sacred Council of Trent, to say that all the prayers and works of a person in a state of sin are sins. St. Bernard says that prayer is the mouth of a sinner, although it is without supernatural excellence, since it is not accompanied by charity, yet is useful and efficient in obtaining a release from sin; for, as St. Thomas teaches,[6827] the prayer of the sinner is indeed without merit, but it serves to obtain the grace of pardon; for the power of obtaining it is based not upon the worth of him who prays, but upon the divine bounty, and upon the merits and promise of Jesus Christ, who has said, "Every one that asketh receiveth."[6828] The same may be said of the prayers offered to the divine mother. If he who prays, says St. Anselm, does not deserve to be heard, the merits of Mary, to whom he commends himself, will cause him to be heard.[6829] Hence St. Bernard exhorts every sinner to pray to Mary, and to feel great confidence in praying to her; because if he does not deserve what he demands, yet Mary obtains for him, by her merits, the graces which she asks of God for him.[6830] The office of a good mother, says the same saint, is this: if a mother knew that her two sons were deadly enemies, and that one was plotting against the life of the other, what would she do but endeavor in every way to pacify him? Thus, says the saint, Mary is mother of Jesus, and mother of man; when she sees any one by his sin an enemy of Jesus Christ, she cannot endure it, and makes every effort to reconcile them.[6831] Our most indulgent lady only requires the sinner to commend himself to her, and have the intention to reform. When she sees a sinner coming to implore mercy at her feet, she does not regard the sins with which he is laden, but the intention with which he comes. If he comes with a good intention, though he have committed all the sins in the world, she embraces him, and this most loving mother condescends to heal all the wounds of his soul; for she is not only called by us the mother of mercy, but she really is such, and shows herself such by the love and tenderness with which she succors us. The blessed Virgin herself expressed all this to St. Bridget, when she said to her, "However great may be a man's sins, when he turns to me, I am immediately ready to receive him; neither do I consider how much he has sinned, but with what intention he comes; for I do not disdain to anoint and heal his wounds, because I am called, and truly am, the mother of mercy."[6832]

Mary is the mother of sinners who desire to be converted, and as a mother she cannot but compassionate them, and it even seems that she regards the woes of her poor children as her own. When the woman of Chanaan implored Jesus Christ to liberate her daughter from the demon which tormented her, she said: "Have mercy on me, oh Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil."[6833] But as the daughter, not the mother, was tormented by the devil, it would seem that she should have said, "Oh Lord, have mercy on my daughter," not "have mercy upon me;" but no, she said, "Have mercy upon me,"[6834] and with reason, for all the miseries of children are felt as their own by their mothers. Exactly thus Mary prays God, says Richard of St. Laurence, when she commends to him a sinner who has recommended himself to her: "Have mercy upon me."[6835] It is as if she said to him, My Lord, this poor creature, who is in sin, is my child; have pity on him, not so much on him as on me who am his mother. Oh, would to God that all sinners would have recourse to this sweet mother, for all would certainly be pardoned by God. Oh Mary, exclaims St. Bonaventure, in wonder; thou dost embrace, with maternal affection the sinner who is despised by the whole world! neither dost thou leave him until he is reconciled to his Judge![6836] The saint here intends to say that the sinner who remains in sin is hated and rejected by all men; even insensible creatures, fire, air, the earth would punish him, and inflict vengeance upon him in order to repair the honor of their insulted Lord. But if this wretch has recourse to Mary, does she banish him from her presence? No: if he comes asking for help, and intending to amend, she embraces him with the affection of a mother, and does not leave him until she has reconciled him to God by her powerful intercession, and re-established him in his grace.

We read in the 2d book of Kings,[6837] that the wise woman of Thecua said to David: "My Lord, I had two sons, and for my misfortune one has killed the other; so that I have already lost a child; justice would now take from me my other and only son; have pity on me a poor mother, and do not let me be deprived of both my children." Then David had compassion on this mother, and liberated the criminal, and restored him to her.[6838] It appears that Mary offers the same petition when God is angry with a sinner, who has recourse to her: Oh my God, she says to him, I had two sons, Jesus and man; man has killed my Jesus on the cross; thy justice would now condemn man; my Lord, my Jesus is dead; have mercy upon me, and if I have lost one, do not condemn me to lose the other also. Ah, God assuredly does not condemn those sinners who have recourse to Mary, and for whom she prays; since God himself has given these sinners to Mary for her children. The devout Lanspergius puts these words into the mouth of our Lord: I have commended sinners to Mary as her children. Wherefore she is so watchful in the performance of her office that she permits none to be lost who are committed to her care, especially those who invoke her, and uses all her power to lead them back to me. And who can describe, says Blosius, the goodness, the mercy, the fidelity, and the charity with which this our mother strives to save us, when we invoke her aid?[6839] Let us prostrate ourselves, then, says St. Bernard, before this good mother, let us cling to her sacred feet, and leave her not until she gives us her blessing, and accepts us for her children.[6840] Who could distrust the goodness of this mother? said St.

Bonaventure. Though she should slay me, I will hope in her; and, confident in my trust, I would die near her image, and be saved.[6841] And thus should every sinner say who has recourse to this kind mother: Oh my Lady and mother, I deserve for my faults that thou shouldst banish me from thy presence, and shouldst punish me for my sins; but even if thou shouldst cast me off and slay me, I shall never lose confidence in thee and in thy power to save me. In thee I entirely confide, and if it be my fate to die before some image of thine, recommending myself to thy compassion, I should have a certain hope of my salvation, and of going to praise thee in heaven, united to all thy servants who called upon thee for aid in death, and are saved. Let the following example be read, and let the reader judge if any sinner can distrust the mercy and love of this good mother, if he has recourse to her.

EXAMPLE

It is narrated by Belluacensis that in Ridolio, a city of England, in the year 1430, there lived a young nobleman named Ernest, who gave all his patrimony to the poor, and entered a monastery, where he led so holy a life that he was greatly esteemed by his superiors, particularly for his special devotion to the most holy Virgin. It happened that a pestilence prevailed in that city and the citizens had recourse to that monastery to ask the prayers of the monks. The abbot ordered Ernest to go and pray before the altar of Mary, and not to quit it until she had given him an answer. The youth remained there three days, and received from Mary, in answer, some prayers, which were to be said. They were said, and the plague ceased. It happened afterwards that this youth became less ardent in his devotion to Mary; the devil assailed him with many temptations, especially to impurity, and to a desire to flee from the monastery; and having neglected to recommend himself to Mary, he resolved to take flight by casting himself from the wall of the monastery; but passing before an image of the Virgin which stood in the corridor, the mother of God spoke to him, and said: “My son, why do you leave me?” Ernest was over whelmed with surprise, and, filled with compunction, fell on the earth, saying: “My Lady, behold, I have no power to resist, why do you not aid me?” and the Madonna replied: “Why have you not invoked me? If you had sought my protection, you would not have been reduced to this; from this day commend yourself to me, and have confidence.” Ernest returned to his cell; but the temptations were renewed, yet he neglected to call upon Mary for assistance. He finally fled from the monastery, and leading a bad life, he went on from one sin to another, till he became an assassin. He rented an inn, where in the night he murdered unfortunate travellers and stripped them of all they had. One night, among others, he killed the cousin of the governor of the place, who, after examination and trial, condemned him to the gallows. But during the examination, a young traveller arrived at the inn, and the host, as usual, laid his plans and entered his chamber to assassinate him: but on approaching the bed, he finds the young man gone and a Christ on the cross, covered with wounds, in his place. Our Lord, looking compassionately at him, said: “Is it not enough that I have died once for thee? Dost thou wish to slay me again? Do it, then; lift thy hand and kill me!” Then the poor Ernest, covered with confusion, began to weep, and exclaimed: “Oh Lord, behold me ready to return to thee, who hast shown me so much mercy.” He immediately left the inn to go back to the monastery and do penance; but the officers of justice overtook him on the way, he was carried before the judge, and in his presence confessed all the murders he had committed. He was at once condemned to death, without even being allowed time for confession. He commended himself to Mary. He was hung upon the gallows, but the Virgin prevented his death. She herself released him, and said to him: “Return to the monastery; do penance; and when you shall see in my hand a paper containing the pardon of thy sins, then prepare to die. Ernest returned, and having related all to the abbot, did great penance. After many years, he saw in the hand of Mary the paper containing his pardon; he then prepared for his last end, and died a holy death.

PRAYER

Oh Mary, sovereign queen, and worthy mother of my God, most holy Mary! Finding myself so vile, so laden with sin, I dare not approach thee and call thee mother. But I cannot let my miseries deprive me of the consolation and confidence I feel in calling thee mother. I know that I deserve to be rejected by thee, but I pray thee to consider what thy son Jesus has done and suffered for me; and then cast me from thee if thou canst. I am a poor sinner, who, more than others, have despised the divine Majesty; but the evil is already done. To thee I have recourse: thou canst help me; oh, my mother, help me. Do not say that thou canst not aid me, for I know that thou art omnipotent, and dost obtain whatever thou desireth from thy God. If then thou sayest that thou canst not help me, at least tell me to whom I must have recourse for succor in my deep distress. With St. Anselm, I will say to thee, and to thy Son: Have pity on me, oh thou, my Redeemer, and pardon me, thou my mother, and recommend me to pardon; or teach me to whom I may have recourse, who is more compassionate than you, and in whom I may have more confidence. No, neither in heaven nor on earth can I find one who has more compassion for the miserable, or who can aid me more than you. Thou, oh Jesus, art my father, and thou, oh Mary, art my mother. You love those who are the most wretched, and you seek to save them. I am worthy of hell, and of all beings the most miserable; you need not to seek me, neither do I ask you to seek me; I present myself to you with a sure hope that I shall not be abandoned by you. Behold me at your feet; my Jesus, pardon me; my Mary, help me.

Chapter II

VITA, DULCEDO

OUR LIFE, OUR SWEETNESS.

SECTION I

MARY IS OUR LIFE, BECAUSE SHE OBTAINS FOR US THE PARDON OF OUR SINS

IN order to understand rightly the reason why the holy Church calls Mary our life, we must consider that as the soul gives life to the body, so divine grace gives life to the soul; for a soul without grace, though nominally alive, in truth is dead, as we find in the Apocalypse: “Thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead.”[6842] As Mary, then, obtains for sinners, by her intercession, the gift of grace, she restores them to life. The holy Church applies to her the following words of Proverbs: “They that in the morning early watch for me, shall find me.”[6843] They shall find me, or, according to the Septuagint, “they shall find grace.”[6844] Hence, to have recourse to Mary is to find the grace of God; for, as immediately follows: “He who finds me shall find life, and shall receive from God eternal salvation.”[6845] Listen, as St. Bonaventure exclaims here upon these words, listen, all ye who desire the kingdom of God; honor the Virgin Mary, and ye shall have life and eternal salvation.[6846]

St. Bernardine of Sienna says, that God did not destroy man after his fall, because of the peculiar love that he bore his future child Mary. And the saint adds, that he doubts not all the mercy and pardon which sinners receive under the Old Law, was granted them by God solely for the sake of this blessed Virgin.[6847]

Therefore St. Bernard exhorts us, if we have been so unfortunate as to lose divine grace, to strive to recover it, but to strive through Mary; for if we have lost it, she has found it:[6848] and hence she is called by this saint, "The finder of grace."[6849] This the angel Gabriel expressed for our consolation, when he said to the Virgin, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace."[6850] But if Mary had never been without grace, how could the angel say to her that she had found it? A thing is said to be found when it has been lost. The Virgin was always with God and with grace; she was even full of grace, as the Archangel himself announced when he saluted her, "Hail! full of grace, the Lord is with thee."[6851] If, then, Mary did not find grace for herself, for whom did she find it? Cardinal Hugo answers, when commenting upon the above passage, that she found it for sinners who had lost it. Let sinners, then, says the devout writer, who have lost grace, flee to Mary; with her they will certainly find it; and let them say: Oh Lady, what is lost must be restored to him who has lost it; this grace which thou hast found is not thine, thou hast never lost it; it is ours, for we have lost it, and to us thou shouldst restore it.[6852] In connection with which, Richard of St. Laurence remarks: If then we desire to find the grace of God, let us go to Mary, who has found it, and always finds it.[6853] And since she ever has been, and ever will be, dear to God, if we have recourse to her, we certainly shall find it. She says, in the holy Canticles, that God has placed her in the world to be our defence,[6854] and therefore she is ordained to be the mediatrix of peace between the sinner and God. "I am become in his presence as one finding peace."[6855] By which words St. Bernard gives encouragement to the sinner, and says: Go to this mother of mercy, and show her the wounds which thy sins have inflicted upon thy soul. Then she will certainly pray her Son that he may pardon thee by the milk with which she has nourished him, and the Son who loves her so much will certainly hear her.[6856] So, too, the holy Church teaches us to pray the Lord to grant us the powerful intercession of Mary, that we may arise from our sins, in the following prayer: "Grant us, oh merciful God! strength against all our weakness; that we who celebrate the memory of the holy mother of God, may, by the help of her intercession, arise again from our iniquities."[6857]

Justly, then, does St. Lawrence Justinian call her the hope of evil-doers, "spes delinquentium," since she alone can obtain their pardon from God. St. Bernard rightly names her the ladder of sinners, "Peccatorum scala;" since she, this compassionate queen, offers her hand to poor fallen mortals, leads them from the precipice of sin, and helps them to ascend to God. St.

Augustine rightly calls her the only hope of us sinners, since by her means alone we hope for the remission of all our sins.[6858] And St. John Chrysostom repeats the same thing, namely, that sinners receive pardon only through the intercession of Mary.[6859] Whence the saints in the name of all sinners thus salutes her: Hail! mother of God and ours; Heaven where God dwells; Throne from which the Lord dispenses all graces; always pray to Jesus for us, that by thy prayers we may obtain pardon in the day of account, and the glory of the blessed in heaven.[6860] Finally, Mary is rightly called aurora: "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising?"[6861] Because, as Pope Innocent says, aurora is the end of night, and the beginning of day, well is the Virgin Mary, who is the end of vices and the beginning of virtues, designated as aurora.[6862] And the same effect which the birth of Mary produced in the world, devotion to her produces in the soul; she puts an end to the night of sin, and leads the soul into the way of virtue. Hence, St. Germanus says: Oh mother of God, thy protection is immortal! thy intercession is life.[6863] And in his sermon on the *Zone of the Virgin*,[6864] the saint says that the name of Mary, to him who pronounces it with affection, is either the sign of life, or that soon he will have life.

Mary sang: "For behold, from henceforth all nations shall call me blessed."[6865] On this account, says St. Bernard, all nations shall call thee blessed, because all thy servants by thy means shall obtain the life of grace and eternal glory.[6866] "In thee sinners find pardon, and the just perseverance, and afterwards life eternal."[6867] Do not despair, as the devout Bernardine de Bustis says, oh sinners, although you have committed all possible sin, but confidently have recourse to this Lady, for you will find her hands full of mercies. Then she adds: Mary is more desirous to bestow favors upon you than you are to receive them.[6868]

By St. Andrew of Crete, Mary is called "The security of divine pardon."[6869] By this is meant, that when sinners have recourse to Mary that they may be reconciled to God, God assures them of pardon, and gives them the assurance by also giving them the pledge of it. And this pledge is Mary, whom he has given us for our advocate, by whose intercession, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, God pardons all sinners who place themselves under her protection. It was revealed to St. Bridget by an angel, that the holy prophets were full of joy when they learned that God, by the humility and purity of Mary, would become reconciled to sinners, and receive into his favor those who had provoked his wrath.[6870]

No sinner need ever fear that he shall be rejected by Mary, if he has recourse to her mercy. No, for she is mother of mercy; and as such, desires to save the most miserable. Mary is that happy ark in which he who takes refuge will never suffer the shipwreck of eternal ruin; "arca in qua naufragium evadimus." Even the brutes were saved in the time of the deluge in the ark of Noe; so, under the mantle of Mary, even sinners are saved. St. Gertrude one day saw Mary with her mantle extended, beneath which many wild beasts, lions, bears, and tigers had sheltered themselves; and Mary not only did not cast them from her, but received them with pity and caressed them. And by this the saint understood, that the vilest sinners, when they flee to Mary, are not cast out, but welcomed and saved from eternal death. Let us enter, then, into this ark, and seek refuge under the mantle of Mary; for she certainly will not reject us, and will surely save us.

EXAMPLE

It is narrated by Father Bevius,[6871] of a very sinful person named Helen, that having gone to church, she accidentally heard a sermon on the rosary. As she went out she bought one but carried it hidden, so that it should not be seen. Afterwards, she began to recite it; and although she recited it without devotion, the most holy Virgin infused into her heart such consolation and sweetness in it, that she could not cease repeating it. And by this she was inspired with such a horror of her evil life, that she could find no peace, and was forced, as it were, to go to confession. She confessed with so much contrition, that the confessor was amazed. Having finished her confession, she went immediately before an altar of the blessed Virgin, to thank her advocate; she recited her rosary, and the divine mother spoke to her from her image, and said: "Helen, you have too long offended God and me; henceforth change your life, and I will bestow upon you many of my favors." The poor sinner in confusion, answered: "Ah, most holy Virgin, it is true that hitherto I have been very sinful, but thou, who art all-powerful, assist me; I give myself to thee, and will pass the remainder of my life in doing penance for my sins." Assisted by Mary, Helen bestowed all her goods upon the poor, and commenced a rigorous penance. She was tormented by dreadful temptations, but she continued to recommend herself to the mother of God; and always, with her aid, came off victorious. She was favored also with many supernatural graces, as visions, revelations, and prophecies. At last, before her death, of which she had been warned a few days previously by Mary, the Virgin herself came with her Son to visit her; and in death, the soul of this sinner was seen, in the form of a beautiful dove, ascending to heaven.

PRAYER

Behold, oh mother of my God, Mary, my only hope, behold at thy feet a miserable sinner, who implores thy mercy. Thou art proclaimed and called by the whole Church, and by all the faithful, the refuge of sinners; thou then art my refuge; it is thine to save me. Thou knowest how much thy Son desires our salvation.[6872] Thou, too, knowest what Jesus Christ suffered to save me. I offer to thee, oh my mother, the sufferings of Jesus; the cold which he endured in the stable, the steps of his long journey into Egypt, his toils, his sweat, the blood that he shed, the torments which caused his death before thy eyes upon the cross; show thy love for this Son, whilst I, for the love of him, beg thee to aid me. Extend thy hand to a fallen creature, who asks pity of thee. If I were a saint, I would not ask for mercy; but because I am a sinner, I have recourse to thee, who art the mother of mercies. I know that thy compassionate heart finds consolation in succoring the wretched, when thou canst aid them, and dost not find them obstinate in their sins. Console, then, to-day thy own compassionate heart, and console me; for thou hast a chance to save me, a poor wretch condemned to hell; and thou canst aid me, for I will not be obstinate. I place myself in thy hands; tell me what I must do, and obtain for me strength to do it, and I will do all I can to return to a state of grace. I take refuge beneath thy mantle. Jesus Christ wishes me to have recourse to thee, that, for thy glory and his, since thou art his mother, not only his blood, but also thy prayers, may aid me to obtain salvation. He sends me to thee that thou mayest assist me. Oh Mary, I hasten to thee, and in thee I trust. Thou dost pray for so many others, pray, and say also one word for me. Say to God, that thou desirest my salvation, and God certainly will save me. Tell him that I am thine; this is all I ask from thee.

SECTION II

MARY IS AGAIN OUR LIFE, BECAUSE SHE OBTAINS FOR US PERSEVERANCE

FINAL perseverance is a divine gift so great, that, as the holy Council of Trent has declared, it is a wholly gratuitous gift and one that cannot be merited by us. But, as St. Augustine teaches us, all those obtain perseverance from God who ask it of him; and as Father Suarez says, they infallibly obtain it if they are diligent to the end of life in praying for it; because, as Cardinal Bellarmine writes: This perseverance is daily to be sought, that it may be daily obtained.[6873] Now, if it is true, which I consider certain, according to the present very general opinion, as I shall presently demonstrate in chap. 5th—if it is true that all the graces which are bestowed on us by God pass through the hands of Mary, it must also be true that only through Mary can we hope for and obtain this great gift of perseverance. And we certainly shall obtain it, if, with confidence, we always ask it of Mary. She herself promises this grace to all those who serve her faithfully in this life. “They that work by me shall not sin; they that explain me shall have life everlasting:”[6874] which words the holy Church puts into the mouth of Mary on the Feast of her Conception.

In order that we may be preserved in the life of divine grace, spiritual strength is necessary to resist all the enemies of our salvation. Now, this strength can only be obtained by means of Mary: Mine is this strength, says Mary: “Mea est fortitudo.” God has intrusted this gift to my hand, that I may bestow it on my devoted servants. “By me kings reign:”[6875] “Per me rege regnant.” By me my servants reign, and rule their senses and their passions, and thus make themselves worthy of reigning eternally in heaven. Oh, what strength have the servants of this great Lady to conquer all the temptations of hell! Mary is that tower spoken, of in the holy Canticles: “Thy neck is as the tower of David, which is built with bulwarks a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the armor of valiant men.”[6876] She is like a strong tower of defence for her lovers, who take refuge with her in the day of battle; in her all her devoted servants find shields and weapons of every kind to defend themselves against the powers of hell.

For this reason, the most holy Virgin is called a plane-tree: “As a plane-tree by the water in the streets was I exalted.”[6877] This passage is explained by Cardinal Hugo, who tells us that the plane-tree has leaves like shields.[6878] And by this is explained the defence that Mary affords those who take refuge with her. The blessed Amadeus gives another explanation, and says that she is called a plane-tree, because, as the plane-tree, with its shade, protects the traveller from the heat of the sun and from the rain, so, under the mantle of Mary, men find shelter from the heat of their passions and the fury of temptations.[6879]

Unfortunate are those souls who withdraw from this shelter, neglect their devotion to Mary, and fail to recommend themselves to her in trial. If the sun should no more rise upon the world, says St. Bernard, what would the world become but a chaos of darkness and horror?[6880] If a soul loses her devotion to Mary, she will immediately be full of darkness, and that darkness of which the Holy Ghost says: “Thou hast appointed darkness, and it is night; in it shall the beasts of the woods go about.”[6881] When the divine light does not shine in a soul it is night, and it will become a den of all sins and demons. Woe to those, as St. Anselm says, who turn away from the light of this sun;[6882] that is, who neglect devotion to Mary. St. Francis Borgia, with reason, feared for the perseverance of those in whom he did not find a special devotion to the blessed Virgin. When once he asked some novices to what saint they had the most devotion, and found that some of them were not especially devoted to Mary, he warned the master to watch more carefully these unfortunate persons; and it happened that they all lost their vocation and quitted religion.

St. Germanus justly called the most holy Virgin the breath of Christians; because, as the body cannot live without breathing, so the soul cannot live without having recourse and commending itself to Mary, through whose means the life of divine grace is obtained for us and preserved in us.[6883] As respiration is not only the sign, but also the cause of life, so is the name of Mary, when it is spoken by the servants of God, not only proves that they are living, but procures and maintains this life, and obtains for them every aid. The blessed Alanus, when once assailed by a strong temptation, was on the point of being lost because he omitted to recommend himself to Mary; but the blessed Virgin appeared to him, and, to warn him against such neglect in future, gave him a blow on the ear, and said to him: “If thou hadst commended thyself to me, thou wouldst not have been exposed to this peril.”

On the other hand: “Blessed is the man,” says Mary, “that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors.”[6884] Mary will certainly be ready to obtain light and strength for those faithful servants, that they may abandon their vices and walk in the paths of virtue. Hence is she, as Innocent III. beautifully expresses it: The moon by night, the dawn of the morning, and the sun by day.[6885] The moon, to him who is groping in the night of sin, to give him light to see his wretched state of condemnation; the dawn, the forerunner of the sun, to him who is enlightened, that he may come forth from sin and return to divine grace; and the sun, to him who is in grace, that he may not again fall into any precipice.

Theologians apply to Mary these words of Ecclesiasticus: “Her bands are a healthful binding.”[6886] Wherefore are they called bands, asks St. Lawrence Justinian, unless because she binds her servants, that they may not wander in forbidden fields?[6887] St. Bonaventure explains in a similar manner the words of the office of Mary: My abode is in the full assembly of saints.”[6888] He says that Mary is not only established in the fulness of the saints, but that she also upholds the saints, that they may not fall away; she sustains their virtue that it may not waver, and prevents the demons from doing them harm.[6889]

It is said that “all her domestics are clothed with double garments.”[6890] Cornelius a Lapide thus describes this double garment: It is a double garment, because she clothes her servants with the virtues of her Son, as well as with her own;[6891] and, thus clothed, they will preserve holy perseverance. For this reason, St. Philip Neri always admonished his penitents by saying to them: My children, if you desire perseverance, be devout to Mary. The venerable brother John Berchmans, of the Company of Jesus, also said: He who loves Mary, shall have perseverance. The reflection which Rupert the abbot makes upon the prodigal son is very beautiful. If the mother of this prodigal son had been living, he would either never have left his father’s house or would have returned much sooner.[6892] And by this he wished to say, that he who is a child of Mary, either never departs from God, or if for his misfortune he departs, by means of Mary he quickly returns.

Oh, if all men loved this most kind and loving Lady, and in temptations always and immediately had recourse to her, who would fall? Who would be lost? He falls and is lost who does not flee to Mary. St. Lawrence Justinian applies to Mary these words of Ecclesiasticus: “I have walked in the waves of the sea;”[6893] and makes her to say: I walked with my servants in the midst of the tempests to which they are exposed, to assist them, and prevent them from falling into the precipice of sin.[6894]

Father Bernardine de Bustis relates that a hawk darted upon a bird which had been taught to say Ave Maria; the bird said Ave Maria, and the hawk fell dead. By this our Lord wished to show us, that if an irrational bird was saved from destruction by invoking Mary, how much more surely will he be prevented from falling into the power of evil spirits, who is mindful to invoke Mary in his temptations. Nothing remains to be done, says St. Thomas of Villanova, when the devil comes to tempt us, but, like the chickens when the kite appears, to run quickly under the shelter of the wings of our mother. Let us, then, at the approach of the temptations which assail us, without stopping to parley with them, place ourselves at once under the protection of Mary.[6895] And then, the saint goes on to say, our Lady and mother must defend us; for, after God, we have no refuge but thee, who art our only hope, and the only protectress in whom we may confide.[6896]

Let us, then, conclude with the words of St. Bernard:[6897] Oh man, whoever thou art, thou knowest that in this miserable life thou art rather tossing on the tempestuous waves, among dangers and tempests, than walking upon the earth; if thou wouldst not sink, keep thy eye fixed on this star, namely, Mary. Look at the star, invoke Mary. When in danger of sinning, when tormented by temptations, when doubts disturb thee, remember that Mary can aid thee, and instantly call upon her. May her powerful name never depart from the confidence of thy heart, nor from the invocation of thy lips. If thou wilt follow Mary, thou shalt never wander from the path of safety. Commend thyself always to her, and thou shalt not despair. If she upholds thee, thou shalt not fall. If she protects thee, thou need not fear ruin. If she guides thee, thou shalt be saved without difficulty.

In a word, if Mary undertakes to defend thee, thou shalt certainly arrive at the kingdom of the blessed. Thus do, and thou shalt live.

EXAMPLE

In the celebrated history of St. Mary of Egypt, which we find in the first volume of the Lives of the Fathers, we read that, at twelve years of age she fled from her parents, and went to Alexandria, where she led an infamous life, and became the scandal of the city. After sixteen years spent in sin, she wandered off to Jerusalem; where, on the festival of the Holy Cross, she was led to enter the church, more from curiosity than devotion. On the threshold she was thrust back, as if by some invisible power; she attempted a second time to enter, and again was repelled, and a third and a fourth time the same thing happened. The wretched creature withdrew then into a corner of the portico, and there she was interiorly enlightened, and saw that God had refused her entrance into the church on account of her wicked life. By chance she raised her eyes, and saw a picture of Mary which was painted in the vestibule. She turned to it, weeping, and said: “Oh mother of God, have pity on this poor sinner! I know that, on account of my sins, I do not deserve that thou shouldst regard me; but thou art the refuge of sinners: for the love of Jesus, thy Son, help me. Obtain for me that I may enter the church, for I desire to change my life, and go and do penance wherever thou shalt direct.” Then she heard an interior voice, as if the blessed Virgin answered her: “Come, since thou hast invoked me, and wishest to change thy life, enter the church, for the door will no longer be closed against thee.” The sinner entered, adored the cross, and wept. She returned to the picture: “Oh Lady,” she said, “I am ready; where shall I retire to do penance?” “Go,” said the Virgin, “beyond the Jordan, and thou wilt find the place of thy repose.” She made her confession, received holy communion, passed the river, reached the desert, and understood that there was her place of penance. During the first seventeen years that she lived in the desert, the evil spirits fiercely assailed her, to make her fall again. What did she then do? She recommended herself to Mary, and Mary obtained for her strength to resist for seventeen years, after which the conflict ceased. Finally, after fifty-seven years spent in the desert, in the eighty-seventh of her age, through Divine Providence, she was found by the abbot St. Zosimus. To him she related the story of her whole life, and begged him to return there the following year, and bring her holy communion. The holy abbot returned, and gave her communion. Then she implored him again to do the same thing. Ha returned the second time, and found her dead, her body surrounded with light, and at her head these words written in the sand: “Bury in this place the body of me, a miserable sinner, and pray God for me.” A lion came and dug her grave, the abbot buried her, and, returning to the monastery, he related the wonders of divine mercy towards this happy penitent.

PRAYER

Oh mother of mercy! holy Virgin! behold at thy feet the traitor, who, returning ingratitude for the favors received through thee from God has betrayed thee and God. But, oh my Lady! know that my misery does not destroy, but increases my confidence in thee, because I see that my misery increases thy compassion for me. Show, oh Mary! that thou art the same to me as thou art to all those who invoke thee, full of grace and mercy. It is enough for me that thou regardest me with compassion. If in thy heart thou hast pity for me, thou wilt not cease to protect me; and if thou dost protect me, what should I fear? No, I fear nothing; I fear not my sins, for thou canst remedy their evil consequences; nor the demons, for thou art more powerful than hell; nor thy Son who is justly angry with me, for at one word of thine he will be appeased. I only fear that through negligence I may fail to implore thy protection in my temptations, and that this may cause my ruin. But I promise thee to-day, I will always have recourse to thee. Help me to keep this resolution. Behold the opportunity thou hast of satisfying thy desire to relieve so miserable a creature as I am.

Oh mother of God, I have great confidence in thee. From thee I expect the grace to do just penance for my sins, and from thee I hope the strength never more to fall back into them. If I am sick, thou canst heal me, oh heavenly physician. If my sins have made me weak, thy help can make me strong. Oh Mary, I hope every thing from thee, for thou hast all power with God.

SECTION III

DULCEDO:—SWEETNESS

MARY RENDERS DEATH SWEET TO HER SERVANTS

“HE that is a friend loveth at all times; and a brother is proved in distress.”[6898] *True* friends and relatives are not known in times of prosperity, but in the season of adversity and misery. Worldly friends do not desert their friend when he is in prosperity; but if any misfortune overtakes him, particularly in the hour of death, immediately his friends abandon him. Not so does Mary desert her devoted servants. In their distresses, and especially at the trying hour of death, when our sufferings are the greatest that can be endured on earth, she our good Lady and mother cannot abandon her faithful servants; and as she is our life in the time of our exile, so is she also our sweetness in the hour of death, by obtaining for us that it may be sweet and blessed. For since that great day in which it was the lot and the grief of Mary to be present at the death of Jesus, her Son, who was the head of the elect, she obtained the grace of aiding at death all the elect. Hence the holy Church requires us to pray the blessed Virgin, that she would especially aid us in the hour of our death: “Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.”[6899]

The sufferings of the dying are very great, on account of their remorse for sins committed, their dread of approaching judgment, and the uncertainty of eternal salvation. At that moment especially, the devil puts forth all his power to gain the soul that is passing into eternity; knowing that the time is short in which he may win her, and that if he loses her, he has lost her forever. “The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.”[6900] And therefore the devil, who has always tempted her in life, will not be satisfied to tempt her alone in death, but calls companions to his aid: “Their houses shall be filled with serpents.”[6901] When any one is at the point of death, his house is filled with demons, who unite to accomplish his ruin.

It is related of St. Andrew Avellino, that at the time of his death, ten thousand devils came to tempt him; and we read in his life, that at the time of his agony he had so fierce a struggle with hell, that it caused all his good religious who were present to tremble. They saw the face of the saint swell from agitation, so that it became black; they saw all his limbs trembling, and greatly agitated, rivers of tears flowed from his eyes, and his head shook violently; all these were signs of the horrible assault he was suffering from the powers of hell. All the religious wept in compassion, redoubled their prayers, and trembled with fear when they saw that a saint died thus. Yet they were consoled by seeing that the saint often turned his eyes, as if seeking help, towards a devout image of Mary, for they remembered that he had often said in life, that in the hour of his death, Mary must be his refuge. It finally pleased God to terminate this struggle by a glorious victory, for the agitation of his body ceased, his countenance gained its natural shape and color, and fixing his eyes tranquilly on that image, he devoutly bowed his head to Mary, who, it is believed, then appeared to him, as if to thank her, and quietly breathed forth in her arms his blessed soul, with heavenly peace depicted on his countenance. At the same time a Capuchin nun, in her agony, turned to the religious who were with her and said: “Say an Ave Maria, for a saint has just died.”

Ah, how these rebels flee before the presence of their queen! If, in the hour of death, we have Mary on our side, what fear can we have of all the powers of hell? David, in dread of the agony of death, comforted himself with confidence in the death of his future Redeemer, and in the intercession of the Virgin mother: “For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I fear no evils, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they have comforted me.”[6902] Cardinal Hugo understands the *staff* to signify the tree of the Cross, and the *rod* the intercession of Mary, who was the rod foretold by Isaias: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root.”[6903] This divine mother, says St. Peter Damian, is that powerful rod by which the fury of the infernal enemies is conquered.[6904] Hence St. Antoninus encourages us, saying: If Mary is for us, who is against us?[6905] Father Manuel Padial, of the Society of Jesus, being at the point of death, Mary appeared to him, and said, to comfort him: “The hour has at length come when the angels, rejoicing, say to thee, Oh happy labors! oh mortifications well recompensed!” At which words an army of devils was seen taking flight in despair, crying: “Alas! we have no power, for she who is without stain defends him.”[6906] In like manner, the devils assailed Father Jasper Haywood, when he was dying, with great temptations against faith; he immediately commended himself to the most holy Virgin, and then was heard to exclaim: "I thank thee, oh Mary, that thou hast come to my aid."[6907]

St. Bonaventure says that Mary sends the archangel Michael, with all the angels, to the defence of her dying servants, to protect them from the assaults of evil spirits, and to receive the souls of all those who have especially and constantly recommended themselves to her.[6908]

When a man leaves this life, Isaias says that hell is in uproar, and sends its most terrible demons to tempt that soul before it leaves the body, and then afterwards to accuse it when it is presented at the tribunal of Jesus Christ to be judged: "Hell below was in an uproar to meet thee; at thy coming it stirred up the giants for thee."[6909] But Richard says, that the demons, when that soul is defended by Mary, will not even dare to accuse it; knowing that a soul protected by this great mother is never, and will never, be condemned.[6910] St. Jerome wrote to the virgin Eustochium, that Mary not only assists her dear servants in their death, but also comes to meet them in their passage to the other life, to encourage them and accompany them to the divine tribunal.[6911] And this agrees with what the blessed Virgin said to St. Bridget, speaking of her servants when they are at the point of death: "Then I, their most loving Lady and mother, hasten to them in death, that they may have consolation and comfort."[6912] St. Vincent of Ferrer adds: The blessed Virgin receives the souls of the dying. The loving queen receives their souls under her protection, and she herself presents them to the judge her Son, and thus certainly procures their salvation.[6913] This happened to Charles, son of St. Bridget, who, dying in the perilous profession of a soldier, and far from his mother, the saint feared for his salvation; but the blessed Virgin revealed to her that Charles was saved for the love he bore her, in recompense of which she had assisted him in death, and had suggested to him the christian acts necessary to be made at that moment. The saint saw at the same time Jesus upon a throne, and the devil bringing two accusations against the most holy Virgin: the first, that Mary had prevented him from tempting Charles at the moment of death; the second, that Mary herself had presented his soul to its judge, and thus had saved without even giving him an opportunity to expose the reasons why he claimed it as his own. She then saw him driven from the presence of the judge, and the soul of Charles taken to heaven.

"Her bands are a healthful binding; in the latter end thou shalt find rest in her."[6914] Blessed art thou, oh brother, if in death thou shalt find thyself bound by the sweet chains of love for the mother of God! These chains are chains of salvation, which will secure to thee eternal salvation, and give thee in death that blessed peace which will be the commencement of thy eternal peace and rest. Father Binetti, in his book "On the Perfections of our Lord," relates that having been present at the death of a devoted servant of Mary, he heard from him these words before he breathed his last: "Oh, my Father, if you knew what happiness I find in having served the most holy mother of God! I could not describe to you the joy I feel at this moment."[6915] Father Suarez, because he was all his life very devoted to Mary, used to say, that he would willingly exchange all his knowledge for the merit of one Hail Mary, and died with so much joy, that he exclaimed at his last moment, "I never imagined it would be so sweet to die,—non putabam tam dulce esse mori."[6916] You too, devout reader, will doubtless feel the same peace and joy, if at death you can remember having loved this good mother, who cannot but be faithful to her children, when they are faithful to her service, paying her their offerings of visits, rosaries, and fastings, and especially thanking her, praising her, and often commending themselves to her powerful protection.

Neither will you be deprived of this consolation on account of your sins, if from henceforth you will be careful to live well, and to serve this very grateful and gracious Lady. In the trials and temptations with which the devil will assail you, that he may throw you into despair, she will comfort you, and even come herself to assist you in death. Martin, brother of St. Peter Damian, as the saint himself relates, finding that he had offended God, went one day before an altar of Mary to dedicate himself to her service, putting his girdle around his neck in token of his servitude, and thus said: "My Lady, mirror of purity, I, a poor sinner, have offended God and thee by violating chastity: I have no other remedy than to offer myself as thy servant; to thy service I dedicate myself to-day; receive this rebel, do not despise me." He then laid on the altar a certain sum of money, promising to pay the same every year as a tribute of his devotion to Mary.

After some time Martin died; but before his death he was heard one morning to say: “Arise, arise, pay homage to my Lady;” and afterwards: “What a favor is this, oh queen of heaven, that thou shouldst condescend to visit this thy poor servant. Bless me, oh Lady, and permit me not to be lost after thou hast honored me with thy presence.” At this moment his brother Peter entered. Martin related to him the visit of Mary, and how she had blessed him, lamenting that the persons present had not arisen at her entrance; and shortly after quietly passed away to our Lord. Such will be your death also, oh my reader, if you are faithful to Mary, even if in your past life you have offended God. She will give you a sweet and happy death.

And if then you are greatly alarmed and lose courage in view of the sins you have committed, she will come to comfort you as she came to Adolphus, Count of Alsace, who, having quitted the world and become a Franciscan, as the chronicles relate, was very devoted to the mother of God. His last days arrived, and at the remembrance of the life he had led in the world, and the rigor of divine justice, he began to fear death and doubt of his salvation. Then Mary, who never sleeps when her faithful servants are in trouble, accompanied by many saints, appeared to him, and encouraged him with these tender words of consolation: “My dear Adolphus, thou art mine, thou hast given thyself to me, then why dost thou so greatly fear death?”[6917] The servant of Mary was consoled by these words, every fear disappeared, and he died in great peace and contentment.

Let us, too, although we are sinners, take courage and have the confidence that Mary will come to assist us in death, and console us by her presence, if we serve and love her during the remainder of our life on this earth. Our queen, speaking one day to St. Matilda, promised that she would be present at the death of all those devoted children who had faithfully served her in life.[6918] Oh my God, what a consolation must it be in that last hour of life, when our lot for eternity is to be decided, to find close by our side the queen of heaven, who sustains and comforts us by promising us her protection! Besides the examples already cited of the assistance afforded by Mary to her faithful servants, they are innumerable others to be found in various books. This favor was granted to St. Clare, to St. Felix, a Capuchin, to the blessed Clara of Montefalco, to St. Theresa, and St. Peter of

Alcantara. But for our common consolation, I will mention the few following examples. Father Crasset relates[6919] that St. Mary of Oignies saw the blessed Virgin by the pillow of a devout widow of Villembroe, who was tormented by a burning fever. The most holy Mary was standing by her side consoling her, and cooling her with a fan. St. John of God, at death, expected a visit from Mary, to whom he was greatly devoted; but finding she did not come, he was afflicted, and perhaps complained a little. But at length the holy mother appeared to him, and as if reproaching him for his want of confidence, said to him these tender words, which should encourage all the servants of Mary: "John, it is not in my heart, at this hour, to desert my children."[6920] As if she had said to him: My John, of what were you thinking? that I had abandoned you? Do you not know that I cannot abandon my devoted children at the hour of death? I did not come before, because it was not yet time; but now I come ready to take you, let us go to paradise. And soon after the saint expired, and flew to heaven to give thanks eternally to his most loving queen.[6921]

EXAMPLE

I will now relate another example by way of conclusion to the subject of which I have been just speaking, and for the sake of showing how great is the tenderness of this good mother towards her children when they are dying.

The pastor of a certain place went to assist at the death-bed of a rich man. He was dying in a splendid house, and a multitude of relations, friends, and servants, surrounded his bed. But among these, the priest saw a number of devils in the shape of hounds, who waited to seize upon his soul, and who actually did so; for he died in sin. At the same time he was sent for by a poor woman, who was dying, and desired the holy sacraments; not being able to leave the dying rich man, whose soul was so much in need of his assistance, he sent another priest to her, who accordingly went, carrying with him the holy sacrament. He found in the dwelling of that good woman no servants, no retinue, no splendid furniture, for she was very poor, and we may suppose had only a little straw to lie upon. But what does he see? He sees in that apartment a great light, and near the bed of the dying person was Mary the mother of God, who was consoling her, and with a cloth was wiping the sweat from her brow. The priest seeing Mary, had not the courage to enter, but she made a motion to him to approach. He entered, Mary pointed to a seat, that he might sit down and hear the confession of her servant. The poor woman then made her confession, received the holy sacrament with much devotion, and at last expired happily in the arms of Mary.[6922]

PRAYER

Oh my sweetest mother, what will be the death of me, a poor sinner? Even now, when thinking of that great moment, in which I must die, and be presented at the divine tribunal, and remembering how often, by my wicked consent, I myself have written my own sentence of condemnation, I tremble, am confounded, and fear greatly for my eternal salvation. Oh Mary, my hopes are in the blood of Jesus, and in thy intercession. Thou art the Queen of heaven! the Lady of the universe! it is sufficient to say that thou art the mother of God. Thou art great, but thy greatness does not separate thee from us; it even inclines thee to have more compassion on our miseries. When our earthly friends are raised to any dignity, they seclude themselves from those whom they have left in a low estate, and will not condescend even to look at them. But it is not so with thy loving and noble heart. Where thou dost behold the greatest misery, there thou art most intent on giving relief. When invoked, thou dost immediately come to our aid, and even anticipate our supplications; thou dost console us in our afflictions, dissipate all tempests, put down our enemies; in a word, thou dost never omit an opportunity of doing us good. Ever blessed be that divine hand which has united in thee so much majesty and so much tenderness, so much greatness and so much love! I always thank our Lord, and congratulate myself that I can regard thy happiness and mine, thy fate and mine as one. Oh consoler of the afflicted, console in his affliction one who recommends himself to thee. I am tortured with remorse for my many sins; I am uncertain whether I have repented of them as I ought to have done; I see how corrupt and imperfect are all my works. The devil is awaiting my death in order to accuse me. Divine justice violated must be satisfied. Oh my mother, what will become of me? If thou dost not aid me, I am lost. Answer me, wilt thou aid me? Oh merciful Virgin, console me; obtain for me strength to amend, and to be faithful to God during what remains to me of life. And when I shall find myself in the last agony of death, oh Mary! my hope, do not abandon me; then more than ever assist me, and save me from despair at the sight of my sins, of which the devils will accuse me. Oh Lady, pardon my boldness; come, then, thyself to console me by thy presence. Grant me this favor which thou hast bestowed on so many; I also desire it. If my boldness is great, greater still is thy goodness, which seeks the most miserable to console them. In this, thy goodness, I trust. May it be to thy eternal glory that thou hast saved from hell a miserable wretch, and brought him to thy kingdom, where I hope to console myself by being always at thy feet to thank, bless, and love thee throughout eternity. Oh Mary, I wait for thee, do not leave me then disconsolate. Come, come. Amen, amen.

Chapter III

SPES NOSTRA SALVE

HAIL, OUR HOPE.

SECTION I

MARY IS THE HOPE OF ALL

MODERN heretics cannot endure that we should salute Mary in this manner by calling her our hope. Hail, our hope, “spes nostra salve.” They say that God alone is our hope, and that he who places his hope in a creature is accursed of God.[6923] Mary, they exclaim, is a creature, and, as a creature, how can she be our hope? Thus say the heretics, but notwithstanding this, the Church requires all the clergy, and all religious daily to raise their voices, and in the name of all the faithful, invoke and call Mary by the sweet name of our hope, the hope of all: “Hail, our hope!”

In two ways, says the angelic St. Thomas, can we place our hope in a person: as the principal cause, and as the intermediate cause. Those who hope for some favor from the king, hope for it from the king as sovereign, and hope for it from his minister or favorite as intercessor. If the favor is granted, it comes in the first place from the king, but it comes through the medium of his favorite; wherefore, he who asks a favor justly calls that intercessor his hope. The king of heaven, because he is infinite goodness, greatly desires to enrich us with his graces; but, because confidence is necessary on our part, in order to increase our confidence, he has given his own mother for our mother and advocate, and has given her all power to aid us; and hence he wishes us to place in her all our hopes of salvation, and of every blessing. Those who place all their hope on creatures, without dependence upon God, as sinners do, who to obtain the friendship and favor of man, are willing to displease God, are certainly cursed by God, as Isaias says. But those who hope in Mary, as mother of God, powerful to obtain for them graces and life eternal, are blessed, and please the heart of God, who wishes to see that noble creature honored, who, more than all men and angels, loved and honored him in this world.

Hence we justly call the Virgin our hope hoping, as Cardinal Bellarmine says, to obtain, by her intercession what we could not obtain by our prayers alone.[6924] We pray to her, says St. Anselm, in order that the dignity of the intercessor may supply our deficiencies.[6925] Therefore, the saint adds, to supplicate the Virgin with such hope, is not to distrust the mercy of God, but to fear our own unworthiness.[6926]

With reason does the Church, then, apply to Mary the words of Ecclesiasticus, with which he salutes her: “Mother of holy hope;”[6927] that mother who inspires us not with the vain hope of the miserable and transitory advantages of this life, but with the holy hope of the immense and eternal good of the blessed life to come. St. Ephrem thus salutes the divine mother: “Hail, hope of the soul! hail, secure salvation of Christians! hail, helper of sinners! hail, defence of the faithful, and salvation of the world!”[6928] St. Basil teaches us that, next to God, we have no other hope than Mary, and for this reason he calls her: After God our only hope, “Post Deum sola spes nostra;” and St. Ephrem, reflecting on the order of Providence in this life, by which God has ordained (as St. Bernard says, and we shall hereafter prove at length) that all those who are saved must be saved by means of Mary, says to her: Oh Lady, do not cease to receive and shelter us under the mantle of thy protection, since, after God, we have no hope but thee.[6929] St. Thomas of Villanova says the same thing, calling her our only refuge, help, and protection.[6930]

St. Bernard assigns the reason for this by saying: Behold, oh man, the design of God, a design arranged for our benefit, that he may be able to bestow upon us more abundantly his compassion; for, wishing to redeem the human race, he has placed the price of our redemption in the hands of Mary, that she may dispense it at her pleasure.[6931]

God ordered Moses to make a propitiatory of the purest gold, telling him that from it he would speak to him: “Thou shalt make a propitiatory of the purest gold. Thence will I give orders, and will speak to thee.”[6932] A certain author explains this propitiatory to be Mary, through whom the Lord speaks to men, and dispenses to them pardon, graces, and favors.[6933] And therefore St. Irenæus says that the divine Word, before incarnating himself in the womb of Mary, sent the archangel to obtain her consent, because he would have the world indebted to Mary for the mystery of the incarnation.[6934] Also the Idiot remarks, that every blessing, every help, every grace that men have received or will receive from God, to the end of the world, has come to them, and will come to them, through the intercession and by means of Mary.[6935] Rightly, then did the devout Blosius exclaim: Oh Mary, who art so amiable, and so grateful to him who loves thee, who will be so stupid and unhappy as not to love thee! In doubt and perplexity thou dost enlighten the minds of those who have recourse to thee in their troubles. Thou art the comfort of those who trust in thee, in time of danger. Thou dost help those who invoke thee. Thou art, continues Blosius, next to thy divine Son, the secure salvation of thy servants. Hail then, oh hope of the despairing. Hail helper of the destitute! Oh Mary, thou art omnipotent, since thy Son would honor thee by immediately doing all that thou desirest.[6936]

St. Germanus, recognizing Mary to be the source of every blessing, and the deliverance from every evil, thus invokes her: Oh my Lady, thou alone art my help, given me by God; thou art the guide of my pilgrimage, the support of my weakness, my riches in poverty, my deliverer from bondage, the hope of my salvation: graciously listen, I pray thee to my supplications, take compassion on my sighs, thou my queen, my refuge, my life, my help, my hope, my strength.[6937]

Justly, then, does St. Antoninus apply to Mary that passage of wisdom: “Now all good things came to me together with her.”[6938] Since Mary is the mother of God and the dispenser of all good, the world may truly say, and especially those in the world who are devoted to this queen, that, together with devotion to Mary, they have obtained every good thing.[6939] Wherefore the Abbot of Celles said positively: He who has found Mary finds every good thing.[6940] He finds all graces and all virtues; since she by her powerful intercession obtains for him in abundance all that he needs to make him rich in divine grace. She gives us to know that she has with her all the riches of God, that is, the divine mercies, that she may dispense them for the benefit of those who love her. “With me are riches and glory, that I may enrich them that love me.”[6941] Hence St. Bonaventure says: We should all keep our eyes fixed on the hands of Mary, that through her we may receive the blessings we desire.[6942]

Oh! how many of the proud have found humility through devotion to Mary; how many of the violent, meekness; how many blind, the light; how many despairing, confidence; how many lost, salvation! And precisely this she herself predicted when she pronounced in the house of Elizabeth that sublime canticle: “Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.”[6943] Which words St. Bernard repeats, and says: All nations will call thee blessed, for to all nations thou hast given life and glory; in thee sinners find pardon, and the just find perseverance in divine grace.[6944] Whence the devout Lanspergius represents the Lord thus speaking to the world: Venerate my mother with especial veneration. Oh men, he says, poor children of Adam, who live in the midst of so many enemies and so much misery, strive to honor with particular affection my mother and yours. I have given her to the world as an example of purity, a refuge and asylum for the afflicted.[6945] That is, I have given Mary to the world for your example, that from her you may learn to live as you ought; and for your refuge, that you may have recourse to her, in your tribulations. This my child, says God, I have created such that no one can fear her, or be unwilling to have recourse to her, for I have created her with so benign and compassionate a nature, that she will not despise any who seek her protection, and she will deny no favor to any who ask it. She spreads the mantle of her compassion over all, and never permits any one to go from her feet unconsoled. May the great goodness of our God, then, be ever blessed, who has given us this great mother and advocate, so loving and tender.

Oh! how tender are the sentiments of confidence which filled the heart of the most loving St. Bonaventure for his dear Redeemer Jesus, and for our loving intercessor Mary! Let the Lord chastise me as much as seemeth to him good, I know that he will not refuse himself to those who love him and who seek him with an upright heart. I will embrace him with my love, and I will not let him go till he has blessed me, and he will not depart without me. If I can do nothing else, at least I will hide myself in his wounds; there I will remain, and out of himself he shall not be able to find me.[6946] Finally, he adds, if my Redeemer, for my sins, drives me from his feet, I will cast myself at the feet of his mother Mary, and, prostrate there, I will not depart until she has obtained my pardon; for this mother of mercy has never failed to take pity on misery and console the wretched who seek her aid; and therefore, if not from obligation, at least from compassion, she will not fail to induce her Son to pardon me.[6947]

Look upon us, then, we will conclude with the words of Euthymius, look upon us, then, with thine eyes of compassion, oh our most merciful mother, for we are thy servants, and in thee we have placed all our hope.[6948]

EXAMPLE

It is related in the Fourth Part of the Treasure of the Rosary, miracle eighty-fifth, that a gentleman who was most devoted to the divine mother, had set apart in his palace an oratory where, before a beautiful statue of Mary, he was accustomed often to remain praying, not only by day, but also by night, interrupting his rest to go and honor his beloved Lady; but his wife, for he was married, though she was a very devout person, observing that her husband in the deepest silence of the night left his bed, and going from his apartment did not return for a long time, became jealous, and was suspicious of evil; wherefore, one day, to free herself from this thorn which tormented her, she ventured to ask him if he ever loved any other woman but herself. Smiling, he answered her: “I assure you that I love the most amiable lady in the world; to her I have given my whole heart and rather would I die than cease to love her; if you knew her, you would say that I ought to love her more than I do.” He meant the most holy Virgin whom he loved so tenderly. But his wife, conceiving a greater suspicion than before, in order to ascertain the truth better, interrogated him anew, and asked him if he arose from his bed and left the room every night to meet that lady. The gentleman, who did not perceive the great trouble of his wife, answered “Yes.” The wife was completely deceived, and, blinded by passion, one night when her husband according to his custom, had left the chamber, seized a knife in despair, cut her throat, and very soon died. Her husband having finished his devotions, returned to his apartment, but. on going to bed, found it wet. He called his wife; she did not answer: he tried to arouse her; she was immovable. At length he took a light, found the bed full of blood, and his wife dead, with her throat cut. Then he perceived that she had destroyed herself through jealousy. What does he do? He locks the door of his apartment, returns to the chapel, prostrates himself before the most blessed Virgin, and shedding a torrent of tears, said to her: “Oh my mother, behold my affliction: if thou dost not console me, to whom shall I go? Remember I am so unfortunate as to see my wife dead and lost because I have come hither to pay thee honor, oh my mother, who dost help us in all our troubles, help me now.” How surely does every one obtain what he wishes if he supplicates with confidence this mother of mercy! No sooner did he offer this prayer than he heard a servant-maid calling him: “My lord, come to your apartment, for your lady calls you.” The gentleman could hardly believe these words for joy. Return, he said to the servant, and see if she really calls me. She returned, entreating him to go quickly, for her mistress was waiting for him. He went, opened the door, and found his wife living; she threw herself at his feet in tears and begged him to pardon her, saying: “Oh, my husband, the mother of God, through thy prayer, has delivered me from hell.” Weeping for joy, they went to their oratory to thank the blessed Virgin. The next day the husband made a feast for all their relations, to whom the wife herself related the facts, at the same time showing the marks of the wound, and all were more deeply inflamed with the love of the divine mother.

PRAYER

Oh mother of holy love, oh our life, our refuge, and our hope, thou knowest that thy Son Jesus Christ, not content with making himself our perpetual intercessor with the eternal Father, would have thee also engaged in obtaining for us, by thy prayers, the divine mercy. He has ordained that thy prayers should aid in our salvation, and has given such power to them that they obtain whatever they ask; I, a miserable sinner, turn to thee then, oh hope of the wretched. I hope, oh Lady, through the merits of Jesus Christ and thy intercession to secure my salvation. In these I trust; and so entirely do I trust in thee, that if my eternal salvation were in my own hands, I would wish to place it in thine; for in thy mercy and protection I would trust far more than in my own works. My mother and my hope, do not abandon me, as I deserve. Behold my misery, pity me, help me, save me. I confess that I have often, by my sins, shut out the light and aid which thou hast obtained for me from the Lord.

But thy compassion for the wretched and thy power with God are far greater than the number and malignity of my sins. It is known in heaven and on earth that he who is protected by thee will certainly not perish. Let all forget me, but do not thou forget me, oh mother of the omnipotent God. Say unto God that I am thy servant, tell him that I am defended by thee, and I shall be saved. Oh Mary, I trust in thee: in this hope I live, and in this hope I wish to die, repeating always: “Jesus is my only hope, and after Jesus, Mary.”[6949]

SECTION II

MARY THE HOPE OF SINNERS

AFTER God had created the earth he created two lights, the greater and the less: the sun to give light by day, and the moon to give light by night.[6950] The sun, says Cardinal Hugo, was the type of Jesus Christ, in whose light the just rejoice who live in the daylight of divine grace; but the moon was the type of Mary, by whom sinners are enlightened, who are living in the night of sin.[6951] Mary, then, being the moon, so propitious to miserable sinners, if any unhappy person, says Innocent III. finds that he has fallen into this night of sin, what must he do? Since he has lost the light of the sun, by loosing divine grace, let him turn to the moon, let him pray to Mary, and she will give him light to know the misery of his condition, and strength to come forth from it.[6952] St. Methodius says that by the prayers of Mary innumerable sinners are continually converted.[6953]

One of the titles by which the holy Church teaches us to invoke the divine mother, and which most encourages poor sinners, is the title of “Refuge of Sinners,” with which we invoke her in the Litanies. There were anciently, in Judea, cities of refuge; and criminals, who sought protection in them, were free from the penalty of their offences. Now, there are not so many cities of refuge, but instead of these there is one only, Mary; of whom it was spoken: Glorious things are said of thee, oh city of God—Gloriosa dieta sunt de te civitas Dei.[6954] But with this difference, that not all criminals could find refuge in those ancient cities, nor for all sorts of crime; but under the mantle of Mary all offenders may find protection, whatever crimes they have committed. It is sufficient for any one to have recourse to her for protection. “I am the city of refuge for all those who flee to me,”[6955] as St. John of Damascus says, speaking in her name.

It is enough that we have recourse to her. He who has been so happy as to enter this city need not speak in order to secure his safety. “Assemble yourselves and let us enter into the fenced city, and let us be silent there.”[6956] This fenced city, as the blessed Albertus Magnus explains it, is the holy Virgin, whose defence is grace and glory. “Let us be silent there,” according to the gloss: “since we may not dare to supplicate the Lord for pardon, it is enough that we enter into the city and are silent, for then Mary will speak and will pray for us.”[6957] Whence a devout writer exhorts all sinners to seek shelter under the mantle of Mary, saying: Fly, oh Adam, oh Eve, and ye their children, who have offended God; fly and take refuge in the bosom of this good mother. Do you not know that she is the only city of refuge, and the only hope of sinners?[6958] As St. Augustine has called her, The only hope of sinners: “Unica spes peccatorum.”[6959]

Hence St. Ephrem says: Thou art the only advocate of sinners, and of those who are deprived of every help; and he thus salutes her: Hail! refuge and retreat of sinners, to whom alone they can flee with confidence.[6960] And this is what David intended to express, says a certain author, when he said: “He hath protected me in the secret place of his tabernacle.”[6961] And what is this tabernacle, if not Mary? As St. Germanus calls her, a tabernacle made by God, in which none but God has entered, in order to complete the great mysteries of human redemption.[6962] On this subject the great Father St. Basil says: The Lord has given us Mary as a public hospital where all the infirm are poor, and destitute of every other help, may assemble: “Aperuit nobis Deus publicum valetudinarium.” Now, in hospitals established expressly for the reception of the poor, I would ask, who have the first claim to be received, if not the poorest and most infirm?

Wherefore, let him who finds himself not miserable, because most destitute of merit, and most afflicted by the maladies of the soul, namely, sins, say to Mary: Oh Lady, thou art the refuge to the infirm; do not reject me, for, because I am the poorest and most infirm of all, I have the greater claim upon thee to receive me. Let us say with St. Thomas of Villanova: Oh Mary, we poor sinners know no refuge but thee. Thou art our only hope; to thee we intrust our salvation. Thou art the only advocate with Jesus Christ; to to thee we all have recourse.[6963]

In the Revelations of St. Bridget, Mary is called the star going before the sun: “Sidus vadens ante solem.”[6964] By which we are to understand, that when devotion to the divine mother first dawns in a sinful soul, it is a certain sign that God will soon come to enrich her with his grace. The glorious St. Bonaventure, in order to revive in the hearts of sinners confidence in the protection of Mary, represents to us the sea in a tempest, in which sinners who have fallen from the bark of divine grace, tossed about by remorse of conscience, and by the fear of divine justice, without light and without a guide, have almost lost the breath of hope, and are nearly sinking in despair; at this critical moment the saint, pointing to Mary, who is commonly called “The star of the sea,” raises his voice and exclaims: Oh poor, lost sinners, do not despair, lift your eyes to that beautiful star, take courage and trust, for she will guide you out of the tempest, and bring you to the port of safety.[6965]

St. Bernard has said the same thing: If you would not be overwhelmed in the tempest, turn to this star, and call Mary to thy aid.[6966] The devout Blosius also says that she is the only refuge for those who have offended God: the asylum of all those who are tempted and afflicted.[6967] This mother of mercy is all kindness and all sweetness, not only with the just, but also with sinners and those who are in despair; so that when she beholds them turning towards her, and sees that they are with sincerity seeking her help, she at once welcomes them, aids them, and obtains their pardon from her Son.[6968] She neglects none, however unworthy they may be, and refuses to none her protection; she consoles all; and no sooner do they call upon her, than she hastens to their help.[6969] With her gentleness she often wins their devotion, and raises those sinners who are most averse to God, and who are the most deeply plunged in the lethargy of their vices that she may dispose them to receive divine grace, and at last render themselves worthy of eternal glory.[6970] God has created this his beloved daughter with a disposition so kind and compassionate, that no one can hesitate to have recourse to her intercession.[6971] The devout writer concludes with saying: It is not possible that any one can be lost, who with exactness and humility practises devotion to this divine mother.[6972]

She is called a plane-tree: As a plane-tree was I exalted: “Quasi platanus exaltata sum.”[6973] Sinners may understand by this, that as the plane-tree gives a shelter to travellers, where they may take refuge from the heat of the sun, thus Mary, when she sees the anger of divine justice kindled against them, invites them to resort to the shelter of her protection. St. Bonaventure remarks that Isaias, in his day lamented, and said, “Behold, thou art angry and we have sinned . . . there is none that riseth up and taketh hold of thee;”[6974] because Mary was not yet born into the world.[6975] But now, if God is offended with any sinner, and Mary undertakes to protect him, she restrains the Son from punishing him, and saves him.[6976] Also, continues St. Bonaventure, no one can be found more fit than Mary to place her hand upon the sword of divine justice, that it may not descend upon the head of the sinner.[6977] Richard of St. Laurence expresses the same thought, when he says: God lamented, before the birth of Mary, that there was no one to restrain him from punishing the sinner; but Mary being born, she appeases him.[6978]

St. Basil encourages sinners with the same thought, and says: Oh sinner, be not timid, but in all thy necessities flee to Mary, invoke her aid, and thou wilt always find her ready to assist thee, for it is the divine will that she should aid all men in all their necessities.[6979] This mother of mercy has such a desire to save the most abandoned sinners, that she even goes to seek them; and if they have recourse to her, she will surely find a method of rendering them dear to God.

Isaac bəing desirous to eat the flesh of some venison, promised to give his benediction in exchange for it to Esau; but Rebecca wishing that her other son Jacob should receive this benediction, ordered him to bring her two kids, for she would prepare the food that Isaac loved. “Go thy way to the flock, bring me two kids.”[6980] St. Antoninus says that Rebecca was the type of Mary, who says to the angels, Bring me sinners (who are typified by the kids), that I may prepare them in such a manner (by obtaining for them sorrow and good resolutions) as to render them dear and acceptable to my Lord.[6981] The Abbot Francone, pursuing the same thought, says, that Mary so well understands how to prepare these kids, that they not only equal, but sometimes even surpass the flavor of venison.[6982]

The blessed Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget, that no sinner in the world is so great an enemy to God, that if he has recourse to her and invokes her aid, does not return to God and is not restored to his favor.[6983] And the same St. Bridget heard one day Jesus Christ saying to his mother, that she could obtain the divine favor even for Lucifer, if he would humble himself so far as to ask her help.[6984] That proud spirit would never stoop to implore the protection of Mary, but if such a thing could happen, Mary would take pity upon him, and the power of her prayers would obtain from God his pardon and salvation. But what cannot happen to the devil may well happen to sinners who seek the help of this mother of mercy.

Noe's ark also prefigured Mary; because as in that all the animal creation found refuge, so under the mantle of Mary all sinners find protection, who have made themselves like the brutes by their vices and sensuality. With this difference, however, says a certain author: The brutes entered into the ark and remained brutes still; the wolf remained a wolf, the tiger a tiger.[6985] But under the mantle of Mary the wolf becomes a lamb, the tiger a dove. St. Gertrude once saw Mary with her mantle outspread, and under it wild beasts of various kinds, leopards, lions, and bears; and the Virgin not only did not drive them from her but with her gentle hand kindly received them and caressed them. The saint understood that these wild beasts were miserable sinners who when they take refuge with Mary are received by her with sweetness and love.[6986]

Justly, then, did St. Bernard say to the Virgin: Oh Lady, thou dost abhor no sinner, however abandoned and vile he may be, when he has recourse to thee; if he asks thy help thou wilt condescend to extend thy kind hand to draw him from the depths of despair.[6987] Oh ever blessed and thanked be our God, oh most amiable Mary, who made thee so merciful and kind towards the most miserable sinners. Oh, wretched are those who do not love thee, and who, having it in their power to seek help of thee, do not trust in thee! He who does not implore the aid of Mary is lost; but who has ever been lost that had recourse to her?

It is related in Scripture that Booz permitted the woman named Ruth to glean the ears that the reapers dropped and left behind them: "Colligebat spicas post terga metentium."[6988] St. Bonaventure adds, that as Ruth found favor in the eyes of Booz, so Mary has found favor in the eyes of the Lord, and is permitted to glean after the reapers.[6989] The reapers are the apotolic laborers, missionaries, preachers, and confessors, who toil through the day to gather and win souls to God. But there are some rebellious and obdurate souls who are left behind even by these reapers, and it is granted to Mary alone by her powerful intercession to save these abandoned ears. But unhappy are those who do not yield themselves to this sweet Lady! for they will be entirely lost and accursed! Blessed, on the other hand, are those who have recourse to this good mother! There is no sinner in the world, says the devout Blosius, so lost and sunk in sin, that Mary would abhor him and reject him. Ah, if such would seek her aid, this good mother could and would reconcile them to her Son, and obtain for them pardon.[6990]

With reason, then, oh my sweetest queen, does St. John of Damascus salute thee and call thee: “The hope of the despairing.”[6991] Justly does St. Laurence Justinian name thee: “The hope of evil-doers.”[6992] St. Augustine: “The only refuge of sinners.”[6993] St. Ephrem: “The secure haven for the shipwrecked.”[6994] The same saint calls thee even by another appellation: “The protectress of the condemned.”[6995] Finally, St. Bernard, with reason, exhorts the desperate not to despair; whence, full of joy and tenderness towards this his most dear mother, he asks her lovingly: Oh Lady, who would not trust in thee, if thou dost thus relieve even the despairing? I do not doubt in the least, he adds, that if we always applied to thee we should obtain what we wish. In thee, then, let the despairing hope.[6996] St. Antoninus relates that a sinner finding himself in disgrace before God, imagined himself standing before the tribunal of Jesus Christ: the devil was accusing him and Mary defending him. The enemy presented against this poor criminal the catalogue of his offences, which, placed in the balance of divine justice far outweighed his good works; but what then did his great advocate do? She extended her kind hand and placed it in the other scale; it descended in favor of her suppliant, and thus it was given him to understand, that she would obtain his pardon if he would change his life; and, indeed, after that vision he was converted and changed his life.

EXAMPLE

The blessed John Erolto, who, through humility, called himself *the disciple*, relates,[6997] that there was once a married man who lived in disgrace in the sight of God. His wife, a virtuous woman, not being able to induce him to abandon his vicious courses, entreated him that at least, while he was in so miserable a condition, he would offer this devotion to the mother of God, namely, to say a “Hail Mary” every time he passed before her altar. He accordingly began to practise this devotion. One night, when he was about to commit a sin, he saw a light, and, on closer observation, perceived that it was a lamp burning before a holy image of the blessed Virgin, who held the infant Jesus in her arms. He said a “Hail Mary,” as usual; but what did he see? He saw the infant covered with wounds, and fresh blood flowing from them. Both terrified and moved in his feelings, he remembered that he himself too had wounded his Redeemer by his sins, and began to weep, but he observed that the child turned away from him. In deep confusion, he had recourse to the most holy Virgin, saying: “Mother of mercy, thy Son rejects me; I can find no advocate more kind and more powerful than thou, who art his mother; my queen, aid me, and pray to him in my behalf.” The divine mother answered him from that image: “You sinners call me mother of mercy, but yet you do not cease to make me mother of misery, renewing the passion of my Son, and my dolors.” But because Mary never sends away disconsolate those who cast themselves at her feet, she began to entreat her Son that he would pardon that miserable sinner. Jesus continued to show himself unwilling to grant such a pardon, but the holy Virgin, placing the infant in the niche, prostrated herself before him, saying: “My Son, I will not leave thy feet until thou hast pardoned this sinner.” “My Mother,” answered Jesus, “I can deny thee nothing; dost thou wish for his pardon? for love of thee I will pardon him. Let him come and kiss my wounds.” The sinner approached, weeping bitterly, and as he kissed the wounds of the infant, they were healed. Then Jesus embraced him as a sign of pardon. He changed his conduct, led a holy life, and was ever full of love to the blessed Virgin, who had obtained for him so great a favor.

PRAYER

I venerate, oh most pure Virgin Mary, thy most sacred heart, which was the delight and repose of God; a heart filled with humility, purity, and divine love. I, an unhappy sinner, come to thee with a heart filled with uncleanness and wounds. Oh mother of mercy, do not on this account despise me, but let it excite thee to a greater compassion, and come to my help. Do not look for virtue or merits in me before thou grantest me thy aid; I am lost, and only merit hell. Look at nothing, I pray thee, but the confidence I have in thee, and the desire I cherish of amending my life. Look at what Jesus has done and suffered for me, and then abandon me if thou canst. I offer to thee all the afflictions of his life, the cold that he suffered in the stable, his journey to Egypt, the blood that he shed, his poverty, toil, sweat, and sadness, the death he endured in thy presence, for love of me; and, for the love of Jesus, promise to save me. Ah, my mother, I will not and I cannot fear that thou wilt cast me from thee, when I flee to thee and implore thy help. To fear this, would be unjust to thy mercy, which seeks the miserable to relieve them. Oh Lady, do not refuse thy compassion to him to whom Jesus has not refused his blood; but the merits of this blood will not be applied to me, if thou dost not recommend me to God. From thee I hope salvation. I do not ask of thee riches, honors, or the other goods of earth; I only ask of thee the grace of God, love for thy Son, the fulfilment of his will, and paradise, where I may love him eternally. Is it possible that thou wilt not hear me? No, already thou dost hear me, as I hope; already thou art praying for me, already thou art procuring me the favors I ask, already thou art receiving me under thy protection. My mother, do not leave me; continue, continue to pray for me, until thou seest me safe in heaven at thy feet, to bless and thank thee through all eternity. Amen.

Chapter IV

AD TE CLAMAMUS EXULES FILII HEVÆ

TO THEE DO WE CRY, POOR BANISHED CHILDREN OF EVE.

SECTION I

HOW READY MARY IS TO SUCCOR THOSE WHO CALL UPON HER

WE poor children of the unhappy Eve, guilty before God of her sin, and condemned to the same punishment, go wandering through this valley of tears, exiles from our country, weeping and afflicted by innumerable pains of body and soul! But blessed is he who in the midst of so many miseries turns to the consoler of the world, to the refuge of the unhappy, to the great mother of God, and devoutly invokes her and supplicates her! “Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates.”[6998] Blessed, says Mary, is he who listens to my counsels, and incessantly watches at the door of my mercy, invoking my help and intercession! The holy Church instructs us her children with how great attention and confidence we should have continually recourse to this our loving protectress; ordaining special devotions to her, that during the year many festivals should be celebrated in her honor; that one day of the week should be especially consecrated to her; that every day, in the divine office, all ecclesiastics and members of religious orders should invoke her in behalf of the whole Christian people, and that three times a day all the faithful, at the sound of the bell, should salute her. This will suffice to show how, in all seasons of public calamity, the holy Church always directs her children to have recourse to the divine mother with novenas, prayers, processions, visits to her churches and altars. This, Mary herself wishes us to do, namely, always to invoke and supplicate her, not to ask our homage and praise, which are too poor in comparison with her merit, but that our confidence and devotion to her thus increasing, she may aid and console us more. She seeks such as approach her devoutly and reverently, says St. Bonaventure; these she cherishes, loves, and adopts as her children.[6999]

The same St. Bonaventure says, that Mary was prefigured by Ruth, whose name, being interpreted, signifies *seeing, hastening;*[7000] for Mary, seeing our miseries, hastens to aid us by her compassion.[7001] To which Novarino adds, that Mary is so desirous to do us good, that she can bear no delay; and not being a miserly keeper of her favors, but the mother of mercy, she cannot restrain herself from dispensing, as soon as possible among her servants, the treasures of her liberality.[7002]

Oh, how ready is this good mother to aid him who invokes her! “Thy two breasts are like two young roes.”[7003] Richard of St. Laurence, explaining this passage, says that the breasts of Mary readily, like the roe’s, give the milk of mercy to those who ask it.[7004] The same author assures us that the mercy of Mary is bestowed on all who ask it, though they offer no prayer but a “Hail Mary.” Hence, Novarino affirms, that the blessed Virgin not only hastens, but flies to aid those who have recourse to her. She, says this author, in exercising mercy, cannot but resemble God; for, as the Lord hastens to succor those who ask help from him, being very faithful to observe the promise which he has made to us—Ask, and you shall receive[7005]—so Mary, when she is invoked, immediately hastens to help those who call upon her.[7006] And by this is explained who was the woman of the Apocalypse, with two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the desert.[7007] Ribeira explains these two wings to signify the love with which Mary always hastens to God.[7008] But the blessed Amadeus says, remarking on this passage, that the wings of an eagle signify the velocity with which Mary, surpassing in swiftness the seraphs, always comes to the help of her children.[7009]

We read in the Gospel of St. Luke, that when Mary went to visit St. Elizabeth, and bestow blessings on all her family, she was not slow, but travelled that whole journey with haste.[7010] But we do not read that it was so on her return. For the same reason, it is said in the sacred Canticles, that the hands of Mary are turned.[7011] For, as Richard of St. Laurence explains it, The art of turning is easier and quicker than other arts, so Mary is more ready than any other of the saints to aid her suppliants.*[7012] She has the greatest desire to console all, and she scarcely hears herself invoked before she graciously receives the petition and comes to our aid.[7013] Justly, then, St. Bonaventure calls Mary, The salvation of those who invoke her: “O salus te invocantium!” signifying, that to be saved it is sufficient to appeal to this divine mother, who, according to Richard of St. Laurence, is always ready to aid those who pray to her.[7014] For, as St. Bernardine de Bustis says: This great Lady is more desirous to confer favors upon us than we are to receive them.[7015]

Neither should the multitude of our sins diminish our confidence that we shall be graciously heard by Mary, if we cast ourselves at her feet. She is the mother of mercy, and there would be no occasion for mercy, if there were no wretchedness to be relieved Therefore, as a good mother does not hesitate to apply a remedy to her child, however loathsome its disease, although the cure may be troublesome and disgusting; thus our good mother does not abandon us, when we recur to her however great may be the filth of our sins, which she comes to cure.[7016] This sentiment is taken from Richard of St. Laurence. And Mary intended to signify the same when she appeared to St. Gertrude, spreading her mantle to receive all who had recourse to her: at the same time it was given the saint to understand, that the angels are waiting to defend the devout suppliants of Mary from the assaults of hell.[7017]

So great is the love and pity which this good mother has for us, that she does not wait for our prayers before giving us her aid. “She preventeth them that covet her, so that she first showeth herself unto them.”[7018] These words of wisdom St. Anselm applies to Mary, and says that she anticipates those who desire her protection. By this we are to understand, that she obtains many graces from God for us before we ask them from her. Therefore Richard of St. Victor says: Mary is called the moon: Pulchra utluna;[7019] net only because she hastens as the moon to shine on those who seek her light,[7020] but because she so earnestly desires our welfare that in our necessities she anticipates our prayers, and in her compassion she is more prompt to help us than we are to have recourse to her.[7021] For, adds the same Richard, the breast of Mary is so full of pity that she scarcely knows our miseries before she offers us the milk of her mercy, neither can this gracious queen perceive the necessities of any soul without relieving it.[7022]

And truly, Mary manifested to us while she was on earth, in the nuptials of Cana,[7023] her great compassion for our sufferings, which prompts her to relieve them before we pray to her. This kind mother saw the trouble of that pair who were mortified to find that their wine had failed at the wedding banquet; and without being requested, moved only by her compassionate heart, which cannot look upon the afflictions of others without pity, prayed her Son, to console them by merely mentioning to him the necessities of the family: They have no wine:[7024] "Vinum non habent." After which, her Son, to comfort that family, and still more to satisfy the compassionate heart of his mother, performed, as she desired, the well-known miracle of changing the water contained in vases into wine. Novarino here remarks, that if Mary, though unasked, is so ready to aid us in our necessities, how much more so will she be when we invoke her and implore her aid![7025]

If any one doubts that he shall be assisted by Mary when he has recourse to her, let him listen to the words of Innocent III.: Who has ever invovoked this sweet Lady, and has not been heard by her?[7026] Who, oh holy Virgin, exclaims the blessed Eutychian, has ever sought thy powerful protection, which can relieve the most miserable and rescue the most degraded, and has been abandoned by thee? No, this has never happened, and never will happen.[7027] Let him be silent concerning thy mercy, oh blessed Virgin, whose necessities have been neglected by thee after he has implored thy aid.[7028]

Sooner will heaven and earth be destroyed, says the devout Blosius, than Mary fail to aid those who, with a pure intention, recommend themselves to her and put their confidence in her.[7029] And to increase our confidence, St. Anselm adds, that when we have recourse to this divine mother, we may not only be sure of her protection, but that sometimes we shall be sooner heard and saved by invoking her holy name than that of Jesus our Saviour.[7030] And he gives this reason: Because it belongs to Christ, as our judge, to punish, but to Mary, as our advocate, to pity.[7031] By this he would give us to understand, that we sooner find salvation by recurring to the mother than the Son; not because Mary is more powerful than her Son to save us, for we know that Jesus is our only Saviour, and that by his merits alone he has obtained and does obtain for us salvation; but because when we have recourse to Jesus, considering him also as the judge to whom it belongs to punish the ungrateful, we may lose the confidence necessary to be heard; but going to Mary, who holds no other office than that of exercising compassion towards us as mother of mercy, and defending us as our advocate our confidence will be more secure and greater. We ask many things of God and do not obtain them; we ask them from Mary and obtain them; how is this? Nicephorus answers: This does not happen because Mary is more powerful than God, but because God has seen fit thus to honor his mother.[7032]

How consoling is the promise that our Lord himself made on this subject to St. Bridget. We read in her revelations, that one day this saint heard Jesus speaking with his mother, and that he said to her: "Mother, ask of me whatever thou wilt, for I will refuse nothing that thou dost ask;[7033] and be assured," he added, "that all those who for love of thee seek any favor, although they are sinners, if they desire to amend. I promise to hear them."[7034] The same thing was revealed to St. Gertrude, who heard our Redeemer himself say to Mary, that he had in his omnipotence permitted her to exercise mercy towards sinners who invoke her, in whatever manner it should please her.[7035]

Every one invoking this mother of mercy may then say, with St. Augustine: "Remember, oh most compassionate Lady! that since the beginning of the world there never has been any one abandoned by thee. Therefore pardon me if I say that I do not wish to be the first sinner who has sought thy aid in vain."[7036]

EXAMPLE

St. Francis of Sales, as we read in his life, efficaciously experienced the power of this prayer. At seventeen years of age he was living in Paris, engaged in study, and at the same time wholly devoted to pious exercises and holy love of God, which gave him a perpetual foretaste of heavenly joy. At this time the Lord, to try his faith, and attach him more strongly to his love, permitted the devil to represent to him that his efforts were in vain, because he was already condemned by the divine decree. The darkness and dryness in which it pleased God to leave him at the time for he was insensible to all consoling thoughts of the divine goodness, caused this temptation to have more power over the heart of the holy youth; so that through great fear and desolation he lost his appetite, sleep, color, and cheerfulness, and excited the compassion of all those who looked upon him.

Whilst this horrible conflict lasted, the saint could conceive no other thoughts and utter no other words but those of sorrow and distrust. “Shall I, then,” he said, as it is related in his life, “be deprived of the favor of my God, who hitherto has shown himself so gracious and so kind to me? Oh love! oh beauty! to which I have consecrated all my affections, shall I never more enjoy your consolations? Oh Virgin mother of God, the most beautiful of all the daughters of Jerusalem, am I then never to see thee in paradise? Ah, my Lady! if I am never to see thy lovely face, do not permit me to be forced to blaspheme and curse thee in hell.” These were the tender sentiments of that afflictted heart, still so enamored of God and the Virgin. This temptation lasted for a month, but at length the Lord was pleased to deliver him from it by means of the consolor of the world, most holy Mary, to whom the saint had before made a vow of chastity, and upon whom he used to say he had placed all his hopes. One evening, on returning home, he entered a church, where he saw a small tablet suspended from the wall; he found written on it the prayer of St. Augustine above mentioned: “Remember, oh most merciful Mary! that no one, in any age, was ever known to have fled to thee for help and found himself abandoned.” He prostrated himself before the altar of the divine mother, and recited with deep feeling this prayer; he renewed his vow of chastity, promised to recite daily the rosary, and then added: “Oh my queen, be my advocate with thy Son, whom I dare not approach. My mother, if in the other world I should be so unhappy as not to be able to love my Lord, whom I know is so worthy to be loved, at least obtain for me that I may love him as much as I can in this world. This is the grace that I ask of thee, and from thee I hope for it.” Thus he supplicated the Virgin, and then abandoned himself to the divine mercy, resigning himself entirely to the will of God. But hardly had he finished his prayer, when by his most sweet mother he was suddenly freed from temptation; he immediately recovered his interior peace, and with it health of body, and from that time continued to live a most devout servant of Mary, whose praises and mercies he never ceased to proclaim in his preaching and his writings to the end of his life.

PRAYER

Oh mother of God! oh queen of angels! oh hope of men! listen to him who invokes thee and has recourse to thee. Behold me to-day prostrate at thy feet; I, a miserable slave of hell, consecrate myself to thee as thy servant forever, offering myself to serve and honor thee to the utmost of my power all the days of my life. I know that thy honor is not increased by the service of so vile and wretched a slave as I am, who have so grievously offended thy Son and my Redeemer Jesus. But if thou wilt accept one so unworthy as I for thy servant, and changing him by thy intercession, wilt render him worthy, thy own compassion will confer upon thee that honor which I, vile as I am, cannot render thee. Accept me, then, and do not reject me, oh my mother! The eternal Word came from heaven upon earth to seek the lost sheep, and to save them, became thy Son. And wilt thou despise a poor sheep, who comes to thee to help him find Jesus? The price has already been paid for my salvation; my Saviour has shed his blood, which is enough to save infinite worlds. It only remains this blood should be applied to me; and to thee it belongs, oh blessed Virgin! to thee it belongs, as St. Bernard says, to bestow the merits of this blood on whomsoever it may please thee. To thee it belongs, as St. Bonaventure also says, to save whom thou wilt.[7037] Oh my queen, help me, then! my queen, save me! To you this day I commit my soul; and do thou secure its safety. Oh, salvation of those who invoke thee![7038] I will exclaim with the same saint, save me.

SECTION II

NOW POWERFUL IS MARY IN PROTECTING THOSE WHO INVOKE HER IN TEMPTATIONS OF THE DEVIL

NOT only most holy Mary is queen of heaven and of the saints, but also of hell and the devils, for she has bravely triumphed over them by her virtues. From the beginning of the world God predicted to the infernal serpent the victory and the empire which our queen would obtain over him, when he announced to him that a woman would come into the world who should conquer him. “I will put enmities between thee and the woman; she shall crush thy head.”[7039] And what woman was this enemy if not Mary, who, with her beautiful humility and holy life, always conquered him and destroyed his forces? St. Cyprian affirms that the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ was promised in that woman:[7040] and hence he remarks, that God did not use the words I put, but I will put, lest the prophecy should seem to appertain to Eve.[7041] He said, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, to signify that this his vanquisher was not the living Eve, but must be another woman descending from her, who was to bring to our first parents greater blessings, as St. Vincent Ferrer says, than those they had lost by their sin.[7042] Mary, then, is this great and strong woman who has conquered the devil, and has crushed his head by subduing his pride, as the Lord added: “She shall crush thy head.”[7043] Some of the commentators doubt whether these words refer to Mary or to Jesus Christ, because in the Septuagint version we read: “He shall crush thy head.”[7044] But in our Vulgate, which is the only version approved by the Council of Trent, it is She, and not He. And thus St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, and many others have understood it. However this may be, it is certain that the Son by means of the mother, or the mother by means of the Son, has vanquished Lucifer; so that this proud spirit, as St. Bernard tells us, has been ignominiously overpowered and crushed by this blessed Virgin.[7045] Hence as a slave conquered in war, he is forced always to obey the commands of this queen. St. Bruno says, that Eve, by yielding to the serpent, brought into the world death and darkness: but that the blessed Virgin, by conquering the devil brought us life and light: and she has bound him so that he cannot move to do the least harm to her servants.[7046]

Richard of St. Laurence gives a beautiful explanation to these words of Proverbs; “The hearts of her husband trusteth in her, and he shall have no need of spoils.[7047] Richard says: The heart of her husband, that is, Christ, trusts in her, and he shall have no need of spoils, for she will endow him with the spoils which she has taken from the devil.[7048] God has intrusted the heart of Jesus, as à Lapide expresses it, to the care of Mary, that she may procure for it the love of men; and thus he will not be in need of spoils, that is, of the conquest of souls, for she will enrich him with those souls of which she despoils hell, and which she has rescued from the demons from her powerful aid.

It is well known that the palm is the emblem of victory, and for this reason our queen has been placed on a high throne in the sight of all potentates, as a palm, the sign of certain victory, which all can promise themselves who have recourse to her. “I was exalted like a palm-tree in Cades.”[7049] That is, for a defence[7050] as blessed Albertus Magnus says: Oh, my children, Mary seems to say to us with these words, when the enemy assails you, lift your eyes to me, behold me and take courage; for in me, who defends you, you will behold, at the same time, your victory. So that recourse to Mary is the most certain means of overcoming all the assaults of hell; for she, as St. Bernardine of Sienna says, is queen over hell, and ruler of the spirits of evil, for she controls and conquers them.[7051] And therefore Mary is called terrible against the power of hell, as an army set in array. “Terrible as an army set in array.”[7052] Set in array, because she knows how to array her powers, that is, her compassion and her prayers, to the confusion of the enemy and the benefit of her servants, who, in their temptations, invoke her powerful aid.

“As the vine I have brought forth a pleasant odor.”[7053] “I, like the vine, as the Holy Spirit puts it in her mouth to say, have given fruit of sweet odor.” “It is said,” adds St, Bernard, on this passage, “that every venomous reptile shuns the flowering vines.”[7054] As from vines all poisonous serpents flee, thus the demons flee from those fortunate souls in whom they perceive the odor of devotion to Mary. On this account she also is called a cedar: “I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus,”[7055] not only because as the cedar is free from corruption, so Mary is free from sin, but also because, as Cardinal Hugo remarks upon this passage, as the cedar with its perfume puts serpents to flight, so that Mary with her sanctity puts to flight the devils.[7056]

Victories were gained in Judea by means of the ark. Thus Moses conquered his enemies. “When the ark was lifted up, Moses said, Arise, oh Lord, and let thy enemies be scattered.”[7057] Thus Jericho was conquered; thus were the Philistines conquered; “for the ark of God was there.”[7058] It is well known that this ark was the type of Mary. As the ark contained the manna, thus Mary contained Jesus, whom the manna also prefigured, and by means of this ark, victories were gained over the enemies of earth and over hell.[7059] Wherefore St. Bernardine of Sienna says that when Mary, the ark of the New Testament, was crowned queen of heaven, the power of hell over men was weakened and overthrown.[7060]

"Oh, how the devils in hell," says St. Bonaventure, "tremble at Mary and her great name!"[7061] The saint compares these enemies to those of whom Job makes mention and says: "He diggeth through houses in the dark. . . . If the morning suddenly appear, it is to them the shadow of death."[7062] Thieves enter houses in the dark to rob them, but when the dawn comes they flee, as if the image of death appeared to them. In the same manner, as St. Bonaventure expresses it, the demons enter into the soul in times of darkness, that is, when the soul is obscured by ignorance; they dig through the houses of our minds in the darkness of ignorance; but then, he adds, as soon as the grace and the mercy of Mary enter the soul, this beautiful aurora dissipates the darkness, and the infernal enemies flee as at the approach of death.[7063] Oh, blessed is he who always, in his conflicts with hell, invokes the beautiful name of Mary!

In confirmation of this it was revealed to St. Bridget that God has given Mary such power over all evil spirits, that whenever they assail any of her servants who implore her aid, at the slightest sign from her they flee far away in terror, preferring that their pains should be redoubled rather than that Mary should domineer over them in this manner.[7064]

A Lapide remarks upon the words with which the divine spouse praises his beloved bride, when he calls her the lily, and says that as the lily is among thorns, so is his beloved among the other daughters;[7065] that, as the lily is a remedy against serpents and poisons, so the invocation of Mary is a special remedy for overcoming all temptations, particularly those of impurity, as they who have tried it have universally experienced.[7066]

St. John of Damascus said, and every one may say the same who is so happy as to be devoted to this great queen: Oh, mother of God, if I trust in thee, I shall surely not be vanquished; for, defended by thee, I will pursue my enemies, and opposing to them thy protection and thy powerful support as a shield, I shall surely conquer them.[7067] James the Monk, reputed a doctor among the Greek fathers, discoursing of Mary to our Lord says: Thou, oh my Lord, hast given us this mother for a powerful defence against all our enemies.[7068]

It is related in the Old Testament that the Lord guided his people from Egypt to the promised land, by day in a pillar of clouds, by night in a pillar of fire.[7069] This pillar, now of clouds, now of fire, says Richard of St.

Laurence, was a type of Mary and her double office, which she exercises continually in our behalf; as a cloud she protects us from the heat of divine justice, and as fire she protects us from demons.[7070] Fire, as St. Bonaventure adds, for as wax melts at the approach of fire, thus the evil spirits lose all power in the presence of those souls who often call upon the name of Mary, and devoutly invoke her, and more than all, strive to imitate her.[7071]

Oh, how the devils tremble, exclaims St. Bernard, if they only hear the name of Mary uttered![7072] As men, says Thomas à Kempis, fall to the earth through fear, when a thunderbolt strikes near them, so fall prostrate the devils when but the name of Mary is heard.[7073] How many noble victories have the servants of Mary not gained over these enemies by the power of her most holy name! Thus St. Anthony of Padua conquered them, thus the blessed Henry Suso, thus many other lovers of Mary. It is related in the accounts of the missions to Japan that a great number of demons appeared in the form of ferocious animals to a certain Christian of that country, to alarm him and threaten him, but he spoke to them in these words: “I have no arms with which to terrify you; if the Most High permits it, do with me according to your pleasure. Meanwhile I use as my defence the most sweet names of Jesus and Mary.” Hardly had he uttered these words, when behold, at the sound of those fearful names, the earth opened and those proud spirits were swallowed up. St. Anselm also asserts that he had seen and heard many persons who at the mention of the name of Mary were delivered from their dangers.[7074]

Very glorious, oh Mary, and wonderful, exclaims St. Bonaventure, is thy great name. Those who art mindful to utter it at the hour of death, have nothing to fear from hell, for the devils at once abandon the soul when they hear the name of Mary.[7075] And the saint adds, that an earthly enemy does not so greatly fear a great army, as the powers of hell fear the name and protection of Mary.[7076] Thou, oh Lady, says St. Germanus, by the invocation alone of thy most powerful name, dost render thy servants secure from all the assaults of the enemy.[7077] Oh, if Christians were mindful in temptations to invoke with confidence the name of Mary, it is certain that they would never fall; for, as blessed Alanus remarks, at the thunder of that great name, the devil flees and hell trembles.[7078] This heavenly queen herself revealed to St. Bridget, that even from the most abandoned sinners, who had wandered the farthest from God, and were most fully possessed by the devil, the enemy departs as soon as he hears her most powerful name invoked by them, if they do it with a true intention of amending.[7079] But the Virgin added, that if the soul does not amend, and with contrition quit its sins, the demons immediately return to it and hold it in their possession.[7080]

EXAMPLE

In Reisberg there lived a Canon regular named Arnold, who was very devoted to the blessed Virgin. Being at the point of death, he received the sacraments, and calling his religious to him, begged them not to leave him at the last moment. Scarcely had he said this, when he began to tremble violently and roll his eyes; cold sweat fell from him, and with an agitated voice he exclaimed: “Do you not see those demons who would seize me and carry me to hell?” Then he cried: “My brothers, invoke for me the help of Mary; I trust in her that she will give me the victory.” They immediately began to recite the Litany of our Lady, and at the words, Holy Mary, pray for him, “Sancta Maria, ora pro eo,” the dying man cried: “Repeat, repeat the name of Mary, for I am even now at the tribunal of God.” He stopped for a moment, and then added: “It is true that I did it, but I have done penance for it.” Then turning to the Virgin, he said: “Oh Mary, I shall be delivered if thou wilt help me.” The demons soon after made another attack, but he defended himself by blessing himself with the crucifix, and invoking Mary. Thus he passed the whole night, but when morning dawned, Arnold, restored to serenity, joyfully said: “Mary, my Lady, and my refuge, has obtained for me pardon and salvation.” Then beholding the Virgin, who summoned him to follow her, he said: “I come, oh Lady, I come.” He made an effort to rise, but not being able to follow her with the body, gently expiring, he followed her with his soul, as we hope, to the blessed kingdom of glory.[7081]

PRAYER

Behold at thy feet, oh Mary my hope, a poor sinner who many times, through his own fault, has been the slave of hell. I know that I have often been conquered by the devil, because I have neglected to recur to thee, oh my refuge. If I had always sought thy protection, if I had invoked thee, I should never have fallen. I hope, oh my Lady, most worthy of love, that by thy help I have escaped the powers of hell, and that God has pardoned me. But I tremble for the future, lest I again fall into their power. I know that these enemies of mine have not lost all hope of reconquering me, and at this moment they are preparing new assaults and temptations. Oh, my queen and refuge, aid me. Shelter me beneath thy mantle, let me not become again their slave. I know that thou wilt succor me and give me victory whenever I invoke thee. I fear only that in my temptations I may forget thee, and neglect to call upon thee. This, then, is the grace, oh most holy Virgin, that I seek and wish from thee, that I may always remember thee, and especially when I find myself in conflict with the enemy; let me not then fail to invoke thee often with the words: “Oh Mary, help me, help me, oh Mary.” And when at length the day of my last conflict with hell, the day of my death arrives, oh, my queen, powerfully assist me then, and remind me thyself to invoke thee more frequently, with the voice or with the heart, that expiring with thy most sweet name, and that of thy son Jesus on my lips, I may go to bless and praise thee, and never leave thy feet in paradise through all eternity. Amen.

Chapter V

AD TE SUSPIRAM US GEMENTES ET FLENTES IN HAC LACRYMARUM VALLE

TO THEE DO WE SEND UP OUR SIGHS, GROANING AND WEEPING IN THIS VALLEY OF TEARS

SECTION I

THE NEED WE HAVE OF THE INTERCESSION OF MARY FOR OUR SALVATION

To invoke and pray to the saints, especially to the queen of saints, most holy Mary, that they may obtain for us, by their intercession, the divine favor, is not only a lawful but a useful and holy practice, and this is of faith, being established by the Councils, against heretics, who condemn it as injurious to Jesus Christ, who is our only mediator; but if a Jeremias, after his death, prays for Jerusalem[7082]; if the elders of the Apocalypse present to God the prayers of the saints; if a St. Peter promises his disciples to remember them after his death; if a St. Stephen prays for his persecutors; if a St. Paul prays for his companions; if, in a word, the saints pray for us, why may we not implore the saints to intercede for us? St. Paul commends himself to the prayers of his disciples: Pray for us: “Orate pro nobis.”[7083] St. James exhorts the Christians to pray for each other: “Pray for one another, that ye may be saved.”[7084] We may then do likewise.

No one will deny that Jesus Christ is the only mediator of justice, and that by his merits he has obtained for us reconciliation with God. But, on the other hand, it is impious to deny that God is pleased to grant favors at the intercession of the saints, and especially of Mary his mother, whom Jesus desires so much to see loved and honored by us. Every one knows that honor paid to a mother redounds to her children.[7085] Hence St. Bernard says, let not any one think that by greatly praising the mother he will throw into the shade the glories of the Son; for the more he honors the mother, so much more he honors the Son.[7086] St. Ildephonsus says, that all the honor which is paid to the mother and the queen, is rendered to the Son and king.[7087] And there is no doubt that on account of the merits of Jesus, the great privilege has been granted to Mary to be the mediatrix of our salvation; not, indeed, mediatrix of justice, but of grace and intercession, as she is called by St. Bonaventure.[7088] St. Lawrence Justinian also says: Can she be otherwise than full of grace, who has been made the ladder of paradise, the gate of heaven, the most true mediatrix between God and man?[7089]

Wherefore St. Anselm well remarks, that when we implore the holy Virgin to obtain graces for us, it is not that we distrust the divine mercy, but rather that we distrust our own unworthiness, and commend ourselves to Mary that her merits may compensate for our unworthiness.[7090]

It cannot be doubted, therefore, except by those who are deficient in faith, that it is a useful and holy thing to have recourse to the intercession of Mary. But the point that we here propose to prove is, that the intercession of Mary is even necessary for our salvation: necessary, to speak properly, not indeed absolutely, but morally. And we affirm that this necessity arises from the will of God itself, who has ordained that all the favors which he dispenses should pass through the hands of Mary, according to the opinion of St. Bernard, which may well be considered at the present day the common opinion of doctors and divines, as the author of “The kingdom of Mary” has already called it It is embraced by Vega, Mendoza, Paciucchelli, Segneri, Poiré, Crasset, and innumerable other learned authors. Even Father Noel Alexander, an author usually very reserved in his assertions, declares it to be the will of God that we receive all favors through the intercession of Mary.[7091] In confirmation of this, he quotes the celebrated passage of St. Bernard: This is the will of him who would have us receive all things through Mary.[7092] The same opinion is held by Father Contensone who, explaining the words of Jesus Christ of the cross to John, behold thy mother, “Ecce mater tua,” says: It is as if he said, no one shall partake of my blood except by the intercession of my mother. My wounds are fountains of grace, but to none can their streams be conveyed except by the channel of

Mary. Oh John, my disciple, even as thou lovest my mother, so shalt thou be loved by me.[7093]

The statement that whatsoever we receive from the Lord comes to us by means of Mary, does not find favor with a certain modern author, who, although he treats with much piety and learning of true and false devotion, yet speaking of the devotion towards the divine mother, has shown himself very sparing in granting her the glory that a St. Germanus, a St. Anselm, a St. John of Damascus, a St. Bonaventure, a St. Antoninus, a St. Bernardine of Sienna, the venerable Abbot of Celles, and so many other doctors, have not hesitated to attribute to her who have not scrupled to declare that for the above-mentioned reason the intercession of Mary is not only useful, but necessary. The above named author says that this proposition, namely, that God grants no favor except through Mary, is an hyperbole and an exaggeration which has escaped from the mouth of some saints in a moment of fervor, and properly speaking, is to be understood only in the sense that through Mary we have received Jesus Christ, by whose merits we receive all graces. Otherwise, he continues, it would be an error to believe that God could not grant graces, without the intercession of Mary, since the apostle says: “There is one God and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”[7094] So far the above-named author.

But with his leave I will suggest to him what he himself in his book teaches me, that the mediation of justice by means of merit, and the mediation of grace by means of prayer, are very different things. Thus it is also one thing to say that God cannot another to say he will not grant favors without the intercession of Mary. We willingly acknowledge that God is the fountain of every good, and absolute Lord of all graces and that Mary is only a pure creature who, through grace, receives whatever she obtains from God. But who can deny it to be reasonable and proper to assert that God, in order to exalt this noble creature, who, more than all other creatures, has loved and honored him in her life, having chosen her for the mother of his Son the Redeemer of the world, has also seen fit to dispense through her hands all the graces which are to be granted to redeemed souls? We acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the only mediator of justice, as we have stated above, who by his merits obtains for us grace and salvation; but we affirm that Mary is the mediatrix of grace, and although whatever she obtains, she obtains through the merits of Jesus Christ, and because she prays and asks for it in the name of Jesus Christ, yet whatever favors we ask are all obtained through her intercession.

In this there is certainly nothing opposed to the sacred doctrines; on the contrary, it is entirely conformed to the sentiments of the Church, who, in the public prayers, by her approved, teaches us to appeal constantly to his divine mother, and invoke her as the Health of the weak; “Salus infirmorum.” The Refuge of sinners: “Refugium peccatorem.” The Help of Christians: “Auxilium christianorum.” Our life and our hope: “Vita et spes nostra.” The same holy Church, in the office which she requires to be recited on the Festivals of Mary, applying to her the words of Wisdom, gives us to understand that in Mary we shall find every hope: “In me is all hope of life and virtue.”[7095] That in Mary we shall find every grace: “In me is all grace of the way and of the truth.”[7096] In a word, that we shall find in Mary life and eternal salvation: “He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.”[7097] And again: “They that work by me shall not sin. They that explain me shall have life everlasting.”[7098] All which passages signify the need we have of the intercession of Mary.

This then is the sentiment in which so many theologians and holy fathers concur, of whom we cannot with justice say, as the author quoted above has asserted, that to exalt Mary they have uttered *hyperboles,* and that *excessive exaggerations* have fallen from their lips. To exaggerate and utter hyperboles, is to exceed the limits of truth, which cannot be said of the saints who have spoken, enlightened by the Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of truth. And here, if I may make a brief digression, let me express a sentiment of mine, namely: when an opinion is in any way honorable to the most holy Virgin, and has some foundation, and is not repugnant to the faith and the decrees of the Church, and to the truth, the rejection of it, and opposition to it, because the contrary may also be true, indicates little devotion to the mother of God. I would not be one of the number of these, nor would I see you, my reader, one of them, but rather of the number of those who fully and firmly believe all that can be believed, without error, concerning the greatness of Mary, as the Abbot Rupert says, who places among the offerings of devotion most pleasing to this mother, that of a firm belief in her great privileges.[7099] If no one else, St. Augustine at least might remove from us all fear of exaggeration in the praise of Mary, who asserts that all we may say in her praise is little in comparison with what she merits on account of her dignity as mother of God. The holy Church also, in the Mass of the blessed Virgin, requires these words to be read: “For thou art happy, oh sacred Virgin Mary, and most worthy of all praise.”[7100]

But let us return to our subject, and hear what the saints say of the opinion in question. St. Bernard says that God had bestowed all graces on Mary, that men, through her as through a channel, may receive whatever goods is in store for them.[7101] Moreover, the saint here makes an important reflection, and says that before the birth of the most holy Virgin there flowed no such current of grace for all, since this desired channel did not yet exist.[7102] But for this end, he adds, Mary has been given to the world, that through this channel the divine graces might continually flow down upon us.[7103]

As Holofernes, in order to gain the city of Bethulia, directed the aqueducts to be broken, so the devil makes every effort to deprive souls of their devotion to the mother of God; for, if this channel of grace were closed, he could easily succeed in gaining them to himself. The same holy father continues, and says: Observe, then, oh souls, with what affection and devotion the Lord would have us honor this our queen, by always seeking and confiding in her protection; for in her he has placed the fulness of all good, that henceforth we may recognize as coming from Mary whatever of hope, grace, or salvation we receive.[7104] St. Antoninus says the same thing: All the mercies ever bestowed upon men have all come through Mary.[7105]

For this reason she is called the moon, because, as St. Bonaventure remarks, as the moon is between the sun and the earth, and reflects upon the latter what she receives from the former, so Mary receives the celestial influences of grace from the divine Son, to transfuse them into us who are upon the earth.[7106]

For this reason, too, she is called the gate of heaven by the holy Church: “Felix cœli porta;” because, St. Bernard again observes, as every rescript of grace sent by the king comes through the palace gate, so it is given to Mary, that through her thou shouldst receive whatever thou hast.[7107] St. Bonaventure, moreover, says that Mary is called the gate of heaven, because, no one can enter heaven if he does not pass through Mary, who is the door of it.[7108]

St. Jerome confirms us in the same sentiment (or, as some persons think, another ancient author of a sermon upon the Assumption which is inserted among the works of St. Jerome), when he says, that in Jesus Christ was the fulness of grace as in the head, whence descend to the members, which we are, all the vital spirits, that is, the divine aids for attaining eternal salvation: in Mary likewise was fulness as in the neck, through which those vital spirits pass to the members.[7109] This is confirmed by St. Bernardine of Sienna, who more clearly unfolded this thought, saying that through Mary are transmitted to the faithful, who are the mystic body of Jesus Christ, all the graces of the spiritual life, which descends upon them from Jesus their head.[7110]

St. Bonaventure also attempts to assign the reason for this when he says: God being pleased to dwell in the womb of this holy Virgin, she has acquired thereby, in a certain sense, a kind of jurisdiction over all graces; since Jesus came from her sacred womb, together with him proceed from her, as from a celestial ocean, all the streams of divine gifts.[7111] St. Bernardine of Sienna expresses this in even clearer terms. From the time, he asserts, that this mother conceived in her womb the Divine Word, she acquired, if we may thus express it, a special right to the gifts which proceed to us from the Holy Spirit, so that no creature has received any grace from God except by the intervention and hand of Mary.[7112]

And thus is explained by a certain author[7113] that passage of Jeremias where the prophet, speaking of the incarnation of the Word and of Mary his mother, says, that “a woman shall compass a man.”[7114] The author above named explains this to mean that, as no line proceeds from the centre of a circle which does not pass through its circumference; thus no grace comes to us from Jesus, who is the centre of every good, that does not pass through Mary, who encompassed him after she had received him in her womb.

Hence, says St. Bernardine, all gifts, all virtues, and all graces, are dispensed by Mary[7115] to whom she will, when she will, and in the manner she will. Richard likewise says, that God wishes all the good he bestows on creatures to pass through the hands of Mary.[7116] Hence the venerable Abbot of Celles exhorts every one to have recourse to this treasurer of graces, as he calls her: “Thesaurariam gratiarum;” for only by her means the world and men are to receive all the good they may hope for.[7117] By which it is evident that the saints and authors above quoted, in saying that all graces come to us through Mary, have not intended to say this only because we have received from Mary, Jesus Christ, who is the fountain of every good, as the author named above would imply; but they assure us that God, after having given us Jesus Christ, has decreed that all the graces which have been dispensed, are dispensed, and shall be dispensed to men, even to the end of the world, through the merits of Jesus, shall be dispensed through the hands and by the intercession of Mary.

Hence Father Suarez concludes it to be the universal sentiment of the Church at the present day, that the intercession of Mary is not only useful, but necessary.[7118] Necessary, as we said before, not in the sense of absolute necessity, because only the mediation of Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary for us, but in the sense of moral necessity; for the Church holds the opinion, with St. Bernard, that God has chosen to bestow no grace upon us but by the hands of Mary.[7119] St. Ildephonsus affirmed this before St. Bernard, when, addressing the Virgin, he says: Oh Mary, God has decreed to commit to thee all the favors that he would confer upon men; hence he has confided to thee all the treasures and riches of grace.[7120] And therefore St. Peter Damian says,[7121] that God would not become man without the consent of Mary, that, in the first place, we might remain greatly indebted to her; and secondly, that we might understand the salvation of all men to be made dependent upon her good pleasure.

St. Bonaventure, contemplating the words of Isaias, where the prophet says: From the race of Jesse there shall come forth a rod—that is, Mary; and from that the flower—that is, the Word incarnate,[7122] utters these beautiful words: Let him who would obtain the grace of the Holy Spirit, seek the flower in the rod, Jesus in Mary; since by the rod we obtain the flower, and by the flower we find God.[7123] And he afterwards adds: If thou wouldst have this flower, strive, with prayers, to incline the stem of the flower in thy favor, and thou wilt obtain it.[7124] The seraphic Doctor, also commenting on the words: “They found the child with Mary his mother,”[7125] says: Jesus is never found but with and through Mary;[7126] and concludes with these words: He seeks Jesus in vain who does not look for him with Mary.[7127]

Hence St. Ildephonsus says: I would be a servant of the Son, and as he can never be a servant of the Son who is not the servant of the mother, my ambition is to be a servant of Mary.[7128]

EXAMPLE

It is related by Belluacensis[7129] and Cesarius,[7130] that a noble youth having lost by his vices the wealth left him by his father, became so poor that he was obliged to beg. He quitted his native land, that he might live with less shame in a distant country where he was unknown. On this journey he met one day an old servant of his father, who, seeing him so cast down by the poverty he was suffering, told him to cheer up, for he would take him to a prince who was so liberal that he would provide him with every thing he needed. Now this wretch was an impious sorcerer. One day he took the youth with him to a wood on the borders of a moor, where he began to address some invisible person. The youth asked to whom he was speaking. "To the devil," he answered; and seeing the youth terrified, bade him not to fear. Continuing to speak with the devil, he said: "This youth, oh my master, is reduced to extreme necessity, and wishes to be restored to his former condition." "If he will obey me," said the enemy, "I will make him richer than before; but in the first place, he must renounce God." At this the youth shuddered, but urged on by that cursed magician, he yielded, and renounced God. "But this is not sufficient," said the demon; "he must also renounce Mary; for it is to her that we attribute our greatest losses. Oh, how many souls she has snatched from us, and led back to God and saved!" "Oh, this I will not do," exclaimed the youth; "deny Mary! why she is my only hope. I would rather be a beggar all my life." With these words he left the place. On his way he happened to pass a church dedicated to Mary. The unhappy youth entered it, and kneeling before her altar, began to weep and implore the most holy Virgin that she would obtain the pardon of his sins. Mary immediately began to intercede with the Son for that miserable being. Jesus at first said: "But that ungrateful youth, my mother, has denied me." But seeing that his mother still continued to entreat him, he at last said: "Oh, my mother, I have never refused thee any thing; he shall be pardoned, since thou dost ask it." The citizen who had purchased the inheritance of that prodigal was secretly present at this scene, and beholding the mercy of

Mary towards that sinner, he gave him his only daughter in marriage, and made him heir of all his possessions. Thus that youth recovered, through the intercession of Mary, the favor of God and even his temporal possessions.

PRAYER

Oh my soul! behold the beautiful hope of salvation, and of life eternal, which the Lord has granted thee, by giving thee, in his mercy, confidence in the protection of his mother, when thou hast by thy sins so often merited his displeasure and the pains of hell. Give thanks, then, to God, and to thy protectress, Mary, who hath deigned to shelter thee beneath her mantle, as already thou certainly knowest, by the many graces that thou hast received through her. Yes, I thank thee, oh my loving mother! for the good thou hast done me, a miserable sinner, deserving of hell. From how many dangers hast thou delivered me, oh my queen! How much light and how many mercies hast thou obtained for me, from God, by thy intercession! What great advantage, or what great honor hast thou received from me, that thou art thus intent on doing me good?

Thy goodness alone, then, hath moved thee in my behalf. Ah! if I were to give my blood, my life for thee, it would be little compared to what I owe thee, for thou hast delivered me from eternal death; thou, who hast enabled me to recover, as I hope, the divine favor, and from thee finally I acknowledge all my blessings to proceed. Oh my Lady! most worthy of love, I a miserable creature can make thee no return but always to praise and love thee. Ah! do not disdain to accept the affection of a poor sinner, who is enamored of thy goodness. If my heart is not worthy to love thee, because it is evil and full of earthly affections, do thou change it. Ah! unite me to my God, and unite me so that I can never be separated from his love. This thou desirest of me, that I may love thy God, and this I wish from thee. Obtain for me that I may love him, and love him always, and I ask nothing more. Amen.

SECTION II

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

ST. BERNARD says, that as a man and a woman have co-operated for our ruin, so it was fit that another man and another woman should co-operate for our restoration; and these were Jesus and his mother Mary. Doubtless, says the saint, Jesus Christ alone was all-sufficient for our redemption: yet it was more fitting that each sex should take part in our redemption, when both took part in our corruption.[7131] For this reason blessed Albertus Magnus calls Mary the co-operatrix with Christ in our redemption: “Adjutrix Redemptionis.” And she herself revealed to St. Bridget, that as Adam and Eve sold the world for one apple, so her Son and herself with one heart redeemed the world.[7132] God could, indeed, as St. Anselm asserts, create the world from nothing; but when it was lost by sin, he would not redeem it without the co-operation of Mary.[7133]

In three ways, says Father Suarez, the divine mother shared in the work of our salvation: first, by having merited, that is, with merit of congruity, the Incarnation of the Word. Secondly, by praying much for us while she lived on the earth. Thirdly, by willingly sacrificing to God the life of her Son for our salvation; and therefore the Lord has justly ordained that as Mary has, with so much love for man, aided in the salvation of all, and thereby so greatly promoted the glory of God, all through her intercession shall obtain salvation.

Mary is called the co-operatrix with her Son in our justification, because God has committed to her keeping all the graces that he has destined for us.[7134] Wherefore St. Bernard affirms, that all men, past, present, and to come, should regard her as the medium and negotiator of the salvation of all ages.[7135]

Jesus Christ has said, that no one could find him unless his Eternal Father drew him by his divine grace.[7136] Thus, also, according to Richard, Jesus said of his mother: No one comes to me unless my mother draw him with her prayers.[7137]

Jesus was the fruit of Mary, as Elizabeth expressed it: “Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.”[7138] Whoever, then, wishes for the fruit, must go to the tree; whoever wishes for Jesus must go to Mary; and he who finds Mary, certainly also finds Jesus. St. Elizabeth, when the most holy Virgin came to visit her in her house, not knowing how to thank her, in deep humility exclaimed: “How have I merited that the mother of my God should come to visit me?"[7139] But why! we may ask: did not Elizabeth already know that not Mary only, but Jesus also, had entered her dwelling? And why, then, does she call herself unworthy to receive the mother, and not rather unworthy of receiving a visit from the Son. Ah, well did the saint understand that when Mary comes she brings Jesus also; and hence it was sufficient for her to thank the mother, without naming the Son.

"She is like the merchant's ship, she bringeth her bread from afar."[7140] Mary is that blessed ship, which brought to us from heaven Jesus Christ, the living bread that came from heaven to give us life eternal, as he has said: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever."[7141] Hence Richard of St. Laurence says, that all those will be lost in the sea of this world who are not received into this ship, that is, protected by Mary.[7142] He also adds, that whenever we find ourselves in danger of destruction from the temptations or passions of the present life, we ought to flee to Mary, crying quickly, Oh Lady, help us; save us, if thou wouldst not see us lost.[7143] And let it be remarked here, in passing, that this writer does not hesitate to say to Mary: Save us, we perish—"Salva nos, perimus;" as the author mentioned several times in the previous section does, who denies that we can ask the Virgin to save us, because, as he says it belongs only to God to save us. But if a person condemned to death may ask some favorite of the king to save him by interceding for him with his prince, why cannot we implore the mother of God to save us by obtaining for us through her prayers the grace of eternal life? St. John of Damascus did not hesitate to say to the Virgin: Oh pure and immaculate queen, save me, deliver me from eternal damnation.[7144] St. Bonaventure called Mary the salvation of those invoking her.[7145] The Church allows us to invoke her: Health of the weak—"Salus infirmorum;" and shall we hesitate to ask her to save us, when, according to a certain author, to no one is the door of salvation open except through her?[7146] And before him St. Germanus, speaking of Mary, said: No one can be saved except through thee.[7147]

But let us see what more the saints say of the need we have of the intercession of the divine mother. The glorious St. Cajetan said that we could ask for graces, but we could never obtain them without the intercession of Mary. And St. Antoninus confirms this, expressing himself thus beautifully: Whoever asks and wishes to obtain graces without the intercession of Mary, attempts to fly without wings;[7148] for, as Pharaoh said to Joseph, "The land of Egypt is in thy hand;"[7149] and as he sent all those to Joseph who applied to him for assistance, saying: Go to Joseph—"Ite ad Joseph;" so God, when we supplicate him for favors, sends us to Mary: Go to Mary—"Ite ad Mariam;" for he has decreed, says St. Bernard, that he will grant no favors except through the hands of Mary.[7150] Hence Richard of St. Laurence says: Our salvation is in the hands of Mary, and we Christians can more justly say to her than the Egyptians to Joseph, our salvation is in thy hand.[7151] The venerable Idiot says the same thing: Our salvation is in her hands—"Salus nostra in manu illius est."[7152] Cassian asserts the same thing, but in stronger language. He absolutely affirms that the salvation of the whole world depends upon the favor and protection of Mary.[7153] St. Bernardine of Sienna thus addresses her: Oh Lady, since thou art the dispenser of all graces, and we must receive the grace of salvation through thy hand alone, then our salvation depends on thee.[7154]

Richard says rightly then, that as a stone falls so soon as the earth is removed from beneath it, in like manner a soul, if the support of Mary is taken away, will fall first into sin and then into hell.[7155] St. Bonaventure adds, that God will not save us without the intercession of Mary,[7156] and goes on to say, that as an infant cannot live without its nurse, so no one without the protection of Mary can be saved.[7157] Therefore he exhorts us in this way: Let thy soul thirst for devotion to Mary; preserve it always, never abandon it until you arrive in heaven and receive her maternal benediction.[7158] Who, says St. Germanus, would ever know God, if it were not through thee, oh most holy Mary? Who would be saved? Who would be free from peril? Who would receive any favor if it were not through thee, oh mother of God? Oh Virgin mother, oh full of grace![7159] And in another place he says: If thou didst not open the way, no one would be free from the sting of the flesh and of sin.[7160]

As we have access to the eternal Father only through Jesus Christ, so, says St. Bernard, we have access to Jesus Christ only through Mary.[7161] And St. Bernard gives us the reason why the Lord decreed that all men should be saved by the intercession of Mary, namely that through Mary we might be received by that Saviour who, through Mary, has been given to us;

and therefore the saint calls her the mother of grace and of our salvation. Then, resumes St. Germanus, what would become of us? what hope of salvation would remain to us if thou, oh Mary, didst abandon us, thou who art the life of Christians?[7162]

But, the modern author above quoted remarks: If all graces pass through Mary, when we implore the intercession of the saints, they must have recourse to the meditation of Mary to obtain for us these graces. This, however, says he, no one believes, or has ever thought of. I reply, that there can be no error or difficulty in believing this. What difficulty is there in saying that God, to honor his mother, having crowned her queen of the saints, and having ordained that all graces should be dispensed by her hands would have the saints also invoke her to obtain favors for their clients? As to saying that no one has ever thought of it, I find that St. Bernard, St. Anselm, St. Bonaventure, Father Suarez[7163] also, and others expressly assert it. In vain, says St. Bernard, would one pray to the other saints for a desired favor, if Mary did not intercede to obtain it for them.[7164] Thus also a certain author explains, in this connection, that passage of David: “All the rich among the people shall entreat thy countenance.”[7165] The rich of that great people of God are the saints, who, when they wish to obtain a favor for one of their clients, all recommend themselves to Mary, that she may obtain it for them. Justly, then, says Father Suarez, we implore the saints to be our intercessors with Mary, who is their lady and queen.[7166]

It is precisely this which St. Benedict promised to St. Frances of Rome, as we learn from Father Marchese.[7167] The above-named saint appeared to her one day, and taking her under his protection, promised to be her advocate with the divine mother. St. Anselm adds, in confirmation of this, addressing the blessed Virgin: Oh Lady, what the prayers of all these saints can obtain, in union with thine, thou canst obtain, by thy intercession alone without their aid.[7168] But wherefore hast thou such power? “quare hoc potes?” continues the saint. Because thou alone art the mother of our common Saviour, thou art the spouse of God, the universal queen of heaven and earth.[7169] If thou dost not speak for us, no saint will pray for us and aid us.[7170] But if thou art moved to pray for us, all the saints will engage to intercede for us and help us.[7171] So says Father Segneri,[7172] applying to Mary, as the holy Church does, these words of Wisdom: “I alone have compassed the circuit of heaven."[7173] As with its motion the first sphere puts in motion all the others, so when Mary is moved to pray for a soul, she moves all heaven to pray with her. St. Bonaventure says even, that when she commands, as being their queen, all the saints and angels to accompany her and unite their prayers to hers.[7174]

So we see, finally, why the holy Church requires us to invoke and salute the divine mother with the great name of our hope: Hail our hope, "Spes nostra salve." The impious Luther could not endure that the holy Roman Church should call Mary, our hope;[7175] because, as he said, God only and Jesus Christ as our mediator are our hope; but that God curses those who place their hope in any creature, as we find in Jeremias: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man."*[7176] But the Church teaches us everywhere to invoke Mary, and call her our hope: "Spes nostra salve." Whoever places his hope in a creature, independently of God, is certainly accursed of God, since God is the only fountain and the dispenser of every good, and the creature, without God, has nothing and can do nothing. But if the Lord has ordained, as we have proved, that all graces shall pass through Mary, as a channel of mercy, we can, and ought even to assert that Mary is our hope, by whose intercession we receive divine graces, and therefore it is St. Bernard called her the whole cause of his hope.[7177] St. John of Damascus expresses the same thing when, addressing the blessed Virgin, he says to her: Oh Lady, in thee I have placed all my hope, and with firm confidence I look to thee for my salvation.[7178] St. Thomas says that Mary is all the hope of our salvation.[7179] St. Ephrem explains: Oh most holy Virgin, receive us under thy protection, if thou wilt see us saved, since we have no other hope of being saved but through thee.[7180]

We will then conclude in the words of St. Bernard: Let us strive, with all the affections of our heart, to reverence this divine mother, Mary, since this is the will of that Lord who would have us receive all good from her hands.[7181] And the saint exhorts us, whenever we desire and ask any favor, to recommend ourselves to Mary, and trust that we shall obtain it through her intercession.[7182] For, says the saint, if you do not deserve from God the favor you ask, Mary, who asks it in your behalf, merits to obtain it.[7183] Hence the same Bernard exhorts us each and all, that, whatever we offer to

God, whether works or prayers, we recommend all to Mary, if we wish our Lord to accept them.[7184]

EXAMPLE

Eutychian, Patriarch of Constantinople, relates the following well-known story of Theophilus. The Patriarch was an eye-witness of the fact which we here relate, and which is confirmed by St. Peter Damian, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Antoninus, and others.[7185] Theophilus was archdeacon of the Church of Adanas, a city of Cilicia; and was so much esteemed, that the people wished him to become their bishop, but his humility prevented his consent. Some malicious persons afterwards accused him, and he was deposed from his office. This afflicted him so much, that, blinded by passion, he went to a Jewish magician, who induced him to apply to Satan for help in his misfortunes. The devil answered that if he wished his assistance, he must renounce Jesus, and Mary his mother, and hand over to him the act of renunciation, written with his own hand. Theophilus executed the vile document. On the following day the bishop having heard of the wrong done him by his calumniators, asked his forgiveness, and restored him to his office. But Theophilus began then to feel so tortured by remorse of conscience on account of the great crime he had committed, that he wept continually. What does he do? He enters a church, prostrates himself in tears before an altar of the blessed Virgin, and exclaims: “Oh mother of God, I will not despair having thee, who art so merciful, to aid me.” He persevered forty days in weeping and praying thus to the holy Virgin; when behold, one night the mother of mercy appeared to him and said: “Oh Theophilus, what have you done? you have renounced my friendship and that of my Son; and for whom? for your own and my enemy.” “Oh Lady,” answered Theophilus, “it belongs to thee to pardon me, and to obtain my pardon from thy Son.” Then Mary, seeing his confidence, answered, “Take courage, and I will pray for thee.” Theophilus, encouraged by these words, redoubled his tears, his penance, and his prayers, remaining constantly at the foot of the altar. And, behold, Mary appeared to him again, and with a joyful countenance said to him: “Theophilus, rejoice, I have presented thy tears and thy prayers to God; he hath accepted them, and hath already pardoned thee; henceforth be grateful and faithful.” “Oh Lady,” replied

Theophilus, “this is not sufficient to console me; the enemy still holds that impious deed, by which I have renounced thee and thy Son; thou canst obtain it for me.” After three days Theophilus awoke one night, and found the paper on his breast. The next day, when the bishop with a large assembly were present in the church, Theophilus cast himself at his feet, related the whole story, weeping bitterly, and gave him the infamous writing, which the bishop immediately ordered to be burned in presence of all the people, who wept for joy, praising the goodness of God, and the mercy of Mary towards that miserable sinner. Theophilus returned to the church of the Virgin, and there, three days afterwards, he died happily, with thanksgivings to Jesus and his holy mother on his lips.

PRAYER

Oh Queen and Mother of mercy! who dost dispense graces to all those who have recourse to thee, so liberally because thou art queen, and with so much love because thou art our most loving mother; to thee I commend myself today, destitute of merits and virtues as I am, and laden with debts to the divine justice. Oh, Mary, thou hast the keys of all the divine mercies, do not forget my miseries, and do not leave me in my great poverty. Thou who art so liberal with all, and who givest more than is asked of thee, do so with me, Oh Lady, protect me, this is all I ask. If thou dost protect me I fear nothing. I do not fear the demons, for thou art more powerful than all the spirits of hell; nor my sins, for one word of thine in my behalf can obtain pardon of them all from God. If I have thy favor I do not fear even the anger of God, for he is appeased by one prayer of thine. In a word, if thou dost protect me I hope all things, because all things are possible with thee. Oh mother of mercy, I know that thou takest pleasure and pride in giving succor to the most miserable, for thou canst aid them, if not prevented by their obstinacy. I am a sinner, but I am not obstinate; I wish to change my life. Thou canst, then, help me; do help and save me. Today I place myself entirely in thy hands. Teach me what I must do to please God, and I will do it; and I hope to do so with thy aid, oh Mary, Mary, my mother, my light, my consolation, my refuge, and my hope. Amen, amen, amen.

Chapter VI

EJA ERGO ADVOCATA NOSTRA

AH, THEN, OUR ADVOCATE.

SECTION I

MARY IS AN ADVOCATE POWERFUL TO SAVE ALL

So great is the authority of mothers over their children that although they may be monarchs, having absolute dominion over all the persons in their kingdom, yet their mothers can never become subject to them. It is true that Jesus is now in heaven, for he is seated there at the right hand of the Father even as man, as St. Thomas explains it; by reason of the hypostatic union with the person of the Word, and has supreme dominion over all, and even over Mary; yet it will always be true, that at the time when our Redeemer lived on this earth, he was pleased to humble himself and make himself subject to Mary, as St. Luke teaches us: And he was subject to them: "Erat subditus illis."[7186] St. Ambrose even says, that Jesus Christ having deigned to make Mary his mother, was obliged as her son to obey her. And therefore, observes Richard of St. Laurence, it is said of the other saints, that they are with God; but of Mary alone can it be said, that not only was it her lot to be subject to the will of God, but that God was also subject to her will.[7187] And as it is said of the other holy virgins, as the same author remarks, that they follow the divine lamb wherever he goes: "sequuntur agnum quocumque ierit;"[7188] of the Virgin Mary it may be said, that the divine Lamb followed her on this earth, having become subject to her.[7189]

Hence we may say, that though Mary is in heaven, and can no longer command her Son, yet her prayers will ever be the prayers of a mother, and therefore most powerful to obtain whatever she asks. Mary, says St. Bonaventure, has this privilege with her Son, that she is most powerful to obtain by her prayers whatsoever she will.[7190] And wherefore? Precisely for the reason which we have before mentioned, and which we will now examine more fully, namely, because the prayers of Mary are the prayers of a mother. And therefore, says St. Peter Damian, the Virgin has all power in heaven as on earth, being able to raise to the hope of salvation even the most despairing.[7191] And then he adds, that when the mother asks any favor for us of Jesus Christ (called by the saint the altar of mercy where sinners obtain pardon from God), the Son has so great regard for the prayers of Mary, and so great a desire to please her, that when she prays, she seems to command rather that request, and to be a mistress rather than a handmaid.[7192] Thus Jesus would honor this his dear mother, who has honored him so much in her life, by granting her immediately whatever she asks and desires. St. Germanus beautifully confirms this by saying to the Virgin: Thou art mother of God, omnipotent to save sinners, and needest no other recommendation with God, since thou art the mother of true life.[7193]

St. Bernardine of Sienna does not hesitate to say that all obey the commands of Mary, even God himself;[7194] signifying by these words, that God listens to her prayers as though they were commands. Hence St. Anselm thus addresses Mary: The Lord, oh holy Virgin, has so highly exalted thee, that by his favor thou canst obtain all possible graces for thy servants, for thy protection is omnipotent.[7195] Thy help is omnipotent, oh Mary: Omnipotens auxilium tuum, O Maria;” as Cosmas of Jerusalem exclaims. Yes, Mary is omnipotent, adds Richard of St. Laurence, since the queen, by every law, must enjoy the same privileges as the king. For as the power of the Son and mother are the same, the mother by the omnipotent Son is made omnipotent.[7196] As St. Antoninus says: God has placed the whole Church, not only under the patronage, but also under the dominion of Mary.[7197]

As the mother, then, must have the same power as the Son, justly was Mary made omnipotent by Jesus, who is omnipotent; it being, however, always true, that whereas the Son is omnipotent by nature, the mother is so by grace. And her omnipotence consists in this, that the Son denies nothing that the mother asks; as it was revealed to St. Bridget, who heard Jesus one day addressing Mary in these words: “Oh my mother, thou knowest how I love thee; ask from me, then, whatever thou dost desire, for there is no demand of thine that will not be graciously heard by me."[7198] And the reason that he added was beautiful: "Mother, when thou wast on earth, there was nothing thou didst refuse to do for love of me; now that I am in heaven, it is just that I refuse nothing which thou dost ask of me.[7199] Mary is, then, called omnipotent in the sense in which it can be understood of a creature, who is not capable of any divine attribute. She is omnipotent, because she obtains by her prayers whatever she wishes.

With reason, then, oh our great advocate! says St. Bernard, dost thou only wish, and it is done: "Velis tu et omnia fient." And St. Anselm: Whatever thou askest, oh Virgin! cannot but be done.[7200] Wish, and it will be done; dost thou wish to raise the most abandoned sinner to an exalted sanctity, to thee it is given to do it. The blessed Albertus Magnus represents Mary speaking thus: I must be asked to wish, for if I wish it must be done.[7201] Hence St. Peter Damian, contemplating this great power of Mary, and praying her to have pity on us, says: Oh Mary! oh our beloved advocate! since thou hast a heart so compassionate, that thou canst not behold the miserable without pity, and, at the same time, hast so great a power with God to save all those whom thou dost defend; deign to intercede in behalf of us miserable creatures, who place in thee all our hopes. If our prayers do not move thee, may thy merciful heart at least move thee; may thy power at least move thee, since God, for this end, has enriched thee with so much power, that the richer thou art in the power to aid us, so much more compassionate thou mayest be in thy desire to aid us.[7202] Of this, St. Bernard assures us, saying, that Mary is abundant in mercy as well as in power; as her charity is most powerful, so also is it most merciful in our behalf, and this is manifested to us continually by its effects.[7203]

Even when she was living on this earth, the only thought of Mary, after the glory of God, was to relieve the wretched. And we know that then she enjoyed already the privilege of obtaining whatever she asked. This we know from what took place at the nuptials of Cana of Galilee, when the wine failed, and the blessed Virgin, compassionating the distress and mortification of that family, asked the Son to relieve them by a miracle, making known to him this want: They have no wine: "Vinum non habent."[7204] Jesus answered: "Woman, what is that to thee and to me? my hour is not yet come."[7205] Observe, that although the Lord appeared to refuse this favor to his mother, by saying: Of what importance is it, oh woman, to me and to thee that the wine has failed? It does not become me now to perform any miracle, as the time has not arrived, the time of my preaching, when with signs I must confirm my doctrine; yet notwithstanding this, Mary, as if the Son had already granted her the favor, said to the attendants, Fill the water-pots with water: “Imple hydrias aqua.”[7206] Come fill the water-pots, and you will be consoled; and Jesus Christ, indeed to please his mother, changed that water into the best wine. But how is this? If the time appointed for miracles was the time of preaching, how could it be anticipated by the miracle of the wine, contrary to the divine decree? Nothing, it may be answered, was done contrary to the divine decree; for although, generally speaking, the time for signs had not come, yet from eternity God had established by another general decree, that nothing the divine mother could ask should be denied her; and therefore Mary, well acquainted with her privilege, although her Son seemed to have then set aside her petition, said notwithstanding, that the water-pots should be filled, as though the favor was already granted. This, St. John Chrysostom would express, when commenting on the passage of John above mentioned—“Oh woman, what is that to thee and to me?”—he says, that although Jesus had answered thus, yet, for the honor of his mother, he did not fail to comply with her demand.[7207] St. Thomas confirms the same, when he observes, that by these words—“My hour has not yet come”—Jesus Christ wished to show that he would have deferred the miracle, if another had asked him to perform it; but because his mother asked it, he immediately performed it.[7208] St. Cyril and St. Jerome confirm this, according to Barrada. And Jansenius of Ghent says, commenting on the same passage of St. John: That he might honor his mother, he anticipated the time of working miracles.[7209]

In a word, it is certain that no creature can obtain for us miserable sinners so many mercies as this good advocate, who is honored by God with this privilege, not only as his beloved handmaid, but also as his true mother. William of Paris says this when addressing her.[7210] It is enough that Mary speaks, and the Son does all she wishes. The Lord, speaking to the spouse of the Canticles, by whom is understood Mary, says: “Thou that dwellest in the gardens the friends hearken, make me hear thy voice.”[7211] The friends are the saints, who, when they ask any favor for their clients, wait until their queen prays to God for it and obtains it; for, as was said before in Chap. V., no favor is dispensed except by the intercession of Mary. And how does Mary obtain favors? It is enough that her Son hears her voice: Make me to hear thy voice: “Fac me audire vocem tuam.” it is enough that she speaks, and her Son immediately hears her. William of Paris, explaining in the same way the passage above named, introduces the Son, who thus addresses Mary: Oh thou who dwellest in the celestial gardens, intercede with confidence for whomsoever thou wilt, for I cannot forget that I am thy Son, or think of refusing any thing to my mother. It is enough for thee to speak, and thy Son will graciously hear and grant thy petition.[7212] The Abbot Godfrey says that Mary, although she obtains favors by praying, yet prays with a kind of maternal authority; hence we may be sure that she will obtain whatever she desires and asks for us.[7213]

It is related of Coriolanus, by Valerius Maximus,[7214] that when he held Rome besieged, all the prayers of his friends and of the citizens could not induce him to withdraw his forces; but when his mother Veturia came to entreat him he could not resist, and immediately raised the siege. But the prayers of Mary are as much more powerful with Jesus than the prayers of Veturia with her son, as the love and gratitude of Jesus to Mary exceeds that of the son of Veturia for his mother. Father Justin Micoviensis writes: One sigh of Mary has more power than the prayers of all the saints united.[7215] The devil himself confessed this same thing to St. Dominic, when, constrained by his commands, he spoke through the mouth of a possessed person, saying, as Father Pacciucchelli narrates,[7216] that one sigh of Mary availed more with God than the united prayers of all the saints.

St. Antoninus says, that the prayers of the blessed Virgin being the prayers of a mother, have a certain kind of authority, hence it is impossible that she should not be heard when she prays.[7217] On this account St. Germanus encourages sinners to recommend themselves to this advocate with these words; Thou, oh Mary, having the authority of a mother with God, dost obtain pardon for the vilest sinners; for the Lord, who in all things recognizes thee for his true mother, cannot refuse to grant thee whatever thou dost ask.[7218] St. Bridget, too, heard the saints in heaven saying to the Virgin: What is there that thou canst not do? Whatever thou dost desire is done.[7219] To which corresponds that celebrated verse: What God by a command, thou, oh Virgin, by a prayer canst effect.[7220] Is it not, says St. Augustine, worthy of the goodness of the Lord thus to guard the honor of his mother? for he asserts that he has come on the earth, not to break, but to fulfil the law, which, among other things, commands us to honor our parents.[7221]

St. George, Archbishop of Nicomedia, even adds, that Jesus Christ grants to his mother all her petitions, as if to satisfy the obligation that he is under to her for having caused, by her consent, that the human nature should be given him.[7222] Wherefore, St. Methodius, the martyr exclaims: Rejoice, oh Mary, that a Son has fallen to thy lot as thy debtor, who gives to all and receives from none. We are all debtors to God for whatever we possess, since every thing is his gift; but God has wished to make himself a debtor to thee, taking from thee his body and becoming man.[7223] So also St. Augustine says: Mary having merited to give flesh to the Divine Word, and by that to furnish the price of the divine redemption, that we might be delivered from eternal death; therefore is she, says the same doctor, more powerful than any other to help us and obtain for us eternal salvation.[7224] Hence St. Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, who lived in the time of St. Jerome, thus wrote: The Son is pleased to be entreated by his mother, because he wishes to grant for her sake all that he does grant; and thus to recompense the favor he has received from her when she gave him flesh. Hence St. John Damascene addresses the Virgin in these words: Thou, then, oh Mary, being mother of God, canst save all men by thy prayers, which are enforced by a mother’s authority.[7225]

Let us conclude with the words of St. Bonaventure, who, considering the great benefit which the Lord has conferred on us in giving us Mary for our advocate, thus addresses her: Oh truly immense and admirable goodness of God, who to us miserable, guilty creatures, has granted thee, oh our Lady, for our advocate, that thou mightest, by thy powerful intercession, obtain for us whatever good thou wilt.[7226] Oh, the great mercy of God, continues the saint, who, that we might not flee to hide ourselves from the sentence to be pronounced upon us, has destined his own mother and the treasurer of graces for our advocate.[7227]

EXAMPLE

Father Razzi, of the order of Camaldoli, relates that a certain youth having lost his father, was sent by his mother to the court of a prince.[7228] The mother, who had a great devotion to Mary, when she parted with him made him promise to recite every day a "Hail Mary," and add these words: "*Blessed Virgin, help me in the hour of my death.*" The youth arrived at court, but soon began to lead so dissolute a life, that his master was obliged to send him away. In despair, without means of support, he went into the country and became a highway robber; but even then he did not omit to recommend himself to our Lady, as his mother had directed him. At length he fell into the hands of justice, and was condemned to death. Being in prison the evening before his execution, and thinking of his disgrace, the grief of his mother, and the death which awaited him, he fell to weeping bitterly. The devil seeing him so oppressed by melancholy, appeared to him in the form of a beautiful young man, and said to him that he would release him from death and prison, if he would follow his directions. The convict engaged to do all that he required. Then the pretended youth made known to him that he was the devil and had come to his assistance. In the first place, he ordered him to renounce Jesus Christ and the holy sacraments. The youth consented. He then required him to renounce the Virgin Mary and her protection. "This," exclaimed the young man, "I will never do," and turning to Mary, repeated the accustomed prayer that his mother had taught him: *Blessed Virgin, help me in the hour of my death.* At these words the devil disappeared. The youth remained in great affliction for the wickedness he had committed in denying Jesus Christ. He invoked the blessed Virgin, and she obtained for him, by her prayers, a great sorrow for all his sins, so that he made his confession with much weeping and contrition. On his way to the gallows, happening to pass before a statue of Mary, he saluted her with his usual prayer: *Blessed Virgin, help me in the hour of my death,* and the statue, in the presence of all, inclined its head and saluted him. Deeply moved, he begged to be allowed to kiss the feet of the image. The executioners refused, but afterwards consented on account of the clamor of the people. The youth stooped to kiss her feet, and Mary extended her arm from that statue, took him by the hand and held him so strongly that no power could move him. At this prodigy the multitude shouted "Pardon,

pardon," and pardon was granted. Having returned to his country, he led an exemplary life, and was always most devoted to Mary, who had delivered him from temporal and eternal death.

PRAYER

Oh great mother of God, I will say to thee with St. Bernard: Thy Son hears thee and will grant thee whatsoever thou dost ask.[7229] Speak then, speak, oh Mary our advocate, in behalf of us miserable creatures. Remember that thou hast received thy great power and dignity even for our benefit. A God has chosen to become thy debtor, by taking from thee the human nature to the end that thou mayest dispense to the miserable the riches of divine mercy. We are thy servants, in a special manner consecrated to thy service, and among these I hope to be one. We glory in living under thy protection. If thou doest good to all, even to those who do not know thee and do not honor thee, and who even insult and blaspheme thee; how much ought we to hope from thy kindness, who dost seek for the wretched that thou mayest relieve them! we who honor, love, and trust in thee! We are great sinners, but God has granted thee mercy and power greater than all our sins. Thou canst and wilt save us; and we will so much the more earnestly desire this, as we are unworthy of it, that we may glorify thee the more in heaven, when we shall have been received there by thy intercession. Oh, mother of mercy, we present to thee our souls once pure and washed with the blood of Jesus Christ, but since defiled with sin. To thee we present them, wilt thou purify them? Obtain for us sincere amendment, obtain for us the love of God, perseverance, paradise. We ask great things of thee, but canst thou not obtain them all for us? Are they greater than the love God has for thee? Thou hast only to open thy lips in prayer to thy Son, and he will grant thee all things. Pray, then, pray, oh Mary, for us; and surely thou wilt be heard graciously, and we shall be saved.

SECTION II

MARY IS A MERCIFUL ADVOCATE, WHO DOES NOT REFUSE TO DEFEND THE CAUSE OF THE MOST MISERABLE SINNERS

THERE are so many reasons why we should love this our loving queen, that if all the earth should praise Mary, and all sermons treat of her alone, and all men should give their lives for Mary, it would yet be little compared to the homage and gratitude we owe her, for the very tender love she bears to all men, even to the most miserable sinners who preserve towards her any feeling of devotion. Raymond Jordan declares that Mary cannot but love those who love her. Nay she does not disdain even to serve those who serve her, using, if they are sinners, all the power of her intercession to obtain pardon for them from her blessed Son.[7230] And so great, he goes on to say, is her kindness and compassion, that no one, however degraded he may be, should fear to cast himself at her feet, since she rejects no one who has recourse to her.[7231] Mary, as our most loving advocate, offers herself to God the prayers of her servants, especially those which are offered to her; for as the Son intercedes for us with the Father, thus she intercedes for us with the Son, and never ceases to intercede with both for our salvation, and to obtain for us the favors that we ask.[7232] Rightly, then, does the blessed Denis, the Carthusian, call the holy Virgin the peculiar refuge of the lost, the hope of the wretched and the advocate of all sinners who have recourse to her.[7233]

But if there ever be any sinner who, indeed, does not doubt the power, but has no trust in the mercy of Mary, fearing that she may not be willing to aid him on account of the magnitude of his offences, St. Bonaventure encourages him by saying: Great and peculiar is the privilege which Mary has with her Son, of obtaining by her prayers whatever she desires;[7234] but what would this great power of Mary avail us, he adds, if she should be indifferent to our welfare?[7235] No, let us not doubt, concludes the saint, let us be secure, and always thank the Lord and his divine mother for it; for, as she is the most powerful of all saints with God, so she is the most loving advocate, and the most desirous of our welfare.[7236] And who, oh mother of sinners! joyfully exclaims St. Germanus, who, after thy Jesus, has so much care of us, and of our welfare, as thou?[7237] Who doth defend us in the trials that afflict us, as thou dost defend us? Who take upon himself to protect sinners, as if combating in their behalf, as thou dost?[7238] Wherefore, he adds, thy patronage, oh Mary! is more powerful and loving than we are able to comprehend.[7239] Whilst, as the Idiot says, all the other saints can aid their own servants by their patronage more than others; the divine mother, as she is the queen of all, so is she the advocate of all, and cares for the salvation of all.[7240]

She cares for all, even for sinners, and glories especially in being called their advocate; as she herself declared to the venerable sister Mary Villani, saying: “Next to the title of mother of God, I glory most in being named the advocate of sinners.” The blessed Amadeus says, that our queen is always before the divine Majesty, interceding for us with her powerful prayers.[7241] And since in heaven she knows perfectly our miseries and necessities, she cannot but have pity on us; so, with the affection of a mother, moved by compassion for us, she kindly and mercifully endeavors to relieve and save us.[7242] It is with good reason, then, that Richard of St. Laurence encourages every one, however degraded he may be, to appeal confidently to this sweet advocate, in the certain belief that he will always find her ready to help him.[7243] It is also well said by Godfrey, that Mary is every ready to pray for all.[7244]

And oh, with how much efficacy and love, St. Bernard exclaims, this good advocate of ours conducts the cause of our salvation![7245] St. Augustine, contemplating the affection and earnestness with which Mary is continually occupied in interceding with the divine Majesty for us, that the Lord may pardon our sins, assist us with his grace, free us from dangers, and relieve us from our miseries, thus addresses the holy Virgin:[7246] Oh Lady! it is true that all the saints desire our salvation and pray for us; but the charity and tenderness which thou dost manifest for us in heaven, by obtaining with thy prayers so many mercies from God, obliges us to confess, that we have in heaven only one advocate, that is thyself, and that thou alone art the only true lover watchful of our welfare. And who can comprehend the solicitude with which Mary is always waiting on God in our behalf? St. Germanus says: She is never satisfied with defending us: “Non est satietas defensionis ejus.” The expression is beautiful. So great is the pity which Mary has for our miseries, and so great is the love she bears us, that she prays always, and prays again and is never satisfied with praying for us, and defending us from evil with her prayers, and obtaining for us favors—she is never satisfied with defending us.

What poor sinners we should be if we had not this advocate, so powerful and so merciful, and at the same time so prudent and so wise, that the judge, her Son, cannot condemn the guilty, if she defends them, as Richard of St. Laurence says.[7247] Well then, does St. John (the geometrician) salute her: Hail, authority which puts an end to strife.[7248] For all the causes defended by this most wise advocate are gained. Hence Mary is called by St. Bonaventure, the wise Abigail “Abigail sapiens.” This was the woman who, as we read in the first of Kings, knew so well how to appease King David, by her persuasive entreaties, when he was full of indignation against Nabal, that he himself blessed and thanked her for having with her sweet words, prevented him from revenging himself upon Nabal with his own hands.[7249] Precisely the same thing does Mary continually in heaven, in behalf of innumerable sinners: she knows so well how to appease the divine justice with her tender and wise entreaties, that God himself blesses her for it, and as it were thanks her, that thus she restrains him from abandoning and punishing them as they deserve. For this end, says St. Bernard, the eternal Father, desirous to show all possible compassion towards us, besides Jesus Christ, our principal advocate with himself, has given us Mary for our advocate with Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt, says St. Bernard, that Jesus is the only mediator of justice between men and God, who in virtue of his merits can, and according to his promises will, obtain for us pardon and divine grace; but because men recognize and fear in Jesus Christ the divine majesty, which dwells in him as God, it was necessary that another advocate should be assigned to us, to whom we could have recourse with less fear and more confidence; and this is Mary, than whom we can find no advocate more powerful with the divine majesty and more compassionate towards us.[7250] But he would greatly wrong the mercy of Mary, continues the saint, who should still fear to cast himself at the feet of this most sweet advocate, who is in nothing severe or terrible, but is in all things kind, lovely, and compassionate.[7251] Read and revolve as much as you will all the history found in the Gospel, and if you find any act of austerity in Mary, then fear to approach her. But you will never find any; go then joyfully to her, for she will save thee by her intercession.[7252]

Exceedingly beautiful is the exclamation which William of Paris puts in the mouth of a sinner who has recourse to Mary: Oh mother of my God, I come to thee full of confidence, even in the miserable state to which I find myself reduced by my sins; if thou dost reject me, I will plead with thee, for in a certain sense thou art bound to help me since all the Church of the faithful calls thee and proclaims thee mother of mercy.[7253] Thou, oh Mary, art so dear to God that he always graciously listens to thee; thy great mercy has never failed; thy most sweet condescension has never despised any sinner, however enormous his sins, who has had recourse to thee.[7254] What! could the whole Church falsely and in vain name thee her advocate and the refuge of sinners?[7255] No, never be it said that my sins prevent thee, oh my mother, from exercising the great office of mercy which thou dost hold, by which thou art at the same time the advocate and mediator of peace between God and man, and next to thy Son the only hope and refuge of sinners.[7256] Whatever of grace and glory is thine, even the dignity of being mother of God itself, if I may so speak, thou owest to sinners, since for their sake the divine Word has made thee his mother.[7257] Far from this divine mother who has brought forth unto the world the fountain of mercy, be the thought that she, could refuse her compassion to any sinner who recommends himself to her.[7258] Since, then, oh Mary, thy office is that of peacemaker between God and man, may thy great mercy, which far exceeds all my sins, move thee to aid me.[7259]

Console yourselves, then, oh ye faint of heart, I will say with St. Thomas of Villanova, take heart, oh miserable sinners; this great Virgin, who is the mother of your judge and God, is the advocate of the human race. Powerful and able to obtain whatever she wishes from God; most wise, for she knows every method of appeasing him; universal, for she welcomes all, and refuses to defend none.[7260]

EXAMPLE

Our advocate has shown how great is her kindness towards sinners by her mercy to Beatrice, a nun in the monastery of Fontebraldo, as related by Cesarius,[7261] and by Father Rho.[7262] This unhappy religious, having contracted a passion for a certain youth, agreed to flee with him from the convent; and in fact she went one day before a statue of the blessed Virgin, there deposited the keys of the monastery, for she was portress, and boldly departed. Arrived in another country, she led the miserable life of a prostitute for fifteen years. It happened that she met, one day, the agent of the monastery in the city where she was living, and asked of him, thinking he would not recognize her again, if he knew sister Beatrice? “I knew her well,” he said: “she is a holy nun, and at present is mistress of novices.” At this intelligence she was confounded and amazed, not knowing how to understand it. In order to ascertain the truth, she put on another dress and went to the monastery. She asked for sister Beatrice, and behold, the most holy Virgin appeared before her in the form of that same image to which at parting she had committed her keys, and her dress, and the divine mother thus spoke to her: “Beatrice, be it known to thee that, in order to prevent thy disgrace, I assumed thy form, and have filled thy office for the fifteen years that thou hast lived far from the monastery and from God. My child, return, and do penance, for my Son is still waiting for thee; and strive by thy holy life to preserve the good name I have gained thee.” She spoke thus and disappeared Beatrice re-entered the monastery, resumed the habit of a religious, and, grateful for the mercy of Mary, led the life of a saint. At her death she made known the foregoing incident, to the glory of this great queen.

PRAYER

Oh great mother of my Lord, I now see that the ingratitude shown by me for so many years to God and to thee, would justly merit that thou shouldst abandon all care of me, for the ungrateful are no more worthy of favors. But, oh Lady, I have a great idea of thy goodness; I believe it to be far greater than my ingratitude; continue, then, oh refuge of sinners, to help a miserable sinner who confides in thee. Oh mother of mercy, extend thy hand to raise a poor fallen creature who implores thy mercy. Oh Mary, defend thou me, or tell me to whom I shall have recourse, and who can protect me better than thou. Can I find an advocate with God more merciful and more powerful than thou, who art his mother? Thou having been created for the mother of the Saviour, art destined to save sinners, and hast been given me for my salvation. Oh Mary, save him who has recourse to thee. I do not merit thy love, but the desire thou hast to save the lost gives me the hope that thou dost love me; and if thou lovest me, how can I be lost? Oh my beloved mother, if, as I hope, I am saved by thee, I will no longer be ungrateful; I will make amends by perpetual praises and by all the affection of my soul for my past ingratitude, and will make some return for the love thou bearest me. In heaven, where thou reignest and wilt reign forever, I will always joyfully sing thy mercies, and forever I will kiss those loving hands that have freed me from hell as often as I have deserved it for my sins. Oh Mary, my liberator, my hope, my queen, my advocate, my mother, I love thee, I wish thee well, and will always love thee. Amen, amen; thus I hope, so may it be.

SECTION III

MARY IS THE PEACE-MAKER BETWEEN SINNERS AND GOD

THE grace of God is a treasure, very great and most earnestly to be desired by every soul. It is called by the Holy Spirit an infinite treasure, since by means of divine grace we are raised to the honor of being made the friends of God: “She is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.”[7263] Whence it is that Jesus, our Redeemer and God, did not hesitate to call those who are in grace, his friends: You are my friends: “Vos amici mei estis.”[7264] Oh accursed sin that loosens the ties of this blessed friendship: “Your iniquities have divided between you and your God:”[7265] for they make the soul hateful to God, and from a friend it becomes an enemy of the Lord: “To God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.”[7266] What, then, must a sinner do who finds himself so unhappy as to have become an enemy of God? He must find a mediator who will obtain pardon for him and enable him to recover the lost friendship of God. Take courage, says St. Bernard, oh sinner, who has lost God. Thy Lord himself hath given thee a mediator, even his Son Jesus Christ who can obtain for thee whatever thou desirest.[7267]

But, oh God, the saint here exclaims, why do men esteem severe this most merciful. Saviour, who hath given his life for our salvation? Why do they look upon him as terrible who is all loveliness? Distrustful sinners, say, why do you fear? If you fear because you have offended God, remember that Jesus with his own lacerated hands has nailed your sins to the cross, and having satisfied the divine justice for them by his death, he has removed them from your soul.[7268] But if ever, adds the saint, you fear to have recourse to Jesus Christ because his divine majesty alarms you, since when he became man he did not cease to be God, if you ever wish for another advocate with this mediator, invoke Mary, for she will intercede for you with the Son, who will surely graciously listen to ner, and the Son will intercede with the Father, who can refuse nothing to this Son.[7269] And so, concludes St. Bernard, this divine mother, oh my children, is the ladder of sinners, by which they ascend anew to the height of divine grace. This is my greatest confidence—this is the whole ground of my hope.[7270]

Let us hear what the Holy Spirit makes the blessed Virgin say in the sacred Canticles:[7271] I am, says Mary, the defence of those who have recourse to me, and my mercy is to them a tower of refuge; for this I have been appointed by my Lord as a peacemaker between sinners and him. Cardinal Hugo, on the same text, says, that Mary is the great peacemaker who obtains from God, and gives peace to enemies, salvation to the lost, pardon to sinners, and mercy to the despairing.[7272] For this reason she was called by her divine spouse: Beautiful as the curtains of Solomon: “Formosa sicut pelles Salomonis.”[7273] In the tents of David there was nothing treated of but war, but in the tents of Solomon peace alone was spoken of. The Holy Spirit giving us to understand by this, that the mother of mercy does not treat of war and of vengeance against sinners, but only of peace and the pardon of their offences.

Again, Mary was prefigured by Noe’s dove, who returned to the ark bearing in her beak the olive-branch, as a sign of the peace which God granted to men. Wherefore St. Bonaventur says: Thou art that most faithful dove, which, mediating with God, hath obtained for the world, which was lost, peace and salvation. Mary, then, was the heavenly dove who brought to the lost world the olive-branch, a sign of mercy;[7274] for she gave us Jesus Christ, who is the fountain of mercy,[7275] and thus obtained, by the price of his merits, all the graces which God gives us. And as through Mary the world received celestial peace,[7276] as St. Epiphanius says, so by means of Mary sinners are constantly becoming reconciled to God. In the same way, the blessed Albertus Magnus says in her name: I am that dove of Noe, who brought to the Church universal peace.[7277]

Moreover, the rainbow seen by St. John, that surrounded the throne of God, was also an exact type of Mary.[7278] According to the explanation of Cardinal Vitalis, Mary is always before the divine tribunal to mitigate the sentence and punishment due to the sinner.[7279] And St. Bernardine of Sienna says, that it was of this rainbow that the Lord spoke, when he said to Noe that he would place in the clouds the bow of peace, that when he should see it he might remember the eternal covenant that he had established with men.[7280] And Mary, says St. Bernardine, is that very bow of eternal peace.[7281] For as God, at the sight of the bow, remembers the peace promised to the earth, thus at the prayers of Mary he pardons sinners the offences committed against him, and establishes peace with them.[7282]

For the same reason Mary is also compared to the moon.[7283] For, St. Bonaventure says, as the moon is in the midst between heaven and earth, so she continually interposes between God and sinners, that she may appease the Lord towards them, and enlighten them on their return to God.[7284]

And this was the most important office given to Mary when she was placed upon the earth—of lifting the souls fallen from divine grace, and reconciling them to God. Feed thy kids: “Pasce hædos tuos.”[7285] This was said to her by the Lord when he created her. It is well known that sinners are represented by goats; and as the elect, represented by sheep, will be placed on the right hand in the valley of judgment, the goats will be placed on the left. Now these goats, says William of Paris, are committed to thee, oh great mother, that thou mayest change them into sheep, and that those who, by their sins, have merited to be banished to the left, by thy intercession may be placed on the right.[7286] Hence the Lord revealed to St. Catherine of Sienna that he had created this his beloved child as a sweet bait, that would draw men, and especially sinners, to God.[7287] And here we should note the beautiful reflection of William, the Englishman, on the passage above cited, who says, that God recommends to Mary her own goats, “hædos tuos;” because the Virgin does not save all sinners, but only those who serve and honor her. Those, on the contrary, who live in sin, and do not honor her with any special devotion, neither recommend themselves to her in order to escape from their sins, are not the goats of Mary, but in the judgment will be placed miserably on the left among the damned.[7288]

A certain nobleman who was despairing of his eternal salvation on account of his sins, was encouraged by a religious to have recourse to the most holy Virgin, by visiting her sacred image which was in a certain church. The nobleman went to the church, and on seeing the figure of Mary he felt himself, as it were, invited by her to cast himself at her feet and trust. He hastens to do so, kisses her feet, and Mary, from that statue, extended her hand for him to kiss, and on it he saw these words written: “I will deliver thee from them that afflict thee.”[7289] As if she had said to him: My son, do not despair, for I will deliver thee from thy sins, and from the fears that oppress thee. It is related that on reading these sweet words, that sinner felt such sorrow for his sins, and conceived such a love for God, and for his sweet mother that he died there at the feet of Mary. Oh, how many obstinate sinners does this magnet of hearts draw daily to God, as she herself said to St. Bridget: “As the magnet attracts to itself iron, thus I draw to myself the most obdurate hearts, that I may reconcile them to God;[7290]” and this prodigy is not rarely, but daily experienced. I could myself testify to many cases that have occurred in our missions alone, where sinners who have remained harder than iron during all other sermons, while hearing that on the mercy of Mary, were touched with compunction, and turned to God. St. Gregory relates that the unicorn is so ferocious a wild beast, that no hunter can succeed in taking it; but at the voice of a maiden who calls upon him to surrender, he draws near, and without resistance allows himself to be bound by her. Oh, how many sinners, more fierce than wild beasts, who flee from God, at the sound of the voice of this great Virgin Mary, advance and allow themselves to be gently bound by her to God!

For this end, says St. John Chrysostom, the Virgin Mary was made mother of God, that those sinners who, by reason of their wicked life, could not be saved according to the divine justice, might obtain salvation through her sweet compassion and powerful intercession.[7291] St. Anselm confirms this when he says that Mary has been exalted to be mother of God for sinners rather than for the just, since Jesus Christ announced that he came not to call the just, but sinners.[7292] And so the holy Church sings: “Sinners thou dost not abhor, since but for them thou never wouldst have been worthy of such a Son.”[7293] William of Paris also says: Oh Mary, thou art obliged to help sinners, since for all the gifts, graces, and honors thou dost possess, which are comprehended in the dignity thou hast received of being the mother of God, for all, if I may so speak, thou art indebted to sinners, since for their sakes thou wert made worthy to have a God for thy Son.[7294] If, then, concludes St. Anselm, Mary, for the sake of sinners, has been made mother of God, how can I, however great may be my sins, despair of pardon?[7295]

The holy Church teaches us, in the collect of the Mass for the Vigil of the Assumption, that the divine mother has been removed from this earth that she might intercede for us with God, in sure confidence of being graciously heard.[7296] Hence Mary is named by St. Justinian, Arbitress: "Sequestra." The Word employed as arbitress.[7297] *Sequester* signifies the same as arbiter, one to whom two contending parties refer all their questions; so that the saint means to say, that as Jesus is mediator with the eternal Father, so Mary is our mediatrix with Jesus, to whom the Son refers all the charges which, as judge he has against us.

Mary is called by St. Andrew of Crete, the confidence and security of our reconciliation with God.[7298] And by this the saint intends to say, that God seeks a reconciliation with sinners by pardoning them, and that they may not despair of pardon, he has given them Mary as a pledge of it; hence he salutes her: Hail, oh peace of God with men: "Salve divina hominibus reconciliatio." Wherefore St. Bonaventure says, encouraging every sinner: If thou fearest, on account of thy sins, that an angry God may wish to avenge himself upon thee, what art thou to do? Go to the hope of sinners, namely, Mary; and if thou fearest that she will refuse to take thy part, know that she cannot refuse to defend thy cause, for God himself has assigned her the office of relieving the wretched.[7299]

And what does the Abbot Adam say? Should a sinner fear being lost, to whom the mother of his judge offers herself as his mother and advocate?[7300] And then the same writer adds: Oh Mary! who art mother of mercy, couldst thou refuse to pray thy Son, who is judge, for another son, who is the criminal? Canst thou refuse to intercede in behalf of a redeemed soul with the Redeemer, who, for no other end than to save sinners, died on the cross?[7301] No, thou wilt not refuse, but earnestly wilt employ thyself in praying for all those who invoke thee, well knowing that the same Lord who hath constituted thy Son mediator of peace between God and man, has at the same time made thee mediatrix between the Judge and the criminal.[7302] Here St. Bernard takes up the subject, and says: Give then thanks to him who has provided thee with such a mediatrix.[7303] Whoever thou art, oh sinner, plunged in the mire of guilt, hoary in sin, do not despair; thank thy Lord, who in order to show mercy to thee, has not only given thee his Son for an advocate, but, to increase thy confidence and courage, has provided thee with such a mediatrix, who, by her prayers, obtains whatever she wishes. Have recourse to Mary, and thou wilt be saved.

EXAMPLE

It is related by Rupensis,[7304] and by Boniface,[7305] that in Florence there lived a young girl, named Benedetta (the blessed), although she might better have been called Maladetta (the cursed), from the scandalous and wicked life she led. Happily for her, St. Dominic happened to preach in that city, and she, from mere curiosity, went one day to hear him. But the Lord touched her heart during the sermon, so that, weeping bitterly, she went to make her confession to the saint. St. Dominic heard her confession, gave her absolution, and directed her to say the rosary. But the unhappy girl, by the force of her evil habits, returned to her wicked life. The saint heard of it, and going to her, induced her to confess once more. God, in order to confirm her in her good life, one day showed hell to her, and some persons there who had been already condemned on her account. Then opening a book, he made her read in it the frightful record of her sins. The pentitent shuddered at the sight, and, full of confidence, had recourse to Mary, asked her help, and learned that this divine mother had already obtained from God for her time enough to mourn for her numerous sins. The vision disappeared, and Benedetta devoted herself to a good life; but seeing always open before her eyes that dark catalogue, she one day prayed in these words to her consoler: “Oh mother, it is true that for my sins I should now be deep in hell; but since thou, by thy intercession, hast liberated me from it, by obtaining for me time for repentance, most merciful Lady, I ask of thee one other favor. I will never cease to weep for my sins; but do thou obtain for me that they may be cancelled from that book.” After this prayer, Mary appeared to her, and told her that in order to obtain what she asked, she must preserve an eternal remembrance of her sins, and of the mercy of

God towards her; and still more, that she must meditate on the passion of her Son, which he suffered for love of her; and also that she must bear in mind that many had been damned who had committed fewer sins than she had done. She also revealed her that a child of only eight years of age, for one mortal sin only, had been that day condemned to hell. Benedetta having faithfully obeyed the most holy Virgin, one day beheld Jesus Christ, who showed her that book, and said to her: Behold, thy sins are cancelled; the book is white, inscribe on it now acts of love and of virtue. Benedetta did this, led a holy life, and died a holy death.

PRAYER

Then, oh my most sweet Lady, if thy office is, as William of Paris says, to interpose as a mediatrix between the sinner and God,[7306] I will say to thee with St. Thomas of Villanova: Ah, then, oh our advocate, fulfil thy office.[7307] Fulfil at once thy office also in my behalf. Do not tell me that my cause is too difficult to be gained; for I know, and all tell me, that no cause, however desperate, if defended by thee, was ever lost; and will mine be lost? No, I fear not this. I have only to fear, when I behold the multitude of my sins, that thou wilt not undertake my defence; but considering thy vast compassion and the great desire that fills thy most loving heart to help the vilest sinners, I no longer fear even this. And who was ever lost that had recourse to thee? I invoke, then, thy aid, oh my great advocate, my refuge, my hope, and my mother Mary. To thy hands I commit the cause of my eternal salvation. To thee I consign my soul; it was lost, but thou must save it. I always thank the Lord that he gives me this great confidence in thee, which, notwithstanding my unworthiness, I believe will secure my salvation. One fear alone remains to afflict me, my beloved queen: it is, that I may one day lose, through my neglect, this confidence in thee. Therefore I pray thee, oh Mary, by all thy love for thy Jesus, to preserve and increase more and more in me this most sweet confidence in thy intercession, by which I certainly hope to recover the divine friendship, which I have hitherto so foolishly despised and lost; and once having recovered it, I hope by thy means to preserve it; and preserving it, I hope finally through thee to go one day and thank thee for it in paradise, and there to sing the mercies of

God and thine through all eternity. Amen, Thus I hope, so may it be, and so it *shall be!*

Chapter VII

ILLOS TUOS MISERICORDES OCULOS AD NOS CONVERTE

TURN THY EYES OF MERCY TOWARDS US.

SECTION I

MARY IS ALL EYES TO PITY AND RELIEVE OUR MISERIES

ST. EPIPHANIUS calls the blessed Virgin, “Multoculam;” that is, one who has many eyes, that she may relieve our miseries on this earth. One day, when a person possessed was being exorcised, the devil was asked by the exorcist what Mary was then doing. The Evil One replied: “She is descending and ascending;”[7308] by which he intended to say, that this gracious Lady does nothing else than descend upon the earth to bring graces to men, and ascend to heaven to obtain there the divine blessing on our supplications. Rightly, then, was the holy Virgin named by St. Andrew of Avellino, the active power of paradise; for she is continually employed in deeds of mercy, imploring favors for all, for the just and for sinners. “The eyes of the Lord are upon the just,” says David;[7309] but the eyes of our Lady are upon the just and upon sinners,[7310] as Richard of St. Laurence says; for he adds: The eyes of Mary are the eyes of a mother; and the mother not only guards her child from falling, but if he falls, she hastens to raise him.[7311]

Jesus himself revealed this to St. Bridget, whom the saint heard one day speaking to his mother, and saying: “Ask of me, oh my mother, whatever thou dost desire;”[7312] and the Son is always in heaven saying this to Mary, pleased with granting his beloved mother whatever she asks. But what does Mary ask? St. Bridget understood the mother to answer him: I ask mercy for sinners: “Misericordiam peto pro miseris.”[7313] As if she would say, my Son, thou hast already destined me for the mother of mercy, for the refuge of sinners, for the advocate of the miserable, now thou sayest to me that I may ask whatever I wish; but what would I ask of thee? I ask of thee that thou wilt have mercy on the sinner: “Misericordiam peto pro miseris.” Thou art, oh Mary, so full of compassion, St. Bonaventure tenderly says to her, thou art so watchful to relieve the wretched, that it seems thou hast no other desire, no other concern than this.[7314] And because, among the wretched sinners are the most wretched of all, the venerable Bede affirms, that Mary is continually praying the Son in behalf of sinners.[7315]

Even whilst on earth Mary was so kind and tender to men that, as St. Jerome says, there never was any person so afflicted by his own sufferings as Mary by the sufferings of others.[7316] She plainly showed the compassion she feels for the sufferings of others at the nuptials of Cana (as has been mentioned in previous chapters), where, as when the wine failed, without being requested, as St. Bernardine of Sienna remarks, she assumed the office of a kind comforter.[7317] And from mere compassion for the troubles of that family, she interceded with her Son, and obtained the miracle of changing the water into wine.

But, perhaps, says St. Peter Damian, since thou wast exalted to the dignity of queen of heaven, thou hast forgotten the wretched; and then he adds, let this never be thought of—it does not belong to a mercy so great as that which reigns in the heart of Mary, to forget such misery as ours.[7318] The common proverb, honors change customs, “Honores mutant mores,” certainly does not apply to Mary. It, indeed, applies to worldlings who, when raised to any dignity, become inflated with pride, and forget their old and poor friends: but not to Mary, who rejoices in her greater exaltation, because it gives her more power to assist others. Considering this point, St. Bonaventure applies to the blessed Virgin the words spoken to Ruth: “Blessed art thou, my daughter, and thy latter kindness has surpassed the former.”[7319] Meaning, as he afterwards explains, that if the pity of Mary for the unhappy was great when she lived on earth, much greater is it now when she is reigning in heaven.[7320] The saint gives the reason for this by saying, that the divine mother shows now, by the innumerable favors she obtains for us, this her increased compassion, because now she better understands our miseries.[7321] And he adds, that as the splendor of the sun exceeds that of the moon, so the mercy of Mary, now that she is in heaven, exceeds the mercy she had for us when she was upon the earth,[7322] And is there any one living on the earth who does not enjoy the light of the sun?—any one on whom this mercy of Mary does not shine?[7323]

On this account she is called bright as the sun, “Electa ut sol;”[7324] because no one is shut out from the heat of this sun,[7325] as St. Bonaventure says. And St. Agnes revealed this from heaven to St. Bridget, when she said to her, that our queen, now that she is united with her Son in heaven, cannot forget her innate goodness; hence she exercises her compassion towards all, even towards the most impious sinners, so that as both the celestial and terrestrial bodies are illuminated by the sun, thus through the goodness of Mary, there is no one in the world who does not, if he asks for it, share in the divine mercy.[7326] A great and desperate sinner, in the kingdom of Valencia, in order to escape justice, had resolved to become a Turk, and was actually going to embark, when by chance he passed a church, in which Father Jerome Lopez, of the Company of Jesus, was preaching, and preaching of the divine mercy; by that preaching he was converted, and confessed to the father, who inquired of him if he had practised any devotion, for which God had shown towards him that great mercy; he answered that he had practised no other devotion than praying the holy Virgin every day not to abandon him.[7327] The same Father found in the hospital a sinner, who for fifty-five years had never been to confession, and had only practised this little devotion, that when he saw an image of Mary he saluted it, and prayed to her that he might not die in mortal sin; and then he related that in a quarrel with an enemy, his sword was broken, and he turned to the Madonna, saying: “Alas, I shall be slain, damned; oh mother of sinners, help me.” When he had said this, he found himself, he knew not how, transported into a secure place. He made a general confession, and died full of confidence.[7328]

St. Bernard writes that Mary becomes all things to all men, and opens to all the bowels of her mercy, that all may receive of her; the captive his freedom; the sick man health; the afflicted consolation; the sinner pardon, and God glory: hence there is no one, since she is the sun, who does not partake of her warmth.[7329] And is there any one in the world, exclaims St. Bonaventure, who will not love this lovely queen? She is more beautiful than the sun, and sweeter than honey; she is a treasure of goodness, and is kind and courteous to all.[7330] I salute thee, then, thus the enamored saint goes on to say, oh my Lady and mother! my heart! my soul! Pardon me, oh Mary, if I say that I love thee: if I am not worthy of loving thee, thou art truly worthy of being loved by me.[7331]

It was revealed to St. Gertrude,[7332] that when any one repeats with devotion these words to the Virgin: “Turn, then, towards us, oh our advocate, thy pitying eyes,”[7333] Mary never fails to listen to the prayer. Oh, let the immensity of thy mercy, oh great Lady, fill the whole earth, exclaims St. Bernard.[7334] Whence St. Bonaventure says, that this loving mother has such a desire to do good to all, that she feels herself offended not only by those who offer her some positive injury, for there are souls to be found so perverse, especially gamesters, who sometimes, to vent their anger, blaspheme and insult this good Lady, but she looks upon herself as injured by those, also, who neglect to ask of her some favor.[7335] So that, as St. Idelbert says, thou dost instruct us, oh Lady, to expect favors greater than our merits, for thou dost never cease to dispense graces that far exceed what we merit.[7336]

The prophet Isaias predicted that by the great work of human redemption, a great throne of divine mercy would be prepared for us: “A throne shall be prepared in mercy.”[7337] Who is this throne? St. Bonaventure answers: This throne is Mary, in whom all, both the just and sinners, find the consolations of mercy;[7338] and he afterwards adds: As the Lord is full of compassion, so also is our Lady; and as the Son, so the mother cannot withhold her mercy from those who ask it.[7339] Hence Guerric, the abbot, represents Jesus thus speaking to Mary: My mother, upon thee I will establish the seat of my kingdom, for through thee will I bestow the graces that are asked of me: thou hast given me the human nature; I will give to thee, as it were, a divine nature, that is, my omnipotence, by which thou canst assist all who invoke thee to obtain their salvation.[7340]

When St. Gertrude was one day devoutly repeating these words to the divine mother: Turn towards us thy merciful eyes,” she saw the Virgin pointing to the eyes of her Son whom she held in her arms, and she said to her: “These are the most merciful eyes that I can turn towards all those who invoke me for their salvation.”[7341] A sinner once weeping before the altar of Mary, and imploring her to intercede with God for his pardon, was given to understand that the blessed Virgin turned to the child whom she held in her arms, and said to him: “My son, shall these tears be in vain?”[7342] and he learned that Jesus Christ at once pardoned him.

And how can any one ever perish who recommends himself to this good mother, when the Son, as God, has promised, for love of her, to exercise mercy, as far as it pleases her, towards all those that have recourse to her? Precisely this our Lord revealed to St. Bridget; permitting her to hear these words which he spoke to Mary: “By my omnipotence, venerated mother, I have granted thee the pardon of all sinners, in whatever way it pleases thee, who devoutly invoke the aid of thy mercy.”[7343] Hence the Abbot Adam Persenius, considering the great compassion that Mary has for all, full of confidence says to her: Oh mother of mercy, thy power is as great as thy pity. As thou art powerful to obtain, so thou art merciful to pardon.[7344] And when, he adds, dost thou ever fail to have compassion on sinners, being the mother of mercy; or art thou unable to help them, being mother of omnipotence? Ah, thou canst as readily obtain whatever thou wilt, as thou canst listen to our woes.[7345] Satiate thyself, then, says the Abbot Rupert, satiate thyself, oh great queen, with the glory of thy Son, and through thy compassion, not certainly through our merit, be pleased to send down to us, thy poor servants here below, whatever fragments may remain.[7346]

If our sins ever throw us into despair, let us say with William of Paris: Oh Lady, do not bring forward my sins against me, for I shall bring forward thy mercy in opposition to them. And let it never be said that my sins can rival, in the judgment, thy mercy, which is more powerful to obtain my pardon, than my sins are to obtain my condemnation.[7347]

EXAMPLE

We read in the chronicles of the Capuchin Fathers,[7348] that there lived in Venice a celebrated advocate, who, by fraud and evil practices, had become rich. His whole life was very bad, and it appears that he had but one good habit, that of reciting every day a certain prayer to the holy Virgin. Yet, even this little devotion saved him from eternal death, through the mercy of Mary. It happened in this way: Happily for himself, he had a great esteem for Father Matthew da Basso, and urged him so much to come and dine at his house, that one day the Father gave him this pleasure. Having arrived, the advocate said to him: “Now, Father, I will show you something that you have never seen. I have a wonderful ape, who is my valet, washes my glasses, lays the table, and opens the door.” “This may not be an ape,” answered the Father: “it may be something more than an ape; order him to come here.” The ape was called again and again, search was made for him everywhere, and he could not be found. At length, he was discovered hidden under a bed in the lower part of the house, but he would not come out. “Come, then,” said the religious, “let us go and see him:” and he went with the advocate to his hiding-place. “Infernal beast,” he said, “come forth, and in the name of God I command you to tell me what you are.” And behold, the ape answered that he was the devil, and that he was waiting until that sinner should omit some day to recite his accustomed prayer to the mother of God; for the first time he should omit it, God had given him leave to strangle him, and take him to hell. At these words the advocate cast himself upon his knees to ask help of the servant of God, who encouraged him, and commanded the devil to depart from that house without committing any injury, only he gave him permission, as a sign that he had really gone, to break a piece of the wall. Scarcely had he finished speaking, when, with a great crash, a hole was made in the wall, which, although it was several times closed with stone and mortar, God willed that it should remain open for a long time; until, by the advice of the servant of God, it was filled up with a slab of marble, with an angel carved on it. The advocate was converted, and, it is to be hoped, persevered until death in his new course of life.

PRAYER

Oh creature, among all others the greatest and most sublime, most holy Virgin, I from this earth salute thee; I, a miserable, unhappy rebel to my God, who deserve punishment and not favors, justice and not mercy. Oh Lady, I do not say this because I distrust thy mercy. I know that thou dost glory in being merciful as thou art great. I know that thou dost rejoice in being so rich, that thou mayest share thy riches with us sinners. I know that the more wretched are those who seek thee the greater is thy desire to help and save them. Oh my mother, it is thou who once did weep for thy Son when he died for me. Offer, I pray thee, thy tears to God, and with these obtain for me a true sorrow for my sins. So much did sinners grieve thee, then, and so much did I, too, grieve thee by my iniquities. Obtain for me, oh Mary, that I at least from henceforth may no longer continue to afflict thee and thy Son by my ingratitude. What will thy tears avail me if I should continue to be ungrateful to thee? What would thy mercy avail me if I should again be faithless and be lost? No, my queen, do not permit it. Thou hast supplied all my deficiencies; thou canst obtain from God whatever thou wilt; thou graciously hearest every one that prays to thee. These two favors do I ask of thee, and at all events from thee do I hope and desire them: namely, that thou wilt obtain for me to be faithful to God by never more offending him, and to love him as much as I have offended him during the life that remains to me.

Chapter VIII

ET JESUM BENEDICTUM FRUCTUM VENTRIS TUI NOBIS POST HOC EXILIUM OSTENDE

AND AFTER THIS OUR EXILE, SHOW US THE BLESSED FRUIT OF THY WOMB, JESUS.

SECTION I

MARY RESCUES HER SERVANTS FROM HELL

IT is impossible that a servant of Mary who faithfully honors her and recommends himself to her should be lost. This proposition at first sight may appear to some persons extravagant. But I would beg them not to condemn it before reading what will hereafter be said on this point. When it is said that a devoted servant of Mary cannot be lost, those servants are not intended who abuse their devotion by sinning with less fear. Therefore it is unjust to say, as some do who disapprove extolling the mercy of Mary to sinners, that by so doing they are encouraged to sin the more; for such presumptuous persons for their presumption merit punishment and not mercy. It is understood, then only of those of her servants who, with the desire to amend, faithfully honor and commend themselves to the mother of God. That these should be lost is, I say, morally impossible. And I find Father Crasset has affirmed the same thing in his book upon devotion to Mary;[7349] and before him Vega,[7350] Mendoza,[7351] and other theologians. And that we may know that they have not spoken unadvisedly, let us see what the Doctors and Saints have said on this subject. Let no one be surprised if I here quote several sentences, of different authors, containing the same thing; for I have wished to record them all, in order to show how unanimously all writers agree on this point. St. Anselm says, that as he who is not devoted to Mary and protected by her cannot be saved, so it is impossible that he should be condemned who recommends himself to the Virgin, and is regarded by her with affection.[7352] St. Antoninus asserts the same thing in nearly the same words: As it is impossible that those from whom Mary turns away her eyes of compassion should be saved, so it must be that all those towards whom she turns her eyes, and for whom she intercedes, shall be saved and glorified.[7353] This saint adds, then, that the servants of Mary must necessarily be saved.

Let us note, however, the first part of the statement of these saints, and let those tremble who little esteem, or abandon, through negligence, devotion to this divine mother. They say that it is impossible for those to be saved who are not protected by Mary. And this is also asserted by others, as the blessed Albertus Magnus: All those who are not thy servants, oh Mary, shall perish: "Gens quæ non servierit tibi peribit."[7354] St. Bonaventure, too: He who neglects the service of Mary shall die in sin.[7355] And in another place: He who has not recourse to thee, oh Lady, will not reach paradise.[7356] And on Psalm 99. the saint goes so far as to say that those from whom Mary turns away her face, not only will not be saved, but can have no hope of salvation.[7357] And before this St. Ignatius, the martyr, said the same thing, asserting that a sinner cannot be saved except by means of the holy Virgin, who, on the other hand, saves by her merciful intercession many that would be condemned by the divine justice.[7358] Some persons doubt whether this passage is from St. Ignatius; at least Father Crasset says that St. John Chrysostom has adopted it as his own.[7359] It is also repeated by the Abbot of Celles.[7360] And in the same sense the holy Church applies to Mary these words of Proverbs: All that hate me love death: "Omnes qui me oderunt, diligunt mortem."[7361] For, as Richard of St. Laurence says, commenting on the words: She is like the merchant's ship:[7362] all those who are out of this ship shall be submerged in the sea of this world.[7363] Even the heretic Œcolampadius esteemed neglect of devotion in any one to the mother of God as a certain sign of reprobation; hence, he said: Let it never be heard of me that I am averse to Mary, to be ill affected towards whom I should think a certain sign of a repr bate mind.[7364]

On the other hand, Mary says: He that hearkeneth to me shall not be confounded.*[7365] He who has recourse to me, and listens to what I say to him, shall not be lost. From which St. Bonaventure said: Oh, Lady, those who are mindful to honor thee, shall be far from perdition.†[7366] Even when, as St. Hilary says, they have hitherto deeply offended God.[7367]

Hence the devil strives so hard with sinners, in order that, having lost divine grace, they may also lose devotion to Mary. Sarah, seeing Isaac playing with Ishmael, who was teaching him evil habits, asked Abraham to send him away, and his mother Agar also: "Cast out this bond-woman and her son."[7368] She was not satisfied that the son alone should leave the house without the mother, fearing lest the son would come to visit his mother, and thus continue to frequent the house. In like manner, the devil is not satisfied with seeing Jesus cast out from a soul, if he does not see the mother also cast out: "Cast out this bond-woman and her son." Otherwise he fears that the mother, by her intercession, may again obtain the return of her son. And he has cause to fear, for as the learned Father Paciucchelli remarks: He who is faithful in honoring the mother of God, through Mary, will soon receive him.[7369] Therefore rightly was the devotion to our Lady called by St. Ephrem: The passport of escape from hell: "Charta libertatis."[7370] The divine mother was also named by him: The protectress of the condemned: "Patrocinatrix damnatorum." And with truth St. Bernard says, that Mary is neither wanting in the power nor the will to save us.[7371] Not in the power, because it is impossible that her prayers should not be heard, as St Antoninus asserts;[7372] and St. Bonaventure says also, that her requests cannot be unavailing, but obtain for her what she wishes: Quod quærit invenit et frustrari non potest.[7373] Not in the will to save us, for Mary is our mother, and desires our salvation more than we desire it ourselves. If this is then true, how can it ever happen that a servant of Mary should be lost? He may be a sinner, but if, with perseverance and a desire for amendment, he commends himself to this good mother, she will take care to obtain for him light to guide him out of his bad state, contrition for his sins, perseverance in goodness, and finally a good death. And is there any mother who would not rescue her child from death, if she could do it by praying his judge for mercy? And can we belive that Mary, the most loving mother possible to her servants, would fail to rescue one of them from eternal death, when she can do it so easily?

Ah, devout reader, let us thank the Lord if we find that he has given us the love of the queen of heaven, and confidence in her; for God, as St. John

Damascene says, does not grant this grace except to those whom he wishes to save. These the beautiful words of the saint, with which he would quicken his own and our hope: Oh mother of God, if I place my confidence in thee I shall be saved. If I am under thy protection, I have nothing to fear, because to be thy servant is to have certain arms of salvation, which God only grants to those whom he will save.[7374] Hence Erasmus thus salutes the Virgin: Hail, terror of hell! hail, hope of Christians! confidence in thee secures salvation.[7375]

Oh, how much it grieves the devil to see a soul persevering in its devotion to the divine mother! We read in the life of Father Alphonsus Alverez, who had a special devotion to Mary, that being in prayer, and finding himself tormented by impure temptations with which the devil afflicted him, the enemy said to him: Quit thy devotion to Mary, and I will cease to tempt thee.

The Lord revealed to St. Catherine of Sienna, as we read in Blosius, that he, in his goodness, had granted to Mary, from love to his only begotten Son, whose mother she is, that not even one sinner, who commends himself devoutly to her, should be the prey of hell.[7376] The Prophet David, too, prayed to be rescued from hell, for the honor in which he held Mary: "I have loved, oh Lord, the beauty of thy house; take not away my soul with the wicked."[7377] He says of thy house, "Domus tuæ," because Mary was, indeed, that house of God, which he himself, when he became man, built on this earth for his habitation, and for the place of his rest, as we read in Proverbs: Wisdom hath built herself a house.[7378] No, he surely will not be lost, says St. Ignatius, the martyr, who is constant in his devotion to this virgin mother.[7379] And this is confirmed by St. Bonaventure, who says: Oh Lady, those who love thee enjoy great peace in this life, and in the other they shall not see eternal death.[7380] No, for it never did, and never will happen, as the devout Blosius assures us, that an humble and constant servant of Mary will be lost.[7381]

Oh, how many would have been eternally condemned, or remained in obstinacy, if Mary had not interceded with her Son to exercise mercy! Thus says Thomas à Kempis.[7382] And it is the opinion of many doctors, especially of St. Thomas, that the divine mother has obtained from God a reprieve for many persons who had even died in mortal sin, and their return to life to do penance. We have many examples of this given by writers of good authority. Among others, Flodoard, who lived about the ninth century, narrates, in his chronicles,[7383] that one Adelman, a deacon, who appeared to be dead, was about to be buried, when he returned to life, and said, that he had seen the place in hell to which he had already been condemned, but that, through the intercession of the blessed Virgin, he had been sent back to earth to do penance. Surius also relates, that a Roman citizen, named Andrew, had died without doing penance, and that Mary had obtained his return to life that he might procure pardon.[7384] Pelbart, moreover, relates, that in his time, when the Emperor Sigismund was crossing the Alps with his army, a voice was heard, proceeding from a dead body, of which only the bones remained, asking for confession, and saying, that the mother of God, to whom he had been devoted whilst he was a soldier, had obtained for him that he should live in those bones until he had made his confession. Having confessed, he died.[7385] These and similar examples must not serve as encouragement for some rash person who would live in sin, in the hope that Mary would free him from hell, even if he should die in sin; for as it would be a great folly to throw one's self into a well, in the hope that Mary would save us from death, because the Virgin has rescued some persons under similar circumstances; thus a greater folly would it be for one to run the risk of dying in sin, on the presumption that the holy Virgin would rescue him from hell. But these examples should serve to strengthen our confidence by the consideration, that if the intercession of this divine mother could deliver those from hell—even those who have died in sin—how much more will it prevent those from falling into hell who in life have recourse to her with the intention to amend and serve her faithfully?

Then, oh our mother, let us say with St. Germanus: What will become of us who are sinners, but who wish to amend and have recourse to thee, who art the life of Christians?[7386] Let us, oh Lady, hear what St. Anselm says of thee, that he will not be lost for whom thou hast once offered thy prayers.[7387] Pray, then, for us, and we shall be saved from hell. Who will tell me, says Richard of Victor, that when I am presented at the divine tribunal, the Judge will not be favorable to me, if I shall have thee to defend my cause, oh mother of mercy?[7388] And the blessed Henry Suso declared, that he had placed his soul in the care of Mary, and he said, that if the Judge wished to condemn him, he would have the sentence pass through the hands of Mary.[7389] For he hoped that when the sentence of condemnation should fall into the kind hands of the Virgin, its execution would certainly be prevented. I ask and hope the same for myself, oh my most holy queen. Whence I will always repeat with St. Bonaventure: Oh Lady, in thee I have placed all my hopes, therefore I securely hope not to be lost, but safe in heaven to praise and love thee forever.[7390]

EXAMPLE

In the year 1604 there lived in a city of Flanders two young students, who, instead of attending to their studies, gave themselves up to excesses and dissipation. One night, having gone to the house of a woman of ill fame, one of them, named Richard, after some time returned home, but the other remained. Richard having gone home was undressing to go to rest, when he remembered that he had not recited that day, as usual, some “Hail Marys.” He was oppressed with sleep and very weary, yet he roused himself and recited them, although without devotion, and only half awake. He then went to bed, and having just fallen asleep, he heard a loud knocking at the door, and immediately after, before he had time to open it, he saw before him his companion, with a hideous and ghastly appearance. “Who are you?” he said to him. “Do you not know me?” answered the other. “But what has so changed you? you seem like a demon.” “Alas!” exclaimed this poor wretch, “I am damned.” “And how is this?” “Know,” he said, “that when I came out of that infamous house, a devil attacked me and strangled me. My body lies in the middle of the street, and my soul is in hell. Know that my punishment would also have been yours, but the blessed Virgin, on account of those few ‘Hail Marys’ said in her honor, has saved you. Happy will it be for you, if you know how to avail yourself of this warning, that the mother of God sends you through me.” After these words he opened his cloak, showed the fire and serpents that were consuming him, and then disappeared. Then the youth, bursting into a flood of tears, threw himself with his face on the ground, to thank Mary, his deliverer, and while he was revolving in his mind a change of life, he hears the matin bell of a neighboring Franciscan Monastery. “It is there,” he exclaimed, “that God calls me to do penance.” He went immediately to the convent to beg the fathers to receive him.

Knowing how bad his life had been, they objected. But after he had related the circumstance which had brought him there, weeping bitterly all the while, two of the fathers went out to search in the street, and actually found there the dead body of his companion, having the marks of strangulation, and black as a coal. Whereupon the young man was received. Richard from that time led an exemplary life. He went into India to preach the faith; from thence passed to Japan, and finally had the good fortune and received the grace of dying a martyr for Jesus Christ, by being burned alive.[7391]

PRAYER

Oh Mary! oh my most dear mother! in what an abyss of evil I should find myself, if thou, with thy kind hand, hadst not so often preserved me! Yea, how many years should I already have been in hell, if thou, with thy powerful prayers, hadst not rescued me! My grievous sins were hurrying me there; divine justice had already condemned me; the raging demons were waiting to execute the sentence; but thou didst appear, oh mother, not invoked nor asked by me, and hast saved me. Oh my dear deliverer, what return can I make thee for so much grace and so much love? Thou hast overcome the hardness of my heart, and hast drawn me to love thee and confide in thee. And oh, into what an abyss of evils I afterwards should have fallen, if thou, with thy kind hand, hadst not so many times protected me from the dangers into which I was on the brink of falling! Continue, oh my hope, continue to save me from hell, but first of all from the sins into which I might again fall. Do not permit that I shall have to curse thee in hell. My beloved Lady, I love thee, and how can thy goodness endure to see one of thy servants who loves thee, lost? Ah, obtain for me the grace to be no longer ungrateful to thee and to my God, who for love of thee hath granted me so many favors. Oh Mary, what dost thou say to me? Shall I be lost? I shall be lost if I leave thee. But who will any more venture to forsake thee? Shall I ever forget thy love for me? Thou, after God, art the love of my soul. I dare live no longer without loving thee. I bless thee! I love thee! and I hope that I shall always love thee in time and in eternity, oh creature most beautiful! most holy! most sweet! most amiable of all creatures in this world! Amen.

SECTION II

MARY ASSISTS HER SERVANTS IN PURGATORY

Too happy are the servants of this most kind mother, since not only in this world they are aided by her, but also in purgatory they are assisted and consoled by her protection. For succor being there more needed, because they are in torment and cannot help themselves, so much the more does this mother of mercy strive to help them. St. Bernardine of Sienna says, that in that prison of souls who are spouses of Jesus Christ, Mary has a certain dominion and plenitude of power to relieve them, as well as deliver them from their pains.[7392]

And, in the first place, as to relieving them, the same saint, applying the words of Ecclesiasticus: I have walked in the waves of the sea: “In fluctibus maris ambulavi,”[7393] adds, visiting and relieving the necessities and sufferings of my servants, who are my children.[7394] St. Bernardine says, that the pains of purgatory are called waves, because they are transitory, unlike the pains of hell, which never end: and they are called waves of the sea, because they are very bitter pains. The servants of Mary tormented by those pains are often visited and succored by her. See, then, how important it is, says Novarino, to be a servant of this good Lady; for she never forgets such when they are suffering in those flames. And although Mary succors all the souls in purgatory, yet she always obtains more indulgences and alleviations for those who have been especially devoted to her.[7395]

This divine mother, in her revelations to St. Bridget, said: “I am the mother of all the souls in purgatory; and all the sufferings which they merit for the sins committed in life are every hour, while they remain there, alleviated in some measure by my prayers.”[7396] This kind mother sometimes condescends even to enter into that holy prison, to visit and console these her afflicted children. I have penetrated into the bottom of the deep: “Profundum abyssi penetravi,” as we read in Ecclesiasticus;[7397] and St. Bonaventure, applying these words, adds: I have penetrated the depth of this abyss, that is, of purgatory, to relieve by my presence those holy souls.[7398] Oh, how kind and beneficent is the holy Virgin to those who are suffering in purgatory! says St. Vincent Ferrer; through her they receive continual consolation and refreshment.[7399]

And what other consolation have they in their sufferings than Mary, and the help of this mother of mercy? St. Bridget one day heard Jesus saying to his mother: “Thou art my mother, thou art the mother of mercy, thou art the consoler of those who are in purgatory.”[7400] And the blessed Virgin herself said to St. Bridget, that as a poor sick person, suffering and deserted on his bed, feels himself refreshed by some word of consolation, so those souls feel themselves consoled in hearing only her name.[7401] The name alone of Mary, a name of hope and salvation, which these beloved children often invoke in that prison, is for them a great comfort. But, then, says Novarino, the loving mother, on hearing herself invoked by them, adds her prayers to God, by which these souls receive comfort, and find their burning pains cooled as if by dew from heaven.[7402]

But not only does Mary console and succor her servants in purgatory; she also releases them from this prison, and delivers them by her intercession. From the day of her glorious assumption, in which that prison is said to have been emptied,[7403] as Gerson writes; and Novarino confirms this by saying, that many weighty authors relate that Mary, when about to ascend to paradise, asked this favor of her Son, that she might take with her all the souls that were then in purgatory;[7404] from that time, says Gerson, the blessed Virgin has possessed the privilege of freeing her servants from those pains. And this also is positively asserted by St. Bernardine, who says that the blessed Virgin has the power of delivering souls from purgatory by her prayers and the application of her merits, especially if they have been devoted to her.[7405] And Novarino says the same thing, believing that by the merits of Mary, not only the torments of these souls are assuaged, but also abridged, the time of their purgation being shortened by her intercession:[7406] and for this it is enough that she presents herself to pray for them.

St. Peter Damian relates,[7407] that a certain lady, named Marozia, after death, appeared to her godmother, and told her that on the day of the Assumption of Mary she had been released by her from purgatory, with a multitude of souls exceeding in number the whole population of Rome. St. Denis the Carthusian relates, that on the festivals of the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Mary descends into purgatory, accompanied by troops of angels, and releases many souls from their torments.[7408] And

Novarino believes that the same thing happens on every solemn festival of the holy Virgin.[7409]

Every one has heard of the promise made by Mary to Pope John, to whom she appeared, and ordered him to make known to all those who should wear the sacred scapular of Carmel, that on the Saturday after their death they should be released from purgatory. And this was proclaimed by the same pontiff, as Father Crasset relates,[7410] in a bull which he published. It was also confirmed by Alexander V., Clement VII., Pius V., Gregory XIII., and Paul V., who, in 1612, in a bull said: “That Christians may piously believe that the blessed Virgin will aid by her continual intercession, by her merits and special protection, after death, and principally on Saturday, which is a day consecrated by the Church to the blessed Virgin, the souls of the members of the confraternity of holy Mary of Mount Carmel, who shall have departed this life in the state of grace, worn the scapular, observing chastity according to their state of life, recited the office of the Virgin, and if they have not been able to recite it, shall have observed the fasts of the Church, abstaining from flesh-meat on Wednesdays, except on Christmas-day.” And in the solemn office of the feast of holy Mary of Mount Carmel, we read that it is piously believed, that the holy Virgin, with a mother’s love consoles the members of the confraternity of Mount Carmel in purgatory, and by her intercession conducts them to their heavenly country.[7411]

Why should we not also hope for the same graces and favors, if we are devoted to this good mother? And if with more special love we serve her, why cannot we hope to obtain the grace of going immediately after death to paradise, without entering into purgatory? as we read that the holy Virgin said to the blessed Godfrey, through brother Abondo, in these words: “Go and tell brother Godfrey to advance in virtue, for thus he will be a child of my Son, and mine also; and when his soul quits the body, I will not permit it to go to purgatory, but I will take it and present it to my Son.”[7412] And if we would assist the holy souls in purgatory, let us endeavor to remember them in all our prayers to the blessed Virgin, applying to them especially the holy rosary, which procures for them great relief, as we read in the following example.

EXAMPLE

Father Eusebius Nierembergh relates,[7413] that there lived in the city of Aragona a girl, named Alexandra who, being noble and very beautiful, was greatly loved by two young men. Through jealousy, they one day fought and killed each other. Their enraged relatives, in return, killed the poor young girl, as the cause of so much trouble, cut off her head, and threw her into a well. A few days after, St. Dominic was passing through that place, and, inspired by the Lord, approached the well, and said: “Alexandra, come forth,” and immediately the head of the deceased came forth, placed itself on the edge of the well, and prayed St. Dominic to hear its confession. The saint heard its confession, and also gave it communion, in presence of a great concourse of persons who had assembled to to witness the miracle. Then, St. Dominic ordered her to speak and tell why she had received that grace. Alexandra answered, that when she was beheaded, she was in a state of mortal sin, but that the most holy Mary, on account of the rosary, which she was in the habit of reciting, had preserved her in life. Two days the head retained its life upon the edge of the well, in the presence of all, and then the soul went to purgatory. But fifteen days after, the soul of Alexandra appeared to St. Dominic, beautiful and radiant as a star, and told him, that one of the principal sources of relief to the souls in purgatory is the rosary which is recited for them; and that, as soon as they arrive in paradise, they pray for those who apply to them these powerful prayers. Having said this, St. Dominic saw that happy soul ascending in triumph to the kingdom of the blessed.

PRAYER

Oh Queen of heaven and of earth, oh mother of the Lord of the world, oh Mary, creature most great, most exalted, most amiable, it is true that many on the earth do not love thee and do not know thee; but there are innumerable angels and saints in heaven who love and praise thee continually. On this earth, too, how many souls burn with love of thee, and live enamored of thy goodness! Ah, if I, too, might love thee, my most lovely Lady! Oh, that I might always be engaged in serving thee, in praising thee, in honoring thee, and in striving to awaken love of thee in others. A God hath been enamored of thee, who, by thy beauty, if I may so speak, hast drawn him from the bosom of the eternal Father, to come upon the earth and become man and thy Son; and I, a miserable worm, shall I not be enamored of thee? Yes, my most sweet mother, I also will love thee, love thee much, and do all in my power to make thee loved by others. Accept, then, oh Mary, the desire I have to love thee, and help me to fulfil it: I know that thy lovers are regarded with much favor by thy God. Next to his own glory, he desires nothing more than thy glory, in seeing thee honored and loved by all. From thee, oh Lady, I await all my blessings. Thou must obtain the pardon of all my sins, thou must obtain for me perseverance, succor in death, deliverance from purgatory, in a word, thou must conduct me to paradise. All this thy lovers hope from thee, and they are not deceived. This I also hope, who love thee with all my heart, and above all things next to God.

SECTION III

MARY CONDUCTS HER SERVANTS TO PARADISE

OH, what a signal mark of predestination have the servants of Mary! The holy Church applies to this divine mother the words of Ecclesiasticus, and makes her say for the comfort of her servants: “In all these I sought rest, and I shall abide in the inheritance of the Lord.”[7414] Cardinal Hugo, commenting on this, remarks; Blessed is he in whose habitation the holy Virgin found rest: “Beatus in cujus domo beatæ Virgo requiem invenerit.” Mary, through the love she bears to all, seeks to make devotion to her prevail in all hearts. Many do not receive it or do not preserve it; blessed is he who receives it and preserves it. In the inheritance of the Lord will I abide; that is, adds the learned Paciucchelli, in those who are the inheritance of the Lord.[7415] Devotion to the Virgin abides in all those who are the inheritance of the Lord, that is, who will be in heaven praising him eternally. Mary continues in the passage above cited: “He that made me, rested in my tabernacle, and he said to me: Let thy dwelling be in Jacob, and thy inheritance in Israel, and take root in my elect.”[7416] My Creator has condescended to come and rest in my bosom, and has willed that I should inhabit in the hearts of all the elect, whom Jacob prefigured, and who are the inheritance of the Virgin; and he has ordained that devotion to me and confidence in me should take root in the hearts of the elect.

Oh, how many would have failed of being among the blessed in heaven, if Mary, by her powerful intercession, had not conducted them thither! “I made that in the heavens there should rise light that never faileth;”[7417] thus Cardinal Hugo puts into her mouth these words of the same chapter of Ecclesiasticus: I have made to shine in heaven as many eternal lights as I have devoted servants. Whence the same author adds, commenting on this text: Many saints are in heaven by her intercession, who never would have been there without it.[7418] St Bonaventure says, that the gate of heaven will be opened to receive all those who trust in the protection of Mary.[7419] Hence St. Ephrem called devotion to the divine mother the opening of paradise.[7420] And the devout Blosius, addressing the Virgin, says to her: Lady, to thee are committed the keys and the treasure of the heavenly kingdom.[7421] And, therefore, we should continually supplicate her in the words of St. Ambrose: Open to us, oh Virgin, heaven, for thou hast the keys of it.[7422] Nay, thou art even the gate of it, as the holy Church names thee, “Janua cœli.”

For this reason the great mother is also called by the holy Church: Star of the sea: “Ave, Maris Stella.” For as navigators, says the angelic St. Thomas, are guided to port by means of a star, thus Christians are guided to heaven by means of Mary.[7423]

She is for this reason, finally, called by St. Peter Damian, the ladder of heaven; “Scala cœlestis;” for, as the saint says, by means of Mary, God has descended from heaven to earth, that by the same, or by her, men might merit to ascend from earth to heaven.[7424] And for this reason, oh Lady, says St. Anastasius, thou art full of grace, that thou mightest be made the way of our salvation, and the ascent to the celestial country.[7425] St. Bernard calls the blessed Virgin: The vehicle to heaven; “Vehiculum ad cœlum.” And St. John the Geometrician salutes her: Hail, most noble chariot: “Salve clarissime currus;” by which her servants are conducted to heaven. And, St Bonaventure addresses her thus: Blessed are those who know thee, oh mother of God! for to know thee is the path to immortal life, and to publish thy virtues is the way to eternal salvation.[7426]

In the Franciscan chronicles[7427] it is related of brother Leo, that he once saw a red ladder, upon which Jesus Christ was standing, and a white one, upon which stood his holy mother. He saw persons attempting to ascend the red ladder; they ascended a few steps and then fell; they ascended again, and again fell. Then they were exhorted to ascend the white ladder, and on that he saw them succeed, for the blessed Virgin offered them her hand, and they arrived in that manner safe in paradise. St. Denis the Carthusian asks: Who will ever be saved? Who will ever reign in heaven? They are saved, and will certainly reign, he himself answers, for whom this queen of mercy offers her prayers.[7428] And this Mary herself affirms: By me kings reign: "Per me reges regnant."[7429] Through my intercession souls reign first in the mortal life on this earth, by governing their passions, and then they go to reign eternally in heaven, where, as St. Augustine declares, all are kings: "Quot cives tot reges." Mary, in a word, as Richard of St. Laurence says, is the mistress of paradise, since there she commands according to her pleasure, and introduces into it whom she will. Therefore, applying to her the words of Ecclesiasticus, he adds: "My power is in Jerusalem:"[7430] I command what I will, and introduce whom I will.[7431] And as she is the mother of the Lord of paradise, she is with reason, also, says Rupert, the Lady of paradise. She possesses, by right, the whole kingdom of her Son.[7432]

This divine mother, with her powerful prayers and assistance, has obtained for us paradise, if we place no obstacle to our entrance there.[7433] Wherefore those who are servants of Mary, and for whom Mary intercedes, are as secure of paradise as if they were already there.[7434] To serve Mary and to belong to her court, adds St. John of Damascus, is the greatest honor we can attain; for to serve the queen of heaven is to reign already in heaven, and to live in obedience to her commands is more than to reign.[7435] On the other hand, he says that those who do not serve Mary will not be saved; whilst those who are deprived of the support of this great mother, are deprived of the succor of the Son, and of all the celestial court.[7436]

Forever praised be the infinite goodness of our God who has constituted Mary our advocate in heaven, that she, as mother of the judge and mother of mercy may efficaciously by her intercession, order the great affair of our eternal salvation. This sentiment is taken from St. Bernard.[7437] And James the Monk, esteemed a doctor among the Greek fathers, says that God has made Mary a bridge of salvation, by which we are enabled to pass over the waves of this world, and reach the blessed port of paradise.[7438] Hence St. Bonaventure exclaims: Hear, oh ye people who desire paradise; serve and honor Mary, and you will certainly find life eternal.[7439]

Not even those who deserve hell should despair of attaining the kingdom of the blessed, if they faithfully devote themselves to the service of this queen. Sinners, says St. Germanus, have sought to find God by thy means, oh Mary, and have been saved![7440] Richard of St. Laurence remarks that Mary is said by St. John to be crowned with stars.[7441] On the other hand, in the sacred Canticles, the Virgin is said to be crowned with wild beasts, lions and panthers: “Come from Libanus, my spouse, come from Libanus, come; thou shalt be crowned from the dens of the lions, from the mountains of the leopards.”[7442] What does this signify? Richard answers that those wild beasts are those sinners, who, through the favor and intercession of Mary, have become stars of paradise, which are a crown more worthy of this queen of mercy, than all the material stars of heaven.[7443] The servant of the Lord, sister Seraphina da Capri, as we read in her life, in her prayes to the most holy Virgin during the Novena of her assumption, asked of her the conversion of a thousand sinners; but as she feared that her demands were too extravagant, the Virgin appeared to her, and reproved her for this her vain fear, saying to her: “Why do you fear? am I not powerful enough to obtain for thee from my Son the salvation of a thousand sinners? Behold them, I have already obtained it.” She showed her the soul of innumerable sinners who had merited hell, and had afterwards been saved by her intercession, and were already enjoying eternal bliss.

It is true that in this life no one can be certain of his eternal salvation: “Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred, but all things are kept uncertain for the time to come.”[7444] David asked of God: Oh Lord, who will be saved? “Who shall dwell in thy tabernacle?”[7445] St. Bonaventure, writing on these words, answers: Oh sinners, let us follow the footsteps of Mary, and cast ourselves at her blessed feet, and let us not leave her until she blesses us, for her blessing will secure to us paradise.[7446] It is enough, oh Lady, says St. Anselm, that thou dost wish to save us, for then we cannot but be saved.[7447] St. Antoninus adds, that souls protected by

Mary are necessarily saved; those upon whom she turns her eyes are necessarily justified and glorified.[7448]

With reason, says St. Ildephonsus, the most holy Virgin predicted that all generations would call her blessed;[7449] for all the elect by means of Mary obtain eternal blessedness.[7450] Thou, oh great mother, art the beginning, the middle, and the end of our felicity, says St. Methodius.[7451] The beginning, because Mary obtains for us the pardon of our sins; the middle, because she obtains for us perseverance in divine grace; the end, because she finally obtains for us paradise. By thee, St. Bernard continues, heaven has been opened—by thee hell has been emptied—by thee paradise has been restored—by thee, in a word, eternal life has been given to many sinners who have merited eternal death.[7452]

But above all, we should be encouraged in the certain hope of paradise, by the rich promise which Mary has herself made to those who honor her, and especially to those who, by their words and their example, strive to make her known and honored among others: “They that work by me shall not sin; they that explain me shall have life everlasting.”[7453] Oh happy, then, are they, says St. Bonaventure, who gain the favor of Mary! they will be welcomed by the blessed as being already their companions; and whosoever bears the seal of a servant of Mary, has his name already written in the book of life.[7454] Of what avail is it, then, to trouble ourselves with the opinions of the schoolmen, on the question, whether predestination to glory precedes or follows the foreknowledge of merits? Whether or not our names are written in the book of life? If we are true servants of Mary and obtain her protection, we certainly are written there; for, as St. John of Damascus says, God gives the grace of devotion to his holy mother only to those whom he will save; in conformity with this, as the Lord seems to have declared expressly through St. John: “He that shall overcome, I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God.”[7455] And who is this city of God but Mary? as St. Gregory explains, commenting on this passage of David: “Glorious things are said of thee, oh city of God.”[7456]

We may, then, well say with St. Paul: “Having this seal, the Lord knoweth who are his.”[7457] Whosoever carries the seal of a servant of Mary, is acknowledged by God as his own. We read in St. Bernard, that devotion to the mother of God is the most certain sign that we shall obtain eternal salvation.[7458] And the blessed Alanus, speaking of the “Hail Mary,” says that he who often invokes the Virgin with this angelical salutation, has a very certain sign of predestination.[7459] And again he says of perseverance in the daily recitation of the holy rosary: Let it be to thee a most probable sign of eternal salvation, if thou dost perseveringly honor the blessed Virgin by daily reciting her rosary.[7460] Father Nierembergh still further remarks, that the servants of the mother of God not only are more privileged and favored in this world, but also in heaven will be more especially honored. And he adds, that in heaven they will have a peculiarly rich device and livery, by which they will be known as servants of the queen of heaven and as the people of her court, according to those words of Proverbs: “All her domestics are clothed with double garments.”[7461]

St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi saw a small vessel in the midst of the sea, in which all the servants of Mary had taken shelter; she herself steering it, safely conducted them to port. By this the saint understood that they who live under the protection of Mary, are rescued, in the midst of all the dangers of this life, from the shipwreck of sin, and from damnation, for by her they are guided in safety to the port of paradise. Let us, then, strive to enter this blessed little vessel of the mantle of Mary, and there let us dwell secure of the kingdom of heaven; for the Church sings, “Holy mother of God, all those who are to be partakers of eternal joy dwell with thee, and live under thy protection.”[7462]

EXAMPLE

Cesarius relates,[7463] that a certain Cistercian monk, who was a devoted servant of our blessed Lady, desired very earnestly a visit from his dear Lady, and was praying her continually to grant him this favor. He went one night into the garden, and while he stood there looking up to heaven, breathing forth to his queen in ardent sighs his desire to see her, a beautiful and radiant virgin descended, and said to him: “Thomas, wouldst thou like to hear me sing?” “Certainly,” he answered, and then she sang so sweetly that it seemed to the devout religious that he was in paradise. Having finished her song, she disappeared, leaving him absorbed with an ardent desire to know who it could have been; and, soon after, another extremely beautiful virgin appeared to him, who, like the first, allowed him the pleasure of hearing her sing. He could not refrain from asking this one who she was, and the virgin answered: “She whom you saw a little while ago was Catherine, and I am Agnes, both martyrs for Jesus Christ, sent by our Lady to console you. Give thanks to Mary, and prepare for a greater favor.” Having said this she disappeared, but left the religious with a greater hope of finally seeing his queen. Nor was he deceived, for shortly after he saw a great light and felt a new joy flowing into his heart, for in the midst of that light the mother of God appeared to him surrounded by angels, and of a beauty far surpassing that of the other two saints who had appeared to him. She said to him: “My dear servant and son, I have been pleased with the devotion which you have offered me, and have graciously heard your prayers: you have desired to see me; look on me, and I will also sing to you.” Then the most holy Virgin began to sing with so great sweetness, that the devout religious lost his senses, and fell with his face upon the ground. The matin-bell sounded, the monks assembled, and not seeing Thomas, searched for him in his cell and other parts of the convent, and at last going into the garden they found him there, apparently lifeless. The superior comanded him to tell what had befallen him. And coming to himself, by the power of obedience, he related all the favors which the divine mother had bestowed upon him.

PRAYER

Oh queen of paradise! mother of holy love! for thou art of all creatures the most lovely, the most beloved of God and his first lover; ah, suffer the vilest and most ungrateful sinner on the earth to love thee, who sees himself released from hell by thy intercession, and without any merit of his own so blessed by thee, that he is enamored of thy goodness. I would wish if I could, to make known to all men who do not know thee, how worthy thou art to be loved, that all might love and honor thee. I would willingly die for love of thee, in defending thy virginity, thy dignity as mother of God, and thy immaculate conception; if it were ever needful for me to die in defence of these thy great privileges. Oh my most beloved mother, graciously accept this my affection, and do not permit that one of thy servants, who loves thee, should ever become an enemy of thy God, whom thou lovest so much.

Ah, unhappy me, such once was I when I offended my Lord. But then, oh Mary, I did not love thee, and I sought little to be loved by thee. Now, after the grace of God, I desire nothing else than but to love thee, and to be loved by thee. I do not despair of this on account of my past offences, for I know that thou, oh most benign and grateful Lady, dost not disdain to love even the most miserable sinners who love thee, and never dost allow thyself to be outdone in love by any one. Oh most lovely queen, I wish to go to thee in paradise, there to love thee. There, at thy feet, I shall better know how amiable thou art, and how much thou hast done to save me; therefore I shall love thee there with greater love, and shall love thee eternally, without the fear that I shall ever cease to love thee. Oh Mary, I have the certain hope of being saved through thee. Pray to Jesus for me. I have no other wish. It is thine to save me; thou art my hope. I will always exclaim, Oh Mary, my hope, thou must save me.

Chapter IX

O CLEMENS! O PIA!

OH CLEMENT! OH MERCIFUL!

HOW GREAT IS THE CLEMENCY AND MERCY OF MARY

ST. BERNARD, speaking of the great mercy of Mary for us poor sinners, says that she is the very Land promised by God, flowing with milk and honey.[7464] St. Leo says, that to the Virgin has been given such bowels of compassion, that she not only merits to be called merciful, but should be called mercy itself.[7465] And St. Bonaventure, considering that Mary was made the mother of God for the sake of us sinners, and that to her was committed the charge of dispensing mercies; and considering, moreover, the great care she has for all those in misery, which renders her so rich in compassion, that she appears to desire nothing else than to relieve the necessitous, says, that when he looked on Mary, it seemed to him that he no longer beheld the divine justice, but only the divine mercy with which Mary is filled.[7466]

In a word, the mercy of Mary is so great, that as Guerric the Abbot says: Her bowels of love can never for a moment cease to bring forth for us the fruits of mercy.[7467] And what, exclaims St. Bernard, can flow but mercy from a fountain of mercy? “Quid de fonte pietatis nisi pietas?”[7468] For this reason Mary was called the olive-tree: As a fair olive-tree in the plains: “Quasi oliva speciosa in campis.”[7469] For, as the olive-tree produces nothing but oil, the symbol of mercy, thus from the hands of Mary nothing but graces and mercies proceed. Hence, justly, says the venerable Louis da Ponte, is Mary called the mother of oil, since she is the mother of mercy.[7470] If, then, we have recourse to this mother, and ask of her the oil of her mercy, we cannot fear that she will refuse us, as the wise virgins refused the foolish, answering: “Lest there be not enough for us and for you.”[7471] No, for she is, indeed, rich in that oil of mercy, as St. Bonaventure remarks: Mary abounds in the oil of mercy: “Maria plena oleo pietatis.”[7472] She is called by the Church not only prudent, but most prudent, and by this we may understand, as Hugo of St. Victor says, that Mary is so full of grace and mercy that there is enough for all without exhausting her.[7473]

But why, I would ask, is it said that this fair olive is in the midst of the plains, and not rather in a garden surrounded by walls and hedges? Cardinal Hugo answers to this question: In order that all may easily see her, and thus may easily have recourse to her, to obtain relief for their necessities.[7474] St. Antoninus confirms this beautiful thought, when he says: That as all can go and gather the fruit of an olive-tree that is exposed in the open fields, so all, both the just and sinners, can have recourse to Mary to obtain mercy.[7475] And then the saint adds: Oh how many sentences of punishment have been revoked through the merciful prayers of this most holy Virgin, in favor of sinners who have had recourse to her![7476] And what more secure refuge can we find, says the devout Thomas à Kempis, than the compassionate heart of Mary? There the poor find shelter; the sick medicine; the afflicted consolation; the doubtful counsel; the abandoned help.[7477]

Wretched should we be, if we had not this mother of mercy, mindful and solicitous to help us in our miseries! “Where there is no wife,” says the Holy Spirit, “he mourneth that is in want.”[7478] This wife, remarks St. John Damascene, is certainly Mary, without whom the sick man suffers and mourns.[7479] So, indeed, it is, since God has ordained that all graces should be dispensed by the prayers of Mary: where these are wanting, there is no hope of mercy, as our Lord signified to St. Bridget, saying to her: “Unless Mary interposes by her prayers, there is no hope of mercy.”[7480]

But perhaps we fear that Mary does not see or pity our miseries. Oh, no! she sees them and feels them more than we do ourselves. And who among the saints can be found, says St. Antoninus, who pities us in our miseries as Mary does?[7481] Hence, wherever she sees misery she cannot refrain from hastening to relieve it with her great compassion.[7482] Thus Richard of St. Victor remarks, and Mendoza confirms it by saying: Therefore, oh blessed Virgin, wherever thou seest misery, there thou dost pour forth thy mercies.[7483] And our good mother, as she herself declares, will never cease to exercise this office of mercy: And unto the world to come I shall not cease to be; and in the holy dwelling-place, I have ministered before him.[7484] Upon which words Cardinal Hugo remarks: I will not cease, says Mary, even to the end of the world, to succor men in their miseries, and to pray for sinners, that they may be saved and rescued from eternal misery.[7485]

Suetonius relates of the Emperor Titus, that he was so desirous to grant favors to those who asked them of him, that on those days when he had no opportunity of doing so, he would say, sorrowfully, I have lost a day: “Diem perdidi.” This day has been lost to me, because I have passed it without benefiting any one. Probably Titus said this more through vanity, or a desire for esteem, than through a movement of charity. But our Empress Mary, if a day should ever pass in which she did not confer some favor, would say it only because she is full of charity, and of a desire to do us good; for as Bernardine de Bustis says, she is more desirous to confer favors on us, than we are to receive them from her.[7486] And this same author adds, that when we have recourse to her, we shall always find her with her hands full of mercy and liberality.[7487]

Rebecca was the type of Mary, who when the servant of Abraham asked her for a little water, answered that she would give him water enough not only for himself, but for his camels also.[7488] Hence the devout St. Bernard addressing the blessed Virgin, says: Oh Lady, not to the servant of Abraham only, but also to his camels give from thy overflowing pitcher.[7489] By which he intends to say: Oh Lady, thou art merciful and more liberal than Rebecca, therefore thou dost not rest contented with dispensing the favors of thy unbounded compassion to the servants of Abraham alone by whom are meant the faithful servants of God, but thou dost bestow them also on the camels, who represent sinners. And, as Rebecca gave more than she was asked, so Mary bestows more than we pray for. The liberality of Mary, says Richard of St. Laurence, resembles the liberality of her Son, who always gives more than is asked, and is therefore named by St. Paul: “Rich to all that call upon him;”[7490] that is, giving abundantly his graces to all those that have recourse to him with their prayers. Hear the words of Richard: The bounty of Mary is like the bounty of her Son; she gives more than is asked.[7491] Hence a devout author, addressing the Virgin, says: Oh Lady, pray for me, for thou wilt ask favors for me with greater devotion than I can do; and thou wilt obtain from God graces greater by far than I can pray for.[7492]

When the Samaritans refused to receive Jesus Christ and his doctrine, St. James and St. John said to their Master: “Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” But the Saviour answered: “You know not of what spirit you are.”[7493] As if he had said: I am of so mild and merciful a spirit, that I have come from heaven to save, not to punish sinners, and would you wish to see them lost? What fire? What punishment? Be silent, speak to me no more of punishment, that is not my spirit. But we cannot doubt that Mary, whose spirit is in every thing so like that of her Son, is wholly inclined to exercise mercy; for, as she told St. Bridget, she is called the mother of mercy, and the mercy of God itself has made her so compassionate and sweet towards all.[7494] Wherefore Mary was seen by St. John clothed with the sun: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun.”[7495] Upon which passage St. Bernard remarks, addressing the Virgin: Thou hast clothed the sun, and art thyself clothed with it.[7496] Oh Lady, thou hast clothed the sun, the divine Word, with human flesh, but he hath clothed thee with his power and his mercy.

So compassionate, then, and kind is this queen, says St. Bernard, that when a sinner recommends himself to her mercy, she does not begin to examine his merits, and whether he is worthy or not of being heard, but she graciously hears all and succors them.[7497] Hence St. Idelbert remarks, that Mary is called fair as the moon: “Pulchra ut Luna:”[7498] because, as the moon illuminates and benefits the smallest bodies upon the earth, so Mary enlightens and helps the most unworthy sinners.[7499] And although the moon receives all her light from the sun, she moves more quickly than the sun; for, as a certain author remarks, what the sun does in a year, the moon does in a month.[7500] Hence, says St. Anselm: Our relief is sometimes more immediate when the name of Mary is invoked than when we invoke the name of Jesus.[7501] Wherefore Hugo of St. Victor tells us, that if by reason of our sins we fear to draw near to God, because he is an infinite majesty that we have offended, we should not hesitate to have recourse to Mary, because in her we shall find nothing to alarm us. She is indeed holy, immaculate, queen of the world, and mother of God; but she is of our flesh, and a child of Adam, like ourselves.[7502]

In a word, says St. Bernard, whatever appertains to Mary is full of grace and mercy; for she, as mother of mercy, has become all things to all, and by her great charity has made herself a debtor to the just and to sinners, and open to all the bowels of her compassion, that all may share it.[7503] As "the Devil." according to St. Peter, "goeth about seeking whom he may devour,"[7504] so, on the contrary, says Bernardine de Bustis, Mary goeth about seeking to whom she can give life and salvation.[7505]

We should understand that the protection of Mary, as St. Germanus says, is greater and more powerful than we can comprehend.[7506] And how is it that the same Lord, who was under the old law so severe in punishing, exercises so great mercy towards the greatest sinners? Thus asks the author del Pomerio;[7507] and he also answers: He does all this for the love and merits of Mary.[7508] Oh, how long since would the world have been destroyed, says St. Fulgentius, if Mary had not preserved it by her intercession![7509] But we may with confidence go to God, as St. Arnold Carnotensis asserts, and hope for every blessing, now that the Son is our mediator with the divine Father, and the mother with the Son. How can it be that the Father will refuse to hear graciously the Son, when he shows him the wounds he has received for sinners? And how can it be that the Son will not graciously hear the mother, when she shows him the breasts from which she has nourished us?[7510] St. Peter Chrysologus says with great energy, that this favored Virgin, having received God in her womb, demands in return, peace for the world, salvation for the lost, life for the dead.[7511]

Oh how many, exclaims the Abbot of Celles, who merits to be condemned by the divine justice, are saved by the mercy of Mary! for she is the treasure of God and the treasure of all graces; therefore it is that our salvation is in her hands.[7512] Let us always then have recourse to this mother of mercy, and confidently hope to be saved by means of her intercession; since she, as Bernardine de Bustis encourages us to believe, is our salvation, our life, our hope, our counsel, our refuge, our help.[7513] Mary is that very throne of grace, says St. Antoninus, to which the apostle exhorts us to have recourse with confidence, that we may obtain the divine mercy, with all needed help for our salvation.[7514] To the throne of grace, that is, to

Mary, as St. Antoninus remarks.[7515] Hence, Mary was called by St. Catherine of Sienna: The dispenser of divine mercy: "Administratrix misericordiæ."

Let us conclude, then, with the beautiful and sweet exclamation of St. Bernard upon the words: Oh clement, oh merciful, oh sweet Virgin Mary! "Oh clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria." Oh Mary, thou art clement to the unhappy, merciful to those who pray thee, sweet to those who love thee: clement to the penitent, merciful to the advancing, sweet to the perfect. Thou showest thyself clement by rescuing us from punishment, merciful by bestowing on us graces, sweet by giving thyself to those who seek thee.[7516]

EXAMPLE

Father Charles Bovius relates that in Domans, in France, lived a married man who had held a criminal connection with another woman. Now the wife being unable to endure this, continually besought God to punish the guilty parties; and one day in particular went to an altar of the blessed Virgin, which was in a certain church to implore vengeance upon the woman who had alienated her husband from her; and this very woman went also every day to the same altar, to repeat a "Hail Mary." One night the divine mother appeared in a dream to the wife, who, on seeing her, began her accustomed petition: "Justice, mother of God, justice." But the blessed Lady answered: "Justice! do you seek justice from me? Go and find others, to execute justice for you. It belongs not to me to do it for you. Be it known to you," she added, "that this very sinner offers every day a devotion in my honor, and that I cannot allow any sinner who does this, to suffer and be punished for his sins." The next day the wife went to hear mass in the above-named church of our Lady, and on coming out met her husband's friend; at the sight of her she began to reproach her and call her a sorceress, who had even enchanted with her sorceries the blessed Virgin. "Be silent," cried the people: "what are you saying?" "I be silent!" she answered: "what I say is only too true; this night the Virgin appeared to me; and when I implored justice of her, she answered me, that she could not grant it on account of a salutation which this wicked woman repeats daily in her honor." They asked the woman what salutation she repeated to the mother of God. She answered that it was the "Hail Mary;" and then on hearing that the blessed Virgin had dealt with her so mercifully in return for that trivial act of devotion, she cast herself on the ground before the sacred image, and there, in the presence of all the people, asked pardon for her scandalous life, and made a vow of perpetual continence. She afterwards put on a religious habit, built for herself a little cell near the church, where she retired, and persevered in continual penance until the day of her death.

PRAYER

Oh mother of mercy! since thou art so compassionate, and hast so great a desire to do good to us sinners, and to satisfy our demands, I, the most wretched of all men, to-day have recourse to thy mercy, that thou mayest grant my requests. Let others ask what they will, health of body, wealth, or temporal advantages; I come to ask of thee, oh Lady, those things which thou thyself dost most desire of me, and which are most comformable and most pleasing to thy sacred heart. Thou who wast so humble, obtain for me humility and love of contempt. Thou who wast so patient in the difficulties of this life, obtain for me patience in things contrary to my wishes. Thou who didst overflow with love to God, obtain for me the gift of a holy and pure love. Thou who wast all charity towards the neighbor, obtain for me charity towards all men, and especially towards those who are my enemies. Thou who wast wholly united to the divine will, obtain for me a perfect uniformity with the will of that God in all his dispositions concerning me. Thou, in a word, art the most holy of all creatures; oh Mary, obtain for me the grace to become a saint. Thy love is unfailing; thou canst and wilt obtain all things for me. Nothing, then, can hinder me from receiving thy graces but my neglect to invoke thee, or my want of confidence in thy intercession. But thou thyself must obtain for me the grace to seek thee, and this grace of confidence in thy intercession. These two greatest gifts I ask from thee—from thee will I receive them—from thee do I confidently hope for them. Oh Mary! Mary, my mother, my hope, my love, my life, my refuge, and my consolation. Amen.

Chapter X

O DULCIS VIRGO MARIA

OH SWEET VIRGIN MARY!

HOW SWEET IS THE NAME OF MARY IN LIFE AND IN DEATH!

THE great name of Mary, which was given to the divine mother, was not found on earth, neither was it invented by the mind or will of men, as were all other names that are in use among them; but it came from heaven, and was given to the Virgin by divine ordinance, as St. Jerome,[7517] St. Epiphanius[7518] St. Antoninus,[7519] and others attest. The name of Mary was drawn from the treasury of the divinity, as Richard of St. Laurence says:[7520] “De thesauro divinitatis Mariæ nomen evolvitur.” From the treasury of the divinity, oh Mary, came forth thy excellent and admirable name; for the Most Holy Trinity, the same author goes on to say, gave to thee this name, next to the name of thy Son, so superior to every name, and attached to it such majesty and power, that when it is uttered, all in heaven, earth, and hell must fall prostrate and venerate it.[7521] Among all the other privileges which the Lord has attached to the name of Mary, let us see how sweet he has made it to the servants of this most holy Lady in life as well as in death.

To begin with life, the holy anchorite, Honorius, says, that the name of Mary is full of all divine sweetness.[7522] And the glorious St. Anthony of Padua attributes to the name of Mary the same sweetness as St. Bernard attributed to the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus, said the latter, the name of Mary, said the former, is joy to the heart, honey to the mouth, melody to the ear of their devoted servants.[7523] It is related in the life of the venerable Father John Ancina, Bishop of Saluzzo, that when he pronounced the name of Mary, he experienced so great a sensible sweetness that he even tasted it on his lips. We also read that a certain woman in Cologne told the Bishop

Marsillius, that whenever she pronounced the name of Mary she perceived in her mouth a taste sweeter than honey. Marsillius made the trial, and he also experienced the same sweetness. We read in the holy Canticles, that at the Assumption of the Virgin, the angels three times asked her name: "Who is she that goeth up by the desert as a pillar of smoke?"[7524] "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising?"[7525] And in another: "Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights?"[7526] Richard of St. Laurence inquires why the angels so often asked the name of this queen, and answers: The sound of the name of Mary was so sweet to the angels, and they repeated the question that they might hear it repeated also.[7527]

But I do not hear speak of this sensible sweetness, since it is not commonly granted to all, but I speak of the salutary sweetness of consolation, love, joy, confidence, and strength, which the name of Mary universally gives to those who, with devotion, pronounce it. Speaking on this subject, Francone the Abbot says, that next to the holy name of Jesus, the name of Mary is so rich in blessings, that no other name is uttered on earth or in heaven from which devout souls receive so much grace, hope, and sweetness.[7528] For the name of Mary, he goes on to say, contains in itself something admirable, sweet, and divine, which, when it meets a friendly heart, breathes into it an odor of holy sweetness. And the wonder of this great name is, he concludes, that if heard a thousand times by the lovers of Mary, it is always heard as new, the sweetness they experience in hearing it spoken being always the same.[7529]

The blessed Henry Suso, also speaking of this sweetness, says, that in pronouncing the name of Mary, he felt his confidence so much increased, and his love so joyfully enkindled, that amidst the joy and tears with which he pronounced the beloved name, he thought his heart would have leaped from his mouth; and he affirmed that this most sweet name, as honeycomb, melted into the depths of his soul. Whereat he exclaims: Oh most sweet name! oh Mary, what must thou thyself be, if thy name alone is so lovely and sweet?

The enamored St. Bernard, too, addressing his good mother with tenderness, says to her: Oh great, oh merciful Mary, most holy Virgin, worthy of all praise, thy name is so sweet and lovely that it cannot be spoken without enkindling love to thee and to God in the heart of him who pronounces it; the thought of it alone is enough to console thy lovers, and inflame them with a far greater love to thee.[7530] If riches are a consolation to the poor, because by them they are relieved of their miseries, oh how much more, says Richard of St. Laurence, does thy name console us sinners, oh Mary; far more than the riches of earth it relieves us in the troubles of the present life.[7531]

In a word, thy name, oh mother of God, is full of grace and divine blessings, as St. Methodius says.[7532] And St. Bonaventure affirms that thy name cannot be pronounced but it brings some grace to him who devoutly utters it.[7533] So great is the virtue of thy name, oh most compassionate Virgin, says the Idiot, that no one can pronounce it, however hardened, however desponding may be his heart, and not find it wonderfully softened; for it is thou who dost console sinners with the hope of pardon and of grace.[7534] Thy most sweet name, according to St. Ambrose, is a sweet ointment, which breathes the fragrance of divine grace.[7535] The saint thus invokes the divine mother: May this oil of salvation descend into the depths of our soul; by which he intends to say: Oh Lady, remind us often to pronounce thy name with love and confidence; for thus to name thee, either is a sign that we already possess divine grace, or it is an earnest that we shall soon recover it.

For as Landolph of Saxony expresses it: The remembrance of thy name, oh Mary, consoles the afflicted, brings back the wanderer to the path of salvation, encourages the sinner, and saves him from despair;[7536] and Father Pelbart remarks, that as Jesus Christ by his five wounds has prepared for the world the remedy for its woes, thus also Mary, with her most holy name, which is composed of five letters, confers every day pardon upon sinners.[7537]

For this reason, the holy name of Mary in the sacred Canticles is compared to oil: Thy name is as oil poured out: “Oleum effusum nomen tuum.”[7538] The blessed Alanus, commenting on this passage, says: The glory of her name is compared to oil poured out. As oil heals the sick, diffuses odor, and kindles flame; thus the name of Mary heals sinners, rejoices hearts, and inflames them with divine love.[7539] Hence Richard of St. Laurence encourages sinners to invoke this great name, because that alone will be sufficient to cure all their maladies; adding, that there is no disease so malignant that it will not at once yield to the virtue of this name.[7540]

On the other hand, the devils, as Thomas à Kempis affirms, are in such fear of the queen of heaven that at the sound of her great name they flee from him who pronounces it as from burning fire.[7541] The Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget that there is no sinner living so cold in divine love, that if he invokes her holy name, with the resolution to amend, the devil will not instantly depart from him.[7542] And she at another time assured her of this, telling her that all the demons so greatly venerate and fear her name, that when they hear it pronounced they immediately release the soul which they held in their chains.[7543]

And as the rebel angels depart from sinners who invoke the name of Mary, thus, on the contrary, our Lady herself told St. Bridget, that the good angels draw more closely around those just souls who devoutly pronounce it.[7544] And St. Germanus assures us, that as breathing is a sign of life, so the frequent utterance of the name of Mary is a sign that we are already living in divine grace, or that we shall soon receive that life; for this powerful name is effectual to obtain help and life for him who devoutly invokes it.[7545] Finally, Richard of St. Laurence adds, that this admirable name is like a tower of strength, by taking shelter in which the sinner will be saved from death, since from this celestial tower the most abandoned sinners come forth securely defended and saved.[7546]

A tower of strength, thus continues the same Richard, which not only shields sinners from punishment, but also defends the just from the assaults of hell; and he adds: Next to the name of Jesus there is no name which gives such support, and through which so great salvation is bestowed upon men, as this great name of Mary.[7547] Especially is it everywhere known, and the servants of Mary daily experience, that her great name gives strength to overcome temptations against chastity. The same author, remarking on the words of St. Luke: And the name of the Virgin was Mary: “Et nomen Virginis Maria,”[7548] says, that these two names, of Mary and of Virgin, are united by the evangelist to show that the name of this most pure Virgin can never be separated from chastity.[7549] Hence St. Peter Chrysologus says, that the name Mary is a sign of chastity: “Nomen hoc indicium castitatis;”[7550] meaning, that whoever is in doubt whether he has yielded to temptations against purity, if he remembers having invoked the name of Mary may be sure that he has not violated chastity.

Let us, then, always follow the beautiful counsel of St. Bernard, who says: In every danger of losing divine grace let us think of Mary, let us invoke the name of Mary together with that of Jesus, for these names are always united. Let these two most sweet and powerful names never depart from our heart and our lips, for they will always give us strength to keep us from falling, and to conquer every temptation.[7551] Very precious are the graces which Jesus Christ has promised to those who are devoted to the name of Mary, as he himself, speaking to his holy mother, gave St. Bridget to understand, revealing to her that whoever will invoke the name of Mary with confidence and a purpose of amendment, shall receive three special graces: namely, a perfect contrition for his sins, the grace to make satisfaction for them and strength to obtain perfection, and at last, the glory of paradise;[7552] for as the divine Saviour added: “Thy words are so sweet and dear to me, oh my mother, that I cannot refuse thee what thou dost ask.”[7553]

Finally, St. Ephrem adds that the name of Mary is the key of the gate of heaven to him who devoutly invokes it;[7554] and therefore St. Bonaventure rightly calls Mary the salvation of all those who invoke her: “O salus te invocantium;” as if it were the same thing to invoke the name of Mary and to obtain eternal salvation; for as the Idiot affirms: The invocation of this holy and sweet name leads to the acquisition of superabundant grace in this life, and sublime glory in another.[7555] If you desire, then, brethren, concludes Thomas à Kempis, to be consoled in every affliction, have recourse to Mary, invoke Mary, honor Mary, recommend yourselves to Mary. Rejoice with Mary, weep with Mary, pray with Mary, walk with Mary, and with Mary seek Jesus; in a word, with Jesus and Mary desire to live and die. Do this, he adds, and you will always advance in the way of the Lord; for Mary will pray for you, and the Son will surely graciously listen to the mother.[7556] Such are his beautiful words.

Very sweet, then, in life to her servants, is the most holy name of Mary, on account of the great graces which it obtains for them, as we have seen above; but sweeter still will it be to them in dying by the sweet and holy death she will obtain for them. Father Sertorio Caputo, of the Society of

Jesus, exhorted all those who were called to the bedside of the dying, often to pronounce the name of Mary, saying that this name of life and of hope, pronounced in death, is alone sufficient to scatter the enemies and to comfort the dying in all their anguishes St. Camillus of Lellis also strongly recommended it to his religious, that they should remind the dying often to invoke the name of Mary and of Jesus, as he always practised it with others; but more sweetly he practised it himself at the moment of his death, when, as we read in his life, he named with so much tenderness his beloved names of Jesus and Mary, that he inflamed also with love of them all those who heard him. And at length, with his eyes fixed on their adorable image, and his arms crossed, the saint expired in celestial peace, pronouncing with his last breath the most sweet names of Jesus and Mary. This short prayer of invoking the holy names of Jesus and Mary, says Thomas à Kempis, which it is as easy to retain in the memory as it is sweet to consider, is at the same time powerful to protect whoever uses it from all the enemies of our salvation.[7557]

Blessed is he, says St. Bonaventure, who loves thy sweet name, oh mother of God.[7558] Thy name is so glorious and admirable, that those who remember to invoke it at the moment of death, do not then fear all the assaults of the enemy.[7559]

Oh, the happy lot of dying as Father Fulgentius of Ascoli, a Capuchin, died, who expired singing: Oh Mary, Mary, the most lovely of all beings, let me depart in thy company. Or, as blessed Henry the Cistercian, of whom it is related in the annals of the order, that he died with the name of Mary on his lips.[7560] Let us pray, then, my devout reader, let us pray God to grant us this grace, that the last word we pronounce at death may be the name of Mary; as St. Germanus desired and prayed.[7561] Oh sweet death, oh safe death, that is accompanied and protected by such a name of salvation, that God does not permit it to be invoked in death, except by those whom he will save!

Oh, my sweet Lady and mother, I love thee much, and because I love thee, I love also thy holy name. I purpose and hope with thy aid always to invoke it in life and death. For the glory, then, of thy name (let us conclude with the tender prayer of St. Bonaventure), when my soul departs from this world, wilt thou come to meet it, oh blessed Lady, and take it in thy arms?

[7562] Do not disdain, oh Mary, let us continue to pray with the saint, to come and comfort it, then, with thy sweet presence. Thou art its ladder and way to paradise. Wilt thou obtain for me the grace of pardon and eternal rest?[7563] And the saint then terminates with saying: Oh Mary, our advocate, to thee it belongs to shield thy servants, and defend their cause before the tribunal of Jesus Christ.[7564]

EXAMPLE

It is related by Father Rho, in his Sabbati, and by Father Lireo, in his Trisagio Mariana, of a certain young maiden of Guelder-land, who lived about the year 1465, that she was sent one day by her uncle to purchase something at the market of the city of Nimeguen, with the direction to go and pass the night at the house of her aunt, who lived in the town. The girl obeyed, but when she went at night to her aunt's house, she was rudely sent away by her, and she set out on her way homewards. Night overtaking her, she fell into a passion, and called loudly upon the devil to come to her aid. And behold, he suddenly appeared in the form of a man, and promised to assist her, provided she would do one thing. I will do any thing, answered the unhappy creature. I only wish, said the enemy, that henceforth you will not bless yourself with the sign of the cross, and will change your name. As to the cross, she answered, I will no longer sign myself with it, but my name of Mary is too dear to me, I will not change it. Then I will not help you, said the devil. At length, after much debate, is was agreed that she should be called by the first letter of the name of Mary, that is, Emme. They then went together to Antwerp, and the wretched girl remained there six years with her diabolical companion, living so sinful a life, that it was the scandal of the whole place. One day she told the devil that she wished to see her country again; the enemy objected, but finally was obliged to consent. When they entered together the city of Nimeguen, there was just then performing a public representation of the life of the most holy Mary. At such a sight the poor Emme, from that little devotion she had still preserved towards the mother of God, began to weep. “What are we doing here?” said her companion; “would you perform here another comedy?” He then seized her to take her away, but she resisted, and seeing that she was escaping from him, in a rage he raised her into the air and let her fall in the midst of the theatre. The poor girl then related what had happened to her. She went to the parish priest to confess, but he sent her to the Bishop of Cologne, and the bishop sent her to the Pope, who, having heard her confession, imposed it upon her as a penance, that she should wear three rings of iron, one around her neck, and two around her arms. The penitent obeyed, and having arrived at Maestricht, she retired into a convent of penitents, where she lived for fourteen years in severe penance. One morning she arose from her bed and found the three rings broken. Two years after she died in the odor of sanctity, and wished to have the ring buried with her, which had changed her from a slave of hell into the happy slave of Mary, her deliverer.

PRAYER

Oh great mother of God, and my mother Mary, it is true that I am unworthy to pronounce thy name, but thou who lovest me, and dost desire my salvation, thou must obtain for me, that, unclean as maybe my tongue, I may yet always invoke thy most holy and most powerful name; for thy name is the support of the living, and the salvation of the dying. Ah, most pure Mary! ah, most sweet Mary! make thy name henceforth to be the breath of my life. Oh Lady, do not delay coming to my help when I call upon thee, since in all the temptations which may assail me, in all the necessities I may suffer, I shall never cease calling upon thee, always repeating Mary, Mary. Thus I hope to do in life, thus especially I hope to do in death, that I may afterwards come to praise eternally in heaven thy beloved name: O clemens! O pia! O dulcis Virgo Maria! Ah Mary! Mary most amiable! what comfort, what sweetness, what confidence, what tenderness does my soul feel only in pronouncing thy name, only in thinking of thee! I thank my God and my Lord that he has given thee, for my good, this name so sweet, so lovely, so powerful.

But, oh my Lady, I am not satisfied with merely pronouncing thy name, I would pronounce it also with love; I desire that my love may remind me to speak thy name at every hour, that I may exclaim with St. Anselm: Oh name of the mother of God, thou art my love. O amor mei nomen matris Dei.

Oh my dear mother Mary! oh my beloved Jesus! may your most sweet names always live in my own and in all hearts. May I forget all other names, that I may remember and always invoke none but your adored names. Ah Jesus, my Redeemer! and my mother Mary, when the moment of my death shall arrive, and my soul shall depart from this life, by your merits grant me the grace then to utter my last accents, repeating: *I love you, Jesus and Mary;* Jesus and Mary, I give you my heart and my soul.

SOME DEVOUT PRAYERS OF VARIOUS SAINTS TO THE HOLY MOTHER

THE following prayers are added, not only for the use of the faithful, but also because they show the great idea which the saints entertained of the power and mercy of Mary, and their great confidence in her patronage.

PRAYER OF ST. EPHREM

OH immaculate and wholly pure Virgin Mary! mother of God, queen of the universe, our most excellent Lady, thou art superior to all the saints, thou art the only hope of the Fathers, and the joy of the blessed. By thee we have been reconciled to our God. Thou art the only advocate of sinners, the secure haven of the shipwrecked. Thou art the consolation of the world, the redemption of captives, the joy of the sick, the comfort of the afflicted, the refuge and salvation of the whole world. Oh great princess! mother of God! cover us with the wings of thy compassion: have pity on us. We have no hope but in thee, oh most pure Virgin! We are given to thee, and consecrated to thy service; we bear the name of thy servants; do not permit Lucifer to draw us down to hell. Oh immaculate Virgin! we are under thy protection; therefore, unitedly we have recourse to thee, and supplicate thee to prevent thy Son, whom our sins have offended, from abandoning us to the power of the devil.

Oh full of grace! illuminate my intellect, loosen my tongue that it may sing thy praises, and especially the Angelic Salutation, so worthy of thee. I salute thee, oh peace! oh joy! oh salvation and consolation of the whole world! I salute thee oh greatest of miracles! paradise of delight! secure haven of those who are in danger! fountain of grace! mediatrix of God and men!

PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD

WE raise our eyes to thee, oh queen of the world. After having committed so many sins we must appear before our Judge, and who will appease him? None can do it better than thou, oh blessed Lady, who hast loved him so much, and hast been so tenderly beloved by him. Open thy heart, then, oh mother of mercy, to our sighs and prayers. We fly to thy protection; appease the anger of thy Son, and restore us to his favor. Thou dost not abhor the sinner, however loathsome he may be; thou dost not despise him, if he sends up his sighs to thee, and with contrition asks thy intercession; thou, with thy kind hand, dost deliver him from despair; thou dost encourage him to hope, dost comfort him, and dost not leave him until thou hast reconciled him to his Judge.

Thou art that only one in whom the Saviour found his rest, and with whom he has deposited all his treasures. Hence all the world, oh Mary, honors thy chaste womb, as the temple of God, where the salvation of the world had its beginning. In thee was effected the reconciliation between God and man. Thou art the enclosed garden, oh great mother of God, whose flowers have never been gathered by the sinner’s hand. Thou art the beautiful garden, in which God has placed all the flowers which adorn the Church, such as the violet of thy humility, the lily of thy purity, and the rose of thy charity. Who can be compared to thee, oh mother of grace and of beauty? Thou art the paradise of God. From thee hath sprung up the fountain of living water, that waters all the earth. Oh, how many favors hast thou bestowed upon the world, by meriting to be the channel of the waters of salvation!

Of thee the Holy Ghost speaks when he says: Who is she that arises like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun? Thou art, then, come into the world, oh Mary, as a resplendent dawn, preceding, with the light of thy sanctity, the coming of the Sun of Justice. The day in which thou didst appear in the world may truly be called the day of salvation, the day of grace. Thou art fair as the moon; for as there is no planet more like the sun, so there is no creature more like God than thou art. The moon illuminates the night with the light which it receives from the sun, and thou dost illuminate our darkness, with the splendor of thy virtues; and thou art fairer than the moon, because in thee is found neither stain nor shade. Thou art bright as the sun, I mean as that Sun which hath created the sun; he has been chosen among all men, and thou among all women. Oh sweet, oh great, oh most lovely Mary, thy name cannot be pronounced by any one that thou dost inflame with thy love; neither can those who love thee think of thee without feeling themselves encouraged to love thee more.

Oh blessed Lady, help our weakness. And who is more fit to speak to our Lord Jesus Christ than thou, who dost enjoy, so near to him, his sweet conversation? Speak, speak, oh Lady, because thy Son listens, and thou wilt obtain from him whatever thou shalt demand.

PRAYER OF ST. GERMANUS

OH my only Lady, who art the sole consolation which I receive from God; thou who art the only celestial dew that doth soothe my pains; thou who art the light of my soul when it is surrounded with darkness; thou who art my guide in my journeyings, my strength in my weakness, my treasure in my poverty; balm for my wounds, my consolation in sorrow; thou who art my refuge in misery, the hope of my salvation, graciously hear my prayer, have pity on me, as is befitting the mother of a God who hath so much love for men. Thou who art our defence and joy, grant me what I ask; make me worthy of enjoying with thee that great happiness which thou dost enjoy in heaven. Yes, my Lady, my refuge, my life, my help, my defence, my strength, my joy, my hope, make me to come with thee to paradise. I know that, being the mother of God, thou canst obtain this for me if thou wilt. Oh Mary, thou art omnipotent to save sinners, thou needest nothing else to recommend us to thee, for thou art the mother of true life.

PRAYER OF THE ABBOT OF CELLES

SURNAMED THE IDIOT

DRAW me after thee, oh Virgin Mary, that I may run to the odor of thy perfumes. Draw me, for I am held back by the weight of my sins and by the malice of my enemies. As no one goes to thy Son unless the divine Father draws him, so I would dare to say, in a certain sense, that no one goes to him if thou dost not draw him with thy holy prayers. It is thou who teachest true wisdom; thou who dost obtain pardon for sinners, because thou art their advocate. It is thou who dost promise glory to him who honors thee, because thou art the treasurer of graces.

Thou hast found grace with God, oh most sweet Virgin, because thou hast been preserved from the stain of original sin, filled with the Holy Spirit, and hast conceived the Son of God. Thou hast received all these graces, oh Mary most humble, not only for thyself, but also for us, that thou mayest help us in all our necessities. And thou, indeed, dost so; thou dost succor the good by preserving them in grace; and the bad, by bringing them to receive the divine mercy; thou dost aid the dying by protecting them against the snares of the devil; and thou dost aid them also after death by receiving their souls, and leading them to the kingdom of the blessed.

PRAYER OF ST. METHODIUS

THY name, oh mother of God, is full of all graces and divine blessings. Thou hast comprehended him who is incomprehensible, and nourished him who nourishes all living creatures. He who fills heaven and earth and is Lord of all, has chosen to have need of thee, since thou hast clothed him with that garment of flesh that he had not before. Rejoice, oh mother and handmaid of God! rejoice! rejoice! thou hast for a debtor him to whom all creatures owe their being. We are all debtors to God, but God is a debtor to thee. Hence it is, oh most holy mother of God, that thou hast greater goodness and greater charity than all the other saints, and more than all others hast near access in heaven to God, because thou art his mother. Ah, we pray thee that we may celebrate thy glories, and may know how great is thy goodness, being mindful of us and of our miseries.

PRAYER OF ST. JOHN DAMASCENE

I SALUTE thee, oh Mary! thou art the hope of Christians; receive the petition of a servant who tenderly loves thee, especially honors thee, and places in thee all the hope of his salvation. From thee I have life, thou dost restore me to the favor of thy Son; thou art the certain pledge of my salvation. I implore thee, then, to deliver me from the burden of my sins; dispel the darknes of my mind; banish earthly affections from my heart; repel the temptations of my enemies, and so order my life, that I may reach, by thy means and by thy guidance, the eternal felicity of paradise.

PRAYER OF ST. ANDREW OF CANDIA, OR OF JERUSALEM

I SALUTE thee, oh full of grace! the Lord is with thee. I salute thee, oh cause of our joy, by whom the sentence of our condemnation has been already revoked, and changed into a judgment of benediction. I salute thee, oh temple of the glory of God, sacred house of the King of Heaven. Thou art the reconciliation of God with men. I salute thee, oh mother of our joy. In truth thou art blessed, for thou alone, among all women, hast been found worthy of being the mother of thy Creator. All nations call thee blessed.

Oh Mary, if I put my confidence in thee I shall be saved; if I am under thy protection I have nothing to fear, for to be thy servant is to have the secure armor of salvation, which God does not grant except to those whom he will save.

Oh mother of mercy, appease thy Son. Whilst thou wast on earth thou didst only occupy a small part of it; but now that thou art raised above the highest heaven, the whole world considers thee as the propitiatory of all nations. We supplicate thee, then, oh holy Virgin, to grant us the aid of thy prayers with God; prayers which are dearer and more precious to us than all the treasures of earth; prayers that render God inclined to forgive our sins; and wilt thou obtain for us abundant graces to receive the pardon of them and to practise virtue? prayers that conquer our enemies, confound their designs, and triumph over their forces.

PRAYER OF ST. ILDEPHONSUS

I COME to thee, oh mother of God, I supplicate thee to obtain for me the pardon of my sins, and that I may be purified from all the errors of my life. I pray thee to grant me thy grace, that I may unite myself with affection to thy Son and to thee; to thy Son as to my God, to thee as to the mother of my God.

PRAYER OF ST. ATHANASIUS

HEARKEN oh most holy Virgin, to our prayers, and remember us. Dispense to us the gifts of thy riches, and the abundant graces with which thou art filled. The archangel salutes thee and calls thee full of grace. All nations call thee blessed; the whole hierarchy of heaven blesses thee, and we, who are of the terrestrial hierarchy, also say to thee; “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;” pray for us, oh mother of God, our Lady and our Queen.

PRAYER OF ST. ANSELM

WE pray thee, oh most blessed Lady, by that grace which God bestowed on thee when he so greatly exalted thee, rendering all things possible to thee with him; we pray thee to obtain for us that the fulness of grace which thou hast merited may make us to share thy glory. Be pleased, oh most merciful Lady, to procure for us the good for which God consented to become man in thy chaste womb. Be not slow to hear us. If thou wilt deign to supplicate thy Son, he at once will graciously hear thee. It is enough that thou wilt save us, for then we cannot but be saved. Who can restrain the bowels of thy compassion? If thou hast not compassion on us, thou who art the mother of mercy, what will become of us when thy Son shall come to judge us?

Come, then, to our succor, oh most compassionate mother, without regarding the multitude of our sins. Remember again and again that our Creator has taken human flesh from thee, not to condemn sinners, but to save them. If thou hadst been made mother of God only for thine own advantage, it might be said that it would be to thee of little importance whether we were saved or condemned; but God has clothed himself with thy flesh for thy salvation and for that of all men. What will it avail us that thou art so powerful and so glorious, if thou dost not render us partakers of thy felicity? Aid us and protect us; remember the need we have of thy assistance. We recommend ourselves to thee; save us from damnation, and make us serve and love eternally thy Son Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OF ST. PETER DAMIAN

HOLY VIRGIN, mother of God, succor those who implore thy assistance. Turn to us. But, having been deified, as it were, hast thou forgotten men? Ah, certainly not. Thou knowest in what peril thou hast left us, and the wretched condition of thy servants; no, it is not befitting a mercy so great, to forget so great misery as ours. Turn to us with thy power, because he who is powerful hath given thee omnipotence in heaven and on earth. To thee nothing is impossible, for thou canst raise even the despairing to the hope of salvation. Thou must be compassionate as thou art powerful.

Turn to us, also, in thy love. I know, oh my Lady, that thou art all kindness, and dost love us with a love that no other love can surpass. How dost thou appease the anger of our Judge when he is on the point of punishing us for our offences! All the treasures of the mercy of God are in thy hands. Ah, may it never happen that thou shouldst cease from doing us good: thou seekest but the occasion of saving all sinners, and of bestowing thy mercy upon them; for thy glory increases when, by thy means, penitents are pardoned, and the pardoned come to paradise. Turn, then to us, that we may come to see thee in heaven; for the greatest glory we can obtain next to seeing God, is to see thee, to love thee, and to be under thy protection. Ah, graciously hear us, since thy Son wishes to honor thee, by granting all thy requests.

PRAYER OF ST. WILLIAM, BISHOP OF PARIS

OH mother of God, I fly to thee and I implore thee not to cast me off, for the whole Church of the faithful calls thee, and proclaims thee the mother of mercy. Thou art so dear to God, that thou art always graciously heard; thy compassion has never been wanting to any one; thy most gracious condescension has never despised any sinner, however enormous his sin, who has recommended himself to thee. Does the Church falsely and in vain call thee her advocate, and the refuge of the unhappy? No; let my sins never prevent thee from exercising thy great office of mercy by which thou art the advocate, the mediatrix of reconciliation, the only hope, and the most secure refuge of sinners. Let it never be that the mother, who, for the good of the whole world, brought forth him who is the fountain of mercy, should refuse her mercy to any sinner who has recourse to her. It is is thy office to reconcile God to man; let then thy compassion move thee to help me, for it is greater than all my sins.

PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY

TO BE SAID EVERY DAY AT THE END OF THE VISIT

OH most holy, immaculate Virgin, and my mother Mary, to thee who art the mother of my Lord, the queen of the world, the advocate, the hope, the refuge of sinners, I, the most miserable of all, have recourse to-day. I adore thee, oh great queen, and thank thee for all the favors thou hast hitherto granted me, especially for having delivered me from hell, which I have so often deserved. I love thee, oh most amiable Lady, and through the love I bear thee promise that I will always serve thee, and do all that I can that thou mayest also be loved by others. I place in thee all my hopes of salvation; accept me for thy servant, and receive me under thy mantle, oh thou mother of mercy. And since thou art so powerful with God, deliver me from all temptations, or obtain for me the strength to conquer them always until death. From thee I ask a true love for Jesus; from thee I hope to die a good death. Oh, my mother, by the love thou bearest to God, I pray thee always to help me, but most of all at the last moment of my life. Do not leave me until thou seest me actually safe in heaven, blessing thee, and singing thy mercies throughout all eternity. Amen. Thus I hope. Thus may it be.

end of the first part.

PART II

Which treats of her principal Festivals; of her dolors in general, and of each of her seven dolors in particular; of her virtues; and lastly, of devotion to be practised in her honor.

Discourses on the Seven Principal Feasts of Mary and Her Dolors

Discourse I

ON THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY

HOW BEFITTING IT WAS TO ALL THREE OF THE DIVINE PERSONS THAT MARY SHOULD BE PRESERVED FROM ORIGINAL SIN.

THE ruin was great which accursed sin brought upon Adam and the whole human race; for when he unhappily lost grace, he at the same time lost the other blessings with which, in the beginning, he was enriched, and drew upon himself, and upon all his descendants, both the displeasure of God, and all other evils. But God ordained that the blessed Virgin should be exempt from this common calamity, for he had destined her to be the mother of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, who was to repair the injury done by the first. Now, let us see how befitting it was that the Three Divine Persons should preserve this Virgin from original sin. We shall see that it was befitting the Father to preserve her from it as his daughter, the Son as his mother, the Holy Spirit as his spouse.

First Point.—In the first place, it was fitting that the eternal Father should create Mary free from the original stain, because she was his daughter, and his first-born daughter, as she herself attests: “I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures;”[7565] for this passage is applied to Mary by the sacred interpreters, by the holy Fathers, and by the Church herself, on the solemn festival of her Conception. Whether she be the first-born on account of her predestination, together with her Son, in the divine decrees, before all creatures, as the school of the Scotists will have it; or the first-born of grace, as predestined to be the mother of the Redeemer, after the prevision of sin, according to the school of the Thomists, all agree in calling her the first-born of God; which being the case, it was not meet that Mary should be the slave of Lucifer, but that she should only and always be possessed by her Creator, as she herself asserts: “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways.”[7566] Hence

Mary was rightly called by Dionysius, Archbishop of Alexandria: One and sole daughter of life: Una et sola filia vitæ;”[7567] differing in this from others, who being born in sin, are daughters of death.

Moreover, it was meet that the eternal Father should create her in his grace, since he destined her for the restorer of the lost world, and mediatrix of peace between man and God; and thus the holy Fathers name her, and especially St. John Damascene, who thus addresses her: Oh blessed Virgin, thou art born to procure the salvation of the whole world![7568] St. Bernard says that Mary was already prefigured in the ark of Noe; for as by the ark men were saved from the deluge, so by Mary we are saved from the shipwreck of sin; but with this difference, that by means of the ark few only were saved, but by means of Mary the whole human race has been redeemed.[7569] Hence it is that Mary is called by St. Athanasius: The new Eve, the mother of life: Nova Eva, mater vitæ.”[7570] A new Eve, because the first was the mother of death, but the most holy Virgin is the mother of life. St. Theophanes, Bishop of Nice, exclaims: Hail to thee, who hast taken away the sorrow of Eve.[7571] St. Basil calls her: the peacemaker between God and men.[7572] St. Ephrem: The peacemaker of the whole world.[7573]

Now, certainly he who treats of peace should not be an enemy of the offended person, still less an accomplice of his crime. St. Gregory says, that to appease the judge his enemy certainly must not be chosen, for instead of appeasing him he would enrage him more. Therefore, as Mary was to be the mediatrix of peace between God and man, there was every reason why she should not appear as a sinner and enemy of God, but as his friend, and pure from sin.

Besides, it was fitting that God should preserve her from original sin, since he destined her to bruise the head of the infernal serpent, who, by seducing our first parents, brought death upon all men, as our Lord predicted: “I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head.”[7574] Now, if Mary was to be the strong woman brought into the world to crush Lucifer, surely it was not fitting that she should first be conquered by Lucifer, and made his slave, but rather that she should be free from every stain, and from all subjection to the enemy. As he had in his pride already corrupted the whole human race, he would also corrupt the pure soul of this Virgin. But may the divine goodness be ever praised, who prevented her with so much grace, to the end that remaining free from every stain of sin, she could overthrow and confound his pride, as St. Augustine says, or whoever may have been the author of that commentary upon Genesis: As the devil was the head from whence original sin proceeded, that head Mary crushed, because no sin ever entered the soul of the Virgin, and therefore she was free from all stain.[7575] St. Bonaventure still more clearly expresses the same: It was meet that the blessed Virgin Mary, by whom our shame was to be removed, should conquer the devil, and there she should not yield to him in the least degree.[7576]

But it was especially fitting that the eternal Father should preserve his daughter from the sins of Adam, because he destined her for the mother of his only begotten Son. Thou wast preordained in the mind of God, before every creature, to bring forth God himself made man.[7577] If for no other reason, then, at least for the honor of his Son, who was God, the Father would create her pure from every stain. The angelic Doctor St. Thomas says, that all things ordained by God must be holy, and pure from every defilement.[7578] If David, when he was planning the temple of Jerusalem with a magnificence worthy the Lord, said: “Not for man a house is prepared, but for God;”[7579] now, how much greater cause have we to believe that the great Creator, having destined Mary to be the mother of his own Son, would adorn her soul with every grace, that it might be a worthy habitation for a God. God, the creator of all things, affirms blessed Denis the Carthusian, about to construct a worthy habitation for his Son, adorned her with all pleasing gifts.[7580] And the holy Church herself assures us of this, when she affirms that God prepared the body and soul of the Virgin to be, on earth, a habitation worthy of his only begotten Son. “Omnipotent, eternal God!” thus the holy Church prays, “who, by the cooperation of the Holy Ghost, didst prepare the body and soul of the glorious Virgin mother, that she might become a worthy habitation for thy Son,” &c.[7581]

It is acknowledged to be the greatest glory of sons to be born of noble parents. The glory of children are their fathers: “Gloria filiorum, patres eorum.”[7582] So that in the world the imputation of small fortune and little science is more endurable than that of low birth; for the poor man may become rich by industry, the ignorant learned by study, but he who is of low birth can hardly become noble; and if ever this occurs, the old and original reproach is liable always to be revived. How can we then believe that God, when he was able to give his Son a noble mother, by preserving her from sin, would have consented that he should be born of a mother defiled with sin, and permit Lucifer to reproach him with the opprobrium of being born of a mother who once was his slave and an enemy of God! No, the Lord has not permitted this, but he has well provided for the honor of his Son, by ordaining that his mother should always be immaculate, that she might be a fit mother for such a Son. The Greek Church confirms this: "By a singular providence, God ordained that the most holy Virgin should be perfectly pure from the very beginning of her life, as was becoming her who was to be a mother worthy of Christ."[7583]

It is a common axiom among theologians, that no gift has ever been granted to any creature with which the blessed Virgin was not also enriched. St. Bernard thus expresses it: We certainly cannot suspect that what has been bestowed on the chosen among mortals should be withheld from the blessed Virgin.[7584] And St. Thomas of Villanova says: Nothing was ever given to any of the saints that did not shine more pre-eminently in Mary from the beginning of her life.[7585] And if it be true, according to the celebrated saying of St. John Damascene, that there is an infinite distance between the mother of God and the servants of God,[7586] it certainly must be supposed, as St. Thomas teaches, that God has conferred greater graces of every kind on the mother than on the servants.[7587] Now, asks St. Anselm, the great defender of the privileges of the immaculate Mary, this being granted, was the wisdom of God unable to prepare a pure abode for his Son, free from every human stain?[7588] Has it been in the power of God, continues St. Anselm, to preserve the angels of heaven unstained amidst the ruin of so many, and could he not preserve the mother of his Son and the queen of angels from the common fall of man?[7589] Could God, I add, give the grace even to an Eve to come into the world immaculate, and afterwards be unable to bestow it on Mary?

Ah, no, God could do it and has done it, since it was altogether fitting, as the above-named St. Anselm says, that this Virgin, to whom God was to give his only Son, should be adorned with such purity, that it not only should surpass the purity of all men and of all angels, but should be second in greatness only to that of God.[7590] And still more plainly does St. John Damascene declare, that he preserved the soul as well as the body of this Virgin, as beseemed her who was about to receive God into her womb, for he being holy, dwells only with the holy.[7591] Thus the eternal Father could say to this beloved daughter: "As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters."[7592] Daughter among all my other daughters, thou art like a lily among thorns; for they are all stained by sin, but thou wert ever immaculate, and ever my friend.

Second Point.—In the second place, it was befitting the Son that Mary, as his mother, should be preserved from sin. It is not permitted to other children to select a mother according to their good pleasure; but if this were ever granted to any one, who would choose a slave for his mother when he might have a queen? who a peasant, when he might have a noble? who an enemy of God, when he might have a friend of God? If, then, the Son of God alone could select a mother according to his pleasure, it must be considered as certain that he would choose one befitting a God. Thus St. Bernard expresses it: The Creator of men to be born of man must choose such a mother for himself as he knew to be most fit.[7593] And as it was, indeed, fitting that a most pure God should have a mother pure from all sin, such was she created, as St. Bernardine of Sienna says, in these words: The third kind of sanctification is that which is called maternal, and this removes every stain of original sin. This was in the blessed Virgin. God, indeed, created her, by the nobility of her nature as well as by the perfection of grace, such as it was befitting that his mother should be.[7594] And here the words of the apostle may be applied: "For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners,"[7595] &c. Here a learned author remarks, that according to St. Paul, it was meet that our Redeemer should not only be separated from sin, but also from sinners, as St. Thomas explains it: It was meet that he who came to take away sins, should be separate from sinners as far as concerns the sin of which Adam was guilty.[7596] But how could it be said of Jesus Christ that he was separate from sinners if his mother was a sinner?

St. Ambrose says: Not from earth, but from heaven, Christ selected this vessel through which he should descend, and consecrated the temple of modesty.[7597] The saint alludes to the words of St. Paul: "The first man was of the earth, earthy: the second man from heaven, heavenly.”[7598] St. Ambrose calls the divine mother: *A celestial vessel:* not that Mary was other than earthly in her nature, as heretics have sometimes fancied, but celestial through grace, for she was superior to the angels of heaven in sanctity and purity, as it was meet she should be, when a King of glory was to dwell in her womb; as John the Baptist revealed to St. Bridget: “It was befitting the King of glory to remain in no vessel but one purer and more select than all angels and men;”[7599] to which we may add what the eternal Father himself said to the same saint: “Mary was a clean and an unclean vessel. Clean because she was wholly fair, but unclean because she was born of sinners; although she was conceived without sin, that my Son should be born without sin.”[7600] And these last words are worthy of note, that Mary was conceived without sin, so that the divine Son might be conceived without sin. Not that Jesus Christ could be capable of contracting sin, but that he might not suffer the opprobrium of having a mother infected with sin, and a slave of the devil.

The Holy Spirit says, that the honor of the Father is the glory of the Son, and the dishonor of the Father is the shame of the Son.[7601] And St. Augustine says, that Jesus preserved the body of Mary from being corrupted after death, since it would have dishonored him if corruption had destroyed that virginal flesh from which he had clothed himself.[7602] Corruption is the reproach of the human condition, from which the nature of Mary was exempted, in order that Jesus might be exempt from it, for the flesh of Jesus is the flesh of Mary. Now, if it were a dishonor for Jesus Christ to be born of a mother whose body was subject to the corruption of the flesh, how much greater would be the shame had he been born of a mother whose soul was corrupted by sin! Moreover, as it is true that the flesh of Jesus is the same as that of Mary, in such a manner (as the saint himself here adds) that the flesh of the Saviour after his resurrection was the very same which he received from his mother;[7603] therefore St. Arnold of Carnotensis says: The flesh of Mary and of Christ is one, and hence I esteem the glory of the Son to be not so much common to both as the same.[7604] Now, this being true, if the blessed Virgin had been conceived in sin, although the Son had not contracted the stain of sin, yet there would always have been a certain stain from the union of himself with flesh once infected by guilt, a vessel of uncleanness and a slave of Lucifer.

Mary was not only the mother, but a worthy mother of the Saviour. Thus all the holy Fathers name her. St. Bernard says: Thou alone hast been found worthy, that in thy virginal hall the King of kings should choose his first mansion.[7605] And St. Thomas of Villanova: Before she had conceived she was fitted to be the mother of God.[7606] The holy Church herself attests that the Virgin merited to be the mother of Jesus Christ.[7607] Explaining which passage, St. Thomas of Aquinas remarks, that Mary could not merit the incarnation of the Word, but with divine grace she merited such perfection as would render her worthy to become the mother of a God;[7608] as St. Peter Damian also writes: Her singular sanctity merited (out of pure grace) that she should alone be judged worthy to receive a God.[7609]

Now, this being granted, that Mary was a mother worthy of God, what excellency and what perfection, says St. Thomas of Villanova, were befitting her![7610] The same angelic Doctor declares, that when God elects any one to a certain dignity, he also fits him for it; hence, he says, that God having chosen Mary for his mother, certainly rendered her worthy of it by his grace, according to what the angels said to her: “Thou hast found grace with God, behold thou shalt conceive, etc.”[7611] And from this the saint infers that the Virgin never committed any actual sin, not even a venial sin, otherwise, he says, she would not have been a worthy mother of Jesus Christ, since the ignominy of the mother would also be that of the Son, if his mother had been a sinner.[7612] Now, if Mary, by committing only one venial offence, which does not deprive the soul of divine grace, might be said not to have been a worthy mother of God, how much more if she had been stained with original sin, which would have rendered her an enemy of God, and a slave of the devil! Therefore St. Augustine says in a celebrated passage of his writings, that speaking of Mary, he would make no mention of sins, for the honor of that Lord whom she merited for her Son, and through whom she had the grace to conquer sin in every way.[7613]

We should therefore hold it for certain, that the incarnate Word selected for himself a befitting mother, and one of whom he need not be ashamed, as St. Peter Damian expresses it.[7614] And also St. Proculus: He inhabited those bowels which he had created, so as to be free from any mark of infamy.[7615]

Jesus felt it no reproach to hear himself called by the Jews the son of a poor woman: “Is not his mother called Mary?”[7616] for he came on earth to give an example of humility and patience. But on the other hand, it would doubtless have been a reproach to him if it could have been said by the demons: Was he not born from a mother who was a sinner, and once our slave?[7617] It would be considered most unfit that Jesus Christ should have been born of a woman deformed and maimed in body, or possessed by evil spirits; but how much more unseemly that he should be born of a woman once deformed in soul, and possessed by Lucifer.

Ah, that God who is wisdom itself well knew how to prepare upon the earth a fit dwelling for him to inhabit: “Wisdom hath built herself a house.”[7618] “The Most High hath sanctified his own tabernacle.” “God will help it in the morning early.”[7619] The Lord, says David, sanctified this his habitation *in the morning early;* that is, from the beginning of her life, to render her worthy of himself; for it was not befitting a God who is holy to select a house that was not holy: Holiness becometh thy house: “Domum tuum decet sanctitudo.”[7620] And if he himself declares that he will never enter into a malicious soul, and into a body subject to sins,”[7621] how can we think that the Son of God would have chosen to inhabit the soul and body of Mary without first sanctifying her and preserving her from every stain of sin? for, as St. Thomas teaches us, the eternal Word inhabited not only the soul, but the body of Mary.[7622] The Church also sings: Oh Lord, thou didst not shrink from the Virgin’s womb: “Non horruisti Virginis uterum.” Indeed, a God would have shrunk from incarnating himself in the womb of an Agnes, of a Gertrude, of a Theresa, since those virgins, although holy, were for a time, stained with original sin; but he did not shrink from becoming man in the womb of Mary, because this chosen Virgin was always pure from every guilt, and never possessed by the infernal serpent. Hence St. Augustine wrote: The Son of God has built himself no house more worthy than Mary, who was never taken by the enemy, nor robbed of her ornaments.[7623]

On the other hand, St. Cyril of Alexandria says: Who has ever heard of an architect building a house for his own use and then giving the first possession of it to his greatest enemy?[7624]

Certainly our Lord, who, as St. Methodius declares, gave us the command to honor our parents, would not fail, when he became man, like ourselves, to observe it himself, by bestowing on his mother every grace and honor.[7625] Hence St. Augustine says, that we must certainly believe that Jesus Christ preserved from corruption the body of Mary after death, as it has been said above; for if he had not done so, he would not have observed the law, which, as it commands respect to the mother, so it condemns disrespect,[7626] How much less mindful would Jesus have been of the honor of his mother, if he had not preserved her from the sin of Adam! That Son would, indeed, commit a sin, says Father Thomas d'Argentina, an Augustinian, who, being able to preserve his mother from original sin, should not do so; now that which would be sinful in us, says the same author, cannot be esteemed befitting the Son of God, namely, if he should not have created his mother immaculate when he was able to do so. Ah, no, exclaims Gerson, since thou, the supreme Prince, dost wish to have a mother, honor will certainly be due to her from thee: but this law would not appear well fulfilled if thou shouldst permit her, who was to be the dwelling of all purity, to fall into the abomination of original sin.[7627]

Moreover, the divine Son, as we know, came into the world to redeem Mary before all others, as we read in St. Bernardine of Sienna.[7628] And as there are two modes of redeeming, as St. Augustine teaches, one by raising the fallen; the other, by preventing from falling;[7629] doubtless, the latter is the most noble. More nobly, says St. Antoninus, is he redeemed who is prevented from falling, than he who is raised after falling;[7630] because in this way is avoided the injury or stain that the soul always contracts by a fall. Therefore we ought to believe that Mary was redeemed in the nobler manner, as became the mother of a God, as St. Bonaventure expresses it; for Frassen proves the sermon on the assumption to have been written by that holy doctor.[7631] We must believe that by a new mode of sanctification the Holy Spirit redeemed her at the first moment of her conception, and preserved her by a special grace from original sin, which was not in her, but would have been in her.[7632] On this subject Cardinal Cusano has elegantly written: Others have had a deliverer, but the holy Virgin had a predeliverer;[7633] others have had a Redeemer to deliver them from sin already contracted, but the holy Virgin had a Redeemer who, because he was her Son, prevented her from contracting sin.

In a word, to conclude this point, Hugo of St. Victor says, the tree is known by its fruit. If the Lamb was always immaculate, always immaculate must the mother also have been.[7634] Hence this same doctor saluted Mary by calling her: The worthy mother of a worthy Son: “O digna digni.” By which he meant to say, that none but Mary was the worthy mother of such a Son, and that none but Jesus was the worthy Son of such a mother.[7635] Therefore let us say with St. Ildephonsus: Give suck, then, oh Mary, give suck to thy Creator; give suck to him who created thee, and hath made thee so pure and perfect that thou hast merited that he should receive from thee the human nature.[7636]

Third Point.—If, then, it became the Father so preserve Mary as his daughter from sin, and the Son because she was his mother, it also became the Holy Spirit to preserve her as his spouse. Mary, says St. Augustine, was the only one who merited to be called the mother and spouse of God.[7637] For, as St. Anselm affirms, the Holy Spirit came bodily upon Mary and rested in her, enriching her with grace beyond all creatures, dwelt in her, and made his spouse queen of heaven and of earth.[7638] As the saint expresses it: He was with her really, as to the effect, since he came to form from her immaculate body the immaculate body of Jesus Christ, as the archangel predicted: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee.[7639] For this reason, says St. Thomas, Mary is called the temple of the Lord, the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit, because, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, she was made mother of the incarnate word.[7640]

Now, if an excellent painter were allowed to choose a bride as beautiful or as deformed as he himself might paint her, how great would be his solicitude to make her as beautiful as possible! Who, then, will say that the Holy Spirit has not dealt thus with Mary, and that, having it in his power to make this his spouse as beautiful as it became her to be, he has not done so? Yes, thus it was fitting he should do, and thus he did, as the Lord himself attested when praising Mary; he said to her: “Thou art all fair, oh my love; and there is not a spot in thee;”[7641] which words, as we learn from à Lapide, St. Ildephonsus, and St. Thomas, explain as properly to be understood of Mary. St. Bernardine of Sienna,[7642] and St. Lawrence Justinian,[7643] also declare that the passage above quoted is precisely to be understood of her immaculate conception; hence the Idiot says: Thou art all fair, oh most glorious Virgin, not in part, but wholly; and the stain of sin, whether mortal, or venial, or original, is not upon thee.[7644]

The Holy Spirit signifies the same thing, when he called this his spouse: “A garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up.”[7645] Mary, says St. Jerome, was properly this enclosed garden and sealed fountain; for the enemies never entered to harm her, but she was always uninjured, remaining holy in soul and body.[7646] And in like manner St. Bernard said, addressing the blessed Virgin: Thou art an enclosed garden, where the sinner’s hand never entered to rob it of its flowers.[7647]

We know that this divine spouse loved Mary more than all the other saints and angels united, as Father Suarez, St. Lawrence Justinian, and others affirm. He loved her from the beginning, and exalted her in sanctity above all creatures, as David expresses it: “The foundations thereof are in the holy mountains; the Lord loveth the gates of Sion above all the tabernacles of Jacob. . . . This man is born in her, and the Highest himself hath founded her.”[7648] All which words signify that Mary was holy from her conception. The same thing is signified by what the Holy Spirit himself says in another place: “Many daughters have gathered together riches; thou hast surpassed them all.”[7649] If Mary has surpassed all in the riches of grace, she then possessed original justice, as Adam and the angels had it. “There are young maidens without number: one is my dove, my perfect one (the Hebrew reads, my uncorrupted, my immaculate); she is the only one of her mother.”[7650] All just souls are children of divine grace; but among these, Mary was the *Dove* without the bitter gall of sin, the *Perfect One* without the stain of original sin, the *one* conceived in grace.

The angel, therefore, before she was the mother of God, already found her full of grace, and thus saluted her: Hail, full of grace: “Ave gratia plena.” Commenting upon which words, Sophronius writes, that to the other saints grace is given in part, but to the Virgin it was given in fulness.[7651] So that, as St. Thomas says, grace not only made the soul, but also the flesh of Mary holy, that with it the Virgin might clothe the eternal Word.[7652] Now by all this we are to understand, as Peter of Celles remarks, that Mary, from the moment of her conception, was enriched by the Holy Spirit, and filled with divine grace.[7653] Hence, as St. Peter Damian says: She being elected and pre-elected by God, was borne off by the Holy Spirit for himself.[7654] Borne off, as the saint expresses it, to explain the swiftness of the Divine Spirit, in making her his spouse, before Lucifer should take possession of her.

I will at length close this discourse, in which I have been more diffused than in the others, because our little congregation has for its principal protectress the most holy Virgin Mary, precisely under this title of her immaculate conception. I will close, I say, by declaring in a few words what are the reasons which make me certain, and which, as I think, should make every one certain of this pious sentiment, so glorious to the divine mother—that she was free from original sin.

There are many doctors who maintain that Mary was even exempt from contracting the debt of sin; such as Cardinal Galatino,[7655] Cardinal Cusano,[7656] De Ponte,[7657] Salasar,[7658] Catherinus,[7659] Novarino,[7660] Viva,*[7661] De Lugo, Egidius, Richelius, and others. Now this opinion is very probable; for if it is true that in the will of Adam, as head of the human race, were included the wills of all, as Gonet,†[7662] Habert,‡[7663] and others hold it to be probable, on the testimony of these words of St. Paul: "In whom (Adam) all have sinned."§[7664] If this, then, is probable, it is also probable that Mary did not contract the debt of sin; for God having greatly distinguished her in the order of grace from the rest of mankind, it should be piously believed, that in the will of Adam, the will of Mary was not included.

This opinion is only probable, but I adhere to it, as being more glorious for my Lady. But, then, I hold it for certain that Mary has not contracted the sin of Adam, as Cardinal Everard,[7665] Duval,[7666] Raynauld,[7667] Lossada,[7668] Viva,[7669] and many others hold it for certain, and even proximately definable as an article of faith, as they express it. I omit, however, the revelations that confirm this opinion; especially those made to St. Bridget, approved by Cardinal Torrecremata, and by four supreme Pontiffs, and which we read in the sixth book of the above-mentioned revelations, in various places.[7670] But I can by no means omit to mention here the opinions of the holy Fathers on this point, in order to prove how uniform they have been in conceding this privilege to the divine mother. St.

Ambrose says: Receive me not from Sarah, but from Mary, as an uncorrupted Virgin, a Virgin through grace preserved pure from every stain of sin.*[7671] Origen, speaking of Mary, says: Neither was she infected by the breath of the venomous serpent.†[7672] And St. Ephrem: She is immaculate, and remote from every taint of sin.‡[7673] St. Augustine, meditating on the words of the angel, “Hail, full of grace,” says: By these words he shows her to be entirely (note, entirely, excluded from the wrath of the first sentence, and restored to the full grace of benediction.[7674] St. Jerome: That cloud was never in darkness, but always in the light.[7675] St. Cyprian, on Psalm 77, or whoever may be the author of that treatise, says: Neither did justice suffer that vessel of election to be open to common injuries, for, being far exalted above others, she was a partaker of their nature, but not of their sin.[7676] St. Amphilochius also says: He who created the first virgin without reproach, also created the second without stain or crime.[7677] Sophronius: Therefore she is called the immaculate Virgin, because she was in no manner corrupted.[7678] St. Ildephonsus: It is certain that she was exempt from original sin.[7679] St. John of Damascus: To this paradise the serpent had no entrance.*[7680] St. Peter Damian: The flesh of the Virgin, received from Adam, was free from Adam’s taint of sin.[7681] St. Bruno: This is that uncorrupted earth which the Lord has blessed, and hence she is pure from all contagion of sin.[7682] St. Bonaventure, also: Our Lady was full of preventing grace in her sanctification, namely, of grace preservative against the defilement of original sin.[7683] St. Bernardine of Sienna: For it is not to be believed that the Son of God himself would choose to be born of a Virgin, and assume her flesh, if she were defiled in any way with original sin.[7684] St. Lawrence Justinian: From her conception she was prevented with blessing.[7685] So the Idiot, upon those words, Thou hast found grace, “Invenisti gratiam,” says: Thou hast found peculiar grace, oh most sweet Virgin, for thou wast preserved from original stain, &c.[7686] And many other Doctors express the same.

But there are two arguments which conclusively prove the truth of this opinion. The first is the universal consent of the faithful on this point. Father Egidius, of the Presentation, asserts that all the religious orders follow the same opinion:[7687] and although in the order of St. Dominic, says a modern author, there are ninety-two writers who are of the contrary opinion, yet one hundred and thirty-six are of ours. But what should especially persuade us that our pious opinion is conformable to the common opinion of Catholics, is the declaration of Pope Alexander VII., in the celebrated bull, “Sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum,” issued in the year 1661, namely: “This devotion and worship to the mother of God again increased and was propagated, . . . so that the universities having embraced this opinion (that is, the pious one), almost all Catholics embrace it.”[7688] And, in fact, this opinion is defended by the universities of the Sorbonne, of Alcala, of Salamanca, of Coimbra, of Cologne, of Mayence, and of Naples, and by many others, in which every one who graduates binds himself by an oath to the defence of the immaculate Mary. The learned Petavius rests his proof of the immaculate conception mainly upon this argument of the common consent of the faithful.[7689] Which argument, writes the most learned Bishop Julius Torni, cannot fail to convince; for, in fact, if nothing else, the common consent of the faithful renders us certain of the sanctification of Mary in the womb, and of the glorious assumption of her soul and body in heaven; why, then, should not this same common sentiment render us certain of her immaculate conception?[7690]

By another reason, still stronger than the first, we are assured of the truth of the fact, that the Virgin is exempt from the original stain, namely, the festival instituted by the universal Church in honor of her immaculate Conception. And with regard to this I see, on the one hand, that the Church celebrates the first moment when her soul was created and infused into the body, as Alexander VII. declares in the bull above quoted, in which it is expressed that the Church prescribes the same veneration for the conception of Mary, as the pious opinion concedes to her, which holds her to be conceived without original sin. On the other hand I know it to be certain that the Church cannot honor any thing unholy, according to the decrees of the sovereign pontiffs St. Leo[7691] and St. Eusebius: “In the Apostolic See the Catholic religion has always been preserved pure from stain.[7692]” And all the theologians, including St. Augustine,[7693] St. Bernard, and St. Thomas, teach the same thing. The latter makes use of the argument of the festival of her birth, instituted by the Church, to prove that Mary was sanctified before birth; and therefore says: The Church celebrates the nativity of the blessed Virgin; but no feast is celebrated in the Church except in honor of some saint; therefore the blessed Virgin was sanctified in the womb.[7694] Now if it is certain, as the angelic Doctor declares, that Mary was sanctified in the womb, because for this reason the holy Church celebrates her birth; why should we not then hold it for certain that Mary was preserved from original sin from the first moment of her conception, now that we know that in this sense the Church herself celebrates the festival of it?[7695] In confirmation, too, of this great privilege of Mary, it is well known what numerous and remarkable graces our Lord has been pleased to dispense daily in the kingdom of Naples, by means of the little pictures of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception. I could relate many that took place under the eyes of the fathers of our own congregation; but I will relate only two, which are truly wonderful.

EXAMPLE

There came a woman to one of the houses of our little congregation, in this kingdom, to tell one of the fathers that her husband had not been to confession for many years, and that she did not know how to bring him back to his duties, for whenever she spoke to him of confession he beat her. The father told her to give him a little picture of Mary immaculate. Evening came, and the woman again begged her husband to go to confession; but the man being as deaf as before, she gave him the picture. He had no sooner received it than he said: “When will you take me to confession, for I am ready?” The wife, at that sudden change, wept for joy. In the morning he came to our church, and when the father asked him how long it was since he had been to confession, he answered: “Twenty-eight years.” “And what has brought you to confession this morning?” said the father. “Father,” he said, “I was obstinate, but yesterday my wife gave me a picture of the Madonna, and immediately I felt my heart changed, so that last night appeared to me a thousand years long, and I thought the day would never come when I might go to confession.” He made his confession with great compunction, changed his life, and continued for a long time to go often to confession to the same father.

In another place, in the diocese of Salerno, during one of our missions, there was a certain man who had a great enmity against one who had offended him. One of our fathers spoke to him, and exhorted him to pardon the offence. “Father, have you ever seen me at the sermon? No, you have not, and for this reason I stay away: I see that I am damned, but I do not wish it otherwise, I must have revenge.” The father made every effort to convert him, but finding that he was wasting his words, “Take,” he said to him, “this little picture of the Madonna.” “Of what use,” said he, “is this picture?” But he took it, and as if he had never refused to pardon his enemy, he said to the missionary, “Father, do you wish anything more than reconciliation? for that I am ready.” The next morning was appointed for the reconciliation; but when the morning came, his mind was changed, and he would do nothing. The father offered him another picture. He did not wish for it, and took it unwillingly; but behold, no sooner had he taken it, than he immediately said, “Let us be reconciled: where is Mastrodatti?” He then forgave his enemy, and afterwards made his confession.

PRAYER

Ah, my immaculate Lady, I rejoice with thee, seeing thee endowed with so great purity. I give thanks, and make the resolution always to give thanks to our common Creator, for having preserved thee from every stain of sin, as I certainly believe; and to defend this great and peculiar privilege of thy immaculate conception I am ready, and swear to give even my life if it is necessary. I wish that all the world might know thee, and acknowledge thee for that beatiful *aurora,* which was always resplendent with the divine light; that chosen *ark* of salvation, safe from the common shipwreck of sin; for that *perfect and immaculate dove,* as thy divine spouse declared thee; that *inclosed garden,* which was the delight of God; that *fountain sealed up,* which the enemy never entered to trouble; finally, that *spotless lily,* which thou art, springing up among the thorns of the children of Adam; for whereas all are born defiled with original sin, and enemies of God, thou wast born pure, all spotless, and in all things a friend of thy Creator.

Let me, then, also praise thee as thy God himself hath praised thee when he said: Thou art all fair, and there is not a spot in thee: “Tota pulchra es et macula non est in te.” Oh most pure dove, all white, all beautiful, and always the friend of God: “O quam pulchra es, amica mea, quam pulchra es.” Oh most sweet, most amiable, immaculate Mary, thou who art so beautiful in the eyes of our Lord, do not disdain to look with thy pitying eye upon the loathsome wounds of my soul. Behold me, pity me, and heal me. Oh powerful magnet of hearts, draw also my miserable heart to thee. Thou who even from the first moment of thy life wast pure and beautiful in the sight of God, have pity on me, for I was not only born in sin, but after baptism, I again have defiled my soul with sin Will God, who hath chosen thee for his child, his mother, and his spouse, and therefore hath preserved thee from every stain, refuse any grace to thee? Virgin immaculate, you must save me; I will say to thee with St. Philip Neri, make me always to remember thee and do not forget me. It seems to me a thousand years before I shall go to behold thy beauty in paradise, to praise and love thee more, my mother, my queen, my beloved, most lovely, most sweet, most pure, immaculate Mary. Amen.

Discourse II

ON THE BIRTH OF MARY

MARY WAS BORN A SAINT, AND A GREAT SAINT FOR GREAT WAS THE GRACE WITH WHICH OUR LORD ENRICHED HER FROM THE BEGINNING, AND GREAT WAS THE FIDELITY WITH WHICH MARY AT ONCE CORRESPONDED WITH IT.

MEN are accustomed to celebrate the birth of their children with joy and feasting; but rather ought they to weep and give signs of grief and mourning, considering that these are born, not only destitute of merits and of reason, but moreover infected by sin and children of wrath, and therefore condemned to misery and death. But with reason do we celebrate, with feasts and universal praise, the birth of our infant Mary, for she came into this world an infant in age, it is true, but great in merits and in virtue. Mary was born a saint, and a great saint. But to conceive the degree of sanctity in which she was born, we must call to mind, in the first place, how great was the first grace with which God enriched Mary; and in the second, with how great fidelity Mary at once corresponded with God.

First Point.—Commencing with the first point, it is certain that the soul of Mary was the most beautiful soul that God ever created; indeed, next to the incarnation of the Word, this work was the greatest and most worthy of himself that the Omnipotent could accomplish in this world—a work, as St. Peter Damian terms it, which God alone excels: “Opus quod solus Deus supergreditur.” Hence it was that the divine grace did not descend upon Mary in drops as upon the other saints, but as David predicted: Like rain upon the fleece: “Sicut pluvia in vellus.[7696] The soul of Mary was like wool, that happily imbibed all that great shower of graces without losing a drop. The holy Virgin, says St. Basil, drew into herself all the graces of the Holy Spirit.[7697] Hence she herself said by the mouth of Ecclesiasticus: My abode is in the fulness of saints: “In plenitudine Sanctorum detentio mea;”[7698] which St. Bonaventure thus explains: I have in fulness all that the other saints have in part;[7699] and St. Vincent Ferrer, speaking especially of the sanctity of Mary before her birth, said, that she surpassed all the saints and angels in sanctity.[7700]

The grace of the blessed Virgin surpassed the grace not only of each saint in particular, but of all the saints and angels together, as the most learned Father Francis Pepe, of the Society of Jesus, proves, in his admirable work on the grandeur of Jesus and Mary;[7701] and he asserts that this opinion, so glorious for our queen, is now common and established among modern theologians, as Carthagena, Suarez, Spinelli, Recupito, Guerra, and others, who have avowedly examined it, which was not done by the ancients; and he further relates, that the divine mother sent Father Martin Guttierez to thank Father Suarez in her name for having, with so much courage, defended this most probable opinion, which Father Segneri asserts, in his work entitled "The Servant of Mary," was maintained by the common consent of the Faculty of Salamanca.

Now if this opinion is universal and certain, the other opinion is also very probable, namely, that Mary received from the first moment of her immaculate conception this grace, superior to the grace of all the saints and angels together. This the same Father Suarez powerfully defends, and Father Spinelli, Recupito,[7702] and Colombiere,[7703] follow him. But besides the authority of theologians, there are yet two great and convincing reasons sufficient to prove the above-mentioned opinion. The first reason is, that Mary was chosen by God to be the mother of the divine Word, hence blessed Denis the Carthusian says, that having been elected to an order superior to all creatures (for in a certain sense the dignity of mother of God, as Father Suarez affirms, belongs to the order of the hypostatic union), gifts of a superior order were justly bestowed upon her from the beginning of her life, so that her graces far exceeded those granted to all other creatures. And, indeed, it cannot be doubted, that at the same time, when in the divine decrees the person of the eternal Word was predestined to become man, a mother was also destined for him, from whom he was to take the human nature, and this was our infant Mary. Now St. Thomas teaches that the Lord gives to every one grace proportioned to that dignity for which he destines him;[7704] St. Paul taught this before, when he said: "Who also hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament;"[7705] signifying to us that the Apostles received from God gifts proportioned to the great office to which they were elected. St. Bernardine of Sienna adds, that when a man is chosen by God for any state, he not only receives the dispositions requisite for that, but also the gifts necessary to fill the office in a becoming manner.[7706] Now if Mary was chosen to be mother of God, it was meet that God should adorn her, even from the first moment, with an immense grace, and of an order superior to the grace of all other men and angels; it being requisite that the grace should correspond with the most high and immense dignity to which God exalted her; in which opinion all theologians agree with St. Thomas, who says: The Virgin was elected to be the mother of God, and therefore there can be no doubt that God, by his grace, rendered her fit for it.[7707] Hence Mary, before being made mother of God, was adorned with a sanctity so perfect, that it rendered her fit for this great dignity. In the blessed Virgin, therefore, says the holy doctor, was a perfection, as it were preparative, by which she was fitted to become the mother of Christ; and this was the perfection of sanctification.[7708]

And St. Thomas had before said, that Mary was called full of grace, not on account of the degree of grace, since she had not grace in its highest possible degree; for even the habitual grace of Jesus Christ (as the same doctor says) was not the highest possible, so that God, by his absolute power, could not make it greater; although it was grace sufficient to correspond to the end for which his humanity was destined by the divine Wisdom, that is, for the union with the person of the Word.[7709] The divine power, although it may form something greater and better than the habitual grace of Christ, yet could make nothing that should be destined to any thing greater than the personal union of the only begotten Son of the Father, to which union such a measure of grace would sufficiently correspond, according to the idea of divine wisdom.[7710]

The same angelic Doctor teaches, that the divine power is so great, that however much it gives, there always remains something more to give; and although the natural power of the creature in receiving is in itself limited, so that it can be entirely filled, yet the power of its obedience to the divine will is unlimited, and God can always increase its fulness by making it more capable of receiving;[7711] and hence, to return to our proposition, St. Thomas declares, that the blessed Virgin, although not full of grace, in respect to absolute grace; yet is called full of grace in respect to herself, since she possessed a grace immense, sufficient, and corresponding to her great dignity, which rendered her fit to become the mother of a God.[7712] Hence the blessed Fernandez says, that the measure by which we can know how great was the grace communicated to Mary is her dignity as mother of God.[7713]

Justly, then, did David say, that the foundations of this city of God, Mary, should be laid upon the summits of the mountains: “Fundamenta ejus in montibus sanctis;”[7714] by which we are to understand that the beginning of the life of Mary was more exalted than the completed lives of all the saints put together. “The Lord loveth the gates of Sion,” the prophet continues, “above all the tabernacles of Jacob.”[7715] And David himself gave this as the reason, namely, that God was to make himself man in her virginal womb; Man was born in her: “Homo natus est in ea.” Hence it was fitting that God should give to this Virgin, even from the first moment he created her, a grace corresponding with the dignity of the mother of God.

Isaias foretold the same when he said, that in future the mountain of the house of the Lord, which was the blessed Virgin, should be prepared on the summit of all the other mountains, and therefore all the nations must hasten to this mountain, to receive the divine favors.[7716] St. Gregory explains this by saying: Yea, the mountain on the top of mountains, because the glory of Mary shone above that of all the saints.[7717] And as St. John Damascene expresses it: The mountain which it pleased God to choose for his habitation.[7718] Mary was called a cypress, but a cypress of Mount Sion: she was also called a cedar, but a cedar of Lebanon; an olive-tree, but a fair olive-tree; chosen, but chosen as the sun; for, as the sun, says St. Peter Damian, with his light so far exceeds all the splendor of the stars, that they are seen no more when be appears, so the great Virgin Mary surpasses, with her sanctity, the merits of the whole celestial court.[7719] And as St. Bernard elegantly expresses it: Mary was so sublime in sanctity, that none but Mary was a fitting mother of God. And no other Son than God was befitting Mary.[7720]

The second argument which proves that Mary, in the first moment of her life, was more holy than all the saints united, is founded upon the great office which she had from the beginning, of mediatrix of men; for which it was requisite that she should possess a greater treasure of grace than the whole human race together. It is very well known how universally this title of mediatrix is applied by theologians and by the very holy Fathers to Mary, since by her powerful intercession and merits *de congruo* she has obtained salvation for all, procuring for the ruined world the great blessing of redemption. It is said by merit *de congruo*, because Jesus Christ alone is our mediator by way of justice, and by merit *de condigno*, as it is expressed by the schools, he having offered to the eternal Father his merits, which he has accepted for our salvation. Mary, on the contrary, is the mediatrix of grace by way of simple intercession, and of merit *de congruo*, she having offered to God, as the theologians say with St. Bonaventure, her merits for the salvation of all men; and God, through grace, has accepted them in union with the merits of Jesus Christ. Hence Arnold Carnotensis says: She effected our salvation in common with Christ.[7721] And Richard of St. Victor, also: She desired, sought, and obtained the salvation of all; nay, more, the salvation of all was effected through her.[7722] So that every blessing and every gift of eternal life which each of the saints has received from God, has been obtained for them by Mary.

And it is this which the holy Church wishes us to understand, when she honors the divine mother by applying to her these passages of Ecclesiasticus: In me is all grace of the way and of the truth: “In me gratia omnis viæ et veritatis.”[7723] It is said: *Of the way*, because through Mary all graces are dispensed to those who are still on the road to heaven: *Of the truth*, because through Mary is given the light of truth. In me is all hope of life and of virtue: “In me omnes spes vitæ et virtutis.”[7724] Of life, because through Mary we hope to attain the life of grace upon earth, and of glory in heaven; and of virtue, because through Mary virtue is obtained, and especially the theological virtues, which are the principal virtues of the saints. I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope.[7725] Mary by her intercession obtains for her servants the gifts of divine love, of holy fear, of celestial light, and of holy confidence. And St. Bernard infers that it is taught by the Church, that Mary is the universal mediatrix of our salvation. “Extol the finder of grace, the mediatrix of salvation, the restorer of ages.” Thus the Church sings of her to me, and hath taught me to sing the same.[7726]

Therefore, as St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, asserts, the archangel Gabriel called her full of grace: “Ave gratia plena;” because whilst to others, as the saint above mentioned remarks, limited grace is given, to Mary it was given in fulness.[7727] And thus it was ordered, as St. Basil attests, that in this way she might become the worthy mediatrix between God and men.[7728] For if the Virgin had not been full of divine grace, as St. Lawrence Justinian adds, how could she be the ladder of paradise, the advocate of the world, and the true mediatrix between God and men?[7729]

The second argument is now made perfectly clear: If Mary, even from the beginning, as already destined to be the mother of the common Redeemer, received the office of mediatrix of all men, and consequently also of all the saints, it was requisite that she, from the beginning, should have a greater grace than all the saints had, for whom she was to intercede. To explain myself more clearly, if by means of Mary all men were to render themselves dear to God, it was meet that Mary should be more holy and more dear to God than all other men united. Otherwise, how could she intercede for all others? In order that an intercessor may obtain from his prince favor for all his vassals, it is absolutely necessary that he, more than all the other vassals, should be dear to his monarch. And Mary, therefore, concludes St. Anselm, merited to be the worthy restorer of the ruined world, because she was the most holy and most pure of all creatures.[7730]

Mary was, then, the mediatrix of men, some one will say, but can she be called also the mediatrix of angels? Many theologians are of opinion that Jesus Christ obtained by his merits the grace of perseverance also for the angels; so that as Jesus Christ was their mediator *de condigno,* Mary may also be called their mediatrix *de congruo,* having hastened by her prayers the coming of the Redeemer. At least, having merited *de congruo* to be chosen for the mother of the Messias, she merited for the angels the restoration of their seats which had been lost by the demons. Then, at least, she merited for them this accidental glory; hence, Richard of St. Victor says: Every creature by her is restored, the ruin of the angels by her is repaired, and human nature is reconciled.[7731] And St. Anselm before had said: All things by this Virgin are reclaimed and restored to their pristine state.[7732]

So that our heavenly child, because she was appointed mediatrix of the world, as well as predestined for the mother of the Redeemer, even from the first moment of her life, received grace greater than that of all the saints united. Hence how lovely in the sight of heaven and earth was the beautiful soul of that happy infant, although still inclosed in the womb of its mother! In the eye of God she was the creature most worthy of love, because, already full of grace and of merit, she could, even at that time, exult and say: When I was a little child I pleased the Most High: “Cum essem parvula, placui Altissimo.” And at the same time she was the creature most full of love for God that until that time had appeared in this world; so that Mary, had she been born immediately after her most pure conception, would have come into the world more rich in merits, and more holy, than all the saints united. Now, let us consider how much more holy she was at her birth, coming to the light after the acquisition of those merits which she made during the nine months that she remained in her mother’s womb. Let us now go on to consider the second point, namely: how great was the fidelity with which Mary at once corresponded with the divine grace.

Second Point.—It is not now an individual opinion of some few divines, says a learned author,[7733] it is the opinion of the whole world, that the holy infant, when she received sanctifying grace in the womb of St. Anna, received at the same time the perfect use of reason, with a great divine light corresponding to the grace with which she was enriched. Hence we may believe, that from the first moment when her pure soul was united to her most pure body, she was enlightened with divine wisdom to comprehend eternal truths, the beauty of virtue, above all, the infinite goodness of her God, and how much he deserves to be loved by all men, but especially by her, on account of the peculiar graces with which he had adorned her and distinguished her from all creatures, preserving her from the stain of original sin, bestowing on her a grace so abundant, and destining her for the mother of the Word and the queen of the universe.

Hence Mary, from that moment grateful to her God, began to effect all that she could, using faithfully all that great treasure of grace that she had received; and wholly applying herself to please and love the divine goodness. From that moment she loved him with all her strength, and thus continued to love him through all those nine months that she lived before her birth, in which she did not cease for a moment to unite herself to God by fervent acts of love. She was free from original sin, and therefore she was also exempt from every earthly attachment, from every irregular tendency, from every distraction, from all strife of the senses, which could have prevented her from advancing constantly in the divine love. All her senses united with her blessed spirit in drawing her near to God. Hence her pure soul, freed from every hindrance, without lingering, always rose to God, always loved him, and always increased in love to him. Therefore she called herself a plane-tree planted by the waters: "Quasi platanus exaltata sum juxta aquam;"[7734] for she, indeed, was that noble tree of God that always grew beside the stream of divine grace. She also called herself a vine: As the vine I have brought forth a pleasant odor: "Ego quasi vitis fructificavi suavitatem odoris;"[7735] not only because she was so humble in the eyes of the world, but also because, as the vine never ceases to grow: "Vitis nullo fine crescit:" according to the Proverb, so the most holy Virgin always increased in perfection. The growth of other trees, as the orange, mulberry, pear, &c., is determinate, but the vine always increases, and increases in proportion to the height of the tree by which it is supported. Hail, oh vine, always vigorous! thus St. Gregory Thaumaturgus salutes her;[7736] for she was always united to her God, who was her only support. Thus it was of her that the Holy Spirit spoke when he said: Who is this that cometh up from the desert flowing with delights, leaning on her beloved?[7737] Commenting on this, St. Ambrose says: Who is that, accompanied by the divine Word, increases like the vine supported by a lofty tree?[7738]

Many grave theologians teach, that the soul which possesses a habit of virtue, whenever she corresponds faithfully with the actual graces which she afterwards receives from God, always produces an act equal in intensity to the habit she possesses; so that each time she acquires a new and double merit, equal to the aggregate of all the merits before acquired. This increase, as they say, was granted to the angels in the time of their probation; and if it were granted to the angels, who shall say that it was not also given to the divine mother while she lived on this earth, but especially in the time of which I am speaking, when she remained in the womb of her mother, and was certainly more faithful than the angels, in corresponding with grace? Mary, then, during all that time was redoubling continually that sublime grace, which from the first moment she possessed; for, corresponding with all her power and perfection in every act she performed, at every successive moment she redoubled her merits. Hence, if, in the first moment, she had received a thousand degrees of grace, in the second she had two thousand, in the third four thousand, in the fourth eight thousand, in the fifth sixteen thousand, in the sixth thirty thousand; and yet we have only reached the sixth moment. But multiply in this way for a whole day, multiply for nine months, and consider, what treasures of grace, of merits, and of sanctity Mary brought into the world when she was born.

Let us rejoice, then, with our infant, who was born so holy, so dear to God, and so full of grace; and let us rejoice not only for her, but also for ourselves, since she came into the world full of grace, not only for her own glory, but for our good. St. Thomas says the most holy Virgin was full of grace in three ways: 1st, She was full of grace in soul, so that from the beginning her holy soul belonged entirely to God. 2d, She was full of grace in body, so that she merited to clothe the eternal Word with her pure flesh. 3d, She was full of grace for the common benefit, so that all men might share it.[7739] Some saints, adds the angelic Doctor, have so much grace, that not only is it enough for themselves but also to save many others, not, however, all men; only to Jesus Christ and Mary was given so great a grace that it was sufficient to save all men. If any one bad enough for the salvation of all, that would be the greatest; and this was in Jesus Christ and the blessed Virgin.[7740] Thus St. Thomas writes. Hence what St. John said of Jesus—“And of his fulness we all have received”[7741]—the saints say of Mary. St. Thomas of Villanova says: Full of grace, of whose fulness all receive.[7742] Therefore St. Anselm remarks, there is no one who does not share in the grace of Mary.[7743] And is there any one in the world to whom Mary is not merciful, and on whom she does not bestow some favor?[7744] From Jesus, however (we should understand), we receive grace as from the author of grace, from Mary as the mediatrix; from Jesus as the Saviour, from Mary as the advocate: from Jesus as the fountain, from Mary as the channel.

Therefore St. Bernard says that God has established Mary as the channel of the mercies which he wishes to dispense to men; and for this reason he filled her with grace, that every one might receive his portion of her fulness.

A full channel, that all might partake of its fulness, but not receive the fulness itself.[7745] Hence the saint exhorts all to consider with how much love God will have us honor this great Virgin, since in her he has placed all the treasure of his blessings; that whatever we possess of hope, grace, and salvation, we may thank our most loving queen for it; since it all comes to us through her hands, and by her intercession.[7746] Miserable is that soul who closes for herself this channel of grace, by neglecting to recommend herself to Mary! When Holophernes wished to make himself master of the city of Bethulia, he ordered the aqueducts to be destroyed: “And he commanded their aqueduct to be cut off.”[7747] And this the devil does when he wishes to make himself master of a soul, he makes her abandon the devotion to the most holy Mary. When this channel is closed, she will at once lose the light and the fear of God, and finally eternal salvation. By the following example it will be seen how great is the compassion of the heart of Mary, and the ruin which he brings upon himself who closes this channel, and abandons devotion to this queen of heaven.

EXAMPLE

It is narrated by Tritemius, Camsius, and others, that in Magdeburg, a city of Saxony, there was a certain man named Udo, who, from his youth, had been so destitute of talent that he was the ridicule of all his school-fellows. Now one day, being more than usually disheartened, he went to pray to the most holy Virgin before her image. Mary appeared to him in a dream, and said to him: “Udo, I will console you, and not only will I obtain from God for you abilities which will protect you from derision, but even talents which will make you admired; and moreover, after the death of the bishop, I promise that you shall be elected in his place.” Thus Mary said, and thus it came to pass. Udo made great progress in the sciences, and obtained the bishopric of that city. But Udo was so ungrateful to God and to his benefactress for these favors, that he neglected all his devotions and became the scandal of the place. Whilst he was in bed one night with a wicked companion, he heard a voice saying to him: “Udo, cease this sinful pastime; you have sinned enough.”[7748] At first he was irritated by these words, thinking it was some one who was reproving him; but hearing it repeated a second and a third night, he began to tremble a little, lest it should be a voice from heaven. Notwithstanding all this, he continued in his wickedness. But after God had given him three months for repentance, behold the punishment! One night a devout canon, named Frederick, was praying, in the church of St. Maurice, that God would remove the scandal which Udo gave; when, behold, the door of the church was burst open by a strong wind. Two youths entered with lighted torches in their hands, and stood on each side of the high altar. Then two others followed, who spread before the altar a carpet, and placed upon it two thrones of gold. Another youth, in military attire, followed, with a sword in his hand, and stopping in the midst of the church, cried: "Oh ye saints of heaven, whose relics are preserved in this church, come to assist at the great justice which the sovereign Judge is about to execute." At these words many saints appeared, and also the twelve apostles, as assistants in this judgment. Lastly, Jesus Christ entered, and seated himself on one of these thrones. Afterwards Mary appeared, attended by many holy virgins, and seated herself on the other throne at the side of her Son. The Judge now ordered that the culprit should be brought forward, and he was the miserable Udo. St. Maurice spoke, and demanded, in the name of the people whom he had scandalized, justice for his infamous life. All present raised their voices and said: "Oh Lord, he merits death." "Let him die, then," said the eternal Judge. But before the sentence was executed (see how great is the mercy of Mary) she, the kind mother, that she might not be present at that tremendous act of justice, left the church; and then the heavenly minister, who entered among the first, with the sword, approaching Udo, with one blow severed the head from the body, and the vision vanished. The place was left dark. The canon, trembling, went for a light from a lamp which was burning under the church; and when he returned, saw the body of Udo with the head cut off, and the pavement all covered with blood. When daylight came, the people thronged the church, and the canon related the whole vision and the circumstances of that fearful tragedy. And on the same day the wretched Udo, who was condemned to hell, appeared to one of his chaplains, who knew nothing of what had taken place in the church. The body of Udo was thrown into a marsh, and his blood remained for a perpetual memorial on that pavement, which was always covered with a carpet; and from that time it became the custom to uncover it when a new bishop took possession of the church, that at the sight of such a punishment he might be mindful to lead a good life, and not be ungrateful for the graces of the Lord and of his most holy mother.

PRAYER

Oh holy and heavenly infant Mary! thou who art the destined mother of my Redeemer and the great mediatrix of miserable sinners, have pity on me. Behold at thy feet another ungrateful creature who has recourse to thee and implores thy mercy. It is true that, for my ingratitude towards God and thee, I am deserving of being abandoned by God and by thee; but I have been told, and thus I believe, knowing how great is thy compassion, that wilt not refuse to help him who, with confidence, recommends himself to thee. Thou, oh most exalted of all creatures, since there is no one above thee but God, and, in comparison with thee, the greatest in heaven are but small; oh saint of saints, oh Mary, abyss of grace, full of grace, help a miserable sinner who has lost it by his own fault. I know that thou art so dear to God that he denies thee nothing. I know also that thou dost rejoice to employ thy greatness in relieving the distressed. Ah, make known how great is thy favor with God by obtaining for me a divine light and a flame so powerful that it may change me from a sinner into a saint, and, detaching me from every earthly affection, may wholly inflame me with divine love. Do this, oh Lady, because thou canst do it; do this for the love of that God who has made thee so great, so powerful, and merciful. Thus I hope. Amen.

Discourse III

ON THE PRESENTATION OF MARY

THE OFFERING WHICH MARY MADE OF HERSELF TO GOD WAS PROMPT, WITHOUT DELAY; ENTIRE, WITHOUT RESERVE.

THERE never has been, and there never will be, any offering of a pure creature greater and more perfect than that which Mary made to God, being yet only a child of three years, when she presented herself in the temple to offer him, not spices, nor calves, nor talents of gold, but her whole self as a perfect holocaust, consecrating herself as a perpetual victim in his honor. Well did she understand the voice of God, which even then called her to dedicate herself wholly to his love, with these words: Arise, make haste, my love, and come: “Surge, propera, amica mea, et veni.”[7749] And therefore her Lord would have her from thenceforth forget her country, her parents, and every thing, to attend to nothing but to love and please him: “Hearken, oh daughter, and see and incline thy ear; and forget thy people and thy father’s house.”[7750] And she at once obeyed promptly the divine voice. Let us consider, then, how acceptable to God was this offering which Mary made of herself, as she presented herself promptly and entirely to him; promptly without delay; entirely without reserve; these are the two points.

First Point.—Mary offered herself to God promptly. From the first moment when this heavenly infant was sanctified in the womb of her mother (which was at the first moment of her immaculate conception), she received the perfect use of reason, that she might from thenceforth begin to merit, as the Doctors universally agree; and one of them, Father Suarez, says, that as the most perfect mode by which God sanctifies a soul is its sanctification by its own merits, as St. Thomas teaches,[7751] so it is to be believed that the blessed Virgin has been thus sanctified.[7752] And if this privilege was granted to the angels and to Adam, as the angelic Doctor says,[7753] much more should we believe that it was granted to the divine mother, on whom we cannot doubt that God, having deigned to make her his mother, conferred greater gifts than on all other creatures, as the same Doctor teaches. From her he received his human nature, hence before all others she must have obtained from Christ the fulness of grace;[7754] for, being mother, as Father Suarez says, she has a certain peculiar right to all the gifts of her Son.[7755] And as, by the hypostatic union, Jesus must of right have the fulness of all graces; thus by the divine maternity, it was meet that Jesus should confer on Mary, as a natural debt, greater graces than those bestowed on all the other saints and angels.

Thus, from the beginning of her life, Mary knew God, and knew him so well, that no tongue, as the angel declared to St. Bridget, shall suffice to tell how the intellect of the holy Virgin clearly saw God in the first moment she knew him.[7756] And even in that first moment of light by which she was illuminated, she offered herself wholly to her Lord, dedicating herself entirely to his love and glory, as the angel continued to say to St. Bridget: "At once our queen resolved to sacrifice her will to God, with all her love, for the whole time of her life; and no one can understand how completely her will submitted itself then to embrace all things pleasing to him."[7757]

Yet, when the immaculate infant understood afterwards that her holy parents, Joachim and Anna, had promised to God, even by a vow, as various authors relate, that if he should grant them a child, it should be consecrated to his service in the temple; for it was an ancient custom of the Jews to place their children in cells which were near the temple, that there they might be properly educated, as we learn from Baronius, Nicephorus, Cedrenus, and Suarez, as also from Josephus, the Jewish historian, St. John Damascene, St. Gregory of Nicomedia, St. Anselm,[7758] and St. Ambrose.[7759] As it is also clearly seen in Macchabees, where, speaking of Heliodorus, who wished to enter the temple by force in order to take from it the treasures deposited there, it is said: "Because the place was like to come into contempt . . . the virgins that were shut up hastened to Onias."[7760] When Mary knew of this vow, as I have before said, she wished solemnly to offer and consecrate herself to God, by presenting herself in the temple, as Germanus asserts, and also St. Epiphanius, who says, that when she was hardly three years old she was presented in the temple,[7761] at an age when children have the greatest desire for the assistance of their parents, and need it the most. She was even the first to entreat her parents earnestly that they would take her to the temple, to fulfil their promise; and her holy mother, Anna, as St. Gregory of Nyssa says, did not delay to bring her there, and offer her to God.[7762]

And behold, Joachim and Anna, generously sacrificing to God what was dearest to them on earth, set out from Nazareth, carrying by turns, in their arms, their beloved little daughter, who could not walk so great a distance as was that from Nazareth to Jerusalem, a journey, as several authors assert, of eighty miles. They thus went on their way, accompanied by only a few of their relations, but by hosts of angels, as St. George of Nicomedia asserts,[7763] who attended and ministered to the immaculate Virgin, as she went to dedicate herself to the Divine Majesty. How beautiful are thy steps, oh prince's daughter! "Quam pulchri sunt gressus tui, filia principis!"[7764] Oh, how beautiful, how pleasing to God, as the angels sung, are thy steps, as thou goest to offer thyself to him, oh great and chosen daughter of our common Lord! God himself on that day, says Bernardino de Bustis, celebrated a great feast with the whole celestial court, when he beheld his spouse conducted to the temple.[7765] For he never saw a creature more holy and more beloved offering herself to him.[7766] Go, then, said St. Germanus, Archbishop of Constantinople, go, oh queen of the world, oh mother of God, go joyfully to the house of the Lord, to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit that will make thee mother of the eternal World.[7767]

When the holy company had arrived at the temple, the eager child turned to her parents, kneeling kissed their hands, and asked for their benediction; and then, without turning back, she ascended the fifteen steps of the temple, as Arias Montanus relates upon the authority of Josephus, the Jewish historian, and presented herself to the priest, who, according to St. Germanus, was Zachary; then, taking leave of the world, and renouncing all the goods which it promises to its followers, she offered and consecrated herself to her Creator.

At the time of the deluge, the raven which was sent by Noe from the ark remained to feed upon the bodies of the dead, but the dove without stopping to rest her foot, returned quickly to the ark: She returned to him into the ark: "Reversa est ad eum in arcam."[7768] Many who are sent by God into this world, unhappily stop to feed on earthly things. Not so Mary, our celestial dove; she knew that God should be our only good, our only hope, our only love; she knew that the world is full of dangers, and that he who the soonest leaves it, is freest from its snares; therefore she sought promptly to flee from it in her tenderest years, and seclude herself in the sacred retirement of the temple, where she could better hear the voice of God, and better honor and love him. And thus the holy Virgin, from the beginning of her life, rendered herself dear and acceptable to her Lord, as the holy Church makes her say: “Rejoice with me, all ye who love the Lord, for when I was little I pleased the Most High.”[7769] For this reason she was compared to the moon; for as the moon completes her course more quickly than the other planets, so Mary attained perfection sooner than all the saints, by giving herself promptly to God without delay; and entirely without reserve. And now let us pass to the second point, upon which we shall have much to say.

Point Second.—The enlightened infant well knew that God does not accept a divided heart, but wishes it entirely consecrated to his love, according to the precept he has given: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.”[7770] Hence, from the first moment of her existence, she began to love God with all her strength, and gave herself wholly to him. But her most holy soul awaited with earnest desire the time when she could in reality consecrate herself entirely, and with a public solemnity, to God. Let us consider, then, with how great a fervor the loving Virgin, seeing herself actually inclosed in that holy place, first prostrated herself to kiss that ground as the house of the Lord, then adored his infinite majesty, and thanked him for the favor she had received of being brought so early to inhabit his house. Then she offered herself entirely to God; entirely, without reserving any thing. She offered to him all her powers and all her senses, her whole mind and her whole heart, her whole soul and her whole body, for it was then, as we are told, that to please God, she made the vow of virginity. A vow, according to Rupert the Abbot, that Mary was the first to make: “Votum virginitatis prima emisit.”[7771] And she offered herself without limitation of time, as Bernardine de Bustis asserts: Mary offered and dedicated herself to the perpetual service of God.[7772] Since she had then the intention of dedicating her whole life to the service of his Divine Majesty in the temple, if it should so please God; and of never quitting that sacred place, Oh, with what affection must she have exclaimed: My beloved to me, and I to him: “Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.”[7773] I for him, as Cardinal Hugo remarks, will wholly live and will wholly die: “Ego illi tota vivam, et tota moriar.” My Lord and my God, she said, I have come hither only to please thee, and to give thee all the honor I can; here I will live wholly for thee and die for thee, if it so please thee; accept the sacrifice which this thy poor servant makes to thee, and help me to be faithful to thee.

And here let us consider how holy was the life that Mary led in the temple, where, like the rising morn, “Quasi aurora consurgens,” increasing always in perfection, as the dawn increases in light; who can describe how, from day to day, in her more brightly shone her virtues; charity, modesty, humility, silence, mortification, meekness? This fair olive-tree, planted in the house of God, as St. John Damascene says, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, became the habitation of all the virtues.[7774] The same saint says in another place: The countenance of the Virgin was modest, her mind humble, her words kind, proceeding from a recollected heart.[7775] And he elsewhere asserts: The Virgin withdrew her thoughts from all earthly things, embracing all the virtues. Thus, then, by the practice of perfection, she made so great progress in a short time, as to merit being made a temple worthy of God.[7776]

St. Anselm, also, speaking of the life of the holy Virgin in the temple, says: Mary was docile, spoke little, was always composed, never laughed, was never distracted. She persevered in prayer, in the reading of the Holy Scripture, in fasting, and all virtuous works.[7777] St. Jerome goes more into detail, and tells us how Mary’s life was ordered: From early in the morning till nine o’clock she remained in prayer; from nine to three she was engaged in labor; at three she resumed her prayers, until the angel, as usual, brought her food. She was the most constant in vigils, the most exact in obedience to the divine law, the most profound in humility, and the most perfect in every virtue. No one ever saw her angry; all her words were so full of sweetness, that when she spoke it always appeared that God was with her.[7778]

The divine mother herself revealed to St. Elizabeth, a Benedictine nun, in the convent of Sconaugia, as we read in St. Bonaventure,[7779] that when she was left in the temple by her parents, she resolved on having God alone for father, and often thought what she could do to please him.[7780] She determined, moreover, to consecrate to him her virginity, and to possess nothing in the world, giving her entire will to God.[7781] She also told her that above all the divine precepts to be observed, she placed before her eyes the precept, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,”[7782] and that she went in the middle of the night to pray the Lord before the altar of the temple, that he would grant her the grace to observe the commandments, and to see the mother of the Redeemer born while she lived, praying him that he would preserve her eyes to see her, her tongue to praise her, her hands and feet to serve her, and her knees to adore in her arms, his divine Son. St. Elizabeth, on hearing this, said to her: “But, my Lady, were you not full of grace and virtue?” and Mary answered her: “Know that I esteemed myself the most vile, and unworthy of divine grace; therefore I prayed thus for grace and virtues.” And, finally, that she might persuade us of the absolute necessity we are all under, of asking from God the graces that we need, she added: “Do you think that I obtained grace and virtue without effort? Know that I received no grace from God without great effort, constant prayer, ardent desire, and many tears and penances.”

But above all, we should consider the revelations made to St. Bridget, of the virtues and exercises practised by the blessed Virgin in her childhood, in these words: “Even from an infant Mary was filled with the Holy Spirit, and as she increased in age, she increased also in grace. Even from that time she resolved to love God with all her heart, so that he should never be offended by her actions or her words, and for this reason all the goods of earth were despised by her. She gave all she could to the poor. In her food she was so temperate that she only took what was absolutely necessary to support life. Discovering then from the sacred Scriptures, that this God was to be born from a virgin to redeem the world, her spirit was so kindled with divine love that she desired and thought only of God; and taking pleasure only in God, shunned the conversation even of her parents, that they might not hinder her from thinking on God. And more than all did she desire that the coming of the Messiah might be in her day, that she might be the servant to that happy Virgin who merited to be his mother. Thus the revelation made to St. Bridget.[7783]

Ah, for love of this exalted child the Redeemer hastened his coming into the world, for whilst she through her humility did not esteem herself worthy of being the servant of the divine mother, she was herself chosen for this mother, and by the odor of her virtues and her powerful prayers, she drew into her virginal womb the divine Son. Hence was Mary called the turtle by her divine spouse: The voice of the turtle is heard in our land: “Vox turturis audita est in terra nostra.”[7784] Not only because she, like the turtle, always loved solitude, living in this world as in a desert, but also because, like the turtle who makes the fields mournful with its sad note, Mary was always mourning in the temple over the miseries of the lost world, and asking from God, the Redeemer of the world. Oh, with how much greater affection and fervor than the prophets did she repeat to God in the temple their supplications and sighs, that he might send the Redeemer: “Send forth, oh Lord, the Lamb, the ruler of the earth.”[7785] “Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just.”[7786] “Oh, that thou wouldst rend the heavens and wouldst come down.”[7787]

In a word, it was an object of delight to God to see this young Virgin always ascending to a higher perfection, like a pillar of smoke, rich in the odors of all virtues, as the Holy Spirit exactly describes her in the sacred Canticles: “Who is she that goeth up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh, and frankincense, and of all the powders of the perfumer?”[7788] This holy child, says Sophronius, was in truth the garden of delights of the Lord, for he found there flowers of every kind, and all the odors of the virtues.[7789] This St. John Chrysostom affirms, that God chose Mary for his mother on earth, because he found not on the earth a more perfect and more holy Virgin than Mary, neither a place more worthy for him to dwell in than her sacred womb;[7790] as St. Bernard also says: On the earth there was no more worthy place than the womb of the Virgin.[7791] St. Antoninus asserts that the blessed Virgin, in order to be elected and predestined to the dignity of mother of God, must have possessed a perfection so great and consummate, that it should surpass the perfection of all other creatures.|[7792]

As then the holy young child Mary, presented and offered herself in the temple promptly and entirely, so let us, at this day, without delay and without reserve, present ourselves to Mary, and entreat her to offer us to

God, who will not refuse us when he sees us offered by the hand of her who was the living temple of the Holy Spirit, the delight of her Lord, and the chosen mother of the Eternal Word. And let us place a great hope in this exalted and most gracious Lady, who rewards with so much love the devotions that are offered to her by her servants, as may be seen by the following example.

EXAMPLE

We read in the life of Sister Domenica of Paradise, written by Father Ignatius of Niente, a Dominican, that in a village called Paradise, near Florence, this little girl was born of poor parents. From her infancy she practised devotion to the divine mother. She fasted every day of the week in her honor, and on Saturday she distributed to the poor the food of which she had deprived herself; and every Saturday she went into the garden, or into the neighboring fields, and there gathered all the flowers she could find, and placed them before a statue of the holy Virgin with the infant Jesus in her arms, which she had in her house. But let us see now with what favors our most grateful Lady compensated this her servant, for the homage she paid her. As she stood one Sunday at the window, when she was about ten years of age, she saw in the street a woman with a beautiful countenance, accompanied by a little child, and they both extended their hands as if to ask alms. She went for some bread, and, behold, before she could open the door, they stood beside her, and she saw wounds on the hands, feet, and breast of the child. Then she said to the woman: “Who has wounded this child?” “It was love,” answered the mother. Domenica, charmed by his beauty and modesty, asked him if his wounds pained him; but he only answered with a smile. As they were standing near the images of Jesus and of Mary, the mother said to Domenica: “Tell me, little girl, what makes you crown these images with flowers?” She answered: “The love I have for Jesus and Mary makes me do it.” “And how much do you love them?” “I love them as much as I can.” “And how much can you love them?” “As much as they will help me.” “Continue, then,” said the mother, “continue to love them, for they will richly return your love in paradise.”

Then the little girl perceived a celestial odor coming forth from those wounds, and she asked the mother with what ointment she had anointed them, and if that ointment could be purchased? “It is purchased,” answered she, “with faith and works.” Domenica then offered them the bread. The mother said: “The food of this my Son is love; tell him that you love Jesus and he will be satisfied.” The child at mention of this word love, began to show great signs of joy, and turning to the little girl, he asked her how much she loved Jesus. She answered that she loved him so much, that day and night she was always thinking of him, and desired nothing else but to please him as much as she could. “Well,” answered he, “love him; and love will teach you what you must do to satisfy him.” The odor then increasing which came from those wounds, Domenica exclaimed: “Oh God, this odor makes me die of love; if the odor of a child is so sweet, what must be the odor of paradise?” But behold the scene was changed; the mother appeared robed as a queen, and surrounded with light, and the child resplendent as a sun of beauty. He took those flowers and strewed them on her head. She at once saw that these persons were Jesus and Mary, and prostrated herself in adoration before them. And thus ended the vision. Domenica afterwards took the Dominican habit, and died in the year 1553, with the reputation of a saint.

PRAYER

Oh beloved of God! most amiable child Mary! oh, that like thee, who didst present thyself in the temple, and at once and wholly didst consecrate thyself the glory and love of thy God, I might offer to thee to-day the first years of my life, and dedicate myself entirely to thy service, oh my most holy and sweet Lady! But it is now too late, for, unhappily, I have lost so many years in serving the world and my caprices, as it were entirely forgetful of thee and of God. Alas for the time in which I did not love thee![7793] But it is better to commence late than at all. Behold, oh Mary, to-day I present myself to thee, and offer myself entirely to thy service, for the longer or shorter time that remains for me to live on the earth; and with thee I renounce all creatures, and dedicate myself entirely to the love of my Creator. I consecrate to thee, then, oh queen, my mind, that I may always think of the love that thou dost merit, my tongue to praise thee, and my heart to love thee. Accept, oh most holy Virgin, the offering which the most miserable sinner presents to thee; accept it, I pray thee, for the sake of that consolation which filled thy heart when in the temple thou gavest thyself to God. And if late I begin to serve thee, it is right that I should make good the time lost by redoubling my devotion and my love. Aid my weakness, oh mother of mercy, with thy powerful intercession, and obtain for me perseverance and strength to be faithful to thee until death; that always serving thee in this life, I may come to praise thee eternally in paradise.

Discourse IV

ON THE ANNUNCIATION OF MARY

MARY COULD NOT HUMBLE HERSELF MORE THAN SHE DID IN THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD. ON THE OTHER HAND, GOD COULD NOT EXALT HER MORE THAN HE HAS EXALTED HER.

“WHOSOEVER shall exalt himself shall be humbled, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.”[7794] These are the words of our Lord, and cannot fail. Therefore, God having determined to make himself man, in order to redeem lost man, and thus manifest to the world his infinite goodness, being about to choose on earth his mother, sought among women the holiest and most humble. Among them all he saw one, the youthful virgin Mary, who, as she was the most perfect in all virtues, so was she the most simple; and humble as a dove in her own esteem. “There are young maidens without number; one is my dove, my perfect one.”[7795] Let this one, then, said God, be my chosen mother. Let us then see how humble Mary was, and how God exalted her. Mary could not humble herself more than she did in the incarnation of the Word; this will be the first point. That God could not exalt Mary more than he exalted her, will be the second.

First Point.—Our Lord in the holy Canticles, speaking precisely of the humility of this most humble Virgin, said: “While the King was at his repose, my spikenard sent forth the odor thereof.”[7796] St. Antoninus, commenting on these words, says that the spikenard, inasmuch as it is a small and lowly plant, was a type of the humility of Mary, whose odor ascended to heaven, and drew, even from the bosom of the eternal Father, into her virginal womb the divine Word. The spikenard is a small herb, and signifies the blessed Virgin, who exhaled the odor of humility; which odor ascended even to heaven, and in heaven as it were awakened him who was in his repose, and brought him to rest in her womb.[7797] Thus the Lord, drawn by the odor of this humble Virgin, chose her for his mother, when he wished to become man to redeem the world. But he, for the greater glory and merit of this his mother, would not make himself her Son without first obtaining her consent. He would not take flesh from her without her consent.[7798] Therefore, when the humble young Virgin was in her poor dwelling, sighing and praying to God more earnestly than ever that he would send the Redeemer, as was revealed to St. Elizabeth, a Benedictine nun, behold the Archangel Gabriel came, bearing the great embassy. He enters and salutes her, saying: “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.”[7799] Hail, oh Virgin, full of grace, for thou wast always rich in grace, above all the other saints. The Lord is with thee because thou art so humble. Thou art blessed among women, for all others have incurred the curse of original sin; but thou, because thou art to be the mother of the Blessed One, hast been and wilt always be blessed, and free from every stain.

But what does the humble Mary answer to this salutation so full of praises? She answered nothing, but she was disturbed thinking on such a salutation: “And when she had heard, she was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be.”[7800] And why was she disturbed? through fear of illusion, or through modesty at the sight of a man, as some suppose, remembering that the angel appeared to her in human form? No, the text is plain; she was troubled at his saying, “turbata est in sermone ejus,” as Eusebius Emissenus remarks: Not by his appearance, but by his speech: Non in vultu, sed in sermone ejus.” Such a disturbance was then wholly owing to her humility at hearing those praises, so far beyond her humble esteem of herself. Hence the more she is exalted by the angel, the more she humbles herself, and the more she considers her nothingness. St. Bernardine remarks: If the angel had said that she was the greatest sinner in the world, Mary would not have been thus surprised; but in hearing those exalted praises she was greatly disturbed.[7801] She was troubled because, being so full of humility, she abhorred every praise, and desired that none but her Creator, the giver of every good, should be praised and blessed. Mary said exactly this to St. Bridget, speaking of the time when she became mother of God. “I disliked my own praise, and only wished to hear that of the giver and Creator.”[7802]

But I would remark, that the blessed Virgin had already well learned from the Holy Scriptures that the time foretold by the prophets for the coming of the Messiah had arrived; that the weeks of Daniel were now completed; that already, according to the prophecy of Jacob, the sceptre of Judah had passed into the hands of Herod, a strange king, and she well knew that a virgin was to be the mother of the Messiah; and she hears those praises offered by the angel to herself, which seemed to belong only to the mother of God; did it then come into her mind that perhaps she herself might be that chosen mother of God? No, her profound humility did not permit this thought. These praises had no other effect than to cause her great fear; so that, as St. Peter Chrysologus remarks: As Christ wished to be consoled by an angel, so must the Virgin be encouraged by an angel.[7803] As the Saviour willed to be comforted by an angel, so it was necessary that St. Gabriel, seeing Mary so full of fear at that salutation, should encourage her, saying: “Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God.”[7804] Do not fear, oh Mary, nor be surprised by the great titles by which I have saluted thee, for if thou art so little and humble in thine own eyes, God, who exalts the humble, has made thee worthy to find the grace lost by man; and therefore has he preserved thee from the common stain of all the children of Adam; therefore, even from the moment of thy conception he has adorned thee with a greater grace than that of all the saints; and therefore, finally, he now exalts thee to be his mother: “Behold, thou shalt conceive and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus.”[7805]

Now why this delay? The angel, oh Lady, awaits thy answer, as St. Bernard says: We rather await it who are condemned to death.[7806] Behold, oh our mother, continues St. Bernard, to thee is now offered the price of our salvation, which will be the divine Word in thee made man; if thou wilt accept him for a son, we shall be immediately delivered from death; behold the price of our salvation is offered to thee; immediately we are liberated if thou dost consent.[7807] Thy Lord himself, as he is greatly enamored of thy beauty, so much the more desires thy consent, on which he has made the salvation of the world depend.[7808] Answer quickly, oh Lady, adds St. Augustine, delay no longer the salvation of the world, which now depends on thy consent.[7809]

But, behold, Mary already answers; she answers the angel, and says: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word.”[7810] Oh, what more beautiful, more humble, and more prudent answer could all the wisdom of men and of angels united have invented, if they had thought of it for millions of years! Oh powerful answer, which gave joy in heaven, and poured upon the earth a vast flood of graces and blessings! Answer, that hardly came forth from the humble heart of Mary before it drew from the bosom of the eternal Father, the only begotten Son, to become man in her most pure womb! yes, for hardly had she uttered these words: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word; when immediately the Word was made flesh: “Verbum caro factum est;” the Son of God became also the Son of Mary. Oh powerful Fiat! exclaims St. Thomas of Villanova; oh efficacious Fiat! oh Fiat to be reverenced above every fiat![7811] for by another fiat God created the light, the heaven, and the earth; but by this fiat of Mary, says the saint, God became man like us.

But let us not wander from our point, let us consider the great humility of the Virgin in this answer. She was indeed well enlightened to understand how great was the dignity of the mother of God. She already had been assured by the angel that she was this happy mother chosen by the Lord. But with all this she is not at all raised in her own esteem, stops not at all to enjoy her exaltation, but considering on one side her own nothingness, and on the other the infinite majesty of her God, who chose her for his mother, she knows how unworthy she is of such an honor, but would by no means oppose herself to his will. Hence, when her consent was asked, what does she do? what does she say? Wholly annihilated as to self; all inflamed, on the other hand, with the desire of uniting herself thus more closely to God, by entirely abandoning herself to the divine will: Behold, she answers, behold the handmaid of the Lord: “Ecce ancilla Domini.” Behold the slave of the Lord: obliged to do whatever her Lord commands. And she intended to say: If the Lord chooses me for his mother, who have nothing of my own; if all that I have is his gift, who could think that he selects me for any merit of my own? Behold the handmaid of the Lord. What merit can a slave have, to be made the mother of her Lord? Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Let the goodness of God alone be praised, and not the slave; since it is wholly his goodness which has led him to place his eye on a creature so lowly as I, and make her so great.

Oh humility, exclaims here Guerric the Abbot; small in its own eyes, great in the eyes of God! Insufficient to itself, sufficient to him whom the whole world cannot contain![7812] But still more beautiful on this occasion is the exclamation of St. Bernard, which he makes in the fourth sermon on the Assumption of Mary, in which, admiring the humility of Mary, he says: Oh Lady, how have you been able to unite in your heart such an humble esteem of yourself with so much purity, so much innocence, and with such fulness of grace[7813] as thou dost possess! And whence, oh blessed Virgin, did this humility, this so great humility, take such deep root in thee, when thou wast so honored and exalted by God?[7814] Lucifer, seeing himself endowed with great beauty, aspired to exalt his throne above the stars, and make himself like to God.[7815] Now what would not that proud spirit have said and attempted if he had seen himself adorned with the privileges of Mary? Not so the humble Mary; the more she saw herself exalted, the more she humbled herself. Ah Lady, for this beautiful humility, concludes St. Bernard, thou hast indeed merited to be regarded by God with peculiar love, to charm thy King with thy beauty; to draw him with the sweet odor of thy humility, from his repose in the bosom of God, into thy most pure womb.[7816] Hence St. Bernardine de Bustis says, that Mary merited more by that answer: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord,” than all creatures could merit by their works.[7817]

Thus, says St. Bernard, this innocent Virgin, although by her virginity she rendered herself dear to God, yet by humility afterwards rendered herself worthy, as much as a creature can render itself worthy, to be made the mother of her Creator. Although she pleased by her virginity, by her humility she conceived: “Etsi placuit ex virginitate, tamen ex humilitate concepit.”[7818] And St. Jerome confirms this by saying, that God chose her for his own mother more for her humility, than for all her other sublime virtues.[7819] Mary herself expressed this to St. Bridget, by saying to her: How much did I merit such a grace to be made the mother of my Lord, if not because I knew my nothingness, and humiliated myself?[7820] And this she declared before in her Canticle, so full of the deepest humility, when she said: “Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid . . . He that is mighty hath done great things to me."[7821] Upon which words St. Lawrence Justinian remarks, that the blessed Virgin does not say, he regarded my virginity, my innocence, but only my humility.[7822] And by this humility, as St. Francis de Sales remarks, Mary did not intend to praise the virtue of her humility, but wished to Proclaim that God had regarded her nothingness, *humility, that is, nothingness:* "Humilitatem, id est nihilitatem," and through his pure goodness had willed thus to exalt her.

In a word, St. Augustine says that the humility of Mary was like a ladder, by which our Lord deigned to descend upon earth to become man in her womb.[7823] And St. Antoninus confirms this by saying that the humility of the Virgin was her most perfect and the next preparation to become the mother of God.|[7824] And by this is explained what Isaias predicted: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root.[7825] The blessed Albertus Magnus remarks, that the divine flower, namely, the only-begotten of God, according to Isaias, would come forth, not from the top or the trunk of the tree of Jesse, but from its root, which precisely denotes the humility of the mother.[7826] And this is more clearly explained by the Abbot of Celles. Observe, says he, that not from the top, but from the root this flower is to spring up.[7827] And therefore our Lord said to his beloved daughter: "Turn away thy eyes from me, for they have made me flee away."[7828] And from whence flee, unless from the bosom of the Father to the womb of Mary?|[7829] as St. Augustine says. Upon which the learned interpreter Fernandez observes, that the most humble eyes of Mary, with which she always contemplated the divine greatness, never losing sight of her nothingness, did such violence to God herself that they drew him into her bosom.[7830] And by this we are to understand, says Francone the Abbot, why the Holy Spirit so much praised the beauty of this his spouse for her eyes, which were like those of a dove: "How beautiful art thou, my love! how, beautiful art thou! thy eyes are like doves eyes;"[7831] because Mary, looking on God with the eyes of a simple, humble dove, he was so much enamored of her beauty, that with the bands of love she made him a prisoner in her virginal womb; these are the words of the abbot: In what place on the earth could so beautiful a virgin be found, who could allure the King of heaven by her eyes, and by a holy violence lead him captive, bound in the chains of charity?[7832] We will conclude this point by remarking that Mary, in the incarnation of the Word, as we have seen from the beginning, could not have humiliated herself more than she did. Let us now see how God could exalt her no higher than he did by making her his mother.

Point Second.—In order to comprehend, the greatness to which Mary was elevated, it would be necessary to comprehend the sublime majesty and grandeur of God. It is sufficient, then, only to say, that God made this Virgin his mother, to have it understood that God could not exalt her more than he did exalt her. Rightly did St. Arnold Carnotensis affirm, that God, by making himself the Son of the Virgin, established her in superior rank to all the saints and angels: "Maria constituta est super omnem Creaturam."[7833] So that, next to God, she is incomparably higher than the celestial spirits, as St. Ephrem asserts: "Nulla comparatione cæteris superis est gloriosior."[7834] St. Andrew of Crete confirms this, saying: God excepted, she is the higest of all: "Excepto Deo, omnibus est altior."[7835] And St. Anselm also says: Oh Lady, there is none equal to thee, because every other, is above or beneath thee; God alone is superior to thee, and all others are inferior.[7836] So great, in a word, says St. Bernardine, is the exaltation of this Virgin, that God alone is able to comprehend it.|[7837]

This removes the surprise expressed by some persons, remarks St. Thomas of Villanova, that the holy Evangelists, who have so fully recorded the praises of a Baptist and a Magdalene, have been so brief in their descriptions of the privileges of Mary; for, says the saint, it was enough to say of her, that from her Jesus was born.[7838] What more would you wish the Evangelists to say, continues the saint, of the grandeur of this Virgin? let it be enough for you, that they attest her to be the mother of God. Having recorded in these few words the greatest, and, indeed, the whole of her merits, it was not necessary for them to describe each separately.[7839] And why not? because, as St. Anselm answers: To say of Mary this alone, that she was the mother of a God, transcends every glory that can be attributed to her, in thought or word, after God.[7840] Peter of Celles adds, remarking on this same thought: By whatever name you may wish to call her, whether queen of heaven, ruler of the angels, or any other title of honor, you will never succeed in honoring her so much as by calling her only the mother of God.[7841]

The reason of this is evident, for as the angelic Doctor teaches: The nearer a thing approaches its author, the greater the perfection it receives from him; therefore, Mary being the creature nearest to God, she has partaken more than all others of his grace, perfection, and greatness.[7842] To this Father Suarez traces the cause why the dignity of mother of God is of an order superior to any other created dignity; because it appertains, in a certain manner, to the order of union with a divine person, with which union it is necessarily connected.[7843] Hence St. Denis the Carthusian asserts, that after the hypostatic union, there is none more intimate than the union of the mother of God with her Son.[7844] This, as St. Thomas teaches, is the highest union that a pure creature can have with God.[7845] And the blessed Albertus Magnus affirms, that to be mother of God is a dignity next to that of being God;[7846] therefore he says, that Mary could not be more united to God than she was, without becoming God.|[7847]

St. Bernardine affirms, that in order to become mother of God, it was requisite that the holy Virgin should be exalted to a certain equality with the divine Persons, by a certain infinity of graces.[7848] And as children are esteemed morally one with their parents, so that their possessions and honors are in common, therefore St. Peter Damian says, that if God dwells in creatures in different modes, he dwelt in Mary in a singular mode of fitness, making himself one with her.[7849] And he exclaims in these celebrated words: Here let every creature be silent and tremble, and scarcely dare to behold the immensity of so great a dignity. God dwells in a virgin with whom he has the identity of one nature.[7850]

St. Thomas asserts, that Mary, being made mother of God, by reason of this close union with an infinite good, received a certain infinite dignity, which Father Suarez calls infinite of its kind.[7851] The dignity of mother of God is the highest dignity which can be conferred on a pure creature. The angelic Doctor teaches, that the humanity of Jesus Christ, though it might have received greater habitual grace from God, yet, as to the union with a divine Person, could not receive greater perfection; so, on the other hand, the blessed Virgin could receive no greater dignity than to be the mother of God. For as habitual grace (this is his reasoning) is a created gift, we must acknowledge that its essence is finite. The capacity of every creature is limited in measure, which however prevents not the divine power from being able to form another creature of greater capacity.[7852] Though the divine power may create something greater and better than the habitual grace of Christ, yet it could not destine it to any thing greater than was the personal union of the only begotten Son with the Father.[7853] The blessed Virgin, because she is the mother of God, has a certain infinite dignity from the infinite good, which is God; and in this respect nothing greater can be created.[7854] St. Thomas of Villanova says the same thing: Certainly there is something infinite in being the mother of the Infinite One.[7855] And St. Bernardine says, that the state to which God exalted Mary as his mother was the highest, so that he could exalt her no higher.|[7856] And this is confirmed by Albertus Magnus. The Lord conferred on the blessed Virgin the highest gift which any pure creature was capable of receiving, namely, the maternity of God.[7857]

Therefore St. Bonaventure wrote that celebrated sentence, that God could make a greater world, a greater heaven, but could not exalt a creature to greater excellence than by making her his mother.[7858] But better than all others has the divine mother herself described the height to which God has elevated her when she said: He that is mighty hath done great things to me: “Fecit mihi magna qui potens est.”[7859] And why has the holy Virgin never made known what were the great favors conferred upon her by God? St. Thomas of Villanova answers, that Mary did not explain them, because they were so great that they could not be explained.[7860]

St. Bernard therefore, with reason, says that God has created all the world for this Virgin, who was to be his mother: “Propter hanc totus mundus factus est.”|[7861] And St. Bonaventure says that the preservation of the world is at the disposal of Mary.[7862] The saint in this place adheres to the words of Proverbs, applied by the Church to Mary: I was with him forming all things: “Cum eo eram cuneta componens.”[7863] St. Bernardine adds, that God, for love of Mary, did not destroy man after the sin of Adam.[7864] Hence the Church, with reason, sings of Mary: She has chosen the best part: “Optimam partem elegit.”[7865] For this virgin mother not only chose the best things, but she chose the best part of the best things; the Lord bestowing upon her, in the highest degree, as the blessed Albertus Magnus attests, all the graces, and the general and particular gifts conferred on all other creatures, wholly in consequence of the dignity granted her of becoming mother of God.[7866] Thus Mary was an infant, but of this state she had only the innocence, but not the defect of incapacity, for from the first moment of life she always had the perfect use of reason. She was a virgin, but without the reproach of sterility. She was a mother, but with the privilege of virginity. She was beautiful, even most beautiful, as Richard of St. Victor asserts, and also St. George of Nicomedia, and St. Dionysius the Areopagite, who, as many believe, once had the happiness of enjoying the sight of her beauty, and said that if faith had not taught him that she was a creature, he should have adored her as God. And the Lord himself revealed to St. Bridget, that the beauty of his mother surpassed the beauty of all men and angels, allowing the saint to hear him say to Mary: "Thy beauty exceeds that of all the angels, and of all creatures."[7867] She was most beautiful, I repeat, but without injury to those who looked upon her, for her beauty put to flight impure emotions, and suggested even pure thoughts, as St. Ambrose attests: So great grace had she, that she not only preserved her own virginity, but also conferred a remarkable gift of purity on those who beheld her.[7868] And St. Thomas confirms this: The grace of sanctification not only repressed in the Virgin illicit emotions, but also had efficacy for others; so that although she was beautiful in person, she never excited impure desires.[7869] Therefore she was called myrrh, which prevents corruption: I yielded a sweet odor like the best myrrh: "Quasi mirrha electa dedi suavitatem odoris;" as the holy Church applies it. She was occupied in active life, but labor did not interrupt her union with God. In the contemplative life she was recollected in God, but without neglect of the temporal life, and of the charity due to the neighbor. Death came upon her, but without its suffering, and without the corruption of the body.

To conclude then: this divine mother is infinitely inferior to God, but immensely superior to all creatures; and if it is impossible to find a Son more noble than Jesus, it is also impossible to find a mother more noble than Mary. This should cause the servants of such a queen not only to rejoice in her greatness, but also to increase their confidence in her most powerful protection; for, being mother of God, says Father Suarez, she has a certain right to his gifts, to obtain them for those for whom she prays.[7870] St. Germanus, on the other hand, says that God cannot but hear the prayers of this mother, for he cannot but recognize her for his true and immaculate mother. Thus says the saint addressing the Virgin: But thou, who dost prevail with God by a maternal authority, even for those who grievously sin, thou dost obtain the great grace of reconciliation; for thou canst not but be graciously heard, as God in all things conforms to thy wishes as to those of a true and pure mother.[7871] Therefore, oh mother of God, and our mother, in thee is not wanting the power to help us. The will, too, is not wanting. Nec facultas, nec voluntas illi deesse potest.[7872] For thou knowest, I will say with thy servant the Abbot of Celles, that God has not created thee for himself alone, but has given thee to the angels for their restorer, to men for their deliverer, and to the demons for their conqueror, for by thy means we recover divine grace, and by thee the enemy is conquered and crushed.[7873]

And if we wish to please the divine mother, let us often salute her by saying the “Hail Mary.” One day Mary appeared to St. Matilda, and told her that no one could honor her better than by this salutation; and we shall certainly obtain through it, peculiar graces from this mother of mercy, as will be seen by the following example.

EXAMPLE

A well-known incident is related by Father Paul Segneri in his “Christian Instructed.”[7874] A Roman youth, of evil habits and laden with sins, went to confession to Father Niccolas Zucchi. The confessor received him kindly, compassionated his misery, and told him that devotion to the blessed Lady would free him from his accursed vices. He therefore imposed it upon him as a penance, that until the time of his next confession, every morning and evening, on rising and going to bed, he should recite a “Hail Mary” to the Virgin; making an offering to her of his eyes, hands, and his whole body, praying her to keep him as her own; and that he should kiss the ground three times. The young man practised this penance, and at first with very little improvement; but the father continued to exhort him never to give it up, encouraging him to trust in the patronage of Mary. In the mean time, the penitent left home with some other companions, and travelled over the world. Having returned to Rome, he went again to seek his confessor, who to his great joy and surprise, found him entirely changed, and free from his former impurities. “My son,” he said, “how have you obtained from God so happy a change?” “Father,” answered the youth, “the blessed Virgin, for that little devotion which you taught me, has obtained for me this grace." But the wonder did not cease here. The same confessor related this fact from the pulpit. An officer, who, for several years, had kept up an illicit intercourse with a certain woman, heard it, and proposed also himself to practise the same devotion, in order to free himself from that horrible tie which held him a slave of the devil (which intention is necessary for all such sinners, that the Virgin may aid them): and he also quitted his bad practices and changed his life.

But what followed? At the end of six months, foolishly and too confidently trusting in his strength, he wished, one day, to go and find that woman, to see if she had also changed her way of life. But on approaching the door of her house, where he was in manifest danger of falling again into sin, he felt himself thrust back by an invisible force, and soon found himself distant from the house the whole length of the street, and before his own door; he was then enlightened to see clearly that Mary had thus rescued him from his destruction. Thus we perceive how solicitous is our good mother, not only to save us from sin, if we for that end commend ourselves to her, but also to protect us from the danger of falling into it again.

PRAYER

Oh immaculate and holy Virgin! oh creature the most humble and the greatest before God! thou wast so small in thy own eyes, but so great in the eyes of thy Lord, that he exalted thee even to choose thee for his mother, and therefore to make thee queen of heaven and of earth. I then thank that God who hath so much exalted thee, and rejoice with thee in seeing thee so closely united to God, that more is not permitted to a pure creature. I am ashamed to appear before thee who art so humble, with so many graces; I, a miserable sinner, and so proud with so many sins. But wretched as I am, I, too, wish to salute thee: Hail Mary, full of grace: "Ave Maria, gratia plena." Thou art already full of grace; obtain a share of it also for me. The Lord is with thee: "Dominus tecum." The Lord who hath ever been with thee even from the first moment of thy creation, is now more intimately with thee, by making himself thy Son. Blessed art thou among women: "Benedicta tu in mulieribus." Oh woman, blessed among all women, obtain for us also the divine benediction. Oh blessed plant which hath given to the world a fruit so noble and so holy: “Et benedictus fructus ventris tui.” Holy Mary, mother of God: “Sancta Maria, mater Dei.” Oh Mary, I confess that thou art the true mother of God, and for this truth I would give my life a thousand times. Pray for us sinners: “Ora pro nobis peccatoribus.” But if thou art the mother of God, thou art also the mother of our salvation, and of us poor sinners; since it is to save sinners that God made himself man; and he has made thee his mother that thy prayers may have the power to save every sinner. Pray for us, oh Mary. Now and in the hour of our death: “Nunc et in hora mortis nostræ.” Pray always; pray now, while we are in life, in the midst of so many temptations and so great danger of losing God; but still more, pray in the hour of our death, when we are on the point of leaving this world and being presented at the divine tribunal; that being saved by the merits of Jesus Christ, and by thy intercession, we may one day come, without the danger of losing thee any more, to salute thee and praise thee, with thy Son, in heaven, for all eternity. Amen.

Discourse V

ON THE VISITATION OF MARY

MARY IS THE TREASURER OF ALL THE DIVINE GRACES. THEREFORE HE WHO DESIRES GRACES SHOULD HAVE RECOURSE TO MARY; AND HE WHO HAS RECOURSE TO MARY, SHOULD BE SECURE OF OBTAINING THE GRACES HE WISHES.

HAPPY is that house esteemed which is visited by some royal personage, both for the honor it receives from him, and the advantages it hopes for; but more happy should that soul be called which is visited by the queen of the world, most holy Mary, who cannot but fill with mercies and graces those blessed souls whom she deigns to visit with her favors. The house of Obededom was blessed when it was visited by the ark of the Lord: The Lord blessed his house: "Benedixit Dominus domui ejus."[7875] But with how much greater blessings are those persons enriched who receive some loving visit from this living ark of God, as was the divine mother! Happy that house which the mother of God visits,[7876] wrote Engelgrave. This was experienced by the house of the Baptist, wherein scarcely had Mary entered, when she filled all that family with celestial graces and benedictions; and for this reason, the present feast of the Visitation is commonly called the feast of our Lady of graces. We shall consider to-day, in the present discourse, how the divine mother is the treasurer of all graces. We shall divide the discourse into two points. In the first, we shall prove that he who desires graces must have recourse to Mary. In the second, that he who has recourse to Mary, should be certain of obtaining the graces that he desires.

Point First.—After the holy Virgin had heard from the archangel St. Gabriel, that her cousin Elizabeth had been six months pregnant, she was interiorly enlightened by the Holy Spirit to know that the Word which had taken human flesh and had already become her Son, wished to commence manifesting to the world the riches of his mercy, by the first graces that he desired to impart to all that family. Therefore, without interposing any delay, as St. Luke relates: Rising up, Mary went into the mountainous country in haste: “Exurgens abiit in montana cum festinatione.”[7877] Rising then from the quiet of her contemplation, to which she was always devoted, and leaving her dear solitude, she immediately set out for the house of Elizabeth. And because holy charity suffers all things: “Charitas omnia suffert;” and can bear no delay, as St. Ambrose remarks, when treating of this gospel: The grace of the Holy Spirit knows no slow movements: “Nescit tarda molimina Spiritus Sancti gratia:” therefore not heeding the fatigue of the journey, the tender and delicate maiden quickly set forth on her way. Having arrived at that house, she saluted her cousin: “She entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth.”[7878] And as St. Ambrose remarks, Mary was the first to salute Elizabeth: “Prior salutavit.” But the visit of the blessed Virgin was not like the visits of the worldly, which, for the most part, consist in ceremonies and false display; the visit of Mary brought into that house an abundance of graces. For at her first entrance, and at that first salutation, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and John was delivered from guilt and sanctified, and therefore gave that sign of joy, exulting in the womb of his mother; for he wished in this way to make known the grace received by means of the blessed Virgin; as Elizabeth herself declared: “As soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.[7879]” So, as Bernardine de Bustis observes, in virtue of the salutation of Mary, John received the grace of the Divine Spirit, who sanctified him: When the blessed Virgin saluted Elizabeth, the voice of the salutation entering through her ears, descended to the child, by virtue of which salutation he received the Holy Spirit.[7880]

Now if these first-fruits of the redemption all passed through Mary, and she was the channel by means of which grace was communicated to the Baptist, the Holy Spirit to Elizabeth, the gift of prophecy to Zachary, and so many other blessings to that house, which were the first graces that we know to have been given upon earth by the Word, after he had become incarnate; we have great reason to believe that God, even from that time, had constituted Mary a universal channel, as St. Bernard calls her, through which thenceforth should be dispensed to us all the other graces which the Lord wishes to bestow on us, as it was said in p. 1 c. 5. of this work.

Rightly then is this divine mother called the treasure, the treasurer, and the dispensatrix of divine graces. Thus she is called by the venerable Abbot of Celles: The treasure of the Lord and the treasurer of graces: “Thesaurus Domini, et thesauraria gratiarum.”[7881] By St. Peter Damian, also: The treasure of divine graces: “Thesaurus divinarum gratiarum.” By blessed Albertus Magnus: The treasurer of Jesus Christ: “Thesauraria Jesu Christi.” By St. Bernardine: The dispensatrix of graces: “Dispensatrix gratiarum.” By a Greek Doctor, quoted by Petavius:[7882] The store-house of all good things: “Promptuarium omnium bonarum.” Thus, also, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus says: Mary is called so full of grace, because in her the treasure of grace was hidden.[7883] And Richard of St. Laurence says that God has placed in Mary, as in a treasury of mercy, the gifts of all the graces, and from this treasure he enriches his servants.[7884]

St. Bonaventure, speaking of the field of the Gospel where the treasure is hidden which should be bought at any great price, as Jesus Christ hath said: “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field, which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth the field;”[7885] remarks that this field is our Queen Mary, in whom is the treasure of God, that is, Jesus Christ, and with Jesus Christ the source and fountain of all graces.[7886] St. Bernard also affirms that the Lord has placed in the hands of Mary all the graces that he wishes to dispense to us, that we may know that whatever of good we receive, we receive it all from her hands.|[7887] And of this Mary herself assures us. when she says: In me is all grace of the way and of the truth: “In me gratia omnis viæ et veritatis.”[7888] In me are all the graces of true blessings that you men can desire in your life. Yes, our mother and our hope, well do we know, to use the words of St. Peter Damian, that all the treasures of the divine mercies are in thy hands.[7889] And before Damian, St. Ildephonsus asserted it with more force, for addressing the Virgin he said to her: Oh Lady, all the graces which God has determined to bestow upon men, he has determined to dispense by thy hands; and therefore has he committed to thee all the treasure of graces.[7890] Hence, oh Mary, concluded St. Germanus, no grace is dispensed to any one except by thy hands; no one is except by thee; no one receives the gift of God except through thee.[7891] The blessed Albertus Magnus makes a beautiful reflection upon the words of the angel to the most holy Virgin: “Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God,”|[7892] saying: Oh, Mary, thou hast not stolen grace as Lucifer wishes to steal it; thou hast not lost it as Adam lost it; thou hast not bought it as Simon the Magician wished to buy it; but thou hast found it because thou hast desired and sought it. Thou hast found the uncreated grace, that is, God himself, become thy Son; and at the same time thou hast found and obtained all created good.[7893] St. Peter Chrysologus confirms this thought, by saying that the great mother found this grace by restoring salvation to all men.[7894] And elsewhere he says, that Mary found grace in its fulness, sufficient to save all men.[7895] In the like manner as God made the sun, says Richard of St. Laurence, that by it the earth may be illuminated, so hath he created Mary, that by her means all divine mercies may be dispensed to the world.[7896] And St. Bernardine adds that the Virgin, as soon as she was made mother of the Redeemer, acquired, as it were, a jurisdiction over all graces: when the Virgin Mary conceived the Word of God in her womb, she obtained, as I should say, a certain jurisdiction over all the temporal manifestations of the Holy Spirit; so that no creature obtained any grace from God, unless according to the disposal of this pious mother.[7897]

Let us conclude this point in the words of Richard of St. Laurence, who says, that if we wish to obtain any grace, we must have recourse to Mary, who cannot but obtain for her servants whatever she demands; since she has found, and always will find, divine grace.[7898] And this he took from St. Bernard, who said: Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary, for what she seeks she finds, and cannot be frustrated.[7899] If, then, we desire graces, we must go to this treasurer and dispensatrix of graces; for this is the sovereign will of the Giver of every good, as St. Bernard himself assures us, that all graces are dispensed by the hands of Mary.[7900] All, all, Totum, totum; he who says all, excludes nothing. But, because confidence is necessary in order to obtain grace, we now will pass on to consider how certain we should be of obtaining graces, if we have recourse to Mary.

Second Point.—And why should Jesus Christ ever have placed in the hands of this his mother all the riches of the mercies which he wishes to use for our benefit, if not that she may enrich with them all her servants who love and honor her, and with confidence recur to her? With me are riches . . . that I may enrich them that love me: “Mecum sunt divitiæ . . . ut ditem diligentes me."[7901] Thus the Virgin herself speaks in this passage, which the holy Church applies to her on so many of her festivals. Therefore, for no other use, but for our benefit, says Adam the Abbot, are the riches of eternal life preserved by Mary, in whose bosom the Saviour has deposited the treasure of the wretched, that, supplied from this treasure, the poor may become rich.[7902] And St. Bernard adds, as I learn from another author, that for this purpose Mary has been given to the world, for a channel of mercy, that by her means graces may continually descend from heaven upon men.[7903]

From this the holy Father goes on to ask, why St. Gabriel, having found the divine mother already full of grace, according to his salutation: Hail, full of grace: "Ave gratia plena:" afterwards says that the Holy Spirit was to come to her, to fill her still more with grace; if she was already full of this grace, what more could the coming of the Holy Spirit effect? Mary was already full of grace, thus answers St. Bernard, but the Holy Spirit came upon her for our good, that from her superabundance we poor sinners might be provided.[7904] For this reason Mary was called the moon, of which it is said: the moon is full, for herself and others: "Luna plena sibi, et aliis."

"He that shall find me, shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord."[7905] Blessed is he who having recourse to me finds me, says our mother. He will find life, and will find it easily; for, as it is easy to find and draw water (as much as one wishes) from a great fountain, so it is easy to find graces and eternal salvation by going to Mary. A holy soul hath said, we have only to ask graces of our Lady and we shall have them. And St. Bernard says, that before Mary was born, the world was without this abundance of graces, that now are overflowing the earth, because this desirable channel (Mary) was wanting.[7906] But now that we actually have this mother of mercy, what graces can we not obtain, if we cast ourselves at her feet? I am the city of refuge, thus St. John of Damascus makes her to say, for all those who have recourse to me: come, then, my children, and yon will obtain from me graces, in greater abundance than you can imagine.[7907]

It is true that many experience what the venerable Sister Maria Villani saw in a heavenly vision. This servant of God once saw the mother of God in the likeness of a great fountain, to which many went to draw the waters of graces; but what then happened? Those who carried vessels which were whole, preserved afterwards the graces received; but those who caryied broken vessels, that is, souls laden with sins, received the graces, but quickly lost them again. As for the rest, it is certain that by means of Mary, men, even the most ungrateful and wretched sinners, daily obtain innumerable graces. St. Augustine says, addressing the Virgin: Through thee the wretched obtain mercy, the ungrateful grace, sinners pardon, the weak support, the earthly heavenly things, mortals life, and travellers their country.[7908]

Let our confidence, then, ever revive, oh devoted servants of Mary, as often as we have recourse to her for graces. And to revive this confidence, let us ever remember the two great privileges which this good mother possesses, namely: the desire she has to do us good, and the power she has with her Son to obtain whatever she asks. That we may know the desire Mary has to aid all, it would be sufficient only to consider the mystery of the present festival, namely, the visit of Mary to Elizabeth. The journey from Nazareth, where the most holy Virgin lived, to the city of Hebron (called by St. Luke a city of Judah), where, according to Baronius and other authors, Elizabeth dwelt, was about sixty-nine miles, as the author of the life of Mary, Father Giuseppe of Jesus, one of the barefooted Carmelites, asserts,[7909] as also Bede and Brocardo. But this did not prevent the blessed Virgin, tender and delicate as she then was, and not accustomed to such efforts, from immediately setting forth—moved by what?—moved by that great charity with which her most tender heart was ever filled, to go and commence from that time her great office of dispenser of graces. Precisely thus does St. Ambrose speak of this her journey: She did not go as if incredulous of the announcement, but happy in her desire, hastening for joy, and intent upon her office.[7910] Not that Mary, as the saint says, went to inform herself of the truth of what the angel had told her concerning Elizabeth, but joyful through her desire to help that household, hastening for the joy she felt to do good to others, and wholly intent on that charitable errand. Rising up, she went with haste: “Exurgens abiit cum festinatione.” Here let it be observed that the Evangelist, when he spoke of Mary going to the house of Elizabeth, said that she went in haste: Abiit festinatione; but speaking of her return from that house, he makes no more mention of haste, but simply says: “And Mary abode with her about three months, and she returned to her own house.”[7911] What other object, then, says St. Bonaventure, caused the mother of God to hasten when going to visit the house of the Baptist, except the desire to do good to that family?[7912]

Certainly, since the assumption of Mary into heaven, this her affection of charity towards men has not ceased; nay, it has ever been increasing, for there she better knows our necessities, and feels more pity for our miseries. Bernardine de Bustis writes, that Mary more earnestly desires to do us good than we desire to receive it from her.[7913] To such a degree, that St. Bonaventure says, she considers herself injured by those who do not ask favors of her;[7914] for this is the desire of Mary, to enrich all with her graces; for, indeed, according to the assertion of the Idiot, she superabundantly enriches her servants.|[7915]

Hence the same author says, that he who finds Mary finds every good: “Inventa Maria, invenitur omne bonum.” And he adds, that every one can find her, were he even the most abandoned sinner in the world; for she is so gracious that she sends away none who have recourse to her.[7916] I invite all to come to me, Thomas à Kempis makes her say, I wait for all, I wish that all may come; neither do I ever despise any sinner who comes to seek my help, however unworthy he may be.[7917] All who go to her asking favors, says Richard, will find her always ready, always inclined to succor them, and obtain for them every grace of eternal salvation by her powerful prayers: “Inveniet semper paratam auxiliari.”

I have said by her powerful prayers, for this is the other reflection which should increase our confidence, namely, knowing that she obtains from God whatever she asks in favor of her servants. Observe especially, says St. Bonaventure, in this visit that Mary made to Elizabeth, the great virtue of the words of Mary; for at the sound of her voice the grace of the Holy Spirit was given to Elizabeth as well as to her son, as the Evangelist has written: “And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.”[7918] On which St. Bonaventure remarks: Behold, how great is the virtue of the words of our Lady, for at the sound of them the Holy Spirit is given.[7919] Theophilus of Alexandria says that Jesus is much pleased when Mary prays to him for us, for then all the graces which he bestows on us through the supplications of Mary, he does not consider to be conferred on us, but rather on Mary herself.[7920] And let these words be noted: Persuaded by the prayers of his mother he gives: “Precibus suæ genitricis evictus, donat.” Yes, because Jesus, as St. Germanus attests, cannot but graciously hear Mary in all her petitions, wishing in this, as it were, to obey her as his true mother; hence the saint says that the prayers of this mother have a certain authority with Jesus Christ, so that she obtains pardon even for the greatest sinners, who commend themselves to her.[7921]

And this is indeed confirmed, as St. John Chrysostom observes, by what took place at the nuptials of Cana, where Mary, asking of her Son the wine that was wanting, said: “They have no wine;” Jesus answered: “Woman, what is that to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come.”[7922] But although the time for miracles has not yet arrived, as Chrysostom and Theophilactus explain; yet, says the same Chrysostom, our Saviour, in order to obey his mother, performed the miracle she requested, and converted the water into wine.[7923]

“Let us go therefore,” thus the apostle exhorts us, “with confidence to the throne of grace; that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.”[7924] The throne of grace is the blessed Virgin Mary, says the blessed Albertus Magnus: “Thronus gratia est beata Virgo Maria.”[7925] If, then, we wish for graces, let us go to the throne of grace, which is Mary; and let us go with the hope of being certainly heard; for we have the intercession of Mary, who obtains whatever she asks of her Son. Let us ask for grace, I repeat with St. Bernard, and through Mary let us ask: “Quæramus gratiam et per Mariam quæramus,” trusting to what the Virgin mother said to St. Matilda, that the Holy Spirit, filling her with all his sweetness, had rendered her so dear to God that everyone who, through her intercession, asked for graces, would certainly obtain them.[7926]

And if we give credit to that celebrated saying of St. Anselm: We shall sometimes find grace sooner by having recourse to Mary, than by having recourse to our Saviour Jesus himself;[7927] not that he is not the source and Lord of all graces, but because if we go to Mary, and she intercedes for us, her prayers will have more power, as the prayers of a mother, than ours. Let us never then leave the feet of this treasurer of graces, but say to her with St. John Damascene: Open to us, oh blessed mother of God, the door of thy mercy, for thou art the salvation of the human race.[7928] Oh mother of God, open to us the door of thy mercy, by praying always for us; for thy prayers are the salvation of all men. And when we have recourse to Mary, it would be best to ask her to pray for us, and obtain for us those graces which she knows are most expedient for our salvation; which is precisely what Brother Reginald, a Dominican, did, as is related in the chronicles of the order.[7929] This servant of Mary was infirm, and asked of her the grace of bodily health. Our Lady appeared to him, accompanied by St. Cecilia and St. Catherine, and said to him with the greatest sweetness: “My son, what shall I do for thee?” The religious at this kind offer of Mary was troubled, and knew not what to answer. Then one of those saints gave him this counsel: “Reginald, do you know what you should do? Do not ask for any thing, place every thing at her disposal, because Mary knows how to obtain for thee a grace greater than you could ask.” The sick brother followed her advice, and the divine mother obtained for him the grace of health.

But if we also desire the happy visits of this queen of heaven, it will greatly aid us if we often visit her before some image, or in some church dedicated to her. Let us read the following example, and learn with what special favors she rewards the devout visits of her servants.

EXAMPLE

It is related in the Franciscan chronicles, that two religious of that order, who were going to visit a sanctuary of the Virgin, were overtaken by night in a great wood, where they became bewildered and so troubled that they knew not what to do. But advancing a little, they discerned through the darkness something which seemed to them a house. They went groping along with outstretched hands, and at length touched a wall; they found the door, knocked, and heard some one within asking who they were? They answered that they were two poor religious who had lost their way by accident in that wood’ and were seeking a shelter, that at least they might not be devoured by wolves. But suddenly they heard the door open, and saw two pages richly dressed, who received them with great courtesy. The religious asked them who inhabited that palace? The pages answered that a very kind, good Lady inhabited it. We wish to pay our respects to her, said they, and thank her for her charity. We will take you to her, said the pages, for she too wishes to speak to you. They ascended the stairs, found the apartments all illuminated, richly furnished, and perfumed as with an odor of paradise; they finally entered the apartment of the Lady, who was majestic and most lovely in her appearance, and who welcomed them with the greatest kindness, and then asked them in what direction they were travelling? They answered that they were going to visit a certain church of the blessed Virgin. If that is the case, said the Lady, when you go I will give you a letter from myself, which will greatly aid you. And whilst the Lady was speaking to them, they felt all inflamed with love of God, and filled with a joy such as they had never before experienced. They afterwards went to rest, if perchance they could sleep in the midst of so much joy, and in the morning they went again to take leave of the Lady of the mansion, thank her, and at the same time receive the letter, they did so and departed. But when they had gone a little distance from the house, they perceived that there was no superscription to the letter; but they turned and returned, and could not find the house again. At last they opened the letter, to see to whom it was sent, and what it contained, and found that it was from the most holy Mary, and was written to themselves, and let them know that she was the Lady whom they saw the night before, and that on account of the devotion they cherished for her, she had provided a house and refreshment for them in that wood. She exhorted them to continue to serve and love her, for she would well reward their devotion, and assist them in life and in death. At the bottom of the letter they read the signature of the Virgin Mary. We may easily imagine the thanks that those good religious offered to the divine mother, and how greatly they were inflamed with the desire of loving her and serving her to the end of their lives.

PRAYER

Immaculate and blessed Virgin, since thou art the universal dispenser of all divine graces, therefore thou art the hope of all, and also my hope. I always thank my Lord that he hath given me to know thee, and the means that I must use to obtain graces and save myself. Thou art this means, oh great mother of God, for I now understand that it is principally through the merits of Jesus Christ, and after those, through thy intercession, that I am to be saved. Ah, my queen, thou didst make so great haste to visit, and sanctify with thy visit, the house of Elizabeth; ah, visit, and visit quickly the poor house of my soul. Ah, hasten! thou knowest better than I how poor it is, how infected with many maladies, with irregular affections, bad habits, and actual sin, all those fatal diseases which will bring it to eternal death. Thou canst enrich it, oh treasurer of God! and thou canst heal all its infirmities. Visit me then in life, and visit me especially at the hour of my death, for then thy help will be more necessary to me. I do not, indeed expect, neither am I worthy that thou shouldst visit me on this earth with thy visible presence, as thou hast done to so many of thy servants, but servants not so unworthy and ungrateful as I am. I will be content to be allowed then to see thee in thy kingdom of heaven, there to love thee better, and thank thee for whatever good thou hast done me. At present I will be content that thou shouldst visit me with thy mercies. It is enough that thou dost pray for me.

Pray for me then oh Mary, and commend me to thy Son. Thou knowest better than now myself, my miseries and my necessities. What more would I say to thee? Have pity on me. I am so miserable and ignorant that I do not even know, and cannot even ask, the graces that are most necessary for me. Oh my queen and most sweet mother, ask thou and obtain for me, from thy Son, those graces which thou knowest to be most useful and necessary for my soul. Into thy hands I entirely abandon myself, and only pray the divine Majesty, that through the merits of my Saviour Jesus, he may grant me those graces that thou dost ask of him for me. Ask, ask then for me, oh most holy Virgin, whatever thou esteemest best. Thy prayers are never rejected. They are the prayers of a mother to a Son, who loves thee so much, and finds his joy in granting whatever thou dost ask of him, thus the more to honor thee, and at the same time, show thee the great love he bears thee. Oh Lady, thus let it be. I will live trusting in thee. Thou must think only on saving me. Amen.

Discourse VI

ON THE PURIFICATION OF MARY

THE GREAT SACRFICE WHICH MARY THIS DAY MADE TO GOD IN OFFERING HIM THE LIFE OF HER SON.

THERE were two precepts of the ancient law concerning the birth of first-born sons. One was, that the mother should remain as an unclean person, retired in her house, for forty days; after which she should go to purify herself in the temple. The other was, that the parents of the first-born should take him to the temple, and there offer him to God. On this day the most holy Virgin desired to obey both precepts. Although Mary was not bound by the law of purification, since she was always a virgin, and always pure; yet, by her love of humility and odedience, she wished to go, like other mothers, to be purified. At the same time she obeyed the second precept, to present and offer her Son to the eternal Father: “And after the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord.”[7930] But the Virgin offered him in a different manner from that in which other mothers offered their sons. Others offered them, but they knew that this was a simple ceremony of the law, through which, by redeeming them, they made them their own, without the fear that they should be obliged to offer them again, and to death. Mary really offered her Son to death, knowing certainly that the sacrifice of the life of Jesus which she then made, should one day be actually consummated upon the altar of the cross; so that Mary, by offering the life of her Son through the love she bore this Son, really sacrificed herself entirely to God. Laying aside, then, all the other considerations which we might make upon the various mysteries of this festival, let us only consider how great was this sacrifice that Mary made of herself to God, by offering to him, on this day, the life of her Son. And this will be the only subject of the following discourse.

The eternal Father had already determined to save man, who was lost through sin, and free him from eternal death. But because he wished that, at the same time, his divine justice should not be defrauded of a full and due satisfaction, he did not spare the life of his own Son, already made man in order to redeem man; but he required that he should pay, to its most rigorous extent, the penalty merited by men: "He that spared not even his own Son," says the apostle, "but delivered him up for us all."[7931] He sent him therefore on the earth to become man, destined for him a mother, and chose the Virgin Mary; but as he did not wish his divine Word to become her Son before she accepted him by her express consent, so he did not wish that Jesus should sacrifice his life for the salvation of men without the concurrence of the consent of Mary, that together with the sacrifice of the life of the Son, the heart of the mother might be sacrificed also. St. Thomas teaches, that the relation of mother gives an especial right over her children; hence Jesus, being innocent in himself and not deserving any punishment for his own sins, it seemed fitting that he should not be destined to the cross as the victim for the sins of the world without the consent of his mother, by which she should voluntarily offer him to death.

But although Mary, from the moment she was made mother of Jesus, gave her consent to his death, yet the Lord wished her, on this day, to make, in the temple, a solemn sacrifice of herself, by offering solemnly her Son, and sacrificing to the divine justice his precious life. Hence St. Epiphanius called her a priest: "Virginem appello velut sacerdotem."[7932] Now we begin to see how much this sacrifice cost her, and what heroic virtue she was obliged to practise when she had herself to sign the sentence of condemnation of her dear Jesus to death.

Now behold Mary actually on her way to Jerusalem to offer her Son; she hastens her steps towards the place of sacrifice, and she herself carries her beloved victim in her arms. She enters the temple, approaches the altar, and there, filled with modesty, humility, and devotion, she presents her Son to the Most High. At this moment St. Simeon, who had received the promise from God that he should not die before seeing the expected Messias, takes the divine child from the hands of the Virgin, and, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, announces to her how much sorrow this sacrifice must cause her, this sacrifice which she was about to make of her Son, with whom must her blessed soul also be sacrificed. Here St. Thomas of Villanova contemplates the holy old man, who, when he had come to announce the fatal prophecy to this poor mother, is agitated and silent.[7933] Then the saint considers Mary, who asks: Why, oh Simeon, in the time of so great consolation, are you thus disturbed? “Unde tanta turbatio?” To whom he answers: Oh, noble and holy Virgin, I wished not to announce to thee such bitter tidings, but since the Lord wishes it thus, for thy greater merit, hear what I say to thee.[7934] This infant who now causes thee, and with reason, so much joy, oh God, shall one day bring thee the most cruel suffering that any creature has ever experienced in the world; and this will be when thou shalt see him persecuted by men of every sort, and placed on earth as the mark of their sneers and derision, even until he is put to death before thy eyes.[7935] Know that after his death there will be many martyrs who, for love of this thy Son, will be tormented and slain; but if their martyrdom will be of the body, thy martyrdom, oh divine mother, will be of the heart.[7936]

Yes, of the heart, for nothing but compassion for the sufferings of this Son so dear could be meant by the sword of sorrow that St. Simeon predicted was to pierce the heart of the mother: “And thy own soul a sword shall pierce.”[7937] Already the most holy Virgin, as St. Jerome says, had been enlightened through the divine Scriptures to know the sufferings which the Redeemer was to endure in his life, and still more at the time of his death. She well understood from the prophets, that he was to be betrayed by one of his friends: “Who ate my bread hath greatly supplanted me;”[7938] as David predicted. Abandoned by his disciples: Strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: “Percute Pastorem, et dispergentur oves.”[7939] Well did she know the insults, spitting, blows, and derision that he was to suffer from the people: “I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them; I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me and spit upon me.”[7940] She knew that he was to become the scandal of men, and the outcast of the lowest of the people: “But I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people,”[7941] even to be laden with insults and outrages: “He shall be filled with reproaches.”|[7942] She knew that at the end of his life his sacred flesh would be torn and bruised by scourges: “He was wounded from our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins,”[7943] so that his body would be wholly disfigured by them, become as a leper, all sores: “There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness, and we have thought him, as it were, a leper,”*[7944] even till the bones were uncovered: “They have numbered all my bones.”[7945] She knew that he was to be pierced by nails.[7946] That he was to be reputed with the wicked.[7947] And that finally he was to die, hanging on the cross, slain for the salvation of men: “And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.”[7948]

Mary, I repeat, already knew all the sufferings that her Son was to endure, but in the above quoted words of St. Simon: “And thy own soul a sword shall pierce,” as the Lord revealed to St. Theresa, all the minute circumstances of the external as well as internal sufferings which her Lord Jesus was to endure in his passion, were made known to her. She consented to all with a firmness which made the angels wonder, and pronounced the sentence that her Son should die, and die by a death so ignominious and painful, in these words: Eternal Father, since thou dost will it, not my will, but thine be done: “Non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat;” I unite mine to thy holy will, and sacrifice to thee this my Son; I am satsified that he should lose his life for thy glory, and for the salvation of the world. And I also sacrifice to thee my heart; let grief pierce it as much as pleases thee; it suffices to me that thou, oh my God, art glorified and satisfied; not my will, but thine be done. Oh, charity without measure! oh, constancy without example! oh, victory, that merits the eternal admiration of heaven and of earth!

And hence Mary, in the passion of Jesus was silent when he was unjustly accused; she said nothing to Pilate, who was inclined to liberate him, for he had already known his innocence; but she only appeared in the public to be present at the great sacrifice, which was to be offered on Calvary. She accompanied him to the place of punishment; she was with him from the first moment he was placed upon the cross: There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother: “Stabat juxta crucem Jesu mater ejus;” until she saw him expire, and the sacrifice was consummated. And all this to complete the offering which she had already made of him to God in the temple.

In order to understand the violence that Mary had to offer herself in making this sacrifice, it would be necessary to comprehend the love which this mother bore to Jesus. Generally speaking, the love of mothers is so tender for their children, that when they are at the point of death, and they are about to lose them, they forget all their faults, their defects, and even the injuries they have received from them, and they suffer an inexpressible grief. And yet the love of those mothers is a love divided among other children, or among other creatures. Mary has one only Son, and he is the most beautiful of all the children of Adam; he is most amiable, for he has all lovable qualities; he is obedient, virtuous, innocent, holy, in one word, he is God. The love of this mother too is not divided among other objects; she has centered all her love upon this only Son, neither does she fear loving him to excess, for this Son is God, who merits an infinite love. And this Son is the victim whom she had voluntarily to offer to death.

Let every one consider, then, how much it must have cost Mary to sacrifice on the cross the life of a Son so amiable, and what strength of mind she must have exercised in this act. Behold the most fortunate of mothers, because she is the mother of a God, but she is at the same time a mother most worthy of compassion, because the most afflicted; being the mother of a Son whom she saw destined to the cross from the day when he was given her for a Son! What mother would accept a son, knowing that afterwards she should lose him by such a painful and infamous death, and that she should be present to see him die? Mary willingly accepted this Son with so hard a condition; and not only accepted him, but offers him herself this day, with her own hands, to death, sacrificing him to the divine justice. St. Bonaventure says, that the blessed Virgin would willingly have taken upon herself the sufferings and death of her Son; but to obey God she made the great offering of the divine life of her beloved Jesus, conquering, but with the greatest grief, all the tenderness of love that she bore him.[7949] Hence it is, that in this offering Mary had to do more violence to herself, and was more generous, than if she had offered herself to suffer all her Son was to suffer. Therefore she surpassed all the martyrs in generosity, for the martyrs offered their own lives; but the Virgin offered the life of her Son, whom she loved and esteemed infinitely more than her own life.

Neither did the suffering of this painful offering end here; rather it commenced here; for from that time forward, through the whole life of her Son, Mary had always before her eyes death, and all the pains he was to suffer in his death. Hence, the more this Son discovered to her how beautiful, graceful, and amiable he was, so much more did the anguish of her heart constantly increase. Ah, afflicted mother! if thou hadst loved thy Son less, or if thy Son had been less lovely, and had loved thee less, thy suffering would certainly have been less in offering him to death. But there never has been, and there never will be, a more loving mother than thou, because there never has been, and never will be, a son more amiable and more loving towards his mother than thy Jesus. Oh God! if we had seen the beauty, the majesty of countenance of that divine child, could we have had the courage to sacrifice his life for our salvation? And thou, oh Mary! who art his mother, and a mother so loving, couldst thou offer thy innocent Son for the salvation of men, to a death more painful and more cruel than any criminal had ever endured on this earth?

Alas! what a fearful scene from that day forward did love continually place before the eyes of Mary, representing to her all the injuries and mockeries which were to be offered to her poor Son! Behold love already representing him to her in his agony in the garden, then torn by scourges, and crowned with thorns in the hall of Pilate, and finally hanging from the infamous wood on Calvary! Behold, oh mother, said love, what a lovely and innocent Son thou hast offered to such sufferings, and to so dreadful a death! And of what avail will it be to thee to rescue him from the hands of Herod, in order to reserve him for so piteous an end?

Thus Mary not only offered her Son to death in the temple, but was offering him up at every moment of her life; for she revealed to St. Bridget, that this grief which St. Simeon announced to her, never left her heart till she was assumed into heaven.[7950] Hence St. Anselm says: Oh Lady, I cannot believe, that with such a sorrow thou wouldst have been able to live one moment, if God himself, who gives life, had not strengthened thee by his divine power.[7951] And St. Bernard affirms, speaking of the great sorrow that Mary endured on this day, that henceforth she suffered a living death, bearing a grief more cruel than death.[7952] She lived, dying at every moment, because grief for the death of her beloved Jesus, which was more cruel than any death, was at every moment assailing her.

The divine mother then, on account of the great merit she acquired in this great sacrifice, which she made to God for the salvation of the world, was justly called by St. Augustine: The restorer of the human race: “Reparatrix generis humani.”[7953] By St. Epiphanius: The redeemer of captives:

"Redemptrix captivorum."[7954] By St. Ildephonsus: The restorer of the ruined world: "Reparatrix perditi orbis."[7955] By St. Germanus: The consolation of our miseries: "Restauratio calamitatum nostrarum."[7956] By St. Ambrose: The mother of all believers: "Mater omnium credentium."|[7957] By St. Augustine: The mother of the living: "Mater viventium."[7958] By St. Andrew of Crete: The mother of life: "Mater vitæ."*[7959] For, as St. Arnold Carnotensis says: In the death of Jesus, Mary united her will to that of her Son in such a manner, that both offered the same sacrifice; and therefore the holy abbot says, that thus the Son and the mother effected human redemption, obtaining salvation for men. †[7960] Jesus by satisfying for our sins, Mary by obtaining for us that this satisfaction should be applied to us. And hence blessed Denis the Carthusian likewise affirms, that the divine mother may be called the salvation of the world, since by the pain she endured in commiserating her Son (voluntarily sacrificed by her to divine justice), she merited that the merits of the Redeemer should be communicated to men.[7961]

Mary, then, having been made the mother of all the redeemed, by the merit of her sufferings, and of the offering of her Son; it is just to believe that only by her hand may be given them the milk of those divine graces, which are the fruits of the merits of Jesus Christ, and the means to obtain life eternal. And it is to this that St. Bernard alludes, when he says that God has placed in the hands of Mary the whole price of our redemption.[7962] By which the saint gives us to understand, that by means of the intercession of the blessed Virgin, the merits of the Redeemer are applied to souls, as by her hand these graces are dispensed, which are precisely the price of the merits of Jesus Christ.

And if the sacrifice of Abraham in offering up to him his son Isaac so pleased God that he promised, as a reward, to multiply his descendants as the stars of heaven: "Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake, I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven;"[7963] we must certainly believe that the more remarkable sacrifice which this great mother made of Jesus was much more agreeable to the Lord; and, therefore, it has been granted her, that by her prayers, the number of the elect should be multiplied, that is, the favored succession of her children, for she holds and protects as such her devoted servants.

St. Simeon received a promise from God that he should not die until he had seen the Messiah born: “And he had received an answer from the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord.”[7964] But he did not receive this grace except by means of Mary, for he did not see the Saviour until he saw him in the arms of Mary. Hence, whoever wishes to find Jesus, will not find him except through Mary. Let us, then, go to this divine mother if we wish to find Jesus; and let us go with great confidence. Mary said to her servant Prudentiana Zagnoni,[7965] that every year, on this day of the purification, a great mercy would be shown to some sinner. Who knows but one of us may to-day be that favored sinner? If our sins are great, greater is the power of Mary. The Son can deny nothing to this mother, says St. Bernard.[7966] If Jesus is offended with us, Mary immediately appeases him. Plutarch relates that Antipater wrote to Alexander the Great a long letter of accusations against Olympias, the mother of Alexander. Having read the letter, he answered: “Does not Antipater know that one tear of my mother is enough to cancel an endless number of letters of accusation?”[7967] Thus we may imagine Jesus would also answer to the accusations which the devil presents him against us when Mary is praying him for us: Does not Lucifer know that one prayer of my mother, in favor of a sinner, is enough to make me forget all the accusations of offences committed against me? The following example is a proof of this.

EXAMPLE

This example is not recorded in any book, but a priest, a companion of mine, related it to me, as having happened to himself. Whilst this priest was hearing confessions in a certain church (for sufficient reasons he did not mention the place where this occurred, although the penitent gave him leave to publish the fact), a youth stood before him, who appeared to wish and not to wish to come to confession. The Father, after looking at him several times, at length called him, and asked him if he wished to make his confession. He answered, yes; but as he required a long time for it, the confessor took him into a retired room. There the penitent began by telling him that he was a foreigner, and of noble birth, but he could not believe that it was possible for God to pardon him after the life he had led. Besides innumerable other sins he had committed of impurity, homicide, &c., he said, that being entirely in despair of salvation, he had set about committing sins, not so much for his own gratification, as to defy God, and manifest the hatred he bore him. He said, that among other things, he had with him a crucifix, which he had beaten out of contempt. He said that just before, on that very morning, he had made a sacrilegious communion, and for what object? That he might put under his feet the consecrated wafer. And that, in fact, he had actually received, and was about to put in execution this horrible intention, but was prevented by the people who observed him. He then consigned to the confessor the consecrated host, wrapped in a paper, and told him that as he was passing by that church he had a great desire to enter. He could not resist this desire, and had entered. That then he felt great remorse of conscience, together with a certain confused and irresolute desire to make his confession. For this reason he had placed himself before the confessional, but while standing there he felt so confused and timid, that he wished to go away, but it seemed as if some one had retained him by force: “Until,” he said, “you, Father, called me; and now I find myself here; I find myself making my confession; but I know not how to do it.” The Father then asked him if he had practised any act of devotion during that time; meaning towards the most holy Mary; for such sudden conversions only come through the powerful hands of the Virgin. “None, Father; what devotion could I offer,” answered the youth, when I believed myself lost?” “But try to remember more carefully,” replied the Father. “Father, nothing.” But accidentally putting his hand to his breast, he remembered that he wore the Scapular of the Seven Dolors of Mary: “Maria addolorata.” “Ah, my son,” said the confessor to him, “do you not see that our blessed Lady has bestowed this grace upon you? And know,” he added, “that this church is a church of our blessed Lady.” Hearing this, the youth was moved to contrition, and began to weep. He confessed his sins, and his compunction increased to such a degree that, bursting into tears, he fell, overcome with grief, as it seemed, at the feet of the Father, who, having restored him by a cordial, finally finished hearing his confession, and absolved him with the greatest consolation, as he was entirely contrite and resolved to amend his life. The Father sent him back to his own country after having obtained from him full liberty to preach and publish everywhere the great mercy exercised by Mary towards him.

PRAYER

Oh holy mother of God my mother Mary, didst thou then feel so great care of my salvation that thou didst even consent to offer up to death the object dearest to thy heart, thy beloved Jesus? If thou, then, hast so greatly desired to see me saved, it is just that next to God I should place in thee all my hopes. Oh, blessed Virgin, I do indeed confide entirely in thee. Oh, by the merit of this great sacrifice of the life of thy Son which to-day thou hast offered to God, pray him to have pity on my soul, for which this immaculate Lamb did not refuse to die upon the cross.

To-day, oh my queen, I also, in imitation of thee wish to offer my poor heart to God; but I fear that he will refuse it, seeing it thus filthy and loathsome. But if thou wilt offer it to him, he will not refuse it. All the offerings made him by thy most pure hands he accepts and receives. To thee, then, oh Mary, I present myself to-day, miserable as I am, and to thee I give myself entirely. Offer me as thine to the eternal Father and to Jesus, and pray him that through the merits of his Son, and by thy favor, he may accept me, and take me for his own. Ah, my sweetest mother, for the love thou bearest this Son whom thou hast sacrificed, aid me always, and do not abandon me. Do not permit that I should one day lose, through my sins, this my most loving Redeemer, to-day offered by thee with so much anguish to die on the cross. Say to him that I am thy servant; say to him that in thee I have placed all my hope; say to him, in a word, that thou dost wish for my salvation, and he will certainly graciously hear thee. Amen.

Discourse VII

ON THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY

ON this day the Church proposes to us to celebrate two solemn observances in honor of Mary: one, her happy departure from this earth; the other, her glorious assumption into heaven. In the present discourse we shall speak of her departure from this earth, and in the next of her assumption.

How precious was the death of Mary! 1st, On account of the special grace which attended it; 2d, On account of the manner of it.

Death being the punishment of sin, it would seem that the divine mother, all holy and exempt from every stain, should not be subject to death, nor suffer the same misfortune as the children of Adam, who are infected by the poison of sin. But God, wishing Mary in all things to be like to Jesus, required, as the Son had died, that the mother should also die; and because he wishes to give to the just an example of the blessed death prepared for them, he decreed that the virgin should die, but by a sweet and happy death. Hence we will enter upon the consideration, how precious was the death of Mary. 1st. On account of the special grace by which it was accompanied. 2d. On account of the manner in which it took place.

Point First.—Three things render death bitter, namely, attachment to earth, remorse for sin, and the uncertainty of salvation. But the death of Mary was entirely free from any such causes of bitterness, and was attended by many circumstances which rendered it precious and joyful. She died as she had always lived, entirely detached from all earthly things; she died in the most perfect peace of conscience; she died in the certainty of eternal glory.

And in the first place, there is no doubt that attachment to the goods of earth renders the death of the worldly bitter and miserable, as the Holy Spirit says: “Oh! death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions!”[7968] But because the saints die detached from the things of the world, their death is not bitter, but sweet, lovely, and precious; or, as St. Bernard explains, it is worthy being purchased at any price. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; “Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur.”[7969] Who are they that being dead, die? Precisely those happy souls that pass into eternity, already detached, and, as it were, dead to all affections for terrestrial things, having found in God alone there every good; as St. Francis of Assisium, who exclaimed: My God, and my all: “Deus meus et omnia.” But what soul was ever more detached from the things of the world, and more united to God, than the beautiful soul of Mary? She was indeed entirely detached from her parents, since at the age of three years, when children are most dependent on their parents, and have the greatest need of their assistance, Mary with so great resolution left them, and went to shut herself up in the temple to attend to the things of God. She was detached from riches, contented to live always poor, and supporting herself with the labor of her hands. She was detached from honors, loving an humble and abject life, although queenly honor belonged to her, for she traced her descent from the kings of Israel. The Virgin herself revealed to St. Elizabeth, a Benedictine nun, that when she was left in the temple by her parents, she resolved in her heart to have no other father, and to love no other good but God.

St. John saw Mary represented in that woman clothed with the sun, who held the moon under her feet. “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet.”[7970] Interpreters explain the moon to signify the goods of this earth, that are uncertain, and change as the moon does. All these goods Mary never had in her heart, but always despised them and kept them under her feet; living in this world as a solitary turtle-dove in a desert; placing her affection on no earthly thing, so that it was said of her: The voice of the turtle is heard in our land: “Vox turturis audita est in terra nostra.”[7971] And again, “Who is she that goeth up by the desert?”[7972] whence Rupert says: “Thou hast gone up by the desert, that is, having a solitary soul.”[7973] Mary, then, having always lived entirely detached from the things of earth, and only united to God, not bitter, but very sweet and dear to her was death, which united her more closely to God, by the eternal bonds of paradise.

Secondly, peace of conscience renders the death of the just precious. The sins committed in life are those worms that the most torment and gnaw the heart of poor dying sinners, who, about to be presented at the divine tribunal, see themselves at that moment surrounded by their sins, which terrify them, and pursue them with cries, as St Bernard says: “We are thy works, we will not desert thee.”[7974] Certainly Mary could not be afflicted in death by any remorse of conscience, for she was always holy, always pure, and always free from every shade of actual and original sin; hence it was said of her: Thou art all fair, oh my love, and there is not a spot in thee: “Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te.”[7975] As soon as she had the use of reason, that is, from the first moment of her immaculate conception in the womb of St. Ann, from that time she began with all her powers to love her God; and thus she continued to do, ever advancing more in perfection and love through her whole life. All her thoughts, her desires, her affections, were wholly given to God; not a word, not a motion, not a glance of the eye, not a breath of hers that was not for God and for his glory, never departing one step, nor separating herself for one moment from the divine love. Ah! in the happy hour of her death how did all the lovely virtues which she practised during her life surround her blessed bed! That faith so constant, that affectionate confidence in God, that patience so strong in the midst of sufferings, that humility in the midst of so many privileges, that modesty, that meekness, that compassion for souls, that zeal for the divine glory, and above all, that perfect charity towards God, with that entire uniformity to the divine will—all, in a word, thronged around her, and consoling her, said: We are thy works, we will not desert thee: “Opera tua sumus, non te deseremus.” Oh Lady and mother, we are all children of thy loving heart; now that thou art leaving this miserable life, we will not leave thee, we also will go to attend thee and honor thee in paradise, where, by our means, thou wilt be crowned queen of all men and of all the angels.

In the third place, the certainty of eternal salvation renders death sweet. Death is called a passage, since, through death we pass from this short life to life eternal. And, as the dread is great of those who die in doubt of their salvation, and who approach the solemn moment with just fear of passing into an eternal death, thus, on the other hand, very great is the joy of the saints at the end of life, hoping with some security to go and possess God in heaven. A nun of the order of St. Theresa, when the physician announced to her that death was near, was so full of joy that she said to him: “And how does it happen, sir, that you tell me this good news and ask no fee for it?” St. Lawrence Justinian being at the point of death, and seeing his friends weeping around him, said to them: “Away, away with your tears, this is no time for tears.”[7976] Go elsewhere to weep; if you will remain with me you must rejoice, as I rejoice, in seeing the gate of paradise open to unite me with my God. And thus, also, a St. Peter of Alcantara, a St. Louis of Gonzaga, and so many other saints, on hearing that death was at hand, burst forth into exclamations of joy and gladness. And yet they were not certain of the divine favor, nor secure of their own sanctity, as Mary was secure of hers. But what joy must the divine mother have felt in learning that her death was at hand; she, who had the fullest security of enjoying the divine favor, especially after the angel Gabriel had assured her that she was full of grace, and already possessed God! “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee . . . thou hast found grace.”[7977] And well did she herself know that her heart was burning continually with divine love, for that as Bernardine de Bustis says, Mary, by a singular grace not granted to any other saint, loved, and was always actually occupied in loving God every moment of her life, and so ardently, that, as St. Bernard says, it required a perpetual miracle to preserve her life in the midst of such burning flames.

It was before said to Mary in the sacred canticles: “Who is she that goeth up by the desert as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh, and frankincense, and of all the powders of the perfumer?”[7978] Her entire mortification was prefigured in the myrrh, her fervent prayers were signified by the incense, and all her holy virtues united to her perfect charity towards God, kindled in her a flame so great, that her holy soul, wholly devoted to, and consumed by divine love, arose continually to God as a pillar of smoke that on all sides breathed sweet odor. As a pillar of smoke, oh blessed Lady, wrote Rupert, thou hast breathed forth a sweet odor to the Most High.[7979] And Eustachius still more strongly expresses it: A pillar of smoke, because burning interiorly as a holocaust with the flame of divine love, she sent forth a most sweet odor.[7980] As the loving Virgin lived, such she died. As the divine love gave her life, so it gave her death;

for she died as the holy Doctors and Fathers of the Church generally affirm, of no other infirmity than pure love; for St. Ildephousus says, that Mary either ought not to die, or only die of love.

Second Point.—But let us now see what were the circumstances of her happy death. After the ascension of Jesus Christ, Mary remained on earth to attend to the propagation of the faith. Hence the disciples of Jesus had recourse to her, and she resolved their doubts, comforted them in their persecutions, and encouraged them to labor for the divine glory and for the salvation of the souls redeemed by her Son. She, indeed, willingly remained on earth, understanding this to be the will of God for the good of the Church; but she could not but feel the pain of being far from the presence and sight of her beloved Son, who had ascended into heaven. “Where your treasure is,” said the Redeemer, “there will your heart be also.”[7981] Where any one believes his treasure and his happiness to lie, there he always holds the love and desire of his heart fixed. If Mary then loved no other good than Jesus, he being in heaven, in heaven were all her desires. Taulerus wrote of Mary: The cell of Mary was heaven, “Mariæ cella fuit cœlum,”[7982] for being in heaven, with her affection, she made it her continual abode. Her school was eternity: “Schola æternitas,” for she was always detached from temporal possessions. Her teacher, divine truth: “Pædagogus divina veritas,” for she was always guided in her actions by the divine light. Her mirror, the Divinity; “Speculum divinitas,” for she looked upon nothing but God, in order to conform always to the divine will. Her ornament, devotion: “Ornatus ejus devotio,” for she was always ready to fulfil the divine commands. Her repose, union with God: “Quies unitas cum Deo,” for her peace was only in uniting herself with God. In a word, the place and treasure of her heart was God alone: “Cordis illius locus et thesaurus solus Deus erat.” The most holy Virgin consoled her loving heart during this cruel separation, by visiting, as it is narrated, the holy places of Palestine, where her Son had been in his lifetime: she often visited now the stable of Bethlehem, where her Son was born; now the workshop at Nazareth, where her Son had lived so many years poor and despised; now the garden of Gethsemane, where her Son commenced his passion: now the hall of Pilate, where he was scourged; the place where he was crowned; but more often she visited Calvary, where her Son had expired; and the holy sepulchre, where she finally had left him. And thus the most loving mother used to soothe the pains of her cruel exile. But this was not enough to satisfy her heart, which could not find its perfect rest upon this earth; hence her continual sighs were ascending to her Lord, as she exclaimed with David, but with more ardent love: “Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest.”[7983] Who will give me wings like a dove to fly to my God and there to find my rest? “As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after thee, oh God.”[7984] As the wounded stag pants for the fountain, so my soul, wounded by thy love, oh my God, desires and sighs for thee. Ah, the sighs of this holy turtle-dove could not but reach the heart of her God, who loved her so much: “The voice of the turtle is heard in our land.” Wherefore not being willing to defer any longer consolation to his beloved, behold, he graciously hears her desire and calls her to his kingdom.

Cedrenus,[7985] Nicephorus,[7986] and Metaphrastes,|[7987] relate, that the Lord, some days before his death, sent to her the angel Gabriel, the same who once announced to her that she was the blessed woman chosen to be the mother of God: My Lady and Queen, said the angel to her, God has already graciously heard thy holy desires, and he has sent me to tell thee to prepare to leave the earth, for he wishes thee with him in paradise. Come then, to take possession of thy kingdom, for I and all its holy citizens await and desire thee. At this happy annunciation what should our most humble and holy Virgin do but conceal herself more deeply in the centre of her most profound humility, and reply in those same words with which she answered St. Gabriel when he announced to her that she was to become mother of God: Behold the handmaid of the Lord: “Ecce ancilla Domini?” Behold, she again answered, the servant of the Lord; he in his pure goodness has chosen me and made me his mother; now he calls me to paradise. I neither merited the one or the other honor; but since he wishes to manifest his infinite liberality towards me, I am ready to go where he wishes. “Behold the handmaid of the Lord;” may the will of my God and Lord always be fulfilled in me.

After receiving this precious intelligence, she imparted it to St. John, and we may imagine with what grief and tender emotion he heard this news; he who for so many years had been near her as a son, and had enjoyed the celestial conversation of this most holy mother. She then visited anew the holy places of Jerusalem, tenderly taking leave of them, especially of Calvary, where her beloved Son had died. And then she returned to her poor dwelling to prepare for death. During this time the angels did not cease to come and visit this their beloved queen, consoling themselves with the thought that they should soon see her crowned in heaven. Many authors assert,[7988] that before she died, by a divine miracle, the apostles and also some of the disciples came from the different places where they were dispersed, and all assembled in the apartment of Mary, and that when she saw all these her dear children united together in her presence, she thus addressed them: My dear children, for love of you, and to help you, my Son left me on this earth. But now the holy faith is spread throughout the world, already the fruit of the divine seed is grown up; hence my divine Son, seeing that my assistance was no longer needed upon the earth, and compassionating me for the pain of separation, has graciously heard my desire to depart from this life, and go to see him in glory. If I leave you, my heart does not leave you; I will carry with me the great love I bear you, and it shall always remain with me. I am going to paradise to pray for you. At these sad tidings, who can realize how great were the tears and lamentations of these holy disciples, knowing that they were shortly to be separated from their mother? Then, they all in tears exclaimed, then, oh Mary, thou wilt leave us! It is true that this earth is not a worthy and fit place for thee, and that we are not worthy to enjoy the society of a mother of God; but remember that thou art our mother; thou hast until now enlightened us in our doubts, consoled our sorrows, strengthened us in persecutions, and how canst thou now abandon us, leaving us alone without thy comfort in the midst of so many enemies and so many conflicts? “We have already lost on earth Jesus, our master and our Father, who has ascended into heaven; we have since been consoled by thee, our mother; and now how canst thou leave us orphans, without father or mother? Oh remain with us, oh our Lady! or take us with thee. Thus writes St. John Damascene.[7989] “No, my children (thus sweetly the loving queen began to speak) this is not according to the will of God; content yourselves to do what lie has appointed for you and for me. To you it yet remains to labor on the earth for the glory of your Redeemer, and to perfect your eternal crown. I do not leave you to abandon you, but to help you more by my intercession with God in heaven. Be satisfied. I commend to you the holy Church; I commend to you the souls redeemed by my Son; let this be my last farewell, and the only remembrance that I leave you. If you love me, labor for souls, and for the glory of my Son; for we shall one day meet again in paradise, never more to separate throughout eternity."

Then she begged them to give burial to her body after death, blessed them, and directed St. John, as Damascene relates,[7990] that after her death he should give her two garments to two virgins who had served her for some time, and then she decently composed herself upon her poor little bed, where she laid herself to await death, and with death the meeting with her divine spouse, who shortly was to come and take her with him to the kingdom of the blessed. Behold, she already feels in her heart a great joy, the forerunner of the coming of the spouse, which overwhelms her with a great and new sweetness. The holy apostles, seeing that Mary already was about to depart from this earth, burst forth into fresh weeping, and knelt around her bed: some kissed her holy feet, others asked her special blessing, one recommended to her some particular necessity of his, and all wept bitterly, for their hearts were pierced with grief at being obliged to separate forever in this life from their beloved Lady. And she, their most loving mother, compassionated all, consoled all, promising to some her protection, blessing others with peculiar affection, and encouraging others to labor for the conversion of the world; especially did she call St. Peter to her, and as head of the Church, and vicar of her Son, she recommended to him in particular the propagation of the faith, promising him her special protection from heaven. But in a very special manner did she call to her St. John, who felt a greater sorrow than all the others at the moment of separation from that holy mother; and the most grateful Lady, calling to mind the affection and attention with which this holy disciple had served her through all the years they had passed on earth since the death of her Son, said to him with great tenderness: My John, I thank thee for all the assistance thou hast afforded me; my son, be certain that I never will be ungrateful to thee for it. If I leave thee now, I am going to pray for thee. Remain in peace in this life until we meet in heaven, where I will await thee. Do not forget me; in all thy necessities call me to thy aid, for I never will forget thee, my beloved son. My son, I bless thee, I leave thee my benediction; rest in peace—adieu.

But the death of Mary draws near. The divine love, with its blessed and ardent flames, have almost entirely consumed the vital spirits, the celestial phœnix is going to lose her life in the midst of this fire. Then the host of angels come to meet her, as if to be ready for the great triumph with which they were to accompany her to paradise.

Mary was indeed consoled at the sight of these holy spirits; but not fully consoled, for she did not yet see her beloved Jesus, who was the whole love of her heart. Hence she often repeated to the angels who descended to salute her: "I adjure you, oh daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him that I languish with love."[7991] Oh holy angels! oh blessed citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem! ye come in hosts kindly to console me, and ye all console me with your sweet presence; I thank you, but ye all do not fully satisfy me, for I do not yet see my Son coming to console me Go, if you love me, return to paradise, and tell my beloved, from me, that I languish and faint for his love. Tell him to come, and come quickly, for I am dying with my desire to see him.

But behold, Jesus himself comes to take his mother to the kingdom of the blessed. It was revealed to St. Elizabeth, that the Son appeared to Mary before she expired, with the cross in his hand, to show the special glory he had obtained from the redemption, having by his death made the acquisition of this great creature, who through the ages of eternity was to honor him more than all men and all angels. St. John of Damascus relates, that he gave to her the holy viaticum, saying to her, tenderly: Take, oh my mother, from my hands, that same body which thou hast given me. And the mother having received with the greatest love that final communion, with her last sighs said to him: My Son, into thy hands I commend my spirit; I recommend to thee this soul that thou, in thy goodness didst create even from the beginning, rich in so many graces, and by a peculiar privilege hast preserved from every stain of sin. I commend to thee my body, from which thou hast deigned to take flesh and blood. I commend to thee, also, these my dear children (speaking of the holy disciples who were around her), they are afflicted at my departure; do thou console them, who lovest them more than I do, bless them, and give them strength to do great things for thy glory.[7992]

The end of the life of Mary having now arrived, there was heard, as St. Jerome relates, in the apartment where she lay, a great harmony; and also, as it was revealed to St. Bridget, a great brightness was seen. By this harmony and unusual splendor the holy Apostles perceived that Mary was then departing, at which they broke forth again in tears and prayers, and raising their hands, with one voice exclaimed: Oh, our mother, now thou art going to heaven, and art leaving us, give us thy last benediction, and do not forget us in our misery. And Mary, turning her eyes around upon them all, as if bidding them for the last time farewell, said: Adieu, my children: I bless you; do not fear that I shall forget you. And now death came, not indeed clothed in mourning and sadness, as it comes to others, but adorned with light and joy. But why death, why death? Rather should we say that divine love came to cut the thread of that noble life. And as a lamp before going out, her life, amid these last flickerings, flashed forth more brightly, and then expired. Thus, this beautiful soul, her Son inviting her to follow him, wrapped in the flame of her charity, and in the midst of her amorous sighs, breathed forth a greater sigh of love, expired and died; and thus that great soul, that beautiful dove of our Lord, was released from the bonds of this life, and entered into the glory of the blessed, where she sits, and will sit, as queen of paradise, for all eternity.

Now Mary has left the earth, now she is in heaven. From thence this kind mother looks down upon us, who are still in this valley of tears, compassionates us, and promises us her support if we wish for it. Let us pray her always that by the merits of her blessed death she may obtain for us a happy death; and if it please God, that she may obtain for us to die on a Saturday, which is dedicated to her honor, or on a day of the Novena, or of the octave of some of her feasts, as she has obtained for so many of her servants, and especially for St. Stanislas Kostka, for whom she obtained to die on the day of her glorious Assumption, as Father Bartoli relates in his life of the saint.[7993]

EXAMPLE

During the lifetime of this holy youth, who was wholly devoted to the love of Mary, it happened that on the first day of August, he heard a sermon of Father Peter Canisius, in which, preaching to the novices of his society, he fervently urged upon all, the important advice, to live every day as if it might be the last of their life, after which they were to be presented at the divine tribunal. The sermon being finished, St. Stanislas told his companions that this counsel had been for him especially the voice of God, for that he was to die on that very month. He said this either because God had expressly revealed it to him, or at least because he gave him a certain internal presentiment of what afterwards happened. Four days after, the blessed youth went with Father Emmanuel to St. Mary Major, and beginning to speak of the approaching festival of the Assumption, he said: “Father, I believe that on that day there is seen in paradise a new paradise, the glory being seen there of the mother of God crowned queen of heaven, and seated so near the Lord above all the choirs of angels. And if it is true that every year, as I believe it to be certain, this festival is renewed in heaven, I hope to see the next one.” The glorious martyr St. Lawrence having fallen to the saint by lot as his monthly patron, according to the custom of that society, it is said that he wrote a letter to his mother Mary, in which he prayed her to obtain for him that he might be a spectator of this festival of hers in paradise. On St. Lawrence’s day he received communion, and after it supplicated the saint to present that letter to the divine mother, by interposing his intercession that the most holy Mary might graciously hear his prayer. At the close of this very day a fever came upon him, and although it was very light, he, however, from that hour esteemed it for certain that he had obtained the favor asked for him, namely, an early death. Indeed, on going to bed he said joyfully, with a smiling countenance: “From this bed I shall never arise.” And speaking to Father Cladius Aquaviva, he added: “I believe that St. Lawrence has already obtained for me the grace from Mary that I should be in heaven on the festival of her Assumption.” But no one thought much of these his words. The vigil having arrived, his malady continued to appear light, but the saint told a brother that he should die the next night, and the brother answered: “Oh, brother, it would be a greater miracle to die of so slight an illness, than to be cured.” But, behold, after noon he fell into a deadly swoon, and then came a cold sweat, and he entirely lost his strength. The superior hastened to him, and Stanislas prayed him to order him to be placed on the bare floor, that he might die as a penitent, which was granted in order to satisfy him, and he was laid on the floor on a mattress. Then he made his confession, received the viaticum, not without the tears of all present, for when the divine sacrament was brought into the apartment, his eyes kindled with celestial joy, and his whole countenance was radiant with holy love, so that he seemed a seraph. He also received extreme unction, and meanwhile did nothing but now raise his eyes to heaven, now look upon, kiss, and lovingly press to his breast, an image of Mary. A father said to him: “Of what use is it to wear that rosary around your hand, if you cannot recite it?” He answered: “It serves to console me, for it is something belonging to my mother.” “Oh, how much more,” said the Father, “will you be consoled by seeing her, and kissing, in a short time, her hands in heaven!” Then the saint, with his countenance all on fire, raised his hands, thus to express his desire of finding himself soon in her presence. Then his dear mother appeared to him, as he himself declared to those around him, and soon after, at the dawn of day on the fifteenth of August, he expired as a saint, his eyes fixed on heaven, without a motion, so that not until afterwards, when the image of the most holy Virgin was presented, and he made no movement towards it, it was perceived that he had already gone to kiss in paradise the feet of his beloved queen.

PRAYER

Oh, our most sweet Lady and Mother, thou hast already left the earth, and hast reached the kingdom, where thou sittest as queen over all the choirs of angels, as the holy Church sings: She was exalted about the choirs of angels in the celestial kingdoms: “Exaltata est super choros angelorum ad cœlestia regna.” We know that we sinners are not worthy of having thee with us in the valley of darkness. But we know also, that thou in thy grandeur hast never forgotten us in our misery, and by being exalted to such glory hast never lost compassion for us poor children of Adam, but rather that it is increased in thee. From the high throne then, where thou dost reign, turn, oh Mary, even upon us, thy pitying eyes, and take compassion upon us. Remember, too, that on leaving this world, thou didst promise not to forget us. Look upon us and succor us. See in what tempests and in how many dangers we are, and always shall be, till the end of our life arrives. By the merits of thy holy death, obtain for us holy perseverance in the divine friendship, that we may finally depart from this life in the grace of God, and thus come one day to kiss thy feet in paradise, and unite ourselves with the blessed spirits in praising thee, and singing thy glories, as thou dost merit. Amen.

Discourse VIII

ANOTHER DISCOURSE ON THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY

1ST. HOW GLORIOUS WAS THE TRIUMPH OF MARY WHEN SHE ASCENDED TO HEAVEN! 2D. HOW EXALTED WAS THE THRONE TO WHICH SHE WAS RAISED IN HEAVEN!

IT would seem just that the holy Church, on this day of the Assumption of Mary to heaven, should rather invite us to weep than to rejoice, since our sweet mother has quitted this earth, and left us bereft of her sweet presence, as St. Bernard says: It seems that we should rather weep than exult: “Plangendum nobis, quam plaudendum magis esse videtur.”[7994] But no, the holy Church invites us to rejoice: “Let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating a festival in honor of the blessed Virgin Mary.”[7995] And justly, if we love this our mother, we ought to congratulate ourselves more upon her glory than upon our own particular consolation. What son does not rejoice, although separated from his mother, if he knows that she is going to take possession of a kingdom? Mary, to-day, is to be crowned queen of heaven, and shall we not make a feast and rejoice if we truly love her? Let us all rejoice, let us rejoice: “Gaudeamus omnes, et gaudeamus.” And that we may be consoled the more by her exaltation, let us consider, in the first place, how glorious was the triumph of Mary ascending to heaven; secondly, how exalted was the throne to which she was elevated in heaven.

First Point.—After Jesus Christ our Saviour had completed the work of our redemption by his death, the angels earnestly desired to have him with them in their heavenly country; hence they were continually supplicating him, repeating the words of David: “Arise, oh Lord, into thy resting-place, thou and the ark which thou hast sanctified.”[7996] Come, oh Lord, now that thou hast redeemed men, come to thy kingdom with us, and bring with thee also the living ark of thy sanctification, namely, thy mother, who was the ark sanctified by thee when thou didst inhabit her womb. Thus St.

Bernardine puts it into the mouth of the angels to say: Let thy most holy mother Mary also ascend sanctified by thy conception.[7997] At length, then, our Lord wished to satisfy this desire of those citizens of the heavenly country, by calling Mary to paradise. But, if he wished that the ark of the covenant should be conducted with great pomp into the city of David—And David and all the house of Israel brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord with joyful shouting, and with sound of trumpet[7998]—with far more splendid and glorious pomp he ordained that his mother should enter into heaven. The prophet Elias was carried up to heaven in a chariot of fire, which, according to the interpreters, was but a company of angels who raised him from the earth. But, to conduct thee into heaven, oh mother of God, as Rupert the Abbot says, a company of angels was not enough, but the King of heaven himself, with all his celestial court, came to accompany thee.[7999]

St. Bernardine of Sienna is of the same opinion, namely: that Jesus Christ, in order to honor the triumph of Mary, came himself from paradise to meet and accompany her.[8000] And precisely for this object it was, says St. Anselm, that the Redeemer wished to ascend before his mother, not only to prepare for her a throne in that palace, but also to render her entrance into heaven more glorious, accompanying her himself, with all the blessed spirits.[8001] Hence St. Peter Damian, contemplating the splendor of this assumption of Mary into heaven, says that we shall find it more glorious than the ascension of Jesus Christ; for the angels only came to meet the Redeemer, but the blessed Virgin went to glory met and accompanied by the Lord of glory himself, and by all the blessed company of saints and angels.[8002] Hence Guerric the Abbot represents the divine Word speaking thus: I descended from heaven upon earth to give glory to my Father; but afterwards, to pay honor to my mother, I ascended again into heaven, that I might thus be enabled to come to meet her, and accompany her by my presence to paradise.[8003]

Let us now consider how the Saviour really did come from heaven to meet his mother, and at the first interview said, to console her: “Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come; for winter is now past . . . and gone.”[8004] Come, my dear mother, my beautiful and pure dove, leave that valley of tears where thou hast suffered so much for my love;

come from Libanus, my spouse, come from Libanus, come, thou shalt be crowned.[8005] Come with soul and body, to enjoy the reward of thy holy life. If thou hast suffered much upon earth, far greater is the glory that I have prepared for thee in heaven. Come there to sit near me; come to receive the crown that I will give thee as queen of the universe. Now, behold, Mary leaves the earth, and calling to mind the many graces she had there received from her Lord, she looks at it at the same time both with affection and compassion, leaving in it so many poor children, in the midst of so many miseries and dangers. And now Jesus offers her his hand, and the blessed mother rises in the air and passes beyond the clouds and spheres. Behold her now arrived at the gates of heaven. When monarchs made their entrance to take possession of their kingdom, they do not pass through the gates of the city, for either these are taken off entirely, or they pass over them. Hence the angels, when Jesus Christ entered paradise, cried: “Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates; and the King of glory shall enter in.”[8006] Thus, also, now that Mary is going to take possession of the kingdom of the heavens, the angels who accompany her cry to the others who are within: “Lift up your gates, ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates, and the queen of glory shall enter in.”[8007]

And now Mary enters into the blessed country. But on her entrance, the celestial spirits seeing her so beautiful and glorious, ask of those who are without, as Origen describes it, and exclaim, all rejoicing in heaven in one (voice): “Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?”[8008] And who is this creature so beautiful, that comes from the desert of the earth, a place so full of thorns and tribulation? But this one comes so pure and so rich in virtue, supported by her beloved Lord, who deigns to accompany her with so great honor. Who is she? The angels who accompany her answer: This is the mother of our King, she is our queen, and the blessed one among women, full of grace, the saint of saints, the beloved of God, the immaculate, the dove, the most beautiful of all creatures. And then all those blessed spirits begin to bless and praise her, singing, with more reason than the Hebrews said to Judith: “Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honor of our people.”[8009] Ah! our Lady and our queen, then thou art the glory of paradise, the joy of our country, thou art the honor of us all; be ever welcome, be ever blessed; behold thy kingdom, behold us, we are all thy servants, ready for thy commands.

Then all the saints who were at that time in paradise came to welcome her and salute her as their queen. All the holy virgins came: They saw her, and declared her most blessed . . . and they praised her.[8010] We, they said, oh most blessed Lady, are also queens of this kingdom, but thou art our queen; for thou wast the first to give us the great example of consecrating our virginity to God; we all bless and thank thee for it. Then came the holy confessors to salute her as their mistress, who had taught them so many beautiful virtues by her holy life. The holy martyrs came also to salute her as their queen, because by her great constancy in the sorrows of the passion of her Son, she had taught them, and also obtained for them by her merits, strength to give their life for the faith. St. James came also, the only one of the apostles who was then in paradise, to thank her in the name of all the other apostles, for the great comfort and support she had given them while she was upon earth. The prophets next came to salute her, and they said to her: Ah, Lady, thou wast foreshadowed in our prophecies. The holy patriarchs came and said to her: Oh Mary, thou hast been our hope, so much and so long sighed for by us. And among those came our first parents, Adam and Eve, to thank her with greater affection. Ah, beloved daughter, they said to her, thou hast repaired the injury done by us to the human race; thou hast obtained for the world that blessing lost by us, on account of our crime: by thee we are saved, and for it be forever blessed.

Then came holy Simeon to kiss her feet, and with joy reminded her of that day on which he received from her hands the infant Jesus. St. Zachary and St. Elizabeth also came, and thanked her again for that loving visit, that with so much humility and charity she made them in their dwelling, and through which they received so many treasures of grace. St. John the Baptist came with greater affection to thank her for having sanctified him by means of her voice. But what could her parents, St. Joachim and St. Anna, say to her, when they came to salute her? Oh God! with what tenderness must they have blessed her, saying: Ah! beloved daughter, what happiness was ours in having such a child! Ah! be thou our queen now, because thou art the mother of our God; as such we salute thee and adore thee. But who can comprehend the affection with which her dear spouse St.

Joseph came to salute her? Who can describe the joy that the holy patriarch experienced at seeing his spouse arrive in heaven with so much triumph, made queen of all paradise? With what tenderness did he say to her: Ah! my Lady and spouse, how shall I ever be able to thank our God as I ought for having made me thy spouse, thou who art his true mother? Through thee I merited on earth to attend upon the childhood of the incarnate Word, to bear him so often in my arms, and receive from him so many special favors. Blessed be the moments that I spent in life serving Jesus and thee, my holy spouse. Behold our Jesus; let us console ourselves that now he is no more lying in a stable upon hay, as we saw him at his birth in Bethlehem; he does not now live poor and despised in a shop, as once he lived with us in Nazareth; he is not now nailed to a shameful cross, as when he died for the salvation of the world in Jerusalem; but he sits at the right hand of the Father, as king and Lord of heaven and of earth. And now, oh my queen, we shall never more depart from his holy feet, where we shall bless and love him eternally.

Then all the angels came to salute her, and she, the great queen, thanked all for the assistance they had given her on earth, especially thanking the Archangel St. Gabriel, who was the happy ambassador of all her glories, when he came to announce to her that she was to be made mother of God. Then the humble and holy Virgin, kneeling, adores the divine majesty, and wholly lost in the consciousness of her nothingness, thanks him for all the graces bestowed upon her solely by his goodness, and especially for having made her mother of the eternal Word. Let those who can, comprehend with what love the most holy Trinity blessed her. Let them comprehend what a welcome the eternal Father gave to his daughter, the Son to his mother, the Holy Spirit to his spouse. The Father crowns her by sharing with her his power, the Son his wisdom, the Holy spirit his love. And all the three divine persons establishing her throne at the right hand of Jesus, declare her universal queen of heaven and of earth, and command angels and all other creatures to recognize her for their queen, and as queen to serve and obey her. And here we pass on to the consideration of how exalted was this throne to which Mary was elevated in heaven.

Second Point.—If the human mind, says St. Bernard, cannot attain to comprehend the immense glory which God has prepared in heaven for those who have loved him on earth, as the apostle declares, who will ever attain to comprehend what he has prepared for her who bore him? “Quid præparavit gignenti se”? What glory did he prepare for his beloved mother, he who on earth loved her more than all men; who, even from the first moment of her creation, loved her more than all men and angels united! Justly, then, does the holy Church sing that Mary having loved God more than all the angels, she has been exalted above all the angels, in heaven.[8011] Yes, she was exalted, says William the Abbot, above the angels, so that she sees no one above her but her Son, who is the only begotten Son of God.[8012]

Hence the learned Gerson asserts, that all the orders of angels and of saints being divided into three hierarchies, as the angelic Doctor declares,[8013] and St. Dionysius also, Mary constitutes in heaven a hierarchy of herself, the most sublime of all, and next to God.[8014] And as the mistress, St. Antoninus adds, is incomparably above her servants, so is the glory of Mary incomparably greater than that of the angels.‖[8015] And in order to understand this, it is enough to know what David said, that this queen was seated at the right hand of the Son: The queen stood on thy right hand: “Astitit regina a dextris tuis.”[8016] Which St. Athanasius exactly explained by saying: Mary is placed at the right hand of God.*[8017]

The works of Mary, as St. Ildephonsus says, certainly incomparably surpassed in merit the works of all the saints, and therefore the reward and the glory she merited cannot be conceived.†[8018] And if it is certain that God rewards according to merit, as the apostle says, “Who will render to every man according to his works;”[8019] it is also certain, says St. Thomas, that the Virgin who excelled in merit all, both men and angels, must have been exalted above all the celestial orders.[8020] In fine, adds St. Bernard, let us measure the singular grace that she acquired on earth, and then we may measure the singular glory that she has obtained in heaven.[8021]

The glory of Mary, remarks a learned author,[8022] which was a full glory, a complete glory, is different from that which the other saints have in heaven. It is true that in heaven all the blessed enjoy a perfect peace and full content; yet it will always be true that no one of them enjoys that glory that he could have merited if he had loved and served God with greater fidelity. Hence, although the saints in heaven desire nothing more than what they possess, yet, in fact, there is something they could yet desire. It is also true that the sins which they have committed, and the time which they have lost, do not bring suffering; but it cannot be denied that the most good done in life, innocence preserved and time well employed, give the greatest content. Mary in heaven desires nothing, and has nothing to desire. Who of the saints in paradise, says St. Augustine, if asked whether he has committed sins, can answer no, except Mary?[8023] It is certain, as the holy Council of Trent has defined,[8024] that Mary never committed any sin, not even the least; not only she has never lost divine grace—never bedimmed it, but she has never kept it unemployed; she never did an action that was not meritorius; she never said a word, or had a thought, or drew a breath, that was not directed to the greatest glory of God; in a word, she never relaxed or stopped one moment in her onward course to God; she never lost anything through negligence, for she always corresponded with grace with all her power, and loved God as much as she could love him. Oh Lord, she now says to him in heaven, if I have not loved thee as much as thou dost merit, at least I have loved thee as much as I could.

The graces of the saints were different in each, as St. Paul said: There are diversities of graces: “Divisiones gratiarum sunt.” So that each of them corresponding with the grace received, has rendered himself excellent in some virtue; one in saving souls, one in leading a life of penance, one in suffering torments, one in contemplation; hence the holy Church, when celebrating their festivals, says of each: And there was not found the like to him: “Non est inventus similis illi.” And as in their merits, so are they in heaven different in glory: for star differeth from star in glory: “Stella enim a Stella differt.”[8025] The Apostles differ from the martyrs, confessors from virgins, the innocents from penitents. The holy Virgin being full of all graces, excelled each saint in every kind of virtue; she was the apostle of the apostles; she was queen of the martyrs, for she suffered more than all of them; she was the standard-bearer of the virgins, the model of spouses; she united in herself a perfect innocence with a perfect mortification; in a word, she united in her heart all the most heroic virtues which any saint has ever practised. Hence it was said of her: “The queen stood on thy right hand in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety;”[8026] for all the graces, privileges, and merits of the other saints were found united in Mary, as the Abbot of

Celles says: The prerogatives of all the saints, oh Virgin, thou hast united in thyself.[8027]

Thus as the splendor of the sun exceeds the splendor of all stars united, so, says St. Basil, the glory of the divine mother exceeds that of all the blessed.[8028] And St. Peter Damian adds, that as the light of the stars and of the moon disappears as if they were not, at the rising of the sun, thus Mary so far obscures in glory the splendor of men and angels, that as it were, these do not appear in heaven.[8029] Whence St. Bernardine of Sienna agrees with St. Bernard in asserting that the blessed participate in part in the divine glory, but that the Virgin, in a certain manner, has been so enriched with it, that it seems no creature could be more united with God than is Mary.[8030] Which is confirmed by the blessed Albertus Magnus, when he says that our queen contemplates God very near incomparably more so than all the other celestial spirits.[8031] And the above-named St. Bernardine says, moreover, that as the other planets are illuminated by the sun, so all the blessed receive greater light and joy from the sight of Mary.[8032] And in another place he likewise asserts, that the mother of God, ascending to heaven, increased the joy of all its inhabitants.|[8033] Hence St. Peter Damian says, that the blessed have no greater glory in heaven, after God, than to enjoy the presence of that most beautiful queen: “Summa gloria est post Deum te videre.”[8034] And St. Bonaventure: Next to God, our greatest glory and our greatest joy is from Mary.[8035]

Let us rejoice, then, with Mary, in the exalted throne to which God has elevated her in heaven. And let us rejoice also for our own sake, since if our mother has ceased to be present with us, by ascending in glory to heaven, she has not ceased to be present with us in her affection. Nay, being there nearer and more united to God, she better knows our miseries, and therefore pities them more, and is better able to relieve us. And wilt thou, as St. Peter Damian asks, oh blessed Virgin, because thou hast been so exalted in heaven, be forgetful of us miserable creatures?[8036] No, may God preserve us from the thought; a heart so merciful cannot but pity our miseries which are so great.[8037] If the pity of Mary for us was so great when she lived upon earth, much greater, says St. Bonaventure, is it in heaven, where she reigns.|[8038]

Meanwhile let us dedicate ourselves to the service of this queen, to honor and love her as much as we can; for she is not, as Richard of St. Lawrence says, like other rulers, who oppress their vassals with burdens and taxes, but our queen enriches her servants with graces, merits, and rewards.[8039] And let us pray her with Guerric the Abbot: Oh mother of mercy, thou who sittest so near to God, queen of the world, upon a throne so sublime, satiate thyself with the glory of thy Jesus, and send to us thy servants the fragments that are left. Thou dost now enjoy the banquet of the Lord; we who are still on earth, like the dogs under the table, ask thy pity.[8040]

EXAMPLE

Father Silvanus Razzi relates,[8041] that a devout ecclesiastic who had a tender love for our Queen Mary, had heard her beauty so much extolled that he ardently desired once to see his Lady, and with humble prayers asked this favor. The kind mother sent an angel to tell him that she would gratify him by allowing him to see her, but on this condition, namely, that after seeing her he should become blind. He accepted the condition. On a certain day, behold the blessed Virgin appeared to him, and that he might not become wholly blind, he at first wished to look at her with one eye only; but afterwards becoming enamored of the great beauty of Mary, he wished to contemplate her with both, and then the mother of God disappeared. Deeply grieved at having lost the presence of his queen, he could not cease weeping; not indeed for his lost eye, but that he had not seen her with both. Then he began to supplicate her anew, that she would again appear to him, and he would be willing to lose the other eye and become entirely blind. “Happy and satisfied,” oh my Lady, he said, “I will remain, if I become wholly blind for so good a cause, which will leave me more enamored of thee, and of thy beauty.” Again Mary was willing to satisfy him, and again she consoled him with her presence; but because this loving queen can never injure any one, when she appeared to him the second time, not only she did not take from him the other eye, but she even restored to him the one he had lost.

PRAYER

Oh great, excellent, and most glorious Lady, prostrate at the foot of thy throne, we adore thee from this valley of tears. We rejoice at the immense glory with which our Lord has enriched thee. Now that thou art really queen of heaven and of earth, ah, do not forget us thy poor servants. Do not disdain from the lofty throne, from which thou dost reign, to turn thy pitying eyes towards us miserable sinners. As thou art so near the source of graces, thou art able so much the more to obtain them for us. In heaven thou seest more plainly our miseries, and therefore thou must pity and relieve us the more. Make us on earth thy faithful servants, that we may thus go to bless thee in paradise. On this day, when thou hast been made queen of the universe, we also consecrate ourselves to thy service. In thy great joy console us also this day, by accepting us for thy vassals. Thou, then, art our mother. Ah, most sweet mother! most amiable mother! thy altars are surrounded by many people who ask of thee, one to be healed of some malady, another to be relieved in his necessities, one prays thee for a good harvest, and another success in some litigation. We ask of thee graces more pleasing to thy heart. Obtain for us that we may be humble, detached from earth, resigned to the divine will. Obtain for us the holy love of God, a good death, and paradise. Oh Lady, change us from sinners to saints. Perform this miracle that will redound more to thy honor, than if thou didst restore sight to a thousand blind persons, or raise a thousand from the dead. Thou art so powerful with God, it is enough to say that thou art his mother, his most beloved, full of his grace; what can he then deny thee? Oh most lovely queen, we do not pretend to behold thee on the earth, but we desire to go and see thee in paradise: thou must obtain this for us. Thus we certainly hope. Amen, amen.

Discourse IX

ON THE DOLORS OF MARY

MARY WAS QUEEN OF MARTYRS, BECAUSE HER MARTYRDOM WAS LONGER AND GREATER THAN THAT OF ALL THE MARTYRS.

WHO can have a heart so hard that it will not melt on hearing of a most lamentable event which once happened in the world? There was a noble and holy mother who had but one only Son; and he was the most amiable that could be imagined, innocent, virtuous, beautiful, and most loving towards his mother; so much so, that he never had caused her the least displeasure, but always had showed her all respect, obedience, and affection. Hence the mother had placed on this Son all her earthly affections. Now what happened? It happened that this Son through envy, was falsely accused by his enemies and the judge, although he knew and confessed his innocence, yet, that he might not offend his enemies, condemned him to an infamous death, precisely as they had requested him to do. And this poor mother had to suffer the affliction of seeing that amiable and beloved Son so unjustly taken from her, in the flower of his age, by a barbarous death; for he was made to die in torment, drained of his blood before her own eyes in a public place, upon an infamous gibbet. Devout souls, what do you say? Is this case and this unhappy mother worthy of compassion? Already you know of whom I speak. This Son so cruelly slain was our loving Redeemer, Jesus, and his mother was the blessed Virgin Mary, who, for love of us, was willing to see him offered up to the divine justice by the barbarity of men. This great pain, then, which Mary suffered for us—a pain which was more than a thousand deaths—merits our compassion and gratitude. And if we can return nothing else for so much love, at least let us for a little time to-day stop to consider the severity of the suffering by which Mary became queen of martyrs; for her great martyrdom exceeded in suffering that of all the martyrs,—being, in the first place the longest martyrdom; and in the second place, the greatest martyrdom.

First Point—As Jesus is called King of sorrows and King of martyrs, because he suffered in his life more than all the other martyrs, so is also Mary called, with reason, queen of the martyrs, having merited this title by suffering the greatest martyrdom that could be suffered, next to that of her Son. Hence she was justly named by Richard of St. Laurence the martyr of martyrs: "Martyr martyrum." And to her may be applied what Isaias said: He will crown thee with the crown of tribulation: "Coronans coronabit tetribulatione.[8042] For that suffering itself which exceeded the suffering of all the other martyrs united, was the crown by which she was shown to be the queen of martyrs. That Mary was a true martyr cannot be doubted, as is proved by the Carthusian, Pelbart, Catharinus, and others; for it is an established opinion that suffering sufficient to cause death, constitutes martyrdom, although death may not then take place. St. John the Evangelist is revered as a martyr, although he did not die in the caldron of boiling oil, but came out more sound than he went in: "Vegetior exiverit quam intraverit."[8043] It is sufficient to procure the glory of martyrdom, says St. Thomas, that any one should be obedient even to offer himself to death.[8044] Mary was a martyr, says St. Bernard, not by the sword of the executioner, but by the bitter sorrow of her heart.[8045] If her body was not wounded by the hand of the executioner, yet her blessed heart was pierced by grief at the passion of her Son; a grief sufficient to cause her not only one, but a thousand deaths. And from this we shall see that Mary was not only a true martyr, but that her martyrdom surpassed that of all the other martyrs, for it was a longer martyrdom, and, if I may thus express it, all her life was a long death.

The passion of Jesus commenced with his birth, as St. Bernard says;[8046] and Mary also, in all things like unto her Son, suffered her martyrdom through her whole life. The name of Mary, among its other significations, as the blessed Albertus Magnus affirms, signifies a *bitter sea:* "Mare amarum." Wherefore to her is applied the passage of Jeremias: Great as the sea is thy destruction: "Magna est enim velut mare contritio tua."[8047] For as the sea is all salt and bitter, thus the life of Mary was always full of bitterness, at the sight of the passion of the Redeemer, which was ever present to her. It cannot be doubted that being more enlightened by the Holy Spirit than all the prophets, she better comprehended than they the predictions concerning the Messias, which they recorded in their holy Scriptures. Precisely this the angel revealed to St. Bridget.[8048] Whence, as the same angel declared, the Virgin knowing how much the incarnate Word was to suffer for the salvation of men, even before she became his mother, and compassionating this innocent Saviour, who was to be so cruelly put to death for crimes not his own, she commenced, from that time, her great martyrdom.[8049]

Her grief afterwards increased immeasurably when she was made mother of this Saviour. So that at the painful thought of all the sufferings which her poor Son was to endure, she indeed experienced, says Rupert the Abbot, a long martyrdom—a martyrdom continued through her whole life.[8050] And exactly this was signified by the vision which St. Bridget had at Rome, in the church of St. Mary Major, where the blessed Virgin appeared to her with St. Simeon, and an angel, having a sword which was very long and red with blood; by which was prefigured the long and bitter grief that pierced the heart of Mary during her whole life.[8051] Whence the above-named Rupert puts into the mouth of Mary the following words: Oh redeemed souls and my beloved children, do not pity me only for that hour in which I saw my dear Jesus dying in my presence, for the sword of sorrow, predicted to me by Simeon, pierced my soul during my whole life; when I was giving suck to my Son, when I was warming him in my arms, I already saw the bitter death that awaited him; consider then what long and cruel sorrows I must have endured.[8052]

Wherefore Mary might truly say in the words of David: My life is wasted with grief and my years in sighs.[8053] My sorrow is continually before me: “Dolor meus in conspectu meo semper.”[8054] My life was wholly passed in grief and tears; for my grief, which was compassion for my beloved Son, never departed from before my eyes, seeing, as I did, continually the sufferings and death that he was one day to endure. The divine mother herself revealed to St. Bridget, that even after the death and ascension of her Son into heaven, the memory of his passion, whether she ate or worked, was deeply impressed and ever recent in her tender heart.[8055] Taulerus therefore says, that Mary passed her whole life in perpetual sorrow; for her heart was always occupied with thoughts of sadness and of suffering.[8056]

So that time, which usually mitigates the sorrows of the afflicted, did not relieve Mary; nay, time itself increased her sorrow, for as Jesus increased in years, on the one hand, he continually showed himself more lovely and amiable; and on the other, the time of his death was ever drawing nearer, and grief at having to lose him on this earth, continually increased in the heart of Mary. As the rose grows up among thorns, said the angel to St. Bridget, so the mother of God advanced in years in the midst of sufferings; and as the thorns increase with the growth of the rose, thus this rose selected by the Lord, Mary, as she increased in age, was so much the more pierced by the thorns of her dolors.[8057] Having considered the length of this suffering, let us now pass on to the second point, namely, the consideration of its greatness.

Point Second.—Ah, Mary was not only queen of the martyrs, because her martyrdom was longer than that of all others, but also because it was the greatest of all. But who can measure its greatness? Jeremias appears to be unable to find any one with whom he may compare this mother of sorrows, when considering her great suffering at the death of her Son. “To what shall I compare thee, or to what shall I liken thee, oh daughter of Jerusalem; for great as the sea is thy destruction; who shall heal thee?”[8058] Wherefore Cardinal Hugo, commenting on these words, says: Oh blessed Virgin, as the bitterness of the sea exceeds all other bitterness, so thy grief surpasses all other griefs.[8059] Hence St. Anselm affirms, that if God, by a special miracle, had not preserved the life of Mary, her grief would have been sufficient to cause her death at each moment of her life.[8060] And St. Bernardine of Sienna even says, that the grief of Mary was so great, that if it were divided among all men, it would be enough to cause their immediate death.[8061]

But let us consider the reasons why the martyrdom of Mary was greater than that of all the martyrs. In the first place, it must be remembered that the martyrs suffered their martyrdom in the body, by means of fire or steel; Mary suffered martyrdom in her soul; as St. Simeon had before prophesied: and thy own soul a sword shall pierce: “Et tuam ipisus animam pertransibit gladius;”[8062] as if the holy old man had said to her: Oh holy Virgin, the bodies of the other martyrs will be torn with iron, but thou wilt be pierced and martyred in thy soul, by the passion of thy own Son. Now, as the soul is more noble than the body, so much greater was the suffering of Mary than that of all the martyrs; as Jesus Christ himself said to St. Catharine of Sienna: There is no comparison between the sufferings of the soul and the body; “Inter dolorem animæ et corporis nulla est comparatio.” Whence the holy Abbot Arnold Carnotensis says, that whoever had been present on Calvary at the great sacrifice of the immaculate Lamb, when he was dying on the cross, would have there beheld two great altars, one in the body of Jesus, the other in the heart of Mary: for there, at the same time that the Son sacrificed his body in death, Mary sacrificed her soul in compassion.[8063]

Moreover, while the other martyrs, St. Antoninus says,[8064] suffered by sacrificing their own lives, the blessed Virgin suffered by sacrificing the life of her Son, whom she loved far more than her own life; so that she not only suffered in spirit all that her Son suffered in body, but, moreover, the sight of the sufferings of her Son brought more grief to her heart than if she had endured them all in her own person. There can be no doubt that Mary suffered in her heart all the tortures by which she saw her beloved Jesus tormented. Every one knows that the sufferings of children are also the sufferings of their mothers, when they are the witnesses of them. St. Augustine, considering the anguish that the mother of the Macchabees experienced in witnessing the tortures which her sons endured, says: “She suffered in them all, because she loved them all, and endured with her eyes what they all endured in the flesh.”[8065] Thus also was it with Mary; all those scourgings, torments, thorns, nails, and the cross, which tortured the innocent flesh of Jesus, entered at the same time into the heart of Mary to complete her martyrdom. He in the flesh, she in the heart suffered, writes St. Amadeus: “Ille carne, illa corde passa est.”[8066] So that as St. Lawrence Justinian says, the heart of Mary became as it were a mirror of the agonies of her Son, in which were seen the spitting, the scourging, the wounds, and all that Jesus suffered.[8067] And St. Bonaventure remarks, that these wounds which were scattered all over the body of Jesus, were all united in one heart of Mary.[8068]

The Virgin, then through compassion for her Son, was scourged, crowned with thorns, insulted, and nailed to the cross. Whence the same saint considering Mary on Mt. Calvary, where she was present with her dying

Son, asks of her: Oh Lady, tell me where you then stood? Perhaps only at the foot of the cross! Might I not rather say: thou wast on the cross itself crucified with thy Son?[8069] And Richard, remarking on the words of the Redeemer, which he spoke by the mouth of Isaias: “I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with me,”[8070] adds: Oh Lord, thou dost rightly say that in the work of human redemption thou didst suffer alone, and there was no man that could pity thee sufficiently; but there was a woman with thee, thy own mother, who suffered in her heart whatever thou didst suffer in thy body.[8071]

But all this is saying only too little of the sorrows of Mary; for, as I have before said, she suffered more in seeing her beloved Jesus suffer, than if in her own person she had endured all the tortures and the death of her Son. Erasmus has written, speaking of parents, generally, that they feel the sufferings of their children more than their own.[8072] But this is not always true. It was no doubt true of Mary, for she certainly loved her Son and his life far more than herself, and a thousand lives of her own. Therefore St. Amadeus well declares, that the afflicted mother, at the sorrowful sight of the agony of her beloved Jesus, suffered much more than if she herself had endured his whole passion.[8073] The reason is plain, since, as St. Bernard says: The soul is more where it loves, than where it lives: “Anima magis est ubi amat, quam ubi animat.” And the Saviour himself had before said, that our heart is where our treasure is.[8074] If Mary, then, through love, lived more in her Son than in herself, a much greater grief did she suffer at the death of her Son, than if the most cruel death in the world had been inflicted on her.

And here is to be considered the other circumstance that rendered the martyrdom of Mary far greater than the sufferings of all the martyrs, for in the passion of Jesus she suffered much, and she suffered without alleviation. The martyrs suffered under the torments which their tyrants inflicted upon them, but love to Jesus rendered their pains sweet and delightful. A St. Vincent suffered in his martyrdom; he was tortured on the rack, torn with hooks, burnt with red-hot iron plates; but St. Augustine says: One seemed to suffer, and another to speak: “Alius videbatur pati, alius loqui.” The saint addressed the tyrant with such power, and with such contempt of his torments, that it seemed as if one Vincent suffered and another Vincent spoke, so greatly did his God, with the sweetness of his love, comfort him in the midst of his sufferings. A St. Boniface suffered; his body was torn with irons, sharp-pointed reeds were thrust between his nails and flesh, melted lead was poured into his mouth, and at the same time he could not often enough repeat: I give thanks to thee, oh Jesus Christ: “Gratias tibi ago, Domine Jesu Christe.” A St. Mark and a St. Marcellinus suffered; they were bound to a stake, their feet pierced by nails, and the tyrant appealed to them, saying: “Miserable beings, look at your condition, and save yourselves from these torments.” And they answered: “What torments, what pain do you speak of? We have never feasted with more joy than now, when we are suffering with pleasure for the love of Jesus Christ.”[8075] A St. Lawrence suffered, but while he was burning on the gridiron, the interior flames of love, as St. Leo says, was more powerful to cheer his soul, than the flames without were to torture his body.[8076] Hence love made him so strong, that he even braved the tyrant by saying to him: Tyrant, if you wish to feed on my flesh, a part is sufficiently cooked, turn and eat: “Assatum est jam, versa et manduca.” But in such torture and lingering death, how could the saint thus exult? Ah, St. Augustine answers, because, intoxicated with the wine of divine love, he felt neither torments nor death.[8077]

For the holy martyrs, the more they loved Jesus, the less they felt torments and death, and the sight alone of the sufferings of a crucified God was sufficient to console them. But was not our afflicted mother, also, thus consoled by love for her Son, and the sight of his sufferings? No, for this very Son who suffered, was the whole cause of her grief; and the love she bore him was her only, and too cruel executioner; for the whole martyrdom of Mary consisted in seeing and pitying her innocent and beloved Son, who suffered so much. Therefore, the more she loved him, the more bitter and inconsolable was her sorrow. “Great as the sea is thy destruction, who shall heal thee?”[8078] Ah, queen of heaven, love hath alleviated the sufferings of other martyrs, and has healed their wounds; but who has ever soothed thy great sorrow? Who has ever healed the cruel wounds of thy heart? Who will heal thee? “Quis medebitur tui?” if that same Son, who could give thee consolation, was by his sufferings the sole cause of thy sorrows, and the love that thou didst bear him, caused all thy martyrdom? Therefore, whilst the other martyrs, as Diez remarks, are all represented with the instrument of their passion—St. Paul with the sword, St. Andrew with the cross, St. Lawrene with the gridiron—Mary is represented with her dead Son in her arms, because Jesus himself alone was the instrument of her martyrdom, by reason of the love which she bore him. In a few words St. Bernard confirms all I have said: With the other martyrs their great love soothed the anguish of their martyrdom; but the more the blessed Virgin loved, so much the more she suffered, and so much more cruel was her martyrdom.[8079]

It is certain that the greater is our love for a thing, the greater pain we feel in losing it. The loss of a brother certainly afflicts us more than the loss of a beast of burden; and the death of a son, more than that of a friend. Now Cornelius à Lapide says, that to comprehend how great was the grief of Mary at the death of her Son, we should comprehend how great was the love she bore him.[8080] But who can measure that love? The blessed Amadeus says, that in the heart of Mary two kinds of love to her Jesus were united: the supernatural love with which she loved him as her God, and the natural love with which she loved him as her son;[8081] so that, of these two loves, one only was formed, but a love so immense that William of Paris even said, that the blessed Virgin loved Jesus to such a degree that a pure creature could not love him more.[8082] And Richard of St. Laurence says, as there was no love like her love, so there was no grief like her grief.[8083] If, therefore, the love of Mary for her Son was immense, immense, also, must have been her grief in losing him by death. Where love is greatest, says blessed Albertus Magnus, there grief is greatest: “Ubi summus amor, ibi summus dolor.”

Let us imagine, then, that the divine mother, standing near her Son dying upon the cross, and justly applying to herself the words of Jeremias, says to us: “Oh, all ye that pass by the way attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.”[8084] Oh ye that are passing your lives upon this earth, and have no pity for me, stop a while to look upon me, now that I behold that beloved Son dying before my eyes: and then see if among all who are afflicted and tormented, there be sorrow like to my sorrow.” No, answers St. Bonaventure, there can be found no sorrow, oh afflicted mother, more bitter than thine, for no son can be found more dear than thine[8085] Ah, there has never been in the world, says St. Lawrence Justinian, a son more worthy of love than Jesus, nor a mother who loved her son more than Mary; if, then, there has never been in the world a love like the love of Mary, how can there be a grief like the grief of Mary?[8086]

Therefore, St. Ildephonsus did not hesitate to affirm, that it was little to say that the sufferings of the Virgin exceeded all the torments of the martyrs, even were they united together.[8087] And St. Anselm adds, that the most cruel tortures inflicted upon the holy martyrs were light or nothing, in comparison with the martyrdom of Mary.[8088] St. Basil likewise writes, that as the sun surpasses in splendor all the other planets, so Mary in her sufferings exceeded the sufferings of all the other martyrs.[8089] A certain learned author[8090] concludes with an admirable sentiment, saying, that so great was the sorrow which this tender mother suffered in the passion of Jesus, that she alone could worthily compassionate the death of a God made man.

But St. Bonaventura, addressing the blessed Virgin, says: Oh Lady, why hast thou wished to go and sacrifice thyself also on Calvary? Was not a crucified God sufficient to redeem us, that thou his mother wouldst be crucified also?|[8091] Indeed, the death of Jesus was more than enough to save the world, and also an infinity of worlds; but this good mother wished, for the love she bore us, likewise to aid the cause of our salvation with the merits of the sorrows which she offered for us on Calvary. And, therefore, says the blessed Albertus Magnus, as we are indebted to Jesus for what he suffered for love of us, we are also to Mary for the martyrdom which she, in the death of her Son, voluntarily suffered for our salvation.[8092] I have added voluntarily, since, as the angel revealed to St. Bridget, this our so merciful and kind mother was willing to suffer any pain, rather than to see souls unredeemed or left in their former perdition.[8093] It may be said that this was the only consolation of Mary in the midst of her great sorrow at the passion of her Son, to see the lost world redeemed by his death, and men, who were his enemies, reconciled with God. Grieving, she rejoiced, says Simon da Cassia, because the sacrifice was offered for the redemption of all, by which wrath was appeased.[8094]

Such love as that of Mary merits our gratitude, and let us show our gratitude by meditating upon and compassionating her sorrows. But of this she complained to St. Bridget, that very few pitied her, and most lived forgetful of her sorrows. “I look around upon all who are in the world, if perchance there may be any to pity me, and meditate upon my sorrows, and truly I find very few. Therefore, my daughter, though I am forgotten by many, at least do not thou forget me; behold my anguish, and imitate, as far as thou canst, my grief.”[8095] In order to understand how much the Virgin is pleased by our remembrance of her dolors, it is sufficient to relate, that in the year 1239, she appeared to seven of her servants, who then became the founders of the order of the Servants of Mary, with a black garment in her hand, and told them that if they wished to please her, they should often meditate upon her dolors; and therefore she wished, in memory of them, that they would hereafter wear that garment of mourning.[8096] And Jesus Christ himself revealed to the blessed Veronica Binasco, that he takes more pleasure, as it were, in seeing his mother compassionated than himself; for thus he addressed her: “My daughter, the tears shed for my passion are dear to me; but loving with so great love my mother Mary, the meditation of the dolors which she suffered at my death is more dear to me.”[8097]

Wherefore the graces are very great which Jesus promises to those who are devoted to the dolors of Mary. Pelbart relates,[8098] that it was revealed to St. Elizabeth, that St. John the Evangelist, after the blessed Virgin was assumed into heaven, desired to see her again. This favor was granted him; his dear mother appeared to him, and Jesus Christ with her; and he then heard Mary asking of her Son some peculiar grace for those who were devoted to her dolors; and Jesus promised her for them the four following special graces: 1st. That those who invoke the divine mother by her sorrows, before death will merit to obtain true repentance of all their sins. 2d. That he will protect such in their tribulations, especially at the hour of death. 3d. That he will impress upon them the memory of his passion, and that they shall have their reward for it in heaven. 4th. That he will commit such devout servants to the hands of Mary, that she may dispose of them according to her pleasure, and obtain for them all the graces she desires. In proof of this, let us see in the following example how devotion to the dolors of Mary may aid our eternal salvation.

EXAMPLE

We read in the revelations of St. Bridget,[8099] that there was once a lord as noble by birth as he was low and sinful in his habits. He had given himself by an express compact as a slave to the devil, and had served him for sixty successive years, leading such a life as may easily be imagined, and never approaching the sacraments. Now, this prince was about to die and Jesus Christ, in his compassion, commanded St. Bridget to tell his confessor to visit him, and exhort him, to make his confession. The confessor went, and the sick man told him that he had no need of a confessor, for that he had often made his confession. The confessor visited him a second time, and that poor slave of hell persevered in his obstinate determination not to make his confession. Jesus again directed the saint to tell the confessor to go to him again. He obeyed, and this third time related to him the revelation made to the saint, and that he had returned so many times because the Lord, who desired to show him mercy, had directed him to do so. On hearing this the dying man was moved, and began to weep. But how, he exclaimed, can I be pardoned, when for sixty years I have served the devil, made myself his slave, and have laden my soul with innumerable sins?” “Son,” answered the father, encouraging him, “do not doubt: if you repent of them, in the name of God I promise you pardon.” Then beginning to gain confidence, he said to the confessor: “Father, I believed myself lost, and despaired of salvation; but now I feel a sorrow for my sins, which encourages me to trust; and as God has not yet abandoned me, I wish to make my confession.” And in fact on that day he made his confession four times with great sorrow; the next day he received communion, and on the sixth he died, contrite and entirely resigued. After his death, Jesus Christ further revealed to St. Bridget, that this sinner was saved, and was in purgatory, and that he had been saved by the intercession of the Virgin, his mother; for the deceased, although he had led so sinful a life, yet had always preserved devotion to her dolors, whenever he remembered them he pitied her.

PRAYER

Oh my afflicted mother! queen of martyrs and of sorrows, thou hast shed so many tears for thy Son, who died for my salvation, and yet what will thy tears avail me, if I am lost? By the merits, then, of thy dolors, obtain for me a true sorrow for my sins, and a true amendment of life, with a perpetual and tender compassion for the passion of Jesus and thy own sufferings. And if Jesus and thou, being so innocent, have suffered so much for me, obtain for me that I, who am deserving of hell, may also suffer something for love of you. O Lady, I will say to thee with St. Bonaventure, if I have offended thee, wound my heart in punishment; if I have served thee, now I beg to be wounded as a reward. It is a shameful thing to see our Lord Jesus wounded, and thee wounded with him, and I uninjured.[8100] Finally, oh my mother, by the grief thou didst experience on seeing thy Son before thy eyes bow his head and expire upon the cross, I entreat of thee to obtain for me a good death. Ah, do not cease, oh advocate of sinners, to assist my afflicted and struggling soul in that great passage that it has to make into eternity. And, because at that time it may easily be the case that I shall have lost the use of speech with which to invoke thy name, and that of Jesus, who are all my hope, therefore I now invoke thy Son and thee to succor me at that last moment, and I say: Jesus and Mary, to you I commend my soul. Amen.

Reflections

On Each of the Seven Dolors of Mary in Particular

ON THE FIRST DOLOR

OF ST. SIMEON’S PROPHECY

IN this valley of tears, every man is born to weep, and every one must suffer those afflictions that daily befall him. But how much more miserable would life be, if every one knew also the future evils which are to afflict him! Too unhappy would he be, says Seneca, whose fate was such.[8101] The Lord exercises his compassion towards us, namely, that he does not make known to us the crosses that await us; that if we are to suffer them, at least we may suffer them only once. But he did not exercise this compassion with Mary, who, because God wished her to be the queen of dolors, and in all things like his Son, and to see always before her eyes, and to suffer continually all the sorrows that awaited her; and those were the sufferings of the passion and death of her beloved Jesus. For St. Simeon in the temple, after having received the divine child in his arms, predicted to her that this child was to be the mark for all the opposition and persecution of men: “Set for a sign which shall be contradicted;” and that therefore the sword of sorrow should pierce her soul; “And thy own soul a sword shall pierce.”[8102]

The holy Virgin herself said to St. Matilda, that at the announcement of St. Simeon all her joy was changed into sorrow.[8103] For, as it was revealed to St. Theresa, the blessed mother, although she knew before this that the life of her Son would be sacrificed for the salvation of the world, yet she then learned more particularly and distinctly the sufferings and cruel death that awaited her poor Son. She knew that he would be contradicted in all things. Contradicted in doctrine; for instead of being believed, he would be esteemed a blasphemer for teaching that he was the Son of God, as the impious Caiaphas declared him to be, saying: “He hath blasphemed, he is guilty of death.”[8104] Contradicted in his reputation, for he was noble, of royal lineage, and was despised as a peasant: “Is not this the carpenter’s son?”[8105] “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?”[8106] He was wisdom itself, and was treated as an ignorant man: “How doth this man know letters, having never learned?”[8107] As a false prophet: “And they blindfolded him and smote his face . . . saying: “Prophesy who is this that struck thee.”|[8108] He was treated as a madman: “He is mad, why hear you him?”[8109] As a wine-bibber, a glutton, and a friend of sinners: “Behold a man that is a glutton, and a drinker of wine, a friend of publicans and sinners.”*[8110] As a sorcerer: “By the prince of devils he casteth out devils.”†[8111] As a heretic and possessed person; “Do we not say well of thee, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?”‡[8112] In a word, Jesus was considered as so bad and notorious a man, that no trial was necessary to condemn him, as the Jews said to Pilate: “If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee.”[8113] He was contradicted in his soul, for even his eternal Father, in order to give place to the divine justice, contradicted him by not wishing to hear him when he prayed to him, saying: “Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me;”[8114] and abandoned him to fear, weariness, and sadness, so that our afflicted Lord said: “My soul is sorrowful even unto death.”[8115] His interior suffering even caused him to sweat blood. Contradicted and persecuted, in a word, in his body and in his life, for he was tortured in all his sacred members: in his hands, in his feet, in his face, and in his head, in his whole body, till, drained to the last drop of his blood, he died an ignominious death on the cross.

When David, in the midst of all his pleasures and royal grandeur, heard from Nathan the prophet, that his son should die—“The child that is born to thee shall surely die”[8116]—he could find no peace, but wept, fasted, and slept upon the ground. Mary received with the greatest calmness the announcement that her Son should die, and peacefully continued to submit to it; but what grief she must have continually suffered, seeing this amiable Son always near her, hearing from him words of eternal life, and beholding his holy demeanor. Abraham suffered great affliction during the three days he passed with his beloved Isaac, after he knew that he was to lose him. Oh God! not for three days, but for thirty three years, Mary had to endure a like sorrow. Like, do I say? A sorrow as much greater as the Son of Mary was more lovely than the son of Abraham. The blessed Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget,[8117] that while she lived on the earth there was not an hour when this grief did not pierce her soul: As often, she continued, as I looked upon my Son, as often as I wrapped him in his swaddling clothes, as often as I saw his hands and his feet, so often was my soul overwhelmed as it were with a fresh sorrow, because I considered how he would be crucified.[8118] Rupert the Abbot, contemplating Mary, while she was suckling her Son, imagines her addressing him in these words: "A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, ha shall abide between my breasts."[8119] Ah, my Son, I clasp the in my arms, because thou art so dear to me; but the dearer thou art to me, the more thou dost become to me a bundle of myrrh and of sorrow, when I think of thy sufferings. Mary, says St. Bernardine of Sienna,[8120] considered that the strength of the saints was to pass through death; the beauty of paradise to be deformed; the Lord of the universe to be bound as a criminal; the Creator of all things to be livid with stripes; the Judge of all to be condemned; the glory of heaven despised; the King of kings to be crowned with thorns, and treated as a mock king.

Father Engelgrave writes, that it was revealed to the same St. Bridget, that the afflicted mother, knowing all that her Son would have to suffer, suckling him, thought of the gall and vinegar; when she swathed him, of the cords with which he was to be bound; when she bore him in her arms, she thought of him being nailed to the cross; and when he slept, she thought of his death.[8121] As often as she put on him his clothes, she reflected that they would one day be torn from him, that he might be crucified; and when she beheld his sacred hands and feet, and thought of the nails that were to pierce them, as Mary said to St. Bridget: "My eyes filled with tears, and my heart was tortured with grief."[8122]

The evangelist says, that as Jesus Christ advanced in years, so also he advanced in wisdom and in grace with God and men.[8123] That is, he advanced in wisdom and in grace before men or in their estimation; and before God, according to St. Thomas,[8124] inasmuch as all his works would continually have availed to increase his merit, if from the beginning grace in its complete fulness had not been conferred on him by virtue of the hypostatic union. But if Jesus advanced in the esteem and love of others, how much more did he advance in Mary's love! But oh God, as love increased in her, the more increased in her the grief of having to lose him by a death so cruel. And the nearer the time of the passion of her Son approached, with so much greater pain did that sword of sorrow, predicted by St. Simeon, pierce the heart of the mother; precisely this the angel revealed to St. Bridget, saying: “That sword of sorrow was every hour drawing nearer to the Virgin as the time for the passion of her Son drew nearer.”[8125]

If, then, Jesus our King and his most holy mother did not refuse, for love of us, to suffer during their whole life such cruel pains, there is no reason that we should complain if we suffer a little. Jesus crucified once appeared to sister Magdalene Orsini, a Dominican nun, when she had been long suffering a great trial, and encouraged her to remain with him on the cross with that sorrow that was afflicting her. Sister Magdalene answered him complainingly: “Oh Lord, thou didst suffer on the cross only three hours, but it is more than three years that I have been suffering this cross.” Then the Redeemer replied: “Ah! ignorant soul, what dost thou say? I, from the first moment I was conceived, suffered in heart what I afterwards suffered on the cross.” If, then, we too suffer any affliction and complain, let us imagine that Jesus and his mother Mary are saying to us the same words.

EXAMPLE

Father Roviglione, of the Company of Jesus, relates,[8126] that a certain youth practised the devotion of visiting every day an image of the sorrowful Mary, in which she was represented with seven swords piercing her heart. One night the unhappy youth fell into mortal sin. Going next morning to visit the image, he saw in the heart of the blessed Virgin not only seven, but eight swords. As he stood gazing at this, he heard a voice saying to him, that this sin had added the eighth sword to the heart of Mary. This softened his hard heart; he went immediately to confession, and through the intercession of his advocate, recovered the divine grace.

PRAYER

Oh my blessed mother, not one sword only, but as many swords as I have committed sins have I added to those seven in thy heart. Ah, my Lady, thy sorrows are not due to thee who art innocent, but to me who am guilty. But since thou hast wished to suffer so much for me, ah, by thy merits obtain for me great sorrow for my sins, and patience under the trials of this life, which will always be light in comparison with my demerits, for I have often merited hell. Amen.

ON THE SECOND DOLOR

OF THE FLIGHT OF JESUS INTO EGYPT

As the stag, wounded by an arrow, carries the pain with him wherever he goes, because he carries with him the arrow that has wounded him; thus the divine mother, after the prophecy of St. Simeon, as we saw in our consideration of the first grief, always carried her sorrow with her by the continual remembrance of the passion of her Son. Ailgrin, explaining this passage of the Canticles, "The hairs of thy head as the purple of the king bound in the channel,"[8127] says: These hairs of Mary were her continual thoughts of the passion of Jesus, which kept always before her eyes the blood which was one day to flow from his wounds. Thy mind, oh Mary, and thy thoughts tinged in the blood of the passion of our Lord, were always moved with sorrow as if they actually saw the blood flowing from his wounds.[8128] Thus her Son himself was that arrow in the heart of Mary, who, the more worthy of love he showed himself to her, always wounded her the more with the sorrowful thought that she should lose him by so cruel a death. Let us now pass to the consideration of the second sword of sorrow which wounded Mary, in the flight of her infant Jesus into Egypt from the persecution of Herod.

Herod having heard that the expected Messiah was born, foolishly feared that the new-born King would deprive him of his kingdom. Hence St. Fulgentius, reproving him for his folly, thus says; "Why, oh Herod, art thou thus disturbed? This King who is born has not come to conquer kings by arms, but to subjugate them, in a wonderful manner, by his death."[8129] The impious Herod, therefore, waited to learn from the holy magi where the King was born, that he might take from him his life; but finding himself deceived by the magi, he ordered all the infants that could be found in the neighborhood of Bethlehem to be put to death. But an angel appeared in a dream to St. Joseph, and said to him: "Arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt."[8130] According to Gerson, immediately, on that very night, Joseph made this command known to Mary; and taking the infant Jesus, they commenced their journey, as it seems clearly from the Gospel itself: "Who arose and took the child and his mother by night, and retired into Egypt." Oh God, as blessed Albertus Magnus says in the name of Mary, must he, then, who came to save men flee from men? "Debet fugere qui salvator est mundi?"[8131] And then the afflicted Mary knew that already the prophecy of Simeon, regarding her Son, was beginning to be verified: "He is set for a sign which shall be contradicted."[8132] Seeing that scarcely is he born, when he is persecuted to death. What suffering it must have been to the heart of Mary, writes St. John Chrysostom, to hear the tidings of that cruel exile of herself with her Son! Flee from thy friends to strangers, from the holy temple of the only true God, to the temples of demons. What greater tribulation than that a new-born child, clinging to its mother's bosom, should be forced to fly with the mother herself![8133]

Every one can imagine how much Mary must have suffered on this journey. It was a long distance to Egypt. Authors generally agree with Barrada[8134] that it was four hundred miles; so that at least it was a journey of thirty days. The way, as St. Bonaventure describes it, was rough, unknown, through woods, and little frequented.[8135] The season was winter, and therefore they had to travel in snow, rain, wind, and storms, and through bad and difficult roads. Mary was then fifteen years of age, a delicate virgin, unaccustomed to such journeys. They had no servant to attend them. Joseph and Mary, said St. Peter Chrysologus, had no man-servant nor maid-servant; they were themselves both masters and servants.[8136] Oh God, how piteous a spectacle it was to see that tender Virgin, with that newly born infant in her arms wandering through this world! St. Bonaventure asks, Where did they obtain food? Where did they rest at night? How were they lodged?[8137] What other food could they have, than a piece of hard bread which Joseph brought with him or begged in charity? Where could they have slept (particularly in the two hundred miles of desert through which they travelled, where, as authors relate, there were neither houses nor inns) except on the sand, or under some tree in the wood, in the open air, exposed to robbers, or those wild beasts with which Egypt abounded? Ah, if any one had met these three greatest personages of the world, what would he have believed them to be but three poor, roving beggars?

They lived in Egypt, according to Brocard and Jansenius, in a district called Maturea, though, according to St. Anselm, they dwelt in Heliopolis, first called Memphis, and now Cairo. And here let us consider the great poverty they must have suffered for the seven years they were there, as St. Antoninus, St. Thomas, and others assert. They were foreigners, unknown, without revenues, without money, without kindred; hardly were they able to support themselves by their humble labors. As they were destitute, says St. Basil, it is manifest what effort they must have made to obtain there the necessaries of life.[8138] Moreover, Landolph of Saxony has written, and let it be repeated for the consolation of the poor, that so great was the poverty of Mary there, that sometimes she had not so much as a morsel of bread, when her Son, forced by hunger, asked it of her.[8139]

St. Matthew also relates that when Herod was dead, the angel again appeared, in a dream, to St. Joseph, and directed him to return to Judea. St. Bonaventure, speaking of his return, considers the greater pain of the blessed Virgin, on account of the sufferings which Jesus must have endured in that journey, having arrived at about the age of seven years—an age, says the saint, when he was so large that he could not be carried, and so small that he could not go without assistance.[8140]

The sight, then, of Jesus and Mary wandering like fugitives through this world, teaches us that we should also live as pilgrims on the earth, detached from the goods which the world offers us, as having soon to leave them and go to eternity. “We have not here a lasting city, but seek one that is to come.”[8141] To which St. Augustine adds: Thou art a stranger, thou givest a look, and then passest on: “Hospes es, vides et transis.” It also teaches us to embrace crosses, for we cannot live in this world without a cross. The blessed Veronica da Binasco, an Augustinian nun, was carried in spirit to accompany Mary and the infant Jesus in this journey to Egypt, and at the end of it the divine mother said to her: “Child, hast thou seen through what difficulties we have reached this place? Now learn that no one receives graces without suffering.” He who wishes to feel least the sufferings of this life, must take Jesus and Mary with him: “Accipe puerum et matrem ejus.” For him who lovingly bears in his heart this Son and this mother, all sufferings become light, and even sweet and dear. Let us then love them, let us console Mary by receiving her Son within our hearts, whom, even now, men continue to persecute with their sins.

EXAMPLE

One day the most holy Mary appeared to the blessed Colletta, a Franciscan nun, and showed her the infant Jesus in a basin, torn in pieces, and then said to her: “Thus sinners continually treat my Son, renewing his death and my sorrows; oh, my daughter, pray for them that they may be converted.”[8142] Similar to this is that other vision which appeared to the venerable sister Jane, of Jesus and Mary, also a Franciscan nun. As she was one day meditating on the infant Jesus, persecuted by Herod, she heard a great noise, as of armed people, who were pursuing some one; and then appeared before her a most beautiful child, who was fleeing in great distress, and cried to her: “MyJane, help me, hide me; I am Jesus of Nazareth, I am flying from sinners who wish to kill me, and who persecute me as Herod did: do thou save me.”[8143]

PRAYER

Then, oh Mary, even after thy Son hath died by the hands of men who persecuted him unto death, have not these ungrateful men yet ceased from persecuting him with their sins, and continuing to afflict thee, oh mother of sorrows? And I also, oh God, have been one of these. Ah, my most sweet mother, obtain for me tears to weep for such ingratitude. And then, by the sufferings thou didst experience in the journey to Egypt, assist me in the journey that I am making to eternity, that at length I may go to unite with thee in loving my persecuted Saviour, in the country of the blessed. Amen.

ON THE THIRD DOLOR

OF THE LOSS OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

ST. JAMES the Apostle has said, that our perfection consists in the virtue of patience. "And patience hath a perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing."[8144] The Lord having then given us the Virgin Mary as an example of perfection, it was necessary that she should be laden with sorrows, that in her we might admire and imitate her heroic patience. The dolor that we are this day to consider is one of the greatest which our divine mother suffered during her life, namely, the loss of her Son in the temple. He who is born blind is little sensible of the pain of being deprived of the light of day; but to him who has once had sight and enjoyed the light, it is a great sorrow to find himself deprived of it by blindness. And thus it is with those unhappy souls who, being blinded by the mire of this earth, have but little knowledge of God, and therefore scarcely feel pain at not finding him. On the contrary, the man who, illuminated with celestial light, has been made worthy to find by love the sweet presence of the highest good, oh God, how he mourns when he finds himself deprived of it!

From this we can judge how painful must have been to Mary, who was accustomed to enjoy constantly the sweet presence of Jesus, that third sword which wounded her, when she lost him in Jerusalem, and was separated from him for three days.

In the second chapter of St. Luke we read that the blessed Virgin, being accustomed to visit the temple every year at the paschal season, with Joseph her spouse and Jesus, once went when he was about twelve years old, and Jesus remained in Jerusalem, though she was not aware of it, for she thought he was in company with others. When she reached Nazareth she inquired for her Son, and not finding him there, she returned immediately to Jerusalem to seek him, but did not succeed until after three days. Now let us imagine what distress that afflicted mother must have experienced in those three days in which she was searching everywhere for her Son, with the spouse in the Canticles: “Have you seen him whom my soul loveth?”[8145] But she could hear no tidings of him. Oh, with how much greater tenderness must Mary, overcome with fatigue, and yet not having found her beloved Son, have repeated those words of Ruben, concerning his brother Joseph: The boy doth not appear, and whither shall I go? “Puer non comparet, et ego quo ibo?” My Jesus doth not appear, and I know not what to do that I may find him; but where shall I go without my treasure? Weeping continually, she repeated during these three days with David: “My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily, Where is thy God?[8146] Wherefore Pelbart with reason says, that during those nights the afflicted mother had no rest, but wept and prayed without ceasing to God, that he would enable her to find her Son.[8147] And, according to St. Bernard, often during that time did she repeat to her Son himself the words of the spouse: “Show me where thou feedest, where thou liest in the mid-day, lest I begin to wander.”[8148] My Son, tell me where thou art, that I may no longer wander, seeking thee in vain.

Some writers assert, and not without reason, that this dolor was not only one of the greatest, but that it was the greatest and most painful of all. For in the first place, Mary in her other dolors had Jesus with her; she suffered when St. Simeon uttered the prophecy in the temple; she suffered in the flight to Egypt, but always with Jesus; but in this dolor she suffered at a distance from Jesus, without knowing where he was: “And the light of my eyes itself is not with me.”[8149] Thus, with tears, she then exclaimed: Ah, the light of my eyes, my dear Jesus, is no more with me; he is far from me, I know not where he is! Origen says, that though the love which this holy mother bore her Son, she suffered more at this loss of Jesus than any martyr ever suffered at death.[8150] Ah, how long were these three days for Mary! they appeared three ages. Very bitter days, for there was none to comfort her. And who, she exclaimed with Jeremias, who can console me if he who could console me is far from me? and therefore my eyes are not satisfied with weeping: “Therefore do I weep, and my eyes run down with water, because the comforter is far from me.”[8151] And with Tobias she repeated: “What manner of joy shall be to me who sit in darkness, and see not the light of heaven?”[8152]

Secondly.—Mary well understood the cause and end of the other dolors, namely, the redemption of the world, the divine will; but in this she did not know the cause of the absence of her Son. The sorrowful mother was grieved to find Jesus withdrawn from her, for her humility, says Lanspergius, made her consider herself unworthy to remain with him any longer, and attend upon him on earth, and have the care of such a treasure.[8153] And perhaps, she may have thought within herself, I have not served him as I ought. Perhaps I have been guilty of some neglect, and therefore he has left me. They sought him, lest he perchance had left them, as Origen has said.[8154] Certainly there is no greater grief for a soul that loves God than the fear of having displeased him. And therefore Mary never complained in any other sorrow but this, lovingly expostulating with Jesus after she found him: "Son, why hast thou done so to us? Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."[8155] By these words she did not wish to reprove Jesus, as the heretics blasphemously assert, but only to make known to him the grief she had experienced during his absence from her, on account of the love she bore him. It was not a rebuke, says blessed Denis the Carthusian, but a loving complaint: "Non erat increpatio, sed amorosa conquestio." Finally, this sword so cruelly pierced the heart of the Virgin, that the blessed Benvenuta, desiring one day to share the pain of the holy mother in this dolor, and praying her to obtain for her this grace, Mary appeared to her with the infant Jesus in her arms; but while Benvenuta was enjoying the sight of that most beautiful child, in one moment she was deprived of it. So great was her sorrow that she had recourse to Mary, to implore her pity that it should not make her die of grief. The holy Virgin appeared to her again three days after, and said to her: "Now learn, oh my daughter, that thy sorrow is but a small part of that which I suffered when I lost my Son."[8156]

This sorrow of Mary ought, in the first place, to serve as a comfort to those souls who are desolate and do not enjoy the sweet presence they once enjoyed of their Lord. They may weep, but let them weep in peace, as Mary wept in the absence of her Son. Let them take courage, and not fear that on this account they have lost the divine favor, for God himself said to St. Theresa: "No one is lost without knowing it; and no one is deceived without wishing to be deceived." If the Lord departs from the sight of that soul who loves him, he does not therefore depart from the heart. He often hides himself that she may seek him with greater desire and love. But those who would find Jesus must seek him, not amid the delights and pleasures of the world, but amid crosses and mortifications, as Mary sought him: We sought thee sorrowing, as she said to her Son: “Dolentes quærebamus te.” Learn from Mary to seek Jesus, says Origen “Disce a Maria quærere Jesum.”

Moreover, in this world we should seek no other good than Jesus. Job was not unhappy when he lost all that he possessed on earth; riches, children, health, and honors, and even descended from a throne to a dunghill; but because he had God with him, even then he was happy St. Augustine, speaking of him, says: He had lost all that God had given him, but he had God himself: “Perdiderat illa quæ dederat Deus, sed habebat ipsum Deum.” Unhappy and truly wretched are those souls who have lost God. If Mary wept for the absence of her Son for three days, how ought sinners to weep who have lost divine grace, to whom God says; “You are not my people, and I will not be yours.”[8157] For sin does this, namely, it separates the soul from God: “Your iniquities have divided between you and your God.”[8158] Hence, if even sinners possess all the goods of earth and have lost God, every thing on earth becomes vanity and affliction to them, as Solomon confessed: “Behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.”[8159] But as St. Augustine says: The greatest misfortune of these poor blind souls is, that if they lose an ox, they do not fail to go in search of it; if they lose a sheep, they use all diligence to find it; if they lose a beast of burden, they cannot rest; but they lose the highest good, which is God, and yet they eat and drink, and take their rest.[8160]

EXAMPLE

We read in the Annual Letters of the Society of Jesus, that in India, a young man who was just leaving his apartment in order to commit sin, heard a voice saying: “Stop, where are you going? He turned round and saw an image, in relief, of the sorrowful Mary, who drew out the sword which was in her breast, and said to him: “Take this dagger and pierce my heart rather than wound my Son with this sin.” At the sound of these words the youth prostrated himself on the ground, and with deep contrition, bursting into tears, he asked and obtained from God and the Virgin pardon of his sin.

PRAYER

Oh blessed Virgin, why art thou afflicted, seeking thy lost Son? Is it because thou dost not know where he is? But dost thou not know that he is in thy heart? Dost thou not see that he is feeding among the lilies? Thou thyself hast said it: “My beloved to me and I to him who feedeth among the lilies.”[8161] These, thy humble, pure, and holy thoughts and affections, are all lilies, that invite the divine spouse to dwell with thee. Ah, Mary, dost thou sigh after Jesus, thou who lovest none but Jesus? Leave sighing to me and so many other sinners who do not love him, and who have lost him by offending him. My most amiable mother, if through my fault thy Son hast not yet returned to my soul, wilt thou obtain for me that I may find him. I know well that he allows himself to be found by all who seek him: The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him: “Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quærenti illum.”[8162] Make me to seek him as I ought to seek him. Thou art the gate through which all find Jesus; through thee I too hope to find him.

ON THE FOURTH DOLOR

OF THE MEETING OF MARY WITH JESUS, WHEN HE WENT TO DEATH

ST. BERNARDINE says, that to form an idea of the grief of Mary in losing her Jesus by death, it is necessary to consider the love that this mother bore to this her Son. All mothers feel the sufferings of their children as their own. Hence the woman of Chanaan, when she prayed the Saviour to deliver her daughter from the devil that tormented her, said to him, that he should have pity on the mother rather than on the daughter: “Have mercy on me, oh Lord, thou son of David, my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil.”[8163] But what mother ever loved a child so much as Mary loved Jesus? He was her only child, reared amidst so many troubles and pains; a most amiable child, and most loving to his mother; a Son, who was at the same time her Son and her God; who came on earth to kindle in the hearts of all the holy fire of divine love, as he himself declared: “I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?”[8164] Let us consider how he must have inflamed that pure heart of his holy mother, so free from every earthly affection. In a word, the blessed Virgin herself said to St. Bridget, that through love her heart and the heart of her Son was one: “Unum erat cor meum, et cor filii mei.” That blending of handmaid and mother, of Son and God, kindled in the heart of Mary a fire composed of a thousand flames. But afterwards, at the time of the passion, this flame of love was changed into a sea of sorrow. Hence St. Bernardine says: All the sorrows of the world united would not be equal to the sorrow of the glorious Mary.[8165] Yes, because this mother, as St. Lawrence Justinian writes: The more tenderly she loved, was the more deeply wounded.[8166] The greater the tenderness with which she loved him, the greater was her grief at the sight of his sufferings, especially when she met her Son, after he had already been condemned, going to death at the place of punishment, bearing the cross. And this is the fourth sword of sorrow which to-day we have to consider.

The blessed Virgin revealed to St. Bridget that at the time when the passion of our Lord was drawing nigh, her eyes were always filled with tears, as she thought of her beloved Son whom she was about to lose on this earth. Therefore, as she also said, a cold sweat covered her body from the fear that seized her at that prospect of approaching suffering.[8167] Behold, the appointed day at length arrived, and Jesus cams in tears to take leave of his mother before he went to death. St. Bonaventure, contemplating Mary on that night, says: Thou didst spend it without sleep, and while others slept, thou didst remain watching.[8168] Morning having arrived the disciples of Jesus Christ came to this afflicted mother, one, to bring her this tidings, another, that; but all tidings of sorrow, for in her were then verified the words of Jeremias: “Weeping, she hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; there is none to comfort her of all them that were dear to her.”[8169] One came to relate to her the cruel treatment of her Son in the house of Caiphas; another, the insults received by him from Herod. Finally, for I omit the rest to come to my point, St. John came and announced to Mary that the most unjust Pilate had already condemned him to death upon the cross. I say the most unjust, for, as St. Leo remarks, this unjust judge condemned him to death with the same lips with which he had pronounced him innocent.[8170] Ah, sorrowful mother; said St. John to her, thy Son has already been condemned to death, he is already on his way, bearing himself his cross on his way to Calvary, as he afterwards related in his Gospel: “And bearing his own cross he went forth to that place which is called Calvary.”[8171] Come, if thou dost desire to see him, and bid him a last farewell in some of the streets through which he is to pass.

Mary goes with St. John, and she perceives by the blood with which the way was sprinkled, that her Son had already passed there. This she revealed to St. Bridget: “By the footsteps of my Son I traced his course, for along the way by which he had passed, the ground was sprinkled with blood.”[8172] St. Bonaventure imagines the afflicted mother taking a shorter way, and placing herself at the corner of the street to meet her afflicted Son as he passed by.[8173] This most afflicted mother met her most afflicted Son: Mœstissima mater mœstissimo filio occurrit, said St. Bernard. While Mary stopped in that place how much she must have heard said against her Son by the Jews who knew her, and perhaps also words in mockery of herself! Alas! what a commencement of sorrows was then before her eyes, when she saw the nails, the hammers, the cords, the fatal instruments of the death of her Son borne before him! And what a sword pierced her heart when she heard the trumpet proclaiming along the way the sentence pronounced against her Son! But behold, now, after the instruments, the trumpet, and the ministers of justice had passed, she raises her eyes and sees; she sees, oh God, a young man covered with blood and wounds from head to foot, with a crown of thorns on his head, and two heavy beams on his shoulders; she looks at him and hardly knows him, saying, then, with Isaias: “And we have seen him, and there was no sightliness.”[8174] Yes, for the wounds, the bruises, and clotted blood, made him look like a leper: “We have thought him, as it were, a leper;”[8175] so that he could no longer be recognized. “And his look was, as it were, hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not.”[8176] But at length love recognizes him, and as soon as she knows him, ah, what was then, as St. Peter of Alcantara says in his meditations, the love and fear of the heart of Mary! On the one hand, she desired to see him; on the other, she could not endure to look upon so pitiable a sight. But at length they look at each other. The Son wipes from his eyes the clotted blood, which prevented him from seeing (as was revealed to St. Bridget), and looks upon the mother; the mother looks upon the Son. Ah, looks of sorrow, which pierced, as with so many arrows, those two holy and loving souls. When Margaret, the daughter of Sir Thomas More, met her father on his way to the scaffold, she could utter only two words, oh, father! oh, father! and fell fainting at his feet. At the sight of her Son going to Calvary, Mary fainted not; no, because it was not fitting that his mother should lose the use of her reason, as Father Suarez remarks, neither did she die, for God reserved her for a greater grief; but if she did not die, she suffered sorrow enough to cause her a thousand deaths.

The mother wished to embrace him, as St. Anselm says, but the officers of justice thrust her aside, loading her with insults, and urge onward our afflicted Lord. Mary follows. Ah, holy Virgin, where art thou going? To Calvary! And canst thou trust thyself to see him who is thy life hanging from a cross? And thy life shall be as it were hanging before thee: “Et erit vita tua quasi pendens ante te."[8177] Ah! my mother, stop, says St. Lawrence Justinian, as if the Son himself had then spoken to her; where dost thou hasten? Where art thou going? If thou comest where I go, thou wilt be tortured with my sufferings, and I with thine.[8178] But although the sight of her dying Jesus must cost her such cruel anguish, the loving Mary will not leave him. The Son goes before, and the mother follows, that she may be crucified with her Son, as William the Abbot says: The mother took up her cross, and followed him, that she might be crucified with him.[8179] We even pity the wild beasts: "Ferarum etiam miseremur;" as St. John Chrysostom has said. If we should see a lioness following her whelp as he was led to death, even this wild beast would call forth our compassion. And shall we not feel compassion to see Mary following her immaculate Lamb, as they are leading him to death? Let us then pity her, and endeavor also ourselves to accompany her Son and herself, bearing with patience the cross which the Lord imposes upon us. Why did Jesus Christ, asks St. John Chrysostom, desire to be alone in his other sufferings, but in bearing the cross wished to be helped by the Cyrenean? And he answers: That thou mayest understand that the cross of Christ is not sufficient without thine.[8180] The cross alone of Jesus is not enough to save us, if we do not bear with resignation also our own, even unto death.

EXAMPLE

The Saviour appeared one day to sister Diomira, a nun, in Florence, and said to her: "Think of me, and love me, and I will think of thee, and love thee:" and at the same time he presented her with a bunch of flowers and a cross, signifying to her by this, that the consolations of the saints on this earth are always to be accompanied by the cross. The cross unites souls to God. Blessed Jerome Emilian, when he was a soldier, and leading a very sinful life, was shut up by his enemies in a tower. There, feeling deeply his misfortune, and enlightened by God to amend his life, he had recourse to the most holy Mary, and then with the help of this divine mother, he began to live the life of a saint. By this he merited to see once in heaven the high place which God had prepared for him. He became founder of the order of Sommaschi, died a saint, and has been lately beatified by the holy Church.

PRAYER

My sorrowful mother, by the merit of that grief which thou didst feel at seeing thy beloved Jesus led to death, obtain for me the grace also to bear with patience those crosses which God sends me. Happy me, if I also shall know how to accompany thee with my cross until death. Thou and Jesus, both innocent, have borne a heavy cross; and shall I a sinner, who have merited hell, refuse mine? Ah, immaculate Virgin, I hope that thou wilt help me to bear my crosses with patience. Amen.

ON THE FIFTH DOLOR

OF THE DEATH OF JESUS

AND now we have to admire a new sort of martyrdom, a mother condemned to see an innocent son, whom she loved with all the affection of her heart, put to death before her eyes, by the most barbarous tortures. There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother: “Stabat autem juxta crucem mater ejus.” There is nothing more to be said, says St. John, of the martyrdom of Mary: behold her at the foot of the cross, looking on her dying Son, and then see if there is grief like her grief. Let us stop then also to-day on Calvary, to consider this fifth sword that pierced the heart of Mary, namely, the death of Jesus.

As soon as our afflicted Redeemer had ascended the hill of Calvary, the executioners stripped him of his garments, and piercing his sacred hands and feet with nails, not sharp, but blunt: “Non acutis, sed obtusis;” as St. Bernard says,[8181] and to torture him more, they fastened him to the cross. When they had crucified him, they planted the cross, and thus left him to die. The executioners abandon him, but Mary does not abandon him. She then draws nearer to the cross, in order to assist at his death. “I did not leave him,” thus the blessed Virgin revealed to St. Bridget, “and stood nearer to his cross.”[8182] But what did it avail, oh Lady, says St. Bonaventure, to go to Calvary to witness there the death of this Son? Shame should have prevented thee, for his disgrace was also thine, because thou wast his mother; or, at least, the horror of such a crime as that of seeing a God crucified by his own creatures, should have prevented thee.[8183] But the saint himself answers: Thy heart did not consider the horror, but the suffering: “Non considerabat cor tuum horrorem, sed dolorem.” Ah, thy heart did not then care for its own sorrow, but for the suffering and death of thy dear Son; and therefore thou thyself didst wish to be near him, at least to compassionate him. Ah, true mother! says William the Abbot, loving mother! for not even the terror of death could separate thee from thy beloved Son.[8184] But, oh God, what a spectacle of sorrow, to see this Son then in agony upon the cross, and under the cross this mother in agony, who was suffering all the pain that her Son was suffering! Behold the words in which Mary revealed to St. Bridget the pitiable state of her dying Son, as she saw him on the cross: “My dear Jesus was on the cross in grief and in agony; his eyes were sunken, half closed, and lifeless; the lips hanging, and the mouth open; the cheeks hollow, and attached to the teeth; the face lengthened, the nose sharp, the countenance sad; the head had fallen upon his breast, the hair black with blood, the stomach collapsed, the arms and legs stiff, and the whole body covered with wounds and blood.”[8185]

Mary also suffered all these pains of Jesus. Every torture inflicted on the body of Jesus, says St. Jerome, was a wound in the heart of the mother.[8186] Any one of us who should then have been on Mount Calvary, would have seen two altars, says St. John Chrysostom, on which two great sacrifices were consummating, one in the body of Jesus, the other in the heart of Mary. But rather would I see there, with St. Bonaventure, one altar only, namely, the cross alone of the Son, on which, with the victim, this divine Lamb, the mother also was sacrificed. Therefore the saint interrogates her in these words: Oh Lady, where art thou? Near the cross? Nay, on the cross, thou art crucified with thy Son.[8187] St. Augustine also says the same thing: The cross and nails of the Son were also the cross and nails of the mother; Christ being crucified, the mother was also crucified.[8188] Yes, because, as St. Bernard says, love inflicted on the heart of Mary the same suffering that the nails caused in the body of Jesus.[8189] Therefore, at the same time that the Son was sacrificing his body, the mother, as St. Bernardine says, was sacrificing her soul.[8190]

Mothers fly from the presence of their dying children; but if a mother is ever obliged to witness the death of a child, she procures for him all possible relief; she arranges the bed, that his posture may be more easy; she administers refreshments to him; and thus the poor mother relieves her own sorrows. Ah, mother, the most afflicted of all mothers! oh Mary, it was decreed that thou shouldst be present at the death of Jesus, but it was not given to thee to afford him any relief. Mary heard her Son say: I thirst: “Sitio;” but it was not permitted her to give him a little water to quench his great thirst. She could only say to him, as St. Vincent Ferrer remarks: My Son, I have only the water of my tears: “Fili, non habeo nisi aquam lacrymarum.”[8191] She saw that her Son, suspended by three nails to that bed of sorrow, could find no rest. She wished to clasp him to her heart, that she might give him relief, or at least that he might expire in her arms, but she could not.[8192] She only saw that poor Son in a sea of sorrow, seeking one who could console him as he had predicted by the mouth of the prophet: “I have trodden the winepress alone; I looked about and there was none to help; I sought and there was none to give aid.”[8193] But who was there among men to console him, if all were his enemies? Even on the cross they cursed and mocked him on every side: “And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads.”[8194] Some said to him: “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.”[8195] Some exclaimed: “He saved others, himself he cannot save.”[8196] Others said: “If he be the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross.”|[8197] The blessed Virgin herself said to St. Bridget: “I heard some call my Son a thief; I heard others call him an impostor; others said that no one deserved death more than he; and every word was to me a new sword of sorrow.”[8198]

But what increased most the sorrows which Mary suffered through compassion for her Son, was to hear him complain on the cross that even the eternal Father had abandoned him: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*[8199] Words which, as the divine mother herself said to St. Bridget, could never depart from her mind during her whole life.[8200] Thus the afflicted mother saw her Jesus suffering on every side; she desired to comfort him, but could not. And what caused her the greatest sorrow was to see that, by her presence and her grief, she increased the sufferings of her Son. The sorrow itself, says St. Bernard, that filled the heart of Mary, increased the bitterness of sorrow in the heart of Jesus.[8201] St. Bernard also says, that Jesus on the cross suffered more from compassion for his mother than from his own pains: he thus speaks in the name of the Virgin: I stood and looked upon him, and he looked upon me; and he suffered more for me than for himself.[8202] The same saint also, speaking of Mary beside her dying Son, says, that she lived dying without being able to die: Near the cross stood his mother, speechless; living she died, dying she lived; neither could she die, because she was dead, being yet alive.[8203] Passino writes that

Jesus Christ himself, speaking one day to the blessed Baptista Varana, of Camerino, said to her, that he was so afflicted on the cross at the sight of his mother in such anguish at his feet, that compassion for his mother caused him to die without consolation. So that the blessed Baptista, being enlightened to know this suffering of Jesus, exclaimed: Oh my Lord, tell me no more of this thy sorrow, for I cannot bear it.

Men were astonished, says Simon of Cassia, when they saw this mother then keep silence, without uttering a complaint in this great suffering.[8204] But if the lips of Mary were silent, her heart was not so; for she did not cease offering to divine justice the life of her Son for our salvation. Therefore we know that by the merits of her dolors she co-operated with Christ in bringing us forth to the life of grace, and therefore we are children of her sorrows: Christ, says Lanspergius, wished her whom he had appointed for our mother to co-operate with him in our redemption; for she herself at the foot of the cross was to bring us forth as her children.[8205] And if ever any consolation entered into that sea of bitterness, namely, the heart of Mary, it was this only one; namely, the knowledge that by means of her sorrows, she was bringing us to eternal salvation; as Jesus himself revealed to St. Bridget: “My mother Mary, on account of her compassion and charity, was made mother of all in heaven and on earth.”[8206] And, indeed, these were the last words with which Jesus took leave of her before his death; this was his last remembrance, leaving us to her for her children in the person of John, when he said to her: Woman, behold thy Son: “Mulier ecce filius tuus.”[8207] And from that time Mary began to perform for us this office of a good mother; for, as St. Peter Damian declares, the penitent thief, through the prayers of Mary, was then converted and saved: Therefore the good thief repented, because the blessed Virgin, standing between the cross of her Son and that of the thief, prayed her Son for him; thus rewarding, by this favor, his former service.[8208] For as other authors also relate, this thief, in the journey to Egypt with the infant Jesus, showed them kindness; and this same office the blessed Virgin has ever continued, and still continues to perform.

EXAMPLE

A young man in Perugia once promised the devil that if he would help him to commit a sinful act which he desired to do, he would give him his soul; and he gave him a writing to that effect, signed with his blood. The evil deed was committed, and the devil demanded the performance of the promise. He led the young man to a well, and threatened to take him body and soul to hell if he would not cast himself into it. The wretched youth, thinking that it would be impossible for him to escape from his enemy, climbed the well-side in order to cast himself into it, but terrified at the thought of death, he said to the devil that he had not the courage to throw himself in, and that, if he wished to see him dead, he himself should thrust him in. The young man wore about his neck the scapular of the sorrowing Mary; and the devil said to him: “Take off that scapular, and I will thrust you in.” But the youth, seeing the protection which the divine mother still gave him through that scapular, refused to take it off, and after a great deal of altercation, the devil departed in confusion. The sinner repented, and grateful to his sorrowful mother, went to thank her, and presented a picture of this case, as an offering, at her altar in the new church of Santa Maria, in Perugia.[8209]

PRAYER

Ah, mother, the most afflicted of all mothers, thy Son, then, is dead; thy Son so amiable, and who loved thee so much! Weep, for thou hast reason to weep. Who can ever console thee? Nothing can console thee but the thought that Jesus, by his death, hath conquered hell, hath opened paradise which was closed to men, and hath gained so many souls. From that throne of the cross he was to reign over so many hearts, which, conquered by his love, would serve him with love. Do not disdain, oh my mother, to keep me near to weep with thee, for I have more reason than thou to weep for the offences that I have committed against thy Son. Ah, mother of mercy, I hope for pardon and my eternal salvation, first through the death of my Redeemer, and then through the merits of thy dolors. Amen.

ON THE SIXTH DOLOR

THE PIERCING OF THE SIDE OF JESUS, AND HIS DESCENT FROM THE CROSS

“Oh, all ye that pass by the way attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.”[8210] Devout souls, listen to what the sorrowful Mary says to you to-day: My beloved children, I do not wish you to console me; no, for my heart can never again be consoled on this earth after the death of my dear Jesus. If you wish to please me, this I ask of you, turn to me and see if there has ever been in the world a grief like mine, when I saw him who was all my love torn from me so cruelly. But, oh Lady, since thou dost not wish to be consoled, and hast such a thirst for suffering, I must say to thee that thy sorrows have not ended with the death of thy Son. To-day thou wilt be pierced by another sword of sorrow, when thou shalt see a cruel lance piercing the side of this thy Son, already dead, and shalt receive him in thy arms after he is taken from the cross. And now we are to consider to-day the sixth dolor which afflicted this sorrowful mother. Attend and weep. Hitherto the dolors of Mary tortured her one by one, but to-day they are all united to assail her.

To make known to a mother that her child is dead, is sufficient to kindle her whole soul with love for the lost one. Some persons, in order to lighten their grief, will remind mothers whose children have died, of the displeasure they had once caused them. But if I, oh my queen, should wish to lighten thy sorrow for the death of Jesus in this way, what displeasure has he ever caused thee, that I could recall to thy mind? Ah, no; he always loved thee, obeyed thee and respected thee. Now thou hast lost him, and who can describe thy sorrow? Do thou who hast felt it explain it. A devout author says, that when our Redeemer was dead, the heart of the great mother was first engaged in accompanying the most holy soul of the Son, and presenting it to the eternal father. I present thee, oh my God, Mary must then have said, the immaculate soul of thy and my Son, which has been obedient to thee even unto death: receive it, then, in thy arms. Thy justice is now satisfied, thy will accomplished; behold, the great sacrifice to thy eternal glory is consummated. And then turning to the lifeless members of her Jesus: Oh wounds, she said, oh loving wounds, I adore you, I rejoice with you, since through you salvation has been given to the world. You shall remain open in the body of my Son, to be the refuge of those who will have recourse to you. Oh how many, through you, shall receive the pardon of their sins, and then through you shall be inflamed to love the Sovereign Good!

That the joy of the following Paschal Sabbath should not be disturbed, the Jews wished the body of Jesus to be taken down from the cross; but because they could not take down a criminal until he was dead, they came with iron mallets to break his legs, as they had already done to the two thieves crucified with him. And Mary, while she remains weeping at the death of her Son, sees those armed men coming towards her Jesus. At this sight she first trembled with fear, then she said: Ah, my Son is already dead, cease to maltreat him, and cease to torture me a poor mother longer. She implored them not to break his legs: “Oravit eos, ne frangerent crura,” as St. Bonaventure writes. But while she is thus speaking, oh, God! she sees a soldier with violence brandishing a spear, and piercing the side of Jesus: “One of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water.”[8211] The cross shook at the stroke of the spear, and, as was revealed to St. Bridget, the heart of Jesus was divided: “Ita ut ambæ partes essent divisæ.”[8212] There came out blood and water, for only a few drops of blood remained, and those also the Saviour wished to shed, in order to show that he had no more blood to give us. The injury of that stroke was offered to Jesus, but the pain was inflicted on Mary: Christ, says the devout Lanspergius, shared with his mother the infliction of that wound, for he received the insult and his mother the pain.[8213] The holy Fathers explain this to be the very sword predicted to the Virgin by St. Simeon; a sword, not of iron, but of grief, which pierced through her blessed soul in the heart of Jesus, where it always dwelt. Thus, among others, St. Bernard says: The spear which opened his side passed through the soul of the Virgin, which could not be torn from the heart of Jesus.[8214] And the divine mother herself revealed the same to St. Bridget, saying: “When the spear was drawn out, the point appeared red with blood; then I felt as if my heart were pierced when I saw the heart of my most dear Son pierced.”[8215] The angel told St. Bridget, that such were the sufferings of Mary, that she was saved from death only by the miraculous power of God.[8216] In her other dolors she at least had her Son to compassionate her; and now she had not even him to take pity on her.

The afflicted mother, still fearing that other injuries might be inflicted on her Son, entreats Joseph of Arimathea to obtain from Pilate the body of her Jesus, that at least after his death she may be able to guard it and protect it from injuries. Joseph went to Pilate, and made known to him the sorrow and the wish of this afflicted mother; and St. Anselm thinks that compassion for the mother softened the heart of Pilate, and moved him to grant her the body of the Saviour. And now Jesus is taken from the cross. Oh most holy Virgin, after thou with so great love hadst given thy Son to the world for our salvation, behold the world returns him to thee again! But oh, my God, how dost thou return him to me? said Mary to the world. My Son was white and ruddy: “Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus:” but thou hast returned him to me blackened with bruises, and red, not with a ruddy color, but with the wounds thou hast inflicted upon him; he was beautiful, now there is no more beauty in him; he is all deformity. All were enamored with his aspect, now he excites horror in all who look upon him. Oh, how many swords, says St. Bonaventure, pierced the soul of this mother, when she received the body of her Son after it was taken from the cross: “O quot gladii animam matris pertransierunt!” Let us consider what anguish it would cause any mother to receive the lifeless body of a son! it was revealed to St. Bridget, that to take down the body of Jesus, three ladders were placed against the cross. Those holy disciples first drew out the nails from the hands and feet, and according to Metaphrastes, gave them in charge to Mary. Then one supported the upper part of the body of Jesus, the other the lower, and thus took it down from the cross. Bernardine de Bustis describes the afflicted mother as raising herself, and extending her arms to meet her dear Son; she embraces him, and then sits down at the foot of the cross. She sees his mouth open, his eye shut, she examines the lacerated flesh, and those exposed bones; she takes off the crown, and sees the cruel injury made by those thorns, in that sacred head; she looks upon those pierced hands and feet, and says: Ah, my Son, to what has the love thou didst bear to men reduced thee! But what evil hast thou done to them, that they have treated thee so cruelly? Thou wast my Father, Bernardine de Bustis imagines her to say, my brother, my spouse, my delight, my glory, my all.[8217] Oh, my Son, behold how I am afflicted, look upon me and console me; but thou dost look upon me no more. Speak, speak to me but one word, and console me; but thou dost speak no more, for thou art dead. Then turning to those barbarous instruments, she said: Oh cruel thorns, oh nails, oh merciless spear, how could you thus torture your Creator? But what thorns, what nails? Alas! sinners, she exclaimed, it is you who have thus cruelly treated my Son.

Thus Mary spoke and complained of us. But if now she were capable of suffering, what would she say? What grief would she feel to see that men after the death of her Son, continue to torment and crucify him by their sins? Let us no longer give pain to this sorrowful mother; and if we also have hither to grieved her by our sins, let us now do what she directs. She says to us: Return, ye transgressors, to the heart: “Redite, prævaricatores, ad cor.”[8218] Sinners, return to the wounded heart of my Jesus; return as penitents, for he will receive you. Flee from him to him, she continues to say with Guerric the Abbot; from the Judge to the Redeemer, from the tribunal to the cross.[8219] The Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget that she closed the eyes of her Son, when he was taken down from the cross, but she could not close his arms; “Ejus brachia flectere non potui.” Jesus Christ giving us to understand by this, that he desired to remain with open arms to receive all penitent sinners who return to him. Oh world, continues Mary, behold, then, thy time is the time of lovers: “Et ecce, tempus tuum, tempus amantium.”[8220] Now that my Son, oh world, has died to save thee, this is no longer for thee a time of fear, but of love: a time to love him who has desired to suffer so much in order to show thee the love he bore thee. Therefore, says St. Bernard, is the heart of Jesus wounded that, through the visible wound, the invisible wound of love may be seen.[8221] If then, concludes Mary, in the words of the Abbot of Celles, my Son had wished his side to be opened that he might give thee his heart,[8222] it is right, oh man, that thou shouldst give him thy heart. And if you wish, oh children of

Mary, to find a place in the heart of Jesus without fear of being cast out, go, says Ubertino of Casale, go with Mary, for she will obtain grace for you;[8223] and in the following example we have a beautiful proof of this.

EXAMPLE

The Disciple relates[8224] that there was once a poor sinner who, among other crimes, had killed his father and a brother, and therefore became a fugitive. Happening to hear one day during Lent, a sermon upon the divine mercy, he went to the preacher himself to make his confession. The confessor having heard his crimes, sent him to an altar of the sorrowful mother to pray that she might obtain for him compunction and pardon of his sins. The sinner obeyed, and began to pray, when behold, suddenly overpowered by contrition, he falls down dead. On the following day when the priest recommended to the people to pray for the deceased, a white dove appeared in the church and let fall a card at the feet of the priest. He took it up, and found these words written on it: “The soul of the dead, when it left the body, immediately went to paradise; and do you continue to preach the infinite mercy of God.”

PRAYER

Oh afflicted Virgin! oh soul, great in virtues and great also in sorrows! for both arise from that great fire of love thou hast for God; thou whose heart can love nothing but God; ah mother, have pity on me, for I have not loved God, and I have so much offended him. Thy sorrows give me great confidence to hope for pardon. But this is not enough; I wish to love my Lord, and who can better obtain this for me than thou—thou who art the mother of fair love? Ah Mary, thou dost console all, comfort me also. Amen.

ON THE SEVENTH DOLOR

THE BURIAL OF THE BODY OF JESUS

WHEN a mother is by the side of a suffering and dying child, she no doubt then feels and suffers all his pains; but when the afflicted child is really dead and about to be buried, and the sorrowful mother takes her last leave of him, oh God! the thought that she is to see him no more is a sorrow that exceeds all other sorrows. Behold, the last sword of sorrow which we are to consider, when Mary, after being present at the death of her Son upon the cross, after having embraced his lifeless body, was finally to leave him in the sepulchre, never more to enjoy his beloved presence.

But that we may better understand this last dolor, let us return to Calvary, again to look upon the afflicted mother, who still holds, clasped in her arms, the lifeless body of her Son. Oh my Son, she seems then to continue to say in the words of Job, my Son, thou art changed to be cruel towards me: “Mutatus es mihi in crudelem.”[8225] Yes, for all thy beauty, grace, virtue, and loveliness, all the signs of special love thou hast shown me, the peculiar favors thou hast bestowed on me, are all changed into so many darts of sorrow, which the more they have inflamed my love for thee, so much the more cause me cruelly to feel the pain of having lost thee. Ah, my beloved Son, in losing thee I have lost all. Thus St. Bernard speaks in her name: Oh truly begotten of God, thou wast to me a father, a son, a spouse; thou wast my life! Now I am deprived of my father, my spouse, and my Son, for with my Son whom I have lost, I lose all things.[8226]

Thus Mary, clinging to her Son, was dissolved in grief; but those holy disciples, fearing lest this poor mother would expire there through agony, went to take the body of her Son from her arms, to bear it away for burial. Therefore, with reverential force they took him from her arms, and having embalmed him, wrapped him in a linen cloth already prepared, upon which our Lord wished to leave to the world his image impressed, as may be seen at the present day in Turin. And now they bear him to the sepulchre. The sorrowful funeral train sets forth; the disciples place him on their shoulders; hosts of angels from heaven accompany him; those holy women follow him; and the afflicted mother follows in their company her Son to the grave. When they had reached the appointed place, how gladly would Mary have buried herself there alive with her Son! “Oh how willingly,” said the Virgin to St. Bridget, “would I have remained there alive with my Son, if it had been his will!”[8227] But since this was not the divine will, the authors relate that she herself accompanied the sacred body of Jesus into the sepulchre, where, as Baronius narrates, they deposited the nails and the crown of thorns. In raising the stone to close the sepulchre, the disciples of the Saviour had to turn to the Virgin, and say to her: Now, oh Lady, we must close the sepulchre; have patience, look upon thy Son, and take leave of him for the last time. Then, oh my beloved Son, must the afflicted mother have said, then shall I see thee no more? Receive then, this last time that I look upon thee, receive the last farewell from me thy dear mother, and receive my heart which I leave buried with thee. The Virgin, says St. Fulgentius, earnestly desired that her soul should be buried with the body of Christ.[8228] And Mary herself made this revelation to St. Bridget: “I can truly say, that at the burial of my Son, one sepulchre contained as it were two hearts.”[8229]

Finally, they take the stone and close up in the holy sepulchre the body of Jesus, that great treasure, greater than any in heaven and on earth. And here let us remark, that Mary left her heart buried with Jesus, because Jesus was all her treasure: “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”[8230] And where shall we keep our hearts buried? With creatures? In the mire? And why not with Jesus, who, although he has ascended to heaven, has wished to remain, not dead but alive, in the most holy sacrament of the altar, precisely in order that he may have with him and possess our hearts? But let us return to Mary. Before quitting the sepulchre, according to St. Bonaventure, she blessed that sacred stone, saying: Oh happy stone, that doth now inclose that body which was contained nine months in my womb, I bless thee, and envy thee; I leave thee to guard my Son for me, who is my only good, my only love. And then turning to the eternal Father, she said: Oh Father, to thee I recommend him, who is thy Son and mine; and thus bidding a last farewell to her Son, and to the sepulchre, she returned to her own house. This poor mother went away so afflicted and sad, according to St. Bernard, that she moved many to tears even against their will: “Multos etiam invitos ad lacrymas provocabat;” so that wherever she passed, all wept who met her: “Omnes plorabant qui obviabant ei,” and could not restrain their tears. And he adds, that those holy disciples, and the women who accompanied her, mourned for her even more than for their Lord.[8231]

St. Bonaventure says, that her two sisters covered her with a mourning cloak: The sisters of our Lady wrapped her in a veil as a widow, covering as it were her whole countenance.[8232] And he also says, that passing, on her return, before the cross, still wet with the blood of her Jesus, she was the first to adore it: Oh holy cross, she exclaimed, I kiss thee and adore thee; for thou art no longer an infamous wood, but a throne of love, and an altar of mercy, consecrated by the blood of the divine Lamb, who has been sacrificed upon thee, for the salvation of the world. She then leaves the cross and returns to her house; there the afflicted mother casts her eyes around, and no longer sees her Jesus; but instead of the presence of her dear Son, all the memorials of his holy life and cruel death are before her. There she is reminded of the embraces she gave her Son in the stable of Bethlehem, of the conversations held with him for so many years in the shop of Nazareth: she is reminded of their mutual affection, of his loving looks, of the words of eternal life that came forth from that divine mouth. And then comes before her the fatal scene of that very day; she sees those nails, those thorns, that lacerated flesh of her Son, those deep wounds, those uncovered bones, that open mouth, those closed eyes. Alas! what a night of sorrow was that night for Mary! The sorrowful mother turned to St. John, and said mournfully: Ah, John, where is thy master? Then she asked of Magdalen: Daughter, tell me where is thy beloved? Oh God! who has taken him from us? Mary weeps, and all those who are with her weep. And thou, oh my soul, dost thou not weep! Ah, turn to Mary, and say to her with St. Bonaventure: Let me, oh my Lady, let me weep; thou art innocent, I am guilty.[8233] At least entreat her to permit thee to weep with her: “Fac ut tecum lugeam.” She weeps for love, and thou dost weep through sorrow for thy sins. And thus weeping, thou mayest have the happy lot of him of whom we read in the following example.

EXAMPLE

Father Engelgrave relates,[8234] that a certain religious was so tormented by scruples, that sometimes he was almost driven to despair, but having great devotion to Mary, the mother of sorsows, he had recourse to her in the agony of his spirit, and was much comforted by contemplating her dolors. Death came, and the devil tormented him more than ever with scruples, and tempted him to despair. When, behold our merciful mother, seeing her poor son so afflicted, appeared to him, and said to him: “And why, oh my son, art thou so overcome with sorrow, thou who hast so often consoled me by thy compassion for my sorrows?[8235] Be comforted,” she said to him;” Jesus sends me to thee to console thee; be comforted, rejoice, and come with me to paradise.” And at these words the devout religious tranquilly expired, full of consolation and confidence.

PRAYER

My afflicted mother, I will not leave thee alone to weep; no, I wish to keep thee company with my tears. This grace I ask of thee to-day: obtain for me a continual remembrance of the passion of Jesus, and of thine also, and a tender devotion to them, that all the remaining days of my life may be spent in weeping for thy sorrows, oh my mother, and for those of my Redeemer. I hope that these dolors will give me the confidence and strength not to despair at the hour of my death, at the sight of the offences I have committed against my Lord. By these must I obtain pardon, perseverance, paradise, where I hope to rejoice with thee, and sing the infinite mercy of my God through all eternity: thus I hope, thus may it be. Amen, amen.

Whoever wishes to practise the devotion of reciting the chaplet of the dolors of Mary, will find it at the end of the book. I composed this many years since, and insert it anew here for the convenience of the servants of Mary, whom I pray in their charity to recommend me to her when they meditate upon her dolors.

Oh Lady, who dost ravish the heart of men with thy sweetness, hast thou not ravished mine? Oh, ravisher of hearts, when wilt thou restore to me my heart? Do with it as with thine own, and place it in the side of thy Son. Then I shall possess what I hope for, because thou art our hope.[8236]

Of the Virtues of the Most Holy Mary

St. Augustine says, that in order to obtain more certainly and abundantly the favors of the saints, it is necessary to imitate them, for when they see us practising the virtues which they practised, then they are more moved to pray for us. The queen of saints, and our first advocate, Mary, after she has rescued a soul from the grasp of Lucifer, and has united her to God, wishes her to begin to imitate her example, otherwise she will not be able to enrich her, as she would wish, with her graces, seeing her so opposed to her in conduct. Therefore Mary calls those blessed who diligently imitate her life: “Now, therefore, children, hear me; blessed are they that keep my ways.”[8237] He who loves, is like, or seeks to make himself like, the person beloved, according to the celebrated proverb: Love either finds or makes like: “Amor aut pares invenit aut facit.” Hence St. Jerome tells us, that if we love Mary, we must seek to imitate her, for this is the greatest honor we can pay her.[8238] Richard says, those are and may call themselves true children of Mary, who strive to imitate her life: “Filii Mariæ imitatores ejus.” Let the child then endeavor, concludes St. Bernard, to imitate the mother, if he desires her favor; for when Mary sees that he honors her as a mother she will treat and favor him as a child.

Although there is little recorded in the Gospels of the virtues of Mary in particular, yet, when they tell us that she was full of grace, it is given us to understand that she had all the virtues, and all in the heroic degree. So much so, that, as St. Thomas says, where as the other saints have excelled, each in some one particular virtue, the blessed Virgin has excelled in all, and in all the virtues has been given us for an example.[8239] And St. Ambrose also says: Such was Mary, that her life alone is the example for all.[8240] And he afterwards adds: Let the virginity and life of Mary be to you as an image, in which the form of virtue shines forth. From thence obtain the model of your life . . . what you should correct, what avoid, what retain.[8241] And because, as the holy Fathers teach, humility is the foundation of all the virtues, let us in the first place consider how great was the humility of the mother of God.

Section I

OF THE HUMILITY OF MARY

Humility, says St. Bernard, is the foundation and guardian of the virtues;[8242] and with reason, for without humility a soul can possess no other virtue. Let her possess all the virtues, they will all depart when humility departs. On the other hand, said St. Francis of Sales, in a letter to St. Jane de Chantal, God so loves humility that he instantly hastens to the soul in which he sees it.[8243] This virtue, so lovely and so necessary, was unknown in the world; but the Son of God himself came on earth to teach it by his example, and he desired that in this we should especially strive to imitate him: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart."[8244] And Mary, as she was the first and most perfect disciple of Jesus Christ in all the virtues, was so in that of humility, by which she merited to be exalted above all creatures. It was revealed to St. Matilda that the first virtue which the blessed mother especially practised from childhood, was humility.[8245]

The first act of humility of heart is to have an humble opinion of ourselves; and Mary always thought so lowly of herself, as was revealed to the same St. Matilda, that although she saw so many more graces bestowed upon her than upon others, she preferred all others before herself.[8246] Rupert the Abbot, explaining that passage, "Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse . . . with one hair of thy neck,"|[8247] says, that this hair of the neck of the spouse was precisely that humble opinion which Mary had of herself, with which she wounded the heart of God.[8248] Not that the holy Virgin esteemed herself a sinner, for humility is truth, as St. Theresa says, and Mary knew that she had never offended God; nor that she did not confess having received greater graces from God than any other creature, for an humble heart always acknowledges the special favors of the Lord, that it may humble itself the more; but the divine mother, by the greater light she had to see the infinite greatness and goodness of her God, saw still more her own littleness, and therefore more than all others did she humiliate herself, and say with the spouse of the Canticles: “Do not consider that I am brown because the sun hath altered my color.”[8249] Approaching him, I find myself black, as St. Bernard explains it: “Appropinquans illi me nigram invenio.”[8250] Yes, adds St. Bernardine, for the Virgin had always present before her eyes the divine majesty, and her own nothingness.[8251] As a beggar, when she is clothed with a costly garment which has been given her, is not made proud by it, but humbles herself more before the giver, because she is reminded then more of her poverty; thus, Mary, the more she saw herself enriched, the more humble she became, remembering that all was the gift of God; whence she herself said to St. Elizabeth, a Benedictine nun: “Know for certain that I esteemed myself most abject, and unworthy of the grace of God.”[8252] And therefore, says St. Bernardine, no creature in the world has been more exalted, because no creature has ever humbled herself more than Mary.[8253]

Moreover, it is an act of humility to conceal the gifts of heaven. Mary wished to conceal from St. Joseph the grace of having been made the mother of God, although it seemed necessary to make it known to him, in order, at least, to remove from the mind of her poor spouse the suspicions he might have of her virtue, when he saw her pregnant; or at least his perplexity, for in fact St. Joseph, on the one side, unwilling to doubt the chastity of Mary, and, on the other, ignorant of the mystery, in order to free himself from perplexity, was minded to put her away privately: “Voluit occulte dimittere eam.”[8254] And if the angel had not revealed to him that his spouse was pregnant by the operation of the Holy Spirit, he would really have left her. Moreover, an humble soul also refuses praise, and gives it all to God. Behold, Mary is disturbed at hearing herself praised by St. Gabriel. And when St. Elizabeth said to her, “Blessed art thou among women . . . and whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me. . . . Blessed art thou that hast believed, &c.,”[8255] Mary, referring all these praises to God, answered with that humble Canticle: My soul doth magnify the Lord: “Magnificat anima mea Dominum,” as if she had said: You praise me, oh Elizabeth, but I praise the Lord, to whom alone honor is due; you wonder that I come to you, and I wonder at the divine goodness in which alone my spirit exults. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour; “Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo." You praise me because I have believed; I praise my God, because he has wished to exalt my nothingness; because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid: "Quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ." Hence Mary said to St. Bridget: "Why did I humble myself so far, or why have I merited so much grace, unless because I thought and knew that of and from myself I was nothing, and had nothing? therefore I would have no praise for myself, but only for the Giver and Creator."[8256] Wherefore, speaking of the humility of Mary, St. Augustine says: Oh truly blessed humility, which has brought forth God to men, opened paradise, and liberated souls from hell![8257]

It is also a part of humility to save others; and Mary did not refuse to go and serve Elizabeth for three months. Wherefore St. Bernard has said: Elizabeth wondered that Mary should come to visit her, but she should wonder still more that she did not come to be ministered unto, but to minister.[8258] The humble retire and choose the lowest place; and therefore, as St. Bernard remarks, Mary, when her Son was preaching in a certain house, as St. Matthew relates,[8259] wished to speak with him, but would not enter the house unbidden.[8260] Therefore, when she was in the "upper room" with the apostles, she wished to take the lowest place, as St. Luke has related: "All these were persevering with one mind in prayer, with the woman and Mary the mother of Jesus."|[8261] Not that St. Luke did not know the merit of the divine mother, on account of which he should have given her the first place; but because she had taken the lowest, after the apostles and the other women, therefore St. Luke described all, as a certain author remarks, just in the order of their places. Hence St. Bernard says: Justly has the last become first, who, when she was first of all, became last.[8262] Finally, the humble love contempt; therefore we do not find that Mary appeared in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, when her Son was received with so much honor by the people; but, on the other hand, at the time of the death of her Son, she did not shrink from appearing in public on Calvary, through fear of the disgrace of being known as the mother of one who was condemned as a criminal to die by an infamous death. Therefore she said to St Bridget: "What more contemptible than to be called a fool, to be in want of all things, to believe one's self the most unworthy of all? Such, oh daughter, was my humility, this was my joy, this my entire will, with which I thought of nothing but to please my Son."[8263]

The venerable sister Paula of Foligno was given to understand in an ecstasy how great was the humility of the holy Virgin. In relating what she had seen to her confessor, she said, scarcely able to utter the words through astonishment: "Oh the humility of the blessed Virgin! Oh father! oh the humility of our blessed Lady! In the world there is no humility, not even the lowest degree of humility, to be compared with the humility of Mary." And our Lord, at another time, showed St. Bridget two females, one all pomp and vanity: "This one," he said, "is Pride; but the other whom you see with her head bent down, respectful to all, having God alone in her mind, and having no esteem for herself, is Humility, and is called Mary."[8264] By this God wished to make known to us that his blessed mother was so humble that she was humility itself.

It is not to be doubted, as St. Gregory of Nyssa says, that for our nature, corrupted by sin, there is perhaps no virtue more difficult to practise than humility. But there is no escape; we can never be true children of Mary if we are not humble. If, says St. Bernard, you cannot imitate the virginity, imitate the humility of the humble Virgin.[8265] She abhors the proud, she invites none to come to her but the humble: Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me: "Si quis est parvulus, veniat ad me." Mary, says Richard, protects us under the mantle of humility: "Maria protegit nos sub pallio humilitatis." The mother of God herself explained this to St. Bridget, saying: "Come, then, oh my daughters, and hide thyself under my mantle; this mantle is my humility."[8266] And she then added, that the contemplation of her humility was a good mantle, that keeps us warm; but, as she afterwards said: "The mantle only warms him who wears it, not only in thought but in fact; thus my humility does not profit unless every one strives to imitate it. Therefore, my daughter," she concludes, "clothe thyself with this humility."[8267] Oh, how dear to Mary is the humble soul! St. Bernard writes: The Virgin recognizes and loves those who love her, and she is near to all who invoke her, especially to those whom she sees like herself in chastity and humility.[8268] Wherefore the saint then exhorts all those who love Mary, to be humble: Emulate this virtue if you love Mary.[8269] Marino, or Martino d'Alberto, of the Society of Jesus, through love of the Virgin, was accustomed to sweep the house and collect the filth. The divine mother once appeared to him, as Father Nierembergh relates in his Life, and as if thanking him, said: “How dear to me is this humble action done for love of me!” Then, oh my queen, I shall never be a true child of thine, if I am not humble. But do you not see that my sins, after having rendered me ungrateful to my Lord, have also made me proud? Oh, my mother, cure me; by thy merits obtain for me that I may be humble, and thus become a child of thine. Amen.

Section II

OF THE CHARITY OF MARY TOWARDS GOD

St. ANSELM says, that where there is the greatest purity, there is the greatest charity: “Ubi major puritas, ibi major charitas.” The purer and more emptied of self is a heart, the more it will be filled with charity towards God. Most holy Mary, because she was all humility, and entirely emptied of self, was entirely filled with the divine love, so that she surpassed all men and all angels in love to God, as St. Bernardine teaches.[8270] Therefore St. Francis of Sales has justly called her: The queen of love. The Lord indeed has given to men the precept to love him with their whole heart: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart;”[8271] but, as St. Thomas declares, this precept will never be perfectly fulfilled by men on this earth, but in heaven.[8272] And here the blessed Albertus Magnus remarks, that in a certain sense, it would be unbecoming for God to give a commandment which none could perfectly fulfil, if the divine mother had not perfectly fulfilled it. These are the words of Albertus: Either some one fulfils this precept or no one; if any one, it is the most blessed Virgin.[8273] And this is confirmed by Richard of St. Victor, who says: The mother of our Emmanuel was perfect in all virtues. Who has ever fulfilled as she did that first commandment: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart?” In her the divine love was so ardent, that there could be no defect of any kind in her.[8274] Divine love, says St. Bernard, so penetrated and pervaded the soul of Mary, that no part was left untouched by it, so that she loved with her whole heart, her whole soul, and her whole strength, and was full of grace.[8275] Wherefore Mary might well have said: My beloved has given himself wholly to me, and I have given myself wholly to him: My beloved to me, and I to him: “Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.”[8276] Ah, says Richard, well might even the seraphim descend from heaven to learn from the heart of the Virgin how to love God.[8277]

God, who is love: “Deus charitas est,”[8278] came on earth to kindle in all men the flames of his holy love; but he inflamed no heart so much as the heart of his mother, who, being entirely pure from every earthly affection, was perfectly ready to be enkindled by this blessed flame. Thus St. Jerome teaches.[8279] Hence the heart of Mary became all fire and flames, as we read of her in the sacred Canticles: The lamps thereof are fire and flames: “Lampades ejus, lampades ignis, atque flammarum.”[8280] Fire burning within, through love, as St. Anselm explains,|[8281] and flames shining forth upon all, by the practice of virtue. Mary, therefore, when she bore Jesus in her arms, might indeed have called herself: Fire carrying fire: “Ignis gestans ignem,” more properly than a certain woman who was carrying fire in her hand was so called by Hippocrates. Yes, for St. Ildephonsus said: As fire heats iron, the Holy Spirit so wholly inflamed Mary that nothing was seen in her but the flame of the Holy Ghost, nothing was felt but the fire of the love of God.[8282] St. Thomas of Villanova says that the bush which Moses saw entirely in flames without being consumed, was really a symbol of the heart of the Virgin. Wherefore with reason, as St. Bernard says, was she seen by St. John clothed with the sun: And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun: “Et signum apparuit in cœlo, mulier amicta sole.”[8283] For, says the saint, she was so united to God by love that it seems as if no creature could be more united to him. Mary, then, is justly described as clothed with the sun, for she has penetrated to an incredible depth the abyss of divine wisdom, so that, as far as it is permitted to a creature not personally united with God, she appears immersed in that inaccessible light.[8284]

Therefore St. Bonaventure asserts, that the holy Virgin was never tempted by the spirits of hell: For as flies, he says, are driven away by a great fire, so from the heart of Mary, which was one flame of love, the devils fled, and did not even dare to approach her.[8285] And Richard also says: The Virgin was terrible to the princes of darkness, so that they did not presume to approach and tempt her, for the flame of charity deterred them.[8286] Mary herself revealed to St. Bridget, that in this world she had no other thought, no other desire, no other joy, than God: I thought of nothing but God; nothing pleased me but God: “Nihil nisi Deum cogitabam, nulla mihi nisi Deus placuerunt.” So that her blessed soul being, as it were, on this earth in a continual contemplation of God, the acts of love she made were innumerable; as Father Suarez has declared: The acts of perfect love which the blessed Virgin made in this life were innumerable, for she passed almost her whole life in contemplation, and was very frequently repeating an act of love.[8287] But Bernard de Bustis pleases me more when he says, that Mary did not so much repeat the acts of love in order, as other saints do, but, by a singular privilege, always actually loved God with one continued act.[8288] Like the royal eagle she kept her eyes always fixed upon the divine Sun, so that, as St. Peter Damian says, neither did the actions of life prevent her from loving, nor love prevent her from acting.[8289] Thus, says St. Germanus, Mary was prefigured by the altar of propitiation on which the fire was never extinguished by day or by night.

Neither did sleep interrupt the love of Mary for her God. For if such a privilege was given to our first parents in the state of innocence, as St. Augustine asserts, saying: Their dreams when sleeping were as happy as their life when waking: “Tam felicia erant somnia dormientium, quam vita vigilantium,”[8290] it certainly could not be denied to the divine mother, as Suarez and Rupert the Abbot believe, with St. Bernardine and St. Ambrose, who has written concerning Mary: While her body rested, her soul watched: “Cum quiesceret corpus, vigilaret animus.”[8291] Thus were verified in her the words of the wise man: Her lamp shall not be put out in the night: “Non extinguetur in nocte lucerna ejus.”[8292] Yes, for while her blessed body, with a light sleep, took its needed rest, her soul, says St. Bernardine, freely rose to God, so at that time her contemplation was more perfect than is that of any other person when awake.[8293] Therefore could she well say with the spouse in the Canticles: I sleep and my heart watcheth: “Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat.”|[8294] Happy in sleep as in waking: “Tam felix dormiendo, quam vigilando,” as Suarez says. In a word, St. Bernardine asserts, that Mary, while she lived on earth, was continually loving God: “Mens Virginis in ardore dilectionis continue tenebatur.”[8295] And he adds further, that she never did any thing that she did not know was pleasing to God; and that she loved him as much as she knew he ought to be loved.[8296] Hence, according to blessed Albertus Magnus, it may be said that Mary was filled with so great charity that a greater was not possible in any pure creature on this earth.[8297] For this reason St. Thomas of Villanova has said, that the Virgin, by her ardent charity, was made so beautiful and so enamored her God, that captivated as it were, by love of her, he descended into her womb to become man.[8298] Wherefore St. Bernardine exclaims: Behold a Virgin who by her virtue has wounded and taken captive the heart of God.|[8299]

But since Mary loves her God so much, she certainly requires from her servants nothing else so much as that they should love God as much as they can. And precisely this she said to the blessed Angela de Foligno one day after communion: “Angela, may you be blessed by my Son; seek to love him as much as you can.” And the blessed Virgin herself said to St. Bridget: Daughter, if you wish to bind me to you, love my Son: “Si vis me tecum devincire, ama filium meum.” Mary desires nothing more than to see her beloved, who is God, loved by all. Novarino asks why the holy Virgin, with the spouse of the Canticles, begged the angels to make known to her Lord the great love she bore him, saying: “I adjure you, oh daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him that I languish with love.”[8300] Did not God know how much she loved him? Why does she desire to show the wound to her beloved who gave the wound? “Cur vulnus ostendi quærit dilecto qui vulnus fecit?” The same author answers, that the divine mother did not wish by this to make known her love to God, but to us; that, as she was wounded, she might be able to wound us also with divine love: “Ut vulnerata vulneret.”[8301] And because she was wholly inflamed with the love of God, she inflames all those who love and approach her, and renders them like herself.[8302] For this reason St. Catharine of Sienna called Mary: The bearer of the flame of divine love “Portatrix ignis.” If we also wish to burn with this blessed flame, let us always endeavor to draw near to our mother with prayers and affections.

Oh queen of love, Mary, the most lovely, the most beloved, and the most loving of all creatures, as St. Francis de Sales said to thee: Ah, my mother, thou wert always wholly inflamed with love to God; ah, deign to bestow on me at least one spark of it. Thou didst pray thy Son for that family whose wine had failed: They have no wine: “Vinum non habent,” and wilt thou not pray for us, who are wanting in love to God, whom we are under such obligations to love? Say to Jesus: They have no love: “Amorem non habent.” Do thou obtain for us this love. We ask of thee no other favor than this. Oh mother, by the great love thou hast for Jesus, graciously hear us and pray for us. Amen.

Section III

OF THE CHARITY OF MARY FOR HER NEIGHBOR

LOVE to God and our neighbor is commanded by the same precept: “And this commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God, love also his neighbor.”[8303] And St. Thomas gives it as a reason for this, that he who loves God, loves all things which God loves. St. Catherine of Genoa one day said to God: “Oh Lord, it is thy will that I love my neighbor, and I can love none but thee.” God answered her in these words: “He who loves me, loves all things loved by me.” But as there never has been and never will be one who loves God more than Mary; so there never has been and never will be one who loves his neighbor more than Mary. Cornelius à Lapide, remarking on these words: “King Solomon hath made him a litter of the wood of Libanus . . . the midst he covered with charity for the daughters of Jerusalem,”[8304] says, that this litter was the womb of Mary, in which the incarnate Word dwelt, filling the mother with charity, that she might succor all who had recourse to her.[8305] Mary was so full of charity when she was on earth, that she assisted unasked, those who were in need, just as she did at the marriage of Cana, when she told her Son of the trouble of the family: They have no wine: “Vinum non habent,”[8306] and begged him to give them wine by a miracle. Oh! how she hastened to the relief of her neighbor, when she went to the house of Elizabeth on an errand of charity: She went into the hill country in haste: “Abiit in montana cum festinatione.”[8307] She could in no way show greater charity than by offering her Son for our salvation; so that St. Bonaventure says: Mary so loved the world as to give her only-begotten Son.[8308] Therefore St. Anselm addresses her in these words: Oh, blessed among women, who dost excel the angels in purity, and the saints in pity![8309] Neither does the charity of Mary for us fail, says St. Bonaventure, now she is in heaven; but is much increased there. Because now she sees more clearly the miseries of men.[8310] Hence the saint said: Great was the mercy of Mary towards the wretched when she was still an exile on earth; but it is far greater now that she is reigning in heaven.[8311] And the angel said to St. Bridget, that there is no one who prays that does not receive graces through the charity of the Virgin.|[8312] Miserable should we be were Mary not to pray for us. Jesus Christ himself also said to the same saint: "If the prayers of my mother did not interpose, there would be no hope of mercy."[8313]

Blessed is he, says the divine mother, who hears my teachings and considers my charity, in order to practise it towards others in imitation of me: "Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors."[8314] St. Gregory Nazianzen says, that there is nothing by which we may more surely gain the love of Mary, than by the practice of charity towards our neighbor.[8315] Hence, as God commands us, saying, "Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful;"[8316] so Mary appears to say to all her children: Be ye merciful, as your mother also is merciful.[8317] It is certain that God and Mary will show mercy to us, according to the charity we practise towards our neighbor. "Give, and it shall be given to you." "For with the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."|[8318] St. Methodius said: Give to the poor and receive paradise: "Da pauperi et accipe Paradisum:" for, according to the apostle, charity towards our neighbor renders us happy in this life and the next: "But piety is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."[8319] St. John Chrysostom, remarking on the words of Proverbs, "He that hath mercy on the poor, lendeth to the Lord,"[8320] says, that he who assists the needy, makes God his debtor.[8321] Oh mother of mercy, thou art full of charity for all. Do not forget my miseries. Thou dost even now see them. Recommend me to that God who denies thee nothing. Obtain for me the grace of being able to imitate thee in holy charity towards God and towards my neighbor. Amen.

Section IV

OF THE FAITH OF MARY

As the blessed Virgin is the mother of love and of hope, thus, also, is she the mother of faith. “I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and knowledge, and of holy hope.”[8322] And justly, says St. Irenæus, since Mary repaired by her faith that loss which Eve caused by her incredulity.[8323] Eve, Tertullian also says, because she chose to believe the serpent rather than the Word of God, brought death into the world, but our queen, believing the words of the angel, that she, remaining a virgin, was to become the mother of the Lord, brought salvation to the world.|[8324] For St. Augustine says that Mary, giving her consent to the incarnation of the Word, by means of her faith opened paradise to men.[8325] Also Richard, commenting on the words of St. Paul: “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife,”[8326] says: This is the believing woman by whose faith the unbelieving Adam and all his posterity are saved.[8327] Hence, on account of her faith, Elizabeth pronounced the Virgin blessed: Blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished in thee that were spoken by the Lord.[8328] And St. Augustine added: Mary is more blessed by receiving the faith of Christ than by conceiving the flesh of Christ.|[8329]

Father Suarez says that the holy Virgin had more faith than all men and all the angels. She saw her Son in the stable of Bethlehem, and believed him the Creator of the world. She saw him flying from Herod, and yet believed that he was the King of kings. She saw him born, and believed him to be eternal. She saw him poor and in need of food, and believed him to be Lord of the universe, laid on straw, and she believed him omnipotent. She observed that he did not speak, and she believed him to be the infinite Wisdom. She heard him weeping, and she believed him to be the joy of paradise. Finally, she saw him in death, despised and crucified, but although the faith of others might have wavered, Mary remained firm in the belief that he was God. St. Antoninus says, remarking on the words: There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother: “Stabat juxta crucem Jesu mater ejus,” Mary stood supported by her faith, which she retained firm in the divinity of Christ.[8330] And it is for this reason, says the saint, that in the office of Tenebræ, only one candle is left lighted. St. Leo, when treating of this subject, applies to the Virgin this passage of Proverbs: “Her lamp shall not be put out in the night.”[8331] On the words of Isaias, “I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the Gentiles, there is not a man with me,”[8332] St. Thomas remarks: He says a man, on account of the Virgin, in whom faith never failed.[8333] Whence the blessed Albertus Magnus says, that Mary practised then a most perfect faith. She had faith in a most excellent degree; who, even when the disciples were doubting, did not doubt. Mary, therefore, by her great faith merited to become the light of all the faithful, as St. Methodius calls her: “Fidelium fax.” And by St. Cyril of Alexandria: The queen of the true faith: “Sceptrum orthodoxæ fidei.” And the holy Church herself attributes to the Virgin, by the merit of her faith, the destruction of all heresies: “Rejoice, oh Virgin Mary, for thou alone hast destroyed all heresies throughout the world.”[8334] St. Thomas of Villanova also says, explaining the words of the Holy Spirit, “Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse . . . with one of thy eyes,”[8335] that the eyes signify faith, by which the Virgin gave the greatest pleasure to the Son of God.[8336]

St. Ildephonsus exhorts us to imitate the faith of Mary: “Imitamini signaculum fidei Mariæ.” But how are we to imitate this faith of Mary? Faith is at the same time a gift and a virtue. It is a gift of God, in so far as it is a light which God infuses into the soul, and it is also a virtue in so far as it is exercised by the soul. Hence faith is given us not only to serve as a rule of belief, but also of action. Therefore St. Gregory says: He truly believes who, by his works, practises what he believes.[8337] And St. Augustine: Thou sayest, “I believe,” do what you say, and it is faith.|[8338] And this is to have a lively faith, namely, to live according to our belief. “My just man liveth by faith.”[8339] It was thus the blessed Virgin lived, very differently from those who do not live according to what they believe, whose faith is dead, as St. James says: Faith without good works is dead: “Fide sine operibus mortua est.”[8340] Diogenes went about seeking a man upon earth: “Hominem quæro;” but God seems seeking a Christian among the many faithful: “Christianum quæro.” For very few are they who have the works, the greater part have only the name; but to these should be said what Alexander said to that cowardly soldier who was also named Alexander: Change either your name or your conduct: “Aut nomen, aut mores muta.” But, as Father Avila used to say: It would be better if these miserable creatures were put in confinement as madmen, believing as they do, that a happy eternity is prepared for him who lives well, and an unhappy eternity for him who lives ill, and yet living as if they did not believe this. St. Augustine therefore exhorts us to see things with Christian eyes, that is, to see according to faith: “Oculos Christianorum habete.” For St. Theresa was accustomed to say, that all sins arise from a want of faith. Let us therefore implore the holy Virgin, that by the merit of her faith she may obtain for us a lively faith. Oh Lady, increase our faith: Domina adauge nobis fidem.

Section V

OF THE HOPE OF MARY

FROM faith springs hope, for God enlightens us by faith with a knowledge of his goodness and his promises, that we may raise by hope to the desire of possessing him. Mary, then, having the virtue of an extraordinary faith, had also the virtue of an extraordinary hope, which made her say with David: "But it is good for me to adhere to my God, and to put my hope in the Lord God."[8341] Mary was, indeed, that faithful spouse of the Holy Spirit, of whom it was said: "Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning on her beloved?"[8342] For she was always perfectly detached from affection to the world, which to her appeared a desert; and placing no confidence either in creatures or her own merits, but relying entirely on divine grace, in which alone she trusted, she always advanced in the divine love; and thus Ailgrin said of her: She ascended from the desert, that is, from the world, which she deserted and esteemed such a desert, that she turned away from it all her affection. Leaning upon her beloved; for she trusted not in her own merits, but in the grace of him who bestows grace.[8343]

And the holy Virgin plainly showed how great was her confidence in God: first, when she saw the trouble of her holy spouse, Joseph, because he knew not the mode of her miraculous pregnancy, and thought of leaving her: But Joseph . . . minded to put her away privately: "Joseph autem . . . voluit occulte dimittere eam."[8344] It appeared then necessary, as we have already said, that she should discover to Joseph the hidden mystery; but no, she would not herself reveal the grace she had received; she thought it better to abandon herself to divine providence, trusting that God himself would protect her innocence and her reputation. Cornelius à Lapide makes precisely the same remark, commenting upon these very words of the Gospel: The blessed Virgin was unwilling to make known this secret to

Joseph, lest she should seem to boast of her gifts, but resigned herself in perfect confidence to the care of God, trusting that he would protect her innocence and reputation.[8345] Moreover, she showed her confidence in God, when, as the time for the birth of Christ approached, she saw herself in Bethlehem shut out from the lodgings even of the poor, and obliged to bring forth her Son in a stable. “And she laid him in a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn.”[8346] She did not then utter a single word of complaint, but abandoning herself to God, trusted that he would assist her in her need. The divine mother also showed how much she trusted in the divine providence, when warned by Joseph that they were obliged to fly into Egypt, she set out the same night on so long a journey to a foreign and unknown country, without preparation, without money, without other company than that of her infant Jesus and her poor spouse: “Who arose and took the child and his mother by night, and retired into Egypt.”[8347] But much more did Mary make known her confidence, when she asked from her Son the favor of the miracle of wine at the marriage of Cana; for having said: They have no wine: “Vinum non habent;” Jesus answered her: “Woman, what is it to thee and to me? my hour has not yet come.”[8348] But after this answer, by which it seemed clearly that he refused her request, she, trusting in the divine goodness, directed the people of the house to do as the Son should order, because the grace was secure: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye: “Quodcumque dixerit vobis racite.” And Jesus Christ did, indeed, order that the vessels should be filled with water, and then changed it into wine.

Let us learn then from Mary to trust in God as we ought, but principally as to what concerns our eternal salvation, in which, although our cooperation is necessary, yet we ought to hope from God alone the grace necessary for obtaining it, entirely distrusting our own strength and saying with the apostle: I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me: “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”[8349]

Ah, my most holy Lady, of thee Ecclesiasticus says, that thou art the mother of holy hope: “Mater sanctæ spei.”[8350] The holy Church says of thee that thou art hope itself: Hail, our hope: “Spes nostra salve.” What other hope then am I seeking? Thou, after Christ, art all my hope; thus St. Bernard called thee, thus I also wish to call thee: The whole reason of my hope: “Tota ratio spes meæ;” and I will always say to thee with St. Bonaventure: Oh salvation of those who invoke thee, save me: “O salus te invocantium salva me.

Section VI

OF THE CHASTITY OF MARY

SINCE the fall of Adam the flesh being rebellious against reason, the virtue of chastity is the most difficult for men to practise. Of all combats, says St. Augustine, those of chastity are the most severe, for the battle is daily and the victory rare.[8351] But eternal praise to the Lord who has given us in Mary a great example of this virtue. With justice says blessed Albertus Magnus, is Mary called the Virgin of virgins, for she being the first who offered her virginity to God, without the counsel or example of others, has brought to him all virgins who imitate her.[8352] As David had already predicted: After her virgins shall be brought to the temple of the king: “Adducentur virgines post eam in templum regis.”[8353] Without counsel or example; yes, for St. Bernard exclaims: Oh Virgin, who has taught thee to please God by virginity, and on earth to lead the life of an angel?[8354] Ah! answers Sophronius, it is for this God has chosen this most pure Virgin for his mother, that she may be an example of chastity to all.|[8355] Hence St. Ambrose has called Mary the standard-bearer of chastity: “Quæ signum Virginitatis extulit.”

By reason of this her purity the blessed Virgin was also called by the holy Spirit: Beautiful as the turtle-dove: Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle-dove’s: “Pulchræ sunt genæ tuæ sicut turturis.”[8356] Mary, says St. Aponius, is a most chaste turtle: “Turtur pudicissima Maria.” And therefore she has also been called a lily: As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters: “Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias.”[8357] St. Denis the Carthusian, commenting on this passage, says, that she has been called a lily among thorns because all other virgins were thorns either to themselves or others; but the blessed Virgin has never been one to herself or others.[8358] For by her presence alone she infused into all, thoughts and affections of purity: “Intuentium corda ad castitatem invitabat.”[8359] And this is confirmed by St. Thomas, who says that the beauty of the blessed Virgin encouraged chastity in all who beheld her: “Pulchritudo B. Virginis intuentes ad castitatem excitabat.”|[8360] St. Jerome declares himself of the opinion that St. Joseph preserved his virginity by the society of Mary, for the saint thus writes against the heretic Helvidius, who denied the virginity of Mary: Thou sayest that Mary did not remain a virgin; I take it upon myself to maintain more than that, even that Joseph himself preserved his virginity through Mary.[8361] A certain author says that the blessed Virgin so loved this virtue, that to preserve it, she would have been ready to renounce even the dignity of mother of God. This we may learn from her own answer to the archangel: “How shall this be done, because I know not man?”[8362] and from the words she afterwards added: Be it done to me according to thy word: “Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum;” signifying by this that she gave her consent on the condition of which the angel had assured her, namely, that she should become a mother by means of the Holy Spirit alone.

St. Ambrose says: He who has preserved chastity is an angel, he who has lost it is a devil.[8363] According to the words of our Lord: “They shall be as the angels of God in heaven.”[8364] But the unchaste become odious to God as the devils. And St. Remigius said that the greater number of adults are lost through this vice. The victory over this vice is rare, as has been said in the words of St. Augustine at the beginning of this section; but why is it rare? Because the means for conquering it are not put in use. The means are three according to Bellarmine, and the masters of the spiritual life: Fasting, avoiding dangerous occasions, and prayer: “Jejuniun, periculorum evitatio, et oratio.” By fasting is meant mortification, particularly of the eyes and of the appetite. The most holy Mary, although she was full of divine grace, was so mortified with her eyes that she kept them always cast down, as St. Epiphanius and St. John Damascene inform us, and never fixed them on any one; they say that from her childhood she was so modest that she was the wonder of all. And hence St. Luke remarks, that in going to visit St. Elizabeth: She went with haste: “Abiit cum festinatione,” that she might not be long seen in public. Philibert relates with regard to her food, that it was revealed to a hermit named Felix, that the infant Mary took milk only once a day. And St. Gregory of Tours asserts that, during her whole life, she fasted always: “Nullo tempore Maria non jejunavit;” and St. Bonaventure adds, that Mary would never have found so much grace unless she had been temperate in food, for grace and gluttony cannot subsist together.[8365] In a word, Mary practised mortification in every thing, so that of her it was said: My hands dropped with myrrh: “Manus meæ stillaverunt myrrham.”[8366]

The second means is to fly the occasions of sin. He that is aware of the snares shall be secure: “Qui autem cavet laqueos, securus erit.”[8367] Hence St. Philip Neri said, that in this warfare cowards conquer; that is, those who avoid dangerous occasions. Mary shunned as much as possible the sight of men; and therefore St. Luke says that in her visit to St. Elizabeth, she went with haste into the hill country: “Abiit in montana cum festinatione.” And a certain author remarks that the Virgin left Elizabeth before the birth of the Baptist, as we learn from the Gospel itself, in which it is said that “Mary abode with her about three months; and she returned to her own house. Now Elizabeth’s full time of being delivered was come, and she brought forth a son.”[8368] And why did she not wait till his birth? In order to avoid the conversation and visits which would follow that event. The third means is prayer. “And as I knew,” said the wise man, “that I could not otherwise be continent except God gave it. . . . I went to the Lord and besought him.”[8369] And the blessed Virgin revealed to St. Elisabeth, a Benedictine nun, that she had not acquired any virtue without effort and continual prayer.[8370] St. John Damascene says that Mary is pure and a lover of purity: “Pura est et puritatem amans,” and therefore she cannot endure the impure. But whoever has recourse to her will certainly be delivered from this vice by only pronouncing her name with confidence. And the venerable John of Avila says that many temptations against chastity have been overcome solely by devotion to the immaculate Virgin. Oh Mary, oh most pure dove, how many are in hell through the vice of impurity! Oh Lady, obtain for us that always in our temptations we may have recourse to thee, and invoke thee, saying: Mary, Mary, help us. Amen.

Section VII

OF THE POVERTY OF MARY

OUR loving Redeemer chose to be poor on this earth in order to teach us to despise the goods of this world: “Being rich,” says St. Paul, “he became poor for your sake, that through his poverty you might be rich.”[8371] For this reason Jesus Christ says to each one who wishes to be his disciple: “If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give it to the poor, and come follow me.”[8372] Behold his most perfect disciple Mary, who indeed imitated his example. Father Canisius proves that the holy Virgin could have lived in comfort on the inheritance left her by her parents, but she was content to remain poor, reserving to herself a small portion, and giving the rest in alms to the temple and to the poor. Many are of opinion that Mary also made a vow of poverty,[8373] and it is known that she herself said to St. Bridget: “From the beginning I vowed in my heart never to possess any thing in the world.”[8374] The gifts received from the holy Magi were certainly not of small value, but St. Bernard attests that she distributed them all to the poor.[8375] And we learn that the divine mother immediately gave to others the presents above mentioned, from the fact that when she went to the temple she did not offer the lamb, which was the oblation made by those who were able, as we read in Leviticus: “For a son she shall bring a lamb,”[8376] . . . but she offered two turtle-doves and two young pigeons, the oblation of the poor: “And to offer a sacrifice, according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.”[8377] Mary herself said to St. Bridget: “All that I had I gave to the poor, and kept nothing for myself but poor food and clothing.”|[8378]

Through love of poverty she did not disdain to marry a poor carpenter, like St. Joseph, and afterwards, as St. Bonaventure relates, to support herself by the work of her hands, as sewing or spinning. An angel revealed to St. Bridget concerning Mary, that worldly riches were in her eyes vile as dirt: “Mundanæ divitæ velut lutum sibi vilescebat.” In a word, she always lived in poverty, and she died in poverty; for as Metaphrastes and Nicephorus relate, she left nothing behind her at her death but two poor garments to two women, who had assisted her during life.[8379]

He who loves riches, said St. Philip Neri, will never become a saint; and St. Theresa also said: It justly follows that he who goes in search of things lost is also lost. On the other hand, the same saint said, that this virtue of poverty is a good that comprises all other goods. I have said the virtue of poverty which, according to St. Bernard, does not consist alone in being poor, but in loving poverty: “Non paupertas, sed amor paupertatis virtus est.” Therefore Jesus Christ has said: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”[8380] Blessed, because they who wish for nothing but God, in God find every good, and find in poverty their paradise on earth, as St. Francis found it in saying: My God and my all: “Deus meus et omnia.” Let us, then, according to the exhortation of St. Augustine, love that only good in which is every good: “Ama unum bonum, in quo sunt omnia bona.” And let us pray our Lord with St. Ignatius: Give me only thy love together with thy grace, and I am rich enough.[8381] And when poverty afflicts us, let us console ourselves by the thought that Jesus and his mother have also been poor like us.[8382]

Ah, my most holy mother, thou hadst in truth reason to say, that in God was thy joy: “And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour,”[8383] for in this world thou didst not desire nor love any other good than God. Draw me after thee: “Trahe me post te.” Oh Lady! detach me from the world, and draw me after thee to love that one who alone merits to be loved. Amen.

Section VIII

OF THE OBEDIENCE OF MARY

IT was through the affection which Mary bore to the virtue of obedience, that when the annunciation was made to her by St. Gabriel, she did not wish to call herself by any other name than that of handmaid: Behold the handmaid of the Lord: “Ecce ancilla Domini.” Indeed, says St. Thomas of Villanova, this faithful handmaid neither in act, word, nor thought, ever disobeyed the Lord, but divested of all self-will, she always, and in all things, lived obedient to the divine will.[8384] She herself declared that God was pleased with her obedience when she said: He regarded the humility of his handmaid: “Respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ;”[8385] for this is the humility of a servant, to be always prompt to obey. St. Augustine says, that the divine mother remedied by her obedience the evil that Eve had caused by her disobedience.[8386] The obedience of Mary was far more perfect than that of all the other saints, for all men being inclined to evil through original sin, they all feel difficulty in doing right; but not so the blessed Virgin; for as St. Bernardine says: Because she was free from original sin, there was in her no hindrance in obeying God, but she was like a wheel readily moved at every divine breath;[8387] hence her only occupation on this earth, as the same saint expresses it, was to discover and do what was pleasing to God.|[8388] Of her it was said: My soul melted when he spoke: “Anima mea liquefacta est, ut dilectus meus locutus est.”[8389] Commenting on this passage, Richard says that the soul of Mary was like metal in a state of fusion, ready to take any form that was pleasing to God.[8390]

Mary proved indeed the readiness of her obedience, in the first place, when, in order to please God, she was willing even to obey the Roman emperor, and made the journey, fifty miles, to Bethlehem, in winter, being pregnant, and so poor that she was obliged to bring forth her Son in a stable. She was also ready at the notice of St. Joseph, to set out immediately on that very night upon the longer and more difficult journey into Egypt. And Silveira asks why the command to fly into Egypt, was given to St. Joseph and not to the blessed Virgin, who was to suffer the most from the journey? And he answers: Lest the Virgin should be deprived of an opportunity for performing an act of obedience for which she was most ready.[8391] But above all, she showed her heroic obedience, when, in order to obey the divine will, she offered her Son to death with so much firmness that, as St. Ildephonsus says, she would have been ready to crucify him, if executioners had been wanting.[8392] Hence the venerable Bede, commenting on those words of the Redeemer to that woman in the Gospel who exclaimed: “Blessed is the womb that bore thee:” “Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it,”[8393] says, that Mary was more happy through obedience to the divine will, than in being the mother of God himself.[8394]

For this reason it is, that those who love obedience are very pleasing to the Virgin. She appeared once to a religious, a Franciscan, named Accorso, in his cell, who being called by obedience to go and hear the confession of a sick person, went out, but when he returned he found Mary waiting for him, and she greatly praised his obedience. As, on the other hand, she greatly blamed another religious, who, when the bell had summoned him to the refectory, delayed in order to finish certain devotions.[8395] The Virgin, speaking to St. Bridget of the security found in obeying a spiritual father, said: Obedience has brought all the saints to glory: “Obedientia omnes introducit ad gloriam.”|[8396] St. Philip Neri also says, that God requires no account of things done in obedience, having himself declared: “He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.”[8397] The mother of God herself revealed to St. Bridget, that through the merit of her obedience she had obtained from the Lord that all penitent sinners who have recourse to her, should be pardoned.[8398] Ah, our queen and mother, pray Jesus for us, obtain for us through the merit of thy obedience that we may be faithful in obeying his will, and the commands of our spiritual fathers. Amen.

Section IX

OF THE PATIENCE OF MARY

SINCE this earth is a place of merit, it is justly called a valley of tears; for we are all placed here to suffer, and by patience to obtain for our souls eternal life: “In your patience you shall possess your souls,”[8399] said our Lord. God gave us the Virgin Mary as an example of all virtues, but especially as an example of patience. St. Francis of Sales, among other things, remarks, that at the nuptials of Cana Jesus Christ gave an answer to the most holy Virgin, by which he seemed to pay but little regard to her prayers: Woman, what is that to thee and to me? Quid mihi et tibi est, mulier?” precisely for this reason, that he might give us an example of the patience of his holy mother. But why seek further? The whole life of Mary was a continual exercise of patience, for, as an angel revealed to St. Bridget, the blessed Virgin lived always in the midst of sufferings.[8400] Her compassion alone for the sufferings of the Redeemer was enough to make her a martyr of patience; wherefore St. Bonaventure says: The crucified conceived the crucified: “Crucifixa crucifixum concepit.” When we spoke of her dolors, we considered all she suffered, as well in her journey and life in Egypt, as during the whole time she lived with her Son in the workshop of Nazareth. But the presence of Mary on Calvary, with her dying Jesus, is alone enough to show us how constant and sublime was her patience: There stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother: “Stabat juxta crucem Jesu mater ejus.” Then, by the merit of this her patience, as blessed Albertus Magnus remarks, she became our mother, and brought us forth to the life of grace.[8401]

If we desire then to be the children of Mary, we must seek to imitate her patience. And what, says St. Cyprian, can enrich us more with merit in this life, and glory in the other, than bearing sufferings with patience?[8402] God said by the mouth of the prophet Osee: I will hedge up thy way with thorns:

“Sepiam viam tuam spinis.”[8403] St. Gregory remarks on this passage, that the ways of the elect are hedged with thorns: “Electorum viæ spinis sepiuntur.” For as a hedge of thorns protects the vine, so God encompasses his servants with tribulation, in order that they may not become attached to the earth; therefore St. Cyprian concludes, patience delivers us from sin and from hell: “Patientia nos servat.” And it is patience that makes the saints: “Patience hath a perfect work,”[8404] bearing in peace the crosses that come to us directly from God, as sickness, poverty, &c., as well as those that come to us from men, such as persecutions, injuries, &c. St. John saw all the saints with palms, the emblem of martyrdom, in their hands. “After this I saw a great multitude . . . and palms were in their hands;”[8405] signifying by this that all men must be martyrs by the sword, or by patience. Be then joyful, exclaims St. Gregory: We can be martyrs without blood, if we preserve patience.[8406] If we suffer the afflictions of this life, as St. Bernard says, patiently and joyfully: “Patienter, et gaudenter,” oh, how much every pain endured for God will obtain for us in heaven! Hence the apostle encourages us in these words: “Our tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us . . . an eternal weight of glory.”[8407] Beautiful are the instructions of St. Theresa on this subject: “He who embraces the cross,” she says, “does not feel it.” And again: “When a person resolves to suffer, the pain is over.” And if we feel our crosses heavy, let us have recourse to Mary, who is called by the Church: the comforter of the afflicted: “Consolatrix afflictorum;” and by St. John Damascene: The remedy for all sorrows of the heart: “Omnium dolorum cordium medicamentum.” Ah, my most sweet Lady, thou, though innocent, didst suffer with so much patience, and shall I, who am deserving of hell, refuse to suffer? My mother, to-day I ask of thee the grace not to be exempt from crosses, but to support them with patience. For the love of Jesus I pray thee to obtain for me nothing less than this grace from God; through you I hope for it.

Section X

OF THE PRAYER OF MARY

No soul on this earth has ever followed so perfectly as the blessed Virgin that great lesson of our Saviour: We ought always to pray, and not to faint: "Oportet semper orare, et non deficere."[8408] From no other, says St. Bonaventure, can we better take example, and learn the necessity of persevering in prayer, than from Mary. Mary gave an example, that we ought to follow and not faint.[8409] For the blessed Albertus Magnus asserts, that after Jesus Christ, the divine mother was the most perfect in the virtue of prayer, of all who ever have lived or ever will live: "Virtus orationis in B. Virgine excellentissima fuit."[8410] First, because her prayer was continual and persevering. From the first moment in which she had life, and with life the perfect use of reason, as we have said above in the Discourse on her Nativity, she began to pray. And, moreover, that she might devote herself more to prayer, she wished, when a child of only three years, to shut herself up in the retirement of the temple; where, as she herself revealed to St. Elizabeth (virgin), among the other hours that she allotted to prayer, she was accustomed to rise at midnight and go to pray before the altar of the temple.[8411] And, in order to meditate on the sufferings of Jesus, according to Odilone, she also frequently visited the places of our Lord's nativity, passion, and burial.[8412] Moreover, her prayer, as St. Denis the Carthusian has written, was wholly recollected, free from all distractions, and every irregular inclination.[8413]

Therefore the blessed Virgin, through her love of prayer, had so great a love of solitude, that, as she said to St. Bridget, when she lived in the temple she even abstained from intercourse with her holy parents. St. Jerome, meditating on the words of Isaias—"Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel"[8414]—says, that in Hebrew the word *virgin* properly signifies a *retired virgin;* so that Mary's love of solitude was already predicted by the prophet. Richard says that the angel addressed her in the words, The Lord is with thee: “Dominus tecum,” on account of her great love of solitude.[8415] And St. Vincent Ferrer asserts that the divine mother never went from home, except to go to the temple, and then she went entirely recollected, having her eyes always cast down.[8416] When going to visit St. Elizabeth, She went with haste: “Abiit cum festinatione;” and from this St. Ambrose says virgins should learn to shun the public eye. St. Bernard teaches that Mary, through her love of prayer and solitude, was always careful to avoid conversation with men.[8417] Hence she is called by the Holy Spirit the turtle-dove: Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle-dove’s: “Pulchræ sunt genæ tuæ sicut turturis.”[8418] Which words Vergellus thus explains: The turtle-dove is a lover of solitude, and is an emblem of the unitive power of the soul.[8419] So the Virgin always lived solitary in this world, as in a desert, and therefore it was said of her: Who is this that goeth up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke? “Quæ est ista quæ ascendit per desertum, sicut virgula fumi?”[8420] On which words Rupert the Abbot says: Thus thou didst ascend by the desert, having a solitary soul: “Talis ascendisti per desertum animam habens solitariam.”

Philo said that God speaks to souls only in solitude: “Dei sermo amat deserta.” And God himself declared this by the prophet Osee, when he said: I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart: “Ducam eam in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor ejus.”|[8421] And hence St. Jerome exclaims: Oh solitude, in which God familiarly converses with his servants![8422] Yes, says St. Bernard, because the quiet and the silence that is enjoyed in solitude, force the soul to leave the earth in thought, and to meditate on the things of heaven.[8423] Oh, most holy Virgin, obtain for us a love of prayer and solitude, that detaching ourselves from the love of creatures, we may aspire only after God and heaven, where we hope one day to see thee, to praise and love thee with thy Son, Jesus, forever and ever. Amen. “Come over to me, all ye that desire me, and be filled with my fruits.”[8424] The fruits of Mary are her virtues.

None has appeared like unto thee, in all time before or after thee.[8425]
Thou alone, oh woman without equal, hast been pleasing to Christ.

Various Practices of Devotion to the Divine Mother

THE queen of heaven is so liberal, as St. Andrew of Crete says, that she makes a large return for the smallest devotions of her servants.[8426] But two conditions are necessary for this: First, that we offer her the homage of a soul pure from sin; for otherwise Mary will say to us what she said to a soldier, a man of vicious habits, who, as St. Peter Celestine relates,[8427] offered every day a devotion to the Virgin. One day when he was suffering greatly from hunger, our Lady appeared to him, and presented him some exquisite viands, but in a vase so filthy that he did not venture to taste them. “I am the mother of God,” Mary then said to him, “who has come to relieve thy hunger.” “But I cannot taste from this vase,” answered the soldier. “And do you wish,” replied Mary, “that I should accept thy devotions, offered me from a soul so polluted?” The soldier, at these words, was converted, became a hermit, lived thirty years in the desert, and at death the Virgin again appeared to him and conducted him to heaven. We have said, in the first part of this work, that morally speaking it was impossible that a servant of Mary should be lost. But this must be understood with the condition, that he lives without sin, or at least that he wishes to abandon it, for then our Lady will assist him. But if any one, on the other hand, should sin, in the hope that our Lady will save him, he would by his sin render himself unworthy and incapable of the protection of Mary. The second condition is, that he perseveres in his devotion to Mary. Perseverance alone shall merit a crown, says St. Bernard: “Perseverantia sola meretur coronam.”[8428] Thomas à Kempis, when a young man, was accustomed daily to have recourse to the Virgin with certain prayers; one day he omitted them, then he omitted them for some weeks, then he gave them up entirely. One night he saw Mary in a dream, who embraced his companions, but having come to him, said: “What do you expect, who have given up your devotions? Depart, for you are unworthy of my favors.” Terrified by these words, Thomes awoke, and resumed his accustomed prayers. Richard therefore with reason says: He who is perseveringly devoted to Mary will be blessed with the hope, that all his desires may be gratified.[8429] But as no one can be secure of this perseverance, no one can be sure of salvation before his death. It was a very remarkable document which brother John Berchmans, of the Company of Jesus, gave to his companions, when he was requested by them to leave with them in writing, what was the most pleasing devotion which they could make to our Lady, in order to obtain her protection, and he answered: Any small thing, but let it be constant: “Quidquid minimum, dum modo sit constans.” Finally, however, I add here, simply and in a few words, the different devotions we may offer to our mother, to obtain for us her favor; a thing which I consider the most useful that I have written in this little work. But I do not so much recommend to my reader to practise them all, as to practise those which he selects, with perseverance, and in fear of losing the protection of the divine mother, if he neglects to continue them. Oh, how many who are in hell would have been saved, if they had continued the devotions which they once commenced to Mary!

Devotion I

OF THE "HAIL MARY"

THIS angelical salutation is very pleasing to the most holy Virgin, for it seems to renew, as it were, the joy which she experienced, when St. Gabriel announced to her that she was made mother of God; and therefore we should often salute her with the "Hail Mary." Salute her with the angelical salutation, says Thomas à Kempis, for gladly does she hear this sound.[8430] The divine mother herself said to St. Matilda, that no one could better salute her than with the "Hail Mary." He who salutes Mary will also be saluted by her. St. Bernard heard himself once audibly saluted from a statue of the Virgin, which said to him, Hail Bernard: "Ave Bernarde."[8431] And the salutation of Mary, says St. Bonaventure, will be some grace, whereby she always responds to those who salute her.[8432] And Richard adds: If any one comes to the mother of our Lord saying, "Hail Mary," could she deny him the favor he asks?[8433] Mary herself promised St. Gertrude help in death for every "Hail Mary" she said. The blessed Alanus asserts, that as all heaven rejoices when a "Hail Mary" is said, so the devil trembles and flees: "Cœlum gaudet, Satan fugit, cum dico, Ave Maria." Which Thomas à Kempis also confirms, for a devil who once appeared to him suddenly fled at hearing the "Hail Mary."[8434]

The practise of this devotion is:—1st. To say every morning on rising, and every evening on going to bed, three "Hail Marys," prostrate, or at least kneeling, adding at each that short prayer: "By thy pure and immaculate conception, Oh, Mary! make my body pure, and my soul holy." To ask the blessing of Mary as our mother, as St. Stanislas always did, and place ourselves under the mantle of our Lady, praying her that during the following day or night she may keep us from sin. And it is a great help to this, to keep near the bed a beautiful image of the Virgin. 2d. To say the Angelus, &c., with the three "Hail Marys," as usual, in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. John XXII. was the first Pope who attached an indulgence to this devotion, on the occasion, as Father Crasset relates,[8435] when a criminal who was condemned to be burned, by invoking Mary on the Vigil of her Annunciation remained uninjured, even to his garments, in the midst of the flames. Benedict XIII. at length granted a hundred days, indulgence to those who recite it, and at the end of the month a plenary indulgence, having made their confession and received holy communion. Father Crasset also states that there have been other indulgences granted by Clement X. to those who at the end of each "Hail Mary" add: Thanks be to God and Mary: "Deo gratias et Mariæ."[8436] Formerly, at the sound of the bell, every one knelt to say the Angelus; now some are ashamed to do so; but St. Charles Borromeo was not ashamed to descend from his carriage or horse, to recite it in the street, and sometimes in the mud. It is related that a certain indolent religious, who would not kneel at the signal for the "Hail Mary," saw the belfry bow three times, and a voice spoke from it which said: Behold, thou wilt not do what even senseless creatures do. Let it be remembered, that as Benedict XIV. directed, in the Paschal season, instead of the Angelus the "Regina Cœli" is said. And from Vespers on Saturday, through the whole of Sunday, the Angelus Domini is said standing. 3d. To salute the mother of God with a "Hail Mary," every time the clock strikes. Alphonsus Rodriguez saluted Mary every hour, and in the night when the hour came, the angels awoke him, that he might not omit his devotion. 4th. On quitting or entering the house, to salute the Virgin with a "Hail Mary," that at home and abroad she may protect us from sin, and to kiss her feet as the Carthusian Fathers are accustomed to do. 5th. To pay reverence with a "Hail Mary" to every image of Mary which we meet, and let every one who can do so, place some beautiful image of the Virgin in a niche in the walls of his house, that it may be honored by those who are passing by. In Naples, and still more in Rome, there are very beautiful images of our Lady, by the wayside, placed there by her devout servants. 6th. The holy Church directs that the angelical salutation be prefixed to all the canonical hours of the office, and that the office should terminate with it; hence it is well, at the beginning and end of every action, always to say a "Hail Mary;" I say of every action, whether it be spiritual, as prayer, confession, communion, spiritual reading, hearing a sermon, &c., or temporal, as study, giving counsel, labor, going to table, to bed, &c. Happy are those actions that are enclosed between two “Hail Marys!” And thus also on awaking in the morning, on closing the eyes to sleep, in every temptation and peril, in every burst of anger, &., say always a “Hail Mary.” My dear reader, practise this, and you will see the advantage to be drawn from it; remembering that for every “Hail Mary” there are twenty days’ indulgence.[8437] Moreover, Father Auriemma relates,[8438] that the blessed Virgin promised St. Matilda a good death, if she recited every day three “Hail Marys” in honor of her power, wisdom, and goodness. And she also said to the blessed Jane of France, that the “Hail Mary” was very pleasing to her, especially when said ten times in honor of her ten virtues.[8439] Many indulgences are also attached to these ten “Hail Marys.”

Devotion II

OF NOVENAS

THE servants of Mary are very attentive and fervent in celebrating the Novenas of her Feasts; and during these the holy Virgin, full of love, dispenses to them innumerable and special blessings. One day St. Gertrude saw under the mantle of Mary innumerable souls, whom our Lady was looking upon with great affection, and she understood them to be those who, on preceding days, had prepared themselves, by devout exercises, for the feast of the Assumption. The devotions to be used for the Novenas are the following: 1st. Mental prayer, morning and evening, with a visit to the most holy Sacrament, with the addition of an “Our Father,” “Hail Mary,” and “Glory be to the Father, &c.,” repeated nine times. 2d. Three visits to some image of Mary, thanking the Lord for the graces granted to her, and asking of the Virgin every time some special favor; and at one of these visits the prayer which is placed at the end of each of her feasts should be read. 3d. Make many acts of love, at least one hundred, or fifty, to Mary and to Jesus, for we can do nothing more pleasing to her, as she said to St. Bridget, than to love her Son: If you wish to become dear to me, love my Son Jesus: “Si te mihi vis devincire, ama filium meum Jesum.” 4th. Read every day of the Novena, for a quarter of an hour, some book which treats of her glories. 5th. Make some external mortification of hair-cloth, discipline, &c., with fasting, or some abstinence at table from fruits or other agreeable food, at least in part; chewing also some bitter herb: and on the vigil of the feast fast on bread and water. But all this must be done always with the permission of a spiritual Father. But better than all others are the practices in these Novenas of internal mortifications, as abstaining from the indulgence of curiosity, either through the eye or the ear; remaining retired and silent; obeying, not answering with impatience; bearing contradictions, and other things of the sort, which may be used with less danger of vainglory and greater merit; and for these, too, the permission of a director is not needed. The most useful exercise is to propose, at the beginning, the amending of some fault into which we are most liable to fall. And to this end it is well, at each of the visits above named, to ask pardon for some past sin, renew the intention of avoiding it in future, and implore the help of Mary, in keeping this resolution. The honor most dear to the Virgin is the imitation of her virtues; wherefore it is well in every Novena to propose to one's self some special virtue of Mary, particularly adapted to the mystery; as for example, on the feast of the Conception, purity of intention; of her Nativity, the renewing of the spirit and the awakening from tepidity; of her Presentation, detachment from something to which we are most attached; of the Annunciation, humility in bearing contempt, &c.; of the Visitation, charity towards the neighbor, alms-giving, &c., or at least, the praying for sinners; of the Purification, obedience to superiors; and finally, of the Assumption, the practice of detachment, and doing all things as a preparation for death, living as if every day were to be the last. In this way the Novena will prove of great service. 6th. Besides the communion on the day of the feast, it is well to ask it more frequently of the spiritual father on the days of the Novena. Father Segneri said that we cannot honor Mary better than with Jesus. For she herself, as Father Crasset relates,[8440] revealed to a holy soul that nothing dearer could be offered to her than the holy communion, for there Jesus Christ gathers in the soul the fruit of his passion. Hence it appears that the Virgin desires nothing from her servants more than the holy communion, saying: "Come, eat the bread and drink the wine that I have prepared for you."[8441] Finally, on the day of the feast after communion we should offer ourselves for the service of this divine mother by asking of her the grace of the virtue proposed in the Novena, or some other special favor. And it is well every year to set apart among others some feasts of the Virgin, to which we have the greatest devotion and tenderness, and make a particular preparation for this by dedicating ourselves anew, and in a more especial manner, to her service; choosing her for our Lady, advocate, and mother.[8442] Then we should ask pardon for our negligence in her service during the past year, promising her greater fidelity for the year that is to come. In a word, let us pray her to accept us as her servants, and obtain for us a holy death.

Devotion III

OF THE ROSARY AND OFFICE

THE devotion of the most holy Rosary is known to have been revealed to St. Dominic by the divine mother herself, when the saint, being in affliction, and bewailing to his Lady the conduct of the Albigensian heretics, who at that time were doing great injury to the Church, the Virgin said to her: “This earth will always be barren, until the rain falls on it.” St. Dominic was then given to understand that this rain was to be the devotion of the Rosary, and that he was to publish it. And indeed the saint preached it everywhere, and this devotion was embraced by all Catholics, so that, at the present day, there is no devotion more practised by the faithful of every condition, than that of the most holy Rosary. What have not modern heretics, as Calvin, Bucer, and others said, to bring into contempt the use of the Rosary? But the great good is well known, which this noble devotion has brought to the world. How many by its means have been freed from sin! How many led to a holy life! How many have had a good death and are now saved! Let us read the various books which treat of it; it is enough to know that this devotion has been approved by the holy Church, and the sovereign Pontiffs have attached indulgences to it. To him who recites the third part of the Rosary, the indulgence of seventy thousand years is granted, and to him who recites it entire, eighty thousand, and yet more to him who recites it in the chapel of the Rosary. Benedict XIII. at length annexed to the Rosary (for him at least who recites the third part of the Rosary which has been blessed by the Dominican Fathers) all the indulgences which are attached to the Rosaries of St. Bridget, namely, one hundred days for every “Hail Mary,” and “Our Father” that is repeated. And, moreover, those who recite the Rosary gain the plenary indulgence on all the principal feasts of Mary and of the holy Church, and also of the Dominican Saints, if they visit their churches after confession and communion. But let it be remarked that this is understood of those whose names are inscribed in the book of the Rosary, to whom a plenary indulgence is also granted on the day when their names are inscribed, provided they have made their confession, and communion, and one hundred years if they wear the Rosary; and to those who make mental prayer once a day, seven years each time, and a plenary indulgence at the end of the month.

In order to gain the indulgences attached to the recitation of the Rosary, it is necessary to meditate on the mysteries which are to be found recorded in many books; but it is sufficient for those who do not know them to contemplate any one of the mysteries of the passion of Jesus Christ, as the scourging, death, &c. The Rosary must be recited with devotion; and here call to mind what the holy Virgin said to St. Eulalia, namely, that she was better pleased with five decades said with pauses and devotion, than with fifteen in haste and with less devotion. On this account it is well to say the Rosary kneeling, and before some image of Mary, and at the beginning of every decade to make an act of love to Jesus and Mary, by asking some favor. And, moreover, let it be remarked that it is more efficacious to say the Rosary in company with others, than to say it alone.

Urban II. attached many indulgences to the recitation of the little office of our Lady, which is said to have been composed by St. Peter Damian; and the holy Virgin has often made known how pleasing to her was this devotion, as we learn from Father Auriemma.[8443] The Litanies are also very pleasing to her, and an indulgence of two hundred days is granted every time they are recited; also the hymn, “Hail, star of the sea,” “Ave Maris stella,” which the divine mother ordered St. Bridget to repeat every day; and more than all, the “Magnificat,” for with this we praise her in the very words with which she praised God.

Devotion IV

OF FASTING

MANY servants of Mary, on Saturdays and the vigils of her feast, are accustomed to honor her by fasting on bread and water. It is well known that Saturday is a day dedicated by the holy Church to the honor of the Virgin, because on this day, says St. Bernard, she remained constant in the faith after the death of her Son.[8444] For this reason the servants of Mary never fail on this day to offer her some special homage; and particularly the fast on bread and water, as St. Charles Borromeo, Cardinal Toledo, and so many others practised it. Rittard, Bishop of Bamberg, and Father Joseph Arriaga, of the Society of Jesus, did not even taste food on Saturday. The great graces which the mother of God afterwards bestowed upon those who practised this devotion, may be read in the writings of Father Auriemma. It is sufficient for us to mention the compassion which she showed to that bandit chief, who on account of this devotion, was permitted to remain alive, although his head had been cut off, and although he was under the displeasure of God, and was enabled to make his confession before dying. He afterwards declared that the holy virgin, for this fasting which he had offered her, had preserved him in life, and he then suddenly expired.[8445] It would not then be a very extraordinary thing, if any one, especially devoted to Mary, and particularly if he had already deserved hell, should offer to her this fast on Saturday. He who practises this devotion, I may say, will hardly be condemned; not that our Lady will deliver him by a miracle if he dies in mortal sin, as happened to the bandit; such prodigies of divine mercy seldom take place, and it would be madness to expect eternal salvation by them. But I do say that the divine mother will readily obtain perseverance in divine grace and a good death for him who will practise this devotion. All the brothers of our little congregation who can do so, fast on bread and water on Saturday, in honor of Mary. I say those who can do so, meaning, that if any one is prevented from doing so on account of ill health, at least on Saturday, he may content himself with one dish, make a common fast, or at least abstain from fruits or other agreeable food. It is necessary on Saturday to offer special devotions to our Lady, to receive communion, or, at least, hear mass, visit some image of the Virgin, wear hair-cloth, and the like. And at least on the vigils of the seven feasts of Mary, let her servants endeavor to offer this fasting on bread, or in any other manner they are able.

Devotion V

OF VISITING THE IMAGES OF MARY

FATHER SEGNERI says, that the devil could in no better way console himself for the losses he has sustained by the overthrow of idolatry, than by attacking sacred images through the heretics. But the holy Church has defended them even by the blood of the martyrs; and the divine mother has also made manifest by miracles, how much she is pleased by devotion and visits to her images. The hand of St. John of Damascus was cut off because he defended with his pen the images of Mary; but our Lady restored it to him in a miraculous manner. Father Spinelli relates, that in Constantinople, every Friday after vespers, a veil which hung before the image of Mary was withdrawn of itself, and after vespers on Saturday it closed of itself. The veil before an image of the Virgin was seen to withdraw itself, in a similar way, by St. John of God, whereupon the sacristan, believing the saint to be a robber, struck him with his foot, but the foot was withered. All the servants of Mary, therefore, are accustomed often to visit her images with great devotion, and also the churches dedicated to her honor. There are, indeed, as John of Damascus teaches, the cities of refuge, where we find safety from temptations, and from the punishments merited by the sins we have committed. St. Henry, Emperor, when he entered a city, always visited, before any thing else, some church of our Lady. Father Thomas Sanchez never returned home until he had visited some church of Mary. Let us not be weary then of visiting our queen every day in some church or chapel, or in our own house, where it would be well for that purpose to have in some retired place a little oratory, with her image adorned with drapery, flowers, tapers, or lamps, and before it also the litanies, the rosary, &c., may be said. For this purpose I have published a little book, which has already gone through eight editions, of Visits to the most Holy Sacrament, as well as to the Virgin, for every day in the month. Some devout servant of Mary might cause one of her feasts to be celebrated in some church or chapel, and preceding it by a Novena, with the exposition of the Sacrament, and also with sermons.

But here it is well to notice the fact which Father Spinelli relates in the “Miracles of the Madonna.”[8446] In the year 1611, in the celebraten sanctuary of Mary in Montevergine, it happened that on the vigil of Pentecost the people who thronged there profaned that feast with balls, excesses, and immodest conduct, when a fire was suddenly discovered bursting forth from the house of entertainment where they were feasting, so that in less than an hour and a half it was consumed, and more than one thousand five hundred persons were killed.

Five persons who remained alive affirmed upon oath, that they had seen the mother of God herself, who with two lighted torches set fire to the inn. After this I entreat the servants of Mary to abstain as far as they can, and to induce others to abstain from going to such sanctuaries of our Lady in times of feasting, for hell then received much more fruit from it, than the divine mother received honor. Let him who practises this devotion go and visit them at a time when they are not thronged.

Devotion VI

OF THE SCAPULAR

As men take pride in having others wear their livery, so the most holy Mary is pleased when her servants wear her scapular, as a mark that they have dedicated themselves to her service, and are of the number of the family of the mother of God. Modern heretics, of course, ridicule this devotion, but the holy Church has approved it by many bulls and indulgences. And Father Crasset relates,[8447] and also Father Lezzana,[8448] when speaking of the scapular of Mt. Carmel, that about the year 1251, the holy Virgin appeared to the blessed Simon Stock, an Englishman, and giving him her scapular, said to him that those who wore it should be saved from eternal damnation, in these words: “Receive, oh my very beloved son, this scapular of thy order, the badge of my confraternity, a privilege granted to thee and to all other carmelites; and any one who wears this at death shall be delivered from eternal flames.[8449] And Father Crasset still further relates, that Mary appeared at another time to Pope John XXII., and directed him to declare to those who wore the above-mentioned scapular, that they should be released from purgatory on the Saturday after their death; this the same pontiff announced in his bull, which was afterwards confirmed by Alexander V., Clement VII., and others, as the above-named Father Crasset relates in the passage above cited. And as we have remarked in the first part,[8450] Paul V. mentions the same, and appears to explain the bulls of the preceding pontiffs, prescribing in his bull the conditions to be observed in order to gain the indulgences annexed, namely, the observance of chastity according to the state of life, the recitation of the little office of the Virgin, and for him who cannot recite that, the observance, at least, of the feasts of the Church and abstinence from meat on Wednesday. Thus the indulgences that are attached to this scapular of our Lady of Mt. Carmel, as well as to the others of the dolors of Mary, of Mary of Mercy, and particularly to that of the

Conception, are innumerable, daily, and plenary, in life and at the article of death. For myself, I have taken all the above-mentioned scapulars. And let it be particularly made known that, besides many particular indulgences, there are annexed to the scapular of the Immaculate Conception, which is blessed by the Theatine Fathers, all the indulgences which are granted to any religious order, pious place, or person. And particularly by reciting “Our Father,” “Hail Mary,” and “Glory be to the Father,” six times, in honor of the most holy Trinity, and of the immaculate Mary, are gained each time all the indulgences of Rome, Portiuncula, Jerusalem, Galicia, which reach the number of four hundred and thirty-three plenary indulgences, besides the temporal, which are innumerable. All this is transcribed from a sheet printed by the same Theatine Fathers.

Devotion VII

OF ENTERING INTO THE CONFRATERNITIES OF MARY

SOME persons disapprove of confraternities, saying that they give rise to contention, and that many persons join them for human ends. But as the Church and the sacraments are not condemned because there are many who abuse them, neither should we condemn the confraternities. The sovereign pontiffs, instead of condemning them, have approved and highly commended them, and enriched them with indulgences. St. Francis of Sales earnestly exhorts laymen to enter into the confraternities. What did not St. Charles Borromeo do to establish and multiply these sodalities? And in his synods he distinctly intimates to confessors that they should endeavor to induce their penitents to join them.[8451] And with reason, for these confraternities, especially those of our Lady, are like so many arks of Noe, in which the poor people of the world may find refuge from the deluge of temptations and sins which inundate them in it. We will learn in the course of our missions the utility of these confraternities. Speaking exactly, there are found more sins in a man who does not belong to the confraternities than in twenty who frequent them. The confraternity may be said to be the tower of David: "The tower of David, a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the armor of valiant men."[8452] And this is the cause of the good obtained from the confraternities, namely, that their members acquire in them many defences against hell; and they make use in them of many means to preserve themselves in divine grace which it is very difficult for persons in the world, who are not in confraternities, to practise.

In the first place, one of the means of salvation is meditating on eternal truths: "Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin."[8453] And so many are lost because they do not think of it: "With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart."[8454] But those who belong to the confraternity are led to think by the many meditations, readings, and sermons that are made there. My sheep hear my voice: “Oves meæ vocem meam audiunt.”[8455] Secondly, In order to be saved it is necessary to commend one’s self to God: Ask, and you shall receive: “Petite, et accipietis.”|[8456] And the brothers of the confraternities do this continually; and God hears them more graciously, because he has himself said, that he will willingly grant great graces to prayers made in common: “If two of you shall agree upon earth concerning any thing, whatsoever they shall ask, it shall he done for them by my Father who is in heaven.”[8457] Concerning which St. Ambrose says: Many who are small, if they unite together become great; and the prayers of many cannot but be heard.[8458] In the third place, in the confraternity the sacraments are more frequently approached, on account of the rules, as well as on account of the example of other members. And by this means perseverance in divine grace is more easily obtained; the holy Council of Trent having declared the communion to be: “An antidote by which we are freed from daily sins, and are preserved from mortal sins.”[8459] Fourthly, Besides the sacraments in the sodalities, there are practised many exercises of mortification, humility, and charity towards infirm and poor members; and it would be well if in every confraternity were introduced the holy custom of assisting the infirm poor of the country. It would be a still greater advantage if there could be introduced into them, in honor of the divine mother, the *secret sodality* of more fervent members. I will here enumerate the exercises that are usually practised in these. 1. Half an hour of reading. 2. Vespers and complin of the Holy Spirit are said. 3. The litanies of the Virgin are repeated, and then some brothers who are designated, practise mortifications by bearing the cross upon their shoulders, or others of a similar kind. 4. For one quarter of an hour a meditation is made on the passion of Jesus Christ. 5. Each one accuses himself of any violation against the rules of which he has been guilty, and receives penance for it from the father of the congregation. 6. The little flowers of mortification made during the past week are read by one of the brothers who is selected, and then the Novenas to be said are announced, &c. Finally, the discipline is made for the space of a Miserere and a Salve, and every one kisses the feet of the crucifix which is at the foot of the altar. The rules, then, would be for each brother: 1. To make a meditation every day. 2. A visit to the most holy Sacrament and to the blessed Virgin. 3. In the evening an examination of conscience. 4. Spiritual reading. 5. To avoid games and the conversation of the world. 6. To frequent the communion and practise some mortification of the chain, discipline, &c. 7. To recommend every day to God the souls in purgatory, and sinners. 8. If any brother is sick, to visit him. But let us return to our subject. In the fifth place: It has already been said how much more sure is our salvation if we serve the mother of God; and do not the brothers serve her in the congregation? How much do they praise her there! How many prayers do they offer up to her! There they consecrate themselves from the beginning to her service, choosing her, in an especial manner, for their Lady and mother; and they are inscribed in the book of the children of Mary; hence as they are distinguished servants and children of the Virgin, she therefore treats them with distinction, and protects them in life and in death. Thus a brother of the confraternity may say that, with the confraternity, he has received every blessing: Now all good things come to me together with her: “Venerunt mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa.”[8460]

Every brother should pay particular attention to two things. First, as to the end; that is, to enter the confraternity for no other end but to serve God and his holy Mother, and save his own soul. 2. Not to leave the congregation on the appointed days, for affairs of the world, since there the most important business in the world is to be transacted, namely, eternal salvation. Endeavor also to draw as many as you can to the confraternity, and especially to induce those brothers who have left it to return to it again. Oh, what terrible punishments has our Lord caused those to suffer who have abandoned the confraternity of our Lady! In Naples a certain brother left the congregation, and being exhorted to return, he said: I will return when my legs are broken and my head cut off. And he was a prophet: for very soon after his legs were broken and his head cut off by some of his enemies.[8461] On the other hand, the members who persevere are favored by Mary with spiritual and temporal good: All her domestics are clothed with double garments: “Omnes domestici ejus vestiti sunt duplicibus.”[8462] We may read in Father Auriemma[8463] the special graces granted by Mary to the brothers of the confraternity in life and in death, but especially in death. Father Crasset relates[8464] that in 1586 there was a youth who, being near death, fell asleep; but afterwards awakening, he said to his confessor: “Oh Father, I have been in great danger of hell, but my Lady has rescued me. The devils have presented my sins before the tribunal of the Lord, and already they were dragging me to hell, but the holy Virgin came and said to them: ‘Where are you taking this youth? What have you to do with one of my servants who has so long served me in the congregation?’ The devils fled, and thus I have been saved from their hands.” The same author relates soon after that another brother of the congregation, also at the point of death, had a great conflict with hell; but he conquered, and full of joy, exclaimed: “Oh, what blessings come from serving the blessed mother well in her confraternity!” And thus entirely consoled, he died. He afterwards adds that the Duke of Popoli being on his death-bed, said to his son; “My son, know that the little good I have done in life I owe to the congregation; and therefore I have no greater good to leave thee than the confraternity of Mary. I am more proud of having been a brother of the congregation than the Duke of Popoli.”

Devotion VIII

OF ALMS IN HONOR OF MARY

THE servants of Mary are accustomed, especially on Saturday, to give alms in honor of the divine mother. That holy shoemaker called St. Deusdedit (God gave), as St. Gregory relates in his Dialogues, dispensed to the poor on Saturday all that he earned during the week. And another holy soul saw in a vision a sumptuous palace which God was preparing in heaven for this servant of Mary, in the building of which nothing was done except on Saturday. St. Gerard never refused anything that was asked him in the name of Mary. Father Martin Guttierez, of the Society of Jesus, did the same, and he confessed that he had never asked a favor from Mary that he had not received it. And this servant of hers having been slain by the Huguenots, the divine mother appeared to his companions, accompanied by some virgins, whom she directed to wrap the body in a sheet and carry it away.[8465] St. Eberard of Salisbury practised the same devotion, and on this account a holy monk saw him, in the form of a child, in the arms of Mary, who said: "This is my Son Eberard, who never has refused me any thing."[8466] Alexander de Hales practised the same who, having been requested by a lay-brother of St. Francis, in the name of Mary, to become a Franciscan, left the world and entered into the order.[8467] Let not the servants of the Virgin then be weary of giving daily some little alms in her honor, and increase it every Saturday. And if they can do nothing else, at least for love of Mary, perform some other act of charity, as visiting the sick, praying for sinners and for the souls in purgatory, &c. Works of mercy are very pleasing to this mother of mercy.

Devotion IX

OF FREQUENT RECOURSE TO MARY

OF all devotions, none is so pleasing to our mother, as recurring often to her intercession, by asking help of her in all special necessities, as in taking or giving counsel, in dangers, afflictions, and temptations, particularly in temptations against purity. The divine mother will certainly deliver us if we have recourse to her with the Antiphon: We fly to thy patronage: “Sub tuum præsidium,” etc, or with a “Hail Mary,” or only invoking the most holy name of Mary, which has particular power against demons. The blessed St. Francis, in a temptation against purity, had recourse to Mary, and she immediately appeared to him, and placing her hand upon his breast, delivered him. It is useful to kiss or press the rosary, or the scapular, or even to look on some image of the Virgin. And be it known that Benedict XIII. granted fifty days’ indulgence to those who pronounce the name of Jesus and Mary.

TENTH AND LAST DEVOTION

I UNITE in this various practices of devotion in honor of Mary. 1. To celebrate, or cause to be celebrated, or at least to hear Mass in honor of the holy Virgin. It is true that the holy sacrifice of the Mass can be offered only to God, to whom it is offered principally in acknowledgment of his supreme dominion; but as the sacred Council of Trent declares,[8468] this does not prevent it from being offered to God in gratitude for the graces bestowed on the saints and his most holy mother, and in commemoration of them, that they may deign to intercede for us. And therefore it is said in the Mass: "That it may avail to their honor, but to our salvation."[8469] This offering of the Mass, as also the repeating three "Our Fathers," "Hail Marys," and "Glories" to the most holy Trinity, in gratitude for the graces granted to Mary, she herself revealed to a soul, were very pleasing to her; for the Virgin not being able fully to thank the Lord for all the favors bestowed on her, is pleased when her children help her to thank God. 2d. To reverence the saints who are most closely united to Mary, as St. Joseph, St. Joachim, and St. Ann. The Virgin herself recommended to a nobleman the devotion to St. Ann her mother.[8470] And we should also honor the saints who had the most special devotion to the divine mother, as St. John the Evangelist, St. John the Baptist, St. Bernard, St. John of Damascus, the defender of her images, St. Ildephonsus, the defender of her virginity, &c. 3d. To read every day some book which treats of the glories of Mary. To preach, or at least recommend to all, particularly to one's relatives, devotion to the divine mother. The Virgin one day said to St. Bridget: "Make thy children my children." To pray daily for the living and dead who were most devoted to Mary.

Let us here enumerate many other indulgences granted by the Pontiffs to those who, in various ways, honor this queen of heaven: 1st. To those who say: "Blessed be the holy and immaculate conception of the blessed Virgin Mary," an indulgence of one hundred years is granted; and when after the word “immaculate,” the word “most pure” is added, according to Father Crasset, other indulgences are granted, applicable to the souls in purgatory. 2d. For the “Salve Regina,” forty days. 3d. Litanies, two hundred days. 4th. To those who bow the head at the names of Jesus and of Mary, twenty days. 5th. To those who repeat five “Our Fathers” and “Hail Marys” in honor of the passion of Jesus and the dolors of Mary, ten thousand years. And for the convenience of devout souls, I will here mention other indulgences, attached by the Sovereign Pontiffs to other devotions: 1st. To him who hears Mass, three thousand eight hundred years. 2d. Benedict XIV. granted seven years’ indulgence to those who make the Christian acts, with the intention of receiving in life and in death the holy sacraments; and if they are continued for a month, plenary indulgence applicable to the souls in purgatory, or to themselves at the article of death. 3d. To those who recite fifteen “Our Fathers” and “Hail Marys,” for sinners, remission of the third part of their sins. 4th. Pope Benedict XIV. has granted more indulgences to those who make mental prayer for half an hour every day, and plenary once a month, after confession and communion. 5th. To those who recite the prayer; Soul of Christ, “Anima Christi,” etc., three hundred days. 6. Those who accompany the viaticum, obtain five years’ indulgence, and with lights seven years; and those who cannot do this, if they accompany it reciting an “Our Father” and “Hail Mary,” one hundred days. 7th. Those who kneel before the most holy Sacrament, gain two hundred days. 8th. Those who kiss the cross, one year and forty days. Those who bow the head at the “Glory be to the Father,” thirty days. 9th. To priests who before Mass recite: I wish to celebrate Mass, &., “Ego volo celebrare missam,” etc., fifty days are granted. 10th. To those who kiss the regular scapular, five years. Other indulgences may be found in the works of Father Viva.[8471] Let every one endeavor, when seeking the above-named indulgences, to make an act of contrition, that he may be in a disposition to gain them.

I omit other devotions, which are to be found in other books, as the seven joys, the twelve privileges of Mary, and the like, and let us terminate this work with the beautiful words of St. Bernardine:[8472] Oh woman, blessed among all women, thou art the honor of the human race, the salvation of our people. Thou hast a merit that has no limits, and an entire power over all creatures. Thou art the mother of God, the mistress of the world, the queen of heaven. Thou art the dispenser of all graces, the glory of the holy Church. Thou art the example of the just, the consolation of the saints, and the source of our salvation. Thou art the joy of paradise, the gate of heaven, the glory of God. Behold, we have published thy praises. We supplicate thee then, oh mother of mercy, to strengthen our weakness, to pardon our boldness, to accept our service, to bless our labors, and impress thy love upon the hearts of all, that after having honored and loved thy Son on earth, we may praise and bless him eternally in heaven. Amen.

And with this, my dear reader and brother, lover of our mother Mary, I leave you, saying to you, continue joyfully to honor and love this good Lady; endeavor also to promote the love of her wherever you can, and do not doubt, but securely trust that if you persevere in true devotion to Mary, even until death, your salvation will be certain. I finish, not because I have nothing more to say of the glories of this great queen, but that I may not weary you. The little that I have written may indeed be enough to charm you with this great treasure of devotion to the mother of God, with which she will correspond with her powerful patronage. Accept, then, the desire I have had by this my work, to see you safe and holy, to see you become a loving and ardently devoted child of this most amiable queen. And if you know that this book of mine has aided you somewhat, I pray you of your charity recommend me to Mary and ask of her the grace that I ask for you, namely, that we may both meet in paradise at her feet, together with all her other dear children.

And last of all, I turn to thee, oh mother of my Lord, and my mother Mary. I pray thee to accept these my poor labors, and the desire I have had to see thee praised and loved by all. Thou knowest how much I have desired to complete this my little work on thy glories, before my life, which is now drawing to a close, should end. I now say that I die content, leaving on the earth this book of mine, which will continue to praise and to preach thee, as I have endeavored always to do in these years since my conversion, which through thee I have obtained from God. Oh immaculate Mary, I recommend to thee all those who love thee, and especially those who will read this my book; and most especially those who will exercise the charity of recommending me to thee; oh Lady, give them perseverance, make them all saints, and thus bring us all to praise thee together in heaven. Oh, my most sweet mother, it is true that I am a poor sinner, but I glory in loving thee, and I hope great things from thee, among others, that I may die loving thee. I hope in the sufferings of my death, when the devil will place my sins before me, that first the passion of Jesus, and next, thy intercession, may give me comfort to quit this miserable life in the grace of God, to come to love him and thank thee, oh my mother, through all eternity. Amen. Thus I hope, thus may it be.

Oh Lady, say for us to thy Son: “They have no wine.” How bright and clear is the intoxicating cup of this wine! The love of God inebriates us even to contempt of the world; it warms and strengthens, renders us insensible to temporal things, and inclined to heavenly things.[8473]

Thou art a fruitful field, full of virtues, full of graces. Thou didst come forth as a bright and ruddy dawn; for original sin being destroyed in the womb of thy mother, thou wast born bright in the knowledge of truth, and ruddy with the love of virtue; no enemy has power against thee, for a thousand bucklers hang upon thee, all the armor of the valiant men; for there is no virtue which does not shine in thee, and thou in thyself dost possess all that belongs to every saint.[8474]

Oh our Lady, our mediatrix, our advocate, commend us to thy Son. Oh blessed one, obtain by the grace which thou didst merit, that he who, through thy means has deigned to become a partaker of our infirmity and misery, thou also interceding, may make us partakers of his blessedness and glory.[8475]

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

Various Additional Examples Appertaining to the Most Holy Mary

MEDITATIONS FOR VARIOUS FESTIVALS, AND DIFFERENT DEVOTIONS IN HER HONOR

Some persons, boasting of being free from prejudices, take great credit to themselves for believing no miracles but those recorded in the holy Scriptures, esteeming all others as tales and fables for foolish women. But it will be well to repeat here a just remark of the learned and pious Father John Crasset,[8476] who says that the bad are as ready to deride miracles as the good are to believe them; adding, that as it is a weakness to give credit to all things, so, on the other hand, to reject miracles which come to us attested by grave and pious men, either savors of infidelity, which supposes them impossible to God, or of presumption, which refuses belief to such a class of authors. We give credit to a Tacitus and a Suetonius, and can we deny it without presumption to Christian authors of learning and probity? There is less risk, says Father Canisius, in believing and receiving what is related with some probability by honest persons, and not rejected by the learned, and which serves for the edification of our neighbor, than in rejecting it with a disdainful and presumptuous spirit.[8477]

1ST EXAMPLE.—A certain man in Germany had committed a great sin, and was ashamed to confess it, yet on the other hand he could not endure the remorse which he felt, and went to cast himself into the river; but just as he was on the point of doing so, he stopped, and bursting into tears, prayed God to pardon him without confession. One night in his sleep he felt some one waking him, and heard a voice saying: Go and make your confession. He went to the church, but yet did not make his confession. He heard the same voice a second night; again he went to the church, but after he had entered it, said that he would rather die than confess that sin. He was about to return home, when he thought he would go and recommend himself to the most holy Mary, before her image which was in the church. He had hardly kneeled before it, when he felt himself entirely changed. He immediately arose, called for a confessor, and weeping bitterly, through grace received from the Virgin, made a sincere confession; and he afterwards said that he felt greater satisfaction than if he had gained all the gold in the world.[8478]

2.—A young nobleman was reading one day, while at sea, an obscene book, in which he took great pleasure. A religious said to him: “Now come, would you give something to our Lady?” “Yes,” he answered; and the other said, “I wish that, for love of the holy Virgin, you would tear that book in pieces and cast it into the sea.” “Here it is, Father,” said the young man. “No,” said the religious, “I wish that you yourself would make this offering to Mary.” He did so, and when he returned to Genoa, his native place, the mother of God so inflamed his heart with the love of God that he became a religious.[8479]

3.—A hermit of Mount Olivet had in his cell a holy image of Mary, and frequently offered up prayers before it. The devil could not endure such devotion to the holy Virgin, and tormented him continually with temptations against purity; and the poor old hermit finding himself still pursued by them, notwithstanding all his prayers and mortifications, said one day to the enemy: “What have I done to you, that you will not leave me in peace?” And the demon appeared to him and answered: “You torment me more than I torment you;” and then he added: “Now come, and swear secrecy to me, and I will tell you what you must cease to do, if you wish me not to molest you any more.” The hermit took the oath, and then the devil said to him: “I wish you never again to approach that image that you have in your cell.” The hermit was greatly perplexed, and went to take counsel of the Abbot Theodore, who told him that he was not bound by his oath, and that he must not cease to recommend himself to Mary before that image, as he had done before. The hermit obeyed, and the devil was put to shame and conquered.[8480]

4.—A woman who had been guilty of a criminal connection with two young men, one of whom had killed the other, came one day in great terror to Father Onefrio d’Anna, a pious missionary in the kingdom of Naples, to make her confession. She told the Father that in the same hour in which that wretched youth had died, he appeared to her, clothed in black, loaded with chains, and cast fire on every side. He had a sword in his hand, and raised it to cut her throat. In terror she exclaimed: “What have I done to you, that you wish to kill me?” And in a rage he answered: “Wretch, do you ask what you have done to me? You have caused me to lose God.” Then she invoked the blessed Virgin; and that spectre, on hearing the most holy name of Mary pronounced, disappeared and was seen no more.[8481]

5.—When St. Dominic was preaching at Carcassone, in France, an Albigensian heretic, who was possessed by demons, was brought to him, because he had publicly spoken against the devotion of the most holy Rosary. The saint then ordered the demons, in the name of God, to declare whether those things which he had said concerning the most holy Rosary were true; and howling with rage they said: “Hear, oh Christians, all that this our enemy has said of Mary and of the most holy Rosary is entirely true.” They added, moreover, that they had no power against the servants of Mary; and that many who at death invoked Mary were saved, contrary to their deserts. And finally they said: “We are constrained to declare, that no one is lost who perseveres in devotion to Mary, and in the devotion of the most holy Rosary, for Mary obtains for sinners a true repentance before death. St. Dominic made the people immediately repeat the Rosary; and, oh miracle! at every “Hail Mary,” many devils went out from that wretched man, in the shape of burning coals, so that when the Rosary was finished, he was entirely freed from them, and many heretics became converted.[8482]

6.—The daughter of a certain prince had entered a monastery, where the discipline was so relaxed, that, although she was a young person of good dispositions, she advanced but little in virtue. By the advice of a good confessor, she began to say the Rosary with the mysteries, and became so changed that she was an example to all. The other religious, taking offence at her for withdrawing from them, attacked her on all sides, to induce her to abandon her newly-begun way of life. One day while she was repeating the Rosary, and praying Mary to assist her in that persecution, she saw a letter fall from above. On the outside were written these words: “Mary, mother of

God, to her daughter Jane, greeting;” and within: “My dear child, continue to say my Rosary; withdraw from intercourse with those who do not help you to live well; beware of idleness and vanity; take from thy cell two superfluous things, and I will be your protectress with God.” The abbot of that monastery soon after visited it, and attempted to reform it, but he did not succeed; and one day he saw a great number of demons entering the cells of all the nuns except that of Jane, for the divine mother, before whose image he saw her praying, banished them from that. When he heard from her of the devotion of the Rosary which she practised, and the letter she had received, he ordered all the others to repeat it, and it is related that this monastery became a paradise.[8483]

7.—There lived in Rome a woman, called Catherine the beautiful, who led a very sinful life. Hearing St. Dominic once preach on the devotion of the most holy Rosary, she had her name inscribed in the book of the confraternity, and began to recite it, but did not abandon her sinful life. One evening a youth, apparently a noble, came to her house, whom she received courteously. When they were at supper, she saw drops of blood falling from his hands while he was breaking a peace of bread, and then she observed that all the food he took was tinged with blood. She asked him what that blood meant? And the youth answered, that a Christian should take no food that was not tinged with the blood of Jesus Christ, seasoned with the memory of his passion. Amazed at this, she asked him who he was. “Soon,” he answered, “I will show you;” and when they had withdrawn into another apartment, the appearance of the youth changed, and he showed himself crowned with thorns, his flesh torn, and said to her: “Do you wish to know who I am? Do you not know me? I am thy Redeemer. Catherine, when will you cease to offend me? See how much I have suffered for you. You have grieved me enough, change your life.” Catherine began to weep bitterly, and Jesus, encouraging her, said: “Now begin to love me as much as you have offended me; and know that you have received this grace from me, on account of the Rosary you have been accustomed to recite in honor of my mother.” And then he disappeared. Catherine went in the morning to make her confession to St. Dominic; and giving to the poor all she possessed, led so holy a life, that she attained to great perfection. The Virgin often appeared to her; and Jesus himself revealed to St. Dominic, that this penitent had become very dear to him.[8484]

8.—The blessed Alanus relates of a lady, named Dominica, who was accustomed to recite the Rosary, that she gave up this devotion, and afterwards became so poor, that in desperation she stabbed herself in three different places. But just as she was breathing her last, and the devils came to take her to hell, the most holy Mary appeared to her, and said to her: “My daughter, you have forgotten me, but I have not been willing to forget you, on account of that Rosary which you have for a time recited in my honor. And now,” she added, “if you will continue to recite it, I will restore life to you, and also the possessions you have lost.” Dominica was restored to health, and continuing the practice of reciting the Rosary, recovered her possessions, and at her death was again visited by Mary, who commended her fidelity, and she died a holy death.[8485]

9.—There lived in Saragossa a certain noble, a very bad man; his name was Peter, and he was a relation of St. Dominic. One day when the saint was preaching, he saw Peter enter the church, and he prayed the Lord that he would make known to the audience the condition of that miserable sinner. And, behold, Peter then appeared like a monster from hell, surrounded and dragged along by many devils. The congregation fled, even his wife who was in the church, and the servants who accompanied him. Then St. Dominic directed him, through one of his companions, to recommend himself to Mary, and to begin to recite the Rosary which he sent him. Peter received the message, humbled himself, sent to thank the saint, and received himself the grace to see the demons that surrounded him. He afterwards went to make his confession to the saint himself, from whom he received the assurance that he was already pardoned, and continuing to recite the Rosary, he attained to so happy a state that one day the Lord made him appear in church, in the presence of the whole congregation crowned with three crowns of roses.[8486]

10.—In the mountains of Trent lived a notorious robber, who, when he was one day admonished by a religious to change his course of life, answered, that for him there was no remedy. “Do not say so,” said the religious; “do what I tell you; fast on Saturday in honor of Mary, and on that day do no harm to any one, and she will obtain for you the grace of not dying under the displeasure of God.” The obedient robber followed this advice, and made a vow to continue to do so. That he might not break it, he from that time went unarmed on Saturdays. It happened that on a Saturday he was found by the officers of justice, and that he might not break his oath, he allowed himself to be taken without resistance. The judge, when he saw that he was a gray-haired old man, wished to pardon him; but, through the grace of compunction which he had received from Mary, he said that he wished to die in punishment of his sins. He also made a public confession of all the sins of his life in that same judgment-hall, weeping so bitterly that all present wept with him. He was beheaded, and buried with but little ceremony, in a grave dug near by. But afterwards the mother of God appeared, with four holy virgins, who took the dead body from that place, wrapped it in a rich cloth embroidered with gold, and bore it themselves to the gate of the city; there the blessed Virgin said to the guards: “Tell the bishop from me, to give an honorable burial, in such a church, to this dead person, for he was my faithful servant.” And this was done. All the people of the place thronged to the spot, where they found the corpse with the rich pall, and the bier on which it was placed. And from that time, says Cesarius, all persons in that region began to fast on Saturdays.[8487]

11.—A devout servant of Mary, who lived in Portugal, fasted on bread and water every Saturday of his life, in honor of Mary, and chose for his advocates with the blessed Virgin, St. Michael and St. John the Evangelist. At the hour of his death the queen of heaven appeared to him, with those saints, who were praying for him, and the holy Virgin, looking upon her servant with a joyful countenance, said to those saints: “I will not depart hence without taking this soul with me.”

12.—In one of our missions, after the sermon on Mary which it is our custom to preach, a very old man came to one of the Fathers of our congregation, to make his confession. He was full of consolation, and said: “Our Lady has done me a favor.” “And what favor has she done you?” asked the confessor. “For thirty-five years, Father, I have made sacrilegious confessions, because I was ashamed of one sin, and yet I have passed through many dangers, and have been several times at the point of death, and if I had died then I certainly should have been lost; and now our Lady has done me the favor to touch my heart;" and when he said this he wept so bitterly, that he seemed to be all tenderness. After the Father had heard his confession, he asked him what devotion he had practised, and he answered that he had never failed on Saturday to keep a strict fast in honor of Mary, and therefore the Virgin had taken pity on him, aud he gave the Father permission to publish the fact in his sermons.

13.—In the country of Normandy a certain robber was beheaded, and his head was thrown into a trench; but afterwards it was heard crying: "Mary, give me confession." A priest went to him and heard his confession; and questioning him as to his practices of devotion, the robber answered that he had no other except that of fasting one day of the week in honor of the holy Virgin, and that for this our Lady had obtained for him the grace to be delivered from hell by that confession.[8488]

14.—There were two young noblemen living in the city of Madrid who encouraged each other in their sinful life. One of them saw one night, in a dream, his companion seized by some Moors and carried to the shore of a stormy sea. They were about to do the same with him, but he had recourse to Mary, and made a vow that he would become a religious at once, and thus he was rescued from these Moors; then he saw Jesus seated on a throne, and as if in anger, and the holy Virgin supplicating and obtaining mercy for him. When his friend came to visit him he related to him the vision, but he laughed at it; and shortly after was stabbed with a poniard and died. When the other youth saw the vision verified he made his confession, and was strengthened in his resolution of becoming a religious. In view of that, he sold all that he had, but instead of giving the money to the poor, as he had intended, he expended it in debauchery. He afterwards fell ill, and had another vision; he thought he saw hell opened and the divine Judge in the act of condemning him. Again he had recourse to Mary, and Mary again delivered him. He was restored to health and led a worse life than before. He went to Lima, in South America, where he fell ill, and in the hospital of that place was again touched by the grace of God. He confessed to Father Francis Perlino, a Jesuit, to whom he promised to change his life, but went back to his evil courses. At length the same Father, visiting one day another hospital in a distant place, saw that wretched man extended on the earth, and heard him exclaim: “Ah, I am lost; and for my greater torment this Father has come here to witness my punishment. I came here from Lima, and am brought to this end by my vices, and now I am going to hell.” With these words on his lips he died, before the Father had time to give him any assistance.[8489]

15.—There was once in Germany a certain criminal condemned to death; but he was obstinate and refused to make his confession, though a Jesuit father did his utmost to convert him. He entreated him, he wept, he cast himself at his feet; but seeing that all was in vain, he finally said: “Let us recite a ‘Hail Mary.’ ” No sooner had the criminal recited it than he began to cry bitterly, made his confession with much compunction, and wished to die clasping the image of Mary.[8490]

16.—In a city of Spain there lived a sinful man who had given himself to the devil, and had never been to confession. He did nothing good but say a “Hail Mary” every day. Father Eusebius Nierembergh relates, that when this man was at the point of death the most holy Virgin appeared to him in a dream and looked on him; her kind eyes so changed him that he immediately sent for a confessor, made his confession with a voice broken by sobs, made a vow to become a religious if he should live, and then died.[8491]

17.—A devout servant of Mary always inculcated it upon her daughter that she should often recite the “Hail Mary,” especially when she was in any danger. One day when this girl was resting after a ball, she was attacked by a demon, who in a visible form, bore her off with him. He had already seized her, but she began “Hail Mary,” and the enemy disappeared.[8492]

18.—A woman of Cologne who had criminal intercourse with an ecclesiastic, found him one day hanging in her room dead. After this she entered into a monastery, where the devil assailed her in a bodily form, so that she knew not what to do in order to be delivered from him. A companion suggested to her to say the “Hail Mary;” and when she did so the demon said: “Accursed may she be who has taught thee this,” and appeared no more.[8493]

19.—A certain baron who led a very sinful life was accidentally visited in his castle by a religious, who, enlightened by God, begged him to assemble together all his servants. They all came except the chamberlain. He at last was forced to come in, and the Father said to him: “Now, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to tell who you are.” And he answered: “I am a devil from hell, who for fourteen years have served this villain, waiting until some day he should omit those seven “Hail Marys” which he is in the habit of reciting, that I might then strangle him and take him to the flames of hell.” The religious then commanded the devil to depart. He obeyed, and disappeared. The baron then threw himself at his feet, was converted, and led a holy life.[8494]

20.—The blessed Francis Patrizii, who greatly loved the devotion of the “Hail Marys,” recited five hundred every day. Mary made known to him the hour of his death. He died as a saint; and after forty years a most beautiful lily sprung from his mouth, which was then transported into France, and on the leaves of it was written the “Hail Mary,” in letters of gold.[8495]

21.—Cesarius relates that a Cistercian lay-brother could say no other prayer but the “Hail Mary,” and recited it continually with the greatest devotion. After his death there sprung up from the place where he was buried a tree, on whose leaves were written these words: Hail Mary, full of grace: “Ave Maria, gratia plena.”[8496]

22.—Three devout virgins, by the advice of their confessor, recited one year, for forty days, the whole Rosary, as a preparation for the feast of the purification of Mary. On the vigil the divine mother appeared to the first of these three sisters with a rich garment, embroidered with gold, thanked her, and blessed her. Then she appeared to the second with a simple garment, and also thanked her. But she said to her: “Oh Lady, why have you brought my sister a richer garment?” “Because she has clothed me,” said Mary, “more richly than you have done.” She afterwards appeared to the third with a canvas garment, and she at once asked pardon for her tepidity in honoring her. The next year all three fervently prepared for the same feast, saying the Rosary with great devotion, when behold, on the evening preceding the festival, Mary appeared to them in glory, and said to them: “Be prepared, for to-morrow you shall come to paradise.” And, in fact, the next day they went to church, related to the confessor what had occurred, and received communion in the morning. At the hour of complin they saw again the most holy Virgin, who came to take them with her, and amid the songs of angels, one after the other sweetly expired.[8497]

23.—Father Crasset relates, that a certain military officer told him, that after a battle he found a soldier on the battle-ground who held in his hand a Rosary and the scapular of Mary, and asked for a confessor. His forehead had been pierced by a musket-ball, which had passed through the head and came out behind, so that the brain was visible and protruded through each opening, and he could not live without a miracle. He however raised himself, made his confession to the chaplain with great compunction, and after receiving absolution, expired.[8498]

24.—The same author adds, that this very captain told him of being present when a trumpeter of his company received a pistol-shot from some one near, and when he examined his breast where he said that he had been hit, he found that the ball had been stopped by the scapular of the Virgin, which the man wore, and that it had not even touched the flesh. He took it and exhibited it to the whole company.[8499]

25.—A noble youth, named Eschylus, being sent by the prince his Father to Hildesheim, a city of Saxony, to study, abandoned himself to a dissolute life. He fell ill, and was near dying, and while in that state he had a vision. He saw himself shut up in a furnace of fire, and believed himself to be already in hell; and then he escaped from it through a hole and took refuge in a great place, where he found the most holy Mary in the hall, and she said to him: “Rash man, dost thou dare to appear before me? Depart from here and go to the flames which thou dost merit.” The young man besought the Virgin to have mercy on him, and then turned to some persons who were near, and implored them to recommend him to Mary. They did so, and the divine mother answered: “You do not know the sinful life he has led, and that he had not even thought of saying a ‘Hail Mary’ in my honor.” But his advocates answered: “Oh Lady, he will change his life;” and the youth added: “Yes, I promise really to amend, and I will be thy servant.” Then the Virgin’s anger was appeased, and she said to him: “Well, I accept thy promise, be faithful to me, and meanwhile with my blessing, be delivered from hell and death.” When she had said this, the Virgin disappeared. Eschylus came to himself, and blessing Mary, related to others the grace he had received. He led ever after a holy life, always preserving a great affection towards the blessed Virgin, and was made Archbishop of the Church of Lude, in Denmark, where he converted many to the faith. Towards the close of his life, being old, he resigned the archbishopric and became a monk of Clairvaux, where he lived four years, and died a holy death. Hence he has been numbered by some writers among the saints of the Cistercian order.[8500]

26.—A member of the brothers of the confraternity of Mary was invited one morning by a friend to dine with him. He promised to go but went first to the meeting of the confraternity, and after that he forgot his promise. His friend was so much offended by this, that one day when he met him he attempted to kill him; but, by a just judgment of God, he killed himself. His friend was immediately taken before the court, found guilty of the murder, and was condemned to death. He recommended himself to the Virgin, and, inspired by her, begged to be led into the presence of the dead body, and then asked him how he had died. He confessed that he died by his own hands, and his friend was set at liberty.[8501]

27.—In the year 1604, at Dola, a member of the same confraternity was very ill. On a feast-day he said to himself: “At this hour my brothers are assembled and occupied in praising Mary, and am I here”? He rose from his bed and went to the assembly, when suddenly the fever left him, and he was restored to health.[8502]

28.—A fisherman, belonging to the same confraternity in Naples, had been ill for several days through the severe discipline he had practised in the meeting of the confraternity. Being somewhat better, as he was poor and had a family, he returned to his fishing, saying to the most holy Virgin: “Oh, my Lady, for thee I have suffered this evil, do thou help me;” and our blessed Lady allowed him to take as many fish as he would have taken in all the time he had lost.[8503]

29.—Another member was going to be imprisoned for debt; he recommended himself to Mary, and the most holy Virgin inspired his creditors to release him from his debt, and so they did.[8504]

30.—A young man who had been a member of the confraternity of the Virgin, left it, and abandoned himself to a dissolute life. One night the devil appeared to him in a frightful form. He began to invoke the blessed Virgin. “In vain,” said his enemy to him, “do you invoke her whom you have abandoned; your sins have made thee mine.” The youth in terror fell on his knees, and began to recite the formula of the brothers: “Oh most holy Virgin mother,” &c. Then the mother of God appeared to him, at whose presence the demon fled, leaving behind him a great stench, and an opening in the wall. And Mary then turned to the youth, and said: “Thou didst not merit my help, but I wish to take pity on thee, that thou mayest change, and return to the confraternity.”[8505]

31.—In Braganza there lived another youth who left the confraternity and abandoned himself to such vicious courses, that one day in despair, he was going to throw himself into a river. But first he turned to our Lady and said: “Oh Mary, I have served thee in the confraternity, wilt thou help me?” The most holy Virgin appeared to him and said: “What art thou doing? Dost thou wish to destroy both soul and body? Go, make thy confession, and return to the confraternity.” The youth, encouraged by this, thanked the Virgin, and amended his life.[8506]

32.—There was once a religious in Spain, who in a fit of passion killed his superior. After committing this crime he fled into Barbary, where he renounced his faith and married, leading afterwards so bad a life that he did nothing good but say a “Hail, oh Queen,” daily. One day, being alone, he repeated this devotion, and behold Mary appeared to him, rebuked him, and encouraged him to amend his life, promising him her assistance. He then returned to his house, and was so sorrowful that his wife questioned him as to the cause, and he in tears told her his condition, and the vision he had seen. She took compassion on him, gave him money to enable him to return to his own country, and also consented that he should take one of their children with him. He returned to the monastery, where he shed so many tears of compunction that he was again received, together with his son. He persevered in his holy life, and died with the reputation of a saint.[8507]

33.—A pupil had been instructed by his master to salute the most holy Virgin in these words: “Hail, oh mother of mercy.” When he was at the point of death Mary appeared to him, and said: “My son, do you not know me? I am that mother of mercy whom you have saluted so many times.” Then this servant of the Virgin extended his arms as if to follow her, and gently breathed his last.[8508]

34.—There was once a sinner who was so abandoned, that he practised no other devotion than that of reciting daily To thy patronage: “Sub tuum præsidium.” The Virgin one day so greatly enlightened him, that he abandoned his sins, entered religion, led for fifty years an exemplary life, and thus died.[8509]

35.—In the year 1610, there lived in Turin an obstinate heretic, who even on his death-bed would not be converted by all that was said to him by the various priests who were with him for eight successive days. At length one of them, almost by force, brought him to have recourse to Mary, with these words: Mother of Jesus, help me: “Mater Jesu, assiste mihi.” And the heretic, as if awakened from sleep, exclaimed, “I will die a Catholic;” and indeed he became reconciled to the Church, and died in two hours.[8510]

36.—Another infidel, who was living in India, was about to die, abandoned by all, but as he had heard the Christians so much extol the power of Mary, he had recourse to her, and the blessed Virgin appeared to him, and said: “Behold I am she whom you invoke; become a Christian.” He was immediately restored to health, and baptized, and many were converted by the prodigy.[8511]

37.—There lived in Madrid, in the year 1610, a very devout servant of Mary, who had an especial devotion to an image of her called “Mary of Antioch.” He married a woman, who through suspicion and jealousy left him no rest. Every Saturday he went barefoot, and early in the morning, to visit that image; but his wife, who suspected him of going elsewhere, once in particular, attacked him so violently, that blinded by impatience, he took a rope and hung himself. But just as his soul was departing, when he could no more help himself, he invoked the help of Mary; and behold a most beautiful lady appeared, who approached him and cut the rope. The people without saw this, and then he narrated the fact. By this the wife was so filled with compunction, that ever afterwards they lived in peace, and devoted to the divine mother.[8512]

38.—Another person, of Valentia, in 1613, committed a great crime, which he was ashamed to confess, and therefore made sacrilegious confessions. But, being troubled with great remorse of conscience, he went one day to visit the altar of Our Lady of Halle, that he might obtain relief. When he arrived at the door of the church, which stood open, he felt himself thrust back by an invisible power. Then he determined to make his confession, and immediately entered. After making a general confession, he went home entirely consoled.[8513]

39.—The blessed Adam, a Cistercian, went one evening to visit an altar of the most blessed Virgin in a church; but finding the doors closed, he knelt outside to make his devotions. He was hardly on his knees when he saw the door opening of itself, and he entered. There he beheld the Queen of Heaven, in the midst of great splendor, and she said to him: “Adam, approach; do you know who I am?” Adam answered: “No, Lady; who art thou?” “I am,” she said, “the mother of God. Know, that as a reward for thy devotion to me, I will always take care of thee.” And then she placed her blessed hand upon his head, and cured him of the great pain he was suffering there.[8514]

40.—A servant of Mary went one day to visit a church of our blessed Lady, without the knowledge of her husband, and she was prevented by a severe storm from returning that night to her own house. She felt a great fear lest her husband should be very angry with her; but she recommended herself to Mary, and when she returned home, her husband was very kind and gracious to her. Upon questioning him, she found that the evening before, the divine mother had taken her form, and attended to all the little affairs of the household like a servant. She then related the occurrence to her husband, and they both afterwards practised great devotion to the blessed Virgin.[8515]

41.—A certain cavalier, of the city of Doul, in France, named Ansaldo, received in the battle a wound from an arrow, which entered so deep into the jaw-bone, that it was not possible to extract the iron. After four years of suffering, the afflicted man could endure the pain no longer, and being besides very ill, he thought he would again try to have the iron extracted. He recommended himself to the blessed Virgin, and made a vow to visit every year a sacred image of her which was in that place, and make an offering of a certain sum of money upon her altar if she granted this request. He had no sooner made the vow then the iron, without being touched, fell into his mouth. The next day, ill as he was, he went to visit the image, and scarcely had he placed the promised gift upon the altar, when he felt himself entirely restored to health.[8516]

42.—There was once a Spaniard who held sinful intercourse with a relative. A devout virgin, while she was at prayer, saw Jesus on his throne, who was on the point of sending that criminal to hell; but his holy mother obtained thirty days' grace for him, because he once had honored her. By the command of the divine mother herself, his female companion told the whole to her confessor, who made it known to the young man, and he at once made his confession, with many tears and promises of amendment. But because he did not remove the temptation from him, he fell again into sin, went again to confession, again made a resolution, and again relapsed. As he did not go to see the Father again, the Father went to his house to find him, but was very rudely dismissed. The last of the thirty days had arrived, the Father went to the house again, but in vain; he desired the servant, however, to give him notice if there was any accident; and indeed at night that miserable sinner was attacked with violent pains. The Father was called, and endeavored to relieve him, but the unhappy man exclaimed:

“My heart has been pierced with a lance, and I am dying. Then giving a groan of despair, he expired.[8517]

43.—There lived once in Milan a man named Masaccio, so addicted to gambling, that one day he lost at play the very clothes he wore. In a violent rage at his loss, he took a knife and struck an image of the blessed Virgin, and blood burst forth from it into his face. He was so much moved that he burst into tears, and offered thanks to the Virgin that she had obtained for him time for repentance. He afterwards entered a Cistercian monastery, and led such a holy life that he even received the gift of prophecy; after being forty years a religious, he died a holy death.[8518]

44.—A very sinful man, once kneeling in tears at the foot of the cross, prayed that he might receive a sign of pardon. But when he found that his prayer was not granted, he turned to an image of the sorrowful Mary, who then appeared to him, and he saw her present his tears to her Son, saying: My Son, shall these tears be lost? “Fili, istæ lacrymæ peribunt?” And then he was given to understand that Christ had already pardoned him, and from that time be led a holy life.[8519]

45.—A man of advanced age, during one of our missions, after the usual sermon on the powerful intercession of Mary, which it is our custom always to preach in the missions, came to make his confession to one of our Fathers, named D. Cesar Sportelli, who lately died in the fame of sanctity, and was found uncorrupted many months after his death. Kneeling at the feet of his confessor, he said: “Father, our Lady has had pity on me.” “This is her office,” anwered the Father. “But you cannot give me absolution,” said the other, “for I have never made my confession.” And, in fact, although he was a Catholic, he had never made his confession. The Father encouraged him, heard his confession, and gave him absolution with great consolation.

46.—The blessed Bernard Tolomeo, founder of the Olivetan Fathers, who, from his childhood, had a great devotion to Mary, was one day greatly tormented in his hermitage at Accona, called Mt. Olivet, with the fear that he should not be saved, and that God had not yet pardoned him; but the divine mother appeared to him, and said: “What do you fear, my son? Take courage; God has already pardoned you, and is pleased with the life you lead; go on, and I will help and save you.” The blessed religious continued to lead a holy life till he died a happy death in the arms of Mary.[8520]

47.—There lived in Germany a young girl, called Agnes, who had been guilty of incest in the first degree. She fled into a desert, and there gave birth to a child. The devil, in the form of a religious, appeared to her, and persuaded her to throw the child into a pond. But afterwards, when he proposed to her to throw herself in also, she said: “Mary, help me,” and the devil disappeared.[8521]

48.—A soldier once made a compact with the devil, that he would sell his wife to him for a certain sum of money. He was taking her to a wood to fulfil his promise, when he passed before a church dedicated to the Virgin. His wife begged him to allow her to pay her devotion to Mary in that church; but as she entered it, Mary came forth from it, and taking the form of the woman, accompanied the husband. When they reached the wood, the demon said to the man: “Traitor, why have you brought me, instead of your wife, my enemy, the mother of God?” “And thou,” said Mary, “how hast thou dared to think of injuring my servant? Go, flee to hell.” And then turning to the man, she said: “Amend your life, and I will aid you.” She disappeared, and that wretched man repented, and amended his life.[8522]

49.—A very sinful woman who lived in Messico, having fallen ill, repented of her life, and made a vow to Mary, that if she would restore her to health she would present her with her hair. She was cured, and she cut off her hair, making an offering of it to the statue of the Virgin. But the woman again fell into sin, again fell ill, and died impenitent. Then Mary one day afterwards spoke from that statue to Father Giammaria Salvaterra, and said: Take those locks from my head, for they belong to a lost and sinful soul, and are not befitting the head of the mother of purity. The Father obeyed her, and threw them himself instantly into the flames.[8523]

50.—A Saracen, named Petran, made captive several Christians in Spain, who recommended themselves to the holy Virgin. Mary appeared to the

Saracen, and said to him: “Petran, how dare you to hold my servants slaves? Release them immediately—obey.” And the Moor answered: “Who are you whom I am to obey?” “I am,” said she, “the mother of God; and because they have had recourse to me, I wish you to give them their liberty.” Then the heart of Petran was changed, he set the Christians free, and presented himself to the Virgin. She first instructed him, and then she herself baptized him in a fountain, near which a church was built, and a Benedictine monastery.[8524]

51.—A certain canon, while he was repeating some devotions in honor of the divine mother, fell into the river Seine and was drowned, and being in mortal sin, the devils came to take him to hell. But Mary appeared at the same time, and said to them: “How have you dared to take possession of one who died praising me?” Then turning to the sinner, she said: “Repent,” and be particularly devout to my Conception. He was restored to life, became a religious, and never ceased to thank his deliverer, and everywhere to propagate the devotion to her immaculate Conception.[8525]

52.—Whilst the monks of Clairvaux were reaping in the fields, and praising the queen of heaven, most holy Mary was seen caressing them, and two other saints wiping their sweat.[8526]

53.—The brother of the King of Hungary recited every day the office of Mary. Once when he was very ill, he made a vow of chastity to the Virgin, if she would restore him to health: and he immediately recovered. But his brother having died, he was about to be married, and just as the nuptials were to be celebrated, he retired apart to recite his accustomed office. When he came to the words: Thou art fair and comely, &c.: “Quam pulchra es et decora,” &c., he saw Mary, who said to him: “If I am fair as you say, why do you leave me for another spouse? Know, that if you leave her, you shall have me for a spouse, and the kingdom of heaven instead of the kingdom of Hungary.” After this the prince withdrew into a desert near Aquileia, where he lived a holy life.[8527]

54.—St. John Climacus relates, that there was a devout religious, named Carcerio, who was accustomed often to repeat little songs in praise of Mary, and always saluted her images with a "Hail Mary." He was once afflicted with so painful a malady, that in the paroxysms of his suffering he bit his lips and tongue. He lost his speech, and was at the point of death. Whilst the religious were recommending his soul to God, the mother of God appeared to him and said: "I have come to cure thee, for I do not wish that mouth should suffer with which thou hast so often praised me. Arise, thou art healed, continue to praise me. Having said this, she sprinkled him with some drops of her milk, and immediately he was cured, and never ceased to praise her, until, visited again by his Lady at his death, he sweetly expired in her arms.[8528]

55.—When St. Francis Borgia was in Rome, an ecclesiastic came to speak with him; but the saint being much occupied, sent Father Acosta to him. The ecclesiastic said to him: "Father, I am a priest and a preacher, but I live in sin, and distrust the divine mercy. After preaching a sermon one day against the obstinate, who afterwards despair of pardon, a person came to me to make his confession, who narrated to me all my sins, and at length told me that he despaired of the divine mercy. In order to do my duty, I told him that he must change his life, and trust in God; then that penitent rose to his feet and reproached me, saying: 'And you, who preach thus to others, why do you not amend, and why do you distrust? Know,' said he, 'that I am an angel come to your aid; amend and you will be pardoned.' And when he had said this he disappeared. I abstained for several days from my sinful practices, but when temptation came I again returned to my sins. On another day, as I was celebrating Mass, Jesus Christ sensibly spoke to me from the host, and said: 'Why dost thou thus maltreat me, when I treat thee so well?' After this I resolved to amend, but at the next temptation fell again into sin. A few hours ago, a youth came to me in my apartment, and drew from under his mantle a chalice, and from this a consecrated host, saying: 'Do you know this Lord whom I hold in my hand? Do you remember how many favors he has done you? Now behold the punishment of your ingratitude,' and saying this he drew a sword to kill me. I then cried: 'For the love of Mary do not kill me, for I will indeed amend.' And then he said: 'This was the only thing that could save you: make a good use of this grace, for this is the last mercy for you.' When he had said this he left me, and I came immediately here, praying you to receive me among you.” Father Acosta consoled him, and the priest, by the advice also of St. Francis, entered another order of strict observance, where he persevered in holiness till his death.[8529]

56.—In the year 1228, while a priest was celebrating Mass on a Saturday, in honor of the most holy Mary, some Albigensian heretics came and cruelly cut out his tongue. In this condition he went to the monastery of Cluny, where the good religious received him with much charity, greatly compassionating the suffering he endured from the loss of his tongue. But what caused the greatest suffering to this devout priest was, that he could no longer say Mass and recite the divine office, and that of the blessed Virgin, as he had been accustomed to do. The feast of Epiphany having arrived, he begged to be carried into the church, and before the altar of the holy Virgin prayed her to restore the tongue which he had lost through love of her, that he might sing her praises as he did before. Then Mary appeared to him with a tongue in her hand, and said to him: “Since thou hast lost the tongue for the faith, and for the honor thou hast paid me, I give thee in return a new one.” Having said this, with her own hands she placed the tongue in his mouth, and immediately the priest, raising his voice, recited the “Hail Mary.” The religious quickly assembled, and the priest wished to remain with them, and to become himself a religious, that there he might always praise his benefactress. The mark of the scar was always seen on his tongue.[8530]

57.—It was in 589 that the famous plague prevailed in Rome, when men were attacked with sneezing, and fell down dead. St. Gregory the Great, when he was carrying in procession through the city an image belonging to the church of St. Mary Major, in the place now called the Castle of St. Angelo, saw an angel in the air, who was replacing in its scabbard a sword dripping with blood. Then he heard the angels singing: Oh, Queen of heaven rejoice, Alleluia; for he whom thou didst deserve to bear, Alleluia, is risen again, as he said, Alleluia: “Regina cœli, lætare, Alleluia; quia quem meruisti portare Alleluia; resurrexit, sicut dixit, Alleluia.” And St. Gregory responded: “Ora pro nobis Deum, Alleluia.” Immediately the plague ceased, and they then began to celebrate the greater Litanies every year on the 25th of April.[8531]

58.—A city of France, called Avignon, was once besieged by enemies. The citizens prayed to Mary to defend them, and placed an image of her which they had taken from the church, at the gate of the city. One of the citizens having concealed himself behind the image, a soldier shot an arrow at him, saying: “This image shall not save you from death.” But the image presented her knee, and the arrow remained fixed in it, and may be seen there even to this day; and thus she saved the life of her servant. And the enemy, moved by this prodigy, raised the siege.[8532]

59.—There was in Naples a Moor, a slave of Don Octavius del Monaco, who, although he had often been exhorted to leave his Mahometan sect, remained obstinate, but yet never failed every evening to keep lighted, at his own expense, a lamp before an image of Mary which was in the house. And he said: “I hope that this Lady will grant me some great favor.” One night the blessed Virgin appeared to him and told him he must become a Christian. Still the Turk resisted, but she placed her hand upon his shoulder, and said to him: “Now no longer resist, Abel; be baptized and called Joseph.” In the morning he immediately went to be instructed, and was baptized August 10th, 1648, with eleven other Turks. Let it be observed that when the divine mother appeared to him, after she had converted him, she was about to depart, but the Moor seized her mantle, saying: “Oh Lady, when I find myself afflicted, I pray thee to let me see thee.” In fact she one day promised him this, and when he was in affliction he invoked her, and Mary appeared again to him, saying: “Have patience,” and he was consoled.[8533]

60.—A certain parish priest of Asella, named Baldwin, became a Dominican, and when he was in his novitiate there came to him the temptation that he could do greater good in the world in his parish, and he resolved to return. But going to take his leave of the altar of the Rosary, Mary appeared to him with two vessels of wine; she gave him to drink of the first, but the novice had hardly tasted it, when he turned away his mouth, for although the wine was good, yet it was full of dregs; the second he pronounced good, and free from dregs: “Now,” said the most holy Virgin, “there is the same difference between the life in the world, and the life in religion, which is under obedience.” Baldwin persevered, and died a good religious.[8534]

61.—Another novice, also overcome by temptation, was about to leave his monastery, but stopping to say a “Hail Mary” before an image of the Virgin, he felt himself nailed, as it were, to the floor, from which he could not rise. He repented, and made a vow of persevering. He then recovered his liberty, asked pardon of the master of novices, and persevered.[8535]

62.—The blessed Clement, a Franciscan, one morning delayed going to the common table, that he might stop and recite certain accustomed devotions to the most holy Virgin; but she spoke from her image, and directed him to go with the others, because obedience pleased her more than all other devotions.[8536]

63.—Whilst Angela, a daughter of the King of Bohemia, was in a monastery, Mary appeared to her, and an angel said to her: “Arise, Angela, and fly to Jerusalem, for thy father wishes to give thee in marriage to the prince of Hungary.” The devout virgin immediately set on her journey, and again the divine mother appeared to her and encouraged her to continue her journey. She was received in Jerusalem among the Carmelites, and afterwards was commanded by the blessed Virgin herself to return to her own country, where she lived a holy life till her death.[8537]

64.—St. Gregory relates that there was a young woman named Musa, who had great devotion to the mother of God; but being, through the evil example of her companions, in danger of losing her innocence, one day Mary appeared to her with many saints, and said to her: “Musa, do you too wish to be one of these?” Musa answered, “Yes;” and Mary added: “Withdraw from your companions, and prepare, for in one month from this you shall come with me.” Musa retired from her companions, and related the vision. On the thirtieth day she was at the point of death, and the most holy Virgin again appeared to her and called her. She answered: “Behold, Lady, I come,” and sweetly expired.[8538]

65.—Anna Caterina Gonzaga was married to Ferdinand I., Archduke of Austria, but her husband dying, she entered the religious order of the Servites, and had a crown made, on the globes of which were carved the dolors of the Virgin. She said that for this crown she renounced all the other crowns of earth; and, in fact, refused marriage with the Emperor Rodolph II. When she heard that her younger sister had been crowned empress, she said: "Let my sister enjoy her imperial crown; for these garments with which Mary my queen has clothed me, are to me a thousand-fold dearer." The most holy Virgin appeared to her many times during her life, and at last this good religious died a holy death.[8539]

66.—A young clerical student playing one day at ball with other young men, and fearing he should lose a ring in his play, which had been given him by a lady, he placed it on the finger of an image of Mary which was near; and he immediately felt impelled to make a promise to the Virgin to quit the world and choose her for his spouse. He made the promise, and Mary pressed his finger in token that she accepted it. But after some time he wished to marry another, and Mary appeared to him and reproached him for his infidelity; wherefore he fled into a desert and led to the last a holy life.[8540]

67.—About the year 850, Berengarius, Bishop of Verdun, in Lorraine, having entered a church where a certain priest named Bernerio was saying the office of Mary prostrate before the choir, stumbled against him, and in his vexation struck him with his foot. In the night the most holy Virgin appeared to him, and said: "How is it that you struck with your foot my servant who was engaged in praising me? Because I love you," she added, "you must pay the penalty." Then his leg became withered, but he lived and died a saint; and after many years his body, except that leg, remained uncorrupted.[8541]

68.—A young man who was left wealthy at the death of his parents, by play and dissipation with his friends, lost all that he had, but always preserved his chastity. An uncle, who found him reduced to such poverty by his vices, exhorted him to say every day a part of the Rosary, promising him that if he would persevere in this devotion he would procure for him a good marriage.

The youth persevered, and having amended his life, he was married. On the evening of his nuptials he rose from the table to go and recite his Rosary, and when he had finished it, Mary appeared to him and said: “Now I will reward thee for the honor thou hast paid me: I do not wish that thou shouldst lose thy chastity; in three days thou shalt die, and shalt come to me in paradise.” And this really happened, for immediately a fever attacked him. He related the vision, and on the third day died in perfect peace.[8542]

69.—The devout author of the book in honor of the most holy Rosary, entitled, “The Secret of every Grace,” relates that St. Vincent Ferrer once said to a man dying in despair: “Why will you ruin yourself when Jesus Christ wishes to eave you?” And he answered, that in spite of Christ he would be damned. The saint replied: “And you, in spite of yourself, shall be saved.” He began to recite the Rosary with the persons of the house, and behold, the sick man asked to make his confession, made it weeping, and then died.

70.—The same author also relates that a poor woman, who was buried by an earthquake under the ruins of a house, was found alive and uninjured, with her children in her arms, by some persons who were employed by a priest to remove the stones. When she was asked what devotion she had practised, she said she had never failed to say the Rosary and visit a chapel of the most holy Mary.

71.—He also relates that another woman who led a wicked life because she thought it the only means by which she could gain a livelihood, was counselled to recommend herself to Mary by saying the Rosary; she did so, and behold one night the divine mother appeared and said to her: “Quit your sinful life: as for your support, trust in me, and I will think of that.” The next morning she went to confession, and Mary most holy provided for her wants.

72.—A person of impure life who had not the courage to quit his sins, began to say the Rosary, and was delivered from his vices.

73.—Another person who maintained a sinful friendship was seized with abhorrence of his sin by saying the Rosary. He yielded again to temptation, but by means of the Rosary finally freed himself from it.

74.—A good priest who was attending a woman on her death-bed, who bitterly hated her husband, not knowing by what means to convert her, withdrew to say the Rosary, and at the last moment that woman saw her sinfulness, repented, and forgave her husband.

75.—Finally, the same author relates, that once making a mission to the convicts in the galleys of Naples, he found some who obstinately refused to make their confession. He suggested to them that at least they should have themselves enrolled in the confraternity of the Rosary, and begin to recite it. They consented to do so, and they had no sooner recited one than they desired to make their confession, and did so, the first time for many years. These modern examples serve to revive our confidence in Mary, seeing that she is at the present time the same that she always has been towards those who have recourse to her.

76.—St. Gregory relates that a holy prelate, Bishop of Ferento, was from childhood devoted to relieving the poor. It happened one day that a certain priest, his nephew, sold a horse for ten crowns of gold, and took the money and locked it up. The bishop not having any thing to give when some poor persons came to beg of him, broke open the chest and distributed the money to them. His nephew made such a disturbance when he discovered it, that the holy prelate, not knowing what to do, went for help to a church dedicated to Mary. When behold, he saw ten crowns lying on the drapery of the statue; he took them and gave them to his nephew.[8543]

77.—A Lutheran lady of Augsburg in Germany, who was a very obstinate heretic, happening to pass one day a small Catholic chapel, went in through curiosity. She saw there an image of Mary with the infant Jesus in her arms, and felt moved to make an offering to it. She accordingly went home, took a silk cloth, and brought it to the altar of the Virgin. When she had returned home the most holy Virgin enlightened her to see the errors of her sect, and she went immediately to seek some Catholics, abjured heresy, and was converted to God.[8544]

78.—In the city of Cesena there lived two very bad men who were friends. One of them, named Bartholomew, in the midst of all his vices practised the devotion of reciting every day the “Stabat Mater” in honor of the sorrowful Mary. Once when he was repeating this hymn Bartholomew had a vision, in which he seemed to stand with his sinful companion in a lake of fire, and saw the most holy Virgin, moved to pity, offer her hand and take him from the flames. She directed him to seek pardon from Jesus Christ, who showed himself willing to pardon him through the prayers of his mother. The vision ended, and Bartholomew at the moment heard the intelligence that his friend had been mortally wounded and was dead. Then he knew the truth of the vision, and quitting the world, entered the order of Capuchins, where he led a most austere life, and died in the fame of sanctity.[8545]

79.—The blessed Jerome, founder of the Sommaschian Fathers, being governor of a certain place, was taken by the enemy, and confined in the dungeon of a tower. He recommended himself to Mary, and made a vow to make a pilgrimage to Treviso in her honor, if she would rescue him. Then the most holy Virgin appeared to him surrounded by a great light, and with her own hands loosed his chains, and gave him the keys of the prison. He fled from the prison, and, setting out for Treviso to fulfil his vow, he found himself immediately surrounded by the enemy. Again he had recourse to his deliverer, and she again appeared to him, took him by the hand, and led him safely through the midst of his enemies, accompanying him even to the gates of Treviso, where she disappeared. He made the visit, deposited his chains at the foot of the altar of Mary, and then devoted himself to a holy life, by which he has merited recently to be ranked by the holy Church among the number of the blessed.[8546]

80.—A priest who had a special devotion to the sorrows of Mary, often remained alone in a chapel to commiserate the dolors of his Lady, and, moved by compassion, was accustomed with a little cloth to wipe, as it were, the tears of a statue of the sorrowful Virgin which was in that place. Now this good priest, in a severe illness, when he was given up by his physicians, and was going to breathe his last, saw a beautiful lady by his side, who consoled him with her words, and with a handkerchief gently wiped the sweat from his brow, and with this cured him. When he found himself well, he said: "But, my Lady, who art thou who dost practise such charity towards me?" "I am she," answered Mary, "whose tears thou hast so often dried," and she disappeared.[8547]

81.—A noble lady, who had an only son, was informed one day that he was killed, and that his murderer had by chance taken refuge in her own palace; but when she called to mind that Mary pardoned the executioners of her Son, she wished also to pardon that criminal for love of the sorrowful Mary; and not only did she pardon him, but provided him with a horse, money, and clothes, that he might make his escape. Then her son appeared to her, and told her that he was saved, and that for her generous act done towards his enemy, the divine mother had delivered him from purgatory, where he should otherwise have had to suffer for a long time, but that he was then already entering paradise.[8548]

82.—The blessed Bionda performed a similar heroic act. Some enemies also killed her only son, though he was innocent, solely by reason of the hatred they bore to his father, who was dead; and with unheard-of cruelty gave the heart of the murdered youth to his mother to eat. Now she, according to the example of the most holy Mary, began to pray for her murderers, and to do them all the good she could. These acts so pleased the divine mother, that she called her to join the third order of the Servites, where she merited to lead so holy a life, that both before and after her death many miracles were wrought through her.[8549]

83.—St. Thomas of Canterbury, when he was a young man, found himself one day in conversation with several other youths, each of whom boasted of some foolish love affair. The holy youth declared that he, too, loved a great lady, and was beloved by her, meaning the most holy Virgin. Afterwards, he felt some remorse at having made this boast; but behold, Mary appeared to him in his trouble, and with a gracious sweetness said to him: "Thomas, what do you fear? You had reason to say that you loved me, and that you are beloved by me. Assure your companions of this, and as a pledge of the love I bear you, show them this gift that I make you.” The gift was a small box, containing a chasuble, of a blood-red color, as a sign that Mary, for the love she bore him, had obtained for him the grace to be a priest and a martyr, which indeed happened, for he was first made priest and afterwards Bishop of Canterbury, in England, where he was at one time persecuted by the king, and fled to the Cistercian monastery, at Pontignac, in France. While he was there, wishing one day to mend his hair-cloth shirt that he usually wore, which was ripped, and not being able to do it well, his beloved queen appeared to him, and, with especial kindness, took the hair-cloth from his hand, and repaired it as it should be done. After this he returned to Canterbury, and died a martyr, having been put to death on account of his zeal for the Church.[8550]

84.—A young woman in the Papal States, who was very devout towards Mary, met in a certain place a chief of banditti. Fearing some outrage, she implored him, for love of the most holy Virgin, not to molest her. “Do not fear,” he answered, “for you have prayed me in the name of the mother of God; and I only ask you to recommend me to her.” And, in fact, he accompanied her himself along the road to a place of safety. The following night Mary appeared in a dream to the bandit, and thanking him for the act she had performed for love of her, told him she would remember it, and would one day reward him. The robber, at length, was arrested, and condemned to death; but behold, the night previous to his execution, the blessed Virgin visited him again in a dream, and first asked him: “Do you know who I am?” He answered, “It seems to me I have seen you before.” “I am the Virgin Mary,” she continued, “who have come to reward you for what you have done for me. You will die to-morrow, but you will die with so much contrition that you will come at once to paradise.” The convict awoke, and felt such contrition for his sins that he began to weep bitterly, all the while giving thanks aloud to our blessed Lady. He sent immediately for a confessor, to whom he made his confession with many tears, relating the vision he had seen, and begged him to make public this grace that had been bestowed on him by Mary. He went joyfully to execution, after which, as it is related, his countenance was so peaceful and happy, that all who saw him believed that the promise of the divine mother was fulfilled.[8551]

85.—The blessed Joachim Piccolomini, who had a very great devotion to Mary, even from childhood, used to visit three times a day an image of the sorrowful mother, which was in a neighboring church, and abstained from all food on Saturday in her honor. Moreover, he rose at midnight to meditate upon her dolors. But let us see how Mary rewarded him. At first she appeared to him when he was young, and directed him to enter into religion in the order of her Servants, which he did. Towards the close of his life, she again appeared to him, with two crowns in her hand: one of rubies, as the reward of the compassion he had cherished for her sorrows; and the other of pearls, as the reward of his chastity which he had consecrated to her. Finally, at death she appeared to him again, when he asked of her the favor to die on the day on which Jesus Christ died, and the most holy Virgin consoled him by telling him: “Make ready now, for to-morrow (Friday) you will die suddenly, as you desire, and to-morrow you shall be with me in paradise.” And thus it happened, for while they were chanting in the church the passion according to St. John, at the words: There stood near the cross of Jesus his mother: “Stabat juxta crucem Jesu mater ejus,” he was attacked with the faintness of death; at the words: And bowing his head he gave up the ghost: “Et inclinato capite tradidit spiritum,” this blessed one also gave up his spirit to God; and at the same moment the church was filled with a great splendor, and a most sweet fragrance.[8552]

86.—Father Alphonso Salmerone, of the Society of Jesus, being a most devout servant of the blessed Virgin, died saying: “To pardise, to paradise; blessed be the hour that I have served Mary! Blessed the sermons, the toils, the thoughts that I have had for thee, oh my Lady! To paradise.”[8553]

87.—A youth named Guido, who wished to join the order of Camaldoli, was presented to St. Romuald by the prince, his father, whose name was Farnulf. The holy founder received him with pleasure. One day Mary appeared to this good youth, her servant, with the infant Jesus in her arms. Esteeming himself unworthy of such a favor, he stood trembling, but the divine mother drawing near to him, said: “Why do you doubt? What do you fear, Guido? I am the mother of God, this is my son Jesus, who wishes to come to you;” and saying this, she placed him in her arms. Guido had not been three years in religion when he fell dangerously ill. St. Romuald saw the poor youth writhing and trembling, and heard him saying: “Oh Father, do you see all the Moors in this cell”? “My son,” said the saint to him, “do you remember any thing you have not confessed?” “Yes, Father,” he answered, “I remember having disobeyed the prior, by not picking up certain brooms, and now I confess it.” St. Romuald absolved him, and then the scene changed; the devils fled, and the Virgin again appeared with Jesus, at the sight of whom Guido died in perfect peace.[8554]

88.—A Cistercian nun in Toledo, called Mary, being at the point of death, the divine mother appeared to her, and Mary said to her: “Oh Lady, the favor you do me of visiting me, emboldens me to ask you another favor, namely, that I may die at the same hour that you died and entered into heaven. “Yes,” answered Mary. “I will satisfy you; you shall die at that hour, and you shall hear the songs and praises with which the blessed accompanied my entrance into heaven; and now prepare.” When she had said this she disappeared. The religious who heard the nun talking to herself, believed her wandering in mind, but she related to them the vision, and the promised grace, and awaited the desired hour; and when she knew it had arrived, by the striking of the clock (the writer does not tell us what hour it was), she said: “Behold, the predicted hour has come; I hear the music of the angels; at this hour my queen ascended into heaven; rest in peace, for I am going now to see her;” and saying this she expired, while her eyes became bright as stars, and her face glowed with a beautiful color.[8555]

89.—In the city of Sens, in France, there lived towards the eighth century St. Opportuna, the daughter of a prince of royal blood. This holy virgin, who had a great devotion to Mary, became a religious in a neighboring monastery, and being at the point of death, she saw St. Cecilia and St. Lucia standing beside her in the dawn of the morning. “My sisters, be welcome,” she said to them; “what message do you bring me from my queen?” And they answered: “She is waiting for thee in paradise.” After this the devil appeared to her, and the saint boldly sent him away, saying: “Brute beast, what hast thou to do with me who am the servant of Jesus?” The hour of her death, which she herself had predicted, having arrived, after receiving the holy viaticum, she turned towards the door, and said: “Behold the mother of

God who comes to take me. Sisters, I commend you to her. Adieu, we shall see each other no more.” Thus saying, she raised her arms, as if to embrace her Lady, and gently expired.[8556]

NOVENA OF MEDITATIONS

FOR THE NINE DAYS PRECEDING THE FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION OF MARY, WHICH COMMENCES ON THE 24TH OF JANUARY

The above-mentioned meditations are upon the Litany of Loretto, and can be used for all the Novenas preceding the principal festivals of the Divine Mother.

FIRST DAY

1st. "SANCTA MARIA, ora pro nobis:" Holy Mary, pray for us. Since in the Litanies of our Lady the Church instructs us to repeat so many times the petition that she will pray for us, "Ora pro nobis," it is well before meditating upon the titles by which the holy Virgin is invoked, to consider of how great value with God are the prayers of Mary. Blessed is that person for whom Mary prays! Jesus is pleased when his most beloved mother prays to him, and grants all she asks. One day St. Bridget heard Jesus speaking with Mary, and thus saying to her: "My mother, ask what thou wilt of me, for thy petition cannot be in vain."[8557] And then he added: "Thou didst deny me nothing on earth, I will deny thee nothing in heaven." St. Bernard says: To be heard by this Son is to be graciously heard: "A Filio audiri est exaudiri." It is enough that Mary speaks, her Son grants whatever she asks. Therefore let us always pray to this divine mother if we wish to obtain eternal salvation, and let us say with St. Andrew of Candia, or perhaps of Jerusalem: We, then, supplicate thee, oh most holy Virgin, to grant us the aid of thy prayers with God; prayers that are more precious than all the treasures of the earth; prayers that obtain for us a great abundance of graces; prayers that confound our enemies, and triumph over their forces.

2d. “Sancta Maria:” Holy Mary. The name of Mary is a name of salvation. This name came not from earth, but from heaven; and therefore St. Epiphanius says, that it was not given to Mary by her parents, but was bestowed upon her by the express will of God. Hence it is that after the name of Jesus, the name of Mary is superior to every name, for God has filled it with grace and sweetness in order that through it every blessing may be obtained by him who names it. St. Bernard said: Oh Mary, thy name cannot be pronounced without inflaming the heart of him who utters it with love to thee. And the blessed Henry Suso exclaimed: Oh Mary, what must thou thyself be if thy name is so amiable and gracious! Name full of blessings. St. Bonaventure said that the name of Mary cannot be invoked without profit to him who invokes it. But more than all, this name has the power to overcome the temptations of hell. Ah, my Lady, if I had always invoked thee in my temptations, I should never have fallen. For the future I shall never cease to invoke thee, saying: “Mary, help me; Mary, succor me.” And do thou obtain for me the grace always to invoke thee in the perils of my soul.

3d. “Sancta Dei genitrix:” Holy mother of God. If the prayers of the saints avail much with God, how much more will the prayers of Mary avail! The former are the prayers of servants, but the latter are the prayers of a mother. St. Antoninus says that the prayer of Mary has the force of a command with Jesus Christ: “Oratio Virginis habet rationem imperii;” and hence he adds, that it is impossible for this mother to ask a favor of the Son that the Son will not grant her: “Impossibile est Deiparam non exaudiri.” Therefore St. Bernard exhorts us to ask through Mary for every grace that we wish from God: “Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus;” for she is the mother, and is always graciously heard: “Quia mater est, et frustrari non potest.” Oh great mother of God, pray to Jesus for me. Look upon the miseries of my soul, and have pity on me. Pray, and never tease to pray for me until thou seest me safe in paradise. Oh Mary, thou art my hope; do not abandon me. Holy mother of God, pray for us: “Sancta Dei genitrix, ora pro nobis.”

SECOND DAY

1st, “Mater divinæ gratiæ:” Mother of divine grace. Mary is called by St. Anselm: Mother of all graces: “Mater omnium gratiarum.” And by the Idiot: Treasurer of divine grace: “Thesauraria gratiarum.” Hence St. Bernardine of Sienna writes: All the graces which we receive from God are dispensed by the hand of Mary, and are dispensed to whom Mary will, when she will, and as she will.[8558] This she herself says: “With me are riches and glory . . . that I may enrich them that love me.”[8559] The Lord has placed in my hand all the riches of his graces, that I may enrich those who love me. Then, oh my queen, if I love thee I shall be no longer poor as I am now. After my God, I love thee above all things; do thou obtain for me greater tenderness and love for thy goodness. St. Bonaventure tells me that every one will be saved if thou wilt have him saved: “Quem ipsa vis salvus erit.” And therefore will I say to thee with the same saint: Oh salvation of those who invoke thee, save me: “O salus te invocantium, salva me.” Save me from hell, and first save me from sin, which alone can bring me to hell.

2d. “Mater purissima:” Mother most pure. This fair and pure virgin mother renders all her servants chaste and pure. St. Ambrose writes that even when Mary was on the earth, by her presence she inspired with the love of purity all those who looked upon her.[8560] She was called the lily among thorns: “Sicut lilium inter spinas sic amica mea inter filias.”[8561] All other virgins, says St. Denis the Carthusian, are thorns either to themselves or to others; but the blessed Virgin was neither a thorn to herself nor to others, for she inspired with pure and holy affection all those who beheld her. Moreover, Frigenius, author of the life of St. Thomas Aquinas, writes, that this saint said that even the image of this chaste turtle-dove extinguishes the sensual emotions of him who looks upon it with devotion. And the venerable John of Avila relates that many persons who were suffering from temptations against purity, were preserved pure through the devotion to our Lady. Oh, how especially powerful is the name of Mary, in conquering all temptations to this vice! Oh Mary, most pure, free me from this vice; make me always to have recourse to thee in temptations, and invoke thee so long as the temptation continues.

3d. “Mater inviolata:” Mother inviolate. Mary was that immaculate woman who appeared in the eyes of God all pure and spotless: “Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te.”[8562] Wherefore the was called the reconciler of sinners, as St. Ephrem salutes her: "Hail, conciliatrix of the world: "Ave conciliatrix orbis." And as she herself said in the Canticles: "Since I am become in his presence as one finding peace."[8563] St. Gregory says that if a rebel should appear before the offended king to appease him, it would only provoke him the more to anger. But Mary being destined to treat of peace between God and men, it was not fitting that she should appear as a partaker in the crime of Adam, and therefore the Lord preserved Mary from every stain of sin. Ah, my immaculate queen; oh spotless dove, so dear to God; ah, do not disdain to look upon the many stains and wounds of my soul; look on me and help me. That God who loves thee so much, denies thee nothing, neither dost thou know how to deny thyself to him who invokes thee. Oh Mary, to thee I have recourse; have pity on me. Mother inviolate, pray for us: "Mater inviolata, ora pro nobis."

THIRD DAY

1st. "Mater amabilis:" Amiable mother. Richard of St. Lawrence says that the blessed Virgin was amiable in the eyes of God himself: "Fuit beata Virgo amabilis oculis ipsius Dei." Mary was so beautiful in the eyes of God, that God was enamored of her beauty. How beautiful art thou, my love! how beautiful art thou! "Quam pulchra es, amica mea, quam pulchra es."[8564] Hence he called her his only dove, his only perfect one: One is my dove; my perfect one is but one: "Una est columba mea, una est perfecta mea."[8565] It is certain, as Father Suarez says, that God loves Mary more than all the other saints together, and justly, for she alone loves God more than all men and all the angels. Oh Mary, most pure; oh Mary, most lovely, thou didst gain the heart of God; take possession of my poor heart also, and make me holy. I love thee, and I confide in thee. Amiable mother, pray for us: "Mater amabilis, ora pro nobis."

2d. "Mater Salvatoris:" Mother of the Saviour. St. Bonaventure calls Mary the mediatrix of our salvation: "Maria mediatrix nostræ salutis;" and St. John Damascene: The deliverer of the world: "Salvatrix mundi suo modo." For two reasons, Mary may be called the deliverer of the world and our mediatrix; that is, mediatrix of grace, as Jesus Christ is the mediator of justice. First, by the consent she gave to the incarnation of the Word; for by such a consent, says St. Bernardine, she procured for us salvation: “Per hunc consensum omnium salutem procuravit.” Secondly, by the consent which Mary gave to the death of her Son, being willing that for our salvation, he should be sacrificed on the cross. I will say to thee then, oh mother of my Saviour, thou who once didst offer to God the life of thy Son, save me now by thy intercession.

3d. “Virgo veneranda:” Virgin most venerable. St. Anselm declares, that when we say of Mary that she is the mother of God, we say that she surpasses in greatness, after God, everything that can be conceived or expressed, whence he says to her: Oh Lady, nothing is equal to thee for every thing is either above thee, and that is God; or it is beneath thee, and that is every thing that is not God. In a word, St. Bernardine says that God alone can know the greatness of Mary;[8566] and the blessed Albertus Magnus affirms that Mary could not be more united to God except by becoming God. “Magis Deo conjungi non potuit, nisi fieret Deus.” Truly worthy then of our veneration is this great mother of God, for God himself could not make her greater than he has done, by making her his mother. Oh, mother of God, and my mother, Mary, I adore thee, and would wish thee to be adored by all hearts, as that exalted Lady thou art. Have mercy on a poor sinner, who loves thee and trusts in thee. Virgin most venerable, pray for us: “Virgo veneranda, ora pro nobis.”

FOURTH DAY

1st. Virgo prædicanda:” Virgin to be praised. The holy Church sings that this divine mother is worthy of all praise: “Omni laude dignissima;” for according to St. Ildephonsus, all praise that is given to the blessed Virgin is an honor paid to her Son: “Refunditur in filium quod impenditur matri.” With reason, then, did St. George of Nicomedia declare that the praises given to Mary God accepts, as if offered to himself.[8567] The holy Virgin promises paradise to him who endeavors to make her known and loved.[8568] Richard of St. Lawrence says that Mary will honor in eternity those who honor her in this life.[8569] St. Anselm says, that as Mary, by being mother of God, was the means of saving sinners, so sinners receive salvation by proclaiming the praises of Mary. Not all can be preachers; but all can praise her, and tell others, when speaking familiarly with relatives and friends, of the merits of Mary, of her power and her mercy, and thus induce them to become servants of this divine mother. Oh queen of heaven, from this day I wish to do all that I can to make thee venerated and loved by all. Accept this my desire, and help me to fulfil it: in the mean time admit me among the number of thy servants, and no longer permit me to be a slave of Lucifer.

2d. “Virgo potens:” Virgin most powerful. And who among the saints is so powerful with God as his most holy mother? She obtains whatever she wishes, as St. Bernard has said: It is enough that thou dost wish, and all things are done: “Velis tu et omnia fient.” St. Peter Damian even says that when Mary asks graces from God she does not pray, but in a certain manner commands.[8570] Thus the Son honors this mother whom he loves so much, by granting her whatever she asks, even favors for sinners. Hence St. Germanus says: Thou art the mother of God, omnipotent to save sinners, and thou hast no need of any other recommendation with God, for thou art the mother of true life. Oh, Mary thou canst make me holy; in thee I trust.

3d. “Virgo clemens:” Most clement Virgin. As Mary is powerful with God, so is she clement and merciful towards those who have recourse to her intercession. Neither the power nor the will is wanting to her, as St. Bernard says: “Nec facultas, nec voluntas illi deesse potest.” The power to save us cannot be wanting to Mary, for she is mother of God; neither can the will be wanting to aid us, for she is our mother. And who has ever had recourse to Mary and been abandoned? Let him cease to praise thy mercy, says again St. Bernard, who remembers having ever invoked thee without being heard.[8571] St. Bonaventure asserts that the desire of Mary to be invoked by us, in order that she may dispense to us her favors more abundantly, is so great, that she not only considers herself offended by those who injure her, but also by those who do not ask favors of her.[8572] Thus it is not needful to pray long to this mother of mercy, in order to obtain her aid; it is enough to ask it of her with confidence. Her clemency comes to our aid before we invoke it, as Richard of St. Victor says: “Velocius occurrit ejus pietas, quam invocetur;” and he gives us the reason, saying: She cannot see our miseries, and not be moved by them: “Non potest miserias scire, et non subvenire.” Behold, then, oh Mary, behold my miseries, and succor me: “Virgo clemens, ora pro nobis,”

FIFTH DAY

1st. “Virgo fidelis:” Virgin most faithful. Blessed is he who with his prayers, watches at the gates of Mary, as the poor wait at the gates of the rich to obtain relief! “Blessed is the man,” as she herself says, “that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates!”[8573] Oh, that we were faithful in serving this divine mother, as she is faithful in succoring us when we pray to her! Mary promises to those who serve and honor her, that they shall be free from sins, and shall obtain eternal salvation. “They that work by me shall not sin. . . . They that explain me shall have life everlasting.”[8574] She invites all to come to her, and promises them every grace that they hope for: “In me is all grace of the way and of the truth; in me is all hope of life and of virtue . . . come over to me all.”[8575] St. Lawrence Justinian applies to Mary that other text of Ecclesiasticus: Her bands are a healthful binding: “Vincula illius alligatura salutaris;”[8576] and then adds: “Wherefore bands? unfess to bind her servants, that they may not go astray into unlawful fields.”[8577] Mary binds her servants that they may not take too much liberty, and thus cause their ruin. Oh mother of God, in thee I place all my hopes: thou must save me from falling again into sin. Oh my Lady, do not abandon me; obtain for me the grace to die rather than to lose the grace of God.

2d. “Causa nostræ latitiæ:” Cause of our joy. As after the darkness and gloom of night, the dawn is the cause of joy, thus after the darkness of sin, which for four thousand years before the coming of Jesus Christ had prevailed on earth, the birth of Mary, our Aurora, brought joy to the world. When Mary was born, the morning rose, says a holy Father: “Nata Maria, surrexit Aurora.” The dawn is the precursor of the sun, and Mary was the precursor of the incarnate Word, the Sun of Justice and our Redeemer, who by his death, freed us from eternal death. With reason does the Church sing of the nativity of Mary: “Thy birth, oh holy mother of God, announced joy to the whole world.”[8578] And as Mary was the beginning of our joy, so is she also the completion of it; for St. Bernard says that Jesus Christ has placed the whole treasure of his merits in the hands of his mother, so that every good we receive we may receive through Mary.[8579] Oh mother of God, thou art my joy and my hope, for thou dost refuse thy favor to none, and thou dost obtain from God whatever thou dost wish.

3d. “Vas insigne devotionis:” Vessel of singular devotion. Devotion, as St. Thomas teaches, consists in the readiness of our will to conform to the will of God. This readiness was the principal virtue that rendered his most holy mother so dear to God. And this we are given to understand by the answer of our Lord to the woman who called blessed the womb that bore him: “Yea rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.”[8580] By this, according to Bede, the Lord intended to say, that Mary was happy by the union of her will with that of God, than by being his mother. That flower which always turns towards the sun is a true type of Mary. The divine will alone was the only aim and satisfaction of the heart of Mary, as she herself sang: “My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.”[8581] Oh, blessed art thou, my Lady, who wast always and entirely united to the divine will! Obtain for me the grace to live for the remainder of my life always in uniformity with the will of God.

SIXTH DAY

1st. “Rosa mystica:” Mystical rose. It is said of Mary, in the holy Canticles, that she was the inclosed garden of God: “Hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa.”[8582] And St. Bernard explaining this passage, says that the Lord planted in this garden all the flowers that adorn the Church, and among others the violet of humility, the lily of purity, and the rose of charity. The rose is red; and therefore Mary is called the rose, according to the Idiot, on account of the ardent charity with which her heart was always inflamed towards God, and towards us.[8583] And where can we find an advocate who is more occupied with our salvation, and who loves us more than Mary? We acknowledge that one alone in heaven is solicitous for us, as St. Augustine says of her.[8584] Oh my dear mother, if I could love as thou lovest me! I will not, however, fail of doing what I can to honor and love thee; my sweet Lady, obtain for me the grace to be faithful to thee.

2nd. “Turris Davidica:” Tower of David. Mary is called, in the holy Canticles, Tower of David: “Thy neck is as the tower of David; a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the armor of valiant men.”[8585] St. Bernardine says, that the tower of David stood on high, that is, on Sion; and therefore Mary is called “The Tower of David,” to denote the elevation of this great creature: as Sion was a most lofty place, so the blessed Virgin was most exalted.[8586] Hence, of Mary it is said in the psalms, that her sanctity in the beginning was more exalted than the mountains: “Fundamenta ejus in montibus sanctis.”[8587] St. Gregory explains it by saying, that the divine mother was more holy in the first moments of her life than the saints have been at the moment of their death. Oh my queen and mother, I rejoice in thy greatness, and am ready to give my life that thy glory should not be diminished in the least degree, if it were possible that it could be diminished. Oh, that I might give all my blood to cause all the nations of the earth to honor and love thee as the Lady thou art!

3d. “Turris eburnea;” Tower of ivory. Thus Mary is also called: Thy neck is as a tower of ivory: “Collum tuum sicut turris eburnea.”[8588] Mary is called the neck, for she is the mystic neck through whom from the head, Jesus Christ, are transmitted to us the faithful, who are the members of the mystic body of the Church, the vital spirits, namely, the divine help which preserves in us the life of grace. In the words of St. Bernardine: Through the Virgin, the life-giving graces flow from Christ, the head, into his mystic body.[8589] The saint adds, that from the time when Mary conceived in her womb the incarnate Word, she received from God such honor, that no one could receive any grace except through her hands. Ivory, in a word, is smooth and strong, hence Rupert the Abbot writes of Mary: As a tower of ivory beautiful in the eye of God, terrible to the devil.[8590] Thou, then, oh my Lady, because thou art so beloved by God, canst obtain for us every blessing; and because thou art terrible to demons, thou canst liberate us from all their snares. Have pity on us, for we glory in living under thy protection.

SEVENTH DAY

1st. “Domus aurea:” House of gold. Gold is the symbol of love. Hence the blessed Albertus Magnus calls Mary, The golden temple of charity: “Templum aureum charitatis.” And with reason; for St. Thomas says, that as every thing in the temple was covered with gold, so the beautiful soul of Mary was filled with sanctity.[8591] Mary was that house of gold which the Eternal Wisdom, that is the divine Word, chose for his habitation on this earth: Wisdom hath built herself a house: “Sapientia ædificavit sibi domum.”[8592] Now this house of God, says Richard of St. Lawrence, is so rich that it can relieve all our miseries.[8593] Oh Mary, thou dost love God so much that thou dost desire to see him beloved by all. This is the grace that above all others I ask of thee, and hope from thee; obtain from me a great love to God.

2d. “Fœderis arca:” Ark of the covenant. Ischio calls Mary: An ark more spacious than that of Noe: “Area Noe largior:” for in that only two animals of each kind were received, but under the mantle of Mary all find room both just and sinners. This was one day revealed to St. Gertrude, who saw a multitude of wild beast, lions, leopards, &c., who took refuge under the mantle of Mary; and she did not drive them away, but with kind hand caressed them, so that they might not fly away. The brutes who entered into the ark remained brutes; but sinners, who take shelter under the mantle of Mary, do not remain sinners. She will certainly change their hearts and render them dear to God. The Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget: “However a man may have sinned, if with a true purpose of amendment, he returns to me, I am ready at once to receive him; neither do I look upon the sins with which he is laden, but only whether he comes with good dispositions; and then I do not disdain to bind up and heal his wounds, for I am called, and truly am, the mother of mercy.” Oh mother of mercy, I will then say to thee with St. Augustine, remember that it has never been known that a sinner was rejected by thee, who had recourse to thee for help; I, a miserable sinner, invoke and trust in thee.

3d. “Janua cœli:” Gate of heaven. Mary is called the gate of heaven, because no one can enter into heaven, as St. Bonaventure declares, except through Mary.[8594] In Jerusalem is my power: “In Jerusalem potestas mea,” says our queen.[8595] And Richard of St. Lawrence adds: Commanding what I will, and introducing whom I will: “Imperando quod volo, et quos volo introducendo.” I can obtain whatever I wish for my servants, and introduce whom I will into paradise. Therefore St. Bonaventure says: Those who enjoy the favor of Mary, are recognized as citizens of paradise; and those who are like her, that is, have the grace to be her servants, are written in the book of life. For this reason St. Bernardine de Bustis calls Mary the book of life, and says that he who through devotion to her finds himself written in this book, will certainly be saved. Ah, my mother, in thee I place the hopes of my eternal salvation. I love thee, save thou me: do not permit a servant of thine who loves thee to go to blaspheme thee in hell.

EIGHTH DAY

1st. “Stella matutina:” Morning star. Mary is called by St. John Damascene: The star that precedes the sun: “Stella demonstrans solem.” As the morning star precedes the sun, so devotion to the holy Virgin precedes the sun of divine grace; and St. Germanus says, that devotion towards Mary in a soul, is a sign that it is, or soon will be, in the state of grace. By the Church our Lady is also called: “Star of the sea,” for, as St. Thomas explains it, as in the time of tempest mariners are guided into port by the star, so by Mary we are guided over the sea of this world to paradise.[8596] Therefore St. Bernard gives us this advice: If you do not wish to be overwhelmed by the tempest of temptations, do not turn your eyes from this star of salvation.[8597] And then he adds: Following Mary, you cannot go astray; if Mary protects you, you cannot fear being lost; if Mary favors you, you will arrive at paradise.

2d. “Salus infirmorum:” Health of the weak. Mary is called by St. Simon Stock: The medicine of sinners: “Peccatorum medicina;” and by St. Ephrem, not only medicine, but health itself: Firm health for those who have recourse to her: “Salus firma recurrentium ad eam.”[8598] For he who has recourse to Mary not only finds medicine, but he finds health, as she herself promises to him who seeks her: “He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.”[8599] Neither should we fear that on account of the loathsomeness of our wounds she will refuse to take care of us. She is our mother, and as a mother does not shrink from taking care of a child covered with wounds, so this celestial physician does not refuse to cure her servants who have recourse to her. Wherefore St. Bernard says: Oh mother of God, thou hast no horror of a sinner however loathsome he may be; if he sighs for thee, thou wilt rescue him with thine own hand from despair.

3d. “Refugium peccatorum: “Refuge of sinners. Thus Mary is called by St. Germanus: The refuge, ever ready, for all sinners: “Refugium paratissimum peccatorum;” for the Idiot says, that she cannot reject any sinner, but as soon as he has recourse to her, Mary receives him.[8600] Hence St. John Damascene calls Mary not only the refuge of the innocent, but also of the bad who implore her protection.[8601] And St. Anselm also says: Thou dost embrace with maternal love the sinner who is despised by the whole world, neither dost thou leave the wretched until thou has reconciled them to their God.[8602] By which he gives us to understand that the sinner, being hated by God, is rendered odious and abominable in the eyes of all creatures; but if he has recourse to the refuge of sinners, Mary not only does not depise him, but affectionately embraces him, and does not abandon him until he is pardoned by her Son and our Judge, Jesus Christ. Then, oh my Lady, if thou art the refuge of all sinners, thou art also my refuge. Thou who dost not despise any one who has recourse to thee, do not despise me, for to thee I recommend myself: "Refugium peccatorum, ora pro nobis." Oh Mary, pray for us and save us.

NINTH DAY

1st. "Consolatrix afflictorum:" Comforter of the afflicted. St. Germanus writes: Oh Mary, who has so great care of our welfare as thou hast? Is there any one who relieves us in our afflictions as thou dost?[8603] No, replies St. Antoninus: There is none among the saints who compassionates our miseries as this most pious Lady.[8604] And because the miseries which most afflict us are the maladies of the soul, the blessed Henry Suso calls Mary: The most faithful consoler of sinners: "Consolatrix fidelissima peccatorum." We need only show to Mary the wounds of our souls, and she immediately comes to our aid with her prayers, and consoles us. Even as Richard of St. Victor teaches, her piety prevents us and relieves us before we invoke her: "Velocius occurrit quam invocetur." Let us say to her, then, with St. Bonaventure: Oh Mary, always console us, but especially at the hour of our death. Come, then, and take our souls, and present them to thy Son, who is to be our Judge.

2d. "Auxilium Christianorum:" Help of Christians. St. John of Damascus calls her: Aid prepared and ready to free us from all dangers.[8605] The help of Mary is, as St. Cosmas of Jerusalem declares, omnipotent to save us from sin and from hell. St. Bernard addressed her in these words: Thou art invincible in the defence of thy servants: "Tu bellatrix egregia," doing battle with the demons who assail them. And for this reason Mary is called in the sacred Canticles: Terrible as an army set in array: "Terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.”[8606] Ah, my queen, if I had always had recourse to thee I should never have been conquered by my enemies. From henceforth thou must be my strength; in my temptations I will always invoke thee, and from thee I hope for victory.

3d. “Regina martyrum:” Queen of martyrs. Mary is justly called queen of martyrs; for her martyrdom, on the death of her Son on the cross, exceeded the sufferings of all the martyrs. And there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother: “Stabat juxta crucem mater ejus.” Mothers fly from their children when they see them dying before their eyes and cannot help them; Mary does not fly, but remains with Jesus until she sees him expire: “Stabat juxta crucem.” And while Jesus is in his agony she is offering to the eternal Father the life of her Son for our salvation; but in offering it she also endures the agony of death, and experiences a suffering greater than that of every death. Oh my afflicted mother, by the merits of the sufferings thou didst endure at the foot of the cross, obtain for me a true sorrow for my sins and love for Jesus my redeemer. And by that sword which pierced thy heart when thou didst see him bow his head and expire, I pray thee to assist me at the moment of my death, and obtain for me then eternal salvation, that I may come to love thee forever with thy Son Jesus.

MEDITATIONS

MEDITATION

FOR THE DAY OF THE PURIFICATION OF MARY AND THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS

1st. THE time having arrived when Mary was to go, according to the law, to be purified in the temple and to present Jesus to the divine Father, she departed with Joseph. Joseph took the two turtle-doves that were to be offered, and Mary takes her dear infant—she takes the divine Lamb to offer him to God as a sign of that great sacrifice which this Son was one day to complete upon the cross. Oh my God, I also unite my offering to that of Mary; I offer thee thy Son made man, and by his merits I pray thee to give me thy grace. I do not merit it, but Jesus, to obtain it for me, has sacrificed himself to thee. For love then of Jesus, have pity on me.

2d. Behold, Mary enters into the temple and makes the oblation of her Son in the name of the whole human race. But especially on this day does Jesus offer himself to his eternal Father: Behold me, he says, oh my Father, to thee I consecrate my whole life: thou hast sent me into the world to save it; behold my blood and my life, I offer all to thee for the salvation of the world. Unhappy should I be, my dear Redeemer, if thou hadst not satisfied for me the divine justice. I thank thee for it with my whole soul, and I love thee with my whole heart. And whom should I love if I do not love a God who has sacrificed his life for me?

3d. This sacrifice was more dear to God than if all men and all the angels had offered to him their lives. Yes, because in this offering alone of Jesus the eternal Father received an infinite honor and an infinite satisfaction. Jesus Christ once said to the blessed Angela of Foligno: “I have offered myself for thee that thou mayest offer thyself to me.” Yes, my Jesus, as thou didst offer to the Father thy life for me, I offer to thee my life and my whole self. Hitherto I have with so great ingratitude slighted thee, but thou hast promised to forget the offences of a sinner who repents of having offended thee; my Jesus, I grieve for it, and I wish to die of grief. I was dead in sin;

from thee I hope for life, and my life will be to love thee, oh Infinite Good. Grant that I may love thee, and I will ask of thee nothing more. Dispense the goods of this earth to those who desire them; I desire nothing but the treasure of thy love. My Jesus, thou art alone enough for me. Oh my queen and mother Mary, through thee I hope for every good.

MEDITATION

FOR THE DAY OF THE ANNUNCIATION TO MARY

1st. WHEN God wished to send his Son to make himself man that he might redeem lost man, he chose for him a virgin mother, among all virgins the most pure, the most holy, and the most humble. And behold, whilst Mary was in her poor dwelling praying to God for the coming of the Redeemer, an angel appears and salutes her, and says to her: “Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.”[8607] And what does the humble Virgin when she hears such words in her honor? She is not elated, but is silent and troubled, esteeming herself too unworthy of these praises. She was troubled at his saying: “Turbata est in sermone ejus.”[8608] Oh Mary, thou so humble and I so proud, obtain for me holy humility.

2nd. Did not those praises, at least, cause Mary to suspect that she was the destined mother of the Redeemer? No, they only caused her to conceive a great fear of herself. Wherefore it was necessary that he should encourage her not to be afraid: “Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God.”[8609] And then he announced to her that she was chosen to be mother of the Savior of the world: “Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus.”[8610] Blessed art thou, oh Mary! how dear thou wast and art to thy God! Have pity on me.

3rd. Take courage, says St. Bernard, addressing her; why delay, holy Virgin, in giving thy consent? The eternal Word awaits it, in order to clothe himself with flesh, and become thy Son. We, who are all condemned to eternal death, are waiting for it in misery; if thou dost accept and consent to be his mother, we shall all be delivered. Quickly, oh Lady, answer; do not delay giving to the world that salvation which depends on thy consent. But rejoice, for Mary already answers to the angel: Behold, she says, the servant of the Lord, bound to do whatever her Lord commands:[8611] if he chooses a servant for his mother, the servant is not to be praised, but only the goodness of God, who wishes thus to honor her. Oh Mary, most humble, thou, by thy humility, hast so enamored thy God that thou hast constrained him to make himself thy Son and our Redeemer. I know that thy Son denies thee nothing that thou dost ask; ask of him to give me his holy love; ask of him to pardon me all the offences which I have committed against him; ask of him to give me perseverance until death. In a word, recommend to him my soul, for thy recommendations are never rejected by a Son who loves thee so much. Oh Mary, thou must save me: thou art my hope.

MEDITATION FOR THE SECOND DAY OF JULY

ON THE FEAST OF THE VISITATION OF MARY

1st. MARY set out from Nazareth to go to the city of Hebron, distant, according to Broccardo, seventy miles; that is to say, at least seven days' journey over rough mountains and with no other companion than her spouse Joseph. The holy Virgin hastens, as St. Luke informs us: She went into the mountainous country in haste: "Abiit in montana cum festinatione."[8612] Tell us, oh holy Lady, why thou didst undertake this long and difficult journey, and why thou didst thus hasten on thy way? I am going, she answers, to exercise my office of charity; I am going to console a family. If, then, oh great mother of God, thy office is to console and dispense graces to souls, ah come to console and visit my soul. Thy visit then sanctified the house of Elizabeth; come, oh Mary, and sanctify me also.

2d. And now the holy Virgin has arrived at the house of Elizabeth. She had been made mother of God, but she is the first to salute her relation. She entered, and saluted Elizabeth: Intravit et salutavit Elisabeth. Elizabeth enlightened by the Lord, already knows that the divine Word has become man and the Son of Mary; hence she calls her blessed among women, and blesses that divine fruit that was in her womb: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb."[8613] And, filled (at the same time) with confusion and joy, she exclaims: "And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"[8614] But what does the humble Mary answer to these words? She answers: My soul doth magnify the Lord: "Magnificat anima mea Dominum." As if she would say: Ah, Elizabeth, you praise me; but I praise my God that he has chosen to exalt me, his poor servant, to be his mother: he hath regarded the humility of his servant: “Respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ.” Oh most holy Mary, since thou dost dispense so many graces to those who ask them of thee, I pray thee to give me thy humility. Thou dost esteem thyself as nothing before God; but I am worse than nothing, for I am, at the same time, nothing and a sinner. Thou canst make me humble. Make me so through love of that God who has made thee his mother.

3d. But at the first words of Mary, when she salutes Elizabeth, what happens? The child, John, exults with joy on account of the divine grace given him before his birth;[8615] Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit, and Zachary, the Father of the Baptist, not long after, is consoled by recovering his speech. So that it is indeed true, oh my queen and mother, that through thee the divine graces are dispensed, and souls are sanctified. Do not forget, then, oh my most dear Lady, me, thy poor servant, who loves thee, and has placed in thee all my hopes. Thy prayers are all graciously heard by that God who loves thee so much. Pray, then, for me, oh my mother, and make me holy.

MEDITATION FOR THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF AUGUST

ON THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY INTO HEAVEN

1st. MARY dies; but how does she die? She dies entirely detached from any affection for created things, and dies consumed with that divine love with which her most holy heart was always and entirely inflamed. Oh holy mother, thou hast already left the earth; do not forget us, miserable pilgrims, who remain in this valley of tears struggling against so many enemies, who desire to see us lost in hell. Ah, by the merits of thy precious death, obtain for us detachment from earthly things, pardon of our sins, love to God, and holy perseverance; and, when the hour of our death shall arrive, assist us from heaven with thy prayers, and obtain for us to come and kiss thy feet in paradise.

2d. Mary dies, and her most pure body is carried by the holy apostles, and placed in the sepulchre, and is guarded by angels for three days, after which it is transported to paradise; but her beautiful soul entered, as soon as she expired, the kingdom of the blessed, accompanied by innumerable angels and by her Son himself. Having entered heaven, she humbly presents herself to God, adores him, and, with unbounded love, thanks him for all the graces which she has received from him. God embraces her, blesses her, and constitutes her queen of the universe, exalting her above all the angels and saints.[8616] Now, if the human mind, as the apostle says, cannot arrive at the comprehension of the great glory that God is preparing in heaven for his servants who have loved him on this earth, what must be the glory that he gave to this his most holy mother, who on earth has loved him more than all the saints and angels, and has loved him with all her power! So that Mary alone, when she entered heaven, could say to God: Oh my Lord, if I have not loved thee on earth as thou dost merit, at least I have loved thee as much as I could.

3d. Let us rejoice with Mary in the glory with which her God has enriched her; and let us also rejoice for ourselves, for Mary, at the same time was made queen of the world, and appointed our advocate. She is so merciful an advocate, that she consents to defend all sinners who recommend themselves to her; and she is so powerful with our Judge that she gains all the causes which she defends. Oh our queen and advocate, in thy hand is our salvation: if thou dost pray for us, we shall be saved. Say to thy Son that thou dost wish us with thee in paradise. He denies thee nothing that thou dost ask. Oh our life, our sweetness, and our hope! Mary, pray Jesus for us.

MEDICATION FOR THE EIGHTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

ON, THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF MARY

1st. BEFORE the birth of Mary the world was lost in the darkness of sin. Mary was born, and the morning arose: “Nata Maria, surrexit auroro,” says a holy Father. Already it had been said of Mary: “Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising?”[8617] As the earth rejoices when the day dawns, for the dawn is the precursor of the sun, so Mary at her birth gave joy to the whole world, for she was the precursor of the sun of justice, Jesus Christ, who being made her son, came to save us by his death; therefore the Church sings; “Thy nativity, oh virgin mother of God, announced joy to the whole world, for from thee the sun of justice has arisen, who has given us life eternal."[8618] Thus, when Mary was born, we received our remedy, our consolation, and our salvation; for through Mary we have received the Saviour.

2d. This child being then destined for the mother of the eternal Word, God bestowed on her so much grace, that even from her immaculate conception her sanctity excelled the sanctity of all the saints and angels united, for she received a grace of a superior order, corresponding to the dignity of mother of God. Oh holy infant, oh full of grace, I, a miserable sinner, salute thee and adore thee. Thou art the beloved, the delight of God; have pity on me, who through my sins have been hateful and abominable in the eyes of God. Thou, oh most pure Virgin, hast so well known even from thy infancy how to gain the heart of God, that he denies thee nothing, and grants all that thou dost ask of him. In thee then I place my hopes. Recommend me to thy Son, and I shall be saved.

3d. At the same time that Mary was destined to be the mother of our Redeemer, she was also destined to be the mediatrix between God and us sinners. Hence the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, says, that Mary received grace sufficient to save all men; and therefore St. Bernard calls Mary a channel so full that we can all partake of its fulness.[8619] Oh my queen, oh mediatrix of sinners, perform thy office and intercede for me! Let not my sins prevent me from confiding in thee, oh great mother of God; no, I trust in thee, and trust in thee so much, that if my salvation were in my own hands, yet I would place it all in thine. Oh Mary, receive me under thy protection, and this is enough for me.

MEDITATION FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF NOVEMBER

ON THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF MARY

1st. THE holy child Mary, having hardly arrived at the age of three years, entreated her parents that she might be placed in the temple according to the promise which they had made. The day appointed having arrived, the immaculate young Virgin leaves Nazareth with St. Joachim and St. Anne, accompanied by a host of angels who attend that holy child who was destined for the mother of their Creator. Go, says St. Germanus, go, oh blessed Virgin, to the house of the Lord, to await the Holy Spirit, who is to come to render thee mother of the eternal Word.

2d. The holy company having arrived at the temple in Jerusalem, the holy child turns to her parents, and kneeling, kisses their hands, asks their blessing, and then, without looking back, ascends the steps of the temple. There renouncing entirely the world and all things that the world could give her, she offers and consecrates herself wholly to God. Henceforth the life of Mary in the temple was but one continual exercise of love, and the offering of her whole self to her Lord. She increased from hour to hour, nay, from moment to moment, in holy virtues, sustained indeed by divine grace, but always endeavoring, with all her powers, to correspond with grace. Mary herself revealed this to St. Elizabeth, the virgin, saying: “Do you think that I obtained the graces and virtues without an effort? Know that I received from God no grace without great effort, continual prayer, an ardent desire, and many tears and penances.”

3d. Thus Mary, a young virgin in the temple, did nothing but pray. And seeing the human race lost and hateful to God, she especially prayed for the coming of the Messias, desiring then to be the servant of that happy Virgin who was to be the mother of God. Oh, who would have said to her then: Oh holy Lady, know that already through thy prayers the Son of God is hastening to come and redeem the world; and know that thou art the blessed one chosen to be the mother of thy Creator. Oh beloved of God, most holy child, thou prayest for all, pray also for me. Thou hast consecrated thyself wholly even from infancy, to the love of thy God; ah, obtain for me at least that during the remaining years of my life I may live for God alone. Today together with thee, I renounce all creatures, and consecrate myself to the love of my Lord. I also offer myself to thee, oh my queen, to serve thee forever. Accept me for thy special servant, and obtain for me the grace to be faithful to thee and to thy Son, that I may come one day to praise thee and love thee eternally in paradise.

MEDITATION FOR THE EIGHTH DAY OF DECEMBER

ON THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

1st. IT was indeed befitting the three divine persons to preserve Mary from original sin. It was befitting the Father, for Mary was his first-born daughter. As Jesus was the first-born of God: “Primogenitus omnis creaturæ,”[8620] so Mary, being destined to become the mother of Jesus, God always considered her as his adopted first-born daughter, and therefore always possessed her by his grace: “Dominus possedit me in initio viarum suarum.”[8621] It was, then, befitting the honor of the Son that the Father should preserve the mother from every stain of sin. It was also fitting, because he destined this his daughter to crush the head of the infernal serpent which had seduced man, as we read: Ipsa conteret caput tuum. How could he then permit that she should first be his slave? Moreover, Mary was also destined to be the advocate of sinners; and for this reason also it was meet that God should preserve her from sin, that she might not appear guilty of the very sin of those for whom she was to intercede.

2d. It was befitting the Son that his mother should be immaculate. He chose her himself for his mother and it cannot be believed that a son who has it in his power to choose a queen for his mother, would choose a slave. How then could we believe that the eternal Word would wish his mother once defiled by sin, and once an enemy of God, when it was in his power to have an immaculate mother and one always the friend of God? Moreover, St. Augustine says: The flesh of Christ is the flesh of Mary: “Caro Christi caro est Mariæ.” The Son of God would have felt horror at taking flesh from St. Agnes, St. Gertrude, or St. Theresa, because those holy virgins, before baptism, were stained by sin, and the devil would have been able to reproach him for being clothed with a flesh which once had been subject to him. But he felt no horror at becoming man in the womb of Mary: “Non horruisti virginis uterum,” Mary having always been pure and immaculate. Besides, St. Thomas says that Mary was preserved from every actual sin, even venial, for otherwise she would not have been a fitting mother of God; but how much less fit would she have been, if she had been defiled by original sin, which renders the soul odious to God!

3d. It was befitting the Holy Spirit that this his most beloved spouse should be immaculate. The redemption of men who had already fallen into sin being decreed, he wished that this his spouse should be redeemed in the most noble manner, namely, by being preserved from falling into sin. And if God preserved the body of Mary after her death, how much more ought we to believe that he would preserve her soul from the corruption of guilt? For this reason the divine spouse called her an inclosed garden, a sealed fountain (Cant.) for the enemies never entered the blessed soul of Mary. Therefore he praised her, calling her all fair, always beloved, and spotless. Ah, my most lovely Lady, it is my delight to see thee so dear to thy God through thy purity and beauty. I thank God for having preserved thee from every sin. Ah, my queen, since thou art so loved by the most Holy Trinity, do not disdain to cast thy eyes upon my soul so defiled by sin, that thou mayest obtain for me, from God, pardon and eternal salvation. Look upon me and change me. Thou, by thy sweetness, hast drawn so many hearts to love thee, draw also my heart, that henceforth I may love no other than God and thee. Thou knowest that in thee I have placed all my hopes; my dear mother, do not abandon me. Assist me always by thy intercession, in life and especially in death; make me then to die invoking thee, and loving thee, that I may come to love thee forever in paradise.

PRAYERS TO THE DIVINE MOTHER FOR EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK

SUNDAY

PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY TO OBTAIN THE PARDON OF SINS

BEHOLD, oh mother of God, at thy feet a miserable sinner, the slave of hell, who has recourse to thee, and trusts in thee. I do not even merit that thou shouldst look upon me, but I know that having seen thy Son die to save sinners, thou hast the greatest desire to aid them. Oh mother of mercy, look on my miseries, and have pity on me. I hear thee called by all: The refuge of sinners, the hope of the desperate, the help of the abandoned. Then thou art my refuge, my hope, my help. Thou must save me by thy intercession. Succor me for the love of Jesus Christ, give thy hand to a poor fallen sinner who recommends himself to thee. I know that thou dost find consolation in helping the sinner when thou canst; help me then, for thou canst help me. I, by my sins have lost the grace of God and my own soul. Now I place myself in thy hands; tell me what I must do to return to the favor of my Lord, for I will do it without delay. He sends me to thee, that thou mayest succor me, and he wishes me to have recourse to thy mercy, that not only the merits of thy Son, but also thy prayers may aid in my salvation. To thee then I have recourse; thou who dost pray for so many others, pray also to Jesus for me. Ask him to pardon me, and he will pardon me; tell him that thou dost desire my salvation, and he will save me. Make known the good that thou canst do to those who confide in thee. Amen; thus I hope, thus may it be.

MONDAY

PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY TO OBTAIN HOLY PERSEVERANCE

OH queen of heaven, I who once have been a miserable slave of Lucifer, now dedicate myself to thee, as thy servant forever, and offer myself to honor and serve thee for the whole life; accept me, do not refuse me as I merit. Oh my mother, I have placed in thee all my hopes, from thee I hope all blessings. I thank and bless God, who in his mercy has given me this confidence in thee, which I consider as the great earnest of my salvation. Ah, how have I fallen in my past life, I a miserable sinner, because I have not had recourse to thee! Now I hope to be pardoned through the merits of Jesus Christ, and through thy prayers. But I may again lose the divine grace; the danger is not over; my enemies do not sleep. How many new temptations remain for me to conquer! Ah, my most sweet Lady, protect me, and do not permit me again to be their slave; help me always. I know that thou wilt help me, and with thy help I shall conquer, if I recommend myself to thee; but this I fear, that in occasions of falling into sin, I may neglect to call on thee, and thus may be lost. This grace I ask of thee, obtain for me that in the assaults of hell, I may always have recourse to thee, saying: Mary, aid me. My good mother, do not permit me to lose my God.

TUESDAY

PRAYER TO MARY MOST HOLY TO OBTAIN A GOOD DEATH

OH Mary, what will be my death? I tremble and am confounded when I now consider my sins, and think of that great, decisive moment of my salvation or eternal damnation, when I shall die and be judged. Oh my most sweet mother, my hopes are in the blood of Jesus Christ, and in thy intercession. Oh consoler of the afflicted, do not abandon me then; do not cease consoling me in that great affliction. If now I am tormented with remorse on account of past sins, the uncertainty of pardon, the danger of relapse, and the rigor of divine justice, what will become of me then? If thou dost not aid me, I am lost. Ah, my Lady, before my death arrives, obtain for me a great sorrow for my sins, a true amendment, and fidelity to God for the life that remains to me. And when the last moment of my life comes, oh Mary my hope, aid me then in my great distress, and encourage me then that I may not despair at the sight of my sins which the demon will present to me. Obtain for me the grace to invoke thee then more constantly, that I may expire with thy sweet name, and that of thy most holy Son, upon my lips. And now, oh Lady, pardon my boldness: before I expire come thyself to console me by thy presence. This grace thou hast granted to so many of thy servants, I also wish and hope for it. I am, indeed, a sinner, and I do not merit it; but I am thy servant, who loves thee, and has great confidence in thee. Oh Mary, I wait for thee, do not leave me disconsolate. At least, if I am not worthy of so great a favor, assist me from heaven, that I may die in the love of God and of thee, and come to love God and thee eternally in paradise.

WEDNESDAY

PRAYER TO MARY MOST HOLY TO OBTAIN DELIVERANCE FROM HELL

OH my dearest Lady, I thank thee that thou hast so often rescued me from hell: as often as I have deserved it through my sins. Oh miserable sinner! I was already condemned to that prison, and that sentence would perhaps have been executed upon me after my first sin, if thou hadst not in thy mercy helped me. Thou wast not even invoked by me, but by thy mercy alone thou hast restrained the divine justice, and then subduing my hard-heartedness, hast drawn me to take confidence in thee. And oh, into how many sins I should have fallen in the dangers to which I have been exposed, if thou, my most loving mother, hadst not preserved me by the graces which thou hast obtained for me! Ah, my queen, still preserve me from hell. But of what avail will be thy mercy and the favors that thou hast bestowed on me, if I should be condemned? If once I loved thee not, now, after God, I love thee above everything. Ah, do not permit that I should turn my back upon thee and upon God, who, through thee, hath dispensed to me so many mercies. My most amiable Lady, do not permit that I should hate and curse thee in hell. Wilt thou suffer a servant of thine who loves thee to be lost? Oh Mary, what dost thou say to me? I shall be lost if I leave thee. But who could have the heart to leave thee? How could I forget the love thou hast borne me? My mother, since thou hast done so much to save me, complete the work; continue to aid me. Dost thou wish to help me? But what do I say? If thou didst show me so much favor when I lived forgetful of thee, how much more ought I now to hope, when I love thee and recommend myself to thee! No, he who has recourse to thee is never lost; only he who does not recommend himself to thee. Ah, my mother, do not leave me in my own hands, for I shall be lost; make me always to have recourse to thee. Save me, my hope, save me from hell; but first from sin, which alone can condemn me to hell.

THURSDAY

PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY TO OBTAIN PARADISE

OH queen of paradise, who sittest above the choirs of angels, nearest to God; from this vale of misery I, a miserable sinner, salute thee, and pray thee to turn towards me those kind eyes of thine, that dispense graces to all those they look upon. See, oh Mary, in how much danger I now find myself, and must find myself, while I live on this earth, of losing my soul, paradise, and God. In thee, oh Lady, I have placed all hopes. I love thee, and long to come to thee, see thee, and praise thee in paradise. Ah Mary, when will the day come that I shall see myself safe at thy feet, and shall behold the mother of my Lord and my mother, who has been so occupied with my salvation? When shall I kiss that hand which has so many times delivered me from hell and bestowed on me so many graces, when, by my sins, I merited to be hated and abandoned by all? Oh Lady, I have been very ungrateful to thee in my life; but if I come to paradise I will be no more ungrateful. There I will love thee as much as I can, every moment through all eternity, and I will make amends for my ingratitude by blessing thee and thanking thee forever. Above all, I thank God who gives me such confidence in the blood of Jesus Christ and in thee; namely, that thou wilt save me, that thou wilt free me from my sins, and obtain for me light and strenght to execute the divine will, and finally conduct me to the port of paradise. All this have thy servants hoped, and none have been deceived. Neither shall I be deceived. Mary, I wish nothing else; thou must save me. Pray thy Son Jesus, as I also pray him, through the merits of his passion, to preserve in me, and always more increase this confidence, and I shall be saved.

FRIDAY

PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY TO OBTAIN LOVE TOWARDS HER AND JESUS CHRIST

OH Mary, I know that thou art the creature the most noble, the most sublime, the most pure the most beautiful, the most merciful, the most holy; in a word, the most lovely of all creatures. Oh, if all knew thee, oh my Lady, and loved thee as thou dost merit! But I console myself that so many happy souls in heaven and on earth live enamored of thy goodness and beauty. Above all, I rejoice that God himself loves thee alone more than all men and angels united. My most amiable queen, I, a miserable sinner, also love thee, but I love thee too little: I desire a love greater and more tender towards thee; and this thou must obtain for me, for to love thee is a great sign of predestination, and a grace that God does not grant except to those whom he wishes to be saved.

I see myself then, oh my mother, greatly indebted to thy Son. I see that he merits an infinite love. Thou who desirest nothing but to see him loved, this is the grace that above all others thou must obtain for me; obtain for me a great love for Jesus Christ. Thou dost obtain from God whatever thou dost wish; ah, obtain for me this grace, to be so united with the divine will that I may never more be separated from it. I do not ask of thee the goods of earth, neither honors nor riches: I ask of thee what thy heart most desires, I wish to love my God. Is it possible that thou wilt not aid me in this my desire, which pleases thee so much? No, for thou dost even now help me, already thou art praying for me; pray, pray, and never cease to pray until thou seest me in paradise, beyond the danger of being able any more to lose my Lord, and certain of loving him forever, together with thee, my dearest mother.

SATURDAY

PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY TO OBTAIN HER PATRONAGE

OH my most holy mother, I know what graces thou hast obtained for me, and I see the ingratitude of which I have been guilty towards thee. The ungrateful are no longer worthy of favors; but I will not on this account distrust thy mercy, which is greater than my ingratitude. Oh my great advocate, have pity on me. Thou art the dispenser of all the graces which God grants to us miserable sinners, and for this end he has made thee so powerful, so rich, and so merciful, that thou mightest succor us in our miseries. Ah mother of mercy, do not leave me in my poverty. Thou art the advocate of the most wretched and abandoned sinners who have recourse to thee, defend me also, who recommend myself to thee. Do not tell me that it is difficult to gain my cause, for the most desperate causes are all gained when they are defended by thee. In thy hands, then, I place my eternal salvation, and to thee I commit my soul. It was lost; thou, by thy intercession, must save it. I wish to be enrolled among thy most devoted servants; do not cast me out thou dost go in search of the wretched to relieve them; do not abandon a miserable sinner who has recourse to thee. Speak for me; thy Son does whatever thou dost ask of him. Take me under thy protection, and this will be enough: yes, for if thou dost protect me I fear nothing: nothing from my sins, for thou wilt obtain for me the remedy for the injury I have inflicted upon myself; nor from the demons, for thou art more powerful than all hell united; nor from Jesus my Judge himself; for by one prayer of thine he is appeased. I only fear that through my negligence I may cease to invoke thee, and shall thus be lost. My mother, obtain for me the pardon of all my sins, love to Jesus, holy perseverance, a good death, and finally, paradise; especially obtain for me the grace always to recommend myself to thee. It is true that these graces are too much for me who do not merit them, but they are not too much for thee who art so much beloved by God that he grants thee whatever thou dost ask of him. It is enough that thou dost begin to speak, and he denies thee nothing. Pray then to Jesus for me, tell him that thou dost protect me, and he will not fail to have pity on me. My mother, I trust in thee; in this hope I repose and live, and in this I wish to die. Amen.

Live always, Jesus our love and Mary our hope!

LITTLE ROSARY OF THE SEVEN DOLORS OF MARY

INCLINE UNTO MINE AID, OH GOD, &C.

My mother, enable my heart to share thy sorrow for the death of thy Son.

First Dolor.—I pity thee, oh my afflicted mother, on account of the first sword of sorrow that pierced thee, when in the temple, by the prophecy of St. Simeon, all the cruel sufferings that men would inflict on thy beloved Jesus were represented to thee, which thou hadst already learned from the holy Scriptures, even to his death before thy eyes upon the infamous wood of the cross, exhausted of blood and abandoned by all, and thou without the power to defend or relieve him. By that bitter memory, then, which for so many years afflicted thy heart, I pray thee, oh my queen, to obtain for me the grace that always in life and in death I may keep impressed upon my heart the passion of Jesus and thy sorrows.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to God, &c., Oh my mother, &c., as above. Which strophe must always be repeated at the end of each dolor.

Second Dolor.—I pity thee, oh my afflicted mother, on account of the second sword that pierced thee when thou didst behold thy innocent Son, so soon after his birth, threatened with death by those very men for whom he had come into the world; so that thou wast obliged to flee with him by night secretly into Egypt. By the many hardships, then, that thou, a delicate young virgin, in company with thy exiled infant, didst endure in the long and wearisome journey through rough and desert countries, and in thy sojourn in Egypt, where, being unknown and a stranger, thou didst live all those years poor and despised, I pray thee oh my beloved Lady, to obtain for me the grace to suffer with patience, in thy company till death, the trials of this miserable life, that I may be able in the next to be preserved from the eternal sufferings of hell deserved by me. Our Father, &c.

Third Dolor.—I pity thee, oh my afflicted mother, on account of the third sword that pierced thy heart at the loss of thy dear son, Jesus, “who remained absent from thee in Jerusalem for three days, when not seeing thy beloved one by thy side, and not knowing the cause of his absence, I conceive, my loving queen, how in these nights thou didst not repose, and didst naught but sigh for him who was thy only good. By the sighs, then, of those three days, for thee so long and bitter, I pray thee to obtain for me the grace never to lose my God, that I may always live closely united to God, and thus united with him, depart from this world. Our Father, &c.

Fourth Dolor.—I pity thee, my afflicted mother, on account of the fourth sword that pierced thy heart, in seeing thy Jesus condemned to death, bound with ropes and chains, covered with blood and wounds, crowned with thorns, and falling under the weight of the heavy cross which he bore on his bleeding back when going like an innocent lamb to die for love of us. Thine eye then met his eye, and your glances were so many cruel arrows with which each wounded the loving heart of the other. By this great grief, then, I pray thee to obtain for me the grace to live wholly resigned to the will of my God, joyfully bearing my cross with Jesus to the last moment of my life. Our Father, &c.

Fifth Dolor.—I pity thee, oh my afflicted mother, on account of the fifth sword that pierced thy heart, when on Mount Calvary thou didst behold thy beloved son, Jesus, dying slowly before thy eyes, amid so many insults, and in anguish, on that hard bed of the cross, without being able to give him even the least of those comforts which the greatest criminals receive at the hour of death. And I pray thee by the anguish which thou, oh my most loving mother, didst suffer together with thy dying Son, and by the tenderness thou didst feel, when, for the last time he spoke to thee from the cross, and taking leave of thee, left all of us to thee in the person of St. John, as thy children; and thou, still constant, didst behold him bow his head and expire; I pray thee to obtain for me the grace, by thy crucified love, to live and die crucified to every thing in this world, in order to live only to God through my whole life, and thus to enter one day paradise, to enjoy him face to face. Our Father, &c.

Sixth Dolor.—I pity thee, oh my afflicted mother, on account of the sixth sword which pierced thy heart, when thou didst see the kind heart of thy Son pierced through and through after his death—a death endured for those ungrateful men, who, even after his death, were not satisfied with the tortures they had inflicted upon him. By this cruel sorrow, then, which was wholly thine, I pray thee to obtain for me the grace to abide in the heart of Jesus, who was wounded and opened for me; in that heart, I say, which is the beautiful abode of love, where all the souls who love God repose; and that living there, I will never love or think of any thing but God. Most holy Virgin, thou canst do it; from thee I hope for it. Our Father, &c.

Seventh Dolor.—I pity thee, my afflicted mother, on account of the seventh sword that pierced thy heart, on seeing in thy arms thy Son who had just expired, no longer fair and beautiful as thou didst once receive him in the stable of Bethlehem, but covered with blood, livid, and lacerated by wounds which exposed his very bones. My Son, thou saidst, my Son, to what has love brought thee? And when he was borne to the sepulchre, thou didst wish to accompany him thyself, and help to put him in the tomb with thy own hands; and, bidding him a last farewell, thou hast left thy loving heart buried with thy Son. By all the anguish of thy pure soul, obtain for me, oh mother of fair love, pardon for the offences that I have committed against my God, whom I love, and of which I repent with my whole heart. Wilt thou defend me in temptations? Assist me at the hour of my death, that, being saved by the merits of Jesus and thine, I may come one day with thy aid, after this miserable exile, to sing in paradise the praises of Jesus and thine through all eternity. Amen. Our Father, &c.

Pray for us, oh most sorrowful Virgin;

That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ.

LET US PRAY.

OH God, at whose passion, according to the prophecy of Simeon, the sword of sorrow pierced through the most sweet soul of the glorious virgin and mother, Mary, grant that we, who commemorate and reverence her dolors, may experience the blessed effect of thy passion, who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

BENEDICT XIII. granted two hundred days' indulgence for every "Our Father" and every "Hail Mary" to those who recite this little crown in the churches of the Servites of Mary, and has granted the same favor to those who recite it in any place whatever on Fridays or any day during Lent; and on other days, one hundred days for every "Our Father," and "Hail Mary."

To those who recite it entire, seven years. To those who recite it for a year, plenary indulgence, applicable to the souls in purgatory.[8622]

Moreover, let it be observed that there are seven hundred years of indulgence for the dead granted by Clement XII. to those who say, kneeling, the De Profundis at the ringing of the bell.

A LITTLE ROSARY OF THE IMMACULATE MARY

WHICH IS RECITED IN SOME CHURCHES

INCLINE unto mine aid, oh God, &c. Glory, &c. After this, an “Our Father” is recited in honor of the Eternal Father, in thanksgiving for all the graces bestowed on Mary; with four “Hail Marys.” The same is repeated in honor of the Son, and again in honor of the Holy Ghost. After each “Hail Mary” is recited the following verse:

As ’mid the thorns the lily fair
Art thou, Virgin immaculate,
From sin preserved, by him whose care
Did thee his mother blest create.

At the end:

V. Pray for us, oh immaculate Virgin:
Ora pro nobis, Virgo immaculata;
R. That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ:
Ut digni officiamur promissionibus Christi.

Let us Pray.

GRANT to thy servants, we pray thee, oh Lord, the gift of divine grace, that to us, for whom the maternity of the blessed Virgin was the beginning of salvation, the votive commemoration of her conception may bring an increase of peace. By our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRAYERS

DEDICATION OF ONESELF TO MARY

OH most holy virgin mother of God, Mary, I, N., although most unworthy of being thy servant, yet moved by thy wonderful mercy and by the desire to serve thee, choose thee to-day, in presence of my guardian angel, and of the whole celestial court, for my especial Lady, Advocate, and mother, and make the firm resolution that I always will love and serve thee for the future, and do whatever I can to induce also others to love and serve thee. I pray thee, mother, of God, and my most kind and amiable mother, by the blood of thy divine Son which was shed for me, that thou wilt receive me into the number of thy servants for thy child and servant forever; assist me in all my thoughts, words, and actions, at every moment of my life, that every step and breath may be directed to the greater glory of my God, and through thy most powerful intercesion obtain for me that I may never more offend my beloved Jesus, that I may glorify and love him in this life, and that I may also love thee, my most beloved and dear mother, that I may love thee and enjoy thee through eternity in holy paradise. Amen.

My mother Mary, I recommend to thee my soul, especially at the hour of my death.

DEDICATION OF A FAMILY TO MARY

OH blessed and immaculate Virgin, our queen and mother, refuge and consolation of all those who are in misery, I, prostrate before thy throne with all my family, choose thee for my Lady, Mother, and Advocate with God. I, with all who belong to me, dedicate myself forever to thy service, and pray thee, oh mother of God, to receive us into the number of thy servants, taking us all under thy protection, aiding us in life, and still more, at the hour of our death. Oh mother of mercy, I choose thee Lady and ruler of my whole house, of my relatives, my interests, and all my affairs. Do not disdain to take care of them; dispose of them all as it pleases thee. Bless me, then, and all my family, and do not permit that any of us should offend thy Son. Do thou defend us in temptations, deliver us from dangers, provide for us in our necessities, counsel us in our doubts, console us in afflictions, be with us in sickness, and especially in the agonies of death. Do not permit the devil to glory in having in his chains any of us who are now consecrated to thee; but grant that we may come to thee in heaven to thank thee, and together with thee to praise and love our Redeemer Jesus for all eternity. Amen, thus may it be.

PRAYER OF ST. EPHREM TO MARY, ABBREVIATED[8623]

OH immaculate and wholly pure Virgin Mary, mother of God, queen of the world, hope of the despairing; thou art the joy of the saints, thou art the reconciler of sinners to God, thou art the advocate of the abandoned, the secure haven of the shipwrecked; thou art the consolation of the world, the ransom of captives, the comforter of the afflicted, the salvation of the world. Oh great queen, we take refuge in thy protection. We confide in none but thee, oh most pure Virgin: Non nobis est alia quam in te fiducia, O Virgo sincerissima. Oh Lady, after God we have no other hope but in thee. We bear the name of thy servants, do not permit the enemy to bear us away to hell. Hail, best mediatrix of God and men: Ave, Dei et hominum mediatrix optima. I salute thee, oh great mediatrix of peace between man and God; oh mother of Jesus our Lord, the love of all men and of God; to thee be honor and blessing with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYER OF ST. THOMAS OF AQUIN

OH most blessed and sweet Virgin Mary, full of compassion, I recommend to thy mercy my soul and my body, my thoughts, my works, my life, and my death. Oh my Lady, help me and make me strong against the snares of the devil; obtain for me a true and perfect love, with which I may love with all my heart thy most beloved Son, and my Lord Jesus Christ; and after him may I love thee above all things. Oh my queen and mother, with thy most powerful intercession make this love to remain with me until death, after which may I be conducted by thee to the country of the blessed.[8624]

PRAYER OF ST. BLOSIUS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

HAIL, Mary, hope of the despairing, help of the destitute, to whom thy Son pays so great honor that whatever thou dost ask thou dost at once obtain, whatever thou dost wish is at once done. To thee are committed the treasures of the celestial kingdom. Grant, oh Lady, that amid the storms of this life, I may always turn my eyes to thee. To thy mercy I commend my soul and my body. Direct and protect me at every hour and every moment, oh my sweet protectress.

ANOTHER PRAYER

HAIL most compassionate mother of mercy; hail consolation and pardon, Mary most desired. Who shall not love thee? Thou our light in doubt, our consolation in sorrow, our relief in distress, our refuge in perils and temptations, thou, after thy only-begotten Son, art our secure salvation. Blessed are those who love thee, oh Lady. Incline, I pray thee, thy ear of mercy to the prayers of this thy servant, this miserable sinner, and dissipate the darkness of my vices by the rays of thy sanctity, that I may please thee.[8625]

EJACULATIONS TO THE MOST HOLY MARY

Mother of God, remember me.—*St. Francis Xavier.*

Virgin and mother, make me always to remember thee.—*St. Philip Neri.*

Virgin Mary, mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.—*The same Saint.*

Oh Lady, obtain that Jesus may not cast me from him.—*St. Ephrem.*

Oh Mary, may my heart never cease to love thee nor my tongue to praise thee.—*St. Bonaventure.*

Oh Lady, by the love which thou dost bear to Jesus, help me to love him.—*St. Bridget.*

Oh Mary, deign to make me thy servant.—*Blessed Jane of France.*

Oh Mary, I give myself wholly to thee, do thou accept and preserve me.—*St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi.*

Oh Lady, do not abandon me until death.—*P. Spinelli.*

Hail Mary my mother.—*P. Francis Brancaccio.*

Holy Mary, my advocate, pray for me.—*P. Sortorio Caputi.*

How sweet, oh my mother, is thy name of Mary!
It gives me peace, and so much pleasure,

That I wish always to repeat it.

The most holy Mary revealed to a soul devoted to her, that it pleased her much to be honored by her servants with the following devotions.

I thank thee, oh eternal Father, for the power given to Mary thy daughter Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to God.

I thank thee, oh eternal Son, for the wisdom given to Mary thy mother. Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to God.

I thank thee, oh eternal Spirit, for the love given to Mary thy spouse. Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to God.

To thee we cry, oh queen of mercy, turn towards us, and let us behold thee dispensing favors, bestowing remedies, giving strength. Show us thy compassionate countenance, and we shall be safe.[8626]

Oh mistress of all things, saint of saints, our strength and refuge, God, as it were, of the world, glory of heaven, accept those who love thee; hear us, for thy Son honors thee and denies thee nothing.—*Ibid.*[8627]

Come, hasten, oh Lady, and aid with thy mercy thy most sinful servant who invokes thee, and deliver him from the hands of the enemy.—*Ibid.*[8628]

Who will not sigh to thee? With love and grief we sigh. How, then, shall we not sigh to thee, oh solace of the miserable, refuge of outcasts, deliverer of captives? We are secure that if thou dost see our miseries, thy compassion will not be slow to relieve us.—*Ibid.*[8629]

Oh our Lady and our advocate, recommend us to thy Son. Obtain, oh blessed one, by the grace thou hast merited, that he who did condescend with thy mediation, to become a participator of our infirmity and misery, may also by thy intercession make us to share in his blessedness and glory.—*Ibid.*|[8630]

In thee I have placed the hope of my whole heart.—*St. John Damascene.*

It is not possible, oh Lady, that thou shouldst abandon him who places his hope in thee.—*St. Bernard.*

If thou dost only wish for our salvation, it will be impossible that we should not be saved.—*St. Anselm.*

Hail, daughter of God the Father; hail, mother of God the Son; hail, spouse of God the Holy Ghost, hail, temple of the holy Trinity.—*Simon Garcia.*

Oh Virgin, how beautiful art thou!

Mother of my God, my heart is enamored with thy goodness.

Thanks be to God and to Mary.

May all things be to the eternal glory of the most holy Trinity, and of the immaculate Mary.

Live always, Jesus our love and Mary our hope, with Joseph and Theresa our advocates

ACCLAMATIONS IN PRAISE OF MARY

OH most holy Virgin Mary! oh queen of angels! how complete and perfect heaven has created thee! Oh, that I might appear in the eyes of God, as thou dost appear to me! Thou art so beautiful and lovely, that with thy beauty thou dost ravish hearts. When thou dost appear, every thing appears deformed, every beauty is eclipsed, every grace disappears, precisely as the stars disappear at the rising of the sun.

Thy great servant, St. John Damascene, contemplated thee; and when he saw thee so lovely, it appeared to him thou hadst taken the flower and the best of every creature, and therefore he called thee: The comeliness of nature: “Naturæ venustatem;” the grace and comeliness of all creatures. St. Augustine, the brightest light of the Doctors, gazed on thee, and thou didst appear to him so beautiful and lovely, that he called thee the form and countenance of God, and it did not seem to him adulation: Thou art worthy of being called the form of God: “Si formam Dei te appellem digna existis.” Thy devout servant, Albertus Magnus, contemplated thee, and it seemed to him that all the graces and gifts that were found in the most celebrated women of the ancient dispensation were all surpassed in thee. The golden mouth of Sara, when with thy smile thou makest heaven and earth joyful; the tender and sweet glance of the fruitful Lia, with which thou dost soften the heart of God inexorable to sinners; the splendor of the countenance of the beautiful Rachel, as thou dost obscure the sun by thy radiant beauty; the grace and the comeliness of the discreet Abigail, with which thou dost appease the wrath of an angry God; the fire and strength of the brave Judith, when thou dost powerfully and graciously subdue the proudest hearts.

In a word, sovereign princess, from the vast ocean of thy beauty flowed forth, like streams, the beauty and grace of all creatures. The sea learned to curl its waves, and wave its crystals, from the golden locks of thy head, which, curling gracefully, floated upon thy shoulders and ivory neck. The crystal fountains, and their clear depths, learned their quiet and steady flow from the serenity of thy beautiful brow and thy placid countenance. The graceful bow, when it is most beautiful, has carefully learned from thy eyebrow to arch itself gracefully, that it may better dart forth its rays of light. The morning Dian and the gentle Hesperus are flashes from thy radiant eyes. The white lily and the ruddy rose have stolen their colors from thy cheeks. The envious purple and coral sigh for the ruby of thy lips. The purest milk and sweetest honey are distillations from the sweet honeycomb of thy mouth. The odorous jasmin and the fragrant rose of Damascus have stolen their perfumes from thy breath. The loftiest cedar and the finest and most erect cypress esteem themselves happy when they see that they are the image of thy straight and lofty neck, and the palm-tree enviously, and in emulation, imitates thy stately stature. And thus, oh Lady, every created beauty is the shadow and copy of thy beauty. Therefore I do not wonder, oh sovereign princess, that heaven and earth are placed under thy feet; for they are so small and thou so great, that when thy feet only rest upon them they are enriched, and they deem themselves happy and blessed when they can kiss them: so the moon when St. John the Evangelist saw her at thy feet. And the splendor of the sun was increased, when thou didst clothe thyself with his rays. The Evangelist, blinded by the greatness of thy light, was lost in wonder, and beside himself at the sight of so stupendous a miracle of beauty, in which the beauty of heaven and earth was contained, and he said: And there appeared a great sign in heaven: “Signum magnum apparuit in cœlo.” There appeared a great wonder in heaven, that amazed the angels and terrified the earth. And that miracle was a woman clothed from head to foot with light and splendor, whom the resplendent sun chose for his mother, and he placed himself in her womb, and to her the fair moon serves as a robe encircled with silver, and innumerable stars crown her temples, and are emulous of encircling her locks, and adorn her head with a wreath of precious gems: And on her head a crown of twelve stars; “Et in capite ejus corona duodecim stellarum.”

And thus the saints, oh most sacred Virgin, marvelling at so great splendor which surpasses the brightness of the sun, and the graceful loveliness of the moon, though they be the perfect flower and ideal of all beauty, and considering the acclamations that burst forth from the heavens, never ceased to admire thy beauty, and do nothing but exclaim, and extol thee also, with acclamations of wonder and amazement. St. Peter Damian, paying to thee his homage, says: “Oh holy, and most holy of all the saints, and the richest treasure of all sanctity!” And St. Bernard: “Oh admirable Virgin! Oh woman, the glory of all other women! The best and greatest that the world has ever possessed!” St. Epiphanius: “Oh heaven more vast and extended than the empyrean! Virgin truly full of grace!” And the Catholic Church, in the name of all, sings: “Oh most clement, most merciful, oh always sweet Virgin Mary!”

And I also, oh heavenly princess, with thy leave, although I am the least of thy servants, I also wish to make my acclamations of wonder and amazement. Oh gracious and beautiful heaven, more vast than the empyrean! since in this the immensity of God is not contained, but he was even concealed in thy womb. Oh richest treasure, in which was deposited the most rich jewel of our redemption! Oh mother of sinners, beneath thy mantle we are protected! Oh consolation of the world, in whom all the afflicted, infirm, and disconsolate find comfort! Oh beautiful eyes, that ravish hearts! Oh coral lips, that take souls captive! Oh beneficent hands, filled with hyacinths, that are always dispensing graces. Oh pure creature, who dost appear so like God, and whom I should have esteemed God, if faith had not taught me that thou art not God, although thou hast a splendor and I know not what of supreme Deity! Oh great Lady, empress of heaven, enjoy for a thousand eternities the grandeur of thy state, the immensity of thy graces, and the felicity of thy glory. Only I supplicate thee, oh compassionate mother, that thou wilt not forget us, who beg to be thy servants and children. And because thou art the depositary of all graces, and the best and most privileged of all created things, obtain for us thy servants, oh Lady, that we may be favored far more than any others in the world. And may all the world know that the dear children of Mary are the best of heaven and earth; the beloved children who are tenderly cared for, and enjoy the best that such a mother has to give; the well-beloved, who are caressed in the bosom of the queen of heaven, and are doubly favored and doubly caressed by thy majesty. Thus I hope, oh most beautiful Rachel! and thus I trust thou wilt do, oh sovereign princess! In the name of what thou art; do it, for all heaven prostrate at thy feet, is supplicating and praying thee for this. Consent; utter but one loving *fiat; fiat; fiat;* be it done, be it done. Oh man, what art thou doing? How dost thou love the creatures of the earth, deceitful and lying creatures, who betray and make thee lose thy soul, and body, paradise, and God? And why not love Mary, the most loving, the most amiable, and the most faithful, who, after enriching thee with consolations and graces in this life, will obtain for thee, from her divine Son, the eternal glory of paradise? Oh Mary, Mary, beautiful above all creatures! lovely, next to Jesus, above all loves! dearer than all created things! more graceful than all graces! have pity on my miserable heart. Miserable because it ought to love thee and does not love thee. Thou canst kindle it with thy holy love. Turn, oh Mary, thy loving eyes upon me, look upon me, draw me to thyself, and obtain that, next to God, I may love none but thee, oh most gracious, most amiable Mary, mother of Jesus, and my mother.

THE VICTORIES OF THE MARTYRS

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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The Centenary Edition

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

EDITED BY

REV. EUGENE GRIMM,

Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

THE ASCETICAL WORKS

Volume IX

VICTORIES OF THE MARTYRS

OR,

THE LIVES OF THE MOST CELEBRATED MARTYRS OF THE CHURCH.

REDEMPTORIST FATHERS

BROOKLYN

ST. LOUIS

TORONTO

Nihil Obstat

John M. Fearns, S.T.D.

Censor Librorum

Imprimatur

+Francis Cardinal Spellman

Archbishop of New York

APPROBATION.

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Leonard Buys, Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled the "Victories of the Martyrs," which is Vol. IX. of the new and complete edition in English of the works of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori.

John Sephton, C.SS.R.,

Provincial.

Mount Saint Alphonsus Esopus, New York June 12, 1953.

CONTENTS

INDEX

THE VICTORIES OF THE MARTYRS

- CONTENTS
- The Victories of the Martyrs
  - NOTICE
  - INTRODUCTION
    - I. VIRTUES PRACTISED BY THE HOLY MARTYRS IN THE COMBATS THAT THEY HAD TO SUSTAIN AGAINST THEIR PERSECUTORS
    - II. THE ADVANTAGES OF DEVOUT MEDITATION ON THE VIRTUES THAT THE MARTYRS PRACTISED DURING THEIR SUFFERINGS
    - III. THE VARIOUS TORTURES TO WHICH THE MARTYRS WERE SUBJECTED
  - PREFACE
- PART I Martyrs of the First Ages
  - *Chapter I* ST. IGNATIUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH
  - *Chapter II* ST. JULITTA, AND ST. QUIRICUS, HER SON
  - *Chapter III* ST. VINCENT, DEACON
  - *Chapter IV* ST. AGRICOLA AND ST. VITALIS, OF BOLOGNA
  - *Chapter V* ST. VITALIS OF RAVENNA
  - *Chapter VI* ST. POLYCARP, BISHOP OF SMYRNA
  - *Chapter VII* ST. THEODORA, VIRGIN, AND ST. DIDYMUS

Chapter VIII
ST. PHILIP, BISHOP OF HERACLEA, AND HIS TWO COMPANIONS, ST. SEVERUS AND ST. HERMES

Chapter IX
ST. JAMES, SURNAMED INTERCISUS

Chapter X
ST. AFRA THE PENITENT

Chapter XI
ST. SABINUS, BISHOP OF SPOLETO, AND HIS COMPANIONS

Chapter XII
ST. EUPLIUS, DEACON

Chapter XIII
ST. THEODOTUS, VINTNER

Chapter XIV
ST. TRYPHO AND ST. RESPICIUS

Chapter XV
ST. ROMANUS, DEACON, AND ST. BARULAS, THE INFANT MARTYR

Chapter XVI
ST. CRISPINA

Chapter XVII
ST. DIONYSIA, ST. MAJORICUS, HER SON, AND OTHER HOLY MARTYRS OR CONFESSORS IN THE PERSECUTION RAISED IN AFRICA BY THE VANDALS

Chapter XVIII
SS. PHILEAS, BISHOP OF THMUIS, AND PHILOROMUS, TRIBUNE

Chapter XIX
ST. DIONYSIA, VIRGIN, WITH SS. ANDREW AND PAUL OF LAMPSACUS

Chapter XX
ST. FEBRONIA, VIRGIN

Chapter XXI
ST. ARCADIUS

Chapter XXII
ST. JUSTIN, THE PHILOSOPHER

Chapter XXIII
ST. AGATHA, VIRGIN

Chapter XXIV
ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE; ST. TYGRIUS, PRIEST; AND ST. EUTROPIUS, LECTOR

Chapter XXV
ST. PIONIUS, PRIEST

Chapter XXVI
ST. ADALBERT, BISHOP OF PRAGUE

Chapter XXVII
SS. JAMES, DEACON; MARIANUS, LECTOR; AND COMPANIONS

Chapter XXVIII
ST. LUCY, VIRGIN

Chapter XXIX
SS. THEODORUS AND NICHOLAS, ABBOTS OF STUDIUS.

Chapter XXX
ST. EULALIA AND ST. JULIA, VIRGINS

Chapter XXXI
ST. POLLIO, LECTOR

Chapter XXXII
ST. APIAN AND ST. ÆDESIUS, BROTHERS

Chapter XXXIII
ST. GORDIUS, CENTURION

Chapter XXXIV
ST. CHRYSOGONUS, PRIEST, AND ST. ANASTASIA, WIDOW

Chapter XXXV
ST. FRUCTUOSUS, BISHOP OF TARRAGONA, AND HIS TWO DEACONS, ST. AUGURIUS AND ST. EULOGIUS

Chapter XXXVI
ST. IRENÆUS, BISHOP OF SIRMIUM

Chapter XXXVII
SS. CECILIA, VIRGIN; VALERIAN, HER HUSBAND; TIBURTIUS, HER BROTHER-IN-LAW; AND MAXIMUS, OFFICER

Chapter XXXVIII
ST. AGNES, VIRGIN

Chapter XXXIX
SS. SIMEON, ARCHBISHOP OF SELEUCIA, USTHAZADES, AND PUSIKIUS, AND

THEIR COMPANIONS

Chapter XL
SS. LUCIUS, MONTANUS, FLAVIAN, AND THEIR COMPANIONS, DISCIPLES OF ST. CYPRIAN

Chapter XLI
SS. EPIPODIUS AND ALEXANDER OF LYONS

Chapter XLII
ST. LEO OF PATARA

Chapter XLIII
ST. BASIL OF ANCYRA, PRIEST

Chapter XLIV
SS. POTHINUS, BISHOP OF LYONS; SANCTUS, DEACON; ALEXANDER, PHYSICIAN ; VETTIUS EPAGATHUS, MATURUS, ATTALUS OF PERGAMUS, BIBLIS, BLANDINA, AND THEIR COMPANIONS

Chapter XLV
ST. ALBAN, FIRST MARTYR OF GREAT BRITAIN

Chapter XLVI
ST. PETER OF LAMPSACUS

Chapter XLVII
ST. CYRIL, THE CHILD

Chapter XLVIII
SS. POTAMIENA, VIRGIN; MARCELLA, HER MOTHER; AND BASILIDES, SOLDIER

Chapter XLIX
SS. NICANDER AND MARCIAN, SOLDIERS

Chapter L
ST. GALLICAN, A ROMAN GENERAL, WITH SS. JOHN AND PAUL, OFFICERS

Chapter LI
ST. THEODORUS OF AMASEA, CALLED THE YOUNG SOLDIER

Chapter LII
SS. PERPETUA AND FELICITAS OF CARTHAGE, WITH STS. REVOCATUS, SATURNINUS, SECUNDULUS, AND SATURUS

Chapter LIII
SS. GEORGE, DEACON; AURELIUS, NATALIA, FELIX, LILIOSA OF CORDUBA

Chapter LIV
STS. TARACHUS, PROBUS, AND ANDRONICUS, MARTYRED IN CILICIA

Chapter LV
ST. QUIRINUS, BISHOP OF SISCIA

Chapter LVI
ST. BLASE, BISHOP OF SEBASTE

Chapter LVII
ST. ANASTASIA, VIRGIN, AND ST. CYRIL OF ROME

Chapter LVIII
STS. VICTOR, OFFICER; ALEXANDER, FELICIANUS, LONGINUS, SOLDIERS, OF MARSEILLES

Chapter LIX
SS. PETER, DOROTHEUS, AND GORGONIUS, CHAMBERLAINS

Chapter LX
ST. TIMOTHY, LECTOR; AND ST. MAURA, HIS WIFE

Chapter LXI
SS. SIXTUS II., POPE; LAURENCE, DEACON; ROMANUS, SOLDIER

Chapter LXII
SS. SEBASTIAN, OFFICER; AND THE TWO BROTHERS, MARCUS AND MARCELLIANUS

Chapter LXIII
SS. CYRIACUS, LARGUS, AND SMARAGDUS

Chapter LXIV
SS. MAMMAS; THEODOTUS, HIS FATHER; RUFINA, HIS MOTHER; AND AMYA

Chapter LXV
SS. JANUARIUS, BISHOP OF BENEVENTO; SOSIUS, PROCULUS, FESTUS, DEACONS; DIDIER, LECTOR; EUTYCHES, ACUTIUS

Chapter LXVI
ST. FAITH, VIRGIN; ST. CAPRAIS, ST. PRIMUS, AND ST. FELICIAN

Chapter LXVII
ST. GENESIUS, THE COMEDIAN

Chapter LXVIII
ST. HIPPOLYTUS, PRIEST

Chapter LXIX
ST. SYMPHORIAN

Chapter LXX
SS. BONOSUS AND MAXIMILIAN, OFFICERS

Chapter LXXI
SS. LIBERATUS, ABBOT; BONIFACE, DEACON; SERVUS, RUSTICUS, SUB-DEACONS; ROGATUS, SEPTIMUS, AND MAXIMUS, RELIGIOUS

Chapter LXXII
ST. SERAPHIA, VIRGIN; AND ST. SABINA, WIDOW

Chapter LXXIII
SS. CYPRIAN, MAGICIAN; AND JUSTINA, VIRGIN

Chapter LXXIV
SS. HERMOLAUS, PRIEST; AND PANTALEON, PHYSICIAN

Chapter LXXV
ST. FELIX, BISHOP OF ABBIR, AND OTHER HOLY MARTYRS AND CONFESSORS OF THE VANDALIC PERSECUTION

PART II
The Martyrs of Japan

NOTICE.

Chapter I
MIRACULOUS CROSS FOUND NEAR ARIMA—PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF BUNGO—JORAM MACAMA—COURAGE OF THE CHRISTIANS

Chapter II
PERSECUTION BY THE EMPEROR TAICOSAMA—GREAT ZEAL OF THE CHRISTIANS—TWENTY-SIX MARTYRS CRUCIFIED AT NANGASAKI

Chapter III
PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF FINGO—JOHN MINAMI, MAGDALEN HIS WIFE, AND LOUIS THEIR ADOPTED SON, WITH SIMON TAQUENDA, JANE HIS MOTHER, AND AGNES HIS WIFE

Chapter IV
PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF SAXUMA AND D’AMANGUCHI—JAMES SACOIAMA—MELCHIOR BUGENDONO—DAMIAN, THE BLIND MAN—LEON XIQUEMON

Chapter V
NEW PERSECUTION IN FINGO—JOACHIM GIROZAIEMO, MICHAEL FACIEMON AND HIS SON THOMAS, JOHN TINGORO AND HIS SON PETER

Chapter VI
PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF FIRANDO—CASPAR NIXIGUENCA; URSULA, HIS WIFE; AND JOHN, THEIR SON

Chapter VII
DEATH OF THE KING OF ARIMA AND PERSECUTION RAISED BY HIS SON—

THOMAS ONDA AND HIS FAMILY—FRANCIS AND MATTHEW, YOUNG PRINCES—EIGHT MARTYRS BURNT ALIVE—THE TYRANT PUNISHED

Chapter VIII
GENERAL PERSECUTION DECREED BY THE EMPEROR DAIFUSAMA FIRMNESS OF THE CHRISTIANS OF MEACO

Chapter IX
PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOMS OF AQUI AND BUNGO—BENEDICT, A CONVERTED BONZE—TWO FAMILIES THAT WERE PUT TO THE TEST—MICHAEL; LIN, HIS BROTHER; AND MAXENTIA, HIS WIFE

Chapter X
JOACHIM AND THOMAS OF FACATA—ADAM OF THE ISLAND OF XIQUI PAUL OF THE KINGDOM OF JAMAXIRO

Chapter XI
PERSECUTION AT NANGASAKI AND AT OMURA—BROTHER LEONARD GUIMURA AND HIS COMPANIONS—LIN TOIEMON

Chapter XII
IN THE KINGDOM OF BUNGO, JAMES FAITO, BALTHASAR AND HIS SON JAMES

Chapter XIII
FIFTY-TWO MARTYRS BURNT ALIVE AT MEACO

Chapter XIV
IGNATIUS XIQUIEMON, MARTYRED AT FUCIMO—CONVERSION OF A BONZE WHO HAD LED A BAD LIFE—MATTHIAS, OF THE KINGDOM OF ARIMA

Chapter XV
SIMON BOCUSAI AND HIS COMPANIONS, IN BUNGO—JOHN CIU AND JOHN ITO, AT NANGASAKI—LEO NONDA, IN FINGO

Chapter XVI
PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF OXU—A FATHER RECLAIMED BY THE EXAMPLE OF HIS CHILD—JOACHIM AND ANN OF MIZUSAMA

Chapter XVII
GREAT EXECUTION AT NANGASAKI—JUSTA, HER DAUGHTER MARY, AND HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGATHA—PAUL GAZAIEMON—CONSTANCY OF A CHILD

Chapter XVIII
MANY VICTIMS OF THE PERSECUTION AT JEDO—MARY JAGERA AND HER COMPANIONS—MASSACRE OF CHILDREN

Chapter XIX
FRANCIS SINTARO AND MATTHIAS SQUIRAIEMON AT FIROXIMA—JOHN CUFROI IN THE KINGDOM OF ZIO

Chapter XX
IN THE ISLAND OF NANCAIA, ISABELLA, MOTHER OF DAMIAN, AND HIS FAMILY; MARY, WIDOW OF JOHN SUCAMOTA, AND HIS FOUR SONS

Chapter XXI
IN THE KINGDOM OF FIRANDO, MICHAEL FIEMOU AND HIS FAMILY

Chapter XXII
FIVE RELIGIOUS BURNT ALIVE AT OMURA—LEO MISAQUI AND HIS THREE SONS, IN BUNGO

Chapter XXIII
CAIUS AND JAMES COICI, BURNT AT OMURA

Chapter XXIV
ORGANTIN TANXU, AND LUCY, HIS WIFE, BURNT AT FUNAI

Chapter XXV
MONICA OIVA, KILLED BY HER RELATIVES AT CUBOTA—THIRTY-TWO MARTYRS BURNT ALIVE

Chapter XXVI
PETER CABIOIE AND SUSANNA, JOHN NAISEN AND MONICA YOUNG LOUIS, AND THEIR COMPANIONS, EXECUTED AT NANGASAKI

Chapter XXVII
FRIGHTFUL PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF ARIMA—JOACHIM MINESUIEDAI, CASPAR NAGAIOSAN, LOUIS XINSABURO, JOHN TEMPEI, BARTHOLOMEW SANUIEMON, SIMON KEISAIEMON, PAUL UCHIBORI, LEONARD MASSUDADEUZO, AND THEIR COMPANIONS

Chapter XXVIII
PERSECUTION IN THE PRINCIPALITY OF JONEZAVA—LOUIS YEMONDONO AND HIS FAMILY, PAUL XIQUIBU, ANTHONY ANAZAVA, AND THEIR COMPANIONS

Chapter XXIX
PERSECUTION PUSHED TO THE LAST DEGREE OF VIOLENCE AT NANGASAKI—ISABELLA AND SIMEON—FATHER ANTHONY ISCIDA

Chapter XXX
JAMES CUFIOIE; MARY, HIS MOTHER; LEO TASUQUE, HIS FATHER-IN-LAW; AND HIS FAMILY

Chapter XXXI
EXTREME CRUELTIES EXERCISED IN THE KINGDOM OF ARIMA—THOMAS QUICHIBIOIE AND HIS COMPANIONS—REMARKABLE PUNISHMENT OF THE TYRANT

Chapter XXXII
LAST EFFORTS OF THE MISSIONARIES—FATHER SEBASTIAN VIEYRA—END OF

THE MISSION

CONCLUSION

HYMNS.

- I. ON THE TOMB OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT
- II. ETERNAL MAXIMS
- III. PARAPHRASE ON THE WORDS OF ST. ALOYSIOS
- IV. AFFECTIONS TO JESUS AND TO MARY
- V. LINES SANG DURING THE MISSIONS
- CANZONCINE SPIRITUALI.
- I. SOPRA LA SEPOLTURA D' ALESSANDRO IL GRANDE
- II. SOPRA LE MASSIME ETERNE
- III. CANZONCINA DI SAN LUIGI GONZAGA
- IV. AFFETTI VERSO GESU SACRAMENTATO

The Victories of the Martyrs

NOTICE

ST. ALPHONSUS was in his eightieth year when he wrote the VICTORIES OF THE MARTYRS, which appeared in the year 1776. He had just been relieved by Pope Pius VI. of the burden of the episcopate, which weighed so heavily upon him, but not of the burden of his Congregation, which furnished him with a retreat that was most laborious. Moreover, he had to compose this work in the midst of the greatest sufferings, says Father Tannoia.[8631] The kingdom of Naples, he adds, received this new fruit of the zeal of our saint with general satisfaction; and in the opinion of Canon Fabius Massa, the Church was to derive the greatest profit from it, nothing being better suited, especially in those calamitous times, to strengthen the faith and to enkindle piety.

But the reading of such a book is not less useful in our age, and will be so in every age. The constancy of the faithful will always be tried, piety will always be persecuted, by the enemies of Jesus Christ: *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*[8632] Other sufferings will also not be wanting; for the road leading to heaven is sown with all kinds of tribulations: *Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.*[8633] Such was the way in which our divine Saviour walked: *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?*[8634] And he himself informs us that his disciples and his servants should be treated as he was treated: *The disciple is not above the master, nor the servant above his Lord.*[8635] But he assures us that the trial will never be above our strength, and that he is ready to aid those that call upon him: *And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will also make with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.*[8636] Hence he wishes us to have unshaken confidence while we are in the midst of the most cruel anguish, since beforehand he has made sure our victory: *In the world you shall have distress: but have confidence, I have overcome the world.*[8637] He even wishes that at such a time we should be filled with joy while considering the eternal reward that he has prepared for the pains of a moment: *Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.*[8638] And when we think of the love that our Saviour has shown us in all that he has done and suffered for us, our hearts are inflamed with gratitude and love towards him; we, then, desire to labor and to suffer yet more for his glory; we desire to sacrifice for him our lives, finding no other happiness than that of suffering and dying for God.

Such are the sentiments that we admire in the athletes of the faith—sentiments with which we feel ourselves sweetly penetrated while reading the *Victories of the Martyrs.* This volume is a selection of the most beautiful examples drawn from the history of the martyrs of every age and place, after the time of the apostles, and taken from the best sources. We have carefully revised these sources in order to be able to establish the correctness of the narrative according to the intention expressed by the author in his preface. We have at times found it necessary, as was the case in the preceding works, to make certain corrections; we have even here and there added the name of a place or of a person, a date or some trifling circumstance, which the clearness and the interest of the narration seemed to us to demand. When, however, we did not follow the author literally, we only did so in order to render his thought more clear; and when the matter appeared to us to be of some importance, we added a note, so as to give to this good book all the accuracy that the readers might desire. In a word, we have done what we think the author would himself have done, and have written for our time and for those for whom our work is intended, without, however, confounding what is the translator's with what belongs to the author, whose every word has always been sacred to us.

This volume completes the first series of the *Ascetical Works,* comprising the volumes that are suitable for persons of every age and every state of life. We began the series by the Preparation of Death, and we finish it by the Victories of the Martyrs, who are our principal models after Jesus and Mary, the King and the Queen of martyrs. The other saints had only to follow them; it is thus that they have acquired the same glory. "St. John beheld all the saints clothed in white, and with palms in their hands: *Clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.*[8639] The palm is the symbol of martyrs; and yet all the saints did not suffer martyrdom;—why, then, do all the saints bear palms in their hands? St. Gregory replies, that all the saints have been martyrs either of the sword or of patience; so that he adds, 'We can be martyrs without the sword, if we keep patience.' "[8640] We can even obtain many times the merit of the martyrs and increase the value of our crown by acts of a good-will, as is explained in the Introduction.[8641]

But our revered author was not satisfied with telling us how we may imitate the heroes of faith; he shows us this much better in his wonderful life, which was a prodigy of patience and long martyrdom. There are but few saints who suffered as much as he suffered.

He was his own tyrant and his own executioner. Although he had never committed a grievous sin from his youth, yet, impelled by his ardent love for Jesus Christ, he gave himself up to the most cruel penances, and God permitted that he could continue them to the age of nearly ninety-one years. He regarded himself as a victim that was to be entirely immolated to divine love without the least reserve; and convinced that this love is manifested by labor and suffering, as he himself teaches us,[8642] he thought only of laboring and suffering as much as possible for God. But obedience being better than sacrifice, he bound himself by a vow to follow in all things the advice of the director of his conscience, in which he recognized the divine will. By renouncing all worldly hopes, he condemned himself to a life of extreme poverty; his garments, his furniture, and everything that he used, even when he was a bishop, bore the impress of this virtue, and reduced him to what was strictly necessary. At night he took his short repose on a simple straw mattress, and sometimes on a plank; and when travelling, if he could not go on foot, he would use only a donkey for riding. He took but little nourishment, and was careful to mix it with bitter herbs so as to render its taste very disagreeable; and this he often ate on his knees or sitting on the floor. Besides the ordinary fast and abstinence, he fasted on bread and water on all Saturdays and vigils of the principal feasts. When he studied or wrote, he would stand with small stones in his shoes in order to suffer. He severely scourged himself every day, and frequently to blood; he used, besides, little chains, hair-cloth, and other instruments for the purpose of continually tormenting his flesh. One evening, worn out with fatigue, he fell down in his room, having swooned away, and remained unconscious the whole night and the greater part of the following day; the doctor ordered him to be disrobed, and on him was found a hair-shirt that covered his whole body. From this we may form an idea of his austerities, which he strove so much to conceal from the eyes of men. To these self-inflicted penalties must be added his great labors in the midst of pain, solicitude, and continual trials.

Our saint had at one time conceived the idea to devote himself to the Chinese missions, and he was anxious to know God's holy will in regard to this matter; but the Lord deigned to call him to another apostolate. Obedient to the voice of Heaven, he generously undertook the work of his Institute, notwithstanding numerous obstacles. When, after having laid the foundation, he saw himself all at once abandoned by his first companions, far from yielding to the efforts of hell to discourage him, he bound himself by a formal vow, under pain of grave sin, to persevere in his vocation, should he have to remain alone, and to offer himself as a sacrifice for the salvation of souls. Wishing to consecrate himself unreservedly, during his whole life, to the service of God, he made another vow, which the Bull of his canonization declares to be very difficult, and till that time unheard of, namely, never to allow a moment to pass without employing it in some useful work. Heaven blessed these magnanimous acts. The devil, however, although always conquered by him, never ceased to excite against him a thousand contradictions, unjust prejudices, perfidious accusations, endless intrigues, law-suits, threats, and odious attacks. His enemies went so far as to bribe an infamous creature to sully his reputation and that of the missionaries. A man of influence, who was leading a scandalous life, took with him one day a troop of assassins for the purpose of murdering him; but he was arrested on the way. The saint, on learning the danger that threatened him, quietly said: ‘‘He may take my life if he pleases; in this way I shall obtain the crown of martyrdom.”

It was a remarkable thing that his own friends were the cause of affliction to him no less than his enemies. As soon as they heard of the design that he had formed of founding a new Congregation of missionaries, nearly all of them turned against him. Those who but recently admitted his talents and his virtues allowed a change to come over them in their conduct towards him, looking upon him as an extravagant and fanatical man, a visionary filled with self-conceit, the sport of a foolish illusion; without consideration they heaped upon him, both in public and private, the most humiliating reproaches; everywhere there were persons that vied with one another to decry him; and men in authority that were secretly his guides and his support did not dare to permit him to use their testimonials that he might defend himself. His associates of the Propaganda wished even to exclude him from their society and to deprive him of a benefice that was his only support. Those that had declared themselves against him triumphed, especially when it became known that his first attempt had failed, and that he now found himself abandoned by his companions; he was regarded as one that was irretrievably lost; no one dared to take up his defence; and he was even referred to from the pulpit as a melancholy instance. The confusion and the anguish of our saint reached their highest point. Yet the most cruel trial to which his heart had to submit came from the excessive tenderness of his father when it became necessary for him to tear himself away from his gentle embraces in order to proceed to the place whither God was calling him.

The Lord, moreover, reserved for his virtue many other assaults, and these came from his own children, and from the common Father of the faithful, by whom he was loved and venerated, and to whom he was always perfectly devoted. Alphonsus had known how to avoid the episcopate, of which the thought alone made him tremble. He had already thought himself free from all danger, when, at the age of sixty-six and under the burden of grave infirmities, he found it suddenly imposed upon him by the irrevocable command of Clement XIII. This was for the poor old man like a thunderbolt, which he appeared only to survive by a miracle. After having carried this heavy burden for thirteen years, with a courage that was truly heroic, he was finally relieved of the episcopate owing to the infirmities that were overwhelming him. It was then believed that he would finish his days in peace among his own children, but he was really going to empty the cup of bitterness that was yet far from being empty. The enemies of his Congregation never ceased to compass his ruin by all imaginable proceedings. His Congregation was continually hovering between life and death; but they were unsuccessful in their criminal designs. When this violent storm appeared to have subsided and peace was restored, the devil succeeded in stirring up, in the Institute itself, a domestic war that shook it in its very foundation. This was caused by some subjects that abused the confidence of the holy Founder, and turned against him. He was shamefully calumniated at Rome in the midst of such a concourse of circumstances that it was impossible for him to defend himself. He was accused of having infringed his Rule, and consequently the authority of the Holy See that had approved it. He was judged and was treated as the author of a culpable act of which he was only the principal victim. Pius VI., prepossessed by false reports and deceived by every appearance of truth, believed it to be his duty to condemn him, to depose him from his office of Superior-General, and even to exclude him from his dear Congregation. Our saint aged eighty-four years, suffering and powerless, received this news without being able to answer; his heart was, moreover, filled with great sorrow in being obliged to see his most worthy children involved in his own disgrace, and the great injury to souls that would be the result. There was no one left to console him; humble and resigned, he profoundly bent his head, and said: “It is only God whom I desire; it is sufficient if his grace is not wanting to me. The Pope wishes it so; may God be praised! The will of the Pope is the will of God.” He was for several years suffering under this fatal blow, the hardest that could have been inflicted upon him; and it was only after his death that the Holy Father learned the entire truth, and became fully convinced of his innocence.

God permitted this event in order to give his servant an occasion to exercise till the end his great virtue, and to acquire very great merits. But this was not all: he still had to suffer a long and painful martyrdom, both in his body and in his soul.

At the beginning of his apostolic career he was affected by two mortal illnesses in consequence of his excessive labors; his recovery was obtained only through the particular help of the Blessed Virgin. In his fifty-second year he was taken with a violent asthma that endangered his life; he was relieved of this trouble, but continued to suffer from it ever after. The violence that he had to do to himself in order to accept the episcopal charge again reduced him to extremity; he rallied with great difficulty, and had a relapse during the first visitation of his diocese, about two years after. Each time his case was despaired of, the last sacraments had to be administered to him, and preparations were made for his funeral; but his course was not yet finished. It was in the seventy-second year of his age, in 1768, that he was attacked by his most cruel malady. An extremely painful rheumatism, which at first was thought to be sciatica, gradually encroached upon all his joints and ended by affecting the vertebrae of his neck. His head was very much bent over, so that his chin rested on his breast, where the pressure of the beard produced a painful wound. As the sick man suffered without complaint, this wound was only perceived when the vitiated eruption flowing from it attracted the attention of the doctors. All his members were contracted, and the body, when viewed from behind, appeared to be without a head. The holy bishop had to remain painfully seated in an arm-chair, during the night as well as during the day, and could not lie down, nor dress, nor move, nor rest. However, at the end of a few months he became convalescent; but he continued to suffer, and it was no longer possible for him to raise his head during the nineteen years that he still lived. Nothing was more wonderful than his patience and his resignation during this painful sickness; and yet great was the constancy of his zeal to perform the exercises of piety, to mortify himself, to apply himself to the duties of his charge, not withstanding all his sufferings.

And to all this we must add his interior trials with which the others cannot be compared. Alphonsus was a little more than thirty-three years old when God subjected him to this terrible cross. His life was then only a life of aridity and desolation. At the altar he found himself without devotion; prayer had become to him most irksome. “I go to Jesus Christ,” he used to say, “and he repels me; I have recourse to Mary, and she is deaf to my voice.” A most sensible privation for a soul that has tasted heavenly delights, and that now, plunged into darkness, sees only misery, and fears to have made itself unworthy of the presence of its Beloved! But it was, above all, during the last period of his life that our saint had to undergo the most frightful combats. It seems that God had given to the devil the power to afflict him as he afflicted Job. After having struck him in his body and in his religious family, having made him fall into disgrace with the Sovereign Pontiff, the tempter represented to him these evils as the punishment of his sins, and wished to persuade him that God had abandoned him. The poor old man was then heard to cry out in a heart-rending voice: “Help me; the devil wishes to make me despair. Help me; I do not wish to offend God.” The enemy being repulsed, returned again and again to the charge, seeking to take him by surprise. He attacked him in different ways—by darkness, scruples, fears, perplexities, horrible temptations. He even appeared to him under the form of different persons, and now flattered him to inspire him with the sentiment of vanity, now endeavored to make him believe that he was a reprobate. But in his distress the saint never omitted to invoke Jesus and Mary, and assistance was given to him.

We give but a cursory view of what Alphonsus suffered during his long career. Would it not have been much more agreeable to him to shed his blood by the hand of the executioner, in the midst of the most cruel tortures, with the consolation of sacrificing his life for Jesus Christ as he desired to do? and would not his merits have been proportionate to his trials and to his fidelity? We should, therefore, be convinced that he bears a brilliant palm in the assembly of the celestial conquerors.

O great saint, who hast done so much to draw us to God, to show us the way to salvation, and to conduct us to it by thy example! now that thou dost occupy so high a rank in glory, assist us from the heights of heaven; obtain for us the grace to follow thee at least from afar; or rather, obtain for us the grace generously to walk in thy footsteps. Obtain for us great humility, great confidence in the divine mercy, great faith, great patience in trials, great love, great courage, great devotedness until the last breath. Obtain for us by thy prayers that we may reach a place near to thee, so that thou mayest present us as thy conquest for Jesus Christ. Amen.

Ed.

INTRODUCTION

USEFUL REFLECTIONS BY WHICH WE MAY DERIVE GREAT FRUIT FROM THE READING OF THE COMBATS AND THE VICTORIES OF THE MARTYRS

I. VIRTUES PRACTISED BY THE HOLY MARTYRS IN THE COMBATS THAT THEY HAD TO SUSTAIN AGAINST THEIR PERSECUTORS

If the reading of the Lives of the Saints is a great means to preserve piety, as is said by St. Philip Neri,[8643] and as is taught by all the masters of spiritual life, we shall find it yet more useful to read about the victories that the holy martyrs gained by sacrificing their lives amid torments. Hence, before relating their individual triumphs, we shall consider, to our spiritual advantage, the principal virtues of which they gave proofs in their combats.

There is no doubt that the martyrs are indebted for their crown to the power of the grace which they received from Jesus Christ; for he it is that gave them the strength to despise all the promises and all the threats of tyrants, and to endure all the torments till they had made an entire sacrifice of their lives. So that all their merits, as St. Augustine writes,[8644] were the effects of the grace that God in his mercy imparted to them. But it is also certain, and even of faith, that on their part the martyrs co-operated with the grace which enabled them to obtain their victory. Innovators have blasphemed against this truth, saving that all the crimes of the wicked and all the good works of the just are the offspring of necessity; but the same St. Augustine gives them the lie when he says that in this case no reward or punishment would be just.[8645]

The martyrs, therefore, acquired great merits, because the virtues of which they gave proofs in their combats were great and heroic. We shall briefly describe these virtues in order that we may imitate them in the tribulations to which we may be exposed in this life.

We at first remark that the martyrs were firmly attached to all the dogmas of the Christian faith. In the first ages of the Church two false religions specially opposed ours: these were the religion of the Gentiles and that of the Jews. The religion of the Gentiles, by admitting several gods, furnished itself the proof of its falsity; for if the world had been under the dominion of several masters, it could not have maintained that regular and constant order which we see has been preserved for so many centuries up to the present time. This is evident even to the eyes of natural reason; for *every kingdom divided against itself shall be destroyed.*[86][46] Moreover, the very words of the idolatrous priests clearly demonstrated the falsity of their worship, since the actions that they attributed to their gods represented the latter as filled with passions and vices. This was the way in which the holy martyrs reproached the tyrants when the latter exhorted them to sacrifice to their idols: “How can we, they said, adore your gods, if, instead of offering us models of virtue, they exhibit us only examples of vice?” The religion of the Jews, although formerly holy and revealed by God, was at that time not less manifestly obsolete and false. In fact, in the Scriptures themselves which they had received from God, had preserved with so much care, and had transmitted to us, it was predicted that at a certain time the Son of God was to come down upon earth, to become man, and to die for the salvation of the world; that they themselves would put him to death on the Cross as they actually did, and that in punishment of this impiety they would be driven from their own kingdom, and without a king, without a temple, without a country, they would live scattered, and be vagabonds throughout the world, abhorred and despised by all nations. These were predictions that were manifestly realized in every particular after the death of the Saviour.

What rendered still more certain the truth of our faith was the formation of a new people of God by the conversion of the Gentiles: this was known to have been announced beforehand in the Scriptures, and this was seen to be realized as soon as the apostles spread through out the world in order to promulgate the New Law preached by Jesus Christ. This event was an evident proof of the protection that God gave to the Christian religion; for how could these poor sinners or these publicans, such as the apostles were—men devoid of instruction, of wealth, of every human assistance, and even persecuted by the magistrates and the emperors, have induced, without divine assistance, so many Christians to renounce all their property, all their honors, and generously to sacrifice their lives amid tortures the most excruciating that the power and the cruelty of the tyrants could invent?

But what was still more marvellous was to behold so many Gentiles embrace a religion difficult to believe and difficult to practise. It was difficult to believe on the part of the intellect, for this religion teaches mysteries beyond the reach of human reason; namely, the Trinity of one God in three distinct persons, who have but one nature, one power, and one will; the Incarnation of the Son of God come upon earth to die for the salvation of mankind; and many other articles regarding original sin, the spirituality and the immortality of the soul, the sacraments, especially the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. It was difficult to practise on the part of the will, because it commands things contrary to the inclinations of nature corrupted by sin and repugnant to the libertinism in which the pagans were living, who were accustomed to follow their passions and to give themselves up to the pleasures of the senses. Notwithstanding these obstacles, the Christian religion saw itself embraced by so many nations! From this universal consent of the nations St. Augustine argues the divinity of our religion, saying that had not God illuminated by his powerful grace so many people—civilized and barbarian, learned and illiterate, noble and plebeian, all immersed in the superstitions of their country, imbued from their earliest years with maxims so opposed to the sanctity of faith—how could they have embraced it?

Besides the interior lights of grace, there were many other causes that induced the people to embrace Christianity and to remain firm in professing it. Miracles contributed much to inflame their zeal; for from the moment in which the apostles began to preach, the Lord caused miracles to abound in testimony of the faith, as St. Mark says: *They preached everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed.*[8647] It is certain that the great miracles that had been wrought by the apostles and their disciples contributed largely to the conversion of the world. In vain the adherents of idolatry tried to make believe that these prodigies were the effect of magical incantations: every one well understood that God would never permit them if they were to serve the purpose of giving support to diabolical agency or to a false religion. The proof of miracles was therefore a truly divine proof, by which the Lord confirmed the Christian religion and the faith of believers.

The faith became further strengthened by the constancy of martyrs of both sexes, of every age and condition: men and women, the aged and the young, the noble and the plebeian, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, married and single. They were seen to renounce their homes, their parents, their titles, their fortunes, and everything they possessed, to embrace scourges, racks, fire, torture, and to encounter death under its most horrible shapes; and all this not only with courage, but with joyfulness and thanksgiving to God, who made them worthy to suffer and die for his love. St. Justin, who was himself a martyr, confessed that this heroic virtue of the Christians had been to him a powerful stimulus to embrace the faith![8648]

The martyrs received great courage in their sufferings from the desire of quickly arriving at the fruition of the promises made by Jesus Christ to his followers: *Blessed are ye when they shall revile you and persecute you. . . . Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.*[8649] *Every one therefore that shall confess me before men I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven.*[8650]

But what above all filled the martyrs with courage and ardor and made them wish to die was their great love for their divine Master, whom St. Augustine[8651] calls the King of Martyrs, who wished to die on the Cross in pain and in desolation for the love of us, as St. Paul says: *He loveth us, and hath delivered himself for us.*[8652] Actuated by this love, they went with joy to suffer and to die for Jesus Christ; so that, not content to endure the pains that were inflicted upon them, they besought, they provoked the executioners and the tyrants, to obtain from them an increase of torture, in order that they might show themselves more grateful to God who died for love of them.

Hence it came to pass, according to St. Justin, that in the course of three centuries the whole earth was filled with Christians and martyrs. “There is no nation, Greek or barbarian,” writes the holy martyr to Trypho, “that does not offer prayers and thanksgivings to the Creator of the universe by invoking the name of Jesus Christ.”[8653] St. Irenæus,[8654] in like manner, attests that at his time the faith of Jesus Christ was extended over the entire world. Pliny, in his celebrated letter to the Emperor Trajan,[8655] declared that the Christian faith was extended to such a degree that the temples of the gods were abandoned, and that victims were no longer offered to the idols.

And Tiberian also wrote to the same emperor that it would be unwise to put to death all the Christians, since the number of those who were anxious to die for Jesus Christ was incalculable.[8656]

From these facts Clement of Alexandria[8657] subsequently inferred, that if God himself had not upheld the Christian faith, it never could have withstood the efforts of so many philosophers who endeavored to obscure it with sophisms, or the violence of so many kings and emperors who labored to extinguish it by persecution. The number of Christians, far from having been diminished by the slaughter of the saints, became so wonderfully increased, that Tertullian said: “Our number grows in the same measure that you decimate us; the blood of the Christians is a sort of seed.”[8658] He used the word seed because the blood of the martyrs was that which multiplied the faithful. Tertullian, indeed, boasted of this, and upbraided the tyrants with their impotency; since, notwithstanding all their endeavors to exterminate the followers of the Gospel, the streets, the forum, and even the senate, were filled with Christians. Origen likewise writes: “It is a thing worthy to be observed, and eminently calculated to excite wonder, to behold the steady progress of the Christian religion, in spite of the most untiring persecution and continual martyrdoms.” “Greeks and barbarians,” continues this celebrated writer, “the wise and the unlearned, voluntarily embraced it; from which we may conclude that its propagation was due to a power superior to the human.”[8659]

Before the end of the second century, we are assured by Tertullian, all nations *(universæ gentes)* had embraced the faith of Jesus. He makes special mention of the Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, of Armenia, and of Phrygia, of Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Cirenasia, and Palestine; the Gethuli, the entire of Spain, many of the Gallic tribes, Bretagne, the Sarmatians, the Dacians, the Scythians, and many remote nations, provinces, and islands.[8660] Arnobius,[8661] who died a hundred years after Tertullian, adds to the list of those converted to the faith, the Indians, the Sarii, the Persians, and the Medes; Arabia, Syria, Gallacia, Acaja, Macedonia, and Epirus, with all the islands and provinces from the rising to the setting sun.” Besides those regions enumerated by Tertullian, St. Athanasius, half a century afterwards, mentions others. Writing to the Emperor Jovinian, he says: “Know that this faith has been preached from the beginning, approved by the Nicene Fathers, and professed by all the Churches of the world—in Spain, in England, and in Gaul; throughout the entire of Italy, in Dalmatia, Dacia, Mysia, and Macedonia; in all Greece, and in all Africa; in Sardinia, Cyprus, Crete, Pamphylia, Lysia, and Isauria; in Egypt and Lybia, in Pontus and Cappadocia. With the exception of a few of the Arian faction, we may add all the nearer Churches, as well as those of the East."

Thus we see that, after the ten persecutions of the Roman emperors, which lasted for more than two hundred years, beginning from the first under Nero, the greater part of the human race, having abandoned the worship of false deities, had embraced the doctrines of Christianity. Finally, after so many struggles, it pleased the Almighty Disposer of events to grant peace to his Church under Constantine. This emperor was, after a miraculous manner, chosen by Heaven for the carrying out of the merciful dispensations of divine Providence. Having first overcome Maxentius, and afterwards Licinius, in the strong arm of the Lord,—for, as Eusebius relates, in whatever direction the *Labarum*, or standard of the cross, appeared, the enemy either fled or surrendered,—after peace had been established he forbade the Gentiles to sacrifice any longer to their idols, and caused magnificent temples to be erected to the honor of Jesus Christ. And oh, how glorious did not the Church then appear! still more widely extending her blessed influence, and, with every new conquest, bringing additional joy to the hearts of her once persecuted children! Then ceased the torments of the martyr, and with them the bitter calumnies of the idolater. Busy multitudes of zealous converts were to be seen in every city destroying the idols which they once adored, pulling down the ancient shrines of superstition, and erecting new altars to the worship of the true God! The confines of so vast an empire were too narrow a limit for the active zeal of the great Constantine. He labored to propagate the saving doctrines of religion in Persia and among the barbarous nations he had subdued; nor would he, according to Eusebius[8662] and Socrates,[8663] grant them the amity of the Roman Empire, except upon the condition of their becoming Christians.

True it is that from time to time divers heresies have sprung up in the Church, which have been productive of much evil; but *the hand of the Lord hath not been shortened.*[8664] Even in these latter days we have had authentic accounts of many considerable acquisitions made by the Church, both among heretics and pagans. A learned author writes that ten thousand Arians have recently been converted in Transylvania. In Prussia an additional number of Catholic churches have been erected. In Denmark the public profession of the Catholic religion is now tolerated. The missions in England are being carried on with very happy results. We have been assured by persons of authority and undoubted veracity, that in the East forty thousand Armenian and other oriental heretics have been received into the communion of our holy Church; that in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Chaldea the number of Catholics is every day increasing; and that during the last few years several Nestorian Bishops have abjured the errors of that sect. Finally, during the present century a considerable number of Pagans have been converted in India and China.[8665]

But to return to the martyrs. The number of Christians who had received the crown of martyrdom, previous to the accession of Constantine, was almost incredible. Many authors calculate the number of those who had laid down their lives for the faith to have been nearly eleven millions! So that if this number were equally distributed in the course of one year, thirty thousand would be allotted to each day.

Oh, the beautiful harvest of holy martyrs that paradise has reaped since the preaching of the Gospel! But, O God! what will be, on the day of general judgment, the confusion of the tyrants and of all the persecutors of the faith, at the sight of the martyrs once so despised and so maltreated by them, when these celestial heroes shall appear in glory, extolling the greatness of God, and armed with the sword of divine justice to avenge themselves for all the injuries and cruelties exercised against them, as was foretold by David : *The high praises of God in their mouths, and two-edged swords in their hands to execute vengeance upon the nations; to bind their kings in fetters, and their nobles in manacles of iron.*[8666] Then shall the martyrs judge the Neros, the Domitians, and other persecutors, and shall condemn them; yea, as we read in the Gospel of St. Matthew, even to the *exterior darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*[8667]

But it will be for us a subject of more profitable meditation to reflect upon another scene which the great day of general and irrevocable doom will present—the despair of so many Christians who, having died in mortal sin, will behold with unavailing anguish the triumph of so many martyrs, who, rather than lose God, suffered themselves to be despoiled of all things, and underwent the most horrid torments that hell could suggest or tyrants inflict; while they, rather than yield a point of honor or forego a momentary gratification, despised the suggestions of divine grace, and lost their souls forever!

II. THE ADVANTAGES OF DEVOUT MEDITATION ON THE VIRTUES THAT THE MARTYRS PRACTISED DURING THEIR SUFFERINGS

From an earnest consideration of the illustrious examples of virtue which the saints have given us during their martyrdom, oh, how much is to be learned!

I. By beholding, in devout meditation, the utter contempt in which they held the world and all the allurements of its pompous vanities, we are taught to despise the fleeting and unsubstantial pleasures which it offers to its deluded votaries. Many of them, previously to having been put to torture, had been offered by the tyrants immense rewards, posts of honor, and noble marriages, to induce them to abandon the faith. Yet they not only indignantly refused them, but willingly renounced the riches and honors which they already held, and offered themselves up to tortures the most excruciating and deaths the most ignominious, in order not to lose those heavenly graces which benign Providence fails not to impart to the servants of the Lord, as the earnest of the eternal blessings which shall be the recompense of their fidelity. To St. Clement of Ancyra the tyrant offered a great quantity of gold and precious stones if he would deny the name of the Lord Jesus; but the saint, raising his eyes to heaven, exclaimed! “And is it thus, O my God, that men treat Thee!—to compare Thee to dust and dross!” The pontifical dignity was offered to St. Theodore of Amasea as the reward of his apostasy. The holy martyr, ridiculing the proposal, replied: “Pontifical dignity! I am about to enjoy God forever in heaven; and is it likely, think you, that I should prefer remaining on earth, to follow the trade of a cook and a butcher to your false gods?”

II. From the example of the martyrs we learn also to place our confidence only in God, and to become daily more enamoured of the excellence of our faith: since in their constancy we cannot help admiring the wonderful power of God which enabled them to encounter torments and death with heroic fortitude and ecstatic joy. For without the interposition of the most powerful assistance from heaven, how could the delicate constitution of nervous persons, the tottering decrepitude of age, the timorous disposition of tender virgins, the recklessness of adolescent manhood, or the inconsideration of boyhood years, be equal to tortures, the bare recital of which fills us with horror? Caldrons of boiling oil and liquid pitch, red-hot coats of mail, hooks to pull out the eyes and teeth, iron combs to tear off the flesh; fires quickly to consume, or tediously to torture; scourging until bones and bowels appeared; beheading, quartering, lacerating, impaling—these were only some of the ingredients of the martyr’s cup.

St. Barlaam, a poor laborer of a village in Antioch, having evinced extraordinary fortitude during his sufferings, and having been scourged until the executioners had exhausted their strength, was obliged by the tyrant to hold his hand over the flame that burned before the shrine of an idol. At the same time burning coals and incense were placed upon his hand, in the hope that he might be obliged by the pain to let them fall upon the altar, and thus afford them the opportunity of asserting that he had sacrificed to the idols; but the constancy of the saint was greater than their malice—he allowed his flesh to be burned to the bone, and expired in the effort.

St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom have eulogized this martyr.

St. Eulalia affords another instance of the wonderful aid which the Almighty gives to those who are devoted to his service. She was a youthful virgin, of only twelve years; the tyrant ordered her to be cruelly scourged, and then caused boiling oil to be poured into the wounds, and burning torches to be applied to her breasts and sides. During these tortures she ceased not to praise the Lord. Her joints were entirely dislocated, the flesh torn from her bones with iron hooks, and she was finally burned alive, having baffled the ingenuity of her inhuman executioners.

The martyrdom, also, of St. Vitus and St. Agapitus shows us the wonderful assistance of grace, which never fails the servants of the Lord. The former, when only fourteen years of age, was scourged, racked, and torn with irons. His father, who was a Gentile, wept with anguish to see his son expire in such torments. “No, father!” exclaimed the boy, “I do not die: I go to live with Christ forever.” St. Agapitus, also a youth, evinced the same fortitude: the tyrant threatened that he would place upon his head a red-hot helmet: “And what better fortune could await me,” said the saint, “than to exchange your instrument of torture for a heavenly crown?” Then the emperor ordered that red-hot coals should be placed on his head, that he be scourged, and be suspended by the feet over a thick smoke; he afterwards had boiling water poured over his breast, and finally had him beheaded.

The triumph of divine grace in the aged was manifested in St. Simeon, who at the age of one hundred and twenty endured the most excruciating tortures and expired on a cross, as is related by Eusebius of Cæsarea. St. Philip, Bishop of Heraclea, at a most decrepit old age, was dragged by the feet through the city, scourged till his bowels appeared, and afterwards burned alive. The venerable martyr, till his last breath, ceased not to return thanks to the Lord, who had made him worthy to die for his glory.

III. From the patience which the martyrs evinced during their tortures, we should learn to suffer with holy resignation the crosses and afflictions of this life; poverty, sickness, persecution, contumely, injustice, and all other evils, are but trifling when compared with their sufferings. The reflection that it was the will of God that they should suffer for his love, was their only solace. We also in our tribulations should remember the necessity of resignation to the divine will; and, calling to mind the more grievous sufferings of the martyrs, should blush to complain. St. Vincent de Paul used to say: “Conformity to the divine will is a sovereign remedy for all evils.”[8668]

It may be useful here to remark, with St. Augustine, that it is not the torture but the cause which maketh the martyr.[8669] Whence St. Thomas[8670] teaches that martyrdom is to suffer death in the exercise of an act of virtue. From which we may infer that not only he who by the hands of the executioner lays down his life for the faith, but whoever dies to comply with the divine will, and to please God, is a martyr, since in sacrificing himself to the divine love he performs an act of the most exalted virtue. We all have to pay the great debt of nature; let us therefore endeavor, in holy prayer, to obtain resignation to the divine will—to receive death and every tribulation in conformity with the dispensations of his Providence. As often as we shall perform this act of resignation with sufficient fervor, we may hope to be made partakers of the merits of the martyrs. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, in reciting the doxology in the office, always bowed her head in the same spirit as she would have done in receiving the stroke of the executioner.[8671]

IV. The examples of the martyrs teach us also to have immediate recourse to the assistance of God, by earnest supplication, when we feel ourselves disconsolate or weak under affliction. Thus did the holy martyrs. As their torture increased, they multiplied their prayers and secured the victory. St. Theodore, after a long endurance of his tortures, was stretched upon burning tiles; feeling the pain penetrating to his very heart, he besought the Lord to mitigate the torture, and persevered to the end. There have, on the contrary, been examples of Christians, who, failing to invoke the assistance of the Almighty, have fallen off from the confession of the faith, and forfeited the glorious crown. An example is found in the acts of the martyrs of Japan. An aged man, having been condemned to a protracted martyrdom, endured the torture for a considerable time, but failing to invoke heavenly aid, denied his faith a few moments before he expired—a startling warning to all, that perseverance in prayer, in times of temptation and distress, is that which alone can insure us the victory.

V. But the most important lesson which we learn from the martyrs is the necessity of the love of God: *He who loveth not abideth in death.*[8672] We cannot manifest our love of God so well by a multitude of actions performed for his glory, as by a willingness to suffer for his sake. St. Gordianus replied to the tyrant, who threatened to put him to death if he did not deny the name of Jesus: “You threaten death! but my greatest regret is, that I can die but once for Jesus Christ.” In a similar manner, St. Procopius exclaimed to the tyrant, who was directing further tortures: “Torment as much as thou wilt, but know that to one who truly loves Jesus Christ, nothing is dearer than to suffer for his sake.” “And did the saints speak thus,” says St. Bernard, “because they were insensible to torments? No.” continues the holy Doctor, “they were neither frantic nor insensible, but their love of Jesus Christ caused them to esteem it all joy to suffer and to die for his glory.”[8673] This ardent love of God is certainly the greatest spiritual advantage to be derived from the perusal of the acts of the martyrs; the recollection of their conduct will make us ashamed to repine under the tribulations which divine Providence sends us, and will strengthen us to receive them with resignation.

VI. I add that death, which is the tribute that every one must pay, is the greatest of all our tribulations, and that makes not only sinners but the just tremble. Our Saviour himself as man wished to show the fear that he felt in the face of death, so that he began to pray to his Father to free him from it. But at the same time he teaches us to accept death according to the good pleasure of God by saying: *Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.*[8674] The following is the way in which we acquire the glory of martyrdom: It is by accepting death to please God and to conform to his will; for, as we have remarked above with St. Augustine, not the pain, but the cause of death, or the end for which one submits to it, is that which makes martyrs. It follows that he who dies, in courageously accepting death and all the pains that accompany it, to accomplish the divine will, though he does not receive death by the hands of the executioner, dies, however, with the merit of martyrdom, or at least with a very similar merit. It also follows that as often as any one offers himself to undergo martyrdom for the love of God, so often he gains the merit of martyrdom. We have seen above[8675] the example of St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, who when she inclined the head at the *Glory be to the Father,* imagined that at the same moment she was receiving the stroke of the executioner. Hence we shall see in heaven a great number of saints doubly crowned with the merit of martyrdom without having been martyred.

VII. Finally, we should be moved to recommend ourselves every day, with great confidence, to the intercession of the holy martyrs, whose prayers are most efficacious with God. When we suffer some grievous pain, or when we desire a special favor, let us make a novena or a triduum in honor of the holy martyrs, and we shall easily obtain the grace. Let us not fail to honor them, says St. Ambrose; for they are our princes in the faith and our powerful intercessors.[8676] If the Lord promises a reward to him who gives a drink of water to a poor man,[8677] what will he not do for those who sacrificed their lives in the midst of torments! Let us here observe that the martyrs, before receiving the mortal blow, without doubt prepared themselves many times for the many tortures and for death, so that when they closed their earthly career they died with the merit not only of one martyrdom, but with the merit of all those martyrdoms that they had already accepted and offered sincerely to God. Hence we may imagine with what abundance of merits they entered heaven, and how valuable is their mediation with God.

A PRAYER TO THE HOLY MARTYRS TO OBTAIN THEIR PROTECTION

O ye blessed Princes of the heavenly kingdom! ye who sacrificed to the Almighty God the honors, the riches, and possessions of this life, and have received in return the unfading glory and never-ending joys of heaven! ye who are secure in the everlasting possession of the brilliant crown of glory which your sufferings have obtained!—look with compassionate regards upon our wretched state in this valley of tears, where we groan in the uncertainty of what may be our eternal destiny. And from that divine Saviour, for whom you suffered so many torments, and who now repays you with so unspeakable glory, obtain for us that we may love him with all our heart, and receive in return the grace of perfect resignation under the trials of this life, fortitude under the temptations of the enemy, and perseverance to the end. May your powerful intercession obtain for us that we may one day in your blessed company sing the praises of the Eternal, and, even as you now do, face to face, enjoy the beatitude of his vision!

III. THE VARIOUS TORTURES TO WHICH THE MARTYRS WERE SUBJECTED

The Rev. Father Mamachi, in his erudite and labored work entitled “Manners and Customs of the First Christians,”[8678] gives an account of all these tortures suffered by the martyrs, from the works of ancient writers who were their contemporaries, as St. Justin, Tertullian, Athenagoras, Origen, Eusebius of Cæsarea, Clement of Alexandria, and others. This author describes at much length the various species of torture employed against the servants of Jesus Christ during the ten persecutions of the Roman emperors; we shall be more brief, as our intention is merely to show how rich in merit those sainted heroes closed their earthly career.

1. THE MARTYRDOM OF THE CROSS

Some were crucified in an erect posture, as was our Lord Jesus Christ; others with the head downwards, as St. Peter, according to Eusebius, who relates this on the authority of Origen; others in the manner in which the martyrdom of St. Andrew is represented. Many were made to pass their arms under the transverse beam of the cross, and had their hands nailed upon the upper part. Some were suspended from a tree by the hands, their arms having been first tied behind their backs, and heavy weights attached to their feet. Women were hung up by the hair, the agony of which torture was sufficient to cause death; others were hung by one or both feet, with the head downwards, and in many cases a large stone tied round the neck; finally, many had their hands nailed to a beam, with enormous weights at their feet.

2. THE MARTYRDOM OF FIRE

Some were placed upon gridirons, others plunged into caldrons of boiling oil or pitch. Many were suffocated with smoke, or dressed in a garment smeared with some combustible matter, and so burned at a stake. Some were cast into fiery furnaces; more were crowded into a ship, which was set on fire at sea; others were in-closed in a brazen bull and roasted alive; more were tortured by red-hot plates of iron applied to their sides; some, finally, were thrown upon the earth, and molten lead poured over them, or were impaled upon a spit, and roasted before a slow fire.

3. THE TORTURE OF THE SCOURGE

Scourges were of various kinds—of leather, of cane, of the tendons of oxen, of iron links, and sometimes of rods of iron, shaped like thorns, which were called *scorpions*. The martyrs were generally tied to a post, or between four posts, to increase their punishment; but some were placed in a kind of stock. This stock consisted of two large pieces of wood, one above the other, between which the feet of the sufferers[8679] were confined, and in this torture they were sometimes scourged, others were thrown with their backs on a table filled with large nails, then struck with sticks or rods.

4. THE TORTURE OF THE IRONS

These were iron hooks on which the Christians were suspended, and iron claws that served to tear them to the bone and to their very entrails. Other instruments were destined to pull out all their teeth, one after the other. Their flesh was lacerated with iron combs, or they were flayed. They were tied to the ground and were cut with blows of the hatchet, or their members were gradually cut to pieces, from the toes till their thighs, and from the fingers to the breasts, so that nothing was left but the trunk. They were stretched with their backs against a wheel that made them move on sharp irons fixed in the ground; or they were tied upon a table, then disembowelled, and their intestines taken out.

5. OTHER TORTURES

The martyrs were also tortured on the rack, and with other torments. Sometimes they were exposed to the sun, their bodies being rubbed with honey so that they might be stung by the flies and wasps. They were made to die in different ways. They were stoned, beheaded, strangled, drowned. There were some who were tied to two trees that had been bent by main force, which when released would tear them to pieces. Others tied in a bag were thrown into the sea, or thrown to the dogs or wild beasts. Some were made to die under the press; others perished from hunger.[8680]

PREFACE

It is not our intention to give, in this work, a history of all the martyrs who have glorified the Church; but, without subjecting ourselves to any order of time or of persons,[8681] merely to relate the victories of some saints who showed the greatest courage in their combats, and suffered the most horrible tortures that could have been invented by the tyrants.

In some of our narrations the reader may find himself at a loss to account for such barbarity and fierceness as the tyrants practised upon the martyrs, whose innocence and meekness might be expected to save them from persecution. Let us consider whence this fury came.

It at first originated in the hatred which the Pagans bore towards Christians, whose virtues were the strongest censure upon their infamous lives.

It was also caused by the instigation of the devils who vehemently abhorred these pious athletes, the more their example served to propagate the faith and induced the rest to imitate them.

The principal reason of this persecution was the hatred that these tyrants conceived against the martyrs in seeing themselves overcome by children, by tender virgins, by simple and ignorant men, who upbraided them with their insanity in following a false religion, which authorized every vice, and called upon them to worship as gods men who, during their lives, had given the most horrid examples of turpitude and crime that ever human nature revolted at.

Their rage was yet more increased at the sight of the very many miracles wrought through the servants of the true God;—they saw wild beasts cast themselves at the feet of the martyrs; they perceived that red-hot coals, molten lead, did not burn them, and witnessed other similar prodigies. In vain did they cry out: “This is magic; these are incantations;” the people were converted in the presence of these miracles, and thousands of them embraced the faith; and this redoubled the irritation of the judges.

They believed that they were frightening the Christians by inventing new tortures, and flattered themselves that they were extinguishing the faith by putting to death all Christians. But the more they multiplied tortures and immolated victims, the more did the number of the faithful increase. Tertullian[8682] relates that a certain governor in Asia, named Arrius, was putting to death those who confessed the name of the Lord Jesus, when such a multitude presented themselves before his tribunal as caused him to shudder at the thought of shedding so much blood; he therefore contented himself with putting a few of them to death, and to the rest he said: “If your desire of death be so irresistible, there are precipices enough from which to fling yourselves. Begone!”

As I have already remarked, I do not intend to give a general history of the martyrs: I wish only to describe the heroic acts of some of the most remarkable of them. No one should be astonished that at times I do not relate all the circumstances that are found in other books; I have only taken care to mention most authenticated facts, drawn from trustworthy authors, omitting a few particulars which I do not reject as being false, but which appear to me to be doubtful, as they are taken from uncertain and suspected acts. According to Cardinal Baronius,[8683] “it is better to relate a few facts of undoubted certainty, than to risk the introduction of any dubious circumstances, by indulging in lengthy details, because the few facts given upon respectable authority will always be received with satisfaction by the reader, while the detection of any dubious matter would make him suspect even that which is in reality true.”

In compliance with this excellent advice, we shall endeavor to select the best authenticated facts, while we intend to avoid, on the other hand, the extreme of scepticism. For such it would be to reject the testimony of an author whose authority is generally received, or who has the characters of antiquity, probity, learning, and exactness.

I say this because there are certain writers who seem to take merit to themselves by doubting everything. An accurate discrimination in the selection of facts and authorities is a homage due to truth; but even this may be carried to an excess bordering on scepticism; for as it is a weakness to put faith in everything we find recorded, without the concurrent testimony of competent authority, so, on the other hand, it is rashness to receive everything with doubt. We should not refuse belief to the wonderful acts of the martyrs; but on the contrary, we should be persuaded that God can work in his saints more wondrous effects than the weakness of our understandings can comprehend.

In describing the following triumphs of the martyrs I have with the utmost diligence consulted the most learned and accurate authors. I have retrenched all superfluous words as well as certain unimportant details, and have endeavored to present clearly and concisely only the substance of the facts, selecting those that most abound in generous traits and in useful instruction; in a word, those that are most conducive to spiritual edification.

PART I

Martyrs of the First Ages

Chapter I

ST. IGNATIUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH

February I.

ST. IGNATIUS, also called Theophorus, that is, *one that carries God*, lived in the first century of the Church. He was a disciple of the apostles, particularly of St. John; by them he was baptized, and subsequently ordained Bishop of the Church of Antioch which had the honor of having been founded by the Apostle St. Peter, and as the place where the disciples of Jesus Christ were first called Christians.

St. Ignatius undertook the government of this church after the death of Evodius, the successor of St. Peter, which occurred in the year of the Lord 69; although Cardinal Orsi[8684] cites the opinion of some who would have it that St. Ignatius was the immediate successor of St. Peter. Our saint governed his flock with such zeal that all the churches of Syria consulted him as an oracle. In the persecution of Domitian he had to suffer much, and labored, at the risk of his life, for the preservation of the faith, animating his flock to be faithful to the death. He longed for the glory of martyrdom, frequently saying that he could not be persuaded of his love for Christ till he had testified it with his blood.

Upon the death of Domitian in the year 96, the tempest abated under Nerva, his successor. But during this time heretics did not cease to trouble the Church; this is the reason why the saint, writing to the faithful of Smyrna, recommended them not to have any communication with them: “Be satisfied,” he said to them, “with merely praying to God for those who abstain from the Eucharist, because they deny it to be the flesh of Jesus Christ, who died for our sins.”

In the year 105 the persecution was renewed by the Emperor Trajan. This prince, after his conquest of the Scythians and the Dacians, published an edict which obliged all, under pain of death, to offer sacrifice to the gods.

Marching afterwards against the Parthians, he arrived at Antioch; and, hearing with how much zeal and success St. Ignatius propagated the Christian religion, he called him to his presence and thus addressed him: “Art thou that wicked demon called Theophorus, who taketh pleasure in violating our edict of sacrificing to the gods, and dost continue to seduce the inhabitants of this city by preaching the law of Christ?” Ignatius replied: “Yes, prince, I am called Theophorus; by no one can Theophorus be called a demon, because the devils fly from the servants of God. If thou callest me a devil because I endeavor to defeat the machinations of the devil, I well deserve the name.’’ Trajan asked him the signification of the term *Theophorus;* the saint replied, “It signifies ‘the bearer of God.’ ” The emperor replied: “Thou carriest God in thy heart; and we, have we not also in ourselves the gods that assist us?” The saint answered with enthusiasm: “It is an error, 0 prince! to give the name of gods to the demons that you adore: there is only one true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son.” The emperor replied, “Dost thou speak of Him who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?” “Yes,” answered the saint, “of Him I speak who has confounded the malice of devils, and placed them beneath the feet of those Christians who carry God in their hearts.” He added that Trajan would be more happy, and his empire more prosperous, if he would believe in the Lord Jesus; but the emperor, heedless of these exhortations, offered to make him a priest of Jupiter and a member of the senate if he would sacrifice to the gods. The saint replied that he was content to be a priest of Jesus Christ, for whom he ardently desired to shed his blood. Trajan, filled with anger, then pronounced sentence upon the saint—that he should be conducted in chains to Rome, and devoured by wild beasts at the public games.

St. Ignatius having heard the sentence, raised his eyes to heaven, and exclaimed: “I thank Thee, O Lord, because that Thou hast vouchsafed to make me worthy of giving Thee a proof of my love by sacrificing my life for Thy faith; I desire, O Lord, that the beasts may hasten to devour me, that I may make to Thee the sacrifice of myself.” He then stretched forth his hands to be chained, kissing the manacles as they bound him; and with tears recommending his church to God, he was conducted by the soldiers to Seleucia, and thence to Smyrna, accompanied by two of his deacons, Philo and Agathopodus, who are believed to be the authors of his acts. Wherever the saint passed, he ceased not his exhortations to the faithful to persevere in faith and prayer, to be enamoured of the riches of heaven, and to despise those of this earth. The Christians came, in great numbers, to meet him and to receive his blessing, especially the bishops and priests of the churches of Asia, who, as they perceived him going so joyfully to martyrdom, wept in the tenderness of affection.

Only the larger bones of his body were left; these were collected and brought to Antioch by his two deacons, to whom he appeared on the following night, resplendent with glory. His martyrdom took place on the 20th December, of the year 107. After the destruction of Antioch by the Saracens, his relics were removed to Rome, and placed in the Church of St. Clement where at the present day they are venerated with great devotion. His name has been inserted in the canon of Mass.

The acts of the martyrdom of St. Ignatius are found in the collection of Ruinart, entitled: *Acta Primorum Martyrum Sincera*.

Chapter II

ST. JULITTA, AND ST. QUIRICUS, HER SON

June 16.

ST. JULITTA was a noble lady of the city of Iconium, in Lycaonia. During the reign of the Emperors Dioclesia and Maximian, a most cruel tyrant called Domitian was governor of the province. While the persecution was raging most violently, St. Julitta took her infant son Cyr,[8685] only three years old, and accompanied by two female servants, fled for safety to Seleucia, in Isauria; where, however, she found Alexander, the Proconsul of Cilicia, who exercised a no less barbarous cruelty than Domitian against those Christians who refused to sacrifice to the gods. The saint passed from Seleucia to Tharsis, where Alexander arrived about the same time. Having been recognized, she was arrested and conducted before the judge with the infant Quiricus in her arms. Fire and incense were produced, in order that, renouncing Jesus Christ, she might sacrifice; but the saint answered: “I am a Christian, and therefore am prepared to lose not only my property, but even my life, rather than deny my God.” The judge frequently urged her to abjure her faith; but she who wished to compensate her temporal loss by the acquisition of eternal gains uniformly replied: “I am a Christian: I cannot deny Jesus Christ.”

Alexander, infuriated by her constancy, ordered that the child should be torn from her embrace, and that she should be cruelly scourged; but the holy lady under this torture fervently and continually repeated: “I am a Christian: I cannot sacrifice to your gods.” Quiricus, meanwhile, was beholding the agonies of his mother, and struggled to return to her embrace; but Alexander, to quiet him, placed him on his knee, and endeavored to kiss him. The child, however, kept his eyes fixed continually upon his parent, and by plunging and kicking, tried to free himself from the tyrant, crying out at the same time: “I also am a Christian.” The inhuman wretch dashed the child from him, and the agonizing mother, seeing the steps of the throne bespattered with the blood and brains of her infant, exclaimed: “I give Thee thanks, O my God! for having called my boy before me to Thyself.”

The brutal judge, still more infuriated by this exclamation, caused her sides to be torn with iron hooks, and boiling pitch to be poured upon her feet. Meanwhile one of the bystanders said to her: “Julitta, have pity upon thyself; perish not as thy son has perished; sacrifice to the gods.” “I cannot,” she replied, “sacrifice to devils and to mute statues. I adore the Lord Jesus, and wish to meet my son in heaven;” upon which the judge decreed that she should be beheaded. This sentence filled the saint with joy. Arrived at the place of her last struggle, she cast herself upon her knees, as Father Massini relates in his beautiful work of the lives of the Saints, according to the acts of the martyrs by Ruinart. She then prayed after the following manner: “O God, who hast been pleased to admit my child to a participation of the glory of Thy saints, turn Thine eyes of mercy towards me also, and grant me a place among the souls destined to love Thee and adore Thee forever.” Having finished her prayer her head was at once cut off. It is thus that Julitta, with her heart all inflamed with holy love and full of joy, consummated her sacrifice in the year 304.[8686]

Chapter III

ST. VINCENT, DEACON

January 22.

ST. VINCENT, one of the most celebrated martyrs of Spain, was born in Saragossa, of one of the most respectable families of that city. While very young, he was placed under the tutelage of Valerius, Bishop of that church, who with great pains instructed him in the doctrines of religion, giving him at the same time a very extensive acquaintance with human science. Vincent, having made wonderful progress in learning, was ordained deacon by this prelate, who being himself prevented from preaching by an impediment in his speech, entrusted this office to Vincent. The young Levite discharged this important duty with such success that a great number of sinners, and even of pagans, was converted at his discourses.

At that time, namely, in the year 303, Spain was under the rule of Maximian; and Dacian was governor of the province of Tarragona, in which Saragossa was situated. This Dacian was a most cruel man, and an unrelenting persecutor of the Christians. Hearing of the manner in which Vincent advanced the Christian faith, he had him arrested, together with his Bishop, Valerius, and brought to Valencia, where he resided. He caused them to suffer much in prison, thinking that by maltreatment he would render them easier to be tampered with, but he soon perceived that this means did not correspond to the end he had in view. When they had been brought into his presence, he first endeavored by kindness to induce them to apostatize. To Valerius he represented that his declining age and infirmity required that repose which he might obtain by obeying the imperial edicts, but if he resisted he would feel the effects of their just anger. Then turning to Vincent he said: “You are young, and should not despise the reward of fortune which you may earn by abandoning your religion. Obey, young man, the commands of the emperors, and do not, by refusal, expose yourself to an ignominious death."

Whereupon Vincent, turning to Valerius, who as yet had made no reply to the governor, said: "Father, if thou wilt, I shall answer for thee." The saintly bishop, resolved to suffer for Jesus Christ, replied: "Yes, my son, as I formerly entrusted to thee the preaching of God's holy word, I now charge thee to manifest our faith. The holy deacon then declared to Dacian that they adored one only God, and could not worship the gods of the empire, who were devils, adding: "Do not think to shake our fortitude with threats of death or promises of reward, because there is nothing in this world which can be compared with the honor and pleasure of dying for Jesus Christ." Dacian irritated by such liberty of speech said to the holy deacon: "Either you must offer incense to the gods or you must pay with your life the contempt that you show." To this Vincent, raising his voice, replied as follows: "I have already told you that the greatest pleasure and the most distinguished honor that you can procure for us is to make us die for Jesus Christ. You may rest assured that you will tire of inflicting torments sooner than we of suffering them."

Dacian condemned Valerius to banishment, and resolved to wreak his vengeance upon Vincent.

He first caused him to be stretched upon the rack, by which horrid machine the saint's arms and feet were so distended, that the bystanders could hear the noise of the dislocation of his joints, which remained attached only by the over-stretched and relaxed sinews. Dacian perceived the placid meekness with which the young martyr endured his torments, and, as Fleury observes,[8687] heard him say, "Behold, what I have ever desired is now being accomplished! Behold the happy consummation of what I have always sighed for!" The tyrant hence concluded that the executioners were remiss in making him feel the torments, and caused them to be beaten with rods.

He then commanded that the sides of the saint should be torn with iron hooks, until the ribs should be visible; and, knowing how much the pain would increase by allowing the wounds to cool, and then opening them afresh, he ordered this torture, which was inflicted with great cruelty, until the bowels appeared, and the blood flowed in torrents. Meanwhile, as Orsi relates, the martyr insulted the tyrant, saying: “Since thy cruel ministers have exhausted their strength, come, thou chief butcher, and help them;—stretch forth thy wicked hands and slake thy thirst in my blood. Thou art deceived, thinking that torments can overcome my faith—within me there is another man strengthened by God, whom thou canst not subdue.”

Hereupon, seeing his constancy, Dacian ordered a cessation of his tortures, begging of the saint, for his own sake, that if he persisted in refusing to sacrifice to the gods, he would at least give up the sacred books to be burned. Vincent answered that fire was not created by God to burn holy books, but to torture the wicked forever: nor did he hesitate to admonish him, that if he did not abandon the worship of idols, he would be one day condemned to eternal flames. The governor, more incensed than ever, condemned him to the most cruel of torments—that of being broiled on a species of gridiron studded with sharp points. The saint hearing this barbarous command, walked with joy to the frightful engine, in anticipation of his executioners:—such was his eagerness to suffer. Upon this gridiron the saint was stretched at length, and bound, hand and foot, while the fire burned beneath. Red-hot plates of iron were placed on his mangled flesh; and his wounds were rubbed with salt, which the activity of the fire forced deeper into his burned and lacerated body. In the midst of these tortures, the countenance of the martyr evinced the inward consolation and joy of his soul, while, with eyes raised to heaven, he blessed the Lord, and besought of him to receive his sacrifice. All admired the prodigious fortitude with which God inspired the holy youth, and the pagans themselves exclaimed that it was miraculous.

The effect that the spectacle of such patience produced obliged Dacian to remove him from the public view. Yet, not content with the tortures he had already inflicted, he caused him to be thrown into a dungeon, his feet placed very wide apart, in wooden stocks, the pain of which was so great that many martyrs died under it. His body was then stretched on potsherds, which, opening his wounds afresh, caused the most painful anguish. In order to weary his patience, strict orders were given that no one should be admitted to see or offer him the least consolation; but the saint at midnight perceived his dungeon illuminated by a celestial light, and perfumed by a heavenly odor. The Lord then sent his angels to console him, to intimate that his tortures were at an end, and to assure him of the reward of his fidelity. The jailers, being awakened by the splendor of the light, approached, and heard the martyr in concert with the angels rendering praises to the Lord. They believed and avowed the Christian faith.

Dacian being informed of this, ordered that the saint should be removed from prison to a soft bed, and that his wounds should be healed, with the intention of renewing his torments when he would be sufficiently recovered to bear them. The faithful being permitted to visit and console him, kissed his wounds and absorbed the blood in their napkins, which they preserved as most precious relics. But the time for our saint's triumph had arrived, and he expired in the embraces of his brethren; while his soul was wafted, by the angels who had assisted him, to the regions of everlasting bliss.

The tyrant on hearing of his death commanded that his body should be exposed to be devoured by wild beasts: but a raven was sent by God to defend it with its claws and beak, even against a wolf that had come to devour it. Dacian having exhausted his malice, ordered that the body should be put in a sack, and, with a heavy stone tied to it, cast into the sea; but there is no power against the Lord—the body floated like a feather on the water and was carried by the waves as far as Valencia. The mariners tried to get possession of it, but before they could reach it, it was carried by the waves on the seashore and covered with sand.

The saint afterwards appeared to a pious lady named Ionica, and indicated the place where his body lay. She went there, accompanied by other Christians, and finding the relics, deposited them in a little chapel; after the persecution had ceased, they were translated to a magnificent church outside the walls of Valencia, where they have always been regarded with devout veneration.[8688] St. Augustine attests that at his time the feast of St. Vincent was celebrated with a special joy in all the countries whither the Christian religion had penetrated.[8689]

The acts of the martyrdom of this great saint are among the number of those that Ruinart has transcribed.

Chapter IV

ST. AGRICOLA AND ST. VITALIS, OF BOLOGNA

November 4.

ST. AGRICOLA was a gentleman of the city of Bologna at the time of the persecution of Diocletian. He led a very pious life; by his universal kindness he conciliated to himself the esteem and affections of all, even the pagans. He had in his service a very holy man, called Vitalis, who served him with great fidelity. As they both ardently loved Jesus Christ, they assisted each other in the practice of virtue, and encouraged each other to shed their blood for the faith, when God should so ordain it. But it was the lot of Vitalis to obtain the crown first—to go before, as St. Ambrose says, and prepare a place for his master in heaven.

The enemies of the faith having seized him, tortured him so cruelly that his entire body was one wound; but Vitalis remained firm to the death. As the termination of his struggle approached, the Lord Jesus sent an angel to show him, in a vision, the crown which was being prepared for him in heaven. Whereupon Vitalis, with his dying breath, pronounced this prayer—“Jesus, my Saviour, and my God! command my longing soul to come to Thee, to receive the crown which has been shown me by Thy angel.” Having uttered these words, he expired.

The persecutors vainly hoped that by the torments and death of Vitalis they would induce his master, Agricola, to abjure the faith. They, however, soon discovered that all their arguments to induce him to obey the imperial edicts, by sacrificing to the idols, were vain; for Agricola, far from being dismayed by the cruelties practised upon his servant, derived from them greater courage, and a still more ardent desire to be made worthy of the crown that awaits those who lay down their lives for Jesus Christ. He had the happiness of dying, like his Saviour, nailed to a cross.

The bodies of these two martyrs, together with the instruments of their martyrdom, were buried in a cemetery, where they lay unknown until it pleased God to manifest the place of their burial to St. Ambrose. This holy bishop, when passing through Bologna, in the year 393, found the depository of these precious relics, and transferred them, with becoming solemnity, to a neighboring church. He took a portion of the blood of the martyrs, and of the cross of St. Agricola, which he had found in the sepulchre, and carried them to Florence, and placed them under the altar of a church which he afterwards consecrated in that city.

St. Ambrose preached upon the occasion, and from his sermon these facts have been extracted. They are to be found also in Ruinart.

Chapter V

ST. VITALIS OF RAVENNA

April 28.

ANOTHER holy martyr by the name of Vitalis was a citizen of Milan, of noble descent; the entire family were Christians, and his conduct was most exemplary. He had served in the army of the emperor, and was consequently on terms of friendship with Paulinus, the consul, trusting to whose favor he assisted the persecuted Christians, succored them in their need, and visited them in their prisons or in the caverns where they lay concealed.

Paulinus was a great enemy of the Christians, but, not knowing that Vitalis was one, invited him to travel to Ravenna. On their arrival our saint heard that a certain Christian, named Ursicinus, by profession a physician, had been condemned to torture, and seemed frightened at the approach of death. Vitalis, leaving the consul, ran to the spot, and finding Ursicinus almost ready to yield, exclaimed: “How is this, my friend? Thou hast the crown almost within thy grasp. Having already suffered so much, wilt thou miserably lose it? To avoid these short pains, wilt thou cast thyself into everlasting torments? Thou hast cured the maladies of others; wilt thou now condemn thyself to eternal death? Enliven thy faith! Have confidence in Jesus Christ! Bravely consummate the sacrifice of thyself.” Upon this exhortation the constancy of Ursicinus revived, and he gave his life for Jesus; upon which Vitalis carried off his body and respectfully interred it.

Information having been given to Paulinus of all that had passed, he said to Vitalis: “How then! art thou mad, to have acted as thou hast, not being a Christian?” The saint instantly replied: “Nay, but I am a Christian, and am proud to be so. Nor am I mad either. He is mad who gives to wicked men the honor due to God. There is but one only God: this God we adore, and we glory in dying for his sake.”

Paulinus loved Vitalis, but his hatred to the Christians prevailed over this feeling, and he ordered Vitalis to be imprisoned; who, finding himself in the company of other confessors, made such manifestation of his joy, that Paulinus became infuriated, and commanded all his joints to be dislocated upon the rack, and his sides to be torn with iron hooks. During these tortures the holy martyr ceased not to preach Jesus Christ, whereupon he was thrown into a ditch and buried alive beneath a torrent of stones, on the 27th of April, of the year 171, according to Baronius.

As St. Vitalis expired, one of the priests of Apollo, who had incensed the tyrant against him, was possessed by a devil; full of rage, he cried out: “Thou tormentest me, O Vitalis! thou burnest me.” Seven days after, he cast himself into a river and was drowned.

The relics of this saint are deposited in a magnificent church at Ravenna, built upon the place of his martyrdom.

On the day dedicated to the honor of St. Vitalis, commemoration is made of his wife, St. Valeria, who, while returning from Ravenna, after the death of her husband, was so beaten and maltreated by the pagans for her faith, that she expired on the second day after her arrival at Milan. She is also honored as a martyr.

Chapter VI

ST. POLYCARP, BISHOP OF SMYRNA

January 26.

St. POLYCARP was a disciple of the Apostle St. John, and was born about the seventieth year of the Christian era. He was a Christian from his infancy, and on account of his extraordinary piety was greatly beloved by the apostles, his teachers. St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, writes that he had had the good fortune, when young, to know our saint, who was then far advanced in years, and remark show strongly impressed on his mind were the instructions which he had received from him, and with what delight he remembered having heard him recount his conversations with St. John and others who had seen the Redeemer.

St. Polycarp was consecrated Bishop of Smyrna by St. John himself before this apostle's banishment to the Island of Patmos. It is looked upon as certain that our saint was the angel, or Bishop of Smyrna, commended by the Lord in the Apocalypse: *And to the angel of the church of Smyrna write . . . I know thy tribulation and thy poverty; but thou art rich. . . . Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.*[8690]

Our saint governed the church of Smyrna seventy years, according to Fleury,[8691] with so much prudence and approbation that he was regarded as the principal of the Asiatic bishops, on account of the great veneration in which he was held. When eighty years of age, he went to Rome to consult with Pope Anicetus on some points of discipline, particularly regarding the time at which Easter should be celebrated. St. Polycarp's delay in Rome was very useful to the faithful, as it afforded him an opportunity of confuting the heresies of that period. Meeting the heresiarch Marcion, who inquired of the holy bishop whether he knew him; "Yes," answered the saint, "I know thee to be the first-born of the devil."

On his return to Asia, he suffered much in the persecution which the Emperor Marcus Aurelius raised against the Church, and which was particularly felt at Smyrna, where the proconsul, Statius Quadratus, was exercising the most barbarous cruelty against the faithful. Amongst other acts of persecution, he caused twelve Christians, who were brought from Philadelphia, to be devoured by wild beasts. Excited by this bloodshed, the pagans were loud in their demands for the slaughter of the Christians, particularly of Polycarp, who failed not on his part to encourage his flock to the most heroic proofs of constancy, in suffering torments and death for Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding the continual clamor raised against him, the saint wished to remain in the city for the discharge of his pastoral duties, but was obliged, by the importunity of the faithful, to retire to a house without the city, where, during his stay, he occupied the entire night and day in holy prayer.

After a short time, however, he was discovered. Three days previously to his arrest, he saw in a vision his pillow in flames, from which he knew that the martyrdom reserved for him was that of fire, and, turning to his companions, told them that he would be burned alive. The Christians, aware that the soldiers were in pursuit of him, removed him to another house; but a young servant, overawed by the fear of torture, revealed the place of his concealment. The saint was informed of this, but refused to retreat any farther, saying, with holy resignation: “The will of God be done.” Full of heroic zeal, he offered himself to God as a victim destined for his honor, besought him to accept the sacrifice of his life, and joyfully delivered himself up to his pursuers. He received them into his house, ordered them a handsome supper, and desired only some time for prayer, which being granted, he was for two hours absorbed in meditation.

The captain and the soldiers were filled with confusion at the sight of the venerable bishop; and unwillingly executing their commission, departed with him at break of day. As the journey to Smyrna was long, they set him on an ass, and were conducting him to the city, when they met on the road two superior officers, called Herod and Nicetas, who took him into their chariot, and endeavored to persuade him to obey the imperial edict, saying, among other things: “What harm is there in sacrificing to the gods in order to save your life?” The saint answered with fortitude that he would rather suffer every torture, even death itself, than consent to what they advised.

Upon this resolute answer they turned away in anger, regarding him as a man lost through his obstinacy, and pushed him from the chariot with such violence that his leg was bruised, or, according to Fleury, broken by the fall.

The saint nevertheless, with undisturbed tranquillity of mind, proceeded to the amphitheatre, where he was about to sacrifice his life. Upon entering it he heard a voice from heaven, saying: “Be courageous, Polycarp; act manfully.’’ He was presented to the proconsul, who endeavored to shake his resolution, saying: “Polycarp, thou art old, and should free thyself from torments which thou hast not strength to bear; swear, therefore, by the fortune of Cæsar, and exclaim with the people, ‘Be the impious exterminated!’ ” The saint immediately replied: “Yes! be the impious exterminated—but by the impious I mean the idolaters.” The proconsul, thinking that he had gained him over, said: “Now blaspheme Jesus Christ, and I will discharge thee.” The saint re-joined: “I have served Jesus Christ these fourscore and six years; he never did me harm, but much good; how can I blaspheme him? How can I blaspheme my Creator and my Saviour, who is also my judge, and who justly punishes those who deny him?” The tyrant, still continuing to tempt him to deny Jesus Christ, Polycarp replied that he was a Christian, and considered it a glory to die for Christ.

The proconsul threatened him with wild beasts. “Call for them quickly,” replied the saint; “I cannot change from good to evil; the beasts will help me to pass from mortal suffering to the glory of heaven.” “Then,” said the tyrant, “thou shalt be burned alive.” The saint answered: “Thy fire only lasts a moment; there is another fire which is eternal, and of that I am afraid. Why dost thou delay to execute thy threats?” This he said with so much intrepidity, that the tyrant himself was struck with admiration; he ordered, however, a crier to make public proclamation that Polycarp had avowed himself a Christian; whereupon the entire multitude of pagans cried out: “Let this destroyer of our gods die!” The public shows having terminated, it was resolved that he should be burned alive, instead of being devoured by wild beasts.

The pile was prepared by the pagans, and also by the Jews, who were particularly active in offering themselves as executioners. Polycarp put off his garments, and seeing they were about to fasten him to the stake, said: “Leave aside these nails: He who gives me fortitude to undergo this fire, will enable me to stand still without them.” They therefore contented themselves with tying his hands behind his back, and placed him upon the pile, whence raising his eyes to heaven, the saint prayed after the following manner: “I bless Thee, O God, for having vouchsafed to make me a partaker in the Passion of Jesus Christ Thy Son, by rendering me worthy to offer myself as a sacrifice for Thy honor, that I may be enabled to praise Thee in heaven, and to bless Thee for all eternity.” The pile was set on fire, yet the flames did not touch the body of the saint, but formed, as it were, an arch around him, while his flesh exhaled a most fragrant odor. The pagans, exasperated to see that the fire had no effect, transfixed him with a spear, and such a quantity of blood issued from the wound as extinguished the flames.

Thus did St. Polycarp terminate his triumph, as is recorded in the celebrated epistle of the Church of Smyrna, which may be seen in “Ruinart’s Collection of the Acts of the Martyrs.” His martyrdom took place about the year 160.

Chapter VII

ST. THEODORA, VIRGIN, AND ST. DIDYMUS

April 28.

St. THEODORA, a native of Alexandria, was descended from noble and opulent Christian parents; she was born towards the close of the third century, and at the early age of sixteen years was distinguished for her beauty. Desirous of having Jesus Christ alone for her spouse she made a vow of perpetual virginity, and her many admirable virtues made her a model of perfection to the other Christian virgins of her acquaintance. No sooner were the edicts of Diocletian against the Christians published in Egypt, than our saint was inflamed with the holy desire of sacrificing her life for Jesus Christ, and by prayer commenced to prepare herself for the great struggle, and to make frequent offerings of herself to God.

She was amongst the first of those who were arrested, and being presented to the judge Proculus, who was much struck with her beauty, was asked whether she was a slave or a free woman; the saint replied that she was a Christian, having been freed by Christ from the slavery of the devil, and that she was also born of what the world called free parents. The tyrant, having discovered that she was of noble birth, inquired why she had not married. St. Theodora replied that she had abstained from marriage that she might live alone to Jesus Christ her Saviour. “But dost thou not know,” continued the judge, “that it hath been commanded by the emperor that each one shall sacrifice to the gods, or else be condemned to the most infamous punishments?” “And thou also knowest very well,” re-joined the saint, “that God is careful of those who serve him, and defends them from contamination.” Proculus continued to persuade her to sacrifice to the gods, threatening that otherwise the imperial edicts should be enforced. The saint answered as before, adding that she was consecrated to Jesus Christ, and would not abandon him though she were torn to pieces. “I am no longer my own,” said she, “but His: He will defend me.”

“Thou shalt pay dearly for thy obstinacy,” said the judge; “what madness to place thy trust in a man who could not free himself from the death of the cross!’ “Yes,” replied the saint, “my confidence is placed in Jesus Christ, who hath suffered death to grant life unto us; he will preserve me from all evil. I fear neither torments nor death, but, on the contrary, I long to die for love of my God who died for me.

“But thou art of noble birth,” said the judge, “and shouldst not dishonor thy family with eternal infamy.” Theodora answered: “My glory is to confess the name of Jesus Christ my Saviour; he hath given me both honor and nobility; he knoweth how to preserve his dove from the hawk.”

“Thou dost but trifle,” said Proculus; “instantly sacrifice to our gods—be not insane.” “I would indeed be insane,” said Theodora, “if I were to sacrifice to devils and gods of brass or marble.” Exasperated by this answer, the judge caused her to be buffeted, and said: “Thou wilt charge us with this dishonor; but thou shouldst not have dishonored our gods.” “I do not complain,” said the saint, “but rather rejoice at this opportunity of bearing insult for my Saviour.”

“I shall give thee,” said the tyrant, “three days to deliberate; after which, if thou wilt remain obdurate, punishment awaits thee.” Theodora replied, “Thou mayest look on these three days as already expired; thou shalt find me the same then as now.” The three days having expired, and the saint being still constant in her faith, Proculus said that he was bound to obey the edict, and commanded her to be conducted whither he had threatened.

Upon entering the infamous place the saint fervently recommended herself to Jesus Christ, and was heard; for Didymus, habited like a soldier, mingled in the crowd, and obtained admission to the room where she was. Upon seeing him, Theodora fled from him into several corners of the room; but Didymus said to her: “Fear me not, Theodora; I am not such a one as thou supposest; I have come to save thy honor and to set thee free. Let us change habits; take thou my clothes and depart; I will remain here in thine.” Theodora did as she was desired, and in her disguise joyfully departed from that place of infamy; holding down her head, she passed undiscovered through the midst of the crowd.

After some time, another young man, on entering the apartment, was astonished to find a man there instead of the virgin, and in his astonishment exclaimed: “Perhaps Christ changeth women into men!” But St. Didymus explained, and said to the idolater: “Christ hath not changed me from a woman to a man, but hath given me an opportunity of acquiring the crown of martyrdom. The virgin is out of your reach; I have remained in her place; do unto me as it pleaseth you.”

The prefect being informed of this, sent for Didymus, and asked him why he had so acted. He replied that it was in consequence of an inspiration from God. He was then commanded to sacrifice to the gods, and to make known where Theodora was. He replied, that as to Theodora he knew not, and as to sacrificing to the gods, the judge had better put in force the imperial edict, since he would never sacrifice to devils, though he should be cast into a furnace. The prefect, incensed at this declaration, commanded that he should be beheaded, and that his body should afterwards be burned.

Didymus accordingly went to the place of execution, but at the same moment Theodora arrived, and with holy emulation contended for the crown. Didymus said: “It is mine, because on me hath sentence been pronounced.” Theodora replied: “I was willing thou shouldst save my honor, but not my life. I abominated infamy, but did not shrink from death. If thou hast intended to deprive me of martyrdom, thou hast deceived me.” Finally, the judge ordered them both to be decapitated, and thus both received the crown of martyrdom.

The original Acts of this glorious martyrdom are transcribed by Ruinart.

Chapter VIII

ST. PHILIP, BISHOP OF HERACLEA, AND HIS TWO COMPANIONS, ST. SEVERUS AND ST. HERMES

ST. PHILIP was elected Bishop of Heraclea, the metropolis of Thrace, in consequence of his extraordinary virtue; and so fully did he correspond to the expectation of his people, that, while they tenderly loved him, there was not one among his flock who was not the object of his most affectionate pastoral solicitude. But there were two of his disciples whom he loved with peculiar affection—Severus, a priest, and Hermes, a deacon, whom he afterwards had companions of his martyrdom.

In the persecution of Diocletian he was advised to retire from the city. This, however, he refused to do, saying that he wished to conform to the dispensations of God, who knows how to reward those who suffer for his love, and that consequently he feared not the threats or torments of the tyrant. In the year 304 the saint was one day preaching to his people upon the necessity of patience and resignation, when a soldier, by the order of Bassus, the governor, entered the church, and having commanded the people to retire, shut the doors and sealed them; upon which Philip said to him: “Dost thou think that God dwelleth in these walls, and not rather in our souls?”

Philip, although unable to enter the church, was unwilling to abandon it altogether, and remained at the door with his people. Separating the good from the bad, he exhorted the former to remain constant in the faith, and called upon the latter to return to God by sincere repentance. Bassus, finding them assembled, caused them to be arrested, and having demanded who was their master, Philip answered: “I am he.” The governor said: “Hast thou not heard the edict of the emperor, that in no place shall the Christians be assembled, but shall sacrifice to the gods, or perish?” He then commanded that the gold and silver vessels, together with the books that treated of the Christian law, should be delivered up; otherwise that recourse would be had to torture. Philip replied: “For my part, I am willing to suffer in this my body, tottering with age, whatever thou canst inflict; but abandon thou the thought of having any control over my spirit. The sacred vessels are at thy disposal; but it shall be my care to prevent the holy books from falling into thy hands.” Bassus, infuriated at this answer, called forward the executioners, and caused the saint to undergo a cruel and protracted torture.

The deacon, Hermes, witnessing the agonies of his bishop, told the governor that, although he were possessed of all the holy books, good Christians would never fail to teach Jesus Christ to others, and to render him the honor he deserves. After these words the holy deacon was most cruelly scourged.

Bassus commanded that the sacred vessels should be removed from the sacristy, that the Scriptures should be burned, and that Philip, with the other prisoners, should be led by the soldiers to the forum, to be executed, in order that the pagans should be gladdened and the Christians affrighted by the spectacle. Philip, having arrived at the forum, and being informed of the burning of the Scriptures, spoke at length to the people of the eternal fire prepared by God for the wicked. During this discourse, a pagan priest, called Cataphronius, came carrying some meats that had been sacrificed to the idols. Hermes, seeing him, exclaimed: “This diabolical food hath been brought, that we, being forced to eat it, may be contaminated! St. Philip desired him to be calm.

In the mean time the governor, arriving at the forum again, commanded the holy bishop to sacrifice to his gods. The saint asked: “Being a Christian, how can I sacrifice to marble?” “Sacrifice at least to the emperor,” said Bassus. “My religion,” said the saint, “commands me to honor the princes, but teaches me that sacrifice is due to God alone.” “But doth not this beauteous statue of Fortune,” said the governor, “deserve a victim?” The saint replied: “It may receive that honor from thy hands, since thou dost adore it; but it shall not from mine.” “Let then,” urged Bassus, “this fine figure of Hercules move thee.” Here the holy bishop, raising his voice, rebuked the insanity of those who worship as gods statues that, being taken from the earth, like earth should be trodden upon, not adored.

Bassus, turning to Hermes, asked him if he at least would sacrifice. The holy deacon resolutely answered that he was a Christian, and could not do so; and having been told that, should he continue obstinate, he would be cast into flames, replied: “Thou dost threaten me with flames that last but for a short time, because thou art ignorant of the strength of those eternal flames in which the followers of the devil shall burn.”

Bassus, exasperated at the constancy of the saints, remanded them to prison. As they went along, the insolent rabble frequently pushed the venerable and aged bishop, so as to throw him down, but he with joyous looks quietly raised himself again.

Meanwhile the term of Bassus’ government having expired, Justin, his successor, arrived at Heraclea. He was a much more cruel man than his predecessor. St. Philip, having been brought before him, was told that if he would not sacrifice, he should, notwithstanding his extreme age, have to suffer tortures that were intolerable even to youth. The venerable bishop replied: “Ye, for fear of a short punishment, obey men: how much more ought we to obey God, who visits evil-doers with eternal torments? Thou mayest torture, but canst never induce me to sacrifice.” Justin: “I shall command thee to be dragged by the feet through the streets of the city.” Philip: “God grant that it may be so.” The bloody threat was executed; yet the saint did not die in that torment, but his body was torn to pieces, and in the arms of the brethren he was carried back to prison.

After this the governor called before him Hermes the deacon, whom he exhorted to sacrifice, in order to escape the torments that were being prepared. But the saint replied: “I cannot sacrifice and betray my faith; do, therefore, according to thy pleasure—tear my body to pieces.” “Thou speakest thus,” said Justin: “because thou knowest not the pains that await thee; upon a trial thou shalt repent.” Hermes: “Atrocious though they may be, Jesus Christ, for whose love I am about to suffer, will render them not only light, but sweet.”

Justin sent him also to prison, where the saints remained for seven months. Thence he sent them before him to Adrianople, and upon his arrival again summoned Philip to his presence, intimating to him that he had deferred his execution in the hope that, upon mature consideration, he would sacrifice. The saint boldly replied: “I have already told thee that I am a Christian, and I will always say the same. I will not sacrifice to statues, but only to that God to whom I have consecrated my entire being.” Angered by this reply, the judge ordered him to be stripped and scourged until the bones and bowels were laid bare. The aged bishop suffered this torture with so much courage, that Justin himself was astonished. Three days afterwards he was again summoned before the tyrant, who inquired why it was that with so much temerity he continued to disregard the imperial edicts. The saint replied: “That which animates me is not rashness, but the love I bear my God, who one day shall judge me. In worldly matters I have invariably obeyed the rulers, but now the question is, whether I will prefer earth to heaven. I am a Christian, and cannot sacrifice to thy gods.”

Seeing that he could not shake the constancy of the holy bishop, Justin, turning to Hermes, said: “This old man is weary of life, but thou shouldst not be so reckless of it: offer sacrifice, and consult thy safety.” Hermes began to show the impiety of idolatry, but Justin hastily interrupted him, saying: “Thou speakest as if thou wouldst persuade me to become a Christian.” “I earnestly desire,” said the saint, “that this should happen not only to thee, but to all those who hear me.”

Finally, the tyrant, perceiving that he could not win over these generous confessors, pronounced sentence in the following manner: “We command that Philip and Hermes, for having contemned the imperial edicts, shall be burned alive.” Sentence having been pronounced, the saints proceeded to the place of execution, evincing by their holy joy that they were two victims consecrated to the Lord. But from having been tortured in the stocks their feet were so sore that the holy bishop had to be supported, while Hermes with great difficulty followed, saying to Philip: “Let us hasten, Father, nor care for our feet, since we shall no longer have need of them.” When they came to the place of their martyrdom, according to the custom of the country, they were placed standing in a trench, and covered with earth up to the knees, in order that they might not be able to flee from the fire. Upon entering the trench, Hermes smiled with holy joy, and the fire having been kindled by the executioners, the saints began to thank Almighty God for their death, terminating their prayer and their martyrdom with the usual “Amen.”[8692]

Severus, who was the other disciple of St. Philip, had been left in prison while his holy bishop consummated his martyrdom in the flames; and having been informed of his glorious triumph, was deeply afflicted at not having been able to bear him company; hence he earnestly besought the

Lord not to think him unworthy of sacrificing his life for his glory. His prayers were heard, and on the following day he obtained the desired crown.

The martyrdom of these saints is related by Cardinal Orsi,[8693] who quotes Ruinart.

Chapter IX

ST. JAMES, SURNAMED INTERCISUS

November 27.

The Christian religion had been for a long time persecuted in Persia, bat during the reign of King Isdegerdes it had enjoyed a peace of twenty years. A certain bishop, named Abdas, set fire to a temple, in which was an idol worshipped by the Persians; and this circumstance gave rise to a fierce persecution of the Christians, since Isdegerdes, infuriated by the fact, gave orders that all Christian churches should be levelled with the earth, and that all his subjects should profess only the Persian religion.

James, overcome by the fear of losing his property and the honors he enjoyed at court, obeyed the iniquitous decree. But his mother and his wife, most exemplary Christians, who were then absent, having heard of his fall, wrote to him a letter, in which, after exhorting him to repair his grievous error, they said: “If thou wilt not return to the good path from which thou hast departed, we shall treat thee as a stranger, and separate from thee; it behooveth us not to have any communication with one who hath abandoned his God to please men, and to secure to himself the perishable things of this life, which will cause him to perish everlastingly.”

James, whose conscience continually upbraided him with his apostasy, was strongly affected by the letter; and he began to reflect that if his nearest relatives thus reproached him, how much more would he have to fear the censure of the Eternal Judge. While he bewailed the publicity of his sin, he resolved that his repentance should be equally notorious, and took frequent occasion to express himself in the following terms: “I am a Christian, and I repent that I have abandoned the faith of Jesus Christ.”

The king upon hearing this was much enraged, and considering himself personally offended by the insult offered to the gods whom he adored, ordered him to be conducted to his presence. The saint appeared before the tyrant, who reproached him with fickleness, and threatened him with the most cruel death unless he immediately sacrificed to the gods of the Persians. But the saint replied that he was a Christian, that he sincerely repented of his apostasy, and that he wished to continue no longer unfaithful to his God. The tyrant, in transports of rage, commanded that his body should be chopped to pieces, limb by limb, in order, as he said, that others might be deterred from following his example.

The saint intrepidly offered himself to this horrible torture. The executioner first cut off the thumb of his right hand, telling him that if he would obey the king his torments should cease there. But James was anxious to give his life for Jesus Christ, and to repair the scandal he had given by having denied him; presenting, therefore, each limb to the executioners, he suffered them to be cut off, joint by joint, without a moan. The faithful witnessed his martyrdom with great edification, until, his body being reduced to a mere trunk, his head was struck off. This happened on the 27th of November, in the year 420,[8694] and from the nature of his martyrdom he was called *Intercisus*, that is, cut into pieces.

The constancy of this martyr makes us better understand the efficacy of the grace of Jesus Christ, since by it he was enabled to suffer this cruel butchery not only with resignation, but with great spiritual joy. All the martyrs were, of themselves and as men, vile and weak, but they were enabled by Jesus Christ, who strengthened them, to suffer their trials with fortitude, and to obtain the victory. Let us also have confidence in the assistance of Jesus Christ, and whenever we find our strength or courage to falter under trial or temptation, let us instantly have recourse to him, praying him to succor us by the merits of his precious blood. If we but do this with fervent faith we also may be sure of triumph. The martyrdom of St. James the Intercisus is related by Father Massini, who collected the particulars from his Acts in Surius, November 27.

Chapter X

ST. AFRA THE PENITENT

August 5.

THE history of St. Afra is related by most respectable authors, such as Fleury,[8695] Orsi,[8696] and Massini.[8697] Penitent sinners may receive great encouragement from the consideration of the fortitude communicated to this penitent by the Lord, which enabled her to suffer the martyrdom of fire; and also from the consideration of the wisdom given to her, by which she answered the insidious arguments that were intended to pervert her.

St. Afra was a citizen of Augsburg, in Rhætia (Bavaria), and a pagan of so dissolute a character, that her house and its inmates were used by her for the infamous purpose of corrupting the youths of that city. But the triumph of divine grace appeared the more brilliant in bringing this most wretched creature from the very lowest abyss of infamy to the glory of martyrdom.

It is believed that St. Afra, together with her mother and entire family, was converted by the holy bishop, St. Narcissus. From her Acts, found in Ruinart, it would appear that she had always before her eyes the deformity of her crimes, and was tortured by the recollection of them; so that when she had embraced the faith, she endeavored to get rid of the price of her infamy by giving liberally to the poor; and when some Christians, although in extreme penury, refused to receive from her what had been the wages of sin, she would beseech of them to accept it, and pray to God for the remission of her grievous offences. Thus did this holy penitent prepare herself to receive from God that glorious palm which she finally obtained.

The persecution of Diocletian was raging when St. Afra was arrested and brought before the judge named Gaius, who said to her: “Come now, sacrifice to the gods; it is better to live than to die amid torments.” The saint replied: “The sins which I have committed before I knew the true God are sufficient; wherefore I cannot now do that which thou commandest. I never will do so: it would be adding a new insult to my God.”

The judge having ordered her to repair to the temple, she answered with great courage: “My temple is Jesus Christ, whom I have continually before mine eyes, and to whom I every day confess my sins. Since I am unworthy to offer him any other sacrifice, I am anxious to sacrifice myself, in order that this body, with which I have offended him, may be purified by torments;—this reflection shall make me suffer most willingly.”

“Since, therefore,” said Gaius, “by reason of thy wicked life thou hast nothing to expect from the God of the Christians, thou hadst better sacrifice to our gods.” The saint replied: “My Lord Jesus Christ has said, that he descended from heaven to save sinners. We read in the Gospel, that a sinful woman, having washed his feet with her tears, obtained from him the forgiveness of all her offences; and, moreover, that he never rejected sinful creatures nor publicans; but, on the contrary, condescended to converse and even to eat with them.”

The iniquitous judge was not ashamed to counsel her to return to her infamous practices, in order that she might gain the favor of her gallants, and enrich herself. “I renounce,” said the penitent saint, “that execrable gain, and look upon it with horror. That which I had, I have cast from me and given to the poor, imploring them to accept it; how, then, can I consent to earn it again?”

After this the discussion was continued in the following manner:

Gaius said: “Thy Christ esteemeth thee unworthy of him; in vain thou callest him thy God; he will have nothing to do with thee; a common prostitute cannot be called a Christian.”

“True,” replied Afra, “I am unworthy of this name; but my God, who chooseth not persons according to their merits, but according to his own goodness, hath been pleased to accept me, and make me a participator of his name.”

Gaius: “And whence knowest thou that he hath done thee this favor?”

Afra: “I know that God has not cast me off, since he has given me strength to confess his holy name; and I feel a hope within me that I can thus obtain the pardon of all my sins.”

“These are foolish stories,” replied the judge; “sacrifice to our gods; because they alone can save thee.”

“My salvation,” answered the saint, “depends alone upon Jesus Christ, who, while hanging on the cross, promised heaven to a robber that confessed his sins.”

Gaius replied: “If thou wilt not sacrifice, I shall cause thee to be stripped and whipped publicly, to thy great shame.”

Afra: “I am ashamed only of my sins.”

“And I,” said Gaius, “am ashamed to be losing my time in disputing with thee. Sacrifice to the gods, or I shall condemn thee to death.”

Afra replied: “That is what I desire, since I hope thus to find an eternal repose.”

Gaius threatened that if she would not sacrifice, he would order her to be tortured and burned alive.

The saint courageously replied: “Let this, my body, which hath been the instrument of so many sins, undergo every torment; but let my soul not be contaminated by sacrificing to demons.”

The judge then pronounced sentence upon her, in the following words: “We ordain that Afra, a prostitute, who has declared herself to be a Christian, and has refused to sacrifice to the gods, be burned alive.”

The place selected for the execution of this terrible sentence was a little island in the river Lech. The saint, having been conducted to this place, and the executioners having tied her to the stake, she raised her eyes to heaven, and prayed after the following manner: “O Lord Jesus Christ, who camest to call, not the just, but sinners to repentance, and who hast vouchsafed to make known unto us, that, upon whatever day the sinner shall return to Thee by contrition, Thou wilt forget all his offences; receive me now, a poor sinner that offers herself to suffer this torture for Thy love. By this fire, which is about to burn my body, deliver my soul from everlasting flames.” At the termination of this prayer, fire was set to the pile, and the saint was heard to say: “I give Thee thanks, O Lord, who, being innocent, didst offer Thyself a sacrifice for sinners; and being the ‘Blessed of God,’ didst vouchsafe to die for us ‘children of wrath.’ I give Thee thanks, and offer myself a sacrifice to Thee, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest world without end. Amen.” Having concluded her prayer she expired.

Her three servants, Eunomia, Digna, and Eutropia, were standing on the banks of the river witnessing her martyrdom. As they had been partners in her vice, they had also imitated her in her conversion, and had been baptized by the holy Bishop St. Narcissus. Knowing that their mistress was now dead, they crossed over to the island; and the news having reached Hilaria, the saint’s mother, she also came, accompanied by some priests: they took the saint’s body and carried it to the family burying-place, two miles distant from Augsburg. Gaius, having been informed of this, sent a troop of soldiers with orders to arrest all who were at the burying-place, and, in case they refused to sacrifice, to shut them up in the sepulchre,[8698] and burn them there. This barbarous order was cruelly executed, and thus all these holy women received the crown of martyrdom in the year 304.

Chapter XI

ST. SABINUS, BISHOP OF SPOLETO, AND HIS COMPANIONS

December 30.

THE persecution under the emperors Diocletian and Maximian is considered as the most violent that the Church has had to endure; and yet the triumph of the Christian faith was never more glorious than under these two notable tyrants. It was considered as a capital offence for Christians to absent themselves from the public games; and not only in the principal towns, but even in the smaller villages, gibbets were prepared to execute those who would dare to confess the name of the Lord Jesus. Irons, scourges, racks, caldrons of boiling oil, and all the apparatus of torture were everywhere in readiness for those who refused to sacrifice to the idols. The cruelty of Maximian went so far as to ordain that in the market-places, in the mills, in the bakers' shops, and in the taverns idols should be set up, to which everybody should show some mark of idolatrous veneration, on pain of being arrested. Yet, notwithstanding this wholesale butchery, never were there seen greater multitudes of Christians professing a desire to suffer and to die for Jesus Christ; so that the number of holy martyrs amounted at that time to eight millions.[8699]

St. Sabinus, who was, during this persecution, Bishop of Spoleto in Umbria, going through all the towns of his diocese, ceased not to exhort his flock to seek a union with God in holy prayer, that they might be enabled by his grace to suffer tortures and death in testimony of his holy faith. Venustianus, who was then governor of Tuscany, having heard of the pious labors of the holy Bishop, caused him to be arrested at Assisi, with his two deacons, Marcellus and Exuperantius, and others of the clergy.

Upon the arrival of this tyrant at Assisi, he summoned the bishop and his two deacons before him, and having inquired of Sabinus who he was, the saint replied: “I am the bishop, although an unworthy sinner.” “And how,” said the governor, “hast thou dared to teach the people to abandon the worship of the gods, and to follow a dead man?” Sabinus replied: “Thou knowest that he died, but dost not know that he rose the third day; and yet thou shouldst know it.” The governor angrily exclaimed: “Sacrifice to the gods, or thou shalt die by torture as thou deservest: then mayest thou rise again like thy Christ.” The saint answered: “This is my desire—to die and rise again, as did the Lord Jesus.” Sabinus continued to preach Jesus Christ.

The governor, however, sent for an idol which he always kept by him—a small coral image of Jove, with robes sculptured in gold—and commanded all present to adore it; but Sabinus, animated with holy zeal, dashed the idol to the earth, and broke it to pieces. Venustianus, exasperated at this insult offered to his idol, caused both the hands of the holy prelate to be instantly cut off.

He then ordered Marcellus and Exuperantius to be put to torture, for having also refused to adore his gods. He had their flesh torn with iron hooks, and their bodies burned with lighted torches; in which torments they expired.

St. Sabinus, who was present animating his companions, was sent to prison by the governor, in the expectation that he would die of the pain caused by the amputation of his hands, or perish by hunger, in case this should prove insufficient to cause death.

But a pious widow, called Serena, found means to support the holy bishop; and her charity was rewarded by the saint, who, by praying over her nephew, restored to him his sight. This miracle worked the conversion of fifteen prisoners who were present.

Venustianus, the governor, allowed the saint to remain unmolested for a month, being tortured by an excessive pain in his eyes. All remedies having proved useless, he was advised to have recourse to the saint, and accordingly sent his wife and two children to Sabinus. When the saint came to his house, Venustianus threw himself at his feet, beseeching him to forget the tortures which he had caused him to suffer, and imploring at the same time the cure of his eyes. Sabinus told him that if he would become a Christian he should be relieved from the pain at his baptism. Venustianus consented, was instructed in the Christian religion, received baptism, together with his entire family, and instantly recovered.

St. Sabinus had the consolation of seeing this entire family receive the crown of martyrdom; for the emperor Maximian sent the tribune Lucius with orders to put Sabinus and Venustianus to death. Lucius upon his arrival at Assisi, without any trial whatever, caused Venustianus, with his wife and children, to be instantly beheaded; and brought Sabinus with him to Spoleto, where he had the holy bishop scourged to death.[8700]

Serena, a noblewoman of this city, who had procured the hands, and had kept them embalmed by her, placed them with the body, and buried the saint at a place two miles distant from the city. A magnificent church was subsequently raised over the place of his interment.

The martyrdom of this saint is related by Fleury in his Church History.[8701]

Chapter XII

ST. EUPLIUS, DEACON

August 12.

ST. EUPLIUS obtained the crown of martyrdom in Sicily during the persecution of Diocletian and Maximian. He was arrested while reading the Gospel in the city of Catana, and brought before the governor, Calvisianus, with the sacred volume in his hand. The governor asked him whether he had brought those writings from his own house, or happened to have them about him. The saint replied: “I have no house; I carry them about me, and was arrested with them.” The judge ordered him to read something from them; and the saint read the two following texts: *Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*[8702] And: *He that will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me.*[8703] The judge inquired the meaning of these words. Euplius replied: “This is the law of God, which hath been given me.” “By whom?” “By Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.” “Since, then, thou dost confess thyself a Christian,” said Calvisianus, “I shall deliver thee to the executioners, that they may torture thee.”

While the saint was undergoing the torture, Calvisianus said to him: “What dost thou now say of thy confession?” The saint replied: “That which I have said I now repeat: I am a Christian!” “But why,” said the judge, “didst thou not give up those writings as the emperors have commanded?” “Because I am a Christian. I will sooner die than deliver them. In them is eternal life, which is lost by him who would betray what God has intrusted to his keeping.” The tyrant ordered his tortures to be continued, and Euplius said: “I thank Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ. Since I suffer for Thy sake, do Thou preserve me.” The judge said: “Adore the gods, and thou shalt be set at liberty.” The saint replied: “I adore Jesus

Christ, and detest the demons. Torture as much as thou pleasest, still shall I proclaim myself a Christian."

After the saint had been tortured for a considerable time, the tyrant exclaimed: "Wretch that thou art! worship our gods; adore Mars, Apollo, Æsculapius." The martyr answered: "I adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one only God; besides whom there is no God. May your gods find no worshippers! I offer myself a sacrifice to the true God; nor is it possible to change me." Calvisianus gave orders that his torments should be increased to the utmost; and while this was being performed, Euplius was heard to say: "I thank Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ. Since I endure these torments for Thy sake, do Thou succor me." Although the agony of his torments caused his voice and strength to fail him, his lips still moved, as if he would repeat this prayer.

At last Calvisianus, seeing that the constancy of the saint was not to be overcome, commanded his head to be struck off. The book of the Gospels was tied round his neck, and, while he was proceeding to the place of execution, the public crier proclaimed before him: "This is Euplius the Christian, an enemy to the gods and to the emperors." But the saint ceased not to return thanks to Jesus Christ, until he arrived at the place of execution, when, casting himself upon his knees, he said: "O Lord Jesus Christ! I give Thee thanks for having granted me strength to confess Thy holy name. Complete, O Lord, what Thou hast begun, that Thy enemies may be confused." Then, turning to the people who had followed him, he said: "Brethren, love the Lord with all your hearts; for he never forgets those who love him. He remembers them during life and at the hour of their death, when he sends his angels to lead them to their heavenly country." Having said these words, he presented his neck to the executioner, who struck off his head, on the 12th of August, in the year 304. The Christians carried off his body, embalmed and buried it. The Acts of his martyrdom are found in Ruinart.

Chapter XIII

ST. THEODOTUS, VINTNER

May 18.

BY the example of St. Theodotus we are taught the important lesson, that there is no state of life in which a man may not become a saint. He was a citizen of Ancyra, the capital of Galatia, was a married man, and followed the humble calling of an innkeeper. Although his life presented to the eyes of the world nothing extraordinary, it was one of sanctity before God: since having been disciplined in the fear of the Lord from his youth, by a holy virgin called Thecusa, he practised temperance, chastity, and the mortification of the flesh, by fasting and other penitential works. As he loved poverty, he gave to the poor whatever he could afford; and his inn was the home of the needy, the asylum of the infirm, and a school of Christian piety. He converted many from the practice of a shameful vice and from other crimes, and also brought many, both Jews and Gentiles, to the profession of the true faith, a considerable number of whom arrived at the glory of martyrdom. He had likewise the gift of miracles, particularly that of healing the sick, which he effected by laying his hands upon them, and invoking the adorable name of Jesus.

The persecution of Diocletian was raging, and Theo—tecnus, a most cruel man, was governor of the province of Dalmatia. He commanded that all the churches should be demolished, and that all who were known to be followers of Jesus Christ should be slaughtered. The pagans, animated by the cruelty of the governor, entered the houses of the Christians, and plundered whatever they thought fit; and if any one dared to complain, he was accused of being a rebel. Every day Christians were put into prison, and even noble ladies barbarously dragged through the streets; so that many hid themselves in caves, or flew to the woods, living, like the beasts, upon wild herbs.

Theodotus remained in Ancyra, where he employed himself in assisting those who had been imprisoned for the faith, helping those in need, and burying the bodies of the martyrs. Moreover, as the governor had forbidden bread or wine to be sold to any one who was not known as an idolater, Theodotus supported the poor, and supplied the priests with bread and wine for the celebration of the Mass. Thus, by the charity of Theodotus, his inn became the temple and asylum of the Christians.

Having been informed that a certain friend of his, named Victor, had been imprisoned for the faith, he went by night to see him, and encouraged him, saying: “A Christian should have no other concern than firmly to maintain his faith.” Having learned that most enticing promises had been made to him in case he would renounce his faith, Theodotus said: “Believe me, my dear Victor, the promises which the impious make to us are for our perdition; they are intended to make us slumber in order that we may not see the eternal death to which they lead us.” Victor, animated by this exhortation, went boldly to the place of torture; but having suffered for some time, demanded a respite to consider the proposals made to him. He was accordingly brought back to prison, where he soon died of his wounds, leaving his eternal salvation in great doubt, to the inexpressible grief of Theodotus.

Some time after this sad occurrence our saint met a priest, named Fronto, in a country place called Malus, and told him that he thought it a most appropriate spot for placing the relics of the martyrs. The priest replied that the relics should be procured before the work would be undertaken. Theodotus said: “God will take care of that. Let it be thy concern to build the crypt, and the relics shall not be wanting.” As an earnest of this promise, he gave the priest a ring from his finger, and returned to Ancyra.

Here he learned that the bodies of seven martyred virgins had been cast into a pond, and was miraculously assisted in releasing them; for there arose a strong wind that drove the waters to the sides of the pond, and discovered at the bottom the bodies of the saints, which he drew out and placed in a neighboring oratory.[8704]

Informations to this effect having been lodged against him, he voluntarily surrendered himself to the magistrates. On entering the court the governor, Theotecnus, told him that if he sacrificed to the gods he would be made high-priest of Apollo, and be loaded with riches and honors. Theodotus, despising all, undertook to prove to the governor the greatness and sanctity of Jesus Christ, and the enormity of the vices which the pagans themselves attributed to their false gods. But Theotecnus, angered by this discourse, ordered that he should be stretched upon the rack, and that, one after another, the executioners should tear his flesh with iron hooks; after which vinegar was poured into his wounds, and lighted torches applied to his sides.

When the saint smelt the burning of his flesh he turned his head somewhat aside, which the governor mistaking for a sign that he was yielding to the torments, approached him and said: “Where now, Theodotus, is that daring thou didst so lately glory in? Hadst thou respected the emperor, thou wouldst not now be reduced to this piteous state? Vile innkeeper! thou shalt learn not to contend henceforward with emperors who have power over thy life.” Theodotus replied: “If thou hadst arrested me for any crime, then I should fear. As it is, I fear nothing. Invent new torments, and my Lord Jesus Christ, for whose love I suffer, will grant me strength to disregard them.” The governor enraged at these words, caused his jaws to be struck with a stone so as to beat out his teeth, upon which the saint said: “Although thou shouldst cut out my tongue my prayers cannot be interrupted, for God hears the Christians even when they are deprived of their speech.” The governor having ordered him back to prison he showed his wounds to the crowd as he went along, giving them thereby to understand the strength which Jesus Christ imparts to his servants. “It is only reasonable,” he said, “to suffer thus for our Lord, who has suffered so much for us.”

At the end of five days, the governor, seated upon a throne in one of the public squares, ordered the martyr to be again brought before him. He then commanded that his wounds should be reopened, his sides again torn with irons, and that in this state he should be stretched upon red-hot tiles. The saint, says Cardinal Orsi,[8705] feeling a most excruciating pain, penetrating to his very bowels, prayed that the Lord would somewhat mitigate his suffering; and having obtained additional consolation, continued to endure this horrible torture with admirable fortitude.

The tyrant had him stretched upon the rack a third time, and caused him to be lacerated as before; but ultimately despairing of being able to overcome his constancy, condemned him to lose his head, and ordered that his body should be burned. Arrived at the place of execution, the saint gave God thanks for the grace which had enabled him to overcome his torments, and fervently implored peace for the Church. Then turning to the Christians, who had followed him with many tears, he consoled them, and desired that they should give God thanks for his victory, assuring them that he would not fail to assist them by his prayers in heaven. He then presented his neck to the executioner, and received the crown. His body was placed upon a funeral pile to be burned, but appeared surrounded with a light so supernaturally resplendent that no one dared approach it. It was therefore left guarded by soldiers.

Upon that same day the priest Fronto arrived in Ancyra with the ring which Theodotus had given him, as an earnest that God would supply relics for the place previously prepared at Malus. He had with him an ass laden with excellent wine, and the animal upon reaching the place where the martyr’s body was being watched instantly lay down. It was night; the soldiers, who had retired to eat their supper in a little hut, invited the priest to join them, and Fronto gladly complied, giving them in return some wine. The guard, having drunk freely fell into a sound sleep, while Fronto, adoring the wondrous ways of divine Providence, took the body of Theodotus, and, replacing his ring, laid it upon the ass. The animal being let loose, went back to Malus, where a church was subsequently built in honor of St. Theodotus. His martyrdom took place in the beginning of the persecution under Diocletian, in the year 303.

Cardinal Orsi says that his acts were written by one Nilus, his most intimate friend, and an eye-witness of the facts herein recorded.

Chapter XIV

ST. TRYPHO AND ST. RESPICIUS

November 10.

THESE two holy martyrs, Trypho and Respicius, were natives of Bithynia, and having been educated from their infancy in the Christian faith, were young men of exemplary virtue. Aquilinus, the governor of the province, being informed that they were Christians, ordered them to be arrested, upon which they returned thanks to God, who made them worthy to suffer for his sake, beseeching him at the same time to accept their sacrifice, and grant them strength to persevere to the death. After their arrest they were conducted to Nice and imprisoned. Aquilinus, having summoned them to his presence, inquired of what condition they were, and what was their fortune. The youths replied: “Christians know not what fortune is, since they believe that it is God who regulates all things according to his infinite wisdom.” The officers who accompanied the governor said to them: “All of your religion are to be burned alive unless they sacrifice to our gods. Such is the imperial command.” The holy prisoners answered: “We are not afraid to suffer for our religion; on the contrary, we desire it.”

The governor here interposed, saying: “Ye are now old enough to know what ye ought to do.” “Yes,’ answered Trypho, “and it is because we are well aware of it that we follow Jesus Christ. All that we desire is, to arrive at the perfection of this knowledge; and we think, moreover, that the surest road is that which we have just commenced to tread.” The judge, seeing their constancy, ordered them to be tortured; but they hearing the command, forthwith stripped themselves and were placed upon the rack, which torture they endured with the most astonishing fortitude and tranquillity. During the torments they did not even open their mouths, except to invoke the adorable name of Jesus, or to give Aquilinus to understand the eternal damnation to which he exposed himself by following the worship of idols. But the governor despised all their exhortations, and gave orders that as he was going to hunt, the martyrs should be exposed in the fields to the severity of the frost until his return. The order was executed, and by reason of the excessive cold the martyrs' legs were burst in many places.

After his return from the chase the tyrant asked them whether they would not now learn to be wise. "This, indeed," said Trypho, "is what we are anxious to learn, through the homage we render to our God." Hereupon the governor sent them to prison; and having made an excursion to some other cities, returned to Nice, where he again summoned the martyrs before him. Speaking in a kind manner, he promised them riches and honors if they would obey the imperial edicts; but finding them still constant, he said: "Have pity upon your youth; despise not the favors which you may obtain from us." Trypho answered: "We cannot better follow your advice than by remaining steadfast in our confession of Jesus Christ."

Aquilinus, enraged at their firmness, caused them to be dragged through the streets of the city, and to be scourged until the executioners became exhausted. He, moreover, ordered their sides to be torn with iron hooks, and their lacerated flesh to be burned with torches; during which butchery the martyrs said: "O Jesus our God, for whom we thus combat and suffer, permit not that the devil overcome us. Hear Thou our prayers, and grant that we may happily arrive at the consummation of our course." Thus did the saints continue to speak to Jesus Christ without heeding the tyrant, who during their tortures ceased not to importune them to sacrifice to the gods. Seeing, however, that all his efforts were unavailing, he condemned them to lose their heads. They suffered about the year 251.

Their Acts are found in Ruinart.[8706]

Chapter XV

ST. ROMANUS, DEACON, AND ST. BARULAS, THE INFANT MARTYR

November 18.

THE martyrdom of St. Romanus is truly wonderful, and is celebrated by oriental writers, as well as by those of the Western Church. Eusebius, St. John Chrysostom, and Prudentius are, according to Cardinal Orsi,[8707] amongst his panegyrists. St. Romanus was a Syrian, and descended of noble and Christian parents. At a very tender age he applied himself to study, in which his natural abilities enabled him to make great progress; but still greater was the advancement which he attained in the science of the saints, by the sanctity of his morals and his zeal for religion.

When the persecution of Diocletian began, he was already a deacon of the Church of Cæsarea, and went from house to house exhorting the Christians to endure with becoming fortitude whatever trials that great tribulation might bring upon them. His bishop, having sent him to Antioch on some very urgent business in the year 303, he found that the Christian churches were being pulled down in obedience to the imperial edict. Much as this afflicted the saint, his grief was much more poignant at beholding the fall of many Christians who, terrified by the threats of the judges, presented themselves to offer sacrifice; whereupon the saint, inflamed by holy zeal, and regardless of his own danger, entered the crowd of apostates and exclaimed: “Alas, brethren, what is it ye do? Do ye abandon the true God, your Creator and Redeemer, to sell yourselves to the devil, your enemy? Do you offer incense to gods of bronze, of stone, and of wood, and do you adore as gods those who during life have been the most abandoned of men?” By such discourse he not only withheld those who were about to fall, and confirmed the constant, but he gave courage to the pusillanimous, and disposed them to brave all the persecutions of their enemies.

Cardinal Orsi, on the authority of Prudentius, relates that the prefect of the prætorium, Asclepiades, having sent some soldiers to a church to offer, upon the consecrated altar, victims to the idols, and afterwards to level the church with the earth, the saint opposed the sacrilegious attempt, saying that, if they wished to slay a victim, he was ready to offer to God the sacrifice of his life. Asclepiades having heard this, ordered Romanus to be arrested. The saint was advised to seek safety in flight, but refused to do so, and surrendered himself to the soldiers; he confessed at the tribunal that he was a Christian, and that he had dissuaded the faithful from obeying the edict, which he termed impious. “I clearly foresee,” continued the holy deacon, “that this my confession will subject me to torments, but I hope to suffer them with constancy for the love of my God, since I have committed no crime.”

The prefect commanded that he should be stretched upon the rack and torn with irons; but having been informed that the saint was a nobleman, he changed the punishment, and had him beaten with scourges armed with lead. “We shall see,” said the prefect, “whether thou wilt speak with so much insolence during thy tortures.” The holy martyr replied: “God would not be pleased were I insolent; but by the grace of Jesus Christ I shall remain faithful, nor will I cease, while I have life, to publish his praises and to detest your superstitions.” Meanwhile Romanus suffered the torture not only with patience but with joy, which caused Asclepiades to burn with rage. In order to oblige the saint to be silent, he would sometimes by gestures encourage the executioners, and at other times, in transports of anger, rise from his seat in order to intimidate the martyr. He then commenced to speak in praise of his gods, to whom, he said, Rome was indebted for her acquisition of empire, and added, that it was his duty to implore of them prosperity for the emperor, and to take a bloody vengeance on those that rebel against their authority. Romanus answered that he could not invent a better prayer for the princes and the soldiers than that they should all embrace the faith of Jesus Christ; adding, that he would never obey the emperor in his persecution of the Christians.

Asclepiades became infuriated beyond measure at these last words, and ordered that the martyr should be stretched upon the rack, and his sides and breast torn with iron hooks, until the bones and bowels should appear. But because the saint continued to despise these tortures, and encouraged the bystanders to be regardless of all temporal punishments, the prefect commanded that his mouth and cheeks should be torn with the same irons. But the saint thanked him, saying, that he had thus opened more mouths to celebrate the praises of Christ. Whereupon the judge threatened to burn him alive for his obstinacy in preferring to the ancient religion the novel doctrines of a crucified man. Here from Romanus took occasion to celebrate the glories of the Cross, explaining the holy mysteries which it indicated, and concluded by saying, that as Asclepiades did not understand these mysteries, he would give him an irrefragable proof of them. “Let there be brought,” said the saint, “a child of tender years, and let us learn from him whether it be better to follow a religion which teaches a plurality of gods, or that which adores only one.

The prefect accepted the challenge, and the young child, who had not been long weaned, was brought forward, to whom Romanus said: “Which is better, my child, to adore Jesus Christ or a plurality of gods?” The boy replied that the true God could be only one, and that a plurality of gods was inconceivable. The tyrant, confused by this answer, turned to the child and said: “Who has taught thee these things?” He replied: “My mother, who was herself taught by God.”[8708] Asclepiades had the cruelty to have the child torn by force from his mother’s embrace, scourged, and beheaded. The Church celebrates the triumph of this infant martyr, named Barulas, who was baptized in his own blood on the 18th November. The good mother, who was a Christian, having heard the sentence pronounced against her child, carried him herself to the place of execution, and without shedding a tear, kissed him and gave him to the executioner, telling him to remember her in heaven; she then held out her garment to receive his head, which she brought home as a precious relic.

The inhuman Asclepiades, instead of being moved at this miracle, which astonished all the bystanders, became more infuriated and cruel: he caused St. Romanus, whom he called “the author of so many evils,” to be again put to the torture, and the fragments of flesh which still remained on his body to be pulled off; but the saint mocked the weakness of his executioners, saying, that they did not know how to deprive him of life. The prefect having heard this, said: “Since thou art so desirous of ending thy life, thou shalt soon be satisfied; fire shall quickly consume thee to ashes.” While the executioners were leading him forward, he said to the judge: “Perfidious man! I appeal to my Saviour Jesus Christ from this thy cruel sentence.” The saint said this to give the tyrant to understand that he should one day render an account to the Supreme Judge; but Asclepiades, notwithstanding, dictated the final sentence, condemning the martyr to the flames.

Meanwhile the funeral pile on which he was about to be burned was prepared, and while the executioners were tying the saint to the stake he told them that he knew that this sort of martyrdom was not destined for him, and that another miracle would astonish them. Even so it happened, for on a sudden it rained in such torrents that the executioners were unable to fire the pile, though it was covered with oil and pitch. This caused so great a murmur among the people, that a report of the fact was sent to the emperor; and while they were awaiting his decision the saint mocked his executioners, saying, “Where is now your fire?”

The emperor was inclined to release a man so evidently protected by Heaven, yet Asclepiades not only dissuaded him, but even obtained an order that Romanus should lose that tongue with which he had so blasphemed their gods. Having, therefore, proceeded to the forum and summoned Romanus, he ordered a surgeon called Aristones to pull out his tongue, which was easily executed, as the saint presented it in such a manner as enabled him to take it out by the root: a torrent of blood followed, which covered his beard and breast. It was a new miracle that Romanus could survive these barbarous torments; but it was a still greater prodigy that the saint continued to speak. Eusebius writes[8709] that in his time there were many persons yet alive who had witnessed this miracle.

Asclepiades, not content with what he had already done, made another attempt upon the constancy of the saint, and caused an altar, with fire, incense, and the flesh of animals, to be prepared. He then brought Romanus forward, exhorted him to sacrifice, and concluded by saying in derision: “I now give thee leave to speak.” But the saint, raising his voice, replied that he should not be surprised if words were never wanting to those who preached Jesus Christ, to whom the laws of nature are subject, and who consequently enabled him to speak without a tongue. The tyrant, not knowing what to say to this new prodigy, declared his suspicions that he had been deceived by the surgeon, who instantly demanded an examination;

whereupon the mouth of the saint was found without a tongue! This miracle was further tested by an experiment tried upon a criminal who had been condemned to death. His tongue was cut out, and he instantly expired.

St. Romanus was brought back to prison and detained there for some months, during which time he ceased not to preach the glories of Jesus Christ with even greater energy and clearness than he had before been master of. Upon the celebration of Diocletian’s birthday all the prisoners were set at liberty except Romanus, who was kept in prison, with his legs stretched in the stocks, as far as the fifth hole, and was finally strangled upon the 17th November, in the year 303. He thus went to heaven to receive the reward for all his sufferings. St. John Chrysostom and other Fathers of the Church have celebrated his martyrdom in great eulogies.

Chapter XVI

ST. CRISPINA

December 5.

ST. CRISPINA was held in high veneration all through Africa, and is honored by St. Augustine in various parts of his works, in which he speaks of her martyrdom. She was a noble lady, very rich, and the mother of several children. When she found herself in danger of losing her children, her possessions, and her life, in the persecution which was then raging, instead of being intimidated, she was filled with a holy joy, not unworthy the Christian education which she had received from her most tender years. Being arrested in her native city of Thagara by order of the proconsul Anulinus, and brought before his tribunal, he inquired of her whether she was aware of the imperial edicts which commanded that all persons should sacrifice to the gods of the empire. She replied: “I have never sacrificed, nor will I sacrifice to any other than to one God, and to our Lord Jesus Christ his Son, who was born and suffered for us.”

Anulinus then said: “Leave this thy superstition, and adore the gods.”

“Every day,” said Crispina, “I adore my God, and besides him I know of no others.”

“I perceive now,” said the judge, “that thou art obstinate, and dost contemn our gods: thou must be made to experience the rigor of the laws.”

“I shall suffer most willingly,” replied the saint, “whatever may be exacted as the testimony of my faith.”

“I will give thee to read,” said the proconsul, “the verdict of the emperor, which it behooveth thee to observe.”

The saint replied: “I observe the commands of my Lord Jesus Christ.”

Anulinus: “But thou shalt lose thy head, unless thou wilt observe the commands of the emperor, as they are observed throughout Africa.”

Crispina: “No one shall oblige me to sacrifice to demons: I sacrifice to the Lord only, who made heaven and earth.”

Here the proconsul began to exhort her to obey the edicts and to avoid the terrible consequences of the emperor’s wrath. The saint courageously replied: “I fear not the anger of men; all they can do is nothing: I fear only God who is in heaven; and I should be lost forever were I to offend him by sacrilege.”

“Thou shalt not,” said the proconsul, “be guilty of that crime by obeying the princes and adoring the gods of the Romans.” But Crispina, raising her voice, exclaimed: “Wouldst thou then have me guilty of sacrilege before God, in order not to appear sacrilegious to the eyes of men? It never shall be! God alone is great and omnipotent, the Creator of all things; men are his creatures; what, therefore, can they do?”

Anulinus, seeing that the saint continued firm in the faith, after some other invectives and threats, ordered that her head should be shaved, as a token of degradation, adding, that if she continued obstinate he would condemn her to a most cruel death. The saint answered: “I care not for the present life, and am only anxious for the life of my soul. I fear eternal torments only.” “Instantly obey,” exclaimed the proconsul, “or your head shall at once be struck off!” The saint meekly answered: “I shall return thanks to my God, for making me worthy of this blessed lot. God is with me, that I may not consent to thy suggestions.”

Here Anulinus exclaimed: “Why do we any longer bear with this impious woman?” Then, having caused the process of her trial to be read over, pronounced the final sentence, that Crispina should lose her head, for obstinately refusing to sacrifice to the gods, in obedience to the edicts. Crispina, having heard the iniquitous sentence, calmly and with holy joy said: “I return thanks to Jesus Christ, and I bless the Lord who has vouchsafed thus to deliver me from the hands of men.” She consummated her martyrdom on the 5th December, about the year 304.

St. Augustine frequently proposed in his sermons the example of this martyr. “See,” says the holy Father, “how St. Crispina despised all things, and life itself, for the love of Jesus Christ. Rich and noble as she was, she might have lived somewhat longer in the enjoyment of earthly happiness; but she would not have obtained everlasting life. Wisely, therefore, did she prefer to live forever, than to prolong for a short while her temporal existence.”[8710]

Chapter XVII

ST. DIONYSIA, ST. MAJORICUS, HER SON, AND OTHER HOLY MARTYRS OR CONFESSORS IN THE PERSECUTION RAISED IN AFRICA BY THE VANDALS

December 6 and 16.

TOWARDS the close of the fifth century a most cruel persecution was raised in Africa by Huneric, king of the Vandals, with the object of obliging the Catholics to follow the Arian heresy. This persecution is described by St. Victor, Bishop of Vita,[8711] who witnessed it and suffered from it. The tyrant, in the year 485, sent emissaries throughout Africa, with orders to spare no one who remained constant in the profession of the Catholic faith; and in pursuance of these orders, racks, gibbets, scourges, and torturing instruments were everywhere in requisition throughout the provinces.[8712]

Among the many martyrs who, in this persecution, sacrificed their lives, Dionysia, a lady of the city of Vita, was conspicuous. The persecutors, seeing her more animated than the rest, were preparing to strip her, in order that she should be scourged with rods, when she said: “I am willing to suffer; torture me as much as you please, but spare my modesty.” These words, however, irritated the barbarians still more: they exposed her naked in the public square, and rent her flesh with scourges so cruelly, that the blood ran in streams down her body. In the midst of these torments the saint exclaimed: “Ministers of Satan! all that you do to dishonor me shall hereafter redound to my greater glory.” Meanwhile she animated others to martyrdom, and her example was the salvation of almost that entire city.

The saint had an only son, named Majoricus, of very tender age, who trembled at the sight of her torments; but the pious mother, steadfastly looking at him, said: “Remember, O my son! that we have been baptized; let us not lose the unsullied robes of grace, that when the Lord cometh to judge us, he may not say, ‘Cast them into outer darkness.’ My child! it is the torment which never ends that we should fear, and the life which never terminates that we ought to sigh for.” The child was so strengthened by these words, that he endured torments which terminated his life; when the mother, embracing the dead body, ceased not to return thanks to God for so great a mercy.

The executioners next commenced to exercise their cruelty upon Dativa, the sister of Dionysia; then upon Leontia, Æmilianus, Tertius, and Boniface, who were torn until their bowels appeared; and they expired during the torture.

St. Victor further relates the great torments to which a citizen of Suburbis, called Servus, was put. He was first scourged until his body was completely lacerated, and then hoisted high in air with ropes, and let fall with all his weight to the earth. After putting him many times to this torture, they dragged him along the streets, so that his flesh, being torn by the sharp stones, hung down in pieces upon his belly, sides, and back; but the holy martyr suffered all with joy, in testimony of his faith.

In the city of Cucusa also there were many who laid down their lives in the same cause; among whom a lady named Victoria deserves special mention. She was suspended in the air, while a fire was kindled beneath to roast her by slow degrees. While she was suffering this exquisite torture, her husband, who had renounced the faith, used all his endeavors to pervert her; and presenting his children, said to her: “Why, my wife, wilt thou suffer such torture? Have pity at least upon these children! Ah! do obey the commands of the king, and console these children and me.” But the servant of the Lord closed her ears to these seducing words, and turned her eyes from her children, that she might raise her heart to God. The executioners seeing her shoulders broken and her arms dislocated by being so long suspended, thought her dead, and left her; but on being taken down she related that a virgin had appeared to her, and cured her by touching her limbs.

It is also recorded by St. Victor, that at Thipasa, in Mauritania,[8713] many Catholics used to perform their devotions in a private house, to avoid communicating with an Arian bishop who endeavored to pervert them; but the impious Arian wrote of the matter to Huneric, who sent thither a command to amputate the right hands and cut out the tongues of all these pious persons. The barbarous order was executed; but God enabled them all to speak, notwithstanding the loss of their tongues. St. Victor attests that these confessors of the faith were able to speak when he wrote, which was three or four years after the event; and there are other authors who confirm the fact. Æneas of Gaza, a philosopher of the Platonic school,[8714] assures us that he himself saw the persons and heard them speak; and that, to be the more certain, he caused them to open their mouths, and saw plainly that they wanted their tongues. Procopius, also a contemporaneous writer, in the history of the Vandal war[8715] affirms that many persons so treated under Huneric were, notwithstanding, able to speak. He makes special mention of some at Constantinople, two of whom, having miserably fallen into a certain sin, lost this miraculous gift of speech. Also Count Marcellinus, in his chronicles, relates that Huneric ordered the tongue to be cut out from a certain Catholic who had an impediment in his speech, and that he afterwards spoke plainly, giving glory to God. This author cites other cases which took place at Constantinople. Finally, the Emperor Justinian, in publishing a certain law, declares that he himself had heard some of these persons speaking.[8716]

This same holy bishop informs us, that among the martyrs of Africa there were many holy virgins who had consecrated their purity to Jesus Christ; but the Arians, who, like the generality of heretics, are opposed to virginity, regarding with envy the edification given by these pious women, wrote calumnious letters to Huneric concerning their conduct with their spiritual directors, and obtained from that wicked king an order that they should be put to torture until they should confess those falsely alleged crimes. They were suspended in air with great weights at their feet, and burned with red-hot plates of iron. Many expired under these torments, and those who survived remained crippled and burn-marked for life. The martyrology mentions these saints on the 6th of December.

But God did not long delay the punishment of the wicked Huneric, who, as St. Victor relates, was eaten up alive by worms, and died, tearing his own flesh through despair.

Chapter XVIII

SS. PHILEAS, BISHOP OF THMUIS, AND PHILOROMUS, TRIBUNE

February 4.

AMONG the many martyrs of Egypt and Thebais, SS. Phileas and Philoromus attract particular attention, on account of their exalted rank and the high estimation in which, according to Eusebius, they were held in their own country. They shed together their blood for the faith, at Alexandria, between the years 306 and 312.

Phileas had discharged some of the first offices of state, in the city of Thmuis, in Egypt. He was a pagan by birth, was married, and had some children, who were still pagans when the saint laid down his life for Christ. He was somewhat advanced in life when he was converted, but the Lord filled him with such virtue, that he deserved to be appointed bishop of his native place.[8717] He was arrested during the persecution, and was conducted to prison in Alexandria.

We have a letter written by him to his flock, while he was in prison for the faith and about to consummate his martyrdom, which shows his holy zeal and pastoral solicitude. He there encourages the faithful to suffer every torture for Jesus Christ rather than renounce the faith; adducing the examples of so many saintly heroes who, having the eyes of their souls fixed on God, went joyfully to encounter death, in the full confidence that he would comfort his servants in the trial which would enable them to obtain eternal life. He then exhorts them to confide in the merits of Jesus Christ, and to keep continually before their eyes his Passion and death, as well as the eternal rewards which he promises to those who will be constant in confessing him before men.

A short time after the writing of this letter the martyrs were brought before Culcian, the governor of Egypt, who exhorted them to have pity upon themselves, their wives and children, who, together with many relatives and friends in Alexandria, had come to dissuade them; but all their arts were incapable of shaking the constancy of the martyrs. Phileas, standing upon the platform and being told by the governor to enter into himself and be wise, answered: “I have never lost my judgment.” Culcian: “Then sacrifice to the gods.” Phileas: “I sacrifice to one only God, not to many.”

“Thy conscience,” said the governor, “should make thee sacrifice for the sake of thy wife and children.” Phileas answered: “Conscience obliges me to prefer God to all things, since the Scripture saith that thou shalt love thy God, who created thee, above all things.” “Which God?” said Culcian. The saint stretching out his hand to heaven, said: “That God who created heaven and earth, and endureth forever.” Culcian asked him: “Was Christ God?” The saint replied: “Yes, truly, for he hath raised the dead to life, and worked many other miracles.” “But how?” exclaimed the governor; “was a god then crucified?” “Yes,” replied Phileas, “he was crucified for our salvation, for which he willingly suffered ignominy and death; all his sufferings had been foretold in the Holy Scriptures. If any be desirous of further information, let them come forward and they shall see the truth!”

The saint then told the governor that he was anxious for him to execute his orders. “Then,” said Culcian, “thou art anxious to die without reason.” “Not without reason,” said Phileas, “but for God and for truth.” “I would wish,” said the governor, “to save thee for thy brother’s sake.”[8718] But Phileas replied: “I beseech thee to execute that which hath been commanded thee.” Culcian said: “If I knew thee to be poor, I would not desire to save thee; but thou art possessed of great wealth, and canst support many; sacrifice, therefore, and live.” Phileas answered: “I will not sacrifice.” Culcian: “Dost thou not see thy wife, how piteously she looks at thee? Phileas: Jesus Christ, whom I serve, is our Saviour; as he has called me, he can also call her to the inheritance of his glory.”

The governor here offered him time to consider, but the holy bishop said: “I have given all these points sufficient consideration, and am determined to suffer for Christ.” Hereupon his relatives cast themselves at his feet, and besought him to have compassion upon his wife and children; but the saint, raising his eyes to God, declared that he should not think of any other relatives than the saints in heaven.

Among the persons of distinction present at this spectacle was Philoromus, a military tribune, who held a very high office in the administration of justice. Having listened to the wailings of the bishop’s relatives and the exhortations of the governor, raising his voice he exclaimed: “Why do you vainly endeavor to shake his constancy? Why do you fatigue yourselves uselessly with one whom you see faithful to his God? Do ye not perceive that your entreaties and your tears are of no avail? Tears shed from human motives cannot move the soul of a Christian who has God before his eyes.” The entire multitude, enraged at these words of Philoromus, cried out that he should be condemned to the same death as Phileas; whereupon the governor commanded that they should be both beheaded.

As the entire crowd were proceeding, together with the martyrs, to the place of execution, the bishop’s brother said with a loud voice that Phileas had demanded an appeal. Culcian instantly called them back, but Phileas said: “I have not demanded any appeal. Give no ear to this wretched man. I am much beholden to the judges who have made me a co-heir with Jesus Christ.”

Having said this he moved forward to the place of execution, where, having arrived together with his companion, he raised his voice to the Christians and said: “My dear children, those of you that seek God in truth should be careful to abstain from sin, since the enemy goeth about seeking whom he may devour. As yet we have not suffered; we now commence to suffer, and to be truly disciples of Jesus Christ. Be ye attentive in the observance of his commandments, and continually invoke the Creator of all things, to whom be glory forever!” At the termination of this exhortation both martyrs were beheaded. In this manner did these two heroes consummate their sacrifice.[8719]

Chapter XIX

ST. DIONYSIA, VIRGIN, WITH SS. ANDREW AND PAUL OF LAMPSACUS

May 15.

IT is recorded by Fleury,[8720] that in the third century, at Lampsacus, a city in Lesser Asia, there were presented to Optimus, the proconsul, three Christians—Andrew. Paul, and Nichomacus.[8721] Being asked to what country they belonged, Nichomacus, first of all, raising his voice, answered: "I am a Christian." The proconsul having repeated the question to the other two, they also replied: "We likewise are Christians."

Optimus then, turning to Nichomacus, ordered him to sacrifice in obedience to the emperor; but he replied: "Thou art already aware that a Christian cannot sacrifice to demons." The proconsul had him tortured so cruelly that he was about to expire, when, his courage failing him, the wretched man exclaimed: "I am no longer a Christian; I will willingly sacrifice to the gods." He was quickly withdrawn from the torture, but was instantly possessed by a devil, and violently casting himself upon the earth, bit off his tongue and expired.

St. Dionysia, a young virgin only sixteen years of age, having witnessed this spectacle and being deeply penetrated by the misfortune of Nichomacus, exclaimed: "O miserable wretch! by not having suffered a moment longer, thou hast condemned thyself to eternal pains!" The proconsul hearing these words caused her to be dragged from out the crowd and asked her if she were a Christian. "Yes," she replied, "I am a Christian, and therefore weep for that unhappy man, who, by suffering a little more, might have earned heaven for himself, whereas he will now weep for all eternity." The proconsul, enraged at these words, exclaimed: "Instantly thou shalt sacrifice to our gods, or thou shalt be ignominiously treated and afterwards burned alive." Dionysia answered: "My God is greater than thou, wherefore I fear not thy threats; he will grant me strength to suffer every torment for his love.” Optimus then delivered her to two young libertines who brought her to a house; but there appeared a youth surrounded with a supernatural splendor who was ready to defend her from insult, whereupon the young men cast themselves at her feet and implored her intercession in their behalf.

On the following morning the proconsul summoned before him Andrew and Paul, who had been kept in prison, and called upon them to sacrifice to Diana. They both replied: “We know not Diana nor the other demons whom you adore; we worship the only God.” At these words the crowd of idolaters called upon the proconsul to leave the execution of the two saints to themselves; and he accordingly delivered them up to be stoned by the multitude. The saints were tied and dragged by the feet through the streets to the place of execution.

While they were being stoned, Dionysia escaped from the guard and repairing to the place threw herself upon the martyrs exclaiming: “To live with you in heaven, I will die with you upon earth.” The proconsul upon hearing this ordered her head to be struck off; and this was accordingly done.

Chapter XX

ST. FEBRONIA, VIRGIN

June 25.

DURING the persecution of Diocletian there existed in the city of Sibapoli,[8722] in Syria, a celebrated nunnery, containing upwards of fifty most exemplary religious. The Superior, named Briena, was a lady of noble birth and great virtue, and had with her a niece called Febronia, whom she had reared from her third to her nineteenth year. She was exceedingly beautiful, and still more adorned by the most exalted virtue; and the pious aunt was so careful of her that she would not allow her to be seen by anybody.

Febronia, almost from her infancy, had dedicated her virginity to Jesus Christ; and, having become a religious, led a life of the most perfect sanctity. She fasted almost the entire year, her food being only bread and roots, or lentils, and she sometimes passed two days without any nutriment at all. She slept mostly upon a narrow plank, and sometimes on the ground.

It was known that there was in the convent a young lady of extraordinary beauty and virtue, and many persons were most anxious to see her and speak with her, but in vain. A young widow, however, of very noble family, called Ieria, who was as yet a catechumen, casting herself at the feet of the Superior, with many tears sought, and finally obtained, an interview with Febronia; the conversation so inflamed her with the love of God, that she immediately received baptism, induced her family to do the same, and renouncing second nuptials, dedicated herself exclusively to the service of God.

Some time after, it was reported that the emperor Diocletian was about to send the prefect Lysimachus, accompanied by his uncle Selenus, to Sibapoli, with orders to exterminate the Christians. This news spread terror among the Christians; and the bishop, knowing the danger in which the nuns would be placed, gave them leave to depart from the convent, which they could not do without shedding many tears. The Superior, however, determined to await her crown in the convent; and turning to her niece, she wept and said “What will become of thee, Febronia?” The young virgin replied: “I shall stay here, my dear aunt; what better lot could await me than to shed my blood for Jesus Christ!”

The prefect Lysimachus was inclined to show favor to the Christians, on account of his mother, who was a true believer. Hence Diocletian associated with him in the proconsulate of the East his uncle Selenus, who was a mortal enemy of the Christians, and gave the command of the troops to Primus, with directions to obey the orders of Selenus. The edicts of extermination were first executed in Palmyra, to a horrible extent, the number of slaughtered Christians being innumerable.

The pagans called the attention of Selenus to the nunnery of Sebapoli, whither a company of soldiers was forthwith despatched. Upon breaking open the gates they were met by Febronia, who casting herself at their feet, implored them to make her the first victim; but the general, Primus, struck with her appearance, went to Lysimachus, who was only twenty years of age, and informed him that he had found in the convent a lady of rare beauty, and apparently of noble family, whom he could recommend to him for a wife. Meanwhile one of the guard went to inform Selenus that Primus was endeavoring to have his nephew married to a Christian virgin, whereupon the uncle ordered that Febronia should be brought before him. The young lady was accordingly laden with chains; some of the religious wished to accompany her, but the soldiers refused, when the pious aunt, taking leave of her, said: “Go, my child, and show thyself a worthy spouse of Jesus Christ!”

When Febronia was brought before Selenus, he asked her whether she was free. “No,” she replied, “I am a servant.” Selenus: “Who is thy master?” Febronia: “Jesus Christ my Saviour and my God.” Hereupon, Selenus began to represent to her the misfortune of having been deceived by the Christian sect, and besought her to awake from the delusion, and sacrifice to the gods, who would prosper her; since she would thus contract nuptials with his nephew, Lysimachus, and become one of the most distinguished ladies of the empire. The saint, raising up her chains, said: “I beseech thee not to deprive me of the most precious gems that I have ever worn. As regards the nuptials, I am consecrated to God, and cannot accept the sons of earth.—Then I am a Christian, and how can I worship devils? Know that for my faith I am willing to suffer all torments.”

Selenus, infuriated by this speech, ordered the saint to be scourged, which torture was so cruelly inflicted that her body might be said to be one wound; nevertheless, Febronia ceased not to bless the Lord. Selenus, thinking that her prayers were intended to insult him, ordered her to be roasted on a gridiron over a slow fire! at which horrid spectacle even the pagans turned away! while the saint continued to thank Jesus Christ, who thus made her worthy to suffer for his sake. The tyrant not content with what she had as yet endured, caused her teeth to be knocked out, and her breasts to be torn off; but seeing that all these tortures could not shake the constancy of Febronia, he ordered her head to be struck off; this completed her martyrdom, on the 25th of June, about the beginning of the fourth century.

While Primus and Lysimachus were con versing about the heroic conduct of the youthful virgin, news was brought them that Selenus, having been seized by a sudden madness, had dashed out his brains. They proceeded to his apartments and found him dead, whereupon Lysimachus ordered Primus to have the body of St. Febronia laid in a rich coffin, and honorably buried. This act of piety performed, Primus and Lysimachus embraced the Christian faith, and their example was followed by many others.[8723]

Chapter XXI

ST. ARCADIUS

January 12.

ST. ARCADIUS was a native of Africa, and most probably suffered in Cæsarea,[8724] the capital of Mauritania. A furious persecution—during which the Christians were cruelly dragged before the idols to sacrifice—was raging, when Arcadius withdrew to a solitary place, where he employed his time in fasting and in prayer. Meanwhile, as he appeared not at the public sacrifices, soldiers were despatched to surprise him in his house, but not finding him, they arrested one of his relatives, in order to make him discover the retreat of his kinsman.

Arcadius was unwilling that another should suffer on his account, and presented himself to the governor, saying that his relative might be discharged, as he had come to answer for himself. The governor replied that he also might depart unhurt if he would sacrifice to the gods. The saint courageously answered: “Thou art deceived if thou believest that threats of death can affright the servants of God. They say with St. Paul, ‘To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain’ [Philipp, i. 21]. Invent, therefore, what tortures thou canst, we shall never be separated from our God.”

Hereupon the tyrant, full of wrath, and thinking the usual tortures too light for Arcadius, ordered that joint by joint should be chopped off the saint’s body, beginning with his toes. The barbarous butchery was instantly executed, during which the holy martyr ceased not to bless the Lord. After his body had been reduced to a mere trunk, calmly surveying his mangled limbs scattered around him, he exclaimed: “Oh, happy members that have served to manifest the glory of God! now that I behold you separated from my body, you are dearer to me than ever. I now know that I belong to Jesus Christ, as I have always desired.”

Then turning to those present, who were idolaters, he said: “Know ye that all these sufferings are easily overcome by those who continually keep before their eyes the eternal life that God bestows upon his servants. Adore the true God, who consoles me in these tortures; and abandon the worship of your false gods, who cannot assist you in your need. He who dies for the true God acquires life everlasting. Behold, for having suffered these torments, I go to live with him eternally, without the fear of ever losing him.” Having finished his discourse, he placidly gave his soul to his Redeemer, on the 12th of January.

This martyrdom filled the idolaters with confusion, and inspired the Christians with a great desire of laying down their lives for Jesus Christ. They afterwards collected the scattered limbs of the martyr, and gave them honorable burial.

Chapter XXII

ST. JUSTIN, THE PHILOSOPHER

April 13, and among the Greeks, June 1 or 12.

ST. JUSTIN was one of those glorious saints that have illustrated the Church of Christ by their extraordinary learning, as well as by their eminent virtues. He wrote in defence of Catholic truth against pagans, Jews, and heretics, and presented to the emperors and Roman senate two famous "Apologies," wherein he vindicates the innocence of the Christians, and proves that the crimes imputed to them were mere calumnies of the pagans. By the sanctity of his life, and the zeal and energy of his preaching, he converted many infidels, and finally terminated his brilliant career by a glorious martyrdom.

St. Justin was born about the beginning of the second century at Neapolis,[8725] the capital of Samaria, of Greek parents, who were idolaters. Having gone through the usual elementary course of studies, he found himself inspired with a great desire to know something concerning the Great Cause, or Creator of all. Having in vain sought for truth among the Stoics, Peripatetics, Pythagoreans, and those of the Platonic school, God was pleased to satisfy his yearnings after a wonderful manner. Having wandered one day into a solitary place in order that he might with more quietude enjoy his meditations, he met with an old man of very venerable appearance, who told him that if he wished to arrive at the knowledge of the true God, he should leave the study of philosophy, and begin to read the Prophets, who in their writings had manifested to man the mysteries of God, and announced Jesus Christ his Son, through whom alone we can arrive at the knowledge of the true God. "But," continued this venerable personage, "above all things, pray to the Lord to illuminate thy mind; because these things are not to be understood except by those unto whom

God hath given the knowledge of them.” Having pronounced these words, he disappeared.

After this interview, Justin applied himself continually to the reading of the Holy Scriptures, from which he derived that blessed knowledge which made him embrace the faith and receive the sacrament of regeneration about the year 133, being then about thirty years of age. The constancy and fortitude of the martyrs, in suffering tortures, and laying down their lives for Jesus Christ, as he himself confesses, contributed much to his conversion, from which time he dedicated himself entirely to the love of Jesus Christ, and the advancement of his religion. To this end he received the holy order of priesthood,[8726] and exerted himself continually in the conversion of infidels and heretics, as considering himself called by God to the defence of his Church. Hence he used to say: “Since I have obtained from God the grace to understand the Scriptures, I labor to make them understood by others also, lest my neglect should be punished at the tribunal of God.” And again: “I am determined to manifest the truth, although I should be cut to pieces.”

Having proceeded to Rome, he instructed many in the doctrines of the Christian faith; and there about the year 150 composed and presented to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and to the Roman senate, his first “Apology,’’ wherein he demonstrates the truth of the doctrines, and the sanctity of life, which the Christians professed. He adds, that many of them had lived in a state of inviolate purity for sixty or seventy years; and that Christians are so enamoured of this angelic virtue, that they either live in perpetual continency, or embrace the married state for the holy purpose of training children in the love and service of God; their desires being placed in the joys of eternal life, which they expect through the death of Jesus Christ.

In testimony of the truth of the Christian faith, he brings forward the fulfilment of the prophecies, which had been preserved by the Jews, the avowed enemies of the Christians. “We have seen,” says the saint, “those prophecies fulfilled in our own days, by the birth of Jesus Christ from a virgin; by his preaching and miracles; by his Passion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven; by the reprobation of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem; by the conversion of the Gentiles, and the establishment of the Church throughout the entire world! These prophecies, so perfectly fulfilled, must convince us that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, who shall come one day to judge mankind, as hath been foretold, and as we believe."

The Church in those days kept concealed from the uninitiated the celebration of the most holy mysteries; but St. Justin thought it necessary to explain them, in order to contradict the infamous calumnies of secret lewdness and infanticide, which were being circulated against the Christians. Wherefore having explained the sacred ceremonies of baptism, he proceeds to speak of the Eucharist in the following terms: "He that presides in the assembly is presented with bread and a chalice of wine, with water; whereupon, in the name of the Son and the Holy Ghost, he renders glory to the Father. And by these gifts doth he make thanksgiving, which all the faithful confirm by the word 'Amen.' The prayers, praises, and thanksgiving being terminated, the deacons take of the bread and the wine, mixed with water, over which all these holy prayers have been recited, and having distributed them among those present, they carry some to the absent also.[8727] This food is by us called *Eucharist;* of which no one can partake who believeth not our doctrines, and who hath not been cleansed from sin in the laver of regeneration. This is not common food or drink; but as Jesus Christ our Saviour was, for our redemption, by virtue of the divine word, composed of flesh and blood; so we are aware that, by virtue of the prayer containing his divine words, the food by which we are nourished is the flesh and blood of the WORD INCARNATE." Thus we see that the present doctrine of the Catholic Church is that which was believed and practised in the apostolic times, in which our saint flourished.

St. Justin proceeds to describe the meetings of the faithful: "Upon the first day of the week, a general meeting takes place, when, as time permits, the prophecies, and writings of the apostles, are read. The reading being terminated by the Lector, he who presides makes an exhortation, to excite the people to the imitation of worthy actions. We then all rise, and place ourselves in prayer, which being finished, bread and wine with water are prepared, over which the bishop or priest recites the prayers and thanksgiving, the people answer *Amen;* and, finally, the distribution of the holy gifts is made by the deacons. The richer sort make a liberal collection, which by the president is distributed to widows and orphans, to the sick and those in prison, to pilgrims or other persons in need. The reason why we meet on Sunday is, because it was the day upon which God began the creation of the world; and upon which Jesus Christ arose from the dead."

It is believed that, although this "Apology" of St. Justin did not cause the persecution to cease, it made a favorable impression on the Emperor Antoninus Pius, as is inferred from his letter, written to the cities of Asia Minor, in favor of the Christians, and recorded by Eusebius.

Our saint composed other works in defence of Catholic doctrine, against the Marcionites and Valentinians;[8728] and also his Dialogue with Trypho,[8729] against the pertinacity of the Jews. Marcus Aurelius having succeeded Antoninus Pius in the empire, the persecution was renewed; and one Crescens, who, although styling himself a Cynic philosopher, was in reality a very shallow fellow, look occasion to exclaim loudly against the Christians. St. Justin, in public dispute, frequently convicted him of the most violent malice, and the greatest possible ignorance of the doctrine and practices of the Christians, and was induced to publish, and present to the emperor, his second "Apology," in which he defends his religion against the calumnies of Crescens and others.

In showing that Christians had been unjustly put to death, he relates that a married couple had both been guilty of incontinency; the woman, having been converted to the Christian religion, used all her endeavors to withdraw her husband from his shameful practices; but he, instead of amending, accused her and one Ptolemy, who had been the means of her conversion, of being Christians. The prefect, Urbicus, sentenced them to death; whereupon a certain Christian, named Lucius, exclaimed: "With what conscience, O Urbicus! dost thou condemn a man who hath been guilty of no crime?'' Lucius, together with another Christian, received a similar sentence.

A very short time after the publication of this discourse St. Justin was apprehended, together with six other Christians of his acquaintance.[8730] and brought before Rusticus, the Prefect of Rome, who exhorted him to obey the imperial edicts. The saint replied: "No one can be reproved or condemned for obeying the precepts of our Saviour, Jesus Christ."

The prefect asked him what kind of learning he professed. Justin answered that he had learned the doctrines of various sects, and had finally embraced Christianity, although it was despised by those who were led away by errors and false opinions. “Unhappy wretch!” exclaimed the prefect, “dost thou then delight in this discipline?” Justin: “Yes, because it teaches me the true doctrine.” Rusticus: “Which is this doctrine?” Justin: “The true doctrine which we profess is, to believe in one only God, the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and to confess Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the foretold by the Prophets, the preacher of salvation unto men, and the Master of those who happily observe the divine precepts. But neither have I a tongue to express nor a mind to conceive anything worthy of his infinite dignity;—to do so, I would need the mind and the spirit of the prophets, who, inspired by God, foretold his coming.”

The prefect asked him where the Christians were in the habit of assembling. Justin replied: “Where they please, and where they can. Dost thou imagine, perchance, that we all assemble in the same place? The God of the Christians is not confined to a place; he is invisible, and fills both heaven and earth; and is everywhere adored and praised by the faithful.” “But I wish to know,” re-joined Rusticus, “where thou and thy disciples assemble.” The saint answered: “As for myself, I dwell at the Timothean baths: this is the second time I have come to Rome, and I am scarcely acquainted with any other place in the city; if any one should wish to seek me, I am ready to communicate to him the doctrines of truth.” Rusticus: “Thou art then a Christian?” Justin: “So it is: I am a Christian.”

The prefect then turned to St. Justin’s companions, and interrogated them, one after the other, concerning their faith. They all confessed themselves Christians, and manifested a desire to die for Jesus Christ. Rusticus then said to Justin: “Tell me, thou who dost believe that thou hast the true wisdom, whether thou art persuaded that thou shalt ascend into heaven, after I shall have caused thee to be scourged and beheaded.” The saint replied: “If I shall suffer these punishments, I hope to receive the reward which is prepared for those who observe the commandments of Christ.” The prefect asked: “Dost thou, then, really imagine that thou shalt ascend into heaven;” “This I do not only imagine, but I know it,” replied the saint, “and am so fully assured of it, that I entertain no doubt whatever.”

Finally, the prefect, turning to all those confessors of Jesus Christ, said to them: “Go ye together, and unanimously sacrifice to the gods,” Justin, answering for all, replied: “No man in his senses could abandon religion to become a participator in impiety.” The prefect hereupon threatened that their non-compliance would be followed by the most unrelenting tortures. Justin said: “There is nothing which we more earnestly desire than to endure torments for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus attain unto salvation; for this it is that will enable us to present ourselves with confidence at the tribunal of that Judge before whom all the world must necessarily appear.” To this the other martyrs assented, adding: “Do quickly what thou art about. We are Christians, and will never sacrifice to idols.”

The prefect then pronounced against them the following sentence: “Those who have not wished to sacrifice to the gods, nor obey the edict of the emperor, shall first be scourged, and afterwards beheaded, in pursuance of the law.” The martyrs were forthwith led to the place of execution, where the sentence being carried into effect, they received the glorious crown of martyrdom, in the year 167, or the following. Their bodies were privately carried away by the Christians, who gave them honorable interment.

The Acts of these martyrs are found in Ruinart and Tillemont.

Chapter XXIII

ST. AGATHA, VIRGIN

February 5.

THIS holy virgin and martyr is held in great veneration by the Greek as well as the Latin Church; and although her original Acts have not been preserved, many well-authenticated facts concerning her martyrdom are found in the Bollandists, Surius, and others. She was a native of Sicily, and descended of a noble and opulent family. These circumstances, added to her extraordinary beauty, inflamed Quintianus, a man of consular dignity, with such love of her, that he resolved to compel her to become his wife. The edicts of the emperor Decius against the Christians having been published, he ordered Agatha to be arrested as a Christian, and conducted to Catania, where he then resided.

The holy virgin having heard the proclamation against the Christians, retired to a solitary place in order to avoid the snares of Quintianus, concerning which she had received some intimation. The emissaries of the governor, however, discovered her place of concealment, and after having been arrested, she prayed after the following manner: “O Jesus Christ, Lord of all things, Thou seest my heart, and knowest my desire, which is to possess only Thee, since I have consecrated myself entirely to Thee. Preserve me, dear Lord, from this tyrant, and enable me to overcome the devil, who layeth snares for my soul.”

When the saint appeared before Quintianus, in order the more easily to overcome her modesty, he gave her up to Aphrodisia, an abominable woman, who, together with her daughters, publicly professed immodesty. In her infamous house the saint suffered greater torture than the darkest and most fetid dungeon could afford. All the arts of Aphrodisia and her partners in crime were unceasingly applied, in order to induce the saint to comply with the wishes of Quintianus; but Agatha, who from her infancy had been consecrated to Jesus Christ, was enabled by his divine grace to overcome all their attempts.

Quintianus, having been informed that the efforts of Aphrodisia for an entire month had been employed in vain, commanded that the saint should be again brought before him. He upbraided her, that, being a free woman and noble, she had allowed herself to be seduced into the humble servitude of the Christians. The holy virgin courageously confessed that she was a Christian, and that she knew of no nobility more illustrious, nor liberty more real, than to be a servant of Jesus Christ. In order to give the governor to understand how infamous were the deities which he adored and desired her to worship, she asked whether he would wish that his wife should be a prostitute, like Venus, or that he himself should be considered an incestuous adulterer like Jupiter. Quintianus, irritated at her rebuke, commanded her to be buffeted and led to prison. The following day she was again summoned, and asked whether she had resolved to save her life. She replied: “God is my life and my salvation.” The governor then put her to the torture; but perceiving how little it affected her, he commanded her breasts to be lacerated, and afterwards cut off, which was executed with barbarous cruelty.

Quintianus then remanded the saint to prison, commanding that her wounds should be left undressed, in order that she might expire under the torture. But at midnight St. Peter appeared to her in a vision, perfectly cured her wounds, and freed her from all pain: during the entire of that night there appeared in the interior of the prison so resplendent a light that the guards fled in terror, leaving the door of her dungeon open, so that she could have escaped, as the other prisoners advised her, but that she was unwilling, as she said, to lose by flight the crown which was being prepared for her in heaven.

Quintianus, nothing moved by her miraculous cure, but on the contrary more irritated, after four days devised new torments for the saint. He commanded that she should be rolled over broken tiles, mixed with burning coals; but she endured all with constancy; and while the tyrant was planning fresh torments, the saint, perceiving that her life was drawing to a close, made the following prayer: “O Lord, my Creator, who hast preserved me from my infancy, hast given me strength to overcome these torments, and hast taken from me the love of the world, receive now my soul. It is time that I should at last pass from this miserable life to the fruition of Thy glory.” Just as she had finished these words, she tranquilly expired, and went to be united to God, to praise him and love him forever. This happened in 251. Her name is mentioned in the Canon of the Mass.

Chapter XXIV

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE; ST. TYGRIUS, PRIEST; AND ST. EUTROPIUS, LECTOR

January 27 and 12.

ALTHOUGH this great saint did not actually die for the faith by the hand of the executioner, yet he may be styled a martyr, as he died of the maltreatment which he received for defending God's honor and the rights of the Church.

St. John was born at Antioch, about the year 347, and was descended of one of the most illustrious families of that city.[8731] His mother, being left a widow at the early age of twenty years, took particular care in the education of her child, and placed him under the most eminent masters, to study rhetoric and philosophy. It was expected that the pious youth would attain to great worldly fortune; but he, from his twentieth year, applied himself to the study of the sacred Scriptures and to prayer, and dedicated himself entirely to the service of his crucified Lord. Whereupon St. Meletius, his bishop, took a great liking to him, and having instructed him for three years, made him Lector of his own church.

Although during his stay in Antioch he led a very retired and mortified life, he bethought him of the advantages of a still more solitary and austere state; and consequently retired to a cave, where he passed some years in continual prayer and penitential practices, which were so severe as to injure his health. He was therefore obliged to return to Antioch, where he was ordained deacon by St. Meletius, whose successor, Flavianus, conferred upon him the holy order of priesthood five years afterwards, and in consequence of his great eloquence, appointed him preacher of that church. This office he discharged so well, that public demonstrations of approbation were frequently made, against which the saint protested, saying: "What good can these your applauses do me? That only which I desire is, that you practise what I preach; this to me will be the most acceptable applause.”

Nectarius, Patriarch of Constantinople, died in the year 397; and as the name of our saint had obtained great celebrity throughout the entire province, the Emperor Arcadius, the clergy, and people, agreed in having him promoted to that see. The emperor accordingly summoned him to Constantinople, and without making known to him his design, took him into his carriage, and brought him to a church outside the city, where, notwithstanding his reluctance, he was consecrated by the bishops previously assembled.

The see of Constantinople had unfortunately been governed for sixteen years by Nectarius,[8732] a man without learning or zeal; so that this great city, containing as it did so many strangers and heretics, required a thorough reform. To this St. John Chrysostom gave his entire attention. With an untiring and holy zeal he labored for the reformation of his clergy, and endeavored to suppress the avarice and haughtiness of the emperor’s court; this made for him many enemies.

It happened that there arrived at Constantinople some monks, who had been expelled from Egypt by Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, under the pretext of Origenism; but St. John being satisfied of their innocence, wrote to Theophilus in their favor, beseeching him not to disturb them. He, however, being a haughty and vindictive man, succeeded in raising a persecution against the saint for protecting the monks. The emperor indeed summoned Theophilus to Constantinople, to account for his conduct; but he easily gained over to his side the nobles, bishops, and clergy, who were opposed to St. Chrysostom. But the greatest acquisition to his party was the Empress Eudoxia, who bore a mortal enmity to our saint, on account of having been rebuked by him for her avaricious rapacity in depriving Callitropa of her money and another widow of her land. Backed by this party, Theophilus was enabled to get together a cabal of thirty-six bishops, who from the place where they met styled themselves the *Synod of the Oak*, and having drawn up some false accusations, deposed St. John from his bishopric, and obtained from the emperor a decree for his banishment.

The people, hearing of the decree, surrounded the church to defend their bishop; but St. John, to avoid a sedition, escaped through a private door, and surrendered himself to the guards, who brought him to Bithynia. On the night of the following day Constantinople was shaken with an earthquake, which was regarded as a sign of God’s displeasure by all, not excepting Eudoxia, who in the greatest consternation besought the emperor to recall the holy bishop. The entire population went out to meet him, chanting hymns, and bearing lighted torches in their hands, and having arrived at the cathedral, obliged him to seat himself upon the episcopal throne.

Theophilus and his party having fled from Constantinople, the saint resumed the discharge of his pastoral duties, and was treating with the emperor about the convocation of a council to vindicate his innocence, when a new accident totally changed the aspect of his affairs. In the square before the great church of St. Sophia a silver statue had been erected to the empress, where dances and public games were performed, which disturbed the sacred offices of the church. The saint strongly rebuked the people for this irreverence; but his zeal only infuriated the Empress Eudoxia, who to satisfy her revenge availed herself of the enmity which Theophilus and other bishops bore our saint. They formed a second cabal, in which they condemned and deposed St. Chrysostom, under pretext that he had reassumed the episcopal function, without having justified himself in synod.

In pursuance of this most iniquitous deposition, an order came from the emperor that he should not enter his church, and he accordingly departed from the city. As this happened upon Holy Saturday, the saint retired to a country chapel, in order to celebrate the sacred offices; but his enemies obtained a troop of four hundred soldiers, and entered the church, where baptism was being administered, wounded some of the priests, and injured some of the children who were about being baptized. Their sacrilegious impiety went so far as to trample on the Blessed Sacrament! Such, in fine, was the uproar, that many of the people ran, in consternation, to hide themselves in the woods and valleys.

Although the Emperor Arcadius had no personal enmity to St. John, he was induced by the importunity of his wife and the hostile bishops to send him into banishment. The saint having received the order, took leave of the bishops who were his friends, and departing through a private door, delivered himself to the soldiers who obliged him to travel day and night, until they arrived at Cucusus, a small city of Armenia, the place of his banishment; the journey lasted seventy days, during thirty of which the saint suffered from a tertian fever.

When they arrived at Cucusus, the bishop of that place received St. John in his house, who thus found some repose after so much suffering. The saint here did not remain idle, but employed himself, as much as possible, in instructing the people and relieving the poor. He also wrote many letters to console his friends, and to assist the churches which had been lately founded in Persia and Phœnicia.

Meanwhile, Pope Innocent I. having been informed of the injustice done St. John, did all in his power to assemble a synod where the innocence of the saint would be definitely declared. But his enemies labored successfully to prevent its celebration, and jealous of the fame he was acquiring in his first place of exile, prevailed upon Arcadius to banish him to Pytius, a small town on the borders of the empire. St. John was accordingly consigned to two officers, one of whom was a most brutal man; and having been instigated by the enemies of the saint to cause his death by maltreatment on the road, he obliged him to travel in the most violent rains and amid scorching heats, not allowing him to rest in any town, but halting at obscure villages, where no accommodation could be found.

When they arrived at Comana, in Pontus, the inhuman officer obliged him to continue his journey five or six miles to the church where St. Basiliscus, Martyr and Bishop of Comana, had been buried; they lodged in a house contiguous to the church, and in the night the holy martyr appeared to St. John, and exhorted him to have courage, adding: “To-morrow we shall be together.” St. Chrysostom, knowing thus that the termination of his sufferings was at hand, besought the soldiers to defer their departure till the morrow: this he could not obtain; but they had travelled only a few miles when, seeing the saint about to expire, they returned to the same house. St. Chrysostom then changed his dress, putting on a white robe; he received the holy Viaticum, and poured forth his last prayer, which he concluded with an expression he was constantly in the habit of using: “Glory be to God for all things. Having said “Amen,” he gave up his soul to God, on the 14th September in the year 407, being about sixty years of age, and having been bishop nine years and almost seven months. A great concourse of monks and persons of rank came from the neighboring provinces to celebrate his funeral. God did not delay the punishment of his enemies, and especially of

Eudoxia, who died a few days afterwards. She was soon followed by Arcadius, who expired in his thirty-first year; and these deaths have generally been considered the effects of divine wrath.

But the persecution against the followers of St. John Chrysostom did not end with his death. Tygrius, a priest, and Eutropius, a lector, were particular objects of vengeance; because, after his second departure from Constantinople, the great church of St. Sophia and the senate-house were burned down, and these two ecclesiastics were accused of having done so maliciously. Optatus, an impious pagan, was governor of the city, and he first put Eutropius, as being the younger, to torture, in order that he might reveal the authors of the fire; but Eutropius suffered himself to be torn with iron hooks and burned with torches rather than falsely accuse any person. Palladius[8733] writes, that in these tortures he expired. Optatus then caused Tygrius to be scourged, and stretched upon the rack until his bones were dislocated, and finally banished him to Mesopotamia, where he died. The Church honors both of these saints with the title of martyr.[8734]

In the year 428, the honors of a saint were first given to St. John Chrysostom, and the archbishop, St. Proculus, afterwards persuaded the emperor, Theodosius the younger, to bring the saint’s body from Comana to Constantinople; the translation of the sacred relics was performed with the utmost pomp, the entire population going forth to join in the procession. The arm of the sea over which they passed was covered with barges, and illuminated with torches. When the sacred relics arrived, the Emperor Theodosius, his eyes bathed in tears and fixed upon the coffin, humbly asked pardon of the saint for the injustice done him by his parents. This translation took place on the 28th of January, in the year 438, thirty-one years after the saint’s death.[8735]

Chapter XXV

ST. PIONIUS, PRIEST

February 1.

ST. PIONIUS was a priest of the church of Smyrna; he was exceedingly learned, and inflamed with the love of Jesus Christ, and a zeal for the conversion of souls, which was successfully exercised in the conversion of many infidels and abandoned sinners.

In his time, that is, about the year 250, the persecution of Decius was raging, and the saint by continual prayer prepared himself for martyrdom, in case such should be his lot. One day, as he was engaged in prayer with Asclepiades and Sabina, two pious Christians, it was revealed to them that, on the day following, they would be arrested for the faith; they therefore made an offering of their lives to Jesus Christ, and placed halters about their necks in order to signify to the soldiers that they were ready to undergo martyrdom.

On the following morning, Palemon, the guardian of the temple, came with a troop of soldiers, and said to them: “Are ye aware of the orders of the emperor, that ye are all to sacrifice to the gods of the empire?” Pionius answered: “That which we know is the order of God—which is, not to sacrifice to any but himself, the sovereign Lord of all.” Upon this reply they were all arrested and led into a great square, where St. Pionius, turning to the enemies of the faith, said that they were vainly rejoicing on account of the apostasy of some few bad Christians, and protested that no species of torture would ever compel him to adore those whom they impiously called gods.

Palemon said to him: “And why wilt thou, Pionius, regardless of life, deprive thyself of the beauteous light of the day which thou enjoyest?” The saint replied: “This light is beauteous, but there is another light more glorious, and a life more estimable, to which Christians aspire.” The people called upon him to sacrifice, but he answered: “Our resolve is to persevere in the faith.”

The people desired that the saint should speak in the theatre, in order that they might all hear him conveniently, but some told Palemon that if he gave him liberty to speak, a tumult might follow; he therefore said to Pionius: “If thou wilt not sacrifice, come with us at least to the temple.” The saint said: “Our entrance into your temple cannot benefit your gods.” “Then,” said Palemon, “thou wilt not be persuaded?” Pionius replied: “Would to God I could persuade ye all to become Christians. Some of the idolaters exclaimed: “Thou canst never induce us to that; we would rather be burned alive.” The saint re-joined: “But it will be worse for you to burn eternally after death.”

Palemon, who was anxious to save the life of Pionius, ceased not to importune him; but the saint resolutely answered: “Thou hast orders to persuade or to punish me; thou canst not persuade, therefore punish.” Hereupon Palemon, being enraged, asked: “But why wilt thou not sacrifice?” Pionius: “Because I am a Christian.” Palemon: “What is the God whom thou adorest?” Pionius: “I adore the Almighty God, who, having made all things, created us also, as I have learned from Jesus Christ.” Palemon: “Sacrifice to the emperor at least.” Pionius: “I shall never sacrifice to a man.”

The judge then judicially inquired his name, and to what church he belonged. The saint replied: “I am a Christian, and belong to the Catholic Church.” His companions gave the same answer, and they were all sent to prison. On the road thither, some of the idolaters observed that many Christians had sacrificed. The saint answered: “Each one is master of his own will: my name is Pionius.” By this he meant to encourage the others to imitate his example, and remain constant in the faith.

When they came to the prison, many Christians offered them refreshments, but Pionius said: “I have not time to think of anything but the martyrdom which awaits me.” The guards, seeing so many Christians coming to visit the saint, brought him and his companions to a more remote and obscure place, for which they gave thanks to God, as their more solitary confinement enabled them to commune more freely with God. Notwithstanding the change, however, many Christians, who had abandoned the faith on account of the violence of the torments, came to

Pionius, who wept over their fall, and exhorted them to do penance, and hope for pardon, through the mercy of Jesus Christ.

Palemon then arrived with a troop of soldiers, and orders from the proconsul to take the confessors to Ephesus. The saint desired to see the order, but the commanding officer put a halter round his neck, and dragged him so violently as almost to suffocate him. He was thus led to the square; and when the martyrs arrived at the temple, they cast themselves on the ground in order not to enter, but the soldiers dragged them in, and placed them erect before the impious altar. They there met Eudæmon, the unhappy Bishop of Smyrna, who had miserably sacrificed to the gods, and the idolaters vainly hoped that they might be moved by his example to prevaricate also. One of the idolaters wished to place on the head of St. Pionius a crown which had been worn by one of the apostates, but the saint broke it in pieces, and cast it from him. Not knowing what to do to pervert the confessors, they brought them back to prison, and while Pionius was entering, one of the soldiers smote him on the head. The saint bore it with patience, but God chastised his assailant by causing not only his hand but his side to become swollen and inflamed, so that he could not breathe.

After some days, the proconsul arrived at Smyrna, and having summoned Pionius, asked him to what sect he belonged. The saint replied: “I am a priest of the Catholic Church.” The proconsul re-joined: “Then art thou a doctor and a professor of folly.” Pionius: “No. but of piety.” Proconsul: “And of what piety?” Pionius: “Of that piety which has for its object the God who made heaven and earth.” The proconsul then commanded him to sacrifice, but the saint replied: “I have learned to adore one only living God.” The tyrant then ordered him to be tortured, during which having in vain importuned him to sacrifice, he finally condemned him to be burned.

In proceeding to the place of execution, St. Pionius walked quickly and with joyous countenance; having arrived at the place, he undressed without assistance, and offered himself to be nailed to the stake, after which the pagans exclaimed: “Repent, O Pionius; promise to obey, and thou shalt be saved.” But he replied: “I have not felt the pain of the nails; I desire to die, that the people may know that death shall be followed by resurrection.” The pile having been fired, the saint closed his eyes, so that the spectators thought he was already dead, but he was only praying; he opened his eyes, and having concluded the prayer with the usual “Amen,” placidly gave up the ghost, saying: “Lord Jesus, receive my soul.”

The end of his companions is not upon record, but it is piously believed that they also received the crown of martyrdom.

Chapter XXVI

ST. ADALBERT, BISHOP OF PRAGUE

April 23.

ST. ADALBERT was born in Bohemia, of noble parentage, about the middle of the tenth century. His father, a Slavonian, sent him to study at Magdeburg, under the care of the Archbishop Adalbert;[8736] who placed him in a school, under the direction of a holy monk, named Odericus, where the pupils, by serious attention to their studies, and most exemplary morals, edified one another.

Adalbert, having remained nine years in this school, made considerable progress in human sciences, but still more in the science of the saints; for whatever time was allowed for recreation, he spent in holy prayer, in relieving the poor, and visiting the sick. Having made a copious collection of books, consisting chiefly of the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, he returned to Bohemia, and entered the ecclesiastical state at Prague. Diethmar, bishop of that city, was greatly enamoured of his virtue, and ordained him subdeacon shortly before his death.

An assembly was held to propose a successor, at which the prince of Bohemia and other grandees were present, and, by unanimous consent, Adalbert was chosen. Notwithstanding all his reluctance, and his pleas of unworthiness and youth, he was obliged to accept the onerous charge; and the election having met the approval of the emperor, our saint received the episcopal consecration at the hands of Villegisus, Archbishop of Mayence. He immediately proceeded to Prague, to take possession of his see, and was received amid the acclamations of the people. In assuming the government of his Church, his extraordinary piety became manifest; for on all festivals he distributed abundant alms, and supported twelve poor persons continually. He slept upon the bare floor, or upon sack-cloth, and passed a considerable part of the night in prayer. His continual preaching, and frequent visits to the sick and those in prison, manifested how totally he was devoted to the glory of God and the welfare of his flock.

But they treated his admonitions with an obstinacy surpassing the enthusiasm with which they had at first hailed his arrival; and Adalbert accordingly resolved to leave them, having first consulted, and obtained permission from Pope John XV. His first intention was to make a pilgrimage on foot to the Holy Land; but on his arrival at Mount Cassino, the Abbot and some of the monks induced him to remain with them for some time, until it became known who he was; whereupon the holy bishop proceeded to Rome, and, by the advice of the Pope, received the religious habit in the monastery of St. Alexis, in the year 900. Here he lived in tranquillity for three years and a half, until the Duke of Bohemia, moved by the wretched state of the Church at Prague, induced the Pope to send him back.

Upon his return, the most ample promises of obedience were made, but never fulfilled. So the saint again abandoned his rebellious flock, and went to preach the Gospel to the idolaters of Hungary. His success here, however, was not proportionate to his zeal;[8737] and the Bohemians continuing as obstinate as ever, he again returned to his monastery at Rome.

He was obliged by the Pope to repair a second time to Prague. The saint set out in obedience to this command; but being informed that his ungrateful flock had shown their implacable hatred of him by murdering his brothers, he requested the Duke of Poland to ascertain whether they were willing to receive him. The Bohemians replied: “Adalbert is a saint, and we are sinners; so it is impossible to expect that we can live quietly together.” The saint took this as a sufficient exoneration from the solicitude of his Church, and went to undertake the conversion of the pagans who were then in Prussia.

After he had suffered many hardships on this mission, the idolaters one day assembled in great numbers, and demanded of him why he had entered their country. The saint replied that he had come for their salvation, and exhorted them to abandon the worship of idols, and to adore the true God. But the barbarians were displeased at his words, and Siggo, the priest of the idols, ran him through the breast with his lance, whereupon the others rushed upon him also, while the saint, raising his hands to heaven, prayed to the Lord for their conversion. The inhuman wretches placed his head upon a pole, and bore it away amid shouts of exultation. His martyrdom happened on the 23d April, of the year 997, and the Lord honored him by many subsequent miracles.

Chapter XXVII

SS. JAMES, DEACON; MARIANUS, LECTOR; AND COMPANIONS

April 30.

ST. JAMES was a deacon, and St. Marianus a lector, but it is not known for what Church they were ordained, nor is the place of their birth upon record. During the persecution of Valerian, they were travelling towards. Numidia, and stopped at a certain village called Muguas, some distance from the city of Cirtha.[8738] The persecution was raging violently in the province, and the prefect bore such a mortal hatred towards the Christians, that he recalled those who had been banished during former persecutions, to stand a new trial. Tim circumstance induced the saints to remain, as they expected to receive there the crown of martyrdom, which they so ardently desired.

Meanwhile, two holy bishops, Agapius and Secondinus,[8739] who had been banished for the faith, were passing through Muguas, having been summoned by the prefect for a second trial. James and Marianus felt a still stronger desire of martyrdom, from the example of these two holy prelates, which was satisfied two days afterwards, when they were arrested and brought to Cithra. Some good Christians seeing them in chains, envied their blessed lot, and encouraged them to remain constant. The idolaters perceiving this, asked them whether they were Christians, and having been answered in the affirmative, these also were arrested, and obtained the crown of martyrdom, even before our saints.

James and Marianus being presented before the magistrates of Cirtha, were interrogated concerning their faith. James boldly acknowledged that he was not only a Christian, but a deacon; although he knew that, in the latter case, capital punishment was inevitable. Marianus was cruelly tortured, being hung up, not by the hands, which was the usual method, but by the thumbs, which was far more painful, weights being also attached to his feet, so that his bones were dislocated, and his bowels convulsed; but the holy martyr, having suffered all with wonderful constancy, was sent with James and the others to prison.

Here Marianus was consoled with a vision which he related as follows:[8740] “I saw a great tribunal and a judge seated thereon; there was a platform on which many confessors were placed, whom the judge successively condemned to death. Methought I was mounting the platform, and saw, near the judge, St. Cyprian, who stretched forth his hand, as it were helping me to ascend. He said to me with a smile: ‘Come thou and sit with me.’ The judge arose and came with us to the prætorium. We passed through a beautiful meadow, surrounded with high trees, in the midst of which was a limpid fountain; the judge disappeared, and St. Cyprian taking a bowl, drank of the water, which I also drank with pleasure.” James hearing this narration, related a vision by which he also had been given to understand that he would obtain the crown of martyrdom.

The saints were then brought before the magistrates, and by them sent to the governor of the province, in company with some other Christians; they found the governor still sitting in judgment on others of the faithful, many of whom he condemned to death; amongst them was Agapius, who immediately after his death appeared in a vision to James, and said to him: “Be ye of good courage, for to-morrow ye shall be with us.” So it happened; for on the following day the governor pronounced sentence of death upon James, Marianus, and the others.

The place selected for the execution was a valley, through which ran a river, with a ridge of hills on both sides. As the number of the condemned was great, the martyrs were placed in rows on the bank of the river, in order that the executioner might pass from one to the other, cutting off their heads, after which the bodies were thrown into the stream, that the spectators might not be disgusted at the sight of so much carnage, While the martyrs, with their eyes bound, awaited the stroke of death, they spoke of the visions by which God was manifesting to them the certainty of their reward. St. Marianus in particular foretold the vengeance which was being prepared by God for those who were shedding the blood of the guiltless.[8741]

When the saints had terminated their struggle, the mother of Marianus was transported with joy at finding herself the mother of a martyr. She is panegyrized by St. Augustine,[8742] and by the author of the Acts of those martyrs, who had been a sharer of their prison, and an eye-witness of their martyrdom, which took place in the year 259, under the Emperor Valerian.

Chapter XXVIII

ST. LUCY, VIRGIN

December 13.

ST. LUCY was descended of a noble family of Syracuse, which was then regarded as the principal city of Sicily. She lost her father in her infancy; but Eutychia, her mother, took care to educate her properly, and to instruct her well in the doctrines of our holy faith. When our saint arrived at a proper age, her mother began to think of giving her in marriage, but Lucy, who had consecrated her virginity to Jesus Christ, awaited only a favorable opportunity to reveal her resolution to her mother.

This opportunity soon presented itself. Eutychia was afflicted for many years with a flux of blood, without being able to find any effectual remedy. St. Lucy, therefore, persuaded her to repair to the tomb of St. Agatha, martyred a half century before in Catania, where the Lord was pleased to work many miracles, and there to implore her cure. When they arrived at Catania, they prostrated themselves in prayer before the sepulchre of St. Agatha, where Lucy, perhaps from fatigue of the journey, was overpowered with sleep. The blessed martyr appeared to her, and as we read in the Roman Breviary, said: “Lucy! why dost thou demand through my intercession that which, by thy faith, thou canst thyself obtain for thy mother?” She then assured Lucy that God would work the desired cure, and that, for having preserved her virginity inviolate, God would reward her in Syracuse with the same glory she herself had received in Catania.

Lucy, animated by this vision, was the more confirmed in her resolution of remaining always consecrated to Jesus Christ, and told her mother to speak to her no more of marriage, but to distribute her fortune among the poor. Eutychia answered, that at her death she would bequeath all to her, and that she might do with it as she pleased; but Lucy replied, that gratitude for her miraculous cure ought to induce her willingly to deprive herself during life of that which, at her death, she should necessarily leave behind her.

The mother consented, and when they returned to Syracuse, they commenced to sell their property, and to distribute the proceeds among the poor. Lucy's suitor perceiving this, complained to Eutychia; but he found that his representations were totally ineffectual, and, in his rage, accused her before the governor, Paschasius, as being a Christian, contrary to the edicts of Diocletian and Maximian. The saint was accordingly arrested and brought before the governor, who endeavored to persuade her to sacrifice to the idols; but Lucy replied, that the sacrifice most agreeable to God was the relief of the poor, in which she was actually engaged and that she was prepared to sacrifice even her life.

Paschasius replied, that she ought to obey the emperor, as he did; but the saint answered: "Day and night I meditate upon the divine law; and if thou art anxious to please the emperor, I am anxious to please my God; therefore it is that I have consecrated to him my virginity." Paschasius in his rage told her that she was impurity itself. The saint replied: "No, thou art impurity, since thou dost endeavor to corrupt Christian souls, alienating them from God, to serve the devil,—wrongly preferring, as thou dost, the goods of this world to those of heaven." Paschasius: "Torments shall stop thy mouth." Lucy: "Words shall never be wanting to the servants of God, since the Lord hath promised that the Holy Ghost shall speak through them."[8743] Paschasius: "Then the Holy Ghost is within thee?" Lucy; "St. Paul hath said, that those who live chastely and piously are the temples of the Holy Ghost."[8744] "Since this is the case," said the tyrant, "I will cause thee to be brought to an infamous place, in order that the Holy Ghost may leave thee." The saint replied: "The body receiveth no stain when the will is averse to sin; on the contrary, the violence you meditate would double my crown."

The governor then threatened the most horrid tortures, in case she continued obstinate. The saint intrepidly exclaimed: "Behold my body ready to suffer every torture! why dost thou delay? Begin the execution of that to which the devil, thy father, prompts thee." Paschasius, maddened with rage, ordered that she should instantly be brought to the place of infamy, in order that she might first lose the honor of virginity, and then be deprived of life.

The guards endeavored to execute this command, but found that God had rendered her so immovable, that all their exertions were insufficient to drag her from the spot. Paschasius in astonishment exclaimed: “What incantation is this?” The saint replied: “This is not an incantation, but the power of God. Why dost thou fatigue thyself? Dost thou not manifestly perceive that I am the temple of the Lord?”

Paschasius, more confused and infuriated than ever, ordered a great fire to be kindled round the saint that she might be burned; but Lucy, nothing daunted, said to the tyrant: “I will pray to the Lord Jesus that the fire may not injure me, in order that the faithful may witness the divine power, and that the infidels may be confused. The friends of Paschasius, unwilling that the people should witness any further miracle, advised him to have her beheaded; but after having been tortured in many other ways, her throat was pierced with the point of a sword.[8745] The saint did not expire immediately; she threw herself on her knees, offered her death to God; and having foretold that peace would soon be restored to the Church, consummated her martyrdom, in the year 303 or 304. Her name is inserted in the Canon of the Mass.[8746]

Chapter XXIX

SS. THEODORUS AND NICHOLAS, ABBOTS OF STUDIUS.[8747]

November 12 and February 4.

ST. NICHOLAS was born in the city of Canea, in Candia, of noble and pious parents, who sent him to Constantinople for his education, and placed him under St. Theodorus, abbot of the monastery of Studius, from which the saint was called the “Studite.” St. Theodorus first placed him in the seminary where the youths were educated apart from the monks, but finding the progress which he made in virtue, he allowed him, while yet very young, to make his religious profession. Nicholas soon manifested that he had dedicated himself to God without reserve; he was obedient not only to the abbot, but to every individual of the community; and whatever time remained after the discharge of the duties which were imposed upon him, he spent in holy prayer. His example became so edifying, that the monks regarded him as a model of perfection, and besought St. Theodorus to promote him to the priesthood, which dignity he was induced to receive only by obedience.

At this time was raging the persecution of Leo the Armenian, who had deposed Michael I., and declared himself in favor of the Iconoclasts. Having attained the imperial dignity, he wished to bring over the bishops and principal abbots to his party. St. Theodorus having been called to the court for this purpose, resisted the impious attempts of Leo, and was in consequence banished. The charity of St. Nicholas induced him to follow the holy abbot into exile.

When they arrived at the Castle of Mesope, in Mysia, they were shut up in a dark dungeon; and, at the end of a year, were brought out to receive a hundred stripes; after which they were again sent to prison, with the intention of starving them to death, but were subsequently removed to the

Castle of Bonitus. An ambassador arrived there from the emperor, to ask them if they had written a letter, condemning his doctrine regarding holy images. Nicholas affirmed that he had written the letter, whereupon the ambassador caused him to be suspended in the air, together with Theodorus, and both to be cruelly scourged for a considerable time. Naked and bleeding as they were, he commanded that they should be exposed to the cold, which was at that time very severe, in the hope that they would thus expire. These expectations, however, not having been realized, the saints were again brought back to prison, where they suffered cold, hunger, and every other hardship, for the space of three years. After this, they were transferred to another prison in Smyrna, where they were again cruelly scourged, and afterwards chained by the feet to a post, for twenty months; during which time they were frequently put to the torture.

The saints, after having suffered seven years' persecution, were at last set at liberty, on the accession of Michael, surnamed the Stutterer, who, on Christmas eve, caused Leo the Armenian to be assassinated in the church, and took possession of his throne. When returning to Constantinople, they were everywhere received with great honors, and several miracles were wrought in their journey. They did not, however, remain a long time in the monastery of Studius, for Theodorus, after fruitless efforts to convert the new emperor, who continued the war against holy images, wished to retire to the peninsula of St. Tryphon, near Calcedonia, in order to lead an eremitical life; and Nicholas followed him. In this place the holy abbot finished his crown, giving up his beautiful soul to God, November 11, 826, at the age of sixty-eight.

Nicholas wished to remain, to live near the sepulchre of his holy master. But a new persecution having been raised by the Emperor Theophilus, who succeeded his father Michael, in the year 829, our saint was obliged to fly from this retreat, and to wander from place to place, until he was received by a pious lady, in one of her country houses, where he remained in the practice of piety, until, upon the death of Naucratius, Abbot of Studius, the monks unanimously elected him their Superior; his enemy, Theophilus, having died in the year 842. He governed the Community for three years, when his humility induced him to resign the office in favor of a holy priest called Sophronius, and to retire again to his solitude.

He enjoyed his retirement for four years only, when the Abbot Sophronius dying, the monks, by their tears and entreaties, compelled him to assume again the government of the monastery. But here he had to suffer new persecutions; for the Emperor Michael III. took for his associate in the empire, his uncle Bardas, a most scandalous man, whom St. Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople, had excommunicated for the horrid crime of incest, and was, in consequence, banished from his see, into which the impious Photius was intruded. Our saint, being unwilling to hold communion with this schismatic, retired to a house in the country, belonging to the monastery of Studius.

St. Nicholas having shown, by his departure, his disapproval of the emperor’s conduct in banishing St. Ignatius, received a visit in his retirement from the emperor, and Bardas, who wished to gain him over, in order to quiet the people. But the saint openly upbraided Bardas with his excesses, in such unmeasured terms, that the princes were exceedingly enraged, and forbade him to live in any house belonging to the monastery of Studius. He therefore retired to a little house in Constantinople, which had been given him for charity; but being here subject to the importunity of the emperor, he retired to the island of Chersonesus, where, after two years, he was discovered, arrested, and imprisoned in his own monastery. For two years more he remained here, bound hand and foot.

Basil having succeeded to the empire upon the death of Michael, banished the impious Photius, restored St. Ignatius to his see, and having set our saint at liberty, obliged him to assume, for the third time, the government of the monastery of Studius; where he ultimately died, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, in 868—a martyr, not indeed of blood, but certainly of suffering, constancy, and patience.

Chapter XXX

ST. EULALIA AND ST. JULIA, VIRGINS

December 10.

ST. EULALIA was born of a noble Spanish family at Merida, then the capital of Lusitania, toward the beginning of the fourth century, when the persecution of Diocletian and Maximian was raging most violently, that is to say, in 304.

Her parents were pious Christians, who took care to educate her in sentiments of piety; and they had the consolation of seeing her totally given to practices of virtue and inflamed with the love of Jesus Christ, to whom she consecrated her virginity at a very early age, and for whose honor she was anxious to suffer martyrdom. She therefore took the greatest pleasure in hearing of the victories, or reading the Acts of the martyrs.

St. Eulalia was only twelve years old when she heard the edicts of the emperors published in Merida; yet she began to prepare herself for the struggle. Her mother, perceiving her ardor, endeavored to mitigate it, by representing to her the horrible tortures to which the confessors of the faith were exposed, but this only inflamed the holy enthusiasm of Eulalia still more. Calpurnianus; having arrived at Merida to execute the imperial mandates, her mother brought her to a country house, and watched her very closely.

The saint, inspired by God, spoke to a young lady named Julia, who had been given her as a companion, and persuaded her to escape with her to the city, in search of martyrdom.[8748] This they effected in the night, travelling without a light or a guide. The impatient zeal of Eulalia caused her to walk so quickly, that Julia, being unable to keep pace with her, at length exclaimed: “Walk as fast as thou canst—I have a presentiment that I shall receive the crown of martyrdom before thee.”

The two young heroines, travelling by night over an unknown country, injured their feet very much; they arrived, however, at the city in the morning, and presented themselves to Calpurnianus, whom Eulalia upbraided with the impiety of doing honor to the devil, by worshipping statues of wood and stone. The prefect, surprised to hear a young girl speak so, asked her who she was, and why she spoke with such boldness. The saint replied: “I am a Christian, and the God whom I adore inspires me with a horror of thy impiety.” The prefect said: “But knowest thou, child, to whom thou speakest?” She answered: “I am aware that I speak with the governor, and therefore it is that I call it an impiety to oblige Christians to sacrifice to false gods.” Calpurnianus endeavored to gain her over, first by promises, and afterwards by threats; but the saint continued to proclaim herself a Christian, and that she was most anxious to lay down her life for Jesus Christ. Cardinal Orsi[8749] and Fleury[8750] add, that she spat in the face of the judge, threw down the idols, and trampled upon the flour which had been provided for an offering.

The judge thereupon commanded the executioners to torture her. They lacerated her entire body with scourges armed with lead, poured boiling oil over her wounds, and applied burning torches to her sides and breasts; she, however, bore all this without uttering a word, except to bless the Lord, and return him thanks. The tyrant, enraged at the constancy of the young virgin, ordered that her flesh should be torn off with iron hooks until the bones should be laid bare. The saint, then, with uplifted eyes, exclaimed: “Behold, my Saviour, these wounds make me believe that I am destined to be thy spouse;—do thou, of thy mercy, render me worthy to be so.” Finally, the tyrant, perceiving that nothing could weaken her constancy, determined to burn her alive.

The executioners therefore kindled a great fire around her, and the flames catching her hair she was quickly smothered. This circumstance is described in verse by Prudentius,[8751] who lived toward the end of the century in which she suffered. She consummated her sacrifice on the 10th December.

Prudentius also relates, and Fleury also adds his testimony, that, when the holy martyr expired, the bystanders saw a dove, so resplendent that it dazzled the beholders, proceeding from her mouth, and winging its flight to heaven.

A great snow fell, and covered the saint’s body, which gave the Christians an opportunity of burying it near the place of her martyrdom. When peace had been restored to the Church under Constantine, a magnificent church was raised over her tomb, which the Lord glorified by many miracles. In the eighth century, that the body of the saint might be preserved from the profanations of the Saracens, it was translated to the cathedral of Oviedo, and placed in a rich chapel dedicated in her honor.

While St. Eulalia was undergoing her tortures, her companion, St. Julia, was arrested as a Christian, and condemned to be beheaded; and this was done immediately. Thus was her prediction verified, since she died before our young heroine had consummated her sacrifice.

Chapter XXXI

ST. POLLIO, LECTOR

April 28.

CARDINAL ORSI[8752] relates that in the city of Cibales,[8753] Pollio was presented to the governor, Probus, who asked him whether he was a Christian. Pollio answered that he was a Christian, and the chief of the Lectors. Probus asked: “Of what Lectors?” The saint replied: “Of those who read the Word of God to the people.” “Of those, perhaps,” added Probus, “who are in the habit of seducing silly women, persuading them to refrain from marriage, and to observe a foolish continency?” Pollio re-joined: “Those, indeed, are foolish who abandon their Creator, to follow thy superstitions; on the contrary, they are wise who, notwithstanding their tortures, persevere in the observance of the commandments.” Probus: “Of whose commandments speakest thou?” Pollio: “Of those that teach us to adore one only God, and not gods made of stone or wood: that teach sinners to be converted, and the virtuous to persevere—that teach virgins their exalted dignity, and married persons the observance of modesty—that teach subjects to obey, and legislators to command just things; finally, I speak of those commandments that teach us to aspire to eternal life, and to despise the death that thou canst inflict upon us.” Probus: “But what happiness can a man hope for, who, with life, has lost the enjoyment of light, and all the pleasures of the world?” The saint answered: “There is an eternal light incalculably better than this, which in a short time must, to us, be obscured forever! Happiness which never ends is, beyond comparison, preferable to that which shortly terminates; and is it prudent to prefer eternal enjoyments to those that quickly fail?”

Probus interrupted the saint’s discourse, saying: “What do these words avail? Do that which the emperor hath commanded—sacrifice to the gods.” Pollio replied: “Do thou that which hath been commanded thee: I will not sacrifice, for it is written: “He that sacrifices to devils, and not to God, shall be exterminated.’ ” Probus: “Then shalt thou be decapitated.” Pollio: “Execute thy orders: I am obliged to follow the doctrine which my fathers and bishops have taught me; I shall suffer with joy whatever thou mayest inflict.” Probus was so enraged, that instead of ordering his decapitation, he condemned him to be burned alive.

When the saint was led to the place of execution, he offered himself as a sacrifice to God, and blessed his holy name for making him die a martyr for his glory. He suffered courageously on the 27th or 28th of April, in the year 304.

Chapter XXXII

ST. APIAN AND ST. ÆDESIUS, BROTHERS

April *2* and 8.

ST. APIAN[8754] was born in Lycia, of rich and noble parents, who sent him to Berytus, to study the humanities; and, notwithstanding that the youths of that city were exceedingly corrupt, Apian preserved himself from contamination. Being eighteen years of age, he returned to his father's house; but finding that the family had continued idolaters, he retired to Cæsarea, in Palestine, where he was most hospitably received into the house of the celebrated Eusebius, who afterwards became bishop of that city. Under this great master he studied the Sacred Scriptures, and practised those austerities that prepared him for the glorious end which he made.

At this time, in the year 306, the Emperor Galerius Maximian was not only persecuting the Christians, but searching for them with the greatest scrutiny. He caused the families to be enrolled, and each individual to be summoned, that he might either sacrifice or be put to death. Apian prepared himself for this trial, and having understood that the governor was about to offer a solemn sacrifice to the gods, he went, on the appointed day, to the temple. Finding himself influenced by a special inspiration from Heaven, he passed the guards, approached the impious altar, and, while the governor was raising his hand to pour out a libation of wine before the idol, he seized his arm, and earnestly exhorted him to desist from the impiety of offending the true God by sacrificing to demons and images.

The soldiers rushed upon Apian, as though they would tear him to pieces; and, having beaten him most cruelly, brought him to prison, where they put him to the torture of the stocks for four-and-twenty hours. Upon the following day he was brought before the governor, who, having in vain sought to gain him over by promises and threats, ordered that his sides should be torn with iron hooks, until the bones and bowels should be laid bare. He was then buffeted upon the face until he became so deformed, that he could not be identified by those who had formerly known him. The tyrant, perceiving that these torments made no impression upon the saint, caused linen, steeped in oil, to be rolled round his legs, and then to be set on fire. It is easy to conceive that the saint suffered the most excruciating torture from the new infliction, yet he endured it with undiminished fortitude. The governor, after three days, finding him armed with the same constancy, ordered him to be thrown into the sea.

Eusebius,[8755] an eye-witness, relates that upon the execution of this sentence, the city was shaken with an earthquake, and the sea became violently agitated, and cast the body back upon the shore before the gates of Cæsarea. St. Apian was not quite twenty-nine years of age at the time of his martyrdom, which took place in the year 306, on the 2d, or, as some will have it, on the 5th, of April.

St. Ædesius,[8756] who was the brother of St. Apian, not only according to the flesh, but equally so in faith and piety, also applied himself to the study of philosophy, which served to separate him still more from the world, and unite him to Jesus Christ. In this same persecution he frequently confessed his adorable name, and suffered long imprisonment and various punishments, which he endured with Christian fortitude. He was sent to labor in the mines of Palestine, from which he was subsequently released; but finally, one day, in Alexandria, perceiving a judge pronouncing cruel sentences against the Christians, and delivering over holy virgins to the lusts of abandoned young men, he went forward and spoke with such force against these acts of injustice, that, as Eusebius says, he covered the persecutors with confusion, and received from them the crown of martyrdom. Like his brother, he was horribly tortured, and afterwards cast into the sea.

Chapter XXXIII

ST. GORDIUS, CENTURION

January 3.

ST. GORDIUS, who was born in the third century, followed the military profession, and obtained the rank of centurion, or captain. St. Basil the Great, who wrote a homily in praise of this saint, relates that at the time of his martyrdom there was a great persecution of the Christians at Cæsarea; in the public squares idols of wood and stone were exposed, and those who refused to sacrifice to them were tortured and put to death. The consternation of the faithful was very great, for their houses were, with impunity, sacked by the idolaters, the prisons filled with Christians, and while the churches were deserted, the woods and mountains were peopled with the fugitives.

Hereupon St. Gordius renounced his profession, laid aside the military insignia, and retired to the desert, to unite himself to God by holy prayer and penitential practices. He casually heard that on a certain day public games were about to be celebrated at Cæsarea, in honor of Mars; he accordingly proceeded to the city, and beheld there a great concourse, not only of Gentiles, but of Christians, who, weak in faith, were not ashamed to assist in these festivities of the devil. The saint, inspired by the Holy Ghost, proceeded to glorify the Christian religion, and to reprobate that of the pagans, who adored, and sacrificed to false gods.

The Gentiles at this interruption of the games vociferated that the saint should be put to death for his temerity; they seized upon him, therefore, and led him to the governor, accusing him of all that he had said. The governor, knowing that he had retired to the mountains, asked him why he had fled, and afterwards returned. St. Gordius replied: “I have returned, because I am anxious to die for Jesus Christ; and knowing thee to be the most cruel of men, I thought that this afforded me the best opportunity of satisfying my desire."

The tyrant, hearing him speak thus, ordered the executioners to prepare their tortures. The saint, nothing daunted, fervently offered himself to Jesus Christ, and implored strength to suffer for his sake. Scourges, the rack, and fire were used to shake the constancy of the holy martyr, but he said: "Torture me as much as thou pleasest; the more excruciating my agony the greater my reward in heaven; for the wounds which now cover my body, I shall there be covered with a garment of glory; and by the pains which now afflict me, I shall earn everlasting joy."

The governor, perceiving that he could not cause him to prevaricate by tortures, endeavored to gain him over by promises of riches and honors; but the saint answered: Thou art deceived if thou thinkest that I will barter the joys of heaven for the miserable advantages this world can afford." Finally, the judge perceiving that promises were as ineffectual as threats, pronounced upon him sentence of death.

While the saint was proceeding to the place of execution, his friends exhorted him to yield, for the present, to the wishes of the governor, and not perish thus miserably in his youth. The saint replied: "Weep not for me, but for those who persecute the faithful, since for them eternal fire is prepared; for my part, I am prepared to die, not once, but a thousand times, for Jesus Christ." They urged that, to avoid death, he might deny Jesus Christ with his tongue, though he continued to adore him in his heart. The saint said: "Far be it from me to deny my God with that tongue which he himself hath given me."

He then armed himself with the sign of the cross, and went boldly to encounter death, which, according to St Basil and the Menologies of the Greeks, was that of fire, in which he gloriously consummated his martyrdom.[8757]

Chapter XXXIV

ST. CHRYSOGONUS, PRIEST, AND ST. ANASTASIA, WIDOW

November 24 and December 25.

ST. CHRYSOGONUS, who is mentioned in the Canon of the Mass, was a Roman priest; there are no Acts of this saint's martyrdom, and that which we know of is derived from the Acts of St. Anastasia, who is also mentioned in the Canon of the Mass, and is commemorated by the Church on the 25th of December. From these Acts we discover that St. Chrysogonus, during the persecution of Diocletian, was giving most exemplary proofs of his piety at Rome. He passed his nights in the subterraneous oratories, and by day visited the houses of the Christians, to strengthen them in the faith, while he also effected many conversions among the Gentiles.

Most remarkable among the children of his ministry was Anastasia, a Roman lady of noble descent. Her father, Prætextatus, was an opulent and noble pagan; but her mother, who was a Christian, caused her to be baptized in her infancy, and secretly reared her in sentiments of Christian piety, in which she made great progress.

The active zeal of St. Chrysogonus in assisting the Christians, quickly discovered him to the persecutors; he was accused before the prefect at Rome as being the greatest enemy of the gods and of the imperial edicts; he was accordingly sent to a prison, which he found full of Christians. St. Anastasia, inflamed with the love of God, occupied her time in consoling and succoring the Christians, particularly those who were in prison, whom she exhorted to suffer for the faith. Having heard of the arrest of St. Chrysogonus, she hurried to his prison, and esteemed herself fortunate in having it in her power to be of service to him in this trial. St. Chrysogonus had been in prison for a year, during which he ceased not to instruct and animate those of his fellow-prisoners who were Christians, and he had also the consolation of converting many pagans to the faith. In this St. Anastasia rendered him much assistance, by reason of her extraordinary works of charity, which afforded the greatest edification.

We must here observe, that St. Anastasia had been married to a noble Roman, named Publius, who was a pagan; he loved his wife much, but having discovered her acts of piety, and that she was a Christian, from a loving husband he became a cruel tyrant, confined her to the house, and treated her like a slave. The saint, instead of being mortified at this maltreatment, was rejoiced, as she considered that she suffered for the love of Jesus Christ; but she was afflicted at seeing herself prevented from assisting the confessors of the faith, and accordingly wrote to St. Chrysogonus, requesting him to pray to God that he would either convert her husband, or take him out of the world in case he was determined to remain obstinate. St. Chrysogonus, in answer, exhorted her to be patient, and gave her an assurance that God would shortly console her.

This letter animated the saint with new courage to suffer the increased cruelty of her husband, who doubled the hardships of her confinement, and allowed her so scanty a portion of food, that she thought she could not long survive. She therefore wrote again to her holy director, imploring him to offer frequent prayers to the Almighty in her behalf, that she might die in the grace of God. The saint replied, that Jesus Christ permitted these things, because he loved her, and that she should prepare herself to endure still greater sufferings for his glory. So in fact it happened; for Publius, her cruel husband, having been appointed by the emperor ambassador to the King of Persia, gave orders to his domestics that they should so maltreat his wife during his absence that there would be no fear of her being alive upon his return. God, however, ordained it otherwise, for Publius met with an untimely death upon his journey; while the saint, having regained her liberty and her property, resumed her pious labors in behalf of the prisoners of Jesus Christ.

Meanwhile, St. Chrysogonus had remained two years in prison, during which time he ceased not to attend to the spiritual wants of his brethren, and to make new conversions among the pagan prisoners; of which Diocletian being informed, he commanded that the saint should be brought before him, at Aquileja, where he then was. The tyrant used all his endeavors to pervert the holy priest, and offered him even the prefecture of Rome as the reward of his apostasy; but the saint replied, that he knew of no honor so great as that of serving the true God; that he found no pleasure in life, except that of sacrificing it to Jesus Christ; and finally, that the religion of the empire was only a compound of fables, which, instead of being entitled to veneration, deserved only to be despised. Diocletian, infuriated at these words, ordered that his head should be instantly struck off, which was accordingly done, on the 24th November, in the year 303.

On this day his festival is celebrated by almost all the Western Churches. The saint’s body was thrown into the sea after his martyrdom, but was found two days afterwards on the shore, by a holy priest named Zoilus, who piously buried it in his house; and who, after thirty days, received an assurance from the martyr in a vision, that his charity would be soon rewarded. From the fifth century there was a church in Rome dedicated to this saint; it was rebuilt in 740, by Pope Gregory III., and at present gives title to a Cardinal.

Now come we to relate the martyrdom of St. Anastasia. After the death of St. Chrysogonus, the emperor ordered that all the confessors who were in prisons at Rome should be brought to Aquileja. Thither, therefore, repaired Anastasia to exercise her charity; but, being informed that many were about to be sent to Macedonia, together with Agapia, Chionia, and Irene,[8758] who had already been sentenced, she resolved to accompany them, and to afford them whatever assistance she could, by bribing the guards to obtain admission, as she had done on former occasions. Having privately sold all that she possessed, she had ample means to succor the sufferers for the faith. She proceeded one day to the prison upon her errand of charity, and having found that all the holy confessors had been butchered by order of the emperor, she wept bitterly. Some of the officers of the court being present, asked her the cause of her tears. “I weep, replied the saint, “because I have lost my brethren, who have been cruelly put to death.” She was hereupon arrested, and brought before Florus, prefect of Illyricum.

The prefect understanding that she was the widow of Publius, a favorite of the emperor, who had died on his journey to Persia, spoke to her in a very respectful manner, and labored much to induce her to abandon her faith; but perceiving by her answers that he was only losing his time, he sent her to the emperor.

Diocletian’s avarice induced him to ask her, first of all, what she had done with her riches; and the saint answered, that she had distributed them among the poor and the Christians, who were so unjustly persecuted. The emperor, although irritated at the declaration, continued to exhort her in respectful language to abandon a religion which was proscribed throughout the empire; but finding her constancy still the same, he sent her back to Florus.

The latter gave her over to Upian, the pontiff of the capitol, in the hope that he would induce her to sacrifice to the gods. Upian having used all his arts of persuasion in vain, said to her: “Now I shall give thee but three days to determine.” Anastasia replied: “They are three too many; thou mayest imagine them already past. I am a Christian, and am anxious to die for Jesus Christ. From me thou shalt never get any other answer.” Upian then employed the assistance of three idolatrous women; but this having proved also ineffectual, he made a second attempt himself, in which he had the effrontery to be guilty of some immodest action. This was instantly punished by the Almighty; for he was struck blind upon the spot, and seized by convulsions that within an hour terminated his life.

Florus, enraged at the death of Upian, caused the saint to be shut up in prison, with the intention of starving her; but the Lord having miraculously preserved her life, the prefect believed that the jailer had transgressed his orders, and therefore caused her to be removed to another prison, where also she still continued to live without food. The prefect having some unwillingness to shed her blood, ordered her to be put on board a ship, which was bored, together with one hundred and twenty idolaters who had been condemned to that death. The ship soon filled with water, but instead of sinking went ashore; and the miracle worked the conversion of all these persons, who afterwards had the glory of suffering martyrdom for Jesus Christ. St. Anastasia was then conducted to the island of Palmarola, under sentence of death; she consummated her triumph in the flames.

A Christian lady obtained her body, and gave it honorable burial near Zara, in Dalmatia; but about the year 460, under the Emperor Leo, her relics were translated to Constantinople, and placed, as Cardinal Orsi writes,[8759] in the celebrated church of the Resurrection,[8760] called *The Anastasia*.[8761] This church was used by St. Gregory Nazianzen as a cathedral, and was afterwards burned during the episcopate of St. John Chrysostom. The feast of St. Anastasia is celebrated on the 25th of December, Christmas Day.

Chapter XXXV

ST. FRUCTUOSUS, BISHOP OF TARRAGONA, AND HIS TWO DEACONS, ST. AUGURIUS AND ST. EULOGIUS

January 21.

THE Acts of these martyrs, as found in Ruinart, relate that in the year 259, under the Emperors Valerian and Gallien, the Bishop Fructuosus, Bishop of Tarragona, in Spain, with his two deacons, Augurius and Eulogius, were apprehended by order of Emilian, the governor of the province.

The holy prelate had retired to his room when the soldiers came to arrest him. On hearing the noise he opened the door; and being informed that the governor had summoned him and his two deacons, he said: “We are ready; but if you permit me, I will put on my shoes.” This done, the three confessors were led to prison.

After six days’ imprisonment they were brought before the governor, who, turning to Fructuosus, said: “Hast thou heard that which the emperors have commanded?” The saint replied: “I know it not; but this I know, that I am a Christian.” Emilian: “They have commanded that the gods be honored.” Fructuosus: “For my part. I adore only one God, who hath made heaven and earth.” Emilian: “Art thou not aware of the existence of the gods?” Fructuosus: “I am not.” Emilian: “Shortly thou shalt be. To what will men render homage, if they adore not the gods and the images of the emperors?” Then turning to Augurius, the deacon, he said: “Give no ear to the words of Fructuosus.” Augurius replied: “I adore one omnipotent God.” The governor then turned to Eulogius and said: “Perhaps thou also adorest Fructuosus?” The deacon replied: “No; I adore him not; but I adore the same God whom he worships.” The governor, then turning to Fructuosus, asked him: “Art thou the bishop?” The saint replied: “Yes, I am.” Emilian said: “Thou shouldst have rather said, ‘I have been,’ for thou shalt be so no longer. I condemn ye all three to the flames.”

Whilst St. Fructuosus and his deacons were being led to the amphitheatre to undergo their sentence, the people, moved to compassion for the venerable bishop, who was beloved not only by the faithful, but even by the idolaters, presented him a cup, requesting him to drink and be strengthened; but he refused, saying, that it was not yet the hour for breaking the fast.[8762] When they arrived at the amphitheatre, the saint appeared filled with a tranquil joy; his lector, Augustalis, came to him weeping, and begged he would permit him to take off his shoes. “No, my son,” replied the holy bishop, “allow me to take them off myself; for the certainty which I have of the divine promises gives me sufficient strength.” Having taken off his shoes, one of the faithful took him by the hand, and desired he would remember him in his prayers. The saint replied: “I am bound to pray for the whole Catholic Church, from east to west.” By these words, as St. Augustine observes,[8763] he wished to signify that each one of the faithful becomes a participator in all the prayers of the Church.

When he was about to receive the crown of martyrdom he raised his voice, as the Acts relate, and said to the Christians: “Be not afraid; you shall not be left without a pastor, for the love and the promises of the Lord never fail. That which you see me now about to suffer, is the pain only of an hour.” Having said these words, he was, together with his companions, encircled with fire; but the Lord so disposed it, that the flames consumed only the bands with which their hands were tied; wherefore, being at liberty to stretch forth their arms, they prostrated themselves in prayer, and raising their hands to Heaven, besought the Almighty to allow the fire to consume them, that their sacrifice might be completed. The Lord vouchsafed to hear their prayers, and, placidly expiring, they went to receive the reward of their martyrdom.

After their death, God was pleased to glorify his servants, by manifesting their triumph to two Christians, Babylas and Mygdone, who were domestics of the governor. These saw the heavens open, and St. Fructuosus between his two deacons, surrounded with a halo of glory, and ascending to receive their crowns. They called Emilianus to witness the ascent into heaven of those whom he had that day condemned; but he was unworthy a heavenly vision.

The faithful, who were exceedingly afflicted at the death of their pastor, came in the night to the amphitheatre, extinguished the smouldering remains of the fire, and were carrying away the bones of the martyrs; but the holy bishop appeared to them, and commanded that all the relics should be buried together.

The Acts of these martyrs terminate with the following devout aspiration: “O blessed martyrs! like gold, they have been tried in the furnace, and found worthy a crown of everlasting glory: to this crown their example invites us also!” St. Augustine, in a sermon delivered on the anniversary of these martyrs, observes that, from the fact that they have attained to such glory, although being men of the same condition that we are, we should hope to overcome all the obstacles to our salvation, through the grace of Jesus Christ, who can render that easy, which our weakness looks upon as insuperable.[8764]

Chapter XXXVI

ST. IRENÆUS, BISHOP OF SIRMIUM

March 25.

IT is believed that St. Irenæus was born in the city of which he was afterwards bishop; and, although it is probable that his parents were pagans, he professed the faith of Jesus Christ from his childhood. He married at an early age, and had many children, whom he left young behind him at the time of his martyrdom. This saint gave such extraordinary examples of virtue, that he deserved to be made Bishop[8765] of Sirmium while yet a young man; and from the time he received that charge, he ceased not to combat the enemies of the faith, and to defend his flock from their artifices, until he terminated a brilliant career in the glory of martyrdom.

The edicts of the Emperor Diocletian against the Christians were published in Sirmium in the year 304, and Probus, the governor of Lower Pannonia, was most indefatigable in putting them into execution. The ecclesiastics, and particularly the bishops, were the first objects of his unholy zeal; for he thought that by striking the pastors he could the more easily disperse the flock of Jesus Christ.

Irenæus was accordingly arrested, and brought before Probus, who said to him: “Obey the imperial edicts, and sacrifice to the gods.” The saint replied: “The Scripture saith that whosoever sacrifices to false gods shall be exterminated.”[8766] Probus: “The princes have commanded that all Christians shall sacrifice to the gods, or shall be tortured.” Irenæus: “But I have been commanded to suffer all tortures rather than deny my God, and sacrifice to demons.” Probus: “Either sacrifice, or I will put thee to the torture.” Irenæus: “In doing so, thou shalt please me; for thus shall I be made a participator of the Passion of my Saviour.”

Hereupon the governor commanded that he should be tortured; and, seeing that he suffered much, said: “What dost thou now say, Irenæus? Wilt thou now sacrifice?” The saint replied: “I sacrifice, by my confession, to my God, to whom I have always sacrificed.”

During the torments of St. Irenæus, his father, his wife and children, his domestics and friends, came to implore of him to obey the emperors. His children embraced his feet, crying out: “Father, if thou hast no pity for thyself, have pity, at least, on us.” The wife, with many tears, besought him not to leave her disconsolate; while his friends exhorted him not to throw away his life in his youth. But the saint, like an immovable rock upon which the waves lose their strength, armed himself against their assaults with the words of the Saviour: *But he that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven.*[8767] To their importunities he returned not a single word of reply, but sighed only for the consummation of his martyrdom. Probus then said to him: “Irenæus, abandon this thy folly; sacrifice to the gods, and destroy not thyself in the prime of life.” The saint answered: “It is that I may not destroy myself for all eternity, that I refuse to sacrifice.” He was then taken down and sent to prison, where he had to endure various tortures for several days.

After some time, Probus, seated upon his tribunal, ordered that the holy bishop should be again brought before him, and, upon his appearance, said: “Irenæus, now at length sacrifice, and free thyself from the torments which otherwise await thee.” The saint replied: “Do that which thou art commanded to do, and do not at all imagine that I am likely to obey thee.” Probus, enraged at this answer, caused him to be scourged in his presence, during which infliction the saint said: “From my childhood I have adored the one only God, who has always assisted and comforted me, and I cannot adore gods made by the hands of men.” Probus: “Let the torments which thou hast already suffered suffice thee; free thyself from death.” Irenæus: “I do free myself from death, when, by the pains which I suffer, I gain eternal life.”

The governor then asked him, whether he had a wife, children, or parents alive; but Irenæus answered that he had not, adding: “I say I have not, because Jesus Christ hath declared that whosoever loveth father or mother, wife or children, more than Him, is not worthy of Him.”[8768] Probus: “Sacrifice at least for thy children’s sake.” Irenæus: “My children have God to provide for them.” Probus: “Do not oblige me to put thee again to the torture.” Irenæus: “Do thy pleasure; but thou shalt see what constancy my Lord Jesus Christ will give me to overcome all thy arts.”

Probus then ordered Irenæus to be cast into the river; but the saint, hearing the sentence, exclaimed: “I thought, that, after so many threats, thou wouldst have caused me to suffer many tortures, and to be cut to pieces; I beseech thee to do so, that thou mayest perceive how Christians, who have faith in God, despise death.”

Probus, enraged at these words, ordered that the saint should be beheaded, and then cast into the river. The holy bishop, perceiving that his end was approaching, returned thanks to Jesus Christ for having given him the necessary fortitude, and for calling him, by such a death, to the participation of his glory. When he arrived at the bridge of Diana, which was the place selected for the execution, he threw off his garments, and prayed thus: “O Lord Jesus Christ! who didst vouchsafe to die for the salvation of the world, I beseech Thee that Thy angels may receive my soul; since I most willingly suffer death for the honor of Thy name, and the edification of Thy Church. Receive me into Thy glory for Thy mercy’s sake, and strengthen my flock in Thy holy faith.” His head was then struck off, and his body thrown into the river Save.

Chapter XXXVII

SS. CECILIA, VIRGIN; VALERIAN, HER HUSBAND; TIBURTIUS, HER BROTHER-IN-LAW; AND MAXIMUS, OFFICER

November 22 and April 14.

ST. CECILIA, virgin and martyr, has always been most celebrated in the Church of God; even from the fourth century a church has been dedicated to her honor in Rome; and honorable mention is made of her, not only in all the martyrologies, but even in the Canon of the Mass. In the eighth century there was a report that Astulphus, King of the Longobards, had carried off the body of our saint from Rome; but she appeared, in a vision, to Pope Paschal I., assured him that the report was false, and encouraged him to seek her relics. The holy pontiff found them, in the cemetery of Prætextatus, on the Appian road; and, having rebuilt her church, placed them there in the year 821. After a lapse of nearly eight centuries, when the place in which the saint's body had been deposited was forgotten, it was again discovered, in 1599,[8769] in a case of cypress-wood, within a marble sarcophagus, together with some linen cloths, steeped in her blood. The celebrated Cardinal Baronius witnessed this second discovery; and Pope Clement VIII. placed the case, containing her body, in another very precious one of silver, where it still remains.

As regards the history of St. Cecilia, we must observe that some writers doubt the authenticity of her original Acts; but, as they have been generally received, in both the Greek and Latin Churches, for fourteen centuries, we shall make use of them in the present narration.[8770] According to the most generally received opinion, our saint was born at Rome about the beginning of the third century, and was descended of a most ancient Roman family. She professed the Christian faith from her childhood, although it is uncertain whether her parents were Christians or idolaters. By reason of her extraordinary natural endowments, she was sued for by the most opulent and noble of the Roman youth, but invariably declined their offers, as she had dedicated herself entirely to Jesus Christ, and resolved that He only should be her spouse. It is said of her, that she took great delight in playing upon musical instruments, accompanying herself upon which, she used to sing the praises of the Lord. Her Acts also relate that she continually carried about with her a copy of the holy Gospels, in order that she might follow the blessed maxims and counsels therein contained; and her life was accordingly spent in holy prayer, and the mortification of the senses.

In the mean time, her parents determined to give her in marriage to a noble youth, named Valerian. Cecilia, however, lost not her courage; but, during the three days that immediately preceded her marriage, she observed a rigorous fast, and put on a rough sackcloth, which she never afterwards took off. To these penitential practices she added continual prayer, beseeching the Lord Jesus Christ, that he would not permit her to lose that virginity which she had already consecrated to him. She was heard. The Lord consoled her through her angel guardian, who, appearing visibly to her, told her that he would assist her, and that Valerian, although destined to be her spouse, should not offend her. With this assurance she consented to the marriage.

Upon the night following the celebration of this ceremony, St. Cecilia said to Valerian: “Know, Valerian, that I am a Christian. From my infancy I have been consecrated to God, by dedicating to him my virginity; and he has appointed an angel from heaven to protect me from every insult. At thy peril, therefore, do not anything to me, by which thou mayest excite the wrath of the Lord.” Upon hearing this, Valerian was afraid to touch her, and said that he also would believe in Jesus Christ, if he were allowed to see the angel. Cecilia overjoyed at this announcement, told him that he could not expect such a favor without being baptized. Valerian, inflamed with the desire of seeing the angel, said he was willing to comply with this condition. Hereupon Cecilia directed him to St. Urban, who, by reason of the persecution, was concealed in the catacombs; and Valerian, having received the necessary instruction, was baptized by that holy Pope.

On his return home he found St. Cecilia in prayer, and accompanied by the angel, surrounded with rays of heavenly splendor. As soon as he recovered from the vision, he determined to use all his energies in order to induce his brother, Tiburtius, whom he tenderly loved, to embrace the Christian faith. To this end he related what had happened to himself; and Cecilia, who was present at their conversation, undertook to demonstrate to Tiburtius the truth of the Christian religion, and to show that the superstitions of the pagans were a collection of fables and falsehoods, invented by the devil for the perdition of souls. While she spoke, the grace of God touched the heart of Tiburtius, and he also was instructed and baptized by St. Urban.

The two brothers being thus happily made followers of Jesus Christ, employed themselves in relieving the poor, consoling the confessors of the faith, and burying the bodies of the martyrs. Almachius, prefect of Rome, and mortal enemy of the Christians, being informed of this, summoned them to his presence, and rebuked them for thus identifying themselves with the Christians; but they answered that, having been illuminated by God, they were led to know the vanity and deceit of all worldly things, and that it was madness to prefer the transitory goods of this life to the inamissible joys of heaven. The prefect asked: “Who has taught ye this folly?” They answered: “It is folly, sir, to worship a statue of stone or of wood, instead of the true God, and to prefer a life that lasts but a few days, to an eternal beatitude. Heretofore we also have partaken of this folly, but henceforth we are resolved to be wiser. And thou, Almachius, shouldst thou continue to worship false gods, shalt bewail thy folly after death, when there shall be no remedy for thy eternal ruin.”

Almachius, enraged at this admonition, caused the brothers to be scourged so cruelly that they were very near expiring under the infliction; yet these young Christians ceased not their thanksgiving to Jesus Christ for having made them worthy to shed their blood for his sake. The prefect then decreed that they should be brought to the temple of Jove to sacrifice, commanding at the same time that they should be put to death in case of refusal. The execution of these orders was entrusted to an officer named Maximus.

The latter, seeing the joy with which the martyrs anticipated death, inquired the reason of their rejoicings. Tiburtius answered: “How is it possible that we would not rejoice, finding that we are about to pass from this miserable life to one of ineffable and never-ending felicity?” Maximus: “There is, then, another life after the present?” Tiburtius: “Most undoubtedly. Our souls are immortal; and after this life, which, although short, is so full of tribulation, there is another life prepared by God for those who serve him faithfully.” Maximus, moved by these words, but more so by the grace of God, said: “If things stand thus, I also will be a Christian.”

The execution of the sentence pronounced against the two saints was thus deferred to the following day; and Maximus was instructed and received baptism that same night, in the presence of St. Cecilia, who spoke most encouragingly of the glory of martyrdom. On the day following the two brothers were beheaded; and Maximus saw their souls, like two bright stars, surrounded by angels, entering into heaven; whereupon, weeping with joy, he exclaimed: “O ye blessed servants of the true God! Who can comprehend your glory as I see it? As I also am a Christian, why can I not enjoy the same blessed lot?” Almachius having heard that his officer had been converted, and that his conversion had been followed by that of many others, ordered him to be beaten with rods. This order was so cruelly executed, that the saint expired during the infliction. The relics of the two martyred brothers were first buried in a place lour miles distant from Rome, but were translated to the church of St. Cecilia, in the year 821, by Pope Paschal I.

St. Valerian and St. Tiburtius had left all their property to St. Cecilia, who, foreseeing that her death was not far distant, sold all, and distributed the proceeds among the poor. Almachius discovered that she was a Christian, and had her arrested. Those who were leading her to prison wept to see a young lady of noble birth and extraordinary beauty about to be condemned to death, and besought her to abjure Jesus Christ; but she on the other hand, weeping over their blindness, said: “Ye speak thus because you are ignorant of the happiness of dying for Jesus Christ. Know, then, that I desire nothing more ardently.” Filled with holy zeal, she showed to the crowd of pagans that surrounded her how happy is the lot of those who believe in the true God, and forego all worldly felicity in the hope of an eternal recompense. Having spoken for some time, she asked them if they believed what she said; and they answered: “Yes, we believe, and wish to become Christians.” This discourse was followed by the conversion of four hundred persons, who were baptized by St. Urban, and the greater part of whom laid down their lives for Jesus Christ.

The glorious conquest of the souls which she had made filled our saint with holy jubilee as she proceeded to prison. Upon being brought before Almachius, he was so enraptured with her beauty and her eloquence that he found himself inclined to dismiss her without any further punishment; but being informed that great numbers had been converted through her means, he endeavored to frighten her by threats of death, in case she refused to obey the edicts. St. Cecilia replied: “You, indeed, condemn us to death; but, instead of the wretched existence which we thus lose, our God gives us an everlasting life of happiness. How, then, can you wonder that Christians have so little fear of death? You adore a statue of stone formed by a sculptor’s chisel, or an image made from a block that has grown in the forest. These are your gods! But the Christians, on the contrary, adore one only God, the Creator of all things; and for so doing you condemn them to die! And why? Because, forsooth, they will not commit acts of impiety!” Almachius became infuriated at these words, and told her she should obey the emperor; the saint replied that she considered the obligation of obeying God much more stringent. The governor then remanded her to prison.

Fearing that the public execution of such a person might cause a sedition, he ordered that she should be shut up in an oven and suffocated. This, however, not having produced the desired effect, an executioner was sent to cut off her head. The law, in such case, permitted only three strokes; these the executioner gave with all his might, but, failing in his attempt, left her still alive, although weltering in her blood. She prayed to the Lord that she might survive for three days, in order to strengthen in the faith those whom she had converted; and during the entire of this period the house[8771] was filled with these zealous neophytes, who became thoroughly confirmed in their religion by the exhortations of St. Cecilia. At the expiration of the three days she placidly rendered her soul to God, and went to receive the reward of so many heroic actions, on the 22d November, in the year 232.

St. Urban, who assisted at her death, had her body buried in the cemetery of Calixtus, and formed her house into a church, which he dedicated.

Chapter XXXVIII

ST. AGNES, VIRGIN

January 21.

THE name of St. Agnes has obtained universal celebrity. St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Maximus, Prudentius, and other illustrious writers[8772] have been her panegyrists, and she is also mentioned in the canon of the Mass.

She is said to have been descended of very noble and pious parents, and to have been but twelve or thirteen years of age at the time of her martyrdom. Her extraordinary beauty caused her to be desired by many as their future spouse, but her principal suitor was Procopius, son of Symphronius, governor of Rome, who sent her a rich present, signifying that he was most anxious to be her husband. But the saint, who had dedicated her virginity and all her affections to Jesus Christ, answered him that she had been promised to another spouse. Procopius, nothing discouraged by this answer, continued his ineffectual importunities, until at last the saint, wishing to free herself forever from his unwelcome attentions, said to him: “Begone from me, thou food for death! I am already engaged to another and a far better spouse. He is the King of Heaven, to whom I have consecrated my entire being.

Procopius not knowing what to do, employed the assistance of his father Symphronius, whose authority, he thought, might induce Agnes to comply. The governor accordingly summoned her to his presence, and told her he could not conceive why she should refuse the hand of his son, as it was impossible for her to obtain a more advantageous match. The saint replied, that she had a divine spouse, who was far preferable to his son. The governor being unable to conceive what she meant by a “divine spouse,” one of the gentlemen in waiting said to him: “That young lady is a Christian, and the divine spouse to whom she refers is none other than the God of the Christians.” Hereupon the governor, changing his tone, told her that she should abandon that sect and its maxims altogether, or else not only lose the good fortune which now presented itself, but be exposed to infamy and the most cruel torments. He concluded by giving her four-and-twenty hours to consider whether, under these circumstances, she would obstinately continue to be a Christian. Agnes boldly replied that she required no time for deliberation, as she was already resolved to have no other spouse than Jesus Christ, and that neither torments nor death could frighten her, as she was most anxious to lay down her life for him.

The governor then thought to intimidate her by threatening to have her sent to an infamous place, to be there dishonored; but the saint replied: “My confidence is placed in Jesus Christ, my spouse, who is omnipotent—he will defend me from all outrage.” Enraged at this answer, Symphronius ordered her to be handcuffed, and dragged in chains before the idols, that she might offer incense; but on arriving at the place, she made the sign of the cross, declaring that her Crucified Spouse alone should be adored. She was then led, by force, to a house of prostitution; but if any approached her with an immodest intent, he became so overawed as not to be able to look at the saint. Only one rash young man, whom some suppose to have been Procopius, attempted to offer her any violence; but as Cardinal Orsi[8773] here observes, the impure wretch soon experienced the jealousy with which the “Spouse of Virgins” defends them, for a flash of lightning struck him blind, and he fell as if dead upon the ground. While his companions were endeavoring to afford him some relief, and were already bewailing him as dead, the saint was requested to pray for him, and this she did; whereupon he instantly recovered, and again received his sight.

The governor, surprised at this miracle, was inclined to dismiss the holy virgin; but the idolatrous priests exclaimed that it was the effect of magic, and excited the people to demand that Agnes should be put to death as a witch. The governor, fearing a sedition if he should discharge her, and, on the other hand, being unwilling to put her to death, left the judgment of the case to his lieutenant, Aspasius, who being obliged to it by the populace, condemned her to be burned alive. The funeral pile was accordingly erected, the saint was placed upon it, and the fire enkindled; but the flames, respecting her person, divided themselves on either side, and consumed many of the idolaters who were assisting at the execution.

The priests and the people continued to cry out that it was the work of the devil, and obliged the lieutenant to send an executioner to behead her. The horror of such an execution caused even this minister of cruelty to turn pale, and, says St. Ambrose,[8774] he trembled to give the stroke: but the saint animated him, saying: “Haste thee to destroy this my body, which could give pleasure to others, to the offending of my divine Spouse. Fear not to give me that death which shall be to me the commencement of eternal life.” Having raised her eyes to heaven, and besought Jesus Christ to receive her soul, this tender virgin received the stroke of death, and went to receive from her Saviour the palm of her triumph.

As early as the time of Constantine the Great, a church was erected in honor of St. Agnes; and her festival is celebrated twice a year by the Church —on the 21 st January, in honor of her earthly triumph; and on the 28th of the same month, in commemoration of her heavenly reward.[8775]

Chapter XXXIX

SS. SIMEON, ARCHBISHOP OF SELEUCIA,[8776] USTHAZADES, AND PUSIKIUS, AND THEIR COMPANIONS

April 21.

ECCLESIASTICAL history informs us that the faith of Jesus Christ was preached in Persia by the apostles themselves; and the number of Christians in this kingdom was consequently very considerable during the reign of Sapor, which was about the middle of the fourth century.[8777] The Magians, or priests of the Persian religion, became alarmed at the spread of Christianity, and, together with the Jews, induced Sapor to persecute the faithful.

St. Simeon was, at that time, Archbishop of Seleucia, and his zealous solicitude for his flock caused him to be regarded as the principal defender of the Christian faith. In order to effect his ruin, his enemies represented to Sapor that he was in continual correspondence with the Roman emperor, to whom, they said, he revealed the most important concerns of the state. Sapor lent a willing ear to these calumnies, and regarding Simeon as his enemy, resolved not only upon his death, but upon the total extermination of the Christians in his dominions. He began by confiscating their property; and finding that they bore this with patience, he ordered that the clergy who would not abjure Jesus Christ should be beheaded, and that all Christian churches should be levelled with the ground.

The holy bishop was arrested and brought before the tyrant; but, lest it should be thought that he was about to ask pardon for having preached the Christian religion, he did not comply with the Persian custom of prostration, although he had frequently done so on former occasions. Sapor, enraged at this omission, asked him why he refused to render him the homage to which his rank entitled him. The saint answered: “When I, on former occasions, appeared in thy presence, I was not led to deny the true God, and therefore refused not to comply with the usual ceremonies; but now I cannot do so, as being called upon to defend my God and my religion." The king exhorted him to adore the sun, declaring that great riches and honors would be the reward of his obedience; while his own death, and the extermination of the Christians, should inevitably be the consequence of his non-compliance. The saint, having given the most decided refusal, was sent to prison in the hope that he would be thus induced to change his resolution.

While St. Simeon was being led to prison, an aged eunuch, named Usthazades, who was the lord chamber—lain, prostrated himself before him. But the holy prelate, despising this mark of veneration, and turning his face from the eunuch, reprimanded him, because that, being a Christian, he had adored the sun. The apostate wept bitterly at this rebuke, and throwing off his white robes, dressed himself in mourning. Thus clothed he sat at the palace gate, and, with many tears, frequently exclaimed: "Wretch that I am! If Simeon, my friend, treats me thus harshly for my fault, and turns away his face from me, what am I to expect from that God whom I have denied?"

Sapor, being informed of the affliction of the eunuch, sent for him, and inquired whether any calamity had befallen him. The other replied: "Ah! would to God that all calamities had befallen me, and not that which is the cause of my grief! I weep because I did not die long ago, but live to behold that sun, which, to please thee, I have adored. I deserve a double death—one for having betrayed Jesus Christ, and another for having deceived thee." He then protested, in the most solemn manner, that he would never, henceforward, deny his God. The king became infuriated at these words, and believing that the Christians had turned his head, swore that he would put them all to death; entertaining, however, some compassion for the poor old man, he did all he could to gain him over. Usthazades, notwithstanding, continued to protest that he never again would be so foolish as to give to creatures the honor due to the Creator; and Sapor, finding that his constancy was invincible, ordered him to be beheaded.

While he was being led to execution, he told another eunuch, his friend, to request of Sapor, that, in consideration of his past services, he would order him to be preceded by a crier, who would proclaim to the people that Usthazades had not been condemned for any crime, but merely for being a Christian, and having refused to abandon his God.[8778] Sapor the more willingly acceded to his wish, as he was anxious to terrify the Christians by showing them that he would not tolerate the profession of their religion, even in an old man who had served him so faithfully.

The king then turned his thoughts toward St. Simeon and again endeavored to gain him over; but seeing that all his arts were ineffectual, he commanded him to be beheaded. As a last resource, however, he ordered the heads of one hundred Christians to be first struck off in presence of the saint, who, far from being intimidated, exhorted the sufferers to constancy, by telling them how glorious was their lot in acquiring the rewards of eternal life by dying for their Saviour. After the martyrdom of these hundred Christians the holy bishop was beheaded on Good Friday, and thus united his death to that of Jesus Christ.

Together with the bishop were beheaded two venerable priests of his church, Ananias and Abdechalas. Pusicius, the prefect of the king’s workmen, seeing that Ananias, in preparing to receive the stroke, was trembling, exclaimed: “Father, shut thy eyes for one moment, and thou shalt instantly see the light of Christ.” These words proclaimed Pusicius to be a Christian; he was accordingly arrested and brought before the king, whom he upbraided with his cruelty towards the Christians. Sapor, enraged at his freedom of speech, caused him to be put to death in a strange and most cruel manner—his tongue was pulled out, not from his mouth, but through an incision made in his neck. His virgin daughter, who had consecrated herself to God, was also arrested and put to death.

All these holy martyrs died about the year 344. Their martyrdom is related by Sozomen,[8779] a contemporaneous author, who is cited by Ruinart.

Chapter XL

SS. LUCIUS, MONTANUS, FLAVIAN, AND THEIR COMPANIONS, DISCIPLES OF ST. CYPRIAN

February 24.

THE account of the martyrdom of these saints is extracted partly from a letter which they wrote, and partly from the testimony of an eye-witness; they suffered in Africa, in the year 158, in the persecution of the Emperor Valerian.

After the death of Galerius Maximus, Proconsul of Africa, the governor, who held the command until the appointment of his successor, gave an order for the arrest of Lucius, Montanus, Flavian, Julian, Victoricus, Primolus, Rhenus, and Donatian: they were all Christians and disciples of St. Cyprian, but Primolus and Donatian were as yet catechumens. The letter written by these martyrs is long; the following is an extract: “As soon as we were arrested, we were given in custody to the officers of the quarter, and thence led to prison, by the horror and stench of which we were not dismayed, but rather rejoiced, as though we had entered heaven; we were here visited by many of our Christian brethren, who by their discourse made us forget the privations we had suffered. We were then brought before the governor, who, without examining us, remanded us to prison, where we suffered much from hunger and thirst, since a cup of cold water was denied even to the sick; but the Lord failed not to console us with heavenly nourishment in this tribulation.”

The martyrs were detained in prison many months, during which two of them died—one shortly after his baptism, the other before he had received it, but after he had confessed Jesus Christ. In this persecution lay persons were not condemned to death; and when the martyrs were again brought before the governor, the relatives and friends of Flavian, in order to save his life, protested that he was not a deacon, as he had declared himself to be; he was therefore sent back to prison, but the others were condemned to die, and walked cheerfully to the place of execution. Lucius, being unwell, and fearing that he might be oppressed by the crowd, and so lose the honor of shedding his blood for Jesus Christ in company with the rest, requested to be led forward before the others. Some of the crowd said to him: “Lucius, remember us;” but he humbly replied: “Do you rather remember me.”

Montanus, just before his martyrdom, frequently repeated with a loud voice: “He that sacrificeth to any but the true God, shall be destroyed by the Lord.” He also exhorted the heretics to return to the Church, telling them that the many martyrs who had laid down their lives in testimony of her was a sufficient proof of the truth of her doctrines. He besought sinners to return to God by repentance, and exhorted all to constancy in the faith, and a strict observance of the divine commandments. Before receiving the stroke of death, he raised his hands to heaven, and prayed that Flavian might follow him after three days; and, as if certain of being heard, he tore the kerchief with which his eyes were to be bound in two parts, and desiring them to keep one half for Flavian, he terminated his martyrdom.

Meanwhile Flavian, in prison, lamented that he had been separated from those who had the happiness to lay down their lives for Jesus Christ; but he endeavored to console himself and his mother, who also grieved at this disappointment, by adverting to the necessity of conformity to the will of God. He felt great confidence in the prayer of Montanus, whose presentiment was fulfilled; for, on the third day, he was again summoned to the presence of the governor. Those who were conducting him said it was a folly to prefer death to life, and exhorted him to sacrifice to the gods; but he replied that, even if there were no obligation of worshipping the God who created us, nor rewards promised to our fidelity, it nevertheless would be unworthy human reason to adore gods of wood and stone. The governor asked him why he had said he was a deacon, when such was not the case. The saint answered, that he had confessed the truth; and the people, who wished to save him by this means, demanded that he should be tortured till he would confess the fact; the governor, however, condemned him to death.

While he was being led to the place of execution, there fell a great deal of rain, and the martyr was led into a house, where he had an opportunity to speak with the Christians who followed him. Having arrived at the scene of his martyrdom, he spoke to the faithful on the necessity of brotherly love, and having finished his discourse, he bound his eyes with that half of the kerchief which had been left him by Montanus, and kneeling down in prayer, received the stroke which consummated his martyrdom.

Chapter XLI

SS. EPIPODIUS AND ALEXANDER OF LYONS

April 22.

BOTH these saints were of noble family. Epipodius was a native of Lyons, and Alexander a Grecian by birth. From their first studies together in the same school, they contracted the strictest friendship, which was strengthened and increased by the mutual practice of those Christian virtues in which they had been reared by their parents. These two saints were in the flower of their age, and both unmarried, when the persecution of Marcus Aurelius was raging, particularly at Lyons, where the slaughter of the faithful was so great, that the pagans thought they had succeeded in extinguishing the Christian religion there.

Epipodius and Alexander were betrayed by a servant, and denounced as Christians to the governor, who ordered them to be arrested. Having heard of this order, they fled from the city, in compliance with the Gospel counsel, and having taken refuge in the cottage of a poor Christian widow, remained concealed there for some time. They were, however, discovered, and most unexpectedly arrested, and after three days brought before the governor, to whom they acknowledged that they were Christians. The pagans loudly demanded their death, whereupon the governor said: “Then the temerity of the Christians in despising the gods and the edicts of the emperor still continues. We have put to death numbers of these rash people, leaving their bodies unburied, and still there are found some to speak of Christ! What audacity is this of yours to profess a religion forbidden by the emperor? But you shall shortly pay the penalty.

He sent Alexander to prison, and commenced tampering with Epipodius, who, he thought, might be more easily perverted, as he was the younger of the two; he first spoke to him with kindness, saying: “It is a pity that thou, who art a young man, shouldst be anxious to perish, through perseverance in the religion of this false sect. We adore the gods, who are adored by all the people and their rulers, and the worship which we render them allows us to lead a life of pleasure. But ye, Christians, adore a crucified man, who loves to see his followers afflicted with penance, and debarred from every enjoyment. What benefits can he bestow on his followers, who could not save himself from the death to which the Jews condemned him? Abandon, my son, this sect, and enjoy the pleasures which are permitted to us."

Epipodius answered: "The pity which thou dost manifest in my regard is in reality a cruelty; since, to live as pagans live, is productive of eternal death; while, on the contrary, to die for Jesus Christ is the greatest of all blessings. Thou knowest that Christ hath died upon a cross, but knowest not that he hath risen again, being both God and man, and that he hath thus opened to his followers the gates of eternal life, to lead them thither from this short and miserable existence, that they may reign with him in heaven everlastingly. Thou understandest not the truth of the Christian faith, but mayest well understand that the pleasures of the body cannot satisfy souls that have been created by God for an immortality. We deny to our bodies the pleasures of this life to save the soul eternally. Thou believest that existence terminates with this life; while we, on the contrary, are assured that the termination of this present miserable existence is only the beginning of a happy state of being that knows no end."

The governor, although somewhat moved by this discourse, gave way to the impulse of anger, and ordered the executioners to strike the saint upon the mouth; but the saint, bleeding from the blows, courageously said: "I confess that Christ, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is the true and only God; and it is but reasonable that I should resign my soul to him who has created and redeemed me. I do not thereby lose my life, but change it for a better one. It matters little in what manner my body may be destroyed, so that my soul return to him that gave it."

The governor ordered him to be stretched upon the rack, and two executioners to tear his sides with iron hooks. The people tumultuously exclaimed that the saint should be delivered up to them, that they might stone him; and the governor, fearing that his authority might be set at nought by their seizing on the prisoner, ordered his head to be immediately struck off, and the holy youth thus hastened to the enjoyment of the crown.

Upon the death of St. Epipodius, the governor summoned his companion, Alexander, before him, and said: ‘It is yet in thy power to avoid the death to which others have been consigned. I imagine that thou art the only Christian remaining; if, therefore, thou art desirous to save thy life, thou must honor and sacrifice to our gods.” Alexander, encouraged by the martyrdom of his companion, answered: “I thank my God that the mention of the deaths of my brethren only confirms my desire of imitating their example. Dost thou imagine that their souls have died with their bodies? No; they have gone to the enjoyment of heaven. Thou art deceived, thinking that thou canst extinguish the Christian faith, which hath been so established by God, that it is propagated by the death of the faithful. Those whom thou believest to have killed are now in the enjoyment of heaven, which they shall continue to enjoy for all eternity; while, on the contrary, thou and the objects of thy adoration shall be cast into the fire of hell, to suffer for all eternity. I am a Christian, like my brother Epipodius, who is now reigning in heaven. Do therefore, to my body as it pleaseth thee; for my soul shall be received by that God who created it.”

The governor, infuriated at these words, ordered three executioners to scourge the saint most cruelly, while he, imploring the divine assistance, continued to suffer with fortitude. The governor, perceiving that this protracted butchery of the saint’s body made no impression upon his constancy, asked him if he would still continue obstinate. Alexander answered: “I shall never change my resolution, because it is in the keeping of a God who is omnipotent, unlike thy gods, who are devils.”

The governor said: “The Christians are so mad as to believe that they can acquire glory by sufferings. This man, therefore, shall be punished as he deserves.” He then ordered the saint to be crucified; but his body had been so lacerated, that his entrails were visible, and he was but a short time fastened to the cross when he consummated his martyrdom, and went to receive the reward of so much suffering.

The triumph of these two saints is believed to have taken place in the month of April, in the year 178. The Christians privately carried off their bodies, and buried them upon a little hill, which afterwards became celebrated; as many miraculous cures were there wrought during the pestilence which afflicted the city of Lyons, shortly after the death of these saints. The author of their acts attests these miracles; they are related by Ruinart.[8780]

Chapter XLII

ST. LEO OF PATARA

February 18.

AT Patara, in Lycia, a great festival was once being celebrated in honor of a certain idol, at which a great concourse assembled; some having gone willingly, and many through fear, as an edict had been published to that effect. But St. Leo, who was a good Christian, departed from the city, and went to perform his devotions before the relics of St. Paregorius, who had died for the faith some short time previously. Upon his return home, St. Paregorius appeared to him in a vision, standing at the opposite side of a torrent, and inviting him to pass over.

St. Leo hence conceived a great hope that he would be honored with martyrdom; and going, some days after, to make a second visit to the tomb of St. Paregorius, he passed by the temple of Fortune, where many lanterns burned before the idol. Impelled by a special impulse of the Holy Ghost, he entered the temple and threw down the lights: but the idolaters, enraged at the insult offered to their idol, raised such a clamor, that the governor heard of the affair, and ordered that the saint should be brought before him.

When Leo made his appearance, the governor rebuked him for the outrage he had committed against the gods, in violation of the commands of the sovereign; but the saint, animated with holy zeal, replied: “Thou speakest to me of the gods, as if there were many: there is but one God, and Jesus Christ is his only begotten Son. Since statues of stone and wood are devoid of sense and feeling, of what use can lanterns be to them? If thou hadst the knowledge of the true God, thou wouldst not worship these false deities. Oh, do abandon this vain superstition, and adore our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!”

The governor said: “Thou dost then exhort me to become a Christian? Better it were for thee to conform to the general practice, lest thy rashness be punished as it deserves.” The saint with increased ardor replied: “I see about me a multitude of those who, blindly persevering in error, despise the true God; but I am a Christian notwithstanding, and follow the instructions of the apostles. If this deserve chastisement, award it; for I am determined to suffer every torture, rather than become the slave of the devil. Others may do as they please, since they are solicitous merely for the present, and are reckless of the future life, which is to be obtained only by sufferings. The Scripture tells us that *narrow is the way which leadeth to life.*”[8781]

The governor observed: “Since, then, the way of the Christians is narrow; exchange it for ours, which is wide and commodious.” Leo answered: “I have said that the way is narrow, because it is one of affliction, and of persecutions suffered for justice sake; but it is wide enough for those who walk therein, because their faith, and the hope of an eternal reward, make it so to them. The love of virtue maketh that easy which to thee seemeth difficult. On the contrary, the road of vice is in reality narrow, and leads to an eternal precipice.

This discourse was most unpalatable to the pagans, who accordingly exclaimed that the impious man, who had spoken against their religion, should be silenced. The governor then asked St. Leo whether he would sacrifice; and being answered that his compliance was totally impossible, he ordered him to be scourged. Although this command was most cruelly executed, the saint suffered without a groan; whereupon the governor threatened still greater torments, but the saint answered: “I know not these gods, and will never sacrifice to them.” “At least,” said the governor, “say that our gods are great, and I will dismiss thee, for I have compassion upon thy old age.” The saint replied: “They are great for the destruction of those souls that believe in them.” The governor, infuriated at this reply, said: “I will order thee to be dragged over stones till thou art torn to pieces.” The saint replied: “I shall welcome any kind of death that procures me the kingdom of heaven, and that blessed life which I shall enjoy in company with the saints, upon my departure from this world.”

The tyrant continued to importune him to sacrifice, or at least to acknowledge that the gods could save him from death. The saint replied: “Thou art very weak, since thou dost nothing but threaten, without putting thy threats into execution.” The populace, being enraged at this reply, obliged the judge to condemn the saint to be tied by the feet and dragged through a torrent.

St. Leo finding himself about to obtain the accomplishment of his desire to die for Jesus Christ, raised his eyes to heaven, and prayed after the following manner: “I thank Thee, O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for granting me the grace to follow Thy servant Paregorius. I praise Thee, because Thou hast enabled me, by martyrdom, to cancel my past sins. I commend my soul to the care of Thy holy angels, that it may be saved from the perdition prepared for the wicked. I beseech Thee, by that which it is my blessed lot to suffer, to have mercy on those who are the cause thereof; and since Thou desirest not the death of the sinner, grant them the grace to recognize Thee as the Lord of the universe. May all that which I suffer in the name of Jesus Christ thy Son redound to Thy glory forever and ever. Amen.” As soon as he pronounced the word *Amen*, he rendered up his soul to God, and went to enjoy the crown to which St. Paregorius had invited him.

The executioners cast the body into a deep pit, in order to break it to pieces; but it was taken thence and found entire, with only a few slight bruises, and the face appeared comely and smiling.[8782]

Chapter XLIII

ST. BASIL OF ANCYRA, PRIEST

March 22.

ST. BASIL was a priest of Ancyra, in Galatia, who during the reign of Constantius bravely defended the divinity of the Son of God against the Arians, and converted many from that heresy. Upon the death of Constantius, Julian the Apostate succeeded to the empire, and used all his energies for the re-establishment of idolatry, which at this time had been almost annihilated. St. Basil, on the other hand, struggled with all his might against this impious project, and ran through the entire city of Ancyra, exhorting the Christians to preserve themselves from apostasy, and to despise the promises of Julian, whom, he said, God would quickly remove. By this conduct he brought upon himself the hatred of the idolaters, who united with the Arians in persecuting him; but the saint was not to be deterred from defending the faith of Jesus Christ.

One day while some of the Gentiles were sacrificing to the gods, he prayed aloud that the Lord might confound them, in order that no Christians should be seduced by their example. The idolaters, upon hearing this prayer, became infuriated, and one of them, named Macarius, laying violent hands upon him, said: “Who art thou that darest to disturb the people, and to preach against the worship of the gods?” Basil replied: “Not I, but the God of Heaven, with his invincible power, will destroy your false religion.” The heathens, more infuriated than ever, dragged him before Saturninus, the governor of the province, saying: “This man has been guilty of sedition, and threatens to overturn the altars of the gods.”

Saturninus, turning to him, said: “Who art thou that showest so much rashness?” Basil answered: “I am a Christian, and glory in being so.” “If then thou art a Christian,” said Saturninus, “why dost thou not act like a Christian?” Basil: “Thou art right; a Christian ought to appear so in all his actions.” Saturninus: “Why hast thou raised the people and blasphemed the emperor as the follower of a false religion?” Basil: “I blaspheme not the emperor nor his religion; but I say that in heaven there is a Ruler whom the Christians adore as the only true God, and who can in one moment destroy your false worship.” Saturninus: “What canst thou say against the religion of the emperor?” Basil was about to reply, but Saturninus interrupted him, saying: “All reply is useless; thou must obey the emperor.” Basil: “I never yet have failed to obey the Emperor of Heaven.” Saturninus: “Who is this Emperor of Heaven?” Basil: “He that dwelleth in heaven and beholdeth all things; while your emperor commands only upon earth, and is a man like the rest, who is shortly about to fall into the hands of the Great King.”

The governor, irritated at this answer, ordered that the saint should be suspended, and torn with iron hooks; but while Basil was returning thanks to God, he asked him whether he would sacrifice. The saint replied: “I have placed all my confidence in the King of kings; nor is it in the power of man to change me.” The tyrant, perceiving that the executioners had fatigued themselves, sent him to prison; and one Felix, a bad Christian, who met him by the way, advised him to obey the emperor, but our saint answered: “Depart from me, O impious wretch! enveloped as thou art in the darkness of sin, how canst thou See the light?”

The Emperor Julian was at this time at Pessinunte, celebrating the festival of the goddess Cybele, who was said to be the mother of the gods. Here Saturninus informed him of what had taken place regarding Basil. The apostate hearing that he possessed great influence, sent two other apostates, Elpidius and Pegasus, to gain him over. When the latter went to the prison to speak to him, the saint said: “Traitor! why hast thou renounced Jesus Christ and thy hopes of salvation? After having been cleansed in the waters of baptism, how couldst thou stain thyself with idolatry?—after having been fed with the flesh of Jesus Christ, how canst thou sit at a feast of demons? Thou wert the disciple of truth, and art now become a master of perdition, to the eternal loss of thy own soul. What wilt thou do when the Lord shall come to judge thee?” Then raising his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed: “Vouchsafe, O Lord, to deliver me from the snares of the devil.” Pegasus, covered with confusion, related the affair to Elpidius and they both proceeded to inform the governor, who again caused Basil to be put to torture. When the saint was placed upon the rack, he said: “Impious tyrant, thou mayst exercise all thy cruelty, but so long as Jesus Christ is with me, I never will change."

The emperor, having arrived at Ancyra, summoned the martyr before him, and inquired his name. The saint replied: "I am a Christian. This is my principal name; but I am generally called Basil. Now, if I shall have preserved the name of a Christian without blemish, Jesus Christ will reward me, on the day of judgment, with an eternal glory." Julian: "Do not thus miserably deceive thyself, continuing to believe in him that was put to death under Pontius Pilate." Basil: "No, emperor; I am not deceived, but thou hast deceived thyself, who by thy apostasy hast forfeited thy right to heaven. I continue to believe in Jesus Christ, whom thou hast renounced, although he placed thee upon a throne; he will, however, quickly hurl thee thence, that thou mayest know the power of the God whom thou hast despised." Julian: "Madman, thou art raving; it shall not befall me as thou wouldst." Basil: "Thou hast forgotten Jesus Christ, and he shall never again remember thee in his mercy. He that is the Emperor of all shall despoil thee of the authority thou hast, and cause thee to expire in agony; nor shall thy body find burial." This prediction was shortly afterwards fulfilled.

Julian, infuriated at the martyr's speech, said: "I had designed to discharge thee unmolested; but, since thy temerity hath gone so far as to reproach me, I now command that there be torn, every day, from off thy body, seven pieces of flesh. This barbarous command was quickly put into execution by the Count Frumentinus, to whom the charge was given. Our saint endured it with great fortitude; and, when he had been entirely lacerated, he desired to speak with the emperor. The count, believing that he was induced by the torture to sacrifice to the gods, made known his desire to Julian, who commanded him to be brought to the temple of Esculapius. Upon being presented to the emperor in the temple, the saint said: "Where, sir, are the persons who are wont to accompany thee? Have they not foretold to thee the motive of this my visit?" Julian: "I suppose thou hast returned to thy senses, and art willing to adore the majesty of the gods." Basil: "Not so; I have come to make thee know that thy gods are but blind and deaf statues, the worshipping of which is punished in hell." Then taking a piece of his torn flesh, he cast it in the emperor's face, saying: "Take this, O Julian, since such food pleaseth thee. To me death is a gain, and Jesus is my life and my strength; in him I believe, and for his sake I am willing to suffer.”

The Christians looked with satisfaction upon the constancy of Basil, and the glorious testimony he had given to the faith; but equal to their joy was the fury of Frumentinus at his disappointment. He therefore ordered the executioners to tear the saint with irons, until his bones and bowels should be laid bare. During the infliction of this sentence the holy martyr prayed thus: Be Thou forever blessed, O Lord, who giveth strength unto the weak that put their trust in Thee. Mercifully vouchsafe to look upon me, and grant me the grace faithfully to consummate my sacrifice, that I may be made worthy of thy eternal kingdom.”

On the following day the emperor departed from Ancyra without granting an audience to Frumentinus, who, having summoned Basil before him, exclaimed: “O! thou most rash and obdurate of mortals! wilt thou at last yield to the emperor, or terminate thy days amid the most excruciating torture?” Basil replied: “Dost thou not recollect to what state thou didst reduce my body yesterday, when its mangled appearance drew tears from all who beheld it? Now it hath pleased Jesus Christ to heal me, as thou seest. Make this known to thy emperor, in order that he may understand the power of that God whom he hath abandoned to become the slave of the devil; but God also will abandon him, and he shall die in his sins.” Frumentinus replied: “Thou art mad; but if thou wilt not sacrifice, I shall cause thy entire body to be pierced with red-hot spikes.” The saint answered: “I have not been afraid, as thou knowest, of the threats of the emperor; think now whether thy words can strike me with terror.”

Although Frumentinus was aware that the constancy of Basil was not to be overcome, he nevertheless caused the irons to be heated, and the saint’s shoulders to be pierced through. During this most agonizing torture, the saint prayed thus: “I thank Thee, O Lord, my God, who hast delivered my soul from hell. Preserve Thy blessed spirit within me, in order that, having overcome these torments, I may offer to Thee the sacrifice of my life, and become an heir to everlasting bliss, through the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whose merits I beseech Thee to receive my soul in peace, since I have continued to the end to confess Thy name, who livest and reignest, world without end.—Amen.” Having finished this prayer, the saint, as though falling into a sweet sleep, in the midst of his tortures placidly rendered his soul to God, on the 28th of June, in the year 362. The Acts of his martyrdom are found in Ruinart.

Chapter XLIV

SS. POTHINUS, BISHOP OF LYONS; SANCTUS, DEACON; ALEXANDER, PHYSICIAN ; VETTIUS EPAGATHUS, MATURUS, ATTALUS OF PERGAMUS, BIBLIS, BLANDINA, AND THEIR COMPANIONS

June 2.

WHILE the Emperor Marcus Aurelius was carrying on the war against the Quadi and other German tribes, he was on one occasion very much terrified at the probability of his entire army perishing from thirst. But the Christian soldiers who were scattered among the ranks, having fervently prayed for rain, it descended in such quantities as to enable all the troops to slake their thirst. The enemy was at this time attacking the Romans with great advantage, when thunderbolts and heavy hail disconcerted their ranks, and obliged them to fly. The emperor, justly attributing this miracle to the power of the God of the Christians, prohibited, in the year 174, under pain of death, that any one should accuse them for their religion. After three years, however, by popular commotion, the idolaters raised a persecution against the Christians, which raged most furiously at Lyons and Vienne, and the adjacent towns.

But the more the faithful were persecuted, the more they experienced the protection of the Almighty, who strengthened them to suffer with heroic patience the maltreatment they received from the populace or the magistrates. Several were arrested and brought before the president, who treated them with such cruelty, that a young nobleman, named Vettius Epagathus, fired with the Spirit of God, exclaimed that the Christians had been guilty of no crime, and that they were, therefore, most unjustly punished. The president asked him who he was. Vettius replied: “I am a Christian.” The president then ordered that all the Christians in Lyons and Vienne should be imprisoned. Some persons came forward to accuse the

Christians of having committed the most execrable impurities in their assemblies, and also having eaten children there. Hereupon the magistrates prepared the most atrocious torments, in order to oblige the faithful to confess these crimes, and to abandon the faith of Jesus Christ.

Among others, they put to torture a certain deacon named Sanctus, who, being asked his name and the place of his birth, would give no other answer than—“I am a Christian.” They applied red-hot plates of brass to the tenderest parts of his body; but, although from his head to his feet he might be said to be one wound, he was so strengthened by divine grace as to remain constant in the profession of his faith. When he became quite shrivelled and stooped by reason of his torments, they sent him back to prison; and when, a few days afterwards, they brought him out to renew his tortures, they found that the second became the remedy of the first affliction, for the saint had perfectly recovered.

In this persecution, many unhappily renounced Jesus Christ, amongst whom was a woman named Biblis; she was, notwithstanding her apostasy, put to the torture, in order to make her confess the crimes with which the Christians had been charged. But her sufferings operated upon her in a very different manner: she began to reflect how insupportable must be the torments of hell, which she should suffer, were she to die in her sin. Instead, therefore of accusing the Christians, she exclaimed: How is it possible that those who abstain even from the blood of animals could be induced to feed upon their own children?” Biblis then protested that she was a Christian, and wished to die for her faith; and was thus ranked among the martyrs.

At this time St. Pothinus, Bishop of Lyons, was ninety years of age, and so very weak that he could scarcely draw his breath; but proportionate to his weakness was his desire to lay down his life for Jesus Christ, and to mingle his blood with that of his flock, which was being spilt. When the soldiers carried him before the president, and he had been asked, who was the God of Christians, the holy prelate replied: “When thou art worthy, thou shalt know him.” The idolaters no sooner heard this answer than they set upon the aged bishop like a set of wild beasts, and so inhumanly maltreated him with kicks and blows, that, being led to prison, he expired after two days.

The prisons were filled with Christians, who were tortured in every possible way; and it was easy to distinguish those who had prepared themselves for the great struggle by a life of sanctity and mortification, from those whose faith became weak by reason of their tepid and effeminate lives. The former were constant in confessing the name of Jesus Christ, and appeared joyous and confident; but the others basely abandoned their faith, and, stung with remorse, appeared sorrowful and confused, while they were despised by the very Pagans themselves. Many of these good Christians died in prison, being overcome by the damp and loathsomeness of the place, as well as hunger and the other sufferings.

Others were reserved by God to expire publicly amid tortures. Among the latter were Maturus, and Sanctus the deacon, who, besides the torments which they had already endured, were, at the request of the populace, placed sitting in a red-hot iron chair—a cruelty that one would think could be invented only by demons. The noisome smell which proceeded from their burning flesh, became offensive to their persecutors, who, accordingly, cut their throats; thus did these two saints obtain the victory of their prolonged martyrdom.

The multitude next called for the death of Attalus of Pergamus, who was known by all to be a zealous Christian; but the governor, hearing that he was a Roman citizen, remanded him to prison, until a decision should arrive from the emperor. At that time there was also at Lyons a certain Christian named Alexander, a physician by profession, and a native of Phrygia, who, being near the governor during the interrogation of some Christians, made signs to them with his head and his eyes to exhort them to remain steadfast in the faith. The pagans accused him of this, and the governor, hearing from himself that he was a Christian, sent him also to prison. On the following day he was brought out, together with Attalus; they were worried by wild beasts, and finally despatched by the swords of the executioners.

The scene of blood was terminated by the martyrdom of St. Blandina, whose glorious triumph is worthy of special commemoration. She was a slave, and a very tender virgin, of such a delicate constitution, that her mistress, who was an excellent Christian lady, entertained very great fears that she would be unequal to the tortures, and deny the faith; but no one could evince more courage than Blandina, or greater patience in enduring the various tortures by which her constancy was tried. The executioners employed an entire day in tormenting her, relieving one another at intervals; and they were astonished to find that a young, a delicate, and sickly creature could survive so many tortures. She was first scourged, next torn with iron hooks until her entrails appeared, and then placed in a red-hot iron chair; yet did she make no complaint, and was only heard to say: “I am a Christian, and among Christians the name of sin is unknown.” She was afterwards wrapped in a net and exposed to a wild bull, who tossed her in the air for a considerable time. At last the sainted heroine had her throat cut, and thus consummated her sacrifice, while the pagans themselves confessed that no woman had ever been known to endure so horrid tortures with so much constancy.

The bodies of all these martyrs were burned, and the ashes thrown into the river Rhone. Their acts were written by some of the faithful of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne, who were witnesses of their triumph, and perhaps the companions of some of their sufferings. The strength evinced by these martyrs, in enduring these cruel and most bitter tortures with so much constancy, proves to us that the souls who really love Jesus Christ, and are dedicated to his service, can easily overcome, by the assistance of his grace, whatever tribulations we are doomed to suffer in this life.

Chapter XLV

ST. ALBAN, FIRST MARTYR OF GREAT BRITAIN

June 22.

ST. ALBAN was an Englishman, and a pagan by birth. During the persecution of Diocletian, he fortunately received into his house a holy ecclesiastic, who was flying from the persecutors. Alban was greatly edified by the saintly life of his guest, who was almost continually employed in prayer, was exceedingly parsimonious in the use of food, and was remarkable for his humility and blandness of manners. Knowing him to be a Christian, our saint begged to be instructed in the religion*;* and the clergyman so forcibly showed him the extravagances of idolatry, and the truth of the doctrines of Jesus Christ, that Alban, illumined by divine grace, embraced the Christian faith.

It was discovered after some time that the ecclesiastic, after whom search was being made, lay concealed in Alban's house, whereupon the governor sent a party of soldiers to seize him; but Alban, upon their approach, put on the habit of the clergyman, and enabled him to effect his escape. Our saint was accordingly arrested and brought before the governor, who was engaged, at the time, in offering sacrifice to his gods. Seeing Alban, with whom he had been acquainted, in that strange dress, and judging that he had become a Christian, he threatened that if the saint would not abandon the faith, he would cause him to suffer all the torments that had been prepared for him whose habit he had assumed. The saint replied that he never would abandon that faith which he had fortunately discovered to be the only true one. The governor then caused him to be cruelly scourged; but Alban suffered this torture, and many others that followed it, with such joy, that the governor, despairing of being able to change his resolve, condemned him to be beheaded.

The saint proceeded to the place of execution, as though it were to a banquet; but having arrived at the bank of the river, which should be crossed in order to reach the destined place, such a multitude had assembled, that it was considered impossible to pass the bridge before evening. Hereupon the saint, anxious to give his life for Jesus Christ, prayed to the Lord, and the waters, dividing themselves on either side, left a dry passage to the opposite bank. At the sight of this miracle the executioner was converted, and happily obtained the crown of martyrdom, together with St. Alban.[8783]

Chapter XLVI

ST. PETER OF LAMPSACUS

May 15.

DURING the persecution of Decius, at Lampsacus, a city near the Hellespont, a young man named Peter was brought before the proconsul, and having confessed himself a Christian, was commanded to sacrifice to the great goddess, Venus. Peter replied: “I wonder much how thou canst expect me to sacrifice to a woman, whose shameful impurities it were immodest even to mention. Sacrifice should be offered to the true God alone. At this answer the tyrant caused him to be bound to a wheel, that, revolving, by certain pieces of wood appropriately placed, caused a complete and gradual fracture of his bones. After this torture, the saint, raising his eyes to heaven, exclaimed: “I thank Thee, my Jesus, because that Thou makest me worthy to suffer for Thy sake.” The proconsul, perceiving his constancy, commanded him to be beheaded.[8784]

Chapter XLVII

ST. CYRIL, THE CHILD

May 29.

ST. CYRIL was born at Cæsarea, and, while yet a child, became a Christian, in consequence of which he was maltreated, and finally turned out of doors by his idolatrous father. Information to this effect having been given to the judge, he caused Cyril to be brought before him; and, being told that the child frequently invoked the name of Jesus, he promised him that he would effect a reconciliation with his father, on condition that he would never more pronounce that name. The holy child replied: "I am content to be turned out of my father's house, because I shall receive a more spacious mansion in heaven; nor do I fear death, because by it I shall acquire a better life." The judge, in order to frighten him, caused him to be bound and led, as it were, to the death, but gave private orders to the executioner not to injure him. He was accordingly brought before a great fire, and threatened to be thrown in; but, being most willing to lay down his life, he was brought back to the judge, who said to him: "My child, thou hast seen the fire; cease, then, to be a Christian, that thou mayest return to thy father's house, and inherit thy estates." The saint replied: "I fear neither fire nor the sword; but I am desirous to have a dwelling more magnificent, and riches more lasting than those of my father! God will receive me. Do thou hasten to put me to death, that I may quickly go to enjoy him."

The bystanders wept to hear the child speak thus; but he observed: "You should not weep, but rather rejoice, and encourage me to suffer, in order that I may attain to the possession of that house which I so ardently desire. Remaining constant in these sentiments, he joyfully suffered death.

The Acts of his martyrdom are found in Ruinart.

Chapter XLVIII

SS. POTAMIENA, VIRGIN; MARCELLA, HER MOTHER; AND BASILIDES, SOLDIER

June 28 and 30.

THE martyrdom of St. Potamiena was most illustrious. This holy virgin was educated with great care in the fear of the Lord, by her pious mother Marcella; but being by condition a slave, and gifted by God with extraordinary beauty, her pagan master conceived towards her a shameful passion, which he frequently manifested, and was as often indignantly repulsed. The unchaste wretch accordingly had recourse to the prefect of Egypt, and promised him a large sum of money if he would compel the saint to yield to his wishes, beseeching him at the same time to put her to death as a Christian, in case she should prove inexorable.

The prefect forthwith summoned Potamiena to his presence; and showing her all the apparatus of torture that had been prepared for her in case of refusal, he commanded her to obey her master. He used all his arts to induce her to comply; but the saint expressed her horror of the iniquitous demand, and, upbraiding him with the infamy of urging such a request, she said: “How is it possible that there can be found a judge so unjust as to condemn me, because I will not satisfy the inordinate desires of a lewd person?”

Mortified at the saint’s constancy, and still more so by the rebuke, the prefect condemned her to a most cruel death. He ordered a caldron of pitch to be placed upon the fire, and when it commenced to boil, he commanded the holy virgin to be thrown in. The saint implored of him, since she had to suffer that death, that she might not be thrown into the caldron at once, but let down into it by degrees, in order that she might suffer the more, and thus manifest her love towards her crucified Spouse. “Thou shalt see,” she continued, “how much patience is given to his servants, by that Jesus Christ whom thou knowest not.” Although the prefect admired the courageous request of the virgin, he nevertheless acceded to it, and gave orders accordingly.

The superintendence of the barbarous execution was entrusted to a soldier named Basilides, who, notwithstanding that he readily accepted the commission, was kind enough to drive back some lewd young men, who were so insolent as to insult the saint. Potamiena promised him that she would reward his kindness by praying to God for him after her death. She was then immersed in the caldron by such slow degrees that, as Cardinal Orsi[8785] writes, her martyrdom was protracted for a considerable time; nor did she expire until the boiling pitch reached her neck, when her pure soul went to enjoy the beatific vision of that God for whose love she had suffered so painful a death. Her triumph took place at Alexandria, about the year 210, when her pious mother also suffered the martyrdom of being burned alive.

Three days after her death, St. Potamiena appeared in glory to Basilides, and, placing a crown upon his head, said to him: “Know that I have prayed for thee to my God, whom I now enjoy; he will presently call thee to that glory of which I have already been made a participator.” The event proved the vision to be real; for Basilides embraced the Christian faith, received baptism, and was beheaded by order of the prefect.

The Acts of St. Potamiena’s martyrdom are found in Ruinart, and are mentioned also by Tillemont in his memoirs.

Chapter XLIX

SS. NICANDER AND MARCIAN, SOLDIERS

June 17.

BOTH these saints belonged to the military profession, but in the reign of Diocletian, at the beginning of the fourth century, distressed at seeing the faithful persecuted, they left the army, renouncing even the money that was due for their services. According to the martyrology they retired to Venafro.[8786] They were accused of being Christians, before the governor Maximus, who ordered them to sacrifice; but Nicander answered: “This order should be given only to those who are willing to obey it; now we are Christians, and cannot do so.” Maximus: “But why have ye refused to receive your pay?” Nicander: “We cannot receive it, because the money of the impious is regarded by the servants of God as a contamination.” Maximus: “Offer incense at least to the gods.” Nicander: “How can a Christian abandon the worship of the true God, to adore stones and blocks? Or why should that honor be given to them which is due only to God?”

Daria, the wife of Nicander, was present at this interrogation, and, filled with the Spirit of God, said to her husband: “Far be it from thee, Nicander, to obey the governor, and renounce Jesus Christ. Remember that God to whom thou didst plight thy faith; he will be thy protector.” Hereupon Maximus exclaimed: “Wicked woman! why wouldst thou procure the death of thy husband?” Daria: “That he may the sooner attain to eternal life.” Maximus: “Say rather, that thou art anxious to have another husband, and therefore dost desire his death.” Daria: “If thou hast any such suspicion, and sufficient authority, cause me to be first put to death for Jesus Christ.” Maximus replied that he had received no orders regarding women; nevertheless he sent her to prison.

Turning then to Nicander, the governor said: “Give no ear to the words of thy wife; she pleads for death, but I will give thee time to consider whether it behove thee to live or die.” Nicander answered: “Consider the time as already past. I have deliberated upon the matter, and am resolved to save myself.” Maximus, believing that the saint meant to save his life by offering sacrifice, exclaimed: “Praise be to God.”

The words were repeated by the saint, and the governor was rejoicing over his imaginary victory, when he heard Nicander continue his prayer aloud; which was, that God would deliver him from the contamination of this world. Astonished at the supposed change, the governor exclaimed: “How is this? Just now thou wert anxious to live, and at present dost pray for death!” Nicander answered: “No; I wish not to die, but to live forever; therefore it is that I despise this life of which thou speakest. Upon my body thou mayest exercise what power thou hast. I am a Christian.”

The governor then, addressing himself to Marcian, asked him what he intended to do. The saint replied: “I profess and desire the same as my companion.” Then, said Maximus, “you shall both be brought to prison. Be prepared to receive the punishment you deserve.”

After twenty days they were again summoned before the governor, who asked them whether they were now prepared to obey the emperors. Marcian courageously replied. “All thy exhortations can never make us abandon our God. We know that he calls us to himself. Detain us not, therefore, but send us to our crucified Lord, whom, although you blaspheme, we nevertheless adore.” Maximus then said: “Since ye wish to die, be it so.” Marcian: “Let it be quickly, not that we are afraid of torments, but because we are anxious to be united to Jesus Christ.” Maximus: “I am innocent of your deaths; they are the orders of the emperors, not I that condemn you. If you are sure of going to a better place, I am glad.” Having received sentence of death, the saints replied: “Peace be with thee, Maximus;” and full of religious joy, they went forward to martyrdom, praising the Lord.

Nicander was followed by his wife Daria and his little son, whom Papian, brother to the martyr St. Pasicrates, carried in his arms. When the holy martyr was about to be decapitated, Daria endeavored to approach, in order to encourage him, but could not by reason of the crowd; whereupon Marcian, stretching forth his hand, presented her to Nicander, who took leave of her with a serene countenance, saying: “Peace be with thee.” The undaunted woman exhorted him in the following words: “Be of good courage, my dear husband, and complete thy sacrifice. I am consoled now that I behold thee going to everlasting glory; and being thus made the wife of a martyr, I rejoice at my happy lot. Give to God those manifestations of love which are his due, and pray for me, that he may save my soul from eternal death.”

Marcian also was followed by his wife and other relatives; but she, on the contrary, tore her garments, and exclaimed: “Ah me! why dost thou despise me, my Marcian? Take pity on me, or at least upon this my child.” Marcian, interrupting her, said: “How long shall the devil continue to keep thee blind? Depart, and allow me to terminate my martyrdom in peace.” But she continued her wailings, and even threw herself upon him to impede his progress. The saint, therefore, requested a pious Christian, named Zoticus, to keep her back, and having arrived at the place of execution, said to her: “In the name of the Lord, retire, possessed as thou art by the devil, thou canst not behold the termination of my triumph.” Then embracing his son, he raised his eyes to heaven, and said: “My God, take this my child into thy holy keeping.”

Finally, the two saints, having given each other the kiss of peace, had their eyes bound by the executioner, and were beheaded.

The Acts of this martyrdom are also copied by Ruinart.[8787]

Chapter L

ST. GALLICAN, A ROMAN GENERAL, WITH SS. JOHN AND PAUL, OFFICERS

June 25 and 26.

JOHN and Paul were two holy brothers, Italians of noble birth, and strongly attached to the Christian religion. It happened at their time that Constance, the daughter of Constantine the Great, having been cured of a troublesome disease through the intercession of St. Agnes,[8788] resolved to lead a devout life, and made a vow of virginity. The emperor, willing to indulge her religious propensities, allowed her to live quite retired, and appointed the two young brothers to act as her pages.

The Scythians having invaded Thrace some time after, with a formidable army, Constantine thought of sending Gallican to oppose them as he had been consul, and by reason of many victories obtained over the barbarians, had acquired the reputation of a valiant commander. The emperor accordingly appointed him general over the entire army; but Gallican refused to accept the commission, except on condition that, upon his returning victorious, he should marry the princess. To this the emperor assented.

In the first engagement, the Roman army was so overpowered by the enemy, that Gallican was on the point of giving orders for a retreat, when our two saints, John and Paul, who had accompanied him to this war, advised him to make a vow that he would embrace the Christian faith if the Lord would render him victorious. Gallican adopted this pious counsel; whereupon the enemy, miraculously seized with a sudden panic, threw down their arms, and surrendered at discretion.

After the victory Gallican returned to the court, not indeed with the intention of being married to the princess, but with the more pious resolution of receiving baptism, and dedicating the remainder of his days exclusively to the service of God. In effect he retired to Ostia, with St. Hilarinus, where he caused a great hospital to be built, in which he assisted the sick with his own hands.

Julian the Apostate, upon his accession to the empire, commanded him either to adore the idols or withdraw from Italy; and Gallican accordingly retired to Alexandria, where he continued to lead a holy life, which he terminated by a glorious martyrdom, on the 25th of June, upon which day he is commemorated by the Church.

John and Paul returned to the princess, and continued to wait upon her until her death, when they were employed in the court; but as soon as Julian ascended the throne, and declared his intentions regarding the Christians, our saints left the palace, to lead a private and religious life.

Julian, knowing their strong attachment to the faith of Jesus Christ, and their readiness to assist the needy or afflicted Christians, ordered Terentian, captain of the Imperial Guards, to intimate to them that it was the emperor’s will they should remain at court, and continue to discharge the duties annexed to their respective offices. The saints replied that, being Christians, they could not serve an emperor who was an avowed enemy of Jesus Christ. Upon receiving this answer, Julian commanded Terentian to put them to death, if, after ten days, they should still refuse to return; but the saints declared that, not only after ten days, but after ten years, they would be equally unwilling to abandon their religion, for which they were most anxious to lay down their lives.

After the ten days, however, Terentian appeared at their house with an image of Jove, and a message from the emperor that, if they would but adore it, he would be satisfied. The saints, filled with horror at seeing an idol in their house, exclaimed: “In pity, sir, remote from our sight that execrable object! Who can be so blind as not to perceive that there is but one only God, and that the histories of all these false deities are only fables and impiety?” Terentian replied: “But if you obey not, I am obliged to put you to death.” Hereupon the saints, casting themselves upon their knees, and raising their eyes to heaven, gave God thanks for having given them the grace to die for his holy faith.

These two pious brothers were greatly esteemed in Rome; and Terentian, fearing that their public execution might occasion a sedition, caused them to be beheaded in their own house, about midnight, and to be buried in the adjoining garden. By this means he thought to conceal their death, but God caused it to be published by several energumens, who went about the following morning, declaring that the brothers had suffered martyrdom. A young son of Terentian, who was also possessed of the devil, proclaimed their death; and having been cured through the intercession of our saints, Terentian and his entire family embraced the Christian faith.

These events occurred in 362. From the fifth century there has existed a church in Rome dedicated to God in honor of Sts. John and Paul, martyrs, in which their bodies are preserved. This church still exists at the present time.[8789] Their names are inserted in the Canon of the Mass.

Chapter LI

ST. THEODORUS OF AMASEA, CALLED THE YOUNG SOLDIER

ST. GREGORY NYSSENUS has left us a noble panegyric in praise of St. Theodorus, who belonged to the military profession, and was a most exemplary Christian. He happened to be with his legion at Amasea, a city of Pontus, when Galerius and Maximin were persecuting the Christians, in the year 306. His commanding officer, knowing him to be a Christian, commanded him to sacrifice to the gods, in obedience to the imperial edicts. The saint protested that he was faithful to the emperors, but was also anxious to be faithful to his God, and that sooner than abandon his faith, he would willingly lose his honors, his possessions, and his life.

He was accordingly brought before the governor, who used all his arts to persuade him to renounce Jesus Christ, but the Christian hero, despising alike his promises and his threats, boldly answered: “I am prepared to persevere in my religion, although I be torn to pieces or burned alive; it is but just that my body should be sacrificed to Him who created it.” After this protestation, the governor discharged him, adding that he would give him time to consider whether he would obey the emperors; but Theodorus employed the while in imploring from God the graces necessary for the struggle that awaited him.

He continued to comfort the persecuted Christians, and to exhort them to remain steadfast in their confession of Jesus Christ. Moved by an extraordinary inspiration from God, he set fire one night to a famous temple in the city, dedicated to the goddess Cybele, who was adored by the pagans as the mother of the gods; and, as there was a high wind at the time, the fabric was quickly reduced to ashes. The saint, instead of concealing his action, joyously proclaimed that he had burned the execrable building, and was accordingly arrested and brought before the governor, who threatened the severest tortures unless he would atone for his crime by sacrificing to the gods. Theodorus answered that he gloried in what he had done.

The governor, perceiving that Theodorus was not to be moved by threats, endeavored to gain him over by allurements, and promised to raise him to the pontifical dignity if he would comply. The saint replied: “I look upon the idolatrous priests as unhappy men, and the pontiffs I consider more so. Since, among the impious, they rank highest, their condition is the more lamentable. Truly pious persons should rejoice in having the lowest place in the house of God.”[8790] Enraged at these words, the tyrant caused him to be stretched upon the rack, and his sides to be torn with iron hooks, until the bones were laid bare; yet during this terrible torture the saint joyously chanted that verse of the Psalm: *I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall be always in my mouth.*[8791]

The governor, astonished at so much patience, said to him: “Unhappy man! art thou not ashamed to place thy confidence in that Christ who was obliged to suffer so ignominious a death?” Theodorus returned him the following pious answer: “It is an ignominy which is gloried in by all those who invoke the name of the Lord Jesus.” The governor then sent him to prison, hoping that after some time he might be enabled to overcome his fortitude; but the saint was visited in the night by angels, who, together with him, chanted the divine praises, and filled his dungeon with celestial splendor that astonished the keeper.

After some days, the governor, finding his constancy undiminished, commanded him to be burned alive. St. Theodorus received the sentence with joy; upon approaching the fire he armed himself with the sign of the cross, and continued till his last breath to bless the Lord.

Chapter LII

SS. PERPETUA AND FELICITAS OF CARTHAGE, WITH STS. REVOCATUS, SATURNINUS, SECUNDULUS, AND SATURUS

March 7.

ST. AUGUSTINE makes frequent and honorable mention of these saints in his works, and was wont to hold them up to the people as examples of fidelity to Jesus Christ.

The Emperor Severus published an edict, commanding all Christians who refused to sacrifice to the gods to be put to death; whereupon Minutius, the proconsul of Africa, caused five young persons to be arrested at Carthage, who were as yet catechumens, and, together with them,[8792] Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas, Sts. Saturninus and Secundulus.[8793]

Perpetua was a young woman, only twenty-two years of age, who led a very devout life, was married, and had an only son. Felicitas was still younger, but also married, and a most exemplary person. The martyrs were kept for some time in a private house, guarded by soldiers; during which time the father of St. Perpetua came to see her, and, being a pagan, used all his endeavors to make her abandon the faith. In the original Acts of these martyrs we find that the occurrences which took place up to the eve of their martyrdom were written by St. Perpetua herself. The principal facts are the following:

“My father,” writes the saint, “used all his endeavors to pervert me; I resolutely answered, ‘Father,’ I am a Christian.’ He instantly threw himself upon me in a rage, as if to tear out my eyes, and used the most injurious language. A few days afterwards we all received the holy baptism, and were led to the public prison, where I was horrified by the darkness, the noisome smell, and the great heat occasioned by the number of prisoners. I had the happiness to have my son brought to me here, which greatly consoled me. My brother came to see me, and desired me to pray to the Lord to let me know whether I was to obtain the crown of martyrdom. I accordingly placed myself in prayer, and saw, in a vision, a golden ladder which reached to the heavens; it was very narrow, and to the sides were fixed sharp knives and iron spikes. At the foot of this ladder was a dragon, who appeared ready to devour those that would attempt to mount it. The first that went up was a certain Christian named Saturus, who invited me to follow him. I ascended, and found myself in a spacious garden, where I met a man of very fine aspect, who said to me: ‘Thou art welcome, my daughter.’ After this vision I knew that we were all destined to suffer martyrdom, and I told my brother so.

“My father came again to see me at the prison, and throwing himself at my feet in a flood of tears: ‘Daughter,’ he said, ‘have pity on me, a poor old man, that am thy father; have pity, at least, on thy child, and bring not ruin upon us all by thy obstinacy.’ I was pierced with grief, but remained immovable in my resolution.

“On the following day I was brought before the auditor, Hilarian, who, by reason of the death of the proconsul, acted as judge. My father appeared with me, holding my son in his arms, whereupon the judge said: ‘Perpetua, have pity on thy father and on thy son—sacrifice to the gods.’ I answered that I was a Christian, and that we were all ready to die for our faith. The judge then condemned us to be devoured by wild beasts.

“We received the sentence with joy, and were brought back to prison, where we were met by my father, who tearing his hair and his beard, threw himself upon his face on the earth, lamenting that he lived to see that day. He once endeavored to pull me off the platform, but the judge commanded him to be beaten off, and he received a blow with a stick, at which I was much grieved; but the Lord continued to grant me strength.”

Secundulus died in prison, of his sufferings, and Saturus had already obtained the crown.[8794] Felicitas desired to suffer with the rest, but she was pregnant, and the law forbade women to be put to death in that state. Her companions therefore prayed for her, and on that very day she was delivered of a daughter. The saint moaned by reason of her pains, and one of the guards said to her: “Dost thou moan? What wilt thou do when thou shalt be devoured by wild beasts?” She answered: “I now suffer by myself;

but then I shall have Jesus Christ with me, and by his grace I will endure all things for his sake.”

Upon the appointed day the martyrs went forward to execution with a joy that was manifest to all.

The other saints having been torn by the wild beasts, Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas were wrapped in nets and exposed to a mad cow. St. Perpetua was first attacked, and having been tossed in the air, she fell upon her back. Then sitting up, she perceived her clothes torn, and was endeavoring to cover herself, when she was again knocked down; but recovering herself, she stretched forth her hand to raise St. Felicitas, whom she perceived prostrate upon the ground, much hurt. The populace were at length moved to compassion, and the two saints were led into the centre of the amphitheatre, and despatched by the gladiators. Thus did they receive, with their companions, the heavenly crown, on the 7th March, in the year 203.

St. Augustine[8795] cites the Acts of their martyrdom, and Tertullian[8796] and St. Fulgentius[8797] have passed the most magnificent encomiums on Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas. They are mentioned also in the Canon of the Mass. Their relics were brought to Rome.[8798]

Chapter LIII

SS. GEORGE, DEACON; AURELIUS, NATALIA, FELIX, LILIOSA OF CORDUBA

July 27.

SPAIN was honored by the martyrdom of many Christians under the Moors, in the ninth century. Among these was Aurelius, who was born in Corduba, of an opulent and noble family. 11 is father was a Mahomedan, and his mother a Christian; but having been left an orphan very young, he was reared by his aunt in the Christian religion. The Mahomedan books which the Moors made him read served only to convince him of the falsity of their sect, and to make him more enamoured of the religion of Jesus Christ. Urged by his relatives to marry, he espoused Natalia, a Christian virgin, remarkable for her piety.

Aurelius was related to a certain Christian named Felix, who had unhappily denied the faith; but although he repented of this sin he had not the courage to proclaim himself, and accordingly lived very retired with his wife; both families, however, lived on terms of the strictest intimacy.

Aurelius one day saw a certain Christian merchant called John cruelly scourged in the public square, and afterwards dragged through the city; after which sight he returned home and said to his wife: “Thou art continually exhorting me to retire from the world. I be—believe the hour has now arrived, in which God calls me to a more perfect life. Let us, therefore, from this day forward live as brother and sister; let us give our whole attention to the service of God, and prepare ourselves for martyrdom.” Natalia instantly adopted the advice, and from that hour they gave themselves to a more holy life of prayer and mortification. Among other works of Christian charity, Aurelius visited the men and Natalia the women who were imprisoned for the faith; and among these confessors they met a holy priest named Eulogius, who afterwards wrote the Acts of their martyrdom. He advised

Aurelius to put his children in a place of safety; and, having left them a competence, to sell the remainder of his goods, and give the money to the poor. Meanwhile, two holy virgins, Mary and Flora, who had been visited in prison by Natalia, suffered martyrdom, and afterwards appeared to her in a vision, dressed in white robes and resplendent with glory. Natalia at this happy sight said to them: “Shall I also have the blessed lot to tread the same path which conducted you to heaven?” “Yes,” they replied, “for thee also is martyrdom being prepared—thou shalt shortly he with us in glory.” Natalia related her vision to Aurelius. From that moment they thought of nothing but preparing themselves to die for Jesus Christ; and, according to the advice of Eulogius, distributed their property to the poor.

At this time there came to Corduba a certain monk, from Palestine, named George, who had lived for twenty-seven years in the monastery of St. Saba. He had been sent by the abbot of another monastery, containing nearly five hundred religious, to Africa, for the purpose of collecting alms; but on his arrival he found the Christians greatly oppressed by the Moors, and accordingly passed into Spain, where he found religion similarly circumstanced. Uncertain what course to adopt, he repaired to a certain monastery of exemplary religious, at Tabnes, to recommend himself to their prayers. He here met Natalia, who upon seeing him, exclaimed: “This good monk is destined to be our companion in martyrdom!” It so happened; for on the following day Natalia brought him to her own house at Corduba, where they found Felix and his wife Liliosa speaking with Aurelius concerning their desire of dying for Jesus Christ. Moved by divine grace, they all resolved to repair to the church, that, thus declaring themselves to be Christians, they might obtain the wished-for crown.

They were not arrested in the church; but on their return, being asked by a Moorish officer why they had entered the church, they answered: “The faithful are wont to visit the tombs of the martyrs; and we have done so, because we are Christians.” The officer instantly sent a report to the governor, and on the following day a guard was sent to the house. Having arrived at the door, they cried out: “Come forth, ye wretches! come to the death, since ye are weary of life!” Aurelius and Felix appeared, accompanied by their wives; and George, the monk, perceiving that the soldiers heeded him not, said to them: “Why will ye compel Christians to follow your false religion?” For these words he was instantly maltreated by the soldiers, with blows and kicks, and knocked prostrate on the ground; whereupon Natalia said: “Rise, brother, and we shall proceed.”

The holy monk answered: “Meanwhile, sister, I have earned this much for Christ;” and having raised himself up very much bruised, he was in that state presented with the rest to the governor, who asked them why they thus blindly ran to death, and made them promises of the most ample rewards if they would renounce Jesus Christ. They answered with one accord: “These promises can avail nothing. We despise this present life, because we hope for a better one. We love our faith, and abhor every other religion.” Hereupon the governor sent them to prison, and having found them constant in their faith at the end of five days, condemned them all to death, with the exception of George. But the holy monk having declared that Mahomet was a disciple of the devil, and that his followers were in a state of perdition, he also was condemned with his companions.

While they were proceeding to the place of execution Natalia encouraged the others to suffer with fortitude; which so irritated the soldiers that they ceased not to buffet and kick her until they arrived at the appointed place, where all these blessed martyrs received the crown, on the 27th July, in the year 852.[8799]

Chapter LIV

STS. TARACHUS, PROBUS, AND ANDRONICUS, MARTYRED IN CILICIA

October 11.

THE martyrdom of these three saints causes us to wonder at the extent to which the cruelty of tyrants and the patience of saints can be carried. Cardinal Orsi[8800] assures us that there is no document of antiquity more authentic than the original Acts of these martyrs. They were brought before Numerianus Maximus, governor of the province, at Tarsus, the metropolis of Cilicia. Their Acts are given at length by Orsi, but we here give a succinct account, for the convenience of the reader.

Tarachus, who was the eldest, was first interrogated. Being asked his name, he replied: I am a Christian.’’ The governor said: “But I wish to know thy name.” Tarachus again replied: “I am a Christian.” Maximus, in a rage, desired the executioners to break his jawbones, and to tell him not to answer one thing for another. The saint observed that he had answered his real name, but that he was called Tarachus by others; and proceeded to state that he was a Roman citizen, and had belonged to the military profession, but retired from the army in order the better to observe his religion. Maximus then said: “In consideration of thy age I am anxious to honor thee, if thou wilt obey the emperor by sacrificing to the gods.” The saint replied: “The emperors are grievously mistaken and blinded by the devil. To my God I sacrifice my heart, and not the blood of animals which he needeth not. Whilst I honor the law of God, I cannot observe the law of false deities.” Maximus asked: “And besides ours, is there any other law?” Tarachus answered: “This your law is impious, since it teaches you to adore as gods blocks of marble and of wood.” The governor then caused the saint to be stripped and scourged with rods, during which torture he said: “These stripes but encourage me to place all my confidence in God and in his

Christ.” Maximus re-joined: “Then thou servest two gods? Having confessed God and Christ, how canst thou deny a plurality of Gods?” Tarachus explained: “I confess one only God, because Christ is the Son of God; and the Father and the Son are but one God.” Maximus, being unwilling to hear him any further, sent him to prison; and desired Probus to be brought before him.

This saint being asked his name and parentage, answered that men called him Probus, but that it was much more pleasing to him to be called a Christian. He added, that his father was of Thrace, but that he was born in Pamphylia; that he was a plebeian by condition, and had been possessed of a large estate, which he had renounced to serve God. Maximus told him that by sacrificing to the gods he would be honored by the emperors, and that he himself would admit him to his friendship. Probus replied: “I want neither honors from the emperors, nor thy friendship.” The governor then ordered him to be stripped and beaten with sinews of oxen, and after some time to be turned and beaten on the belly. During this torture Probus called upon the Lord to assist him; whereupon Maximus sent some of the executioners to ask him where was the assistance of God which he had invoked. The saint replied: “God helps me, and will continue to help me; so much so that I dread not your torments.” Maximus said: “Look, wretch, how the ground is all covered with thy blood!” The saint answered: “But thou shouldst know that the more my body suffers for Christ, the more my soul is enlivened.” The governor then sent him to prison, and called Andronicus.

Maximus questioned this saint also concerning his name and parentage; he answered that he was a Christian, but was called Andronicus by men, and that he was a native of Ephesus, of noble family. Maximus said to him: “Obey the emperors who are our fathers, and adore the gods.” Andronicus replied: “Thou art right in calling them fathers; for the devil is thy father.” Maximus said: “I have compassion on thy youth; but know that I have great torments ready, in case thou wilt not sacrifice to the gods.” Andronicus replied: “I appear to thee young in years; but my soul hath grown to a manly age, and I am prepared for all thy torments.” Maximus then commanded him to be put to torture; during which a certain notary told him to obey the governor. Andronicus said: “Keep thy advice to thyself; although older than I am thou art foolish in advising me to sacrifice to demons.” During the infliction of the tortures the tyrant said to him:

“Wretch, art thou insensible to torments? Wilt thou not give over thy follies which cannot save thee from my hands?” The saint answered: “These follies are necessary for those who put their trust in God; but thy wisdom shall bring eternal death to thy soul. The governor then ordered that he should be cruelly tortured in the limbs, that his sides should be torn, and his wounds scraped with broken tiles. The saint having endured all with fortitude, had chains put about his neck and feet, and was sent to prison with the rest.

The governor having gone from Tarsus to Mopsuestia, summoned the three saints before him at this place; and again beginning with Tarachus, commanded him to sacrifice to the gods. The saint having persevered in his refusal, Maximus ordered his mouth to be beaten with a stone until his teeth were knocked out; upon which he said: “Although thou shouldst break every limb of my body, yet will I not alter my resolution. I am prepared to suffer all thou canst invent; and am well assured of receiving the necessary assistance from him for whom I combat.” Maximus then caused the fire to be brought, and his hands to be burned; whereupon Tarachus said: “This fire doth not cause me to be afraid; I fear rather the eternal fire which would await me, did I obey thy command.” Maximus then commanded him to be tied up by the feet, and suspended over a great smoke; the saint having suffered these tortures without the least complaint the tyrant caused his nostrils to be filled with vinegar, salt, and mustard; but, perceiving that Tarachus endured all in silence, he remanded him to prison till he could devise new tortures.

After this Probus was called up, and the governor said to him: “The emperors sacrifice to the gods, and wilt thou not sacrifice?” Probus answered: “The torments which thou hast already caused me to suffer have given me new strength; it is, therefore, improbable that I can be induced to sacrifice to the gods whom I know not. I adore one only God, and him only do I serve. How can blocks of wood and marble be called gods?” Maximus, interrupting him, caused him to be buffeted on the mouth, and the soles of his feet burned with red-hot plates of iron; but the saint appearing insensible to these tortures, was stretched upon the rack and most cruelly scourged. The tyrant perceiving that all these torments were insufficient to overcome the constancy of the saint, commanded his head to be shaved and burning coals to be placed upon it; but finding that this torture was also to no purpose, he endeavored to seduce him by promising him the favor of the emperors, which had been extended to previous apostates. Probus answered: “All those who have received such favors have thereby miserably lost themselves. What can he expect who has lost the favor of the only true God?” Maximus, who imagined himself personally offended by every answer of the saint, ordered him to be again buffeted on the face, and brought back to prison.

Andronicus was next summoned, whom the tyrant endeavored to persuade that Tarachus and Probus had already sacrificed. The saint replied: “In vain dost thou attempt to deceive me with lies; they have not done so, nor will I ever be induced to do so. I fear thee not; use all thy tortures, and thou shalt see how far superior to them is a true servant of the Lord.” Upon these words the tyrant caused him to be tied between four posts, and most cruelly scourged; whereupon the saint asked: “Have all thy threats only come to this?” Maximus ordered his lacerated back to be rubbed with salt, but the saint told the executioners to continue this infliction in order that he might be well seasoned. “Thou shalt not,” said Maximus, “overcome me.” “Nor shall I,” replied Andronicus, “ever permit thy torments to diminish my constancy. By the grace of that God who strengthens me, thou shalt always find me the same. It so happened: the governor, wearied by his perseverance, ordered him back to prison.

Maximus then passed to the city of Anazarbus, whither he commanded the saints to be brought, and again began with Tarachus, ordering him to sacrifice to the gods. “O wretched deities!” exclaimed the saint, for whom and for whose worshippers eternal fire is prepared.” Maximus: “I perceive that thou wouldst have me instantly behead thee in order that thy sufferings be shortened.” Tarachus: “Thou art deceived: for, on the contrary, I beseech thee to prolong my combat, that I may receive the greater reward.” “Unhappy wretch!” exclaimed the tyrant, “what reward canst thou hope for from death?” Tarachus: “Alas, thou knowest not the reward which is prepared for us by our God who is in heaven!” After this interrogation had continued for some time, the tyrant ordered him to be stretched on the rack, to be buffeted on the face and mouth, and his breasts to be perforated with red-hot iron spikes; he then commanded his ears to be cut off, and the skin to be flayed from his head, that burning coals might be placed thereon; during this torture the saint said: “Exercise what cruelty thou wilt, I will never turn my back upon the God who strengthens me.” Finally, his shoulders having been pierced as his breasts had been, he was condemned to the beasts and sent to prison.

Probus was next called, and Maximus, finding his constancy undiminished, caused him to be suspended by the feet, and his sides and back to be pierced with red-hot spikes. Having then caused wine and meats, which had been offered to the gods, to be forced down his throat, the tyrant said to him: “What has the endurance of thy tortures availed thee? Behold! thou hast at last participated in our sacrifices.” Probus answered: “Doth it, then, appear to thee that thou hast obtained a great victory? Although thou shouldst cause all the filth of thy altars to be forced into my mouth, yet would not my soul be contaminated, since God beholds the violence which I have suffered.” Maximus, to vent his rage upon him, caused the calves of his legs and his hands to be thoroughly perforated with red-hot spikes, and his eyes to be burned out with them; yet during these horrible tortures no word of lamentation was heard from the saint; but he continued to bless the Lord, and said to the tyrant: “As long as I shall have breath, I will render thanksgiving to the Lord, who grants me strength and patience; I desire nothing so much as to finish my life by the most cruel death which thy tyranny can invent, in order that I may render to God the homage which he deserves.”

Andronicus was then brought forward, and having continued to despise equally the threats and promises of the tyrant, rolls of paper were lighted upon his abdomen, and burning spikes placed between his fingers. The saint having invoked the name of Jesus for strength to suffer these tortures, Maximus said to him: “This Jesus, in whom thou confidest, was a malefactor, crucified by Pontius Pilate.” “Peace!” replied Andronicus, “thou shouldst not speak of him, of whom thou art unworthy; if thou didst know him, thou wouldst not blaspheme his name, nor persecute his servants. Thou and thy associates shall suffer for this; but may the Lord punish ye in such a manner that ye may come to the knowledge of your misdeeds.” After this speech Maximus caused his teeth and tongue to be pulled out, and sent him back to prison.

Upon the following day an arena of wild beasts was prepared, to whom the martyrs were exposed; the beasts not daring to approach them, a most ferocious bear was let loose; but the animal having approached Andronicus, began to lick his wounds, whereupon Maximus commanded her to be killed at the saint's feet. A lioness was then put forward; but she laid down at the feet of Tarachus like a lamb. Maximus having caused her to be irritated, her fury was directed towards the spectators, and she was accordingly shut up in her den. Finally, the tyrant caused the martyrs to be cut down by the gladiators, and they thus obtained the desired crown.[8801]

Chapter LV

ST. QUIRINUS, BISHOP OF SISCIA

June 4.

THE Emperors Diocletian and Maximian having abdicated the empire, in the year 303, their successor, Galerius, continued the persecution against the Christians. St. Quirinus, who was bishop of Siscia,[8802] in Croatia, after having converted the inhabitants of that country to the faith of Christ, understanding that Maximus, who ruled in Pannonia as lieutenant for the governor, had given orders for his arrest, escaped from the city, in order that he might be spared for the benefit of his flock.

He was overtaken, however, by the soldiers, and presented before Maximus, who asked him why he had fled; the saint replied: “I obey the orders of my Master, who hath said, *When they persecute ye in one city, fly ye into another.*”[8803] Maximus: “Who hath given this order?” Quirinus: “Jesus Christ, who is the true God.” Maximus: “But knowest thou not that the emperor can find thee in all places, and that thy God cannot save thee from our hands?” Quirinus: “I know this, that our God is with us, and can succor us in all places. He it is that grants me strength in this my decrepit age, and will also uphold me during thy tortures.”

Maximus: “Thou speakest much because thou art an old man, and hopest to baffle us with talk; we require thy submission, not thy exhortations; there shall be no further toleration for Christians in the empire. The emperor has ordered that all shall sacrifice to the gods on pain of death; obey therefore.” Quirinus: “I cannot obey orders that are contrary to my religion. How can I refuse to obey God, in order to please men?” Maximus: “Dotard! hadst thou not lived so long, thou wouldst not have learned such idle talk—obey the emperor, and learn to be wise, even at the close of thy days.” Quirinus: “Dost thou then think it wisdom to commit such an act of impiety?” Maximus: “No more words—choose to be a priest of Jupiter, or to die amid torments.” Quirinus: “I have already made my choice, and I now exercise the functions of a priest, in offering myself as a sacrifice to my God, and esteem myself happy in being, at the same time, the priest and the victim.”

Maximus, unwilling to hear him any longer, caused him to be cruelly scourged. The holy bishop, during the infliction, raised his eyes to heaven, and returned thanks to God. Then, turning towards Maximus, he said that he was willing to suffer still greater torments, in order to give a good example to his followers; but the lieutenant, fearing that he might expire under the lash, sent him back to prison.

St. Quirinus, upon his arrival, again thanked God for what he had suffered, and prayed that those who were in prison might be illuminated by the light of the true faith. About midnight the martyr was seen surrounded by a great light, whereupon the jailer, named Marcellus, casting himself at the feet of the saint, exclaimed: “Servant of God, pray to him for me, since I believe that there is no other God than he whom thou adorest.” St. Quirinus, having instructed him in the faith, as well as the time would permit, baptized him.

At the expiration of three days he was sent, loaded with chains, to Amantius, the governor of the greater Pannonia, which is now called Hungary. On his way thither he was confined at Sabadia, where he was visited by some Christian women, who brought him food; and while the saint was blessing it, the chains fell from his hands and feet, as the Lord wished to show, by this sign, his approval of the charity done to the venerable prelate.

Upon his arrival the governor had him brought before him, and, having read the proceedings of his former trial, endeavored to shake his resolution by threatening to put him to a most cruel death, notwithstanding his most advanced age. The saint replied that the recollection of his old age should the more induce him to despise death, as he had but a short time to live; and Amantius despairing of being able to change him, ordered him to be cast into the river Sabarius, with a mill-stone tied to his neck.

While the saint was being led to the bridge, a great concourse of people had assembled. They saw him cast into the river, together with the mill-stone; but both were seen to float upon the surface of the water; whence the holy bishop commenced to exhort the faithful to remain firm in the faith, and, as he continued to preach thus for a considerable time, many pagans were converted. At last the saint made the following prayer: “Christ Jesus, my Saviour, these people have already seen the wonders of Thy power; grant me now the grace to die for Thee, nor permit me to lose the crown of martyrdom.” His body then sank, together with the stone, and he thus rendered his soul to God on the 4th June, in the beginning of the fourth century. His death is placed by St. Jerome in the year 310, and by Baronius 308.

The body of Saint Quirinus was afterwards translated to Rome, and buried near the catacombs of St. Sebastian; but Pope Innocent II. finally deposited it in the church of St. Mary beyond the Tiber.

Chapter LVI

ST. BLASE, BISHOP OF SEBASTE

February 3.

ST. BLASE was a native of the city of Sebaste, in Armenia, and in his younger days applied himself to the study of philosophy, in which he made considerable progress; he afterwards studied medicine with great success. The science of the saints, however, and a desire to improve in the love of God, occupied his principal attention, whereby being inflamed with an ardent charity towards the poor, he went frequently to relieve them in their sickness. Upon the death of the bishop, his fellow-citizens unanimously elected him their pastor, by reason of his extraordinary virtues and great learning.

He accepted the office, as being unwilling to resist the will of God, which appeared too manifest in his election to be mistaken; but in the government of his church he lost not that spirit of holy retirement which he had had from his youth. He therefore retired to Mount Argeus, without the city, and dwelt in a cave there.[8804] During our saint's residence in this place the Lord was pleased to manifest his sanctity by honoring him with the gift of miracles, and numerous crowds of persons used constantly to come to him for the cure of their bodily diseases as well as of their spiritual maladies. Even the most ferocious animals are said to have proceeded to his cave to be relieved. If they found the saint in prayer, they would patiently wait until he had done; nor would they depart until they had received his blessing.[8805]

About the year 315, Agricolaus, governor of Cappadocia and the lesser Armenia, had been sent, by the Emperor Licinius, to Sebaste, to put to death the Christians of that city; and, immediately upon his arrival, commenced to put his bloody commission into execution, by commanding that all those who had been already imprisoned for the faith should be devoured by wild beasts. He accordingly sent huntsmen into the neighboring forest to catch the ferocious animals, in order to execute his barbarous design. When they arrived at Mount Argeus, they found a multitude of these beasts assembled round the cave of St. Blase, and the holy bishop in the midst of them, performing his devotions. Astonished at this sight, they returned to Agricolaus, and informed him of the fact; which, although it caused him to marvel greatly, did not prevent him from sending his soldiers to arrest our saint. When they intimated to him the order of the governor he answered with a cheerful countenance: “Let us go to shed our blood for Jesus Christ;” then turning to those who stood by, he protested that he had long sighed for the honor of martyrdom, and that on the preceding night the Lord had manifested to him that he would vouchsafe to accept the sacrifice of his life.

As soon as the news was spread among the citizens that their bishop was being led to Sebaste by order of the governor the streets were filled with people who, with tears in their eyes, asked his blessing. Among the rest was a woman, who, weeping bitterly, presented to him her child, who was expiring by reason of a small bone having stuck in his throat; full of holy confidence, she besought the saint to save his life. St. Blase, moved to compassion by the tears of the afflicted mother, prayed to the Lord not only for the relief of that child, but of all those who would find themselves similarly afflicted. Having terminated his prayer the child perfectly recovered; and hence the origin of the peculiar devotion of the faithful to this saint when afflicted with diseases of the throat.

When St. Blase arrived at the city and was presented to the governor, he was commanded to sacrifice to the immortal gods. The saint answered: “What a title for your demons, who can bring only evil on their worshippers! There is only ONE Immortal God, and him do I adore.” Agricolaus, infuriated at this answer, caused the saint to undergo a scourging so prolonged and cruel that it was thought the saint could not possibly survive it; but having endured this torture with placid courage, he was sent to prison, where he continued to work miracles so extraordinary that the governor ordered him to be again lacerated with iron hooks.

The blood of the saint ran profusely, and certain pious women were induced to collect portions of it, which act of devotion was amply rewarded, for they were seized, with two of their children, and brought before the governor. He commanded them to sacrifice to the gods under pain of death. The holy women asked for their idols, as some thought, to sacrifice to them, but they no sooner laid hands upon them than they cast them into an adjoining lake, for which they were instantly beheaded, along with their children.

Agricolaus resolved to wreak his vengeance on St. Blase; and not content with the torture which he had already caused him to endure, commanded him to be stretched upon the rack, and his flesh to be torn with iron combs, in which state a red-hot coat of mail was placed upon him. Finally, the tyrant, despairing of overcoming his constancy, ordered him to be cast into the lake; the saint, arming himself with the sign of the cross, walked upon the waters, and, arriving at the middle, sat down, and invited the idolaters to do the same if they believed that their gods could enable them. Some were so rash as to make the attempt, but were immediately drowned.

St. Blase was admonished then by a voice from heaven to go forth from the lake and encounter his martyrdom. When he reached the land the impious tyrant ordered him to be beheaded. This sentence was executed in the year 313. The republic of Ragusa honor him as their principal patron, and he is the titular saint of many cities.

Chapter LVII

ST. ANASTASIA, VIRGIN, AND ST. CYRIL OF ROME

October 28.

VALERIAN succeeded to the empire on the death of Gallus, in the year 244, and in the beginning of his reign showed himself so favorable to the Christians, that many of them were employed at his court; but his subsequent cruelty towards them was as remarkable as his former clemency. A certain Egyptian magician succeeded in ingratiating himself into the emperor's confidence; and as many Christians, by the sign of the cross, were enabled to destroy his demoniacal incantations, the favorite stimulated Valerian to undertake the destruction of the Christian religion, towards the close of the year 247.

St. Anastasia was a Roman virgin of noble and Christian parentage; and, although endowed with extraordinary beauty, manifested from her tenderest years a desire to be espoused to Jesus Christ only. She accordingly led a most holy life, without any other desire than to increase in the divine love. There was at Rome a nunnery governed by a most holy lady named Sophia, the inmates of which lived in the greatest Christian perfection and among these St. Anastasia enrolled herself, in order to make still further progress in virtue. The devil left no means untried in order to tempt her to abandon her holy design; but, by the assistance of continual prayer, she overcame these temptations, and thus rendered herself more perfect, and more intimately united to Jesus Christ.

No sooner were the edicts of Valerian published against the Christians than his emissaries began a most searching inquisition. They discovered the residence of Anastasia, who, by reason of her exemplary life, had acquired great reputation for sanctity amongst the faithful; and accordingly, an officer, accompanied by a band of soldiers, having proceeded to the monastery, broke open the doors, and in the name of Probus, Prefect of

Rome, demanded that Anastasia should be given up to them. Hereupon the good Sophia hastened to animate her disciple in the following terms: “Behold, my daughter, the time hath arrived when the Spouse calleth thee. Go, and offer thyself as a sacrifice of love to him who for thee offered himself upon the cross. Be strong and fear not; make it appear that thou art worthy of such a spouse.”

The young virgin was forthwith brought before Probus, who, admiring her wonderful beauty, spoke to her with much affability, and inquired her name. She replied: “My name is Anastasia, and I have the happiness to be a Christian.” “This,” said the prefect, “is a bad recommendation; it overshadows thy prospects, and I would, therefore, recommend thee to abandon so odious a religion. I intend to render thee perfectly happy; but, to this end, thou must come with me to the temple, and offer sacrifice to Jove; but, if thou wilt not obey, know that the most cruel torments await thee.” The saint replied: “I shall rather await these torments, and I am ready to suffer them for the love of God. Thy promises and thy threats are equally ineffectual; for the Almighty God, whom I adore, will give me strength to resist both.”

At these words, so resolutely uttered, the prefect became greatly exasperated, and commanded the saint to be buffeted upon the face; which was done with such violence that she was covered with blood, and in this state was sent back to prison. Here she manifested so much holy joy, that the tyrant’s fury knew no bounds; he commanded that she should be tortured by the dislocation of all her limbs, and that her sides should be burned with lighted torches. This infliction was endured by the saint without a moan, and with so serene a countenance, that the prefect, perceiving that torture and fire moved her not, commanded the nails to be torn from her fingers, her teeth to be broken with a hammer, and her breasts to be pulled off with iron pincers. In the order of nature, she should have expired under these tortures; but the Lord so upheld her that she did nothing but bless his holy name, and upon being brought back to prison, all her wounds were miraculously cured.

Probus having heard this, and being informed, moreover, that the saint called his gods “gods of wood, of clay, and of metal,” ordered her tongue to be pulled out by the roots. The holy virgin, upon hearing the cruel command, began to thank the Lord, and to sing his praises. The operation filled the spectators with horror, and a torrent of blood proceeded from her mouth, which completely stained her clothes. Finding herself ready to faint after the infliction, she made signs to a certain Christian, named Cyril, to give her some water; he complied, and this act of charity earned for him the crown of martyrdom.

Notwithstanding the loss of her tongue, St. Anastasia ceased not to bless the Lord, and implore of him help to consummate her sacrifice. In these prayers she frequently raised her hands to heaven, which so annoyed the tyrant that, in addition to her other torments, he had her hands and feet cut off, and finally ordered her to be beheaded. Thus did this glorious saint enter the kingdom of Jesus Christ, with as many merits as she had suffered tortures for his sake.

The above-mentioned Cyril was also beheaded at the same time, which was on the 27th or 28th of October, about the year 249.

Surius adds, that the good Sophia, having heard the glorious end of her novice, procured the body; and with the assistance of two pious persons, buried it without the city.[8806]

Chapter LVIII

STS. VICTOR, OFFICER; ALEXANDER, FELICIANUS, LONGINUS, SOLDIERS, OF MARSEILLES

July 21.

DURING the reign of the Emperor Maximilian the Christian religion was extensively propagated at Marseilles; in consequence of which this notable enemy of the faithful caused a great slaughter of them upon his arrival in that city. Among these was St. Victor, a military officer, and so good a Christian that he let no opportunity pass of animating the faithful, and exhorting them to suffer every torture, rather than abandon the religion of Jesus Christ. To this end he frequently visited them in their houses by night.

His zealous conduct could not long remain concealed, and he was soon arrested and brought before the prefects of the city, Asterius and Eutychius, who told him that they would obtain his pardon if he would consent to sacrifice to the gods, and exhorted him not to lose his past services by being the follower of a dead man, as was Jesus Christ. Victor answered that the gods of the pagans were none other than devils, who deserved only contempt. He added, that he gloried in being a follower of that “dead man,” Jesus Christ, who being the Son of God, became man, for the salvation of the world; but who, in doing so, did not cease to be God, since by his own power he rose again on the third day, and ascended into heaven, where he reigns with his Father. The pagans hearing these things, which they imagined to be fables, commenced to deride him; but Victor being a nobleman, the prefects forwarded his case to the emperor for judgment.

Maximilian endeavored to intimidate him by threats; but finding that Victor disregarded them, he commanded that he should be bound hand and foot, and dragged through the streets of the city. When the saint was brought back to the prefects all torn and covered with blood, they thought that he had been daunted by the torture already suffered, and used all their exertions to make him renounce Jesus Christ; representing to him the good fortune he might enjoy by complying with the will of the emperor, and the evils which would be the consequence of his disobedience; but Victor, even more courageously than before, replied: “I have committed no crime against the emperor, nor have I failed to serve him when it was a duty. I, moreover, pray every day for his salvation; but how can it be expected that I will bring damnation upon myself by preferring temporal to eternal things? Would I not be truly mad to prefer the insignificant and transitory goods of fortune, to those which are immensely greater and never end? Is it not reasonable that I should think less of the emperor’s favor than of the favor of that God who created me, and prepared for me an eternal felicity? As for the tortures which you threaten, I regard them rather as so many favors conferred upon me, since they are likely to free me from eternal torments; the death which is being prepared shall be to me the entrance into life everlasting. Should I not be supposed to have lost my senses, were I to prefer your gods, who are only demons, to my God, the living and the true?

The saint spoke at some length of the evidences of the Christian religion, the glories of Jesus Christ, and the many miracles wrought by him when on earth; but the prefects, unwilling to hear him further, interrupted him, saying: “Now, Victor, thy words are of no avail; either choose to appease our offended deities, or to end thy days by an ignominious death.” Victor answered: “Since this is your decision, let the tortures be prepared. I despise your gods, and adore Jesus Christ.”

The prefects disputed amongst themselves for some time regarding the torments to which they would subject the saints; but it was finally resolved that he should undergo a long and painful torture suggested by Asterius, during which Jesus Christ appearing to him, said: “Be of good courage, Victor, I am with thee in the combat, to help thee, and shall be with thee in heaven to reward thee after thy triumph.” The saint, consoled by this vision, endured his torments with a serene countenance, rendered thanks to God; and, after the executioners had exhausted their strength, was cast into a dark dungeon, whither there came angels to console him, with whom he chanted the divine praises. The guards seeing the place filled with a heavenly light, cast themselves at the feet of the saint, and requested him to baptize them; these guards were named Alexander, Longinus, and Felicianus. The saint instructed them as well as time would permit, and in the course of the night they were baptized by a priest for whom he had sent.

On the day following, the conversion of the three guards having been made public, the emperor ordered Victor to be again tortured; and the guards, having remained faithful to the religion which they had embraced, were beheaded.

Victor having undergone the tortures, was brought before an altar of Jove, and commanded to sacrifice; but he threw it down with his foot, which was instantly cut off by order of the emperor. A mill-stone was then placed upon him, by which he was greatly bruised and crushed, but it broke to pieces before the saint expired, and his head was accordingly struck off. At the moment of his death a voice was heard from heaven, saying: “Victor, thou hast conquered!”[8807]

The tyrant commanded that the bodies of the martyrs should be cast into the sea; but God so disposed it that they were cast ashore upon the opposite side of the port, so that the Christians were enabled to recover them, and place them in a grotto, where the Lord was pleased to honor them with many miracles.[8808]

Chapter LIX

SS. PETER, DOROTHEUS, AND GORGONIUS, CHAMBERLAINS

March 12 and September 9.

DIOCLETIAN having been greatly alarmed by a fire breaking out in 303 in his palace at Nicomedia, was told by some malevolent persons that the disaster had been caused by the Christians, who, it was said, intended to burn him alive. The emperor accordingly determined to exterminate them from the empire, and forthwith sent orders to all the governors that they should put to death all the Christians of their respective jurisdiction, without any exception whatever, and this on pain of losing not only their office, but their lives.

Galerius, the son-in-law of Diocletian, being an implacable enemy of the Christians, caused the palace to be a second time set on fire, in order the more to incite the emperor against them; he, moreover, accused the Christian officers of the palace with being the authors of the fire, alleging that their intention was to destroy both the emperors, together with the household. Diocletian's rage knew no bounds; and the first victim was one of his chamberlains, a zealous Christian named Peter, who being commanded to sacrifice or lose his life, answered: "I would rather lose my life than my religion. How can it be expected that I should sacrifice to the devils, who are our enemies?" Having said these words, he was hoisted in the air, and most cruelly scourged upon every part of the body; after which he was taken down, and vinegar and salt being rubbed into his torn flesh, he was roasted on a gridiron, in which torture the Christian hero terminated his life.

Diocletian was aware that the lord chamberlain Dorotheus, and Gorgonius, one of the principal officers of the household, were Christians; but as he loved them on account of their fidelity and virtue, he could not bring himself to condemn them to death. The two saints, however, had witnessed, and regarded with a kind of pious jealousy, the martyrdom of Peter; and finding themselves one day alone with the emperor, they respectfully represented to him how much he had been imposed upon by those malevolent persons, who induced him to persecute the innocent. They continued: “What evil hath Peter done, my lord, to merit so cruel a death? True, he was a Christian; but what subjects are there in all the empire more faithful than the Christians? If to be so be considered a crime, we are willing to die for it. But it is no crime; on the contrary, we are obliged to adore the one only true God.”

After this protestation, Diocletian was wavering between his regard for the saints and his hatred of their faith: but Galerius soon caused the latter to prevail; and it was intimated to them that they should renounce their faith, or suffer death. Having refused to comply with the wishes of the emperor, they were scourged so cruelly, and their blood flowed so copiously, that the torture was suspended lest they should expire under it. However, as they were found yet alive, and firm in their resolution, they were roasted over a slow fire, upon a gridiron, and afterwards strangled. Thus on the 9th of September, in the year 302, did they consummate their sacrifice, a striking example of the love of God, and an acceptable holocaust to his honor.

Their relics were subsequently brought to Rome, and buried on the Via Latina, whence they were translated by Pope Gregory IV. to St. Peter’s Church, in the year 764. Pope Paul the First granted the body of St. Gorgonius to the Bishop of Mentz, and it was again translated, in the year 1595, to Pont Mausson, where it still remains.

Chapter LX

ST. TIMOTHY, LECTOR; AND ST. MAURA, HIS WIFE

UPON the death of the Emperor Diocletian, his successors Galerius and Maximilian continued the persecution against the Christians, and our saints were of the number of those who then obtained the crown of martyrdom. Timothy was a native of the town of Perapus in Thebais, and was so exemplary a Christian that his bishop ordained him lector. He was married to a Christian lady named Maura, only seventeen years of age; and the marriage had been solemnized but three weeks, when Arianus, the governor of the province, issued an order for the arrest of Timothy, who had been represented to him as one of the greatest enemies of the gods. When the latter was presented, Arianus said to him: “Art thou not aware of the edicts of the emperors against those who refuse to sacrifice to the idols?” Timothy answered: “I am aware of them, but will rather lay down my life than commit such an act of impiety.” “Then,” said the governor, “we shall put thee to the torture, and hear how thou wilt speak during the infliction.” The saint resolutely refused to comply, and the barbarous tyrant caused burning irons to be put into his ears, until the violence of the pain caused his eyes to start from their sockets.

After this horrible torture Timothy commenced to return thanks to the Lord; whereupon the tyrant, more infuriated than before, ordered him to be suspended by the feet, with a large stone tied to his neck, and a kind of bridle on his mouth to prevent him from speaking. Seeing, however, that torments had no effect upon Timothy, he sent for Maura, and told her that she alone could save her husband from death, as by her tears she might induce him to sacrifice to the gods. She went accordingly to the place, and seeing him in so piteous a condition, endeavored to induce him to abandon the faith. Timothy, whose mouth had been unbridled that he might answer his wife, replied: “How is it possible, O Maura, that, being thyself a

Christian, instead of animating me to die for the faith, thou dost tempt me to abandon it; and thus, to obtain a short and miserable existence here, expose myself to the never-ending pains of hell? Is this, then, thy love?”

Maura was instantly converted by this rebuke; and, casting herself on her knees, besought Jesus Christ, with many penitent tears, to forgive her. She then asked pardon of her husband, and exhorted him to remain firm in his profession of faith, expressing at the same time a desire to sacrifice her life in atonement for her fault, and be the happy companion of his martyrdom. Timothy, much consoled by the repentance of his wife, told her that her last words had caused him to forget his past sufferings, and that she should forthwith return to the governor to retract her first step, and to express her desire of dying for Jesus Christ. Maura at first was afraid to trust her own weakness; but Timothy prayed for her so effectually, that the Lord granted her grace and strength to execute the orders of her pious husband.

The governor, surprised at her sudden change, endeavored to dissuade her from her holy purpose, by promising to obtain for her an advantageous match upon her husband’s death, but Maura replied that after his death she would have no other spouse than Jesus Christ. Hereupon Arianus caused her hair to be violently pulled out and her fingers cut off; after which she was immersed in a caldron of boiling water, from which, however, she came out uninjured. Arianus was much affected by this miracle, and it contributed much to his conversion, which happened a few days after. Before the martyrdom of the saints, however, he had not that happiness; and, lest he should be remiss in executing the orders of the emperor, he caused the saint to be tortured with burning sulphur and pitch, after which she was sentenced to be crucified, together with her husband.

While she was proceeding to the place of execution, her mother, shedding many tears, embraced her; but the saint, freeing herself from her parent’s embrace, hastened to the cross. The husband and wife were crucified one opposite to the other; and in order that their agonies might be prolonged, they were not strangled. They continued to live in this state for some days, during which time they ceased not to bless the Lord, and to encourage each other with the hope that they would soon be united to Jesus Christ in heaven. These two saints obtained the crown of their glorious martyrdom on the 19th December, in the beginning of the fourth century.

Their festival is kept by the Greeks, and also by the Muscovites. There was a church at Constantinople dedicated to God in honor of these martyrs.

Chapter LXI

SS. SIXTUS II., POPE; LAURENCE, DEACON; ROMANUS, SOLDIER

August 6, 9, and 10.

FROM the sacramentary of St. Leo it would appear that St. Laurence was by birth a Roman citizen, but was probably a Spaniard by descent; yet some authors state that he was born in Spain, and that he came to Rome when very young. St. Peter Chrysologus observes, that though poor in earthly possessions, he was rich in heavenly gifts, for which reason Pope St. Sixtus conceived a great affection for him, and not only regarded him as one of his most beloved disciples, but promoted him to deacon's orders, placed him over seven other deacons, and appointed him his treasurer and almoner.

The Emperor Valerian was, at the beginning of his reign, rather favorable to the Christians, but in the year 258 he raised a fierce persecution against them, which was particularly directed against the bishops and clergy. St. Sixtus was accordingly one of the first who was arrested; as he was preparing to celebrate the divine mysteries in the cemetery of Calixtus, he was loaded with chains and conducted to prison. St. Laurence, having heard of his arrest, went to see him, and as St. Ambrose relates,[8809] addressed him in the following manner: "Whither dost thou go, Father, without thy deacon? What hast thou seen in me to displease thee, and which could induce thee to abandon me? Dost thou doubt me; let me have some trial before I am thus cast off?" St. Sixtus replied: "No, my son, I abandon thee not; a trial greater than mine, in testimony of the faith of Jesus Christ, awaits thee. The Lord, in consideration of the weakness of my age, exposes me to a less arduous struggle; but greater torments and a more glorious victory are reserved for thee. Go; and instantly distribute amongst the poor the treasures of the church, and prepare thyself for martyrdom." St. Laurence, inflamed as he was with the desire of martyrdom, received great consolation from these words, and lost no time disposing of the sacred vessels and vestments of the church, and distributing the money among the poor. He then returned to the prison, to visit the Holy Father, and finding him about to be led to the place of execution to be beheaded, he informed him that he had complied with his orders, and casting himself at his feet, implored his benediction, in the hope of shortly following his footsteps. St. Sixtus was beheaded, August 6, in the year 258.

The prefect of Rome, having been informed that St. Laurence held the property of the church, sent for him, and required him to deliver it up, alleging that the emperor needed it for the payment of the army. The saint composedly replied that he should be allowed some time, and that he would then show him how rich the church was. Within eight days the saint was enabled to assemble all the poor who had received succor from the church funds, and going to the prefect said to him: “Come, and thou shalt see the treasures of our church.” The prefect, finding only an assemblage of paupers, looked furiously upon the holy deacon, who said to him: “My lord, thou art angered; but remember, that silver and gold and precious stones are but dross extracted from the earth, but the riches of the Christians are the poor, whom the property of the Church supports.” The prefect, finding his avarice baffled by the saint, commanded him to renounce Jesus Christ; and finding his faith immovable, ordered that he should be scourged with rods as a slave. At the same time he was threatened with greater torments unless he consented to sacrifice to the gods; but Laurence protested that he was willing to undergo any punishment rather than worship deities who were worthy of nothing but contempt. The prefect then sent him to prison, in charge of Hippolytus, an officer of the guards. Hippolytus was struck with the intrepidity, the conduct, and the language of the saint, and began to conceive a species of veneration for him, but the miracles which he subsequently wrought in prison affected his conversion. Amongst these was the cure of a blind man named Lucillus, whose sight was restored by the saint’s touching his eyes; upon witnessing this miracle, Hippolytus requested to be baptized.

On the following day the prefect summoned the saint before him, and endeavored by promises and threats to make him renounce Jesus Christ. All his exertions proving useless, he commanded him to be stretched upon the rack until all his bones were dislocated, and his flesh to be torn by scourges armed with iron points. The saint believed that he was about to expire under this torture, for he prayed to the Lord to receive his soul; but he heard a voice which intimated to him that his triumph was not yet complete, and that other tortures were reserved for him. It is recorded by some writers that this voice was heard by all, even the prefect, who exclaimed: “Heed not the voice of the demons who wait upon this sorcerer.” At the same, a soldier named Romanus saw’ an angel in the form of a beautiful youth, who wiped away the blood which flowed from the wounds of the holy martyr, and being converted by this vision, approached St. Laurence, and intimated to him his desire to be baptized. The saint could not then comply with his wish; but the emperor, understanding that Laurence still persisted, ordered that he should be sent to prison, and there undergo still greater tortures.

Romanus procured a vessel of water, and entering the prison of St. Laurence received the necessary instructions, the sacrament of regeneration, and exhortations to prepare himself for martyrdom, which he received with great joy on the 9th of August, the day immediately preceding the triumph of our saint.

The prefect again summoned Laurence to his presence, and asked him: “Why dost thou so insolently despise our gods? The saint replied: “Because they are false gods; reason itself dictates that the true God can be only one.” Upon these words the tyrant caused his jaws to be broken by blows of a stone, and ordered him to be stretched upon a red-hot gridiron, under which a slow fire was placed, in order that his torture might be the more prolonged and painful. But these cruel torments seemed only to increase the intrepidity of the saint, who, perceiving that one side was completely roasted, said to the tyrant: “If thou wilt feed upon my flesh, thou mayest turn me and eat, as one side is done.” He then raised his eyes to heaven, and manifesting the joy with which he died, placidly rendered his soul to God, on the 10th of August, in the year 258.

Hippolytus and a priest named Justin took his body and buried it in a cave in Agro Verano; upon the spot a famous church was afterwards erected. Indeed, there are innumerable churches dedicated to God in his honor throughout Christendom; almost all the holy Fathers have celebrated his triumph, and Prudentius[8810] attributes the conversion of Rome principally to the martyrdom of this great saint. His name has been inserted in the Canon of the Mass.[8811]

Chapter LXII

SS. SEBASTIAN, OFFICER; AND THE TWO BROTHERS, MARCUS AND MARCELLIANUS

January 29 and June 18.

THIS saint was born of Christian parents, who dwelt at Narbonne, in Languedoc, but were natives of Milan. St. Ambrose[8812] relates that, by reason of his extraordinary talents and exemplary conduct, our saint was much beloved by Diocletian, who appointed him captain of the first company of his guards. Sebastian employed the emoluments of his station in the relief of the poor; he was indefatigable in assisting his brother Christians, and particularly those who languished in prison, whom he not only relieved with alms, but encouraged to suffer for Jesus Christ. He was consequently considered the main prop of the persecuted faithful.

At this time it happened that the two brothers, Marcus and Marcellianus, Roman knights, who had suffered tortures with considerable constancy, were being led to death, when their father, Tarquillinus, and their mother, Marcia, accompanied by the wives and children of the two confessors, obtained from the judge, Cromatius, by tears and entreaties, that the sentence should be deferred for thirty days. It is easy to imagine what wailings and entreaties were used by their relatives during the respite in order to induce the two brothers to prevaricate; indeed, they were so importunate and unceasing, that they who had already confessed the faith began now to vacillate. But Sebastian, knowing them, ran instantly to their assistance, and God’s blessing so accompanied his words, that he induced them to receive with joy a most cruel death; for they were obliged to hang nailed by the feet to a gallows for a day and a night before they were transfixed with a lance. Nor was this all: the zealous captain likewise converted to the faith not only all the above-named relatives of Marcus and

Marcellianus, but also Nicostratus, an officer of Cromatius, Claudius, the provost of the prison, and sixty-four prisoners, who were idolaters.

But the most remarkable conversion was that of Cromatius himself, who, hearing that Tarquillinus had embraced the faith, sent for him and said: “Hast thou then turned mad in the last days of thy life?” The good old man replied: “On the contrary, by embracing the Christian faith I have become wise, for it is wisdom to prefer an everlasting life to the few wretched days that await me in this world.” He then persuaded him to have an interview with St. Sebastian, who quickly persuaded him of the truth of the Christian religion; and Cromatius, having received baptism, with his entire family, and one thousand four hundred slaves, to whom he granted their freedom, renounced his office, and retired to his country house.

Fabian, the successor of Cromatius, having learned that Sebastian not only exhorted the Christians to remain steadfast in the faith, but procured also the conversion of the pagans, reported the fact to the emperor, who sent for our saint, and upbraided him with the crime of perverting his subjects. Sebastian answered that he considered he was rendering the greatest possible service to the emperor, since the state benefited by having Christian subjects, whose fidelity to their sovereign is proportionate to their devotedness to Jesus Christ. The emperor, enraged at this reply, ordered that the saint should be instantly tied to a post, and that a body of archers should discharge their arrows upon him. The sentence was immediately executed, and Sebastian was left for dead; but a holy widow, named Irene, went at night to bury him, and finding him yet alive, brought him to her house, where he recovered. After this the saint went to the emperor, and said to him: “How long, O Prince, wilt thou believe the calumnies that have been spread against the Christians? I have returned to tell thee again that thou hast not in the empire subjects more faithful than the Christians, who by their prayers obtain for thee all thy prosperity.”

Diocletian, surprised to see the saint still living, exclaimed: “How is it that thou art yet alive?” Sebastian answered: “The Lord has been pleased to preserve my life that I might admonish thee of thy impiety in persecuting the Christians.”

The emperor, irritated at the admonition, ordered that the saint should be scourged to death. This sentence being executed, he expired on the 20th January, about the year 228.

The pagans threw the body of the martyr into a marsh, but a holy lady named Lucina caused it to be taken thence, and buried it at the entrance of a cemetery which is now called the “Catacombs of St. Sebastian.”

Chapter LXIII

SS. CYRIACUS, LARGUS, AND SMARAGDUS

March 17 and August 8.

THE vanity of the Emperor Diocletian incited him to build a palace which would be one of the wonders of the world; and in truth he succeeded in erecting at Rome a stupendous fabric, where he placed the baths, afterwards called “Le Terme Diocleziane,” the vestiges of which are still visible. Amongst the many punishments which the intense hatred of this emperor directed against the Christians was that of obliging them to assist in the erection of this palace. Multitudes of them were there to be seen rolling stones, digging the foundations, and carrying lime and water; and as his barbarous intention was to make them die of fatigue, they were obliged to labor unceasingly, and without sufficient food.

An opulent and noble Roman, named Thraso, who privately practised the Christian religion, regarding with compassion these confessors of Christ, employed three of his friends who were zealous Christians, namely, Cyriacus, Largus, and Smaragdus, in relieving their necessities and in encouraging them to endure their trials for the love of Jesus Christ. Pope St. Marcellinus having been informed of their many acts of virtue, promoted Cyriacus to the order of deacon, in order that he might the more effectually carry on the holy work.

The saints were ultimately detected carrying food to the Christians, and were immediately arrested and condemned to labor at the building; but here they so distinguished themselves by their charity and zeal, that they were accused before Maximian, the colleague of Diocletian, who being no less cruel, caused them to be arrested and led to prison, where the Lord wrought many miracles by them. Some persons who had been blind recovered their sight when Cyriacus blessed them with the sign of the cross, and many others, afflicted with various diseases, came to the prison, and were by the same means restored to health. The saints availed themselves of these opportunities to inculcate the truths of Christianity, and induced many to embrace the faith.

The fame of these miracles at last reached the court, and a daughter of Diocletian, named Arthemia, being possessed by a devil, from which she suffered much, declared that she could not be cured except through the intercession of the deacon Cyriacus. The emperor being induced by the great love which he bore his daughter, sent to the prison for Cyriacus, who, having prayed over the princess, and commanded the devil to depart from her, received the following answer: “I obey, because I cannot resist the power of Jesus Christ; but I shall proceed to the court of the King of Persia.” The saint observed: “All shall ultimately be to the glory of Christ, and to thy confusion.” The young lady was immediately freed from the evil spirit, and boldly manifested her intention of becoming a Christian.

Meanwhile the daughter of the King of Persia, named Jobia, was possessed by the same evil spirit, and exclaimed that she could not be relieved unless by the deacon Cyriacus, who was at Rome. The king immediately sent an ambassador to request of Diocletian that Cyriacus should be sent to him. The emperor accordingly despatched the deacon and his two companions, and upon their arrival in Persia, Cyriacus declared to the king, that in Order to see his daughter relieved from the evil spirit, he should embrace the faith of Jesus Christ. The king consented; the princess was cured, and the monarch and his daughter, with four hundred pagans, received the sacrament of baptism. The king was desirous that the saints should remain in his dominions; but, anxious for the glory of martyrdom, they insisted upon returning to Rome. On their arrival there they labored indefatigably in assisting the persecuted Christians, and Diocletian tolerated their proceedings.

When the emperor left Rome, his colleague, Maximian, whose hatred to the Christians was ungovernable, caused our saints to be arrested, and intimated to his lieutenant, Carpasius, that they should either sacrifice, or be themselves sacrificed, to the gods. The saints expressed their horror at the proposal, and Cyriacus said: “How can we sacrifice to the gods, who are only demons of hell?” Carpasius caused boiling pitch to be poured upon his head, and then had him stretched upon a rack, and beaten with clubs; but the saint suffered these tortures, not only with patience, but with thanks to

Jesus Christ, who rendered him worthy to suffer these tortures for his sake. Maximian, perceiving that the heroism of the saints could not be overcome by tortures, caused them to be beheaded, with twenty other martyrs, on the 16th of March, in the year 303.

Their bodies were buried near the place of their martyrdom, upon the road called *Via Salaria*, but those of our three saints were shortly afterwards translated by Pope St. Marcellus, to the farm of a Christian lady named Lucina, on the Ostian way.

Chapter LXIV

SS. MAMMAS; THEODOTUS, HIS FATHER; RUFINA, HIS MOTHER; AND AMYA

August 17 and 31.

St. MAMMAS was born in Paphlagonia, a town of Asia Minor, now called Bolli, and situated between Pontus Euxinus and Galatia. He was the son of Theodotus and Rufina, both noble and exemplary Christians.[8813] The persecution against the Christians was raging in this province, and Theodotus was arrested and sent to prison by Alexander, the governor of the town, who, however, not having authority to inflict capital punishments, and finding Theodotus persevering in his profession of the faith, sent him to Faustus, governor of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, whither Rufina, although pregnant, accompanied him. It was intimated to Theodotus, on being presented to the cruel Faustus, that he should either obey the emperor, or be prepared to undergo tortures that would finally cause his death. The pious confessor replied that it was his desire to die for Jesus Christ; but being taken ill on account of the want of food and the fatigue of his journey, which was on foot, he was sent to prison, where he ended his days in a holy manner. Rufina was his companion in death, for she prematurely gave birth to her child, and died the day following.

A rich and noble Christian widow, named Amya, while engaged in holy prayer, was favored with the vision of an angel, who intimated to her that she should take care of the orphan infant who was in prison. The good lady obtained from the governor a legal possession of the child, whom she called Mammas, at baptism. The boy, as he grew up, made considerable progress in human learning, but still greater in the science of the saints, and a holy zeal for the advancement of the Christian religion; so much so, that at twelve years of age he undertook the task of making converts to the faith of Jesus Christ. Meanwhile the good Amya died, leaving him heir to all her riches, which, however, he quickly distributed among the poor. Faustus also died, and was succeeded in the government by Democritus, an implacable enemy of the Christians, who arrived at Cæsarea; and, having heard of the zeal and energy with which the young Mammas labored for the increase of the faithful, summoned him to his presence, and said: “How is it possible that, being so learned, thou art anxious to follow the Christian sect, which is proscribed throughout the empire? Come with me to offer sacrifice at the temple of Jove, and I will not fail to use my interest with the emperor for thy advancement.” The holy youth replied: “However grateful, my lord, for thy very kind opinion regarding my learning, I should feel myself unworthy of being esteemed wise were I to sacrifice to any creature, knowing as I do that there is but one only God. If I were to give the honors due to the emperor to one of his vassals, would I not become guilty of treason? How then can I sacrifice to thy gods, who are none other than devils?”

Democritus, enraged at this answer, ordered Mammas to be put to the torture; but the saint observed that, being the adopted son of a noble woman, it was not in the governor’s power to authorize the execution of such a sentence. Democritus therefore reported all the circumstances to the Emperor Aurelian, who commanded that the saint should be brought before him, and upon his appearance addressed him thus: “I wish, my son, to employ thee at court, but thou must therefore abandon the Christian faith. Choose, then, a happy life at my palace, or an ignominious death upon the scaffold. Mammas replied: “The choice, O prince, is already made: thou dost propose unto me a death which shall render me forever happy, or a short life that must make me eternally miserable.” The emperor asked: “And from whom, if not from our gods, canst thou expect this everlasting bliss?” “No,” re-joined Mammas, “thy gods which are but deaf and blind statues, can confer no favor upon me. I adore the one only true God, and for him I am most willing to lay down my life. To be permitted to do so I would esteem the greatest possible happiness.”

This conversation so irritated Aurelian, that he commanded the saint’s body to be torn with scourges: yet Mammas endured this torture without a groan; and the emperor, who appeared moved by the horrid infliction, said, in a tone of entreaty: “Mammas, merely say with thy mouth that thou wilt sacrifice.” The saint replied: “It would displease my God were I to deny him with my heart or with my tongue. Continue to torture me as long as it pleaseth thee. The executioners shall sooner tire than I.” This expression exasperated Aurelian, and he commanded that the saint’s flesh should be burned with torches, which, however, by God’s permission, burned not the saint, but those who held them. The emperor perceiving this, ordered that he should be cast into the sea; but while he was being led thither, an angel, appearing in the form of a young man, put the guards to flight, and intimated to Mammas that he should retire to a mountain in the neighborhood of Cæsarea; the saint accordingly dwelt in that solitude for forty days.

A new governor was appointed to Cæsarea, and having been informed that there lived on the adjoining mountain a Christian whom the emperor had condemned to death, he sent a troop of cavalry to seize him. The soldiers having met the saint, without knowing him to be the object of their pursuit, asked him if he knew in which part of the mountain Mammas dwelt. The saint replied that he could show them his abode, and led them to his hut, which was instantly surrounded by a troop of wild beasts. The soldiers being alarmed hereat, the saint said: “Fear not: these creatures come to nourish me with their milk. I am Mammas, whom you seek; return to town, and I will follow you.” The soldiers were too much alarmed not to obey the saint; and on their return informed the governor of what had happened. The holy martyr soon presented himself before the governor, who said to him: “Art thou the wizard that by the magical arts of the Christians dost tame wild beasts?” The saint answered: “I am a servant of Jesus Christ, who protects his servants, and condemns to eternal fire those that confide in idols. For the rest, know that the practice of magic, of which you falsely accuse us, is unknown to Christians. Thou hast sent for me; what is thy will?” The governor replied: “Thou art a rash man, opposing, as thou dost, the edicts of the emperor; but torments shall alter thee.”

The tyrant then ordered that the saint should be stretched upon the rack, and scourged; but as he evinced considerable fortitude, the governor threatened to have him burned alive, and accordingly sent him to prison. St. Mammas here found forty Christians who had been incarcerated for the faith, and being moved to compassion, prayed for them; whereupon the gates of the prison opened of themselves, and these holy confessors were thus restored to liberty.

The miracle converted some pagans, but increased the fury of the tyrant, who ordered that Mammas should be bound hand and foot and cast into a furnace. The fire, however, touched not a hair of his head, but merely burned his bonds, and during his stay in the fire he ceased not to bless the Lord. The saint after this trial prayed for the termination of his martyrdom; and being cut down by the swords of the executioners, went to receive the reward of his many victories, in the year 275, which was the last year of Aurelian’s reign.

Surius has written the life of this saint, who has always been regarded by the Greeks as one of their most glorious martyrs. During the reign of Constantine a church was built over his tomb at Cæsarea, and other churches have been erected to his honor throughout Christendom.[8814]

Chapter LXV

SS. JANUARIUS, BISHOP OF BENEVENTO; SOSIUS, PROCULUS, FESTUS, DEACONS; DIDIER, LECTOR; EUTYCHES, ACUTIUS

September 19.

NAPLES and Benevento both claim the honor of having given birth to Januarius; he is said to have been descended of the ancient family of the Sanniti, who had made war with the Romans, and were masters and dukes of Benevento. There are no historical records of the first years of St. Januarius, but it is certain that his parents were Christians, and that he was esteemed the most learned and pious of the clergy, for which reason he was unanimously chosen bishop of Benevento, upon a vacancy having occurred in that see. The humility of the saint induced him most resolutely to refuse that dignity, until he was obliged to accept it by a command from the Pope, who was at that time St. Caius, or St. Marcellinus.

Our saint undertook the government of his church during the persecution of Diocletian and Maximian, which circumstance gave him noble opportunities of manifesting the extent of his zeal for the faith of Jesus Christ. Not content with propagating and maintaining the faith in his own diocese, he ran through the neighboring cities converting pagans, and assisting and encouraging the faithful.

In the discharge of these duties he became acquainted with a holy deacon of the city of Miseno, named Sosius, with whom he formed a most intimate friendship; for as Sosius was one day reading the Gospel to the people, St. Januarius saw a most resplendent flame upon his head, from which fact he predicted that the pious deacon would be crowned with martyrdom. The prophecy was soon fulfilled; for after a few days Sosius was arrested as a Christian, and brought before Dracontius, governor of the district, who having in vain endeavored with promises and threats to make him prevaricate, caused him to be cruelly scourged, tortured, and sent to prison. He was here frequently visited by the Christians, but the deacon Proculus, and his fellow-citizens Eutyches and Acutius, were particularly attentive to him; and St. Januarius was no sooner apprised of his arrest than he repaired to the prison to comfort and encourage him.

Meanwhile Dracontius was removed to another place by the emperor, and succeeded in the government by Timothy, who upon his arrival at Nola, having heard of the preaching of St. Januarius, and the assistance which he afforded to the faithful in the neighborhood, ordered him to be arrested and brought before him, bound hand and foot. On being presented to the new governor, our saint was commanded to sacrifice, but immediately rejected the iniquitous proposal with horror and contempt; whereupon Timothy ordered him to be thrown into a furnace. The order was instantly executed, but the saint received not the least hurt; and although this miraculous preservation excited the wonder of all present, it was so far from making any salutary impression on the tyrant, that it rendered him more furious and cruel than before, and he accordingly ordered that the saint's body should be stretched upon the rack until his every nerve should be broken.

As soon as these proceedings were known at Benevento, Festus, the bishop's deacon, and Desiderius, his lector, forthwith departed to visit their holy prelate in the name of his entire flock; but Timothy being informed of their arrival at Nola, caused them to be arrested, and their depositions to be taken regarding the motives of their journey. They answered that, holding as they did subordinate offices in the church of the good bishop, they thought it their duty to visit their Superior in prison, and minister to him whatever assistance it might be in their power to afford. Upon hearing this declaration the tyrant commanded that they should be loaded with chains, and made to walk before his chariot to Puzzuoli, to be there delivered to wild beasts together with their pastor.

Immediately after their arrival they were exposed in the amphitheatre, when St. Januarius said to the rest: "Be of good heart, brethren! Behold, the day of our triumph has arrived. Let us confidently give our lives for Jesus Christ, who vouchsafed to give his for us." The beasts were let loose upon them, in the presence of a great multitude; but although they ran towards the martyrs as it were to devour them, they cast themselves before them and licked their feet. The miracle was evident to all, and a deep murmur was heard to run through the amphitheatre: “The God of the Christians is the only true God.”

The effect produced by this miracle made Timothy fear a general sedition, and he accordingly gave orders that the martyrs should be led to the public square and beheaded; but St. Januarius, in passing the governor, prayed that the Lord might strike him blind, for his own confusion and the conversion of the people. This prayer having taken instant effect, the tyrant delayed the execution of the sentence, and besought the holy bishop to forgive the maltreatment he had received, and to pray for the restoration of his sight. St. Januarius did so, and the miracle was followed by the conversion of five thousand pagans; but Timothy, fearing lest he should lose the favor of the emperor, ordered his officers to have the last sentence privately but instantly executed.

While our saint was being led to Vulcano, the place selected for his last struggle, an aged Christian followed him, imploring with many tears that he would give him something to keep for his sake; the good bishop, moved by the devotion of the old man, told him that he had nothing to give, except his handkerchief, which, as he needed it to bandage his eyes in receiving the stroke of death, he could not let him have until after his martyrdom. On arriving at Vulcano, St. Januarius tied the handkerchief over his eyes, and repeating the words, “Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit,” he was decapitated on the 19th of September, towards the close of the third century, together with his companions, Sosius, Festus, Proculus, Desiderius, Eutyches, and Acutius.

The relics of these holy martyrs were afterwards translated to different cities. Puzzuoli was favored with the bodies of SS. Proculus, Eutyches, and Acutius; while Benevento was honored with those of SS. Festus and Desiderius; that of St. Sosius was removed to Miseno. The body of St. Januarius was first deposited at Benevento, and afterwards at the Monastery of Monte Virgine, until during the pontificate of Alexander IV., St. Severus, bishop of Naples, accompanied by the Neapolitan clergy and a great concourse of the laity, translated it to Naples, and placed it in a church dedicated to God in his honor. From this church, however, which was without the city, the relics of St. Januarius were again translated to the cathedral, together with two vials of his blood, and have been there objects of great religious veneration for fourteen centuries. The Neapolitans honor this saint as the principal patron of their city and nation, and the Lord himself has continued to honor him, by allowing many miracles to be wrought through his intercession, particularly when the frightful eruptions of Mount Vesuvius have threatened the city of Naples with utter destruction. While the relics of St. Januarius were being brought in procession towards this terrific volcano, the torrents of lava and liquid fire which it emitted have ceased, or turned their course from the city.

But the most stupendous miracle, and that which is greatly celebrated in the church, is the liquefying and boiling up of this blessed martyr’s blood whenever the vials are brought in sight of his head. This miracle is renewed many times in the year, in presence of all who desire to witness it; yet some heretics have endeavored to throw a doubt upon its genuineness, by frivolous and incoherent explanations; but no one can deny the effect to be miraculous, unless he be prepared to question the evidence of his senses.

All the facts related about St. Januarius are drawn from trustworthy sources, such as the Acts possessed by Baronius, the Greek Acts of the Vatican, the Greek Menology of Basil, the writing of John Diacono, an author of great credit, who lived in the ninth century, and whom Muratori himself praises. To this must be added the very ancient Offices of Naples, Salerno, Capua, and Puzzuoli, and finally the tradition of Nola, where is yet shown at the present day the prison in which the saint was shut up, the place where his bones were dislocated, and the furnace from which he came forth unhurt. These records contain nearly all that we have related: all, or nearly all, are written in the Acts of Baronius, which, resting on other records, deserve our entire confidence.

I repeat here what I have said at the beginning of this book, that it seems to be a kind of temerity to wish to doubt positively about the truth of the facts related by several ancient authors, though they may not be contemporaneous—authors grave and careful to examine into things, especially when these facts are supported by an uncontroverted and ancient tradition.

It is true that we should justly doubt ancient facts against the authenticity of which we may allege some solid reason; but I ask here, which are the arguments that Tillemont, Baillet, and some other modern authors oppose to the facts of the martyrdom of St. Januarius? They say that this antiquity removes them too far from our time; that the tortures related are too violent, and therefore incredible; that these facts are too numerous. They also add other similar objections which are groundless, and which I pass over in silence for brevity's sake. To all these difficulties I reply, that by following this method we should have to reject many Acts that are commonly regarded as genuine, such as those of St. Felix of Nola, of St. Carpus, of St Theodotus and of St. Tarachus, and many others that we read of in the celebrated Ruinart, and in a host of other good authors.

Some of our writers have approved of what is said by Tillemont and Baillet, because of certain Acts of St. Januarius that were found at Bologna with the Celestin Fathers in the monastery of St. Stephan. But I do not see why we should put faith in these Acts, and not in those of Baronius and of other authors mentioned above. They say with Tillemont that the Acts of Bologna are more simple, because in them no mention is made of the miracles described in the Acts of Baronius, and should therefore the former be preferred to the latter?

Allow me to make here a painful reflection. The present age is called the *age of light,* because it has a better taste and a more correct judgment of things. But would to God that it had not degenerated in many things, and that it were not growing worse by wishing to subject divine things to be estimated by our feeble intelligence! Some of these who are learned in this fashion deny or call in question most of the miracles related in the lives of the saints; they say that the account of these miracles only makes heretics laugh at the too great credulity of the Catholics, and for this reason refuse to be united to our Church. I answer: Heretics do not wish to believe our miracles, not because they esteem us too credulous, but because among them no miracles are ever seen; this explains why they despise our miracles. And it is by no means true that our too great facility in believing in miracles hinders them from being united to our Church, for it is precisely because they do not wish to unite with our Church, and to submit to her that they refuse to believe in miracles. These unfortunate people do not see that in refusing to submit to the Church they reduce themselves to a state of believing in nothing, as evidently appears from the books that often reach us from the so-called reformed countries. Moreover, they know that the Christian faith was propagated and maintained by means of miracles—just as Jesus Christ and the Apostles propagated it; and the reason of this is clear. For as the revealed truths which are the object of our faith are not of themselves evident to the eyes of our mind, it was necessary to induce us to believe them by means of miracles, which surpassing the forces of nature aid us to know clearly that it is God who speaks to us in the midst of these prodigies. Thus in proportion to the persecutions raised against the Church has the Lord multiplied miracles. In short, the miracles wrought more or less frequently by God through his servants have never been wanting in our Church.

Let us return to our subject. It is not therefore just to prefer the Acts of the Monastery of Bologna to all those that we have quoted, because they are more simple, and because they do not comprise all the miracles related by Baronius, Diacono, and other authors. Besides, these Acts of Bologna, if carefully examined, date only from the sixteenth century. Again, another well-informed author, Xavier Rossi, in a learned dissertation, assures us that these Acts should be regarded as less trustworthy than those that we have followed, since they are encumbered with other narratives that are false, or at least improbable, and since it has become known that they were written by an ignorant person, who collected them without discretion, and in writing committed many faults against the Latin grammar.

Chapter LXVI

ST. FAITH, VIRGIN; ST. CAPRAIS, ST. PRIMUS, AND ST. FELICIAN

October 6 and 20.

ST. FAITH was born at Agen, in Aquitaine, of one of the most illustrious and Christian families of the province. She had from her most tender years dedicated herself to Jesus Christ; and having heard of the many glorious victories obtained by the martyrs during the persecution which was still raging, she conceived a most ardent desire to be made a partaker of their triumph; nor was the object of her yearnings long delayed.

Dacian, whose cruelty has obtained for him an infamous celebrity, was then prefect of Aquitaine; and as the Christian religion was generally professed at Agen, he determined to repair thither, in order that his presence might render the slaughter of the faithful more complete. The news of his intended visit struck terror into the Christians, and the adjoining woods and caverns were peopled with the former inhabitants of Agen. St. Faith was also pressed to seek safety in flight, but she refused to depart from the city, saying that she could not think of losing the fine opportunity that God had given her of dying for his love.

Upon the arrival of Dacian she learned that he had received information regarding her, and of her own accord presented herself before him. The tyrant being aware of her noble birth, and admiring her intrepidity, asked her name and religion in a mild tone. The saint answered: “My name is Faith, and I wish to be in reality that which my name implies. I am therefore a Christian, and entirely consecrated to Jesus Christ, my Saviour.”

The prefect said: “Abandon, my child, the superstition of the Christians. Have some regard for thy rank and thy youth. I promise to make thee the first lady of the province. Go, therefore, and sacrifice to Diana, and upon coming out from the temple thou shalt receive the rich reward I have destined for thee.” St. Faith returned the following animated answer: “From my infancy I have known that all the gods whom thou worshippest are devils; and dost thou expect that I can be persuaded to offer them sacrifice? The Lord preserve me from such impiety! There is but one true God, to whom I am willing to sacrifice my life. All thy promises and gifts shall never make me abandon my religion.”

Dacian in a rage said: “How dost thou presume to call our gods ‘devils’? Instantly resolve to sacrifice, or to expire under torments.” The saint with increased courage replied: “Know, sir, that I am not only prepared to suffer all tortures for the love of my God, but I am impatient to give him this proof of my fidelity.” The tyrant then gave orders that the saint should be roasted alive upon a gridiron; but while the barbarous sentence was being executed, the pagans themselves were horror-struck, and proclaimed aloud that it was too cruel so to torture a young woman for no other crime than that of being faithful to the God whom she adored.

Meanwhile St. Caprais, a pious young man, who was one of the Christians that had retired to the mountain, beheld from an eminence the martyrdom of St. Faith, and was favored with a vision, in which he saw a white dove bearing a rich crown and placing it on the head of the martyr, at the same time moving his wings, as if to draw down the rain which extinguished the fire. St, Caprais was by this vision inflamed with the desire of martyrdom; but, irresolute as to how he should act, he prayed to the Lord to manifest to him whether he was called to that honor. Upon entering his cave he saw a vein of water issuing from a stone; and interpreting this miracle as a call to martyrdom, he left the cave to present himself before the prefect.

Being asked by Dacian who he was, Caprais replied, “I am a Christian;” but the prefect perceiving him to be a youth of very pleasing appearance, called him apart, and used all his arts of persuasion to pervert him. The young Christian continuing resolute in his profession of faith, was, by order of the tyrant, stretched upon the rack and torn with iron hooks. During his tortures Caprais spoke of the truths of the Christian religion, and of the impiety and folly of paganism, with such triumphant conviction, that the greater part of the pagan bystanders were converted.

Among these were the two brothers SS. Primus and Felician, who received baptism, and openly avowed their belief that the God of the

Christians was the only true God. Dacian left no means untried in order to induce them to abandon the faith which they had so recently embraced, and even had them conducted to the temple to sacrifice to the gods; but as their constancy was unconquerable, they were condemned to be beheaded, together with SS. Faith and Caprais, and some other converts.

On the following night the Christians of Agen took the bodies of these blessed martyrs and secretly buried them. After peace had been restored to the Church, a holy bishop of Agen, named Dulcitius, built a church in honor of St. Faith, and placed therein the relics of the above-named martyrs; but in process of time the body of St. Faith was translated to the Abbey of Conques, which was afterwards called after the saint. She is mentioned in the martyrology on the 6th October, and is held in great veneration by the Church of France.

Chapter LXVII

ST. GENESIUS, THE COMEDIAN

August 25.

AUTHENTIC documents, quoted by Ruinart, induce us to believe that the martyrdom of Saint Genesius took place at Rome, at the beginning of Diocletian's reign, about, the year 285.

Our saint was a favorite comedian, and such an enemy to the Christians, that he did not exempt from his hate those of his relatives who professed the faith. Having become acquainted with the ceremonies of the Church in the administration of baptism, he wished to amuse the emperor and the Roman people by turning this holy sacrament into ridicule; and accordingly, acting the part of a dying Christian, the ceremonies of baptism were performed upon him by another player, who personated the character of a priest.

But when the player, sitting down beside him, said, "Well, my child, why hast thou sent for me?" Genesius, suddenly illuminated by divine inspiration, answered, not in jest, but seriously: "I desire to receive the grace of Jesus Christ, and to be relieved from the weight of my sins, which oppress me." The usual ceremonies were then performed, but he seriously answered the questions proposed, and declared that he was in earnest in professing his belief therein. During the reception of this baptism[8815] he was favored with a vision, in which he saw an angel, surrounded with heavenly light, holding a book in which his sins had been written. The angel having immersed this book in the waters of baptism, showed it to Genesius perfectly white.

In continuation of the play, Genesius was clothed in the white robe of the neophytes, after which certain players representing soldiers came to seize him, and present him to the emperor as a Christian. But when he was brought before Diocletian he manifested the vision with which he had been favored, and proclaimed his desire that all present should acknowledge

Jesus Christ to be the true God, through whom alone it is possible to be saved. Diocletian was both surprised and irritated hereat, and having ordered him to be severely beaten with clubs upon the spot, he delivered him over to Plautian, prefect of the prætorium, that he might compel him to renounce Jesus Christ.

Plautian ordered him to be stretched upon the rack, to be torn with iron hooks, and burned with torches; during which horrid infliction the saint made the following protestation: “Jesus Christ is the sovereign Lord of all things. Him will I adore, although I be obliged to suffer a thousand deaths. All possible tortures shall never take Jesus Christ from my heart or from my lips. My only grief is, that I have so long persecuted his holy name, and have learned to adore him, alas! so late.” he was then beheaded, and thus went to receive his reward in heaven.

Chapter LXVIII

ST. HIPPOLYTUS, PRIEST

August 13.

ST. HIPPOLYTUS was one of the five Roman priests that had the misfortune to be implicated in the schism of Novatian,[8816] who, renouncing his obedience to Pope St. Cornelius, had the rashness to have himself surreptitiously consecrated Bishop of Rome. God, however, granted to Hippolytus the grace to expiate this fault by a glorious martyrdom, which he suffered under Decius, in the year 252. He had been already imprisoned with others for the faith, and the prefect of Rome, who had to pass sentence upon them, was at Ostia, whither he caused all the Christian prisoners to be brought. As Hippolytus was being led out, the people asked him who was the real Pope. He replied: “Fly from the unworthy Novatian; abhor the schism, and adhere to the Catholic Church. I now see things in a different light, and repent of what I once taught.”

Upon the arrival of the confessors at Ostia, the prefect caused some of them to be tortured, and finding that this availed nothing, he condemned them all to death. Being informed, however, that our saint was a chief amongst the Christians, he inquired his name; and being told that he was called Hippolytus, the prefect said: “Then let him die the death of Hippolytus, and be dragged by wild horses.” By this sentence he referred to the fabled personage who, falling from his chariot, became entangled in the harness, and being dragged along by the horses, was torn to pieces.

The executioners accordingly led out two wild horses, and tying them together, placed a long rope between them, to the end of which they attached the martyr’s feet; they then frightened the horses away with shouts and blows; whereupon the saint was heard to say: “O Lord, let my body be torn, but save my soul.”

The horses dragged him over rocks and hedges, leaving the entire way sprinkled with his blood, and his torn flesh and limbs scattered about. These the faithful diligently collected, and absorbed his blood in sponges. The relics of this saint, as Prudentius[8817] writes, were afterwards brought to Rome, where they were held in great veneration.

Chapter LXIX

ST. SYMPHORIAN

August 22.

FAUSTUS, an exemplary Christian of Autun, in France, was the father of St. Symphorian, who by reason of the pious education he received, and being, moreover, assisted by divine grace, made such progress in virtue, that he was held in the highest esteem by all the faithful. There were many idolaters in Autun, who formed an annual procession, in which a statue of the goddess Cybele was borne on a richly adorned chariot. As Symphorianus was, on one occasion, passing the procession, he publicly condemned the veneration of the idol, whereupon he was instantly seized and brought before Heraclius, the governor, who was at the time searching out the Christians, in order to compel them to renounce Jesus Christ.

Heraclius asked our saint why he refused to adore the goddess Cybele, and received the following answer: "I am a Christian; and as such, I adore the true God, who reigns in heaven; but certainly not the images of the devil, which I would rather break to pieces." The governor asked whether he was a native citizen; and being answered by his attendants that he was one of very noble birth, he said to the saint: "I perceive that thy noble birth maketh thee rash and disobedient. But perhaps thou art ignorant of the imperial edicts." He then ordered that edict of Marcus Aurelius, commanding all recusants to be tortured, should be read, and added: "Thou mayest now perceive that thou art guilty of two crimes—sacrilege towards the gods, and disobedience of the law; upon continuing obstinate thou shalt die." Symphorian answered: "The God whom I adore is as rigorous in awarding punishment as he is bounteous in bestowing rewards; and I never can arrive at the happy eternity unless I persevere in the faith."

Having made this confession, the governor caused him to be scourged with rods and sent to prison; but after some days he sent for the saint, and promised that he would obtain for him a high post of honor if he would adore the gods of the Romans. Symphorian, interrupting him, said: “A judge descends below his dignity when he endeavors to corrupt innocence. I fear nothing; for, sooner or later, I must die; nor do I know of any other honors than those which Jesus Christ promises me, and which are immense and eternal. The honors which are in thy power to bestow are like snow that melts upon the appearance of the sun. Our God alone can grant us a lasting felicity, by making us partakers of his own glory, which, as it never had a beginning, can have no end.”

Heraclius, looking sternly at him, said: “My patience is worn out! Instantly sacrifice to Cybele, or I shall have thee put to death after a lengthened torture.’ Symphorian answered: “I fear only to offend my God, who is omnipotent. My body is in thy power, but my soul thou canst not injure.” The saint then proceeded to expose the inconsistency of paganism, and spoke so powerfully that Heraclius commanded him to be beheaded without delay, lest he should make some converts.

While he was being led to martyrdom, his pious mother encouraged him in the following words: “Think of God, my child, and fear not a death that leads thee to eternal life. Raise thy eyes to heaven, where the Lord awaits thee in glory. To-day thou diest not but dost change this for a better life.” Symphorian thus happily terminated his triumph.

The Acts of this glorious martyr are found in Ruinart.[8818]

Chapter LXX

SS. BONOSUS AND MAXIMILIAN, OFFICERS

August 21.

JULIAN THE APOSTATE, upon his accession to the empire, found an able minister of impiety in the person of another Julian, his maternal uncle, who, to please the wicked emperor, also abandoned the faith. While this impious wretch held the command in the East, two officers of the army, Bonosus and Maximilian, were accused before him, because they retained the cross and the adorable name upon their standards, contrary to the imperial edicts, which ordained that idolatrous figures should be substituted for these Christian emblems. The general having received this information, summoned the Christian officers before him, and told them that they should change their standards, and worship the gods. The saints replied that they would do neither.

Whereupon Julian commanded that Bonosus should be tied up and flogged with scourges loaded with lead. This sentence was most cruelly executed, the number of lashes which he received being upwards of three hundred. During the infliction the general asked the saint many questions, without receiving any answer, until at last he said: “We adore the true God, nor do we know who these gods are whom we are called upon to worship.”

Julian then addressed Maximilian, who returned the same answer that his companion had given, and then added: “If we must adore your gods, make them capable of hearing and speaking, for it is forbidden us to worship deaf and dumb divinities.” Hereupon the tyrant caused both the saints to be tortured on the rack; but finding that they suffered with great joy, he ordered them to be thrown into a caldron of boiling pitch, from which, however, they came forth unhurt, retaining only some signs of the torments suffered. The idolaters, as usual, attributed this miraculous preservation to the magical abilities of the saints; but the prefect of the prætorium, Secundus

Salustius, although a pagan, declared that he wished to examine the matter more minutely. Accordingly, approaching the caldron, instead of hearing any magical incantation, he heard them praising the Lord, as placidly as if they were in a cold bath. Overcome with wonder, he proposed to Julian to expose the priests of their gods to a similar trial, alleging that, if the devil could preserve the Christians, surely the immortal gods would, for their own honor, preserve their priests, as the God of the Christians was said to preserve his servants. Julian dreaded the consequences of refusing to comply with so reasonable a demand, coming from such a person, and accordingly delivered up some pagan priests to the prefect, who ordered them to be cast into the caldron, whereupon they were instantly consumed.

Our saints were then brought back to prison by order of the tyrant, who commanded that they should receive no bread but that which bore the impress of an idol, and the saints declared that they would sooner die of hunger than eat it. Meanwhile the brother of Sapor, king of Persia, Prince Hormisdas, who, being a good Christian, had retired from his own country and lived in the Roman empire during the reigns of Constantine and Constantius, paid our saints a visit of devotion, which so enraged Julian that he threatened to expose the saints to wild beasts unless they would abandon their faith. Bonosus answered: “Our God is with us, and therefore we fear neither men nor beasts.” Julian next declared that he would have them burned alive; whereupon the entire crowd of Christians exclaimed that they also should be burned. Julian, fearing a sedition, requested the prefect, Secundus Salustius, to take his place and cause the saints to be again tortured. The prefect, however, refused to comply, and although a pagan, requested Bonosus to pray to his God for him.

Finally, Julian condemned Bonosus and Maximilian, together with some other Christian prisoners, to be beheaded. They all proceeded joyously to martyrdom, accompanied by St. Melesius, Bishop of Antioch, and many other Christians, who congratulated the blessed martyrs on their happy lot.

On the third day after their triumph the wretched Julian was seized with a horrible disorder, which so putrefied his bowels that he constantly vomited forth worms. Having suffered the most excruciating tortures, he at last acknowledged that his punishment was the effect of divine vengeance, and died in despair.[8819]

The Acts of SS. Bonosus and Maximilian are found in Ruinart’s collection.

Chapter LXXI

SS. LIBERATUS, ABBOT; BONIFACE, DEACON; SERVUS, RUSTICUS, SUB-DEACONS; ROGATUS, SEPTIMUS, AND MAXIMUS, RELIGIOUS

August 17.

HUNERIC having succeeded Genseric in Africa, raised a persecution against the Catholics, and, at the suggestion of the Arian bishops, published an edict, in the year 485, wherein it was ordained that the Catholic clergy should be banished into far distant countries. Those who had been exiled received no other food than such grain as was given to horses, and even of this they were soon deprived.[8820]

During this persecution, seven Religious of a monastery in the province of Byzacena were incarcerated: they were—Liberatus, the abbot; Boniface, deacon; Servus and Rusticus, sub-deacons; Rogatus, Septimus, and Maximus, simple monks. They were at first tempted with promises of riches, honors, and the favor of the sovereign, but answered: “We hold in contempt all that you can promise. As we acknowledge but one God, there can be but one faith. Do unto us as it pleaseth you; we are willing to suffer all temporal punishments rather than suffer everlastingly.” After this protestation they were sent to prison, instructions having been given to the jailers so to maltreat them that they would relent.

The Christians at Carthage, notwithstanding, by bribing the guards, procured admission to them, and administered whatever relief they could afford. Information to this effect having reached Huneric, he gave orders that they should be more closely confined; but, perceiving that their constancy was superior to all sufferings, he ordered that a boat should be filled with dry sticks, and that, the seven Religious being bound thereto, the pile should be fired at sea. While they were being led to the shore they exhorted the faithful to remain steadfast in the faith, and called that day “the day of their salvation.”

The soldiers who were guarding them endeavored to seduce Maximus, who was very young, telling him not to imitate his foolish companions, when he might expect a happy life in a king’s court; but Maximus replied: “In vain you endeavor to separate me from my brethren. I am anxious to suffer martyrdom with them, and God will grant us grace that we be not divided.”

The martyrs were brought into the boat and tied upon the wood; but although the soldiers made several attempts to kindle it, they found it impossible to do so. This miracle, instead of converting the tyrant, enraged him still more, and he commanded the soldiers to beat out the brains of the martyrs with the oars. This brutal order was instantly executed, and the bodies of the saints were thrown into the sea, but the tide cast them ashore, and the clergy and faithful of Carthage gave them honorable burial. The Church celebrates the memory of these martyrs on the 17th August.

Chapter LXXII

ST. SERAPHIA, VIRGIN; AND ST. SABINA, WIDOW

August 29 and September 3.

ST. SERAPHIA was born at Antioch, of Christian parents, who, to avoid the persecution, retired to Italy, where they died soon after. Many Roman gentlemen, admiring the extraordinary beauty of Seraphia, paid their addresses to her; but she, unwilling to have any other spouse than Jesus Christ, refused these honorable proposals, and preferred becoming a servant to a Roman lady named Sabina who was at that time a young widow. This lady was a pagan, but Seraphia in the space of two months gained her warmest affection, and being full of the Spirit of God, converted her to the faith; whereupon she persuaded her to retire from the tumult of Rome to one of her estates in Umbria. She was accompanied hither not only by Seraphia, but by some other Christian virgins, and her country seat thus became a seminary of saints.

The persecution was renewed in the year 125, and Beryllus, the governor of Umbria, knowing that there were many Christian ladies at the residence of Sabina, ordered that they should be brought before him. Sabina at first refused to obey the order; but Seraphia, whose confidence in Jesus Christ was great, besought of her to let her go alone to the governor, since she hoped that the Lord would grant her strength. Sabina, after much ado, consented, but resolved on accompanying her. Beryllus received Sabina with every mark of respect due to her rank, and expressed his surprise that a lady of her quality would follow the abject sect of the Christians, at the persuasion of a witch, for so he called Seraphia, whom he knew to have been the cause of her conversion.

The governor on this occasion allowed Sabina to return home with Seraphia; but a few days afterwards he caused the latter to be arrested. Sabina followed her on foot, and used all her endeavors to prevent the maltreatment of her dear friend; but Beryllus, nothing moved by her entreaties, called upon Seraphia to sacrifice to the gods. The holy virgin answered that she was a Christian, that she neither acknowledged nor feared any other than the one true God, and that it was to her a matter of surprise how she could be called upon to worship demons. The governor said: "Let me see thee sacrifice to thy Christ." The saint replied: "Day and night I sacrifice myself to him." Beryllus asked: "And what sort of sacrifice is this? to offer thyself to thy Christ!" Seraphia answered: "The sacrifice of a good life is the most pleasing to him which I can offer."

Beryllus hereupon delivered her up to the pleasure of two infamous young men, but they were deterred by an angel, who struck them almost lifeless to the earth. When the governor asked the saint by what incantation she had produced this effect, she answered that the Christians used no incantations but holy prayer, and confidence in their God who protects them. Beryllus exclaimed in a rage: "Instantly sacrifice to Jove, or be prepared to receive immediate death." Seraphia replied: "This thy threat is to me the greatest possible consolation, since I esteem no happiness so great as that of being enabled to offer my life as a sacrifice to my God. The governor, still more infuriated by this declaration, caused her to be cruelly beaten with clubs; and finding her constancy invincible, finally ordered her head to be struck off.

Sabina, immediately after her death, procured the body of the martyred virgin, and gave it most honorable burial; after which she led a very retired life in her own house, and night and day besought her departed friend to obtain for her also the grace to terminate her course by martyrdom. She was soon consoled; for Beryllus, who had permitted her to return to her house unmolested, out of respect to her rank, was promoted to the prefecture, and was succeeded in the government of Umbria, by Elpidius, who summoned Sabina before him; and having grievously maltreated her, sent her to prison. Upon reaching the prison doors she found herself filled with holy joy, and exclaimed: "And is it then possible that I am to be admitted to a participation of the glory which my Seraphia enjoys? She undoubtedly has obtained for me this great privilege."

On the day following, Elpidius summoned her before him, and said: "How is it possible that thou couldst so far forget thy rank as to follow those abject Christians, who glory in beggary, and madly despise both honors and life itself? One needs must have a mean soul to follow so mean a course.” The saint answered: “Thou hast, sir, a false idea of the Christian religion, and art ignorant of its true nobility and real excellence. It is no meanness to despise the goods of this earth in order to attain to those of heaven. It is no disgrace, then, to be a Christian; but it is a real disgrace, meanness, and infamy to kneel down before idols, that have no other merit than that of the materials from which they were formed, or of the workmanship of the hands that made them.”

After this answer Elpidius resolved to cease threatening, and in the mildest manner said to her: “The emperors adore these our gods, and thou shouldst also adore them. Do not oblige me to treat thee with rigor.” Sabina replied: “My life is in thy power; over my faith thou hast no control, I will adore none but the true God.” Hereupon Elpidius condemned her to be beheaded. On hearing the sentence the saint exclaimed: “I thank Thee, O my God, for the favor Thou hast done me, and into Thy hands I commend my spirit.” After these words the executioner struck off her head. Her martyrdom happened on the 29th of August, the day upon which, in the preceding year, her companion St. Seraphia had received the crown.

The bodies of these two saints were brought to Rome in the year 430, and placed in a church which was built in honor of St. Sabina, upon the Aventine Mount.

Chapter LXXIII

SS. CYPRIAN, MAGICIAN; AND JUSTINA, VIRGIN

September 29.

CYPRIAN was born at Antioch[8821] in Syria, of a noble and opulent family, who, being pagans, educated him in the superstitious idolatry, and particularly in the practice of magic, wherein he made such progress by reason of his great talents that he was accounted the most famous magician of Greece. Having become familiar with diabolical practices, there was no sort of abomination too hideous for him to undertake; and he even went so far as to bleed children to death, in order to offer their blood to demons. This impious life he continued to his thirtieth year, when it pleased the Almighty to make him an illustrious example of his great mercy.

His conversion happened in the following manner: There lived at Antioch a young lady called Justina, who, notwithstanding that her parents were idolaters, had embraced the faith upon hearing a Christian sermon, and had consecrated herself to God by a vow of virginity. Her extraordinary beauty drew the attention of a young gentleman named Agladius, who used all his endeavors to persuade her to become his wife, but being continually repulsed, had recourse to Cyprian, in order that he might change her resolution by some magic spell. The wizard used all his arts in vain; and St. Gregory writes that the devil made use of all his temptations to effect her fall, but that the holy virgin placed herself under the protection of the Mother of purity, and thus remained faithful to her vow. Cyprian upbraided the devil with his impotency in not being able to overcome a young virgin, but he was answered that she was rendered invincible by the God of the Christians. “Since, then,” said Cyprian, “the God of the Christians is more powerful than thou art, I will rather serve him than thee.”

Cyprian forthwith proceeded to a priest, named Eusebius, who had been a friend of his, and from this clergyman he received great comfort and encouragement, particularly against temptation to despair, with which the devil continually afflicted him by upbraiding him with his past enormities. By the charitable assistance of this holy priest, Cyprian, once a monster of fiendish deformity, became a most exemplary Christian, and worked the conversion of many idolaters. It has even been asserted that upon the death of the Bishop of Antioch Cyprian was raised to that see.

In the persecution of Diocletian, Cyprian and Justina were both arrested by Eutolmus, governor of Phenicia, who upon their resolute confession of the faith caused Justina to be scourged and Cyprian to be inhumanly torn with iron hooks. He then sent them into separate dungeons: and every endeavor to pervert them having proved useless, he caused them to be immersed in a caldron of boiling pitch. The two saints having come forth unhurt, were by the governor sent to the emperor, who ordered them to be beheaded. This sentence was executed on the 26th September. Their relics were brought to Rome, and a pious lady named Rufina afterwards caused a small church to be built over them. They were thence removed into the Lateran Basilica.

Chapter LXXIV

SS. HERMOLAUS, PRIEST; AND PANTALEON, PHYSICIAN

July 27.

PANTALEON was a native of Nicomedia. His father Eustorgius was a pagan; and his Christian mother Eubula dying while he was yet a child, he was educated an idolater. He studied medicine with such success, that the Emperor Maximilian[8822] appointed him his physician. One day as our saint was discoursing with a holy priest named Hermolaus, the latter, after praising the study of medicine, concluded thus: "But, my friend, of what use are all thy acquirements in this art, since thou art ignorant of the science of salvation?" This expression gave rise to a discourse, in which Hermolaus explained the principal truths of our faith; so that the physician was obliged to confess that, in order to be truly happy, it is necessary to be a Christian. Some time after it happened that Pantaleon, in one of his walks, found a child lying dead from the recent bite of a viper, and by the impulse of a sudden inspiration said to the child: "In the name of Jesus Christ, arise!" The child instantly arose, and Pantaleon proceeded forthwith in search of St. Hermolaus, from whom he received the sacrament of baptism.[8823]

Having once experienced the blessings of the true faith, our saint wished to communicate them to his father, for whose infidelity he grieved much. One day the old man, having asked him the cause of his sorrowful appearance, he answered: "Father, the extravagances of our religion are to me a matter of great concern. If our gods have been men, how did they afterwards become divinities? Again, many idols are formed from the same clay of which pots are made. How, then, can we offer sacrifice to these idols, which are nothing more than blind statues?" The father was greatly moved hereat; and a blind person arriving shortly afterwards to procure some medicine from the saint, he invoked over him the name of Jesus, and his sight was instantly restored. Upon this miracle the blind man and the saint's father were converted, and subsequently baptized.

By these circumstances Pantaleon was discovered to be a Christian, and was accused before the emperor as such. Maximilian sent for him who had been blind, and made inquiry concerning his cure. The man related the tact as it had taken place, and acknowledged that he had thereupon become a Christian. In vain did the emperor endeavor to persuade him that he had been cured not by Jesus Christ, but by the gods. The other answered: "How is it possible, O prince, that the gods, who are themselves blind, can grant sight to others?" Mortified by this answer, the emperor caused his head to be instantly struck off, and then sent for Pantaleon, whom he upbraided with ingratitude for embracing the Christian religion after having been by him loaded with honors and riches. The saint answered: "It is not unknown to thy majesty that we are all aware of the origin of those gods, their passions and their crimes; how then can we adore as gods men who have signalized themselves only by their impiety? O prince! there is but one true God, and he is the God of the Christians. Let us in this presence give a proof of the truth of our faith."

The emperor assented, and a person afflicted with an incurable disease was produced. In vain did the idolaters offer prayers and sacrifice for his relief; but no sooner did Pantaleon make the sign of the cross, and invoke the name of Jesus, than the sick person exclaimed: "I am cured! I am cured! There is no other god than the God of the Christians!" The emperor endeavored to satisfy the spectators of this miracle that it was the effect of incantation and magic. Vain attempt! the greater part were converted, and rendered willing and public testimony to the power of Jesus Christ.

Maximilian, enraged hereat, caused Pantaleon to be led out into one of the public squares, where he was torn with iron hooks, and his wounds burned with torches. He was then thrown into a vessel of liquid lead, from which, however, he came forth perfectly cured. The emperor then commanded him to be cast into the sea, with a millstone tied to his neck but the execution of this sentence proved also ineffectual. The saint was next bound to a tree, in order to be cut to pieces by the swords of the executioners; their weapons, however, fell upon him as though they had been made of wax.

The tyrant, nothing moved by these evident marks of God’s protection, ordered his head to be struck off, and there issued therefrom blood, and a white liquor like milk.

St. Hermolaus was the next victim,[8824] At his prayers an earthquake shook the entire city, and all the idols were laid prostrate; whereupon Maximilian thought it advisable to despatch him at once, and he was accordingly beheaded.

The relics of St. Pantaleon were translated to Constantinople, and afterwards brought into France. At Ravello, a city in the kingdom of Naples, there is a vial of his blood, which becomes liquid every year, and may be seen in this state interspersed with the milk, as I, the author of this work, have seen it.

Chapter LXXV

ST. FELIX, BISHOP OF ABBIR, AND OTHER HOLY MARTYRS AND CONFESSORS OF THE VANDALIC PERSECUTION

October 12.

HUNERIC, king of the Vandals, having resolved to extinguish the Catholic religion in Africa, and to establish there the Arian heresy, by one decree alone banished bishops, priests, and other ecclesiastics,[8825] to the number of four thousand nine hundred and seventy-six. Among these was St. Felix, Bishop of Abbir, who being afflicted with paralysis, could neither walk nor speak. Some persons were so moved to compassion for the helpless state of the venerable prelate, that they besought the king to let him die at Carthage; but he replied: “If Felix cannot sit upon a horse, you may tie him to two oxen, who will drag him to the place of his banishment.” He was accordingly fastened upon a mule and so borne away, not without exciting the compassion of all who beheld him.

The other holy confessors who had been condemned to banishment were to be driven into the desert by the Moors;[8826] and the two officers to whom this barbarous commission had been given thought that they could induce these persecuted ecclesiastics to submit to the wishes of the king. This proposal having been rejected with horror, they were shut up in prison, where, however, they were at first treated with comparative lenity, as the Catholics were permitted to visit them, and to bring them some nourishment.

This indulgence was afterwards not only denied, but the confessors were crowded into dark and narrow dungeons, so that the filth and noisomeness of the place was absolutely intolerable. St. Victor Vitensis, by bribing the Moors, obtained a few interviews with the sufferers, whom he endeavored thus to console; and he assures us that upon entering he had to stand up to his knees in filth. Notwithstanding all the hardships which these true lovers of Jesus Christ had to endure, and although many of them had died from this cause, and many of hunger, yet did the constancy of the survivors remain unshaken.

The time appointed for their departure having arrived, they were led out, from what might be more properly called sewers than dungeons, to be driven forward by the Moors; and although their clothes and faces were besmeared with filth, they nevertheless manifested a holy joy, while they chanted from the 149th Psalm : “This glory is unto all his saints.’’ The roads through which they passed were lined with Catholics, who had repaired thither, many of them bearing lighted tapers, as if to honor their triumph, and others bringing their children to kiss the ground that had been trodden by the martyrs. Among the pious sufferers were many children who had been employed in the service of the churches; and these were followed by their mothers, some of whom rejoiced at being thus made the parents of martyrs, while others, influenced by carnal affection, in vain endeavored to prevail on the children to consent to Arianism. Among the former was an aged matron, who carried a bag with some bread in one hand, and was leading a boy by the other, while she said to him: “Hasten, my child, hasten. Dost thou not see how joyously the martyrs hurry towards the crown?” Being asked why she said so, she answered: “Pray for me, I beseech ye, pray for me, and for this my little grandson. I come with this child into exile, in order that the enemy find him not alone, and so precipitate him into hell.”

Meanwhile the barbarians hurried the holy confessors towards the desert; and, as the old men and children were unable to keep pace with the rest, they were goaded on with spears and pelted with stones. But the more they were harassed, the less able they were to accomplish their task; so that this gave occasion to another diabolical cruelty, for they were tied by the feet and dragged over stones and briers. Many expired in this way; and indeed they were only the most robust that arrived, worn and lacerated, at the place of their exile.

This was a desert, filled with serpents and most venomous scorpions, but they did no harm to any of the servants of God. They were for some time supported here with barley, like beasts, but even of this food they were afterwards deprived. Yet St, Victor, who wrote a history of this persecution, and was himself one of the persecuted bishops, observes that the Lord did not fail to succor his servants when they were deprived of every human aid.

PART II

The Martyrs of Japan

NOTICE.[8827]

I WILL add here the victories of those martyrs who in the inlands of Japan suffered death in order to profess their faith in Jesus Christ. In giving their history I have selected the most heroic and the most wonderful trait's by which they signalized their zeal for the Christian religion. I trust that my readers will be very well pleased to see in the midst of a barbarous nation so many Christians,—men, women, children, old people after they had embraced the faith, seeking with eagerness the opportunity to die for Jesus Christ, and manifesting their joy at being able to suffer for him the most cruel torments.

In obedience to the decree of Urban VIII. I protest that in giving the appellation of *Saint* or *Martyr* to any servant of God, I only intend to do so according to the usage and opinion of men, since it is reserved to the Church to decree by divine authority these titles, when it shall please the Lord.

Chapter I

MIRACULOUS CROSS FOUND NEAR ARIMA—PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF BUNGO—JORAM MACAMA—COURAGE OF THE CHRISTIANS

1586–1589.

OUR European priests who undertook to evangelize Japan were at first very successful; but in the year 1586 God made known by several signs the approach of a long and bloody persecution that was menacing the rising church. Among these signs the following is particularly remarkable:

The King of Arima, named Protasius[8828], a good and zealous Christian, had a vision in which there appeared to him two persons of celestial exterior, who thus spoke to him: “Know that on the lands over which you rule the sign of Jesus is found; honor and love it much, for it is not the work of man.” Six months afterwards, it happened that a fervent Christian, by the name of Leo, from the neighborhood of Arima, sent his son Michael to the woods for the purpose of cutting firewood. On his arrival the young man perceived a tree that was somewhat dried up, of the kind called in that country Tara; he cut it down, split it in two, and found inserted in the middle of it a cross of a brown color and of a regular form. At the sight of this prodigy every one was struck with astonishment. As soon as the king heard of this, he went himself to the place, and on seeing the crass he cried out: “Behold the sign of Jesus, that I was told was hidden in my dominions, and that was not made by the hand of man.” He then fell on his knees, and after having venerated it amidst many tears, he had it carried to Arima, where by his order it was framed in a magnificent crystal. This miraculous cross brought about the conversion of twenty thousand idolatrous inhabitants of this country.

But let us return to the martyrs. The persecution begun by the emperor in 1587 became about three years afterwards very sanguinary in the Christian kingdom of Bungo; and the first victory that I find described in Japan is that of a good old man of Funai, named Joram Macama. He was a soldier when he embraced Christianity, and afterwards converted his whole family; he subsequently spent his time in instructing the pagans and aiding the faithful. The King of Bungo having apostatized, commanded three of his officers to put him to death. They went in search of him; but fearing the valor of which Joram had given proofs in war, they took with them by way of precaution an escort of one hundred men. Anticipating their arrival, Joram took leave of his wife and children, sent them to another place and remained alone in the house, preparing himself for death. He did not even wish to keep his sword near him, and the night in which he was to die he spent in prayer before the crucifix.

Towards midnight the soldiers approached the house to see whether he was armed. The saintly old man, perceiving them, told them that they had nothing to fear, because, far from fleeing from them, he was waiting for them. He then took a cross in his hand, placed a rosary around his neck, and having knelt down gave thanks to God for allowing him to die for his name, and even thanked the soldiers, because by the death-blow they were going to give him they would procure for him eternal happiness. Then having received three stabs in his breast, he presented his neck, and while pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary three blows of the cimeter deprived him of life. The faithful hastened to take away his body and to bury it. This so enraged the king that he put to death the wife and children of the valiant martyr, as also many other Christians.

The tyrant by these first acts of cruelty inspired the Christians with great fear; when, however, they heard of the noble death of Joram and of other Christians, especially of that of another Christian named Joachim, who had also been put to death by the king, instead of being intimidated they appeared publicly with the rosary around the neck, testifying thereby that far from fearing death they had a longing for it. A woman named Mary, to whom the king before his apostasy had made a present of a rosary, had the courage to wear it in the palace before his very eyes. The prince having asked the reason why she did so, she answered: “Sire, the presents of kings must be highly esteemed; it was your Majesty who gave me this rosary, and I glory in wearing it. The tyrant seeing the Christians so resolute, and fearing that a tumult might arise, was content for the present to conceal the hatred that he bore them, in order to revenge himself at a more favorable time.

Chapter II

PERSECUTION BY THE EMPEROR TAICOSAMA—GREAT ZEAL OF THE CHRISTIANS—TWENTY-SIX MARTYRS CRUCIFIED AT NANGASAKI

1596–1597.

TAICOSAMA having in 1582 ascended the imperial throne, was at first favorable to the missionaries; but four or five years afterwards, beginning to distrust and to hate them exceedingly, he published an edict which proscribed the Christian religion in his whole empire. He did not, however, push to extremes; for during several years he contented himself with forbidding all religious manifestations, and the faith continued to be propagated unnoticed.

On December 9, 1596, feeling again incensed against the servants of the true God, the emperor ordered the governor of Meaco, as also the governor of Ozaca, where the religious of St. Francis were established, to arrest these Fathers and to draw up a list of the Christians who frequented their churches. Here follows what Father Peter Baptist, the Superior of the Franciscans, wrote at that time to a religious of his Order: “The first day on which guards were placed before our door the Christians confessed and passed the whole night in prayer; for we had been informed that we were to be put to death on the following day. I gave Holy Communion to all our brethren, as if for the last time. Then each one provided himself with a cross to carry in the hand while going to the place of execution. Our Christians filled me with consolation by the ardent desire which they displayed to die for Jesus Christ. When the news spread that the latter had been condemned to death, many others came from different places to join them. ‘We must once die,’ they said. ‘We all desire that this may be for the glory of God, and we pray him to give us the grace to do so; help us to obtain this from the divine Goodness.’ ”

During this time were witnessed a large number of wonderful examples, some of which we will now quote.

Prince Ucondono, a distinguished general, to whom Taicosama was indebted for his empire, was living for six years in exile, because he had refused to abjure his faith. He had been stripped of his dignities, deprived of his estates, his old father, his wife, and his large family sharing in the same privations; yet they esteemed themselves happy in being able to suffer for Jesus Christ. When he heard of the persecution, he took leave of the king of Canga, under whose supervision he had been placed and whose friendship he enjoyed on account of his great virtue. The latter assured him that the court was not thinking of him; but the noble Ucondono answered: “My dear prince, the greatest happiness in which I can delight in this world is to die for the faith that I profess. Whatever may be the assurance that you give me, I am going to prepare myself for death.” He immediately set out for Meaco.

The fervor of the two sons of Genifonio, who was a pagan and prime-minister of the emperor, and who was ignorant of the fact that his sons had received baptism, was not less great than that of Prince Justus Ucondono.

The elder son, aged twenty years, was named Paul Sacondono. He enjoyed the favor of the emperor, and was commander of a fortress that was far away from the capital. Having heard that all the Fathers, as well as the bishops, had been arrested, and that all the Christians were to be put to death, he at once dispatched two couriers, one to Meaco and the other to Ozaca, in order to assure himself of the truth. While waiting he began to reflect on the best means to attain martyrdom. He at first thought of showing himself publicly at the capital, so as to be arrested; but fearing that no one would dare to lay his hand upon him if he were seen clad in his ordinary costume, he had his hair cut off and disguised himself as an ecclesiastic, being resolved to appear there with eight of his faithful Christian servants. Only one among them showed any sign of inconstancy, because he had been but recently baptized. Sacondono advised him not to expose himself with the others; but he generously answered: “My lord, I well know what the eternal salvation of my soul is worth; since martyrdom is the shortest road to gain it, I prefer it, and I make no more account of my life than I do of the dust under my feet.” Satisfied with this answer the young lord went to his room, where, prostrate on the floor, he prayed fervently to God to make him worthy to die for the love of him. Then he wrote to his parents to inform them that he was a Christian, and that he had formed the resolution to die for his faith. In this disposition he made a general confession, and prepared himself for death.

His brother's name was Constantine. He arrived at Meaco with one of his cousins named Michael, where he received the fatal news. He cried out: "Oh we have just come in time to be martyrs." He immediately went to Fucino, where his father was, and declared to him that he was a Christian. The minister, who tenderly loved his son, was astonished; he took him aside and said to him: "But, my son, if the emperor commands me to put to death all Christians, it will be necessary for me to make you die with them. Constantine answered: "My father, I have declared to you that I am a Christian, not that I may avoid death, but that you may regulate your affairs. As for me, I am ready to die by the hand of the executioner, and even by your own hand, rather than disobey God; you certainly do not wish, I think, that I should cast myself into hell merely to please a prince." Genifonio communicated this source of affliction to his wife, and both were plunged into the deepest grief. Michael happening to call upon his sorrowing aunt, she entreated him to use every effort to dissuade Constantine from rushing headlong to so premature a death. Nevertheless both returned to Meaco in order to find there an opportunity to be inscribed on the list of martyrs.

About this time two other gentlemen came to Meaco to sacrifice their lives for the faith; and not having been able to obtain what they desired, they begged their friends to notify them when the favorable moment should arrive.

We must also make mention of a gentleman of Bungo, named Andrew Ongazavara, who after the martyrdom of the saintly Joram, of whom we have spoken in the previous chapter, carried off at night the cross that the latter wore around his neck. Since that time he lived retired at Ozaca with his old father, his wife, and his young child. When this brave man learned that a list was being made up of Christians who were doomed to die, he not only courageously prepared himself for death, but he also advised his own father to prepare for death, although he was eighty years of age, and had been baptized only six months before. He had been all his life a redoubtable warrior, and was still vigorous. Andrew exhorted him to gain the palm of martyrdom by informing him that it was gained not by the force of arms, but by humility and patience. “But,” cried out the old soldier indignantly, “may a man of honor allow, himself to be killed like a coward?” Andrew, knowing that all this pride came from his little knowledge of Christian maxims, said to him: “My dear father, you have given too many proofs of your valor; for no one will think of reproaching you with cowardice, if you give your life for Jesus Christ without defending it. If, however, this manner of acting does not please you, retire at least for a short time into the country; you will there preserve your life and honor.” Becoming yet more indignant, the old man replied that he had always been incapable of such baseness, which would be worse than the first offer that had been made him, for to do such a thing would look as if he were fleeing to save his life. Andrew, however, saw that his object was attained in another way; for the good old man, filled with emotion, entered the apartments of his daughter-in-law, whom he found occupied in working at her festive garments; he also perceived the servants preparing their rosaries, crosses, and reliquaries for the day of their martyrdom. He asked what all this signified, and they informed him with a joyful air that all were preparing themselves to die for Jesus Christ. These few words and their example made such an impression on his mind, that, renouncing the maxims of the world, he also took a rosary, and said that he wished to die with them.

We may also see at this time the generosity of several Christian women of Meaco. Having learned that the persecution had been proclaimed, they assembled at the house of one of them, named Mary, in order to be always prepared for martyrdom; and each one had taken care to take with her her nuptial garment, that is, the garment in which she wished to die. There was a person of very high rank, who, fearing that she would on this account escape being prosecuted by the law, went secretly to Mary’s house, in order to die with the rest. Mary had living with her an adopted child, named Gratia, ten years of age ; she endeavored to persuade her to return to her father’s house in order to avert the danger of being crucified; but the child answered with firmness: “No; I wish to die with you, because I am a Christian. Have no fear for me; as long as I shall be with you I shall not fear death.” Mary was greatly consoled to hear such language from the mouth of her dear child, which was an effect of divine grace. Being quite ready, one of the women said to her companions: “I am resolved to die for the faith; but if you ever see me tremble at the sight of death, I beg you to drag me forcibly before the executioners, in order that I may not fail in having a share in your crown."

Such were the dispositions of these fervent neophytes at the moment when it was believed that all the faithful were going to be nailed to the cross; but as to the majority of them, Heaven was satisfied with their goodwill. The governor of Meaco, though a pagan, tried his utmost to mitigate the sanguinary order that the emperor had given him, and he finally succeeded in having the number reduced to twenty-four. The emperor had commanded that their noses and ears should be cut off; but the governor had only the end of the left ear cut off. This was done January 3, 1597, in the grand square of Meaco. The twenty-four condemned persons were then placed upon eight carts, and were ignominiously conducted through the streets, being preceded by an officer who carried at the end of a pike a sign on which could be read the sentences pronounced against them, because they had preached Christian doctrine that was proscribed in the empire. The entire population was moved to tears on seeing the modesty, sweetness, and even joy of these pretended criminals, so that their humiliation was changed into a triumph. Many Christians went so far as to beg the soldiers to put them among the number of the condemned, that they might die with them; but the favor was refused. When the martyrs had returned to the prison they rapturously embraced one another, rejoicing at the happy death that awaited them. This filled the guards with astonishment, and made them say: "What kind of men are these who rejoice amidst torments and every sort of insult?"

On the following day, January 4, they were placed upon beasts of burden, to be transported to Nangasaki, the place of execution, where they arrived after a journey lasting a month. While passing through Ozaca and Sacaia, they were exposed as at Meaco to the gaze of the people; but the effect produced was quite contrary to what their enemies expected. In this long journey the severity of the season added not a little to the sufferings of these holy martyrs, yet a large number of the faithful accompanied them, bestowing upon them everywhere marks of sympathy and veneration. Peter Sukegiro and Francis Fahelente, two fervent Christians, had not ceased for an instant to follow them, and with an invincible courage to assist them in their wants. Their faith and their charity were handsomely rewarded; for the guards, seeing that nothing could repel them, concluded to make them prisoners and to add their names to the list of the condemned. Thus was the number of martyrs increased to twenty-six.

They arrived at Nangasaki on February 4. On the following day they were conducted to a hill situated near the city, where the instruments of death had been prepared. When they saw the crosses that were destined for them on their Calvary, these courageous athletes gave themselves up to transports of joy, and each one hastened to place himself at his post. Their limbs and the middle of the body were then tied to their crosses with cords, according to the custom of the country; a collar of iron was put round their necks; afterwards the crosses were raised simultaneously and fixed in the ground, all being in one row, with their faces turned to the south, in the direction of the city. Father Peter Baptist intoned the canticle *Benedictus*, and his companions joined their voices to his. Soon after, each one was pierced with two lances which, thrust into the sides, crossed each other in the breast and came out at the shoulders. At this moment a large number of the faithful who had surrounded the hill, uttering cries and saying, "Jesus, Mary," made their way through the line of the soldiers, entering the enclosure, to gather up the blood of the martyrs with cloths and procure for themselves a part of their garments. We are told that a heavenly light was shining above their bodies, and that for a long time many stars appeared over the hill.[8829]

We might relate many interesting particulars about each one of these glorious soldiers of Jesus Christ, but we must be brief. We cannot, however, pass over in silence what concerns the three youngest of them; namely, Thomas, of about fourteen years of age; Anthony, aged thirteen; and Louis, who was eleven years old. They used to serve at the altar at the church of the Franciscans, and might have gone away when the list of the condemned was published, but they desired nothing so much as the palm of martyrdom. They were together on the same cart when, with the end of the ear cut off, they were conducted through the streets of Meaco. With their hands tied behind them, these three young confessors began to sing, with a radiant countenance and with a penetrating voice, the *Pater nosier* and the *Ave Maria*. This spectacle moved all hearts.

Thomas was the son of Michael Cozaki, one of the twenty-six martyrs. His father had written to him that, being resolved to die, he left him heir of all his property; but the saintly young man came at once to see him, and represented to him that it was not just to make him the heir of earthly goods by excluding him from those that he was going to possess in heaven, and he declared that he was determined to die with him; Thomas had also the happiness of going to heaven with his father, his head encircled with the same crown.

Anthony, born at Nangasaki, met his father and his mother, who subjected him to a violent temptation. They were Christians, and when they saw their dear child on the point of being crucified, they permitted themselves to be overcome by natural affection, and began to conjure him with tears to dissimulate for a little while. “You wish then,” said the young hero, “that in order to preserve this life that lasts only a moment, I should lose life eternal? Ah! cease to tempt me by your discourses and your complaints. I am resolved to die for Jesus Christ.” Having spoken thus, he left his parents, refused with the same firmness the offers of a magistrate whom this scene had deeply moved, and gave himself up to the executioners. When he was raised upon the cross he found himself by the side of Father Peter Baptist; and after the hymn *Benedictus* he begged him to intone the psalm *Laudate Pueri Dominum.* But the holy religious, who was absorbed in an ecstasy, not answering him, he intoned it himself, and continued it as far as the *Gloria Patri,* which he was going to chant forever in paradise, having had at this moment his heart pierced with the lance.

Little Louis, who had been baptized only a few days before, showed no less courage. The officers of the law had at first refused to put his name on the list; but by dint of crying and begging he succeeded in having his name inscribed. His face, which was radiant with joy, attracted in the streets of Meaco the attention of all, and deeply moved the spectators. The under-governor of Nangasaki, who was charged with presiding at the execution, wished to set him free, provided he would renounce the Christian religion. “On such a condition,” Louis replied, “I do not desire to live; since for this short and miserable life I should lose a happy and eternal life.” It is said that as soon as he saw his cross he ran to embrace it, as if he had found an object that was most dear to him. He died with an angelic air, by the side of Anthony. Further on we shall see other wonderful victories gained by children.

Chapter III

PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF FINGO—JOHN MINAMI, MAGDALEN HIS WIFE, AND LOUIS THEIR ADOPTED SON, WITH SIMON TAQUENDA, JANE HIS MOTHER, AND AGNES HIS WIFE

1603.

IN the year 1598, at the age of sixty-four, the emperor Taicosama died, well deserving the fires of hell, since he had shed so much blood of the faithful servants of Jesus Christ. He had given orders that after his death he should be ranked among the gods. As his successor he left a son scarcely six years old, under the tutelage of six regents of the empire. At the head of this regency was Daifusama, who profited by his position gradually to usurp the imperial power, and, as we shall see, surpassed his predecessor in cruelty.[8830]

Daifusama at first believed it to be the best policy to treat the Christians like the rest of his subjects until he could see his authority well established. During the first years of his reign there were only local persecutions that were carried on by secondary tyrants. In 1603, the king of Fingo, named Canzugedono, wishing to compel the nobility of Jateudixiro to deny the Christian faith, the magistrates of this city forcibly dragged into the house of a bonze, a gentleman named John Minami, in order to place upon his head the book of his sect; for this was a sign of apostasy. Magdalen, the wife of the persecuted gentleman, a fervent Christian, followed her husband, crying out: “Take care, my dear John, what you do; if you become faithless to your religion, I will neither speak to you nor see you any more, and I will renounce you as my husband.” When the bonze, who was seated on a kind of throne, raised the volume to place it on John’s head, the servant of God, not being able to do anything else, spit upon the infamous book. One of his friends by the name of Simon Taquenda offered a similar resistance, and refused to go to the house of the bonze. The king being informed of what had happened, ordered the governor to have them beheaded, and to have all the members of their families crucified.

As soon as Minami heard of the fate that was awaiting him, he presented himself to the governor. The latter made every effort to gain him over, but could not shake his constancy; he then showed him the order of the king, and saintly man declared that he desired nothing so much as to sacrifice his life for the God whom he adored. Thereupon he was led into a large hall, where he had to leave his sword; passing then still farther, he was taken in charge by three soldiers, and there appeared upon the scene two executioners armed with cutlasses. John knelt down, presented his neck, and pronounced the holy names of Jesus and Mary; he received four blows that cut off his head, December 8, in the thirty-first year of his age.

On the same day the governor went to the house of Simon Taquenda, who was his intimate friend, to persuade him to show some sign of submission to the will of the king. As soon as the governor saw him he burst into tears; Simon, greatly moved, could not restrain his own, and they thus remained for some time without speaking. The governor tried in vain to shake his friend, when Jane, the mother of Simon, entering, he said to her: “Your son refuses to follow my counsel, preserve him and his whole family from death, and do not force me to imbrue my hands in his blood.” But his noble mother replied to him with firmness: “If there were questions only of terrestrial goods, your counsel would be good, but, when eternal goods are in question, we must not prefer a transitory life to a felicity that has no end. I envy the happiness of my son, and if I could I would follow him with joy.”

This language stung the governor to the quick, and took away from him all hope of overcoming the constancy of his friend. He thereupon withdrew and communicated to an officer, a relative of Simon, that this gentleman had been condemned to death, and that he charged him on the part of the king with the duty to go and behead him in his house. This officer went to the house of his relative, rapped at the door, for it was already night, found the servant of God in prayer, and made known to him the contents of the written order of which he was the bearer. “You could not have brought me,” said Simon to him, “more pleasant news; only allow me a few moments to prepare myself for death.” This delay was granted him.

The pious gentleman went at once to prostrate himself before an image of our Lord crowned with thorns. After his prayer he visited his mother and his wife, and apprised them of his approaching death. These women, without being disturbed, ordered the domestics to prepare some water, according to the custom the Japanese had of washing themselves when they were invited to a banquet. Simon, having finished his ablutions, put on his richest garments and took leave of his mother and of his wife, not forgetting his servants. When the latter began to cry and utter lamentations, he said to them: “What! do you not rejoice at my happiness? where is your faith? where is the Christian virtue of which you have shown proofs up to the present time?” Then his wife, whose name was Agnes, throwing herself at his feet, begged him to cut off her hair. “In this way,” she said, “if I survive you, people may not think that I ever wish to have another husband.” Simon at first refused the request, but finally yielded at the entreaties of his mother.

He afterwards arranged that three members of the confraternity[8831] of Mary should meet him, and to them he spoke thus: “My dear confreres, what a happiness is mine to be able to die as a martyr of Jesus Christ! What have I done to merit this grace? ” “Yes,” replied one of them, named Joachim, “you are happy. Pray to God, when you are in heaven, to make us share in your glory.” All knelt down; Simon recited the *Confiteor*, and the *Our Father* and *Hail Mary* three times; then he remained silent for some time, conversing interiorly with his God. His prayer finished, he arose, had the crucifix brought in and the candle lit, took his mother by one hand and his wife by the other, and spoke to them the following words: “I bid you a final farewell; I shall no longer see you in this world, but I count upon seeing you soon in heaven. I go before you to pave the way for you; I shall pray God to permit you to participate in this happiness, and to call you soon to paradise.” After this they proceeded to the hall where the sacrifice was to be consummated. One of the associates carried the crucifix, the two others accompanied him with burning candles, and the martyr followed them, holding by the hand his mother and his wife. Then followed the domestics, plunged in the deepest sorrow.

Having reached the hall, the martyr fell upon his knees before the image of the Saviour; his mother and his wife withdrew a little aside, then all made the sign of the Cross and recited the *Confiteor*, and three times the

Our Father and *Hail Mary.* At this moment a gentleman, a friend of Simon, entered to bid him farewell; his name was Figida, and he had unfortunately denied his faith. Filled with remorse on witnessing this spectacle, although he did not dare to confess his repentance at that time, he asked his friend as a favor for a bead of a blessed rosary. Simon gave it to him on condition that he would return to Jesus Christ; this the gentleman promised to do. Finally, the martyr having recommended himself to God for the last time, pulled down the collar of his garment, saluted the image of the Saviour by bowing down with his forehead to the ground, and, pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary, offered his head to the executioner, who cut it off with one blow. One of the associates took it up at once, and placed it upon his own as a mark of veneration. All those that were present uttered a cry at the moment the fatal blow was struck; but the mother and the wife of the martyr appeared to be unmoved, and were silent. Some time afterwards, the mother took the head of her son, kissed it several times, and said: "O beautiful head, now crowned with glory! O happy Simon, you have given your life to Him who gave his own for you!—My God, who didst sacrifice Thy Son for the love of me, receive my son, who sacrificed himself for Thee. Agnes also approached, kissed the head of her dear husband while moistening it with her tears, and said: "As for myself, I am satisfied; I have a martyr husband who is now in heaven. O Simon! call me as soon as possible to you, to see and praise with you the Lord our God."

Simon Taquenda died, like John Minami, at the age of thirty-five, December 9, two hours before daybreak. The soldiers who guarded his body testified to having seen, during that same night, a great light descending from heaven and resting above the house of the martyr.

When the two women, Jane and Agnes, had withdrawn Figida, the converted gentleman, came to visit them; and finding them in tears, said to them: "How is it that you, who showed so much constancy while seeing your dear Simon die, now when he is no more you give yourselves up to lamentations?" They answered that what made them weep was because they were still in this life, and because they feared that they would not be thought worthy of martyrdom. Figida, in order to console them, informed them that Magdalen, the widow of Minami, had already been condemned to death, and added that they should not expect to receive better treatment. On hearing this news both fell on their knees to thank God, and their sorrow disappeared. They now had the courage to ask the governor to let them die with the virtuous Magdalen, and this request was granted them.

In fact, towards evening Magdalen was led into the house with a child of about seven years of age, named Louis, who was a nephew of Minami, and whom she had adopted as her son. When they found themselves together, they tenderly embraced each other, happy to die like Jesus Christ on the Cross, according to the order given by the emperor. Then Magdalen, turning towards little Louis, who had been condemned to die with her, told him to prepare himself to depart for heaven, and recommended to him above all not to cease, when he would be on the cross, to repeat till his death the words: “Jesus and Mary.” The child answered: “My dear mother, I will not forget to do so as long as I am alive.”

At night they were informed that they would have to start for the place of execution. They appeared attired in their finest garments, recommended themselves to God, and set out on the journey. Three palanquins, each carried by two men, were awaiting them at the door. Little Louis was placed with his mother. When they approached the place where the crosses had been prepared, Agnes said: “Jesus, my Saviour, went on foot to Mount Calvary, and should I be carried thither in a litter!” She wished to descend from the palanquin, but she was prevented from doing so, as she was told that the officers would not permit such a thing. Having finally reached their crosses they knelt down to venerate them.

The first that was crucified was the heroic Jane, the mother of Simon. She spoke thus from the height of the cross to the crowd that had surrounded her: “About to appear before God to render to him an account of all my actions, I confess that the Christian religion is the only one in which you can save your soul; open your eyes, and renounce the false divinities. And you, O Christians, do not allow yourselves to be unsettled by the spectacle of our death; there is nothing sweeter than to die for him who died for us.” The executioner interrupted her at these words by striking her with the lance. The first blow was not mortal, but the second deprived her of life, and thus enabled her to receive the heavenly crown.

It was then Magdalen’s turn. Little Louis, seeing his mother bound, offered himself to be also bound to the cross. The executioners raised him on the small cross prepared for him opposite to his mother, who then said to him: “My son, we are going to heaven; take courage, and always say: Jesus!

Mary!" While the child was repeating these sacred names, the executioner struck at him with his lance, but missed him; and the little lamb received tranquilly the second blow, which caused his death. Immediately afterwards, the same executioner withdrawing the iron, quite red with the blood of the child, plunged it into the heart of the mother, and thus united the two victims.

There remained yet the innocent Agnes, who having descended from the palanquin, remained kneeling before her cross, and recommended herself to God. The executioners, moved to tears, had not the heart to approach and to tie her to the cross, although she begged them to discharge their duty, and while waiting for them placed herself on that cruel instrument. Then some idolaters, urged on by the inducement of receiving a reward, took courage to take the place of the executioners, but when it became necessary to pierce the victims, not having had any experience, they succeeded in taking away her life only by repeated blows.

Many persons worthy of belief attested having seen a resplendent light over the bodies of the four martyrs at the moment in which they gave up their souls to God. Their history was written by Louis Cerqueyra, Bishop of Japan.

After their death the governor was more enraged than before against the Christians; but God permitted that he should fall into disgrace with the king, who deprived him of his office, and ordered him to appear to render an account of his actions. It is thus that the Lord punishes those who, to please princes, sully their souls; they lose at the same time their souls and the favor of their master.

Chapter IV

PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF SAXUMA AND D'AMANGUCHI—JAMES SACOIAMA—MELCHIOR BUGENDONO—DAMIAN, THE BLIND MAN—LEON XIQUEMON

1604–1608.

DURING the persecution of which we have just spoken, a youth, who was a Christian, named James Sacoiama, and only fourteen years old, had gone with his mother to live in the kingdom of Saxuma. As he was of fine appearance and possessed much intelligence, the king grew very fond of him, and even thought of giving him as wife a princess of his family. One day the king communicated to him what he intended to do; but only on condition that the young man would renounce the Christian religion. The young man, who already held a situation at court, answered that he would not abjure his faith for the whole world. The king tried another method in order to seduce him: he sent to his mother four of his trusty servants, in the hope that she would influence her son to yield to the wishes of his prince. This virtuous woman courageously declared that she could not in conscience lend herself to carry out such a design. The king became so enraged at this that all were expecting a terrible revenge. The mother and the son thereupon retired the following night to the oratory, which they had in their own house, in the expectation of death. But the king fearing that his violence might displease the emperor, who at that time (1604) was yet favorable to the Christians, restrained himself for the present. It is not known what subsequently became of them.

It was about this time that the crown of martyrdom was obtained by one of the most distinguished personages in Japan, named Melchior Bugendono, a lord of Miri, a place of considerable importance in the kingdom of Aqui. He was a captain and a minister of very high merit in the service of King

Amanguchi. He had openly professed the Christian religion for eighteen years, when the king, notwithstanding the high esteem in which he held him, wished him to venerate the gods of the country. The brave man, in answer to such a request, said that he was ready to give his life for the king, but that he could not renounce his faith. The tyrant informed him that he would let him feel what it costs to despise his orders. Melchior well understood that he was threatened with death; but as he was desirous of laying down his life, he contented himself with asking the king that, as the latter was bent upon destroying him, he might have him dragged through the streets of the city preceded by a herald who would proclaim in a loud voice that his crime was that he was a Christian. Had the tyrant only listened to what his anger dictated, he would have ordered him to be put to death on the spot; but being in doubt about the disposition of the emperor, he waited for a more favorable moment. Four years after, the occasion having presented itself, he sent a troop of a thousand soldiers with a bonze and an officer ordering Melchior to deliver up to them as hostages his son and his nephew. This was done in order to prevent any resistance to the execution of the sentence. The following day, August 16, 1605, two officers came and presented him with a warrant of his condemnation. Melchior read it without the least emotion; he contented himself with saying that the only crime for which he was made to die was that he was a Christian. He could not receive permission to be dragged through the streets as he had requested. The executioners told him that as he wished to die he might die like a man of honor by cutting open his abdomen, as is the custom in Japan; the good nobleman, however, replied that he wished to die not as a despairing Japanese, but as a Christian, resigned to God’s holy will. He then knelt down in his room before the images of Jesus and Mary, and while he was recommending himself to God, he was beheaded. The news of what had taken place was carried at once to the tyrant, who not satisfied with the death of the father, ordered that his son, his nephews, as well as his wife, should also perish, and that their bodies should be burnt. He also had his son-in-law put to death, as he was a Christian, and more than a hundred domestics of the family. The Bishop of Japan having collected information about their martyrdom, transmitted it to Rome.

In connection with the death of this pious nobleman, we must mention that of a poor blind man, named Damian. He had been baptized in 1585;

and as he was gifted with extraordinary talents, he went about explaining and propagating the faith. A priest who was instructing the Christians at Amanguchi having been expelled, Damian took his place, and never ceased to preach and baptize in case of necessity. Informed of this conduct, the king sent to that place two commissioners, before whom Damian presented himself as soon as they cited him to appear. They made him on behalf of the prince brilliant offers should he wish to give up the Christian religion, and threatened him with death should he refuse. Damian answered without hesitation: “You give me the choice between life and death: it is death which I choose, and I prefer it to all the goods that you promise me.” He then began to demonstrate to them the truth of the Christian faith; but they took no heed of his discourse, and resolved to put him to death. Fearing, however, that there might be a tumult, they placed-him upon a horse during the night and conducted him to the place of execution. Having been informed that he was condemned to death because he was a Christian, he joyfully dismounted and began to pray. Some moments afterwards, having thanked Jesus Christ for the grace of allowing him to die for his sake, he presented his head to the executioner. The latter, while holding the sabre already raised, told him that he could still save himself by denying his faith, but the martyr answered: “I wish to die a Christian; do your work. He was then beheaded, being at that time forty-five years old.

Then followed the martyrdom of a valiant nobleman named Leo Xiquigemon; he was from Jonai, a city of the kingdom of Saxuma, and thirty-five years old. Since his baptism he could speak of nothing else but of God, and when his friends urged him to take part in their diversions, he answered that present life being short he had no time to lose, in order to gain that life which has no end. The lord whose vassal he was, wishing to make him apostatize under the penalty of death, he protested that he was ready to die for his faith. It was in vain that his relatives and friends tried to shake his constancy; he always answered that he could not be unfaithful to God. Finally, the tyrant condemned him to be beheaded, and sent eight soldiers to execute him at his own house. Leo quietly received them and assured them that they need not fear any resistance on his part. He then dressed himself as for a grand feast, and took leave of his wife, who was still a pagan, saying to her: “If you love me, and if you desire to be with me after death, become a Christian, otherwise we shall be separated forever as far apart as heaven is from hell.” He had two sons, one seventeen years old, who was still an idolater, the other only seven, who had been baptized three months before. He said to the first: “My son, if you love your father, follow his example, and you will come to join him at the place where he expects you.” Then to the second he said: “Farewell, my dear child; learn of me to sacrifice your life rather than abandon your faith.” After that he desired to be executed in the public square in order that every one might know that he died a Christian. Having laid aside his sword and dagger, he took in his hand a rosary and a crucifix, recommended himself to God, and gave a sign to the executioner to discharge his duty. This generous Christian was then beheaded at Sirassa, September 17, 1608.

Chapter V

NEW PERSECUTION IN FINGO—JOACHIM GIROZAIEMO, MICHAEL FACIEMON AND HIS SON THOMAS, JOHN TINGORO AND HIS SON PETER

1605–1609.

IN the kingdom of Fingo, the persecution, after having abated, took a fresh impulse. We have spoken of three charitable noblemen who were present at the death of Simon Taquenda.[8832] Their names were Joachim Girozaiemon, Michael Faciemon, and John Tingoro, and they directed together a confraternity of mercy that did a great deal of good. Their zeal was the cause why they were thrown into a frightful prison, in which Joachim died a true martyr at the end of two years, a victim of his sufferings. His two companions bore up under this torture for four years, when the king ordered them as well as their children to be beheaded.

This sentence having been made known to them, Michael asked the chief executioner to permit him to be crucified like Jesus Christ, and John begged to be cut to pieces. The officer assented, but he understood that this was to be done only after their death. While going to the place of execution with a rope around his neck, Michael walked rapidly, but John advanced slowly, exhausted as he was by a grave malady, and the rope by which he was bound being fastened so tightly that he could scarcely breathe. While they were on the way, the officers sent some soldiers to bring the children of the holy martyrs; these were Thomas, the son of Michael, aged twelve, and Peter, the son of John, who was only six years old.

Thomas, on hearing that his father was going to martyrdom, conceived so great a desire for death that he hastened to leave the city to join him; and while embracing his father he said: “My father, see your son Thomas who is going to die with you for the faith. Far from fearing death, I desire it; we shall go to heaven together.” Little Peter was expected; but as he delayed in coming, the officer wished to hasten the execution. Michael was the first that was beheaded. The executioner wished to take Thomas aside to spare him the horror of seeing the torture of his father; but the child cried out: "I wish to die near my father." He was then conducted near the bleeding body; there he offered his head with a countenance all radiant with joy, and invoking the names of Jesus and Mary, he received the death-blow. John was the third one that was beheaded.

There still remained little Peter, as he was at the house of his uncle and had a longer journey to make. Some days before, while the conversation was about the sufferings of his father, he had said: "They will make me die with him, because I am a Christian, and I am so glad." When the officers called to take him away, he was asleep. They awoke him and told him that his father was waiting for him to die with him. The child immediately set out with his guards, the latter leading him by the hand, and he hastened as fast as he could. On seeing him, the spectators burst into tears. Arrived at the place of execution, he readily went on his knees, and seeing the executioner drawing his sword, extended his neck while clasping his hands in prayer. This movement deeply affected the executioner; he put back the sword into the scabbard, and withdrew, saying that he had not the heart to kill this innocent lamb. Two others sent to do the bloody deed shed tears and were unable to execute the order. At last there was no one found to immolate this tender victim but an unskilful slave, who, striking Peter at first on the shoulders, threw him on the ground. He returned twice to the charge without succeeding in cutting off the head, and he was obliged to saw it off with violence. Truly a barbarity at which a ferocious beast would have revolted!

Michael Faciemon, besides his son Thomas, had a daughter whom the Christians saved and conducted to Arima. Here a gentleman wished to unite her in marriage to his son; and as it was represented that this young orphan was deprived of everything, and had no dowry, he answered: "It is enough that she is the daughter of a martyr."

Chapter VI

PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF FIRANDO—CASPAR NIXIGUENCA; URSULA, HIS WIFE; AND JOHN, THEIR SON

1609.

DURING this period three persons of rank were also put to death in the kingdom of Firando. A distinguished nobleman, named Caspar Nixiguenca, was living at Tamanda, of which he was the ruler. He married his daughter, by the name of Mary, to the son of Condoquisan, the governor of the island. But the latter being an idolater felt reluctant to have in his house a daughter-in-law professing the Christian religion. He ceased not to make efforts to pervert her, until one day, no longer able to suffer his importunities, Mary left his house and went to the house of her father. The idolater, annoyed at her flight, wrote to her to return to his house under pain of being denounced to the king, who would not tolerate the Christian religion in his states. The pious young woman answered him that her religion forbade her to return, and that as she was a Christian, far from being afraid of death, she desired it.

Condoquisan, to revenge himself, hastened to accuse Caspar to the king, who was a profligate pagan. Caspar was at once summoned by the bonzes, who were charged with proceeding against the Christians. Scarcely had he reached the place when the soldiers threw themselves upon him to tie him, and when he asked them why they did so, the bonzes said to him: “You are a Christian, and it is for this reason that you are condemned to death.” “If it is for this reason,” re-joined the nobleman, “bind me as much as you please, and do not fear that I will offer resistance.”

On the following morning the governor came to visit him, exhorting him to deny the faith if he wished to save his life as well as the life of his wife and his sons, who had also been arrested. Caspar answered that he was ready to die for Jesus Christ, and that he asked for no other grace than that he might die on the cross. The governor replied that for this the consent of the prince was needed. Then he had him conducted to the place where he was to be beheaded, and wished as a mark of honor to execute him himself.

On the same day the officers of justice proceeded to his house, where Ursula, his wife, and John, his son, were guarded. They wished to make them believe that they were going to lead them into exile with Caspar; but they were already aware of his martyrdom, and departed full of joy, not desiring anything so much as to die for the faith. The journey finished, a soldier suddenly drew his sabre and struck Ursula with it with great violence; but the weapon slipped and did not kill her. The saintly woman had thus time to fall on her knees. Invoking Jesus and Mary, she received the second blow which deprived her of life. John, who was in advance, turned back on hearing the noise; and seeing his mother die, he also knelt as she had done, and had his head also cut off.

This triple martyrdom happened November 14, 1609; Caspar and Ursula were both fifty-four years old, and John was twenty-five. There was no sentence pronounced against Mary, nor against the young wife of her brother.

Chapter VII

DEATH OF THE KING OF ARIMA AND PERSECUTION RAISED BY HIS SON—THOMAS ONDA AND HIS FAMILY—FRANCIS AND MATTHEW, YOUNG PRINCES—EIGHT MARTYRS BURNT ALIVE—THE TYRANT PUNISHED

1611–1614.

WE have to relate here the edifying death of the king of Arima, Protasius or John,[8833] of whom we spoke in the beginning—a death that was followed by a horrible persecution in the kingdom that was nearly Christian. The emperor had deposed and exiled him, in consequence of an odious intrigue concocted against him by his own son, named Michael. In his exile King John led a very penitent life, to repair all the bad example that he had given, and he desired nothing so much as to expiate by his death his past iniquities. God soon brought about the accomplishment of his desires.

Prince Michael, not content with having thus humbled his father, and with seating himself on his throne, wished also to deprive him of life. He had him accused to the emperor of several supposed crimes. The latter, taking to counsel only of the hatred that he bore him, condemned him without trial to be beheaded, and sent one hundred and fifty soldiers to carry out the sentence. It is the custom in Japan that when it is desired that a prince should die, the persons of his court defend him till death. But John begged his servants not to oppose his execution, and through affection for him they obeyed most reluctantly. Moreover he made them swear not to open his body after death, as he foresaw they would do, according to another barbarous custom. He then wrote to his unnatural son a letter full of tenderness, and asked his pardon should he ever have offended him. He afterwards had the Passion, of Jesus, Christ read to him, praying with tears that the many sins of his past life might be forgiven him. Having had a crucifix put before him, he went on his knees and calmly awaited the death-blow. The good Princess Justa, his wife, who was present, took the head of her husband between her hands and kissed it. Then she withdrew to her apartments, where she cut off her hair, indicating thereby that she renounced the world.

The new king of Arima, the infamous parricide Michael, after having taken possession of all the goods of his father, declared war against the Christian religion. Following the advice of the bonzes, he published an edict obliging all his subjects to swear to him an oath of fidelity with the books of Cami and of Fotoqui on their heads, and declaring guilty of high treason all those who would refuse to do so. But the Christians, while protesting their entire submission to the orders of the king, said boldly that they would never allow the imposition of that infamous book; and several of them went to ask for it, not to place it on their heads, but to trample on it. Informed of what had occurred, the tyrant condemned all of them to the torture. Listening, however, to better counsel, he was contented with the death of some of them, and sent the rest into exile. Those who were condemned to death submitted joyfully to the penalty; but the exiles were in deep affliction because they had not enjoyed the same happiness. We shall relate a few beautiful examples furnished by this persecution.

Michael had at his court a valiant captain, by the name of Thomas Onda. Not being able to suffer to see him a Christian, he ordered him to abjure his faith. Thomas answered that he could not betray the God to whose service he had devoted himself. Thereupon the tyrant ordered the governor of Arima to put to death him and his whole family.

The friends of Thomas counselled him to fly during the night; but the servant of God answered that he would have come from the extremities of Japan for the purpose of dying for Jesus Christ. He passed the night in prayer. The following morning the governor had him called on a false pretext. Thomas, having a presentiment that his end was approaching, embraced his mother and his three children; then he proceeded to the governor, who wished him to dine with him. Before sitting down to table the governor had a sword brought in, and showing it to his guest, he said: “What do you think of it? Is it not a suitable instrument to cut off a man’s head?” Thomas took it, not doubting that it had been prepared for him, and then returned it, saying that it was an excellent sword. At this moment the governor plunged it into his body, and stretched him dead on the ground.

The same thing happened to Thomas's brother, whose name was Matthias. Having been summoned by the governor, he took leave of his family and prepared himself for death; and as soon as he entered the house of the governor, the latter dispatched him with his sword.

Soldiers afterwards went to the dwelling of Thomas, where they found his mother, named Martha; his wife, Justa; and his three children—two boys and one girl. Having entered, they announced to Martha that she should prepare herself to die, with her two grandchildren. The venerable lady thanked God for the favor that he was granting her, to shed her blood for the faith. Her two grandsons, Justus and James, aged respectively eleven and nine, having been brought to her, she embraced them and said: "My dear children, your father and your uncle have died for Jesus Christ. I am also going to die, and you will come with me. Are you satisfied to join your father, who is awaiting you in heaven?" The two boys answered that they wished this with all their heart; all that they asked was when this would take place. "This very day," answered Martha; "go, then, and bid farewell to your mother, and prepare yourselves for death." After having spoken these words she put on a white dress and made her grandchildren do the same. She then embraced Justa, her daughter—in-law, who was greatly afflicted at not being able to die with her children. She tried to console her by holding out to her the hope of also dying for the faith. At this moment there appeared before Justa her two sons dressed in white, who came to ask her for her blessing. "Farewell, my mother," said James to her; "my brother and I are going to die in order to be martyrs." Their Christian mother tenderly embraced them, and said, while shedding a torrent of tears, "Go, my dear sons, go and die for Jesus Christ; when you are at the place of execution show yourselves Christians. Your father awaits you, and Jesus Christ calls you to his palace. Go and die generously for him who died for you. When you extend the neck to receive death, invoke without ceasing Jesus and Mary. How unfortunate am I not to be able to die for you!"

The soldiers made the grandmother with the two children enter a litter. When the latter reached the place where a crowd had gathered they dismounted, and looked about for him who was to put them to death. Having recognized him by the unsheathed sword, they knelt at his feet, with their hands joined, and while repeating the names of Jesus and Mary they fearlessly received the death-blow. Martha, who rejoiced at the firmness displayed by her grandchildren, advanced modestly and put herself into an attitude of prayer. Finally she presented her head, which, being cut off at one blow, rebounded twice on the pavement.

Let us return to King Michael, the parricide. King John, his father, had only him from his first marriage; but his second wife, Queen Justa, had borne him four children, among whom were Princes Francis and Matthew. These children had remained in the kingdom, while their mother, after the death of the king, her husband, had been sent to Meaco. Prince Francis was only eight years old, and Prince Matthew was only six. In so tender an age, both knew how to show an inviolable attachment to the faith. Princess Fima, the second wife, or rather the concubine of Michael, who had taken her by repudiating his lawful wife, seeing one day these two children, said to Francis: “Will you deny the God of the Christians?” The young prince indignantly answered: “No; I will never deny him.” She replied: “If you do not consent to do so, the emperor will put you to death.” “God grant it,” replied the prince; “I do not fear it, and I even desire it.” She then tried to pervert Matthew, the younger prince, but he was as immovable as his brother. This wicked woman, being supported by a perfidious counsellor, afterwards prevailed upon the king to cause the death of these two innocent youths, thus to secure for himself the possession of the throne.

They were at first kept in close confinement, and it was noised abroad that they were living with their mother at Meaco, whither only the two young princesses, their sisters, had been sent. Thus imprisoned, our little martyrs, as if they had a presentiment that they were doomed to death, prepared themselves by exercises of continual piety, especially by prayer and fasting, just as well as persons who are of a mature age and who have consummate virtue. During the night that was to be the last of their stay upon earth, as Francis was engaged till a very late hour, his servant reminded him that it was time to go to bed. “Ah!” cried out the youth, “I am thinking of the torments that Jesus Christ suffered for us, and that makes me weep. What goodness was that, to wish to die for us! Poor idolaters, who know not this good Saviour!” Before retiring he recommended his soul to the Blessed Virgin, in case he was to die that very night. About midnight a soldier quietly entered the room, approached little Matthew, who was asleep, and plunged a dagger into his heart; then he cut the throat of his brother Francis, and the servant found them in the morning, weltering in their blood. When their worthy mother, the exiled widow, was informed of this murder, as she had been for a long time united with God, she raised her eyes to heaven and thanked the Lord for having called to himself these two tender lambs that she had brought into existence.

Michael having been informed of this, resolved to extinguish entirely the Christian religion in Arima, no longer by putting his subjects to death, as this would have brought ruin to his states, but by employing the bonzes in perverting the faithful. For this purpose he had one of the most renowned of the bonzes to come to his court, but no Christian, would visit him, with the exception of some who were forced to do so; and when they went they carried a rosary around the neck. The bonze preached, but no one will listen to him. The king seeing that no one took any notice of the bonze, had him come to his palace, and ordered that every one should receive from his hands a kind of rosary by which the idolaters pretended to honor their god Amida. But all the Christians refused to take it; even the women refused, in spite of the orders of Princess Fima; and one of them, named Maxentia, took it and threw it into the face of the bonze. Then the princess ordered the women of her suite to take away from the Christians the rosary that they wore around the neck, and all resisted. She commanded a nobleman to take it away from them by force; but he declared that he could not do so, because such a thing was not proper for a nobleman and for a Christian. The king desired that at least his pages should receive the rosaries from the bonzes, but none of them would obey.

Later on, being instigated to a new persecution, he undertook to gain over eight noblemen of the highest rank by urging them to dissemble their religion, at least for a short time. Five of them consented, but the other three resisted with firmness, and were condemned to be burnt alive with their wives and children. They were at once made prisoners and locked up in a house, where they found eight others, namely, Adrian Mondo and Jane, his wife, with their daughter Magdalen, aged twenty, who had made a vow of virginity, and their son James, aged eleven; Leo Luguiemon and Martha, his wife; Leo Caniemon and his son Paul, who was twenty-seven years old.

The news of this having spread, about twenty thousand Christians assembled near the city, not in order to fight for the deliverance of the prisoners, but in order to die with them. Then four of the five noblemen who had apostatized came and threw themselves on their knees before this large crowd of the faithful, asking pardon for the scandal that they had given, and imploring the assistance of a priest to prepare them for death. After this they wrote to the king to be again united to those who had been condemned; but this favor was refused them. The tyrant, frightened on seeing so many Christians, who had come to be present at the execution, ordered the prisoners to be put to death secretly in the house in which they were guarded; but having received from the faithful the assurance that they only desired to be present at the death of their brethren, so as to provide them with a suitable funeral, he decided that there should be raised in the middle of a plain a wooden cabin, to be filled with straw and other combustible materials, to serve as a funeral-pile for the condemned.

On October 7, 1613, the moment of departure having arrived, they embraced one another, and after having fallen on their knees to thank God for having made them worthy of dying for the love of him, they set out for the place of execution. The Christians having reassembled for the purpose of accompanying them, were ranged by the officials of the Confraternity, one half of them before, the other half behind the martyrs. They walked six abreast, singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. Those of the city of Arima held each a lighted candle, and wore upon the head a garland, as a sign of triumph; the rest carried each a rosary.

During the procession little James, hearing some one calling him martyr, answered with great modesty: “Wait a little; you are too fast; I indeed see the crown, but I am not yet in possession of it.” As the distance to be traversed was great, several Christians offered to carry him on their shoulders; but he refused, saying: “We are imitating our Captain who ascended Calvary on foot carrying a heavy cross, which I have not to carry. Now we must labor; eternity will give us a long rest.” When he perceived the place where all were to be burnt, he said to those present who were shedding tears; “Why do you weep? Do you not envy my happiness? Walk merrily, as you see me doing.”

Having at last arrived at the place where they were to finish their sacrifice, our courageous martyrs hastened to kiss the stakes to which they were about to be tied. One of them, Leo Caniemon, having been put in a more elevated position, cried out with a loud voice: “We see the fire that is to consume us; but we see it without fear, well knowing that our souls will thence pass to eternal happiness. My brethren, the Christian religion is the only one in which we can be saved. Persevere in the faith; let not our torments frighten you; the sufferings are light and short; but the reward is great and is eternal. Be you the witnesses that we die for the faith in Jesus Christ."

As soon as they had been bound to the stakes, the head of the Confraternities displayed a banner on which was represented our Lord bound to the pillar, and said: "My brethren, see your Saviour, for the love of whom you are going to die. From the heights of the heavens he holds your crowns ready; courageously die for him who died for you." The funeral pile was then set on fire, and all the Christians fell at once upon their knees, praying to the Lord and the Blessed Virgin to assist the sufferers. The whole plain resounded with their lamentations; one cried out: "Jesus, Mary!" another: "My God, mercy!" The martyrs did not cease silently to recommend themselves to God. The fire having consumed the cords that tied little James, he suddenly rushed through the flames and cinders into the arms of his mother, who said to him: "My son, look up to heaven and invoke Jesus and Mary." The innocent boy, after having three times repeated the names of Jesus and Mary, fell dead at the feet of his mother, and she in her turn fell dead over him. Young Magdalen, the sister of James, still remained. Already burnt in every part of her body, she bent over, and seizing some burning cinders she placed them upon her head as if she wished to make of them a crown for herself. A little while after she gently sank down and gave up her soul to God. Oh, what a beautiful triumph of the faith did the Church see on that day!

When all the martyrs had breathed their last, the Christians passed over the palisade, gathered up the relics, and buried them in the church at Nangasaki. The Bishop of Japan after due investigation had a public act drawn up in reference to this event.

Towards the end of the following year, 1614, King Michael, seeing that he had not gained the favor of the emperor as he had wished, imagined that he would gain it by means of a new persecution. To this end he decreed that all the Christians who were drawing from him revenues or pensions should lose them unless they abandoned their religion. After the publication of this edict fifty of the most distinguished families of the kingdom had the courage to renounce their entire fortune. Besides, on hearing of this the young persons who were members of the congregation of St. Joseph, who were all under fifteen years of age, took among themselves the following oath: “Even though we should be burnt alive, we shall never give up the faith.” And as for the unfortunate Michael, who had redoubled the persecution, hoping that the emperor would give him a more extensive kingdom, received from him, after having published the barbarous edict, the peremptory order to leave Arima and to retire to the wretched kingdom of Fiunga. This was, indeed, a just chastisement of his perversity, that made him prefer the favor of the emperor to the grace of God.

Chapter VIII

GENERAL PERSECUTION DECREED BY THE EMPEROR DAIFUSAMA FIRMNESS OF THE CHRISTIANS OF MEACO

1614.

TILL the year 1614 there had been only local persecutions; but at this time the tempest extended through the whole of Japan and enveloped all the Christians. The Emperor Daifusama wished at first to expel all the missionaries and demolish all the churches. He then ordered that all the names of all the Christians should be taken down in order that they might be subjected to capital punishment if they did not deny their faith. When the list of the Christians of Meaco was presented to him, he became greatly enraged against the governor for having permitted them to multiply to such an extent. He then entrusted the task of exterminating the faithful to one of his most redoubtable generals.

This general proceeded to Meaco with the choicest troops, and there published that all Christians that would not apostatize from the faith should be tied to stakes and be burnt alive. On the following day it was remarked that the greatest part of the Christians had placed stakes before their doors in order to give notice that they were ready to submit to be burnt rather than renounce their faith. Among them there was a poor man who sold his garment, as well as a poor woman who sold her waistband, in order to purchase a stake. In the face of such disposition the tyrant contrived other expedients: he had all those stakes burnt in the public square, and gave orders to his agents to do all in their power to induce the Christians whose names were inscribed on the list to give their consent to have them erased. Some yielded to the seduction; others having had their names erased against their will kept silence; but there was a great number who everywhere published that their names had been effaced without their consent. One of the streets of the city was inhabited only by Christians; there, women were seized, tied tightly in sacks as far as the neck, and thus left night and day exposed to the severity of the winter. There were several children who desired to be treated in the same manner. Women consecrated to God were in derision led about in their sacks through the streets of the city; then they were set free to make believe that they had abjured their faith. They did not, however, cease to cry out that they were Christians. The tyrant afterwards went to Ozaca, where he exercised the same cruelties; but the faithful showed no less constancy. Such was also the courage of the faithful of Sacaia, who were subjected to the like treatment.

Chapter IX

PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOMS OF AQUI AND BUNGO—BENEDICT, A CONVERTED BONZE—TWO FAMILIES THAT WERE PUT TO THE TEST—MICHAEL; LIN, HIS BROTHER; AND MAXENTIA, HIS WIFE

1614.

TAIDONO, King of Aqui and of Bungo, heretofore favorable to the Christians, wished to conform to the imperial edict. He gave orders to four of his officers that they should also submit to it, but they answered him to his face that they were Christians, and that rather than abandon their faith, they were ready to lose all their property, and even life itself. A young page said to the king with the same boldness: “Sire, I am disposed to obey you in all things; but if you command anything that is forbidden by the true God, here is my head. I give it up to you. While speaking thus, he uncovered his neck and presented it. Every one trembled, fearing that the enraged prince would himself cut off his head; but he restrained himself.

The city of Bungo offered in this persecution many beautiful examples of heroism. A converted bonze named Benedict was arrested there, with his whole family and other Christians. After they had been stripped of their garments, they were ignominiously dragged the distance of a league to an enclosed place. Here they were bound fast in sacks, and thrown upon one another. Benedict, who was lying below all of them, fainted away. The guards then carried him to a neighboring house, where he was importuned to abandon his faith. But as nothing could shake his constancy, he was put back into the sack and thrown under the others as before. When he was at the point of death they took him again into the house, where he died while pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary. The companions of his sufferings were banished.

Having through others solicited in vain a Christian nobleman to obey the orders of the emperor, the king resolved to visit him in person, hoping to conquer him by this extraordinary condescension. The nobleman, hearing that the king was on the road to meet him, went on towards him and said to him: “Prince, I am extremely obliged to you for the honor you have deigned to confer upon me by visiting me in person; but if all this is for the purpose of making me change my religion, I declare that I wish to die a Christian. If that is a crime you may at once cut off my head.” Having said this, he fell on his knees, uncovered his shoulders, and awaited the blow. At that moment his son, who was nine years old, ran up to him, and also knelt by his side. Then came his wife and his mother, who did the same in order that all might die together. This spectacle greatly moved the king and he withdrew; but sometime afterwards, for fear of the emperor, he sent this entire noble family into exile.

Another distinguished nobleman, by the name of Titus, had to undergo a severer trial. The king used every kind of solicitation to persuade him to deny his faith; and as he courageously resisted, he was ordered to send, on his return home, his younger son, a boy nine years of age. Titus felt this order most difficult to execute, as he feared that his son would lose either his life or his faith; but forced to obey, he embraced the child, exhorted him to remain firm, and sent him to the palace. Two days afterwards the prince sent word to the father that he had put his son to death because he had refused to abjure his religion, and he should now send his daughter, who was fourteen years old. This was a second cruel blow aimed at the heart of both father and mother; but they had to be resigned to it. Some time having elapsed, Titus received the news that his daughter was also dead, and also the order to send his eldest son, aged sixteen. The good father was heartbroken by this last blow, which was more painful than the rest; he called his son, and said to him: “My dear child, your young brother and sister have died for Jesus Christ; they are now in heaven calling for you; go, show that you are a true Christian, and prepare a place for your mother and for me, for we shall not delay to follow you.” The young man fell on his knees, asked his father’s blessing, and set out courageously for the palace. These saintly parents felt keenly the loss of their children; but they were consoled in thinking that these were crowned in heaven, and that they were thus disposing themselves to join them there. In fact the king soon informed

Titus that he should send his wife. This last separation was cruel, yet it was unavoidable. Finally, he was informed that his children and his wife being dead, he was in his turn to be beheaded if he did not obey. Titus answered that it was the most agreeable news that he could receive; he joyfully set out for the palace, and asked the prince for the same favor that had been granted to his family. Here the scene was all at once changed: the king in the presence of Titus opened a door, and out came his wife and his children alive. He then told them to go home and to practise the Christian religion, to which they were so much attached.

Those who were exercising authority under King Taidono did not use the same moderation. We have read above about the heroic death of the converted bonze Benedict: we shall also cite the glorious example of three other martyrs of the kingdom of Bungo. A gentleman of rank, named Clement, had two sons, Michael and Lin; Michael, being married to a fervent Christian, whose name was Maxentia, was the father of several children. Clement showed great firmness at the beginning of the persecution; but after the publication of the imperial edict, although his two sons had protested that they would never abandon their faith, he cowardly signed a declaration stating that he and his family renounced the Christian religion. Michael and Lin, learning what their father had done, hastened to publish that they had not subscribed this act; and Clement himself, moved by the just reproaches of his children, retracted what he had signed. The governor then had the father and the two sons arrested, as also Maxentia, the wife of Michael, with his two young children. Three of them were seized, namely, Lin, Maxentia, and Peter, aged fourteen, the eldest son of Michael. They were stripped and securely tied in sacks; the others were reserved to a more cruel torment, which was to see those suffer whom they loved. Young Peter, enclosed in his sack, encouraged his mother to suffer with patience; and, addressing the idolaters present, he said to them: “Beware of putting my name on the list of those who have denied the faith; if you dare to do so, I will myself go and accuse you of forgery.” Lin and Maxentia prayed continually. They passed three days in this state without being able to turn either to one side or the other. After this long torture they were remanded to prison; and seven days later, July 13, 1614, Michael and Lin were condemned to be burnt alive. On leaving the prison Michael said to his brother: “See, now, in preference to our parents we have received the happiness of dying for Jesus Christ!” While going to the place of execution they saw that Maxentia was also conducted thither, and they found there three stakes. Michael and Lin immediately ran to embrace theirs. While the latter were being tied to them, Maxentia also asked to be tied; but she was refused in order that she might endure the pain of seeing her husband die. When the funeral pile had been set on fire, she wished to leap into the flames; but she was prevented. After she had witnessed this sorrowful holocaust, the executioners tried to frighten her by putting the sword to her neck, but she cried out: “This is not the way to frighten Christians: if you wish to frighten me you must threaten to spare my life.” Then she knelt down and presented her neck to the executioner, telling him to do his duty. She was then beheaded.

Chapter X

JOACHIM AND THOMAS OF FACATA—ADAM OF THE ISLAND OF XIQUI PAUL OF THE KINGDOM OF JAMAXIRO

1614–1616.

THE church of Facata was enjoying peace under a good king; but after the edict of the emperor a day was fixed on which all the Christians of a quarter of the city were to present themselves to have their names enrolled among those who had denied the faith. As the inhabitants of this city were the richest in Japan, for fear of losing their property they all made but a feeble resistance, with the exception of two faithful Christians, named Joachim and Thomas. Joachim, who was a physician, was so charitable as to treat gratuitously all the sick, and he exercised this charity principally among the poor. As the urgent solicitations of his friends could not shake his resolution, he was finally condemned to be hanged from a tree head downwards. Thomas was condemned to the same punishment, and he was tied to the same tree below Joachim. They remained in this state for three days, and there was none who dared to give them anything to eat or to drink; they, however, consoled themselves by thinking of the Cross of Jesus Christ. After this torture they were beheaded. A bonze was so struck by their constancy that he did not hesitate to say publicly: “Who could doubt the salvation of these two Christians who have given their blood in defence of their law?”

In the island of Xiqui, when the edict of the emperor was published, the priests who governed this church being obliged to depart, they left the care of it to an old man named Adam Aracava. As this good man fulfilled worthily the duties of his office, he was arrested and brought before the governor, who did all in his power to win him over. Adam, however, replied: “When I compare the death with which men threaten me with the eternal life that God promises me, I look upon as good all the evil that can be done to me. The prince unjustly persecutes the Christians to preserve his crown; and I should not fear what is just in order to acquire an immortal crown, and to please God, who is the sovereign Master of all kings." The governor becoming greatly incensed at such language, ordered that the saintly old man should be stripped and conducted through the city, preceded by a public crier, who was to say in a loud voice: "Here is the man who has rebelled against the emperor!" He was then kept suspended by the arms and feet from two posts from morning until night, for nine days. Finally he was condemned to be beheaded, and the execution took place during the night, on a mountain. Several witnesses have testified that his head while falling pronounced twice in a strong voice these sacred names: "Jesus, Mary!"

After this glorious death, a Christian who had through fear denied his faith felt so lively a remorse that he presented himself to the judges and declared to them, in the presence of several witnesses, that he had yielded to violence when he abjured his religion, but that now he wished to live and die a Christian. The judges derided him and drove him away. He then entered a neighboring house and impressed upon his forehead with a red-hot iron the sign of the cross. Returning to the judges he said to them: "Now you cannot doubt that I am a Christian. The God who has given me the strength to suffer this burning will also grant me the same to endure all the torments that you will inflict upon me." The governor intended at first to put him to death; but reflecting that thereby the number of martyrs would only be increased, he left him in peace.

In 1616 occurred the martyrdom of Paul Tarosuque, who was of the kingdom of Jamaxiro. After the publication of the last edicts he was strongly urged to abandon his faith. As he refused to do so, his friends drew up a formula of abjuration, and holding his hand, made him sign it in spite of himself. This was the cause of the greatest affliction to him. But while he was in search of the means to repair this involuntary evil, an officer came to tell him that the governor was not satisfied with the act that he had signed, because he had omitted to indicate the sect which he had embraced. Paul, full of joy, seized at once the writing and tore it up. He declared that he was a Christian, and that he desired to seal his profession of faith with his blood. Then foreseeing that his death was near, he wrote to five of his friends, asking them to recommend him to God, and to obtain for him the grace of dying for the faith. Some time afterwards he was informed that he should prepare himself for death. This news completed his happiness; he asked the officer to allow him to die on the cross; but the latter answered that he could not change the sentence which condemned him to have his head cut off; and this sentence was carried out.

Chapter XI

PERSECUTION AT NANGASAKI AND AT OMURA—BROTHER LEONARD GUIMURA AND HIS COMPANIONS—LIN TOIEMON

1618–1619.

IN I618, at Nangasaki, which was the last refuge of the Christians, an officer of justice entered the house of one of the principal inhabitants of the city and asked for a pen in order to register the names of all the Christians living there. A little girl eight years old gave him a pen, saying: “Take this, and put my name down so that I may be the first to die for Jesus Christ.” Then came the mother, who also gave her name; and as the officer was going away she ran after him, holding in her arms her youngest child, and said: “Put also on your list, I beg you, the name of this child, who was sleeping when you came, and whom I had forgotten.”

Among the many faithful Christians who were cast into prison in that year was Brother Leonard Guimura, a Japanese, of the Society of Jesus. This fervent Christian baptized in the prison eighty-six idolaters who had been locked up with him. The holy life led by these prisoners was most remarkable; for every day they made a two hours’ meditation, and spent one hour in vocal prayer; they fasted Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays; and on each Friday they prayed for five hours in honor of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

The governor knowing that Brother Leonard had changed his prison into a house of prayer, and that he had converted the idolatrous prisoners, condemned him to death with four of his companions. When they were interrogated the judge asked Leonard why he had remained in Japan. The Brother answered, saying: “I remained in order that I might preach the law of Jesus Christ.” “For that,” re-joined the judge, “you shall be burned alive.” “Then,” exclaimed Leonard, “let the world know that I am condemned to death by fire, and that I have preached the law of Jesus Christ.” The judge addressing another of the faithful, named Dominic George, a Portuguese,[8834] arrested for having given shelter to a missionary priest, he said that he also would be burnt for what he had done. Dominic replied: “I prefer thus sentence to the possession of the whole Japanese Empire.” The five who had been condemned were then led to execution. The streets were crowded with people, the sea covered with boats filled with spectators who had assembled to witness the death of the holy confessors. Each one inclined respectfully to the stake to which he was then bound. The fire having been kindled, Leonard was after a short time seen to place reverentially the cinders upon his head while he sang the psalm *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes*. This spectacle so filled the faithful with the desire of martyrdom that many of them approached the fire in order to be thrown into it; there were even two among them who asked their neighbors whether it were not permitted to cast themselves into it. Several pagans were converted when they saw the joy exhibited by the martyrs in the midst of the flames. Their sacrifice was consummated November 28, 1619.

One is moved with compassion while reading about the sufferings of the confessors of the faith endured in the prison of Omura, a city situated about six leagues from Nangasaki. These holy prisoners were exposed to the inclemency of the weather in a place closed on the one side by a wall, on the other by a row of hedges, with guards who were keeping watch inside. They suffered from hunger—so much so that they frequently fainted. The guards, moved with pity, allowed the Christians to assist them by secretly furnishing them with food. The magistrates, however, wished to oblige the guards to swear by the gods of Japan that they would not permit any more assistance to be given to the prisoners, but a noble captain, a Christian, named Lin Toiemon, refused to take the oath, saying that he could swear only in the name of the true God. He well knew that such a refusal would cost him his life. After having recommended himself to the prayers of the prisoners, he retired to his own house and took leave of his friends. The soldiers did not delay to make an attack upon him, and one of them struck him in the neck with the sword. Lin fell immediately on his knees and offered his head, which was at once cut off. His wife, seeing him dead, ran after the executioners, crying out that she also was a Christian; but they refused to listen to her, saying that they had not received any orders concerning her. The death of Lin made those enter into themselves who had taken the sacrilegious oath; for three among them, moved by repentance for their fault, tore up publicly the paper on which this oath was written. A young nobleman was a martyr of his charity: he was killed with blows of the sword, because he had sent by one of his servants some refreshments to the prisoners. The servant was beheaded; his name was Thomas, and his master’s name was Peter.

Chapter XII

IN THE KINGDOM OF BUNGO, JAMES FAITO, BALTHASAR AND HIS SON JAMES

1619.

AT this period two men of distinction also suffered martyrdom in the kingdom of Bungo.

The name of the first was James Faito. He had during the preceding year been expelled from his house, stripped of all his property, and reduced so much that he lived with his family in a poor cabin; finally, he was condemned to death for not having wished to deny his faith. The news of this sentence having reached him at his dwelling, he passed at once to a neighboring apartment, where he found his wife with one of his daughters, and said to them: “I have come to bid you farewell, but on condition that you do not begin to weep.” After having recommended himself to Jesus Christ and to the Blessed Virgin, he put on his finest clothes and entered a boat which was to transport him to the place of execution. Having landed he wished to take off his shoes in order to go barefooted as far as the hill designated; there he fell upon his knees, presented his head to the executioner, and while invoking the names of Jesus and Mary, received the death-blow, October 15, 1619, at the age of fifty-four.

On the same day his cousin, by the name of Balthasar, superintendent of the royal treasury, obtained the same crown. He had also been despoiled of his property and exiled from the kingdom on account of his faith, and it was also in the place of exile where it was announced to him that he had been condemned to death because he was a Christian. He rejoiced greatly, and thanked the governor for having delivered him thereby from the miseries of this life. He subsequently visited his mother, Lucy his wife, and his daughter Thecla, and communicated to them the good news that he had received. The officers of justice came to ask him in which place he wished to die. “Wherever you please,” he answered. Thecla then said: “My father, it is not necessary for you to leave the house; it would be for us a consolation to be present at your death.” Balthasar re-joined: “My daughter, the Son of God wished to die outside of Jerusalem, in a public place; we should imitate his example by dying in the same place in which malefactors die.” Before departing he prayed before the image of our Lord. His wife and his daughter wished to have the consolation of washing his feet; thereupon he set out and joined the executioners.

Balthasar had a son four years old, named James, who, seeing his father going to his death, threw himself at his feet and cried out that he wished to die with him. The father persuaded him to remain with his mother; but the boy did not wish to leave him; finally, to rid himself of further trouble, he allowed him to follow him.

When all had arrived at the place of execution, the servant of God, seeing those present moved with compassion, spoke to them: “You would have reason to pity me if I died in punishment of a crime; but since I die for my religion, you should envy my happiness; for I only quit the earth in order to reign eternally in heaven.” Having said this, he embraced his son, fell on his knees, made to God an offering of his life, and presented his neck to the executioner who beheaded him. The martyr was in his forty-eighth year.

Little James, without being frightened by the death of his father, knelt as he had done, kissed the collar of his garment, and received also the death-blow, while he was saying, “Jesus, Mary!” It was indeed wonderful to see so young a child die with such intrepidity; but it was still more wonderful that there could be found an executioner capable of immolating this little innocent.

Chapter XIII

FIFTY-TWO MARTYRS BURNT ALIVE AT MEACO

1619.

IN the same year of 1619 thirty-six Christians of every age and of both sexes were arrested at Meaco; and as the prisons were already filled, they were kept in the open air.

There was among them a good old man by the name of James, a physician and a fervent Christian. The superintendent, who highly esteemed him, had his bands taken off and had him placed elsewhere, giving him to understand that he might set himself free; but James declared that being a Christian he wished to die with the rest. A soldier then seized him by the arm and said to him angrily: “Go away from here, unfortunate man; go and take a good place in prison, where we shall soon meet you.” His intention was that the physician should return home; but James, obeying the command literally, went to the prison, happy at being able to re-join his companions.

The emperor having come to Meaco, many other Christians were seized and incarcerated. The prisons of Japan, and above all those of Meaco, were so small and infectious that one could hardly breathe in them. Eight Christians died of sickness, hunger, and misery. It having been reported to the emperor that many Christians were in prison on account of their faith, he ordered that all of them should be burnt alive.

On the day of this barbarous execution, October 7, 1619, all the victims, to the number of fifty-two, were tied together and transported on nine carts to the place of execution. The men were placed in front, the young persons behind; in the middle were placed the women with their children. A public crier preceded them, publishing the sentence of death in these words: “The emperor wishes that these who are condemned shall be burnt alive, because they are Christians.” And each time this announcement was made the holy confessors cried out: “Yes, we die for Jesus Christ; live Jesus!” All those who saw them were unable to restrain their tears, especially when they noticed so many women and innocent children who were doomed to die.

On the funeral pile had been erected crosses to serve as stakes; this surprised and consoled our generous martyrs. While leaving the carts each one asked for his cross in order to embrace it; but it was found necessary to tie two men or two women to each cross. Among the men was a lord belonging to the court, named John Tafioie, to whom great promises were offered, but the hero remained unshaken. Among the number of women was found Thecla, the wife of Tafioie; she died in the fire with five of her children, three of whom expired in her arms. When the flames burst forth from the funeral pile, the executioners began to howl, and those who were spectators shed tears and uttered cries, while the martyrs sang and invoked the holy name of Jesus. At first the smoke was so dense that no one could see them; but after a short time these holy martyrs were seen dying with their eyes raised to heaven. What was more remarkable was, that of so many persons who could have escaped, not one attempted to do so, and that even the children remained steadfastly in the fire till death. It is related that over this place a brilliant star was afterwards seen by pagans as well as by Christians.

There was among these martyrs a young person by the name of Martha, whom the officers at first drew aside so that she might escape; but she wept so bitterly that, to please her, they had to lock her up in prison with the others. She was threatened with the most horrible torments; most seductive offers were made to her; but she never ceased to answer that she wished to die for the faith. The dampness of the prison made her blind; and in this sad state all that she feared was that she might not die with the others. When the prisoners set out for the place of execution, Martha clung so closely to her mother, who was of the number of the condemned, that she could not be torn from her arms, and had to be delivered with her to the flames.

There was also among them another heroine named Monica; she was from the kingdom of Mino. She ardently desired martyrdom, and exercised herself beforehand in the endurance of all the torments that the idolaters could inflict upon her. One day she went so far as to pick up a red-hot iron. On seeing this her sister cried out: “Ah! Monica, what are you doing?” “I am preparing myself for martyrdom,” she answered. “I have already struggled against hunger, and I have overcome it; now I am handling fire in order to conquer it when I shall be obliged to endure it. Whoever does not make a trial of himself in this way should flee from danger.” This courageous woman having reached the funeral pile, before descending from the cart, said in a loud voice: “Listen to me, ye who are present: I declare to you that I am a Christian, and that I die a Christian.” She then died a glorious death.

Chapter XIV

IGNATIUS XIQUIEMON, MARTYRED AT FUCIMO—CONVERSION OF A BONZE WHO HAD LED A BAD LIFE—MATTHIAS, OF THE KINGDOM OF ARIMA

1619–20.

THE great holocaust, of which we have just spoken, was followed by a victory that was gained, nearly in the same place, by a Christian hero, Ignatius Xiquiemon. Being at that time at Meaco, he was invited to a great ball which was given in honor of the Fotoqui; but he refused to take part in it, and ridiculed this vain superstition. As he was immediately pursued as a Christian, he withdrew to Fucimo, where he was arrested. The judges having asked whether he knew other wicked men professing the same religion that he professed, Ignatius, quite inflamed with zeal, replied that it was wrong for them to treat as wicked those men who were thinking only of their salvation. He was put into prison, and at first treated with kindness because of his gentle manners that gained all hearts. But the news having spread that fifty-two Christians had been immolated at Meaco, he was at once brought to trial and condemned to death by fire. The haste with which he was conducted to the place of execution gave his executioners no time to prepare the stake and to gather the necessary wood. While they were arranging the funeral pile, Ignatius waited with so great tranquillity that the pagans themselves were filled with admiration. When he had been tied to the stake and the funeral pile had been kindled, he recited in a loud voice the *Pater noster;* but he could not finish it, as the smoke and the flames prevented him from speaking. An idolater seeing him half burnt approached and said to him: “Courage, brother; recommend yourself to the Fotoqui; there is yet time.” Ignatius turned away his head while continuing his prayer, and gently gave up his soul to God. The Christians took his body and buried it with honors.

About the same time there occurred a wonderful conversion and the holy death of a bonze who had led a wicked life. He was so wicked, that while giving lodgings to travellers, he did so, not to give them hospitality, but to rob and to kill them. His crimes having come to the knowledge of the authorities, he was condemned to be buried in the ground up to his neck, and it was forbidden to give him any other thing than two or three mouthfuls of rice every evening, in order to prolong his torture. The unfortunate man passed several days in this state; but when already the worms were beginning to devour his entrails, God permitted that there should shine forth in him the wonderful effects of his mercy. Some Christian soldiers, touched with compassion, exhorted him, since he was about to die, to save his soul and to receive baptism, without which he could not be saved. As this bonze belonged to the number of those who did not believe in a future life, he ridiculed their exhortations. The soldiers, however, insisted, in speaking to him especially of the worm of conscience that would gnaw his heart eternally in hell, and would do so in a manner more horrible than the material worms that were actually gnawing his entrails. This great sinner becoming then enlightened with the grace of God, asked for baptism, and received it with great sorrow for his past life. He thenceforward accepted his punishment in a spirit of penance, and died in a holy manner, never ceasing to repeat the names of Jesus and Mary.

We have here another example of firmness given, in 1620, by a Christian of the kingdom of Arima. His name was Matthias, and he was devoting himself to the service of the Father Provincial of the Jesuits. One night as he was carrying a cassock to Nangasaki, he was arrested by the soldiers and taken before the governor. The latter asked him to whom belonged the garment that he was carrying. Matthias, in order not to expose himself to the danger of telling a lie, and at the same time in order not to betray the religious, kept silence. The soldiers heaped upon him every kind of bad treatment to oblige him to speak; but he courageously persisted in giving no answer. Then he was extended on two pieces of wood, and made to swallow so great a quantity of water that he was on the point of expiring. Matthias suffered all without saying anything and without uttering the least complaint. His invincible constancy being thus apparent, he was sent to the governor of Arima, who although he saw him in a half-dead condition, had him tormented still more cruelly by forcing him to swallow water and to vomit it violently. The patient asked for a moment’s repose, which was granted in the hope that he was at last going to reveal all; but no precise answer was given. They threatened him with yet more cruel torments, when he fell down in a swoon, and as his tongue hung out of his mouth, a soldier struck him on the head with so powerful a blow of his fist that his teeth bit off his tongue. He remained in this state during the whole night; and on the following morning he gave up his beautiful soul to God, in the forty-ninth year of his life.

Chapter XV

SIMON BOCUSAI AND HIS COMPANIONS, IN BUNGO—JOHN CIU AND JOHN ITO, AT NANGASAKI—LEO NONDA, IN FINGO

1620–21.

IN the kingdom of Bungo a nobleman named Simon Bocusai, who had distinguished himself in the army by his bravery, consecrated himself later on to the service of God and to the salvation of souls. He opened a school in which he taught the doctrines and the maxims of the Christian religion. The king ordered him to close his school; but as Simon did not obey, he condemned him to die on the cross, with Magdalen, his wife, and the members of the Christian family that were living in his house, namely, Thomas Guengoro, Mary, his wife, and James, their child. Simon, informed of his approaching end, wrote to a religious as follows: “The prince has pronounced against me the sentence of death; I must therefore die soon. I have often asked this grace of God; I hope that, if my sins offer no obstacle, I may go in a few hours to enjoy eternal happiness. I entreat you to obtain for me perseverance.” The virtuous wife of Simon and their guests received with the same joy the news of their condemnation. On the following day, being informed that they would have to proceed to the place of execution, they knelt down before a crucifix and having reached their destination, each one prostrated himself at the foot of his cross. Simon asked the officer of justice to thank the prince on his part for the favor that he had conferred in causing him to die for Jesus Christ. The five martyrs were then crucified, September 14, 1620. Simon was then sixty years old; he died on the following day; so also did Magdalen; the others expired somewhat later.

In 1621, two noblemen of Nangasaki, John Ciu and John Ito, were decapitated for having given hospitality to two missionary Fathers. As they were persons of distinguished merit, the governor did all he could to save them; they, on the contrary, far from defending themselves, maintained that death was their due. Their wives put the greatest obstacle in their way, for they asserted that during the absence of their husbands they had had their names inscribed on the list of Christians, and that thus on themselves should the death penalty be inflicted, and not on their husbands; but the latter became so importunate by their arguments and entreaties that they gained the victory.

The same year, a nobleman of the kingdom of Fingo, by the name of Leo Nonda, after having received baptism at Nangasaki, retired to Isafai, his native city, and there lived a life of piety, applying himself above all to fortify the Christians who were wavering in their faith He made many efforts to bring back to a virtuous life, among others, a young man who had gone astray; but seeing that he was only losing time, he abandoned him. This wretched man afterwards went through spite to accuse Leo of being a Christian. Whereupon the governor deputed three officers to visit Leo and to prevail upon him to deny his faith. They made use of every artifice to persuade him; but finding that he was unshaken in the resolution of remaining faithful, they chained him, drove his wife and children from the house, and placed guards over it. Afterwards the governor sent some one to tell him, as if on behalf of his wife, that he should consent to dissemble his faith, at least with the mouth, and he should not by his obstinacy cause his own ruin and that of his family. Leo replied that the evils of the present life being transitory, he preferred them to the evils of the next life that are eternal, and that if he were forced to abandon his family it would not be abandoned by God. This stratagem having failed, the governor also employed several other persons of great authority to gain him over; but Leo informed him that in recognition of the goodness that he (the governor) showed in his regard, he would warn him that if he did not cease to adore the Camis and the Fotoqui, he would surely be condemned forever to hell. Thereupon the governor became greatly enraged, and pronounced against him the sentence of death. When Leo was informed of this, he rendered thanks to the Lord, and gave a beautiful exhortation to the idolaters present to induce them to follow Jesus Christ. During the following night he was secretly conveyed to a vessel that carried him to a neighboring island, where he was beheaded, July 25, 1621, in his forty-second year.

Chapter XVI

PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF OXU—A FATHER RECLAIMED BY THE EXAMPLE OF HIS CHILD—JOACHIM AND ANN OF MIZUSAMA

1621.

A GOVERNOR of the kingdom of Oxu had published an edict declaring that all the Christians must abandon their religion under penalty of losing their lives, and he thereby forced one of his near relatives to deny the faith. The latter had a son, aged twelve years, who was also a Christian; he went to declare to the judges that he and his son had abandoned the faith. The son, however, as soon as he heard of this shameful proceeding, went to the judges and protested against the declaration of his father, saying that he was a Christian, and that he wished to die a Christian. The father on hearing of this, conducted him again to the judges, who told him that if he wished to remain a Christian, he would have to renounce the inheritance bequeathed to him by his father. "I renounce," said the boy with magnanimity, "not only the inheritance of my father, but all the grandeurs of this world, in order to gain eternal life." On hearing these words the father seized his dagger and rushed upon him to kill him. The boy seeing him come, instead of running away fell on his knees and presented his breast; but those who were present prevented him from committing the crime. A few days afterwards, the father, in admiration of the fidelity of his son, entered into himself, acknowledged his fault, asked pardon of God, and declared in presence of the judges that he was a Christian, and that he willingly accepted death to wipe out with his blood the injury that he had done to God. Moreover, finding himself one day in an assembly of the faithful, he mutilated his flesh with a discipline, crying out with tears in his eyes: "My brethren, I am unworthy of the name of Christian; I have sullied my soul with a great crime, and with black ingratitude towards my Creator and my Redeemer!" Thus was the constancy of the son the salvation of the father.

The same governor charged a commissioner to search for and exterminate all the Christians of his province. There lived in the town of Mizusama a holy man, named Joachim, with Ann, his wife, as virtuous as himself. Both were advanced in years, one being sixty-six, the other sixty, and they had been baptized only two years before. The commissioner not having succeeded in making Joachim renounce his faith, he ordered him to be put in prison, where he was to be left to die of hunger, At the end of twenty-three days, as he was still living, thanks to the aid that had been given him by some of the faithful, the tyrant ordered that he together with his wife should be decapitated. The news of this having spread, the Christians went in crowds to visit Joachim in prison, where he exhorted all to meditate without ceasing on the Passion of Jesus Christ, saying that the remembrance of this mystery would suffice to make them support courageously all that they would have to suffer in trying to save their souls. While he was thus speaking, the executioners entered and displayed in his presence the iron collars and handcuffs. He then bowed his head and gave thanks to God for having judged him worthy to carry these irons, more precious in his eyes than the sceptres and crowns of princes. The two saintly martyrs walked to the place of execution, their arms and neck laden with chains; Ann was accompanied by two women, and Joachim by a large number of Christians who had clothed themselves in silk in order to honor their martyrdom. Finally, at the place of execution when the executioner raised his arm to cut off the head of the martyr, the Christians uttered so loud a cry that the frightened man cut off only one half of the neck; but he was at once replaced by another, who finished the work. This head, only the half of which was cut off, pronounced the names of Jesus and Mary. Ann was executed immediately after while repeating the same sacred names. This event occurred in 1621.

Chapter XVII

GREAT EXECUTION AT NANGASAKI—JUSTA, HER DAUGHTER MARY, AND HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGATHA—PAUL GAZAIEMON—CONSTANCY OF A CHILD

1622

IN 1622, September 2 or 10, there was at Nangasaki a great execution of Christians, which was called the Great Martyrdom, because twenty-one religious and thirty-one seculars were put to death, some of them being decapitated and the rest burnt alive. What was above all to be admired was the constancy of those who perished in the fire; for they had been but loosely tied to their stakes, so that overcome by their sufferings they could easily get loose, take flight, and declare themselves apostates; but the holy confessors steadfastly remained in the midst of the flames till death.[8835] One of the condemned, who was not counted among the fifty-two martyrs, came forth from the fire; but seeing the courage with which his wife suffered death, he again threw himself into the flames and returned to his stake. There were two others, who were still young, who fled and presented themselves to the judge, invoking Xaca and Amida. But oh, astonishing thing, that proves how much the wicked themselves abhor inconstancy in doing good! the idolaters felt such contempt for these two apostates that they seized them and threw them back into the fire. Thus did these unfortunate men pass from the temporal to the eternal fire.

These victims were followed by many others immolated chiefly at Nangasaki and at Omura. In this latter city three women distinguished themselves above all by their admirable firmness. A magistrate having gone to visit one of them named Justa, whose son had been despoiled of all his property and deprived even of life on account of his faith, declared to her that he would aid her to recover all the possessions of her son if she would only cease to be a Christian. Justa also had a daughter called Mary, aged fourteen years. The judge having perceived her, said to her that he would adopt her as his daughter if she would adore the gods. “Adore the gods!” cried out the young Christian: “I adore only one God, the Creator of heaven and earth: it was for Him that my brother died, and it is for Him that I also wish to die.” The judge then proceeded to the widow of the martyr, a young woman of eighteen, named Agatha, who was near her confinement; he falsely stated that Justa, her mother-in-law, had denied her faith, and that she should imitate her, and in doing so she would be taking care of her child. Agatha replied that she would prefer to see this child perish in her womb, rather than intrust it to the care of an idolater, the murderer of its father. She added that she desired death, hoping soon to re-join her husband in heaven. The judge having reported all this to the governor, the latter condemned the three women to die the following night. When they heard of this sentence they fell on their knees to thank Jesus Christ for the grace that he had conferred on them. At the appointed hour, they joyfully set out for the place of execution, accompanied by more than three hundred Christians. When they arrived there, Agatha prostrated herself, having Justa on her right, and Mary, her daughter-in-law, on her left. After praying for some time, all three presented their necks and were beheaded, October 9, 1622.

At another place, a generous martyr named Paul Gazaiemon obtained the crown in his old age, and obtained it by a new kind of suffering. He was eighty years of age, and had employed the greatest part of his life in works of charity towards his neighbor, applying himself specially to assist the faithful who were sick or persecuted. Summoned one day to appear before the judges, he hastened to present himself, being happy to give to God a life of which a natural death would soon deprive him. The governor seeing his constancy in the faith, conducted him to a convent of bonzes, who exhausted all their knowledge to make him prevaricate; but he clearly demonstrated to them the falsity of their religion and the truth of ours. The governor then endeavored to conquer him by torments. He was led to the sea shore, and was threatened with death by drowning if he did not renounce his faith. He was then put into a boat, his feet were enveloped in a bag, and his head in another; but Paul tranquilly said to the soldiers that at his age he had nothing more to hope nor to fear on earth, and that his greatest regret was not to have loved God more during life after having received so many graces. These barbarians, irritated by such language, stretched the good old man at his full length, and jumping upon his abdomen, trampled it with their feet; after this they tied his hands and feet, fastened a large stone to his neck, and threw him into the sea. To their great surprise, however, he floated upon the water for nearly an hour, and did not expire until he had peacefully finished his prayer.

On October 2d of the same year nine Christians were martyred at Nangasaki. Among them was a boy, who was tortured during the space of eight days, to make him discover the place where the religious were hidden; but he did nothing else but repeat the names of Jesus and Mary. The executioners, transported with rage, tore open his back between the shoulders and poured into it melted lead—a cruelty that the heroic boy suffered while constantly saying, “Jesus and Mary! I desire to go to heaven and see my God.” The judges finally despaired of conquering him, and had him with his whole family burnt alive.

Chapter XVIII

MANY VICTIMS OF THE PERSECUTION AT JEDO—MARY JAGERA AND HER COMPANIONS—MASSACRE OF CHILDREN

1623.

During the month of September of the year 1623 many of the faithful were immolated at Jedo. On the 4th of the same month fifty of them perished by fire. On the 29th there were twenty-four who were burnt, decapitated, or crucified. Among them was a woman named Mary Jagera, who had given shelter to a religious missionary. The governor having tried in vain all that he could to pervert her, ended by condemning her to the stake with four other women of high rank. On the day of the execution Mary was tied to a horse in order to be carried to the place of torture; she proceeded thither with a smiling countenance, accompanied by those who were to die with her. But what drew tears from the eyes of all was the spectacle of eighteen little children who were led to execution at the same time. They were so innocent that they indulged in play the whole length of the journey. One cannot read without horror the cruelties that were inflicted on these tender lambs. Some of them had their heads cut off, others had their bodies cut open as far as the throat; there were some who were divided in two; several were taken by the feet and cut in pieces. During this frightful butchery the five women continued in prayer, then the funeral pile was lit, and the saintly heroines were consumed by a slow fire.

Chapter XIX

FRANCIS SINTARO AND MATTHIAS SQUIRAIEMON AT FIROXIMA—JOHN CUFROI IN THE KINGDOM OF ZIO

1624.

THE princes who were the least hostile to the Christians, to please the emperor did not cease to go in search of them and to persecute them. At Firoxima, a young lord called Francis Sintaro having learned that during his absence the guardian of his house had declared to the officers of justice that it harbored no Christian, hastened to write to the governor that the guardian had imposed on them, because he was a Christian and was resolved to remain such till death. This letter gave great pain to the governor, who very much regretted having to lose so distinguished an officer. He therefore engaged all the relatives and friends of Sintaro to unite their efforts in inducing him to deny the faith. They did all that they could for this purpose, but they gained nothing. The principal personages of the court wrote to him to make him on behalf of the emperor the most brilliant offers; but when he perceived what they were aiming at, he threw their letters into the fire. The courier having remarked to him that those lords would feel themselves insulted if they heard what he had done, he said: “My friend, you are a courier, and not a counsellor; your duty is to bring the letters, not to give advice. You have done your duty: all you have now to do is to depart.”

A short time after there presented themselves four officers, who had been sent by the governor to ask whether he was willing to embrace the religion of the prince. He answered that he desired to follow till death the religion of Jesus Christ, the King of heaven and earth. After this declaration the governor ordered three other officers to put him to death if he persisted in his resolution, and would not yield. The latter having arrived at his house communicated to him the grief that the governor felt at seeing himself obliged to treat him rigorously according to the law, and represented to him the ruin of his whole family which his obstinacy would cause. Francis, full of intrepidity, answered: “The governor may order what he pleases: I am ready to obey him in all that is not contrary to the law of God; but it is unreasonable for him to demand of me that I should disobey the Sovereign of kings, who forbids me to adore any other god except Him.” The officers replied: “If you refuse to do what you are asked, you must make up your mind to die.” “I am resolved to die,” he replied; “and I assure you that you could not have brought me more welcome news.” They then said to him: “Since you are tired of living, die at least like a man of honor. Slit open your body, as people of your rank are accustomed to do.” To this the Christian nobleman re-joined: “I would do so if the law of God permitted me, but it forbids me to take away my life. You have the sword in your hands: you may kill me, if you wish. I shall look upon him as my father who inflicts death upon me, because he will furnish me with a better life than that which he takes from me.”

Having said this, he asked their permission to go to bid farewell to his mother; and on reaching her apartments he spoke thus to her: “My mother, the hour for which I have so much longed, and which I have asked of God to grant me, has at last come; I am going to die. Forgive me all the displeasure that I have caused you, and give me your blessing. Then he knelt down to receive this last favor. His mother tenderly embraced him, and said: “My dear son, may the Lord bless you, and give you the strength to die a holy death. It greatly afflicts me to lose you; but I console myself in thinking that you are dying for Jesus Christ. May he be always praised for the grace that he is granting you!” He also took leave of his young wife, and returned to the place where he was to be executed. Whilst entering he saluted the officers, prostrated himself, and, after having prayed, he presented his head, which one of the officers cut off immediately. Francis Sintaro died in this manner, February 16, 1624, in the flower of his age, being only twenty-four years old.

While he was yet free, and many were urging him to give up his faith, having learned that a man of his acquaintance, by the name of Matthias Squiraiemon, had just been imprisoned for being a Christian, he cried out: “Happy Mathias, how I envy your situation!” and having taken up a pen he wrote him a letter of congratulation. But he obtained the palm of martyrdom before Matthias; the latter followed him a short time after.

Matthias was in the service of an idolatrous master of the city of Firoxima. The latter did all he could to seduce him; not having succeeded, he had him tied to a stake by his hands, arms, and neck. This was a frightful torture that used to be inflicted in Japan; for the cords are drawn so tightly that they penetrate the flesh, and sometimes as far as the bone. Matthias passed a day and a night in this state; and the tyrant, far from being moved, became more and more incensed. He ordered that upon his neck should be placed a large piece of wood, which the martyr carried for four days. During this interval many persons were sent to persuade him to yield; but as he was steadfast, his master ended by denouncing him to the governor, who condemned him to die on the cross.

Matthias received this news with expressions of the liveliest joy, happy to think that he was going to die like his Saviour. When he saw the cross he prostrated himself, and cried out, in imitation of the apostle St. Andrew: “O cross sanctified by the death of my Lord Jesus Christ! I venerate thee from the bottom of my heart.” He then recited the *Confiteor,* and after a short prayer, raising his eyes to heaven, he said: “Praised forever be Jesus Christ, who deigns to call to himself by the way of the cross a sinner such as I am.” He pronounced these words with so much serenity, that the idolaters while listening said to one another: “Who will be saved if these people are not?” When he had been raised on the cross he was pierced with lances, and gave up his soul into the hands of his Creator, February 17, 1624, at the age of thirty-seven years.

On the 14th of the same month, another noble and fervent Christian, named John Cufroi, after being eighteen months in prison, was condemned to death in the kingdom of Zio. Esteeming himself happy to die for the faith, he begged the one who had come to notify him of his condemnation to thank the governor on his behalf. Arrived at the place of his sacrifice, he publicly declared that the only crime for which he died was because he was a Christian. He was subjected to a barbarous torture. After he had been stripped of his garments, he was stretched on the ground and cut in two.

Chapter XX

IN THE ISLAND OF NANCAIA, ISABELLA, MOTHER OF DAMIAN, AND HIS FAMILY; MARY, WIDOW OF JOHN SUCAMOTA, AND HIS FOUR SONS

1624.

A GENEROUS servant of God, named Damian, had sacrificed his life for the faith in 1622. All his property having been confiscated, the house where his mother Isabella, his wife Beatrice, and his children dwelt was assigned to them as their prison. Guards were constantly watching over them, and did not cease to importune them to leave the Christian religion; they, however, always answered that they desired to die for Jesus Christ. Finally, after two years of captivity, the governor condemned all of them to be put to death, with the exception of Isabella; yet this venerable woman, aged seventy-four, having bitterly complained that she could not share the fate of her family, to satisfy her he ordered that she also should be executed. The grandmother, the mother, and the four children were then led from the house to the place of execution. A pagan wished to save the eldest of the two sons, named Paul, aged twelve years, and he kept him secreted; but the boy managed things so well that he was able to escape and follow the others. They were placed in a vessel, to be transported to the island of Nancaia, the place of execution. While on their journey they were joined by Mary, widow of Sucamota, who had been martyred with Damian; she was also led to death with her four sons. The two families embraced each other in a most cordial manner, and began to chant together the praises of God.

Beatrice was the first that was immolated. Paul followed her; he was already on his knees awaiting the fatal blow, when the executioner, seeing on his neck a kind of collar that was the ornament worn by the children of rank in Japan, ordered him to take it off. The boy arose at once and removed it; he then knelt down again, bent his neck while pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary. John, his brother, nine years of age, seeing him stretched dead at his side, courageously fell on his knees, and was at once decapitated. There still remained two girls—Magdalen, aged thirteen, and Isabella, who was seven. The executioners seized little Isabella, and having thrown her on the body of her mother, killed her with three blows of the sabre. Magdalen afterwards perished in the same way. Finally, Isabella, who had obtained permission to die last, in order, she said, to have the consolation to see her whole family pass happily from the earth to heaven, after she had contemplated, not without the greatest grief, the massacre of all those who were dear to her, was also beheaded, March 5, 1624. We may here see how far the noble Christian soul can go.

Mary and her children, who had been treated in the same manner, were also put to death in this place. The mother was the first that was beheaded, together with the youngest of her sons, aged ten years. The other three remained on board of the vessel. Andrew was twenty-five years of age, Mance twenty-three, and John twenty-one. The executioners thrust each one into a sack as far as the neck, and covered the head with another sack. The three brothers asked to be fastened together in order that they might be united in death as they had been in life. Their request was granted; they were tied together, with large stones attached, and thus thrown into the sea.

Chapter XXI

IN THE KINGDOM OF FIRANDO, MICHAEL FIEMOU AND HIS FAMILY

1624.

IN a harbor of Firando there lived an excellent Christian by the name of Michael Fiemon, whose religious zeal was known by every one. This was the reason why he was soon condemned to death with his whole family. He had brought up his children so well that the idolaters tormented in vain for two days one of them named John aged thirteen, trying to pervert him. He always said as his only answer: “I wish to die a Christian.” Ursula, the wife of Michael, had a little daughter as wise as she was pretty; some pagans begged the mother to intrust her to them, promising that they would take care of her. Ursula declared that for all the gold in the world she would never permit any one of her children to pass into the hands of idolaters.

The day of their martyrdom having arrived, Michael took by the hand his eldest daughter Clara, aged seven, whilst in the other hand he carried a lighted candle, the symbol of faith; Ursula took care of Magdalen, the youngest, and also carried a lighted candle. On arriving at the place of execution Ursula asked the executioners to execute her last: “I wish,” she said, “before dying to see all my family in safety.” This was done.

Michael, in his thirty-seventh year, was the first that was decapitated; the executioner took off his head with one blow, which was also to take off at the same time the head of little Clara, whom her father held in his arms; but this was only accomplished after several other blows. Then John arose and asked his mother to arrange his hair, which was too long, so as to offer the executioner no obstacle. The good mother embraced him, and raising his hair fastened it upon his head. The boy then approached the executioner, and noticing that the latter was yet very young, he thus addressed him: “It seems to me that you are afraid, and that you have never yet cut off a head;

take care, and do your duty.” Having said this he fell on his knees, joined his hands, and while invoking Jesus and Mary he courageously received the death-blow. Finally, Ursula, after having seen her husband and her two children die, cried out with tears in her eyes: “Be Thou praised, O my God! for having rendered me worthy to be present at this sacrifice; now grant me the grace to have a share in their crown. I have no one else left but this child. O my God! I offer it to Thee with me; accept this last sacrifice.” After having recited this prayer she pressed the little Magdalen to her bosom; and the same blow caused the head of the mother and that of the daughter to fall.

Chapter XXII

FIVE RELIGIOUS BURNT ALIVE AT OMURA—LEO MISAQUI AND HIS THREE SONS, IN BUNGO

1624.

ON August 25, 1624, there were taken from the prisons of Omura, to be delivered up to the flames, five religious; namely, a Dominican, Father Peter Vasquez; three Franciscans, Fathers Louis Sotelo and Louis Sassandra, and Brother Louis, a Japanese received into the Third Order; a Jesuit, Father Michael Carvailho. They were but lightly fastened to the stakes, so that when finding themselves unbound they could easily escape and declare themselves apostates, or they might at least serve to amuse the people by remaining voluntarily in the fire. The first one burnt was Brother Louis, who seeing himself loosened from his cords, passed through the flames, cast himself at the feet of the priests, to kiss their hands, and then returned to his stake, where he expired a few moments afterwards. Father Carvailho was the second to die. The third was Father Sassandra, a Japanese, who, seeing his cords burnt, wished to join his companions; but not being able to walk, because his feet had been already half consumed, he contented himself with saluting them from a distance, and died immediately after. As for the other two, there being but a slow fire, they remained in this torment for the space of three hours, at the end of which they expired.

On May 8 of the same year occurred in the kingdom of Bungo the courageous death of Leo Misaqui. During the first persecution he had wavered in his faith, or at least he had given cause of suspicion; he having entered into himself, he called his oldest son, and declared to him that in order to expiate his fault he had taken the resolution to die for Jesus Christ. The young man, feeling himself too weak to imitate him, retired to another country. Leo afterwards called his three other sons, Andrew, Thomas, and John, and asked them what was their intention. They all three answered that they were ready to die with him for the faith. The officers of the governor being somewhat afraid of Leo, arrested John, the youngest of his sons. Leo at once presented himself before the judge, declaring to him that if in the past he had dissembled his religion, he now had made up his mind to expiate his infidelity, even at the expense of his life. The judge then summoned Thomas and Andrew. The latter was at first irresolute; but soon finding out the mistake that he had made, he had himself bound as a prisoner with his father and his two brothers. Then all that could be possibly done was tried to shake the fidelity of the three young servants of God; yet they resisted with firmness, and were finally condemned to die with their father. On reaching the place of execution Leo addressed a few words to his children to encourage them. While he was yet speaking, the son of the governor arrived, and said that he wished to try the temper of his arms upon the bodies of the martyrs. This was the reason why they were executed in so unusual a manner. Their heads were not merely cut off, but each by a blow of the sabre had his head taken off together with the left shoulder. Leo was in his sixty-first year, Andrew was twenty-five, Thomas twenty-three, and John twenty.

Chapter XXIII

CAIUS AND JAMES COICI, BURNT AT OMURA

1625.

I REFRAIN from speaking of those martyrs whose combats resemble one another too much, so that the narrative may not become irksome to the reader. I cannot, however, pass over in silence those whose history contains certain particular circumstances. Such is the martyrdom of James Coici and of Caius, both having been burnt for the faith at Omura in 1625.

James was arrested for having lodged a missionary. Caius, on learning that James, his friend, was in prison, went thither to speak to him; and as the guards opposed his entrance, he opened a passage for himself by main force. In punishment for this insolence he was held a prisoner, and the lieutenant of the governor had him punished so severely that his face was black and blue. The lieutenant then told him that he could not save him from the chastisement that he merited unless he would promise to teach no more the Christian doctrine, as he had been in the habit of doing. Caius pleaded in excuse that he had consecrated his life to the instruction of his neighbor. The lieutenant nevertheless, as he took a liking to him, wished to set him at liberty; but Caius said to him while leaving the prison: “Do not think that I shall stop coming here; I will come to serve the prisoners, cost what it may.” At these words the lieutenant changed his mind, and ordered him to be put in irons.

The governor having arrived at Omura from Nangasaki, ordered Caius to be brought before him; he promised that the past would be forgotten if he would bind himself no more to instruct the Christians. Caius again protested that it was a work of charity, which he could not give up. Thereupon the governor remanded him to prison, threatening that he would have him burnt alive. In fact, a short time afterwards he, with his friend James, was condemned to death by fire. They gayly walked to the place of execution, singing the litany of the saints. When they arrived, Caius broke away from the hands of his guards, and ran to embrace the stake that was destined for him; James in his turn did the same. They were then tied, and fire was set to the funeral pile, Caius knelt down in the middle of the flames, and while thanking God in a loud voice for having found him worthy to die as he had desired, he expired. James was also kneeling in the middle of the fire; when his cords had been consumed he arose as if he wished to speak to those present, but as his strength failed him he again knelt down, and died while invoking Jesus and Mary.

I must relate here the conversion of Caius. He was a native of Korea. Although brought up in paganism, he conceived so ardent a desire for the salvation of his soul that he retired into the woods so as better to think of the means to attain it. Korea having fallen into the hands of the Japanese, our young solitary was made a slave and transported to Japan, where he began to examine what sect of bonzes he should embrace in order to secure his salvation. In the mean time he retired to their principal house at Meaco, but he could not find there the peace that he was searching for. One day during sleep it seemed to him that the house was on fire: a little while afterwards a young child of ravishing beauty appealed to him, and announced to him that he would soon meet what he desired; at the same time he felt himself quite well, though he had been sick, Despairing of seeing among the bonzes the light for which he was longing, he resolved to leave them. Scarcely had he left the house when he met a Christian, to whom he made known his mental troubles. The Christian having explained to him some truths of our faith, he was filled with admiration, and went to the house of the missionaries to become more thoroughly instructed. After receiving baptism Caius consecrated himself unreservedly to the service of God and to the instruction of the idolaters, and martyrdom put him in possession of the sovereign happiness which he was seeking.

Chapter XXIV

ORGANTIN TANXU, AND LUCY, HIS WIFE, BURNT AT FUNAI

1625.

THE governor of Funai, the capital of the kingdom of Bungo, having by an edict called upon all the Christians to abjure their religion, Organtin Tanxu, a personage of considerable distinction in the country, refused to obey. He had a noble wife named Lucy, who was also a fervent Christian, and both were of an advanced age. The governor, after vain efforts to make them change their resolution, ended by condemning them to be burnt alive.

On the day of their martyrdom, September 1, 1624 or 1625, they were conducted to the sea-shore, the place where they were to be executed. Organtin on seeing his stake alighted from his horse and prostrated himself to salute it; Lucy followed his example. One of the officers then said to Organtin: “Now, old man, how are you pleased with the banquet that is prepared for you? What say you in regard to the stake at which you are to be burnt?” The martyr, kissing the stake, replied: “This is the ladder which is to conduct me to heaven; I will never leave it, no matter how terrible my sufferings may be.” Both bade farewell to those of their friends who were present; after which the executioners tied them to their stakes, and set the wood on fire. The wind blew the flames towards Lucy, who almost immediately gave up her soul to God, in her seventy-seventh year. Organtin did not cease to hold himself erect in the middle of the flames, without exhibiting the least pain, till he expired, leaving the executioners wrapt in admiration at his firmness and patience.

Chapter XXV

MONICA OIVA, KILLED BY HER RELATIVES AT CUBOTA—THIRTY-TWO MARTYRS BURNT ALIVE

1625.

A YOUNG woman, twenty-seven years old, by the name of Monica Oiva, who had been repudiated by her husband on account of her faith, went to Cubota to her relatives; but there she found a brother more cruel than her husband. In order to pervert her, this unworthy brother wished to force her to unite herself in marriage to another pagan; she excused herself, saying that she had made a vow of chastity, and consequently could not marry again. Incensed by her opposition, he made her serve in the kitchen for a whole year like a slave. The wife of the governor, informed of what was going on, sent for her, and strove by all means in her power to make her alter her resolution; but she labored in vain. To remove all hope in this respect Monica cut off her hair; this in Japan was a sign of the absolute renunciation of marriage. Her relatives seeing this gave information of it to the governor, who permitted them to treat her as they pleased. Then these barbarians extended before her some matting to receive her blood, and declared to her that she must change her religion or die. She knelt down and presented her head, which was immediately cut off by one of her relatives.

About the same time, in the year 1625, the governor of Cubota condemned to the fire thirty-two Christian nobles, of whom nine were women; for them this was a great subject of rejoicing. In consideration of their rank, it was the intention to lead them to execution without tying them; but in order to bear greater resemblance to their divine Master, they entreated the executioners so earnestly, that the latter consented to tie them all, except the women and a boy thirteen years old, named Thomas. The martyrs moved onward in procession with a joyous and recollected air. Thomas walked at the head, holding in his hand the book of litanies; his exterior was so amiable and he appeared so cheerful that one could not look at him without being moved. He began the litany, and the rest responded. They journeyed a distance of two leagues. Having arrived at the place of execution, each one was fastened to his stake, and the wood was at once set on fire. They all died holding their eyes fixed on heaven, and while often repeating, “Have mercy on us, O Lord! have mercy on us!” Witnesses have testified that during the night a brilliant light was seen over the bodies of these martyrs, and that the inhabitants of Mina ascended the roofs of their houses to contemplate this prodigy, which on the third night was observed by more than three hundred persons.

Chapter XXVI

PETER CABIOIE AND SUSANNA, JOHN NAISEN AND MONICA YOUNG LOUIS, AND THEIR COMPANIONS, EXECUTED AT NANGASAKI

1625.

A CHRISTIAN woman, called Susanna, of the city of Facata, was summoned before the judge with her husband, Peter Cabioie, like her a fervent Christian, because they had provided lodgings for the missionaries. She took into her arms her little girl, aged three, and requested that the latter's name should be inscribed on the list of Christians. Five days afterwards, seeing herself led away with the other prisoners, she took her husband by the hand and said to him: "I believe that they are going to torture us. I am going away first, and I hope with the help of God to remain faithful; I expect of you a like firmness. Remember that this life is short, and that eternity is very long."

The judges tried at first to unsettle Susanna by threats; then they subjected her modesty to a severe test by stripping her of her garments. They moreover suspended her to a tree by her hair; and this was done in very cold weather. While she was courageously enduring these tortures, one of the judges, seeing the little girl, whom a servant was carrying in her arms, asked to whom she belonged. The servant, in order to save it, replied that it was her own child. "No," cried out Susanna; "it is my child; look at the list where I have had her name inscribed." The judge, full of anger, ordered that the little innocent should also be stripped and be tied to the feet of her mother. The cold made the child cry most bitterly, and the mother offered to God this cruel torture, which lasted eight whole hours. After this an iron collar was put upon her, and being fastened to a column she was obliged to serve in the kitchen like a slave during six months. Finally, she was conducted to Nangasaki, to be put to death with the other martyrs of whom we are going to speak. During the journey the child was taken from her; and this was for her the greatest suffering.

After Susanna, another valiant woman, named Monica, the wife of John Naisen, gave an example of a heroism not less wonderful. The governor having ordered her to be disrobed, then exposed to the insults of some dissolute young men, her husband though a fervent Christian, frightened by the sight of such an affront, cried out to the governor: “Impious man! Save the honor of my wife, and I will do all that the judge wishes me to do.” John had then the weakness to say that he denied the faith in order that the honor of his wife might be respected. Monica, however, remained firm. The governor commanded her to take in her hands some burning coals that she might feel the torture of fire with which he threatened her. As she was stretching out her hand the tyrant raised his sword to cut it off, and she did not withdraw it. He, however, set her at liberty with her husband on account of the words uttered by the latter.

Having gone to his home, John felt so great remorse that he resolved to go in search of the governor. The latter received him most kindly, praising him for what he had done; but John said: “I come to declare to you that I spoke against my conscience when I promised you that I would do what the judge should command. I have not denied the faith in my heart; I therefore protest that I am always a Christian, and I beg you to make this known to the judge.” The governor, after having conferred with the judge, sent him to prison, whither Monica, accompanied by her three young children, soon after came to rejoice with him at his repentance.

Then there was seen another example of Christian charity. A young and rich cavalier named Paul Uchibori, learning that John was incarcerated because he had lodged a missionary, went to present himself to the judge and told him that it was he, and not John, who had given shelter to the missionary. In fact, the missionary, on the evening preceding the day on which he was received by John, found himself in the house of Paul, where he sojourned for a long time; hence Paul concluded that the punishment should be inflicted on him, and not on John. The latter replied that the missionary had been secreted at his house, and therefore he should be subjected to punishment. The judge taxed these two generous men with folly when seeing them thus dispute about the right of dying. Finally, it was decided that John should die, and that Paul should be held a prisoner.[8836]

The number of the condemned was reduced to eight; namely, John Naisen, Monica his wife, and little Louis, their son; Peter Cabioie and Susanna, his wife; Matthias Aragni, John Tanaca, and Catharine his wife. Tanaca was a poor laborer, advanced in life. They were informed that they had to proceed to Nangasaki to be executed there; and soon after the saintly cortége set out, All were on horseback except little Louis, whom a soldier, carried in his arms. Arrived at the place of execution, the four men who were to be burnt were tied each to his stake; the women knelt in prayer near their husbands. Louis having been placed on the ground ran towards his mother; but Monica made him leave her in order not to be disturbed in her prayers, and the child returned to the soldier, who again took him in his arms. John, seeing that Louis was frightened, said to him: “My son, take courage, do not fear; we are going to enter Paradise.” The execution was begun by beheading the three women and young Louis; then fire was set to the funeral pile. John Tanaca, seeing his fetters consumed, walked through the flames and went to kiss the hands of each of his companions; he then returned to his place, where he fell and expired. Finally, all having accomplished their sacrifice, they went to receive in heaven the palm that they had merited, July 12, 1625.

Chapter XXVII

FRIGHTFUL PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF ARIMA —JOACHIM MINESUIEDAI, CASPAR NAGAIOSAN, LOUIS XINSABURO, JOHN TEMPEI, BARTHOLOMEW SANUIEMON, SIMON KEISAIEMON, PAUL UCHIBORI, LEONARD MASSUDADEUZO, AND THEIR COMPANIONS

1627.

IN 1627, the persecution in the kingdom of Arima was redoubled. New tortures were invented to torment the Christians more cruelly; and the following was the occasion. The governor of this country was accused of malversation and of negligence in driving away the missionaries. The emperor wished to dismiss him and even to deprive him of life; and the latter only escaped by promising to exterminate all the Christians of the country. To this end, he had at first the names of all the males, not excepting the smaller children, taken down. He then ordered to be manufactured three iron instruments, suitable for forming together the word *Quirixitan,* that is, *Christian,* which was thus divided: *Quiri-xi-tan;* being heated in the fire, the three instruments were used to impress these characters on the forehead and the two cheeks of every Christian. Many apostatized to escape this torture; but the rest remained steadfast.

Two young pages, John and Michael, showed a beautiful example of firmness. The governor, after having exhausted every means to make them abandon the Christian religion, threatened them that he would have all the fingers of their hands cut off. They at once boldly presented their hands, and the governor was on the point of executing his threat; but he restrained himself, and drove them away from his house. Michael went to a forest to hide himself; as for John, he was soon recalled by the tyrant, who, finding him always firm in his faith, had his face burnt with a torch so that his nostrils were entirely destroyed. A rope was then put around his neck and attached to a beam in a way that he could touch the ground only with the tips of his feet. Afterwards, his hands and feet having been bound behind his back, and being raised in the air, he was rapidly turned around. This was the cause of terrible anguish, to which poor John would have succumbed had not the governor released him. He did not die, but he constantly suffered excruciating pains till he had the happiness to give his life for Jesus Christ.

In the country of Ximabara eighty Christians, seeing that the persecution was increasing, encouraged one another to die for the faith. The governor having been informed of this, had them conducted into a citadel, giving orders to the commandant to force them into apostasy; but all his efforts having been useless, he had them come out one by one, and outside they were scourged in such a manner that many of them lost their lives, and the rest scarcely survived.

The governor gave orders that there should be sent to him at Ximabara the members of the two principal families of the city of Cuchinozu; namely, Joachim Minesuiedai, his wife Mary, and his mother-in-law Mary Piz, who was an octogenarian and blind; Caspar Nagaiosan and his wife Isabella. These five persons, after having generously confessed the faith, were tied to stakes in a public place; then on their forehead and two cheeks were burnt with hot-irons the letters which we have mentioned, and thus they were exposed for three days. After this torment they were remanded to Cuchinozu, there to undergo the same ignominy.

In this place a young man, twenty-six years old, named Xinsaburo, son of a glorious martyr, came to throw himself at their feet, which he kissed respectfully. The executioners, being greatly incensed at this, seized him at once, bound him, and inflicted upon him so terrible a bastinado that the blood flowed from his nose, mouth, and eyes. As he suffered all this without complaint, they cut off a finger of his right hand, and having stripped him, he was tied with the rest.

These intrepid martyrs were afterwards led through different provinces, to intimidate the Christians by so frightful a spectacle, and their number increased little by little to eighteen. From city to city sufferings were heaped upon them without ceasing. At the same time a number of other Christians were seized, and they were subjected to various torments. Some had one or more fingers cut off with a refinement of cruelty: others had all parts of the body burnt with torches; others had their limbs broken, and their heads crushed between two pieces of wood. A young man of twenty-four years of age, named John Cauxichi, was condemned to have his fingers cut off with red-hot scissors. He courageously extended the hand to endure this torture, but the lieutenant of the governor had him conducted to a house in order that an effort might be made to pervert him. His hand was taken by force to make him sign the act of renunciation; but he seized the paper and tore it up. Whereupon the executioners threw themselves upon him in great rage, and overwhelmed him with blows. He was bound naked to a stake, and the flesh of his fingers was torn with red-hot pincers. Then his face and the sides of his body were burnt during a whole hour, and in order to completely disfigure him they rubbed his face with sea rushes. John suffered all these torments with admirable patience; and thus merited to be placed among the number of the eighteen who, having been brought back to Ximabara, were there kept in prison while awaiting their execution.

We must also mention another man of Sucori, named Thomas Soxin, who was sixty-eight years old, and had a son called John Tempei. The latter was at first solicited to renounce the Christian religion, and as he could not be gained over, he as well as his father was told to prepare himself to undergo the chastisement that the governor would inflict upon him. John informed his father of what was going on. The good old man seemed at that moment to be marvellously fortified by grace; and he said to his friends: “Help me to thank God, and to employ well the time that remains to me to live.” The governor made renewed efforts to seduce John; but finding him immovable he delivered him into the hands of the judges to be put to the torture with his father and several others. A gridiron was placed upon burning coals, and the good old man Thomas was stretched thereupon; two executioners held his hands, and two others his feet; they turned his body in every way until it was entirely roasted. The martyr bore this torture with admirable courage and without uttering a word. At last they released him so as to make room for his son, who was present. The fire also penetrated him so thoroughly that his bones were laid bare. While he was thus tormented, John did nothing but bless the Lord. Having been thus roasted on the gridiron, both were fastened to stakes, their ears were cut off, and the name *Quirixitan* was impressed on the forehead with hot irons so that they could not longer be recognized.

If any one should blame me for holding up a picture of these horrible torments, fearing that while reading this narrative one might happen to lose confidence in case one should find one's self under similar trials, I would beg leave to answer him that the strength to endure torments during the time of persecution is not to come from ourselves, but it must be given by God, who is all-powerful, and who has promised to hear him who prays with confidence: *He shall cry to me and I will hear him.*[8837] He who is wanting in confidence in God, is also wanting in faith, when he says that he has not enough strength; for every one who in a case of necessity recommends himself to God, trusting in his promises, will surely be victorious, as he is strengthened by him who has said to his servants that his help will render them capable of all things: *I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.*[8838] In this way the saints surmounted all their torments. But let us continue the narrative of the cruelties exercised against those of whom we have been speaking.

The other Christians in whose presence Thomas and John had been so horribly maltreated were asked whether they had the courage to endure similar tortures. Bartholomew Sanniemon, who had been arrested with his wife and four of his children, approached and fearlessly placed himself in front of the fire. Thereat the executioners became so enraged that they struck him with sticks in such a manner that he fell to the ground like one dead. His daughters were then put to the torture. One of them, named Regina, as beautiful in mind as she was in body, having been strongly solicited to deny her faith, answered that she wished to die for Jesus Christ; whereupon she was suspended by her feet to a stake, and her whole body was burnt by a torch.

At this moment the governor was informed that Thomas, who had been put in prison, was about to expire in consequence of his wounds. The barbarous tyrant wished to profit by the remainder of his life to torture him still more. By his orders the saintly old man was put into a boat. Then after four fingers of his hand had been cut off, he was plunged four times into the sea; into which he was finally thrown with a stone around his neck. He underwent these last cruelties before the eyes of his son, whose anguish was thereby increased.

The martyrs were afterwards transported to other cities to frighten the Christians by the spectacle of their sufferings; and as John's body was entirely burnt, he was put into a coffin made of reeds, that two men carried upon their shoulders. He was continually a prey to more violent pains; for his numerous wounds became as many centres of corruption that had now begun to mortify. This however did not prevent him from being always cheerful and from encouraging others to suffer for Jesus Christ. Finally, May 5, in his thirty-seventh year he consummated his sacrifice on the cross which he was bound, head downward.

Among a crowd of other glorious athletes of the faith there was Peter, a boy, aged thirteen, whom the idolaters wished to force to yield to their request by suspending him naked to a tree and burning him with torches; yet he endured all this with invincible constancy. The executioners knowing no more what cruelty to invent, heated an earthen vessel and put it all burning as it was into his hand, saying that if he let it fall, it would be a sign of apostasy. The young hero held the vessel, and did not flinch, although the fire penetrated to his very bones.

Simon Keisaiemon, an old man of sixty-two years, showing himself immovable in his faith, was summoned by the governor either to abjure or to be thrown naked upon a fire of live-coals. The good old man accepted this order as coming from God. Fearing that he would be giving a sign of infidelity if he did not obey, he immediately disrobed, and boldly stretched himself upon the burning coals, where he even turned himself, now upon one side, now upon the other; afterwards on his face, then on his back, according to the orders that were given to him. The tyrant, who was put to shame by so heroic conduct, left the place; but those who were present took the martyr from the fire and carried him into a house, where they gave him every care. Having thus been overcome by the father, the tyrant began to torment his sons in a horrible manner; but the holy old man had the consolation of seeing them come forth victorious like himself from the combat. He told them that he would die contented, since he had seen their fidelity towards God. Full of this joy, he died in consequence of the wounds that had been inflicted upon him, February 23, after ten days of suffering.

About this time there was taken from the prison Paul Uchibori, of whom we have already spoken,[8839] with his three young sons. The governor to intimidate the father asked him which fingers of his eldest son Anthony he wished to have cut off. Paul answered that such a thing did not concern him. The tyrant then ordered that three fingers of each hand should be cut off. The boy at once extended his hand and fearlessly suffered this torture. His brother, Balthasar, when seeing him in this state, cried out: "O my brother! how beautiful appear to me your hands that have been thus mutilated for the glory of Jesus Christ!" Then he also presented his hands to the executioner, who cut each finger several times. The third son, named Ignatius, was only five years old. On seeing the executioner approach armed with his knife, he likewise stretched forth his little hand, and this barbarian, having cut his first finger, held it up before his eyes; then he cut off one finger of the other hand, and the child did not utter the least complaint. After this torture they were transported with other Christians to the sea, into which they were plunged at different times, then drawn back into the vessel. Those who persevered were finally thrown into the sea with a stone around the neck; but several of them, overcome by the cold, apostatized. The valiant Paul thus saw three of his children drowned in the sea, and he himself expected in his turn to join them; but he was brought back with the rest of the faithful to the sea-shore, where all had their faces burnt with red-hot irons and their fingers cut off. Paul encouraged his companions, and all suffered these tortures with firmness. After having been thus mutilated and disfigured, they were set at liberty. Paul fell down in a swoon in consequence of the great loss of blood; and having revived, he related that he had seen his children and that he had received from them consolation and encouragement. He then retired to a small house where he lived in extreme poverty while awaiting his execution.

But our martyrs did not long enjoy this liberty; for the governor, having resolved to make them die a cruel death, ordered them to go back to prison, and they obeyed. Here we must relate the frightful tortures to which they were subjected. Two leagues from Nangasaki there is a very high and steep mountain that is called Mount Ungen. Its summit is divided by three or four deep abysses, full of sulphurous waters which subterranean tires keep constantly boiling. These waters are cast up together with flames through these large openings which the Japanese call the *mouths of hell;* and these masses of liquid are called *infernal waters;* they are seen to boil and are filled with vapor as if they were in a boiler that is placed over a fire. They are precipitated from the mountain with great noise and form lakes in different places. In these lakes they preserve such a heat that as soon as they touch the flesh they penetrate the very bones. It was upon this horrible mountain that the condemned, sixteen in number, were conducted, February 28, in order to be cast into the abyss.

Among these heroic Christians were several of whom we have spoken above;[8840] the chief of them being Paul Uchibori. They set out on horseback, singing on the way the praises of God. Arrived at the summit of the mountain whence they directed their looks into the frightful abyss, they were not dismayed; on the contrary, Paul and Mary, the wife of Joachim Minesuiedai, alone of her sex among this troop of the elect, intoned the psalm *Laudete Dominum omnes gentes.* After having prayed, Paul spoke to the idolaters, saying to them that there is only one God, for the love of whom he and his companions were sacrificing their lives. He then exhorted his brethren, in order to encourage them to submit to martyrdom. They were conducted to the brink of the precipice, where they were stripped of their clothing. The executioners then passed a rope under their armpits, so as to be able to plunge them into the abyss and to withdraw them at will.

The first to gain the palm in the *infernal waters* was Louis Xinsaburo. On receiving the command to throw himself into the gulf, being fortified by the spirit of God, after having made the sign of the cross and invoked Jesus and Mary, he precipitated himself without fear, and thus consummated his martyrdom. Paul, however, informed his companions that it was not permitted to throw one’s self into the gulf voluntarily. The executioners then threw them one after another into the burning waters so that they could be seen swimming about for an instant and then expiring. The last was Paul; in his case after the rope had been fastened to his feet, he was plunged into the waters, head foremost, and was drawn out half dead; the same thing was done a second time, during which he repeated: “Praised be the Most Blessed Sacrament!” Finally he was made to perish in the abyss where he obtained his immortal crown, after having suffered so many torments for the faith.

The governor, after having used every effort to seduce the men, undertook to pervert the women. One among them, named Magdalen, was the wife of Leonard Massudadeuzo, of whom we shall speak further on. As her hand was forcibly held to make her inscribe her name on the list of renegades, she struck the register with a powerful blow and cried out that she would never obey the ministers of Satan. The judges incensed at such language, after having inflicted upon her a cruel bastinado, sent her to prison and afterwards conducted her to the sea. On the way thither she met her brother Caspar and wished to bid him farewell; but the guards bound him and took him with her. When they were out upon the sea, they asked that Caspar should persuade his sister to inscribe her name on the register. “God forbid!” cried out the young man, “that I should commit such a crime; I would rather encourage my sister to die for the faith.” The guards were on the point of throwing him into the sea; but they abstained from doing so, since they had not received orders to that effect. They returned to his sister Magdalen, and enjoined upon her either to renounce her religion or to throw herself into the sea. The pious woman replied: “It is in vain that you importune me to make me abandon my faith; all the torments in the world could never force me to do such a thing. As for throwing myself into the sea, do it yourselves; I am ready to die, but I must not cause my own death.” Upon this declaration her hands and feet were tied and she was plunged into the water four times. Finally, because of her unshaken constancy she was precipitated into the sea with a stone fastened to her neck, and she thus gained the victory.

After that another Magdalen was seized. She had already suffered much for not renouncing her religion. She had been plunged twice into the sea, but when she saw that a stone was being fastened to her neck to drown her, she unfortunately failed and declared herself conquered. Although since that time she did not cease to lament and protest that she was a Christian, history does not inform us how she ended her life.

The governor having been told that the waters of the sea could not shake the constancy of the prisoners again condemned to the *infernal fires* ten of them, eight men and two women. On hearing this the servants of God passed the whole night in prayer; and on the following day, on arriving at the summit of Mt. Ungen, they prostrated themselves on the ground to honor the place of their martyrdom. One of them, Paul Mofioie, embracing his father, said: “What thanks shall we render to God for the honor that he confers upon us to die together for his glory?” Paul was the first that was lowered into the abyss; he was soon after withdrawn to see whether he would surrender; but, as he was about to expire and did not answer, a large quantity of the burning water was thrown upon him, and he was thus deprived of life. The executioner then set to torturing the courageous Joachim Suquidaia. They first made him feel the painful effects of the *infernal waters;* then seeing his constancy, they opened his sides in different places with blows of a knife, and poured into his wounds the horrible liquid. Joachim, however, remained unshaken till his last breath. After him came John Chizaburo's turn. A pagan who wished to save him led him aside, and after having conversed with him a few moments, he went to tell the judge that John had submitted; but becoming aware of this trick, the generous martyr cried out that he wished to live and to die a Christian. The judge in his anger ordered that his sides should be cut open and the burning water should be poured into his wounds. During this torture, the servant of God did not cease to say: "My Jesus! do not remove Thy presence from me!" Finally, the executioners being fatigued, bound the other martyrs together and poured upon them such a quantity of the poisonous liquid that they soon expired. Their bodies were quite disfigured as if they had been flayed alive. This execution took place in the month of May.

There yet remained in prison a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ. It was Leonard Massudadenzo, the husband of the courageous Magdalen mentioned above. He had been accused of theft, a crime of which he was declared innocent. The governor offered him liberty on condition that he would renounce Jesus Christ. Leonard answered that he did not wish to abandon his faith, even though he would have to endure the evils of the whole world. At these words the tyrant had him come before him, and seizing in his rage a hammer, he crushed all the fingers of one hand, one after another, asking him at each blow whether he persisted in his refusal, The holy martyr was then remanded to prison. On another day he was forced to swallow a large quantity of water; when he was gorged with it, he was stretched on the ground, where one of the executioners stood upon his abdomen, and while trampling it with his feet, made him vomit forth the water, which came with the blood through his mouth, nose, and eyes. He was then placed upon a ladder, on which he was violently drawn with ropes attached to his hands and feet. The servant of God afterwards related that during these tortures he was consoled by the apparition of his wife, Magdalen, and that she encouraged him, saying: "Leonard, be faithful to

God.” The judge not being able to shake his constancy, sent him back again to prison, where he spent several months, fasting three times a week, wearing hair-cloth, scourging himself with the discipline in order to obtain the grace of martyrdom of which he believed himself deprived on account of his sins. He there baptized an idolater, converted two apostates, and encouraged all the faithful to suffer for Jesus Christ. Finally, the Lord hearing his prayer and his desire to die a martyr of the faith, he was condemned to be beheaded, and he thus consummated his sacrifice, December 13, 1627.

Chapter XXVIII

PERSECUTION IN THE PRINCIPALITY OF JONEZAVA—LOUIS YEMONDONO AND HIS FAMILY, PAUL XIQUIBU, ANTHONY ANAZAVA, AND THEIR COMPANIONS

1628.

THE following year, 1628, a young prince, Lord of Jonezava, in order to commend himself to the emperor, enjoined upon a governor to force all the Christians of his States to follow the religion of the country. This governor, who was of a gentle and conciliatory disposition, in order to calm him, informed him that there were no Christians in his dominion. Another functionary, however, a rival of the former, made up a long list of Christians and sent it to the prince.

A little while after the prince asked the governor who among his subjects was the best captain whom he could safely promote to a higher rank. The governor proposed to him Yemondono as the most worthy of all; but the prince, knowing that he was a Christian, said that he could not intrust his states to a man of this religion. To which the governor replied that Yemondono had been a Christian, but was so no longer. “If this is the case,” answered the prince, “I will promote him.”

Upon this promise the governor went in search of Yemondono with other friends, and endeavored to persuade him to accept the advantageous offers. Yemondono replied that there was no fortune in this world that could detach him from Jesus Christ. Having been informed of this, the prince ordered the governor to put to death Yemondono, his wife, his children, and all Christians. Whereupon the governor said to him: “Shall we sacrifice more than three thousand persons?” He knew that he would lose his life if he did not obey; yet thought it expedient to represent to his young master that all the precepts of the Christian law were full of justice, and that among them was one that specially ordained that one should expose one’s life in the service of the prince. The tyrant would, however, not heed these representations, and confirmed the order that he had given, namely, that all the Christians should die.

The eldest son of Louis Yemondono, named Michael Taiemon, aged twenty-three, was at that time grievously ill; but hearing of the general condemnation of the Christians, leaped from his bed and cried out that joy had healed him. He had himself carried to the house of his venerable father, who rejoiced with him at the good news and gave thanks to God. His second son, Vincent Ichibioie, did not delay to visit the paternal roof. Two officers afterwards came who were charged with the duty to announce to Yemondono that the prince had condemned him and his whole family to die on the following day, January 12. The good old man answered that he thanked the prince for making him die for so noble a cause; then addressing his two sons, he said to them: “Now, my dear children, I have nothing more to desire, since God is pleased that I should make him a sacrifice of my life,—a grace for which I have always been longing.” Michael and Vincent, animated with the same sentiments, united their thanksgivings to those of their father. The two young women, Dominica and Thecla, the wives of the two brothers, having heard of what was going on, and burning with the same desire for martyrdom, hastened to join their husbands; they each had a little daughter that they carried in their arms.

Yemondono then desired to give his servants their discharge, and to make them presents; but they refused even the salary that was due to them, and declared that they all wished to die for Jesus Christ. The servants of Michael and those of his brother spoke in the same way. Among them was a young page, less than twelve years old, who was to be sent home to his parents, but he refused to go. He afterwards consented to return to his father’s house, but only to take leave. His father endeavored to retain him by force; but the boy resolutely told him that he did not wish to lose so beautiful an occasion to prove his fidelity to his God; after this he fled from the house, and returned to join the martyrs.

The night was passed in exercises of piety and in making preparations under the direction of the saintly old man. Two hours before day the officers of justice arrived; they found the servants of God awaiting the moment of their sacrifice. Upon all a rope was put around the neck, and their hands were tied behind the back, with the exception of the women and

Yemondono. Remaining thus free to receive the executioners, he went to meet them with a smiling countenance; then he was bound like the rest. All knelt down before an image of the Mother of God that was fastened to a pike. A young page was charged with carrying this holy standard, and another had to accompany him with a blessed candle that was burning. The pious cortège finally left the house in the following order: after the two pages came the women; Thecla had her little daughter in her arms, and that of Dominica was carried by her chamber-maid; then followed the men, masters and servants; and the brave Yemondono closed the procession. They all showed so great a modesty that the idolaters were themselves deeply moved. Arrived at the place of execution, they fell on their knees, and again recommended themselves to the Blessed Virgin. All, to the number of fifteen, were beheaded, the women first, the men afterwards; their venerable chief, Yemondono, was the last that was executed; he received the mortal blow while pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary.

There were left five of his servants who expected to die with the rest; but they were told to return home. These poor men, who were greatly distressed, said to the judge: "We are Christians as well as those who have just died; why do you not make us die with them?" Whilst thus speaking they remained on their knees. The two young pages refused above all to rise and to go away; they had to be forced out of the enclosure. They returned home, weeping for not having obtained the grace of being executed with the rest.

A second band of Christians, composed of seven persons, all of the same family, were afterwards put to death. Then came a nobleman, named Simon Xuzaiemon, with his daughter, aged thirteen, whom some idolaters carried off in the hope of perverting them; but she escaped from their hands, and ran to the place of execution, where her father was already on his knees awaiting death; she placed herself by his side, and both were beheaded.

On the same day there was also executed a highly distinguished young lord named Paul Xiquibu, a great friend of Yemondono. The governor having notified him the previous evening to prepare himself, he sent his thanks to him. After midnight an emissary arrived, with orders to behead him when the sun should rise. Paul began to pray, and when morning came, set out for the place of execution. Magdalen, his wife, wished to follow him, but she was prevented from doing so: she was told that the prince, at the instance of her father, allowed her to live. This generous woman replied that it was an injustice to let a Christian wife live while they put to death her Christian husband. An officer seeing her burst into tears, to console her, said to her that he would try to procure for her the death that she desired; he added that the prince would not execute her publicly on account of the promise that he had given to her father; but he promised to come in the evening to behead her in her apartments. In the mean time, Paul, who had heard this whole conversation, seeing the ardent desire that his virtuous spouse showed to die for Jesus Christ, wept for joy; full of this sweet consolation, he walked cheerfully to the place of execution, where, after having prayed, he received the death-blow, and the palm that nothing can tarnish.

One league from Jonezava there lived several Christian noblemen belonging to the prince's court. The more distinguished among them were Anthony Anazava and Ignatius Soiemon. While they were absent, their wives, in order to save them, declared that their husbands were not Christians. But our two heroes, when they heard of this, hastened to go in search of the governor, to let him know that their wives had deceived him. The latter having told them that they should obey the prince, they replied that if the prince wished to be obeyed he had but to order their death and they would be ready to submit to it.

Three days after, Anthony being in a house with soldiers, the latter pressed him to deny the faith, because they had received orders to arrest him in case of refusal. "That is right," Anthony answered: "do your duty at once." But as no one dared to put his hand upon him, he took the rope himself and passed it around his neck; then having put his hands behind his back, he begged them to tie him. Thus bound he went to the house of Ignatius, to whom he said on entering: "Well, friend, what say you about the state in which you see me?" "You never," answered Ignatius, "appeared to me more worthy of honor than on this day on which you carry the livery of Jesus Christ; I wish to share your glory." Having said this, he begged and obtained the favor of being bound like Anthony.

Four other noblemen were also arrested, among whom was Paul, the eldest son of Anthony. His two younger sons, Mancio and Michael, the former fourteen, the latter eleven years of age, having come to visit him, he said to them: "As you see, I am bound; are you not also ready to die for

Jesus Christ?” “Yes,” they answered, “we are ready.” They presented themselves to the soldiers to be bound; but the latter said to them that if they wished to die with their father, they needed only to follow him.

A short time afterwards, by order of the prince, the men were conducted to another place, where they were beheaded. Their wives, who were also condemned, were taken with their children into the yard of the house that had belonged to Ignatius, where they suffered the same punishment. Mancio and Michael having knelt down to receive the death-blow, the pagans who were present were touched with compassion, and cried out that these boys did not even know why they died; but both answered with firmness: “We die for Jesus Christ.” Whereupon the executioners decapitated at first Mancio, the elder son. Michael, seeing his brother dead, put his hands to his hair to raise it up; at the same moment the executioner cut off with one blow of the sabre not only the head, but also the two hands—a spectacle that drew tears from the eyes of those present.

Chapter XXIX

PERSECUTION PUSHED TO THE LAST DEGREE OF VIOLENCE AT NANGASAKI—ISABELLA AND SIMEON—FATHER ANTHONY ISCIDA

1629–30.

ABOUT the year 1629 there came to Nangasaki a new governor, who was more cruel than all the rest. He made a large number of the faithful ascend the horrible Mount Ungen, and gave orders that they should be tormented as much as possible without causing their death, because death under these torments was the object of their desires. Among them was a young woman named Isabella, whose husband had denied the faith. She was placed on the brink of the abyss; there a large stone was fastened to her neck, and a small one was put on her head; she was told that if she let it fall, this would be a sign of apostasy. Isabella answered that even if her head were to fall, her soul would always remain firm and constant in the faith. She nevertheless kept the same posture for several hours, and did not let the stone fall from her head. She passed the whole night in prayer. On the following day, from morning till night, burning water was poured on her head from time to time. She was treated in this manner for several days, and at intervals new cruelties were inflicted upon her. Every time they urged her to submit she answered: “I am a Christian, and I will be one till death.” “But,” said the executioners to her, “we will torment you in this way for ten, twenty years.” “Ah,” she cried, “ten, twenty years! that is too short a time; if I lived a hundred years I should esteem myself happy to suffer all this time the same tortures for the love of God.” This torture lasted thirteen days, and the servant of God passed six of them without drinking, eating, or sleeping—her whole body being one wound. Finally, despairing of being able to conquer her, she had to be taken back to Nangasaki, where the governor had her hand taken by force to inscribe her name on the list of renegades; he then dismissed her. She, however, remained firm in her faith, and the pagans could not help admiring her courage.

The governor having ordered that all those who were imprisoned for the faith should be prosecuted, there were found among them two brothers, Alexis and Simeon. Alexis being asked to deny his faith, protested that he would never consent; however, he had the misfortune to yield later on and to deny his faith. The judge then took in hand Simeon, the younger brother, who was in his nineteenth year; he asked him whether he had applied himself to study. “Others,” said Simeon in reply, “study to succeed in the world; but I have studied only to learn how to die well.” The judge having told him that many Christians advanced in age had abandoned the faith to save their lives, he replied: “As for myself, I am sure that I cannot be saved except in my religion; let others do what they please, I will never abandon it.” After this, the governor condemned him with several others to be conducted to Mount Ungen.

Arrived at the summit of the mountain, Simeon was stripped and tied; then subjected to the same treatment as Isabella; but after several hours of the most excruciating sufferings he fell into a swoon. The same thing was renewed on the following day. When he recovered his senses he heard the executioners still speaking to him about denying his faith; he then said to them: “Know that whatever may be the torments that you make me endure, I will never adore your false gods.” Irritated at these words, the judge ordered that he should be subjected for the third time to the punishment of the *infernal waters*. The executioners having again stripped him saw his body all covered with the most frightful wounds; nevertheless they stretched him on the ground, and continued to pour the horrible liquid on his flesh that was already consumed. The poor young man, quite exhausted, fainted again; he was placed in the cabin where he had been before, and left lying upon the ground. The wounds then began to putrefy, and worms were engendered. This created such a stench that in order to frighten Isabella, the valiant woman of whom we have spoken, she was threatened with being shut up in the same cabin with Simeon. The governor fearing that the patient might die, sent a doctor to cure him, or if he could not restore him to health, to have him sent back to his father. For the emperor desired that the Christians should no longer be put to death, but that they should be tormented till they renounced the faith;—a barbarous invention inspired by the devil. The doctor despairing of being able to heal Simeon, had him transported to his father’s house; but the saintly youth was told that should he recover, he would be tortured anew. To this he replied, “That is just what I desire.”

The young man arrived at his father’s house more dead than alive. As the Christians came to visit him and congratulated him for having suffered so much for God, he made the request that in order to be freed from hearing such eulogies the door should be closed to every one. There in solitude he was often heard to repeat: “Oh, my Jesus! Thy wounds, not mine, are great; all that I suffer is nothing in comparison with what Thou hast suffered for me.” On the third day he asked that his face be washed. “But, my son,” said the father to him, “do you not know that your face is but one wound? To wash it would only increase your sufferings.” Simeon replied: “Wash it as well as you can; do you not see that I am going to paradise?” Then he asked for his crucifix, saying that he wished to give up his soul into the sacred wounds of the Saviour. It was given to him; and not being able to raise his arms to embrace it, he said: “Oh, my Saviour! have pity on me.” Then pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary, he gave up his spirit to God, August 29, 1630. His father and his other relatives wept, but less for grief than for joy that they experienced in seeing this martyr in the bosom of their family.

The persecution in this country raged afterwards with such fury that of six hundred thousand Christians who had been counted before, there soon remained no more than forty thousand, the rest having been either perverted or martyred. It was not long after those of whom we have just spoken that Father Anthony Iscida, a Japanese and missionary of the Society of Jesus, also won with much glory the immortal crown. Having been in prison at Omura for three years, he was worn out with sufferings. The governor not ceasing to press him to return to the worship of the gods of the country in which he had been born, this good priest answered: “In order to affect me it will be necessary to threaten me with sparing my life. My most ardent desire is to suffer much and to die for Jesus Christ.” The tyrant had him conducted to Mount Ungen, where, after his limbs had been dislocated, he was for thirty days subjected to torture by means of the sulphurous waters. He was finally burnt alive at Nangasaki, and thus consummated his sacrifice in the sixty-fourth year of his age.

Chapter XXX

JAMES CUFIOIE; MARY, HIS MOTHER; LEO TASUQUE, HIS FATHER-IN-LAW; AND HIS FAMILY

1630.

WE shall now relate the martyrdom of James Cufioie, one of the most zealous and most charitable Christians in the kingdom of Fingo. He lived at Nangasaki. Having offered his house as an asylum to Father Iscida, he was arrested and imprisoned with him. When he saw himself a prisoner, he regulated his time and his devotions in the following manner: He fasted the whole week, except on Sundays; he wore continually a hair—shirt, and spent daily twelve hours in prayer, in order to obtain from God the grace to die for the faith. The grace was granted him; for he was condemned to death by fire, and his mother, named Mary, was sentenced to die at the same time by being beheaded.

There was a woman named Agatha, who having learned that her husband had been condemned to death with his mother, while she herself was spared, went at once to visit them in prison. James seeing her weep, said to her: “Agatha, why these tears? Are you weeping on account of my death?” “No,” she replied, “I weep because I was not condemned with you.” James held out to her the hope that this consolation would not be refused to her.

Mary gave thanks to God, happy to see herself on the point of dying for Jesus Christ. The soldiers did not hesitate to take the son and the mother in order to lead them to the place of execution. Having arrived there James embraced the stake that awaited him; he was then bound to it; and when the flames surrounded him on all sides, he began to sing the psalm *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes.* Scarcely had he finished it when he fell and gave up his soul to God. Mary, his good mother, after having offered to the Lord the sacrifice of her son, who was immolated before her eyes, knelt down and presented her head to the executioner, who immediately cut it off. A few days after, James appeared to one of his friends, and being somewhat anxious about the salvation of his soul, said to him: “My friend, everything passes away; whence comes it that you neglect your salvation, and that you do not work for eternity?”

Agatha in the mean time was inconsolable at finding herself still living. Five days after, it was announced to her that her three young sons had just been condemned to death. Far from being afflicted by this news, she rejoiced at the thought that to her children was assured the possession of eternal happiness. She only regretted that she was not able to follow them, and therefore said to the soldiers: “If my children are to die, why do you let me live—me, who am their mother?” The eldest, called John, was only nine years old; Michael, the second, was five; Ignatius, only two. This little innocent was at play when he was told that he was to die; and at once, how wonderful! he entered the house without emotion, took his rosary, and knelt down for the purpose of praying.

The three young martyrs, after having bid farewell to their mother, put themselves at the disposal of the soldiers. This affectionate mother accompanied them for some time, then having embraced them, she retired while encouraging them to die for God. When they reached the place of execution, John prostrated himself and lowered his collar in expectation of death; but the executioner, who trembled in performing so barbarous an action, missed his aim, and threw the boy on the ground. John arose again, and received a second blow, that severed his head from the body. The executioner passing then to Michael, missed him as he had missed his brother, and despatched him only after the second blow. There remained only the little Ignatius, who, with his hands joined, was awaiting tranquilly his turn; on seeing the boy, who, because of his smallness, was an object difficult to aim at, the executioner shook in every limb. With a trembling hand he aimed two blows at him, the first having missed. The spectators became quite indignant, and wished to rush upon the cruel wretch to tear him in pieces, but the judge hindered them from doing so.

Leo Tasuque, the maternal uncle of the three boys, was present at their execution, and he was put to death after them. He was a Christian of great virtue. As soon as James, his son-in-law, was arrested, he prepared himself for martyrdom. When his three grandchildren were taken to be led to execution, he accompanied them to the gate of the street, where he embraced them, repeating several times, with tears in his eyes: “Farewell, my dear children; when you get to paradise, do not forget me.” On reaching his house he began to pray; but scarcely had he began when he heard a confusion of voices saying: “Kill him, kill him!” Agatha hastened to the place whence the noise proceeded, and believing that she was the object of search, presented herself in order to be conducted to prison; but the soldiers cried out: “Go away; it is not you whom we are seeking, but Tasuque, your father.” The saintly old man, hearing his name mentioned, arose at once, and advanced towards them. A soldier threw himself upon him to tie him. “One moment, I beg you,” said Leo to him; your cords are too weak; I am going to give you better ones.” He then produced iron handcuffs, which he told him to fasten on him. He was at once conducted to the place where his three grandchildren were awaiting death. After they had been beheaded, he himself was also put to death in the same manner.

There now remained to poor Agatha of all the relatives only a little daughter, who to her great grief she saw taken from her without being able to die with her. We do not know what finally became of this desolate mother, because these facts occurred in 1630, and after this period we find no accurate accounts of what took place in Japan.

Chapter XXXI

EXTREME CRUELTIES EXERCISED IN THE KINGDOM OF ARIMA—THOMAS QUICHIBIOIE AND HIS COMPANIONS—REMARKABLE PUNISHMENT OF THE TYRANT

1630.

BUGONDONO, the furious tyrant who persecuted the faithful in the kingdom of Arima[8841] with so much cruelty, became more and more ferocious. He formed the plan to have them conducted into the pagan temples so as to force them to worship the false gods. Three hundred of them showed an admirable constancy in the midst of the torments to which they were subjected. Of this number was a woman of high rank with her family. Her daughter, aged thirteen, was tortured in a horrible manner. Among the means that were employed to make her suffer was that of burying pointed reeds in her flesh; she was then roasted with burning coals; and when the executioners were tired of tormenting her, they would leave her only to return to their horrible work.

The tyrant afterwards conceived the idea of exercising a piece of diabolical cruelty against the fathers and the mothers of those who withstood the tortures. He gathered together a large number of the children of those who refused to renounce Jesus Christ, and after having skinned their hands, he placed upon them burning coals, saying that if they withdrew their hands this would be a sign of apostasy. There were some who withdrew their hands, though they protested they did not cease to be Christians; but many others bore without flinching this awful pain. They were thus tormented before the eyes of their parents, the majority of whom yielded through compassion for their children. There were about fifty of them who remained firm in the faith.

These last were conducted to Ximabara, where they were subjected to unheard-of trials. They were made to sit on two stakes placed in the form of a cross in a hole; then two boards hollowed out held them tightly by the neck; so that only the head could be seen above, whilst the body was in the hole. They remained in this position night and day. Every day, among the tortures that they had to suffer, a part of the neck was sawed with a wooden saw, precautions being taken to prolong their sufferings. A nobleman, named Thomas Quichibioie, bore this torment for seven days, at the end of which, May 31, 1630, he had his head entirely cut off. The example of his courage caused three of his companions to enter into themselves, as they had yielded after resisting a long time. They deplored their unfaithfulness, and having again declared themselves Christians, were beheaded soon after.

But here the vengeance of God burst forth against the tyrant. He was at once seized with a burning fever, which made him furious, and caused him to utter loud cries. He sought everywhere for remedies, and several were offered him. He desired to mix and to take them all at once, saying that if each of the remedies could heal him, he would be still more sure of being cured by taking them all at once. Scarcely had he swallowed a part of the medicine when all his teeth fell out, and he felt as if there was a burning fire in his entrails. He thought that he would have recourse to the waters of Mount Ungen, of which salutary baths were made by tempering them with cold water; but as soon as he was in the bath, he cried out that he was all on fire, and that the sight of the heads of all the Christians whom he had made to die caused him an insupportable torture. He thus expired in a transport of rage, in the month of December of the year 1630.

Chapter XXXII

LAST EFFORTS OF THE MISSIONARIES—FATHER SEBASTIAN VIEYRA—END OF THE MISSION

1632–34.

WE have reached the end of this history; but before concluding it, it may be permitted to me to relate one more fact that was glorious for the faith. Father Sebastian Vieyra, a Portuguese Jesuit, expelled from Japan in 1614, came to Rome some years after, to render an account to the Holy Father of the state of his mission. He then returned to Japan, into which he penetrated in disguise in 1632. The governor of Nangasaki having succeeded in capturing him, immediately gave information of this to the young emperor, who ordered that he should be taken to Jedo for the purpose of obtaining from him news from Europe. Having arrived at this capital, he was visited by the lords of the court, and he spoke to them freely about the truths of our faith. The emperor wished to have in writing an abridgment of the Christian doctrines. When these memoirs had been carried to the court, and the reading of them had begun, it was remarked that the emperor seemed as if wavering and agitated by various thoughts, above all when the article about the immortality of the soul was read. He then said: “This bonze of Europe is a man of good faith; he exposes with sincerity the mysteries of his religion.” He added: “If what he says of the immortality of the soul be true, as it seems to be, what will become of us, unhappy beings that we are?” The more the reading continued, the more the emperor appeared to be moved; but all the lights that he had on the truth of our faith were soon obscured by the discourses of Oiendono, his uncle, who persuaded him that all that the missionary had advanced was a tissue of lies, and that it was something unworthy of a prince to abandon the religion of his ancestors in order to embrace that of a stranger, an emissary of the King of Spain, who aspired to take possession of Japan as he had already done in the case of the

Philippine islands. The young prince, imbued from his infancy with pagan maxims, yielded at once to the reasons given by his uncle, and condemned the holy missionary to the following torture: after he had been led through the streets of the city in a most ignominious way, he was suspended in a grave, his head downwards and his hands tied behind his back; two boards hollowed out held him tightly in the middle of the body, depriving him entirely of light. He, however, predicted that he would die only by fire. In fact, at the end of three days, on finding him quite fresh, as if he had not suffered at all, the executioners kindled a large fire in the grave, and he thus consummated his martyrdom, January 6, 1634.

It was about this time that all the missionaries having been martyred or banished, with the exception of some who concealed themselves, the mission ceased to exist in Japan. Numerous spies were kept all along the coast, with orders to be on the watch for strangers and to oblige them as soon as discovered to trample on the crucifix. It was, therefore, no longer possible for any missionary to go there to keep alive the faith of the Christians who still remained. Those who were still devoting themselves to this heroic undertaking were soon arrested and put to death. The ports remained open only to the Protestant Hollanders, because the latter declaring that they did not belong to the Catholic Church, and rejecting the veneration of holy images, felt no repugnance in stepping upon the crucifix. The last missionary who died in Japan was Father Christopher Ferreyra; though in 1633 out of fear for the torments that were inflicted he had the misfortune to apostatize. After having passed nineteen years in this sad state, he acknowledged his sinfulness, again confessed Jesus Christ, and courageously submitted to the sentence of death, which was carried out in 1652.

To sum up, the mission of Japan lasted only eighty—four years since St. Francis Xavier opened it in 1549, and according to the best historians, this was eight years after the discovery of the islands or of the sixty—six kingdoms of which this empire is composed, and it ceased, as we have said, about the year 1633. Nevertheless, this last persecutor did not entirely extinguish the faith in Japan, where one could still count many Christians; and even though at the present time there are no more to be found, one may hope that, as the faith has passed from Japan to China, so by an admirable substitution of grace, it will return from China to Japan. It is certain that so many martyrs, who have sacrificed their lives for Jesus Christ, will not cease to intercede for the salvation of their countrymen, and we are justified in entertaining the hope that one day, in consideration of their merits, God will deliver from the servitude of the devil these unhappy countries.[8842]

Before concluding I will here relate a very edifying occurrence. Toward the end of the mission there was a religious of the Order of St. Augustine, who to remain unknown became a vender of chestnuts, and entered under this disguise one of the vessels. As he asked too much for his chestnuts some one gave him a blow on the cheek; but he received this affront without the slightest emotion, and continued quietly to offer his chestnuts for sale. The idolaters, observing that such meekness was not a virtue practised among them, suspected the vender of being a Christian, arrested him and put him to death, after the religious had openly professed his faith. Wonderful power of the grace of Jesus Christ, who gives to his servants the strength to practise virtues unknown among pagans!

CONCLUSION

WE here finish our history of the victories gained by the martyrs,—a work the reading of which will specially awaken in us two useful reflections:

The first reflection is that we should have great confidence in the intercession of the martyrs, who, while offering to God the sacrifice of their lives, have acquired great influence with him for obtaining for us the graces that we desire. The faithful who wish to invoke them can use the prayer that we have offered to their piety at the beginning.[8843]

The second reflection, more important than the first, is, that if the martyrs have made themselves endeared to us by so many sufferings that they endured for Jesus Christ, and by the courage that they inspire in us to suffer also for him, with how much greater reason should we love this divine Master himself, who has deigned to descend from heaven and expire in pain on a cross in order to save us! If the martyrs merit our compassion and our love because they were innocent and holy, how much greater compassion and love should we have for Jesus Christ, who being innocence and holiness itself, died on the infamous gibbet to expiate our iniquities!

Let us, therefore, love this King of the Martyrs, as St. Augustine calls him; let us love this Good Pastor who loved us so as to give his life for us, his sheep, and his ungrateful sheep! And if we have shown ingratitude to him in the past, let us try, during the rest of our lives, to please and to love him with all our strength. For this purpose let us have our eyes constantly fixed on Jesus crucified; let us every day meditate for some time on the sorrowful martyrdom that he suffered for us, a martyrdom that comprised and surpassed immensely the pains endured by all the martyrs. Then we shall no longer have the melancholy courage to despise him, as we have done heretofore. The mere sight of Jesus crucified will make us love, at least out of gratitude a God who died for the love of us!

O Son of God, our redeemer! Give us thy holy love. O Mary, Mother of God! Pray for us, and obtain for us this love. *Amen.*

HYMNS.[8844]

I. ON THE TOMB OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

BEHOLD the end of all the pomp of earth,—
All human greatness, beauty, noble birth!—
Worms, rottenness, a little dust, a stone,
Close the brief scene of life for ev'ry one.
Who gives his heart to God alone is wise,
Dead to the world already ere he dies.
O thou that readest this! thou, too, one day
Must die;—which lot dost thou prefer, I pray,
To die a slave, and then in bliss to reign,—
Or die a king, and pass to endless pain?
Reflect, prepare; the present time flies fast;
Repentance comes too late when life is past.

II. ETERNAL MAXIMS

WHY serve the world, thy enemy,
And from thy thankless heart dethrone
That God whose love created thee—
To love and serve Himself alone?
Slave of a tyrant thou dost live;
He promises, and breaks his word,
And for thy service nought can give
But bitter thorns as thy reward.
Remember, death will come one day;
His touch thy fragile life destroys;
Then, then, alas! will fade away
Earth's cheating hopes and empty joys.
All worldly pleasures then will be

To thee but weariness and woe;
The scene of life must close for thee,
Thy part is played, and thou must go.
That body thou hast oft caress'd
Such noisome stench shall send around,
That all will fly the loathsome pest,
And hide the carrion in the ground.
Forth flies the spirit from this clay,
Alone before its God to stand;
The soul scarce yet has passed away,
The judge already is at hand.
Sinner! sinner! what wilt thou do,
Standing before the awful throne?
In vain for mercy wouldst thou sue,—
Stern Justice triumphs there alone.
Ah! miserable, thoughtless one!
Say, what excuse thou darest bring
Before that gaze of brightest sun,
The face of thy offended King.
What horror then the soul shall pierce,
When, spurned away by heavenly ire,
'Tis hurled into the torment fierce
Of never, never-ending fire!
Then shall be closed upon thy pain
The gates of hope and liberty;
Thou seekest death,—in vain, in vain;
It flies and mocks thy misery.
That moment when this life shall fail,
Or heaven or hell thy lot must be;
Eternal joys or endless wail,—
O moment! O eternity!
Think, then, ere yet this life is o'er,
On that whereon thy ALL depends;
That EVERMORE or NEVERMORE,
Eternity which never ends!

III. PARAPHRASE ON THE WORDS OF ST. ALOYSIOS

Recede a me, Domine.

Depart from me, O Lord!

(These *words* St. Aloysius pronounced when he saw himself obliged by obedience to withdraw from the Blessed Sacrament.)

POOR heart, what art thou doing? say;
Seest not how thy good Master deigns
To bind thee with love’s strongest chains,
And force thee here within to stay.
Where, O my soul, where wilt thou flee?
How, thus transfixed with love’s keen dart,
Canst thou from thy true life depart,
Who on that altar stays for thee?
But ah! my God, what meaneth this?
Thou bindest first with such a chain,
Then forcest me to go with pain
Away from Thee, my only bliss.
Must I then go? Yes, I obey;
But here my heart shall stay with Thee,
True to Thy love still may it be:
I go; then come with me away.
Alas! I cannot tear away
My soul from Thee, its very life;
I start, I wait in saddest strife;
I cannot leave. I dare not stay.
Between the two, in doubts and fears,
I waver still from side to side;
While agitated, tost, and tried,
Love’s target my poor heart appears.
What strife! what tempest in my will!
Obedience bids me haste away;
Thy love then binds and makes me stay,
It ravishes and holds me still.
Thus, when the winds on ocean blow,
A ship among the billows lost

By raging storms is fiercely tost,
And dashed with fury to and fro.
With sighs and tears I moan and cry;
Lov'd Jesus, in Thy mercy sweet,
From this rude torment, I entreat
Ah! set me free, and let me die.
In heaven, where love alone doth reign,
There, dearest Jesus, I shall be,
Close bound, united, tied to Thee,
And never part from Thee again.

IV. AFFECTIONS TO JESUS AND TO MARY

IN this sweet Sacrament, to Thee,
My God, be ceaseless praise!
And to the name of Jesus be
All love through endless days!
And blessed, too, be Mary's womb,
Which gave to us that Son,
More pure, more fair than lily-bloom—
Jesus, the Blessed One.
Come now, my loving Lord, to me,
Oh, come into my heart;
Inflame it all with love of Thee,
And never thence depart.
And let this wretched heart be Thine—
Yes, Thine, dear God, alone!
And, Mary, may this soul of mine
Henceforth be all thy own!

V. LINES SANG DURING THE MISSIONS

LOVE God, who loveth thee,
For love itself is He;
He bids the sinner weep;
He saith: Poor child, from sin depart;
Rest thee within thy Father's heart;

Turn to thy Shepherd, wandering sheep.
A messenger from God am I,
Pardon and grace I offer thee;
Perchance thine hour of death draws nigh
For thy soul’s sake, ah! list to me.
The God of mercy calleth thee;
Turn not deaf ear and rebel heart:
If now His call rejected be
His grace He’ll ne’er again impart,
Poor sinful one! can’st thou remain
In God’s disgrace, yet tremble not?
Depart from sin and pleasures vain
Ere hell becomes thy dreadful lot
Long-suffering is thy Saviour dear,
But not forever will He wait;
If suddenly thy death draws near,
Say, sinner, what shall be thy fate?
Our Jesus is so sweet, so mild,
How canst thou turn from Him away?
Haste, then, with God be reconciled;
Poor sinner, make no vain delay.
How canst thou tranquil, joyous dwell;
Unmindful of eternity?
And on the very brink of hell
Slight ev’ry grace God offers thee?
Ere long thy life must pass away;
Know’st thou the hour when thou shalt die?
Perchance ere dawns another day
Thou wilt behold eternity!
My son, while yet thou hast the pow’r
Reflect how soon thy life must end—
How on its last sad, solemn hour
Eternal pains or joys depend.
If thou pursue thy careless way,
He who is now despis’d by thee

Will meet thee on that dying day
And thy Eternal Judge will be.
Then, sinner, wilt thou trembling stand,
Recalling past iniquity,
Dreading to fall into His hand
Who wrathful stands in majesty.
They who so blindly risk'd their all,
Nor thought on hell's eternal fire,
Now after death too surely fall
Into th' abyss so dark and dire.
And when shall hell's sharp pains be o'er?
The insult to God's majesty
Has been so deep that evermore
Those pains shall last, eternally.
Think on that dread eternity
To which thou art hast'ning ever;
Think of that long futurity
Of pains that will leave thee never.

CANZONCINE SPIRITUALI.[8845]

I. SOPRA LA SEPOLTURA D' ALESSANDRO IL GRANDE

Ecco dove finisce ogni grandezza,
Ogni pompa di terra, ogni bellezza:
Vermi, luto, vil pietra, o poca arena,
Chiudono al fin d'ognun' la breve scena.
Saggio chi, a Dio donando in vita il core,
Morto si trova al mondo, allorchè more!
O tu che leggi! ed ancor tu dovrai
Morire un di; dimmi, che far vorrai:
Morir da abietto, ed esser poi beato;
O morire da grande, e gir dannato?
Pensa, e rimedia a tempo, ora che puoi;
Che tempo allor non vi sarà piu poi!

II. SOPRA LE MASSIME ETERNE

PERCHE al mondo, al tuo nemico,
Vuoi servire, o tu cor mio!
E non servi al tuo buon Dio,
Che a servirlo ti creo?
Vivi schiavo d’ un tiranno
Che promette, e non attende,
E, a chi l’ serve, ingrato rende
Spine e fiele per mercè.
Pens’ almen che un di la morte
Darà fine alla tua vita,
Ed, oimè! per te finita Ogni cosa allor sarà.
Tutt’ i beni allor del mondo
Ti sarann’ d’ affanno e pena,
In veder che la tua scena
Già si chiude ancor per te.
Questo corpo che tant’ ami,
Manderà tanto fetore,
Ch’ alla puzza ed all’ orrore
Da te ognuno fuggirà,
Partirà da questa terra
L’alma sola, a render conto
Al gran Giudice, che pronto
Al suo uscir si troverà.
Che farai, tu peccatore,
Giunto innanzi al divin trono,
Quando allor, non piu perdono,
Ma giustizia vi sarà?
Infelice, spensierato,
Va pensando che dirai,
Quando a vista già sarai,
Dell’ offeso tuo Signor.
Qual affanno sarà poi
Da quel tron’ esser cacciato

E in quel fuoco esser gittato
Che non mai piu finirà!
Per te allor, d’ogni ristoro
Saran chiuse, oh Dio, le porte!
Cercherai per fin la morte,
E neppur potrai morir!
Della morte al gran momento,
Avrai dunque o cielo o inferno,
O riposo o pianto eterno. .
Oh momento! oh eternita!
Mira dunque, finchè in vita
Di tua sorte incerto stai,
Quel grand Sempre e quel gran Mai,
Che in eterno durerà!

III. CANZONCINA DI SAN LUIGI GONZAGA

Sopra quelle parole: “Recede a me, Domine, recede;” ch’ egli proffer in doversi partire, per l’ ubbidienza avuta, dalla presenza del Santissimo Sacramento.

MIO povero core, oh Dio, che farai?
Non vedi, non senti, chè ’1tuo buon Signore,
Con dolci pur troppo catene d’ amore,
Ti stringe, ti forza qui seco a restar?
E dove anderai, tu, anima mia?
Deh! come tu, stando d’ amor si ferita,
Partire potrai lontan dalla Vita,
Che su quell’ altare per te se ne sta?
Ma lascia ch’ io parli: Qual tratto è mai questo?
Tu teco m’ annodi con tante catene,
E poi mi costringi, o amato mio Bene!
Con duro precetto a partire da te!
Vuoi dunque ch’ io parta? Si, voglio ubbidirti;
Ma sappi che resta qui teco il mio core:
Tu, pensa a serbarlo fedele al tuo amore;
E s’ io da te parto, tu, vieni con me.
Ah! no, chè non posso vedermi diviso

Da te, mio Tesoro, mio Amore, mio Dio!
Pertanto la morte sospiro, desio,
Che teco m’ unisca per sempre nel ciel.

IV. AFFETTI VERSO GESU SACRAMENTATO

SIA lodato, ogni momento,
Il mio Dio nel Sacramento!
Sia per sempre il nome amato
Di Gesu sacramentato!
Benedetto ancora sia
Il bel seno di Maria,
Che ci diede questo Figlio
Puro e bello piu che giglio!
Vieni, amante mio Signore!
Vieni, e infiammami d’ amore.
Fa che sia questo cor mio
Tutto tuo, mio caro Dio!
Fa che sia quest’ alma mia
Tutta tua, dolce Maria!

THE TRUE SPOUSE OF JESUS CHRIST

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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The Centenary Edition

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

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THE ASCETICAL WORKS

Volumes X and XI in One.

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OR, THE NUN SANCTIFIED BY THE VIRTUES OF HER STATE

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APPROBATION.

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Patrick Murray, Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled “THE TRUE SPOUSE OF JESUS CHRIST”, which is Volume X and XI in one of the complete edition of the works of St. Alphonsus de Liguori.

JAMES BARRON, C.SS.R.,

Provincial

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CONTENTS

INDEX

THE TRUE SPOUSE OF JESUS CHRIST

- CONTENTS
- The True Spouse of Jesus Christ
  - NOTICE
  - THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE
  - *Chapter I*
    THE MERIT OF VIRGINS WHO HAVE CONSECRATED THEMSELVES TO GOD
    - 1. THEY BECOME LIKE THE ANGELS, AND ARE THE SPOUSES OF JESUS CHRIST
    - 2. HOW MUCH MORE HAPPY ARE VIRGINS THAN MARRIED WOMEN EVEN IN THIS LIFE
    - 3. EXCELLENCE OF VIRGINITY
    - 4. MEANS TO PRESERVE VIRGINAL PURITY
    - 5. THE SPOUSE OF JESUS CHRIST SHOULD BE ENTIRELY HIS
  - *Chapter II*
    THE ADVANTAGES OF THE RELIGIOUS STATE
    - 1. THE RELIGIOUS STATE IS LIKE THE PROMISED LAND; IT IS PARADISE ON EARTH; IT IS A GREAT GRACE
    - 2. ADVANTAGES OF THE RELIGIOUS STATE ACCORDING TO ST. BERNARD
  - *Chapter III*
    THE RELIGIOUS SHOULD BELONG ENTIRELY TO GOD
    - 1. SHE SHOULD RENOUNCE EVERYTHING, AND LOVE ONLY GOD
    - 2. WE MUST OVERCOME OURSELVES AND COURAGEOUSLY STRIVE FOR PERFECTION—MEANS TO BE ADOPTED FOR THIS PURPOSE
  - *Chapter IV*
    THE DESIRE OF PERFECTION

1. HOW HOLY DESIRES ARE USEFUL, AND EVEN NECESSARY

2. MEANS FOR ACQUIRING PERFECTION

Chapter V
THE DANGER TO WHICH AN IMPERFECT RELIGIOUS, WHO IS BUT LITTLE AFRAID OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF HER IMPERFECTIONS, EXPOSES HER SALVATION

I. ONE CAN AND SHOULD AVOID ALL VENIAL SINS PLAINLY VOLUNTARY

2. VENIAL SINS INJURE, ABOVE ALL, THE RELIGIOUS, WHO ARE MOST ESPECIALLY CALLED TO PERFECTION

Chapter VI
CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT

1. A RELIGIOUS HAS ESPECIALLY TO FEAR BEING LOST WHEN SHE SINS BY ATTACHMENT TO SOME PASSION, OR WHEN SHE LIVES IN TEPIDITY

2. MEANS TO EXTRICATE ONE’S SELF FROM TEPIDITY

Chapter VII
INTERIOR MORTIFICATION, OR ABNEGATION OF SELF-LOVE. OBEDIENCE

I. NECESSITY OF COMBATING SELF-LOVE. PRACTICAL RULES

II. DETACHMENT FROM SELF-WILL

III THE MERIT OF OBEDIENCE

IV THE OBEDIENCE DUE TO THE SUPERIORS

V. THE OBEDIENCE DUE TO THE RULE

VI. THE FOUR DEGREES OF PERFECT OBEDIENCE

Chapter VIII
EXTERIOR MORTIFICATION

I. ITS NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGES

II. THE MORTIFICATION OF THE EYES, AND MODESTY IN GENERAL

III. THE MORTIFICATION OF THE APPETITE

IV. THE MORTIFICATION OF THE SENSE OF HEARING, OF SMELL, AND OF TOUCH

Chapter IX
RELIGIOUS POVERTY

I THE VOW OF POVERTY, THE PERFECTION OF POVERTY, AND COMMUNITY LIFE

II. THE DEGREES AND THE PRACTICE OF PERFECT POVERTY

Chapter X
DETACHMENT FROM RELATIVES AND OTHER PEOPLE

I. DETACHMENT FROM RELATIVES

II. DETACHMENT FROM SECULARS, AND EVEN FROM THE SISTERS.

Chapter XI
HOLY HUMILITY

I. THE ADVANTAGES OF HUMILITY

II. THE HUMILITY OF THE INTELLECT OR OF THE JUDGMENT

III. HUMILITY OF THE HEART OR OF THE WILL

IV. CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT, AND ESPECIALLY PATIENCE, IN BEARING CONTEMPT

Chapter XII FRATERNAL CHARITY

I. THE NECESSITY OF THIS VIRTUE, AND ITS PRACTICE IN OUR THOUGHTS AND SENTIMENTS

I. THE CHARITY TO BE PRACTISED IN WORDS

III. THE CHARITY TO BE PRACTISED IN WORKS, AND TOWARDS WHOM IT IS TO BE PRACTISED

Chapter XIII
PATIENCE

I. PATIENCE IN GENERAL

II. PATIENCE IN SICKNESS, POVERTY, CONTEMPT, PERSECUTIONS, AND SPIRITUAL DESOLATION

III. PATIENCE IN TEMPTATIONS

Chapter XIV
RESIGNATION TO THE WILL OF GOD

I. THE MERIT OF RESIGNATION TO THE DIVINE WILL

II. IN WHAT THINGS WE OUGHT, IN A SPECIAL MANNER, TO RESIGN OURSELVES

Chapter XV
MENTAL PRAYER

I. MORAL NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER FOR RELIGIOUS

II. THE PRACTICE OF MENTAL PRAYER

Chapter XVI
SILENCE, SOLITUDE, AND THE PRESENCE OF GOD

I. SILENCE

II. THE LOVE OF SOLITUDE, AND THE AVOIDING OF IDLENESS

III. THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Chapter XVII
SPIRITUAL READING

Chapter XVIII
THE FREQUENT ATI ON OF THE SACRAMENTS.

I
CONFESSION

II
SCRUPLES

III
COMMUNION, SPIRITUAL COMMUNION, AND VISITING OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Chapter XIX
PURITY OF INTENTION.

Chapter XX
PRAYER.

Chapter XXI
Devotion TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

I
A TRUE SERVANT OF MARY CANNOT BE LOST

II
WHAT ARE THE TRUE SERVANTS OF MARY

Chapter XXII
THE LOVE FOR JESUS.

I
THE OBLIGATION OF A RELIGIOUS TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST

II
THE MEANS OF ACQUIRING DIVINE LOVE, AND THE ACTS OF LOVE THAT A RELIGIOUS SHOULD PRACTISE TOWARDS JESUS CHRIST

Chapter XXIII
PARTICULAR ADMONITIONS

I
FOR THE SUPERIOR

II
FOR THE VICAR OR ASSISTANT

III
FOR THE MISTRESS OF NOVICES

IV
FOR THE BURSAR

V
FOR THE SACRISTAN

VI
FOR THE ATTENDANT AT THE TURN, AND FOR THE PORTRESS

VII
FOR THE INFIRMARIAN

VIII
FOR THE COUNSELLORS

IX
FOR THE LAY-SISTERS

Chapter XXIV
RULE OF LIFE FOR A RELIGIOUS THAT DESIRES TO BECOME A SAINT.

I
RISING IN THE MORNING

II
MENTAL PRAYER

III
THE DIVINE OFFICE

IV
THE HEARING—OF MASS

V
THE REFECTORY

VI
RECREATION

VII
THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE, WITH OTHER INSTRUCTIONS

APPENDIX

OF THE VIRTUES

SPIRITUAL MAXIMS FOR A RELIGIOUS

ASPIRATIONS OF LOVE TO JESUS CHRIST

The True Spouse of Jesus Christ

NOTICE

SAINT ALPHONSUS had reached the age of sixty-four years when he published THE TRUE SPOUSE OF JESUS CHRIST, which appeared in 1760. At that time of life he joined to the learning and sanctity that distinguished him a consummate experience; in a word, he united in himself all that could be desired in order to treat in a masterly manner of all the delicate matters that are spoken of in this work. This he has done in a superior manner, which has been justly appreciated not only in Italy, but in the whole Catholic world, as is proved by the numerous translations of his book, and by the success that they have met with.

We have endeavoured to give to our labor all the care that is due to the work and its venerated author, as well as to those people that will be able to profit by it. To the True Spouse of Jesus Christ, which numbers twenty—four chapters, we have added various little works that have reference to the same subject. Besides the Abstract of the Virtues, the Spiritual Maxims, and the Aspirations of Love, which belong to the work as an appendix, the work contains: an Exhortation to a religious that she may make progress in the love of her divine Spouse Jesus Christ; an Exhortation addressed to the nuns of the Most Holy Redeemer; an Exhortation to religious communities to introduce the perpetual adoration before the Blessed Sacrament; a Familiar Discourse to a young person taking the religious habit; a Sermon at the reception of the religious habit, heretofore unpublished; Rules for the Monastery of Mary, Queen of Heaven, at Airola; Notes on the life and death of Sister Teresa Mary de Liguori, and lastly, one hundred and fifty Spiritual Letters. These two volumes of the writings of St. Alphonsus contain, therefore, all that properly regards the religious.

The saint himself tells us that his book is suitable not only to nuns, but also to all members of the religious state, in that which refers to the observance of the vows, regular discipline, and the perfection of their state. As for the practice of Christian virtues, the work will be found highly useful even for seculars. We add that this volume should with greater reason be serviceable to ecclesiastics, especially to those that are charged with the difficult task of directing souls in the spiritual life; they may draw there from lights that may not perhaps be found as clear and as sure elsewhere.

We fear, however, that some people may find in some passages things that at first sight are of such a nature as to astonish and to displease them, for the author at times inveighs forcibly against abuses that have happily became rare or are at the present time even unknown in our country. Hence we think that we are obliged to ask them to consider well the circumstances. When St. Alphonsus wrote his work many communities in Italy and elsewhere had relaxed in spirit. Many abuses indeed existed, especially in the kingdom of Naples, and should be ascribed to the character or the manners of the country, and also to the excessive interference of the government in ecclesiastical affairs. This intermeddling often hindered the action of the Superiors, even of the Sovereign Pontiff, and favoured disorder. Yet other countries and other epochs have also their defects and their trials. The spectacle of what occurred then in Italy should awaken attention to what may perhaps be out of order among ourselves.

But you will say, “ Would it not be better not to know the evil, and not to think of it?” Ah ! undoubtedly, if we were not always exposed to evil, if we had not continually to fear it and to take precautions in order to avoid it. Should we wait till the evil is revealed by a sad experience ? The saints did not thus understand this; they did not cease to remind us of it by showing us the precipices yawning at our feet and the enemies that are besieging us, and by pointing out to us the necessary means to escape the danger and to resist the assaults to which we are always exposed.

Furthermore, if this book has been written for all the religious, it will have a twofold interest for the Superiors: it will inspire them with zeal and with vigilance, on which depend the maintenance of regular observances, and consequently the salvation of the Community and their own salvation. They should know not only the evil that exists, in order to remedy it, but even the evil that is possible, in order to prevent it, and hinder it from penetrating; they should even suspect it, says our saint.[8846] One day he had given utterance to very forcible language in a monastery. He was afterwards told that the nuns believed that he had in his address entered too much into details; this remark made him smile, and he answered: “What should I have told them ? Should I have told them that they are saints ? When one preaches, one preaches for everyone, and one may suppose things that do not exist.”[8847]

Finally, we may say to every religious that has the happiness of living in a house in which reigns exact observance: The example of so many Communities that have fallen into a deplorable tepidity after having begun with the greatest fervor, should induce you to give continual thanks to God for the advantage that you enjoy, and to do all you can to attain its continuance, well knowing that the least abuse that succeeds in insinuating itself may in time bring about great ruin.

LIVE JESUS, MARY, JOSEPH, AND ST. ALPHONSUS!

THE AUTHOR’S PREFACE

THIS work, as appears from the title, is intended particularly for Nuns. However, only a small portion of it is directed exclusively to them; the remainder, but especially what regards the observance of the vows of religion, regular discipline, and the perfection of the religious state, is equally suited to Religious of all denominations; and what regards the Christian virtues, will be found highly useful even for seculars.

To each chapter I have annexed prayers, replete with pious affections, knowing that such prayers are very acceptable to Religious who seek perfection. For, as St. Denis the Areopagite says, “Divine love consists in the affections of the heart more than in the knowledge of the understanding.” In human sciences, knowledge excites love; but in the science of the saints, love produces knowledge. He that loves God most, knows him best. Besides, it is not lofty and fruitless conceptions, but works, that unite the soul to God, and make it rich in merits before the Lord.

Chapter I

THE MERIT OF VIRGINS WHO HAVE CONSECRATED THEMSELVES TO GOD

1. THEY BECOME LIKE THE ANGELS, AND ARE THE SPOUSES OF JESUS CHRIST

VIRGINS who have the happiness of dedicating themselves to the love of Jesus Christ by consecrating to him the lily of their purity, are, in the first place, as dear to God as his angels. They shall, says the Redeemer, be like the angels of God in heaven.[8848]Such is the immediate fruit of the virtue of chastity. Hence St. Ambrose says, that " whoever preserves this virtue is an angel, and that whoever violates it is a demon."[8849] Baronius relates that when a certain virgin, called Georgia, was at the point of death a great multitude of doves was seen hovering about her; that when her body was brought to the church they flew to that part of the roof which corresponded to the place where the corpse had been put, and remained there till after the interment. By all who saw them, these doves were regarded as angels paying respect and homage to the body of the virgin. Chastity is justly styled an angelic and celestial virtue. "Because," says St. Ambrose, " this virtue has ascended even to the heavens, and thence taken an example to be imitated on earth; and because only in heaven, the residence of its spouse, it is practised in all its perfection."[8850] Besides, a virgin that consecrates herself to Jesus Christ becomes his spouse. Hence, writing to his disciples, St. Paul did not hesitate to say: I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."[8851] I have promised to present to Jesus Christ your souls as so many chaste spouses. In the parable of the virgins, Jesus himself wished to be called their spouse: They went out to meet the bridegroom. . . . they went in with him to marriage.[8852] The Redeemer, whenever he speaks of virgins, calls himself their spouse; but where he speaks of others, he calls himself master, pastor, or father. Hence that elegant verse of St. Gregory Nazianzen, “ and chaste virginity is adorned by Christ her spouse.”[8853]These espousals are perfected in faith. And I will espouse thee to me in faith?[8854] Jesus Christ has, in a special manner, merited for mankind the gift of virginity, and is therefore followed by virgins whithersoever he goeth.[8855]The Mother of God once said to a soul, that a spouse of Jesus Christ ought to have a great esteem for all virtues, but that purity, by which she is principally assimilated to her divine spouse, should hold the first place in her heart. St. Bernard assured us that all just souls are spouses of the Lord.[8856]

But St. Anthony of Padua adds that virgins—consecrated to God are his spouses in a special manner.[8857]Hence St. Fulgentius calls Jesus Christ the only spouse of all consecrated virgins.[8858]

A young person desirous of settling in the world, will, if she be prudent, in the first place carefully inquire into the circumstances and dispositions of all who pretend to her affections, and will diligently seek to ascertain who of these is most deserving of her heart; and from whom she may expect the greatest happiness in this life. A religious, on the day of her profession, is espoused to Jesus Christ; for in the ceremony of profession the bishop says to the novice about to be professed : I espouse thee to Jesus Christ; may he preserve thee inviolate. Receive, then, as his spouse, the ring of faith, that, if thou serve him with fidelity, he may give thee an eternal crown. Let us, then, ask the spouse of the Canticles who is this divine bridegroom. Tell me, O sacred spouse, what are the qualities of thy beloved, the only object of thy affection, who renders thee the happiest of women ? What manner of one is thy beloved of the beloved, O thou most beautiful among women[8859] She will answer: My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.[8860]My beloved is rendered white by his innocence, and ruddy by the ardor with which he loves his spouses. In a word, he is so loving, so perfect in all virtues, and at the same time so courteous and affable, that he is of all spouses the most dear and amiable.

“ There is nothing,” says St. Eucherius, “more glorious, nothing more beautiful, nothing more magnificent, than he is.”[8861] “ These happy virgins, then,” says St. Ignatius, Martyr, “ who are consecrated to Jesus Christ, may be assured that they have obtained the most beautiful, the most noble, the most opulent, and most amiable spouse that can be found in heaven or on earth."[8862]

Hence Blessed Clare of Montevallo used to say that her virginity was so dear to her, that rather than lose it she would be content to suffer the pains of hell during her whole life. Hence, as we learn from St. Ambrose, the glorious virgin St. Agnes, when to her was offered for husband the son of the Roman Prefect, justly answered that she had found a better spouse.[8863]

St. Domitilla, the emperors niece, through a love of virginity refused the hand of Count Aurelian; and when it was argued that she might lawfully marry him, because, although a Gentile, he would allow her to remain a Christian, she replied: "If to a young woman were offered the choice of a monarch or a peasant, which would she prefer ? If I marry Aurelian, I must renounce the nuptials of the King of heaven, and would not that be the extreme of folly ? You may, therefore, tell the count that I cannot accede to his proposal." Thus she preserved her virginity, which she had consecrated to Jesus Christ; and rather than prove unfaithful to her divine spouse, she suffered to be burned alive by her barbarous lover.[8864]

The holy virgin St. Susanna made a similar reply to the Emperor Diocletian, who offered her the title of Empress, on the condition that she would marry his son—in-law Maximin, whom he had created Caesar. In punishment of her refusal she was rewarded with the crown of martyrdom.

Many other holy virgins have declined the nuptials of earthly monarchs to become the spouses of Jesus Christ. Thus blessed Jane, the Infanta of Portugal, refused the hand of Louis XI. King of France; Blessed Agnes, that of the Emperor Ferdinand II.; and Elizabeth, the daughter and heiress of the King of Hungary, rejected the proposal of marriage with Henry, the Archduke of Austria.

2. HOW MUCH MORE HAPPY ARE VIRGINS THAN MARRIED WOMEN EVEN IN THIS LIFE

Besides, the virgin that consecrates herself to Jesus Christ is devoted entirely to God, in body as well as in mind. The unmarried woman, says St. Paul, and the virgin—thinketh on the things of the Lord ; that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she that is married thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband.[8865] Virgins consecrated to God think only of God, and desire only to belong to him without reserve; but married people, being of the world, can think of nothing but of the things of the world. Hence the Apostle adds: and this I speak for your profit; not to cast a snare upon you, but for that which is decent, and which may give you power to attend upon the Lord, without impediment? Thus poor worldlings meet with insurmountable difficulties in the way of virtue; and the more exalted their rank, the greater the obstacles to their sanctification.[8866]

To become a saint in the world, it is necessary for the married woman to adopt the means of sanctification, to frequent the sacraments, to make long and frequent mental prayer, to practise many interior and exterior mortifications, to love contempt, humiliations, and poverty; in a word, to make every effort in her power to please God. She must, then, be perfectly detached from the world, and all its goods, and perfectly free from the control and tyranny of human ties. But how can a married person find the time, the opportunities, and helps necessary for recollection, and continual application to the things of God ?

She that is married thinketh on the things of the world, how to please her husband. The married woman must provide for her family, educate her children, please her husband, his parents, brothers, and relatives, who are sometimes to her a constant source of trouble. Hence the Apostle says, her heart must be divided, and her affections fixed partly on her husband, partly on her children, and partly on God. What time can she have for continual prayer, for frequent Communion, when, with all her efforts, she is not able to attend to the wants of the house? The husband must be attended; if his directions be neglected, or his commands be not immediately executed, he breaks out into complaints and reproaches. The servants disturb the house, at one time by their clamour or their quarrels, at another by their importunate demands. The children, if small, are a perpetual source of annoyance, either by their cries and screams, or by the endless variety of their wants; if grown up, they are an occasion of still greater inquietude, fears and bitterness, by associating with bad companions, by the dangers to which they are exposed, or the infirmities with which they are afflicted.

How, in the midst of so many difficulties and embarrassments, is it possible for the married woman to attend to prayer, or to preserve recollection ? And, as to her Communions, they can scarcely be as frequent as once a week. She may indeed have strong desires of sanctification; but to pay great and constant attention to the affairs of her soul will be morally impossible. The very privation of the opportunities of attending to the things of God may be made a source of great merit by patient submission to the divine will, in the unhappy state in which she is placed. All this is indeed possible; but to practise patience and resignation, in the midst of so many troubles and distractions, without the aid of prayer, of spiritual reading, or of the sacraments, will be exceedingly difficult and almost impracticable.

But would to God that seculars were exposed to no other evils than the obstacles to their devotions, to constant prayer, and the frequent use of the sacraments. Their greatest misfortune is to be in continual danger of losing the grace of God and their own immortal souls. They must appear like their equals, they must employ servants, and support their rank. They must go abroad to visit their friends, and in these visits they must converse with a variety of characters. At home they must hold constant intercourse with their own families, with their relatives, and with the friends of their husband. Oh ! how great on such occasions is the danger of losing God ! This is not understood by young people, but it is well known to those who are settled in the world, and who are daily exposed to such dangers.

Oh ! how unhappy and miserable is the life of the generality of married people ! I have known the circumstances, the feelings and dispositions, of numberless married people, from the highest to the lowest classes of society, and how few of them were content ! The bad treatment of husbands, the disaffection of children, the wants of the family, the control of relatives, the pains of childbirth, which are always accompanied with danger of death, the scruples and anxiety of conscience regarding the flight of occasions, and the education of children, plunge poor seculars into endless troubles and agitation, and fill their souls with continual regret for not having been called to a happier and more holy state. God grant that, in the midst of such troubles and agitation, many of them may not lose their immortal souls, and that, along with passing through a hell in this life, they may not be condemned to an eternity of torments in the next. Such is the unhappy condition of many of those who have engaged in the married state.

But you will ask, Are there no saints among so many thousands of married people ? I answer, that there are some who sanctify themselves in the world by suffering a continual martyrdom, by bearing, for God's sake, all crosses and troubles with patience and cheerfulness, and by peacefully and lovingly offering themselves in all things to God. There are some who attain this high degree of perfection: but they are as rare as white flies. And you will find that such holy souls are always employed in works of penance, and that they continually aspire after the sanctity and disengagement of those who have consecrated their virginity to Jesus Christ, devoted their lives to the glory of God, and have embraced a state of constant happiness.

The state, then, of virgins consecrated to Jesus Christ, and who are entirely devoted to his divine love, is of all states the most happy and sublime. They are free from the dangers to which married people are necessarily exposed. Their affections are not fixed on their families, nor on men of the world, nor on goods of the earth, nor on the dress and vanities of women. To appear like their equals, and to please their husbands, married people must wear rich apparel and costly ornaments; but a virgin consecrated to Jesus Christ only requires a garment which will cover her body. In her, vanity of dress or the decoration of her person would be a scandalous exhibition. Besides, consecrated virgins are not troubled with the cares of a house, a family, and a husband; their sole concern, the only desire of their hearts, is to please Jesus Christ, to whom they have dedicated their souls and bodies, and all their affections. They are unshackled by worldly ties, by subjection to friends or to relatives, and are far removed from the noise and tumult of the world. Hence they have more time and better opportunities for prayer, spiritual reading, and frequent Communion. Their minds are more free to think on the affairs of their soul, and to practise recollection and union with God. " She that is a virgin," says Theodoret, " has her mind free from. useless thoughts."[8867] A religious, then, has no other occupation than to hold constant and familial converse with God. Œcumenius, in his commentary on the words of St. Paul, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit, says, " that her body is sanctified by chastity, and her spirit by familiarity with God."[8868] St. Anselm says that in the mere exemption from the cares of the world, to think on the things of the Lord, virgins receive an abundant compensation for all their temporal sacrifices.[8869] Hence the saint adds, that virgins consecrated to God not only shall receive great glory in heaven, but shall be also rewarded beforehand by the enjoyment of continual peace on earth.[8870]

3. EXCELLENCE OF VIRGINITY

Virgins who aspire to perfection are the beloved of Jesus Christ, because they have consecrated to him their bodies and their souls, and seek nothing in this life but to do his holy will. St. John, because he was a virgin, was called the beloved disciple of Jesus: “whom Jesus loved”[8871] Hence in the divine office we read of him that he was chosen, a virgin, by the Lord, and of all the apostles was the most beloved?[8872]

Virgins are called the first-fruits of God. For, says St. John, they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first-fruits to God, and to the Lamb[8873] But why are virgins called the first-fruits of God ? Because, says Cardinal Hugo,[8874] in his commentary on the preceding passage, as first-fruits are the most delicious, so virgins consecrated to God are most pleasing and dear to him. The spouse in the canticles feedeth among the lilies?[8875] One of the sacred interpreters, explaining these words, says, that “as the devil revels in the uncleanness of lust, so Christ feeds on the lilies of chastity.”[8876]Venerable Bede asserts that the hymn of the virgins is more agreeable to the Lamb than that of all the other saints.[8877]

So great is the excellence of virginity, that the Holy Ghost says, no price is worthy of a continent soul[8878]Hence Cardinal Hugo teaches that, in the other vows, a dispensation is sometimes granted, but not in the vow of chastity; because such is the value of continence, that its loss cannot be compensated.”[8879] The price of chastity may be estimated by the answer of Mary to the Archangel Gabriel: How shall this be done, because I know not man ?[8880] By these words she showed her readiness to renounce the offered dignity of Mother of God rather than forfeit her virginal integrity.

St. Cyprian says that “ virginity is the queen of all virtues and the possession of every good.”[8881]Speaking of virginity, St. Ephrem says, “ if you have loved it, you will be favored by the Lord in all things.”[8882] St.

Bernardine of Sienna teaches that “ virginity prepares the soul to see her spouse Jesus by faith in this life, and by glory in the next.”[8883] Oh ! what an immense weight of glory is prepared for those who dedicate their virginity to Jesus Christ ! The Redeemer showed to that great servant of God, Lucretia Orsini, the sublime dignity to which consecrated virgins are raised in heaven. In the vision she exclaimed, “ Oh ! how dear are virgins to God and to Mary !” Theologians teach that virgins are honored in heaven with a special crown of glory and of joy.

And no man, says St. John, could say the canticle, but those hundred and forty-four thousand who were purchased from the earth.[8884]St. Augustine, explaining this passage, says that the joys of the virgins are not given to the other saints of God.[8885]

4. MEANS TO PRESERVE VIRGINAL PURITY

But to be the virginal spouse of Jesus Christ it is not sufficient to be a virgin; it is necessary to be a prudent virgin, and to carry a lamp always filled with oil, that is, a heart inflamed with the love of God. The foolish virgins were indeed virgins; but, because their lamps were extinguished, they were shut out from the marriage, and were told by the bridegroom that he knew them not.[8886] A virgin, then, who wishes to be a true spouse of the Redeemer, ought to desire and seek nothing but to love and please Jesus Christ. “ If,” says St. Bernard, “ he become a spouse, he will change his language, and say: If I am a spouse, where is my love? God requires to be feared as a master, to be honored as a father, and to be loved as a spouse.”[8887]

To be a faithful lover of Jesus Christ her spouse, and to preserve unsullied the lily of her purity, a virgin must adopt the necessary means. The principal means of acquiring an ardent love of Christ are mental prayer, Communion, mortification, retirement. Although each of these means is fully discussed in another part of this work, still a brief notice of them in this place will not be irrelevant.

The first means to love Jesus Christ is mental prayer. Mental prayer is that blessed furnace in which the soul is inflamed with divine love. And, says holy David, “in my meditation a fire shall flame out”[8888]In temptations against purity, the immediate invocation of the divine aid is absolutely necessary. The Venerable Sister Cecilia Gastelli used to say, that without prayer, chastity cannot be preserved. As I knew, says Solomon, that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, I went to the Lord and besought him with my whole heart?[8889]

The second means is the holy Communion. This, says St. Bonaventure, is the cellar of wine into which the King of heaven brings his spouses " to set in order charity" in their hearts, teaching them to love God above all things, and their neighbors as themselves.

The third means is mortification. *As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters?*[8890] As the lily blooms among the thorns, so virginity is preserved only in the midst of mortification. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that " chastity flourishes only among thorns." To fulfil the obligations of the religious state, in the midst of amusements, worldly attachments, and conversations with seculars, in the midst of sensual gratifications, of indulgence of the palate, of the eyes, and of the ears, is utterly impossible. Religious purity can be preserved only among the thorns of mortification. "A virgin," says St. Basil, " should be immaculate in all things in the tongue, the ears, the eyes, the touch, and above all in the mind."[8891]

To be faithful to her spouse, a virgin must be immaculate in her tongue by the delicacy of her language, and by abstinence as much as possible from conversations with men; she must be immaculate in the ears, by shunning, like death itself, all worldly discourses; immaculate in her eyes by the modesty of her looks, always restrained so as never to fix them on the face of a man; immaculate in the touch, always observing the greatest caution towards herself and others; but, above all, immaculate in her soul, rejecting every unchaste thought, as soon as it is presented to the mind, by invoking the assistance of Jesus and Mary. As a queen tempted by a vile slave contemptuously turns away without condescending to notice him, so the spouse of Jesus Christ should reject with disdain and horror every immodest thought which intrudes itself into the mind. To preserve her soul and body free from stain, she must also chastise her flesh, by fasting, abstinence, by disciplines and other penitential works. And if she has not health or strength to practise such mortifications, she ought at least to bear in peace her infirmities and pains, and to accept cheerfully the contempt and ill-treatment that she receives from others. The spouse follows the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.[8892] Jesus Christ has not walked before us in the way of pleasures and honors; no, he has chosen the rugged path of pains and opprobrium. Hence many holy virgins have loved sufferings and contempt, and have joyfully encountered torments and death.

The fourth means is retirement. Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle doves."[8893] The spouse in the canticle is compared to the turtle, because the turtle avoids the company of other birds, and delights in solitude. A religious appears beautiful in the eyes of Jesus Christ only in retirement and at a distance from the society of men. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi was accustomed to say that chastity is a plant that thrives only in inclosed gardens and in the midst of thorns.

A religious should observe not only the enclosure of the convent, but also that of the senses; and therefore, unless compelled by duty or by obedience, she should never approach the door, the grate, or the windows. " Jesus," says St. Jerome, in his epistle to Eustochia, " is a jealous spouse: he is unwilling that your face be seen by others."[8894] The Saviour, then, is greatly displeased with the conduct of those who seek to appear before seculars, and delight in their conversation. Virgins distinguished for sanctity always seek retirement; and whenever it is necessary to go into the company of men, they endeavor to deform their people, so as to excite feelings of aversion, rather than sentiments of affection. Bollandus relates[8895] that St. Andregesma, a virgin, besought the Almighty to change her beauty into deformity. Her prayer was heard, and she was instantly covered with a leprosy which made her an object of horror to all who beheld her. James of Vibriaco says that St. Euphemia, to free herself from the attention of a person who was greatly attached to her, cut off her nose and lips, saying, " Vain beauty, you shall be no longer an occasion of sin to me." Baronius[8896] relates that St. Ebba, abbess of the convent of Collingamens, fearing an invasion of the barbarians, cut off her nose and upper lip, and that all the other nuns, amounting to thirty in number, followed her example. The barbarians came, and, seeing the religious so deformed, set fire to the convent and burned them alive. The Church has placed all these holy virgins in the catalogue of her martyrs. St. Antonine[8897] cites a similar incident as having happened in 1291 in Palestine, in a convent of the Clares.

It would not be lawful for others to imitate the heroic conduct of these saints: they acted from an impulse of the Holy Ghost. But from their example religious may learn how much virgins inflamed with the love of Jesus Christ shun the company and despise the esteem and affections of men.

A religious should conceal herself as much as possible from the view of men. At her espousals with Jesus Christ she renounced the world and all its vanities. Such is the compact which she made with him, when, in answer to the question, " Do you renounce this world and all its vanities?"[8898] she answered, "I renounce them. "[8899] St. Jerome, in his eighth epistle to Demetria, says: "Now, since you have left the world, fulfil your solemn engagements, and do not conform to this world."[8900] In a word, if you desire to possess the purity which becomes the spouse of Jesus, you must cut off all dangerous occasions: you must cherish a holy ignorance of all that is opposed to chastity, and abstain from reading whatever has the slightest tendency to sully the soul. If, at the grate, language unbecoming your state be ever uttered, you should instantly withdraw, or change the subject of conversation, otherwise you shall have much to suffer from the temptations by which you will be assailed. If fire does not always burn, it never fails to scorch. A look, an endearing expression, or a trifling gift often enkindles a spark which soon becomes an infernal, a consuming fire. In all that regards purity, too much caution cannot be observed. Trust not in your own strength; believe one who has known a thousand cases in which that sublime virtue was lost by exposure to danger. If you say, I will expose myself so far, and no farther, be assured that before you perceive your danger you will be plunged into the abyss.

If in voluntary perils you have hitherto escaped ruin, thank God for your preservation, but tremble for the future. Saints have retired into the deserts to preserve the virtue of chastity; and will you rush into unnecessary danger ? It is particularly difficult for those who are in the vigour of youth to practise immaculate purity while the converse with young men on worldly subjects, jesting with them, and smiling at expressions which ought to cover them with shame. Fly, fly from all such occasions. Explain to the confessor not only your temptations, but also the occasions of them, and ask his advice about the best means of removing them.

5. THE SPOUSE OF JESUS CHRIST SHOULD BE ENTIRELY HIS

The day on which a virgin is espoused to Jesus Christ is to him a day of great joy. *Go forth, he says in the canticles, daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem, wherewith his mother crowned him on the day of his espousals, and the day of the joy of his heart*[8901]Yes, the day on which a religious consecrates her virginity to Jesus Christ is to him a day of triumph and exultation, provided she dedicates her whole being to his love and glory, and prepares herself in a becoming manner for her espousals with the God of holiness. On such days the Redeemer calls on all Paradise to rejoice with him. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give glory to him : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath prepared herself.[8902]

The ornaments which the Lamb requires in his spouses are the virtues recommended in the Gospel, but particularly charity and purity. He will make thee chains of gold inlaid with silver?[8903] These chains of gold, inlaid with silver, signify the virtues of charity and chastity. These, as we learn from St. Agnes, are the garments and jewels with which the Lamb decorates his spouse. He surrounded my right hand and my neck with precious stones. The Lord clothed me with a garment of golden texture, and adorned me with immense necklaces?[8904]

Seculars direct all their attention to the things of the world ; but the spouses of Jesus Christ seek God, and God alone. Of religious it is written, This is the generation of them that seek him? These holy virgins, whom you see confined within their convent poor and humble, are the generation of blessed souls who seek nothing on this earth but God’s glory.[8905]“ You then, O consecrated virgins,” says St. Thomas of Villanova, “ should contend with one another, not about the preeminence of your birth, the superiority of your talents, nor the amplitude of your fortunes; but for the first place in the esteem and affections of Christ Jesus, and for the highest claim to familiarity with him, to humility and obedience.”[8906] St. Jerome, in one of his letters to Eustochia, who wished to consecrate her virginity to Jesus Christ, writes: “Since, my child, you come to the service of God, the Holy Ghost admonishes you to stand in justice, and to prepare your soul for temptation; to practise patience in humility: for gold is tried in the fire.[8907]

No one can serve two masters.[8908] You will, therefore, despise the world, and, espoused to Christ, you will sing, The Lord is my portion forever.”

Religious on the day of profession change their names to show that on that day they die to the world, to live to Christ, who died for them. All Christians should, according to St. Paul, die to themselves, and live only to Jesus Christ. And Christ died for all : that they also, who live, may not now live to themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again.[8909] But if all do not attend to the instructions of the Apostle, religious at least, who are the chosen spouses of the Redeemer, should fulfil them.

The Venerable Sister Francis Farnese regarded the remembrance of being the spouses of Jesus Christ as the most powerful means of exciting her religious to fervor and perfection. It is certain, she would say to them, that since you have been raised to the dignity of his spouses, God has chosen each one of you to be a saint. St. Augustine, addressing a religious, says: O happy virgin ! if you know not your dignity, endeavor to estimate its excellence by the doctrine of the saints. You have the most beautiful of spouses, who, by selecting you from among thousands, and making you his spouse, has given you a pledge of affection, from which you may learn how ardent should be your love for him.[8910]

And St. Bernard, in his fortieth sermon on the Canticle of Canticles, addressing consecrated virgins, says: “ Have nothing to do with the world: forget all things: reserve yourself for the Lord, whom, from all things, you have chosen for your inheritance.”[8911] Cease, O spouse of Jesus, to think of yourself or of the world: you belong no longer to yourself or to the world, but to that God to whom you are consecrated. Forget all things, and attend to him only who has chosen you for his spouse. “Your God,” continues the saint, “has chosen you; and how many have been cast away who could not obtain the grace which has been bestowed on you ? Your Redeemer and your Spouse has preferred you before all these; not because you were more worthy, but because he loved you more than them.”[8912] You have not chosen God, but God has first chosen you for his spouse. How many has he left in the world who could not obtain the dignity to which you have been raised. He has chosen you in preference to them; he has called you to his tabernacle, not because you had superior claims, but because his love for you was greater than his love for them. The saint then concludes: “Wherefore, saith the Lord: Behold, thy time is the time of lovers. Reflecting, then, upon these things in your soul, place all your hope and affection in Jesus, your spouse, who has loved you with an everlasting love, and in mercy has drawn you to himself."[8913]

Whenever, then, O spouse of Jesus, the world solicits your affection, answer in the words of St. Agnes: "Depart from me, food of death; I am already espoused to another lover." All the affections of my heart shall be reserved for my God, who has loved me before I could love him.[8914] A religious, when she receives the veil on the day of profession, makes use of similar language. " He has placed," she says, " a seal on my forehead, that I admit no lover but him."[8915]My spouse has covered my face with this veil, that not seeing, and not being seen, I may have no lover but Jesus. St. Jerome exhorts religious to take a holy pride in this exalted dignity of spouses of the Redeemer. " Learn," he says, " O spouse of God, a holy pride. Know that you are raised above worldlings, and say: I have found him whom my soul sought: I will hold him, and will not let him go."[8916]Seculars glory in their nuptials with men of rank and fortune; but you, who are the spouse of the King of heaven, can boast of better espousals. Say, then, with pride and with joy: I have found the object of my affections; I will embrace him with love, and will not permit him to depart from me. It is love that unites the soul with God. But above all things, says St. Paul, have charity, which is the bond of perfection.[8917]

Sublime, indeed, is the dignity of virgins: each of them can glory, and say, " I am espoused to Him whom the angels serve."[8918] He to whom the celestial spirits ardently desire to minister is my spouse; with his own ring he has pledged me, and with a crown has adorned me as his own spouse.[8919]

My Creator, the Sovereign of the universe, has espoused me, and, conferring upon me a crown, has raised me to the dignity of a queen. But, O sacred virgin, remember that, while you remain on earth this crown is not eternal, and that by your negligence it may be lost. Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.[8920] Hold fast your crown, that no one may be able to snatch it from you; disengage yourself from all affection to creatures; unite yourself more and more every day to Jesus Christ by love, by petitions, and by continual supplication that he may never suffer you to abandon him. " Jesus, my spouse, never permit me to be separated from thee."[8921]And, when creatures seek to take possession of your heart, and to banish the Son of God from your soul, trust in the divine aid, and say with the Apostle, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Neither life, nor death, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?[8922]

Jesus, my Saviour and my God ! how have I merited this singular favor, that while Thou hast left in the world so many innocent souls, Thou shouldst have chosen me, a sinner, for Thy spouse, to live in Thy own house here on earth, that I might afterwards receive from Thee an eternal crown in heaven ? O Lord, since Thou hast bestowed upon me so great a grace, grant me light to understand its value, and strength to be always grateful for it, and with my whole soul to correspond to the love which Thou hast borne me. Thou hast chosen me, in preference to many others: it is my duty to prefer Thee to all. Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me; it is but just that I present my whole being to Thee, and that Thou be the sole object of all my love, and of all my affections.

Yes, my Jesus, I love Thee above all things: I desire to love Thee alone. Thou hast given Thyself to me without reserve: I offer myself entirely to Thee. I beseech Thee to accept this oblation, and not to refuse the affections of a heart that once loved creatures, and even preferred them before Thee, the sovereign good. Accept and preserve my soul and body. Without Thy assistance I can do nothing: without it I shall certainly betray Thee. Since Thou hast chosen me for Thy spouse, make me a faithful and grateful spouse. O sacred fire, burning in the heart of Jesus, inflame my soul, and destroy in my heart every affection which is not for him; make me live only to love this my amiable spouse, who has given his life to be loved by me.

O Mary, Mother of God, since I am the spouse of thy Son, thou art not only my queen, but my mother. And since it was by thy intercession that I have been detached from the world, conducted into this house of God, and made the spouse of thy Son, assist me now, and do not abandon me forever. Grant that my life and death may be worthy the spouse of Jesus Christ.

Chapter II

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE RELIGIOUS STATE

1. THE RELIGIOUS STATE IS LIKE THE PROMISED LAND; IT IS PARADISE ON EARTH; IT IS A GREAT GRACE

WELL may the words of the Canticle of Moses and of the children of Israel, after their delivery from the tyranny of Pharaoh and the bondage of Egypt, be applied to religious: *In thy mercy thou hast been a leader to the people which thou hast redeemed, and in thy strength thou hast carried them to thy holy habitation.*[8923]As the Hebrews compared with the Egyptians were, in the Old Law, the beloved people of God; so religious, contrasted with seculars, are, in the New Law, the chosen spouses of the Saviour. As the Hebrews went forth from Egypt, a land of labor and of slavery, where God was not known, so religious retire from the world, which gives to its servants no other recompense than pains and bitterness, and in which God is but little known. Finally, as the Hebrews in the desert were guided by a pillar of fire to the land of promise, so the spouses of Jesus Christ are conducted, by the light of the Holy Ghost, into the sanctuary of religion the bright image of the promised land of heaven.

In heaven there is no self-will; no thirst for earthly riches or for sensual pleasures; and from the cloister these pernicious desires, by means of the holy vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, are effectually excluded. In heaven, to praise God is the constant occupation of the saints, and in religion every action of the Community is referred to the glory of his name. “ You praise God,” says St. Augustine, “ by the discharge of every duty; you praise him when you eat or drink; you praise him when you rest or sleep.”[8924] You, O sacred virgin, praise the Lord by regulating the affairs of the convent, by assisting in the sacristy, at the turn, or at the door; you praise the Lord when you go to table; you praise him when you retire to rest and sleep; you praise him in every action of your life. Lastly, in heaven the saints enjoy continual peace; because there they find in God the source of every good; and in religion, where God alone is sought, in him is found that peace which surpasses all understanding, and that content which the world cannot give.

Well, then, might St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi say that the spouse of Jesus should have a high esteem and veneration for her holy state, since after baptism a vocation to religion is the greatest grace which God can bestow. You, then, who are religious should hold the religious state in higher estimation than all the dignities and kingdoms of the earth. In that holy state you are preserved from sins which you would commit in the world; there you are constantly occupied in holy exercises; there you meet every day with numberless opportunities of meriting an eternal crown. In this life religion makes you the spouse of a God, and in the next will raise you to the rank of queen in the eternal kingdom of his glory. How did you merit to be called to that holy state, in preference to so many others who had stronger claims than you ? Black, indeed, must be your ingratitude if, for the benefit of your vocation, you do not thank God every day with all the affections of your soul.

2. ADVANTAGES OF THE RELIGIOUS STATE ACCORDING TO ST. BERNARD

The advantages of the religious state cannot be better described than in the words of St. Bernard: “Is not that a holy state in which a man lives more purely, falls more rarely, rises more speedily, walks more cautiously, is bedewed with the waters of grace more frequently, rests more securely, dies more confidently, is cleansed more quickly, and rewarded more abundantly ?”[8925] Let us examine these advantages separately, and meditate on the great treasures which each of them contains.

VIVIT PURIUS. “ A RELIGIOUS LIVES MORE PURELY.”

Surely all the works of religious are in themselves most pure and acceptable before God. Purity of action consists principally in purity of intention, or in a pure motive of pleasing God. Hence our actions will be agreeable to God in proportion to their conformity to his holy will, and to their freedom from the corruption of self-will. The actions of a secular, however holy and fervent she may be, partake more of self-will than those of religious. Seculars pray, communicate, hear Mass, read, take the discipline, and recite the divine Office when they please. But a religious performs these duties at the time prescribed by obedience that is, by the holy will of God. For in her Rule and in the commands of her Superior she hears his voice. Hence a religious, by obedience to her Rule and to her Superior, merits an eternal reward, not only by her prayers and by the performance of her spiritual duties, but also by her labors, her recreations, and attendance at the turn ; by her meals, her amusements, her words, and her repose. For, since the performance of all these duties is dictated by obedience, and not by self-will, she does in each the holy will of God, and by each she earns an everlasting crown.

Oh ! how often does self-will vitiate the most holy actions ? Alas ! to how many, on the day of judgment, when they shall ask, in the words of Isaias, the reward of their labors, *Why hare we fasted, and thou hast not regarded ; have we humbled our souls, and thou hast not taken notice?”* 1(“Quare jejunavimus, et non aspexisti; humiliavimus animas nostras, et nescisti ?” Is. Iviii.—3.)—to how many, I say, will the Almighty Judge answer, Behold, in the day of your fast, your own will is found.[8926] What ! he will say, do you demand a reward ? Have you not, in doing your own will, already received the recompense of your toils ? Have you not, in all your duties, in all your works of penance, sought the indulgence of your own inclinations, rather than the fulfilment of my will ?

Abbot Gilbert says that the meanest work of a religious is more meritorious in the sight of God than the most heroic action of a secular.[8927] St. Bernard asserts that if a person in the world did the fourth part of what is ordinarily done by religious, she would be venerated as a saint.[8928] And has not experience shown that the virtues of many whose sanctity shone resplendent in the world faded away before the bright examples of the fervent souls whom, on entering religion, they found in the cloister ? A religious, then, because in all her actions she does the will of God, can truly say that she belongs entirely to him. The Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus, foundress of the convent of Toulouse, used to say that for two reasons she entertained a high esteem for her vocation: first, because a religious enjoys the society of Jesus Christ, who, in the holy sacrament, dwells with her in the same habitation; secondly, because a religious having by the vow of obedience sacrificed her own will and her whole being to God, she belongs unreservedly to him.

CADIT RARIUS.” A RELIGIOUS FALLS MORE RARELY.”

Religious are certainly less exposed to the danger of sin than seculars. Almighty God represented the world to St. Anthony and before him to St. John the Evangelist, as a place full of snares.

Hence, the holy Apostle said, that in the world there is nothing but the concupiscence of the flesh, or of carnal pleasures; the concupiscence of the eyes, or of earthly riches; and the pride of life,[8929] or worldly honors, which swell the heart with petulance and pride. In religion, by means of the holy vows, these poisoned sources of sin are cut off. By the vow of chastity all the pleasures of sense are forever abandoned; by the vow of poverty the desire of riches is perfectly eradicated; and by the vow of obedience the ambition of empty honors is utterly extinguished.

It is, indeed, possible for a Christian to live in the world without any attachment to its goods; but it is difficult to dwell in the midst of pestilence and to escape contagion. The whole world, says St. John, is seated in wickedness?[8930]St. Ambrose, in his comment on this passage, says, that they who remain in the world live under the miserable and cruel despotism of sin. The atmosphere of the world is noxious and pestilential; whosoever breathes it, easily catches spiritual infection. Human respect, bad example, and evil conversations are powerful incitements to earthly attachments and to estrangement of the soul from God. Everyone knows that the damnation of numberless souls is attributable to the occasions of sin so common in the world. From these occasions religious who live in the retirement of the cloister are far removed. Hence St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi was accustomed to embrace the walls of her convent, saying, “ O blessed walls ! O blessed walls ! From how many dangers do you preserve me.” Hence, also, Blessed Mary Magdalene of Orsini, whenever she saw a religious laugh, used to say: “Laugh and rejoice, dear Sister, for you have reason to be happy, being far away from the dangers of the world.”

SURGIT VELOCIUS. “ A RELIGIOUS RISES MORE SPEEDILY.”

If a religious should be so unfortunate as to fall into sin, she has the most efficacious helps to rise again. Her Rule which obliges her to frequent the holy sacrament of penance; her meditations, in which she is reminded of the eternal truths; the good examples of her saintly companions, and the reproofs of her Superiors, are powerful helps to rise from her fallen state. *Woe,* says the Holy Ghost, *to him that is alone; for when he falleth he hath none to lift him up.*[8931]. If a secular forsake the path of virtue, he seldom finds a friend to admonish and correct him, and is therefore exposed to great danger of persevering and dying in his sins. But in religion, if one fall he shall be supported by the other? If a religious commit a fault, her companions assist her to correct and repair it. “ She,” says St. Thomas, “ is assisted by her companions to rise again.”[8932]

INCEDIT CAUTIUS, “ A RELIGIOUS WALKS MORE CAUTIOUSLY.”

Religious enjoy far greater spiritual advantages than the first princes or monarchs of the earth. Kings, indeed, abound in riches, honors, and pleasures, but no one will dare to correct their faults, or to point out their duties. All abstain from mentioning to them their defects, through fear of incurring their displeasure; and to secure their esteem many even go so far as to applaud their vices. But if a religious go astray, her error will be instantly corrected; her Superiors and companions in religion will not fail to admonish her, and to point out her danger; and even the good example of her Sisters will remind her continually of the transgression into which she has fallen.[8933]

Surely a Christian, who believes that eternal life is the one thing necessary, should set a higher value upon these helps for salvation than upon all the dignities and kingdoms of the earth, As the world presents to seculars innumerable obstacles to virtue, so the cloister holds out to religious continual preventives of sin. In religion, the great care which is taken to prevent light faults is a strong bulwark against the commission of grievous transgressions. If a religious resist temptations to venial sin, she merits by that resistance additional strength to conquer temptations to mortal sin; but if, through frailty, she sometimes yields to them, all is not lost the evil is easily repaired. Even then the enemy does not get possession of her soul; at most he only succeeds in taking some unimportant outpost, from which he may be easily driven; while by such defeats she is taught the necessity of greater vigilance and of stronger defences against future attacks. She is convinced of her own weakness, and being humbled and rendered diffident of her own powers, she recurs more frequently, and with more confidence, to Jesus Christ and his holy Mother. Thus, from these falls, the religious sustains no serious injury; since, as soon as she is humbled before the Lord, he stretches forth his all-powerful arm to raise her up. When he shall fall he shall not be bruised, for the Lord putteth his hand under him.[8934] On the contrary, such victories over her weakness contribute to inspire greater diffidence in herself, and greater confidence in God. Blessed Egidius, of the Order of St. Francis, used to say that one degree of grace in religion is better than ten in the world; because in religion it is easy to profit by grace and hard to loose it; while in the world grace fructifies with difficulty and is lost with facility.[8935]

IRRORATUR FREQUENTIUS. “ A RELIGIOUS IS BEDEWED MORE FREQUENTLY.”

O God, with what internal illuminations, spiritual delights, and expressions of love does Jesus refresh his spouses at prayer, Communion, in presence of the holy sacrament, and in the cell before the crucifix ! Christians in the world are like plants in a barren land, on which but little of the dew of heaven falls, and from that little . the soil for want of proper cultivation seldom derives fertility Poor seculars ! They desire to devote more time to prayer, to receive the holy Eucharist, and to hear the word of God more frequently; they long for greater solitude, for more recollection, and a more intimate union of their souls with God. But temporal affairs, human ties, visits of friends, and restraints of the world place these means of sanctification almost beyond their reach. But religious are like trees planted in a fruitful soil, which is continually and abundantly watered with the dews of heaven. In the cloister, the Lord continually comforts and animates his spouses by infusing interior lights and consolations during the time of meditation, sermons, and spiritual readings, and even by means of the good example of their Sisters. Well, then, might Mother Catharine of Jesus, of the holy Order of St. Teresa, say, when reminded of the labors she had endured in the foundation of a convent: “God has rewarded me abundantly, by permitting me to spend one hour in religion, in the house of his holy mother.”

QUIESCIT SECURIUS.” A RELIGIOUS RESTS MORE SECURELY.”

Worldly goods can never satisfy the cravings of the human soul. The brute creation, being destined only for this world, is content with the goods of the earth, but being made for God, man can never enjoy happiness except in the possession of the divinity. The experience of ages proves this truth; for if the goods of this life could content the heart of man, kings and princes, who abound in riches, honors, and carnal pleasures, should spend their days in pure unalloyed bliss and felicity. But history and experience attest that they are the most unhappy and discontented of men; and that riches and dignities are always the fertile sources of fears, of troubles, and of bitterness. The Emperor Theodosius entered one day, unknown, into the cell of a solitary monk, and after some conversation said: “ Father do you know who I am? I am the Emperor Theodosius.” He then added: “Oh! how happy are you, who lead here on earth a life of contentment, free from the cares and woes of the world. I am a Sovereign of the earth, but be assured, Father, that I never dine in peace.”

But how can the world, a place of treachery, of jealousies, of fears and commotions, give peace to man ? In the world, indeed, there are certain wretched pleasures which perplex rather than content the soul; which delight the senses for a moment, but leave lasting anguish and remorse behind. Hence the more exalted and honourable the rank and station a man holds in the world, the greater is his uneasiness and the more racking his discontent; for earthly dignities, in proportion to their elevation, are accompanied with cares and contradictions. We may, then, conclude that the world, in which the heart-rending passions of ambition, avarice, and the love of pleasures, exercise a cruel tyranny over the human race, must be a place not of ease and happiness, but of inquietude and torture. Its goods can never be possessed in such a way that they may be had in the manner and at the time we desire their possession; and when enjoyed, instead of infusing content and peace into the soul, they drench it with the bitterness of gall. Hence, whosoever is satiated with earthly goods, is saturated with wormwood and poison.

Happy, then, the religious who loves God, and knows how to estimate the favour which he bestowed upon her in calling her from the world and placing her in religion; where conquering, by holy mortification, her rebellious passions, and practising continual self-denial, she enjoys that peace which, according to the Apostle, exceeds all the delights of sensual gratification: The peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding.[8936]Find me, if you can, among those seculars on whom fortune has lavished her choicest gifts, or even among the first princesses or queens of the earth, a soul more happy or content than a religious divested of every worldly affection, and intent only on pleasing God ? She is not rendered unhappy by poverty, for she preferred it before all the riches of the earth; she has voluntarily chosen it, and rejoices in its privations; nor by the mortification of the senses, for she entered religion to die to the world and to herself; nor by the restraints of obedience, for she knows that the renunciation of self-will is the most acceptable sacrifice she could offer to God. She is not afflicted at her humiliations, because it was to be despised that she came into the house of God. I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than dwell in the tabernacles of sinners?[8937] The enclosure is to her rather a source of consolation than of sorrow; because it frees her from the cares and dangers of the world. To serve the Community, to be treated with contempt, or to be afflicted with infirmities, does not trouble the tranquillity of her soul, because she knows that all these make her more dear to Jesus Christ. Finally, the observance of her Rule does not interrupt the joy of a religious, because the labors and burdens which it imposes, however numerous and oppressive they may be, are but the wings of the dove which are necessary to fly towards God and be united with him.

Oh! how happy and delightful is the state of a religious whose heart is not divided, and who can say with St. Francis: “ My God and my all.”[8938]

It is true that, even in the cloister, there are some discontented souls; for even in religion there are some who do not live as religious ought to live. To be a good religious and to be content are one and the same thing; for the happiness of a religious consists in a constant and perfect union of her will with the adorable will of God. Whosoever is not united with him cannot be happy; for God cannot infuse his consolations into a soul that resists his divine will. I have been accustomed to say, that a religious in her convent enjoys a foretaste of paradise or suffers an anticipation of hell. To endure the pains of hell is to be separated from God; to be forced against the inclinations of nature to do the will of others; to be distrusted, despised, reproved, and chastised by those with whom we live; to be shut up in a place of confinement, from which it is impossible to escape; in a word, it is to be in continual torture without a moment s peace. Such is the miserable condition of a bad religious; and therefore she suffers on earth an anticipation of the torments of hell. The happiness of paradise consists in an exemption from the cares and afflictions of the world, in the conversations of the saints, in a perfect union with God, and the enjoyment of continual peace in God. A perfect religious possesses all these blessings, and therefore receives in this life a foretaste of paradise.

The perfect spouses of Jesus have, indeed, their crosses to carry here below; for this life is a state of merit, and consequently of suffering. The inconveniences of living in Community are burdensome; the reproofs of Superiors, and the refusals of permission, galling; the mortification of the senses, painful; and the contradiction and contempt of companions, intolerable to self-love.

But to a religious who desires to belong entirely to God all these occasions of suffering are so many sources of consolation and delight; for she knows that by embracing pain she offers a sweet odour to God. St. Bonaventure says that the love of God is like honey, which sweetens everything that is bitter. The Venerable Cæsar da Bustis addressed a nephew who had entered religion in the following words: “ My dear nephew, when you look at the heavens, think of paradise; when you see the world, reflect on hell, where the damned endure eternal torments without a moments enjoyment; when you behold your convent, remember purgatory, where many just souls suffer in peace and with a certainty of eternal life.” And what more delightful than to suffer (if suffering it can be called) with a tranquil conscience? than to suffer in favour with God, and with an assurance that every pain will one day become a gem in an everlasting crown? Ah! the brightest jewels in the diadems of the saints are the sufferings which they endured in this life with patience and resignation.

Our God is faithful to his promises, and grateful beyond measure. He knows how to remunerate his servants, even in this life, by interior sweetness, for the pains which they patiently suffer for his sake. Experience shows that religious who seek consolation and happiness from creatures are always discontented, while they who practise the greatest mortifications enjoy continual peace. Let us, then, be persuaded that neither pleasures of sense, nor honors, nor riches, nor the world with all its goods can make us happy. God alone can content the heart of man. Whoever finds him possesses all things. Hence St. Scholastica said, that if men knew the peace which religious enjoy in retirement, the entire world would become one great convent; and St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that they would abandon the delights of the world and force their way into religion. Hence, also, St. Laurence Justinian says that “ God has designedly concealed the happiness of the religious state, because if it were known all would relinquish the world and fly to religion.”[8939]

The very solitude, silence, and tranquillity of the cloister give to a soul that loves God a foretaste of paradise. Father Charles of Lorraine, a Jesuit of royal extraction, used to say that the peace which he enjoyed during a single moment in his cell was an abundant remuneration for the sacrifice that he had made in quitting the world. Such was the happiness which he occasionally experienced in his cell, that he would sometimes exult and dance with joy. Blessed Seraphino of Ascoli, a Capuchin, was in the habit of saying that he would not give one foot of his cord for all the kingdoms of the earth. Arnold, a Cistercian, comparing the riches and honors of the court which he had left with, the consolations which he found in religion, exclaimed: “ How faithfully fulfilled, O Jesus, is the promise which Thou didst make of rendering a hundred-fold to him who leaves all things for Thy sake!” St. Bernard’s monks, who led lives of great penance and austerities, received in their solitude such spiritual delights, that they were afraid they should obtain in this life the reward of their labors.

Let it be your care to unite yourself closely to God; to embrace with peace all the crosses that he sends you; to love what is most perfect; and, when necessary, to do violence to yourself. And that you may be able to accomplish all this, pray continually; pray in your meditations, in your Communions, in your visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and especially when you are tempted by the devil; and you will obtain a place in the number of those fervent souls who are more happy and content than all the princesses and queens and empresses of the earth.

Beg of God to give you the spirit of a perfect religious; that spirit which impels the soul to act, not according to the dictates of nature, but according to the motions of grace, or from the sole motive of pleasing God. Why wear the habit of a religious, if in heart and soul you are a secular, and live according to the maxims of the world ? Whosoever profanes the garb of religion by a worldly spirit and a worldly life has an apostate heart. “To maintain,” says St. Bernard, “a secular spirit under the habit of religion, is apostasy of heart.”[8940] The spirit of a religious, then, implies an exact obedience to the rules and to the directions of the Superior, along with a great zeal for the interests of religion. Some religious wish to become saints, but only according to their own caprice; that is, by long silence, prayer, and spiritual reading, without being employed in any of the offices of the Community. Hence, if they are sent to the turn, to the door, or to other distracting occupations, they become impatient; they complain and sometimes obstinately refuse to obey, saying that such offices are to them occasions of sin. Oh ! such is not the spirit of a religious. Surely what is conformable to the will of God cannot hurt the soul. The spirit of a religious requires a total detachment from commerce with the world; great love and affection for prayer, for silence, and for recollection; ardent zeal for exact observance; deep abhorrence for sensual indulgence; intense charity towards all men; and, finally, a love of God capable of subduing and of ruling all the passions. Such is the spirit of a perfect religious.

Whosoever does not possess this spirit should at least desire it ardently, should do violence to herself, and earnestly beg God’s assistance to obtain it. In a word, the spirit of a religious supposes a total disengagement of the heart from everything that is not God, and a perfect consecration of the soul to him, and to him alone.

MORITUR CONFIDENTIUS. “ A RELIGIOUS DIES MORE CONFIDENTLY.”

Some are deterred from entering religion by the apprehension that their abandonment of the world might be afterwards to them a source of regret. But in making choice of a state of life I would advise such people to reflect not on the pleasures of this life, but on the hour of death, which will determine their happiness or misery for all eternity. And I would ask if, in the world, surrounded by secular, disturbed by the fondness of children, from whom they are about to be separated forever, perplexed with the care of their worldly affairs, and disturbed by a thousand scruples of conscience, they can expect to die more contented than in the house of God, assisted by their holy companions, who continually speak of God; who pray for them, and console and encourage them in their passage to eternity ? Imagine you see, on the one hand, a princess dying in a splendid palace, attended by a retinue of servants, surrounded by her husband, her children, and relatives, and represent to yourself, on the other, a religious expiring in her convent, in a poor cell, mortified, humble; far from her relatives, stripped of property and self-will; and tell me, which of the two, the rich princess or the poor nun, dies more contented ?

Ah ! the enjoyment of riches, of honors, and pleasures in this life do not afford consolation at the hour of death, but rather beget grief and diffidence of salvation; while poverty, humiliations, penitential austerities, and detachment from the world render death sweet and amiable, and give to a Christian increased hopes of attaining that true felicity which shall never terminate.

Jesus Christ has promised that whosoever leaves his house and relatives for God’s sake shall enjoy eternal life. And every one that hath left house or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or lands for my sake shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting?[8941] A certain religious, of the Society of Jesus, being observed to smile on his death-bed, some of his brethren who were present began to apprehend that he was not aware of his danger, and asked him why he smiled; he answered: “Why should I not smile, since I am sure of paradise? Has not the Lord himself promised to give eternal life to those who leave the world for his sake ? I have long since abandoned all things for the love of him: he cannot violate his own promises. I smile, then, because I confidently expect eternal glory.” The same sentiment was expressed long before by St. John Chrysostom, writing to a certain religious. “ God,” says the saint, “cannot tell a lie; but he has promised eternal life to those who leave the goods of this world. You have left all these things; why, then, should you doubt the fulfilment of his promise ?”[8942]

St. Bernard says that “ it is very easy to pass from the cell to heaven; because a person who dies in the cell scarcely ever descends into hell, since it seldom happens that a religious perseveres in her cell till death, unless she be predestined to happiness.”[8943]

Hence St. Laurence Justinian says that religion is the gate of paradise; because living in religion, and partaking of its advantages is a great mark of election to glory.[8944] No wonder, then, that Gerard, the brother of St. Bernard, when dying in his monastery, began to sing with joy and gladness. God himself says: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.[8945] And surely religious who by the holy vows, and especially by the vow of obedience, or total renunciation of self-will, die to the world and to themselves must be ranked amongst the number of those who die in the Lord. Hence Father Suarez, remembering at the hour of death that all his actions in religion were performed through obedience, was filled with spiritual joy, and exclaimed that he could not imagine death could be so sweet and so full of consolation.

PURGATUR CITIUS. A RELIGIOUS IS CLEANSED (IN PURGATORY) MORE QUICKLY.”

St. Thomas teaches that the perfect consecration which a religious makes of herself to God by her solemn profession remits the guilt and punishment of all her past sins. “ But,” he says, “ it may reasonably be said that a person by entering into religion obtains the remission of all sins. For, to make satisfaction for all sins, it is sufficient to dedicate one s self entirely to the service of God by entering religion, which dedication exceeds all manner of satisfaction. Hence,” he concludes, “ we read in the lives of the Fathers, that they who enter religion obtain the same grace as those who receive baptism.”[8946]

The faults committed after profession by a good religious are expiated in this world by her daily exercises of piety, by her meditations, Communions, and mortifications. But if a religious should not make full atonement in this life for all her sins, her purgatory will not be of long duration. The many sacrifices of the Mass which are offered for her after death, and the prayers of the Community, will soon release her from her suffering.

REMUNERATUR COPIOSIUS. “A RELIGIOUS IS MORE ABUNDANTLY REWARDED.”

Worldlings are blind to the things of God; they do not comprehend the happiness of eternal glory, in comparison with which the pleasures of this world are but wretchedness and misery. If they had just notions, and a lively sense of the glory of paradise, they would assuredly abandon their possessions, even kings would abdicate their crowns, and, quitting the world, in which it is exceedingly difficult to attend to the one thing necessary, they would retire into the cloister to secure their eternal salvation. Bless, then, dear Sister, and continually thank your God, who, by his own lights and graces, has delivered you from the bondage of Egypt, and brought you to his own house; prove your gratitude by fidelity in his service, and by a faithful correspondence to so great a grace. Compare all the goods of this world with the eternal felicity which God has prepared for those who leave all things for his sake, and you will find that there is a greater disparity between the transitory joys of this life and the eternal beatitude of the saints than there is between a grain of sand and the entire creation.

Jesus Christ has promised that whosoever shall leave all things for his sake shall receive a hundred-fold in this life, and eternal glory in the next. Can you doubt his words ? Can you imagine that he will not be faithful to his promise? Is he not more liberal in rewarding virtue than in punishing vice ? If they who give a cup of cold water in his name shall not be left without abundant remuneration,[8947]how great and incomprehensible must be the reward which a religious who aspires to perfection shall receive for the numberless works of piety which she performs every day ? for so many meditations, offices, and spiritual readings ? for so many acts of mortification and of divine love which she daily refers to God’s honor? Do you not know that these good works which are performed through obedience, and in compliance with the religious vows, merit a far greater reward than the good works of seculars ? Brother Lacci, of the Society of Jesus, appeared after death to a certain person, and said that he and king Philip II. were crowned with bliss, but that his own glory as far surpassed that of Philip as the exalted dignity of an earthly sovereign is raised above the lowly station of an humble religious.

The dignity of martyrdom is sublime; but the religious state appears to possess something still more excellent. The martyr suffers that he may not lose his soul; the religious, to render herself more acceptable to God. A martyr dies for the faith; a religious for perfection. Although the religious state has lost much of its primitive splendour, we may still say, with truth, that the souls who are most dear to God, who have attained the greatest perfection, and who edify the Church by the odour of their sanctity, are, for the most part, to be found in religion. How few are there in the world, even amongst the most fervent, who rise at mid night to pray and sing the praises of God ?

How few who spend five or six hours each day in these or similar works of piety ? Who practise fasting, abstinence, and mortification ? How few who observe silence, or accustom themselves to do the will of others rather than their own ? And, surely, all these are performed by the religious of every Order, even in convents where the discipline is relaxed many are found, who, on the day of judgment, will condemn the others who aspire to perfection, observe the rules, and perform, in private, many works of supererogation. It is evident that the conduct of the generality of pious Christians in the world cannot be compared with that of good religious.

No wonder, then, that St. Cyprian called virgins consecrated to God the flower of the garden of the Church, and the noblest portion of the flock of Jesus Christ.[8948] St. Gregory Nazianzen says the religious " are the first—fruits of the flock of the Lord, the pillars and crown of faith, and the pearls of the Church."[8949] I hold as certain that the greater number of the seraphic thrones vacated by the unhappy associates of Lucifer will be filled by religious. Out of the sixty who during the last century were enrolled in the catalogue of saints, or honoured with the appellation of Blessed, all, with the exception of five or six, belonged to the religious orders. Jesus Christ once said to St. Teresa: " Woe to the world, but for religious."[8950] Ruffinus says: "It cannot be doubted that the world is preserved from ruin by the merits of religious."[8951]

When, then, the devil affrights you by representing the difficulty of observing your Rule, and practising the self-denial, and the austerities necessary for salvation, raise your eyes to heaven, and the hope of eternal beatitude will give you strength and courage to suffer all things. The trials, mortifications, and all miseries of this life will soon be past, and to them will succeed the ineffable delights of paradise, which shall be enjoyed for eternity without fear of failure or of diminution.

PRAYER

O God of my soul, I know that Thou dost most earnestly desire to save me. By my sins I had incurred the sentence of eternal condemnation ; but instead of casting me into hell, as I deserved, Thou hast stretched forth Thy loving hand, and not only delivered me from hell and sin, but Thou hast also drawn me, as it were by force, from amidst the dangers of the world, and placed me in Thy own house amongst Thy own spouses. I hope, O my Spouse, to be admitted one day to heaven, there to sing for eternity the great mercies Thou hast shown me. Oh ! that I had never offended Thee. O Jesus, assist me, now that I desire to love Thee with my whole soul, and wish to do everything in my power to please Thee. Thou hast spared nothing in order to gain my love : it is but just that I devote my entire being to Thy service. Thou hast given thyself entirely to me: I give myself without reserve to Thee. Since my soul is immortal, I desire to be eternally united to Thee. And if it is love that unites the soul to Thee, I love Thee, O my Sovereign Good; I love Thee, my Redeemer; I love Thee, O my Spouse, my only treasure and object of my love : I love Thee ! I love Thee ! and hope that I shall love Thee for eternity. Thy merits, O my Redeemer, are the grounds of my hope. In Thy protection, also, O great Mother of God, my Mother Mary, do I place unbounded confidence. Thou didst obtain pardon for me when I was in the state of sin ; now that I hope I am in the state of grace, and am a religious, wilt thou not obtain for me the grace to become a saint? Such is my ardent hope, my fervent desire. Amen.

Chapter III

THE RELIGIOUS SHOULD BELONG ENTIRELY TO GOD

1. SHE SHOULD RENOUNCE EVERYTHING, AND LOVE ONLY GOD

PLUTARCH[8952] relates that in Rome it was the duty of a woman, on her first arrival at the house of her husband, to address him in the following words: “ Wherever you are, there also shall I be. Wheresoever your will leads you, there likewise my desires shall carry me.”[8953] It is this perfect conformity of her will with his that Jesus Christ demands of every virgin who aspires to the dignity and glory of his spouse. My son, he says, give me thy heart?[8954]My child and my spouse, what I desire from you is, that you give me your heart, your affections, and your will. The Holy Ghost says that when God created our first parents, Adam and Eve, he set his eyes upon their hearts.[8955]He fixed his eyes not upon their hands, but upon their hearts; because external works are of no value before God, unless they proceed from the heart, and be accompanied by the affections of the soul. All the glory of the spouse of Christ consists in an entire and a perfect union of her heart with the heart of God. All the glory of the Kings daughter is within.[8956] This union of her interior makes a religious belong entirely to the Lord. “ God,” says St. Bernard, “ requires to be feared as a Sovereign, to be honored as a Father, and to be loved as a Spouse.”[8957] Hence in his virginal spouses the Redeemer bears more patiently with every imperfection than with a divided heart or a want of love. It was to show the necessity of a complete and unqualified dedication of themselves to his glory that he ordained by his Church that in receiving the sacred veil on the day of their profession his spouses should be reminded of their obligation to reject every other lover. “ Receive,” the bishop says, “ the veil, that you may admit no lover but him.”[8958] Receive this veil, that you may no longer have regard to creatures, and that you may banish from your heart every affection that is not for God. The Church commands religious at their profession to change their name, that they may forget the world, that they may esteem themselves dead to all earthly things, and that the dispositions of their souls may correspond to the words which they utter on that solemn occasion: “The empire of the world and all the grandeur of the earth I have despised for the love of my Lord Jesus Christ, whom I have seen, whom I have loved, in whom I have believed, towards whom my heart inclineth.”[8959] I have despised the world and all its pomps, for the sake of Jesus, my Spouse, to whom, because he is most amiable and most worthy of my love, I have consecrated all the affections of my heart. Every religious should say to the world with St. Agnes: “Depart from me, food of death, for I am pledged to another lover.”[8960]

Whenever any earthly object steals into her heart, and claims a share in that love which had been entirely consecrated to her divine Spouse, she should exclaim: “Begone, pernicious affection, you seek to poison my heart: depart, therefore, for another lover, more noble, more faithful, and more acceptable than you, has loved me before I could love him, and has taken possession of my whole soul: you are a vile and miserable creature; but my Spouse is the Lord, the King of heaven and earth. I am espoused to Him whom the angels serve.”[8961]

Without love the soul of man cannot exist. Her affections must be fixed on God or on creatures: if she love not creatures, she will certainly love God. Hence, the Holy Ghost exhorts us to guard our hearts with the utmost vigilance against all affections which have not God for their object: With all watchfulness keep thy heart, because life issueth out from it?[8962] While the heart loves God, the soul shall have life; but if the heart transfer its affections to creatures, spiritual death will be the inevitable consequence. In order, then, to become a saint, the spouse of the Lamb must expel from her soul whatsoever has not God for its end and object. When any one demanded admission into the Society of the Fathers of the Desert, they answered him by the following question: “ Do you bring a vacant heart, that it may be filled by the Holy Ghost?”[8963] Justly did they require a soul detached from earthly goods; for a heart in which the world dwells cannot be replenished with the love of God. Whoever brings to the fountain a-vessel replete with sand, will labor in vain to fill it with water unless it be first emptied of its contents.

O my God, why do so many religious frequent the holy exercises of prayer and Communion, and draw from them so little increase of divine love ? It is because their hearts are so full of the world, of self-esteem, of vanity, or of self-will, of affection to friends, attachment to creatures. Until the world is rooted out of their hearts, the love of God cannot take possession of their souls. Give me a religious who is detached from the world and the things of the world, and I pledge myself that divine love shall abound in her soul. To obtain this detachment from the earth, it is necessary to call continually on the Lord, in the language of holy David: Create in me a clean heart, O God[8964] Give me, O Lord, a heart free from every affection which does not proceed from the love of Thee. Woe to them that are of a double heart?[8965] “Woe,” says St. Augustine, in his comment on these words, “to them who divide their heart, giving it partly to God and partly to the devil.” For, continues the saint, the anger of God is justly provoked against those who treat him and his sworn enemy with equal attention, and therefore he departs from them, and yields to the devil the undivided possession of their hearts. “ God is angry, because in the affections of a double heart he is associated with the devil: he departs, and the devil possesses the whole.”[8966] The holy Doctor then concludes, that because a soul loves God less in proportion as her affections are fixed on other objects, a religious cannot be entirely devoted to the love of her Spouse while she is attached to creatures. “ He loves you less, who” loves anything else with you.”[8967]In a word, every little attachment to created objects impedes the perfect consecration of the soul to God.

St. Teresa, while she cherished a certain little inordinate though not an unchaste affection for a relative, was but imperfectly united to God; but when she afterwards disengaged her heart from all earthly attachments, and consecrated her whole soul to the love of Jesus, she merited to hear from him: “Teresa, now thou art all mine, and I am all thine.”[8968] St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say that a religious who gives not to Jesus her whole heart gives him nothing. The assertion was most just; for it is impossible to divide a heart too small to love a God who deserves infinite love, and to give one part of it to him and another to creatures. No, says blessed Egidius,

“ The soul, which is one, must be entirely given to Him who is one,[8969] who merits all our love, and who has done and suffered so much to extort our love. Surely, observes Father Nieremberg, it was not necessary for our redemption that Jesus Christ should have submitted to all the miseries and endured all the pains of his life and death. A single drop of his blood, a tear, a prayer, would have been sufficient to save the whole world, and an infinite number of worlds. But the Son of God has shed the last drop of his blood, and has given his life, not only to redeem us, but also to compel us to love him with our whole hearts. He could have sent an angel to deliver us from sin: “but,” says Hugh of St. Victor, “ lest you should divide your love between the Creator and the redeeming angel, he who was your Creator has chosen to become your Redeemer.”[8970]

The Lord commands all to love him with their whole heart. To each one he says: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.[8971] This precept of love is especially directed to the spouses of the Redeemer.

A brother in religion said once to the Venerable Father John Joseph of Alcantara, that he had become a religious to save his soul. The Venerable Father replied: “My child, do not say that you have left the world to secure your salvation; say rather that you have entered religion to become a saint; for the object of a religious should be to love God in the highest degree.” O my God, if a religious love not Jesus Christ with her whole soul, to whom will she give the preference in her heart ? Oh ! how many marks of predilection must he have shown to you in making you his spouse in religion ? He must first have selected you for creation from among an infinite number of possible beings. Then to make you from your birth a child of the Church, by the holy sacrament of baptism, he must have chosen you from among so many millions who are born in infidelity and heresy. Lastly, in bringing you into religion by his lights, his invitations, and by his special graces, he must have preferred you before the numberless multitudes of seculars whom he has left in the world in the midst of so many dangers and occasions of losing their immortal souls. Now if you do not love your God with your whole heart and soul, if you do not consecrate your entire being to his service, to whom will you give your heart ? This, says the Psalmist, is the generation of them that seek the Lord.[8972]Who can behold virgins of noble birth and splendid fortunes despising the pomp and pleasures of the world, which they might have enjoyed, and shutting themselves up in a convent, to live in poverty and abjection; who, I say, can behold these holy virgins without exclaiming, This is the generation of them that seek the Lord? Since, then, God has called you to be his spouse, all your thoughts and affections must be fixed on him, and on him alone. " Have no connection," says St. Bernard, with the world; forget all things; reserve yourself for him alone whom you have chosen from among all."[8973]

Now that you are consecrated to Jesus Christ, what have you to do with the world ? Forget all things, and en deavor to preserve your whole heart for that God who has chosen you for his spouse in preference to so many others. You must give him your whole heart; for Jesus Christ requires that his spouse be an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain. My spouse is a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up.[8974] The spouse of Jesus must be an enclosed garden admitting into her heart no lover but Jesus. " An enclosed garden," says Gilbert, " which admits none but her beloved. "[8975] She must be a sealed-up fountain; for he is a jealous Spouse who will suffer no one to share in the affections of his beloved. Put me, he says, as a seal upon thy heart ; as a seal upon thy arm : for love is strong as death?[8976] I desire to be placed as a seal upon your heart and upon your arm, that you may love none but me, and that my glory may be the sole object of all your actions. " The Beloved," says St. Gregory, " is put as a seal upon the heart and arm of his spouse; because, in a holy soul, the intensity of her love is shown by the affections of the will, and by the works of her hands."[8977] Oh! how love, when it is strong, banishes from the soul every affection which is not for God : For love is strong as death. As no created power can avert the stroke of death when the hour of dissolution arrives, so there is no obstacle which a soul filled with divine love will not overcome. If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing.[8978]

A heart which loves God despises all that the world can give, and disregards all that is not God. " When," says St. Francis de Sales, " a house takes fire, the furniture is thrown out of the windows; and when a soul burns with divine love, she, without the aid of sermons, or spiritual reading, or the exhortations of directors, divests herself of all affection for creatures, to possess and to love her only Supreme Good the God of Majesty and Sovereign of the universe."

Perhaps, dear Sister, so much love is not due to your Spouse, Jesus, who died upon the cross for your redemption; who has given you himself so often in the holy Communion, and has enriched your soul with so many special graces which have not been granted to others ?

Reflect, says St. John Chrysostom, that he has given you himself entirely and without reserve. “ He has given all to you: he has reserved nothing for himself.”[8979] This consideration was one of the principal means by which St. Bernard enkindled in his soul the flame of divine love. “ He,” says the saint, “ was given to me entirely: he was wholly consumed for my benefit.”[8980] My Saviour has given me his adorable divinity and his sacred humanity; he has become a whole-burnt offering for my sake: can I refuse to consecrate my entire being to his love ? My beloved to me, and I to him.[8981] My beloved has given himself entirely to me: it is but just that I dedicate to him my soul, my body, my life, and all my possessions.

St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that a religious being called to be the spouse of a crucified God, should, in her whole life and in all her actions, have in view no other object than Jesus crucified; and should in her whole life have no other occupation than the continual meditation of the eternal love which her divine Spouse bore to her. When Jesus was about to accomplish the redemption of man, he said: Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.[8982] Perhaps by these words the Son of God meant that after his crucifixion the devil was to be banished from the earth ? “ No,” says St. Augustine, “ but from the hearts of the faithful.”[8983] Now if Jesus Christ has died for all, he has suffered in a special manner for his virginal spouses. Since, then, a God has given himself entirely for your salvation, would it not be enormous ingratitude in you to refuse to him the sacrifice of your whole heart, or to love him only with reserve ? Say, then, frequently to your Spouse: O my Jesus, Thou hast given Thyself to me without reserve; Thou hast given all Thy blood, all Thy labors, all Thy merits, for my sanctification. In a word, Thy favours were so abundant and magnificent that nothing more remained to be conferred upon me. I therefore give myself entirely to Thee; I offer to Thee all that I possess or shall ever possess upon earth; I consecrate to Thee all my pleasures, my body, my soul, my will, my liberty. I have nothing more to present to Thee: if I had Thou shouldst have it. I renounce all that the world can give, and declare that Thou alone canst satisfy the desires of my heart. “ Oh !” said St. Teresa, “ what a profitable exchange to give our hearts to God, and in return to be made the objects of his love.”[8984] “ But,” continues the saint, “ because we do not offer to him the undivided affections of our souls, he does not bestow upon us all the treasures of his love.”[8985]

The spouse of Jesus should sing no other than that canticle of love recommended by holy David: Sing to the Lord a new canticle[8986] “What,” says St. Augustine, “is a new canticle, but new love?”[8987] The old canticles are those affections to creatures and to ourselves to which we have been subject from our birth, and which continually spring up from the inclinations to evil transmitted to us by our first parents. For, says the Holy Ghost, the imagination and thought of man’s heart are prone to evil from his youth[8988] But the new canticle is love, by which the soul is consecrated to God. “ The voice,” says St. Augustine, “ of this singer of canticles is the voice of holy love: let us love him for his own sake.”[8989] The voice of the soul praising God is the fervour of charity which makes her love him, because he merits her love, and banishes from her affections whatever is not God. Jesus crucified, commands his spouses to be crucified to all earthly things. Whenever, then, the world places before your eyes its pomps and delights, you should exclaim with St. Paulinus: “ Let the rich enjoy their treasures, and kings their thrones; Christ is our kingdom and our glory.”[8990] His love is more valuable to us than the sovereignty of the earth. The spouse of Jesus should desire nothing but love; should live but for love; should seek only to advance continually in love: she should incessantly languish with love, in the choir, in the cell, the dormitory, the garden, in all places. Such should be the ardor of her charity, that the flames of her love would extend to all parts of the convent, and even beyond the boundaries of the enclosure.

To this love the Apostle exhorts and invites her, by the example of her beloved Spouse. Happy the religious who can say with St. Francis, “ my God and my all.” My God, who hast shown to me such an excess of love, why should I seek earthly possessions? I have found Thee, the source of all happiness. My God and my all, I care not for honors, for riches, or for pleasures. Thou art my glory, my treasure, my delight, and my all. What have I in heaven ? and besides thee, what do I desire upon earth ? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever?[8991] Can I, O my God, find any one in heaven or on earth who is so deserving of my affection, or who has done so much to gain my love ? Thou alone shalt be the Lord of my heart; Thou shalt reign in its affections, and shalt rule its motions with sovereign sway. Thee alone shall my soul obey, seeking in all things Thy holy will. *I found him whom my soul loveth ; I held him and will not let him go?*[8992] Yes, I have found the object of all my affections: I have found him who alone can make me happy. Though the world, with all its pleasures, and hell, with all its powers of darkness, should endeavor to separate me from Thee, I will not abandon Thee, O Jesus, my Spouse. " I held him, and will not let him go." I will hold Thee fast by my love, and will never suffer Thee to depart from me. I desire to live and to die always, and in all things, united to Thee.

2. WE MUST OVERCOME OURSELVES AND COURAGEOUSLY STRIVE FOR PERFECTION—MEANS TO BE ADOPTED FOR THIS PURPOSE

To attain perfection, and to enjoy true peace of con science, it is necessary to die to the world and to self.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord[8993] As corporal death is necessarily accompanied with pain, so abandonment of the world and detachment from its pleasures is utterly impossible without trials and sufferings. The kingdom of heaven is represented to us in the Holy Scriptures under various images. It is sometimes compared to a treasure which can be obtained only by selling all our possessions; sometimes to a city which, because the gate is narrow, no one can enter without fatigue and industry; sometimes to a palace in which the stones (that is, the souls of which it is composed) must be polished with the utmost care; sometimes to a feast, to which no one is admitted unless he abandon all other concerns; sometimes to a prize which cannot be won without running to the end; and, finally, to a crown, for the acquisition of which it is necessary to fight and conquer. In a word, to die to the world, self-love must die in the soul.

St. Augustine says, that the love of God increases in proportion as self-love is diminished; and that the destruction of the latter is the perfection of the former. " The diminution of cupidity," says the holy Doctor, "is the nutriment of charity; but its total absence is the perfection of charity."[8994]

Charity is estimated, not by its tenderness, but by its strength. Ardent charity smooths every asperity and surmounts every obstacle. “ There is nothing,” says St. Augustine, “ so difficult, which the fire of love does not conquer.”[8995] In another place he says: “ In what we love there is no labor; or if there be, we love the very labor itself.”[8996]

In a soul that loves God, torments endured for his sake excite no pain; or if they do, these pains are to her a source of happiness and delight. In his confessions, the saint writes, that when he gave himself entirely to God, the very privation of sensual gratifications filled his soul with joy; and that though at first he dreaded their loss, he afterwards had reason to rejoice at their relinquishment. “ How sweet, on a sudden, was it become to me to be without these joys ! and what I was before so much afraid to lose, I now cast from me with joy.”[8997] To a religious who has fixed her whole heart on God, the practice of poverty, of obedience, mortification, and of all virtues is easy and agreeable; but to her whose affections are divided between God and creatures, all the duties of religion are an intolerable burden.

It is true that whatever good we do, comes from God, and that without his grace we cannot, according to the Apostle, even pronounce the name of Jesus. But not withstanding our absolute dependence on divine grace, God commands us to perform our part, and to co-operate with him in the work of our salvation. Many desire to become saints, but wish that God would do all, and that he would bring them to eternal glory without labor or inconvenience to them. But this is impossible. The law of God is said to be a yoke borne by two, to show that the divine aid, on the one hand, and our co-operation on the other, are indispensably necessary for its observance. And sometimes, to carry this yoke, and merit everlasting happiness, we must do violence to the feelings of flesh and blood. The kingdom of heaven suffer-eth violence, and the violent bear it away.”[8998]

And St. Paul says, that the crown of life shall be given to him only who shall combat till he overcomes the enemies of his salvation. O spouse of Jesus, I say to you with the same apostle, hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown?[8999] Since Jesus Christ has made you his spouse, do not allow your enemies to snatch from you the eternal dignity of queen which he has prepared for you in his kingdom; but, on the contrary, hold fast your crown, by assimilating yourself to your beloved, the predestined model of the elect: For, whom He foreknew, he also predestined to be made conformable to the image of his Son.[9000] He has gone before you, crowned with thorns, scourged at the pillar, loaded with the cross, and saturated with contempt and reproach; and in that pitiable condition he invites you to follow him, and to deny yourself: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.[9001] He has died for you, and it is your duty to sacrifice your life for him, and to say with the seraphic St. Francis: "O good Jesus, may I die for the love of thee, who hast condescended to die for the love of me."[9002]Yes, it is but just that you should die to yourselves, and live only for that God who has died for your salvation. " That they also," says the Apostle, who live, may not now live to themselves, but unto him who died for them[9003] You. indeed, are weak; but if you trust in the goodness of your Spouse, his grace and strength will prepare you to execute so arduous a task.

When the devil molests you, and endeavors to cast you into despair, by representing to you the difficulties and miseries of a life of continual mortification, of incessant self-denial, and of perpetual abstinence from sensual pleasures, answer him in the words of the Apostle: I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.[9004] Of myself I can do nothing; but the Lord, who has chosen me for his spouse, and called me to his love, will give me courage and strength to walk in the rugged path of his commandments. " If," says St. Teresa, " we be not in fault, God will assuredly, by his all-powerful aid, enable us to become saints." And, O my God, upon whom, if not upon your spouses, will the obligation of sanctity be imperative? O consecrated virgins, offer yourselves frequently to God, with a strong desire and determination to please him in all things, and implore continually the assistance of his holy grace. He has promised to grant whatsoever is asked of him with confidence. All things whatsoever you ask, when ye pray, believe that you shall receive; and they shall come unto you?[9005]

What then do you fear? Have courage; God has taken you from the world; he has delivered you from its snares; has called you to his love; and has, if you be faithful to him, prepared for you numberless helps and graces. You have already left the world; you have, as St. Teresa used to say to her spiritual children, taken the most difficult and important step; and to become a saint little now remains to be done. Resolve, then, at once to dissolve every worldly attachment.

Perhaps, after having forsaken the world, and renounced all its goods, after having voluntarily relinquished your liberty, and bound yourself, by vow, to perpetual enclosure; perhaps, after all these sacrifices, you are disposed, for the miserable gratifications of sense or caprice, to risk your all the everlasting possession of paradise and of God and to prefer, before the exalted glory of spouse of the Most High, the unhappy slavery of Satan, who will render you unhappy in this life, and eternally miserable in the next. Resolve, then, I say again, to burst every earthly tie, and tremble lest the words which you now read should be the last invitation of your Spouse. Do not resist the voice of God any longer. If you neglect his call on this occasion, he may perhaps abandon you forever. Resolve, then, resolve! “The devil,” says St. Teresa, “ is afraid of resolute souls.” St. Bernard teaches that many souls are lost through want of fortitude. Take courage, then, and trust in the power and goodness of God: strong resolutions overcome all difficulties. Oh ! happy, thrice happy soul, if, in obedience to the voice of God, you give yourself entirely to your Spouse, Jesus. When death approaches you can return thanks to him for his favours, and address him in the words of the glorious St. Agnes: “O Lord, who hast taken from me the love of the world, receive my soul.”[9006] O my God, who hast disengaged my heart from creatures, that all its affections might be fixed on Thee, receive, now, my soul, that I may be admitted into the kingdom of Thy glory, to love Thee with all my strength, without fear of being ever separated from Thee the Supreme and Infinite Good.

Oh, that all religious would imitate the example of the Venerable Frances Farnese ! Her life at first was very imperfect; but happening one day to read the history of the Franciscans in Japan, she was suddenly seized with compunction, and exclaimed: “And what, my Sisters, will we do? We have forsaken our families and our goods, and shall we now draw down upon our souls the vengeance of God, and the sentence of eternal death by attachment to the things of the world which we do not possess ?” From that moment she resolved to give up the world, and to consecrate herself entirely to God. This resolution she afterwards fulfilled in the accomplishment of that wonderful reformation of the Order which was planned and executed by her direction:” Men,” says St. Jerome, “ always seek to advance in , the knowledge of their secular profession, but are satiated with the mere rudiments of the science of the saints. In all their worldly pursuits,” says the saint, “ men are never satiated; but in virtue it is sufficient for them to have made a beginning.”[9007] Every Christian is bound to tend to perfection. “ When I speak of a Christian,” says St. Ambrose, “ I mean a perfect man.”[9008] The precept by which all are commanded to love God with all their strength, imposes upon all the obligation of perfection. Besides, to discharge the duty of preserving sanctifying grace it is necessary to struggle always to perfect charity in the soul; for in the path of virtue he that does not advance, recedes, and exposes himself to the danger of sin. Now, if this is true with regard to all Christians, how much more so must it be with regard to religious, who are bound by a stricter obligation to seek perfection, not only because they receive more abundant graces and more powerful helps to sanctity, but also because they have promised to observe the vows and rules of religion !

But to fulfil the command by which you are obliged to aspire to perfection, an inefficacious and fruitless desire of sanctity is not sufficient. You must do violence to yourself, and adopt the means of attaining perfection. It will not be necessary for you to undertake very extra—ordinary things: it will be sufficient to perform your ordinary exercises with diligence and attention, to observe your Rule with exactness, and to practise with fidelity the Gospel virtues. However, a religious who desires to become a saint will not confine herself to the mere discharge of the duties prescribed by her Rule, which is accommodated to weak as well as to perfect souls; she must also perform supererogatory works of prayer, of charity, of mortification, and of the other virtues. St. Bernard says that “ what is perfect must be singular.”[9009] A religious, who barely discharges the ordinary duties of the Community, will never attain sublime sanctity. It. is your duty, then, to do violence to yourself, and courageously to adopt the means of arriving at perfection.

The principal means are:

1. A strong and ardent desire to become a saint.
2. Great confidence in Jesus Christ and in his holy Mother.

3. To avoid every deliberate sin or defect, and after a fault not to lose courage, but to make an act of contrition for it, and then resume your ordinary occupations.

4. To cut off all attachment to creatures, to self-will, and self-esteem.

5. To resist continually your own inclinations.

6. To observe with exactness the rules of religion, however unimportant they may appear.

7. To perform your ordinary duties with all possible perfection.

8. To communicate often with the permission of your director; to make long and frequent meditations, and to perform all the mortifications which he will permit.

9. To prefer, on all occasions, those actions which are most agreeable to God, and most opposed to self-love.

10. To receive all crosses and contradictions with joy and gladness from the hands of God.

11. To love and serve those who persecute you.

12. To spend every moment of your time for God.

13. To offer to God all your actions in union with the merits of Jesus Christ.

14. To make a special oblation of yourself to God, that he may dispose of you and of all you possess in whatever way he pleases.

15. To protest continually before God that his pleas ure and love are the only objects of your wishes.

16. Lastly, and above all, to pray continually, and to recommend yourself, with unbounded confidence, to Jesus Christ and to his Virgin Mother, and to entertain a special affection and tenderness towards Mary.

I conclude with the words which the Venerable Father Anthony Torres, after an ecstasy of love, addressed to a religious who was one of his penitents: “ My child, love, love your Spouse, who is the only object that merits your love.”

PRAYER

O my God ! O amiable love ! O infinite lover ! and worthy of infinite love, when shall I love Thee as Thou hast loved me? It is not in Thy power to give me stronger proofs of love than those Thou hast already given. Thou hast spared nothing; Thou hast expended Thy blood and Thy life to oblige me to love Thee ; and shall I love Thee only with reserve ? Pardon me, O my Jesus, if, in my past life, I have been so ungrateful as to prefer my accursed pleasures before the love which I owed to Thee. Ah ! my Lord and my Spouse, discover to me always, more and more, Thy infinite loveliness that I may be daily more enamoured of Thy perfection, and that I may continually endeavor to please Thee as Thou dost deserve to be pleased. Thou dost command me to love Thee, and I desire nothing but Thy love. Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.[9010] Speak, O Lord : tell me what Thou desirest from me : my wish is to obey Thee in all things. I will no longer resist the graces and mercies Thou hast bestowed upon me. Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me : I offer myself without reserve to Thee. For Thy mercy s sake accept, and do not refuse this oblation. By my infidelities I have deserved to be cast away from Thy love : but the desire to be Thine which Thou hast infused into my soul assures me that Thou hast already accepted the offer. I love Thee, O God, who art infinitely amiable : I love Thee, O my Sovereign Good. Thou art, and shalt be forever, the only delight of my heart, and the sole object of my affections. And since Thou hast said, Ask, and you shall receive (Petite, et accipietis. “John, xvi. 24.) and hast promised to grant whatsoever we ask, I beg, with St. Ignatius, that “ Thou wilt give me only Thy love along with Thy grace, and I shall be sufficiently rich.” (Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi clones, et dives sum satis.)

Give me Thy love and Thy grace ; grant that I may love Thee, and be beloved by Thee, and I shall be content, and shall desire nothing else from Thee. O Mary, who belonged always and entirely to God, by that love which our Lord bore thee through all eternity, obtain for us the grace henceforth to love God, and to love him alone.

Chapter IV

THE DESIRE OF PERFECTION

1. HOW HOLY DESIRES ARE USEFUL, AND EVEN NECESSARY

AN ardent desire of perfection is the first means that a religious should adopt in order to acquire sanctity and to consecrate her whole being to God. As the sports man, to hit a bird in flight, must take aim in advance of his prey, so a Christian, to make progress in virtue, should aspire to the highest degree of holiness which it is in his power to attain. Who, says holy David, will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest.[9011] Who will give me the wings of the dove to fly to my God, and, divested of all earthly affection, to repose in the bosom of the divinity ? Holy desires are the blessed wings with which the saints burst every worldly tie, and fly to the mountain of perfection, where they find that peace which the world cannot give.

But how do fervent desires make the soul fly to God ? “They,” says St. Laurence Justinian, “supply strength, and render pains light and tolerable.”[9012] On the one hand, good desires give strength and courage, and on the other they diminish the labor and fatigue of ascending the mountain of God. Whosoever, through diffidence of attaining sanctity, does not ardently desire to become a saint, will never arrive at perfection. A man who is desirous of obtaining a valuable treasure which he knows is to be found at the top of a lofty mountain, but who, through fear of fatigue and difficulty, has no desire of ascending, will never advance a single step towards the wished-for object, but will remain below in careless indifference and inactivity. And he who, because the path of virtue appears to him narrow and rugged, and difficult to be trodden, does not desire to climb up the mountain of the Lord, and to gain the treasure of perfection, will always continue in a state of tepidity, and will never make the smallest progress in the way of God.

On the contrary, he that does not desire, and does not strenuously endeavor, always to advance in holiness, will, as we learn from experience and from all the masters of the spiritual life, go backward in the path of virtue, and will be exposed to great danger of eternal misery.

The path of the just, says Solomon, as a shining light goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day. The way of the wicked is darksome : they know not when they fall} As light increases constantly from sunrise to full day, so the path of the saints always advances; but the way of sinners becomes continually more dark and gloomy, till they know not where they go, and at length walk into a precipice.[9013] Not to advance," says St. Augustine, " is to go back."[9014] St. Gregory[9015] beautifully explains this maxim of spiritual life by comparing a Christian who seeks to remain stationary in the path of virtue to a man who is in a boat on a rapid river, and striving to keep the boat always in the same position. If the boat be not continually propelled against the current, it will be carried away in an opposite direction, and consequently, without continual exertion, its station cannot be maintained. Since the fall of Adam man is naturally inclined to evil from his birth. For the imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth.[9016] If he do not push forward, if he do not endeavor, by incessant efforts, to improve in sanctity, the very current of passion will carry him back. " Since you do not wish to proceed," says St. Bernard, addressing a tepid soul, " you must fail." " By no means," she replied; " I wish to live, and to remain in my present state. I will not consent to be worse; and I do not desire to be better." "You, then," rejoins the saint, "wish what is impossible."[9017] Because, in the way of God, a Christian must either go forward and advance in virtue, or go backward and rush headlong into vice.

In seeking eternal salvation, we must, according to St. Paul, never rest, but must run continually in the way of perfection, that we may win the prize, and secure an incorruptible crown. So run that you may obtain[9018] If we fail, the fault will be ours ; for God wills that all be holy and perfect. This is the will of God your sanctification? He even commands us to be perfect and holy.[9019]

Be you therefore perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect?[9020]Be holy because I am holy.[9021] He promises and gives, as the holy Council of

Trent teaches, abundant strength, for the observance of all his commands, to those who ask it from him. “ God does not command impossibilities; but by his precepts he admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask what you cannot do ; and He assists you, that you may be able to do it.”[9022]

God does not command impossibilities; but by his precepts he admonishes us to do what we can by the aid of his ordinary grace; and when greater helps are necessary, he exhorts us to seek them by humble prayer. He will infallibly attend to our petitions, and enable us to observe all, even the most difficult, of his commandments. Take courage, then, and adopt the advice of the Venerable Father Torres to a religious, who was one of his penitents: “ Let us, my child, put on the wings of strong desires, that, quitting the earth, we may fly to our Spouse and our Beloved, who expects us in the blessed kingdom of eternity.”

St. Augustine teaches, that the life of a good Christian is one continued longing after perfection. “ The whole life,” says the saint, “ of a good Christian is a holy desire.”[9023] He that cherishes not in his heart the desire of sanctity, may be a Christian; but he will not be a good one. If this be true of all the servants of God, how much more so must it be of religious, who, though it is not imperative on them to be actually perfect, are strictly obliged to aspire after perfection. “ He that enters the religious state,” says St. Thomas, “ is not commanded to have perfect charity; but he is bound to tend to it. It is not,” continues the saint, “ obligatory on him to adopt all the means by which perfection may be attained; but it is his duty to perform the exercises prescribed by the Rule, which at his profession he promised to observe.”[9024] Hence, a religious is bound not only to fulfil her vows, but also to assist at public prayer; to make the Communions, and to practise the mortifications ordained by the Rule; to observe the silence, and to discharge all the other duties of the Community.

You will, perhaps, say that your Rule does not bind under pain of sin. That may be; but theologians generally maintain, that to transgress without a sufficient cause even the rules which of themselves do not impose a moral obligation, is almost always a venial fault. Because the wilful and unnecessary violation of rule generally proceeds from passion or from sloth, and consequently must be at least a venial offence.

Hence, St. Francis de Sales, in his Entertainments, teaches that though the Rule of the Visitation did not oblige under the penalty of sin, still the infraction of it could not be excused from the guilt of a venial transgression. " Because," says the saint, " by disobedience to her Rule a religious dishonors the things of God, violates her profession, disturbs the Community, and dissipates the fruits of the good example which everyone should give."[9025]Whoever, then, breaks the Rule in the presence of others, will, according to the saint, incur the additional guilt of scandal. It should be observed that the breach of rule may be even a mortal sin, when it is so frequent as to do serious injury to regular observance in the Community. To violate the Rule, through contempt, is likewise a grievous transgression. And St. Thomas remarks, that the frequent infraction of rule practically disposes to the contempt of it.[9026] This is my answer to those tepid religious who excuse their own irregularities by saying that the Rule imposes no obligation. The fervent spouses of Jesus Christ do not inquire whether their rule has the force of a precept or not: it is enough for them to know that it is approved by God, and that he takes complacency in its observance.

As it is impossible to arrive at perfection in any art or science, without ardent desires of its attainment, so no one has ever yet become a saint, but by strong and fervent aspirations after sanctity. " God," observes St. Teresa, " ordinarily confers his signal favours on those only who thirst after his love." Blessed, says the royal prophet, is the man whose help is from thee : in his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps in the vale of tears. . . . They shall go from virtue to virtue. "[9027]

Happy the man who has resolved in his soul to mount the ladder of perfection: he shall receive abundant aid from God, and will ascend from virtue to virtue. Such has been the practice of the saints, and especially of St. Andrew Avellino, who even bound himself by vow " to advance continually in the way of Christian perfection."[9028] St. Teresa used to say, that " God rewards, even in this life, every good desire." It was by good desires that the saints arrived in a short time at a sublime degree of sanctity. Being made perfect in a short space , He fulfilled a long time[9029] It was thus that St. Aloysius, who lived but twenty-five years, acquired such perfection, that St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, who saw him in bliss, declared that his glory appeared equal to that of most of the saints. In the vision he said to her: My eminent sanctity was the fruit of an ardent desire, which I cherished during my life, of loving God as much as he deserved to be loved: and being unable to love him with that infinite love which he merits, I suffered on earth a continual martyrdom of love, for which I am now raised to that transcendent glory which I enjoy.

The works of St. Teresa contain, besides those that have been already adduced, many beautiful passages on this subject. “ Our thoughts,” says the saint, “ should be aspiring: from great desires all our good shall come.” In another place she says: “We must not lower our desires, but should trust in God, that by continual exertion we shall, by his grace, arrive at sanctity and felicity of the saints.” Again she says: “The divine Majesty takes complacency in generous souls who are diffident in themselves.” This great saint asserted that in all her experience she never knew a timid Christian to attain as much virtue in many years as certain courageous souls acquire in a few days. The reading of the Lives of the saints contributes greatly to infuse courage into the soul.

It will be particularly useful to read the Lives of those who, after being great sinners, became eminent saints; such as the Lives of St. Mary Magdalene, St. Augustine, St. Pelagia, St. Mary of Egypt, and especially of St. Margaret of Cortona, who was for many years in a state of damnation, but even then cherished a desire of sanctity; and who, after her conversion, flew to perfection with such rapidity, that she merited to learn by revelation, even in this life, not only that she was predestined to glory, but also that a place was prepared for her among the seraphim.

St. Teresa says that the devil seeks to persuade us that it would be pride in us to desire a high degree of perfection, or to wish to imitate the saints. She adds, that it is a great delusion to regard strong desires of sanctity as the offspring of pride; for it is not pride in a soul diffident of herself and trusting only in the power of God, to resolve to walk courageously in the way of perfection, saying with the Apostle: I can do all things in him who strengthened me.[9030] Of myself I can do nothing; but, by his aid I shall be able to do all things, and therefore I resolve, with his grace, to desire to love him as the saints have loved him.

It is very profitable frequently to aspire after the most exalted virtue, and to desire it; such as to love God more than all the saints; to suffer for the love of him more than all the martyrs; to bear and to pardon all injuries; to embrace every sort of fatigue and suffering, for the sake of saving a single soul; and to perform similar acts of perfect charity. Because these holy aspirations and desires, though their object shall never be attained, are, in the first place, very meritorious in the sight of God, who glories in men of good will, as he abominates a perverse heart and evil inclinations.

Secondly, because the habit of aspiring to heroic sanctity animates and encourages the soul to perform acts of ordinary and easy virtue. Hence it is of great importance to propose in the morning to labor as much as possible for God during the day; to resolve to bear patiently all crosses and contradictions; to observe constant recollection; and to make continual acts of the love of God. Such was the practice of the seraphic St. Francis. “ He proposed,” says St. Bonaventure, “ with the grace of Jesus Christ, to do great things.” St. Teresa asserts that “ the Lord is as well pleased with good desires as with their fulfilment.” Oh ! how much better is it to serve God than to serve the world. To acquire goods of the earth, to procure wealth, honors, and applause of men, it is not enough to pant after them with ardor; no, to desire and not to obtain them only renders their absence more painful. But to merit the riches and the favour of God, it is sufficient to desire his grace and love. St. Augustine relates that in a convent of hermits there were two officers of the emperor’s court, one of whom began to read the life of St Anthony. “He read,” says the holy Doctor, “and his heart was stripped of the world.”[9031] Turning to his companion, he said: “What do we seek? Can we expect from the emperor anything better than his friendship? Through how many dangers are we to reach still greater perils ? and how long shall this last ?[9032] Fools that we have been, shall we still continue to serve the emperor in the midst of so many labors, fears, and troubles ? We can hope for nothing better than his favour; and should we obtain it, we would only increase the danger of our eternal reprobation.

It is only with difficulty that we shall ever procure the patronage of Caesar, but if I will it, behold I am in a moment the friend of God.[9033] Because who ever wishes, with a true and resolute desire for the friendship of God, instantly obtains it. I say with a true and resolute desire, for little profit is derived from the fruitless desires of slothful souls, who always desire to be saints, but never advance a single step in the way of God. Of them Solomon says: *The sluggard willeth and willeth not*[9034] And again: *Desires kill the slothful*[9035] The tepid religious desires perfection, but never resolves to adopt the means of its acquirement. Contemplating its advantages, she desires it; but reflecting on the fatigue necessary for its attainment, she desires it not. Thus “ she willeth and willeth not.” Her desires of sanctity are not efficacious; they have for their object means of salvation incompatible with her state. Oh ! she exclaims, were I in the desert, all my time should be employed in prayer and in works of penance ! were I in another convent, I would shut myself up in a cell to think only of God ! if my health were good, I would practise continual mortifications. I would wish, I would wish, she cries, to do all this; and still the miserable soul does not fulfil the obligations of her state. She makes but little mental prayer, and is even absent from the common meditations; she neglects Communion; is seldom in the choir, and frequently at the grate and on the terrace; she practises but little patience or resignation in her infirmities; in a word, she daily commits wilful and deliberate faults, but never labors to correct them. What, then, will it profit her to desire what is inconsistent with the duties of her present state, while she violates strict obligations ? Desires kill the slothful. Such useless desires expose the soul to great danger of everlasting perdition; because wasting her time, and taking complacency in them, she will neglect the means necessary for the perfection of her state, and for the attainment of eternal life. “I do not,” says St. Francis de Sales, “approve of the conduct of those who, while bound by an obligation, or placed in any state, spend their time in wishing for another manner of life, inconsistent with their duties; or for exercises incompatible with their present state. For these desires dissipate the heart, and make it languish in the necessary exercises.”[9036] It is, then, the duty of a religious to aspire only after that perfection which is suitable to her present state and to her actual obligations; and whether a Superior, or a subject, whether in sickness or in health,, the vigour of youth or the imbecility of old age, to adopt, resolutely, the means of sanctity suitable to her condition in life. “The devil,” says St. Teresa, “ sometimes persuades us that we have acquired the virtue, for example, of patience; because we determine to suffer a great deal for God. We feel really convinced that we are ready to accept any cross, however great, for his sake; and this conviction makes us quite content, for the devil assists us to believe that we are willing to bear all things for God. I advise you not to trust much to such virtue, nor to think that you even know it, except in name, until you see it tried. It will probably happen that on the first occasion of contradiction all this patience will fall to the ground."[9037]

2. MEANS FOR ACQUIRING PERFECTION

Let us now come to what is most important the means to be adopted for acquiring perfection. The first means is mental prayer, and particularly the meditation of the claims which God has to our love, and of the love which he has borne us, especially in the great work of redemption.

To redeem us, a God has even sacrificed his life in a sea of sorrows and contempt; and to obtain our love, he has gone so far as to make himself our food. To inflame the soul with the fire of divine love, these truths must be frequently meditated. In my meditation, says David, a fire shall flame out.[9038] When I contemplate the goodness of my God, the flames of charity fill my whole heart. St. Aloysius used to say, that to attain eminent sanctity it is first necessary to arrive at a high degree of mental prayer.

We should frequently renew our resolution of advancing in divine love. In this renewal you will be greatly assisted by considering, each day, that it is only then you begin to walk in the path of virtue. This was the practice of holy David: *And I said, now have I begun*[9039] And this was the dying advice of St. Anthony to his monks: "My dear children, figure to yourselves that each day is the day on which you begin to serve God."

We should search out continually and scrupulously the defects of the soul. " Brethren," says St. Augustine, "examine yourselves with rigor; be always displeased with what you are, if you desire to become what you are not."[9040] To arrive at that perfection which you have not attained, you must never be satisfied with the virtue you possess; "for," continues the saint, "where you have been pleased with yourself, there you have remained."[9041] Wherever you are content with the degree of sanctity which you have acquired, there you will rest, and, taking complacency in yourself, you will lose the desire of further perfection.

Hence the holy Doctor adds, what should terrify every tepid soul, who, content with her present virtue, has but little desire of spiritual advancement; *“But if you have said it is sufficient, you have perished.”*[9042] If you have said that you have already attained sufficient perfection, you are lost; for not to advance in the way of God is to retrograde. And, as St. Bernard says, “ Not to wish to go forward, is certainly to fail.”[9043] Hence St. John Chrysostom exhorts us to think continually on the virtues which we do not possess, and never to reflect on the little good which we have done; for the thought of our good works “generates indolence and inspires arrogance,”[9044] and serves only to engender sloth in the way of the Lord,and to swell the heart with vain-glory, which exposes the soul to the danger of losing the virtues she has acquired. “He that runs,” continues the saint, “does not compute the progress he has made, but the distance he has to travel.”[9045] He that aspires after perfection does not stop to calculate the proficiency he has made, but directs all his attention to the virtue he has still to acquire. Fervent Christians, as they that dig a treasure,[9046] advance in virtue as they approach the end of life. As St. Gregory says, in his comment on this passage of Job, that the man who seeks a treasure, the deeper he has dug the more he exerts himself in the hope of finding it; so the soul that pants after holiness multiplies its efforts to attain it in proportion to the advancement it has made.

IV. The fourth means is that which St. Bernard employed to excite his fervor. “ He had,” says Surius, “ this always in his heart, and frequently in his mouth: Bernard, for what purpose hast thou come ?[9047] Every religious should continually ask herself the same question: I have left the world and all its riches and pleasures, to live in the cloister, and to become a saint; what progress do I make? I do not advance in sanctity; no, but by my tepidity I expose myself to the danger of eternal perdition. It will be useful to introduce, in this place, the example of the Venerable Sister Hyacinth Mariscotti, who at first led a very tepid life, in the convent of St. Bernardine, in Viterbo. She confessed to Father Bianchetti, a Franciscan, who came to the convent as extraordinary confessor. That holy man thus addressed her: “ Are you a nun ? Are you not aware that paradise is not prepared for vain and proud religious?” “Then,” she replied, “ have I left the world to cast myself into hell?” “Yes,” rejoined the Father, “ that is the place which is destined for religious who live like seculars.”

Reflecting on these words of the holy man, Sister Hyacinth was struck with remorse; and, bewailing her past life, she made her confession with tearful eyes, and began from that moment to walk resolutely in the way of perfection. Oh ! how salutary is the thought of having abandoned the world to become a saint ! It awakens the tepidity of the religious, and encourages her to advance continually in holiness, and to surmount every obstacle to her ascent up to the mountain of God. Whenever, then, O spouse of Jesus, you meet with difficulties in the practice of obedience, say in your heart: I have not entered religion to do my own will; if I wished to follow my own inclinations, I should have remained in the world; but I have come here to do the will of God, by obedience to my Superiors, and this I desire to do in spite of all difficulties.

Whenever you experience the inconveniences of poverty, say: I have not left the world and retired into the cloister for the enjoyment of ease and riches, but to practise poverty for the love of my Jesus, who for my sake became poorer than I am. When you are rebuked or treated with contempt, say: I have become a religious only to receive, and bear with patience, the humiliations due to my sins, and thus render myself dear to my divine Spouse, who was so much despised on earth. By this means you will live to God and die to the world. In conclusion, I recommend you frequently to ask yourself this question: What will it profit me to have abandoned the world, to have confined myself in the cloister, to have given up my liberty, if I do not become a saint; but if, on the contrary, I expose my soul to everlasting misery by a careless and tepid and negligent life? The fifth means for a religious to attain sanctity is frequently to call to mind and to renew the senti ments of fervor and the desires of perfection which she felt when she first entered religion. The Abbot Agatho being once asked by a monk for a rule of conduct in religion, replied: “ See what you were on the day you left the world, and persevere in the dispositions you then entertained.”[9048] Remember, O consecrated virgin, the resolutions which you made on the day you retired from the world, to seek nothing but God; to have no will but his, and to suffer all manner of contempt and hardship for the love of Jesus Christ. This thought, as we learn from the Lives of the Fathers,[9049] brought back to his first fervor a young monk who had fallen into tepidity. When he first determined to retire into a monastery, his mother strongly opposed his design, and endeavored by various reasons to show that it was his bounden duty not to abandon her.

To all her arguments he replied:”*I am resolved to save my soul.”* And in spite of her opposition he entered religion; but after some time his ardor cooled, and tepidity stole into his heart. His mother died, and a little after her death he was seized with a dangerous malady. In his sickness he thought he saw himself before the judgment-seat of God, and his mother reproaching him with the violation of his first resolution: My son, said she, you have forgotten the words, “I am resolved to save my soul,” by which you replied to all my entreaties. You have become a religious, and is it thus you live ? He recovered from his infirmity, and, reflecting on his first fervor, he began a life of holiness, and practised such mortifications that his companions advised him to moderate his austerities. To their admonitions he answered: “If I have not been able to bear the rebuke of my mother, how shall I, if I abuse his graces, support the reproaches of Jesus Christ in judgment?” The reading of the Lives of the saints is very profitable to us; their examples humble us, and make us know and feel our own miseries. The poor understand their poverty only when they see the treasures of the rich.

VI. The sixth means is, not to lose courage when you perceive that you have not as yet arrived at the perfection to which you aspire. To be discouraged by the imperfections which you desire to correct, would be to yield to a great illusion of the devil. St. Philip Neri used to say, that to become a saint is not the work of a day. It is related in the Lives of the Fathers,[9050] that a certain monk, after having begun his religious career with great fervor, relaxed his zeal, and remained for some time in a state of tepidity; but reflecting on his unhappy condition, he began to sigh after his former piety, and became greatly afflicted because he knew not how to recover it. In this disposition of mind he sought advice from an aged Father. The good Father consoled and encouraged him by relating the conduct of a parent who commanded his son to clear a certain portion of land from thorns and briars.

Disheartened by the difficulty of the task, and despairing of success, the son neglected altogether the duty imposed upon him, and excused himself to his father, saying that he had not courage to undertake such labor. In answer the father said to him: My son, I only ask you to cleanse, every day, as much land as will be the size of your body. The son began to work, and by degrees he removed every useless and noxious plant. This example is well adapted to encourage and stimulate us in our progress to perfection. He that always cherishes an ardent desire of advancement, and strives continually to go forward, will, with the divine assistance, obtain the perfection after which he aspires. St. Bernard says that to make constant exertions to advance in virtue is the perfection that can be attained in this life. " Continual efforts for perfection," says the saint, "are reputed perfection."[9051] You must be careful never to omit your usual exercises, your meditations, Communions, or mortifications. This rule must be particularly observed in the time of aridity. It is then that God tries his faithful servants, and that they prove their fidelity to him, by discharging, in spite of their darkness, pains, and difficulties, the duties which, amid the abundance of his celestial consolations, they were accustomed to perform.

VI. The last and most efficacious means of perfection is, to have continually before your eyes the examples of the Sisters who are most distinguished for sanctity, in order to imitate the virtues which they practise. St. Anthony says, as the bee gathers honey from every flower, so a religious should draw lessons of perfection from the good examples of all her companions.

She should emulate the modesty of one, the charity and affection for prayer of another, the frequent Communion of a third, and all the other virtues practised by the rest of the Community. Such is the holy zeal with which a good religious should endeavor to rival, and even to excel, all the Sisters in all virtues. Worldlings seek to surpass one another in riches, honors, and earthly pleasures; but a religious ought to struggle for the superiority in humility, patience, meekness, charity, love of contempt, poverty, purity, and obedience. To outstrip one another in loving and pleasing God should be the object of their emulation. To succeed in this holy contest, a religious must perform all her ordinary actions with an intention of pleasing God, and of edifying her companions that thus she may sanctify herself, and give greater glory to the Lord. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven[9052] Hence, they who admit to the religious profession a novice whose conduct has disedified her Sisters, incur a great responsibility; for as good example stimulates to virtue, so the loose and irregular lives of the tepid scandalize the Community, and lead many of its members into the faults which they witness every day.

PRAYER

O divine Heart of my Jesus ! Heart enamoured of men ! Heart created to love them ! how is it possible that thou hast been so much dishonored and despised by them ? Unhappy me ! I, too, have been one of those ungrateful souls ; I, too, have lived so many years in the world and have not loved thee.

Pardon me, O my Jesus, the great fault of not having loved Thee, who art so amiable, and who hast loved me so much, that Thou couldst not have done more than Thou hast done to oblige me to love Thee. In punishment of having so long despised Thy love, I would deserve to be condemned to that miserable state in which I could never love Thee. But no, my Spouse ; I cheerfully accept every chastisement except the eternal privation of Thy love. Grant me the grace to love Thee, and then dispose of me as Thou pleasest. But how can I fear such a chastisement when Thou dost continue still to command me to love Thee, my Lord and my God. Thou shall, thou sayest, love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart[9053] It is Thy will that I love Thee with my whole soul, and I desire nothing but to love Thee with all my strength. O loving Heart of my Jesus, light up in my soul that blessed fire which Thou earnest on earth to enkindle. Destroy all the earthly attachments that still live in my heart, and prevent me from belonging entirely to Thee. O my beloved Saviour, do not reject the love of a heart which has hitherto so much afflicted Thee. Ah ! since Thou hast loved me so much, do not permit me to live for a single moment without Thy love. O love of my Jesus, Thou art my love. I hope that I shall always love Thee, and that Thou wilt always love me; and that this mutual love shall never be dissolved. O Mary, mother of fair love ; O thou who dost desire to see thy Son loved, bind and unite me to Jesus, so that I may become entirely his, as he desires me to be.

Chapter V

THE DANGER TO WHICH AN IMPERFECT RELIGIOUS, WHO IS BUT LITTLE AFRAID OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF HER IMPERFECTIONS, EXPOSES HER SALVATION

I. ONE CAN AND SHOULD AVOID ALL VENIAL SINS PLAINLY VOLUNTARY

THE first step to be taken in the formation of a garden is to root out all useless and noxious weeds, and to put in their place fruitful and salutary plants. It was in this way the Almighty commanded Jeremiah to proceed when he imposed upon him the arduous task of cultivating the Church. Go, I have set thee this day over the nations and over kingdoms, to root up, and to pull down, and to waste, and to destroy, to build, and to plant.[9054] To become a saint, then, a religious must, in the first place, endeavor to eradicate from her soul all imperfections, and to plant in their stead the virtues of the Gospel.

" THE FIRST DEVOTION," SAYS ST. TERESA, " IS TO TAKE AWAY ALL SINS."

I do not speak of grievous sins, from which I suppose the religious who reads this book to be exempt. I hope that she has never lost the grace of God infused by baptism, or at least that she has recovered it, and that she is resolved to suffer a thousand deaths rather than forfeit it again. To prevent the danger of relapse, I entreat her to keep always in mind the alarming doctrine so strongly inculcated in the Holy Scriptures, and taught by St. Basil, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and other Fathers, that God has fixed for each person the number of sins which he will pardon.

Being ignorant of this number, we should tremble, lest, adding another to our past sins, we complete the measure of our iniquities, be abandoned by God, and lost forever. This thought has powerful efficacy in dispelling the illusion by which the devil so often induces Christians to relapse into sin.

Holding out the hope of pardon to them, he says: You may indulge your passions for this time; you will afterwards confess it, and obtain forgiveness. Oh! If Christians were penetrated with the salutary fear that any new sin should never be forgiven, would they not be struck with horror at the very idea of relapse? But through a false hope of pardon, innumerable souls return to their former crimes, until the measure of their iniquities is filled up, and they are thus irremediably lost.

Nor do I speak of venial faults of imperfect advertence, or of human frailty, when I say that a religious should cleanse her soul from all sins. From such imperfections no one is exempt: For, says St. James, In many things we all offend[9055] Even the saints have fallen into the sins of frailty. If, says St. John, we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.[9056] Our corrupt nature is so strongly inclined to evil, that it is impossible for us, without a most special grace (which has been given only to the Mother of God), to avoid, during our whole lives, all venial sins even those that are but imperfectly deliberate. God permits such defects even in souls dedicated to his love, to keep them humble, and to make them feel that, as they fall into light transgressions, inspite of all their resolutions and promises, so but for his divine support they should likewise be precipitated into grievous crimes.

When we are guilty of a venial fault we must humble our souls, and, confessing our weakness, must endeavor to multiply prayer, and to implore the aid of the protecting arm of God against more grievous offences.

Here, then, I mean to speak only of deliberate and fully voluntary venial sins. All these may be avoided, and are seldom or never committed by holy souls, who live with the firm and constant resolution rather to suffer death than, with full advertence, to be guilty of a venial violation of God’s holy law. St. Catharine of Genoa used to say, that to a soul inflamed with the pure love of God the smallest fault is more intolerable than hell itself. Hence she frequently protested that, rather than wilfully commit a venial sin, she would suffer to be cast into an ocean of fire. It is no wonder that the saints had such a horror of the smallest sin: for, illuminated by the light of God, they saw and felt that the least offence against his infinite Majesty is a much greater evil than the death and destruction of all men and angels. “ What sin,” says St. Anselm, “ will the sinner dare to call small ? For when can it be a slight fault to dishonour God?[9057] Who shall ever be daring enough to assert that such a sin, because it is venial, is not a great evil ? Can it be ever said that an indignity to the Lord is but of little moment ? If a subject said to his sovereign, In other things I will obey you, but not in this, because it is unimportant, what censure and chastisement would he not deserve?

Hence St. Teresa used to say: “ Would to God we had a horror not of the devils, but of every venial sin from which we may suffer far greater injury than from all the devils in hell.”[9058] She would frequently say to her spiritual children, “ From all deliberate sins, however small, may God deliver you.”[9059]

Religious should take particular care to avoid the least offence of God. Of them St. Gregory Nazianzen says: “ Do you know that in you a wrinkle is a greater deformity than the greatest wounds are in seculars?” If a servant, whose occupation renders cleanliness impossible, appear in soiled clothes before the king, he treats her with compassion rather than with severity. But if he sees a stain on the garments of his spouse, the queen, he is indignant, and bursts out into expressions of complaint and reproach. Jesus Christ is likewise indulgent to the sins of seculars, but bitterly complains of the faults of his spouses. Unhappy the religious who is regardless of light defects![9060]She shall never become a saint, and shall never enjoy peace. St. Teresa, while she led an imperfect life, made no progress in virtue, and enjoying neither spiritual consolation nor sensual pleasure, lived in a state of continual misery. It is because they are heedless of their imperfections that so many nuns are always unhappy. They are, on the one hand, far removed from the pleasures of the world, and, on the other, never experience the joy and tranquillity of a good conscience. For, since they are not generous to God, he is justly sparing in his favours to them. Let us offer our whole being to God, and he will give himself entirely to us. I to my beloved, and his turning is towards me.[9061]

But you will say, venial sins however great, though they may prevent me from being a saint, will never deprive me of the grace of God, nor of eternal life; and for me it is enough to obtain salvation. Whosoever speaks thus should reflect on the words of St. Augustine: “ Where you have said it is sufficient, you have perished.”[9062] Do you then say that for you it is sufficient ?

If you do, you are lost. To understand this truth, and to see the danger of venial sins, particularly when they are deliberate and habitual, it is necessary to consider that the habit of light faults inclines the soul to grievous transgressions. Thus the habit of slight aversions disposes the will to mortal hatred, the habit of small thefts to gross rapine, and the habit of sensual attachments to impure affections. St. Gregory says that “ the soul never remains where it falls;” no, she always sinks still lower.[9063] As mortal diseases frequently proceed from slight indisposition, so grievous transgressions often have their origin in habitual venial sins. “ Trivial detractions,” says Father Alvarez, “ slight aversions, culpable curiosity, acts of impatience and intemperance, do not kill the soul ; but they render her so weak, that when assailed by any grievous temptation she has not strength to resist it, and falls.”[9064]

Venial sins do not indeed separate the soul from God, but they estrange her affections from him, and thus expose her to great danger of losing his grace. When Jesus was taken in the garden, St. Peter did not wish to abandon his Master, but followed him afar off[9065] Many, though unwilling to be separated from Jesus Christ by mortal sins, will follow—him only at a distance, and will make no effort to abstain from venial faults. But how many of that class of Christians have imitated the conduct of St. Peter, who three times denied that he was a disciple of the Redeemer, and to his denial added the guilt of perjury ? St. Isidore[9066] says, that in punishment of their indifference, and the tepidity of their love to him, God justly permits those who disregard venial faults to fall into mortal sins.

He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little.[9067]

Do not then, therefore, says St. Dorotheas, say that the habit of venial sins is only a small evil; but reflect on its consequences. A bad habit is an ulcer which infects the soul; and as it diminishes her strength to avoid light faults, so it gradually renders her unable to resist grievous temptations. “ Do not,” says St. Augustine, “contemn them because they are numerous: ruin is to be apprehended from their multitude, though not from their magnitude.”[9068] Despise not your faults because they are venial, but tremble because they are many: for the greatness of their number may bring upon you that destruction which the heinousness of their malice does not deserve. You, says the saint[9069] in another place, carefully fly from the danger of being crushed by a rock; but I caution you to shun the risk of suffocation by a heap of sand. By a collection of sand the holy Father means frequent habitual venial transgressions, which, when committed with deliberation and without efforts of amendment, destroy in the soul the fear of committing mortal sins. And whoever fears them but little, will easily fall into them. Hence St. John Chrysostom[9070] has gone so far as to assert that we should, in a certain manner have a greater dread of habitual venial sins than of mortal sin. Because the latter naturally excites horror; but as the habit of the former generates negligence and contempt for small faults, so likewise it induces a disregard for grievous transgressions. Hence the Holy Ghost says: Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines.[9071]

He does not tell us to catch the lions, or the leopards, but the little foxes. We tremble at the approach of the lion or of other fierce animals, and therefore we take care to guard against their attacks; but we fear not little foxes, and therefore through our negligence they by their excavations dry up the root and destroy the vine. In like manner, frequent and voluntary faults, though small, dry up the good desires of the soul, which are the roots of spiritual life, and thus produce decay and ruin.

Habitual and voluntary venial sins expose the soul to the danger of perdition : first, because, as we have already seen, they incline the will to mortal sin, and diminish its strength to resist temptations. Let us consider besides how they deprive her of numberless helps from God, which he had prepared for her.

To incline the will to good, the understanding must be continually illuminated by the light of God; and to become pliant and obedient to the motions of grace, the will requires the constant assistance of God. Besides, to resist the powers of hell, we stand in need of the continual protection of the Lord. Without it, we should all yield to the temptations of the devil, which of ourselves we are utterly unable to overcome. It is God that either enables us to conquer all the powers of darkness, or prevents the devil from suggesting temptations to which we would yield. Hence Jesus Christ has taught us the prayer, and lead us not into temptation ;[9072] that is, preserve us from those temptations to which we would consent. Now, what are the effects of venial sins ? They diminish the lights, the helps, and the protection of God; so that the soul, being darkened, weak, and dry, will lose all affection for the things of God, will become attached to the things of the world, and thus exposed to great danger of renouncing the grace of God for the sake of earthly goods.

Besides, in punishment of venial sins Almighty God permits the soul to be assailed with more violent temptations. Whosoever is ungenerous to God does not deserve liberality from him. He who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly.[9073] Blessed Henry Suso,[9074] in the vision of the rocks, described in his life, seeing a great many on the first rock, asked who they were. Jesus Christ answered: “ These are the tepid who only seek to avoid mortal sin.” The holy man then asked whether they should be saved. “ If,” replied the Redeemer, “ they die in the state of grace, they shall be saved; but their danger is much greater than they imagine. They think they can serve God and the senses; but this is scarcely possible; for it is exceedingly difficult to persevere in the grace of God and at the same time to indulge in sensual pleasures.”

Be not without fear about sins forgiven[9075]Why does the Holy Ghost admonish us to be afraid of sin which has been already pardoned ? Because after the guilt is remitted the temporal penalties of sin still remain; and among them we must reckon the withdrawal of God’s graces. Hence the saints never ceased to weep for their faults, though only venial, and even after they had been forgiven; for they always trembled lest their past transgressions should be punished by the subtraction of the graces necessary to obtain eternal life. A favorite who has offended his sovereign will not be raised to his former rank and dignity immediately after he has obtained pardon, nor until he has given strong proofs of a determination to atone by subsequent services for his past misconduct.

And when Christians insult the Majesty of their God he justly withdraws his protecting arm and his former familiarity, until by tears of sorrow and other good works they have expiated their guilt. The more frequently the soul displeases God, the more will he retire from her. By repeated faults her weakness and her inclination to evil are increased, while the graces of God are diminished, and then she will easily fall into eternal ruin.

2. VENIAL SINS INJURE, ABOVE ALL, THE RELIGIOUS, WHO ARE MOST ESPECIALLY CALLED TO PERFECTION

Every Christian who, because he desires to do only what is necessary for salvation, commits habitually deliberate venial sins, is, as we have seen, exposed to the danger of being lost. How much more perilous must be the state of a religious who, with full knowledge, and without any thought or effort of amendment, commits light faults, saying, For me it is sufficient to be saved. The spouse of Jesus being called to religion, is called not only to be saved, but also to be a saint. Now St. Gregory says that he who is called to sublime sanctity will not be saved without it. Jesus Christ said one day to Blessed Angela of Foligno: “ They who, after being enlightened by me to walk in the way of perfection, will only tread in the ordinary path, shall be abandoned by me.” It is certain that every religious is called and commanded to walk in the way of perfection. It is to enable her to become a saint that God has bestowed upon her so many special lights and graces. Now if she lead a life of habitual negligence and continual defects, without ever seeking to correct them, she will justly forfeit all claim to the helps necessary for the fulfilment of her obligations, and thus she will neither become a saint nor be saved. St. Augustine says that God ordinarily abandons tepid souls who, reckless of the consequences, wilfully neglect their duties and disregard their defects. “ God is accustomed to desert the negligent. “[9076] “If,” says Jesus to St. Peter, “I wash thee not, thou shall have no part with me[9077] Jesus Christ spoke in this place not of the physical washing of the feet, but of the spiritual cleansing of the soul from venial sins, which, unless corrected and expiated, will make those who are called to perfection liable to great danger of perdition. St. Gertrude saw the devil gathering all the little tufts of wool which she allowed to be destroyed; as if her negligence in not preserving them were a fault against holy poverty. To another religious who, contrary to Rule, permitted the fragments of bread which remained after meals to fall off the table, he showed at the hour of death a large mass of these fragments which he had collected, and by this representation endeavoured to lead the religious into despair. The enemy of our souls is well aware that God will demand a much stricter account from religious than from seculars.

And here it may be remarked, that, according to the common opinion of theologians, many violations of rule which in subjects are but light faults will be grievous sins in the Superior if, when they are frequent and apt to produce general relaxation of discipline, she do not correct them according to the best of her ability, and insist on the reparation necessary to preserve exact observance. To this class belong the faults regarding silence, poverty, fasts, the grate, and all similar transgressions. And Superiors are strictly obliged not only to correct such defects, but also to examine carefully whether they have been committed.

Let us now return to the obligation of a religious to aim at perfection, and to avoid even venial sins. In the time of St. Ignatius there was one of the lay-brothers very negligent in the service of God. One day the saint said to him: “Tell me, Brother, for what purpose have you entered religion ?” “ I have come,” replied the Brother, “to serve God.” “O Brother,” rejoined the saint, “ what have you said ? If you answered that you had come to attend a Cardinal or an earthly prince, your conduct would be more excusable : but you say you have come to serve the Lord; and is it thus you serve him ?” To become a saint, the religious stands in need of particular and abundant graces. Now how can God be expected to bestow his favours in abundance on the religious, who after having retired into the cloister to serve the Lord, dishonors rather than glorifies his name ? For by her negligence and continual defects she insinuates that God does not merit to be served with greater fervour. By her imperfect life she declares that his service does not content the soul or impart that felicity which is represented in the Holy Scriptures as the portion of God’s servants on earth ; in a word, she proclaims that his divine Majesty does not deserve to be loved in preference to the indulgence of all caprice or sensuality. “It is true,” says Father Alvarez, “ that even souls devoted to the love of God are not free from all imperfections. But they seek continually to amend their lives by diminishing the number of their defects.” But how will the tepid religious, who commits habitual faults, and continues to commit them without remorse or desire of amendment how, I say, will she be ever able to purify her soul from them, or to escape the danger of falling into mortal sin ? The Venerable Louis de Pont used to say: “I have been guilty of many faults; but never without scruple and uneasiness of conscience.” Woe to the religious who sins, even venially, with full knowledge and tranquillity of soul. As long, says St. Bernard, as the soul detests her imperfections we may hope for amendment; but when she commits faults without fear or remorse, then she will always go from bad to worse. Dying flies, says the Wise man, spoil the sweetness of the ointment.[9078] " These dying flies," says Denis the Carthusian, "are the defects which remain in the soul, and are not detested; such as habitual feelings of dislike, inordinate affections, vanity, indulgence of the appetite, want of modesty in looks and of delicacy in words. These defects spoil the sweetness of the ointment; they diminish devotion at Communion, at meditation, and in the visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Thus the soul loses all the spiritual unction and consolations of religion."

These habitual faults, like a foul incrustation, take away the beauty of the soul, render it an object of disgust, and unworthy the embraces of the Holy Ghost. "They are," says St. Augustine, "as it were an eruption, and destroy our comeliness so as to remove us from the embraces of the Spouse."[9079]Hence, feeling no more consolation in her exercises of devotion, the soul will soon omit and abandon them; and neglecting the means of salvation, she will probably be lost. If the tepid religious should continue her Communions, meditations, and visits to the Blessed Sacrament, she will draw but little fruit from them. In her will be verified the words of the Holy Ghost: "*You have sowed much, and brought in little. . . . And he that hath earned wages, put them into a bag with holes.*"[9080] Such, precisely, is the tepid and imperfect religious. All her spiritual exercises are laid up in a bag with holes: for them no reward remains.

Being performed with so much tepidity, they render her always more and more deserving of chastisement, and deprive her of those abundant helps which God had prepared for her, had she corresponded to his holy inspirations. For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath.[9081] Whoever by his co-operation treasures up the fruit of the graces received from God shall obtain an increase of grace and glory; but from the man who buries his talent, thus rendering it unprofitable, that which he hath shall be taken, and the graces prepared for him shall be withheld.

PRAYER

Behold, O Lord, I am one of those unhappy souls who deserved to be left by Thee in the miserable state of tepidity, in which, deprived of Thy light and abandoned by Thy grace, I lived for so many years. But I now see the light which Thou givest me ; and I hear Thy voice calling me again to Thy love. These graces are so many proofs that Thou hast not as yet abandoned me. And since Thou hast not cast me away in punishment of so much ingratitude, I desire never more to be ungrateful to Thee. Thou art ready to pardon me, if I repent of the offences that I have committed against Thee. Pardon me, O Jesus, for I detest and abhor my sins above all things. Would that I had died before I ever offended Thee. Thou dost wish for my love : I desire nothing more but to love Thee. I love Thee, O my Sovereign Good : I love Thee, O my God, who art worthy of infinite love. Increase, O Lord, in my soul Thy own light, and the desire Thou givest me to belong entirely to Thee. Thou art omnipotent: Thou canst easily change my heart, and make a rebel to Thy graces become an ardent lover of Thy goodness. Such I desire and hope to be, with the assistance of Thy grace. Thou hast promised to hear all who pray to Thee. I now ask Thee to make me belong entirely to Thee, and love nothing but Thee alone. Ah ! Jesus, my Spouse, through the merits of Thy blood, make me love Thee as a sinner ought to love, whom Thou hast loved so much, and whose ingratitude Thou hast borne with so much patience, and for so many years. Trusting, then, in Thy infinite mercy, I hope with a firm confidence to love Thee with my whole heart in this life, and in the next to praise for all eternity Thy mercies to me. The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever.[9082] O Mary, my Mother, I acknowledge that these graces, this light, these desires, and this good-will, which God now gives to me, are the fruits of thy intercession. Continue, O Mary, continue to intercede for me, and do not cease to pray for my sanctification, until my whole being shall be, as thou dost desire, consecrated without reserve to Jesus Christ. Such, O Mary, my firm hope: may it soon be realized. Amen.

Chapter VI

CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT

1. A RELIGIOUS HAS ESPECIALLY TO FEAR BEING LOST WHEN SHE SINS BY ATTACHMENT TO SOME PASSION, OR WHEN SHE LIVES IN TEPIDITY

THE religious whose faults spring from attachment to any passion is exposed in a particular manner to the danger of being lost. O God! how many religious are there who, because they do not disengage their hearts from certain earthly attachments, never become saints, and endanger their eternal salvation. To conquer her passions, to expel from her soul all worldly affections, and to remove every obstacle to her progress in perfection, should be the end and object of a religious, in all her spiritual exercises, in her Communions, meditations, spiritual readings, and in all similar duties. To this end she should direct all her devotions and all her prayers, begging continually of the Almighty a perfect detachment from every creature, and a complete victory over all her corrupt inclinations. To gain this victory she ought, in the first place, to direct her attention to the practice of exterior mortification, and particularly to the mortification of the eyes, of the appetite, and of the tongue. Secondly, she should endeavor to mortify and to eradicate all the irregular affections of the heart, such as attachment to self-esteem, to the things of the world, or to any other object in which she takes delight. Thirdly, she must strive to destroy self-will, by acting continually in opposition to her own inclinations. Lastly, she should seek to do all this with ease and with cheerfulness; for in this great contest with the corruption of nature she shall always have some passion to moderate or some virtue to improve.

There are some who continue their Communions and meditations, but in them they only seek spiritual refreshment and sensible devotion. Hence they remain always bound down to the earth by worldly attachments, which continually impede their advancement in holiness, and make them recede more and more every day from their first fervor. It frequently happens that such people in the end lose the grace of God.

It is necessary to impress deeply on your mind that the artifice by which the devil seeks to draw spiritual souls from the service of God is, not to tempt them at first to any mortal sin. In the beginning he is, as St. Francis says, satisfied to hold them in bondage by a single hair; for if he attempted to bind them at once in the bonds of servitude they would fly from him with horror. . But fearing not the trammels of a single hair, they are easily led into the snares prepared for their destruction. At first they are caught by a single hair; then they are bound by a slender thread; next by a strong cord; and finally they are chained in the fetters of hell and the slavery of Satan. For example, a religious, after a dispute with some of her Sisters, will at first retain feelings of dislike, and thus is held by a single hair. After a little time she will neither speak to them nor salute them: she is now bound by a slender thread. Next she will begin to injure them by words and deeds, and is fettered by a strong cord: then on the first occasion of provocation she conceives a mortal hatred towards them, and thus puts on the chains of hell and the slavery of the devil. Again, another religious will at first entertain a human affection towards a friend; she then cherishes this affection under the pretext of gratitude: mutual presents follow; they are succeeded by words of endearment; and by the first assault of passion the miserable soul is bound in the chains of death. In fine, as gamblers by the loss of many small sums are induced to risk and to lose their whole property, so the tepid soul by frequent venial faults is rendered reckless of God's grace, and too weak to resist the temptations of the enemy. Thus she loses her God and her all. To find us addicted to any passion, is to the devil a powerful stimulus to exert himself for our destruction. "It is," says St. Ambrose, "principally when he sees any passions generated in us that the adversary lays his snares: it is then that he excites concupiscence, and prepares his nets."[9083] The enemy endeavors to discover the evil inclinations which predominate in our hearts, and presenting to us opportunities of indulging these corrupt tendencies, foments our passions, and prepares a snare for our destruction. "When," says Cassian, "we hear of the fall of a soul consecrated to God, we are not to imagine that she fell at once into mortal sin. No: we must suppose that she began by light faults, and by them was led into grievous transgressions.” St. John Chrysostom asserts that he knew many people who appeared to be adorned with all virtues, and who, because they disregarded venial sins, were precipitated into an abyss of crime. The Venerable Sister Anne of the Incarnation saw in hell a soul reputed by her and by all to be a saint. On her countenance appeared a multitude of small animals, representing the first faults which she disregarded. Of these animals some were heard to say to the unhappy soul, “With us you began ;” others, “ By us you continued ;” and the rest, “ By us you were lost.” Hence, Mother Mary Victoria Strada used to say : “The devil, when he cannot have much, is content with a little ; and with that little he afterwards acquires a great deal.”

At first the serpent tempted Eve not to eat, but only to behold the forbidden fruit; he then raised doubts about the fulfilment of the divine threats; and in the end induced her to violate the command of God. St. Teresa observes that the enemy is satisfied when a soul begins to open to him the gate of her heart: he will afterwards obtain full possession of it. This is likewise the doctrine of St. Jerome. “The devil,” says the holy Doctor, “does not contend at once against any one by temptations to great vices, but only to small faults, that he may by some means enter and govern the heart of man, and that he may afterwards impel him to more heinous crimes.”[9084] He does not immediately tempt any one to mortal sin; but commences by suggesting light defects, that, gaining admission into the soul, and beginning his rule, he may afterwards draw her into grievous transgressions. “ No one,” says St. Bernard, “ is plunged at once into the depths of turpitude:[9085] they who fall into the greatest enormities begin by the smallest faults.”[9086] An insignificant spark will set fire to a whole forest. Behold, says St. James, how small a fire what a great wood it kindleth![9087] A single unmortified passion will precipitate the soul into ruin.

And here it is necessary to remark most particularly, that whenever a religious is guilty of mortal sin, her fall will expose her to great danger of being abandoned by God: for being committed amid the lights and graces of God, imparted to her by means of so many sermons, Communions, meditations, good example of companions, admonitions of spiritual directors and of Superiors, her trangression will not be like that of seculars, who sin in the midst of the darkness of the world, but will be a sin of malice. After having received so many lights, and having in her hands so many means of obtaining strength against the enemy of her salvation, she cannot allege ignorance or weakness in extenuation of her guilt. According to the doctrine of St. Thomas,[9088] a sin of malice is that which is committed with a full knowledge of its enormity. Hence, because the darkness arising from sin is proportional to the lights bestowed on its author, the sin of malice produces great misery in the soul. Besides, the angelic Doctor *2* teaches that the grievousness of sin increases in proportion to the ingratitude of the sinner. Now the graces and favors which a religious has received from God are innumerable. He has taken her from the midst of the dangers of the world, and because every convent is the house of God, has given her a place in his own habitation. From a vast multitude of his servants he has selected her for his spouse; and to make her a saint, and fit to be a spouse of God, he has enriched her with so many lights and so many external and internal helps to sanctity. He has frequently given himself to her in the Holy Eucharist; and in her meditations, visits, and spiritual readings has often spoken to her with the familiarity of a friend. In a word, he has raised her up from the depth of lowliness and placed her among the princes of his people. And after all these favors she by sin turns her back upon him, and deliberately determines to become his enemy. Unhappy soul ! her fall will be her destruction. He that falls on level ground seldom sustains serious injury; but he that tumbles from a lofty eminence is said not to fall, but to be dashed to ruin. “A fall from on high,” says St. Ambrose, “ is accompanied with great destruction.”[9089] And the prophet Ezechiel says: And I set thee in the holy mountain of God. . . . And thou hast sinned: and I cast thee out from the mountain of God and destroyed thee[9090] Ungrateful soul, the Almighty will say to the religious, I have placed you on my holy mountain, and from its summit you have voluntarily fallen into sin. In punishment, then, of your ingratitude, remain in perdition, for I have banished you forever from my face. “ God,” says Sister Mary Strozzi, “ wishes religious to be the mirror of the entire world. Hence, because they are called to extraordinary perfection they dishonour him greatly by an imperfect life. The sin of a religious excites the horror of paradise, and obliges the Almighty to turn away from her ; for he repudiates faithless spouses who violate the contract made at their profession, and therefore he abandons them to their irregular passions.” Oh how difficult is the conversion of a soul who, after having once tasted the sweetness of God, becomes a rebel to his love !

A religious, then, should tremble at the thought of being bound to the service of Satan by any passion, or by any, even the smallest sin. She should, I say, tremble, because every little attachment may be the cause of her damnation. St. Teresa used to say that “whoever approaches ruin will be lost.” This observation is most just. For although she had never been guilty of a mortal sin, Almighty God showed her the place prepared for her in hell if she had not relinquished an irregular though not an unchaste affection which she entertained towards a relative.

A bird unshackled flies with ease, but when tied even by a slender thread it remains on the earth, and, like the toad, will continue to crawl in the mire. So a religious free from all earthly attachments flies and will continually fly to God. But while any affection to creatures dwells in her heart she will never rise above the earth, but will fall continually into greater defects, till at length all is lost. In fine, you must be persuaded that the salvation of a religious depends on the correction of light faults, particularly when frequent and habitual: for so many little streams will form a river in which she will be overwhelmed. Habitual faults disregarded and not corrected will by degrees draw her into the state of tepidity that miserable state of which the Redeemer said to the Bishop of Laodicea: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot[9091] Behold the state of a tepid religious. She is not daring enough to abandon God altogether, but she despises light faults. She commits a great many of them every day, by impatience, lies, murmuring, greediness, imprecations; by aversions, and by attachments to worldly goods, to the grate, to curiosity, to self-esteem, and to self-will. And these imperfections she neither regrets nor endeavors to correct. I would, continues the Lord, thou wert cold or hot; but because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth.[9092] I would, he says, thou wert cold: that is, it were better for you to be altogether deprived of my grace; for then there would be stronger hopes of your repentance. But, remaining in a state of tepidity, you will stand in greater danger of damnation; because you will easily fall from that state into mortal sin, and then there will be but little reason to hope for your resuscitation.

Speaking of a sinner not as yet converted, St. Gregory holds out hopes of repentance; but, speaking of a tepid soul who is not afraid of her imperfections, he despairs of her amendment. “Warmth which has failed from fervor is in despair.”[9093] The Son of God says: Because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth. A draught, when cold or hot, may be taken without repugnance; but when tepid it is nauseous. The lukewarm Christian stands in great danger of being vomited forth by Almighty God; that is, of being forsaken by his grace. By the words, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth, the Redeemer signified that he was ready to abandon the tepid soul; for what is vomited is taken back only with horror.

But how does God begin to vomit the tepid religious out of his mouth ? He ceases to give her the vivid lights of faith, the spiritual consolations, the holy desires, and the loving calls which he was accustomed to bestow upon her. Bereft of these blessings, she begins to neglect her meditations, Communions, and visits to the blessed Sacrament, or to discharge these duties with repugnance, disgust, and distraction. She will perform all her exercises with reluctance, dissipation, with inquietude, and without devotion. Behold ! how the Lord begins to vomit her out of his mouth. Thus the miserable soul finding only pain and trouble, and no comfort in any of her exercises of piety, she finally abandons them all, and falls into grievous sins.

In a word, tepidity is a moral fever which is scarcely felt, but irremediably leads to death. The tepid soul never thinks of correcting her faults. She becomes so insensible to the stings of conscience, that without perceiving her fall she will be one day precipitated into eternal misery.

2. MEANS TO EXTRICATE ONE’S SELF FROM TEPIDITY

Then, the tepid religious will say, for me there is no hope of salvation. Because, she will add, it is almost impossible for me to arise from my miserable state. But let her attend to the answer of Jesus Christ: The things that are impossible with men are possible with God.[9094] What is impossible to man is not impossible to God. Whoever prays and adopts the necessary means obtains all graces.

WHAT ARE THE NECESSARY MEANS ?

First, as to Faults committed through Frailty. If your faults are sins of inadvertence, or of frailty, they do but little injury to the soul as long as you detest them with humility. And here it is necessary to remark, that two sorts of humility arise from our defects the one holy, and the gift of God; the other pernicious, and the offspring of the devil. The former is that by which the soul sees her imperfections, and is covered with confusion before God, and filled with a sense of her own nothingness. She is sorry for her faults: she detests them, but without being disturbed; and at the sight of her misery she is not discouraged or agitated; but, trusting in God, she resolves to atone for her imperfections by greater attention to her duties, and by greater fervor in works of piety. The other species of humility is that which fills the soul with agitation, with inquietude, and with diffidence; thus making her weak and almost incapable of doing any good. “True humility,” says St Teresa, “ though it makes the soul feel her own sinfulness, does not disturb her peace, but, on the contrary, infuses consolation. It fills, indeed, the heart with grief and affliction for having offended God, but at the same time inspires strong hopes of mercy.

By such humility the soul is enlightened to see her own misery, and to praise God for having so long borne with her. But false humility instilled by the devil brings with it no light to make the soul do good, but represents God as a tyrant who will destroy all by fire and sword. Of all the deceitful inventions of the devil which I have known this is the most subtle.”[9095]

In the imperfections, then, which human weakness cannot avoid, as negligence is censurable, so excessive fear is reprehensible. “ In such almost inevitable faults,” says St. Bernard, “ immoderate fear, as well as negligence, is culpable.”[9096]We should be sorry, but not lose courage, when we commit such faults; for God readily grants pardon when the soul detests them. For the just man falls seven times, and shall rise again.[9097] He that sins through frailty easily rises. “He falls and will rise again.” St. Francis de Sales says that as daily defects are indeliberately committed, so they are indeliberately taken away. St. Thomas teaches that such faults are cancelled “when the soul is fervently moved towards God,”[9098] that is, by acts of divine love, of resignation, of oblation, and by similar works which spiritual souls are accustomed to perform. The angelic Doctor adds, “ that the sacramental’s such as to recite the Pater Noster, the Confiteor; to strike the breast; to receive the blessing of the bishop; to sprinkle one’s self with holy water; and to pray in a consecrated Church produce the remission of such venial defects.” The sacraments, but especially the Holy Eucharist, have particular efficacy to remit venial sin. “The mind,” says St. Bernardine of Sienna, “ may be so absorbed in devotion, by receiving Holy Communion, that the soul will be purified from all venial sins.”

SECONDLY, AS TO DELIBERATE THOUGH NOT HABITUAL VENIAL SINS

If a religious should have the misfortune to commit sometimes, but not often, a deliberate venial sin, she should not even then lose courage, or permit the peace of her soul to be disturbed. Let her endeavor immediately to repair her fault by repentance, and by a strong determination not to be guilty of it again. Whenever she relapses her sorrow and resolution should be renewed, and all her confidence placed in God, who, if she continue to act in this way after every fault, will finally deliver her from such deliberate sins. St. Philip Neri used to say that to become a saint is not the business of a day. Whoever leaves not the road of perfection in which he began to walk ought not to despond, for he will ultimately arrive at sanctity. To convince us of our weakness, to show us that without his aid and protection we should fall into the greatest crimes, God sometimes permits us to commit deliberate venial sins. Such faults, then, though voluntary, provided they be unfrequent, do not seriously injure the soul, or at least they do not bring her to ruin.

THIRDLY, AS TO DELIBERATE VENIAL AND HABITUAL SINS

But light sins which are deliberate and habitual easily lead the soul into perdition, particularly when they are committed through attachment to any passion, and without sorrow or efforts of amendment; for they show that the soul has fallen into a state of tepidity from which, as we have already seen, it is very difficult to recover.[9099]

But if a religious should be so unfortunate as to fall into such a state, let her attend to the following means of emerging from it:

1. The first means is a true desire of being delivered from her miserable condition. If she feel not that desire, she ought at least to beg it of God, trusting in his promises to give us whatsoever we ask. Ask, and you shall receive.[9100]

2. She should endeavor to search out her defects, particularly her predominant failing. If, for example, she is full of self-esteem; if she frequently speaks in the language and tone of authority; if she is addicted to self-praise; if she is disturbed by every humiliation and inattention from others then she may conclude that pride is her ruling passion. Self-love will predominate in some who are afflicted at every little infirmity, who are annoyed at every inconvenience, and who always seek to gratify their palate, and cannot bear any food that is not agreeable to their taste. In others anger is the prevailing fault: they are provoked by every contradiction, and complain of the conduct of all who thwart their inclinations. Others, for every trivial cause, neglect mental prayer, Communion, the choir, and other similar duties: in them sloth holds the ascendancy.

3. As soon as she has discovered her predominant passion, a religious should make a strong resolution to free herself from it, and to contend with it till it is completely vanquished. Thou shalt, says the Lord, utterly destroy them."[9101] " God," says St. Teresa, " requires of us only strong resolutions; he himself will do the rest."[9102] In another place she asserts that the devil is afraid of resolute souls; but he fears not those who, though they desire perfection, never desire to become saints.

Again the saint says that God cheerfully lends his aid to all, however great their sinfulness may be, who with a firm resolution consecrate themselves entirely to his love. The meditations of a religious should always be concluded by strong resolutions. " Short prayer," says St. Teresa, " which produces great effects, is better than prayer continued for many years, but devoid of holy resolutions."[9103] And of what use, I ask, is the meditation in which we are content with certain devout affections, and certain general petitions made through habit, but in which we never resolve to correct the faults we know to be an obstacle to our spiritual advancement ?

1. One of the most necessary resolutions is to remove as much as possible the occasions of our defects. The devil laughs at all our resolutions and promises of amendment as long as we expose ourselves to the occasions of sin. He once said that of all instructions that which treated on avoiding the occasions of sin was the most displeasing to him. A religious, then, should endeavor to discover the causes of her defects; she ought to examine if they arise from familiarity with any person within or without the monastery; from remaining in such a place; from keeping up a correspondence by letters or by presents, or from similar causes. St. Teresa says that if a soul does not relinquish worldly diversion she will soon begin to fall back in the way of the Lord; and that if all sinful occasions be taken away she will advance rapidly in the love of God. This great saint also says that a religious should communicate her temptations only to those who love perfection. If she disclose them to imperfect souls she will do injury to herself and to others.

2. A religious ought to be particularly exact in performing acts of the virtues opposed to the evil inclinations which are most troublesome to her, and which most frequently lead her into defects.

For example, if she is prone to pride, she should take particular care to humble herself before all, and to bear patiently all the humiliations that she receives from others. If she is addicted to greediness, she ought to abstain as much as possible from the indulgence of her appetite. They that are inclined to other defects should adopt similar means of conquering them. It will also, as Cassian observes,[9104] be very useful to represent to ourselves, in the time of mental prayer, the occasions which may occur; as, for example, any insult or injury that we are likely to receive, and then to resolve to humble ourselves, and to be resigned to the divine will. Such previous resolutions (except with regard to temptations against chastity) prepare the soul for sudden and unforeseen contradictions. It was by this means that the saints were always prepared to bear with peace and joy all the derision, injuries, stripes, and injustices that they received.

1. It is also very useful to make the particular examination on the predominant passion, and to perform some penance as often as we yield to it. We must never cease to combat this passion until it is completely conquered; we must trust in the divine aid, and say with holy David: I will

pursue after my enemies, and overtake them ; and I will not turn again till they are consumed[9105] I will persecute my enemies; I will beat them down, and will not cease to combat them till they are utterly destroyed. Remember that however great your progress in virtue may be, it would be a fatal delusion to imagine that your passions are dead, for, although they may be extinguished for a time, they will again spring up as long as you remain in the body. “ How muchsoever,” says St. Bernard, “ you have advanced here below, you err if you think your vices are not only suppressed, but dead.”[9106] Hence Cassian observes that to prevent the passions that you have subdued from resuming their sway, it is necessary to watch continually; for if you slacken your exertions they will return, and will rule your soul with still greater despotism.

4. To overcome any defect whatever, it is necessary, above all, to distrust altogether our own strength and exertions, and to place entire confidence in God, saying with David: For I will not trust in my bow; neither shall my sword save me[9107] If we confide in our own resolutions and exertions our labor will be lost. We must therefore pray without ceasing for the divine assistance, continually crying out, Have mercy on me, O Lord; assist me O my God. Jesus Christ has promised that he who asks shall receive, and that he who seeks shall find;[9108] but to obtain God’s gifts we must pray continually, and never cease to pray. We ought, says the Redeemer, always to pray and not to faint.[9109] Whenever we give up prayer we shall be defeated; but if we persevere in prayer, with a true desire of receiving the graces of God, though as yet we have not been conquerors, the victory shall, nevertheless, ultimately belong to us.

PRAYER

O my Jesus, look not on my ingratitude to Thee, after all Thy mercies, but turn Thy eyes to Thy own merits, and to the pains that Thou hast suffered for me, from the crib of Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary. I repent, with my whole soul, of all the offences that I have offered to Thee. From this moment I consecrate to Thee my life, which I desire to spend in doing all that I can to obey and to love Thee. I love Thee, O my Redeemer, but I love Thee too little ; for Thy mercy’s sake, increase in my soul Thy love. Hear my prayer O Jesus, and make me, by Thy grace, continue to repeat this prayer. O love of my soul, O that my heart may burn continually with Thy love. I have offended Thee grievously ; but for the future I desire to love Thee intensely. I desire to love Thee alone, because Thou alone deservest to be loved above all things ; and I desire to love Thee for no other reason than because Thou art worthy of all love. O Mary, my mother and my hope, assist me.

Chapter VII

INTERIOR MORTIFICATION, OR ABNEGATION OF SELF-LOVE. OBEDIENCE

I. NECESSITY OF COMBATING SELF-LOVE. PRACTICAL RULES

THERE are two sorts of self-love : the one good, the other pernicious. The former is that which makes us seek eternal life the end of our creation; the latter inclines us to pursue earthly goods, and to prefer them to our everlasting welfare, and to the holy will of God. “ The celestial Jerusalem, “[9110].says St. Augustine, “ is built up by loving God so as to condemn one s self; but the earthly city is raised by loving self so as to despise Almighty God.” Hence, Jesus Christ has said: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself:[9111] Christian perfection, then, consists in self-abnegation. Whoever denies not himself, cannot be a follower of Jesus Christ. “ The augmentation of charity,” says St. Augustine, “ is the diminution of cupidity: the perfection of charity is its destruction.”[9112]The less, then, a Christian desires to indulge passion, the more he will love God; and if he seeks nothing but God, he will then possess perfect charity. But in the present state of corrupt nature it is not possible to be altogether exempt from the molestation of self-love.

Jesus alone among men, and Mary alone among women, have been free from its suggestions. All the other saints had to combat their irregular passions. The principal and the only care of a religious should be, to restrain the inordinate inclinations of self-love. “ To regulate the motions of the soul is,” as St. Augustine says, “ the office of interior mortification.”[9113]

Unhappy the soul that suffers itself to be ruled by its own inclinations. “ A domestic enemy,” says St. Bernard, “ is the worst of foes.”[9114] The devil and the world continually seek our destruction, but self-love is a still more dangerous enemy. “ Self-love,” says St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, “ is like a worm which corrodes the roots of a plant, deprives us not only of fruit, but of life.” In another place she says, “ Self-love is the most deceitful of all enemies: like Judas, it betrays us with the kiss of peace. Whoever overcomes it conquers all. He that cannot cut it off by a single stroke should at least endeavor to destroy it by degrees.” We must pray continually, in the language of Solomon: Give me not over to a shameless and foolish mind[9115] O my God, do not abandon me to my foolish passions, that seek to destroy in my soul Thy holy fear, and even to deprive me of the use of my reason.

Our whole life must be one continued contest. The life of a man upon earth, says Job, is a warfare.[9116] “ Now he that is placed in the front of battle must be always prepared for an attack: as soon as he ceases to defend himself he is conquered.

And here it is necessary to remark, that the soul should never cease to combat her passions, however great her victories over them may have been; for human passions, though conquered a thousand times, never die. “ Believe me,” says St. Bernard, “ that after being cut off they bud forth again; and after being put to flight they return.”[9117] Hence by struggling with concupiscence we can only render its attacks less frequent, less violent, and more easy to be subdued. A certain monk complained to the Abbot Theodore that he had contended for eight years with his passions, and that still they were not extinguished. “ Brother,” replied the abbot, “ you complain of this warfare of eight years, and I have spent seventy years in solitude, and during all that time I have not been for a single day free from assaults of passion.”[9118] We shall be subject during our mortal lives to the molestation of our passions.[9119] “ But,” as St. Gregory says, “ it is one thing to look at these monsters, and another to shelter them in our hearts.”[9120] It is one thing to hear their roar, and another to admit them into our souls, and suffer them to devour us.

The human soul is a garden in which useless and noxious herbs constantly spring up: we must, therefore, by the practice of holy mortification continually hold the mattock in our hands to root them up and banish them from our hearts; otherwise our souls will become a wild, uncultivated waste, covered with briers and thorns. “ Conquer yourself,” was an expression always on the lips of St. Ignatius of Loyola, and the text of his familiar discourses to his religious. Conquer self-love and break down your own will. Few (he would say) of those who practise mental prayer become saints, because few of them endeavor to overcome themselves. “ Of a hundred people,” says the saint, “ devoted to prayer, more than ninety are self-willed.” Hence he preferred a single act of mortification of self-will to long prayer, accompanied with many spiritual consolations. “ What does it avail,” says Gilbert, “ to close the gates, if famine the internal enemy produce general affliction ? What does it profit us to mortify the exterior senses and to perform exercises of devotion while at the same time we cherish in our hearts rancor, ambition, attachment to self-will and to self-esteem, or any other passion which brings ruin on the soul ?

St. Francis Borgia says that prayer introduces the love of God into the soul, but mortification prepares a place for it, by banishing from the heart earthly affections the most powerful obstacles to charity. Whoever goes for water to the fountain must cleanse the vessel of the earth which it may contain; otherwise he will bring back mire instead of water. “ Prayer without mortification,” says Father Balthasar Alvarez, “ is either an illusion, or lasts but for a short time.” And St. Ignatius asserts that a mortified Christian acquires a more perfect union with God in a quarter of an hour s prayer, than an unmortified soul does by praying for several hours. Hence, whenever he heard that any one spent a great deal of time in mental prayer, he said: “ It is a sign that he practises great mortification.”

There are some religious who perform a great many exercises of devotion, who practise frequent Communion, long meditations, fasting, and other corporal austerities, but make no effort to overcome certain little passions for example, certain resentments, aversions, curiosity, and certain dangerous affections. They will not submit to any contradiction; they will not give up attachment to certain people, nor subject their will to the commands of their Superiors, or to the holy will of God.

What progress can they make in perfection ? Unhappy souls! they will be always imperfect: always out of the way of sanctity. “ They,” says St. Augustine, “ run well, but out of the way.” They imagine that they run well because they practise the works of piety which their own self-will suggests; but they shall be forever out of the way of perfection, which consists in conquering self. “ Thou shalt advance,” says the devout Thomas a Kempis,

“ in proportion to the violence thou shalt have offered to thyself.”[9121] I do not mean to censure vocal prayer, or acts of penance, or the other spiritual works. But, because all exercises of devotion are but the means of practising virtue, the soul should seek in them only the conquest of its passions. Hence, in our Communions, meditations, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and other similar exercises, we ought always to beseech Almighty God to give us strength to practise humility, mortification, obedience, and conformity to his holy will. In every Christian it is a defect to act from a motive of self-satisfaction. But in a religious who makes a particular profession of perfection and mortification it is a much greater fault. “ God,” says Lactantius, “ calls to life by labor; the devil, to death by delights.” The Lord brings his servants to eternal life by mortification; but the devil leads sinners to everlasting death by pleasure and self-indulgence.

Even works of piety must be always undertaken with a spirit of detachment; so that whenever our efforts are unsuccessful we shall not be disturbed, and when our exercises of devotion are prohibited by the Superior we shall give them up with cheerfulness. Self-attachment of every kind hinders a perfect union with God. We must therefore seriously and firmly resolve to mortify our passions, and not to submit to be their slaves.

External as well as interior mortification is necessary for perfection: but with this difference, that the former should be practised with discretion; the latter without discretion, and with fervor. What does it profit us to mortify the body while the passions of the heart are indulged ? “ Of what use is it,” says St. Jerome, “ to reduce the body by abstinence, if the soul is swelled with pride ?[9122] or to abstain from wine, and to be inebriated with hatred ?” It is useless to chastise the body by fasting while pride inflates the heart to such a degree that we cannot bear a word of contempt or the refusal of a request. In vain do we abstain from wine while the soul is intoxicated with anger against all who thwart our designs or oppose our inclinations. No wonder, then, that St. Bernard deplored the miserable state of religious who wear the external garb of humility, and at the same time inwardly cherish their passions. “ They,” says the saint, “are not divested of their vices: they only cover them by the outward sign of penance.” By attention to the mortification of self-love we shall become saints in a short time, and without the risk of injury to health; for since God is the only witness of interior acts, they will not expose us to the danger of being puffed up with pride. Oh ! what treasures of virtue and of merits are laid up by stifling in their very birth those little inordinate desires and affections, those bickerings, those suggestions of curiosity, those bursts of wit and humor, and all similar effects of self—love ! When you are contradicted, give up your opinion with cheerfulness, unless the glory of God require that you maintain it. When feelings of self-esteem spring up in your heart, make a sacrifice of them to Jesus Christ. If you receive a letter, restrain your curiosity, and abstain from opening it for some time.

If you desire to read the termination of an interesting narrative, lay aside the book, and defer the reading of it to another time. When you feel inclined to mirth, to pull a flower, or to look at any object, suppress these inclinations for the love of Jesus Christ, and deprive yourself for his sake of the pleasure of indulging them. A thousand acts of this kind may be performed in the day. Father Leonard of Port Maurice relates that a servant of God performed eight acts of mortification in eating an egg, and that it was afterwards revealed to her that as the reward of her self-denial eight degrees of grace and as many degrees of glory were bestowed upon her. It is also narrated of St. Dositheus, that by similar mortifications of the interior he arrived in a short time at a high degree of perfection. Though unable, in consequence of bodily infirmities, to fast or to discharge the other duties of the Community, he attained so perfect an union with God, that the other monks, struck with wonder at his sublime sanctity, asked him what exercises of virtue he performed. “ The exercise,” replied the saint, “ to which I have principally attended is the mortification of all self-will.”

Blessed Joseph Calasanctius used to say that “ the day which is spent without mortification is lost.” To convince us of the necessity of mortification, the Redeemer has chosen a life of self-denial, full of pains and ignominy, and destitute of all sensible pleasure. Hence he is called by Isaias a man of sorrows.[9123] He might have saved the world, amid the enjoyment of honors and delights; but he preferred to redeem it by sorrows and contempt. Who having joy set before him, endured the cross.”[9124]To give us an example, he renounced the joy which was set before him, and embraced the cross. “Reflect again and again,” says St. Bernard, “ on the life of Jesus, and you will find him always on the cross.”[9125] The Redeemer revealed to St. Catharine of Bologna that the sorrows of his passion began in his mother's womb. For his birth he selected the season, the place, and the hour most adapted to excite pain. During life he chose to be poor, unknown, despised; and, dying, he preferred the most painful, the most ignominious, and the most desolate of all sorts of death which human nature could suffer. St. Catharine of Sienna used to say, that as a mother takes the bitterest medicine to restore the health of the infant she suckles, so Jesus Christ has assumed all the pains of life to heal the infirmities of his children.

Thus he invites all his followers to accompany him to the mountain of myrrh; that is, of bitterness and of sorrows. *I will go to the mountain of myrrh*[9126] Behold, he invites us to follow him if we wish for his company. " Do you come," says St. Peter Damian, " to Jesus crucified ? If you do, you must come already crucified, or to be crucified." *: If, O sacred spouse, you come to embrace your crucified Saviour, you must bring with you a heart already crucified, or to be crucified.*[9127] Speaking especially of his virginal spouses, Jesus Christ said to blessed Baptist Varani: The crucified Bridegroom desires a crucified spouse. Hence, to be the true spouses of Jesus, religious must lead lives of continual mortification and self-denial. *Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus.*[9128] They must never seek their own satisfaction, in any action or desire, but the pleasure of Jesus Christ, crucifying for his sake all their inclinations.

They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences[9129]; Religious, if they expect to be recognized as the spouses of the Redeemer, must transfix all their passions. Let us now see what are the means by which the spirit of interior mortification may be acquired.

I. The first means is, to discover the passion which predominates in our heart, and which most frequently leads us into sin; and then to endeavor to conquer it. St. Gregory says, that to overcome the devil we must avail ourselves of the artifices by which he seeks our destruction. He labors continually to increase in us the violence of the passion to which we are most subject; and we must direct our attention principally to the extirpation of that passion. Whoever subdues his predominant passion will easily conquer all other evil inclinations; but he that is under its sway can make no progress in perfection. “ Of what advantage,” says St. Ephrem, “are wings to the eagle when his foot is chained ?”[9130] Oh ! how many religious are there who, like the royal eagle, are capable of lofty flights in the way of God, and who, because they are bound by earthly attachments, never fly, and never advance in holiness. St. John of the Cross says, that a slender thread is sufficient to fetter a soul that flies not with eagerness to its God. Besides, he that submits to the tyranny of any passion, not only does not go forward in the way of virtue, but is exposed to great danger of being lost. If a religious neglects to subdue her ruling passion, other mortifications will be unprofitable to her.

Some despise worldly riches, but are full of self-esteem. If they do not endeavor to bear the humiliations which they receive, their contempt of mammon will profit them but little. Others, on the contrary, are patient and humble, but enslaved to the love of money. If they do not mortify the desire of wealth, their patience and humility in bearing with contempt will be of little use to them.

O sacred virgin, resolve then, with a resolute will, to subdue the evil inclination which is most predominant in your heart. A resolute will, aided by the grace of God (which is never wanting), conquers all difficulties. St. Francis de Sales was very prone to anger; but by continual violence to himself he became a model of meekness and of sweetness. We read in his life that he bore without murmur or complaint the injuries and calumnies which, to try his patience, were by the divine permission heaped upon him. As soon as one passion is subdued we must endeavor to overcome the others; for a single unmortified passion will be sufficient to lead the soul to destruction. St. Joseph Calasanctius asserts that while a single passion reigns in a heart, though all the others should have been extirpated, the soul shall never enjoy tranquillity. “A ship,” says St. Cyril, “ however strong and perfect it may be, will be unsafe while the smallest hole remains in the bottom.”[9131] And St. Augustine says: “ Trample under foot passions already subdued, and combat those that still offer resistance.”[9132] If you wish to be a saint, I advise you to entreat the Superior and director to point out the way in which you ought to walk. Tell them not to spare you, but to contradict your inclinations as often as they shall judge it useful to you. “ Be of an upright and perfect will,” says that great servant of God, Cardinal Petrucci.

St. Teresa[9133] relates that she derived more advantage from one of her confessors, who sought on all occasions to oppose her desires, than from all the others.

She adds, that she was frequently tempted to leave him; and that, as often as she yielded to the suggestion of the devil, God rebuked her severely. " Every time," says the saint, " I resolved to leave him, I felt within me a rebuke more painful than the conduct of my confessor towards me.

II. The second means to obtain the spirit of interior mortification is, to resist the passions, and to beat them down before they acquire strength. If one of them become strong by habitual indulgence, the subjugation of it will be exceedingly difficult. " Lest cupidity," says St. Augustine, "should gain strength, strike it to the ground whilst it is weak."[9134] Sometimes it will happen that a religious will feel inclined to make use of an angry expression, or to entertain an affection for a certain person. If she do not resist these desires in the beginning, the slight wound, inflicted by her consent to them, shall soon become incurable. " Unless," says St. Ephrem, " you quickly take away the passions, they produce an ulcer."[9135] One of the ancient monks, as we learn from St. Dorotheus,[9136]has beautifully illustrated this doctrine. He commanded one of his disciples to pluck up a young cypress. The disciple executed the command without difficulty. The Superior then told him to pull up another tree of greater growth: to perform this task all the strength of the young monk was necessary. Lastly, the venerable Father commanded the disciple to tear up a tree which had taken deep root. In obedience to this precept the young religious exerted all his strength; but his efforts were fruitless the tree was immovable. Behold, said the old man, how easily our passions are eradicated in the beginning, and how difficult it is to conquer them after they have acquired strength and vigour by evil habits.

This truth is confirmed by daily experience. A religious when she receives an insult feels within a motion of resentment; if in the beginning she stifles the spark, and silently offers to God the sacrifice of her feelings, the fire is extinguished, she escapes unhurt, and even acquires merit before the Lord. But if she yield to the impulse of passion, if she pause to reflect on the insult she has received, and manifest externally the feelings of her soul that spark of resentment will soon be kindled into a flame of hatred.

Another religious entertains a certain little attachment towards a certain person; if in the beginning she avoids the company of that person, the affection will vanish; but if she encourages the attachment, it will in a short time become sinful and mortal. We must therefore abstain with the greatest care from nourishing our passions the monsters that would devour us.

III. The third means is, as Cassian says,[9137] to endeavor to change the object of our passions, that thus the pernicious and vicious desires of the heart may become salutary and holy. Some are inclined to an inordinate love of all from whom they receive a favour. They should seek to change the object of this propensity, and to turn their affections to God, who is infinitely amiable, and who has bestowed the most inestimable blessings upon them. Others are prone to anger against those who are opposed to them: they ought to direct their resentment against their own sins, which have done them more injury than all the devils in hell could inflict upon them. Others pant after honors and temporal goods: they should aspire to the goods and honors of God's eternal kingdom.

But to practise successfully this means of conquering our passions, frequent meditation on the truths of faith, frequent spiritual readings, and frequent reflections on the eternal maxims are indispensably necessary. And, above all, it is necessary to impress deeply on the mind certain fundamental spiritual maxims, such as: " God alone deserves to be loved. Sin is the only evil which we ought to hate. Whatever God wills is good. All worldly goods shall have an end. The most insignificant action, performed for God's sake, is more profitable than the conversion of the whole world effected from any other motive than the love of God. It is necessary to do what at the hour of death we would wish to have done. We ought to live on this earth as if there were nothing in existence but ourselves and God." He whose mind is continually filled with holy maxims suffers little molestation from earthly objects, and is always strong enough to resist his corrupt inclinations. The saints have kept their souls always occupied with the truths of eternity, and thus in the time of temptation have been almost insensible to the goods or the evils of this life. To conquer self-love, and to shake off the tyranny of passion, we must above all things pray without ceasing, and continually ask of God the assistance of his grace. He that prays, obtains all God's gifts: *For every one that asketh receiveth.*[9138]

We ought especially to beg the gift of divine love; for to him who loves God, nothing is difficult. Consideration and reflection assist us greatly in the practice of virtue; but in the observance of the divine commands a single spark of the love of God affords more help than a thousand reflections and considerations. Acts of virtue which proceed from reflection are accompanied with labor and violence; but he that loves is not fatigued by doing what pleases his beloved. “ He that loves, labors not,”[9139] says St. Augustine.

PRAYER

O my God, after so many graces, so many Communions, and so many good examples of companions ; after so many interior lights and loving invitations my whole soul should at this moment be one flame of divine love. But notwithstanding all Thy favors I am still as imperfect and miserable as ever. Nothing has been wanting on Thy part; the fault is entirely mine, and is to be ascribed to the obstacles which I have opposed to Thy grace by obeying my passions. I see, O my Jesus, that my life has not given glory to Thee, but has rather brought dishonour on Thy name, by exhibiting to others one of Thy spouses so attached to the world and to herself. Thou hast taken me from the world, and I have loved it more than even seculars. O Lord, have mercy upon me; do not abandon me, for I desire to amend. I repent with my whole heart of all the insults which for the indulgence of my pleasures, I have offered to Thee. I desire to begin to love Thee from this moment. I have abused Thy patience too long, but now I love Thee with my whole soul. From this day forward Thou shalt be the only object of my affections. I desire to leave all, and to do everything in my power to please Thee. Show me Thy will and assist me to execute it, I am ready to please Thee in all things. Do not permit me to be any longer insensible to the excessive love by which Thou hast obliged me to love Thee. I am willing to be deprived of every earthly consolation, and to suffer every cross which Thou wilt please to send me. Dispose of me as Thou pleasest. I desire and hope to belong to Thee entirely and forever. I desire Thee alone, and nothing more. Mary, my mother, beg of thy Son to hear me ; for he denies thee nothing.

II. DETACHMENT FROM SELF-WILL

Nothing is more injurious to religious who have consecrated their will to Jesus Christ than to be guided by the dictates of their own will and inclinations. Hence, to guard against this enemy of the spiritself-will the vow of obedience has been prescribed in every religious Order. Nothing but self-will can separate us from God. Neither all the men upon earth nor all the devils in hell can deprive us of his grace. “ Let self-will cease,” says St. Bernard, “and there will be no hell.”[9140]Let men give up their own will, and for them there shall be no hell. It is self-will that destroys all virtues. St. Peter Damian calls it “ the great destroyer of all virtues; “[9141] and St. Anselm says that “the will of God is the fountain of all good, and the will of man the source of all evil.”[9142] And what fruit can be expected from the disciple who chooses a master destitute of reason, that is, his own will? “Whoever,” says St. Bernard, “ constitutes himself his own master, becomes the disciple of a fool.”[9143] St. Anthony used to say that self-love is that wine which inebriates man so as to render him incapable of comprehending the value of virtue or the evil of sin.

St. Augustine asserts that “ the devil has been made a devil by self-will.”[9144] It is principally by self-will that Satan seeks to effect the perdition of religious. Cassian relates that the Abbot Achilles, being asked by his disciples with what arms the devil fights against religious, answered, that he employs pride against the great, avarice against merchants, intemperance against youth, but that his principal weapon against religious are their own will: that with this he attacks and frequently defeats them.

The Abbot Pastor says that “ the demons do not contend with us when we do our own will, for then our wills become devils.”[9145] When we do our own will, the enemy ceases to combat us; because then our wills are devils, and more injurious to us than all the devils in hell. St. John Climacus (quoted by Gerson) says that he who, despising the authority of his Superior, wishes to direct himself, does not require a devil to tempt him, because he is become a devil to himself.[9146]

Go not, says the Holy Ghost, after thy lusts, but turn from thy own will. “[9147] Do not follow your own desires, but fly from the indulgence of self-will. This admonition is directed in a particular manner to religious who have sacrificed their will to God by promising obedience to their Rule and to their Superior. As God should be the only object of their love, so obedience is the only means by which they can obtain his love. To be the fruit of obedience is the highest perfection which the actions of religious can attain. The Venerable Catharine of Cardona, having left the Spanish court, retired into a desert, where she lived for many years in the practice of penitential austerities, the very recital of which would fill the mind with horror. In her life it is related that seeing one day a discalced Carmelite carrying through obedience a bundle of wood, and knowing by inspiration that he murmured interiorly against the command of his Superior, she thus addressed him: " Brother, carry, carry with alacrity these fagots; and be assured that by this act of obedience you will merit a greater reward than I have deserved by all my penances."

But as the works of religious derive from obedience the highest degree of perfection, so by self-will they are rendered most imperfect and defective. Hence, Tritemius says that nothing is more hateful to the devil than the practice of obedience. " The devil detests nothing more than obedience."[9148] Speaking of obedience, St. Teresa says that " Satan knows that it is the remedy of the soul, and therefore he labors hard to prevent its attainment."[9149] When St. Francis de Sales was devising the Rule for the nuns of the Visitation a certain person said that they ought to be barefooted. "You," replied the saint, "wish to begin with the feet, but I wish to begin with the head." St. Philip Neri continually impressed on his penitent that sanctity consists in the mortification of self-will. "You will," says St. Jerome, " advance in proportion as you deny your own will."[9150] Your progress in virtue will be proportional to your denial of self-will. It was because they knew that they could not offer to God a more agreeable sacrifice than that of their own will, by the vow of obedience, that so many parish priests and bishops, who led exemplary lives in the world, retired into the cloister to live under obedience.

Oh ! how happy the religious who, at the hour of death, can say, with the Abbot John, I have never done my own will.[9151] St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say, that the only means of dying a happy death is to submit with simplicity to the direction of a Superior. " To crucify all her desires is," says Cassian, " the end of a religious."[9152]

The religious, then, who does not attend to the mortification of self-will cannot be called a religious, but a sacrilegious violator of her profession. What greater sacrilege than to take back the will that has been once consecrated to God? " There is not," says St. Bernard, "a more heinous sacrilege than to resume power over a will once offered to God." The Holy Ghost has declared by the mouth of Samuel, that to violate obedience and to follow self-will in contempt of authority is a species of idolatry. *It is like the sin of witchcraft, to rebel; and like the crime of idolatry, to refuse to obey.*[9153] St. Gregory applies this passage in a particular manner to the disobedience of religious. "It is," says the saint, " like the sin of witchcraft to rebel, because they believe the proud inventions of their own hearts, and resist the counsels of their prelates."[9154] The sin of religious who despise the commands of Superiors, and follow the dictates of self-love, is like the crime of idolatry; because they in a manner adore self-will as their God. Hence, St. Basil[9155] ordained that monks who were attached to their own will should, like lepers, be separated from the rest of the Community, lest others might be infected by their bad example.

Blessed Charlotte used to say that mortification of self-will is more meritorious than the renunciation of all the riches of the world. And here it is right to observe, that sanctity depends on the abnegation of self-will, not only in what is imperfect or indifferent, but also in the exercises which have the appearance of virtue; as, for example, prayer, alms-deeds, acts of penance, and other works of piety.

Cassian remarks that acts of virtue performed through self-will and disobedience are productive of the worst consequences; because sinful actions which wear the appearance of holiness are corrected only with the greatest difficulty. " Vices," he says, "which appear to be virtues are the most irremediable."[9156] Religious who desire to attain sanctity by following self-will are precisely the souls who, according to Isaias, will say to Jesus Christ on the Day of Judgment: Why have we fasted and thou hast not regarded?[9157]To them the Judge will answer, that their works were performed to please themselves rather than to do the will of God, and that therefore they deserve no reward. Behold, he will say, in the day of your fast your own will is found[9158] Oh ! how great, then, is the evil of self-will, which vitiates and destroys the most perfect actions ! "Great, "says St.

Bernard, " is the evil of self-will, which renders your good works unprofitable to you."[9159]But, on the other hand, to be the result of obedience, is an infallible sign that an action is pleasing to God. Nicephorus relates that when the Superiors of St. Simon Stylites wished to ascertain whether the extraordinary and singular life which he led, remaining on a pillar in the open air, night and day, were pleasing to God, they commanded him to come down from his pillar and to live with the other monks. On hearing the command, the saint instantly stretched out his foot to descend, but was told by his Superiors to persevere in his austerities, which he proved by his obedience to be acceptable before God. It is necessary, then, to seek even holy things without attachment to self-will. St. Francis de Sales used to say: "I desire but few things, and for these I am not solicitous."[9160] He wished for them, not through self-love, but to please God ; and was therefore prepared to give them up as soon as he knew they were not conformable to the holy will of God.

Oh ! how great is the peace of a religious whose desires are the dictates of obedience ! St. Dositheus, having consecrated his whole will to obedience, enjoyed continual peace. Fearing that in this peace there was some delusion of the enemy, he one day said to his Superior, St. Dorotheus: "Father, tell me why it is that I experience such tranquillity as to be free from every other desire?" "My son," replied the Father, "this peace is altogether the fruit of obedience." And what can give more content to religious that love God, than to know with certainty that in all their actions they do the will of God ? They can say with the prophet: We are happy, O Israel, because the things that are pleasing to God are made known to us.[9161] We enjoy constant happiness; because being obedient in all things we are certain of doing in all the will of our Spouse. " Oh ! what sweetness," says Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, " is contained in this expression the will of God ?" St. Laurence Justinian says that "he who has rejected his own will has thrown off a most grievous burden."[9162]"What tyrant," says St. Peter Damian, "more cruel than self-will?"[9163] A religious cannot be subject to a more galling tyranny than the domination of her own will; for her inclinations will lead her to seek after things that cannot be had in the cloister.

Fruitless desires will keep her in perpetual misery and agitation of mind, and she shall frequently suffer within herself a little hell. “Of what use,” says St. Eucherius, “are the silence and repose of a habitation, if the inhabitants be disturbed by the struggling of passions? Of what use is external serenity, if the tempest rage within ?”[9164] What will it profit a religious to live in the retirement of the cloister, if her heart be agitated by the conflicts of her passions? Without, indeed, there will be a calm, but within a storm.

And from what source arise all our troubles ? Do they not spring from attachment to our own inclinations ? “ Whence,” says St. Bernard, “ is disturbance of mind, if not from following self-will ?”[9165]Cassian relates[9166]that the ancient Fathers were accustomed to say that the religious who does not conquer self-will cannot persevere in religion: certainly she cannot persevere with profit and with peace. Attachment to self-will is the only reason why many religious lead an unhappy life. One is unhappy because she cannot have the confessor or Superior of her choice: another, because she desires an office, and it is not given to her. She is so discontented, that the Superiors, to put an end to her complaints, accede to her wishes; and still she is not content. How can she expect to enjoy peace, when, instead of practising obedience, she obliges her Superiors to submit to her desires ? Others are disturbed because an occupation opposed to their inclinations is assigned to them; others, because they are forbidden to keep up a certain communication or correspondence with their friends. Others, because some disagreeable precept is imposed upon them; they are displeased, and endeavor to excite against the Superior the aversion of their relatives, and even of the Community, and thus produce endless scandal and disorder.

Their crime, as is related by Surius,[9167] would merit the chastisement of two monks, who refused to receive as their abbot a holy man named Philibert: one of them was struck with lightning, the other suddenly attacked with a mortal disease. “ Have peace with your prelates,” says St. Bernard: “ do not detract, nor wilfully listen to others detracting them: for God punishes inferiors in a special manner for this vice, and even in the present life.”[9168] And St. Gregory says[9169] that “ the works of Superiors, though they may appear reprehensible, are not to be struck with the sword of the tongue.” Thou shall not, says the Lord, speak ill of the gods[9170] You shall not censure the conduct of your Superiors, who hold the place of God in your regard.

Attend to what Mary M. de Pazzi, while in an ecstasy, said of the evil done to religious by self-love: “ I see,” says that great saint, “ a multitude of souls, among whom there is one who, at the time of uniting herself to you, O divine Word, is wholly recollected; but before the lapse of an hour something occurs that is opposed to her inclinations, and she is thrown into confusion and agitation. I see another who, during the holy Mass, burns with divine love; but when reminded of a fault she will not acknowledge it; in her, pride and self-love reign. Another appears to rival St. Anthony by the rigor of her austerities; but if her penances be prohibited, she is pertinacious, and will not obey. Another is reserved and mortified in the refectory; but she takes complacency in her mortifications, and desires to be esteemed more holy than her companions. To her, discretion appears excess; but she imputes to immoderate zeal the want of anything that she desires. Another will appear in the parlour to surpass St. Augustine by her wisdom; and to manifest her own perfection, will exhibit in her conversation an extraordinary degree of prudence. Others are ready to forego in the exercises of charity every personal advantage, but wish to be thanked for their services, and to be praised by all their companions.” Of such religious the Lord once said to the same saint: “ They desire my spirit, but they desire it in a manner and at a time pleasing to themselves, and thus they render themselves unfit to receive it.”[9171]

But let us return to ourselves. If you, dear Sister, wish to become a saint, and to enjoy continual peace, seek to overcome as much as possible your own will; adopt the rule of religious who love perfection; never do anything for your own satisfaction, but do all to please God: by this means you cut off all vain desires and all evil inclinations. Worldlings continually seek the gratification of their own wishes; but the saints constantly endeavor to mortify self-will, and to find occasions of self-denial. St. Andrew Avellini, as we read in his Office, bound himself by an express vow to resist continually his own will. You should at least prescribe to yourself to deny your own will a certain number of times in the day. Repeat often the words by which St. Bernard was accustomed to excite his fervor in God’s service: “ Bernard, for what purpose have you come here?”[9172]

Say to yourself: have I entered religion to do my own will ? If I wish to live according to my own inclinations, I should have remained in the world. At my profession I consecrated my will to God by the vow of obedience: why should I now seek to indulge it ? Why am I disturbed when not permitted to follow my own will ? Be not troubled, then, when your requests are refused, and when a duty painful to self-love is imposed upon you; but remember that by your obedience you will merit a greater reward, and will make greater progress in virtue than you would by many spontaneous acts of penance and devotion. A great servant of God used to say, that to perform a single act of abnegation of self-will is more profitable than to build a thousand hospitals. Have continually before your eyes the words of the Venerable Father Anthony Torres to a religious who was one of his penitents: *“A soul entirely consecrated to God loves nothing, wants nothing, seeks nothing, desires nothing.”*

I will conclude this chapter by an extract from a letter of the same Father Torres to a religious whom he wished to detach from herself and from all created objects, in order to love nothing but God: *“Since the Lord gives you so many occasions of suffering and of desolation, endeavor to improve in charity, which is said to be as strong as death. Study to strengthen divine love in your soul, so that it may disengage your heart from all creatures, from all human respect, from all that is prized by the world, from your own desires, and from all self-love; that there may be nothing in you to prevent your thoughts, your desires, and your affections from being entirely directed to your beloved. Let the heart sigh after the beloved; let the will rest only on him; let the thoughts be wholly fixed on him. Let every motion of the body, let every act of your life, be for and with the beloved. To attain the love of your beloved, I advise you to renounce every day before the crucifix every object of your affections, all honors, interests, consolations, and relatives, and to protest that you desire no other glory than his ignominies; no riches but his charity, no other convenience than the cross: that you desire him only, your dear and beloved Spouse.*

When you walk in the garden, or look up to the heavens, invite frequently and with your whole heart all creatures to the love of your beloved. Avoid *all conversation; give up every employment which is not pleasing to him; omit every action which will not redound to the glory of your Spouse."*

PRAYER

Ah, my God, my Lord, and my Spouse ! Thou hast loved me so much, and hast given me a will to love Thee, and I have so often employed this will in offending and insulting Thee. If I were not convinced that Thou art a God of infinite mercy, I should lose all hope of recovering Thy grace, which I have unfortunately lost. By my ingratitude I deserved to have been long since abandoned by Thee. But I see that Thy light still assists me, and I know that Thou dost still call me to Thy love. Behold, O Lord, I do not wish to continue any longer in my ingratitude, or to resist any longer Thy invitation. I offer to Thee my whole being: receive an unfaithful soul who for so many years has despised Thy love, but who now desires to love Thee and to belong entirely to Thee. Assist me, O my Jesus ; give me a sorrow for my sins which will fill my soul with pain and anguish for having outraged so good and so amiable a God. Unhappy me, if, after the lights which Thou now givest me, I betray Thee again. How canst Thou bear with me any longer ? The fear of again offending Thee afflicts my soul. Ah, Lord ! do not permit me to be evermore separated from Thee. Chastise me as Thou pleasest, but not by permitting me to lose Thy grace. If Thou seest that I shall ever turn my back upon Thee, take me out of life, at this moment, in which I hope to enjoy Thy friendship. Of what use will life be to me if by living I continue to offend Thee ? O Mary, my hope, obtain for me the grace of perseverance, or of instant death.

III THE MERIT OF OBEDIENCE

“Since,” as St. Bonaventure says, “all the perfection of religious consists in the destruction of self-will,”[9173] obedience should, of all virtues, be the most dear to a religious. Obedience to rule and to the commands of Superiors is the greatest sacrifice that a Christian can offer to God; because, as St. Thomas says, “nothing is more amiable in the eyes of man than the liberty of his own will.”[9174] Hence we cannot present to God a more acceptable gift than the consecration of our wills to his service. “ For,” says the Holy Ghost, obedience is better than sacrifices.[9175]Obedience is more pleasing to God than all the sacrifices that we can offer to him. They who give to the Lord their worldly goods by alms-deeds, their honor by embracing contempt, and their body by mortification, by fasts, and by works of penance, make only a partial consecration of themselves to him. But he that offers to God the sacrifice of his own will by the practice of obedience consecrates all that he possesses to God's glory, and can say: Lord, after having given to Thee my will, I have nothing more to present to Thee. Besides, as St. Gregory says, " By the other virtues we give to God what belongs to us, but by obedience we dedicate ourselves to him."[9176]

The same Father says in another place that "obedience is a virtue that infuses the other virtues into the mind and preserves them in the soul."[9177] St. Teresa asserts that "from a soul resolved to love God he requires nothing but obedience;" and again, that " the devil knows well that obedience is the remedy of the soul, and therefore he labors hard to prevents its attainment."[9178]

The Venerable Father Sertorio Caputo[9179] used to say that obedience merits even the reward of martyrdom; because as by martyrdom a Christian submits, for God's sake, to the loss of life, so by obedience he offers to the Lord the sacrifice of self-will, which is, as it were, the head of the soul. Hence the wise man says that he who practises obedience shall conquer every enemy. An obedient man shall speak of victory[9180] Yes, says St. Gregory, the obedient shall overcome all the temptations of hell, because by obedience they subject their will to men, and thus become superior to the devils who fell through disobedience. " They who obey," says the saint, " are conquerors, because when they submit their will to others, they triumph over the angels who sinned by disobedience."[9181] Cassian observes that since all vices proceed from self-will when the latter is destroyed the former die in the soul. " By mortification of the will all vices wither and decay."[9182]

God promises those who renounce their own will that he will raise them above the earth, and give them a celestial spirit. If, says the Lord, thou turn away from doing thy own will . . . I will lift thee up above the high places of the earth, and will feed thee with the inheritance of Jacob.[9183] St. Laurence Justinian teaches that all who sacrifice their own will to God become so dear to him that they shall obtain whatever they ask. “ He that has consecrated himself to God by the immolation of self-will will receive all that he shall demand.”[9184]

St. Augustine says that after Adam had by his disobedience entailed misery on himself and the whole human race, the Son of God became man, principally to teach us obedience by his own example. Jesus from his infancy began to obey Mary and Joseph: he continued to obey them during his life; and by his obedience was in the end brought to the ignominious death of the cross. He humbled himself , becoming obedient unto death even to the death of the cross.”[9185] St. Bernard says that “ the disobedient seek to be exempted from obedience. Jesus Christ did not do so: he, indeed, gave his life lest he should violate obedience.”[9186] The mother of God once revealed to one of her servants that our Redeemer died with a special affection for obedient souls.

The Venerable Father de Leonardis, founder of the Order of the Mother of God, being importuned by his disciples to give them a rule, wrote this single word obedience. He wished by this act to signify what Father Sertorio Caputo used to say, that in religion, obedience and sanctity are identical; that to be obedient and to be a saint are one and the same thing. St. Thomas[9187]; teaches that it is principally by the vow of obedience a Christian is made a religious; and, according to St. Teresa,[9188] a religious who is not obedient cannot be called a religious. Of what use is a disobedient nun? Many are versed in the belles-lettres, in poetry, foreign languages, and in history, but are unacquainted with obedience. A religious who knows not how to obey, knows nothing.

St. Teresa” used to say that obedience[9189] is the short road to perfection. It is related in the Lives of the Fathers,[9190] that one of them saw in a vision two orders of saints: the first consisted of those who had left the world and retired into the desert to practise continual prayer and penance; the second, of those who for the love of Jesus Christ lived in obedience and subjection to the will of others. He also saw that the latter enjoyed greater glory than the former: for although the solitaries had pleased God in all their exercises, still they had always done their own will; but they who lived under obedience had given their will to God, and thus offered to him the most acceptable of all sacrifices. St. Dorotheus relates that his disciple St.

Dositheus, being weak in health, could not practise the exercises performed by the other monks, but cast off self-will and consecrated himself entirely to obedience. He died in the space of five years. After his death the Lord revealed to the abbot that this young man obtained the same reward as St. Paul, the first hermit, and as St. Anthony, the abbot. The monks were amazed, and could not conceive how Dositheus, who did not perform the ordinary duties of his state, could merit so exalted a glory. Almighty God told them that the glory of the young saint was the reward of the obedience which he had practised.

St. Gregory says that " a repast of precept deserves a greater reward than fasting voluntarily undertaken."[9191] To eat through obedience is more meritorious in the sight of God than to fast through self-will. The same truth was revealed by the Blessed Virgin to St. Bridget. Being prohibited by her confessor to practise her accustomed penances, the saint began to apprehend a diminution of her fervor; but the mother of God encouraged her to obey without fear, by saying to her that " they who do penance deserve but one reward, while he that omits through obedience one act of mortification, receives a twofold remuneration one for the penance which he wished to perform, another for his obedience in omitting it."[9192]

St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say that an obedient religious is the precious gem of the convent. Oh ! if all nuns were obedient, every convent would be a paradise.—Besides, a nun faithful to obedience lays up in every action an immense treasure of merit; because in every exercise she does the will of God; and in doing his will all merit consists. To enable us to acquire eternal treasures, by whatsoever we do through obedience, is the principal advantage of the religious state. Even duties agreeable to our own feelings, when performed through a motive of obedience, merit a great reward. St. Aloysius used to say that religion is a ship, in which even he that labors not makes the voyage! Yes; for a religious merits not only when she fasts or meditates, or recites the Office, but also when through obedience she takes repose or abstains from labor, when she eats or indulges in recreation. Oh ! how profitable and meritorious is every act performed in obedience to the will of Superiors !

If, then, dear Sister, you desire soon to become a saint, consecrate yourself entirely to obedience; divest yourself of all self-will; and endeavor with all your might to obey your Rule and your Superior in the external exercises, and your spiritual Father in whatever regards the interior. It is by obedience and by the absence of self-will that perfect religious are distinguished from the imperfect. The latter do nothing cheerfully, but what pleases self-love and self-will. They, indeed, desire to be entrusted with some of the offices of the Community; because to be without office they deem to be dishonorable. But they wish for those employments that tend to their own ease and convenience, and in everything else they seek their own will. In a word, they desire to become saints, but only according to their own will, and according to the dictates of self-love. But St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say that " he who in serving God seeks his own convenience, serves himself, and not God." But religious who love perfection do not act in this manner: they never omit what obedience commands, and—desire only what obedience prescribes. Imitate their example, and you will soon become a saint. Endeavor to perform all your actions from a motive of obedience, and you will always walk securely to salvation. To secure their profits, merchants obtain an insurance of their property. Let it be your care to make sure your eternal gain by procuring for every work the insurance of obedience the approbation of your Superiors: otherwise your works may prove injurious, or at least unprofitable, to you. When St. Anselm was made Archbishop of Canterbury he became unhappy in consequence of being so free from the yoke of obedience, and at his own solicitation the Pope appointed for the saint a Superior whom he might obey. The saint regulated his conduct by the advice of the Superior, and undertook nothing without his consent. How much more should you who by your profession have consecrated your will to obedience how much more, I say, should you seek occasions of practising that sublime virtue!

PRAYER

Ah ! my Jesus, to save me Thou hast been obedient unto death even the death of the Cross; and I, for a vile and wretched gratification, have been so often disrespectful and disobedient to Thee. Wait, O Lord ; do not abandon me yet. I repent with my whole soul of all the offences I have offered Thee. I now see that I have abused Thy mercy too much, and that therefore I am undeserving of Thy pity. But I also see that Thou hast borne with me till now, that, entering one day into myself, I might consecrate my whole being to Thee. I hope the day has arrived when I shall dedicate myself entirely to Thy love. I hear Thy voice calling me to Thy love. 1 shall no longer resist Thy invitation. Behold! I offer myself to thee ; refuse not, O Lord, my oblation. Tell me what Thou dost require of me : I am ready to do all in my power to please Thee. I promise Thee that henceforth I shall never violate the obedience due to my Superiors. I love Thee, my Jesus; and because I love Thee, I desire to do all that I can to please Thee. Assist me, O Lord ; draw and unite me more and more every day to Thy love. Eternal Father, I offer to Thee the Passion of Thy Son, and through his merits I beseech Thee to give me all the graces necessary to make me a saint, such as Thou dost wish me to be. O Mary, my mother and my hope, beg of thy Son that I may be no longer mine, but that I may belong to him entirely and forever.

IV THE OBEDIENCE DUE TO THE SUPERIORS

The principal and most efficacious means of practising the obedience due to the Superiors, and of rendering it meritorious before God, is to consider that in obeying them we obey God himself; and that by despising their commands we despise the authority of our divine Master, who has said of Superiors: He that heareth you, heareth me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me[9193] Hence St. Paul addressed to his disciples the following words: Not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart[9194] When, then, a religious receives a precept from her prelate, Superior, or confessor, she should immediately execute it, not only to please men, but principally to please God, whose will is made known to her by their command. In obeying their directions she is more certain of doing the will of God than if an angel came down from heaven to manifest his will to her. Hence St. Paul says, in his epistle to the Galatians, that though an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you, besides that which the apostles preach, he should not be believed. No, says the apostle, let him be anathema.

St. Bernard says that “ God deigns to make prelates his own equals. He takes to himself the reverence or contempt manifested to them.”[9195] Obedience shown to Superiors is shown to God; for he has said: He that heareth you, heareth me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me. Bear, then, always in mind, dear Sister, that the obedience which you practise towards your Superiors is paid to God himself. Now if Jesus Christ himself came down from heaven, and imposed any duty upon you, or gave you any particular charge, would you attempt to decline it ? or would you dare to disobey his commands ? “But,” continues St. Bernard, “ whether God, or a creature who is his representative, impose a precept, they are both to be obeyed with equal exactness.”[9196]

If, then, you receive a command from one that holds the place of God, you should observe it with the same diligence as if it came from God himself. St. John Climacus[9197] relates that in a certain monastery the Superior, to set an example to the Community, commanded in their presence an old man of eighty years to stand in the refectory for two hours without interruption. The aged monk being asked how he had been able to bear this mortification, replied: “I imagined that I stood before Jesus Christ, and that he imposed on me that humiliation; and this thought made me obey without difficulty or repugnance.”

For our greater merit the Lord wishes to lead us to salvation by means of faith, and therefore does not speak to us himself, but manifests his will by the commands of our Superiors. When Jesus Christ appeared to St. Paul, and transformed him into a new man, he might in person have directed the apostle what to do, but Jesus only said to him: *Go into the city, and there it will be told to thee what thou must do*[9198]Go into the city, and Ananias will make known my will to you. Hence blessed Egidius used to say that it is more meritorious to obey man for the love of God, than to obey God himself.

It may be added, that there is more certainty of doing the will of God by obedience to Superiors, than by obedience to Jesus Christ should he appear in person and give his commands. Because should Jesus Christ appear to a religious she would not be certain whether it was he that spoke or an evil spirit, who under the appearance of the Redeemer wished to deceive her. But when her Superiors speak, she knows for certain, from the words of Jesus Christ, that in obeying them she obeys him.

He, says our Lord, that heareth you heareth me. Even when it is doubtful whether the object of a precept is conformable to the law of God, the generality of theologians and masters of spiritual life teach that a religious is bound to obey; and that in obeying she is certain of not sinning, and of even pleasing God. Attend to the doctrine of St. Bernard, which he has taken from the Rule of St. Benedict: “Whatever a man holding the place of God commands, unless it be certain that it is displeasing to God, is to be received as if commanded by God himself.”[9199]

Thus, on the Day of Judgment, religious will be charged with every act of disobedience; but, as St. Philip Neri[9200] used to say, they shall be most certain of not having to render an account of the actions performed through obedience. For these the Superiors only, who commanded them, shall be held accountable. Speaking particularly of nuns, the Lord once said to St. Catharine of Sienna: “ Religious will not be obliged to render an account to me of what they do through obedience; for that, I will demand an account from the Superiors.” Obey, says the Apostle, your prelates, and be subject to them; for they watch, as being to render an account of your souls : that they may do this with joy, and not with grief .[9201]And, O blessed spouse of the Lord! if you practise obedience, when after death you shall be asked by Jesus Christ why you have not done greater penance, why you have not made more mental prayer, or why you have performed such an action, you can answer with confidence, that in all this you only fulfilled his commands by obeying your Superiors, whom he commanded you to obey as you would obey himself; and that if you have done wrong, the blame is imputable to your Superiors, whose authority you obeyed.

Attend to the words of St. Paul: That they (your prelates) may do this with joy, and not with grief.[9202] From this passage it clearly appears that it is the duty of a religious to obey promptly, without reply, and without thwarting her Superiors or disturbing their peace. Oh ! how miserable is the condition of a Superior whose subjects violate obedience by excuses, by colored pretexts, by complaints, and even by murmurings. The situation of abbesses at the approach of the time for distributing the offices of the Community is truly deserving of pity. They are, on the one hand, troubled by scruples arising from the apprehension that through human respect or through the fear of displeasing a sister they will intrust her with a charge for which she is unfit; and on the other, they are afflicted to find that after the distribution one declines her office, another complains, a third murmurs, and others refuse to accept the duties assigned to them. This state of things sometimes compels the Superior to dispense the offices, not according to the rules of reason and for the good of the Community, but according to human prudence. In acting according to the dictates of human wisdom to prevent greater evils, the Superior may be blameless; but whoever accepts or discharges her duties not in the spirit of obedience, but through caprice, will certainly be inexcusable. The Apostle commands you to obey, and to be subject to your Superiors, that they may discharge their duty with joy, and not with grief. For, says St. Paul, this is not expedient for you[9203]

No, it is not expedient for you that the Superiors be resisted and thwarted; but if they be supported and consoled in the government of the Community, good order and your spiritual progress will be promoted.

What a scandal is it to see certain religious decline certain offices assigned to them, and thus extort obedience from their Superiors! St. Bernard, in his comment on the words of the Redeemer to the blind man, What wilt thou that I do to thee[9204] says: "He was truly blind, otherwise he would have exclaimed: Far be it from me, O Lord, to ask Thee to do what I will; tell me rather what Thou wilt have me do for Thee. "[9205] Let us apply to ourselves this passage of St. Bernard. There are some nuns whom the abbess must ask what office they wish to have. Perfect religious do not require to be consulted about the office they wish for: should the Superior ask them what charge would be most agreeable to them, they answer that it is not for them to say what employment they desire, but that it belongs to her to tell them what she will have them do.

If, then, dear sister, you wish to be truly obedient and truly religious, bear continually in mind:

I. That your Superiors hold in your regard the place of Jesus Christ; and endeavor to show them all the veneration and love that are due to his representatives not through a feeling of self-interest, not to be esteemed by them or to avoid their censure, but from the sole motive of pleasing God. And this obedience is due not only to the prelate and abbess, but to all that hold office in the convent: such as the Infirmarian, the Sacristan, and the sister who is charged with the care of the refectory. In obeying the abbess, a religious may be easily influenced by human respect; but in obeying sisters entrusted with the inferior offices, she shows that she possesses the true spirit of obedience.

St. Francis of Assisi thanked God in a particular manner for having given him the grace to be always ready to obey the least of the novices in all things in which they might be appointed his Superiors. The saint was accustomed to say that the less the authority of a Superior and the more humble his station and qualifications, the greater is the merit of obedience; because then it proceeds from the sole motive of pleasing God.

I. Do not seek the society of imperfect sisters, who have little affection for obedience.

II. Receive correction with humility; beg of the Superior to reprimand you as often as reproof may be necessary for you. Be not of the number of those who resent even the slightest rebuke, to whom the Superior cannot give even the necessary admonitions without great caution; whose correction, lest they should be wanting in respect to her, and should disturb the Community she is, perhaps, compelled to defer for several months, till a seasonable opportunity occurs. But woe to the religious who cannot be admonished without such caution! she must be very imperfect indeed.

III. When corrected receive the admonition with humility, and without excusing your fault; and should the Superior charge you with a defect which you had not committed, do not speak of her mistake, unless she commands you to state your guilt or innocence. But I shall hereafter treat this subject more at large.

IV. Banish from your mind all thoughts and suspicions against the Superior, with the same promptness as if they were thoughts opposed to chastity, and when you hear any one attribute to her a fault which cannot be denied, seek to excuse her as much as you can. But should the fault of the Superior be evident and inexcusable, for example, were she impatient with all the sisters, persuade yourself that God permits this defect in her, not for your injury, but for your profit. St. Gertrude once besought the Lord to deliver the abbess from the fault of frequent impatience. In answer, she was told that he permitted this defect in the abbess, as well for her own advantage as for the good of the religious: for her good, that she might be kept humble; for the good of the religious, that by bearing with her impatience their merit might be increased.[9206] “ The more,” says St. Bernard, “ you are oppressed, the more you gain.”[9207]The greater the burden you bear the greater the merit you acquire. St. Gregory teaches that

“ the commands of Superiors should be respected, though their life be not deserving of praise.”[9208] And speaking of the Scribes and Pharisees, who blasphemed his works, Jesus Christ says: *All things whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works, do ye not*[9209]

With regard to the offices of the convent, observe the excellent rule of St. Francis de Sales: “Never to seek and never to refuse any of them.” Prefer always that which is least honourable, and least suited to your convenience. Few nuns merit the full reward of obedience by fulfilling the duties of their office, because few accept and discharge them in the true spirit of obedience, and with a pure intention of pleasing God. Imperfect religious look only to the advantages and disadvantages of office; but the perfect regard only the will of God, and therefore seek not their own ease or convenience, but cheerfully embrace pains and labors. Endeavor to belong to the number of the perfect. Do not imagine that the refusal of office, through fear of committing faults in the discharge of its duties, will be excusable before God; but be persuaded that by becoming a religious you bound yourself to serve the convent.

Could the fear of committing faults justify you in declining a charge, the same fear would exempt all the sisters from the obligation of accepting office. Should they give way to such fears, who would serve the monastery or support the Community? Have a pure intention of pleasing God: fear not; he will assist you.

Accept, in the spirit of obedience, the office entrusted to you; and in accepting it, regard not the power of domination; look not to self-ease nor self-esteem, but solely to the obligations of obedience. Accept it with a holy confidence, and listen not to the devil, who will perhaps suggest to you that the duties of such an office are above your strength. If you be obedient, the Lord will give you that strength which you do not possess. Do not imagine that, because the duties of your charge are of a distracting nature they will destroy in your soul the spirit of fervor and recollection. Be assured that if you comply with your duties God will bestow upon you more graces in a quarter of an hour spent in prayer, than, without performing them, you would receive in a retreat of ten days. In the fulfilment of your office endeavor as much as possible to set apart some little time to recollect yourself in prayer. Do not say that your office requires every moment of your time. Perfect religious who have an affection for prayer can find abundant time for the discharge of their duties and for recollection. Do not imitate the conduct of some who burden themselves with such a multiplicity of occupations, which they cannot find a moment s time to recollect themselves before God. In discharging the duties of office be careful not to be partial to your friends. Be still more careful not to abuse your office by employing it as a means of procuring for yourself advantages which the other sisters do not enjoy.

Lastly, remember that neither obedience nor even the perfection of obedience forbids a religious to make known to her Superiors all secret disqualifications for the duty imposed upon her. She may, for example, without any violation of obedience, make known to them any bodily infirmity, or whatever would render her unfit for the office assigned to her; because her Superiors are not angels, but human beings, who require to be made acquainted with what of themselves they do not know. But in stating your disqualifications for any charge, you must take care, in the first place, not to speak of those which the Superior already knows; for these she must be supposed to have already taken into consideration. Secondly, after explaining your difficulties, you must cheerfully acquiesce in the judgment of the Superior; and your acquiescence must be manifested externally, as well for her peace and satisfaction as for the edification of the Community. Hence, before they represent to the Superior their unfitness for office, religious would do well to figure to themselves that, notwithstanding their supposed difficulties, she insists on the acceptance of the charge entrusted to them. By this means they will be better disposed to receive, without reply, the decision of the Superior.

It is necessary to remark in this place, that a discreet attention to the preservation of health, with a view to be better able to serve God, is not a defect, but an act of virtue. But a superfluous solicitude about health is a fault; and, aided by self-love, makes many unnecessary indulgences appear indispensable. St. Bernard says that some are fitter to be the disciples of Hippocrates and Galenus than of Jesus Christ. “ Consider,” says the saint, “ that you are a monk and not a physician.”[9210] And he continues: “ Consult for your own repose.”[9211]

As if he said, Seek to promote your own peace by living like the rest of the Community, and by avoiding all singular and superfluous indulgence. “ Spare the labor of those who serve the Community.”[9212] Spare the labor of the attendant in the refectory, and of the cook; and seek not after delicacies withheld from others. “ Spare the burden of the house.”[9213] Abstain from putting the Community to any superfluous expense.

St. Basil[9214] exhorted religious to accustom themselves as much as possible to the common fare. Oh ! how much better is it for a religious to eat and drink like her companions, than to fast, to take discipline, or wear hair—shirts, and afterwards practise singularity in her food! In singularity has originated the relaxation of many religious orders. Be not afraid that by using the common food you will be wanting in the care of your health; for although it is not lawful directly to shorten life with the intention of accelerating death, still, according to the common opinion of theologians, it is allowable to abstain from some indulgences, particularly those that are singular, which might prolong life for some time. Such abstinence is even an act of virtue, when practised with the intention of promoting our own spiritual advancement, and the edification of our neighbour. When the celebrated Chapter of Matts[9215] was held, St. Francis of Assisi saw that the demons convened a Chapter, in which they agreed that, to introduce a relaxation of discipline into his Order, in which the spirit of fervor then flourished, the most effectual means would be to induce the religious to receive a great number of novices of noble extraction and of delicate health, because such subjects would be treated with less rigor; thus by degrees discipline would be relaxed, and the spirit of fervor banished from the Order. This reasoning was most just.

Beware, then, lest by immoderate care of your health you put your salvation in peril, or at least lose the crown of a saint. Remember that, had the Saints, like you, been unnecessarily solicitous [about the preservation of health, they should never have become saints.

PRAYER

O my beloved Lord, Thou art beauty itself, goodness itself, and love itself: how can I love anything but Thee ! Fool that I have been ! In my past life I have offered numberless insults to Thee. I have violated Thy law, but I am sorry above all things for my sins, and desire to die of grief for having offended Thee. O my Jesus, have mercy upon me. I desire to cry out continually: My Jesus, mercy; O my Jesus, mercy. But if for the past I have despised Thy love, I now prefer it to all the goods of the earth. Thou, O my Jesus, art, and shalt be forever, the only object of all my affections. My love, I leave all things and desire nothing but Thee. I now say and desire to repeat every moment of my life, that I desire Thee only, O my God, and nothing more. Assist me, O Lord, to be faithful to Thee. Look not on my sins, but on the love that Thou didst bear to me when Thou wast nailed to the Cross for my salvation. In the merits of Thy Passion I place all my hopes. I love Thee, O infinite Good ! O my supreme Good ! and ask nothing of Thee but the grace to love Thee ; to love Thee intensely, and henceforward to love no other object but Thee, my treasure and my all. My Jesus, I give Thee my will : purify its affections. I give Thee my body : preserve it unsullied. I give Thee my soul : make it belong entirely to Thee. Burn with Thy own consuming fire every affection that is opposed to the pure love of Thy divinity.

O Mary, my great advocate, I hope first in the merits of thy Son, and afterwards in thy intercession.

V. THE OBEDIENCE DUE TO THE RULE

St. Francis de Sales has asserted that “the predestination of religious is connected with the observance of their rules. “ And St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say, that the observance of Rule is the shortest way to eternal life and to sanctity. In a word, the only way by which a religious can become a saint and be saved, is to observe her Rule. For her there is no other way that leads to salvation. Hence, no matter how great her austerities, how frequent her prayers, and how numerous her other spiritual works, a religious who habitually violates any, even the most unimportant, rule, will never advance a single step towards perfection. She will labor, but without fruit, verifying in herself the words of the Holy Ghost: *He that rejecteth wisdom and discipline is unhappy ; and their fruit is vain, and their labors without fruit, and their works unprofitable*[9216] They who despise discipline, that is, their Rule, are miserable, and trust in vain in their works; for their labors are without fruit. “We,” says St. Teresa, “ do not fulfil certain easy duties prescribed by rule, such as silence, which gives no pain; and still we go in search of works of penance; but afterwards we neglect the former and omit the latter."[9217] Not to advance in perfection is but a small part of the evils that arise from the infraction of light rules. According to St. Bernard, the worst consequence of such transgressions is, that the habit of them renders very difficult the observance of the most important rules, and even of the vows.

Oh! what a scandal to see certain religious, so well instructed during their novitiate in the observance of the rule, and after their profession, disregard regular discipline, as if their solemn consecration to Jesus Christ exempted them from all the obligations of the religious state! A learned author says: " It is better to be a finger united to the body, than to be an eye separated from it."[9218] An eye torn from the body is but rottenness; and an action that wears the appearance of virtue, but is not conformable to rule, will never please God; instead of promoting, it will impede the perfection of a religious. For, as St. Augustine says, acts of devotion opposed to rule are but so many steps out of the way, and so many stumbling-blocks to the soul.

But you, dear sister, have left the world to become a saint; and do you not see, that not to conquer yourself in small things will not only prevent you from being a saint, but will also expose you to the danger of perdition ? " We had," says St. Eucherius of Lyons, " abundant strength to relinquish the dearest affections, and we are not strong enough to overcome negligence."[9219] We had the courage to renounce all attachments to relatives, to property, and to the pleasures of the world; and now we are too weak to conquer our tendency to violate rule. Cassian relates that to a certain monk who had abandoned the dignity of senator to enter religion, but afterwards did not observe his rule, St. Basil said, in a tone of commiseration: " You have lost the rank of senator, and have not become a monk."[9220] Unhappy man, what have you done? To become a monk, you have forfeited the honourable station of senator, and have not attained the sanctity of a religious.

Tertullian says: " If you deem the liberty of the world to be true liberty, you have returned to servitude, and have lost the liberty of Christ."[9221] As if he said: O spouse of Jesus, you have gone forth from the slavery of the world, and have taken possession of the liberty of Christ, by putting off all earthly affections the unhappy chains which hold so many poor souls in bondage; and will you still esteem the liberty of the world to be true liberty ? If you do, you have miserably returned to the slavery of the world, and have lost the freedom of the children of God, which Jesus Christ purchased for you.

FIRST EXCUSE

SOME RELIGIOUS EXCUSE THEIR NEGLIGENCE BY SAYING THAT THE RULES WHICH THEY VIOLATE ARE OF NO IMPORTANCE

To them I answer, in the first place, that no Rule of religion can be deemed unimportant or undeserving of attention. All the rules of religion should be respected, because they are all ordained by Almighty God, and approved by the Church, as means of attaining the perfection “to which every religious consecrated to God should continually aspire; and because the neglect of even trifling rules injures regular discipline, and disturbs the whole Community. It is certain that the spirit of fervor flourishes in the convent where attention is paid to the smallest rules; but where they are neglected, there piety is either lost or begins to decay Father St. Jure[9222] relates that Father Oviedo, the Superior of the college of the Jesuits in Naples, insisted on the punctual observance of even the smallest rules. He was opposed by Father Bobadilla, who asserted that it was not right to oblige subjects to observe such trifles.

By this opposition the rigor of discipline was relaxed; the event showed the evil consequences of the neglect of rule. By the habitual violation of order, a contempt for the most important as well as for the smallest rules was engendered in some, who afterwards abandoned religion. Being informed of the relaxation which had taken place, St. Ignatius ordained that the rules should be observed with the utmost exactness, and thus discipline was reestablished.

Tepid and negligent religious disregard trifles, but , the devil sets great value on the smallest violation of rules; he carefully marks all our transactions to charge us with them one day before the tribunal of Jesus Christ. St. Richard, a religious, having once got his hair cut before the usual time, saw the devil gathering and numbering the hairs that were scattered over the floor.[9223] In like manner, St. Gertrude[9224] saw the enemy collecting all the little tufts of wool which, for want of the perfect spirit of poverty, she had allowed to be wasted; and all the syllables of the Office that had been omitted because it was recited with too much rapidity. Blessed Denis the Carthusian relates that Satan appeared once to a religious with a needle and a silk thread in his hand, which she had used without permission. Thus the enemy of mankind keeps an account of every word uttered in the place or time of silence, of every look of curiosity, and of every transgression of rule into which negligent religious fall.

It is because they are heedless of small faults that these miserable souls experience nothing but aridity and irksomeness in their meditations, Communions, and in all their exercises of devotion.

In punishment of one look of curiosity, contrary to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost not to indulge her eyes, St. Gertrude was visited with spiritual dryness for eleven days. It is but just that whoever sows little should gather but little fruit. He who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly.[9225] How can the Lord be liberal of his graces and consolations to a religious who serves him with reserve and with negligence ? Had she faithfully observed such a rule God would perhaps have bestowed upon her great graces; but in punishment of her negligence he has justly withheld them from her. Blessed Egidius used to say, “By a small neglect a great grace may be lost.” “Many,” says St. Bonaventure, “desire to die for Christ, and are at the same time unwilling to bear light crosses for his sake.”[9226] Many pant after the crown of martyrdom, and will violate a small rule rather than submit to a trifling inconvenience. If, says the Saint, you received a command hard to be observed, and in its fulfilment attended with serious disadvantages, there might perhaps be some apology for its violation; but for the infraction of rules of easy observance there cannot be the shadow of an excuse. The more unimportant a rule, and the more easy it is to be observed, the more imperfect the religious who transgresses it, because the greater is her attachment to self-will. But God grant, as has been said above,[9227] that the disregard of small rules may not lead her one day to the violation of her vow, and to eternal perdition. He that breaketh a hedge, says the Holy Ghost, a serpent shall bite him.[9228] Whoever breaks down the fence of the Rule stands in great danger of being one day bitten by the infernal serpent.

When you see a religious of exemplary conduct fall into the pit of sin, do not imagine that the devil, by the first attack, succeeded in effecting her ruin. No, he first induced her to neglect her Rule and to despise small things, and then drew her into grievous transgressions.

SECOND EXCUSE

OTHERS EXCUSE THEMSELVES BY SAYING THAT THE RULE DOES NOT BIND UNDER PAIN OF SIN

It has been already said (Chap. IV.) that to violate without sufficient necessity even the Rules that are not obligatory under the penalty of moral guilt, is, according to the common opinion of theologians, at least a venial transgression. Speaking of the Rule of his Order, which has not the force of a strict precept, St. Thomas, after stating that the violation of the vows is a mortal sin, says that " the transgression of the other Rules is only a venial fault."[9229] I have said that to break any Rule without sufficient cause is at least a venial sin. For when the violation of Rule is productive of serious injury or of great scandal in the convent, it may be a mortal sin. For example, to disturb habitually the general silence, to enter the cells of your companions, to break without leave the fasts prescribed by the Rule, and similar irregularities, sometimes rob the soul of sanctifying grace. But that the violation of Rule is at least a venial sin, cannot be doubted: 1. Because a religious by transgressing her Rule neglects the means of attaining the perfection to which she is bound to aspire; 2. Because she is unfaithful to the promise which at her profession she made to observe the Rules of the Community; 3. Because by her bad example in transgressing the Rule she disturbs the good order of the Community; 4. And lastly (and this is the strongest reason): Because every infraction of the Rule proceeds from self-love, and is a departure from the will of God.

Unnecessary transgressions of rule are certainly not acts of virtue; neither can they be said to be indifferent. For how can we call an action indifferent that is performed through self-will, that gives bad example, and destroys the order of regular discipline ? If, then, the violation of the Rule cannot be good or indifferent, it must be sinful. Some perhaps will say: It is enough for me that the violation of the Rule is not a mortal sin. To such people I would answer, that they are in a very dangerous state. If they are not dead, they are in the last agony. Their unhappy souls are infected with a slow fever which will soon bring on death. Let them read what is said in Chapter V.

THIRD EXCUSE

IN EXTENUATION OF THEIR NEGLECT OF THE RULE OTHERS SAY THAT THEY ARE ADVANCED IN YEARS, AND THAT THEY CANNOT BEAR THE RIGORS PRACTISED BY YOUNG PEOPLE

In answer to them I say, that a religious, whether young or old, does injury to herself and the Community by the transgression of the Rule. St. Peter Chrysologus says that “ by its shade a barren tree is pernicious not only to itself, but also to the fertile plants by which it is surrounded.”[9230] Yes, every religious who gives bad example by inattention to the Rule does an injury to her own soul and to her fervent companions.

Besides, religious advanced in years are more strictly bound to perfect observance than those who are young in religion. First, because they have been longer in the cloister: and as the more time a person has devoted to study, the more extensive should be his learning; so the longer a religious is engaged in the meditation of Jesus crucified, the greater should be her progress in the science of the saints and in Christian perfection.

Secondly, because the example of the more advanced is most efficacious in inducing the juniors to observe or to violate the Rule. Religious of long standing are the torches that enlighten the Community; they are the pillars that sustain regular observance; and by their example they engage the young in the support of order. But if discipline be disregarded by the oldest members of the Community, the Rule will be despised by the novices in religion. Generally speaking, all the irregularities that creep into convents are to be ascribed not so much to the young as to the advanced religious, who by their bad example lead the others to seek a relaxation of the rigor of the Rule. As long as their works contradict their words, all their exhortations and entreaties to the juniors to observe the Rule will be unprofitable. “The eyes,” says St. Ambrose, “persuade sooner than the ears.” Example is far more persuasive than admonition. And how is it possible to induce novices to observe the Rule when the conduct of

Superiors is subversive of regular observance ? “ Nothing,” says Tertullian, “can be built up by the same means as that by which it is pulled down.”

When Eleazar was tempted by the wicked Antiochus to transgress the divine command, which forbade the Hebrews to eat swines flesh, his friends through compassion for his old age besought him, in order to escape death, at least to pretend to comply with the tyrants order.[9231] But the venerable old man wisely replied, that he would rather be sent into the other world: for it doth not become our age to dissemble? He would rather sacrifice his life than pretend, at such an advanced age, to break the divine precept, and thus teach his young countrymen to transgress the law.[9232] “The look of a just man,” says St. Ambrose, “is an admonition.”[9233] Oh! what an affecting admonition to novices, and how far superior to the most eloquent exhortation, to see an aged religious observing with punctuality all the Rules, great and small ! All the zeal and exertions of religious who love perfection should be directed to the support of discipline in all its rigor. When Jesus Christ, by stretching forth his right hand, showed St. Teresa that he was espoused to her, he said: “ Henceforth, as my true spouse, you shall be zealous for my honor.”[9234]Every spouse, then, of Jesus should ardently seek his glory. But it is for the observance of the Rules, which are the principal support of perfection in the Community, that religious should display all their zeal. And this zeal should be cherished not only by Superiors, but by all, and especially by those whose office or age gives them authority over the other Sisters. Whenever St. Andrew Avellini saw the rules transgressed, he admonished with great fervor not only his companions in religion, but also his Superiors. It is related in the life of Father Torres that one of his penitents, Sister M. Teresa Spinelli, a religious of great zeal and piety, in the convent of the Most Holy Trinity at Naples, seeing certain abuses introduced into the Community, opposed them vehemently without regard to any person, however great his dignity. She had in view only God’s honor; and to uphold it by resisting the introduction of irregularity into religion, she endured many troubles and contradictions. When manifest abuses and relaxation of discipline steal into a convent, it is not pride or temerity, but an act of virtue and zeal, to exclaim against them, and even to oppose the Superiors themselves, should such opposition be necessary for the correction of abuses.

FOURTH EXCUSE

THROUGH A PRETENDED FEAR OF BEING TROUBLESOME TO THE SUPERIOR, SOME ABSTAIN FROM ASKING PERMISSION TO DO WHAT THEY ARE FORBIDDEN BY RULE TO DO WITHOUT HER LEAVE

This, too, is a vain excuse; for Superiors, instead of being annoyed, are edified by the religious who ask permissions as often as they may be required. Besides, how can a Superior complain of the sisters for asking leave to do what their Rule forbids them to do, without her permission ? Be careful, then, never to abstain from asking any permission which your Rule commands you to ask. And when, to support the observance of the Rule, your Superior refuses your request, be not disturbed, but thank her for the refusal, and keep your soul in peace. All the passengers in a ship rejoice, and even feel grateful to the pilot, when they see that he compels all the sailors, without exception, to attend to their duty; for should even one of them neglect his post the vessel might be lost.

The rules are burdensome, but they are only the burden of the wings with which we fly to the Lord. “ The burden of Christ,” says St. Augustine, “ has wings.”[9235] Yes, it has wings which assist us to rise on high. The rules are fetters; but they are bonds of love which unite us to the Supreme Good. When bound by rule, we should say with holy David: The lines are fallen unto me in goodly places[9236] To me these cords are not a badge of dishonour, but of nobility; they are the object of my love because they deliver me from the chains of hell.

And when we feel pain or sorrow in consequence of being deprived by our Rule of any gratification which self-love prompts us to desire, let us rejoice, and say with the Apostle “I, a prisoner in the Lord. “[9237] As if he said: I see that I am a prisoner, but I exult in those chains which bind me to my God and merit for me an eternal crown. “ He would not,” says St. Augustine, “ put a golden necklace on you if he had not first chained you in iron fetters.”[9238] The Lord would not give you the golden necklace of eternal glory without having first bound you with the chains of rule.

Should a sister, then, ask you to do what without permission you are forbidden to do, tell her without hesitation that you cannot accede to her request. You ought not to be ashamed to refuse when there is question of avoiding a fault, and especially the violation of the Rule. No: should the others be negligent, it is your duty to be singular in regular observance. Be not afraid that your regularity will be an occasion of vainglory. That your example may shine forth, and serve as an incentive to others to observe the Rule and thus give glory to God, it is certainly his will that, if the rest of the Community be careless, you should be singular in attending even to the smallest rules. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven[9239] If you are not able to do great things for God, to perform rigorous penances, or to devote much time to prayer, strive at least to observe your Rule with exactness; and be assured that by its sole observance you will in a short time make rapid progress in perfection. A great servant of God used to say that the punctual observance of the Rule is the short way to sanctity." The best perfection," says St. Bonaventure, " is to fulfil all things whatsoever that are prescribed."[9240] God will be liberal to a religious in proportion to her fidelity to him. "A religious," says St. Teresa, "faithful to the minutest of the rules does not walk, but flies to perfection without either wings or feathers." St. Augustine justly calls the Rule the mirror of religious; for by its observance the character of a religious may be known. Yes, says Hugo of Victor, commenting on St. Augustine, the Rule is the best test by which we may discover " whether religious are just or unjust, whether they advance, whether they are pleasing or displeasing to God. "[9241]By seeing religious attentive to the Rule, or careless about its observance, we ascertain at once whether they love or do not love perfection; whether they go forward or recede; whether they please or displease God. Be assured that a religious will become a saint not by doing a multiplicity of works, but by the faithful observance of the Rule. At the times set apart by the Rule for labor or for recreation a religious should not go to prayer, to the choir, nor take the discipline. These unseasonable devotions are, says Father Alvarez, sacrifices of rapine, which God does not accept.

A certain Capuchin was accustomed to absent himself from the common labors for the purpose of attending to his private devotions. On the bed of sickness Jesus Christ, in quality of his judge, appeared to him, and ordered all the vocal prayers and other devotions performed during the time of the common exercises to be taken from him and to be distributed among those who had labored for the Community. By the mercy of God his life was prolonged, his health was restored, and ever after the good brother assisted most punctually at all the common duties.

St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that the best means to acquire great merit is to be present at every assembly of the Community. It is true that in certain circumstances, as when you labor under infirmity or are engaged in some very important duty of office, it is not a fault to break some small rule. But it is likewise true that transgressions committed under pretence of sickness or necessity frequently proceed from sloth, and from a want of affection for the Rule. For others who are perhaps more infirm, and not less occupied in the offices of the convent, never violate the rules that you so often transgress. They who love discipline find the means of observing the Rule, and also of discharging the duties of office. St. Teresa used to say that " sometimes the evil is small, and therefore we imagine that we are not bound to avoid it."[9242]

To read your Rule frequently for the purpose of seeing what faults you commit and what you .have to correct will contribute greatly to infuse into your soul an affection for exact observance. The reading of the rules is one of the best spiritual readings that you can make. It will also be very profitable to make your particular examination on the rules that you transgress most frequently. Whenever you violate the Rule be not ashamed to acknowledge your fault to the Superior, and to ask penance for it. The devil once said to St. Dominic, that in the chapter at which religious confess their defects, and receive penance and admonition for them, he lost all that he had gained in the refectory, in the parlour, and in the other places of the monastery. Before you confess your fault, dispose your heart to accept whatever reproof or penance may be given to you, lest you should be like the religious who, to show that they are humble and exact in the observance of the Rule, acknowledge their defects, but are at the same time unwilling to be reproved for their transgressions.

But to be profitable, the observance of the Rule, as St. Ignatius has remarked, must above all be accompanied with "the spirit of love, and not the perturbation of fear."[9243] You should observe the rules not to escape the rebukes of the Superior, nor to win the admiration of the sisters, but through the spirit of love and to please Jesus Christ. Hence the same saint has declared, that in not annexing the penalty of sin to the violation of the Rule of the Society of Jesus, his object was “to make love take the place of the fear of offending God. “[9244] Count,” says St. Eucherius of Lyons, “ among the days of your life that day only on which you have denied self-will, and which you have spent without any violation of the Rule.”[9245] St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi has recommended three very efficacious means of observing the Rule: “1. Prize the Rule as you esteem God himself. 2. Act as if you only were obliged to observe the Rule. 3. If the others fail in regular observance, endeavor to supply their deficiency.”

In a word, I say again, you must be persuaded that the perfection of a religious does not consist in great and manifold works, but in performing all her actions well. Great indeed was the praise of the multitude to Jesus Christ when they said: He hath done all things well.[9246]To achieve what is difficult and extraordinary is not given to all; nor can extraordinary works be performed at all times.

But ordinary actions such as the common prayer, the examination of conscience, Communion, the hearing of Mass, the recitation of the divine Office, the fulfilment of the duties annexed to the offices of the Community, and the other obligations imposed by the Rule are duties that may be discharged every day, and by all the members of the convent. Be assured that though in the fulfilment of ordinary duties you should be employed in the meanest occupations, the faithful discharge of them will certainly make you a saint. It is not enough to do what God wills: it is moreover necessary to do it in the manner he wishes. It is related in the Chronicles of the Cistercians, that St. Bernard saw many angels noting what the monks were doing in the choir. The works of one were written in gold, of another in silver, of a third in ink, and of a fourth in water, to denote the perfection or imperfection with which each attended to prayer. Consider then how easily, if you will, you can arrive at perfection: by the discharge of your ordinary duties you may become a saint. The Lord does not require of you lofty flights of contemplation, nor formidable penances: all that he demands is, that you perform all your actions well.

Many religious, on days of devotion, for example, during the novena of the Nativity, of the Holy Ghost, and of the Blessed Virgin, practise many exercises of piety, fasts, disciplines, vocal prayers, and similar works of penance. All these are very good; but the best devotion for a religious on such occasions is to perform her ordinary duties with extraordinary perfection. The perfection of an action consists, first, in that it is done through the sole motive of pleasing God; for it is not the external act, but purity of intention, that constitutes perfection. All the glory of the king s daughter is within[9247] The perfection of an action consists, secondly, in doing it well; that is, with promptness, attention, and exactness.

The following are the means of performing our actions well:

1. The first means is to preserve during the discharge of your duties a lively sense of the presence of God, that thus every act may be worthy of his divine eyes.

2. The second means is, to perform every work as if it were the only duty you had to fulfil. When at prayer, let your sole care be to pray well; when you say the divine Office, direct all your attention to the devout recitation of it; when engaged in any employment enjoined by obedience, your sole concern should be to discharge it well. Think of nothing but the duty in which you are occupied. To examine, during the time of prayer, how you will execute a certain command, or how you will direct a certain work, or to reflect on the means of performing any other duty, is a temptation of the enemy. “ When,” says Father M. Avila, “ any unseasonable thought enters your mind, say: God does not will that I think at this moment on such a subject; and therefore it is not useful for me to reflect upon it: when he commands me, I shall attend to it.”

3. The third means is, to perform every action as if it were the last of your life. St. Anthony frequently recommended this means to his disciples. “ In every work,” says St. Bernard, “let each one say to himself: If I were about to die, would I do this?”[9248] Would I do it in this manner ? Were this the last Mass that I should hear, with what devotion would I be present at it ? Were this the last Office that I should recite, with what attention would I say it ! Were this my last Communion or my last meditation, with what fervor would I perform it !

When, says St. Basil, you discharge the duties of the morning, imagine that you shall not live till evening; when night approaches, think that you shall not see the morning.[9249] It is related of a certain Dominican, who was accustomed to go to confession every morning before he offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, that, being seized with a serious malady, his Superior commanded him to prepare for death by a good confession. The good religious raised his hands to heaven, and exclaimed: Blessed be God, I have confessed every day for the last thirty years, as if I were to die suddenly. Blessed, says the Redeemer, is that servant, whom, when His Lord shall come, he shall find so doing:[9250] And happy the religious whom, should death come suddenly upon her, Jesus Christ, her judge, shall find performing the duty in which she may be engaged, as if she knew it to be the last of her life.

4. To think each day only on the labors of the day, is another means which greatly assists weak souls to discharge their duties with fervor. The apprehension of the pains to be endured, in living till death with so much exactness, and in continually resisting self-love, is one of the causes which make many lose courage in the way of God. The best means of conquering this temptation is, to imagine each morning that you have but one day to live. Whoever represents to himself that only one day of life remains, will certainly perform all the actions of that day with great perfection. This means is very profitable to weak souls; but strong and perfect Christians do not require to conceal from themselves the labors necessary for the attainment of sanctity; they rejoice in suffering, and pant for opportunities of pleasing God.

5. To religious beginning to walk in the way of perfection it will be very useful means to consider that what is in itself difficult and painful will by habit soon become easy and agreeable. *I will,* says the Holy Ghost, *lead thee by the paths of equity ; which, when thou shalt have entered, thy steps shall not be straitened* ; *and when thou run-nest, thou shalt not meet a stumbling-block*[9251] I will, says the Lord, first conduct you into the narrow paths of virtue; but you shall soon walk through a broad and pleasing way, and there you shall run without difficulties or obstacles. “At first,” says St. Bernard, writing to Pope Eugenius, “some duty will seem intolerable; if you accustom yourself to it, in process of time it will not appear so difficult: afterwards you shall not feel it; and in the end you will delight in it.”[9252] Behold with your eyes, says Ecclesiasticus, how I have labored a little, and have found much rest to myself[9253]

PRAYER

O my God ! I am that unhappy soul that has long since merited the curse of the barren fig-tree.[9254] Since I have produced no fruit, why should I occupy a place in religion ? I have deserved to be cut down and cast into the fire. Unhappy me ! I have been for so many years in religion, and favoured with so many helps to sanctity, and what fruit have I brought forth ? But Thou dost not wish that I despair, or doubt in Thy mercy. Thou hast said : Ask, and you shall receive. Since Thou dost desire me to ask for Thy graces, the first favour I seek is the pardon of all the displeasure that I have given to Thee. I have repaid Thy love and Thy benefits by so many insults; but I repent, my God, with my whole soul. The second grace I ask of Thee is the gift of Thy love, that henceforth I may love Thee, not with tepidity, as in my past life, but with my whole soul, and that I may never more give Thee the least displeasure, but that I may always do whatever I know to be pleasing to Thee. The third grace I ask is holy perseverance in Thy love. I now esteem Thy love more than all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou wishest me to be entirely Thine, and I desire to belong to Thee without reserve. On the Cross and in the Blessed Sacrament Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me ; I offer my whole being to Thee. I thank Thee for enabling me by Thy grace to make this oblation. Since Thou hast inspired, I hope thou hast accepted it. O my Jesus, I am Thine, and I trust that Thou wilt be mine for all eternity. I desire not that my inclinations, but Thy holy will, may live henceforth in me. And I promise from this day forward to observe all, even the smallest, of the rules of religion ; because I know that all of them are approved by Thee. O my Love, my Love ! I will say with St. Catharine of Genoa, no more sins. I beseech Thee to make me always love Thee, or to take me out of life. Either love or death, O my God !

Mary, my mother, speak to thy Son, and obtain for me the grace to love him or to die.

VI. THE FOUR DEGREES OF PERFECT OBEDIENCE

To be perfect in obedience, a religious must obey with promptness, exactness, cheerfulness, and simplicity. These are the degrees of perfect obedience.

THE FIRST DEGREE

The first degree, then, is to obey with promptness, executing immediately and without reply every injunction imposed by obedience. There are some who obey only after many entreaties of the Superior, and after many attempts to elude her commands. Religious that are truly obedient do not act in this manner. “ A Christian faithful to obedience,” says St. Bernard, “ knows not delays, but prepares his ears for hearing, and his hands and his feet for labor.”[9255]

A religious truly obedient is never slow to obey, but instantly applies her ears to hear every precept, and her hands and feet to execute every command. She does not indulge in slothful slumbers after the morning bell, but obeying its sound as the call of God himself, she instantly rises. On receiving a precept, she makes no reply, offers no excuses, manifests no repugnance, as some do, by a silence which often afflicts the Superior, but instantly and with external joy shows her readiness to obey, and immediately fulfils the command. She is not like those who are with difficulty made to submit to authority, and who by their reluctance to obey lose the greater part of the merit of obedience. No; to insure her compliance with every duty, neither entreaties, nor arguments, nor repeated commands are necessary. She fulfils at once, and without reply, every obligation of obedience.

Oh ! how meritorious in the sight of God is prompt obedience. He has several times shown, even by supernatural prodigies, how acceptable it is in his sight. St. Mark, a monk, while engaged in writing, was called by his Superior, the Abbot Silvan; the saint left unfinished a word which he had just begun, and instantly obeyed. On his return he found the remainder of the word written in letters of gold. Blosius[9256] relates that a nun to whom the infant Jesus appeared, being summoned at the moment of his appearance to a certain duty, instantly obeyed the call. On her return she found him grown up to the age of manhood, and was addressed by him in the following words: “My child, your ready obedience has made me grow thus in your heart.” Jesus appeared to another religious, who on hearing the bell for Vespers left him, and went to the choir.

When she returned to her cell, he appeared to her again and said: “Because you left me, you have found me again; had you not obeyed the call of duty, I should have departed from you.” To try the obedience of some of his monks who were confined to bed by sickness, St. Columban commanded them to rise, and go to the barn to thrash corn. As many as were filled with the true spirit of—obedience instantly arose, and were suddenly restored to health. The others, because they were weak in spirit as well as in body, remained in bed and continued in their infirmities.[9257] God has also sometimes shown how much he dislikes tardy obedience. Blessed Juniper, while employed in planting a tree in the garden, was called by St. Francis. The brother did not obey the call immediately, but waited till he had finished the work in which he was engaged. The saint, to show him the fault he had committed by the tardiness of his obedience, cursed the tree, and on the part of God, commanded it to grow no larger. The tree obeyed, and never increased in size.[9258] The narrator of this fact states, that when he wrote his annals the tree was preserved in the convent of the city of Carinula; that It remained green, but was as small as when it was planted. How scandalous is it to see certain religious slow to obey, for no other reason than because they are commanded to obey ! Were the duty of obedience not of precept, they should perhaps discharge it without delay, because it would be agreeable to self-will. Some will obey only after having frequently said to the Superior: I cannot perform this duty. They would speak with more truth if they said: I do not wish to do what you command. St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say that he who instead of saying “ I will not,” says “ I cannot,” deceives himself, and not the Superior.

THE SECOND DEGREE

The second degree of obedience is to obey with exactness; that is, with punctuality, and without interpretation.

PUNCTUALLY. You should obey with punctuality, and not rob God of any part of your sacrifice by a mutilation of the victim you offer to him. You should carefully fulfil the whole duty imposed upon you, and employ in its discharge all the time prescribed by obedience. Some are punctual in the presence of the Superior, but in her absence they comply so imperfectly with the obligations of obedience, that it would be difficult to determine whether the fulfilment of their duties is a source of merit or demerit. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say, that “ religious have consecrated their will not to men, but to God; that they have given it to him, not in part, but entirely and without reserve."

WITHOUT INTERPRETATIONS. It is also necessary to obey without interpreting in your own favour the commands that you receive. A lay-brother, from another convent, came one day to the house of the Dominicans in Bologna. Being obliged to go out in haste on pressing and important business, he obtained permission from the Superior to take for his companion the brother whom he should first meet. Meeting, by chance, St. Thomas, he asked the saint in the name of the Superior to accompany him. The saint instantly obeyed, but being corpulent, walked slowly; the lay-brother, because his business was urgent, entreated the saint to quicken his pace. When the brother knew who his companion was, he frequently begged pardon of St. Thomas for having treated him so disrespectfully; but the holy Doctor bore all without the least sign of impatience.[9259]

St. Thomas might have interpreted the command of the Prior, and have reasonably inferred that it did not extend to him; but no: he wished to obey without reply and without interpretation, and when he was told that he might have excused himself, he answered that the sole concern of a religious should be, to fulfil with exactness the obligations of obedience.

Cassian[9260] relates that two young religious being sent by the Abbot John with a basket of figs, as a present to an aged monk who lived at a distance, missed their way and wandered through a desert for many days without food. In such necessity they might, without violating obedience, have interpreted in their own favour the command of the Superior, and have eaten of the figs sent to the monk; but rather than depart from even the letter of the precept, they submitted to a painful death. They were afterwards found dead, and the figs untouched.

I do not mean to say that it is never lawful to transgress the letter of a precept; or that it is wrong to interpret the will of Superiors, when circumstances justify or render necessary an interpretation of their command. But I assert that certain forced and sophistical interpretations differ but little from formal acts of disobedience. Subjects should always comply even with the letter of a precept, unless they be certain that the Superior does not intend to oblige them to fulfil it. Some religious, though fully acquainted with the will of the Superior, follow the dictates of their own caprice, saying that what they do is not forbidden. But Albert Magnus says that “ a truly obedient man never waits for a command, but performs, as if commanded, whatever he knows or judges to be the will of his Superior.”[9261]

It is in the prompt fulfilment of the will of the Superior that perfect obedience consists. St. Thomas teaches that the will of the Superior, in whatever way it is known, should be regarded as a tacit precept by the religious who aspires to perfect obedience.[9262]

THE THIRD DEGREE

The third degree of obedience is to obey with JOY. To obey with reluctance, and murmuring against Superiors, is a defect rather than an act of virtue. “ If,” says St. Bernard, “ murmuring in your heart, you begin to judge the Superior, though you externally comply with the precept, your compliance is not a virtue, but a covering of malice.”[9263] If you murmur interiorly against the Superior, the fulfilment of her commands is but a cloak thrown over your malice. For your obedience is only external, and in your heart you disregard her authority and violate the divine law. Oh! what a misery to see certain religious who discharge with cheerfulness only the duties which they themselves have asked, or which they have been requested and entreated to perform, and who accept without reluctance only the offices by which their own self-love is gratified?

How can a person who importunes the Superior for a charge agreeable to her inclinations, who is willing to accept such a charge and no other how, I say, can she be called an obedient religious? St. Ignatius used to say, that to regard as an act of obedience the fulfilment of a command extorted from a Superior is an illusion; and in confirmation of his assertion he adduced the following words of St. Bernard: “

Whosoever, either openly or secretly, labors to obtain from his spiritual Father a precept agreeable to self-will, deceives and vainly flatters himself by imagining that he practises obedience; for in this he does not obey his Superior, but the Superior rather obeys him.”[9264] Tritemius goes so far as to call the religious who obeys with reluctance a monster of the devil;[9265] for he too obeys, but his obedience is forced.

A religious who obeys only by constraint is in a certain sense worse than the demons; because she has promised obedience to God by her solemn vow, but they have not. In what, I ask, does the obedience of such a religious consist ? Is it not in doing with cheerfulness what pleases her own caprice, and in performing what is painful to self-love with reluctance, and with external signs of discontent ? “ What room is there for obedience,” says St. Bernard, “ where the bitterness of sadness is perceived ?”[9266]

God loveth a cheerful giver[9267]says the Apostle. The Lord loves the man who performs with cheerfulness whatever he does for the love of God. Religious filled with the true spirit of obedience execute with the greatest joy the commands that are most opposed to their inclinations; because it is in the fulfilment of such commands that they are most certain of not doing their own will, and of doing the will of God. And what can give greater happiness to a Christian than in the performance of every duty to be able to say: By this action I please God? If you, dear sister, desire to give great pleasure to Jesus Christ, beg of the Superior to impose upon you whatever precepts she pleases without any regard to your inclinations; for thus she will be more free in prescribing to you the necessary duties, and you shall have greater merit in executing her orders. You shall then be certain of deserving as great a reward by works agreeable to self-love as by the exercises opposed to the feelings of flesh and blood. Never depart from the excellent rule of St. Francis de Sales neither to ask nor to refuse any duty.”Obedience,” says St. John Climacus, “ is the sepulchre of self-will.”[9268] Some call obedience the death of self-will; but it is more properly denominated its sepulchre. For the dead, as long as they are unburied, may be seen; but after their interment they are no longer visible. Some destroy self-will by the practice of obedience, but still allow it to appear in their exterior. In the perfect, self-will is not only dead, but buried; so that in their actions it can never be perceived.

In St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi self-will was so completely extinguished that her Superiors could never know what was agreeable or disagreeable to her. Endeavor to imitate her conduct, and to receive with perfect indifference all the duties, offices, and employments that may be assigned to you; and to fulfil them with cheerfulness and alacrity. If you desire to discharge your obligations with true joy, you must perform them from the pure intention of pleasing God. If you comply with them to obtain the friendship of the Superior, to induce her to grant your requests, to escape her displeasure, or the charge of disobedience, or through any other motive of self-interest, you may indeed satisfy the Superior, but you will not please God, and therefore you shall suffer all the fatigue and pains of obedience without enjoying the tranquillity of an obedient religious. Moreover, if to please God be the sole end of your obedience, you will cheerfully obey, not only when the tone and manner of the Superior are sweet and agreeable, but also when her directions are given in severe and commanding language: in this merit consists.

Father Rodriguez relates that St. Gertrude besought the Lord to deliver the abbess from her roughness of manner and impatience towards the sisters, but in answer Almighty God told her that he permitted these defects in the abbess to keep her humble, and for the greater trial and merit of the religious.

THE FOURTH DEGREE

The fourth and last degree of perfect obedience is to obey with SIMPLICITY. Servants, says the Apostle, be obedient . . . in the simplicity of your hearts.[9269] To be simple of heart you must subject your own judgment to that of the Superior, and esteem as just and reasonable whatever she commands. Behold how the Holy Ghost teaches his spouse the duty of perfect obedience: *If thou knowest not thyself, O fairest among women, go forth, and follow after the steps of thy flocks*[9270] O fairest of women, if you know not how to make yourself the object of my love, come and I will teach you; go forth from thyself, and follow after the steps of thy flocks, which, when sent to pasture, ask not where or when or why they go ? They obey their pastor without reply: so should a religious obey without demanding the reasons why she should obey.

That great servant of God, Father Pavone, of the Society of Jesus, used to say that obedience, to be perfect, should captivate the intellect as well as the will. The obedience of a religious whose will only obeys, and whose understanding condemns what the Superior commands, is lame and imperfect. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi says that “ perfect obedience requires a soul without a will, and a will without an intellect.”

Hence to acquire the perfect spirit of obedience the saint was accustomed, first to captivate her judgment, and then to perform the duty imposed upon her. He who does not practise obedience of the intellect will hardly obey with cheerfulness; his submission will be that of a slave the result of force, not the obedience of a child, and the fruit of love. Hence the Apostle says: With a good will serving as to the Lord, and not to men[9271] Obey with a good will, serving God rather than men. Your obedience will never be cheerful unless it proceed from a motive of pleasing God, who can never err in his precepts, and who commands only what will be profitable to us.

St. Thomas teaches that though the commands of a Superior may appear impossible, a religious should make an effort to fulfil them. Because subjects have no right to decide on the possibility or impossibility of a precept imposed upon them. " Perfect obedience," says St. Bernard, "is indiscreet."[9272] In subjects perfect obedience does not require discretion. And in another place the saint says: "It is impossible for a prudent novice to persevere in religion."[9273] A novice who regulates her obedience by her own prudence cannot persevere in the religious state. Because, continues the saint, to assume the office of Superior is, in a novice, insufferable pride. " To decide belongs to the Superior; and to obey is the duty of the subject."[9274] To decide what is to be done is the prerogative of the Superior, and to fulfil her commands the bounden duty of subjects. St. Ignatius once said that should the Pope command him to undertake a voyage by sea in a ship without a mast, without oars or sails, he would blindly obey the precept.

And when he was told that it would be imprudent to expose his life to danger, he answered that prudence is necessary in Superiors; but in subjects the perfection of prudence is to obey without prudence.

This doctrine is conformable to Holy Scripture: Behold, says the Lord, as clay is in the potter's hands.[9275]Religious must leave themselves in the hands of the Superior to be moulded as she wills. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it: What art thou making ?[9276] If clay should dare to say to the potter, Why hast thou formed me thus? the potter ought to answer: Be silent: it is not your business to inquire what I do, but to obey and to receive whatever form I please to give you. Such the answer merited by religious who seek to know why a precept, an office, or a duty is imposed upon them. St. Jerome, in an epistle to Rusticus, a monk, says: “ It is your duty to obey: judge not of the decision of your Superiors.”[9277] In the lives of the monks of La Trappe we read that a good religious called Arsenius judged to be superfluous the expense incurred by the Superior in making the church more commodious. But afterwards, reflecting that his judgment was in opposition to that of his Superior, he went immediately and with tears accused himself of his fault as if it were a great crime. The abbot told him that his fault was not so grievous as he imagined; but Arsenius could not restrain the torrent of tears which flowed from his eyes.

To regard as good whatever Superiors command, is the blind obedience so much praised by the saints ; and is the duty of every religious, and this for four reasons : 1 Because, according to the proverb, no one is fit to be a judge in his own cause.[9278] When there is question of their own interest, self-love renders it difficult for all men to distinguish truth from falsehood ; and therefore no one should be the judge of what regards himself. 2. Because a Superior is acquainted with a great many circumstances of which subjects are ignorant; and therefore her opinion should be preferred to theirs. 3. Because subjects only regard their own interests; but the Superior looks to the good of the Community. 4. Because Superiors are assisted, in a particular manner, by Almighty God to govern the Community; and therefore are favoured with lights not given to subjects.

Of St. Paul it is written, that after his conversion, when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. But they leading him by the hand, brought him to Damascus.[9279] Some religious are unwilling to obey without examining whether the duty imposed upon them will be profitable or unprofitable to them. Should it appear not suited to them, they either refuse to obey, or obey only with reluctance, or sometimes go so far as to charge the Superior with imprudence, indiscretion, or partiality. All this arises from a want of the spirit of blind obedience, and from a desire to demand from the Superior the reason why she imposes certain duties. “ To seek for reasons is,” according to St. Bernard, “ a sign of an imperfect heart.” 5 Whoever demands the reason of a precept shows a very imperfect will. It was by asking the reasons of the divine command that the devil tempted Eve to eat the forbidden apple, and succeeded in making her prevaricate. Why, said the serpent, hath God commanded you, that you should not cat of every tree in paradise?[9280] Had Eve answered: It belongs not to us to seek the reason of the precept: it is our duty to obey; she should not have fallen.

But because she began to examine the reason of the command, she replied, We can eat of the fruits of paradise. There is but one tree which we are forbidden to touch, lest perhaps we die.[9281] Perceiving that she began to doubt the threatened punishment of death, he rejoined, Be not afraid, you shall not die,[9282] and thus he persuaded her to transgress the command of God.

Religious that are truly obedient seek not for reasons; but, like St. Paul, with open eyes, they see not, and reduce a haughty intellect to the subjection of obedience, by submitting their judgment to that of their Superior. St. John Climacus[9283] says that a religious should banish thoughts opposed to obedience, as she would reject thoughts against chastity, that is, immediately, and without reply; and that, instead of questioning the reasonableness of the precepts of her Superior, she should always seek for reasons to defend their expediency. Almighty God has several times shown, in a miraculous manner, how much he delights in the blind obedience of religious. Sulpitius Severus relates, that to try the obedience of a young man who applied for admission into a certain monastery, the abbot commanded him to walk into a furnace filled with burning coals. The young man instantly plunged into the fire, but received no injury; his clothes were not even touched. St. Gregory relates that St. Benedict commanded St. Maurus to follow the young St. Placidus, who had fallen into a river. St. Maurus obeyed, walked on the waters, and saved the life of the boy.

These examples are not to be imitated. The precepts given by these holy men, and their fulfilment, proceeded from extraordinary impulses of the Holy Ghost, who assured the Superiors that by their commands, and the subjects that by their obedience, they were accomplishing the divine will. But at the same time they show how much God is pleased by blind unhesitating obedience.

To try the obedience of their subjects, Superiors sometimes impose commands that are inexpedient, and even absurd. St. Francis commanded his disciples to plant cabbages with their roots uppermost. He obliged Brother Matthew to continue turning round till he fell to the ground. St.

Teresa made similar trials of her children. But you will ask, Of what use are such precepts ? In answer I ask, Why are untrained horses made sometimes to run, sometimes to stop, and sometimes to go back ? All these contribute to make them obedient to the bridle ; and to exercise religious in what appears extravagant and useless accustoms them to subdue the stubbornness of their own will, and to subject their own judgments to that of their Superiors.

St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say, that “ to follow one s own judgment in the practice of obedience, is not obedience.” In every act of your life, be careful, dear sister, never to prefer your opinion to that of your Superiors. St. Philip Neri has remarked, that nothing is more dangerous than to be directed by one s own counsel. Peter of Blois says that “ to trust ones self-alone, is the greatest of evils.”[9284] Cassian asserts that “ it is impossible for him who confides in his own judgment to escape the deceits and illusions of the devil.”[9285]

Hence St. John Chrysostom teaches that “nothing is so destructive of the Church as a separation of disciples from their masters.”[9286] There is nothing which does greater injury to the Church of God than the opposition of disciples to the opinion of their masters; and there is nothing more ruinous to a religious Community than the disregard of the sisters for the judgment of their Superiors.

PRAYER

O my Jesus, Thou dost never abandon a soul that seeks Thee. Thou hast not forsaken them that love thee.[9287] I have left the world to find Thee in this holy place: but I have only sought myself and my own pleasures, and thus I have greatly offended Thee. Forget, O Lord, the past, and pardon the offences which I have committed against Thee, and which I now abhor with my whole soul. I feel a strong desire to become a saint, and to please Thee in all things. I know that this desire is Thy gift. Ah ! my Spouse, what has induced Thee to visit with so much love a soul so ungrateful, and to bestow upon me so many graces, after all the insults I have offered to Thee? With an humble and a contrite heart I thank Thee for all Thy favors : be a thousand times blessed for them. Thou dost invite me to Thy love; and I desire to obey Thy call. I know the value of this grace, and am resolved never more to be unmindful of Thy benefits, as I have hitherto been. I love Thee, O my Sovereign Good ! I love Thee, O my God ! Thou art my only treasure, and the only object of my love. Give me strength to correspond, by my affections, to the love which Thou dost bear me. Grant that I may love Thee always; that I may love Thee intensely: I ask nothing more.

O my mother, Mary, thank thy Son for me, and obtain for me the grace to be faithful to him during the remainder of my life. O Mother of God, in thee I trust.

Chapter VIII

EXTERIOR MORTIFICATION

I. ITS NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGES

THERE is no alternative: we poor children of Adam must till death live in continual warfare; For, says the Apostle, the flesh lusteth against the spirit[9288]The flesh desires what the spirit dislikes; and the spirit pants for what the flesh abhors. Now, since it is peculiar to irrational creatures to place all their happiness in sensual enjoyment, and to the angels to seek only the accomplishment of God’s will, surely if we attend to the observance of the divine commands, we shall, as a learned author justly says, he transformed into angels; but if we fix our affections on the gratifications of sense, we shall sink to the level of the brute creation.

If the soul do not subdue the body, the flesh will conquer the spirit. To maintain his seat on a furious steed, and to escape danger, the horseman must hold a tight rein; and to avoid the corruption of the flesh, we must keep the body in perpetual restraint. We must treat it as a physician treats a patient, to whom he prescribes nauseous medicine, and to whom he refuses palatable food. Cruel indeed must be the physician who gives to a sick man noxious draughts because they are pleasing to the taste, and who does not administer useful remedies, because they are bitter and disgusting.

And great is the cruelty of the sensual, when to escape some trifling corporal pain in this life they expose their souls and bodies to eternal torments in the next. “ Such charity,” says St. Bernard, “ is destructive of charity: such mercy is full of cruelty; because it serves the body so as to destroy the soul.”[9289] The false love of the flesh destroys the true charity which we owe to ourselves: inordinate compassion towards the body is full of cruelty, because by indulging the flesh it kills the soul. Speaking of sensualists who deride the mortifications of the saints, the same Father says: “If we are cruel in crucifying the flesh, you by sparing it are far more cruel."[9290]Yes, for by the pleasures of the body in this life you shall merit for soul and body inexpressible torments forever in the next. Father Rodriguez[9291] tells us of a solitary who had emaciated his body by very rigorous austerities. Being asked why he treated his body so badly, he replied: " I only chastise what chastises me."[9292] I torment the enemy who persecutes my soul, and who seeks my destruction. The Abbot Moses being once censured for his severity towards his body, replied: " Let the passion cease, and I will also cease to mortify my flesh."[9293] When the flesh ceases to molest me, I shall cease to crucify its appetites. If, then, we wish to be saved, and to please God, we must take pleasure in what the flesh refuses, and must reject what the flesh demands. Our Lord once said to St. Francis of Assisi: "If you desire my love, accept the things that are bitter as if they were sweet, and the things that are sweet as if they were bitter."

Some will say that perfection does not consist in the mortification of the body, but in the abnegation of the will. To them I answer with Father Pinamonti, that the fruit of the vineyard does not consist in the surrounding hedge; but still if the hedge be taken away, you will seek in vain for the produce of the vine. Where there is no hedge, says the Holy Ghost, the possession shall be spoiled.[9294] So ardent was the desire of St. Aloysius to crucify his flesh, that, although weak in health, he sought nothing but mortifications and penitential rigors; and, to a person who once said that sanctity does not consist in corporal works of penance, but in the denial of self-will, he wisely answered in the words of the Redeemer: These things you ought to have done, and not to have those undone[9295]He meant to say that, to keep the flesh in subjection to reason, the mortification of the body is necessary, as well as the denial of the will. I chastise my body, says St. Paul, and bring it into subjection[9296] The flesh, when indulged, will be brought with difficulty to obey the divine law. Hence St. John of the Cross, speaking of certain spiritual directors who despise and discourage external penance, says that "he who inculcates loose doctrine regarding the mortification of the flesh, should not be believed though he confirmed his preaching by miracles."

The world and the devil are very powerful enemies of our eternal salvation; but our own body, because it is a domestic enemy, is a still more dangerous antagonist. “ A domestic enemy,” says St. Bernard, “ is the worst of foes.”[9297]

A town that is besieged has more to apprehend from the enemies that are within than from those that are without the walls; because it is far more difficult to ward off the attacks of the former than those of the latter. St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say that “ we should pay no more attention to the body than to the vilest rag.” Such indeed has been the practice of the saints. As the indulgence of the body by sensual pleasures is the sole and constant study of worldlings, so the continual mortification of the flesh is to the saints the only object of their care and of their desires. St. Peter of Alcantara was accustomed to say to his body: O my body, keep your peace; I shall give you no rest here below; pains and torments shall be your portion in this life; when we shall be in paradise, you will then enjoy that repose which shall never end. Similar was the practice of St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, who, on the bed of death, stated that she did not remember to have ever taken pleasure in any other object than in God alone. If we read the lives of the saints and see the works of penance that they performed, we shall be ashamed of the delicacy and of the reserve with which we chastise the flesh. In the lives of the ancient Fathers[9298] we read of a large Community of nuns who never tasted fruit or wine. Some of them took food only once every day; others never ate a meal, except after two or three days of rigorous abstinence: all were clothed and even slept in haircloth. I do not require such austerities from religious of the present day: but is it too much for them to take the discipline several times in the week ? to wear a chain round some part of the body till the hour of dinner? not to approach the fire in winter on some day in each week, and during novenas of devotion ? to abstain from fruit and sweet meats ? and, in honor of the Mother of God, to fast every Saturday on bread and water, or at least to be content with one dish ?

But you will say: I am weak, and my director forbids me to practise any corporal austerity. Obey your confessor, but take care to embrace with peace all the troubles of your infirmities, and all the inconveniences arising from the heat or cold of the seasons. If you cannot chastise your body by positive rigors, abstain at least from some lawful pleasures. St. Francis Borgia, when amusing himself in hawk-hunting, used to cast down his eyes when he saw the hawk about to spring upon its prey. St. Aloysius always turned away his eyes from the objects of curiosity exhibited at the festivities at which he was present. Why cannot you practise similar mortifications ? If denied lawful pleasures, the body will not dare to seek forbidden indulgence; but if continually gratified by every innocent enjoyment, it will soon draw the soul into sinful gratifications. Besides, that great servant of God, Father Vincent Carafa, of the Society of Jesus, used to say that the Almighty has given us the goods of the earth, not only that we may enjoy them, but also that we may have the means of pleasing him by offering to him his own gifts, and by voluntarily renouncing them in order to show our love for him. It is true, indeed, that certain innocent pleasures assist our weakness, and prepare us for spiritual exercises; but it is likewise true that sensual pleasures poison the soul, by attaching her to creatures. Hence, like poison, they must be used sparingly. Poisons, when properly prepared and taken with moderation, are sometimes conducive to health; and sensual delights, because they are poisonous remedies, must be taken with great caution and reserve, without attachment to them, only through necessity, and to be better able to serve God.

Besides, for the recovery of bodily health you must take care never to impair the strength of the soul, which will be always weak as long as the flesh is not mortified. “ I compassionate,” says St. Bernard, “ the infirmities of the body; but the infirmity of the soul should be an object of greater alarm.”[9299] I pity the infirmities of the body, but feel greater commiseration for the more formidable and dangerous maladies of the soul. Oh! how often is bodily weakness made the pretext for unnecessary indulgence. “ We leave the choir,” says St. Teresa, “ to-day, because the headaches; on to-morrow, because it has ached; and on the day after, lest it should ache.” Hence on another occasion she thus addresses her dear children: “ You have entered religion not to indulge the flesh but to die for Jesus Christ. If we do not resolve to disregard the want of health, we shall do nothing. What injury will death do us ? How often have our bodies molested us ? Shall not we torment them in return ?” St. Joseph Calasanctius says: “Woe to the religious who loves health more than sanctity.”

St. Bernard considered it indecent in a religious to take costly medicine; for them, he said, decoctions of herbs should be sufficient. I do not require this of you; but I say that small indeed must be the spiritual progress of the religious who is continually seeking physicians and remedies; who is sometimes not content with the prescription of the ordinary physician; and who, by her discontent, disturbs the whole Community. “ Men,” says Salvian, “ devoted to Christ are weak, and wish to be so: if they were robust, they could with difficulty be saints.”[9300] All, and particularly nuns who have consecrated themselves to the love of Jesus Christ, are weak in body, and desire to continue in their infirmities: were they strong and vigorous, it would be difficult for them to attain sanctity. The truth of this observation appears from the lives of St. Teresa, St. Rose, St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, and other saints.

The Venerable Beatrix of the Incarnation, the first spiritual daughter of St. Teresa, though afflicted with pains and infirmities, was accustomed to say that she would not exchange her condition for that of the happiest princess on earth. Such was her patience, that in the greatest sufferings she never uttered a word of complaint. Hence a sister once said to her: “ You are like one of those wretched paupers who languish for want of food, but continue to endure the pains of hunger rather than submit to the shame of manifesting their poverty.”[9301]

If bodily weakness renders us unable to practise corporal austerities, let us at least learn from her example to embrace with joy the infirmities with which Almighty God visits us. If borne with patience, they will conduct us to perfection better than voluntary works of penance. St. Syncletica used to say, that “as corporal maladies are cured by medicine, so the diseases of the soul are healed by the infirmities of the body.”[9302]

Oh ! how profitable to the spirit are the mortifications of the flesh.

They detach the heart from sensual pleasures, which wound the soul, and frequently deprive her of life. “The wounds of charity,” says Origen, “make us in sensible to the wounds of the flesh.”[9303]

Moreover, by mortifications we atone in this life for the pains due to our sins. He that has offended God, though the offence may be pardoned, must either by expiatory works in this life, or by the pains of purgatory in the next, make satisfaction for the temporal punishment due to sin after remission of its guilt. His sufferings in purgatory will be infinitely greater than any torments that he could endure on earth. They shall be in very great tribulation, unless they do penance from their deeds.[9304]

They who have not expiated their sins shall suffer the sharpest torments in the other world. St. Antoninus[9305] relates that an angel proposed to a sick man the choice of being confined to purgatory for three days, or of being condemned to a continuation of his infirmities for two years. The sick man chose the three days in purgatory; but scarcely had an hour elapsed in that place of torments when he began to complain of the angel for having condemned him to a purgation not of three days, but of several years. “What!” replied the angel, “ your body is still warm on the bed of death, and you speak of having spent years in purgatory.” If, dear Sister, you wish to suffer in peace, imagine that you have still to live fifteen or twenty years, and say, This is my purgatory: it is the spirit rather than the body that I must conquer.

Mortifications raise the soul to God. St. Francis de Sales used to say, that a soul cannot ascend to the throne of God unless the flesh is mortified and depressed. There are many beautiful remarks on this subject in the works of St. Teresa: “ It would be folly,” says this great saint, “to think that God admits to his familiar friendship those who seek their own ease.”[9306] Sensuality and prayer are incompatible.[9307] Souls who truly love God cannot desire repose.”[9308]

Mortifications merit great glory in heaven. If “everyone who striveth for the mastery” abstains from whatever is likely to diminish his strength, and thus endanger the conquest of a miserable earthly crown, how much more should we deny the flesh for the attainment of an eternal kingdom ? And they, indeed, says St. Paul, that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible one[9309]

St. John saw all the saints with palms in their hands[9310] From this passage we learn that all the elect must be martyrs, either by the sword of the tyrant or by the voluntary crucifixion of the flesh. But while we meditate on the necessity of works of penance, we should at the same time remember that the pains of this life bear no proportion to the eternal glory that awaits us in paradise. *The sufferings of this life, says St. Paul, are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.*[9311] The few transitory mortifications which we practise here below will produce complete and everlasting felicity. For, says the Apostle, that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an exceeding weight of glory?[9312]

Let us then animate our faith. Our pilgrimage on earth will not be of long duration: our home is eternity, where he who has practised the greatest mortifications during life shall enjoy the greatest glory. St. Peter says the saints are the living stones of which the celestial Jerusalem is built.[9313] But before they are translated to the city which is above, they must be polished by the salutary chisel of penance.[9314]

Scalpri salubris ictibus Many a blow the biting sculpture
Et tunsione plurima Polished well those stones elect,
In their places now compacted
Fabri polita malleo By the heavenly Architect,
Who therewith hath willed forever
Hanc saxa molem construunt That his palace should be decked.

Let us consider each act of self-denial as a work that will prepare us for paradise. This thought will sweeten all our pains and all our toils. How pleasing is the fatigue of a journey to him who is assured that he shall obtain possession of all the territory through which he travels? It is related in the Lives of the Fathers,[9315]that a certain monk was anxious to exchange his cell for another nearer to the fountain from which he was accustomed to draw water, but as he was one day going to the fountain, he heard his steps counted by a person behind him. Turning round he saw a young man, who said: “I am an angel: I count your steps, that none of them may be without a reward.” The monk immediately abandoned the intention of changing his cell; and even wished it to be more distant from the water, that he might be able to acquire greater merit.

Mortified religious enjoy peace and content in this life, as well as in the next. What greater happiness can a soul possess than to know that by her mortifications she pleases God ? The very privation of carnal pleasures, and even the pains of penance, is so many spiritual delights to a loving soul. Love cannot be at rest. He that loves God cannot live without giving continual proofs of his affection. Now a soul cannot give a stronger proof of its love for God than the voluntary renunciation of earthly pleasures for his sake, and the oblation of its pains to him. A Christian enamoured of Jesus

Christ feels no pain in his penitential works. “He that loves,” says St. Augustine, “labors not.”[9316] “ Who,” says St. Teresa, “ can behold his God covered with wounds and harassed by persecutions, without embracing and even desiring a portion of his Saviours sufferings ?”[9317]

Hence St. Paul exclaimed, that he wished for no other delight or glory than the Cross of the Redeemer. *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*[9318] Again he says, that the crucifixion of the flesh is the test by which the true lovers of Jesus Christ may be known. They that are Christ’s have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences.[9319] Worldlings go in search of sensual gratifications, but the followers of Christ seek only corporal austerities.

In conclusion, dear Sister, imagine that death is at hand, and that as yet you have done but little for paradise. Strive from this day forward to mortify yourself as much as possible, at least by abstinence from the pleasures that self-love seeks. Endeavor to profit by every” opportunity of mortification. Let not the part of a good gift overpass you.[9320] Consider every occasion of self—denial as a gift which God bestows upon you, that you may be able to merit greater glory in another life; and remember that what can be done to-day cannot be performed to-morrow, for time that is past never returns.

To animate your fervor in the practice of mortification, I shall here place before your eyes, in his own words, what St. John Climacus saw in a monastery called the Prison of Penitents. “ I saw,” says the saint, “ some of them standing the whole night in the open air, to overcome sleep. I saw others with their eyes fixed on heaven, and with tears begging mercy from God. Others stood with their hands bound behind their shoulders, and their heads bowed down, as if they were unworthy to raise their eyes to heaven. Others remained on ashes, with their heads between their knees, and beat the ground with their foreheads. Others deluged the floor with their tears. Others stood in the burning rays of the sun. Others, parched with thirst, were content with taking a few drops of water to prevent death. Others took a mouthful of bread, and then threw it out, saying that he who has been guilty of beastly actions is unworthy of the food of men. Some had their cheeks furrowed by continual streams of tears; and others had their eyes sunken. Others struck their breast with such violence, that they began to spit blood. And I saw all with faces so pallid and emaciated, that they appeared to be so many corpses."[9321]

The saint then concludes by saying, that notwithstanding their fall, he considered them, on account of their penitential rigors, more happy than those who had never sinned and never done penance. What shall be said of them who have fallen and have never atoned for their crime by expiatory works ?

PRAYER

O my Spouse, assist me and give me strength, that for the future I may serve Thee better than I have done for the past. Hitherto I have sought the gratification of my senses and of self-love, but have been regardless of offending Thee. But for the future I desire only to please Thee, who art so deserving of all my love. For the love of me Thou hast chosen a life of continual pains and sorrows; Thou hast spared nothing to draw me to Thy love, and shall I continue to be as ungrateful as I have been for so many years ? No, my Jesus, it shall not be so : I have sinned enough in my past life. Pardon me all my transgressions ; I am sorry for them, and repent with all my whole heart of all the displeasure I have given Thee by my irregular life. I now love Thee with my whole soul, and desire to do all that I can to please Thee in all things, and without reserve.

Through my director, make known to me Thy will. I now purpose, and hope with the assistance of Thy grace, to fulfil Thy will in all things. My beloved Redeemer, replenish my memory with holy thoughts, that I may always remember the sorrows which Thou hast endured for my sake. Inflame my will with holy affections, that I may seek only what pleases Thee, and may desire only the accomplishment of Thy will, and to belong entirely to Thee. Grant, O Lord, that I may love Thee, and that I may love Thee ardently. For if I love Thee, all pains will be sweet and agreeable to me. Holy Virgin Mary, my mother, assist me to please God during the remainder of my life. In thee I place all my hope.

II. THE MORTIFICATION OF THE EYES, AND MODESTY IN GENERAL

1. MORTIFICATION OF THE EYES

Almost all our rebellious passions spring from unguarded looks; for, generally speaking, it is by the sight that all inordinate affections and desires are excited. Hence, holy Job made a covenant with his eyes, that he would not so much as think upon a virgin.[9322] Why did he say that he would not so much as think upon a virgin ? Should he not have said that he made a covenant with his eyes not to look at a virgin ? No; he very properly said that he would not think upon a virgin; because thoughts are so connected with looks, that the former cannot be separated from the latter, and therefore, to escape the molestation of evil imaginations, he resolved never to fix his eyes on a woman.

St. Augustine says: “The thought follows the look; delight comes after the thought; and consent after delight.”[9323] From the look proceeds the thought; from the thought the desire; for, as St. Francis de Sales says, what is not seen is not desired, and to the desire succeeds the consent.

If Eve had not looked at the forbid den apple, she should not have fallen; but because she saw that it was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and beautiful to behold, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.[9324] The devil first tempts us to look, then to desire, and afterwards to consent.

St. Jerome says that Satan requires “ only a beginning on our part.”[9325] If we begin, he will complete our destruction. A deliberate glance at a person of a different sex often .enkindles an infernal spark, which consumes the soul. “ Through the eyes,” says St. Bernard, “ the deadly arrows of love enters.”[9326] The first dart that wounds and frequently robs chaste souls of life finds admission through the eyes. By them David, the beloved of God, fell. By them was Solomon, once the inspired of the Holy Ghost, drawn into the greatest abominations. Oh ! how many are lost by indulging their sight!

The eyes must be carefully guarded by all who expect not to be obliged to join in the lamentation of Jeremiah: My eye hath wasted my soul[9327] By the introduction of sinful affections my eyes have destroyed my soul. Hence St. Gregory says, that “ the eyes, because they draw us to sin, must be depressed.”[9328] If not restrained, they will become instruments of hell, to force the soul to sin almost against its will. “ He that looks at a dangerous object,” continues the saint, “ begins to will what he wills not.” It was this the inspired writer intended to express when he said of Holofernes, that the beauty of Judith made his soul captive.[9329]

Seneca says that “ blindness is a part of innocence.”[9330] And Tertullian relates[9331] that a certain pagan philosopher, to free himself from impurity, plucked out his eyes. Such an act would be unlawful in us: but he that desires to preserve chastity must avoid the sight of objects that are apt to excite unchaste thoughts. Gaze not about, says the Holy Ghost, upon another s beauty; . . . hereby lust is enkindled as a fire.[9332] Gaze not upon another s beauty; for from looks arise evil imaginations, by which an impure fire is lighted up. Hence St. Francis de Sales used to say, that “they who wish to exclude an enemy from the city must keep the gates locked.”

Hence, to avoid the sight of dangerous objects, the saints were accustomed to keep their eyes almost continually fixed on the earth, and to abstain even from looking at innocent objects. After being a novice for a year, St. Bernard could not tell whether his cell was vaulted. In consequence of never raising his eyes from the ground, he never knew that there were but three windows to the church of the monastery, in which he spent his novitiate. He once, without perceiving a lake, walked along its banks for nearly an entire day; and hearing his companions speak about it, he asked when they had seen it. St. Peter of Alcantara kept his eyes constantly cast down, so that he did not know the brothers with whom he conversed. It was by the voice, and not by the countenance, that he was able to recognize them.

The saints were particularly cautious not to look at people of a different sex. St. Hugh, bishop, when compelled to speak with women, never looked at them in the face.

St. Clare would never fix her eyes on the face of a man. She was greatly afflicted because, when raising her eyes at the elevation to see the consecrated host, she once involuntarily saw the countenance of the priest. St. Aloysius never looked at his own mother in the face. It is related of St. Arsenius, that a noble lady went to visit him in the desert, to beg of him to recommend her to God. When the saint perceived that his visitor was a woman, he turned away from hen She then said to him: “ Arsenius, since you will neither see nor hear me, at least remember me in your prayers.” “ No,” replied the saint, “ but 1 will beg of God to make me forget you, and never more to think of you.”

From these examples may be seen the folly and temerity of some religious who, though they have not the sanctity of a St. Clare, still gaze around from the terrace, in the parlour, and in the church, upon every object that presents itself, even on people of a different sex. And notwithstanding their unguarded looks, they expect to be free from temptations and from the danger of sin. For having once looked deliberately at a woman who was gathering ears of corn, the Abbot Pastor was tormented for forty years by temptations against chastity. St. Gregory states that[9333] the temptation, to conquer which St. Benedict rolled himself in thorns, arose from one incautious glance at a woman. St. Jerome,[9334] though living in a cave at Bethlehem, in continual prayer and macerations of the flesh, was terribly molested by the remembrance of ladies whom he had long before seen in Rome. Why should not similar molestations be the lot of the religious who wilfully and without reserve fixes her eyes on people of a different sex? “ It is not,” says St. Francis de Sales, “ the seeing of objects so much as the fixing of our eyes upon them that proves most pernicious.”“If,” says St. Augustine, “ our eyes should by chance fall upon others, let us take care never to fix them upon any one.”[9335] Father Manareo, when taking leave of St. Ignatius for a distant place, looked steadfastly in his face: for this look he was corrected by the saint.[9336] From the conduct of St. Ignatius on this occasion, we learn that it was not becoming in religious to fix their eyes on the countenance of a person even of the same sex, particularly if the person is young. But I do not see how looks at young people of a different sex can be excused from the guilt of a venial fault, or even from mortal sin, when there is proximate danger of criminal consent. “ It is not lawful,” says St. Gregory, “ to behold what it is not lawful to covet.”[9337] The evil thought that proceeds from looks, though it should be rejected, never fails to leave a stain upon the soul. Brother Roger, a Franciscan of singular purity, being once asked why he was so reserved in his intercourse with women, replied, that when men avoid the occasions of sin, God preserves them; but when they expose themselves to danger, they are justly abandoned by the Lord, and easily fall into some grievous transgressions.

The indulgence of the eyes, if not productive of any other evil, at least destroys recollection during the time of prayer. For, the images and impressions caused by the objects seen before, or by the wandering of the eyes, during prayer, will occasion a thousand distractions, and banish all recollection from the soul. It is certain that without recollection a religious can pay but little attention to the practice of humility, patience, mortification, or of the other virtues. Hence it is her duty to abstain from all looks of curiosity, which distract her mind from holy thoughts. Let her eyes be directed only to objects which raise the soul to God.

St. Bernard used to say, that to fix the eyes upon the earth contributes to keep the heart in heaven. “Where,” says St. Gregory, “ Christ is, there modesty is found.”[9338]Wherever Jesus Christ dwells by love, there modesty is practised. However, I do not mean to say that the eyes should never be raised or never fixed on any object. No; but they ought to be directed only to what inspires devotion, to sacred images, and to the beauty of creation, which elevate the soul to the contemplation of the divinity. Except in looking at such objects, a religious should in general keep the eyes cast down, and particularly in places where they may fall upon dangerous objects. In conversing with men, she should never roll the eyes about to look at them, and much less to look at them a second time.

To practise modesty of the eyes is the duty of a religious, not only because it is necessary for her own improvement in virtue, but also because it is necessary for the edification of others. God only knows the human heart: man sees only the exterior actions, and by them he is edified or scandalized. A man, says the Holy Ghost, is known by his look[9339] By the countenance the interior is known. Hence, like St. John the Baptist, a religious should be a burning and shining light[9340] She ought to be a torch burning with charity, and shining resplendent by her modesty, to all who behold her. To religious the following words of the Apostle are particularly applicable: We are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men.”[9341] And again: Let your modesty be known to all men: the Lord is nigh[9342]

Religious are attentively observed by the angels and by men; and therefore their modesty should be made manifest before all; if they do not practise modesty, terrible shall be the account which they must render to God on the day of judgment. Oh ! what devotion does a modest religious inspire, what edification does she give, by keeping her eyes always cast down ! St. Francis of Assisi once said to his companion, that he was going out to preach. After walking through the town, with his eyes fixed on the ground, he returned to the convent. His companion asked him when he would preach the sermon. We have, replied the saint, by the modesty of our looks, given an excellent instruction to all who saw us. It is related of St. Aloysius, that when he walked through Rome the students would stand in the streets to observe and admire his great modesty.

St. Ambrose says, that to men of the world the modesty of the saints is a powerful exhortation to amendment of life.[9343] "The look of a just man is an admonition to many." The saint adds: "How delightful it is to do good to others by your appearance !"[9344] " It is related of St. Bernardine of Sienna, that even when a secular, his presence was sufficient to restrain the licentiousness of his young companions, who, as soon as they saw him, were accustomed to give to one another notice that he was coming. On his arrival they became silent or changed the subject of their conversation. It is also related of St. Gregory of Nyssa, and of St. Ephrem, that their very appearance inspired piety, and that the sanctity and modesty of their exterior edified and improved all that beheld them. When Innocent II. visited St. Bernard at Clairvaux, such was the exterior modesty of the saint and of his monks, that the Pope and his cardinals were moved to tears of devotion. Surius[9345] relates a very extraordinary fact of St. Lucian, a monk and martyr. By his modesty he induced so many pagans to embrace the faith, that the Emperor Maximian. fearing that he should be converted to Christianity by the appearance of the saint, would not allow the holy man to be brought within his view, but spoke to him from behind a screen.

That our Redeemer was the first who taught, by his example, modesty of the eyes, may, as a learned author remarks, be inferred from the holy evangelists, who say that on some occasion he raised his eyes. And he, lifting up his eyes on his disciples[9346] When Jesus therefore had lifted up his eyes.[9347] From these passages we may conclude that the Redeemer ordinarily kept his eyes cast down. Hence the Apostle, praising the modesty of the Saviour, says: I beseech you, by the mildness and modesty of Christ.[9348]

I shall conclude this subject with what St. Basil said to his monks: If, my children, we desire to raise the soul towards heaven, let us direct the eyes towards the earth.[9349] From the moment we awake in the morning, let us pray continually in the words of holy David: Turn away my eyes, that they may not behold vanity.[9350]

2. MODESTY IN GENERAL

We must practise modesty, not only in our looks, but also in our whole deportment, and particularly in our dress, our walk, our conversation, and all similar actions:

I. Modesty of dress is not incompatible with neatness or cleanliness. But how disedifying is the conduct of the religious who attends too much to the neatness of her person and to the fineness or richness of her apparel, who wears superfluous ornaments, whose dress is made in a manner apt to attract notice, and whose whole appearance exhibits worldly vanity ! Speaking of seculars, St. Cyprian says that “women decorated with gold, necklaces, and precious stones lose the ornaments of the soul.”[9351] What would the saint have thought of the religious who imitates worldlings in the vanity of her dress ? “ The ornaments of a woman are,” says St. Gregory Nazianzen, “ to be conspicuous for probity; to converse with the divine oracles; to seek wool and take hold of the spindle; and to keep a restraint on her eyes and on her lips.”[9352] Yes, the ornaments of holy women are probity of life; continual conversation with God by prayer; constant labor; and a perpetual guard over the eyes and tongue, by modesty and by silence.

II. A religious should be modest in her walk. “ Let your gait,” says St. Basil, “ be neither slow nor vehement.”[9353] Your walk, to be modest, must be grave, neither too quick nor too slow.

III. A religious must practise modesty in sitting. She must avoid every slothful posture; she must abstain from crossing her feet, and from putting one limb on the other.

IV. She must be modest at meals, by taking her food without avidity, and without rolling her eyes around in all directions, as if to observe how and what the others eat.

V. Above all, a religious must be modest in her conversation, by abstaining from all the words unbecoming the religious state. She must be persuaded that all words that savour of the world are indecorous in a religious.”If,” says St. Basil, “ a worldling make use of scurrilous expressions, he is not noticed. But if a man who professes to lead a perfect life appear to depart in the slightest degree from his duty, he is instantly remarked by all."[9354] In a secular, no one observes indecent words, because they are common in the world; but if religious who profess to aspire to sanctity be guilty of the smallest impropriety, universal attention is immediately directed to their conduct.

To observe modesty in words at the common recreations, you must attend to the following rules:

1. You must abstain from all murmurings, even against manifest abuses.

2. You must never interrupt the person that is speaking. And, says the Holy Ghost, interrupt not others in the midst of their discourse? How scandalous is it to see a religious engrossing to herself the whole conversation[9355] to see her ready to stop the sisters in the middle of a word, or of a sentence, and thus show her pride by pretending to know everything, and constituting herself mistress of all ! Such conduct is a source of great annoyance to all that join in the conversation. However, every religious should speak occasionally during the hours of recreation, and particularly when the others are silent; for, should all abstain from speaking, the end of the rule which prescribes recreation would be frustrated. But modesty requires, particularly from the young, that, after speaking as much as will be necessary for the ends of the recreation, they show a stronger inclination to listen than to speak. The best rule, then, is to speak when others are silent, and to be silent when others are speaking.

3. You must abstain from certain jests and jocose remarks on the real and known defects of others; for such jokes offend the people to whom they are applied.

4. You must never utter a word of self-praise; when you are praised by others, you must raise your heart to God, and change the subject of conversation; and when you are contradicted or ridiculed, you must not be angry. Whenever the companions of St. John Francis Regis made him the subject of their jests at recreation, he endeavoured with great good-humor to keep up the conversation, that, by being the object of their laughter, he might contribute to their amusement.

5. You must speak always in a low tone, and never in such a manner as to offend the ears of others. " Let no one," says St. Ambrose, " offend by too loud a voice."[9356]

6. You must observe modesty and moderation in laughter. St. Gregory relates, that the Mother of God appeared once to a devout virgin called Musa, and told her that, if she wished to please her, she must restrain immoderate laughter. “ They who seek after piety,” says St. Basil, “ must take care not to pour forth their souls in laughter.”[9357]All that aspire to perfection should avoid excessive laughter. Moderate laughter, which shows the serenity of the soul, is neither a violation of decorum nor opposed to devotion. A religious should always present an appearance of modesty and devotion, but not of sadness and melancholy. By appearing sad and afflicted she dishonors religion, and gives all who behold her to understand that sanctity, instead of infusing peace and joy, fills the soul with sorrow and melancholy. But by a cheerful countenance she encourages others to the practice of piety. Two courtiers of a certain monarch, having witnessed the joy with which an aged monk remained in solitude, renounced the world, and remained in his retreat.

7. Lastly, you must not speak of things of the world; such as marriages, feasts, comedies, or of splendid dresses: you must not speak of eating, nor praise or censure the dishes that are brought to table. St. Francis de Sales used to say that “ well-behaved people never think of the table but when they sit at it.” When religious hear unseemly discourses, they should, like St. Aloysius, propose some useful question, or take occasion from what is said to introduce some pious subject of conversation. To be able to converse with his companions on spiritual subjects during recreation, he was accustomed to spend, each day, half an hour in reading the life of a saint, or some other book of devotion. When among the juniors, he was the first to introduce a religious subject. When with priests, or with his seniors, he proposed a case of conscience, as if for his own information, and thus succeeded in making the conversation turn upon holy things. In a short time his companions knew that he did not relish any but pious conversation, and therefore they sought on every occasion to gratify his wishes. When they happened to be discoursing on any other subject, when he came among them, they would immediately begin to speak of God. Everyone is inclined to speak continually of what he tenderly loves. St. Ignatius of Loyola appeared not to know how to speak of anything but God, and was therefore called the “ Father who speaks always of God.”

PRAYER

My Jesus, pardon me, for Thy mercy s sake, the numberless faults which I have committed for want of sufficient modesty, and of which I now repent with my whole heart. All my defects have arisen from my little love of Thee. I acknowledge that I do not deserve mercy; but Thy wounds and Thy death encourage and oblige me to hope. O my God ! how often have I insulted Thee? And with what tenderness hast Thou pardoned all my sins? I have promised to be faithful to Thee, and still I have returned to my sins! Shall I wait till Thou abandon me to my tepidity, and thus to eternal misery? I desire, O Lord, to amend ; and I place all my confidence in Thee, and purpose to seek continually Thy assistance to be faithful to Thee. Hitherto I have trusted in my own resolutions, and have neglected to recommend myself to Thee. This self-confidence and neglect of prayer have been the cause of my past sins. Eternal Father, through the merits of Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me and assist me; give me grace to recommend myself to Thee in all my wants. I love Thee, O my Sovereign Good, and desire to love Thee with all my strength; but without Thee I can do nothing. Give me Thy love : give me holy perseverance. I hope for all things from Thy infinite goodness. O Mary, Mother of God, thou knowest how much I confide in thee ; assist me ; have pity on me.

III. THE MORTIFICATION OF THE APPETITE

St. Andrew Avellini used to say, that he who wishes to advance in perfection should begin zealously to mortify the appetite. “ It is impossible,” says St. Gregory, “ to engage in the spiritual conflict, without the previous subjugation of the appetite.”[9358] Father Roggacci, in his “ Treatise on the one thing necessary,” asserts that the principal part of external mortification consists in the mortification of the palate. Since the mortification of the taste consists in abstinence from food, must we then abstain altogether from eating? No; it is our duty to preserve the life of the body, that we may be able to serve God as long as he wills us to remain on earth. But, as Father Vincent Carafa used to say, we should attend to the body with the same feelings of disgust as a powerful monarch would perform by compulsion the meanest work of a servant.” We must,” says St. Francis de Sales, “ eat, in order to live; but we should not live as if for the purpose of eating.” Some, like beasts, appear to live only for the gratification of the palate. “A man,” says St. Bernard, “ becomes a beast by loving what beasts love.”[9359]Whoever, like brute animals, fixes his heart on the indulgence of the appetite, falls from the dignity of a spiritual and rational creature, and sinks to the level of senseless beasts. Unhappy Adam, for the pleasure of eating an apple, is “ compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them.” In another place, St. Bernard says that, on seeing Adam forget his God and his eternal salvation, for the momentary gratification of his palate, the beasts of the fields, if they could speak, would exclaim: “Behold Adam is become one of us.”[9360] Hence, St. Catharine of Sienna used to say, that “ without mortifying the taste, it is impossible to preserve innocence, since it was by the indulgence of his appetite that Adam fell.” Ah ! how miserable is the condition of those whose God is their belly![9361]

How many have lost their souls by intemperance ! In his Dialogues,[9362] St. Gregory relates, that in a monastery of Sienna there was a monk who led a very exemplary life. When he was at the point of death, the religious, expecting to be edified by his last moments, gathered around him. “ Brethren,” said the dying man, “when you fasted, I ate in private, and therefore I have been already delivered over to Satan, who now deprives me of life, and carries away my soul.” After these words he expired. The same saint relates[9363] in another place, that a certain nun, seeing in the garden a very fine lettuce, pulled and ate it, in opposition to her Rule.

She was instantly possessed by a devil, who tormented her grievously. Her companions called to her aid the holy Abbot Equitius, at whose arrival the demon exclaimed: “What evil have I done ? I sat upon the lettuce; she came and ate it.” The holy man, by his commands, compelled the evil spirit to depart. In the Cistercian records we read that St. Bernard, once visiting his novices, called aside a brother whose name was Acardo, and said that a certain novice, to whom he pointed, would on that day fly from the monastery. The saint begged of Acardo to watch the novice, and to prevent his escape. On the following night, Acardo saw a demon approach the novice, and by the savoury smell of a roasted fowl tempt him to desire forbidden food. The unhappy young man awoke, and, yielding to the temptation, took his clothes and prepared to leave the monastery. Acardo endeavoured in vain to convince him of the dangers to which he would be exposed in the world. Overcome by gluttony, the unhappy man obstinately resolved to return to the world: there, the narrator adds, he died miserably.

Let us then take care not to be conquered by this brutal vice. St. Augustine says,[9364] that food is necessary for the support of life; but, like medicine, it should be taken only through necessity. Intemperance is very injurious to the body as well as to the soul. It is certain that excess in eating is the cause of almost all the diseases of the body. Apoplexy, diarrhea, headaches, complaints of the stomach and bowels, and innumerable other maladies, spring from the immoderate use of food. But the diseases of the body are only a small part of the evils that flow from intemperance; its effects on the soul are tar more disastrous.

This vice, according to St. Thomas, in the first place, darkens the soul, and renders it unfit for spiritual exercises, but particularly for mental prayer. As fasting prepares the mind for the contemplation of God and of eternal goods, so intemperance diverts it from holy thoughts. St. John Chrysostom says that the glutton, like an overloaded ship, moves with difficulty, and that in the first tempest of temptation he is in danger of being lost. “ Take,” says St. Bernard, “ even bread with moderation, lest a loaded stomach should make you weary of prayer.”[9365] And again he says: “ If you compel a person who takes a heavy meal to watch, you will extort from him wailing rather than singing.”[9366] Hence it is the duty of religious to eat sparingly, and particularly at supper: for in the evening a false appetite is frequently created by the acid that is produced by the food taken at dinner. Whoever satisfies his appetite in the evening, is exposed to great danger of excess; and in consequence of indigestion will frequently feel his stomach overburdened in the morning, and his head so stupid and confused that he will not be able to say a “ Hail Mary.” Do not imagine that the Almighty will, at the time of prayer, infuse his consolations into the souls of those who, like senseless beasts, seek delight in the indulgence of the appetite. “Divine consolation,” says St. Bernard, “is not given to those that admit any other delight.”[9367] Celestial consolations are not bestowed on those that go in search of earthly pleasures.

Besides, he that gratifies the taste will readily indulge the other senses; for, having lost the spirit of recollection, he will easily commit faults, by indecent words and by unbecoming gestures. But the greatest evil of intemperance is, that it exposes chastity to great danger. “Repletion of the stomach,” says St. Jerome, “ is the hotbed of lust.”[9368] Excess in eating is a powerful incentive to incontinence. Hence, Cassian says that “it is impossible for him who satiates his appetite not to experience conflicts.”[9369]The intemperate cannot expect to be free from temptations against purity. To preserve chastity, the saints practised the most rigorous mortifications of the appetite. “The devil,” says St. Thomas, “vanquished by temperance, does not tempt to lust.”[9370] When his temptations to indulge the palate are conquered he ceases to provoke incontinence.

He that attends to the abnegation of the appetite makes continual progress in virtue. That the mortification of the palate will facilitate the conquest of the other senses, and enable us to employ them in acts of virtue, may be inferred from the following prayer of the Church: “Q God, who by this bodily fast extinguishest our vices, elevatest our understanding, bestowest on us virtue and its reward, etc.”[9371] By fasting, the Lord enables the soul to subdue her vices, to raise her affections above the earth, to practise virtue, and to acquire merits for eternity. Worldlings say: God has created the goods of this earth for our use and pleasure. Such is not the language of the saints.

The Venerable Vincent Carafa, of the Society of Jesus, used to say, that God has given us the goods of the earth, not only that we may enjoy them, but also that we may have the means of thanking him, and showing him our love by the voluntary renunciation of his gifts, and by the oblation of them to his glory. To abandon, for God’s sake, all worldly enjoyments, has always been the practice of holy souls. The ancient monks, as St. Jerome[9372] relates, thought it a great defect to make use of food dressed with fire Their daily sustenance consisted of a pound of bread St Aloysius, though always sickly, fasted three times in the week on bread and water. St. Francis Xavier during his missions was satisfied each day with a few grains of toasted rice. St. John Francis Regis, in the great fatigues of his missions took no other food than a little flour steeped in water. The daily support of St. Peter of Alcantara was but a small quantity of broth. We read in the life of the Venerable Brother John Joseph of the Cross, who lived in our own days, and with whom I was intimately acquainted, that for twenty-four years he fasted very often on bread and water, and never ate anything but bread and a little herbs or fruit. When commanded, on account of his infirmities, to use warm food, he took only bread dipped in broth. When the physician ordered him to take a little wine, he mixed it with his broth to increase the insipidity of his scanty repast.

I do not mean to say, that to attain sanctity it is necessary for nuns to imitate these examples; but I assert that whoever is attached to the pleasures of the table, or does not seriously attend to the mortification of the appetite, will never make any considerable progress in perfection. In religious Communities there are generally several meals in the day: hence, they who neglect the mortification of the taste will daily commit a thousand faults.

Let us now come to the practice of denying the appetite. In what is it to be mortified ? St. Bonaventure answers: “ *In the quantity, the quality, and the manner”*[9373]

I. In the quality, adds the saint, by seeking not what is delicate, but what is simple.[9374] The saint says, in another place, that small is the progress of the religious who is not content with what is offered to her, but requires that it be prepared in a different manner, or seeks more palatable food. A mortified religious is satisfied with what is placed before her; and instead of seeking after delicacies, she selects among all the dishes that may be presented to her, the least palatable, provided it be not prejudicial to health. Such was the practice of St. Aloysius, who always chose what was most disagreeable to the taste.”Wine and flesh,” says Clement of Alexandria, “give strength indeed to the body, but they render the soul languid.”[9375] From the sacred Canons we learn that formerly monks were not permitted even to taste flesh. “ To a monk, the privilege of either . taking or of tasting flesh is not granted.”[9376] Speaking of himself, St. Bernard says: “I abstain from flesh, lest I should cherish the vices of the flesh.”[9377] Give not wine to kings, says the Wise Man.”[9378] By kings, in this place, we are to understand, not the monarchs of the earth, but the servants of God, who rule their wicked passions and subject them to reason. In another place Solomon says: Who hath woe? . . . Surely they that pass their time in wine, and study to drink off their cups?[9379]

Since, then, the word woe, in the Sacred Scriptures, according to St. Gregory, signifies everlasting misery, woe, eternal woe, shall be the lot of all who are addicted to wine ! Because wine is a luxurious thing[9380] and incites to incontinence. “ My first advice,” says St. Jerome, in one of his epistles to the virgin Eustochia, “ is, that the spouse of Christ fly from wine as from poison. Wine and youth are a twofold incentive to pleasure.”[9381] If you desire to preserve the chastity which becomes the spouse of Jesus, avoid wine as poison: wine and youth are a double fire, which kindle the desire of unlawful pleasures. From the words of the holy Doctor we may infer that he who has not enough of courage or of bodily strength to abstain altogether from flesh and from wine, should at least use them with great moderation: otherwise he must be prepared for continual molestation from temptations against purity.

A mortified religious would also do well to abstain from superfluous seasonings which serve only to gratify the palate. The seasonings used by the saints were ashes, aloes, and wormwood. I do not require such mortifications of you; nor do I recommend very extraordinary fasts. On the contrary, it is, according to Cassian,[9382] the duty of all that are not solitaries, and that live in Community, to avoid, as a source of much vain glory, whatever is not conformable to the common usages of the monastery. “ Where,” says St. Philip Neri, “ there is a common table, all should eat of what is served up.” Hence he frequently exhorted his disciples to “avoid all singularity as the origin of spiritual pride.”[9383]

A courageous religious finds opportunities of practising mortification without allowing it to appear to others. St. John Climacus partook of whatever was placed before him; but his refection consisted in tasting rather in eating what was offered to him; and thus, by his abstemiousness, he practised continual mortification of the appetite without the danger of vanity. St. Bernard[9384]used to say that he that lives in Community will take more pleasure in fasting once, while his companions at table take their ordinary repast, than in fasting seven times with them.

However, religious may, without the danger of vain glory, occasionally perform very rigorous mortifications. For example, by living on bread and water on days of devotion, on Fridays and Saturdays, on the vigils of the Blessed Virgin, and on similar occasions; for such fasts are ordinarily practised by fervent religious. If, on account of bodily infirmity, or through want of fervor you do not practise rigid fasts, you should at least not complain of the common fare; and should be content with whatever is brought to table. St. Thomas never asked for particular food, but was always satisfied with what was placed before him, and ate of it with great moderation. Of St. Ignatius we read that he never refused any dish, and never complained that the food was not well dressed or well seasoned. It is the duty of the Superior to provide the Community with wholesome food, but a religious should never complain when what is laid before her is rare or overdone; when it is scanty, smoked, insipid, or too highly seasoned with salt. The poor, provided they receive what is necessary for the support of life, take what is offered to them without conditions or complaints; and a religious should, in like manner, accept whatever is laid before her as an alms from Almighty God.

WITH REGARD TO THE QUANTITY, ST. BONAVENTURE SAYS THAT “ FOOD OUGHT NOT TO BE TAKEN TOO OFTEN, OR IN EXCESS, BUT IN SUCH A QUANTITY THAT IT MAY BE A REFLECTION AND NOT A BURDEN TO THE BODY.”[9385]

Hence the rule of all who seek perfection is never to eat to satiety. “ Let your repast be moderate,” says St. Jerome, “so that the stomach will never be replete.”[9386] Some religious fast one day and eat to excess on the next. St. Jerome says that it is better to take always a reasonable quantity of food than to fast sometimes, and afterwards to commit excess. The same holy Doctor remarks that satiety is to be avoided in the use, not only of delicacies, but also of the coarsest food.[9387]If a nun commit excess, it matters not whether she eat of partridges or of vegetables: the bad effects of her intemperance are the same in both cases. St. Jerome s rule for determining the quantity of food is that a person should always rise from the table in such a state that he may be able to apply immediately to prayer or to study. “ When,” says the holy Doctor, “ you eat, think that it will be your duty to pray or to read immediately after.”[9388]

An ancient Father wisely said, that “ he who eats a great deal, and is still hungry, will receive a greater re ward than the man who eats little and is satiated.” Cassian[9389] relates that to comply with the duty of hospitality a certain monk was one day obliged to sit at table many times with strangers, and to partake of the refreshment prepared for them, and that after all he arose the last time with an appetite.

This is the best and most difficult sort of mortification; for it is easier to abstain altogether from certain meats than, after having tasted them, to eat but little. He who desires to practise moderation in eating would do well to diminish his meals gradually till, by experience, he ascertains the quantity of food necessary to support the body. It was in this manner that St. Dorothy trained his disciple, St. Dositheus, to the just practice of mortification. But the most secure means of removing all doubts and scruples with regard to fasts and abstinence is to follow the advice of your director. St. Benedict[9390] and after him St. Bernard[9391] say that mortifications that are performed without the permission of one's confessor are not meritorious, because they are the fruit of a criminal presumption : "What is done without the permission of the spiritual Father will be regarded as presumption, and shall not be rewarded."[9392] All, but particularly nuns, as we have said above, should make it a general rule to eat sparingly at supper, even when there is some apparent necessity for a plentiful meal; for in the evening all are subject to a false appetite, and therefore a slight excess will occasion, on the following morning, headaches, fullness of the stomach, and by consequence a repugnance and incapacity for all spiritual exercises.

Abstinence from drink, except at meals, may be safely observed by all, unless when, in particular circumstances, such as in the heat of summer, the want of liquid might be prejudicial to health. However, St. Laurence Justinian, even in the burning heats of summer, never drank out of meal-time; and to those who asked how he could bear the thirst, he replied: "How shall I be able to bear the burning thirst of purgatory if I cannot now abstain from drink ?" On fasting days the ancient Christians abstained from drink till the hour of their repast, which was always taken in the evening. Such is the practice of the Turks at the present day during their fasts of Lent. We should at least observe the rule that is universally prescribed by physicians, not to take any drink for four or five hours after dinner.

WITH REGARD TO THE MANNER OF EATING, ST. BONAVENTURE SAYS THAT " FOOD SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN UNSEASONABLY NOR INORDINATELY, BUT RELIGIOUSLY."[9393]

1. Food should not be taken unseasonably; that is, before the hours prescribed for the Community. To a penitent who could not abstain from eating till the hour of meals, St. Philip Neri said: “Child, if you do not correct this defect you will never advance in virtue.”[9394] Blessed, says the Holy Ghost, is the land whose princes eat in due season[9395] And happy the monastery whose members never eat out of the hours of meals. When St. Teresa heard that some of her nuns had asked permission from the Provincial to keep eatables in their cells, she reproved them very severely: “ Your request,” said the saint, “ if granted, would lead to the destruction of the monastery.”[9396]

2. To avoid the fault of taking your food inordinately, you must be careful not to eat with avidity, with eagerness, or with haste. Be not greedy in your feasting? says the Holy Ghost.[9397]

Your object in eating must be to support the strength of the body, and to be able to serve the Lord. To eat through mere pleasure cannot be excused from the guilt of venial sin; for Innocent XL[9398] has condemned the proposition which asserts that it is not a sin to eat or to drink from the sole motive of satisfying the palate. However, it is not a fault to feel pleasure in eating; for it is, generally speaking, impossible to eat without experiencing the delight which food naturally produces. But it is a defect to eat like beasts through the sole motive of sensual gratification, and without proposing any reasonable end. Hence the most delicious meats may be eaten without sin if the motive be good and worthy of a rational creature; and in taking the coarsest food through attachment to pleasure there may be a fault. In the Lives of the Fathers[9399] it is related that though the same food was served to all the monks of a certain monastery, a holy bishop saw some of them feasting on honey, others on bread, and others on mire By this vision he was given to understand that the first ate with a holy fear of violating temperance, and were accustomed at meals to raise their souls to God by holy aspirations; that the second felt some delight in eating, but still returned thanks to God for his benefits; and that the third ate for the mere gratification of the taste.

To practise temperance in the manner of eating, you must not perform indiscreet fasts, which would render you unable to serve the Community, or to observe your Rule. Transported with a certain fervor, by which the

Almighty animates their zeal for virtue, beginners are often very indiscreet in their fasts and other works of penance. Their rigors sometimes bring on infirmities, which disqualify them for the duties of the Community, and sometimes make them give up all exercises of piety. Discretion is necessary in all things.

A master who intrusts a servant with the care of a horse will be equally displeased whether the animal be rendered unfit for use by an excess or by a want of food. St. Francis de Sales used to say to his nuns of the Visitation, that "continual moderation is better than fits of violent abstinence interspersed with occasional excesses. Besides, such abstinences make us esteem ourselves more holy than others who do not practise them."[9400] It is certainly the duty of all to avoid indiscretion, but it has been justly remarked by a great spiritual master (and the remark deserves attention), that the spirit seldom deceives us by suggesting excessive mortifications; while the flesh, under false pretences, frequently claims commiseration, and procures an exemption from what is displeasing to its propensities. The following are some of the mortifications that are very useful:

1. To abstain from delicacies agreeable to the taste, and in some measure injurious to health.

2. To refrain from the fruits that come first in season.

3. To deprive yourself throughout the year from some particular fruit, determined by lot.

4. To abstain once or twice in the week from all fruit, and every day from a portion of what is laid before you.

5. To deny yourself some delicacy, or merely to taste it, and say with St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, that it is not useful for you.

6. To leave, every day, according to the advice of St. Bernard, a part of what is most pleasing to the palate. " Let everyone," says the saint, " offer at table something to God."[9401]

To check for some time the desire of drinking or of eating what is before you; and to abstain from wine, spirits, and spices. Such abstinence is particularly useful for young people.

The preceding mortifications may be practised without pride, or injury to health. It is not necessary to perform all of them. Let each person observe the abstinences that her Superior or director permits. It is certainly better to practise small and frequent works of penance, than to perform rare and extraordinary fasts, and afterwards lead an unmortified life.

PRAYER

My dear Redeemer, I am so tepid and full of defects, that I am ashamed to appear before Thee. Had I corresponded to Thy graces, I should now be a seraph by the ardor of my love. But I am more imperfect than ever. How often have I promised to become a saint, and to consecrate myself entirely to Thee? But my promises have been so many treasons. I console myself with the reflection, that I have to deal with infinite Goodness. Do not abandon me, O Lord ! but continue to strengthen me, for I desired to amend, by the assistance of Thy grace. I do not wish to resist the love that Thou bearest me; I see that Thou dost wish me to become a saint ; and to please Thee, I desire to sanctify my soul. I promise to mortify my senses, particularly by abstaining from certain pleasures. {Name them). Ah ! my Jesus, I know that to gain my heart Thou hast done too much. Great, indeed, should be my ingratitude if I denied Thee anything, or loved Thee but little. I do not wish to be any longer ungrateful. Thou hast been infinitely good to me; I shall not be ungenerous to Thee as I have hitherto been. I love Thee, O my Spouse; I am sorry for all the displeasure that I have given Thee. Pardon me, and assist me to be faithful to Thee. O Mary, thou hast always been faithful to God, obtain for me the gift of fidelity to his graces during the remainder of my life.

IV. THE MORTIFICATION OF THE SENSE OF HEARING, OF SMELL, AND OF TOUCH

I. The sense of HEARING must be mortified by not listening to indecent words, to detraction, or to worldly conversations, which fill the mind with a thousand thoughts and images, that afterwards distract and disturb the soul in prayer, and in the other exercises of devotion. Should you ever happen to be present at such discourses, endeavor to cut them short by proposing some useful question. If that be not sufficient, you ought either to retire or remain silent, and cast down your eyes, to show how much you dislike such language.

II. To mortify the SMELL, you must abstain from the use of perfumes and of scented waters: such delicacies are unbecoming even in worldlings.

Animated by the spirit of charity and mortification, the saints felt as much delight in the offensive odours that surround the sick and the infected, as they would in a garden of the most fragrant flowers. Let it be your study to imitate their example, and to bear patiently the disagreeable smell that you may experience in the rooms of the sick.

III. With regard to the TOUCH, you must take the greatest care to avoid all, even the smallest, defects. For every fault committed by the indulgence of that sense exposes the soul to the danger of eternal death. I cannot explain myself fully on this subject: I shall only say, that to preserve the precious jewel of purity, religious should observe all possible modesty and caution, not only towards others, but also towards themselves. Even in his last agony St. Peter of Alcantara would not allow any of his brethren to touch any part of his body. Feeling himself touched by one of them, he exclaimed: “Withdraw, touch me not; I am still alive, and may still offend God.” This sense of touch must be kept under the greatest restraint by external mortifications, of which I shall now speak. These mortifications are reduced to four heads to fasts, haircloths, disciplines, and watchings.

1. In the preceding section enough has been said of fasting.

2. Haircloths are of various kinds: some are made of strong or coarse hair; the others are bands or chains of brass or iron wire. The former may be injurious to people of a delicate constitution: for, as Father Scaramelli justly remarks,[9402] they inflame the flesh, and weaken the stomach by drawing its natural heat to the external surface of the body. The latter may be worn on the arms, thighs, or shoulders without injury to the health, but not on the breast or round the body. These are the ordinary species of haircloths, and may be safely used by all. Far different from them were the hair cloths worn by the saints. D. Sancia Carriglio, the celebrated penitent of Father M. Avila, wore a shirt of coarse hair which reached from the neck to the knees. St. Rose of Lima used a long hair-shirt interwoven with needles, and carried a broad iron chain round her loins. St. Peter of Alcantara wore on his shoulders a large plate of iron, which was so rough, and covered with sharp projections, that it kept the flesh in a state of continual laceration. Would it then be too much for you to wear a small band of iron from morning till the hour of dinner ?

3 Disciplines or flagellations are a species of mortification strongly recommended by St. Francis de Sales, and universally adopted in religious Communities of both sexes. All the modern saints, without a single exception, have continually practised this sort of penance. It is related of St. Aloysius that he often scourged himself unto blood three times in the day. And at the point of death, not having sufficient strength to use the lash, he besought the Provincial to have him disciplined from head to foot. Surely, then, it would not be too much for you to take the discipline once in the day, or at least three or four times in the week. However, the practice of this penance should be regulated by the confessor.

4. Lastly, vigils or watchings consist in the retrenchment of sleep. It is related of St. Rose, that to prevent sleep, and thus be able to spend the night in prayer, she tied her hair to a nail fastened in the wall. When she was overcome by sleep the inclination of the head caused pain sufficient to awake her. Of St. Peter of Alcantara we read that for forty years he slept but an hour, or at the most an hour and a half, each night; and that he might not be overcome by sleep, he lay with his head on a piece of wood fixed in the wall of his cell. Such austerities cannot be practised by all, nor without a special grace. Indeed, watching is a species of penance in which great moderation and discretion should be observed. Severe watchings generally render us unfit for the exercise of the mental faculties, for the recitation of the office, for prayer, and spiritual reading. St. Charles Borromeo, in consequence of watching during the night, was sometimes overcome by sleep even during public functions, and was therefore obliged to prolong the time for rest. However, they that pretend to virtue should not, like brute animals, give to their body all the repose that the flesh desires. It is necessary to take as much rest as is requisite, and no more. Generally speaking, women require less sleep than men. In general, five, or at the most six hours sleep is sufficient for women. At least, dear sister, be careful to rise at the first sound of the morning bell, and not to remain, like the sluggard, turning about in bed after having heard the signal for rising. St. Teresa used to say that a religious should leap out of bed the instant she hears the bell.

The saints have not only curtailed the time for sleep, but have also practised various mortifications in the manner of taking repose. St. Aloysius was accustomed to scatter fragments of wood and of stones over his bed. St.

Rose of Lima lay on the trunks of trees, the space between which was filled with broken earthenware. The Venerable Sister Mary Crucified, of Sicily, used a pillow of thorns. These austerities are extraordinary, and are not adapted to all people. But a religious should not seek a bed of down; if a straw bed be not injurious to her health, why should she require a mattress of hair? or, if a single mattress be sufficient for her, why does she make use of two ?

To bear with patience the excessive heat or cold of the seasons is a very useful mortification of the sense of touch. St. Peter of Alcantara went barefooted and bareheaded throughout the winter, and never wore more than a single coat, which was generally torn. You cannot practise such rigors; but would it be too much for you to refrain from approaching the fire during the winter? St. Aloysius, even when he lived in Lombardy, where the cold is very intense, never approached the fire. You can, at least on one day of the week, bear with patience, and accept as a penance from the hands of God, the cold and heat of the seasons. St. Francis Borgia, on arriving one night at a college in the country, found the gates locked, and was therefore obliged to remain all night exposed to the cold and the snow, which fell heavily. In the morning the religious expressed great regret at what had happened. Be assured, replied the saint, that though I suffered much in the body I was greatly consoled in spirit by the reflection that God rejoiced at my pains. It appeared to me that God himself sent to me from heaven the flakes of snow that fell upon me.

PRAYER

My beloved Redeemer, I blush to appear before Thee with so many attachments to earthly pleasures. During life Thou hast thought of nothing but of suffering for me. But, forgetful of Thy pains, and of Thy love for me, I have hitherto attended only to my own gratification. In my past life I have had nothing of the character of a religious, and of Thy spouse, except the habit and the name. I would deserve to be banished from this holy place, where Thou hast favored me with so many lights and graces, which I have always repaid with ingratitude. I have certainly made many good purposes ; and though I have frequently promised, I have not fulfilled them. O my Jesus, give me strength: I desire to do something for Thee before I die. If I were now to die, how unhappy should I be ? Thou dost prolong my life that I may become a saint. I desire to be perfect : I love Thee, O my God and my Spouse ; and I desire to love Thee as becomes Thy spouse. I wish to think only of pleasing Thee. Pardon me all the offences that I have hitherto offered to Thee : I detest them with my whole heart. O God of my soul, to gratify myself I have insulted Thee, my treasure and my life, who hast loved me so much. Assist me to give myself entirely to Thee from this day forward. Holy Virgin Mary, my hope, come to my aid, and obtain for me the grace to do something for God before the hour of my death.

Chapter IX

RELIGIOUS POVERTY

I THE VOW OF POVERTY, THE PERFECTION OF POVERTY, AND COMMUNITY LIFE

ALL the views of the world are opposed to the laws of God: in the estimation of the world riches are the basis of greatness; but in the eyes of God poverty is the foundation of sanctity. It is not certain that the rich are damned; but the Redeemer has declared that It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.[9403]Hence the founders of every religious order have endeavoured to establish in all the Communities of their Institute a perfect spirit of poverty as the basis of the common good. St. Ignatius of Loyola[9404]called religious poverty the fortification by which the spirit of fervor is preserved. The truth of this observation is demonstrated by daily experience; for in the Communities in which poverty is maintained fervor flourishes, and in which poverty is violated irregularities soon prevail. Hence the powers of hell labor so hard to introduce a relaxation of poverty into the observant Orders. Speaking of her own religious, St. Teresa once said from heaven: " Let them endeavor to have a great esteem for poverty; for while it lasts fervor will be maintained."[9405]

Poverty is justly styled by the holy Fathers the guardian of virtues, since in religious it preserves mortification, humility, detachment from creatures, and, above all, interior recollection.

In treating of religious poverty it is necessary to distinguish between the perfection of poverty and that which is the object of the religious vow. The vow implies that a religious has no dominion over worldly goods, and that her use of them is dependent on the will of her Superior. But, alas ! this is a rock on which many religious are lost. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi saw many nuns in hell for the transgression of the vow of poverty. In the Chronicles of the Capuchins[9406] it is related that the devil once took away from among his brethren and in their presence a religious, from whose sleeve, at the moment when he was carried off, a breviary fell, which the unhappy man had, in violation of the vow of poverty, appropriated to his own use. The fact related by St. Cyril to St. Augustine[9407] is still more alarming. In Thebais there was a convent containing two hundred nuns who did not live according to the rules of holy poverty. St. Jerome appeared to one of them, who was more exact than the rest, and commanded her to admonish the abbess and the other nuns that, if they did not amend, a frightful chastisement should be inflicted upon them. The good religious executed the command, but her advice was received with derision. While at prayer she was again commanded to repeat the admonition, and, should it be fruitless, to depart immediately from the convent. She obeyed a second time; but the abbess, instead of profiting by the advice, threatened to expel the sister from the monastery if she said any more on the subject. “

You shall not,” replied the nun, “ expel me; for I will depart instantly, that I may not be involved in the common ruin.” Scarcely had she gone out when the monastery fell, and crushed to death all the religious. Woe to those that introduce into religion a relaxation of holy poverty. Examine, dear sister, whether you keep money or any other kind of property without leave. And remember that the permission of the Superior is invalid, whenever its object is not just; for she cannot permit you to retain what cannot be lawfully kept. All the money, furniture, clothes, and whatever species of property you possess, all that you receive from your relatives, or for the fruits of your industry, belong not to you, but to the monastery. You have only the use of what the Superior gives you. Hence, if you dispose of anything without her leave, you are guilty of theft, and of a sacrilegious theft, by violating the vow of poverty. Be persuaded that the Lord will demand a very rigorous account. Hence, zealous Superiors are always most exact and severe in chastising every fault against that virtue. Cassian[9408] relates that among the ancient Fathers, the procurator, in consequence of allowing a few lentils to be wasted through negligence, was deprived of the benefit of common prayers, and was excluded from the holy Communion till he had done public penance. It is related of Rinald, the prior of the Dominican convent at Bologna, that he chastised very severely a lay-brother for having taken without permission a shred of cloth to mend his habit, and that he caused the cloth to be burned at Chapter, in presence of the whole Community.

What has been just said regards the vow of poverty; but the perfection of holy poverty requires that a religious be divested of every affection for the goods of the earth, and that she make use of them only as far as is necessary for the preservation of life. It was this that the Redeemer wished to signify to the young man, who asked what he should do in order to attain perfection. “If,” says Jesus, thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor.[9409] The Saviour told him that he should renounce all his possessions without a single exception. For when, as St. Bonaventure says, the spirit is encumbered with the weight of any temporality, the soul can not rise to union with God. “ Burdened with the load of temporal things, the spirit cannot ascend to God.”[9410] “ The love of terrestrial objects,” according to St. Augustine, “ is the birdlime of the spiritual wings,”[9411] which impedes the flight of the soul to God. And again the holy Doctor says: “ By the great wing of poverty a Christian quickly flies to heaven.”[9412] Hence, St. Laurence Justinian exclaimed: “O blessed voluntary poverty! possessing nothing, fearing nothing; always cheerful, always abounding, because it turns to advantage every inconvenience.”[9413]

It was for our edification and instruction that Jesus Christ wished to live in continual poverty on earth. Hence, St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi called poverty the spouse of Jesus. “ Poverty,” says St. Bernard, “ was not found in heaven it abounded on earth; but man did not know its value: therefore the Son of God, longing after it, came down from heaven to choose it for himself, and to make it precious to us.”[9414]

Being rich, says St. Paul, he became poor for your sakes, that through his poverty you might be rich.[9415] Our Redeemer was the Lord of all the riches in heaven and on earth, but he wished to be miserably poor in this life, in order to enrich us, and to excite us by his example to the love of poverty, which, by withdrawing our affections from temporal goods, procures for us eternal riches. He wished to be poor during his whole life. Poor in his birth he was born not in a palace, but in a cold stable, having only a manger for his cradle and straw for his bed. Poor in his life and poor in all things, he dwelt in a miserable hut containing but a single room; which served for all the purposes of life. Poor in his garments and in his food. St. John

Chrysostom says, that the Redeemer and his disciples ate nothing but barley-bread; and this may be inferred from the Gospel.[9416] Poor, in fine, in his death: leaving nothing behind him but his miserable garments; and these, even before his death, were divided among the soldiers. Thus for his winding-sheet and sepulchre he depended on the bounty of the charitable. Hence, Jesus once said to Blessed Angela of Foligno: " If poverty were not a great blessing, I should not have chosen it for myself, nor should I have left it as an inheritance to my elect." It was because they saw Jesus poor that the saints loved poverty so much. Father Granada and Father M. Avila discussed one day the reason why St. Francis of Assisi had such an affection for poverty. Father Louis of Granada maintained that it was because the saint wished to be freed from every impediment to a perfect union with God. But Father Avila asserted with more truth, that the ardent love of St. Francis for holy poverty arose from his ardent love of Jesus Christ.

And surely a soul that loves Jesus Christ intensely cannot but exclaim with the Apostle: I count all things as dung, that I may gain Christ. I esteem all the goods of the earth as dung, and therefore I despise them all, that I may gain Jesus Christ. Hence, St. Francis de Sales used to say, that when a house is on fire the furniture is thrown out of the windows; and long before, the Holy Ghost said: If a man should give all the substance of his house for lore, he shall despise it as nothing? The ardent lover cheerfully despises all things through the love which he bears to God.

From the Sacred Scriptures we learn that the reward of poverty is most certain, and great beyond measure. It is most certain; because Jesus Christ has said:[9417] Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. To the other beatitudes, heaven is promised only as a future reward.[9418]Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.[9419] Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God[9420] But to the poor in spirit God's kingdom is promised as a present recompense: For theirs is the kingdom of heaven[9421] Because, to those that are truly poor in spirit the Lord gives very great helps, even in this life. Hence, Cornelius à Lapide says,[9422] that since, by the decree of God, the kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor, they have a full right to it." The reward of poverty is very secure, and great beyond conception." The less we have here," says St. Teresa, " the more we shall enjoy in God’s kingdom, in which the mansion of each is proportioned to the love with which he shall have imitated the life of Jesus Christ.”[9423] “ O happy commerce,” exclaims St. Peter Damian, “ where clay is given away and gold received.”[9424]O happy traffic ! in which we renounce the goods of the earth, which are but mire, and receive in exchange the graces of God and eternal rewards; which are more precious than the purest gold.

The poor in spirit shall also have the honor of sitting with Jesus Christ as the judges of the world. Behold, says St. Peter to Jesus, we have left all things and have followed thee : what, therefore, shall we have ?[9425] And Jesus said to them : Amen, I say to you, that you who have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of his Majesty, you shall also sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel[9426] God has promised eternal glory here after, and a hundredfold in this life, to all who abandon earthly goods for his sake. And every one that hath left house or lands for my name s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting[9427] This promise is fulfilled in all the poor in spirit who, because they desire nothing on earth, possess all riches: As having nothing and possessing all things.[9428]The Redeemer has justly compared riches to thorns,[9429] for in proportion to their abundance, riches torment the soul by cares, by fears, and by the desires of increased possessions.

Hence, St. Bernard says, that while the avaricious, because their desire of riches is never satiated, like mendicants, thirst after the goods of this world; the poor in spirit, because they wish for nothing upon earth, despise mammon. “ The avaricious man, like a mendicant, hungers after earthly things; the poor man, like a lord, contemns them.”[9430] Oh ! how great is the happiness of a religious, who desires and possesses nothing upon earth. She enjoys true peace a blessing more valuable than all worldly goods, which can never content a soul destined to be made happy only by the possession of God. Thus the poor in spirit receive a great reward in this as well as in the next life. But where shall we find a religious truly poor in spirit ? Let us examine in what true poverty of spirit consists.

It consists, first, not only in the absence of all property, but also in the destruction of every desire which has not God for its object. “ A pauper meets me,” says St. Augustine, “ and still I seek a man who is poor.”[9431]

Yes, in the world the number of the indigent is countless, but few of them are poor in spirit and desire. St. Teresa used to say, that the religious who appears to be bereft of all property, but at the same time is not poor in spirit, deceives the world and herself. What will her actual poverty profit her? The poor that desire the possession of riches suffer indeed the pains of want, but do not practise the virtue of poverty. " He that desires the goods of the earth," says St. Philip Neri, " will never become a saint." You, dear sister, have abandoned the world; you have left all things, and will you, after so many sacrifices, expose yourself to the danger of being lost, or at least of not being a saint?

Ah ! be content with humble food and raiment; seek to become a saint, and do not, for miserable trifles, risk your eternal inheritance. But, says the Apostle, having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content[9432]For they that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which draw men into destruction and perdition[9433] Whoever covets worldly riches shall fall into the snares of the enemy, and into numberless desires, which lead to death and to eternal misery.

Poverty of spirit consists, secondly, in keeping the heart detached, not only from what is valuable, but also from what is trifling. The adhesion of the smallest portion of earth prevents the free ascent of a feather in the air; and the possession of a particle of worldly goods, in opposition to the perfection of poverty, impedes the perfect union of a religious with God, and the enjoyment of true peace. Thorns (or riches), however small, torment the traveller, and diminish the expedition of his journey. To be perfect, it is not necessary for a religious to abandon large possessions; no, it is sufficient to leave in effect and in affection the little that it is in her power to relinquish. St .Peter gave up little; but because, in affection, he left all that he possessed (Behold, we have left all things), he merited to hear from Jesus Christ that he was chosen for one of the Redeemer s assessors at the general judgment. You shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel[9434]

There are some religious who have an affection, not for precious stones, nor for vessels of gold, but for certain miserable trifles, such as some article of furniture, a book, or the like. They have not renounced all attachments to the goods of the earth, but have transferred their affections from things of value to trifles, and their solicitude about these trifles occasions as many imperfections and as much inquietude as the care of large possessions.

If seculars are lost, they are lost for the attainment of something great in the eyes of the world; but what a pity, says Cassian,[9435] to see a nun, after having left the world, and after having renounced her inheritance and liberty, lose the crown of a saint for trifles that are vile and miserable even in the estimation of worldlings. “ The adversary,” says St. Eucherius, “ exults when he sees us, who condemned the most valuable goods, overcome in matters of the smallest importance.”[9436]What a source of triumph to the devil to find a person who has left considerable possessions shamefully conquered by the love of trifles. “ Some,” says Cassian, “ who despise the most magnificent property, we see disturbed for a needle or a pen, and thus fall into the occasions of death.”[9437] St. Eucherius asserts what appears very extraordinary, that “ the love of property, unless it be perfectly eradicated, is most ardent in small things.”[9438] Most ardent, and therefore most criminal; for by attachment to trifles a religious shows a greater avidity for earthly goods than by an affection for what is valuable. Hence Jesus Christ has said, So likewise, every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple[9439]

Thirdly, poverty of spirit consists not only in being poor, but in loving poverty. “ For,” says St. Bernard, “ it is not poverty, but the love of poverty, that is reputed virtue.”[9440] It is not the poor man, but the lover of poverty, that is esteemed virtuous. And to love poverty is to love the effects of poverty, that is, hunger, cold, and, above all, the contempt attendant upon want. For St. Thomas teaches[9441]that the honor of judging the world shall be given to the poor in spirit, as the reward of the humiliations occasioned by their indigence. Many religious, says St. Vincent Ferrer, glory in the name of poverty, but shun the sufferings and opprobrium that are its constant companions. “ They glory in the name, but fly from the associates of poverty.”[9442] St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say, that he who feels not the inconveniences of want, is not poor. And Blessed Salome, a religious of the Order of St. Clare, used to say, that “angels and men shall laugh at the religious who desires to be poor, and at the same time wishes to enjoy the advantages of wealth, or complains whenever she is deprived of them.” But, my God, what is to be said of the poverty of the religious who, should her food be scanty or not well seasoned, breaks out into complaints , who, should she not be supplied with a new habit before the old one is torn, disturbs the whole Community by her murmuring against the Superior, and against those who hold office in the convent? What shall I say of the poverty of the nun who seeks finer cloth and linen than become her state ? who is disquieted if her dress be not made in a neat and graceful form, so as to give her a genteel appearance ? “They indeed” says St. Bernard, “ wish to be poor, but only on the condition that nothing may be wanting to them.”[9443] But you will, perhaps, say that the Community life[9444] not being observed in your convent, you must think of everything, of food, of clothing, of medicines, and that you must go to the grate to sell your work and to receive a price for it in order to procure for yourself the things that you need. I answer: Although your Institute, or the present usage of your convent, permits this to you, yet you should not show yourself like a secular who sells her wares by directly treating with outside people without the modesty and gentleness that suit your state. This kind of traffic is often the effect, not of necessity, but of cupidity that induces certain religious to work much at night, to neglect the duties of their office, the choir mental prayer, the sacraments, and even sometimes to use without permission what belongs to the Community. Ah! When the true love of God enters the heart of a nun, she easily finds the means of practising perfect poverty, even though Community life no longer exists in the convent. Blessed Hyacinth Mariscotti, when she had laid aside her tepidity and given herself up entirely to God, immediately set to work to strip her cell of all that was superfluous, and to give it to the Superior; and she even gave up her habit to take another that was torn and patched, that had covered the body of a deceased nun.

Since mention has been made of the Community life, I must make a few reflections on this point. It is certain that all the cares and disquietudes of nuns, all the annoyances that they frequently experience, and all the obstacles that hinder them from advancing in perfection, usually arise from the possession of personal property, and from the desire of preserving and increasing it. The necessity of providing for their own maintenance in regard to food, clothing, furniture, medicines, is indeed a source of care and embarrassment for the poor nuns, and the cause of distractions in their prayers and Communions. It is true the vow of poverty does not forbid them to keep or use things with the requisite permission; but this must be done with such indifference regarding these things that one is always ready to deprive one s self of these should the Superior so ordain. Unfortunately this total indifference is not found in all nuns. There are some who are willing to deposit the money with the Superior; but if the latter should wish to use it for the benefit of the convent they would excite a great commotion. I therefore say that this depositing of money is a mere sham, is a fiction, and I should say it is an attempt to deceive the Superiors and God at the same time, since such nuns are in fact real owners. All those who live a private life are exposed to this danger. Now community life delivers and preserves the nuns from all these inconveniences. Hence St. John Climacus says: “This is community life in which true spiritual poverty is preserved: it frees us from worldly cares; it is a smooth road that enables us, without any obstacle, to unite ourselves to God; it removes all sadness and all disquietude.”[9445]

It is certain that all the holy founders of religious Orders had in view the establishment of community life; and as long as community life has been maintained, fervor has reigned in the communities. We must here remark, that, according to the common opinion of theologians, such as Suarez, Navarro, Lessius, and others, the vow of poverty obliges the religious always to be interiorly disposed to enter community life when the Superiors, after having examined the circumstances, judge it opportune. This being the case, we must conclude that a religious would be in a bad state as to her conscience if the Superiors wishing to re-establish community life, she would refuse to accept it, even though it did not exist when she entered the convent. We should not be afraid that in community life we shall not find the means of living; for our Lord one day said to St. Catharine of Sienna: “While the religious Order observed poverty, they did not surfer; but now, when they are living by themselves, they suffer.” Oh ! how happy you would be if you would co-operate in the introduction into your convent of this great good the community life !

If, however, the community life does not exist in your house, and if under present circumstances it cannot be established, I do not wish to force you observe it. It is therefore permitted to you to take a moderate care of what concerns food, medicines, and other things of which you may be in need. You may also, with the requisite permissions, sell your work, procure for yourself what is required for your sustenance, and retain the money necessary for your daily wants, depositing the rest in the common fund and leaving it at the disposal of the Superior in case she should think fit to use it. You may also receive permission to spend or receive money up to a certain amount. In acting in this manner you may still merit the reward promised to the poor in spirit.

PRAYER

My Jesus, if hitherto my heart has been attached to the goods of the earth, Thou shalt henceforth be my only treasure. O God of my soul ! Thou art a good infinitely greater than any other, Thou dost merit infinite love ; I esteem and love Thee above all things, and even more than myself; Thou art the only object of all my affections. I desire nothing in this world. If I had any desires, it would be to possess all the treasures and kingdoms of the earth, for the purpose of renouncing them all, and depriving myself of them for the love of Thee. Come, O my love! come and consume in me every affection that is not for Thee. Grant that, in future, I may regard nothing but Thee, think only of Thee, and sigh only after Thee. The love that made Thee die on the cross for me, makes me die to all my inclinations makes me love only Thy infinite goodness, and desire only Thy grace and Thy love. My dear Redeemer, when shall I be entirely Thine, as Thou art all mine ? I am not able even to give myself to Thee as I ought. Oh ! take me and make me live only for Thy glory.

Trusting in the merits of Thy blood, O Jesus, and in Thy intercession, O my mother Mary, I hope for all things.

II. THE DEGREES AND THE PRACTICE OF PERFECT POVERTY

FIRST DEGREE

The first degree of perfect religious poverty is not to possess anything as one s own. Hence a religious should regard but as a loan whatever she possesses, and should be ready to give it up at the first intimation of the

Superiors will. She ought to be like a statue, which when dressed is not elated, and when stripped is not dejected. A sister who is afflicted at being deprived of anything by the Superior shows that she did not retain it with the true spirit of poverty, or at least that she had some attachment to it. A religious should remember that what she is permitted to receive or retain, belongs not to her, but is the property of the monastery. She should, therefore, hold it as a deposit, and ought not to expend it on vanity, or in superfluous presents. Neither should she complain when the Superior applies it to the use of the Community, or of any of the religious. What then are we to think of the nun who throws the whole convent into confusion whenever the sisters, with the permission of the Superior, use what she possesses. Search, then, dear sister, your heart, and see if it is detached from all you possess.

Examine how you would feel if the Superior refused to permit you to incur a certain expense, to retain a certain sum of money or a certain piece of furniture. And if you feel an attachment to anything whatsoever, resolve, in imitation of that great servant of God, Sister Mary of the Cross, either to deprive yourself of it, or to bring it to the Superior and leave it at her disposal. In a word, you must preserve the heart free from all affection, even for those things that you are permitted to retain.

SECOND DEGREE

The second degree of poverty is, to deprive yourself of whatever is superfluous: for the smallest superfluity will prevent a perfect union of the soul with God. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi went so far as to strip her little altar of all its ornaments except the crucifix. St. Teresa relates of herself that, knowing God to be most jealous of religious poverty, she could not recollect herself in prayer as long as she retained anything that she thought to be superfluous. If in your convent there is not a perfect community of property, endeavor at least to imitate the poverty practised by the most exemplary and exact among your companions, as well in dress as in food and furniture.

But you will perhaps say that whatever you possess is retained with the leave of the Superior. Permission to keep superfluities may save you from the punishments inflicted on proprietors but will not secure to you the merit of perfect poverty.

Again, you will perhaps say that you have no attachment to what you keep. But whether you have an attachment to it or not, the possession of what is not necessary will always prevent you from attaining the perfection of poverty. You may imagine that a certain sum of money or a certain portion of property will enable you to relieve the poor or to assist your companions. But I repeat that it is the nun that has nothing to give, and not the religious that has the means of distributing alms, who edifies the Church. St. Thomas says that " it is good to give your goods to the needy, but it is better to be poor with Christ."[9446] It is meritorious to distribute your property to the poor, but it is better to be like Jesus Christ, without the means of giving alms. Besides, as the Venerable Sister Amadea, a Visitation nun, used to say, a good religious should desire to dispense only the goods that she receives from God, that is, good example, prayers, salutary advice, and the helps to spiritual life.

If, dear sister, you desire to please your Spouse, you must renounce whatsoever you know to be superfluous. Should you be unable to ascertain what is absolutely necessary for your use, beg of the abbess to examine your cell and to remove whatever is not indispensable. If you truly desire to be with Jesus Christ, I advise you not indeed to be singular, but not to allow any of your companions to surpass you in poverty. And that you may be among the poorest of your companions, you must endeavor to be poor in all things, in your dress, in your furniture, and in your food.

I. With regard to clothes, be careful to practise the highest degree of poverty compatible with the usage of the Community. Let your clothes be such as necessity requires, and not what vanity would suggest. Of what use are fine clothes to religious except to gratify vanity, and to attract the notice and esteem of all that behold them ?" For," says St. Gregory, " no one desires to be clothed in precious garments, when he cannot be seen by others."[9447] But the Holy Ghost has declared that beauty does not consist in external decoration, but in interior comeliness. All the glory of the king's daughter is within[9448]On the contrary, " the exterior signs betray what is concealed within the soul."[9449] Thus, every vain ornament of dress shows that he who wears it is puffed up with vanity. Hence St. John Chrysostom says that a religious who attends to the decoration of her person manifests the deformity of her soul. “ Attention to the ornaments of the body indicates internal deformity.”[9450] St. Jerome observes that “the soul is defiled in proportion as the body is adorned.”[9451] St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi saw many nuns in hell for violating poverty, and especially by vanity in dress.”[9452]

I do not require of you to wear a torn or sordid dress : a torn garment is not decent in a religious; but a patched habit is suited to all that have made a vow of poverty: a sordid veil is not becoming, but an affected whiteness sought after by some is not proper. What edification is to be expected from the nun that wears wristbands of fine linen, fastened with silver buttons; that carries a costly ring on her finger, and beads of great value by her side; that uses only fine veils, and casts them aside as soon as the smallest break appears in them ?

She may be assured that her contempt of poverty is highly displeasing to God. To the Venerable Sister Constantia of the Conception, a Carmelite nun, Jesus once appeared, and, because she threw away a torn veil, said to her: “ Is it thus you despise the badge of spouse which I gave you ?”

Religious that love Jesus Christ do not thus disregard holy poverty. When the Venerable Sister Margaret of the Cross, a daughter of Maximilian II. and a barefooted Clare, appeared before her brother Albert, the Archduke, in a patched habit, he was struck with astonishment, and expressed his surprise at seeing her dressed in such a manner. “ Brother,” replied the good religious, “ I am more happy in these rags than all the monarchs of the earth are in their purple.” What the world contemns is highly prized and rewarded by Almighty God. Violante Palombara, a noble lady, used only a garment of coarse linen, the poorest bedclothes, and beads of plain wood. At the hour of death she exclaimed: “Oh! what do I see? My dress resplendent with rays ! my covering made of gold ! and my beads of diamonds ! “

II. You must also take care to practise poverty in the furniture of your cell. In the chronicles of St. Jerome we read that when Superiors found curiosities in the convent they immediately cast them into the fire, calling them idols of religious. The great servant of God, Sister Mary Magdalene Carafa, who had been duchess of Andria, and afterwards a religious in the Sapienza of Naples, would not keep in her cell paintings, or presents, or even many books. “ For reading,” she would say, “ a single book is sufficient, and contains more than we can put in practice.” Her conduct should cover with confusion certain religious who keep in their cells a great number of spiritual books, but do not practise the lessons that they read in any of them.

St. Teresa examined every day whether there was any superfluity in her cell; if she found any, she immediately removed it. What profit do religious draw from paintings that are not sacred, from gilded cornices, or splendid chests ? Ornaments of silver and crystals are better suited to a lady in the world than to a nun in the cloister. Remember that what now pleases the eyes shall at the hour of death torture the soul, and in another life shall be severely punished at least in purgatory. The learned Palafox relates that a Superior once appeared to a religious and told him that, with regard to the vow of poverty, God demands a most rigorous account of certain things that are not attended to in this life. He also said that he himself suffered severely in purgatory for having kept in his cell a walnut desk.

II. Some religious must have in their cells a supply of fruits, spices, and other eatables. When the physician prescribed for the Venerable Mother Mary John of the Annunciation a conserve of roses, she refused to keep any of it in the cell, but made a sister bring her every evening as much as was necessary for the night.

III. Above all, seek to be poor in money. St. Paul compares avarice to idolatry. No covetous person (which is a serving of idols,} hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ.[9453] The comparison is most just; for the avaricious man desires money as his last end, and thus makes it his God. Hence St. John Chrysostom said, “ Let us contemn money, lest we be condemned by Christ.”[9454] If we wish not to be despised by Jesus Christ, we must despise riches. Hence the first Christians, after having sold their goods, placed the price at the feet of the apostles,[9455] thus showing, as St. Jerome says,[9456] that money should not find a place in the heart of man, but should be trampled under his feet.

Some religious, under the pretext of providing for their necessities, desire the possession of riches. St. Catharine of Sienna used to say: “We desire to abound in temporal goods, because, as long as we do not possess them in abundance, we imagine that we stand in need of them.”[9457] But, religious who love perfection seek not after riches; they desire only what is absolutely indispensable, and therefore they look for scarcely as much as is necessary for their support. By enabling them to indulge every whim and caprice, a superfluous income serves only to make religious more proud, more at ease, more vain, and less mortified. What a shame, says St. Catharine of Sienna, in one of her letters, to see some religious, who should be mirrors of poverty, enjoy more pleasures in the cloister than they would had they remained in the world ! Surely it is a scandalous irregularity in a nun to seek more indulgence in religion than she should obtain in the world.

If you wish not to offend against poverty, you must observe great caution in your whole expenditure. There are some, and particularly in our own time, since the expenses of religious have become extravagant, who boast of their splendour and generosity, saying, While we have the means we must spend. Such language might be expected from a worldling, but should never be uttered by a religious. Nor is it any justification to say that the expenses are incurred for God’s honor, on the solemn festivals of the monastery. Clement V.[9458] prohibited to religious all superfluous expenditure, even on the divine worship.[9459]

Hence, St. Charles Borromeo ordained that on the festivals of nuns the decorations should be decent, but not sumptuous. What think you, says St. Bernard, “ Is it penance, compunction, or the admiration of the bystanders that is sought in these things ?”[9460] Do you think that a religious, in the sumptuous celebration of a feast, seeks the honor of God by inspiring others with devotion, or rather the indulgence of her own vanity, by exciting admiration of her generosity and splendour? But you will perhaps say that bishops incur great expenses in the celebration of festivals. In the words of St. Bernard, who has proposed and answered this objection, I reply that “ the condition of bishops is different from that of religious. We,” says the saint, “ have left all that is precious in the world, and by this means we intended to excite devotion.”[9461] The circumstances of bishops, and of religious who make a profession of poverty, are very different: the latter have left the world; even in their festivals they should appear poor, and by their exterior poverty should endeavor to excite devotion in others. Oh ! how many faults are committed by religious in celebrating their feasts. They are not content with a great abundance of lights and of ornaments, or with the expense of music: no; they must also display their vanity by regaling all who are invited to the solemnity.

But you will say, What am I to do ? Others act in this manner: shall I not be like them ? If you must be like others, you ought at least not to endeavor to surpass them, nor increase the excesses that have been already introduced. If you indulge in any excess, the sister who will have to celebrate the next feast will strive to equal you in pomp and splendour.

The abuses that already exist are more than sufficient. Do not, then, I repeat, introduce any new one; if you do, you shall have to render a frightful account to God. For it is by repeated acts of extravagance that the habit of lavish expenditure is established. One exceeds her companions in magnificence and liberality; she is surpassed by another, and thus a great degree of extravagance is gradually introduced. It is in this manner that many Communities have lost the spirit of fervor, and have fallen away from the habit of regular observance. How many nuns are there who, on account of their extravagant expenditure, lead a life of continual distraction and inquietude, without recollection or devotion, and full of faults and vanities ! The Sovereign Pontiffs and the Sacred Congregations have frequently endeavoured to correct this evil; but their exertions have in a great measure proved abortive. On this subject I have nothing more to say, except to exclaim: Woe to the nun who introduces abuses and vanities into religion ! A few important remarks must here be made:

1. The sister who is charged with the management of the affairs of the convent should be careful not to expend extravagant sums for her own convenience. By her prodigality she might be guilty of a grievous transgression of the vow of poverty.

2. Let all remember that permissions to lay out money are not to be obtained from the confessor, but from the Superior. For in temporals all the religious are bound to obey her.

3. To lay out money on any object, different from that on which you obtained permission to expend it, is a violation of poverty.

4. Let it also be remembered that to make presents, without just reason, and only through caprice or vanity, to people who do not stand in need of them, is also an offence against poverty. “ It is a sacrilege,” says St. Jerome, “ to give the property of the poor to those that are not poor.”[9462] It is a

sacrilegious violation of poverty to give the goods of the poor that is, of religious, who have nothing of their own to those that are not in want.

5. The decrees of the Sovereign Pontiffs forbid confessors to receive presents from nuns: such presents, when mutual, are particularly prohibited. “ Holy love,” says St. Jerome, “ does not make frequent little presents, nor indulge in affectionate letters.”[9463] But we shall treat of this subject in the next chapter.[9464]

THIRD DEGREE

The third degree of poverty requires that you do not complain when you are in want even of necessaries. The Mother of God once said to one of her devout servants, a Franciscan nun: My child, as long as all your wants are supplied, you are not poor; true poverty consists in having less than is necessary. “ To complain of poverty,” says St. Jane Frances Chantal, “ is displeasing to God and to men. I never feel so happy as when I bear some of the marks of poverty.” That great servant of God, Baptista Vernazza, a canoness regular, used to say that she experienced great pleasure in reflecting that she had no provision for any future necessity. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi was afflicted at seeing her wants supplied by the abbess. She once felt so much complacency, in not having bread at table, that she afterwards accused herself of having entertained too much pleasure in the privation. Sometimes she exclaimed: “ Oh ! how happy should I be, if I went to table and found no food, if I went to sleep and found no bed, if I went to dress and had no clothes ! Oh that all things were wanting to me !

Tell me, dear sister, do you practise such perfect poverty? Although you may have renounced all affection for the world, and for vain and superfluous possessions, you are perhaps still attached to what you regard as necessary, and still anxious to be furnished with decent and comfortable clothes, food, and bed. It is this solicitude about them that disturbs you whenever they are wanting to you. But in what way do you wish to be poor? Do you expect to enjoy the reward of poverty, and at the same time to want nothing? Would you not be in want of many necessaries had you remained in the world? And do you seek to be supplied with all necessaries in religion, which you embraced for the purpose of suffering, and in which you had made a solemn vow of poverty? “ To desire to be poor,” says St.

Francis de Sales, "and not to feel any of the inconveniences of want, is to wish for the honor of poverty and the advantages of riches."[9465]

But you will say, Had I good health, I would cheerfully suffer all things; but I am weak and infirm, and therefore I cannot bear to see the Superior as forgetful of me as if I were in good health. You complain that others are unmindful of you, and you yourself forget that you have entered religion for the purpose of suffering. A nun should embrace sufferings in sickness as well as in health. In the Constitutions of the Teresians the following admonition is given: "Our sick brethren, if anything be wanting to them, should remember that they have embraced the poverty of Jesus Christ, and therefore, neither in sickness nor in health, should desire to be treated like the rich." St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi gives a very excellent advice on this subject. However great your infirmities," says the saint, " never take and never seek what savors not of poverty." Hence, St. Bernard says[9466] that it is not becoming in poor religious to make use of costly remedies; and therefore he recommended his monks not to take any other medicine than decoctions of herbs.

Had you remained in the world, you should not, perhaps, be able to procure the medicine and the attendance of physicians, with which you are provided in religion; and still you seek for other remedies. Ah ! be content, not only to live but to die in poverty; and rejoice that death, when it comes to take you out of this life will find you treated as a pauper. On every occasion in which you have to suffer from want have before your eyes the beautiful sentiment of St. Jane Frances Chantal, who was accustomed to say, that as the opportunities of practising poverty are so rare, we should, whenever they occur, accept them with gladness.

FOURTH DEGREE

The fourth and last degree of poverty requires not only that a religious be content with what is poor, but also that she prefer and select what is poorest the poorest cell, the poorest bed, the poorest clothes, and the poorest food. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi rejoiced in eating what was left by the other sisters. Her habit was so threadbare that the Superior obliged her to change it. St. Jane Frances Chantal used to say that for the perfection of poverty it is advisable not to use silver when tin is sufficient, nor tin when lead answers the purpose. The nun who wishes to be a saint observes a similar rule in all other things.

It will be useful to insert in this place the beautiful instruction of Father Anthony Torres to a nun who was one of his penitents: “ Since your Spouse esteemed poverty so highly, you should love it as a treasure; you should practise it in all things, and glory in it more than in the most splendid ornaments. Do not allow any nun or lay-sister in the convent to be poorer than you. You should wear no ornaments, and no more clothes than are absolutely necessary; you must practise poverty even in your veil, which should be coarse and patched, and even in the beads that hang by your side. You should delight in wearing a poor patched habit, and should not cast it aside until it is no longer fit for use.

Abstain as much as possible from keeping two habits, or more linen than the humblest of the lay-sisters. Do not possess or seek anything, however necessary it may appear, without first looking at your naked Spouse on the cross, and asking his permission. Neither give nor receive any presents, however small, without the Superiors leave. In your cell you should have only a poor bed, the coarsest bed-clothes, two chairs of straw, a crucifix, four unframed pictures, the few books that your director will prescribe for your use, and whatever else is indispensably necessary. You should frequently examine before the crucifix your conduct with regard to the virtue of poverty; and if you find that you possess any superfluity you should take it immediately to the Superior. Never ask from your relatives anything for your own use; you may ask something from them for the Community, but never reserve anything whatsoever for yourself.”

Ah ! dear sister, after having renounced the world and all its goods, do not, I pray you, prefer emptiness and nothingness to the Lord. When, to induce St. Clement, Bishop of Ancyra, to deny Jesus Christ, the Emperor Diocletian offered him silver, gold, and precious stones, the saint heaved a deep sigh of sorrow at seeing his God compared with dross. And when, on condition of renouncing Christianity, the dignity of first pontiff and head of the priesthood was offered by the tribune to St. Basil, Martyr, on the part of the Emperor Licinius, the saint replied: “Tell the emperor that though he made me master of all his dominions he could not give me as much as he would take from me by robbing me of my God to make me a slave of the devil.”[9467]

And, dearest sister, since you have left all things for God, do not, for the sake of any miserable earthly good, expose your soul to the danger of eternal perdition. Imagine that God places before you himself on the one hand and creatures on the other, and that he speaks to you in the language that he once addressed to the Venerable Mary Crucified: “ Choose between me and creatures whatsoever will make you happy.” A religious should have no treasure but God. I conclude in the words of St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi: “O happy the religious who, detached from all things by means of holy poverty, can say, The Lord is the portion of my inheritance.” God only is the portion that I desire in time as well as in eternity. Hence the saint was heard to exclaim: “ Nothing, nothing but God; I desire to possess him only for his own sake.”

PRAYER

My Jesus, in Thee I find all things : out of Thee I desire nothing. Ah ! draw me entirely to Thee ; enkindle in my heart Thy holy love, by which I desire to see myself entirely consumed. My dear Redeemer, I know that Thou hast been near to me for so many years, because thou dost wish me to belong entirely to Thee. Since, then, Thou dost so ardently desire my welfare, grant that henceforth I may seek only Thy love, and the fulfilment of Thy holy will. Ah ! Lord, deliver me from all affections that remove me from Thee. Grant that my thoughts may be wholly employed in endeavoring to avoid every offence against Thy majesty, and in seeking to please Thee to the best of my power. O incarnate Word ! Thou art come upon earth to kindle the flames of love in the hearts of men. Oh ! take possession of my heart ; fill it with Thy love ; enlighten it, and make it ready and willing to execute all Thy holy desires. In a word, unite my soul perfectly to Thy divinity, and possess it entirely and forever. Unite Thyself to me, and me to Thee, by a perfect love that shall never be dissolved. Grant that I may be no longer mine own, but that I may be Thine entirely and forever, my treasure, my love, and my only good.

Mary, my mother, in thy intercession, my hopes are placed.

Chapter X

DETACHMENT FROM RELATIVES AND OTHER PEOPLE

I. DETACHMENT FROM RELATIVES

IF attachment to relatives were not productive of great mischief Jesus Christ would not have so strenuously exhorted us to estrangement from them. “If,” he says, “any man come to me and hate not his father and mother . . . and brethren and sisters, he cannot be my disciple”[9468] And again: I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother[9469] But why does the Redeemer insist so strongly on alienation from relatives ? Why does he take so much pains to separate us from them ? He himself assigns the reason: it is because a mans enemies shall be they of his own household. Relatives are the worst enemies of the sanctification of Christians and particularly of religious; because they are, according to St. Thomas, the greatest obstacle to advancement in virtue. “ Frequently,” says the holy Doctor, “carnal friends oppose the progress of the spirit;[9470] for in the affair of salvation the nearest akin are not friends, but enemies.”[9471] The truth of this assertion is fully established by experience.

Even St. Charles Borromeo, notwithstanding his great reserve and perfect detachment from relatives, acknowledged that after returning from among them he felt his soul tepid, and detached from the things of God. Hence, according to all the masters of the spiritual life, he that desires to walk in the way of perfection must fly from relatives, must abstain from taking part in their affairs, and when they are at a distance must not even inquire about them.

What progress can be expected from the religious that wishes to have her relatives near the convent, who, if she does not see them, is constantly sending letters and messages to request a visit from them; and who, if they yield not to her entreaties, is disturbed, and complains by frequent letters of their absence and neglect? It is impossible for a nun of this description ever to attain a close union with God. “ Whoever,” says St. Gregory, “ wishes to be truly united to the Father of all must be separated from relatives.”[9472] Whoever aspires to a union with God, the common Father of all men, must fly altogether from his kindred. When the Blessed Virgin lost the infant Jesus she sought him in vain for three days among her kinsfolk. “ Yes,” says St. Bernard, “ Jesus is not found among kinsfolk.”[9473] Peter of Blois asserts that the love of flesh and blood soon robs the soul of the love of God. “ Carnal love will soon remove you from the love of God.”[9474]

Religious should regard the dying words of Moses as peculiarly applicable to themselves: Who hath said to his father and to his mother, I do not know you; and to his brethren, I know you not. These have kept thy word and observed thy covenant[9475]

The religious who tells her parents and her brothers and her sisters that she knows them not, is the true spouse of Jesus. She is the kings daughter who obeys the call of God, and fulfils the covenant made with him at her profession, when he spoke to her in the language that he addresses to every soul consecrated to his love: Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear, and forget thy people and thy fathers house. And the king shall greatly desire thy beauty.[9476]Hear my voice, O daughter, and learn to understand the great blessings that you will receive if you observe my commandments. Open, then, your ear to my words: forget your kindred and your father s house, and I, your King and Spouse, shall love your beauty. “It is,” says St. Jerome, “ a great advantage to forget your parents; for then the King shall greatly desire your beauty.”[9477]Great shall be your reward: you shall become dear to the Lord, who will make you happy here and hereafter. Such is the recompense promised by the Redeemer when he said: And every one that hath left house or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother . . . for my name s sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall possess life everlasting[9478] The nun that leaves her relatives in effect and in affection shall obtain eternal beatitude in heaven and a hundredfold on earth; she will leave a few and shall find many sisters in religion; she will abandon a father and a mother, and in return shall have God for her father and Mary for her mother; and from them she shall experience the kindness and affection of the fondest parent.

Hence, convinced that detachment from kindred is highly pleasing to God, the saints have sought to be wholly removed from their relatives. St. Francis Xavier, when about to set out on the Indian mission, refused to visit his mother or relatives, though they repeatedly requested a visit from him, although he passed near their place of residence, and although he knew that he should never see them again. When his sister came to see St. Pachomius he sent her the following message: “ It is enough for you to have learned that I am alive; go, then, in peace.” Some of the saints have gone so far as to abstain from reading the letters of their dearest friends. St. John Climacus relates that St. Anthony, after having spent several years in the desert, on receiving some letters from his relatives, said to himself: What can I expect from the perusal of these letters, but disturbance of mind, and the loss of the peace that I enjoy ? The holy man then cast them into the fire, saying: Begone from me, all thoughts of my country, that I may not return to the things that I have already left. To the flames, ye letters, that I may not be one day burned by you. “ For my part,” says St. Teresa, “ I cannot conceive what consolation a nun can find in her relatives. By attachment to them she displeases God, and without being able to enjoy their amusements she shares in all their troubles.”[9479] How applicable to you, dear Sister, is this reflection of the saint? When your parents and friends come to the grate, they certainly cannot make you a partaker of their worldly amusements, for you cannot go beyond the limits of the enclosure. In their visits, then, they only recount their misfortunes, their infirmities, and their wants.

Surely such narratives only serve to fill your head and heart with so much inquietude, with so many distractions and defects, that after each visit you will be for several days disturbed and distracted in your meditations and Communions by the remembrances of what you have heard.

How is it possible that you who have left the world can so ardently desire the frequent visits of your relatives ? Is it that they may frequently rob you of your peace and of the progress you have made ? Oh ! what an excess of folly to imagine that you cannot be happy without frequently seeing your friends. Ah ! if you keep aloof from them, what torrents of consolation and happiness would your Spouse, Jesus, infuse into your soul ! St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that an abhorrence of the great should be the principal fruit of the Communions of religious. And as an evil spirit once said to the Venerable Sister Mary Villani, there is certainly no place where the devil does so much injury to religious as in the parlour. Hence, St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi would not even enter the parlour; and such was her hatred of it, that she could not bear to hear it mentioned. Whenever she was obliged to go to the parlour, she would begin to weep, and would say to her novices: “ My dear children, pray to God for me; for I am called to the grate.” When leaving them, she would beg of them soon to call her away from the grate under some pretext.

But you will say, What am I to do? Am I never to see my friends? When they visit me, must I send them away, and refuse to go to the grate? I do not require so much from you; but if you refuse to see them, would you do wrong? would you do what would be inconvenient, or what is never done by religious? Several nuns have resolved never to see their relatives, and have fulfilled their resolution. In the life of Father Torres, it is related of Georama Snakelike, a religious in the convent of St. Alvina, that so great was her attachment to her relatives that her thoughts were continually upon them, that she desired frequent visits from them, and sent every day to inquire about her father. Her sister, Mary Antonia, who lived in the same convent, was so fervent, that she be sought the Lord to make her suffer a great deal in this life. Her prayer was heard, and she was afflicted with an ulcer, which ate away her flesh, and produced the very pangs of death. In her agony she would exclaim: “More suffering, O my Spouse, more suffering.” When dying she said to Gerolama, that she hoped to obtain eternal glory, and that as soon as she should enter into bliss she would beg of God to transform her tepid sister into a saint. She died: Gerolama changed her life, and adopted and observed for forty years the resolution never more to see her relatives. It once happened that two of her nephews came to visit her, but she refused to see them; and having sent them away, she went to the grate of the church to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. The young men entered the church, expecting to see her at a distance; but she instantly retired behind the curtain, and such was the effort which she made on that occasion to stifle the feelings of flesh and blood that she fainted away. Whoever does not offer violence to herself will never become a saint. Sister Gerolama made rapid progress in divine love, and afterwards lived and died a saint. After death her body was opened and a cross of flesh was found on her heart, as a token of the great love that she had borne to

Jesus crucified. Why cannot you imitate her example, and free yourself forever from the distractions that are caused by going to the grate ?

But you will say that the abbess or the confessor will not permit you to observe such a resolution. On what grounds can they refuse you permission ? Is not such a resolution the fruit of a divine inspiration ? and if practised, would it not be a source of great edification to the other sisters ? Would it not, at least, make them see the impropriety and the dangers of attachments to their relatives and to the grate? But should the Superior command you to see your parents or relatives, I tell you to obey; but at the same time I entreat you to imitate the example of Blessed Theodore, who, when commanded to converse with his mother, who had come to see him, said to the abbot: “ Father, you command me to speak with my mother, but do you assure me that from the conversation I shall suffer no spiritual injury?” Afraid of the consequence, the abbot released the brother from the obligation that he had imposed upon him. It may be useful to remind abbesses and confessors, that if, without just cause, and only through caprice, or unreasonable human respect, or self-interest, or to avoid trouble, they hinder the greater progress of a religious, who seeks to run to God, they will certainly have to render to the Lord an account of their conduct. As to you, dear Sister, when they oblige you to see your relatives, obey; again I say, that I do not require of you never more to see your friends; but whenever necessity compels you to speak with them, I exhort you to observe the following rules:

1. Before you go to the grate, recommend yourself to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament or on the cross, and beg that he may assist you and preserve you from every fault in your conversation.

2. Take care not to imitate the religious who go to the parlour to amuse themselves, or to learn what passes in the world, and afterwards tell it to the whole Community.

3. Be careful not to make known to externs the internal affairs of the convent, and particularly what might tend to the discredit of the Superior or the sisters.

4. Should externs begin to speak on useless or worldly matters, such as marriages, balls, or fond attachments, break off, break off at once the conversation, and introduce some Christian maxim, or some fact from which you can draw a spiritual sentiment. You are not to learn the language

of seculars, hut should teach them the language of religious, whose conversation should be always on the things of God. Time spent at the grate is not profitable to the soul; it is all lost, and for it you shall one day have to render an account to God.

5. Never seek a visit from your relatives. When they come, endeavor to withdraw from them as soon as possible; excuse your withdrawal by saying that you must attend to the duties of your office; that you must assist a person who is sick; or make some similar apology.

Whoever wishes, easily finds very just reasons for taking leave of visitors. If you act in this manner, they will soon feel that their conversation is not very pleasing to you, and will come less frequently to disturb you. And be assured that the shorter their visits, the fewer will be your faults; and that the less frequently you see them, the more you will be recollected, and the greater will be the consolations that you will receive from Jesus Christ. The Venerable Sister Catharine, a Cistercian, because she became a nun against the consent of her parents, was altogether abandoned by them; but such was the joy that her Spouse poured into her soul, that she was accustomed to say: “ I do not envy my sisters who are visited very frequently in the year by their parents, because as often as I wish, I go to my true father, Jesus, and to my dear mother, Mary, and they fill me with consolations.”

1. Lastly, take care, above all things, not to implicate yourself in the temporal concerns of your relatives; such as marriages, contracts, expenses, or any similar affairs. If you do, you will lose all peace and recollection, and perhaps your immortal soul. “ How many monks,” says St. Jerome, “ by compassion towards their father and mother have lost their own—souls ? 9480

How many religious by compassion for their relatives have been lost ? In another place the saint says, that the more tender the affection of a religious for her kindred, the greater her impiety towards God. “ Great piety towards relatives is impiety towards God.”[9481] And what greater impiety than that a nun should, for the service of her family, give up the service of God, neglect mental prayer, the sacraments, and expose herself to all the distractions that necessarily arise from the care of worldly affairs. St. Bernard exhorts his religious “ to fly from such cares, as being diabolical.”[9482]St. Ignatius of Loyola refused to interfere in the marriage of one of his nieces, though she was the heiress of the family. St. Francis Borgia would not ask the Pope for a dispensation (which he would have easily obtained) to have his son married to a relative, although the acquisition of a large estate depended upon the marriage. No man, said the Redeemer, pulling his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God[9483]

Let us tremble, for God himself has declared that he who has begun to serve the Lord, and looks back to the things of the world, is unfit for paradise. When, then, relatives seek to implicate you in worldly affairs, withdraw at once from them. Attend to the advice of the Redeemer to the young man who, when asked to follow Jesus, answered, that he wished first to bury his father: Let the dead, says Jesus, bury the dead.[9484] Leave, then, dear sister, worldlings (who are said to be dead) to attend to their worldly business, and let it be your sole care and concern to love God and to become a saint.

Tell your parents that worldly business is not fit for you, nor suited to your state. When his mother said to Jesus: Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing, he replied: Did you not know that I must be about my Fathers business[9485] Did you not know that I should attend only to the interests of my Fathers glory ? Should your relatives complain of your unwillingness to serve them, should they even charge you with disaffection, with ingratitude, and even call you the enemy of your family, answer them with firmness that you are dead to the world, and that it is your duty to attend only to the service of God and of the monastery. I conclude this chapter with the words of St. Joseph Calasanctius: “A religious who is attached to her relatives has not yet left the world.”

PRAYER

O my God and my Spouse, Thee alone I desire to serve and to love henceforth and forever. I desire to serve creatures only, when I know that Thou dost wish me to serve them. Ah ! Lord, make Thy will known to me ; I wish to do it in all things. Ah ! inflame my whole soul with Thy holy love, that for the future I may seek only Thy will. Grant that nothing may please me but what pleases Thee. Grant that I may always say with sincerity : “ My God and my Spouse, I desire Thee only, and nothing more.” O my King and my Spouse, Jesus, reign alone in my whole soul; possess it without reserve; let Thy love command and point out what I am to do, what I am to avoid, and what I am to desire; and let my soul obey only Thy will. Ah ! my dear Redeemer, through the merits of Thy Passion hear my prayer.

O Queen of heaven, in thee I trust ; assist me by thy intercession.

II. DETACHMENT FROM SECULARS, AND EVEN FROM THE SISTERS.[9486]

St. Augustine says that whoever does not shun dangerous conversations will soon fall into a precipice: “ He that will not avoid suspected familiarity soon falls into ruin.”[9487] The example of the unhappy Solomon should make us all tremble. At first he was most clear to God, and even the inspired of the Holy Ghost, but by the love of strange women he was in his old age led into idolatry.[9488]Nor should his fall be a subject of wonder; for, as St. Cyprian says,[9489] to stand in the midst of flames and not to burn is impossible.

Be assured, O blessed spouse of the Lord, that for religious the atmosphere of the parlour, where conversations are held with seculars, is pestiferous. As in the choir religious breathe the salubrious air of paradise, so in the parlour they may inhale the pestilential vapours of hell. A religious, were she in her father s house, would certainly not dare to spend an hour or two in conversation with people of every age and of both sexes, and will she not scruple to do so in God’s own dwelling? Is the house of the Lord to be treated with less respect than the house of a secular ? But you will say: By the grace of God such conversations are harmless. Let those that speak thus remember, that all friendships founded on a sensible affection for external objects, if not productive of other evils, are at least great obstacles to perfection.

They certainly destroy the spirit of prayer and recollection; and the nun that entertains such friendships will be in the church in body, but her thoughts will be fixed on her friends. Such friendships serve to weaken her affection for the sacraments, and to conceal from herself and others the source of her tepidity; and thus she daily becomes more imperfect. She loses her peace; for should anything be said against those for whom she has conceived a regard, or whose conversation she seeks to enjoy, she is at once disturbed, and censures the person by whose language she is offended. She loses obedience; for when admonished by the Superior to break off such friendships, she excuses herself by various pretences, but does not obey. In fine, she loses the love of God, who desires to possess her whole heart, who will not suffer any affection that is not for him; and therefore seeing her soul attached to others, he withdraws himself, and deprives her of his special assistance. The Venerable Sister Frances Farnese used to say to the religious under her care: “We are shut up in this monastery, that we may neither see nor be seen, but that we preserve our souls spotless before God.” The more we hide ourselves from seculars, the more God will manifest himself to us by his grace in this life, and by his glory in the next.

Affections that arise from certain external qualifications, possessed by people of a different sex, not only deprive the soul of great advantages, but also expose her to very great danger. In the beginning they appear indifferent, but by degrees they become sinful, and finally lead the soul into some mortal transgression. St. Jerome says: “Man and woman are like fire and straw, and the devil does not cease to blow so that there may be a blaze.”[9490]

People of different sexes, as soon as there exists too much familiarity among them, are inflamed as easily as when straw is held near the fire; for the devil is there trying his best to produce a conflagration. St. Teresa was once shown the place prepared for her in hell had she not renounced a certain inordinate, though not impure, affection for a relative.[9491]

If, dear reader, you ever feel an attachment of this kind, your only remedy is a resolute and total retreat from the object of your affection. If you seek to withdraw by degrees, believe me your efforts will be fruitless: such chains, because they are strong, are burst only with difficulty without a sudden and violent effort their bondage shall never be dissolved. You will perhaps say that no impropriety can occur. Remember that the devil never begins by suggesting the worst of evils, but by degrees he leads negligent souls to the brink of ruin, and then by an easy effort casts them over the precipice. It is a common maxim of masters of the spiritual life, that the only remedy is flight and the removal of occasions. St. Philip Neri used to say that in this warfare only cowards, that is, they that fly from the occasions of defeat, shall be conquerors. St. Thomas has said before: “ *Whoever can resist the other vices cannot resist this except by flight.* “[9492]

Although you have been free from such affections, you must still guard yourself against them with all possible care; for you too are exposed to the danger of being caught in the snare into which, through their own negligence, others have fallen. To preserve your soul free from every dangerous attachment, I advise you, in the language of St. Teresa, first, to prize yourself more for the plainness than for the elegance of your manners, the agreeableness of your conversation, or the facility of paying compliments to seculars. “ With externs,” says St. Catharine of Sienna in a letter to her niece, “ you should be modest; your head should be bowed down, and your manner and conversation simple and unaffected.” At the grate be careful to abstain from unguarded looks and indecent laughter, and never appear in a habit affectedly neat. It would be a still greater fault to go to the grate with any badge of worldly pomp or vanity.

In a word, if you expect to escape every danger, remove yourself as much as possible from all conversation with seculars. “ Sit solitary,” says St. Bernard, “ as the turtle: have nothing to do with crowds.”[9493] Remain in solitude; love the choir and the cell, and shun the parlour as the abode of pestilence. To consecrate your whole being to God, you have left the world; what, then, have you to do with seculars ? “If,” says the Venerable Sister Jane of St. Stephen, of the Order of St. Francis, “ you are the spouse of the King of kings, turn not your eyes toward slaves.”[9494] It is a crime in a slave to fix his eyes on the king s spouse, and should the queen take complacency in his attention to her, she would be guilty of a similar transgression. Speaking of nuns, St. Catharine of Sienna says: “We shall not be spouses but sacrilegious violators of our engagements, if we seek for happiness in the gratification of self-love; if we hate the cell, and love the society of seculars.” Should you, in conversation, ever feel a disorderly affection, stifle it at once before it acquires the strength of a giant. “ While,” says St. Jerome, “ the enemy is small, destroy him.”[9495] To kill a lion when young is an easy task; but to conquer him when he has attained full growth is a work of extreme and insuperable difficulty.

It would be still more criminal and disgraceful to permit any secular to indulge in indecent jests; I do not speak of improper familiarities, not wishing to suppose such an excess. Should any worldling carry his sacrilegious insolence so far as to utter such jests in your presence, imagine not that because you only listen you are blameless By not retiring at once you co-operate with him and render yourself a partaker of his guilt. Besides, should you not instantly withdraw from such infernal conversation you will soon become more criminal than its author; and from the dignity of the spouse of Jesus you will fall to the degraded condition of the slave of Satan. Besides, you might easily be the cause of ruin to your convent; for such a religious that keeps up so unhallowed a relationship is sufficient by her bad example to seduce others into doing the same thing.

Be specially on your guard if your brother or another of your relatives in visiting you brings with him one of his friends who has taken a fancy to you; they may perhaps call in your aunt to be present, but you will after all be the principal person in the scene. Should you ever perceive that such a snare has been laid, cast down your eyes at once, keep silence, and show yourself very grave; but the best thing for you to do would be to go away immediately. If later on you are again called to the parlour, knowing that the same person is there, send word that you are busy and that you cannot go. Be careful not to act otherwise, for if you again allow that person to have an interview with you, I shall look upon you as lost.

Likewise, if you receive from any one a letter in which you notice tender and affectionate words, tear up the letter at once, throw it into the fire, and do not answer it. If, however, on account of some matter of importance, an answer should be necessary, answer it briefly and seriously, without showing that you have taken the least pleasure in the sentiments that have been expressed to you, or that you have paid any attention to them. And if afterwards the same person calls you to the grate, refuse absolutely to go there; for if after his letter you consent to speak to him, it will be all over with you. You must know, besides, that you will be an accomplice of the same disorder if you have less fear to displease God than to displease one of your sisters by daring to encourage her in her unlawful attachment. In this case you would have to expect an exemplary chastisement, such as was inflicted upon a religious who was sacristan. To please one of her sisters she took upon herself the care of having a letter forwarded to a person with whom her companion kept up an improper correspondence. But when she gave the letter to the porter, the latter, being in a hurry, closed the revolving turn of the sacristy with such violence that her hand was caught and entirely torn off. She died a few days after, in consequence of this accident.

With religious and ecclesiastics who visit you, not for the purpose of speaking of God, nor for your spiritual good, but for the pleasure of your society, you should be reserved. I would recommend you to speak with your confessor only in the tribunal of penance. I advise you to abstain as much as possible from all correspondence with him by little presents, or by any similar means; and if you have to speak to him, do so at the turn and not at the grate. It is of importance that you use great reserve in regard to your directors, because the confidence that you have to repose in them by revealing to them the secrets of your conscience is always accompanied by a certain sympathy, which, if it is not moderated, may degenerate into a fire of hell. This is the reason why I counsel you to abstain as much as possible from having any worldly business with your confessor; do not make him presents; do not undertake the care of his secular affairs, of providing him with meals, of taking care of his linen, and other similar things. “ Oh !” says St. Teresa, “ what obstacles does such worldly correspondence present to the spiritual progress of religious.” Should there be an ancient custom in your convent of making presents to the confessor, it will be enough for you to send him two or three times a year some trifle as a mark of attention. Be always most watchful over your words so that nothing may ever escape you that would express the least affection or tenderness.

Do not pretend that there is no danger because that priest is a saint. “ Nor,” says St. Thomas, “ are they to be less avoided because they are more holy: for the greater their sanctity the more they excite sentiments of affection.”[9496] The Venerable Father Sertorio Caputo of the Society of Jesus says that the devil first makes us love a man s virtue, then his person, and at length draws us over the precipice. St. Thomas teaches that the devil at first kindles an attachment which only slightly wounds the soul: but what appeared to be pure angelic love soon degenerates into the human affection of beings clothed with flesh. Looks and words of tenderness follow; these are succeeded by a desire of each other s society: thus by degrees a holy attachment will be converted into a natural affection. Such is the doctrine of St. Thomas.

St. Bonaventure[9497] gives five marks by which we may ascertain whether a mutual attachment between two friends is pure or otherwise.

1. It is not pure when it leads to long and useless discourses; and when conversations are very long they are always useless.
2. When each delights in looking at each other and in praising each other.
3. When either excuses the others defects.
4. When they manifest certain little jealousies.
5. When either feels unhappy at being separated from the other.

The attachment is not pure when personal beauty or gracefulness is a source of pleasure; when either desires to be esteemed by the other, or when either is unwilling that his friend should receive attention from others; when one does not wish that others should observe, hear, or speak of what is passing.

Father Peter Consolini of the Oratory has justly remarked that we should treat with holy people of a different sex as with the souls in purgatory, that is, at a distance, and without looking at them. Some religious have a strong desire of conversing with their spiritual Father because they imagine that his instructions will stimulate their fervor. But what need is there of such conversations, of such long and familiar discourses ? Have they not an abundant supply of spiritual books? Have they not spiritual reading at table and at prayer? Have they not the benefit of sermons in the church? Without any of these the reading and observance of their Rules and Constitutions ought to be sufficient to make them saints.

What has been said refers to outside people; but it is necessary to remark that even among the religious themselves inordinate attachments may be found, especially among those who are young. “ Young man,” says St. Basil, “ avoid familiarity with your equals: how many young people has the devil, through their companions, drawn into hell to be burned with eternal fire.”[9498]

Many of them, continues the saint, were, in the beginning enticed into a certain attachment that appeared to be charity, but that afterwards led them to the loss of peace and of the perfection of their state.[9499] “ Love,” says Blessed Angela of Foligno, “ includes every evil as well as every good. I do not speak of criminal love, which everyone knows should be avoided, but of the love that one friend entertains for another; and that may degenerate into an irregular affection. Frequent conversations along with the manifestation of mutual regard produce too close a union of their hearts render their friendship noxious; and by strengthening their attachment, obscure the light of reason. Each yields to the will of the other, and thus both are led into the neglect of duty."[9500]

It is, moreover, to be remarked, that if the friendships with outside people cause more scandal, the friendships that exist at home among the religious themselves are more dangerous, either because they are more difficult to remove, or because the occasion is more proximate. Would to God that the religious in the house of the Lord may never have the misfortune to commit a grave fault against chastity! Isaias regards such a one as already lost. He says: In the land of the saints he hath done wicked things, and he shall not see the glory of the Lord[9501] Hence those nuns who have charge of the education of young pupils must always be watchful in regard to their conduct, and should not scruple to suspect the worst. When they perceive any attachment or familiarity between two young people they must separate them at once, and not permit them to go together, and they should continually keep their eyes upon them lest any evil should happen.

They should also from time to time exhort them in general to avoid, as they would avoid death, ever concealing through shame any sin in confession, and for this purpose they should relate to them the sad example of people who had the misfortune of being condemned to hell for having made sacrilegious confessions.

St. Basil[9502] prescribed a very severe chastisement for the nuns of his Order who should entertain particular friendships. St. Bernard calls such friendships "poisoned attachments, and the enemies of the peace of communities." They are a source of disturbance, of murmurings, of irregularities, of factions, and of parties; and sometimes they influence the votes at elections to office in favour not of the most worthy, but of the greatest favourites. Let it be your study to love all and to serve all, so that each will regard you as a friend. But abstain from familiarity with any; let your intimacy be only with God. Be particularly careful to avoid familiarity with all who manifest attachment to you. The way through which you walk in this life is dark and slippery: if you select an imperfect companion who will lead you to the precipice, you are lost.

Beware of all human respect of the accursed fear of what others will say or think of you. " If," you will say, " I give up all intercourse with such a secular; if I separate from such a one; if I consecrate myself to retirement, to prayer, and to mortification what will be said of me ? I shall be an object of jest and derision to all." Ah ! how many religious of both sexes has this accursed weakness of human respect brought to eternal misery? "Oh!" says St. Augustine, "how many has this infirmity precipitated into hell ?"[9503] St. Francis Borgia says that he who desires to consecrate himself to God must, in the first place, trample under his feet all regard for what others will say of him.

O my God, why do we not ask what Jesus Christ or his holy mother will think of our conduct ? My spouse, says our Lord, is a garden enclosed[9504] To be the true spouse of Jesus, the heart of a religious must be an enclosed garden, excluding every affection that is not for God. Remember that to cherish in the soul any strange affection is, perhaps, of all the defects of nuns the most displeasing to God. He requires the full and undivided possession of the heart of his spouse. Even men cannot bear with any division in the affections of their spouses. In conclusion, I exhort you to endeavor to love God as if he and you were the only beings in existence.

But before finishing, I cannot omit to blame the folly of certain religious who become fond of animals, such as cats and dogs. These they wish to have always with them at table, and even in bed. They often carry them in their arms, kiss them, and say even affectionate words to them. If these animals become sick they are greatly afflicted; if they die they are inconsolable, and are an annoyance to those who may have been the cause of the death. If such an affection is unreasonable even in a person of the world, how much more is it unreasonable in a spouse of Jesus Christ !

PRAYER

My Jesus, I already understand Thee. Thou dost desire my whole heart and all my love ; and I desire to consecrate my whole soul and all my affections to Thee. After all the insults which I have offered to Thy majesty, I deserve to be abandoned by Thee. But I feel that Thou dost still call me to Thy love. Thou shall, thou sayest, love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart[9505] I desire, O my God, to obey, and henceforth to love Thee only. Oh that I were wholly consumed for Thee, O my Jesus, who hast been entirely consumed for my salvation ! For my sake Thou hast given all Thy blood; for my redemption, Thou hast spent Thy life; and shall I be reserved with Thee? Even a thousand hearts are too little to love Thee, and shall I give a part of this, my miserable heart, to creatures? No Thou dost wish for it entirely; I give it wholly to Thee Accept my being, O my Jesus, my Love, and my Spouse. I am Thine, and entirely Thine : dispose of me as Thou pleasest Mary, my hope, unite me with thy Son Jesus; make me belong entirely to him. From thee I desire this favour—from thee I hope for it.

Chapter XI

HOLY HUMILITY

I. THE ADVANTAGES OF HUMILITY

HUMILITY has been regarded by the saints as the basis and guardian of all virtues. Although in point of excellence the virtue of humility does not hold the highest rank, still, according to St. Thomas, because it is the foundation of all virtues it has obtained the first place among them. Hence, as in the structure of an edifice, the foundation takes precedence of the walls, and even of the golden ornaments, so, to expel pride, which God resists, humility must, in the edification of the spiritual man, precede all other virtues. “ Humility,” says the angelic Doctor, “ holds the first place, inasmuch as it expels pride, which God resists.”[9506]Hence St. Gregory asserts that “ he who gathers virtues without humility is like the man who carries dust against the wind. “[9507] His virtues shall be scattered.

There was in the desert a certain hermit who had a high character for sanctity.[9508] At the hour of death he sent for the abbot, and asked from him the Viaticum. During the administration of the holy sacrament a public robber ran to the cell; but seized with compunction for his sins, he esteemed himself unworthy to enter, or to be present at so sacred a ceremony, and in the humility of his soul exclaimed: “Oh that I were what you are !” The dying monk heard the words, and, swelled with pride, said: “Happy, indeed, should you be were you as holy as I am.” After these words he expired: the robber immediately ran off from the place for the purpose of going to confession; on his way he fell over a precipice and was killed. At the death of the hermit his companion burst into tears; but at the fate of the robber he exulted with joy. Being asked why he wept over the death of the former and rejoiced at the melancholy end of the latter, he replied: Because the robber was saved by contrition for his past sins, but my companion is damned in punishment of his pride. Do not imagine that the hermit yielded to pride only at the hour of death: from his last words it is clear that pride had long before taken root in his heart; by its baneful influence he was brought to a miserable eternity.” Unless,” says St. Augustine, “ humility shall have preceded, shall be continued, and shall have followed, pride will wrest the whole from our hands.”[9509]Yes, the rapacious grasp of pride shall tear from us every good work which is not preceded, accompanied, and followed by humility. This sublime virtue was but little known, but little loved, and greatly abhorred on earth, where pride, the cause of the ruin of Adam and of his posterity, enjoyed universal sway. Therefore the Son of God came down from heaven to teach it to men by his example as well as by his preaching. To instruct them in humility he came upon earth in the likeness of flesh and in the form of a servant. He emptied himself, says the Apostle, taking the form of a servant[9510]

He wished to be treated as the most contemptible of men. Despised, says the Prophet Isaias, and the most abject of men.[9511] Behold him in Bethlehem, born in a stable and laid in a manger; in Nazareth, poor, unknown, and employed in the humble occupation of assisting a poor artisan. Look at him in Jerusalem, scourged as a slave, buffeted as the vilest of men, crowned with thorns as a mock king, and in the end suffering as a malefactor the ignominious death of the cross. And with all his humiliations before your eyes hearken to his advice: I have given you an example, that as I have done so you do also.[9512]As if he said: My children, I have embraced so much ignominy that you may not refuse abjection. Speaking of the humiliations of the Son of God, St. Augustine says: “If this medicine cure not your pride, I know not what will heal it.”[9513] Hence in one of his epistles to Dioscorus he tells his friends that it is principally by humility a man is made the disciple of Jesus, and that the soul is prepared for a union with God. “ The first,” says the saint, “ is humility; the second, humility; the third, humility, and as often as you would ask I should answer, humility.”[9514]

The proud are objects of hatred and abomination before God. Every proud man, says the Holy Ghost, is an abomination to the Lord.”[9515] Yes; for the proud man is a robber, and is blind; he is a liar, and the truth is not in him. He is a robber, because he appropriates to himself what belongs to God. What hast thou that thou hast not received?[9516]

Would it not be the extreme of folly in a brute animal (were it gifted with reason) to glory in the gilded trappings of which it knows it may be stripped at the beck of its master ? The proud man is blind, as we learn from the Apocalypse of St. John. Thou sayest I am rich, and knowest not that thou art wretched and blind.[9517] And what has man of his own but nothingness and sin ? Even the little good that he does, when examined with rigor, will appear full of imperfection."All our justice," says St. Bernard, "if rigorously judged, will be found to be injustice."[9518] Lastly, the proud man is a liar, and the truth is not in him. For all his advantages, whether of nature such as health, talent, beauty, and the like; or of grace such as good desires, a docile heart, and an enlightened mind, are all the gifts of God. By the grace of God, says St. Paul, I am what 1am[9519] The same apostle tells us that of ourselves we are not capable of even a good thought. Not that we. are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves.[9520]

Woe to the proud religious ! Into a haughty soul the Spirit of God cannot enter; over all its actions the devil exercises the most arbitrary despotism. "With the proud religious," says St. Joseph Calasanctius, " Satan sports himself as with a toy." Cesarius relates[9521] that when a demoniac was once brought to a certain monastery, the abbot asked the evil spirit whether he would depart at the command of a certain young monk who was reputed a saint. "No," replied the demon, "I am not afraid of him, because he is proud."

To preserve his servants from pride, the Lord sometimes permits them to be afflicted with the shameful solicitations of the flesh; to their repeated prayers to be delivered from the suggestions of Satan and of their own corruption he appears deaf, and leaves them to combat with the temptation. It was thus he treated St. Paul; and, says the saint, lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given to me a sting of the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me. For which thing thrice I be sought the Lord that it might depart from me, and , he said to me, My grace is sufficient for thee? "[9522] To keep him humble," says St. Jerome, "the Almighty refused to deliver the apostle from the molestation of the flesh by which he was tormented." Moreover, to teach them humility, the Lord sometimes permits the elect to fall into sin. Thus, David acknowledges that he sinned because he had not been humble. Before I was humbled, I offended.[9523]" God," says

St. Augustine, “ sits on high ; you humble yourself, and he descends to you; you exalt yourself, and he flies from you.”[9524] The royal prophet says that the Lord looketh at the low, and the high he knoweth afar off.[9525] He regards the humble with an affectionate eye, but the proud he beholds only at a distance. As we cannot recognize a person whom we see from afar, so the Lord appears to tell the proud, in the words of the Psalmist, that he knows them not.

There was in a certain monastery a religious who had the insolence to say to one of her companions: “You and I wear, indeed, the same habit, and sit at the same table; but though my equal in religion, you are not fit to be a servant in my father’s house.” Oh, how poor and naked before the Lord was this haughty nun !

The proud are hateful before God; he cannot bear them. As soon as the angels yielded to pride, he banished them from paradise and sent them into hell, far distant from his presence. The words of God must be fulfilled: Whosoever, says the Lord, shall exalt himself, shall be humbled.[9526] St. Peter Damian relates[9527]that a certain proud man had resolved to assert his right to an estate by single combat; before the time appointed for the duel he went to Mass, and hearing in the church the above-mentioned words of the Gospel: Whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be humbled, he exclaimed: This cannot be true: for had I humbled myself I should have lost my property and my character. But when he came to the combat, his sacrilegious tongue was cut across by the sword of his antagonist, and he instantly fell dead on the ground.

God, says St. James, resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.[9528] The Lord has promised to hear the prayers of all. Everyone that asketh, receiveth.[9529]The proud he hears not; according to the Apostle, he resists their petitions. But to the humble he is liberal beyond measure: He giveth grace to the humble. To them he opens his hands, and grants whatsoever they ask or desire. Humble thyself to God, says the Holy Ghost, and wait for his hands.[9530] Humble your soul before the Lord, and expect from his hands whatever you seek from him. “Give me, O Lord,” exclaims St. Augustine, “the treasure of humility.”[9531] Humility is a treasure, because upon the humble the Lord pours every blessing in abundance. A heart full of self cannot be replenished with the gifts of God. To receive the divine favors, the soul must be first emptied by the knowledge of her own nothingness.

Thou sendest forth, says David, springs in the vales: between the midst of the hills the waters shall pass.[9532] God makes the waters of his graces abound in the valleys, that is, in humble souls; but not on the mountains; the emblems of the proud and the haughty. In the midst of these, his graces pass, but remain not upon them. Because, says Mary, he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid. . . . He that is mighty hath done great things to me.[9533] The Lord looking upon my humility, and my sense of nothingness, hath bestowed great favors upon me. St. Teresa relates of herself, that the greatest graces that she received from God were infused into her soul when she humbled herself most before the Lord in prayer. The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds, and he will not depart till the Most High behold.[9534] The humble obtain from God whatever they ask: they need not be afraid of being confounded, or of being left without consolation. Let not, says David, the humble be turned away with confusion.[9535] Hence, St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say: “If you wish to be a saint, be humble; if you wish to be a very great saint, be most humble.” To St. Francis Borgia, while a secular, a holy man once said: “If you desire to be a saint, never let a day pass without thinking of your miseries.”

Hence the saint spent every day the first two hours of prayer in the study of his own nothingness, and in sentiments of self-contempt. St. Gregory says “ that pride is the most evident mark of the reprobate; but humility is, on the contrary, the most evident mark of the elect.” Seeing the world covered with the toils of the devil, St. Anthony, with[9536] sigh, exclaimed: “Who can escape so many snares!”[9537] “Anthony,” replied a strange voice, “it is only humility that passes through them with security: the humble man is not in danger of being caught by them.” In a word, unless we are like infants, not in years but in humility, we shall never attain salvation. Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven[9538] In the life of St. Palemon it is related that a certain monk who walked on burning coals said to his companions: Which of you can tread on red-hot fire without being burnt. The saint reproved him for his vanity, but the unhappy man did not amend. Puffed up with pride, he afterwards fell into sin, and died without repentance.

To the humble who are despised and persecuted on earth is promised the glory of God’s kingdom. Blessed are ye when they shall revile and persecute you, for your reward is very great in heaven[9539] The humble shall be happy in this life as well as in the next. Learn of me, says Jesus, because I am meek and humble of heart; and you shall find rest to your souls.[9540]

The proud never enjoy peace, because they never receive the respect or attention which a vain opinion of their own greatness makes them regard as their due. When loaded with honors, they are not content; either because they see others still more exalted; or, because they desire some unattainable dignity, the absence of which is to them a source of torture, not to be removed by the gratification arising from all the honors that they enjoy. Great, indeed, was the glory of Aman, in the court of Assuerus, where he sat at the monarchs table. But, because Mardochai would not salute him, he was unhappy. And whereas I have all these things, I think I have nothing so long as I see Mardochai, the Jew, sitting before the king s gate.[9541] Being the result of constraint and of human respect, the honor shown to the great does not give true joy. “ True glory,” says St. Jerome, “ like a shadow, follows virtue: it flies from all who grasp at it, and seeks after those who despise it.”[9542]

The humble man is always content, because whatever respect is paid to him he deems to be above his merits, and whatever contempt may be offered to him he regards as far short of what is due to his sins. In humiliation he exclaims with holy Job: I have sinned, and indeed I have offended, and I have not received what I have deserved.[9543] Previously to a long journey which he was obliged to make, St. Francis Borgia was advised to dispatch a courier, who would secure accommodation for his master at the hotels where he intended to stop. “I never,” replied the saint, “ fail to send my courier before me. But do you know who he is? My courier is the thought of hell, which my sins have merited; this thought makes every lodging appear to me a palace in comparison of the dungeon to which I deserve to be condemned.”

PRAYER

O my God, after having committed so many sins, how is it possible that such an excess of pride should still reign in my soul ? I now see that my faults have not only rendered me ungrateful to Thee, but have also made me proud. Cast me not away from thy face,[9544] as I have deserved. Have pity on me: enlighten my soul, and make me feel what I am and what I merit. How many, for fewer sins than I have committed, are now in hell, and have no hope of pardon ! I know that Thou dost offer me pardon if I wish for it. Yes, Lord, I desire it : my Redeemer, pardon me all my sins of pride, by which I have not only despised my neighbour, but have also despised Thee, my Sovereign Good. With St. Catharine of Genoa I will say : “ My God, no more sins ! no more sins.” I have sinned enough. I desire never more to abuse Thy patience.

I love Thee, O my God, and I desire to spend the remainder of my life only in loving and in pleasing Thee. My Jesus, assist me. The stronger my present desire to belong entirely to Thee, the more violently will the powers of hell tempt me to sin. Assist me, O Lord, and leave me not in my own hands. Most holy Virgin Mary, thou knowest that in thee I have placed all my hopes ; do not cease to assist me by thy prayers, which God never rejects.

II. THE HUMILITY OF THE INTELLECT OR OF THE JUDGMENT

After having maturely considered the great advantages of humility, let us now examine what must be done for its attainment. There are two sorts of humility : the humility of the intellect, and the humility of the will or of the heart. Here we shall speak of the former, without which the latter cannot be acquired.

Humility of the intellect consists in thinking lowly of ourselves; in esteeming ourselves to he vile and miserable creatures, such as we really are. “Humility,” says St. Bernard, “ is a virtue which, by the knowledge of himself, makes a man contemptible in his own estimation.”[9545] Humility is truth, as St. Teresa has well said,[9546] and therefore the Lord greatly loves the humble, because they love the truth. It is too true that we are nothing; that we are ignorant, blind, and unable to do any good. Of our own we have nothing but sin, which renders us worse than nothing; and of ourselves we can do nothing but evil. Whatever good we have or perform belongs to God and comes from his hands. This truth the humble man keeps continually before his eyes; he therefore appropriates to himself only what is evil, deems himself worthy of all sorts of contempt, and cannot bear to hear others attribute to him what he does not deserve. On the contrary, he delights in seeing himself despised and treated according to his deserts; and thus renders his soul most pleasing to God. “ A Christian,” says St. Gregory, “ becomes estimable before God in proportion as he is despicable in his own eyes.”[9547] Hence, speaking of nuns, St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say, that the two foundations of religious perfection are the love of God and the contempt of self. “ Because,” says the saint, “ the nun who will have humbled herself most upon earth shall see God most clearly in heaven.”

It is necessary, then, to pray continually in the words of St. Augustine: “May I know myself; may I know Thee, O my God, that thus I may love thee and despise myself.”[9548] Make me, O Lord, understand what I am and what Thou art. Thou art the source of every good: I am misery itself. Of myself I have nothing, I know nothing, I can do nothing but evil. It is only the humble that truly honor God. He, says the Holy Ghost, is honoured by the humble[9549] Yes, it is only the humble that can give glory to the Lord, for they alone acknowledge him to be the supreme and only good. If, then, you desire to honor God, keep continually in view all your miseries; confess in the sincerity of your soul, that of yourself you are only nothingness and sinfulness, and that whatsoever you possess belongs to God. And convinced of your own wretchedness, consider yourself deserving only of contempt and punishment; and offer yourself to accept all the chastisements with which God will visit you.

As a sequence of these principles we give here the following rules:

I. Be careful never to boast of anything. Far different from yours was the conduct of the saints. It is my continual practice to exhort all to read, for their spiritual reading, the lives of the saints. The great labors and exertions of the saints for God’s glory will humble our pride, and make us ashamed of the little we do or have done for him. But how is it possible that we should glory in anything, when we know that all the virtues that we possess are the gifts of God. “ Who,” says St. Bernard, “could abstain from laughing, if the clouds boasted of having begotten rain.”[9550] Whoever glories in any good action deserves to be treated with similar derision.

Father M. Avila relates that a certain rich nobleman who had married a peasant, to prevent her from being puffed up with pride at seeing herself attended by servants and dressed in rich apparel, caused the miserable garment which she wore before her marriage to be preserved and to be kept continually before her eyes. You should imitate his example. When you perceive that you have performed a good work or acquired any virtue, look back to your former state; remember what you were, and conclude that all the good that you possess is but an alms from the Almighty. “Whosoever,” says St. Augustine, “ reckons up to Thee, O Lord, his own merits, what else does he reckon up but Thy gifts.”[9551] Whenever St. Teresa performed a good work, or saw an act of virtue performed by others, she immediately burst out into the praises of God, and referred the whole to him as to its author. Hence the saint justly observes, that it is not incompatible with humility to acknowledge the special graces that God has given more abundantly to us than to others. Such an acknowledgment, continues the saint, is not pride; on the contrary, by making us feel that we are more unworthy, and at the same time more favoured, than others, it assists our humility and stimulates our gratitude. The saint adds, that a Christian who does not reflect with gratitude on the sublime graces that he has received, will never resolve to do great things for God.[9552]But in contemplating the gifts that God has bestowed upon us we must always distinguish between what belongs to him and what belongs to us. St. Paul scrupled not to assert that for the glory of the Lord Jesus he had done more than all the other apostles. I have he says, labored more abundantly than all they.[9553]

But he immediately confessed that his labors were not his own works, but the fruit of the divine grace by which he was assisted: Yet not I, but the grace of God with me.[9554]

II. Since without the divine aid you can do nothing, be careful never to confide in your own strength; but after the example of St. Philip Neri, endeavor to live in continual and utter distrust of yourself. Like St. Peter, who protested that not even death would induce him to deny his master,[9555] the proud man trusts in his own courage, and therefore yields to temptation. Because he confided in himself, the apostle had no sooner entered the house of the high-priest than he denied Jesus Christ, Be careful never to place confidence in your own resolutions or in your present good dispositions; but put your whole trust in God, saying with St. Paul: I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me[9556] If you cast away all self-confidence, and place all your hopes in the Lord, you may then expect to do great things for God. They that hope in the Lord, says the prophet Isaias, shall renew their strength."[9557] Yes, the humble, who trust in the Lord, shall renew their strength; distrusting themselves, they shall lay aside their own weakness and put on the strength of God. Hence, St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say, that " whoever desires to be the instrument of God in great undertakings, should seek to be the lowest of all." Strive to imitate the conduct of St. Catharine of Sienna, who, when tempted to vainglory, would make an act of humility, and when tempted to despair, would make an act of confidence in God. Enraged at her conduct, the devil began one day to curse her and the person who taught her this mode of resisting his temptations; and added, that he " knew not how to attack her."

When, therefore, Satan tells you that you are in no danger of falling, tremble; and reflect that, should God abandon you for a moment, you are lost. When he tempts you to despair, exclaim in the loving words of David: In thee, O Lord, have I hoped : let me never be confounded.[9558] In Thee, O Lord, I have placed all my hopes; I trust that I shall not be confounded, deprived of Thy grace, and made the slave of hell.

II. Should you be so unfortunate as to commit a fault, take care not to give way to diffidence, but humble your soul; repent, and with a stronger sense of your own weakness, throw yourself into the arms of the Lord. To be angry with ourselves after having committed a fault, is not an act of humility, but of pride, which makes us wonder how we could have fallen into such a defect. Yes, it is pride and a delusion of the devil, who seeks to draw us away from the path of perfection, to cast us into despair of advancing in virtue, and thus precipitate us into more grievous sins. After a fault we should redouble our confidence in God, and thus take occasion from our infidelity to place still greater hopes in his mercy. To them that love God, says St. Paul, all things work together unto good.[9559]" Yes," adds the Gloss,—even sins."[9560] The Lord once said to St. Gertrude:—When a people hands are stained he washes them, and they become cleaner than before they were soiled."[9561] sometimes permits his servants, and particularly those So the soul that commits a fault, being purified by repentance, is made more pleasing in the eyes of God than she was before her transgression. To teach them to distrust themselves, and to confide only in him, God who are not well grounded in humility, to fall into some defect. When, then, dear sister, you commit a fault, endeavor to repair it immediately by an act of love and of sorrow; resolve to amend, and redouble your confidence in God; say with St. Catharine of Genoa: “ Lord, this is the fruit of my garden; if Thou dost not protect me I shall be guilty of still more grievous offences; but I purpose to avoid this fault for the future, and with the aid of Thy grace, I hope to keep this resolution.” Should you ever relapse, act always in the same manner, and never abandon the resolution of becoming a saint.

III. Should you ever see another commit some grievous sin, take care not to indulge in pride, nor to be surprised at her fall; but pity her misfortune, and trembling for yourself, say with holy David: Unless the Lord had been my helper, my soul had almost dwelt in hell[9562] If the Almighty had not been my protector, I should at this moment be buried in hell. Beware of even taking vain complacency in the exemption from faults that you perceive in your companions; otherwise, in chastisement of your pride the Lord will permit you to fall into the sins which they have committed. Cassian relates[9563] that a certain young monk, being for a long time molested by a violent temptation to impurity, sought advice and consolation from an aged Father. Instead of receiving encouragement and comfort he was loaded with reproaches. “What!” said the old man, “ is it possible that a monk should be subject to so abominable thoughts?” In punishment of his pride the Almighty permitted the Father to be assailed by the spirit of impurity to such a degree that he ran like a madman through the monastery.

Hearing of his miserable condition, the Abbot Appollo told him that God had permitted this temptation to punish his conduct towards the young monk, and also to teach him compassion for others in similar circumstances. The Apostle tells us that in correcting sinners we should not treat them with contempt, lest God should permit us to be assailed by the temptation to which they yielded, and perhaps to fall into the very sin which we were surprised to see them commit. We should, before we reprove others, consider that we are as miserable and as liable to sin as our fallen brethren. Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault . . . instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.[9564] The same Cassian relates[9565] that a certain abbot called Machete confessed that he himself had miserably fallen into three faults, of which he had rashly judged his brethren.

V. Consider yourself the greatest sinner on this earth. They who are truly humble, because they are most perfectly enlightened by God, possess the most perfect knowledge, not only of the divine perfections, but also of their own miseries and sins. Hence, notwithstanding their extraordinary sanctity, the saints, not in the language of exaggeration, but in the sincerity of their souls, called themselves the greatest sinners in the world. Thus St. Francis of Assisi called himself the worst of sinners; St. Thomas of Villanova was kept in a state of continual fear and trembling by the thought of the account he was one day to render to God of his life; which, though full of virtue, appeared to him very wicked. St. Gertrude considered it a miracle that the earth did not open under her feet and swallow her up alive, in punishment of her sins.

St. Paul, the first hermit, was in the habit of exclaiming: “Woe to me, a sinner, who am unworthy to bear the name of a monk.” In the writings of Father M. Avila we read of a person of great sanctity who besought the Lord to make known to her the state of her soul. Her prayer was heard; and so deformed and abominable was the appearance of her soul, though stained only with the guilt of venial sins, that, struck with horror, she cried out: “ For mercy’s sake, O Lord, take away from before my eyes the representation of this monster!”

VI. Beware, then, of ever preferring yourself to anyone. To esteem yourself better than others, is abundantly sufficient to make you worse than all. “Others,” says Tritemius, “ you have despised; you have therefore become worse than others.”[9566] Again to entertain a high opinion of your own deserts, is enough to deprive you of all merit. Humility consists principally in a sincere conviction that we deserve only reproach and chastisement. If, by preferring yourself to others, you have abused the gifts and graces which God has conferred upon you, they will only serve for your greater condemnation at the hour of judgment. But it is not enough to abstain from preferring yourself to any one; it is, moreover, necessary to consider yourself the last and worst of all your sisters in religion. First, because in yourself you see with certainty so many sins; but the sins of others you know not, and their secret virtues, which are hidden from your eyes, may render them very dear in the sight of God. You ought to consider also, that by the aid of the lights and graces which you have received from God you should at this moment be a saint. Ah ! had they been given to an infidel, he would perhaps have become a seraph, and you are still so miserable and full of defects.

The consideration of your ingratitude, should be sufficient to make you always regard yourself as a fit object of scorn to the whole Community: for, as St. Thomas[9567] teaches, the malice of sin increases in proportion to the ingratitude of the sinner. Hence one of your sins may be more grievous in the sight of God than a hundred sins of another less favoured than you have been. But you know that you have already committed many sins; that your life has been one continued series of voluntary faults; and that whatever good you may have done is so full of imperfection and of self-love, that it is more deserving of punishment than of remuneration.

VII. All these considerations ought to inspire you with the sentiments of humility which St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi inculcated on her spiritual children, with a continual sense of your unworthiness to kiss the ground on which your sisters walk. You ought to consider that, had you received all imaginable insults, and were you confined in the bottom of hell, under the feet of all the damned, all this would be but little in comparison with what you deserve. And therefore, from the bottomless abyss of your own miseries you should continually cry out, with holy David: Incline unto my aid, O God ; O Lord, make haste to help me.[9568] Lord, hasten to my assistance, otherwise I am lost, and shall offend Thee more than ever, and more than all sinners. But this prayer must be repeated continually almost every moment in the choir, in the cell, in going through the monastery, at the grate, at table, at rising, and going to sleep. You must cry out: “ Assist me, O Lord ! assist me: Lord have mercy on me.” At the very moment you cease to invoke the divine aid you may become the most wicked monster in creation.

Shun, as death itself, every, even the most trifling, act or thought of pride. I conclude with that great saying of St. Bernard: “In the soul no humiliation, however great, is to be feared; but the least elation is to be regarded with horror.”[9569] Yes; for the smallest degree of arrogance may lead us into every evil.

PRAYER

O God of my soul ! I thank Thee for making me feel that whatever the world esteems is all folly. Give me grace to detach my heart from all creatures before death separates me from them. Unhappy me, who have been so many years in Thy house ; I have left the world to become a saint, and till now, what progress have I made ? Alas ! how many disgusting wounds do I see in my soul ! My Jesus, have pity on me and heal me. Thou art able and willing to heal me if I consent to a change of life. Yes, Lord, I desire to amend. If the sinner repent, Thou hast promised to forget his wickedness. That if the wicked do penance I will not remember all his iniquities.[9570] I am sorry, O my God, above all things for having despised Thy love : forget, then, O Lord, all the displeasure I have given Thee. For the future I desire to lose my life sooner than give Thee the smallest offence. My God, I desire to love Thee; if I do not love Thee, whom shall I love? Thou art most worthy of my love: Thou hast called me to religion. Thou hast loaded me with Thy grace. Thou alone, therefore, dost merit all my love ; Thee alone do I desire to love.

My Queen and my great advocate, Mary, assist me by Thy intercession, that I may be no longer ungrateful to Thy Son.

III. HUMILITY OF THE HEART OR OF THE WILL

Humility of the intellect consists, as we have seen, in esteeming one s self worthy of reproach and scorn: but humility of the will consists in desiring to be despised by others, and in taking pleasure in contempt. The latter is the most meritorious; because acts of the will are more pleasing to God than acts of the intellect.

Speaking of humility of the will, St. Bernard says: “ The first degree is, not to wish for power; the second, to wish to be in a state of subjection to authority; the third is, in subjection to bear injuries with equanimity.”[9571]Such is the humility of the heart which Jesus Christ wished to teach us by his own example. Learn of me, said the Redeemer, because I am meek and humble of heart.[9572] Many have humility on their tongue, but not in their heart. “ They, indeed,” says St. Gregory, “ confess with their lips that they are most wicked and most deserving of all sorts of chastisement; but they believe not what they say. For, when rebuked, they give way to disquietude, and deny that they are guilty of the fault for which they are corrected.” To this class belonged a certain monk, who, as Cassian[9573] relates, used to say that he was a great sinner, and unworthy to breathe the breath of life. But when the Abbot Serapion corrected him for violating the Rule by idle visits to the cells of the other monks, he became greatly troubled. Seeing him disturbed, the abbot said: “ Why, my son, are you so much disquieted ? Hitherto you have called yourself a great sinner, and now you cannot bear from me a charitable admonition.” Even in convents we sometimes find similar examples of haughty religious. Certain nuns proclaim that they are the most wicked of sinners, that they deserve a thousand hells. But should the abbess or a sister in religion point out to them any particular fault, or speak of their general tepidity, or of the little edification which they give to the Community, they immediately begin to vindicate their conduct, and in a tone of fretfulness exclaim: What evil or scandal have you seen in my conduct ? You would do your duty much better by correcting the others who are guilty of faults that I never commit.

A little before they confessed that their sins merited a thousand hells, and now they cannot bear a word of admonition. Such religious possess, indeed, humility in words, but know not the humility recommended by Jesus Christ, which is the humility of the heart. There is, says the Holy Ghost, one that humbleth himself wickedly, and his interior is full of deceit.[9574] There are some who humble themselves, not from desire of being rebuked and despised, but through a motive of being esteemed humble and of being praised for their humility. But, according to St. Bernard,[9575] to seek praise from voluntary humiliations is not humility, but the destruction of humility, for it changes humility itself into an object of pride. Speculative humility, says St. Vincent de Paul, presents a very beautiful aspect; but practical humility, because it is nothing else than the love of abjection and contempt, is an object of horror to flesh and blood. Hence St. John Climacus observes that the proof of true humility consists, not in confessing our own sinfulness, but in rejoicing in the contempt due to sinners. “ Self-disparagement," says the saint, " is good, but to confirm the dispraise which others cast upon us, not to resent it but to delight in it, is still better."[9576] "When," says St. Gregory, " the humble man calls himself a sinner, he does not contradict others who say the same of him."[9577]

No; when reproved for his faults he reasserts his own sinfulness. In a word, as St. Bernard says,[9578]" The truly humble man wishes, indeed, to be held in little estimation, but desires not to be praised for his humility." Instead of seeking to be esteemed for his humility he wishes to be regarded as a man deserving of contempt and full of imperfections; and because he deems himself worthy only of abjection, he delights in the humiliations which are heaped upon him. Hence, as St. Bernard teaches, " he converts humiliation into humility;"[9579] and all the humiliations that he receives only serve to render him more humble. St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say that " he who loves God seeks not to be reputed a saint, but to attain sanctity."[9580]

If, dear sister, you wish to acquire true humility of heart, you must:

I. In the first place, shun all self-praise, whether it regards your own actions, talents, virtues; the nobility, wealth, or connections of your family. Let another praise thee, says the wise man, and not thy own mouth? Self—praise never fails to earn the contempt, but seldom wins the respect of others. What would you say or think of a nun who would extol the respectability of her family, or who would boast of having better claims than her sisters to certain offices ? Remember that if you indulge in empty boasting, others will say and think of you what you would say and think of her. In speaking of your own concerns, seek always to humble and never to exalt yourself. Self-dispraise can do you no injury; but the smallest portion of unmerited self-commendation may be productive of great evil. "To extol yourself slightly above your deserts is," says St. Bernard, " a great evil."[9581] He who in passing through a door bends his head more than is necessary, is free from all danger of injury; but he who carries it too high may be seriously hurt. Be careful, then, to speak of yourself humbly rather than boastingly, and to disclose your faults rather than your virtues. The best rule is, never to speak well or ill of yourself, but to regard yourself as unworthy to be even named in conversation. It frequently happens that in saying what tends to our own confusion we indulge a secret and refined pride. For the confusion arising from the voluntary manifestation of our defects excites within us a desire of obtaining the praise or reputation of being humble. This rule is not to be observed in the tribunal of penance: on the contrary, it will be always useful to make known to the confessor your defects, your evil inclinations; and, generally speaking, even the evil thoughts that pass through your mind. It is also very profitable to manifest, on some occasions, certain circumstances that redound to your shame. On such occasions be careful not to abstain from humbling your own pride. Father Villanova, of the Society of Jesus, was not ashamed to tell the whole Community that his brother was a poor laborer.

Father Sacchini, likewise a Jesuit, having in a public place met his father, who was a muleteer, instantly ran to embrace him, and exclaimed: " O behold my father !" Should it ever happen that you are compelled to listen to your own praise, endeavor to humble yourself, at least interiorly, by casting an eye at the grounds of self-contempt that have been already detailed. To the proud, says St. Gregory,[9582] praise, however undeserved, is delicious; but to the humble, even well-merited commendation is a source of grief and of affliction.

And being exalted, says the Royal Prophet, I have been humbled and troubled.[9583] Like holy David, the humble man, says St. Gregory, is troubled at hearing his own praises. He sees that he has no claim to the virtues or to the good qualities that are ascribed to him; and he fears that by taking self-complacency in his good works he may lose whatever merit he has acquired before God, and that the Judge may say to him: Thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime[9584] Whoever takes pleasure in listening to his own praise has already received his reward: he has no claim to any other remuneration. As gold, says the wise man, is tried in the furnace, so a man is tried by the mouth of him that praiseth.[9585] Yes, a man's spirit is tried by praise: when the commendation of his virtues excites sentiments, not of pleasure nor of pride, but of shame and confusion, then, indeed, his humility appears. St. Francis Borgia and St. Aloysius were greatly afflicted whenever they heard themselves extolled. When you are praised or treated with respect, humble your soul and tremble lest the honor that you receive should be to you an occasion of sin and of perdition. Consider that the esteem of men may prove your greatest misfortune; by fomenting pride it may contaminate your heart, and thus be the cause of your damnation. Keep always before your eyes the great saying of St. Francis of Assisi: “What I am before God, that I am, and no more.”

Are you so foolish as to think that the esteem of men will render you more pleasing in the sight of God ? When you are gratified and elated by the praises bestowed upon you, and are by them induced to think yourself better than the other religious, you may be assured that, while men extol your virtues, God shall cut you off. Be persuaded, then, that the praises of others will never make you more holy in the sight of God. St. Augustine says that as the reproach or slander of an enemy cannot deprive a man of the merit of his virtues, so the applause of a friend or admirer will not make him better than he really is. “ A bad conscience,” says St. Augustine, “ is not healed by the praise of a flatterer, nor a good one wounded by the contumely of the reviler.”[9586] Whenever, then, you hear your own praises, say in your heart, with St. Augustine: “ I know myself better than they do; and God knows me better than I do myself.”[9587] They, indeed, praise me, but I, who see the state of my own soul better than they do, know that these praises are unmerited; God knows it still better than I do; he sees that I deserve neither honor nor respect, but all the contempt of earth and hell.

II. Secondly, as you ought carefully to refrain from all complacency in the praises that you receive from others, so you must abstain with still greater caution from asking any office of rank or dignity in the convent. “ You must,” as St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi says, “avoid with all possible care every exercise that is apt to attract attention, for it is in such exercises that pride delights.” It is necessary to shun, even with horror, every honourable office in the monastery. In the convent of the Most Holy Trinity, in Naples, there was a very exemplary religious called Sister Archangela Sanfelice. The confessor said to her one day: “Sister Archangela, the nuns wish to make you abbess.” At first she appeared afflicted and surprised, but afterwards expressed her readiness to accept the office. After signifying her assent, she was suddenly seized with a fit of apoplexy, which nearly deprived her of life, and obliged the nuns to seek another abbess. “All worldly honor,” says St. Hilary, “is the business of the devil.”[9588] Worldly honors are the means by which Satan gains many souls for hell. And, if the ambition of honors occasions great ruin in a worldling, it is productive of far greater havoc in a religious. “ The body of the Church,” says St. Leo, “is defiled by the contention of the ambitious.”[9589] Speaking of nuns, St. Teresa[9590] says that “ where they attend to punctilios of honor, fervor will never flourish.” In another place she says, “ The monastery in which points of honor and claims of precedence are attended to, may be considered as lost: from it the Spouse is already banished.” Addressing her own Community, she says: “ Should a Judas be ever found among you, expel her at once, as a source of infection; and deprive forever of all hope of success in her projects the nun who attempts to seek superiority over her companions. I would rather see this monastery burnt to the ground than ever see ambition enter into it.” Similar were the sentiments of St. Jane Frances de Chantal. “ I would,” says the saint, “ sooner see my monastery buried in the sea, than ambition or the desire of office enter it.”

Listen to the wise remarks of Peter de Blois on this subject. In one of his letters[9591] he describes the pestiferous effects of ambition, and its frightful ravages in the souls of Christians. Ambition, he says, though full of uncharitableness, puts on the garb of charity. Charity suffers all things for the attainment of eternal goods: ambition, too, endures every hardship, but only for the acquisition of the miserable honors of this world.

Charity is kind, but particularly to the poor and the abject; ambition, too, abounds in benevolence, but only to the rich and powerful, who can gratify its cravings. Charity bears all things to please God: ambition submits to every wrong, but only through the vain motive of obtaining honors or office. O God ! to what annoyance, inconvenience, fatigues, fears, expenses, and even reproaches and insults, must the ambitious submit, for the attainment of the dignity to which they aspire! Finally, charity believes and hopes all that regards the glory of eternity; but ambition believes and hopes only what regards the empty honors of this life.

But, in the end, what is the fruit of all the labors of the ambitious? They only attain some empty dignity which contents not the heart, and which renders them, in the eyes of the others, objects of contempt rather than of respect. “ By the sole desire of it,” says St. Teresa, “ honor is lost: the greater the dignity obtained, the more disgraceful it is to the person w r ho has procured it. For the more he has labored for its attainment, the more he has shown himself unworthy of it.” St. Jane Frances de Chantal said that “ they who esteem themselves most deserving of office are the most unworthy of it: because they want humility, which is the best disposition for the fulfilment of an office.” God grant that the dignity which the ambitious procure may not be the cause of their eternal ruin. Father Vincent Carafa, of the Society of Jesus, having once visited a dying friend, to whom an office of great emolument, but at the same time of great danger, had been given, was requested by the sick man to obtain from God the restoration of his health. No, my friend, replied the Father, I shall not abuse my affection for you: desirous of your salvation, God calls you to another life while you are in the state of grace. I know not whether, if restored, to health, you would save your soul in the office which has been offered to you. The sick man peacefully accepted the stroke of death, and expired with sentiments of joy and resignation. “ It is scarcely possible,” says St. Bonaventure, “ that he who delights in honors should not be in great danger.”[9592] To take complacency in any dignity, particularly in the office of abbess, of assistant, mistress of novices, or in any other charge to which are annexed serious obligations, exposes a religious to great danger of perdition. But the condition of the nun who through ambition has procured such an office is still more perilous. For she cannot, without great difficulty, refuse any request to the sisters by whom she was promoted, and thus she will probably be lost. Besides, God is not bound to give her the aid necessary for the discharge of the duties of an office which she has procured by her own exertions. How, then, can she, bereft of the divine assistance, fulfil her obligations? Oh! how many shall we see condemned on the day of judgment for having obtained offices by their own efforts!

If, dear sister, you desire to preserve humility, do not allow yourself to be seduced by any desire of worldly glory. What shall I say of the nun who, to make a display of pomp and riches, is guilty of extravagance in the discharge of her office ? What shall I say of the nun who, though a poor religious, receives with pleasure worldly titles? Were she truly humble, she would tell all, even the servants of her parents, that such titles are neither agreeable nor suited to her. It is certain that to a nun the title of reverend is more honorable than the appellation of noble; because the former is given to her as the spouse of Jesus, but it is only as a person of rank in the world that she can claim the latter.

St. Francis Xavier used to say that to desire respect and honor, or to take complacency in them, is unworthy of a Christian, who should have always before his eyes the ignominies of Jesus Christ. How much more unsuited must such foolish ambition be to a religious, the consecrated spouse of the Redeemer, who lived for so many years in obscurity and contempt ? St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that “ the honor of a nun consists in being the lowest of all, and in having a horror of being preferred to any.”[9593]To surpass all her sisters in humility and in the love of Jesus should, says St. Thomas of Villanova, be the sole object of the ambition of religious. “ Let your ambition be to be the most humble and the most dear to Jesus Christ.” In entering religion you said, with holy David: I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of Sinners.[9594]Yes, you then publicly declared your determination to prefer abjection in the house of the Lord, before honor and glory in a wicked world. And why should you be now attached to earthly vanities ? St. Bonaventure tells you, that if you desire to be a saint, you must endeavor to lead a life of obscurity and contempt. “ Love,” says the saint, “ to be unknown and despised,”[9595] so that no attention whatever may be shown to you in the monastery.

Envy not the religious who surpass you in talent and understanding, or who are more highly esteemed by the Community than you are. Envy those only who are your superiors in charity and humility. Humiliation is preferable to all the applause and honor which the world can bestow.

For a nun, the most useful of all sciences is that which teaches her to humble and despise herself, and to delight in being treated with contempt. God has not given you great abilities, because they might lead you to perdition. Be content, then, with the little talent that you have received: let the want of talent be to you an occasion of practicing humility, which is the safest, and indeed the only, way to save your soul and to become a saint. If others surpass you in the knowledge of governing, or in the art of acquiring the esteem of the Community, take care to outstrip all in the practice of humility. But, says St. Paul, let each esteem others better than themselves[9596] They who are invested with authority over others are exposed to great danger of being puffed up with pride, of losing the divine light, and of thus becoming like senseless beasts that seek only the miserable goods of the earth, and never think of the glory of eternity. And, says the Psalmist, when he was in honor he did not understand i he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them.[9597]

If you wish to walk in the secure path, shun all posts of honor, and embrace the most abject exercises and offices. A religious who wishes to be a saint should seek only the meanest offices of the convent; and therefore she ought frequently to beg of the Superior, and of them that are in office, to employ her in the occupations that others decline. The spouse of the Canticles presents at one time the character of a solitary, at another of a warrior, and again of the cultivator of the vine; but she always appears full of love. Like her, every religious should perform all her actions through the love of her Spouse, and in all her occupations should appear as a lover of Jesus Christ, and therefore she should not refuse any office or employment.

The employments that the world regards as the most contemptible are the most important and exalted in religion, and are most sought after by the saints, because they are most dear to Jesus Christ. Cassian[9598]relates that, to shun the respect and veneration shown to him in Egypt, the Abbot Paphnutius fled from that country and betook himself to the monastery of St. Pachomius. Being unknown, he was at first entrusted with the cultivation of the garden, and enjoyed great happiness in his humble employment. As soon as he was recognized, he was removed from so mean a charge. But he wept continually for having lost the treasure that he found in his humiliation.

Endeavor also to practise humility by the poverty of your furniture and of your garments. The dress of St. Equitius was so humble, that, as St. Gregory relates, they who had not known him would have scorned to salute him. Oh ! what a source of edification is poverty of dress ! Of the two Macariuses it is related that, in passing the Nile along with certain seculars richly attired, the poverty of their garments made such an impression on one of the seculars, that he abandoned the world and became a monk. To keep the eyes modestly cast down, and to speak in a low tone of voice, helps to preserve humility. But it must be observed that such external acts assist humility of the heart when they are united with it. Without it they would be acts of pride the most abominable of pride concealed under the garb of humility. “ Pride,” says St. Jerome, “ is far more deformed when it is hidden under the outward appearance of humility.”[9599]

PRAYER

My Jesus, I am ashamed to appear before Thee. Thou hast loved contempt and opprobrium, so as to die on the cross an object of derision and of scorn ; and I cannot bear the smallest affront! Thou, the innocent Lamb of God, hast for my sake been saturated with ignominies, and I, a sinner, am so desirous of praise and honor. Ah ! my Spouse, how unlike am I to Thee ! This makes me tremble for my eternal salvation ; for the predestined must be conformable to Thy image. But I will not distrust Thy mercy. It is from Thee I expect succour and a change of life. With Thy assistance, I purpose henceforward to suffer for the love of Thee all the contempt and all the injuries that shall be offered to me. Ah ! Lord, by Thy example, Thou hast rendered ignominies agreeable and delightful to all who love Thee. I love Thee, and desire to do all that I can to please Thee. Pardon me all my sins of pride, of which I now repent with my whole heart ; and give me strength to be faithful to the promise that I now make, never more to resent any affront that I may receive.

O Mary, my mother, the model of humility ! obtain for me grace to imitate thee as much as possible.

IV. CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT, AND ESPECIALLY PATIENCE, IN BEARING CONTEMPT

III. In the third place, to preserve humility, you must not allow yourself to be disquieted by reproof or correction. The nun who, when rebuked, yields to disquietude, shows that she has not yet acquired humility, and therefore should beg of God that holy virtue, which is so necessary for salvation. Father Rodriguez says that some religious resemble the hedgehog: when touched they become all thorns, and instantly break out into words of impatience, of reproach, and even of murmuring. “ We have known many,” says St. Gregory, “ who, when no one accuses them, confess themselves sinners; but when they have been corrected for a fault, they endeavor with all their might to defend themselves, and to remove the imputation of guilt.”[9600]

Such, too, is the practice of certain religious they ought to attend to the words of the Holy Ghost: He that hateth to be reproved, walketh in the trace of a sinner.[9601]Whoever is disturbed by correction, walks not in the way of the just, but in the path of sinners the road to hell.

St. Bernard[9602] says: Some are displeased with the physician who cures them by reproof, and are not angry with the man who wounds them by flattery. Terrible is the threat of the wise man against all who spurn correction: Because they have despised all my reproof, the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.[9603] The prosperity of fools consists in the privation or in the contempt of advice, and therefore they are miserably lost. The Venerable Bede gives a frightful account of the fate of two nuns who despised the admonitions of their Superior. Their irregularity became so great that they at length fled from the monastery. When brought back to the convent, they were asked by the abbess, St. Borgontofora, what had led them into such a crime? They answered that it was their inattention to her admonitions. Shortly after their return both were seized with a mortal disease, but could not be induced to confess their sins. Even at the point of death, to those who exhorted them to have recourse to the tribunal of penance they replied, Wait a little wait; and turning to the religious, they exclaimed: Do you not see the crowd of demons who are come to carry us away ? Calling for respite from the demons, they both died miserably without the sacraments.

St. John Chrysostom says that the just man when discovered in a fault weeps for his fall. The sinner, too, says the saint, if detected in a criminal act, weeps not for his transgression, but because his guilt is known; and instead of repenting, he seeks to defend his conduct, and pours out his indignation on the friend who corrects him. Have you, dear sister, hitherto indulged in anger against those from whose charity you have received correction ? And if you have, are you disposed to repeat such conduct? “ Sister,” says St. Bernard, “ give many thanks to him who has rebuked you: be not sad when he shall have shown you the way of salvation.”[9604] Is it not most unjust to be displeased with the sister who points out to you the way to eternal life ? Could it be done without violating the Rule, you would do well to procure, according to the advice of St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, a faithful companion who would remark to you all the faults that you do not perceive. You know that you are full of miseries and defects. The only remedy for them is to humble your soul when you perceive them, or when others make them known to you. “Our humility,” says St. Augustine, “ is perfection.”[9605] Since our manner of practising the virtues of the Gospel is so full of imperfection, let us at least be perfect in humbling ourselves, and in rejoicing under the confusion occasioned by the reproofs we receive for the faults we have committed. It may be here observed, that to our pride undeserved reproach is more tolerable than well-merited censure, because the latter is more painful to self-love. When justly reproved, be careful to offer to God, in atonement for your transgression, the shame and confusion that you experience.

Make use of that confusion as a means of repairing your fault; crush the scorpion on the wound he has inflicted, and be assured that the mercy of the Lord in granting you pardon will be proportioned to your humility in receiving correction. When corrected for a fault, be careful never to defend or excuse yourself, and thus you will practise an act of humility highly pleasing to God. St. Teresa says that to a nun such an act is more profitable than to be present at ten sermons. Should you, then, ever receive an unmerited reprimand, abstain, in honor of holy humility, from the vindication of your conduct, unless, to prevent scandal to the Community, such vindication be necessary. To a religious who requested her director Father Anthony Torres to excuse her to a certain person who had charged her with a fault, the Father replied: “I am astonished at your request. I pity your weakness. I suppose that the occupations in which you were engaged for the last few days must have soon obliterated from your mind the remembrance of the doleful narrative which you so lately heard of the sorrows of your Spouse, who had been called a seducer. It is impossible that you can have remembered the calumnies and the blasphemies that were uttered against him, and at the same time request me to vindicate your character. Filled with sentiments of shame and confusion, and prostrate before the crucifix, implore of your crucified Spouse the pardon of your infidelity. Resolve neither on this nor on any other occasion to justify or excuse your conduct, but always acknowledge, however galling such acknowledgment may be, that you have erred. For your sake the Saviour died on a cross, saturated with opprobrium; and it is by humiliation that you are to obtain the possession of your Spouse."

St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi says that to excuse oneself, even under a false accusation, is to cease to be a religious. A truly humble religious not only abstains from excusing her faults, but even seeks to make them known to all. In the " Prodigies of Grace" we read that a certain religious of the reformed Order of La Trappe, as soon as he committed a fault, confessed it first to the abbot, then to the prior, and afterwards before the whole Chapter. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that the nun who manifests her faults merits to be washed from them by the blood of Jesus Christ.

IV. Fourthly, if you wish to acquire perfect humility, accept in peace all the contempt and bad treatment that you receive. These are easily borne by all who truly believe that in punishment of their sins they merit nothing but scoffs and insults. Humiliation is the touchstone of sanctity. St. John Chrysostom[9606] says that to receive affronts with meekness is the most certain proof of virtue. In his History of Japan, Father Crasset relates that during the last persecution, in consequence of having received an insult without resenting it, a certain Augustinian missionary, though disguised, was instantly taken for a Christian, and cast into prison by the idolaters, who asserted that no one but a Christian could practise such a virtue.

Some, says St. Francis of Assisi, imagine that sanctity consists in the recital of many prayers or in the performance of works of penance; but, not understanding the great merit of patience under insult, they cannot bear an injurious word. You will acquire more merit by meekly receiving an affront than by fasting ten days on bread and water. It will sometimes happen that a privilege that is refused to you will be conceded to others; that what you say will be treated with contempt, while the words of others are heard with respectful attention; that while the actions of others are the theme of general praise, and they are elected to the offices of honor, you are passed by unnoticed, and your whole conduct is made a subject of derision.

If you accept in peace all these humiliations, and if, with a sisterly affection, you recommend to God those from whom you receive the least respect, then indeed, as St. Dorotheus says, it will be manifest that you are truly humble. To them you are particularly indebted, since by their reproaches they cure your pride the most malignant of all diseases that lead to spiritual death. Because they deem themselves worthy of all honors, the proud convert their humiliations into an occasion of pride. But because the humble consider themselves deserving only of opprobrium, their humiliations serve to increase their humility. “ That man,” says St. Bernard, “ is truly humble who converts humiliation into humility.”[9607]

Voluntary humiliations, such as to serve the sick, to kiss the feet of those who imagine, even unjustly, that we have offended them, and similar acts of humility, are very profitable; but to embrace with cheerfulness, for the love of Jesus Christ, the humiliations that come from others, such as reproofs, accusations, insults, and derisions, is still more meritorious. Gold and silver, says the Holy Ghost, are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation.[9608] As gold is tried in the fire, so a man’s perfection is proved by humiliation. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that “ untried virtue is not virtue.” He who does not suffer contempt with a tranquil mind shall never attain the spirit of perfection. My spikenard, says the Spouse, sent forth the odor thereof.[9609]

The spikenard is an odoriferous plant, whose scent is drawn forth only by friction and trituration. Oh! what an odor of sweetness does the humble religious exhale when she embraces in peace all manner of contempt, and delights in seeing herself maltreated and despised, as the most contemptible among her sisters. A monk of the name of Zachary, being asked the best means of attaining humility, took his cowl, put it under his feet, and, trampling on it, said: “He who takes pleasure in being treated like this cowl is truly humble.” Ah ! how happy the death of the religious who has lived in abjection in her monastery, and has always borne her humiliations in peace. Her soul shall overflow with feelings, not of dislike, but of thanksgiving, to all who have despised her. St. John Climacus[9610] relates that a good monk called Abacyrus, who had for fifteen years been treated contemptuously by others, at the hour of death returned them many thanks for their charity in having afforded him so many occasions of humiliation, and thus expired in celestial peace.

There are some who imagine that they are humble because they feel a strong conviction of their own miseries and a deep sorrow for their past sins. But they will not submit to humiliations, and cannot endure the slightest want of respect or esteem; and therefore they shun all humble offices, and whatever is not flattering to their pride. They acknowledge that they are worthy of all sorts of ignominy, but cannot bear any mark of inattention; on the contrary, they seek continually to be treated with respect and honor. There is, says the Holy Ghost, one that humbleth himself wickedly, and His interior is full of deceit.[9611]There are some who practise external humility, by confessing that they are the worst of sinners, but in their hearts they seek after honors and the esteem of men. I hope, dear sister, that you do not belong to that class of Christians.

If you sincerely believe that you are a greater sinner than any of your sisters, be content to be treated as the lowest among them: love as your best friends all who, by despising you, assist you to practise humility and to detach your heart from earthly glory, and thus to unite your soul more closely to God, and to seek nothing in this life but his holy love. Consider yourself as only worthy of universal horror; offer yourself to God, professing your readiness to suffer for his sake, and in satisfaction for your offences, all manner of opprobrium, and never permit self-love to complain of the contempt with which you are treated. Remember that they who have dared to despise the Almighty merit far greater contempt; they deserve to be the footstool of the devils for all eternity in hell. “ I know no remedy,” says St. Bernard, “ better able to heal the wounds of my conscience than opprobrium and contumely.”[9612] Rejoice, then, blessed spouse of the Lord, when you are humbled, and treated as the last of your sisters; or when you see yourself an object of derision, and regarded by all as the most foolish and contemptible member of the Community. When censured, even without grounds, neither excuse yourself nor seek to be excused by others, unless, as I have already said, you see that your justification is absolutely necessary to prevent scandal. Do not hinder others to disclose your faults to the Superior. When you receive any humiliation, seek not to know the sister who was the occasion of it; and should you discover her name, be careful not to reprove her, not to show that you know it, nor to complain of her conduct: on the contrary, in your prayers for others, pray, in the first place, for her, and for all by whom you have been despised or persecuted.

Be persuaded of the truth of what Father Alvarez used to say, that the time of humiliation is the time for putting off our own miseries and for acquiring great merits.

St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that crosses and ignominies are the greatest favors that God is accustomed to bestow on his beloved spouses. In conversing with those who are despised she experienced great consolation from the conviction that they were most dear to Jesus Christ. Hence she fervently exhorted the religious to place all their happiness in being treated with contempt. But, above all, it is necessary to keep before your eyes what the Redeemer has said, that happy is he who is hated and cast out by men. Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the Son of Mans sake.[9613] The apostle St. Peter adds: If you be reproached for the name of Christ, you shall be blessed: for that which is of the honor, glory, and power of God, and that which is his Spirit, resteth upon you[9614] When you are insulted for the sake of Jesus Christ, then shall you be happy; for then shall the true honor, the true power, and the true Spirit of God rest upon you.

The saints have not been made saints by applause and honor, but by injuries and insults. St. Ignatius Martyr, a bishop, and an object of universal esteem and veneration, was sent to Rome as a criminal, and on his way experienced from the soldiers who conducted him nothing but the most barbarous insolence. In the midst of his suffering and humiliations he joyfully exclaimed: “I now begin to be a disciple of Christ.”[9615] I now begin to be a true disciple of my Jesus, who endured so many ignominies for my sake.

St. Francis Borgia, when travelling, slept one night in the same room with his companion, Father Bustamente, who, in consequence of a severe attack of asthma, spent the whole night in coughing and casting out phlegm unconsciously on the saint, and frequently in his face. In the morning Father Bustamente perceived his mistake, and was greatly afflicted at having given so much cause of pain to the saint. Father, said St. Francis, be not disturbed; for there is no part of this room so fit for the reception of spittle as my face.

O God ! what must become of the religious who will not submit to an insult for the love of Jesus Christ ! The nun who cannot bear contempt shows that she has lost sight of Jesus crucified. Standing once before the crucifix, Blessed Mary of the Incarnation said to her sisters in religion: Is it possible, dear sisters, that we refuse to embrace contempt when we see

Jesus Christ reviled and scoffed ? A certain holy religious having been affronted, went before the Blessed Sacrament, and said: Lord, I am very poor; I have nothing to present to you: but I offer you the injury that I have just received. Oh ! how lovingly does Jesus Christ embrace all that embrace contempt for his sake ! He soon consoles and enriches them with his graces. Father Anthony Torres was once unjustly charged with disseminating false doctrines, and in punishment of his supposed transgression was for many years deprived of faculties to hear confessions. But in a letter to a certain friend he says: "Be assured that during the whole time I was calumniated the spiritual consolations that the Lord gave me surpassed any I ever received from him."

To suffer contempt with a serene countenance not only merits a great reward, but also serves to draw others to God. " He," says St. John Chrysostom, " who is meek is useful to himself and to others."[9616]

The man who meekly bears affronts is useful to himself and to all who behold him. For nothing is more edifying to a neighbour than the meekness of a man who receives injuries with a tranquil countenance. "Nothing," adds the saint, "conciliates friends to the Lord so much as to see a man agreeable by his meekness."[9617] Father Maffei relates that a Jesuit, while preaching in Japan, having been spit upon by an insolent bystander, removed the spittle with his handkerchief, and continued his sermon as if nothing had happened. One of his auditors exclaimed, that a doctrine that teaches such humility must be true and divine, and was instantly converted to the faith. Thus, also, St. Francis de Sales converted innumerable heretics by his meekness in bearing the insults that he received from them.

A religious who lives in a monastery of relaxed observance, and who wishes to walk in the way of perfection, may be assured that during her whole life she shall be an object of continual derision and persecution. There is no remedy: The wicked, says the Holy Ghost, loathe them that are in the right way.[9618] They who walk in the broad road cannot but feel an abhorrence of them that tread in the narrow way.

For the lives of the saints are a continual reproach to sinners who wish to see all like themselves. Shunning the grates, assisting in choir, observance of silence, detachment from particular friendships, and almost every good work of a fervent religious will be regarded by the tepid as singularities, or perhaps, as hypocritical acts, performed from a motive of acquiring the reputation of a saint. Should a fervent nun in a convent of relaxed discipline commit a fault (for she has not ceased to be frail, and subject to defects), should she, for example, yield to a word of slight impatience, or sometimes defend herself against an unjust accusation, oh, what an outcry is raised against her ! Behold the saint ! the tepid exclaim. To impose upon others she communicates every morning, she always observes silence, she wears hair-cloth, and remains all day in the choir. They sometimes add falsehood to truth. If she wishes to be a saint, she must be careful to suffer, and to offer to God all these reproaches. Unless she submit to them she will not continue long in the way of perfection; she will soon lose all that she has acquired, and will become as imperfect as the others. In speaking once of a certain religious who was esteemed a saint, St. Bernard said: He indeed is a saint, but he wants the greatest of all blessings the reputation of a sinner.

Let us then be persuaded that to be persecuted in this life confers the highest excellence on the saints. And, says the Apostle, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.[9619] The Redeemer says, If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.[9620]

Some will say: I attend only to my own concerns, I give offence to no one: why should I be persecuted ? But all the saints have been persecuted; Jesus Christ, the head of the saints, has been persecuted: and will you not submit to persecution ? But what greater favour, says St. Teresa,[9621] can God bestow upon us than to send us the treatment that he wished his beloved Son to suffer on earth ? “ Believe me,” says Father Torres, in a letter to one of his penitents, “ that one of the greatest graces that God can confer upon you is to make you worthy to be calumniated by all, without being esteemed by any.”

When, then, dear sister, you see yourself disregarded and despised by all men, rejoice, and thank your Spouse, who wishes you to be treated in the same manner in which he himself wished to be treated in this life. And to prepare your soul to accept humiliations when they occur, represent to yourself in the time of meditation all the contempt, contradictions, and persecutions which may happen to you, and offer yourself, with a strong desire and resolution to suffer them all for the sake of Jesus Christ, and thus you shall be better prepared to accept them.

V. In the fifth place, you must not only accept humiliations in peace, but must also be glad and exult under them. “ A good religious,” says St. Joseph Calasanctius, “ despises the world and rejoices in its scoffs.” The Venerable Louis de Ponte could not at first conceive how a soul could delight in contempt; but when he became more perfect he experienced the consolations of abjection. By our own strength we certainly cannot rejoice in humiliations, but by the aid of Jesus Christ we can imitate the apostles, who went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.[9622] There are some, as St. Joseph Calasanctius says, who suffer reproach, but not with joy. To teach the perfect spirit of humility to St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, St. Ignatius came down from heaven and assured her that true humility consists in taking pleasure in whatever inspires self-contempt.

Worldlings do not delight as much in honors as the saints do in contempt. Brother Juniper, of the Order of St. Francis, received insults as he would the most costly gems. When derided by his companions, St. John Francis Regis was not only pleased by their ridicule, but even encouraged it. Thus from the lives of the saints it would appear that sufferings and humiliations were the sole objects of their wishes.

With a cross on his shoulder and a crown of thorns on his head the Redeemer once appeared to St. John of the Cross and said: “ John, ask of me what thou wilt.”[9623] “ Lord, replied the saint, “ I desire to suffer and to be despised for Thy sake.” As if he said: Lord, seeing you oppressed with sorrow and saturated with opprobrium for the love of me, what can I ask from you but pains and ignominies? The Lord once assured Blessed Angela of Foligno that the surest means by which a soul can ascertain whether its lights are from God is to examine if they have inspired and left behind a strong desire of being despised for his sake. Jesus wishes that under injuries and persecutions we not only be not disquieted, but that we even rejoice and exult in expectation of the great glory that he has prepared for us in heaven as the reward of our sufferings. Blessed are ye when they shall revile and persecute you; . . . be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven?

To those who are about to enter religion it is my custom to recommend, above all things, the practice of obedience, and of patience under contempt.

I have been anxious to treat the latter at full length. Because I am convinced that without bearing contempt it is impossible for a nun to advance in perfection; and because I hold as certain that the religious who cheerfully embraces humiliations shall become a saint. “ A soul humble of heart,” says St. Paulinus, “ is the heart of Christ.”[9624] The nun who is humble of heart or who delights in contempt is transformed into the heart of Jesus Christ. Be assured, then, dear sister, that if you are to be a saint you must suffer humiliations and contempt.

Though all your companions were saints, you would notwithstanding, by God’s ordinance, meet with frequent contradictions; you will be put below others, held in little esteem, and will frequently have to submit to accusations and reproofs. To render you like himself, Jesus Christ will easily find the means of making you an object of contempt. Hence I entreat you to practise every day the beautiful advice of Father Torres given to his penitents: “ Say every day an Our Father and a Hail Mary, in honor of the life of ignominy of Jesus; and offer yourself to suffer not only in peace but even with joy for the love of him all the contradictions and reproaches that he will send you; begging always his assistance to be faithful to him in bearing patiently all injuries and humiliations.”

PRAYER

My Jesus, my love, how is it possible that, seeing Thee, my God, humbled unto death, and even the ignominious death of the cross, I should be so proud? Ah ! through the merits of Thy ignominies make me know my miseries and deformities that I may abhor myself ; and suffer in peace for the love of Thee all the injuries that I shall receive. Ah ! my Redeemer, Thou hast rendered ignominies amiable to all who love Thee. Grant that I may understand Thy goodness and Thy love, that thus to please Thee 1 may love and embrace all manner of contempt. Grant that I may banish from my heart all human respect, and that in all my actions I may seek only Thy will and pleasure. I love Thee, O my humbled Jesus ; and I purpose with Thy grace not to resent any injuries, nor to complain of any affront that may be offered to me. From Thee I hope for strength to fulfil this resolution.

Mary, my mother, assist me by thy intercession; pray to Jesus for me.

Chapter XII FRATERNAL CHARITY

I. THE NECESSITY OF THIS VIRTUE, AND ITS PRACTICE IN OUR THOUGHTS AND SENTIMENTS

To love God without at the same time loving our neighbour is impossible. The same precept that prescribes love towards God imposes a strict obligation of fraternal charity. And this commandment we have from God that he who loveth God love also his brother.[9625]Hence St. Thomas[9626] teaches that the love of God and the love of our neighbour proceed alike from charity. For charity makes us love God and our neighbour, because such is the will of God. Such too was the doctrine of St. John the Evangelist. St. Jerome relates that being asked by his disciples why he frequently recommended fraternal love, that holy apostle replied: “Because it is the precept of the Lord, and the fulfilment of it alone is sufficient.”[9627]

St. Catharine of Genoa once said to the Lord: “My God, Thou dost command me to love my neighbour; and I can love nothing but Thee.” “ My child,” answered Jesus, “he that loves me, loves whatsoever I love.” Indeed, when we love any person we also love his relatives, his servants, his likeness, and even his clothes, because we know that he loves them.

And why do we love our neighbors? It is because God loves them. Hence St. John says that if any man say I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar.[9628] But as hatred towards our brethren is incompatible with the love of God, so an act of charity performed in their regard will be accepted by Jesus Christ as if done for himself. I say to you, says the Redeemer, as long as you did it to one of these my brethren you did it to me.[9629] St. Catharine of Genoa used to say that our love of God is to be measured by our love for our neighbor.

But holy charity the beautiful daughter of God, being banished from the world by the greater part of mankind, seeks an asylum in the monasteries of religious. Oh, what then will become of the convent from which charity is exiled ! As hell is a land of hatred, so paradise is the kingdom of love, where all the blessed love one another, and each one rejoices at the happiness of the rest as at his own. Oh, what a paradise is the convent in which charity reigns ! it is the delight of God himself. Behold, says the Psalmist, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.[9630] The Lord looks with complacency on the charity of brethren and sisters who dwell together in unity, who are united by one will of serving God, and who seek only to sanctify one another that they may be all united one day in the land of bliss. The highest praise bestowed by St. Luke on the first Christians was that they had but one heart and soul. And the multitude of the believers had but one heart and one soul."[9631] This unity was the fruit of the prayer of Jesus Christ, who before his Passion besought his eternal Father to make his disciples one by holy charity as he and the Father are one.

Holy Father, keep them in thy name that they may be one as we also are.[9632] This unity is one of the principal fruits of redemption, as may be inferred from the prediction of Isaias: The wolf shall dwell with the lamb ; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid they shall not hurt, nor shall they kill in all my holy mountain.[9633]Yes, the followers of Jesus, though of different countries and of different dispositions, shall live in peace with one another, each seeking by holy charity to accommodate himself to the wishes and inclinations of the other. And as a certain author has well remarked, what does a Community of religious mean, but a union of many by will and desire so as to form but one person. It is charity that maintains union; for it is not possible that all the members of a convent should have congenial dispositions. It is charity that unites their hearts and makes them bear one anothers burdens, and it is charity that makes each conform to the will of the other.

St. John Climacus 3 relates that in the vicinity of Alexandria there was a celebrated monastery, where, because they loved one another so cordially in holy charity, all the religious enjoyed the peace of paradise. In general the first that perceived a disagreement between two of the religious was able to restore peace by a mere sign. But if they could not be reconciled, both were sent as exiles to a neighboring house, and were told at their departure that the abode of two demons in the monastery could be no longer profitable to the Community.

Oh ! how delightful is it to see in a convent of nuns each praise, assist, and serve the others, and all love the others with a true sisterly affection. Nuns are called sisters, because they are such not by blood, but by charity, which should unite them in love more closely than all the ties of flesh and blood. “ The nun who has not charity,” says St. Jane Frances de Chantal, “is a religious in name, but not in reality. She is a sister in dress, not in affection.” Hence because they knew that where there is no union there is no God, almost all the founders and foundresses of religious Orders have with their last breath recommended the practice of holy charity to their spiritual children. “When,” says St. Augustine, “you see the stones of any fabric well bound to the timber, you enter with security, and apprehend no danger.”[9634] But were the stones detached from the wood, you should shudder at the very thought of approaching the building. Happy the religious house in which all are united by holy charity; but miserable is the monastery in which disunion and party-spirit prevail. “ Yes,” says St. Jerome, “ such a monastery is not the tabernacle of the Lord, but the abode of Lucifer; it is a house not of salvation, but of perdition.”[9635] Of what use are riches and magnificence, a splendid church and a beautiful garden, to a monastery from which union and charity are banished ? Such a monastery is a hell, where, to prevent the advancement of the rivals, each party decries the other. Suspicions and aversions are always on the increase: they fill the minds, are poured out in conversation, and occupy the thoughts of the religious at mental prayer, at Mass, and at Communion. Hence we may exclaim, O miserable prayers, miserable Masses, miserable Communions ! In a word, where there is not charity there is no recollection, no peace, no God.

If, dear sister, factions exist in your convent, prostrate yourself before the Lord, and in his presence pour forth tears of blood and fervent supplications that by his Almighty hand he may remedy the evil. For when the spirit of faction has crept into the cloister, it can be extinguished only by the arm of omnipotence. If it be in your power to restore peace, endeavor with all your might and at all hazards to accomplish so great a good; but if the extinction of discord be beyond your reach, it is your duty at least to remain neutral, and to shun, as you would death itself, every act that may encourage the fell spirit of faction.

Remember, however, that I do not mean to censure those zealous nuns who defend the observance of Rule, and who strenuously oppose all abuses. Whoever seeks the good of the Community belongs to the party of Jesus Christ. Would to God that all were of this party ! If, dear sister, you ever see an abuse introduced into the convent, I exhort you to unite with the fervent, and never to abstain from vindicating the cause of God even though you should be left alone. The Lord will reward your efforts for the maintenance of regular observance. To feel careless and to manifest indifference about the relaxation and neglect of discipline is neither virtue nor humility, but is the fruit of pusillanimity, tepidity, and of a want of divine love.

The religious, then, whom I condemn are those who maintain parties for promoting their own interests or particular friendships, or for depressing a rival or resenting an insult. From such parties I exhort you to keep aloof, though, in punishment of your neutrality, you should be reproached with ingratitude, wrongheadedness, or baseness of spirit, and even though you should be deprived of office and doomed to perpetual disgrace. To preserve charity and the common peace you must sacrifice all self-interest. When some of the bishops wished to have St. Gregory Nazianzen for patriarch while others refused to submit to his authority, the saint, to heal their dissensions, exclaimed: “ My brothers, I wish to see you in peace, and if the renunciation of my patriarchal dignity be necessary to preserve harmony among you, I am ready to renounce my see.” He then gave up the bishopric of Constantinople, and retired into solitude.

But, let us speak in particular of the means that a nun should adopt for the maintenance of charity among her sisters in religion. She must follow the advice of the Apostle to his disciples: Put ye on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy.[9636] As a religious always wears her habit, and as her whole body is covered by it, so in all her actions she must be clothed and encompassed around with charity. Put on the bowels of mercy. A religious should be clothed not only with charity, but with the bowels of charity; that is, she should love each of her sisters as if for each she had the tenderest affections. When a person entertains for others a strong attachment he rejoices at their prosperity and grieves at their misfortunes as at his own. He continually seeks to promote their happiness, to vindicate their character from any imputation that may be cast upon it, to excuse any fault that they may commit, and to extol every good act that they may perform. Now what is the effect of passion in worldlings should be the fruit of holy charity in religious.

PRACTICE OF CHARITY IN OUR THOUGHTS AND SENTIMENTS

I. To practise charity in thought you must, in the first place, endeavor to banish all rash judgments, suspicions, and doubts. To entertain a rash doubt regarding another is a defect; to indulge a positive suspicion is a greater fault, and to judge with certainty without certain grounds that another has sinned, is still more criminal before God.

Whoever judges rashly of his neighbor shall be judged with severity. Judge not, that you may not be judged. For with what judgment you judge you shall be judged.[9637] But although it is sinful to judge evil of others without certain grounds, still it is not a violation of the divine law to suspect or even to judge evil of them when we have certain motives for such suspicions or judgments. However, the safest and most charitable rule is to think well of all, and to banish all such judgments and suspicions. Charity, says the Apostle, thinketh no evil[9638] But this rule is not to be observed by the religious who hold the office of Superior, or of Mistress of novices. Because, to prevent evil, it is their duty to suspect whenever there are grounds of suspicion. But if by your office you are not charged with the correction of others, endeavor always to judge favorably of all your sisters. St. Jane Frances de Chantal used to say that “ in our neighbor we should observe only what is good.” Should you sometimes through mistake praise in others what is censurable, you will never have reason to repent of your error. “ Charity,” says St. Augustine, “grieves not when she erroneously thinks well of what is evil.”[9639]

St. Catharine of Bologna once said: “ I have lived for many years in religion, and have never thought ill of any of my sisters; because I know that a person who appears to be imperfect may be more dear to God than another whose conduct is much more exemplary.” Be careful, then, not to indulge in observing the defects and concerns of others, nor to imitate the example of those who go about asking what others say of them, and thus fill their minds with suspicions and their hearts with bitterness and aversions. Listen not to them who tell you that others have spoken of your defects, and ask not from them the names of those who dispraised you. In such tales there is, in general, a great deal of exaggeration. Let your conduct be such as deserves praise from all, but regard not what is said of you. When told that any one has charged you with a certain fault, let your answer be that others know you but little; and that, were they aware of all your defects, they would say a great deal more of you; or you may say that only God is to be your judge.

II. When our neighbor is visited with any infirmity, loss, or other calamity, charity obliges us to regret his misfortune at least with the superior will. I say with the superior will ; for concupiscence always appears to take a certain delight in hearing that a calamity has befallen an enemy. But that delight is not culpable as long as it is resisted by the will. Whenever the inferior appetite solicits the will to rejoice at the misfortune of others, pay no more attention to its criminal solicitations than you would to a dog that barks without reason; but endeavor to excite in the superior will sentiments of regret at their distress. It is indeed sometimes lawful to rejoice at the good effects that are likely to result from the temporal afflictions of others. For example, it is not forbidden to be glad from a motive of his conversion, or of the cessation of scandal, that a notorious and obstinate sinner has been visited with sickness. However, should he have offended us, the joy occasioned by his infirmity may be the fruit of passion as well as of zeal.

III. Charity obliges us to rejoice at a neighbor s good, and to banish envy, which consists in a feeling of regret at the good of others, inasmuch as it is an obstacle to our own. According to St. Thomas,[9640] a person may grieve at the good of others in four ways:

First, when he apprehends that their advancement will be detrimental to himself or to others; and if the loss sustained be unjust, his regret is not envy, and may be blameless.” “It may often happen,” says St. Gregory, “ that without losing charity, we rejoice at the ruin of an enemy; and that without incurring the guilt of envy, we feel sorrow at his exaltation, when by his downfall we think that others will be justly exalted, and when we fear that by his prosperity many will be unjustly oppressed.”[9641]

Secondly, when a person grieves not because others have been prosperous, but because he himself has not been equally successful. This grief is not envy, but is, on the contrary, an act of virtue when it regards spiritual goods.

Thirdly, when he regrets the success of others, because he deems them unworthy of it; and this sorrow is not sinful, when he believes that the advantages, dignity, or riches that they have acquired will be injurious to their salvation.

Fourthly, when a person regrets the prosperity of others, because it is an obstacle to his own advancement: this is envy, and should not be entertained. The Wise Man says that the envious imitate the devil, who instigated our first parents to sin, because he was grieved to see them destined for that celestial kingdom from which he himself had been expelled.

But, says the Wise Man, by the envy of the devil death came into the world, and they follow him that are of his side.

1 But charity makes us regard the happiness or misery of others as we would our own.

PRAYER

Ah! my Redeemer, how unlike am I to Thee! Thou wast all charity towards Thy persecutors ; I am all rancor and hatred towards my neighbor. Thou didst pray with so much love for those who crucified Thee ; and I immediately seek revenge against those that offend me. Pardon me, my Jesus : I wish no more to be what I have hitherto been ; give me strength to love and to do good to all who injure me. Abandon me not, O Lord to my passions. Oh ! what a hell would it be to me, after having received so many of Thy graces, to be again separated from Thee, and deprived of Thy friendship. For the sake of the blood that Thou hast shed for me, permit not such a separation. Eternal Father, through the merits of Thy Son, suffer me not to become Thy enemy. Shouldst Thou see that I will one day offend Thee, take me out of life, now that I hope to be in the state of grace. O God of love, give me Thy love! O in finite power, assist me ! O infinite mercy, have pity on me! O infinite goodness, draw me entirely to Thee! I love Thee, O Sovereign Good !

Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me ! Thy protection is my hope.

I. THE CHARITY TO BE PRACTISED IN WORDS

II.[9642]To practise fraternal charity in words, you must above all, abstain from every species of detraction. The talebearer, says the Holy Ghost, shall defile his own soul, and shall be hated by all.[9643]

Yes; he shall be an object of hatred to God and to men, and even to those who for their own amusement applaud and encourage his slanderous language. Even they shall shun him; because they justly fear that as in their presence he has detracted others, so before others he will slander them. St. Jerome says that some who have renounced other vices cannot abstain from detraction. “ They who have abandoned other sins continue to fall into the sin of detraction.”[9644] Would to God that even in the cloister there were not to be found religious whose tongues are so sharp that they cannot speak without wounding the character of a neighbor ! Such people should be banished from all monasteries, or should at least be separated from the society of their sisters. For they disturb the recollection, silence, devotion, and peace of the whole Community. In a word, they are the ruin of religious houses. God grant that such uncharitable nuns may not meet the fate of a certain slanderer, who, according to Thomas Cantipratensis,[9645] died in a fit of rage, and in the act of lacerating his tongue with his teeth. St. Bernard[9646] speaks of another slanderer who attempted to defame the character of St. Malachy ; his tongue instantly swelled and became filled with worms. In this miserable state the unhappy man died after seven days. But how dear to God and to men is the nun who speaks well of all! St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say, that if she knew anyone who had never in his whole life spoken ill of a neighbor, she would have him canonized. Be careful never to utter a word that savors of detraction; be particularly careful to avoid all uncharitableness towards your sisters in religion.

But, above all, be on your guard against every expression that is in the slightest degree apt to depress the character of your prelate, abbess, confessor, or any other Superior. By speaking ill of them, you would destroy in your companions the spirit of obedience, by diminishing their respect for the judgment and authority of their Superiors. Should your language excite a suspicion in the mind of the sisters that the Superior is unreasonable in her commands, it will be very difficult to induce them to practise the obedience that is due to her. The sin of detraction is committed, not only by imputing to others what is not true, by exaggerating their defects, or by making known their hidden faults, but also by representing their virtuous actions as defective, or by ascribing them to a bad motive. It is also detraction to deny the good works of others, or to question their claims to the just praise bestowed upon them. To render their calumnies more credible, worldlings sometimes begin by praise and end with slander. Such a person, they say, has a great deal of talent, but he is proud; he is very generous, but at the same time very vindictive.

Let it be your care always to speak well of all. Speak of others as you would wish to be spoken of by others. With regard to the absent, observe the excellent rule of St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi: “ Never to utter in their absence what you would not say in their presence.” And should you ever hear a sister speak ill of others, be careful neither to encourage her uncharitableness nor to appear pleased with her language; otherwise you will partake of her guilt. You should either reprove her, or change the subject of conversation, or withdraw from her, or at least pay no attention to her. Hedge in thy ears with thorns, says the Holy Ghost; hear not a wicked tongue.[9647] Against detraction, hedge in your ears with thorns, that it may not enter.

Whenever, then, you hear a person speak ill of others, it is necessary to show, at least by silence, by a gloomy countenance, or by downcast eyes, that you are not pleased with the conversation. Conduct yourself always in such a way that no one will in future dare attack the character of another in your presence. And when it is in your power, charity requires of you to take the part of the person who is detracted. Thy lips are as a scarlet lace.[9648] My spouse, says the Lord, I will have thy lips as a scarlet lace; that is, according to the explanation of St. Gregory of Nyssa,[9649] your words must be full of charity, so as to cover as much as possible the defects of others, or at least to excuse their intention, if their actions be inexcusable.[9650] “ Excuse the intention,” says St. Bernard, “if you cannot excuse the act.” The Abbot Constabile, as Surius relates, was called “ The covering of his brethren.”[9651]For this holy monk, as often as he heard any one speak of the defects of others, sought to cover and excuse them. Such, too, was the practice of St. Teresa. Of her the nuns used to say, that in her presence their character was secure, because she would defend them.[9652]

II. Be careful never to mention to any sister that another has spoken ill of her; for tale-bearing of this kind sometimes occasions disputes and aversions which last for a long time. Oh ! how frightful the account which talebearers must render to God ! The sowers of discord are objects of abomination in his sight. Six things there are that the Lord hateth, and the seventh his soul detesteth? The seventh is the man that soweth discord among brethren![9653]

An uncharitable word that proceeds from passion may be excusable. But how can the Almighty bear with a religious who sows discord and disturbs the peace of a Community ? Listen to the advice of the Holy Ghost: Hast thou heard a word against thy neighbor ? let it die within thee.[9654] The words that you hear of a sister must not only be confined to yourself, but must even die and be buried within you. You must be careful, then, never to give the slightest intimation of what you have heard. For a single word, a nod of the head, a simple hint, may lead others to a knowledge or at least to a suspicion of the faults that were mentioned to you.

Some appear to suffer the pangs of death until they have disclosed the secrets communicated to them; as if these secrets were so many thorns that wound their very heart until they are drawn out. You should never mention the hidden defects of others to anyone except to the Superiors, and not even to them unless the reparation of the injury done to the Community, or the good of the sister herself who has committed the fault, require that her neglect should be known to the Superior.

III. Moreover, in your conversation you must be careful never to wound even by jests the feelings of a sister. Jests that offend a neighbor are opposed to charity, and to the words of Jesus Christ: All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them.[9655] You certainly would not like to be made an object of derision and of mockery before your companions. Abstain then from casting ridicule on others. Endeavor also to avoid as much as possible all disputes. Sometimes trifles give occasion to arguments that end in disputes and injurious language.

There are some who violate charity by proposing, through the spirit of contradiction, certain topics of debate which give rise to useless disputation. Strive not, says the Wise Man, in a matter which doth not concern thee.[9656]

But you will say that in every debate you defend the right side of the question, and that you cannot listen in silence to assertions utterly destitute of foundation. I answer in the words of Cardinal Bellarmine: “ That an ounce of charity is more valuable than a hundred carloads of reason.” In all debates, but particularly when the subject is of little importance, give your opinion if you wish to join in the conversation; but be careful never to defend it with obstinacy. It is better to give up your own opinion than to enter into a useless and perhaps dangerous controversy. Blessed Egidius used to say that in such controversies to submit is to conquer; because submission evinces superiority in virtue and preserves peace. Surely the preservation of peace is of far greater importance than the empty honor of a wordy victory. Hence St. Ephrem used to say that to maintain peace he always yielded to his adversary in disputation. Hence, also, St. Joseph Calasanctius advises “ all who desire peace never to contradict anyone.”

IV. If you love charity, endeavor to be affable and meek to all. Meekness is the characteristic virtue of the lamb; it is the beloved virtue of Jesus Christ, who through a love of meekness took the appellation of Lamb. In your conversation and intercourse with others be agreeable not only to the Superior and to those who are in office, but to all, and particularly to the sisters who have offended you, who oppose your wishes, or displease you by their roughness of manner, or by their forgetfulness of past favors. Charity is patient : beareth all things.[9657]

Whoever, then, bears not the defects of his neighbor cannot have true charity. The most perfect souls are not free from all defects. You yourself are subject to faults; and notwithstanding your manifold imperfections you expect to be treated with charity and compassion. You therefore should, according to the advice of the Apostle, compassionate the defects of others. Bear ye one another’s burdens.[9658] A mother, because she loves them, submits in patience to the insolence of her children. It is by the manner in which you bear the burdens of your sisters that you are to judge whether you love them with true charity, which, because it is supernatural, should be stronger than natural affection.

Oh ! with what charity did the Redeemer bear with the rudeness and imperfections of his disciples during the whole time that he lived with them! With what charity did he wash the feet of the traitor Judas! With what patience has he borne even to the present moment with your sinfulness and ingratitude! And will you refuse to bear with the defects of your sisters ? The physician while he loves a patient loathes his disease; and if you have charity you must love your sisters and at the same time hate their faults. But you will say: What am I to do ? I have a natural repugnance to the society of such a sister, and feel it painful to hold intercourse with her. My answer is: Have more fervor and more charity, and all such antipathies will vanish. Let us come to the practice of meekness. In the first place, endeavor with all your might to restrain every motion of anger. In the next place, you must be careful to abstain from all disagreeable words, and to avoid all roughness and haughtiness of manner; for rude conduct is sometimes more offensive than insulting language. Should a sister ever treat you with contempt, suffer it in patience for the love of Jesus Christ, who for the love of you has borne with far greater insults.

My God ! what a misery to see certain religious, who practise mental prayer and frequent the sacraments, so sensitive to every mark of disrespect or inattention ! Sister Mary of the Ascension, as often as she received an affront, went immediately before the Blessed Sacrament, and said: My Spouse, I bring you this little present; I beg you to accept it, and to pardon the person by whom I have been offended. Why do you not imitate this holy religious ? To preserve charity you must suffer all things. Father Alvarez used to say that virtue is weak till it is proved by maltreatment from others. It is by the manner in which she bears with contempt and insult that a soul shows whether she abounds or fails in charity.

Should anyone ever address you in the language of passion, or even of insult and reproach, answer with sweetness, and her anger will be instantly appeased. A mild answer breaketh wrath[9659] St. John Chrysostom says: “ Fire cannot be extinguished by fire, nor wrath by anger.”[9660] Do you imagine that by replying with acrimony to all who speak to you in anger you will calm passion ? On the contrary, you will provoke it, and will also violate charity. Let your answer to every word of anger be full of sweetness, and the fire of passion will be instantly extinguished.

Sophronius relates that two monks having missed their way on a journey, entered by chance into a field in which seed had been just sown. The man who was entrusted with the care of the field burst into a fit of rage and heaped upon them every epithet of reproach. At first they were silent, but seeing that their silence served only to inflame his anger, they exclaimed: “ Brother, we have done wrong: for God’s sake pardon us.” This humble answer calmed his passion and filled his soul with sorrow for his conduct. He immediately asked pardon of the monks for his injurious language he even left the world and joined them in the cloister.

You will sometimes think it right and even necessary to repress by a sharp answer the forwardness of a sister, particularly if you are Superior, and she be wanting in respect to you: be assured that such sharpness proceeds from passion rather than from reason. I know that anger is sometimes lawful. Be angry, says the Psalmist, and sin not.[9661] But to be angry and not to sin is very difficult in practice. Whoever abandons himself to anger exposes his soul to imminent danger. Hence St. Francis de Sales wisely teaches in his Philothea, that however just the occasions of anger may be, its motions should be repressed. “ It is better,” says the saint, “ to have it said of you that you are never angry, than that you were justly angry.”[9662] St. Augustine says that anger once allowed to enter the soul is banished with difficulty; and therefore he strongly recommends us to stifle it in its very origin. A certain philosopher, called Agrippinus, having lost his property, said: “If I have lost my goods I will not lose my peace.” Let such be your language as often as you receive any offence. Is it not enough for you to have received an affront ? do you wish, moreover, to lose the peace of your soul by yielding to anger ? The disturbance of mind occasioned by anger will be far more injurious to you than the insult that you have received. St. Augustine says that he who yields to passion on every occasion of insult is his own chastiser. Disquiet of soul, even when it arises from regret for a fault, is always injurious. For, as St. Aloysius used to say, it delights the devil to fish in troubled water.

I have said that when a sister speaks to you in the language or tone of passion or contempt you should answer her with sweetness. But I now say, that whenever the soul is disturbed, it is better to be silent; for passion will then make harsh expressions appear just and reasonable. But when peace returns, you will see that your language was altogether unjustifiable. St. Bernard says that anger draws over the soul a dark veil, which renders her incapable of distinguishing what is right from what is wrong.[9663]

When a sister who has offended you comes to ask pardon, be careful not to receive her with a stern countenance, nor to show discontent or want of respect by your words or looks. If you give signs of dissatisfaction, you will violate charity, you will confirm the sister in her dislike towards you, and will give great scandal to the whole Community. You must, then, receive her with affection; and if, through humility, she fall on her knees to ask pardon, you should likewise go on your knees, and say to her: O my sister, why should you ask pardon of me? You know how much I love and esteem you. I ask pardon for having displeased you by my ignorance and negligence, and by my want of attention to you. Have pity, then, on me, and forgive me.

But whenever you offend or displease a sister, endeavor at once, by all means in your power, to make satisfaction to her, and to remove from her heart all feelings of aversion towards you. St. Bernard says " that humility alone is the reparation of wounded charity."[9664] Self—humiliation is the most efficacious means of repairing the violation of charity.

Whenever, then, you offend against charity, humble yourself immediately, overcome by force your natural repugnance to humiliation: the longer you defer the reparation of the fault you have committed, the more your repugnance to make reparation will increase. If, says the Redeemer, thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming, thou shalt offer thy gift.[9665] If you come to the altar to offer your gift, to receive the Holy Eucharist, or to attend Mass, and remember that you have offended a brother, retire from the altar and be reconciled with him. However, if you think that by asking pardon of the sister you have offended, you will only renew her anguish, it is better to wait for a more convenient opportunity, or to ask pardon through another sister But you must, in the mean time, show her particular attention and respect.

PRAYER

O my God, look not on my sins, but on Jesus Thy Son, who has sacrificed his life for my salvation. For the sake of Jesus, have pity on me, and pardon all the offences I have given Thee, but especially those which I have committed by my want of charity to my neighbor. Destroy in me, O Lord, whatever displeases Thee, and give me a sincere desire to please Thee in all things. Ah ! my Jesus, my greatest sorrow arises from a conviction that I have been so long in the world, and that I have loved Thee so little. Ah ! give me a portion of that sorrow which Thou didst feel for my sins in the garden of Gethsemane. Oh ! that I had died before I offended Thee. It consoles me, however, to know that Thou givest me time to love Thee. I desire to spend all that remains of my life in Thy love. I love Thee, O infinite Good ! I love Thee, the only love of my soul. Ah ! make me entirely Thine before I die. Draw all my affections to Thy love, so that I may never love any object but Thee. But while I live I am in danger of losing Thee. When shall I be able to say, O my Jesus, that I can never lose Thee again ! O Jesus, unite me to Thee, so that I can never be separated from Thee. Grant me this favour, through the love with which Thou didst love me on the cross.

O most holy Virgin, thou art most dear to God, he denies thee nothing ; obtain for me the grace never more to offend him, and to love him with my whole heart. I ask no other favour of thee.

III. THE CHARITY TO BE PRACTISED IN WORKS, AND TOWARDS WHOM IT IS TO BE PRACTISED

With regard to the charity which you ought to practise in works, endeavor to be always ready to assist your sisters in all their necessities. Some religious say that they sincerely and affectionately love all their sisters, but they will not submit to inconvenience for the sake of any of them. My little children, let its not love in word, nor in tongue, but in. deed and in truth.[9666] To fulfil the precept of charity, it is not enough to love our neighbor in words: we must love him in deed. The just are merciful[9667] says the Wise Man. All the saints were full of charity and compassion to all who required their assistance. It is related of St. Teresa, that she was accustomed to perform every day some act of charity towards her sisters; and whenever she was unable to do so by day, she was careful to do so by night, at least by showing light to the sisters who passed in the dark before her cell.[9668]

I. Give alms as often as it is in your power. Holy Scripture says, that alms delivers a soul from death; that it purifies her from sin, and obtains for her the divine mercy and eternal salvation.

For alms, says Tobias, delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting.[9669] St. Cyprian says, that “ the Lord commands nothing more frequently than the constant practice of alms.”[9670] By alms-deeds I mean not only the distribution of money or of temporal goods, but every species of relief given to a neighbor who stands in need of our assistance. He that hath the substance of this world, says St. John, and shall see his brother in need, how doth the charity of God abide in him ?[9671] When a religious assists her companions in their labors she performs an act of charity very pleasing in the sight of God. St. Theodora, a religious, endeavored to assist all her sisters in performing the duties of their office, but was careful never to seek assistance from anyone in the discharge of her own duties. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi not only assisted her sisters in their most laborious duties, but also offered to perform by herself alone every work that required extraordinary labor. Hence it was a common saying in the convent, that she labored more than four lay-sisters. Endeavor as much as possible to imitate her conduct, and when you are overcome by fatigue, look on your Spouse carrying his cross, and embrace with joy any new labor which your duties may require. The aid that you receive from God will be proportioned to the assistance that you give to your companions. And with what measure you mete, says Jesus Christ, it shall be measured to you again.[9672]

Hence, St. John Chrysostom says that the practice of charity is a powerful means of obtaining great graces from God. “ Alms,” says the saint, “is the most lucrative of all arts.”[9673] St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that she felt more happy during the time she assisted her neighbor than when she was rapt in contemplation. “ Because,” says the saint, “ when I am rapt in contemplation, God assists me; but when I relieve a neighbor, I assist God.” The Redeemer has declared that what we do to a brother, we do to him.[9674] But in assisting others you should not expect either thanks or recompense. You should even rejoice when you receive for your kindness no other reward than inattention and reproach. For then you will have double profit. It is an act of charity to accede to the reasonable requests of others. But should a sister ask you to leave your devotions in order to amuse her by your conversation, you ought to refuse her request, and attend to your devotions. Charity is well ordered. He set in order charity in me[9675] says the Spouse in the Canticles. Hence whatever injures your own spiritual progress, or that of a sister in religion, is not charity.

II. The most perfect charity consists in zeal for your neighbor s spiritual good. To relieve the spiritual necessities of a fellow-man, or to contribute to his spiritual welfare, as far excels the exercise of charity towards his body as the dignity of the soul transcends the lowly condition of the flesh. Charity towards the soul is practised, in the first place, by correcting our neighbours faults. St. James[9676] declares that he who causes a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.

But, on the other hand, St. Augustine says that he who sees a brother destroying his soul, by giving way to anger against a neighbor, or by insulting him, and neglects to correct him, sins more grievously by his silence than the other does by his insults and contumely. “You, “says the saint, “see him perish, and care not; your silence is more criminal than his reproachful language.”[9677] Do not excuse yourself by saying that you know not how to correct him. St. John Chrysostom[9678] tells you that for correcting the faults of others charity is more necessary than wisdom. Make the correction at a reasonable time, with charity and sweetness, and it will be profitable. If you are Superior, you are bound by your office to correct the sisters; if not, you are bound in charity to administer correction as often as you expect fruit from it. Would it not be cruelty in him who should see a blind man walking over a precipice not to admonish him of his danger, and thus rescue him from temporal death? But it would be still greater cruelty in you to neglect, when able, to deliver a sister from eternal death. If you prudently judge that your advice would be unprofitable, be careful at least to make known the fault to the Superior, or to some other person who will be able to apply a remedy. Do not say, This is not my business; I will not take any trouble about it. This was the language of Cain. Am I, said he, my brother’s keeper?[9679] It is the duty of everyone, when able, to save his neighbor from ruin. And, says Ecclesiasticus, he gave every one of them a commandment concerning his neighbour.[9680]

St. Philip Neri says, that when necessary, God wishes that we omit mental prayer in order to assist a neighbor, particularly in his spiritual necessities. St. Gertrude desired one day to entertain herself in prayer, but a work of charity was to be performed, and therefore the Lord said to her: “ Tell me, Gertrude, do you intend that I should serve you, or that you should serve me?” If,” says St. Gregory, “you go to God, take care not to come alone to him.”[9681] And St. Augustine says, “If you love God, draw all to the love of God.”[9682] If you love God, you should take care not to be alone in loving him, but should labor to bring to his love all your relatives, and all those with whom you have intercourse, but particularly your sisters in religion. Ah ! how a holy nun can sanctify the whole Community by her words, by her example, by performing her exercises of devotion with a view to induce others to do the same! Be not afraid of vainglory. Actions that have nothing extraordinary in them, but which become every religious that tends to perfection, according to her obligation, ought to be performed, even with the intention of giving good example, and of drawing the sisters nearer to God. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.[9683] Hence, to appear devout, mortified, observant of rule, devoted to mental prayer and to frequent Communion, in order to give good example to the other sisters, is not an act of vanity, but an act of charity, very pleasing to God.

III. Endeavor, then, to assist all according to the best of your ability, by words, by works, and particularly by prayers. Every spouse of Jesus Christ should have zeal for his honor, as he himself said to St. Teresa, when he called her his spouse: “ Henceforth, as a true spouse, you shall be zealous for my honor.”[9684] If the spouse of Jesus Christ do not take his part, who will take it ? Many Doctors, along with St. Basil, teach, that by the words, Amen I say to you , if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.[9685] Jesus Christ promises to hear our prayers, not only for ourselves, but also for others, provided they do not place a positive obstacle in the way. Hence, in the common prayer, in your thanksgiving after Communion, and your visits to the Blessed Sacrament, you should never omit to recommend to God all poor sinners, infidels, and heretics, and all that live without God.

How pleasing to Jesus Christ are the prayers of his spouses for sinners! He once said to the Venerable Sister Seraphina de Capri: “Assist me, O my daughter, to save souls by your prayers.” To Mary Magdalene de Pazzi he said: See, Magdalene, how Christians are in the hands of the devil; unless my elect by their prayers deliver them, they shall be devoured. Hence the saint used to say to her religious: “ My sisters, God has not separated us from the world only for our own good, but also for the benefit of sinners.” And on another occasion she said: “ My sisters, we have to render to God an account of so many lost souls: had we recommended them to God with fervor, perhaps they would not be damned.” Hence we read in her life that she did not allow an hour of the day to pass without praying for sinners. That great servant of God, Sister Stephana de Soncino, for forty years performed severe penances, and offered them all for sinners.

Oh ! how many souls are sometimes converted, not so much by the sermons of priests, as by the prayers of religious ! It was once revealed to a preacher that the fruit which he produced was not the effect of his sermons, but of the prayers of a brother who assisted him at the pulpit. Be careful, also, to pray for priests, that they may labor with true zeal for the salvation of souls.

IV. Do not neglect to pray for the souls in purgatory. It is not only a counsel, but also (as a learned author says) a duty of holy charity, to pray for these holy souls who stand in great need of our prayers. St. Thomas teaches that Christian charity extends not only to the living, but also to all who have died in the state of grace. Hence, as we are bound to relieve our living neighbors, who require our aid, so we are obliged to succor these holy prisoners. According to St. Thomas, their sufferings surpass all the pains of this life. They stand in need of our assistance, because they cannot assist themselves. A certain Cistercian monk appeared after death to the sacristan of his monastery, and said to him: “ Assist me by your prayers, for I can obtain nothing for myself.” If all the faithful ought to assist these holy souls, how much more are religious, placed by God in monasteries, which are so many houses of prayer, bound to succor them by their suffrages. Be careful, then, to recommend to God, every day, in all your prayers, these spouses of the Saviour, who ask your assistance. Be not unwilling to offer for them some fasts and other mortifications. Above all, apply to them the masses that you hear, for this affords great relief to these holy souls who, even in their prison, cannot be ungrateful, and will not fail to obtain great graces for us from God, and still greater when they are admitted into heaven.

V. From what has been already said, you see how much you stand in need of the virtue of charity, in order to be a saint, and even to be saved. You must practise this charity towards all your neighbors, hut particularly towards the sisters of your monastery. If you lived in a desert this virtue would not be so necessary. For in order to become a saint in the solitude of a desert it would be sufficient to attend to prayer and penance. But if you have not great charity towards those with whom you live in the cloister, you will commit a thousand defects every day, and will perhaps be lost. Were a vessel in the midst of the ocean tossed by a violent tempest, surely the people on board would think only of saving one another from shipwreck. Imagine that God has placed you in this monastery as in a ship, where it is your duty to assist one another to escape the shipwreck of eternal death, and to reach heaven, where you hope to be united for eternity in praising God.

Be particularly careful to practise charity towards the sick, whether they are choir nuns or lay-sisters. Father Anthony Torres used to say: “If you wish to know whether the Spirit of God reigns in a Community, ask how the sick are treated.” Hence, when Superior, although of a most amiable disposition, he punished with severity the person who had the care of the sick whenever he was wanting in charity to them. Oh ! how pleasing to God is charity towards the sick ! All religious that tend to perfection practise this charity, either in choir or in the cells of the sick. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, even though not infirmarian, never omitted (when it was in her power) to assist and serve the sick; and she would say that she desired always to live in a hospital in order to be always employed in an office so pleasing to God.

Let it be remembered that the merit of serving the sick is far greater than the merit of serving those who are in health. First, because the sick stand in greater need of assistance. They sometimes find themselves abandoned by all; sometimes tormented by pains, by melancholy, and by fears. Oh, how pleasing is it to God to labor to console them in that state of affliction ! There is greater merit also, because there are greater inconveniences in serving them; in their rooms you find a disagreeable smell, and the gloom of melancholy. Be careful, then, when it is in your power, never to omit to visit a sick companion, even though she be the humblest lay-sister in the monastery. To the lay-sisters you should pay special attention, for they are generally the most abandoned, particularly when their illness is of long duration. Console them, serve them, and even bring them an occasional little present. Do not look for thanks; but bear with their complaints, impatience, and rudeness. The Lord will reward the charity you practise towards them. It is related in the Chronicles of the Teresians, that St. Isabella of the Angels was seen ascending to heaven immediately after her death, carried by angels amid great splendor. And she said to a religious to whom she appeared, that God had bestowed that great glory on her on account of her charity towards the sick.

IV. Lastly, I recommend you, above all, to practise charity towards the sisters who are opposed to you. I am grateful, such a nun says, to all who treat me with kindness. But I cannot bear acts of ingratitude. But, as Jesus Christ says, the infidels are grateful to their benefactors. Christian virtue consists in wishing well to those who hate and injure us. But I say to you, says Jesus Christ, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.[9686]

What a horrible thing must it be in a religious who makes mental prayer every day, and communicates frequently, to entertain aversion or rancor towards a sister ! She is even not ashamed to show it; and when she hears others speak of the sister, she endeavors to lessen their esteem for her whenever she can. If she meet the sister, she does not salute her; if the sister speak to her, she turns away. She turns away from a sister, and God turns his back on her. Consider how the Lamb of God must reward such a tiger of hell. But poor and miserable is the nun that lives in a monastery with hatred in her heart ! She shall suffer a hell here and another hereafter; she endures, even in this life, the punishment of the damned, because she is constrained to live always with a person whom she cannot bear to see.

But, Father (she replies), this sister is impertinent; it is impossible to bear with her. But it is in bearing with those who are unbearable that the virtue of charity consists. She lessens your character; she thwarts your designs; she even takes away your reputation; but you, as it perfectly ignorant of her conduct, should force yourself, not to show the smallest alienation or coldness: whenever occasion requires, speak to her with a serene countenance. If she appear distant with you, salute her before she salutes you, and endeavor to gain her by sweetness. To act in this manner is not baseness, but the most heroic action that you can perform; because it is very pleasing to God. Do not say that her conduct is unreasonable: listen to what St. Teresa says: “ Let her who wishes to bear the cross only when it is reason able, return to the world, where such reasons are admitted.”[9687] The reason that ought to prevail with you is, to practise charity in order to please God, though you should die of pain.

If the sister goes so far as to do you a positive injury, take revenge on her; but let it be the revenge of the saints. What is the revenge of the saints ? St. Paulinus answers, that “ to love an enemy is heavenly revenge.”[9688] The saints have taken revenge by loving, praising, and doing good to all that have done them evil. St. Catharine performed for a long time the offices of a servant for a woman confined by sickness, who had charged the saint with a sin against chastity. St. Acaius sold his goods in order to relieve a man who had taken away his reputation. St. Ambrose assigned to an assassin, who made an attempt on his life, a daily sum, sufficient to enable him to live comfortably. Venustanus, governor of Tuscany, through hatred of the faith, ordered the hands of St. Sabinus, bishop, to be cut off. The tyrant feeling a violent pain in one of his eyes, prayed the saint to apply a remedy. The saint offered a prayer to God, and raising his arm, still streaming blood, blessed the tyrant, restored his health, and saved his soul; for, entering into himself at the sight of the miracle, the governor was converted to the faith. St. John Chrysostom relates that St. Meletius, seeing the people prepared to stone to death the governor who conducted him to exile, stretched his arms over him, and thus saved his life. Father Segneri[9689] also relates that in Bologna there was a lady, whose only son was murdered; the murderer came into her house in order to escape the officers of justice. What did she do ? She concealed him from them; and said to him: Since I have lost my son, you shall henceforth be my son and heir: take this sum of money, and save yourself elsewhere; for here your life is not secure. In answer to such examples someone may say: These have been saints; I have not strength to imitate their example. Let St. Ambrose answer for me: If you have not strength, ask it of God and he will give it. “ If,” says the saint, “ you are weak, pray: you pray, and God protects you.”[9690]

He who pardons those who have offended him is secure of forgiveness from God, who says: Forgive, and you shall be forgiven[9691] Blessed Baptista of Verona, a Franciscan nun, used to say: Were I to raise the dead to life, I would not be so certain of being loved by God as I am when I feel inclined to do good to those who have done me evil. Our Lord said to Blessed Angela of Foligno: The strongest proof of a mutual love between me and my servants is the love that they bear to the person who has offended them. If, then, you can do nothing else, at least pray for all who have offended and persecuted you; and recommend them fervently to God, that you may fulfil the command of Jesus Christ: Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.[9692] Blessed Jane of the Cross prayed continually for those who gave her any displeasure. Hence her sisters in religion used to say: Whoever desires the prayers of Mother Jane must offer some insult to her. St. Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, after having prayed for a person who had offended her, heard from God the following words: Know that you never said a prayer more acceptable to me than that which you have just offered, and on account of this prayer I pardon all your sins. Imitate her example, and you shall certainly obtain the pardon and affection of your divine Spouse.

PRAYER

My Jesus, grant me the gift of Thy love, which will make me embrace all pains and insults in order to please Thee: give me strength to deny myself all things that are not pleasing to Thee, and to accept all that is disagreeable to self-love sorrows, persecutions, loss of relatives, of health, of self-esteem, and all the crosses that shall come from Thee. I now accept all from Thy hand: I accept all the troubles of my life, and especially the pains of my death. Grant that I may live only to please Thee; and that at death I may sacrifice my life to Thee, with all the affection of my soul. My God, Thou dost command me not to offend Thee; and I dread an offence against Thee more than death. Thou dost command me to love Thee, and I desire only to love Thee. But I know my weakness. Ah! assist me continually with Thy grace: do not leave me in my own hands, if Thou dost, I will betray Thee again. I love Thee, O my Sovereign Good, and I hope always to love Thee. O Mary, my hope, and my mother, obtain for me the grace to be faithful to God, and to love him as a God of infinite goodness deserves to be loved.

Chapter XIII

PATIENCE

I. PATIENCE IN GENERAL

Patience hath a perfect work.[9693] Patience is a perfect sacrifice that we offer to God; because in suffering tribulations and contradictions we do nothing but accept from his hands the cross that he sends us. A patient man is better than the valiant.[9694] He who suffers with patience is better than a valiant man. Some are resolute and courageous in promoting and supporting a pious undertaking, but are not patient in bearing adversity: it would be better for them to be valiant in patience than in the works that they undertake. This earth is a place of merits, and therefore it is not a place of repose, but of toils and pains; for merits are acquired not by rest, but by suffering. All those that live here below (whether saints or sinners) must suffer. Some are in want of one comfort, others of another; some have nobility, but have not property; others abound in riches, but want nobility; others enjoy nobility and wealth, but have not health. In a word, all, even sovereigns, have occasion to suffer; and because they are the most exalted of mortals their cares and troubles are the most harassing and perplexing.

All our good, then, consists in bearing crosses with patience. Hence the Holy Ghost admonishes us not to assimilate ourselves to senseless beasts that break out into a rage when they are unable to indulge their appetites. Do not become like the horse and the mule who have not understanding.[9695] What other advantage than to double our misfortunes can we ever derive from giving way to impatience in contradictions? The good and the bad thief both died on the cross and suffered the same pains; but because the one embraced them with patience he was saved, and because the other bore them with impatience he was damned. St. Augustine says that the same affliction sends the just to glory because they accept it with peace, and the wicked to fire because they submit to it with impatience.[9696]

It often happens that a person who flies from a cross that God sends him meets with another far more afflicting. They, says Job, that fear the hoary frost, the snow shall fall upon them.[9697] They who shun the hoar-frost shall be covered with snow. Such a nun may say: Give me any other office, but take from me the one that I hold. But she shall suffer much more in the second office than in the first, and with little or no merit. Be careful not to imitate her: embrace the fatigue and tribulation that God sends you: for you shall thus acquire greater merit, and shall have less to suffer: you will at least suffer with peace, knowing that your sufferings come not from self-will, but from the will of God. Let us be persuaded of the truth of what St. Augustine says, that the whole life of a Christian must be a continual cross.[9698] The life of religious who wish to become saints must in a special manner be a continued series of crosses.

St. Gregory Nazianzen says that these noble souls place their riches in poverty, their glory in contempt, and their delights in the voluntary privation of earthly pleasures. Hence St. John Climacus[9699] asks: Who is truly a religious ? It is, he says, the nun that offers continual violence to herself: and when shall this violence cease? When, answers St. Prosper, life shall have an end.[9700] Then shall the battle cease when the conquest of the eternal kingdom shall be obtained. If you remember to have hitherto offended God, and if you desire to be saved, you should be consoled when you see that God sends you occasions of suffering. St. John Chrysostom writes: “ Sin is an ulcer and chastisement a medicinal iron: therefore the sinner if left unpunished is most miserable.”[9701] Sin is an imposthume of the soul: if tribulation do not come to extract the putrid humor the soul is lost. Miserable the sinner who is not punished after his sin in this life.

Be persuaded, then, says St. Augustine, that when the Lord sends you suffering he acts as a physician; and that the tribulation that he sends you is not the punishment of your condemnation, but a remedy for your salvation. “ Let man understand,” says the holy Doctor, “ that God is a physician, and that tribulation is a medicine for salvation, not a punishment for damnation.”[9702]Hence you ought to thank God when he chastises you; for his chastisements are a proof that he loves you, and receives you into the number of his children.

Whoever the Lord loveth, says St. Paul, he chastiseth; and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.[9703] Hence, St. Augustine says: “ Do you enjoy consolation ? acknowledge a father who caresses you: are you in tribulation ? recognize a parent who corrects you.” On the other hand, the same holy Doctor says:[9704] “ Unhappy you, if after you have sinned God exempts you from scourges in this life. It is a sign that he excludes you from the number of his children.”[9705] Say not, then, for the future, when you find yourself in tribulation, that God has forgotten you; say rather that you have forgotten your sins. He who knows that he has offended God must pray with St. Bonaventure: “ Run, O Lord, run, and wound Thy servants with sacred wounds, lest they be wounded with the wounds of death.” Run, O Lord, and wound Thy servants with the wounds of love and salvation, that they may escape the wounds of Thy wrath and of eternal death.[9706]

Let us rest assured that God sends us crosses not for our perdition but for our salvation; if we know not how to turn them to our own profit it is entirely our own fault. Explaining the words, the house of Israel is become dross to me, all these are . . . iron and lead in the midst of the furnace? St. Gregory says: “ As if God should say, I wished to purify them by the fire of tribulation, and sought to make them gold, but in the furnace they have become to me iron and lead. “[9707] I have endeavoured by the fire of tribulation to change them into gold, but they have been converted into lead.

These are the sinners who, after having several times deserved hell when visited with any calamity, break out into impatience and anger; they almost wish to treat God as if he were guilty of injustice and tyranny, and even go so far as to say: But, O Lord, I am not the only one who has offended Thee; it appears that I am the only person whom Thou chastisest: I am weak, I have not strength to bear so great a cross. Miserable man, alas ! what do you say ? You say to God, I am not the only one who has offended you. If others have offended God, he will punish them also in this life if he wishes to show mercy to them; but do you not know that, according to the words which God himself spoke by Ezekiel, My indignation shall rest in thee, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and . . . I will be angry no more,[9708] the greatest chastisement that God can inflict on sinners is not to chastise them on this earth ? I have no more zeal for your soul, and therefore as long as you live you shall never more feel my anger. But St. Bernard says, “ God’s anger is greatest when he is not angry. I wish, O Father of mercies, that Thou mayest be angry with me.”[9709] God’s wrath against sinners is greatest when he is not angry with them, and abstains from chastising them. Hence the saint prayed the Lord, saying: Lord, I wish that Thou shouldst treat me with the mercy of the Father of mercies, and therefore I wish that Thou shouldst chastise me here for my sins, and thus save me from Thy everlasting vengeance. Do you say, I have not strength to bear this cross ? But if you have not strength why do you not ask it of God ? He has promised to give his aid to all who pray for it; Ask, and it shall be given you.[9710]

When you, dear sister, are visited by God with any infirmity, or loss, or persecution, humble yourself, and say with the good thief, We receive the due reward of our deeds.[9711]Lord, I deserve this cross because I have offended Thee. Humble yourself and be comforted: for the chastisement that you receive is a proof that God wishes to pardon the eternal punishment due to your sins. Who will grant me, says Job, . . . that this may be my comfort, that afflicting me with sorrow, He spare not.”[9712]Let this be my consolation, that the Lord may afflict me and may not spare me here below in order to spare me hereafter. O God ! how can he who has deserved hell complain if the Lord send him a cross. Were the pains of hell trifling, still, because they are eternal, we should gladly exchange them for all temporal sufferings that have an end. But no: in hell there are all kinds of pain they are all intense and everlasting. And though you should have preserved baptismal innocence and have never deserved hell, you have at least merited a long purgatory: and do you know what purgatory is ? St. Thomas says[9713] that the souls in purgatory are tormented by the very fire that tortures the damned. Hence St. Augustine says that the pain of that fire surpasses every torment that man can suffer in this life.[9714] Be content, then, to be chastised in this life rather than in the next; particularly since by accepting crosses with patience in this life your sufferings will be meritorious; but hereafter you will suffer without merit.

Console yourself also in suffering with the hope of paradise. St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say: “ To gain heaven all labor is small.” And before him the Apostle said: The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.[9715] It would be but little to suffer all the pains of this earth for the enjoyment of a single moment in heaven: how much more, then, ought we to embrace the crosses that God sends us when we know that the short sufferings of this life shall merit for us an eternal felicity. That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us . . . an eternal weight of glory.[9716] We should feel not sadness but consolation of spirit when God sends us sufferings here below. They who pass to eternity with the greatest merits shall receive the greatest reward. It is on this account that the Lord sends us tribulations. Virtues, which are the fountains of merits, are practised only by acts. They who have the most frequent occasions of annoyance make the most frequent acts of patience; they who are most frequently insulted make most frequent acts of meekness. Hence St. James says, Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life.[9717] Blessed is he who suffers afflictions with peace; for when he shall be thus proved he shall receive the crown of eternal life.

This thought made St. Agapitus, martyr, a boy of fifteen years, say, when the tyrant ordered his head to be encompassed with burning coals, “It is very little to bear the burning of my head, which shall be crowned with glory in heaven.” This thought made Job exclaim: If we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?[9718] He meant to say, if we have gladly received good things, why should we not also receive with greater joy temporal evils, by which we shall acquire the eternal goods of paradise? This thought also filled with jubilation the hermit whom a soldier found singing in a wood, though his body was covered with ulcers so that his flesh was falling to pieces. The soldier said to him: Is it you that were singing? Yes, I sang, and I had reason to sing; for between me and God there is nothing but the filthy wall of my body. I now see it falling to pieces, and therefore I sing, because I see that the time is at hand when I shall go to enjoy my Lord.[9719] This thought made St. Francis of Assisi say. “ So great is the good which I expect, that to me every pain gives delight.” In a word, the saints feel consoled when they see themselves in tribulation, and are afflicted when they enjoy earthly consolations. We read in the Teresian Chronicles that in reciting these words of the Office: When wilt thou comfort me ?[9720]Mother Isabella of the Angels used to say them so fast that she would anticipate the other sisters. Being asked why she did so, she answered: “ I am afraid that God may console me in this life.”

To be in tribulation in this world is a great sign of predestination. “ To be afflicted here below,” says St. Gregory, “ belongs to the elect, for whom is reserved the beatitude of eternity.”[9721]

Hence we find in the lives of the saints, that all, without exception, have been loaded with crosses. This is precisely what St. Jerome wrote to the virgin Eustochia: “ Seek,” says the holy Doctor, “ and you shall find that every saint has been subject to tribulations: Solomon, alone, lived in the midst of delights, and therefore perhaps he was lost.”[9722] The Apostle has said that all the predestined must be found like to Jesus Christ: Whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son.[9723] But the life of Jesus Christ was a life of continual suffering; hence the same Apostle says: Yet so if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him? If we suffer with Jesus Christ, we shall then be glorified with Jesus Christ.[9724]

But we shall not be glorified with him unless we suffer with patience like our Saviour, who when he was reviled did not revile: when he suffered he threatened not.”[9725] St. Gregory says that as to suffer with patience is a mark of predestination, so to suffer with impatience is a presage of damnation. Hence the Lord tells us that we shall attain salvation only by suffering with patience: In your patience you shall possess your souls.[9726]And let us be persuaded that God sends us tribulations only because he seeks our welfare; by them he wishes to detach us from earthly pleasures, which may occasion the loss of our eternal salvation. “ The world,” says St. Augustine, “ is bitter and it is loved; if it were sweet, how ardently, think you, should it be loved.”[9727]

The world is bitter because all its delights do not content the heart of man, and because they all ultimately terminate in bitterness and remorse of conscience; but still it is loved. Imagine, then, says the saint, were it sweet, how intensely should we love it, and how completely would we forget the soul, heaven, and God. To wean an infant, and to give it a horror of taking suck, the mother puts gall on the paps. It is thus God treats us. He makes the very pleasures of this earth become bitter, that, detaching our hearts from them, we may pant after the eternal delights which he prepares in heaven for all those that love him. It was for this end that our loving Saviour came on earth to suffer, that we might not refuse to imitate his example. Christ, says St. Peter, suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow his steps.[9728] Behold how he invites us to follow him: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.[9729] As if he said, He who wishes not to suffer and refuses the cross, let him cease to pretend to be my disciple, or to expect to follow me to paradise. But the desire of pleasing God is the sublime end which a soul should have in embracing sufferings Ecclesiasticus says that some show friendship only in the time of prosperity, and abandon a friend in his adversity: There is a friend for his own occasion, and he will not abide in the day of thy trouble[9730] But the most certain testimony of love is to suffer with cheerfulness for the person loved. The sacrifice most agreeable to God consists in embracing with patience all the crosses which he sends. Charity is patient beareth all things.[9731]

Love bears all things: external crosses, loss of health, loss of property, of honors, of relatives, of friends: interior crosses, anguish, temptations, sorrows, desolation of spirit. By patience virtue is proved. Hence, in the lives of the saints we usually find a description of their patience under afflictions. It is thus the Lord proves our fidelity. The devil tempts us, and God also tempts us. The devil tempts us in order to bring us to perdition, God tempts us in order to prove us: As gold in the furnace he hath proved them.[9732] As gold is proved by fire, so God proves the love of his lovers by the fire of tribulation. Hence to be in tribulation is a mark that the soul is dear to God. Because thou wast acceptable to God, said the angel to Tobias, It was necessary that temptation should prove thee.[9733] St. Jerome says that when God sends a person an occasion of suffering, he confers a greater favour than if he gave him power to raise the dead to life.[9734] Because, adds the saint, when we work miracles we are debtors to God, but when we bear afflictions with patience, God is, in a certain manner, our debtor.[9735] O God, how is it possible for him who looks at the crucifix, and beholds a God dying in a sea of sorrows and insults; how, I say, is it possible for him, if he loves that God, not to bear with cheerfulness, or even not to desire to suffer every pain for his sake ? St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say: “ The sharpest pains become sweet when we behold Jesus on the cross.”

Justus Lipsius once found himself greatly afflicted with pains: a certain person endeavoured to encourage him to bear them with patience by placing before him the patience of the stoics; but he turned to the crucifix and said: There is true patience. He meant to say, that the example of a God who had suffered so much for the love of us is sufficient to animate us to endure all pain for the love of him. "The ignominy of the cross," says St. Bernard, "is grateful to him who is not ungrateful to a crucified God."[9736] To him who loves his crucified Saviour pains and opprobrium are agreeable. When St. Eleazar was asked by his virgin spouse, St. Afra, how he could submit to so many insults from the rabble without seeking revenge, he said: "My spouse, think not that I am insensible to these insults; I feel them strongly; but I turn to Jesus on the cross, and continue to look at him until my soul becomes tranquil." Love, says St. Augustine, makes all things easy."[9737]After being wounded with divine love, St. Catharine of Genoa used to say that she knew not what it was to suffer. Although she endured the most grievous pains, she felt none of them, because she regarded them as sent by him who loved her so tenderly. Thus also a good religious of the Society of Jesus, when God visited him with any pain, sickness, or persecution, used to say within himself: " Tell me, O pain, sickness, or persecution, who sends you ? Does God send you ? Welcome, welcome !" Thus he was always in peace. Let us conclude. Since in this life we must suffer either cheerfully or with reluctance, let us endeavor to suffer with merit, that is, with patience. Patience is a shield that defends us against all the pains arising from persecutions, infirmities, losses, and other afflictions. He who has not this shield, has to bear all these pains.

Let us, then, in the first place, ask this patience of God; without asking it we shall never obtain this great gift When afflictions come upon us, let us be careful to do violence to ourselves, and not to break out into words of impatience or complaint. The fire that burns in a vessel is soon extinguished when the vessel is closed. To him that over cometh, I will give the hidden manna. When a person does violence to conquer himself in adversity, by instantly embracing the cross that God sends him, oh ! what sweetness does the Lord make him afterwards experience in the very tribulation that he suffers a sweetness hidden from men of the world, but well known to souls that love God.[9738] St. Augustine used to say, that to enjoy a good conscience in the midst of afflictions is sweeter than to live with a guilty conscience in the midst of delights.[9739] Speaking of herself, St. Teresa said; I have several times experienced that when I generously resolve to do an act, God instantly makes the performance of it pleasant to me. He wishes the soul to feel these terrors in the beginning, that she may have greater merit."

He who resolves to suffer for God, suffers no more pain. Let us read the lives of the saints, and see how they have been enamoured of suffering. St. Gertrude used to say, that so great was her enjoyment in suffering, that no time was more painful than that in which she was free from pain. St. Teresa used to say, that she did not wish to live without suffering; hence she would often exclaim: " Either to suffer or to die." St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi went so far as to say: "To suffer and not to die."

When the tyrant was preparing new torments for the martyr Procopius, the saint said to him: "Torment me as much as you please; do you not know that to him who loves Jesus Christ there is nothing more dear than to suffer for Jesus Christ."[9740]

St. Gordian, as St. Basil relates, being threatened with great torments if he refused to deny Jesus Christ, answered: "I am sorry that I can die but once for my Saviour, Jesus Christ."[9741] He afterwards intrepidly suffered death.

To the tyrant who threatened to make her die in a cauldron of boiling pitch, St. Potamiena, virgin, said: I entreat you to let me down into this caldron, not at once, but by degrees, that thus I may suffer more for my Jesus. The tyrant complied with her request: she was let down gradually into the caldron, till the pitch having reached her neck, took away her speech and her life.[9742]

Baronius describes the celebrated martyrdom of three holy virgins, called Faith, Hope, and Charity, who when threatened with torments by the tyrant Antiochus courageously said: Do you not know that to Christians nothing is more desirable than to suffer for Jesus Christ ? St. Faith was first scourged; her breasts were then cut off, she was afterwards tormented with fire, and finally beheaded. St. Hope was first beaten with the sinews of an ox; her ribs were then torn with iron combs, and she was afterwards thrown into a vessel of burning pitch. St. Charity was the youngest; she was not more than nine years old; hence the tyrant expected that she would yield through fear of torments. He said to her, My child, be you at least wise, unless you wish to be tortured like your sisters. The holy child answered: You deceive yourself, O Antiochus; all your torments shall not make me forsake Jesus Christ. The tyrant ordered her to be fastened to a rope, and to be cast several times from a height to the ground, until all her bones were dislocated. He then commanded her members to be pierced with sharp irons, so that she died exhausted of blood.

Let us come to more modern examples. In Japan a certain married woman called Maxentia was subjected to torments for the faith. One of the executioners wished to alleviate her pains, but she rejected the offer. Seeing her continue firm in confessing the faith, one of her persecutors pointed a sword twice to her cheek in order to terrify her; but she said to him: O God, how do you expect to terrify me with that death which I desire? The way to fill me with terror is to promise me life. After these words she stretched her neck to the executioner, and he cut off her head. In Japan, also, Father John Baptist Maciado, of the Society of Jesus, was confined in a damp prison, in which he remained for forty days in such intense pain, that he could not rest by night or by day. From this prison he wrote to another religious: My Father, not withstanding all my pains, I would not exchange my condition for that of the first monarch of the earth.

From a prison in which he had a great deal to suffer Father Charles Spinola wrote to his companions: “ Oh ! how sweet is it to suffer for Jesus Christ ! I have received the news of my condemnation. I pray you to thank the divine goodness for the great gift bestowed upon me.” In the same letter he added: “Charles Spinola condemned for Jesus Christ.” Soon after he was burnt alive on a slow fire. It is said that, in thanksgiving to God, when he was fastened to the stake, he intoned the Psalm, O praise the Lord, all ye nations.[9743] Thus he died.

But how, someone may ask with wonder, were the holy martyrs able to suffer with so much joy ? Were they not flesh ? or did the Lord make them insensible to pain? No, says St. Bernard, their patience and jubilation under suffering, says the saint, were the effect not of insensibility, but of the love which they bore to Jesus Christ; they were not exempt from pain, but through love for their Lord they conquered and despised it.[9744]That great servant of God, Father Hippolitus Durazzo, of the Society of Jesus, used to say: “ Let God cost what he will, the price is never too great.” And St. Joseph Calasanctius said, that he who knows not how to suffer for Jesus Christ knows not how to gain Jesus Christ. Ah! souls that understand the language of love, being convinced that by embracing crosses they please God, know well how to find all their happiness in suffering.

PRAYER

My crucified Jesus, Thou hast suffered so many sorrows and insults for my sake; Thou hast died in order to gain my love, and I have so often renounced Thy love for nothing. Have mercy on me and pardon me. Blessed be Thy mercy which has borne with me so long and with so much patience. During that time I neither loved Thee nor cared to be loved by Thee. I now love Thee with my whole soul ; and the greatest of all my pains is that which arises from having offended Thee, who hast loved me so tenderly. Yes, this is my greatest pain. But it is a pain that consoles me, because it gives me confidence that Thou hast already pardoned me. Oh ! that I had died rather than have ever offended Thee. My God, if I have not hitherto loved Thee, I now give myself entirely to Thee. I wish to renounce all things to love only Thee, my Saviour, who art worthy of infinite love. I have sinned enough against Thee. The remainder of my life I wish to spend in loving Thy heart, which is so enamoured of me. Tell me all Thou wishest from me : I wish to do it. Give me strength to execute this wish. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness, I love Thee with my whole heart ; and for Thy sake I accept all the pains which Thou shalt be pleased to send me.

Mary, my Mother, assist me by thy intercession : in thee I trust.

II. PATIENCE IN SICKNESS, POVERTY, CONTEMPT, PERSECUTIONS, AND SPIRITUAL DESOLATION

1. PATIENCE IN SICKNESS

We must practise patience in sickness. This is the touchstone by which the spirit of a Christian is found to be of gold or of copper. Some are cheerful, patient, and devout as long as they enjoy health, but when visited by sickness they commit a thousand defects: they appear to be inconsolable;

they are impatient to all, even to the person who attends them through charity; they complain of every pain or inconvenience that they suffer; they complain of all, of the physician, the Superior, the infirmarian, saying that they are treated with neglect and inattention. Behold, the gold is found to be copper. But, my Father, such a person may say, I suffer so much, and can I not even complain, or tell what I endure? I do not forbid you to make known your pains when they are severe, but when they are trifling it is a weakness to complain of them to all, and to seek sympathy and compassion from everyone who visits you. And should the remedies prescribed not remove your pains, I wish that you yield not to impatience under them, but that you resign yourself in peace to the will of God.

Another may say, But where has charity gone ? Behold how my very sisters forget me, and abandon me on the bed of sickness. I pity you; not on account of your bodily infirmities, but on account of your want of patience under them, which makes you doubly sick in body and soul. The sisters forget you; but you have forgotten Jesus Christ, who died abandoned for your sake on the cross. And what profit do you derive from complaining of the sisters? Complain of yourself because you have but little love for Jesus Christ, and therefore have so little patience. St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say: “ If the sick had patience there should be no more complaints.” Salvian writes that there are many per sons who, had they good health, could not be saints.[9745] With regard to saintly women, we know from their published lives that they were almost all continually afflicted with various infirmities. For forty years St. Teresa was not free from pain for a single day. Hence, Salvian adds, that people dedicated to the love of Jesus Christ are infirm, and wish to continue in their infirmities.[9746]

Another will perhaps say: I do not refuse sickness, but I regret that on account of my infirmities I am not able to be present in choir, to go to Communion, or to make mental prayer, and that I am a burden to the Community. Allow me to answer all these excuses one by one.

1. Tell me, why do you wish to go to the choir in order to recite the Office ? or to the church in order to communicate ? Is it not to please God ? Well, but if it is God’s will and pleasure that you go neither to choir to say the Office, nor to the church to communicate, but that you remain in bed to suffer, why should you be troubled ? Father M. Avila[9747] wrote to a priest

labouring under sickness: “Friend, do not stop to examine what you would do if you had health, but be content to remain sick as long as it shall please God. If you seek the will of God, it matters not whether you are in sickness or in health.” St. Francis de Sales has even said that “ we serve God better by sufferings than by works.”

2. You say that in sickness you cannot make mental prayer, and why can you not make mental prayer? I grant that you cannot apply the mind to reflection, but why can you not look at the crucifix, and offer to your crucified Saviour the pains that you suffer? And what prayer can be better than to suffer, and to resign yourself to the divine will, uniting your sufferings to those of Jesus Christ, and presenting them to God in union with the sufferings of his Son ?

3. You say that in sickness you are useless, and a burden to the Community. But as you conform yourself to the divine will, so you ought to suppose that your sisters also conform to it, when they see that you are a burden to the monastery, not through your own fault, but by the will of God. Ah ! such desires and complaints spring not from the love of God, but from self-love; for we would wish to serve the Lord not in the manner that pleases him, but in the way that is agreeable to ourselves. Ah ! embrace with peace all the infirmities that God sends you, if you truly wish to please him, and wish at the same time to give good example to your sisters. Oh ! how great the edification given by the religious, who, in spite of all her pains, and even in the danger of death with which she is threatened, preserves a serene countenance, abstains from all complaints against the physician or the sisters, thanks all for their attendance, whether it be much or little, and accepts in the spirit of obedience the remedies applied, however bitter or painful they may be ! St. Lidwina, as Surius relates, lay for thirty-eight years on a board, abandoned, covered with sores, and tortured by pains: she never complained of anything, but peaceably embraced all her sufferings. Blessed Humiliana of Florence, a Franciscan nun, being afflicted with several painful and violent diseases, used to raise her hand to heaven, and say: “ Be blessed, my love, be blessed.” St. Clare was likewise continually sick for twenty-eight years, and the smallest complaint never escaped her lips. St. Theodore, abbot, had a painful ulcer during his whole life, and he would say that the Lord sent it in order to give him occasion to thank God unceasingly, as he was always accustomed to

do. When we suffer any pain, let us cast a glance at so many holy martyrs, whose flesh was torn in pieces with iron hooks, or burnt with red-hot plates, and let us at the sight of their torments take courage to offer to God the pain by which we are afflicted.

Patience under the severity of the seasons accompanies patience in infirmities. When cold or heat is intense, some are disturbed and complain, particularly if they have not the clothes or other comforts that they wish for. Be careful not to imitate their example; but bless these creatures as ministers of the divine will, and say with Daniel, O ye fire and heat, bless the Lord. . . . O ye cold and heat, bless them. Lord.[9748]

Above all, we should in the time of sickness accept death should it come, and the death that God wills. And what is this life but a continual tempest, in which we are always in danger of being lost ? St. Aloysius, though he died in the flower of youth, embraced death with joy, saying: “Now I find myself, as I hope, in the grace of God: I know not what might happen to me hereafter. I therefore gladly quit this earth, if it now pleases God to call me to the other life.” But you will say: St. Aloysius was a saint, and I am a sinner. But listen to the answer of Father M. Avila: Everyone who finds himself even moderately well disposed should desire death, in order to escape the danger of losing the grace of God, to which he is always exposed as long as he lives on this earth. What more desirable than, by a good death, to be secure of being no longer able to lose God! But, you reply, hitherto I have gained nothing for my soul: I would wish to live in order to. do something before I die. But if God calls you at present to the other life, how do you know that for the future you will not be worse than you were hitherto ? and that you will not fall into other sins and be lost?

And if we had no other motive, we ought to embrace death with peace when it comes, because it delivers us from the commission of new sins. In this life no one is exempt from all sins at least from all venial sins. Hence, St. Bernard says: “Why do we desire life, in which the longer we live the more we sin ?[9749] Why do we desire to live, since we know that the greater the number of our days, the more our sins shall be multiplied ? Moreover, if we love God, we should sigh to see and to love him face to face in heaven. But, unless death opens the gate to us, we cannot enter into that happy country. Hence the enamoured St. Augustine exclaimed: “Lord take me out of life, that I may be able to go to see Thee. “[9750]

2. PATIENCE IN POVERTY

In the second place, it is necessary to practise patience in the inconveniences of poverty when we are in want of temporal goods. “What,” says St. Augustine, “ can be sufficient for him for whom God is not sufficient ?”[9751] They who possess God, though they should want everything else, possess all things. Hence they can say, “ My God and my all.”[9752] Hence, the Apostle says, that though the saints have nothing, they possess all things.[9753]As having nothing, and possessing all things? When, then, you want medicines in sickness, when you want food, or fire in the winter, or clothes, say, My God, Thou alone art sufficient for me; and thus console yourself.

Embrace also the losses of creatures, such as the loss of property, of relatives, of friends. Such a nun loses a trifle, a book, a wax taper, a medal, and she disturbs the whole monastery, and cannot keep herself in peace. Another is inconsolable at the death of a relative. She gives up mental prayer, she abstains from Communion, she is impatient to all her sisters, she shuts herself up in her cell, she will not take food, and sends away those who come to console her. To such a religious I would say: Is this the love that you bear to God? Then it is not true that God is your every good, since it is now manifest, that because you have lost a creature, you no longer enjoy peace, and appear almost to care no more about God? Tell me what advantage do you derive from thus abandoning yourself to melancholy ? Do you imagine that you please the person who has died ? No; you displease God, and also the deceased relative. How much more pleasing would it be to her, if, conforming yourself to the divine will, you endeavoured to abstain from weeping and howling, and sought to unite yourself more closely to God, and to pray for her if she is in purgatory. To shed an occasional tear at the death of a relative is a pardonable weakness of nature; but immoderate grief proceeds from weakness of spirit and of the love of God. Holy religious also hear of the death of people most dear to them; but reflecting that God has willed their death, they instantly resign themselves, and go in peace to pray for them. They then make more frequent meditations and Communions, and unite themselves more to God, hoping to go one day to enjoy him in heaven, along with their deceased relatives.

Other nuns, who appear to be the most devout, are not so much afflicted at the loss of relatives and friends as at the loss of their director. They seem as if inclined to complain of God, saying that he has abandoned them by taking away their help and spiritual guide. Oh what folly ! It is God and not a confessor that must make us saints. The Lord certainly wishes that we do not leave our confessor as long as we have him to point out to us the will of God in our regard. But when God takes him away he will take care to send another, or to supply in some other way. Hence to be disturbed when we are deprived of our ordinary director is not virtue, but an imperfection, and a great imperfection; for the inquietude arises either from earthly attachment, or at least from a want of confidence in God. Let it be your care, dear sister, to remain always detached from your director, and to be prepared to lose him whenever God wishes. And should he leave you, or should God call him to the other life, say with Job: The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.[9754] You can then follow the directions that he has given you though you should have another confessor: however, regulate your conduct, generally, by the advice of your ordinary confessor, who, commonly speaking, may be said to be the most secure guide; because he is assigned to you by God, and the extraordinary director is chosen by yourself.

3. PATIENCE IN CONTEMPT AND PERSECUTIONS

Thirdly, it is necessary to practise patience in contempt and persecutions. But, you say, I have not failed in anything why should I receive such an affront ? why should I be persecuted ? This is not the will of God. But do you not know the answer that Jesus Christ gave to St. Peter, Martyr, who complained of being unjustly imprisoned, saying:

O Lord, what evil have I done that I should suffer this mortification ? Jesus answered from the cross, And what evil have I done that I should be nailed to this cross?[9755]

If, then, my dear sister, your Redeemer has voluntarily embraced death for the love of you, it is not too much for you to embrace this mortification for the love of him. It is true that God does not will the sin of the person who insults or persecutes you; but he certainly wishes that you bear this, contradiction for his sake, and also for your own welfare. Although, says St. Augustine, we have not committed the fault that is imputed to us, we have been guilty of other sins that deserve the chastisement we receive, and even far greater chastisement.[9756]

All the saints have been persecuted in this world. St. Basil was accused of heresy before St. Damasus, Pope. St. Cyril of Jerusalem was condemned as a heretic by forty bishops, and was deprived of his see. St. Athanasius was charged with the crime of sorcery, and St. John Chrysostom with sins against chastity. St. Romuald, at the age of more than a hundred years, was accused of an enormous sin, for which some said that he deserved to be burned alive. St. Francis de Sales was charged with an unchaste familiarity with a secular lady, and remained for three years under the imputation till his innocence was discovered. Of St. Lidwina it is related that one day a woman entered her chamber, and began to insult her in the most atrocious manner; and because the saint preserved her usual tranquillity, the tigress becoming more furious began to spit in her face, and seeing the saint still undisturbed, she screamed like a madwoman. There is no remedy: for, says the Apostle, all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.[9757]

All who wish to follow Jesus Christ shall be persecuted. If, says St. Augustine, you are unwilling to suffer any persecution, tremble lest you have not as yet begun to serve Jesus Christ. Who more innocent and holy than our Saviour ? And still he was persecuted by men until he died on a cross, covered with wounds, and overwhelmed with shame. Hence, to animate us to bear persecutions with peace the Apostle exhorts us to keep always before our mind Jesus Christ crucified. Think diligently upon him that endured much opposition from sinners against himself.[9758] Let us rest secure that when we suffer persecution in peace God will take up our defence; and should he ever permit us to remain in dishonor here, He will reward our patience with greater honors hereafter.

4. PATIENCE IN SPIRITUAL DESOLATION

In the fourth and last place, we ought to practise patience in desolation of the spirit, which is the most sensible and the sharpest pain that a soul that loves God can experience on this earth. To a soul assisted by divine consolations, all insults, sorrows, losses, and persecutions are not only not an affliction, but rather a source of consolation, because they give her occasion to offer these pains to her Lord, and by such offerings to unite herself more closely to her beloved. The severest pain of a loving soul consists in seeing herself without devotion, without fervor, without desires, and in finding nothing but disgust and tediousness in meditation and Communion. But, according to St. Teresa, God has the best proof of their love, when without relish, and even with anguish and pain, they persevere patiently in their accustomed exercises. By aridity and temptations, says the saint, God tries his lovers.[9759] Blessed Angela of Foligno, finding herself in a state of aridity, complained to God as if he had abandoned her. No, daughter, answered our Lord, I now love you more than before, and I bring you nearer to myself.

In the beginning, some religious, finding themselves in desolation, imagine that God has abandoned them, or that they are not fit for the way of perfection; thus they leave the road in which they began to walk, begin to give liberty to the senses, and thus lose all they have done. Be attentive, do not allow yourself to be deceived by the enemy: when you feel aridity, be constant, and omit none of your ordinary exercises of devotion. Humble yourself, and say that you deserve to be treated in this manner in punishment of your sins. Above all, resign yourself to the divine will, and trust more than ever in God; for that is the time of rendering yourself dear to your divine Spouse. Do you imagine that the saints were always in the enjoyment of consolations and celestial tenderness ? Know that they have spent the greater part of their life in desolation and darkness. And to speak the truth, which I have learned by experience, I have but little confidence in the soul that abounds in spiritual sweetness without having first passed through the ordeal of internal sufferings; because it not infrequently happens that such souls go on well as long as the divine consolations continue, but when tried by aridity they give up all, and abandon themselves to a life of tepidity.

But such a nun may say: I do not refuse this cross if it be the will of God; but what afflicts me is that this abandonment may be the chastisement of my infidelities. But I answer: Let it be a chastisement, as you say; to you in a special manner, I say, that if you have failed by attachment to any creature, God, who is jealous of the heart of his spouses, justly withdraws himself. Let it then be a chastisement; is it not a just one? Is it not the will of God that you accept it ? Accept it then in peace, and remove the cause of your desolation, take away affections to creatures, take away dissipation of spirit arising from excessive indulgence of the eyes, the tongue, and the ears: give yourself again entirely to God, and he will restore your former fervor. But seek not to be consoled by your former tenderness; but rather ask strength to be faithful to God. Be persuaded that he sends desolation only for our greater profit, and to prove our love. He said to St. Gertrude that he tenderly loves the souls that serve him at their own expense, that is, in aridity and without sensible sweetness. Love is not proved so much in following one that caresses you as in seeking after him that flies from you. But, says St. Bernard, fear not, O spouse of Jesus, fear not if the Spouse hides his face for a little; know that he does all for your good; he withdraws for your security, lest, finding yourself greatly caressed, you begin to despise your companions by esteeming yourself better than they are; he withdraws also that you may desire him with greater ardor, and seek after him with greater solicitude.[9760] You must in the mean time persevere in your pious exercises, though you should suffer in them the agonies of death: far more painful was the agony which your Spouse suffered in the garden of Gethsemane when he was preparing for death and was praying for you. Being in agony he prayed the longer.[9761] Be constant, then, in seeking after your Spouse; he will not delay long to come and console you.[9762] And should he not come to give you consolations and tenderness, be content with receiving from him courage and strength to love him without the recompense of present delights. God is more pleased with a strong than with a tender love.

5. A FEW PRACTICAL COUNSELS

Let us conclude with giving a few practical counsels in order to obtain patience and to practise it under every trial.

1. In general, St. Thomas says, that to reflect on them before they happen is a great help to bear all tribulations with fortitude. Jesus Christ said to his disciples: In; the world you shall have distress : but have confidence, I have

overcome the world.[9763]My children, know that in the world you shall be afflicted and despised; but have confidence in me, who have conquered the world. The reason is, that by reflecting beforehand on tribulation, and embracing it with patience we form to ourselves an idea of it, not as an evil, but as a good conducive to eternal life. Thus the premeditation takes from us the fear of the evil that the tribulation excites. This has been the practice of the saints: they have embraced crosses long before they happened; and thus they have found themselves prepared to bear them in peace when they have come suddenly upon them. Accustom yourself, then, in mental prayer to embrace the tribulations which are likely to come upon you.

2. And when you imagine it to be impossible for you to suffer such a tribulation (should it happen) pray to the Lord to give you his aid to submit to it in case it occurs, and have confidence in him, saying: I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.[9764] And when you do this, doubt not that your prayers will in that case obtain the strength that you do not possess.

And how have the holy martyrs obtained courage to bear so many torments and deaths the most painful, except by prayer and by recommending themselves to God ? When you find yourself under the cross have recourse instantly to prayer, If says St. James, any of yon sad, let him pray.[9765] Is any of you afflicted with any tribulation or passion, let him pray, and not cease to pray until he finds the peace of his soul restored. Call upon me in the day of trouble : I will deliver thee, and thou wilt glorify me.[9766] When you are in tribulation invoke my aid, and I will rescue you from difficulties, and you will give glory to me. When a soul in trouble recommends itself to God, he delivers it from the evil which afflicts it, or gives it grace to bear it with patience, and thus it glorifies the Lord. St. Ignatius of Loyola used to say that the greatest evil that could befall him in this world would be the destruction of the society; but he hoped that, even should such a calamity happen, his peace of mind would be restored by a quarter of an hour’s mental prayer.

3. Endeavor also, in the time of tribulation, to communicate more frequently. The ancient Christians in the time of persecution prepared themselves for martyrdom by frequent Communion.

4. Be careful to ask advice from your director, or from some other spiritual person; for a word of comfort gives great help to bear the cross with patience. But beware of explaining your trials to imperfect souls: for they will only add to your troubles and confusion, particularly if you have received an injury, or if you actually suffer persecution.

5. But above all, I say again, have recourse to prayer, have recourse to Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, and beg of him to make you in all things conformable to his holy will. He promises to comfort all who are in tribulation when they have recourse to him. Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.[9767]

PRAYER

My God, I offer to Thee the pains of Jesus, Thy Son, in satisfaction for my sins. He is the Lamb whom Thou didst one day behold sacrificed for Thy glory, and for our salvation, on the altar of the cross. For the love of that victim, so dear to Thee, pardon me all the offences, whether grievous or venial, which I have offered to Thee : I am sorry for them all with my whole heart, because by them I have offended Thy infinite goodness. Thou, O my God, dost call me to Thy love : behold I leave all things, and I come to Thee, my treasure and my life. For the love of Thee, I renounce all the goods and honors and pleasures of the world. I love Thee, O my Sovereign Good, above every other good. Ah ! my Jesus, do not permit me to resist any longer, and to be ungrateful to the tender affection that Thou hast shown me. Ah ! make known to me always more and more the greatness of Thy goodness, that I may be enamoured of Thee, who art infinitely amiable. Thou hast shown Thyself enamoured of my soul, and shall I be able to love anything but Thee ? No, my Redeemer; for Thee only do I wish to live, Thee only do I wish to love.

Mary, my mother, assist me, and obtain for me grace to be faithful to this my promise.

III. PATIENCE IN TEMPTATIONS

Dear sister in the Lord, your past life does not content either God or yourself; if death came upon you at present, you should certainly die discontented. But since, as I hope, you have resolved to serve him better for the future, prepare yourself to combat with temptations. Behold the admonition of the Holy Ghost : Son, when than contest to the service of God, stand injustice and in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation.[9768] And remember that, as the prophet says,[9769] religious are the most acceptable food to the devil. The enemy labors more to gain one religious than a hundred seculars. And why ? First, because by making a spouse of Jesus Christ become one of his slaves he gains a greater triumph. Secondly, because by bringing a nun into sin he gains more than one, because by her bad example she will probably draw others with her. On the other hand, the Lord usually permits souls that are most dear to him to be most severely tormented by temptations. While he lived in the solitude of Palestine, in prayer and penitential works, St. Jerome was greatly afflicted with temptations: behold how he himself described them ! " I was alone, and my heart was full of bitterness; my dried and withered members were covered with a sack. My skin became as black as that of a Moor; the hard ground was my bed, which served rather to give pain than rest; my food was very scanty: and still my heart was inflamed against my will with bad desires. I had no other refuge than to have recourse to Jesus, and to implore his aid."[9770] The Lord permits us to be tempted for our greater good. First, that we may be more humble. Ecclesiasticus says: What doth he know that hath not been tried.[9771]

What does he who has not been tempted know? In truth, no one is better acquainted with his own weakness than the man that is tempted. St. Augustine remarks, that St. Peter, before he had been tempted, presumed on his own strength, boasting that he would have constancy to embrace death rather than deny Jesus Christ; but when tempted he miserably denied his master, and then he became sensible of his weakness.[9772] Hence, having favoured St. Paul with celestial revelations, our Lord, in order to preserve him from vain glory, wished him to be molested with an importunate temptation against chastity, which is of all temptations the most humiliating to man. And, says the saint, lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me.[9773]

Secondly, the Lord permits us to be tempted in order to make us rich in merits. Many religious are disturbed by scruples, on account of the bad thoughts that molest them. But they are disturbed in vain; for it is certain that the consent to evil, but not evil thoughts, is a sin. Temptations, however violent they may be, leave no stain on the soul when they happen without any fault of ours, and when we drive them away. St. Catharine of Sienna and Blessed Angela of Foligno were strongly tempted against chastity, but the temptations increased rather than diminished their purity. Every time the soul conquers a temptation she gains a degree of grace, for which she shall be afterwards rewarded with a degree of glory in heaven. Hence we shall receive as many crowns as we resist temptations. “ As often.” says St. Bernard, “as we conquer, we are crowned.”[9774] And our Lord said to St. Matilda: “ He who is tempted, places as many gems on my head as he overcomes temptations.”

In the Cistercian Chronicles it is related that a certain monk was one night greatly molested with unchaste temptations, which he overcame. A lay—brother had a vision, in which he saw a most beautiful young man handing to him a crown of gems, saying, Go to such a monk, and bring him this crown, which he has gained this night. The lay-brother related the vision to the abbot, who sent for the monk that had been tempted. When the abbot heard from him the resistance that he had made against the temptations, he understood the reason why the Lord had prepared so great a reward for him in heaven. The divine mother revealed to St. Bridget that for the violence that the saint had done to herself, in order to banish bad thoughts, our Lord would give her a reward, although the thought remained in her mind.[9775]

And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with the temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.[9776] St. Jerome says, that to a ship no tempest is more dangerous than too long a calm. He meant to say, that the tempest of temptation prevents a man from rotting in sloth, and makes him unite himself more closely to God, by turning to him to ask his graces, by renewing good purposes, by making good acts of humility, of confidence, and of resignation. In the lives of the ancient Fathers we read that to a certain young man who was constantly and severely assailed by carnal temptations, his spiritual Father, seeing him in great affliction, said: Son, do you wish me to pray to God to deliver you from so many temptations, which do not allow you to live an hour in peace? The young man answered, No, my Father; for though I am greatly molested by these temptations, I derive great advantage from them, for with the divine aid I thus make continual acts of virtue. I now pray more than I did before, I fast more frequently, I watch more, I endeavor to practise greater mortifications of my rebellious flesh. It is better for you to pray to God that he may assist me by his grace to bear these temptations with patience, and thus to advance in perfection.

Such temptations, then, we should not desire; but we ought to accept them with resignation, believing that God permits them for our greater good. The Apostle, when molested by similar temptations, several times implored the Lord to deliver him from them. But God answered: My grace is sufficient for thee. For which thing thrice I be sought the Lord that it might depart from me. And he said to me : My grace is sufficient for thee : for power is made perfect in infirmity.[9777] You will say: But St. Paul was a saint. And St. Augustine answers: By what means, think you, did the saints resist temptations ? Was it by their own strength, or by the power of God?[9778] The saints have trusted in God, and thus have conquered. Hence the holy Doctor adds: Do you also abandon yourself into the hands of God, and fear not. He who placed you in the combat will not leave you alone, neither will he abandon you to perdition.[9779]

But let us come to what is practical, and see with what arms we must fight in order to escape defeat.

I. The first, the principal, and I may say the only, and absolutely necessary means for conquering temptations, is to have recourse to God by prayer. Speaking of the necessity of humility, in order to be true disciples of Jesus Christ, St. Augustine says: “If you ask what holds the first place in the discipline of Christ, I will answer, Humility. What is the second? Humility. What is the third ? Humility. And as often as you ask, so often shall I give the same answer.” Now, were you to ask what are the means of overcoming temptations, I would answer, The first means is prayer; the second is prayer; the third is prayer; and should you ask me a thousand times, I would always repeat the same.

This means is particularly necessary for conquering temptations against purity; these, as the Wise Man says, are overcome only by recommending ourselves to God. And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent except God gave it, . . . I went to the Lord and besought him.[9780]As soon as I knew that I could not obtain continence unless God gave it, I went to the Lord and asked it from him. Hence, St. Jerome has written, “ As soon as lust assails us, let us instantly say: Lord, assist me; do not permit me to offend you.”[9781] Thus the Abbot Isaias exhorted his disciples always to repeat in such temptations: Incline unto my aid, O God[9782] and he would add, that this is a secure defence. He had just reason to say so; for God cannot violate his promises to hear all who pray to him: Cry to me, and I will hear thee.[9783] Call upon me I will deliver thee.[9784]Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find.[9785] For every one that asketh, receiveth.[9786] You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.[9787] In the book of the Sentences of the Fathers[9788] it is written that St. Pachomius related to his disciples that he once heard the devils discoursing together; one of them said: My monk, when I tempt him, listens to me he does not turn to God, and therefore I make him fall frequently. Another complained that he could do nothing with his monk, because he instantly asked help from God, and thus was always victorious. Hence, brethren, concluded the holy abbot, resist temptations by always invoking the name of Jesus. But this must be done immediately, without listening to or arguing with the temptation.

Another monk, as we find in the lives of the Fathers,[9789] complained to an aged Father of being continually tempted to impurity; the good old man prayed for him, and learned by revelation that the monk did not turn away instantly from the temptation, but used to stop to look at it. The Father corrected him for this fault, and the monk was not molested afterwards as much as before. “While the enemy is small,” says St. Jerome, “ kill him.”[9790] A lion when small is easily killed, but not when he has become large. Unchaste temptations must be instantly shaken off, as we shake from the hand the sparks that fly from the fire. The best means of conquering them is, as I have said, to turn away from them, without listening to them. Were a queen tempted by a negro slave, what would she do ? Would she not indignantly turn away without giving him an answer? Be careful to act in this manner if the devil should molest you; turn away without answering him, and invoke the name of Jesus and of Mary; and if you do this, you will be always sure of not falling into sin.

St. Francis de Sales says: “ The instant you feel any temptation, imitate children, who, when they see a wolf, run into the arms of their father or mother, or at least cry out to them for assistance. Do you in like manner run with filial confidence to Jesus and Mary.”

In temptations it is also very useful to make the sign of the cross. St. Augustine says: “ All the machinations of the devil are reduced to nothing by the power of the cross.”[9791]By giving his life on the cross, Jesus destroyed the powers of hell; and therefore at the sign of that sacred symbol all the machinations of the devil vanish. St. Athanasius relates of St. Anthony, that when the devils assailed him he instantly armed himself with the sign of the cross, and, thus armed, would say to them: Of what use is it to labor to injure me when I am rendered secure by this sign, and by the confidence I have in my Lord?[9792] St. Gregory Nazianzen relates what is still more wonderful, that Julian the apostate, knowing the virtue of the sign of the cross, used, when terrified by the devils, to make that holy sign, and the devils would be put to flight.[9793]

II. The second means of conquering temptations is to humble yourself, and to distrust your own strength. To make us humble, the Lord often permits us to be assaulted with temptations, and even frequently with temptations the most shameful. Hence, when we see ourselves thus molested, let us humble ourselves and say: I deserve to be thus tormented for the offences I have hitherto offered to you.

In the lives of the Fathers, it is related that a virgin and anchoret called Sara was cruelly persecuted in the desert by the spirit of impurity. She never asked God to deliver her from the temptation, but humbled herself, and constantly implored strength. The more violently the devil tempted her, the more she labored to humble herself, and to supplicate the divine aid. Finally, the enemy, not being able to make her fall into sins of impurity, endeavoured to tempt her to vainglory. Hence he said with a loud voice: Sara, you have conquered, you have conquered. The humble servant of God answered: No, wicked spirit, I have not conquered you, but Jesus my God has conquered you.[9794] Thus let us humble ourselves, and at the same time let us have recourse with confidence to God, who protects all that hope in him. He is the protection of all that trust in him.[9795] He himself has promised to deliver all those that hope in him. Because he hoped in me, I will deliver him.[9796] When, then, we find ourselves tortured by temptations, and fears of losing God, let us say with great courage: In thee, O Lord, have I hoped: let me never be confounded.[9797] In thee, O Lord, have I placed my hopes: do not permit me ever to be confounded, or to incur thy enmity. I say,, with great courage; for, according to St. Teresa, when the devils see themselves despised, they remain powerless.[9798] And when the enemy represents the great difficulty of doing what is necessary to become saints, let us say, with diffidence in ourselves, but with confidence in God: I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.[9799] I can do nothing of myself, but I can do all things with the aid of my Lord.

III. The third means of overcoming temptations is, to make them known to your spiritual Father. Thieves, when discovered, take flight. Hence, St. Philip Neri used to say, that a temptation disclosed is half conquered. St. Antonine relates[9800] that Brother Ruffinus, the companion of St. Francis, was assailed by a strong temptation to despair, and to believe that all he did was lost. The afflicted brother concealed the temptation from his Superior, St. Francis; it became more violent, and one day the devil appeared to him in the form of Jesus crucified, and said to him, Know that you and Francis, and all your followers, are damned. Hence, Ruffinus regarded himself as lost. This was revealed to St. Francis, who sent for him; but Ruffinus refused to come; at length he went to the saint and disclosed the temptation. The saint ordered him to despise it. The devil returned, but seeing himself treated with contempt, he fled. And afterwards Jesus crucified appeared to him, and assured him that he was in the state of grace.

IV. The fourth means, which is a very important one, of relieving one’s self from temptations is to avoid the occasions of them. St. Basil says[9801]that God assists the man who is engaged in the contest against his own will; but he who voluntarily places himself in the battle, does not deserve compassion, and is therefore abandoned by God. And, before him, Ecclesiasticus said: He that loveth danger, shall perish in it.[9802] He that loves danger, and goes in search of it, shall perish in it: nor is it of any use to hope for aid from God; to trust in God, and to expose one’s self voluntarily to the occasion of sin, is not a holy but a rash confidence, which merits chastisement.

V. Lastly, it is necessary to give in this place two very important admonitions.

1. It is necessary to remark that we must conquer some temptations by contrary acts; for example, temptations to revenge must be overcome by seeking to do good to those who have offended you; temptations to vanity by humbling ourselves; to envy by rejoicing at the good of others; similar temptations must be conquered in the same manner. But it is better to resist other temptations, such as those against faith, or against chastity, or to blasphemy, by despising them, and by making good acts indirectly opposed to the temptations, such as acts of confidence, of contrition, of charity.

St. John Climacus relates[9803] that a certain monk was greatly tormented with blasphemous temptations. The miserable man was all in confusion: he went to a good Father, and told him all the execrable blasphemies that passed through his mind. Have confidence, said the Father, I take on myself all these sins; do not think of them anymore. The monk followed the advice, and his peace of mind was restored. But with regard to temptations against chastity, it is not advisable for timorous souls to contend directly with the bad thought, saying and repeating, I will not do it, I will not consent to it. For by endeavoring to make these contrary acts, the image of the bad objects presented to the mind becomes more vivid, and thus the struggle is longer and more severe. It is better to renew, in general, the purpose of dying a thousand times rather than offend God. It is also useful to renew your vows, particularly the vow of chastity: you must, then, instantly turn to God for help, making acts of hope and love, as has been already said, and frequently invoking the most holy name of Jesus and of Mary.

2. Secondly, it is necessary to remark that the most dangerous temptations are those that come under the appearance of good, so that a soul, without perceiving it, may find that she has fallen over some precipice. This may easily happen to spiritual people in particular. “ A good man,” says St. Bernard, “ is never deceived except by the similitude of good.”[9804]

The devil deceives souls that have a good intention only by the appearance of good. St. Bonaventure relates[9805] that there was a brother so attached to silence that he would not speak even in confession, but wished to explain his sins by signs. The minister-general, in presence of St. Francis, bestowed great praise on the brother for his exact observance of silence. But the saint said: My Father, you deceive yourself: command him to confess his sins twice a week. The minister imposed the precept, but the brother refused to obey, and became so obstinate on this point, that on account of his disobedience he in the end abandoned the religious state.

Still more dangerous would be the temptation which would induce a religious to entertain too great an affection for the spiritual Father or for any other person, because she considers him to be a saint. The devil persuades her that the relations of direction or of friendship to such a one will be conducive to high perfection. He inspires her with an ardent desire to have such an advantage, and she does all that she can to secure it. After this the enemy begins by causing to arise in her heart an affection that appears to be altogether spiritual; then follow mutual confidence, familiarity; then the license of tender words; and finally all ends in allowing themselves to be seduced into base actions or sacrilegious desires. But of this we have already spoken.

I conclude by repeating, that, to overcome temptations, all the means explained in this chapter are very good, but the first, and the one that is absolutely necessary, is to have recourse to God by prayer that he may give us light and strength to conquer. Without asking the divine aid, it is impossible to overcome temptations; and if we ask it we shall certainly be victorious.

Praising, I will call upon the Lord; and I shall be saved from my enemies.[9806]

PRAYER

Ah ! my God, I will no longer resist the love that Thou dost entertain for me. This love made Thee bear me with so much patience when I offended Thee. Ah ! my Jesus, through Thy merits do not permit me ever more to offend Thee. O make me cease to be ungrateful to Thee, or make me cease to live. I see that Thou dost wish me to be saved, and I wish to be saved, that I may go to sing Thy mercies for eternity in heaven. Lord, do not abandon me. I know that Thou wilt never abandon me if I do not first abandon Thee; but past experience makes me afraid of my weakness. Ah !

through the painful death that Thou didst one day suffer for me on the cross, give me strength in my temptations, and especially the grace to have immediate recourse to Thee. I love Thee, O infinite goodness, and I hope to love Thee always. Ah ! bind me with the sweet chains of Thy love, that my soul may never more be separated from Thee. Mary, thou art called the mother of perseverance; this great gift is dispensed through thee; thee I ask to obtain it for me : through thy intercession I certainly hope for it.

Chapter XIV

RESIGNATION TO THE WILL OF GOD

I. THE MERIT OF RESIGNATION TO THE DIVINE WILL

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM says that all the perfection of the love of God consists in resignation to the divine will. As hatred divides the wills of enemies, so love unites the wills of lovers, so that each wishes only what the other desires. “ True friendship of people consists in wishing and not wishing the same thing,”[9807] says St. Jerome to Demetriades. Hence the Wise Man says: They that are faithful in love shall rest in him.[9808] Souls that are faithful in loving God acquiesce in all that he wills.

Since nothing is more dear to us than self-will, the sacrifice of it is the most acceptable offering we can present to the Lord. This is the sacrifice that God himself continually asks of us with so much earnestness. My son, give me thy heart.[9809] Son, give me your heart, that is, your will. Nothing else that we offer to God can content him as long as we reserve our own will. I explain myself by this example: If you had two servants, one of whom labored continually, but always according to his own will; the other performed less work, but was obedient to all your directions,—you would certainly entertain a great regard for the latter, and little or no esteem for the former.

Oh ! how often do we deceive ourselves by desiring to engage in certain undertakings in order to please ourselves without seeing that they are not conformable to the divine will. How often do we act through self-love, saying: But what I wish to do is conducive to the glory of God. But let us be persuaded that the greatest glory that we can give to God is to conform ourselves to his divine will. Blessed Henry Suso used to say: “God is not so much glorified when we abound in lights and spiritual consolations as when we submit to the divine will and pleasure.” Hence Blessed Stephana of Soncino saw among the seraphim certain souls whom she had known on earth; and she learned by revelation that they had attained that sublime elevation by the perfect union of their will in this life with the will of God.

All the malice of sin consists in wishing what God does not will; for then, says St. Anselm, we in a certain manner endeavor to rob God of his crown. He who wishes to follow his own will against the will of God takes, as it were forcibly, from God his crown;[9810] for as the crown belongs only to the sovereign, so to do his own will (without dependence on others) belongs to God only. Samuel said to Saul that to refuse to conform to the divine will is a species of idolatry. It is like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey.[9811] It is called idolatry because, in refusing to conform to the divine will, man, instead of adoring the will of God, adores his own will. Now, since all the malice of a creature consists in contradicting the Creator, so all the goodness of the creature consists in a union with the will of the Creator. He who conforms himself to the divine will becomes, as the Lord said of David, a man according to God's own heart.

I have found David . . . a man according to my own heart, who shall do all my will.[9812]The Lord also says: a soul that is conformed to my will shall have for her name my will. Thou shalt be called my pleasure in it.[9813] Yes, for in this happy soul, because self-will is dead, only the will of God lives.

Ah ! happy the soul that can always say with the sacred Spouse: My soul melted when he spoke.[9814] My soul melted as soon as my beloved spoke. Why does she say melted? Listen: what is rendered liquid no longer retains its own shape, but takes the form of the vessel in which it is contained. Thus, loving souls do not retain their own wills, but conform them to whatever their beloved wills. This conformity implies a will docile and pliant in all things pleasing to God, compared with the obdurate will that resists the divine will. An instrument is said to be a good one when it is obedient to the person that employs it; if it refuse to obey, of what use is it ? For example, were a pencil to resist the hand of the painter, if, when drawn to the right, it should turn to the left; if. when drawn downwards, it should seek to move upwards, what would the painter do? Would he not instantly cast it into the fire?

Some place their sanctity in works of penance, others in frequent Communion, others in reciting many vocal prayers. But, no: St. Thomas says that perfection consists not in these things, but in submission to the divine will. “ The perfection of the human soul consists in its subjection to God.”[9815]Works of penance, prayers, Communions, are good, inasmuch as God wills them; hence they serve only as means to unite us to the divine will.

But all perfection and sanctity consists in doing the will of God. In a word, the divine will is the rule of all goodness and virtue. Because it is holy, it sanctifies all, even the most indifferent actions, when they are done to please God. The will of God is your sanctification.[9816] says the Apostle. The accomplishment of the divine will is the sanctification of your souls.

I know well that men cheerfully conform to the will of God in prosperity, but are afterwards unwilling to submit to it in adversity. But this is great folly; for they thus suffer doubly and without merit from the evils that befall them, since, whether they wish or wish not, the will of God shall be accomplished. My counsel shall stand, and all my will shall be done.[9817] When, then, a person in sickness does not accept his pains with patience, but gives way to anger, and complains of every one, what does he do? Does he by his impatience get rid of his pains? No: on the contrary, he increases them, because by resisting the will of God he loses his peace, and still endures the same pains. Who hath resisted him, and hath had peace ?[9818]But were he to embrace his sufferings in peace, he would feel his pains less sensibly, and would derive consolation from the thought of pleasing God, by accepting crosses from his divine hands.

Oh ! what pleasure does he give to the Lord, who in the time of tribulation says with David: I was dumb, and I opened not my mouth, because thou hast done it.[9819] My God, I have shut my mouth, and have not dared to speak, because I know that Thou hast done it. No; there is no one that is better able than God to promote our welfare, or that loves us more than our Creator.

And let us be persuaded that whatever he does, he does for our good, and because he loves us. Many things appear to us to be misfortunes, and we call them misfortunes; but if we understood the end for which God sends them, we should see that they are graces. It appeared a calamity to King Manasses to be deprived of his kingdom, and to be made a slave of the prince of the Assyrians: but these misfortunes were blessings; for after his downfall he returned to God, and did penance for the wickedness of his life.

And after that he was in distress, he prayed to the Lord his God; and did penance exceedingly before the God of his fathers.[9820] We labor under a vertigo, and therefore many things appear to us to go to ruin; and we know not that it is our giddy head that makes them appear to us different from what they are in reality. Such a nun may say: How does it happen that everything goes astray with me? No, sister, but you go astray: your will is crooked; for all that happens comes from God. He does all for your welfare, but you know it not.

And whom can we ever find more solicitous for our welfare and for our salvation than God ? To make us understand this truth, he likens himself at one time to a shepherd, going through the desert in search of his lost sheep;[9821] at another to a mother who cannot forget her own child. Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb.[9822] Again, to a hen gathering and sheltering her chickens under her wings, that they may suffer no injury: Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . How often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wing, and thou wouldst not?[9823]

In a word, according to David, God surrounds us with his goodwill, in order to save us from all the assaults of our enemies. Lord, thou hast crowned us with a shield of thy good will.[9824] Why, then, do we not abandon ourselves entirely into the hands of this good Father? Would it not be folly in a blind man, placed in the midst of precipices, to reject the guidance of a father who loves him, and to follow the way suggested by his own caprice?

Happy the soul that permits itself to be conducted in the way in which God leads it. Father St. Jure[9825]relates that a certain young man, desirous of entering the Society of Jesus, was rejected because he had only one eye. Who would not have said that the defect was a great misfortune to the poor young man ? But that defect was the occasion of the happiest end that he could meet; for on account of it he was received into the Society only on the condition that he would consent to go on the Indian mission. He went to India, and had the happiness of dying for the faith. The Venerable Balthazar Alvarez used to say that “ the kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of the lame, the tempted, and the abject.” Let us then, as if blind, permit ourselves to be guided by God, through whatever level or steep road by which he may be pleased to conduct us, secure of finding in it eternal salvation. St. Teresa used to say, “ Our Lord never sends a cross without rewarding it with some favour, when we accept it with resignation.”[9826]

Oh, how great the peace of the soul whose will is in all things conformed to the will of God ! Because she wishes only what he wills, she always obtains whatsoever she desires; for all that happens in the world, happens by the will of God. Panormitano relates that King Alphonsus, called the Great, being asked whom he esteemed happy in this life, wisely answered: “He who abandons himself entirely to the divine will of God.” And, in reality, does not all our inquietude arise from this cause that things do not happen according to our wishes, and that we resist the divine will? St. Bernard says: “God justly ordains that they who refuse to be governed by him in peace should rule themselves amid difficulties and troubles.”[9827]But, on the other hand, they who wish only what God wills, always find their wishes accomplished, and therefore are always in peace, as well in prosperity as in adversity. When, then, you see a person in sadness, tell her that she is sad because she is not resigned to the will of God. The saints, even in the midst of persecutions the most severe and torments the most painful, knew not what it was to be sad. And why ? Because they were united to the divine will. Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad.[9828] Hence, Cardinal Petrucci has wisely said that this frail and fleeting world is but a scene of woes. Its most pleasing amusements and pleasures have the appearance of joys, and they are torments. But to follow Christ suffering appears painful and gives true joy.

Speaking of the saints, Salvian says: “ If they are humbled, they desire their humiliations; if they are poor, they delight in their poverty: hence in every misfortune which befalls them they are content, and therefore they begin even in this life to enjoy beatitude.”[9829]

Crosses will certainly be painful to the senses, but this pain is in the inferior part: in the superior part of the soul peace shall reign. The saints, says Father Rodriguez, are like Mount Olympus: at the base there are showers of rain and thunderstorms, but at the summit, which is raised above the middle region of the atmosphere, there is a perpetual calm. In a word, they are like Jesus our Saviour, who, in the midst of all the sorrows and ignominies of his Passion, suffered no diminution of his peace. The more the saints suffer, the more they rejoice in spirit, knowing that in accepting their sufferings they please their Lord, whom only they love. This David experienced when he said: Thy rod and thy staff, they have comforted me.[9830] St. Teresa says: “ And what greater good can we acquire than a testimony that we please God?” Father Avila has written: “ One Blessed be God, in adversity, is of greater value than a thousand acts of thanksgiving in prosperity.”[9831]

But such a religious says: I accept all the crosses that come to me from God, such as losses, pains, and infirmities; but how can I bear so much maltreatment and such unjust persecutions? They that thus persecute me are certainly guilty of sin, and God does not will sin. But, dear sister, do you not know that all comes from God ? Good things and evil, life and death . . . are from God.[9832]Prosperity and adversity, life and death, come from the Lord. It is necessary to know that in every action there is a physical entity which belongs to the material part of the action, and a moral entity that appertains to reason: the moral entity of the action, or the sin of the person who persecutes you, belongs to his malice, but the physical entity appertains to the divine concurrence; so that God wills not the sin, but he wills that you suffer the persecution, and it is he that sends it.

When his cattle were taken away from Job, God did not will the sin of the plunderers, but he willed that Job should suffer the loss. Hence, Job said: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done ; blessed be the name of the Lord.[9833] St. Augustine remarks that Job did not say: The Lord gave and the devil has taken away; but the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.[9834] The Lord did not wish the sin of the Jews who crucified Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ said to St. Peter, The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?[9835] By these words he showed that his death was caused by the hands of the Jews, but that it was sent to him by his eternal Father. St. Dorotheus[9836]says that they who when maltreated seek revenge against the man who maltreats them, imitate the dog that bites the stone by which he is struck, without attending to the hand by which it was thrown. In all the injuries that we receive from others, we should recognize the hand of God, that sends the evil to us, and thus resign ourselves to his holy will.

PRAYER

My beloved Saviour, Thou hast suffered so many sorrows and reproaches for my sake, and I, on account of the miseries of this life, have so often turned my back on Thee. I thank Thee for having waited for me till the present moment. Had I died in my sins, I could never more love Thee. Since I am now able to love Thee, I wish to love Thee with my whole heart. Accept me, O my love, now that I return to Thee, full of tenderness and sorrow for the offences 1 have given Thee. But if, when I despised Thy love, Thy didst not cease to seek after me, how can I fear that Thou wilt cast, me off, now that I desire nothing but Thy love. Thou hast borne with me so long that I might love Thee. Yes, I wish to love Thee. I love Thee, my God, with my whole heart, and I feel greater sorrow for having hitherto offended Thee than if I had suffered every other evil. O love of my soul ! I wish never more to give Thee any deliberate displeasure ; and I wish to do all that Thou dost wish me to do. Thy will shall henceforth be my only love. Make known to me what I must do in order to please Thee : I wish to do it. I wish to love Thee with a true love, and therefore I embrace all the tribulations that Thou wilt send me. Chastise me in this life, that I may be able to love Thee for eternity! My God, give me strength to be faithful to Thee. Mary, my mother, to thee I recommend myself : do not cease to pray to Jesus for me.

II. IN WHAT THINGS WE OUGHT, IN A SPECIAL MANNER, TO RESIGN OURSELVES

We have already seen the great efficacy of resignation to the divine will, to render us dear to God and to procure for us great good. Let us now come to the practice. In what things in particular must we resign ourselves ?

I. Let it be remembered, in the first place, that it is very useful to resign ourselves in small things; for example, to suffer a painful word, an importunate fly, the barking of a dog, a trip in walking, the extinguishing of a candle, the tearing of a garment, and the like. It is of greater importance to bear these trifles than to submit to great crosses. First, because they are more frequent; secondly, because we thus more easily acquire a habit and facility of resigning ourselves in things that are difficult.

II. Let us be careful to practise resignation in our infirmities. They that desire to please God should desire the occasions of pleasing him, and therefore what the world calls misfortunes, holy souls call graces; and graces so much the more valuable as they are painful and burdensome. The condition of the sick that suffer and are not conformed to the divine will is most pitiable and deplorable, not so much on account of their pains, as because they know not how to appreciate the riches that God offers them in their sufferings. Miserable souls ! they convert into poison the remedy of their evils; for bodily maladies are the most efficacious remedies for the cure of spiritual diseases. The blueness of a wound, says the Wise Man, shall wipe away evils.[9837]But , Father Balthazar Alvarez says that they who are resigned in afflictions and pains run to a union with God, or draw God to a union with them, as the Lord himself revealed to St. Gertrude, saying, that when he sees a soul in tribulation he feels himself drawn to it, and that his delights consist in remaining with the sick and afflicted. Of this David assures us in several places: The Lord is nigh to them that are of a contrite heart.[9838] God rejoices in being near to those who are in tribulation. The Lord himself says: I am with him in tribulation[9839] I am united with those who are in affliction. In the time of sickness it is lawful, and even a duty, to take the remedies prescribed by the physician, because this is also the will of God; but we should afterwards resign ourselves entirely to the divine will. We may also pray to God for health, in order to employ it in his service; but we should leave ourselves in his hands, that he may do with us what he pleases: and this is the best means of obtaining the restoration of health. They that seek in their prayers not God, but themselves, shall not be heard; but, on the other hand, he who in his petitions seeks God and the divine will, shall certainly obtain what he asks. I sought the Lord and he heard me.[9840]

Our Lord appeared one day to St. Gertrude, who suffered great torture from fever, and asked if she wished for health. She embraced his heart and said: “ This is what I wish for; I desire nothing but Thy holy will.”[9841]

Oh ! how efficacious a remedy for all infirmities is that beautiful prayer, Thy will be done ! St. Lidwina, nailed, as it were, to a bed, all sores and pains, used to say: “ Lord, my pleasure is that you load me with pains; because my only consolation is to accomplish Thy will.” A tepid soul cannot attain to this perfect spirit of resignation, but loving souls easily attain it. Oh ! how consoling the sufferings that are borne with love ! This is the sour sweet, so palatable to souls enamoured of that God who rendered scourges, racks, and red-hot plates sweet to the martyrs. When, by order of the tyrant, the flesh of St. Epictetus was torn with hooks of iron and his sides burned with lighted torches, the holy martyr repeated unceasingly: " Lord, Thy will be done in me ! Lord, Thy will be done in me ![9842] Thus he endured all his torments with peace. St. Bonaventure relates[9843] that at a time when St. Francis was greatly afflicted with pains, a simple-minded brother said to him: Father, ask of God to treat you with a little more tenderness, for his hand appears to be very heavy upon you. St. Francis answered: " Brother, listen to me: did I not know that what you have said comes from simplicity, I would never see you more; for you wish to censure what God does." After these words the saint threw himself on the ground from the bed on which he lay, and kissing the floor, said: " My God, I thank Thee for these pains, and I beseech Thee to increase them, if it be pleasing to Thee; for I desire nothing else than to do Thy will."

III. We should practise conformity to the divine will with regard to our natural defects; such as want of talent, defective memory, bad sight, bad hearing, bad health, little abilities for the offices of the Community. To them who upbraid us with these defects we should say: He made us, and not we ourselves. 1 And thus let us resign ourselves to the divine will. We are poor; we should be content with the alms which the Lord gives us. What would you think of a beggar who should complain that the garment which you give him is not as rich as he wishes, or that the food is not as delicious as he desires. Let us, then, be content with what God has given us, and seek nothing else. Could he not have left us in our nothingness ? Could he not ordain that, instead of being men, we should be toads, flies, or blades of grass ? Oh ! how often has the want of mental acuteness, of corporal beauty, or of other natural gifts contributed to the salvation of many! For to many the possession of such qualifications might be the occasion of their damnation. To how many have great talents, beauty, nobility, and wealth been the cause of pride and haughtiness, and of running headlong into a multitude of crimes ? Let us, then, desire only the goods that God wishes to give us, and no more. Blessed Henry Suso used to say: "I would rather be the vilest animal on earth in conformity with the will of God than be a seraph with my own will." And though, on our part, we ought to aspire to the highest sanctity that we can attain, we should be content with that degree of perfection which God gives us.

IV. We ought in a special manner to practise resignation in spiritual desolations, which are the severest trials to a soul that loves God. But be not disturbed at them, nor say: I would not be troubled if I knew that I am in desolation because God wills it; but I fear that the Lord has withdrawn from me in punishment of my sins. Though your desolation be a chastisement, it is the will of God that you bear it; accept it, then, and you shall enjoy peace.

To remove disquietude, it is necessary to know that there are two sorts of aridity one in the sensible part of the soul, the removal of which does not depend on us. This kind of aridity is not displeasing to God. The other is in the will (this is, properly speaking, voluntary tepidity), and this we can remove. It is needless to treat here of this second kind of aridity, for I have said enough about it. But with regard to the first we should not be disturbed, though we see ourselves unable to raise the heart to God, to make acts of love, of contrition, and of conformity. It is enough to wish to perform them with a prompt will; and though they be made with dryness, without relish, and without feeling, God accepts them, and is pleased with them. When in our darkness we can do nothing else, let us at least annihilate ourselves before God; and confessing our miseries, let us cast ourselves into his hands as we cast a stone from a mountain into a valley without knowing where it may go, and we shall find peace. But in every state in which we find ourselves, whether of darkness or of light, let us pray to God, saying, Lord, conduct me in any way Thou pleasest; make me do Thy will: I wish for nothing else. The soul that is disturbed in aridity shows that it has not entirely abandoned itself to the divine will. St. Teresa used to say: “The sole end of those who practise mental prayer should be to conform their will to the will of God; and let them be persuaded that in this consists the highest perfection. They who practise it best shall receive the greatest gifts from God.” Hence St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi has well said that ”the accomplishment of the divine will should be the object of all our prayers.”

O blessed spouse of the Lord, accustom yourself in meditation to offer yourself always to God, to suffer for the love of him every spiritual or bodily pain, every desolation, every sorrow, infirmity, dishonour, or persecution; and beg[9844]of him always to give you strength to do in all things his holy will. Attend to the excellent admonition given by spiritual masters: When any serious calamity befalls you, there is no better subject for your mental prayer than the tribulation that has come upon you; and in your meditation be careful to make repeated acts of conformity to the divine will. The union of the will with God has been the continual exercise of the saints. Even in going to sleep St. Peter of Alcantara would imagine himself at the point of death, and would repeat: " Lord, Thy will be done in me." He would desire that every respiration during his repose should be an act of resignation. Oh ! how pleasing to the Lord are such oblations and acts of conformity; not because he rejoices in our sufferings, but because he then knows how much we love him. When God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, he did not wish the death of the son, but he wished to know if Abraham was ready to do his will.

What God wishes from us all is that we keep our will united to his. Some religious by reading books on mystic theology become desirous of the supernatural or passive union; I would wish that they should desire the active union, that is, perfect conformity to the will of God; in which, according to St. Teresa, the true union of the soul with God consists. They, adds the saint, who have only the active union, may have much greater merit, because this is accompanied with labor on their part, and the Lord conducts them as strong in virtue: he reserves what they do not enjoy here to give it to them all at once in heaven. Cardinal Petrucci also says that without the gift of infused contemplation a soul may, only with the ordinary grace, succeed in annihilating its own will and in transforming it into the will of God. Hence he concludes, that we should neither desire nor ask of God any other favour than the accomplishment of his will, in which all sanctity consists. We thus die to ourselves, that is, we renounce all our gratifications and desires in order to make only the divine will live in us. This is what the Apostle said: And I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me.[9845] I live no longer in myself, but Jesus Christ lives in me; because I wish only what he wishes.

Endeavor, then, dear sister, in every occurrence, particularly in things that are painful to the senses, to have always in your mouth the words of our Saviour: Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in thy sight.[9846]Lord, let what has happened be done, for so it has pleased Thee. A holy monk, as

Cesarius relates,[9847]performed many miracles; being asked by his Superior what were the extraordinary works for which God had bestowed upon him the gift of miracles, he answered: “I do nothing, except that I endeavor to wish only what God wishes, and to accept everything from his hands.” But, said the abbot, were you not disturbed at the great injury we sustained from such an enemy a few days ago ? No, replied the monk, because I regarded it as permitted by the divine will. From this the abbot perceived why the good religious was so dear to God.

Thus, also, when tormented with the fear of any grievous calamity that may befall you, say immediately: Lord, I wish what Thou wishest; do what Thou pleasest with me, and with all I possess. St. Gregory relates[9848] that the devil in the form of a serpent tormented a religious for three years; the religious, though he suffered a great deal, never lost his peace, but would say to the enemy: “ Do with me what you wish if such be the will and pleasure of God.” Let your continual prayer be: “Thy will be done.” At rising in the morning, in going to bed at night, in meditation, at Communion, at the visit to the Most Holy Sacrament, and always, say: “Thy will be done thy will be done.” St. Gertrude used to say three hundred times in the day: “ My Jesus, let not my will but Thine be done.”

Happy you if you do the same that is, if you are always resigned to the divine will. Truly happy shall be your life, and still more happy your death. Blosius says that he who, at the moment of death, makes an act of perfect conformity to the divine will, shall be delivered not only from hell, but also from purgatory, though he had been guilty of all the sins of the whole world.[9849] The reason is, that he who accepts death with perfect resignation acquires merit similar to that of the holy martyrs who spontaneously gave their lives for Jesus Christ. Moreover, he who dies with perfect conformity to the divine will dies in peace and joy, even in the midst of pains. A Cistercian monk was seized with his last illness; his flesh became rotten, and his pains were so excruciating that he suffered a continual death; but the good religious unceasingly thanked the Lord, and enjoyed uninterrupted tranquillity and consolation. When near his last breath, and racked with increased torture, he began to sing. The monks that stood round his bed were astonished to see such joy amid so many pains; but his cheerfulness continued to the last moment, and thus, with joy and jubilation, he happily closed his life.

To them that love God, all things work together unto good.[9850] To him who loves God all things are an occasion of merit and consolation; for it is certain that God sends us crosses only for our welfare. This he himself said one day to St. Catharine of Sienna: I can wish only what is useful to you. As I have freely created man, so I have loved him infinitely. Hence you will infer that I ordain tribulations for your own good, which I desire more ardently than you yourself wish it. Another holy woman died consumed by an ulcer, which had entirely changed her appearance. The bishop who assisted her in her last moments could not restrain his tears when he saw her agony; but she smiled, and was surprised to see the bishop weeping. The prelate, on the other hand, was astonished to see her smiling, and said to her, Why do you smile? She answered, Tell me, were a princess confined in a dungeon, informed that she could not return to her palace till the prison was destroyed, how great should be her joy at seeing its walls falling to the ground ? Thus, because I find myself near my deliverance from this prison of my body, I rejoice and smile.

I do not dilate much on the subject of conformity to the will of God, on which I would never cease to speak, because I have already written a little treatise on it,[9851] which I pray you to procure, and to read several times: for it is certainly in uniting ourselves to the divine will that all our salvation, peace, and perfection consist. And life in his good-will[9852]

Lastly, I entreat you to perform all that you do for the sole motive of doing the will of God, for thus you will never be disturbed when things do not happen according to your wishes. Thus you will be always in peace, and will always give pleasure to God. Oh ! how delightful a thing it is to please God ! Do you wish to know what is meant by giving pleasure to God ? I will tell you, in the words of the Venerable Father Anthony Torres: “It means to please that loving heart to which we owe so much; to gratify those divine eyes, always solicitous for our welfare; to satisfy that will, always employed with the love of us. To give pleasure to God is the end for which he has created us, the goal to which our desires should tend; the rule that ought to be the measure of our existence. To give pleasure to God is that which is most ardently sought by the saints; that which moved so many holy virgins to consecrate themselves to him in the cloister, that sent so many anchorets to the deserts. This made the persecuted insensible to calumnies and reproaches, and rendered sweet to the martyrs torments and death. To give pleasure to God is that for which an enlightened soul offers itself to every kind of spoliation, to all sorrows to all, even the worst, calumnies; to all deaths the most painful, and to hell itself. To give pleasure to God is such, that every one should prefer it to all self-interest, to all felicity. It is such, that if the very blessed in paradise knew that it would give greater pleasure to God that they should be in hell than in heaven, they would all (and the first should be the Most Holy Virgin) cast themselves into hell, there to find, in the midst of these eternal torments, the greater pleasure of God. That is what is meant by giving greater pleasure to God."

PRAYER

My Jesus have mercy on me, miserable that I have been ! How often, in order to follow my own will against Thine, have I voluntarily condemned myself to hell? Hadst Thou then taken me out of life, I should now remain in that pit forever, to curse and hate Thy will. But no; I now bless it, I love it; I wish always to love it. My Redeemer, pardon me ; I will not contradict Thee anymore ; tell me what Thou wishest from me, and give me strength ; I wish to do Thy will. Thy will be done. Make me do Thy will perfectly during the remainder of my life, and I ask nothing more. Ah ! my sweet love, what else dost Thou wish but my welfare and my salvation ? Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, who has taught me to pray to Thee in his name, I ask this grace of Thee : Thy will be done in me! Thy will be done in me ! Thy will be done in me ! O happy shall I be if I live and terminate life doing Thy will. O Mary, happy thou who hast always done the will of God perfectly. O my mother! obtain for me by thy prayers the grace that I may fulfil the divine will during all the remaining moments of my life : this grace I hope for through thy intercession.

Chapter XV

MENTAL PRAYER

I. MORAL NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER FOR RELIGIOUS

THE life of a religious must be a life of prayer. It is difficult, or to speak more correctly, it is morally impossible for a religious, who is not a lover of mental prayer, to be a good religious. If you see a tepid religious, say that she does not make mental prayer and you will say the truth. The devil labors hard to make religious lose the love for meditation; and should he conquer them in this, he will gain all. St. Philip Neri used to say, “A religious without mental prayer is a religious without reason.” I add: she is not a religious, but the corpse of a religious. Let us examine what makes mental prayer so necessary.

I. In the first place, without mental prayer a religious is without light. They, says St. Augustine, who keep their eyes shut, cannot see the way to their country. The eternal truths are all spiritual things that are seen, not with the eyes of the body, but with the eyes of the mind, that is, by reflection and consideration. Now, they who do not make mental prayer do not see these truths, nor do they see the importance of eternal salvation, and the means that they must adopt in order to obtain it. The loss of so many souls arises from the neglect of considering the great affair of our salvation, and what we must do in order to be saved. With desolation says the prophet Jeremias, is all the land made desolate: because there is none that consider eth in the heart.[9853] On the other hand, the Lord says, that he who keeps before his eyes the truths of faith, that is, death, judgment, and the happy or unhappy eternity that awaits us, shall never fall into sin. In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin[9854]Draw near to God, says David, and you shall be enlightened. Come ye to him and be enlightened.[9855] In another place our Saviour says: Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands.[9856] These lamps are, according to St.

Bonaventure, holy meditations;[9857] for in prayer the Lord speaks to us, and enlightens, in order to show us the way of salvation. Thy word is a lamp to my feet.[9858]

St. Bonaventure also says, that mental prayer is, as it were, a mirror, in which we see all the stains of the soul. In a letter to the Bishop of Osma, St. Teresa says: “ Although it appears to us that we have no imperfections, still when God opens the eyes of the soul, as he usually does in prayer, our imperfections are then clearly seen.”[9859] He who does not make mental prayer does not even know his defects, and therefore, as St. Bernard says, he does not abhor them.[9860] He does not even know the dangers to which his eternal salvation is exposed, and therefore he does not even think of avoiding them.

But he that applies himself to meditation instantly sees his faults, and the dangers of perdition, and seeing them, he will reflect on the remedies for them. By meditating on eternity, David was excited to the practice of virtue, and to sorrow and works of penance for his sins. I thought upon the days of old, and I had in my mind the eternal years . . . and I was exercised, and I swept my spirit.[9861] The spouse in the Canticles said: The flowers have appeared in our land: the time of pruning is come: the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.[9862] When the soul, like the solitary turtle, retires and recollects itself in meditation to converse with God, then the flowers, that is, good desires, appear; then comes the time of pruning, that is, the correction of faults that are discovered in mental prayer. “ Consider,” says St. Bernard, “that the time of pruning is at hand, if the time of meditation has gone before.”[9863] For, says the saint in another place, meditation regulates the affections, directs the actions, and corrects defects.[9864]

II. Besides, without meditation there is not strength to resist the temptations of our enemies, and to practise the virtues of the Gospel. Meditation, says the Venerable Bartholomew of the Martyrs,[9865] is like fire with regard to iron, which when cold is hard, and can be wrought only with difficulty, but placed in the fire it becomes soft, and the workman gives it any form he wishes. To observe the divine precepts and counsels, it is necessary to have a tender heart that is, a heart docile and prepared to receive the impressions of celestial inspirations, and ready to obey them.

It was this that Solomon asked of God: Give, therefore, to thy servant an understanding heart.[9866] Sin has made our heart hard and indocile; for being altogether inclined to sensual pleasures, it resists, as the Apostle complained, the laws of the spirit. But I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind.[9867] But the soul is rendered docile and tender to the influence of grace that is communicated in mental prayer. By the contemplation of the divine goodness, the great love which God has borne him, and the immense benefits that God has bestowed upon him, man is inflamed with love, his heart is softened, and made obedient to the divine inspirations. But without mental prayer his heart will remain hard and restive and disobedient, and thus he shall be lost. A hard heart shall fare evil at the last.[9868]Hence, St. Bernard exhorted Pope Eugene never to omit meditation on account of external occupations. " I fear for you, O Eugene, lest the multitude of affairs (prayer and consideration being intermitted), may bring you to a hard heart, which abhors not itself, because it perceives not."[9869]

Some may imagine that the long time which devout souls give to prayer, and which they could spend in useful works, is unprofitable and lost time. But such people know not that in mental prayer souls acquire strength to conquer enemies and to practise virtue. " From this leisure," says St. Bernard, "strength comes forth."[9870]

Hence the Lord commanded that his spouse should not be disturbed. I adjure you . . . that you stir not up, nor awake my beloved till she please.[9871] He says, until she please : for the sleep or repose which the soul takes in mental prayer is perfectly voluntary, but is at the same time necessary for its spiritual life. He who does not sleep, has not strength to work, nor to walk, but goes tottering along the way. The soul that does not repose and require strength in meditation is not able to resist temptations, and totters on the road. In the life of the Venerable Sister Mary Crucified we read that while at prayer she heard a devil boasting that he had made a nun omit the common meditation, and that afterwards, because he continued to tempt her, she was in danger of consenting to mortal sin. The servant of God ran to the nun, and with the divine aid rescued her from the criminal suggestion. Behold the danger to which one who omits meditation exposes the soul ! St. Teresa used to say that he who neglects mental prayer needs not a devil to carry him to hell, but that he brings himself there with his own hands. And the Abbot Diocles said that “ the man who omits mental prayer soon becomes either a beast or a devil.”

III. Without petitions on our part God does not grant the divine helps, and without aid from God we cannot observe the commandments; hence the Apostle exhorted his disciples to pray always. Pray without ceasing.[9872]We are poor mendicants: I am a beggar and poor.[9873] The entire revenue of the poor consists in asking alms from the rich; and our riches also consist in prayer, that is, in the prayer of petition; for by prayer we obtain from God his graces.

Without prayer, says St. John Chrysostom, it is absolutely impossible to lead a good life.[9874] And, says the learned Monsignor Abelly, what but the neglect of mental prayer can be the cause of the great relaxation of morals that we witness ? God has an ardent desire to enrich us with his graces, but, as St. Gregory writes, he wishes to be entreated, and, as it were, forced by our prayers to grant them to us. “ God,” says the holy Doctor, “ wishes to be asked, he wishes to be compelled, he wishes to be overcome by a certain importunity.”[9875] According to St. John Chrysostom, it is impossible for him who attends to prayer to fall into sin.[9876] And in another place he says that when the devils see that we pray, they immediately cease to tempt us.[9877]

From the absolute necessity of the prayer of petition arises the moral necessity of mental prayer; for he who neglects meditation, and is distracted with worldly affairs, will not know his spiritual wants, the dangers to which his salvation is exposed, the means which he must adopt in order to conquer temptations, or even the necessity of the prayer of petition for all men; thus he will give up the practice of prayer, and by neglecting to ask God’s graces, he will certainly be lost. The great Bishop Palafox, in his Annotations to the letters of St. Teresa,[9878] says; “ How can charity last, unless God gives perseverance ? How will the Lord give us perseverance if we neglect to ask him for it ? And how shall we ask him without mental prayer? Without mental prayer, there is not the communication with God which is necessary for the preservation of virtue.”

And Cardinal Bellarmine says that for him who neglects meditation, it is morally impossible to live without sin. Someone may say, I do not make mental prayer, but I say many vocal prayers. But it is necessary to know, as St. Augustine remarks, that to obtain the divine grace it is not enough to pray with the tongue: it is necessary also to pray with the heart. On the words of David: I cried to the Lord with my voice[9879]the holy Doctor says: “ Many cry not with their own voice (that is, not with the interior voice of the soul), but with that of the body. Your thoughts are a cry to the Lord.[9880] Cry within, where God hears.”[9881] This is what the Apostle inculcates. Praying at all times in the spirit.[9882] In general, vocal prayers are said distractedly with the voice of the body, but not of the heart, especially when they are long, and still more especially when said by a person who does not make mental prayer; and therefore God seldom hears them, and seldom grants the graces asked. Many say the Rosary, the Office of the Blessed Virgin, and perform other works of devotion; but they still continue in sin. But it is impossible for him who perseveres in mental prayer to continue in sin; he will either give up meditation or renounce sin. A great servant of God used to say that mental prayer and sin cannot exist together. And this we see by experience: they who make mental prayer rarely incur the enmity of God ; and should they ever have the misfortune of falling into sin, by persevering in mental prayer, they see their misery, and return to God. Let a soul, says St. Teresa, be ever so negligent, if she persevere in meditation, the Lord will bring her back to the haven of salvation.[9883]

IV. All the saints have become saints by mental prayer. Mental prayer is the blessed furnace in which souls are inflamed with the divine love. In my meditation, says David, a fire, shall flame out.[9884] St. Vincent of Paul used to say, that it would be a miracle if a sinner who attends at the sermons in the mission, or in the spiritual exercises, were not converted. Now, he who preaches and speaks in the exercises is only a man; but it is God himself that speaks to the soul in meditation. I will lead her into the wilderness; and I will speak to her heart[9885] St. Catharine of Bologna used to say: “ He who does not practise mental prayer deprives himself of the bond that unites the soul to God; hence, finding her alone, the devil will easily make her his own.” “ How,” she would say, “ can I conceive that the love of God is found in the soul that cares but little to treat with God in prayer?”

Where but in meditation have the saints been inflamed with divine love? By means of mental prayer St. Peter of Alcantara was inflamed to such a degree that in order to cool himself he ran into a frozen pool, and the frozen water began to boil like water in a caldron placed on the fire. In mental prayer St. Philip Neri became inflamed, and trembled so that he shook the entire room. In mental prayer St. Aloysius Gonzaga was so inflamed with divine ardor that his very face appeared to be on fire, and his heart beat as strongly as if it wished to fly from the body.

St. Laurence Justinian says: " By the efficacy of mental prayer temptation is banished, sadness is driven away, lost virtue is restored, fervor which has grown cold is excited, and the lovely flame of divine love is augmented."[9886]

Hence, St. Aloysius Gonzaga has justly said that he who does not make much mental prayer will never attain a high degree of perfection. A man of prayer, says David, is like a tree planted near the current of waters, which brings forth fruit in due time; all his actions prosper before God. Blessed is the man . . . who shall meditate on his law (day and night) ! And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season, and his leaf shall not fall off : and all, whatsoever he shall do, shall prosper."[9887] Mark the words, in due season; that is, at the time when he ought to bear such a pain, such an affront, etc.

St. John Chrysostom[9888] compared mental prayer to a fountain in the middle of a garden. Oh ! what an abundance of flowers and verdant plants do we see in the garden which is always refreshed with water from the fountain. Such, precisely, is the soul that practises mental prayer: you will see that she always advances in good desires, and that she always brings forth more abundant fruits of virtue. Whence does she receive so many blessings? From meditation, by which she is continually irrigated. Thy plants are a paradise of pomegranates with the fruits of the orchard, . . . the fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, which run with a strong stream from Libanus[9889]But let the fountain cease to water the garden, and, behold, the flowers, plants, and all instantly wither away; and why? Because the water has failed.

You will see that as long as such a religious makes mental prayer she is modest, humble, devout, and mortified in all things. But let her omit meditation, and you will instantly find her wanting in modesty of the eyes, proud, resenting every word, in devout, no longer frequenting the sacraments and the church; you will find her attached to vanity, to useless conversations, to pastimes, and to earthly pleasures; and why? The water has failed, and therefore fervor has ceased. My soul is as earth without water unto thee. . . . My spirit hath fainted away.[9890] The soul has neglected mental prayer, the garden is therefore dried up, and the miserable soul goes from bad to worse. When a soul abandons meditation St. John Chrysostom regards it not only as sick, but as dead. " He," says the holy Doctor, " who prays not to God, nor desires to enjoy assiduously his divine conversation, is dead. . . . The death of the soul is not to be prostrated before God."[9891] The same Father says that mental prayer is the root of the fruitful vine.[9892] And St. John Climacus writes that " prayer is a bulwark against the assault of afflictions, the spring of virtues, the procurer of graces."[9893]Rufinus asserts that all the spiritual progress of the soul flows from mental prayer.[9894] And Gerson goes so far as to say, that he who neglects meditation cannot, without a miracle, lead the life of a Christian.[9895]

Speaking of mental prayer, Jeremias says: He shall sit solitary, and hold his peace ; because he hath taken it up upon himself.[9896] That is, a soul cannot have a relish for God, unless it withdraws from creatures, and sits, that is, stops to contemplate the goodness, the love, the amiableness, of God. But when solitary and recollected in meditation, that is, when it takes away its thoughts from the world, it is then raised above itself, and departs from prayer very different from what it was when it began it.

St. Ignatius of Loyola used to say that mental prayer is the short way to attain perfection. In a word, he who advances most in meditation makes the greatest progress in perfection. In mental prayer the soul is filled with holy thoughts, with holy affections, desires, and holy resolutions, and with love for God. There man sacrifices his passions, his appetites, his earthly attachments, and all the interests of self-love. Moreover, by praying for them in mental prayer we can save many sinners, as was done by St. Teresa, St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, and is done by all souls enamoured of God, who never omit in their meditations to recommend to him all infidels, heretics, and all poor sinners; begging him also to give zeal to priests who work in his vineyard, that they may convert his enemies. In mental prayer we can also, by the sole desire of performing them, gain the merit of many good works which we do not perform. For as the Lord punishes bad desires, so, on the other hand, he rewards all our good desires.

It is necessary, above all, to be careful not to go to mental prayer in order to enjoy consolation and tenderness, but for the purpose of pleasing God, and of learning from him how he wishes to be loved and served by us. Father Balthazar Alvarez used to say: “The love of God consists not in receiving his favors, but in serving him through the sole motive of pleasing him. And he would say, that divine consolation is like the refreshment that we take on a journey not to rest in it, but in order to go forward with greater vigour. When you feel aridity in meditation, be careful to persevere, in spite of all the tediousness that you experience, and know that you then give great pleasure to your Spouse, and acquire great merits. Say to him then: O my Jesus, why dost Thou treat me thus ? Thou hast stripped me of all things, of property, of relatives, of my will, and I have been satisfied with these privations, in order to gain Thee; but why dost Thou now deprive me also of Thyself ? Say this to him with an humble affection; he will make thee feel that he does all because he loves thee, and for thy greater good. Father Torres used to say: “ To carry the cross with Jesus without consolation, makes the soul run and fly to perfection.”

PRAYER

My Jesus, Thou hast loved me in the midst of pains ; and in the midst of sufferings I wish to love Thee. Thou hast spared nothing: Thou hast even given Thy blood and Thy life in order to gain my love ; and shall I continue as hitherto, to be reserved in loving Thee ? No, my Redeemer, it shall not be so ; the ingratitude with which I have hitherto treated Thee is sufficient. To Thee I consecrate my whole heart. Thou alone dost deserve all my love. Thee alone do 1 wish to love. My God, since Thou wishest me to be entirely Thine, give me strength to serve Thee as Thou deservest, during the remainder of my life. Pardon my tepidity and my past infidelities. How often have I omitted mental prayer in order to indulge my caprice. Alas ! how often, when it was in my power to remain with Thee in order to please Thee, have I remained with creatures so as to offend Thee. Oh ! that so many lost years would return ! But, since they will not return, the remaining days of my life must be entirely Thine, O my beloved Lord. I love Thee, O my Jesus ! I love Thee, O my Sovereign Good ! Thou art, and shalt be forever, the only love of my soul.

O mother of fair love, O Mary, obtain for me the grace to love thy Son, and to spend the remainder of my life in his love. Thou dost obtain from Jesus whatsoever thou wishest ; through thy prayers I hope for this gift.

II. THE PRACTICE OF MENTAL PRAYER

Having seen the great necessity of mental prayer for religious, and the great blessings that they may draw from it, let us now consider the practice of meditation, with regard to the place, the time, and the manner.

1. THE PLACE SUITABLE FOR MENTAL PRAYER

With regard to the place, it should be solitary. But, said our Saviour, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret.[9897]When you wish to pray, shut yourself up in your chamber, and thus pray to your Father. St. Bernard says that silence and the absence of all noise almost force the soul to think of the goods of heaven.[9898]

To make mental prayer, the best place is, as has been said, your own room; but for religious the most appropriate place is the church, in presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The Venerable Father Avila used to say that he knew no sanctuary more desirable than a church in which Jesus Christ remains in the holy Eucharist.

In order to make mental prayer well, it is necessary to unite to the external silence interior silence, that is, detachment from earthly affections. Speaking of certain people attached to the world, our Lord said one day to St. Teresa: “I would wish to speak to them, but creatures make such a noise in their ears that they do not give me a moment in which I can make them listen to me.”

But in the next chapter,[9899] on the solitude of the heart, we shall speak at length on this point. We have here two things to consider, namely, the time of the day most suitable for mental prayer, and the time that is to be spent in making it.

2. THE TIME OF MAKING MENTAL PRAYER

1. With regard to the time of making mental prayer, St. Isidore used to say, that, ordinarily speaking, the fittest time for meditation is the morning and evening.[9900] But according to St. Gregory of Nyssa, the morning is the most seasonable time for prayer; because, says the saint, when prayer precedes business, sin will not gain admission to the soul.[9901] The Venerable Father Charles Carafa, founder of the Congregation of the Pious Workers, used to say that a fervent act of love made in the morning during meditation is sufficient to maintain the soul in fervor during the entire day. Prayer, as St. Jerome has written, is also necessary in the evening.[9902] Let not the body go to rest before the soul is refreshed by mental prayer, which is the food of the soul. But at all times and in all places religious can pray, even at work, or at recreation; it is enough for them then to raise the mind to God and to make good acts, for in this consists mental prayer.

2. With regard to the time to be spent in mental prayer, the rule of the saints was, to devote to it all the hours that were not necessary for the occupations of human life. St. Francis Borgia employed eight hours in the day in meditation, because his Superiors would not allow him a longer time, and when the eight hours were expired, he earnestly asked permission to remain a little longer at prayer, saying, “ Ah ! give me another little quarter of an hour.” St. Philip Neri was accustomed to spend the entire night in prayer. St. Anthony the Abbot remained the whole night at prayer, and when the sun appeared, which was the time assigned for terminating his prayer, he complained of it for having risen too soon. Father Balthazar Alvarez used to say that a soul that loves God, when not in prayer, is like a stone out of its centre, in a violent state; for in this life we should as much as possible imitate the life of the saints in bliss, who are constantly employed in the contemplation of God.

It is right to observe, that with regard to the posture the fittest one is kneeling; but when it causes pain and distraction, a person may, as St. John of the Cross says, make meditation sitting in a modest posture. But let us come to the particular time which a religious who seeks perfection should devote to mental prayer. Father Torres prescribed for religious who were his penitents an hours meditation in the morning, another during the day, and a half-hours meditation in the evening, when they should not be hindered by sickness or by any duty of obedience. If to you this appears too much, I counsel you at least to give to mental prayer an hour in addition to the time devoted to it by the Community.

Sometimes the Lord wishes you to omit prayer in order to perform some work of fraternal charity; but it is necessary to attend to what St. Laurence Justinian says: “When charity requires it, the spouse of Jesus goes to serve her neighbor; but during that time she continually sighs to return to converse with her Spouse in the solitude of her cell.”[9903]

Father Vincent Carafa, General of the Society of Jesus, stole as many little moments of time as he could, and employed them in prayer. Mental prayer is tedious to the religious who is attached to the world, but not to those who love God only. Now, how can it be said that a religious loves God only, when she feels no tediousness in conversing for two hours with a relative or an acquaintance at the grate, and cannot bring herself to make an hour’s meditation, in addition to the meditations made by the Community? Ah! conversation with God is not painful nor tedious to those who truly love him. His conversation has no bitterness, his company produces not tediousness, but joy and gladness.[9904] Mental prayer, says St. John Climacus, is nothing else than a familiar conversation and union with God.[9905] In prayer, as St. John Chrysostom says, the soul converses with God, and God with the soul. No, the life of holy religious that love prayer and fly from earthly amusements is not a life of bitterness. If you do not believe me, Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.[9906] Try it, and you will see how sweet the Lord is to those who leave all things in order to converse with him only. But the end which we ought to propose to ourselves in going to meditation should be, as has been said several times, not spiritual consolation, but to learn from our Lord what he wishes from us, and to divest ourselves of all self-love. “To prepare yourself for prayer,” says St. John Climacus, “ put off your own will.”[9907] To prepare ourselves well for meditation, we must renounce self—will, and say to God: Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.[9908]

Lord, tell me what you wish me to do: I am willing to do it. And it is necessary to say this with a resolute will, for without this disposition the Lord will not speak to us.

3. THE MANNER OF MAKING MENTAL PRAYER

As to the manner of making mental prayer, I will suppose that you are already instructed in it; but allow me to explain briefly the principal parts of mental prayer for any young beginner into whose hands this book may fall.

Mental prayer contains three parts: the preparation, the meditation, and the conclusion.

1. In the PREPARATION there are three acts: an act of faith, of the presence of God, and of adoration; 2, an act of humility and of sorrow for our sins, and, 3, a petition for light. They may be made in the following manner: *My God, I believe Thee present within me; I adore Thee with my whole soul.*

Be careful to make this act with a lively faith, for a lively remembrance of the divine presence contributes greatly to remove distractions. Cardinal Carracciolo, Bishop of Aversa, used to say that when a person is distracted in meditation there is reason to think that he has not made a lively act of faith.

1. *Lord, I should now be in hell in punishment of the offences I have offered to Thee. I am sorry for them from the bottom of my heart; have mercy on me.*

2. *Eternal Father, for the sake of Jesus and Mary, give me light in this meditation, that I may draw fruit from it.*

We must, then, recommend ourselves to the Blessed Virgin by saying a Hail Mary, to St. Joseph, to our guardian angel, and to our holy patron. These acts, says St. Francis de Sales, ought to be made with fervor, but should be short, that we may pass immediately to the meditation.

II. On entering on the meditation we must take leave of all extraneous thoughts, saying with St. Bernard, “ O my thoughts I wait here;”[9909] after prayer we shall speak on other matters. Be careful not to allow the mind to wander where it wishes; but should a distracting thought enter, we must not be disturbed, nor seek to banish it with a violent effort, but let us remove it calmly and return to God. Let us remember that the devil labors hard to disturb us in the time of meditation in order to make us abandon it. Let him, then, who omits mental prayer on account of distractions be persuaded that he gives delight to the devil. It is impossible, says Cassian,[9910]that our minds should be free from all distractions during prayer. Let us, then, never give up meditation, however great our distractions may be. St. Francis de

Sales[9911] says that if in mental prayer we should do nothing else than continually banish distractions and temptations, the meditation is well made. And before him St. Thomas taught that involuntary distractions do not take away the fruit of mental prayer.[9912] When we perceive that we are deliberately distracted, let us desist from the voluntary defect, and banish the distraction, but let us be careful not to discontinue our meditation.

With regard to the subject-matter of meditation, the best rule is to meditate on the truths or mysteries in which the soul finds most nourishment and devotion. But above all, for a religious who loves perfection the most appropriate subject is the Passion of Jesus Christ. Blosius writes that our Lord revealed to several holy women, to St. Gertrude, St. Bridget, St. Mechtilde, and St. Catharine of Sienna that they who meditate on his Passion are very dear to him. According to St. Francis de Sales,[9913] the Passion of our Redeemer should be the ordinary subject of the meditations of every Christian; how much more should it be the subject of the meditations of the spouse of Jesus Christ ! Oh, what an excellent book is the Passion of Jesus ! There we understand better than in any other book the malice of sin, and also the mercy and love of God for man. You may read for your meditation the devout reflections that I have published on what the holy evangelists have written concerning the Passion of our Saviour. To me it appears that Jesus Christ has suffered so many different pains, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the crucifixion, etc., that having before our eyes so many painful mysteries we might have a variety of different subjects for meditating on his Passion, by which we might excite sentiments of gratitude and love.

When she is alone at meditation a religious will do well always to make mental prayer with the aid of a book. St. Teresa used a book for seventeen years: she would first read a little, and then meditate for a short time on what she had read. It is useful to meditate in this manner, in imitation of the pigeon, that first drinks and then raises its eyes to heaven.

However, let it be remembered that the advantage of mental prayer consists not so much in meditating as in making affections, petitions, and resolutions: these are the three principal fruits of meditation. “ The progress of a soul,” says St. Teresa, “ does not consist in thinking much of God, but in loving him ardently; and this love is acquired by resolving to do a great deal for him."[9914]

Speaking of mental prayer, the spiritual masters say that meditation is, as it were, the needle which when it has passed must be succeeded by the golden thread composed, as has been said, of affections, resolutions, and petitions.

1. When you have reflected on the point of meditation, and feel any pious sentiment, raise your heart to God and offer him acts of humility, of confidence, or of thanksgiving; but above all, repeat in mental prayer acts of contrition and of love.

The act of love, as also the act of contrition, is the golden chain that binds the soul to God. An act of perfect charity is sufficient for the remission of all our sins. Charity covereth a multitude of sins.[9915] The Lord has declared that he cannot hate the soul that loves him: I love them that love me.[9916]The Venerable Sister Mary Crucified once saw a globe of fire in which some straws that had been thrown into it were instantly consumed. By this vision she was given to understand that a soul by making a true act of love obtains the remission of all its faults. Besides, the Angelic Doctor teaches that by every act of love we acquire a new degree of glory. " Every act of charity," says the saint, " merits eternal life."[9917] Acts of love may be made in the following manner:

My God, I esteem Thee more than all things.

I love Thee with my whole heart. I delight in Thy felicity.

I would wish to see Thee loved by all.

I wish only what Thou wishest.

Make known to me what Thou wishest from me, and I will do it.

Dispose as Thou pleasest of me and of all that I possess.

This last act of oblation is particularly pleasing to God. St. Teresa was accustomed to offer herself to God in this manner at least fifty times in the day.

Remember that in this chapter we speak of the ordinary mental prayer; for should a soul feel itself at any time united to God by supernatural or infused recollection, without any particular thought of an eternal truth or of any divine mystery, it should not then labor to perform any other acts than those to which it feels itself sweetly drawn to God. It is then enough to endeavor with loving attention to remain united with God without impeding the divine operation, or forcing ones self to make reflections and acts. But this is to be understood when the Lord calls the soul to this supernatural prayer; but until we receive such a call we should not depart from the ordinary method of mental prayer, but should, as has been said, make use of meditation and affections. However, for people accustomed to mental prayer it is better to employ themselves in affections than in considerations.

2. Moreover, in mental prayer it is very profitable, and perhaps more useful than any other act, to repeat petitions to God asking with humility and confidence his graces; that is, his light, resignation, perseverance, and the like; but above all, the gift of his holy love. St. Francis de Sales used to say, that by obtaining the divine love we obtain all graces; for a soul that truly loves God with its whole heart will of itself, without being admonished by others, abstain from giving him the smallest displeasure, and will labor to please him to the best of its ability.

When you find yourself in aridity and darkness, so that you feel, as it were, incapable of making good acts, it is sufficient to say: My Jesus, mercy. Lord, for the sake of Thy mercy, assist me. And the meditation made in this manner will be for you, perhaps, the most useful and fruitful.

The Venerable Paul Segneri used to say that until he studied theology he employed himself during the time of mental prayer in making reflections and affections; but “ God “ (these are his own words) “ afterwards opened my eyes, and thenceforward I endeavoured to employ myself in petitions, and if there is any good in me, I ascribe it to this exercise of recommending myself to God.” Do you likewise do the same; ask of God his graces in the name of Jesus Christ, and you shall obtain whatsoever you desire. This our Saviour has promised, and his promise cannot fail: Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name he will give it you.[9918]

In a word, for you, religious, all your mental prayer should consist in acts and petitions. Hence the Venerable Sister Mary Crucified, while in an ecstasy, declared that mental prayer is the respiration of the soul; for as by respiration the air is first attracted and afterwards given back, so by petitions the soul first receives grace from God, and then by good acts of oblation and love it gives itself to him.

In finishing the meditation it is necessary to make a particular resolution; as, for example, to avoid some particular defect into which you have more frequently fallen, or to practise some virtue, such as to suffer the annoyance that you receive from a sister, to obey more exactly a certain Superior, to perform some particular act of mortification. We must repeat the same resolution several times until we find that we have got rid of the defect or acquired the virtue. Afterwards reduce to practice the resolutions you have made as soon as an occasion presents itself.

You would also do well, before the conclusion of your prayer, to renew the vows made at your profession. This renewal is most pleasing to God, because by her vows a religious gives herself entirely to God. According to the doctrine of St. Thomas,[9919] a religious is absolved from all her sins on the day of her profession, on account of the donation that she makes of herself entirely to God by means of the vows by which she consecrates to him all that she has her property, her body, and her will. The same favour appears to be obtained by the nun who with a true spirit of self-spoliation renews her religious vows. Hence I advise you to renew them frequently, as well in the common prayer as at Communion, in the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, at rising in the morning, and in going to bed at night.

III. The CONCLUSION of meditation consists of three acts: 1. In thanking God for the lights received; 2. In making a purpose to fulfil the resolutions made; 3. In asking of the eternal Father for the sake of Jesus and Mary grace to be faithful to them.

Be careful never to omit at the end of meditation to recommend to God the souls in purgatory and poor sinners. St. John Chrysostom says that nothing more clearly shows the love of a soul for Jesus Christ than her zeal in recommending her brethren to him.[9920]

St. Francis de Sales remarks that in leaving mental prayer we should take with us a nosegay of flowers, in order to smell them during the day; that is, we should remember one or two points in which we felt particular devotion in order to excite our fervor during the day.

The ejaculations that are dearest to God are those of love, of resignation, of oblation of ourselves. Let us endeavor not to perform any action without first offering it to God, and not to allow at the most a quarter of an hour to pass, in whatever occupations we may find ourselves, without raising the heart to the Lord by some good act.

Moreover, in our leisure time, such as when we are waiting for a person, or when we walk in the garden, or are confined to bed by sickness, let us endeavor to the best of our ability to unite ourselves to God. It is also necessary by observing silence, by seeking solitude as much as possible, and by remembering the presence of God, to preserve the pious sentiments conceived in meditation. But I shall-speak more at length on this subject in the following chapter.

I here add, that in order to be a soul of prayer, a religious must resist with fortitude all temptations to continue mental prayer in the time of aridity. St. Teresa has left us very excellent instructions on this point. In one place she says: “The devil knows that he has lost the soul that perseveringly practises mental prayer.”[9921] In another place she says: “I hold for certain that the Lord will conduct to the haven of salvation the soul that perseveres in mental prayer, inspite of all the sins that the devil may oppose.”[9922] Again she says: “He that does not stop in the way of mental prayer, reaches the end of his journey, though he should delay a little.”[9923] The love of God does not consist in experiencing tender affections, but in serving him with courage and humility.[9924] Finally she concludes, saying: By aridity and temptations the Lord proves his lovers. Though aridity should hist for life, let not the soul give up prayer: the time will come when all will be well rewarded.”[9925]

The Angelic Doctor says that true devotion consists not in feeling, but in the desire and resolution to embrace promptly all that God wills.[9926]

Such was the prayer that Jesus Christ made in the garden; it was all full of aridity and tediousness, but it was the most devout and meritorious prayer that had ever been offered in this world; it consisted of these words: Not what I will, but what thou wilt.[9927]

Dear sister, never give up mental prayer in the time of aridity. Should the tediousness that assails you be very great, divide your meditations into several parts, and employ yourself for the most part in petitions to God, even though you should seem to pray without confidence and without fruit. It will be sufficient to say and repeat: My Jesus, mercy. Lord, have mercy on me. Pray, and doubt not that God will hear you and grant your petitions.

And in going to meditation, never propose to yourself your own pleasure and satisfaction, but only to please God, and to learn what he wishes you to do. And for this purpose pray always that God may make known to you his will, and that he may give you strength to fulfil it. All that we ought to seek in mental prayer is light to know and strength to accomplish the will of God in our regard.

PRAYER

Ah ! my Jesus, it appears that Thou couldst do nothing more, in order to gain the love of men. It is enough to know that Thou hast wished to become man ; that is, to become like us, a worm. Thou hast wished to lead a painful life, of thirty-three years, amid sorrow and ignominies, and in the end to die on an infamous gibbet. Thou hast also wished to remain under the appearance of bread, in order to become the food of our souls; and how is it possible that Thou hast received so much ingratitude, even from Christians that believe these truths, and still love Thee so little? Unhappy me! I have hitherto been among those ungrateful souls; I have attended only to my pleasures, and have been forgetful of Thee and of Thy love. I now know the evil I have done ; but I repent of it with my whole heart ; my Jesus, pardon me. I now love Thee ; I love Thee so ardently that I choose death, and a thousand deaths, rather than cease to love Thee. I thank Thee for the light that Thou givest me. Give me strength, O God of my soul, always to advance in Thy love. Accept this poor heart to love Thee. It is true that it has once despised Thee, but now it is enamoured of Thy goodness ; it loves Thee and desires only to love Thee. O Mary, Mother of God, assist me ; in thy intercession I place great confidence.

Chapter XVI

SILENCE, SOLITUDE, AND THE PRESENCE OF GOD

CASSIAN says: “The religious prays little who prays only when she is on her knees in the choir or in the cell.”[9928] To fulfil the obligations of her state, a religious should keep her soul continually united with God; but to maintain this constant union, continual prayer is necessary. There are three means of acquiring the habit of continual prayer; namely, silence, solitude, and the presence of God. These were the means that the angel suggested to St. Arsenius when he said: “If you wish to be saved, fly into solitude, observe silence, and repose in God by always keeping yourself in his presence.”[9929]We shall speak of each of these means separately.

I. SILENCE

In the first place, silence is a great means of acquiring the spirit of prayer, and of disposing the soul to converse continually with God. We rarely find a spiritual soul that speaks much. All souls of prayer are lovers of silence that is called the guardian of innocence, the shield against temptations, and the fountain of prayer. For by silence devotion is preserved, and in silence good thoughts spring up in the soul. St. Bernard says: “Silence and the absence of noise in a certain manner force the soul to think of God and of eternal goods.”[9930]

Hence, the saints fled to the mountains, to caves, and to deserts, in order to find this silence, and escape the tumults of the world, in which, as was said to Elias, God is not found.[9931] Theodosius the monk observed silence for thirty-five years. St. John the Silent, who gave up his bishopric and became a monk, observed silence for forty-seven years before his death; and all the saints, even they who were not solitaries, have been lovers of silence.

Oh, how great the blessings that silence brings to the soul ! The prophet says that silence shall cultivate justice in the soul;[9932] for, on the one hand, it saves us from a multitude of sins by destroying the root of disputes, of detractions, of resentments, and of curiosity; and on the other, it makes us acquire many virtues. How well does the nun practise humility who when others speak listens with modesty and in silence ! How well does she practise mortification by not yielding to her inclination or desire to tell a certain anecdote, or to use a witty expression suggested by the conversation ! How well does she practise meekness by remaining silent when unjustly censured or offended ! Hence the same holy prophet said: In silence and in hope shall be your strength.[9933]Your strength shall be in silence and in hope; for by silence we shun the occasions of sin, and by hope we obtain the divine aid to lead a holy life.

But, on the other hand, immense evils flow from speaking too much. In the first place, as devotion is preserved by silence, so it is lost by a multitude of words. However recollected the soul may have been in prayer, if it afterwards indulge in long discourses it will find the mind as distracted and dissipated as if it had not made meditation. When the mouth of the burning furnace is opened the heat soon evaporates.

St. Dorotheus says: “ Beware of too much speaking, for it banishes from the soul holy thoughts and recollection with God.”[9934] Speaking of religious that cannot abstain from inquiring after worldly news, St. Joseph Calasanctius said: “The curious religious shows that he has forgotten himself.” It is certain that he who speaks too much with men converses but little with God, for the Lord says: I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart.[9935] If, then, the soul wishes that God speak to its heart, it must seek after solitude; but this solitude will never be found by religious who do not love silence. “ If,” said the Venerable Margaret of the Cross, “ we remain silent, we shall find solitude.” And how will the Lord ever condescend to speak to the religious, who, by seeking after the conversation of creatures, shows that the conversation of God is not sufficient to make her happy ?. Besides, the Holy Ghost tells us that in speaking too much we shall not fail to commit some fault. In the multitude of words they shall not want sin.[9936] While they speak and prolong conversation without necessity, certain people think that they are not guilty of any defect; but if they carefully examine themselves they will find some fault against modesty, of detraction, of curiosity, or at least of superfluous words. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that a religious should speak only through necessity. For religious are bound in a special manner to give an account of idle words, for which, according to our Saviour, all men shall have to render an account. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall account for it in the day of judgment.[9937]

I have used the words some defect ; but when we speak too much we shall find that we have committed a thousand faults. St. James has called the tongue a universal evil: The tongue is . . . a world of iniquity.[9938] For, as a learned author remarks, the greater number of sins arise from speaking or from listening to others. Alas ! how many nuns shall we see condemned on the day of judgment, on account of having had but little regard for silence ! And what is most to be deplored is, that the religious that dissipates her mind by intercourse with creatures, and by too much speaking, will never be able to see her defects, and thus she will go from bad to worse. A man full of tongue shall not be established in the earth.[9939] The man that speaks too much shall walk without a guide, and therefore he shall fall into a thousand mistakes without the hope of ever perceiving them. Such a religious appears as if unable to live without speaking continually from morning till evening. She wishes to know what happens in the monastery and in the world; she goes about asking questions from all the others, and afterwards says, What evil am I doing? I answer you, dearly beloved sister, put an end to idle talk; endeavor to recollect yourself a little, and you will see how many defects you have committed by the multitude of your words.

St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say “ that a dissipated religious is a source of joy to the devil.” And justly, for by her dissipation she not only does not attend to her own sanctification, but is also an obstacle to the advancement of others, by going about the monastery in search of someone to converse with her, by speaking in a loud voice in every place, and by a want of reverence, even in the choir and sacristy.

St. Ambrose relates that a certain priest, while at prayer, was disturbed by the cries of a multitude of frogs: he commanded them to be silent, and they instantly obeyed. The holy Doctor then took occasion to say: “ Shall senseless animals, then, be silent through respect for prayer, and shall men not be silent ?"[9940] And I add, will religious refuse to practise silence, after having entered the monastery in order to become saints, to observe their Rule, and to maintain holy recollection; or will they perform the office of the devil, by disturbing their sisters who wish to pray, and to be recollected with God ? A certain author justly calls such talkative nuns " the home devils of monasteries," who do great injury to the Community. According to St. Ignatius of Loyola, to know if there is fervor in a convent, it is enough to ascertain whether silence is observed or violated. A monastery in which the sisters speak continually is an image of hell; for where there is not silence there must be continual disputes, detractions, complaints, particular friendships, and factions. But, on the other hand, a monastery in which the religious love silence is an image of paradise: it excites devotion not only in all who live in it, but also in those who live in the world. It is related by Father Perez, of the Order of Discalced Carmelites, that while a secular he entered one day into a house of the Order, and was so edified and filled with devotion by the silence of the brethren, that he renounced the world and remained in the convent. Father Natalis, of the Society of Jesus, used to say, that to reform a religious house it is enough to establish in it the observance of silence. Because each of the religious would then practise recollection, and would attend to his own advancement. Hence, also, Gerson says that the holy founders of religious Orders have prescribed and earnestly recommended silence to their religious, because they knew how important its observance is for the maintenance of fervor.

In his rules for nuns, St. Basil insists, not once, but frequently, on silence. St. Benedict commanded his monks to endeavor to observe continual silence.[9941]

And experience shows that in the monastery in which silence is observed, discipline is maintained; and on the other hand, where silence is neglected, but little fervor is found. Hence few religious become saints, because few love silence. In many monasteries the rule of silence is prescribed by the written rules, and is strongly recommended; but some of the religious appear not to know what silence is, and therefore they unhappily live in dissipation, without fervor, and always in trouble. But, dear sister, do not imagine that the negligence of others will excuse or exempt you from the rule of silence. Blessed Clare of Montefalco used to say that in the time of silence it is difficult to speak without committing a fault.

Someone may excuse herself, saying, that it is sometimes necessary to speak in order to get rid of melancholy; but how can the violation of silence free a religious from melancholy ? Let us be persuaded that all the creatures on earth or in heaven cannot console us in our afflictions. God alone is the author of consolation; but will he console us at the very time we offend him ? But when there is any necessity for speaking in the time of silence, at least ask permission. Another religious does not seek occasions to speak, but as often as they are presented she allows herself to be led into breaches of silence by others who wish to speak. But her condescension will certainly not excuse her from the fault. It is necessary, then, to do violence to yourself, and to go away, or to remain silent, and sometimes by putting the finger on the mouth to make a sign that it is a time of silence.

And even out of the hours of silence endeavor to practise it as much as possible if you wish to keep yourself recollected with God and free from imperfections; for there is no sin more easily committed than sins of the tongue. He, says Solomon, that keepeth his month keepeth his soul.[9942] And St. James says that he who sins not with the tongue is a perfect man: If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.[9943] Hence it is the same thing to be a silent religious and a holy religious; for by observing silence she will be punctual to the rules, she will be devoted to prayer, to spiritual reading, and to her visits to the Holy Sacrament. Oh, how dear to God does the religious render herself who loves silence . especially if by her silence on certain extraordinary occasions she offers to God an act of mortification; for example, when she feels greatly annoyed by long solitude, or when any very adverse or prosperous event occurs which she feels strongly impelled to relate to others. On the other hand, the religious who indulges in much speaking will be generally dissipated, will easily omit her meditations and other devout exercises, and thus will gradually lose all relish for God. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say: “The religious that has not a love for silence cannot find pleasure in the things of God.” Hence the unhappy soul will abandon itself to worldly amusements, and thus retain nothing but the name and habit of a religious.

However, it is necessary to remark, that in monasteries the virtue of silence consists not in being always silent, but in observing silence when there is no necessity for speaking. Hence Solomon says that there is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.[9944]

But St. Gregory of Nyssa remarks that the time for silence is put before the time for speaking, because, as the saint adds, by silence we learn to speak well.[9945] By silence we learn to consider well what we shall afterwards say. But for a religious who wishes to become a saint, what is the time for silence and the time for speaking? The hours of silence for her are all the hours in which there is no necessity for speaking. The time for speaking is when necessity or charity obliges her to speak. Behold the excellent rule of St. John Chrysostom: “ Then only should we speak when it is more useful to speak than to be silent.”[9946]Hence the saint gives the following advice: “ Either remain silent, or say what is more profitable than silence.”[9947] Oh! happy he who at death can say what the monk Pambo said: “That he did not remember to have ever uttered a word which he was sorry for having spoken.”[9948] St. Arsenius used to say that he often repented of having spoken, but never of having remained silent.[9949] St. Ephrem gave this excellent lesson to religious: “ Speak a great deal with God, and little with men.”[9950]St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say the same: “The true servant of Jesus Christ bears all things; she labors much, and speaks little.”

From all that has been said, every religious that wishes to live in union with God may see with what care she should shun the parlour. As the air that is breathed in the choir or in the cell is the most salubrious for religious, so the air of the grates is for them the most pestiferous. And what is the parlour but what St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi called it, a place of distractions, inquietudes, and of temptations.

The Venerable Sister Mary Villani one day compelled the devil, on the part of God, to tell in what part of the monastery he gained most. The tempter answered: I gain in the choir, in the refectory, and in the dormitory: in these places I partly gain, and partly lose. But in the parlour I gain all, for the whole place is mine. Hence the Venerable Sister Philippa Cerrina had reason to call the parlor an infected place, in which the contagion of sin is easily caught. St. Bernardine of Sienna relates that a religious in consequence of having heard in the parlor an improper word miserably fell into a grievous sin. Truly happy was the holy virgin St. Fabronia, who afterwards gave her life for the faith at the age of nineteen; she would never allow herself to be seen at the grate by any secular, male or female. St. Teresa appeared after death to one of her spiritual children, and said to her: The religious that wishes to be a great friend of God must be an enemy of the grate.

Would to God that in all monasteries there were grates of perforated iron such as we find in some observant convents ! A certain author relates that the Superior of a monastery procured a narrow grate; but the devil, through rage, first bent it, and afterwards sent it rolling through the house. The good Superior placed it, crooked as it was, in the parlor to give the nuns to understand that as the grate was hateful to hell so it was pleasing to God. Oh ! what an awful account will the abbess have to give to God who introduces open grates, or who neglects to make the companions attend. In one of her letters St. Teresa wrote this great sentence: “The grates when shut are the gates of heaven; and when open they are the gates of danger” (she did not wish to say hell). And she added: “ A monastery of nuns in which there is liberty serves to conduct them to hell rather than to cure their weakness.”

What rapid progress in divine love does the religious make who resolves never to go to the great! When you, dear sister, go to the parlor, be careful at least to conduct yourself like a religious. In your intercourse with seculars you should not only guard with great care against all affectionate expressions, but should also be very grave and reserved in the parlor. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi wished her nuns to be “ like the wild deer” these are her very words. And the Venerable Sister Hyacinth Marescotti used to say: “ The courtesy of nuns consists in being discourteous by cutting short all long discourses in the parlor.” This applies, ordinarily speaking, to long discourses even with spiritual people. Mother Anne of Jesus, a Discalced Carmelite, said: “A nun acquires more fervor in the choir or in the cell than by the longest conferences in the parlor. Show all respect to directors, but you should treat with them only through necessity; despatch your business with them in a few words.”

Should you ever happen to hear in the “parlor an indecent word, go away immediately; or, at least, cast down your eyes, and change the discourse, or give no answer. In a monastery of the Venerable Sister Seraphina de Carpi two women began to speak about a certain marriage: the attendant at the turn heard the voice of Sister Seraphina (who was dead) saying, “ Chase away, chase away these women.” And whenever it is in your power, endeavor to change all discourses that savour of the world. St. Frances of Rome received a buffet from an angel because she did not change the conversation of certain ladies who spoke of worldly vanities. You should be still more careful to observe silence with your sisters in the monastery: for the occasion of breaking silence with them is more continual. Hence it is necessary to mortify curiosity. The Abbot John used to say: “ Let him who wishes to restrain the tongue shut his ears by mortifying the curiosity of hearing news.” It is also necessary to avoid the conversation of any religious who speaks frequently. It is, moreover, well to fix some time each day during which you will observe silence, remaining alone in your cell or in some solitary place in order to avoid the occasions of speaking.

Whenever you have to speak, be careful, in conformity with the advice of the Holy Ghost, Make a balance for thy words.[9951] To examine what you ought to say. Make a balance for your words that you may weigh them before you give expression to them. Hence St. Bernard says that “ before your words come to the tongue, let them pass twice under the file of examination,”[9952] that you may suppress what you should not utter. The same was said by St. Francis de Sales in other words, namely, that to speak without sin everyone should keep a lock on his lips, that in opening his mouth to speak he might reflect well on what he wishes to say.

Before speaking you should consider:

1. Whether what you intend to say can injure charity, modesty, or exact observance.

2. Examine the motive that impels you to speak; for it sometimes happens that what a person says is good, but her intention is bad; she speaks either to appear spiritual, or to acquire a character for talent.

3. Examine to whom you speak, whether to your Superiors, to companions, or to inferiors: whether in the presence of seculars, or of the postulants, who may perhaps be scandalized at what you say.

4. Examine the time at which you speak, whether at the time of silence or of repose.

5. The place in which you speak, whether in the choir, in the sacristy, or the corridors; at the door or in the parlor.

6. Be careful to speak with simplicity, avoiding all affection; with humility, abstaining from all words of pride or vainglory; with sweetness, never uttering a word that savors of impatience, or that tends to the discredit of a neighbor; with moderation, by not being the first to give your opinion on any question that may be proposed, particularly if you are younger than the others; with modesty, by not interrupting any sister while she is speaking; and also by abstaining from every word that savors of the world, from all improper gestures, and immoderate laughter, and by speaking in a low tone of voice; for St. Bonaventure says[9953] that it is a great defect in a religious to speak in a loud voice, particularly at night. And should you, as Superior, be ever obliged to correct a sister, take care not to reprimand her in a loud voice ; for otherwise she will perceive that you speak through impatience, and then the reprimand will be unprofitable At recreation, which is the proper time for unbending the mind, speak when the others are silent, but endeavor as often as you can to speak on something that has reference to God. “ Let us speak of the Lord Jesus,” says St. Ambrose, “ let us always speak of him.”[9954] And what other enjoyment should a religious seek than to speak of her most amiable Spouse? He who has an ardent love for another, appears unable to speak of anything but of him. They who speak little of Jesus Christ, show that they have but little love for Jesus Christ. On the other hand, it often happens that good religious, after speaking on divine love, feel more fervor than after mental prayer. At the conversations of the servants of God, says St. Teresa, Jesus Christ is always present. Of this,

Father Gisolfo, of the Congregation of the “ Pious Workers,” relates a memorable example, in the life of the Venerable Father Anthony de Collelis. He says that Father Constantine Rossi, the Master of novices, saw one day two of his young disciples, F. D. Anthony Torres, and F. D. Philip Orilia, conversing together, and with them a young man of most beautiful aspect. The Master of novices was surprised that two novices, whom he regarded as most exemplary, should speak to a stranger without permission: he therefore asked who was the young man whom he had seen conversing with them. They said there was no one conversing with them. But he afterwards learned that they were speaking of Jesus Christ, and understood that the person whom he saw in their company was our divine Saviour.

Except in the hours of recreation, and other extraordinary occasions, such as in attending the sick, or in consoling a sister in tribulation, it is always better to be silent. A religious of the Order of St. Teresa, as we find in the Teresian Chronicles, said that it is better to speak with God than to speak of God. But when obedience or charity obliges you to speak, or to have intercourse with creatures, you must always endeavor to find intervals, for at least repairing the losses caused by the distractions attendant on these external occupations; stealing at least as many little moments as possible to recollect yourself with God; thus following the counsel of the Holy Ghost : Let not the part of a good gift overpass thee.[9955]Do not allow that particle of time to pass away: give it to God, if you can have no more to give him during the day. But whenever you can abridge the conversation, abridge it under some pretext. A good religious seeks not pretexts, as some do, to prolong conversation, but endeavors to find out some means of shortening it.

Let us remember that time is given us not to be spent unprofitably, but to be employed for God, and in acquiring merits for eternity. St. Bernardine of Sienna used to say that a moment of time is of as much value as God, because in each moment we can gain his friendship, or greater degrees of grace.

PRAYER

O my God, may the patience with which Thou hast borne me be forever blessed. Thou hast given me time to love Thee, and I have spent it in offending and displeasing Thee. Were I now to die, with what heartfelt pain should I end my life, at the thought of having spent so many years in the world, and of having done nothing. Lord, I thank Thee for still giving me time to repair my negligence, and so many lost years. O my Jesus ! through the merits of Thy Passion assist me. I do not wish to live any longer for myself, but only for Thee, and for Thy love. I know not how much of life remains, whether it is long or short ; but were it a hundred or a thousand years, I wish to spend them all in loving and pleasing Thee. I love Thee, my Sovereign Good, and I hope to love Thee for eternity.

I do not wish to be ever again ungrateful to Thee. I will no longer resist Thy love, which has so long called me to be entirely Thine. Shall I wait till Thou abandon me, and call me no more ? Mary, my mother, assist me, pray for me, and obtain for me perseverance in my resolution to be faithful to God.

II. THE LOVE OF SOLITUDE, AND THE AVOIDING OF IDLENESS

1. THE LOVE OF SOLITUDE

Whosoever loves God, loves solitude; there the Lord communicates himself more familiarly to souls, because there he finds them less entangled in worldly affairs, and more detached from earthly affections. Hence, St. Jerome exclaimed: “O solitude, in which God speaks and converses familiarly with his servants ![9956] O blessed solitude, in which God speaks and converses with his beloved spouses with familiarity, with great love and confidence ! God speaks not at the grates, nor in the belvedere, nor in any other place in which religious indulge in useless laughter and idle talk. The Lord is not in the earthquake.[9957] But where is he? I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart.[9958] He speaks in solitude, and there he speaks to the heart in words that inflame it with his holy love, as the sacred spouse attests: My soul melted when my beloved spoke.[9959] St. Eucherius relates[9960] that a certain man, desirous of becoming a saint, asked a servant of God where he should find God. The servant of God conducted him to a solitary place, and said: “Behold where God is found!” By these words he meant to say that God is found not amid the tumults of the world, but in solitude .

Virtue is easily preserved in solitude; and, on the other hand, it is easily lost by intercourse with the world, where God is but little known, and therefore his love, and the goods that he gives to those who leave all things for his sake, are but little esteemed. St. Bernard says[9961] that he learned more among the trees of the forest than from books and masters. Hence the saints, in order to live in solitude and far from tumult, have so ardently loved the caves, the mountains, and the woods.

The land that was desolate and impassable shall be glad, and the wilderness shall rejoice, and shall flourish like the lily; it shall bud forth and blossom. . . . They shall see the glory of the Lord and the beauty of our God.[9962] The wilderness shall be a perennial fountain of joy and gladness to the soul that seeks it; it shall flourish like the lily in whiteness and innocence of life, and shall produce fruits of every virtue. These happy souls shall in the end be raised on high to see the glory and infinite beauty of the Lord. It is certain that to keep the heart united with God we must preserve in the soul the thoughts of God, and of the immense goods that he prepares for those who love him; but when we hold intercourse with the world, it presents to us earthly things that cancel spiritual impressions and pious sentiments. Hence, for a nun that delights in receiving visits and letters, in reading the newspapers, and in speaking frequently of the things of the world, it is impossible to be a good religious. Every time that she unnecessarily holds intercourse with seculars, she will suffer a diminution of fervor.

There is no one more deserving of pity than a nun who, being unable to go into the world, brings the world to herself by spending a great part of the day in vain amusements, in conversing with seculars at the grate, or in diverting herself with the sisters, laughing, talking, censuring others, and by seeking to learn what happens in the neighbourhood. Shall a spouse of Jesus Christ, who should have no other pleasure than that of conversing with her God, place her consolation in a life of distraction, and of intercourse with seculars, who by their conversation will infect her heart with the corrupt maxims of the world ? Shall she thus spend the time that the Lord gives her in order to become a saint? O God ! how can she squander that time the moments of which the saints would have purchased even at the cost of their blood ? Alas ! when one day she finds herself at the hour of death, what would she give for a day, or even for one of the many hours that she now loses ! A certain religious said at the end of her life: “Oh that I had more time I would give it all to God !” But the unhappy soul desired time when for her time was no more.

Besides, I say to you, dear sister, God in his goodness has rescued you from the dangers of the world, and has given you the courage to forsake it; why, then, should you expose yourself to the same dangers by again holding intercourse with the world ? Tertullian says[9963] that “ we have escaped once from the waves of the world (in which so many perish); let us not voluntarily cast ourselves again into the midst of them," and expose our souls to the danger of perdition. The religious who wishes to become a saint should seek neither to know nor be known by the world; she should endeavor to the utmost of her ability neither to see nor to be seen by seculars. Blessed Clare of Montefalco spoke even to her brother with the veil drawn down; the abbess said that in conversing with her brother she might raise the veil. She answered: "Mother, since I speak only with the tongue, allow me to remain covered." The words of the Venerable Sister Frances Farnese are also very remarkable. " My sisters," said she, " we are shut up within these walls, not to see and to be seen, but to hide ourselves from creatures. The more we hide ourselves from them, the more Jesus Christ will unveil himself to us."

Worldlings shun solitude, and with good reason; for in solitude they feel more acutely the remorse of conscience, and therefore they go in search of the conversations and tumults of the world, that the noise of these occupations may stifle the stings of remorse. The religious, then, who flies from solitude shows that she, too, is a disorderly soul, who, in order to extinguish the remorse caused by her irregularities, seeks after the noise and bustle of the world. On the other hand, religious who live with a tranquil conscience cannot but love solitude; and when they find themselves out of it, they feel like fish out of water they enjoy no peace, and are, as it were, in a violent state. It is true that man loves society; but what society preferable to the society of God ? Ah! to withdraw from creatures and to converse in solitude with our Creator brings neither bitterness nor tediousness. Of this the Wise Man assures us: For her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness, but joy and gladness.[9964] The Venerable Father Vincent Carafa, General of the Society of Jesus (as has been said in another place), said that he desired nothing in this world, and that were he to desire anything, he would wish only for a little grotto, along with a morsel of bread, and a spiritual book, in order to live there always in solitude.

It is not true that a life of solitude is a life of melancholy: it is a foretaste and beginning of the life of the saints in bliss, who are filled with an immense joy in the sole occupation of loving and praising their God. Thus St. Jerome said, that flying from Rome he went to shut himself up in the cave of Bethlehem, in order to enjoy solitude. Hence he afterwards wrote: "

To me solitude is a paradise."[9965] The saints in solitude appear to be alone, but they are not alone. St. Bernard said: "I am never less alone than when I find myself alone;"[9966] for I am then in the company of my Lord, who gives me more content than I could derive from the conversation of all creatures.

They appear to be in sadness, but they are not sad. The world, seeing them far away from earthly amusements, regard them as miserable and disconsolate; but they are not so; they, as the Apostle attests, enjoy an immense and continual peace. As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.[9967] The prophet Isaias attested the same when he said: The Lord therefore, will comfort Sion, and will comfort all the ruins thereof; and He will make her desert as a place, of pleasure, and her wilderness as the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of praise.[9968] The Lord well knows how to console the solitary soul, and will give a thousand fold compensation for all the temporal pleasures which it has forfeited: he will render its solitude a garden of his delights. There joy and gladness shall be always found, and nothing shall be heard but the voice of thanksgiving and praise to the divine goodness. Hence, Cardinal Petrucci describes the happiness of a solitary heart in the following words: " It appears to be sad, and it is filled with celestial joy. Though it treads on the earth, its dwelling is in heaven. It asks nothing for itself, because in its bosom it contains an immense treasure. It appears to be agitated and overwhelmed by the tempest, and it is always in a secure harbour."

In order to find this happy solitude, it is not necessary for you, dear sister, to hide yourself in a cave or in a desert; even in the monastery, you can, whenever you wish, find the solitude which you desire. Shun the grates, shun useless conversations and discourses; love the choir and the cell; remain in the choir or cell whenever obedience or charity does not call you elsewhere; and thus you will find the solitude that is suited to you, and that God wishes from you. Thus David found it, even in the midst of the great concerns of a kingdom, and therefore he said: Lo, I have gone far off, flying away; and I abode in the wilderness.[9969] St. Philip Neri desired to retire into a desert, but God gave him to understand that he should not leave Rome, but that he should live there as in a desert. The Lord wishes the same from religious, whom he desires to be his true spouses; he wishes them to be enclosed in gardens, that in them he may be able to find his delights. My sister my spouse is a garden enclosed[9970] But Gilbert well remarks: “He knows not how to be a garden, that does not wish to be enclosed.”[9971] The nun who is unwilling to be enclosed, that is, careful not to bring into her heart the thoughts and dangers of the world by frequent intercourse with worldlings, cannot be the garden of Jesus Christ.” Live therefore as a solitary,” says St. Bernard, “ retire not merely in body, but in spirit.”[9972] Even when you are with the sisters at work, or at the common recreation, endeavor not to leave your solitude; be careful to keep yourself as much as possible recollected with God; and if you cannot withdraw in body from conversation, withdraw at least in affection and intention, by intending to remain there only because it is God’s will that you should remain. Since you must sometimes have intercourse with creatures, you ought to act like a tender woman, who, being accustomed to remain always in a close room, far from the society of men, endeavors, when obliged to go into the street, to return as quickly as possible in order to escape the cold and bustle. It is thus that holy religious act when by duty or charity they are forced to converse with the sisters or with externs; they suffer a species of martyrdom, partly on account of their repugnance to hold intercourse with creatures, and partly through fear of committing some fault, and therefore they seek to abridge the conversation as much as possible.

When external occupations last for a long time, it is very difficult to escape defects. Even when they were employed in the conversion of sinners, Jesus Christ wished the holy apostles to retire from time to time into a solitary place, in order to give some repose to the spirit. Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little.[9973] Yes; for in external occupations, even of a spiritual nature, the soul falls into distractions, disquietudes, coldness of divine love, and imperfections; hence repose is always necessary to remove the stains contracted, and to acquire strength to walk better for the future. It is not necessary, then, to remain always in solitude; but, as St. Laurence Justinian has written, we ought to procure it whenever we can, and when we cannot, we ought to love it.[9974]Hence, when a religious is obliged to interrupt her retirement in order to serve the Community, or to relieve the necessity of a sister, she must do it with liberty of soul, without disturbing herself: otherwise she will show attachment to solitude, which is a great defect. But in going to treat with creatures her object must . .not be to amuse herself by their conversation, but to practise obedience or charity. Then, as soon as the occupation is over, she ought instantly to retire to her beloved solitude.

Hitherto we have spoken of the solitude of the body; we must now say something on the solitude of the heart, which is more necessary than the solitude of the body. “ Of what use,” says St. Gregory, “ is the solitude of the body without the solitude of the heart ? “[9975]That is, of what use is it to live in the desert if the heart is attached to the world ? A soul detached and free from earthly affections, says St. Peter Chrysologus, finds solitude even in the public streets and highways.[9976] On the other hand, of what use is it to observe silence in the choir or in the cell, if affections to creatures are entertained in the heart, and by their noise render the soul unable to listen to the divine inspirations ? I here repeat the words of our Lord to St. Teresa: “ Oh, how gladly would I speak to many souls! but the world makes such a noise in their heart that my voice cannot be heard. Oh that they would retire a little from the world !”

Let us then understand what is meant by solitude of the heart. It consists in expelling from the soul every affection that is not for God, by seeking nothing in all our actions but to please his divine eyes. It consists in saying with David: What have I in heaven? and besides thee, what do I desire upon earth ? . . . Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.[9977] O my God, except Thee, what is there on earth or in heaven that can content me ? Thou alone art the Lord of my heart, and Thou shalt always be my only treasure. In fine, solitude of the heart implies that you can say with sincerity, My God, I wish for Thee alone, and for nothing else.

Such a religious complains that she does not find God; but listen to what St. Teresa says: “Detach the heart from all things seek God, and then you will find him.”[9978]God can neither be sought nor found if he is not first known; but how can a soul attached to creatures comprehend God and his divine beauty ? The light of the sun cannot enter a crystal vessel filled with earth; and in a heart occupied with affections to pleasures, to wealth, and to honors, the divine light cannot shine. Hence the Lord says: Be still, and see that I am God.[9979]The soul, then, that wishes to see God must remove the world from her heart, and keep it shut against all earthly affections. This is precisely what Jesus Christ gave us to understand under the figure of a closed chamber, when he said: But when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret.[9980] That is, the soul, in order to unite itself with God in prayer, must retire into its heart (which, according to St. Augustine, is the chamber of which our Lord speaks), and shut the door against all earthly affections.[9981]

This is also the meaning of the words of Jeremiah: He shall sit solitary, and hold his peace; because he hath taken it upon himself.[9982] The solitary soul, that is, the soul that is free from all attachments, and in which earthly affections are silent, will unite itself with God in mental prayer by holy desires, by oblations of itself, and by acts of love: and then it will find itself raised above all created objects, so that it will smile at the worldling who sets so high a value on the goods of this earth, and submits to so many toils in order to secure their enjoyment, while it regards them as trifles, and utterly unworthy of the love of a heart created to love God, who is an infinite good. Hence Cardinal Petrucci says, that the love of a heart dedicated to the divine love is raised above all that is spread over the theatre of the world.

2. THE AVOIDING OF IDLENESS

But remember that by solitude I do not mean pure leisure, as if a religious were to be free from all occupations and from all care. God wishes that his spouses be solitary, but not idle. Some nuns lead a hidden and retired life, but in their retreat they either remain idle, without applying themselves to any work, or spend their time in vain reading, or in other useless occupations. They remain silent, but of this useless silence St. Basil says[9983] they shall render an account to God. Idle solitude is the solitude of beasts; solitude devoted to curious studies is worldly solitude; religious solitude is neither idle nor useless, but is all fruitful and holy. Religious should remain in their cells, like the bee, which in its little cell never ceases to make honey; and hence they should not waste their time, but should be employed either in prayer, or in reading spiritual books, or in manual works that will not hinder them to keep the mind on God. St. John Chrysostom says that in solitude the soul is not idle, but occupied in God.[9984] In a certain convent of St. Francis there was an idle brother who was always going about the house now troublesome to one, and again to another. The saint called him Brother Fly. Would to God that in monasteries there were no Sister Fly, constantly going about, observing who is at the grate or at confession; who sends or receive presents, and the like.

Such religious would deserve, like flies, to be expelled from the house, or at least to be shut up in a prison that they might cease to disturb others.

It is a common saying, that idleness is the parent of all vices, and it is founded on the oracle of the Holy Ghost: Idleness hath taught much evil.[9985] St. Joseph Calasanctius says: " The devil goes in pursuit of idle religious." And, according to St. Bonaventure,[9986] a religious assiduously employed is molested with one temptation, but an idle religious shall be assailed by a thousand. It is certain that to a nun the cell is a great help to practise recollection with God. But the same St. Joseph Calasanctius said that a religious " makes a bad use of her cell when while in it she neither speaks with God nor labors for God." We cannot be always at prayer, and therefore in this life it is necessary for religious to be employed in manual occupations. She hath sought wool and flax, and hath wrought by the counsel of her hands.[9987] Hence, St. Jerome prescribed to Demetriade to have wool always in her hands.[9988] All holy women, particularly religious, have employed themselves in manual work. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, though so infirm and weak, took part in all the labors of the monastery, as well for the choir nuns as for the lay-sisters. She worked now in the kitchen, and again in the refectory; at one time she swept the convent, at another she carried water from the well. She labored so hard in making bread, that she distorted one of the bones of the hand. In a word, the author of her life says that she performed more work than four lay-sisters together.

And let it be observed, that it is an error to imagine that labor is injurious to bodily health, for it is certain that manual employment contributes greatly to the preservation of health, and this is the reason why lay—sisters ordinarily enjoy better health than the choir nuns. Ah ! it is frequently not so much the danger of health, as the desire of escaping the pain attendant on labor, that makes us excuse ourselves from manual work. But the religious who looks at the crucifix will not endeavor to shun labor. Sister Frances of St. Angelo of the Carmelite Order complained one day to Jesus on the cross, that by severity of labor she had injured her hands. Jesus answered: " Frances, look at my hands, and then complain."

Besides, manual work contributes greatly to relieve the tediousness of solitude, and also to overcome temptations, which are very frequent in solitude. St. Anthony found himself one day so molested with immodest thoughts and so weary of solitude that he knew not what to do. An angel appeared and conducted the saint to a little garden. There he took the mattock and began to dig, and afterwards to pray; he next resumed the work, and again returned to prayer. From the conduct of the angel the saint learned that he was to live in solitude, and at the same time defend himself against temptations by passing from prayer to work and from work to prayer. A person should not be always employed at work; but it is impossible for a religious to be always at prayer without affecting her brain, and rendering herself utterly unfit for all spiritual exercises. Hence St. Teresa after death appeared to Sister Paula Mary of Jesus, and exhorted her not to fail to exercise herself in corporal works under the delusive pretext of devoting herself more to holy occupations; and the saint added that these manual exercises are a great help to eternal salvation.

Besides, manual works when performed without solitude and passion do not hinder us from praying. Sister Margaret of the Cross, Archduchess of Austria, a discalced nun, used to perform the most laborious offices of the monastery, and would say that labor is not only useful but necessary for nuns, since it does not hinder them from raising the heart to God. It is related that St. Bernard one day saw a monk who while he worked did not cease to pray. The saint said to him: “ My brother, continue to do always what you do at present, and be of good cheer; for by acting in this manner you shall after death be exempt even from purgatory.” The saint afterwards practised the same, as we read in his life. He did not neglect his external works, but he was at the same time wholly recollected in God.[9989] And thus every religious, while she works with her hands, should not neglect to keep her heart occupied with God; otherwise, all her external employments shall be without spiritual fruit, and shall be full of imperfections. Hence the Spouse of the Canticles says to the soul: Place me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm.[9990] He first tells her to place him as a seal upon her heart, and afterwards upon her arm; because if she has not God in the heart she cannot have him upon the arm; that is, her external works cannot be pleasing to him. But, on the other hand, St. Teresa says that “works of the active life, when they spring from divine love, are the highest perfection.”

Hence it is an error in a religious to wish to remain always in solitude, or to shun all external occupations. But it is also an error in her to undertake voluntarily such a multiplicity of employments that she afterwards has not time to recollect herself with God. My son, meddle not with many matters; and if thou be rich thou shalt not be free from sin.[9991] Son, says the Lord, do not burden yourself with so many concerns; for if you wish to attend to them all, you may indeed succeed, but not without sin. There are others who, when they undertake any business apply, themselves so closely to it that they render themselves unable to think of anything else. What has been undertaken should be done with diligence, but with tranquillity and without passion, so that the soul may have liberty to turn to God from time to time. You should labor; but you who are a religious should not work like a secular, toiling night and day in order to accumulate money. And for what purpose? In order to make presents, or to gratify vanity or caprice. It is necessary to work, but to work like a religious: hence attend first to the business of the soul; and afterwards to that of the body, employing yourself in external exercises, with a pure intention either of practising obedience or of assisting the Community, or of relieving your own pressing wants, and of avoiding idleness; but always without avidity or solicitude, which may hinder you from raising the heart to God. St. Antonine says that in every external occupation, however urgent, we must always keep a secret little corner within, in which we may take refuge and turn to God when we find ourselves oppressed and overwhelmed with business. Hence it is of great importance to take care in the beginning as well as in the progress of our work to raise the heart several times to God by an act of love, of oblation, of resignation, or by a petition for his graces. Why, for example, can you not, when employed in embroidering or in sewing, make at every moment an act of the love of God, or of oblation of yourself? I conclude this point. Fervent nuns in all their works are recollected in spirit, unite themselves more closely to God, and always acquire merit. But the tepid and negligent fabricate cobwebs; for they labor and toil through earthly motives, and thus lose all.

PRAYER

My Jesus, grant that I may love Thee ardently during the remainder of my life, and that I may be entirely Thine. I curse the days in which I have loved creatures so as to displease Thee. Henceforth I wish to love nothing but Thee. I entreat Thee to give me strength to detach my heart from all things that divert me from Thy love. Grant that my heart may be employed in regarding only Thee as the only object worthy of love. O Incarnate Word ! Thou hast come into the world to dwell in our souls that Thou hast redeemed with Thy blood. Let my heart, then, be all Thine. Take possession of it and watch over all my wants ; illuminate my soul, inflame me, and make me promptly obey all Thy wishes. My Jesus, my Sovereign Good, I love Thee and I esteem Thee above every good. I give myself entirely to Thee : accept me to serve Thee forever but to serve Thee not through fear, but through love. Thy majesty deserves to be feared, but Thy goodness deserves still more to be loved.

O Mary, my Mother and my refuge, obtain for me the grace to belong entirely to Jesus.

III. THE PRESENCE OF GOD

1. EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THIS HOLY EXERCISE

The practice of the presence of God is justly called by spiritual masters the foundation of a spiritual life, which consists in three things: the avoidance of sin, the practice of virtue, and union with God. These three effects the presence of God produces: it preserves the soul from sin, leads it to the practice of virtue, and moves it to unite itself to God by means of holy love.

I. As to the first effect, the avoidance of sin, there is no more efficacious means of subduing the passions, of resisting temptations, and consequently of avoiding sin, than the remembrance of God’s presence. The angelic Doctor says: “ If we always thought that God was looking at us, we would never, or scarcely ever, do what is displeasing in his eyes.”[9992] And St. Jerome has written that the remembrance of God’s presence closes the door against all sins. “ The remembrance of God,” says the holy Doctor, “ shuts out all sins.”[9993]And if men will not dare in their presence to transgress the commands of princes, parents, or Superiors, how could they ever violate the laws of God if they thought that he was looking at them ? St. Ambrose relates that a page of Alexander the Great, who held in his hand a lighted torch whilst Alexander was offering sacrifice in the temple, suffered his hand to be burnt sooner than be guilty of irreverence by allowing the torch to fall. The saint adds,[9994]that if reverence to his sovereign could conquer nature in a boy, how much more will the thought of the divine presence make a faithful soul overcome every temptation, and suffer every pain rather than insult the Lord before his face!

All the sins of men flow from their losing sight of the divine presence. “ Every evil,” says St. Teresa, “ happens to us because we do not reflect that God is present with us, but imagine that he is at a distance.”[9995] And before her David said the same: God is not before, his eyes; his ways are filthy at all times.[9996] Sinners forget that God sees them, and therefore they offend him at all times. The Abbot Diocles went so far as to say that[9997] “ he who distracts himself from the remembrance of the presence of God becomes either a beast or a devil.” And justly; for he shall be instantly assailed by carnal or diabolical desires which he will not have strength to resist.

On the other hand, the saints by the thought that God was looking at them have bravely repelled all the assaults of their enemies. This thought gave courage to holy Susanna to resist the temptations of the Elders, and even to despise their threats against her life. Hence she courageously said to them: It is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it than to sin in the sight of the Lord.[9998] It is better to fall into your hands and to die without sin than to offend God before his face. This thought also converted a wicked woman who dared to tempt St. Ephrem; the saint told her that if she wished to sin she must meet him in the middle of the city. But, said she, how is it possible to commit sin before so many people? And how, replied the saint, is it possible to sin in the presence of God, who sees us in every place? At these words she burst into tears, and falling prostrate on the ground asked pardon of the saint, and besought him to point out to her the way of salvation. St. Ephrem placed her in a monastery, where she led a holy life, weeping over her sins till death.[9999]

The same happened to the abbot Paphnutius and a sinner called Thais. She tempted him one day, saying that there was no one to see them but God. The saint with a stern voice said to her: “ Then you believe that God sees you, and will you commit sin ?” Thais was thunderstruck, and filled with horror for her sinful life: she gathered together all her riches,, clothes, and jewels which she had earned by her infamous practices, burned them in the public square, and retired into a monastery, where she fasted on bread and water every day for three successive years, always repeating this prayer: " O Thou who hast made me, have mercy on me ! My God, who hast created me, have pity on me !"[10000] After these three years she happily ended her life by a holy death. It was afterwards revealed to Paul, a disciple of St. Anthony, that this happy penitent was placed among the saints on an exalted throne of glory.[10001]

Behold the efficacy of the remembrance of the divine presence to make us avoid sins. Let us then always pray to the Lord, saying with Job: Set me beside thee, and let any man's hand fight against me[10002] My God, place me in Thy presence; that is, remind me in every place that Thou seest me, and then let all my enemies assail me: I shall always defeat them. Hence St. Chrysostom concludes: " If we keep ourselves always in the presence of God, the thought that he sees all our thoughts, that he hears all our words, and observes all our actions will preserve us from thinking any evil, from speaking any evil, and from doing any evil."[10003]

II. As to the second effect, the practice of virtue, the presence of God is also a great means. Oh, what valour does a soldier exhibit in the presence of his sovereign! The sole thought that his prince by whom he shall be punished or rewarded is present inspires him with great courage and strength. Thus also when such a religious is in the presence of her Superior, with what exterior recollection does she pray, with what modesty and humility does she treat the sisters; with what care does she execute the directions that she receives! Hence if they reflected that God was looking at all their actions, all religious would do all things well, with a pure intention, without seeking to please anyone but God, and without any regard to human respect. St. Basil says that were a person to find himself in the presence of a king and a peasant, his sole concern would be to please the king without any regard to the wishes of the peasant. Thus he that walks in the divine presence is regardless of the pleasure of creatures, and seeks only to please God, who sees him always.

III. Finally, as to the third effect of the divine presence, that is, to unite the soul to God, it is an infallible rule that love is always increased by the presence of the object loved. This happens even among men, although the more they converse together, the more their defects are discovered. How much more shall the love of a soul for God increase if it keep him before its eyes! for the more it converses with him, the better it comprehends his beauty and amiableness. The morning and the evening meditation are not sufficient to keep the soul united with God. St. John Chrysostom says, that even water, if removed from the fire, soon returns to its natural temperature; and therefore after prayer it is necessary to preserve fervor by the presence of God, and by renewing our affections.

St. Bernard says of himself, that in the beginning of his conversion, when he found himself disturbed, or his fervor cooled, peace and the ardor of divine love were instantly restored by the remembrance of a deceased or absent saint.[10004] Now, how much greater the effect which must be produced on a soul that loves God, by remembering that he is present, and that he is asking her love.

David said that by the remembrance of his God he was filled with joy and consolation. I remembered God, and was delighted.[10005] However great the affliction and desolation of a soul may be, if it loves God it will be consoled and freed from its affliction by remembering its beloved Lord. Hence, souls enamoured of God live always with a tranquil heart and in continual peace; because, like the sunflower that always turns its face to the sun, they in all events and in all their actions seek always to live and act in the presence of God. “ A true lover,” says St. Teresa, “always remembers her beloved.”[10006]

2. PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Let us now come to the practice of this excellent exercise of the divine presence. This exercise consists partly in the operation of the understanding, and partly in the operation of the will: of the understanding, in beholding God present; of the will, in uniting the soul to God, by acts of humiliation, of adoration, of love, and the like: of the latter we shall speak more particularly hereafter.

I. With regard to the intellect, the presence of God may be practised in four ways:

1. By imagining that our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, is present, that he is in our company, and that he sees us in whatsoever place we may be. We can at

one time represent him in one mystery, and again in another: for example, now an infant lying in the manger of Bethlehem, and again a pilgrim flying into Egypt; now a boy working in the shop of Nazareth, and again suffering as a criminal in his Passion in Jerusalem, scourged, or crowned with thorns, or nailed to a cross. St. Teresa[10007]praises this method of practising the presence of God.

But it is necessary to remark, that though this method is good, it is not the best, nor is it always profitable: first, because it is not conformable to truth; for Jesus Christ, as God and man together, is present with us only after Communion, or when we are before the Blessed Sacrament. Besides, this mode is liable to illusion, or may at least injure the head by the efforts of the imagination. Hence, should you wish to practise it, you must do it sweetly, only when you find it useful, and without labouring to represent in the mind the peculiar features of our Saviour, his countenance, his stature, or colour. It is enough to represent him in a confused manner, as if he were observing all we do.

2. The second method, which is more secure and more excellent, is founded on the truth of faith, and consists in beholding with eyes of faith God present with us in every place, in considering that he encompasses us, that he sees and observes whatever we do. We indeed do not see him with the eyes of the flesh. Nor do we see the air, yet we know for certain that it surrounds us on every side, that we live in it; for without it we could neither breathe nor live. We do not see God, but our holy faith teaches that he is always present with us. Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord? Is it not true, says God, that I fill heaven and earth by my presence.[10008] And as a sponge in the midst of the ocean is encompassed and saturated with water, so, says the Apostle, we live in God, we move in God, and have our being in God.[10009] And our God, says St. Augustine, observes every action, every word, every thought of each of us, as if he forgot all his other creatures, and had to attend only to us.[10010]Hence, observing all we do, say, and think, he marks and registers all, in order to demand an account on the day of accounts, and to give us then the reward or the chastisement that we have deserved.

This second mode of practising the divine presence does not fatigue the mind; for the exercise of it we need only enliven our faith with an affectionate act of the will, saying: My God, I believe firmly that Thou art here present. To this act we can easily add the acts of love, or of resignation, or of purity of intention, and the like.

3. The third means of preserving the remembrance of the presence of God is to recognize him in his creatures, which have from him their being, and their power of serving us. God is in the water to wash us, in the fire to warm us, in the sun to enlighten us, in food to nourish us, in clothes to cover us, and in like manner in all other things that he has created for our use. When we see a beautiful object, a beautiful garden, or a beautiful flower, let us think that there we behold a ray of the infinite beauty of God, who has given existence to that object. If we converse with a man of sanctity and learning, let us consider that it is God who imparts to him a small portion of his own holiness and wisdom. Thus, also, when we hear harmonious sounds, when we feel a fragrant odour, or taste delicious meat or drink, let us remember that God is the being who by his presence imparts to us these delights, that by them we may be induced to aspire to the eternal delights of paradise.

Let us accustom ourselves to behold in every object God, who presents himself to us in every creature; and let us offer him acts of thanksgiving and of love, remembering that from eternity he has thought of creating so many beautiful creatures that we might love him. St. Augustine says:[10011] Learn to love your Creator in creatures; and fix not your affection on what God has made, lest you should become attached to creatures and lose him by whom you, too, have been created.

This was the practice of the saint. At the sight of creatures he was accustomed to raise his heart to God; hence he exclaimed with love: Heaven and earth and all things tell me to love Thee.[10012] When he beheld the heavens, the stars, the fields, the mountains, he seemed to hear them say: Augustine, love God, for he has created you for no other end than that you might love him.

Thus, likewise, St. Teresa, when she beheld the plains, the sea, the rivers, or other beautiful creatures, felt as if they reproached her with ingratitude to God. Thus also St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, holding in her hand a flower or an apple, and looking at it, became enraptured with divine love, saying within herself: Then my God has thought from eternity of creating this fruit for my sake, and to give me a proof of the love that he bears me! It is also related of St. Simon Salo, that when in walking through the fields he saw flowers or herbs, he would strike them with his staff, saying: " Be silent ! be silent ! you reproach me with not loving that God who has made you so beautiful for my sake, that I might be induced to love him: I have already heard you; cease; reprove me no longer; be silent."[10013]

3. The fourth and most perfect means of remembering the divine presence is to consider God within us. We need not ascend to heaven to find our God; let us be recollected within ourselves, and in ourselves we shall find him. To treat in prayer with God as at a distance, causes great distraction. St. Teresa used to say: "I never knew how to make mental prayer as it ought to be made till God taught me this manner of praying: in this recollection within myself I have always found great profit."

To come to what is practical: It is necessary to know that God is present in us, in a manner different from that in which he is present in other creatures; in us he is present as in his own temple and his own house. Know you not, says the Apostle, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwell eth in you.[10014] Hence our Saviour says, that into a soul that loves God, he comes with the Father and Holy Ghost, not to remain there for a short time, but to dwell in it forever, and there to establish an everlasting habitation. If, any one love me, . . . my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him.[10015]

The kings of the earth, though they have their great palaces, have, notwithstanding, their particular apartments in which they generally live. God is in all places; his presence fills heaven and earth; but he dwells in a particular manner in our souls, and there, as he himself tells us by the mouth of the Apostle, he delights to remain as in so many gardens of pleasure. I will dwell in them, and will walk among them, and I will be their God:[10016] There he wishes us to love him and to pray to him: for he remains in us full of love and mercy, to hear our supplications, to receive our affections, to enlighten us, to govern us, to bestow on us his gifts, and to assist us in all that can contribute to our eternal salvation.

Let us then often endeavor, on the one hand, to enliven our faith in this great truth, and annihilate ourselves at the sight of the great majesty that condescends to dwell within us; and on the other, let us be careful to make acts at one time of confidence, at another of oblation, and again of love of his infinite goodness; now thanking him for his favors, at another time rejoicing in his glory; and again asking counsel in our doubts; consoling ourselves always in the possession of this Sovereign Good within us, certain that no created power can deprive us of him, and that he will never depart from us unless we first voluntarily banish him from our hearts. This was the little cell that St. Catharine of Sienna built within her heart, in which she lived always retired, always engaged in loving colloquies with God; thus she defended herself against the persecution of her parents, who had forbidden her to retire any more to her chamber for the purpose of praying. And in this little cell the saint made greater progress than she did by retiring to her room; for she was obliged to leave her chamber several times in the day. This interior cell she never left, but remained in it always recollected with God. Hence St. Teresa, speaking of the divine presence in our interior, said: “ I believe that they who are able to lock themselves up in this little heaven in their souls, where he who created them is always present, walk in an excellent path, because they make great progress in a short time.”[10017]

In a word, by this exercise of the presence of God the saints have succeeded in acquiring great treasures of merits. I set the Lord always in my sight says the royal prophet, for he is at my right hand that I be. not moved.[10018] I endeavor to consider God always present, and observing all my actions. Blessed Henry Suso applied himself with so much attention to this holy exercise that he performed all his actions in the divine presence, and thus continually conversed with God by tender affections.

St. Gertrude acquired the habit of this exercise so perfectly, that our Lord said of her to St. Mechtilde: “ This beloved spouse always walks in my presence, seeking always to do my will, and directing all her works to my glory.”[10019] This was also the practice of St. Teresa; for in whatever occupation she found herself she never lost sight of her beloved Lord.

If, then, you ask me how often in the day you should remember the presence of God, I will answer you with St. Bernard[10020]that you ought to remember it every moment. As there is not a moment, says the saint, in which we do not enjoy the benefits of God, so there is not a moment in which we should not remember God, and prove our gratitude. If you knew that the king was always thinking of you and of your welfare, though he should confer no real benefit, still you could not remember his affection without feeling an interior love for him. It is certain that your God is always thinking of you, and that he incessantly confers favors on you at one time by his lights, at another by internal helps, and again by loving visits. Is it not ingratitude in you to be forgetful of him for any length of time ? It is then a duty to endeavor to remember always, or at least as often as we can, the divine presence.

This was the advice of the Lord to Abraham: Walk before me, and be perfect.[10021]Endeavor to walk always in my presence, and you shall be perfect. Tobias gave the same advice to his son: All the days of thy life have God in thy mind.[10022] My son, during your whole life keep God always before your eyes.

The exercise of the divine presence St. Dorotheus recommended in a most special manner to his disciple, St. Dositheus, who besought him to tell him what he should do in order to be a saint : “ Consider that God is always present, and that he is looking at you.”[10023]St. Dorotheas relates that the good disciple was so faithful to the advice, that in all his occupations, and even in the severe infirmities with which he was visited, he never lost sight of God. Thus after being a soldier, and a dissolute young man, he attained in five years so high a degree of sanctity, that after death he was seen in heaven seated on a throne of glory equal to that of the most holy among the anchorets.

The great servant of God, Father Joseph Anchieta, who by the exercise of the divine presence arrived at such perfection, used to say that nothing else but our inattention to it can divert us from so holy an exercise. The prophet Micheas says: I will show thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requireth of thee, . . . to walk solicitous with thy God.[10024] O man, I will show you in what your welfare consists, and what the Lord demands of you; behold it: he wishes you to be solicitous, and that your whole concern be to do all your actions in his presence; because then all shall be well done. Hence, St. Gregory Nazianzen has written: “So often should we remember God as we draw breath.”[10025] He adds, that by doing this we shall do all things. Another devout author says that meditation may in some cases be omitted; for example, in the time of sickness, or of important business, which cannot be deferred; but the exercise of the presence of God must be always practised by acts of purity of intention, of oblation, and the like, as will be more fully explained hereafter.

II. Hitherto we have spoken of the operation of the intellect; allow me to speak of the application of the will to the holy exercise of the divine presence. And it is necessary, first, to know that to remain always before God, with the mind always fixed on him, is the happy lot of the saints; but in the present state it is morally impossible to keep up the presence of God without interruption. Hence we should endeavor to practise it to the best of our ability, not with a solicitous inquietude and indiscreet effort of the mind, but with sweetness and tranquillity.

There are three means of facilitating the application of the will to this exercise.

1. The first method consists in frequently raising the heart to God, by short but fervent ejaculations, or loving affections towards God, present with us. These may be practised in all places and in all times, in walking, at work, at meals, and at recreation. These affections may be acts of election, of desire, of resignation, of oblation, of love, of renunciation, of thanksgiving, of petition, of humiliation, of confidence, and the like. In whatever occupation you find yourself, you can very easily turn to God from time to time and say to him:

—My God, I wish only for Thee, and nothing else.

—I desire nothing but to be all Thine.

—Dispose as Thou pleasest of me, and of all that I possess.

—I give myself entirely to Thee, I love Thee more than myself,

—I wish only what Thou wishest.

—I renounce all things for the love of Thee,

—I thank Thee for the great graces Thou hast bestowed upon me.

—Assist me, have mercy on me.

—Give me Thy holy love.

—Lord, I should be at this moment in hell.

—I delight in Thy felicity.

—I would wish that all men loved Thee.

—Do not permit me to be separated from Thee.

—In Thee I place all my confidence.

—When shall I see Thee and love Thee face to face.

—Let all that I do and suffer be done and suffered for Thee.

—May Thy holy will be always done. !

The ancient Fathers set great value on all these short prayers, by which we can practise the presence of God more easily than by long prayers. And St. John Chrysostom used to say, that he that makes use of these short prayers or acts shuts the door against the devil, and prevents him from coming to molest him with bad thoughts.[10026]

At certain special times it is necessary more particularly to enliven our faith in the divine presence. First, in the morning when we awake, by saying: My God, I believe that Thou art here present, and that Thou wilt be present with me in every place to which I shall go this day; watch over me, then, in all places, and do not permit me to offend Thee before Thy divine eyes. Secondly, at the beginning of all our prayers, whether mental or vocal. The Venerable Cardinal Caracciolo, Bishop of Aversa, used to say, .that he that makes mental prayer with distractions, shows that he has been negligent in making the act of faith in the presence of God. Thirdly, on occasion of any temptation against patience or chastity; for example, if you are seized with any sharp pain, or receive any grievous insult, or if any scandalous object be presented to you, instantly arm yourself with the divine presence, and excite your courage by remembering that God is looking at you. It was thus that David prepared himself to resist temptations. My eyes are ever towards the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the snare.[10027] I will keep my eyes on my God, and he will deliver me from the snares of my enemies. You must do the same when you have occasion to perform any very difficult act of virtue; you must imitate the valorous Judith, who, after having unsheathed the sword, and taken Holofernes, who was asleep, by the hair of the head, turned to God before she gave the stroke, and said: Strengthen me, O Lord, in this hour.[10028] Thus she courageously cut off his head.

2. The second method of preserving the presence of God by acts of the will is to renew always in distracting employments the intention of performing them all with the intention of pleasing God. And therefore, in the beginning of every action or occupation, whether you apply yourself to work, go to table, or to recreation, or to repose, say: Lord, I do not intend in

this work my pleasure, but only the accomplishment of Thy will. In the course of the action endeavor to renew your intention, saying: My God, may all be for Thy glory. By these acts the presence of God is preserved without fatiguing the mind; for the very desire of pleasing God is a loving remembrance of his presence. It is also useful to fix certain times, or particular signs, in order to remember the divine presence; as when the clock strikes, when you look at the crucifix, when you enter or leave the cell. Some are accustomed to keep in their room some particular sign, to remind them of the presence of God.

3. The third method is, when you find yourself very much distracted during the day, and the mind oppressed with business, to procure leave from the Superior to retire, at least for a little, to the choir or to the cell, in order to recollect yourself with God.

Were you on any day to feel bodily weakness, arising from excess of labor and long fasting, would you not take some refreshment in order to be able to proceed with the work ? How much more careful should you be to treat the soul in a similar manner, when it begins to fail in courage, and to grow cold in divine love, in consequence of being a long time without food; that is, without prayer and recollection with God? I again repeat what Father Balthasar Alvarez used to say, that a soul out of prayer is like a fish out of water; the soul is, as it were, in a state of violence. Hence, after being a long time engaged in business and distracting occupations, a Christian should retire (if I may use the expression), to take breath in solitude, recollecting himself there with God, by affections and petitions. The life of bliss in heaven consists in seeing and loving God, and therefore I infer that the felicity of a soul on this earth consists also in loving and seeing God, not openly as in paradise, but with the eyes of faith, by which it beholds him always present with it; and thus acquires great reverence, confidence, and love towards its beloved Lord. He that lives in this manner, begins, even in this valley of tears, to live like the saints in heaven, who always see God. They always see the face of my Father,[10029] and therefore they cannot cease to love him. Thus he that lives in the divine presence will despise all earthly things, knowing that before God all is misery and smoke; and will begin in this life to possess that Sovereign Good who contents the heart more than all other goods.

PRAYER

My adored Jesus, Thou hast not refused to give all Thy blood for me ; and shall I refuse to give Thee all my love ? No, my beloved Redeemer, I offer myself entirely to Thee; accept me and dispose of me as Thou pleasest. But since Thou givest me the desire of Thy pure love, teach me what I ought to do, and I will do it. Grant that this heart that was once miserably deprived of Thy love may now neither love nor seek anything but Thee. Grant that my will may wish only what Thou wishest. Unhappy me ! I once, for the sake of my pleasures, despised Thy will, and forgot Thee. Grant that from this day forward I may forget all things, even myself, to think only of loving and pleasing Thee. O my God, amiable above every good, how bitterly do I regret that hitherto I have had so little regard for Thee ! Lord, pardon me, draw me entirely to Thyself ; do not permit me to love Thee but little, or to love anything but Thee. I hope for all things from Thy goodness, and from Thy merits, O my Jesus !

And I place all confidence in thee, O my Queen, my advocate, and my Mother, Mary. Have pity on me, and recommend me to thy Son, who hears thy prayers, and refuses thee nothing.

Chapter XVII

SPIRITUAL READING

To a spiritual life the reading of holy books is perhaps not less useful than mental prayer. St. Bernard says reading instructs us at once in prayer, and in the practice of virtue.[10030] Hence he concluded that spiritual reading and prayer are the arms by which hell is conquered and paradise won.[10031] We cannot always have access to a spiritual Father for counsel in our actions, and particularly in our doubts; but reading will abundantly supply his place by giving us lights and directions to escape the illusions of the devil and of our own self-love, and at the same time to submit to the divine will. Hence St. Athanasius used to say that we find no one devoted to the service of the Lord that did not practice spiritual reading.[10032] Hence all the founders of religious Orders have strongly recommended this holy exercise to their religious. St. Benedict, among the rest, commanded that each monk should every day make a spiritual reading, and that two others should be appointed to go about visiting the cells to see if all fulfilled the command; and should any monk be found negligent in the observance of this rule, the saint ordered a penance to be imposed upon him. But before all, the Apostle prescribed spiritual reading to Timothy. *Attend unto reading*[10033] Mark the word *Attend*, which signifies that, although Timothy, as being bishop, was greatly occupied with the care of his flock, still the Apostle wished him to apply to the reading of holy books, not in a passing way and for a short time, but regularly and for a considerable time.

The reading of spiritual works is as profitable as the reading of bad books is noxious. As the former has led to the conversion of many sinners, so the latter is every day the ruin of many young persons. The first author of pious books is the Spirit of God; but the author of pernicious writings is the devil, who often artfully conceals from certain persons the poison that such works contain, and makes these persons believe that the reading of such books is necessary in order to speak well, and to acquire a knowledge of the world for their own direction, or at least in order to pass the time agreeably. But I say that, especially’ for nuns, nothing is more pernicious than the reading of bad books. And by bad books I mean not only those that are condemned by the Holy See, either because they contain heresy, or treat of subjects opposed to chastity, but also all books that treat of worldly love. What fervor can a religious have if she reads romances, comedies, or profane poetry’? What recollection can she have in meditation or at Communion? Can she be called the spouse of Jesus Christ? Should she not rather be called the spouse of a sinful world? Even young women in the world that are in the habit of reading such books are generally not virtuous seculars.

But someone may say, What harm is there in reading romances and profane poetry when they contain nothing immodest? Do you ask what harm? Behold the harm: the reading of such works kindles the concupiscence of the senses, and awakens the passions; these easily gain the consent of the will, or at least render it so weak that when the occasion of any dangerous affection occurs the devil finds the soul already prepared to allow itself to be conquered. A wise author has said that by the reading of such pernicious books heresy has made, and makes every day, great progress; because such reading has given and gives increased strength to libertinism. The poison of these books enters gradually into the soul; it first makes itself master of the understanding, then infects the will, and in the end kills the soul. The devil finds no means more efficacious and secure of sending a young person to perdition than the reading of such poisoned works. Oh ! what desolation will this poison produce should it be ever introduced into any religious Community ! A single bad book will be sufficient to cause the destruction of a monastery. Blessed spouse of the Lord, should a work of this description ever fall into your hands, cast it at once into the fire, that it never more may be seen. And if you are Superior, and wish not to have a great account to render to God, exclude all such books from the convent.

Remember also that for you certain useless books, though not bad, will be pernicious; because they will make you lose the time that you can employ in occupations profitable to the soul. In a letter to his disciple Eustochium, St. Jerome stated for her instruction that in his solitude at Bethlehem he was attached to the works of Cicero, and frequently read them, and that he felt a certain disgust for pious books because their style was not polished. He was seized with a serious malady, in which he saw himself at the tribunal of Jesus Christ. The Lord said to him: “Tell me; what are you?” “I am,” replied the saint, “a Christian.” “No,” rejoined the Judge, “you are a Ciceronian, not a Christian.” He then commanded him to be instantly scourged. The saint promised to correct his fault, and having returned from the vision he found his shoulders livid and covered with wounds in consequence of the chastisement that he had received. Thenceforward he gave up the works of Cicero, and devoted himself to the reading of books of piety. It is true that in the works like those of Cicero we sometimes find useful sentiments; but the same St. Jerome wisely said in a letter to another disciple: “What need have you of seeking for a little gold in the midst of so much mire,”[10034] when you can read pious books in which you may find all gold without any mire?

Works on Moral Theology also are ordinarily useless, and sometimes even injurious to a nun; because by reading them her conscience may be disturbed, or she may learn what it is not useful for her to know. To some the reading of books on Mystic Theology may be pernicious; for it may incline them to seek after supernatural prayer, and to abandon the ordinary method of mental prayer by considerations and affections: thus they may be left without one or the other. For no one should seek to attain the prayer of contemplation unless God clearly calls him to it. Hence St. Teresa after death appeared to one of her nuns and directed that the Superiors should forbid the religious to read her books of visions and revelations, saying that she had become a saint not by visions and revelations, but by the practice of virtue.

Let us return to the subject, and consider the great blessings that the reading of spiritual books brings to the soul.

In the first place, as the reading of bad books fills the mind with worldly and poisonous sentiments; so, on the other hand, the reading of pious works fills the soul with holy thoughts and good desires. How can the religious be recollected and filled with holy thoughts that spends a considerable part of the day in reading curious and profane works that fill her head with a thousand worldly ideas and a crowd of earthly affections? How can she keep herself in the divine presence, and offer to God frequent acts of love, of oblation, of petition, and the like. The mill grinds the corn that it receives; if the wheat be bad how can the mill make good flour? The nun that has employed a considerable time in reading curious books will go to meditation and Communion, and then, instead of thinking of God and of making acts of love and confidence, she will be constantly molested with distractions; for the representations of all the vanities that she has read will be presented to her mind. On the other hand, the nun that keeps the mind filled with devout thoughts, such as spiritual maxims, examples of the virtuous actions of the saints, will not only during prayer, but also at other times, be accompanied by these thoughts, and by them she will be kept almost always united with God. St. Bernard explains this by a beautiful similitude in his exposition of the words *seek and you shall find,*[10035] he says: "Seek by reading books of devotion, and in meditation you will find what you seek; for reading puts into the mouth the food that is afterwards masticated by meditation."[10036]

In the second place, the soul that is imbued with holy thoughts in reading is always prepared to banish internal temptations. The advice that St. Jerome gave to his disciple Salvina was: "Endeavor to have always in your hand a pious book, that with this shield you may defend yourself against bad thoughts."[10037]

In the third place, spiritual reading serves to make us see the stains that infect the soul, and helps us to remove them. The same St. Jerome recommended Demetriade to avail herself of spiritual reading as of a mirror.[10038] He meant to say that as a mirror exhibits the stains of the countenance, so holy books show us the defects of the soul. St. Gregory, speaking of spiritual reading, says: "There we perceive the losses we have sustained and the advantages we have acquired; there we observe our falling back or our progress in the way of God."[10039]

In the fourth place, in reading holy books we receive many lights and divine calls. St. Jerome says that when we pray we speak to God; but when we read, God speaks to us.[10040] St. Ambrose says the same: "We address him when we pray: we hear him when we read."[10041] In prayer, God hears our petitions, but in reading we listen to his voice. We cannot, as I have already said, always have at hand a spiritual Father, nor can we hear the sermons of sacred orators, to direct and give us light to walk well in the way of God. Good books supply the place of sermons. St. Augustine whites[10042] that good books are, as it were, so many letters of love that the Lord sends us; in them he warns us of our dangers, teaches us the way of salvation, animates us to suffer adversity, enlightens us, and inflames us with divine love. Whoever, then, desires to be saved and to acquire divine love, should often read these letters of paradise.

How many saints have, by reading a spiritual book, been induced to forsake the world and to give themselves to God! It is known to all that St. Augustine, when miserably chained by his passions and vices, was, by reading one of the epistles of St. Paul, enlightened with divine light, went forth from his darkness, and began to lead a life of holiness. Thus also St. Ignatius, while a soldier, by reading a volume of the lives of the saints which he accidentally took up, in order to get rid of the tediousness of the bed to which he was confined by sickness, was led to begin a life of sanctity, and became the Father and Founder of the Society of Jesus—an Order which has done so much for the Church. Thus also by reading a pious book accidentally and almost against his will, St. John Colombino left the world, became a saint, and the founder of another religious Order. St. Augustine relates[10043] that two courtiers of the Emperor Theodosius entered one day into a monastery of solitaries; one of them began to read the life of St. Anthony, which he found in one of the cells; so strong was the impression made upon him, that he resolved to take leave of the world. He then addressed his companion with so much fervor that both of them remained in the monastery to serve God. We read in the Chronicles of the Discalced Carmelites that a lady in Vienna was prepared to go to a festivity, but because it was given up she fell into a violent passion. To divert her attention she began to read a spiritual book that was at hand, and conceived such contempt for *the* world, that she abandoned it and became a Teresian nun. The same happened to the Duchess of Montalto, in Sicily. She began also by accident to read the works of St. Teresa, and afterwards continued to read them with so much fervor, that she sought and obtained her husband's consent to become a religious, and entered among the Discalced Carmelites.

But the reading of spiritual books has not only contributed to the conversion of saints, but has also given them during their whole life great aid to persevere and to advance continually in perfection. The glorious St.

Dominic used to embrace his spiritual books, and to press them to his bosom, saying, “These books give me milk.” And how, except by meditation and the use of pious books, were the anchorets enabled to spend so many years in the desert, at a distance from all human society? That great servant of God, Thomas a Kempis, could not enjoy greater consolation than in remaining in a corner of his cell with a spiritual book in his hand. It has been already mentioned in this work that the Venerable Vincent Carafa used to say that he could not desire a greater happiness in this world than to live in a little grotto provided with a morsel of bread and a spiritual book. St. Philip Neri devoted all the vacant hours that he could procure to the reading of spiritual books, and particularly the lives of the saints.

If you ask me what book is most useful for you who are religious, above all I counsel you to read the books that you find best calculated to excite your devotion, and to move you most powerfully to unite your soul to God. Of this character are the works of St. Francis de Sales, of St. Teresa, of Father Granada, of Rodriguez, of St. Jure, of Nieremberg, of Pinamonti, and other similar books; and particularly the “Admonitions to Religious,” by the Fathers of St. Maur, and the “Ascetic Directory” of Father Scaramelli, a modern work, but full of learning and unction.[10044] In general, I advise you to lay aside works that are hard to be understood, and to read books of devotion written in a plain and simple style! Be careful also to read the subjects that you know will contribute most to your perfection. Among the rest, read frequently the lives of the saints, and particularly of those who have been religious; such as the life of St. Teresa, of St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, of St. Catharine of Sienna, of St. Jane Frances de Chantal, of the Venerable Frances Farnese, of the Venerable Sister Seraphina da Capri, of St. Peter of Alcantara, of St. John of the Cross, of St. Francis Borgia, of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, etc. Read frequently the lives of the holy martyrs, particularly of so many holy young virgins that have given their lives for Jesus Christ. You can use the lives of the saints published by Father Croisset.

Oh! How profitable is the reading of the lives of the saints! In books of instruction we read what we are bound to do, but in the lives of the saints we read what so many holy men and women, who were flesh as we are, have done. Hence, their example, if it produce no other fruit, will at least humble us and make us sink under the earth. In reading the great things that the saints have done, we shall certainly be ashamed of the little that we have done and still do for God. St. Augustine said of himself: “My God, the examples of Thy servants, when I meditated on them, consumed my tepidity and inflamed me with Thy holy love.”[10045] Of St. Francis, St. Bonaventure writes: “By the remembrance of the saints and of their virtues, as if they were so many stones of fire, he was inflamed with new love for God.”[10046]

St. Gregory also relates[10047] that in Rome there was a beggar called Servolus; he was afflicted with infirmities, and lived on the alms that he collected: he gave a part to the poor, and employed the remainder in purchasing books of devotion. Servolus could not read, but he engaged those whom he lodged in his little house to read for him. St. Gregory says that by listening to these spiritual readings Servolus acquired great patience and a wonderful knowledge of the things of God. Finally, the saint states that at death the poor man besought his friends to read for him; but before breathing his last he interrupted the reading, and said: “Be silent, be silent, do you not hear how all paradise resounds with canticles and harmonious music?” After these words he sweetly expired. Immediately after his death a most agreeable odor was diffused over the room, in testimony of the sanctity of the beggar, who left the world poor in earthly goods, but rich in virtue and merits.

But to draw great fruit from spiritual reading:

It is, in the first place, necessary to recommend yourself beforehand to God, that he may enlighten the mind while you read. It has been already said, that in spiritual reading the Lord condescends to speak to us; and, therefore, in taking up the book, we must pray to God in the words of Samuel: *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.* Speak,[10048] O my Lord, for I wish to obey Thee in all that Thou wilt make known to me to be Thy will.

In the second place, you must read not in order to acquire learning, nor to indulge curiosity, but for the sole purpose of advancing in divine love. To read for the sake of knowledge is not spiritual reading, but is, at the time of spiritual reading, a study unprofitable to the soul. It is still worse to read through curiosity, as certain nuns do, who devour books, seeking only to finish them in a short time, and to gratify curiosity. What profit do they expect to draw from such reading? All the time devoted to such reading is lost time. St. Gregory says that many read and read a great deal, but, because they have read only through curiosity, they finish reading as hungry as if they had not been reading.[10049] Hence the saint corrected a physician called Theodore for reading spiritual books quickly and without profit.

To derive advantage from pious books it is necessary to read them slowly and with attention. "Nourish your soul," says St. Augustine, "with divine lectures."[10050] Now to receive nutriment from food, it must not be devoured, but well masticated. Remember, then, in the third place, that to reap abundant fruit from pious reading, you must masticate and ponder well what you read; applying to yourself what is there inculcated. And when what you have read has made a lively impression on you, St. Ephrem counsels you to read it a second time.[10051]

Besides, when you receive any special light in reading, or any instruction that penetrates the heart, it will be very useful to stop, and to raise the mind to God by making a good resolution, or a good act, or a fervent prayer. St. Bernard says, that it is useful then to interrupt the reading, and to offer a prayer, and to continue to pray as long as the lively impression lasts.[10052] Let us imitate the bees, that pass not from one flower to another until they have gathered all the honey that they found in the first. This we should do, although all the time prescribed for the reading should be spent in such acts; for thus the time is spent with greater spiritual profit. Sometimes it may happen that you draw more fruit from reading a single verse than from reading an entire page.

Moreover, at the end of the reading you must select some sentiment of devotion, excited by what you have read, and carry it with you as you would carry a flower from a garden of pleasure.

PRAYER

My Lord, I thank Thee for so many helps and lights that Thou givest me, in order to make me a saint, and to unite me always more closely to Thee. When will the day arrive on which I shall see myself freed from all earthly affections, and entirely united to Thy heart, which is so enamoured of my soul! I hope for all things from Thy infinite mercy. My Jesus, I cannot bear to see myself any longer ungrateful to Thy love, as I have hitherto been. *Create a clean heart in me, O God.* Lord, give me a new heart that will think only of pleasing Thee. This desire that Thou givest me makes me hope for Thy grace. My God, I believe in Thee, and for Thy faith I would give my life a thousand times. I hope in Thee through the merits of Jesus Christ; without them I should be lost. O Sovereign Good, I love Thee; and for the love of Thee, I renounce all things, and embrace every pain and every cross that Thou wishest to send me. I have offended Thee, but I feel more sorrow for having offended Thee, than if I had suffered every other misfortune. I now sigh only for Thy grace and love. My God, assist me, have mercy on me.

Holy Virgin, assist me by thy prayers, which obtain from God whatever thou askest. My Mother, recommend me to thy Son; do not forget me.

Chapter XVIII

THE FREQUENTATION OF THE SACRAMENTS.

I

CONFESSION

I DO not intend to treat in this place of the confessions of those who commit mortal sins, although I shall say something on proximate occasions and on sacrilegious confessions; but I will principally speak of the confessions of timorous souls that love perfection and endeavor constantly to purify their souls more and more from the stain of venial sins.

UTILITY OF FREQUENT CONFESSION

Cesarius relates that a good priest commanded, in the name of God, a devil who appeared to him to tell what was most hurtful to him. The demon answered that nothing was more injurious or displeasing to him than frequent confession. Jesus Christ once said to St. Bridget, that they who wish to preserve fervor should often purify their souls by accusing themselves in confession of all their defects, and all their negligence in his service.[10053] Cassian says[10054] that he who aspires to perfection should aim at great purity of conscience; because from purity of conscience the soul passes to perfect love. Hence, love corresponds to cleanness of heart. It is, however, necessary to know that in the present state this purity of soul does not consist in a total exemption from all faults; for except our divine Saviour and his divine Mother, there neither has been nor will be in this world any soul free from all stain *In many things we all offend.*[10055] —But it consists in two things: first, in a careful guard over the heart, to pre—vent the commission of every deliberate sin, however venial; and secondly, in instantly purifying the soul from any fault that it may commit. Now these two are precisely the fruits of frequent confession.

In the first place, confession cleanses the soul from the stains which it contracts. St. John Climacus relates[10056] that a young man, in order to discontinue the wicked life that he led in the world, went to a monastery in order to become a religious. Before his admission the abbot told him that if he wished to be received, he must make a public confession of all his sins. The young man, who was sincerely resolved to give himself to God, readily obeyed; and behold, while he confessed his faults in the presence of the monks, a holy religious who was among them saw a man of venerable aspect expunge from a written paper that he held in his hand every sin that had been confessed, so that at the end of the confession all the sins of the penitent were cancelled. Now, what then took place in a visible manner, happens invisibly to everyone that confesses his sins with the requisite dispositions.

Confession not only washes away the stains of the soul, but it also gives it strength against relapse. The angelic Doctor teaches that the virtue of penance not only destroys the fault that has been committed, but also prevents it from budding forth again. In his life of St. Malachy, St. Bernard relates that there was a certain woman who was so much given to impatience and to anger that she became insupportable. Hearing from her that she never confessed her impatience, St. Malachy induced her to make a confession of all her sins of anger. St. Bernard states that after her confession she became so meek and patient that she appeared incapable of resenting any injury or insult that she received.

Hence, to acquire purity of conscience, many saints confessed their sins every day. Such was the practice of St. Catharine of Sienna, of St. Bridget, of Blessed Colletta, of St. Charles Borromeo, of St. Ignatius of Loyola, and of many others. St. Francis Borgia went to confession even twice a day. If worldlings cannot bear to appear before those whom they love with a stain on the countenance, what wonder is it that souls that love God should endeavor always to purify themselves more and more, in order to render themselves more pleasing in the eyes of their beloved Lord! But I do not intend to require of religious who practise frequent Communion to go to confession every time they communicate; but it is right that they should go to confession twice or at least once a week, and also when they have committed any deliberate fault.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE, SORROW OR CONTRITION, AND PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT

Everyone knows that for a good confession three things are necessary: an examination of conscience, sorrow, and a purpose to avoid sin.

As to the *examination of conscience*, for those that frequent the sacraments, it is not necessary to distress the head by efforts to find out all the minute circumstances of venial sins. I would rather see such persons careful to discover the causes and roots of their attachments and tepidity. I say this for certain nuns who go to confession with their heads full of things heard at the grate, and thus they always give the same account, and recite the same faults without sorrow, and without any thought of amendment.

For spiritual souls that go frequently to confession, and guard against deliberate venial sins, it is not necessary to spend a long time in the examination of conscience; with regard to grievous sins, they need not scrutinize the conscience, for had they committed any mortal sin, they would know it without examination

With regard to venial sins, if they have been fully deliberate, they, too, by the remorse that they cause would make themselves known to the soul. Besides there is no obligation of confessing all our venial transgressions; consequently we are not obliged to make a strict search after them, and much less after the number, the circumstance, the manner, or the causes of them; it is enough to confess those that are most grievous, and most opposed to perfection, and to tell the rest in general terms. And when you have not certain matter for the sacrament, tell some sin of your past life for which you have great sorrow; and say, for example: I accuse myself in a special manner of all the faults I have committed in my past life against charity, purity, or obedience. How consoling is the doctrine of St. Francis de Sales on this point. “Be not troubled, he says, if[10057] you do not remember all your little faults at confession; for as you often fall imperceptibly, so you are often raised up imperceptibly,”[10058] that is, by the acts of love, or by the other good acts that devout souls are accustomed to perform.

In the second place, *sorrow* is necessary; this is the principal condition necessary for obtaining the pardon of sins. 1 he most sorrowful, not the longest confessions, are the best. The proof of a confession is found, says St. Gregory, not in the multitude of the words of the penitent, but in the compunction that he exhibits. But let nuns who go frequently to confession, and abhor even venial faults, banish all doubts regarding the sincerity of their sorrow. Some are troubled because they do not feel sorrow; they wish to shed tears, and to feel a tender sorrow every time they receive the sacrament of penance; and, because with all their efforts they are unable to excite this tender sorrow, they feel always uneasy about their confessions. But you must be persuaded that true sorrow consists not in feeling it, but in wishing for it. All the merit of virtue is in the will; hence, speaking of the virtue of faith, Gerson has said that sometimes a person who wishes to believe, has more merit than another who believes.’ Speaking of sorrow, St. Thomas says that the essential sorrow necessary for confession is a displeasure at having committed sin; and this sorrow is not in the sensitive part of the soul, but in the will; for sensible sorrow is an effect of the displeasure of the will, which effect we are not always able to produce, because the inferior part does not always follow and obey the superior part of the soul.[10059] Whenever the will is displeased, above all things, at having committed sin, the confession is a good one.

Be careful to abstain from forced efforts to excite sensible sorrow. Remember that, with regard to interior acts, the best are those that we perform with the least violence, and with the greatest sweetness; for the Holy Ghost orders all things sweetly and peacefully.[10060] Hence, the holy penitent Ezechias said of the sorrow that he felt for his sins: *Behold in peace is my bitterness most bitter.*[10061] He felt great sorrow, but it was accompanied with peace.

When you wish to receive absolution, be careful, in your preparation for confession, first to ask of Jesus Christ, and of the sorrowful Mother Mary, a true sorrow for your sins. Make afterwards, as has been already said, a short examination of conscience, and then as to the sorrow, it is enough for you to say with sincerity: My God, I love Thee above all things; I hope, through the blood of Jesus Christ, for the pardon of all my sins for which I am sorry with my whole heart, because by them I have offended and displeased Thy infinite goodness; I abhor them above every evil, and I unite my abhorrence of them to the abhorrence that Jesus had for them in the garden of Gethsemani. I purpose, with Thy grace, never more to offend Thee.

And as often as you have sincerely wished to make these acts, go in peace to receive absolution, without fear or scruple. St. Teresa gave another excellent means of removing anxiety about sorrow for sins. “See,” said the saint, “whether you have a sincere purpose not to commit the sins that you confess; if you have, doubt not that you also have true sorrow.”

In the third place, a purpose to sin no more is necessary; and this purpose must be firm, universal, and efficacious.

First, it must be *firm.* Some say: I would wish never more to commit this sin: I would wish never more to offend God. Alas! This expression, *I would wish,* denotes that the purpose is not firm. In order to have a firm purpose, you must say with a resolute will: I will never more commit this sin: I will never more deliberately offend God.

Secondly, it must be *universal,* so that the penitent will purpose to avoid all sins without exception, that is, all mortal sins. With regard to venial sins, it is sufficient for the validity of the sacrament to have sorrow for one species of them, and to have a firm purpose to avoid it. Spiritual souls should purpose to avoid all deliberate venial sins; and with regard to in deliberate venial sins, it is enough to resolve to guard against them according to the best of their ability; for it is impossible to avoid all in deliberate sins.

Thirdly, the purpose of avoiding sin must be *efficacious;* that is, it must make the penitent adopt the means of not relapsing into the sins that he confesses, and must make him avoid the proximate occasions of a relapse. An occasion is called proximate in which a person has frequently fallen into grievous sins, or has been, without a just cause, an occasion of sin to others. It is not enough for penitents to purpose merely to renounce sin: it is necessary also to resolve to remove the occasion of it; otherwise all their confessions, though they should receive a thousand absolutions, will be invalid: for not to remove the proximate occasion of mortal sin is in itself a mortal sin. And, as I have already shown in my *Moral Theology*[10062] he that receives absolution without a firm purpose of removing the proximate occasion of mortal sin, commits a new mortal sin, and is guilty of sacrilege.

But someone may say, If I separate from such a person, if I give up such familiarity, scandal will be the consequence, and it will be an occasion of talk to the Community. I answer: My dear sister, you are wrong; you will, on the contrary, give scandal by not removing the occasion, for the religious are aware of the friendship; and be assured, that although they may not speak in your presence, they think your conduct deceiving of blame. But you will say: To separate from such a one would be an act of incivility, and even of ingratitude, for she assists me, serves me, and relieves me. She assists you; yes, she helps to remove you from God, and to make you lead an unhappy life here, and a more unhappy life hereafter. Is it incivility or ingratitude?

Civility and gratitude are first due to Jesus Christ, who is a Sovereign of infinite majesty, and from whom we have received immense benefits. You may add, but I have pledged my word not to separate from her. But did you not first give your word to Jesus Christ at your profession that you would have no other lover but him?[10063] Did you not give your word that you wish neither to love nor to be loved by any other than God? Do you not then see that it is passion that makes you speak in this manner, and makes you seek pretexts in order to bring you to eternal perdition? Ah! Give no more pain to the heart of your Spouse, who feels his heart, as it were, wounded, at the sight of one of his spouses giving her affections to any other than to himself. To St. Ludgard, while she was miserably entangled in a dangerous friendship, Jesus appeared, and showed her his heart grievously wounded. The saint began to weep over her fault, and took leave of her friend, saying that she could love no other than Jesus Christ, to whom she had been espoused. Thenceforward she consecrated herself entirely to the love of her Spouse, and became a saint.

This is said only in passing, for proximate occasions scarcely ever occur in convents.

FALSE SHAME

But a nun may perhaps be tempted to conceal a sin in confession. A certain nun may have the misfortune of falling into mortal sin; the devil endeavors to lock her mouth, and to make her ashamed to confess her sin.

O God! How many souls shall, on account of this accursed shame, burn, and burn forever in hell, or rather in the bottom of hell. Some Christians, through human respect, and through fear of losing the esteem of others, easily continue for months and years to make sacrilegious confessions and

Communions. In the Chronicles of the Discalced Carmelites it is related that a young girl of great virtue consented to a sin against chastity; she concealed the sin three times in confession, and went to Communion; after the third Communion she suddenly fell dead. Because she was regarded as a saint her body was laid in a particular part of the church of the Jesuits; but after the obsequies were finished, and the church closed, the confessor was conducted by two angels to the place of interment; she came forth, fell on her knees, and threw from her mouth, into a chalice prepared for them, the three consecrated hosts which had been sacrilegiously received, and miraculously preserved in her breast. The angels stripped her of the scapular; the miserable girl instantly presented a horrible aspect, and was carried out of sight by two devils.

But how can a Christian that has been so daring as to sin grievously against the divine majesty, and has thus merited hell, where he should suffer eternal shame, find an excuse before God for concealing a sin in confession, in order to avoid the transient and trifling confusion that would arise from confessing it to a priest? If he wishes to be pardoned by God, and to deliver himself from the hell that he has deserved, the shame caused by the confession of his sin disposes him to receive pardon. It is but just that the man that has despised God should humble and confound himself. Adelaide the sinner gave a beautiful answer to the devil; being called by God to a change of life, she was converted, and instantly resolved to make a good confession; the devil placed before her eyes the shame that she should suffer in confessing all her sins, and said to her. Adelaide, where are you going?” She courageously answered: “Filthy beast, do you ask me where I am going? I am going to confound myself and you.

Along with this shame, the devil endeavors to fill the mind of sinners with many delusions and vain fears.

Such a one says: My confessor will rebuke me severely if I tell this sin. Why should he rebuke you? Tell me, were you a confessor, would you speak harshly to a poor penitent, who should come to manifest his miseries to you, in the hope of being raised up from his fallen state? How, then, can you imagine that a confessor who is bound by his office to show charity to those that come to the tribunal of penance, should treat you with harshness and severity, if you confess your sin to him?

Another says: But the confessor will, at least, be scandalized at my sin, and will conceive a dislike for me. All false; he will not be scandalized, but will be edified, when he sees the good disposition that makes a sinner confess his sins with sincerity, in spite of the shame that he feels. And will he not have heard from other penitents similar or perhaps more grievous sins? Oh! Would to God that you were the only sinner in the world! Neither is it true that he will conceive a dislike for those who disclose their guilt to him; on the contrary, he will entertain a greater esteem for them, and will labor more zealously to assist them, when he sees the confidence that they place in him, and that has made them reveal their miseries to him.

Alas! What do certain sinners say: I will go to confession, but not till the extraordinary confessor comes. And will they, for the sake of avoiding shame, live in the meantime at enmity with God? In danger of being lost forever, in an actual hell, caused by the remorse of conscience that lacerates the soul, and that leaves them without peace night or day? Father, they say, I have unfortunately fallen into sin, but I will not despair on that account. They say, I will confess it to an extraordinary confessor. And will they remain in sin, or add several sacrileges to the sin they have committed?

Do they not know that sacrilege is a horrible sin? Will they change into the poison of eternal death the remedy that Jesus Christ has prepared for them by his blood, in the sacrament of penance? I will, they say, go to confession afterwards. But what will become of them for eternity if they meet a sudden death which is now so frequent, that we hear almost every day, that someone has died suddenly.

But, some say, I have not confidence in my confessor. Go, then, to another. Should a nun ever have the misfortune of falling into this delusion, let her ask a confessor from the bishop.[10064] But should a person not be able to procure a strange confessor, would it not be madness to conceal his sin? Were he afflicted with an ulcer that might cause death, would he not, if there were no other remedy, instantly call for a surgeon, and however great his shame, would he not make known his disease? And in order to recover the life of the soul, and to escape hell, a Christian cannot bring himself to open his conscience to a spiritual Father. Let all remember that it is not enough to say: I accuse myself of all the sins that I have committed since my childhood, as they are before God. If they do not open their conscience, these words only serve to add to their delusion and danger of damnation.

You, then, should have courage, and generously conquer this shame that the devil magnifies so much in your mind. It will be enough to begin to reveal the sin that you have committed; all your vain apprehensions will instantly vanish. And you may be persuaded that after confession you will feel more happy at having confessed your sins, than if you were made monarch of all the earth. Recommend yourself to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and she will obtain for you strength to overcome all repugnance. And if you have not courage to disclose your sins at once to the confessor say to him: Father, assist me, for I stand in need of help: I have committed a certain sin, which I cannot bring myself to confess. The confessor will adopt an easy means of dragging from its den the wild beast that devours you. It will be enough for you to answer yes or no to his interrogations. Oh! may you do this Should a person be unwilling to tell his sin in words he may write it on paper, and show it to the confessor saying: I accuse myself of this sin that you have read And, behold, the eternal and temporal hell has disappeared, the grace of God is recovered, and with it peace of conscience. The greater the violence a person does himself in order to conquer shame, the greater will be the affection with which God will embrace him. Father Paul Segneri the younger relates that a certain person made such an effort to confess certain sins, committed in her infancy, that in disclosing them to her confessor she swooned away. But in return for the violence that she had done herself, the Lord gave her such fervent compunction, that thenceforward she gave herself up to a life of perfection, and of great austerities, and died with the reputation of a saint.

DOUBTS

But I do not wish that any soul be disturbed by what has been just said. What I have said is applicable only to those who have a consciousness of grievous and certain sins, and who, through shame, will not confess them. With regard to doubts, which some may have of having committed certain sins, or of having made bad confessions, if they wish to disclose them to a confessor for their greater tranquillity, they will do well, unless they have a scrupulous conscience. For the scrupulous, it is not advisable to confess their doubts, as will be more fully explained hereafter. It may be useful for the timid to know certain doctrines approved by theologians, that may save them from a great deal of disquiet of conscience, and give them peace of mind.

First, it is a solid and very probable opinion of divines, that there is no obligation of confessing doubtful mortal sins, when a person doubts whether he had full advertence, or whether he gave a perfect and deliberate consent. The divines add, that at death there is an obligation either of making an act of perfect contrition, lest the doubtful sin should have been really grievous, or to tell, not the doubtful sin, but any certain sin (a venial sin is sufficient), and to receive the sacrament of penance. But this is necessary only when a person, after the doubtful sin, had never received sacramental absolution. Many theologians of high authority also say that persons that have for a long time led a spiritual life, when doubtful whether they have consented to mortal sin, may remain certain of not having lost the grace of God; because it is morally impossible that a person well confirmed in good purposes should be suddenly changed, and yield to mortal sin, without clearly perceiving that he had consented to it. For mortal sin is a monster so horrible that it cannot enter a soul that has for a long time abhorred it without producing on the mind a clear knowledge of its entrance into the soul. This is fully proved in my work on Moral Theology.[10065]

Secondly, when it is certain that a mortal sin has been committed, and when there is a doubt whether it has been ever confessed, then if the doubt be a negative one, that is, if there be no reason to judge that it has been confessed, it is certainly necessary to tell the sin in confession. But when there is reason to believe, or a well-founded presumption, that the sin has been once told, then, according to the common opinion of divines, there is no obligation of confessing it. Hence, divines commonly teach that if a person that has made his general or particular confessions with sufficient diligence doubts whether he has forgotten in confession a certain sin, or circumstance of sin, he is not bound to confess it; because he can prudently judge that it has been already sufficiently confessed.[10066] He need not confess the sin, though he should feel a great unwillingness to disclose the doubt that tormented him. But such a person may say: If I were bound to tell such a thing, I should feel great shame. But what does it matter that you are ashamed to tell it? As long as you are not obliged to confess it be not troubled. The confession of certain natural actions should also cause shame, but you are not therefore obliged to mention them. Thus, for example, you are not obliged to confess certain acts of levity or immodest jests, that occurred in your childhood, without a knowledge of their malice. Nor is your having done these acts in secret a certain proof of malice; for children do certain natural actions secretly, though these actions are not sins. Hence, we are not bound to accuse ourselves in particular of such things, unless we remember that we committed them with an impression, or at least with a doubt, that they were grievous sins. It is, then, enough for a person to say within himself: Lord, if I really knew that I was bound to confess these things, I would readily confess them, though I should suffer every pain.

This is intended for the comfort of timorous souls that feel great anxiety arising from a fear that they did not well know how to explain all their doubts in confession. But it is useful for all, at least for their humiliation, to make known to their director the doubts by which they are troubled. I except the scrupulous, for they should not speak of their doubts, as will be explained more fully in the following chapter. What I would advise is, that all would explain to their confessors, their passions, attachments, and the causes of their temptations, that he may be able to cut off the roots, which, if not extirpated, will never cease to cause temptations, and will expose the soul to great danger of consenting to sin, when it can, but will not, remove the cause. It will also be very profitable to some to disclose the temptations that are most humiliating, particularly thoughts against chastity, though there should be no consent. St. Philip Neri used to say that a temptation disclosed is half conquered. I have said that it is very profitable to *some:* for with regard to others, of tried virtue, who are too timid on this point, and are always afraid of having consented to sin, it is sometimes useful to forbid them to confess such temptations, unless they are certain of having yielded to them. For, as has been said elsewhere, by the very examination that such persons make, in order to ascertain whether they have consented or not, and to think of the manner in which they will explain the temptation, the images of the bad objects presented to the mind become more vivid, and the soul becomes more agitated by repeated apprehensions of consent. Obey your confessor on this point, and be regulated by his advice.

What I recommend to you is, to be sincere and faithful in disclosing to your spiritual Father, all the secrets of your conscience, and in explaining things to him as they really are.

I also recommend to you, in confessing your faults, to abstain from excusing them. I he soul that excuses and covers its defects shows that it has but little sorrow for the sins that it confesses. I know not how a person can have sincere sorrow for a fault, for the commission of which he thinks he had a just reason. The confession of some consists in exaggerating the occasions that led them to yield to impatience, or to some other defects But of what use, I ask, are such exaggerations? Confess the fault that you have committed, and omit the cause that led you into it.

Guard also against useless discourses at confession. Of what use is it to relate to the confessor all the occasions of displeasure that you have received from others, or to make many complaints about your infirmities and tribulations? Were you to omit all these complaints, all these confessions, a quarter of an hour would be abundantly sufficient for your confession, in which your principal object should be to get rid of some habitual fault, or to advance in perfection.

Some, at every confession, recite the same story, which they have learned by heart; the recital of it lasts at least half a quarter of an hour. I accuse myself, they say, of the little love I have had for God, of not having fulfilled my obligations, of not having loved my neighbor as I ought, and the like. Of what use are such accusations? All lost time.

St. Catharine of Bologna wished that her nuns should speak to the confessor of nothing but of the state of their conscience. St. Teresa says that, “after having told her sins, received absolution, and asked (if necessary) some spiritual advice from the confessor, a nun should retire immediately; for spiritual discourses, when long, easily infuse an affection, which, though not bad, is at least not holy.” St. Catharine of Sienna used to say: “Religious should not introduce unnecessary conversation with their confessor.” Thus, a religious will always observe holy detachment, and will not be disturbed when deprived of her spiritual Father. However, when the confessor speaks to you on the direction of your conscience, be careful not to interrupt him, and to attend to what he says without thinking of anything else. There are some who are very anxious to speak to the confessor, but when he speaks they pay very little attention to his admonitions. St. Francis de Sales used to say,[10067] that great importance should be attached to the words of a priest in the tribunal of penance, because he then holds the place of God, who enlightens him in a special manner to say what is conducive to our spiritual welfare.

NEED AND CHOICE OF A DIRECTOR

Some religious wish to live without a director, and imagine that, having the rules and the Superior, they stand in need of no other guide. But they err, for, along with the rules and the Superior, nuns should have a confessor to direct the interior exercises, and to admonish and guide them, even in what regards their exterior employments. It is true, says St. Gregory, that some saints have been directed immediately by—God himself; but, adds the saint, such examples "are to be venerated but not imitated, lest while a person disdains to be the disciple of a man, he may become a teacher of error."[10068] Virtue holds the middle place. As in the spiritual life sloth is criminal, so indiscretion is a vice. It is the business of a director to correct and moderate both, and therefore a guide is necessary. When a religious has not a director that is able to guide her soul to perfection, God supplies the deficiency; but to refuse the guidance of a minister of God, when it can be had, is an act of temerity that the Lord will punish by permitting the soul to fall into many errors. God could guide us all by himself, but to make us humble he wishes that we submit to his ministers, and depend on their directions.

Cassian relates[10069] that a solitary in the desert, dying of hunger, refused some loaves that had been offered to him, saying that he expected from God a supply of food the unfortunate man died miserably. Now, I maybe asked why did the Lord send, for many years, by means of a crow, a loaf to St. Paul the hermit, and refuse to provide for this solitary? The answer is evident. St. Paul had no means of supporting life; but the solitary refused the food that had been offered to him, and therefore God abandoned him. Now, what is said of corporal food is likewise true with regard to the food of the soul. Hence, Cassian concludes, that they that refuse the guidance of the wise, do not deserve to be guided by God.

The choice of a spiritual Father should not be made by accident, nor through predilection. You should select the person whom you consider best qualified to promote your spiritual progress, and who is not only a man of learning and experience, but also a man who practises prayer and walks in the way of perfection. A vessel can give no other wine than that which it contains. St. Teresa says, that "if directors are not men of prayer, their learning will be of little use."[10070] When you have chosen a guide, you should not change him without a just reason. You ought not to leave your confessor, but should rather adhere more closely to his directions when he reproves your faults. To his son, the heir of his kingdom, St. Louis King of France, bequeathed the following advice: "My son, select a confessor who knows how to direct you, and who has at the same time courage to reprove you as often as reproof is necessary. I here is no confessor more injurious than the priest who seldom reproves, and treats with too much indulgence, the faults of his penitents; for by such indulgence he makes them think little of their defects.

If, then, dear sister, you find a confessor who conducts you by the narrow way, and who, when he sees that you commit voluntary faults, reproves you with severity, have a great esteem for him, and do not ever leave him.

Obey your director and do not depart from his directions, even when what you would wish to do in opposition, to his advice, appears good in your eyes. In the lives of the ancient Fathers it is related that a young man far advanced in virtue, disregarding the advice of his spiritual Father, resolved to leave the monastery and to go into the desert in order to live in solitude. But what was the result? From the desert he went to live with his relatives, and in their society he forgot the desert and abandoned himself to a life of tepidity.

But, perhaps, you will tell me that you have been badly directed by your confessor, and of this other spiritual Fathers have assured you.[10071] In the first place, I answer, that you can scarcely have erred by obedience to your director; but if you have fallen into an error, do you know why you have erred? It is because you have been obedient in some things and not in others. With such imperfect obedience God is not bound to co-operate. But place yourself entirely in the hands of your director, with a firm determination to obey him in all things, and then the Lord will never permit you to err. Though your confessor should not have all the learning that you would desire, God will take care to supply the defect. For it is not possible that a soul desirous of becoming a saint, and placing all her confidence in God, should be deluded when she faithfully obeys his minister.

From this I infer that it is impossible for a nun to err when she regulates her conduct by the advice of the ordinary confessor, though he may be changed from time to time. That great servant of God, Sister Paula Centurione used to say: “To me every confessor appears the same, because every confessor applies the blood of Jesus Christ to cure the wounds of my soul.” When a new confessor comes to the convent, it will be enough for you to give him a general knowledge of your conscience. You should then place yourself under his direction. For the nun that sincerely desires to become a saint, and wishes for nothing but God, every confessor that is appointed by her bishop, is a safe guide. A religious only wants a good will and a determined resolution, to refuse to self-love every gratification, in order to find in all things the sole pleasure of God. Hence, the Venerable Sister Ursula Benincasa used to say to her religious: “My dear sisters, be persuaded that no director can make you saints, unless you are resolved to mortify self-will and your passions.”

PRAYER

Ah ! my Jesus, Thou hast suffered so much, Thou hast given Thy blood and Thy life in order to place me under the necessity of loving Thee, and I have repaid Thee with ingratitude. How often have I, for a miserable gratification, turned my back on Thee, and have lost Thy grace. I knew that in committing sin, I gave Thee great displeasure, and with this knowledge I have consented to sin. Ah ! my dear Redeemer, pardon me for the sake of the blood that Thou hast shed for me. *Assist, we beseech Thee Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy precious blood.*[10072] I am sorry with my whole heart for having offended Thy infinite goodness. Lord, increase my sorrow: give me a sorrow for my sins, which will make me always weep till death, over the injuries I have done Thee. Had I died in my sins, I could never more love Thee. Since Thou givest me time to love Thee, I wish to love Thee ardently, and to love nothing but thee. I love Thee, O my Sovereign Good, I love Thee ‘with my whole heart, and because I love

Thee, I give my entire will to thee. Give me grace to love Thee always for the future, and then do with me, and dispose of me as Thou pleasest.

I accept all Thy arrangements. Grant that in all temptations and in all clangers of sin I may never cease to recommend myself to Thee.

O Mary, my Mother, obtain for me the grace that in my temptations, I may always have recourse to God and to thee, who art all-powerful with God.

II

SCRUPLES

WHAT ARE REAL SCRUPLES, AND HOW THEY ARE HURTFUL

A scruple is nothing else than a vain fear of sinning, that arises from false and groundless apprehensions.

These scruples are useful in the beginning of conversion. For a soul that has but a short time renounced sin stands in need of repeated purgations. Scruples produce this effect; they cleanse the soul, and at the same time make it careful to avoid real sins, and they also render it humble; so that distrusting its own opinion, it places itself in the hands of its spiritual Father to be directed as he pleases. St. Francis de Sales used to say, that "the fear that begets scruples in those that have lately gone from the confines of sin, is a certain presage of future purity of conscience.[10073]

But, on the other hand, scruples are hurtful to those that seek perfection, and have for a long time given themselves to God. In such persons, says St. Teresa, scruples produce extravagant impressions, which bring the soul to such a state that it will not advance a single step towards perfection. St. Francis de Sales has written: "Be diligent, but guard against inquietudes, for there is no greater obstacle to advancement in perfection."[10074]

It is, however, necessary to make a distinction between scrupulous consciences. Some nuns boast of being free, and are ashamed to be looked upon as scrupulous, *and* therefore they give themselves up to a tepid life. They give and receive presents as they please; they disregard the Rule, saying that it is not binding; they give liberty to the eyes, to the tongue, to the ears, to see, to speak and to hear whatever they please. They blush to appear mortified, and censure those that practise mortification—they call it affectation and singularity to speak in a low tone, and to keep the eyes cast down. Hence, they are easily led by the imperfect to join in their vain amusements. Let such nuns cease to boast of their freedom of conscience; for they are at least tepid and imperfect religious. Would to God that they were scrupulous; that is, that they had, as they ought to have, a delicate conscience. But let such religious beware lest they should be of the number of those who, as David says, follow like sheep the bad example of others, and find themselves one day confined with them in hell. *They are laid in hell like sheep*.[10075] To refuse to lose time in the parlor, or on the terrace, to refuse to speak in the choir, or in the time of silence, or to avoid telling a lie, however small, are signs, not of a scrupulous, but of a delicate conscience that every religious ought to have. The marks of a scrupulous conscience are the following:

To be always afraid of not having, at confession, true sorrow, or a sincere purpose of amendment.

To be afraid, on frivolous grounds, of sinning in every action; for example, of always consenting to rash judgments, or to every bad thought that presents itself to the mind.

To be inconstant, in doubts, considering an action at one time to be lawful and at another unlawful; and to be at the same time disturbed with great fears and perplexities.

Not to be calmed by the decision of a confessor, etc.

To decide whether a penitent is scrupulous or not belongs not to the penitent but to the confessor; for all scrupulous persons say that their scruples are not scruples, but real doubts and sins. If they knew them to be scruples, they would disregard them. They are in the dark, and therefore they do not see the state of their conscience. The confessor, who is free from the darkness in which they are involved, understands it well. Hence, the penitent should obey his advice; if she wish to decide for herself, the more she labor to tranquillize her conscience by her own opinions, the greater will be her confusion and agitation of mind; and, as will be hereafter shown, she will perhaps expose herself to the danger of perdition.

With regard to those who walk in the way of perfection, the devil ordinarily fills their mind with scruples and troubles, that, in order to get rid of them, they may give up the practice of virtue, or abandon themselves to despair, and voluntarily take away their own lives. And has not this happened to several? A modern but learned author, Father Scaramelli,[10076] relates that he himself had known two persons, one of whom was led by scruples to inflict on his breast several wounds with a knife, and the other shot himself and instantly fell dead. I know a person who, on account of similar anxieties of conscience, threw himself out of a window, but escaped death; and at another time intended to cast himself into a well, but was prevented by another person. We read of several cases of scrupulous persons that have taken away their own lives. The devil labors at least to disturb religious by scruples, in order to render them unable to go to Communion, to say the divine Office, and if possible to make them lose their reason and become foolish; or to render the way of perfection hateful hat thus they may give up mental prayer, the frequentation of the sacraments, and that, by degrees, losing the aid and love of God, they may abandon themselves to a tepid life, and pass from scruples to real sins. Hence, many theologians say that when directed by her confessor to act with freedom and to conquer scruples, a scrupulous person not only can but ought to obey his directions; and should she act otherwise she is guilty of sin, because she does an injury to herself by making herself unable to advance in the way of God, and also because she exposes herself to the danger of losing her health, her reason, and her soul, by abandoning herself to vice.

OBEDIENCE TO THE DIRECTOR IS THE GREAT REMEDY AGAINST SCRUPLES

The spiritual masters prescribe many remedies against scruples, but the generality of theologians, as well as the ascetics, say that the principal and only remedy for a penitent is to place herself in the hands of a spiritual Father, and to obey him blindly, distrusting entirely her own judgment. St. Philip Neri used to say that there is nothing more dangerous than to direct one’s Own conscience. A scrupulous person that is not obedient to her director is lost. St. John of the Cross says that not to submit to the judgment of a confessor is pride and a want of faith. And justly; for Jesus Christ has declared that they that obey his priests obey himself; and that they who despise them despise him: *He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me.*[10077] Hence the same St. John of the Cross, speaking in the name of our Lord to a penitent who disobeys her director, says: “Being unfaithful to your confessors you are also unfaithful to me, who have said he that despises you despises me. But, on the other hand, they who obey the spiritual Father cannot err.” St. Bernard teaches that “whatever a man holding the place of God commands, when we are not certain that it is displeasing to God, ought to be received as if commanded by God himself.”[10078]

Hence Blessed Henry Suso used to say that God does not demand an account of what is done through obedience. St. Philip Neri taught the same to his penitents. Let them, he would say, who desire to advance in the way of God, place themselves under a learned confessor, and obey him as they would obey God. Whoever acts thus, is certain of not having to render to God an account of his actions. Hence the saint exhorts penitents to have confidence in their confessor, because the Lord will not allow him to err. Should a person become blind, what other remedy, I ask, can he have than a faithful guide, who will conduct him in the way in which he has to walk? And in like manner, a soul that finds itself in a state of darkness and confusion, on account of its scruples, should allow itself to be conducted by the guide whom God has given it, and ought to obey him blindly. I say, *by the guide whom God has given it;* for ordinarily speaking, a penitent agitated by scruples, would do well to speak of her doubts to her confessor only; for others, though holy and learned, in consequence of not understanding the state of the conscience, may ask a question or drop a word not in accordance with the sentiments of her own director. Behold, that word will again throw her conscience into a state of confusion, and losing her former confidence in the confessor, she will be forever, or at least for a long time disturbed and agitated.

Obey, then, your director, dear sister, and fear not that in obeying him you may be led astray. This was the practice of the saints who have been often troubled with perplexities and fears of conscience, and thus they obtained tranquillity of conscience. St. Catharine of Bologna was afflicted with scruples, but she followed in all things the advice of her director. She was sometimes afraid to approach Holy Communion, but in spite of all her fears she obeyed her spiritual Father, and communicated. Jesus Christ appeared one day to her, and to animate her still more to obedience, told her to have courage; because by her obedience she gave him great pleasure. Our Saviour also appeared to Blessed Stephana de Soncino, of the Order of St. Dominic, and said to her: “Since you have placed your will in the hands of your confessor, who represents my person, ask me for any grace and it shall be granted.”

The same advice was given by St. Augustine to his friend St. Paulinus, by whom he was consulted about doubts of conscience: “State your doubts,” was the reply of the holy Doctor, “to a spiritual physician, and let me know what the Lord will say to you through him.[10079]Hence St. Augustine held as certain that should St. Paulinus consult a spiritual Father, God would certainly have spoken to him through his director, and would make known to him the divine will. St. Antonine relates that to a religious of the Order of St. Dominic, who was harassed by scruples, a deceased religious appeared and gave the following advice: “Consult with the wise and acquiesce in their advice.”[10080] The same holy archbishop relates that a disciple of St. Bernard was reduced to such a state by scruples, that he could no longer say Mass; but in this disturbed state he asked advice from his holy master, and St. Bernard said to him, without giving any reason for the counsel: “Go and say Mass; I take it on my conscience.” The monk obeyed, and thenceforward was freed from all his troubles of conscience.

It is useless to say had I St. Bernard for my confessor, I, too, would obey him blindly; but my confessor is not a St. Bernard. He is not a St. Bernard, but he is more than a St. Bernard, for he holds the place of God. Listen to the advice of Gerson: “Whoever you are that speak in this manner, you err; for you have not intrusted your soul to the hands of a man because he is learned, but, because he is placed over you. Wherefore obey him, not as a man, but as God.”[10081] You who speak thus, says this learned author, err; for you have not placed yourself in the hands of a man because he is learned or holy, but because God has given him to you for a guide. Obey him, then, not as a man, but as God, and you will never err. In the beginning of his conversion, St, Ignatius of Loyola was so violently assailed by scruples, and so encompassed with darkness, that he found no peace. But because he had true faith in the words of God, *he that heareth you heareth me,* he said with great confidence: Lord, show me the way in which I ought to walk, and though you should give me a dog for my guide, I will faithfully follow him.

And because the saint was faithful in obeying his director, he was not only delivered from his scruples, but also became an excellent guide to others. Hence St. Teresa has well said: “Let a soul choose a confessor, with a determination not to seek any longer an excuse for self-will, but to trust in the words of the Lord, *he that heareth you heareth me*. Our Lord sets so great a value on this submission that though it may be after a thousand struggles and with a persuasion of the imprudence of the confessor’s opinion, that though it may be with or without pain that we follow his advice, he will assist us so much that he will certainly make us conform to his divine will.”[10082]

If, dear sister, Jesus Christ at judgment should demand an account of what you have done in obedience to your director, you can say in answer: Lord, I have done this to obey Thy minister, whom Thou hast commanded me to hear. Say this to him, and fear not that he will condemn you. Father James Alvarez has written, that though a confessor should by chance make a mistake, the penitent in obeying him is secure, and does not err. And are you, in order to be secure against error, obliged to examine whether the confessor has sufficient learning? When he has been lawfully approved by the bishop, as you are bound to suppose, he holds the place of God in your regard, and you cannot err in following his advice.

But, you will say, I am not scrupulous; my anxieties are not vain but well-founded fears. I answer: no fool esteems himself foolish, but his folly consists in being a fool without knowing it. And, in like manner, I say to you, that you are scrupulous, as your director considers you to be, because you do not see the groundlessness of your scruples. Did they appear to you to be vain apprehensions you would disregard them, and would be no longer disturbed by them. Cast off your fears, then, and obey your confessor, who understands the state of your conscience.

I hear you say in reply, the defect is not in the confessor but in me, who am not able to explain myself, and therefore he cannot understand the miserable state of my soul. But you yield to so many foolish scruples, and you scruple not to charge your spiritual Father either with ignorance or with sacrilege. When you confess doubts that, as you say, regard mortal sins, the confessor was obliged to make the interrogations necessary, in order to form a correct judgment of your doubts. Hence, if without just reason, or without understanding you, as you imagine, he has commanded you to disregard these doubts as vain scruples, he must have acted either through ignorance or through malice. Then by distrusting his advice, through fear that he did not sufficiently understand you, you, as I have said, charge him either with ignorance or with sacrilege: and for this very rash judgment do you feel no scruple? To nuns that begin to censure the decisions of their confessors, we ought to say what the learned Monsignor Sperelli wrote to a religious who had accused her confessor of heresy, because he had said that the sins that she confessed were not sins. “Tell me,” said the learned bishop to her, “in what university have you studied theology, that you know better than your confessor how to decide on sins? Ah ! go and attend to your work of spinning and do not give ear to such follies.”

I will not say the same to you, but I tell you to acquiesce in all the directions of your spiritual leather. When, after having once explained your doubts to him he says that you have confessed your sins sufficiently, that he will hear no more, or when he tells you to be obedient, or to go to Communion, etc., obey him without hesitation, and be assured that he has understood you sufficiently. You should not entertain any doubt about the correctness of his advice, but should obey him blindly and without reply, not asking the grounds of his opinion, but submitting in all things to his direction. If you desire to understand the reason of his advice, you will be always more perplexed, and will relapse into your troubles of conscience. Obey blindly—that is, without asking reasons. Be careful, then, never to examine the directions of your confessor. Scruples are, as it were, a species of pitch, which, the more it is handled the more it adheres; the more you reflect on them, the more you fill your mind with darkness. Keep before your eyes the following beautiful maxims of St Francis de Sales: First, a soul should be satisfied when it is told by its spiritual Father that it is going on well and should not seek any greater certainty. Secondly, it is better for us to walk blindly under divine Providence, amidst the darkness and perplexities of this life. Thirdly, an obedient soul has never been lost. This last maxim should calm your mind on all occasions. In a word, keep always before your eyes this great rule, that in obeying your confessor, you obey God; force yourself, then, to obey him in spite of all your fears. And be persuaded that if you are not obedient to him, it will be impossible for you to go on well; but if you obey, you are always secure. But, you say, if I am damned in consequence of obeying my confessor, who will rescue me from hell? What you say is impossible; for, it is not possible that obedience, which is the secure way to heaven, should be for you the road to hell.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Ordinarily speaking there are two sources of scruples, by which the scrupulous are generally tormented. The first regards the past; the second regards the future: some are afraid of not having confessed their sins as they ought; others are afraid that they commit sin in every action. With regard to the past, scrupulous nuns would wish to be continually employed in making general confessions, with the hope of thus removing their fears and troubles. But what is the result? Their perplexities are always increased; because new apprehensions, and scruples of having omitted, or of not having sufficiently explained their sins, are continually excited. Hence, the more they multiply confessions, the more their inquietudes are redoubled. There is no doubt, that a general confession is most useful for those that have never made one. It contributes greatly to humble the soul by bringing before its view all the irregularities of the past life. It also contributes to increase its sorrow for its ingratitude towards God, and to make it adopt holy resolutions for the future. It also gives the confessor a better knowledge of the state of the penitent’s conscience, of the virtues which she stands in need of, and of the passions and vices to which she is most inclined: thus, he will be better able to apply remedies, and to give advice. But, for those who have once made a general confession, it is not useful to repeat it. Should a doubt afterwards arise, a penitent who does not remember to have ever intentionally omitted any sin in confession, is, ordinarily speaking, not obliged to confess any sin, unless she is certain that it is a grievous sin, and that she never mentioned it in confession.

But, you may say, if the sin be really a mortal sin, and if I have not confessed it, shall I be saved? Yes, you will be saved: for the divines, along with St. Thomas,[10083] teach, that if, after a diligent search, a mortal sin has been omitted through forgetfulness; it is indirectly remitted by the absolution. It is true, that when the penitent remembers it, or has just reason to doubt whether it was ever confessed, she is bound to mention it; but when, as has been stated in the preceding paragraph, she can prudently judge that it was told in some past confession, she is not bound to confess it. I have said, *she is not obliged to confess it,* and this holds for all: but a soul tortured by scruples, is, according to the divines not obliged to confess a past sin, unless she can swear that it was certainly a mortal sin, and that it was never told in any confession. For the repetition of past sins may be productive of grievous detriment to a scrupulous soul, and may drive her to despair. And when a penitent finds herself greatly agitated and confused, in endeavoring to decide whether she can swear or not to the certainty of the sin, the confessor can, in such a case, exempt her from confessing sins of her past life; for, in a case of so much danger and evil to the penitent, in obligation of providing for the integrity of the confession ceases: since the divines commonly teach, a less inconvenience excuses from the integrity of the confession. Hence, to conclude this point, scrupulous persons should understand that a general confession is useful for others, but very dangerous and injurious to them. Good directors, therefore, do not permit scrupulous persons to speak of past sins. The remedy for them is not to explain, but to be silent, and to obey; hence, when they wish to speak of past sins, the confessor must not listen to them; for if he once permitted them to speak, they will be always disturbed when they cannot explain their doubts.

I have said so much regarding general confessions; as to the ordinary confessions, it is not necessary for religious that seek perfection and communicate frequently, to receive absolution before each Communion; it is enough for them to receive absolution once or twice a week, and when they fall into any deliberate venial sin. St. Francis de Sales, in one of his letters, says that even when persons who walk in the way of perfection, commit a deliberate venial fault, they ought not to omit Communion, because they have not the opportunity of going to confession. For, as the Council of Trent teaches,[10084] there are other means of obtaining the remission of venial sins, such as acts of contrition, and of love. I have read that St. Mechtilde, not having an opportunity of confessing certain acts of negligence, made an act of contrition, and went to Communion. After Communion, Jesus Christ appeared to her and said that she had acted rightly. A certain learned priest used to say that it is sometimes more profitable to the soul to Communion after a venial sin without confession, than if she had gone to confession and received absolution before

Communion. For the soul will then make so many acts of contrition for the fault it has committed that it will receive Holy Communion with greater fervor and humility.

With regard to those who are afraid of committing sin in all their actions, or of consenting to every bad thought that starts up in the mind, it is necessary to know two things: first, that feeling is one thing, and consent another. The motions of sense that naturally arise, are never sins when the will resists them. Neither should a person scruple having given cause to them, when the cause has been placed for a good end, that is, for *spiritual* or temporal utility. The second is, that in order to commit mortal sin the full advertence of the understanding, as well as the full consent of the will, is necessary; if either be wanting the sin is not grievous. And in cases of doubt, timorous, and particularly scrupulous, souls, as has been already said elsewhere,[10085] ought to feel certain that they have not sinned grievously, unless they can affirm with certainty that they have consented to mortal sin.

And here it may be useful to remark, that for certain very timid souls, that are always in doubt about having consented to bad thoughts, it is better sometimes not to accuse themselves of certain temptations; for example of temptations to hatred, against faith, or purity; because, as has been already explained,[10086] by examining whether they have or have not given a deliberate consent, and how they may explain their temptations, the images of bad objects are excited still more vividly in the mind, and their agitation is increased by the fear of having given a new consent. Such souls should be told to accuse themselves of such thoughts only in a general way, saying: I accuse myself of all the negligence’s of which I have been guilty in banishing bad thoughts.

There are two privileges then, given to the scrupulous penitent by the generality of divines, such as St. Antonine[10087], Navarre[10088], Suarez[10089], and many others.

The first is, that by acting with a fear or scruple, she is not guilty of sin, as long as she acts through obedience. And it is not necessary for her to form expressly at each act, a practical judgment of the lawfulness of her actions, by reflecting that she is acting according to obedience. To exempt her from all fault, it is enough for her to make a virtual judgment; that is, it is enough for her to act by virtue of a judgment already formed, that such fears ought to be disregarded. Nor can it be said that the soul then acts with a practical doubt about the unlawfulness of an action; it is one thing to act with a practical doubt, and another to act with a fear of its sinfulness. Gerson justly teaches, that to act with a doubt that arises from a formed conscience, or after a person has examined the circumstances, and come to the conclusion that while the doubt remains, he cannot act without sin, would be to act with a practical doubt, and would be sinful. But when the mind is perplexed, vacillating amid doubts, and not knowing what opinion to adopt, but at the same time, resolved not to do anything displeasing to God, such a doubt is not according to Gerson, a practical doubt, but a vain fear and scruple that should be, as much as possible, rejected and despised. These are his words: "A conscience is formed when, after inquiry and deliberation a person judges by a definitive sentence that an act is to be performed or omitted. And to act against such a conscience is a sin. A fear or scruple of conscience consists in a vacillation of the mind between doubts; the soul knows not whether it is bound to do or to omit the act, but would not wish to omit what it knows to be pleasing to the divine will; and such fear should be, as much as possible rejected and extinguished."[10090]—Hence, when a soul has a firm purpose not to offend God, and acts according to obedience in overcoming scruples, it is not guilty of sin, though it acts with fear, and though it does not actually advert to the command of its director.

The second privilege of the scrupulous is that after having acted, they should believe that they have not given consent to any temptation, unless they are certain of having fully adverted and consented to the malice of the sin. Hence, when they are doubtful their very doubt is a certain sign that they either had not full advertence or that they did give a full consent. Hence, if the confessor tells them not to confess such doubts, they ought to obey; and should not think of leaving him if he persists in refusing to listen to the explanation of their doubts.

I add, that the spiritual Father who is indulgent in hearing the doubts of scrupulous souls, falls into a great error: for by scrutinizing their consciences, they generally become disquieted, and are rendered more incapable of advancing in the way of God. What has been just said does not regard so much the direction of penitents, as of confessors in the guidance of souls. Penitents have only to submit their judgment to their spiritual Father, and to obey him in all things. However it may be useful to certain penitents to know what has been just said for the direction of confessors, that, when their confessor tells them not to accuse themselves of certain sins, nor to speak of them unless they are certain of having committed a grievous fault; or when after having heard them, he sends them to Communion without absolution, they may not begin to contend with him, but may obey blindly, without even asking—a reason for the command that he has imposed upon them.

But some may say: I wish to act with a certainty of not giving displeasure to God. I answer, that the greatest security that you, who have a troubled conscience, can have, is to obey your director, and to conquer scruples, in spite of the actual fear that molests you. And know that, though you were at the point of death, you would be obliged to act in this manner in order to avoid the delusions of the devil. And here I repeat what I have already said, that you ought to scruple not to have done violence to yourself in order to conquer scruples by acting against your fears in obedience to your spiritual Father, even though you may not be persuaded that your scruples are vain fears. For, if you omit an act on account of the scruple, you will not be able to make any further progress in the way of God, and as has been said you will expose yourself to the danger of losing your soul or your reason; and to expose yourself to such danger is a certain sin. Hence, the devil excites so many fears in scrupulous persons, that they may either abandon themselves to a tepid life, or may lose their reason; or, at least, that they may not advance in perfection, and live always amid troubles and confusion, in which hell always gains something. St. Aloysius Gonzaga used to say, that in troubled water the devil always finds fish to catch.

If, then, you wish to go on well and securely, obey punctually all the commands and directions of your confessor. And beg of him to prescribe, not only particular, but also general rules for your direction. I say *general* rules; for example, to overcome and disregard scruples as long as it is not evident that what you scruple is a grievous sin; or not to confess anything unless you can swear that it was certainly a mortal sin; and unless you can also swear that it was never told in confession; or to go to Communion always when you are not certain of having committed mortal sin; or never to repeat the divine Office, or any part of it, unless you are certain of having omitted it; and other similar rules that are usually given to the scrupulous. For particular rules, that is, rules given by the confessor in particular cases that have occurred, are of little or no use for the direction of a penitent tormented by scruples. She will always say that the second case is not like the first on which she had the advice of the confessor, and thus the mind will always be full of confusion and inquietude.

I conclude by repeating always, obey, obey; and do not treat God as a tyrant. It is true that he hates sin; but he cannot hate a soul that detests its sin, is sorry for it, and ready to die a thousand times rather than relapse into it. Tell me if you had the love and affection for a fellow-creature that you now have for God, would you ever believe that that creature did not entertain a tender love for you? Oh! How good is God to a soul that has a good will! *How good,* says the royal prophet, *is God to Israel, to them that are of a right heart.*[10091] The Lord cannot but receive with tenderness the soul that seeks him. *The Lord,* says Jeremias, *is good to the soul that seeketh him.*[10092] Our Lord said one day to St Margaret of Cortona: Margaret you seek me; but I seek you with far greater ardor than you seek me Imagine that God says the same to you, if you love him and seek him. Abandon yourself into his arms, as the Psalmist exhorts you to do, and cast upon him the care of your soul, and he will preserve you, and will deliver you from all troubles. *Cast thy care upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall not suffer the fast to waver forever.*[10093] Be obedient, and cast away so many fears. Jesus said to the same St. Margaret that her fears impeded her advancement in divine love. Do not imagine that as long as you love him from the heart God is provoked to wrath by every little fault that you commit. St. Teresa used to say: “My children, be assured that God does not, as you imagine, attend to so many trifles; do not suffer your heart to be narrowed; if you do you may lose many blessings. Let your intention be pure, and your will resolved never to offend him.”[10094]

I repeat, then, and I say, obey in all things your spiritual Father, and have confidence in obedience: for by the practice of obedience you will always be secure; keep always before your eyes the great lesson that St. Philip Xeri used to repeat to his penitents: “Have confidence in your confessor, for the Lord will not allow him to err, there is no surer way of cutting the snares of the devil than to do the will of another, and there is nothing more dangerous than to be directed by one’s own opinion.” In your meditations ask this grace of God that he may make you practise obedience to your director. And doubt not that if you practise it you will be saved, and will become a saint.

PRAYER

My Jesus, because I love Thee all the pain arising from the troubles of my conscience consists in the fear of displeasing and losing Thee, who art an infinite Good. There was a time (and oh! that it had never been) when I did not love Thee, and cared but little to be loved by Thee. But now I desire nothing but to love Thee, and to be loved by Thee, my dear Redeemer. I do not wish ever more to displease Thee. Thou knowest my wish to love Thee at any cost; do not abandon me. If I have hitherto offended, I now feel more pain at the offences I have offered to Thee than if I lost all things—property, relatives, and life. Thou hast died for me; to Thee I consign my soul; into Thy hands I recommend it.[10095] Thou lovest me, and therefore I abandon myself entirely into Thy hands, and hope never to see myself confounded, and in enmity with Thee. *In thee, 0 Lord, have I hoped; let me never be confounded*.[10096] My Jesus, I wish always to love Thee. This I repeat, and hope to repeat during life, at death, and for all eternity. My Jesus, I love Thee, and wish always to love Thee.

Mary, my hope, Mother of Mercy, assist me; have pity on me.

III

COMMUNION, SPIRITUAL COMMUNION, AND VISITING OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

EXCELLENCE OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST; EFFECTS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Of all the sacraments the adorable sacrament of the altar is the most excellent. The other sacraments contain the gifts of God, but the Holy Eucharist contains God himself. Hence St. Thomas says[10097] that the other sacraments have been instituted by Jesus Christ to prepare men either to receive or to administer the Blessed Eucharist, which, according to the holy Doctor, is the consummation of the spiritual life; because from this sacrament is derived all the perfection of the soul. For all perfection consists in a union with God: and of all the means of uniting the soul to him there is none better than Holy Communion by which, as Jesus Christ himself has said, the soul becomes as it were one thing with him. *He that eateth my flesh . . . abideth in me and I in him.*[10098] Hence St. John Chrysostom says that Jesus has given his body to us under the species of bread that we may become one thing with him.[10099] And St. Cyril of Alexander teaches that as two pieces of wax melted together become one, so we, by Holy Communion, are similarly united with Jesus Christ.[10100]

Our Saviour instituted this sacrament under the form of food to show that, as corporal food is changed into our flesh, so this heavenly bread becomes one thing with us; but with this difference that earthly food is converted into our substance, while this divine bread transforms those who eat into Jesus Christ. This is the reason why Rupert makes our Lord say: “Eat and you shall be by grace what I am by nature.”[10101] And this is what our Lord deigned to say one day to St. Augustine: “I will not be changed into you, but you shall be changed into me.”[10102]

The principal effect of this sacrament is to preserve in the soul the life of grace. Hence, it is called bread; for as earthly bread supports corporal life, so this heavenly bread preserves the life of the soul which consists in the grace of God.

The Eucharist is, according to the Council of Trent, the divine medicine that purifies the soul from venial, and preserves it from mortal sins.[10103] Like a stream of water, this sacrament extinguishes the ardor of the passions by which we are consumed. Let him in whose soul the flame of some particular passion is kindled approach holy Communion, and he will find the passion altogether, or at least in a great measure, destroyed. “If any of you,” says St. Bernard, “does not experience so frequent or so violent motions of anger, of envy, or of lust, let him give thanks to the body of the Lord that produces fruit in his soul.”[10104] The angelic Doctor teaches that the Communion gives us strength to overcome all the attacks of the devil. “It repels every assault of the demons.”[10105] St. John Chrysostom asserts[10106] that when we receive the holy Eucharist, the devils are put to flight, and the angels run to our assistance. Moreover, this sacrament infuses into the soul great interior peace, a strong inclination to virtue, and a great willingness to practise it, and thus renders it easy to walk in the path of perfection.

Holy Communion, as St. Thomas teaches,[10107] infuses divine charity into the heart. Jesus Christ protested that he came into the world for no other purpose than to kindle in our souls the holy fire of divine love *came to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?*[10108] The Venerable Father Olimpio, of the Order of Theatines, used to say, that there is no mystery of redemption more apt to inflame us with the love of Jesus Christ than the sacrament of the altar in which he gives himself entirely to us, and pours forth all his love. Hence, speaking of the institution of this sacrament, St. John says: *Jesus knowing that His hour was come to pass from this world to His Father, when He had loved His friends who were in the world, He loved them even to the end.*[10109] *He loved them to the end*, that is, according to the commentators, he loved them to the utmost of his power. Hence the Council of Trent said that in this sacrament Jesus "poured forth, as it were, all the riches of his divine love towards man."[10110] Holy Communion has been called by St. Thomas "the sacrament of love;"[10111] and by St. Bernard "the love of loves."[10112] St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to call the day of Communion "the day of love;" and would say that a soul after Communion might exclaim with Jesus dying on the cross, "it is consummated."[10113] For after having given himself to me, God has nothing more to give me; nor can I desire anything else from him.

TEACHING OF THE CHURCH IN REGARD TO FREQUENT COMMUNION

Should not all, then, ardently desire to receive Jesus as often as possible in holy Communion?

We know from the Acts of the Apostles that in the first ages of the church, as St. Luke tells us, all the faithful communicated every day. *Continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house.*[10114] In the Syriac version, instead of "breaking bread," we find the words, "breaking blessed bread,"[10115] which express more clearly the blessed Eucharist. Besides, the interpreters of the sacred Scripture, by the *breaking of bread,* understand holy Communion. Hence, according to St. Thomas[10116] it is certain that in the early ages all that attended Mass received Communion. This fact is attested by St. Denis the Areopagite,[10117] a contemporary of the apostles, and by St. Jerome,[10118] who died in420, in his letters to Lucina and Pammachius, in which he states that this pious practice was preserved in Rome and Spain, even in his own time.

By degrees the piety of the faithful began to grow cold. Such was their lukewarmness in the time of Pope Fabian,[10119] that he had to command all Christians to approach holy Communion at least three times in the year; that is, on the festivals of Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas. In after ages, the tepidity of Christmas became so great, that Innocent III., in 1215,[10120] obliged all the faithful, under very severe penalties, to communicate at least at Easter. The decree of Innocent was afterwards confirmed by the Council of Trent.[10121] These enactments of Popes and Councils do not prove that the practice of frequent Communion is not very laudable; they only show the decay of the fervor that animated the first Christians.

Among the confessors of the present day, some are favorable and others opposed to frequent Communion. I agree *with the former, because, as the learned Petavius has* shown *in his work against the rigid Arnauld, their opinion is* that *of the holy Fathers and of the Church.*

This controversy, so long and bitterly carried on by Theologians, was settled definitely and for all time by the following Decree issued by the Venerable Vicar of Christ, Pius X.

DECREE OF THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF THE COUNCIL ON RECEIVING DAILY THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST

The Council of Trent, having in view the unspeakable treasures of grace which are offered to the faithful who receive the Most Holy Eucharist, makes the following declaration:

“The holy Synod would desire that at every Mass the Faithful who are present should communicate, not only spiritually, by way of internal affection, but sacramentally, by the actual reception of the Eucharist.” (Sess. XXII, cap. 6) Which words declare plainly enough the wish of the Church that all Christians should be daily nourished by this heavenly banquet, and should derive there from abundant fruit for their sanctification.

And this wish of the Council is in entire agreement with that desire wherewith Christ our Lord was inflamed when He instituted this Divine Sacrament. For He Himself more than once, in no ambiguous terms, pointed out the necessity of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood frequently, especially in these words: “This is the bread that cometh down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread, shall live forever.” (John VI. 59).

Now, from this comparison of the food of the angels with bread and with manna, it was easily understood by His disciples that, as the body is daily nourished with bread, and as the Hebrews were daily nourished with manna in the desert, so the Christian soul might daily partake of this heavenly bread, and be refreshed thereby. Moreover, whereas in the Lord’s Prayer we are bidden to ask for “our daily bread,” the holy Fathers of the Church all but unanimously teach that by these words must be understood, not so much that material bread which is the support of the body as the Eucharistic bread which ought to be our daily food.

Moreover, the desire of Jesus Christ and of the Church that all the faithful should daily approach the sacred banquet is directed chiefly to this end, that the faithful being united to God by means of the Sacrament, may thence derive strength to resist their sensual passions, to cleanse themselves from the stains of daily faults, and to avoid those graver sins to which human frailty is liable; so that its primary purpose is not that the honor and reverence due to our Lord may be safeguarded, or that the Sacrament may serve as a reward of virtue bestowed on the recipients (St. Aug. Serm. 57 in St. Matth., “De Orat. Dorn.” n. 7). Hence the holy Council of Trent calls the Eucharist “the antidote whereby we are delivered from daily faults and preserved from deadly sins.” (Sess. XIII., cap. 2).

The desire on the part of God was so well understood by the first Christians that they daily flocked to the Holy Table as to a source of life and strength. “They were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread.” (Acts. II. 42). And that this practice was continued into later ages, not without great fruit of holiness and perfection, the holy Fathers and ecclesiastical writers bear witness.

But when in later times piety grew cold, and more especially under the plague of Jansenism, disputes began to arise concerning the dispositions with which it was proper to receive Communion frequently or daily; and writers vied with one another in imposing more and more stringent conditions as necessary to be fulfilled. The result of such disputes was that very few were considered worthy to communicate daily, and to derive from this most healing Sacrament its most abundant fruits, the rest being content to partake of it once a year, or once a month, or at the utmost weekly. Nay, to such a pitch was rigorism carried that whole classes of persons were excluded from a frequent approach to the Holy Table; for instance, those who were engaged in trade, or even those who were living in the state of matrimony.

Others, however, went to the opposite extreme. Under the persuasion that daily Communion was a divine precept and in order that no day might pass without the reception of the Sacrament, besides other practices contrary to the approved usage of the Church, they held that the Holy Eucharist ought to be received, and in fact administered it even on Good Friday.

Under these circumstances the Holy See did not fail in its duty of vigilance, for by a decree of this Sacred Congregation, which begins with the words "Cum ad aures," issued on February 12, A. D. 1679, with the approbation of Innocent XI, it condemned these errors, and put a stop to such abuses, at the same time declaring that all the faithful of whatever class—merchants or tradesmen or married persons not excepted—might be admitted to frequent Communion according to the devotion of each one and the judgment of his confessor. And on December 7, 1690, by the decree of Pope Alexander VIII, "Sanctissimus Dominus," the proposition of Baius postulating a perfectly pure love of God, without any admixture of defect, as requisite on the part of those who wished to approach the Holy Table, was condemned.

Yet the poison of Jansenism, which, under the pretext of showing due honor and reverence to the Holy Eucharist, had infected the minds of even good men, did not entirely disappear. The controversy as to the dispositions requisite for the lawful and laudable frequentation of the Sacrament survived the declarations of the Holy See; so much so, indeed that certain theologians of good repute judged that daily Communion should be allowed to the faithful only in rare cases, and under many conditions.

On the other hand, there were not wanting men of learning and piety who more readily granted permission for this so pleasing to God. In accordance with the teaching of the lathers, they maintained that there was no precept of the Church which prescribed more perfect dispositions in the case of daily than of weekly or monthly Communion; while the good effects of daily Communion would, they alleged, be far more abundant than those of Communion received weekly or monthly.

In our own day the controversy has been carried on with increased warmth, and not without bitterness, so that the minds of the confessors and the consciences of the faithful have been disturbed, to the no small detriment of Christian piety and devotion. Accordingly, certain distinguished men, themselves pastors of souls, have urgently besought His Holiness Pius X, to deign to settle, by his supreme authority, the question concerning the dispositions requisite for daily Communion; so that this usage so salutary and so pleasing to God, might not only suffer no decrease among the faithful, but might rather be promoted and everywhere propagated—a thing most desirable in these days, when religion and the Catholic faith are attacked on all sides, and the true love of God and genuine piety are so lacking in many quarters. And His Holiness, being most earnestly desirous, out of his abundant solicitude and zeal, that the faithful should be invited to partake of the sacred banquet as often as possible, and even daily, and should profit to the utmost by its fruits, committed the aforesaid question to this Sacred Congregation to be looked into and decided once for all (definiendum).

Accordingly the Sacred Congregation of the Council, in a plenary Session, held on December 16, 1905, submitted the whole matter to a very careful scrutiny; and after sedulously examining the reasons adduced on either side, determined and declared as follows:

Frequent and daily Communion, as a thing most earnestly desired by Christ our Lord and by the Catholic Church, should be open to all the faithful of whatever rank and condition of life; so that no one who is in the state of grace, and who approaches the Holy Table with a light and devout intention, can lawfully be hindered there from. A right intention consists in this: that he who approaches the Holy Table should do so, not out of routine, or vain glory, or human respect, but for the purpose of pleasing God, of being more closely united with Him by charity and of seeking this divine remedy for his weakness and defects.

Although it is most expedient that those who communicate frequently or daily should be free from venial sins, especially from such as are fully deliberate, and from any affection thereto, nevertheless, it is sufficient that they be free from mortal sin, with the purpose of never sinning in future;

and, if they have this sincere purpose, it is impossible but that daily communicants should gradually emancipate themselves even from venial sins, and from all affection thereto.

But whereas the Sacraments of the New Law, though they take effect ex opere operato, nevertheless produce a greater effect in proportion as the dispositions of the recipient are better; therefore, care is to be taken that Holy Communion be preceded by serious preparation, and followed by a suitable thanksgiving, according to each one’s strength, circumstances and duties.

That the practice of frequent and daily Communion may be carried out with greater prudence and more abundant merit, the confessor’s advice should be asked. Confessors, however, are to be careful not to dissuade any one (ne quemquam avertant) from frequent and daily Communion, provided that he is in the state of grace and approaches with a right intention.

But since it is plain that by frequent or daily reception of the Holy Eucharist union with Christ is fostered, the spiritual life more abundantly sustained, the soul more richly endowed with virtues, and an even surer pledge of everlasting happiness bestowed on the recipient, therefore parish priests, confessors, and preachers—in accordance with the approved teaching of the Roman Catechism (Part II. cap. 4. n. 60)—are frequently and with great zeal to exhort the faithful to this devout and salutary practice.

Frequent and daily Communion is to be promoted especially in religious Orders and Congregations of all kinds; with regard to which, however, the decree “Quemadmodum,” issued on December 17, 1890, by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, is to remain in force. It is also to be promoted especially in ecclesiastical seminaries, where students are preparing for the service of the altar; as also in all Christian establishments, of whatever kind, for the training of youth.

In the case of religious institutes, whether of solemn or simple vows, in whose rules, or constitutions, or calendars Communion is assigned to certain fixed days, such regulations are to be regarded as directive and not perceptive. In such cases the appointed number of Communions should be regarded as a minimum, and not as setting a limit to the devotion of the religious. Therefore, freedom of access to the Eucharistic Table, whether more frequently or daily, must always be allowed them, according to the principles above laid down in this decree. And in order that all religious of both sexes may clearly understand the provisions of this decree, the Superior of each house is to see that it is read in community, in the vernacular, every year within the octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

Finally after the publication of this decree, all ecclesiastical writers are to cease from contentious controversies concerning the dispositions requisite for frequent and daily Communion.

All this having been reported to His Holiness Pope Pius X, by the undersigned Secretary of the Sacred Congregation in an audience held on December 17, 1905 His Holiness ratified and confirmed the present decree and ordered it to be published, anything to the contrary notwithstanding. He further ordered that it should be sent to all local ordinaries and regular prelates, to be communicated by them to their respective seminaries, parishes, religious institutes, and priests; and that in their reports concerning the state of their respective dioceses or institutes they should inform the Holy See concerning the execution of the matters therein determined.

Given at Rome, the 20th day of December, 1905.

Vincent, Card. Bishop of Palestrina, Prefect. L.S. Cajetan De Lai, Secretary.

PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION

The preparation for frequent Communion is twofold: remote and proximate.

The remote preparation consists in detachment from creatures. St. Augustine says that,[10122] if you expected a visit from a great personage, to whom certain objects in your house would be offensive, would you not remove them before his arrival? When, then, you wish to receive Jesus Christ you should remove from your heart all earthly affections that you know to be displeasing to him. He that wishes to communicate often, should empty his heart of the things of the earth. This is precisely what our Lord once said to St. Gertrude: “I want nothing more from you, than that you come to receive me with a heart divested of all self-love.”[10123]

As to the immediate preparation you should begin it the evening before Communion, by acts of love and of desire. As soon as you awake in the morning, consider that you are to receive Jesus Christ, and with a fervent aspiration, invite your Spouse to hasten into your soul.

Immediately before Communion, you should, even though you had made mental prayer, excite in your soul lively sentiments of faith, of humility, and of desire.

First, you ought to animate your faith by reflecting on the majesty of him whom you are to receive. If faith did not assure us of this who could ever imagine that a God wished to make himself the food of his own creatures? But the Church has declared, in several of her councils, and especially in the Council of Trent,[10124] that our Redeemer, Christ Jesus, is really and truly present in the consecrated Host. How beautiful was the answer of St. Louis, king of France, to a person inviting him to behold Jesus Christ, who appeared in the consecrated host, under the form of an infant! "Let those," said the holy king, "that do not believe by faith, go and see; I believe more firmly than if I saw Jesus Christ with my eyes." And he remained where he was.

Secondly, you should excite sentiments of humility by considering that in spite of your misery you are to receive a God into your mouth and into your heart. The Venerable Paul Segneri used to say that, for a person going to Communion the most appropriate sentiment is one of astonishment that would make her exclaim: What! A God to me! A God to me! What would be the sentiment's of a shepherd, if he saw his sovereign coming to dwell with him in his tent? What are your sentiments when you behold the King of heaven coming into your heart in the Holy Communion? Will you not at least say to him with true humility: *Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof*?[10125] To humility unite an act of contrition and of hope, confidently expecting that Jesus Christ, when he comes into your soul, will enrich you with his graces.

Thirdly, you must excite an ardent desire of receiving Jesus Christ in the holy sacrament. To nourish the soul this celestial bread must be eaten with hunger. He that receives it with the strongest desire derives from it the greatest graces. St. Francis de Sales[10126] used to say that he that gives himself to us only through love should be received only through love. Our Redeemer said once to St. Mechtilde: "When you communicate, desire to have the greatest love that the saints have had for me, and in return for this desire I will accept your love in proportion to the fervor with which *you* wished for it."[10127]

To remember these acts it will be sufficient to say to yourself before Communion: ‘Who comes? to whom does he come? why does he come? A God of infinite majesty comes: he comes to you, a miserable sinner: and he comes to be loved by you.

THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION

After Communion remain with Jesus Christ as long as you can. Father d’Avila said that we should set great value on the time after Communion, because it is a precious time for acquiring treasures of grace. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi was accustomed to say: “The time after Communion is the most precious time of our life; it is the fittest time for negotiating with God, and for inflaming our souls with his divine love. At that time we have no need of masters or of books, for Jesus Christ himself teaches us how we are to love him.[10128] St. *T*eresa used to say: “After Communion let us not lose so good an opportunity of negotiation. God does not repay with ingratitude the abode in which he is well received.”[10129] In another place she says that after Communion Jesus Christ remains in the soul as on a throne of grace, and appears to say to it what he said when on earth to the man that was born blind: *What wilt thou that I should do to thee.*[10130] Beloved soul, tell me what you want from me; I am come for the purpose of bestowing on you the graces you ask of me.

It is the opinion of Cajetan, Suarez, Gonet, Valentia, Lugo, and others, that as long as the sacramental species remain the fruit of the sacrament and divine love are increased in proportion to the efforts of the soul to unite itself to Jesus Christ, and to the good acts that it performs. For the operation of this celestial bread in the soul is similar to that of corporal food, which gives nourishment and strength in proportion to the time it remains in the body. Many religious communicate frequently, and draw but little fruit from their communions, because they remain but a short time with Jesus Christ. To St. Margaret of Cortona our Lord once said: “I treat souls as they treat me.”

If you are not prevented by some duty of obedience or of charity, be careful to remain with Jesus Christ at least for half an hour after Communion. I say, “at least for half an hour,” for an hour is the proper time for thanksgiving. Endeavor to employ yourself after Communion in acts of recollection, of thanksgiving, of love, of sorrow, of oblation of yourself, and of all that you possess; but, above all, in petitions to Jesus Christ for his graces, and particularly for the gift of final perseverance and of his holy love. In these acts consists that "negotiation" of which St. Teresa speaks; and when you feel dryness and dissipation of mind, read a book that contains devout affections towards God. The entire day of Communion should be spent in more than usual recollection. St. Aloysius Gonzaga endeavored to entertain himself for three days after Communion in thanking Jesus Christ. Nor should your recollection be diminished because you communicate more frequently; on the contrary, the oftener you receive the Lord the more closely should you keep yourself united to him.

EXCUSES BROUGHT FORWARD BY CERTAIN RELIGIOUS FOR NOT COMMUNICATING FREQUENTLY

What shall we say of the nun who, through carelessness, abstains from the holy Eucharist, though she has the opportunity of frequent Communion, and has before her eyes the example of the sisters who communicate often? Let us see whether her excuses are reasonable:

She will say: "I do not communicate often, because I do not think myself worthy of frequent Communion." My dear sister, if this excuse were satisfactory, you ought never to communicate. For St. Ambrose says: "He that is not worthy to receive daily is not worthy to receive after a year."[10131] But who can be ever worthy of the holy Communion? Jesus Christ alone, who was God and man, communicated worthily; for only God is worthy of receiving a God. You say you do not think yourself worthy of frequent Communion. But do you not know that the longer you defer Communion the more unworthy you become? For the longer you abstain from the Blessed Eucharist, the more your defects are multiplied, because you are bereft of the assistance that you should receive from Holy Communion. A Holy Dominican nun used to say: "For my part, because I am sensible of my unworthiness, I would wish to communicate three times a day; for by more frequent Communion, I should hope to render myself less unworthy.'[10132]

Which of the two, says Cassian, is the more humble, the man that communicates often or he that communicates but seldom? lie answers that the person that frequently receives Jesus Christ is the more humble; because he knows his infirmities, and therefore seeks more frequently the remedy of his disease. The angelic Doctor says that though to abstain from Communion through humility and fear is pleasing to God, still the love and confidence that induce a soul to receive him are more acceptable in his sight. “However, love and hope, to which the Scriptures constantly exhort us, are preferable to fear.”[10133]

She will add: I do not know whether I am in the state of grace. But I ask, do you expect that an angel will come from heaven to assure you that you are in the state of grace? Is it not enough for you to have the assurance of your confessor? You ought to place more confidence in the testimony of the minister of God than in the revelations of all the angels of paradise; for in receiving a communication from angels, there might be an illusion, but in listening to the confessor who, in your regard, holds the place of God, there is no danger of deception. Whenever, then, your spiritual Father allows you to communicate take care not to obey the suggestions of the devil by abstaining from Communion through fear and scruples. Be assured that there is no species of disobedience more pernicious to a person, than to omit a Communion prescribed by his confessor; for such disobedience proceeds from a want of humility, or from a belief that he is a better judge than his director.

I cannot, you will say, bring myself to communicate often, because I constantly commit faults and never amend. To this excuse an answer has been given above.[10134]

If your faults are fully deliberate, and if you make no effort to correct them, neither I nor any other spiritual guide will advise you to communicate often. But if you have no affection for venial sins, and do not commit them with full deliberation—if, on the contrary, you love prayer and desire to advance in perfection, then, I say to you, obey your confessor and have no more uneasiness about your Communions. The greater you perceive your infirmities to be, the more frequently you ought to seek a remedy for them in Holy Communion. “Because,” says St. Ambrose, “I always sin, I should always use a remedy.”[10135] We buttress walls that are inclined, not to make them erect but to prevent them from falling. You say that you perceive in yourself no amendment; will you improve without the aid of the Holy

Communion? No, you will, on the contrary, grow worse every day. In his treatise on Communion, Father Granada says that “he that desires to be cured of his infirmities should not abstain from this great remedy.” The bare remembrance of having communicated in the morning, and the thought of having to communicate the next day, makes a person more watchful and more attentive to the correction of his faults. Besides, the sacrament itself infuses an increase of light and strength into the soul. Theologians generally assert that the holy Eucharist produces more grace than all the other sacraments, because it contains Jesus Christ himself who is the author of grace. A present that a prince makes with his own hand is more valuable than the gifts that he dispenses through the hands of others.

You will say, I feel myself distracted, cold, and without devotion. What, I ask, do you understand by devotion? If you mean sensible fervor, I say that is not necessary, it is enough to have fervor in the will, or a determination to do what you know to be pleasing to God. This is the true devotion and fervor that God demands of you; and though you do not feel this fervor of the will, you should, notwithstanding, communicate in order to obtain it by means of the holy sacrament. For if you abstain from Communion because you have not sensible fervor you will, as Gerson says,[10136] imitate the folly of those who, when cold, refuse to approach the fire because they do not feel warm. According to St. Laurence Justinian,[10137] this sacrament sometimes produces its effect, though we do not perceive it. St. Bona—venture says: “Although you feel tepid, approach with confidence; for the greater your infirmity the more you stand in need of a physician.”[10138] Do not be deterred from frequent Communion, because you experience more devotion when you communicate seldom than when you communicate often. He that eats but seldom eats with greater eagerness but with less profit; and, if you communicate but seldom you may, perhaps, feel a little more of sensible fervor, but you will also receive less fruit; because your soul will want the food that gives strength to avoid sins and imperfections. Seek not, then, sensible devotion in your Communions. Communicate only for the purpose of uniting your soul more closely to God, and be assured that, as often as you communicate with that view, your Communions will be productive of great fruit.

I abstain from Communion to escape the censure of others that see my imperfections and rebuke me for communicating so frequently. To this pretext I answer: If you communicate with the advice of your director, and through a motive of advancing in divine love, or of correcting your defects, be not disturbed by the complaints or censure of others. I have already said,[10139] that, according to the Venerable John d'Avila, they who censure others for frequent Communion perform the office of the devil. Will you then pay attention to their complaints? Listen to the words of St. Francis de Sales: "If," he says, "they ask you why you communicate so often tell them that two classes of persons should communicate frequently, the perfect, to preserve perfection, and the imperfect, to attain perfection; the strong not to become weak, and the weak to grow strong; the sick to be cured, and the healthy to prevent sickness. And as to yourself, tell them that, because you are imperfect, weak, and infirm, you stand in need of frequent Communion. Tell them that all that are free from worldly occupations, because they have the opportunity, and all that are engaged in them, because they have need of Communion, should communicate frequently." In conclusion, he says: "Philothea communicate often, and as often as possible, with the advice of your spiritual Father; and believe me that, as the hares on our mountains become white, because they feed only on snow, so, by eating purity itself in this sacrament you will become all pure."[10140] To St. *Frances* of Rome, as she was going to Communion, the devil said: "How can you, who are so full of venial sins, dare receive the Immaculate Lamb." Perceiving that the enemy wished to deprive her of Communion, she banished him by spitting in his face. The Blessed Virgin immediately appeared to her, and, after having praised her conduct, said that our defects, instead of being an obstacle, should be an incentive to Communion, since, in Communion we find the remedy of all our miseries. The Roman catechism teaches,[10141] that venial sins are remitted by holy Communion; and the generality of divines agree with St. Thomas, that the holy Eucharist excites in the soul acts of divine love, by which venial sins are pardoned.[10142]

You will perhaps say, "I have not time to prepare as I ought for holy Communion." I answer: if your time is spent in useless occupations or in idle discourses, then your discourse is frivolous. But if it be employed in performing the duties of your office, or of obedience, then you may rest assured that the discharge of these duties, with a view to please God, will be an excellent preparation for Communion. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi was once engaged in making bread, when the bell rang for Communion; she instantly obeyed the call, and in an ecstasy received the holy sacrament. Hence, she was accustomed to say to her sisters: “Offer to God all your actions as a preparation for Communion, perform them with the intention of pleasing him and communicate.” Whenever they want of time arises from your being employed in the service of the Community, in the care of the sick, or in the performance of any work of charity that cannot be deferred, you should never abstain from Communion in consequence of not having sufficient time for preparation. But be careful to avoid as much as possible all unnecessary conversations and amusements, and when you foresee that in the morning you will not have time to prepare for Communion, endeavor on the preceding evening to make some preparation, by reading a book of piety, and by making the acts that ought to be made in the morning; or rise a little before the usual hour and spend whatever time may be at your disposal in preparation for the holy sacrament.

My confessor, you will perhaps say, is not inclined to allow me frequent Communion. If the confessor does not permit you to communicate often you must obey. But supply the want of the holy sacrament by redoubling your spiritual Communions. Say to Jesus Christ: Lord, I would receive Thee more frequently were I not prevented by obedience. And he will be pleased with your desire of Communion, and with your obedience. But why do you not ask the permission of your confessor to communicate more frequently? To ask leave for more frequent Communion is useful, and is by no means opposed to the perfection of obedience. For, in allowing more or less frequent Communion, confessors are regulated by the desire of Communion that they perceive in their penitents. To produce great fruit this divine food must be eaten with hunger; it fructifies but little in the souls that have not an appetite for it. You do not ask leave for Communion, and therefore you show but little eagerness for the holy sacrament; hence, the confessor does not permit you to communicate often. Why do you not imitate St. Catharine of Sienna, who, when deprived of Communion by her confessor, exclaimed: “Father give my soul its food; give my soul its food.” Had you, like her, manifested, with humility and resignation, this holy hunger, your confessor would have treated you in a different manner. But, because he sees you cold and not unwilling to be refused Communion, he prudently abstains from advising you to communicate more frequently.

EXHORTATION TO RECEIVE COMMUNION FREQUENTLY

Oh ! what great and continual progress is made in divine love by those who, with a strong desire, and with the permission of their spiritual Father, frequent holy Communion! Oh! How wonderfully does the Lord draw them to his love! To keep them humble and resigned, he sometimes leaves them in darkness without any sense of their own advancement, and without any sense of the comforts of sensible devotion. According to St. Teresa, frequent Communion is the best support of these desolate souls. Let others say what they please, it is certain that in general the most regular convents are those in which holy Communion is most frequented, and that in all monasteries the religious that communicate most frequently are the most fervent and exemplary.

O my God! Why are so many frivolous excuses put forward? Let the religious that seldom communicates speak the truth, and she must acknowledge that her repugnance to frequent Communion arises from an unwillingness to bind herself to a life of greater retirement, and of greater detachment from creatures, and from self-indulgence. She knows well, that conversations with seculars, friendships, vanity, self-esteem, and inordinate attachment to the indulgence of the appetite, and such imperfections, are not compatible with frequent Communion, and therefore she abstains from it. She cannot bear to be rebuked at each Communion by Jesus Christ for her disorderly life. In a word, she receives him but seldom, because she wishes to live under less restraint.

Are you, dear sister, animated with these sentiments? If you are, I say that since you love Jesus Christ but little, and desire but little to love him, you should not receive him frequently. But beware: this obstinate tepidity that you can but will not correct may one day lead you into an abyss. Ah, arise from this miserable state; give yourself to God for the remainder of your life; you know not how long it will last; it may be very short. Reform your conduct according to the best of your ability, and endeavor to communicate more frequently. When your confessor permits you, go to Communion without fear or hesitation; and leave others to say of you what they please.

Fear not that you will have to account, at the hour of death, for Communions made with the advice of your confessor. I say, and I assure you, that at the hour of death you will repent not of the Communions that you made with his permission, but of those that you could have made, and that through negligence you omitted. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi once saw a soul suffering in purgatory for having through carelessness omitted one Communion. And we read in her life that she several times burst into tears because a sister abstained from Communion through negligence. Be assured that of all your devotions there is none more dear to Jesus Christ than your Communions. For all perfection consists in a perfect union with God; and holy Communion is the action that unites the soul most closely to him, and consequently the religious can do nothing more pleasing in his sight. Hence, the same St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say: “I would rather die than omit a Communion permitted by’ obedience.” I shall now speak of spiritual Communion, which has been so much practised by the saints.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Spiritual Communion, as St. Thomas says,[10143] consists in an ardent desire to receive Jesus Christ in the holy sacrament. The holy Council of Trent[10144] extols the advantages of spiritual Communion, and exhorts the faithful to practise it. And God himself has several times given devout souls to understand how pleasing it is to him that they receive him spiritually. Jesus Christ appeared one day to sister Paula Maresca, foundress of the convent of St. Catharine of Sienna, in Naples, as we read in her life, and showed her two precious vessels, one of gold and another of silver, and said to her, that in the former he preserved her sacramental Communions, and in the latter her spiritual Communions.

On another occasion he said to the Venerable Jane of the Cross, that as often as she communicated spiritually, she received a grace similar to that which she derived from her sacramental Communions.

Father John Nider, of the Order of St. Dominic, relates, that in a certain city a poor man of great virtue desired to communicate often; but because the practice of frequent Communion did not exist in the place, he, in order to avoid singularity, contented himself with spiritual Communions. Hence, he would first go to confession, and make his meditation; he would then hear Mass, and prepare for Communion, and would open his mouth as if he were receiving Jesus Christ. The author relates, that in opening his mouth the poor man used to feel the particle laid on his tongue, and his soul filled with sweetness. One morning he put his finger into his mouth to find out whether the consecrated particle were really placed on his tongue; the sacred host adhered to his finger; he placed it again in his mouth, and received it. Thus the Lord rewarded the desire of this good servant.

Father Peter Faber, of the Society of Jesus, used to say[10145] that spiritual Communions are a very powerful help to receive the holy Eucharist, with the proper dispositions. Hence the saints have been in the habit of making frequent spiritual Communions. Blessed Angela of the Cross, a Dominican nun, went so far as to say: “If my confessor had not taught me this method of communicating, I could scarcely live.” Hence she used to make a hundred spiritual Communions every day, and a hundred more every night. But how, you will ask, could she make so many? St. Augustine answers: “Give me a lover, and he understands what I say.”[10146] Give me a soul that loves nothing but Jesus Christ, and it will not wonder at it. It is most easy to make several spiritual Communions in the day; it is not necessary to be fasting, to have a priest, or to spend, a long time. Hence we may make a spiritual Communion as often as we please in the day. The Venerable Jane of the Cross used therefore to say: “O my Lord, how excellent a mode of communicating! without being seen or remarked: without giving trouble to my spiritual Father, or depending on any one but Thee, who in solitude dost nourish my soul, and speak to my heart.”

Be careful, then, to make frequent spiritual Communions in your meditations, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and be particularly careful, as often as you hear Mass, to make a spiritual Communion, during the Communion of the priest. Make an act of *faith,* believing firmly that Jesus Christ is present in the holy sacrament; an act of *love,* uniting to it an act of sorrow for your sins; and then an act of *desire,* inviting Jesus Christ to come into your soul, in order to make it entirely his own; and in the end thank him as if you had received him. You can make these acts in the following manner:

My Jesus, I believe that Thou art truly and really present in the holy sacrament. I love Thee with my whole heart, and because I love Thee, I am sorry for having offended Thee. I embrace Thee, O my love, and I give myself entirely to Thee; do not permit me to be ever separated from Thee.

In this manner you can make as many spiritual Communions as you please.

THE VISITS TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT

The frequent visits to Jesus Christ in the sacrament of the altar is a great help to the souls that love him. The holy Church has instituted and celebrates the festival of the adorable sacrament with so many solemnities in honor not only of holy Communion, but also of the loving dwelling of Jesus Christ night and day in our churches, in this sacrament of love. Our loving Lord, says Nieremberg, has left himself on earth under the species of bread, principally in order to be the food of our souls; but he has left himself also in order to remain with us shut up in our tabernacles, and thus remind us of the love which he bears us. "No tongue," says St. Peter of Alcantara, "can express the greatness of the love that Jesus bears to all that are in the state of grace.[10147]

Hence, that his absence from them might not be an occasion of forgetting him, this most sweet Spouse, before his departure from this world, left, as a memorial of his love, this most holy sacrament, in which he himself remained. He did not wish that between him and his servants there should be any other pledge than himself to keep alive the remembrance of him.

Hence, when our dear Saviour left this world, he did not wish to leave us alone, and therefore he devised a means of remaining with us in the holy Eucharist to the end of time, that even here below we may enjoy his sweet company. This he declared to his disciples, and through them to us all. *Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world,*[10148] St. Peter of Alcantara therefore adds: "The Saviour did not wish to leave his spouse alone at such a distance, and therefore he has left her this sacrament, in which he himself remains, as the best companion he could leave her."

St. Teresa says that all are not permitted to speak to the king; the most that a vassal can expect is, to speak to his sovereign through a third person. She then adds: But to speak to Thee, O King of Glory, the intervention of a third person is not necessary; Thou art always ready to give audience to all in the sacrament of the altar. Every one that wishes may find Thee there always, and may speak to Thee with confidence. Oh, how difficult is it to obtain an audience from an earthly monarch! Kings seldom give audience to their subjects. But Thou, O my Redeemer, in this sacrament, dost give audience to all, whenever they wish. Our divine king, says the same saint, in order to animate us to approach his feet with greater confidence, has clothed himself with the species of bread in this sacrament, and thus has veiled his majesty that we may not be terrified at the sight of it.

But, O God, how many insults must Jesus Christ have suffered from infidels, from heretics, and from sinners in this sacrament, in order to remain with us. Some have trampled on the sacred Host, others have thrown it into the mire. He foresaw all these injuries; but still he resolved to remain with us on the altar, that we might not be deprived of his amiable presence.

Many pilgrims make long journeys to visit the holy house in Loretto, where Jesus Christ once dwelt, or to venerate the places in the holy land in which he was born, in which he suffered and died. But Father John d’Avila had just reason to say, that he knew no sanctuary more amiable, or more apt to inspire devotion, than a church in which the holy sacrament is preserved, for there Jesus Christ has not only once dwelt and suffered, but truly lives and dwells. Hence, the saints have experienced no greater delight on earth than that which they enjoyed in the presence of the most holy sacrament. St. Francis Xavier, as is related in his Life,[10149] after having labored all day for the sanctification of souls, spent the night at the foot of the tabernacle; when overcome b) sleep, he threw himself on the steps of the altar and, after a short repose, he began again to converse with his dear Lord. St. John Francis Regis[10150] used to do the same; after having spent the entire day in preaching and hearing confessions, his repose consisted in remaining during the night before Jesus in the holy sacrament, and when he found the church shut he remained outside the door to pay homage, at least at a distance, to his beloved Redeemer. The Venerable Father Balthasar Alvarez, a holy man, when unable to remain in the church, endeavored at least to keep his eyes turned to the tabernacle, in which he knew the holy sacrament was preserved.[10151] In a word, all the saints have found their paradise on earth in this sacrament. St. Teresa said one day from heaven to one of her religious:

"We who rejoice in heaven, and you who suffer on earth, should be the same in purity and love. And what we do in heaven before the divine essence you should do on earth before the most holy sacrament."[10152] And what greater paradise can a religious that loves Jesus Christ find on this earth than to remain at his feet, to manifest the love that she bears him, to offer to him herself and all that belongs to her, to make known her desires, to see him face to face, in order to love him with greater ardor!

But this paradise religious can enjoy in a special manner. It is true that Jesus remains in the holy sacrament for all; but he remains particularly for nuns—his spouses who enjoy his society day and night within their own very house. When Jesus was born, the holy Magi left their country and their homes, and spent a long time travelling through Palestine, inquiring for the birthplace of the Redeemer: *Saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews?*[10153] —To visit Jesus Christ, seculars must leave their houses and go to the church, which is closed at night, and in many places is open only in the morning. But a nun need not leave her own dwelling in order to enjoy the society of Jesus Christ; he remains continually in the house in which she dwells. A nun, then, can visit him whenever she pleases, in the morning or evening, by day or by night. She, as a spouse, is permitted to dwell in the palace. How highly honored does the vassal esteem himself to be, when he is invited to dwell in the palace of the king! You then, O dear sister, are one of those happy Christians that have the honor of dwelling on this earth with Jesus Christ, the king of heaven. You can visit him and remain with him day and night, whenever you please. The Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus, the foundress of a monastery in Toulouse, used to say, that she thanked God in a special manner for two things: first, because by the vow of obedience, religious belong entirely to God; secondly, because they have the happiness of dwelling always along with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

In other churches Jesus Christ remains for all; but in your monastery he dwells only for you and your companions. Be careful to profit by his presence. O God! In all monasteries the nuns should, like so many butterflies, hover night and day about their Spouse; their hearts should remain with him to burn continually, and with greater splendor than the lights and lamps that decorate the altar. But alas! of the ingratitude of men for his loving dwelling among them, our Lord complained to his servant, Sister Margaret Alacoque, to whom he showed one day his divine heart burning with flames of love for men, and said to her: “Behold the heart that has loved men so tenderly, has reserved nothing, but has consumed itself in order to show its love for them. But in return I receive nothing but ingratitude and contempt from the greater number of men in this sacrament. But what displeases me most is, that some of these ungrateful hearts are hearts consecrated to me.”[10154]In these last words he spoke of the religious that set but little value on their happy lot, of dwelling in the same house with Jesus Christ, and therefore draw but little profit from his society. If he were to come into your church once a year, and to remain only for a single day, surely all would contend with one another in paying homage to him, and in remaining in his loving company; and will you leave him alone, and visit him so seldom, because in order to see you more frequently in his presence, he, in his goodness, remains continually with you?

If you have hitherto been negligent in visiting Jesus in the tabernacle, I entreat you henceforth to avail yourself of the great treasure that you have in the most holy sacrament. Sister Anne of the cross, who had been Countess of Feria, and a Spanish lady of high rank, after being a widow for twenty-four years, became a nun of the Order of St. Clare, in Montilla; she procured a cell, from which she had a view of the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, and there she generally remained day and night. Being asked how she was employed during so many hours that she spent before the sacrament, she replied: “I would remain there for all eternity. How am I employed before Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist? I thank him, I love him, and I ask his graces.” Behold an excellent means of drawing great fruit from your visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

First, thank Jesus Christ. O God, how thankful is a nun to a relative that comes from a distance to visit her! And will you not thank Jesus Christ, who descends from heaven, not only to visit you, but also to remain always with you? First of all in your visit, enliven your faith and adore your Spouse in the sacrament: thank his great goodness in coming to remain on the altar for the love of you.

Secondly, love him. St. Philip Neri, when he saw the most holy Viaticum brought into his room, was all on fire with holy love, and exclaimed, Behold my love*!* behold my love! Do you say the same when you re—main before the holy tabernacle. Consider that your Spouse, shut up in that prison of love, is burning with love for you. To St. Catharine of Sienna he appeared one day in the sacrament in the form of a fiery furnace, and the saint was astonished that the flames that issued from it had not filled the hearts of all men with the fire of divine love. If, when you remain in his presence, you wish to please him, repeat acts of love, offering to him yourself in a special manner.

Thirdly, ask his grace. Blessed Henry Suso used to say that it is in the holy sacrament that Jesus hears most readily the prayers of those that visit him, and dispenses his graces most abundantly. The Venerable Father Balthasar Alvarez once saw Jesus Christ in the sacrament with his hands full of graces; but found no one to whom he could impart them, because there was no one to ask them. You say that you cannot remain in the presence of Jesus Christ, because you know not what to do before him, nor what to say to him. O God! and why do you not employ yourself in asking the graces of which you stand in need? Beg of him to give you strength to resist temptations, to correct the faults into which you always relapse, to rescue you from the passion that keeps you in chains, and hinders you from giving yourself entirely to God. Entreat him to give you aid to suffer all insults and contradictions in peace, to increase in your heart his divine love, and entreat him particularly to make you live always united with his holy will. When you feel disturbed on account of having committed any fault, go instantly to the holy sacrament to ask pardon, and then calm your mind. When you receive any offence or when you meet a heavy cross, go and offer it to Jesus Christ and ask his aid to embrace it with resignation. Oh! if all religious acted in this manner and knew how to avail themselves of the society of their Spouse, they would all become saints. Let it be your care to become a saint by adopting this practice.

PRAYER

I adore Thee, O my Jesus, in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. Thou didst once sacrifice Thy divine life on the cross for my sake; and now, because Thou lovest me, Thou dost remain shut up in this tabernacle as a prison of love. From among so many young person’s that have offended Thee less than I have, Thou hast, after I had committed so many sins, chosen me to live with Thee in Thy own house; taking me from the world and rescuing me from its dangers, Thou hast admitted me into this ‘convent that I might remain always in Thy company on this earth, that I might one day love and enjoy Thee face to face in heaven, and become Thy eternal spouse and companion in the kingdom of Thy glory. Here Thou dost even invite me frequently to eat Thy sacred flesh in holy Communion, that I may be entirely united with Thee, and that I may become all Thine. My dear Redeemer, what can I say? I thank Thee for this great favor, and I hope one day to thank Thee for it in heaven for all eternity. I will say with St. Teresa: The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever. *Y*es, my Jesus, my love, and my Spouse, this I expect through Thy merits. I now declare that I feel more content at having left, for the love of Thee, the world and the little pleasures that I could there enjoy, than if I were queen of all the earth. I am sorry for having hitherto, even in Thy own house, given Thee so much displeasure, for which I would deserve to be banished from it. My Jesus, pardon me, and for Thy mercy’s sake grant that, among so many of my good sisters that have served Thee so well, I too. A poor sinner, may serve Thee. I do not wish ever more to depart from Thy feet, I wish to visit Thee frequently. Thy presence will give me strength to banish every affection that is not for Thee: it will remind me of my obligation to love Thee, and to have recourse to Thee in all my necessities. I wish to remain always near Thee; and I wish to communicate often in order to love Thee more ardently, and to be united with Thee, my beloved Lord. I love Thee, O God, concealed in the most holy sacrament. For the love of me Thou dost remain continually on this altar, and for the love of Thee I wish as much as possible to remain in Thy society. Shut up in this tabernacle Thou dost always love me; and, shut up in this convent, I will always love Thee. Then, my Jesus and my all, we shall remain always together, as I hope, for time in this house, and for eternity in paradise.

O Mary, my mother, pray to Jesus for me, and obtain for me a great love for the most holy sacrament.

Chapter XIX

PURITY OF INTENTION.

Purity of intention consists in performing all our actions through the sole motive of pleasing God. It is necessary to know that the good or bad intention with which an act is performed makes the act good or bad in the sight of God. *If,* said our Lord, *thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome. But if thy eye be evil, thy whole body shall be darksome.*[10155] By the *eye* the holy Fathers understand the intention, and by the *body* they understand the action. Hence Jesus Christ tells us that if our intention be simple, that is, if we have no other object than to please him, our works are good, and resplendent with the light of purity: but if our intention be twofold, that is, if any vicious end enters into our actions, they are sinful. Holy simplicity admits no other end than the pleasure of God. Hence a pure intention is the soul of our actions: it gives them life, and makes them pleasing in the eyes of God.

In the estimation of men, the value of an act increases in proportion to the time spent in its performance; but before God the value of an act increases in proportion to the purity of intention with which it is performed. For, as the Scripture says, men look only to the external acts, but God regards the heart; that is, the will with which they are performed. *For man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart.*[10156] Can there be any action more excellent than to suffer martyrdom, and give one's life for the faith? But St. Paul says: *If I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*[10157] Though I should give my body to the flames, unless I give it for God, it profits me nothing. No, for as St. Augustine says, it is neither torments nor death, but the cause and intention that make a martyr.[10158]

Hence the royal prophet said: *I will offer up to thee holocausts full of marrow.*[10159] Some offer to God sacrifices without marrow, that is, without a pure intention of pleasing him; and such oblations God does not accept. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that God rewards our actions in proportion to the purity of our intention of pleasing him. Hence St. Augustine has written: “Attend not to what a man does, but to the motive of his conduct:”[10160] for, adds St. Ambrose, the good that you will do shall be proportioned to the purity of intention with which you do it for the divine glory.[10161]

Who is she, says the Holy Ghost, that goeth up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh, and frankincense, and of all the powders of the perfumer?[10162] Myrrh signifies mortification, frankincense prayer, and the powders of the perfumer represent all other virtues. But the spouse is praised for all; because all her virtues form a pillar of odoriferous smoke, which ascends to God; that is, all her actions have no other end than to please her divine Spouse.

We have in the Gospels two great proofs and examples of the great value of a good intention before God.

The first example is related by St. Luke. Whilst our Redeemer travelled through the cities and towns preaching the kingdom of God, he was one day accompanied by a great crowd: *a woman having an issue of blood* made her way through the throng until she succeeded in touching the hem of his garment. He asked: *Who is it that touched me?* Surprised at the question, the disciples answered: *Master, the multitude throng and press thee, and dost thou say, Who touched me?* But our Lord meant not the material touch, but the faith and devotion with which the woman had touched his garment. Hence St. Augustine has written: “Many press round Jesus Christ, but few touch him.”[10163] Many nuns submit to great labor through the monastery, in order to increase the revenues of the convent, in order to celebrate their festivals with great pomp, and perform many actions that appear to be great; but because their intention is not pure, they press round Jesus Christ, but do not touch him; hence they annoy rather than please him.

The other example is that of the poor widow that put her two mites into the treasury of the temple, into which others had cast large sums. But of her the Saviour said: *Amen,* I *say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury.*[10164] In his exposition of this passage, St. Cyprian says that by these words, our Lord meant that he regards not so much the action that is performed, as the affection and purity of intention with which it is performed.[10165]

Let us come to what is practical. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say to her novices: “Never seek yourselves in any of your exercises.” A religious that seeks herself in her actions, by performing them in order to be praised, or to please herself, imitates the man that puts the wages he receives for his labor into a bag with holes. *He*, says the Prophet Aggeus, *that hath earned wages, put them into a bag with holes.*[10166] That is, she loses all her works. Hence, our Lord says to all: *Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them.*[10167] Be careful, he says, not to act through the sole motive of being seen and praised by men; if you do, when you ask a reward from me, I will answer: You have received your reward, you have obtained the praise that you sought, what can you now expect from me? In the Life of St. Pachomius, Surius relates that a certain monk made two mats, whilst his companions made but one; he showed the two mats to the saint in order to receive praise, but the saint said to the other monks: “Behold, this monk has worked till night, and has offered his work to the devil.”

But let us examine the marks by which you may know whether your works have been truly done for God.

The first mark is, if, when your undertaking has not been successful, you are not disturbed, but remain as tranquil as if you had attained your object. This will certainly be the case when you have acted only for God; because when you see that he has not wished your efforts to be crowned with success, neither will you wish it; for you know that he demands an account, not of the success or failure of your undertaking, but of the purity of your intention.

The second mark is, to rejoice at the good done by—others, as if it had been done by yourself. He that *seeks* nothing but the divine glory, cares not whether it is promoted by another or by himself.

The third mark is, not to desire one office more than *another*, one occupation more than another, but to be content with whatever is prescribed by obedience; because in everything you then seek nothing but the pleasure of God.

The fourth sign is, in your good works not to desire approbation nor thanks, but to remain, even when censured and maltreated, in the same tranquillity of mind, satisfied at having succeeded in pleasing God, which was your sole object.

And should it ever happen that any of your actions are greatly praised by others, and that you are tempted to vainglory, and to take complacency in the praises bestowed upon you, you need not annoy yourself by endeavoring to banish the temptation by contrary acts; it is better to pay no attention to the evil suggestion, and in conformity with the advice of Father John d'Avila, to say: "You have come too late, for I have already given my work to God." When you perform any act of virtue, such as when you observe the Rule with exactness, when you remain in the choir to pray, or retire to your cell, or perform an act of mortification, or assist the lay-sisters in their work, or perform similar acts of edification in order to give good example to others, do not, through the fear of being seen and praised, abstain from such acts, as long as you do all for God. The Lord wishes that others should see our good works, that thus they may be induced to imitate them, and give glory to God. *So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your lather who is in heaven.*[10168] All consists in doing our actions with an upright intention. Should vainglory assail us, let us say with St. Bernard, who, when tempted to vanity in the act of preaching, said: "I have not commenced my sermon for you, neither shall I, through fear of you abstain from finishing it:"[10169]In preaching I have sought only to please God. St. Francis Xavier used to say, that a person that has deserved hell by his sins should regard the praises of men as insults and mockery. St. Teresa says: "When we seek to please God only, the Lord will give us strength to conquer all vainglory."[10170] Our intention may be good in three ways: first, when we perform an act in order to obtain from God temporal goods; when, for example, a person gives alms, procures Masses to be offered, or fasts in order to be delivered from any infirmity, calumny, or other temporal affliction. This intention is good, provided it is accompanied with resignation to the divine will; but it is the least perfect, because the object is earthly. Secondly, when we do an act in order to make satisfaction to the divine justice for the pains due to our sins, or to obtain from God spiritual goods, such as virtue, or an increase of merits and of glory in heaven; this intention is far more perfect than the former. But the most perfect of all is when, in our works, we seek only to please God and to do his holy will. *T*his intention is also the most meritorious; for the more we forget ourselves in our good actions, the more God will remember us, and the more abundantly he will pour his graces upon us, as he himself once said to St. Catharine of Sienna: “My daughter, think of me, and I will think of you. lie meant to say, think only of pleasing me, and I will take care of your progress in virtue, of your victories over your enemies, of your perfection, and of your glory in heaven. I his was what the sacred spouse meant when she said: I to my beloved and his turning is towards me.[10171]

Oh ! that you had the spirit of that holy woman, who was seen by a religious of the Order of St. Dominic when travelling to Palestine along with St. Louis, king of France. In one hand she carried a vessel of water, and in the other a lighted torch. Being asked by the religious why she carried them, she replied, With this water I would wish to extinguish hell, and with this torch I would wish to burn heaven, that all might serve God, not through fear of hell nor hope of heaven, but only through love, and in order to please him. To act from such a motive, is to imitate the love of the saints in bliss, who seek nothing but the pleasure of God; for, as St. Thomas says,[10172] they rejoice more in the felicity of God than in their own. It is to enter into the joy of the Lord, into which each of the blessed is invited when he enters heaven: *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*[10173] Hence, says St. Bernard,[10174] a person acts with a perfect motive when he acts not that he may be pleasing to God, but because the actions that he performs are pleasing to him; when he is so forgetful of himself that he acts not that God may be pleased with him, but only that his acts may be agreeable to him. Hence the saint used to say: “May I love Thee on account of Thyself.” Lord, grant that I may love Thee, not to please myself, but only to gratify Thee, and to do Thy will.

St. Francis de Sales used to say: “The spouse that loves Jesus Christ does not purify herself in order to be pure; she does not adorn herself in order to be beautiful, but only to please her Spouse.” The confidence that she feels in the goodness of her lover frees her from all solicitude and fear of not being sufficiently beautiful, and makes her satisfied with a calm and faithful preparation, proceeding from a good heart. Let us imitate the divine

Saviour, who said: *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.* When nothing remains but to die the death of love, living no longer to ourselves, but procuring that Jesus Christ may live in us, by saying: Let this be done, O Lord, because it is pleasing to Thee.

And here, let it be observed, that it is better and safer to act through a motive of doing the will of God, than with the intention of promoting his glory; because we shall thus escape all the delusions of self-love. Under the pretence of seeking the glory of God, we often do our own will; but on the other hand, when we endeavor to do the divine will, and what is most pleasing to God, we can never err. And let us be persuaded, that the greatest glory we can give to God consists in doing his will. It was thus our Saviour always acted, doing as he several times declared, all things in order to do the will of his eternal Father: *I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me.*[10175] In another place, he says: *I do always the things that please him.*[10176] Hence, of Jesus it was justly said, that he had done all things well.[10177] And, says St. John Chrysostom,[10178] if we imitate his example, and succeed in pleasing God, what else need we seek? If you have been worthy of doing anything pleasing to God, what better reward do you require? Does it appear to you a small thing, that you, a miserable creature, should be able to give pleasure to God?

Let us be persuaded, that the Lord does not demand of us great things, but only that we present to him the little we do, with a pure intention. St. Augustine[10179] says that if, because you are poor, you have nothing to give to God, your will affords much to give him, if you offer him what you do through the sole motive of pleasing him. To every soul the Lord says: *Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm.*[10180] If you wish to please me, put me as a seal upon your heart, and upon your arm; that is, make my pleasure the sole end of all your desires, and of all your actions. The Lord goes so far as to say, that a person that acts for the sole end of pleasing him, becomes his sister and his spouse, and wounds his heart with the wound of love, so that he cannot but love her. *Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse: thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy eyes.*[10181] By one of her eyes, is signified the sole object of the soul to do the divine will in all its exercise’s; in making meditation only to please God, in going to Communion only to give pleasure to God, obeying

Superiors only to obey God, recognizing God in them, as the Apostle says: *Serving as to the Lord, and not to men.*[10182] *T*hus the soul does all its actions in order to give glory to God, fulfilling the advice of the same Apostle: *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God.*[10183]

The Venerable Beatrix of the Incarnation, once a spiritual child of St. Teresa, used to say: “No price can be an equivalent for the smallest action done for God.”

She had just reason to say so, for all actions performed to please God are acts of divine love that deserve an eternal reward. Hence, Father Rodriguez has written, that purity of intention is a celestial alchymy, that changes iron into gold; that is, it converts into the gold of holy charity the meanest works, such as eating, sleeping, working, or recreation. Hence, St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi was of opinion that the person that performed all his actions with a pure intention would go straight to heaven, without passing through purgatory.

Be careful, O blessed spouse of the Lord, from the moment you awake in the morning, to direct all the actions of the day to God, offering them in union with the actions that our Saviour performed during his mortal life; thus your works will be more acceptable to God. Endeavor to renew your intention at the beginning of every action at least at the beginning of the principal actions, such as your meditations, Communions, hearing Mass, work, meals, and recreation; saying always, at least mentally: “Lord, in this action I intend not my own pleasure, but only the accomplishment of Thy will.” A holy hermit, as St. Jure relates,[10184] was accustomed to raise his eyes to heaven, and to remain in that posture for a little time before he began any action. Being asked why he did so, he said: “I am endeavoring to direct my aim. He meant to say, that as the archer looks towards the mark in order to direct the arrow, so it is necessary to raise our eyes to God, that all our actions may be holy. In the course of our employments, it is advisable to renew, from time to time, our intention of pleasing God. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, when she saw a novice employed at any work, would say to her: “Sister, for what end do you perform that action? And if the novice did not instantly answer that she did it for God, the saint would reprove her. Should you find yourself engaged in occupations prescribed by obedience, be not uneasy, because you cannot spend that time in prayer as you would wish. Father Balthasar Alvarez, being one day very much occupied, and desiring to finish his work, in order to go to prayer, heard our Lord say: "Although you are not with me, let it be sufficient for you to be employed for me."[10185]

The days of those that do all their actions for God shall, as the Psalmist has said, be full days: *And full days shall be found in them.*[10186] By full days he meant days that are entirely employed in pleasing God On the other hand, days that are not spent for God are empty days. Hence the Psalmist says that the wicked do not live half their days: *Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.*[10187] A holy Franciscan, as we read in the Chronicles, being asked how long he was a religious, answered: "Ah! unhappy me, I have worn this holy habit for seventy-five years, but I know not how long I have been a religious, not in name but in truth: I cannot say that I have been a true religious even for a single moment." Would to God that what he said through humility might not be said with truth by some who have been more than thirty years in religion, and have not as yet begun to be religious.

Hence, St. Eusebius said: "Consider that you have lived only for the days on which your actions have had the light of purity;"[10188] that is, on which your actions have been performed through the sole motive of pleasing God. Examine your conduct, then, dear sister, and see how many of your actions are really pure, are done solely for God, and free from all self-love; and should you find that hitherto they have not been pure, endeavor henceforward to perform them through the sole motive of pleasing God, and thus you will have the happiness of hearing from the Lord on the day of your death: *Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things,* I *will place thee over many thing enter thou into the joy of the Lord.*[10189] Rejoice, my good servant, because you have been faithful in a few things, by performing your works through the sole motive of pleasing me, I will give you many and great rewards.

PRAYER

My Jesus, when shall I cease to be ungrateful to Thee When shall I begin to love Thee with a true love? Oh! infinite Goodness, so unknown and despised in this world! I am sorry that I have miserably been among the number of so many ungrateful souls. But I do not wish to die among them. Lord, assist me; make me entirely Thine before I die. Give me Thy love—a fervent love, that will make me forget all creatures to remember Thee only : a strong love that will make me conquer all difficulties, when there is question of giving pleasure to Thee; a perpetual love that will never more be dissolved between me and Thee. I love Thee, my dear Redeemer, and I hope for every grace through the blood Thou hast shed for me.

I hope for all things from thy intercession also, O Mary, my refuge, my mother, and my hope.

Chapter XX

PRAYER.

I have several times treated of prayer in my other spiritual works: in a little treatise at the end of the volume that contains the *Visits to the Most Holy Sacrament*, in the *Preparation for Death,* and especially in a book that I have written on prayer, entitled the *Great Means of Prayer,* in which I have spoken of the necessity of prayer for all, in order to obtain salvation.

In this place I will only collect the principal reflections on prayer. We shall see, in the first place, the *necessity* of prayer; in the second place, its *efficacy* before God to obtain every grace; and in the third place, we shall treat of the manner in which we must pray.

With regard to the necessity of prayer: it is necessary to be persuaded that we cannot perform any good action without the actual graces of God. But the Lord declares that these graces he gives only to those who ask them of him: *Ask and it shall be given you.*[10190] He, then, says St. Teresa, who does not ask, will not receive.

For adults, prayer is necessary, as a matter of strict precept. *We ought,* says Jesus Christ, *always to pray*[10191] *Pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*[10192] *Ask, and you shall receive.*[10193] The words, *we ought, pray, ask,* according to St. Thomas, and the generality of theologians, imply a strict precept that binds under pain of grievous sin. “Every man,” says the angelic Doctor, “is bound to pray, because he is bound to procure spiritual goods, which can*not be obtained unless they are asked.”*[10194] *A person is obliged to pray, particularly in three cases: first, when he finds himself in the state of sin; secondly, when he is in danger of death; thirdly, when he is assailed by any violent temptation. Theologians teach, that ordinarily he who neglects prayer for a month, or at most for two months, is guilty of a mortal sin.*[10195]

Prayer is necessary, not only as a matter of strict precept, but, according to St. Basil, St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria, and others, it is also necessary as a means of salvation, without which it is absolutely impossible for us to preserve ourselves in the grace of God, and to be saved. "It is simply impossible," says St. John Chrysostom, "to lead, without the aid of prayer, a virtuous life."[10196] *Hence, Lessius concludes that it must be held as of faith, that prayer is necessary for adults, as appears from the Scriptures.*[10197]

The angelic Doctor teaches the same: "After baptism," he says, "continual prayer is necessary for a man, in order to enter heaven."[10198] *Because, adds the saint, though sins are cancelled by baptism, we still have temptations to conquer, which we shall not have strength to overcome without prayer. Hence he says in another place: "After a person is justified by grace, he requires to ask of God the gift of perseverance, that he may be preserved from evil to the end of life."*[10199]

To understand the reason of this doctrine, it is necessary to know, first, that without a special aid from God we cannot continue for a long time in his grace without falling into mortal sin. For we have so many enemies that continually combat against us, and we are at the same time so weak, that if God does not assist us with special helps, or if he gives us only the common graces given to all, we shall not have strength to resist. This is even a dogma of faith defined by the Council of Trent in the following words: "If any one shall say that a person who has been justified can, without special aid from God, persevere in the justice which he has received, or cannot persevere with such aid, let him be anathema."[10200]It is necessary to know, secondly, that this special aid to persevere in grace (at least, ordinarily speaking) is given only to those who ask it. "It is evident," says St. Augustine, "that God gives, even to those that do not pray, some gifts, such as the beginning of faith; and that he prepares other graces, such as perseverance to the end, only for those who ask them.[10201]

In a word, the holy Doctor says, that except the first graces, such as vocation to the faith or to repentance, all other graces, and particularly perseverance, God gives only to him who prays for them.

Let us, then, from all that has been said, infer the strict necessity of prayer for the attainment of salvation. All the reprobate have been damned in consequence of their neglect of prayer; had they prayed they should not be lost; and all the saints have become saints by prayer; had they neglected prayer, they would not have become saints, and should not be saved. We must live in the persuasion, St. John Chrysostom says, that to neglect prayer, and to lose the life of the soul, or the grace of God, are one and the same thing.[10202] The ancient Fathers held a conference in order to determine what exercise is most necessary for a Christian, in order to obtain salvation, and they came to the conclusion that it consists in continually repeating the prayer of David: *Incline unto my aid, O God; O Lord, make haste to help me*[10203] Lord assist me, and hasten to my aid, for if Thou delay Thy assistance, I shall fall, and lose Thy grace. If we do this, we shall be certainly saved; if we neglect to do it, we shall be certainly lost.

In the second place, it is necessary to examine the efficacy of prayer. Theodoret says that prayer is one, but can obtain all blessings: “Prayer, though one, can do all things.” He that prays, obtains whatsoever he wishes. And in this it appears to me that God displays the immense love that he bears us, and his ardent desire to promote our welfare. What greater love can a person show to a friend than to say to him, Friend, ask what you wish from me, and I will grant your petition. This God says to each of us: *Ask, and it shall be given you.*[10204] He makes no exception: *You shall ask whatever you will,* a*nd it shall be done unto you.*[10205] He tells us to ask whatsoever we desire, and promises that our prayer shall be heard. St. John Climacus asserts that prayer is so powerful before God, that it, as it were, constrains him to give us all the graces we ask.[10206] Devout prayer does violence to God. We are, as David says, poor mendicants: *But I am a beggar and poor.*[10207] But to be rich depends on ourselves: let us ask graces of God, and they shall be given us: let us ask them frequently, and they shall be poured upon us abundantly. David blessed the Lord in a special manner for his goodness in always uniting his mercy to our prayers. *Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me*.[10208] St. Augustine explains this passage in these words: “When you see that your prayer has not been turned away, be assured that the mercy of God is not turned away from you.”[10209] When you see that you pray, be certain that the divine mercy will not fail to assist you. And St. John Chrysostom says that when we pray, the Lord hears us before the conclusion of our prayers.[10210]

For this, we have even God’s own promise: *As they are yet speaking I will hear.*[10211]

Let us, in the third place, examine what is of the greatest importance, the *conditions* with which it is necessary to pray.

It is necessary, in the first place, to pray with *humility. God,* says St. James, *resisieth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*[10212] God rejects the prayers of the proud, and does not listen to them; their pride is a wall that hinders the Lord to hear their petitions. But, on the other hand, Ecclesiasticus says that *the prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds . . . and he will not depart till the Most High behold.*[10213] The prayer of an humble soul that esteems itself unworthy of being heard penetrates the heavens, and is presented at the throne of God; and it departs not till God beholds and hears its petitions. When, therefore, we ask the divine graces, we must first cast a glance at our own unworthiness, particularly at the frequent infidelities into which, because we trusted too much in our own strength, we have fallen, after so many resolutions and promises. And, full of diffidence in ourselves, we should pray and implore of the divine mercy the aid of which we stand in need.

It is necessary to pray with *confidence.* Ecclesiasticus says that no one has ever trusted in the Lord and has been confounded 01 not heard. *No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.*[10214] We should, as St. James says, pray without wavering, and with a secure confidence of being heard. *Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.*[10215] The Apostle adds: *For he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore, let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.*[10216] He says that the man that prays with a doubt of being heard, being tossed like a wave of the sea, encouraged by one thought and disheartened by another, shall receive nothing from the Lord. We must, then, trust in the divine mercy, and believe that if we pray we shall certainly receive the graces that we ask; our prayer will then be certainly heard, and, as our Saviour assures us, the objects of our petitions will surely be granted. *All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive: and they shall come unto you.*[10217] But, says St. Augustine, how can we fear that our prayers will not be heard when God (who is truth itself) has promised to hear all who pray to him.[10218] In another place the saint asks, how can that God, who so frequently exhorts us in the Scriptures to pray for his graces, refuse what we ask of him?[10219] No; this is impossible, adds the holy Doctor, for by his promises the Lord has obliged himself to grant us the graces that we ask of him. “By his promises he made himself a debtor.”[10220]

But, you will say, I am a sinner, I deserve chastisement and not favors; and therefore I am afraid, because I am not worthy to be heard. But St. Thomas answers that the efficacy of prayer to obtain the divine graces depends not on our merits, but on the mercy of God.[10221] Hence Jesus Christ has said: *Ask and it shall be given you; . . . for every one that asketh will receiveth.*[10222] “Everyone,” says the author of the “Imperfect Work,” “whether he be a just man or a sinner.”[10223] The Lord has promised to hear the prayers of all, not only of the just, but also of sinners. But to remove every apprehension, our loving Redeemer has said in another place: *Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.*[10224] As if he said, Sinners, you have no claim to be heard by my Father; ask his graces, then, in my name; that is, through my merits, and I promise that he will give whatsoever you ask. How consoling the words of St. James: *If any want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not.*[10225] If, says the Apostle, any of you want wisdom, that is, the divine love, what is he to do? Let him ask it of God, who usually dispenses his graces with a liberal hand; that is, he bestows greater favors than are asked of him. He adds, and he *upbraideth not.*[10226] *If* that is, when we ask of God his gifts he does not reject our petition, and upbraid us with the insults we have offered to him, but appears then to forget all our ingratitude; he accepts our homage and hears our prayer.

It is finally necessary to pray with *perseverance.* St. Hilary says that to obtain the divine graces depends on our continuance in prayer.[10227] The Lord wishes to hear some the first time, others the second, and others the third time. Hence, since we know—not how often we are to present our supplications in order to be heard, we must always continue to ask the graces of which we stand in need, and particularly the gift of final perseverance, which (as the Council of Trent teaches[10228]) we cannot merit. But St. Augustine says that it may be merited in a certain manner by prayer; that is, by praying for it, it is infallibly obtained.[10229] But to obtain this gift and to be saved, it is, as St. Thomas observes, necessary for everyone to ask it continually of God. “In order to enter heaven, continual prayer is necessary.”[10230]

And before him, our Saviour said the same: *We ought to pray always, and not to faint.*[10231] And the Apostle says, *pray without ceasing.*[10232] It is not enough, says Cardinal Bellarmine, to ask the gift of perseverance once, or a few times; in order to obtain it every day, we must ask it every day.[10233] On the day we neglect to ask it, we may fall into sin and be lost.

St. Gregory teaches that God wishes to give us perseverance, but in order to give it, he wishes to be importuned, and as it were forced by our prayers. “God,” says the holy Doctor, “wishes to be asked, he wishes to be forced, he wishes, in a certain manner, to be overcome by importunity.”[10234] This appears from the repeated exhortations of our Lord: *Ash and you shall receive; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you.*[10235] *Ask, seek, knock:* this is necessary, particularly to obtain strength to conquer violent temptations; we must pray and multiply prayers until we are freed from the temptations. Let us continually repeat: My Jesus, mercy; Lord assist me; do not permit me to be separated from Thee.

It is also necessary to ask always the spirit of prayer, or the grace to pray continually—that great gift that God had promised to the family of David. *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of prayers.*[10236] Mark the words, *of grace, and of prayers;* which mean, that prayer is always united to the grace we desire. He who perseveres in prayer will always be certain of not being taken in the snares of his enemies. *A net* is *spread in vain before the eyes of them that have wings.*[10237] In vain, says the Wise Man is the net cast before the eyes of the bird; for it instantly flies away and escapes the snare. Thus, they that pray escape all temptations; for by prayer they instantly fly to God, and he delivers them.

And here let us remember that there never can be any excuse for a sinner, who says that he fell because he had not strength to resist; for the Council of Trent has declared that “God does not command impossibilities, but by his precepts he admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask what you cannot do, and he assists you that you may be able to do it.”[10238] God does not command impossibilities; but in giving us his precepts, he admonishes us to do what we can with the ordinary grace that he gives to all; and in order to be able to do what we cannot do with the ordinary grace, he admonishes us to ask the additional helps of which we stand in need; and whenever we ask them, he is ready to grant them.

The Lord then hears the prayers of all, because he has promised to hear them; but it is necessary to know that this promise does not extend to temporal favors—such as bodily health, the acquisition of wealth, or the attainment of a post of honor, and the like. For God frequently, and justly, refuses these gifts, because he knows that they would be injurious to the soul. “The physician, says St. Augustine, “knows better than the patient what is useful for him.”[10239] It is not the sick man, but the physician that cures his malady, that knows what is most conducive to his recovery. If these temporal favors be the object of prayer, they should be asked with resignation, and on condition that they will be conducive to our eternal salvation; if we ask them without this resignation, the Lord will not listen to our prayers. But in praying for spiritual blessings, we must pray not conditionally, but absolutely, and with a firm confidence of obtaining them. Behold how our Saviour encourages us to ask such graces: *If you then,* he says, *being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good spirit to them that ask it.*[10240] If you, said our Lord, who are evil, and full of self-love, cannot refuse your children what they ask, how much more will your heavenly Father, who loves you more tenderly than the fondest parent loves an only son, grant the good spirit, that is, the graces that are profitable to the soul, whenever you ask them from him?

God, how often are the prayers of certain persons offered for temporal graces only. The time of prayer, says St. Teresa,[10241] is not a time for treating with God on matters of little importance. Let us ask for virtues, for the divine light in order to fulfil the divine will: let us ask for meekness, for patience under crosses, for perseverance, and for divine love, which, as St. Francis de Sales says, contains all other good gifts: let us ask the grace to pray always, and to recommend ourselves continually to God. “If,” says St. Augustine, “Thou dost not hear these prayers of Thy servants, what wilt I Thou hear?”[10242] O my Lord, what petition wilt Thou grant, if Thou neglect these that are so pleasing to Thee? Ah!

The Lord desires ardently to enrich us with his gifts, because he is Infinite Goodness! So great is his desire that, as St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi says, when we ask his graces, he, in a certain manner, considers himself under an obligation to us, and thanks us, because we then give him an opportunity of satisfying his desire of promoting our welfare. If he does not bestow his graces upon us, the fault is ours; it is because we do not ask them of him. He, then, that remains in his poverty, is undeserving of compassion: he is poor because he does not wish to ask of God the graces that are necessary for him. Hence, St. Teresa used to say, that she would have wished to ascend a mountain, from which she could be heard by all men, and from which she would continually exclaim: *O men, pray! pray! pray!*

I will not dilate more on this subject, because, as I have said in the beginning, I have written at length on it in several places, and particularly in the little book on prayer (which is now in the hands of many), and therefore I will not weary those who have read it, by repeating the same things.

But I would wish to do nothing else than write, and speak always on this great means of prayer: for, on the one hand, I see that the Scriptures, the Old as well as the New Testament, exhort us so often to pray, to ask, and cry out, if we wish for the divine graces. *Cry to me and will hear thee.*[10243] *Call on me . . . and I will deliver thee.*[10244] *Ask and it shall be given you?*[10245] *All things whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive; and they shall come unto you.*[10246] *You shall ask whatsoever you will, and it shall be done unto you.*[10247] *If you shall ask me anything in my name, that I will do.*[10248] There are a thousand similar passages know not how the Lord could better declare his desire to bestow his graces upon us, or the necessity we are under of asking them, if we wish to obtain them. The holy Fathers, also, continually exhort us to pray.

And to speak the truth, I complain of preachers, of confessors, and of spiritual writers, because I see that neither preachers, nor confessors, nor spiritual writers speak as much as they ought of the great means of prayer. And in so many courses of Lenten sermons, that have been published, where shall we find a discourse on prayer? Scarcely do we find a few passing words on it.

I have therefore written at length on this subject in so many of my little works; and when I preach, I do nothing else than say and repeat: Pray! pray! if you wish to be saved, and to become saints. It is true that *to* become saints we must have all virtues, mortification, humility, obedience, and principally holy charity; and to acquire these virtues, other means besides prayer are necessary—such as meditation, Communion, holy resolutions; but unless we pray, all our meditations, Communions, and resolutions will not make us practise mortification, humility, or obedience: we shall neither love God, nor resist temptation; in a word, we shall do no good. Hence, St. Paul, after having enumerated many virtues necessary for a Christian, tells us to be in*stant in prayer,*[10249] in order, as St. Thomas says,[10250] to show that for the attainment of the virtues of which we stand in need it is necessary to attend to constant prayer, because without it we shall not have the divine aid, which is necessary for the practice of virtue.

Let us conclude. Dear sister in the Lord, if you wish to be saved, and to become a saint, recommend yourself always to Jesus Christ, to his divine mother, to your angel guardian, and to your holy advocates. Keep your mouth always open, and your heart always vigilant, saying: My God, assist me; my God, assist me; most holy Mary, pray for me; my holy angel guardian, and my holy advocates, assist me. The great servant of God, and the great missionary, Father Leonard of Port Maurice (who died a few years since at Rome, with the reputation of a saint), used to say that we should not allow a moment to pass without repeating with the tongue, or in the mind, the little prayer, *My Jesus, mercy! My Jesus. mercy!* These words (he would say) contain an act of sorrow, and a prayer for grace to sin no more. He relates, in his most beautiful little work, *The Sacred Manual for Nuns*, that he knew a holy man who always repeated these words, *My Jesus, mercy!* so that he sometimes repeated them three hundred times in a quarter of an hour. I advise you to do the same; endeavor to repeat this prayer as often as you remember it; when you awake, at your meditations, after Communion, at your work, at your recreations, at table, and at the grate, repeat continually: *My Jesus, mercy! My Jesus, mercy!* And in repeating it, let your intention be to say: My Jesus, by my sins I would deserve hell, but trusting in Thy mercy I hope for pardon, and the grace to love Thee always: my Jesus, assist me. And do not forget to recommend yourself to the divine

Mother, who is called the treasurer and dispensator of the divine graces. Hence, St. Bernard says: “Let us ask grace, and let us ask it through Mary ; for what she seeks she finds, and she cannot be disappointed.”[10251]

PRAYER

(It would be advisable to recite the following prayer every day.)

Eternal Father, Thy Son has promised that Thou wilt grant us all the graces that we shall ask of Thee in his name. Trusting, then, in this great promise, I, in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ, ask of Thee the following graces; and what I ask for myself, I intend to ask for all men.

First, I ask the pardon of all the offences I have offered to Thee, for which I am sorry, above all things, with my whole heart, because I have despised Thy infinite goodness; and I purpose to die a thousand times rather than ever more offend Thee.

Secondly, I ask Thy divine light, which will make me see the vanity of all the goods of this earth, and Thy infinite greatness and goodness.

Thirdly, I ask Thy holy love, which will detach me from all creatures, and particularly from myself, that I may love nothing but Thee, and Thy most holy will. *Enkindle the fire of Thy love in my heart.*[10252]

Fourthly, give me confidence in the merits of Jesus Christ, and in the patronage of Mary.

Fifthly, I ask holy perseverance in Thy grace. Lord, Thou knowest my weakness, and my frequent infidelities after so many promises; if Thou do not constantly assist me with Thy aid, I will again miserably lose Thy graces: my God, do not permit this: *do not permit me to be separated from Thee: do not permit me to be separated front Thee.*[10253] I purpose, in all my temptations and necessities, to have recourse to Thee; and I am certain that as often as I recommend myself to Thee, I shall receive Thy aid ; but I fear that I shall neglect to have recourse to Thee, and that this neglect may be the cause of my ruin. Ah! Eternal Father, through the love which Thou dost bear to Jesus Christ, grant me the grace of prayer, that is, the grace to pray to Thee always for Thy aid, always repeating, *My God, assist me: my Jesus, mercy: Mary, my mother, pray for me.*

To thee, in fine, I turn. O Mary, my advocate and hope; thou dost obtain from God whatsoever thou askest. I entreat thee, through the love that thou bearest to Jesus Christ, to obtain for me holy perseverance, and the grace to recommend myself always to thy Son, and to thee.

Chapter XXI

Devotion TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

I

A TRUE SERVANT OF MARY CANNOT BE LOST

Oh! How great the grounds of hope of the soul that trusts in the intercession of this great Mother of God! Behold the words that the holy Church applies to Mary on her festivals: *He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.*[10254] He that shall find me, says Mary, shall find the life of grace here, and eternal glory hereafter. Addressing the divine Mother, St. Anselm goes so far as to say that "as it is impossible for a person not devoted to Mary, and protected by her, to be saved, so, on the other hand, it is impossible for him to be lost who recommends himself to Mary,' and is regarded by her with love."[10255] St. Antonine says that all those that are defended by this great Queen are necessarily saved.[10256] St. Bonaventure writes that they that obtain the protection of Mary shall, even while they live on this earth, be acknowledged as companions by the saints in glory, and that they that carry the badge of servant of Mary shall be written in the book of life.[10257] Thus to be devoted to Mary is a mark of predestination. The angelic Doctor says that Mary is called *the Star of the sea ;* because as navigators are directed to the port by means of the pole star, so Christians are guided to paradise by Mary.[10258]

Should a person truly devoted to Mary be lost (I will hereafter explain what is meant by a true client of Mary), it would be because she is either unable or unwilling to assist him. "But no," says St. Bernard, she can neither want the power nor the will."[10259] It is impossible for a true and persevering client of Mary to be lost; because she can neither want the power nor the will to assist him.

Let us, then, see, in the first place, how great is Mary's power before God in favor of her clients.

To inspire us with confidence in this great advocate, the holy Church invokes her under the title of Powerful Virgin.[10260] Yes, that God who is omnipotent has, as she herself has said, given her great power. *He that is mighty hath done great things to me.*[10261] Hence St. Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, has written: "The Son is pleased that the Mother should pray to him because he wishes to grant her whatever she asks in order to repay her for the favor received from her in giving him flesh.[10262] St. Bridget heard Jesus say to Mary: *Ash what you wish from me, for your petition cannot be fruitless.*[10263] My mother, ask of me what you wish; you know that I cannot reject any of your petitions. He then added: "Because you refused me nothing on earth, I will refuse nothing to you in heaven."[10264] You refused me nothing while I lived on earth, it is right that I refuse you nothing now that you are with me in heaven.

But what is the principal reason why the prayers of Mary are so powerful before God? St. Antonine says: "The prayer of the Mother of God partakes of the nature of a command; hence it is impossible that she should not be heard."[10265] The prayers of Mary being the prayers of a mother partake, in a certain manner, of the nature of a command, and therefore they cannot be rejected. Hence Blessed Albertus Magnus used to repeat the words of the Church, "Show thyself a mother,"[10266] in this sense: O Lady, show thyself a mother; ask thy Son, as his mother, to have mercy on us.[10267] Cosmas of Jerusalem asserts that the protection of Mary is omnipotent.[10268] Yes, says Richard of St. Laurence, it is but just that the mother should share in the power of the Son.[10269] The Son is omnipotent by nature, the mother is omnipotent by grace; that is, she obtains by her prayers whatsoever she wishes.

Let a sinner be ever so abandoned, says St. Gregory of Nicomedia, if he has recourse to Mary she will save him by her intercession. "You have insuperable strength lest the multitude of our sins should overcome your clemency. Nothing resists your power; for the Creator regards your glory as his own."[10270] O mother of God, thou hast invincible power, that thy clemency may not be conquered by the multitude of sins. Nothing can resist thy power, since the Creator regards, as his own, the glory of his mother.

Thou, then, says St. Peter Damian, canst do all things, for thou canst inspire even those who are in despair with hopes of salvation.[10271] As often, then, as the devil tempts us to diffidence, let us turn to Mary, and say to her, with St. Germanus. “Thou, O Mary, art omnipotent in saving sinners; thy prayers are all-powerful with God because thou art the mother of true life.”[10272]

II. LET US EXAMINE, IN THE SECOND PLACE, HOW GREAT IS MARV’S DESIRE TO ASSIST HER CLIENTS

Of what use, says St. Bonaventure, would Mary’s power be to us if she had no regard for us? But, adds the saint, let us hold for certain that as the Virgin is the most powerful of all the saints before God, so she is the most solicitous of all for our salvation.[10273] “And who, O Lady,” says St. Germanus, “after thy Son, feels greater solicitude for us than thou dost? Who defends us so powerfully in our afflictions? Who labors so hard for the conversion of sinners? O Mary, thy protection is so great that we cannot comprehend it.”[10274] St. Andrew Avellino used to call Mary “the agent of paradise.’ But what does she do in heaven? She prays continually for us, and obtains for us all the graces that we ask. She said one day to St. Bridget: “I am called, and 1really am, the Mother of Mercy; for such the mercy of God has made me.”[10275] “And who but God in his mercy, because he wishes to save all, has given us this great protectress.”[10276] Miserable, and miserable for eternity shall be the man who is damned, because when it was in his power in this life to invoke my intercession, neglected to have recourse to me who am so compassionate to all.

Richard of St. Victor says that Mary is so full of mercy that when she sees our miseries she instantly assists us; she cannot behold a soul in want without coming to her relief.[10277] It was thus she acted when she lived on this earth, as we learn from what happened at the marriage of Cana in Galilee. When the wine failed she did not wait to be asked, but, taking pity on the affliction and shame of the spouses, she besought her Son to console them, saying, *they have no wine;*[10278] and induced him to change, by a miracle, water into wine. If, says St. Bonaventure, Mary’s compassion for the afflicted was so great while she lived in this world, her pity for us is certainly far greater now that she reigns in heaven, where she has a better knowledge of our miseries and greater compassion for our afflictions.[10279]

Ah ! let us not neglect to have recourse, in all our necessities, to the divine mother, who is always prepared to assist all who invoke her intercession. “You will find her, says Richard of St. Laurence, “always ready to help us.”[10280] Bernardine da Bustis adds that whenever we have recourse to her, we shall find her hands full of mercies and graces.[10281] Richard of St. Victor says, that Mary’s heart is so full of compassion, that as soon as she perceives the wants of the miserable, she anticipates their supplications, and obtains relief for them before they ask it.[10282] Why, then, says St. Bernard, should we fear that when we have recourse to Mary she will not console us? She is not austere, she does not inspire terror; she is all sweetness and benignity to those who recommend themselves to her.[10283] And can she be otherwise than beneficent to those who ask her prayers, when she herself goes in search of the miserable to save them? Behold how she invites all, and encourages them to hope for all good if they have recourse to her: *In me is all hope of life and of virtue: come over to me all.*[10284] On this passage Pelbart says: “She calls all, the just and sinners.”[10285] The devil, according to St. Peter, goes about seeking whom he may devour,[10286] but this divine mother, says Bernardine da Bustis, goes about seeking whom she may save.[10287]

To obtain salvation through her intercession, it is enough to ask the aid of her prayers. A holy soul used to say, that to receive the divine graces it is sufficient to ask Mary to obtain them for us. St. Bonaventure has written that Mary’s desire for our welfare and salvation is so great, that she is offended not only with those who do her a positive injury, but also with those who do not ask favors from her.[10288] Hence the saint used to say, that when he looked at Mary he beheld mercy itself stretching out its hands to raise him up from his miseries.[10289] For, he would add, this great Lady knows not, and has never known, how to behold without compassion, or to leave without succor, a person in misery who recommends himself to her.[10290]

Mary’s constant occupation in heaven consists in asking mercy for the miserable. St. Bridget once heard Jesus say to his holy mother: “My mother, ask what you wish from me.”[10291] And what was Mary’s answer “I ask mercy for the miserable.”[10292] As if she said: My Son, since thou hast made me Mother of Mercy, and advocate of the miserable, what else shall I ask from Thee than mercy for those who are in misery? And because poor sinners are the most miserable of all, she has her eyes always turned to them in order to assist them. David says that the eyes of the Lord are upon the just,[10293] and according to Richard of St. Laurence, this Mother of mercy has her merciful eyes as well upon the just as upon sinners. This author says that she treats us as a mother treats her child; a mother always keeps her eyes on her child to prevent him from falling, and to raise him up should he fall.[10294]

The Lord has constituted Mary the universal advocate of all. "As," says Idiota, "she is the queen of all, so she is the advocate of all."[10295] Denis the Carthusian says that she is, in a special manner, the advocate of sinners, because the guilty stand in greater need of succor than the innocent; hence he calls her the advocate of all sinners who invoke her intercession.[10296] And before him, St. John Damascene called Mary "the city of refuge for all who fly to her."[10297] Hence St. Bonaventure says: "Poor abandoned sinners do not despair, raise your eyes to Mary,"[10298] and be comforted, trusting in the clemency of this good mother, for she will rescue you from the shipwreck you have suffered and will conduct you to the haven of salvation. Let us then say with St. Thomas of Villanova: "O holy Virgin, since thou art the advocate of the miserable, assist us who are the most miserable of all."[10299] "Let us," says St. Bernard, "ask grace, and ask it through Mary."[10300] The grace that we have lost she has found, says Richard of St. Laurence; we, then, should go to her in order to recover it.[10301] When the Archangel Gabriel announced to Mary that God had chosen her to be the mother of the Word, he said to her: *Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God.*[10302] But how can that be? Mary was never deprived of grace; on the contrary, she was always full of grace; how, then, could the angel say that she had found grace? Cardinal Hugo answers, that she did not find grace for herself, because she always possessed it, but she found it for us who had miserably lost it. Hence he says that in order to recover it, we should go to Mary and say to her: O Lady, property should be restored to him who has lost it; the grace which thou hast found is not thine, for thou hast always possessed it, it is ours, we have lost it; to us then, thou shouldst restore it. Behold the Cardinal's words: "Sinners, who by your sins have forfeited the divine grace, run, run to the Virgin, and say to her with confidence: Restore to us our property which you have found."[10303]

Oh ! if all sinners had recourse to Mary, with a determination to amend their lives, who should ever be lost? They that have not recourse to Mary are lost. St. Bridget heard our Saviour say to his mother: "You would show mercy even to the devil were he to ask it with humility."[10304] The proud Lucifer will never humble himself so far as to recommend himself to Mary; but were he to humble himself to this divine mother, and ask her aid, she would not cast him off, but would deliver him from hell by her intercession. By these words Jesus gives us to understand that Mary obtains salvation for all that have recourse to her. Hence St. Basil calls her "a public hospital."[10305] Public hospitals are established for the poor that are afflicted with sickness, and the greater the poverty of the invalid, the stronger his claim to admission. Hence, according to St. Basil, Mary should receive with the greatest promptness the most abandoned sinners that have recourse to her. Ah! Says St. Bernard, this great queen feels no horror for any sinner, however great the stench of his sins; if the miserable man flies to her protection, she disdains not to stretch forth her hand and to rescue him from the state of perdition.[10306] Our Lord revealed to St. Catharine of Sienna, that he had chosen Mary to draw men, and particularly sinners, to his love.[10307] Mary herself said to St. Bridget, that there is no sinner, however abandoned by God, for whom, if he invoke her aid, she will not obtain the grace to return to God, and find mercy.[10308] She also said that as the magnet attracts iron, so she draws to herself and to God the hardest hearts.[10309]

The holy Church wishes that we call this divine mother our hope.[10310] The impious Luther said that he could not bear to hear the Church teaching us to call Mary our hope; God only, he said, is our hope; and Go himself curses them who place their hopes in any creature. Yes, God curses those that trust in creatures independently of him, but we hope in Mary as a mediatress with God. For, says St. Bernard, God has placed in the hands of Mary all the treasures of the goods that he wishes to dispense to men.[10311] Hence the Lord wishes us to acknowledge that all good comes from Mary; for he has ordained that all the graces that he will give us should pass through the hands of Mary. Hence St. Bernard called her his greatest confidence, and the entire ground of his hope.[10312] St. Bonaventure called

Mary the salvation of them who invoke her.[10313] Hence according to St. Bonaventure, to be saved it is enough to invoke Mary. Whenever, then, the devil terrifies us with the fear of being lost, let us say to Mary with the same saint: “In thee, O Lady, have I hoped; may I not be confounded forever.”[10314] In thee, after Jesus, I have placed all my hopes; thou hast to watch over my salvation, and to deliver me from hell. But, says St. Anselm, hell is not the lot of any true client of Mary, for whom she prays even once, and says to her Son that she wishes him to be saved.[10315]

II

WHAT ARE THE TRUE SERVANTS OF MARY

I have said that no one truly devoted to Mary is lost. But in order to escape illusion, let us examine what is necessary in order to be a true client of Mary.

In the first place, a good intention of changing one’s life, and a will to offend God no more, are necessary. To the Princess Matilda, St. Gregory VII. wrote: “Put an end to the will of sinning, and I promise you that you will find Mary more willing than any carnal mother to assist you.”[10316] The Virgin herself said one day to St. Bridget these consoling and encouraging words to sinners: “Let a sinner be ever so abandoned, if he come to me I am ready to receive him the moment he returns. Nor do I attend to the sins he has committed, but only to the intention with which he comes to me. If he come with a desire to change his life, I will not disdain to apply a remedy and heal his wounds; for I am called, and truly am, the Mother of Mercy.”[10317] Mother of Mercy! That is, her clemency and her compassion for our miseries incline her to love and assist us with more than maternal tenderness. But she herself declared to the same St. Bridget, that she is a mother only to those that wish to amend their lives.[10318] Hence Mary is not a mother to obstinate sinners. Should any one find himself bound by any passion, and not as yet resolved to renounce sin, but desirous of being delivered from it, let him pray to Mary to obtain aid for him to break the chain of hell, and let him at least endeavor to begin to resist the passion and to remove the occasion; and this good Lady will stretch out her hand and will comfort him. This St. Bridget heard from the mouth of Jesus Christ himself. Addressing Mary he said: “To him that endeavors to emerge from sin in order to return to God, you, my mother, give aid; you do not allow anyone to depart from you without consolation.”[10319]

In the second place, to be a true client of Mary, it is necessary to secure her protection by prayers and other acts of devotion. It is true that she prays for all; but she always prays most efficaciously for those among her servants that honor her most. And remember, says St. Andrew of Crete, that because she is most grateful and liberal, she repays with great graces every little act of devotion that we perform in her honor.[10320] Let us, then, see the acts of devotion that we may perform in honor of this our most loving mother.

Say every morning at rising, and every evening before going to bed, three “Hail Marys” in honor of the purity of Mary, adding: O Mary, through thy pure and immaculate conception, obtain for me purity of body and sanctity of soul. And place yourself under her protection, that she may preserve you from sin during the day and during the night. Salute her also with a “Hail Mary” as often as the clock strikes, and whenever you leave or return to the cell, or pass by any of her images; and endeavor at the beginning of every action (whether spiritual or temporal), to salute her with a “Hail Mary.” Blessed will be the actions that are begun and terminated by a “Hail Mary.” When we salute this great Queen, particularly with the Angelical Salutation, which is so pleasing to her, she always obtains for us in return some favor from heaven.

Do not omit to say the Rosary every day, or at least five decades of it. This is a devotion practised generally by all the faithful, even by seculars, and has been favored by the sovereign Pontiff with immense indulgences. But observe, that to gain the indulgences of the Rosary, it is necessary to accompany the recital of it with the consideration of the mysteries. Moreover, if your name is inscribed in the Confraternity of the Rosary, you may gain many more indulgences. Some religious also say the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin. You might at least say, along with the Rosary, the Office of the name of Mary, which consists of five psalms. Say also, everyday, three “Our Fathers” and Hail Marys in honor of the Most Holy Trinity, for the graces bestowed on Mary. The Blessed Virgin once revealed that this devotion is very pleasing to her.

Fast every Saturday, and on the vigils of all the festivals of Mary; and if you cannot fast on bread and water, fast at least in the ordinary way, or eat only of one dish, or abstain from something that you feel a desire to eat. Perform some mortification on Saturday, which is the day dedicated by the Church to the honor of the divine mother.

Make every day a visit to some image of your Queen; and in your visit ask Mary to obtain for you holy perseverance, and the love of Jesus Christ.

Do not let a day pass without reading at least a small portion of a book that treats of Mary. There are many books of this kind—*True Devotion towards the Blessed Virgin*, by Father Crasset; *Mutual Affections between Mary and her Clients,* by Father Auriemma ; *The Devout Servant of Mary,* by Segneri ; *Affections to Mary,* by Nieremberg : there are many others that you can read. I, too, have written a work on the Virgin, entitled *The Glories of Mary,* of which several editions have been published.

Perform devoutly the Novenas of the festivals of the Virgin. You can practise the following devotions in these Novenas: first, an additional meditation of half an hour; secondly, recite the “Hail Mary” and “Glory be to the Father” nine times, in honor of the Virgin. I do not advise many vocal prayers, because I would rather see you make many acts of love, or many petitions to Jesus and Mary. For example, *I love Thee, O my Jesus; I love thee, O Mary, my Mother; or, Mary, mother of God pray to Jesus for me.* You can make a hundred, or at least fifty, of these acts or prayers in the day. Thirdly, visit each day the image of the Virgin three times, and at each visit repeat the preceding acts of love, or prayers, and at the end of the visit ask some particular grace for the benefit of your soul. Fourthly, endeavor, but with the advice of your confessor, to communicate more frequently during the Novenas. Fifthly, on these days perform some particular act of mortification, by the use of the discipline or little chains; or by fasting, or at least by abstaining from fruit, or from something else; and on the vigil, fast, if you can, on bread and water. I recommend to you the following excellent devotion. Among the festivals of Mary, select one to which you feel most devoted, such as the Immaculate Conception, the Annunciation, the Assumption, or the Feast of Sorrows (to which all should have a special devotion), and after Communion on the festival you select, offer yourself in a special manner to serve her, choosing her for your mistress and mother, asking pardon of your negligence’s in honoring her during the past year, and promising to serve her better in the year to come. It would be well, with the permission of the Superior, to procure a public Novena along with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, but without music, or the usual accompaniments, even on the festival: otherwise all will end in vanity and disturbance of mind, as sometimes happens in the festivals of nuns. Would to God that on such festivals more was not lost than gained!

Be careful to recommend yourself often in the day to the protection of Mary. Know that among all devotions, that which is most pleasing to her consists in having frequent recourse to her, and in frequently asking her to obtain for you the divine graces. *Blessed is the man*, says the Church in the name of Mary, *that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates*.[10321] Happy the man that watches at the gates of my mercy. Mary is called the mother of mercy, on account of her ardent desire to promote our welfare; hence the greatest pleasure that we can give her is to recommend ourselves to her, and to ask her prayers. She desires to assist us, but snc wishes that we pray to her, says Blessed Albertus Magnus,[10322] in the name of Mary. That I may wish to obtain race you must pray to me; for if I wish to ask, what I ask of my Son is necessarily given. Hence, St. Bernard says: “In the dangers of consenting to sin, in afflictions, in doubts, call on Mary for succor.”[10323] The saint adds, “Let her powerful name be always in your mouth, by the constant invocation of it, and in your heart by great confidence in her intercession.”[10324] St. Bonaventure says that a person cannot mention the name of Mary without obtaining some grace.”[10325]And St. Germanus calls the name of Mary the *respiration of the soul*. “As,” says the saint, respiration in the body is a sign of life, so the name of Mary in the mouth of her servants is a proof of life, for this name at once procures and preserves the life of grace.”[10326] All would do well to ask of God every day the gift of confidence, first, in the blood of Jesus Christ, and afterwards in the intercession of Mary.

If you love Mary, endeavor to induce others to love her. Endeavor, as often as you can, to inspire all with devotion to the Virgin, by relating some devout example, or by proposing some particular exercise to be performed in her honor, or some favor to be asked of her. She promises paradise to all that love her, and seek to inspire others with her love. *They that work by me shall not sin. They that explain me shall have life everlasting*.[10327] How great the consolation that you will experience at death from all that you have done during life in honor of Mary. Father Binetti relates that he once assisted a dying servant of Mary, who, before death, said: “O my Father, if you knew the happiness I feel on account of having served the most holy mother of God! I could not explain the joy that I experience at this moment.” Endeavor, then, to remain always at the feet of this tender mother. And thank the Lord unceasingly; among the mercies he has shown you, the particular devotion that he has given you to his holy mother is a special grace; this devotion is a great proof that he wishes your salvation in a special manner. In recommending your salvation to her, say to Mary with St. John Damascene: “O Mother of God, if I place my confidence in thee I shall be saved. If I am under thy protection I have nothing to fear; for to be devoted to thee is to have arms of salvation, which God grants only to those whom he specially wishes to be saved.”

PRAYER

My Lady, if thou pray for me, I shall be saved ; for thou dost obtain by thy prayers whatsoever thou wishest. Pray then for me, O great Mother of God: for thy Son hears thee, and grants whatever thou askest. It is true that I am unworthy of thy protection, but thou hast never abandoned a soul that had recourse to thee. O Mary, I consign my soul to thee; thou hast to save it. Obtain for me perseverance in the divine grace, and the love of thy Son, and of thee. I love thee, O my Queen, and I hope always to love thee. Do thou also love me; take me under thy protection, and have pity on me: grant me this favor through the love that thou bearest thy Son. Behold the confidence that I place in thy clemency, and do not cease to assist me in all my wants. I know that thou wilt not cease to help me as often as I recommend myself to thee ; but obtain for me also the grace to have recourse to thee in all my temptations, and in all my dangers of losing God. Assist me, particularly at the hour of my death; obtain for me the grace that with my last breath I may pronounce thy name, and the name of thy Son, saying : Jesus and Mary, to you I recommend my soul.

Chapter XXII

THE LOVE FOR JESUS.

I

THE OBLIGATION OF A RELIGIOUS TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST

The sole object of a religious in this life should be to love her most amiable Spouse, Jesus Christ. The first and principal command that the Lord imposes on us is to love him with our whole heart. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*[10328] Because he loves us intensely, he wishes to be loved ardently by us. Hence, he so pressingly demands our. love, and calls for our heart: *My son, give Me thy heart.*[10329] And what, says Moses, does the Lord demand of you, but that you love him with your whole heart. *What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but that . . . thou love Him, and serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart?*[10330] To our love he promises himself as a reward. *I am thy reward exceeding great*[10331] To their faithful subjects the monarchs of the earth give riches and honors; but to those that love him our God gives nothing less than himself. But though our love should receive no other reward, for us it should be enough to know that God loves those that love him. He frequently declares in the Scriptures that he love all who love him. *I love them that love Me.*[10332] In another place he says: *He that abideth in charity, abideth in God and God in him.*[10333] And Jesus Christ has said: *He that loveth Me, shall be loved by My Father; and I will love him.*[10334]

All our perfection, then, consists in the love of God; for, as St. Augustine says, love is the only virtue that unites us to God.[10335] All other virtues, without charity, profit us nothing; but charity brings with it all virtues; for, as the Apostle teaches,[10336] it is patient, it is kind, it is not puffed up, it is not ambitious of honors, it seeks not its own interest, but suffers all things, believes all things, and hopes for all things. Love, says the same Apostle, is the fulfilment of the law.[10337] Hence, St. Augustine said, “Love, and do what you wish.”[10338] lie that loves another is careful not to give him the least displeasure, and studies to do everything in his power to please him. Hence, also, the soul that loves God abhors as death the smallest offence against his divine majesty, and endeavors to the best of her ability to please him.

Let it be remembered that perfect charity consists in loving God for himself. To love God as the author of our felicity is the love of *concupiscence,* which, strictly speaking, belongs not to charity, but to hope; to love God because he deserves to be loved, because he is infinite goodness, is the love of *friendship,* or true charity. But it is necessary to observe that hope is in no way opposed, nor any obstacle to perfect charity. In admitting a state of charity that excluded all hope the Bishop of Cambray fell into an error which was condemned. We love God, because on account of his perfections he deserves to be loved, and we would love him though there were no reward for loving him; but since he wishes to give us a reward, and even commands us to hope for it, we are bound to hope for it and to desire it. Besides, to desire paradise in order to possess God, and to love him better, is true and perfect charity; for eternal glory is the consummation of love. There the soul, entirely forgetful of herself, and divested of all self-love, loves God with all her strength, and with a most pure love; it is thus that the saints in bliss happily lose themselves in God.

If we knew that in an earthly kingdom there was a prince, beautiful, holy, and learned, kind and merciful, surely he would win our affection, though he had conferred no favor upon us. But what are the amiable qualities of such a prince compared with the perfections of God? God possesses all perfections, and possesses them in an infinite degree. He has all the qualities that could render him amiable: he is infinite goodness, infinite beauty, infinite wisdom, and infinite mercy. Hence his goodness of itself merits all our love. In the lives of the Fathers of the desert it is related that in the desert there were two monks who were brothers; to one of them the devil said that the other was doomed to perdition: the simple monk believed the fiend, and was greatly afflicted. Being asked one day the cause of his affliction, he answered, that it was revealed to him that his brother was doomed to hell. The brother humbly answered: “If such be the will of the

Lord, may it be forever blessed; but still I will love him to the utmost of my power in this life, for I love him neither through fear of hell, nor through the hope of heaven, but only because he deserves to be loved.” On the following night an angel appeared to the deluded monk and told him that his brother’s name was written among the number of the elect. We should, therefore, love God because he deserves to be loved on account of his infinite perfections. We should love him, at least through gratitude for the love that he has borne us.

If the affections of all men, of all the angels, and of all the saints, were united together, they would not equal the smallest part of the love that God bears to a single soul. St. John Chrysostom says that God loves us more than we love ourselves. I, says God himself to each of us, have loved you from eternity, and through pure love have drawn you out of nothing, and have placed you in this world. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*[10339] Our parents have been the first to love us in this world; but they have loved us only after they had known us; but God loved us before we had existence. Our fathers or mothers were not yet born, and God loved us; the world was not yet created, and God loved us ; and how long before the creation of the world did he love us? Perhaps a thousand years, or a thousand ages? It is useless to multiply years and ages; for God loved us as long as he has been God; he has loved us as long as he has loved himself. Hence the holy virgin St. Agnes had reason to say, “I am *prevented* by another lover.”[10340] When the world and creatures sought her love, she answered: No, I cannot love you; since my God has been the first to love me, it is but just that I consecrate my whole heart to him only.

Our God, then, has loved us as long as he has been God ; and through pure love has drawn us out of nothing; and among so many possible beings that he could but will never create, he has chosen us, and has placed us in this world. For the love of us, he has also created so many other beautiful creatures—the heavens, the hills, the seas, the fountains, and all other creatures that are on this earth.

But he was not content with giving us these creatures: his love was not satisfied till he gave us himself. *He hath loved us and delivered Himself for us.*[10341] From the ruin caused by sin he took occasion to show his love; accursed sin had robbed us of the divine grace, had closed paradise against us, and made us the slaves of hell. The Lord could redeem us from these evils in many ways; but he chose to come in person on this earth, in order to become man, to redeem us from eternal death, and to obtain for us the divine friendship and heaven, which we had lost, exciting by such a prodigy of love, the astonishment of heaven and creation. How great the wonder which an earthly monarch would excite were he, through love for a slave, to become a slave, or for the sake of a worm, to become a worm? But our wonder should be infinitely greater at the sight of the Son of God humbled so as to become man, for the love of man: He *emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, . . . and in habit found as man*[10342]at the sight of a God clothed with flesh: *And the word was made flesh.*[10343]

But the wonder increases when *we* see all that this Son of God has done and suffered for the love of us miserable worms. To save us it was enough for him to have given a single drop of his blood, to have shed a tear, or to have offered a prayer; for a tear or prayer offered to the eternal Father, by a Man-God, for our salvation, would have been of infinite value, and therefore sufficient to save the world, and an infinite number of worlds. But no; Jesus Christ wished not only to save us, but through the immense love that he bore us, he wished to gain all our love. Hence, to make us understand the extent of his love, he chose a life of pain and ignominy, and a death the most cruel and shameful of all deaths. *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.*[10344]

O God! had our Saviour not been God, but an equal and a friend, what more could he do than give his life for us? *Greater love than this no man hath, that a man laydown his life for his friends.*[10345] What do you say? Do you believe it? Can you then think of loving any other object than Jesus Christ? A certain author says that before the incarnation of the Word, man might be able to doubt whether God loved him with a tender love; but after the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ, how is it possible to doubt it? How could he show us greater tenderness of affection than by suffering so many torments, so many insults, and by dying on a cross? Alas! we have heard of the incarnation of the Redeemer, of a God born in a stable, of a God scourged, of a God crowned with thorns, and dying on a cross. O holy faith, enlighten us, and make us understand the excess of love which made our God become man, and die for the love of us !

But the desire that Jesus Christ had to suffer and die for us should be a subject of still greater astonishment During his life our Saviour used to say: *I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?*[10346] I am to be baptized with the baptism of my own blood, not to wash myself, but to cleanse men from their sins; and how am I straitened until my desire be accomplished. O God! Jesus Christ is not loved by men, because they will not even think of the love that the amiable Redeemer has borne them. How is it possible for a soul that thinks on his love to live without loving him? *The charity of Christ presseth us.*[10347] St. Paul says, that a soul that reflects on the love of Jesus Christ feels itself as it were constrained to love him. In meditating on the Passion of the Saviour, the saints were inflamed with love, and sometimes broke out into exclamations of wonder and tenderness. “We have seen,” exclaimed St. Laurence Justinian, “the author of wisdom become foolish through excess of love.”[10348] We have seen a God, as it were, foolish through love for us. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, being one day rapt in an ecstasy, took an image of Jesus crucified into her hands, and cried aloud that he was foolish through love. “Yes, my Jesus,” she continued to exclaim, “thou art foolish through love. I say, and I will always say, O my Jesus, that Thou art foolish through love.”

Had not faith assured us of this great mystery of redemption, who could ever believe that the Creator of the universe should voluntarily suffer and die for his own creatures. O God, if Jesus Christ had not died for us, who among men would dare to ask a God to become man, and save us by his death? Would it not have appeared folly even to think of it? And in reality when the Gentiles heard the apostles preaching the death of Jesus Christ, they regarded it as a fable, and as St. Paul attests, called it incredible folly. *We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness.*[10349] Yes, says St. Gregory, it appeared to them folly that the author of life should die for man.[10350] How, said the Gentiles, can we believe that a God, who has need of no one, and is most happy in himself, should descend from heaven to earth, assume human flesh, and die for men, his miserable creatures? This would be to believe that a God had become foolish for the love of men. But it is a truth of faith that Jesus, the true son of God, for the love of us, his miserable and ungrateful creatures, has abandoned himself to torments, to ignominies, and to death. *He hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us.*[10351]

And why has he done so? He has done so, says St. Augustine, that man might understand the immense love that God bears him.[10352] And long before Jesus himself said: *I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?*[10353] I have, he says, come on earth to kindle the holy fire of divine love, and I only desire to see the hearts of men burning with its blessed flames. In contemplating Jesus in the garden, captured as a criminal by the soldiers, St. Bernard, turning to his Lord, exclaimed, “My Jesus, what hast Thou to do with cords and chains?”[10354] These belong to us slaves and sinners; but Thou art the King of heaven, Thou art holy. And what has reduced Thee to the condition of a malefactor, the vilest and most wicked among men? And what has effected all this? Love, which is regardless of dignity when there is question of gaining the affection of the beloved.”[10355] In a word, concludes the saint, God, whom no one can conquer, has been conquered by love; his love for man has made him take human flesh, and consume his divine life in a sea of sorrows and reproaches. “Love triumphs over God.”[10356]

In another place the same St. Bernard contemplates our Redeemer condemned to death by Pilate, and asks of Jesus Christ:[10357] “Tell me, O my beloved Lord, who art innocence itself, what evil hast Thou done to merit the barbarous sentence of condemnation to the death of the cross?” But, adds the saint, I understand the cause of Thy death; the crime Thou hast committed is Thy love.[10358] Thy offence is the love Thou hast borne to men; it is this, and not Pilate, that condemns Thee to death, and makes Thee die.

But, O Lord, exclaimed holy Job, *what is man, that Thou shouldst magnify him? or why dost Thou set Thy heart upon him*?[10359] My God, what is man whom Thou hast so highly honoured? What benefit has he ever conferred upon Thee that Thy whole heart should, as it were, be occupied in seeking his welfare, and in endeavoring to make known to him the affection Thou dost bear him? St. Thomas says that God loved man “as if man were his God; as if without him he could not be happy;”[10360] as if God could not be happy unless man were also happy. And, dear sister, had you been the God of Jesus Christ, what more could he have done for you than spend so many years in pains and toils, and afterwards submit to a cruel death? Had Jesus Christ to save the life of his own Father, what more could he have done than he has done for you? But, O God, where is your gratitude? Had one of your servants suffered what your Spouse has endured for your salvation, could you ever forget his sufferings, or live without loving him? Ah ! at the thoughts of the death of Jesus Christ each of us should be, as it were, foolish through love for him, and should exclaim with St. Paschal: “My love has been crucified for me: my love has died for me.”

But what we have not as yet done we may now do. God gives us time to do it. Jesus has died for us, that by his love for us he might gain the entire dominion of our hearts. *To this end,* says St. Paul, *Christ died. that He might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living.*[10361] He has died that we might live no longer to ourselves, but only to that God who has given his life for us. *Christ died for all,* says the same Apostle, *that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them.*[10362] Contemplating the death of Jesus Christ, and the love with which he died for men, the saints esteemed it little to forfeit, for his sake, property, honors, and life. How many grandees, how many kings and queens and empresses, have renounced their kingdoms to shut themselves up in a cloister, and live only for the love of Jesus Christ! How many millions of martyrs have esteemed themselves happy to be able to sacrifice their lives for him amid the most horrible torments! How many young and noble virgins, renouncing the nuptials of the first monarchs of the earth, have gone with joy to death to make some return of love for the love of a God who had died for the love of them!

And do you, dear sister, think that you have as yet done anything for the love of Jesus Christ? What proof or token have you as yet given of the love that you bear him? It is certain that as lie has died for the saints, for St. Lucy, for St. Agatha, for St. Agnes, so he has also died for you. Consider also the special graces that he has bestowed on you, and that he has withheld from so many of your companions who had as good a claim to them as you had. How many noble ladies, how many princesses, have been born among infidels and heretics, and live miserably in the state of perdition, bereft of the sacraments, of sermons, and of the other helps necessary for salvation? And to you he has given the grace to be born in the bosom of the true Church. He has also given wealth to your parents, that you might have more opportunities and means of acquiring eternal salvation. He has also chosen you for his spouse from among so many of your companions, whom he has left in the midst of the dangers of the world; from these dangers he has rescued you (and perhaps against your inclination), and has brought you into his own house, where he assists you continually by his lights and interior calls, by the sacraments, by sermons, by the example of your good sisters, and by so many other helps to salvation. Consider also the many mercies he has shown you, in pardoning so many offences that you have committed in the world and in religion. It was enough for him that you repented and asked forgiveness: he instantly pardoned you; you ungratefully offended him again, and he with the same love pardoned you, and instead of inflicting chastisements on your multiplied offences, he has multiplied graces, lights, calls, and consolations. And behold, at this moment, while you read this book, he continues to call you to his love. What are your thoughts? What resolutions do you make? What do you wait for? Perhaps you intend to wait till the Lord calls you no more, and abandons you.

PRAYER

My dear Redeemer, I see that Thou hast placed me under too many obligations to love Thee. My soul has cost Thee too high a price; I should be ungrateful if I loved anything but Thee; or if I loved but little a God who has given his blood and his life for me. If Thou, O my Jesus and my Spouse, hast died for me, Thy miserable servant, it is but just that I die for Thee, my Lord and my God. I renounce the love of all creatures, and consecrate my heart only to the love of Thee. I choose Thee for my only Good, my only Love. I love Thee, my love, I love Thee. I repeat, and wish always to repeat, I love Thee, O my love, I love Thee. Thou dost wish that I love Thee ardently, and that I love nothing but Thee. My Saviour, I wish to content Thee; I wish to love Thee ardently; I wish only for Thee : yes, to love Thee only, my God, my treasure, my all. Assist me for the sake of Thy mercy, and grant that I may fully satisfy Thee.

O Mary, my mother, do thou, too, assist me; thou art the dispenser of all the gifts of God, and particularly of the great gift of divine love. This gift I ask thee to obtain for me; through thee I hope for it.

II

THE MEANS OF ACQUIRING DIVINE LOVE, AND THE ACTS OF LOVE THAT A RELIGIOUS SHOULD PRACTISE TOWARDS JESUS CHRIST

The Lord commands all men to love him, and to love him with their whole hearts.[10363] But he wishes in a special manner that religious, his chosen spouses, should love him with all their affections. Hence he has favored them with so many lights and spiritual graces, that they may seek to love nothing but this most loving Spouse. St. Teresa used to say that God bestows a great favor on the souls he calls to his love. You, dear sister, are one of these fortunate souls; but to consecrate yourself entirely to the love of your Spouse, as he desires, you must resolutely adopt the means.

The first means is, to desire ardently to attain that perfect love that will make your heart entirely belong to him. Ardent desires are the wings with which the saints flew to unite themselves with God by perfect love. If you have not this desire, at least ask it of God; for without it you will never be able to arrive at any degree of holiness, but with the aid of such desires you will soon attain sanctity. St. Teresa has left her spiritual children many excellent lessons on this subject. In one place she says: “Let our thoughts be great: from great thoughts our good shall come.” In another place she writes: “We must not debase our desires, but must trust in God: for by continual efforts we shall, with the divine aid, gradually arrive at the perfection that the saints have attained.”[10364] She attests that she had never seen a cowardly soul make as much progress in many years as generous souls make in a few days. Hence she said: “The Lord is as much pleased with our desires as if they were already executed.” St. Gregory says,[10365] that he who pants after God with his whole heart finds him; but to wish for God with the whole heart, the soul must be stripped and emptied of worldly affections.

The second means necessary to love God with the whole heart is, detachment from all love that is not for God. He wishes to have the exclusive possession of our whole hearts; he will admit no companion. St. Augustine relates[10366] that the Roman Senate, after adoring thirty thousand gods, refused to adore the God of the Christians, saying that he was a proud

God, who wished to be worshipped alone, without companions. But this our Lord justly claims; for he is the only and the true God; and our only true lover, who, because he loves us tenderly, wishes that we should love him with our wholehearts. To love God with the whole heart implies two things: it implies, first, the expulsion from the heart of every affection that is not for God.

The enamoured St. Francis de Sales said: “If I knew that there was a single fibre in my heart that was not for God, I would instantly pluck it out.”[10367] If the heart is not emptied of earthly affections, the love of God cannot enter. But in a heart detached from creatures, the fire of divine love burns and always increases. St. Teresa used to say: “Detach the heart from creatures; seek God, and you shall find him.”[10368] *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him.”*[10369] He gives himself entirely to those that leave all things for his sake, as he once said to St. Teresa: “Now that you are all mine, I am all yours.”[10370] He says the same to you, if you divest yourself of all things in order to belong entirely to him. Father Segneri, the younger, wrote to a spiritual soul: “Divine love is a thief that robs the soul of all her affections, so that she can say: What else do I wish for than thee alone, O my Lord?” And St. Francis de Sales has said: “The pure love of God consumes all that is not God, in order to convert everything into itself; for all that is done for the love of God is love.”[10371] In the life of the Venerable Joseph Caracciolo, of the Order of Theatines, we read, that after the death of a brother, being in company with his relatives, he said: “Ah! let us reserve our tears for a better occasion; to weep over the death of Jesus Christ, who has been to us a father, a brother, and a Spouse, and has died for the love of us. Every religious should reserve all her tenderness and compassion for Jesus, her Spouse.

St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say that she is a true religious who can say: “My God and my all[10372] my God, Thou art my all. Remember, dear sister, that when you were espoused to Jesus Christ, you said: “The kingdom of the world and all ornaments of the earth I have despised for the love of Jesus Christ; whom I have seen, whom I have loved, in whom I have believed, towards whom my heart inclined.”[10373] I have renounced the world and all its pomp for the love of my Spouse, whom I know to be the most amiable of all spouses, and therefore in him I have placed all my affections and all my hopes. And when creatures seek to enter your heart, dismiss them, saying that you have given your heart to Jesus Christ, and that there is no room for them. It is divine love that makes a monastery the reverse of the world in which all despise what the world esteems, and love what the world hates.

Above all, to love Jesus Christ with our whole heart it is necessary to deny ourselves by embracing what is painful to self-love, and by abstaining from what self-love seeks. St. Teresa once refused to taste a dish that was brought to her in sickness. The infirmarian entreated her to eat it, saying that it was well dressed. The saint replied: “It is because it is well dressed that I do not wish to taste it.” Hence we ought to abstain from things that are agreeable because they please us. We should, therefore, turn away the eyes, and not look at certain objects of curiosity because they gratify the sight. We should also abstain from such an amusement because we feel a predilection for it; we should serve an ungrateful sister because she is ungrateful; we should take such a medicine because it is bitter. Beware, says St. Francis de Sales, lest self-love should seek to have part in things the most holy, and should make it appear to us that nothing is good in which we do not feel satisfaction. Hence the saint used to say that even virtues should be loved with detachment.[10374] For example, we ought to love mental prayer and solitude; but when obedience or charity takes us away from meditation or solitude, we must not be disturbed, but must embrace with peace whatever happens by the will of God, however repugnant it may be to our own inclinations. The Venerable Father Balthasar Alvarez used to say that our Lord often commands creatures to turn their back upon us, and abandon us that we may run to him; but let us be careful to leave them and unite ourselves to God before they forsake us.

The path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards, and increaseth even to perfect day.[10375] The Wise Man says that the life of the just always increases to perfect day. But who arrives at this perfect day? He that, without inclining to anything until he knows the divine will, wishes, or wishes not, what God wills or wills not. Hence we should pray in the words of the same Father Alvarez: “Lord, grant me the grace to find peace in whatever thy divine will shall appoint for me; for my part, I ask neither more delights nor fewer afflictions.” Oh! How happy the life of the nun that lives detached from all things! Let us be persuaded that there is no one more content in this world than the man who despises all its goods, and wishes only for God. Hence each of us should live on this earth as in a wilderness, saying: Here there is no one but myself and God. And with this spirit of detachment endeavor, dear sister in the Lord, to renew every day the religious vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; intending to divest yourself of all attachment to property, to pleasure, and to self-will. Make this renewal of the vows in a few words, that you may make them more easily and more frequently. It is enough for you to say, My Jesus, for the love of Thee I renew my vows, and purpose to observe them with exactness; I entreat Thee to grant me the grace to be faithful to Thee.

The third means of obtaining the perfect love of Jesus Christ is to meditate frequently on his Passion. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that after being made the spouse of a crucified God, a religious, during her whole life, and in all her actions, should have nothing before her view but Jesus on the cross; and should have no other occupation than the contemplation of the love that this divine Spouse has borne her. Were a person to suffer for a friend insults, stripes, and imprisonment, how great the pleasure he would derive from hearing that his friend frequently remembered his sufferings! But if, when his sufferings are mentioned, the friend should endeavor to change the subject of conversation, and should refuse even to think of them, how great the pain that he would feel at such ingratitude! Such the pain given to the heart of Jesus by the souls that think but little on the sorrows and ignominies that he suffered for the love of them. But, on the other hand, he is greatly pleased with all those that continually remember and meditate on his Passion. I say that the only object of all the meditations of a religious ought to be the Passion of Jesus Christ; she should make at least one meditation on it every day.

To me it appears, as I have observed in another place, that it was to supply different mysteries for the meditations of his beloved spouses that our Redeemer wished to suffer different species of pains and reproaches, chains, buffets, scourges, thorns, spittle, and nails; it was for this end that lie wished to represent himself to us suffering in so many different ways: at one time sweating blood in the garden, at another bound and captured by the soldiers, now clothed with a white garment, the badge of a fool; again, torn with scourges, now crowned with thorns as a king of sorrows and mockery, and again going to death with the cross on his shoulders; at one time suspended by three nails on a cross, and at another hanging dead on that bed of sorrow with his side opened. But remember that we should not meditate on the Passion of Jesus Christ in order to enjoy spiritual consolations, but for the sole purpose of inflaming our souls with the love of our Redeemer, and of learning from him what he wishes us to do; offering ourselves to suffer every pain for his sake, because he voluntarily suffered so much for the love of us. Our Lord once revealed to a holy solitary that there is no exercise more apt to kindle in us the divine love than the meditation on his Passion.

The fourth means to attain perfect love is to make frequent acts of love. As fire is kept alive by fuel, so love is nourished by acts.

I. He that loves, in the first place, rejoices at the welfare and happiness of his beloved: this is called love of *complacency.* Rejoice, then, dear sister, in the infinite felicity of your God, and delight in it more than if it were your own; for you should love your Spouse more than yourself, and your greatest joy should consist in the thought that your beloved wants nothing, and will not for all eternity want anything necessary for infinite beatitude. Hence you ought to feel consolation in knowing that so many millions of angels and saints love him perfectly in heaven. You should also rejoice whenever you hear that any soul on this earth loves Jesus Christ with a tender love. *He* that loves desires to see his beloved loved by all: such love is called the love of *benevolence*, which you should practise by desiring to see Jesus Christ ardently loved by all men. Hence you would do well to speak frequently to others of his love in order to kindle it in the hearts of all those with whom you converse. You should, moreover, desire to see your Spouse known and loved by all that neither know nor love him. And to you the contempt with which he is treated by so many Christians should be the only source of pain. Would she be considered an affectionate spouse who should behold with indifference an insult offered to her husband, or a wound inflicted on him? You should grieve still for the offences that you remember to have hitherto given your Spouse; for these you should constantly make acts of contrition—this is called *sorrowful love.*

He that loves prefers his beloved to all other objects, and this is the love of *preference* with which God principally wishes us to love him. The first degree of this love consists in being prepared to lose all things rather than forfeit the grace of God. Does the Lord demand too much of us when he requires that we prefer him to everything in this world? And what are creatures compared with God? The Emperor Domitian tempted St. Clement to worship idols by presenting to him, as the reward of his impiety, gold, silver, and precious stones. The saint heaved a deep sigh, and began to weep when he saw his God compared with earthly goods. We should be ashamed to say to God, Lord, I love Thee above all things. For to speak in this manner to God would be the same as if we said to a king, My sovereign, I esteem you more than chaff and mire! But our God is content with being loved above all creatures, which, compared with his sovereign majesty, are infinitely less than chaff or mire is in comparison with the first monarch of the universe. Father Vincent Carafa, of the Society of Jesus, used to say that were the whole world in his possession he would surrender it in an instant at the bare name of God. It is necessary, then, to live always in such a disposition of mind that we would forfeit property, character, life, and all things sooner than lose God. We must say with St. Paul: *Neither death nor life, nor height, nor depth, shall be able to separate us from our God.*[10376]He that feels he cannot live without God possesses a great treasure; but he that aspires to his perfect love should not only be ready to die a thousand times rather than offend him by mortal sin, or even by a deliberate venial sin, but should also prefer the pleasure of God before all self-indulgence, and should be prepared to suffer every pain in order to please his Lord. Consider, O sister! that Jesus Christ has preferred your salvation before his own life; in you, then, it is not much, nay, it is nothing, to prefer his pleasure to every personal good.

They that love, refuse not, on the contrary, they rejoice, to suffer for their beloved, in order to give him proof of their love. It was thus that Jesus Christ has shown his love for us. He that desires to suffer for Jesus desires, or at least embraces in peace, the occasions of suffering. For loving souls, tribulations, as it were, are the way to union with God; for in sufferings they unite themselves with him by stronger love. Father Balthasar Alvarez used to say, “that he who in afflictions peacefully resigns himself to the divine will, runs to God.” In a word, every event, whether it causes joy or sorrow, tends to unite the soul that loves more closely to her God. *To them that love God, all things work together unto good.’*[10377] It is certain that all his arrangements are intended for our good. Our Lord said one day to St. Gertrude: “With the same love with which I created man, I ordain for his good all the prosperity or adversity which I send him.”

Be particularly careful, dear sister, to unite yourself to God in the time of sickness. Infirmities prove the true lover. In sickness you must be obedient to the physician and to the infirmarian. Ask for nothing, and take the remedies prescribed, however nauseous and painful. Do not complain of anything; be meek and thankful to all. Resign yourself entirely to the will of God, and offer yourself to suffer whatsoever he sends, uniting yourself to Jesus on the cross, desiring not to descend from it so long as it is not his will, content even to leave your life upon it, if such be his will. Fix your eyes on the crucifix, and when you see that your sufferings are far less than those that Jesus suffered for your sake, you will bear the pains of sickness with greater peace. “Love your Spouse,” says St. Francis de Sales, “in consolations and tribulations: he is as lovely when he consoles as when he afflicts you, because he does all for your welfare.”[10378] If you love Jesus Christ, love contempt, love correction; and entreat the confessor and Superior to correct and chastise you in the way that they deem most profitable to you. The same St. Francis de Sales used to say that the monastery is like a hospital, to which the sick come to be cured, and in which they cheerfully submit to the nauseous medicines and painful operations that may be prescribed.[10379] Hence you should ask your spiritual physician not to exempt you from any remedy necessary for your recovery.

He that loves, always remembers his beloved. Thus the soul that loves God always thinks of him, and always endeavors to show him its affection by ardent sighs and ejaculations of love. This is called *the love of aspiration*. Endeavor frequently, by day and night, in the cell and out of the cell, in solitude and in company, to say frequently to your crucified Spouse, My God, I wish for nothing but Thee. My God, I give myself entirely to Thee. I wish whatsoever Thou wishest. Dispose of me as Thou pleasest. It will be enough to say to him My God, I love Thee: or, my God, my all. A loving sigh, an elevation of the heart, a look towards heaven, an affectionate glance at the crucifix, or at the most holy sacrament, will be sufficient, even without words. Such acts are, perhaps, the most useful, because they can be made more easily and more frequently, and sometimes they are the most fervent. |See Aspirations of love, page 220.] In the Old Law, the Lord commanded that fire should burn unceasingly on his altar. *And the fire on the altar shall always burn.*[10380] St. Gregory says[10381] that these altars are our hearts, on which God commands that the fire of his divine love should always burn. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart. These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart, . . . and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising. And thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand, and they shall be, and shall move before thy eyes. And thou shalt write them in the entry, and on the doors of thy house.*[10382] Mark the earnestness with which the Lord inculcates the precept of loving him. I wish, he says, that this command be always within your heart, that you meditate upon it continually, sitting in your house, walking on your journey, in bed and out of bed. I wish that you keep it printed on your hands, and present to your eyes: I wish that you write it on the entrance, and on all the doors of your house, in order to remember it always, and fulfil it by acts of love. Hence theologians justly teach, that though it is probable that we are not bound to make acts of faith and hope more than once a year, still we are obliged to make an act of charity at least once a month; some say that we ought to make it more frequently.

Father Balthasar Alvarez used to call monasteries of religious hospitals of persons wounded with divine love; furnaces of love, in which the hardest rocks are reduced to ashes. Such they ought to be: all men should burn continually with the love of Jesus Christ. But alas! Few, very few, have this ardent love. I say, that if Jesus Christ could weep at present, and were capable of sadness, his greatest sorrow would arise from seeing himself so little loved by his spouses. Do you, then, dear sister, who have been made his spouse, love him; love him at least through compassion, at the sight of your God who is so little loved, and particularly by religious. Tell me, were a mighty prince of noble birth, of immense wealth, of extraordinary beauty and holiness, to take for his spouse a poor, ignorant, deformed, ill-dressed peasant, and were he, by making her his spouse, to render her rich, noble, wise, and happy, what would she not do for such a spouse? How great the affection and respect that she would feel for him, at the thought of his greatness and her own vileness! She would do nothing else than thank him continually for his goodness towards her. With what care would she labor to gratify his inclinations, and to please him in all things? How careful would she be to execute, without reply, all his wishes? And should it be necessary to suffer any pain for his sake, with what promptness and joy would she submit to it; how happy would she esteem herself in giving him such a proof of her affection and gratitude? And should she see him despised by his subjects, would she not weep continually? Were she, even through her own negligence, to offend him, how great would be her sorrow, and with what humility would she cast herself in tears at his feet, and ask pardon? Should she be at a distance from her spouse, oh! Would she not count the hours and moments of her absence from him? How great the happiness that she would feel in thinking of her former and present state. Apply what has been said to yourself, dear sister; Jesus Christ has made you, a miserable sinner, his own spouse.

Love, then, your Spouse; but know that unless you love him with your whole heart, he will not be satisfied. Love him not only with affections of the heart, but love him also by works. Some that are friends only in name, say to their friends: Friend, you are master of all that I possess; but in effect they give him little or nothing. But others that are real friends, give to their friend the better part of their possessions, and offer him the rest. A religious soul that resolves to give herself to God without reserve, divests herself of all earthly things to which she sees her heart attached; she resolves to subject all her inclinations to holy obedience; she resolves to mortify herself in all that gratifies self-love, to disregard self-esteem, and to embrace with joy derision and contempt. Oh! With what security does such a resolution make her walk! What confidence in God does it inspire! How prompt does it render the soul to bear crosses and contradictions! It makes her perform all her actions with a pure intention; it impels her to pray to Jesus and Mary for help to execute her purposes, and makes her firm and resolute in seeking, in all things, only what is pleasing to God. When difficulties occur, the same resolution animates her to say with courage, I have to please God; let pleasure be given to him, though death should be the consequence. Should she sometimes fall into a defect, the resolution she has made prevents dejection, inspires hope, and gives her courage to attend with greater care, for the future, to what she had before neglected. But this resolution must be frequently renewed in meditation, at Communion, in the visits to the Blessed Sacrament; and at rising in the morning it is particularly necessary to make the following protestation: My Jesus, I again give myself to Thee, and I promise to endeavor to do always what I shall know to be most pleasing to Thee. I unite this oblation of mine to the perfect unreserved oblation of Thyself, which Thou hadst made to Thy Eternal Father. Give me strength to be faithful to Thee. Thy Passion is my hope; Thy merits, Thy promises, Thy love, are my hope. O Mary, my mother, pray to Jesus for me; obtain for me holy perseverance, and the love of Thy Son.

If, dear sister, you wish to acquire the great treasure of the love of God, I recommend you to ask it continually, saying: My Jesus, give me love; Mary, obtain for me the gift, of divine love; my holy angel guardian, my holy advocates, obtain for me the gift of love. It will be sufficient to say, *love:* God will be always pleased with it, and will always infuse some new sentiment of devotion, will kindle some new flame, and will excite some holy desire in your heart. Our Lord is liberal in dispensing all his gifts, but particularly in granting the gift of love to those that ask it; for this love is what he demands of us above all things. But let us ask not so much for a tender as for a strong love, that will make us conquer all human respect, and all the repugnance’s of self-love, and render us prompt in doing, without delay or reserve, the things that are pleasing to God; and let us therefore accustom ourselves to seek what is most pleasing to God in all, even in small things; for we shall thus be prepared to do great things. And when you are molested with the apprehension of not having strength to overcome yourself in some extraordinary difficulty, trust in God, and say, *I can do all things in him who strengthened me.*[10383] Say, What I am of myself unable to do, I shall be able to do with the aid that I expect from God. Read the summary of virtues.

St. Augustine says that all the time that is not spent for God is lost time. At death, we shall receive consolation only from having loved Jesus Christ. O God ! how great the consolation that they who have loved him shall enjoy in being able to say, with their eyes fixed on the crucifix: Jesus crucified has been my only love. Even in this life, what greater happiness can a soul enjoy than to say: I give pleasure to God: I am in the company of God. But we must give ourselves to God, not for our own gratification, but to please him, altogether forgetful of ourselves, saying with the spouse in the Canticles: *He brought me into the cellar of wine: He set in order charity in me: stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples: because I languish with love.*[10384] By *wine*, is signified holy charity; for as wine deprives men of their senses, so that they no longer see or hear, but are, as it were, dead; so the soul inflamed with divine love lives as if it no longer had any sense of earthly things, and, forgetful of created objects, wishes for nothing but God; and therefore it asks the flowers of holy desires, and the fruits of holy works, which support the spiritual life, that is, divine love, with which and for which it lives. But this can be said only by the soul that truly gives itself entirely and without reserve to Jesus Christ. What do you say, dear sister? Have you as yet given yourself to him, as he desires you to do? Do you still resist? Has he not done enough to merit all your love? Jesus Christ gave himself to you without reserve once on the cross, and frequently in holy Communion; what more do you expect from him? What more can he do in order to make you belong entirely to himself? Will you wait till he abandons you, and calls you no more, in punishment of your ingratitude? Arise, then, instantly; resist no longer; say to him:

PRAYER

Yes, my Jesus, my Spouse, behold me; I will no longer resist Thy love. *My beloved lo me, and I to Him.*[10385] Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me, I give myself entirely to Thee. I would deserve to be cast oil in punishment of my ingratitude in resisting so many calls, but the desire that Thou dost now inspire, of being Thine without reserve, makes me hope that Thou dost accept me. Accept me, O my Jesus! for the sake of the love with which Thou didst love me on the cross, when Thou didst die for me. My dear Lord, were I now in hell, which I have deserved, I could no longer love Thee. But since Thou givest me time to love Thee, I wish to love Thee, and I wish to love nothing but Thee. Ah! My beloved Saviour, how is it possible for him that thinks of Thee in the manger of Bethlehem, on the cross of Calvary, or in the sacrament of the altar, not to be enamoured of Thee. Whom will I love when I see that a God has died for me? I love Thee, O my Redeemer, my love, my all. Increase Thy holy love in my heart. Remind me always of what Thou hast done, and suffered for me, and do not permit me to be ever more ungrateful to Thee. O blessed flames of love that consumed the life of my Jesus on the altar of the cross, come and take possession of my whole heart, and destroy every affection to creatures. O my love, I give myself entirely to Thee, and if I know not how to give myself to Thee as I ought, take me and make me all Thine. Grant that I may speak of nothing but Thy love, sigh for nothing else than to love Thee and to give Thee pleasure. My Jesus, I hope for all things through Thy merits.

I also trust in thee. O Marv, my hope, that thou wilt obtain for me the grace to love nothing henceforward but thy Son, my Spouse, and thee, my Mother.

Chapter XXIII

PARTICULAR ADMONITIONS

PARTICULAR ADMONITIONS FOR THE SUPERIOR, VICAR OR ASSISTANT, MISTRESS OF NOVICES, BURSAR, SACRISTAN, ATTENDANT AT THE TURN, INFIRMARIAN, AND COUNSELLORS; WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LAY-SISTERS

I

FOR THE SUPERIOR

I will suppose that you have been elected Superior, not through your own ambition and exertions, but by the will of God; otherwise you will scarcely succeed well in the government of the Community, because you will be bereft of the divine aid, which God withholds from those that are not called to such an office. Father Leonard of Port Maurice relates that the abbess of a certain convent, though she had accepted the office with reluctance, was greatly tormented at death by many scruples on account of the manner in which she governed the monastery. Now I ask, what will become of the one that has procured the office by her own exertions?

If you have been promoted to the office without your own co-operation, be persuaded that the honor conferred has placed on your shoulders a heavy and a dangerous cross. Lo his sister after she had been made Superior of her convent Father Torres wrote: “Beg of God to assist you, that you may not die under the torture of so many crosses—a martyr without merit and without a crown.” Consider that you must render to God a great account, if, through you, observance fails and abuses are introduced. That great religious, Father Doria, a Discalced Carmelite, used to say that religious Orders are relaxed more by headaches than by the gout; that is, by diseases of the head rather than of the feet. He meant that the relaxation does not proceed from the inferiors so much as from the Superiors, who shut their eyes to the neglect of the Rule and to abuses.

Hence, before you enter on your office, thank your sisters in religion for the honor they have conferred upon you; but afterwards protest that if you accept the burden in order to serve them, you will not consent to lose your soul. Tell them that you will neither grant nor permit anything that your conscience condemns. This will serve to prevent the nuns from asking inconvenient permissions; and should they ask for them, they will not feel much disappointed at your refusal. Thus you will be able to govern with less restraint.

Watch over the observances of the Rule, and be careful to prevent abuses, the removal of which, if they be once introduced into the monastery, will be morally impossible. You must take care not to allow even small defects, because by degrees they grow into great irregularities. How have abuses, particularly regarding poverty, been introduced into religious houses? Father Francis of the Cross, a Discalced Carmelite, relates that a certain abbess appeared to a friend after death, and said that she suffered a great deal in purgatory for having neglected to watch over the observance of the rules and of the orders of the Superior. She suffered in purgatory; but, alas! How many Superiors shall we see condemned to hell for the abuses introduced or permitted during the time they were in office? The Superior should also go through the monastery and see whether the orders that she has given have been executed. Of what use are orders unless they are fulfilled? Hence it is better to give few directions that will be observed than many that will be afterwards neglected. When the religious see that the Superior cares but little whether her commands are obeyed or not, they will soon begin to despise all her directions.

Be careful to see that they that are in office fulfil their obligations, but abstain from interfering much in their duties. Abstain also from imposing new burdens or Hew laws, for this gives great dissatisfaction to the sisters. What you should do is to enforce the observance of the existing rules. But if you find any rule neglected, such as the frequentation of the sacraments, the attendance of the companions in the parlor, the common mental prayer, mortifications that were before practised at table, and the like, it would not be a novelty to endeavor to restore the observance of the Rule; you are even obliged to do so according to the best of your ability.

Be particularly careful not to permit any particular friendships, either among the sisters or with externs. And should you be unable to prevent them, you should have recourse to the higher Superior, who, in good faith, might have given to someone the permission to speak; but if you know that the friendship is improper and a cause of scandal to others, you ought to inform the higher Superior of it, so that he may revoke the permission. In endeavoring to prevent such abuses, you ma] incur the displeasure of some, but there is no remedy. By the obligations of your office, which obliges you tc attend more to the spiritual than to the temporal good of your Community, you are bound to correct irregularities. I also recommend to you, by the way, that you see that your subjects sleep each one in a separate bed.

Be careful, likewise, not to allow persons employed in the monastery to bring letters or unbecoming messages to the religious; and should you ever discover that this was done by any persons in the employment of the convent, dismiss them immediately. Take care that no other men enter the convent than those that are needed to render service. Father Bartholomew of St. Charles, in his “School of Truth,” cites a decree of the Sacred Congregation in which it is forbidden to men to enter convents, except for the doing of work that is above the strength of the lay-sisters. He also cites another decree by virtue of which any one bringing into the convent children of whatever age would incur the censures inflicted on those violating the enclosure. Be careful to hold chapters as oftenas the Rule prescribes; and in chapter speak strongly against the more frequent defects, and against any abuse that you may witness. It is not necessary to preach a sermon, but you must speak, and make yourself be heard.

If you wish others to be observant, you must give them an example of exactness. St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say: “Woe to the Superior who, by her example, destroys the effect of her words!” The Superior is placed on a candlestick from which she is seen by all. How can she expect the sisters to be exact in going to meditation, to the divine office, and to other duties of the Community, if she be frequently absent? She will not even have courage to complain of their negligence; and should she speak of it, her words will make but little impression; for the sisters will attend more to her example than to her words. Be careful to be present at all the exercises of the Community, particularly at mental prayer, of which the Superior has greater need than the sisters; for she requires a double portion of food, one for herself and the other for the religious. In meditation you ought to beg of the Lord, in a special manner, to assist you by his light and aid, to bear the burden that has been imposed upon you. Endeavor to be present at the divine office and at the common meals; should you be absent, many irregularities will probably occur. Abstain with great care from the use of particular food, dress, or furniture; and tell the religious in office not to pay more attention to you than to the lay-sisters. Be assured that if you avail yourself of the authority of your office to obtain special conveniences for yourself or your relatives, you will excite the criticism and dissatisfaction of the whole Community.

Endeavor to govern the Community by yourself and not by others. It is an occasion of great annoyance and disquietude to the nuns to be obliged to obey a person who is not Superior. Be careful, then, not to depend on the advice of a single sister; it would be still worse if she were a lay-sister. In matters of moment, first recommend yourself to God, then ask the opinion of more than one of the religious, and do what appears best to you; but in general you ought to follow the majority of the counsellors. Be careful to treat all with equal attention, and do not show partiality to any sister, unless sickness or some other just cause requires it. In the distribution of offices take particular care not to be carried away by passion or by human respect, but be guided by Christian prudence, otherwise you must render to God an account of the evils that follow.

Be humble and affable to all. Imagine that because you are Superior you should be the servant of all the sisters. Beware of governing the monastery arrogantly. By humility and meekness, not by severity, you will gain the hearts of the sisters, and thus your admonitions and corrections shall be received without murmuring or discontent. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say: “Love, esteem, and confidence are the chains that bind the hearts of subjects; but these bonds are dissolved by pride.”

If you are not affable, the sisters will not feel confidence in making known their wants and afflictions, in asking the necessary permissions, and informing you of the disorders of the monastery, and thus your government will not be successful. It is not enough to have a good heart: if your manner is austere, all will avoid you. It is necessary to listen to all without distinction, when they come to you; otherwise you will know but little of the irregularities that take place, and much less will you be able to repair them. Should any sister appear to be reserved with you, endeavor to gain her confidence by treating her with greater affability.

When you have to assign offices or to give employment to the sisters, or to prohibit anything, be careful to abstain from imposing precepts (unless in cases of absolute necessity), refrain as much as possible from all commanding words, and from speaking in a loud voice. Speak rather in the language of entreaty, saying: Sister, I beg of you to do such a thing; do an act of charity for me; will you do me a favor, etc. In a word, endeavor to be loved rather than feared; and do not impose a burden of twenty pounds on a sister whom you see unable to bear more than ten.

Be meek, particularly in correcting the sisters. St. Ambrose says: “A friendly correction is more profitable than a turbulent accusation; the former excites shame, the latter provokes indignation. Let the person whom you correct believe you to be a friend rather than an enemy.[10386] A friendly admonition that points out the defect is more useful than a sharp rebuke that excites anger in the person corrected, who must regard you as an affectionate friend rather than as an adversary. St. John Chrysostom says: “Do you wish to see a brother corrected?—weep, exhort, embrace his feet, be not ashamed to kiss them (if necessary), if you wish to see him soon cured.”[10387] Endeavor with great sweetness and in private to correct the first fault that a sister commits. Should public correction be necessary in consequence of the fault being public, be careful first to correct the sister in private, praising her on the one hand for her good qualities, and on the other correcting her for the defect; then say to her, that since public correction is necessary for the good of the Community, she ought not to be displeased at your correcting her before the sisters. Oh! How much more profitable are admonitions made in this manner than corrections accompanied with sharpness and severity. When the Superior acts with meekness, she leads the sisters, as it is commonly said, with a thread of silk. The nuns call and regard you as a mother: you, then, should treat them as children, and with maternal affection. It is particularly necessary to treat the aged religious with charity and prudence. In general, says St. Gregory,[10388] it is useful, as shall be said hereafter, to treat the young with severity when necessary; but with the aged you must have recourse to entreaties and to sweetness, saying: My sister, you know how much I esteem you; I entreat you not to violate such a rule: we are advanced in years; we must give good example to the young sisters.

Sometimes it is necessary to defer correction for a week or a month, till a convenient opportunity occurs, that the admonition may be more fruitful. Medicine administered at the proper time cures an invalid; but if given at an unseasonable time it will kill him. Sometimes it is necessary to shut your eyes and overlook a fault, as if you had not seen it; that is, when the defect is a light one, confined to the person that commits it, and not imitated by others. We must leave many things to God, and implore of him to apply a remedy. Speaking of the defects of nuns advanced in years, St. Francis de Sales has said, in one of his letters,[10389] "It is necessary to pay attention to the aged: they cannot be so easily managed; they are not so flexible; for the sinews of the soul, as well as of the body, have grown stiff.

But when defects are serious, such as when they give scandal or annoyance to any of the nuns, or are opposed to the observance of any rule, then you must speak. If you remain silent, and dissemble through fear of losing the good-will of any of the sisters, you will lose the good-will of God. It is also necessary, in certain cases, such as when you perceive friendships or aversions, to apply an immediate remedy; for the longer such evils continue, the more difficult it is to repair them.

In correcting the religious, it is necessary, as has been said, to use all possible sweetness; but when you see that meekness does not correct the evil, you must, as the Apostle advises, speak strongly: *Reprove, entreat, rebuke*.[10390] In her intercourse with the sisters, the Superior should have a heart of honey; but in correcting abuses and relaxations of exact observance, she requires a soul of bronze. In the rules of St. Augustine it is said that the Superior should inspire subjects with fear and love, the humble and docile with love, and the proud and obstinate with fear. A certain author says that certain hearts are so obdurate, that they feel only when pierced with a lance; hence, if neither meekness nor severe words are effectual, you must have recourse to penances, and to severe penances, if the defect be grievous. St. Bonaventure[10391] used to say, that the difference between relaxed and observant convents is, not that in exact monasteries there are no defects (for even there the religious are not angels, but men), but that in the former transgressions are not reproved, while in the latter they are corrected and punished. In correcting the religious, I entreat you to attend to two things, that you may be secure against error: the first is, not to have recourse to chastisement (I mean severe chastisement), unless when it is absolutely necessary for the amendment of a sister, or for the example of others. Severe remedies are applied only in diseases that are otherwise incurable. The second is, that you do not show passion in correcting any of the sisters, but that before inflicting punishment you first recommend yourself to God, then take the advice of others, and afterwards act according to the best of your judgment.

Be careful not to impose penances, nor to correct a sister with severity, as long as you feel disturbed. Sometimes you may think it a duty to repress without delay the insolence of a sister who treats you with disrespect before your face; but I entreat you to abstain for some time from correcting her: otherwise the correction will probably be accompanied with anger, and will be unprofitable; for the sister will regard it as the fruit of passion, rather than the effect of charity. Besides, when a sister is disturbed by anger, and her mind obscured by passion, the admonition will be of little use. Wait, then, till yours and her feelings of displeasure have ceased, and then correct her as you think proper. If the correction must be severe, endeavor always to administer wine and oil, that is, after the correction, say to the sister, that you love her, that you have done all for her good.

When a sister is accused of a fault, do not correct or punish her immediately; but hear first the person accused, and then, after having examined the matter, act according to your judgment. It sometimes happens that things are seen in a wrong light, and that acts are taken for grievous faults when, perhaps, they are not even trivial defects. Some Superiors believe what they hear without further inquiry, and instantly reprove and punish the accused; such conduct leads to a thousand evils and disturbances, because the representation that has been made is without foundation.

May God preserve you from ever seeking revenge against a sister that has opposed or contradicted you, or has spoken disrespectfully of you during the time you are in office: guard, I say, against giving her any pain or humiliation on that account; this would cause very great scandal. You should, whenever it can be done without scruple, rather endeavor to treat with particular respect and attention any sister that may have opposed you. Thus you will please God, and give great edification to the Community.

Be careful never to grant a permission that opens the door to any abuse that may afterwards become general, or give annoyance to the other religious. It is necessary to refuse such permission with firmness, without any regard to friendship, gratitude, or any other human motive. To please others and injure your own soul, is not charity, but folly. But with regard to permission or dispensations that are reasonable, and do no injury to the Community, it is necessary to grant them with facility, unless you wish to see many violations of Rule, which, when committed without leave, are real transgressions. It is on this account that Superiors have power to dispense with the rules in particular cases, for dispensations are frequently necessary, or at least useful.

Be careful to provide for all the wants of the sisters, particularly with regard to food and clothing.

St. Antonine says,[10392] that a Superior that does not supply the religious with necessaries, when he can conveniently do so, and thus gives occasion to them to retain something for their particular use, cannot be excused from mortal sin. Some Superiors make the Community suffer, in order to erect new buildings, and to adorn the church with ornaments of marble and silver. Certain monasteries have superfluous revenues, and the religious suffer from want; but all have not sufficient fervor to bear the want of necessaries, and thus the monastery goes to ruin. I entreat you to be liberal rather than parsimonious to the sisters, if you expect them to be exact in the observance of the Rule; and therefore abstain from new improvements that are not necessary, unless you wish to see the material house adorned, and the spiritual edifice brought to ruin.

Be particularly careful to see the sick well treated, and supplied with medicine and food; endeavor to the best of your ability to procure for them every comfort of which they stand in need. The care of the sick ought to be one of the principal concerns of a Superior. Our Lord recommended the care of the sick, in a special manner, to St. Teresa. When you know that a sister is ill, go immediately to visit her, and if she stands in need of a physician, send for one, and charge the other sisters to be attentive to her wants. While her illness continues, take care to inquire whether she is well attended; and do not omit to visit her frequently. Father Leonard of Port Maurice remarks that the Superior should not be very condescending to those who, in every little illness, seek particular attention and exemption from the common exercises; for much condescension to them might cause scandal and abuses injurious to general observance.

So much regarding the care of the temporalities; but you should pay far greater attention to the spiritual concerns of the monastery.

Be careful, then, to see that the spiritual exercises be made every year for eight or ten days, in solitude and with devotion; do not spare trouble, or a little expense, in order to procure, according to the best of your ability, a person well qualified to give the meditations and instructions to the religious. Expenditure of this kind contributes far more to the glory of God than the expense of music, of costly ornaments, and of repasts. Ask the ecclesiastical Superior to procure a suitable person to give the spiritual exercises. Above all, be careful to provide the religious with an extraordinary confessor, at least four times a year, and to make the sisters present themselves to him, if not for confession, at least for his blessing according to Canons 521 and 566, n. 4. Do not imagine that the extraordinary confessor is useless, since no one asks for him; for she that rarely asks for him may be most in need of him. Fearing that it may be suspected that her conscience is disturbed, she will not ask for one; and in the mean time, by going to the ordinary confessor, she continues to make sacrilegious confessions and Communions. Oh! how great the account that certain Superiors will have to render to God for the neglect of this duty! I entreat you to attend to it. Be careful always to give the extraordinary confessor, or the new ordinary confessor, the information necessary for the direction of the Community.

I would, moreover, recommend to you to see to it that in your church the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass be celebrated with the respect and devotion due to Jesus Christ. I say, in a special little work that I have written on this subject, that those priests .that say Mass in a hurried manner (some of them finish Mass in less than a quarter of an hour) cannot be excused from mortal sin on account of the grave irreverence of which they are guilty towards the great sacrifice, as well as on account of the great scandal that they give to the people. How disgraceful, therefore, to see religious, who are anxious to hear several Masses, extolling such precipitate Masses, and those unworthy priests that deserve to be expelled from all the churches! There is perhaps no church in which Masses are said so unbecomingly as in the churches of religious; and why?—because the religious wish to have short Masses. What a disorder! And I repeat, what a shame! You, therefore, who are the Superior, endeavor to keep from your church these undevout priests who say Mass hurriedly. A single Mass well celebrated inspires more devotion than a hundred Masses said hastily and disrespectfully.

Let us now say a few words on the music and singing of nuns. In itself, singing in the church is good, because it is intended to praise God; but it sometimes happens that in the singing of nuns, vanity and the devil have a greater share than God. Someone may ask, What evil is there in singing?

I answer, in the first place, that there is a loss of time, and a great loss of time; for music is an art which, if not perfectly learned, not only does not delight, but gives positive displeasure.

In the second place, it is an occasion of a thousand distractions, and sometimes of irreverence.

How unbecoming is the mariner in which in many convents the nuns sing the Lessons in Holy Week! Young men go there not out of devotion, but for the purpose of hearing this or that nun sing, and at the end applaud her in a loud voice, just as is done in the theatre. The devils re-echo this applause, as may be seen in the following incident related by Father Leonard of Fort Maurice.[10393] While a brother of a religious Community was singing with much vanity in the church of his convent, a voice was heard saying: Bravo, bravo! Quite flattered by such applause, the singer became still more vain, and continued singing. He finally noticed that the church was filled with smoke and an insupportable stench, and at once understood who had been applauding him. Do you think that a religious that sings a solo inspires with devotion the men that are present? For myself I do not believe so;—temptation, indeed, but not devotion.

Thirdly, it may sometimes be an occasion of losing God; for it may sometimes be necessary to take lessons from men, and perhaps from young men. In such lessons the devil may gain much. Do not imagine that speak in this manner because I am an enemy to music: on the contrary, I am fond of music, and when a secular, devoted a good deal of time to it (it were better that I had devoted it to the love of God). I do not disapprove of nuns singing the plain chant, nor even the figured chant in unison, in imitation of the plain chant. But I say that it is not at all becoming in a nun to sing alone the figured chant. If the figured chant has not been introduced into your monastery, I entreat you to guard against its introduction. Should it be unfortunately introduced, I entreat you to do everything in your power to abolish it, or to prevent, at least, young men, teachers of music, from coming to the house.

Lastly, be careful to give to the lay-sisters sufficient time for meditation, for Communion, and some other devotions: if you do not, you should not complain that they are disobedient, proud, and without devotion. If you do not give them the opportunity of adopting the means of acquiring devotion, how can you expect them to be devout?

I entreat you to recommend to those who are in office to read the admonitions that I here subjoin, regarding their duties that each may know her principal obligations, and the manner of performing them.

II

FOR THE VICAR OR ASSISTANT

If you have been elected assistant, know that your office obliges you to a general superintendence of the monastery, and particularly of the lay-sisters, and therefore you should frequently visit them, in order to see if they fulfil their duties.

Be most affable to all the sisters, and listen to all that come to speak to you. Many nuns feel a reluctance to mention their troubles to the Superior, and will have recourse to you. Therefore, when they come, inspire them with confidence, that they may freely disclose their inquietudes, and endeavor to provide for their wants, according to the best of your ability; and when you cannot comfort them, apply to the Superior in their behalf. But do not arrogate to yourself authority that you do not possess: you are the servant of the Superior, and should therefore depend on her in all matters of importance.

III

FOR THE MISTRESS OF NOVICES

The mistress of novices should be a person of great fervor and prudence; for the good of the monastery depends entirely on the education of the novices, who have afterwards, in their turn, to govern the Community. Many of the admonitions given to the Superior are applicable to you: such as to give an example of all the virtues in which you instruct the novices; not to show partiality to any novice, by praising her, keeping her near you, or showing her attention that excites surprise and discontent among her companions; to correct those that commit a fault, correcting with sweetness, and without anger. Hence you would do well to read the admonitions to the Superior. (See III., IV., V.) With regard to correction, the mistress of novices should be more rigid than the Superior; you should not overlook any fault without correcting it.

Besides the instructions to which I have referred, there are others peculiar to your office.

The first is, to be discreet, and not to require too much from young person’s that are but little advanced in spiritual life. You must endeavor to lead them to perfection by degrees, according to the strength that you perceive in them. You should not show partiality, as has been said: but holy prudence requires that not all be treated in the same way. One is timid, and must be treated with greater kindness: another is haughty and obstinate; she must be treated with greater rigor. Another is very much under the influence of shame, and may be in danger of concealing a sin in confession; another is too affectionate, and is in danger of forming particular friendships. In these and similar occasions be careful to remove each of the novices from the danger to which she may be exposed.

The second admonition is, not to permit the novices to be familiar with the religious, or with the postulants, much less with one another; be careful, then, not to allow them to wander about the monastery without a companion. Do not permit them to read profane books, to indulge in vanity of dress, or to write useless letters. Father Leonard of Port Maurice relates that in a certain monastery, a young person, by an epistolary correspondence, contracted an intimacy with a young man, which led her into a mortal sin of thought. Through shame she concealed the sin in confession, and was guilty of many sacrileges. She was seized with a mortal disease, and died impenitent. After death she appeared to an uncle, and said to him: “Behold the niece whom you watched over with so much caution! I am damned for a sin of thought, which I concealed from my confessor.” Be also careful frequently to remind the novices of the eternal maxims, saying, for example: “Sooner or later, we must die. What shall become of us on the Day of Judgment? Everything in this world will have an end. Miserable the soul that is damned.” Recommend them frequently to practise devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ, and to his divine Mother, if they wish to become saints.

Above all, inculcate on the novices the observance of their rules, on which you are bound by your office to instruct them frequently; for, as has been already said, the observance of her rules is the only means by which a religious can become a saint.

IV

FOR THE BURSAR

It is necessary for you to guard against two extremes—extravagance, and excessive parsimony. With regard to the former, be careful not to violate justice, nor to injure the convent by spending more than you ought, in order to gain the esteem of the religious. With regard to the second, do not violate charity towards the nuns, by not attending sufficiently to their wants, in order to gain the name of a good economist, by saving a large sum of money during the time of your office. Be careful to provide for the nuns according to the best of your ability.

Be careful also not to omit your devotions, nor to live like a secular, through an excessive solicitude to save for the monastery. It is true that your office obliges you to treat with externs, to keep the accounts, to be sometimes absent from choir and from the common exercises: but be careful to cut off useless discourses; and when it can be done without inconvenience, put off till the next day the business that might interfere with meditation, Communion, examination of conscience, or spiritual reading. The monastery does not require that, in order to serve the Community, you should lead a life of dissipation.

Take care, also, not to enter into disputes with seculars, about the price of their goods, nor with workmen about the wages for their labor. You must do these things, not like a worldling, but like a religious.

It would be still worse to appropriate to your own use anything that you save by excessive parsimony. Whatsoever you acquire is the property of the monastery; and all that you save by a culpable or blameless thriftiness belongs not to you, but to the convent

V

FOR THE SACRISTAN

Entertain a great esteem for your office, all the duties of which remind you of your Spouse. T. he hosts, the vestments, the sacred vessels, corporals, purificators, candles, and flowers remind you of him. You should discharge all your duties with devotion and recollection, frequently renewing your intention of honoring the Most Holy Sacrament. And in passing before the Holy Eucharist, do not omit to bend the knee with reverence.

Be reserved with the chaplains, and still more reserved with persons that serve Mass; speak to them only when necessary.

Treat your companion with great charity and respect. Be not disturbed when she does anything that you do not approve; and be still more careful not to yield to any word of anger or complaint. Do what is in your power, and when there is anything to be done that you are unable to do, ask her to assist you, but always in the language of meekness, saying: I pray you to help me; do this act of charity for me; have patience with me; and the like.

Be careful, above all things, not to expend, through vanity, more than others have ordinarily expended. I say *ordinarily,* for you should not follow the example of a person that has been extravagant: for such vanity she will suffer many years in purgatory, if she escapes hell; and do you wish to be her companion in that place of suffering? I entreat you to read what has been said on this subject, in Chapter IX. § II.[10394]Be assured that you will have to give a great account to God, if you introduce or continue an abuse that will be the cause of a thousand sins. Finally, I recommend to you, as I have recommended to the bursar, not to lead a life of dissipation in consequence of attending too much to your office. Do all for God, and not for vanity, and everything will go on well.

VI

FOR THE ATTENDANT AT THE TURN, AND FOR THE PORTRESS

Be not idle at the *turn*, or at the door: employ the little moments of your time in working, or in reading; or at least in recollection with God, looking occasionally at some sacred image. When you open the door, cast down your eyes, if you wish not to expose yourself to a thousand faults and a thousand temptations.

Do not, I say, remain idle; but do not neglect the duty of opening the door, and give without delay the messages to the nuns as often as it may be necessary. Offer the trouble and annoyance to God, and it will be more profitable to you than prayer. You must, however, observe that should a person having a bad intention present himself in order to speak with a nun, you cannot call this nun without danger of committing a grievous sin, since you would then co-operate with the evil. Under such circumstances answer firmly that the sister is engaged, and that she cannot come. You must act in the same way in regard to letters that are sent to suspected persons or are received from them. On this account you will perhaps hear complaints from different quarters; but it is better to hear these complaints than those that God will make. If, however, you have not the courage to do this, give up your charge rather than expose yourself to the danger of being forever lost.

Be careful to lock the inner as well as the outer doors at the hours prescribed. Be also on your guard lest anything should enter the convent that might injure its inmates, such as children, dogs, immodest pictures, and the like. And then, what a shame is it not to see the convent door wide open, and seculars, men and women, occupied in joking and laughing with the religious ! As soon as you notice this, take care to close the door; your office of portress imposes upon you not only the obligation to open and close the door, but also to prevent every disorder that may occur at the door.

VII

FOR THE INFIRMARIAN

Your office is one of great importance and of great merit, if you fulfil it as you ought. In order to fulfil your office well, be careful to recognize in the sick the person of Jesus Christ, who says that he accepts the aid that we give the sick, as given to himself. *I was sick and* you visited Me.[10395]

Hence, you require, in the first place, great *charity* in assisting the sick, according to the utmost of your ability. Do not be uneasy if you sometimes lose the sermon, or if you are unable to hear the usual number of Masses, or to attend at your other devotions; you will gain far greater merit by assisting one of your sisters in religion. Sympathize with her in her pains, and give her as many bodily comforts as you can; if you are obliged to refuse something, because it would be injurious to her, at least console her by your words. Repeat from time to time some spiritual maxim, remind her of the sorrows of Jesus Christ, and should it be agreeable to her, read some spiritual book for her. Be on your guard not to reproach her with being the cause of her illness by eating to excess, or by remaining too long in the garden or on the terrace. Do not show, by your manner or otherwise, that you feel weary of attending her; do not thus add to the pain of an afflicted sister. And when you see that she suffers from headache, tell the nuns in the cell to retire, or at least not to raise their voice. Be careful to give her at the proper time the medicines prescribed. Should she refuse them, remind her of her obligation to obey the physician; and should she still refuse, send for the Superior, or for some of the religious who will persuade her to obey.

Secondly, be careful to practise *humility* in attending your sisters in sickness, though they should be the humblest lay-sisters in the convent; do not disdain to serve them in all their wants. These are the most noble acts of a religious, or of a Christian.

Thirdly, you require great *patience* in attending the sick, during the whole time of their illness and Convalescence. Tedious maladies weary the tepid infirmarian, but not the religious that has an ardent love of Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, you require great meekness in bearing with a sick sister, who, instead of thanking you, complains of you, and appears incapable of being satisfied with all the services that you render her; but you must bear with her, and pity her in her sufferings. There are certain infirmarians that cannot hear a word of complaint from the sick without resenting it. If this be your character, endeavor to give up your office; otherwise you will injure yourself and the sick. A brother of the Society of Jesus used to answer the complaints of the sick by saying: Pardon me, for I am stupid; and in spite of their complaints, he would continue to assist them with the same attention and cheerfulness. You should act in this manner.

Be careful not to judge that any sick sister only pretends to be ill; and be still more careful not to say that her illness is only imaginary. On the other hand, when the malady is considered dangerous, do not deceive the sister, but speak plainly to her, and say: “My sister, your recovery is not beyond hope, but your disease is mortal: it appears that God wishes to call you to paradise. I know that you are prepared, but if you have any scruple do not lose time. I will send for the confessor. The holy sacraments are conducive to the health of the soul and body. We all pray for the restoration of your health; but in the end we must all conform to the will of God.” Should your speaking in this manner disturb the sick sister, have patience with her. Shall religious be treated like seculars, who are not warned of their danger until their recovery is past hope?—a deplorable abuse that sends many souls to hell. As soon, then, as you hear from the physician that a sick sister is in danger, take care that she be fortified by the sacraments, particularly if you have any suspicion that her conscience is troubled. I say that an infirmarian that fulfils her office as she ought is a source of joy to the monastery, and renders herself the beloved of God.

VIII

FOR THE COUNSELLORS

When your advice is asked, be careful, before you give an answer, to understand well the question proposed; and should you ever find that, because it was founded on error, the counsel that you gave was unjust, you are obliged to retract it.

Tell freely what you think before God; and in giving your opinion, be not influenced by the consideration that the Superior, or any other religious that is your friend, thinks the contrary. The Rule requires that consultations should be held on matters of importance; that in these consultations each sister may speak her sentiments freely, and that thus the best counsel may be adopted. If you are influenced by human respect, disadvantageous contracts, useless expenditure, unjust punishments, and other evils will be permitted.

When you see any serious irregularity in the convent, you should inform the Superior of it, that she may apply a remedy. But in doing this attend to two things: First, after having done your duty, be not disturbed if the

Superior does not do what you think ought to be done; secondly, be not too importunate in speaking to the Superior on the affairs of the Community: you should speak to her only on matters of some importance.

IX

FOR THE LAY-SISTERS

What is said for the lay-sisters may be also useful to those that have the care of instructing and admonishing them. I wish, first, to say a word to the choir nuns on their conduct towards the lay-sisters. You, O choir sister, complain that some of the lay sisters are arrogant, disobedient, in devout, that they injure the property of the monastery, and sometimes give it away to externs. But who, I ask, is the cause of their misdeeds? You are the cause of this. You keep them at work the whole day; you do not give them sufficient time to make mental prayer, to frequent the sacraments, to visit Jesus Christ on the altar, to read or hear a spiritual reading, or to hear Mass on week-days; and afterwards you complain that they are imperfect and in devout. How can you expect that they will be fervent in the exercises of piety if you deprive them of the means of acquiring devotion? Such is the manner in which lay-sisters are sometimes treated; for such treatment certain nuns will have to give a great account to God.

I shall now address the lay-sisters.

Dear sister, you should understand that your state is a state of humility, and that it is particularly by humility that you are to become a saint. You should be humble towards all, even your companions, but particularly towards the choir nuns, by endeavoring always to speak to them with great respect, and to serve them as much as you can without neglecting the duties you owe to the Community. And should they ever say a disagreeable word, bear it with patience, and be careful not to answer them as if you were their equal. Had you remained in the world, would you dare to answer your mistress as you now answer the nuns? You certainly would not; and why should you, now that you are a religious, forget what you are? You should not be puffed up with vanity because the nuns call you sister, or because you sit at the same table with them: you have come to be a servant, and as such you have been professed; you must then serve, and serve with humility; for to serve with pride is not to serve.

Be obedient in the office in which you are placed; and obey without reply and without delay. Do not go about examining whether your companions attend to their work, or spend their time in idleness; attend only to yourself: the more you labor, the more merit you will gain before God, if you work with the intention of pleasing him. You will thus merit a greater reward than the nuns that hear many Masses, or are employed in spiritual reading; because in all your toils and labors you perfectly fulfil the divine will, and in this all sanctity consists. Do not say, then, that you have come to the convent to serve God and not to be a drudge; for you are to serve God by laboring for the Community, and by serving the nuns.

Be careful, if the Superior does not appoint it for you, to ask a little time for mental prayer, for Communion, for hearing Mass, and visiting the Blessed Sacrament, etc. And when time is given you for these exercises, be careful not to spend it in idle chat, or, as some do, in going about the monastery. You who are a lay—sister must be very avaricious of the time that is allowed to you; you must be careful not to lose a single moment of it; for you are obliged to attend to the service of the Community. If you do not serve the Community, who else is to serve it?

But, during your work, who can hinder you from being recollected in God? Make frequent acts of love, and fervent petitions, saying: My Jesus, mercy; my God, assist me; give me Thy love, etc. At least recite the “Hail Mary,” or other vocal prayers. Do not say any more that you are abandoned. Seek God and you shall find him. But you must love *silence;* speak when your business requires you to speak, but avoid contention, and cut short all useless discourses. And for that purpose keep at a distance from those that are prone to talk. Avoid particularly the discontented, who sometimes express their discontent in uncharitable language. I recommend to you the practice of holy poverty. I fear that some lay-sisters go to hell on account of the violation of the vow of poverty; they are intrusted with the care of the goods of the monastery; if then they give them to externs, or neglect to preserve them, how can they expect salvation? Be careful to preserve, with the greatest care, the things that are given to you in charge; and should others ask them of you, answer with firmness that they are not yours, and that you cannot damn yourself for their sake. If you wish to assist any one through charity, do it with the permission of the Superior. Do not make your entrance into religion the occasion of your own damnation.

Chapter XXIV

RULE OF LIFE FOR A RELIGIOUS THAT DESIRES TO BECOME A SAINT.

I

RISING IN THE MORNING

As soon as you hear the signal for rising, imitate the infant on awakening, that instantly looks for its mother’s milk: the moment you awake raise your heart to God by an act of love, offer him the actions of the day, and beg of him to assist you. You must, then, according to the advice of St. Teresa, not remain turning in bed, but rise immediately, as if the bed were on fire; otherwise you will, as I have said in another place, lose the flower of merit.

While you are dressing, do not lose your time, but employ it in repeating some ejaculation or prayer; for example: “My God, I wish only for Thee, and nothing more. I offer Thee all that I shall do and suffer during this day. My Jesus, mercy. Lord, assist me always, and make me do Thy will,” etc. You will do well to use such ejaculations in the intervals between your actions, such as in going to choir, to the refectory, or in the occupations that do not require application of mind. These moments employed in this manner produce great fruit in the course of time.

As soon as you are dressed, place yourself before the crucifix, and make the morning acts of thanksgiving, of love, of oblation of all your actions and prayers during the day. And, above all, ask with fervor help from Jesus and Mary, to serve God well during the day.

II

MENTAL PRAYER

With regard to mental prayer, I do not intend to repeat here what has been already said on this subject in Chapter XV. I will only say a few words on the manner of making it.

After the three acts—of faith in the presence of God, of humility, and petition to God for light—always read the point, or listen to another reading it, and then stop to reflect on the sentiment that has made the greatest impression upon you.

Afterwards make pious affections towards God, such as acts of thanksgiving, of humiliation, of confidence, and, above all, of contrition and of love, and petitions to God for light and help, for resignation to his will, and for the gift of his love. And when you feel aridity, employ yourself then particularly in praying for God’s graces. It will be enough to say and repeat: My Jesus, mercy. My God, assist me.

Finally, cast a glance at your conscience, and see if there is anything in it displeasing to God; remove whatever you find to be offensive to him, and make a particular resolution to correct the fault.

Be careful always to make meditation as well in the morning as in the evening. Should you on any day be unable to make your usual meditation, make at least a part of it. Be persuaded that you will never make progress in perfection unless you have a great love for mental prayer.

III

THE DIVINE OFFICE

It is necessary to say something on the divine office, as it has not been treated in the body of the work. All men should be continuously employed on this earth in thanking the Lord for his benefits, and in asking the graces necessary for the attainment of salvation. But because seculars live in the midst of the distractions arising from worldly concerns, the holy Church wishes that in her name, and in the name of all Christians, ecclesiastics and religious should praise God, and pray for the whole world, by reciting the divine office, which is nothing more than a memorial or petition composed by God himself, that he may the more readily hear our prayers, and relieve our wants. Hence, a hundred private prayers have not as much efficacy as a single petition offered in the divine office. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say, that, in comparison with the divine office, all other prayers are of little merit. Hence, when she heard the bell for the office, she exulted with joy, and giving up every occupation, she ran to the choir, thinking that she was going to perform the office of the angels in praising God, and imploring graces for poor sinners. St. Catharine of Bologna felt such joy in reciting the office, that she desired to end her life in chanting the Psalms; and she would say that a nun that persevered till death in reciting the office in the choir, might be ranked among the saints.

But it is not enough to say the office: it is necessary to say it as it ought to be said—with reverence and attention. If you say it with distraction, rolling the eyes about on dissipating objects, or what is worse, occasionally smiling, and speaking without necessity, know that a severe purgatory is prepared for you in the next life. It is related of two nuns, that for inattention of this kind they were condemned to severe torments. A Cistercian nun called Gertrude appeared after death to a companion, and said that she was suffering in purgatory for not having observed silence in reciting the office. St. Antonine[10396] relates that a Holy Father once saw a devil in the choir putting several things into a bag. Being asked what he was doing, the evil spirit answered that he was laying up all the words and syllables omitted or badly pronounced by the religious, in order to charge them with their inattention at the judgment-seat of God. In the life of St. Lutgarde[10397] we read that God sent a plague into a convent of nuns, in punishment of the negligent manner in which they recited the office.

Prayer made with attention is an odoriferous incense that is very pleasing to God, and obtains treasures of graces. But, on the other hand, prayer made without devotion and with distraction is a fetid smoke, that provokes the divine wrath; for God himself said to St. Bridget that they that recite the divine office negligently, dishonor him more than they glorify him. Hence, St. Thomas says[10398] that he who prays with voluntary distraction (though the prayer be not of obligation) is not exempt from sin, for he appears to treat God with contempt—just as a person that speaks to others without attending to what he says is guilty of disrespect towards them.

In the Cistercian chronicles we find an account of the celebrated vision that St. Bernard had one night, while he chanted the Psalms in choir along with his monks. At the right hand of each monk he saw an angel writing: some of the angels wrote in letters of gold, others in letters of silver; some wrote with ink, others with water; others, in fine, held the pen in the hand without writing at all. Our Lord afterwards gave the saint to understand that the letters of gold signified the fervor with which some of the monks recited the office; the letters of silver represented prayers said with devotion, but with less fervor; the letters of ink denoted attention to the pronunciation of the words, without devotion; and the letters of water indicated the negligence of those that were distracted, and paid but little attention to the words that they pronounced with the tongue. Finally, the angels that were not writing at all denoted the irreverence of those that were voluntarily distracted.

I hope, dear sister, that you are not one of those who, in saying the office, are voluntarily distracted. A person is understood to be voluntarily distracted when, after adverting to the thought that distracts him, he attends to it, although he sees that it takes away his attention from the office. Be careful henceforth to recite the office with proper attention. You go through the labor of reciting the office, and will you, for the sake of avoiding the little trouble or exertion necessary to say it with due attention, voluntarily lose the merit of it, and render yourself deserving of punishment? Adopt, then, the following method: When you enter the choir, after blessing yourself with holy water, first adore the Most Holy Sacrament, offer to the honor of Jesus Christ the office you are going to recite, ask his assistance, and then go to your place, and imagine that the Lord is looking at you from heaven, that his ears are attentive to the prayers that you recite, and that the angels are present to offer your petitions to God. While the religious were one day reciting Matins, Blessed Herman saw a multitude of angels with golden censers in their hands, offering to God the prayers of the religious.

Be not disturbed at the distractions you suffer in the office; as long as they are not voluntary they are not sinful. God compassionates the misery of our nature. Thoughts frequently enter the mind without being wilful, and when not wilful, they are not displeasing to God. St. Thomas says[10399] that even souls rapt in contemplation cannot remain long on high, but are drawn down by the weight of human misery to involuntary distractions. Endeavor, not only in the beginning but also during the course of the office, to renew your attention from time to time, such as at the beginning of each Psalm.

You already know that, according to St. Thomas and the generality of divines, there are three kinds of attention to the office: to the words, to the sense, and to God. *To the words,* by endeavoring to pronounce them distinctly. *To the sense*, by attending to the signification of the words. *To God*, by adoring him, loving him, and asking his graces. Any of the three is sufficient for the fulfilment of the obligation of saying the office; but he that recites it merely with attention to the words, without attention to the sense or to God, will never say it with devotion or fruit. Endeavor, then, to excite in your heart the sentiments you read. It is true that many passages of the Psalms are obscure, but many of them are also clear, and are full of petitions, of affections of love, of confidence, and of contrition.

The most perfect kind of attention is attention to God; and in order to practise this kind of attention it will be particularly useful to meditate, during the different parts of the office, on different circumstances of the Passion. For example, during the first Nocturn you can meditate on the washing of the feet; during the second, on the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament; and during the third, on the prayer of our Lord in the garden. During Lauds, on his capture, and on the maltreatment that he received in the house of Caiphas; during Prime, on his scourging; during Tierce, on the crowning with thorns; during Sext, on the journey to Calvary; at None, on the three hours that Jesus remained hanging on the cross; at Vespers, on his death; and during Complin, on his burial. But the meditations should not be so profound, nor be made with such application of the mind as to fatigue the head. They should be made with sweetness, so that the mind may be assisted with holy thoughts, and may at the same time attend, in some manner, to the words recited by the other side of the choir.

Every time you say the *Pater noster,* apply the heart in a special manner to the words, *sanctificetur nomen tuum*, by which you mean to say, Lord, make Thyself known and loved by all. *Adveniat regnum tuum;* reign in our hearts by grace in this life, and by glory in the next. *Fiat voluntas tua sicut in coelo et in terra I* grant that Thy will may be done on earth as the saints do it in heaven. In saying the *Gloria Patri,* you can make different affections: of faith, of thanksgiving, of complacency in the felicity of God, and of desire to honor him and to suffer for his glory. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, in saying the *Gloria Patri,* always bowed down her head, intending to offer it to the executioner in honor of the faith; and she sometimes made this act with such fervor, that she became pale as if she felt that her head was about to be cut off. In repeating the *Ave Maria* so often in the office, you can obtain many graces through this divine mother. Such is the manner of reciting the divine praises with devotion, and with great advantage to yourself.

Some nuns esteem and call the divine office a great burden; and I say that they who say it without devotion, and with an anxious desire to finish it soon, have reason to call it so. For they have to toil for two hours, or at least for an hour and a half, in reciting it without relish, and with great pain. But to good religious who say the office with devotion, offering to God holy affections and petitions, it gives spiritual delight; and if it be called a burden, it is, as has been said in another place, the burden of the wings that raise the soul to God, and unite it more closely to him.

For the instruction of nuns, and to relieve them from uneasiness of conscience, I will here subjoin the privileges that have been granted to them by the Sovereign Pontiffs.

Clement VII. granted to all religious who are sick, and to the infirmarians, the privilege of being able to satisfy the obligation of the divine office by saying six or seven psalms assigned by the Superior, along with seven *Paters* and two *Credos.* Martin V. granted to religious that are in a state of convalescence the privilege of fulfilling the obligation of the office, by reciting the part of it that their confessor may assign. Observe, that by the sick I mean those that labor under an infirmity, which of itself would not excuse them from the office. Observe, also, that privileges granted to religious of the male sex are also granted to nuns; for what is granted to the former is understood to be granted to the latter, in all that is accommodated to them, and reciprocally.

Leo X. granted permission to religious to anticipate the long offices, and to reserve the short offices for days on which they are more busily employed.

Innocent IV. granted to the nuns of St. Clare (and through them to all nuns who have enclosure, for they all partake of one another’s privileges) permission to comply with the divine office, by reciting the office of lay—sisters when there is any reasonable cause, such as when they are tormented with scruples, or greatly fatigued, or when they were employed for the greater part of the day in useful occupations, or when, in the opinion of the

Superior or confessor, they are not as yet well instructed in the office of the choir nuns; and nuns can avail themselves of this privilege without permission of the Superior, because it was granted absolutely and without any condition.[10400]

IV

THE HEARING—OF MASS

In order to hear Mass with devotion, it is necessary to know that the sacrifice of the altar is the same as that which was once offered on Calvary, with this difference, that on Calvary the blood of Jesus Christ was really shed, but on the altar it is shed only in a mystical manner. Had you been present on Calvary, with what devotion and tenderness would you have attended that great sacrifice! Enliven your faith, then, and consider that the same action is performed on the altar, and that the same sacrifice is offered not only by the priest, but also by all that attend Mass. Thus, all perform, in a certain manner, the office of priests during the celebration of the Mass, in which the merits of the Passion of our Saviour are applied to us in a particular manner.

It is, moreover, necessary to know that the sacrifice of the Mass has been instituted for four ends: I. To honor God; 2. To satisfy for our sins; 3. To thank God for his benefits; 4. To obtain the divine graces.

The following is a method that will enable us to hear Mass with great fruit:

By the oblation of the person of Jesus Christ, and man, to the Eternal Father, we give to God infinite honor—we give him greater honor than he would receive from the oblation of the lives of all men and all angels.

By the oblation of Jesus Christ in the Mass, we offer to God a complete satisfaction for all the sins of men, and especially for the sins of those that are present at Mass; to whom is applied the same divine blood by which the human race was redeemed on Calvary. Thus, by each Mass more satisfaction is made to God than by any other expiatory work. But although the Mass is of infinite value, God accepts it only in a finite manner, according to the dispositions of those that are present at the holy sacrifice, and therefore it is useful to hear several Masses.

In the Mass we render to God an adequate thanksgiving for all the benefits that he has bestowed upon us.

During the Mass we can obtain all the graces that we desire for ourselves and for others. We are unworthy of receiving any grace from God, but Jesus Christ has given us the means of obtaining all graces, if, while we offer him to God in the Mass, we ask them of the eternal Father in his name, for then Jesus himself unites with us in prayer. If you knew that while you pray to the Lord, the divine Mother, along with all paradise, united with you, with what confidence would you pray! Now when you ask of God any grace during the Mass, Jesus (whose prayers are more efficacious than the prayers of all heaven together) prays for you, and offers in your behalf the merits of his Passion.

You will do well, then, to divide the Mass into four parts, in the following manner.

1. From the Beginning till After the Gospel.

Offer the sacrifice of the Mass to honor God, saying:

My God, I adore Thy Majesty; I would wish to honor Thee as much as Thou deservest; but what honor can I, a miserable sinner, give Thee? I offer Thee the honor that Jesus renders to Thee on this altar.

2. After the Gospel till the Elevation.

Offer the sacrifice in satisfaction for your sins, saying:

Lord, I detest above every evil all the offences that I have given Thee: I am sorry for them above all things, and in satisfaction for them I offer Thy Son, who sacrifices himself again for us on this altar, and through his merits I pray Thee to pardon me and to give me holy.

3. Perseverance. After the Elevation till Communion.

Offer Jesus to the Eternal Father in thanksgiving for all the graces that he has bestowed upon you, saying:

Lord, I am unable to thank Thee; I offer Thee the blood of Jesus Christ in this Mass, and in all the Masses that are at this moment celebrated throughout the world.

4. After Communion till the End.

You will ask with confidence the graces of which you stand in need, and particularly sorrow for your sins, the gift of perseverance and of divine love; and you will recommend to God, in a special manner, your sisters in religion, poor sinners, and the souls in purgatory. I do not find it amiss if during Mass you recite vocal prayers; but I beg you not to neglect to discharge towards God the four obligations that I have indicated to you: namely, honor, expiation, thanksgiving, and prayer. I also ask you to hear as many Masses as possible in the manner in which I have taught you; for then every Mass will obtain for you a treasure of merits. Should you be permitted to lay out any money, procure Masses to be celebrated in your church, as well for your own benefit as to give the nuns an opportunity of hearing them. But I entreat you not to be of the number of those religious who, desirous of hearing many Masses, extol those priests that say them hurriedly, in contempt of the ceremonies and to the great scandal of those persons that are present.

Read what is said on this subject in the preceding chapter.

With regard to confession and Communion, enough has been said in Chapter XVIII.

V

THE REFECTORY

Would to God that some nuns did not, by their intemperance and want of reserve in the refectory, lose all they had gained in their spiritual exercises. You can practise many virtues in the refectory.

Obedience, by going to meals the instant you hear the signal, in order to be present at the grace that is said.

Purity of intention, by intending to take your meals, not for your own satisfaction, but to do the will of God, who wishes you to support the body that it may help you to serve him on this earth. But before you begin to take food, beg of God the grace not to exceed the bounds of necessity.

Mortification, by abstaining from something, or leaving a part of what pleases you most, or at least by contenting yourself with what you receive from the Community, and not seeking for anything particular, nor complaining that what you receive is not well dressed, or not properly seasoned. Endeavor also to perform some mortification at table, particularly during novenas, and on Fridays and Saturdays, by eating on your knees, or sitting on the floor; be not disturbed if others laugh at you, for then your merit will be increased.

Modesty of the eyes, by keeping them cast down, not looking about to observe what your companions are doing or eating.

Silence, which is so necessary in the refectory. Be careful then to attend to what is read. It is a delightful thing to nourish the soul with the pious sentiments that are read, while the body is nourished with food. By attending to the reading you will also avoid the faults that are committed by the indulgence of the appetite Read Chapter VIII., § III.,[10401] on the mortification of the taste.

VI

RECREATION

It is the will of God that they that love him should take recreation from time to time, in order to unbend the bow. *Be glad in the Lord*, said David, *and rejoice, ye just.*'[10402]But he says *in the Lord;* which implies that in recreation there should be moderation and modesty.

I. *Moderation*, because when too long, recreation will not be free from faults; hence, the moment the time fixed by rule is expired, you should be silent and retire. Do not imitate those that wish to finish the discourse that has been introduced, and thus spend time unprofitably. St. Jane Frances Chantal used to say: “If I threw away a moment of time, I would consider myself a robber before God. Perhaps the time is mine, so that I can spend it as I please? God has given it to me in measure, and will demand an account of every moment.”

Recreation must also be m*odest;* which implies, first, that you abstain from self-praise, from detraction, and from certain jests that are painful to your companions, and also from interrupting others when they speak. Secondly, *modesty* implies that you abstain from speaking in a very loud tone, and also from immoderate laughter. I say immoderate laughter; for, as St. Francis de Sales writes, as it is an irregularity to laugh during serious occupations, so it is very improper never to laugh at recreation. Hence his disciple St. Jane Frances Chantal used to say “When I am among our young religious, I laugh in order to encourage them to enjoy the recreation, for this is necessary.” Thirdly, *modesty* implies that you abstain from contending with any one, from speaking of things of the world, such as marriages, festivities, splendid dresses, etc. St. John of the Cross used to say, that to speak of these worldly trifles cannot be free from all fault.

I do not say that during recreation you should always speak on serious topics. Laugh, amuse yourself, speak even on entertaining subjects, but preserve recollection, by interiorly making occasional acts of the love of God, or petitions for his graces. Frequently introduce discourses on God, endeavoring to draw spiritual good from conversations that are indifferent. Imitate St. Aloysius Gonzaga, who thus converted the recreation hall into a sanctuary; for the students sometimes went from recreation more fervent than from meditation. I pray you read on this subject what I have written in Chapter VIII. § II.,[10403] on modesty. Abstain also from all particular attention to those for whom you may feel a preference: if you do not, you will give displeasure to others, and disturb the whole recreation. Be equally free with all, even with those whose dispositions may be least pleasing to you, and imitate St. Teresa, by conversing more with them than with the others.

But what shall we say of recreations that are practised in certain monasteries during the carnival, when some of the common exercises are allowed to be performed in private, the good order of the Community and the rule of silence are not observed, and the nuns spend a part of the day and night in dancing, singing profane songs, and even take part in acting comedies? I here we see spouses of Jesus Christ disguised as worldly spouses,[10404] and even what is worse, disguised as men with wig and sword, bold enough sometimes to show themselves in this condition at the grate and at the door, to the great scandal of seculars! What a disgrace for a nun to exchange her holy veil for the head-dress of a worldling! I know not how the Superior can permit such irregularities without grievous scruples of conscience. It is related that St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi saw in an ecstasy many persons belonging to the religious state who were damned because they had worn secular clothes with an inordinate affection. O God! it is during the carnival that instead of thinking of worldly amusements religious should then more than ever remain before Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, or in their cell, at the foot of the crucifix, to bewail the many offences with which seculars insult him. Religious who seek such amusements do not love Jesus Christ. During the carnival, St. Mary

Magdalene de Pazzi watched entire nights praying for sinners. How pleasing to Jesus Christ are the prayers of his spouses, who seek to console him at that time when he is most abandoned by the world! Our Lord gave St. Gertrude to understand that he rewards with special graces the acts of virtue which are offered to him during the carnival. And while St. Catharine of Sienna was praying to him during the carnival, our Lord called her his spouse, in return for the homage that she offered to him at a time when so many insults were offered to him.

But if, during that time, you wish to indulge in amusement, amuse yourself in a manner becoming a religious. If you wish to sing, sing spiritual songs; but take care never on any account to dance. The very fact of taking your companion by the hand may cause you many bad thoughts and temptations. If you are invited to take part in any little opera, avoid it as much as possible, for it will at least distract you for a month or two, hindering you from saying your prayers and from being recollected; and refuse absolutely unless the opera be altogether sacred; or if it should be necessary to put on a secular dress, refuse, even though you should be upbraided with incivility, with a want of education, or hypocrisy. Others may reproach you, but God will praise you.[10405] Never gaze at masquerades; else you will run the risk of seeing and hearing things contrary to modesty.

Be careful not to omit your spiritual reading on any day. Enough has been said on this subject in Chapter XVII. Make your visit to the Most Holy Sacrament: read Chapter XVIII. § II.[10406] Attend also to your work: see Chapter XVI. § II.[10407] You should never omit to say at least five decades of the Rosary. Read Chapter XXI.[10408]

VII

THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE, WITH OTHER INSTRUCTIONS

A religious should make two examinations in the day: the general and particular examination. The general examination is made in the evening, the particular is made in the morning before dinner, on some particular defect into which a person falls more frequently. Worldly spouses remain for several hours before the glass; the spouse of Jesus Christ should, at least twice in the day, place herself in the presence of God in order to cleanse the soul.

With regard to the practice of these examinations, the particular is short, for in it a person gives only a glance at the predominant failing and makes a short act of sorrow.

The general examination should be longer. In making it, first ask light of God to enable you to discover the faults you have committed. Then call to mind the actions of the day, and examine whether you have fallen into any defect, such as sloth in rising in the morning, or in obeying any of the calls of the bell; impatience, vanity, in wishing to be seen by others; words of disrespect to companions, idle or uncharitable words, lies of excuse, intemperance in eating, voluntary distractions at prayer or at the Office, looks of curiosity, loss of time, omission of good works, little detractions, want of respect to Superiors, defects against poverty, etc.

But when you commit any fault do not wait till evening to make an act of contrition: make it immediately, and then remain in peace. Be comforted when you feel remorse of conscience for your faults, for it is a good sign; it is a sign that you have a horror of your defects. Woe to the nun that is not afraid of light faults; she is in danger of falling into grievous transgressions.

After the examination make acts of faith, hope, and charity, etc. I here subjoin short acts of these virtues for your convenience.

My God, because Thou hast revealed them to the holy Church, I believe all the truths that she proposes to our belief. I believe that Thou art a just rewarder, that Thou dost reward the saints with heaven, and dost punish the wicked in hell. I believe the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. I believe the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ, and all the other articles that the Church believes.

Trusting in Thy promises, I hope, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to obtain from Thee, because Thou art powerful, faithful, and merciful, the pardon of my sins, holy perseverance, and the glory of paradise.

And because Thou art infinite goodness, I love Thee above all things, and I repent of all the offences that I have offered to Thee. With the aid of Thy grace, which I ask for this moment and for my whole life, I purpose to die rather than ever more offend Thee. I also purpose to receive the holy sacraments during life and at my death.

You should know that Benedict XIV. has granted an indulgence of seven years and seven times forty days to all the faithful as often as they say these acts, and a plenary indulgence to those who continue to say them every day for a month.

After these acts, say your usual prayers to St. Joseph, to your angel guardian, to your holy advocates, along with the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, which you should never omit.

Go then to take the necessary repose. The devil tempts some nuns to spend a part of the night in prayer, in order to deprive them of the entire of the following day. One day St. Francis could not sleep, but after making the sign of the cross on his pillow he saw' the Hempter going away. He then said to his companion: “Brother, this devil wished to prevent me from sleeping, that I might be unable to pray on to-morrow.” Take, then, the repose that is necessary for you. In taking off the habit, kiss it, and, in undressing, be careful to practise the greatest possible modesty. Sprinkle the bed with holy water. Before going to sleep, say: *Into Thy hands, O Lord, / commend my spirit*:[10409] intending that every breath you draw during your repose may be an act of divine love: let your last words be: My Jesus, I wish for Thee, and for nothing else.

Be careful to make all your novenas with devotion: such as the novena of Christmas, of Pentecost, of the seven festivals of Mary, of your holy patron, along with the devout exercises, and the mortifications that your confessor will prescribe. But during these novenas endeavor to employ yourself in acts of love, and in visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and to an image of the Blessed Mother, more than in vocal prayers.

Be careful also to make, every month, a day’s retreat, spending the entire day in mental prayer, thanksgiving after Communion, spiritual reading, etc., and rigorous silence. A day’s retreat contributes greatly to preserve and increase fervor. I also recommend you, in addition to the spiritual exercises that are made in common, to make the spiritual exercises for eight or ten days in private. For this purpose I shall briefly mention in this chapter the spiritual maxims on which you can meditate.

The virtues that you should be most careful to practise in the monastery are meekness and obedience. *Meekness* in bearing affronts: a person living in a Community who is unwilling to bear affronts can never advance in the way of God. *Obedience* in promptly executing what the rules prescribe, and what the Superiors direct. Do not listen to any one that proposes a maxim that savors little of obedience. St. Teresa used to say: If principles opposed to obedience are to be instilled into religious, it would be better there were neither nuns nor convents. Do not begin to examine whether the Superior, in giving you any directions, was influenced by passion: it is the will of God that you obey; and if you are unwilling to obey, do not speak either of perfection, or of the love of God. You already know that all sanctity consists in submitting your own will to the will of your Superiors.

Long as you are disturbed you will always fall into many defects; you will do no good, and almost all your prayers, meditations, Communions, spiritual readings, and other exercises will be unprofitable; because they will be performed badly, and with a thousand distractions. Remember that all your inquietude and troubles arise from not accepting crosses with resignation from the hand of God. The will of God renders all tribulations sweet and amiable. Read what has been said in Chapter XIV.[10410] You complain that you are infirm, despised, persecuted, and in aridity; unite yourself to the divine will, and these sufferings will be no longer painful to you.

If you tell me that you are not so much tormented by these external crosses as by the interior scruples of conscience, and by fears of being at enmity with God, I answer that your confessor has, as I suppose, already ordered you to speak no more of your past life. By the grace of God you abhor your past sins; you are resolved to die rather than commit even a deliberate venial sin: you frequent the sacraments, and seek to belong entirely to God. All these are signs that you enjoy his grace and friendship. Why, then, are you disturbed? Why do you say: Who knows how I stand before God? How shall 1 die? Have I confessed all my sins? Is my confessor deceived? The devil tells me that I shall be damned. Behold the usual tales of scrupulous nuns! Ah ! abandon yourself into the arms of divine mercy, and say in all tranquillity: Lord, I obey Thy minister, and thus I hope in Thy blood to be saved, and never to lose Thy grace.

With regard to the present, I hope, if you are troubled in mind, that you have no attachment to the venial faults that you daily commit, and that they are not fully deliberate: detest them as soon as you perceive them, and then remain tranquil.

But, Father, my greatest troubles arise from doubts of consenting to grievous sins when I am assailed by bad thoughts. I have already spoken on this subject in Chapter XVIII. § II.[10411] I here briefly repeat that a person of a timorous conscience, when he is not certain of having fallen into mortal sin, should remain certain of being in the state of grace; because it is impossible for him whose will is confirmed in good purposes to revolt against God without having a clear knowledge of his consent. When your confessor tells you to disregard these fears, and to go to Communion without confession, obey him blindly, and do not listen to the devil, who seeks to disturb you with scruples in order to make you abandon the way of perfection. When you feel agitated, say to the Lord: My Father, I leave my soul in Thy hands: if it please Thee that this cross should continue till death, I am content; do not permit me to offend Thee, make me love Thee, and I do not refuse to suffer as much as Thou pleasest. St. Francis de Sales says that God loves with a tender love the souls that thus abandon themselves into his paternal bosom, leaving themselves to be governed by his divine Providence; for he will make all things co-operate to their good, helping these chosen souls to follow him with the will without any other support than that of his divine pleasure.[10412]

But perhaps you will tell me you can never have peace, because you find that you have entered religion to please your parents, and against your own will. I answer thus: If, at the time of your profession, you had not a vocation, I would not have advised you to make the vows of religious; but I would have entreated you to suspend your resolution of going back to the world, and casting yourself into the many dangers of perdition that are found in the world. I now see you placed in the house of God, and made either voluntarily or unwillingly the spouse of Jesus Christ. For my part I cannot pity you more than I could pity a person that had been transported, even against his will, from a place infected with pestilence and surrounded by enemies, to a healthful country, to be placed there for life, secure against every foe.

I add: Grant that what you state is true; now that you are professed in a convent, and that it is impossible for you to leave it, tell me what do you wish to do? If you have entered religion against your inclinations, you must now remain with cheerfulness. If you abandon yourself to melancholy you will lead a life of misery, and will expose yourself to great danger of suffering a hell here and another hereafter. You must then make a virtue of necessity. And if the devil has brought you into religion for your destruction, let it be your care to avail yourself of your holy state for your salvation, and to become a saint. Give yourself to God from the heart, and I assure you that by so doing you will become more content than all the princesses and queens of this world. Being asked his opinion regarding a person who had become a nun against her will, St. Francis de Sales answered: It is true that this child, if she had not been obliged by her parents, would not have left the world; but this is of little importance, provided she knows that the force employed by her parents is more useful to her than the permission to follow her own will. For now she can say: If I had not lost such liberty, I would have lost true liberty. The saint meant to say that had she not been compelled by her parents to become a nun, her liberty which would have induced her to remain in the world would have robbed her of the true liberty of the children of God, which consists in freedom from the chains and dangers of the world.

You may say in reply: But how can I be content if I have not been called to religion? But what does it matter that you have not had a vocation from the beginning? Although you have not become a nun in obedience to a divine call, it is certain that God has permitted your profession for your welfare: and if he did not call you then, he certainly calls you now to be his without reserve.

St. Paul, the first hermit, went into the desert, not to remain in it, but to fly from the persecution that was then carried on against the Church; but he was afterwards called by God to remain in the desert: he remained, and became a saint.

When St. Teresa first entered a monastery she entered not without reluctance; she said that in leaving her father’s house the pain that she felt was so great that she thought it equal to the pain that she should suffer at death; and in her life it is related that she took the habit, as it were, by force. But after all she became a great saint, and the reformer of the Carmelite Order.

Blessed Hyacintha Marescotti, a religious of the convent of St. Clare, in Viterbo, was also induced to take the sacred veil against her inclination, and for ten years led a very imperfect life. But being one day illumined with a divine light, she gave herself entirely to God, and persevered till death, for the space of twenty—four years, in a life of holiness, so that she has deserved to be venerated on the altar.

Likewise Sister Mary Bonaventure, a nun in the convent of the Torre Dei Specchi, entered against her will; but after a life of tepidity and dissipation she went, during the first meditation of the spiritual exercises, and threw herself at the feet of Father Lancicio, of the Society of Jesus, and courageously said to him: “Father, I have learned what God wishes from me. I wish to be a saint, and a great saint, and I wish to be one immediately.” And by the divine aid she executed her purpose; so abundant were her tears that she could say no more; but she went to her cell, and at the foot of the crucifix wrote the following protestation: I, Mary Bonaventure, this day, in the beginning of the spiritual exercises, offer myself entirely to Thee, O my God. I promise to love nothing but Thee, O my Jesus! Accept, O most loving Redeemer! This paper, bathed in my tears, which I consecrate to Thee as the pledge of my love. I leave it in the wound of Thy side, that through the merits of Thy blood Thou mayest pardon my sins, and establish me in Thy love, so that I may be no longer mine, and may be all Thine.

It is in this manner you must act: resolve this moment to belong entirely to God, and make the same protestation before the Blessed Sacrament, or at the foot of the crucifix, and doubt not that if you are resolute in your determination the Lord will stretch forth his hand to raise you to a high degree of sanctity. Thus your misfortune, as you call it, will be a source of the greatest happiness, as it was to Sister Bonaventure, who in a short time became a saint. She survived her conversion only a year, but she died rich in merits; for during that year all her time was spent in meditations and works of penance; and she expired in celestial peace, and immediately after death there were manifest signs of her admission to glory.

Have courage, then, and rejoice, now that God calls you to his perfect love, and say: I know, O Lord, that Thou dost wish me entirely for Thyself: love which is divided is not true love.

But remember that to become a saint desires are not sufficient; it is necessary to put the hand to the work. Begin to make a little more mental prayer, make a spiritual reading every day, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and to an image of Mary. When reproved, be humble; when despised, be silent; cut *off* all correspondence, begin to mortify the appetite, curiosity, and self-will. Be not diffident, but begin the work, and by degrees you will succeed. Self-love will live in us as long as we have life, and therefore we must constantly endeavor to cut down the noxious plants that spring up in our garden. To become a saint without trouble is impossible.

APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF THE VIRTUES

WHICH THE RELIGIOUS THAT WISHES TO BECOME A SAINTSHOULD PRACTISE[10413]

It would be useful for religious to read this abstract on the day of re—treat, in order to see in what virtue they fail.

To desire always to advance in the love of Jesus Christ. Holy desires are the wings with which souls fly to God. Hence it is necessary to meditate frequently on the Passion of our Lord. To make frequent acts of the love of Jesus Christ during the day, beginning as soon as you awake in the morning, and endeavoring to fall asleep making an act of love. And always to ask of Jesus Christ his holy love.

To go to Communion as often as possible, with the permission of your director. And during the day to make several spiritual Communions, at least three.

To visit the Most Holy Sacrament at least once in the day; and in the visit to ask perseverance and holy love, after the acts of faith, thanksgiving, and love. And when you meet with troubles, losses, affronts, or any other cross, have recourse to the Blessed Sacrament, from the place in which you find yourself at the time.

Every morning, at rising, to offer yourself to suffer in peace all the crosses that will happen during the day, and when they happen always to say: Lord, Thy will be always done.

To rejoice in the infinite happiness of God. She that loves God more than herself ought to rejoice in his felicity more than in her own. To desire paradise, and therefore to desire death in order to be delivered from the danger of losing God, and to go to love him for eternity, and with all your strength.

To desire, and to labor that all may love Jesus Christ; and therefore to speak frequently to the sisters of the love of Jesus Christ.

To treat God without reserve, not refusing him anything that you know to be pleasing to him; and even to choose what is most pleasing to him.

To pray every day for the souls in purgatory, and for poor sinners.

To perform all your actions through the sole motive of giving pleasure to Jesus Christ, saying, at the beginning of each action: Lord, may this be entirely for Thee !

To offer yourself several times in the day to suffer every pain for his sake, saying: My Jesus, I give myself entirely to Thee: here I am; do with me whatsoever Thou pleasest.

To resolve to die rather than commit a deliberate venial sin.

To abstain from even lawful gratifications, at least two or three times in the day.

To spend two hours, or at least an hour every day in mental prayer.

To love solitude and silence, in order to converse alone with God: hence it is necessary to love the choir and the cell, and to shun the grate, the door, and the terrace.

To perform all the exterior mortifications that you are allowed by obedience, but to attend particularly to interior mortifications; such as not to indulge curiosity, to be silent when you receive an affront, and never to do anything through self-satisfaction.

To perform every spiritual exercise as if it were the last time you are performing it; and on that account to think frequently on death in your meditations. And when you are in bed, consider that there you will one day breathe your last.

Not to abandon your usual devotions, or any other good work, through human respect, through aridity, or tediousness.

Not to complain, in sickness, of the inattention of the physicians or of the sisters; and to endeavor to conceal your pains, except when it is necessary to mention them to the physician.

To banish melancholy, preserving tranquillity, and a uniform serenity of countenance in all crosses. He that wishes what God wishes should never be afflicted.

In temptations, to have recourse immediately and with confidence to Jesus and Mary, and to continue constantly to repeat the names of Jesus and Mary as long as the temptation lasts.

To place all your confidence, first, in the Passion of Christ, and then in the intercession of Mary, and to ask every day this confidence from God.

After a fault, never to give way to disturbance of mind or to diffidence, even though you should relapse several times into the same fault; but instantly to repent of it, and trusting in God, to renew your resolution to correct it.

To render good to all those that treat you badly, at least by praying to God for them.

To answer with meekness all those that offend you by acts or words, and thus to gain them to God.

When you are disturbed, you will do well to remain silent until the mind is composed; otherwise you will commit a thousand faults without perceiving them.

In correcting others, endeavor to select a time when neither you nor the person to be corrected are disturbed; otherwise the correction will do more harm than good.

Always to speak well of others, and to excuse the intention when you cannot excuse the action.

To assist others to the best of your ability, and particularly those that are opposed to you.

Neither to say nor to do anything disagreeable to others, unless when it is more pleasing to God that you should say or do it. And when you sometimes fail in charity to your neighbor, to ask pardon, or at least to speak to the person with kindness; and always to speak with meekness, and in a low tone.

To offer to God the affronts that you receive, and not to complain of them to others.

To observe punctually the rules of the monastery. St. Francis de Sales used to say that the most austere penance of a religious is to deny self-will, and to be content that the observance of the Rule be the priest that every moment offers such a sacrifice to God. He would frequently say that the predestination of religious is annexed to the love of their Rule. And to Superiors he used to say, that to fulfil their office they should do nothing else than observe the Rule, and see that it be observed by others.

To regard the Superiors as the person of Jesus Christ, and therefore to obey them punctually and without reply.

To love the most lowly offices. To select the poorest things. To humble yourself even to inferior sisters. Not to speak of yourself either well or ill: for speaking ill of yourself sometimes foments pride. Not to excuse yourself when reproved, nor even when you are calumniated, unless it is absolutely necessary to excuse yourself in order to prevent scandal to others.

To visit the sick, and to assist them according to the best of your ability, particularly those that are abandoned.

To say frequently to yourself, I have come to the convent, not to indulge in pleasure, but to suffer; not to lead a life of comfort, but of poverty; not to be honored, but to be despised; not to do my own will, but the will of others.

To renew always the purpose to become a saint, and not to lose courage in any state of tepidity in which you may find yourself.

To renew every day the vows of your profession.

To conform to the divine will in all things opposed to the senses, in sorrows, infirmities, affronts, contradictions, losses of property, death of relatives or of other persons that are dear to you. And to direct all your actions, Communions, and other prayers to that end, always asking of God to make you love him, and fulfil his holy will in all things.

To recommend yourself to the prayers of other devout persons; but to recommend yourself more to the saints in heaven, and particularly to the Blessed Virgin, setting a great value on the devotion to this divine mother, and endeavoring to infuse it into others.

SPIRITUAL MAXIMS FOR A RELIGIOUS[10414]

Of what use will it be to gain the whole world and to lose one’s soul?

Everything has an end; but eternity has no end.

All may be lost, provided God be not lost.

No sin, however small, is a light evil. *If we* desire to please God, we must deny ourselves.

That which is done for our own satisfaction is all loss.

In order to save ourselves we must be inconstant fear of falling.

Let me die, so that I may please God.

The only evil that we ought to fear is sin. All that God wills is good, and therefore to be desired.

He who desires nothing but God is happy, and contented with everything that happens.

I ought to imagine to myself that there are no others in the world but God and myself.

The whole world cannot satisfy our heart; God alone can satisfy it.

All good consists in loving God. And loving God consists in doing his will.

All our riches are in prayer. He who prays obtains everything that he can desire.

Let us consider that day lost on which we omit our mental prayer. He who leaves off praying," says St. Teresa, "casts himself into hell of his own accord."

Let us not pass a day without reading some spiritual book.

Points of honor arc the plague of spirituality.

To be humble of heart, and not merely in word, it is not sufficient to say that we are deserving of all contempt, but we must also be glad when we are despised. And what has a Christian learnt to do, it lie cannot suffer an affront for God's sake? When you are insulted, take it all cheerfully.

He who thinks of hell, which he has deserved, finds every trouble easy to hear.

He who loves poverty possesses all things. In the things of this world we must choose the worst; in the things of God we must choose the *best.*

An obedient soul is the delight *of God.*

True charity consists in doing good to those who do us evil, and in thus gaining them over.

Of what use are the riches and honors of this world at the hour of death?

It is a great grace of God to be called to his holy love. God does not leave a single good desire unrewarded. All attachment, even to good things (except to God), is bad.

Let us be grateful, and first of all to God. Let us therefore resolve to deny him nothing, making choice of those things which are most pleasing to him.

The most beautiful prayer is when in sickness we unite ourselves to the will of God.

A holy lift and sensual pleasures cannot agree together. He who trusts in himself is lost; he who trusts in God can do all things.

And what greater delight can a soul have than to know that it is pleasing God.

God is ready to give himself to those who leave all for his love.

The only way by which we can become saints is the way of suffering.

It is by aridity and temptations that God tries those who love him.

No one can be lost who loves God and trusts in him.

Let us beg of God to give us a tender devotion to his divine Mother.

He who looks on Jesus crucified suffers everything in peace.

He who loves God most in this World is the happiest.

All that is not done for God, turns to pain.

No kind of disquietude, although for a good end, comes from God.

It, is enough that we do not stand still; we shall arrive in the end. He who desires only God is rich and happy: he is in want of nothing, and may laugh at the whole world. Nothing can satisfy one whom God does not satisfy. God, God, and nothing more.

We must overcome all to gain all.

ASPIRATIONS OF LOVE TO JESUS CHRIST[10415]

My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me.

My Love, do not permit me to separate myself from Thee. When shall I be able to say, “My God, I cannot lose Thee anymore?”

Lord, who am I, that Thou shouldst desire so much to be loved by me?

And whom shall I love if I love not Thee, my Jesus?

Here I am, Lord; dispose of me as Thou pleasest.

Give me Thy love; I ask nothing more.

Make me all Thine before I die.

Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ have pity on me.

My God, I wish for Thee alone, and nothing more.

O My Jesus! Would that I could be entirely spent for Thee, as Thou didst spend Thyself entirely for me.

If I had died while I was in sin, I could no more have loved Thee; now that I can love Thee, I will love Thee as much as I can.

To Thee do I consecrate all the remainder of my life.

O wish only, and I wish in all things, that which Thou dost desire.

When I see thee for the first time, my Jesus, may it be with a look of mercy!

May I die rather than ever offend Thee again!

Thou wilt not leave me; I will not leave Thee: so shall our love endure in this world and in the next.

I should be too ungrateful, O my Jesus! If I loved Thee but little, after so many graces.

Thou didst give Thyself all to me; I give myself all to Thee.

Thou lovest those that love Thee. I love Thee; do Thou also love me.

If I love Thee but little, give Thou me the love Thou requirest of me.

What hast Thou not done to oblige me to love Thee? Make me conquer all things to please Thee.

Accept the love of a soul that has offended Thee so deeply.

Show me the immense good Thou art, that I may love Thee exceedingly.

I desire to love Thee exceedingly in this life, that I may love Thee exceedingly in the next.

I hope to love Thee for all eternity, O eternal God! Oh, that I had always loved Thee! Oh, that I had died rather than have offended Thee!

I give Thee my will, my liberty; dispose of me as Thou pleasest.

May my only happiness be to please Thee, O Infinite Goodness!

O my God! I rejoice in that Thou art infinitely happy. Thou art omnipotent; make me a saint.

Thou hast sought me while I was fleeing from Thee; Thou didst love me when I despised Thy love: abandon me not, now that I seek Thee and love Thee.

May I this day give myself wholly to Thee!

Send me any chastisement; but deprive me not of the power of loving Thee.

O thank Thee that Thou givest me time to love Thee.

I love Thee, my Jesus, I love Thee; and I hope to die repeating, “I love Thee, I love Thee.”

I desire to love Thee without reserve, and to do all that I know to be pleasing to Thee.

I love Thy good pleasure more than all the pleasures of the world.

I accept all the troubles that may happen to me, provided I love Thee, O my God. O my Jesus, that I could die for Thee, as Thou didst die for me!

Oh, that I could make all men love Thee as Thou deservest!

O will of God ! thou art my love.

O God of love ! give me love.

O Mary ! draw me all to God.

O my Mother ! make me always have recourse to thee It is for thee to make me a saint. This is my hope.

DIGNITY AND DUTIES OF THE PRIEST

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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The Centenary Edition

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

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THE ASCETICAL WORKS

Volume XII.

DIGNITY AND DUTIES OF THE PRIEST; OR SELVA.

A COLLECTION OF MATERIALS FOR ECCLESIASTICAL RETREATS. RULE OF LIFE AND SPIRITUAL RULES.

REDEMTORIST FATHERS

BROOKLYN

CONTENTS

- INDEX
- DIGNITY AND DUTIES OF THE PRIEST
  - CONTENTS
  - Dignity and Duties of the Priest
    - NOTICE
    - A COLLECTION OF MATERIAL FOR SERMONS AND INSTRUCTIONS, FOR ECCLESIASTICAL RETREATS, AND ALSO FOR PRIVATE SPIRITUAL READING
      - ADMONITIONS NECESSARY FOR HIM WHO GIVES THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES TO PRIESTS
  - PART I
Material for Sermons
    - *Chapter I*
THE DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD
      - I. IDEA OF THE PRIESTLY DIGNITY
      - II. IMPORTANCE OF THE PRIESTLY OFFICE
      - III. GRANDEUR OF THE PRIESTLY POWER
      - IV. THE DIGNITY OF THE PRIEST SURPASSES ALL OTHER CREATED DIGNITIES
      - V. ELEVATION OF THE POST OCCUPIED BY THE PRIEST
      - VI. CONCLUSION
    - *Chapter II*
THE END OF THE PRIESTHOOD
      - I. THE PRIESTHOOD APPEARS TO THE SAINTS A FORMIDABLE CHARGE
      - II. WHAT IS THE END OF THE PRIESTHOOD
      - III. PRINCIPAL DUTIES OF THE PRIEST
    - *Chapter III*
THE SANCTITY NECESSARY FOR THE PRIEST

I. WHAT SHOULD BE THE SANCTITY OF THE PRIEST BY REASON OF HIS DIGNITY

II. WHAT SHOULD BE THE SANCTITY OF THE PRIEST AS THE MINISTER OF THE ALTAR

III. WHAT SHOULD BE THE SANCTITY OF THE PRIEST AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

IV. WHAT SHOULD BE THE SANCTITY OF THE PRIEST GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE TO BE THEIR MODEL

V. PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES

Chapter IV
GRIEVOUSNESS AND CHASTISEMENT OF SIN IN A PRIEST

I. GRIEVOUSNESS OF SIN IN A PRIEST

II. CHASTISEMENT OF THE SINFUL PRIEST

III. EXHORTATION

Chapter V
THE INJURY THAT TEPIDITY DOES TO THE PRIEST

I. TO WHAT THE TEPID PRIEST IS EXPOSED

II. A PRIEST CANNOT BE SATISFIED WITH AVOIDING GRIEVOUS SINS

III. EXHORTATION

Chapter VI
THE SIN OF INCONTINENCE

I. NECESSITY OF PURITY IN THE PRIEST

II. MALICE OF IMPURITY IN THE PRIEST

III. SAD EFFECTS OF IMPURITY

IV. REMEDIES FOR INCONTINENCE

Chapter VII
THE SACRILEGIOUS MASS

I. PURITY REQUIRED IN THE PRIEST TO CELEBRATE WORTHILY

II. HOW GREAT IS THE CRIME OF THE PRIEST THAT CELEBRATES MASS IN MORTAL SIN

Chapter VIII
THE SIN OF SCANDAL

Chapter IX
THE ZEAL OF THE PRIEST

- I. THE OBLIGATION OF EVERY PRIEST TO LABOR FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS
- II. THE PLEASURE THAT A PRIEST WHO LABORS FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS GIVES TO GOD
- III. HOW SECURE THE PRIEST WHO LABORS FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS RENDERS HIS OWN SALVATION, AND HOW GREAT THE REWARD THAT HE SHALL RECEIVE IN HEAVEN
- IV. THE END, THE MEANS, AND THE LABORS OF THE PRIEST WHO HAS ZEAL

Chapter X
THE VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

- I. NECESSITY OF A DIVINE VOCATION TO TAKE HOLY ORDERS
- II MARKS OF A DIVINE VOCATION TO THE SACERDOTAL STATE
- III. TO WHAT DANGERS ONE EXPOSES ONESELF BY TAKING HOLY ORDERS WITHOUT A VOCATION

PART II
Material for Instructions

Instruction I
THE CELEBRATION OF MASS

- I. IMPORTANCE OF THE HOLY SACRIFICE AND WHAT IT EXACTS OF THE PRIEST
- II. THE PREPARATION FOR MASS
- III. THE REVERENCE AND THE DEVOTION WITH WHICH THE PRIEST SHOULD CELEBRATE MASS
- IV. THANKSGIVING AFTER MASS
- V. THE PRIEST WHO ABSTAINS FROM SAYING MASS

Instruction II
THE GOOD EXAMPLE THAT THE PRIEST SHOULD GIVE

Instruction III
THE CHASTITY OF THE PRIEST

  - I. THE MERIT OF THIS VIRTUE, AND ITS NECESSITY FOR THE PRIEST
  - II. MEANS OF PRESERVING CHASTITY

Instruction IV
PREACHING, AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

  - I. PREACHING
  - II. THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Instruction V
MENTAL PRAYER

  - I. NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER FOR PRIESTS
  - II. ANSWER TO EXCUSES
  - III. THE RECITATION OF THE DIVINE OFFICE. IT MAY BE USEFUL TO SAY SOMETHING HERE ON THE RECITATION OF THE DIVINE OFFICE.)

Instruction VI
HUMILITY

  - I. NECESSITY OF HUMILITY
  - II. THE PRACTICE OF HUMILITY

Instruction VII
MEEKNESS

  - I. WE MUST REPRESS ANGER
  - II. WE MUST BEAR CONTEMPT

Instruction VIII
MORTIFICATION, AND PARTICULARLY INTERIOR MORTIFICATION

  - I. NECESSITY OF MORTIFICATION IN GENERAL
  - II. NECESSITY OF INTERIOR MORTIFICATION
  - III THE PRACTICE OF INTERIOR MORTIFICATION

Instruction IX
EXTERIOR MORTIFICATION

  - I. NECESSITY OF EXTERIOR MORTIFICATION
  - II. PRACTICE OF EXTERIOR MORTIFICATION

- III. THE GOOD THAT IS DERIVED FROM A MORTIFIED LIFE

Instruction X THE LOVE OF GOD

- I. SPECIAL OBLIGATION FOR THE PRIEST TO BELONG ENTIRELY TO GOD
- II. MEANS TO BE EMPLOYED FOR BELONGING ENTIRELY TO GOD

Instruction XI
Devotion TO MOST HOLY MARY

- I. MORAL NECESSITY OF THE INTERCESSION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN
- II. CONFIDENCE THAT WE SHOULD HAVE IN THE INTERCESSION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
- III. PRACTICE OF DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Appendix

RULE OF LIFE FOR A SECULAR PRIEST

- I. MORNING EXERCISES
- II. EXERCISES AFTER DINNER
- III. EXERCISES OF THE EVENING
- IV. EXERCISES THAT ARE NOT PERFORMED EVERY DAY

SPIRITUAL RULES FOR A PRIEST WHO ASPIRES TO PERFECTION

- 1. TO AVOID SIN, AND TROUBLE AFTER SIN
- 2. EFFICACIOUS DESIRE TO ADVANCE IN THE LOVE OF GOD
- 3. DEVOTION TO THE PASSION OF OUR LORD AND TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
- 4. THE INTENTION OF DOING ALL FOR GOD
- 5. LOVE OF SOLITUDE AND OF SILENCE
- 6. CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD
- 7. DESIRE FOR DEATH
- 8. DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN
- 9. TO BE HUMBLE OF HEART
- 10. TO RENDER GOOD FOR EVIL

  - 11. INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR MORTIFICATION
  - 12. TO PRAY WITHOUT CEASING
- SPIRITUAL MAXIMS FOR PRIESTS
- EXHORTATION TO YOUNG MEN WHO DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO THE STUDY OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL SCIENCES.
- Discourse ON THE NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER FOR PRIESTS
  - I. WITHOUT MENTAL PRAYER IT IS DIFFICULT FOR A PRIEST TO SAVE HIS SOUL
  - II. WITHOUT MENTAL PRAYER IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE PRIEST TO ATTAIN PERFECTION

Dignity and Duties of the Priest

NOTICE

WE begin the series of works composed especially for the clergy. The work that comes first appeared in 1760 after the True Spouse of Jesus Christ, when the author had attained the age of sixty-four. It is the fruit of researches and of studies that he had made during nearly forty years, either for the purpose of regulating his own conduct, or of directing ecclesiastical retreats, and exercises which, by order of the archbishop, he preached for the first time to the clergy of Naples, in 1732, when he had been a priest only six years. He was then regarded as a model for imitation, and as a master worthy of being entrusted with the duty of educating ministers of the sanctuary of every grade.[10416]

This book is one that has had most success, thus giving us a high idea of the good that it has affected. It was at once translated into the principal languages of Europe. There are at least five translations of it in French, among which the translation by Mgr. Gaume, an author of very many valuable works, deservedly holds a high rank. To several of these translations the first word of the Italian title Selva[10417] has been given, the word Selva meaning wood, forest, material, and collection of the translation of this we give as the sub-title of the work. We have, however, preferred to give to this work and to this volume a title that clearly expresses its aim, namely, DIGNITY AND DUTIES OF THE PRIEST.

We think it to be not amiss if we call to mind what we have elsewhere said, namely, that all the citations from authors, accompanied by references to the margin, have been carefully verified and corrected when necessary. St. Alphonsus was not always able to draw from original sources: he was often obliged to content himself with what was offered him by the authors whom he had at hand, and who themselves only reproduced the mistakes of their predecessors, which were increased by the mistakes of copyists or of printers. Hence it was necessary to consult the original texts in order to obtain exact citations. As to the value and utility of this Collection, we take pleasure in quoting the following passage from the preface of Mgr. Gaume: “We have Massillon, Sevoy, le Miroir du clergé What have you ? three authorities that are without doubt respectable; but they are, after all, private authorities, and your reason, so often the dupe of such authorities, hesitates, distrusts, and using its right, judges, adopts, rejects, and never raises itself to a philosophical faith. Useful at all times, these works monuments of eloquence or of piety suffice no longer at the present day.

To the vast development of error we must oppose the analogous development of truth; to this invasion of private spirit we must oppose the imposing authority of the Catholic spirit. *Read Selva, and say whether it is possible to reach this end in a better manner. Here is not mans thought that is given to you as a rule for your thought: it is the thought of ages; it is not the Bishop of St. Agatha;*[10418] *it is solely tradition that preaches that instructs, that forbids, that commands, that encourages, or that terrifies. This book is as a sacred tribune from which speak one after another the prophets, the apostles, the apostolic men, the martyrs, the solitaries, the most illustrious pontiffs of the East and the West, the most famous Doctors, the most skilful masters of the science of the saints, the successors of St. Peter and the councils, the organs of the Holy Ghost; in a word, antiquity, the middle ages, modern times, the entire Church.n the midst of this august assembly what does the holy bishop do? Nearly always he limits his task to the modest role of a narrator; often even he leaves to you the care of drawing conclusions. There are no long reasonings, inductions, special interpretations. In this consist the particular merit and providential character of Selva. More than at any other epoch did the world and the clergy, who should save the world, stand in need of Catholic thought, and the saint gives it pure and entire; he feared to weaken it by mingling his own with it.”*[10419]

We know that nothing is more difficult than the composing of such a work, in which the texts are not in juxtaposition, but are united by a living thought that revivifies them. If St. Alphonsus is an echo, it is after the fashion of St. Bernard.” This judgment seems to us to be perfectly just; we thence conclude that our venerated author is an echo that thinks, that admirably chooses the most proper sounds to express his thought with an irresistible energy; but he also knows how to speak in another manner when the subject demands it, as one may especially see in his Fourth Instruction, in which he speaks of preaching and the administration of the sacrament of Penance.

This is the language of Mgr. Gaume, and we must acknowledge that such is in fact the power of this book; but this power is equalled by the unction that accompanies it, as is the case with the other works of this author, and both its unction and its power are supported by the example of his life. One may in some manner say of him what was said of our divine Saviour: Cœpit facere, et docere " He began to do and to teach " (Acts ii.).

The following are the rules of conduct that he composed for himself at the time he entered the ecclesiastical state, to serve for his guidance as a candidate for the priesthood:

1. The cleric should frequent the society of holy priests, to be edified by their example.

2. He should spend at least one hour daily in mental prayer, that he may live in fervor and recollection.

3. He should visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently, especially during the time of exposition.

4. He should read the lives of holy priests, that he may imitate their virtues.

5. He must cultivate a special devotion to the Holy Virgin, the Mother and Queen of the clergy, and consecrate himself particularly to her service.

6. For the honor of the ecclesiastical state he must be most careful of his reputation.

7. He should flee from worldly conversation, and not be too familiar with the laity, especially women.

8. Seeing God in his Superiors, he must obey them, because such is the divine will.

9. He should be modest, but without affectation, severity, or fastidiousness; and he should always wear the cassock and tonsure.

10. He should be quiet and gentle at home, exemplary in class, and edifying in church, especially during the public offices.

11. He should confess every eight days, and communicate still oftener.

12. He should live free from sin, and practise every virtue.

The young Levite, whose virtue and talents we have admired in another career, edified the whole city of Naples by a constantly increasing fervor while ascending the different degrees of the sanctuary. At the end of a preparation of three years he was judged worthy to be elevated by a dispensation to the dignity of the priesthood. This took place December 21, 1726. He then wrote the following resolutions:

1. I am a priest; my dignity is above that of the angels. I should then lead a life of angelic purity, and I am obliged to strive for this by all possible means.

2. A God deigns to obey my voice. I should with far greater reason obey his speaking to me through his inspirations or my Superiors.

3. The holy Church has honored me: I must therefore honor myself by sanctity of life, by my zeal and labors, etc.

4. I offer to the Eternal Father Jesus Christ, his Son it is then my duty to clothe myself with the virtues of Jesus Christ, that I may become fit for my office.

5. Christian people see in me a minister of reconciliation, a mediator between God and man; consequently I must always keep myself in the grace and friendship of God.

6. The faithful desire to see in me a model of the virtues to which they should aspire; I must then be edifying always and under all circumstances.

7. Poor sinners that have lost the light of grace come to me to be spiritually resuscitated: I must therefore aid them by my prayers, exhortations, and good example.

8. Courage is necessary to triumph over the world, the flesh, and the devil; I must then correspond with divine grace that I may combat these virtues victoriously.

9. To defend religion and fight against error and impiety, one must have knowledge. I will then strive, by every means within my reach, to acquire the necessary knowledge.

10. Human respect and worldly friendships dishonor the priesthood; I will then avoid them.

11. Ambition and self-interest have often caused priests to lose their faith; I must then abhor these vices as sources of reprobation.

12. Gravity should accompany charity in a priest; I will then be prudent and reserved, especially with regard to women, without being proud, rough, or disdainful.

13. I can please God only by recollection, fervor, and solid virtue, which nourish the holy exercise of prayer; I will then neglect nothing which may tend to their acquisition.

14. I should seek only the glory of God, my own sanctification, and the salvation of souls; consequently, I must achieve these ends though it should cost my life.

15. I am a priest; it is my duty to inspire virtue in all with whom I come in contact, and to glorify Jesus Christ, the eternal High-priest. (Villecourt, 1. i, ch. 11.)

Such was the aurora of this star that was to pass through so grand a career, and raise itself to so high a perfection. Quasi lux splendens, procedit, et crescit usque ad perfectam diem “ As a shining light goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day” (Prov. iv. 18).

Our saint is already recognized as one of the purest lights that God has sent to illumine the world. Quasi sol refulgens, sic ille effulsit in templo Dei “ As the sun when it shineth, so did he shine in the temple of God” (Ecclus. 1. 7). A new ray has been added to his glory: he has been declared a Doctor of the Church. Let us not omit to profit by his teachings and imitate his virtues in order that we may one day share in his eternal happiness.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Alphonsus !

A COLLECTION OF MATERIAL FOR SERMONS AND INSTRUCTIONS, FOR ECCLESIASTICAL RETREATS, AND ALSO FOR PRIVATE SPIRITUAL READING

ADMONITIONS NECESSARY FOR HIM WHO GIVES THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES TO PRIESTS

THE present little work is entitled " A Collection of Materials,"[10420]{*1 Selva . . . See Notice*} and not Discourses or Spiritual Exercises, because although I have endeavored to collect the material belonging to each subject, I have not observed the order necessary for a regular discourse, nor have I extended the thoughts. They are given without order, and expressed briefly, that the reader may select the authorities, subjects, and thoughts that are most pleasing to him, and may afterwards arrange and extend them as he pleases, and thus make the discourse his own. For experience shows, that a preacher will scarcely deliver sentiments with fervor and zeal unless he has first made them his own, at least by selecting them from among others, and arranging and extending them, in composing the discourse. Hence, I have taken from different authors several passages that have the same signification, so that the preacher may select those that please him most. I have said so much to explain the aim of the work. Let him who gives the spiritual exercises to priests be careful, first of all, to propose to himself a good end in his instructions:

I. This end must be not to gain the character of a man of learning, of talent, and of eloquence, but only to give glory to God by the sanctification of his hearers.,

II. Let him be careful not to seek to introduce into his sermons ideas foreign to the subject, nor new and lofty thoughts that serve only to fix the mind on the beauty of the conceptions, but leave the will dry and without fruit; let him be careful to say what he considers best calculated to move his hearers to make some good resolution.

III. In order to attain that end, let him in his sermons frequently remind the hearers of the truths of eternity, by the consideration of which perseverance is obtained, according to the words of the Holy Ghost: *In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin. 1* It is true, indeed, that certain priests dislike sermons on the last things, and are offended at seeing themselves treated like seculars, as if they were not, as well as seculars, to die and be judged. Let him, then, who gives the spiritual exercises not omit at least to remind the audience several times of death, of judgment, and of eternity. These are the truths best calculated to effect a change of life in all that meditate upon them.

IV. Let the preacher be careful to inculcate as much as possible what is practical. For example, the method of making mental prayer, thanksgiving after Mass, the correction of sinners, and above all the mode of hearing confessions, particularly the confessions of relapsing sinners, or of those that are in the proximate occasion of sin. In hearing the confessions of these two classes of penitents, many confessors err, either by an excess of rigor, or by too great a facility of giving absolution (the latter is more frequent), and thus they are the cause of the damnation of so many souls. Latin passages are soon forgotten; only what is practical remains in the mind.

V. Let the preacher be careful to treat with respect and sweetness the priests who listen to him.With respect ; showing a veneration for them, often calling them men of learning and of sanctity, and when he inveighs against any vice, let him always speak in general terms, protesting that he speaks not of those that are present. Let him guard, in a special manner, against censuring any defect of any particular people, as also against speaking in a tone of authority; but let him endeavor to preach in a familiar style, which is the best calculated to persuade and move. With respect and with sweetness; let him, then, never appear angry, nor ever break out into injurious words, which tend more to irritate the mind than to excite piety.

VI. In sermons that are apt to strike terror, let him not induce his hearers to despair of salvation or of amendment. Let him always leave to all, however abandoned, a means by which they may hope to change their lives; animating them to confidence in the merits of Jesus Christ, and in the intercession of the divine Mother, and to have recourse by prayer to these two great anchors of hope. Let the preacher, in almost all his sermons, frequently and strongly recommend the exercise of prayer, that is, the prayer of petition, which is the only means of obtaining the graces necessary for salvation.

VII. Finally, above all, let the preacher be careful to expect the fruit not from his own labors, but from the divine mercy, and from his prayers, begging of God to give strength to his words. For we know that, ordinarily, sermons produce scarcely any fruit in priests, and to induce, in the spiritual exercises, a priest to change his life if he is a sinner, or to become fervent if he is tepid, is almost a miracle, which seldom occurs. Hence, the conversion of priests must be the fruit of prayer more than of study.

PART I

Material for Sermons

Chapter I

THE DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD

I. IDEA OF THE PRIESTLY DIGNITY

IN his epistle to the Christians of Smyrna, St. Ignatius, Martyr, says that the priesthood is the most sublime of all created dignities: “The apex of dignities is the priesthood.”[10421] St. Ephrem calls it an infinite dignity: The priesthood is an astounding miracle, great, immense, and infinite.”[10422] St. John Chrysostom says, that though its functions are performed on earth, the priesthood should be numbered among the things of heaven.[10423]According to Cassian, the priest of God is exalted above all earthly sovereignties, and above all celestial heights he is inferior only to God.[10424] Innocent III says that the priest is placed between God and man; inferior to God, but superior to man.[10425]St. Denis calls the priest a divine man.[10426] Hence he has called the priesthood a divine dignity.[10427] In fine, St. Ephrem says that the gift of the sacerdotal dignity surpasses all understanding.[10428] For us it is enough to know, that Jesus Christ has said that we should treat his priests as we would his own people: He that heareth you, heareth me; he that despiseth you, despiseth me?[10429] Hence St. John Chrysostom says, that “ he who honors a priest, honors Christ, and he who insults a priest, insults Christ. “[10430] Through respect for the sacerdotal dignity, St. Mary of Oignies used to kiss the ground on which a priest had walked.

II. IMPORTANCE OF THE PRIESTLY OFFICE

The dignity of the priest is estimated from the exalted nature of his offices. Priests are chosen by God to manage on earth all his concerns and interests. “Divine,” says St. Cyril of Alexandria, “are the offices confided to priests.”[10431] St. Ambrose has called the priestly office a divine profession.[10432]

A priest is a minister destined by God to be a public ambassador of the whole Church, to honor him, and to obtain his graces for all the faithful. The entire Church cannot give to God as much honor, nor obtain so many graces, as a single priest by celebrating a single Mass; for the greatest honor that the whole Church without priests could give to God would consist in offering to him in sacrifice the lives of all men. But of what value are the lives of all men compared with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which is a sacrifice of infinite value? What are all men before God but a little dust ? As a drop of a bucket, . . . as a little dust.[10433] They are but a mere nothing in his sight:

All nations are before him as if they had no being at all. Thus, by the celebration of a single Mass, in which he offers Jesus Christ in sacrifice, a priest gives greater honor to the Lord, than if all men by dying for God offered to him the sacrifice of their lives. By a single Mass, he gives greater honor to God than all the angels and saints, along with the Blessed Virgin Mary, have given or shall give to him; for their worship cannot be of infinite value, like that which the priest celebrating on the altar offers to God.

Moreover, in the holy Mass, the priest offers to God an adequate thanksgiving for all the graces bestowed even on the Blessed in Paradise; but such a thanksgiving all the saints together are incapable of offering to him. Hence it is, that on this account also the priestly dignity is superior even to all celestial dignities. Besides, the priest, says St. John Chrysostom, *is an ambassador of the whole world, to intercede with God and to obtain graces for all creatures.*[10434] The priest, according to St. Ephrem, “ treats familiarly with God.”[10435] To priests every door is open.

Jesus has died to institute the priesthood. It was not necessary for the Redeemer to die in order to save the world; a drop of his blood, a single tear, or prayer, was sufficient to procure salvation for all; for such a prayer, being of infinite value, should be sufficient to save not one but a thousand worlds. But to institute the priesthood, the death of Jesus Christ has been necessary. Had he not died, where should we find the victim that the priests of the New Law now offer? a victim altogether holy and immaculate, capable of giving to God an honor worthy of God. As has been already said, all the lives of men and angels are not capable of giving to God an infinite honor like that which a priest offers to him by a single Mass.

III. GRANDEUR OF THE PRIESTLY POWER

The dignity of the priest is also estimated from the power that he has over the real and the mystic body of Jesus Christ. With regard to the power of priests over the real body of Jesus Christ, it is of faith that when they pronounce the words of consecration the Incarnate Word has obliged himself to obey and to come into their hands under the sacramental species. We are struck with wonder when we hear that God obeyed the voice of Josue The Lord obeying the voice of man[10436] and made the sun stand when he said move not, O sun, towards Gabaon, . . . and the sun stood still.[10437]But our wonder should be far greater when we find that in obedience to the words of his priests *HOC EST CORPUS MEUM* God himself descends on the altar, that he comes wherever they call him, and as often as they call him, and places himself in their hands, even though they should be his enemies.And after having come, he remains, entirely at their disposal; they move him as they please, from one place to another; they may, if they wish, shut him up in the tabernacle, or expose him on the altar, or carry him outside the church; they may, if they choose, eat his flesh, and give him for the food of others. “ Oh, how very great is their power,” says St. Laurence Justinian, speaking of priests. “ *A word falls from their lips and the body of Christ is there substantially formed from the matter of bread, and the Incarnate Word descended from heaven, is found really present on the table of the altar ! Never did divine goodness give such power to the angels. The angels abide by the order of God, but the priests take him in their hands, distribute him to the faithful, and partake of him as food for themselves.”*[10438]With regard to the mystic body of Christ, that is, all the faithful, the priest has the power of the keys, or the power of delivering sinners from hell, of making them worthy of paradise, and of changing them from the slaves of Satan into the children of God. And God himself is obliged to abide by the judgment of his priests, and either not to pardon or to pardon, according as they refuse or give absolution, provided the penitent is capable of it. “*Such is,*” says St. Maximus of Turin, “ *this judiciary power ascribed to Peter that its decision carries with it the* *decision of God."*[10439]The sentence of the priest precedes, and God subscribes to it, writes St. Peter Damian.[10440] Hence St. John Chrysostom thus concludes: " The Sovereign Master of the universe only follows the servant by confirming in heaven all that the latter decides upon earth. "[10441]Priests are the dispensers of the divine graces and the companions of God. " Consider the priests," says St. Ignatius, Martyr, " as the dispensers of divine graces and the associates of God."[10442]" They are," says St. Prosper, " the glory and the immovable columns of the Church; thay are the doors of the eternal city; through them all reach Christ; they are the vigilant guardians to whom the Lord has confided the keys of the kingdom of heaven; they are the stewards of the king s house, to assign to each according to his good pleasure his place in the hierarchy."[10443]Were the Redeemer to descend into a church, and sit in a confessional to administer the sacrament of penance, and a priest to sit in another confessional, Jesus would say over each penitent, *"Ego te absolve,"* the priest would likewise say over each of his penitents, *"Ego te absolve,"* and the penitents of each would be equally absolved. How great the honor that a king would confer on a subject whom he should empower to rescue from prison as many as he pleased ! But far greater is the power that the eternal Father has given to Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ has given to his priests, to rescue from hell not only the bodies but also the souls of the faithful:*The Son,"* says St. John Chrysostom, *"has put into the hands of the priests all judgment; for having been as it were transported into heaven, they have received this divine prerogative. If a king gave to a mortal the power to release from prison all prisoners, all would pronounce such a one happy; but priests have received from God a far greater power, since the soul is more noble than the body."*[10444]

IV. THE DIGNITY OF THE PRIEST SURPASSES ALL OTHER CREATED DIGNITIES

Thus the sacerdotal dignity is the most noble of all the dignities in this world. " Nothing," says St. Ambrose, "is more excellent in this world."[10445] It transcends, says St. Bernard, "all the dignities of kings, of emperors, and of angels."[10446]According to St. Ambrose, the dignity of the priest as far exceeds that of kings, as the value of gold surpasses that of lead.[10447] The reason is, because the power of kings extends only to temporal goods and to the bodies of men, but the power of the priest extends to spiritual goods and to the human soul. *Hence,* says St. Clement, *“ as much as the soul is more noble than the body, so much is the priesthood more excellent than royalty.”*[10448]*Princes,”* says St. John Chrysostom, *“have the power of binding, but they bind only the bodies, while the priest binds the souls.”*[10449] The kings of the earth glory in honoring priests: *“ It is a mark of a good prince,”* says Pope St. Marcellinus, *“ to honor the priests of God.”*[10450] *“ They willingly,”* says Peter de Blois, *“ bend their knee before the priest of God; they kiss his hands, and with bowed down head receive his benediction.”*[10451] “The sacerdotal dignity,” says St. Chrysostom, “effaces the royal dignity; hence the king inclines his head under the hand of the priest to receive his blessing.”[10452] Baronius relates that when the Empress Eusebia sent for Leontius, Bishop of Tripoli, he said that if she wished to see him, she should consent to two conditions: first, that on his arrival she should instantly descend from the throne, and bowing down her head, should ask his benediction; secondly, that he should be seated on the throne, and that she should not sit upon it without his permission: he added, that unless she submitted to these conditions he should never go to the palace. Being invited to the table of the Emperor Maximus, St. Martin, in taking a draught, first paid a mark of respect to his chaplain, and then to the emperor. In the Council of Nice, the Emperor Constantine wished to sit in the last place, after all the priests, and on a seat lower than that which they occupied; he would not even sit down without their permission. The holy king St. Boleslans had so great a veneration for priests, that he would not dare to sit in their presence.

The sacerdotal dignity also surpasses the dignity of the angels, who likewise show their veneration for the priesthood, says St. Gregory Nazianzen.[10453] All the angels in heaven cannot absolve from a single sin. The angels guardian procure for the souls committed to their care grace to have recourse to a priest that he may absolve them : *“ Although,”* says St. Peter Damian, *“ angels may be present, they yet wait for the priest to exercise his power, but no one of them has the power of the keys of binding and of loosening.”*[10454] When St. Michael comes to a dying Christian who invokes his aid, the holy archangel can chase away the devils, but he cannot free his client from their chains till a priest comes to absolve him. After having given the order of priesthood to a holy ecclesiastic, St. Francis de Sales perceived, that in going out he stopped at the door as if to give precedence to another. Being asked by the saint why he stopped, he answered that God favored him with the visible presence of his angel guardian, who before he had received priesthood always remained at his right and preceded him, but afterwards walked on his left and refused to go before him. It was in a holy contest with the angel that he stopped at the door. St. Francis of Assisi used to say, “ *If I saw an angel and a priest, 1 would bend my knee first to the priest and then to the angel.”*

Besides, the power of the priest surpasses that of the Blessed Virgin Mary; for, although this divine Mother can pray for us, and by her prayers obtain whatever she wishes, yet she cannot absolve a Christian from even the smallest sin. “

The Blessed Virgin was eminently more perfect than the apostles,” says Innocent III.; “ *it was, however, not to her, but only to the apostles, that the Lord intrusted the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”*[10455] St. Bernardine of Sienna has written: “Holy Virgin, excuse me, for I speak not against thee: the Lord has raised the priesthood above thee.”[10456]The saint assigns the reason of the superiority of the priesthood over Mary; she conceived Jesus Christ only once; but by consecrating the Eucharist, the priest, as it were, conceives him as often as he wishes, so that if the people of the Redeemer had not as yet been in the world, the priest, by pronouncing the words of consecration, would produce this great people of a Man-God. “ *O wonderful dignity of the priests,”* cries out St. Augustine; “ *in their hands, as in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, the Son of God becomes—incarnate.”*[10457]Hence priests are called the parents of Jesus Christ:[10458] such is the title that St. Bernard gives them, for they are the active cause by which he is made to exist really in the consecrated Host.

Thus the priest may, in a certain manner, be called the creator of his Creator, since by saying the words of consecration, he creates, as it were, Jesus in the sacrament, by giving him a sacramental existence, and produces him as a victim to be offered to the eternal Father.

As in creating the world it was sufficient for God to have said, Let it be made, and it was created He spoke, and they were made?[10459]So it is sufficient for the priest to say, “ *Hoc est corpus meum,”* and behold the bread is no longer bread, but the body of Jesus Christ. *"The power of the priest,"* says St. Bernardine of Sienna, *" is the power of the divine people; for the transubstantiation of the bread requires as much power as the creation of the world."*[10460] And St. Augustine has written, *" O venerable sanctity of the hands! O happy function of the priest ! He that created (if I may say so) gave me the power to create him; and he that created me without me is himself created by me!"*[10461] As the Word of God created heaven and earth, so, says St. Jerome, the words of the priest create Jesus Christ.[10462]At a sign from God there came forth from nothing both the sublime vault of the heavens and the vast extent of the earth; but not less great is the power that manifests itself in the mysterious words of the priest." The dignity of the priest is so great, that he even blesses Jesus Christ on the altar as a victim to be offered to the eternal Father. In the sacrifice of the Mass, writes Father Mansi, Jesus Christ is the principal offerer and victim; as minister, he blesses the priest, but as victim, the priest blesses him.

V. ELEVATION OF THE POST OCCUPIED BY THE PRIEST

The greatness of the dignity of a priest is also estimated from the high place that he occupies.

The priesthood is called, at the synod of Chartres, in 1550, the seat of the saints. Priests are called Vicars of Jesus Christ, because they hold his place on earth. "*You hold the place of Christ,*" says St. Augustine to them; *"you are therefore his lieutenants."*[10463] In the Council of Milan, St. Charles Borromeo called priests the representatives of the people of God on earth.[10464] And before him, the Apostle said: *For Christ we are ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting by us?*[10465]

When he ascended into heaven, Jesus Christ left his priests after him to hold on earth his place of mediator between God and men, particularly on the altar. " *Let the priest,"* says St. Laurence Justinian, *"approach the altar as another Christ."*[10466] According to St. Cyprian, *a priest at the altar performs the office of Christ.*[10467]

When, says St. Chrysostom, you have seen a priest offering sacrifice, consider that the hand of Christ is invisibly extended.[10468]The priest holds the place of the Saviour himself, when, by saying *"Ego te absolvo,"* he absolves from sin, This great power, which Jesus Christ has received from his eternal Father, he has communicated to his priests. *“Jesus,”* says Tertullian, *“ invests the priests with his own powers.”*[10469]To pardon a single sin requires all the omnipotence of God. *“O God, who chiefly manifestest Thy almighty power in pardoning and showing mercy,”*[10470] etc., says the holy Church in one of her prayers.

Hence, when they heard that Jesus Christ pardoned the sins of the paralytic, the Jews justly said: *Who can forgive sins but God alone.*[10471] But what only God can do by his omnipotence, the priest can also do by saying “ Ego te absolve a peccatis tuis;” for the forms of the sacraments, or the words of the forms, produce what they signify. How great should be our wonder if we saw a people invested with the power of changing a negro into a white man; but the priest does what is far more wonderful, for by saying “ *Ego te absolvo* “ he changes the sinner from an enemy into the friend of God, and from the slave of hell into an heir of paradise. Cardinal Hugo represents the Lord addressing the following words to a priest who absolves a sinner: *“ I have created heaven and earth, but I leave to you a better and nobler creation; make out of this soul that is in sin a new soul, that is, make out of the slave of Satan, that the soul is, a child of God. I have made the earth bring forth all kinds of fruit, but to thee I confide a more beautiful creation, namely, that the soul should bring forth fruits of salvation.”*[10472] The soul without grace is a withered tree that can no longer produce fruit; but receiving the divine grace, through the ministry of a priest, it brings forth fruits of eternal life. St. Augustine says, *that to sanctify a sinner is a greater work than to create heaven and earth.*[10473] *And hast thou,* says Job, *an arm like God, and canst thou thunder with a voice like Him ?*[10474]

Who is it that has an arm like the arm of God, and thunders with a voice like the thundering voice of God ? It is the priest, who, in giving absolution, exerts the arm and voice of God, by which he rescues souls from hell.

According to St. Ambrose, a priest, in absolving a sinner, performs the very office of the Holy Ghost in the sanctification of souls.[10475] Hence, in giving priests the power of absolving from sin, the Redeemer breathed on them, and said to them, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins you shall retain, they are* *retained.*[10476] He gave them his own Spirit, that is, the Holy Ghost, the sanctifier of souls, and thus made them, according to the words of the Apostle, his own coadjutors: We are God s coadjutors.[10477] “ *On priests,”* says St. Gregory, *“it is incumbent to give the final decision, for by the right that they have received from the Lord they now remit, now retain sins.”*[10478] St. Clement, then, had reason to say that the priest is, as it were, a God on earth.[10479] *God*, said David, *stood in the congregation of the gods.*[10480] *These gods are,* according to St. Augustine, *the priests of God.*[10481] Innocent III. has written: “ *Indeed, it is not too much to say that in view of the sublimity of their offices the priests are so many gods.”*[10482]

VI. CONCLUSION

How great, then, says St. Ambrose, the disorder to see in the same people the highest dignity and a life of scandal, a divine profession and wicked conduct ![10483] *What,* says Salvian, *is a sublime dignity conferred on an unworthy people but a gem enchased in mire ?*[10484] *Neither doth any man,* says St. Paul, *take the honor to himself,*[10485] *but he that is called by God, as Aaron was. For Christ did not glorify Himself that He might be made a high priest; but He that said unto Him: Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee?* Let no one, he says, dare to ascend to the priesthood, without first receiving, as Aaron did, the divine call; for even Jesus Christ would not of himself assume the honor of the priesthood, but waited till his Father called him to it. From this we may infer the greatness of the sacerdotal dignity. But the greater its sublimity, the more it should be dreaded. *“For,”* says St. Jerome, “ *great is the dignity of priests; but also, when they sin, great is their ruin. Let us rejoice at having been raised so high, but let us be afraid of falling.”*[10486]Lamenting, St. Gregory cries out: *“Purified by the hands of the priest the elect enter the heavenly country, and alas ! priests precipitate themselves into the fire of hell !”*[10487] The saint compares priests to the baptismal water which cleanses the baptized from their sins, and sends them to heaven, *“and is afterwards thrown into the sink.”*[10488]

Chapter II

THE END OF THE PRIESTHOOD

I. THE PRIESTHOOD APPEARS TO THE SAINTS A FORMIDABLE CHARGE

ST. CYPRIAN said, that all those that had the true spirit of God were, when compelled to take the order of priesthood, seized with fear and trembling, as if they saw an enormous weight placed on their shoulders, by which they were in danger of being crushed to death. “I see,” said St. Cyril of Alexandria, “ all the saints frightened at the sacred ministry, as at an immense charge.”[10489] St. Epiphanius writes, that he found no one willing to be ordained a priest. A Council held in Carthage ordained that they that were thought worthy, and refused to be ordained, might be compelled to become priests.

St. Gregory Nazianzen says: *“No one rejoices when he is ordained priest.” 2*[10490]In his life of St. Cyprian, Paul the Deacon states that when the saint heard that his bishop intended to ordain him priest, he through humility concealed himself.[10491] It is related in the life of St. Fulgentius that he too fled away and hid himself.[10492] St. Athanasius also, as Sozomen relates, took flight in order to escape the priesthood.

St. Ambrose, as he himself attests, resisted for a long time before he consented to be ordained.[10493] St. Gregory, even after it was made manifest by miracles that God wished him to be a priest, concealed himself under the garb of a merchant, in order to prevent his ordination.

To avoid being ordained, St. Ephrem feigned madness; St. Mark cut off his thumb; St. Ammonius cut off his ears and nose, and because the people insisted on his ordination, he threatened to cut out his tongue, and thus they ceased to molest him.

It is known to all, that St. Francis remained a deacon, and refused to ascend to the priesthood, because he learned by revelation, that the soul of a priest should be as pure as the water that was shown to him in a crystal vessel. The Abbot Theodore was only a deacon, but he would not exercise the duties of the Order he had received because during prayer he was shown a pillar of fire, and heard the following words: “If you have a heart as inflamed as this pillar, you may then exercise your Order.” The Abbot Motues was a priest, but always refused to offer the holy Mass, saying that he had been compelled to take holy Orders, and that because he felt himself unworthy, he could not celebrate. Formerly there were but few priests among the monks, whose lives were so austere; and the monk who aspired to the priesthood was considered to be a proud man. Hence, to try the obedience of one of his monks, St. Basil commanded him to ask in public the Order of priesthood; his compliance was regarded as an act of heroic obedience, because by his obedience in asking to be ordained priest he, as it were, declared himself to be a man filled with the spirit of pride.

But how, I ask, does it happen that the saints, who live only for God, resist their ordination through a sense of their unworthiness, and that some run blindly to the priesthood, and rest not until they attain it by lawful or unlawful means ? Ah, unhappy men ! says St. Bernard, to be registered among the priests of God shall be for them the same as to be enrolled on the catalogue of the damned. And why? Because such peoples are generally called to the priesthood, not by God, but by relatives, by interest, or ambition. Thus they enter the house of God, not through the motive that a priest should have, but through worldly motives. Behold why the faithful are abandoned, the Church dishonored, so many souls perish, and with them such priests are also damned.

II. WHAT IS THE END OF THE PRIESTHOOD

God wills that all men should be saved, but not in the same way. As in heaven he has distinguished different degrees of glory, so on earth he has established different states of life, as so many different ways of gaining heaven. On account of the great ends for which it has been instituted, the priesthood is of all these the most noble, the most exalted and sublime. What are these ends? Perhaps the sole ends of the priesthood are to say Mass, and to recite the Office, and then to live like seculars ? No, the end for which God has instituted the priesthood has been to appoint on earth public peoples to watch over the honor of his divine majesty, and to procure the salvation of souls. *For every high priest,* says St. Paul, taken from among men, *is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err.*[10494]

To execute the office of the priesthood and to have praise.[10495] " That is," says Cardinal Hugo, " to perform the office of praising God."[10496] And Cornelius à Lapide says: " *Just as it is the office of the angels to praise God without ceasing in heaven, so it is the office of priests to praise God without ceasing on earth."*[10497]

Jesus Christ has made priests, as it were, his co-operators in procuring the honor of his eternal Father and the salvation of souls, and therefore, when he ascended into heaven, he protested that he left them to hold his place, and to continue the work of redemption which he had undertaken and consummated. *"He made them,"* says St. Ambrose, " *the vicars of his love."*[10498]And Jesus Christ himself said to his disciples: *As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you.*[10499] I leave you to perform the very office for which I came into the world; that is, to make known to men the name of my Father. And addressing his eternal Father, he said: *I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do; I have manifested Thy name to the men!"*[10500] He then prayed for his priests: *I have given them Thy word. . . . Sanctify them in truth* .[10501]As Thou hast sent me into the world, I also have sent them. Thus, priests are placed in the world to make known to men God and his perfections, his justice and mercy, his commands, and to procure the respect, obedience, and love that he deserves.

They are appointed to seek the lost sheep, and when necessary, to give their lives for them. This is the end for which Jesus Christ has come on earth, for which he has constituted priests: As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.

III. PRINCIPAL DUTIES OF THE PRIEST

Jesus came into the world for no other purpose than to light up the fire of divine love. I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?[10502] And the priest must labor during his whole life, and with his whole strength, not to acquire riches, honors, and worldly goods, but to inspire all with the love of God. “ Therefore,” says the author of the Imperfect Work, “has Christ sent us not that we may do what is to our profit, but what is for the glory of God. True love does not seek its own advantage, but it wishes in all things only what is the good pleasure of the people loved.”[10503] In the Book of Leviticus the Lord says to his priests: *I have separated you from other people, that you should be Mine.*[10504]Mark the words that you should be Mine ; that you may be employed in my praises, devoted to my service, and to my love: “ The co-operators and dispensers of my sacraments,” says St. Peter Damian.[10505]“ Mine,” says St. Ambrose, “ that you may be the guides and the rulers of the flock of Christ.”[10506]ine” for, according to the same Doctor, the minister of the altar belongs not to himself, but to God.[10507] The Lord separates his priests from the rest of his people in order to unite them entirely to himself. *Is it a small thing unto you that the God of Israel hath separated you from all the people, and joined you to Himself?*[10508]

If, said the Redeemer, any man minister unto Me, let him follow Me.[10509]Let him follow Me ; he should follow Jesus Christ by shunning the world, by assisting souls, by promoting the love of God, and extirpating vice. *“The reproaches of them that reproached thee have fallen upon Me.”* The priest, who is a true follower of Jesus Christ, regards injuries done to God as offered to himself.[10510] Seculars, devoted to the world, cannot render to God the veneration and the gratitude that are due to him: hence, says a learned author, Father Frassen, it has been necessary to select certain peoples, that by the fulfilment of their peculiar office and obligations they may give due honor to the Lord.[10511]

In every government ministers are appointed to enforce the observance of the laws, to remove scandals, to repress the seditious, and to defend the honor of the king. For all these ends the Lord has constituted priests the officers of his court. Hence St. Paul has said: Let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God.[10512] Ministers of state always endeavor to procure the respect due to their sovereign, and to extend his glories; they always speak of him in terms of praise, and should they hear a word against their master, with what zeal do they reprove the author of it ? They study to gratify his inclinations, and even expose their life in order to please him.

Is it thus that priests act for God ? It is certain that they are his ministers of state: by them are managed all the interests of his glory. Through them sins should be removed from the world: this is the end for which Jesus Christ has died. *Crucified, that the body of sin may be destroyed.*[10513] But on the day of judgment how can the judge acknowledge as his true minister the priest who, instead of preventing the sins of others, is the first to conspire against Jesus Christ ? What would you say of ministers who should neglect to attend to the interests of their sovereign, and should refuse to assist him when he stood in need of their aid ? But what would you say if these ministers also spoke against their master, and endeavored to deprive him of his throne by entering into an alliance with his enemies ?

Priests are the ambassadors of God, says the Apostle: *For Christ we are ambassadors.*[10514] They are his coadjutors in procuring the salvation of souls: For we are God s coadjutors:[10515] For this end Jesus Christ gave them the Holy Ghost, that they might save souls by remitting their sins. He breathed on them, and He said to them : Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them."[10516]Hence the theologian Habert has written that the essence of the priesthood consists in seeking ardently to procure first the glory of God, and then the salvation of souls.[10517]

The business, then, of every priest is to attend, not to the things of the world, but to the things of God: He is ordained in the things that appertain to God.[10518] Hence St. Silvester ordained that for ecclesiastics the days of the week should be called Feria, or vacant or free days; and he says: " *It is every day that the priest, free from earthly occupations, should occupy himself entirely with God."*[10519]By this he meant that we, who are ordained priests, should seek nothing but God and the salvation of souls, an office which St. Denis called " *the most divine of all the divine offices."*[10520] St. Antonine says that the meaning of sacerdos is sacra docens, one that teaches sacred things.[10521] And Honorius of Autun says that presbyter signifies presybesiter, one that shows the way.[10522]Hence St. Ambrose calls priests the guides and rectors of the flock of Christ.[10523] And St. Peter calls ecclesiastics a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people.[10524]A people destined to acquire not riches, but souls. St. Ambrose calls the sacerdotal office " an office that should acquire not money, but souls. "

Even the Gentiles wished their priests to attend only to the worship of their gods, and therefore they would not permit them to hold the office of secular magistrates.

Hence, speaking of priests, St. Gregory says, with tears, it is our duty to abandon all earthly business in order to attend to the things of God, but we do the very contrary, “ *for we desert the cause of God and devote all our care to the things of the earth.”*[10525] After being appointed by God to attend only to the advancement of his glory, Moses spent his time in settling the disputes of the people. Jethro rebuked him for his conduct, saying: *Thou art spent with foolish labor. . . . Be thou to the people in the things that pertain to God.*[10526] But what would Jethro say if he saw our priests employed in mercantile affairs, acting as the servants of seculars, or occupied in arranging marriages, but forgetful of the works of God; if, in a word, he saw them seeking, as St. Prosper says, “ to advance in wealth, but not in virtue, and to acquire greater honors, but not greater sanctity!” . . .” *Oh ! what an abuse,”* exclaims Father John d’Avila, “ *to make heaven subordinate to earth !” “ What a misery,”* says St. Gregory, “ *to see so many priests seeking, not the merits of virtue, but the goods of this life!”*[10527]

Hence, says St. Isidore of Pelusium, *in the very works of their ministry they regard not the glory of God, but the reward annexed to them.*[10528]any other things that might be added to this chapter are omitted, because they are contained in the following chapter, which treats of the offices of a priest.)

Chapter III

THE SANCTITY NECESSARY FOR THE PRIEST

I. WHAT SHOULD BE THE SANCTITY OF THE PRIEST BY REASON OF HIS DIGNITY

GREAT is the dignity of the priesthood, but great also are its obligations. Priests ascend to a great height, but in their ascent they must be assisted by great virtue; otherwise, instead of meriting a reward, they shall be reserved for severe chastisement. “The sacerdotal dignity,” says St. Laurence Justinian, “ is great, but great is the burden. Raised to this high degree of honor, it is necessary that priests sustain themselves by great virtue; otherwise they will have to expect instead of great merit great punishment.”[10529]And St. Peter Chrysologus says: “The priests are honored, but I say that they are burdened.”[10530]The honor of the priesthood is great, but its burden is also great; great, too, is the account that priests have to render to God. “ *Priests,”* says St. Jerome, *“will save themselves, not by their dignity, but by the works that correspond to their dignity.”*[10531]

Every Christian should be perfect and holy, because every Christian professes to serve a God of holiness.*In this,”* says St. Leo, “ *a Christian consists, that he gets rid of the earthly and puts on the heavenly man.”*[10532]Hence Jesus Christ has said: *Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.*[10533] But the sanctity of the priest should be very different from that of seculars. “ *Between priests and the rest of men,”* says St. Ambrose, “ *there should be nothing in common as to works and as to conduct.”*[10534]And the saint adds, that as greater grace is given to the priest, so his life should be more holy than that of seculars.[10535]And St. Isidore of Pelusium says that between the sanctity of a priest and a good secular the difference should be as great as between heaven and earth.[10536] St. Thomas teaches that everyone is obliged to practise what is suited to the state that he has chosen.[10537] And according to St. Augustine, a man by entering the ecclesiastical state imposes on himself the obligation of being holy.[10538] And Cassiodorus calls the clerical profession a heavenly life.[10539] The priest is, as Thomas a Kempis says, bound to greater perfection than all others,[10540]because the priesthood is the most sublime of all states.

Salvian adds, that *in things in which God counsels perfection to seculars, he makes it imperative on ecclesiastics.*[10541] The priests of the Old Law carried on their forehead a plate on which was engraved the words Sanctum Domino.[10542] that they might be reminded of the sanctity that they should profess. The victims offered by the priests should be entirely consumed. And why? *"It was,"* says Theodoret, *" to symbolize the complete sacrifice that the priest has made of himself to the Lord."*[10543] St. Ambrose says that to offer sacrifice worthily the priest ought first to sacrifice himself by the oblation of his whole being to God.[10544]And Hesychius has written that from youth till death the priest should be a perfect holocaust of perfection.[10545]Hence God said to the priests of the Old Law: *I have separated you from other people, that you should be mine.*[10546]Now, in the New Law, the Lord commands his priests far more strictly to abstain from worldly business that they may labor only to please that God to whom they have dedicated themselves. *No man,* says St. Paul, *being a soldier to God, entangleth himself with secular business that he may please him to whom he hath engaged himself.*[10547]

And the holy Church requires of those that enter the sanctuary by taking the first tonsure, to promise that they shall not engage in secular pursuits, and to declare .that thenceforward they will have no other inheritance than the Lord. *The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup ; it is Thou that wilt restore my inheritance to me.*[10548] St. Jerome says that the clerical dress, the very state, calls for and demands sanctity of life.[10549]Thus the priest should keep not only at a distance from every vice, but should also make continual efforts to arrive at perfection. In this consists, according to St. Bernard, the perfection that can be attained in this life.[10550] St. Bernard weeps at the sight of so many that run to Holy Orders without considering the sanctity necessary for those that wish to ascend to such a height.[10551] St. Ambrose says, " *Those are very rare that can say, "The Lord is my portion. Those are very rare whom passion does not inflame, or whom cupidity does not actuate, or whom terrestrial cares do not* *absorb."*[10552] St. John the Evangelist writes: *Who hath made us a kingdom, and priests to God and His Father.*[10553] In explaining the word kingdom, Tirinus with other interpreters says*, that priests are the kingdom of God: first, because in them God reigns in this life by grace, and in the next by glory:*[10554]*secondly, because they are made kings to reign over vice.*[10555] St. Gregory says, that the priest ought to be dead to the world and to all the passions, in order to lead a life altogether divine.[10556] The present priesthood is the same as that which Jesus Christ has received from his Father: And the glory which Thou hast given to Me, I have given to them?[10557] Since, then, says St. Chrysostom, the priest represents Jesus Christ, he ought to have as much purity as would entitle him to stand in the midst of the angels.[10558] St. Paul requires that the priest should be irreprehensible: It behoveth a bishop to be blameless."[10559] In the word bishop, the Apostle certainly includes priests; for from bishops he passes to deacons, without making mention of priests: *Deacons in like manner chaste.*[10560] etc.Hence he intended to comprehend them under the word bishop. This passage is understood in this sense by St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom, who in speaking on this point says, " What he said of bishops he also meant for priests."[10561] Now the word *"irreprehensibilem"* blameless everyone knows, implies the possession of all virtues. " It comprises all virtues,"[10562] says St. Jerome. And in explaining this word, Cornelius à Lapide says " that it is meant for him who is not only exempt from all vice, but who is adorned with all virtues."[10563]For eleven centuries, all that fell into mortal sin after baptism were excluded from the priesthood.This we learn from the Council of Nice,[10564]from the Council of Toledo,[10565] from the Council of Elvira,[10566]and from the Fourth Council of Carthage.[10567] And if a priest after his ordination had fallen into sin, he was deposed, and shut up in a monastery, as may be observed from several canons.[10568] In the sixth canon, the following reason is assigned: *"Above all, what the Church wishes is perfect innocence. Those that are not holy should not touch holy things. "*[10569]And in the several canons we read: *"Since the clerics have taken the Lord for their inheritance, let them not have intercourse with the world."*[10570] The Council of Trent declared, " *Wherefore clerics called to have the Lord for their portion ought by all means so to regulate their whole life and conversation as that in their dress, comportment, gait,* *discourse, and all things else, nothing appear but what is grave, regulated, and replete with religiousness."*[10571] In ecclesiastics the Council requires sanctity in dress as well as in conduct, language, and every action. St. John Chrysostom says, that priests should be so holy that all may look to them as models of sanctity; because God has placed them on earth that they may live like angels, and be luminaries and teachers of virtue to all others.[10572]The word ecclesiastic, according to St. Jerome, signifies a people who has taken God for his inheritance. This made the holy Doctor say: " Let the cleric then understand the signification of his name, and let him put his life in harmony with his title."[10573] Let ecclesiastics understand the signification of their name, and live according to it; and since God is their portion, let them live for God alone, says St. Ambrose.[10574] The priest is a minister destined by God for two most noble and exalted offices to honor him by sacrifices and to sanctify souls: Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God?[10575]" Hence," says St. Thomas on this passage, " *it is for the things that refer to God that the priest receives his mission, and by no means that he may acquire glory or amass riches."*[10576] Every priest is chosen by the Lord, and placed in the world to labor, not to acquire wealth nor applause, nor to indulge in amusements, nor to advance his family, but only to promote the interests "of God s glory. " He is ordained for the things that appertain to God." Hence, in the Scriptures, the priest is called a man of God.[10577] A man that belongs not to the world, nor to relatives, nor to himself, but only to God, and that seeks nothing but God. Hence to priests should be applied the words of David: This is the generation of them that seek him, of them that seek the face of the God of Jacob?[10578]Behold the generation that seek only God ! As in heaven God has appointed certain angels to assist at his throne, so on earth, among men, he has destined priests to procure his glory. Hence he says to them, *I have separated you from other people.*[10579] St. John Chrysostom writes: " Therefore has God chosen us, that like angels we may live with men on earth."[10580]And God himself says, *I will be sanctified in them that approach to Me.*[10581] *"That is,"* adds the commentator, " *my sanctity shall be shown forth by the sanctity of my ministers.* "[10582]

II. WHAT SHOULD BE THE SANCTITY OF THE PRIEST AS THE MINISTER OF THE ALTAR

St. Thomas says, that greater sanctity is required in a priest than in religious, on account of the most sublime functions of his ministry, particularly in the oblation of the sacrifice of the Mass. “ *Hence,”* adds the holy Doctor, “ *the cleric who is ordained sins more grievously under similar circumstances if he does anything contrary to the sanctity of his state than the religious who is not ordained.”*[10583] Listen to the celebrated maxim of St. Augustine: “A good monk will hardly become a good cleric.”[10584]Hence no one can be called a good ecclesiastic unless he surpasses a good monk in virtue. *true minister of the altar,”* says St. Ambrose, “ *is born for God, not for himself.”*[10585] That is, a priest should disregard his conveniences, his interests, and amusements; he should consider that from the day that he has received the priesthood, he belongs not to himself, but to God; and should attend only to the interests of God. The Lord evidently wishes his priests to be pure and holy; that being cleansed from every defect, they may approach the altar to offer sacrifice to him: *And,* says the Prophet Malachy, *He shall sit refining and cleansing the silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and shall refine them as gold and as silver, and they shall offer sacrifices to the Lord in justice?*[10586] In the book of Leviticus he says: *They shall be holy to their God, and shall not profane His name; for they offer the burnt offerings of the Lord, and the bread of their God, and therefore they shall be holy.*[10587] The priests of the Old Law, then, were commanded to be holy, because they offered to God incense and the loaves of proposition, that were but a figure of the most holy Sacrament of the altar. How much greater should be the purity and sanctity of the priests of the New Law that offer to God the immaculate Lamb, his own very Son ? Estius says that *we do not offer calves or incense, as the priests of the Old Law did,* “ *but the body of Christ who was hanging on the cross.”*[10588]

Hence Bellarmine says: “*Woe be to us miserable beings, to whom the highest office has been assigned, yet we are so far from the fervor that God required of the priests of the Old Law, who were in comparison with us only shadows.”*[10589]

The Lord commanded even those that carried the sacred vessels to be free from all stain: Be ye clean, you who carry the vessels of the Lord?[10590] *How much greater,”* says Peter de Blois, “ *should be the purity of priests* *who carry Jesus Christ in their hands and in their breasts ?”*[10591] “ *He that holds in his hands not only golden vessels,”* says St. Augustine, “ *but those vessels in which the death of the Lord is commemorated, must be pure.”*[10592] The Blessed Virgin Mary should be holy and free from all stain, because she was to carry in her womb, and to treat as a mother, the Incarnate Word. “*Why, then,”* says St. John Chrysostom, “ *should not sanctity shine forth with greater splendor than the sun, in the hand that touches the flesh of a God? in the mouth that is filled with celestial fire ? and in the tongue that is purpled with the blood of Jesus Christ ?”*[10593] The priest on the altar holds the place of Jesus Christ. “ *He should, then,”* says St. Laurence Justinian, “ *approach the altar to offer sacrifice like Jesus Christ; imitating as much as possible the purity and sanctity of Jesus Christ.”*[10594]

How great the sanctity that a confessor requires in a nun, in order to permit her to communicate every day ? And why is not the same perfection required in a priest that celebrates every morning?*It must be confessed,”* says the Council of Trent, “ *that man can perform no action more holy than the celebration of Mass.”*[10595] Hence the holy Council adds, *that priests should be most careful to offer this holy sacrifice with the greatest possible purity of conscience.”*[10596]“ But,” says St. Augustine, “ what a horrible thing to hear the tongue that calls down the Son of God from heaven to earth speaking against God; and to see the hands that are bathed in the blood of Jesus Christ polluted with the filthiness of sin.”[10597]

If God required so much purity in those that were to offer the sacrifice of animals and of bread, and if he forbid these oblations to be made by him who had any blemish, Whosoever hath a blemish, he shall not offer bread to his God,[10598] how much greater purity,” says Cardinal Bellarmine, “is required in those that have to offer to God his own Son, the divine Lamb?”[10599]St. Thomas says that the word macula includes every defect: “*Whoever is addicted to any vice should not be admitted to Holy Orders.”*[10600]

In the Old Law, the blind, the lame, the lepers, were forbidden to offer sacrifice. Neither shall he approach to minister to him, if he be blind, if he be lame, if he be crooked-backed, if he have a continual scab.[10601] Understanding the preceding defects in a spiritual sense, the holy Fathers say, that the blind, that is, they that shut their eyes to the light of God; the lame, that is, slothful priests that never advance in the way of God, and live always with the same defects, without mental prayer, and without recollection; the crooked-backed, that are, by worldly attachments, always bent down to the earth, to riches, to empty honors, and worldly amusements; and the scabious, that is, the voluptuous, that always wallow in sensual pleasures, The sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.[10602] are unfit to offer sacrifice; in a word, that he that is not holy is unworthy to approach the altar, because by the stains that he brings with him he contaminates the sanctuary of God. Let him not approach the altar, because he hath a blemish, and he must not defile my sanctuary.[10603]

III. WHAT SHOULD BE THE SANCTITY OF THE PRIEST AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

The priest should be holy, because he holds the office of dispenser of the sacraments;[10604]and also because he is a mediator between God and sinners.etween God and man the priest stands,” says St. John Chrysostom, “ by communicating to us God s benefits, and by offering him our petitions; he reconciles the angry Lord, and wards from us the blows of his justice.”[10605]

Through priests, God communicates his grace to the faithful in the sacraments. Through them he makes us his children, and saves us by baptism: Unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.[10606]Through them he heals the infirm, and even resuscitates, by the sacrament of penance, sinners that are dead to divine grace. Through them he nourishes souls, and preserves in them the life of divine grace, by means of the sacrament of the Eucharist: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you.[10607] Through them he gives strength to the dying, to overcome the temptations of hell, by means of the sacrament of Extreme Unction.

In a word, St. John Chrysostom says, that without priests we cannot be saved.[10608] By St. Prosper priests are called judges of the divine will.[10609] By St. Chrysostom, the walls of the Church.[10610] By St. Ambrose, the camps of sanctity,[10611] and by St. Gregory Nazianzen, the foundations of the world, and the pillars of the faith.[10612]

Hence St. Jerome says, that the priest by the power of his sanctity has to carry the weight of all the sins of the world.[10613] Oh, what a tremendous weight ! And the priest shall pray for him, and for his sins before the Lord,. . . . and the sin shall be forgiven[10614] It is on this account that the holy Church obliges priests to recite the Office every day, and to celebrate Mass at least several times in the year. St. Ambrose says that priests should never cease by night or by day to pray for the people.[10615]

But to obtain graces for others the priest must be holy. "Those that are mediators between God and the people," says St. Thomas, "must shine before God with a good conscience, and with a good reputation before men."[10616]St. Gregory says that it would be temerity in a mediator to present himself before a prince to ask pardon for rebels, if he himself stood charged with the guilt of treason.[10617] They that wish to intercede for another, adds the same saint, must stand high in the esti mation of the king; nor should they be objects of his hatred, their intercession will only increase the indignation of the sovereign."[10618] Hence, according to St. Augustine, the priest must have such merit before God that he may be able to obtain for the people what they, on account of their demerits, cannot hope to receive.[10619]

And Pope Hormisdas has said, "The priest must be holier than the people, because he must pray for them."[10620]But St. Bernard says, with tears, "Behold, the world is full of priests, and still there are but few mediators."[10621] Yes; for few priests are holy and worthy of being mediators. Speaking of bad ecclesiastics, St. Augustine says: "To the Lord is more pleasing the barking of dogs than the prayer of such priests."[10622] Father Marchese, in his Journal of the Dominicans, writes that when a servant of God of the Order of St. Dominic implored the Lord to have pity on the people through the merits of priests, he said to her that, by their sins, priests provoked rather than appeased his anger.

IV. WHAT SHOULD BE THE SANCTITY OF THE PRIEST GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE TO BE THEIR MODEL

Priests should be holy; because God has placed them in the world as models of virtue. They are called by St. John Chrysostom, "Teachers of piety;"[10623] by St. Jerome, " Redeemers of the world;"[10624] by St. Prosper, "Gates to the eternal city for all nations;"[10625] and by St. Peter Chrysologus, "Models of virtue."[10626]

Hence St. Isidor has said, " Whoever leads people on the road of virtue, must himself be holy and blameless."[10627]Pope Hormisdas has written: "Let him be blameless that presides over others in order to reform them."[10628]And St. Denis has pronounced that celebrated sentence, that no one should dare to become the guide of others, unless by his virtues he has made himself most like to God.[10629] And according to St. Gregory, the sermons of the priest whose life is not edifying, excite contempt and produce no fruit.[10630]St. Thomas adds, " For the same reason are disregarded all the spiritual functions of such a one."[10631] Speaking of the priest of God, St. Gregory Nazianzen writes: "The priest must first be cleansed before he can cleanse others; he must first himself approach God before he can lead others to him; he must first sanctify himself before he can sanctify others; he must first be himself a light before he can illumine others."[10632] The hand that must wash away the stains and defilements of others must not be polluted, says St. Gregory.[10633]

In another place he says that the torch that does not burn, cannot inflame others.[10634]And St. Bernard says, that to him that loves not, the language of love is a strange and a barbarous tongue.[10635] Priests are placed in the world as so many mirrors, in which seculars should look at themselves: We are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels and to men.[10636] Hence the Council of Trent, speaking of ecclesiastics, says, "Others fix their eyes upon them as upon a mirror, and derive from them what they are to imitate. "[10637] Philip the Abbot used to say that priests are chosen to defend the people, but for this their dignity is not sufficient; sanctity of life is also necessary.[10638]

V. PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES

Hence the Angelic Doctor, considering all that has been said on the sanctity necessary for the priesthood, has written, that to exercise Holy Orders worthily more than ordinary virtue is required.[10639] Again he says, " Those that devote themselves to the celebration of the divine mysteries should be perfect in virtue."[10640]

In another place he says, “ In order to exercise this office in a worthy manner interior perfection is required.”[10641] Priests should be holy, that they may give glory, and not dishonor to that God whose ministers they are: They shall be holy to their God, and shall not profane His name.[10642] Were a minister of state seen playing in the public places, frequenting public-houses, associating with the rabble, speaking and acting in a manner calculated to reflect dishonor on the king, what regard could such a minister entertain for his sovereign ? By bad priests, who are his ministers, Jesus Christ is covered with shame. St. John Chrysostom says that of unholy priests the Gentiles might say, “What kind of a God have those that do such things ? Would he bear with them if he did not approve of their conduct?”[10643]Were the Chinese, the Indians, to see a priest of Jesus Christ leading a scandalous life, they might say, how can we believe that the God whom such priests preach is the true God ? were he the true God, how could he bear them in their wickedness without being a party to their crimes?

Hence the exhortation of St. Paul: In all things let us exhibit ourselves as ministers of God.[10644]Let us, he says, addressing priests, appear as true ministers of God, in much patience bearing with peace, poverty, infirmity, persecutions; in watchings and fastings vigilant in what regards the glory of God, mortifying the senses; *in chastity, in knowledge, in sweetness, in charity unfeigned* in guarding holy purity, in attending to study in order to assist souls, in practising meekness and true charity to our neighbor; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing appearing afflicted at being deprived of the pleasures of the world, but enjoying the peace which is the portion of the children of God; *as having nothing, but possessing all things* poor in earthly goods, but rich in God; for he that possesses God, possesses all things.

Such ought priests to be. In a word, they ought to be holy; because they are the ministers of the God of holiness: Be holy, because I am holy.[10645] They ought to be prepared to give their lives for souls, because they are the ministers of Jesus Christ, who, as he himself has said, came to die for us who are his sheep: I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth His life for His sheep.[10646] They ought, in fine, to be entirely employed in inflaming all men with the holy fire of divine love; because they are the ministers of the Incarnate Word, who came into the world for that purpose: I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled.[10647]

David earnestly besought the Lord to grant, for the benefit of the whole world, that his priests might be clothed with justice: Let the priests be clothed with justice.[10648]Justice comprises all virtues. Every priest should be clothed with faith, by living according to the maxims not of the world, but of faith. The maxims of the world are: It is necessary to possess wealth and property, to seek the esteem of others, to indulge in every amusement within our reach. The maxims of faith are: Happy are the poor; we should embrace contempt, deny our selves, and love suffering.

The priest must be clothed with holy confidence; hoping for all things not from creatures, but only from God. He must be clothed with humility, considering himself worthy of all punishment and contempt; with meekness, being sweet to all, particularly to the rude and passionate; with charity towards God arid man: towards God, living in an entire union of his soul with God, and making his heart, by means of mental prayer, an altar on which the fire of divine love always burns; and towards man, fulfilling the instruction of the Apostle: Put ye on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy;[10649] and endeavoring to the best of his ability to relieve all in their spiritual and temporal necessities. I say all even his persecutors and those that treat him with ingratitude.

St. Augustine says: “Nothing in this world is more advantageous or more honorable in the eyes of men than the priestly office. But in the eyes of God nothing is more formidable, important, and dangerous. “[10650] It is a great happiness and advantage to be a priest, to have the power of making the Incarnate Word descend from heaven into his hands, and of delivering souls from sin and hell, to be the vicar of Jesus Christ, the light of the world, the mediator between God and men, to be raised and exalted above all the monarchs of the earth, to have greater power than the angels, in a word, to be, as St. Clement says, a God on earth: nothing more advantageous. But, on the other hand, *nothing more important and dangerous.*[10651] For if in his hands, Jesus Christ descends to be his food, the priest must be more pure than the clearest water, as St. Francis of Assisi was told in a vision.

If he is a mediator before God in favor of men, he must not appear before God stained with the guilt of any sin; if he is the vicar of the Redeemer, he must be like him in his life. If he is the light of the world, he must be refulgent with the splendor of all virtues. In fine, if he is a priest he must be holy. If he correspond not with God s graces, the greater the gifts that he has received, the more frightful the account that he shall have to render to God. “ For,” says St. Gregory, “ the gifts of God while augmenting augment the account that one has to render.”[10652]St. Bernard says that, the priest “holds a celestial office, that he is made an angel of the Lord, and [adds the saint], as an angel he is elected to glory or condemned to hell.”[10653] St. Ambrose says that a priest should be exempt even from the smallest faults. “ Not a mediocre and ordinary virtue is suitable to the priest,” says the same holy Doctor; “he must be on his guard not only against shameful falls, but even against light faults.”[10654] Hence, if a priest is not holy, he is in great danger of being lost. What do some, or rather the greater number of priests do in order to acquire sanctity ? They say the Office and Mass, and do nothing more: they live without making mental prayer, without mortification, without recollection. Some will say, It is enough for me to be saved. “ No,” says St. Augustine, “ it is not enough; if you say that it is enough, you will be lost.”[10655] To be holy, the priest must lead a life of detachment from all things, from worldly society, empty honors, etc.: and particularly from inordinate attachment to relatives.

When they see him attend but little to the advancement of his family, and wholly devoted to the things of God, they say to him: Why dost thou do so to us?[10656] He must answer them in the words of the Infant Jesus to his mother when she found him in the temple: How is it that you sought Me ? did you not know that I must be about My Father s business![10657] Such should be the answer of a priest to his relatives. Have you, he should say to them, made me a priest ? Do you not know that a priest should attend only to God ? Him only do I wish to seek.

Chapter IV

GRIEVOUSNESS AND CHASTISEMENT OF SIN IN A PRIEST

I. GRIEVOUSNESS OF SIN IN A PRIEST

THE sin of a priest is very grievous, because he sins in view of the light: in consenting to sin he knows well what he does. On this account St. Thomas says, “ *that the sin of a Christian is more grievous than the sin of an infidel: because he knows the truth.*”[10658] But the light of a secular, though a Christian, is very different from that of a priest. The priest is so well instructed in the divine law that he teaches it to others. The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law of his mouth.[10659]Hence St. Ambrose says, “ *that the sins of those who know the law are very grievous, because they are not excused by ignorance.”*[10660]Poor seculars sin, but they sin in the midst of the darkness of the world, at a distance from the sacraments, badly instructed in spiritual things, and immersed in worldly business; they have but little knowledge of God, and consequently they see but imperfectly the evil that they do in consenting to sin. To use the words of David, they shoot in the dark.[10661]But priests are so full of light that they are the luminaries by which the people are enlightened:

You are the light of the world.[10662]They are well instructed by so many books that they have read, by so many sermons that they have heard, by so many considerations that they have made, by so many admonitions that they have received from Superiors. In a word, to priests is given to know the mysteries of God.[10663] Hence they well understand the claims that God has to our love and service, the malice of mortal sin, which is an enemy so opposed to God that were he capable of destruction a single mortal sin would, as St. Bernard says, destroy him;[10664]and in another place the saint says: “*Sin, as far as in it lies, aims at the destruction of God.”*[10665] Thus, accord ing to St. Chrysostom, the sinner, as far as his will is concerned, puts

God to death.[10666] Hence Father Medina writes that *mortal sin does so much dishonor, and gives so much displeasure to God, that were he capable of grief, sin would make him die through pure sorrow.*[10667]All this the priest understands well: he has also a perfect knowledge of his obligations by which as a priest, whom the Lord has so highly favored, he is bound to serve and love God. The more perfectly, then, he sees the enormity of the injury that he does to God by committing sin, the more grievous the malice of his sin,[10668] says St. Gregory.

Every sin of a priest is a sin of malice; it is like the sin of the angels that sinned in view of the light, says St. Bernard, speaking of a priest; hence he adds, *"He has become an angel of the Lord, and sinning as a priest he sins in heaven."*[10669] He sins in the midst of light, and therefore his sin, as has been said, is a sin of malice: he cannot allege ignorance, for he knows the great evil of mortal sin: he cannot plead weakness, because he knows the means by which, if he wishes, he can acquire strength; if he is unwilling to adopt the means, the fault is entirely his own. He would not understand that he might do well.[10670] According to St. Thomas, *the sin of malice is that which is committed with knowledge.*[10671] And in another place he says: " *Every sin committed through malice is against the Holy Ghost."*[10672] We know from St. Matthew that the sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come.[10673]That is, on account of the blindness caused by sins of malice they shall be pardoned only with great difficulty.

Our Saviour prayed on the cross for his persecutors, saying, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.[10674] But for bad priests this prayer was a source rather of condemnation than of salvation: for they know what they do.[10675] Jeremias said with tears, "*How is the gold become dim, the finest color is changed"*[10676]*he gold which has been obscured,"* says Cardinal Hugo, *"is the sinful priest who ought to shine forth with divine love; but by committing sin he becomes black, and an object of horror even to hell, and becomes more hateful to God than other sinners."* St. John Chrysostom says that *the Lord is not so much enraged against any sinner as against him who, while he shines with the splendor of the sacerdotal dignity, insults the divine majesty.*[10677] The malice of the sins of a priest is increased by his ingratitude to God, by whom he has been so highly exalted. St. Thomas teaches that the grievousness of sin increases in proportion to the ingratitude of the sinner. “We ourselves,” says St. Basil, “are not so indignant at any offence as at that which we receive from a friend and familiar acquaintance.”[10678] For this reason priests are called by St. Cyril the most intimate friends of God.[10679]What greater exaltation can God give to a man than by raising him to the dignity of his own priest ? “ Enumerate all the honors, all the dignities,” says St. Ephrem; “the priest surpasses them all.”[10680]What greater honor, what more exalted rank, could God confer upon him than that of being his own representative, his coadjutor, the sanctifier of souls, and the dispenser of his sacraments ? Priests are called by St. Prosper “Dispensers in the royal house.”[10681]The Lord has chosen the priest from among so many men for his own minister to offer to him in sacrifice his own very Son. He chose him, says the Holy Ghost, out of all men living to offer sacrifice to God.[10682]

He has given him power over the body of Jesus Christ, he has placed in his hands the keys of paradise, he has raised him above all the kings of the earth, and above all the angels in heaven; in a word, he has made him, as it were, a God on earth: “ A God on earth.”[10683] What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard that I have not done?[10684](Here God appears to speak only of priests.) How horrible, then, the ingratitude of the priest whom God has loved so tenderly, and who insults the Lord in his own very house ? What is the meaning, says Jeremias, *that my beloved hath wrought much wickedness in my house ?*[10685] Hence St. Gregory weeps and says, “Alas! my Lord God, those that should govern Thy Church persecute you more than the rest.”[10686]

It appears, also, that it was of bad priests that God complained when he called on heaven and earth to witness the ingratitude with which he was treated by his own children. *Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth. . . . I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have despised me.*[10687]And who are these children but priests who, after being raised by God to such an elevation, and nourished at his table with his own flesh, dare to despise his love and his grace ? Of this he also complained by the mouth of David: If my enemy had reviled me I would verily have borne it.[10688]Were my enemy, were an idolater, a heretic, or a worldling to offend me, I would bear with him, but how can I bear to see myself insulted by you, my priest, who are my friend and fellow-guest ?*ut thou, a man of one mind, my guide and my familiar, who didst take sweetmeats together with me*. The Prophet Jeremias weeps and exclaims: *They that were fed delicately, . . . they that were brought lip in scarlet, have embraced the dung.*[10689]Oh ! what a misery, what a horrible thing, to see the man that fed on celestial food and was clad in purple wearing the sordid garment of sin, and feeding on filth and dung ! By the word croceis the interpreters (resting on the Hebrew text that were brought up in scarlet[10690]) understand the purple; and priests are said to be honored with the purple on account of their regal dignity: You are a chosen nation, a kingly priesthood[10691]

II. CHASTISEMENT OF THE SINFUL PRIEST

But let us now see the chastisement that awaits the sinful priest a chastisement proportioned to the grievousness of his sin. According to the measure of the sin shall the measure also of the stripes be.[10692]St. John Chrysostom gives up as lost the priest that commits a single mortal sin after his elevation to the priesthood.[10693] Terrible in deed are the threats that the Lord has pronounced, by the mouth of Jeremias, against priests who fall into sin. For the prophet and the priest are defiled, and in my house I have found their wickedness, saith the Lord. Therefore, their way shall be as the slippery way in the dark ; for they err and fall therein![10694]

What hope of life would you give to him who, without light to guide his steps, should walk on a slippery way along the brink of a precipice, and who should from time to time be violently assailed by enemies endeavoring to cast him down the precipice ? This is the miserable state into which a priest who commits mortal sin has brought himself. The slippery way in the dark. By sin the priest loses light and becomes blind. It had been better for them not to have known the way of justice , than after they had known it, to turn back.[10695] How much better would it be for the priest that falls into sin to have been a poor uninstructed peasant, who had never known the law! For, after so much knowledge learned from books, from sermons, from directors, and after so many illuminations received from God, the miserable man, by yielding to sin and trampling under foot all the graces that God had bestowed upon him, shall make all the lights received serve to increase his blindness, and to keep him in the state of perdition. “ *Greater knowledge is* *followed by greater punishment,”* says St. John Chrysostom.[10696] And the saint adds*: “ The sin to which the priest consents may be committed by many seculars, but his chastisement shall be far more severe, because his blindness shall be far greater than theirs.”*—He shall receive the punishment threatened by the Prophet: *That seeing they may not see, and hearing may not understand*[10697]*“And this,”* says the same St. John Chrysostom, *“we know from experience that a secular after committing sin is easily induced to do penance.”*[10698]

A secular who falls into sin, if he attends a mission, or is present at a sermon in which he hears some eternal truth regarding the malice of sin, the certainty of death, the rigor of the divine judgment, or the pains of hell, easily enters into himself and returns to God; *“because”* says the saint, *“these truths are new to him, and fill him with terror.”*[10699] But what impression can the eternal truths and the menaces of the holy Scriptures make on a priest that has trampled on the grace of God, and on all the lights and knowledge that he has received ? *“ All that is contained in Scripture,”* continues the holy Doctor, *“ appears to him as something obsolete and worthless, for everything terrible has by use lost its power.”*[10700] *Hence he concludes that there is nothing more impossible than to reform a people who sins with a perfect knowledge of the law.*[10701]*reat indeed,”* says St. Jerome, *“is the dignity of priests, but great also is their perdition, if in the priesthood they turn their back on God.”*[10702] *“The greater the height,”* says St. Bernard, *“to which God has raised them, the more precipitous and ruinous shall be their fall.”*[10703]He that falls on level ground is seldom severely hurt, but the man that falls from a great height is said not to fall, but to be precipitated, and therefore his fall is mortal. *“As when we fall on a plain, we do ourselves rarely any harm,”* says St. Ambrose, *“ so when we fall from a height, we not only fall, but are precipitated, and the fall becomes more dangerous.”*[10704]et us who are priests,” says St. Jerome, “ rejoice at our elevation to so great a height, but let our fear of falling be proportioned to our exaltation.”[10705] It is to the priest that the Lord appears to speak by the Prophet Ezechiel, when he says, I set thee on the holy mountain of God, and thou hast sinned; and I cast thee out from the mountain of God and destroyed thee[10706] O priests ! says the Lord, I have placed you on my holy mountain, and have made you the luminaries of the world: *You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid.*[10707] Justly, then, has St. Laurence Justinian said *that the greater the grace that God has bestowed on priests, the more severe the chastisement that their sins deserve; and the more elevated the state to which he has raised them, the more disastrous shall be their fall.*[10708]He that falls into a river sinks deeper in proportion to the height from which he has fallen,[10709] says Peter de Blois. Beloved priest, remember that in elevating you to the sacerdotal state God has raised you up to heaven, by making you a man no longer earthly, but altogether celestial: If you sin, you fall from heaven. Consider, then, how ruinous and destructive shall be your fall. " What is higher than heaven ?" says St. Peter Chrysologus; " *he therefore falls from heaven that mingles sin with heavenly functions."*[10710]*Your fall,* according to St. Bernard, *shall be like that of a thunderbolt, which rushes headlong with vehement impetuosity.*[10711]

That is, your *destruction is irreparable.*[10712] In your unhappy soul is verified the threat of the Lord against Capharnaum: *And thou, Capharnaum, which art exalted unto heaven, thou shalt be thrust down to hell.*[10713]

Such the chastisement that the priest that falls into sin merits on account of his infinite ingratitude to God. *He owes more gratitude to God than others, because he has received greater favors, says St. Gregory.*[10714] *The ungrateful, as a learned author says, deserve to be deprived of all the favors that they have received.*[10715]Jesus Christ has said : *To every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall abound; but from him that hath not, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away.*[10716] Upon those that are grateful to God he shall pour his graces more abundantly; but the priest who after so many lights and so many Communions turns his back on God, despises all his favors, and renounces his grace, shall be justly deprived of all. The Lord is liberal to all, but not to the ungrateful. *"Ingratitude,"* says St. Bernard, *"dries up the sources of divine favors."*[10717]Hence St. Jerome justly says, *"There is not in the whole world a monster to be compared with a priest in the state of sin, for the unfortunate man will not bear with correction."*[10718]

And St. John Chrysostom, or the author of the "Imperfect Work," writes: "*When lay peoples sin, they easily amend. As for priests, once bad, they are incorrigible."*[10719] To priests that fall into sin, we may, with St. Peter

Damian,[10720] apply in a special manner the words of the Apostle: *It is impossible for those that were once illuminated, have tasted also the heavenly gift, and were made, partakers of the Holy Ghost, and are fallen away, to be renewed again to penance.*[10721]Who has been more enlightened than the priest? Who has tasted more frequently the heavenly gifts, and partaken more abundantly of the Holy Ghost? St. Thomas says that the rebel angels remained obstinate in sin, because they sinned in view of the light; and St. Bernard writes that God shall treat the sinful priest in a similar manner, that is, " *the priest having become an angel of the Lord, must expect either the reward or the reprobation of an angel."*[10722] Our Lord said to St. Bridget: " *I see on earth pagans and Jews, but I see none so wicked as priests; they are guilty of the same sin that Lucifer committed."*nd let it be observed in this place, that, according to Innocent III., *many things are venial sins in seculars that are mortal in ecclesiastics."*[10723]

To priests we may also apply what St. Paul says in another place: *The earth that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it,. . . . and bringeth forth thorns and briers, is reprobate and very near unto a curse, whose end is to be burnt.*[10724] What showers of grace has the priest continually received from God ! And, after all, he brings forth briers and thorns instead of fruit. Miserable man ! he is on the point of being reprobated, of receiving the final malediction, and of being sent in the end, after so many favors from God, to burn forever in the fire of hell. But what dread has the priest that turns his back on God of the fire of hell ? Priests who fall into sin lose light, and lose also the fear of God. Behold, the Lord himself assures us of this. *If I be a master, where is My fear, saith the Lord of Hosts, to you, O Priests, that despise My name ?*[10725] St. Bernard says that *priests falling from on high remain so immersed in their malice, that they forget God, and disregard the divine threats to such a degree that the danger of their damnation has no longer any terror for them.*[10726]

But why should that excite our wonder, since by committing sin the priest falls from an immense height into a deep pit, in which he is bereft of light, and therefore despises all things; verifying in himself the words of the Wise Man: *The wicked man when he is come into the depth of sins, contemneth.*[10727] The wicked man: this wicked man is the priest that sins through malice: into the depth; by a single mortal sin, the priest sinks to—

the depth of misery and remains in blindness; contemneth; and thus he despises chastisements, admonitions, the presence of Jesus Christ who is near him on the altar: he despises all, and blushes not to surpass in malice Judas, the betrayer of Jesus Christ.

Of this our Lord complained to St. Bridget: " Such priests are not my priests, but they are real traitors."[10728] Yes, real traitors, who avail themselves of the celebration of Mass to outrage Jesus Christ by sacrilege. But what shall be the unhappy end of such priests? Behold it: In the land of the saints he hath done wicked things, and he shall not see the glory of the Lord.[10729] The end shall be, first, abandonment of God, and then the fire of hell. But, Father, some may say, this language is too terrific. Do you, they ask, wish to drive us to despair? I answer with St. Augustine, " being myself frightened, I frighten others."[10730] Then a priest who has offended God since his ordination may ask, Is there no hope of pardon for me? Yes, there is hope, if he repents and entertains a horror for the evil he has done. Let such a priest, then, thank the Lord with his whole heart if he, too, finds himself aided by divine grace; but he must instantly give himself to that God who calls him. " Let us listen to the Lord," says St. Augustine, "while he is calling us, lest he may turn a deaf ear to us when he judges us."[10731]

III. EXHORTATION

From this day forward, let us, dearly beloved priests, *learn to esteem our noble elevation, and regarding ourselves as ministers of a God, let us blush to become the slaves of sin and of the devil*, says St. Peter Damian.[10732] Let us not imitate the folly of seculars that think only of the present. *It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.*[10733] We must all appear at this judgment: *We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done*[10734] To each of us the Judge shall say: *Give an account of thy stewardship.*[10735] That is, of your priesthood; how have you exercised it? for what end have you exercised it ? Dearly beloved priest, were you now to be judged, would you feel satisfied and content with the manner in which you have discharged your ministry? Or would you not say: *When he shall examine, what shall I answer him ?*[10736] When the Lord chastises a people, the chastisement begins with the priest, for he is the cause of the sins of the people, either by his bad example, or by his negligence in attending to their sanctification. Hence the Lord says, The time is that judgment should begin at the house of God[10737] In the slaughter described by Ezechiel, God wished the priests to be the first victims of his vengeance: Begin ye at my sanctuary.[10738]That is, says Origen, “ with the priests.” A most severe judgment, says the Wise Man, for them that bear rule.[10739]

And unto whom, says Jesus Christ, much is given, of him much shall be required.[10740] The author of the “Imperfect Work” says, “*On the day of judgment the secular will receive the priestly stole, but the sinful priest will be deprived of the priestly dignity, and ranked among infidels and hypocrites.”*[10741]*Hear ye this, O priests!* says the Prophet Osee, . . . *for there is judgment against you.*[10742]

And as the judgment of priests is most rigorous, so also shall their damnation be most miserable. With a double destruction destroy them, says Jeremias.[10743] A Council of Paris repeats these words of St. Jerome, already cited: *“Great is the dignity of priests, but if they happen to fall into sin, very great will also be their ruin.”*[10744] And St. John Chrysostom says, “ *If a priest were to commit only the sins of which the simple faithful become guilty, he would incur not a similar but a more rigorous chastisement.”*[10745] It was revealed to St. Bridget that priests who are sinners “ *will find themselves deeper in hell than all the other damned.”* Oh! how great the rejoicing of the devils when a priest enters hell ?[10746]

All hell is in confusion to meet the priest who comes. Hell below, says Isaias, was in an uproar to meet thee at thy coming. . , . All the princes of the earth have risen from their thrones. All the princes of that land of woe rise up to give the first place of torment to the damned priest. *All,* continues the prophet, *shall answer and say to thee : Thou also art wounded as well as we, thou art become like unto us.*[10747] O priest, you once ruled over us, you have so often made the Incarnate Word descend on the altars, you have delivered so many souls from hell, and now you have become like us, miserable and tormented as we are: Thy pride is brought to hell. Your pride, by which you have despised God and your neighbor, has in the end brought you to this land of misery, Thy carcass is fallen down : under thee shall the moth be strewed, and worms shall be thy covering?[10748] As a king you shall have a royal couch and a purple robe: behold, fire and worms shall forever corrode your body and your soul. Oh! how shall the devils then scoff at all the Masses, sacraments, and sacred functions of the damned priest! And have mocked at her Sabbaths.[10749]

Be attentive, dearly beloved priests, for the devils tempt one priest more than a hundred seculars; because a priest that is lost brings with him many seculars to hell. St. Chrysostom says, “ To take away the shepherds is to scatter the flocks.”[10750]In a work that is found among the works of St. Cyprian we read this very just remark: “In war, the combatants endeavor first of all to kill the enemy s commanders.”[10751]

St. Jerome adds: “ The devil does not go in search of infidels and those that are outside” (that is, who are outside of the sanctuary); he looks for booty in the Church of Christ, for according to Habacuc they are his choice food.”[10752]To the devils, the souls of ecclesiastics are the most delicious food.Non qusarit diabolus homines infideles, non eos qui foris sunt; de Ecclesia Christi rapere festinat; escsa ejus, secundum Habacuc, electsa sunt.” Ep. ad Eustoch.hat follows may serve to supply motives of compunction in the act of contrition.] Dearly beloved priests, the Lord appears to say to you what he said to the Jewish people:

What have I done to thee? Or in what have I grieved thee ? Answer me ? Tell me, what evil have I done you: have I not, on the contrary, bestowed many favors upon you?

I brought thee out of the land of Egypt. I have drawn you out of the world, I have selected you from among so many seculars, to make you my priest, my minister, my familiar: thou hast prepared a cross for thy Saviour : and you, for a miserable interest, for a vile pleasure, have again nailed me to the cross.

I fed thee with manna in the desert : in the wilderness of this earth I have fed you every morning with the celestial manna, that is, with my divine flesh, and with my blood : and thou hast beaten me with buffets and stripes.

What more should I have done to thee, and have not done ? I have planted thee for my most beautiful vineyard; and thou hast proved very bitter to me. I have destined you for the vineyard of my delight, planting in you so many lights and so many graces, that they might produce sweet and precious fruits; and you have given me only fruits of bitterness.

I gave thee the royal sceptre. I have made you a king, and have exalted you above all the kings of the earth: and thou hast given me a crown of thorns, by the bad thoughts to which you have consented.

I raised thee on high. I have raised you to the dignity of my representative, and have given you the keys of heaven ; I have, in fine, made you, as it were, a God on earth: And thou hast hanged me on the gibbet of the cross, and you have despised all my graces, my friendship, nailing me again to the cross, etc.

Chapter V

THE INJURY THAT TEPIDITY DOES TO THE PRIEST

I. TO WHAT THE TEPID PRIEST IS EXPOSED

THE Lord commanded St. John in the Apocalypse to write to the Bishop of Ephesus the following words: *I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience*.[10753]I know well all that you do; I know your labors for my glory; I know your patience in the toils of your office. But he adds: But I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first charity[10754] But I must reprove you for having fallen away from your first fervor. But what great evil was there in this ? What great evil ? Listen to what our Lord adds: *Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen; and do penance, and do the first works : or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place*[10755] Remember whence you have fallen; do penance, and return to the first fervor, with which, as my minister, you are bound to live, otherwise I will reject you as unworthy of the ministry that I have committed to you.

Is tepidity, then, productive of so much ruin ? Yes, it brings with it great ruin, and the greatest evil is, that this ruin is not known, and is, therefore, neither avoided nor dreaded by the tepid, and especially by priests. The majority of them are shipwrecked on this blind rock of tepidity, and therefore many of them are lost. I call it a blind rock: because the great danger of perdition to which the tepid are exposed consists in this, that their tepidity does not allow them to see the great havoc that it produces in the soul. Many are unwilling to be altogether separated from Jesus Christ; they wish to follow him, but they wish to follow him at a distance, like St. Peter, who, when the Redeemer was seized in the garden, followed him from afar off.[10756] But they that act in this manner, shall easily fall into the misfortune which befell St. Peter, who, when charged by a servant maid with being a disciple of the Redeemer, thrice denied Jesus Christ.

He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little.[10757] The interpreter applies this passage to the tepid Christian, and says that he shall first lose devotion, and shall afterwards fall,[10758]passing from venial sins, which he has disregarded, to grievous and mortal offences. Eusebius Emissenus says that he that is not afraid to offend God by venial faults shall scarcely be exempt from mortal sins.[10759]*“By a just judgment,”* says St. Isidore, “*the Lord will permit him that despises minor transgressions to fall into grievous crimes.*” Trifling maladies, when few, do little injury to health, but when they are numerous and frequent, they bring on mortal diseases.[10760]*ou guard against great faults,”* says St. Augustine, *“ but what do you do in regard to light faults? You have shaken the mountain: take care that you be not crushed by a heap of sand.”*[10761] You are careful to avoid grievous falls, but you fear not small ones; you are not deprived of life by the great rock of any mortal sin, but beware, says the saint, lest by a multitude of venial sins you be crushed as by a heap of sand. We all know that only mortal sin kills the soul, and that venial sins, however great their number, cannot rob the soul of divine grace. But it is also necessary to understand what St. Gregory teaches, *that the habit of committing light results without remorse, and without an effort to correct them, gradually deprives us of the fear of God; and when the fear of God is lost, it is easy to pass from venial to mortal sins.*[10762] St. Dorotheus adds, *that by despising light faults we expose ourselves to the danger of falling into perfect insensibility.*[10763] He that disregards small offences is in danger of general insensibility, so that afterwards he shall feel no horror even of mortal sins.

St. Teresa, as the Roman Rota attests, never fell into any mortal sin; but still our Lord showed her the place prepared for her in hell, not because she had deserved hell, but because, had she not risen from the state of tepidity in which she lived, she should in the end have lost the grace of God, and should be damned. Hence the Apostle says, *Give not place to the devil.*[10764]The devil is satisfied when we begin to open the door to him by disregarding small faults; for he shall then labor to open it perfectly, by leading us into grievous transgressions.*Do not imagine,”* says Cassian, *“ that anyone falls at once into ruin.”*[10765]That is, when you hear of the fall of a spiritual soul, do not imagine that the devil has suddenly precipitated her into sin; for he has first brought her into tepidity, and then has cast her into the precipice of enmity with God. Hence St. John Chrysostom says that he knew many peoples adorned with all virtues, who afterwards fell into tepidity, and from tepidity into an abyss of vice.[10766] It is related in the Teresian Chronicles, that Sister Anne of the Incarnation once saw in hell a people whom she had regarded as a saint: on her countenance appeared a multitude of small animals, which represented the multitude of defects that she committed and disregarded during life. Of these some were heard to say, By us you began; others, By us you continued; others, By us you have brought yourself to hell.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot.[10767] says our Lord, through St. John, to the Bishop of Laodicea. Behold the state of a tepid soul, neither cold nor hot. “ *The tepid people,*” says Father Menochius in his exposition of this passage, “ *is one that does not dare offend God knowingly and willingly, but is one that neglects to strive after a more perfect life, and hence easily gives himself up to his passions.”*[10768]

A tepid priest is not manifestly cold, because he does not knowingly and deliberately commit mortal sins; but neglecting to seek after the perfection to which he is bound by the obligations of his state, he makes little of venial sins, he commits many of them every day without scruple, by lies, by intemperance in eating and drinking, by imprecations, by distraction at the Office and Mass, by detractions, by jests opposed to modesty: he leads a life of dissipation in the midst of worldly business and amusements; he cherishes dangerous desires and attachments; full of vainglory, of human respect and self—esteem, he cannot bear a contradiction or a disrespectful word; he neglects mental prayer, and is destitute of piety. Father Alvarez de Paz says that the defects and faults of a tepid soul are “ *like those light indispositions that do not cause death, but that weaken the body in such a manner that a grave malady cannot supervene without destroying the body which has no longer the power of resisting.”*[10769]The tepid Christian is like a sick man who has labored under many light maladies, which, because they are incessant, reduce him to such a state of debility, that as soon as he is attacked by any serious disease, that is, by a strong temptation, he has not strength to resist, and falls, but falls with greater ruin.

Hence the Lord continues to address the tepid bishop, saying, *I would thou wert cold or hot, but because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit* *thee out of My mouth.*[10770] Let him that finds himself miserably fallen into the state of tepidity, consider these words and tremble.

I would that thou wert cold! Better, says the Lord, that you were cold, that is, deprived of my grace, for then there should be greater reason to hope for your recovery from so miserable a state; but by remaining in it, you shall be exposed to greater danger of rushing into grievous sins without any hope of ever emerging from them. " *Although he that is cold,"* says Cornelius à Lapide, " *is worse than he that is tepid, yet the condition of the tepid is worse, since the danger of falling is greater, without any hope of recovery."*[10771] " St. Bernard says that it is easier to convert a wicked layman than a tepid ecclesiastic. Pereira adds, *that it is easier to bring an infidel to the faith, than to renew a tepid Christian in the spirit of fervor.*[10772] And Cassian has said *that he saw many sinners consecrate themselves to God with their whole heart, but that he knew no one that had risen from tepidity to fervor.*[10773] St. Gregory holds out hopes to a sinner not yet converted, but he despairs of him who, after having repented, and given himself to God with fervor, falls into tepidity. Beholds his words: *"However tepid any one may be, there is always a hope that sooner or later his fervor will be reanimated; but of any one that falls little by little from fervor into tepidity, we must expect nothing. In fact, we may count on a sinner for the grace of conversion, but if after conversion he becomes tepid, we must despair of his return."*[10774]

In a word, tepidity is a desperate and almost incurable evil. For in order to be able to avoid danger it is necessary to know it. Now the tepid, when they have fallen into that miserable state of darkness, do not even know their danger. Tepidity is like a hectic fever that is scarcely perceived. The tepid man does not see even habitual defects. " Grievous faults," says St. Gregory, " because they are more easily observed, are more readily corrected; but he who disregards light defects continues to commit them, and thus by the habit of despising minor transgressions he shall soon despise grievous sins."[10775] Besides, mortal sin always excites a certain horror even in habitual sinners, but to the tepid, his imperfections, inordinate attachments, dissipations, love of pleasure or of self-esteem, cause no horror. These little faults are the more dangerous because they imperceptibly dispose him to ruin. " Great sins," says Father Alvarez de

Paz, “ are less dangerous for the just than these little faults, because the hideous aspect of the former frightens them, while the others insensibly conduct to ruin.”[10776]

Hence St. John Chrysostom has written that celebrated sentence, that we ought in a certain manner to be more careful to avoid light faults than grievous sins: “We must use more care to avoid little sins than to avoid great sins; for the latter are already opposed by our nature, and because the former, being small, make us more indolent in our struggles. Since we disregard them, the soul cannot raise itself so generously as to repel them: hence great sins flow from small sins.”[10777]

The reason, then, assigned by the saint is, that mortal sins excite a natural horror, but light faults are disregarded, and therefore they soon become grievous. And the greatest evil is, that small defects that are disregarded render the soul more careless about her spiritual interests, and therefore, because she has been accustomed to despise slight offences, they lead her to think little of grievous transgressions. In the Canticles the Lord says. *Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines, for our vineyard hath flourished.*[10778] Mark the word foxes: he does not tell us to catch the lions and tigers, but the foxes. These foxes destroy the vine; they make a multitude of dens, and thus dry up the roots, that is, devotion and good desires, which are the roots of spiritual life. He also says little. Why does he tells us to catch the little and not the large foxes ? Because the little foxes excite less terror, but often do.more mischief than the large ones. *For,* as Father Alvarez says, *small faults when disregarded impede the infusion of divine graces, and thus the soul remains barren, and is finally lost.*[10779] The Holy Ghost adds: for our vineyard hath flourished. How great the evil of venial faults when multiplied and not abhorred ? They eat the flowers, that is, they destroy the good desires of advancing in perfection, and when these desires fail, the soul shall always go backward until she finds herself fallen into a precipice from which it will be difficult to rescue her. *I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth.*[10780]

Let us conclude the exposition of this text of the Apocalypse. A draught that is cold or hot is taken with facility, but when tepid it is taken with great difficulty, because it provokes vomiting. This precisely is what the Lord has threatened against the tepid soul. I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth. In expounding this passage Menochius says, *“ God begins to vomit forth the tepid man, because the latter as long as he perseveres in his tepidity creates in Him nausea, until finally at his death the Lord vomits him entirely, and he is forever separated from Christ.”*[10781] The tepid are in danger of being vomited forth by God, that is, of being abandoned without hope of remedy. This is what the Lord means by vomiting the soul out of his mouth; for all have a great horror of taking back what they vomit. *“ For just as,”* says Cornelius à Lapide, *“ one refuses to take back what one has rejected, so God has a horror of the tepid whom he has vomited forth.”*[10782] How does God begin to vomit forth the tepid priest ? He ceases to give him any longer these loving calls (this precisely means to be vomited forth from the mouth of God), these spiritual consolations, these good desires. In fine, he shall be deprived of spiritual unction. The unhappy man will go to meditation, but shall make it with great tediousness, dissipation, and unwillingness. Hence he shall by degrees begin to omit it, and thus shall cease to recommend himself to God by petitions for his graces, and by neglecting to ask the divine graces he shall always become more poor, and shall go from bad to worse. He shall say Mass and the Office, but they shall be a source of demerit rather than of merit.

He shall perform all his functions with difficulty and by force, or without devotion. You shall, says the Lord, be anointed all overth oil, but you shall remain without unction.[10783] The Mass, the divine Office, preaching, hearing confessions, assisting the dying, attending at funerals, are exercises that should excite new fervor; but after all these functions you shall remain dry, without peace, dissipated, agitated by a thousand temptations. I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth. Behold how God begins to vomit you out of his mouth.

II. A PRIEST CANNOT BE SATISFIED WITH AVOIDING GRIEVOUS SINS

Some priests may say it is enough for me to avoid mortal sins and to save my soul. No, answers St. Augustine, you that are a priest, and therefore obliged to walk in the narrow way of perfection, shall not even save your soul by treading the broad way of tepidity—“When you say it is enough, you are lost.”[10784] St. Gregory says that they that are to be saved as saints, and wish to be saved as imperfect souls, shall not be saved. And this, our

Lord one day gave Blessed Angela of Foligno to understand: “They that are enlightened by me to walk in the way of perfection, and through tepidity wish to tread in the ordinary path, shall be abandoned by me.”[10785] It is certain, as we have seen in the above,[10786]that a priest is bound to be holy, as well on account of his dignity as the familiar and minister of God, as on account of his office of offering to God the sacrifice of the Mass, of mediator for the people before the divine Majesty, and of sanctifier of souls by means of the sacraments.he reason is that he may walk in the way of perfection, that God loads him with so many graces and special helps. Hence, when he exercises his ministry with negligence, amid defects and faults, without even detesting them, God pronounces a malediction against him. Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully.[10787] This malediction consists in abandonment by God. “God,” writes St. Augustine, “is accustomed to abandon the negligent.”[10788] The Lord, says the saint, usually abandons souls favored by his special graces, when after all his gifts they neglect to live according to the perfection to which they are called. God, observes a certain author, wishes to be served by his priests with the fervor with which the seraphim serve him in heaven; otherwise he will withdraw his graces and permit them to sleep in tepidity, and thence to fall, first into the precipice of sin and afterwards into hell.[10789] The tepid priest, weighed down by so many venial sins and by so many inordinate attachments, remains, as it were, in a state of insensibility. Hence the graces received and the obligations of the priesthood make but little impression upon him, and therefore the Lord shall justly withhold the abundant helps that are morally necessary for the fulfilment of the obligations of his state; thus he shall go from bad to worse, and with his defects his blindness shall increase. Perhaps God is bound to make his graces abound in those that are parsimonious and ungenerous to him ? No, says the Apostle, he who sows little shall reap but little.[10790]

The Lord has declared that to the grateful that preserve his graces he will multiply his favors, but from the ungrateful he shall take away the gifts that had been bestowed upon them. For to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound; but from him that hath not, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away.[10791]Besides, St. Matthew says that when the master receives no fruit from the vineyard, he takes it away from the husband men to whom he had given it, and after punishing them consigns it to others. He will bring those evil men to an evil end, and will let out His vineyard to other husbandmen, that shall render Him fruit in due season[10792]He afterwards adds : Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof.[10793]That is, God shall take out of life the priest to whom he gave the care of his kingdom, or of procuring his glory, and shall intrust his interests to others who will be grateful for his favors and faithful to his graces. Hence it happens that from so many sacrifices, so many Communions, and so many prayers offered in the Office and in the Mass, many priests draw little or no fruit. You have sowed much, says the Prophet Aggeus, and brought in little, . . . and he that earned wages put them into a bag with holes.[10794] Such the tepid priest ! He lays up all his spiritual exercises in a bag with holes ; thus no merit remains, but on the contrary, in consequence of committing many defects in the performance of these exercises, he always renders himself more deserving of chastisement.

The tepid priest is not far from perdition. The heart of a priest should, as Peter de Blois says, be the altar on which the fire of divine love always burns. But what proof of burning love for God does the priest give who is content with avoiding mortal sin, but takes no trouble to abstain from displeasing God by light faults. *“It is a sign of a very tepid love,”* says Father Alvarez, *“to restrict the proofs of love only to the omission of very grave faults against God, and to be troubled very little about offending him with little faults.”*[10795]

To become a good priest, a man requires not the common graces, nor a small number of graces, but special and abundant helps. But how can God be generous and abundant in his graces to him who is appointed to serve him, and who serves him so badly? St. Ignatius of Loyola sent one day for a lay brother who led a very tepid life, and said to him: *“ Tell me, my brother, for what purpose have you entered religion ?”* The lay brother answered, “ To serve God.” *“ And is it thus,”* replied the saint, *“you serve him ? Had you told me that you came to serve a cardinal or an earthly prince, you should be more deserving of compassion; but you tell me that you have come to serve God, and do you serve him so badly ?”* Every priest enters into the court, not among the servants, but among the familiars of God, who have continually to treat confidentially with him on matters of the utmost importance to his glory. Hence a tepid priest dishonors God more than he honors him; for by his negligent and imperfect life he shows that he regards God unworthy of being served and loved with greater fervor. He declares that in pleasing God he does not find that felicity which is sufficient to make the soul perfectly content; he declares that his divine Majesty is unworthy of the love that obliges us to prefer his glory to all self-gratification.

III. EXHORTATION

Be attentive, dearly beloved priests; let us tremble lest all the grandeurs and honors by which God has raised us to such an elevation among men should only terminate in our eternal damnation. St. Bernard says that the solicitude of the devils for our destruction should make us solicitous in laboring for salvation.[10796] Oh ! how active are our enemies in seeking the perdition of a priest. They desire the fall of one priest more ardently than that of a hundred seculars; as well because the victory over a priest is a far greater triumph than a victory over a layman, as because a priest that falls brings many others with him to perdition. But as flies avoid boiling water and run to that which is tepid, so the devils do not tempt the fervent as violently as they tempt the tepid priest, whom they often succeed in bringing from tepidity into the state of mortal sin. Cornelius à Lapide says that the tepid when assailed by any strong temptation are in great danger of yielding to temptations, because they have but little strength to resist; hence it is that in so many occasions of danger they often fall into mortal sin.[10797] It is necessary then to labor to avoid faults that are wilfully and deliberately committed. It cannot be denied that, except Jesus Christ and the divine Mother, who by a singular privilege have been free from all stain of sin, all other men, even the saints, have not been exempt at least from venial sins.

The heavens are not pure in his sight says Job.[10798] St. James says, In many things we all offend.[10799] Thus every child of Adam must, as St. Leo has written, be defiled with the mire of this earth.[10800] But it is necessary to attend to what the Wise Man says on this subject: *For a just man shall fall seven times, and shall rise again.*[10801] He that falls through human frailty, without a full knowledge of the malice of the act, and without a deliberate consent, rises easily: shall fall and rise again. But how can he rise who knows his defects, commits them deliberately, and instead of detesting them, takes complacency in them ? If we commit faults, says St. Augustine, let us at least confess and detest them, and God will pardon them .[10802] *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.*[10803] To obtain the remission of venial faults, Louis de Blois says that it is enough to confess them in general.[10804] And in another place he writes[10805] *that such sins are more easily cancelled by turning to God with humility and love than by stopping to dwell upon them with too much fear.*

St. Francis de Sales also has written that as the daily faults of spiritual souls are indeliberately committed, so they are indeliberately taken away. He meant to say what St. Thomas teaches, that for the remission of venial sins " it is sufficient to detest them either explicitly or even implicitly, for example, by a fervent act of the love of God."[10806]The holy Doctor then says: *"The remission of venial sins is brought about in three ways: 1. By infusion of divine grace; in this way by means of the Holy Eucharist and the other sacraments such sins are remitted. By acts that in clude a movement of detestation, and thus by a general confession of sins, by striking the breast, by reciting an Our Father , we obtain the remission of such sins; 3. By every act of religion towards God and the things of God, such as the receiving of the blessing from a bishop, to take holy water, to pray in a consecrated church."*[10807] Speaking of the holy Communion, St. Bernardine of Sienna says: "It may happen that after Communion the soul finds itself so absorbed in God that all venial sins disappear before the fervor of its devotion."[10808]The Venerable Louis da Ponte used to say: "I have committed many faults, but I have never made peace with my faults. Many make peace with their defects, and this shall cause their ruin."

St. Bernard says that as long as a people detests his imperfections, there is reason to hope that he shall return to the straight path; but when he commits faults knowingly and deliberately, and when the commission of them excites neither fear nor remorse, they shall by degrees bring him to ruin. Dying flies, says the Holy Ghost, spoil the sweetness of the ointment.[10809] Dying flies are the faults that are committed but not detested; for they remain dead in the soul. "When a fly," says Denis the Carthusian, "falls into a sweet-smelling ointment and remains therein, it will injure the ointment and its good odor. If we apply this to the spiritual life, the dead flies represent our idle thoughts, illicit affections, voluntary distractions things that spoil the sweetness of the ointment, that is, the sweetness attached to the exercises of piety."[10810]

St. Bernard[10811]writes, that to say this is a light sin is not a great evil, but to commit it, and take complacency in it, is an evil of great moment, and shall, according to the words of St. Luke, be severely chastised by God. And that servant that knew the will of his Lord, and did not according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes."[10812] It is true that even spiritual peoples are not free from light transgressions; "but," says Father Alvarez, " they daily diminish the number and grievousness of their faults, and afterwards efface them by acts of divine love."

Whoever acts in this manner shall acquire sanctity: neither shall his defects hinder him from tending to perfection. Hence Louis de Blois tells us not to be disheartened by these little faults, because we have several means of expiating them: "If every day we fall several times, it will depend entirely on us to employ every day the means of atoning for our faults."[10813] But how can he that entertains an attachment for any earthly good, and voluntarily falls and relapses into that attachment without any wish to get rid of it, advance in the way of God ? The bird that escapes from the net instantly takes flight; but as long as it is held even by a slender thread, it remains on the earth. " Every little thread of attachment to this world," says St. John of the Cross, "impedes the spiritual progress of the soul."

Let us, then, guard against falling into this miserable state of tepidity; for, according to what has been already said, to raise a priest from such a state a most powerful grace is necessary. But what reason have we to think that God will give such a grace to priests that provoke him to vomit them out of his mouth ? Some people that has fallen into this miserable state may ask, Is there, then, no hope for me? There is ground of hope in the mercy and power of God. The things that are impossible with men, are possible with God.[10814] It is impossible for the tepid priest to rise, but to raise him up is not impossible to God. However, a desire, at least, is necessary on our part. How can he that does not even desire to rise hope for the divine aid ? Let him that has not even this desire ask it of God. If we pray, and persevere in prayer, the Lord shall grant both the desire and the grace to rise. Ask, and you shall receive.[10815]

God has promised, and his promise cannot fail. Let us then pray, and say with St Augustine, “ Let my merit be Thy mercy.”[10816] Lord, I have no claim or merit to be heard by you, but, O eternal Father, your mercy and the merits of Jesus Christ, are my merits. To have recourse to the most holy Virgin is also a great means of rising from a state of tepidity.

Chapter VI

THE SIN OF INCONTINENCE

I. NECESSITY OF PURITY IN THE PRIEST

INCONTINENCE is called by St. Basil of Seleucia[10817] a living plague, and by St. Bernardine of Sienna, the most noxious of all sins; " a terrible gnawing worm."[10818] Because, as St. Bonaventure says, impurity destroys the germs of all virtues.[10819]Hence St. Ambrose calls it the hot-house and mother of all vices.[10820] For it brings with it hatred, thefts, sacrileges, and other similar vices. Hence St. Remigius has justly said: "With the exception of those that die in childhood, most men will be damned on account of this vice."[10821] And Father Paul Segneri says that as pride has filled hell with angels, so impurity has filled it with men. In other vices the devil fishes with the hook, in this he fishes with the net; so that by incontinence he gains more for hell than by all other sins. On the other hand, God has inflicted the severest chastisement on the world, sending deluges of water and fire from heaven, in punishment of the sin of incontinence.

Chastity is a most beautiful gem; but, as St. Athanasius says, it is a gem found by few on this earth.[10822] But if this gem is suitable for seculars, it is absolutely necessary for ecclesiastics. Among the virtues that St. Paul prescribes to Timothy, he recommended chastity in a special manner: Keep thyself chaste?[10823] Origen says that chastity is the first virtue with which a priest that goes to the altar should be adorned.[10824]Clement of Alexandria has written that only they that lead a chaste life are and can be called priests.[10825] Hence, then, as purity constitutes priests, so, on the other hand, incontinence robs them, as it were, of their dignity, says St. Isidore.[10826]

Hence the holy Church has always endeavored by so many Councils, laws, and admonitions to guard with jealousy the chastity of her priests. Innocent III. made the following ordinance: " No one is to be allowed to be ordained priest unless he is a virgin or his chastity has been proved. “[10827] He also commanded that the incontinent priest should be excluded “ from all ecclesiastical dignities.”[10828]St. Gregory ordained: “ He that has fallen into a carnal sin after ordination should be deprived so far of his office, that he be not permitted to perform any function at the altar.”[10829]Besides, he ordained,[10830] that if a priest committed a sin against purity, he should do penance for ten years.

For the first three months he should sleep on the ground, remain in solitude, have no intercourse with any people, and should be deprived of Communion. He should then fast every day for a year and a half on bread and water, and for the remainder of the ten years he should continue to fast on bread and water only on three days in the week. In a word, the Church regards as a monster the priest that does not lead a life of chastity.

II. MALICE OF IMPURITY IN THE PRIEST

Let us, in the first place, examine the malice of the sin of a priest who violates chastity. A priest is the temple of God, as well by the vow of chastity as by the sacred unction by which he was consecrated to God. He that hath anointed us in God, who also hath sealed us.[10831] Such is the language of St. Paul, speaking of himself and of his associates in the ministry. Hence Cardinal Hugo has said: “The priest should not pollute the sanctuary of the Lord, because the oil of the holy unction is poured out upon him.”[10832] The body, then, of the priest is the sanctuary of the Lord. “ Keep thyself chaste,” says St. Ignatius, Martyr, “ as a gift of God and the temple of the Holy Ghost. “[10833] St. Peter Damian says that the priest that denies his body by impurity violates the temple of God. He then adds: “ Do not change the vessels consecrated to God into vessels of contumely.”[10834]

What would you say of the man that should use a consecrated chalice at table? Speaking of priests, Innocent II. has said: *“Since they should be the temples of the sanctuaries of the Holy Ghost, they are disgraced if they become addicted to impurity.”*[10835] How horrible to see a priest that should send forth in every direction the light and odor of purity, become sordid, fetid, and polluted with sins of the flesh ? *The sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire*[10836] Hence Clement of Alexandria has written that an unchaste priest, as far as in him lies, contaminates God himself, who dwells within him.[10837] Of this God himself complains by the mouth of his prophet: *Her priests have despised My law, and have despised My sanctuaries, . . . and I was profaned in the midst of them.*[10838] Alas! says the Lord, by the incontinence of my priest, I, too, am defiled: by violating chastity he pollutes my sanctuary, that is, his body which I have consecrated, and in which I often come to dwell. It was this St. Jerome meant when he said: *"We defile the body of Christ whenever we approach the altar unworthily."*[10839]Besides, the priest on the altar offers to God in sacrifice the immaculate Lamb; that is, the very Son of God. On this account, says St. Jerome, the priest should be so chaste as not only to abstain from every impure action, but also to avoid every indecent glance.[10840]

St. John Chrysostom likewise has written that a priest should have purity which would make him fit to stand in the midst of the angels in heaven.[10841] And in another place he has said that by their purity the hands of a priest, which must touch the flesh of Jesus Christ, should be more resplendent than the rays of the sun.[10842] On the other hand, St. Augustine asks where can a man be found so wicked as to presume to touch the most holy sacrament of the altar with unclean hands?[10843]But," says St. Bernard, " the priest that dares to ascend the altar, to handle the body of Jesus Christ, after being contaminated with sins of impurity, is guilty of a far more enormous crime."[10844] "Ah! priest of God," exclaims St. Augustine, " the hands that you moisten with the blood of the Redeemer do not moisten with the sacrilegious blood of sin."[10845] Ah! do not allow the hands which are bathed in the blood of the Redeemer, shed one day for the love of you, to be polluted with the sacrilegious blood of sin.

Moreover, Cassian says that priests must not only touch, but must also eat, the sacred flesh of the Lamb; and therefore they should practise angelic purity.[10846]

But according to Peter Comestor, the priest who, while he is defiled with sins against chastity, pronounces the words of consecration, spits, as it were, in the face of Jesus Christ; and in receiving the sacred body and blood into his polluted mouth, he, as it were, casts them into the foulest mire.[10847]St. Vincent Ferrer says that such a priest is guilty of a greater impiety than if he threw the consecrated host into a sink.[10848] Here St. Peter Damian exclaims, and says, “ O priests ! whose duty it is to offer to God the immaculate Lamb, do not first immolate yourself to the devil by your impurities.”[10849] Hence the saint afterwards calls the unchaste priest a victim of the devils, on which these cruel spirits make a most delicious feast in hell.[10850] Besides, the unchaste priest not only brings himself to perdition, but he also causes the damnation of many others. St. Bernard said that incontinence in ecclesiastics was one of the greatest persecutions that the Church could suffer. On the words of Ezechias, Behold in peace is my bitterness most bitter[10851]says the holy Doctor, the Church has suffered much from the sword of the tyrant and from the infection of heresy, but she suffers still more from the incontinence of the unchaste ecclesiastic, who by his scandals drags the bowels out of his own mother.[10852]How shameful,” says St. Peter Damian, “ to see a man who preaches chastity made the slave of lust !”[10853]

III. SAD EFFECTS OF IMPURITY

Let us. now examine the evils that the vice of incontinence produces in the soul, particularly in that of a priest.

1. BLINDNESS OF THE SOUL

First, this sin blinds the soul, and makes her lose sight of God and of the eternal truths. “ Chastity,” says St. Augustine, “ purifies the mind, and through it men see God.”[10854] But the first effect of the vice of impurity is, according to St. Thomas, blindness of the understanding. Its effects are thus described by the saint: “The effects of this impure vice are: blindness of the mind, hatred of God, attachment to the present life, horror of the future life.”[10855] St. Augustine has said that impurity takes away the thought of eternity.[10856] When a raven finds a dead body, its first act is to pluck out the eyes; and the first injury that incontinence inflicts on the soul is to take away the light of the things of God. This was felt by Calvin, who was first a parish priest, a pastor of souls,[10857] but afterwards, by this vice, became an heresiarch; by Henry VIII., first the defender and afterwards the persecutor of the Church.

This was also experienced by Solomon; first a saint, and afterwards an idolater. The same happens to the unchaste priest. They shall, says the Prophet Sophonias, walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord.[10858] Miserable man! in the midst of the light of the Masses that he celebrates, of the Offices that he recites, and of the funerals that he attends, he remains as blind as if he believed neither in death that awaits him, nor in a future judgment, nor in hell that he purchases by his sins. *Mayest thou, says the Lord, grope at midday as the Mind is wont to grope in the dark*[10859]In a word, he is so blinded by the fetid mire in which he is immersed, that after having forsaken God who has raised him so much above others, he does not even think of returning to ask pardon. They will not, says the Prophet Osee, set their thoughts to return to their God; for the spirit of fornication is in the midst of them[10860]Hence St. John Chrysostom says, that neither the admonitions of Superiors, nor the counsels of virtuous friends, nor the fear of chastisements, nor the danger of shame shall be sufficient to enlighten the unchaste priest.[10861]No wonder: for he is so blind that he can no longer see. *Fire hath fallen on them, and they have not seen the sun.*[10862] *"This fire is no other than the fire of concupiscence,"*[10863]says St. Thomas.

Hence he afterwards adds, " The sins of the flesh extinguish the light of reason, for carnal delectations cause the soul to be drawn entirely towards the pleasures of the senses."[10864] This vice, by its beastly delectation, deprives man even of reason; so that, as Eusebius says, it makes him become worse than the senseless beast.[10865] Hence the unchaste priest, blinded by his impurities, shall no longer make any account of the injuries that he does to God by his sacrileges, nor of the scandal that he gives to others. He will even go so far as to dare to say Mass in a state of sin. No wonder; for he that has lost the light, easily abandons himself to the commission of every crime.

Come ye to Him and be enlightened[10866] He that wants light must draw near to God; but because, according to the words of St. Thomas, " a thoroughly impure man is mostly removed from God,"[10867] impurity removes man to a great distance from God, the unchaste becomes, as it were, senseless brutes that no longer apprehend spiritual things. But the sensual man, says St. Paul, perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God[10868] Hell, eternity, and the dignity of the priesthood, no longer make any impression upon the incontinent ecclesiastic: He perceiveth not!"[10869]

Perhaps he will, as St. Ambrose says, begin even to entertain doubts about faith: "Whenever one begins to be incontinent, one begins to deviate from the faith."[10870] Oh! how many miserable priests have by this vice even lost their faith ? His bones, says Job, shall be filled with the vices of his youth (the vices of youth are impurities), and they shall sleep with him in the dust[10871] As the light of the sun cannot enter into a vessel filled with earth, so the light of God cannot shine into a soul habituated to sins of the flesh: her vices shall continue to sleep with her till death.

But as that unhappy soul, for the sake of her impurities, forgets God, so shall he forget her, and permit her to remain abandoned in her darkness. Because, says the Lord, thou hast forgotten Me, and hast cast Me off behind thy body, bear thou also thy wickedness and thy fornications[10872] St. Peter Damian says, " They throw the Lord behind their bodies that obey the voice of their passions."[10873] Father Cataneo[10874] relates that a sinner who had contracted a habit of impurity, when admonished by a friend to abandon his evil ways, unless he wished to be damned, answered: " Friend, I may indeed go to hell for this habit." He certainly went to that place of torment, for he was suddenly struck dead. A priest who was found in the house of a certain lady whom he went to tempt was compelled by her husband to take a poisonous draught. After returning home he took to his bed, and mentioned to a friend the misfortune that had befallen him. The friend seeing the miserable man so near his end exhorted him to go to confession. No, replied the unhappy man, I cannot go to confession; this favor only I ask of you, go to such a lady, tell her that I die for the love of her. Can greater blindness be conceived.

2. OBSTINACY OF THE WILL

In the second place, the sin of impurity produces obstinacy of the will. " Once fallen into the snare of the devil, one cannot so easily escape it," says St. Jerome.[10875] And according to St. Thomas, there is no sin in which the devil takes so much delight as in impurity; because the flesh is strongly inclined to that vice, and he that falls into it can be rescued from it only with difficulty.[10876] Hence the vice of incontinence has been called by

Clement of Alexandria “a malady without remedy;”[10877] and by Tertullian, “an incurable vice.”[10878] Hence St. Cyprian calls it the mother of impenitence.[10879] “ It is impossible,” says Peter de Blois, “for him that submits to the domination of the flesh to conquer carnal temptations.”[10880]Father Biderman relates of a young man, who was in the habit of relapsing into this sin, that at the hour of death he confessed his sins with many tears and died, leaving strong grounds to hope for his salvation. But on the following day his confessor, while saying Mass, felt some one pulling the chasuble; turning round he saw a dark cloud, which sent forth scintillations of fire, and heard a voice saying that was the soul of the young man that had died; that though he had been absolved from his sins, he was again tempted, yielded to a bad thought, and was damned.

The prophet and the priest are defiled. . . . Therefore their way shall be as a slippery way in the dark; for they shall be driven on, and fall therein.[10881] Behold the ruin of the unchaste ecclesiastic. He walks on a slippery path, in the midst of darkness, and is impelled to the precipice by the devils, and by evil habits. Hence it is impossible for him to escape destruction. St. Augustine says that they that give themselves up to this vice soon contract the habit of it; and the habit soon creates, as it were, a necessity of sinning.[10882] The vulture rather than abandon the carcass on which it has begun to feed is content to wait to be killed by the sportsman. This happens to him that contracts a habit of impurity.

Oh! how much greater the obstinacy produced in the priest that submits to the tyrannical rule of this vice, than that which it causes in seculars! This happens both because the priest has had greater light to know the malice of mortal sin, and because in him impurity is a greater sin than it is in a secular. For the unchaste priest not only offends against chastity, but also against religion, by violating his vow, and, generally speaking, he also transgresses against fraternal charity. For the incontinence of a priest is almost always accompanied with most grievous scandal to others. In his book on the “ Last Things,” Denis the Carthusian relates that a servant of God, conducted in spirit to purgatory, saw there many seculars that were suffering for sins against purity, but very few priests. Having asked the reason, he was told that scarcely any unchaste priest repents sincerely of this sin, and that, therefore, almost all such priests are damned.[10883]

3. ETERNAL DAMNATION

Finally, this accursed vice leads all, and particularly priests that are infected with it, to eternal damnation. St. Peter Damian says that the altar of God receives no other fire than that of divine love. Hence he that dares to ascend the altar inflamed by the fire of impurity is consumed by the fire of divine vengeance.[10884] And in another place he says that all the obscenities of the sinner shall be one day converted into pitch, which shall eternally nourish in his bowels the fire of hell.[10885]

Oh ! what vengeance does not the Lord inflict on the unchaste priest ! How many priests are now in hell for sins against purity ! “ If,” says St. Peter Damian, “ the man in the Gospel, who came to the marriage feast without the nuptial garment, was condemned to darkness, what then should he expect who, admitted to the mystical banquet of the divine Lamb, neglects to adorn himself with the brilliant garb of virtues, and even presents himself impregnated with the fetid odors of impurity.”[10886]

Baronius relates that a priest who had contracted a habit of sins against chastity saw at death a multitude of devils coming to carry him away. He turned to a religious who was attending him, and besought him to pray for him. But soon after he exclaimed that he was before the tribunal of God, and cried aloud: “ Cease, cease to pray for me, for I am already condemned, and your prayers can be of no service to me.”[10887] St. Peter Damian[10888] relates that in the city of Parma a priest and a woman with whom he had sinned were suddenly struck dead. In the revelations of St. Bridget[10889] we read that an unchaste priest was killed by a thunderbolt; and it was found that the lightning had reduced to ashes only the indelicate members, and left the remainder of the body untouched, as if to show that it was principally for incontinence that God had inflicted this chastisement upon him. Another priest in our own time died suddenly in the act of committing a sin against chastity, and for his greater infamy was exposed in the court of the church. The unchaste priest dishonors the Church, and therefore the Lord justly chastises him by making him the most dishonored of all men. Thus, speaking of priests, God says, by the Prophet Malachy, But you have departed out of the way, and have caused many to stumble at the law. . . . Therefore I also made you contemptible, and base before all people.[10890]

IV. REMEDIES FOR INCONTINENCE

The spiritual masters point out many remedies for the vice of impurity; but the principal and the most necessary are the flight of occasions, and prayer. As to the first means, St. Philip Neri used to say that in these warfare cowards, that is, they that avoid dangerous occasions, gain the victory. Let a man use all other possible means, unless he flies away he is lost. He that loveth danger shall perish in it.[10891]

As to the second means, it is necessary to know that we have not strength to resist temptations of the flesh. This strength must be the gift of God. But God grants it to those only that pray and ask for it. The only defence against this temptation, says St. Gregory of Nyssa, is prayer.[10892] And before him the Wise Man said: And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, . . . I went to the Lord and besought Him[10893]

Chapter VII

THE SACRILEGIOUS MASS

I. PURITY REQUIRED IN THE PRIEST TO CELEBRATE WORTHILY

WE must needs confess," says the holy Council of Trent, " that no other work can be performed by the faithful so holy and divine as this tremendous mystery itself."[10894] God himself could not enable man to perform a more sublime or sacred action than the celebration of Mass. Oh! how much more excellent than all the ancient sacrifices is our sacrifice of the altar, in which we immolate not an ox, nor a lamb, but the very Son of God? The Jews, says St. Peter of Cluni, had an ox; the Christians have Christ: the sacrifice of the latter as far transcends that of the former, as Christ is more excellent than an ox.[10895]The same author adds, that to servants a servile victim was suited, but for friends and children was reserved Jesus Christ a victim that has delivered us from sin and eternal death.[10896] Justly, then, has St. Laurence Justinian said, that there is no oblation greater, more profitable to us, or more pleasing to God, than the offering that is made in the sacrifice of the Mass.[10897]

According to St. John Chrysostom, during the celebration of Mass the altar is surrounded by angels, who are present to pay homage to Jesus Christ, the victim offered in sacrifice.[10898] And St. Gregory asks, " who doubts that at the very hour of immolation, at that voice of the priest, the heavens are opened and the choirs of angels are present at that mystery of Jesus Christ?"[10899] St. Augustine says that the angels assist as servants to the priest who offers the sacrifice.[10900]

Now the Council of Trent teaches that Jesus Christ himself was the first that offered this great sacrifice of his body and blood, and that he now offers himself by the hands of a priest chosen to be his minister and representative on the altar.[10901]St. Cyprian says that " the priest truly holds the place of Christ,"[10902]and that, therefore, at the consecration, he says This is My body: this is the chalice of My blood[10903]To his disciples Jesus himself said, He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me.[10904]

The priests of the Old Law the Lord commanded to be clean, merely because it was their duty to carry the sacred vessels: Be ye clean, you that carry the vessels of the Lord?[10905]ow much more clean," says Peter de Blois, " should they be who carry Christ in their hands and in their body?"[10906] How much greater purity shall God demand from the priests of the New Law, who must represent the people of Jesus Christ on the altar, in offering to the eternal Father his own very Son ! Justly, then, does the Council of Trent require that priests celebrate this sacrifice with the greatest possible purity of conscience: *"It is also sufficiently clear, that all industry and diligence are to be applied to this end, that it be performed with the greatest possible inward cleanness and purity of heart."*[10907]This, says the Abbot Rupert, is what is signified by the Alb with which the Church commands the priest to be covered from head to foot in the celebration of the holy mysteries.[10908]

It is but just that priests should honor God by innocence of life, since he has honored them so much above others, by making them the ministers of this great mystery. " Behold, O priests," says St. Francis of Assisi, "your dignity; and as the Lord has honored you on account of this mystery, so be careful on your part to love and to honor him. "[10909] But how shall a priest honor God? Is it by the costliness or vanity of his dress ? No, says St. Bernard, but by sanctity of life, by the study of the sacred sciences, and by labor in holy works.[10910]

II. HOW GREAT IS THE CRIME OF THE PRIEST THAT CELEBRATES MASS IN MORTAL SIN

But does the priest that celebrates in mortal sin give honor to God ? As far as regards himself, he treats the Lord with the greatest dishonor that can be offered to him, by despising him in his own people. For by his sacrilege he appears, as far as in him lies, to defile the immaculate Lamb, whom he immolates in the consecrated host. *To you, O priests,* says the Lord by the Prophet Malachy, *who despise My name, . . . you offer polluted bread upon*

My altar, and you say, wherein have we polluted Thee ?[10911] *“ We,”* says St. Jerome, in his comment on this passage, *“ pollute the bread, that is, the body of Christ, when we unworthily approach the altar.*[10912]

God cannot raise a man to a greater elevation than by conferring on him the sacerdotal dignity. How many selections must the Lord have made in calling a people to the priesthood. First, he must select him from a countless number of possible creatures. He must then separate him from so many millions of pagans and heretics, and, lastly, he must make choice of him from the immense multitude of the faithful. And what power does God confer on this man ? If the Lord bestowed only on one man the power of calling down by his words the Son of God from heaven, how great should be his obligations and his gratitude to the Lord ! This power God grants to every priest. *Lifting up the poor out of the dunghill, that he may place him with princes, with the princes of his people.*[10913]

The number of peoples to whom God has given this power does not diminish the dignity or the obligations of the priesthood. But what does the priest do that celebrates in the state of sin ? He dishonors and despises the Lord, by declaring that so great a sacrifice is not deserving of the reverence which would make him dread the sacrilegious oblation of it, says St. Cyril.[10914]

The hand, says St. John Chrysostom, that touches the sacred flesh of Jesus Christ, and the tongue that is purpled with his divine blood, should be purer than the rays of the sun.[10915] In another place he says that a priest ascending the altar should be possessed of purity and sanctity which would merit for him a place in the midst of the angels.[10916] How great, then, must be the horror of the angels when they behold a priest, who is the enemy of God, stretching forth his sacrilegious hands to touch and eat the immaculate Lamb ! “Who,” exclaims St. Augustine, shall be so wicked and daring as to touch the most holy sacrament with polluted hands!”[10917] Still more wicked is the priest that celebrates Mass with a soul defiled by mortal sin. God turns away his eyes that he may not behold such horrible impiety. When, says the Lord, you stretch forth your hands, I will turn away My eyes,. . . . for your hands are full of blood.[10918]

To express the disgust that he feels at the sight of such sacrilegious priests, the Lord declares that he will scatter the dung of their sacrifices over their faces: *I will scatter upon your face the dung of your solemnities.*[10919] It is true, as the Council of Trent teaches, that the holy sacrifice cannot be contaminated by the malice of priests.[10920]However, priests who celebrate in the state of sin defile, as far as in them lies, the sacred mystery; and therefore the Lord declares that he is, as it were, polluted by their abominations. Her priests have defiled My sanctuaries, . . . and I was profaned in the midst of them.[10921] Alas! O Lord, exclaims St. Bernard, how does it happen that some of those that hold a high place in your Church are the first to persecute you![10922] This is, indeed, too true, as St. Cyprian says, that a priest who celebrates Mass in the state of sin insults with his mouth and hands the very body of Christ.[10923] Another author, Peter Comeston, adds, that the priest who pronounces the words of consecration in the state of sin spits, as it were, in the face of Jesus Christ; and when he receives the most holy sacrament into his unhallowed mouth he, as it were, casts the body and blood of Jesus Christ into the mire.[10924]

But why do I say that he casts Jesus Christ into the mire ? The soul of a priest in sin is worse than mire; and, as Theophilactus says, the mire is not so unworthy of receiving the divine flesh as the heart of a sacrilegious priest.[10925] The sacrilegious priest, then, says St. Vincent Ferror, is guilty of greater impiety than if he cast the most holy sacrament into a sink.[10926] Such, too, is the doctrine of St. Thomas of Villanova.[10927]

The sins of a priest are always most grievous on account of the injury that they do to God, who has chosen him for his own minister, and has heaped so many favors upon him. It is one thing, says St. Peter Damian, to violate the laws of a sovereign, and another to strike him with your own hands. This is what the priest does that offers sacrifice in the state of mortal sin. “It is one thing to transgress edicts which the king has promulgated, and another to wound him with our own hands. No one sins more grievously than the priest that offers sacrifice unworthily. When we sin in any other way we, as it were, injure God in his property, but when we unworthily offer sacrifice we dare to lay violent hands upon his people.[10928] This was the sin of the Jews who had the daring audacity to offer violence to the people of Jesus Christ. But St. Augustine teaches that the sin of the priest that offers sacrifice unworthily is still more grievous: “*Those that* *unworthily offer Jesus Christ in heaven sin more grievously than the Jews who crucified him when he was upon earth.*[10929]

The Jews did not know the Redeemer as priests do. Besides, as Tertullian says, the Jews lay hands on Jesus Christ only once, but the sacrilegious priest dares frequently to repeat this injurious treatment.[10930] It is also necessary to remark, that, according to the doctrine of theologians, a priest by the sacrilegious celebration of Mass is guilty of four mortal sins: *1. Because he consecrates in the state of sin, 2 Because he communicates in the state of sin, 3 Because he administers the sacrament in the state of sin; and, 4 Because he administers it to an unworthy people, that is, to himself, who is in mortal sin.*[10931]

This made St. Jerome foam, through zeal, against the Deacon Sabinian. " *Miserable wretch !*" said the holy Doctor, " *how has it happened that your eyes have not grown dim, that your tongue has not been twisted, that your arms have not fallen to the ground when you dared to assist at the altar in the state of sin."*[10932] St. John Chrysostom teaches that a priest that approaches the altar with a soul stained with mortal sin is far worse than a devil.[10933] For the devils tremble in the presence of Jesus Christ We read in the life of St. Teresa that when she was going to Communion one day she saw with terror a devil on each side of the priest who celebrated Mass in the state of mortal sin. The devils trembled in the presence of the holy sacrament, and manifested a desire to fly away.rom the consecrated Host Jesus said to the saint, "Behold the force of the words of consecration, and see, O Teresa, my goodness which makes me willing to place myself in the hands of my enemy for your welfare, and for the welfare of every Christian !"[10934] The devils then tremble before Jesus in the holy sacrament; but the sacrilegious priest not only does not tremble, but, as St. John Chrysostom says, he audaciously tramples on the Son of God in his own people.[10935] In the sacrilegious priest are verified the words of the Apostle: How much more do you think he deserveth worse punishments who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath esteemed the blood of the testament unclean by which he was sanctified ?[10936] Then, in the presence of that God at whose beck the pillars of heaven tremble, and the whole earth and all things in it are moved.[10937] a worm of the earth dares to trample on the blood of the Son of God ! But, alas ! what greater calamity can befall a priest than to change redemption into perdition; sacrifice into sacrilege, and life into death ? Great, indeed, was the impiety of the Jews who drew blood from the side of Jesus Christ; but far greater is the impiety of the priest who receives from the chalice the same blood and insults it. Such is the thought of Peter de Blois; he adds, while borrowing the words of St. Jerome: " Shame on the perfidious Jew; shame on the perfidious Christian : the Jew caused the blood to flow from the side of Christ; the Christian, the priest, causes the same blood to flow from the chalice in order to profane it."[10938]

Of such priests our Lord complained one day to St. Bridget, saying, " They crucify my body more cruelly than the Jews did."[10939] A learned author says that the priest who celebrates in the state of sin is guilty, as it were, of murdering before the eyes of the eternal Father his own Son.[10940]

Oh ! what an impious treason. Behold how Jesus Christ complains, by the mouth of David, of the sacrilegious priest: For if My enemy had reviled Me I would verily have borne with it, . . . but thou, a man of one mind, and My familiar, who didst take sweetmeats together with Me.[10941]Behold an exact description of a priest who offers Mass in the state of sin. If my enemy, said the Lord, had insulted me, I would have borne the offence with less pain; but you whom I have made my familiar, my minister, a prince among my people, to whom I have so often given my flesh for food you have sold me to the devil for the indulgence of passion, for a beastly gratification, for a little earth. Of this sacrilegious treason the Lord complained to St. Bridget: "Such priests," he said, "are not my priests, but real traitors; for, like Judas, they sell and betray me."[10942]St. Bernardine of Sienna teaches that such priests are even worse than Judas; because Judas betrayed the Saviour to the Jews, but they deliver him up to devils by receiving him into their sacrilegious breasts, which are ruled by devils.[10943]

Peter Comestor observes that when a sacrilegious priest begins the prayer Aufer a nobis iniquitates nostras, etc. ("Take away from us our iniquities, etc."), and kisses the altar, Jesus appears to reproach him, and say: Judas, do you betray me with a kiss?[10944] And when the priest, says St. Gregory, extends his arm to communicate, I think I hear the Redeemer say what he said to Judas, " Behold the hand that betrays me is with me on the altar."[10945] Hence, according to St. Isidore of Pelusium, the sacrilegious priest is, like Judas, entirely possessed by the devil.[10946]

Ah ! the blood of Jesus Christ, so much insulted, cries more powerfully for vengeance against the sacrilegious priest than the blood of Abel did against Cain. This Jesus himself declared to St. Bridget. Oh ! what horror must God and his angels feel at the sight of a sacrilegious Mass !

This horror the Lord made known in the following manner, in the year 1688, to his servant Sister Mary Crucified, of Palma, in Sicily. At first she heard a doleful trumpet, which uttered, in a tone of thunder, audible over the entire earth, the following words: *Ultio, pœna, dolor* (vengeance, punishment, pain). She then saw several sacrilegious ecclesiastics singing psalms with discordant voices, and in a confused and irregular manner. She next saw one of them rise up to go to the altar and say Mass. While he was putting on the sacred vestments, the church was covered with darkness and mourning. He approaches the altar, and, in saying the Introibo ad altare Dei, the trumpet sounds again and repeats, *Ultio, pœna, dolor.* In an instant the altar appeared to be surrounded by flames of fire, which denoted the just fury of the Lord against the unworthy celebrant; and at the same time a great multitude of angels were seen with swords in their hands as if to execute vengeance on him for the sacrilegious Mass which he was going to offer. When the monster came near the consecration, a crowd of vipers sprung from the midst of the flames to drive him away from the altar; these vipers represented his fears and stings of conscience. But they were all useless; the impious wretch preferred his own reputation to all these stings of remorse. Finally he pronounced the words of consecration; and instantly the servant of God felt a universal earthquake, which caused heaven, earth, and hell to tremble. She saw angels around the altar bathed in tears; but the divine mother wept still more bitterly at the death of her innocent son, and at the loss of a sinful child. After a vision so tremendous and dismal, the servant of God was so overpowered with fear and sorrow that she could do nothing but weep. The author of her life remarks that it was in the same year the earthquake happened which produced such havoc in the city of Naples and in the surrounding country. Hence we may infer that this earthquake was a punishment for the sacrilegious Mass at which Sister Mary was present.

But, exclaims St. Augustine, what more horrid impiety can be conceived than that the tongue that calls down the Son of God from heaven should be, at the very same moment, employed in outraging his majesty? or that the hands that are bathed in the blood of Jesus Christ should be, at the same time, polluted with the blood of sin.[10947]

To the sacrilegious priest St. Bernard says: O unworthy wretch ! if you wish to commit the enormous crime of celebrating Mass in the state of sin, at least procure another tongue, and do not employ that which is washed in the blood of Jesus Christ; procure hands different from those which you stretch out to touch his sacred flesh.[10948] Oh ! let the priest who wishes to live at enmity with God at least abstain from sacrilegiously offering sacrifice on his altar ! But, no ! says St. Bonaventure: he will, for the sake of the miserable stipend that he receives, continue to commit a sin of such horrible enormity.[10949] Perhaps he expects that the sacred flesh of Jesus Christ which he offers in sacrifice will deliver him from his iniquities ? Shall the holy flesh, says the prophet Jeremias, *take away from thee thy crimes in which thou hast boasted?*[10950] No: the contact of that sacred body, as long as you remain in the state of sin, shall render you more guilty and more deserving of chastisement. He, says St. Peter Chrysologus, who commits a crime in the presence of his judge can advance no grounds of defence.[10951]

What chastisement does not the priest deserve who, instead of carrying with him to the altar flames of divine charity, brings the fetid fire of unchaste love ! Speaking of the punishment inflicted on the sons of Aaron for having offered strange fire, St. Peter Damian says: “ Let us take care not to mingle unholy fire, that is, the flames of lust with the salutary sacrifices.” ![10952]

Whosoever, adds the saint, shall dare to carry the flame of lust to the altar, shall certainly be consumed by the fire of Gods vengeance.[10953] May the Lord, then, says the holy Doctor in another place, preserve us from ever adoring on the altar the idol of impurity, and from placing the Son of the Virgin in the Temple of Venus, that is, in an unchaste heart![10954] If the man that came to the feast without the nuptial garment was cast into darkness, how much greater vengeance shall fall on him who approaches the divine table not only not clothed with a decent garment, but exhaling the stench of his impurities? says the same St. Peter Damian.[10955] Woe, exclaimed St. Bernard, to him that separates himself from God; but still greater woe to the priest who approaches the altar with a guilty conscience.[10956] Speaking one day to St. Bridget of a priest who had sacrilegiously celebrated Mass, the Lord said that he entered into the soul of that priest as a spouse for his sanctification, and that he was obliged to depart from it as a judge, to inflict the punishment merited by the sacrilegious reception of his body.[10957]

If the sacrilegious priest will not abstain from celebrating the divine mysteries in the state of sin, through horror of the insult, or rather of so many insults, offered to God by sacrilegious Masses, he ought at least to tremble at the awful chastisement prepared for him. St. Thomas of Villanova teaches that no punishment is sufficient to avenge a crime so enormous as a sacrilegious Mass. “ Woe,” he says, “ to the sacrilegious hands! woe to the unclean breast of the impious priest! Every punishment is inadequate to the sin by which Christ is despised in this sacrifice.”[10958] *Our Lord once said to St. Bridget that such priests are cursed by all creatures in heaven and on earth.*[10959] A priest, as we have said in another place, is a vessel consecrated to God; and as Balthasar was chastised for having profaned the vessels of the Temple, so says, Peter de Blois, shall the priest be punished who unworthily offers sacrifice: “ We see priests abusing vessels consecrated to God, but near them is that hand and that terrible writing: *Mane, Thecel, Phares numbered, weighed, divided.*”[10960] Thou art numbered: a single sacrilege is sufficient to put an end to the number of divine graces. Thou art weighed : such a crime is enough to make the balance of divine justice descend to the eternal perdition of the sacrilegious priest. Divided : enraged at such an enormity, the Lord shall banish and separate you from himself for eternity. Thus, then, shall be verified the words of David: *Let their table become as a snare before them.*[10961]

The altar shall become for the sacrilegious priest the place of his punishment, where, remaining obstinate in sin, he shall be bound in the chains of hell, and shall be made the perpetual slave of Satan. For, according to St. Laurence Justinian, they that communicate in mortal sin adhere with greater pertinacity to sin.[10962]This is conformable to the doctrine of the apostle, that he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself.[10963] Hence St. Peter Damian exclaims: O priest of God, who offer to the eternal Father his own Son in sacrifice do not beforehand immolate yourself as a victim to the devil.[10964]

Chapter VIII

THE SIN OF SCANDAL

THE devil first procured the invention of deities addicted to vice, he then sought to induce the Gentiles to worship them, that thus men might consider it lawful to sin as often as they pleased, and that they might even lose all horror for the vices with which they saw their gods clothed. This, Seneca, who was a Gentile, confessed: " Since we have such gods the horror of vice should disappear from among men."[10965] " To attribute vices to the gods what is it but to inflame passion in the hearts of men, at the same time legalizing all the disorders through the example of the divinity?"[10966] Hence, as we read in the works of the same Seneca, the unhappy Gentiles would say: "Why should that be forbidden to me what the gods have a right to do ?"[10967] But what the devil obtained from the Gentiles by means of these pretended deities, whom he proposed as models for imitation, he now obtains from Christians by means of the scandalous priest, who by his bad example persuades poor seculars into a belief that what they see in their pastor is lawful, or at least not a great evil in world lings. *Seculars think,"* says St. Gregory, *"that all is allowed them what they see their pastors do, so that they imitate them the more ardently."*[10968] God has placed priests in the world that they maybe a model to others, as our Saviour himself was sent by his Father to be an example to the world: As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.[10969]Hence St. Jerome wrote to a bishop to guard against actions by the imitation of which others might be drawn, as it were, by force into sin.[10970]

The sin of scandal consists not only in directly advising others to do evil, but also in inducing them indirectly by acts to the commission of sin. Scandal is thus defined by St. Thomas and other theologians: " *Every word or action, more or less inordinate, that constitutes for the neighbor an occasion of falling into sin."*[10971] To understand the grievousness of the sin of scandal, it is enough to know, that according to St. Paul he who offends against a brother by leading him into sin, offends against Jesus Christ: When you sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ[10972]

St Bernard assigns the reason, saying, that the author of scandal robs Jesus Christ of the souls redeemed by his blood. The saint goes so far as to say that Jesus Christ suffers more from those that scandalize others than he did from his crucifiers. “ *If our Lord,”* he says, “ *has given his blood to redeem souls, do you not think that of these two persecutions, the one in which scandal robs him of souls purchased by his blood, the other in which the Jews shed his blood, the first is much more cruel to his heart ?”*[10973]

But if in all, even in seculars, the sin of scandal is so detestable, how much greater must be its malice in a priest, whom God has placed on earth to save souls and to conduct them to heaven ! The priest is called the salt of the earth and the light of the world.[10974]The office of salt is to preserve soundness and prevent putrefaction, and the office of the priest is to preserve souls in the grace of God. What, says St. Augustine, shall become of the people if the priest does not perform the office of salt.[10975] Then the saint proceeds to say, this salt shall be fit only to be cast away by the Church, and to be trodden by all.[10976]But what, if, instead of being a preservative, this salt be employed in producing and promoting corruption ? If instead of bringing souls to God, a priest is occupied in leading them to perdition, what punishment shall he deserve?

The priest is also the light of the world.[10977] Hence, says St. John Chrysostom, he should shine with the splendor of his sanctity so as to enlighten all others to imitate his virtues.[10978]

But should this light be changed into darkness, what must become of the world ? Shall it not be brought to ruin ? says St. Gregory.[10979]The saint has written the same to the bishops of France, whom he exhorted to chastise the priest who is guilty of scandal.[10980] This is conformable to the words of the Prophet Osee: And there shall be like people like priest[10981] By the mouth of Jeremias the Lord has said, And I will fill the soul of the priest with fatness : and My people shall be filled with good things.[10982] Hence St. Charles Borromeo says that if the priests be fat and rich in virtue, the people, too, shall be rich; but if the priests be poor, the people shall be in still greater poverty.[10983] Thomas de Cantimpre writes that in Paris a devil told an ecclesiastic to preach to the clergy of that city, and to say that the princes of hell saluted and thanked some of them for having caused the damnation of an immense multitude of souls.[10984] Of this the Lord complained by the Prophet Jeremias: *My people, hath been a lost flock; their shepherds have caused them to go astray.*[10985] There is no alternative, says St. Gregory; when the priest walks into the precipice, the people, too, are dashed to ruin.[10986]

The bad example of the priest necessarily produces immorality among his people, says St. Bernard.[10987] Should a secular mistake the way, he alone is lost; but when a priest errs, he shall cause the perdition of many, particularly of those that are under his care, says the same St. Bernard.[10988] The Lord ordained in Leviticus that for the sin of a single priest a calf should be offered, as well as for the sins of the entire people. From this Innocent III. concludes that the sin of a priest is as grievous as the sins of the whole people. The reason is, says the Pontiff, that by his sin the priest leads the entire people into sin.[10989] And, long before, the Lord himself said the same: If the priest that is anointed shall sin, he maketh the people to offend."[10990] Hence, St. Augustine, addressing priests, says, " Do not close heaven: but this you do if you give to others a bad example to lead a wicked life."[10991] Our Lord said one day to St. Bridget, that when sinners see the bad example of the priest, they are encouraged to commit sin, and even begin to glory in the vices of which they were before ashamed.[10992] Hence our Lord added that worse maledictions shall fall on the priest than on others, because by his sinful life he brings himself and others to perdition.[10993]

The author of the Imperfect Work says that all that see a tree covered with pale and withered leaves immediately infer that its roots have been injured; and when we see a people immoral, we may justly conclude, without danger of rash judgment, that the priest is a man without virtue.[10994]Yes, says St. John Chrysostom, the life of the priest is the root from which the people, who are the branches, receive nutriment. St. Ambrose[10995] also says that priests are the head from which virtue flows to the members, that is, to seculars. The whole head is sick, says the Prophet Isaias; . . . from the sole of the foot unto the top of the head there is no soundness therein.[10996]St. Isidore explains this passage in the following words: “ This languishing head is the priest that commits sin, and that communicates his sin to the whole body.” St. Leo weeps over this evil, saying,[10997] How can health be found in the body if the head be not sound? [10998] Who, says St. Bernard, shall seek in a sink the limpid water of the spring ? Shall I, adds the saint, seek counsel from the man that knows not how to give counsel to himself?[10999] Speaking of the bad example of. princes, Plutarch[11000] says, that it poisons not a single cup, but the public fountain; and thus, because all draw from the fountain, all are poisoned.

This may be said with greater truth of the bad example of priests; hence Eugene III. has said that bad Superiors are the principal causes of the sins of inferiors.[11001] Priests are called by St. Gregory[11002] *Patres Christianorum* The Fathers of Christians. Thus also are they called by St. John Chrysostom, who says that a priest as the representative of God is bound to take care of all men, because he is the Father of the whole world.[11003] As a parent, then, sins doubly when he gives bad example to his children, so a priest is also guilty of a double sin when he gives bad example to seculars, says Peter de Blois.[11004] St. Jerome made the same remark in a letter to a certain bishop: “ Whatever you do, all will think they may also do.”[11005]When they sin at the sight of the bad example of a priest, seculars, as Cesarius has observed, say, “ Do not also priests do such things ?”[11006] St. Augustine puts the following words into the mouth of a secular: “Why do you reproach me ? are not priests doing the same? and you wish to force me not to do so ?”[11007] St. Gregory says that when, instead of edifying the people, a priest gives scandal, he renders sin, in a certain manner, honorable rather than an object of horror.[11008]

Such a priest, then, is at the same time a parent and a parricide; for, as St. Gregory says, he is the cause of the death of his spiritual children. “ You see,” says the saint, “ what blows daily are given to the people, and whose fault is it but the fault of priests? We are the cause of the death of the people, while we should be their leaders to eternal life.”[11009] Some one that has lost the divine light may say I must give an account of my own sins, but what have I to do with the sins of others? He may say what he pleases, but I exhort him to listen to the words of St. Jerome: *“If you say I have enough to do with my own conscience; what do I care for peoples talk? listen to the* *words of the Apostle: Providing good things, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men"*[11010] St. Bernard says that the scandalous priest kills others at the same time that he murders his own soul.[11011] And in another place the saint writes that there is no plague more noxious to the people than ignorance in a priest united with irregularity of life.[11012]In another place the same saint says that in their sermons many priests are orthodox, but in their conduct they are heretics; because by their bad example they inflict a deeper wound on religion than heretics do by teaching false doctrines, because acts have more force than words.[11013]

Seneca says that the way of instruction is a long and tedious way of learning vice or virtue; but the way of example is short and efficacious.[11014] Hence, speaking particularly of the chastity of priests, St. Augustine has written : " To all chastity is very necessary, but especially to the ministers of Christ, whose lives should be to others a sermon unto salvation."[11015]How can the slave of lust preach chastity ? says St. Peter Damian.[11016] St. Jerome says that the very state and dress of an ecclesiastic call for and demand chastity.[11017] What a source of scandal, then, to the Church to see a man with the name and rank of a saint give examples of vice? " No one," says St. Gregory, " injures the Church more than he that bears the name and the Order of sanctity."[11018] And must it not, adds St. Isidore of Pelusium, be a still more disastrous evil to see a priest avail himself of his dignity as the arms with which he commits sin ?[11019] According to the words of Ezechiel, such a priest renders the exalted dignity of his state an object of abomination: Thou hast made thy beauty to be abominable.[11020]

St. Bernard says that the priest that does not give good example is an object of scorn to the entire people.[11021] It is not in order to see a priest live like worldlings; but what a scandal to see his conduct worse than that of seculars[11022] says the author of the Imperfect Work? And what example, says St. Ambrose, can the people take from you, if in you, who are esteemed holy, they witness actions of which they themselves are ashamed ?[11023] *Hear ye this, O priests,* says the prophet Osee, . . . *for there is a judgment against you, because you have been a snare to them whom you should have watched over, and a net spread upon Thabor."*[11024] The sportsman employs decoys, that is, birds that are bound so that they cannot fly away, and the devil employs the authors of scandal in order to catch souls in his net. Says St. Ephrem: When the soul is once caught it becomes as a snare for catching others."[11025] Of these authors of scandal God complains by the prophet Jeremias, saying, *For among My people are found wicked men, that lie in wait as fowlers, setting snares and traps to catch!*[11026]*But,* says Cæsar of Arles, *the devil seeks in a special manner to employ for his decoys scandalous priests; hence this author calls them decoy birds whom the devils usually incite to catch others.*[11027] A certain author attests that in ancient times when a simple ecclesiastic passed by the way all rose up and besought him to recommend them to God. Is this done at the present day? Alas! Jeremias weeps, and says: How is the gold become dim, the finest color is changed, the stones of the sanctuary are scattered in the top of every street ?[11028] The gold, according to the exposition of Cardinal Hugo, signifies ecclesiastics, in some of whom it has lost its beautiful color: it has ceased to be ruddy with holy charity; it has grown dim, and no longer shines with the splendor of brilliant examples. The stones of the sanctuary, that is, says St. Jerome, many of the priests, are scattered through the streets, and serve only to precipitate poor seculars into vice. This passage is thus explained also by St. Gregory: "The gold is obscured, for the priests dishonor their lives by the baseness of their works. It has lost its beautiful color, since their shameful actions have covered with reproach the sacerdotal dignity. The stones of the sanctuary are scattered through the streets, because recollection and the holy exercises have given way to dissipation and worldly occupations, so that one finds really no secular enterprise to which the priest has not consecrated his energy."[11029]*The sons of My mother have fought against Me.*[11030]Origen applies this passage to the disorderly priest, who, he says, arms himself by his scandals against his own mother, the Church.St. Jerome says that the Church is laid waste by the scandalous lives of some of her priests.[11031] Hence on the words of Ezechias, Behold in peace is My bitterness most bitter[11032]St. Bernard, speaking in the name of the Church, said: " Now we have peace from pagans, peace from heretics, not, however, from our own children."[11033]At present, says the holy Church, I am not persecuted by the pagans, for the tyrants have ceased, nor by the heretics, because there are no new heresies; but I am persecuted by the ecclesiastic, who by his scandals robs me of so many souls. " I think," says St. Gregory, "that no one injures the interests of God as the priests do whom he has himself charged with the duty of drawing souls from vice, and who by their bad example precipitate them into it."[11034] By his bad example the scandalous priest brings disgrace even on his own ministry, that is, on his sermons, Masses, and all his functions. Against this the Apostle has warned priests: Giving no offence to any man, that our ministry be not blamed, but in all things let us exhibit our selves as the ministers of God.[11035]Salvian says that through certain priests the law of Jesus Christ is dishonored.[11036] St. Bernardine of Sienna writes that many, seeing the bad example of the scandalous ecclesiastic, begin even to waver in faith, and thus abandon themselves to vice, despising the sacraments, hell, and heaven.[11037]

St. John Chrysostom writes that *the infidels, seeing the vices of certain priests, would say that the God of the Christians either was not the true God, or that he was not a God of sanctity. For, said they, were he holy, how could he tolerate the sins of his priests?*[11038] In the instruction on the Mass we shall relate more at length the fact of a heretic who had resolved to abjure his errors, but being afterwards present at a Mass celebrated in a scandalous manner, he determined to remain in his heresy, and said that even the Pope did not believe in the Mass, for if he did he would condemn such priests to be burnt alive. St. Jerome said that among those that had infected the Church and perverted the people, he found in history the names only of priests.[11039] And Peter de Blois says: " On account of the negligence of priests heresies came into existence."[11040] In another place he says: "*On account of the sins of priests the holy Church of God has been covered with opprobrium and trodden in the dust."*[11041]

St. Bernard was of opinion that greater injury is done to the Church by scandalous priests than even by the heretics; because we may guard against heretics, but how can we guard against the priest of whose ministry we must necessarily avail ourselves ? " See," says the holy Doctor, " what poison is now ravaging the whole body of the Church ! The more it extends the less it can be checked, and the greater the danger of becoming more hidden. Let a heretic preach impious doctrines, and he will be expelled; let him have recourse to violence, and we shall flee from him. But now how can we reject or expel priests? We need them, and all are our enemies."[11042]

Oh ! how great the punishment which is reserved for the scandalous priest! If against every secular that gives scandal vengeance has been threatened, *Woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh.*[11043] how much more tremendous the scourge that shall fall on the scandalous priest whom God has chosen from among all men for his own minister! *He chose him out of all flesh*[11044] Jesus Christ has chosen him to bring forth fruit by saving souls. I have chosen you, and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit.[11045] And by bad example he robs Jesus Christ of souls redeemed with his blood. St. Gregory says that such a priest merits as many deaths as he gives examples of vice.[11046] Speaking especially of priests, our Lord said to St. Bridget: *"Upon them greater malediction will come, because by their conduct they damn not only themselves, but also others."*[11047]

To them is intrusted the care of cultivating the vineyard of the Lord; but he casts out of his vineyard the scandalous priest, and places in his stead others that will bring forth good fruit: *He will bring those evil men to an evil end: and will let out His vineyard to other husbandmen, that shall render Him the fruit in due season*[11048] Alas! what shall become of the scandalous priest on the day of judgment? *I will, says the Lord, meet them as the bear that is robbed of her whelps*[11049] With what rage does the bear rush on the sportsman that has killed or stolen her whelps ! It is thus God has declared that he will meet on the Day of Judgment the priest that has destroyed instead of saving souls. And if, says St. Augustine, we shall scarcely be able to give an account of ourselves, what shall become of the priest that shall have to render an account of the souls he has sent to hell?[11050] And St. John Chrysostom says, " If priests sin, all the people are led to sin. Hence every one must render an account of his own sins; but the priests are also responsible for the sins of others."[11051] Oh! how many seculars, how many peasants, how many weak and tender women, shall cover the priest with shame and confusion in the valley of Josaphat ! " The layman," says St. John Chrysostom, " will on the day of judgment receive the priestly stole, but the sinful priest, stripped of his dignity, will have to take his place among infidels and heretics."[11052]

Let us, then, dearly beloved priests, guard against bringing to hell by our bad example the souls for whose salvation God has placed us in the world.

And for this purpose we must avoid not only actions that are in themselves unlawful, but also those that have the appearance of evil. *From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves.*[11053] The Council of Agatha ordains " *that servant maids be removed from the houses of priests."*[11054] To keep young servant maids, though they were not an occasion of evil (which is impossible), has at least the appearance of evil, and may give scandal to others. Hence the Apostle has written that we should sometimes abstain from what is lawful, lest it become a stumbling-block to the weak[11055] It is also necessary to abstain with great care from giving expression to certain worldly maxims; such as, we must not allow others to take precedence; we must enjoy the present life; happy the. man that abounds in riches; God is full of mercy and has pity on us, even on sinners that persist in sin. But how scandalous would it be to praise peoples for sinful conduct ! For example, for resenting an injury, or for maintaining a dangerous friendship. " It is worse," says St. John Chrysostom, " to praise those that do wrong, than to do wrong ourselves. "[11056] He that has hitherto had the misfortune of giving scandal, or of being the occasion of scandal, is bound under pain of grievous sin to repair it by external good example.

Chapter IX

THE ZEAL OF THE PRIEST

In giving the spiritual exercises to the clergy, the sermon on zeal is the most necessary, and may be the most useful of all; for if one of the priests who assist at the exercises resolves (as we ought to hope through the divine grace) to employ himself in procuring the salvation of souls, God will gain not one but a hundred and a thousand souls, who will be saved through the labors of that priest.)

WE shall speak in this chapter:

1. Of the obligation of priests to labor for the salvation of souls.
2. Of the pleasure that a priest who seeks the salvation of souls gives to God.
3. Of the eternal glory and the great reward that a priest who labors for the salvation of souls may expect from God.

I. THE OBLIGATION OF EVERY PRIEST TO LABOR FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

In the world there are at the same time many and few priests many in name, but few in reality," says the author of the " Imperfect Work."[11057] The world is filled with priests, but few of them labor to be priests; that is, to fulfil the duty and obligations of a priest, or to save souls. The dignity of priests is great, because they are the coadjutors of God. " We are God's coadjutors."[11058]

And what greater dignity, says the Apostle, than that of cooperating with Jesus Christ in saving the souls which he has redeemed ? Hence St. Denis the Areopagite calls the dignity of the priest a divine dignity, and even the most divine of all divine things. For, as St. Augustine says, it requires more power to sanctify a sinner than to create heaven and earth.

St. Jerome used to call priests the saviours of the world.[11059] St. Prosper calls them the administrators of the royal house of God.[11060]And, long before, Jeremias called them the fishers and sportsmen of the Lord: Behold, I will send many fishers, saith the Lord, and after this I will send many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks[11061] St. Ambrose[11062]“ explains this passage of priests who gain to God the most abandoned sinners, and deliver them from all their vices. The mountain signifies pride; the hill, pusillanimity; and the holes of the rocks, bad habits, which bring with them darkness of understanding and coldness of heart. Peter de Blois says that in the work of creation God had no one to assist him, but in the mystery of redemption he wished to have coadjutors.[11063] Who on this earth is superior to the priest? “To the king are intrusted earthly things; to me, a priest, heavenly things,”[11064] says St. Chrysostom.

And Innocent III. adds: “Although the dignity of the Blessed Virgin was greater than that of the apostles, yet to these, and not to her, were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”[11065]

St. Peter Damian calls the priest the leader of the people of God.[11066] St. Bernard styles him the guardian of the Church, which is the spouse of Jesus Christ.[11067] St. Clement, an earthly god.[11068] For by the ministry of priests the saints are formed on earth. St. Flavian says that all the hope and salvation of men is placed in the hands of priests.[11069]And St. John Chrysostom writes, “ Our parents generate us for the present life, priests for life eternal.”[11070] Without priests, says St. Ignatius Martyr, there would be no saints on this earth.[11071] And, long before, holy Judith said that on priests depends the salvation of the people. You are the ancients among the people of God, and their very soul resteth upon you[11072] The priest is the author of holiness of life in seculars, and on him depends their salvation. Hence St. Clement has said: “ Honor priests as those that effect good conduct in others.”[11073]

Great, then, beyond measure, is the dignity and office of priests, but great also is their obligation to labor for the salvation of souls.

For, says the apostle, *every high—priest taken from among men, in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins.*[11074] He afterwards proceeds to say: *Who can have compassion on* *them that are ignorant.*[11075]The priest, then, is appointed by God as well to honor him by sacrifices, as also to save souls by instructing and converting sinners.

A kingly priesthood . . . a purchased people.[11076]The order of ecclesiastics differs altogether from that of seculars. The latter attend to the things of the world and to them selves, but the former are a purchased people; a people whose business it is to gain not the goods of this earth, but the souls of men, says St. Ambrose.[11077]St. Antonine says that the very name of the priest explains the nature of his office, for sacerdos signifies " *he that teaches holy things."*[11078] And St. Thomas says, *"He that distributes holy things."*[11079] Honorius of Autun says, *presbyter signifies " he that shows the way from exile to our Country. "*[11080]*; St. Ambrose calls priests the " leaders of the flock of Christ."*[11081] Hence the saint says in another place: *" May the name and the works agree, so that the name may not remain a vain title and may not become the cause of terrible crime."*[11082] If, then, the meaning of the words sacerdos and presbyter is to assist souls in order to save and conduct them to heaven, let the name and conduct, says St. Ambrose, correspond; that the name may not be empty, and that the honor of the office may not be come a source of guilt. "[11083] The misery of the flock is the shame of the shepherd," adds the same holy Doctor.

If, then, says St. Jerome, you wish to perform the office of a priest, let the salvation of others be the gain of your soul.[11084]And St. Anselm holds that the proper office of a priest is to preserve souls from the corruption of the world, and to lead them to God.[11085] Hence the Lord has separated priests from the rest of mankind, that they may save themselves and others.[11086] Zeal, as St. Augustine says,[11087] springs from love. Hence, as charity obliges us to love God and our neighbor, so zeal obliges us first to procure the glory and to prevent the dishonor of God, and afterwards to seek the welfare and to avert the injury of our neighbor.

It is useless to say, I am a simple priest; I have not the care of souls; it is enough for me to attend to myself. No: every priest is bound to attend, in the way in which he can, to the salvation of souls, according to their necessity. And in a district in which souls are in grievous spiritual necessity for want of confessors a simple priest is, as we—have proved in our Moral

Theology,[11088] bound to hear confessions; and if he has not the necessary qualifications, he is obliged to qualify himself for the office of confessor. This is the opinion that the learned Father Pavone of the Society of Jesus has held in his works, and not without reason; for as God has sent Jesus Christ to save the world, so Jesus Christ has appointed priests to convert sinners.

As the Father hath sent ore, I also send you.[11089]Hence the Council of Trent ordains that they that wish to receive priesthood should prove themselves fit for the administration of the sacraments.[11090] For this end, says the angelic Doctor, God has constituted the order of priests, that they may sanctify others by the administration of the sacraments.[11091] And priests are specially appointed to administer the sacrament of penance. For immediately after the words: As the Father hath sent me, etc.[11092] St. John has added: When He had said this, He breathed on them; and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost.[11093]Since, then, it is the office of a priest to absolve from sins, one of his principal obligations is to qualify himself for that office, at least when there is necessity, that he may not receive the reproach contained in the words of St. Paul to his companions in the priesthood: And we helping to exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain.[11094] Priests, as Venerable Bede writes, are destined by God to be the salt of the earth, that they may preserve souls from the corruption of sins.[11095] But if salt do not perform the office of salt, it is fit only to be cast out of the house of the Lord, and to be trodden by all.[11096]

Every priest, says St. John Chrysostom, *is, as it were, the father of the whole world, and therefore should have care of all the souls to whose salvation he can co-operate by his labors.*[11097] Besides, priests are appointed by God as physicians to cure every soul that is infirm; thus Origen has called them " Physicians of souls,"[11098] and St. Jerome, " Spiritual physicians."[11099] Hence St. Bonaventure says, " If the physician flees from the sick, who will cure them?"[11100]

Priests are also called the walls of the Church: "The Church has her walls," says St. Ambrose, " that is, her apostolic men."[11101]And the author of the " Imperfect Work" says, "Her walls are the priests."[11102]They are also called the stones that support the Church of God,[11103] and by St. Eucherius they are called the pillars that sustain the tottering world.[11104] Finally, they are called by St. Bernard the very house of God. Hence we may say with St. John Chrysostom, that if a part of the house fall, the injury may be easily repaired;[11105] but if the walls fall, if the foundations and the pillars that sustain the edifice give way; finally, if the whole house tumbles to the ground, how can the loss be ever repaired ? More over, priests are called by the same St. John Chrysostom, the husbandmen of the vineyard of the Lord.[11106]

But, O God ! exclaims St. Bernard with tears, the husbandmen sweat and labor the whole day in the cultivation of their own vineyards.[11107] But what are the occupations of priests whom God has appointed to cultivate his vineyard ? They are, continues the saint, always corrupted with idleness and worldly pleasures,[11108]

The harvest is indeed great, but the laborers are few.[11109] No : the bishops and parish priests are not sufficient for the spiritual wants of the people. If God had not destined other priests to assist souls, he should not have sufficiently provided for his Church. St. Thomas[11110] says that the twelve apostles destined by Jesus Christ for the conversion of the world represented the bishops, and the seventy-two disciples represented all priests ordained for the salvation of souls, the fruit which the Redeemer demands of his priests: *I have chosen you that you should go, and should bring forth fruit!*[11111] Hence St. Augustine calls priests the administrators of the interests of God.[11112]To priests has been intrusted the duty of extirpating vice and pernicious maxims from the minds of the people, and of infusing into them the virtues of the Gospel and the maxims of eternity. On the day God raises a man to the priesthood he says to him what he said to Jeremiah: Lo, I have set thee thus over the nations and over kingdoms, to root up and pull down, and to waste and to destroy, and to build and to plant.[11113]

I do not know how a priest can be excused from sin, who sees the people of the district in grievous necessity, and is able to assist them by teaching the truths of faith, or by preaching the divine word, and even by hearing confessions, and through sloth neglects to give them spiritual aid ? I know not, I say, how he can escape on the Day of Judgment the reproof and chastisement threatened against the slothful servant who hid the talent given to him, that he might trade with it. The master gave him that talent that he might trade with it, but he hid it; and when the master demanded an account of—the profit he had received from it, he answered: *I hid thy talent in the earth ; behold, here thou hast that which is thine.*[11114] But for hiding the talent the master reproved him, saying: What! I have given you a talent that you might trade with it; this is the talent, but where are the profits ? He then took the talent from him, commanded it to be given to another, and ordered him to be cast into exterior darkness: *Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it him that hath ten talents; . . . and the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness*[11115]To be cast into exterior darkness means, according to the commentators, to be sent into the fire of hell, which gives no light, and to be excluded from heaven.

This passage is applied by St. Ambrose,[11116]Calmet, Cornelius à Lapide, and Tirinus to those that can procure the salvation of souls, and neglect to do it, either through negligence or through a vain fear of commiting sin.This," says Father Cornelius, " is advice to those who through indifference or a vain fear of sinning do not devote to the salvation of their neighbor the lights, the talents that they receive from God; no doubt Christ will ask of them an account on the day of judgment."[11117] And St. Gregory says: "Hear! whoever does not wish to employ his talents will be cast out by a sentence of damnation."[11118]Peter de Blois writes: " Whoever employs God s gifts for the good of others deserves to have a greater measure of what he already possesses; but from him who hides the Lords talent will be taken what he seems to possess."[11119] St. John Chrysostom says that he cannot conceive how a priest can be saved who does nothing for the salvation of his neighbor.[11120]After having mentioned the parable of the talent, he says that for a priest the neglect of having employed the talent given to him is criminal, and shall be the cause of his damnation.[11121] Addressing those who say, *"I am satisfied if only I save my soul,"*[11122] St. Augustine says, *"Do you not recall to mind the servant who buried his talent ?"* St. Prosper says *that to save his own soul it will not be enough for a priest to lead a holy life, for he shall be damned with those that are lost through his fault.*[11123]

In one of the apostolical canons we read the following words: " *The priest that does not take care of the clerics or of the people should be punished, and if he perseveres in his carelessness, let him be deposed."*[11124] *Why,* says St. Leo, *should you take the honor of the priesthood if you will* *not labor for the salvation of souls ?*[11125] The Council of Cologne declared that if a people takes the Order of priesthood without the intention of performing the office of vicar of Jesus Christ, or of saving souls, a great and certain chastisement is reserved for him, as for a wolf and a robber, which he is called in the Gospel.[11126]

St. Isidore does not hesitate to charge with mortal sin the priest that neglects to instruct the ignorant and to convert sinners.[11127] And St. John Chrysostom says, " *Not on account of their own, but on account of the sins of others that they did not prevent, priests are often condemned to hell."*[11128] St. Thomas, speaking of a simple priest, says that the priest that fails either through negligence or ignorance to assist souls, renders himself accountable to God for all the souls that are lost through his fault[11129]

St. John Chrysostom says the same: " If priests take care only of their own souls, and neglect the souls of others, they will be condemned to hell with the damned."[11130]

A certain priest in Rome felt great fears at death for his eternal salvation, although he had led a life of retirement and piety. Being asked why he was so much afraid, he answered: " I am afraid, because I have not labored for the salvation of souls." He had reason to tremble, since the Lord employs priests to save souls, and to rescue them from vice. Hence, if a priest do not fulfil this duty, he must render to God an account of all the souls that are lost through his fault: *If when I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; thou declare it not to him, nor speak to him, that he may be converted from his wicked way and live; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand.*[11131]Thus, says St. Gregory, speaking of idle priests, they shall be accountable before God for the souls whom they could assist, and who are lost through their negligence.[11132] Jesus Christ has redeemed souls with the price of his blood: For you are bought with a great price.[11133]But these souls the Redeemer has intrusted to the care of priests. Unhappy me, said St. Bernard, when he saw himself a priest, if I be negligent in taking care of this deposit; that is, of the souls whom the Redeemer considered to be more precious than his own blood.[11134]

Seculars have to render an account of their own sins, but priests must render an account of the sins of all, says the author of the Imperfect Work.[11135] And before him the apostle said: For they watch as being to render an account of your souls.[11136] Thus the sins of others are imputed to the priest that neglects to prevent them, says St. John Chrysostom.[11137] Hence St. Augustine has said: “ If on the day of judgment one can scarcely render an account of ones own soul, how will the priest fare if he has to render an account of all sins?”[11138] Speaking of those that become priests not to save souls, but to secure a more comfortable means of living, St. Bernard says, Oh, how much better would it have been for them to labor in the field, or to beg, than to have taken to the priesthood! On the day of judgment they shall hear complaints against them from so many souls that have been damned through their sloth.[11139]

II. THE PLEASURE THAT A PRIEST WHO LABORS FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS GIVES TO GOD

To understand how ardently God desires the salvation of souls, it is enough to consider what he has done in the work of the redemption of man. Jesus Christ clearly expressed this desire when he said: I have a baptism, wherewith I am to be baptized ; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.[11140] He said that he felt as if swooning away through the ardor with which he wished to see the work of redemption accomplished, that men might be saved.

From this St. John Chrysostom justly infers, that there is nothing more acceptable to God than the salvation of souls.[11141]And before him St. Justin said: “ Nothing is so pleasing to God as to labor to make others better.”[11142] Our Lord once said to Bernard Colnado, a priest who had labored much for the conversion of sinners: “ Labor for the salvation of sinners, for this is what is most pleasing to me.”[11143] This is so dear to God, adds Clement of Alexandria, that the salvation of men appears to be his sole concern.[11144] Hence, addressing a priest, St. Laurence Justinian said: “If you wish to honor God, you can do no better than labor in behalf of the salvation of souls.”[11145]

St. Bernard says that in the eyes of God a soul is more valuable than the whole world.[11146] Hence, according to St. John Chrysostom, a people pleases God more by converting a single soul than by giving all his goods, to the poor.[11147]Tertullian asserts that to God the salvation of a single sheep that has strayed away, is as dear as the salvation of the entire flock.[11148]

Hence the Apostle said: *I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me.*[11149]By these words he signified that Jesus Christ would have died as soon for a single soul as for the salvation of all men, says St. John Chrysostom in his comment on this passage.[11150] This our Redeemer gave us to understand by the parable of the goat that had been lost. On this parable St. Thomas writes: " He calls together all the angels, not that all men, but that he himself may be congratulated on account of the groat that was found, as if man were God's God, as if his salvation depended on man s finding him, and as if God could not be happy "without him.[11151]

It is related by several authors[11152] of St. Carpus, Bishop, that he had a vision in which he seemed to see a scandalous sinner who had induced an innocent people to commit sin, and that he felt himself impelled by zeal to throw him into a precipice on the brink of which he stood, but Jesus Christ appeared to support the sinner with his hand, and said to St. Carpus: " Strike me, for I am ready again to die for sinners."[11153]As if he said: Hold, strike me rather than this sinner; for I have given my life for him, and am ready to give it again to save him from perdition.

The ecclesiastical spirit, says Louis Habert,[11154] consists precisely in an ardent zeal for promoting the glory of God, and the salvation of our neighbor.

Hence, according to Natalis Alexander, they that wish to attend only to themselves, and not toothers, should not be admitted to the priesthood.[11155] The Lord commanded[11156] that the priests of the Old Law should wear vestments covered all over with certain circles, which resembled eyes, to show, as a certain author says, that the priest should be all eyes to attend to the sanctification of the people. St. Augustine says that *zeal for the salvation of souls and for the promotion of divine love in all men springs from love.* Then, adds the saint, *he that has not zeal, shows that he does not love God; and he that does not love God is lost.*[11157] He that watches over his own soul pleases God; but he that watches over the souls of his neighbors, pleases him still more, says St. Bernard.[11158]

God, says St. John Chrysostom, has no better proof of the fidelity and affection of a soul than in seeing her zealous for the welfare of her neighbor.[11159] The Saviour three times asked St. Peter if he loved him:

Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me ?[11160] When assured of Peter s love, Jesus Christ asked him to do nothing else in proof of his love than to take care of souls: He said to him: *Feed My sheep*[11161]

On this passage St. John Chrysostom says: “ The Lord might have said, If you love me, cast away money, practise strict fast, sleep on the hard floor, and macerate yourself by hard labor. But no; he says, Feed my sheep.”[11162] On the word my, St. Augustine remarks that our Lord wished to say: “ Feed them as my sheep, not as thine; seek in them my glory, not thine; my profit, not thine.”[11163] In these words the saint has taught that he that desires to labor for the salvation of souls should seek neither his own glory nor his own gain, but only the advancement of the divine glory.

After reading the lives of the holy martyrs, and of the holy workmen in God s vineyard, St. Teresa[11164] said that she envied the latter more than the former, on account of the great glory which they that labor for the conversion of sinners give to God. St. Catharine of Sienna used to kiss the ground that had been trodden by priests employed in saving souls. Such was her zeal for the salvation of sinners, that she desired to be placed at the mouth of hell, that no soul might enter into that land of torment. And what do we, who are priests, say ? What do we do ? We see so many souls perish, and shall we remain idle spectators of their perdition ? St. Paul said that to obtain the salvation of his neigh bors he would have consented to be separated from Jesus Christ, that is, according to commentators, for a time: *For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren*[11165] St. John Chrysostom desired to be blind, provided the souls under his care were converted.[11166]

St. Bonaventure declared that he would have accepted as many deaths as there are sinners in the world, that all might be saved.[11167]During a winter which he spent among the heretics of Chablais, St. Francis de Sales used to creep over a river on a beam of ice, with great risk and inconvenience to himself, in order to preach to them. Being in Naples during the great revolution of 1647 and seeing the great loss of souls which it caused, St. Cajetan felt so intense a sorrow that he died of grief. St. Ignatius used to say that he would rather live uncertain of his eternal lot than die with a certainty of salvation, provided he could continue to assist souls. Behold the zeal for souls which animated priests that loved God! And still, in order to avoid a trifling inconvenience, or through fear of illness, some even among those that are charged with the care of souls withhold the aid of their ministry. St. Charles Borromeo used to say, that a pastor of souls, who wishes to have every convenience, and to take all the precautions that may be useful to health, will never be able to fulfil his duties. Hence he would add, that a parish priest should not go to bed till after the third paroxysm of fever.

He that truly loves God, says St. Augustine,[11168] does everything in his power to draw all to his love, and can say with David: O magnify the Lord with me; and let us extol His name together.[11169] He goes in every direction: exhorting in the pulpit and in the confessional, in the public places and in private houses, saying, Brethren, let us love God, let us praise his name, in words and works.

III. HOW SECURE THE PRIEST WHO LABORS FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS RENDERS HIS OWN SALVATION, AND HOW GREAT THE REWARD THAT HE SHALL RECEIVE IN HEAVEN

The priest who has labored for the salvation of souls can hardly die a bad death. *When thou shalt pour out,* says the prophet Isaias, *thy soul to the hungry, and shalt satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise up in darkness. . . . And the Lord will give thee rest continually, and will fill thy soul with brightness, and deliver thy bones.*[11170]If you have spent your life in assisting a soul in need, and have consoled her in her afflictions, in the darkness of your temporal death, the Lord shall fill you with light, and shall deliver you from eternal death. This was the doctrine of St. Augustine: “ In saving a soul thou hast predestined your own,” says the holy Doctor.[11171] And, long before, the apostle St. James said: He must know, that he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul (that is, his own soul, as appears from the Greek text) from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.[11172]

A priest of the Society of Jesus, who during life devoted a great deal of time to the conversion of sinners, died with joy and confidence of salvation; this some considered to be excessive. Hence he was told that at death we should entertain sentiments of fear as well as of confidence. He answered: Have I served Mahomet? I have served a God who is so grateful and faithful; why, then, should I fear?

When St. Ignatius of Loyola declared that in order to assist souls he would remain on earth in an uncertainty about his salvation, though he was certain that by dying he should be saved, a people said: “But, Father, it is not prudent to expose your own soul to danger for the salvation of others.” The saint replied, “ Is God a tyrant, who, after seeing me risk my salvation in order to gain souls, would send me to hell ?”

After having saved the Jews from the hands of the Philistines, by the victory that he won with so much peopleal danger, Jonathan was condemned to death by Saul for having, contrary to “his orders, eaten a little honey But the people cried out, Shall Jonathan then die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel?[11173] Why, O king, said they, should Jonathan be put to death after having saved us all from destruction ? Thus they obtained his pardon. The priest who has saved souls may well expect a similar reward on the day of his death. These souls shall come and say to Jesus Christ: Wilt Thou, O Lord, send to hell the priest who has delivered us from eternal misery ? And if Saul remitted the punishment of death at the prayers of the people, surely God will not refuse to pardon such a priest for the prayers of the souls that are his friends in heaven. Priests who have labored for the salvation of souls shall hear from God himself the announcement of eternal rest: *From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours*[11174] Oh ! what consolation and confidence shall the remembrance of having gained a soul to Jesus Christ infuse at the hour of death ! As repose is sweet to him who is oppressed with fatigue, *Sleep is sweet to a laboring man*[11175] so death is sweet to a priest who has labored for God.

St. Gregory says that *the more souls a sinner shall have converted from their sins, the sooner he shall be absolved from his own transgressions.*[11176] He that has the good fortune of being employed in converting sinners has a great mark of predestination, and of being written in the book of life. This the Apostle insinuated when, in speaking of those that assisted him in the conversion of nations, he said: I entreat thee also, my sincere com panion, help those women that have labored with me in the Gospel with Clement and the rest of my fellow-laborers, whose names are (mark these words) in the book of life[11177]

With regard to the great reward that priests who labor for souls shall receive, Daniel said: *They shall shine . . . as the brightness of the firmament : and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity.*[11178] As we now see the stars shine in the firmament, so the priest who converts souls to God shall shine among the blessed in the empyreal heaven with a brilliant light of glory. *If,* says St. Gregory, *he that rescues a man from temporal death deserves a great reward, how much greater shall be the recompense of a priest who delivers a soul from eternal death, and brings her to eternal life !*[11179] And before him our Saviour said: *But he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*[11180]

How great shall be the chastisement in hell of a damned priest who by his scandals has perverted many souls ! On the other hand, will not God, whose liberality in rewarding virtue surpasses his severity in punishing vice, give great glory in heaven to the good priest who by his labors shall have gained many souls ? St. Paul placed the hope of his eternal crown in the salvation of those whom he had converted to God, and trusted that they should procure for him a great recompense for eternity: *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glory ? Are not you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming ?*[11181] St. Gregory says that a priest who works in the Lords vineyard obtains as many crowns as he gains souls to God.[11182]We read in the Canticles, Come from Libanus, My spouse, come from Libanus, come: thou shalt be crowned[11183] Behold the promise of the Lord to him who is employed in the conversion of sinners the souls that were once wild beasts and monsters of hell, but were afterwards converted and became dear to God, shall be so many gems adorning the crown of the priest who has brought them back to the path of virtue. A priest who is damned does not go to hell alone, and the priest that is saved is certainly not saved alone. When St. Philip Neri died and went to heaven, the Lord sent to meet him all the souls that he had saved. The same is related of that great servant of God, Brother Cherubim of Spoleto. He was seen entering heaven accompanied by many thousands of souls that had been saved by his labors. It is also related of the Venerable Father Louis la Nuza, that he was seen in heaven sitting on a lofty throne, at the foot of which were seated all the souls that he had converted.

The poor husbandman suffers toils and sweats in sowing and cultivating the ground, and in reaping the crop; but all his labors are superabundantly compensated by the joy of the harvest. *Going, they went and wept, casting their seeds; but coming, they shall come with joy fulness, carrying their sheaves.*[11184] It is true that in the work of bringing souls to God many pains and labors are endured; but the laborer shall be recompensed with immense superabundance by the joy that he shall feel in presenting to Jesus Christ in the valley of Josaphat all the souls he had saved. Nor should the priest who labors without success to bring souls to God be disheartened, nor turned away from so noble a work. *Beloved priest*, says St. Bernard, *be not discouraged by your want of success, but rest secure of the reward that awaits you. God does not require of you to save souls: labor for their salvation, and he will reward you, not in proportion to your success, but according to the toils you have endured.*[11185] St. Bonaventure confirms this doctrine, and says that a priest shall not merit less for those that draw little or no profit from his labors, than from the souls that reap great benefit from them.[11186]The same saint adds, that the husbandman who cultivates the barren and rocky soil merits a greater reward though he reaps less fruit.[11187] He meant to say, that a priest who endeavors, though without success, to bring back an obstinate sinner to God shall have a greater reward, because his labor is greater.

IV. THE END, THE MEANS, AND THE LABORS OF THE PRIEST WHO HAS ZEAL

1. THE END TO BE PROPOSED

If we wish to receive from God the reward of our labors for the salvation of souls, we must do all not through human respect, nor for our own honor or temporal gain, but only for God and for his glory; otherwise, instead of a reward shall we receive punishment. Great should be our folly, says St. Joseph Calasanctius, were we to seek from men a temporal remuneration for our labors. The office of saving souls, says St. Bernard, is in itself very dangerous, since we shall have once to render an account of the actions of others.[11188] And St. Gregory writes: “The priest possesses as many souls as he is instructing subjects.”[11189] With the divine aid we shall be able to avoid sin and merit a reward in the work of saving others; but he who performs this work for any other end than to please God, shall be abandoned by God; and without the divine assistance, how shall he be able to avoid sin ? And how, says St. Bonaventure, shall they avoid sin who “ receive holy Orders, seeking not the salvation of souls, but temporal gain,”[11190] or whose motive, as St. Prosper says, “is not to become better, but richer: not more holy, but more honoured.”[11191] When, says Peter de Blois, there is question of obtaining a benefice, do peoples ask how many souls may be gained, or do they not inquire rather about the amount of its revenues?[11192] Many, says the Apostle, seek the things that are their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ’s.[11193] O execrable abuse, says Father John d‘Avila, to make heaven subordinate to earth ! St. Bernard observes that *when our Lord intrusted his sheep to St. Peter he said: “Feed my sheep; do not milk nor shear them.*[11194] The author of the Imperfect Work says : *“We have been hired as day-laborers; and just as no one hires a day-laborer only for the purpose of eating, so Jesus Christ has not called us to labor only for our own profit, but for Gods glory.”*[11195]Hence St. Gregory says of priests, *“Priests should not rejoice that they precede others but that they can be useful to them.”*[11196]The glory of God, then, must be the sole end of the priest who labors for souls.

2. MEANS TO BE EMPLOYED

With regard to the means that a priest should adopt in order to gain souls to the Lord:

I. The priest must above all attend to the perfection of his own soul. The sanctity of the priest is the principal means of converting sinners.t. Eucherius says that priests by the power of their sanctity sustain the world.[11197] The priest, as mediator, is charged with the office of making peace between God and men, says St. Thomas.[11198] But he who is a mediator must not be hateful to the people before whom he has to intercede; otherwise, he will increase his wrath, says St. Gregory.[11199] Hence the saint adds, “ Pure must be the hand of the one that wishes to cleanse others of their stains.”[11200] Hence St. Bernard concludes that a priest, in order to be fit to convert sinners, must first purify his own conscience and afterwards the conscience of others.[11201]*St. Philip Neri used to say, give me ten zealous priests and I will convert the whole world.* What did not a solitary St.

Francis Xavier do in the East ? It is related that he alone converted ten millions of pagans to the faith. What did not a St. Patrick, a St. Vincent Ferrer, do in Europe ? A single priest of moderate learning, who loves God ardently, will convert more souls to God than a hundred priests of great learning and little zeal.

II. He who wishes to reap an abundant harvest of souls must devote a good deal of time to mental prayer. In prayer he must first receive from God sentiments of piety, and afterwards communicate them to others: That which you hear in the ear, preach ye upon the housetops.[11202]

It is necessary, says St. Bernard, to be first a reservoir and then a canal.[11203] The saints have converted more souls by their prayers than by their labors.

3. WORKS OF A ZEALOUS PRIEST

The works in which a zealous priest should be employed are:

I. The correction of sinners. Priests who see insults offered to God and remain silent are called by Isaias mute dogs.[11204]But to these mute dogs shall be imputed all the sins that they could have but have not prevented. “Do not be silent,” says Alcuin, “lest the sins of the people be ascribed to you.”[11205] Some priests abstain from reproving sinners because they do not wish to disturb their peace of mind; but, says St. Gregory, for this peace that they desire, they shall miserably lose peace with God.[11206] An animal falls, exclaims St. Bernard, and many are found to lift it; a souls falls, and no one is found to raise her up.[11207] Yes, sinners are not converted, although, according to St. Gregory, priests are specially appointed by God to point out the path of virtue to those who go astray.[11208]Hence St. Leo adds: “ The priest who does not withdraw another from error proves that he is himself involved in it.”[11209] St. Gregory writes that we kill as many souls as we see committing sin without endeavoring to apply a remedy.[11210]

II. A zealous priest ought to be employed in preaching. By preaching, the world has been, as the Apostle says, converted to the faith of Jesus Christ: *Faith cometh by hearing; and hearing by the word of Christ.*[11211] And by preaching, the faith and the fear of God are preserved in the hearts of the faithful. Priests who feel themselves unable to preach should at least endeavor as often as possible, in their conversation with friends or relatives, to edify by words of edification, by relating examples of virtues practised by the saints, by inculcating some maxim of eternity, by impressing on them the vanity of the world, the importance of salvation, the certainty of death, the peace enjoyed by those who are in the grace of God, or some similar truths.

III. The priest should be occupied in assisting the dying, which is a work of charity most dear to God, and most conducive to the salvation of souls; for the dying are more strongly tempted by the devils, and are less able to assist themselves. St. Philip Neri frequently saw angels suggesting words to priests who were attending dying peoples. For parish priests this work is an obligation of justice, but for every priest it is a duty of charity. It may be performed with advantage by every priest, even by those who have not talent for preaching. In attending the sick, a priest may be of great service to their friends and relatives. That is the fittest time for spiritual discourses. On such an occasion it is even unbecoming in a priest to speak of anything but of God and of spiritual things. But let it be remembered that he who performs this office must use great caution, that he may not be an occasion of ruin to himself or others. Moreover, he who cannot preach should at least labor in teaching the Christian doctrine to the children and the poor, many of whom in the rural districts, in consequence of not being able to go often to the church, live in ignorance of even the principal mysteries of faith.

IV. Lastly, it is necessary to be persuaded that the work which is most conducive to the salvation of souls is the administration of the sacrament of penance. The Venerable Louis Fiorillo, of the Order of St. Dominic, used to say that by preaching the priest casts out the net, but by hearing confessions he draws it ashore and takes the fish. But some may say this is a very perilous office. There is no doubt, dearly beloved priest, says St. Bernard, that to become the judge of consciences is attended with much danger; but you shall fall into greater danger if through sloth or excessive fear you neglect to fulfil this office when God calls you to it. “Woe to you,” says the same saint, “if you are a Superior! But a greater woe to you if through fear of commanding you shrink from doing good.”[11212] We have already spoken of the obligation of every priest to employ the talent that God has given him that he may save souls; and we have already said that at his ordination a priest is destined in a special manner for the administration of the sacrament of penance. But you may say that you are not qualified for this office, because you have not studied theology. But do you not know that a priest is bound to study ? *The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth*[11213] If you did not intend to study in order to be able to assist your neighbor, why did you become a priest? Who, says the Lord, asked you to take holy Orders ? *Who required these things at your hands that you should walk in My courts?*[11214]

Who, asks St. John Chrysostom, has forced you to become a priest ?[11215] Before your ordination, adds the saint, you ought to have examined your fitness for this duty; but now that you are a priest you must work and not examine; and if you are not fit for the work, you must qualify yourself for it.[11216] To excuse yourself now on the ground of ignorance, continues the holy Doctor, is to excuse one sin by another.[11217]Some priests read many useless books, and neglect to study the science that may enable them to save souls. St. Prosper says that such priests violate justice.[11218]

In fine, it is necessary to be persuaded that the priest should seek nothing but the glory of God and salvation of souls. Hence St. Sylvester ordained that with regard to ecclesiastics the days of the week should be called by no other name than that of Fcrice, or vacant days.[11219] The Gentiles themselves used to say that priests should attend only to the things of God, and therefore they forbade their priests to exercise the office of magistrates, that they might be entirely devoted to the worship of their gods.

After he had been appointed by God to promote his honor, and the observance of his law, Moses spent a good deal of his time in settling disputes. Jethro justly reproved him, saying*: Thou art spent with foolish labor. . . . Be thou to the people in those things that pertain to God.*[11220] *Before you were ordained priest,* says St. Athanasius, *you might devote yourself to any occupation you wished, but now that you are a priest, you must be employed in the fulfilment of the office for which you are destined.*[11221] And what is the nature of this office ? One of its principal duties is, as we have shown, to labor for the salvation of souls. This doctrine is confirmed by St. Prosper, who says: “ To priests properly belong the care of saving souls.”[11222]

Chapter X

THE VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

I. NECESSITY OF A DIVINE VOCATION TO TAKE HOLY ORDERS

To enter any state of life, a divine vocation is necessary; for without such a vocation it is, if not impossible, at least most difficult to fulfil the obligations of our state, and obtain salvation. But if for all states a vocation is necessary, it is necessary in a particular manner for the ecclesiastical state. *He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber.*[11223] Hence he who takes holy orders without a call from God is convicted of theft, in taking by force a dignity which God does not wish to bestow upon him.[11224] And before him St. Paul said the same thing: *Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was. So Christ also did not glorify Himself that He might be made a high priest ; but he that said unto Him : Thou art My Son ; this day I have begotten Thee.*[11225]

No one, then, however learned, prudent, and holy he may be, can thrust himself into the sanctuary unless he is first called and introduced by God. Jesus Christ himself, who among all men was certainly the most learned and the most holy, full of grace and truth,[11226] in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge? Jesus Christ, I say, required a divine call in order to assume the dignity of the priesthood.[11227]

In entering the sanctuary, even after God himself had called them to it, the saints trembled. When his bishop ordered St. Augustine to receive ordination, the saint through humility regarded the command as a chastisement of his sins.[11228] To escape the priesthood St. Ephrem of Syria feigned madness; and St. Ambrose pretended to be a man of a cruel disposition. To avoid the priesthood, St. Ammonius the Monk cut off his ears, and threatened to pluck out his tongue, if the peoples who pressed him to take holy orders should continue to molest him. In a word, St. Cyril of

Alexandria says, “ The saints have dreaded the dignity of the priesthood as a burden of enormous weight. “[11229] Can anyone, then, says St. Cyprian, be so daring as to attempt of himself, and without a divine call, to assume the priesthood ?[11230]

As a vassal who would of himself take the office of minister should violate the authority of his sovereign, so he who intrudes himself into the sanctuary without a vocation violates the authority of God. How great should be the temerity of the subject who, without the appointment, and even in opposition to the will of the monarch, should attempt to administer the royal patrimony, to decide lawsuits, to command the army, and to assume the vice regal authority !Among you,” asks St. Bernard in speaking to clerics, “ is there any one so insolent as, without orders and contrary to the will of the pettiest monarch, to assume the direction of his affairs?”[11231] And are not priests, as St. Prosper says, the administrators of the royal house ?[11232]Are they not, according to St. Ambrose, the “ leaders and rectors of the flock of Christ”?[11233] according to St. Chrysostom, the “interpreters of the divine judgments,”[11234]and according to St. Denis, the “ vicars of Christ “?[11235] Will anyone who knows all this dare to become the minister of God without a divine call ?

To think of exercising royal authority is, according to St. Peter Chrysologus, criminal in a subject.[11236] To intrude into the house of a private individual, in order to dispose of his goods and to manage his business, would be considered temerity; for even a private individual has the right of appointing the administrators of his affairs. And will you, says St. Bernard, without being called or introduced by God, intrude into his house to take charge of his interests and to dispose of his goods?[11237] The Council of Trent has declared that the Church regards not as her minister, but as a robber, the man who audaciously assumes the priesthood without a vocation.[11238] Such priests may labor and toil, but their labors shall profit them little before God. On the contrary, the works that are meritorious in others shall deserve chastisement for them.

Should a servant who is commanded by his master to take care of the house, through his own caprice labor in cultivating the vineyard, he may toil and sweat, but instead of being rewarded he shall be chastised by his master. Thus, in the first place, because they are not conformable to the divine will, the Lord shall not accept the toils of the man who, without a vocation, intrudes himself into the priesthood. *I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will not receive a gift of your hand.*[11239] In the end God will not reward, but will punish the works of the priest who has entered the sanctuary without a vocation. *What stranger soever cometh to it (the tabernacle) shall be slain.”*[11240]

Whosoever, then, aspires to holy Orders must, in the first place, carefully examine whether his vocation is from God. “ For,” says St. John Chrysostom, “since this dignity is great, it must be approved by a divine sentence, so that only the one that is worthy may be admitted thereto.”[11241] Now to know whether his call is from God, he should examine the marks of a divine vocation. *He,* says St. Luke, *who wishes to build a tower first computes the necessary expenses, in order to know if he has the means of completing the edifice.*[11242]

II MARKS OF A DIVINE VOCATION TO THE SACERDOTAL STATE

Let us now see what are the marks of a divine vocation to the sacerdotal state.

Nobility is not a mark of a divine vocation. To know, says St. Jerome, whether a people should become the guide of the people in what regards their eternal salvation, we must consider not nobility of blood, but sanctity of life.[11243] St. Gregory says the same: “ By ones conduct, not by ones high birth, is one s vocation to be proved.”[11244]

Nor is the will of parents a mark of a divine vocation. In inducing a child to take priesthood they seek not his spiritual welfare, but their own interest, and the advancement of the family. “ *How many mothers,”* says St. John Chrysostom, or the author of the Imperfect Work, “ *have eyes only for the bodies of their children and disdain their souls! To see them happy here below is all that they desire; as for the punishments that perhaps their children are to endure in the next life, they do not even think of them.”*[11245] We must be persuaded, as Jesus Christ has said, that with regard to the choice of a state of life we have no enemies more dangerous than our own relatives. *“And a man’s enemies shall be they of his own household.”*[11246]

Hence the Redeemer adds: *“He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me”*[11247]Oh! how many priests shall we see condemned on the day of judgment for having taken holy Orders to please their relatives.

When a young man, in obedience to the call of God, wishes to become a religious, what efforts do not his parents make, either through passion or for the interest of the family, to dissuade him from following his vocation ! It is necessary to know that, according to the common opinion of theologians, this cannot be excused from mortal sin. See what I have written on this subject in my Moral Theology. Parents who act in this manner are guilty of a double sin. They sin first against charity, because they are the cause of a grievous evil to the child whom God has called to religion. A people who dissuades even a stranger from following a religious vocation is guilty of a grievous sin. They sin, secondly, against piety; for by their obligation to educate a child they are bound to promote his greater spiritual welfare. Some ignorant confessors tell their penitents who wish to become religious, that in this they should obey their parents, and abandon their vocation if their parents object to their entering religion. These confessors adopt the opinion of Luther, who taught that a people sins by entering religion without the consent of his parents. But the doctrine of Luther was rejected by the holy Fathers, and by the Tenth Council of Toledo, in which it was decreed that children who had attained their fourteenth year may lawfully enter religion even against the will of their parents. A child is bound to obey his parents in what regards his education and the government of the house; but with regard to the choice of a state of life, he should obey God by embracing the state to which God calls him.

When parents seek to be obeyed in this matter we must answer them in the words of the apostles to the princes of the Jews: *If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God judge ye.*[11248]

St. Thomas expressly teaches that in the choice of a state of life children are not obliged to obey their parents. And the saint says that when there is question of a vocation to religion, a people is not bound even to consult his relatives; for on such occasions self-interest changes relatives into enemies.[11249] Parents are, as St. Bernard says, content to see their children damned with them, rather than see them saved by entering religion and separating from the family.[11250] But when a people wishes to enter the sacerdotal state, in which he may be able to serve the family, what efforts do not his parents make to procure his ordination, either by lawful or unlawful means, whether he is called or not called to the priesthood ! And with what severity do they not treat him if, through remorse of conscience, he refuse to take holy orders ! Barbarous fathers! Let us, with St. Bernard, call them not parents, but murderers![11251] Unhappy fathers! miserable children! I say again. How many shall we see condemned in the valley of Josaphat for having interfered with the vocation of others, or for not having attended to their own! For, as we shall hereafter demonstrate, the salvation of each individual depends on following the divine call. But let us return to our subject.

Neither nobility of birth nor the will of parents are marks of a vocation to the priesthood; nor is talent or fitness for the offices of a priest a sign of vocation, for along with talent a holy life and a divine call are necessary. What, then, are the marks of a divine vocation to the ecclesiastical state? There are three principal marks:

1. PURITY OF INTENTION

The first is a good intention. It is necessary to enter the sanctuary by the door, but there is no other door than Jesus Christ: *I am the door of the sheep. . . . If any man enter in, he shall be saved.*[11252] To enter, then, by the door is to become a priest not to please relatives, nor to advance the family, nor for the sake of self-interest or self-esteem, but to serve God, to propagate his glory, and to save souls. “ If anyone,” says a wise theologian, the learned continuator of Tournely, “ presents himself for holy Orders without any vicious affection, and with the sole desire to be employed in the service of God and in the salvation of his neighbor, he, we may believe, is called by God.”[11253] Another author asserts that he who is impelled by ambition, interest, or a motive of his own glory, is called not by God, but by the devil.[11254]“But,” adds St. Anselm, “he who enters the priesthood through so unworthy motives shall receive not a blessing but a malediction from God.[11255]

2. SCIENCE AND TALENTS

The second mark is the talent and learning necessary for the fulfilment of the duties of a priest. Priests must be masters to teach the people the law of God. For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth.[11256] Sidonius Apollinarius used to say: “ *Ignorant physicians are the cause of many deaths.”*[11257] An ignorant priest, particularly a confessor, who teaches false doctrines and gives bad counsels will be the ruin of many souls; because, inconsequence of being a priest, his errors are easily believed. Hence Ivone Carnotensis has written: *“No one should be admitted to holy Orders unless he has given sufficient proofs of good conduct and learning.”*[11258]

A priest must not only have a competent knowledge of all the rubrics necessary for the celebration of Mass, but must be also acquainted with the principal things that regard the sacrament of penance. It is true, as we have said in the preceding chapter of this work, that every priest is not obliged to hear confessions, unless there is great necessity for his assistance in the district in which he lives; however, every priest is bound to be acquainted with what a priest must ordinarily know in order to be able to hear the confessions of dying peoples; that is, he is bound to know when he has faculties to absolve, when and how he ought to give absolution to the sick, whether conditionally or absolutely; what obligation he ought to impose on them, if they are under any censure. He should also know at least the general principles of Moral Theology.

3. POSITIVE GOODNESS OF CHARACTER

The third mark of an ecclesiastical vocation is positive virtue. Hence, in the first place, the people who is to be ordained should be a man of innocent life, and should not be contaminated by sins. The Apostle requires that they who are to be ordained priests should be free from every crime. In ancient times a people who had committed a single mortal sin could never be ordained, as we learn from the First Council of Nice.[11259] And St. Jerome says that it was not enough for a people to be free from sin at the time of his ordination, but that it was, moreover, necessary that he should not have fallen into mortal sin since the time of his baptism.[11260] It is true that this rigorous discipline has ceased in the Church, but it has been always at least required that he who had fallen into grievous sins should purify his conscience for a considerable time before his ordination. This we may infer from a letter to the Archbishop of Rheims, in which Alexander III. commanded that a deacon who had wounded another deacon, if he sincerely repented of his sin, might, after being absolved, and after performing the penance enjoined, be permitted again to exercise his Order; and that if he afterwards led a perfect life, he might be promoted to priesthood.[11261] He, then, who finds himself bound by a habit of any vice cannot take any holy Order without incurring the guilt of mortal sin. “ I am horrified,” says St. Bernard,[11262] “ when I think whence thou comest, whither thou goest, and what a short penance thou hast put between thy sins and thy ordination. However, it is indispensable that thou do not undertake to purify the conscience of others before thou purifiest thy own.”

Of those daring sinners who, though full of bad habits, take priesthood, an ancient author, Gildas, says, “ It is not to the priesthood that they should be admitted, but they should be dragged to the pillory.”[11263]They, then, says St. Isidore, who are still subject to the habit of any sin should not be promoted to holy Orders.[11264]

But he who intends to ascend the altar must not only be free from sin, but must have also begun to walk in the path of perfection, and have acquired a habit of virtue. In our Moral Theology[11265] we have shown in a distinct dissertation (and this is the common opinion) that if a people in the habit of any vice wish to be ordained, it is not enough for him to have the dispositions necessary for the sacrament of penance, but that he must also have the dispositions required for receiving the sacrament of order; otherwise he is unfit for both: and should he receive absolution with the intention of taking Orders without the necessary dispositions, he and the confessor who absolves him shall be guilty of a grievous sin. For it is not enough for those who wish to take holy Orders to have left the state of sin: they must also, according to the words of Alexander III. [si perfectæ vita et conversionis fuerit], cited in the preceding paragraph, have the positive virtue necessary for the ecclesiastical state. From the words of the Pontiff we learn that a people who has done penance may exercise an order already received, but he who has only done penance cannot take a higher order.

The angelic Doctor teaches the same doctrine: “ Sanctity is required for the reception of holy Orders, and we must place the sublime burden of the priesthood only upon walls already dried by sanctity; that is, freed from the malignant humor of sin."[11266] This is conformable to what St. Denis wrote long before: " Let no one be so bold as to propose himself to others as their guide in the things of God, if he has not first, with all his power, transformed himself into God to the point of perfect resemblance to him."[11267] For this St. Thomas adduces two reasons: the first is, that as he who takes orders is raised above seculars in dignity, so he should be superior to them in sanctity.[11268] The second reason is, that by his ordination a priest is appointed to exercise the most sublime ministry on the altar, for which greater sanctity is required than for the religious state.[11269]

Hence the Apostle forbade Timothy to ordain neophytes; that is, according to St. Thomas, neophytes in perfection as well as neophytes in age.[11270]

Hence the Council of Trent, in reference to the words of Scripture, *And a spotless life in old age.*[11271]prescribes to the bishops to admit to ordination only those who show themselves worthy by a conduct full of wise maturity.[11272] And of this positive virtue it is necessary, according to St. Thomas, to have not a doubtful but a certain knowledge.[11273] This, according to St. Gregory, is particularly necessary with regard to the virtue of chastity: "No one should be admitted to the ministry of the altar unless an assurance has been given of his perfect chastity."[11274] With regard to chastity, the holy Pontiff required a proof of many years.[11275]

From this we may infer that God will demand a terrible account of the parish priest who gives to peoples aspiring to the priesthood a testimony of their having frequented the sacraments and led exemplary lives, though they had neglected the frequentation of the sacraments, and had given scandal rather than good example. Such parish priests by these false attestations, given not through charity, as they pretend, but against the charity due to God and the Church, render themselves guilty of all the sins that shall be afterwards committed by the bad priests who were ordained in consequence of these testimonials. For in this matter bishops trust to the testimony of parish priests, and are deceived. Nor should a parish priest in giving such attestations trust the testimony of others: he cannot give them unless he is certain that what he attests is true, namely, that the ecclesiastic has really led an exemplary life, and has frequented the sacraments.

And as a bishop cannot ordain any people unless he be a man of approved chastity, so a confessor cannot permit an incontinent penitent to receive ordination without having a moral certainty that he is free from the bad habit which he had contracted, and that he had acquired a habit of the virtue of chastity.[11276]

III. TO WHAT DANGERS ONE EXPOSES ONESELF BY TAKING HOLY ORDERS WITHOUT A VOCATION

From what has been said, it follows that he who takes holy Orders without the marks of a vocation cannot be excused from the guilt of grievous sin. This is the doctrine of many theologians, of Habert, of Natalis Alexander, of Juenin, and of the continuator of Tournely. And before them St. Augustine taught the same. Speaking of the chastisement inflicted on Core, Dathan, and Abiron, who, without being called, attempted to exercise the sacerdotal functions, the holy Doctor said: " God struck them that they might serve as an example, and thus to warn off him who would dare to assume a sacred charge. Indeed, this is the chastisement reserved for those who would thrust themselves into the office of bishop, priest, or deacon."

And the reason is, first, because he who thrusts himself into the sanctuary without a divine call cannot be excused from grievous presumption; secondly, because he shall be deprived of the congruous and abundant helps, without which, as Habert writes, he shall be absolutely unable to comply with the obligations of his state, but shall fulfil them only with great difficulty. He will be like a dislocated member, which can be used only with difficulty, and which causes deformity.[11277]

Hence Bishop Abelly writes: " He who of himself, without inquiring whether he has a vocation or not, thrusts himself into the priesthood will no doubt expose himself to the great danger of losing his soul; for he commits against the Holy Spirit that sin for which, as the Gospel says, there is hardly or very rarely any pardon."[11278]

The Lord has declared that his wrath is provoked against those who wish to rule in his Church without being called by him. On this passage St. Gregory says, " It is by themselves and not by the will of the Supreme Head that they reign. "[11279] Divine vocation is entirely wanting to them, and they have followed only the ardor of vile cupidity, not certainly to accept, but to usurp this sublime dignity.[11280] How many intrigues, adulations, entreaties, and other means do certain peoples employ in order to procure ordination, not in obedience to the call of God, but through earthly motives !

But woe to such men, says the Lord by the prophet Isaias: *Woe to you, apostate children, . . . that you would take counsel, and not of me.*[11281] On the day of judgment they shall claim a reward, but Jesus Christ shall cast them off. *Many will say to Me in that day, have we not prophesied in Thy name (by preaching and teaching), and cast out devils in Thy name (by absolving penitent sinners), and done many miracles in Thy name (by correcting the wicked, by settling disputes, by converting sinners). And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you; depart from Me, you that work iniquity*[11282] Priests who have not been called are indeed workmen and ministers of God, because they have received the sacerdotal character; but they are ministers of iniquity and rapine, because they have of their own will, and without vocation, intruded themselves into the sheepfold. They have not, as St. Bernard says,[11283] received the keys, but have taken them by force. They toil, but God will not accept; he will, on the contrary, punish their works and labors, because they have not entered the sanctuary by the straight path. *The labor of fools shall afflict them that know not how to go to the city.*[11284] The Church, says St. Leo, receives only those whom the Lord chooses, and by his election makes fit to be his ministers.[11285]

But, on the other hand, the Church rejects those whom, as St. Peter Darnian has written, God has not called; for instead of promoting her welfare, they commit havoc among her members; and instead of edifying, they contaminate and destroy her children.[11286]

Whom He (the Lord) shall choose, they shall approach to Him.[11287] God will gladly admit into his presence all whom he has called to the priesthood, and will cast off the priest whom he has not chosen. St. Ephrem regards as lost the man who is so daring as to take the order of priesthood without a vocation. *“I am astonished,” he says, “at that which those fools dare to do, who, without the grace of vocation through Christ, full of boldness, seek to insinuate themselves into the office of the priesthood. Miserable beings, that know not that they are preparing for themselves an eternal fire.”*[11288] And Peter de Blois has written: “What ruin does not the bold man prepare for himself who of the sacrifice makes a sacrilege, and of life an instrument of death!”[11289] He who errs in his vocation exposes himself to greater danger than if he transgressed particular precepts; for if he violates a particular command, he may rise from his fall, and begin again to walk in the right path, but he who errs in his vocation mistakes the way itself. Hence the longer he travels in it, the more distant he is from his home. To him we may justly apply the words of St. Augustine: “You run well, but on the wrong road.”[11290]

It is necessary to be persuaded of the truth of what St. Gregory says, that our eternal salvation depends principally on embracing the state to which God has called us.[11291] The reason is evident: for it is God that destines, according to the order of his Providence, his state of life for each individual, and according to the state to which he calls him, prepares for him abundant graces and suitable helps. “ In the distribution of graces,” says St. Cyprian, “ the Holy Spirit takes into considera tion his own plan and not our caprices.”[11292] And according to the Apostle: *And whom He predestinated, them He also called. And whom He called, them He also justified.*[11293] Thus to vocation succeeds justification, and to justification, glory; that is, the attainment of eternal life. He, then, who does not obey the call of God shall neither be justified nor glorified. Father Granada justly said that vocation is the main wheel of our entire life. As in a clock, if the main wheel be spoiled the entire clock is injured, so, says St. Gregory Nazianzen, if a people err in his vocation his whole life will be full of errors; for in the state to which God has not called him he will be deprived of the helps by which he can with facility lead a good life.

Every one, says St. Paul, hath his proper gift from God; one after this manner, and another after that.[11294] The meaning of this passage, according to St. Thomas and other commentators, is, that the Lord gives to each one graces to fulfil with ease the obligations of the state to which he calls him. “God,” says the angelic Doctor, “gives to every man not only certain aptitudes, but also all that is necessary to exercise them.”[11295]

And in another place he writes: “God does not destine men to such or such a vocation without favoring them with gifts at the same time, and preparing them in such a way as to render them capable of fulfilling the duties of their vocation; for, says St. Paul: *Our sufficiency is from God, who also hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament.*”[11296] As each people, then, will be able to discharge with facility the office to which God elects him, so he will be unfit for the fulfilment of the office to which God does not call him. The foot, which is given to enable us to walk, cannot see; the eye, which is given to see, is incapable of hearing; and how shall he who is not chosen by God to the priesthood be able to discharge its obligations?

It belongs to the Lord to choose the workmen who are to cultivate his vineyard: I have chosen you, . . . and have appointed you that you should go, and should bring forth fruit.[11297] Hence the Redeemer did not say, Beg of men to go and gather the harvest; but he tells us to ask the master of the crop to send workmen to collect it.[11298] Hence he also said: As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you."[11299] When God calls, he himself, says St. Leo, gives the necessary helps.[11300] This is what Jesus Christ has said: I am the door. By Me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and he shall go in, and go out, and shall find pastures.[11301] " He shall go in:"[11302] what the priest called by God undertakes, he shall easily accomplish without sin, and with merit.nd shall go out[11303] he shall be in the midst of perils and occasions of sin, but with the divine aid he shall readily escape injury. *And shall find pastures:*[11304] finally, in consequence of being in the state in which God has placed him, he will be assisted in all the duties of his ministry by special graces, which will make him advance in perfection. Hence he will be able to say with confidence, The Lord ruleth me: and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture.[11305]

But priests whom God has not sent to work in his Church he shall abandon to eternal ignominy and destruction. *I did not send prophets,* says the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah, *yet they ran.* He afterwards adds: *Therefore I will take you away, carrying you, and will for sake you; . . . and I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame which shall never be forgotten.*[11306] In order to be raised to the sublimity of the priesthood, it is necessary, as St. Thomas says, for a man " to be exalted and elevated by divine power above the natural order of things,"[11307] because he is appointed the sanctifier of the people, and the vicar of Jesus Christ. But in him who raises himself to so great a dignity shall be verified the words of the Wise Man: There is that hath appeared a fool after he was lifted up on high.[11308]

Had he remained in the world, he should perhaps have been a virtuous lay man; but having become a priest without a vocation, he will be a bad priest, and instead of promoting the interest of religion, he will do great injury to the Church. Of such priests the Roman Catechism says: “Such ministers are for the Church of God the gravest embarrassment and the most terrible scourge.”[11309] And what good can be expected from the priest who has entered the sanctuary without a vocation? “ It is impossible,” says St. Leo, “ that a work so badly begun should finish well.”[11310] St. Laurence Justinian has written: “What fruit, I ask, can come from a corrupted root?”[11311] Our Saviour has said, Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.[11312] Hence Peter de Blois writes that when God permits a people to be ordained without a vocation, the permission is not a grace, but a chastisement. For a tree which has not taken deep root, when exposed to the tempest shall soon fall and be cast into the fire.[11313] And St. Bernard says that he who has not lawfully entered the sanctuary shall continue to be unfaithful; and instead of procuring the salvation of souls, he shall be the cause of their death and perdition.[11314]

This is conformable to the doctrine of Jesus Christ: *He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, . . . the same is a thief and a robber.*[11315]

Some may say, if they only were admitted to orders who have the marks of vocation which have been laid down as indispensable, there should be but few priests in the Church, and the people should be left without the necessary helps. But to this the Fourth Council of Lateran has answered: “It is much better to confer the priesthood on a small number of virtuous clerics than to have a large number of bad priests.”[11316]And St. Thomas says that God never abandons his Church so as to leave her in want of fit ministers to provide for the necessity of the people.[11317]St. Leo justly says that to provide for the wants of the people by bad priests would be not to save but to destroy them.[11318]If, then, a priest has been ordained without a vocation, what must he do?[11319] Must he look on himself as lost? must he abandon himself to despair? No. St. Gregory has asked the same question. He answers: “ He must lament.” Behold what such a priest must do if he wish to save his soul: “ He must lament;”[11320] he must weep, and seek to appease the anger of God by tears and by repentance, and to move him to pardon the great sin that he committed in thrusting himself into the sanctuary without a divine call. He must, as St. Bernard exhorts, endeavor to attain after his ordination the sanctity of life which ought to precede it.[11321]

He must change his conduct, his conversation and pursuits. “ Let all be holy your life and your works,”[11322] continues the saint. If he is ignorant, he must study; if he has spent his time in worldly conversations and amusements, he must change them into meditations, spiritual reading, and visits to the churches. But to do this he must use violence to himself; for, as has been already said, since he has entered the sanctuary without a vocation, he is but a dislocated member, and therefore he must work out his salvation with great difficulty and great labor. But if in consequence of having become a priest without a divine call, he is, as has been shown, bereft of the helps necessary to enable him to discharge with facility the obligations of the priesthood, how shall he without these helps fulfil the sacerdotal duties ? Habert,[11323] and the continuator of Tournely,[11324] say, let him pray, and by his prayers he shall obtain that assistance which he does not deserve.[11325] This is conformable to the doctrine of the Council of Trent: “*God commands not impossibilities, but, by commanding, both admonishes thee to do what thou art able, and to pray for what thou art notable (to do), and aids thee that thou mayest be able.*”[11326]

PART II

Material for Instructions

Instruction I

THE CELEBRATION OF MASS

I. IMPORTANCE OF THE HOLY SACRIFICE AND WHAT IT EXACTS OF THE PRIEST

For every high-priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins.[11327] The priest, then, is placed by God in the Church in order to offer sacrifice. This office is peculiar to the priests of the Law of grace, to whom has been given the power of offering the great sacrifice of the body and blood of the Son of God a sacrifice sublime and perfect in comparison with the ancient sacrifices, the entire perfection of which consisted in being the shadow and figure of our sacrifice. They were sacrifices of calves and oxen, but ours is the sacrifice of the eternal Word made Man. Of themselves they had no efficacy, and were therefore called by St. Paul *weak and needy elements.*[11328] But ours has power to obtain the remission of the temporal penalties due to sins, and to procure an augmentation of grace, and more abundant helps for those in whose behalf it is offered.

The priest who has not a just idea of the Mass shall never offer that holy sacrifice as he ought. Jesus Christ performed no action on earth greater than the celebration of Mass. In a word, of all actions that can be performed, the Mass is the most holy and dear to God; as well on account of the oblation presented to God, that is, Jesus Christ, a victim of infinite dignity, as on account of the first offerer, Jesus Christ, who offers himself on the altar by the hand of the priest. " The same now offering," says the Council of Trent, "by the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross."[11329] St. John Chrysostom said: " When you see a priest offering, do not believe that this is done by the hand of a priest; the offering is made rather by the hand of God invisibly stretched out."[11330] All the honors that the angels by their homages, and men by their virtues, penances, and martyrdoms, and other holy works, have ever given to God could not give him as much glory as a single Mass. For all the honors of creatures are finite honors, but the honor given to God in the sacrifice of the altar, because it proceeds from a divine people, is an infinite honor. Hence we must confess that of all actions the Mass, as the Council of Trent says, is the most holy and divine: “*We must needs confess that no other work can be performed by the faithful so holy and divine as this tremendous mystery itself.*”[11331]

It is, then, as we have seen, an action the most holy and dear to God an action that appeases most efficaciously the anger of God against sinners, that beats down most effectually the powers of hell, that brings to men on earth the greatest benefits, and that affords to the souls in purgatory the greatest relief. It is, in fine, an action in which, as St. Udone, Abbot of Cluni, has written, consists the entire salvation of the world: “ Of all the favors granted to me this is the greatest: it is truly by the most generous ardor of his love that God instituted this mystery, without which there would be no salvation in this world.”[11332] And speaking of the Mass, Timothy of Jerusalem said that by it the world is preserved.[11333] But for the Mass the earth should have long since perished on account of the sins of men.

St. Bonaventure says that in each Mass God bestows on the world a benefit not inferior to that which he conferred by his incarnation.[11334] This is conformable to the celebrated words of St. Augustine: “ O venerable dignity of the priests, in whose hands, as in the womb of the Virgin, the Son of God became incarnate!”[11335]

Moreover, St. Thomas teaches that since the sacrifice of the altar is nothing else than the application and renewal of the sacrifice of the cross, a single Mass brings to men the same benefits and salvation that were produced by the sacrifice of the cross.[11336] St. John Chrysostom says: “ The celebration of a Mass has the same value as the death of Christ on the cross.”[11337]And of this we are still more assured by the holy Church in the Collect for the Sunday after Pentecost: “ As many times as this commemorative sacrifice is celebrated, so often is the work of our redemption performed.”[11338] The same Redeemer who once offered himself on the cross is immolated on the altar by the ministry of his priests. “ For the victim is one and the same,” says the Council of Trent: “the same now offering by the ministry of priests, who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different."[11339]

In a word, the Mass is, according to the prediction of the prophet, " the good and the beautiful thing" of the Church: For what is the good thing of him, and what is his beautiful thing, but the corn of the elect and wine springing forth virgins?[11340] In the Mass, Jesus Christ gives himself to us by means of the most holy sacrament of the altar, which is the end and object of all the other sacraments, says the angelic Doctor.[11341] Justly, then, has St. Bonaventure called the Mass a compendium of all God's love and of all his benefits to men.[11342]

Hence the devil has always sought to deprive the world of the Mass by means of the heretics, constituting them precursors of Antichrist, whose first efforts shall be to abolish the holy sacrifice of the altar, and, according to the prophet Daniel, in punishment of the sins of men, his. efforts shall be successful: *And strength was given him against the continual sacrifice because of sins.*[11343]

Most justly, then, does the holy Council of Trent require of priests to be most careful to celebrate Mass with the greatest possible devotion and purity of conscience: "It is sufficiently clear that all industry and diligence is to be applied to this end, that it (the mystery) be performed with the greatest possible inward cleanness and purity of heart."[11344] And in the same place the Council justly remarks, that on priests who celebrate this great sacrifice negligently, and without devotion, shall fall the malediction threatened by the prophet Jeremiah: *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord negligently.*[11345] And St. Bonaventure says that he who approaches the altar without reverence and consideration, celebrates or communicates unworthily.[11346] In order, then, to avoid this malediction, let us see what the priest must do before Mass, during Mass, and after Mass. Before Mass preparation is necessary, during the celebration of Mass reverence and devotion are necessary, after Mass thanksgiving is necessary. A servant of God used to say that the life of a priest should be nothing else than preparation and thanksgiving for Mass.

II. THE PREPARATION FOR MASS

In the first place, then, the priest must make his preparation before Mass.

Before we come to practice, I ask how does it happen that there are so many priests in the world and so few holy priests? St. Francis de Sales[11347] called the Mass a mystery which comprises the entire abyss of divine love. St. John Chrysostom used to say that the most holycrament of the altar is the treasure of all Gods benignity.[11348] There is no doubt that the Holy Eucharist has been instituted for all the faithful, but it is a gift bestowed in a special manner on priests. Give not, says our Lord, addressing priests, *that which is holy to dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine.*[11349] Mark the words *your pearls.* In the Greek the consecrated particles are called pearls ; but these pearls are called, as it were, the property of priests: your pearls. Hence, as St. John Chrysostom says, every priest should leave the altar all inflamed with divine love, so as to strike terror into the powers of hell: “ Like lions breathing forth fire should we leave that table, so that we may become terrible to the devil.”[11350] But this is not the case. The greater number depart from the altar always more tepid, more impatient, proud, jealous, and more attached to self-esteem, to self-interest, and to earthly pleasures. “ The defect is not in the food,”[11351] says Cardinal Bona.

The defect does not arise from the food that they take on the altar; for, as St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say, that food taken once would be sufficient to make them saints, but it arises from the little preparation that they make for the celebration of Mass.

Preparation for Mass is twofold: remote and proximate.

The remote preparation consists in the pure and virtuous life that a priest should lead in order to celebrate worthily. If God required purity in the priests of the Old Law because they had to carry the sacred vessels, Be ye clean, you that carry the vessels of the Lord[11352] how much greater should be the purity and sanctity of the priest who has to carry in his hands and in his body the Incarnate Word, says Peter de Blois![11353] But to be pure and holy it is not enough for the priest to be exempt from mortal sins: he must be also free from venial sins that are fully deliberate; otherwise he shall have no part with Jesus Christ. “ Let no one,” says St. Bernard, “ disregard little faults, for thus it was said to Peter, that unless Christ purifies of them, we shall have no part in Christ.”[11354] Hence all the actions and words of the priest who wishes to celebrate Mass must be holy, and serve to prepare him for the worthy celebration of the sacred mysteries.

For the immediate preparation, mental prayer is, in the first place, necessary. How can the priest celebrate Mass with devotion without having first made mental prayer? The Venerable John d'Avila used to say that a priest should make mental prayer for an hour or, at least, half an hour, before Mass.

I would be content with half an hour, or, and for some, with even a quarter of an hour; but a quarter is too little. There are so many beautiful books containing meditations preparatory to Mass, but who makes use of them ? It is through neglect of meditation that we see so many Masses said without devotion and with irreverence. The Mass is a representation of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Hence Pope Alexander I. justly said that in the Mass we should always commemorate the Passion of our Lord.[11355] And before him the Apostle said: *For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come.*[11356] According to St. Thomas,[11357] the Redeemer has instituted the most holy sacrament that we might always have a lively remembrance of the love that he has shown us, and of the great benefits that he obtained for us by offering himself in sacrifice on the cross. But if all should continually remember the Passion of Jesus Christ, how much more should the priest reflect on it when he goes to renew on the altar, though in a different manner, the same sacrifice which the Son of God offered on the cross ! Moreover, even though he had made his meditation, the priest should before he begins Mass always recollect himself at least for a short time, and consider what he is going to do. The Council of Milan, in the time of St. Charles, ordained that all priests should do so.[11358]

In entering the sacristy to celebrate Mass the priest should take leave of all worldly thoughts, and say with St. Bernard*: " Ye cares, solicitudes, earthly troubles, remain here: let me go freely to my God, with all my intelligence and with all my heart, and when we have adored we shall return to you; we shall return, alas! and we shall return too soon."*[11359] In a letter to St. Jane Chantal, St. Francis de Sales said: When I turn to the altar to begin Mass, I lose sight of everything on this earth. Hence, during the celebration of Mass, the priest should take leave of all worldly thoughts, and should think only of the great action that he is going to perform, and of the heavenly bread he is going to eat at the divine table. When thou shalt sit to eat with a prince, says Solomon, consider diligently what is set before thy face.[11360] Let him consider that he is going to call from heaven to earth the Incarnate Word; to treat with him familiarly on the altar; to offer him again to the eternal Father; and finally to partake of his sacred flesh. In preparing to celebrate, Father John d'Avila would endeavor to excite his fervor by saying: "I am now going to. consecrate the Son of God, to hold him in my hands, to converse and treat with him, and to receive him into my heart." The priest should also consider that he ascends the altar to perform the office of intercessor for all sinners, says St. Laurence Justinian.[11361] Thus the priest on the altar stands between God and men, presents their petitions, and obtains for them the divine graces, says St. Chrysostom.[11362]

It is for this reason, says St. Thomas, that the sacrifice of the altar is called the Mass: "On this account it is called Mass, because the priest sends his prayers to God through the angel, and the people send them through the priest."[11363] In the Old Law the priest was permitted to enter the holy of holies only once in the year; but now every priest is allowed to immolate every day the Lamb of God, in order to obtain the divine graces for himself and the entire people, says St. Laurence Justinian.[11364] Hence, according to St. Bonaventure, in going to celebrate, a priest should propose to himself three ends: to honor God, to commemorate the Passion of Jesus Christ, and to obtain graces for the whole Church.[11365]

III. THE REVERENCE AND THE DEVOTION WITH WHICH THE PRIEST SHOULD CELEBRATE MASS

Secondly, it is necessary to celebrate Mass with reverence and devotion. It is well known that the maniple was introduced for the purpose of wiping away the tears of devotion that flowed from the eyes of the priest; for in former times priests wept continually during the celebration of Mass. It has been already said that a priest on the altar represents the very people of Jesus Christ, says St. Cyprian.[11366] There he says in the people of Jesus Christ, *hoc est corpus meum: hie est calix sanguinis mei.*ut, O God! it would be necessary to weep, and even to shed tears of blood, at the manner in which many priests celebrate Mass. It excites compassion to see the contempt with which some priests and religious, and even priests of the reformed Orders, treat Jesus Christ on the altar. Observe with what kind of attention certain priests celebrate Mass. I hope their number is small. Of them we may well say what Clement of Alexandria said of the pagan priests, that they turned heaven into a stage, and God into the subject of the comedy.[11367] But why do I say a comedy ? Oh! how great would be their attention if they had to recite a part in a comedy ! But with what sort of attention do they celebrate Mass? Mutilated words; genuflexions that appear to be acts of contempt rather than of reverence; benedictions which I know not what to call. They move and turn on the altar in a disrespectful manner; they confound the words with the ceremonies which they perform before the time prescribed by the rubrics, although these rubrics are, according to the true opinion, all preceptive. For St. Pius V. in the Bull inserted in the Missal commands us " strictly, by virtue of holy obedience,"[11368] to celebrate Mass according to the rubrics of the Missal: "According to the rite, mode, and norm prescribed in the Missal."[11369] Hence he who violates the rubrics cannot be excused from sin, and he who is guilty of a grievous neglect of them cannot be excused from mortal sin.

All arises from an anxiety to have the Mass soon finished. Some say Mass with as much haste as if the walls were about to fall, or as if they expected to be attacked by pirates without getting time to fly away. Some priests spend two hours in useless conversation, or in treating of worldly affairs, and are all haste in celebrating Mass. As they begin the Mass without reverence, so they proceed to consecrate, to take Jesus Christ in their hands, and to communicate with as much irreverence as if the holy sacrament were common bread. They should be told what the Venerable John d'Avila said one day to a priest who celebrated with haste and irreverence: " For God's sake treat him better, for he is the Son of a good Father."

The Lord commanded the priests of the Old Law to tremble through reverence in approaching his sanctuary: *Reverence. My sanctuary.*[11370] And still we see scandalous irreverence in priests of the New Law while they stand at the altar in the presence of Jesus Christ; while they converse with him, take him in their hands, offer him in sacrifice, and eat his flesh. In the Old Law the Lord threatened several maledictions against priests who neglected the ceremonies of sacrifices, which were but figures of our sacrifice. *But if Thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep* . .

. all His ceremonies,. . . . all these curses shall come upon thee;. . . . cursed shalt thou be in the city, cursed in the field[11371] St. Teresa used to say: “ *I would give my life for a ceremony of the Church.”*[11372] ; And will a priest despise the ceremonies of the holy Mass ? Suarez[11373] teaches that the omission of any ceremony prescribed in the Mass cannot be excused from sin; and it is the opinion of many theologians, that a notable neglect of the ceremonies may be a mortal sin.

In my Moral Theology[11374] I have shown, by the authority of many theologians, that to celebrate Mass in less than a quarter of an hour cannot be excused from grievous sin. This doctrine rests on two reasons: first, the irreverence that in so short a Mass is offered to the holy sacrifice; secondly, the scandal that is given to the people.

As to the reverence due to the sacrifice, we have adduced the words of the Council of Trent, commanding priests to celebrate Mass with the greatest possible devotion: “ All industry and diligence are to be applied that it be performed with the greatest possible outward show of devotion and piety.”[11375] The Council adds, that to neglect even this external devotion due to the sacrifice is a species of impiety: “ Irreverence that can hardly be separated from impiety. “[11376] As the due performance of the ceremonies constitutes reverence, so to perform them badly is an irreverence which, when grievous, is a mortal sin. And to perform the ceremonies with the reverence due to so great a sacrifice, it is not enough to go through them; for some who are very quick in their articulation and motions may be able to perform the ceremonies in less than a quarter of an hour, but it is necessary to perform them with becoming gravity, which belongs intrinsically to the reverence due to the Mass.

To celebrate Mass in so short a time is also a grievous sin on account of the scandal given to the people who are present. And here it is necessary to consider what the same Council of Trent says in another place, that the ceremonies have been instituted by the Church in order to excite in the faithful the veneration and esteem due to so great a sacrifice, and to the most sublime mysteries that it contains. “*The Church,”* says the holy Council, “ *has employed ceremonies, whereby both the majesty of so great a sacrifice might be recommended and the minds of the faithful be excited, by those visible signs of religion and piety, to the contemplation of those* *most sublime things which are hidden in this sacrifice."*[11377] But instead of inspiring reverence, these ceremonies, when performed with great haste, diminish and destroy the veneration of the people for so holy a mystery. Peter de Blois says that the irreverence with which Mass is celebrated makes people think little of the most holy sacrament.[11378] This scandal cannot be excused from mortal sin. Hence in the year 1583 the Council of Tours ordained that priests should be well instructed in the ceremonies of the Mass: *"For fear that the people intrusted to their care, far from entertaining veneration for our divine mysteries, might regard them only with indifference."*[11379]

How can priests expect by Masses said with such irreverence to obtain graces from God, when during the oblation of these Masses they offend and dishonor him more than they honor him ? Should a priest not believe in the most holy sacrament of the altar, he would offend God; but it is a still greater offence to believe in it, and to celebrate Mass without due reverence, and thus make the people who are present lose their veneration for the holy sacrament. In the beginning the Jews respected Jesus Christ, but when they saw him despised by their priests they lost their esteem for him, and in the end joined in the cry of the priests: *"Away with this man; crucify him!"*[11380] And in like manner, seculars, seeing a priest treat the Mass with such irreverence, lose their respect and veneration for it. A Mass said with reverence excites devotion in all who are present at it; but, on the other hand, a Mass celebrated with irreverence destroys devotion and even faith in those that are present. A religious of high reputation told me that a certain heretic had resolved to renounce his errors, but having been afterwards present at a Mass said without reverence, he went to the bishop and said that he no longer intended to abjure his heresy, because he felt convinced that priests who celebrated Mass in such a manner did not sincerely believe in the truth of the Catholic Church; and added: " If I were Pope, and knew that a priest said Mass with irreverence, I would command him to be burned alive." After these words he withdrew, resolved to continue in his heresy.

But some priests say that seculars complain when the Mass is long. Then I ask: Shall the want of devotion in seculars be the rule for the respect due to the Mass? Besides, if all priests said Mass with becoming reverence and gravity, seculars would feel the veneration due to so great a sacrifice, and would not complain of being obliged to spend half an hour in attending Mass. But because Masses are frequently so short, and so little calculated to excite devotion, seculars, after the example of priests, attend Mass with in devotion and with little faith; and when they find that it lasts longer than half an hour, they, on account of the bad habit that they have contracted, grow weary and begin to complain; and though they spend without tediousness several hours at play, or in the street, to pass the time, they feel it tedious and fatiguing to spend half an hour in hearing Mass. Of this evil, priests are the cause. *To you O priests, that despise My name, and have said: Wherein have we depised Thy name ? . . . In that you say: The table of the Lord is contemptible.*[11381] The want of reverence with which many priests celebrate Mass is the cause that it is treated with contempt by others.

Poor priests! Having heard that a priest died after celebrating his first Mass, the Venerable Father John d'Avila said: " Oh what a terrible account shall he have to render to God for his first Mass!" But what should Father d'Avila say of priests who have for thirty or forty years said Mass with haste and irreverence, so as to scandalize all that were present at it ? And how, I ask again, can such priests propitiate the Lord and obtain his graces, when by celebrating in such a manner they insult rather than honor him ? " *Since every sin,"* says Pope Julius, *" is wiped out by the holy sacrifice, what would be offered to the Lord in atonement of sin if in offering the sacrifice sin is committed ?"*[11382] Miserable priests! and miserable the bishop who permits such priests to celebrate. For, as the Council of Trent prescribes, bishops are bound to prevent all irreverences in the celebration of Mass*: "The holy synod decrees that the ordinary bishops of places shall take diligent care and be bound to prohibit irreverence, which can hardly be separated from impiety."*[11383]

Mark the words, shall take diligent care and be bound ; they are bound to suspend the priest who celebrates without due reverence. And this they are obliged to do even with regard to regulars; for in this every bishop is constituted a delegate of the Apostolic See, and is therefore bound to seek for information regarding the manner in which Mass is celebrated in his diocese.

And let us, dearly beloved priests, endeavor to amend, if we have hitherto offered this great sacrifice with a want of reverence and devotion. Let us, at least from this day forward, repair the evil we have done. Let us, in preparing for Mass, reflect on the nature of the action that we are going to perform: in celebrating Mass we perform an action the most sublime and holy that man can perform. Ah, what blessings does a Mass, said with devotion, bring on him who offers it, and on those that hear it ! With regard to the priest who offers it, the Disciple writes: “ Prayer is more quickly heard when recited in the presence of a priest saying Mass.”[11384] Now, if God hears more speedily the prayers which a secular offers in the presence of a priest celebrating Mass, how much more readily will he hear the prayers of the priest himself if he celebrates with devotion ! He who offers the holy Mass every day with devotion shall always receive new lights and new strength from God. Jesus Christ will always infuse increased knowledge and consolation; he will encourage him, and grant him the graces that he desires. A priest may feel assured, particularly after the consecration, that he shall receive from Jesus Christ all the graces he asks. The Venerable Father D. Anthony de Colellis, of the Congregation of the Pious Workers, used to say: “When I celebrate and hold Jesus Christ in my hands I obtain whatsoever I wish for.” With regard to him who celebrates, and to those that hear Mass, it is related in the life of St. Peter of Alcantara that the Mass that he so devoutly celebrated produced more fruit than all the sermons preached in the province in which he lived. The Council of Rhodes commanded priests *to show their faith and devotion towards Jesus Christ by pronouncing the words with piety, and performing the ceremonies with reverence and devotion towards Jesus Christ, who is present in the Mass.*[11385]*The external deportment,* says St. Bonaventure, *is what shows the interior dispositions of the celebrant.*[11386] And here let us call to mind, in passing, the command of Innocent III.: “*We also command that the oratories, vases, corporals, and vestments should be kept clean; for it seems to be absurd to neglect in so holy actions what would be unbecoming in profane actions.”*[11387]O God! the Pontiff has too much reason to speak in this manner; for some priests have no repugnance to celebrate with corporals, purificators, and chalices which they could not bear to use at table.

IV. THANKSGIVING AFTER MASS

In the third place, after Mass thanksgiving is necessary. The thanksgiving should terminate only with the day. St. John Chrysostom says that for every trifling favor that they confer upon us men expect that we should show our gratitude by making some return. How much more grateful should we be to God, who expects no recompense for his gifts, but wishes us to thank him solely for our welfare.[11388] If, continues the saint, we are not able to thank the Lord as much as he deserves, let us at least thank him as much as we can. But what a misery to see so many priests who, after Mass, say a few short prayers in the sacristy, without attention or devotion, and then begin to speak on useless subjects or on worldly business, or perhaps leave the church immediately after Mass, and carry Jesus Christ into the street ! They should be treated in the manner in which Father John d’Avila once acted toward a priest who left the church immediately after celebrating Mass. He sent two ecclesiastics with lighted torches to accompany him; when asked by the priest why they followed him, they answered: “We accompany the most Holy Sacrament which you carry in your breast.” To such priests we may well apply the words of St. Bernard to the Archdeacon Fulcone: *“How is it possible that you so quickly grow tired of Christ?”*[11389] O God ! how can you become so soon weary of the company of Jesus Christ, who is within you?

So many books of devotion exhort thanksgiving after Mass; but how many priests make it? It is easy to point to those who practise it. Some make mental prayer, recite many vocal prayers, but spend little or no time with Jesus Christ after Mass. They might at least continue in prayer as long as the consecrated species remain within their breast. Father John d’Avila used to say that we ought to set great value on the time after Mass; he ordinarily spent two hours in recollection with God after celebrating Mass.

After Communion the Lord dispenses his graces most abundantly. St. Teresa said that then Jesus Christ remains in the soul as on a throne of grace, and says to her: *“What do you wish that I should do for you ?”*[11390] Besides, it is necessary to know that, according to the opinion of Suarez,[11391] Gonet,[11392] and many other theologians, the more the soul disposes herself by good acts, while the consecrated species remain, the greater the fruit she derives from the holy Communion. For, as the Council of Florence[11393] teaches, this sacrament has been instituted in the form of food, and therefore as the longer earthly food remains in the stomach the more nutriment it gives to the body so the longer this heavenly food continues in the body the more it nourishes the soul with grace, provided there be corresponding dispositions in the communicant. This increase of grace is the more confidently to be expected, because during that time every good act has greater value and merit; for the soul is then united with Jesus Christ, as he himself has said: *He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.*[11394]

And according to St. John Chrysostom, the soul is then made one thing with Jesus Christ. Hence, good acts are then more meritorious, because they are performed by the soul while she is united with Jesus Christ.[11395] But, on the other hand, St. Bernard tells us that the Lord will not lose his graces by giving them to the ungrateful.[11396] Let us then remain, at least for half an hour, with Jesus Christ after Mass ; or at least for a quarter. But, O God ! a quarter of an hour is too little. We should remember that from the day of his ordination the priest belongs no longer to himself, but to God, says St. Ambrose.[11397] And before him God himself said the same: They offer the burnt-offering of the Lord, and the bread of their God, and therefore they shall be holy.[11398]

V. THE PRIEST WHO ABSTAINS FROM SAYING MASS

Some abstain through humility from the celebration of Mass. A word on this subject. To abstain from saying Mass through humility is a good act, but it is not the most perfect: acts of humility give God a finite honor, but the Mass gives him infinite honor, because this honor is offered by a divine people. Attend to the words of Venerable Bede. “ A priest who without an important reason omits to say Mass robs the Blessed Trinity of glory, the angels of joy, sinners of pardon, the just of divine assistance, the souls in purgatory of refreshment, the Church of a benefit, and himself of a medicine.”[11399]t. Cajetan, while in Naples, heard that a Cardinal in Rome, a particular friend, who was accustomed to say Mass every day, had begun to omit it on account of his occupations. The saint resolved to go, and actually went to Rome, in the burning heat of summer, at the risk of his life, in order to persuade his friend to resume his former custom.

The Venerable John d’Avila, as we read in his life, going one day to say Mass in a hermitage, felt himself so feeble that he began to despair of being able to reach the place, which was at a distance, and intended to omit Mass; but Jesus Christ appeared to him in the form of a pilgrim, uncovered his breast, showed him his wounds, and particularly the wound in his side, and said to him. “When I was wounded, I felt more fatigued and feeble than you are.” He then disappeared: Father d’Avila took courage, went to the oratory, and celebrated Mass.

Instruction II

THE GOOD EXAMPLE THAT THE PRIEST SHOULD GIVE

JESUS CHRIST has instituted two orders in his church: one, of the simple faithful; the other, of ecclesiastics: but with this difference, that the former are disciples and sheep, the latter are masters and shepherds. To the laity St. Paul says: *Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls.*[11400] And to ecclesiastics St. Peter has said: *Feed the flock of God which is among you*[11401] And in another place we read: *Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the church of God.*[11402]

Hence St. Augustine has well said, that " there is nothing more difficult, nothing more dangerous, than the office of priest."[11403] The difficulty and danger of the office of a priest arise precisely from his obligation to lead a holy life, not only by interior, but also by exterior sanctity, that others may learn from him, holiness of life. " If the one that is over thee is good, he will be thy nurse; if bad, he will be thy tempter," writes the same saint.[11404]

The Scripture says that in Jerusalem the people lived in holiness because of the godliness of Onias the high priest.[11405] And according to the Council of Trent, " The integrity of those who govern is the safety of the governed. "[11406]But, on the other hand, how great the havoc, how strong the temptations, caused by the bad example of a priest ! My people, says the Lord, by the mouth of the prophet Jeremias, have been a lost flock; their shepherds have caused them to go astray.[11407] " *God,*" writes St. Gregory, " *suffers from no one more than from priests whom he has appointed for the salvation of others, and whom he sees giving bad example.*"[11408] St. Bernard says " *that seculars, seeing the sinful life of the priest, think no more of amending their conduct, but begin to despise the sacraments, and the rewards and punishments of the next life.*" "*Very many,*" writes the holy Doctor, "*beholding the wicked life of an ecclesiastic, indulge in vices,* *despise the sacraments, feel no horror of hell, nor the smallest desire of heavenly things."*[11409] For, like the man of whom St. Augustine writes, they say: *"Why do you correct me? Do not ecclesiastics do what I do? And do you compel me to abstain from it ?"*[11410] Our Lord said to St. Bridget: " *At the sight of the bad example of the priest the sinner assumes confidence in sinning, and begins to boast of sins which he before regarded as shameful."*[11411]*Priests in the Church,"* says St. Gregory, *"are the foundations of the Church."*[11412] When the foundations give way the whole edifice falls. Hence, in the ordination of priests, the holy Church prays for them in the following words: " May they shine before others by showing an example of justice, constancy, mercy, and other virtues."[11413] Priests ought not only to be holy, but they should also show forth sanctity in their lives: for, says St. Augustine, *as a good conscience is necessary for a priest to save his own soul, so he requires a good reputation in order to save his neighbor; otherwise, though he might be merciful and attentive to himself, he would be cruel towards others, and thus should bring himself and them to perdition.*[11414] God has selected priests from among men, not only that they may offer sacrifices, but also that by the good odor of their virtues they may edify the rest of the Church. *He chose him out of all men living to offer sacrifice to God, incense, and a good savor.*[11415]

Priests are the salt of the earth.[11416] *"Then,"* says the Gloss, " *priests should give a savor to others, and render them grateful to God, instructing them in the practice of virtue, not only by preaching, but still more by the example of a holy life."*[11417] Priests are also the light of the world.[11418]

The priest, then, as our divine Master proceeds to say, should shine refulgent among the people by the splendor of his virtues, and thus give glory to that God who has con ferred on him an honor so singular and sublime. So, said the Redeemer, *let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven*[11419] Of this obligation St. John Chrysostom reminds priests. "Therefore," says the saint, "has God chosen us that we may be luminaries."[11420] Pope Nicholas has written the same, saying that priests are the stars that enlighten the people on every side.[11421] "They are," said the Pontiff, according to the words of Daniel, they that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity, " stars shedding light on their neighbors, far and wide."[11422] But, to be a luminary, it is not enough for the priest to enlighten by his words: he must also give light by his good example. “ For the life of a priest,” as St. Charles Borromeo used to say, “ is precisely the beacon on which seculars, navigating in the midst of the ocean and darkness of the world, keep their eyes fixed in order to escape destruction.” And before him St. John Chrysostom said: “The priest ought to lead a life of order, that all may look to him as to an excellent model; for God has chosen us, that we might be, as it were, luminaries and teachers to others. “[11423]

The life of the priest is the light that is placed on the candlestick to give light to all. *Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house.*[11424] Hence the Council of Bordeaux said: “The life of clerics is so exposed to the eyes of all, that all will be inspired by them to lead either a good or a bad life.”[11425] The priest, then, is the light of the world; but if the light be changed into darkness, what must become of the world ?

Priests are also, as St. Jerome calls them, the fathers of Christians.[11426] “If then,” adds St. John Chrysostom, “priests are the fathers of all, it is their duty to attend to all their spiritual children, edifying them first by a holy life, and afterwards by salutary instructions.”[11427] If he give bad example, his spiritual children will imitate him. *“What,”* says Peter de Blois, *“ will a layman do but what he has seen done by his spiritual father? “*[11428] Priests are also the teachers and models of virtue. Our Saviour said to his disciples: *As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you.*[11429]As the eternal Father, then, sent Jesus Christ into the world to be a model for imitation, so Jesus Christ has placed priests in the world to be patterns of all virtues. This the very words *sacerdos* and *presbyter* signify. *Sacerdos,* says Peter de Blois, *“means one that gives what is holy, for he gives what is holy of God, that is the sacrament; he gives what is holy for God, that is a good example.”*[11430]nother author says that the word presbyter signifies “one who shows to the people (by word and example) the way from exile to the kingdom of heaven.”[11431] This, the Apostle has taught: *In all things show thyself an example, . . . that he who is on the contrary part may be afraid, having no evil to say of us*[11432] St. Peter Damian says that the Lord has separated priests from the laity that they may observe a rule of life different from that which the people follow.[11433] And from this rule seculars learn to lead a life of virtue. Hence St. Peter Chrysologus calls the priest *“the form of virtues.”*[11434] And, addressing a priest, St. John Chrysostom has said: “Let the splendor of your life be the common school and model of virtues.”[11435] This, as St. Bernard writes, the sacerdotal ministry itself demands.[11436] In order to see the people sanctified, David prayed to the Lord in the following words: *Let Thy priests be clothed with justice, and let Thy saints rejoice.*[11437] To be clothed with justice, the priest must give an example of every virtue, of zeal, of humility, of charity, of modesty, etc. In a word, St. Paul says, that we priests should, by holiness of life, show ourselves to be true ministers of the God of holiness. But in all things let its exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, . . . in chastity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, etc.[11438]

And before him Jesus Christ taught the same: *If any man minister to Me, let him follow Me.*[11439]Hence priests should copy in their life the example of Jesus Christ, so that, as St. Ambrose says, they may give such edification that every one that beholds them may bear testimony to their sanctity, and venerate that God who has such ministers.[11440] Hence Minutius Felix writes, that we priests should make ourselves known as priests, not by splendor of dress nor by ornaments of the head, but by modesty and innocence of life.[11441] Priests are placed in the world to wash away the stains of others. Hence, says St. Gregory, they must be holy, and appear holy.[11442]

The priest is the leader of the people[11443] says St. Peter Damian. But, according to St Denis, no one should dare to become a guide to others in what relates to God, unless he himself be made in all things like to God.[11444] And Philip the Abbot said: “ The life of ecclesiastics is the form of the laity; the former should go before as leaders, and the latter follow as flocks.”[11445] St. Augustine calls priests, the rulers of the earth.[11446] “ He, then, who is placed over others for their correction must be irreprehensible,” says Pope Hormisdas.[11447]

And according to the Council of Pisa, “ as ecclesiastics enjoy an exalted dignity, so they ought to shine with the light of virtues, and profess a kind of life which may excite others to sanctity.”[11448]For, as St. Leo has written, “ The integrity of those that preside is the salvation of the subjects.”[11449]

St. Gregory of Nyssa calls the priest a teacher of sanctity.[11450] But if the master exhibit pride, how can he teach humility? If he be vindictive, how can he inculcate meekness? “ He,”says .St. Isidore, “ who is appointed to instruct the people must be holy in all things.”[11451] And if our Lord has said to all: *Be you therefore, perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.*[11452] how much more, says Salvian, will he demand perfection from priests, who are to teach all the people?[11453] How can he inflame others with the love of God unless he shows by his works that his own heart burns with that holy fire ? *“He,”* says Gregory, “ *who does not burn, does not inflame ?”*[11454]and St. Bernard writes, that to him who loves not, the language of love is a strange and barbarous tongue.[11455]

Hence St. Gregory says that the priest who does not give good example will bring contempt on his preaching,[11456] and on all his spiritual functions, says St. Thomas.[11457] The Council of Trent ordains that they only are to be admitted to the priesthood who are *“conspicuous for piety and chasteness of morals, as that a shining example of good works and a lesson how to live maybe expected from them.”*[11458] But observe, that good example should be first expected, and after wards salutary instructions; the Council calls good example a perpetual kind of preaching.[11459] Priests, then, should preach, first by example, and afterwards by words, “ Their life,” says St. Augustine, “ must be a sermon of salvation to others.”[11460] And St. John Chrysostom writes: “Good example gives forth a louder sound than trumpets, . . . for people pay more attention to our deeds than to our words.”[11461]Hence St. Jerome said to Nepotianus: “ Let not works confound your preaching, lest when you speak in the church every one should tacitly answer, Why, then, do you yourself not practise what you preach ?”[11462]

St. Bernard has written: *“You will give power to your voice when people see that you have previously taken the advice yourself before you have given it to others; for action is more powerful than speaking.”*[11463]To persuade others, the preacher must show that he himself is convinced of the truth of his doctrine; but how can he evince such a conviction when his conduct is in opposition to his preaching ? *“He,”* says the author of the Imperfect Work, “ *who neglects to practise what he teaches, teaches not others, but condemns himself.”*[11464] The sermon, says St. Gregory, which is commended by the life of the preacher persuades and moves.[11465]Men believe the eyes sooner than the ears, that is, they are convinced more easily by the examples that they see than by the words that they hear. “ *Since,”* says an ancient Council, “ *men believe the eyes rather than the ears, it is necessary for a priest to give good example, as well in dress as in all his actions.”*[11466]Priests are, as the Council of Trent says, the mirrors of the world, in which all look at themselves, and from which they take examples for the regulation of their life: “ *Others fix their eyes upon them as upon a mirror, and derive from them what they are to imitate.”*[11467] And long before the holy Council, St. Gregory said the same: “*The priest should shine before others by good example, for the people see in him, as in a mirror, what they must do, what they must avoid.”*[11468]

And the Apostle writes: *We are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men.*[11469] Everything belonging to the priest demands sanctity. “ *The clerical dress,”* says St. Jerome, “ *the state of life, require of him sanctity of life.”*[11470] According to St. Eucherius, priests bear the weight of the whole world, that is, they are bound by their obligations to save all souls. But how are they to save them ? By the power of their sanctity and holy example.[11471] Hence the Council of Valentia said: “ *By the gravity of his dress, by his looks and words, the priest should show that he is a model of discipline and modesty.”*[11472] The priest should then, in the first place, exhibit gravity in his dress: but can priests give an example of modesty, if, instead of wearing the clerical costume, they display vanity and extravagance in their apparel? Secondly, the priest should exhibit gravity in his countenance: in order to set an example of modesty, he must keep his eyes cast down, not only when he is on the altar and in the church, but also in all places in which there are women. Thirdly, to exhibit gravity in his words, he must carefully abstain from uttering certain worldly maxims, and certain jests that are contrary to modesty. The Fourth Council of Carthage ordained that *the ecclesiastic who indulges in immodest jests should be suspended from his office.*[11473]

But you may ask, What harm is there in such jests? “*Words,”* says St. Bernard, “*that are jests among seculars are in the mouth of a priest blasphemies which excite horror.”*[11474] The saint adds: “*You have dedicated your mouth to the Gospel; but to open it for such things is not allowed: to accustom ones self to doing so would be a sacrilege.”*[11475] St. Jerome writes: *“All that does not edify the hearers is dangerous to those that say it.”*[11476] Some things that are trifling in seculars are criminal in a priest; for every bad example by which he leads others into sin is in him a grievous transgression. “ *What is for the people only a venial sin,”* says Peter de Blois, “ *is criminal in the priest, because every fault of the shepherd becomes mortal by the scandal that accompanies it.”*[11477] St. Gregory Nazianzen writes: *“Spots on a garment are more visible, the more beautiful the garment.”*[11478] In a splendid garment stains are most conspicuous, and produce great deformity.

It is also necessary for the priest to abstain from every species of detraction. St. Jerome says that some renounce other vices, but they appear to think it impossible to give up the sin of detraction.[11479] It is also necessary to avoid familiar intercourse with seculars. The conversations of seculars breathe an infectious air, which, as St. Basil says, gradually destroys the health of the soul.[11480]

Finally, the priest must abstain from certain secular amusements, at which the presence of an ecclesiastic does not give edification, such as profane comedies, balls and parties where women are present. But, on the other hand, the priest ought to be seen at prayer in the church, making thanksgiving after Mass, and visiting the Blessed Sacrament, and the images of the divine mother. Some perform these devotions in private, lest they might be seen by others; but it is better for priests to perform them in public, not to seek praise, but to give good example, and thereby induce others to praise God. *That they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*[11481]

Instruction III

THE CHASTITY OF THE PRIEST

I. THE MERIT OF THIS VIRTUE, AND ITS NECESSITY FOR THE PRIEST

No price is worthy of a continent soul.[11482] In comparison with a chaste soul, all the riches, all the titles and dignities of the earth are contemptible. Chastity is called by St. Ephrem the life of the spirit;[11483] by St. Peter Damian, the queen of virtues;[11484]and by St. Cyprian, the acquisition of triumphs.[11485] He who conquers the vice opposed to chastity, easily subdues all other vices; and, on the other hand, the man who submits to the tyranny of impurity, easily falls into many other vices, into hatred, injustice, sacrilege, etc. Chastity, says St. Ephrem, changes a man into an angel.[11486] St. Bernard says, “ Chastity makes an angel of man.”[11487] And according to St. Ambrose, “ he who has preserved chastity is an angel: he who has lost it is a devil.”[11488] The chaste, who live at a distance from all carnal pleasures, are justly assimilated to the angels: They shall be as the angels of God in heaven.[11489] The angels are pure by nature, but the chaste are pure by virtue. Through the merit of this virtue,” says Cassian, “ men are like unto angels.”[11490] And St. Bernard asserts that a chaste man differs from an angel only in felicity, not in virtue; and although the chastity of the angel is more blissful, that of man is stronger.[11491] St. Basil adds, that chastity renders man like to God, who is a pure spirit.[11492]

Chastity is not more excellent than it is necessary for the attainment of salvation. But for priests it is specially necessary. For the priests of the Old Law the Lord ordered so many white vestments and ornaments, and so many external purifications, as symbols of bodily purity, merely because they were to touch the sacred vessels, and because they were a figure of the priests of the New Law, who were to handle and to immolate the most sacred flesh of the Incarnate Word. Hence St. Ambrose has written: “If of the figure such chastity was asked, how much more will it be asked of the reality ?"[11493] On the other hand, God ordained that the priests who were habitually infected with eruptions on the skin, the symbols of impurity, should be cast off from the altar: Neither shall he approach to minister to Him, . . . if he have a pearl in his eye, or a continual scab?[11494]

But this evil," says St. Gregory, " he has that is controlled by the concupiscence of the flesh."[11495]Even the pagans, as Plutarch writes, *required purity in the priests of their false gods; because they thought that whatsoever related to the divine honor should be clean.*[11496] And of the Athenian priests Plato says, that for the more effectual preservation of chastity they lived apart from the rest of the people.[11497]Hence St. Augustine exclaims: *"O great misery among Christians! the pagans have become the teachers of the faithful. "*[11498] Speaking of priests of the true God, Clement of Alexandria says that they only that lead a life of chastity are, or should be, called true priests.[11499]*" Let the priest be humble and pious,"* said St. Thomas of Villanova; *" if he is not chaste, he is nothing."*[11500] Chastity is necessary for all, but principally for priests. *" To all,"* says St. Augustine, *"chastity is most necessary, but especially to the ministers of the altar."*[11501]Priests have to treat on the altar with the immaculate Lamb of God, who is called the Lily of the valleys[11502]and feeds only among the lilies[11503]

Hence Jesus Christ would have no other mother than a virgin no other guardian or precursor than a virgin. And St. Jerome says that Jesus loved John above the other disciples on account of the prerogative of chastity.[11504]And Jesus intrusted his mother to John on account of his purity, as he consigns to the priest his Church and himself. Hence Origen says : "*Above all should the priest who assists at the altar of God be girt about with chastity."*[11505] And according to St. John Chrysostom, a priest should have purity which would entitle him to stand among the angels.[11506]Should none, then, but virgins be promoted to the priesthood ? St. Bernard answers: *"Long continuance in chastity is regarded as virginity."*[11507] Hence the holy Church guards nothing with so much jealousy as the purity of her priests. How many councils and canons enforce it? "Let no one," says Innocent III., " be admitted to holy orders unless he be a virgin, or a man of approved chastity;"[11508] and he ordained that "they who are in holy Orders, if they lead not a chaste life, are to be excluded from every dignity: *ab omni gradum dignitate.*[11509] St. Gregory says: " No one should approach the ministry of the altar unless his chastity has been proved."[11510]

St. Paul assigns the reason why the ministers of the altar are obliged to lead a life of celibacy: *He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God; but he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife.*[11511] He who is free from the conjugal bonds belongs entirely to God; for he has to think of nothing but of pleasing God. But he who is bound to the married state has to think of his wife, of his children, and of the world. Thus his heart is divided, and cannot belong wholly to God. St. Athanasius, then, *had reason to call chastity the house of the Holy Ghost, the life of angels, and the crown of saints.*[11512] And St. Jerome has justly called it the honor of the Church and the glory of priests.[11513] Yes: for, as St. Ignatius, Martyr, says, *the priest as the house of God, the temple of Jesus Christ, and the organ of the Holy Ghost, by which souls are sanctified, ought to practise chastity.*[11514]

II. MEANS OF PRESERVING CHASTITY

Great, then, is the excellence of chastity; but terrible indeed is the war that the flesh wages against men in order to rob them of that precious virtue. The flesh is the most powerful weapon that the devil employs in order to make us his slaves. His strength is in his loins.[11515] Hence but few gain the victory in this warfare.*mong all combats,"* says St. Augustine, *"the combat for chastity is the most violent, because it is a daily combat, and because victory is very rare."*[11516] How many miserable men, exclaims St. Laurence Justinian with tears, after many years spent in the solitude of a desert, in meditations, fasting, and penitential austerities, have, for the sake of sensual indulgence, left the desert and have lost chastity and God?[11517] Priests, then, who are bound to perpetual chastity, must take great care to preserve it. *You shall never practise chastity,* said St. Charles Borromeo to an ecclesiastic, *unless you are careful to watch over yourself with great diligence; for chastity is easily lost by the negligent.*[11518] This care and attention consist in taking the means of preserving chastity. These means are, to avoid certain incentives to impurity, and to adopt certain remedies against temptations.

1. FLIGHT OF THE OCCASION

The first means is to avoid the occasions of sins against purity. *“We must,”* says St. Jerome, *“ be far from those whose presence may entice us to evil.”*[11519]St. Philip Neri used to say *that in this warfare cowards, that is, they that fly from the occasions, are victorious. “Concupiscence,”* says Peter de Blois, *“is overcome by nothing more easily than by flight.”*[11520] The grace of God is a great treasure, but this treasure we carry in vessels that are frail and easily broken. We have this treasure in earthen vessels[11521]

Man cannot of himself acquire the virtue of chastity: God alone can give it. *I knew*, said Solomon, *that I could not otherwise be continent except God gave it.*[11522] We have not strength to practise any virtue, but particularly the virtue of chastity; for we have by nature a strong propensity to the opposite vice. The divine aid alone can enable a man to preserve chastity; but this aid God gives not to those that voluntarily expose themselves to the occasion of sin, or remain in it. *He that loveth danger shall perish in it*[11523]

Hence St. Augustine gives the following advice: *“ To repel the attacks of lust, take flight if you wish to obtain the victory.”*[11524] Oh ! how many, said St. Jerome at the hour of death to his disciples (as we read in the epistle of Eusebius to Pope Damasus), how many have been cast into the putrid mire of impurity through a presumptuous security that they should not fall.[11525] No one, then, adds the saint, should consider himself secure against this vice: though you were a saint, you are always in danger of failing.[11526] It is not possible, says the Wise Man, for a man to walk on red-hot coals and not be burned. *Can a man walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt*[11527]

On this subject St. John Chrysostom writes: *“Are you perhaps of stone or of iron ? no, you are a man subject to the common weakness of nature. Do you think that you will not be burnt if you take fire into your hand ? How else could this be? Put a burning light into the hay, and then say that there will be no blaze ! Like hay is this nature of ours.”*[11528] Hence it is not possible for a man to expose himself voluntarily to the occasions of sins against chastity and not fall into a precipice. We should fly from sin as from the face of a serpent. *Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent.*[11529] We fly not only from the bite of a serpent, but also from contact with it and proximity to it. We must also avoid the company and conversation of peoples who may be to us an occasion of yielding to any sin against purity. St. Ambrose remarks that the chaste Joseph would not stop to hear the first words of Putiphars wife, but instantly fled away, considering that there was great danger in waiting to listen to her.[11530]But someone may say: I know my duty; but let him attend to the words of St. Francis of Assisi: “ *I know what I ought to do, but I know not what I would do were I to remain in the occasion of sin.*”

I. Let us examine the principal occasions that the priest should carefully avoid in order to preserve chastity. It is necessary, above all things, to abstain from looking at dangerous objects. Death is come up through our windows.[11531] says the Prophet Jeremias.

Through the windows: that is, through the eyes, as St. Jerome, St. Gregory, and others say in their comments on this passage. For as to defend a fortification it is not enough to lock the gates if the enemy be allowed to enter by the windows; so to preserve chastity all other means shall be unprofitable unless we carefully watch over the eyes. Tertullian[11532] relates that a certain pagan philosopher plucked out his eyes in order to preserve chastity. This is not lawful for us. But if we wish to avoid sins against purity we must abstain from looking at women, and still more from looking at them a second time. To look at dangerous objects, says St. Francis de Sales, is not so hurtful to us as to repeat the look. And St. John Chrysostom adds, *that it is necessary to turn away the eyes not only from women whose dress or manner is immodest, but even from those whose demeanor is full of modesty.*[11533]Hence holy Job made a compact with his eyes not to look at any woman, even at a chaste virgin; because he knew from looks evil thoughts arise: *I made a covenant with my eyes that I would not so much as think upon a virgin*[11534] Ecclesiasticus advises us to imitate the example of Job. *Gaze not upon a maiden, lest her beauty be a stumbling-block to thee.*[11535] St. Augustine says: *From looks spring evil thoughts; the thoughts produce a certain carnal delectation, though indeliberate. To this indeliberate delectation succeeds the consent of the will;*[11536] and, behold, the soul is lost. Cardinal Hugo remarks that the Apostle commanded women to keep their heads veiled in the church *because of the angels*[11537] that is, because of priests, lest looking at their faces they should be tempted to lust.[11538]ven while he lived in a cave at Bethlehem, in constant prayer and penitential austerities, St. Jerome was tormented by the remembrance of the ladies whom he had long before seen in Rome. *Hence he cautioned his friend Nepotianus to abstain not only from looking at women, but from even speaking of their figure.*[11539] By a single look of curiosity at Bethsebee, David miserably fell into the sins of adultery, homicide, and scandal. “ *The devil only wishes us to begin,”*[11540] says the same St. Jerome. The devil only requires that we begin to open the door; he will afterwards open it entirely. A deliberate, fixed look at the countenance of a young woman may be an infernal spark that will cause the ruin of the soul. Speaking of priests, *St. Jerome says that they ought to avoid not only every unchaste act, but every glance of the eye.*[11541]

II. If to preserve chastity we must abstain from looking at women, it is far more necessary to avoid conversation with them. *Tarry not among women*[11542] says the Holy Ghost. The inspired writer subjoins the reason, saying, that as the moth comes from clothes, so the wickedness of men has its origin in conversation with women. *For from garments cometh a moth, and from a woman the iniquity of a man.*[11543]And, says Cornelius à Lapide, *as the moth comes from a garment inspite of the owner, so from intercourse with women evil desires spring up, even when we will them not.*[11544]

He adds that as the moth is insensibly generated in and corrodes the garment, so by conversation with women concupiscence is imperceptibly excited, even in men who are spiritual.[11545] St. Augustine regards as certain the sudden fall of the man who will not avoid familiarity with dangerous objects.[11546]St. Gregory relates[11547] of Orsinus, who had sep arated from his wife, and become a priest with her consent, that forty years after their separation, when he was dying, she put her ear to his mouth to ascertain whether he was still alive; but Orsinus exclaimed: “Withdraw, O woman,” said he; “ take away the straw; for I have still a small portion of the fire of life which may consume us both.”[11548] Every one should be filled with terror by the unhappy example of Solomon, who after being so dear to God, and so familiar with him, after being made, as it were, the pen of the Holy Ghost, was in his old age, by conversation with pagan women, induced to worship idols. *And when he was now old, his heart was turned away by* *women to follow strange gods.*[11549] No wonder; for, as St. Cyprian says, it is impossible to stand in the midst of flames without being burned.[11550]And *St. Bernard has written, that to be familiar with a woman and to preserve chastity require greater virtue than to raise a dead man to life.*[11551]

If, then, says the Holy Ghost, you wish to be secure, *Remove thy way far from her.*[11552] Do not even pass near the door of her whom the devil makes an occasion of temptation to you: pass at a distance from it; and should it be really necessary for you to speak to a woman, *your words*, says St. Augustine, *should be few and reserved.*[11553] St. Cyprian gives the same advice. He says that our intercourse with women should be passing, and as if we were in flight.[11554]

But someone may say, The woman with whom I am familiar is a people of deformed figure; God forbid she should be an occasion of sin to me. But St. Cyprian answers that the devil is a painter who, when concupiscence is excited, makes a deformed countenance appear beautiful.[11555]

But she is a relative. St. Jerome answers: "Allow not to stay with you even the people that is your relative."[11556] Relationship sometimes serves to take away restraint and to multiply sins by adding the guilt of incest to impurity and sacrilege. "The sin will be only the more criminal," says St. Cyprian, " the more easily one can remove the suspicion of misconduct. "[11557] St. Charles Borromeo[11558] passed a decree that his priests should not without his permission dwell in the same house with women, even with near relatives. But she is a spiritual soul and a saint: there is no danger. Is there no danger? Yes, says St. Augustine there is danger; and because she is spiritual and a saint you ought the more to fear and fly familiarity with her; for the more spiritual and holy a woman is, the more easily she gains the affections of men.[11559] The Venerable Father Sertorius Caputo used to say, as we read in his life, that the devil endeavors first to infuse a love for the virtue of the individual, and thus inspire a security that there is no danger; he then excites sentiments of affection for the people, and afterwards tempts to sin; and thus he causes great havoc. Before him St. Thomas said the same: *"Although carnal affection is dangerous to all, it is yet more so for those that associate with peoples that seem to be spiritual; for, even though the beginning seems pure, yet frequent familiarity is very dangerous; and the more the familiarity increases, the more the first motive is weakened,* *and thus purity is defiled.”*[11560] He adds, that the devil knows well how to conceal the danger. In the beginning he sends, not poisoned darts, but only those that inflict slight wounds, and kindle an affection; but in a short time the peoples begin to act towards each other not like angels, as in the beginning, but like beings clothed with flesh. The looks are not immodest, but they are frequent and reciprocal; their words appear to be spiritual, but are too affectionate. Each begins frequently to desire the company of the other. “And thus,” concludes the saint, “a spiritual devotion is converted into a carnal one.”[11561]

St. Bonaventure gives five marks by which we may know when a spiritual affection has become carnal. 1. When there are long and useless conversations (and when they are long they are always useless); 2. When there are mutual looks and mutual praise; 3. When one excuses the faults of the other; 4. When they exhibit certain little jealousies; 5. When the absence of one causes a certain inquietude in the other.

Let us tremble: we are flesh. Blessed Jordan severely reproved one of his religious for having, without any bad motive, once taken a woman by the hand. The religious said in answer that she was a saint. But, replied the holy man: “The rain is good, and the earth also, but mix them together and they become mire.” Such a man is a saint, and such a woman, too, is a saint; but because they expose themselves to the occasion of sin, both are lost. *The strong hath stumbled against the strong, and both are fallen together.*[11562] Listen to the melancholy fall of a holy woman who, as we read in ecclesiastical history, was accustomed through charity to bury the bodies of the holy martyrs. She found one of them whom she believed to be dead; but finding he was still alive, she brought him to her house and took care of him. He recovered; but what happened ? These two saints, by conversing together, lost their chastity and the grace of God. This has happened, not once, nor a few times: how many Christians, who were saints before, have, by similar attachments, which were at first spiritual, in the end lost their soul and God ?

St. Augustine attests that he knew some great prelates of the Church of whom he had as high an opinion as of St. Jerome and St. Ambrose, and who, by exposing themselves to such occasions, fell away from sanctity into sin.[11563] St. Jerome wrote to Nepotianus: “ *Do not confide too much in* *your past chastity; be careful not to sit alone with a woman without a witness,"*[11564]that is, do not remain with her. St. Isidore of Pelusium says: " If necessity obliges you to converse with women, keep your eyes cast on the ground; and after you have spoken a few words, go away immediately."[11565] Father Peter Consolini of the Oratory used to say, that we should practise charity towards women who are even saints as towards the souls in purgatory, that is, from a distance, and without looking at them. This good Father would say, that in temptations against chastity priests would do well to reflect on their dignity; and would add that a certain Cardinal, when molested by thoughts, began to look at his cap, and to think of his cardinalitial dignity, saying: " My cap, I recommend myself to you." Thus he resisted the temptation.

III. It is also necessary to fly from bad company. St. Jerome says that a man becomes like the companions with whom he converses. We walk in a dark and slippery way;[11566] such is the present life ; *Eubricum in tenebris:* if a wicked compa[11567]ion impels us to the precipice, we are lost. St. Bernardine of Sienna relates[11568] that he knew a people who had preserved her virginity for thirty—eight years, and afterwards, in consequence of having heard an immodest word, fell into such habits of impurity, that, says the saint, the devil himself, if clothed with flesh, could not have been guilty of such filthy abominations.

IV. To preserve chastity, it is also necessary to avoid idleness. *Idleness,* says the Holy Ghost, *hath taught much evil.*[11569] Ezechiel says that it was the cause of all the wickedness of the inhabitants of Sodom, and of their total destruction. *Behold ! this was the iniquity of Sodom* . . . *the idleness of her and of her daughters*[11570] This was, as St. Bernard remarks, the cause of the fall of Solomon. The concupiscence of the flesh is repressed by labor, says St. Isidore.[11571] Hence St. Jerome exhorted Rusticus to be always occupied, so that the devil, whenever he came to tempt him, should find him employed.[11572]According to St. Bonaventure, the man who is employed shall be tempted by a single devil, but the idle shall be frequently assailed by many devils.[11573]

2. MORTIFICATION

We have seen, then, that for the preservation of chastity it is necessary to avoid idleness and the occasions of impurity. Let us now examine what we must do in order to preserve this great virtue. First, it is necessary to practise the mortification of the senses. If, says St. Jerome, any one wishes to live in the midst of earthly delights, and expects at the same time to be free from the vices that accompany pleasures, he deceives himself.hen the Apostle was molested with the stings of the flesh he had recourse to bodily mortifications. *I,* said he, *chastise my body and bring it into subjection*[11574] Unless the flesh be mortified, it will submit to the spirit only with difficulty. *As the lily among the thorns—, so is My love among the daughters*[11575] As the lily is preserved among thorns, so chastity is guarded by mortifications. But for him who wishes to practise this sublime virtue, it is, above all, necessary to avoid intemperance as well in drinking as in eating. *Give not, says the wise man, wine to kings.*[11576]He who takes more wine than is necessary, shall certainly be molested with many carnal motions, and shall scarcely be able to rule the flesh and make it obedient to the law of chastity. “ The body that is inflamed with wine will overflow with lust,” says St. Jerome.[11577] For as the prophet Osee has said, wine deprives man of reason, and reduces him to the level of a brute. *Wine and drunkenness take away the understanding.*[11578] Of the Baptist it was foretold. *He shall drink no wine and strong drink, and he shall be filed with the Holy Ghost.*[11579] Some will argue in favor of the necessity of wine, because it is a remedy for the weakness of the stomach.

But, according to the words of St. Paul to Timothy, a small quantity of wine is sufficient for that malady. Use a little wine for thy stomachs sake, and thy frequent infirmities.[11580] It is also necessary to abstain from superfluity of food. St. Jerome asserts[11581] that satiety of the stomach provokes incontinence. And St. Bonaventure says: “Impurity is nourished by eating to excess.”[11582] But on the other hand, fasting, as the holy Church teaches, represses vice and produces virtue: *“O God, who by corporal fasting dost suppress vice, dost elevate the mind, and dost confer virtues and rewards.”*[11583] St. Thomas has written that when the devil is conquered by those whom he tempts to gluttony, he ceases to tempt them to impurity.[11584]

3. HUMILITY

It is necessary to practise humility. *Cassian says that he who is not humble cannot be chaste.*[11585] It happens, not unfrequently, that God chastises the proud by permitting them to fall into some sin against purity. This, as David himself confessed, was the cause of his fall. *Before I was humbled I offended.*[11586]It is by humility that we obtain chastity, says St. Bernard.[11587]And St Augustine writes: “Charity is the guardian of virginity, humility is the place of the guardian.”[11588]

Divine love is the guardian of purity, but humility is the house in which this guardian dwells. St. John Climacus used to say, that he who expects to conquer the flesh by continence alone is like a man in the midst of the ocean who wishes to save his life by swimming with a single hand. Therefore it is necessary to unite humility to continence.[11589]

4. PRAYER

But above all, to acquire the virtue of chastity prayer is necessary: it is necessary to pray, and to pray continually. It has been already said that chastity can neither be acquired nor preserved unless God grant his aid to preserve it; but this aid he gives only to those who ask.it. Hence the holy Fathers teach that, according to the words of Scripture: *We ought always to pray, and not to faint.*[11590] Ask, and it shall be given you.[11591] The prayer of *petition* is necessary for adults, *necessitate medii*, that is, as a means without which salvation is impossible. Hence the angelic Doctor has said: “After baptism, continual prayer is necessary to man.”[11592] And if to practise any virtue Christians require the divine assistance, they stand in need of still greater help in order to preserve chastity, because they have a strong tendency to the opposite vice. *It is impossible, says Cassian, for man, by his own strength, without aid from God, to keep himself chaste; and therefore, in our struggle with the flesh, we must ask the Lord, with all the affection of our soul, for the gift of chastity.*[11593]

According to the advice of the Wise Man,” says Abelly, “ we should pray to God with our whole heart.”[11594] Hence St. Cyprian teaches that the first means of obtaining chastity is to ask it of God.[11595] And before him Solomon said: And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it y and this also was a point of wisdom, to know whose gift it was : I went to the Lord, and besought Him, and said with my whole heart[11596] We should then, says St. Cyprian, instantly resist the first carnal solicitations with which the devil assails us, and not permit the serpent, that is, the temptation, to grow strong.[11597] St. Jerome gives this same advice: " You must not permit bad thoughts to grow in your mind; no, kill the enemy when he is small."[11598] It is easy to kill a lion when he is small, but not when he has grown to his full size.

Let us guard against reasoning with temptations contrary to chastity: let us endeavor instantly to banish them. And, as the spiritual masters teach, the best means of banishing such temptations is not to combat them directly face to face, by making contrary acts of the will, but to get rid of them indirectly by acts of the love of God, or of contrition, or at least by turning the mind to other things.

But the means in which we should place the greatest confidence is prayer, and recommending ourselves to God. It is useful, as soon as we perceive the first motion of impurity, to renew our purpose to suffer death rather than consent to sin, and immediately after to have recourse to the wounds of Jesus Christ for aid. Thus the saints, who were flesh, and subject to temptations, have acted, and thus they have conquered. " *If I am tormented," says St. Augustine, " by any bad thought, I have recourse to the wounds of Jesus; for I find rest in the wounds of our Saviour."*[11599] Thus, also, St. Thomas of Aquinas repelled the attacks of the woman by whom his chastity was assailed: *"Do not permit, O Lord Jesus and O most holy Virgin Mary, that I should offend God* !" exclaimed the saint.[11600]

It is also very useful to make the sign of the cross on the breast, and to have recourse to our angel guardian and our holy patron. But above all, it is useful to have recourse to Jesus Christ and the divine Mother by instantly invoking their most holy names, and by continuing to invoke them until the temptation is beaten down. Oh ! how powerful are the most holy names of Jesus and Mary against the attacks of impurity ! Devotion to the holy Virgin, who is called " the Mother of fair love, and the guardian of virginity,"[11601] is a most useful devotion for the preservation of chastity. And to recite, at rising in the morning and going to bed at night, three "Hail

Marys,” in honor of the purity of Mary, is a devotion that has singular efficacy in obtaining the gift of continence.

Father Segneri[11602] relates that a sinner addicted to the grossest impurities went one day to confession to Father Nicholas Zucchi, of the Society of Jesus. The Father prescribed as a remedy for his wicked habits that he should recommend himself, morning and evening, to the purity of Mary, by saying three “ Hail Marys.” After the lapse of several years the sinner returned to Father Zucchi, and by his confession showed that all his vices were perfectly corrected. The Father asked him how such a change had been wrought. He answered that through the little devotion of saying the three “ Hail Marys” he had obtained the grace to change his life.

Father Zucchi, with the permission of the penitent, mentioned the fact from the pulpit. There was a soldier present who was actually in the habit of sins of impurity; he began to say every day the three “ Hail Marys,” and in a short time, with the aid that the divine Mother obtained for him, he soon renounced the evil habit. Through a false zeal, he went one day to the accomplice of his sins in order to convert her; but when he was on the point of entering her house he was suddenly driven back, and found himself transported to a considerable distance. He then understood that he had been prevented from speaking to the woman by a special grace obtained for him by Mary, for which he thanked her. Had he been placed again in the occasion of sin he would probably have relapsed.[11603]

Instruction IV

PREACHING, AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

IF all preachers and confessors fulfilled the obligations of their office the whole world would be sanctified. Bad preachers and bad confessors are the ruin of the world. By bad preachers and confessors I mean those that do not fulfil their duty as they ought. We shall treat, first, of the preaching of the divine word, and afterwards of the administration of the sacrament of penance.

I. PREACHING

By preaching, the faith has been propagated, and by the same means God wishes it to be preserved: *Faith cometh by hearing: and hearing by the word of Christ*[11604] But for a Christian, it is not enough to know what he is obliged to do; it is, moreover, necessary for him, by hearing the divine word from time to time, to be reminded of the importance of eternal salvation, and of the means which he ought to adopt in order to secure it. Hence the following command of St. Paul to Timothy: *Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine.*[11605]

And the same command God had long before given to the Prophets Isaias and Jeremias. To the former he said: *Cry, cease not to lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their wicked doings.*[11606] To the latter: *Behold, I have given My words in thy mouth: lo, I have set thee this day over the nations, and over kingdoms, to root up and to pull down, . . . to build and to plant.*[11607] The same command he has also imposed on his priests; for preaching is one of their principal duties. *Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, . . . to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded* *you*[11608]And should a sinner be damned through the fault of him who preaches the divine word, God will demand an account of the priest who could have announced the truths of salvation to that lost soul. *If, when I say to the wicked thou shalt surely die, thou declare it not to him; . . . the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand?*[11609]

But, to save souls, it is not enough to preach: it is, as I have already said, necessary to preach in a proper manner. In the first place, in order to preach well learning and study are necessary. He who preaches at random will do more injury than service to religion. In the second place, an exemplary life is necessary. The sermons of the man whose conduct excites contempt shall be despised, says St. Gregory.[11610]

And St. John Chrysostom writes: *"How is it possible for a priest to persuade by his words, when his acts are in opposition to his doctrine."*[11611] The preaching of such a man shall serve only for his condemnation; for according to St. Paul, he who reproves in others what he does himself, condemns himself*: Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest. For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself.*[11612] Justly, then, did Father John d'Avila say to a people who asked what rule he should follow in order to preach well, that the best means of preaching well was to love Jesus Christ ardently. *"He," says St. Gregory, " who is not on fire does not inflame."*[11613] The divine love must first burn in the preacher, that he may afterwards kindle it in others. St. Francis de Sales used to say that the heart speaks to the heart.[11614] He meant, that words alone speak to the ears, but do not enter the soul. He only who speaks from the heart, that is, he who feels and practises what he preaches, shall speak to the heart of others, and shall move them to the love of God. Hence, according to the words of the Redeemer, *that which ye hear in the ear, preach ye on the housetop.*[11615]The preacher must have an affection for mental prayer, in which he may excite the sentiments that he will afterwards communicate to others. Mental prayer is the blessed furnace in which sacred orators are inflamed with divine love. *In my meditation,* says David, *a fire shall flame out.*[11616] Here they form the fiery darts that afterwards wound the hearts of their hearers. It is necessary to preach with a good intention, that is, not for temporal interest, but for the glory of God not to attract empty praises, but to procure the salvation of souls.

Hence, as the Council of Trent ordains, it is the duty of preachers to preach in a manner accommodated to the capacity of their hearers: *“Archpriests shall, either peopleally or by others who are competent, feed the people committed to them.”*[11617] Empty words and sounding periods are, says St. Francis de Sales the pest of sermons.[11618] First, because God does not co-operate with vain preaching. Secondly, because the peoples who are present at sermons are generally rude and illiterate, and incapable of understanding flowery discourses. What a pity, sometimes, to see so many of the poor going to the sermon, and afterwards leaving the church afflicted and wearied, without having understood almost any part of the discourse. Justly has Father John d’Avila said, that they who preach in a lofty style, not intelligible to the audience, are traitors to Jesus Christ; and that, though sent by him to procure his glory, they seek only their own exaltation. Justly, too, has Father Caspar Sanzio said, that such preachers are at the present day the greatest persecutors of the Church, because by their sermons they are the cause of the perdition of many souls that would be saved by exhortations composed in a simple and apostolic style. *My preaching, says the Apostle, was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in showing of the spirit and power.*[11619]

In the lives of the saints who were employed in saving souls I find many praised for preaching in simple and popular language, but I have not found one eulogized for having preached in a labored and flowery style. It will be useful to abridge, in this place, what the learned and celebrated Muratori has written in his golden little treatise entitled Popular Eloquence.

There are, he says, two sorts of eloquence: the sublime, and the popular. The sublime eloquence directs us in the composition of discourses which treat of lofty subjects, contain ingenious reflections, select language, and turned periods. With the aid of the popular eloquence the eternal truths are expounded nakedly, subjects easily understood are explained in a simple and familiar style, so that each people present may understand the entire instruction. In sermons, we address not only the learned, but also the uninstructed, and these ordinarily form the greater part of the audience. Hence it is always expedient to preach in a simple, popular style, not only in the missions and spiritual exercises, but also in all sermons addressed to the people. In the sight of God, the souls of the learned and unlearned are equally precious; and, according to the words of the Apostle: *To the wise and to the unwise I am a debtor*[11620] The preacher is obliged to seek the sanctification of the latter as well as of the former. Besides, even to the learned, sermons composed in a simple and familiar style are more profitable than discourses written in lofty and florid language. For in sublime discourses the mind stops to admire and criticise (and this frequently happens); but the will is left without food, and derives no profit from the sermon. Father Paul Segneri, Junior, by preaching in a popular manner ravished (these are the words of Muratori) the hearts even of the learned. The same was the result of the sermons of St. John Francis Regis.

He who wishes to preach, not for the purpose of acquiring praise, but of gaining souls to God, should not seek to hear others say: Oh, what beautiful thoughts! What a splendid speaker! What a great man ! But he should desire to see all going away with their heads bowed down, weeping over their sins, resolved to change their lives, and to give themselves to God. The end of true rhetoric is to persuade and move the audience to practise what is inculcated in the discourse. Even in popular eloquence, preachers avail themselves of the art of rhetoric, of figures, of the arrangement of the arguments, of the language, of the peroration. But all must be done simply and without show of art, in order to reap not applause, but fruit. If in such sermons the audience are not delighted by elegant language and ingenious reflections, they shall certainly be pleased to find themselves enlightened and moved to attend to what alone is important their eternal salvation.

And what has been said is, according to Muratori, applicable to sermons preached in cities, where the audience consists of the ignorant and the learned; but he adds, that in addressing the common people or the inhabitants of the villages the preacher must adopt the most popular and lowest kind of eloquence, in order to accommodate his instruction to their weak understanding. He must imagine himself to be one of them, and that another is anxious to instruct him in some duty and to persuade him to fulfil it. Hence his language ought to be popular and common, the periods short and unconnected, imitating the very mode of reasoning that such peoples usually adopt among themselves. In a word, the whole study of the preacher should be to make the audience understand all he says, and to move his hearers most effectually to do what he exhorts them to practise. And as the preacher should adopt a familiar style, so he should also select subjects easily understood; omitting scholastic points and ingenious interpretations of Scripture, which though intelligible will be unprofitable to the poor and illiterate. The great object should be to explain nakedly and simply the eternal truths, the importance of salvation, and to lay before the people the illusions of the devil, the dangers of perdition, and the means to be adopted in some particular cases that may occur. In this consists the breaking of bread to the little ones, which the Lord demands of preachers, and of the general neglect of which he complains: *The little ones have asked for bread, and there was none to break it unto them.*[11621] In speaking to the uninstructed, it is also very useful to ask questions from time to time, and to reply to them. It is useful to bring forward examples of the saints, or examples of punishments inflicted on sinners. But above all, it is useful to inculcate things which are practical, and to repeat them several times, that they may remain impressed on the weak understanding of the poor.

Such the doctrine of Muratori, which I have here abridged in order to show that the sacred orators who preach in a high and florid style to the poor, who generally compose the audiences in our churches, receive even from the learned censure rather than praise.

This is enough on preaching the divine word. I hope hereafter, in treating of the exercises of the mission, to subjoin other reflections on the manner of preaching to be adopted in the missions, and on the method of arranging the sermons. Let us now pass to the administration of the sacrament of penance.

II. THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

1. GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY OF CONFESSORS

The great Pontiff, St. Pius V., said: “ *Give us fit confessors, and surely the whole of Christianity will be reformed.”*[11622]

He who wishes to be a good confessor must, in the first place, consider that the office of a confessor is very difficult and dangerous, and that on account of its difficulty and danger *the Council of Trent has called it an office to be dreaded even by angels.*[11623] And what, says St. Laurence

Justinian, can be more perilous than to assume the responsibility of rendering to God an account of the life of others?[11624] St. Gregory says that no error is more dangerous than that which is committed in the direction of souls.[11625] It is certain that if a soul be lost through the fault of her confessor, God will demand of him an account of that soul: *I will require My flock at their hand*[11626] And the Apostle writes: *Obey your prelates, . . . for they watch, as being to render an account of your souls.*[11627] Hence, according to St. Gregory, a confessor has to render to God an account of as many souls as he has penitents.[11628] And St. John Chrysostom says: " If we already tremble having to render an account of our own sins, what awaits him who has to render an account of so many souls ?"[11629]

This is not applicable to those good priests who, penetrated with a holy fear, labor to qualify themselves for this great office, and afterwards devote themselves to the exercise of it, through the sole desire of bringing souls to God. It is intended only for those who undertake to hear confessions through worldly motives, or temporal interest, or self-esteem, or, as sometimes happens, without the necessary learning.

2. THE KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED TO HEAR CONFESSIONS WELL

St. Laurence Justinian says: " Many graces and not a little knowledge is needed by him who desires to raise souls to life."[11630] He, then, who wishes to hear confessions, stands in need of extensive knowledge. Some imagine the science of Moral Theology to be easy, but Gerson justly says that it is the most difficult of all sciences. And before him St. Gregory said: "The directing of souls is the art of arts."[11631] St. Gregory Nazianzen writes: " To direct men seems to me to be the greatest of all sciences."[11632] St. Francis de Sales also used to say that the office of confessor is of all offices the most important and the most difficult. It is the most important, because on it depends the eternal salvation of souls, which is the end of all the sciences. It is the most difficult, because the science of Moral Theology requires a knowledge of many other sciences, and embraces an immense variety of matter. It is also most difficult, because different decisions must be given, according to the different circumstances of the cases that occur; for, a principle by which a case involving a certain circumstance may be decided will not answer for the solution of another case containing a different circumstance.

Some disdain to read the works of the moralists, saying that to hear confessions is enough to know the general principles of Moral Theology, by which, they add, the particular cases may be resolved. I answer: It is certain that all cases must be decided by means of principles, but there is great difficulty in applying to particular cases just principles of solution. This the moralists have done. They have labored to explain the principles by which many particular cases may be resolved.

Besides, at present there is a great number of positive laws contained in the bulls and decrees of Pontiffs, as well as in the ancient canons, and which a confessor is obliged to know. Of these laws he who neglects to read Moral Theology shall scarcely be able to acquire a competent knowledge. The learned author of *The Instruction for Young Confessors* justly says that many divines are as deficient in Moral Theology as they are profound in the speculative sciences. But, on the other hand, Monsignor Sperelli asserts that it is a great error in some confessors to devote all their time to scholastic theology, considering the study of Moral Theology as lost time, Such confessors, as he says, are afterwards unable to distinguish one sin from another. He then adds: " This is an error that will cause eternal ruin both to the confessor and to the penitents."[11633]

We must, then, be persuaded that to hear confessions great science and also great prudence are required; for with knowledge without prudence a confessor shall do but little good, and to some his ministry will be more injurious than beneficial.

3. CHARITY AND FIRMNESS THAT THE CONFESSOR SHOULD HAVE

Sanctity is still more necessary, on account of the great fortitude which a confessor requires in the exercise of his ministry. " Only he that is a great saint," says St. Laurence Justinian, "can without injury to himself occupy himself with the care of souls."[11634]

I. A confessor requires a great fund of charity in receiving all the poor, the ignorant, and the vicious. Some hear the confessions only of pious peoples; but when a poor peasant comes with a conscience loaded with sins, they hear him with impatience, and send him away with reproaches. Hence the miserable man, who must have done great violence to himself in resolving to go to confession, seeing himself dismissed in such a manner, will conceive a horror for the sacrament, and a dread of approaching it anymore, and thus, through despair, will abandon himself to a dissolute life. To such confessors the Redeemer (who came to save sinners, and was therefore full of charity) says what he said to his disciples: *You know not of what spirit you are*[11635] But such is not the conduct of confessors who, in obedience to the exhortation of the Apostle, put on the bowels of charity: *Put ye on, therefore, as the elect of God, . . the bowels of mercy*[11636] When a sinner comes to confession, the more abandoned he is, the more they labor to assist him, and the greater the charity with which they treat him. You are not, says Hugo of St. Victor, appointed judges of crimes, to chastise, but, as it were, judges of maladies to heal."[11637] It is indeed necessary to admonish the sinner, in order to make him understand his miserable state, and the danger of damnation to which he is exposed; but he must be always admonished with charity, he must be excited to confidence in the divine mercy, and must be taught the means by which he may amend his life. And though the confessor should be obliged to defer absolution, he ought to dismiss the penitent with sweetness; fixing a day for him to return, and pointing out the remedies that he must practise in the mean time, in order to prepare himself for absolution.

Sinners are saved in this way, but not by harshness and reproaches, which drive them to despair. St. Francis de Sales used to say: " More flies are caught by a drop of honey than by a pound of aloes." But some will say, we treat sinners in this manner a great deal of our time will be taken up, and others who are waiting cannot be heard. But in answer I say, that it is better to hear one confession well than to hear a great number imperfectly. But the most appropriate answer is, that the confessor has not to give an account to God of the peoples who are waiting, but only of the people whose confession he has begun to hear.

II. The confessor also stands in need of great fortitude, and at first in hearing the confessions of women. How many priests have lost their souls in hearing these confessions! We must treat in the confessional with young girls and young women; we must hear their temptations and often the avowal of their falls; for they also are of flesh and blood. We have a natural affection for peoples of the other sex, and this affection increases whenever they confide to us their miseries. But if these peoples are pious, devoted to spirituality, says St. Thomas, the danger of an inordinate attachment is yet greater, since this natural affection is still more strongly attracted; but, continues the saint, if mutual affection increases, the attachment w r ill also increase in the same proportion; it will assume at first the appearance of piety, and the devil will easily succeed in making *“ the spiritual devotion change into carnal devotion.”*[11638]

Great fortitude is necessary in correcting penitents and in refusing absolution to those who have not the requisite dispositions, without any regard to their rank or power, or to the loss or injury which the confessor may sustain, or to the imputations of indiscretion or of ignorance which may be cast upon him.

Seek not, says the Holy Ghost, *to be made a judge unless thoit hast strength enough to extirpate iniquities, lest thou fear the people of the powerful.*[11639]? A Father of our Congregation had occasion to hear in the sacristy the confession of a priest, whom he refused to absolve. The priest, rising up in a proud and haughty manner, said to him: “ Begone ! you are a brute.” But there is no remedy: poor confessors must submit to such inconveniences and insults. For it often happens that they are bound to refuse or to defer absolution, either because the penitent will not do what they require of him, or because he is a relapsing sinner, or because he is in the proximate occasion of sin. And here it is necessary to examine how a confessor should treat relapsing sinners, and those who are in the occasion of sin. For, in order to save his penitents, the confessor should attend with the greatest care to relapsing sinners, and to those who are in the occasion of sin.

But, before we enter on this subject, it is necessary to remark, that a confessor exposes himself to as much danger of damnation by treating his penitents with too much rigor as he does by treating them with excessive indulgence.

Too much indulgence, says St. Bonaventure, begets presumption, and too much rigor leads to despair.[11640] There is no doubt that many err by being too indulgent: and such peoples cause great havoc and I say even the greatest havoc; for libertines, who are the most numerous class, go in crowds to these lax confessors, and find in them their own perdition.

But it is also certain that confessors who are too rigid cause great evil. *You ruled over them with rigor, and with a high hand. And My sheep were scattered.*[11641] etc. *Too much rigor,* says Gerson, *serves only to bring souls to despair, and from despair to the abyss of vice.*[11642] Hence he says in another place: “ The Doctors of theology should not, if they are not certain, be so ready to assert that certain sins are mortal sins.”[11643] Such also is the doctrine of St. Raymond. *“ Do not be so prone,”* says the saint, *“ to declare mortal sins, unless it be clear from Scripture.”*[11644] St. Antonine teaches the same. *“ It is very dangerous,”* he says, *“ to decide whether or not something is mortal, if this be not clear from the authority of Scripture, of a canon, or of an evident reason. “*[11645] For, as the saint adds, he who, without some of the above-mentioned grounds, pronounces an action to be a mortal sin, exposes souls to the danger of damnation.[11646] Speaking of the vain ornaments of women the same holy archbishop says: “ From what has been said it seems that we must conclude that if the confessor clearly and undoubtedly sees that one cannot use such an ornament without mortal sin, he cannot give absolution if the penitent does not take the resolution to avoid such a sin.

But if one does not clearly see whether this is a mortal sin, one must not hasten to a decision by either refusing absolution or by representing it to the penitent as a mortal sin. If the penitent should afterwards do the same thing, it would be for him a mortal sin, even if it were in itself no mortal sin; for everything that is against conscience exposes the soul to damnation. And since one should use his power rather to loosen than to bind, and it is better to have to give an account to the Lord for too great mercy than too great rigor, as St. John Chrysostom teaches, it seems to be better to absolve such penitents and to leave them to the divine judgment.”[11647] Silvester teaches the same doctrine; he says: “I say with St. Antonine, that one may with a good conscience choose an opinion and act according to it, if he has on his side notable teachers, and if it is not opposed to any decision of Scripture, of the Church, etc.”[11648]

And this is also the opinion of John Nider, who, after giving the opinion of Doctor William, quotes the passage of Bernard of Clermont or of Gannat of Auvergne: “ If among the masters of sacred science some say that there is a mortal sin and others deny that it is, then we must consult some learned and prudent peoples in whom we have confidence, and after having taken their advice we must decide whether or not there is a sin. For the moment that the masters discuss among themselves and the Church has not given any decision, one may freely embrace that opinion in favor of which we can cite the testimony of wise and prudent peoples.”[11649] And this is conformable to the teaching of St. Thomas. “ *He who adopts the opinion of a particular Doctor against a formal text of Scripture or against the universal sentiment of the Church, cannot be excused from culpable error.*”[11650] Then, according to the angelic Doctor, a people is excused from error when the opinion that he holds rests on the foundation of authority, and is not opposed to any clear passage of Scripture or to any definition of the Church. Finally, the same doctrine has been laid down more clearly by Gabriel Biel, who flourished in the year 1480. “ The opinion,” he says. “ that is more probable to me is, that we must never condemn as a mortal sin anything for which we cannot allege either a very evident reason or the formal testimony of Scripture.”[11651]

4. HOW TO ACT IN REGARD TO THOSE LIVING IN THE OCCASION OF SIN AND THOSE WHO ARE RELAPSING SINNERS

But let us come to particulars, and examine how a confessor ought to treat peoples who are in the proximate occasion of sin, and habitual sinners who relapse into any vice. With regard to those who are in the occasion of sin, it is necessary first to distinguish various kinds of occasions.

I. The occasion may be remote or proximate. The remote occasion is that in which a people rarely sins or in which men, commonly speaking, seldom fall. The occasion that is itself[11652] proximate is that in which men always, or nearly always, fall. The occasion that is proximate by accident,[11653] or the respective occasion, is that in which a particular people frequently sins. This is the correct definition of the respective occasion, according to the true and common opinion of theologians, in opposition to those who hold that the proximate occasion is that in which a people always, or nearly always, yields to sin. The occasion of sin is also divided into voluntary and necessary. The occasion is voluntary when it can be removed; it is necessary when it cannot be avoided without grievous loss or grievous scandal to others.

Many theologians say that he who is in the voluntary proximate occasion may be absolved once or twice, provided he has a firm purpose of removing it as soon as possible. But here it is necessary to distinguish, with St. Charles Borromeo, in his Instructions to Confessors, occasions that are in esse, such as when a people keeps a concubine in his house, from those that are not in esse, such as when in gaming or conversation a people falls into blasphemies, quarrels, and the like.

In the occasions that are not in esse, St. Charles says that the penitent who sincerely promises to renounce them may be absolved the second or third time, but unless he afterwards gives proof of amendment he should not be absolved until he has actually removed the occasion. In the occasions which are in esse the saint says that a promise is not sufficient, and that the penitent cannot be absolved until he has taken away the occasion of sin. Ordinarily speaking, this opinion should certainly be followed; as I have shown in my Moral Theology[11654] by the authority of many authors. A penitent who wishes to receive absolution before the removal of such an occasion is not disposed for the sacrament; because he is in the proximate danger of violating his purpose as well as the obligation by which he is bound under pain of mortal sin to remove the occasion. To take away proximate occasions is very painful and difficult, and can be effected only by doing great violence to one s self. But he who has already received absolution will scarcely offer such violence to himself. Freed from the fear of being deprived of absolution, he will flatter himself with the hope of being able to resist temptations without taking away the occasion; and thus remaining in the occasion, he will certainly relapse. This we know by the experience of so many miserable sinners who, after receiving absolution from over-indulgent confessors, neglect to remove the occasion of sin: thus they fall back, and become worse than before. Hence, on account of the danger of violating the purpose that he has made of removing the occasion of sin, the penitent who wishes to be absolved before he takes it away is not disposed for absolution, and therefore the confessor who absolves him is certainly guilty of sin. And here let it be observed, that, generally speaking, the greater the rigor with which the confessor treats his penitents, when there is question of the danger of formal sins, particularly against chastity, the more he will promote their sanctification.

But, on the other hand, the greater his indulgence, the greater his cruelty to their souls. St. Thomas of Villanova says that confessors who are too indulgent are *impiously merciful.*[11655]Such charity is contrary to charity.

I have said ordinarily speaking; for in some rare cases the confessor may absolve before the occasion is removed. For example, if the penitent had evinced a strong determination to amend his life, along with great compunction, and is unable to take away the occasion for a long time; or if he could not return to the same confessor; or if there should be other extraordinary circumstances which would oblige the confessor to absolve him. But such cases are very rare. Hence peoples who are in the proximate occasion of sin can scarcely ever be absolved until they have first removed it; particularly if they promised at other times to take away the occasion, but did not afterwards fulfil their promise. It is useless to say that a penitent who is disposed for the sacrament has, after the confession of his sins, a strict right to receive absolution; for it is the common opinion of theologians that a people who has confessed his sins has not a strict right to be immediately absolved, and that the confessor can and should, as a spiritual physician, defer absolution whenever he knows that by deferring it he will promote the amendment of his penitent. What has been said applies to voluntary occasions: but if the occasion be necessary, generally speaking there is not a strict obligation of removing it; for when the penitent does not wish, but rather suffers and permits it against his will, he may hope for greater help from God to resist the temptation. Hence, ordinarily speaking, he who is in a necessary occasion of sin may be absolved, provided he is determined to adopt all the means necessary to guard against a relapse.here are three principal means to be prescribed in necessary occasions. The first is to fly from the occasion and avoid as much as possible being alone with the accomplice, speaking confidentially with her, or looking at her. The second is prayer and unceasing petition to God and the Blessed Virgin for help to resist the temptation. The third is the frequentation of the sacraments of penance and of the Eucharist, by which strength is obtained to resist temptations.

I have said generally speaking ; for when, after having used all the means the penitent always relapses, without any amendment, then, according to the more common and true opinion, which is to be followed, he cannot be absolved until he quits the occasion of sin, though it should cost him his life,[11656] as the theologians say; for he should prefer eternal to temporal life. I add, that though, according to the rules of Moral Theology, a people who is in the necessary occasion of sin may be absolved whenever he is properly disposed for the sacrament, still, w r hen the occasion leads to sins against purity, it will, ordinarily speaking, be expedient to defer absolution until it appears by the experience of a considerable time, of twenty or thirty days, that the penitent has been faithful in practising the means prescribed, and that he has not relapsed. I also add, that when the confessor knows that it will be useful to defer absolution he is bound to defer it; for he is obliged to adopt the most efficacious remedies for the amendment of his penitent. I say, moreover, that when a people is long habituated to sins of impurity, it will not be enough for him to avoid proximate occasions: it will be also necessary for him to remove certain occasions which of themselves would, perhaps, be remote, but with regard to him will be not remote, but proximate. Because by so many relapses he has become weak and strongly inclined to the vice of impurity.

II. With regard to relapsing sinners, it is necessary to distinguish between them and habitual sinners.

Habitual sinners are those who have contracted a habit of any vice, but have never confessed the habit. If they are truly penitent, and firmly resolved to adopt the means of overcoming their evil habit, they may be absolved the first time they confess the habit, or when they confess the sin after having, for a considerable time, retracted the habit. But let it be observed, that when a penitent has contracted a bad habit, particularly if it has become inveterate, the confessor can certainly defer absolution, in order to try by experience how the penitent practised the means prescribed.

But relapsing sinners are those who after confession have fallen back into the same habit without any amendment. They cannot be absolved when they show only the ordinary signs of repentance such as the confession of their sins, along with the declaration that they are penitent, and resolved to amend their lives. For Innocent XI. has justly condemned the following proposition: *“The moment that a sinner guilty of infringing a divine law, either positive or natural, or a precept of the Church, even if he gave no hope of amendment, but protests at least that he repents and wishes to amend, one cannot refuse or defer absolution.”*[11657]Because although the confession itself, along with a declaration on the part of the habitual sinner that he is sorry for his sins, and resolved to avoid them for the future, gives a kind of moral certainty that he is disposed for the sacrament, unless there is a presumption in favor of the contrary, still when a habit has been contracted, and when, without any improvement, several relapses have taken place after absolution, there is strong reason to suspect that the sorrow and purpose of amendment of the penitent are not sincere.

Hence, such a penitent should not be absolved until he shows by a change of conduct for some time, and “by practising the means prescribed, that he has the dispositions necessary for the sacrament. Remember that this holds not only for those who relapse into mortal sin, but also for those who relapse into venial sins, which many penitents confess through custom, but without sorrow and a purpose of amendment. If they wish to receive absolution, the confessor should make them give certain matter for the sacrament, by the confession of a more grievous sin of their past life, for which they are truly penitent, and which they are firmly resolved to avoid for the future.

Hence, to absolve relapsing sinners, it is necessary for the confessor to try for some time the sincerity of their repentance; or at least to see some extraordinary signs of sorrow, which exclude the conditions of the condemned propositions, and give a well-founded hope of their amendment. These signs are, according to the theologians:

1. Great compunction, manifested by tears or by words, proceeding not from the mouth but from the heart. From expressions of this kind we sometimes get more certainty of a penitent s fitness for absolution than even from tears;

2. A considerable diminution in the number of sins, though the penitent was exposed to the same occasions and temptations;

3. Greater caution against relapses, by avoiding the occasions, and by practising the means prescribed; or a great struggle made before consenting to sin;

4. When the penitent asks, with a sincere desire of amendment, for new remedies or means of freeing himself from the sin;

5. If he come to confession, not to conform to any pious custom already established, such as the practice of going to the sacraments at Christmas, or any other determinate festival; not by the direction of a parent or master, but through a desire infused by God of recovering the divine grace; particularly if the penitent has put himself to great inconvenience in order to come to confession, by making a long journey; or if he has come after a great struggle, or after doing great violence to himself;

6. If he has been impelled to go to confession by hearing a sermon, by the account of the sudden death or some great calamity of another, or by any other extraordinary spiritual motive;

7. If he confesses sins previously concealed through shame;

8. If the penitent shows that by the admonition of the confessor he has acquired new light, and a new horror for his sins, and a new dread of the danger of being lost;

9. Some theologians place among the extraordinary signs of repentance a firm promise made by the penitent to practise the remedies prescribed by his confessor; but unless there is some other sign, the confessor can seldom trust to such promises. For in order to obtain absolution the more easily, penitents make many promises that they are not firmly resolved to fulfil.

Whenever, then, there are such extraordinary signs, a confessor may absolve a relapsing sinner; but he may also defer absolution for some time, when he knows that delay will be profitable to his—penitent. Some maintain that it is not always expedient to defer the absolution of a relapsing sinner who has the necessary dispositions; others teach that it is better to put off the absolution, unless the delay and privation of Communion should give others grounds of suspicion injurious to the reputation of the penitent. My opinion is, as I have stated in my *Instructions to Confessors.*[11658] that where there is no external occasion, and the sins are committed through internal frailty, such as blasphemies, hatred, pollution, morose delectation, etc., it is seldom expedient to defer absolution. For we may always hope for better fruit from the aid of the grace which the penitent receives from the sacrament than from the delay of absolution. But when there is an external occasion, though necessary, I, as has been already said, deem it expedient, and generally speaking necessary, for the amendment of the penitent, who is even disposed for the sacrament, to defer absolution.

Instruction V

MENTAL PRAYER

I. NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

IF, as the most learned Suarez[11659]has asserted, mental prayer is morally necessary for all the faithful, it is still more necessary for priests. Because priests stand in need of greater help from God, on account of the greater obligations by which they are bound to seek perfection, of the greater sanctity of their state, and on account of the office that they hold, of procuring the salvation of souls. Hence, like mothers, who require more corporal nutriment than others, because they have to support themselves and their children, priests stand in need of a double portion of spiritual nourishment. Hence St. Ambrose says, that to teach us the necessity of mental prayer our Saviour separated from the people, and went up the mountain to pray,[11660] although he did not require to go into solitary places in order to pray; for his blessed soul, always enjoying the intuitive vision of God, was employed in all places and in every occupation in the contemplation of the divinity and in praying for us. St. Luke tells us, that he spent entire nights in prayer.[11661]On this passage St. Ambrose says, if Jesus Christ has spent nights in prayer for your salvation, how much more ought you to pray in order to save your soul![11662]

Hence the saint has written in another place: “Priests should always devote themselves to prayer.”[11663] Father John d’Avila used to say, that the offices which a priest holds of offering sacrifice and of offering incense go together.[11664] Everyone knows that incense signifies prayer: Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight.[11665] Hence St. John saw the angels having . . . golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints.”[11666]Oh, what sweet odor do the prayers of good priests give to God ! On account of the necessity of mental prayer for ecclesiastics, St. Charles

Borromeo ordained, in the Council of Milan,[11667] that every ecclesiastic, before his ordination, should be interrogated in a special manner whether he knew how to make mental prayer, whether he was in the habit of making it, and what meditations he used. Father John d'Avila once dissuaded a people from taking priesthood because he was not accustomed to make mental prayer.

I do not intend to detail at length the reasons why the practice of mental prayer is morally necessary for every priest. It is enough to say, that without mental prayer a priest has but little light; for without it he will reflect but little on the great affair of salvation, he will scarcely see the obstacles to it, and the obligations that he must fulfil in order to be saved. Hence the Saviour said to his disciples: Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands.[11668]These lamps, says St. Bonaventure,[11669]are holy meditations, in which the Lord enlightens us.

Come ye to Him and be enlightened.[11670] He who does not make mental prayer has but little light and little strength. In the repose of meditation, says St. Bernard, we acquire strength to resist enemies and to practise virtue.[11671]He who does not sleep during the night is not able to stand steady, and goes tottering along the road.

Be still and see that I am God[11672] He who neglects to withdraw, at least now and then, from the thoughts of the world, and to retire to converse with God, has but little knowledge or light regarding the things of eternity. Seeing, one day, that his disciples had been greatly occupied in works of fraternal charity, Jesus Christ said to them: *Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little*.[11673] Retire into some solitary place and rest a while. Our Lord spoke of the repose, not of the body, but of the spirit, which unless it retire from time to time to converse alone with God, has not strength to persevere in doing good, but easily faints and falls into sin in the occasions that occur. All our strength is in the divine aid: *I can do all things in Him who strengthened me*.[11674]But this aid God gives only to those who pray for it. He is most desirous of dispensing his graces to us; but, as St. Gregory says, he wishes that we pray to him. and that we, as it were, compel him by our prayers to grant them to us.[11675]

But he who neglects mental prayer has but little knowledge of his defects, of the dangers of losing the divine grace, of the means of conquering temptations, and of the need he has of asking God’s graces; thus he will neglect to ask them, and neglecting to pray for them, he shall certainly be lost. Hence St. Teresa of Jesus used to say, *that he who neglects mental prayer does not stand in need of devils to carry him to hell, but brings himself to that land of woe.*[11676]

Some say many vocal prayers; but he who does not make mental prayer will scarcely say his vocal prayers with attention: he will say them with distractions, and the Lord will not hear him. *“Many cry to God,”* says St. Augustine, *“but not with the voice of the soul, but with the voice of the body;*[11677] *only the cry of the heart, of the soul, reaches God.”*[11678] It is not enough to pray only with the tongue: we must, according to the Apostle, pray also with the heart if we wish to receive Gods graces: *Praying at all times in the spirit.”*[11679] And by experience we see that many peoples who recite a great number of vocal prayers, the Office and the Rosary, fall into sin, and continue to live in sin. But he who attends to mental prayer scarcely ever falls into sin, and should he have the misfortune of falling into it, he will hardly continue to live in so miserable a state; he will either give up mental prayer, or renounce sin. Meditation and sin cannot stand together. However abandoned a soul may be, if she perseveres in meditation God will bring her to salvation. All the saints have become saints by mental prayer. “By prayer,” says St. Laurence Justinian, “fervor is renewed, and the fire of divine love is increased. “[11680]

St. Ignatius used to say, that to remove the disturbance of mind caused by the greatest calamity that could befall him, a meditation of a quarter of an hour would be sufficient. St. Bernard has written: “ Consideration rules the affections, directs the actions, corrects excesses.”[11681]St. John Chrysostom regards as dead the soul that does not make mental prayer.[11682] Ruffinus says that all the progress of the soul depends on meditation.[11683] And Gerson goes so far as to assert that he who does not meditate, cannot, without a miracle, lead a Christian life.[11684] Speaking of the perfection to which every priest is bound, *St. Aloysius Gonzaga justly said that without a great zeal for mental prayer a soul will never attain great virtue.*[11685] (He who desires more detailed proofs of the moral necessity of mental prayer, is referred to the chapter on meditation in the True Spouse of Jesus Christ, Ch. XV)[11686]

I here omit many other arguments that I could adduce in favor of the necessity of mental prayer; I will only answer three excuses put forward by priests who neglect meditation.

I. Some say, “ I do not make mental prayer, because I am subject to desolation, to distractions, and to temptations; I have a wandering mind that I cannot confine to the subject of meditation, and therefore I have given up mental prayer.”

But to such peoples St. Francis de Sales says,[11687] that if in their meditations they do nothing else than banish distractions and temptations, the meditation is well made, provided the distraction is not voluntary. The Lord is pleased with a good intention, with a patient endurance, during the whole time prescribed for meditation, and with the pain arising from distractions, and will bestow many graces in return. We ought to go to prayer, not to please ourselves, but to please God. Even holy souls generally suffer aridity in meditation, but because they persevere, God enriches them with his blessings. St. Francis de Sales used to say, an ounce of prayer made amid desolations is of greater value before God than a hundred pounds of it in the midst of consolations. Even statues do honor to a prince by standing in his galleries. Whenever, then, the Lord wishes us to remain as statues in his presence, let us be content to honor him as statues. It will then be enough to say to him: Lord, I remain here to please you. St. Isidore says that the devil never labors so hard to tempt and distract us as in the time of meditation.[11688]And why ? because he knows the great fruit that we draw from meditation, and therefore he endeavors to make us give it up. They, then, who abandon mental prayer on account of the tediousness that they feel in it, give great delight to the devil.

In the time of aridity the soul should do nothing else than humble herself and ask God s graces. She should humble herself, for there is no better time for understanding our own miseries and insufficiency than when we are desolate in prayer: we then see that of ourselves we can do nothing. Hence we should do nothing else than, uniting ourselves with Jesus, desolate on the cross, humble ourselves and ask mercy, saying and repeating, Lord, assist me: Lord, have mercy on me: my Jesus, mercy. Meditation made in this manner will be the most fruitful of all; for to the humble God opens his hands and dispenses his graces: God resisteth the proud, and giveth His grace to the humble.[11689] Let us then, more than ever, fervently implore mercy for ourselves and for poor sinners. God requires, in a special manner, of priests that they pray for sinners. *The priests, the Lords ministers, shall weep, and shall say: Spare, O Lord, spare Thy people*[11690]But in answer to this some may say: It is enough for me to say the divine office. But St. Augustine writes, that the barking of dogs is more pleasing to God than the prayers of bad ecclesiastics. The ecclesiastic who neglects mental prayer soon falls away from virtue, for without meditation he shall scarcely acquire the ecclesiastical spirit.[11691]

II. Others say, If I neglect mental prayer, I do not mis-spend my time; I employ it in study.

But the Apostle said to Timothy: *Take heed to thyself and to doctrine*.[11692] Attend first to thyself, that is, to prayer, and then to doctrine, that is, to study, in order to procure the salvation of others. If we are not saints, how can we make others become saints ?Happy he that knows Thee, even if he knows nothing else," says St. Augustine.[11693] If we knew all sciences and knew not how to love Jesus Christ, our knowledge shall profit us nothing to eternal life. But if we know how to love Jesus Christ, we shall know all things, and shall be happy for eternity. Happy, then, the man to whom is given the science of the saints, that is, the science of loving God: *She gave him the knowledge of the holy things*.[11694] A single word from a priest who truly loves God will produce more fruit in others than a thousand sermons of the learned who love God but little.

But this science of the saints is not acquired by the study of books, but by mental prayer, in which the master who instructs and the book that is read is a crucified God. Being asked one day by St. Thomas from what book he had acquired so much learning, St. Bonaventure pointed to the crucifix, and said that there he had acquired all his knowledge. Sometimes a people learns more in a moment during the time of meditation than he would in ten years spent in the study of books. " In the soul," says St. Bonaventure, " there is left, by the desire of unitive love, incomparably greater knowledge than by study."[11695]

Human sciences require a good understanding; in the science of the saints it is enough to have a good will. He who loves God most ardently, knows him best. Love, says St. Gregory,[11696]is knowledge; and according to St. Augustine, to love is to see.[11697]

David exhorts us to taste and see how sweet the Lord is: *O taste and see that the Lord is sweet.*[11698]He who tastes God most by loving him, sees him most clearly, and has the most perfect knowledge of the immensity of his goodness. He who tastes honey has a more correct notion of it than all the philosophers who study and explain its properties. “ If,” said St. Augustine, “ God is wisdom, a true philosopher is a lover of God.”[11699] God is wisdom itself; then the true philosopher (by philosopher is meant a people who loves wisdom) is one who truly loves God. To learn worldly sciences much time and labor are necessary; but to learn the science of the saints it is enough to wish and ask for it. The wise man says that *Wisdom . . . is easily seen by them that love her, and is found by them that seek her. She preventeth them that covet her, so that she first showeth herself to them.*[11700] The divine wisdom is easily found by all that seek and covet her; she is found, even before she is sought. *He that watcheth early to seek her shall not labor, for he shall find her sitting at his door.*[11701] He who seeks her with diligence shall not labor to find her, for he shall find her sitting at his door waiting for him. Finally, Solomon concludes: Now all good things came to me with her[11702] That is, he who finds wisdom, or the love of God, finds all goods.

Oh, how much more did St. Philip Neri learn in the grottoes of St. Sebastian, where he spent entire nights in meditation, than in all the books that he had read! How much more did St. Jerome learn in the cave of Bethlehem than in all his studies! Father Suarez used to say that he would rather lose all his knowledge than one hour s mental prayer. “ May the wise men of this world,” says St. Paulinus, “ possess their wisdom, the rich their riches, the kings their kingdoms. Jesus Christ is our wisdom, our riches, our kingdom.”[11703] Let the learned of the world enjoy their wisdom, let the rich possess their wealth, and kings their kingdoms, but let Jesus Christ be our wisdom, our riches, our kingdom; let us say with St. Francis. “ My God and my all.”[11704] This true wisdom we should in a special manner ask of God, for he will certainly give it to all who pray for it. If any of you want wisdom, says St. James, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not.[11705] I do not deny that study is useful, and even necessary for priests; but the study of the crucifix is still more necessary. In a letter to Jovius, who devoted a great deal of time to the study of the works of the philosophers, but through pretence of not having time, paid but little attention to the exercises of a spiritual life, the same St. Paulinus writes. “ You have time to be a philosopher, but you have no time to be a Christian.”[11706] Some priests spend so much time in the study of mathematics, geometry, astronomy, and profane history (oh that they would at least study what is better suited to their state), and afterwards say that they have not time to make mental prayer.

To them it should be said: “ You have time to be a learned man, but you have no time to be a priest.”[11707]Seneca says that we have little time, because we lose a great deal of it.[11708] And in another place he says: “We are ignorant of what is necessary, because we learn what is superfluous.”[11709]

III. Others say I would wish to make mental prayer, but I am so much occupied in hearing confessions and preaching, that I have not a moment to spare.

I answer: I praise you, dearly beloved priest, for seeking the salvation of souls, but I cannot praise you for forgetting yourself in order to assist others. We must attend first to ourselves by making mental prayer, and then to our neighbor. The holy apostles labored more than all others for the salvation of souls, but finding that their exertions for the good of others interfered with prayer, they appointed deacons for the performance of the external works of charity, that thus they themselves might have time for prayer and the preaching of the divine word: *Brethren, may we appoint men over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*”[11710] But remark, they attended first to prayer, and then to preaching; because without prayer sermons produce but little fruit. This is what St. Teresa wrote to the Bishop of Osma, who paid great attention to the care of his flock, but devoted little time to prayer. “ Our Lord,” says the saint in a letter to him, “has shown me that you are wanting in what is particularly necessary for you (and when the foundation gives way the edifice falls to ruin); you fail in mental prayer, and do not persevere in it; from this defect arises the aridity which the soul suffers.”[11711]

St. Bernard admonished Pope Eugene not to omit meditation on account of external affairs; and added, that he who gives up mental prayer may fall into hardness of heart, which will destroy all remorse for his faults, so that after having committed them he shall feel no hatred for them.[11712]

St. Laurence Justinian says that the works of Martha, without the recollection of Mary, cannot be perfect.[11713] He deceives himself, says the saint, who expects, without the aid of prayer, to succeed in the work of saving souls a work as dangerous as it is sublime; without the reflection of mental prayer, he shall certainly faint on the way.[11714]Our Lord commanded his disciples to preach what they heard in prayer: That which you hear in the ear, preach ye upon the housetops.[11715] By the ear in this place is understood the ear of the heart, to which God promises to speak in the solitude of prayer: I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart[11716] In—prayer, says St. Paulinus, we conceive the spirit, which we must afterwards communicate to others.[11717]

Hence, speaking of priests, St. Bernard complained, that though a priest should be first a cistern, that is, full of holy lights and affections collected in prayer, and afterwards a canal to diffuse them among his neighbors, still there are in the Church many canals and few cisterns.[11718] Hence before a priest engages in works of charity to others he should have recourse to prayer, says St. Laurence Justinian.[11719] Hence, on the passage of the Canticles, Draw me; we will run after Thee in the odor of Thy ointments[11720] St. Bernard has written, that the priest who has zeal for the salvation of souls ought to say to God: *“I will run not alone; others shall run with me: we will run after Thee in the odor of Thy ointments; that is, we will hasten after Thee, attracted by Thy example.”*[11721]My God, draw me to Thyself; for drawn by Thee, I will run with Thee, and others also shall run with me: I shall run, drawn by the odor of Thy ointments; that is, by the inspirations and graces that I shall receive in prayer, others shall be drawn by my example.

That a priest may be able to draw many souls to God, he must first prepare himself to be drawn by God. Such has been the conduct of holy workmen in Gods vineyard of St. Dominic, St. Philip Neri, St. Francis Xavier, St. John Francis Regis. They employed the day in laboring for the people, and spent the night in prayer, and persevered in that holy exercise until they were overcome by sleep. A priest of moderate learning and great zeal will bring more souls to God than a great number of tepid though learned priests. St. Jerome says, *“A man inflamed with zeal is sufficient to amend an entire people.”*[11722]A single word from a priest inflamed with holy charity will do more good than a hundred sermons composed by a theologian who has but little love of God.

St. Thomas of Villanova used to say that words of fire, which are, as it were, darts of the fire of divine love, are necessary to wound and inflame hearts with the love of God. But how, adds the saint, can these darts of fire issue from a heart of snow ? It is meditation that inflames the heart of holy workmen in the vineyard of the Lord, and transforms them from snow into fire. Speaking especially of the love that Jesus Christ has borne us, the Apostle says: *For the charity of Christ presseth us.*[11723] He means that it is impossible for any one to meditate on the sorrows and ignominies that our Redeemer has endured for us without being inflamed, and without seeking to inflame others, with his love: *You shall draw waters with joy,* says the Prophet Isaias, *out of the Saviour’s fountains*[11724] The fountains of the Saviour are the examples of the life of Jesus Christ, from the consideration of which souls draw sweet waters, lights, and holy affections; and inflamed with these affections, they endeavor to kindle them, also, in others, exhorting them to confess and praise, and love the goodness of our God.

III. THE RECITATION OF THE DIVINE OFFICE. IT MAY BE USEFUL TO SAY SOMETHING HERE ON THE RECITATION OF THE DIVINE OFFICE.)

By the Divine Office God is honored, the fury of the enemy is repelled, and the divine mercies are obtained for sinners. But to attain these ends it is necessary to recite the Office in a proper manner: it is necessary to say it “carefully and devoutly,”[11725]as the fifth Council of Lateran[11726] has taught, in the celebrated Canon Dolentes.

Carefully, by pronouncing the words distinctly; devoutly, that is, with attention, as Cassian teaches: “*Let that be considered in the heart which is uttered by the lips.”*[11727]*How,* asks St. Cyprian, *can you expect that God will hear you when you do not hear yourself ?*[11728]Prayer made with attention is the odoriferous incense that is most agreeable to God, and obtains treasures of grace; but prayer made with voluntary distraction is a fetid smoke that provokes the divine wrath, and merits chastisement. Hence, while we recite the Office, the devil labors strenuously to make us say it with distractions and defects. We should, then, take all possible care to recite it in a proper manner. We here give some practical advice:

1. It is necessary to enliven our faith, and to consider that in reciting the divine Office we unite with the angels in praising God. " We begin here upon earth the office of the inhabitants of heaven,"[11729] says Tertullian. We then perform on earth the office of the citizens of heaven, who unceasingly praise God, and shall praise him for eternity.[11730] Hence, as St. John Chrysostom remarks, *before we enter the church or take up the breviary we must leave at the door and dismiss all thoughts of the world.*[11731]

2. In reciting the divine Office we must take care that our affections accompany the sentiments contained in what we read. It is necessary, says St. Augustine: " *We must pray when the Psalmist prays, sigh when he sighs, hope when he hopes."*[11732]

3. It is useful to renew our attention from time to time; for example, at the beginning of every psalm.

4. We must be careful not to give occasion to mental distractions. How can he who recites the Office in a public place, or in the midst of peoples who are jesting and amusing themselves, how, I ask, can he say it with piety and devotion ?

Oh! what treasures do they lay up who daily recite the divine Office with devout attention ! St. John Chrysostom says that they are filled with the Holy Ghost.[11733] But, on the other hand, they who say it negligently lose great merits, and have to render a great account to God.[11734]

Instruction VI

HUMILITY

Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.[11735] Humility and meekness were the two beloved virtues of Jesus Christ, in which he wished in a special manner to be imitated by his disciples. We shall speak first of humility, and afterwards of meekness.

I. NECESSITY OF HUMILITY

St. Bernard says, *“The higher one is placed, the humbler one should be.”*[11736]The more exalted, then, the dignity of the priest, the greater should be his humility; otherwise, if he fall into sin, the greater the height from which he is precipitated, the more disastrous his fall. Hence St. Laurence Justinian says that the priest should regard humility as the most precious jewel that shines forth in his character.[11737] And St. Augustine writes: “The highest honor should be united with the greatest humility.”[11738] And before him, Jesus Christ said, *He that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger.*[11739] Humility is truth.

Hence the Lord has said, that if we know how to separate the precious from the vile, that is, what belongs to God from what belongs to ourselves, we should be like his mouth, which always speaks truth: If thou wilt separate the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth.[11740] Hence we must always pray with St. Augustine: *“O Lord, may I know Thee, may I know myself!”*[11741]St. Francis of Assisi, admiring in God his greatness and goodness, and in himself his own unworthiness and misery, used to say continually to the Lord: “Who art Thou, and who am I?” Hence the saints at the sight of the infinite perfections of God humble themselves to the very, earth. The more they know God, the better they see their own poverty and defects. The proud, because they are bereft of light, have but little knowledge of their own vileness.

Let us, then, continue to separate what is ours from what belongs to God. Ours is nothing but misery and sin. And what are we but a little fetid dust, infected by sin ? How, then, can we be proud ? Why is earth and ashes proud?[11742] Nobility, wealth, talent, ability, and theher gifts of nature, are but a garment placed over a poor mendicant. If you saw a beggar glorying in an embroidered garment thrown over him, would you not pronounce him to be a fool ? *What hast thou that thou hast not received ? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?*[11743] Have we anything that God has not bestowed upon us, or that he cannot take away whenever he pleases ? The gifts of grace that God confers upon us also belong to him, and we contaminate them by so many defects, distractions, acts of impatience, and inordinate motives.

All our justices are as the rag of a menstruous woman.[11744] Thus, after having said our Masses, Offices, and prayers, though perhaps we esteem ourselves more enlightened and rich in merits, we deserve from the Lord the reproof which he gave to the bishop in the Apocalypse: *Because thou sayest : I am rich, . . . and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miser able, and poor, and blind, and naked.*[11745] St. Bernard writes: “ What we need in fervor we should supply by an humble acknowledgment of our misery.”[11746] If we know that we are poor and full of faults in the sight of God, let us at least humble ourselves and confess our miseries. St. Francis Borgia, while a secular, was advised by a holy man, if he wished to make great progress in virtue, to reflect every day on his own miseries. Hence the saint spent every day the first two hours of prayer in endeavoring to know and despise himself. He thus became a saint, and has left us so many beautiful examples of humility. St. Augustine says: “God is the supreme being: humble thyself and he will descend to thee; but if thou raisest thyself he will flee from thee.”[11747] To the humble, God unites himself and gives the treasures of his graces; but from the proud he withdraws and flies away: Every proud man is an abomination to the Lord.[11748] The proud man is an abomination to the Lord. God, says St. James, resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.[11749]

The Lord hears the prayers of the humble. *The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds . . . and he will not depart till the Most High behold,*[11750]But, on the other hand, he rejects the petitions of the proud: *He resisteth the proud. He looks at the proud as from a distance. The Lord . . . looketh on the low, and the high He knoweth afar off*[11751] When we see a people at a distance, we know him not; thus God feigns, as it were, not to know nor to hear the proud when they pray to him. They call upon him, but he answers: *Amen, I say to you, I know you not*[11752] In a word, the proud are hateful to God and to men. *Pride*, says Ecclesiasticus, *is hateful before God and men."*[11753] Men are sometimes compelled by necessity to pay external honor to the proud; but in their heart they hate them, and censure them before others. Where pride is, said Solomon, there also shall be reproach.[11754]

Praising the humility of St. Paul, St. Jerome writes: " *As the shadow follows him who flies from it, and flies from him who pursues it, so glory follows them who fly from it, and flies from them who seek it."*[11755] Our Lord says: *Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*[11756]

A priest, for example, does a good work; he is silent about it, but as soon as it is known, all praise him. But if he goes about proclaiming it to others, in order to receive applause, he shall earn reproach instead of praise. What a shame, says St. Gregory, to see the teachers of humility become by their example teachers of pride![11757] You may say, I manifest my works to make known the truth, and to procure praise for the Lord; but I answer in the words of Seneca: " He that cannot keep silence about the thing itself will not be silent about the author."[11758] Everyone who hears a priest speaking of his good works will suppose that he relates them in order to be praised; thus he shall lose the esteem of men and merit before God, who seeing him praised according to his desire, will say to him what he said to the hypocrites in the synagogue: *Amen, I say unto you, they have received their reward.*[11759] The Lord has declared that three species of sinners he hates with a special hatred, and that the first is a poor man that is proud. *Three sorts my soul hateth, and I am greatly grieved at their life: a poor man that is proud; a rich man that is a liar; and an old man that is a fool.*[11760]

II. THE PRACTICE OF HUMILITY

But let us come to the practice of humility. Let us examine what we must do in order to be humble, not in name, but in reality.

1. TO HAVE A HORROR OF PRIDE

In the first place, it is necessary to entertain a great fear of the vice of pride; for, as has been already said, God resists the proud, and deprives them of his graces. A priest, particularly, in order to preserve chastity, stands in need of a special aid from God. But how can a proud priest practise that sublime virtue if in punishment of his pride the Lord withholds his assistance ? Pride, says the Wise Man, is a sign of approaching ruin. *The spirit is lifted up before a fall.*[11761] Hence St. Augustine has gone so far as to say that it is in a certain manner useful to the proud to fall into some manifest sin, that thus they may learn humility and a horror of themselves.[11762]This is what happened to David, who, as he himself afterwards confessed with tears, fell into adultery because he was not humble: *Before I was humbled, I offended.*[11763]St. Gregory calls pride the seminary of impurity; because some, while they are exalted by the spirit of pride, are precipitated into hell by the flesh.[11764] The spirit of pride easily brings with it the spirit of impurity. The spirit of fornication, says the Prophet Osee, is in the midst of them, . . . and the pride of Israel shall answer in his face.[11765] Ask certain peoples why they always fall back into the same impurities; pride shall answer for them, that it is the cause of their relapses: they are full of self-esteem, and there—the Lord chastises them by permitting them to remain immersed in their abominations, a chastisement which, as the Apostle says, has already fallen on the wise of the world: *God gave them up to the desires of their heart, unto uncleanness, to dishonor their own bodies among themselves.*[11766]

The devil has no fear of the proud. Cesarius relates[11767] that a demoniac being once brought to a Cistercian monastery, the prior took with him a young religious who had the reputation of being a man of great virtue, and said to the evil spirit: If this monk shall command you to depart, will you dare to remain ? I have no fear of him, replied the enemy, because he is proud. St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say that the devil treats a proud priest as a play-toy; that is, he throws him up and pulls him down as he pleases.

Hence the saints have had a greater dread of pride and vainglory than of any temporal calamity that could befall them. Surius[11768] relates of a holy man who was greatly esteemed and honored on account of the miracles that he wrought, that finding himself often assailed by vainglory, he besought the Lord that he might be possessed by an evil spirit; his prayer was heard, and he was possessed for five months. He was then delivered from the infernal spirit, and from the spirit of vanity that molested him. For this purpose the Lord also permits even saints to be tormented by temptations against purity, and after they pray to be freed from them, he leaves them as he left St. Paul, to combat with the temptations. *And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me. For which thing I thrice besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And He said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee ; for power is made perfect in infirmity.*[11769]

Thus, according to St, Jerome, a sting of the flesh was given to St. Paul to warn him to be humble: “ *To remind him of human misery, and to make him humble in the sublimity of his revelations.”*[11770] Hence St. Gregory concludes: “ To preserve chastity in all its splendor we must place it under the care of humility.”[11771] Let us here make another reflection. To humble the pride of the people of Egypt, the Lord sent not bears and lions, but frogs to molest them. What do I mean ? God permits us to be annoyed by certain little expressions, by certain little aversions, by certain trifles, that we may know our miseries and may humble ourselves.

2. NOT TO GLORY IN THE GOOD THAT WE DO

Secondly, it is necessary to guard against glorying in any good that we may do, particularly if we are raised to the height of the priesthood. The offices intrusted to us are very great. To us is given the great office of offering to God the sacrifice of his own Son. To us is confided the care of reconciling sinners with God, by preaching, and by the administration of the sacraments: *He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.*[11772] We are ambassadors and vicars of Jesus Christ, and are made the tongues of the Holy Ghost: For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us.[11773] St. Jerome says that the highest mountains are most violently as sailed by the tempest: the more exalted, then, is our dignity, the more we are exposed to the molestation of vainglory. We are esteemed by all, we are respected as men of learning, and as saints. He who stands on a great height is in danger of dizziness.

How many priests have fallen into precipices because they were not humble! Montanus wrought miracles, and he afterwards through ambition became a heresiarch. Tatian wrote at great length and with great success against the pagans, and through pride he fell into heresy. Brother Justin, a Franciscan, attained the highest degree of contemplation, and he afterwards died an apostate from religion, and was lost. In the life of Palemon we read that a certain monk walked on fire and boasted of it, saying to his companions, Which of you can walk on red-hot coals without being burnt? St. Palemon corrected him, but the unhappy man, being full of himself, fell into sin, and died in that miserable state.

A proud spiritual man is the worst of robbers; because he usurps not earthly goods, but the glory of God. Hence, St. Francis was accustomed to say: Lord! if Thou givest any good, watch over it; otherwise I will steal it from Thee. Thus we priests must pray, and say with St, Paul: *By the grace of God I am what I am.*[11774] For of ourselves we are incapable not only of doing good works, but of even having a good thought: *Not that we are sufficient to thinking anything of ourselves.*[11775]

Hence the Lord says to us: When you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say: *We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which we ought to do*[11776] Of what use can all our works be to God ? What need can he have of our possessions ? *I have said to the Lord,* said David, *Thou art my God, for Thou hast no need of my goods.*[11777]

And Job said: *If thou do justly, . . . what shall he receive of Thy hand.*[11778] What can God receive from you to increase his riches? Moreover, we are useless servants, because however much we do for a God who merits infinite love, and has suffered so much for the love of us, it is all nothing. Hence the Apostle writes: *If I preach the Gospel, it is no glory to me, for a necessity lieth upon me*[11779] To all that we do for God we are bound by our obligations and by gratitude; particularly as all that we do is his work more than it is ours. Who would not laugh at the clouds, if they boasted of the rain that they send down ? This is the language of St. Bernard.[11780]He then adds, that we ought to praise, not so much the saints for the works that they perform, as God who operates through them.[11781]St. Augustine says the same: *“Every good thing, large or small, is a gift of God : from ourselves comes what is bad.”*[11782] And in another .place, speaking to God, he writes: *“Whoever enumerates to Thee Thy merits, does he enumerate to Thee anything but Thy merits?*”[11783] Hence, when we do any good, we must say to the Lord: *“We have given Thee what we received of Thy hand.”*[11784] When St. Teresa performed any good work, or saw a good act done by others, she began to praise God for it, saying that it was entirely his work.

Hence, St. Augustine remarks, *that unless humility go before, pride will steal from us all the good we do.*[11785] And in another place he says: *“Pride lays snares for good works that they may be lost.”*[11786] St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say, that the more God favors a soul by special graces, the more she ought to humble herself that she may not lose all. All is lost by every little consent to self-esteem. He, says St. Gregory, who performs many virtuous actions, but has not humility, is like a man who scatters dust before the wind.[11787] Trithemius has written*: “ Thou hast despised others: thou art become worse than others.”*[11788]

The saints have not only not boasted of any perfection, but have sought to make known to others what redounded to their own contempt. Father Nillanova, of the Society of Jesus, felt no repugnance to tell all that his brother was a poor workman. Father Sacchini, also a Jesuit, meeting in a public place his father, who was a poor muleteer, ran to embrace him, and said: “Oh, behold my father!” Let us read the lives of the saints, and pride shall depart from us: there we shall find the great things that they have done, at the sight of which we shall feel ashamed of the little we have done.

3. WE MUST DISTRUST OURSELVES

Thirdly, it is necessary to live in contiriual distrust of ourselves. Unless God assists us, we shall not be able to preserve ourselves in his grace: *Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.*[11789]

If God work not in us, we shall be unable to do any good: *Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.*[11790] Some saints, with very moderate learning, have converted entire nations. By certain discourses that he preached in Rome, though the language was simple, and even incorrect (for he had but an imperfect knowledge of the Italian tongue), St. Ignatius of Loyola, because his words came from a heart that was humble and enamoured of God, produced such an effect on the hearers that they instantly went to confession, but could scarcely speak on account of the many tears that they shed.[11791] But, on the other hand, many learned theologians, with all their science and eloquence, preach without converting a single soul. In them are verified the words of the Prophet Osee: *Give them a womb without children, and dry breasts.*[11792] Such preachers, because they are puffed up with their learning, resemble unfruitful mothers, they have the name, but are without children. And should they be intrusted with the child of another, with an infant that stands in need of milk, the little one shall die of hunger, for the paps of the proud are filled with wind and smoke, but give no milk: *Knowledge puffeth up.*[11793] To this evil the proud are subject. It is, as Cardinal Bellarmine wrote to one of his nephews, difficult for a man of learning to be humble, not to despise others, not to censure their acts, not to be full of his own opinions; he will hardly submit willingly to the judgment and correction of others.

It is true that we ought not to preach at random, or without consideration and study; but after we have studied the discourse, and after we have delivered it with zeal and success, we ought to say: *We are unprofitable servants,*[11794] and should expect the fruit, not from our own labors, but from the hands of God. And what proportion can there ever be between our words and the conversion of sinners ? Shall the axe boast itself against him that cutteth with it[11795] Can the axe say to him who fells the tree: This tree I, and not you, have cut down? We are like so many pieces of iron, incapable even of motion, unless God moves us: *Without Me, you can do nothing.*[11796] On this passage St. Augustine writes: “The Lord does not say, Without me you can do but little, but he says, *Without me you can do nothing.”*[11797]And the Apostle has said: *Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves.*[11798] If we are incapable of having even a good thought of ourselves, how much less shall we be able to perform a good action ! *Neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that water eth: but God that giveth the increase.*[11799]It is neither the preacher, nor the confessor who exhorts them, that makes souls advance in virtue: no, it is God that does all.

“ Let us,” says St. John Chrysostom, *“ call ourselves useless servants, that we may be made useful.”*[11800]Whenever, then, we are praised, let us instantly give the honor to God, saying: *To the only God be honor and glory.*[11801]

And when any office or work is given us by obedience, let us not be diffident at the sight of our inability, but let us have confidence in God, who speaks to us by the mouth of our Superior, and says to us: *I will be in thy mouth.*[11802]

Gladly, says the Apostle, *will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.*[11803] We, too, should say the same: we should glory in the knowledge of our insufficiency, that thus we may acquire the power of Jesus Christ, that is, holy humility. Oh, what great things do the humble effect ! “ Nothing,” says St. Leo, “is difficult to the humble.”[11804] No, for the humble, trusting in God, act with the strength of the divine arm, and therefore they effect whatsoever they wish. *They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength.*[11805] St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say, that the man who wishes that God should make him do great things must labor to be the most humble of all. The humble man says: *I can do all things in Him who strengthened me.*[11806] When he finds an undertaking difficult, he does not despair of success, but says: *Through God we shall do mightily*[11807] Jesus Christ did not wish to select men of power and learning for the conversion of the world, but poor ignorant fishermen, because they were humble, and distrustful of their own strength. *The weak things of the world hath God chosen that He may confound the strong. . . . That all flesh should not. glory in His sight.*[11808]

Even when we see that we are subject to defects we must not be diffident. Though we should relapse into the same faults after many purposes, and many promises made to God, we should not abandon ourselves to diffidence, as the devil tempts us to do, in order to precipitate us into greater sins; but we must then, more than ever, trust in God s goodness, making use of our failings to increase our confidence in the divine mercy. Thus we are to understand the words of the Apostle: All things work together unto good.[11809] The Gloss adds: Even sins.[11810] Hence our Lord sometimes permits us to fall or to relapse into a defect, that thus we may learn to distrust ourselves, and to confide only in the divine aid. Hence David said:

It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me.[11811]Lord, Thou hast permitted these my faults for my good, that I may learn to be humble.

4. TO ACCEPT HUMILIATIONS

Fourthly, to acquire humility, it is, above all, necessary to accept humiliations that come to us from God and from men, and in the time of humiliation to say with Job: *I have sinned, and indeed I have offended, and I have not received what I deserved*[11812]Some, as St. Gregory[11813] remarks, say with the tongue that they are sinners, that they are wicked, and deserving of every species of contempt; but they do not believe what they say, for when despised or reproved by others they are disturbed. “Many,” says St. Ambrose in a letter to Constance, “have the appearance of humility, but not the virtue of humility. “[11814]Cassian[11815] relates that a certain monk, who used to protest that he was a great sinner, and unworthy of living on earth, was corrected by the abbot Serapion for a considerable fault, which consisted in going about idly to the cells of the other monks instead of remaining in his own, according to his rule. The monk became instantly agitated, so as to manifest externally the disturbed state of his interior. The abbot said to him: “ My son, hitherto you have declared that you deserved nothing but opprobrium, and why are you now so indignant at a word of charity that I have said to you ?”

The same happens to many who would wish to be esteemed humble, but are unwilling to suffer any humiliation. *There is, says Ecclesiasticus, one who humbleth himself wickedly, and his interior is full of deceit.*[11816] St. Bernard has said that to seek praise from humility is not humility, but the destruction of humility.[11817] To seek praise from humility only foments pride by the desire of being reputed humble. He who is truly humble has a low opinion of himself, and wishes others to think of him as he thinks himself. “ He is humble,” says St. Bernard, “ who converts humiliations into humility.”[11818] The truly humble man, when treated with contempt, humbles himself still more, and acknowledges that he justly deserves the humiliation.

Finally, let us bear in mind that unless we are humble we shall not only do no good, but we shall not be saved. *Unless you . . . become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”*[11819] In order, then, to enter into the kingdom of heaven, we must become children, not in age, but in humility.

St. Gregory says that as pride is a sign of reprobation, so humility is a mark of predestination.[11820] And St. James has written, that God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.[11821] From the proud God withholds his graces, but to the humble he opens his hand and dispenses his favors. Be humble, says Ecclesiasticus, and expect from the hands of God as many graces as you desire. Humble thyself to God, and wait for His hands[11822] And our Saviour has said: *Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*[11823] A priest who dies to self—love shall produce great fruit; but—he who dies not to himself, and resents insults or trusts in his own talents, remaineth alone : he remains alone, and will produce no fruit for himself or others.

Instruction VII

MEEKNESS

Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.[11824]Meekness is the virtue of the lamb: lamb is the name by which Jesus Christ wished to be called: *Behold the Lamb of God.*[11825] *Send forth, O Lord, the Lamb, the ruler of the Earth.*[11826]And like a lamb he conducted himself in his Passion. *He shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth.*[11827] *As a meek lamb that is carried to be a victim.*[11828] Meekness was the beloved virtue of the Saviour. He showed the extent of his meekness in doing good to the ungrateful, in submitting sweetly to his enemies, and in bearing without complaint all that insulted and maltreated him. *Who, when He was reviled, did not revile : when He suffered, He threatened not, but de livered Himself to him who judged Him unjustly.*[11829] After being scourged, crowned with thorns, covered with spittle, nailed to a cross, and saturated with opprobrium, he forgot all, and prayed for those that had thus maltreated him. Hence he has exhorted us, above all things, to learn from his example humility and meekness. *Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.*[11830] St. John Chrysostom says that meekness is, of all virtues, that which renders us most like to God.[11831] Yes, for it belongs only to God to render good for evil. Hence the Redeemer has said: Do good to them that hate you . . . that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven.[11832] Hence, according to St. John Chrysostom, Jesus Christ has called the meek imitators of God.[11833]

To the meek, paradise is promised. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.[11834] St. Francis de Sales says that meekness is the flower of charity.[11835] And Ecclesiasticus has said: That which is agreeable to Him is faith and meekness.[11836] A meek and faithful heart is the delight of God. He knows not how to cast off the meek. The Lord lifted up the meek.[11837]The prayers of the humble and meek are very pleasing in the sight of God. The prayer of the humble and the meek hath always pleased Thee.[11838]

The virtue of meekness consists in two things: 1. In restraining the motions of passion against those that provoke us to anger; and, 2d, In bearing insults.

I. WE MUST REPRESS ANGER

With regard to the first, St. Ambrose says that the passion of anger ought to be either avoided or restrained.[11839]

He who feels himself prone to the vice of anger should endeavor to avoid the occasions of it; and should he through necessity be exposed to them, he ought to prepare himself beforehand by good resolutions either to be silent, to answer with sweetness, or to pray to God for strength to resist the temptation, and not to yield to passion. Some excuse themselves by saying such a people is very impertinent, his conduct is insufferable. But, according to St. John Chrysostom, the virtue of meekness consists not in being agreeable to the meek, but in treating with sweetness those that know not what meekness is.[11840] When a neighbor is enraged there is no better means of appeasing his anger than by answering with sweetness. A mild answer breaketh wrath.[11841] As water extinguishes fire, so, says St. John Chrysostom, a mild answer softens the anger of a brother, however great may be his excitement.[11842]This is conformable to the words of Ecclesiasticus: A sweet word multiplieth friends and appeaseth enemies.[11843] St. John Chrysostom adds: “We cannot extinguish fire by fire.”[11844]Even towards sinners the most abandoned, obstinate, and insolent we priests must exercise all possible meekness in order to draw them to God. Hugh of St. Victor has written: “ You must know the faults, not to punish them, but the diseases to heal them. “[11845]

When, on the other hand, we feel ourselves assailed by any motion of anger, the remedy is to be silent, and to ask strength from God not to make a reply. “ The best remedy,” says Seneca, “ is in delay,[11846] for should we speak while we are inflamed with passion, what we say will appear reasonable, but it will be unjust and sinful. For passion is a certain veil that covers the eyes of the soul, and does not permit us to see the unreasonableness of our reply. “ The eye disturbed by anger cannot see,” says St. Bernard.[11847] Sometimes it appears to us just, and even necessary, to repress the boldness of a people who treats us with insolence: for example, of an inferior who acts disrespectfully towards us. It would indeed be right in such circumstances to show moderate displeasure; to be, as the angelic Doctor says, angry according to right reason.[11848]This is conformable to the words of David: Be ye angry, and sin not.[11849] This would be right if in such anger there were no fault on our part; but in this consists the difficulty. To leave oneself in the hand of anger is a very dangerous thing: you might as well mount a furious horse that refuses to obey the bit, and carries you wheresoever he pleases. Hence St. Francis de Sales, in the Devout Life,[11850] says that however just the reason of our anger, it is always expedient to restrain it; and that it is better for you to have it said that you are never angry than that you are wisely angry. When, says St. Augustine,[11851] anger has entered the soul, it is difficult to expel it. Hence he exhorts us in the beginning to close the gate that anger may not enter. When a people who is corrected sees his Superior in a passion, he will derive but little fruit from the admonition: he will regard it as the effect of anger rather than of charity.

A single admonition given with sweetness and a tranquil countenance will do more good than a thousand reproaches, however just, accompanied with motions or expressions of anger. But to be meek does not imply that in order to show kindness or to avoid the displeasure of another we should omit to correct him with just rigor, when such correction is necessary. To omit correction in that case would not be virtue, but a culpable and abominable negligence. Woe, says the Prophet, to him who furnishes a pillow to sinners that they may peacefully sleep in their deadly slumber. *Woe to them that sew cushions under every elbow; and make pillows for the heads of peoples of every age, to catch souls: . . . you have strengthened the hands of the wicked that he should not return from his evil way and live.*[11852] This vicious condescension, says St. Augustine, “ *is not charity, but carelessness.*”[11853]It is neither charity nor meekness, but it is negligence, and even cruelty, to the poor souls that thus remain in the state of damnation, without being admonished of their miserable condition. St. Cyprian says that when the sick man feels the knife he assails the surgeon; but when he is cured he will thank him.”[11854] Meekness, then, implies that when it is necessary to correct a brother we should do it with firmness, but at the same time with sweetness.

And when it is our duty to correct others, the Apostle exhorts us first to consider our own defects, that we may have compassion for our neighbor as we have for ourselves. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.*[11855] Peter de Blois says that it is great baseness in a Superior to correct an inferior with anger and asperity.[11856] Anger so disfigures the face that it gives to the most beautiful countenance a horrible appearance, says Seneca.[11857] In this matter, then, we should always attend to the admonition of St. Gregory: " Be kind, yet without effeminacy; use rigor, but without exasperating; be merciful, without sparing more than is expedient."[11858]

Physicians, says St. Basil,[11859] should not get angry with a patient, but should only assail his disease in order to restore his health. Cassian relates[11860] that a young religious who was violently tempted against chastity sought advice from an aged monk; but instead of assisting and encouraging him, the old man loaded him with reproaches. But what was the result ? The Lord permitted the aged monk to be so violently attacked by the spirit of impurity that he ran like a madman through the monastery. Having heard of his indiscretion towards the young man, the abbot went to him, and said: " Brother, know that God has permitted you to be molested by this temptation, that you may learn to take compassion on others."

When, therefore, we witness the weaknesses and faults of others, we ought not to reprove them with a vain conceit of ourselves: but in applying, to the best of our ability, a remedy to their faults, we should be humble in our own estimation: otherwise God will permit us to fall into the very defects that we condemn in others. The same Cassian[11861] relates that a certain abbot, called Machete, confessed that he had miserably fallen into three faults of which he had before judged his brethren. Hence St. Augustine says that compassion for our neighbor, and not indignation, should precede correction.[11862] And St. Gregory tells us that the consideration of our own defects will make us pity and excuse the faults of others.[11863] Thus to yield to anger is never profitable to ourselves or to others. If it produce no other evil, it at least robs us of peace. Agrippinus the philosopher having once lost some of his goods, said: “ If I have lost my property I will not lose my peace.” The disturbance of mind to which we give way on account of the maltreatment we receive from others is more hurtful to us than the injuries offered to us. Seneca has said: “ My anger will hurt me more than their insults.”[11864] He who indulges anger when an affront is offered to him is a cause of pain to himself. “ Thou hast decreed, O Lord !” says St. Augustine, “ that the soul that is inordinate should be its own torment. “[11865]

Hence that great master of meekness, St. Francis de Sales,[11866] teaches that it is necessary to practise meekness not only to others, but also to ourselves. After yielding to a fault, some are indignant with themselves, and give way to disquietude, and in this state of agitation they commit a thousand faults. In troubled water, says St. Aloysius Gonzaga, the devil always finds fish to catch.

It is necessary, then, when we perceive that we have fallen into a defect, not to be disturbed (to give way to disquietude after a fault is the effect of our own pride, and of the high opinion we had of our own virtue), but to humble ourselves peacefully, to detest the sin, and instantly to have recourse to God, hoping to receive from him help to avoid a relapse. In a word, they who are truly humble and meek live always in peace, and in every occurrence preserve tranquillity of soul. *Learn of Me, says Jesus Christ, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls.*[11867] And before him, David said: The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight in abundance of peace.[11868]“Nothing is able to disturb their serenity,”[11869] says St. Leo. No insult, no loss, no misfortune, disturbs the peace of a meek heart.

Should we feel angry on any occasion, we must endeavor (according to the advice of the holy bishop of Geneva) to repress passion without waiting to examine whether it is right or not to subdue it. And after a dispute, which may perhaps have disturbed our peace, let us observe the advice of the Apostle: Let not the sun go down upon your anger. Give not place to the devil.[11870] Let us first put our soul in peace, and then be reconciled to the people by whom we have been offended, lest through that spark the devil should kindle in our souls a deadly flame that may cause our ruin.

II. WE MUST BEAR CONTEMPT

Secondly, the virtue of meekness consists still more in bearing insults. Many, says St. Francis of Assisi, place their sanctification in saying many prayers, or in the practice of many corporal mortifications, but afterwards they cannot bear an offensive word. “ Not understanding,” says the saint, “ of what profit it is to bear insults.”[11871] A soul gains more by peacefully bearing an affront than by fasting for ten days on bread and water.

St. Bernard says that there are three degrees of advancement, to which a soul that wishes to be a saint, ought to aspire. The first is not to wish for authority over others; the second, to wish to be subject to all; the third is to bear insults with peace.[11872]You will, for example, see that what is given to others is denied to you: what others say is heard with attention; what you say is received with derision: others are praised, are elected to offices of honor, to transact business of importance; but you are despised: what you do is censured and ridiculed. You will be truly humble, says St. Dorotheus,[11873]if you accept in peace all these humiliations, and recommend to God, as your best benefactors, all that treat you in this manner; for they thus cure your pride, which is a most malignant and deadly malady. In thy humiliation keep patience,[11874]

Behold, then, what we must do; we must give way neither to anger nor to complaints, but accept insults as due to our sins. He who has offended God merits very different insults: he deserves to be cast under the feet of the devils. St. Francis Borgia was once obliged on a journey to sleep in the same bed with his companion, Father Bustamente, who labored under asthma, and spent the whole night coughing and casting out phlegm. He thought that he was spitting towards the wall; but frequently the phlegm fell on the face of St. Francis. In the morning the Father was greatly grieved at what he had done; but the saint placidly answered: “ Father, be not troubled; for certainly in this room there is no place so fit for the reception of spittle as my face.” The proud, because they esteem themselves worthy of all honor, convert the humiliations that they receive into an occasion of pride; but the humble, because they think themselves deserving of all ignominies, convert the insults offered to them into a source of humility. “ He is humble,” says St. Bernard, “ who changes humiliations into humility.”[11875] Rodriguez says that when reproved the proud imitate the hedgehog, which when touched becomes all thorns; that is, they get into a fury, and instantly break out into complaints, reproaches, and detraction. But, on the other hand, the humble when blamed for their conduct humble themselves still more, confess that they are full of defects, thank the people who corrects them, arid preserve tranquillity of soul. He who is disturbed by correction shows that in him pride still reigns. Hence they who are disquieted by correction or admonitions must humble themselves more before God, and entreat him to deliver them from the hands of pride, which still lives in their hearts. My spikenard sent forth the odor thereof.[11876] The spikenard is a small odoriferous plant that sends forth its odors when bruised and twisted.

Oh, what odors of sweetness does an humble soul give to God when she peacefully suffers insults, and delights in seeing herself despised and maltreated! Being asked what must be done in order to acquire true humility, Zachary, a monk, took his cowl, and trampling on it said: “He who delights in seeing himself treated in this manner is truly humble.” Father Alvarez used to say that the time of humiliation is the time of getting rid of our miseries, and of acquiring great treasures of merit. God is as liberal of his gifts to the humble as he is sparing to the proud: God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.[11877] St. Augustine says that a guilty conscience is not healed by praise, nor a good conscience wounded by insults.[11878] It was this that St. Francis of Assisi meant when he said: “ We are what we are before God.” It is, then, of little importance to us whether we are praised or censured by men : it is enough for us to merit praise from God. And God will certainly bestow great praise on all that cheerfully bear insults from others for his sake. The meek are dear to God and to men. St. John Chrysostom says that there is nothing that gives greater edification to others, and draws souls more powerfully to God, than the meekness of the man who, when treated with derision,ntempt, and insult, seeks not revenge, but bears all with a peaceful and placid countenance.[11879] St. Ambrose writes that Moses was more beloved by the Hebrews on account of the meekness with which he received insults, than on account of the miracles which he wrought.[11880]

The meek are useful to themselves and to others, says St. John Chrysostom.[11881] Father Maffei relates that while a Jesuit was preaching in Japan, an insolent bystander spit in his face; the Father wiped away the spittle, and continued the sermon as if nothing had happened. At the sight of such meekness one of the audience was converted, and said that a religion that teaches such humility must be true and divine. Thus also, by the meekness and tranquillity with which he bore all the insults heaped upon him by the heretical ministers St. Francis de Sales converted an immense number of heretics. Meekness is the touchstone of sanctity. St. John Chrysostom says[11882] that the surest means of knowing whether a soul has virtue is to observe if she practises meekness under contradictions. In the history of Japan, Crasset relates that a certain Augustinian missionary who, in the time of the persecution, had changed his dress, received a buffet without resenting it. Seeing his meekness, the idolaters instantly supposed him to be a Christian, and laid hold of him; for said they, no one but a Christian could practise such virtue.

Ah ! at the sight of Jesus loaded with contempt it is easy to bear all insults. Standing one day before a crucifix, Blessed Mary of the Incarnation said to her religious: “O sisters ! can it be possible that we will not bear contempt when we see a God so despised ?” On his journey to Rome to receive the crown of martyrdom, St. Ignatius, Martyr, finding himself so maltreated by the soldiers, said: “I now begin to be the servant of Christ.”[11883]

What can be expected from a Christian if he is not able to bear contempt for Jesus Christ? It is indeed very painful to our pride to be despised and insulted, without seeking revenge, or even making a reply.

But in doing violence to ourselves consists our progress in perfection, says St. Jerome.[11884] A holy nun, whenever she received an affront, was accustomed to go to the holy sacrament, and to say: “ Lord, I am a poor miserable creature: I have nothing to present to you, but I offer this little gift this insult that I have received.” Oh, how lovingly does Jesus Christ embrace the soul that is despised ! Oh, how soon does he console her and enrich her with his graces !

Ah ! the soul that truly loves Jesus Christ not only bears insults in peace, but embraces them with pleasure and joy. The holy Apostles went from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were accotinted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.[11885] St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say that in many are verified the last words of this passage they are accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus, but not the first they went rejoicing. But he who wishes to be a saint must at least aspire to this degree of perfection. “ He is not humble that does not wish to be despised,”[11886] says the same saint. The Venerable Louis da Ponte did not at first understand how a man could rejoice in contempt; but when he afterwards attained higher perfection he easily comprehended it, and experienced joy under insults. It was this that St. Ignatius of Loyola, coming from heaven, taught St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi: he said to her that true humility consists in attaining such a state of mind as to feel a continual joy in all things which can lead a people to self-contempt.

Worldlings do not rejoice as much in the honors that they receive, as the saints do in seeing themselves despised. Brother Juniper, of the Order of St. Francis, when treated with insult held out his habit as if to receive precious gems. When St. John Francis Regis saw himself made an object of laughter he not only rejoiced at the humiliation, but sought still more to excite derision. To St. John of the Cross the Redeemer once appeared with a cross on his shoulders and a crown of thorns on his head, and said: “John, ask what you desire of me.”[11887] The saint answered: “ O Lord ! to suffer and to be despised for Thee.”[11888] As if he said: Lord, since I see you so afflicted and despised for my sake, what else can I ask but sufferings. and contempt?

To conclude: He who wishes to belong entirely to God, and to assimilate himself to Jesus Christ, must love to be unknown and disregarded. “ *Love to be unknown and to be regarded as nothing,”*[11889]was the great lesson of St. Bonaventure, which St. Philip Neri constantly inculcated to his spiritual children. Jesus Christ tells us to esteem ourselves happy, and to exult with joy when we are hated, cast off, and censured by men for his sake. He tells us that the more galling the insults which we accept with joy, the greater the reward will he give us in heaven. *Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s sake. Be glad in that day and rejoice; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven.*[11890]

And what greater joy can a soul feel than that which arises from seeing herself despised for the love of Jesus Christ? Then, says St. Peter, she obtains the greatest honor that it is possible for her to receive; for God then treats her as he has treated his own very Son. *If you are reproached for the* *name of Christ, you shall be blessed, for that which is of the honor, glory, and power of God . . . resteth upon you.*[11891]

Instruction VIII

MORTIFICATION, AND PARTICULARLY INTERIOR MORTIFICATION

I. NECESSITY OF MORTIFICATION IN GENERAL

AN was created by God in a state of integrity, so that without a struggle the senses obeyed the spirit, and the spirit obeyed God: *God made man right.*[11892] Sin came and deranged the beautiful order that God had established, and the life of man began to be a state of continual warfare: For the flesh lusteth against the spirit: and the spirit against the flesh.[11893] But I see, says the Apostle in a tone of lamentation, another law in my members, fighting against the law of the mind, and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my members.[11894]

Hence for man there are two kinds of life the life of the angels, who seek to do the will of God, and the life of beasts, who attend only to the indulgence of the senses. If a man labors to do the will of God he becomes an angel; if he seeks after sensual gratifications he becomes a beast. Hence what the Lord prescribed to Jeremias, *Lo, I have set thee this day* . . . *to root up and to pull down,* . . . *to build and to plant.*[11895] we ought to do in ourselves: we should plant virtues, but we should first extirpate noxious weeds. Hence we must always carry in our hand the mattock of mortification, to cut down the evil desires that constantly spring up and bud forth within us from the infected roots of concupiscence; otherwise the soul shall become a forest of vices.

In a word, it is necessary to cleanse the heart, if we wish for light to know God, the sovereign Good: *Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.*[11896] Hence St. Augustine has said: *“If you wish to see God take care, to purify your heart.”*[11897] Isaias asks: *Whom shall He teach knowledge ? . . . Them that are weaned from the milk, that are drawn away from the* *breasts.*[11898] God gives the science of the saints, that is, the science of knowing and loving him, only to them that are weaned and drawn away from the breasts of the world: *But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God."*[11899] He who like a brute animal seeks after sensual pleasures is not capable of even understanding the excellence of spiritual goods. St. Francis de Sales says that as salt preserves flesh from corruption, so mortification preserves the soul from sin. In the soul in which mortification reigns all virtues shall flourish. *Myrrh and stacte and cassia perfume thy garments* "[11900] On this passage Guerric the abbot writes: " When myrrh begins to exhale a perfume, soon other aromatical perfumes will be exhaled. "[11901]

This is precisely what the sacred Spouse has said: *I have gathered my myrrh with my aromatical spices.*[11902] All our sanctity and salvation consist in following the examples of Jesus Christ: *For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son.*[11903] But we shall not be able to imitate Jesus Christ unless we deny ourselves, and embrace by mortification the cross that he gives us to carry: *If any man will come after Me, let him deny Jiimself and take up his cross and follow Me*.[11904]The life of our Redeemer was all full of sufferings, of sorrows, and ignominies. Hence Isaias said of him, *that he was despised and the most abject of men: a man of sorrows.*[11905]As a mother takes nauseous medicine in order to cure the infant to which she gives suck, so our Redeemer, says St. Catharine of Sienna, wished to assume so many pains in order to heal the infirmities of us poor sinners. But since Jesus Christ has endured so much for the love of us, it is but just that we suffer for his sake. We must, then, endeavor to follow the advice of St. Paul: *Always bearing about in your body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.*[11906] " This we shall do," says St. Anselm in his comment on the preceding text, when, "in imitation of him, we assiduously practise mortification. "[11907] To this we priests, who celebrate the mysteries of the Passion of our Lord, are bound in a special manner.ecause," says Hugh of St. Victor, "while celebrating the divine mysteries we celebrate the Passion of our Lord: we should therefore be careful to reproduce it in our lives."[11908] The principal means of acquiring sanctity are prayer and mortification, represented in the sacred Scripture by incense and myrrh.

Who is this that goeth up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh and frankincense.[11909] The Holy Ghost adds: *and of all the powders of the perfumer*[11910] to show that prayer and mortification are followed by all virtues. Prayer, then, and mortification, are necessary to render a soul holy; but mortification must precede prayer: *I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.*[11911] Thus our Lord invites us to follow him, first to the mountain of myrrh, and then to the hill of frankincense.

St. Francis Borgia used to say, that prayer introduces divine love into the heart; but it is mortification that prepares a place for charity, by removing from the soul the world, which should otherwise prevent the entrance of love. Should a people go to a fountain for water with a vessel full of earth, he shall take back nothing but mire. He must first cast away the earth, and then fill the vessel with water. Father Baltassar Alvarez used to say that prayer without mortification is either an illusion, or will be only of short duration. And St. Ignatius of Loyola has said that a mortified soul unites herself more intimately to God in a quarter of an hour's prayer, than an immortified soul does in several hours. Hence, having once heard a people praised for his great spirit of prayer, the saint said: "It is a sign that he practises great mortification."

II. NECESSITY OF INTERIOR MORTIFICATION

We have a soul and a body. External mortification is necessary in order to mortify the disorderly appetites of the body; and interior mortification is necessary in order to mortify the irregular affections of the soul. All this is comprised in the following words of the Saviour: *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*[11912] External mortification is included in the words *let him take up his cross;* this species of mortification is necessary, as we shall see hereafter: but interior mortification is still more important and necessary *let him deny himself*. This consists in subjecting to reason the disorderly passions of the soul; such as ambition, inordinate anger, self-esteem, attachment to self—interest, to our own opinion, or to self-will. " *There are two kinds of crosses,"* says St. Augustine, *"one corporal, the other spiritual. The latter is more sublime, and consists in curbing the inordinate inclinations of the* *heart.”*[11913] External mortification, then, represses the appetites of the body in order to bring it under subjection to the spirit; the interior mortification restrains the affections of the heart in order to subject them to reason and God; hence it has been called by the Apostle: *The circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit.*[11914] In themselves the passions are indifferent, and not sinful; and when well regulated by reason they are useful, because they contribute to the preservation of our existence. But when opposed to reason, they are the ruin of the soul.

Miserable the soul that God leaves in the hands of her own desires ! This is the greatest chastisement which he can inflict upon her. *I let them go according to the desires of their own hearts: they shall walk in their own inventions.*[11915] Hence we must always pray to the Lord in the words of Solomon: *Give me not over to a shameful and foolish mind.*[11916] My God, do not abandon me into the hands of my passions.

Our principal care, then, should be to conquer ourselves. *Conquer thyself.*[11917] St. Ignatius of Loyola appeared not to consider any lesson more important than that which is contained in the words *Conquer thyself:* his familiar discourses were ordinarily on conquering self-love and subduing self-will; and he would say, that out of a hundred peoples who practise prayer, more than ninety are attached to their own opinion. He set a greater value on a single act of mortification of self-will than on several hours spent in prayer, in the midst of spiritual consolations. To a Brother who separated from the company of the others in order to get rid of a certain defect the saint said, that he would have gained more by a few acts of mortification in the society of his companions than he would by remaining silent in a cave for an entire year. *”It is no small matter,”* writes Thomas a Kempis, *“even in things the most trifling, to relinquish self.”*[11918] On the other hand, St. Peter Damian asserts that *unless he leaves himself, it will profit a man nothing to have forsaken all things.*[11919]

Hence, to a people who wished to leave all things in order to give himself to God, St. Bernard said: *“Remember that if you have resolved to leave everything, you must count yourself among those things that you must leave.”*[11920] *Unless,* adds the saint, *you deny yourself, you shall never be able to be a follower of Jesus Christ.*[11921] *Our Redeemer hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way.*[11922] But, says the holy Doctor, he who carries the weight of his passions and of earthly affections, and wishes to follow the Saviour, shall not be able to keep within view of Jesus running the way.

It is necessary, above all, to attend to the subjugation of the predominant passion. Some are careful to mortify themselves in many things, but make little effort to conquer the passion to which they are most inclined; such peoples can never advance in the way of God. He who allows any irregular passion to rule over him, is in great danger of being lost. But, on the other hand, he who subdues the predominant passion will easily conquer all his other passions. When the strongest enemy is vanquished, it is easy to defeat less powerful foes. The value and merit of the victory is greatest when the greatest valor is required: for example, some are not avaricious of money, but are full of self-esteem; others are not ambitious of honors, but feel a great thirst for riches. Unless the former are careful to practise mortification, when treated with contempt, their disregard for riches will profit them but little. Unless the latter labor to mortify the desire of wealth, their contempt for honors will be but of little advantage to them. In a word, a people gains most merit and makes the greatest progress when he uses the greatest violence to conquer himself.*o much will you advance in virtue," says St. Jerome, " as you do violence to yourself."*[11923] St. Ignatius was naturally prone to anger, but by virtue he became so meek that he was considered to be a man of a mild disposition. St. Francis de Sales was also strongly inclined to anger; but by the violence that he offered to himself he became, as we read in his life, an example of patience and sweetness in the many contradictions and insults that he received.

External mortification, without interior self-denial , profits the soul but little. *Of what use, says St. Jerome, is it to reduce the body by fasting, and afterwards to swell with pride? or to abstain from wine, and to be inebriated with hatred?*[11924] The Apostle says that we must put off the old man, that is, attachment to self-love, and clothe ourselves with the new man, that is, Jesus Christ, who never pleased himself. *For,* says St. Paul, *Christ did not please Himself.*[11925] Hence St. Bernard pitied certain monks who wore an humble dress, but interiorly cherished their passions: *"This humble habit is not a sign of interior holiness, but a cover thrown over inveterate corruption. They have not stripped themselves of the old man, but have only hidden him."*[11926]They, says the saint, do not put off their vices:

they only cover them with the exterior marks of penance. Hence, fasting, watching, hair-shirts, and disciplines are of little or no use to him who is attached to himself, and to what belongs to him.

III THE PRACTICE OF INTERIOR MORTIFICATION

They, says St. John Climacus,[11927] *who wish to belong entirely to God must divest themselves of attachment to four things in particular: to property, to honors, to relatives, and above all, to self-will.*

1. PROPERTY

First, it is necessary to remove attachment to property or to riches. *St. Bernard says that riches are a burden to him who possesses them, that they contaminate the man who loves them, and torture him who loses them.*[11928] The priest ought to remember, that when he entered the sanctuary he declared, in the following words, that he wished for no other possessions than God: *The Lord is the portion of my inheritance; . . . it is Thou that wilt restore my inheritance to me.*[11929]The ecclesiastic, then, says St. Peter Damian, who after having chosen God for his portion attends to the acquisition of riches, offers a great insult to his Creator.[11930] Yes, for by his conduct he shows that he considers the Lord not sufficient to content his heart. St. Bernard says, and says truly, that among the covetous there is none more avaricious than the ecclesiastic who is attached to money.[11931]How many priests are there who, but for the miserable honorarium that they receive, would seldom say Mass ! Would to God that they never offered the holy sacrifice !

They, as St. Augustine says, belong to that class of men who do not seek for money in order to serve God; but serve God in order to accumulate riches.[11932] *What a disgrace,* exclaims St. Jerome, *to see a priest intent on the acquisition of wealth !*[11933]

But let us pass by the disgrace, and examine the great danger of perdition, to which a priest intent on heaping up riches exposes his soul. “ Those priests are greatly in peril,” says St. Hilary, “ who are anxious to amass riches and increase their fortune.”[11934] This the Apostle has taught, saying that such peoples shall not only be molested by many cares which impede their spiriual progress, but shall also fall into temptations and desires which will lead them to ruin. *They that will become rich, fall into temptations, . . . and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which draw men into destruction and perdition.*[11935] And into what excesses, thefts, injustice, simony, and sacrileges has the desire of money precipitated certain priests ! St. Ambrose says: " *He who amasses gold loses the grace of God."*[11936]St. Paul assimilates avarice to idolatry: *A covetous people (which is a serving of idols).*[11937] And justly, for the covetous man makes money his God, that is, his last end. " *Extirpate the thirst for gold,"* says St. John Chrysostom, *"and you will extirpate all crimes."*[11938] If, then, we wish to possess God, let us remove all attachment to the goods of this world.

St. Philip Neri used to say that he who seeks after riches shall never become a saint. The riches of us who are priests should consist not in possessions, but in virtues; these will make us great in heaven, and give us strength on earth against the enemies of our salvation. This is the language of St. Prosper: " *Our riches are chastity, piety, humility, meekness: they only will make us great in heaven, and at the same time strong upon earth against the enemies of our salvation."*[11939] Let us, says the Apostle, be content with moderate food for the support of life, and simple raiment to cover the body: let us labor to become saints; this alone is important to us: But having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content.[11940] Of what use are earthly goods, which we must one day quit, and which never content the heart? Let us seek to acquire goods which shall accompany us to eternity, and make us happy forever in heaven: Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and the moth consume. . . . But layup treasures in heaven.[11941] Hence, in the Council of Milan the following admonition was given to priests: " Layup treasures not on earth, but good works and souls for heaven.[11942]The treasures of a priest should consist in good works, and in gaining souls to God.

Hence, in conformity with the words of the Apostle: *No man being a soldier to God entangleth himself with secular business, that he may please Him to Whom he hath engaged Himself.*[11943] The holy Church prohibits, with so much rigor, and under pain of censure, ecclesiastics to engage in traffic. The priest is consecrated to God; he therefore should attend to no other business than the advancement of Gods glory. The Lord does not accept empty victims from which the marrow has been extracted. I will offer up to Thee, said David, holocausts full of marrow.[11944]The sacrifices, the Masses, Offices, and works that a priest dissipated by the cares of traffic offers to God are, says St. Peter Damian, empty; for he has taken away the marrow, that is, attention and devotion, and presents only the skin or external appearance.[11945]What a misery to see a priest, who could save souls and do great things for the glory of God, employed in buying and selling, and engaged in traffic of cattle and corn. *"You are consecrated,"* says Peter de Blois, " *to great things do not occupy yourself with what is trivial."*[11946] What but a spiders web, says St. Bernard, is earthly traffic ?[11947]As the spider eviscerates itself, making its web for the purpose of catching a fly, so, O God ! certain priests spend themselves, lose their time, and the fruit of their spiritual works, in order to gain a little dust. They submit to labors, to anxiety and disquietude, for emptiness, when they could possess God, who is the Lord of all things. *"Why do we trouble ourselves,"* exclaims St. Bonaventure*," about nothing, while we may possess the Creator of all things?"*[11948]

Some will say: But I act justly; I attend to this business without any scruple of conscience. I answer, first, that, as has been already said, ecclesiastics are forbidden to engage even in a just traffic: hence if they do not violate justice, they at least sin against the precept of the Church. Besides, St. Bernard says: *"Wherever the river flows there it hollows out the earth; so the application to earthly affairs injures the conscience."*[11949] As in their passage the running waters eat away the banks of the river, so the cares of traffic gnaw the conscience, that is, they make us always fail in some duty. If, says St. Gregory, traffic were productive of no other evil, at least the crowd of worldly thoughts that it engenders closes the ear of the heart, and prevents it from hearing the divine inspirations.[11950] In a word, St. Isidore writes: "The more priests occupy themselves with the care of earthly affairs, the more they separate themselves from the things of heaven."[11951]It is true that some are obliged by charity to attend to the affairs of their family; but, according to St. Gregory, this should be permitted only in cases of strict necessity.[11952] Some priests undertake, without necessity, the care of the concerns of their family, and even forbid relatives to interfere in them; but if they wished to attend to the affairs of their family why have they become ministers of the family of God ?

The priest who seeks to be employed in the courts of the great also exposes his soul to very imminent danger. Peter de Blois says that as the saints are saved through many tribulations, so they who enter courts are lost through many tribulations.[11953] It is very dangerous for a priest to plead as an advocate in the courts of law. “ In the court,” says St. Ambrose, “ Christ is not found.”[11954] What fervor, I ask, can the priest have who pleads in the courts? How can he say the Office and Mass with devotion when the causes he has to defend fill his whole mind and hinder him from thinking of God ? The causes that a priest should advocate are the causes of poor sinners; and these he should seek to deliver from the hands of the devil and from eternal death by sermons, by hearing confessions, or at least by admonitions and prayers. A priest should abstain from pleading, not only for others, but also for himself. Every temporal law-suit is a seminary of cares and disquietudes, of rancor and sins. Hence we read in the Gospel: *And if a man will contend with thee in judgment and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also to him.*[11955] We know that this is only a counsel; but let us at least avoid suits that are but of trifling importance. You may get rid of temporal misery, you may gain a victory, but you shall suffer a great loss of fervor and peace. “ Sacrifice something,” says St. Augustine, “ in order that you may enjoy God and escape law-suits. Lose your money in order to purchase peace for your soul.”[11956] St. Francis de Sales has said that to go to law, and not yield to folly, is scarcely given to the saints. Hence St. John Chrysostom condemned all that engaged in litigation.[11957]

What shall we say of gaming? According to the Canons, it is certain that to play frequently and for a long time at games of mere hazard, or for a large sum, at least when it is accompanied with scandal to others, is a mortal sin. With regard to other games, which are called games of amusement, I will not here discuss the question whether they are lawful or unlawful; but I say that such amusements are but little suited to a minister of God, who, if he wishes to fulfil his obligation to himself and his neighbor, has certainly no superfluous time to spend in gaming. I read that St. John Chrysostom says: “*It is the devil that has introduced gaming into the world.*”[11958] I find that St. Ambrose writes: “ *I am of opinion that one* *should not only avoid frequent plays, but all plays."*[11959] In the same place he says that recreation is lawful; but not the recreations which derange regularity of life, or which are not suited to ones state. Hence he adds: *"Although at times a play may be proper, yet it is not proper for ecclesiastics."*[11960]

2. HONORS

Secondly, a priest should divest himself of attachment to worldly honors. Peter de Blois says that the ambition of honors is the ruin of souls.[11961] For ambition disturbs regularity of life, and injures charity towards God. Ambition, as the same author says, pretends to resemble charity, and is quite opposed to it. Charity suffers all things, but only for the attainment of eternal goods: ambition bears all things,[11962] but only for things perishable.

Charity is all benignity to the poor, but ambition is kind to the rich.[11963] *Charity bears all*[11964] in order to please God; ambition submits to all evils for the sake of vanity. Charity believes and hopes for all that appertains to eternal glory; ambition believes all things, hopes for all things, that tend to the glory of this life.[11965]

Oh ! to how many thorns, fears, censures, refusals, and insults must the ambitious submit in order to attain a dignity, an office of honor ! " *How many thorns await those that strive after honors!"*[11966] says St. Augustine. And in the end what do the ambitious gain but a little smoke, which, when enjoyed, does not content the heart, and speedily disappears. *I have seen the wicked highly exalted, and lifted up like the cedars of Lebanon. And I passed by, and lo he was not.*[11967]Besides, the Scripture says that to him who seeks it honor becomes an occasion of disgrace. *The promotion of fools is disgrace*[11968]And, according to St. Bernard, *the greater the honor the more the unworthy possessor, who has procured it by his own exertions, is despised by others.*[11969]For the more exalted the dignity, the more clearly the man who is unfit for it shows his unworthiness by seeking to obtain it.[11970]

Add to this the great dangers of eternal salvation which arise from offices of honor. Father Vincent Carafa once visited a sick friend who had just been appointed to a situation of great emolument, but also of great danger. The sick man entreated the Father to obtain from God the restoration of his health; but Carafa answered: No, my friend, God forbid that I should violate the love that I bear you: your sickness is a grace from the Lord, who wishes to save you by sending death now that your soul is in a good state. Perhaps you might not be in such a state hereafter should you enter on the office that has been given you. The friend died, and died full of consolation. We should have a special fear of all offices to which the care of souls is annexed. St. Augustine said that many envied his elevation to the episcopacy, but he was afflicted at it on account of the danger to which his salvation was exposed.[11971] St. John Chrysostom when made bishop was so much terrified that, as he afterwards said, he felt as if his soul were separating from the body: he had great doubts about the salvation of a pastor of souls.[11972]But if the saints, forced against their will to become prelates, tremble for the account that they must render to God, how should he tremble who intrudes himself into an office to which is annexed the care of souls ? " The measure of honor," says St. Ambrose, " must be measured by the strength of him that is to bear it, otherwise if the bearer is too weak the burden will weigh him down and cause his ruin."[11973] A weak man who puts on his back a great weight shall not be able to carry it, but shall be oppressed by it.

St. Anselm says that he who wishes to obtain ecclesiastical honors through right and wrong does not receive them, but takes them by force.[11974] St. Bernard says the same: *"Those whom we see entering of themselves the vineyard of the Lord are not laborers, but robbers."*[11975] This is conformable to the words of Osee: *They have reigned, but not by Me.*[11976] Hence it happens, as St. Leo says, that the Church, which is governed by such ambitious ministers, is neither served nor honored, but despised and defiled.[11977]

Let us, then, attend to the beautiful lesson of Jesus Christ: *Sit down in the lowest place.*[11978] He who sits on the ground is not afraid of falling. We are ashes: " *The place of ashes and dust is not in a high place, for they will be scattered by the wind,"*[11979] says the angelic Doctor." Happy the priest who can say: *I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners.*[11980]

3. RELATIVES

Thirdly, a priest must divest himself of attachment to relatives. *If any man, says Jesus Christ, hate not his father and mother, . . . he cannot be my disciple.*[11981]

But how are we to hate relatives ? We must, says a learned author, disown them in whatever is opposed to our spiritual advancement: *“If they hinder us from living according to the rules of ecclesiastical discipline, if they ask that we should involve ourselves in secular business, then we must hate and shun them as our opponents.”*[11982]And before him St. Gregory said: “ To those that are a hindrance to us on the road to God we must show by hatred and flight that we do not know them.”[11983] Peter de Blois writes: “No one should be chosen priest who does not say to his father and mother, I know you not.”[11984] St. Ambrose says that he who wishes to serve God ought to deny his relatives.[11985]We should honor parents, but we must first obey God, says St. Augustine.[11986] To show great kindness to relatives, and not to obey God, is, according to St. Jerome, not piety, but impiety.”[11987] Our Redeemer has declared that he came on earth to detach us from relatives. *I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, etc.*[11988]And why? Because in spiritual concerns .relatives are our greatest enemies: *A man’s enemies shall be they of his household.*[11989]

Hence St. Basil exhorts us to avoid, as a temptation of the devil, the care of the property of relatives.[11990]What a misery to see a priest who could save numberless souls altogether occupied in transacting the business of his family, and in attending to the management of farms, flocks of sheep, and the like ? What ! exclaims St. Jerome, must a priest abandon the service of the Father of heaven to please an earthly parent ?[11991] The saint says that when there is question of serving God, a son (if it be necessary) should trample on his father: “ What would you do in the house of your parents, O delicate soldier !” asks the saint, “where is the wall, where the ditch ? Yes, even if the father lay across the threshold walk quietly over him, and hasten with unmoistened eyes to the banner of the cross. Filial piety in this case consists in being cruel.”[11992]

St. Augustine relates that St. Anthony having received a letter from his relatives threw it into the fire, saying: “I burn you lest I be burnt by you.”[11993]According to St. Gregory, he who wishes to be united with God must detach himself from relatives.[11994]Otherwise, as Peter de Blois says, the love of flesh and blood will soon deprive us of the love of God.[11995] It is difficult to find Jesus Christ in the midst of relatives. “ How shall I,” says St. Bonaventure, “find Thee, O Jesus ! among my relatives, since Thou wert not found among Thine?”[11996]

When the divine mother, after having found Jesus in the temple, said to him: Son, why hast Thou done so to us?[11997] the Redeemer answered: How is it that you sought Me ? did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?[11998]Such should be the answer of a priest to his relatives when they wish to charge him with the care of his family. I am a priest; I can attend only to the things of God; to you who are seculars it belongs to mind the things of the world. It was this our Lord wished to signify to the young man whom he called to follow him, when, in answer to the young man s request to be permitted to bury his father, he said: *Let the dead bury the dead.*[11999]

4. SELF-WILL

It is necessary, above all, to remove attachment to self-will. St. Philip Neri used to say that sanctity consists in the mortification of self-will. Blosius has asserted *that he who mortifies self-will does an act more pleasing to God than if he gave life to the dead.*[12000] Hence many priests and pastors, and even bishops, who led exemplary lives, and devoted their time and labor to the salvation of souls, not content with all this, have entered religion in order to live under obedience to others; believing what is really the truth that they could not offer to God a sacrifice more acceptable than the renunciation of their own will. All are not called to the religious state; but he who wishes to walk in the way of perfection (besides the obedience due to his prelate) must submit his will to the direction of at least a spiritual Father, who will guide him in all his spiritual exercises, and also in temporal affairs of importance, which are connected with the sanctification of his soul. What is done through self-will is of little or no advantage to the soul.

In the day of your fast your own will is found.[12001]Hence St. Bernard has written: “A great evil is self-will, which causes the good that you do not to be good to you.”[12002] The greatest enemy we have is self-will. “ *Let self-*

will cease," says the same St. Bernard, *" and there will be no longer a hell."*[12003] ; Hell is full of self-will. What but our own will is the cause of our sins ? St. Augustine confessed of himself that he was impelled by grace to forsake sin, but he remained in it bound by no other chain than that of his own will.[12004]St. Bernard teaches that *self-will is so opposed to God that were his destruction possible it would destroy him.*[12005] *He,* says the same saint, *who becomes his own disciple, becomes the disciple of a fool.*[12006]

It is necessary to understand that all our good consists in a union with the divine will. *And life in his goodwill.*[12007] But, ordinarily speaking, God makes his will known to us only through our Superiors, that is, through our prelate or director. *He that heareth you,* says Jesus *Christ, heareth Me ;*[12008] and he adds: *despiseth you, despiseth Me.*[12009]

Hence in the Scripture not to submit to the authority of Superiors is called a species of idolatry. Because it is like the sin of witchcraft to rebel.[12010] But, on the other hand, St. Bernard assures us *that in whatever our spiritual Father directs us, unless it be certainly sinful, we should feel as secure as if God himself had spoken to us.*[12011]Happy he who can say at death with the Abbot John: *" I have never done my own will, and never taught anything that I did not do myself."*[12012] Hence Cassian, who relates this fact, has written *that by the mortification of self-will all vices are destroyed.*[12013] And before him the Wise Man said: *An obedient man shall speak of victory.*[12014] And in another place: *Obedience is better than sacrifices!*[12015]For he who offers to God the sacrifice of alms, fasts, penitential works, sacrifices to him only a part of himself; but he who gives God his will by subjecting it to obedience, gives all that he is able to give, and can say to him: Lord, having given you my will, I have nothing more to give you. Hence St. Laurence Justinian has written that *they who offer the sacrifice of self-will to God shall obtain from him whatever they ask.*[12016]

And God himself has promised those who renounce self-will that he will raise them above the earth, and make them celestial men. *If thou turn away thy foot . . . from doing thy own will, . . . I will lift thee up above the high places of the earth.*[12017]

5. MEANS OF CONQUERING SELF-WILL

The means of conquering self-will and of subduing all irregular passions are the following:

1. Prayer: he who prays, obtains all graces. " Though prayer is but one, it can do all things,"[12018] says St. Bonaventure. And before him Jesus Christ said: You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.[12019]

2. To do violence to self with a determined will. A resolute will surmounts all difficulties.

3. To make our examen on the passion that molests us, and to impose a penance on ourselves as often as we yield to it.

4. To indulge in a multitude of desires. " I," said St. Francis de Sales,[12020] " desire but few things, and my desire for them is not strong."

5. To practise mortification in small things, and even in things that are not sinful; for thus we shall acquire a facility of overcoming great difficulties. For example, by abstaining from certain jests, by not indulging curiosity, not pulling a flower, not opening letters for some time after we receive them, by giving up certain undertakings, making a sacrifice of them to God, regardless of the honor that they might procure for us. What advantage do we now derive from so many gratifications ? from so many successful undertakings? Had we been mortified on such occasions, how many merits should we now have treasured up before God ! Hence forth let us labor to gain something for eternity. Let us reflect that we are drawing near the grave. The more we mortify ourselves the less we shall suffer in purgatory, and the greater the glory that we shall merit for eternity in heaven. On this earth we are only in passage: we shall soon be in eternity. I conclude with the words of St. Philip Neri: " *Foolish is the man who does not become a saint."*

Instruction IX

EXTERIOR MORTIFICATION

I. NECESSITY OF EXTERIOR MORTIFICATION

ST. GREGORY says *that no man is fit to be a minister of God, and to offer the sacrifice of the altar, unless he has first sacrificed himself entirely to God.*[12021] And St. Ambrose writes: " *This is the primitive sacrifice, that every one offers himself first to God, in order afterwards to be able to offer his gift."*[12022]And long before, the Redeemer said: *Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone.*[12023]He, then, who wishes to bring forth fruits of eternal life, must die to himself; that is, he must desire nothing for his own satisfaction, and, as St. Gregory has written, *he must embrace all that is mortifying to the flesh.*[12024] He who is dead to himself must, according to Lanspergius, live in the world as if he saw nothing, heard nothing; as if nothing disturbed and as if nothing gave him content but God. *For,* says Jesus Christ, *he that will save his life shall lose it.*[12025]

Happy loss, exclaims St. Hilary, when everything in this world, and even life itself, is lost in order to follow Jesus Christ and to gain eternal glory.[12026]St. Bernard says that were there no other reason for giving ourselves entirely to God, it would be enough to know that God has given himself entirely to us.[12027] But to give ourselves to God without reserve, it is necessary to banish from the heart every earthly desire. " Wherever charity is augmented," says St. Augustine, " there cupidity is diminished. Freedom from all cupidity is perfection."[12028]He who least desires the goods of the earth, loves God most; he who desires nothing, loves God perfectly.

In the preceding instruction we have spoken of interior mortification: we shall now speak of external mortification, or the mortification of the senses.

This species of mortification is also necessary, because on account of sin our flesh wars, as the Apostle said of himself, against reason, and is an enemy to our salvation: *I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind?*[12029] “ That is,” says St. Thomas in his comment on this passage, “ the concupiscence of the flesh that is struggling with reason.”[12030] It is necessary to understand that the soul must bring the body under subjection, or the body will trample on the soul. God has given us senses that we employ them, not as we please, but as he directs; hence we must mortify the desires that are contrary to the divine law.

They that are Christs have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences.[12031] Hence the saints have been so careful to macerate the flesh. St. Peter of Alcantara purposed never to give any indulgence to the body, and observed his resolution till death. St. Bernard maltreated his body to such a degree, that at death he asked its pardon. St. Teresa used to say that *“it would be silliness to imagine that God admits to his friendship peoples who seek their own ease and convenience;”*[12032] and in another place she says: “Souls that truly love God cannot ask for comforts.”[12033]And St. Ambrose has written *that he who does not cease to indulge the body shall cease to please God.*[12034]According to St. Augustine, *he who subjects reason to the flesh is a mon ster that walks with his head downwards and his feet upwards.*[12035] *We are born for a more noble end than to be the slaves of the body,* said the pagan Seneca.[12036] How much more should we say it, who know by faith that we have been created to enjoy God for eternity? St. Gregory says that *by gratifying the desires of the flesh we only nourish enemies.*[12037]

St. Ambrose weeps over the misfortune of Solomon, saying that this unhappy king had the glory of building the temple of God, but that it would have been far better for him to preserve to God the temple of his body, for the gratification of which he lost his body, his soul, and his God.[12038]

A man mounted on a furious horse must always keep the reins tight: it is thus we must treat the body. St. Bernard says that we ought to treat the flesh as a physician treats a patient who seeks what is noxious and refuses what is conducive to health. Were a physician, in order to please a sick man, to give him what should cause his death, would he not be guilty of cruelty? And in like manner, let us be persuaded that to indulge the body is not charity, but the greatest act of cruelty we can commit against ourselves; because, for a momentary indulgence of the flesh, we condemn the soul to an eternity of torments. Such is the language of St. Bernard: “ *Such a charity destroys charity; such mercy is full of cruelty; for in such a manner the body is served, but the soul is destroyed.”*[12039] In a word, we must change our palate, and follow the admonition of our Lord to St. Francis: *“If you desire me, take what is bitter as sweets, and what is sweet as bitter.”*

Let us now attend to the fruits of external mortification.

First, it satisfies for the pains due to the pleasures in which we have indulged: these pains are far milder in this than in the next life. St. Antonine relates that an angel proposed to a sick man the choice of remaining three days in purgatory, or of being confined for two years to his bed by the infirmity under which he labored. The sick man chose the three days in purgatory; but he was scarcely an hour there when he began to complain to the angel that his purgatory, instead of continuing for three days, had lasted for several years. What! replied the angel, your body is still warm on the bed of death, and you speak of years! “ *If you do not wish to be punished,”* says St. John Chrysostom, “ *be your own judge chastise and amend yourself.”*[12040]

Secondly, mortification detaches the soul from earthly pleasures, and gives her a facility of flying to God, and of uniting herself with him. St. Francis de .Sales used to say that “ *if the flesh is not mortified and depressed, the soul will never be able to raise herself up to God.”* St. Jerome has said the same: “*Only by mortification can the soul rise to heavenly things.”*[12041]

Thirdly, penance merits for us eternal goods, as St. Peter of Alcantara revealed from heaven to St. Teresa, saying: “ *O happy penance that has merited for me so much glory!”*[12042]

Hence the saints have endeavored to mortify the flesh continually, and to the best of their ability. St. Francis Borgia said that he would die without consolation on any day on which he had not mortified his body by some penitential work. A life of ease and pleasure on this earth cannot be the life of a Christian.

II. PRACTICE OF EXTERIOR MORTIFICATION

If we have not fervor to mortify the body by great penances, let us at least practise some little mortifications: let us bear with patience the pains that happen to us. For example, let us submit in peace to the inconvenience, the want of sleep, the disagreeable smell that we feel in attending the dying, to the annoyance we experience in going to hear the confessions of peoples confined in prison, in hearing the confessions of the poor and the ignorant, and to similar occasions of pain or trouble. Let us at least deprive ourselves from time to time of some lawful pleasure. Clement of Alexandria says: “Whoever does everything that is allowed will soon do what is not allowed.”[12043]

He who wishes to indulge in all gratifications that are in themselves lawful, will not abstain long from unlawful pleasures. That great servant of God, Vincent Carafa, of the Society of Jesus, used to say that God has given us earthly goods not only for our delight, but also that we might have a means of showing our gratitude to him by abstaining from pleasures, and giving him back his own gifts in proof of our love; for, as St. Gregory writes,[12044] he who is accustomed to renounce lawful gratifications easily abstains from forbidden pleasures.

Let us speak of the mortifications of the senses, that we can practise, and especially of the mortifications of the eyes, the taste, and the touch.

1. THE EYES AND THE WHOLE EXTERIOR

First, it is necessary to mortify the eyes. “ Through the eyes,” says St. Bernard, “ the dart of impure love enters the heart.”[12045] The first darts that wound, and sometimes kill, the chaste soul, enter through the eyes.[12046]By means of the eyes bad thoughts spring up in the mind. “ What is not seen,” says St. Francis de Sales, “is not desired.” Hence the devil first tempts a people to look, then to desire, and afterwards to consent. Thus he acted with the Saviour himself: *He showed Him all the kingdoms of the world.* He then tempted him, saying: *All these will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore Me.*[12047] The evil spirit gained nothing by tempting Jesus Christ, but by thus tempting Eve he gained a great deal: *She saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, . . . and she took of the fruit thereof.*[12048] etc.

Tertullian says that certain little glances are the beginnings of the greatest iniquities.[12049] And St. Jerome compares the eyes to certain hooks, which drag us, as it were, by force to sin.[12050] He who wishes not to admit the enemy into the fortress, should lock the gate. The Abbot Pastor was molested by bad thoughts for forty years after having looked at a woman. In consequence of having seen a woman in the world, St. Benedict was afterwards so strongly tempted, that to conquer the flesh he threw himself naked among thorns, and thus overcame the temptations. While he lived in the cave of Bethlehem, St. Jerome was for a long time troubled with bad thoughts on account of having formerly seen certain women in Rome. These saints conquered temptations by the divine aid, by prayers and penitential works; but many others, on account of the eyes, have miserably fallen. On account of the eyes a David fell; on account of the eyes a Solomon fell. Listen to an alarming fact related by St. Augustine of Alipius. He went to the theatre, resolved not to look at any dangerous object, saying, " I will be absent though present;"[12051] but being tempted to look, he, says the saint, not only prevaricated, but also made others prevaricate: "He opened his eyes, applauded, became excited, and left the theatre carrying sin with him."[12052]Seneca justly said that blindness is a great help to preserve innocence.[12053]

It is not lawful to pull out our eyes, but we ought to make ourselves blind by closing the eyes, and by not looking at objects which may impel us to evil: *He . . . that shutteth his eyes that he may see no evil, he shall dwell on high.*[12054] Hence Job said that he had made a covenant with his eyes never to look at a woman, lest he should be afterwards molested by bad thoughts: *I made a covenant with my eyes, that I would not so much as think upon a virgin.*[12055] St. Aloysius Gonzaga never dared to raise his eyes to look at his mother. St. Peter of Alcantara abstained from looking even at his brothers in religion: he knew them not by the sight, but by the voice.

The Council of Tours tells priests that they should guard against everything that can offend the eyes or the ears.[12056] But particular caution is necessary for secular priests, who frequent public places, or the houses of seculars. If they permit the eye to look at every object that is presented to them, they shall scarcely preserve chastity. Turn away thy face, says the Holy Ghost, from a woman dressed up, . . . for many have perished by the beauty of a woman.[12057]And, says St. Augustine, should the eyes happen sometimes to fall on a woman, let us take care never to fix them on her.[12058]

Hence it is necessary to abstain from going to balls, or profane comedies, which are frequented by men and women; and when through necessity a priest is obliged to go to a place in which there are women, he must pay special attention to modesty of the eyes.

Father Alvarez was once present at a public degradation of a priest, but because there were women present, he held in his hand an image of the Blessed Virgin, on which he kept his eyes constantly fixed for several hours, lest they might fall on a woman. From the moment we awake in the morning, let us pray with David: *Turn away my eyes, that they may not behold vanity.*[12059]

Oh! how profitable is it to us ecclesiastics, and how edifying to others, to keep the eyes cast down! St. Francis once said to his companion, that he wished to go out in order to preach a sermon: he went out and walked through the village with his eyes fixed on the ground. After they had returned, his companion asked when he intended to preach the sermon. The saint replied: We have already preached by the modesty with which we walked before the people. A certain author remarks that the Evangelists, in order to show that he ordinarily kept them cast down, mention in several places that our Redeemer raised his eyes: *Lifting up His eyes on His disciples.*[12060] *When Jesus had lifted up His eyes.*[12061]Hence St. Paul has praised the modesty of Jesus Christ, saying: *I beseech you by the mildness and modesty of Christ.*[12062]

St. Basil says that we should keep the eyes cast down upon the earth and the soul raised up to heaven.[12063] And St. Jerome has written, that the countenance is the mirror of the soul, and that chaste eyes indicate a chaste heart."[12064]But, on the other hand, St. Augustine says: "*The immodesty of the eyes betrays the vices of the heart.*"[12065]t. Ambrose adds, that the motions of the body show the recollection or dissipation of the soul.[12066] Hence the saint relates that ,he foreboded the fall of two men on account of the irregularity of their gait. The prediction was verified; for one fell into impiety, and the other into heresy. Speaking especially of men whose character is sacred, St. Jerome says that their actions, language, and gesture are a lesson for seculars.[12067]

The Council of Trent has said: " They ought by all means so to regulate their whole life and conversation, as that in their dress, comportment, gait, discourse, and all things else, nothing appear but what is grave, regulated, and replete with religiousness.”[12068] And St. John Chrysostom has written: “ The mind of the priest should be resplendent with virtues, that it may enlighten those that look up to him.”[12069]Thus the priest ought to give to all an example of modesty in all things: modesty in looks, modesty in his gait, modesty in his conversation, particularly by saying little, and by speaking as a priest ought to speak. By saying little. He who speaks much to men, shows that he converses but little with God. Men of prayer are men of few words. When the mouth of the furnace is opened, the heat rushes out. “ In silence,” says Thomas a Kempis, “ the soul maketh progress.”[12070] And St. Peter Damian calls silence the guardian of justice.”[12071] We read in Isaias: In silence and in hope shall your strength be.”[12072]

In silence consists our strength, for in speaking much there is always some defect. *In the multitude of words there shall not want sin, says Solomon.*[12073] By speaking as a priest ought to speak, St. Anselm says, “ *Thy mouth must be the mouth of Christ: and thou shouldst not only not open it for calumnies or lies, but not even for idle discourse.”*[12074] He who loves God seeks to speak always of God. He who loves a fellow-man can scarcely speak of anything else than of him. “ *Forget not,”* says Gilbert, “ *that thy mouth is consecrated only to heavenly sayings, and look upon it as sacrilegious if something comes forth from it that is not divine.”*[12075] *It is,* according to St. Ambrose, *a violation of modesty to speak in a very loud tone.*[12076] It belongs to modesty to abstain, not only from immodest words, but also from listening to them: *Hedge in thy ears with thorns, hear not a wicked tongue.*[12077] A priest should be modest also in his dress. St. Augustine says that in order to appear well dressed exteriorly, some strip themselves of interior modesty.[12078] Vanity and costliness of dress in a priest show that there is but little virtue in the soul. St. Bernard writes: “ The poor cry out to thee: *To us belongs what you waste; from our necessities is withdrawn what you bestow upon vanities.”*[12079]

In the 16th Canon of the second Council of Nice we read: *“A priest should wear simple garments, for what goes beyond what is necessary is luxury, and this vanity will be imputed to him as a crime.”*[12080] The priest ought to be modest in his hair. Pope Martin ordained that ecclesiastics should not minister in the church unless their head was shorn so that the ears would be visible.[12081] What shall we say of those whom Clement of Alexandria calls “ *illiberales tonsos,”*[12082] that is, peoples who are so much attached to their hair that they allow it to be cut only sparingly. What a shame, says St. Cyprian, for an ecclesiastic to appear with his head decked out like the head of a woman.[12083]And before him the Apostle, in his epistle to the Corinthians, said, that to nourish the hair is as disgraceful in a man as it is becoming in a woman: A man indeed if he nourish his hair, it is a shame unto him.[12084] And this he said of all, even of seculars. What, then, must we think of the ecclesiastic who curls his hair and arranges it in a worldly fashion ? Minutius Felix says that we ought to show ourselves to be ecclesiastics, not by the ornaments of the body, but by examples of modesty.[12085] St. Ambrose has written, that the deportment of a priest should be such that all who behold him may be inspired with reverence for God, whose priest and minister he is.[12086] But, on the other hand, a priest who violates modesty excites irreverence towards God.

2. THE TASTE OR APPETITE

We shall now speak on the mortification of the taste or of the appetite. In his treatise entitled *The One Thing Necessary,* Father Rogacci says, that the principal part of external mortification consists in the mortification of the appetite. Hence St. Andrew Avellino used to say, that he who wishes to walk in the way of perfection must begin to mortify the taste. *St. Leo asserts that this has been the practice of the saints.*[12087]To a penitent who practised but little mortification St. Philip Neri said, “ *My son, unless you mortify the appetite you shall never become a saint.”*[12088] St. Francis Xavier used to eat nothing but a few grains of toasted rice. St. John Francis Regis took only a little coarse flower boiled in water. St. Francis Borgia, even when a secular, and viceroy of Catalonia, was content with bread and herbs. The food of St. Peter of Alcantara was nothing more than a small quantity of broth. St. Francis de Sales says that we ought to eat in order to support life, and not live for the purpose of eating. Some appear to live for the sole purpose of eating, making, as the Apostle said, the belly their God: *They are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly.*[12089] Tertullian says that the vice of gluttony kills, or at least inflicts a deep wound, on all other virtues.[12090]

The sin of gluttony has caused the ruin of the world: for the sake of eating an apple, Adam brought death on himself and the entire human race. But priests, who are bound by a vow of chastity, should pay special attention to the mortification of the appetite. St. Bonaventure says *that excess in eating nourishes impurity*.[12091] And St. Augustine has written: " *If the soul is weighed down by too much food, the mind becomes torpid, and there will spring up thorns of wicked desires,"*[12092] Hence in the forty-second Canon of the Apostles we read: *"Those priests are to be deposed that are given excessively to good cheer."*[12093] ; The Wise Man has said, that he who accustoms servants to delicate food shall not find them obedient to his commands: *He that nourishes a servant delicately from his childhood, afterwards shall find him stubborn.*[12094] St. Augustine exhorts us not to give the flesh strength to fight against the soul.[12095] Palladius relates that a certain monk being asked why he treated his body so badly, said: " *I trouble him that troubles me."*[12096] St. Paul has done and said the same. *I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection.*[12097] If the flesh is not mortified, it obeys reason only with difficulty. But, on the other hand, according to St. Thomas, the devil, when vanquished in his temptations to the indulgence of the appetite, ceases to tempt to impurity.[12098]

Cornelius à Lapide says that when intemperance is overcome, all other vices are easily conquered.[12099] Blosius remarks that many find it easier to conquer other vices than the vice of intemperance.[12100] But some may say God has purposely created the various kinds of food that we may enjoy them. I answer, God has created them that they may serve for the support of life, but not to be abused by intemperance. There are some delicious meats that are not necessary for the support of life; these God has created, that by sometimes abstaining from them we may practise mortification. God created the apple that he forbade Adam to eat, that Adam might abstain from it. Let us at least practise temperance in the use of delicacies. *To practise temperance, St. Bonaventure says that we must avoid four things: first, eating out of the time of meals, as animals do; secondly, eating with too much avidity, like famished dogs; thirdly, eating too large a quantity, of food; and fourthly, we must avoid too much delicacy.*[12101] What a shame to see a priest seeking a variety of meats, dressed in various ways, and giving trouble and annoyance to servants, and to the whole house, when everything is not prepared so as to please his taste. Fervent priests are satisfied with what is placed before them. Reflect on the words of St. Jerome: “ The cleric cannot easily escape contempt if he frequently accepts invitations to dinner.”[12102]

Hence exemplary priests fly from banquets, in which, ordinarily speaking, there is a want of modesty and of temperance. “ Lay people,” adds the holy Doctor, “ would rather enjoy our consolations in their trials than our presence at their banquets.”[12103]

3. THE TOUCH

Thirdly, with regard to the sense of touch, it is necessary, in the first place, to abstain from familiarity with peoples of the opposite sex, even though they are relatives. You will say: They are my sisters, my nieces; yes, but they are women. With regard to this sense (which is very dangerous for priests), they must use all possible caution and modesty with themselves. Everyone of you, says St. Paul, *should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, . . . not in the passion of lust.*[12104]

Holy priests are accustomed to practise some painful penitential works, such as the discipline, or the use of little chains. Some despise these things, saying that sanctity consists in the mortification of the will. But I find that all the saints have thirsted after penitential austerities, and have sought to macerate the flesh to the utmost of their power. St. Peter of Alcantara wore a hair-shirt of punched iron, which kept his shoulders constantly lacerated. St. John of the Cross wore a waistcoat armed with iron points, and an iron chain, which could not be removed after his death without taking with it a piece of the flesh. This saint used to say *that a people who should teach lax doctrine regarding the mortification of the flesh ought not to be believed, even though he confirmed it by miracles.*[12105]

It is true that interior mortification is the most necessary; but exterior mortification is also indispensable. To a people who wished to dissuade him from macerating his body, by saying that sanctity consists in conquering self-will, St. Aloysius Gonzaga replied, in the words of the Gospel: *These things you ought to have done, and not leave those undone.*[12106] To Mother Mary of Jesus, of the Order of St. Teresa, our Lord said the world is destroyed not by penitential works, but by pleasures. “*Mortify your body* *and you will conquer the devil says St. Augustine.*[12107] The remedy of the saints, particularly in temptations against purity, was the maceration of the flesh. In temptations contrary to chastity, St. Benedict and St. Francis rolled themselves among thorns. Father Rodriguez says, " If a people had entwined round him a serpent, which by its poisoned bites would seek to kill him, surely if he could not take away its life he would at least endeavor to draw its blood and diminish its strength, in order to render it less able to injure him." Job tells us that wisdom is not found among earthly delights: *Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of them that live in delights"*[12108] In one place the Spouse in the Canticles said that he dwells on the mountain of myrrh: I will go to the mountain of myrrh;[12109] and in another, that he feeds among the lilies: Who feedeth among the lilies.[12110]

In reconciling these two passages, Philibert says that on the mountain of myrrh, where the flesh is mortified, the lilies of purity spring up and flourish.[12111] Should a people have ever violated chastity, reason requires that he should afterwards chastise the flesh: *For as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity, so now yield your members to serve justice unto sanctification.*[12112]

4. INVOLUNTARY MORTIFICATIONS

If we have not courage to mortify the flesh by works of penance, let us at least endeavor to accept with patience the mortifications arising from the infirmities, the heat and cold, that God sends us. St. Francis Borgia once arrived late at a college of the Order, and was obliged to remain all night in the open air, exposed to the cold and snow. In the morning the Fathers of the college were afflicted at what had happened; but the saint said he was greatly consoled by thinking that God had sent the wind, the frost, and snow. " *Hasten,*

O Lord," says St. Bonaventure, " *hasten to wound Thy servants with Thy sacred wounds, lest they be wounded by deadly wounds of vice."*[12113] This we, too, should say when we are afflicted with sickness and pains: Lord, chastise me with these healing wounds, that I may be freed from the deadly wounds of the flesh; or let us say with St. Bernard: *"It is just that he should be bowed down and become sad who has despised Thee, O Lord! "*[12114]

Yes, my God, it is just that I who have insulted you should suffer affliction: I have been con demned to eternal death; let me, then, be crucified in this life, that I may not be tormented for eternity in the next.

Let us at least bear the pains that God sends us. A certain author well observes, that a people who does not embrace voluntary pains will scarcely bear involuntary sufferings with perfect patience. And, on the other hand, St. Anselm says: *"God will cease to chastise the sinner who voluntarily punishes himself for his sins."*[12115]

III. THE GOOD THAT IS DERIVED FROM A MORTIFIED LIFE

Some imagine that a life of mortification is an unhappy life. No: the life of the man who practises mortification is not unhappy; but the life of him who indulges his senses so as to offend God is truly miserable: *Who hath resisted Him, and hath had peace ?*[12116]A soul in sin is a sea agitated by the tempest: The wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest.[12117] St. Augustine says *that the man who is not in peace with God is an enemy that wages war against himself.*[12118] The gratifications that we give the body fight against us, and make us unhappy: *From whence are wars and contentions amongst you ? Are they not hence—from your concupiscences, which war in your members ?*[12119] On the other hand, the Lord says: *To him that overcometh, I will give the hidden manna.*[12120]

To them who practise mortification God gives that sweetness and peace that are hidden from the unmortified, and that surpass all sensual pleasures: *The peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding*[12121] Hence they who live dead to earthly delights are pronounced happy: *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.*[12122] Worldlings regard as miserable the life of those who live at a distance from sensual gratifications. *They see the Cross, but not its interior unction.*[12123] says St. Bernard; they see the mortifications of the saints, but not the interior consolations with which God caresses them, even in this life. The promises of God cannot fail: *Take up My yoke upon you, . . . and you shall find rest to your souls."*[12124] Ah! the soul that loves God suffers not in her mortifications. He who loves, finds nothing difficult, says St. Augustine[12125]" *Love,"* says a certain author, " *blushes at the word difficulty."*[12126] As nothing resists death, so nothing resists love: *Love is as* *strong as death*[12127] If we wish to acquire eternal delights, we must deprive ourselves of temporal pleasures: *He that will save his life shall lose it.*[12128] Hence St. Augustine says: “ *Beware of enjoying yourself in this life, lest you suffer eternally.”*[12129] St. John saw all the saints with palms in their hands.[12130] To be saved, we must all be martyrs, either by the sword of the tyrant or by voluntary mortification.

Let us reflect that all we suffer is nothing compared with the eternal glory which awaits us: *The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.*[12131]The transitory pains of this life shall merit for us eternal beatitude: *For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.*[12132] Hence Philo the Jew has written: “ *The pleasures which we give the body to the detriment of the soul are thefts of the glory of heaven, which we commit against ourselves.”*[12133]On the other hand, St. John Chrysostom says that *when God gives us an occasion of suffering, he bestows a greater grace than if he gave us power to restore life to the dead.*[12134]He assigns the reason, saying: “ *For the miracles I am a debtor to God, and by suffering with patience I have Christ as my debtor.”*[12135]The saints are the living stones that compose the heavenly Jerusalem: *As living stones built up, a spiritual house!*[12136] But these must be first polished by the chisel of mortification, as is sung by the Church:

Many a blow and biting sculpture
Polished well those stones elect,
In their places now compacted
By the heavenly Architect. “[12137]

Hence every act of mortification is a work for heaven. This thought will sweeten all the bitterness we shall feel in mortification: *The just man liveth by faith.*[12138] To live well, and obtain salvation, we must live by faith, that is, in view of the eternity which awaits us: *Man shall go into the house of his eternity.*[12139] Let us consider, says St. Augustine, that at the very time when the Lord exhorts us to combat against temptations, he assists us, and prepares a crown for us.[12140] Speaking of wrestlers, the Apostle said, that they abstain from everything that can be an obstacle to their winning a miserable temporal crown; how much more ought we to die to all things in order to acquire an infinite and eternal crown: *Every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things ; and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one.*”[12141]

Instruction X THE LOVE OF GOD

I. SPECIAL OBLIGATION FOR THE PRIEST TO BELONG ENTIRELY TO GOD

PETER DE BLOIS says that a priest without divine love *“may be called a priest but is not a priest.”*[12142]From the day of his ordination a priest is no longer his own, but belongs to God. St. Ambrose has said: *“A true minister of the altar is in the world for God and not for himself.”*[12143]And before him God himself said: *They offer the burnt-offering of the Lord, and the bread of their God, and therefore they shall be holy:”*[12144] Origen has called a priest *“a being consecrated to God.”*[12145] From his very entrance into the ecclesiastical state the priest declared that he wished for no other portion than God.[12146] If, then, adds St. Ambrose, God is the portion of the priest, he should live only for God.[12147]

Hence the Apostle has said, that he who is devoted to the service of the divine majesty should not engage in worldly affairs, but should seek only to please him to whom he has given himself: *No man being a soldier to God, entangleth himself with secular business; that he may please Him to Whom he hath engaged himself*[12148] Jesus Christ forbade the young man who wished to become one of his disciples to return home for the purpose of burying his father: *Follow Me, and let the dead bury the dead.*[12149] This lesson was, as the same St. Ambrose writes, directed to all ecclesiastics, to teach them that it is their duty to prefer the concerns of the divine glory to all human affairs, which may be an obstacle to their belonging entirely to God.[12150]

Even in the Old Law, God declared to the priests that he had chosen them from among the people that they might be his without reserve. Hence he told them that they should have no possession, no portion among seculars, because he himself wished to be their portion and inheritance: *You shall possess nothing in their land, neither shall you have a portion among them: I am thy portion and inheritance in the midst of the children of Israel.*[12151] On this passage Oleaster writes: “ O priest! understand what great happiness God has conferred upon thee by wishing to have thee as his inheritance. And what can be wanting to thee if thou possesses! God ?”[12152] The priest, then, should say with St. Augustine: “ Let others choose for their portion temporal things; God is my portion.”[12153]

And, says St. Anselm, *if we love not God, what shall we love?*[12154] The Emperor Diocletian placed before St. Clement gold, silver, and precious stones, in order to induce him to deny the faith: seeing his God put in comparison with a little dust, the saint heaved a sigh of sorrow: But one thing is necessary.[12155] He who possesses all things without God, has nothing; but he who possesses God without anything else, has all things. Hence, St. Francis had reason to say, and to repeat, as he did for an entire night, My God, and my all. Happy, then, is he who can say with David: *For what have I in heaven ? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth ? . . . God is my portion forever.*[12156] My God, neither in heaven nor on earth do I wish for anything but Thee. Thou art, and shall be always, the Lord of my heart, and my only riches.

God deserves to be loved for his own sake, because he is an object worthy of infinite love: but we should love him, at least, through gratitude for the infinite love he has shown in the benefit of redemption. What more could God do for us, than become man and die for us ? *Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*”[12157] Before redemption, men could doubt if God loved them with a tender love; but how can they doubt it after having seen him dead on a cross for the love of them. This has been, as it was called by Moses and Elias on Mount Thabor, an excess of love: *And they spoke of His decease [excess] that He should accomplish in Jerusalem.*[12158]An excess that all the angels shall not be able to comprehend for all eternity.

Who among men, says St. Anselm, could deserve that a God should die for him?[12159] But it is certain that this Son of God has died for each of us: *Christ died for all.*[12160] The Apostle writes, that when the death of our Saviour was preached to the Gentiles it appeared to them foolishness: *We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness.*[12161]It was neither foolishness nor a lie, but a truth of faith, a truth which, as St. Laurence Justinian says, *makes a God appear to us foolish through love for man.*[12162] O God, if Jesus Christ wished to show his love for his eternal Father, could he give him a more convincing proof than by dying on a cross, as he has died, for each of us? I say more: If a servant had died for us, could we but love him ? But where is our love and gratitude towards Jesus Christ? Let us at least frequently remember what our Redeemer has done and suffered for us. They who frequently remember his Passion give great pleasure to Jesus Christ. If a people submitted to insults, wounds, and imprisonment for the sake of a friend, how great should his gratification be at hearing that the friend frequently remembered and thought of his sufferings. Ah! the soul that frequently thinks on the Passion of Jesus Christ, and on the love that that enamoured God has shown us in his pains and humiliations, cannot but feel herself chained to his love: *The charity of Christ presseth us.*[12163]

But if all should burn with love for Jesus Christ, we priests should love him with a special love; for Jesus Christ has died in a special manner to make us priests: for, as has been said in Chapter I., without the death of Jesus Christ we should not have the holy and immaculate victim that we now offer to God. Justly, then, has St. Ambrose said: “Although Christ has suffered for all, he has especially suffered for us. But he that receives more, owes more. Let us render love to him for the blood that he has shed for us.”[12164]

Let us endeavor to understand the love that Jesus Christ has shown us in his Passion, and we shall certainly renounce the love of creatures, “ *Oh, if you knew the mystery of the cross!”*[12165] said the Apostle St. Andrew to the tyrant who tempted him to deny Jesus Christ. As if he said, O tyrant! if you knew the love that your God has for you, and his desire for your salvation, you would certainly cease to tempt me, and through gratitude for so much love, you would devote yourself to his love. Happy, then, the man who keeps constantly before his eyes the wounds of Jesus Christ! *You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviours fountains.*[12166] Oh, what waters of devotion, what lights and affections, do the saints draw from these fountains of salvation! Father Alvarez used to say, that the ignorance of the riches that we have in Jesus Christ is the cause of the ruin of Christians. The learned boast of their science, but the Apostle gloried in nothing but in the knowledge of Jesus Christ crucified: *For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*[12167]

Of what advantage are all sciences to him who knows not how to love Jesus Christ ? *And if . . . I should know . . . all science,* said the same Apostle, *and have not charity, I am nothing.*[12168] In another place he said that to gain Jesus Christ he esteemed all things as dung: *I count all things to be but loss, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ.*[12169] Hence he gloried in calling himself the prisoner of Jesus Christ: *I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ.*[12170]

Oh, happy the priest who, bound by these holy chains, gives himself entirely to Jesus Christ! God loves a soul that gives herself entirely to him, more than he does a hundred imperfect souls. If a prince had a hundred servants, ninety-nine of whom served him with little affection, always giving him some displeasure, and had one that served him through pure love, always seeking to please him to the utmost of his power, surely the prince would love that faithful servant more than all the others: *There are young maidens without number. One is my dove, my perfect one.*[12171]The Lord loves the soul that serves him perfectly, as if he had no other to love but her. St. Bernard says: “ *Learn from Christ how to love Christ.”*[12172] From his birth Jesus Christ has given himself entirely to us: *For a Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us.*[12173]

And he has given himself through love*: Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.*[12174] It is just, then, that we also through love give ourselves entirely to Jesus Christ. He, says St. John Chrysostom, has given himself without reserve to you, bestowing upon you his blood, his life, his merits.[12175] It is but just that you, too, give yourself without reserve to Jesus Christ, says St. Bernard.[12176] But if this holds for all, it applies in a special manner to priests. Hence, addressing particularly the priests of his Order, St. Francis of Assisi, knowing the special obligation of a priest to belong entirely to Jesus Christ, said: “ Keep nothing back of yourselves, so that he who offers himself entirely may also receive you.”[12177] The Redeemer has died for all, that each may live no longer to himself, but only to that God who has given his life for him: *Christ died for all; that they also, who live, may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them:*[12178] Oh that each of us would continually say to God with St. Augustine: “ May I die to myself that I may live only for Thee!”[12179] But to belong entirely to God, we must give him our whole, .undivided love, says

St. Augustine.[12180] He cannot belong entirely to God who loves anything which is not God, or loves it not for God, continues St. Augustine. “ Let your soul,” cries out St. Bernard, “be one, that you may serve God alone.”[12181]

Ah! redeemed soul, divide not your love among creatures; keep yourself alone for that God who alone merits all your love. It was this that Blessed Egidius meant by the words una, uni, that is, the one soul which we have, we ought not to divide, but give entirely to that one God whose love for us exceeds the love of all others, and whose claims to our love surpass the claims of all.

II. MEANS TO BE EMPLOYED FOR BELONGING ENTIRELY TO GOD

1. DESIRE FOR PERFECTION

Let us now see what a priest must do in order to belong entirely to God. *First of all, he must have a great desire of sanctity: For the beginning of her is the most true desire of discipline.*[12182] Holy desires are the wings with which souls fly to God: *But the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forward, and increaseth even to perfect day.*[12183] The way of the just is like the light of the sun, which from his rising increases as he advances in his course; but, on the other hand, the light of sinners, like that of the evening, constantly grows more dim, until it is entirely lost, so that the miserable beings no longer see where they are going: *The way of the wicked is darksome; they know not where they fall.*[12184]Miserable, then, the man who is content with his conduct, and seeks not to advance. “ *Not to advance is to go backward,”*[12185] says St. Augustine. And St. Gregory has said,[12186] he who remains in a river without making an effort to make way against the current, shall be carried back by it.

Hence St. Bernard said to a tepid soul, “ *You do not wish to advance. You will then go backward.”*[12187] Are you unwilling to advance? Then you wish to go backward. You perhaps will answer: I wish to remain as I am, neither better nor worse. But this is impossible. “This,” adds the saint, “ is what cannot be done.”[12188] This cannot be, since Job has said, that man never continueth in the same state.[12189] To win the prize that is, the eternal crown, we must run till we obtain it: *So run that you may obtain.*[12190] He who ceases to run, shall lose all his labor and the crown of glory.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice.[12191] For, as the divine mother said, God fills with his graces the souls that desire to become saints. *He hath filled the hungry with good things*. Mark the words, *the hungry, those that hunger.*[12192] But to become a saint, a simple desire is not enough: a strong desire, and a certain hunger after sanctity, are necessary. As flame runs through a dry reed, so they who have this blessed hunger do not walk, but run in the way of virtue. *The just shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds.*[12193]Who, then, shall become a saint ? He who wishes to become one: *If thou wilt be perfect, go, etc.*[12194] But he must wish for sanctity with true humility.

The tepid Christian, as the Wise Man says, also wills, but not with a sincere will. He desires, and always desires, but his desires bring him to destruction; for he feeds on them, and in the mean time goes from bad to worse*: The sluggard willeth and willeth not.*[12195] *Desires kill the slothful.*[12196]Wisdom, that is sanctity, is easily found by them who seek it: *It is found by them that seek her.*[12197]But to find sanctity it is not enough to desire it; we must desire it with a determined will to attain it: *If you seek, seek.*[12198]says Isaias. He who desires sanctity with a resolute will of acquiring it, easily attains it. *“ Not with the feet of the body,”* says St. Bernard, *“but with the desires of the soul; is God sought.”*[12199] And St. Teresa has written: *“Let our thoughts be great; from great thoughts our advancement shall come. Our desires must not be low and grovelling, but we must trust in God; that, gradually doing violence to ourselves, we shall, with the divine grace, arrive at the sanctity which the saints have attained.”*[12200]

Open thy mouth wide, says the Lord, and I will fill it.[12201]A mother cannot give suck to an infant if it open not its mouth to take the milk. Open thy mouth wide; that is, says St. Athanasius, “Increase thy desires.”[12202] By holy desires the saints have arrived at perfection in a short time: *Being made perfect in a short time, he fulfilled a long time.*[12203]This was verified particularly in St. Aloysius Gonzaga, who in a few years attained such sublime sanctity, that to St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, who saw him in bliss, it appeared that his glory was scarcely surpassed by that of any of the saints. And she was told that he attained to such glory by the ardor with which he desired, during life, to love God as much as he deserved to be loved.

Desires, says St. Laurence Justinian, *give strength to the soul, and render labor light.*[12204] Hence the saint adds, *that he who has an ardent desire of victory has already conquered.*[12205] St. Augustine has said: *"For him that labors, the road is narrow; for him that loves, it is wide."*[12206] To him who has but little love for sanctity, the way is narrow and difficult to be trodden; but he who ardently loves perfection, finds the way broad, and walks in it without labor. The broadness, then, of the way is found not in the way, but in the heart; that is, in a determined will to please God: *I have run the way of Thy commandments , when Thou didst enlarge my heart.*[12207] Blosius says *that the Lord is not less pleased by holy desires than by ardent love.*[12208]

He that has not the desire of becoming a saint, let him at least ask it of God, and God will give it to him. And let us be persuaded that to become a saint is not difficult to him who desires it. In the world it is difficult for a vassal to obtain the friendship of his sovereign, however ardently he may desire it, but, said the courtier of the emperor mentioned by St. Augustine, to obtain the friendship of God it is enough to wish for it: " Behold, if I wish I am instantly his friend!"[12209]

And St. Bernard has written *that a man cannot have a greater proof of being the friend of God, and of enjoying his grace, than when he desires greater grace in order to please God.*[12210] And, adds the saint, it matters not that he should have been a sinner, for " God attends not to what a man has done, but to what he wishes to be."[12211]

2. THE INTENTION OF PLEASING GOD IN ALL THINGS

Secondly, the priest who wishes to be a saint, must do all his actions for the sole purpose of pleasing God. All his words, thoughts, desires, and actions must be an exercise of divine love. The spouse in the Canticles assumed at one time the character of a fowler; at another, of a warrior; now a gardener; again, a cultivator of the vine; but in all these occupations she presented the appearance of a lover, because she did all for the love of her spouse. So, in like manner, all the words, thoughts, sufferings, actions, of a priest, whether he says Mass or hears confessions, or preaches, or meditates, or assists the dying, or mortifies the flesh, or whatever else he does, should all proceed from the same love; for he ought to do all in order to please God.

Jesus Christ has said: If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome.[12212] By the eye the holy Fathers have understood the intention. Then, says St. Augustine, " The intention makes the work good."[12213] The Lord said to Samuel: Man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart.[12214] Men are satisfied with the works that they see, but God, who beholds the heart, is not content with any work unless he sees it performed with a view to please himself.

I will offer up to Thee holocausts full of marrow.[12215] says David. Works performed without the proper intention, are victims without marrow, which God rejects. In the oblations made to him he regards not the value of the offering, but the affection with which it is presented. " *God,"* says Salvian, *" looks not so much at the value of the offering as at the disposition with which it is offered."*[12216] Of our Saviour it was justly said: He hath done all things well.[12217] For in all his actions he sought only the pleasure of his eternal Father: *I seek not my own will, but the will of Him that sent me.*[12218] But, alas! only few of our works are perfectly pleasing to God; because few are done without some desire of our own glory. " It is rare," says St. Jerome, " to find a faithful soul that never acts out of vain-glory."[12219]How many priests on the day of judgment shall say to Jesus Christ: *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied, and cast out devils in Thy name, and done many miracles in Thy name ?*[12220] Lord, we have preached, we have celebrated Masses, we have heard confessions, we have converted souls, we have assisted the dying. The Lord shall answer: *I never knew you : depart from Me, you that work iniquity.*[12221] He shall say: Begone, I have never known you as my ministers, for you have not labored for me, but for your own glory or interest.

Hence Jesus Christ exhorts us to conceal the works which we perform: Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth.[12222] The Son of God tells us to conceal our works, that, as St. Augustine remarks, what we do for God may not be afterwards lost through vanity.[12223] God abominates rapine in the holocaust: I the Lord . . . hate robbery in a holocaust.[12224] By rapine is meant precisely the seeking of our own glory, or of self-interest in the works of God. He who truly loves, says St. Bernard, merits a reward, but does not seek it: the only recompense that he demands is to please the God whom he loves.[12225] In a word, as the same saint says in another place, " True love is content with itself;"[12226] that is, with being love, and demands nothing more. The marks by which a priest may know whether he acts with a pure intention are the following:

1. If he loves works that are attended with greater inconvenience and less glory.

2. If he preserves peace when he has not attained the object that he proposed. He who works for God has already attained his end, which is to please God; and, on the other hand, he who is disturbed when he fails in the attainment of his object shows that he has not labored solely for God.

3. If he rejoices in the good done by others as if it had been done by himself, and entertains no jealousy when others engage in the works that he performs, but desires to see all laboring to give glory to God, and says with Moses: Oh that all the people might prophesy[12227]

The days of the priest who performs all his actions for God are full days: *And full days shall be found in them.*[12228] But of them who act for a selfish end, it is said that they do not reach even the half of their days: *Deceitful men shall not live out half their days.*[12229] Hence St. Eucherius of Lyons has written, *that we ought to consider ourselves to have lived only on the day on which we have denied our own will.*[12230] Seneca says that he who makes us a small present through love, imposes on us a greater obligation than another who bestows great favors upon us through a motive of self-interest.[12231] Certainly the Lord is more pleased by a trifling act performed in order to do his will, than by the most splendid works done for our own satisfaction. Of the poor widow who gave two mites in the temple, Jesus Christ said that she gave more than all the others: This poor widow hath cast in more than all.[12232]On this passage St. Cyprian says: " The Lord does not regard how much is given, but with what sentiments it is given."[12233] The Lord regarded not the sum, but the affection with which it was given. The Abbot Pambo, seeing a woman decked out in costly ornaments, began to weep. Being asked the cause of his tears, he said: " O God! how much more does this woman do to please men than I do to please God !"

In the Life of St. Louis, king of France, it is related that a Father of the Order of St. Dominic, who was going to court, asked a woman whom he saw with a lighted torch in one hand and a vessel of water in the other, why she carried these things; she answered: With this torch I wish to burn heaven, and with this water I desire to extinguish hell, that God may be loved solely because he deserves all love. Oh, happy the priest who labors only to please God! He who seeks only to please God imitates the souls in heaven, who, as the angelic Doctor says, “ *wish that He rather than themselves should be happy.”*[12234] They rejoice more in the felicity of God than in their own happiness, because they love him more than themselves.

3. PATIENCE IN PAINS AND HUMILIATIONS

Thirdly, the priest who wishes to be holy must be ready to suffer in peace for God all things poverty, dishonor, infirmity, and death. The Apostle says: *You bear God in your body?*[12235] In his comment on this text, Gilbert says*: “Jesus Christ wishes to be carried by us in peace and joy. He who carries him with tediousness or complaint, carries not, but drags him by force.”*[12236] The love that a soul bears—to God is shown in embracing not delights, but insults and sufferings. This we learn from the words of our Redeemer when he went to meet the soldiers who came to capture him, in order to put him to death: *But that the world may know that I love the Father. . . . Arise, let us go hence.*[12237]

Hence the saints in imitation of Jesus Christ, have gone with joy to embrace torments and death. St. Joseph of Leonessa, a capuchin, was once obliged to undergo a painful operation. When some peoples present spoke of binding him with cords, he took the crucifix into his hands and said: “What cords! what cords!” My Lord, who was nailed to the cross for my sake, binds me sufficiently to endure all pain for the love of him. Thus he bore the incision without complaint. St. Teresa said: “*Who is there that can behold his Lord covered with wounds, and persecuted by enemies, without being willing to embrace and desirous of suffering every tribulation?”*[12238] St. Bernard writes: *“To him who loves his crucified God, insults and pains are very acceptable.”*[12239]

The Apostle says that in patience particularly we priests should make ourselves known as the ministers of Jesus Christ: *Let us exhibit ourselves as* *the ministers of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, . . . in labours.*[12240] Thomas a Kempis has written: *“When the Day of Judgment cometh, it will not be asked of us what we have read, but what we have done.”*[12241] Many men of learning are acquainted with many things, but know not how to bear anything for God; and what is worse, they are incapable of understanding the great fault which they commit by their impatience. *Who have eyes, and see not,*[12242] says the Prophet Jeremias.

What does learning profit the man who has not charity? says St. Paul. *And if . . . I should know all mysteries and all knowledge, . . . and have not charity, I am nothing.*[12243] But, as the same Apostle has observed, *Charity beareth all things.*[12244]He who wishes to become a saint must suffer persecution. *All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*[12245] And before him our Saviour said : *If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.*[12246] The life of a saint cannot, says St. Hilary, be a life of quiet and tranquillity: it must be often disturbed by contradictions and tried by patience.[12247] The Lord chastises those whom he accepts for his children: *For whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth: and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.*[12248] *Such as I love I rebuke and chastise.*[12249] And why ? Because patience tries the love and perfect fidelity of a soul: *Patience hath a perfect work.*[12250] It was this that the Archangel Raphæl meant to say to holy Tobias: *Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee.*[12251] Sometimes we shall be reproved for a fault which we have not committed; but *“what matter?”* says St. Augustine; *“we ought to accept the reproof in atonement for other sins to which we have consented.”*[12252]

Let us attend to the words of holy Judith, who says that in this life chastisements come from God, not for our destruction, but that we may amend, and thus escape eternal vengeance : *They have happened for our amendment, and not for our destruction.*[12253] If, then, on account of past sins, we find ourselves debtors to the divine justice, we should not only accept with patience the tribulations that befall us, but should also pray with St. Augustine: “ *Here burn, here cut, here do not spare, that Thou mayest spare us in eternity.”*[12254]

Job said: *If we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?*[12255] He said this because he well knew that we gain far more by patiently accepting the evils, that is, the tribulations of this life, than we do by temporal blessings. But whether we will or not, we must suffer the miseries of this life: he who bears them with patience merits heaven, but he who is impatient under them also suffers from them, but lays up merits for hell, says St. Augustine.[12256]Speaking of the good and the wicked thief, the same saint says: *“The cross united them; the manner of carrying the cross separated them.”*[12257] Both suffered death, but one of them, because he accepted it with patience, was saved; the other, because he blasphemed in his suffering, was lost. St. John the Apostle saw that the saints who were in the enjoyment of the beatific vision came not from the delights of the earth, but from tribulations: *These are they who are come out of great tribulation; . . . therefore they are before the throne of God.*[12258]

4. CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

Fourthly and lastly, he who wishes to be a saint must wish only what God wishes. All our good consists in uniting ourselves to the will of God: And life in His good-will[12259] St. Teresa says: *“All that he who practises mental prayer should seek, is to conform his will to the divine will; let him be assured that in this consists the highest perfection.”*[12260] All that the Lord demands of us is, that we give him our heart; that is, our will: *My son, give Me thy heart.*[12261] St. Anselm says that *God asks and, as it were, begs our heart; and when cast off, he does not depart, but repeats his petitions*[12262]

The most acceptable offering, then, that we can present to God is the oblation of our will, saying with the Apostle: *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ?*[12263] Hence St. Augustine has written: “We can do nothing more pleasing than to say to him, Do Thou possess us.” The Lord said that he had found in David a man according to his own heart. And why? Because David fulfilled all his divine wills: *I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man according to my own heart.*[12264]Let us endeavor to say always with David: *Teach me to do Thy will.*[12265] Lord, teach me to do nothing but what Thou wiliest.[12266]

Hence we must frequently offer ourselves to God, saying with the same holy prophet: My heart is ready, O God! my heart is ready.[12267] But we must remember that our merit consists in embracing the divine will, not so much in things that are pleasing to us, as in those that are opposed to self-love. In these we show the strength of the love we bear to God. The Venerable John d'Avila used to say, that a single Blessed be God, in things that are opposed to our inclination, is of greater value than six thousand acts of thanksgiving in what is agreeable to us. And here it is necessary to understand that all that befalls us happens through the will of God, says St. Augustine.[12268] This is the meaning of the words of Ecclesiasticus: *Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God.*[12269] Thus when a people offends us, God wills not his sin, but he wills that we bear with the insult. When our reputation or property is taken away, we must say with holy Job: *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord so is it done!*[12270]

He who loves the will of God enjoys continual peace even in this life. Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart, said David.[12271] Our heart, which has been created for an infinite good, cannot be satisfied by all creatures which are finite; and therefore, though it should possess all goods but God, the heart is not content; it always seeks after new enjoyments: but when it finds God, it possesses all things he satisfies all its demands.

Hence our Lord said to the Samaritan woman: *He that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever.*[12272]And in another place he said: *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill.*[12273]Hence he who loves God is not afflicted at anything that happens: *Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad.*[12274] For the just man knows that whatever occurs, happens to him by the will of God. *If,* says Salvian, *the saints are humbled, they wish for the humiliation; if they are poor, they rejoice in their poverty; in a word, they wish only what their God wishes, and therefore they enjoy continual peace.*[12275] In afflictions it is lawful to pray to be delivered from them, as Jesus Christ did in the garden: *My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me? But we must also add with the Redeemer: Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*[12276]

It is certain that what God wills is best for us. Father John d'Avila once wrote to a sick priest: " *Friend, think not of what you would do if you were in health, but be content to remain sick as long as it shall please God. If you seek the will of God, is it not as profitable to you to be sick as to be in* *health ?”*[12277] We must be resigned in all things, even in the temptations by which we are impelled to offend God.

The Apostle besought the Lord to deliver him from the many temptations which he suffered against chastity: *There was given me a sting of my flesh. . . . For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me.*[12278] But in answer God said to him: *My grace is sufficient for thee.*[12279]Let us be persuaded that God not only desires, but is also solicitous for our welfare. *The Lord is careful for me.*[12280] Let us, then, abandon ourselves into the hands of God, for he has care of us: *Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you.”*[12281]

Finally, how happy shall be the death of a soul perfectly conformed to the will of God! But he who wishes to die in sentiments of perfect conformity to the divine will must first conform to it in all things during life. Let us, then, in all contradictions and crosses that befall us accustom ourselves to acts of resignation, always repeating with the saints that great prayer which Jesus Christ has taught us: *“Thy will be done; Thy will be done.”*[12282] Or let us repeat the words of the same Saviour: *Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.*[12283] And let us continually offer ourselves to God, saying with the divine Mother: “ *Behold the handmaid of the Lord.”*[12284] Lord, behold your servant, dispose of me, and of all that belongs to me, as you please; I accept all from your hands. St. Teresa used to offer herself fifty times in the day to God. Let us also say to him, with the Apostle: *O Lord, what wilt Thou have me do.*[12285] My God, make known to me what Thou wishest from me, and I will do it.

The saints have done great things in order to accomplish the will of God. Some have fled into the desert, others have shut themselves up in the cloister, and others have suffered torments and death. Let us also who are priests, and are bound by stricter obligations to sanctity, unite ourselves to the divine will; let us become saints; let us not be diffident on account of past sins. “ God does not attend,” says St. Bernard, “ to what man does, but to what he wishes to be.”[12286]A resolute will, with the divine aid, conquers all things.

Let us pray always: he who asks, receives: *For everyone that asketh, receiveth.*[12287] Whatsoever we ask in prayer, we shall obtain: *You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.*[12288] And among all prayers, let the beautiful prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola be always dear to us; let us repeat it continually: *"Grant me only Thy love with Thy grace, O Lord! and I shall be rich enough.* "[12289] Lord, give me your love and your grace, and I desire nothing more. But, like St. Augustine, we must ask this gift of divine love continually and earnestly. The holy Doctor says: *"Hear me, hear me, O my God, my King, my Father, my honor, my salvation, my light, my life, hear, hear me! Thee only do I love, Thee only do I seek. Heal me, and open my eyes. Look upon him who has fled from Thee; long enough have I served Thy enemy. Command that I may be a pure, a perfect lover of Thy wisdom."*[12290]" And in asking the divine graces, I add, with St. Bernard, let us always have recourse to the intercession of Mary, who obtains for her servants whatever she asks from God.[12291]

Instruction XI

Devotion TO MOST HOLY MARY

HIS instruction may serve either for an instruction or for a sermon; but whether it be given in the form of an instruction or of a sermon, the people who gives the spiritual exercises to the priests is entreated not to omit this discourse, which is, perhaps, the most fruitful of all; for without devotion to the divine Mother it is morally impossible for anyone to be a good priest.)

Let us, first, consider the moral necessity of the intercession of Mary for priests; and secondly, the confidence which they ought to have in the prayers of this divine Mother.

I. MORAL NECESSITY OF THE INTERCESSION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

With regard to the necessity of invoking her intercession, it is necessary to know that although the Counil of Trent[12292] has only declared that the invocation of the saints is useful, still St. Thomas has asked the question: “Whether we should ask the saints to pray for us,”[12293]and has answered in the affirmative, saying, that the order of the divine law requires that we mortals be saved through the saints by obtaining, through their prayers, the graces necessary for salvation.

The holy Doctor says: *“Such is, after St. Denis the Areopagite, the order divinely established for the government of kings, that those far off should return to God through the mediation of those that are nearer.”*[12294] *And as the saints in heaven are near God, we who are prisoners in the body and who travel far from God, we cannot, according to the order established, return to our supreme end except through the mediation of the saints.”*[12295]Other authors, particularly the continuator of Tournely and Sylvius, hold the same opinion. He afterwards adds: “ *The natural law prescribes for us the order established by God. Now God wishes that* *inferior creatures in order to reach salvation should implore the help of superior creatures."*[12296]

But if it is a duty to ask the prayers of the saints, how much more strictly are we bound to invoke the intercession of Mary, whose prayers are more efficacious with God than the prayers of all the other saints! St. Thomas says that through the abundant grace which God has given them the saints can save many, but that the Blessed Virgin has merited grace sufficient to save all.[12297] St. Bernard has written that as we have access to the Father through his Son Jesus Christ, so we have access to the Son through the Mother.[12298]

Hence he afterwards said that all the graces that we receive from God come to us through Mary: "God has placed in Mary the plenitude of all gifts.[12299] Acknowledge, then, that all that there is in us of hope, of grace, of salvation, we receive from her who is filled with delights. She is truly a garden of delights, so that from her are sent forth perfumes the most exquisite, that is, gifts and graces of God." ! The saint assigns the following reason for asserting that all the divine graces come to us through the hands of Mary: " It is the will of God to grant us all the graces of which we stand in need."[12300] This maybe also inferred from all the texts of Scripture which the holy Church applies to Mary: He that shall find me shall find life.[12301] In me is all grace of the way and of the truth. . . . They that work by me shall not sin. They that explain me shall have life everlasting."[12302] The words of the holy Church, in the Salve Regina, in which she calls Mary our life and our hope[12303] are sufficient to confirm us all in this doctrine.

Hence St. Bernard exhorts us to have recourse to this divine Mother, with a secure confidence of obtaining the graces that we ask her to procure for us; because the Son knows not how to refuse anything to the Mother.[12304]

Hence the saint afterwards calls Mary the entire ground of his hope: " My children, she is the ladder for sinners; she is the greatest motive of my confidence; she is the only cause of my hope."[12305] He concludes by saying that we should ask all the graces of which we stand in need, through Mary, because she obtains whatever she asks, and her prayers cannot be rejected.[12306] Before him St. Ephrem said the same: " O most sincere Virgin ! only in thee do we repose confidence."[12307] St. Ildephonsus teaches the same doctrine: " All the good decreed by the sublime majesty for the benefit of men, this she has decreed to be conveyed to them through the hands of Mary; for to thee, O Mary ! has been intrusted treasures and ornaments of grace."[12308] The same is held by St. Peter Damian: " In thy hands are all the treasures of divine mercies."[12309] St. Bernardine of Sienna says: "Thou art the dispenser of all graces; our salvation rests in thy hands. "[12310] This, too, was the doctrine of St. John Damascene, of St. Germanus, of St. Anselm, of St. Antonine, of Idiota, and of so many other learned authors, such as Segneri, Pacciuchelli, Crasset, Vega, Mendoza, and Natalis Alexander, who says: "He [God] wishes that we should receive all the good that we wish from him through the mediation of his powerful Mother, by invoking her as we should."[12311]

Father Contenson has also held this opinion. Explaining the words of Jesus Christ on the cross to St. John, he says: "Behold thy Mother. As if he said: No one will participate in my blood except through the mediation of my Mother. My wounds are the fountains of all graces, but these fountains flow only through Mary upon you. O my disciple John, as much as you love her, so much shalt thou be loved by me."

And if, on account of the moral necessity of Mary's intercession for all, every Christian ought to be devoted to the Mother of God, how much more should priests, who are bound by greater obligations, and stand in need of greater graces for salvation, practise devotion in her honor[12312]We priests should remain always at the feet of Mary, asking the aid of her prayers. St. Francis Borgia had great doubts about the salvation of those that have not a special devotion to Mary; because, according to St. Antonine, he who expects graces from God without the intercession of Mary attempts to fly without wings.[12313] St. Anselm has gone so far as to say: " It is impossible to be saved if we turn away from thee, O Mary."[12314] St. Bonaventure has said the same: " He that neglects her will die in his sins. "[12315] Blessed Albertus Magnus says: The people that do not serve thee will perish."[12316]

And speaking of Mary, Richard of St. Laurence says: "All those whom this ship does not receive are lost in the sea of this world."[12317] But, on the other hand, he who is faithful in the service of Mary will be certainly saved. " O Mother of God," says St. John Damascene, " if I put my confidence in you I shall be saved. If I am under your protection I have nothing to fear;

for to be devoted to you is to have certain arms of salvation which God gives only to those whose salvation he wills in a special manner”[12318]

II. CONFIDENCE THAT WE SHOULD HAVE IN THE INTERCESSION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

Let us now pass to the confidence which we ought to have in the intercession of Mary, on account of her power and mercy.

I. As to her power. Cosmas of Jerusalem has called the intercession of our Queen not only powerful, but omnipotent.[12319] And Richard of St. Laurence has written: “ From the omnipotent Son the Mother was made omnipotent.”[12320] The Son is omnipotent by nature, the Mother by grace, inasmuch as she obtains from God whatsoever she asks. That this grace has been given to Mary we may infer from two reasons: first, because of all creatures Mary has been the most faithful, and the greatest lover of God. Hence, as Suarez says, the Lord loves Mary more than all the other saints and all the angels together.

St. Bridget heard our Lord one day saying to his Mother: “Mother, ask what thou desirest of Me; for thy petition cannot be in vain. . . .” Then he added: “ For since on earth thou didst deny Me nothing, I will not deny thee anything in heaven.”[12321] The second reason is, that Mary is a mother: hence St. Antonine has said, that her prayers partake of the nature of a command, because they are the prayers of a mother.[12322] St. John Damascene says: “ O Lady, thou hast all power to save sinners; thou needest no other recommendation to God, since thou art his mother.”[12323] And St. George of Nicomedia has written, that Jesus Christ, in order to discharge the obligations that he owed in a certain manner to Mary for having given him his human nature, grants whatever she asks from him.[12324] Hence St. Peter Damian has gone so far as to say, that when Mary goes to Jesus to ask a favor for any of her clients “ she approaches the altar of human reconciliation; not asking, but commanding, not as a servant, but as a mistress; for the Son honors her by not refusing her anything.”[12325] From the time that Mary was on this earth she had the privilege of having all her prayers heard by her Son. Speaking of Mary’s request[12326] to Jesus to provide wine when it failed at the marriage of Cana in Galilee, St. John Chrysostom says, that though the Redeemer appeared to refuse the favor, saying: Woman, what is to Me and to thee ? My hour has not yet come.[12327] still he granted the petition of his mother.[12328]

The prayers of Mary, says St. Germanus, obtain great graces for the most abandoned sinners, because they are prayers accompanied with the authority of a mother.[12329] In a word, there is no one, however wicked, whom Mary does not save by her intercession when she wishes. Hence St. George, Archbishop of Nicomedia, says, O great Mother of God: " Thou hast insuperable strength, since the multitude of our sins does not outweigh thy clemency. Nothing resists thy power, for the Creator regards thy honor as his own."[12330] To thee, then, O my Queen, says St. Peter Damian, nothing is impossible, since thou canst succor and save even those that are in despair.[12331]

II. But if Mary is powerful, and able to save us by her intercession, she is equally merciful, and willing to obtain our salvation: "Neither the power nor the will is wanting to her,"[12332] says St. Bernard. She is called the Mother of Mercy, because her compassion for us makes her love and assist us as a mother assists a sick child. The love of all mothers together, according to Father Nieremberg,[12333] is not equal to the love which Mary bears a client that recommends himself to her.

Hence she is compared to a fair olive tree: *As a fair olive tree in the plains.*[12334] " In the plains," says Cardinal Hugo, " that all may look upon her, that all may have recourse to her."[12335] As the olive gives oil, the symbol of mercy, to him who possesses it, so Mary pours her mercies on all who have recourse to her.

Blessed Amedeus has written, that our Queen is continually praying for us in heaven.[12336] And before him Venerable Bede said: "Mary stands before her Son and does not cease to pray for sinners."[12337] St. Bernard asks, What else but mercy can flow from the fountain of mercy?[12338] St. Bridget once heard our Saviour saying to Mary: "Mother, ask what you wish of me."[12339] Mary answered: "I ask mercy for the miserable."[12340] As if she said: Son, since you have made me the Mother of Mercy, what will I ask of you ? Nothing else than mercy for miserable sinners. The great charity, says St. Bernard, that reigns in the heart of Mary for all, obliges her to open to all the bosom of mercy.[12341]

St. Bonaventure says that, looking at Mary, he appeared no longer to behold the divine justice that terrified him, but only the divine mercy that God has placed in the hands of Mary, that she may assist the miserable.[12342] And St. Leo has said that Mary is so full of mercy that she is called mercy itself.[12343] And who after Jesus, exclaims St. Germanus, is so solicitous for our welfare as thou, O Mother of Mercy?[12344] Speaking of Mary, St. Augustine says: “We acknowledge that one, namely, that thou alone, takest care of us in heaven.”[12345]. As if he said: O Mother of God, it is true that all the saints love our salvation, but thy charity, in assisting us from heaven, with so much love, and heaping on us so many graces, which thou continually obtainest for us, compels us to confess, that it is thou alone who truly loves us, and anxiously seeks our welfare. St. Germanus adds: “Her defence of us is never satisfied.”[12346] Mary prays incessantly for us; she repeats her prayers, and is never tired praying in our defence. Bernardine De Bustis says that Mary is more desirous of dispensing graces to us than we are of receiving them.[12347]The same author says that as the devil, according to St. Peter, goes about seeking whom he may devour,[12348] so Mary goes about seeking whom she may save.[12349]ho, I ask, receives grace from Mary? he who wishes for them. A holy soul used to say, to obtain graces through Mary it is enough to ask them. And St. Ildephonsus has written, that we ought to ask nothing of Mary but to pray for us; for by her prayers she will obtain for us greater graces than we could ask.[12350] How, then, does it happen that there are many who do not receive graces through the prayers of Mary? Because they do not wish for them. He who is attached to any passion, to self-interest, to ambition, to an inordinate affection, does not wish for grace to be delivered from it, and therefore he does not ask it: had he asked it of Mary, she would certainly have obtained it for him. But miserable and unhappy the man, said the Holy Virgin to St. Bridget, who, having it in his power to have recourse to me in this life, shall, through his own fault remain miserably in his sins and in the state of perdition.[12351] A time shall come when he would wish, but will not be able, to have recourse to her.

Ah ! let us not expose ourselves to this great danger. Let us always have recourse to this divine Mother, who knows not how to let anyone who invokes her aid depart without consolation, says Blosius.[12352] Mary is always ready, as Richard of St. Laurence says, to assist those who ask her prayers.[12353]

According to Richard of St. Victor, Mary's tenderness prevents our supplications, and procures aid for us before we pray to her. Because, adds the same author, Mary is so full of mercy that she cannot see our miseries without coming to our relief.[12354] And who, exclaims Innocent III., has ever had recourse to Mary without being heard?[12355] Who, says Blessed Eutichianus, has ever sought her aid and has been abandoned by her?[12356] St. Bernard has written: "O holy Virgin, if a man has been ever found who, after invoking your aid, remembers not to have obtained relief, I am satisfied that he should cease to praise your mercy.[12357] No: such a case has never occurred, and never shall occur; for, says St. Bonaventure, Mary cannot but pity and relieve the miserable.[12358]Hence the saint has said, that this Mother of mercy, who so ardently desires to assist us and to see us saved, is offended not only by those who do her a positive injury, but also by those who neglect to ask favors from her.[12359] Let us then have recourse to Mary; and in seeing that our sins render us unworthy to be heard, let us not distrust her clemency. Our Lord revealed to St. Bridget that Mary would have saved Lucifer by her intercession had that haughty demon humbled himself and had recourse to her.[12360]

And the Virgin herself said to the same St. Bridget, that when a sinner casts himself at her feet she regards not his sins, but the intention with which he comes. If he comes with a determination to change his life, she heals and saves him.[12361]Hence St. Bonaventure called Mary the salvation of them who invoke her.[12362] He that has recourse to Mary shall be saved.

III. PRACTICE OF DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

I repeat, then, let us always have recourse to this great Mother of God, imploring her to protect us. But the better to gain her protection, let us endeavor to perform in her honor as many pious exercises as we can. That ardently devoted servant of Mary, Brother John Berchmans, of the Society of Jesus, being asked at death by his companions what they should do in order to obtain the favor of Mary, said: *"However little it may be, provided it be done with perseverance."*[12363] Every little act of devotion is sufficient to secure the patronage of this divine Mother. She is content with any little exercise, provided it be constant; for, as St. Andrew of Crete says, she is so liberal that she is accustomed to reward the smallest homage by obtaining abundant graces.[12364]

But we should not be content with small things: let us at least offer her all the acts of devotion which her clients ordinarily perform in her honor; such as, to recite the Rosary every day, to perform the Novenas of her festivals, to fast on Saturday, to wear the Scapular, to visit some image every day in her honor, asking her to obtain some special grace, to read each day a book that treats of her praises, to salute her in leaving and returning home; rising in the morning and going to bed at night, to put ourselves under her protection, by saying three " Hail Mary's" in honor of her purity. Even seculars practise these devotions; but we priests can honor her much more by preaching her glories, and by inculcating to others the advantages of being devoted to her: *They that explain Me shall have life everlasting.*[12365]She promises eternal life to him who endeavors in this life to make others know and love her. Blessed Edminco, Bishop, began every sermon by the praises of Mary. This was so pleasing to the divine Mother, that she one day said to St. Bridget: " *Tell that prelate that I will be a mother to him, and that at death I will present his soul to my Son."*[12366] Oh, what pleasure would a priest give to Mary, if every Saturday he made a short discourse to the people on devotion to her, and especially on her tender compassion for us, and her desire to assist all who pray to her ! For, as St. Bernard says, it is the mercy of Mary that inspires in the people the greatest affection for her devotion. Let preachers at least endeavor in every sermon, before the conclusion, to exhort the hearers to have recourse to most holy Mary, and to ask some favor from her. In a word, Richard of St. Laurence says that he who honors Mary acquires treasures of eternal life.[12367] For this purpose I published some years since a book entitled the Glories of Mary, and I endeavored to enrich it with authorities from Scriptures and the holy Fathers, with examples and devout practices, not only that it might be useful to all as a book for spiritual reading, but particularly that it might supply priests with abundant matter for preaching the praises of Mary, and inspiring the people with devotion to her.

Appendix

St. Alphonsus himself has added, as an appendix to his Collection of Materials for Ecclesiastical Retreats, the three following little works: RULE OF LIFE, SPIRITUAL RULES, and SPIRITUAL MAXIMS. To them we have added an EXHORTATION TO YOUNG MEN WHO ARE DEVOTING THEMSELVES TO THE STUDY OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL SCIENCES. EDITOR.

RULE OF LIFE FOR A SECULAR PRIEST

I. MORNING EXERCISES

1. THE FIRST ACTS ON RISING

IN the morning on rising the priest shall make acts of thanksgiving, of love, and of oblation of all that he is to do and to suffer during the day. He shall finish by a prayer to God and to the Blessed Virgin, in order to obtain the grace of not falling into sin.

These acts may be thus formulated:[12368]

O my God ! prostrate in Thy presence, I adore Thy infinite Majesty, and I submit myself entirely to Thee.

I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, and I love Thee with my whole heart.

I thank Thee for all Thy benefits, and especially for having preserved me during this night.

I offer Thee all my thoughts, words, actions, and sufferings of this day in union with those of Jesus and of Mary.

I intend to gain all the indulgences that I can gain, and to apply them to the souls in purgatory.

O my God ! for the love of Jesus Christ, deliver me from every sin. O my Jesus ! by Thy merits make me lieited to Thee. Mary, my Mother, bless me, and protect me under thy mantle. My holy guardian angel, and all holy patrons, intercede for me. Amen.

Here *recite the “ Hail Mary” three times in honor of the purity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

2. MENTAL PRAYER

The priest shall begin the day by a half-hours meditation on the eternal truths, or on the Passion of Jesus Christ. Meditation on the Passion of our Lord is more especially suitable to a priest before celebrating Mass, since he is about to renew at the altar the memory of it by offering to God the same victim and the same sacrifice. During meditation, after having read the subject, he should endeavor to make acts of sorrow and of love, and frequently offer to God prayers in order to obtain perseverance in his grace and his divine love. Let him guard against abandoning meditation, however great the disgust and the pain he may experience during it; if he abandons the practice of meditation, he will be exposed to the greatest danger of losing God. Even when he is able to say only these words: O my God, help me ! O my Jesus, mercy ! his meditation will be excellent, and will profit him much. In order to be more recollected in meditation, let him shut himself up in some place where he may find himself alone with the crucifix. For this purpose he shall endeavor to have a separate room; and if he cannot have it, let him go to the church to make his meditation there rather than make *it at home amid the noise made by peoples who pass in and out, and who talk.*[12369]

3. THE HOLY MASS

After meditation, he shall recite the Little Hours as far as None; then he shall celebrate Mass. In order to say Mass with greater recollection, it would be expedient, if there be no obstacle, to say Mass before all other occupations of the day. Besides the meditation one should not fail to make a short preparation for Mass by reanimating ones faith in the great mystery that one is about to celebrate; one should make at least three acts: of love, of contrition, and of desire to be united to Jesus Christ.

After Mass one should not omit to make thanksgiving, of an hour or at least of half an hour, by applying ones self during that time to the making of acts of love, of the offering of one s self, and of petition. The time that follows Mass is a time for amassing treasures of grace. When one is in a state of interior dryness, not knowing what to do with one s self, one may at least read out of some book pious affections to Jesus Christ.

4. CONFESSIONS AND STUDY

After having made his thanksgiving,[12370] the priest shall go to the confessional if he is a confessor. It must here be observed that on days on which there is a great concourse of people, as on festivals, he may shorten his thanksgiving in order to hear confessions; but this only holds good for similar cases that are rare. Usually the confessor should not omit his thanksgiving after Mass in order that penitents may not be obliged to wait for him. However, when there come to confession men that are not accustomed to frequent the sacraments, it will be better if he hears them before Mass; because such peoples have not the patience to wait; and if they do not confess on that day, God knows when they will confess. As for the priest who is not a confessor, he shall retire in order to attend to his studies. He should occupy himself in the study of Moral Theology, so as to become capable of administering the sacrament of penance, in the composition of sermons, or in similar things that *may serve for his own instruction or for the good of* souls.

REMARK IN REGARD TO THE ORDER OF THE EXERCISES

It must here be observed that we do not ask that all the exercises of which this Rule speaks should be performed in the order in which they are here mentioned. Provided that they are performed in the course of the day, it is sufficient; it matters little whether one takes place before the other according to ones convenience. Thus, for example, in winter, when the days are longer, one may, after meditation and the Office, study for an hour or two. For the rest, a priest that wishes to lead a life worthy of his state should fix the time and the hour of all his exercises so that everything may be done in a regular order. Let him not act as some who follow no order in all that they do. The life that is without a rule is an image of hell, which is described by Job: *A land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth.*[12371]

DINNER

The hour of dinner having come, he shall eat moderately, as is becoming a priest: he should not imitate certain gluttonous priests who wish that the whole house should busy itself about preparing different kinds of food which they ordered in the morning, and when at dinner they do not find the food to be according to their taste, they grow angry, and excite a commotion among their servants and relatives. St. Philip Neri says: “He that seeks to gratify his palate will never become a saint.” And if the priest should be temperate in eating, he should be particularly so in the use of wine, the excess of which is most pernicious to virtue, especially to the virtue of chastity.

On Saturdays, let him endeavor, in honor of the Blessed Virgin, to keep at least the common fast, if he thinks that he cannot fast on bread and water; let him, however, be content on that day with one course. Moreover, on some other days of the week, as on Wednesday and Friday, as also in all the Novenas of our Lady, let him at least deprive himself of something at table.

II. EXERCISES AFTER DINNER

1. SPIRITUAL READING

After the needed rest, the priest shall recite Vespers and Compline, and shall afterwards make a half-hours spiritual reading. For the spiritual reading he may use the Knowledge and Love of Jesus Christ by Father St. Jure, or Christian Perfection by Father Rodriguez, books that are filled with piety and unction. He may also read other works;[12372] but let him, above all, read the lives of the saints, as the life of St. Philip Neri, of St. Francis Borgia, of St. Peter of Alcantara, and the like. In the books that treat of spirituality we see virtues in theory, while in the lives of the saints we see them in practice; and this will stimulate us more efficaciously to imitate the saints. St. Philip Neri never ceased to exhort his penitents to read the lives of the saints. How many saints, such as St. John Colombini, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Teresa, have been induced by the reading of such books to *consecrate themselves entirely to God !*

2. THE VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

After the spiritual reading he shall pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Many of the faithful are very exact in performing this exercise every day, and never omit doing so, no matter how they may be inconvenienced thereby; but it is rare, and even very rare, to find secular priests who do so. It must be confessed that Jesus Christ is unfortunate in his priests ! All this comes from the little love that priests have for him. He that tenderly loves a friend, seeks to see him as often as he can, especially when his visits are most agreeable to this friend.

By this visit I do not mean only a few “ Our Fathers” said in passing and with distraction before the altar. It consists in occupying oneself during some time in making pious affections to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, and in asking of him graces, especially the grace of final perseverance and of his holy love. Alas ! who should entertain himself oftener and longer than a priest who every day makes Jesus come down from heaven to the earth, takes him in his hands, partakes of his adorable flesh, and moreover for his own benefit shuts him up in the tabernacle where he may find him present every time that he wishes ? After the visit to the Blessed Sacrament he should not omit to make, in the same church, his visit to the Mother of God, before some *image that inspires him with the greatest devotion.*[12373]

3. RECREATION

He may then recreate himself for some time by walking either in the country or on some solitary road, in company with a Father or some other spiritual people who speaks of God and not of the world. In the absence of such a people he should walk alone; for if he is accompanied by some secular he will soon lose all the recollection that he has found in his exercises of piety. If in his moments of leisure he visits the place where the moral conference is held, he will do better; he will find there recreation, and what will be profitable to him.

III. EXERCISES OF THE EVENING

1. BEFORE SUPPER

Towards evening it is befitting that the priest should make another half-hours meditation; it will be better if he makes it when possible with all the peoples of the house, reading the points of meditation himself, and finishing by reciting the Christian acts. Then he should recite Matins and Lauds, and afterwards devote himself to another hours study. Afterwards he shall recite five decades of the Rosary, also with the people of the house, taking care to announce the mysteries on which the meditation should be made; he shall finish by saying the Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

2. SUPPER

The Rosary shall be followed by supper. He should observe greater sobriety at supper than at dinner; for if in the evening one takes too much food, it will happen that in the morning, when so many important duties are to be fulfilled, meditation, the saying of Mass, the hearing of confessions, one will suffer not only in the stomach, but also in the head, so that everything will be done with distraction and tepidity, and the half of it will be lost.

3. THE LAST ACTS BEFORE GOING TO BED

After supper the priest shall make the examination of conscience, to be followed by the act of contrition and by other pious acts; then after having recited, with the face on the floor, the " Hail Mary" three times, and after the usual practices in honor of the holy patrons, he should go to bed. The following is the act that we may recite before going to bed:

O my God ! I thank Thee for having preserved me this day, and I beseech Thee to vouchsafe to preserve me also this night, and to protect me from all evil. I take this repose in order to please Thee, and I intend each moment that I breathe to love and praise Thee, as is done by the saints and the elect in heaven. Mary, my Mother, bless me, and protect me under thy mantle. My angel guardian, and all my holy Patrons, intercede for me.

IV. EXERCISES THAT ARE NOT PERFORMED EVERY DAY

1. CONFESSION

The priest should confess twice or at least once a week. He should not fail to have a particular Director, on whom it will be his duty to depend in all his spiritual exercises, and even in all the temporal affairs that may be of profit to his soul.

1 We add this simple formula as we have done above for the morning exercise. ED.

2. THE MONTHLY RETREAT

Every month he shall make a day of retreat; on this day he should keep aloof from all temporal affairs, and even from spiritual occupations that regard his neighbor. Having retired to his own home or to some religious house, he shall occupy himself in silence only with himself, consecrating the whole day to prayer, to spiritual reading, to visiting the Blessed Sacrament, and to other similar exercises. Oh what strength does not the soul draw from these retreats, to be able to unite itself intimately with God, and to walk more fervently in the ways of the Lord on the following days ![12374]

3. SPECIAL COUNSELS

In temptations, especially in those against purity, he shall renew the resolution to suffer rather a thousand deaths than to offend God; then he shall have recourse at once to Jesus and to Mary by invoking their holy names until the violence of the temptation has subsided. He should be careful to dress modestly, always wearing long clothes, and never those that are of silk. Let him keep from all banquets, the amusements of the *world, the reunions with* seculars, *especially where* there are women.

SPIRITUAL RULES FOR A PRIEST WHO ASPIRES TO PERFECTION

1. TO AVOID SIN, AND TROUBLE AFTER SIN

A PRIEST who aspires to perfection and desires to sanctify himself should, above all, endeavor to avoid more than death the least deliberate venial sin. In the present state of human frailty, since Adams sin, no one can, and no one ever could, with the exception only of Jesus Christ and his most Blessed Mother, be exempt from all in deliberate venial faults. With the help of God, however, everyone can avoid every deliberate fault; that is to say, committed with full advertence and consent; thus the saints have acted. He, therefore, who tends to perfection should make up his mind rather to allow himself to be cut to pieces than to tell, with full knowledge, a lie, or to commit any other venial sin, however small it may be. Such should be his resolution; but if unfortunately he happens to fall into a fault, either deliberate or in deliberate, let him beware of troubling and disquieting himself. Disquietude does not come from God; it is a smoke that comes only from the abode of disquietude itself, namely, from hell; and it comes to us from that place because, as St. Aloysius has justly said, the devil always finds something to fish in troubled waters. When one has, for example, committed a fault one is troubled, and one is troubled because one has been troubled. In this state of disquietude we shall not only be unable to do any good, but we shall also easily commit many other faults, either of impatience or of some other kind. Hence, as soon as the fault has been committed, we must humble ourselves and immediately have recourse to God by making an act of love or of contrition with the firm purpose of amendment; then we ask with confidence for the grace of which we stand in need by saying: *O Lord ! see what I am able to do; and if Thou withdrawest Thy hand from me I shall do still worse. I love Thee; I repent of the displeasure that I have caused Thee, and I will do so no more; grant me the help that I hope to receive from Thy goodness.*

After having done this we should be calm, as if we had not committed any fault; and if we fall back, even on the same day, let us do the same thing. Should we even fall a hundred times, we should always act in the same way, namely, we should humble ourselves, we should rise again, we must never remain down. It must be observed that to trouble oneself after a fault has been committed is an effect not of humility, but of pride; since we are sorry for the fault not because we have offended God, but rather because we are ashamed to appear before him so defiled. The priest should, therefore, never trouble himself on account of the faults into which he falls; but let him humble himself, acknowledging himself capable of committing these and other faults. Let him then make an act of love of God; thus this sin, instead of removing him from God, will serve only the more to unite him more closely to him, according to what the Apostle says: All things " even sins,"[12375] the Gloss adds work together unto good.[12376]

2. EFFICACIOUS DESIRE TO ADVANCE IN THE LOVE OF GOD

Let him desire to advance without ceasing in the love of God. Not to wish to advance in perfection, which consists in the love of God, is to wish to go backward, says St. Augustine.[12377] He that moves against the current of a river, and does not make continual efforts against the movement of the waters, will be driven back. The same thing happens to us when we cease to struggle with the concupiscence of the flesh. Holy desires render our efforts easier, and help us to move forward; but it is necessary that these desires be firm and efficacious that is to say, that they be put in practice as much as possible. They should not resemble the desires of those that are content with saying, for example: Oh! if I had no brothers, no nephews, I would enter religion; if I had health, I would do this or that penance; and in the mean time these peoples do not take a step forward in the way of God: on the contrary, they always commit the same faults, always keeping up the same attachments and the same animosities, and go from bad to worse. It is therefore necessary that we advance in divine love, but with the resolution to do on our part all that we can to attain this end. We must, however, entirely mistrust our own strength, and trust only in God; for as soon as we trust in ourselves we remain deprived of the help of grace.

3. DEVOTION TO THE PASSION OF OUR LORD AND TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

To advance in perfection the priest must, moreover, entertain a great devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ and to the Blessed Sacrament. When we consider these two great mysteries of love, in which a God, to make himself loved, gives his life and makes himself the food of a worm of the earth, his creature, we cannot live without being inflamed with love for Jesus Christ. For the charity of Christ presseth us.[12378]

He that thinks of the love of Jesus Christ will feel himself, as it were, forced to love him. St. Bonaventure calls the wounds of Jesus the wounds that wound the most hardened hearts, and that inflame with love for God the coldest souls.[12379] Let the priest, then, always make as a usual thing, every day, a half-hours meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ. Let him, besides, make during the day frequent acts of love to this good Master, beginning them on awakening in the morning, and endeavoring at night to fall asleep while making them. St. Teresa said that acts of love are the wood that keeps up in the heart the sweet fire of divine love. The act of love of God that is more especially agreeable to God is the offering that we make to him of ourselves by offering to do and to suffer all that will please him. St. Teresa repeated this act at least fifty times a day.

4. THE INTENTION OF DOING ALL FOR GOD

The priest should in all his actions take care to make his intention to do for God alone all that he does. The right intention is called by the masters of spiritual life a heavenly alchemy, which converts into gold all our actions, even corporal alleviations, such as sleep, eating, and recreation. But it is particularly necessary that the exercises of piety should be performed only to please God, and not for any interested motive, either of vain glory or self-satisfaction; otherwise all will be lost, and instead of a reward we shall receive only punishment. This is the reason why, in order to do surely for God all that we do, it is important that we always act in dependence on our director.

5. LOVE OF SOLITUDE AND OF SILENCE

It is necessary that the priest should be a friend of solitude and of silence. He that treats too much with men, and speaks too much with them, will do well to be cautious; he will with difficulty escape sin: In the multitude of words there shall not want sin.[12380]For this reason the Lord says: In silence and in hope shall your strength be.Our strength against temptations is in confidence in God and in detachment from the society of creatures. Moreover, he that speaks much with men will rarely speak and treat with God. In solitude the Lord speaks and converses familiarly with souls, in accordance with the saying of St Jerome; "O solitude, in which God familiarly converses with his creatures!"[12381] And he himself has informed us that it is in solitude that he speaks to our hearts: I will lead her into the wilderness; and I will speak to her heart.[12382] Thus we see souls that burn with the love of God always seeking solitude. The saints went to bury themselves in the forests and in the most frightful caverns, in order not to be troubled by the noise of the world and in order to converse only with God. " Silence and rest from noise," said St. Bernard, "as it were, forces the soul to converse with God."[12383]

Nevertheless the virtue of silence does not consist in always keeping silence, but in being silent when it is expedient. A good priest is silent when he should be silent, and speaks when he should speak; but he speaks only of God or of what concerns the glory of God and the good of souls. Often a word about God spoken familiarly in conversation will produce more fruit than many sermons. We should therefore be careful in all our conversations, however indifferent they may be, to allow some edifying word to glide into it on the eternal truths or on the love of God. When we love a people, we always wish to speak of him and to hear others speak of him; when we love God, we do not wish to speak of anyone but of God, and we do not wish to hear any one spoken of except God.

6. CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

The love of God consists above all in conformity to his holy will, especially in regard to things that are mostly contrary to self-love, such as sickness, poverty, contempt, persecutions, spiritual aridities. We should be persuaded that all that comes from God is useful to us, since all that he does, he does for our own good; for there is no one that loves us more than God. If we wish to sanctify ourselves, let us say in all that happens to us: May Thy will be done! May the name of the Lord be blessed. O Lord! what wilt Thou have me do ? As it pleases the Lord, so let it be done. Let it be thus, O Father! because it was thus pleasing to Thee.

In all the occurrences of life, whether agreeable or disagreeable, let us endeavor to preserve this continual peace and this unalterable tranquillity, of which the saints have given us the example, always saying: *In peace in the self—same I will sleep and I will rest.*[12384]A soul that loves God, always united with its Lord, leads a uniform life. This is what is said by that great servant of God, Cardinal Petrucci, when speaking of the words of the Holy Ghost: *Whatsoever shall befall the just, it shall not make him sad.*[12385] Thus a priest that loves God will never be afflicted. Sin only should cause him sorrow; but even this sorrow, as we have said above, should be a tranquil sorrow, that does not trouble the peace of the soul.

7. DESIRE FOR DEATH

The priest should often desire paradise, and consequently death itself, in order promptly to go to heaven, where he may love Jesus Christ with all his strength and during all eternity, without fear of ever losing him. In the mean time he should conduct himself towards God without reserve, not refusing him anything that he knows will be more agreeable to him; and he should be continually attentive to banish from his heart all that is not God or for God.

8. DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

He should endeavor to conceive a great confidence and a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin. All the saints are always fond of nourishing in their hearts a filial piety towards this divine Mother. He should take care to make every day a spiritual reading out of a book that treats of the great confidence that we should have in her powerful protection. He should never fail as well as he is able to fast on Saturdays in her honor; and in all her novenas he should at least practise some abstinence and some other mortification. He should never omit to pay her a visit once or several times a day before some devout image. He should speak to others as much as he can of the confidence that we should have in the protection of Mary, and should endeavor on Saturdays to address in the church a little instruction to the faithful, so as to excite their devotion towards this charitable Queen; at least he should speak of her in a special manner in every one of his sermons, and recommend the same devotion to all his penitents and to all peoples. The more one loves Mary, the more one loves God; for Mary draws to God all that love her. St. Bonaventure says: “Because she was inflamed with love, she also inflames all those that love her, and makes them like herself.”[12386]

9. TO BE HUMBLE OF HEART

Let the priest endeavor to be humble of heart. Many are humble in their speech, but not in their hearts; they say that they are the greatest sinners in the world, that they merit a thousand hells: nevertheless they wish to be preferred, esteemed, and praised; they strive after honorable employments; they cannot suffer a contemptuous word. The humble of heart do not act in this manner: they never speak of their talents, of their nobility, of their riches, or of anything that may be turned to their advantage. He should, therefore, love those employments and those works that are most humble and are less conspicuous. He should receive affronts without being troubled; he should even feel interior pleasure in seeing that he has become similar to Jesus Christ, who was filled with reproaches. Therefore, when he meets with some contradiction that wounds and irritates his pride he should do violence to himself not to speak nor act at that moment, even if he held the office of Superior, and as such is obliged to reprimand the insolence of him that offers the outrage. As long as he feels himself agitated he should keep silence and wait till he becomes calm, otherwise the smoke produced by his trouble will obscure his vision; he will believe that what he says or what he does is right, while all is faulty and disorderly. Moreover, when the correction is made amid agitation, the inferior will not receive it as a deserved reprimand, but as a passionate outbreak of temper on the part of the Superior; and this will make the correction useless, or nearly so. For the same reason, when the Superior perceives that the inferior is troubled, he should put off the reprimand and wait till he has become calm; otherwise the inferior, blinded by his passion, will not only not receive the correction, but will even be moved to greater passion.

10. TO RENDER GOOD FOR EVIL

The priest should try to be ready to assist every one, and especially to do good to him that has done him wrong, at least by recommending him to God. This is the way in which the saints take revenge.

11. INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR MORTIFICATION

Let the priest be attentive to the practice of interior and exterior mortification. It was recommended by Jesus Christ when he said: Let him deny himself.[12387] This is absolutely necessary in order to attain sanctity. Interior mortification exacts of us that we know how to conquer ourselves by refusing all that satisfies only our self-love. We should therefore abstain from every action that has no other object than to satisfy curiosity, ambition, or self-love.

We should also love exterior mortification, namely, fasting, abstinence, disciplines, and the like. The saints macerated their flesh as much as possible, that is to say, as much as obedience permitted, and obedience is the rule of the saints. As to him who, on account of ill-health, cannot impose upon himself exterior mortifications, he should embrace the pains and the inconveniences that he has to suffer by endeavoring to support them patiently and peacefully, and by refraining from making them known without necessity, and from complaining about the want of care on the part of the physicians or peoples of the house.

12. TO PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

We must always pray and recommend ourselves to God. All our good resolutions and all our promises end in smoke when we neglect to pray; for by not praying we are deprived of the necessary graces to carry them out. *I will cry like a young swallow.*[12388]We should always have the mouth open for prayer by saying: O Lord, help me! O Lord, mercy! O Lord, have pity on me! Thus the saints have acted, and it is thus that they sanctified themselves.

We should above all ask Jesus Christ for the gift of his holy love. St. Francis de Sales said that this gift includes all other gifts; for when we love God we try to avoid all that which is disagreeable to him, and to do all that we can do to please him. Let us also ask always for the grace of having great confidence in the Passion of Jesus Christ and in the intercession of Mary. Let us, moreover, not cease to recommend to God the poor souls in purgatory and poor sinners; for such prayers are most pleasing to God.

SPIRITUAL MAXIMS FOR PRIESTS

1. To lose all rather than to lose God.

2. To displease every one rather than to displease God.

3. It is only sin that we have to fear, and that should grieve us.

4. To die rather than knowingly to commit a sin, even if it were only a venial sin.

5. All things come to an end; the world is a scene that passes very quickly.

6. Every moment is a treasure for eternity.

7. Everything that pleases God is good.

8. Do what you would wish to have done at the hour of death.

9. Live as if there were no other beings in the world except God and yourself.

10. God alone makes man contented.

11. There is no other good than God; there is no other evil than sin.

12. Never do anything for your own gratification.

13. The more one mortifies oneself in this life, the more joy one shall have in the next.

14. To the friends of God the bitter is sweet, and the sweet bitter.

16. He that wishes what God wishes has all that he wishes. The will of God renders sweet all that which is bitter.

17. In sickness one may see who has real virtue.

18. Whoever desires nothing of this world has no need of anything.

19. Do not defer carrying out your good resolutions if you do not wish to retrograde.

20. To trouble oneself about faults committed is not humility, but pride.

21. We are only that which we are before God.

22. He that loves God desires to love rather than to know.

23. He that wishes to sanctify himself should banish from his heart all that which is not God.

24. One is not entirely for God when one seeks something that is not God.

25. Pain, poverty, and humiliation were the companions of Jesus Christ; may they also be ours.

26. Mental agitation, whatever may have been the cause, does not come from God.

27. The humble man believes himself unworthy of all honor, and worthy of contempt.

28. When one thinks of hell, which one has deserved, one suffers with resignation every pain.

29. Forget yourself, and God will think of you.

30. Love contempt, and you will find God.

31. He that contents himself with that which is less good is not far from evil.

32. God esteems but little him who seeks to be esteemed.

33. The saints always speak of God; they always speak ill of themselves, and always well of others.

34. The curious are always distracted.

35. Woe to him that loves health more than sanctity.

36. The devil is always in pursuit of the idle.

37. A vain priest is but the sport in the hand of the devil.

38. He that wishes to live in peace ought to mortify all his passions without excepting any one of them.

39. St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say: “ The servant of God speaks little, works much, bears all.”

40. The saints try to be saints, and not merely to appear to be saints.

41. We shall never reach any high degree of perfection as long as we are not fond of prayer.

42. One must first be a reservoir to collect, and then only can we be a canal to pour out.

43. Every attachment hinders us from belonging entirely to God.

44. The priest should not perceive anything but Jesus Christ and the good pleasure of Jesus Christ.

45. In our actions that become conspicuous pride is often hidden.

46. To offer one s self entirely to God is an .excellent preparation for Communion.

47. When you walk in places that are inhabited keep your eyes cast down; think that you are a priest, and not a painter.

EXHORTATION TO YOUNG MEN WHO DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO THE STUDY OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL SCIENCES.[12389]

They should, above all, endeavor to make Progress in the Science of the Saints.

ST. PAUL says, in speaking of worldly science: *Knowledge puffeth up; but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he hath not yet known as he ought to know.*[12390] Worldly science when united with divine love is of great use for us and for others; but when it is separated from charity, it causes us great injury by rendering us proud and inciting us to despise others; for as much as the Lord is lavish of his graces towards the humble, so much is he chary of them towards the proud.

Happy the man to whom God gives the science of the saints, as he gave it to Jacob: *She gave him the knowledge of holy things.*[12391] Scripture speaks of this gift as greater than all other gifts. Oh how many men live full of themselves because of their knowledge of mathematics, belles-lettres, foreign languages, and antiquities, which are of no service to religion, and are of no help as to spiritual profit! Of what use is it to possess such a science, to know so many fine things, if one does not know how to love God and to practise virtue ?

The wise men of this world, who seek only to acquire a great name, are deprived of the celestial lights that the Lord gives to the simple: *Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent* (the wise and prudent of the world), *and hast revealed them to the little ones.*[12392] The little ones are the simple minds that bestow all their care on pleasing God alone.

St. Augustine proclaims him happy who knows God, his grandeur, his goodness, even though he should be ignorant of all other things: *“Happy he that knows Thee, although he knows nothing of those things.”*[12393] He that knows God cannot but love him; now he that loves God is wiser than all the men of letters that know not how to love him. “ The unlettered,” exclaims the same holy Doctor, “ will rise up and bear away heaven.”[12394]How many rustics, how many poor villagers, reach sanctity and obtain eternal life, the enjoyment of which for a moment is better than the acquisition of all the goods of this world! The Apostle wrote to the Corinthians: for I judged not Myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.[12395] How happy should we be if we succeed in knowing Jesus crucified, in knowing the love that he has borne us and the love that he has merited for us by sacrificing for us his life on the cross, and if by studying such a book we succeed in loving him with an ardent love!

A great servant of God, Father Vincent Caraffa, writing to some young ecclesiastics who were engaged in studying to qualify themselves for the work of saving souls, said to them: “ To bring about great conversions among souls it is better to be a man of much prayer than a man of great eloquence; for the eternal truths that convert souls are preached differently by the heart than they are by the lips.” The true ministers of the Gospel should, therefore, lead a life that shows itself to be in agreement with what they teach; they should, in a word, appear like men who, detached from the world and the flesh, seek only to procure the glory of God and to make him loved by all. This is the reason why Father Caraffa added: “ Bestow all your care on giving yourself up to the exercise of divine love; only the love of God, as soon as it possesses our heart, detaches it from all inordinate love, and renders it pure by stripping it of earthly affections.” “ A pure heart,” says St. Augustine, “ is a heart empty of all Cupidity.”[12396]In fact, adds St. Bernard, he that loves God, thinks only of loving him, and desires nothing else: “He that loves, loves and knows nothing else.”[12397] When one. burns with the love for God, one knows not how to devote one s self to the love of any earthly object.

Hence, just as students should give from year to year proofs of their advancement in the sciences, so those that wish to sanctify themselves should labor to acquire not only from year to year, but from day to day, a great love for God. They should endeavor to increase in themselves holy love by often repeating acts of love, by offering to God every action that they begin, with the intention of performing it only to please him, and by always begging him to grant them the light and the strength necessary to accomplish the good desires with which he inspires them.

St. Thomas of Villanova used to say: “To convert sinners and make them come forth from the mire of their iniquities, we need arrows of fire; but how can these arrows of fire come forth from an icy heart that is not animated by the love of God ?” Experience permits us to see that a priest with moderate science, but burning with love for Jesus Christ, draws more souls to God than many learned and excellent orators who charm people by their eloquence. The latter, with their beautiful thoughts, their rare acquirements, and their ingenious reflections, send away their hearers greatly satisfied with the discourse that they have heard; but they go away deprived of the love for God, and perhaps colder than when they came. But is such a success of profit to the common good ? and what profit does the preacher draw there from, if it is not to be more full of himself and more responsible before God, since instead of the fruit that his sermon could have produced, he obtains only vain praises that yield nothing? He who, on the contrary, preaches Jesus crucified in a simple manner, not to be praised, but only to make him loved, descends from the pulpit rich in the merit of all the good that he has done, or at least that he desired to do for his hearers.

All that has been said above concerns not only preachers, but also those that are charged with teaching and those that hear confessions. How much good cannot a professor do in teaching sciences, in instilling into his pupils the maxims of true piety! The same thing holds good of confessors. To this must be added the happy fruits that one may produce in conversing with others. We cannot always preach; but what good may not be done in conversation by a priest, who is well instructed and who is holy, when he speaks adroitly, when an occasion presents itself, of the vanity of worldly grandeur, of conformity to the will of God, of the necessity of recommending oneself without ceasing to the protection of Heaven in the midst of so many temptations with which we have to struggle! May the Lord deign to give us the light and the strength of which we stand in need in order to employ the days that still remain to us in loving him and in doing his will, since only this is profitable, and all the rest is lost!

Discourse ON THE NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER FOR PRIESTS[12398]

IF we do not try to become saints, it will be difficult to sanctify others. If therefore we wish to produce much fruit in souls, we must necessarily practise meditation, and practise it much. Without this practise what good can we ever hope for ourselves and for others ? With desolation is all the land made desolate, says the Holy Ghost, why? because there is none that considereth in the heart.[12399]The Holy Ghost speaks thus of the neglect of mental prayer; and if it is this that causes the ruin of every one, with how much greater reason should not this defect cause the ruin of the priest! If you desire to see what is the necessity of mental prayer for the priest, you should this evening consider with me these two points: I say, in speaking of a priest without mental prayer: First, it is difficult for him to save his soul; Secondly, it is impossible for him to attain perfection. Let us pray to the Holy Ghost to enlighten us.

I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes.[12400] Ah! how happy should I be, O my God! if I were but dust and ashes! I am worse than that: I am a rebel, having had the boldness to offend Thee, who art the supreme good! But Thou hast come into this world in order that poor sinners may have life, and may have it more abundantly.[12401] Enlighten me, therefore, O Lord! speak to me, for I wish to listen to Thee: *Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.*[12402] Tell me what I have to do to please Thee and to sanctify myself.

Mary, my hope; thou dost fulfil the beautiful office, so conformable to thy heart all full of love and mercy, of being pacifier between sinners and God; for pitys sake, exert thyself also in my behalf, O my Sovereign Lady!

I. WITHOUT MENTAL PRAYER IT IS DIFFICULT FOR A PRIEST TO SAVE HIS SOUL

With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart. These last words, considereth in the heart, I understand to mean mental prayer: it is to meditate on the law of God, on eternity, on one s own duties, on the things of God. Let us see how difficult it is for a priest to save his soul without prayer; here is the way in which I reason: It is certain that a priest, in order to save his soul, must fulfil all the duties of a priest, duties of which we have already shown the greatness; and to fulfil all these duties he needs to be continually aided by the hand of the all-powerful God. It is true that God is ready to aid us; but what does the Lord desire ? He desires that we should continually ask all the help that is necessary for us; and if we do not ask him for it he will not give it to us. You know the common opinion of theologians, that prayer, that is to say, the asking for graces, on the part of every one that has attained the age of reason, is necessary as a means of salvation; otherwise we cannot be saved. Ask, and you shall receive, He that does not ask will not receive.

Now a priest that does not make mental prayer, when will he reflect on his duties as a priest? under what circumstances will he ask God for the necessary help ? It will happen, that walking blindly without looking where or how he walks, he will hardly think of asking God s help; he will hardly think of the necessity in which he is of asking for it; or rather, without prayer he will not even think of his duties as a priest; and so how will he save his soul ? Cardinal Bellarmine thinks it to be morally impossible for any Christian to fulfil the duties of a simple Christian without mental prayer; for how much greater reason should we not believe that this is impossible for a priest who has greater duties than a simple Christian! My dear patroness St. Teresa also says that to obtain Gods grace the only door is mental prayer, and she speaks expressly of mental prayer: “ This door being closed,” she says, “ I know not how grace will reach the soul.”[12403] If the saint does not know, I declare that I know much less how a priest without mental prayer will receive all the graces necessary to save his soul.

Let us consider, in the first place, how much light a priest needs for himself and for others so as to save his soul. He must keep himself pure in the midst of the seductions of the flesh; he must avoid the occasions in which he is exposed to lose God; he must give wise counsel to others, since he is the master of the people, especially if he is a confessor; he has to place souls on the road that leads to God, so often to resolve doubts unexpectedly, to give advice in every confession, and then to render an account of all to

Jesus Christ. Now how will he receive this light unless he makes mental prayer ?

Mental prayer, says St. Bonaventure,[12404] is a torch which on this earth of darkness shows us the road on which we should walk. St. Bernard, treating of the same subject, says that mental prayer is like a mirror: this comparison pleases me much. If one has a stain on ones countenance and one looks in the mirror, one sees it and takes it away; without this mirror, the stain remains, and will always remain; as one does not see it, one does not take it away. So it is with mental prayer: if we have a defect, if we find ourselves in a dangerous occasion, when we go to mental prayer, as if going before the mirror, we see in our conscience this defect that we have, we see this danger of losing God; we see it and we take it away.

Even though one should have had the misfortune of falling over the precipice, if one practises mental prayer with perseverance, one will surely come forth from it. Hence we quote the remark made by a master of the spiritual life: With sin there can often be united some act virtuous in itself, as, for instance, to be in the state of sin and to give alms, to be worldly and to be patient; but mental prayer and sin cannot remain united together. Why ? Because if we begin voluntarily to make mental prayer, there are some that go to mental prayer by force, and then it will do them no good, if, I say, we go to it voluntarily, either we shall give up mental prayer, or we shall give up sin. And according to St. Teresa,[12405] however great may be the ruin of a soul, if it perseveres in mental prayer, it is sure that the Lord will bring it back to the haven of salvation. But if this soul does not go to mental prayer, because it does not think of it, or thinks of it but little, it will continue to live in its faults, in the dangerous occasions in which it finds itself, and it will end by falling into the abyss. Why ? Because it walks in darkness, without light; it will find itself at the bottom of the precipice without knowing in what manner it fell over it.ome ye to Him and be enlightened.[12406] What light would we wish to have if we do not approach God by means of mental prayer ? Where have so many saints, I ask, where, without studying theology, have so many simple men and women, so well learned divine things if it was not in mental prayer, this school of the saints ? Such was a St. Hildegarde, who composed several books about holy Scripture; a St. Magdalene de Pazzi, who spoke so admirably of the perfection of God; a St. Teresa, who wrote so well on mental prayer that she has become the admiration of the whole world, and the Church wishes us to ask God for the grace of profiting by her heavenly doctrine: *“ So we feed to our ghostly health upon her heavenly teaching.”*[12407] Let us add a St. Thomas Aquinas, who confessed that all that he knew he had learnt in mental prayer; likewise a St. Bonaventure, who said that he never had any other Master than Jesus crucified. Come ye to Him and be enlightened. Let us, moreover, consider how much strength a priest needs to overcome so many enemies, both exterior and interior, that are continually laying snares for his soul. These enemies are the world, persecutions, human respect, passions, evil inclinations, temptations of the devil. Oh, how much more trouble does not the devil take to make a priest fall than to make a secular fall!

And why? Because if he succeeds in bringing to his fall a priest, he obtains a greater prey, and causes greater displeasure to God Again, the fall of a priest is accompanied by the fall of many others; for a bad priest by falling into the precipice does not fall into it alone; he drags down with him many others: and this is the reason why the devil makes so many efforts to ruin a priest. How, then, can he undertake without mental prayer to overcome all these temptations, especially if he is a secular priest, who has to live in the midst of the world, exposed to the danger of meeting with so many dangerous objects at times in the same house in which he lives? and if he is a confessor, when hearing the confessions of young peoples, of children, of women; when hearing the history of their miseries, of their frailties? But then you will say, The priest takes the place of God. Ah! dear Fathers, while receiving the sacerdotal character, we nevertheless remain earthly beings, weak, frail, liable to fall. How often must we not, as it were, sweat blood in order to overcome a suggestion of the devil! And without mental prayer how shall we do this ? how shall we acquire the strength to resist so many enemies? Let us hear what St. Teresa says: “ He that neglects mental prayer has no need of being taken to hell by demons: he will cast himself into it.”[12408]

When, on the contrary, we apply to mental prayer, what strength do we not continually derive from this holy exercise in order to resist all the attacks of hell! What shalt thou see in the Sulamitess but the companies of camps?[12409] The Sulamitess represents the soul given to mental prayer, which by this powerful means becomes for all its *enemies terrible as an army set in array.*[12410] The soul is then able to conquer all its passions, all bad inclinations.

These vicious tendencies are produced only by our corrupt nature, and it is very difficult to conquer them without much mental prayer; but by means of this prayer we overcome them easily. The soul in mental prayer is like iron in the fire: when the iron is cold it is difficult to work; but when it is put into the fire it becomes soft, and allows itself to be easily worked: so it is with the soul. A master of the spiritual life calls it a furnace, because as the fire softens the iron and renders it easy to work, so mental prayer makes it easy for the soul to overcome its passions. For example, someone receives an affront, an injury that wounds his self-love: before mental prayer, it is very difficult to him to overcome the passion that incites him to grow angry, to defend himself, and even to furnish him at times with pretexts to make him believe that this is necessary. The iron is yet cold, it must be put into the fire. Let this troubled soul enter mental prayer, and at once the sweet flame of the Holy Ghost touches it, and an interior voice tells him: Is it not better to bear that without resenting it ? Leave rather your defence to God, as your divine Master did when he was calumniated, he who was more innocent than you! At once the iron loses its hardness; the soul is softened, is appeased: without mental prayer, it would have been otherwise.

St. John Chrysostom[12411] says that in a soul mental prayer is as a fountain in a garden. Oh, how beautiful is a garden when a fountain continually waters it with its vivifying waters ! how fresh the verdure, how resplendent the flowers, how abundant the fruit! Take away the fountain, and everything will languish and dry up grass, flowers, fruits, and plants. Hence how quickly does one recognize a priest who makes mental prayer! See his manner of saying Mass, of preaching, of conversing!

See his humility and modesty in his actions, in his whole conduct! He is the garden of the Lord, a garden enclosed.[12412] It is closed to vices, to passions; it is filled with flowers and fruits of virtues; it is a paradise: *Thy plants are a paradise of pomegranates with the fruits of the orchard.*[12413] And why ? Because it is the fountain of gardens, the well of living waters.[12414] Mental prayer is the source of living waters that continually waters the garden. Take away mental prayer, take away the fountain, and then we say Mass and the Office with precipitation; we preach in a different manner. Show me your beautiful detachment, your beautiful humility, your beautiful modesty, . . . after the fountain has been taken away. A priest without mental prayer is a garden without water, just as David said of himself in reference to the time when he was far from God: *My soul is as earth without water unto Thee."*[12415]He is not even a priest; he is the corpse of a priest, according to the saying of St. John Chrysostom*: " As the body cannot live without the soul, so the soul without prayer is dead and malodorous."*[12416]Oh, how one perceives even from afar the bad odor of a priest who does not make mental prayer! Happy, on the contrary, he who meditates on the law of God, who applies himself to the holy exercise of mental prayer. The Holy Ghost compares him to a tree planted by the rivers of water.[12417]

II. WITHOUT MENTAL PRAYER IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE PRIEST TO ATTAIN PERFECTION

We now enter upon the second point, in which we must consider that, as it is difficult for a priest to save his soul without mental prayer, so it is impossible for him to attain perfection. I suppose that, without dwelling specially on this point, every priest well knows the obligation under which he is of striving to attain perfection. Let us therefore come to the point.

Observe, says the Holy Spirit to us, that the trees planted far from the water, dry up, grow but little, or do not grow straight, while those that are found on the banks of a stream are vigorous, straight, and high. Thus men of mental prayer show themselves full of life and strength : they are straight, having only God before their eyes; they attain a great height, growing always in virtue: *Like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season—and his leaf shall not fall off.*[12418] They will not lose a leaf, that is, they will not lose a moment of their life, because either actually or virtually they always advance in perfection or in divine love, holy charity, which is the cause of perfection in our soul, as St. Paul says: *Have charity, which is the bond of perfection.*[12419] The sweet furnace in which souls are inflamed by this celestial fire, with which the saints on earth and the blessed in heaven are burning, is mental prayer: *In my meditation a fire shall flame out,* says David.[12420]

We complain that we are lukewarm and feeble; but need we be astonished at this if we remain from mental prayer? Why do we not try to enter often this happy cellar of love, where, having been scarcely introduced, the Spouse of the Canticles feels herself all set on fire with charity ? *He brought me into the cellar of wine, He set in order charity in me.*[12421]

We feel ourselves cold in divine love: why, then, do we not often go to converse with God ? Why do we not approach Him who is called a devouring fire: *Thy God is a consuming fire.*[12422] We approach God by means of mental prayer, says St. John Climacus.[12423] Let us suppose the heart to be very cold, entirely deprived of love towards God: if it perseveres in mental prayer, it is certain that this God, who is so faithful and never allows himself to be outdone in generosity, will end by inflaming it with his holy love; the fire should produce its effect. If at times, while conversing with a people who truly loves God, we feel ourselves excited by the ardor that he communicates to us to love God also, how much more shall we not be inflamed with this celestial fire by often conversing with God himself!

God speaks, yes, God speaks to souls that seek him sincerely; but when does he speak to them? Is it in society, in visits, where we lose whole hours in useless conversation? No; there God does not speak. If a soul wishes to hear me, says the Lord, let it leave the society of men, let it retire into solitude, and make mental prayer; it is there that I wish to speak to it: *"I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart."*[12424]

There I will make the soul hear my word, this word full and substantial, which in making itself heard, produces the effect that it signifies, and is not only an exhortation, but a power that makes others act rightly. Where, in fact, have the saints learned to love God if it was not in mental prayer ? Where did a St. Philip Neri receive a love so ardent, that his poor heart, not being able to support it, two ribs expanded so as to give more space to its palpitations ? Where was a St. Peter of Alcantara inflamed with such a love for God that, in order not to die of this love, he was obliged to go into the field, and sometimes throw himself upon the ice ? Where was a St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi inflamed with the same fire, she going nearly out of herself on account of this love ? Where was a St. Teresa wounded, she who has written of herself, that when she began to practise mental prayer, only then she began to feel what it is to love God ?

Ah! dear Fathers, let us not think that mental prayer is an exercise only peculiar to solitaries, and not to those that are occupied in an active life. Tertullian calls all priests "people devoted to prayer and contemplation."[12425]

The Apostles were not solitaries; they were very great workers of the Gospel throughout the world. Now what did they do in order to have time to devote themselves to mental prayer? They appointed deacons who were charged with the care of inferior things, and they said: *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*[12426] Note the words, prayer and the ministry of the word; at first prayer, and then preaching, because without prayer we can do no good.

What matters it that we are not solitaries, called to a contemplative life? If we wish to sanctify ourselves by becoming good evangelical laborers, it will be necessary that we apply ourselves to mental prayer, and much mental prayer; not a quarter, or half an hour in passing, but much more, much more; otherwise it will, morally speaking, be impossible for us to become saints. In the midst of our greatest labors we must always find time to give a little rest to our soul, as Jesus Christ has enjoined upon the Apostles: Rest a little.[12427] In retreats and in mental prayer the soul sits down, as it were, and takes rest, and gathers new strength to work better. *He shall sit solitary, and hold his peace, because he hath taken it upon himself.*[12428]When a soul comes forth from mental prayer it is quite changed. Hence I think highly of the good practice of those that reserve for themselves every week a day of retreat, a day entirely consecrated to the repose of the soul. On this day we do not hear confessions, we do not study: we apply only to mental prayer, to spiritual reading, to holy solitude. There are religious institutes that allow every week a day of recreation for the body, in order that the body may have more strength to work, and be better able to resist fatigue. Why should we not also give to the soul a day of spiritual recreation, so that it may be better able to bear the fatigue, considering that in exterior works it becomes always a little dissipated ?

Yes, I repeat, we stand much in need of mental prayer, of not a quarter of an hour, nor half an hour, but much more. Show me an apostolic laborer who has sanctified himself without much mental prayer; as for myself, I can find none. I see that St. Francis Xavier, the wonder of apostolic workers, spent most of the night in the churches to make mental prayer, and that after a short rest which he took in the sacristy he went to pour out the affections of his heart before the Blessed Sacrament, where the Lord so filled him with his consolations that he cried out: "It is enough, O Lord, it is enough!"[12429] I read of the Blessed John Francis Regis, the great missionary of France, that after having spent the whole day in preaching and hearing confessions, instead of resting, he went before the door of the church, which was closed, and conversed there with his God during the whole night. You know what were the labors of a St. Philip Neri, and what was his love for prayer. St. Vincent Ferrer, the apostle of Spain, used to make before preaching an hour's meditation. All evangelical laborers have only imitated in this their model and chief, Jesus Christ, who spent sometimes the whole night in prayer: He passed the whole night in the prayer of God.[12430]

Undoubtedly, when God commands us to leave mental prayer in order to labor for the salvation of souls we must obey by leaving God for God. Let us then apply ourselves to the good of our neighbor as much as it is necessary; but let us not lose time: let us avoid useless conversations, and not listen to vain discourses. The time lost is a thing that God does not command. As soon as we are free let us return to prayer. And even in the midst of our occupations, while hearing confessions, preaching, or doing anything else, we must always preserve in our hearts the little cell of St. Catharine of Sienna, where we may be anxious to enter from time to time in order to speak to God by an act of love or some ejaculatory prayer. We must also take care not to lose sight of holy solitude, and not cease to love it. We should imitate the Spouse of the Canticles, who said to his Well-beloved: *Flee away, O My beloved, . . upon the mountains of aromatical spices.*[12431]

She did not wish that the divine Spouse should depart from her and abandon her; but knowing that he was accustomed to speak in solitude, she begged him to retire to the solitary mountains, so that she might be able to converse with him alone. It is thus that in our labors, and then more than ever, we should sigh after happy solitude, desiring ardently, as a thirsty hart desires the fountain of waters, to see the moment of prayer arrive.

And how long should we converse with God ? Would it be a very great thing to give ourselves up to prayer for two hours a day, one hour in the morning, the other in the evening? Let us devote ourselves to it at least for an hour every day. Ah! I would regard it as a success if, with God's help, I should obtain as the fruit of this retreat that some among you, even if it were only one of you, would desire to increase a little the time given to prayer. You at least who are candidates for ordination do so; increase the time of mental prayer; all depends on the good habit that you acquire in the beginning. For those who for a number of years have the habit of making, for example, a half-hours meditation, and not more, it would be difficult to add more to it; they would believe that it would be an injury to them to add more mental prayer.

No, I repeat, it is not a great sacrifice to spend every day two hours in conversing with Jesus Crucified or with the Blessed Sacrament. *I sat down under His shadow, whom I desired.*[12432] Oh! what a paradise to be able to speak with Jesus Christ exposed during the Forty Hours devotion, or under other circumstances, or to visit some solitary church where the Blessed Sacrament is kept! Seculars, to our shame be it said, spend there sometimes whole hours.

It is precisely to converse often with us that our dear Saviour remains on earth in the Blessed Sacrament; when he is shut up there, he asks, he prays, so to speak, that we go to speak to him. But you will perhaps say, Two hours! that is too much. How! it would be too much, two hours of mental prayer! Do you not then know what mental prayer is? It consists in speaking familiarly with God, as a friend speaks with a friend, says St. Teresa. In mental prayer we find those wings so greatly desired by the Royal Prophet, by the aid of which he raised himself up to perfection:—*Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?*[12433]What perfection could we ever acquire without mental prayer ? It is an excellent school in which one learns the heavenly science of the saints. Permit me still to say before finishing, So many studies to which we devote ourselves, so many languages that we wish to know, so much knowledge, so many various sciences that we try to master, are without doubt good: no one denies that;

they may be useful. It would, however, be better first to study Holy Scripture, the Canons, Dogmatic Theology, to be ready to satisfy also this modern erudition that is diffused throughout the world. But what is above all necessary to us is the beautiful science of the saints, which consists in loving God; a science that we learn, not in books, but before the Crucifix, before the Blessed Sacrament. Mental prayer, then, dear Fathers, mental prayer! The more we desire to labor for the salvation of souls, the more we need light and strength, since we are to give light and strength to others. What warmth and what light can be communicated to other lamps by a lamp that scarcely burns, that is in danger of being extinguished ? Ah! would to God that it would not occur daily that a priest who devotes himself to the salvation of souls, having himself but little fervor, little love for God, become-s more and more lukewarm, even falls sometimes over the precipice, and ends by losing God! How many examples of a similar misfortune do exist! Do you not yourselves know of some priest, who, wishing to hear confessions, to convert others, has afterwards succumbed to the occasions, and in them has lost God?

After this we say that it is too much to spend two hours in mental prayer! Such was not the thought of a St. Francis Borgia, who after eight hours of prayer asked the favor of a quarter of an hour more; a St. Rose of Lima, who spent twelve hours a day in prayer; a St. Anthony the Abbot, who, after having devoted the whole night to prayer, complained in the morning that the sun arose so soon and obliged him to finish. And how many young virgins, how many seculars, even mechanics, make four, five, and six hours of mental prayer! Is this not a subject of confusion for us who are priests ? Will they not have to judge us on the last day? Ah, priests of the Lord! let us not allow ourselves to be surpassed by others in the love for God, while as priests we are under greater obligations than others to love him. Let us not lose any more time; who knows how many days are still left us to live ? Let us love God, at least on account of the great desire and the firm will that he has of being loved by us who are his priests.

O my God! it is then true that Thou wishest to be loved by me. And of what use will life be if I do not employ it entirely to love Thee, who art my Lord and my God, my supreme and only good ? I am not worthy to love Thee; but Thou art infinitely worthy of being loved; Thou hast all the qualities that render Thee amiable: Thou art beautiful, loving, beneficent, faithful; what dost Thou need more to be loved ? There remains only one thing to be done: it is, that I love Thee. But why should I not love Thee, O my God! Why ? what should I love if I do not love Thee ? Outside of Thee, to whatever side I turn, I find nothing amiable; I see only creatures, earthly objects; I see only smoke and misery. “ *O fire that dost always burn,”* I will say with St. Augustine, *“inflame me!”*[12434] O God, who art all afire with love, thoroughly inflame me, consume me with love for Thee!

Have we a better means to love God than continually to ask him for his holy love ? I desire, says Jesus Christ to us, I desire to inflame thy heart as thou desirest, thou who art my priest; but come to mental prayer: *Arise, My love, my beautiful one, and come? I expect thee in solitude; it is there that I have prepared for thee the abundance of my favors.*[12435]

Ah, dear Fathers, of what advantage is it not to love God! The only thing that we find at the moment of death will be to have loved God nothing more. If we have obtained honors, possessed a convenient house, succeeded in our undertakings, at the end what shall we find ? Nothing but that we have loved God. Alas! what are we doing in this world, if we are not occupied therein in loving God ? Should we seek to amass riches, to gain the esteem of others, to enjoy pleasures, to acquire honors ? What interest have we in the world? *I have chosen you out of the world.*[12436]God has withdrawn us from the world, and we should wish to throw ourselves again into it? Ah! the world, honors, pleasures! let us live, and let us live only in order to love God; and to do this, let us devote ourselves to prayer, to prayer.

By this means we shall have the happiness of leaving this world while thanking God, like the glorious martyr St. Agatha, who said at the moment of her death: “ O Lord, who hast taken from me the love of the world! receive now my soul.”[12437] Ah! a thousand times happy shall we be if we can then also say: “ The kingdom of this world and all the beauty of life I have esteemed as nothing, for the Excellency of the love of Jesus Christ my Lord.”[12438]

Mary, my tender Mother! thou whose whole life was a continual prayer, since even sleep did not hinder thee from keeping thyself united with God, deign to remember us. Thou didst do to St. Rose the charity to awaken her when it was time for prayer: in the same way, when thou seest us fallen asleep in negligence, in lukewarmness, have the kindness to come to awaken us, and to recall us to the duty of attending to prayer, which should inflame us with love for God and for thee, so that afterwards we may be able to go to love thee for all eternity in paradise. *Live Jesus and Mary: with Joseph and Teresa!*

THE HOLY MASS

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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The Centenary Edition

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

EDITED BY

REV. EUGENE GRIMM,

Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

THE ASCETICAL WORKS

Volume XIII.

THE HOLY MASS.

The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Ceremonies of the Mass. Preparation and Thanksgiving. The Mass and the Office that are hurriedly said.

THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION

RNDE PATER:

Memoriam gloriosi Congregationis SS. Redemptoris Fundatoris, centesimo, ab ejus obitu, adventante anno, pio et admodum opportuno consilio recolere aggressus es, dum omnia ipsius opera anglice vertenda, et typis edenda curasti. Suramus itaque Pontifex, cui tum S. Doctoris exaltatio, tum fidelium utilitas summopere cordi est libentissime excepit 9 volumina huc usque edita, quæ Ei offerre voluisti. Ac dum meritas Tibi laudes de hac perutili tua cura præbet, et gratias de filiali oblatione agit, Benedictionem, quam tuis obsequentissimis litteris petiisti, Emi quoque archiepiscopi Baltimorensis commendationi obsecundans, ex intimo corde impertiit.

Hæc ad Te deferens fausta cuncta ac felicia a Domino Tibi adprecor.

Paternitatis Tuæ,

Addictissimus,

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.

Romae, die 4 Junii, 1888.

TRANSLATION.

Reverend Father:

As the centenary of the death of the illustrious Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer drew near, you conceived the pious and appropriate plan of shedding a new lustre on his memory by translating all his works into English and publishing them. The Holy Father, therefore, who has at heart the spiritual advancement of the faithful, as well as the exaltation of the holy Doctor, has most graciously accepted the nine volumes thus far published, which you wished to present to him. While bestowing upon you well-deserved praise for your useful labor, and thanking you for the gift inspired by your filial love, he gives you from his heart the blessing which you humbly asked for in your letter, complying also with the request of the Most Rev. Archbishop of Baltimore.

As the bearer of this, I wish you all happiness in the Lord.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA

Rome, June 4, 1888.

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APPROBATION.

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Nicholas Mauron, Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled the “Holy Mass,” which is Vol. XIII. of the new and complete edition in English of the works of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, called “The Centenary Edition.”

Elias Fred. Schauer,

Sup. Prov. Baltimorensis.

Baltimore, Md.,

January 6, 1889.

CONTENTS

INDEX

THE HOLY MASS

- CONTENTS
- The Holy Mass
  - PREFACE
    - I. CONTENTS OF THIS VOLUME
    - II. ZEAL OF ST. ALPHONSUS IN REGARD TO THE CELEBRATION OF MASS
    - III. MASS CONSIDERED IN ITS RELATIONS TO THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST, TO THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR, AND TO THE UNIVERSAL HISTORY OF RELIGION.
- The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, with a Short Explanation of the Prayers of Mass
  - NOTICE
  - THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST
    - I. THE SACRIFICES OF THE OLD LAW WERE FIGURES OF THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST
    - II. FULFILMENT OF THE PROPHETIC FIGURES
  - SHORT EXPLANATION OF THE PRAYERS OF MASS
    - FIRST PART. THE PREPARATION THAT IS MADE AT THE FOOT OF THE ALTAR
    - SECOND PART. FROM THE INTROIT TO THE CREDO
    - THIRD PART. THE OFFERTORY AND THE PREFACE
    - FOURTH PART. THE CANON
    - FIFTH PART. FROM THE PRAYER “LIBERA NOS” TILL THE COMMUNION
    - SIXTH PART THANKSGIVING
  - ACCOUNT OF THE MANNER IN WHICH THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, WHICH HAD BEEN STOLEN IN A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NAPLES, WAS MIRACULOUSLY FOUND, IN THE YEAR 1772

The Ceremonies of the Mass

- NOTICE
- *THE CEREMONIES OF THE MASS*
- *Chapter I*
  WHAT THE PRIEST SHOULD DO BEFORE GOING TO THE ALTAR
    - 1. PREPARATORY ACTS
    - 2. THE PREPARING OF THE MISSAL AND THE WASHING OF HANDS
    - 3. THE PREPARING OF THE CHALICE
    - 4. THE PRIEST ABOUT TO PUT ON THE SACRED VESTMENTS
    - 5. HE PUTS ON THE AMICE
    - 6. THE ALB
    - 7. THE MANIPLE
    - 8. THE STOLE
    - 9. THE CHASUBLE
- *Chapter II*
  LEAVING THE SACRISTY AND APPROACHING THE ALTAR
    - 1. THE PRIEST TAKES THE CHALICE AND PROCEEDS TO LEAVE THE SACRISTY
    - 2. THE PRIEST GOES FROM THE SACRISTY TO THE ALTAR
    - 3. THE PRIEST ARRIVES AT THE ALTAR
    - 4. THE PRIEST ASCENDS THE STEPS OF THE ALTAR WHEREON HE PLACES THE CHALICE
    - 5. THE PRIEST OPENS THE MISSAL, THEN DESCENDS TO THE FOOT OF THE ALTAR
- *Chapter III*
  THE BEGINNING OF THE MASS
    - 1. THE PRIEST, WITH HIS HANDS JOINED, MAKES AN INCLINATION OR A GENUFLECTION
    - 2. THE PRIEST MAKES THE SIGN OF THE CROSS
    - 3. THE PRIEST RECITES THE PSALM JUDICA ME

4. THE PRIEST RECITES THE CONFITEOR AND WHAT FOLLOWS IT, AS FAR AS THE PRAYER AUFER A NOBIS

Chapter IV
THE INTROIT, KYRIE, AND GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

1. THE PRIEST SAYS THE PRAYER ORAMUS TE, AND KISSES THE ALTAR

2. THE PRIEST READS THE INTROIT, AND RECITES THE KYRIE ELEISON

3. THE PRIEST RECITES THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

Chapter V
THE PRAYERS

1. THE PRIEST SALUTES THE PEOPLE, SAYING DOMINUS VOBISCUM

2. THE PRIEST RECITES THE PRAYER

3. THE PRAYERS ON THE EMBER DAYS

4. THE NUMBER OF PRAYERS

5. THE ORDER OF THE PRAYERS

Chapter VI
THE EPISTLE, THE GRADUAL, THE GOSPEL, AND THE CREDO

1. THE PRIEST READS THE EPISTLE, THE GRADUAL, AND WHAT FOLLOWS

2. THE PRIEST READS THE GOSPEL

3. THE PRIEST RECITES THE CREDO

4. AT WHICH MASSES SHOULD THE CREDO BE SAID

Chapter VII
THE OFFERTORY, THE SECRETA, AND THE PREFACE

1. THE PRIEST RECITES THE OFFERTORY

2. THE PRIEST UNCOVERS THE CHALICE AND OFFERS THE BREAD

3. THE PRIEST PUTS WINE AND WATER INTO THE CHALICE, AND OFFERS THEM

4. THE PRIEST BLESSES THE BREAD AND THE WINE

5. THE PRIEST WASHES HIS HANDS

6. THE PRIEST SAYS THE SUSCIPE SANCTA TRINITAS, THE ORATE FRATRES, AND THE SECRETA

7. THE PRIEST SAYS THE PREFACE

Chapter VIII
FROM THE CANON OF THE MASS TO THE CONSECRATION INCLUSIVELY

1. THE PRIEST RECITES THE PRAYER TE IGITUR

2. THE PRIEST MAKES THE MEMENTO FOR THE LIVING

3. THE PRIEST FINISHES THE PRAYER MEMENTO, AND SAYS THE FOLLOWING PRAYERS: COMMUNICANTES, HANC IGITUR, ET QUAM OBLATIONEM

4. THE PRIEST CONSECRATES THE HOST

5. THE PRIEST CONSECRATES THE CHALICE

Chapter IX
FROM THE CONSECRATION TILL THE PATER NOSTER EXCLUSIVELY

1. THE PRIEST SAYS THE PRAYERS UNDE ET MEMORES, SUPRA QUÆ, AND SUPPLICES

2. THE PRIEST MAKES THE MEMENTO FOR THE DEAD

3. THE PRIEST SAYS THE PRAYERS NOBIS QUOQUE PECCATORIBUS AND PER QUEM HÆC OMNIA

Chapter X
FROM THE PATER NOSTER AND THE ACTS THAT FOLLOW TILL THE PRIEST’S COMMUNION, INCLUSIVELY

1. THE PRIEST RECITES THE PATER NOSTER, AND BEGINS THE LIBERA NOS QUÆSUMUS

2. THE PRIEST CONTINUES UNTIL AFTER THE AGNUS DEI

3. THE PRIEST RECEIVES THE SACRED HOST

4. THE PRIEST TAKES THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

5. THE PRIEST TAKES THE ABLUTIONS, THEN COVERS THE CHALICE WITH THE VEIL AND THE BURSE

Chapter XI
THE PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION, AND THE END OF MASS

1. THE PRIEST RECITES THE COMMUNIO, THE POST-COMMUNIO, AND THE ITE MISSA EST

- 2. THE PRIEST RECITES THE PRAYER PLACEAT TIBI, AND GIVES THE BLESSING
- 3. THE PRIEST READS THE LAST GOSPEL
- 4. THE PRIEST LEAVES THE ALTAR AND RETURNS TO THE SACRISTY

Chapter XII
THE MANNER OF GIVING COMMUNION DURING MASS

- 1. THE MANNER OF GIVING COMMUNION WITH THE HOSTS CONSECRATED AT MASS
- 2. MANNER OF GIVING COMMUNION WITH THE HOSTS KEPT IN THE TABERNACLE
- 3. REMARKS IN REGARD TO THE HOSTS THAT ARE NOT CONSUMED
- 4. COMMUNION IS GIVEN DURING AND EVEN AFTER MASS
- 5. MANNER OF PURIFYING THE CIBORIUM
- 6. COMMUNION IN REQUIEM MASSES

Chapter XIII
COMMUNION GIVEN OUTSIDE OF MASS, EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER IT

Chapter XIV
WHAT IS OMITTED IN THE MASSES OF THE DEAD

Chapter XV
MASS CELEBRATED WHEN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT IS EXPOSED

Chapter XVI
MASS CELEBRATED BEFORE A BISHOP

Chapter XVII
THE FAULTS THAT ARE USUALLY COMMITTED IN CELEBRATING MASS

APPENDIX.

- I. NOTICE OF THE MISSAL
- II. THE ALTAR AND ITS ORNAMENTS.
- III. THE CHALICE AND ITS ACCESSORIES.
- IV. THE VESTMENTS.
- V. THE MATTER AND THE FORM OF THE SACRAMENT.

- VI. THE DISPOSITION OF THE CELEBRANT
- VII. ACCIDENTS.
- VIII. THE PLACE AND THE TIME IN WHICH ONE MAY CELEBRATE MASS
- IX. MASS WHEN CELEBRATED IN ALIENA ECCLESIA.
- X. THE SERVER OF MASS.

THE HONORARIUM OF MASSES, OR THE ABUSES TO WHICH IT GIVES RISE.

- 1. ANCIENT CUSTOM OF PUBLIC MASSES WITH OFFERINGS, AND ORIGIN OF PAID MASSES
- 2. ABUSES OCCASIONED BY THE ADMISSION OF HONORARIA, AND THE MEANS EMPLOYED TO REMEDY THEM
- 3. VARIOUS MEANS DEVISED TO ABOLISH THE HONORARIUM, AND THE REMEDY PROPOSED BY THE ANONYMOUS AUTHOR
- 4. EXAMINATION OF THE AUTHOR’S VIEWS; FIRST, AS TO PRIVATE MASSES
- 5. THE USE OF UNLEAVENED AND OF LEAVENED BREAD
- 6. THE ORIGIN OF HONORARIA.
- 7. THE VALUE AND APPLICATION OF THE FRUIT OF THE MASS
- 8. THE MASSES SPECIALLY APPLIED, FOR WHICH STIPENDS ARE GIVEN
- 9. THE CONTRACTS MADE IN REGARD TO THE HONORARIUM
- 10. THE ABOLITION OF HONORARIA AND THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF MASSES WITH OFFERINGS
- 11. THE CARE OF EXCLUDING UNWORTHY SUBJECTS FROM HOLY ORDERS
- 12. PRIVILEGED ALTARS

Preparation for Mass and Thanksgiving after it

I
PRAYERS OF THE MISSAL, AND PRAYERS TO WHICH INDULGENCES ARE ATTACHED

- PRÆPARATIO AD MISSAM
- INDULGENCED PRAYERS FOR PRIESTS
- POST CELEBRATIONEM ET COMMUNIONEM DICENDÆ

INDULGENCED PRAYERS FOR PRIESTS

II
ConsiderationS AND AFFECTIONS. VARIOUS PRAYERS

INTRODUCTION

1. IMPORTANCE OF THE HOLY SACRIFICE

2. THE MASS THAT IS CELEBRATED WITH BUT LITTLE RESPECT AND DEVOTION

3. PREPARATION FOR MASS

4. THANKSGIVING

5. A WORD TO THOSE THAT ABSTAIN FROM SAYING MASS THROUGH HUMILITY

PREPARATION FOR MASS

I. FOR SUNDAY

II. FOR MONDAY

III. FOR TUESDAY

IV. FOR WEDNESDAY

V. FOR THURSDAY

VI. FOR FRIDAY

VII. FOR SATURDAY

THANKSGIVING AFTER HOLY MASS FOR EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK

I. FOR SUNDAY

II. FOR MONDAY

III. FOR TUESDAY

IV. FOR WEDNESDAY

V. FOR THURSDAY

VI. FOR FRIDAY

VII. FOR SATURDAY

III
ConsiderationS AND AFFECTIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST. ACTS. ASPIRATIONS. PRAYERS

- INTRODUCTION
- THE RESPECT WITH WHICH ONE SHOULD CELEBRATE MASS
- PREPARATION FOR MASS
- I. FOR SUNDAY
- II. FOR MONDAY
- III. FOR TUESDAY
- IV. FOR WEDNESDAY
- V. FOR THURSDAY
- VI. FOR FRIDAY
- VII. FOR SATURDAY

THANKSGIVING AFTER MASS

- I. FOR SUNDAY
- II. FOR MONDAY
- III. FOR TUESDAY
- IV. FOR WEDNESDAY
- V. FOR THURSDAY
- VI. FOR FRIDAY
- VII. FOR SATURDAY

ACTS BEFORE COMMUNION

- I. AN ACT OF FAITH
- II. AN ACT OF CONFIDENCE
- III. AN ACT OF LOVE
- IV. AN ACT OF HUMILITY
- V. AN ACT OF CONTRITION

- VI. AN ACT OF DESIRE

ACTS AFTER COMMUNION

- I. AN ACT OF FAITH
- II. AN ACT OF WELCOME
- III. AN ACT OF THANKSGIVING
- IV. AN ACT OF OBLATION
- V. AN ACT OF PETITION

BEFORE COMMUNION

- I
- II
- III
- IV
- V
- VI
- VII
- VIII
- IX
- X
- XI
- XII

AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

- I
- II
- III
- IV
- V

  - VI
  - VII
  - VIII
  - IX
  - X
  - XI
  - XII
  - XIII
  - XIV
- DEVOUT ASPIRATIONS
  - TO BE MADE BEFORE AND AFTER COMMUNION, DRAWN FROM THE MANUSCRIPTS OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
  - I. BEFORE COMMUNION
  - II. AFTER COMMUNION AND AT THE VISIT TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT
  - VARIOUS PRAYERS
  - I. PETITIONS TO JESUS CHRIST RECEIVED IN HOLY COMMUNION
  - II. PRAYER OF ST. BONAVENTURE TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.
  - III. PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY, TO OBTAIN THE LOVE OF JESUS, AND LOVE TOWARDS HER
  - IV. LITANIÆ SANCTISSIMI NOMINIS JESU
  - V. LITANIÆ LAURETANÆ, B. M. V
- THE MASS AND THE OFFICE THAT ARE HURRIEDLY SAID
  - THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS HURRIEDLY SAID
  - I. IMPORTANCE OF THE HOLY SACRIFICE
  - II. THREE THINGS NECESSARY TO CELEBRATE WELL
  - III. THE PRIEST WHO ABSTAINS FROM SAYING MASS
- THE DIVINE OFFICE HURRIEDLY SAID

I. IMPORTANCE OF THE DIVINE OFFICE

II. NECESSITY OF RECITING THE OFFICE WELL

III REQUISITE ATTENTION AND DEVOTION

IV. LIGHTS AND GRACES DERIVED FROM THE OFFICE WELL RECITED

The Holy Mass

PREFACE

I. CONTENTS OF THIS VOLUME

WE may call this volume the Manual of the Celebrant. It is a collection of little works that St. Alphonsus published successively, in order to induce and aid priests to celebrate Mass well.

This volume has four parts, namely:

I. THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST.—The author here shows us in a few words the Sacrifice of our divine Saviour as prefigured in the Old Law, as accomplished on the cross, as continued on the altars, and as eternized in heaven. He then gives a short explanation of the prayers of Mass. We have added to it the account of a striking miracle which occurred in 1772, near Naples, and which confirms the truth of the Sacrament of the Altar.

II. THE CEREMONIES OF THE MASS.—It is a detailed explanation of the Rubrics, at least as to what concerns the private Mass. We have added thereto an Appendix, the substance of which is drawn from the Rubrics of the Missal and from the Moral Theology of our author. The Appendix is followed by a dissertation on the *Honorarium* of Masses, in which are briefly treated several interesting questions touching this subject.

III. PREPARATION FOR MASS AND THANKSGIVING AFTER MASS.—This is a large and varied collection, that offers us, in three parts, Considerations, Affections, Acts, Aspirations, and Prayers, for every day of the week; every one may select there—from what suits his devotion.

IV. THE MASS AND THE OFFICE THAT ARE HURRIEDLY SAID.—This little work is in the main a pressing exhortation addressed to the ministers at the altar, to induce them to fulfil worthily the double function with which they are specially charged; namely, to offer the holy Sacrifice and to celebrate the praises of God in the name of the Church. We add, that this is a fitting conclusion of the volume; for the first part of it is, as it were, the peroration or natural conclusion, and the second may serve as a preface or as a transition to the following volume, which has as its object the Divine Office.

II. ZEAL OF ST. ALPHONSUS IN REGARD TO THE CELEBRATION OF MASS

These different writings give evidence of the zeal that animated our venerated author in regard to the divine Sacrifice on our altars. From his childhood he was admired for the tender devotion with which he attended Mass, received Communion, or spent his time in adoring the Blessed Sacrament. This virtue only grew and became more perfect as he advanced in age. Even in the midst of the world, notwithstanding the occupations and the cares of the profession which he at first embraced, he went every day to visit his dear Lord exposed in one of the churches of Naples, and there on his knees and immovable, he spent long hours before the altar, contemplating the object of his affection with so humble and so recollectcd an attitude, that he appeared to be out of himself; all persons that saw him were profoundly edified. Such piety was to receive its reward; for thus we read in his writings: “I feel myself bound, at least out of gratitude to my Jesns in the Holy Sacrament, to declare that by means of this devotion of visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament, which I practised, though with so much tepidity and in so imperfect a manner, I abandoned the world, in which, unfortunately, I lived until six-and-twenty years of age.”[12439]

Such were his dispositions in the world; but one cannot imagine with what respect, with what care, with what dignity and with what fervor he celebrated the holy mysteries when he had the happiness of ascending the altar as a priest of the Most High, to consecrate and to hold in his hands the body and the blood of his well-beloved Jesus, and to be nourished every day with his heavenly food. Moreover, we can hardly picture to ourselves what was his preparation for an act of which he had so sublime an idea, and what was his conversation with his God living in him after Communion and during his long thanksgiving.

He never failed to celebrate Mass every day, unless he was obliged by an absolute necessity to omit doing so; in this case it was to him a very great privation. One day, at Naples, while he was going to say Mass in a church that was far distant, he was seized with violent cramps in the stomach, so that he was not able to go any farther. His companion advised him to enter some house and to use a remedy; but he answered: “I would rather walk ten more miles in order not to be deprived of the privilege of saying Mass.” Fortunately he recovered from his illness, and was able to satisfy his devotion.[12440] He had not the same consolation on another occasion, when he was at St. Agatha. Pressed by an accumulation of work, he labored every evening till a very advanced hour, and instead of taking supper he contented himself with taking a glass of water before going to bed. Once, however, he noticed that he had drunk the water a little after midnight. Being quite annoyed by this mishap, he at once sent for his servant and had him to bring him different watches to find out the exact time; but finding that they all agreed, he had to make up his mind to do without saying Mass as well as without receiving Communion, which was his resource whenever he was too ill to celebrate Mass. This accident was the cause of great affliction to him for several days.[12441]

When he was at the altar one had more than one occasion to admire the marvellous effects of his fervor, without speaking of the trembling, the palpitation, the extraordinary movements that he felt. At Modugno, in February, 1745, he was seen after the Consecration raised in the air at the height of several feet. At another time, at Nocera, while he was reciting the psalm *Judica me*, he all of a sudden stopped. A Father who was serving his Mass, thinking that his memory had failed him, without looking at him suggested several times the words to him; but all to no purpose: then raising his eyes, he saw the saint in an ecstasy.[12442]

At the altar he resembled an angel rather than a human being; after Communion his countenance appeared transformed, and all on fire.[12443]

He made it a rule for the priests of his religious Institute to celebrate Mass every day, and to employ in saying it half an hour, after having devoutly prepared themselves; they had then to make at least half an hours thanksgiving. He permitted the shortening of the time of thanksgiving only in case of necessity, as when many confessions had to be heard, and there were only a few confessors; they had, however, to make at least a quarter of an hour’s thanksgiving. He required that on retreat days, besides the half-hour’s ordinary meditation, the proximate preparation for Mass should last at least half an hour, and the thanksgiving a whole hour. He enjoined upon the members of his Institute the exact observance of the ceremonies of

Mass, and in order that they might not fail in this, he wished them carefully to study the Rubrics; for this purpose he established a special conference for the exercise of the Rubrics to be held on the first Monday of every month.

Obliged by obedience to assume the office of bishop in 1762, when he was sixty-six years of age, and bowed down by the weight of innumerable labors and grave infirmities, he at once made exact inquiries regarding the manner in which the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated in his diocese; he himself examined the priests on the subject about which he had his serious doubts, and he did not hesitate to suspend from the celebration of Mass those whom he found deficient in this respect, until they had duly corrected themselves. He moreover watched specially over the manner in which the churches were kept. In the course of his first pastoral visit he fell dangerously ill, received Extreme Unction, and hovered for several weeks between life and death. When he was hardly convalescent and still bedridden, an altar was erected in his room, where every day Mass was said, during which he communicated; he would then send for the priests whom he wished to examine, and made them go through the exercises of the Rubrics in his presence. As for priests newly ordained, he did not grant them permission to say Mass till he became certain that they were perfectly able to observe all the prescribed ceremonies. He used to say: “When a man has once become a cripple there is no longer any remedy for him.” He earnestly recommended to them never to neglect to make a suitable preparation and thanksgiving. “By the acts that precede the Mass,” he said, “especially by the act of contrition, one empties and purifies the vessel of one’s heart, and by those acts that follow Mass one fills this vessel with graces and heavenly gifts.” Such conduct did not fail to produce happy effects in his diocese, the state of which left much to be desired; thenceforward priests were seen carefully applying themselves to the celebration of Mass in an irreproachable and edifying manner.[12444]

In 1768, at the age of seventy-two, the holy bishop had to submit to a very severe trial. After a long and painful attack of rheumatism his neck became twisted and his head bent, so that his chin rested on his breast; he could not hold up his head. He had to resign himself to pass in this state the rest of his life, which was yet to last nineteen years. He had already, in 1765, asked in vain Pope Clement XIII. to be freed from his charge; he renewed his request, but without success. In the midst of all his sufferings he did not forget his flock. Having recovered little by little some strength, he again occupied himself with the affairs of his diocese and of his Congregation; he published more important books, and even entered the pulpit to preach. He, however, believed that he was obliged to give up saying Mass, because he was not able to raise his head to take the precious blood: this was a source of the greatest grief to him.

He had endured this privation for two years, when in a conversation with an Augustinian priest he began to speak of that which so sensibly afflicted his pious soul. The Father, however, remarked to him that on account of his infirmity he could be dispensed at the altar from performing certain ceremonies that were not essential, and that he could sit down in such a way as to make it convenient for him to take the precious blood. This advice was to him a ray of light that filled his heart with joy. He made the effort and succeeded. He immediately gave information of his good fortune to Father Villani, his Vicar-General in the government of his Institute and his spiritual director, by a letter dated August 27, 1770, in which he thus expresses himself: “To-day I again began to say Mass, and I hope to be able to continue. The whole difficulty was in taking the precious blood; but a means of doing so with ease has been pointed out to me. *Gloria Patri!”* Writing to the same Father on the following September 1, he says: “Thanks be to God! I continue to say Mass, but with great difficulty; when I finish Mass, I am nearly worn out and in great perspiration.” He afterwards obtained permission from Rome to say every day the Mass of the Blessed Virgin.

While making his thanksgiving after Mass he heard another Mass, which was said by his chaplain or another priest. During the recitation of the *Credo,* at the words *Et incarnatus est* he threw himself on his knees, holding himself profoundly inclined, notwithstanding the intense pain that he suffered; he did the same thing at the Consecration, although each time great efforts had to be made to raise him up and put him back into his chair.[12445]

He thus had the consolation of offering the Holy Sacrifice till his eighty-eighth year, either in his diocese or in the house of his Institute at Nocera, to which he retired in 1775, when Pope Pius VI. finally consented to relieve him of the burden of the episcopate. When at the altar, he was always most exact in observing all the Rubrics, even in making the genuflections down to the floor, although it was most difficult for him to do so, and each time great effort was required to raise him up. In 1784, when Father Villani saw that the difficulty of saying Mass was becoming extreme, so much so that it was often feared that the saint would not be able to finish it, he begged him to abstain from celebrating Mass in future, telling him that such was the will of God. The words “the will of God” made the saint bow his head in submission. On November 25, which was on a Friday, he made to God this great and perpetual sacrifice. He had still three years to live, during which he finished his eternal crown in the midst of new sufferings and the greatest trials, both interior and exterior, which he bore till the end in perfect conformity to the holy will of his God.[12446]

III. MASS CONSIDERED IN ITS RELATIONS TO THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST, TO THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR, AND TO THE UNIVERSAL HISTORY OF RELIGION.[12447]

The civil year is an abridgment of human life in which one naturally discerns four seasons; the day is an abridgment of the year. So also, the ecclesiastical year, which begins with Advent, is an abridgment of the principal mysteries of religion; and one may see in the ceremonies of the Mass an abridgment of the ecclesiastical year.

1. PREPARATION

The altar is erected, lit up by burning candles, adorned with verdure and flowers, and other decorations; legions of angels range themselves around it: think of the creation of the world. Sacred relics are deposited there; the saints descend from heaven and join the angels in order to adore our divine Saviour: think of the redemption of the world.

2. THE BEGINNING OF THE MASS

The priest arrives at the altar and inclines profoundly: the first man, opening his eyes to the light, pays homage to his Creator. The priest ascends the altar: man takes possession of the empire that God has prepared for him. The priest goes to open the Missal, and returns to the middle of the altar, where he again inclines: man receives the law from God, and promises to obey him. The priest descends from the altar: fall of man. The priest humbles himself and strikes his breast, then he stands erect, and ascends again the altar while praying: man acknowledges his fault; God has compassion on him, and promises him a Saviour; he is consoled, hopes, and prays while working. Let us remember our sins, let us humble ourselves, and let us pray with confidence.

3. KYRIE ELEISON

The patriarchs and the prophets sighed for the coming of the Messias during four thousand years; this is perfectly expressed by the repetition of this ardent prayer. Let us enter into the same sentiments, and let us ask Jesus Christ to be born and to grow in our hearts, while saying with fervor: *Kyrie eleison*, etc.

4. GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

It was the angels that intoned this magnificent hymn over the cradle of the Saviour, and the poor shepherds of Bethlehem have had the happiness of hearing it. Let us rejoice with them, and repeat this beautiful prayer, while meditating on each word.

5. PRAYER

Hidden life of Jesus Christ: the Son of God spends thirty years on earth in a most humble condition, in poverty, mortification, labor, patience, sweetness, charity, abnegation, obedience, piety; and before entering public life, he retired to the desert to give himself up to fasting and to prayer during forty days. What an example!

6. EPISTLE

The Epistle is an instruction that our Lord addresses to us through the mouth of the prophets or apostles in order to dispose us to hear him himself. Before appearing in the world, he announced himself through the prophets and his precursor, St. John the Baptist; and before going to preach the

Gospel in any place, he made his apostles or disciples precede him in order to prepare men’s minds to receive him.

7. GOSPEL

Here is our Lord going to instruct us by his own mouth. Let us rise in order to pay to him our respects, to show him that we are ready to obey him; let us make the sign of the cross on our forehead, on our lips, and on our hearts, to consecrate to him our thoughts, our words, and our affections.

8. CREDO

The *Credo* is an act of faith in the principal truths that God has revealed to his Church; that which is recited at the Mass is the Symbol of the Councils of Nice and Constantinople. Let us, say it with faith, love, and thanksgiving for the happiness that we have of being Catholics.

9. OFFERTORY

The Offertory well represents the Lord’s Supper, in which our Lord celebrated for the last time the sacrifice of the Old Law before substituting for it the sacrifice of the New Law, of which the Old Law was the figure. Let us offer with the priest the bread and the wine, destined to be changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

10. LAVABO

The priest washes his hands: our divine Master washes the feet of his disciples, to give us a grand example of humility and charity, and to teach us how pure we should be in order to participate in the adorable mystery that he is about to institute.

11. ORATE FRATRES

The priest invites us to pray with more fervor in order that his Sacrifice, which is also ours, may be agreeable to God. Let us answer him with our whole heart: *Suscipiat Dominus*, etc.

12. PREFACE

The Preface is the giving of thanks. Before consecrating bread and wine our divine Saviour raised his eyes towards heaven and gave thanks to his Father; this is the reason why the priest in finishing the prayer called *Secreta,* raises his voice and invites us to thank God through Jesus Christ.

13. MEMENTO OF THE LIVING

Let us here call to mind that Mass has a twofold object: the sacrament of the Eucharist and the sacrifice of the cross which it represents and renews. When leaving the supper-room to go to the Garden of Olives, our Lord offered a fervent prayer for himself and for his Church; this is also done by the priest at this moment: let us unite ourselves to him.

14. HANC IGITUR OBLATIONEM

While saying this prayer the priest holds his two hands extended over the host and the chalice in order to unite himself with the assistants and all the faithful, as in the sacrifices of the Old Law, to the divine Victim who is about to immolate himself for the salvation of all. Let each one unite his intention to that of the celebrant, while saying with hint: *Hanc igitur,* etc.

15. CONSECRATION

This is the great moment: the miracle of love is wrought; the minister of God receives and adores Jesus Christ in his hands. The elevation of the Host and of the Chalice represents the crucifixion, and the separation of the holy species represents the death of our Lord. Let us reanimate our faith; let us prostrate ourselves, and adore.

16. MEMENTO OF THE DEAD

When our Lord drew his last breath on the cross, being entirely consumed for our salvation, his holy soul descended in triumph to Limbo and Purgatory in order to console and deliver the just that were expecting his coming. Let us ask him to visit again at this moment the souls of the faithful departed, and let us think of those to whom we should more particularly give our assistance.

17. PATER NOSTER

Let us visit in spirit the tomb of our Saviour, and while confiding in the merits of his life and death, recite with confidence the admirable prayer that he has taught us.

18. PAX DOMINI

While pronouncing these words the priest drops a part of the Host into the Chalice; the two species thus reunited represent the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and peace is announced to the world as it was announced at his birth.

19. AGNUS DEI

Preparation for Communion.—If we have not the happiness of communicating sacramentally with the priest, let us not fail to make a spiritual Communion by uniting ourselves interiorly to Jesus Christ, by a sincere desire to receive him and by an act of fervent love: we should therefore always say the prayers before and after Communion, whether sacramental or spiritual. What hinders our union with God is sin: let us then, before all, beg the Victim, who is without stain, to free us from sin, while saying *Agnus Dei,* etc., three times with the priest, and striking our breasts as if acknowledging ourselves guilty.

20. POST-COMMUNION

Jesus is no longer on the altar; he is in heaven, at the right hand side of God his Father, and on earth in the hearts of those that have piously received him. After the Ascension, the chief disciples retired with the Blessed Virgin to the *Cenaculum,* to await there in recollection and prayer the divine Consoler whom Jesus Christ promised to his Church: let us imitate them.

21. BLESSING

The Coming Down of the Holy Ghost.—Let us ask him to penetrate our minds and our hearts, and to fill us with his gifts.

22. LAST GOSPEL

The preaching of the Gospel throughout the world; perpetual struggle of light with darkness, of truth with error, of good with evil. He that has fought well shall be crowned.

Praise be Jesus Christ forever!

The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, with a Short Explanation of the Prayers of Mass

The little work that we place at the beginning of this volume has already appeared in Volume VI. for ordinary readers; but we believe it necessary to reproduce it in this volume, to which it properly belongs St. Alphonsus published it with *The Victories of the Martyrs*, in 1776, when he was eighty years old (Tannoia and Villecourt, “Life of St. Alphonsus,” 1. 4, ch. 3). We add an account of a great miracle that was wrought confirming the truth of the Blessed Sacrament.—ED.

NOTICE

I ACKNOWLEDGE to have drawn this little treatise on the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ from a work composed by a learned French author.[12448] His work is complete and somewhat diffuse. I have composed and have published this abridgment because of the profit that may be derived from it, not only by the priests who say Mass, but by the faithful who are present at it.

My little work bears the title “The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ,” for, although we distinguish by different names the Sacrifice of the Cross from the Sacrifice of the Altar, yet it is substantially the same sacrifice. In fact, we find at the altar the same victim and the same priest that one day offered himself on the cross. The Sacrifice of the Altar is a continuation or a renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross, and differs from it only in the manner in which it is offered.

THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST

I. THE SACRIFICES OF THE OLD LAW WERE FIGURES OF THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST

All the sacrifices of the old law were figures of the sacrifice of our divine Redeemer, and there were four kinds of these sacrifices; namely, the sacrifices of peace, of thanksgiving, of expiation, and of impetration.

1. The *sacrifices of peace* were instituted to render to God the worship of adoration that is due to him as the sovereign master of all things. Of this kind were the holocausts.

2. The *sacrifices of thanksgiving* were destined to give thanks to the Lord for all his benefits.

3. The *sacrifices of expiation* were established to obtain the pardon of sin. This kind of sacrifice was specially represented in the Feast of the Expiation by the emissary-goat,[12449] which, having been laden with all the sins of the people, was led forth out of the camp of the Hebrews, and afterwards abandoned in the desert to be there devoured by ferocious beasts. This sacrifice was the most expressive figure of the sacrifice of the cross. Jesus Christ was laden with all the sins of men, as Isaias had foretold: *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*[12450] He was afterwards ignominiously led forth from Jerusalem, whither the Apostle invites us to follow him by sharing in his opprobrium: *Let us go forth therefore to him without the camp, bearing his reproach.*[12451] He was abandoned to ferocious beasts; that is to say, to the Gentiles, who crucified him.

4. Finally, the *sacrifices of impetration* had for their object to obtain from God his aid and his grace.

Now, all these sacrifices were abolished by the coming of the Redeemer, because only the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which was a perfect sacrifice, while all the ancient sacrifices were imperfect, was sufficient to expiate all the sins, and merit for man every grace. This is the reason why the Son of God on entering the world said to his Father: *Sacrifice and oblation Thou* *wouldst not; but a body Thou hast fitted to me. Holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I: Behold, I come; in the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do Thy will, O God.*[12452] Hence, by offering to God the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we can fulfil all our duties towards his supreme majesty, and provide for all our wants; and by his means we succeed in maintaining a holy intercourse between God and ourselves.

We must also know that the Old Law exacted five conditions in regard to the victims which were to be offered to God so as to be agreeable to him; namely, sanctification, oblation, immolation, consumption, and participation.

1. The victim had to be *sanctified,* or consecrated to God, so that there might not be offered to him anything that was not holy nor unworthy of his majesty. Hence, the animal destined for sacrifice had to be without stain, without defect; it was not to be blind, lame, weak, nor deformed, according to what was prescribed in the Book of Deuteronomy.[12453] This condition indicated that such would be the Lamb of God, the victim promised for the salvation of the world; that is to say, that he would be holy, and exempt from every defect. We are thereby instructed that our prayers and our other good works are not worthy of being offered to God, or at least can never be fully agreeable to him, if they are in any way defective. Moreover, the animal thus sanctified could no longer be employed for any profane usage, and was regarded as a thing consecrated to God in such a manner that only a priest was permitted to touch it. This shows us how displeasing it is to God if persons concecrated to him busy themselves without real necessity with the things of the world, and thus live in distraction and in neglect of what concerns the glory of God.

2. The victim had to be *offered* to God; this was done by certain words that the Lord himself had prescribed.

3. It had to be *immolated,* or put to death; but this immolation was not always brought about by death, properly so called; for the sacrifice of the loaves of proposition, or show-bread, was accomplished, for example, without using iron or fire, but only by means of the natural heat of those who ate of them.

4. The victim had to be *consumed.* This was done by fire. The sacrifice in which the victim was entirely consumed by fire was called holocaust. The

victim was thus entirely annihilated in order to indicate by this destruction the unlimited power that God has over all his creatures, and that as he created them out of nothing, so he can reduce them to the nothingness from which they came. In fact, the principal end of the sacrifice is to acknowledge God as a sovereign being, so superior to all things that everything before him is purely nothing; for all things are nothing in presence of him who possesses all things in himself. The smoke that came from this sacrifice and arose in the air signified that God received it as a sweet odor,—that is to say, with pleasure,—as is written of the sacrifice of Noe: *Noe . . . offered holocausts upon the altar; and the Lord smelled a sweet savor.*[12454]

5. All the people, together with the priest, had to be partakers of the victim. Hence, in the sacrifices, excepting the holocaust, the victim was divided into three parts, one part of which was destined for the priest, one for the people, and one for the fire. This last part was regarded as belonging to God, who by this means communicated in some manner with those who were partakers of the victim.

These five conditions are found reunited in the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb. The Lord had commanded Moses[12455] that, on the tenth day of the month on which the Jews had been delivered from the slavery of Egypt, a lamb of one year and without blemish should be taken and separated from the flock; and thus were verified the conditions enumerated above, namely: 1. The separation of the lamb signified that it was a victim *consecrated* to God; 2. This consecration was succeeded by the *oblation,* which took place in the Temple, where the lamb was presented; 3. On the fourteenth day of the month the *immolation* took place, or the lamb was killed; 4. Then the lamb was roasted and divided among those present; and this was the partaking of it, or communion; 5. Finally, the lamb having been eaten, what remained of it was *consumed* by fire, and thus was the sacrifice consummated.

II. FULFILMENT OF THE PROPHETIC FIGURES

The Sacrifice of our Lord, as we have said, was a perfect sacrifice, of which those sacrifices of the Old Law were but signs, imperfect figures, and what the Apostle calls *weak and needy elements*.[12456] The sacrifice offered by

Jesus Christ really fulfilled all the conditions mentioned above. The first condition, which is the *sanctification,* or the consecration of the victim, was accomplished in the Incarnation of the Word by God the Father himself, as is mentioned in the Gospel of St. John: *Whom the Father hath sanctified.*[12457] Likewise, when announcing to the Blessed Virgin that she was chosen to be the Mother of the Son of God, the Angel said: *The Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*[12458] Thus this divine victim, who was to be sacrificed for the salvation of the world, had already been sanctified by God, when he was born of Mary. From the first moment in which the Eternal Word took a human body, he was consecrated to God to be the victim of the great sacrifice that was to be accomplished on the Cross for the salvation of men. In regard to this our Lord said to his Father: *But a body Thou hast fitted to me . . . that I should do Thy will, O God.*[12459]

The second condition, or the *oblation,* was also fulfilled at the moment of the Incarnation, when Jesus Christ voluntarily offered himself to atone for the sins of men. Knowing that divine justice could not be satisfied by all the ancient sacrifices, nor by all the works of men, he offered himself to atone for all the sins of men, and hence he said to God, *Sacrifices, and oblations, and holocausts for sin, Thou wouldst not. . . . Then said I, Behold, I come to do Thy will, O God.*[12460] Then the Apostle adds immediately, *In which will we are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once.*[12461] This last text is remarkable. Sin had rendered all men unworthy of being offered to God and of being accepted by him, and, therefore, it was necessary that Jesus Christ should offer himself for us in order to sanctify us by his grace, and to make us worthy of being accepted by God. And this offering which our Lord then made of himself did not limit itself to that moment, but it only then began; it always has continued since, and it will continue forever. It is true it will cease on earth at the time of Antichrist: the Sacrifice of the Mass is to be suspended for twelve hundred and ninety days; that is, for three years six months and a half, according to the prophecy of Daniel: *And from the time when the continual sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination unto desolation shall be set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred ninety days.*[12462] Yet the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ will never cease, since the Son of God will always continue to offer himself to his Father by an eternal sacrifice, for he himself is the priest and the victim, but an eternal victim and an eternal priest, not according to the order of Aaron, of which the priesthood and the sacrifice were temporary, imperfect, and inadequate to appease the anger of God against rebellious man, but according to the order of Melchisedech, as David predicted: *Thou art a priest according to the order of Melchisedech.*[12463] The priesthood of Jesus Christ will, therefore, be eternal, since, even after the end of the world, he will always continue to offer in heaven this same victim that he once offered on the Cross for the glory of God and for the salvation of mankind.

The third condition of the sacrifice—namely, the *immolation* of the victim—was evidently accomplished by the death of our Lord on the Cross.

There remains for us yet to verify, in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the two other conditions requisite to render a sacrifice perfect—that is, the *consumption* of the victim and the *partaking* of it.

It is then asked, What was this consumption of the victim in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ? for although his body was by death separated from his holy soul, yet it was not consumed, nor destroyed.

The anonymous author of whom I spoke in the beginning, says that this fourth condition was fulfilled by the resurrection of our Lord; for, then, his adorable body was divested of all that is terrestrial and mortal, and was clothed in divine glory. He adds that it is this glory that Jesus Christ asked of his Father before his death: *And now glorify Thou me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee.*[12464] Our Lord did not ask this glory for his divinity, since he possessed it from all eternity as being the Word equal to the Father; but he asked it for his humanity, and he obtained it at his resurrection, by which he entered in a certain manner into his divine glory.

In speaking of the fifth condition, which is, the *partaking* of the victim, or Communion, the same author says that it is also fulfilled in heaven, where all the blessed are partakers of the victim of the Sacrifice that Jesus Christ continues to offer to God while offering himself.

These two reflections, made by the author to explain the last two conditions of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, are wise and ingenious; but for myself I think that the two conditions of which there is question, namely, the consumption and Communion, are manifestly fulfilled in the Sacrifice of the Altar, which, as has been declared by the Council of Trent, is the same as that of the Cross. In fact, the Sacrifice of the Mass, instituted by our Lord before his death, is a continuation of the Sacrifice of the Cross. Jesus Christ wished that the price of his blood, shed for the salvation of men, should be applied to us by the Sacrifice of the Altar; in which the victim offered is the same, though it is there offered differently from what it is on the Cross, that is, without the shedding of blood. These are the words of the Council of Trent: “Although Christ our Lord was to offer himself once to his Eternal Father on the altar of the Cross by actually dying to obtain for us eternal redemption, yet as his priesthood was not to become extinct by his death, in order to leave his Church a visible sacrifice suited to the present condition of men, a sacrifice which might at the same time represent to us the bloody sacrifice consummated on the Cross, preserve the memory of it to the end of the world, and apply the salutary fruits of it for the remission of the sins which we daily commit; at his last supper, on the very night on which he was betrayed, giving proof that he was established a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech, he offered to God the Father his body and blood, under the appearances of bread and wine, and, under the same symbols, gave them to the apostles, whom he constituted at the same time priests of the New Law. By these words, ‘Do ye this in remembrance of me,’ he commissioned them and their successors in the priesthood to consecrate and offer his body and blood, as the Catholic Church has always understood and taught.”[12465] And further on the Council declares that the Lord, appeased by the oblation of the Sacrifice of Mass, grants us his graces and the remission of sins. It says: “It is one and the same victim; the one that offers sacrifice is the same one who, after having sacrificed himself on the Cross, offers himself now by the ministry of the priest; there is no difference except in the manner of offering.”[12466]

Jesus Christ has, then, paid the price of our redemption in the Sacrifice of the Cross. But he wishes that the fruit of the ransom given should be applied to us in the Sacrifice of Altar, being himself in both the chief sacrificer, who offers the same victim, namely, his own body and his own blood;—with this difference only, that on the Cross his blood was shed, while it is not shed at the altar. Hence the Roman catechism[12467] teaches that the Sacrifice of the Mass does not serve only to praise God and to thank him for the gifts that he has granted us, but it is a true propitiatory sacrifice, by which we obtain from the Lord pardon for our sins and the graces of which we stand in need. Because the fruit of the death of Jesus Christ is applied to us by the Sacrifice of the Altar, the Church expresses herself thus in her prayers: “As often as the memory of the Sacrifice of the Cross is celebrated, so often is accomplished the work of our redemption.”[12468]

Now, in the Mass we find not only the three essential parts of the Sacrifice of the Cross—that is, the sanctification and oblation of the victim, as also the immolation, which is here done mystically, the consecration of the body and that of the blood taking place separately,—but we also find the two other parts of the sacrifice; namely, the destruction or consumption, communion or partaking, of the victim. The destruction or consumption is accomplished by the natural heat of those who receive the consecrated Host. Communion or partaking of the victim consists in the distribution of the Holy Eucharist to the faithful who approach the altar for this purpose.

In this manner we clearly see realized in the Sacrifice of the Altar the five conditions required in the ancient sacrifices, all of which were signs and figures of the great Sacrifice of our Lord.[12469]

SHORT EXPLANATION OF THE PRAYERS OF MASS

Mass is rightly divided into six parts. The first part is the preparation for the sacrifice; and this is made at the foot of the altar. The second part extends from the Introit to the Credo, inclusively—and was formerly called the Mass of the Catechumens, who had to leave the church after the Credo. The third part contains the Offertory and the Preface. The fourth part comprises the Canon with the *Pater Noster;* for the Canon in olden times finished with the *Pater Noster,* as a learned author concludes from a passage in the writings of St. Gregory the Great.[12470] The fifth part begins with the prayer *Libera nos, quæsumus, Domine* ("Deliver us, O Lord, we beseech Thee"), which is a preparation for Communion, and includes Communion. The sixth and last part comprises under the form of thanksgiving the rest of the Mass.

FIRST PART. THE PREPARATION THAT IS MADE AT THE FOOT OF THE ALTAR

In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen ("In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen").

In order to sacrifice a victim one must have the power over its life and death; but as God only has the power over the life of his incarnate Son, who is the victim of the Sacrifice of the Mass, the priest needs divine authority in order to be able to offer Jesus Christ to his heavenly Father. Yet as he is invested with the authority that belongs to the priesthood, he says, in union with Jesus Christ, who is the principal one that offers that sacrifice, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; thus declaring that he offers the sacrifice by the authority of the three Persons.

The priest afterwards recites the antiphon *Introibo ad altare Dei* ("I will go unto the altar of God"), and the psalm *Judica me Deus* ("Judge me, O God"). He implores the help of God against the enemies who are laying snares for him. Then expressing the pain that he feels of seeing himself, as it were, rejected by the Lord, he begs him to assist him with his light, and to console him with the graces that he promised by leading him into his tabernacle. Finally, he reproaches himself for indulging in fear, for why should he be troubled when he has with him his God in whom he should confide?

Innocent III.[12471] attests that the recitation before Mass of the psalm *Judica me* was the custom of his time, that is, in the twelfth century; and Cardinal Lambertini, afterwards Benedict XIV.,[12472] assures us that it was recited before the eighth century. The psalm is concluded with the *Gloria Patri*. It was Pope St. Damasus who ordained that each psalm should be concluded in this manner. It is, however, believed that the *Gloria Patri* was introduced by the Council of Nice, or, as we are told by Baronius[12473] and St. Basil, even by the Apostles, the Council of Nice having added only these words, *Sicut erat*, etc.

Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini ("Our help is in the name of the Lord"). Affrighted by the grandeur of the act he is about to perform, and by the thought of his unworthiness, the priest asks God's help in the name of Jesus Christ; and acknowledging himself guilty, he accuses himself of his sins, not only before God, but before the Blessed Virgin and all the saints, who on the last day, with Jesus Christ, will pronounce judgment upon sinners.

Deus, tu conversus, vivificabis nos ("Thou, O Lord," says the priest, "wilt turn and bring us to life"). The sinner remains in death so long as God in his goodness does not come to restore to him the life of grace. Then he implores anew the divine mercy: *Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam* ("Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy"); and supplicates the Lord to hear him: *Domine, exaudi orationem meam* ("O Lord, hear my prayer").

Before leaving the people to go up to the altar, the priest says to them, *Dominus vobiscum* ("The Lord be with you"). By these words he wishes and asks that Jesus Christ may grant to the people as well as to himself the effects of the prayers that he has said; and the server expresses to him the same wish when answering for all the people: *Et cum spiritu tuo* ("And with Thy spirit"). These reciprocal wishes indicate the union of faith in Jesus Christ that exists between the priest and the people.

Aufer a nobis, etc. ("Take away from us our iniquities, etc."). In going up the steps of the altar, the priest begs the Lord to deliver him from all iniquities, in order that he may approach the Holy of Holies with a pure heart; that is to say, in order that he may worthily offer up the great sacrifice.

Oramus te, Domine, per merita Sanctorum tuorum, etc. (“We beseech Thee, O Lord, by the merits of Thy saints, etc.”). Having reached the altar, he kisses it, to unite himself to Jesus Christ, represented by the altar; and, through the merits of the holy martyrs whose relics are therein enclosed, he conjures our Lord to deign to pardon him all his sins.

From the first ages the Church was accustomed to offer up the Eucharistic sacrifice on the tombs of the martyrs who had sacrificed their lives for God, and who for this reason have always been particularly honored in the Church. During the first period of the Church there were no other festivals than those of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, those of the Blessed Virgin, and the anniversaries of the martyrs. However, it is not to the saints, but only to God that altars are erected, “and,” as St. Augustine says, “we have not erected an altar to the martyr, Stephen, but with the relics of the martyr Stephen we have erected an altar to God.”[12474]

SECOND PART. FROM THE INTROIT TO THE CREDO

It is usually in the Introit that the Church proposes the subject of the feast that is celebrated. Mention is therein made of some divine mystery, of the Blessed Virgin, or of some other saint whom the Church honors on that day, so that we simply render this honor to the saint, since the sacrifice, as we have said, is offered only to God. It is asserted that the author of the Introit is St. Gregory the Great, as may be seen in the works of Benedict XIV.[12475]

Kyrie, eleison; Christe, eleison. These are Greek words that mean “Lord, or Christ, have mercy.” This prayer is addressed three times to the Father, three times to the Son, and three times to the Holy Ghost. Durand[12476] says that Mass was begun to be said in Greek in the Oriental Church at the time of the Emperor Adrian I., about the year 140. Pope St. Sylvester ordered that, after the example of the Greeks, the *Kyrie eleison* should be said in the Latin Church. According to Cardinal Bellarmine[12477] this custom was introduced into Italy about a hundred and fifty years before St. Gregory. Thereby is shown the union that exists between the Greek and the Latin Church.

Gloria in excelsis Deo, etc. (“Glory be to God on high, etc.”). This canticle or prayer is formed of the words that the celestial choirs used when the Angel came to announce to the shepherds the birth of the Saviour; “Glory to God in the highest: and on earth peace to men of good will.”[12478] The remaining words were added by the Church. In it God is thanked for his glory, because God has used our salvation for his glory by saving us through Jesus Christ, who, in offering himself as a sacrifice to his Father, has procured salvation for men, and has given, at the same time, infinite glory to God. Then the Church, addressing herself to Jesus Christ, asks him by the merits of his sacrifice to have pity on us; and she concludes by proclaiming him: *Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen* (“For Thou only art holy; Thou only art Lord; Thou only, O Jesus Christ, art Most High in the glory of God the Father. Amen”). For our Saviour, who sacrifices himself as a victim, is at the same time God, equal to Him to whom the sacrifice is offered.

Then follows the prayer or Collect, thus called because the priest, performing the office of mediator between God and men, collects all the prayers of the people, and presents them to God. The Collect is said in a suppliant manner, with outstretched and raised hands. In these prayers are asked of God the graces that have reference to the mystery of the day: for example, at Easter, the grace to rise with Jesus Christ, and at the Ascension to dwell with him in spirit in heaven; or we ask for those graces that we wish to obtain through the intercession of the saint whose feast we are celebrating. But all these prayers are concluded with the name of Jesus Christ: *Per Dominium nostrum Jesum Christum* (“Through our Lord Jesus Christ”). Because all the graces that we obtain are given to us chiefly in view of the merits of Jesus Christ. It is not true, as the innovators say, that we offer the Sacrifice of the Altar to the saints. It is altogether false; for we know very well that the sacrifice, being a cult or worship that is due to the sovereign Lord of the universe, can be offered only to God; and if at the Mass we make mention of the saints, we do so only because of the favors that they have received from God, to whom they acknowledge they are indebted for all the happiness that they possess.

Here follow the Epistle and the Gospel. While listening to the reading of the Epistle, we must hear it as if it is God himself who speaks by the mouth of his prophets and apostles.

The Epistle is followed by the Gradual, which, according to Bellarmin, was sung in former times while the deacon ascended the steps of the *ambo*—an elevated pulpit—to read the Gospel. The Gradual was followed by the *Alleluia,* a Hebrew word that signifies *Praise the Lord.* But in Lent the *Alleluia,* which expresses joy, is replaced by the Tract, which Abbot Rupert calls the *lamentation of penitents (Pœnitentium lamentum).*

The priest then leaving the left side of the altar, which represents the Jewish people, passes to the right side, which represents the Gentiles, who accepted the Gospel that was rejected by the Jews. We should listen to the Gospel as if we heard the words of our divine Saviour instructing us himself, and we should at the same time ask him for the necessary help to put in practice what he teaches. It is an ancient custom to stand during the reading of the Gospel, to show that we are ready to follow the precepts and counsels that our Lord points out to us.

Credo ("I believe"). While the priest is reciting the symbol, we should renew our faith in all the mysteries and all the dogmas that the Church teaches. By the *symbol* was formerly understood a military sign, a mark by which many recognize one another, and are distinguished from one another: this at present distinguishes believers from unbelievers. Benedict XIV.[12479] tells us that at Rome the recitation of the symbol during Mass was begun only in the eleventh century.

THIRD PART. THE OFFERTORY AND THE PREFACE

The Offertory embraces everything from the *Dominus vobiscum* till the Preface. In offering the bread and wine the priest calls them *the immaculate Host, the Chalice of salvation.* We should not be astonished at this; for all the prayers and all the ceremonies before and after the consecration have reference to the divine Victim. It is at the moment of consecration that the Victim presents himself to God, that he offers himself to him, and that the sacrifice is offered; but as these different acts cannot be explained at the same time, they are explained one after the other. The priest then offers by anticipation the bread prepared for the sacrifice, and while saying, *Suscipe,* *sancte Pater, hanc immaculatam Hostiam*, etc. (“Accept, O holy Father, this immaculate Host, etc.”); and he offers the wine as if it had already been consecrated, by saying, *Offerimus tibi, Domine, Calicem salutaris,* etc. (“We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the Chalice of salvation, etc.”); because this wine, being afterwards changed into the blood of Jesus Christ, becomes our salvation. St. Augustine says that as at the Eucharistic Table our Saviour offers us to eat and to drink his body and his blood, we should also offer to him our body and our blood by giving ourselves entirely to him, being ready to sacrifice our life for his glory, should it be necessary. These are the beautiful words of the holy Doctor: “You know what this banquet is, and what nourishment is offered you at this table. Since Jesus Christ gives entirely his body and his blood, let no one approach without giving himself entirely to the Lord.”[12480]

A little water is mixed with the wine to represent the mixture or the union that takes place in the Incarnation of the Word between the divinity and the humanity, and also to represent the intimate union that is effected in the sacramental Communion between Jesus Christ and the person who communicates—a union which St. Augustine calls *Mixtura Dei et hominis* (“A mixture of God and of man”). Hence the priest, in the prayer which he recites while mixing the water with the wine, beseeches God to grant that, as his divine Son became partaker of our humanity, we may be made partakers of his divinity. The Council of Trent declares that this mingling of water and of wine in the chalice is prescribed: “The holy Synod admonishes that it is enjoined on the priests by the Church that they should mix water with the wine that is to be offered in the chalice, as it is believed that the Lord has done the same thing.”[12481] However, this is only an ecclesiastical, not a divine precept.

Offerimus tibi, Domine, Calicem salutaris, etc. (“We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the Chalice of salvation, etc.”). The chalice of salvation is offered to the Lord, so that it may arise in his divine presence as an agreeable odor, for our salvation and for the salvation of the whole world. Cardinal Bona,[12482] in his Liturgy, assures us that neither in the *Sacramentarium* of St. Gregory, nor in other authors, is any prayer found for the offering of the bread and of the wine; however, the same Cardinal says that in the ancient Liturgy which he caused to be published we find the prayers that were recited by the clergy as well as by the faithful when the latter presented to the priest their offerings. Moreover, our French author says that the prayers recited at present by the priest at the oblation of the bread and of the wine have reference to the offerings which the faithful formerly made, not at the altar, but at the balustrade of the choir.

In spiritu humilitatis et in animo contrito suscipiamur a te, Domine, etc. (“In the spirit of humility, and with a contrite heart, let us be received by Thee, O Lord, etc.”). The priest presents himself before our Lord with an humble and a contrite heart, and begs him to bless the great sacrifice that is about to be offered: *Veni, Sanctificator,* etc. (“Come, O Sanctifier, etc.”).

Then he goes to wash his hands, out of respect for this divine sacrifice, while reciting the psalm *Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas,* etc. (‘‘I will wash my hands among the innocent, etc.”).

Suscipe, Sancta Trinitas, etc. (“Receive, O Holy Trinity, etc.”). By this prayer the priest offers to God Jesus Christ as a victim already immolated by his death on the Cross. Heretics calumniate us when they affirm that we offer to God two different sacrifices, namely, the sacrifice of the Cross and that of the altar. We reply to them that there are not two sacrifices, since, as we have already explained elsewhere, the sacrifice of the altar is a memorial of the sacrifice of the Cross; it is really the same sacrifice as that of the Cross, Jesus Christ being there the principal offerer and the victim that is offered.

Orate, fratres, etc. (“Brethren, pray, etc.”). By these words the priest exhorts the people to supplicate the Lord to receive this sacrifice for the glory of his name and the good of the faithful. The server then answers in the name of the people by praying to God to accept this sacrifice: *Suscipiat Dominus Sacrificium de manibus tuis,* etc. (“May the Lord receive this sacrifice from thy hands, etc.”).

Then follows the *Secret,* a prayer that refers to the offerings made by the people, namely, of the bread and wine that are to be changed into the body and the blood of Jesus Christ. The Church asks the Lord to bless them and to render them profitable, not only to those who present them, but to all the faithful, just as may be seen in the Secret of the fifth Sunday after Pentecost: “Mercifully receive, O Lord, these offerings of thy servants; that what each hath offered to the honor of thy name, may avail to the salvation of all.”[12483] Thus the Offertory is concluded.

Before passing to the Canon, the priest reads the Preface, in which he exhorts the faithful to raise their hearts to God: *Sursum corda* (“Lift up your hearts”). The people answer that they have already done so: *Habemus ad Dominum* (“We have lifted them to the Lord”). And the priest continues by inviting them to unite with him in thanking the Lord: *Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro* (“Let us give thanks to our Lord God”). He afterwards says that it is just and salutary to render thanks through Jesus Christ, who alone can worthily give thanks for the eternal salvation and for so many benefits granted to men and also to angels, who also give thanks to God through Jesus Christ for all the gifts that they have received. The priest entreats the Lord to accept our prayers united with those of the angels, who celebrate his glory by repeating without ceasing the canticle, *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth!*[12484] (“Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts!”); and he concludes by repeating the words used by the Jewish people in their acclamations at the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem: *Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini! Hosanna in excelsis!*[12485] (“Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”)

FOURTH PART. THE CANON

Te igitur, clementissime Pater, etc. (“We therefore humbly pray and beseech Thee, most merciful Father, etc.”). Here begins what we call the *Canon* of the Mass, which the Council of Trent declares to be free from every error,[12486] since it is composed of the very words of our Lord, of the traditions of the apostles, and of pious regulations of the Holy See.[12487] The Canon is very ancient: it was already in use in the fourth century, according to the testimony of St. Ambrose.[12488] The priest first prays to his heavenly Father in the name of the whole Church, and through the merits of Jesus Christ, to accept and to bless the offerings that are made to him, and that are called gifts without spot: *Hæc dona, hæc munera, hæc sancta sacrificia illibata* (These gifts, these presents, these holy unspotted sacrifices”). These words apply not only to the bread and the wine that have been offered, but refer by anticipation to the body and the blood of Jesus Christ, into which the bread and the wine are soon to be changed; hence they are called unspotted sacrifices Innocent III. refers these last words to the purity of the heart and of the body with which the priest should celebrate Mass: “We call them by this name because of the purity of heart and of body with which the priest should offer them.”[12489] But this is rather a spiritual and mystical reflection, the proper explanation is that which precedes it above.

The Holy Sacrifice is, before all, offered for the Catholic Church by praying to God that he may preserve her in peace, may defend her, maintain her in unity, and govern her through the ministry of the pastors, by communicating to them his Holy Spirit. It must be observed that the prayers of the Church, during the Holy Sacrifice, should be addressed to God the Father, as was ordained by the Third Council of Carthage: “During the August Function the prayer should be addressed to God the Father.”[12490] It does not follow that the other divine Persons should be excluded from these prayers; but they are considered together in the Person of the Father, their first principle, and this is the reason why the Church is accustomed to pray to the Father, with the Son, in the Holy Ghost.

At the first *Memento,* the priest recommends, at first, all those persons for whom he wishes most especially to pray; then he recommends all those who, happening to be present, offer with him the Holy Sacrifice; finally, he recommends all their relatives and friends. He says: 1. *Pro quibus tibi offerimus, vel qui tibi offerunt* (“For whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee”). It must be remarked that the disjunctive particle *vel,* “or,” is sometimes conjunctive, and that it is probable that it is here taken in this last sense according to St. Gregory, as we are told by Benedict XIV. Moreover, it must be observed that there is a great difference between sacrificing and offering: to the priest alone belongs the right to sacrifice, whilst all those who are present may offer the sacrifice. 2.*Quorum tibi fides cognita est, et nota devotio* (“Whose faith is known, and devotion apparent unto Thee”). By these words we are to understand that in order to participate in the fruit of the sacrifice we must have faith and devotion, which spring from charity. 3. *Pro redemptione animarum suarum* (“For the redemption of their souls”). The first effect of the sacrifice of the Cross, which is applied to us by the sacrifice of the altar, is to become free from the power of the devil. 4. *Pro spe salutis et incolumitatis suæ* (“For the hope of their safety and salvation”). These words comprise all the spiritual and temporal graces that God grants to us by virtue of this sacrifice, through which alone we can render to God the thanks that we owe him.

Communicantes et memoriam venerantes, etc. (“Communicating with the saints and honoring the memory, etc.”). This prayer is said in order to enter into communion with the Church triumphant. Thereby we honor, in the first place, the memory of the Mother of God, then that of the apostles, then that of the martyrs and of all the other saints, through the merits and the intercession of whom we beg our Lord’s protection in all our necessities. We who are travellers upon earth form only one body with the saints who are in heaven, and united with them in the same spirit, we offer to God the same sacrifice.

Hanc igitur oblationem, etc. (“We therefore beseech Thee, O Lord, graciously to accept this oblation, etc.”). The priest spreads his hands over the bread and the wine, and, through the merits of Jesus Christ, who redeemed us from the power of the devil, he prays to the Eternal Father favorably to accept this offering that his servants and his whole family make to him. He also asks God to help us to enjoy peace in this life, to preserve us from hell, and to admit us among the number of the elect: *Et in electorum tuorum jubeas grege numerari* (“And number us in the flock of Thine elect”). Estius observes that by these last words we do not ask of God predestination, as if God could change his eternal decrees, but we ask of him the effects of predestination, that he may draw us to himself and conduct us to eternal happiness.[12491] In the Old Law he who offered sacrifice placed his hands on the victim to signify that just as this animal was soon to lose its life by immolation, so he also offered up his own life to God. It is with the same spirit of sacrifice that every priest should offer himself to God, when he spreads his hands over the host and the chalice.[12492]

Quam oblationem tu, Deus in onmibus, quæsumus, benedictam, adscriptam, ratam, rationabilem, acceptabilemque facere digneris; ut nobis corpus et sanguis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi (“Which oblation do Thou, O God, vouchsafe in all respects to make blessed, approved, ratified, reasonable, and acceptable, that it may become to us the body and blood of Thy most beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord”).

In this prayer the priest asks God to cause this oblation to be blessed (*benedictam*), that by this blessing the bread and the wine may be changed into the body and the blood of Jesus Christ; that it may be admitted (*adscriptam*),—that is, substracted from all profane usage and wholly consecrated to the divine Majesty; ratified (*ratam*), that is, approved as a perfect sacrifice; reasonable or rational *(rationabilem)*—this includes an allusion to a passage in the Epistle to the Romans, in which St. Paul says: "I beseech you . . that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service;"[12493] acceptable (*acceptabilem*),—that is, altogether agreeable and worthy of being received, differently from the victims and the oblations of the Hebrew people, which were not sufficient to appease the divine justice incensed against sinners; and, finally, *Ut nobis corpus et sanguis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui* ("That it may become to us the body and blood of Thy most beloved Son"). The priest, according to St. Thomas, does not thereby ask that the consecration be accomplished, but that it be profitable to us.[12494]

Qui, pridie quam pateretur, etc. ("Who the day before he suffered," etc.). Here the priest, renewing the memory of the Passion of Jesus Christ, relates what the Lord did on the evening before his death, when he instituted the Sacrament and the sacrifice of his body and blood. Then the priest does the same thing, and consecrates by pronouncing the very words used by Jesus Christ, as St. Ambrose remarks: "He uses not his own words, but the very words of Jesus Christ."[12495]

The form of the consecration is taken from St. Matthew: *Hoc est corpus meum* ("This is my body").[12496] These words need no explanation, since they themselves declare what mystery is accomplished, namely, the change of the bread into the body of Jesus Christ.

The form of the consecration of the chalice is as follows: *Hic est enim calix Sanguinis mei, novi et æterni Testamenti, mysterium fidei, qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum* ("For this is the chalice of my blood of the new and eternal testament, the mystery of faith, which shall be shed for you, and for many, to the remission of sins"). These words the Church has taken from different texts of the Gospel, partly from St. Luke, partly from St. Matthew. St. Luke says: *This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you.*[12497] St. Matthew:

For this is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins.[12498] The word *æterni,* "everlasting," is found in St. Paul: *In the blood of the everlasting testament.*[12499] The other words, *Mystery of faith,* the Roman catechism declares are taught by sacred tradition, which is the guardian of Catholic truths. This divine mystery is called *Mystery of faith,* not to exclude the reality of the blood of Jesus Christ, but to show that in it the faith shines forth in a wonderful manner, and triumphs over all the difficulties that may be raised by human reason, since it is here, says Innocent III.,[12500] that we see one thing and believe another. We believe, he adds, that the form that we read in the Canon was received from Jesus Christ by the Apostles, and that they transmitted it to their successors.[12501] The Roman catechism,[12502] moreover, says, that the words of consecration should be thus understood: It is my blood that is contained in the chalice of the New Testament. This signifies that men receive no longer the figure of the blood of Jesus Christ, as was the case in the Old Law; but they really receive the true blood of the New Testament. The words *Pro vobis et pro multis* ("For you and for many") are used to distinguish the virtue of the blood of Christ from its fruits; for the blood of our Saviour is of sufficient value to save all men, but its fruits are applicable only to a certain number and not to all, and this is their own fault. Or, as the theologians say, this precious blood is (in itself) sufficiently (*sufficienter)* able to save all men, but (on our part) effectually (*efficaciter)* it does not save all—it saves only those who co-operate with grace. This is the explanation of St. Thomas, as quoted by Benedict XIV.[12503]

The consecration is followed by the elevation of the host and of the chalice: this is done, writes Sassi, in order to prove the truth of the Eucharist which was attacked by Berengarius at the beginning of the twelfth century. The same truth is again professed at the second elevation shortly before the *Pater noster,* when the priest says, *Omnis honor et gloria* ("All honor and glory"). It was also at the time of the heresy of Berengarius that the custom was introduced of ringing the bell at the elevation of the Host and of the chalice.

Hæc quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis ("As often as ye do these things, ye shall do them in remembrance of me"). After the two consecrations the priest repeats the words of Jesus Christ, by which our

Saviour commanded his Apostles and their successors to do, in memory of his Passion, what he had just done himself in their presence.

Unde et memores, Domine, etc. ("Wherefore, O Lord, . . . calling to mind," etc.). Here the priest calls to mind the Passion of our Lord, his resurrection, and ascension. He offers to the divine majesty in the name of the Church the consecrated victim, which he calls a *pure* Host, exempt from every sin; *holy,* being united with the divinity in the person of the Word; *immaculate,* without any stain; and then, "The holy bread of eternal life, and the chalice of everlasting salvation." While pronouncing these words he blesses the bread and the chalice with the sign of the cross. On this subject Luther turns to ridicule the Roman Church by asking how the priest blesses Jesus Christ—how the creature blesses the Creator. We answer here that the priest blesses the Host, not by his own authority, nor in his own name, but in the name and by the authority of the Eternal Father, who alone can bless Jesus Christ as man and as victim. Such is the answer given on this point by Innocent III. St. Thomas answers differently by saying that after the consecration the priest does not make the sign of the cross to bless, but only to remind us of the power of the cross and of the death of our Lord.[12504]

Supra quæ propitio, etc. ("Upon which vouchsafe to look," etc.). The priest then prays to the Lord that he may accept with pleasure this sacrifice, just as he accepted the offerings of Abel, the sacrifice of Abraham, and that of Melchisedech. In recalling to mind the sacrifice of Abel, of Abraham, and of Melchisedech, we regard less the value of the things offered than the sanctity of those who offered them, because they were holy men. Consequently, if God, because of his sanctity, favorably received their sacrifice, how much more should please him the sacrifice of the Saint of saints—of our Lord Jesus Christ! But the most decisive reason on account of which the Church makes special mention of these three sacrifices is, because they represented in an excellent manner the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Supplices te rogamus, etc. ("We most humbly beseech Thee," etc.). The priest continues humbly to ask the Saviour that the consecrated Host be presented to his divine Majesty through the hands of his holy Angel, in order that all those who are going to receive the body and the blood of his adorable Son may be filled with blessings and all celestial gifts through the merits of Jesus Christ. By the Angel of whom mention is made in this prayer, we may understand the Angel who presides at the Sacrifice of the Altar, or, as our French author says, we may understand Jesus Christ himself, who is preeminently the Holy Angel, called in Scripture the Angel of the Great Counsel. But the explanation of St. Thomas seems to be the most natural. The priest, he says, speaks for the Church, and asks that the Angel who presides at the divine mysteries may present to God the prayers of the celebrant and of the people.[12505]

Memento etiam, Domine, etc. ("Be mindful, O Lord," etc.). The priest asks the Lord to remember his servants who have passed to the other life and are slumbering in the sleep of peace, and to grant them a place of refreshment, light, and peace, through the merits of Jesus Christ. When the charity of the souls that depart from this life is not sufficient to purify them, the fire of purgatory will supply this defect. Yet the charity of the Saviour supplies it best by means of the Eucharistic sacrifice, which procures for these holy souls great mitigation of their sufferings, and often deliverance from their torments. The Council of Trent says: " The souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar."[12506] And it adds[12507] that this is a tradition of the Apostles. St. Augustine exhorts us to offer the sacrifice for all the dead, in case the souls that we recommend cannot receive our help.

Nobis quoque peecatoribus, etc. ("And to us sinners," etc.). Here the Church prays for sinners, in order that God may vouchsafe, in his mercy, to permit them to enter the society of the saints ; and she asks this grace through the merits of Jesus Christ. She then adds:

Per quem hæc omnia semper bona creas, etc. ("By whom, O Lord, Thou dost always create," etc.). By the Word Thou hast created this bread and wine, and now, by the same Word, Thou hast sanctified *(sanctificas)* them by reserving them for the sacrifice. Thou hast quickened them (*vivificas*) by changing them into the body and the blood of Jesus Christ; Thou hast *blessed (benedicis)* them and transformed them into a source of benediction for the Church of Christ; and, finally, *Thou hast given us all these good things (et præstas nobis)* by distributing them to the faithful in Holy Communion. And all these favors the Church asks through the merits of Jesus Christ: *Per ipsum*, that is, through him; *cum ipso,* in union with our

Saviour; *in ipso*, in him as the members are in the body, since God recognizes as his own only those who are united with Jesus Christ.

THE PATER NOSTER

Oremus. Præceptis salutaribus moniti, etc. ("Instructed by Thy saving precepts, etc."). The Church militant regards herself as entirely composed of sinners; she thinks herself unworthy to call God her Father, and to address to him the seven petitions, which in the name of the faithful she is going to address to him by reciting the *Pater noster, (*"Our Father"). Hence she protests that she only dares to address to God this prayer because God himself has commanded her to do so. She then teaches us that we may venture to present to God the seven petitions which contain the whole economy of our salvation, because it is pleasing to him and he himself gives us the command. We are so miserable, and our mind is so limited, that we do not even know what graces we should ask of God in behalf of our own salvation. Regarding our poverty and our insufficiency, Jesus Christ himself deigned to compose our prayer or to indicate the subjects on which we should address Almighty God. He instructs us to say:

Pater noster, qui es in cœlis ("Our Father, who art in heaven, etc.). The Apostle St. John says: *Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called, and should be the sons of God.*[12508] It is assuredly only by the effect of extreme love that we worms of the earth have been enabled to become the children of God, not by nature, but by adoption; and such is the immense grace that the Son of God has obtained for us by becoming man; for St. Paul says: *You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba (Father).*[12509] Can a subject wish for greater happiness than to be adopted by his king? or a creature to be adopted by its Creator? This is what God has done for us; and he wishes that we should address to him with filial confidence the following prayer:

1. *Sanctificetur nomem tuum* ("Hallowed be Thy name"). God cannot possess a greater sanctity than that which he possesses from all eternity, because he is infinite; hence what we ask in this prayer is merely that God may make known in every place his holy name, and that he may make himself loved by all men: by unbelievers, who know him not; by heretics,

who do not know him in the right manner; and by sinners, who know him but do not love him.

2. *Adveniat regnum tuum* ("Thy kingdom come"). Two kinds of dominion God exercises over our souls—the dominion of grace and the dominion of glory. By these words we ask for both, namely, that the grace of God may reign among us in this life, that it may direct and govern us, so that one day we may be judged worthy of glory, and may have the happiness to possess God and be possessed by him for all eternity.

3. *Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in cœlo, et in terra* ("Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven"). The whole perfection of a soul consists in the perfect accomplishment of the will of God, as is done by the blessed in heaven. Hence Jesus Christ wishes us to ask the grace to accomplish the will of God upon earth, as the angels and saints accomplish it in heaven.

4. *Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie* ("Give us this day our daily bread"). Such is the text as we find it in St. Luke.[12510] By this prayer we ask God for the temporal goods of which we stand in need to sustain our present life. The words "Our daily bread" teach us that we should ask for this kind of goods with moderation, after the example of Solomon, who asked only what was necessary: *Give me only the necessaries of life.*[12511] It is to be remarked that in the Gospel of St. Matthew, instead of the *daily bread,* we read, *Give us this day our supersubstantial*[12512] *bread.*[12513] By this supersubstantial bread we must understand, according to the explanation given by the Roman catechism, Jesus Christ himself in the Sacrament of the Altar, that is, in Holy Communion. We ask this heavenly bread every day, *Give us this day,* because every good Christian should communicate every day, if not really at least spiritually, as we are exhorted by the Council of Trent.

5. *Et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut el nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris* ("And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us"). To eat worthily of this heavenly bread, we must be free from mortal sin, or at least be washed of it by the blood of the Lamb in the sacrament of penance. We say, *free from mortal sin;* but it must be observed that if anyone should communicate with an actual affection for some venial sin, he could not be said to communicate without offering some indignity to our Lord—at least if he communicates often.

6. *Et ne nos inducas in tentationem* ("And lead us not into temptation"). How are these words to be understood? Does God sometimes tempt us—does he lead us into temptation? No; for St. James says: *God is not a tempter of evils, and He tempteth no man.*[12514] This text we must understand as we do that of Isaias: *Blind the heart of this people* . . . *lest they see.*[12515] God never blinds any sinner, but he often refuses to grant to some, in punishment for their ingratitude, the light that he would have given them had they remained faithful and grateful. Hence when it is said that God makes any one blind, it is meant that he withholds the light of his grace. This, therefore is the sense of the prayer, *and lead us not into temptation;* we ask God not to permit us to have the misfortune of being in those occasions of sin in which we might fall. Hence we should always watch and pray as the Lord exhorts us to do, in order not to fall into, temptation: *Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation.*[12516] To enter into temptation means the same as to find one's self in the danger of falling into sin; we should therefore often say to God, *Lord, lead us not into temptation.*

7. *Sed libera nos a malo* ("But deliver us from evil"). There are three kinds of evils from which we should ask the Lord to deliver us—the temporal evils of the body, the spiritual evils of the soul, and the eternal evils of the next life. As for the temporal evils of this life, we ought always to be disposed to receive with resignation those that God sends us for the good of our souls, such as poverty, sickness, and desolation; and when we ask God to deliver us from temporal evils we should always do so on condition that they are not necessary nor useful for our salvation. But the true evils from which we should absolutely pray to be delivered are spiritual evils, sins, which are the cause of eternal evils. Moreover, let us be convinced of this infallible truth, that in the present state of corrupt nature we cannot be saved unless we pass through the many tribulations with which this life is filled: *Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.*[12517]

The priest finishes the Lord's prayer with the word *Amen,* which he pronounces in a low voice, because he represents the person of Jesus Christ, who is the foundation of all the divine promises.[12518] This word is a summary of all the petitions that have been made—petitions the repetition of which pleases the Lord, for the more we pray to God the more he will hear our prayers. The great people of this world are not pleased when they are importuned by petitions; but this importunity is pleasing to God, says St. Jerome.[12519] Cornelius à Lapide even assures us that God wishes that we should persevere in this importunity in our prayers.[12520]

FIFTH PART. FROM THE PRAYER “LIBERA NOS” TILL THE COMMUNION

Immediately after the *Pater noster* the priest recites the prayer *Libera nos, quæsumus, Domine* (“Deliver us, O Lord”), by which he asks the Lord for himself and for all the faithful to grant, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, of the apostles and of all the saints, a continual peace during the days of the present life, so that his divine mercy may preserve them from every sin and from all confusion.

He then says, *Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum* (“May the peace of the Lord be always with you”). He wishes the peace of the Lord for all his brethren, who answer him with the same wish: *Et cum spiritu tuo* (‘‘And with thy spirit”). He makes at the same time upon the chalice, with the particle of the Host which he holds in his hand, three signs of the cross, which indicates, according to St. Thomas,[12521] the three days that Jesus Christ spent in the tomb.

The priest then drops the sacred particle into the chalice and says these words: *Hæc commixtio et consecratio Corporis et Sanguinis Domini nostri Jesu Christi fiat accipientibus nobis in vitam æternam!* (“May this mixture and consecration of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be to us that receive it effectual to eternal life”). Explaining these words, *Consecratio . . . fiat,* Bellarmin says that we do not here ask that the consecration should take place, but that it be profitable for eternal life to those who are about to receive Jesus Christ in Holy Communion.[12522] This mixture of the holy species represents the union of the divinity with the humanity which was at first effected in the womb of Mary through the Incarnation of the Word, and which is renewed in the souls of the faithful when they receive him in the Eucharistic Communion.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi (“Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world”). Before Communion the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, as the victim of the sacrifice, is invoked, and is invoked three times, to point out the need that we have of his grace, in order to be reconciled with God and to receive his peace.

Here follow the three prayers that precede Communion.

In the first prayer—*Domine Jesu Christe, qui dixisti Apostolis tuis, Pacem relinquo vobis* ("Lord Jesus Christ, who said to Thy Apostles, I leave you peace")—prayer is offered to God that he may vouchsafe to grant peace to the Church in consideration of her faith, and keep her in union, according to his will, by delivering her from the division produced by false doctrines, and from all that is contrary to the divine will.—And here the Church has introduced the custom that the faithful should give one another the kiss of peace, to remind them that their hearts should be united in charity. Before giving the kiss of peace, the priest kisses the altar, to show that he cannot give the peace unless he has first received it from Jesus Christ, who is represented by the altar.

In the second prayer, *Domine Jesu Christe, Fili Dei vivi,* the priest asks Jesus Christ, by virtue of his adorable body and blood, to deliver him from all evils, and to keep him always united with him.

In the third prayer he beseeches the Lord that this Communion may not turn to his condemnation, but may be for the salvation of his soul and body.—The Holy Eucharist protects the soul against temptations and passions; it extinguishes the fire of concupiscence that burns in our bodies, and is a powerful remedy against the death of the soul.

After these prayers the priest says, while invoking the name of the Lord, *Panem cælestem accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo* ("I will take the bread of heaven, and call upon the name of our Lord"). In order that the earthly food may be of benefit to us, we must eat it when we are hungry; in like manner, in order that Communion may produce in us much fruit, we should receive it with great desire to possess Jesus Christ and to love him ardently. As John Gerson says, we ought, at the moment in which we are about to receive Jesus, invoke him anew, in order to obtain the grace to receive him with great profit to our souls.

Corpus (*Sanguis) Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam æternam* ("May the Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting"). While pronouncing these words the priest receives the body and the blood of Jesus Christ. This prayer recalls to our mind that this precious body and blood are given to us as a pledge of eternal life, and as a *viaticum* in order to pass from this exile to our heavenly country. Hence when we receive Communion we ought to be so disposed as if we had to leave the earth at once, to enter eternity.

SIXTH PART THANKSGIVING

Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi? ("What shall I render to the Lord for all he hath rendered unto me?") The priest says, *For all, etc.,* because he who receives Jesus Christ in Communion receives all the gifts and all the goods that one can desire, according to the words of St. Paul: *How hath He not also, with Him, given us all things.*[12523] He says, *What shall I render?* because man is not capable of thanking God as he should thank him. Jesus Christ only can worthily thank the Eternal Father for the gifts that he bestowed upon men. The priest therefore adds: *Calicem salutaris accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo* ("I will take the chalice of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord"). He supplicates the Divine Redeemer to thank the heavenly Father for himself and for all men.

After having taken the precious blood he renews his thanks to God in the following words: *Quod ore sumpsimus, Domine, pura mente capiamus, et de munere temporali fiat nobis remedium sempiternum* ("Grant, O Lord, that what we have taken with our mouth we may receive with a pure mind, that of a temporal gift it may become to us an eternal remedy"). By this prayer the Church makes us ask God that, as our mouth has received this divine food and drink, our hearts may also receive them, so that they may be for us an eternal remedy that may forever heal us of all our infirmities.

Finally the priest says, *Corpus tuum, Domine, quod sumpsi, et Sanguis quem potavi, adhæreat visceribus meis* ("May Thy body, O Lord, which I have received, and the blood which I have drunk, cleave to my bowels"). In this prayer, and in the last prayer called Post-communion, he asks, through the merits of Jesus Christ in this mystery, and through the intercession of the saint whose memory is celebrated, that this divine Saviour may always preserve him in this intimate union With him, and that no stain may rest on his soul, which has been nourished by a sacrament so holy and so pure.

Ite, Missa est ("Go, the Mass is ended"); or, *Benedicamus Domino* (‘‘Let us bless the Lord"). It is with these words that the priest dismisses the people, just as if he said, The Sacrifice is accomplished; and those who are present while thanking God by the mouth of the server, say, *Deo Gratias* (“Thanks be to God”). “To give thanks to God,” says St. Augustine, “is to acknowledge that all good things come from God, and to thank him for them.[12524]

The priest afterwards passes to the right side of the altar, and recites the Gospel of St. John: *Inprincipio erat Verbum* (“In the beginning was the Word”). William de Bury says that it was St. Pius V. who ordained that this Gospel should always be recited at the end of Mass; as formerly some said it, and others omitted it.

This explanation of the prayers of Mass may be serviceable to all—to the faithful as well as to priests.

ACCOUNT OF THE MANNER IN WHICH THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, WHICH HAD BEEN STOLEN IN A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NAPLES, WAS MIRACULOUSLY FOUND, IN THE YEAR 1772

HAVING received information from many persons of the wonderful occurrence that I am now going briefly to relate, I endeavored to collect evidence sufficient to enable me to publish an account of it; and I first obtained a full relation of the fact, written by a priest of the same town, who was one of the eye-witnesses of the miracle. But not satisfied with this, I read myself the authentic process that was drawn up by the Archiepiscopal Court of Naples, by order of his Eminence Cardinal Sersale, the present Archbishop. The process is very long, consisting of 364 pages—a most careful investigation into the facts having been made by the officers of the court from the evidence of many priests and lay persons, all of whom, in perfect agreement, made their depositions on oath.

It happened on the morning of the 28th of January, in the past year 1772, at a place called S. Pietro à Paterno, in the diocese of Naples, that the tabernacle of the parish chuich, in which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved, was found open, and that the two ciboriums, a large and a small one, containing many particles, had been taken away. For several days the whole neighbor-hood was in the greatest distress and grief; and though the most diligent search was made, no tidings could be obtained either of the ciboriums or of the sacred particles. At last, on Thursday, the 18th of February, a certain youth, Giuseppe Orefice, of about eighteen years old, as he was passing in the evening near the property of the Duke of Grottolelle, saw a number of lights, which had the appearance of bright stars. The following evening he saw the same thing, and on coming home he told his father what he had seen; his father, however, would not believe him.

On the following day, about an hour before sunrise, the father was passing by the same spot, with Giuseppe and his brother Giovanni (a child of eleven years), who, turning to his father, said: “See, father, the lights of which Giuseppe spoke to you yesterday evening, and you would not believe him!”

On the evening of the same day, the same boys, on coming home, again saw the lights in the same place. Don Girolamo Guarino, the confessor of Giuseppe Orefice, was then informed of it, who, in company with his brother Don Diego, also a priest, went to the spot where the lights had been seen, and meanwhile sent for Orefice, who, on coming there with his brother and a person called Tomaso Piccino, again saw the lights; but at that time the priests saw nothing.

On the evening of Monday, the 23d of February, Orefice returned to the spot with Piccino and a man named Carlo Marotta, and met on the road two strangers, who stopped and asked them what those many lights were which they had just distinctly seen, and which twinkled like stars. They replied that they did not know; and, taking leave of the strangers, they ran in haste to mark the spot where they had seen the lights. As soon as they had marked the spot, which was distant a few steps from the hedge, and in which was a poplar-tree higher than the rest of the trees, they went to find the two priests already mentioned, told them what had occurred, and returned all together to the spot.

When they were all there, with a child of five years, nephew to the two priests, the child cried out: “See, there are the lights, which look like two candles.” (Here we must observe, that the lights did not always appear in the same manner.) At the same moment Orefice saw these two lights; and said they shone like two stars; Carlo and Tomaso also saw them, and three other children of Signor Guarino, close to the poplar already mentioned.

After this they heard the shouting of many people, who, from a stack of straw which was on the property, were begging the priest to come and see in the stack a great light in the appearance of a flame. In the mean time, a woman named Lucia Marotta threw herself with her face to the ground on the spot where the light was seen.

The priests and many other persons ran up, and having lifted up the woman, commenced to dig the ground; but then they found nothing. The two brothers, Giuseppe Orefice, with Tomaso Piccino and Carlo Marotta, then returned to the town; and going along the Strada Regia they heard the cries of those who had remained on the spot. Going back there, Piccino fell suddenly upon his face; and after a few steps, Giuseppe felt himself pushed forward on the shoulders, and he also at once fell to the ground. In the same way, and at the same moment, the other two, Carlo Marotta and Giovanni, Giuseppe's brother, also fell; and all four felt their heads wounded, as if they had received a severe blow with a stick.

Having risen, they went forward a few steps; Giuseppe, as also Carlo, Tomaso, and Giovanni, saw a brilliant light as of the sun coming forth from beneath the poplar-tree; and they all four saw rising out of this light, to about four or five feet in height, a dove, which was almost as brilliant as the light itself: the dove, however, gliding down into the earth at the foot of the poplar, from which it came out, disappeared, as also did the light. What the dove signified is not known; but it appears certain that it was something supernatural; and all the persons already mentioned gave evidence of the fact upon oath before the Vicar-General of Naples.

After this, remaining in the same place, they all cried out: "See, there are the lights!" And going on their knees they began to seek for the sacred particles. While Piccino was scooping out the earth with his hands, they saw one particle come out white as paper. They then sent to call the priests. Don Diego Guarino came, and kneeling down he took the sacred particle and put it in a white linen handkerchief, amid the tears and devotion of all the people, who wept bitterly.

He then began to search more carefully; and having removed some more earth, he saw a group of about forty particles appear, which had not lost their whiteness, although they had been buried for nearly a month from the time they were stolen. They were placed in the same handkerchief, and the earth in which they were found was also removed.

It being now rumored about, other priests of the place came to the spot, bringing with them a ciborium, cotta, stole, canopy, and torches. In the mean time a priest and a gentleman went to Monsignor the Vicar-General to know what was to be done. An order came that the particles should be carried in procession to the church. They did so, and arrived at the church about half-past eleven at night, when the particles were placed in the tabernacle.

This took place on the night of the 24th of February. The people were much consoled, but not fully so, because the greater part of the particles, as was supposed, were still wanting.

But on the evening of the following Tuesday, the 25th, a small light, but very brilliant, was seen in the same place as at the first, by many persons, country-people, gentlemen, as also by the priests Don Diego Guarino and Don Giuseppe Lindtner, who wrote for me an account of the whole affair, as I mentioned at the beginning. This priest, being much terrified, pointed to a mustard-plant which was growing there, and cried out: “O Jesus, O Jesus! look at the light there, look at it!” Upon which the others also saw a most dazzling light, which rose about a foot and a half from the ground, and formed itself on the top into the figure of a rose. Giuseppe Orefice, who was there, affirmed that the light was so brilliant that his eyes remained for some time dazzled and dimmed.

They began, therefore, to seek the remainder of the particles in that place, but found none; but on the evening of the following day, the 26th of February, a number of lights was seen round the stack of straw by three cavalry soldiers of the regiment called Borbone, Pasquale de S. Angelo of the diocese of Atri and Penne, Giuseppe Lanzano, and Angelo di Costanzo of Acerra, who were all examined before the archiepiscopal court. These deposed before Monsignor the Vicar-General, that as they were riding round the royal villa of Caserta, where his majesty the king then resided, they saw on the property above mentioned “several lights like shining stars. These are the very words of the soldiers, as taken down in the process.

Moreover, on the same evening of the 26th, Signor D. Ferdinando Haam, a gentleman of Prague in Bohemia, Chancellor and Secretary for letters to the Embassy of his Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty, was returning from the city of Caserta at about nine at night, along the Strada Regia, near to the above-mentioned property: he alighted from his carriage to go and see the place where he had heard the stolen particles had been found two days before. On arriving there he found many persons, and among them the priest Don Giuseppe Lindtner, with whom he was acquainted, who told him the whole history both of the sacrilege and of the miraculous discovery of the particles. Signor Haam, after having heard the priest, related that he also, eight or nine days before, on the 17th or 18th of the month, not having then heard either of the particles that had been stolen or of the lights that had been seen, was passing by this place about nine at night, and that he saw “a great number of lights amounting to about a thousand,” and at the same time a number of persons who were standing in silence and with devotion round the lights. Being much frightened at what he saw, he asked the driver what those lights were; he replied, “that perhaps they were accompanying the Most Holy Viaticum to some sick person.” “No,” replied Signor Haam, “that cannot be, otherwise we should at least hear the bells.” Hence he suspected that these lights were the effect of some diabolical sorcery, and so much the more as the horse had stopped, and would not go on a step: he therefore made the driver get down, but it was impossible to make the horse go on; it trembled all over and foamed at the mouth. At last, after many attempts, the horse, drawn away as by force out of the road which led to the ground, set off with such speed that the driver cried out: “O Jesus, what will come of this?” And so Signor D. Ferdinando returned to Naples, seized with great fear. He himself deposed the whole of this in the archiepiscopal court, as may be read in the process.

On the evening of Thursday, the 27th, at about seven o’clock, Giuseppe Orefice and Carlo Marotta went to the place where was the stack of straw, which they found had been burned by the priests Don Girolamo Guarino and Giuseppe Lindtner, in order that they might more easily search for the missing particles: they found also Giuseppe Piscopo, Carmine Esposito, and Palmiero Novello, prostrate on the ground and weeping, because they had seen a little light appearing and then disappearing before them several times. When Orefice heard this, he knelt down, and began to recite the acts of faith, hope, and charity: when he had finished he returned with the others to see what the light was, which, according to the deposition of Orefice, rose up about four fingers from the earth, and then disappeared as it were in the ground. After this, having put a mark over the place where the light had appeared, so as not to be mistaken, Orefice and Marotta went to inform the priest Don Girolamo Guarino, who came immediately to the place and found many persons kneeling there: he began to search with care about the ground on which the mark had been placed.

At this moment many persons again saw the light; and Guarino, who did not see it, made the sign of the cross upon the ground, and ordered his brother Giuseppe to scoop out the earth on which the stack of straw had stood, on the left of the cross, with a pickaxe which he had in his hand; but he found nothing. However, just as they were thinking of digging in another part, Giuseppe Orefice, who was on his knees all the time, put his hand on the ground, and finding that it was soft and yielding, mentioned it to Don

Guarino, who, taking a knife from his brother, stuck it into the ground on the spot which had been marked with the cross; and when it was at its depth, he heard a noise as if several hosts united together were broken. He drew the knife out of the ground, and with it a little ball of earth, to which he saw many particles were attached. Struck with fear at what he saw, he cried out in astonishment, “Oh, oh, oh!” and then fainted away; so that, as he himself deposed, his sight failed him, and, losing all power over himself, the knife, with the ball of earth and the particles, fell from his hand.

As soon as Guarino recovered his senses, he put the particles in a white linen handkerchief, covered them up, and laid them in the hole in which they had been found; for, on account of the trembling which had come over him, and especially in the arms, he was not able to stand upright. The parish priest, being informed of what had happened, came quickly to the spot, where he found all kneeling before this hidden treasure; and having taken better information of the event, he went back to his church, and sent a canopy, veil, a number of wax-tapers, and a chalice in which the sacred particles were put. The assistants spread the veil over a little table covered with silk, on which the Blessed Sacrament reposed; round this a number of persons knelt with lighted torches; and many people arrived, not only from the town, but also from the surrounding villages, with their priests, all of whom shed tears of tender devotion. In the mean time the priest Lindtner and Signor Giuseppe Guarino went off to find Monsignor the Vicar-General, and returned about ten o’clock with orders to carry in procession the particles that had been found to the parish church of S. Pietro à Paterno. They did so, and along the way they all sang, praising and thanking Almighty God. As soon as they arrived at the church, benediction was given with the chalice in the midst of the tears and cries of devotion of the whole people, who could not leave off weeping and thanking the Lord for the great consolation they had received.

We read in the history of olden times of many suchlike prodigies in confirmation of the truth of the Most Holy Sacrament. I myself, in my *History of Heresies,* have related many examples on this matter in the time of the impious Wickliffe, who was the first of modern heretics to deny the truth of this venerable Sacrament. At that time Almighty God was pleased to work many miracles to confound their incredulity, which I have inserted in the book just mentioned (chap. 10, n. 36, 37). Nevertheless, there are not wanting certain critical spirits who altogether refuse to believe these ancient accounts, and say, “But who saw them?” Now, if such a one should doubt the fact which I have now related, and which was proved with such exactness in the archiepiscopal court of Naples, he can easily certify himself of the truth of it by going to the town of St. Pietro à Paterno, which is not far from the city, where he will find many lay persons and ecclesiastics who will assure him that they beheld with their own eyes the prodigies here related.

For the rest, let others say what they please: for my own part, I hold the fact to be more than certain, and therefore I wished to make it known by publishing an account of it. It is true that the miracle here described does not call for any other than mere human faith: nevertheless, of all such facts grounded on human faith I do not know if there be one that is more deserving of belief than this that I have related, considering the extreme care with which the information was taken by the Neapolitan court, and the evidence, not of credulous women, but of seventeen men, lay and ecclesiastics, who judicially deposed on oath all that they had seen with their own eyes. All these circumstances, which are so many marks of truth, make the fact more than morally certain. Hence I hope that all those that read this account will not be disinclined to believe it, but will do what they can to make it known, for the glory of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

The Ceremonies of the Mass

FATHER TANNOIA (B. ii. ch. 1.) speaks of a work that St. Alphonsus caused to be printed at Naples in 1761, on the manner of celebrating Mass conformably to the Rubrics, and on the faults that are ordinarily committed, with exhortations on the disposition requisite for celebrating Mass worthily, and with affections for preparation and thanksgiving for every day of the week. This is a work that Cardinal Villecourt (1. vi. p. 1, ch. 5 et 6), in his "Tableaux Chronologiques," under the same year 1761, designates thus: "Ceremonies of the Mass, followed by acts of preparation and thanksgiving." In another place (1 iii. ch. 42) we also see that our saint, towards the end of 1768, had a work printed, entitled "Ceremonies of the Mass," and divided into two parts: in the first he explains the Rubrics, and points out the ordinary faults; in the second he treats of the preparation and thanksgiving. We think that there is here question of a simple reprint of the work published in 1761, to which the author added in 1768, as a third part, his dissertation on the *Honoraria* of Masses, of which Father Tannoia afterwards speaks.—ED.

NOTICE

IN the following pages, which treat of the Ceremonies of the Mass, we have thought it very useful to quote at the head of each article the text of the Rubric of the Missal, which our author only explains. Both the text and its commentary are needed so as to elucidate and supplement each other; and experience proves that one neglects too often what it is important that one should know before all things.

In the many notes we have endeavored to give all the latest decisions of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. It must be observed that in this treatise there is question only of the celebration of private Mass.

We have added an Appendix in ten articles, which speak of the Altar and its ornaments, the Chalice and its accessories, the Vestments, the Matter and Form of the Sacrament, the Disposition of the celebrant, the Accidents that may occur, the Place and the Time of celebrating Mass, the Server of Mass. All this is drawn from the Rubrics of the Missal, and from the Moral Theology of our author, with some notes. We subjoin an article on the Mass celebrated in a strange church.

We have added another treatise of the holy bishop in which he speaks of the *Honoraria* of Masses; of the abuses connected therewith, and the means proposed to remedy them; of public Masses with offerings, and private Masses with stipends; of the use of unleavened and leavened bread; of the Value and Application of the fruit of the Mass; and of privileged Altars.–ED.

THE CEREMONIES OF THE MASS

Chapter I

WHAT THE PRIEST SHOULD DO BEFORE GOING TO THE ALTAR

1. PREPARATORY ACTS

> "Sacerdos celebraturus Missam, prævia confessione sacramentali, quando opus est, et saltem Matutino cum Laudibus absoluto, orationi aliquantulum vacet, et orationes inferius positas pro temporis opportunitate dicat."—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. I. n. 1.)

THE priest who wishes to say Mass should previously have recited at least Matins and Lauds, and this under pain of venial sin,[12525] according to the common opinion of theologians, against some who assert that it would be a mortal sin. This rule is founded on an ancient custom of the Church; for when Innocent IV. heard of the controversy raised on this point between the Archbishop of Nicosia and his Latin suffragans on the one side, and the Greek bishops of Cyprus on the other, he rendered this decision: "Sacerdos autem dicat Horas canonicas more suo; sed Missam celebrare, prius quam Officium matutinale compleverit, non presumat."[12526] Benedict XIV. concludes that even a mortal sin may be committed if any one violates this rule habitually. He says: "Si quis nulla causa urgente, perpetuo id faceret, ut videretur quasi statuisse animo, numquam celebrare dicto Matutino cum Laudibus, tum cum doctis Auctoribus concludi posset, hujusmodi sacerdotem peccare mortaliter."[12527]

It is also proper that the priest should spend some time in mental prayer. If he wishes to confess, he should do so before putting on the sacred vestments. Then he should make the proximate preparation on which ordinarily depends all the actual devotion that one has during the celebration of Mass. Nothing is, therefore, better than to recite attentively the psalms and the prayers that are printed for this purpose in the tablet containing the preparatory acts.[12528]

2. THE PREPARING OF THE MISSAL AND THE WASHING OF HANDS

> “Deinde, accedit ad locum in sacristia, vel alibi præparatum, ubi paramenta aliaque ad celebrationem necessaria habentur; accipit Missale, perquirit Missam, perlegit, et signacula ordinat ad ea quæ dicturus est. Postea, lavat manus, dicens orationem inferius positam.*”—(Rub. Miss.* tit. I. n. 1.)

Alter this preparation the priest takes the Missal, searches for the Mass that he wishes to say, and arranges the book-marks in their proper places; he also prepares the sacred vestments.

Then he washes his hands,[12529] saying in a low voice the following prayer:

Da, Domine, virtutem manibus meis ad abstergendam omnem maculam, ut sine pollutione mentis et corporis valeam tibi servire.

It must be observed that, according to the common opinion of theologians, the omission of this prayer, as also of the other prayers which the celebrant says while putting on the sacred vestments, is not a grave fault; yet it cannot be excused at least from a venial sin.

3. THE PREPARING OF THE CHALICE

> “Deinde, præparat calicem, qui debet esse vel aureus, vel argenteus, aut saltem habere cuppam argenteam intus inauratam, et simul cum patena itidem inaurata, ab Episcopo consecratus; super ejus os ponit purificatorium mundum, et super illud patenam cum hostia integra, quam leviter extergit, si opus est, a fragmentis, et eam tegit parva palla linea, tum velo serico, super velo ponit bursam coloris paramentorum, intus habentem corporale plicatum, quod ex lino tantum esse debet, nec serico vel auro in medio intextum, sed totum album; et ab Episcopo, vel alio habente facultatem, simul cum palla benedictum.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. I. n. 1.)

After having washed his hands, he prepares the chalice;[12530] he himself places the host on the paten, but before doing so he should lightly pass his thumb and forefinger around the edge, so that the loose particles may be removed.

He then covers the paten with the pall, the upper part of which, according to the S. R. C.,[12531] must not be covered with silk.

Upon the pall he puts the veil, which is to be spread out in front in such a manner that it covers the foot of the chalice, and has folds at the sides, not in front, so that it may be more easily folded when the chalice is to be uncovered.

Upon the veil he places the burse, so that its opening is towards the celebrant when he carries the chalice, and he turns over upon the burse the border of the veil in order to be able to hold the chalice more conveniently. The burse should contain the corporal; otherwise, says Gavantus,[12532] the burse would be useless. One should not carry the corporal upon the veil outside of the burse without an apostolic dispensation; see Gavantus and Merati.[12533]

It must be observed that, according to the teaching of theologians, it would be a grave sin to celebrate with a corporal that is very much soiled; and Merati says the same thing in regard to the other vestments. To use a corporal that is a little soiled is a venial sin if one could easily procure another. The continuator of Tournely[12534] says that, in case one could not otherwise say a Mass of precept, it would be permitted to use a corporal that is very much soiled.

It must also be observed that there should be no cross in the middle of the corporal; but a cross is permitted near the border of the anterior part, where one may kiss it when the altar is to be kissed.

It is, moreover, to be remarked, that it is not allowed to place upon the chalice one's pocket-handkerchief or anything else; and so also upon the altar nothing is to be placed that does not appertain to the Mass.[12535]

4. THE PRIEST ABOUT TO PUT ON THE SACRED VESTMENTS

> "Quibus ita dispositis, accedit ad paramenta, quæ non debent esse lacera, aut scissa, sed integra, et decenter munda, ac pulchra, et ab Episcopo itidem, vel alio facultatem habente, benedicta; ubi calceatus pedibus, et indutus vestibus sibi convenientibus, quarum exterior saltem talum pedis attingat, induit se, si sit Prælatus sæcularis, supra rochettum, si sit Prælatus regularis, vel alius Sacerdos saecularis supra superpelliceum, si commode haberi possit, alioquin sine eo supra vestes communes, dicens ad singula singulas orationes inferius positas."—*(Rub. Miss.* tit. I. art. 2.)

After having thus prepared everything, the priest goes to the place where the vestments are kept. These should be kept in the sacristy, or at least,[12536] as is permitted by theologians, at the corner of the altar on the Gospel side; for the right of vesting at the middle of the altar is permitted only to bishops and to cardinals; this right is also granted to prelates who have the privilege of celebrating pontifically, but to the latter only when they use this faculty.[12537]

If at the moment in which he is about to vest he wishes to make the sign of the cross, he should do so before taking the amice; such is the opinion of Bauldry and Tonellius.

5. HE PUTS ON THE AMICE

> "Ac primum accipiens amictum circa extremitates et chordulas, osculatur illud in medio, ubi est crux, et ponit super caput, et mox declinat ad collum, et, eo vestium collaria circumtegens, ducit chordulas sub brachiis, et circumducens per dorsum ante pectus reducit et ligat."—*(Rub. Miss.* tit. I. art. 3.)

He takes at first the amice at both ends and kisses it where the cross is. If there is no cross in the middle of the amice, and no other amice can be had, Merati says, he should form a cross with his thumb and then kiss it.[12538] To kiss the cross conveniently, let him place his left hand under the middle of the amice, holding in the mean time its two ends. Let him raise the amice to his mouth so that he may kiss the cross. Then raising the amice at his left he puts it on his head. After he has rested the amice on his head, he lowers it and arranges it around his neck, so that his collar may be entirely covered by it. Then he crosses the strings on his breast, passing the right over the left; and bringing them under his arms, he passes each to the other side behind his back, brings them in front, and then ties them on the breast.

The following is the prayer that he should say while putting on the amice:

Impone, Domine, capiti meo galeam salutis, ad expugnandos diabolicos incursus.

6. THE ALB

> "Tum alba induitur, caput submittens, deinde manicam dextram brachio dextro, et sinistram sinistro imponens, albam ipsam corpori adaptat, elevat ante, et a lateribus hinc inde; et cingulo per ministrum a tergo sibi porrecto, se cingit. Minister elevat albam super cingulum circumcirca, ut honeste dependeat et tegat vestes; ac ejus fimbrias diligenter aptat, ut ad latitudinem digiti vel circiter, super terram æqualiter fluat."—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. I. art 3.)

Then he puts on the alb. If any one presents it to him, he inclines his head a little, holding his hands joined while receiving it. He next lets the right side of the alb fall to the floor, holding the other side on his left arm, so that the left hand may be freer to vest the right arm, which should always be vested first. Then he lets fall the left side of the alb, and the right hand aids in vesting the left arm.

While putting on the alb the priest says:

Dealba me, Domine, et munda cor meum, ut, in sanguine Agni dealbatus, gaudiis perfruar sempiternis.

He then girds himself with the cincture, saying:

Præcinge me, Domine, cingulo puritatis, et exstingue in lumbis meis humorem libidinis ut maneat in me virtus continentiæ et castitatis.

It is better that the cincture should be made of linen [rather than of silk[12539]], and it may be of the color of the vestments.[12540]

Rubricists wish the alb to be tied as soon as it is let down, and then to be adjusted. According to present usage the priest with both hands arranges at first the front part, so that it hangs at an equal distance above the shoes, and then only he girds himself.

The cincture, which should be doubled, is taken on the right side, and so tied that the tassels at the right side hang down as long as possible for fastening the stole. During this time the server should adjust the alb behind in such a way that it hangs equally distant above the feet and covers the cassock.

7. THE MANIPLE

> “Sacerdos accipit manipulum, osculatur crucem in medio, et imponit brachio sinistro.”—*(Rub. Miss.* tit. I. art. 3.)

He takes the maniple and kisses the cross that is in the middle of it; he passes it over his left arm and fastens it near his elbow, so that it may not hinder him in his functions.

He says at the same time:

Merear, Domine, portare manipulum fletus et doloris, ut cum exsultatione recipiam mercedem laboris.

8. THE STOLE

> “Deinde, ambabus manibus accipiens stolam, simili modo deosculatur, et imponit medium ejus collo; ac transversando eam ante pectus in modum crucis, ducit partem a sinistro humero pendentem ad dextram, et partem a dextro humero pendentem ad sinistram; sicque utramque partem stolæ exremitatibus cinguli, hinc inde ipsi cingulo conjungit.”-*(Rub. Miss.* tit. art. 3.)

He takes the stole with both hands, that is, between his thumbs and forefingers, so that the hands are distant from each other about a palm;[12541] he kisses the cross that is in the middle of the stole, and separates his hands from each other about two palms and a half, and thus he will be able to place the stole upon his shoulders. Then he puts the right part over the left so that a cross is formed on his breast; he next takes with both hands the ends of the stole, and draws it down as far as his hands will reach, because in this way the cross will come just at the middle of the neck: This done, he fastens the stole at the sides with both ends of the cincture.

While putting on the stole the priest says:

Redde mihi, Domine, stolam immortalitatis, quam perdidi in prævaricatione primi parentis; et quamvis indignus accedo ad tuum sacrum mysterium, meraer tamen qaudium sempiternum.

Merati, with many others, makes the remark that the stole be so adjusted that the cross is covered by the chasuble; hence in many churches in which the sacred rites are strictly observed there is fastened to the middle of the stole a band that is tied to the cincture below the shoulders, so that the stole cannot rise above the chasuble nor above the neck.[12542]

9. THE CHASUBLE

"Postremo, Sacerdos accipit planetam."–(*Rub. Miss.* tit. I art. 3.)

Lastly, the priest puts on the chasuble and takes care to arrange it not only around the neck and shoulders by drawing down the back part of it with both hands so that there may be no folds, but that it be also adjusted in front by fastening it with the strings underneath it.

He says while putting on the chasuble:

Domine, qui dixisti: Jugum meum suave est, et onus meum leve;—fac ut istud portare sic valeam, quod consequar tuam gratiam. Amen.

If he wishes to carry with him a pocket-handkerchief, he should fasten it to his cincture, but under the chasuble in such a manner that it may be entirely hidden from view.[12543]

It must be observed that the priest while vesting should not speak to any one; he should pay attention to recite devoutly and in a low voice the prescribed prayers by reflecting on the mysteries represented by the sacred vestments.[12544]

Chapter II

LEAVING THE SACRISTY AND APPROACHING THE ALTAR

1. THE PRIEST TAKES THE CHALICE AND PROCEEDS TO LEAVE THE SACRISTY

> “Sacerdos, omnibus paramentis indutus, accipit manu sinistra calicem ut supra præparatum, quem portat elevatum ante pectus, bursam manu dextra super calicem tenens, et facta reverentia cruci vel imaginii illi quæ in sacristia erit, capite cooperto, accedit ad altare, ministro cum Missali et aliis ad celebrandum necessariis (nisi ante fuerint præparata) præcedente, superpelliceo induto.”[12545]—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. II. art. 1.)

WHEN the priest is vested he puts on the biretta, makes the sign of the cross (this is, however, not prescribed by the Rubric). According to Tonellius, before taking the chalice he should with uncovered head salute the other priests.

It is true Merati contradicts this opinion of Tonellius, because by uncovering the head greater reverence would be paid to priests than to the crucifix, which is saluted with the head covered. But to this we may easily reply that the priest with his head covered shows reverence to, the crucifix for the reason that he is holding the chalice, and he would run an evident risk of throwing it down if he desired to uncover his head while bowing profoundly. In fact, if the priest were not carrying the chalice, he would have to make a bow to the crucifix with uncovered head.

He takes the chalice by the knob *(ad nodum)* [according to the Rubric farther on], although it seems to me that they are not wrong that take it below the cup, namely, between the thumb and third finger, holding the cup with the other fingers, as in this way he can avoid all danger of throwing it down, the more so since the hand is covered by the veil. [And, moreover, this Rubric is not preceptive, since it treats of matters that are done outside of the Mass.]

Holding the chalice with the left hand, he places the right hand on the burse, the opening of which should be turned towards himself. Upon the burse there should not be placed either handkerchief, spectacles, the key of the tabernacle, or anything similar, as the S. R. C., Sept. 1, 1703, declared. He holds the chalice before his breast, carrying it in such a way that he neither touches his breast nor has it far removed from it.

Having then taken the chalice, he makes a profound reverence or bow[12546] to the crucifix or image that is in the sacristy. He does not uncover the head unless the chalice has already been carried to the altar. He shall walk gravely and modestly, with his eyes cast down, and the chalice should be carried at such a height that he may see his way beyond it. It must be observed that the right hand is so to be stretched out upon the burse that the fingers be united, that the elbow be not raised, but that it rest against the body.

But as there is question here of reverences, we must know that besides the prostration and genuflection three modes of reverences are to be distinguished, which are called inclinations, namely, the *profound,* the *moderate,* and the *simple.* The *profound* inclination is made when any one standing inclines his head and shoulders in such a way that he can touch his knees with both hands. The *moderate* is made when any one inclines moderately the head and the shoulders. The *simple* is made if only the head is inclined. This last inclination is again divided into three kinds—*minimarum maxima, minimarum media, minimarum minima:* they correspond to a triple cult—of *latria, hyperdulia,* and *dulia.* The first (*minimarum maxima)* consists in a profound inclination of the head, with a slight movement of the shoulders: it is made at the *Gloria Patri,* and at the name *God*[12547] and *Jesus.* The second (*minimarum media*) consists in notably inclining the head only, and is made when the name of *Mary* is pronounced. The third (*minimarum minima*) is a simple inclination of the head, and is made when the name of any saint or of the living Pope is mentioned.

2. THE PRIEST GOES FROM THE SACRISTY TO THE ALTAR

> “Procedit autem, oculis demissis, incessu gravi, erecto corpore. Si vero contigerit eum transire ante altare majus, capite cooperto faciat ad illud reverentiam; si ante altare ubi celebretur Missa, in qua elevatur vel tunc ministratur Sacramentum, similiter genuflectat, et detecto capite illud adorat, nec ante surgat, quam celebrans deposuerit Calicem super corporale.—*(Rub. Miss.* tit. II. c. 1.)

After having, therefore, made a bow to the cross or to another image, he proceeds to the altar, walking with gravity and modesty, with his eyes cast down.[12548]

There are theologians that say that while going to the altar one may recite the *Miserere;* but others deny this, because the Rubric does not speak of it.[12549]

If he passes before an altar where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed he should kneel down on both knees (although Bauldry and others say that he need bend only one knee); then he uncovers his head and gives the biretta to the server, or, according to the opinion of Merati and of others, he holds it downward in his right hand, with the open side turned towards himself;[12550] after having adored our Lord by a profound inclination of the head, he puts on his biretta and rises. He does the same thing when he meets a priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament.

If he passes before an altar at the moment of the Elevation, he kneels down on both knees, as has been said above, and does not rise until the chalice [or ciborium] is placed on the altar. He does the same thing when Communion is distributed. When there is distribution of Communion he need not wait till it is finished (S. R. C., July 5, 1698).

If he passes before an altar after the Consecration he makes a genuflection, takes off his biretta, and makes a profound bow; then he puts 011 his biretta and rises. It is also probable that he may make a simple genuflection without uncovering his head; for then the Blessed Sacrament, hidden on the altar, may be regarded as inclosed in the tabernacle. Such is the practice at Rome, says Merati.[12551]

If he passes before the main altar where the Blessed Sacrament is kept, he genuflects without taking off his biretta; if, however, only a cross is on the altar, he makes a profound bow: this kind of bow is also made if there is exposed some remarkable relic of a saint whose feast is being celebrated, or who is held in high honor. When the relics are on the same altar on which is kept the Blessed Sacrament, it suffices for him to genuflect without uncovering his head.[12552]

If the priest passes through the choir while there is being sung the *Gloria Patri,* or another verse which requires an inclination of the head, he remains standing, and inclines reverently. If the clergy be present, he salutes them both sides of the choir with head covered.

If he meets a priest who has just said Mass, he lets him pass on the right and salutes him, but without uncovering and without stopping.

If he passes before a Cardinal, or the Archbishop of the Province, or the Bishop of the diocese, or an Apostolic Legate, or a King, or some other great personage, he salutes him by a moderate inclination, without however uncovering his head.

Finally, it must be observed that if the priest does not carry the chalice, he should go to the altar with his hands joined before his breast, and make all the reverences with his head uncovered.

3. THE PRIEST ARRIVES AT THE ALTAR

> “Cum pervenerit ad altare, stans ante illius infimum gradum caput detegit, birretum ministro porrigit, et altari, seu imagini Crucifixi desuper positæ, profunde inclinat. Si autem in eo sit tabernaculum Sanctissimi Sacramenti, genuflectens debitam facit reverentiam.”—*(Rub. Miss.* tit. II. n. 2.)

Having arrived at the altar, the priest stops at the foot of it, before the first step, uncovers his head, and gives the biretta to the server.

If he also wears a skull-cap he must take it off, unless it is permitted him by an apostolic dispensation to wear it during Mass; in this case he may wear it till the Canon, and may put it on only after the Communion. It must be observed that no one, even if a bishop, is permitted to wear the skull-cap during Mass without an apostolical indult, as appears from several decrees cited by Gavantus (Part II. tit. 2, n. 2, lit. f), and from the decree approved by Urban VIII. and placed at the beginning of the Missal.[12553]

He makes a profound inclination if the Blessed Sacrament is not on the altar; for if it is there, he genuflects below, on the first step, as has been said above, without any other reverence of the head; this is in accordance with the common practice.[12554]

4. THE PRIEST ASCENDS THE STEPS OF THE ALTAR WHEREON HE PLACES THE CHALICE

> “Tunc ascendit ad medium altaris, ubi ad cornu Evangelii sistit calicem, extrahit corporale de bursa, quod extendit in medio altaris, et super illud calicem velo coopertum collocat, bursam

> autem ad cornu Evangelii. Si in altari paramenta accipit hoc idem facit, antequam descendat ab altari ut Missam inchoet.
>
> "Si est consecraturus plures hostias pro communione facienda quæ ob quantitatem super patena manere non possint, locat eas super corporale ante calicem, aut in aliquo calice consecrato, vel vase mundo benedicto, ponit eas retro post calicem, et alia patena, seu palla cooperit."–(*Rub. Miss.* tit II. n. 2 et 3.)

He then ascends the steps of the altar, in the middle, always beginning with the right foot. Having arrived at the middle of the altar, he puts the chalice on the Gospel side,[12555] takes the burse with the left hand, and taking out of it the corporal with the right hand, he places it on the altar. Then with the left hand, which is already holding the burse, he places it on the Gospel side, and so places it between the candles that its opening be towards the Epistle side, and the wax of the candles may not fall upon it.

Then with his two hands he extends the corporal upon the sacred stone, which is in the middle of the altar, so that its extremity is distant about the width of a finger from the front part of the altar. In this way there is no danger that the lace of the corporal will cling to the vestments of the priest, who in his movements might thus upset the chalice. If there is on the corporal an embroidered cross, this part should be placed in front so that he may kiss the cross when the altar is to be kissed.[12556]

This done, the priest places the chalice on the corporal with both hands, that is, he holds with the left hand the foot of the chalice at the knob, and with the right he raises the veil by taking it at its extremity, and thus transfers the chalice, raised about half a palm from the Gospel side to the middle. When it is in the middle he raises a little the veil so that it may not slip under the foot of the chalice. He places the chalice more towards the back than towards the front, and the chalice should be covered on all sides with the veil, so that when he kisses the altar it may not be in the way; this is far more necessary after the Communion, because then the chalice is also covered with the burse. The chalice should always stand on the sacred stone, namely, in a direct line in the middle of the altar. It must be here remarked that without an apostolical dispensation the corporal should not be carried outside of the burse on the veil. See Gavantus, p. 2, n. 1, lit. o, and Merati, p. 2, tit. 2, n. 12.

If several particles are to be consecrated for the Communion of the people, and they can be held on the paten (if they are few they can be placed on the paten below the large host), they are placed on the corporal before the chalice on the Gospel side, so that they may not be outside of the sacred stone; or they may be placed in a ciborium or another chalice, which is then put behind the chalice: if it is a chalice, it is to be covered with a pall; but if it is a ciborium, it should be covered with its own lid.

5. THE PRIEST OPENS THE MISSAL, THEN DESCENDS TO THE FOOT OF THE ALTAR

> “Collocato calice in altari, accedit ad cornu Epistolæ, Missale super cussino aperit, reperit Missam, et signacula suis locis accommodat. Deinde, rediens ad medium altaris, facta primum Cruci reverentia, vertens se ad cornu Epistolæ, descendit post infimum gradum altaris, ut ibi faciat Confessionem.”—*(Rub. Miss.* tit. II. n. 4.)

The chalice having thus been put in its place, the priest joins his hands and makes a simple (*maxima*) inclination[12557] to the cross; this he does whenever he leaves the middle of the altar or returns to the middle,[12558] unless a little before his arrival or after his departure the Rubric prescribes the kissing of the altar or the making of another inclination, as when the *Credo* is said. Immediately after having made this reverence, he joins his hands, putting the right thumb over the left in the form of a cross, and goes to the Epistle corner. He opens the Missal,[12559] again looks for the Mass that is to be said,[12560] and having verified the book-marks, he returns to the middle of the altar with his hands joined before his breast. There he makes to the cross a moderate (not profound) reverence, according to the more common opinion, without raising the eyes to the cross, and without stopping to say some prayer before descending from the altar.

Having made a reverence to the cross, he moves towards the Gospel side, that he may not turn his back to the cross or the tabernacle, and with his face towards the Epistle corner, his eyes cast down, and his hands joined before his breast, he descends to the foot of the altar below the lowest steps; the more altar steps there are, the more should he turn towards the Gospel side, in order that, descending in an oblique direction, he may find himself at the middle before the altar when he arrives at the lowest step. But if the altar has more than three steps he may remain standing on the third step, or upon the step that is more convenient. If, however, the altar has only one step, the priest moves back a little and remains standing on the floor below the lowest step.

It must be remarked that the priest should not descend from the altar before the candles have been lighted.[12561]

Chapter III

THE BEGINNING OF THE MASS

1. THE PRIEST, WITH HIS HANDS JOINED, MAKES AN INCLINATION OR A GENUFLECTION

> “Sacerdos, cum primum descenderit sub infimum gradum altaris, convertit se ad ipsum altare, ubi stans in medio, junctis manibus ante pectus extensis et junctis pariter digitis, et pollice dextro super sinistrum posito in modum crucis (quod semper servatur. quando junguntur manus, præterquam post Consecrationem) detecto capite, facta prius Cruci vel altari profunda reverentia, vel si in eo sit tabernaculum Sanctissimi Sacramenti, facta genuflexione, erectus incipit Missam.”—*(Rub. Miss.* tit. III. n. 1.)

THE priest having descended to the front of the last step, turns his face to the altar and stops in the middle, with his hands joined before his breast, without touching the chasuble; in order to do this more easily, he should keep his elbows nearer to the breast than to the sides.

To join the hands, the fingers should be extended and joined, so that each finger touches the same finger of the other hand; for example, the forefinger of the right hand should touch the forefinger of the left hand, and so on with the other fingers. Moreover, the right thumb should be placed upon the left thumb in the form of a cross, so that there remains no space between the fingers. This should be observed every time that the hands are joined, except after the Consecration, when the thumbs and the forefingers are to be joined, and the extremities of the fingers should be held more towards the face of the celebrant than towards the altar.

He makes to the cross a profound inclination of the body or a genuflection,[12562] if the Blessed Sacrament is in the tabernacle.

When he genuflects, he lowers the knee near the heel of the left foot; and when he stands, the feet should be not far apart, but joined.

2. THE PRIEST MAKES THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

> “Stans igitur celebrans ante infimum gradum altaris, ut supra, producens manu dextra a fronte ad pectus signum Crucis, dicit intelligibili voce: *In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*—Et postquam id dixerit, non debet advertere quemcumque in alio altari celebrantem, etiamsi Sacramentum elevet, sed continuate prosequi Missam suam usque ad finem. Quod item observatur in Missa solemni, et simul etiam a ministris.
>
> “Cum seipsum signat, semper sinistram ponit infra pectus; in aliis benedictionibus cum est ad altare, et benedicit oblata, vel aliquid aliud, ponit eam super altare, nisi aliter notetur. Seipsum benedicens, vertit ad se palmam manus dextræ, et, omnibus illius digitis junctis et extensis, a fronte ad pectus, et ab humero sinistro ad dextrum, signum Crucis format. Si vero alios, vel rem aliquam benedicit, parvum digitum vertit ei cui benedicit, ac benedicendo, totam manum dextram extendit, omnibus illius digitis pariter junctis et extensis; quod in omni benedictione observatur.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. III. n. 4 et 5.)

Then standing erect, he makes the sign of the cross, and holding the left hand below his breast, he signs himself with the right hand, moving it from the forehead to the breast and from the left shoulder to the right shoulder, saying in a loud voice: *In nomine Patris,* etc., and while saying *Amen* he joins his hands.

It must be observed that the cross must be formed with the three fingers of the right hand that is extended; but all the fingers should be joined, nor should the thumb be separated from the forefinger: and when the priest signs himself he turns the palm of the hand towards his face; but if he makes the sign of the cross on the book, the palm is to be turned towards the book. Moreover, if he forms the cross only with one hand, he never holds the other that is not employed extended in the air, but holds it either on his breast, or on the altar, or on the book: on the breast when he signs himself, or blesses the assistants or something that is near the altar, such as incense; or the book, when he signs the book: but he puts it on the altar when he makes the sign of the cross over anything that is placed on or near the altar; for instance, ashes, candles, palm, or the subdeacon after the Epistle, etc.

He places his hand also on the altar when he turns the leaves of the Missal, or while standing at the altar, he does some other action with one hand only.

If, before the priest begins Mass, the Elevation happens to take place at a neighboring altar, while he is arranging the chalice and looking for the Mass, he continues to do what he is doing. Then he descends to the floor and kneels down on the lowest step. But if he has already made the sign of the cross, he no longer heeds what is done at the other altars; that is, he makes neither a genuflection nor an inclination.

The celebrant should pay attention not to pronounce too fast what he is to say in a loud voice, so that what he says may be understood; nor should he pronounce it too slowly, lest those present might be annoyed. He should not speak so loud as to disturb the priests that are celebrating, or are engaged in hearing confessions in the same church;[12563] but his voice should be grave, uniform, clear, and intelligible, so that those who are not far from the altar may understand him, and may be excited to devotion. What is to be said in a low tone, *he should pronounce in such a manner that the celebrant may hear himself, and may not be heard by those around the altar,* according to the Rubric. The obligation of thus varying the voice binds under pain at least of venial sin, against the opinion of a few who falsely suppose that such Rubrics are not preceptive, although, as we have remarked above, all the Rubrics to be observed within the Mass are preceptive, and bind even under a grave fault, if the matter is grave.[12564]

3. THE PRIEST RECITES THE PSALM JUDICA ME

> "Postquam dixerit: *In nomine Patris, etc.,* ut supra; jungens iterum manus ante pectus, pronuntiat clara voce antiphonam, *Introibo ad Altare Dei.* Minister vero retro post eum ad sinistram genuflexus et in Missa solemni ministri, hinc inde stantes prosequuntur: *Ad Deum, qui lætificat juventutem meam.* Deinde Sacerdos, eodem modo stans, incipit, et prosequitur cum ministro, alternatim, psalmum *Judica me Deus*, usque ad finem, cum *Gloria Patri.* Quo finito repetit antiphonam *Introibo,* cum ministris, ut supra. Qui Psalmus nunquam prætermittitur, nisi in Missis Defunctorum, et in Missis de Tempore a Dominica Passionis inclusive usque ad Sabbatum Sanctum exclusive: in quibus semel tantum dicta antiphona *Introibo* cum ministris, ut supra, Sacerdos statim subjungit: *V. Adjutorium nostrum, etc.,*—ut infra. Cum in line Psalmi dicit, *Gloria Patri, etc.,*—caput Cruci inclinat.
>
> "Repetita antiphona *Introibo,* dextra manu producens signum Crucis a fronte ad pectus, dicit: *V. Adjuforium nostrum in nomine Domini; R. Qui fecit cœlum et terram."—(Rub. Miss.* tit. III. n. 6 et 7.)

The priest says in a clear and intelligible voice the antiphon *Introibo ad Altare Dei* and the psalm *Judica* as far as the prayer *Aufer,* etc. In the mean time he represents to his mind the end to which all the rest of his actions should be directed, that is to say, to the offering of the sacrifice, the dignity and sanctity of which surpass all that one can imagine. The psalm *Judica* is omitted in the Masses of the Dead, and from Passion Sunday inclusively to Holy Saturday exclusively. But on the feasts of the saints that fall within

Passion Week this psalm must be said, as also in the votive Masses that are celebrated in the same week, even if the votive Masses are *de Passione* or *de Cruce.*

At the *Gloria Patri* a simple inclination of the head is made, which is called, as has been mentioned above, *minimarum maxima:* this should always be observed when this versicle is recited.

After having repeated the antiphon *Introibo,* he signs himself with the sign of the cross, saying, *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini;* these words are so distributed that when he says *Adjutorium,* the hand touches the forehead; when he says *nostrum,* the breast; when he says *in nomine,* the left shoulder; and when *Domine,* the right shoulder.

4. THE PRIEST RECITES THE CONFITEOR AND WHAT FOLLOWS IT, AS FAR AS THE PRAYER AUFER A NOBIS

> “Deinde, altari se profunde inclinans, junctis manibus dicit *Confiteor Deo,* ut in ordine Missæ; et prosequitur, eodem modo stans inclinatus, donec a ministro vel ministris dictum sit *Misereatur;* cum incipitur a ministris *Confiteor*-se erigit. Cum dicit *Mea culpa,* ter pectus dextra manu percutit, sinistra infra pectus posita.
>
> “Facta a circumstantibus confessione, Celebrans stans respondet *Misereatur vestri, etc.* Deinde producens manu dextra a fronte ad pectus signum Crucis, dicit: *Indulgentiam, etc.* Et stans inclinatus junctis manibus prosequitur, *Deus tu conversus* et quæ sequuntur in Ordine Missæ, clara voce usque ad Orationem, *Aufer a nobis, etc.;* etcum dicit *Oremus,* extendit et jungit manus.”—*(Rub. Miss.* tit. III, n. 7 and 10.)

When he says the *Confiteor* he holds his hands joined, as has been said above,[12565] and he inclines so profoundly that he can touch the knees with his hands; he remains thus inclined till the *Misereatur tui,* etc., has been said; then he answers *Amen,* and assumes an erect posture.

It is not permitted while saying the *Confiteor* to add the name of another saint, or even of a patron;[12566] nor when he says *vobis fratres* and *vos fratres* should he turn to the server.[12567] But in a solemn Mass, when the celebrant says *vobis fratres* and *vos fratres*, he should turn a little towards the ministers; and he observes the same thing while saying the *Misereatur,* according to the opinion of Gavantus, Rub. 12.

When he says *Mea culpa,* etc., he strikes his breast three times with all the fingers of the right hand joined together, holding his left below the breast. Merati does not disapprove of the practice of striking the breast with the open palm of the hand, but the common opinion wishes that the fingers be joined together. It must be here observed that the breast should not be struck with great violence. Having said *mea maxima culpa,* he immediately joins his hands.

After the server has finished the *Confiteor,* the celebrant continues saying *Misereatur vestri,* etc.; and when he says *Indulgentiam* he signs himself with the cross, so arranging the words that at *Indulgentiam* he touches his forehead; at *absolutionem,* his breast; at *remissionem,* his left shoulder; at *peccatorum nostrorum,* his right; and at *tribuat,* etc., he joins his hands.

Afterwards the celebrant with his hands joined before his breast remains moderately inclined, and says: *Deus tu conversus,* etc. It must be remarked that these versicles should not be said too fast, as some priests and servers are accustomed to do; for it is not proper for one to begin before the other finishes. And if the server does not know the words, the celebrant should supply them. He does not stand erect until he has said *Oremus;* but while saying *Oremus* he opens his hands and again joins them.

Then standing erect, he says in a low voice *Aufer,* and ascends the altar, raising at first the right foot, and slowly ascends so that when he reaches the middle of the altar he has finished the prayer.

Chapter IV

THE INTROIT, KYRIE, AND GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

1. THE PRIEST SAYS THE PRAYER ORAMUS TE, AND KISSES THE ALTAR

> “Dum dicit: *Aufer a nobis, etc.,* celebrans junctis manibus, ascendit ad medium altaris; et ibi inclinatus, manibusque item junctis super eo positis, ita ut digiti parvi dumtaxat frontem, seu medium anterioris partis tabulæ seu mensæ altaris tangant, residuo manuum inter altare et se retento, pollice dextro super sinistrum in modum crucis posito (quæ omnia semper observantur cum manus junctæ super altare ponuntur), secreto dicit: *Oramus te Domine, etc.;* et cum dicit: *Quorum reliquiæ hic sunt,* osculatur altare in medio, manibus extensis æqualiter hinc inde super eo positis; quod semper servatur, quando osculatur altare: sed post Consecrationem pollices ab indicibus non disjunguntur. In omni etiam deosculatione, sive altaris, sive libri, sive alterius rei, non producitur signum crucis, pollice vel manu, super id quod osculandum est.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. IV. n. i.)

HAVING arrived at the middle of the altar, the priest inclines moderately and places his hands joined on the altar, so that the small fingers touch the front of the altar, and the other fingers rest on the edge, the right thumb being held on the left in the form of a cross. This should always be observed as often as it is prescribed that he should place his hands joined on the altar, even after the Consecration; but then in this case the thumbs should never be disjoined from the forefingers. Care should be taken that the little fingers that touch the front part of the altar be not separated from the other fingers.

He recites in this posture *Oramus te Domine,* etc. When he says *Quorum Reliquiæ hic sunt*, he extends his hands, which he puts on the altar as far as the wrist, on both sides, a little outside of the corporal, and bending his head in a straight line he kisses the altar in the middle, and not on the side. This he should always do when the altar is to be kissed; but after the Consecration the hands are placed on the corporal. In order that the altar may be more easily kissed, it will be necessary to move back about a foot; this is also to be observed when a moderate or profound inclination or a genuflection is to be made. Care must be taken to kiss the altar; for some, in order to avoid the inconvenience that they feel in bending the head as far as the altar, kiss the air; this a great fault.

2. THE PRIEST READS THE INTROIT, AND RECITES THE KYRIE ELEISON

> “Osculato altari, accedit ad cornu ejus sinistrum, id est, Epistolæ; ubi, stans versus altare, et producens a fronte ad pectus signum Crucis, incipit intelligibili voce *Introitum* Missæ, et prosequitur junctis manibus. Cum dicit *Gloria Patri* tenens junctas manus, caput inclinat versus Crucem. Cum repetit *Introitum,* non signat se ut prius; et eo repetito, junctis manibus ante pectus accedit ad medium altaris: ubi stans versus illud similiter manibus junctis, dicit eadem voce ter *Kyrie eleison,* ter *Christe eleison,* et iterum ter *Kyrie eleison,* alternating cum ministro. Si minister non respondeat, ipse solus novies dicit.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. IV. n. 2.)

Having kissed the altar the priest joins his hands, and without making any inclination to the cross he goes at a natural walk to the Epistle corner, continuing to say *et omnium Sanctorum,* etc., as appears from the Rubric that says: *Osculato altari accedit ad cornu ejus sinistrum.*

When he arrives at the place where the Missal is, he turns toward it, and with his body and his head erect he begins the *Introit* (not, however, while still walking) in a loud voice, signs himself with the sign of the cross, and with his hands joined continues it in the same high tone of voice.

At the *Gloria Patri* he makes towards the cross a simple *minimarum maxima* inclination, but does not raise his eyes; and thus remains till the *Sicut erat.* While making this inclination he should also bend his body a little, according to the practice more commonly received and more natural. While he repeats the *Introit* he does not make the sign of the cross.

Gloria Patri in the Introit is omitted only in the Masses of the Dead, and from Passion Sunday till Easter it is said only in Masses of the saints and in votive Masses; during the Paschal time two *alleluias* are added.

After the Introit, while walking with his hands joined and at his natural pace, and therefore with his right side turned towards the altar, he goes to the middle, where in a loud voice he says alternately with the server three times *Kyrie eleison,* three times *Christe eleison,* and again three times *Kyrie eleison.* He should, however, take care not to begin until he has arrived at the middle, and has made to the cross a simple *minimarum maxima* inclination,[12568] without, however, raising his eyes. This must be observed as often as he passes to the middle of the altar or leaves it, unless a little before leaving it, or a little after reaching it, the making of a bow is prescribed in the Missal; for example, if the altar is to be kissed or after the Gospel the *Credo* is to be said, because at the word *Deum* a bow is prescribed. And so also when on the Ember days after Pentecost *Gloria in excelsis Deo* is to be said separately (without *Kyrie),* because at the word *Deo* an inclination is prescribed.

3. THE PRIEST RECITES THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

> “Dicto ultimo *Kyrie eleison,* Sacerdos, stans in medio altaris, et manus extendens, elevansque usque ad humeros (quod in oinni manuum elevatione observatur), voce prædicta incipit, si dicendum sit *Gloria in excelsis.* Cum dicit *Deo,* jungens manus, caput Cruci inclinat; quo erecto, stans junctis manibus ante pectus, prosequitur usque ad finem. Cum dicit *Adoramus te, Gratias agimus tibi,* et *Jesu Christe, Suscipe deprecationem nostrum,* et iterum, *Jesu Christe,* caput Cruci inclinat. Cum dicit, in fine *Cum sancto Spiritu,* seipsum a fronte, ad pectus signat, interim absolvens *In gloria Dei Patris, Amen.*—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. IV. n. 3.)

The last *Kyrie* having been said, while yet standing erect at the middle of the altar, he says *Gloria,* extending his hands the width of his body and raising them to the height of his shoulders, so that they do not pass higher than his nose;[12569] when he says *in excelsis* he joins them before his breast,[12570] but at the word *Deo* he inclines his head, without, however, raising his eyes.

Merati wishes this inclination to be the simple *minimarum minima;* but it seems to me that the simple *minimarum maxima* is required, just as at *Gratias agimus,* when this inclination is made at the word *Deo:* the more so since Merati himself says that on the Saturday within the Octave of Pentecost, when he arrives at the middle of the altar in order to say the *Gloria* and the *Credo,* no inclination is to be made, because immediately at the word *Deo,* which is said in the *Gloria* and the *Credo,* an inclination must be made; and he wishes that this inclination should be the simple *minimarum maxima.*

It must be observed that those do wrong who lower their separated hands and place them on the altar; because the hands are to be immediately disjoined, and without lowering them are to be held in such a way that one palm faces the other, and the hands do not reach higher than the shoulders.

After having said *Gloria in excelsis Deo,* he continues the hymn, remaining in the same posture and holding his hands joined before his breast till the end. But when he says *Adoramus te, Gratias agimus tibi,* and

Jesu Christe, Suscipe deprecationem nostrum, and again *Jesu Christe*, he makes a simple *minimarum maxima* inclination. At the end, when he says *Cum sancto Spiritu*, etc., he makes the sign of the cross, so distributing the words that at the words *Cum sancto* he places his right hand on his forehead; at the word *Spiritu*, he places it below the breast; at the words *in gloria*, he conveys it to the left shoulder; at the words *Dei Patris*, he transfers it to the right shoulder; and at the word *Amen*, he joins his hands. But Tonellius and others, with whose opinion Merati seems to concur, say that the joining of the hands may be omitted, because they are to be disjoined immediately, and such a joining is not prescribed by the Rubric. And the same thing holds good, after the *Credo* is finished, at the *Benedictus qui venit*, etc., after the *Sanctus*, and at *Omni benedictione cœlesti*, because at the *Memento* for the Dead the hands must be immediately disjoined.[12571]

The *Gloria* is always said when the *Te Deutn* was said in the Office; but it is omitted in Masses of the Dead and in votive Masses, except in Masses of the Blessed Virgin on Saturdays,[12572] in Masses of the Angels, or in Masses that are solemnly celebrated *pro re gravi;*[12573] and otherwise if it is expressly prescribed in the Missal, as on Thursday and Saturday of Holy Week, on which days the *Gloria* is recited, although the *Te Deum* was not said in the Office, because on those days the Office is not in accord with the Mass.

Chapter V

THE PRAYERS

1. THE PRIEST SALUTES THE PEOPLE, SAYING DOMINUS VOBISCUM

> “Dicto hymno *Gloria in excelsis,* vel, si non sit dicendus, eo omisso, celebrans osculatur altare in medio, manibus hinc inde super eo, ut supra, extensis; tum illis ante pectus junctis, et demissis ad terram oculis, vertit se a sinistro latere ad dextrum versus populum, hoc est per eam partem quæ respicit cornu Epistolæ, et, extendens ac jungens manus ante pectus, ut prius, dicit voce prædicta *Dominus vobiscum.*
>
> “Si altare sit ad Orientem versus populum, celebrans, versa facie ad populum, non vertit humeros ad altare, cum dicturus est, *Dominus vobiscum; Orate fratres; Ite Missa est;* vel daturus benedictionem; sed, osculato altari in medio, ibi expansis et junctis manibus, ut supra, salutat populum, et dat benedictionem.”-(*Rub. Miss.* tit. V. n. 1 et 3.).

AFTER the *Gloria,* or if it is omitted, after the *Kyrie,* the celebrant, with his hands (not only his fingers) resting as far as the wrists exclusively, on both sides of the altar, outside of the corporal, as has been said above (Chap. IV. 1), kisses the altar, and then with his hands again joined before his breast, and with his eyes cast down, but not closed, so that he can see about three feet beyond the steps of the altar, he turns from the Epistle side towards the people, and standing in the middle, he extends his hands so that one palm faces the other, and he joins them, all the fingers being joined and straight, but the hands are not extended beyond the width of the shoulders, and immediately in an intelligible voice he says *Dominus vobiscum,* but he does not incline the head nor lean against the altar: this should be observed in all similar cases.

It must be remarked that spectacles should be taken off and put on the altar outside of the corporal before the celebrant turns towards the people.[12574]

If the altar is placed in such a manner that the celebrant faces the people, he does not turn to them, but having kissed the altar, he salutes or blesses them in the prescribed words.

2. THE PRIEST RECITES THE PRAYER

> “*Et cum spiritu tuo.* Et junctis ut prius manibus, revertitur per eamdem viam ad librum, ubi, eas extendens et jungens ante pectus, caputque Cruci inclinans, dicit *Oremus* tum extendit manus ante pectus, ita ut palma unius manus respiciat alteram, et digitis simul junctis, quorum summitas humerorum altitudinem distantiamque non excedat; quod in omni extensione manuum ante pectus servatur. Stans autem, ut supra, extensis manibus, dicit *Orationem.*—Cum dicit *Per Dominum nostrum,* jungit manus, easque junctas tenet usque ad finem. Si aliter concluditur Oratio *Qui tecum,* vel *Qui vivis,* cum dicit *in imitate,* jungit manus.
>
> “Cum nominatur nomen *Jesus,* caput versus Crucem inclinat; quod etiam facit cum nominatur in Epistola. Et similiter ubicumque nominatur nomen beatæ Mariæ, vel Sanctorum de quibus dicitur Missa, vel fit commemoratio; item in oratione pro Papa quando nominatur, semper caput inclinat, non tamen versus Crucem.
>
> “Si plures Orationes sint dicendæ, idem in eis, in voce, extensione manuum, et capitis inclinatione, quod supra dictum est, observatur.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. V. n. I, 2.)

After the server has answered *Et cum spiritu tuo,* the celebrant returns to the Missal by the same way, at a natural and grave pace; and when he arrives there, he extends his hands and again joins them, and turning a little towards the cross, without raising his eyes, makes to the cross a simple *minimarum maxima* inclination, saying at the same time in an intelligible voice *Oremus,* and then in the same intelligible voice he continues the prayer, standing erect and with his hands so extended that one palm faces the other, and the extremities of the fingers reach, but do not extend higher than the shoulders, nor beyond the width of the body; but the fingers should be joined and straight: this must always be done when the hands are to be held extended before the breast. We must observe that the left hand should be placed on the Missal[12575] if the right hand turns the leaves.

At the conclusion *Per Dominum nostrum* and *Per eumdem Dominum* the hands are immediately joined;[12576] if the conclusion is made with *qui tecum* or with *qui vivis,* they are joined at the words *in unitate.* If the prayer is directed to God the Father, it is concluded with the words *Per Dominum,* etc. If in the middle of the prayer[12577] the name *Jesus* is uttered, it is concluded with the words *Per eumdem,* etc.; if the name *Jesus* is mentioned at the end, it is concluded with the words *qui tecum,* etc.; if the prayer is directed to Jesus Christ, it is concluded with *qui vivis,* etc.; if the Holy Ghost is named, or if the prayer is directed to him, we must say in conclusion *in unitate ejusdem Spiritus sancti.*[12578] Therefore in the first two conclusions, while saying *Jesum,* the celebrant turns to the cross with the *minimarum maxima* inclination, and remains thus inclined till the end of the prayer.[12579] If several prayers are to be said, he should not look for the next prayer before the first is concluded, as the Rubric clearly prescribes against the opinion of Tonellius: *Easque junctas tenet usque ad finem.*

In the conclusions *qui tecum* and *qui vivis* the hands are joined at the words *in unitate*, but the head is not inclined nor turned to the cross. If in the prayer the name *Jesus* is said, a *minimarum maxima* inclination is to be made towards the cross; at the name of the Blessed Virgin a *minimarum media* inclination is to be made towards the book; at the name of a saint a *minimarum minima* inclination is also to be made towards the book; and also when the name of that saint is uttered of whom a commemoration is made.[12580] By the word *commemoration* is not understood that which is made in the prayer *A cunctis*, because in that only at the name *Mary* the head is inclined. By commemoration we mean when a Mass, even if a votive Mass, is said of any saint, or when it is said within the octave of the saint of whom a commemoration is made.[12581]

At the name of the saint of whom a commemoration is made, the head is to be inclined whenever it is mentioned in the prayer, in the Epistle, in the Gospel, or in the Canon.[12582] Excepted, however, is the title of the Epistle and of the Gospel, as, for example, *Lectio Epistolæ B. Pauli Apostoli, Sequentia S. Evangelii secundum Joannem.* For in these places the head is not inclined, although in the Office a commemoration is made of the same holy apostles.[12583]

Whatever may be the number of prayers, the conclusion is made only in the first and in the last, and the invitation *Oremus* is said only in the first and in the second prayer.[12584]

3. THE PRAYERS ON THE EMBER DAYS

> “In Quatuor Temporibus vel alias, quando dicendæ sunt plures Orationes cum Prophetiis, dicto *Kyrie eleison* in medio altaris, revertitur ad cornu Epistolæ, ubi, stans ante librum. extensis et junctis ante pectus manibus, et caput Cruci inclinans, dicit, *Oremus*, *Flectamus genua;* et illico manibus super altare extensis, ut seipsum ad altare sustineat, genuflectit; et sine mora surgens, eadem voce ministro respondente *Levate*, manibus extensis dicit *Orationem* ut supra, et in conclusione eas jungit. Dum autem legit Prophetias, tenet manus super librum vel altare positas, ut mox dicetur de Epistola.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. V. n. 4.)

On the Ember days, and on other days on which there are many prayers and Prophecies, the priest, having said the *Kyrie* in the middle of the altar, and a *minimarum maxima* inclination having previously been made towards the cross,[12585] returns to the Epistle corner, and there as usual says *Oremus*. Then he says *Flectamus genua*, and with his hands resting on the altar he makes a genuflection only on one knee, and immediately, after the server has answered *Levate*, he rises and says the prayer. When he reads the Prophecies, he holds his hands either upon the altar or upon the Missal.

4. THE NUMBER OF PRAYERS

As for the number of prayers, it should be known that if the Office is *duplex,* all the prayers that are prescribed in the Office should be said, nor is it permitted to add or omit a prayer. It must be remarked that if a *festum duplex secundæ classis* occurs, which has a commemoration of the *simplex* only in the Lauds and not in the Vespers, a commemoration of the *simplex* is not made in the solemn Mass, but is made only in private Masses. On those days, however, on which by the Rubric several prayers are forbidden, all the commemorations are also omitted in the Mass; as on Pentecost and on the Vigil of Pentecost, etc.

Besides, the Sacred Congregation of Rites, December 2, 1684, has declared that it is not a precept of the Rubric that *in semiduplicibus, simplicibus,* and *feriis* an odd number should always be taken. Theologians, however, require that in conformity to the Rubrics at least three prayers should be taken, and in ferial, votive, or simple Masses only five or at the most seven may be allowed; but on Sundays and *in semiduplicibus* are to be said four inclusively of the prayer prescribed by the Superior, and it is not necessary to add a fifth: *Cum in Missa de semiduplici non sint necessario dicendæ collectæ impares, id est tres, quinque vel septem,* according to the cited decree of December 2, 1684. Moreover, if a prayer is prescribed by the Superior, [then either it is taken *ad libitum* instead of the third, or it is added as a commemoration to the *duplex, semiduplex,* or to the Sunday: so the S. C. R. declared August 28, 1627]. This prayer is regularly omitted on feasts *primæ* and *secundæ classis;* and even in the principal churches in Rome it is omitted in private Masses: that it must be omitted in the solemn

Masses is certain. So also the commemoration of the *simplex* is omitted, although it is otherwise of precept.

It must be observed that the prayers *ad libitum* are not to be so understood that the celebrant may say any prayer he may please to say, but that of those prayers that are in the Missal he may choose one, as appears from the Rubric, tit. VII. n. 9.

It must be observed: 1. That it is not proper that the celebrant in a solemn Mass should say the prayer *Pro se ipso sacerdote* in the presence of the bishop or the clergy assembled in the choir, but he should take the prayer that has reference to the Superior or Congregation, or another that is more suitable. 2. The commemorations of the Sundays, of Advent, of Lent, of the Vigils, and of the Ember days should never be omitted. 3. The commemoration of the Ember days should be the first after the Introit, that is, the prayer of the Office. 4. If any octave falls on a privileged[12586] Sunday, only the commemoration of the octave is taken, the third prayer being omitted.

In the votive Masses the second prayer shall always be the prayer of the Office, but the third should be that which was to have been said in the second place. The prayer that was to have been said in the third place may be omitted unless it be a particular commemoration that is made in the Office.

In the Mass of a saint who is the titular patron of the altar, of whom no Office is said, but only a votive Mass on the day of the same saint, the second prayer will be of the Office of the day; the third, that which agrees with the Office, and which was to have been taken in the third place. In this Mass, which is regarded as a combination of the votive and festive (votive, because it does not agree with the Office; festive, because it is the feast of the saint), the *Gloria* is said. But in regard to the solemn votive Masses, see the Rubric.

In the votive Masses of the Blessed Virgin, the second[12587] commemoration is of the Holy Ghost even during the time of Advent, of the Passion, and of Easter. In the Masses of the apostles instead of the prayer *A cunctis*, *Concede* of the Blessed Virgin is said, so that the commemoration of Sts. Peter and Paul may not be repeated. In the votive Mass of the patron in the prayer *A cunctis*, the name of the patron is omitted, or another saint is mentioned, according to devotion.[12588]

5. THE ORDER OF THE PRAYERS

As for the order of the prayers, the prayer of Sunday precedes the prayer within the octave, but the latter precedes the prayer *feriæ majoris*[12589] or of the Vigil; the latter precedes the prayer of the *simplex*, the prayer of the *simplex* precedes the *communes*, which would be in the second place, and are now put in the third place; but the *communes* precede those that are said through devotion. The votive prayers of the Blessed Trinity, the Holy Ghost, the Blessed Sacrament, and the Cross precede those of the Blessed Virgin, the Holy Angels, and St. John the Baptist, and all precede those of the holy apostles. We must, therefore, say *cum beato Michaele Archangelo*, or *cum beato Joanne Baptista, atque beatis Apostolis tuis Petro et Paulo et omnibus Sanctis.* If a commemoration of the Dead must be made, it is always put in the second last place.

If two prayers in the same Mass are similar, that which is to be said last is to be changed, and in its place another *ex communi* is to be taken. If the prayer of the 22d Sunday after Pentecost, of the Forty Martyrs, or of the Thursday after Ash Wednesday is to be changed, the prayer of the Sunday or *feriæ sequentis* is to be taken.

Chapter VI

THE EPISTLE, THE GRADUAL, THE GOSPEL, AND THE CREDO

1. THE PRIEST READS THE EPISTLE, THE GRADUAL, AND WHAT FOLLOWS

> "Dictis Orationibus, celebrans, positis super librum vel super altare manibus, ita ut palmæ librum tangant; vel (ut placuerit) librum tenens, legit *Epistolam* intelligibili voce, et respondetur a ministro *Deo gratias;* et similiter stans eodem modo, prosequitur *Graduale, Alleluja,* et *Tractum,* ac *Sequentiam* si dicenda sint. Quibus dictis, Sacerdos si privatim celebret, ipsemet, seu minister portat librum Missalis ad alteram partem altaris in cornu Evangelii; et dum transit ante medium aitaris, caput Cruci inclinat; et Missale sic locat, ut posterior pars libri respiciat ipsum cornu altaris. et non ad parietem, sive ad partem ejus contra se directam."—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. VI. 1.)

AFTER having recited the prayers, the priest so places his hands upon the Missal or upon the altar that the palms touch the Missal or he holds them in any way that may be convenient, provided neither hand remains suspended in the air. With his hands thus placed, he reads the Epistle in a loud voice; at the end of the Epistle he lowers the tone of his voice in order to warn the server to answer *Deo gratias.* He does the same at the end of the Gospel. He recites in the same tone of voice the Gradual, Versicle, Tract, or *Sequentia.*

If while he reads the Epistle or some subsequent Versicle a genuflection is to be made, he will make it on one knee, resting meanwhile his hands on the altar without lowering the head.

If in the Epistle the name *Jesus* must be pronounced, he turns a little towards the cross and makes the prescribed inclination. If he pronounces the name *Mary* or that of a saint whose feast it is, he makes a *minimarum media* inclination at the name of the Blessed Virgin, a *minimarum minima* at the name of a saint, but towards the Missal. This holds good for every case that occurs in which the said names must be pronounced, as has been explained on page 117.

The Gradual having been said, throughout the year two *alleluias* are said, then the Versicle, and after it another *alleluia.* In the Paschal time, instead of the Gradual two Versicles and four *alleluias* are said, according to the rubric given at the Mass of Saturday after Easter.

2. THE PRIEST READS THE GOSPEL

“Locato Missali in altari, celebrans redit ad medium altaris, ibique stans, junctis manibus ante pectus, levatisque ad Deum oculis et statim demissis, tum profunde inclinatus, dicit secreto—*Munda cor meum,* et *Jube Domine benedicere, Dominus sit in corde meo*—ut in Ordinario. Quibus dictis, vadit ad librum Missalis, ubi stans versus illum, junctis manibus ante pectus, dicit intelligibili voce *Dominus vobiscum. R. Et cum spiritu tuo.*—Deinde, pollice dextræ manus, signo crucis signat primo librum super principio Evangelii quod est lecturus; postea seipsum in fronte, ore, et pectore, dicens—*Sequentia,* vel *Initium sancti Evangelii,* etc.; *R. Gloria tibi Domine.*—Tum junctis iterum manibus ante pectus, stans ut supra, prosequitur Evangelium usque ad finem. Quo finito, minister, stans in cornu Epistolæ post infimum gradum altaris, respondet—*Laus tibi Christe*—et Sacerdos elevans parumper librum, osculatur principium Evangelii, dicens—*Per Evangelica dicta, etc.*—Cum autem nominatur—*Jesus*—caput versus librum inclinat: et eodem modo versus librum genuflectit, cum in Evangelio est genullectendum.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. VI. 2.)

Having finished the Gradual and what follows it, the priest, leaving the Missal open, with his hands joined before his breast, goes immediately to the middle of the altar, and when he arrives there he raises his eyes to the cross, and immediately lowers them, and profoundly inclined, he does not rest his hands on the altar, but holds them between himself and the altar, and says in a low tone of voice: *Munda cor meum,*[12590] etc. *Jube Domine benedicere: Dominus sit in corde meo,* etc. If the server is so small that the priest himself would have to remove the Missal to its place, while passing he makes an inclination to the cross,[12591] and the Missal having been put into its place, he returns to the middle in order to recite *Munda cor meum,* etc., as has been said above.

Then, with his hands still joined before his breast, he goes to the Gospel corner, and there so places the Missal that it looks not towards the front, but obliquely towards the angle of the altar. Then with his hands joined before his breast, without resting them or his arms on the altar, he faces the Missal;

his head and body being erect, he says in an intelligible voice *Dominus vobiscum.* He then disjoins his hands, and having placed his left hand on the book he makes the sign of the cross with the inner part, not the nail, of the thumb of his right hand on the Missal where the Gospel begins. But while making this sign of the cross he extends his whole right hand, turns the palm towards the book, and keeps the four fingers together. Meanwhile he places his left hand on the Missal, then places it below his breast, and with the same inner part of the thumb of his right hand makes three other small crosses on his forehead, on his mouth, and on his breast, while holding the right hand with the other fingers extended and the palm turned towards himself. The signs of the cross are thus distributed according to the words: While saying *Sequentia* or *Initium* he signs the book; at the words *sancti Evangelii,* the forehead; while signing the mouth he says nothing, because it should be closed; while saying *secundum Joannem,* etc., he signs his breast.

After the server has answered: *Gloria tibi Domine,* the priest joins his hands before his breast, and in an intelligible voice reads the Gospel, inclining the head at the name of Jesus or of Mary towards the Missal, towards which he also genuflects if a genuflection must be made.

The Gospel having been said, the priest raises the Missal a little with both hands, inclines somewhat, and kisses the beginning of the text of the Gospel, saying in a low tone of voice: *Per Evangelica dicta,* etc.

After having kissed the Missal the celebrant places it with both hands on the cushion or stand near the corporal, so that he may conveniently read it from the middle of the altar. Then, with his hands joined before his breast, he goes to the middle of the altar, and on arriving there he kisses it, unless the *Credo* is to be said.

3. THE PRIEST RECITES THE CREDO

> “Dicto Evangelio, stans in medio altaris versus Crucem, elevans et extendens manus, incipit (si dicendum sit) *Credo.* Cum dicit *In unum Deum* jungit manus, et caput Cruci inclinat; quo erecto, stans ibidem junctis ante pectus manibus, ut prius, prosequitur usque ad finem. Cum dicit, *Jesum Christum* caput Cruci inclinat. Cum dicit *Et incarnatus est* usque ad, *Et homo factus est* inclusive, genuflectit. Cum dicit *simul adoratur* caput Cruci inclinat. Cum dicit *Et vitam venturi sæculi, Amen,* producit sibi manu dextra signum Crucis a fronte ad pectus.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. VI. 3.)

If the *Credo* is to be said, the priest standing erect immediately extends his hands, raises them and joins them, and in an intelligible and distinct voice, as at the *Gloria*, begins the *Credo.* At the word *Credo* he extends and raises his hands; at the words *in unum* he joins them; at the word *Deum* he inclines his head, raising neither his eyes nor his head. He continues as at the *Gloria*. At the words *Jesum Christum* he makes a simple *minimarum maxima* inclination. When he says *Et incarnatus est,* which words it is proper to recite slowly so that all may be done rightly, he begins to bend the right knee, and finishes this genuflection at the words *et homo factus est,* so that at these words he already has his knee on the platform of the altar; and he does not (contrary to the opinion of a few) incline the head. Before making a genuflection he extends his hands on the altar and moves back about a foot, both in order not to touch with his left knee the antipendium, and in order not to be obliged to extend his right foot beyond the platform: this should never be done unless perhaps the platform is so narrow that it could not otherwise be done. At the word *adoratur* a simple *minimarum maxima* inclination is to be made towards the cross; but at the words *Et vitam venturi sæculi* he makes the sign of the cross, as at the end of the *Gloria*, so distributing the words that when he says *Et vitam* he touches the forehead and the breast; when he says *venturi he* touches the left shoulder, and when he pronounces the word *sæculi* he touches the right shoulder. But he must pronounce these words slowly, so that everything may be done rightly. At the word *Amen* he may join his hands; but if he does not join them, it is no fault, because it is not prescribed by the Rubric.—(Tonellius, 1. c. t. 4, n. 2.)

4. AT WHICH MASSES SHOULD THE CREDO BE SAID

The *Credo* is said after the Gospel on all Sundays,[12592] although the Office be of a saint in whose Mass there would not be a *Credo* on any other day.

On all the feasts of the Lord and of the Blessed Virgin.

On the feasts of the angels; namely, St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. Raphael, and the holy angel guardians.[12593]

On all the feasts of the apostles and evangelists.

On the feast of any Doctor of the Church whose feast is celebrated as *duplex.*[12594].[3] In the Dedication of a church; also in the consecration of a church or altar, and in octaves, but not of the altar, because there is no octave of the consecration of the altar.

The Dedication of the cathedral church is celebrated with the rite of *primæ classis,* as well in the city as in the diocese; but the octave is celebrated only in the city. Regulars should celebrate with the rite of *secundæ classis* without an octave, as is prescribed in the decree S. R. C., Febr. 11, 1702.[12595] On the titular feasts of the church, that is, of the patron of the place, or of the titular saint, the *Gloria* and *Credo* are said. We say *of the church*, for on the titular feasts of any chapel or altar the *Credo* is said not in private Masses, but only in solemn Masses that are sung. On the titular feast of the cathedral only the *Credo* is said, but there is no octave. The *Credo* is also said on all the octaves and feasts of saints that occur within the octave in churches (not outside of them) that have any remarkable relic, as *the head, arm, leg, or any part of the body in which the saint suffered martyrdom; provided it is entire, not small, and lawfully approved by the Ordinary.* The *Credo* is also said on the day of the creation and coronation of the Pope and on the anniversary; as also on the day of election and consecration of a bishop, and on the principal feasts of Religious Orders and within their octaves, but only in their own churches.[12596] It is also said in the solemn votive Masses celebrated *pro re gravi*. On other feasts of the saints the *Credo* is not said, unless in the churches of which they are the Titular or Patron saints.

Chapter VII

THE OFFERTORY, THE SECRETA, AND THE PREFACE

1. THE PRIEST RECITES THE OFFERTORY

> “Dicto *Symbolo*, vel, si non sit dicendum, post Evangelium, celebrans osculatur altare in medio, et, junctis manibus ante pectus, ibidem a manu sinistra ad dextram (ut dictum est supra), vertit se ad populum, et, extendens ac jungens manus dicit *Dominus vobiscum;* et junctis manibus revertitur per eamdem viam ad medium altaris, ubi, extendens et jungens manus, caputque Cruci inclinans, dicit *Oremus;* tum junctis ut prius manibus dicit, *Offertorium.”*—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. VII. n. 1.)

AFTER having recited the *Credo*, or, if it is not to be said, after having finished the Gospel, the celebrant kisses the altar in the middle and turns to the people to say *Dominus vobiscum* in the manner given above. Then he joins his hands and returns by the same way to the middle of the altar, where extending his hands and raising them to the height of his shoulders,[12597] and again joining them before his breast, he inclines his head towards the cross, and says *Oremus*. Then, with his hands joined before his breast, he says the Offertory, and in Paschal time adds one *Alleluia*. Some recite the Offertory in a low tone of voice, but this seems to be contrary to the Rubric which always expressly says when anything is to be pronounced in a low tone of voice.

2. THE PRIEST UNCOVERS THE CHALICE AND OFFERS THE BREAD

> “Dicto Offertorio, discooperit calicem, et ad cornu Epistolæ sistit; et manu dextra amovet parvam pallam desuper hostiam, accipit patenam cum hostia, et ambabus manibus usque ad pectus cam elevatam tenens, oculis ad Deum elevatis, et statim demissis, dicit, *Suscipe sancte Pater,* etc.
>
> “Si fuerint aliæ hostiæ, non super patenam, sed super corporale, vel in alio calice sen vase, pro communione populi consecrandæ, calicem illum seu vas dextra discooperit, et, intentionem suam etiam ad illas offerendas et consecrandas dirigens, dicit ut supra *Suscipe,* etc.—ut in ordine Missæ.
>
> “Quo dicto, patenam uraque manu tenens, cum ea facit signum Crucis super corporale, et deponit hostiam circa medium anterioris partis corporalis ante se, et patenam ad manum dextram

> aliquantulum subtus corporale; quam, exterso calice, ut dicetur, cooperit purificatorio.
>
> “Si autem adsit vas seu calix cum aliis hostiis, ipsum cooperit alia patena, vel palla.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. VII. n. 2 et 3.)

The Offertory having been said, the priest uncovers the chalice by taking the extremities of the veil with both hands; then raising it in front he removes it towards the back part, and withdraws it from behind the chalice outside of the corporal. Then, if the server is not a cleric invested with surplice, he folds the veil in such a manner that its fringes do not appear on the outside, lest when he puts the pall upon it the border of the pall should adhere to the fringes of the veil. The veil having been thus folded, he places it near the corporal at the Epistle corner; he must never fold it upon the corporal.

After having folded the veil, the priest places his left hand on the altar outside of the corporal; with his right hand he takes the chalice at the knob and puts it on the Epistle side nearly at such a distance as his arm can reach, so that when he takes off the pall he may conveniently place it on the folded veil. Then the celebrant, while yet standing in the middle of the altar, takes the pall off the paten, and so places it on the veil that it projects at one end, and he may thus more easily take hold of it.

It must be observed that in the second and the third Mass of Christmas, when some drops of precious blood remain in the chalice, there should be placed on the altar-cloth a pall on which the chalice may be put: one may use for this purpose the pall of the chalice before removing the said chalice from the corporal, or the chalice may also be held in the left hand. And in these two Masses the priest should take care not to purify the chalice with the purificator when he pours wine and water into the chalice.[12598]

He takes with the right hand, between the thumb, forefinger, and middle finger, the paten with the Host, and raises it as high as his breast, namely, with both thumbs, forefingers, and middle fingers around the paten, and sustains it with the other lingers extended and joined under the paten. At the same time he raises his eyes to the cross, and immediately lowers them, and in a low voice he says: *Suscipe, sancte Pater,* etc. The Rubric says: *elevatis oculis et statim demissis;* but the word *statim* must be taken in a moral sense, so that while saying: *Suscipe, sancte Pater, omnipotens æterne Deus,* it is more suitable to raise the eyes towards the cross, and to lower them while saying *hanc immaculatam Hostiam,* etc.

When the priest has to consecrate particles for the Communion of the faithful, if there are only a few—five or six of them—they should be placed on the paten, and after the Oblation he places them on the corporal on the Gospel side—always, however, on the altar-stone, at a little distance from the large Host. If there are many particles, they should be placed in a ciborium or upon the corporal, as has been just said; and if they are brought to the altar in a ciborium, the ciborium is placed behind the chalice, and the priest before he takes the paten from the chalice opens the ciborium, but does not move it from its place, and at the Offertory directs his intention also to the particles.[12599]

Having finished the prayer *Suscipe*, he forms with the paten a cross *(unius palmi)* nine inches in length, over the corporal, holding the paten *(circa medium palmum)* about four inches above the corporal. Then [inclining the paten he causes the Host to slide from the front part of the paten to the middle of the corporal] he immediately puts the paten partly under the corporal on the Epistle side, and after having purified it, he covers it with the purificator. We say partly (*aliquantulum*), that is, less than one half, so that it may easily be drawn out at the proper time. If a ciborium or a chalice containing particles is at hand, the ciborium is closed with its own cover after the little veil has been removed from the cover; but the chalice is covered with a paten or a pall.

It must be observed that it is a venial sin to consecrate without a reason the particles that are brought to the altar after the Offertory; but if there be a reason, for instance, if otherwise a person who is to communicate would be deprived of Communion, or would have to wait a long time, or if the person be of noble birth or very distinguished (to whom, according to Suarez and others, one may give Communion with a part of the large Host), then they may be lawfully consecrated, the offering of them being mentally supplied; and this is probably allowed even when the Canon has already been begun. See Benedict XIV.,[12600] Quarti, Possevinus, Gobat, and others.

3. THE PRIEST PUTS WINE AND WATER INTO THE CHALICE, AND OFFERS THEM

> “Deinde, in cornu Epistolæ, accipit calicem, purificatorio extergit, et, sinistra tenens illius nodum, accipit ampullam vini de manu ministri (qui osculatur ipsam ampullam, non autem manum celebrantis), et ponit vinum in calicem. Deinde eodem modo tenens calicem, producit signum

> crucis super ampullam aquæ, et dicit—*Deus qui humanæ substantiæ,*—et infundens parum aquæ in calice prosequitur—*Da nobis per hujus aquæ et vini mysterium,* etc.
>
> “Imposita aqua in calice, et finita oratione prædicta, accipit manu dextra calicem discoopertum; et stans ante medium altaris, ipsum ambabus manibus elevatum tenens, videlicet cum sinistra pedem, cum dextra autem nodum infra cuppam, intentis ad Deum oculis offert, dicens—*Offerimus tibi Domine,* etc.—qua oratione dicta, facit signum crucis cum calice super corporale, et ipsum in medio, post hostiam, collocat, et palla cooperit.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. VII. 4 et 5.)

Then having made an inclination towards the cross,[12601] the priest with his hands joined goes to the Epistle corner, and taking with his left hand the chalice at the knob, he at first purifies it with the right hand;[12602] then holding with the left hand the extremity of the purificator upon the knob of the chalice,[12603] he extends the other part of the purificator in the direction of the cruets, in order that if drops should fall the altar-cloth may not be soiled. Then holding the chalice a little inclined, he pours into it at the inclined part such a proper quantity as can be drunk at one draught. The wine having been poured in and the cruet having been returned to the server, while holding the chalice in the same way, he blesses the water, making the sign of the cross over the water cruet (this blessing being omitted in Masses for the Dead), and says at the same time: *Deus, qui humanæ substantiæ,* etc.;[12604] and pouring into the chalice a little natural water,[12605] he continues to say: *da nobis per hujus aquæ et vini mysterium,* etc. Then he returns the cruet to the server, places the chalice upright, takes the purifier that he is holding at the knob between the fingers of his left hand, and puts it neatly around the forefinger, and purifies the chalice in that part where he poured in the wine and the water. But if he poured in the wine by dropping it to the bottom of the chalice, he must purify the chalice all around as far as the wine reaches, and in the mean time pronounce with a pause the words that follow *divinitatis,* so that when he says *Jesus Christus* the purifying is finished. Then with the same left hand he places the chalice near the corporal, that he may conveniently take it. When he says *Jesus Christus* he may join his hands, and he makes an inclination towards the cross. Continuing to recite the rest of the words, he meanwhile goes to the middle of the altar, and so places the purificator upon the part of the paten that is not covered by the corporal so that its extremities look towards the altar.[12606] Some wish that the purificator should be laid down with the left hand; but if it is laid down when the celebrant goes to the middle, it can be laid down with the right hand; but if it is laid down before he goes to the middle, it will be more convenient to do so with the left hand. Others wish that the words *Jesus Christus* should be pronounced in the middle in order that the celebrant may make an inclination there: every one may suit his own convenience.

Having arrived at the middle and made the usual inclination towards the cross,[12607] he places his left hand on the altar, but with his right he takes the chalice at the knob so that he holds his thumb in front of the chalice and the rest of his fingers behind it. Then he supports the foot of the chalice with the longer fingers of his left hand underneath it; and thus holding it in a straight line over the place that it is afterwards to occupy, taking care that the top of the chalice be not higher than the eyes nor lower than the chin, he says the prayer *Offerimus tibi Domine*, etc. During the whole of this prayer he raises his eyes towards the cross and keeps his elbows more inclined towards his breast.

This prayer finished (and not before, as some wrongly do), he makes with the chalice which he holds erect a cross over the corporal, holding it in the same position as when the offering was made. He makes the cross, with the chalice raised four or five inches over the corporal: he makes it not by jerks, but in straight lines of about a palm in length, and may begin from the end of the corporal as far as the Host; but the chalice should not be moved over the Host. He puts the chalice behind the Host, but on the consecrated stone at the distance of about the size of another Host, and covers the chalice with the pall, while holding his left hand on the altar: this is to be done as often as he has to cover or uncover the chalice. Some put the hand on the foot of the chalice lest, they say, they should upset it; but to them we may reply, that the ceremonies should be performed quietly, not hurriedly: then there will be no reason to fear any accident.

4. THE PRIEST BLESSES THE BREAD AND THE WINE

> “Deinde, junctis manibus super altari positis, aliquantulum inclinatus, dicit secreto, *In spiritu humilitatis,* etc. Postea erectus, elevans oculos, manusque expandens, et statim jungens ante pectus (quod semper facit quando aliquid est benedicturus) dicit *Veni sanctificator,* etc., cum dicit *Et benedic,* signat manu dextra communiter super hostiam et calicem, sinistra posita super altare.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. VII. 5.)

Then he places his hands on the altar in such a way that the little fingers, being extended and united with the others (as has been said above[12608]), touch the front of the altar, and moderately inclined he says in a low tone of voice: *In spiritu humilitatis,* etc. Then standing erect, he raises his eyes towards the cross, while at the same time he extends his hands and raises them as high as his shoulders, then he immediately lowers his eyes, and joining his hands before his breast (as is done when *Oremus* is said before the prayer) he says: *Veni sanctificator,* etc.; and when he says *Bene†dic,* he makes the sign of the cross over the chalice and the Host at the same time, keeping his left hand on the altar.

Here it must be observed:

1. When *Veni sanctificator* is said, at the word *Deus* the head is not inclined, as Merati and many others teach, because an inclination is made immediately after, when leaving the middle of the altar; and this inclination, as Sarnelli says, should properly be made while pronouncing the last words: *Tuo sancto nomini præparatum.*[12609]

2. In order to form well the cross over the *oblata,* he draws a straight line towards himself, but does not deflect the line over the Host, and he does so in such a manner that the extremity of the little finger begins from the middle of the chalice and finishes outside of the Host; then he draws a transverse line with the hand, likewise extended (not, however, with the fingers curved as the S. R. C. prescribed August 4, 1663) at the same height, namely, before the pall between the chalice and the Host; and in these crosses and in others of this kind he should not exceed the size of the pall. When the cross is to be made only over the chalice, it should be extended from one end of the pall to the other.

3. Every time anything is to be blessed, the hands should be first joined, as the Rubric indicates in this place; unless the left hand be hindered, as happens at the blessing of the water: *Deus qui humanæ,* etc., and at the blessing of the Host and of the chalice at the moment of the Consecration.

5. THE PRIEST WASHES HIS HANDS

> “Tunc, junctis ante pectus manibus, accedit ad cornu Epistolæ ubi stans, ministro aquam fundente, lavat manus, id est, extremitates digitorum pollicis et indicis, dicens psalmum, *Lavabo inter innocentes* cum *Gloria Patri,* qui versus—*Gloria Patri*—prætermittitur in Missis de Tempore a Dominica de Passione usque ad Sabbatum Sanctum exclusive.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. VII. 6.)

Having made the sign of the cross, he again joins his hands, inclines towards the cross,[12610] and with his hands joined goes to the Epistle corner, where he washes the extremities of four fingers, namely, of the two thumbs and forefingers, holding the two fingers of the right hand upon the other two fingers of the left hand, so that while the water is being poured on the fingers of the right hand the rest may be washed; and in the mean time he says in a low voice: *Lavabo,* etc. At the *Gloria Patri* he makes an inclination towards the cross, and then, while continuing *Sicut erat,* etc., he returns to the middle of the altar. Some are of opinion that if the priest has wiped his hands before finishing the psalm he may say the *Gloria Patri* in the middle of the altar and there make the inclination; but Merati rightly defends the contrary opinion, for such a thing seems to me not to be conformable to the Rubric. The *Gloria Patri* is omitted in the Masses of the Dead and in those Masses that are said from Passion Sunday to Holy Saturday inclusively; but in the votive Masses of the Passion and of the Cross the *Gloria* of this psalm is prescribed even in Passion Week.

6. THE PRIEST SAYS THE SUSCIPE SANCTA TRINITAS, THE ORATE FRATRES, AND THE SECRETA

> “Celebrans, lotis manibus, eas tergit, et, illis ante pectus junctis, revertitur ad medium altaris, ubi stans, oculosque ad Deum elevans, et statim demittens, manibus junctis super altare aliquantulum inclinatus dicit secreto orationem, *Suscipe sancta Trinitas,* etc. Qua dicta, manibus hinc inde extensis, et super altare positis, osculatur illud in medio: tum junctis manibus ante pectus, demissisque oculis ad terram, a sinistra manu ad dextram vertit se ad populum, et, versus eum extendens et jungens manus, dicit voce aliquantulum elata *Orate fratres,* et secreto prosequens *ut meum ac vestrum sacrificium,* etc., perficit circulum, revertens junctis manibus ante pectus a manu dextra ad medium altaris. Et responso a ministro, *Suscipiat Dominus sacrificium de manibus tuis,* etc. (alioquin per seipsum, dicens *Sacrificium de manibus meis),* ipse celebrans submissa voce dicit *Amen,* et manibus ante pectus extensis, ut fit ad orationem, stans in medio altaris versus librum, dicit absolute sine *Oremus,* et sine alia interpositione, Orationem vel Orationes secretas. Cum dicit *Per Dominum,* jungit manus: cum dicit *Jesum Christum,* caput inclinat, quod facit in prima oratione, et in ultima, si plures sint dicendæ.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. VII. 7.)

Then the priest with his hands joined returns to the middle of the altar, and when he has arrived there, without making an inclination, he raises and lowers his eyes towards the cross, and with his hands joined and placed on the altar he says, moderately inclined, in a low tone of voice: *Suscipe sancta Trinitas,* etc.; then he kisses the altar in the middle, again joins his hands, and turns towards the people in the same way that he does when he says the *Dominus vobiscum;* but he lingers somewhat, and extending his hands and again joining them, he says in a moderate tone of voice: *Orate fratres;* and while continuing in a low tone: *ut meum ac vestrum,* etc., he returns to the middle of the altar, on the Gospel side, not on the Epistle side, making a complete circle: and having turned towards the altar he makes an inclination towards the cross,[12611] according to the opinion of Merati, Bissus, Hippolytus, and Tonellius. When the server has finished *Suscipiat Dominus,* the priest answers in a low tone of voice: *Amen.*

Then he raises and extends his hands, and turning a little towards the book he says in a low tone of voice the *orationes secretas* without saying in the beginning *Oremus;* in regard to the conclusion he observes what was said above[12612] as to the prayers. In the conclusion of the first *oratio secreta* he says *Amen;* and if there be only one, he pronounces it in a subdued tone of voice as far as the words *Per omnia,* etc.

7. THE PRIEST SAYS THE PREFACE

> "Pervento autem, in conclusione ultimæ Secretæ, ad verba illa, *Per omnia sæcula sæculorum,* exclusive, Sacerdos, stans in medio altaris depositis super eo manibus hinc inde extensis, dicit convenienti et intelligibili voce *Præfationem*—Cum dicit *Sursum corda,* elevat manus hinc inde extensas usque ad pectus, ita ut palma unius manus respiciat alteram. Cum dicit *Gratias agamus Domino,* jungit manus. Cum dicit *Deo nostro,* oculos elevat, et statim cruci caput inclinat. Responso, *Dignum et justum est,* elevatis et extensis ut prius manibus, prosequitur *Præfationem,* propriam, vel communem, ut tempus requirit. Cum dicit *Sanctus*, junctis ante pectus manibus, et inclinatus, voce mediocri prosequitur, ministro interim parvam campanulam pulsante. Cum dicit, *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini,* etc., erigit se, et signum crucis sibi producit a fronte ad pectus."—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. VII. 8.)

Having come as far as the words *Per omnia sæcula sæculorum* in the conclusion of the *oratio secreta* or of the last *oratio secreta,* the priest pronounces these words in a loud tone of voice (if there be several prayers he does the same at the end of the last), holding his hands extended on the altar outside of the corporal, and he thus holds them until he says *Dominus vobiscum.* But when he says *Sursum corda* he raises his hands as far as his breast, so that the palm of one hand looks towards the palm of the other hand; but the extremities of the fingers should be joined and erect. When he says *Gratias agamus Domino* he raises them a little higher,[12613] as far as the shoulders, and immediately joins them before his breast. When he says *Deo* *nostro,* he raises his eyes towards the cross and immediately inclines the head with a simple inclination that seems to me should be a simple *minimarum maxima* inclination. He therefore raises his hands and joins them at *Domino,* at *Deo* he raises his eyes, and at *nostro* he makes the inclination.

After the server has answered *Dignum et justum est*, the priest again disjoins his hands, and holding them open as at the prayers, he continues the Preface, common or proper according to the time, and remains in this posture as far as the *Sanctus.* It must be observed that Pope Clement XIII. in the year 1759 ordained that on all Sundays that have no proper Preface the Preface of the Blessed Trinity must be said. It was doubted whether on the Sundays within the octave, or on the Sundays of Lent, or of the Paschal time, the Preface is to be said of the saint of whom an octave is celebrated, or of the Sunday of Lent, etc.; but the custom which has the force of law, which exists both in Rome and in other places, has declared that within the octave the Preface of the octave is to be said, and on the Sundays of Lent and of the Paschal time the Preface of Lent or of the Paschal time is to be said.

When the priest has reached the *Sanctus* he inclines moderately and joins his hands before his breast, but he does not rest them on the altar, and he says in a moderate voice *Sanctus*, etc. At the words *Benedictus qui venit,* etc., he stands erect and makes the sign of the cross on himself, holding his left hand below his breast, and continuing in the same tone of voice. But he may distribute the words so that at the word *Benedictus* he touches his forehead, his breast when he says *qui venit,* his left shoulder at the words *in nomine Domini,* and his right shoulder when he says *Hosanna in excelsis.*

There are some who wish that the priest should here join his hands; but there are others who say that this is not prescribed by the Rubric. To me, however, it seems that the hands should be joined; for the Rubric at the beginning of the Canon, before *Te igitur*, says *extendens manus;* hence it supposes that the hands should have been joined before.[12614]

Chapter VIII

FROM THE CANON OF THE MASS TO THE CONSECRATION INCLUSIVELY

1. THE PRIEST RECITES THE PRAYER TE IGITUR

> “Finita Præfatione, ut supra, Sacerdos stans ante medium altaris, versus ad illud, aliquantulum elevat manus, oculisque elevatis ad Deum, et sine mora devote demissis, ac manibus junctis, et super altare positis, profunde inclinatus incipit Canonem, secreto dicens, *Te igitur,* etc., ut in Ordine Missæ. Cum dicit, *uti accepta habeas et benedicas,* prius osculatur altare in medio, deinde erigit se, et stat, junctis manibus ante pectus. Cum dicit, *Hæc do†na, hæc* † *munera, hæc sancta* † *sacrificia,* dextra manu signat ter communiter super hostiam et calicem. Deinde, extensis manibus ante pectus, prosequitur, *in primis, quæ tibi offerimus,* etc.
>
> “Ubi dicit, *Una cum famulo tuo Papa nostro N.,* exprimit nomen Papæ: Sede autem vacante verba prædicta omittuntur. Ubi dicitur, *Et Antistite nostro N.,* specificatur nomen Patriarchæ, Archiepiscopi, vel Episcopi, ordinarii in propria diœcesi, et non alterius superioris, etiam si celebrans sit omnino exemptus, vel sub alterius Episcopi jurisdictione. Si vero Episcopus ordinarius illius loci, in quo Missa celebratur, sit vita functus, prædicta verba omittuntur, quæ etiam omittuntur ab iis, qui Romæ celebrant.”—(*Rub. Miss.* VIII. tit. 1 et 2.)

AFTER the Preface, the priest, standing in the middle of the altar, immediately extends his hands as high as his shoulders, raises his eyes towards the cross, and immediately lowers his hands and his eyes, and profoundly inclined before the altar, with his hands resting on it in the usual way, he says, in a low tone of voice: *Te igitur,* etc. And here it must be remarked that the entire Canon must be said in a low tone of voice, excepting those parts that are prescribed by the Rubric to be said in a loud voice. Gavantus with others asserts that as no movement should be made without being accompanied by words, the *Te igitur* should be said while the foregoing actions are performed, namely, when the hands are extended. But in this Merati, contrary to his custom, differs from Gavantus in opinion, and with many others rightly and clearly demonstrates that the Rubric prescribes that the Canon should begin after the hands have been placed upon the altar, and that this cannot be explained in any other sense; and he cites several actions, such as genuflections, the raising of the Host and of the chalice, etc., that are performed without words.

After the word *petimus* he kisses the altar, and then, standing erect, he joins his hands and says *uti accepta habeas et benedicas;* and having immediately placed his left hand on the altar outside of the corporal, he makes with his right hand a cross three times over the chalice and the Host, saying: *Hæc* † *dona, hæc* † *munera, hæc sancta* † *sacrificia illibata.* How these crosses are to be formed we have explained above.[12615] Then with his hands extended as in the Preface, he continues in a low tone of voice: *In primis, quæ tibi offerimus.* At the words *Papa nostro N.,* the name of the reigning Pope is mentioned, and a simple *minimarum minima* inclination is made towards the Missal; and at the words *Antistite nostro N.,* is mentioned the Bishop of the diocese in which he celebrates, but without making an inclination. If he does not know the name of the Bishop, he will say only *Antistite nostro,* mentally intending to mention the Bishop of the diocese. If the place belongs to no diocese, he acts as if the episcopal See were vacant; in which case the words *Et pro Antistite nostro N.* are to be omitted; for a church belonging to no diocese resembles a vacant See, because it has no Bishop to govern it. But if the Apostolic See is vacant the words *Pro famulo tuo Papa nostro N.* are omitted.

2. THE PRIEST MAKES THE MEMENTO FOR THE LIVING

> "Cum dicit, *Memento Domine,* elevans et jungens manus usque ad faciem, vel pectus, sic junctis manibus stat paulisper in quiete, demisso aliquantulum capite, faciens commemorationem vivorum Christi fidelium ad suam voluntatem: quorum nomina, si vult, commemoret: non tamen necesse est ea exprimere, sed mente tantum eorum memoriam habeat. Potest etiam celebrans, si pro pluribus orare intendit, ne circumstantibus sit morosus, ante Missam in animo proponere sibi omnes illos tam vivos quam defunctos, proquibus in ipsa Missa orare intendit, et hoc loco generaliter, unico contextu, ipsorum vivorum commemorationem agere, pro quibus ante Missam orare proposuit in Missa."—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. VIII. 3.)

When he says *Memento,* etc., he raises and joins his hands, so that the extremities of the fingers reach as far as the mouth;[12616] he does not lower them before his breast, but holding them thus raised and joined, and with his head inclined a little, he remains quiet for a short time. In order to be more recollected, he may shut his eyes; but those that lower them would conform to the opinion of authors whom Merati regards as of the highest authority. And he keeps his eyes thus lowered or closed until he says the words *Et omnium circumstantium.* The letters N. N., that occur in the Canon, serve to express all the names of those for whom he wishes to pray. In olden times tablets called *diptychs* were used; they were double-folded, and on them were registered the names of those for whom prayers were to be said. It must be observed that the *Memento* is best made before Mass, in order that he may not become tedious to those that are present. Standing in the aforesaid way, the celebrant mentions all the living Christians according as his pious wish may inspire him. It must, however, be remarked, with Merati, Gavantus, and Tonellius, that in this prayer, which is private, the excommunicated, heretics, and infidels may be mentioned.

For the convenience of priests we add here the formula of this *Memento,* which Cardinal Bona gives in his treatise on the Sacrifice of the Mass:

"O God of heaven and earth, never-failing source of every good, I, a most miserable sinner and most unworthy minister of Thy Church, because this Sacrifice has an infinite power of impetration, I offer it for my necessities and those of all the living and the dead. And first, the fruit that I can and should derive from it I chiefly apply to him for whom I intend to celebrate; and if perchance it happens that he does not need it, or is incapable of it, I desire and wish that this fruit should be obtained by N., with the application of the indulgence to myself, or to such a deceased person. But, secondarily, without prejudice to him for whom I am primarily obliged or intend[12617] to offer it, I offer it for all those that are specially recommended to me, for N. and N., for obtaining such a grace, . . . and for all the living and the dead, for whom Thou wishest me, Thy unworthy servant, to exercise Thy ministry, in order that, granting rest to the dead, Thou mayest confer upon the living the grace of serving Thee and of persevering till the end in Thy love. Amen."[12618]

The same author says:

"In order that you may remember all for whom you must pray, after you have said MEMENTO, DOMINE, FAMULORUM FAMULARMUQUE TUARUM, and in order that the prayers may be more efficacious, it will be of great profit to unite them to the sufferings of Christ our Lord in the following manner: 1. You should pray for yourself by *the blood that was shed for us,* in order that through it you may atone for your sins and obtain those virtues that are most necessary for you and for final perseverance; 2.

By *the pierced side* you should recommend the Church that came forth from it; 3. By *the head crowned with thorns,* the Sovereign Pontiff, all the princes, and the whole ecclesiastical hierarchy; 4. By *the wound of the right hand,* your friends, relatives, and benefactors; 5. By *the wound of the left hand,* all those that hate you, or have given you some trouble or scandal; 6. By *his transpierced right foot,* your Superiors and those things that you have confided to them; 7. By *his transpierced left foot,* those that are in mortal sin, that they may return to the right path; 8. By *the scourges, spittle, and blows,* the heathen, heretics, and the rest of unbelievers, who dishonor God; 9. By *the crucifixion,* the religious of all Orders, that they may voluntarily embrace with courage the sufferings of their martyrdom; 10. By *his thirst,* all those that have you to pray for them. 11. By *his agony in the garden,* all those that find themselves in any calamity, peril, necessity, temptation, or any trouble whatever; 12. By *his death and burial,* all the just, in order that, buried with Jesus Christ, they may persevere in justice. But above all, you should pray for those whom God wishes you to remember, and whom you do not know; for those whom God loves particularly, although you know not their number nor their name; for it is most pleasing to him that you are mindful of his friends."[12619]

3. THE PRIEST FINISHES THE PRAYER MEMENTO, AND SAYS THE FOLLOWING PRAYERS: COMMUNICANTES, HANC IGITUR, ET QUAM OBLATIONEM

> "Commemoratione vivorum facta, demissis et extensis ut prius manibus, continuat, *Et omnium circumstantium,* etc. Similiter stans prosequitur, *Communicantes.* Cum dicit. *Jesu Christi,* caput Cruci inclinat: in conclusione, quando dicit *Per eumdem,* jungit manus. Cum dicit, *Hanc igitur oblationem* expandit manus simul super oblata, ita ut palmæ sint apertæ versus ac super calicem et hostiam, quas sic tenet usque ad illa verba, *Per Christum Dominum nostrum,* tunc enim jungit manus, et sic prosequitur, *quam oblationem tu Deus in omnibus quæsumus,* et cum dicit, *bene†dictam, adscri†ptam, ratam* † communiter signat ter super hostiam et calicem simul deinde cum dicit, *ut nobis corpus,* separatim signat semel super hostiam tantum: et cum dicit, *et sanguis,* semel super calicem tantum, deinde elevans et jungens manus ante pectus, prosequitur *fiai dilectissimi Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi,* et inclinans caput Cruci."—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. VIII. 4.)

After having finished the commemoration of the living, and the application of the special fruit having been made, the priest extends and lowers his hands before his breast, and continues to say *et omnium circumstantium* as far as the words *Per eumdem,*[12620] etc. When he says *communicantes* at the name *Maria* he makes towards the book a simple *minimarum media* inclination, and at the name *Jesus* he makes towards the cross another simple *minimarum maxima* inclination; and also at the name of a saint whose feast is celebrated, if it is mentioned in the Canon, he makes towards the Missal a *minimarum minima* inclination.[12621]

It must be remarked that in the octaves that have a proper *Communicantes* and *Hanc igitur oblationem,* if perhaps there is to be celebrated *pro re gravi* a votive Mass that has a proper Preface, as when in the octave of Easter there is to be said a Mass of the Holy Ghost or of the Blessed Virgin, the *Communicantes* and *Hanc igitur* must be taken from the octave. So also if there is celebrated the feast of the apostles Sts. Philip and James, the Preface will be of the apostles and the *Communicantes* of the Ascension, as has been declared by the S. R. C. of August 7, 1627.

When he says *Hanc igitur oblationem,* etc., he extends both hands over the chalice and the Host, so that the palms are open over the chalice and the Host. He so extends his hands that the tips of the fingers reach as far as the middle of the pall, without, however, touching it; and that the thumbs be crossed, namely, the right be placed upon the left, as appears from a decree S. R. C., August 4, 1663.

He should take care not to raise his elbows, but he should keep them close to his body, toward his breast; and so he remains till *Per Dominum,* etc.; for when he says this conclusion he again joins his hands and continues *Quam oblationem.* Having said *quæsumus,* the priest places his left hand on the altar outside of the corporal, and with his right hand he makes three crosses over the chalice and the Host at the same time, saying: *Bene†dictam, ad†scriptam, ra†tam,* etc., in the same manner as has been mentioned above.[12622] Then he makes another sign of the cross over the Host, saying: *Ut nobis cor†pus;* while making this sign he does not lower the hand over the Host, as Merati remarks, as it is sufficient for him to draw his hand somewhat towards himself in order that he may form a transverse line over the Host. Afterwards he makes another cross over the chalice, saying *San†guis.* These two crosses over the Host and the chalice should be shorter than the usual crosses. As the Rubric indicates that the cross at the word *ratam* should be made in the middle of this word, an inconvenience seems to occur from being obliged to delay a little until the other cross at the word *corpus* is to be made over the Host; this has given rise to different opinions. I will only mention here the opinion that pleases me; it is this: after having with the right hand made the cross at the word *ra†tam,* it should slowly move towards the Host, so that when it begins to form the cross over the Host, the other words that follow the word *ratam* are already finished. But if the priest is slow in pronouncing, then, says Turrinus with others, according to Merati, he should place his right hand on the altar; for it is an inviolable rule of the Rubric that the hand should never remain suspended in the air.

After having made the five crosses in the manner indicated, the priest raises his hands and joining them before his breast, he continues *fiat dilectissimi Filii tui, Domini nostri Jesu Christi;* and when he says *Jesu Christi* he inclines his head towards the cross.

4. THE PRIEST CONSECRATES THE HOST

> “Extergit, si opus fuerit, pollices et indices super corporale, et dicit secreto, ut prius, *Qui pridie quam pateretur,* et accipiens pollice et indice dextræ manus hostiam, et eam cum illis ac indice et pollice sinistræ manus tenens, stans erectus ante medium altaris, dicit, *accepit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas,* elevansque ad cœlum oculos, et statim demittens, dicit, *et elevatis oculis in cœlum ad te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem,* caputque aliquantulum inclinans, dicit. *tibi gratias agens,* et tenens hostiam inter pollicem, et indicem sinistræ manus, dextra producit signum crucis super eam, dicens, *bene†dixit, fregit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens: Accipite et manducate ex hoc omnes.*
>
> “Si adsit vas cum aliis hostiis consecrandis, antequam accipiat hostiam, discooperit manu dextra calicem seu vas aliarum hostiarum.
>
> “Cum autem finierit supradicta verba, cubitis super altare positis, stans capite inclinato, distincte, reverenter et secreto, profert verba Consecrationis super hostiam, et simul super omnes si plures sint consecrandæ, et hostiam suis pollicibus et indicibus tantum tenens, dicit, *Hoc est enim Corpus meum.*
>
> “Quibus prolatis, celebrans, tenens hostiam inter pollices et indices prædictos super altare, reliquis manuum digitis extensis et simul junctis (et Hostiis, si plures sint consecratæ, in loco in quo a principio Missæ positæ sunt, super corporali, vel in alio vase, seu calice demissis) genuflexus eam adorat; tunc se erigens, quantum commode potest, elevat in altum hostiam, et intentis in eam oculis (quod et in elevatione Calicis facit) populo reverenter ostendit adorandum, et mox sola manu dextra ipsam reverenter reponit super corporale in eodem loco unde eam levavit, et indices non disjungit, nisi quando Hostiam consecratam tangere vel tractare debet, usque ad ablutionem digitorum post Communionem.
>
> “Reposita Hostia consecrata super corporale, genuflexus ipsam veneratur; si adsit vas aliarum Hostiarum, patena vel palla cooperit, ut supra.
>
> Interim dum celebrans elevat Hostiam, accenso prius intorticio[12623] (quod non extinguitur, nisi postquam Sacerdos Sanguinem sumpserit, vel alios communicaverit, si qui erunt communicandi

> in Missa), minister manu sinistra elevat fimbrias posteriores planetæ, ne ipsum celebrantem impediat in elevatione brachiorum; quod et facit in elevatione Calicis; manu dextra pulsat campanulam, ter ad unamquamque elevationem, vel continuate quousque Sacerdos deponat Hostiam super corporale, et similiter postmodum ad elevationem Calicis."—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. VIII. n. 4, 5, and 6.)

At the words *Qui pridie quam pateretur* he wipes his fingers, namely, his thumbs and forefingers of both hands, on the extreme ends of the corporal, but not in the middle, where the consecrated Host is to be placed, and in the mean time with the forefinger and the thumb of the right hand he takes the Host, saying, *accepit panem.* In order that the Host may be more easily taken, he presses with the forefinger of the left hand the edge of the Host; and when he says in *sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas,* he takes it up with the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, extending and joining the other fingers. He should take care to hold the Host erect, not horizontally, as he himself should stand erect in the middle of the altar.

At the words *et elevatis oculis in cœlum* he raises his eyes to the cross, and he keeps them raised, says Bauldry, until he has said all the other words, *ad te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem;* then he immediately lowers them, and inclining[12624] the head, he says, *tibi gratias agens.* While saying *bene* † *dixit* he makes with his right hand a cross over the Host, which, as has been said, he holds somewhat raised above the corporal. If there is behind the chalice a ciborium, he puts it by the side of the chalice and uncovers it before he begins *Qui pridie,* that is, before he wipes his fingers on the corporal. After saying the words *deditque discipulus suis,*[12625] the priest having becomingly placed his elbows on the altar, without however, touching the altar with his hands, and with his feet joined and equi-distant from the altar, he moderately inclines his head and shoulders, and distinctly and with reverence, without raising his voice, pronounces the words (*profert secreto*, says the Rubric), as it were, breathing them forth (*a fiato*), so that he may not be heard by the bystanders, saying, *Hoc est,* etc. The priest, when he consecrates the Host, should take care not to make any movement of the head or mouth, not to pronounce the form with a certain vehemence, not to bring the Host too near his mouth, or his mouth too near the Host; but he should pronounce the words distinctly, putting no interval between the words.

After the priest has pronounced the words of consecration of the Host, he holds the same consecrated Host between his thumbs and forefingers, the other fingers being at the same time joined and extended, and the hands also closely joined; he withdraws his elbows from the altar so that only his hands as far as the wrists remain on the altar at the extremity of the corporal. Then he genuflects only on one knee, without an inclination of the head; for it must be observed that when a genuflection is made the head must not be inclined, as some wrongly do. This genuflection should be made with greater reverence, and therefore with a slight pause,[12626] and the same thing should be observed in the adoration of the chalice. After having made this first adoration, and while holding his hands joined and his fingers extended, he raises the Host perpendicularly over the place where the corporal is, a little higher than his head so that his wrists are on a level with his eyes, without moving the Host over his head, but he elevates it so that it may be seen and adored by the people; and after having thus held it for a short time, he slowly lowers it and puts it in the place whence he took it. In order to do this more easily, he puts while laying down the Host the ends of his fingers on the corporal at a distance of about three inches from the place where the Host is to be put, and having thus placed his left hand, with his right he takes the Host in the middle, near the border and puts it in its place. The Host having been placed on the corporal, if there is present a ciborium or a chalice containing particles, he again covers the ciborium with its own cover, or the chalice with a pall, and places it behind the chalice where it had been before, and then having made a genuflection, he stands erect.[12627]

It must here be remarked that—

1. During the elevation of the Host as well as of the chalice the eyes should never be turned from them;

2. From the Consecration of the Host till the ablution, as often as a genuflection is to be made or the altar is to be kissed, the hands should be separated and extended upon the corporal; but the thumbs and the forefingers should remain joined, and should not be disjoined unless the Host is to be handled;

3. As often as the Host is to be taken up or laid down, the last three fingers should be extended, but should not be bent, so that there may be no

danger of touching the Host with other fingers than the thumbs and forefingers;

4. Between the words of Consecration of the Host, as also of the chalice and the preceding words, namely, *Qui pridie* and *Postquam cœnatum est,* other prayers, though mental and devout, should not be inserted: for Le Brun[12628] defends at great length the opinion that the Consecration is accomplished not only by the words of our Saviour, but also by the preceding words, and especially by the prayer that precedes *ut nobis Corpus et Sanguis fiat.* And this he proves by citing the Council held in Rome by Gregory VII. against Berengarius, where it is said that bread and wine are changed into the body and the blood of Jesus Christ as well by the words of our Lord as by the holy prayer: *Per mysterium sacræ orationis et per verba Redemptoris converti in carnem et sanguinem Jesu Christi;* and he quotes in favor of this opinion the authority of twenty Doctors of the Sorbonne. Scotus, for some other reason, doubts whether the consecration is brought about solely by the words *Hoc est corpus meum;* for if (he says) the words *qui pridie quam pateretur* are not premised, it is not indicated that the words *Hoc est,* etc., are those that Jesus Christ has spoken. The contrary opinion, according to which only the words *Hoc est corpus,* etc., *Hie est calix,* etc., are sufficient for the consecration is common to Tournely, Juvenin, Gonet, Concina, Frassen, Lugo, and others, who prove it from a decree of Eugene IV. published in the Council of Florence, which reads thus: *Forma hujus Sacramenti sunt verba Salvatoris, quibus hoc conficitur Sacramentum.* The other opinion, however, does not seem to be altogether improbable; the more so since the Rubric prescribes for the case in which the form is to be repeated on account of a doubt in regard to the matter that one should begin at the words *Qui pridie.* Therefore the sense of the preceding words and of the words of Jesus Christ must not be interrupted by the insertion of vocal or mental prayers.

It must be observed that the thumbs and the forefingers should thenceforth remain joined till their ablution, which takes place after the receiving of the precious blood, and are opened only when the Host is to be taken up.

5. THE PRIEST CONSECRATES THE CHALICE

> “Celebrans, adorato Sacramento, surgit et discooperit calicem m quem, si opus sit, extergit digitos; quod semper faciat, si aliquod fragmentum digitis adhæreat; et stans erectus, dicit: *Simili modo postquam cœnatum est,* et ambabus manibus accipiens calicem juxta nodum infra cuppam, et aliquantulum illum elevans, ac statim deponens dicit, *Accipiens et hunc præclarum Calicem, etc.,* cum dicit, *Item tibi gratias agens,* caput inclinat, cum dicit, *Bene†dixit,* sinistra calicem infra cuppam tenens, dextra signat super eum; et prosequens *Deditque discipulis suis, etc.,* et ambabus manibus tenens calicem, videlicet, sinistra pedem, dextra nodum infra cuppam, cubitis super altare positis, et capite inclinato, profert attente, continuate, et secreto, ut supra, verba Consecrationis Sanguinis: *Hic est enim Calix, etc.* Quibus dictis, reponit calicem super corporale, dicens secreto *Hæc quotiescumque feceritis, etc.,* genuflexus Sanguinem reverenter adorat. Tum se erigit, et. accipiens Calicem discoopertum cum Sanguine ambabus manibus, ut prius, elevat eum, et erectum, quantum commode potest, ostendit populo adorandum, mox ipsum reverenter reponit super corporale, in locum pristinum, et manu dextra palla cooperit, genuflexus Sacramentum veneratur.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. VIII. 7.)

After having raised the Host he makes a genuflection (but the genuflection is made with the right knee, which must touch the ground near the left foot). Then he rises, and with his right hand uncovers the chalice; he holds the left hand either on the corporal, or what is better, he holds it at the foot of the chalice, and takes the pall between the middle finger and the forefinger joined to the thumb. He places the pall on the end of the folded veil; then he purifies the forefingers and the thumbs, rubbing them together lightly over the mouth of the chalice, so that if there should be any fragments adhering to the fingers they may fall into the chalice: this should always be done when the Host has been touched. Standing erect, he says: *Simili modo,* etc.

He takes the chalice with both hands in the following manner: Four fingers, namely, the thumbs and forefingers joined should be put between the cup and the knob of the chalice in front, and the other fingers behind it (the Rubric says *juxta nodum infra cuppam),* and standing thus he raises the chalice over the corporal In a straight line about four inches, saying: *Accipiens et hunc præclarum Calicem,* and at once replaces it in the same place. At the words *tibi gratias agens* he makes a simple inclination of the head.[12629] At *bene † dixit* he makes with his right hand across over the chalice, holding the knob with his left hand.[12630] Then leaning with both elbows on the altar, he holds the chalice at the foot with three fingers of his left hand, and holds the knob with his right, so that the thumb and forefinger are placed in front, and the other fingers behind. Thus moderately inclined, and holding the chalice straight, but not inclined towards the mouth, and a little raised over the corporal, he attentively and without any interruption pronounces the words: *Hic est enim,* etc.

After having pronounced these words he again places the chalice on the corporal, and says: *Hæc quotiescumque*, etc., at the same time he devoutly genuflects and adores. Having risen, he takes hold of the chalice with the right hand at the knob in the above-mentioned way, namely, with the thumb and the forefinger in front, holding the foot with the three fingers of the left hand. He raises the chalice perpendicularly, always following it with his eyes, without, however, turning it around in a circle above his head, as many awkwardly do; he raises it so high that the eyes of the celebrant can see below the foot of the chalice, and that the chalice may be seen by the people; for a moment he holds the chalice thus raised, that the people may adore it. Then he again lowers it in following the same perpendicular line, and puts it in the place it occupied before.

Chapter IX

FROM THE CONSECRATION TILL THE PATER NOSTER EXCLUSIVELY

1. THE PRIEST SAYS THE PRAYERS UNDE ET MEMORES, SUPRA QUÆ, AND SUPPLICES

> “Reposito Calice et adorato, Sacerdos, stans ante altare, extensis manibus ante pectus, dicit secreto, *Unde et memores, etc.* Cum dicit, *de tuis donis ac datis,* jungit manus ante pectus; et cum dicit, *Hostiam pu†ram, Hostiam † sanctum, Hostiam im†maculatam,* manu sinistra posita super altare intra corporale, dextra signat ter communiter super Hostiam et Calicem, et semel super Hostiam tantum, et semel super Calicem tantum, dicens, *Panem † sanctum vitæ æternæ, et Calicem † salutis perpetuæ.* Deinde, stans ut prius, extensis manibus, prosequitur. *Supra quæ propitio, etc.* Cum dicit, *Supplices te rogamus, etc.*, inclinat se ante medium altaris, manibus junctis super illo positis. Cum dicit, *ex hac Altaris participatione,* osculatur altare, manibus hinc inde super corporale positis. Cum dicit, *sacrosanctum Filii tui,* jungit manus; et, dextra signans semel super Hostiam tantum, et semel super Calicem, sinistra super corporale posita, dicit, *Cor†pus, et San†guinem sumpserimus,* et cum dicit, *omni benediction † cælesti,* seipsum signat a fronte ad pectus signo crucis, sinistra posita infra pectus, et prosequitur: *et gratia repleamur.* Cum dicit, *per eumdem,* jungit manus.”-(*Rub. Miss.* tit. IX. c. 1.)

HAVING replaced the chalice on the altar, and having adored it by making a genuflection, the celebrant rises, and standing erect, with his hands extended before his breast, and turned towards the Missal, he says: *Unde et memores Domine,* etc. At the words *de tuis donis ac datis,* he joins his hands, and then places his left hand on the corporal, and with his right hand he forms three crosses over the Host and the chalice together, saying: *Hostiam † puram, Hostiam † sanctam, Hostiam † immaculatam,* and he makes a cross once over the Host, saying, *Panem † sanctum vitæ æternæ,* and once over the chalice, saying: *Et Calicem † salutis perpetuæ.* Then with his hands extended he continues: *Supra quæ,* etc.

When he says *Supplices te rogamus,* he inclines profoundly, holding the hands joined and resting on the edge of the altar as at the Introit, that is to say, the small fingers should touch the front of the altar, with the other fingers resting on the altar and joined to the forefingers and thumbs.[12631] After the words *Ut quotquot* he kisses the altar while moving back a little, and on rising he joins his hands.[12632] Then having placed his left hand on the corporal, he makes with the right hand a cross over the Host, saying, *Sacrosanctum Filii tui cor † pus;* then he makes another cross over the chalice, saying: *San † guinem sumpserimus.* But when he says *Omni benedictione † cœlesti et gratia repleamur,* he signs himself, holding his left hand below the breast; and at the words *Per eumdem,* etc., he joins his hands according to the Rubric.

2. THE PRIEST MAKES THE MEMENTO FOR THE DEAD

> “Cum dicit, *Memento etiam, Domine famulorum famularumque tuarum, etc.,* extensis et junctis manibus ante pectus, et usque ad faciem elevatis, et intentis oculis ad Sacramentum super altare, facit commemorationem fidelium defunctorum, de quibus sibi videtur, eodem modo ut dictum est de commemoratione vivorum. Qua commemoratione facta, stans ut prius extensis manibus prosequitur, *Ipsis Domine, et omnibus in Christo, etc.,* et in fine, ad *per eumdem* jungit manus, et caput inclinat.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. IX. 2.)

When he says *Memento etiam Domine,* etc., he separates his hands and joins them slowly, so that he finishes joining them at the words *in somno pacis.* Having joined his hands before his breast, as has been done and said at the *Memento* for the living, holding his head inclined, and his eyes fixed on the Blessed Sacrament, he makes for a short time a commemoration of the dead. After this he lowers his hands before his breast, and holding them disjoined, he continues: *Ipsis, Domine,* etc. At the words *Per eumdem* he again joins his hands, and when he says *Christum* he inclines the head. According to the general rule, the head is to be inclined only at the name *Jesus;* but in this place, and not elsewhere, it is prescribed by the Rubric. Bauldry wishes that the inclination should be continued until after the following words: *Nobis quoque peccatoribus;* but this opinion is singular, and does not seem to me to be in accordance with the Rubric.

3. THE PRIEST SAYS THE PRAYERS NOBIS QUOQUE PECCATORIBUS AND PER QUEM HÆC OMNIA

> “Cum dicit, *Nobis quoque peccatoribus,* vocem aliquantulum elevat, et dextra manu pectus sibi percutit, sinistra posita super corporale, et prosequitur secreto, *famulis tuis, etc.,* stans manibus extensis ut prius. Cum dicit, *Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Per quem hæc omnia Domine semper bona creas,* jungit manus ante pectus: deinde manu dextra ter signans communiter super Hostiam et Calicem, dicit, *san†ctificas, vivi†ficas, bene†dicis, et præstas nobis.* Postea discooperit manu dextra Calicem, et genuflexus Sacramentum adorat: tum se erigit, et reverenter accipit Hostiam inter pollicem, et indicem dextræ manus; et cum ea super Calicem, quem manu sinistra

> tenet circa nodum infra cuppam, signat ter a labio ad labium, dicens, *Per ip†sum, et cum † ipso, et in ip†so.* Similiter cum Hostia signat bis inter Calicem et pectus, incipiens a labio Calicis, et dicit, *est tibi Deo Pa†tri omnipotenti in unitate Spiritus † sancti.* Deinde tenens manu dextra Hostiam super Calicem, sinistra Calicem, elevat eum aliquantulum simul cum Hostia, dicens omnis honor et gloria, et statim utrumque deponens, Hostiam collocat super corporale, et si opus sit, digitos extergit, ut supra; ac pollices et indices ut prius jungens, Calicem palla cooperit, et genuflexus Sacramentum adorat."—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. IX. 3.)

Then he puts his left hand upon the corporal, and standing erect, he strikes his breast with the extremities of his three fingers, saying in a moderate voice: *Nobis quoque peccatoribus,* and with his hands extended as before he continues, and again joins them when he says: *Per Christum Dominum nostrum.* And thus continuing in the same attitude he says: *Per quem hæc omnia, Domine, semper bona creas,* and then he forms three crosses conjointly, as has been explained above, saying: *Sancti†ficas, vivi†ficas, bene†dicis, et præstas nobis.* Afterwards with his right hand he uncovers the chalice, his left hand being placed on the corporal, or, as others wish, on the foot of the chalice, taking the pall between the middle and the forefinger that is joined to the thumb, and having placed it on the folded veil he genuflects.

Having risen he takes with the thumb and forefinger of his right hand the Host at the side a little below the middle, and holding the chalice by the knob with his left hand, he forms with the Host the sign of the cross three times over the chalice from rim to rim, without however touching the edges in Straight lines without any break, saying. *Per ip†sum, et cum ip†so, et in ip†so.* Then with the same Host he makes two other crosses between the chalice and his breast, saying: *Est tibi Deo Patri † omnipotenti in unitate Spiritus † sancti.* These two crosses are formed in the same direction, so that the height of the Host always corresponds with the height of the rim of the chalice; but the crosses should not extend beyond the corporal or pass beyond the left arm, which for this reason should be bent. He then with his right hand carries the Host over the chalice in a straight line, not in a circle, and raises a little the chalice together with the Host, saying at the same time in a low voice *Omnis honor et gloria.* Having then put the chalice on the corporal and the Host in its place, he purifies his thumbs and forefingers over the chalice, not on its rim, covers it again with the pall, and makes a genuflection.

Chapter X

FROM THE PATER NOSTER AND THE ACTS THAT FOLLOW TILL THE PRIEST’S COMMUNION, INCLUSIVELY

1. THE PRIEST RECITES THE PATER NOSTER, AND BEGINS THE LIBERA NOS QUÆSUMUS

> “Celebrans, cooperto Calice, adoratoque Sacramento, erigit se, et manibus extensis hinc inde super Altare infra corporale positis, dicit intelligibili voce *Per omnia sæcula sæculorum,* et cum dicit *Oremus* jungit manus, caput Sacramento inclinans. Cum incipit *Pater nosier* extendit manus, et stans, oculis ad Sacramentum intentis, prosequitur usque ad finem. Responso a ministro *Sed libera nos a malo,* et a celebrante, submissa voce *Amen,* manu dextra, pollice et indice non disjunctis, patenam aliquantulum purificatorio extergens, eam accipit inter indicem et medium digitos; quam tehens super altarc erectam, sinistra super corporale posita, dicit secreto *libera nos quæsumus, etc.”*—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. X. 1.)

THE priest, standing erect, places his hands, now separated, on the corporal, and says in a loud voice: *Per omnia sæcula sæculorum ;* then raising his hands and joining them, and inclining his head towards the Blessed Sacrament, he says: *Oremus,* etc. Raising his head he holds his hands joined till the *Pater noster;* but when he says *Pater noster,* he extends his hands before his breast and fixes his eyes on the Blessed Sacrament up to the words *Et ne nos inducas in tentationem;* and the server having answered: *Sed libera nos a malo,* the priest says in a low tone of voice, *Amen.*[12633]

Afterwards,[12634] placing his left hand on the corporal, he takes with his right hand the purificator without separating the forefinger from the thumb, and slightly rubs the paten drawn from under the corporal; he leaves the purificator a short distance from the corporal on the Epistle side. Then taking the paten between the forefinger and the middle finger he holds it upright so that the gilt or concave side looks towards the Host, and its edge rests on the altar cloth, but not on the corporal; he keeps his hand on the upper part of the paten, and thus standing he says the prayer *Libera nos,* etc.

2. THE PRIEST CONTINUES UNTIL AFTER THE AGNUS DEI

> “Antequam celebrans dicat *Da propitius pacem,* elevat manu dextra patenam de altari, et seipsum cum ea signat signo crucis a fronte ad pectus dicens, *Da propitius pacem in diebus nosiris.* Cum signat se, manum sinistram ponit infra pectus: deinde patenam ipsam osculatur, et, prosequens, *ut ope misericordiæ tuæ, etc.,* submittit patenam Hostiæ, quam indice sinistro accommodat super patenam, discooperit Calicem et genuflexus Sacramentum adorat; tum, se erigens, accipit Hostiam inter pollicem et indicem dextræ manus et cum illis, ac pollice et indice sinistræ manus eam super Calicem tenens, reverenter frangit per medium, dicens, *Per eumdem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum,* et mediam partem, quam inter pollicem et indicem dextræ manus tenet, ponit super patenam: de illa media, quam sinistra manu tenet, frangit cum pollice et indice dextræ manus particulam, prosequens, *Qui tecum vivit et regnat, etc.,* et eam inter ipsos dextræ manus pollicem et indicem retinens, partem majorem, quam sinistra tenet, adjungit mediæ super patenam positæ, interim dicens, *in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus,* et particulam Hostiæ, quam in dextra manu retinuit, tenens super Calicem, quem sinistra per nodum infra cuppam retinet intelligibili voce dicit, *Per omnia sæcula sæculorum.* R. *Amen,* et cum ipsa particula signans ter a labio ad labium Calicis, dicit, *Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum.* Responso per ministrum, *Et cum spiritu tuo,* particulam, quam dextra manu tenet, immittit in Calicem, dicens secreto, *Hæc commixtio et consecratio Corporis, etc.* Deinde pollices et indices super Calicem aliquantulum tergit et jungit, Calicem palla cooperit, et genuflexus Sacramentum adorat, surgit, et stans junctis manibus ante pectus, capite inclinato versus Sacramentum, dicit intelligibili voce, *Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,* et dextra percutiens sibi pectus, sinistra super corporale posita, dicit, *miserere nobis,* et deinde non jungit manus, sed iterum percutit sibi pectus, cum dicit secundo, *miserere nobis,* quod et tertio facit, cum dicit, *dona nobis pacem.”*—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. X. 2.)

After the words *omnibus Sanctis* and before he says *Da propitius pacem,* he makes with the paten the sign of the cross on himself, holding his left hand below his breast; he kisses the paten, and then says: *Da propitius pacem,* because the Rubric prescribes that after the words *omnibus Sanctis: signat se cum patena a fronte ad pectus et eam osculatur;* and after these words the prayer *Da propitius pacem . . .* is said. Some one has expressed the opinion that the paten should be kissed after the word *pacem,* saying that this is thus prescribed by the *Ceremoniale Episcoporum.*[12635] But I find nothing there that is different from the words of the Missal just quoted; for there we read: *Antequam dicat verba: Da propitius,* etc., *signat se cum ea a fronte ad pectus, et reliqua dicit et facit, quæ in Missali ponuntur.* The Ceremonial, therefore, says nothing about the kiss, but refers in all things to the Rubric of the Missal, according to which the kiss is prescribed before the celebrant says *Da propitius pacem.* The paten, however, should be kissed by him at the upper edge, near his hand. Tonellius and Bauldry say that the cross should be begun at the words *cum beatis Apostolis.* But when the priest says *ut ope misericordiæ,* etc., he puts the paten under the Host, using the forefinger of the left hand to bring the Host to the middle of the paten, and he shall take care to place the front part of the paten on the foot of the chalice in order that the Host and the paten may be taken more conveniently.

He then uncovers the chalice, places the pall on the veil, and while putting his hands on the corporal he makes a genuflection. He presses with the forefinger of the left hand on the side of the Host, and takes it in the middle with the forefinger and the thumb of the right hand, raises it over the chalice, and divides it reverently and by degrees with the thumbs and forefingers of both hands while holding it over the chalice; namely, he first bends it two or three times backwards and forwards, straight down the middle, beginning at the upper part, taking care that no particles fly off behind the chalice, thus he will be able more easily to divide it in the middle. The one half that he holds in his right hand he lays down on the paten, and of the other half that he holds in the left hand he detaches with the forefinger and thumb of the right hand a small particle, and with this particle he makes, as will presently be mentioned, the crosses over the chalice. When he divides the Host he says: *Per eumdem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum;* after the word *tuum* he places the part that he holds in his right hand on the paten, and when he says: *Qui tecum vivit et regnat,* he detaches with his right hand, as has already been said, a particle of the other half; and while saying *in unitate,* etc., he joins this half to the other half that is on the paten. While with his right hand he still holds the particle over the chalice, and with his left hand the knob of the chalice, he says in a loud voice: *Per omnia sæcula sæculorum;* and after the server has answered *Amen,* he makes with this particle three crosses over the chalice, from rim to rim, in a straight line, without making pauses, and without touching with the Host the rim of the chalice, and he says at the same time. *Pax* † *Domini sit* † *semper vobis*†*cum.* The server having answered *Et cum Spiritu tuo,* the priest lets the particle fall into the chalice, saying in a low voice: *Hæc commixtio,* etc. At the name *Jesu Christi* he makes a simple *minimarum maxima* inclination. Then he rubs his fingers over the chalice, covers the chalice with the pall, genuflects, rises, and inclining only the head [*Capite inclinato versus Sacramentum,* says the Rubric] he says in a loud voice: *Agnus Dei,* etc.

While saying *Miserere nobis* he places his left hand on the corporal, and keeps it there until he has said *Agnus Dei* three times, and striking his breast three times with the last three fingers of his right hand, he says *Miserere nobis* and *dona nobis pacem.*

3. THE PRIEST RECEIVES THE SACRED HOST

> "Tunc, manibus junctis supra altare positis, oculisque ad Sacramentum intentis, inclinatus dicit secreto, *Domine Jesu Christe,* etc., qua oratione finita, . . . statim subjungit alias orationes, ut in Ordine Missæ.
>
> "Quibus orationibus dictis, genuflectens Sacramentum adorat, et; se erigens, dicit secreto, *Panem cœlestem accipiam, etc.,* quo dicto, dextra manu accipit de patena reverenter ambas partes Hostiæ, et collocat inter pollicem et indicem sinistræ manus, quibus patenam inter eumdem indicem et medium digitos supponit, et, eadem manu sinistra tenens partes hujusmodi super patenam inter pectus et Calicem, parum inclinatus, dextra tribus vicibus percutit pectus suum, interim etiam tribus vicibus dicens voce aliquantulum elevata, *Domine non sum dignus,* et secreto prosequitur, *ut intres,* etc.
>
> "Quibus tertio dictis, ex sinistra accipit ambas partes prædictas Hostiæ inter pollicem et indicem dextræ manus, et cum illa super patenam signat seipsum signo crucis, ita tamen, ut Hostia non egrediatur limites patenæ, dicens, *Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam æternam, Amen,* et se inclinans, cubitis super altare positis, reverenter easdem ambas partes sumit: quibus sumptis, deponit patenam super corporale, et engens se junctis indicibus et pollicibus, ambas quoque manus ante faciem jungit, et aliquantulum quiescit in meditatione Sanctissimi Sacramenti."—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. X. 3, 4.)

Then holding his hands on the altar, as has been said at the beginning of Chapter IV,[12636] and inclining moderately, with his eyes fixed on the Blessed Sacrament, he says in a Low voice the three prayers of the Missal.[12637]

Having recited these prayers, he genuflects, and in a low voice says: *Panem cœlestem accipiam,* etc.; then with the thumb and forefinger of the right hand he reverently takes from the paten both parts of the Host, and holds them with his left hand in such a manner that they form a round figure or nearly so, and places that part which is towards the Gospel side a little over the other part, then below the Host that is thus held he puts the paten between the forefingers and the other fingers which are so extended that they support it. He should not rest the arm on the altar: however, as the Rubric is not opposed to this, it may be done in case he suffers from weakness, but only outside of the corporal. He holds the paten about four inches above the corporal, and inclining a little, he says three times *Domine,* *non sum dignus,* in a somewhat loud tone of voice, while striking his breast each time as at the *Agnus Dei,* and without turning sideways, as some do. The rest, *Ut intres,* etc., he says in a low voice. He next takes with the thumb and the forefinger of the right hand the two parts ot the Host by placing the part that is towards the Gospel side over the other part, and makes over himself with the Host the sign of the cross by drawing a perpendicular line of about a palm in length above the paten, which he holds in his left hand, taking care in making the cross that the Host does not pass beyond the limits of the paten, saying in the mean time: *Corpus Domini nostri,* etc., and inclining his head at the name *Jesu Christi,* etc. Then leaning his arms on the altar, and moderately inclining, he reverently receives Holy Communion, holding the paten under the Host. He should pay attention while taking the Host not to put his tongue out of his mouth, and not to chew the Host; and in order that it may not adhere to the roof of the mouth he should put it under his tongue, and there bend it. If it, however, adheres to the roof of the mouth, he should try to remove it with his tongue; but if some particle should remain, he should swallow it when taking the precious blood and the ablution.

After having received the sacred species he replaces[12638] the paten on the corporal, and standing erect and holding his thumbs and forefingers united, he joins his hands, raises them as far as his chin, and remains a short time in meditation on the Blessed Sacrament.

4. THE PRIEST TAKES THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

> "Deinde, depositis manibus, dicit secreto, *Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi?* et interim discooperit Calicem, genuflectit, surgit, accipit patenam, inspicit corporale, colligit fragmenta cum patena, si quæ sint in eo, patenamque diligenter cum pollice et indice dextræ manus super Calicem extergit, et ipsos digitos, ne quid fragmentorum in eis remaneat.
>
> "Si vero adsint Hostiæ consecratæ super corporale positæ, pro alio tempore conservandæ, facta prius genuflexione, reponit eas in vas ad hoc ordinatum; et diligenter advertit, ne aliquod fragmentum, quantumcumque minimum, remaneat super corporale; quod si fuerit, accurate reponit in Calicem.
>
> "Post extersionem patenæ, junctis pollicibus et indicibus, Calicem dextra manu infra nodum cuppæ accipit, sinistra patenam, dicens, *Calicem salutaris,* etc., et signans se signo crucis cum Calice, dicit, *Sanguis Domini nostri*, etc., et manu sinistra supponens patenam Calici, stans reverenter sumit totum Sanguinem cum particula in Calice posita."—*(Rub. Miss.* tit. X. 4 et 5.)

Then having disjoined his hands, he places his left hand on the corporal or on the foot of the chalice, and uncovers the chalice with his right hand, saying *Quid retribuam Domino,* etc.[12639] After these words, having placed his hands on the corporal, he genuflects with a pause,[12640] and then, holding his left hand on the corporal, he diligently gathers with the paten the fragments. If the priest has to remove the chalice in order to gather the fragments, he should do so before he genuflects. Then holding the paten with his left hand over the chalice, with the forefinger, which is no longer united with the thumb, but is entirely free, he causes the fragments to fall into the chalice, and then rubs the front parts of the fingers together, not at the edge, but over the mouth of the chalice, so that, should there be any fragment left, it may fall into the chalice.

Here the Rubric remarks that if there are consecrated particles 011 the corporal to be preserved, or if there is another Host for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament,[12641] he must first put them into the ciborium or the monstrance, after having made a genuflection, and then the corporal should be purified and the precious blood should be received. The precious blood having been received and the first ablution having been made, the ciborium or monstrance is put back into the tabernacle. This is to be done only when the ciborium is outside of the tabernacle; for if it is in the tabernacle, the particles are to be put into the ciborium after receiving the precious blood. As to the manner in which Holy Communion is to be given both during Mass or outside of it, mention will be made in a following chapter.

Then the celebrant again joins the thumbs and the forefingers, places his left hand, which holds the paten, on the corporal, takes with his right hand the chalice below the knob, saying: *Calicem salutaris accipiam,* etc., and forming with the chalice a cross over himself, he says: *Sanguis Domini nostri,* etc., and inclining his head at the name *Jesu Christi,* he receives the precious blood. As the Rubric says: *Manu sinistra supponens patenam Calici,* it must be observed that the paten should be held under the chalice only when the precious blood is taken, and then the paten is placed under his chin.

Some say that the precious blood may be received in three draughts; others say that it is more becoming to take it in one draught; but Gavantus justly recommends that this should be done in two draughts; and this practice is praised by Merati.[12642] If a particle of the Host happens to adhere to the chalice, it should not be drawn up to the edge of the chalice with the finger, but should be consumed with the wine that is afterwards poured into the chalice.[12643] Gavantus adduces the ordinance of St. Pius V., by which it is prescribed that the ablution should be received in the same manner in which the precious blood is received.

5. THE PRIEST TAKES THE ABLUTIONS, THEN COVERS THE CHALICE WITH THE VEIL AND THE BURSE

> “Quibus sumptis, dicit secreto, *Quod ore sumpsimus,* etc., et super altare porrigit calicem ministro in cornu Epistolæ. quo vinum fundente, se purificat; deinde vino et aqua abluit pollices et indices super calicem, quos abstergit purificatorio; interim dicens, *Corpus tuurn Domine quod sumpsi*, etc., ablutionem sumit, et extergit os et calicem purificatorio; quo facto, purificatorium extendit super calicem, et desuper patenam, ac super patenam parvam pallam, et plicato corporali, quod reponit in bursam, cooperit calicem velo, et bursam desuper ponit, et collocat in medio altaris, ut in principio Missæ.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. X. 5.)

Having taken the precious blood, the priest gives holy Communion if there should be persons present that wish to communicate. (About the manner of giving Communion, see Chapter XII.) Then he says: *Quod ore sumpsimus,* etc.; and at the same time with his right hand he holds out the chalice towards the server on the Epistle side in Older to receive the wine for ablution, keeping meanwhile on the corporal his left hand holding the paten; and he has as much wine poured into the chalice as has been consecrated. Some, such as Cabrinus and Tonellius, wish that the prayer *Quod ore,* etc., should be recited before, while presenting the chalice to receive the ablution; but this does not seem to be conformable to the little Rubric that is found in the Canon, which says: *Postea dicit: Quod ore,* etc., *interim porrigit Calicem ministro, qui infundit in eo parum vini.* The word *interim* clearly indicates that this prayer, *Quod ore* should be said while the wine is being poured into the chalice.

Then the celebrant slightly moves in a circle the wine that has been poured into the chalice in order to collect the rest of the precious blood, and he takes the ablution on the same side of the chalice at which he took the precious blood, as has been prescribed by St. Pius V., and also in the same manner by holding the paten under his chin with his left hand. It must, besides, be remarked with Merati, that the abstemious cannot without the permission of the Pope use water in this first ablution, but they must use wine.

After having purified the chalice, the priest puts the paten on the corporal towards the Epistle side; then taking the cup of the chalice between the last three fingers of both hands, and holding the forefingers and the thumbs over the mouth of the chalice he makes an inclination to the cross,[12644] and goes to the Epistle side; there, holding the chalice raised over the altar, he washes his forefingers and thumbs, and also the other fingers that might have touched the Blessed Sacrament, first with wine, and then with water, in a larger quantity.

He afterwards places the chalice outside of the corporal towards the Epistle side, and wipes his fingers with the purificator, saying in the mean time: *Corpus tuum Domine, quod sumpsi*, etc. This prayer having been finished in the middle of the altar, he makes an inclination to the cross,[12645] puts with his left hand the purificator under his chin, takes the chalice with his right hand, and drinks the ablution in one draught; then he wipes his mouth and the chalice with the purificator. If there remains in the chalice or on the paten some particle of the Host, he should consume it.

Having afterwards placed the chalice outside of the corporal, towards the Gospel side, he spreads over it the purificator, on which he puts the paten with the pall and the veil. He then folds the corporal, takes the burse with the left hand; with the right hand he puts into it the corporal, so that the opening of the burse looks towards himself (the celebrant). Then he takes the chalice by the knob under the veil, and while placing his right hand on the burse, he places the chalice in the middle of the altar, arranging the veil in such a manner that it covers at least the whole front part of the chalice, according to a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites (March 5, 1698), mentioned by Merati.

It should be observed that on Christmas, after having taken the precious blood at the first and the second Mass, the chalice should not be purified nor wiped with the purificator, and that the ablution of the fingers should be made in a special vessel. The prayers *Quod ore* and *Corpus tuum* are, however, to be said, after which the chalice is covered with the paten, on which another host is placed; over the chalice is spread the veil, but the purificator is left on the Epistle side.

Chapter XI

THE PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION, AND THE END OF MASS

1. THE PRIEST RECITES THE COMMUNIO, THE POST-COMMUNIO, AND THE ITE MISSA EST

> “Celebrante purificato, dum calicem collocat in altari, liber Missalis defertur per ministrum ad cornu Epistolæ, et collocatur ut in Introitu. Ipse autem minister genuflectit juxta cornu Evangelii, ut in principio Missæ. Deinde celebrans, stans junctis minibus, legit *Antiphonam* quæ dicitur *Communio;* qua lecta, junctis itidem manibus ante pectus vadit ad medium altaris, et, eo osculato, vertit se ad populum a manu sinistra ad dextram, et dicit *Dominus vobiscum,* et per eamdem viam redit ad librum, dicit *Orationes post Communionem* eisdem modo, numero, et ordine, ut supra dictæ sunt Collectæ.
>
> “Quibus finitis, claudit librum, et, jungens manus ante pectus, revertitur ad medium altaris, ubi, eo osculato, vertit se ad populum, et dicit ut supra *Dominus vobiscum.* Quo dicto, stans junctis manibus ante pectus versus populum, dicit, si dicendum est *Ite Missa est,* et per eamdem viam revertitur ad altare. Si vero non sit dicendum, dicto *Dominus vobiscum,* revertitur eodem modo per eamdem viam ad medium altaris; ubi stans versus ad illud, junctis ante pectus manibus dicit *Benedicamus Domino.*
>
> “In Quadragesima autem, a Feria quarta Cinerum usque ad Feriam quartam Majoris Hebdomadæ, in feriali Officio, postquam celebrans dixit orationes post Communionem cum suis solitis conclusionibus, antequam dicat *Dominus vobiscum* stans eodem loco ante librum dicit, *Oremus. Humiliate capita vestra Deo,* caput inclinans, et extensis manibus subjungit eadem voce *Orationem super populum* ibidem positam: qua finita, osculato altare; et, vertens se ad populum dicit *Dominus vobiscum* et alia ut supra.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. XI. 1, 2.)

THE celebrant, after having finished the ablutions and arranged the chalice on the altar, as has been explained in Chapter X., holding his hands before his breast, goes to the Epistle side, where in a loud voice he reads the antiphon, which is called *Communio;* he returns immediately after to the middle of the altar, kisses it, and turning towards the people says as usual, *Dominus vobiscum.* Then he returns to the book, and recites the prayer called *Post communio* and all the other prayers that are to be recited on that day; the first and the second prayer are preceded by the word *Oremus,* with an inclination to the cross.

It must be remarked that, according to Merati, during Lent, in the Ferial Masses the words *Humiliate capita vestra Deo,* which precede the prayer *super populum,* are pronounced without an inclination; an inclination is made only at the word *Oremus,* which is said in the usual manner.

Having finished the prayers, he closes the Missal (if he has not a special Gospel to say) in such a way that the opening of the book be turned towards the chalice. He returns to the middle of the altar, kisses it, and turning to the people, he repeats, with his hands extended, *Dominus vobiscum;* then while turned towards the people, his hands being joined before his breast, without inclining his head, lie says: *Ite Missa est.* During the octave of Easter he adds two *alleluias.* The *Ite Missa est* is said at all the Masses in which the *Gloria in excelsis* is said; but if the *Gloria in excelsis* was not said, the priest after the *Dominus vobiscum* turns round to the altar, and standing erect, says *Benedicamus Domino,* or *Requiescat in pace,* in Masses of the Dead.

2. THE PRIEST RECITES THE PRAYER PLACEAT TIBI, AND GIVES THE BLESSING

> “Dicto *Ite Missa est,* vel *Benedicamus Domino,* ut supra, celebrans, ante medium altaris, stans, junctis manibus super eo, et capite inclinato, dicit secreto *Placeat tibi sancta Trinitas, etc.*
>
> “Quo dicto, extensis manibus hinc inde super altare positis, ipsum in medio osculatur; tum erigens se, adhuc stans versus illud, elevat ad cœlum oculos et manus, quas extendit et jungit, caputque Cruci inclinans, dicit voce intelligibili *Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus,* et junctis manibus, ac demissis ad terram oculis, vertens se ad populum a sinistro latere ad dextrum, extensa manu dextra, junctisque digitis, et manu sinistra infra pectus posita, semel benedicit populo, dicens *Pater et Filius* † *et Spiritus sanctus. R. Amen.”*—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. XII. 1.)

Then holding his hands joined on the altar and inclining his head (*capite inclinato,* says the Rubric), he says in a low voice: *Placeat tibi, sancta Trinitas,* etc.; he lays his hands extended on the altar, kisses it in the middle, and having raised himself up, lifts his eyes to the cross; elevating his hands at the same time, joining them, and inclining his head, he says in a loud voice: *Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus;* then holding his hands joined and his eyes cast down (*demissis ad terram oculis,* says the Rubric), he turns round to the people by the Epistle side, and with his left hand below his breast he blesses the people with his right hand extended and his lingers united, saying: *Pater, et Filius* † *et Spiritus Sanctus.* While saying *Pater,* he begins to make the cross with his hand extended and raised to the height of the forehead; when he says *Filius,* he lowers it as far as the breast; and when he says *Spiritus Sanctus,* he forms a transverse line that does not exceed the width of the shoulders.

3. THE PRIEST READS THE LAST GOSPEL

> “Circulum perficiens, accedit ad cornu Evangelii, ubi dicto *Dominus vobiscum. R. Et cum spiritu tuo,* pollice dextro signans primum signo crucis altare seu librum in principio Evangelii, deinde frontem, os, et pectus, dicit *Initium sancti Evangelii secundum Joannem,* vel *Sequentia sancti Evangelii* ut dictum est in Rubricis generalibus, et *R. Gloria tibi Domine,* junctis manibus legit Evangelium *In principio,* vel aliud ut convenit, Cum dicit *Et Verbum caro factum est* genuflectit versus cornu Evangelii, et surgens prosequitur ut prius: quo finito, minister stans a parte Epistolæ respondet *Deo gratias.”*—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. XII. 1.)

The blessing having been given, the celebrant completes the circle and goes to the Gospel side; there, with his hands joined and his face turned towards the altar, he says: *Dominus vobiscum.* Then he makes with his right thumb the sign of the cross, at first on the altar (or on the book at the beginning of the Gospel), then on himself on his forehead, mouth, and breast, and says the Gospel of St. John: *Initium sancti Evangelii* (or another Gospel that is prescribed). When he pronounces the words *Verbum caro factum est,* he genuflects; holding his hands separated on the altar, and rising immediately, he recites the rest of the Gospel.

The Gospel being over, he does not kiss the altar card nor the Missal,[12646] but returns to the middle of the altar.

4. THE PRIEST LEAVES THE ALTAR AND RETURNS TO THE SACRISTY

> “Quibus omnibus absolutis, exstinguntur per ministrum candelæ: interim Sacerdos accipit sinistra calicem, dextram ponens super bursam, ne aliquid cadat, descendit ante infimum gradum altaris; et ibi in medio vertens se ad illud, caput inclinat, vel, si in eo est tabernaculum Sanctissimi Sacramenti genuflectit, et facta reverentia, accipit birretum a ministro, caput cooperit, ac præcedente eodem ministro, eo modo quo venerat, redit ad sacristiam, interim diccns antiphonam *Trium puerorum,* cum cantico *Benedicite* et aliis orationibus, ut suo loco ponuntur.
>
> “Si vero sit dimissurus paramenta apud altare ubi celebravit, finito Evangelio prædicto, ibidem illis se exuit, et dicit antiphonam *Trium Puerorum,* cum cantico et aliis orationibus, ut suo loco ponuntur.”

Having arrived at the middle of the altar, the priest makes an inclination to the cross,[12647] turns the front part of the veil upon the burse. He takes with his left hand the chalice at the knob, holding his right hand on the burse; he turns towards the Epistle side and descends to the lowest step of the altar, and there, if the Blessed Sacrament is present, he genuflects on one knee on the step,[12648] or if the Blessed Sacrament is not there, he inclines his head to the cross *(caput inclinet*, says the Rubric). Merati with others wishes that a profound inclination should be made. He then covers his head with the biretta and returns to the sacristy, saying in the meanwhile the antiphon: *Trium puerorum*, etc., with the canticle *Benedicite omnia opera,* etc. If he meets another priest, they should salute each other with the head uncovered.

Having come to the sacristy, he makes a profound inclination to the principal image; then he takes off the vestments, one after the other, in the inverse order to that in which he put them on; namely, he first takes off the chasuble, then the stole, maniple, cincture, alb, and finally the amice, kissing the cross of the stole, maniple, and amice. In removing the alb, he draws off the left sleeve first, then passes the alb over his head. If the vestments are to be put on the altar, they should be placed at the Gospel side. Then the priest should retire to give thanks to the Divine Guest, who has deigned to enter his soul with so much love.

Chapter XII

THE MANNER OF GIVING COMMUNION DURING MASS

> “Si qui sunt communicandi in Missa, Sacerdos, post sumptionem Sanguinis, antequam se purificet, facta genuflexione, ponat Particulas consecratas in pyxide, vel, si pauci sint communicandi, super patenam, nisi a principio positæ fuerint in pyxide, seu alio calice. Interim minister ante eos extendit linteum, seu velum album, et pro eis facit confessionem, dicens *Confiteor Deo, etc.* Tum Sacerdos iterum genuflectit, et manibus junctis, vertens se ad populum in cornu Evangelii, dicit, *Misereatur vestri,* et *Indulgentiam, absolutionem et remissionem peccatorum vestrorum, etc.*, et manu dextra facit signum crucis super eos. Postea genuflectens, accipit manu sinistra pyxidem seu patenam cum Sacramento, dextra vero sumit unam Particulam, quam inter pollicem et indicem tenet aliquantulum elevatum super pyxidem seu patenam, et conversus ad communicandos in medio altaris dicit *Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi* —Deinde dicit: *Domine non sum dignus, ut intres sub tectum meum, sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea.* Quibus verbis tertio repetitis, accedit ad eorum dextram, hoc est, ad latus Epistolæ, et unicuique porrigit Sacramentum, faciens cum eo signum crucis super pyxidem vel patenam, et simul dicens *Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam tuam in vitam æternam, Amen.* Omnibus communicatis revertitur ad altare, nihil dicens: et non dat eis benedictionem, quia illam daturus est in fine Missæ.
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> “Si particulæ positæ erant super corporale, extergit illud cum patena, et si quæ in eo fuerint fragmenta, in calicem immittit. Deinde dicit secreto, *Quod ore sumpsimus Domine, etc.,* et se purificat, dicens *Corpus tuum Domine quod sumpsi,* et alia facit ut supra.
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> “Si in altari remaneant particulæ in calice, seu in alio vase usque ad finem Missæ, serventur ea, quæ in Feria quinta Cœnæ Domini præscribuntur circa finem Missæ.”-(*Rub. Miss.* tit. X. 6, 7.)

1. THE MANNER OF GIVING COMMUNION WITH THE HOSTS CONSECRATED AT MASS

WHEN particles are placed on the altar for persons that desire to communicate, the priest, having taken the precious blood, and before taking the ablution, covers the chalice with the pall, puts the particles on the paten, makes a genuflection, and turning a little towards the people, with his shoulders towards the Gospel side, says the prayer *Misereatur vestri,* etc., even though there be only one person to receive Communion. Then he places his left hand below his breast, but with the right hand makes the sign of the cross over the communicants, saying: *Indulgentiam, absolutionem,* etc. Then he turns towards the altar,[12649] takes the paten,[12650] and with the forefinger and thumb of his right hand one of the particles, and turning entirely towards the people, although the Blessed Sacrament be exposed,[12651] he raises the Host a little, without, however, touching the paten with the other fingers, and he says: *Ecce Agnus Dei*, etc., and three times *Domine non sum dignus*. While distributing Communion he makes with the particle over the paten or ciborium the sign of the cross towards every one that communicates (the communicant kneeling on the step nearest to the altar rails), and says: *Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi* etc. Then, having returned to the altar, he purifies the corporal, and puts the fragments into the chalice, as has been said above.

2. MANNER OF GIVING COMMUNION WITH THE HOSTS KEPT IN THE TABERNACLE

If the particles have already been consecrated and are kept in the tabernacle, the celebrant, having taken the precious blood, places the chalice towards the Gospel side, and holding his thumbs and forefingers joined, he opens the tabernacle, genuflects, takes out the ciborium, and having placed it in the middle of the altar uncovers it, again genuflects, and with his hands joined before his breast waits till the server finishes the *Confiteor.* Then he turns around in order to say the prayers *Misereatur* and *Indulgentiam,* and gives Communion in the manner above mentioned.

Having returned to the altar, he puts down the ciborium, covers it, makes a genuflection,[12652] again takes it, and puts it back into the tabernacle: he does not, however, kiss it, as some do; and before closing the tabernacle he again genuflects, and then closes it. Merati, adding another genuflection, requires that in all we should make three genuflections: for he wishes that before covering the ciborium the first genuflection should be made; the second, before putting back the ciborium after opening the tabernacle; lastly, the third, before the tabernacle is closed. He cites for his opinion the Ceremonial of the private Mass; but the Ceremonial says nothing of the first genuflection required by Merati; for it merely says: *Si remanserint particulæ, clausa pyxide et facta genuflexione reponit eam in custodiam, et antequam claudat illam, denuo genuflectat.* It therefore prescribes the second and the third genuflection, but not the first before the priest covers the ciborium. Communion having been distributed, the priest does not give the blessing, because it is given at the end of Mass. He then consumes the drops of precious blood that still remain in the chalice; and afterwards purifies the chalice.

3. REMARKS IN REGARD TO THE HOSTS THAT ARE NOT CONSUMED

Here a few remarks should be made:

As to Hosts consecrated and not distributed: If there is in the tabernacle a ciborium, the priest puts them into the ciborium; but if there is no ciborium, the priest consumes them before purifying the chalice; and if there are still found in the chalice some drops of the precious blood, it is proper for him to consume them before purifying the chalice. In case the consecrated Hosts remain on the altar till the end of Mass, the priest should observe what is prescribed when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed on the altar.

4. COMMUNION IS GIVEN DURING AND EVEN AFTER MASS

As much as possible, Communion is to be given to the people during the Mass after the Communion of the priest, this is the intention of the Church, for it is said in the Roman Ritual: *Communio autem populi intra Missam statim post communionem Sacerdotis fieri debet, nisi quandoque ex rationabili causa post Missam sit facienda.* And the following reason is given: *Cum orationes, quæ post communionem dicuntur, etiam ad alios communicandos spectent.* . . . The same holds good for giving Communion before Mass. A reasonable cause would be either illness or necessary occupation in the case of those that wish to communicate. Gavantus adds that Communion may be given at the end of Mass if many are to communicate, in order that those not communicating may not grow weary. However, Benedict XIV., in his work on the Sacrifice of the Mass (lib. 3, c. 18, n. 9), says that those manifestly err who without a reason give Communion after Mass. The same is said by Le Brun and Magri (*vocab. eccl. verb. Communio*), and the same was prescribed by St. Charles Borromeo for his diocese.

5. MANNER OF PURIFYING THE CIBORIUM

If the ciborium is to be purified[12653] (this should be done every fifteen days), the celebrant takes it from the tabernacle after having consumed the precious blood, and places on the paten all the Hosts that it contains [or he takes them out of the ciborium]; then he pours wine into the chalice for the first ablution, and with the forefinger lets the fragments that remain fall into the ciborium; and if necessary he also purifies the ciborium with a little wine, which he afterwards pours into the chalice. Having then wiped the ciborium with the purificator he puts into it the new particles, and consumes the old particles.

6. COMMUNION IN REQUIEM MASSES

According to a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, of 1741, Communion may be given, but it is prohibited to give it with particles consecrated before Mass. This ordinance does not lose its binding force because Merati and Benedict XIV. (*de Sacrif. Miss.* lib. 3, c. 18, n. 10) assert that such a decree has never been published, for they speak of another decree of the year 1701. The decree of which mention is here made is of the year 1741, and has also been published. This decree, however, is to be understood as referring to the Mass that is said with black vestments, but not when it is said with violet vestments; for in the latter case Communion may be given according to a decree of June 21, 1670, quoted by Merati *(in indice decretorum,* n. 444).[12654]

Chapter XIII

COMMUNION GIVEN OUTSIDE OF MASS, EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER IT

MANNER OF GIVING COMMUNION

WHEN Communion is to be given outside of Mass, the priest, wearing a surplice and a white stole,[12655] goes to the altar. When he arrives there he takes off the biretta, genuflects on the first step,[12656] ascends the altar, takes the burse, takes out of it the corporal, and puts the burse in its place;[12657] then, having unfolded the corporal, he opens the tabernacle, genuflects, takes out the ciborium, opens it, and makes again a genuflection. Then, the *Confiteor* having been said by the server, the priest again genuflects,[12658] and with his hands joined he turns to the people and says: *Misereatur,* etc., as above, anti distributes Communion. This is to be observed when the celebrant gives Communion before or after Mass.

After Communion has been given, the priest, having returned to the altar, says in a low voice the antiphon (this is, however, only a counsel): *O sacrum convivium, in quo Christus sumitur, recolitur memoria passionis ejus, mens impletur gratia, et futuræ gloriæ nobis pignus datur.* In Paschal time and within the octave of Corpus Christi an *alleluja* is added.[12659] Then are recited the versicles: *V. Panem de cælo præstitisti eis. R. Omne delectamentum in se habentem,* with the prayer: *Deus qui nobis sub Sacramento,*[12660] etc., without saying previously *Dominus vobiscum,* according to a decree of S. R. C., June 16, 1660.[12661]

If any fragment should adhere to his fingers the priest shall let it fall into the ciborium. Then having covered the ciborium, he purifies his fingers in a vessel of water, and wipes them with the purificator; he genuflects, replaces the ciborium in the tabernacle, and closes it after having made another genuflection.[12662]

Finally, he raises his eyes to the cross, and extending his hands and again joining them, and making at the same time a simple *minimarum maxima* inclination, he says in a loud voice: *Benedictio Dei omnipotentis;* then with his hands joined he turns to those that have communicated, and holding his left hand below his breast, he gives the blessing with his right hand, saying: *Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, descendat super vos et maneat semper.* And the server answers: *Amen.*

This blessing is given both before and after Mass; however, it is to be given with the hand, not with the ciborium, as some do, especially when they give Communion to nuns; such is the decision given by Benedict XIV., in a certain bull. If, therefore, Communion has been given to nuns, the ciborium having been covered, it is put into its place, and the blessing is given to the nuns with the hand.[12663]

Chapter XIV

WHAT IS OMITTED IN THE MASSES OF THE DEAD

> “In Missa pro Defunctis, ante confessionem, non dicitur Psalmus *Judica me Deus,* sed, pronuntiata antiphona *Introibo ad Altare Dei,* et responso a ministro, *Ad Deum qui lætificat,* etc. dicitur *V. Adjutorium nostrum,* et *Confessio,* cum reliquis ut supra. Cum celebrans ad altare incipit *Introitum,* non signat se, sed manu dextra extensa, facit signum crucis super librum, quasi aliquem benedicens. Non dicitur *Gloria Patri,* sed post Psalmum repetitur *Requiem æternam;* nec dicitur *Gloria in excelsis,* nec *Alleluja,* nec *Jube Domine benedicere,* nec *Dominus sit in corde meo;* nec osculatur librum in fine. Non dicitur *Credo,* non benedicitur aqua in Calicem fundenda; dicitur tamen Oratio, *Deus, qui humanæ substantiæ,* etc. Cum lavat manus, in fine psalmi *Lavabo inter innocentes,* non dicitur *Gloria Patri.* Ad *Agnus Dei,* non dicitur *miserere nobis,* cujus loco dicitur *dona eis requiem;* nec tertio *dona nobis pacem,* cujus loco dicitur *dona eis requiem sempiternam;* nec percutitur pectus. Non dicitur prima Oratio ante Communionem, scilicet: *Domine Jesu Christe, qui dixisti Apostolis tuis,* etc., nec datur pax. In fine non dicitur *Ite Missa est,* nec *Benedicamus Domino,* sed *Requiescant in pace.* Et non datur benedictio; sed dicto *Placeat,* et osculato altari, dicitur, ut supra: *In principio erat Verbum;* et alia omnia ut in aliis Missis.”—(*Rub. Miss.* tit. XIII. 1.)

AT THE FOOT OF THE ALTAR

IN the beginning of Masses for the Dead the psalm *Judica me Deus* is omitted. Hence after the antiphon *Introibo ad altare Dei,* and after the server has answered *Ad Deum qui lætificat,* etc., the priest says: *Adjutorium nostrum,* and then he says the *Confiteor,* and what follows.

FROM THE INTROIT TO THE LAVABO

When beginning the *Introit,* he does not make the sign of the cross on himself, but having placed his left hand on the book,[12664] with his right hand extended he makes a sign of the cross in the air towards the book.

He does not say the *Gloria,* nor *Jube Domine benedicere,* nor *Dominus sit in corde meo,* nor is the book kissed at the end of the Gospel.[12665]

The *Credo* is not said, nor is the water that is poured into the chalice blessed, but the prayer *Deus qui Humanæ substantiæ,* etc., is said; nor is

Gloria Patri said after the psalm *Lavabo.*

FROM THE AGNUS DEI TILL THE END OF MASS

At the *Agnus Dei*[12666] the priest says, not *miserere nobis,* nor *dona nobis pacem,* but twice *dona eis requiem,* and once *dona eis requiem sempiternam;* and the breast is not struck.

He omits the first of the three prayers that precede the Communion.

At the end of Mass, instead of the *Ite Missa est* or *Benedicamus Domino, Requiescant in pace* must be said.[12667] Then there is no blessing given, but after having said *Placeat* and kissed the altar, the priest goes to the Gospel side and says: *Dominus vobiscum,* and the Gospel of St. John *In principio,* and the rest as in other Masses.

Chapter XV

MASS CELEBRATED WHEN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT IS EXPOSED

ON entering the chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed the celebrant gives his biretta to the server, and when he arrives at the middle of the altar he genuflects on both knees *in plano,* making also a profound inclination of the head.

Having ascended the altar and placed the chalice on the Gospel side, he genuflects on one knee, but does not incline the head. He then takes the corporal out of the burse and unfolds it, and having placed the chalice in the middle, he again genuflects and goes to the Epistle side to find the Mass.

Then he returns to the middle of the altar, and having made a genuflection (which is always to be made when he goes to the middle or when he leaves it) withdrawing a little towards the Gospel side with his face towards the Epistle side, he descends to the foot of the altar *in plano,* there he genuflects on one knee on the first step of the altar; then he rises and begins Mass.

After having again ascended the altar he genuflects, and then says the prayer *Oramus te Domine,* etc.; after having finished it, he kisses the altar, again genuflects and goes to read the *Introit.* He then returns to the middle of the altar, where, having made a genuflection, he says the *Kyrie* and the *Gloria.* Then having kissed the altar he genuflects, and turns towards the people, withdrawing a little towards the Gospel side, in order not to turn his back to the Blessed Sacrament, and says *Dominus vobiscum.* Thus he should always act as often as he has to turn towards the people, that is, he genuflects before and after. And then he continues to say Mass in the usual manner.

When he goes to wash his hands, lie descends to the foot of the altar *in piano* by the steps at the Epistle side, and turning to his left, lest his back be towards the Blessed Sacrament, while facing the people he washes and dries his hands, and returns by the same way to the altar.

Before saying the *Orate Fratres* he kisses the altar, genuflects, and turning a little towards the people, with his shoulders towards the Gospel side, he says *Orate Fratres.*

Then without completing the circle, so that he may not turn his back to the Blessed Sacrament, he turns towards the altar, again genuflects, and continues the rest till the Communion. At the *Sanctus* and at the Elevation the bell is not rung.

After the Communion, and after the first ablution has been taken, he places the chalice outside of the corporal towards the Epistle side, and having made a genuflection he goes to the Epistle corner to purify his fingers.

Having recited the *Placeat,* he says *Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus;* and having made a genuflection he turns a little towards the people, with his shoulders towards the Gospel side, and then gives the blessing; then he turns towards the altar on his right side, but does not complete the circle lest he should turn his back to the Blessed Sacrament; and without making another genuflection, he goes to the Gospel side to read the Gospel. It must be remarked that if the altar card is wanting, he signs with the sign of the cross, not the altar, but himself.

Having finished the Gospel, he returns to the middle of the altar, genuflects, takes the chalice, descends to the foot of the altar *in plano,* where, before leaving the altar, he genuflects on both knees, and inclines the head profoundly, as he did at the beginning of Mass; then he covers his head with the biretta and returns to the sacristy.

Chapter XVI

MASS CELEBRATED BEFORE A BISHOP

THE ceremonies that are here indicated should be observed before a bishop in his own diocese, and before an archbishop in his own province, and also before a consecrated abbot in his monastery, and before a bishop in private oratories, although outside of his diocese. Gavantus adds that the same thing should be observed if a prelate is in the church of exempt Regulars, provided he has a kind of jurisdiction over them.

After the celebrant, with his head covered, has arrived at the middle of the altar, before the lowest step, he uncovers his head, makes an inclination towards the cross or a genuflection if the Blessed Sacrament is kept there. Then he salutes the prelate with a profound inclination and goes to the Epistle side, standing *in plano* before the lowest step; after having received the sign, he again inclines towards the prelate, and turning a little towards the altar (the server kneeling on the Epistle side) he begins Mass. This holds good when the bishop hears Mass in front of the altar, but not when he is present at the side; in this case the priest may begin Mass in the middle, because then he does not turn his back to him and can conveniently make the usual inclinations that must be made to him.

At the *Confiteor* he does not say *vobis fratres* and *vosfratres,* but says only *tibi pater* and *te pater.* Having, said *Oremus* before he ascends the altar, he makes again, for the third time, a profound bow to the prelate, and when he reaches the middle of the altar before the lowest step, he begins *Aufer a nobis,* and ascends the altar.

The Gospel having been read, the priest does not kiss the Missal, nor does he say *Per Evangelica dicta,* because the server without making an inclination to the prelate must carry the Missal to him to be kissed; the prelate, however, having kissed the book, says *Per Evangelica dicta.* The server now closes the book, genuflects before the prelate, and carries back the Missal to the celebrant, who abstains from kissing it. If several prelates are present, the Missal is carried to the one superior in dignity, but if they are of equal dignity, it is carried to none of them. It is the practice of some that when before the offering water is poured into the wine, the server says: *Benedic Illustrissime et Reverendissime Pater;* and the bishop blesses the water; but as this is prescribed nowhere in the Rubric it should be omitted.

At the end of Mass the celebrant, having said *Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus,* makes a profound inclination to the prelate, and blesses those that are present, taking care to make the sign of the cross towards that place where the prelate is not. If the prelate is outside the place of his jurisdiction, the celebrant gives the blessing in the usual manner, when, namely, he celebrates in a public church; but in private oratories, as has been said above, the same ceremonies are observed towards him as if he were in his own diocese. After the last Gospel the celebrant, standing in the place where he is, turns towards the prelate and makes towards him a profound inclination, nor does he depart before the prelate has departed.

If Mass is celebrated before a prelate in a public church that does not belong to his jurisdiction, it is becoming that the priest, on going to the altar or leaving it, while passing before the prelate, should with head covered, if he carries the chalice, make towards him a moderate inclination; but if he does not carry the chalice, he uncovers his head and makes to him a profound inclination. And after the Mass is finished he makes to him from the altar a profound inclination. All that has been said in this chapter on this point is taken from Gavantus and Merati (on Rubric XI.).

It must, moreover, be observed that the priest celebrating before his own prelate on those days on which it is allowed to say a prayer *ad libitum,* cannot say the prayer *pro se ipso.*

Chapter XVII

THE FAULTS THAT ARE USUALLY COMMITTED IN CELEBRATING MASS

I

THE first fault is not to know well by heart the prayers which, in accordance with the precept of the Rubric, should be known, as the prayers that one should say in washing the hands and in putting on the sacred vestments. It is, moreover, a fault if one does not pronounce well the other prayers that are to be said by heart during the Mass; as *Aufer a nobis*, etc., *Oramus te Domine*, etc.

II

It is a very great fault to go to say Mass with little or no preparation; it would be worse to talk while putting on the vestments. St. John Chrysostom exclaims: *Ad divina Christi mysteria negligenter accedens supplicium intolerabile meretur.*[12668] Moreover, St. Bonaventure says: *Cave, ne nimis tepidus et inordinatus atque inconsideratus accedes, quia indigne sumis, si non accedis reverenter.*

III

It is a fault, worthy of reprehension, or rather it is a horrible sacrilege, to celebrate Mass too fast, for then it happens that the words are mutilated, the ceremonies are transposed so that they are performed either before or after the time prescribed; this would show little devotion, and scandalize those that are present. Of those that act in this way one may say: *Non timent Dominum, neque custodiunt cæremonias ejus.*[12669]

IV

It is also a great fault to omit the thanksgiving that should be made after Mass; and in this not a few imitate Judas, who, *cum accepisset buccellam, exivit continuo.*[12670]

V

It is a great sin to celebrate with torn vestments, with a dirty purificator and corporal. This is the general opinion of theologians.

VI

It is a fault to place on the chalice the handkerchief or any other thing (see Chap. II.); it is a great fault to place on the altar what does not belong to the Mass. The handkerchief may be fastened to the cincture at the right side under the chasuble, in such a way that it is hidden from view.

VII

It is a fault: 1. To sign one's self with the amice; 2. While leaving the sacristy to recite the psalm *Miserere*, although any prayer may be recited mentally; some, however, deny that it is a fault.[12671] 3. To make a reverence to the image in the sacristy while holding the biretta with the right hand and the chalice with the left; 4. To make an inclination, simple, moderate, or profound, after having made a genuflection on one knee; 5. To make 110 difference between the profound, moderate, and simple inclination.

The *profound* inclination should be made by the priest: (1) before leaving the sacristy; (2) while passing before the high altar if the Blessed Sacrament is not there; (3) when he arrives at the altar; (4) before he begins Mass if the Blessed Sacrament is not there; (5) when he says *Munda cor meum, Te igitur, Supplices te rogamus.*

The *moderate* inclination should be made in descending from the altar either to say Mass, or after Mass.[12672] Moreover: 1. At *Deus qui conversus*, etc.; 2. At *Oramus te Domine;* 3. At *In spiritu humilitatis;* 4. At the *Sanctus;* 5. At the Consecration; 6. At the *Agnus Dei;* 7. At the three prayers before Communion; 8. At the *Domine non sum dignus;* 9. At the *Placeat tibi sancta Trinitas.*

As for the *simple* inclination we must distinguish three kinds, as has been explained in Chapter II., page 92.

It should be made: 1. When *Gloria Patri* is said; 2. Every time *Oremus* is said; 3. At the name *Jesus* and *Maria* or of the saints whose Mass is celebrated or of whom a special commemoration is made; 4. When the name of the reigning Pope is mentioned; 5. In the hymn *Gloria,* at the words *Deo, Adoramus te, Gratias agimus tibi, Jesu Christe, Suscipe deprecationem nostram;* 6. When the *Credo* is said at the words *In unum Deum, Jesum Christum,* and *simul adoratur;* 7. In the Preface at *Deo nostro;* 8. In the Canon at *Tibi gratias agens* before each Consecration; 9. At *Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum,* before *Nobis quoque peccatoribus;* 10. At *Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus.* In accordance with a laudable custom an inclination is always made to the cross on arriving at the middle of the altar, or on leaving it.[12673]

VIII

It is a great fault not to make well the sign of the cross, by making it in the air, without touching the head, breast, and shoulders; and, moreover, it is also a fault to form the cross on the breast without carrying the hand to the left and the right shoulder, as some, even pious, priests do through negligence.

IX

It is a fault to genuflect at the prayer *Aufer* when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed; and so, too, it is a fault against the Rubric not to touch the floor with the knee while making genuflections.

X

It is a fault to go to the middle of the altar before repeating the *Introit,* or to say the *Kyrie* or the *Munda cor meum* while going there, or to recite the conclusion of the prayer while proceeding to the middle, because the Missal should be shut only after the conclusion has been finished. It is a fault if, when going to the altar or leaving it, or turning towards the people, saying *Dominus vobiscum* or *Orate Fratres,* the celebrant does not cast down his eyes, as is prescribed by the Rubric, which says: *demissis oculis.* It is a fault if, when putting his hands on the altar in order to kiss it or to make a genuflection, the celebrant places upon it only the half of his hands and not the entire palms, or when, genuflecting, he raises them towards heaven, since he should hold them flat on the altar. So, also, it is a fault, when the altar is to be kissed not to recede from it about the space of a foot so as not to be obliged to make contortions or to kiss it sideways.

XI

When there are several prayers, it is a fault to turn the leaves before having finished the conclusion of the first prayer.

XII

It is a fault not to raise the eyes at *Munda cor meum,* or not to incline profoundly, and not to hold the hands joined between the breast and the altar, or to begin it before one has arrived at the middle and raised the eyes towards the cross.

XIII

It is a very great fault not to make at the beginning of the Gospel the sign of the cross as one should make it, or to make it as some usually do, who, without forming a cross, draw only a serpentine line from the forehead to the breast.

XIV

It is a fault: 1. To recite the Offertory without joining the hands; 2. Not to read the Offertory at the Masses for the Dead, but to say it by heart while uncovering the chalice; 3. Not to fold the veil, but to let it fall behind the chalice on the corporal, and to leave it there; 4. While putting the chalice on the Epistle side, to take at the same time with the left hand the paten with the pall upon it; 5. Not to raise the eyes at the prayers *Suscipe Sancte Pater, Offerimus tibi, Veni Sanctificator,* and *Suscipe Sancta Trinitas;* 6. To wipe the paten with the chasuble; 7. To begin the prayer *Deus qui humanæ substantiæ* while taking the wine cruet, instead of waiting till the server presents the water cruet, on which the sign of the cross is to be made while pronouncing those words.

XV

It is a fault: 1. To begin the prayer *In spiritu humilitatis* before placing the hands joined on the edge of the altar; 2. To incline the head while making the genuflection; as at *Incarnatus est,* etc., or after the Consecration, etc., and generally when a profound or moderate inclination is to be made; 3. To confound the ceremonies at *Sursum corda* and at *Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro;* but few perform them well. They are to be performed in the following manner: At *Sursum corda* the hands are raised as high as the breast, and are held apart in such a manner that they do not exceed the width of the breast, and one palm of the hand looks towards the other. At *Gratias* they are raised a little higher,[12674] and are then joined, but the eyes are raised and the head is inclined when the words *Deo nostro* are said.

XVI

It is a fault: 1. To incline the head at the words *Per Christum Dominum nostrum,* except after the *Memento* of the Dead; 2. To hold the hands joined on the altar at the *Sanctus,* because they should be held between the breast and the altar till the *Benedictus qui venit,* etc., and the body should be moderately inclined.

XVII

It is a fault to say the *Te igitur* while the hands are extended; for the Rubric prescribes that at first the hands should be separated and raised a little; and after the eyes are raised towards the crucifix, and the hands are joined and placed on the altar, the celebrant, profoundly inclined, begins the Canon, saying *Te igitur.*

XVIII

It is against the Rubric: 1. Not to join the hands before the crosses are made over the *Oblata;* namely, before the words *Hæc dona,* etc., and at the words *Fiat dilectissimi Filii tui,* etc., before he takes the Host to consecrate it; 2.

Not to divide the crosses where the words have the sign †, for example, *Bene†dictam,* etc.; 3. To hold the Host only with the left hand till the cross is made over it; 4. To hold the Host inclined towards the corporal, and not erect, when the cross is made over it.

XIX

It is unbecoming to keep the feet in different directions or at a great distance from each other, or to place the tip of the right foot on the platform of the altar during the consecration or during any other action.

XX

It is unbecoming: 1. At the Consecration of the Host to place the arms entirely upon the altar; only the elbows should rest on it; 2. At the adoration to place on the altar not only the extremities of the hands, but also the elbows; 3. To incline the head at the adoration when the Host and the chalice should be looked at; 4. To raise the Host and the chalice above the head; 5. In the genuflections not to hold the hands entirely on the corporal; namely, as far as the wrists, or to raise the fingers towards heaven.

XXI

It is a fault: 1. In the Consecration of the chalice to hold the knob of the chalice with both hands, when the foot of it should be held with the left hand; 2. Not to say immediately after the Consecration, but at the Elevation, the words *Hæc quotiescumque*, etc.; 3. To kiss the foot of the chalice or to touch it with the forehead; 4. Not to raise in a straight line the Host as well as the chalice, so high that it can be seen by the people; 5. To say some vocal prayer at the elevation of the Host or chalice.

XXII

It is a fault to hold the hands joined on the corporal when they should be so placed that the small fingers touch the edge of the altar; for the Rubric makes only the distinction that before the Consecration the thumbs should be held in the form of a cross, but after Consecration they should not be separated from the forefingers.

XXIII

It is a fault: 1. To say either the one or the other *Memento* in a loud voice; as, *Et omnium circumstantium,* after the first, and *Ipsis Domine* after the second *Memento;* 2. It is a fault in the *Memento* for the Dead to make a pause before the words *Qui nos præcesserunt,* etc., have been said.

XXIV

It is a fault to keep one’s head inclined, with the hands joined on the altar, when one says: *Præceptis salutaribus moniti,* as far as the *Pater noster;* for the hands should be held joined before the breast.

XXV

It is a fault to wipe the paten with the left hand or to wipe it on the chasuble after having kissed it.

XXVI

It is a fault: 1. To say *Agnus Dei,* etc., with the hands joined on the altar; 2. To stand sideways at *Domine non sum dignus,* which is contrary to what has been said in Chapter IV., and to strike the breast violently; 3. When signing one’s self with the cross, saying: *Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi,* to make the transverse line exceed the width of the paten.

XXVII

It is a fault: 1. To say *Quid retribuam Domino,* etc., while collecting the fragments; for the Rubric says: *Aliquantulum quiescit in meditatione Ss. Sacramenti; deinde depositis manibus dicit secreto: Quid retribuam Domino, et interim discooperit Calicem,* etc.; 2. To hold the paten under the chin before taking the precious blood, or while taking it or taking the first ablution, to hold it near the breast; 3. To cover the paten with the pall or to put the paten upside down on the corporal; 4. To purify with the fingers the mouth, or the fingers on the edge of the chalice; 5. To rest the chalice on the altar in purifying the chalice and the fingers; 6. Not to purify the chalice with wine, unless one has a papal dispensation; or to take the ablution not from the part of the chalice where the precious blood was taken, as has been ordained by St. Pius V. (see Gavantus); 7. In purifying the fingers not to use a little wine and much water, so that the purificator may not be soiled.

XXVIII

It is a fault: 1. To place the chalice, after the ablutions, in the middle of the altar with the veil turned over the burse, so that the chalice may be seen uncovered; it is a greater fault to put the folded corporal on the chalice, and not into the burse. 2. To say the antiphon called *Communio* while arranging the chalice, or not to say it at the Epistle corner, or to finish it while on the way.

XXIX

It is a fault while saying *Et Verbum caro factum est*, to genuflect towards the cross and not towards the Gospel and to raise the front of the chasuble.

XXX

It is a fault if the celebrant takes the biretta before he descends from the altar, or before he makes a genuflection or a profound inclination, or to place it upon the burse, upon which nothing should be placed either in going to the altar or in leaving it. See Merati, p. 2, tit. 2, n. 1, where he cites a decree of September 1, 1703, which forbids the carrying of the *Manutergium* in this way; and the theologians say the same about any other thing.

APPENDIX.[12675]

I. NOTICE OF THE MISSAL

“Sacerdos, celebraturus, omnem adhibeat diligentiam, ne desit aliquid ex requisitis ad sacramentum Eucharistiæ conficiendum. Potest autem defectus contingere ex parte Materiæ consecrandæ, ex parte Formæ adhibendæ, et ex parte Ministri conficientis. Quidquid enim horum deficit, scilicet Materia debita, Forma cum intentione, et Ordo sacerdotalis in conficiente, non conficitur Sacramentum; et his existentibus, quibuscumque aliis deficientibus, veritas adest Sacramenti. Alii vero sunt defectus, qui in Missæ celebratione occurrentes, etsi veritatem Sacramenti non impediant, possunt tamen aut cum peccato aut cum scandalo contingere.”—(*De Defect. gen.* tit. I.)

II. THE ALTAR AND ITS ORNAMENTS.[12676]

1. THE ALTAR

> “Altare, in quo sacrosanctum Missæ Sacrificium celebrandum est, debet esse lapideum, et ab Episcope, sive Abbate facultatem a Sede Apostolica habente, consecratum; vel saltem Ara lapidea, similiter ab Episcopo vel Abbate, ut supra, consecrata, in eo inserta, quæ tam ampla sit, ut hostiam et majorem partem Calicis capiat.”—(*Rubric. Miss. gen.* tit. XX.)

THE altar, of which mention is here made, consists of a stone that must under pain of a grave sacrilege be consecrated by a bishop, by an abbot, or a privileged priest, who has received the power of consecrating it. The altar is either fixed or portable. The portable altar, *Ara lapidea*, is a consecrated stone at least so large that it may be able to contain the sacred Host and the greater part of the foot of the chalice, as well as the other Hosts that may have to be consecrated either on the corporal or in the ciborium, which is to be left on it till the Communion.[12677] The altar stones, or portable altars are not validly consecrated unless the *Sepulchre*, the cavity in which the relics are placed, is covered with a stone (S. R. C., September 9, 1880).[12678]

2. THE ALTAR-CLOTHS AND THE ANTIPENDIUM

> “Hoc altare operiatur tribus mappis seu tobaleis mundis, ab Episcopo vel alio habente potestatem benedictis, superiori saltem oblonga, quæ usque ad terram pertingat, duabus aliis brevioribus, vel una duplicata. Pallio quoque ornetur coloris, quoad fieri potest, diei Festo vel Officio convenientis.”—(*Rubric. Miss, gen.* tit. XX.)

It would be at least a venial sin to celebrate Mass without the three altar-cloths required by the Rubric; it would be a mortal sin to celebrate Mass without any altar-cloth. However, there would be no fault if such a thing were done in a case of grave necessity. These altar-cloths should be blessed, and this under pain of venial sin, unless there be a case of necessity or a reasonable cause that permits the use of altar-cloths that are not blessed. They should be made of linen, or at least of hemp,[12679] and should be bleached and clean.[12680]

3. THE CROSS AND THE CANDLES

> “Super altare collocetur Crux in medio, et candelabra saltem duo cum candelis accensis hinc et inde in utroque ejus latere; . . . et a parte Epistolæ paretur cereus ad elevationem Sacramenti accendendus.”—(*Rubric, gen. Miss.* tit. xx.)

The cross is required at the altar during the celebration of Mass under pain of at least venial sin, except in a case of necessity. It should bear the image of Jesus crucified, although this is less rigorously exacted; and it should be placed in the middle and raised above the candles. The following is what Benedict XIV. says in regard to this matter: *Nullo modo fiat Sacrificium nisi Crucifixus inter candelabra ita prominent, ut Sacerdos ac populus eumdem Crucifixum facile et commode intueri possit; et imago non sit ita tenuis et exigua, ut ipsius Sacerdotis et populi oculos pene effugiat.* The Ceremonial of the Bishops prescribes the same thing.

A special cross is not necessary where there is on the altar a large statue representing our Lord crucified. It is believed that this holds good when our Lord is represented in a painting, provided his figure occupies the principal place in the picture.[12681]

It is not required that the cross on the altar should be blessed.[12682]

As for the lights, it is never allowed to celebrate Mass without lights, even in a case of necessity, when the Viaticum is to be administered. If the light goes out during Mass, it must not be continued unless this happens after Consecration. To celebrate only with one light would be, according to the most probable and most common opinion of theologians, only a venial sin.[12683] The candles used during the celebration of Mass should be of bees-wax.[12684]

4. ALTAR-CARDS, BOOK-STAND, CRUETS, ETC

> “Ad Crucis pedem ponatur tabella Secretarum appellata; in cornu Epistolæ, cussinus supponendus Missali; . . . parva campanula, ampullæ vitreæ vini et aquæ cum pelvicula et manutergio mundo, in fenestella seu in parva mensa ad hæc præparata. Super altare nihil omnino ponatur, quod ad Missæ sacrificium vel ipsius altaris ornamentum non pertineat.”—(*Rubr. Miss. gen.* tit. XX.)

It is not required that these different objects should be blessed. Instead of a cushion on which to place the Missal we may use a book-stand.[12685]

III. THE CHALICE AND ITS ACCESSORIES.[12686]

1. THE CHALICE AND THE PATEN

> “Præparat calicem, qui debet esse vel aureus vel argenteus, aut saltem habere cuppam argenteam, intus inauratam, et simul cum patena itidem inaurata, ab Episcopo consecratus.”—(*Rit. celebr.* tit. I. n. 1.)
>
> “Adsit calix cum patena conveniens, cujus cuppa debet esse aurea, vel argentea, vel stannea; non ærea, vel vitrea.”—(*De Defect.* tit. X. n. 1.)

The cup of the chalice and the paten should be of gold, or at least of silver gilt inside; they may be of tin or also *alluminio aliis metallis commixto*, when there exists some reasonable cause, as the poverty of the church or danger in time of persecution.[12687]

Consecration is required for the paten as well as for the chalice. It is lost as soon as the sacred vessel deteriorates in such a manner that it can no longer be decently used at the altar; for example, if the cup of the chalice be split or broken, has a hole in the bottom of it, or if it is dissevered from the foot by fracture, but not when it is simply divided, that is when *(calix tornatilis)* the cup and foot are joined by a screw. The vessel does not lose its consecration when the gilding wears off; but when it is regilt, it must be reconsecrated (S. R. C, 14 Jun., 1845).

2. THE PURIFICATOR, PALL, CORPORAL, VEIL, AND BURSE

> “Ponit purificatorium mundum, . . . tegit parva palla linea, tum velo serico; super velo ponit bursam coloris paramentorum, intus habentem corporale plicatum, quod ex lino tantum esse

> debet, nec serico vel auro in medio intextum, sed totum album, et ab Episcopo, vel alio habente potestatem, simul cum palla benedictum.”—(*Rit. celebr.* tit I. n. 1.)

According to the most common and most probable opinion, the purificator need not be blessed.

It would be a mortal sin to celebrate Mass with a corporal that is not blessed. As for the pall, it is probable that the sin would not be mortal.

The purificator, pall, and corporal should be of linen or hemp. When these linens, after having been used, must be washed, this should be done for the first time by a cleric in the higher orders, or, according to present custom, by a cleric in minor orders. The water that has been used for this purpose should afterwards be poured into the *Sacrarium.*

The veil and the burse need not be blessed.

IV. THE VESTMENTS.[12688]

1. MATERIAL AND BLESSING

> “Paramenta, . . . non debent esse lacera aut scissa, sed integra, et decenter munda ac pulchra, et ab Episcopo itidem, vel alio facultatem habente, benedicta.”—(*Rit. celebr.* tit. I. n. 2.)

The priest’s vestments, namely, the amice, alb, cincture, maniple, stole, and chasuble should be in a good condition and have been blessed by the bishop or by an authorized priest.

It is certainly a mortal sin to celebrate Mass without a chasuble, or with a chasuble not blessed; the same thing holds good In regard to the alb. Theologians agree more or less in saying the same thing in regard to the other vestments.[12689]

2. THE COLOR OF THE VESTMENTS

> “Paramenta, . . . debent esse coloris convenientis Officio et Missæ diei, secundum usum Romanæ Ecclesiæ, quæ quinque coloribus uti consuevit: Albo, Rubeo, Viridi, Violaceo, et Nigro.”—(*Rub. gen.* tit. xviii. n. 1.)

It is more probable that the Rubric concerning the color of the vestments is a matter of precept; however, it does not oblige one under pain of mortal sin, unless scandal may result therefrom. A reasonable cause, such as the want of the vestments of the color of the day, would then permit the taking of another color.[12690]

V. THE MATTER AND THE FORM OF THE SACRAMENT.[12691]

1. THE BREAD

> “Si panis non sit triticeus, vel si triticeus, admixtus sit granis alterius generis in tanta quantitate ut non maneat panis triticeus, vel sit alioqui corruptus, non conficitur Sacramentum.
>
> “Si sit confectus de aqua rosacea, vel alterius distillationis, dubium est an conficiatur.
>
> “Si cœperit corrumpi, sed non sit corruptus; similiter, si non sit azymus, secundum morem Ecclesiæ latinæ, conficitur; sed conficiens graviter peccat.
>
> “Si celebrans ante Consecrationem advertit hostiam esse corruptam, aut non esse triticeam, remota illa hostia, aliam ponat, et facta oblatione, saltem mente concepta, prosequatur ab eo loco, ubi desivit.
>
> “Si id adverterit post Consecrationem, etiam post illius hostiæ sumptionem, posita alia, faciat oblationem ut supra, et a Consecratione incipiat, scilicet, ab illis verbis—*Qui pridie quam pateretur*—et illam priorem, si non sumpsit, sumat post sumptionem Corporis et Sanguinis, vel alii sumendam tradat, vel alicubi reverenter conservet. Si autem sumpserit, nihilominus sumat eam quam consecravit; quia præceptum de perfectione Sacramenti majoris est ponderis, quam quod a jejunis sumatur.
>
> “Quod si hoc contingat post sumptionem Sanguinis, apponi debet rursus novus panis, et vinum cum aqua, et facta prius oblatione ut supra, Sacerdos consecret, incipiendo ab illis verbis.

1. *Black* is the color proper to death, which deprives us of the light of life, and plunges us into the darkness of the tomb. It is used on Good Friday in memory of the darkness that covered the whole earth when our Lord expired, and at all the Masses of the Dead.

The Church does not admit *blue* or *yellow;* however, the use of vestments in gold cloth having been introduced, the following doubt has been submitted to the Congregation of Rites: *An sacra paramenta revera auro, maxima saltem ex parte, contexta, pro quocumque colore, exceptis violaceo et nigro, inservire possint?* The Congregation answered, Apiil 28, 1866. *Tolerandum esse locorum consuetudinem, relate tamen ad paramenta ex auro contexta.*

—*Qui pridie*—ac statim sumat utrumque, et prosequatur Missam; ne Sacramentum remaneat imperfectum, et ut debitus servetur ordo.

> “Si Hostia consecrata dispareat, vel casu aliquo, aut vento aut miraculo, vel ab aliquo animali accepta, et nequeat reperiri, tunc altera consecretur ab eo loco incipiendo—*Qui pridie quam pateretur*—facta ejus prius oblatione, ut supra.”—(*De Defect.* tit. III.)

The matter essential to the divine Sacrifice is bread properly so called, made of the flour of pure wheat and of natural water. Any other kind of grain, as also any mixture of artificial liquor, as rose-water, would make the matter null, or at least uncertain, and gravely illicit.

Unleavened and leavened bread are both valid; but the former is permitted only in the Latin Church and the latter in the Greek Church, so that a priest of the Latin Church who would consecrate with leavened bread, and a Greek priest who would consecrate with unleavened bread, would both consecrate validly, but would commit a mortal sin. The common and more probable opinion is that a priest of the Latin Church could not consecrate with leavened bread even in a case of necessity when he wished to administer holy Viaticum.

It is a precept in the Latin Church that the Host that is to be consecrated should be of a circular form; but this is not the case in the Greek Church.

The Host that is consecrated for Mass should be larger than those that are distributed to the faithful; yet one may celebrate Mass with a small Host for want of another, provided no scandal be thereby given; one would even be obliged to do so in a case of necessity; for example, in order to administer the Viaticum.

The priest should communicate with the Host consecrated in the Mass that he celebrates; he would do wrong, when he renews the sacred Host for Exposition to use the old Host to communicate at Mass, and to replace it by the Host that he has just consecrated at his Mass.

2. THE WINE

> “Si vinum sit factum penitus acetum, vel penitus putridum vel de uvis acerbis seu non maturis expressum, vel ei admixtum tantum aquæ, ut vinum sit corruptum, non conficitur Sacramentum.
>
> “Si vinum cœperit acescere vel corrumpi, vel fuerit aliquantum acre, vel mustum de uvis tunc expressum, vel non fuerit admixta aqua, vel fuerit admixta aqua rosacea seu alterius distillationis, conficitur Sacramentum; sed conficiens graviter peccat.
>
> “Si celebrans, ante consecrationem Sanguinis, quamvis post consecrationem Corporis, advertat, aut vinum, aut aquam, aut utrumque, non esse in calice, debet statim apponere vinum cum aqua, et facta oblatione, ut supra, consecrare, incipiendo ab illis verbis—*Simili modo,* etc.
>
> “Si, post verba Consecrationis, advertat vinum non fuisse positum, sed aquam; deposita aqua in aliquod vas, iterum vinum cum aqua ponat in calice, et consecret, resumendo a verbis prædictis—*Simili modo,* etc.
>
> “Si hoc advertat post sumptionem Corporis, vel hujusmodi aquæ, apponat aliam hostiam iterum consecrandam, et vinum cum aqua in calice, offerat utrumque; et consecret, et sumat, quamvis non sit jejunus; vel, si Missa celebretur in loco publico, ubi plures adsint, ad evitandum

> scandalum, poterit apponere vinum cum aqua, et, facta oblatione ut supra, consecrare, ac statim sumere, et prosequi cetera.
>
> "Si quis percipiat, ante Consecrationem, vel post Consecrationem, totum vinum esse acetum, vel alias corruptum, idem servetur quod supra, ac si deprehenderet non esse positum vinum, vel solam aquam fuisse appositam in calice.
>
> "Si autem celebrans, ante consecrationem calicis, advertat non fuisse appositam aquam, statim ponat eam, et proferat verba Consecrationis. Si id advertat post consecrationem calicis, nullo modo apponat; quia non est de necessitate Sacramenti.
>
> "Si Materia quæ esset apponenda, ratione defectus vel panis, vel vmi, non posset ullo modo haberi, si id sit ante consecrationem Corporis, ulterius procedi non debet; si post consecrationem Corporis, aut etiam vini, deprehenditur defectus alterius speciei, altera jam consecrata, tunc, si nullo modo haberi possit, procedendum erit in Missa absolvenda, ita tamen ut prætermittantur verba et signa quæ pertinent ad speciem deficientem; quod si, expectando aliquamdiu, haberi possit, expectandum erit, ne Sacrificium remaneat imperfectum."—(*De Defect.* tit. IV.)

The wine proper for consecration must be natural wine produced from the grape *(vinum de vite*).[12692] Its color is immaterial.

The consecration would be null if one were to use sour grapes or vinegar, or wine adulterated by some mixture.

The must and the wine that begin to grow sour or to spoil would furnish valid but gravely illicit matter; and the sin would be still more grave if one were to use a doubtful matter. However, in case of necessity, one may use wine that is a little sour.

It is not permitted to consecrate frozen wine; nevertheless if one has done so, the consecration would still have to be regarded as valid.

There is an obligation, under pain of grievous sin, to put a little water into the wine, as is prescribed by the Rubric; but if one has omitted to do so, the consecration would nevertheless be valid.

In case one of the two species happens to be wanting, the other being consecrated, if it should be very difficult to procure what is needed, and considerable agitation would arise among the people, the Mass should be finished as the Rubric indicates; for the natural law obliging us to avoid giving scandal prevails over the positive divine law which ordains that the sacrifice should be completed.[12693]

3. THE SACRAMENTAL FORM

> "Defectus ex parte formæ possunt contingere, si aliquid desit ex iis, quæ ad integritatem verborum in ipsa Consecratione requiruntur. Verba autem Consecrationis, quæ sunt forma hujus Sacramenti, sunt hæc: *Hoc est enim Corpus meum,* et *Hic est enim calix Sanguinis mei, novi et æterni*

> *testamenti: mysterium fidei; qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum.* Si quis autem aliquid diminueret vel immutaret de forma consecrationis Corporis et Sanguinis, et in ipsa verborum immutatione verba idem non significarent, non conficeret Sacramentum. Si vero aliquid adderet, quod significationem non mutaret, conficeret quidem, sed gravissime peccaret.
>
> "Si celebrans non recordetur se dixisse ea quæ in Consecratione communiter dicuntur, non debet propterea turbari. Si tamen certo ei constet, se omisisse aliquid eorum quæ sunt de necessitate Sacramenti, id est, formam Consecrationis, seu partem, resumat ipsam formam, et cetera prosequatur per ordinem. Si vero valde probabiliter dubitet se aliquid essentiale omisisse, iteret formam saltem sub tacita conditione. Si autem non sunt de necessitate Sacramenti, non resumat, sed procedat ulterius."—(*De Defect.,* tit. V.)

One should pronounce each form of the consecration *simul recitative et significative;* that is to say, by reciting the words of Jesus Christ, and by applying their meaning to the matter that is present. It must be observed that, if one is voluntarily distracted at the moment of consecration, one would commit a grievous sin.[12694]

VI. THE DISPOSITION OF THE CELEBRANT

1. THE INTENTION.[12695]

> "Si quis non intendit conficere, sed delusorie aliquid agere; item si aliquæ hostiæ ex oblivione remaneant in altari, vel aliqua pars vini, vel aliqua hostia lateat, cum non intendat consecrare nisi quas videt; item si quis habeat coram sc undecim hostias, et intendat consecrare solum decem, non determinans quas decem intendit: in his casibus non consecrat, quia requiritur intentio. Secus si, putans quidem esse decem, tamen omnes voluit consecrare quas coram se habebat: nam tunc omnes erunt consccratæ: atque ideo quilibet Sacerdos talem semper intentionem habere deberet, scilicet, consecrandi eas omnes quas ante se ad consecrandum positas habet.
>
> "Si Sacerdos, putans se tenere unam hostiam, post Consecrationem invenerit fuisse duas simul junctas, in sumptione sumat simul utramque. Quod si deprehendat post sumptionem Corporis et Sanguinis, aut etiam post ablutionem, reliquias aliquas relictas consecratas, eas sumat, sive parvæ sint, sive magnæ, quia ad idem sacrificium spectant.
>
> "Si vero relicta sit Hostia integra consecrata,[12696] eam in tabernaculo cum aliis reponat; si hoc fieri nequit, seqnenti Sacerdoti ibi celebraturo, in altari supra corporale decenter opertam, sumendam una cum altera, quam est consecraturus, relinquat: vel, si neutrum horum fieri possit, in ipso calice, seu patena decenter conservet, quousque vel in tabernaculo reponatur, vel ab altero sumatur; quod si non habeat quomodo honeste conservetur, potest eam ipsemet sumere.
>
> "Si intentio non sit actualis in ipsa Consecratione propter evagationem mentis, sed virtualis, cum accedens ad altare intendat facere quod facit Ecclesia, conficitur Sacramentum, etsi curare debeat Sacerdos, ut etiam actualem intentionem adhibeat."—(*De Defect.*, tit. VII.)

In regard to the fragments of the sacred Host or of the precious blood which the celebrant finds after the ablution, he may consume them even after he has reentered the sacristy, provided he is still vested; but he should not do so if the fragments belong to another sacrifice, provided there be no danger of irreverence. If the celebrant has already taken off his vestments when he discovers similar fragments, he should put them into the tabernacle, or reserve them for another priest who is to celebrate on the same day; and if this cannot be done, he should consume them himself.

As for the Hosts found outside of the corporal, in a doubt whether they are consecrated, one should consume them after the ablution of the chalice, or, better, with the ablution.

2. THE DISPOSITION OF THE SOUL.[12697]

> "Si quis suspensus, excommunicatus, degradatus, irregularis, vel alias canonice impeditus celebret, conficit quidem Sacramentum, sed gravissime peccat, tam propter Communionem, quam indigne sumit, quam propter executionem Ordinum, quæ sibi erat interdicta.
>
> "Si quis habens copiam confessoris celebret in peccato mortali, graviter peccat.
>
> "Si quis autem in casu necessitatis non habens copiam confessoris, in peccato mortali absque contritione celebret, graviter peccat. Secus si conteratur, debet tamen, cum primum poterit, confiteri.
>
> "Si in ipsa celebratione Missæ, Sacerdos recordetur se esse in peccato mortali, conteratur cum proposito confitendi, et satisfaciendi.
>
> "Si recordetur se esse excommunicatum vel suspensum. aut locum esse interdictum, similiter conteratur cum proposito petendi absolutionem. Ante Consecrationem autem, in supradictis casibus si non timetur scandalum, debet Missam incœptam deserere."—(*De Defect.*, tit. VIII.)

When, while celebrating, a priest remembers a mortal sin, if after consecration, he should continue; but if before consecration, and especially before the Canon, he should interrupt the Mass in order to confess, provided he can do so without dishonor. If in this last case the means of confessing were wanting, it is more probable that the priest would be obliged to leave the altar without finishing the Mass. This is more probable, but not certain; for it is not certain that the Rubric, by the word *Debet*, imposes a grave precept. Besides, it may be remarked, with reason, that it is hardly possible in a similar case to avoid dishonor.

We read in the Council of Trent: *Si, necessitate urgente, Sacerdos (sibi conscius mortalis peccati), absque prævia confessione celebraverit, quamprimum confiteatur.*[12698] And Alexander VII. has condemned the two following propositions: *Mandatum Tridentini, factum Sacerdoti sacrificanti* *ex necessitate cum peccato mortali, confitendi quamprimum, est consilium, non præceptum. Illa particula* QUAMPRIMUM *intelligitur, cum Sacerdos suo tempore confitebitur.*[12699] It is therefore a formal obligation, and, according to the opinion of theologians, it should be fulfilled within three days. Such is the best interpretation of the word *quamprimum.*[12700] It is understood that an accidental cause, such as the duty of celebrating Mass on the following day, may besides render this obligation more pressing.

3. THE DISPOSITION OF THE BODY.[12701]

> "Si quis non est jejunus post mcdiam noctem, etiam post sumptionem solius aquæ, vel alterius potus, aut cibi, per modum etiam medicinæ, et in quantacumque parva quantitate, non potest communicare nec celebrare.
>
> "Si autem ante mediam noctem cibum aut potum sumpserit, etiamsi postmodum non dormierit nec sit digestus, non peccat; sed ob perturbationem mentis, ex qua devotio tollitur, consulitur aliquando abstinendum.
>
> "Si reliquiæ cibi remanentes in ore transglutiantur, non impediunt communionem, cum non transglutiantur per modum cibi, sed per modum salivæ. Idem dicendum, si lavando os, deglutiatur stilla aquas praster intentionem.
>
> "Si plures Missas in una die celebret, ut in Nativitate Domini in unaquaque Missa abluat digitos in aliquo vase mundo, et in ultima tantum percipiat purificationem.
>
> "Si præcesserit pollutio nocturna, quæ causata fuerit ex præcedenti cogitatione quæ sit peccatum mortale, vel evenerit propter nimiam crapulam, abstinendum est a communione et celebratione, nisi aliud Confessario videatur. Si dubium est an in præcedenti cogitatione fuerit peccatum mortale, consulitur abstinendum, extra tamen casum necessitatis. Si autem certum est non fuisse in illa cogitatione peccatum mortale, vel nullam fuisse cogitationem, sed evenisse ex naturali causa, aut ex diabolica illusione, potest communicare ct celebrare; nisi ex illa corporis commotione tanta evenerit perturbatio mentis, ut abstinendum videatur."—(*De Defect.* tit. IX.)

Although the precept of the Eucharistic fast is only an Ecclesiastical law, it admits of no lightness of matter; but, to violate it, three conditions are required: (1) that what we take be taken from without; (2) that we take it by way of eating or drinking; (3) that it be nourishment or drink.

When one swallows remnants of food taken the evening before and retained in the mouth,—if one does so, not inadvertently but designedly, the very probable opinion is that that is sufficient to break the fast. It is therefore prudent, when one feels such remnants coming upon the tongue, to reject it rather than to swallow it.[12702]

The drops of water that remain mixed with saliva after one has washed one's mouth,—if one swallows them designedly, also break the fast; such is the common opinion given about this matter.

The fast would be broken if one puts a piece of sugar into one’s mouth before midnight and swallows it afterwards: if one swallows water, even involuntarily, having fallen, for instance, into the river; also if it is blood that one sucks from a wounded finger; but not if the blood came from the gums.

One does not break the fast if accidentally one swallows while breathing grains of tobacco taken into the nose, or dust or rain or snow-flakes, even a gnat. One may not say as much of tobacco juice; but all agree that it is unbecoming to chew tobacco before Mass. It would be a venial sin to do so without a reason.

Finally, the fast is not broken if one swallow’s things that cannot be digested, such as hair, metal, glass, silk, wool, etc.; but this is not the case in regard to paper, straw, flax, wax, and other things that the stomach can decompose by drawing nourishment from them.

If one remembers after consecration that one is not fasting, one should finish the Mass; if before consecration, and, above all, before the Canon, one should leave the altar unless this could not be done without scandal; for in this case one should continue the Mass that is begun.[12703]

VII. ACCIDENTS.[12704]

1. PROFANATION OF THE CHURCH, AND IMMINENT DANGERS.[12705]

> “Si Sacerdote celebrante, violetur Ecclesia ante Canonem, dimittatur Missa; si post Canonem, non dimittatur. Si timeatur incursus hostium, vel alluvionis, vel ruina loci ubi celebratur, ante Consecrationem dimittatur Missa; post Consecrationem vero, Sacerdos accelerare poterit Sumptionem Sacramenti, omissis omnibus aliis.”

The church is profaned or polluted in the following cases: 1. Voluntary homicide that is criminal or injurious to the holy place; 2. Suicide that is also voluntary and criminal; 3. A wound that causes considerable effusion of blood and that cannot be excused from mortal sin. The crime must have been committed in the interior of the church, and must be known to the public. One may say Mass in a profaned church when it is necessary; for example, if there is no other church where the people can hear Mass.

It is never permitted to mutilate intentionally the holy Sacrifice even for the purpose of avoiding death; but one may sometimes do so accidentally and indirectly; as, when one is surprised by a conflagration, or by an invasion, or by some other extreme peril. In this case the priest may at once consume the consecrated Host, or carry it away with him, without consecrating the chalice; for then he does not mutilate the Sacrifice, but he is dispensed from finishing it.[12706]

2. ILLNESS WITH WHICH THE CELEBRANT MAY BE SEIZED

> “Si Sacerdos, ante Consecrationem, graviter infirmetur, vel in syncopen inciderit, aut moriatur, prætermittitur Missa; si post consecrationem Corporis tantum, ante Consecrationem Sanguinis, vel utroque consecrato id accidit, Missa per alium Sacerdotem expleatur ab eo loco ubi ille desiit, et in casu necessitatis etiam per non jejunum. Si autem non obierit, sed fuerit infirmus, adeo tamen ut possit communicare, et non adsit alia Hostia consecrata, Sacerdos qui Missam supplet, dividat Hostiam, et unam partem præbeat infirmo, aliam ipse sumat. Si autem, semiprolata forma Corporis obiit Sacerdos, quia non est consecratio, non est necesse, ut Missa per alium suppleatur. Si vero obierit semiprolata forma Sanguinis, tunc alter prosequatur Missam, et super eumdem calicem repetat integram formam, ab eo loco, *Simili modo postquam cœnatum est*—vel posset super alium Calicem præparatum integram formam proferre, et Hostiam primi Sacerdotis, et Sanguinem a se consecratum sumere, ac deinde Calicem relictum semiconsecratum.
>
> “Si quis, extra hujusmodi casus necessitatis, integra Sacramenta non sumpserit gravissime peccat.”—(*De Defect.* tit. X.)

It would be better for the celebrant who happens to become ill after the consecration, to resume and finish the Sacrifice himself, although lie is not fasting;[12707] but, if he is incapable of doing so, his place must be supplied by another priest, even though no one else could be had than a priest who is excommunicated and irregular.[12708]

3. HURTFUL THINGS THAT MAY FALL INTO THE CHALICE OR TOUCH THE HOST

> “Si musca, vel aranea, vel aliquid aliud, ceciderit in calicem ante Consecrationem, projiciat vinum in locum decentem, et aliud ponat in calice, misceat parum aquæ, offerat ut supra, et prosequatur Missam.—Si post Consecrationem ceciderit musca, aut aliquid ejusmodi, et fiat nausea Sacerdoti, extrahat eam, et lavet cum vino; finita Missa comburat, et combustio ac lotio hujusmodi in sacrarium projiciatur; si autem non fuerit ei nausea, nec ullum periculum timeat, sumat cum Sanguine.
>
> “Si aliquid venenosum ceciderit in Calicem, vel quod provocaret vomitum, Vinum consecratum reponendum est in alio calice,[12709] et aliud vinum cum aqua apponendum denuo consecrandum; et finita Missa, Sanguis repositus in panno lineo vel stuppa tamdiu servetur, donee species vini fuerint desiccatrc, et tunc stuppa comburatur, et combustio in sacrarium projiciatur.

“Si aliquid venenatum contigerit Hostiam consecratam, tunc alteram consecret, et sumat eo modo quo dictum est, et illa servetur[12710] in tabernaculo in loco separato, donec species corrumpantur, et corruptæ deinde mittantur in sacrarium.”[12711]—(*De Defect,* tit. X. 5, 6, et 7.)

4. THE HOST THAT IS BROKEN OR HAS FALLEN INTO THE CHALICE

“Si Hostia ante Consecrationem inveniatur fracta, nisi populo evidenter appareat, talis Hostia consecretur; si autem scandalum populo esse possit, alia accipiatur, et offeratur; quod si illius Hostiæ jam erat facta oblatio,eam post ablutionem sumat; quod si ante oblationem Hostia appareat confracta, accipiatur altera integra, si citra scandalum, aut longam moram fieri poterit.

“Si propter frigus, vel negligentiam, Hostia consecrata dilabatur in Calicem, propterea nihil est reiterandum; sed Sacerdos Missam prosequatur, faciendo cæremonias et signa consueta cum residua parte Hostiæ, quæ non est madefacta Sanguine, si commode potest; si vero tota fuerit madcfacta, non extrahat eam, sed omnia dicat omittendo signa, et sumat pariter Corpus et Sanguinem, signans se cum Calice, dicens—*Corpus et Sanguis Domini nostri, etc.*”—(*De Defect.* tit. X. 9, 10.)

5. PRECIOUS BLOOD FROZEN OR SPILT

“Si in hieme Sanguis congeletur in calice, involvatur Calix pannis calefactis; si id non proficeret, ponatur in ferventi aqua prope altare, dummodo in Calicem non intret, donec liquefiat.

“Si per negligentiam[12712] aliquid de Sanguine Christi ceciderit, siquidem super terram, seu super tabulam, lingua lambatur, et locus ipse radatur quantum satis est, et abrasio comburatur; cinis vero in sacrarium recondatur. Si vero super lapidem altaris ceciderit, sorbeat Sacerdos stillam, et locus bene abluatur, et ablutio in sacrarium projiciatur. Si super linteum altaris, et ad aliud linteum stilla pervenerit; si usque ad tertium: linteamina ter abluantur ubi stilla ceciderit, calice supposito, et aqua ablutionis in sacrarium projiciatur. Quod si in ipso solum corporali, aut si in vestibus ipsis sacerdotalibus ceciderit, debet similiter ablui, et ablutio in sacrarium projici. Si in substrato pedibus panno, vel tapeto, bene abluatur, ut supra.

“At si contingat totum Sanguinem post Consecrationem effundi, si quidem aliquid, vel parum remansit, illud sumatur, et de effuso reliquo Sanguine fiat, ut dictum est. Si vero nihil omnino remansit, ponat iterum vinum et aquam, et consecret ab eo loco,—*Simili modo postquam cænatum est,* facta prius tamen calicis oblatione, ut supra.”—(*De Defect.* Tit. X. 11, 12, 13.)

6. VOMITING, AND THE HOST THAT HAS FALLEN

“Si Sacerdos evomat Eucharistiam, si species integræ appareant, reverenter sumantur, nisi nausea fiat; tunc enim Species consecratæ caute separentur, et in aliquo loco sacro reponantur, donec corrumpantur, et postea in sacrarium projiciantur. Quod si species non appareant, comburatur vomitus, et cineres in sacrarium mittantur.

“Si Hostia consecrata, vel aliqua ejus particula dilabatur in terram, reverenter accipiatur, et locus ubi cecidit, mundetur, et aliquantulum abradatur, et pulvis seu abrasio hujusmodi in sacrarium immittatur. Si ceciderit extra Corporale in mappam, seu alio quovis modo in aliquod linteum,

> mappa vel linteum hujusmodi diligenter lavetur, et lotio ipsa in sacrarium effundatur."—(*De Defect,* tit. X. 15.)

If, while one is distributing holy Communion, a Host happens to fall, after having picked it up, one should first cover the place with a clean linen cloth, and wash the place afterwards, as is prescribed by the Rubric, which, however, does not bind one *Sub gravi.* Usually one may even omit to wash the garment or the beard in order not to inconvenience the people. If the Host falls into the bosom of a woman, the priest should not take it from her himself; the woman should take it away with her own hand and replace it in the ciborium.[12713]

VIII. THE PLACE AND THE TIME IN WHICH ONE MAY CELEBRATE MASS

1. THE PLACE.[12714]

> "Possunt etiam defectus occurrere in ministerio ipso, si aliquid ex requisitis ad illud desit, ut si celebretur in loco non sacro, vel non deputato ab Episcopo."—(*De Defect,* tit. X. 16.)

Generally, it is permitted to celebrate Mass only in churches and chapels that are consecrated or blessed, and that are not profaned, execrated, or interdicted.

The exceptions to this rule are the following:—1. In a case of necessity, as when the church is destroyed, inundated, threatened with ruin, or too Small for the crowd, one may celebrate Mass in a decent place, in order that the people may not be deprived of the Mass on days of precept. One should, however, in such cases ask the permission of the Ordinary, if this is possible.

2. In the camp, for the army.

3. In the harbor, on the arrival of a ship, for those that cannot go far away.

4. On the vessel at sea, but only by a Papal indult, granted with conditions and with prescribed precautions; namely, that the weather be fair and the sea tranquil; that the vessel be far away from the shore, and that there be at the side of the celebrant a second priest or a deacon who watches over the chalice.

One may say Mass in the churches or chapels of religious Communities, seminaries, colleges, hospitals, public prisons, and, generally, in all the chapels where divine worship is held, with the authorization of the bishop.

A privilege from the Pope is needed to authorize the celebration of Mass in a domestic oratory. There are, however, cases in which, for a grave and passing cause, the Ordinary may permit the saying of Mass in the house of one of the faithful.

2. THE TIME.[12715]

> “Missa privata, post Matutinum et Laudes, quacumque hora ab aurora usque ad meridiem dici potest.”—(*Rub. gen.* tit. XV. n. 1.)
>
> “Tempus debitum celebrandi, quod est ab aurora usque ad meridiem communiter.”—(*De Defect,* tit. X. n. 1.)

The aurora is of more or less extent, according to the degree of latitude and the season. Generally, in the United States it varies between one and two hours before the rising of the sun. Without a special privilege, it is not allowed to say Mass *ante auroram* or *post meridiem.* These two points of time, the aurora and midday, must be understood not *mathematically* but *morally,* so that it is permitted to finish Mass at the beginning of the aurora and to begin it a little before mid-day. Hence, Mass may be said nearly two hours before sunrise. The privilege is usually granted by the bishops to celebrate Mass *per unam horam ante auroram et aliam post meridiem.*

Such is the ordinary rule; but we may go beyond these limits in certain cases of necessity; for example, in order to give the Viaticum to the dying, it is permitted to say Mass at midnight; on account of a journey, we may say it an hour before the aurora or an hour after mid-day. Moreover, the Ordinary, whether a Bishop in his diocese or a Superior in a religious Order, has the faculty of dispensing in this respect in particular cases, for any reasonable cause.

One would commit a grave sin if, without a reasonable motive, one would celebrate Mass an hour before the aurora or an hour after mid-day.[12716]

IX. MASS WHEN CELEBRATED IN ALIENA ECCLESIA.[12717]

SUMMARY

By an *Aliena Ecclesia* is meant a church of seculars, or regulars, or of nuns who say the Office in choir, either in the diocese of the celebrant or out of it, in which a different Office, or, consequently, a different Mass, from that of a celebrant is prescribed.

A private oratory, or the chapel of nuns who do not celebrate the Office in choir, or the chapel of a seminary, is not an *Aliena Ecclesia;* and consequently the rules given below do not apply to them.

GENERAL PRINCIPLE.—THE MASS IS CONFORMABLE TO THE OFFICE OF THE CELEBRANT

RULES FOR MASS IN ALIENA ECCLESIA

I. When the Celebrant’s Office is a Duplex, and the Office of the Aliena Ecclesia also is Duplex, the Celebrant—

(a) Should say his own Mass if his color is the same as that of the church;

(b) Should say the Mass of the church if his color is different.

II. When the Celebrant’s Office is a Duplex, and that of the *Aliena Ecclesia* a Semiduplex or Simplex, the Celebrant should say his own Mass, no matter whether his color is the same as that of the church or not.

III. When the Celebrant’s Office is a Semiduplex or Simplex, and the Office of the church a Duplex, the Celebrant—

(*a*) Will say his own Mass if his color is the same as that of the church;

(*b*) But the Mass of the church if the color is different.

IV. When the Celebrant’s Office is a Semiduplex or Simplex, that of the church a Semiduplex or Simplex, the celebrant will say his own Mass, or Requiem Mass, or Votive Mass, as he would in his own church.

NOTANDA

In the following cases the Mass of the *Aliena Ecclesia* must always be said. Hence the foregoing Rules do not apply to them:

1. When the *Aliena Ecclesia* is celebrating a Feast *cum solemnitate et concursu populi.*

2. When the Celebrant says the Parochial Mass, as substitute for the Parish Priest, or the Community Mass in a convent of nuns bound to the choral recitation of the Office.

3. When he celebrates a High Mass or Missa Cantata.

4. When the Celebrant’s Office is of a *Beatus* not included in the calendar of the *Aliena Ecclesia.*

5. When he celebrates in the church of Regulars who have the privilege permitting all priests celebrating there to conform to their calendar.

X. THE SERVER OF MASS.[12718]

“Sacerdos. . . . accedit ad altare, ministro cum Missali et aliis ad celebrandum necessariis (nisi ante fuerint præparata) præcedente, superpelliceo induto.—(*Rit. celebr.* tit. II. n. 1.)

“Defectus. . . . , si non adsit clericus vel alius deserviens in Missa, vel adsit qui deservire non debet, ut mulier.”—(*De Defect,* tit. X. n. 1.)

It is certain that, without a special faculty usually granted by the bishops of this country, the priest would commit a mortal sin if he celebrated Mass without a server. However, it is permitted to do so in the case of necessity in order to administer the Viaticum; and then the priest himself serves. Many authors admit the same exception in order that the people may hear Mass on a day of precept.

When the Mass has begun, and especially after the Offertory, if the server absents himself and delays to come back, it is probable that the celebrant may continue without him.

It is also probable that the celebrant should not be scrupulous if the server pronounces the words badly, nor, in wishing to correct his faults, should he trouble himself or his assistants; however, he should supply what the server omits. There need be no such great necessity to say Mass with a server who cannot answer, as to say Mass without a server.

It would be a mortal sin to admit a woman to serve Mass; in a case of necessity, it would be better to celebrate without a server. When necessary, however, a woman, especially if she is a religious, may from her place answer the celebrant, but she cannot approach the altar to offer the cruets, etc.

It is proper, according to the Rubric, that the functions of the server be performed by a cleric, or one that has received at least the tonsure and wears the clerical dress; but a layman can supply his place. However, it is not permitted to the latter to touch the sacred vessels, nor the corporal, under pain of venial sin, unless there is a reasonable motive and it can be done with respect and without scandal. A cleric who has received the tonsure may touch the sacred vessels; and the same privilege is also granted to the religious of both sexes when they exercise the duties of sacristan.

THE HONORARIUM OF MASSES, OR THE ABUSES TO WHICH IT GIVES RISE.[12719]

REPLY TO AN ANONYMOUS BOOK ENTITLED “DISSERTATION ON THE HONORARIUM OF MASSES.”

RECENTLY, during the year 1768, there was republished at Naples an anonymous book entitled “Dissertation on the Honorarium of Masses.”[12720] The entire aim of the author is to exhibit the great disorders, the sins of simony, the sacrileges, and the scandals that arise from the custom of priests receiving *honoraria,* or stipends, from the faithful, with the obligation of applying Masses specially to the intention of the givers.

1. ANCIENT CUSTOM OF PUBLIC MASSES WITH OFFERINGS, AND ORIGIN OF PAID MASSES

It is certain that, during the first ages of the Church, there was nothing to fear from the abuses that were subsequently introduced with the custom of *honoraria;* for at that time a single priest, either the bishop or another, celebrated the Mass, during which all the faithful brought their offerings of bread and wine, with other eatables.[12721] Afterwards they also began to offer money. These offerings were put into little boxes and then presented; after this the minister of the celebrant-namely, the deacon in the Greek Church and the subdeacon in the Latin Church—made known to him the persons who had offered the gifts, that he might name them at the altar, or that he might recommend their wants to God. The Lord, according to his divine will and according to the disposition of these persons, dispensed to them his graces by virtue of the holy Sacrifice, each one participating in it as much as he was able conformably to his merit and to the divine judgments.

But, about the eighth century there began to be introduced the “manual” or “paid” Masses, as our author calls them; that is to say, it was agreed that the priest, by receiving a certain remuneration, pledged himself that he would apply the medium or special[12722] fruit of such a Mass to the profit or according to the intention of him who paid the money.

This new custom, little by little, supplanted the custom of making offerings. The usage of saying Mass specially for those that gave a contribution being always on the increase, it happened that in the twelfth century the making of offerings entirely ceased, since it was no longer the custom of celebrating those Masses the fruit of which might be applied in common.[12723]

2. ABUSES OCCASIONED BY THE ADMISSION OF HONORARIA, AND THE MEANS EMPLOYED TO REMEDY THEM

It cannot be denied that this change gave rise to different abuses, either on the part of the priests or on the part of those that gave contributions for Masses. Some priests, prompted by cupidity, endeavored to gain from this as much as they could. Some of them were seen to say Mass several times a day, not out of devotion, not through necessity, but only through avarice. Others obliged their penitents and the sick whom they assisted to give them or to bequeath them contributions for Masses. There were some who, as Cardinal Bona[12724] relates, went so far as to exact several contributions for the same Mass. They then said before the Offertory several Introits, several prayers, as many Epistles and Gospels, etc.; this was called a two-faced, a three-faced Mass—*Missa bifaciata, trifaciata.*[12725] The divine Sacrifice was thus made a shameful traffic; as the Council of Toledo calls it: “Super hoc, ac si vellent vendere rem profanam, impudenter mercantur.”[12726]

This evil was the cause of much solicitude to the Church, either in order to hinder the avarice of priests and seculars or in order to discharge the intention of those that gave the *honoraria*. Ilence the Holy See, always watching with zeal and prudence over the extirpation of the abuses that crept into sacred things, did not cease to find out means to do away with those abuses which, in consequence of false opinions held by certain minds, had insinuated themselves into this matter of paid Masses.

Under Pope Urban VIII., from 1623 to 1644, the Congregation of the Council enacted, by several decrees, that the priest who has received from anyone a contribution to celebrate Mass is obliged to apply the Mass to this person, even though the contribution would be less than the tax established in the diocese. Moreover, it was ordained that the priest who receives from several persons various small sums to say Masses is obliged to celebrate as many of them as the times the established tax is contained in the sum total. It was also prescribed that he who receives a large contribution is obliged to give it entirely to the celebrant, without retaining any part of it, even when the celebrant is satisfied with what is remitted to him;[12727] and this was confirmed by Benedict XIV., in his Bull *Quanta cura*, in which he imposed excommunication upon laymen, and suspension upon ecclesiastics, who would retain a part of the contribution given.

In the decrees of Pope Urban VIII., it was also enacted that the administrators of churches cannot retain any part of the contributions for Masses in order to cover the expenses of the celebration, unless the churches, being quite poor, had not the means to provide for these expenses.[12728] Furthermore, the Congregation of the Council decreed, July 6, 1726, that the arch-priests are not obliged to furnish the wine, the candles, and the hosts to the ecclesiastics that say Mass in their churches, even though the latter must celebrate Mass there so as to fulfil the duties of chaplains. It is also decided at the same time that, in regard to adventitious[12729] Masses, the Rectors are not obliged to furnish these articles except to those priests that come to celebrate in their churches with their consent.[12730]

Under Pope Alexander VII., December 13, 1659, the Sacred Congregation forbade the receiving for one Mass of two contributions, one of which for the application of the satisfactory fruit, and the other for the impetratory fruit. The same Pope, September 7, 1665, through the Congregation of the Holy Office, condemned among others this proposition: “Duplicatum stipendium potest Sacerdos pro eadem Missa licite accipere, applicando petenti partem etiam specialissimam fructus ipsimet celebranti correspondentem.” Also the following: “Non est contra justitiam, pro pluribus sacrificiis stipendium accipere, et sacrificium unum offerre; neque etiam est contra fidelitatem, etiamsi promittam, juramento pro—missione etiam firmata, danti stipendium, quod pro nullo alio offeram.”

Under Pope Innocent XI., from 1676 to 1689, the Sacred Congregation forbade chaplains to celebrate Mass on the days of a permitted vacancy, for others than the founders. Besides, the chaplains that are obliged to celebrate Mass without having the obligation of satisfying through themselves, received the prohibition of abstaining at times from celebrating and of not satisfying their obligation.

As the Council of Trent[12731] forbids the receiving of anything for the first Mass of a newly ordained priest, the question has been discussed whether it is permitted him to receivc some offering during this Mass. Gregory XIII., in 1573: “Audita relatione Congregations Concilii, decrevit licere se vertere in medio altaris ad populum, et accipere oblationes, non autem circumire ecclesiam.

By the decrees of Urban VIII., it is also established that, when a testator has arranged to have a certain number of Masses without determining the contribution for them “esse ab Episcopo præscribendam eleemosynam congruam, quæ respondeat oneribus Missarum celebrandarum, secundum morem civitatis vel provinciæ.”

The wish was expressed of forbidding laymen to give for the Mass a contribution above the tax fixed by the bishop, and priests to receive it, even when it is offered spontaneously. Hence a doubt arose, which was thus formulated: “An possit Episcopus prohibere sub pœna censurarum laicis, ne pinguius stipendium taxa solvant Sacerdotibus, tam sæcularibus quam regularibus, Missam celebrantibus, et quod iidem Sacerdotes illud acceptare non possint, etiam a sponte dantibus?” The Congregation of the Council answered, January 16, 1649: “Prohiberi non posse.”—The following question was then asked: “An Episcopus statuere possit eleemosynam manualem unius integri julii[12732] pro qualibet Missa, imponendo pœnam celebrantibus pro minori quantitate?” To this the answer was given: “Affirmative quoad eleemosynam manualem.”[12733]

It was, moreover, asked whether he that received a contribution only to celebrate Mass can receive a second contribution to apply the fruit of it. Passerinus holds the affirmative opinion, and it is also the opinion of the author of the “Instructions for New Confessors,” printed at Rome. Resting on this opinion Gavantus cites the following resolution of the Congregation of the Council, dated July 13, 1630: “Quando, in fundatione beneficii seu capellæ, expresse cautum est non teneri celebrantem ad applicationem Sacrificii, eo casu poterit celebrans accipere novum stipendium.”[12734]

Nevertheless, Father Diana says that the Sacred Congregation, in the supposed case, has always judged that it is never permitted to priests to receive a double contribution; and in favor of this opinion another answer of the same authority is produced. This was the question: “An Sacerdotes qui nulla alia obligatione in confraternitatibus vel monasteriis monialium celebrant, quam pro ornatu ecclesiæ, vel ut confratres vel moniales satisfaciant præcepto audiendi Missam, possint, ultra stipendium quod recipiunt a confraternitate vel monialibus, aliud recipere?” To this the Congregation of the Council gave answer, July 9 and February 6, 1627: “Non posse.”

Cardinal Lambertini (Benedict XIV.) says, on this subject: “Attamen experientia compertum habemus, in errorem non semel eos adduci, qui Sacrarum Congregationum sententias usurpant; eos pariter plane novimus, qui in hoc negotio periti satis existimari debent. Quamobrem, cum tot annis, quibus Congregationis Concilii secretarium egimus, nulla usquam nobis occurrerit sententia ex iis quæ ab utraque parte feruntur, ut pateat an Sacerdoti, ad celebrandum unice addicto, liceat duplex stipendium percipere, pro celebratione atque applicatione, hanc quæstionem non diremptam relinquemus, donec magis tuta monumenta deprehendantur.” Then he adds: “Neque enim res ita facilis ad judicandum videri potest; nam, pro Sacrificii applicatione obtinenda, satis est ut ipsius celebratio indicatur. Si quis autem se applicationis onere prorsus immunem esse contendat, apertissime docere debet, a pio testatore Missæ celebrationem unice requiri, et Sacerdotis arbitrio permitti ut fructum Sacrificii, cui libuerit attribuat.” He moreover says that this is conformable to the decision rendered March 18, 1668, by the Congregation, which he assures us has always followed the same opinion in like cases; namely, a chaplaincy has been founded by testament with the charge of celebrating Mass without any declaration in whose favor the Mass was to be applied. Having been consulted as to what was to be done, the Congregation answered: “Applicandum esse Sacrificium pro anima testatoris.”

Among the abuses that had to be remedied, the greatest that ever prevailed (would to God it did not exist at the present day!) was the habit that certain priests had of accumulating Mass stipends without ever saying the Masses. Hence, by the decrees of Urban VIII. it was forbidden to receive new stipends before having discharged those that had been received before. Afterwards, by an interpretation of this decree it was permitted to receive new stipends “dummodo infra modicum tempus posset omnibus satisfied;” and, finally, July 17, 1655, the Congregation of the Council added this other explanation: “Modicum tempus intelligi infra mensem.”[12735].[12736]

3. VARIOUS MEANS DEVISED TO ABOLISH THE HONORARIUM, AND THE REMEDY PROPOSED BY THE ANONYMOUS AUTHOR

Such are the measures adopted to correct the abuses that have arisen on account of the admission of *honoraria;* but this did not satisfy the zeal of our anonymous author, and he set to work to find out other means.

He at first exposes the project of Peter Cantor,[12737] according to whom we should diminish the number of churches and priests so that there would be in every place only the absolutely necessary number of priests. But I do not know how this could be consistent with piety.

He then gives the idea of John Gerson, who wished that all the priests should live by following some profession or honest trade, like St. Paul, without exacting any contribution for the Masses that they celebrate. Our anonymous author does not himself approve of this means. This is what he says: “It seems to me that this way is not very practicable; for, after all, all the priests have not the science and the lights, much less the zeal, of St. Paul; all cannot at the same time gain a living by the work of their hands and discharge the duties of an office that demands their whole attention. Application, study, and prayer are absolutely necessary for this formidable employment; whoever desires to fulfil its duties as he should will have no time to spare. All traffic is forbidden to ecclesiastics by the holy Canons; St. Paul prohibited secular occupations as opposed to the recollection, the gravity, and the sanctity of their state: ‘Nemo, militans Deo, implicat se negotiis sæcularibus, ut ei placeat, cui se probavit.’”[12738] Distraction and dissipation are obstacles to study and to prayer, both public and private. Add to all this the want of the means to perfect themselves and to be successful, the difficulty of finding a market for the work that they have done, and, finally, the little profit that they would make thereby. If the artisans of a village, and sometimes even those of cities, find it very difficult to derive from their work a simple and frugal living, what can be gained by a vicar or a country curate with his lathe, his brush, his spade, and the other tools of his trade? It is therefore impossible for a man occupied with the care of instructing himself and of instructing others to contribute by his work to his own support. At most, this could be done by certain priests who are isolated and without occupation, or certain religious excluded from the discharge of priestly functions and but little engaged in study."

Our author also indicates other different means devised by others, but even they do not satisfy him. He therefore arrives at this conclusion, that, in order to put an end to so many disorders, sacrileges, and abuses, the true and only means is to abolish "manual," or paid, Masses, as they call them. Consequently he offers the advice to resume the custom of olden times, when the bishop or one of the priests said Mass, and those that were present made their offerings, which served for the support of the priests, the churches, and the poor.

4. EXAMINATION OF THE AUTHOR'S VIEWS; FIRST, AS TO PRIVATE MASSES

We have now to examine whether the means proposed by the author would be useful or hurtful to the welfare of the faithful.

It is certain that private Masses are permitted, whatever may be said by the innovators of the sixteenth century who reject them according to their principle, namely, that in Mass not a true sacrifice is offered, because, according to them, it was instituted only in order that the faithful might receive Communion in the common Mass. Hence, they conclude that all the private Masses have been introduced only for their own private gains. But this subject has been treated against them at length by very grave authors, such as Cochleus, Cardinal Bellarmine,[12739] Estius,[12740] Cardinal Bona,[12741] Sylvius,[12742] and Father Berti.[12743]

And, in fact, nothing authorizes any one to say that private Masses are unlawful; for there was never a law of the Church ordaining that Mass should be celebrated only in public. On the contrary, ecclesiastical history shows us that many saints, even in the first ages, had the custom of celebrating private Masses. The Acts of Pope St. Marcellus inform us that he celebrated Mass in the house of St. Lucina. St. Gregory of Nazianzen[12744] relates that St. Gregory, Bishop of Nazianzen, and his father privately celebrated Mass in his room. St. Ambrose also said Mass in a house in Rome, beyond the Tiber, as is related by Paulinus of Milan.[12745] Uranius[12746] attests that St. Paulinus of Nola celebrated Mass, a few hours before his death, on an altar prepared before his bed. Philostorgius[12747] relates that St. Lucian, martyr, covered with wounds, and dying, having no altar, said Mass on his own breast. We read in St. Gregory the Great,[12748] that Cassius of Narni celebrated Mass every day, although he had no one present at it. Dom Mabillon[12749] proves that St. Goar, anchorite, St. Germer, and Licinius, Bishop of Angers, as well as many others in the sixth and seventh centuries celebrated Mass every day; and thus there were said at that time many private Masses.

Cardinal Bona,[12750] in like manner, shows that even in olden times a great number of Masses was celebrated every day. In the Justinian Code[12751] we read that, under the Emperors Honorius and Theodosius junior, the Church of Constantinople counted nine hundred and fifty priests who were called *Decani*. Moreover, at the beginning of the Church it was customary to ordain other priests besides curates. Now, these priests would have been useless if it had been obligatory to say only one public Mass which was celebrated only by the curates. We must add what we read in Allacci,[12752] namely, that the Greeks, as well as the Latins, often celebrated Mass in private, without there being any one to receive Communion during its celebration.

The innovators object that Jesus Christ, after having celebrated the Last Supper, said: *Hoc facite in meam commemorationem.* This means, according to them, that the priests should celebrate as Jesus Christ did, by distributing Communion. We reply to them that the words *Hoc facite* have reference to the substance, and that the substance of the Mass consists only in offering the Sacrifice, in not refusing Communion to him who asks for it, provided he be not unworthy.

They object, besides, that the Apostle calls the Mass *Participatio Corporis Domini,—Dominicam cœnam manducare.*[12753] But all that we may infer from these texts is that it is not forbidden to refuse the Sacrament of the Altar to any one that desires to participate in it. Moreover, we know that even when no one communicates at Mass the priest always uses these words: *Ut quotquot ex hac altaris participatione,* etc.; for it is sufficient that several participate in it, if not really, at least spiritually; whence we also draw this conclusion, that, by virtue of the general fruit in which all the faithful in the state of grace participate, every Mass is a public sacrifice.

Here is what the Emperor Charles V. and the other Catholic princes have said on the subject of the article of the Confession of Augsburg, in which private Masses were interdicted: *Hac enim abrogatione Missarum, cultus Dei minuitur, Sanctis subtrahitur honor, ultima voluntas defunctorum corruit, debitis defuncti spoliantur suffragiis et vivorum devotio aufertur aut frigescit.*[12754]

5. THE USE OF UNLEAVENED AND OF LEAVENED BREAD

While speaking of “paid” Masses,—that is to say, Masses that are applied, not gratuitously, but in consideration of stipends given,—the anonymous author says that during eleven centuries they were not in use in the Church, because only Masses with offerings were celebrated. At the same time, he assures us, as a certain thing, that the celebration of the Mass with unleavened bread began only about the ninth century, and that before this epoch Mass had always been celebrated with leavened bread.

I find, however, that many trustworthy authors are actuated by strong arguments to regard it as probable that during the first six centuries Mass was said, without distinction, either with unleavened or with leavened bread; and even Juvenin expressly says: 1. *Per sex priora sæcula, Latinos fermentatum et azymum indifferenter consecrasse.* 2. *Circa septimum, aliquas ecclesias occidentales adhibere cœpisse solum azymum.* 3. *Illarum ecclesiarum usum alias occidentales, ante nonum sæculum, ubique amplexas fuisse.*[12755]

We read, in Tournely,[12756] that St. Thomas, Alexander of Hales, and other ancient scholastics were of opinion that in the first ages the Greek and the Latin Church always celebrated Mass with unleavened bread. This is what the heretic Elbion himself did, wishing to unite the observances of the Old Law with those of the New Law. Tournely says that formerly there were other opinions that have not been sustained in the schools. He adds that at the present time there are three celebrated opinions on this subject, namely:

The tirst opinion is that of James Sirmond. He says that the Latin Church employed leavened bread during more than eight centuries, but that between 887 and 1054 she began to use unleavened bread.

The second opinion is that of Mabillon and of Lupus, who say that since the time of the apostles the Latin Church has always used unleavened bread. The same opinion is held by Cardinal Humbert, Abbot Rupert, James of Vitrai, Innocent III., and other authors.

The third opinion is that of Cardinal Bona. According to him, the Greeks always employed leavened bread, but the Latins in the first ages admitted now one, now the other, according to the circumstances of times and places. It was not before the tenth century that the use of unleavened bread became common in the Latin Church.

From all these authorities, joined to other documents, Tournely concludes that one may probably say that in the first ages the Greeks also used unleavened bread, according to the opinion of St. Thomas; and that the Latins till the ninth century employed, indifferently, unleavened and leavened bread. Hence, from the various opinions of so many learned authors it follows that the quoted opinions on this so much discussed question are all uncertain.

6. THE ORIGIN OF HONORARIA.[12757]

As to the origin of Masses said on account of stipends paid, I find that this custom dates from several centuries before the eleventh. Cardinal Bona[12758] writes that, from the time of Peter Damian, "paid" Masses were begun to be said, the faithful believing that by having Mass said specially for themselves they would derive a particular advantage; and then the custom of making offerings at the common Masses was discontinued. We also know, from history, that in the middle of the eighth century St. Chrodegang, Bishop of Metz, who is regarded as the restorer of the common life among clerics, permitted his priests to receive and to employ, each one for himself, what was offered to him for his own Mass. Mabillon[12759] says that this custom became general about the twelfth century. Moreover, we read, in Thomassinus, that, from the time of Pepin and Charlemagne, Masses were said for stipends: "Pipini et Caroli Magni ævo, jam cœperant fideles singuli suam privatim presbytero cuipiam stipem erogare, ut ejus Sacrificii exuberantem fructum in se derivarent, in proximos, in amicos, vitæ compotes adhuc vel defunctos."[12760] Besides, Cardinal Lambertini[12761] quotes Father Francis Berlendi, a Theatine, who, in his learned dissertation on the offerings at the altar, asserts that the use of these *honoraria* reaches farther back than the eighth century.

7. THE VALUE AND APPLICATION OF THE FRUIT OF THE MASS

The anonymous author says: “It is temerity to affirm that a Mass said for one person cannot also be applied and be profitable to all.” His authority for this statement is Gerson,[12762] whose opinion he gives in the following words: “Gerson does not hesitate to assure us that a church that is accustomed to satisfy by a single Mass for several anniversaries may continue without needing the consent of those that have founded them.” As far as I am concerned, I do not understand how this doctrine of Gerson can be approved by others; nor do I understand in what the “temerity” consists, of him who says that the Mass applied to any one in particular is more profitable to him than to others.

The anonynxous author speaks according to the opinion that fruit of the Mass is of an infinite value; yet it is the opinion that is held by Cajetan,[12763] Melchior Canus,[12764] and others. Nevertheless, the contrary opinion is more common: it is that of St. Thomas,[12765] of St. Bonaventure,[12766] of Scotus,[12767] of Suarez,[12768] of Dominic Sotus.[12769] The same doctrine is taught by Bellarmine,[12770] Gabriel,[12771] Durandus,[12772] Major,[12773] and other theologians. The latter say that the *value* of the Sacrifice that has reference to the Victim offered is one thing, and another thing is the *effect* of the Sacrifice; which effect belongs, not to the sufficiency of the Sacrifice, but to the efficacy that Jesus Christ has wished to give to it by limiting it according to his own will. This is what Father Natalis Alexander seems to hold for certain, since he expressly says, in speaking of the holy Sacrifice: “Non æque prodest singulis, ac si pro uno solum offerretur. Virtus enim illius, secundum hanc rationem spectata, finita est; quod autem est finitum, si dividatur inter plures, non æque prodest singulis, ac si uni tantum applicaretur.”[12774] Cardinal Bona says that the common opinion is that the *fructus medius*, or special fruit, of which we speak, is not extensively infinite: “De hoc fructu medio, communis sententia est non esse infinitum extensive.”[12775]

Dominic Sotus, speaking of the contrary opinion, writes that he has always regarded it not only as false, but also as opposed to the very ancient practice of the Church: “Semper sum arbitratus, non solum falsam esse, verum antiquissimo Ecclesiæ usui contrariam.”[12776] We read the same thing in Du Hamel, who says of the Mass: “Vim habet bona impetrandi, pro quibus offertur;” and then: “Id probat perpetuus Ecclesiæ usus.”[12777] He adds that, although the Mass is of an infinite value in view of the dignity of the Victim offered, yet our Lord has wished that the effect of it should be finite, according to his own will; and this for several reasons, but especially for this: “Ut, per reiteratas oblationes, frequentius recoleremus memoriam mortis quam pro nobis passus est in cruce.” Tournely expresses the same thought in these terms: “Studium, laborem, ac vigilantiam nostram, hac ratione Deus excitare voluit, nempe, ut, pro mensura nostræ pietatis ac religionis, majorem vel minorem Sacrificii fructum perciperemus.” In support of what he says, he quotes the doctrine of St. Thomas: “Quamvis hæc oblatio, ex sui quantitate, sufficiat ad satisfaciendum pro omni pœna, tamen fit satisfactoria illis pro quibus offertur, vel etiam offerentibus, secundum quantitatem suæ devotionis, et non pro tota pœna.”[12778]

It is useless to say that the Sacrifice of the Mass is the same as that of the Cross, from which it differs only in the manner in which it is offered, as the Council of Trent teaches; hence, both being of an infinite value, a single Mass produces as much good as ten. We answer that the Sacrifice of the Cross had for its object to satisfy for the sins of men, and that this satisfaction, having been accomplished, it is not necessary to repeat it; but the Sacrifice of the Mass has for its object, not to bring about this satisfaction, but to apply the Sacrifice of the Cross; that is, to apply its fruit which we receive every time we renew the Sacrifice.[12779]

8. THE MASSES SPECIALLY APPLIED, FOR WHICH STIPENDS ARE GIVEN

It cannot be called in question that the custom of applying Masses to those that have them celebrated in order that they may profit by them in a special manner is approved by the Church, according to Cardinal Lambertini,[12780] who says: “Stipendium, quod, ex communi Ecclesiæ disciplina, Sacerdotibus traditur pro comparando fructu medio Sacrificii.” It is for this reason that in the Missal there are found votive Masses for certain persons in particular, such as for a bishop, for a sick person, for a person deceased. The Council of Constance condemned, among others, this proposition of Wycliffe: “Speciales orationes, applicatæ uni personæ per prælatos vel religiosos, non plus prosunt eidem, quam generales, cæteris paribus.”[12781] Moreover, the Council of Trent[12782] ordains that, in reducing the number of Masses, there remains the obligation of always making a special *memento* for old benefactors; hence, according to the Council, this *memento* is of greater profit to the benefactors than a general application.

The anonymous author says that the Eucharist, belonging to charity, and containing in itself the object of charity, which is Jesus Christ, the suffrages offered through charity in Mass are as profitable to all as to one; and to prove this he thus quotes St. Thomas: “Si valor suffragiorum consideretur secundum quod valent ex virtute charitatis unientis membra Ecclesiæ, suffragia pro multis facta tantum singulis prosunt, ac si pro uno tantum fierent.”[12783] Now, he himself adds, in the same place, that the holy Doctor afterwards writes that this kind of satisfaction offered for the dead, with the intention of helping some of them more than others, because of such an intention profits more those for whom it is offered than others; and he quotes the following words of St. Thomas: “Tunc magis valet suffragium alicui, quod pro eo singulariter fit, quam quod fit pro eo communiter et multis aliis.” But this reasoning of the angelic Doctor does not please our author; he claims that it will always be difficult, not to say impossible, to determine what amount of fruit may be derived by the individual. And yet St. Thomas says: “Tunc magis valet suffragium alicui, quod pro eo singulariter fit, quam quod fit pro eo communiter et multis aliis.” At least, St. Thomas having written this, it cannot be looked upon as “temerity,” as our author calls it, to say that a Mass applied to any one in particular does not equall profit others.

We must add what has been said on this point at the Council of Lambeth, namely: “Absit enim ne a quoquam catholico credatur, tantum intentione prodesse Missam unam devote celebratam mille hominibus, pro quibus forsan dicitur, quantum si mille Missæ pro eis devotione simili canerentur.”[12784] This is what I read in the anonymous author himself; and he answers that this is a metaphysical distinction that he does not find in other Councils. But if he does not find this distinction, one must not conclude that it is false. If he does not find it expressed, he will find it at least indicated: certainly he will not find any Council that says the contrary, namely, that a single Mass, applied to any one, is worth to him as much as a thousand; for this is offensive to the common sense of the faithful.

The following is the conclusion that Father Collet, the continuator of Tournely, speaking of the *honorarium* of Masses, draws from all that has been said on the subject: “Citra summam temeritatem, aut quid temeritate pejus, culpari non potest, quod tota per orbem frequentat Ecclesia.” He adds that the faculty of Paris, in 1521, condemned six propositions that were directed against Mass stipends.

Cardinal Lambertini[12785] also says that it is temerity to condemn the practice of giving stipends for Masses. This is what he says: “Satis erit innuere receptam ab universa Ecclesia consuetudinem ut pro Sacro dentur et accipiantur stipendia, cum ex altari vitæ sustentationem merito desumere minister altaris debeat; ideoque non sine imprudentia mos ejusmodi damnari potest.” Yet this is what our anonymous author seems to wish to condemn. He says that the text of St. Paul “Qui altari deserviunt, cum altari participant”[12786] should not be understood of stipends given for Masses to be said for individuals. But it is thus that Gerson understands it; for he says: “Sufficere debet, ad consensum hujus veritatis, usus totius communis Ecclesiæ qui sic habet et recipit; cui si quis detrahit, imprudenter se decipit. Nihil æquius secundum legem esse deducit Apostolus, quam, qui altari deservit, de altari vivat.”[12787] The same is taught by St. Thomas, as we shall see further on, and by all theologians.

9. THE CONTRACTS MADE IN REGARD TO THE HONORARIUM

It is not true that all the contracts that are made in regard to Mass stipends are illicit, simoniacal, or shameful, as is said by our anonymous author. As a proof of what he advances, he quotes the following text of the Council of Trent: “Quod ad avaritiam pertinet, cujusvis generis mercedum conditiones, pacta, et quidquid pro Missis novis celebrandis datur, necnon importunas atque illiberales eleemosynarum exactiones potius quam postulationes, aliaque hujusmodi, quæ a simoniaca labe, vel certe a turpi quæstu, non longe absunt, omnino pro hibeant (Episcopi).”[12788] He thence concludes that all the Mass stipends about which a contract is made are simoniacal or tainted with filthy lucre. We must, however, carefully consider the words that are quoted. The Council at first says: “Quod ad avaritiam pertinet, cujusvis generis mercedum conditiones, pacta . . .” The Council wishes, therefore, that one should prohibit all conditions and contracts that are related to *avarice* Now, avarice is a sin against justice. We distinguish a covetous man from one that is avaricious: the covetous man is one that always desires to amass riches; the avaricious is one that wishes to take what does not belong to him;—hence all contracts and all conditions that relate to avarice, that are unjust, are forbidden to us. As to the words, “Et quidquid pro Missis novis celebrandis datur.” To understand this passage, we must know that it was doubted whether a newly-ordained priest could receive offerings for his first Mass; the Sacred Congregation decided, as we have seen above,[12789] that it could be done, but without going about in the church to collect the offerings. The Council finally says: “Necnon importunas atque illiberales eleemosynarum exactiones potius quam postulationes, aliaque hujusmodi, quæ a simoniaca labe vel a turpi quæstu non longe absunt.” Simoniacal or shameful are therefore only those sums of money that are obtained through importunate means, but not those that are given freely and spontaneously.

Let us note the following words of Cardinal Lambertini [Benedict XIV.]: “Every priest should have before his mind this maxim that the *honorarium* of the Mass is not the price of the consecration of the Eucharist, but a means of subsistence conformably to the doctrine of St. Thomas.” This is what St. Thomas teaches: “Dispensantur autem Sacramenta per Ecclesiæ ministros, quos oportet a populo sustentari, secundum illud: ‘Nescitis quoniam, qui in sacrario operantur, quæ de sacrario sunt, edunt; et qui altari deserviunt, cum altari participant?’[12790] Sic ergo dicendum est quod, accipere pecuniam pro spirituali Sacramentorum gratia, est crimen simoniæ; accipere autem aliqua ad sustentationem eorum qui Sacramenta Christi ministrant, secundum ordinationem Ecclesiæ et consuetudines approbatas, non est simonia, neque peccatum; non enim sumitur tamquam pretium mercedis, sed tamquam stipendium necessitatis.” We find quoted in the same place these words of St. Augustine: “Accipiant sustentationem necessitatis.”[12791] Speaking specially of the *honorarium* of the Mass, St. Thomas adds: “Sacerdos non accipit pecuniam quasi pretium consecrationis

Eucharistiæ, aut Missæ decantandæ, hoc enim esset simoniacum, sed quasi stipendium suæ sustentationis.”[12792]

In the following article, the angelic Doctor gives the reason of this *honorarium,* and says: “Oportet Sacerdotes a populo sustentari, cui spiritualia administrant, secundum illud: ‘Quis militat suis stipendiis unquam? . . . Quis pascit gregem, et de lacte gregis non manducat?’[12793] Et ideo, vendere quod spirituale est, in hujusmodi actibus, aut emere, simoniacum est; sed accipere aut dare aliquid pro sustentatione ministrantium spiritualia, secundum ordinationem Ecclesiæ et consuetudinem approbatam, licitum est; ita tamen quod desit intentio emptionis vel venditionis, ct quod ab invitis non exigatur, per spiritualium subtractionem, quæ sunt exhibenda.”

He, moreover, says in speaking of contracts. “Facere pactionem de Missa celebranda, est simoniacum. . . .” But he adds: “Si tamen non habet alios sumptus, et non tenetur ex officio Missam cantare, potest accipere denarios, sicut conducti Sacerdotes faciunt, non quasi pretium Missæ, sed quasi sustentamentum vitæ.”[12794] Hence those that make themselves guilty of simony are only those priests who, already provided by the Church with an income, with the obligation by virtue of their office to celebrate Mass or to administer the sacraments, still exact another salary; but those that are not bound by such a charge can ask for a *honorarium* to say Mass, not as the price of the Sacrifice, but as a means of subsistence. Such is the answer given by Tournely to those that say: “Omnis pactio in rebus sacris reprobanda est, quæ veram redolet simoniam, in qua spirituale pro temporali datur.” He answers them in the words of St. Thomas: “Stipendium non datur tamquam pretium operis, sed tamquam sustentatio operantis.”[12795]

10. THE ABOLITION OF HONORARIA AND THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF MASSES WITH OFFERINGS

The Masses said for *honoraria* or stipends are, therefore, certainly allowed, and they are even approved by the practice of the universal Church, being exempt from every reproach of simony and of filthy lucre, when the contributions are given altogether spontaneously, as we have above demonstrated in accordance with the opinion of St. Thomas, Gerson, Juvenin, Tournely, Thomassinus, Lambertini (Benedict XIV.), Bellarmine, and others. As for the plan of the anonymous author who wishes to abolish them and to re-establish the use of public Masses with the common offerings of the faithful, it seems that, under the present circumstances, such a thing would be more hurtful than useful.

Thomassinus[12796] says, that if it were re-established according as the anonymous proposes, one should see in the Church disorders and injuries more grave than the abuses that my opponent points out. In fact, now that the ancient charity has ceased, as well as the ancient necessity to support the churches, which have been suitably provided by the faithful, it is certain that if the use of *honorarium* were suppressed, one would not see the ancient offerings revive; and then to what would the large number of priest be reduced who now live on the stipends that they receive for Masses! What employments, what ignoble trades would they be forced to adopt in order to make a living! What scandals and what disorders would be the result!

Even the censor of the anonymous book, while praising it, does not admit of the efficacy of the means proposed. “But this practice,” he says on the subject of public Masses with offerings, “is very difficult to re-establish, and would not be a sufficient means to support so many curates, priests, secular and regular.”

11. THE CARE OF EXCLUDING UNWORTHY SUBJECTS FROM HOLY ORDERS

The best means, after all, of remedying the abuses resulting from “paid” Masses seems to be that indicated by St. Thomas, namely, that the bishops should strictly observe what is prescribed by the Council of Trent of admitting to Holy Orders all those clerics that have a real intention of devoting themselves to the service of God; of not procuring for themselves, by means of Holy Orders, earthly honors and comforts in order to live more at their ease. St. Thomas says: “Accurate investigandum num, videlicet, Dei causa tantum, aut potius suæ commoditatis gratia, ad Ordines capessendos aspirant, quærentes quæ sua sunt, non quæ Jesu Christi, lucris inhiantes, et honores ab hominibus expetentes; quisquis talis est, nec Dei filius, nec ovilis Christi idoneus pastor futurus, sed mercenaries est.”

Thereupon, however, the anonymous author asks how the bishop can assure himself of this good intention of his subjects; and, supposing that he is certain of it for the moment, he cannot assure himself of their perseverance. “Thus,” he concludes, “it is impossible not to be deceived on this point.” We should therefore, in future, I say to him in reply, never more ordain priests; since one has no certainty of their good intention, and much less of their perseverance! But every one knows that on this earth of ours, in which we walk in darkness, men can act only in a human way; one cannot obtain a physical certainty of their good intention, but one may have a moral certainty. This is sufficient to quiet the consciences of bishops; the same holds good as to perseverance.

It has not been denied, nor is it denied, that with the increase of “paid” Masses many abuses have crept in; but it must be considered that, in all that men do,—in all their functions, in the magistracy as well as in commerce, whatever may be the integrity of the laws that govern them,—abuses have always in the course of time been introduced. Human malice has rendered them inevitable. It is seen that even the holiest things are often subject to abuses; still they are none the less holy. We should therefore try as much as possible to hinder the evil, but not to abolish the thing itself. St. Augustine observes that in every state, in every condition of life, there are good and bad Christians, good and bad religious; there are such, and there will always be such.

12. PRIVILEGED ALTARS

Something still remains to be said about privileged altars, in reference to which the anonymous author does wrong to speak contemptuously; for, in treating of the abuses that are committed on the subject of *honoraria*, he says: “There are those that wish Masses to be said on a privileged altar, as if the source of graces flowed therefrom more abundantly.”

We answer that the abundance of graces does not proceed from this altar, but from the concession of the Sovereign Pontiff, who, by virtue of the supreme power that Jesus Christ has given to the universal Church, as the Council of Trent has declared in these words: “Pro suprema potestate sibi in Ecclesia universali tradita,”[12797] may apply, to the souls for whose benefit the Mass is celebrated,—a part of the treasure of merit of Jesus Christ and of the saints,—as much as is necessary to efface their faults. Let us hear what the learned Cardinal Lambertini[12798] says about this in his work that

we have quoted several times. He thus expresses himself: “Certum et commune est apud theologos, indulgentias defunctis prodesse, non tamquam *ex potestate judiciaria,* uti contingit cum indulgentiæ degentibus adhuc inter vivos conceduntur, sed *per modum suffragii,* quemadmodum Gabriel Biel fuse demonstrat. Hoc fundamento innititur Summus Pontifex, cum privilegiatas aras declarat, ac pro Missæ celebratione, quæ in illis indicitur ad expiandam defuncti alicujus animam, Thesauri Ecclesiastici eam partem attribuit per modum suffragii, quæ satis est ut eadem anima, si Deo placitum sic fuerit, e purgatorii cruciatibus eripiatur, uti Gregorius XIII. explicat, cum privilegiatum altare metropolitanæ nostræ Sancti Petri largitus est: ‘Eam a pœnis purgatorii, quantum divinæ bonitati placuerit, per modum suffragii liberare possit.’ ” Bellarmine observes that, from the time of Paschal I., who reigned from 817 to 824, concessions of this kind in reference to privileged altars were already in use: “Pascalis I.,” he says, “indulgentiam ita concessit, ut, qui, pro anima alicujus particularis personæ defunctæ, tot Missas celebraverit in capella Sancti Zenonis, quæ est in Ecclesia Sanctæ Praxedis, animam illam purgatorii pœnis eripiat.”[12799]

Cardinal Lambertini (Benedict XIV.) adds, in regard to privileged altars, several things worthy of note. He relates that under Clement XI. a Congregation of Cardinals established the rule to grant the favor of the privileged altar once a week only to the churches where there would be every day at least five fixed Masses; twice for those where there would be ten Masses; and three times for those where there would be fifteen. It, however, ordained that, in order to enjoy the daily indulgence of the privileged altar, forty Masses would be necessary every day. Innocent XII., on the advice given, June 5, 1694, by the Congregation of the Council, had before decreed that the Masses, the number of which is thus determined in order to enjoy the privilege, should be celebrated every day: “Celebrationem Missarum Indultis præfinitarum omnino necessariam esse singulis diebus in eadem ecclesia.” Under Clement XI., July 30, 1706, the Sacred Congregation decided that the indulgences of the privileged altar are suspended when the number of Masses requisite is not said on account of the absence of the religious sent to preach during Advent or Lent, but not, “quando occasione festivitatum, vel funerum, aut similium, ad celebrandum alibi transmittuntur, dummodo raro contingat;” nor are they suspended in case of the sickness of the priests, regular or secular, who are charged with the celebration of the Masses.[12800]

Preparation for Mass and Thanksgiving after it

I

PRAYERS OF THE MISSAL, AND PRAYERS TO WHICH INDULGENCES ARE ATTACHED

We here put in the first place the prayers that our Holy Mother the Church herself gives us in the Missal. To these prayers we join prayers to which indulgences are attached.—Ed.

PRÆPARATIO AD MISSAM

PRO OPPORTUNITATE SACERDOTIS FACIENDA

ANTIPHONA

NE reminiscaris, Domine, delicta nostra vel parentum nostrorum, neque vindictam sumas de peccatis nostris.

Quæ Antiphona in Festis duplicibus tantum duplicatur; et Tempore Paschali, additur in fine: Alleluia. Deinde dicuntur sequentes Psalmi.

PSALMUS 83

Quam dilecta tabernacula tua, Domine virtutum: * concupiscit et deficit anima mea in atria Domini.

Cor meum et caro mea * exultaverunt in Deum vivum.

Etenim passer invenit sibi domum: * et turtur nidum sibi, ubi ponat pullos suos.

Altaria tua, Domine virtutum: * Rex meus et Deus meus.

Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine: * in sæcula sæculorum laudabunt te.

Beatus vir, cujus est auxilium abs te: * ascensiones in corde suo disposuit, in valle lacrymarum, in loco quem posuit.

Etenim benedictionem dabit legislator, ibunt de virtute in virtutem: * videbitur Deus deorum in Sion.

Domine Deus virtutum, exaudi orationem meam: * auribus percipe, Deus Jacob.

Protector noster aspice Deus: * et respice in faciem Christi tui.

Quia melior est dies una in atriis tuis * super millia.

Elegi abjectus esse in domo Dei mei, * magis quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum.

Quia misericordiam et veritatem diligit Deus: * gratiam et gloriam dabit Dominus.

Non privabit bonis eos, qui ambulant in innocentia: * Domine virtutum, beatus homo qui sperat in te.

Gloria Patri.

PSALMUS 84

Benedixisti, Domine, terram tuam: * avertisti captivitatem Jacob.

Remisisti iniquitatem plebis tuæ: * operuisti omnia peccato eorum.

Mitigasti omnem iram tuam: * avertisti ab ira indignationis tuæ.

Converte nos, Deus salutaris noster: * et averte iram tuam a nobis.

Numquid in æternum irasceris nobis? * aut extendes iram tuam a generatione in generationem?

Deus, tu conversus vivificabis nos: * et plebs tua lætabitur in te.

Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam: * et salutare tuum da nobis.

Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus Deus: * quoniam loquetur pacem in plebem suam.

Et super Sanctos suos, * et in eos qui convertuntur ad cor.

Verumtamen prope timentes eum salutare ipsius: * ut inhabitet gloria in terra nostra.

Misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi: * justitia et pax osculatæ sunt.

Veritas de terra orta est: * et justitia de cœlo prospexit.

Etenim Dominus dabit benignitatem: * et terra nostra dabit fructum suum.

Justitia ante eum ambulabit: * et ponet in via gressus suos.

Gloria Patri.

PSALMUS 85

Inclina, Domine, aurem tuam, et exaudi me: * quoniam inops et pauper sum ego.

Custodi animam meam, quoniam sanctus sum: * salvum fac servum tuum, Deus meus, sperantem in te.

Miserere mei, Domine, quoniam ad te clamavi tota die: * lætifica animam servi tui, quoniam ad te, Domine, animam meam levavi.

Quoniam tu, Domine, suavis et mitis: * et multæ misericordiæ omnibus invocantibus te.

Auribus percipe, Domine, orationem meam, * et intende voci deprecationis meæ.

In die tribulationis meæ clamavi ad te: * quia exaudisti me.

Non est similis tui in diis, Domine: * et non est secundum opera tua.

Omnes gentes quascumque fecisti venient et adorabunt coram te, Domine: * et glorificabunt nomen tuum.

Quoniam magnus es tu et faciens mirabilia: * tu es Deus solus.

Deduc me, Domine, in via tua, et ingrediar in veritate tua: * lætetur cor meum, ut timeat nomen tuum.

Confitebor tibi, Domine Deus meus, in toto corde meo, * et glorificabo nomen tuum in æternum.

Quia misericordia tua magna est super me: * et eruisti animam meam ex inferno inferiori.

Deus, iniqui insurrexerunt super me, et synagoga potentium quæsierunt animam meam: * et non proposuerunt te in conspectu suo.

Et tu, Domine Deus, miserator et misericors, * patiens, et multæ misericordiæ, et verax.

Respice in me, et miserere mei: * da imperium tuum puero tuo, et salvum fac filium ancillæ tuæ.

Fac mecum signum in bonum, ut videant qui oderunt me, et confundantur: * quoniam tu, Domine, adjuvisti me, et consolatus es me.

Gloria Patri.

PSALMUS 115

Credidi, propter quod locutus sum: * ego autem humiliatus sum nimis.

Ego dixi in excessu meo: * Omnis homo mendax.

Quid retribuam Domino * pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi?

Calicem salutaris accipiam, * et nomen Domini invocabo.

Vota mea Domino reddam coram omni populo ejus: * pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors Sanctorum ejus.

O Domine, quia ego servus tuus: * ego servus tuus, et filius ancillæ tuæ.

Dirupisti vincula mea: * tibi sacrificabo hostiam laudis, et nomen Domini invocabo.

Vota mea Domino reddam in conspectu omnis populi ejus: * in atriis domus Domini, in medio tui Jerusalem.

Gloria Patri.

PSALMUS 129

De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine: * Domine, exaudi vocem meam.

Fiant aures tuæ intendentes * in vocem deprecationis meæ.

Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine: * Domine, quis sustinebit?

Quia apud te propitiatio est, * et propter legem tuam sustinui te, Domine.

Sustinuit anima mea in verbo ejus: * speravit anima mea in Domino.

A custodia matutina usque ad noctem * speret Israel in Domino.

Quia apud Dominum misericordia, * et copiosa apud eum redemptio.

Et ipse redimet Israel * ex omnibus iniquitatibus ejus.

Gloria Patri.

Deinde repetitur Antiphona:

Ne reminiscaris, Domine, delicta nostra vel parentum nostrorum, neque vindictam sumas de peccatis nostris. (Alleluja.)

POSTEA SACERDOS DICIT:

Kyrie eleison.

Christe eleison.

Kyrie eleison.

Pater noster.

V. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.

R. Sed libera nos a malo.

V. Ego dixi, Domine, miserere mei.

R. Sana animam meam, quia peccavi tibi.

V. Convertere, Domine, aliquantulum.

R. Et deprecare super servos tuos.

V. Fiat misericordia tua, Domine, super nos.

R. Quemadmodum speravimus in te.

V. Sacerdotes tui induantur justitiam.

R. Et Sancti tui exultent.

V. Ab occultis meis munda me, Domine.

R. Et ab alienis parce servo tuo.

V. Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

V. Dominus vobiscum.

R. Et cum spiritu tuo.

OREMUS

Aures tuæ pietatis, mitissime Deus, inclina precibus nostris, et gratia Sancti Spiritus illumina cor nostrum: ut tuis mysteriis digne ministrare, tcque æterna charitate diligere mereamur.

Deus, cui omne cor patet, et omnis voluntas loquitur, et quem nullum latet secretum; purifica per infusionem Sancti Spiritus cogitationes cordis nostri: ut te perfecte diligere et digne laudare mereamur.

Ure igne Sancti Spiritus renes nostros et cor nostrum, Domine: ut tibi casto corpore serviamus et mundo corde placeamus.

Mentes nostras, quæsumus, Domine, Paraclitus, qui a te procedit, illuminet, et inducat in omnem, sicut tuus promisit Filius, veritatem.

Adsit nobis, quæsumus, Domine, virtus Spiritus Sancti: quæ et corda nostra clementer expurget et ab omnibus tueatur adversis.

Deus, qui corda fidelium Sancti Spiritus illustratione docuisti; da nobis in eodem Spiritu recta sapere, et de ejus semper consolatione gaudere.

Conscientias nostras, quæsumus, Domine, visitando purifica: ut veniens Dominus noster Jesus Christus Filius tuus paratam sibi in nobis inveniat mansionem. Qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

ORATIONES

PRO OPPORTUNITATE SACERDOTIS ANTE CELEBRATIONEM ET COMMUNIONEM DICENDÆ

I. ORATIO SANCTI AMBROSII EPISCOPI

DIE DOMINICA

SUMME Sacerdos et vere Pontifex, Jesu Christe, qui te obtulisti Deo Patri hostiam puram et immaculatam in ara crucis pro nobis miseris peccatoribus, et qui dedisti nobis carnem tuam ad manducandum, et sanguinem tuum ad bibendum, et posuisti mysterium istud in virtute Spiritus Sancti tui, dicens: Hæc quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis: rogo per eundem sanguinem tuum, magnum salutis nostræ pretium: rogo per hanc miram et ineffabilem caritatem, qua nos miseros et indignos sic amare dignatus es, ut lavares nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine tuo: doce me servum tuum indignum, quem inter cetera dona tua etiam ad officium sacerdotale vocare dignatus es, nullis meis meritis, sed sola dignatione misericordiæ tuæ: doce me, quæso, per Spiritum Sanctum tuum, tantum tractare mysterium ea reverentia et honore, ea devotione et timore, quibus oportet et decet. Fac me per gratiam tuam semper illud de tanto mysterio credere et intelligere, sentire et firmiter tenere, dicere et cogitare, quod tibi placet et expedit animæ meæ. Intret Spiritus tuus bonus in cor meum, qui sonet ibi sine sono, et sine strepitu verborum loquatur omnem veritatem. Profunda quippe sunt nimis, et sacro tecta velamine. Propter magnam clementiam tuam concede mihi Missarum solemnia mundo corde et pura mente celebrare. Libera cor meum ab immundis et nefandis, vanis et noxiis cogitationibus. Muni me beatorum Angelorum pia et fida custodia ac tutela fortissima, ut hostes omnium bonorum confusi discedant. Per virtutem tanti mysterii, et per manum Sancti Angeli tui repelle a me et a cunctis servis tuis durissimum spiritum superbiæ et xenodoxiæ, invidiæ et blasphemiæ, fornicationis et immunditiæ, dubietatis et diffidentiæ. Confundantur, qui nos persequuntur: pereant illi, qui nos perdere festinant.

FERJA SECUNDA

Rex virginum, et amator castitatis et integritatis, cœlesti rore benedictionis tuæ extingue in corpore meo fomitem ardentis libidinis: ut maneat in me tenor castitatis corporis et animæ. Mortifica in membris meis carnis stimulos omnesque libidinosas commotiones, et da mihi veram et perpetuam castitatem cum ceteris donis tuis, quæ tibi placent in veritate: ut sacrificium laudis casto corpore et mundo corde valeam tibi offerre. Quanta onim cordis contritione et lacrymarum fonte, quanta reverentia et tremore, quanta corporis castitate et animæ puritate istud divinum et cœleste sacrificium est celebrandum, ubi caro tua in veritate sumitur, ubi sanguis tuus in veritate bibitur, ubi ima summis, terrena divinis junguntur, ubi adest sanctorum Angelorum præsentia, ubi tu es sacrificium et sacerdos mirabiliter et ineffabiliter constitutus!

FERIA TERTIA

Quis digne hoc celebrare poterit, nisi tu Deus omnipotens offerentem feceris dignum? Scio, Domine, et vere scio, et idipsum pietati tuæ confiteor, quia non sum dignus accedere ad tantum mysterium propter nimia peccata mea et infinitas negligentias meas. Sed scio, et veraciter ex toto corde meo credo et ore confiteor, quia tu potes me facere dignum, qui solus potes facere mundum de immundo conceptum semine, et de peccatoribus justos et sanctos. Per hanc omnipotentiam tuam te rogo, Deus meus, ut concedas mihi peccatori hoc sacrificium celebrare cum timore et tremore, cum cordis puritate et lacrymarum fonte, cum lætitia spirituali et cœlesti gaudio. Sentiat mens mea dulcedinem beatissimæ præsentiæ tuæ, et excubias sanctorum Angelorum tuorum in circuitu meo.

FERIA QUARTA

Ego enim, Domine, memor venerandæ passionis tuæ accedo ad altare tuum, licet peccator, ut offeram tibi sacrificium, quod tu instituisti, et offerri præcepisti in commemorationem tui pro salute nostra. Suscipe illud, quæso, summe Deus, pro Ecclesia sancta tua et pro populo, quem acquisisti sanguine tuo. Et quoniam me peccatorem inter te et eundem populum tuum medium esse voluisti, licet in me aliquod boni operis testimonium non agnoscas, officium saltem dispensationis creditæ non recuses: nec per me indignum, eorum salutis pereat pretium, pro quibus victima salutaris dignatus es esse redemptio. Profero etiam, Domine (si digneris propitius intueri), tribulationes plebium, pericula populorum, captivorum gemitus, miserias orphanorum, necessitates peregrinorum, inopiam debilium, desperationes languentium, defectus senum, suspiria iuvenum, vota virginum, lamenta viduarum.

FERIA QUINTA

Tu enim misereris omnium, Domine: et nihil odisti eorum quæ fecisti. Memorare, quæ sit nostra substantia: quia tu Pater noster es, quia tu Deus noster es, ne irascaris satis, neque multitudinem viscerum tuorum super nos contineas. Non enim in justificationibus nostris prosternimus preces ante faciem tuam, sed in miserationibus tuis multis. Aufer a nobis iniquitates nostras: et ignem Sancti Spiritus in nobis clementer accende. Aufer cor lapideum de carne nostra: et da nobis cor carneum, quod te amet, te diligat, te delectetur, te sequatur, te perfruatur. Oramus, Domine, clementiam tuam, ut sereno vultu familiam tuam, sacri tui nominis officia præstolantem, aspicere digneris; et ut nullius sit irritum votum, nullius vacua postulatio, tu nobis preces suggere, quas ipse propitius audire et exaudire delecteris.

FERIA SEXTA

Rogamus etiam te, Domine Sancte Pater, et pro spiritibus fidelium defunctorum, ut sit illis salus, sanitas, gaudium et refrigerium hoc magnum pietatis Sacramentum. Domine Deus meus, sit illis hodie magnum et plenum convivium de te pane vivo, qui de cœlo descendisti, et das vitam mundo, de tua carne sancta et benedicta, Agni videlicet immaculati, qui tollis peccata mundi, quæ de sancto et glorioso Beatæ Virginis Mariæ utero est assumpta, et de Spiritu Sancto concepta; ac de illo pietatis fonte, qui per lanceam militis ex tuo sacratissimo latere emanavit: ut exinde refecti et satiati, refrigerati et consolati exultent in laude et gloria tua. Peto clementiam tuam, Domine, ut descendat super panem tibi sacrificandum plenitudo tuæ benedictionis et sanctificatio tuæ Divinitatis. Descendat etiam, Domine, illa Sancti Spiritus tui invisibilis incomprehensibilisque majestas, sicut quondam in patrum hostias descendebat, qui et oblationes nostras, Corpus et Sanguinem tuum efficiat, et me indignum sacerdotem doceat tantum tractare mysterium cum cordis puritate et lacrymarum devotione, cum reverentia et tremore, ita ut placide ac benigne suscipias sacrificium de manibus meis ad salutem omnium tam vivorum quam defunctorum.

SABBATO

Rogo etiam te, Domine, per ipsum sacrosanctum mysterium Corporis et Sanguinis tui, quo quotidie in Ecclesia tua pascimur et potamur, abluimur et sanctificamur, atque unius summæ divinitatis participes efficimur, da mihi virtutes tuas sanctas, quibus repletus, bona conscientia ad altare tuum accedam, ita ut hæc cœlestia sacramenta efficiantur mihi salus et vita. Tu enim dixisti ore tuo sancto et benedicto: Panis, quem ego dabo, caro mea est pro mundi vita: Ego sum panis vivus, qui de cœlo descendi: si quis manducaverit ex hoc pane, vivet in æternum. Panis dulcissime, sana palatum cordis mei, ut sentiam suavitatem amoris tui. Sana illud ab omni languore, ut nullam præter te sentiam dulcedinem. Panis candidissime, habens omne delectamentum et omnem saporem, qui nos semper reficis, et numquam in te deficis: comedat te cor meum, et dulcedine saporis tui repleantur viscera animæ meæ. Manducat te Angelus ore pleno, manducet te peregrinus homo pro modulo suo, ne deficere possit in via, tali recreatus viatico. Panis sancte, panis vive, panis munde, qui descendisti de cœlo, et das vitam mundo, veni in cor meum, et munda me ab omni inquinamento carnis et spiritus. Intra in animam meain, sana et munda me interius et exterius. Esto tutamen et continua salus animæ et corporis mei. Repelle a me insidiantes mihi hostes: recedant procul a præsentia potentiæ tuæ, ut foris et intus per te munitus, recto tramite ad tuum regnum perveniam, ubi non in mysteriis, sicut in hoc tempore agitur, sed facie ad faciem te videbimus, cum tradideris regnum Deo et Patri, et eris Deus omnia in omnibus. Tunc me de te satiabis satietate mirifica, ita ut nec esuriam nec sitiam in æternum. Qui cum eodem Deo Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

II. ALIA ORATIO ANTE MISSAM

(Indulg. 100 dierum, Leo PP. XIII., 20 Dec. 1884.)

Ad mensam dulcissimi convivii tui, pie Domine Jesu Christe, ego peccator de propriis meritis nihil præsumens, sed de tua confidens misericordia et bonitate, accedere vereor et contremisco. Nam cor et corpus habeo multis criminibus maculatum, mentem et linguam non caute custoditam. Ergo, O pia Deitas, O tremenda Majestas, ego miser inter angustias deprehensus, ad te fontem misericordiæ recurro, ad te festino sanandus, sub tuam protectionem fugio: et quem judicem sustinere nequeo, Salvatorem habere suspiro. Tibi, Domine, plagas meas ostendo: tibi verecundiam meam detego. Scio peccata mea multa et magna, pro quibus timeo. Spero in misericordias tuas, quarum non est numerus. Respice ergo in me oculis misericordiæ tuæ, Domine Jesu Christe, Rex æterne, Deus et homo, crucifixus propter hominem. Exaudi me sperantem in te: miserere mei pleni miseriis et peccatis, tu qui fontem miserationis numquam manare cessabis. Salve salutaris victima, pro me et omni humano genere in patibulo crucis oblata. Salve nobilis et pretiose Sanguis, de Vulneribus crucifixi Domini mei Jesu Christi profluens et peccata totius mundi abluens. Recordare, Domine, creaturæ tuæ, quam tuo Sanguine redemisti. Pœnitet me peccasse, cupio emendare quod feci. Aufer ergo a me, clementissime Pater, omnes iniquitates et peccata mea: ut purificatus mente et corpore, digne degustare merear Sancta Sanctorum: et concede, ut sancta prælibatio Corporis et Sanguinis tui, quam ego indignus sumere intendo, sit peccatorum meorum remissio, sit delictorum perfecta purgatio, sit turpium cogitationum effugatio ac bonorum sensuum regeneratio, operumque tibi placentium salubris efficacia, animæ quoque et corporis contra inimicorum meorum insidias firmissima tuitio. Amen.

III. ORATIO SANCTI THOMÆ AQUINATIS

(Indulg. 100 dierum, Leo PP. XIII., 20 Dec. 1884.)

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, ecce accedo ad sacramentum unigeniti Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi: accedo tamquam infirmus ad medicum vitæ, immundus ad fontem misericordiæ, cæcus ad lumen claritatis æternæ, pauper et egenus ad Dominum cœli et terræ. Rogo ergo immensæ largitatis tuæ abundantiam, quatenus meam curare digneris infirmitatem, lavare fœditatem, illuminare cæcitatem, ditare paupertatem, vestire nuditatem: ut panem Angelorum, Regem regum, et Dominum dominantium, tanta suscipiam reverentia et humilitate, tanta contritione et devotione, tanta puritate et fide, tali proposito et intentione, sicut expedit saluti animæ meæ. Da mihi, quæso, Dominici Corporis et Sanguinis non solum suscipere sacramentum, sed etiam rem et virtutem sacramenti. O mitissime Deus, da mihi Corpus unigeniti Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi, quod traxit de Virgine Maria, sic suscipere, ut corpori suo mystico merear incorporari, et inter ejus membra connumerari. O amantissime Pater, concede mihi dilectum Filium tuum, quem nunc velatum in via suscipere propono, revelata tandem facie perpetuo contemplari. Qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

INDULGENCED PRAYERS FOR PRIESTS

I. PRAYER BEFORE MASS

(Indulgence of fifty days.—Gregory XIII.—This indulgence, as also the following indulgences, are applicable to the souls in purgatory.)

EGO volo celebrare Missam, et conficere Corpus et Sanguinem Domini nostri Jesu Christi, juxta ritum Sanctæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ, ad laudem omnipotentis Dei totiusque curiæ triumphantis, ad utilitatem meam totiusque curiæ militantis, pro omnibus, qui se commendarunt orationibus meis in genere et in specie, et pro felici statu Sanctæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ. Amen.

Gaudium cum pace, emendationem vitæ, spatium veræ pœnitentiæ, gratiam et consolationem S. Spiritus, perseverantiam in bonis operibus tribuat nobis omnipotens et misericors Deus. Amen.

II. PRAYER IN HONOR OF ST. JOSEPH

(Indulgence of 100 days, if one recites this prayer before celebrating Mass.—Pius IX., 4 Febr. 1877.)

O felicem virum beatum Joseph, cui datum est Deum, quem multi reges voluerunt videre et non viderunt, audire et non audierunt, non solum videre et audire, sed portare, deosculari, vestire, et custodire!

V. Ora pro nobis, beate Joseph.

R. Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

OREMUS

Dens, qui dedisti nobis regale sacerdotium, præsta, quæsumus, ut sicut beatus Joseph unigenitum Filium tuum natum ex Maria Virgine suis manibus reverenter tractare meruit et portare, ita nos facias cum cordis munditia et operis innocentia tuis sanctis altaribus deservire, ut sacrosanctum Filii tui Corpus et Sanguinem hodie digne sumamus, et in futuro sæculo præmium habere mereamur æternum. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

III. ANOTHER PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

(Indulgence of one hundred days, once a day.—Pius IX., February 4, 1877.)

Virginum custos et pater, sancte Joseph, cujus fideli custodiæ ipsa Innocentia Christus Jesus et Virgo virginum Maria commissa fuit, te per hoc utrumque carissimum pignus Jesum et Mariam obsecro et obtestor, ut me ab omni immunditia præservatum, mente incontaminata, puro corde et casto corpore Jesu et Mariæ semper facias castissime famulari. *R.* Amen.

GRATIARUM ACTIO

POST MISSAM

(Indulg. unius anni pro recitatione præter illam Cantici *Benedictus* et Ps. *Laudate* et cum versiculis et tribus Orationibus adnexis, duarum sequ. Orationum, quarum altera S. Thomæ, altera vero S. Bonaventuræ.—Leo PP. XIII., 20 Decembris, 1884.)

ANTIPHONA

TRIUM puerorum cantemus hymnum: quem cantabant Sancti in camino ignis, benedicentes Dominum.

Quæ Antiphona in festis duplicibus tantum duplicatur; et Tempore Paschali, additur in fine : Alleluja.

Canticum Trium Puerorum.

Dan. 3.

Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino: laudate et superexaltate eum in sæcula.

Benedicite Angeli Domini Domino: benedicite cœli Domino.

Benedicite aquæ omnes, quæ super cœlos sunt, Domino: benedicite omnes virtutes Domini Domino.

Benedicite sol et luna Domino: benedicite stellæ cœli Domino.

Benedicite omnis imber et ros Domino: benedicite omnes Spiritus Dei Domino.

Benedicite ignis et æstus Domino: benedicite frigus et æstus Domino.

Benedicite rores et pruina Domino: benedicite gelu et frigus Domino.

Benedicite glacies et nives Domino; benedicite noctes et dies Domino.

Benedicite lux et tenebræ Domino, benedicite fulgura et nubes Domino.

Benedicat terra Dominum: laudet et superexaltet eum in sæcula.

Benedicite montes et colles Domino: benedicite universa germinantia in terra Domino.

Benedicite fontes Domino: benedicite maria et flumina Domino.

Benedicite cete, et omnia quæ moventur in aquis, Domino: benedicite omnes volucres cœli Domino.

Benedicite omnes bestiæ et pecora Domino: benedicite filii hominum Domino.

Benedicat Israel Dominum: laudet et superexaltet eum in sæcula.

Benedicite sacerdotes Domini Domino: benedicite servi Domini Domino.

Benedicite spiritus et animæ justorum Domino: benedicite sancti et humiles corde Domino.

Benedicite Anania, Azaria, Misael Domino: laudate et superexaltate eum in sæcula.

Benedicamus Patrem et Filium cum Sancto Spiritu: laudemus, et superexaltemus eum in sæcula.

Benedictus es, Domine, in firmamento cœli: et laudabilis et gloriosus et superexaltatus in sæcula.

Psalmus 150.

Laudate Dominum in Sanctis ejus: laudate eum in firmamento virtutis ejus.

Laudate eum in virtutibus ejus: laudate eum secundum multitudinem magnitudinis ejus.

Laudate eum in sono tubæ: laudate eum in psalterio et cithara.

Laudate eum in tympano et choro: laudate eum in chordis et organo.

Laudate eum in cymbalis benesonantibus: laudate eum in cymbalis jubilationis: omnis spiritus laudet Dominum.

Gloria Patri.

Deinde Repetitur Antiphona:

Trium puerorum cantemus hymnum: quem cantabant Sancti in camino ignis, benedicentes Dominum. (Alleluja.)

Deinde Sacerdos dicit:

Kyrie eleison.

Christe eleison.

Kyrie eleison.

Pater noster.

V. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.

R. Sed libera nos a malo.

V. Confiteantur tibi, Domine, omnia opera tua.

R. Et Sancti tui benedicant tibi.

V. Exultabunt Sancti in gloria.

R. Lætabuntur in cubilibus suis.

V. Non nobis, Domine, non nobis.

R. Sed nomini tuo da gloriam.

V. Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

R. Et clamor mens ad te veniat.

V. Dominus vobiscum.

R. Et cum spiritu tuo.

OREMUS

Deus, qui tribus pueris mitigasti flammas ignium; concede propitius, ut nos famulos tuos non exurat flamma vitiorum.

Actiones nostras, quæsumus, Domine, aspirando præveni et adjuvando prosequere: ut cuncta nostra oratio et operatio a te semper incipiat, et per te cœpta finiatur.

Da nobis, quæsumus, Domine, vitiorum nostrorum flammas extinguere, qui beato Laurentio tribuisti tormentorum suorum incendia superare. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

ORATIONES

POST CELEBRATIONEM ET COMMUNIONEM DICENDÆ

I. ORATIO SANCTI THOMÆ AQUINATIS

GRATIAS tibi ago, Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus, qui me peccatorem indignum famulum tuum, nullis meis meritis, sed sola dignatione misericordiæ tuæ satiare dignatus es pretioso Corpore et Sanguine Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi. Et precor, ut hæc sancta communio non sit mihi reatus ad pœnam, sed intercessio salutaris ad veniam. Sit mihi armatura fidei, et scutum bonæ voluntatis. Sit vitiorum meorum evacuatio: concupiscentiæ et libidinis exterminatio: caritatis et patientiæ, humilitatis et obedientiæ, omniumque virtutum augmentatio: contra insidias inimicorum omnium, tam visibilium quam invisibilium, firma defensio: motuum meorum, tam carnalium quam spiritualium, perfecta quietatio: in te uno ac vero Deo firma adhæsio: atque finis mei felix consummatio. Et precor te, ut ad illud ineffabile convivium me peccatorem perducere digneris, ubi tu cum Filio tuo et Spiritu Sancto, Sanctis tuis es lux vera, satietas plena, gaudium sempiternum, jucunditas consummata, et felicitas perfecta. Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

II. ORATIO SANCTI BONAVENTURÆ

Transfige, dulcissime Domine Jesu, medullas et viscera animæ meæ suavissimo ac saluberrimo amoris tui vulnere, vera serenaque et apostolica sanctissima caritate, ut langueat et liquefiat anima mea solo semper amore et desiderio tui, te concupiscat et deficiat in atria tua, cupiat dissolvi et esse tecum. Da, ut anima mea te esuriat, panem Angelorum, refectionem animarum sanctarum, panem nostrum quotidianum supersubstantialem, habentem omnem dulcedinem et saporem et omne delectamentum suavitatis: te, in quem desiderant Angeli prospicere, semper esuriat et comedat cor meum, et dulcedine saporis tui repleantur viscera animæ meæ: te semper sitiat fontem vitæ, fontem sapientiæ et scientiæ, fontem æterni luminis, torrentem voluptatis, ubertatem domus Dei: te semper ambiat, te quærat, te inveniat, ad te tendat, ad te perveniat, te meditetur, te loquatur, et omnia operetur in laudem et gloriam nominis tui, cum humilitate et discretione, cum dilectione et delectatione cum facilitate et affectu, cum perseverantia usque in finem: et tu sis solus semper spes mea, tota fiducia mea, divitiæ meæ, delectatio mea, jucunditas mea gaudium meum, quies et tranquillitas mea, pax mea, suavitas mea, odor meus, dulcedo mea, cibus meus, refectio mea, refugium meum, auxilium meum, sapientia mea, portio mea, possessio mea, thesaurus meus, in quo fixa et firma et immobiliter semper sit radicata mens mea et cor meum. Amen.

III. RHYTHMUS S. THOMÆ A.D. SACRAM EUCHARISTIAM

(Indulg. 100 dierum, Leo PP. XIII., 20 Dec. 1884.)

Adoro te devote, latens Deitas,
Quæ sub his figuris vere latitas;
Tibi se cor meum totum subjicit:
Quia te contemplans totum deficit.
Visus, tactus, gustus in te fallitur,
Sed auditu solo tuto creditur.
Credo quidquid dixit Dei Filius:
Nil hoc verbo Veritatis verius.
In cruce latebat sola Deitas;
At hic latet simul et humanitas.
Ambo tamen credens atque confitens,
Peto quod petivit latro pœnitens.
Plagas, sicut Thomas, non intueor;
Deum tamen meum te confiteor:
Fac me tibi semper magis credere,
In te spem habere, te diligere.
O memoriale mortis Domini!
Panis vivus, vitam præstans homini:
Præsta meæ menti de te vivere,
Et te illi semper dulce sapere.
Pie Pelicane, Jesu Domine,
Me immundum munda tuo sanguine:
Cujus una stilla salvum facere
Totum mundum quit ab omni scelere.
Jesu, quem velatum nunc aspicio,
Oro, fiat illud, quod tam sitio;
Ut te revelatâ cernens facie,
Visu sim beatus tuæ gloriæ.

Amen.

INDULGENCED PRAYERS FOR PRIESTS

I. PRAYERS AFTER MASS

(Indulgence of three years.—This indulgence, as also the following indulgences, are applicable to the souls in purgatory.—Pius IX., Dec. 11, 1846.)

OBSECRO te, dulcissime Domine Jesu Christe, ut Passio tua sit mihi virtus, qua muniar, protegar, atque defendar: vulnera tua sint mihi cibus potusque, quibus pascar, inebrier, atque delecter; aspersio Sanguinis tui sit mihi ablutio omnium delictorum meorum, mors tua sit mihi gloria sempiterna. In his sit mihi refectio, exultatio, sanitas, et dulcedo cordis mei. Qui vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

II. INVOCATION OF ST. IGNATIUS

(Post Missam Indulg. 7 annorum semel in die; aliter 300 dierum toties quoties. Indulg. plenar. semel in mense, si hæc Oratio quotidie recitatur.—Pius IX., 9 Jan. 1854.)

Anima Christi, sanctifica me; Corpus Christi, salva me; Sanguis Christi, inebria me; Aqua lateris Christi, lava me; Passio Christi, conforta me. O bone Jesu, exaudi me; intra Vulnera tua absconde me; ne permittas me separari a te; ab hoste maligno defende me; in hora mortis meæ voca me, et jube me venire ad te, ut cum Angelis tuis laudem te in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

III. PRAYER BEFORE THE CRUCIFIX

(Plenary indulgence for those that recite it after Confession and Communion, and who add some other prayer to the intention of His Holiness.—Pius IX., July 31, 1858.)

En ego, O bone et dulcissime Jesu, ante conspectum tuum genibus me provolvo ac maximo animi ardore te oro atque obtestor, ut meum in cor vividos fidei, spei et caritatis sensus, atque veram peccatorum meorum pœnitentiam, eaque emendandi firmissimam voluntatem velis imprimere: dum magno animi affectu et dolore tua quinque Vulnera mecum ipse considero ac mente contemplor, illud præ oculis habens, quod jam in ore ponebat suo David propheta de te, O bone Jesu: “Foderunt manus meas et pedes meos, dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea.”

PREPARATION FOR MASS AND THANKSGIVING AFTER IT

II

ConsiderationS AND AFFECTIONS. VARIOUS PRAYERS

We do not precisely know when St. Alphonsus composed and published this little work; but it is probably that which is found in the collection printed in 1758 under the title of *Novena of Christmas*, and which Cardinal Villecourt (1. 6, p. I., ch. v. et vi. 1 *Tableau chron.*) mentions in these words: “Acts for preparation and thanksgiving, preceded by a few considerations on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.”—Ed.

INTRODUCTION

1. IMPORTANCE OF THE HOLY SACRIFICE

MAN cannot perform a more holy, a more grand, and a more sublime action than to celebrate a Mass, in regard to which the Council of Trent says: “We must needs confess that no other work can be performed by the faithful so holy and divine as this tremendous mystery itself.”[12801] God himself cannot cause an action to be performed that is holier and grander than the celebration of Mass. All the sacrifices of the Old Law were but a shadow, a figure, of our divine Sacrifice. The sacrifice of the lives of all the saints, of all the angels, of the Mother of God herself, would certainly never procure for God the honor that a single Mass procures, because only the Mass renders to God an infinite honor.

The Mass is therefore an action that renders to God the greatest honor that can be rendered to him, and that obtains the most powerful suffrage for the souls in purgatory. It is also an action that breaks most triumphantly the powers of hell, that most efficaciously appeases the anger of the Lord against sinners, and that obtains for us most abundant graces. *For what is the good thing of him, and what is his beautiful thing, but the corn of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins?*[12802] At the Mass the Son of God himself sacrifices himself to his eternal Father and gives himself to us in the Holy Sacrament, which contains all that is good and beautiful in the Church; for, as St. Thomas says, all the other sacraments have as their end the Eucharist—“Nearly all the sacraments are brought to perfection in the Eucharist.”[12803]

Every Mass that is celebrated procures for the world the greatest benefits that the Sacrifice on the cross procured for it, according to the teaching of the angelic Doctor who says: “Whatever is the effect of the Passion of our Lord, is also entirely the effect of this sacrament.”[12804] The holy Church also assures us of this when she says: “As many times as this commemorative sacrifice is celebrated, so often is the work of our redemption performed.”[12805] In fact, it is the same Redeemer who is the Victim offered on the altar where he offers himself as a sacrifice by the ministry of the priests; and the Council of Trent teaches: “For the victim is one and the same—the same now offering by the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different.”[12806] Thus, as the Doctors teach, if Jesus Christ had not yet come into the world, the priest would make him come by pronouncing the form of Consecration according to the celebrated sentence of St. Augustine: “O sublime dignity of priests, in whose hands, as in the womb of the Virgin, the Son of God became incarnate!”[12807] The sacrifice of the cross is applied to us by a Sacrifice of the altar. The Passion of our Lord renders us capable of redemption; Mass puts us in possession of it, and makes us participate in the merits of Jesus Christ.

We are then incapable, by any work that we may perform, of thanking God for the innumerable benefits that he has conferred upon us; but by offering to him Jesus Christ at the Sacrifice of the Mass, we render him worthy thanksgiving. St. Irenæus says: “The divine Sacrifice was instituted that we might not be ungrateful to God.”[12808] Moreover, by this sacrifice we can obtain all graces. It has been promised us that we shall obtain all that we shall ask of God in the name of Jesus Christ: *If you ask the Father anything in My name, he will give it to you;*[12809] how much more confidently should we hope to obtain what we ask, when we offer him Jesus Christ himself! Our loving Redeemer is continually making intercession for us in heaven: *Who also maketh intercession for us.*[12810] But this is done more especially at the time of the Sacrifice of the Mass, in which, by the hands of the priest, he presents himself to his Father to obtain graces for us. If we knew that all the saints, with the Blessed Virgin, were praying for us, what confidence would we not have to obtain favors! Now, a single prayer of Jesus Christ can effect infinitely more than all the prayers of the saints.

Poor, wretched sinners, what would become of us if we had not this divine Sacrifice to appease the Lord? "For the Lord," says the Council of Trent, "appeases by the oblation thereof, and, granting the grace and gift of penitence, forgives even heinous crimes and sins."[12811] In a word, as the Passion of Jesus Christ was sufficient to save the whole world, so is a single Mass sufficient to save it. Hence, while offering the chalice, the priest says: "We offer unto Thee, O Lord! the chalice of salvation, . . . for our salvation, and for that of the whole world.[12812]

2. THE MASS THAT IS CELEBRATED WITH BUT LITTLE RESPECT AND DEVOTION

Let us thence conclude what will be the account that will have to be rendered by priests who celebrate this great sacrifice without reverence. The Venerable Father John d'Avila, hearing that a priest had died after having celebrated his first Mass, cried out: "O what a terrible account will this priest have to render for this first Mass!" Alas! where do we find devotion, reverence, among the priests that say Mass? Mass is, as we have said, the sublimest, the holiest action; so that, according to the Council of Trent, we should perform it with as much devotion and purity of conscience as possible: "It is sufficiently clear that all industry and diligence are to be applied to this end; that it be performed with the greatest possible inward cleanness and purity of heart, and outward show of devotion and piety."[12813] Nevertheless, this action is the most neglected by many priests. Certainly, they would use more care in performing a part in a comedy than they would in celebrating Mass. There are some that go so far as to say Mass in less than a quarter of an hour. This cannot be excused from a mortal sin even when it would be a Mass for the dead, as we have proved in our Moral Theology,[12814] for it is impossible to celebrate Mass in so short a time without neglecting in a serious manner the words and the ceremonies; without gravely failing in the respect and gravity that such a Sacrifice demands; and, moreover, without giving great scandal to seculars.

In speaking of this subject, one should shed tears, and tears of blood. On the day of judgment, priests that celebrate in this manner will be greatly to be pitied. But greatly are also to be compassionated bishops that permit them to celebrate Mass; for bishops, as in the common opinion of Doctors, and as is certain according to the Council of Trent, are strictly obliged to forbid priests to celebrate Mass if they say it with such an irreverence (called impiety by the Council), which, while speaking of this divine Sacrifice, expresses itself thus: "The holy Synod decrees that the ordinary bishops of places shall take diligent care, and be bound, to prohibit all those things that irreverence (which can hardly be separated from impiety) has introduced."[12815] To fulfil this precept of the Council conformably to the terms quoted, "they shall take diligent care, and be bound, to prohibit." The bishops are therefore obliged continually to watch and to gather information in regard to the manner in which the Masses are celebrated in their dioceses, and to suspend from celebrating Mass those that perform this duty without due care and without befitting gravity. Besides, this obligation imposed on the bishops regards, not only secular priests, but also religious; for by the same decree the bishops are in this respect appointed apostolic delegates—"As delegates of the Apostolic See, they may prohibit, ordain, reform, and establish, and may compel the faithful people inviolably to observe them, by ecclesiastical censures and other penalties."[12816]

However, notwithstanding all this, we must say that it is a pity to see priests ordinarily holding in contempt Jesus Christ when they celebrate this august mystery; and what causes most astonishment is to see even religious belonging to the reformed Orders, in which regular observance should reign, saying Mass in such a way that they would scandalize even Turks and idolaters.

It is true that the Sacrifice of the altar suffices to pacify God for all the sins of the world; but how can it pacify him for the injuries that priests heap upon him during the time that they offer the sacrifice to him? In celebrating Mass with so little respect, they on their part cause God more dishonor than honor; they offend him then by outraging the divine Victim even though they offer him to God. The heretic who does not believe in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the holy Sacrifice is guilty; but more guilty is he who believes in it and manifests no respect for it. Moreover, the priest who celebrates Mass with little respect causes those that are present to lose the esteem and the veneration due to the majesty of so great a sacrament. The Jewish people had at first great veneration for Jesus Christ; but when they saw him despised by the priests, they lost all the esteem that they had entertained for him. So, also, at present the people lose the respect that they had for Mass when they see it treated with so much negligence and indevotion by priests. As a Mass celebrated devoutly inspires devotion, so, on the contrary, the irreverence of the priest diminishes the veneration and even the faith of those that are present. In fact, how could the indevotion of the priest, who is the minister of this divine Sacrifice and the guardian of the body of Jesus Christ, inspire others with sentiments of respect and devotion? What idea can a priest give to others, of the sanctity and the majesty of so august a mystery, who shows for it contempt rather than veneration?

But one will say: Seculars complain of priests when the Mass is long. What! is the little devotion that seculars have, to be the rule governing the amount of respect with which the priest should celebrate Mass? I add that if all the priests would celebrate with the respect and the gravity that are due to this great sacrifice, seculars would assuredly be penetrated with a quite different veneration for Mass; and they would not complain of being obliged to hear a Mass that lasts half an hour. But usually seeing only Masses that inspire anything but respect and devotion, they assume the habit of indevotion and languor in the faith. Then if they see a priest celebrate Mass with befitting reverence, that bad habit makes them feel annoyed, and they complain; and those that do not grow tired by remaining several hours at a gaming-table, or in an ante-chamber to pay court to a man of this world, find it irksome to spend half an hour in a church in order to hear Mass. If all the priests, says an author, would celebrate Mass as priests, seculars would hear Mass devoutly as Christians.

How astonishing! God enjoined upon priests of the Old Law to tremble at the mere sight of the sanctuary—*Pavete ad sanctuarium meum;*[12817] and the priests ot Jesus Christ should dare to remain at the altar in the presence of the incarnate Word to offer him as a sacrifice, to hold him in their hands, and to nourish themselves with his adorable flesh,—to do all this with little respect!

For my part, says one of them, I do not fail in what is essential; to fail in the ceremonies is a trifling matter. Let him who speaks in this manner listen to the words that the Lord addressed to those that neglected the ceremonies of the ancient sacrifices: *But if thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep and to do all his commandments and ceremonies which I command thee this day, all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shall thou be in the city, cursed in the field. . . .* [12818] St. Teresa used to say: “For the least of the ceremonies of the Church I would lay down my life a thousand times.”[12819] And the priest should set little value on the ceremonies of Mass! Father Suarez[12820] teaches that the omission of any ceremony in the Mass is a sin; and Doctors agree in saying that a notable negligence in the ceremonies, which must necessarily be the case if one celebrates Mass too hurriedly, is a mortal sin, as well on account of the great irreverence that one commits against the holy Sacrifice as on account of the scandal given thereby to those that are present by making them lose the veneration that is due to the Mass. *To you, O priests, that despise My name, and have said: Wherein have we despised Thy name? . . . In that you say: The table of the Lord is contemptible.*[12821] The contempt that priests have for the altar is the cause why others also show contempt for it.

Because Mass is so badly celebrated, we see that among so many priests there are so few saints. Moses did not emerge from the interview that he had with God without being entirely inflamed with love so that his face was resplendent with light; in the same way no priest should leave the altar without being inflamed with new fervor. But experience shows that the priests who celebrate Mass with little devotion always continue in the same faults. They are seen to be always lukewarm, always impatient, proud, envious, always attached to their own honor, to their own interest, to the pleasures and pastimes of the world. Where is therefore the fruit of so many divine Sacrifices that they offer every day on the altar of the Lord, and of so many Communions in which every day they nourish themselves with the flesh of Jesus Christ?

3. PREPARATION FOR MASS

Cardinal Bona gives us this advice: “The defect is not in the food, but in the disposition of the one that eats it.”[12822] Hence, to come to the point, I say that the first cause why priests commit so many faults and celebrate with so little devotion and respect is that they go to the altar without thinking of what they are going to do; one goes to the altar through a motive of self-interest, through habit, without the proper disposition, and without preparation.

As for the *disposition:* in order to derive benefit from the Mass two things are necessary—the desire to advance in divine love, and detachment from earthly affections. Divine love finds no room in a heart filled with the things of the earth; it cannot enter there.

As for the *preparation:* at least a half-hour's, or, at the very least, a quarter of an hour's, meditation should be devoted to it. What devotion can be brought to the Mass by a priest who goes to celebrate Mass without preparation, passing at once to the altar from worldly occupations and discourse, without even thinking of what he is going to do?

It is indeed remarkable that so many excellent authors—Cardinal Bona, Fathers Molina, Mansi, and Sabatini, and many others—earnestly recommend the preparation for Mass, and have written for this purpose so beautiful considerations and affections; and yet how many are there that make this preparation? I have therefore thought of publishing the following Considerations and Affections as a preparation for Mass for every day of the week. I have tried to make them very short, so that priests who cannot spend much time in preparation may at least read these few reflections before celebrating, and recite the acts that follow them.

4. THANKSGIVING

At the end I have added some other Affections and Prayers for thanksgiving after Mass; for the neglect of making the thanksgiving is also a very deplorable disorder, which is the cause why priests derive so little benefit from the holy Sacrifice. What a pity to see so many priests who, having scarcely said Mass, leave the church or begin to speak about useless things! Authors also strive to recommend the union with God after Communion; but who are the priests that observe this practice? There are some; but they are rare. We even see religious who, living in solitude, say many prayers at other times, but who are careless about uniting themselves to God after Mass.

Many grave authors, however, teach that holy Communion, as long as the sacramental species last, produce more and more fruit in the soul, according as we multiply the acts by which we dispose ourselves to receive graces. Besides, they say that the good acts after Communion are of much more value and merit before God than if they were made at some other time; and with reason, for then the soul is united with Jesus Christ, according to what he himself has said: *He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.*[12823] On his part our Lord, at this moment, seems to be more disposed to distribute his graces. St. Teresa assures us that Jesus Christ after Communion places himself in our soul as upon a throne of grace, and he says to it: *What wilt thou that I should do to thee?*[12824] Dear soul, ask graces of me; I have expressly come to do thee favors; ask of me now what thou wishest of me, and thou wilt obtain it. In the same manner Father Balthasar Alvarez and all the mystical Doctors recommend that one should set a high value on the time that follows Communion. The Venerable John d'Avila, even during his missions, as is related in his life, spent at least two hours in prayer after Mass.

5. A WORD TO THOSE THAT ABSTAIN FROM SAYING MASS THROUGH HUMILITY

Before coming to the Considerations, it seems fitting to add here the opinion expressed by a wise author in regard to those who through humility abstain from celebrating Mass. These priests say: I abstain from celebrating Mass often, because I know that I am unworthy of such a privilege. The author answers them, that it is well to abstain from saying Mass out of humility, but that to do so is not the best act: the acts of humility procure honor to God, but it is a finite honor, which comes from us; while the honor that we render to him in celebrating Mass is an infinite honor, because it is given to God by a divine Person. When, therefore, we take care to prepare ourselves to celebrate Mass with such a devotion as our weakness will permit us, we procure much more glory to God by celebrating Mass than by abstaining from doing so through humility.

PREPARATION FOR MASS

CONSIDERATIONS AND AFFECTIONS FOR EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK

I. FOR SUNDAY

CONSIDERATION

> De stercore erigens pauperem, ut collocet eum cum principibus populi sui.
>
> *Ps.* cxii. 7, 8.
>
> (Raising up the needy from the earth, and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill).

CONSIDER, O priest, that God could not have made you greater in this world than he has done. For to what greater dignity could he have raised you, than to make you his minister on earth for those things that belong to his greater glory? He has allowed you to ascend the altar, to sacrifice thereon his own Son. In how many ways has he not chosen you, in order to make you a priest! Out of innumerable creatures whom he might have made, he has chosen you, and has placed you in the world. Again, from the midst of millions of infidels and heretics he has chosen to place you in the true Church: he has made you a Christian and a Catholic. Moreover, out of so many millions of believers he has made you a priest.

Ah! if God should have honored but one man in the world with the priesthood, with the power of causing the Incarnate Word to descend upon this earth and of delivering souls from hell by absolving them from their sins, in what estimation would not such a priest be held by all? and what thanksgivings would not this priest offer to God? What would he not do out of love for him, in seeing himself chosen before all other men for so great an honor? But consider here, O priest, that the number of other priests in no way diminishes your own dignity and your own obligations.

It is with reason, then, that Almighty God expects every priest to belong entirely to himself. The Holy Scriptures call a priest *homo Dei*, that is, a man who belongs to God alone. The priests of the Old Law extended their hands over the victims to signify that they themselves offered their own lives in sacrifice, in the same way as they sacrificed the lives of the animals: and so in like manner, when the priests of the New Law extend their hands over the *oblata* they likewise declare that they are bound to offer their lives and their entire selves to God, in union with the life of Jesus Christ, whom they offer in the Holy Sacrifice.

Behold, then, you are now about to approach the altar, where by a few words you will call down the divine Word into your hands, and at the sound of your voice the substance of the bread and of the wine will be changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. You are going, moreover, to the altar as the ambassador of the human race, to intercede with God for the Church and for all mankind. Prepare yourself, then, by the following affections.

AFFECTIONS

O my God! it is in me indeed that the words of David have their proper fulfilment: *De stercore erigens pauperem, ut collocet eutti eum principibus populi sui.* For see how I, a miserable sinner, who for my sins have deserved these many years to be imprisoned in hell beneath the devil’s feet, abandoned by ail and by Thee my beloved Lord, am now about to celebrate, that is to offer Thee in sacrifice Thine own Son. Behold, in a few moments the King of Heaven, the Eternal Word, will at my word come down upon the altar. He will come into my hands, to be offered by me, and then to feed me with his own most holy flesh.

God of my soul, I, a priest! I, who have so often turned my back upon Thee! I, who for a mere trifle, or for a brief and empoisoned pleasure, have bartered Thy friendship and renounced Thy grace and Thy love. Ah! how wert Thou able to choose me among so many faithful and innocent souls to be Thy priest?

Enlighten me, I beseech Thee, O Lord; increase my faith: *Noverim te, noverim me.* Make me know who Thou art, who wiliest to give Thyself to me this morning; and who I am, who am about to receive Thee. I pray Thee, through the merits of Thy blood, cleanse my soul from its many stains before I ascend the altar. Pardon me, O my Jesus! before Thou comest into my hands and into my breast. I have offended and displeased Thee, the Sovereign Good: I am sorry for this with all my soul.

I believe, my Redeemer, that Thou art the Son of God; that Thou didst die for me, and that Thou hast left Thyself in the most Holy Sacrament to be sacrificed by Thy priests, and to become our food.

I hope of Thee, through Thy Passion and Thy promises, to love Thee always for the time to come, and to possess Thee in eternity. I love Thee, my dear Redeemer—I love Thee more than myself; and because I love

Thee, I repent with my whole heart of all my offences against Thee, because by them I have offended Thee who art infinite goodness.[12825]

I love Thee, my God; but I love Thee too little.

I would wish to love Thee as much as a priest is bound to love Thee. I desire to receive Thee with that love with which so many loving souls receive Thee. Inflame me, I beseech Thee, with Thy love, and make me all Thine own.

Eternal Father, I offer Thee this Sacrifice in thanksgiving for all Thy benefits to mankind, especially for those conferred on the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, the most Blessed Virgin, on my guardian angel, and on all my patron saints: and I beg of Thee, through the merits of Jesus Christ, holy perseverance, Thy love, and all those other graces that Jesus, Mary, and my holy Advocates ask of Thee for me.

With regard to prayers for others, it will be well for the priest to recommend in the holy Mass those who are named in the following Memento :

MEMENTO OF THE LIVING

I. O Lord! I recommend to Thee the Sovereign Pontiff, and all prelates, confessors, preachers, and priests: grant them zeal and the spirit of their state, that they may give themselves to the salvation of souls.

II. My relatives, friends, and enemies; the dying who are on the point of leaving this world; and all the faithful who are in Thy grace: give them, O Lord, perseverance and the fervor in Thy love.

III. All infidels, heretics, and sinners: give them light and strength, that they may all know and love Thee.

MEMENTO OF THE DEAD

I. I recommend to Thee, O Lord! the souls of my parents, benefactors, friends, and enemies; and of those who are in Purgatory through my fault.

II. The souls of the priests, and especially of those who labored for souls.

III. The souls of those who were most devout to the Passion of Jesus Christ, to the most Holy Sacrament, and to the divine Mother; the souls who are the most forgotten; those who are suffering the most; and those who are nearest to the gate of Paradise.

Each Memento may be repeated every day; at least the intention may be made of recommending those here specified.

FORMA INTENTIONIS A.D. MISSAM CELEBRANDAM

Ad laudem et gloriam Sanctissimæ Trinitatis, in memoriam benedicti Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi, vitæ, passionis, mortis, et resurrectionis, ac in operum et meritorum suorum omniumque Sanctorum unionem; ad laudem quoque et exaltationem Beatissimæ semper Virginis ejus matris Mariæ, cœlestium Angelorum, Sanctorum atque Sanctarum, et signanter N. N. et aliorum devotorum meorum; offero, etiam cum ipsorum beatorum spirituum laudibus, Sanctorum omnium precibus et meritis, nunc et semper, hoc et omnia alia sacrificia, officia, orationes, et bona opera totius mundi, pro meis præsentibus et futuris animæ et corporis necessitatibus; in auxilium et consolationem meam, et in remissionem omnium peccatorum meorum, quorum veram contritionem semper habeo et habere intendo, Conor et cupio; omniumque vivorum et defunctorum meorum parentum, fratrum, sororum, consanguineorum, amicorum, inimicorum, benefactorum in spiritualibus et temporalibus, superiorum, subditorum, ac illorum, quibus fui gravamen, scandalum, et occasio peccandi; pro omni gradu Sanctæ Catholicæ Ecclesiæ ac illius conservatione, augmento et exaltatione; christianorum principum unione et concordia, hæresum exstirpatione, summi Pontificis salute, et animarum in purgatorio existentium liberatione; pro conservatione et augmento omnium observantium religionum, pro conversione omnium infidelium nationum, pro mihi commissis et commendatis. Denique pro illis omnibus vivis atque defunctis, pro quibus Dominus noster Jesus Christus et ejus Beatissima Mater et Virgo Maria sciunt et volunt me debere orare: sic oro et obsecro, sic consecrare et sacrificare intendo et propono, ac juxta intentionem Sanctæ Catholicæ Ecclesiæ et meorum Superiorum pro debito voluntatem.

Ego N. minister, licet indignus. In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen. Cum intentione lucrandi et acquirendi omnes quascumque possum indulgentias.

II. FOR MONDAY

CONSIDERATION

Hoc facite in meam commemorationem.—*Luc.* xxii. 19.

(Do this for a commemoration of me.)

It is the opinion of sound theologians that by these words priests are bound, when celebrating Mass, to call to mind the Passion and death of Jesus Christ. And it seems the Apostle requires the name of those who communicate: *Quotiescumque manducabitis panem hunc et calicem bibetis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis* (I *Cor.* xi. 26). St. Thomas writes that for this very end the Redeemer has left us the most Holy Sacrament, namely, that we might ever remember the blessings that he has obtained for us and the love he has shown in dying for us: *Ut autem tanti beneficii jugis in nobis maneret memoria, Corpus suum in cibum et Sanguinem in potum fidelibus reliquit* (*Off. Ss. Sacr.* lect. 4). And hence the most holy Sacrament is called, by the same holy Doctor, *Passionis memoriale.*

Consider, therefore, O priest, that this most Holy Victim which you are about to sacrifice is that same Lord who gave his blood and his life for you. But the Holy Mass is not only the memorial of the Sacrifice of the Cross, it is the very same Sacrifice; for he who offers it, and the Victim offered, are the same, namely, the Incarnate Word. The manner alone is different. The one was a sacrifice of blood, this is unbloody; in the one Jesus Christ really died, in the other he dies mystically: *Una eademque hostia, sola offerendi ratione diversa (Trident Sess.* xxii. c. 2). Imagine, therefore, when you celebrate, that you are on Calvary, and that you are offering to God the blood and the life of his Son. And when you communicate, imagine that you are drawing from the wounds of the Saviour his precious blood.

Consider, moreover, that in every Mass the work of Redemption is renewed; so much so, that if Jesus Christ had not died once upon the Cross, the celebration of one Mass would procure for the world the very same blessings that we have received from the death of our Redeemer. *Tantum valet* (says St. John Chrysostom) *celebratio Missæ quantum mors Christi in cruce.* So that all the merits of the Passion are applied to men by means of the Sacrifice of the altar, and more abundantly to the priests who offer it.

Hence St. Francis of Assisi (who considered himself unworthy of the priesthood, and therefore would never become a priest) exhorted priests to detach themselves from the things of the world, and to give themselves solely to the love and honor of their God, who had so greatly love and honored them; and he added that those priests were indeed exceedingly unhappy who, whilst they have Jesus so near to them on the altar, cherish in their hearts an attachment for anything of this world: *Videte sacerdotes* (these are the saint's words) *dignitatem vestram; et sicut super omnes propter hoc mysterium honoravit vos Dominus, ita et vos diligite eum, et honorate. Magna infirmitas, quando Jesum sic præsentem habetis, et aliud in toto mundo curatis.*[12826]

AFFECTIONS

O Lord! I am unworthy to appear before Thee; but encouraged by Thy goodness, who has chosen me in spite of my unworthiness to be Thy priest, I come this morning to offer unto Thee Thy Son. I offer Thee, then, O my God! the spotless Lamb, in satisfaction for my sins and for those of all mankind.

Ecce Agnus Dei. Here is the Lamb Thou didst behold one day sacrificed for Thy glory and for our salvation upon the altar of the Cross. For the love of this Victim, so dear to Thee, apply his merits to my soul, and pardon me all the offences, great and small, that I have committed against Thee. I grieve with my whole heart for having offended Thee, the Infinite Goodness.

And Thou, my Jesus, come and wash away in Thy blood all my stains, ere I receive Thee this morning. *Domine, non sum dingus, ut intres sub tectum meum; sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea.* I am not worthy to receive Thee; but Thou, O heavenly physician, art able with one word to heal all my wounds. Come and heal me.

Erravi sicut ovis quæ periit. I am that sheep who have wilfully chosen to damn myself, by flying away from Thee, my Redeemer; but Thou art the good shepherd, who hast given Thy life to save me. *Quære servum tuum, quia mandata tua non sum oblitus.* Seek me, O my Jesus; do not abandon me. Seek me, and bind me on Thy shoulders, for I firmly purpose to serve and love Thee as much as I am able.

Thou has said, *Oves meæ vocem meam audiunt, et non rapiet eas quisque de manu mea.* Thou art calling me to love Thee: behold, I leave all and come to Thee, my Life. I desire to obey Thee in all things. I renounce all the pleasures of the world, since Thou dost deign to give me this morning Thy most holy flesh to be my food.

I love Thee, O my Jesus, above every good; and I desire to receive Thee, in order to love Thee more. Thou givest Thyself wholly to me; I give mvself all to Thee. Thou shalt be always my all, my only good, my only love.

O Mary, my Mother, obtain for me a portion of that humility and fervor with which thou didst receive Jesus in thy Holy Communions.

III. FOR TUESDAY

CONSIDERATION

> Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi bene complacui.—*Matt.* xvii. 5.
>
> (This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased).

In the Old Law, men honored God by many sacrifices; but in the New, God is more honored by one single Mass than by all the old sacrifices, for these were but the shadow and type of our Sacrifice of the altar.

In the Holy Mass, God is honored as much as he deserves to be honored, since the same infinite honor is paid to him again that Jesus Christ paid to him when he sacrificed himself upon the Cross. One single Mass gives more honor to God than have given to him, or will give him all the prayers and penances of the saints, the labors of the apostles, all the torments of the martyrs and all the burning love of the seraphim and of the divine Mother. Now, it is this honor, O priest, which God desires to receive this morning from you.

It is also just that God should be thanked for all the immense blessings which, in his infinite goodness, he has conferred upon us. But what fitting thanksgiving can we miserable creatures offer to him? If the Lord had only but once shown us one single mark of affection, even then he would deserve an infinite thanksgiving from us, inasmuch as that affection is the gift and favor of an infinite God. But see he has given us a way of not remaining overwhelmed with confusion in the midst of such obligations, and of thanking him worthily. And how? By offering to him Jesus in the Mass. In this way God is fully thanked and satisfied.

This great Victim which is offered to him is his own very Son, in whom he finds his delight. The sacrifice is of the life of a God, who in the Consecration and in the Communion is sacrificed by a mystical death. It was in this way that David thanked God for all the graces he had received: *Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi? calicem salutaris accipiam* (*Ps.* cxv. 13). And so Jesus himself thanked his divine Father for all the blessings conferred upon mankind: *Et accepto calice gratias egit et dixit: Accipite, et dividite inter vos* (*Luke,* xxii. 17).

AFFECTIONS

O my God and my Creator, how couldst Thou choose me to honor Thee by means of the Sacrifice of Thy Son, when in past times I have so dishonored Thee by the insults I have offered Thee? Instead of punishing me in hell, Thou hast honored me in making me a priest and the minister of Thy glory.

Since, then, Thou dost deign and art pleased to receive this great Sacrifice from my hands, I unite my poor heart to the Heart of Jesus Christ, and in his name I offer it to Thee, in acknowledgment of Thy supreme dominion.

Would that I could see Thy infinite majesty adored and loved by all men! May the honor that I pay Thee this morning, in sacrificing to Thee Thy Son, make amends for all the dishonor that men have shown and show Thee by their sins!

I intend at the same time to thank Thee by this Mass for all the blessings conferred upon the world, and especially on me a miserable sinner, who have deserved for my ingratitude to be abandoned by Thee, for I have gone on multiplying my sins, and Thou hast continued to increase Thy graces to me. I thank Thee, O infinite Goodness; rather I will say, Jesus Christ thanks Thee for me.

Enlighten me, I beseech Thee, O Lord, this morning, through the merits of Jesus Christ; inflame me with Thy love, and detach me from the earth: do not allow me any longer to resist so many winning arts of Thy love. I love Thee, O Sovereign Good, with all my heart. I desire to leave all, in order to please Thee. O God, worthy of infinite love, make known to me, I pray Thee, more and more the greatness of Thy goodness, so that I may become evermore enamoured of Thee, and may labor to please Thee in all things without reserve.

Thou hast shown Thyself enamoured of my soul, and shall I be able to love any but Thee? No, my Lord; henceforward I will live for Thee alone: I will love Thee only, who indeed deservest all my love. O Eternal Father, I hope in the blood of Jesus Christ that Thou by Thy grace wilt carry this my desire into effect. Thou hast shown me so many favors when I was flying away from Thee; much more then am I bound to hope from Thee, now that I seek and desire nought but Thy love. O Mary, my Mother, who carried in thy bosom that God whom I am going this morning to receive, help me to receive him with humility and love.

IV. FOR WEDNESDAY

CONSIDERATION

> Ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris.—I *John*, ii. 2.
>
> (He is the propitiation for our sins.)

Consider that the punishment due to sins is remitted by the Sacrifice of the altar, and immense benefits are obtained in favor of sinners. Unhappy should we be were there not this great Sacrifice to withhold the divine justice from inflicting those just chastisements that our sins deserve. It is certain that all the victims of the Old Law were not able to appease the indignation of God against sinners. *Numquid placari potest Dominus in millibus arietum?* (*Mich.* vi. 7.) Even had the lives of all men and all angels been sacrificed, the divine justice would not have been worthily satisfied for one single sin committed by a creature against its Creator. Jesus Christ alone was able to make satisfaction for our sins. *Ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris.* And for this end the eternal Father sent him into the world, that by becoming mortal man he might appease for sinners. And this sacrifice is renewed in every Mass that is celebrated.

Consider, therefore, O priest, your great office, to be the mediator between God and sinners, by offering upon the altar the life and merits of Jesus Christ, for the sake of which the Lord is moved to grant to sinners light and strength, and then the pardon of their sins: *Hac oblatione placatus Dominus, gratiam et donum pœnitentiæ concedens, crimina et peccata* *etiam ingentia dimittit* (*Trid. Sess.* xxii. c. 2). Oh, how much more powerfully does the voice of the innocent blood of the Redeemer cry out for pity on us, than did the blood of Abel cry out for vengeance against Cain! *Accessistis ad Mediatorem Jesum, et sanguinis aspersionem melius loquentem quam Abel* (*Heb.* xii. 22.)

AFFECTIONS

O great God, Thou art indignant against sinners, and with too great reason; for they repay Thee with ingratitude for all that great love Thou hast shown them. But if the sins of the world are great, greater is the offering and the gift which this morning I am about to present to Thee: *Non sicut delictum, ita et donum* (*Rom.* v. 15). I offer to Thee this morning the Sacrifice of Thine own Son: mav this Victim, so dear to Thee, appease Thee, and move Thee to have pity on all poor sinners, who either know Thee not, or if they know Thee, will not love Thee, and live deprived of Thy grace. Give them light and strength to come out of the miserable state in which they are blindly living.

I pray to Thee for all, but especially for myself who have been favored by Thee more highly than others, and who have been more ungrateful than others in offending and despising Thee. For the love of Jesus Christ, pardon me, O my God! all my sins, mortal and venial: all acts of impatience, my untruths, my intemperance, the distractions and negligences at Mass, in my Office, and in prayer. I repent of them all, because they have offended Thee, the infinite Goodness, who dost deserve from all men, but especially from me, a priest, infinite love.

I love Thee, infinite Goodness; I love Thee above all things; and I promise Thee to be willing to die rather than wilfully to give Thee the slightest displeasure. Ah, my Jesus, Thy death, Thy blood, are my hope. By Thy merits I ask of Thee and I hope for the grace to be faithful to Thee, and to love Thee with all my heart, and to love none but Thee. Most holy Mary, may thy assistance accompany me now that I go to offer this great Sacrifice to God.

V. FOR THURSDAY

CONSIDERATION

> In omnibus divites facti estis in illo.—I *Cor.* i. 5.
>
> (In all things you are made rich in Him.)

Consider that by means of the Holy Mass Almighty God hears more quickly the prayers of his priests. God indeed at all times, as soon as he is asked through the merits of Jesus Christ, dispenses his graces; but St. John Chrysostom says that during the Holy Mass he dispenses them more abundantly at the prayers of the priest, because it is then that these prayers have greater weight, from being united to the prayers of Jesus himself, who is the chief priest, and who offers himself in this Sacrifice in order to obtain graces for us.

According to the Council of Trent,[12827] the time of the celebration of Mass is precisely that time in which the Lord is on the throne of grace, to which we are exhorted by the Apostle to have recourse, that we may obtain the Divine mercy and find grace: *Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno* (*Heb.* iv. 16).

St. John Chrysostom[12828] says that the angels also wait for the time of Mass to intercede with greater efficacy in our favor; and he adds, that what is not obtained during Mass is with difficulty obtained at any other time.

Oh, what treasures of graces may a priest obtain for himself and others if he beseeches the Lord with confidence when he celebrates at the altar! The Venerable Father Antony de Colellis said: “When I am celebrating and hold in my hands my Jesus Christ, I obtain of him whatever I desire.”

In a word, St. Paul declares that in Jesus Christ we obtain all riches and every grace, if *we* ask the Father for them through his merits: *In omnibus divites facti estis in illo; ita ut nihil vobis desit in ulla gratia* (I *Cor.* i. 5, 7). But this is especially the case when the priest honors Almighty God and propitiates him by the sacrifice of his own Son. And if the Father precisely by means of the Mass gives us in the most Holy Sacrament this same Son who has been sacrificed to him, how can he, having given us his Son, deny us any other grace? *Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?* (*Rom.* viii. 32.)

AFFECTIONS

O miserable being that I have been! how many graces have I lost, O my God, from having neglected to ask Thee for them in the Masses that I have celebrated! But since Thou now givest me light, I will no longer be negligent in this respect. I unite, then, O eternal Father, my prayers with those of Jesus Christ; and for the love of this Thy Son, whom this morning I am going to sacrifice to Thee, I pray Thee, in the first place, to grant me pardon for all my sins, of which I repent with my whole heart: and then make me know how infinitely Thou art deserving of being loved, and the immense obligation I am under of loving Thee for Thy goodness and the love Thou hast borne me: and give me strength to detach myself from all earthly affections, and to occupy my heart in the love of Thee alone, the sovereign Good, who hast loved me so much.

I pray Thee also to enlighten those who know Thee not, and who are living deprived of Thy grace. Give to all the gift of Thy grace. Give to all the gift of Thy holy fear. O infinite love of my God, make Thyself known, make Thyself loved.

And do Thou, my dear Saviour, make me wholly Thine before I die, and do not allow me to be ever again separated from Thee. Ah, my Jesus, as long as I live I am in this danger. I do not wish to lose Thee more. Beg of Thy Father to let me die sooner than to turn my back on Thee again. Beg of him to bind me ever more closely to Thyself, who hast in so many ways obliged me to love Thee. My Jesus, Thou art my love and my hope. Grant that every time I behold Thee on the altar I may say to Thee with my whole heart that which St. Philip Neri said when he saw Thee in the most Holy Sacrament—“Behold my love, behold my love, behold all my love.” Most Holy Mary, do thou also pray for me. I am a priest. Make me by thy intercession that which a priest ought to be, all for Jesus Christ.

VI. FOR FRIDAY

CONSIDERATION

Accipite et comedite; hoc est corpus meura.—*Matt.* xxvi. 26.

(Take ye, and eat: This is My body.)

Consider that a priest who says Mass with devotion is in a special manner sanctified by it; for in the Mass he is admitted to an audience with the divine Majesty, and he converses familiarly with the Incarnate Word: it is then that he holds him in his hands, and speaks to him confidentially, without ceremony and without attendants.

Moreover, it is then that he is allowed to feed himself with his own hands on the most holy flesh of Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood; since it was to priests especially that the Redeemer said: *Accipite et comedite; hoc est corpus meum.*

The holy Communion is given also to lay persons, but they are not allowed to take the most holy Sacrament themselves, and to communicate whenever they please: they are obliged to receive Communion from the hands of the priest, and when the priest is pleased to give it to them; but the priest can take Jesus Christ and communicate himself when he pleases.

Our Lord when speaking of the Sacraments, and especially of the Eucharist, forbade his priests to give it to sinners: *Nolite dare sanctum canibus, neque ponatis margaritis vestras ante porcos* (Matt. vii. 6). *Margaritas vestras:* by pearls are signified the consecrated particles—but observe the word *vestras:* this shows that the Sacrament of the Altar is, as it were, the property of the priest; for the priest takes it out of the tabernacle when he pleases, carries it where he likes; he feeds himselt on it when he wills, and gives it to whom he wills. In a word, the priest holds the keys of all the divine treasures, to make use of them when he likes; for as St. John Chrysostom says, in the most Holy Sacrament there is the whole treasure of the goodness of God: *Dicendo Eucharistiam, omnem benignitatis Dei thesaurum aperio.* So that it seems when the priest celebrates he makes himself in a certain way the master of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament: *De toto Deo dives est.*

Jesus Christ, then, belongs wholly to priests: but how many priests are there who belong wholly to Jesus Christ? O God! the greater number of them, how do they love their Saviour who has so loved and exalted them? O God, how many poor country people are there, poor peasants, who love Jesus Christ more than so many priests! Alas, what suffering for a priest who is damned, when in hell he shall find himself forever at a distance and separated from Jesus Christ, who on this earth was so near to him, and belonged entirely to him!

AFFECTIONS

O my dear Jesus, Thou didst make Thyself a Victim on the Cross that Thou mightest be sacrificed by me upon the altar, and mightest fill me with Thy divine blood. In short, in making me Thy priest, Thou hast made Thyself all mine; Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me; so that I can take Thee when I will, and feed myself on Thee when I will.

My beloved Redeemer, increase my faith; make me know who Thou art, when I hold Thee hidden in the Sacrament in my hands; when Thou art close to me on the altar; when I place Thy body in my mouth, and approach my lips to Thy blood. How is it that I do not burn with love in thinking of Thee who art my God, and who art pleased to be treated with such familiarity by me, as even to become my meat and drink? Thou wert not satisfied in giving all Thy blood and Thy life upon the Cross for love of me: it is Thy will that I should drink this very blood, in order to unite myself and to become one with Thee. *Ipsa re nos suum efficit corpus,* says St. John Chrysostom.[12829]

Enlighten me, I beseech Thee, O my God, and help me to be no longer ungrateful to Thine exceeding love. Detach me from the earth. Grant that I may no longer put any obstacles to the abundance of graces which Thou dost dispense to those who receive Thee with love in holy Communion. I love Thee, my Jesus, who died for me and hast become my food. Eternal Father, by the merits of Jesus Christ, whom I am about to offer to Thee this morning, give me, all those graces which I require in order to be wholly Thine. And do thou, most holy Mary, pray to Jesus for me.

VII. FOR SATURDAY

CONSIDERATION

> Festinans descende; quia hodie in domo tua oportet me manere.—*Luc.* xix. 5.
>
> (Make haste and come down, for this day I must abide in thy house.)

Imagine that Jesus Christ says to you this morning those very words which he once addressed to Zaccheus: “Be quick, come to the altar; for I desire this day to enter into the house of your soul, to preserve its life, to heal its wounds, to inflame it with My love.” All this is done by the divine Sacrament. It is this bread that gives life to the soul: *Panis quem ego dabo, caro mea est pro mundi vita* (*John,* vi. 52). It is the medicine that frees and preserves us from sins. *Antidotum quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis, et a peccatis mortalibus præservemur* (*Trid. Sess.* xiii. c. 2). It is the fire that inflames the soul with holy love, so that we all (as St. John Chrysostom says), if only we place no obstacle, should leave the altar *flammam spirantes, terribiles effecti diabolo.*[12830]

But, O my God, how is it that so many priests who every morning feed on this heavenly bread, instead of burning with divine love, are seen to be always more attached to the world, and go always to the altar with the very same wilful venial sins? All proceeds from this, that they go to say Mass without the intention and the desire of becoming saints, or else for interested motives, or by way of routine. And therefore they always commit the same faults; and so they approach their death, and go to give an account to Jesus Christ of the lukewarm and disorderly way in which their whole priestly life was passed.

O priest! if you are one of these, consider that this heavenly bread will not help you to become a saint, but will, through your own fault, make you more guilty before the divine tribunal. Amend your life; consider that death is nigh. Consider those attachments and those faults that hinder your progress in the divine love, and do away with them. Remember that you are a priest; remember that God has chosen you for his favorite, and that he could not have made you greater.

AFFECTIONS

O God of infinite majesty, Thou wiliest to come this morning to lodge in my soul; but those houses in which Thou art pleased to dwell ought to be holy: *Domum tuam decet sanctitudo, Domine* (*Ps.* xcii. 5). How shall I, who am so imperfect and so full of faults, be able to receive Thee? *Domine, non sum dignus ut infres sub tectum meum.*

Ah, my Redeemer, if I had now to appear before Thy judgment-seat, what good account could I render Thee of so many Masses said, and of the years during which I have been a priest? Wait, O Lord, do not judge me yet: *Non intres in judicium cum servo tuo.* For pity’s sake, wait for me yet a little while: *Dimitte me, ut plangam paululum dolorem meum, antequam vadam, et non revertar.* Prolong my life still a while, that I may weep over the ingratitude with which I have treated Thee, O my Jesus, up to the present time. Thou hast made me a priest; but what kind of priestly life have I hitherto led? With so many Masses and Communions, I ought to have become all on fire with Thy love, all pure and holy. Thou hast not failed on Thy part; the failure has been through my own fault, and because of the obstacles I have thrown in the way of Thy grace. My life has not honored Thee—no, but has dishonored Thee in the sight of heaven and earth. Thou hast snatched me out of the world, and I have loved the world more than worldlings themselves. Have mercy on me, O my God! Do not abandon me, for I desire to amend my life. I repent with my whole heart of all the displeasure I have given Thee. I will begin to love Thee truly; I will begin this very morning, on which I am again about to receive Thee.

I love Thee, O God of my soul; I love Thee, my Saviour, who, in order to save me, and to make me Thy priest, didst give Thy life: *Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum, sed tantum dic verbo et sanabitur anima mea.* Pardon me, O my Jesus, and heal me. Detach me from the world, and bind me closely to Thyself; make me live as a priest, Thou who hast made me a priest. Thy merits, my dear Redeemer, are my hope. Eternal Father, this morning I offer to Thee Jesus Christ, that Thou mayest make me all Thine own. Most holy Mary, pray to Jesus for me.

THANKSGIVING AFTER HOLY MASS FOR EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK

AFFECTIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK

I. FOR SUNDAY

MY dear Jesus, my Redeemer and my God! before celebrating I adored Thee in heaven, considering Thee in Thy glory enthroned at the right hand of Thy eternal Father: now I adore Thee hidden within my breast under the humble appearances of bread and wine, and thus made the meat and drink of my soul.

Welcome, my Lord, to my soul. I thank Thee with my whole heart: would that I could thank Thee as Thou deservest! But what fitting thanksgiving could a poor peasant offer who should behold his king enter into his cabin to visit him? he could but cast himself at his feet, and remain there prostrate in silence, in astonishment, and in thankfulness for this condescension. I cast myself, therefore, at Thy feet, O my divine King, O my Jesus, and I adore Thee from the depths of my misery. I unite my adoration to that which the Most Holy Mary offered Thee when she received Thee into her most sacred womb: and would that I could also love Thee as she loved Thee!

Ah, my Redeemer, in obedience to my words, Thou hast this morning come down from heaven into my hands; and I, how often by disobeying Thy commandments have I ungratefully turned my back upon Thee, and have renounced Thy grace and Thy love! My Jesus, I hope that now at this moment Thou hast forgiven me; but if through my fault Thou hast not yet pardoned me, pardon me this morning; for I repent with my whole heart of having offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness.

O my Jesus, would that I had always loved Thee! At least from the day 011 which I said my first Mass I should have burned with love for Thee. Thou hast chosen me from the midst of so many millions of men to be Thy priest, Thy favorite: what couldst Thou have done more to make Thyself beloved by me? But I thank Thee, my love, that Thou givest me time to do that which I have not done. I wish to love Thee with all my heart. No, I will not cherish in my heart any affection save for Thee, who hast so greatly obliged me to love Thee.

Deus meus et omnia. O my God, what are riches, honors, the pleasures of the world! Thou art my All. Thou shalt be henceforth my only good, my only love. I will say to Thee with St. Paulinus, *Sibi habeant divitias suas divites, regna sua reges: mihi Christus gloria et regnum est.* Let the kings and rich ones of this world delight indeed in their kingdoms and in their riches; Thou alone, O my Jesus, shalt be my treasurer and my kingdom.

Eternal Father, for the love of that Son whom I have this morning sacrificed to Thee and received into my heart, give me holy perseverance in Thy grace and the gift of Thy holy love. I recommend to Thee again all my relatives, friends, and enemies. I recommend to Thee the souls in Purgatory, and all poor sinners.[12831]

Most Holy Mary, my Mother, do thou obtain for me holy perseverance and the love of Jesus Christ.

INVOCATIONS

Anima Christi sanctissima, sanctifica me
Corpus Christi sacratissimum, custodi me
Sanguis Christi pretiosissime, inebria me
Aqua lateris Christi purissima, lava me.
Passio Christi amarissima, conforta me.
O bone Jesu! exaudi me:
Intra vulnera tua absconde me.
Ne permittas me separari a te.
Ab hoste maligno defende me.
In hora mortis meæ voca me.
Et jube me venire ad te.
Ut cum Sanctis et Angelis tuis collaudem te.
Per infinita sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

VARIOUS PRAYERS

1. PRECATIUNCULA SACERDOTIBUS QUOTIDIE LEGENDA, UT IN DIES DEO FERVENTIUS DESERVIANT.[12832]

ADJUVET nos gratia tua, omnipotens Deus, ut, qui officium sacerdotale suscepimus, digne ac devote tibi in omni puritate et conscientia bona famulari valeamus; et si non possumus in tanta innocentia vitæ conversari ut debemus, concede nobis tamen, digne flere mala, quæ gessimus, et, in spiritu humilitatis ac bonæ voluntatis proposito tibi ferventius de cætero deservire.

2. A.D. BEATISSIMAM VIRGINEM MARIAM PRECATIO

O serenissima et inclyta Virgo Maria, Mater Domini nostri Jesu Christi, Regina cœli et terræ, quæ eumdem Creatorem omnium creaturarum in tuo sancto utero digna fuisti portare, cujus idem veracissimum corpus et sanguinem ego indignus sumere præsumpsi! rogo te, per virginalem humilitatem tuam et per passionem et mortem ejusdem Filii tui, ut apud ipsum pro me misero peccatore intercedere digneris: ut quidquid in hoc sacrosancto Sacrificio irreverenter, ignoranter, negligenter, vel incaute commisi, aut etiam omisi, tuis sanctissimis precibus mihi dignetur indulgere. Amen.

3. A.D. VULNERA CHRISTI ORATIO

> Rogo te, Domine Jesu, per illa salutifera vulnera tua, quæ passus es in cruce pro salute nostra, ex quibus emanavit ille pretiosus sanguis, quo sumus redempti, vulnera hanc animam meam peccatricem, pro qua etiam mori dignatus es; vulnera eam igneo et potentissimo telo tuæ nimiæ charitatis. Confige cor meum jaculo tui amoris, ut dicat tibi anima mea: Charitate tua vulnerata sum, ita ut ex ipso vulnere amoris tui uberrimæ fluant lacrymæ die ac nocte. Percute, Domine, percute, obsecro, hanc durissimam mentem meam pia et valida cuspide dilectionis tuæ, et altius ad intima penetra potenti virtute. Qui vivis et regnas Deus, in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

4. SALUTATIONES A.D. OMNIA MEMBRA CHRISTI ET SUI IPSIUS A.D. EUM COMMENDATIO

Salve, tremendum cunctis potestatibus Caput Domini nostri Jesu Christi, Salvatoris nostri, pro nobis coronatum et arundine percussum! Salve, pretiosissima Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi Facies, pro nobis sputis et alapis cæsa! Salvete, benignissimi Domini Jesu Christi, Salvatoris nostri, Oculi, pro nobis lacrymis perfusi! Salve, mellifluum Os, guttuque suavissimum Domini nostri Jesu Christi, pro nobis felle et aceto potatum! Salvete, Aures nobilissimæ Domini Jesu Christi, Salvatoris nostri, pro nobis contumeliis et opprobriis affectæ! Salve, Collum humile Jesu Chiisti, pro nobis colaphyzatum, Dorsumque sanctissimum, pro nobis flagellatum! Salvete, venerabiles Domini nostri Jesu Christi Manus et Brachia, pro nobis in cruce extensa! Salve, Pectus mitissimum Domini nostri Jesu Christi, Salvatoris nostri, pro nobis in passione conturbatum! Salve, Latus gloriosum Domini nostri Jesu Christi, pro nobis lancea militis perforatum! Salvete, Domini Jesu Christi, Salvatoris nostri, sacra misericordiæ Genua, pro nobis in orationibus flexa! Salvete, Domini Jesu Christi, Salvatoris nostri, Pedes adorandi, pro nobis clavis affixi! Salve, totum Corpus Jesu Christi, pro nobis in cruce suspensum, vulneratum, mortuum et sepultum! Salve, Sanguis pretiosissime, de corpore Jesu Christi, Salvatoris nostri pro nobis effusus! Salve, sanctissima Domini nostri Jesu Christi Anima, in cruce pro nobis in manus Patris commendata!

In eadem commendatione tibi commendo hodie et quotidie animam meam, vitam meam, cor et corpus meum, omnes sensus et actus meos, omnes amicos, benefactores et consanguineos meos, animas parentum, fratrum, sororum, et omnium amicorum, ac inimicorum meorum: ut nos protegere, liberare et defendere digneris ab omnibus insidiis inimicorum nostrorum, visibilium et invisibilium, nunc et in perpetuum. Amen.

O infinite Goodness! O infinite Love! A God has given himself wholly to me, and has made himself all mine! Unite, O my soul, all thy affections and bind thyself to thy Lord, who has come on purpose to unite himself to thee and to be loved by thee.

My dear Redeemer, I embrace Thee; my treasure, my life, I bind myself to Thee; do not Thou disdain me. Miserable being that I am, hitherto I have driven Thee from my soul, and have separated myself from Thee. But for the future I will rather lose my life a thousand times than lose Thee, my sovereign Good. Forget, O Lord, my many offences against Thee, and pardon me. I repent with my whole soul; would that I could die with grief!

But notwithstanding my offences, I feel that Thou art bidding me to love Thee: *Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde.* Ah, my Lord, who am I, that Thou dost so greatly desire to be loved by me? But if this indeed be Thy desire, I wish to please Thee. Thou didst die for me, Thou hast given Thy flesh to be my food. I leave all; I bid farewell to all; and I embrace Thee, my beloved Saviour: *Quis me separabit a caritate Christi?*

My beloved Redeemer, and whom shall I desire to love, if I love not Thee, who art infinite Beauty, infinite Goodness, worthy of infinite love? *Quid mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.* Yes, my God, where can I find in heaven or on earth a good greater than Thyself, or one who has loved me more than Thou?

Adveniat regnum tuum. Take possession, I beseech Thee, my Jesus, this very morning, of my whole heart; give it all to Thee. Do Thou possess it always and entirely: banish from it every love that is not for Thee. Thee alone do I choose for my portion and my riches. *Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.* Suffer me to beg and to ask of Thee always with St. Ignatius Loyola, *Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis.* Give me Thy love and Thy grace; that is, grant that I may love Thee and be loved by Thee, and with this I am rich enough; I desire and ask Thee for nothing more.

But Thou knowest my weakness, Thou knowest my past treachery; help me with Thy grace, and do not allow me ever again to separate myself from Thy holy love: *Ne permittas me separari a te.* I say it to Thee now, and I desire to repeat it always; and do Thou give me the grace to be able always to repeat it: *Ne permittas me, ne permittas me separari a te.*

Mary, most holy, my hope, do thou obtain for me from God these two graces—holy perseverance and holy love. I ask thee for nothing more.

III. FOR TUESDAY

Ah, my Lord, how could I have so many times offended Thee by my sins, when I knew that sin so greatly displeased Thee! Pardon me, I beseech Thee, by the merits of Thy Passion, and bind me by Thy love wholly to Thyself: let not the stench of my sins drive Thee from me. Make me, I pray Thee, know always more and more how great a good Thou art, the love Thou deservest, and the affection Thou hast borne me.

I desire, my Jesus, to sacrifice myself entirely to Thee, who didst sacrifice Thyself wholly for me. Thou by so many artifices hast bound me to Thyself; do not allow me ever again to disjoin myself from Thee. I love Thee, my God, and I will love Thee always. And now that I have known Thy love, how should I be able to live any longer at a distance from Thee and deprived of Thy grace?

I thank Thee for having borne with me when I was not in Thy grace, and for now giving me time to love Thee. If I had died then, I could never have loved Thee more. But now that I am able to love Thee, I have the will to love Thee, O my Jesus, as much as I am able and I desire to do everything to please Thee. I love Thee, infinite Goodness, I love Thee more than myself; and because I love Thee I give Thee my body, my soul, and my whole will. Do with me and dispose of me, O Lord, as Thou wilt: I accept all. Enough, if Thou allowest me to love Thee always; I ask Thee for nothing more. Give to those who wish for them the goods of this earth: I desire and seek for nought but perseverance in Thy grace, and Thy holy love.

O eternal Father, trusting in the promise made me by Thy Son, *Amen, amen, dico vobis, si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis* (*John*, xvi. 23), I ask of Thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, holy perseverance, and the grace to love Thee with my whole heart, and perfectly to fulfil henceforward Thy will. O my Jesus, Thou hast sacrificed Thyself wholly for me, and hast given me Thyself, in order that I should give myself to Thee, and sacrifice my entire will to Thee: for I hear Thee saying to me, *Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi* (*Prov.* xxiii. 26).

Behold, O Lord, behold my heart, my will; I give and sacrifice it all to Thee. But Thou knowest how weak I am: come to my assistance; suffer me not to take back again my will from Thee, by sinning against Thee. No, do not let it be: make me love Thee always, make me love Thee as much as a priest ought to love Thee: and as Thy Son when dying was able to say, *Consummatum est,* grant that I also at my death may be able to say, that from this day forward I have fulfilled Thy holy will. Grant that in all temptations and danger of offending Thee, I may never cease to have recourse to Thee, and to beg Thee to assist me by the merits of Jesus Christ.

O Mary, most holy, obtain for me this grace, to recommend myself always in temptations to God and to thyself, who art all-powerful with God.

IV. FOR WEDNESDAY

Ah! my Jesus, I see how much Thou hast done and suffered for me, to put me under the necessity of loving Thee; and I have been so ungrateful to Thee! How many times, for the sake of some miserable pleasure or fancy, have I bartered away Thy grace, and have lost Thee, O God of my soul! I have been grateful enough to creatures; to Thee alone have I shown ingratitude. My dear God, pardon me: I am sorry; I grieve with my whole heart, and I hope for pardon from Thee, because Thou art infinite goodness. If Thou wert not infinite goodness, I should lose hope, and I should not even have the courage to ask Thee to have mercy on me.

I thank Thee, my love, for not having sent me to hell, as I deserved; and for having borne with me so long a time. Ah, Thy patience with me, O my God, should alone suffice to fill me with love to Thee. And who indeed but Thou, who art a God of infinite mercy, would have borne with me? I see that Thou hast been following me for so long, in order that I should love Thee. I will no longer resist Thy love: behold, I give myself up entirely to Thee. I have offended Thee enough; now I wish to love Thee. I love Thee, my sovereign Good; I love Thee, infinite Goodness; I love Thee, my God, worthy of infinite love; and I desire to repeat, in time and in eternity, I love Thee, I love Thee.

Alas, O God, how many years have I lost, in which I might have loved Thee and have gained an increase of Thy love; and I have spent them in offending Thee! But Thy blood, O my Jesus, is my hope. I hope it will never be my lot again to cease to love Thee. I know not how long I have still to live; but the years that remain to me, be they few or many, I consecrate entirely to Thee. For this end Thou hast waited for me until now. Yes, my beloved Lord, I wish to please Thee; I wish to love Thee always, and to love Thee alone. What are pleasures, riches, honors? Thou alone, my God, Thou alone, art and shalt be always, my love, my all.

But I can do nothing except Thou helpest me by Thy grace. Wound, I beseech Thee, my heart; inflame it wholly with Thy holy love, and bind it entirely to Thyself; but so bind it that it can never separate itself again from Thee. Thou hast promised to love those who love Thee: *Ego diligentes me diligo* (*Prov.* viii. 17). Now I love Thee: forgive my boldness, love me in return, and do not allow me to do anything that would force Thee to cease to love me: *Qui non diligit, manet in morte* (I *John,* iii. 14). Deliver me from this death, to remain deprived of the power of loving Thee. Make me love Thee always, in order that Thou mayest be always able to love me: and thus may our love be everlasting, and may no breach occur between me and Thee. Grant it, O eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ. Grant it, my Jesus, by Thy merits: through them I hope to love Thee always, and to be always loved by Thee. Mary, Mother of God and my Mother, do thou also pray to Jesus for me.

V. FOR THURSDAY

O God of infinite Majesty, behold at Thy feet a traitor who has so often offended Thee. Thou hast so many times pardoned me, and I, notwithstanding the graces and lights that Thou hast given me, have begun again to offend Thee. Others have sinned in the midst of darkness, I in the midst of light: but listen to this Thy Son, whom I have this morning sacrificed to Thee, and who now is reposing within my breast. He is asking of Thee mercy and pardon for me. Pardon me for the love of Jesus Christ; for I repent with my whole heart of having offended Thee, the infinite Goodness.

I know that, for the love of Jesus Christ, Thou art pleased to make peace with sinners: *Complacuit per eum reconciliare omnia in ipsum* (*Coloss.* i. 20). For the love, then, of Jesus Christ, be reconciled also to me: *Ne projicias me a facie tua :* Drive me not away from Thy face, as I should have deserved; pardon me, and change my heart: *Cor mundum crea in me, Deus.* Do so at least for Thine honor’s sake, since Thou hast made me Thy priest, Thy minister, whose office it is to sacrifice to Thee Thine own Son. Make me live as a priest. Consume, I pray Thee, in the flames of Thy holy love, and destroy within me, all earthly affections. Grant that henceforth I may be grateful for the many graces Thou hast bestowed on me, and for the exceeding love Thou hast borne me. If in past time I have despised Thy friendship, now I value it more than all the kingdoms of the world, and I prefer that which pleases Thee to all the riches and pleasures of heaven and earth.

O my Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, detach me from all things. It is Thy will that Thy priests should be wholly separated from the world, in order to live for Thee alone, and for the things of Thy glory: *Segregate mihi Saulum et Barnabam in opus ad quod assumpsi eos* (*Acts,* xiii. 2). The same I know is Thy will for me. I resolve to do it; but do Thou help me with Thy grace. Draw me wholly to Thyself. Give me patience and resignation in difficulties and in contradictions. Give me the spirit of mortifying myself for Thy love. Give me the spirit of true humility, that I may even rejoice in being considered vile and full of faults: *Doce me facere voluntatem tuam:* Teach me to do Thy will, and then tell me what Thou willest of me, for I will do all. Allow, O my God, a sinner to love Thee, who in past times has offended Thee too much, but who now desires to love Thee truly, and to be wholly Thine. O eternal God, I hope to love Thee forever; and therefore also I wish to love Thee exceedingly in this life, that I may love Thee exceedingly in eternity.

And because I love Thee, I would see Thee known and loved by all. And therefore, O Lord, since Thou hast made me Thy priest, give me the grace to labor for Thee, and to gain Thee souls. I hope for all, through Thy merits, O my Jesus Christ, and through thy intercession, O my Mother Mary.

VI. FOR FRIDAY

My Jesus, how couldst Thou choose me for Thy priest from the midst of so many men?—me, who have so often turned my back on Thee and despised Thy grace for a mere nothing? I am sorry for it, my beloved Saviour, from my whole soul. Tell me, hast Thou pardoned me? I hope so. Yes, Thou hast been my Redeemer, not once only, but as often as Thou hast pardoned me. O my Saviour, would that I had never offended Thee! Let me hear those words Thou didst say to Magdalene: *Remittuntur tibi peccata tua.* Let me hear that Thou hast reinstated me in Thy grace, in giving me a great sorrow for my sins.

In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine, Deus veritatis. Ah, my divine Shepherd, Thou didst come down from heaven to seek after me, the lost sheep; and every day Thou descendest 011 the altar for my good. Thou hast given Thy life to save me. Do not abandon me. I commend my soul into Thy hands: receive it in Thy mercy, and never allow it to be separated again from Thee.

Thou didst shed all Thy blood for me: *Te ergo, quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.* Thou art now my advocate. Thou hast not yet become my judge. Obtain for me pardon from Thy Father. Obtain for me light and strength to love Thee with my whole soul. Give me the grace so to pass the remaining days of my life, that when I behold Thee as my judge I may behold Thee appeased with me.

Reign over my heart, I beseech Thee, with Thy love; make me wholly Thine; and for this end, recall to me always, my dear Saviour, the love Thou hast borne me, and all that Thou hast done to save me, and to make Thyself loved by me. It was for this that Thou hast made me a priest, that I should think of loving none but Thee.

Yes, my Jesus, I desire to please Thee: I love Thee, and will love none but Thee. Give me humility, resignation in the trials of this life, meekness when I am despised, mortification to earthly pleasures, and detachment from creatures, and grant that I may banish from my heart every affection that does not tend to Thee. I ask and hope for all through the merits of Thy passion. My dear Jesus, my beloved Jesus, O my good Jesus, hear Thou me: *O bone Jesu, exaudi me.*

And do thou, O Mary, my Mother and my hope, hear me, and pray to Jesus for me.

My dear Jesus, Thou hast come again this morning to visit my soul: I thank Thee with all my heart. Since Thou hast come, speak to me, tell me what Thou willest of me, for I desire to do all. I should deserve that Thou didst no longer speak to me, for having so many times been deaf to Thy voice, which called me to love Thee, and for having ungratefully turned my back upon Thee. But I have already repented of my offences against Thee: I repent anew, and I hope that Thou hast already pardoned me. Tell me, then, what Thou desirest of me, for I will fulfil all.

Oh, would that I had always loved Thee, my God! Unhappy that I am, how many years have I lost! But I hope, through Thy blood and Thy promises, to make up in future for the time I have lost, by attending solely to Thy love and pleasure.

I love Thee, my Redeemer; I love Thee, my God; I long for nothing but to love Thee with all my heart, and even to die for the love of Thee, who died for love of me. I will say to Thee with St. Francis: *Amore amoris tui moriar, qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori.* Thou, my Jesus, hast given Thyself wholly to me; Thou hast given me all Thy blood, Thy life, all Thy sweat, all Thy merits. Thou hast nothing left to give me: I give myself all to Thee. I give Thee all my satisfactions, all the pleasures of the earth, my body, my soul, my will. I have nothing more to give Thee: had I more, I would give Thee more. My dear Jesus, Thou art sufficient for me.

But do Thou, O Lord, make me faithful to Thee: do not let me change my will and leave Thee. I hope through Thy Passion, O my Saviour, that this will never happen. Thou hast said, *Nullus speravit in Domino et confusus est* (*Ecclus.* ii. 11). I also, therefore, may resolutely say: *In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.* I hope, and I will always hope, O God of my soul, that I shall never suffer the confusion of seeing myself separated from Thee, and deprived of Thy grace: *In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.*

Thou, my God, art all-powerful. Make me holy: grant that I may love Thee exceedingly, that I may never neglect anything that I know to be for Thy glory. Grant that I may overcome all, in order to please Thee. Happy shall I be, if I lose all, to gain Thee and Thy love. For this end Thou hast given me my life. Grant that I may spend it wholly for Thee. I do not deserve graces, but punishments: and I say to Thee, punish me as Thou wilt, but do not deprive me of Thy love. Thou hast loved me without reserve. I wish to love Thee without reserve, O infinite Good, infinite love. O will of God, thou art my love. O my Jesus, Thou didst die for me. O would that I could die for Thee, and by my death cause all men to love Thee! O infinite Good worthy of infinite love, I prize Thee and love Thee above all things. O Mary, draw me wholly to God; give me confidence in thyself, and make me have continual recourse to thee. Thou, by thy prayers, must make me holy. So I hope.

PREPARATION FOR MASS AND THANKSGIVING

III

ConsiderationS AND AFFECTIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST. ACTS. ASPIRATIONS. PRAYERS

These exercises, put into the last place, were added by the saintly author as a “second part” to the treatise on the Ceremonies of the Mass, and appear to have been composed at the same time. We give here the full title: “The respect, the preparation, and thanksgiving that priests should practise in order to derive fruit from the celebration of Mass.” To this we subjoin Acts, Aspirations, and Prayers.—ED.

INTRODUCTION

THE RESPECT WITH WHICH ONE SHOULD CELEBRATE MASS

ALL the great good that the Passion of Jesus Christ has procured for the world is also procured, according to St. Thomas, by each Mass that is celebrated: “Whatever is the effect of the Passion of our Lord, is also the effect of this sacrament.”[12833] This the Church confirms by her prayer: “As many times as this commemorative sacrifice is celebrated, so often is the work of the redemption performed.”[12834] In fact, the Council of Trent adds that it is the same Saviour who is offered for us on the cross, and who offers himself on the altar through the ministry of the priest: “For the victim is one and the same—the same now offering by the ministry of priests, who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different.”[12835] Hence, as the Passion of our Saviour was sufficient to save the whole world, so one single Mass is sufficient for this end; the priest, therefore, says in offering the chalice: “We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, . . . for our salvation, and that of the whole world.”[12836]

By the sacrifice on the cross our Lord has obtained for us all the graces of the redemption; but it is by the sacrifice of the altar that the fruit of the sacrifice of the cross is applied to us. The Passion has rendered us capable of participating in the merits of Jesus Christ, but the Mass has put us in possession of them: it applies to us the fruits of the Passion, as is taught us by the Council of Trent.[12837]

We should therefore be convinced that the Mass is the greatest and the holiest action that we can perform upon earth, and that it is at the same time the most useful for our spiritual good. But as it is the holiest action, it is also that which we should perform with the greatest purity of intention and the greatest interior devotion of which we may be capable. The Council of Trent itself gives us this admonition: "It is also sufficiently clear, that all industry and diligence are to be applied to this end, that it be performed with the greatest possible inward cleanness and purity of heart, and outward show of devotion and piety,"[12838]

Hence we may infer how great is the chastisement that priests merit if they say Mass with grave irreverence. Now one renders one's self culpable of this grave irreverence when one celebrates Mass with great haste, as one would do if one finished Mass in less than a quarter of an hour. This, according to the opinion of Doctors, cannot be excused from mortal sin, even when the Mass is short, as in a Mass of the Dead or of the Blessed Virgin.

Benedict XIV.[12839] teaches with Clericatus, Roncaglia, Bissus, Gobat, Quarti, and others, that the Mass should not last more than half an hour, nor less than twenty minutes; for in a less space of time one cannot perform, with the respect that is due to them, all the prescribed ceremonies; and if one goes beyond that time one cannot avoid wearying those that are present. Hence Roncaglia,[12840] Quarti,[12841] and Gobat[12842] rightly say that he who celebrates Mass *infra quadrantem,* that is to say, in less than a quarter of an hour, cannot be exempt from a grave fault. In fact, it is certain that all the Rubrics relative to what is done during the Mass is preceptive, as we have proved in our Moral Theology;[12843] for St. Pius V., in his Bull placed at the beginning of the Missal, ordains *districte, in virtute sanctæ obedientiæ,* that the Mass should be celebrated *juxta ritum, modum, ac normam, quæ per Missale traditur.* This being established, each time that one omits a ceremony, or that one does not perform it as one should, one commits at least a venial fault; and Concina,[12844] Wigandt,[12845] Roncaglia,[12846] and Lacroix[12847] rightly say that if one offends against many ceremonies, even if they do not belong to the most important, such negligence could amount even to a mortal sin.

We thence conclude, with the common opinion of the Doctors named above, that he who says Mass in less than a quarter of an hour sins grievously; for one cannot finish Mass in so short a time without falling into two grave disorders: namely, a grave irreverence in regard to the divine Sacrifice, and a grave scandal in regard to the people.

In regard to irreverence towards the holy Sacrifice, it is certain, according to what is declared by the Council of Trent in the decree cited above, that the malediction which God pronounces by the mouth of Jeremias[12848] against those that exercise negligently the functions that concern divine worship, applies precisely to those priests that celebrate Mass without due respect. He that celebrates Mass in less than a quarter of an hour must necessarily commit many faults by mutilating the words, by mixing them up pell-mell with the ceremonies, by not following the order prescribed by the Rubric, or by awkwardly making through excessive precipitation the blessings and genuflections;—faults which, though each one may be light in itself, will when taken together be the cause why the Mass is said with grave irreverence.

In the second place, as to the scandal given to the people, we must consider what the Council of Trent[12849] says; namely, that the ceremonies of worship, and especially those of the Mass, have been instituted to inspire the people with esteem and veneration for this august mystery. These ceremonies the heretics despise and ridicule; but God wishes that we should be exact in their observance. In the Old Law our Lord threatened to let all the maledictions fall upon him who should neglect the ceremonies prescribed in the sacrifices; yet these sacrifices were only a shadow and a figure of the great sacrifice of the altar; how much greater will be the punishment that God will inflict upon those that are careless about the ceremonies of the Mass! St. Teresa used to say: “For the least ceremony of the Church I would lay down my life a thousand times.”[12850]

Why should we set so great a value on ceremonies? We have already indicated the reason. The Council of Trent says that the ceremonies of the Mass have been instituted by the Church to make the faithful understand by these exterior signs the majesty of the divine sacrifice and the grandeur of the mysteries contained therein: “The Church has employed ceremonies, . . . whereby both the majesty of so great a sacrifice might be recommended, and the minds of the faithful be excited, by those visible signs of religion and piety, to the contemplation of those most sublime things which are hidden in this sacrifice.”[12851] But when the ceremonies are hastily performed, as they must be in order to finish them in so short a time as in less than a quarter of an hour, far from inspiring veneration for the Mass, they become the cause why people esteem so little so great a sacrifice. This conduct cannot be excused from a grave fault by reason of the grave scandal that the priest gives thereby to the people; for instead of inspiring them with a great veneration for the holy sacrifice he makes them lose it by showing them the contempt in which he himself holds this sacrifice. The Council of Tours ordained in 1583 that the priests should be fully instructed in the ceremonies of the Mass. Why? “Lest,” says the Council, “instead of urging the people to venerate the sacred mysteries, they cause them to make little account of them.”[12852]

It is also for this reason that the Council of Trent has strictly enjoined upon the priests that they should not celebrate Mass irreverently; this, says the Council, can hardly be exempt from impiety. These are the words of the Council: “The holy Synod decrees that the ordinary bishops of places shall take diligent care, and be bound to prohibit and abolish all those things that . . . irreverence (which can hardly be separated from impiety) may have introduced.”[12853] We should note the words: “shall take diligent care, and be bound.” It follows that the bishops are obliged, *sub gravi*, attentively to watch and to ask information about the manner in which the Masses are celebrated in their dioceses, and that they should suspend from the celebration of Mass all those that discharge this duty with but little care and respect. Moreover, the Council has made the bishops apostolic delegates in reference to this point, even as to the religious that are exempt. They can and should correct them; and if any subject neglects to amend, they can forbid him to celebrate Mass, and can even constrain him by censures and other punishments in order to force him to do his duty.

It is certain that a Mass celebrated with devotion will inspire with devotion those that hear it; on the contrary, a Mass said in haste and without gravity makes them lose devotion; and what is worse, it diminishes the respect, and chills at the same time the faith, in the divine Sacrifice. In fact, when a priest says Mass without devotion and with little respect, hastening and mutilating the ceremonies, the genuflections, the sign of the cross, the raising of the hands, the kissing of the altar, and other similar movements, or mixing them with the words which he precipitates so as to mutilate a great part of them,—can he inspire with devotion and respect those that are present, and see him? Most of the seculars are pleased to rid themselves as soon as possible of the duty of hearing Mass; but after having been present at a Mass celebrated in this hurried way they are scandalized at the priest who has celebrated it.

There are some who excuse themselves, saying: For myself, I do not fail either in the words or in the ceremonies: I omit nothing. We must, however, understand that in order to say Mass well, one should, it is true, pronounce all the words and perform all the ceremonies prescribed by the Rubric, not only the most essential, but also the least important, because all concur to exalt the dignity of the sacrifice. Hence the Church wishes that all the ceremonies that are performed during Mass should be regarded as preceptive and obligatory, as we have proved above; but all must be performed with the gravity suitable to an action so holy. It is, therefore, not sufficient to say Mass by pronouncing all the words and by performing all the ceremonies; it is also necessary that one should celebrate Mass gravely and sedately, so as to inspire those that are present with veneration towards the holy sacrifice; otherwise, when everything is done with much haste, one inspires them rather with contempt than with esteem for so grand a mystery. Thence comes that the priest who says Mass in less than a quarter of an hour, should he even have pronounced all the words and performed all the ceremonies, makes himself guilty of a grievous sin; for such a priest by not celebrating Mass with the requisite gravity cannot be excused from a grave irreverence.

The first thing that makes priests celebrate with so much irreverence is that they go to the altar without thinking of what they are going to do: one goes there either for a wretched remuneration, or on account of some other human motive. Before going, therefore, to the altar, it is proper, it is even necessary, to prepare one's self, by making a half-hour's meditation, or at least a meditation of a quarter of an hour; which, however, is not enough; and it would be well to take for the subject of meditation the Passion of Jesus Christ, since the priest is going to renew on the altar the sacrifice of the cross.

It is then with this view that I have here placed the following Considerations with various pious acts; before going to celebrate Mass one should at least read some one of these considerations.

I have added at the end some Affections with prayers, that may serve as thanksgiving after Mass. One should remember that the pious acts, after Communion, as writers teach us, have more value and merit before God than if they were made at any other time, because then the soul is united with Jesus Christ.

PREPARATION FOR MASS

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST, IN PREPARATION FOR MASS, FOR EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK

I. FOR SUNDAY

Jesus goes to meet His enemies, is taken, and bound.

JESUS being in the garden, and knowing that Judas with the soldiers was now drawing nigh to seize and carry him off to death, does not wait until they come, but goes forth himself to meet them and to give himself into their hands. Our loving Redeemer was still bathed in that deadly sweat caused by the agony he had suffered in the garden, but his Heart was burning with love, and panting to suffer for us; and so he calls his disciples who were asleep, and says to them: *Surgite, eamus; ecce qui me tradet prope est* (*Mark,* xiv. 42).

So great, then, was Thy desire, my Saviour, to die for us, that Thou goest forth Thyself to meet Thy death. Ah, my Jesus, behold I am now going to the altar to renew the very same sacrifice of the Cross which Thou didst once consummate on Calvary. How I grieve for having despised Thee, who hast loved me so much as even to make me Thy priest! In past times I have turned my back upon Thee; but now I only desire to be united to Thee. Pardon, I beseech Thee, this morning, before Thou enterest into my breast, all the bitterness I have caused Thee, which I abhor above every other evil. Ah, do not allow me, my beloved Redeemer, to displease Thee again. I love Thee, my Jesus, dead for me; I love Thee, my God, worthy of infinite love. I love Thee, my only Good: I leave all for Thy love. *Deus meus et omnia.* Thou alone art sufficient for me.

Eternal Father, I offer Thee this sacrifice in thanks—giving for all the gifts conferred on Jesus as Man, on the Blessed Virgin, and on all my patron saints. I recommend to Thee the Sovereign Pontiff, my relatives, benefactors, friends, and enemies. I recommend to Thee, moreover, infidels, heretics, and all sinners who are living in Thy displeasure: give them light and help to come out of so miserable a state. And to me—since, as I hope, Thou hast restored me to Thy grace—give holy perseverance.

And thou, O Mary, Mother of perseverance, do not cease to pray to Jesus for me.

II. FOR MONDAY

Jesus is brought before Caiphas, and is condemned to death.

The iniquitous high-priest, finding no proof wherewith to condemn the innocent Lord, endeavored to gain from his own words the declaration of his guilt, and therefore he asked him in the name of God: *Adjuro te per Deum vivum, ut dicas nobis, si tu es Christus Filius Dei* (*Matt.* xxvi. 63). Jesus, on hearing himself conjured by the name of God, declared the truth, and replied: *Ego sum: et videbitis Filium hominis sedentem a dextris virtutis Dei, et venientem cum nubibus cœli* (*Mark,* xiv. 62). On hearing this, Caiphas rent his garments, and said: “What need have we of further witnesses? Have you heard the blasphemy which he has uttered?” *Tunc princeps sacerdotum scidit vestimenta sua, dicens: Blasphemavit: quid adhuc egemus testibus?* (*Matt.* xxvi. 65.) He then asked the other priests, *Quid vobis videtur?* and they answered, *Reus est mortis.* But this sentence had already been given by the Eternal Father when Jesus offered himself to pay the penalty of our sins. My Jesus, I thank Thee, and I love Thee.

As soon as this unjust sentence was proclaimed, all, during that night, labor to torment him. One spits in his face; another strikes him with his fists; another gives him many blows on the face, deriding him as a false prophet: *Tunc expuerunt in facicm ejus, et colaphis eum ceciderunt; alii autem palmas in faciem ejus dederunt, dicentes: Prophetiza nobis, Christe, quis est qui te percussit?* (*Matt.* xxvi. 67, 68.) And as St. Mark adds, they cover his sacred countenance with a miserable rag, and so they strike him by turns.

Ah, my Jesus, how many insults hast Thou suffered for me to satisfy for the insults I have offered Thee! I love Thee, infinite Goodness. I grieve above all things for having so despised Thee. Pardon me, and give me the grace to be wholly Thine: I wish to belong wholly to Thee; it is for Thee to grant it.

Thou too, O Mary, my advocate and my hope, must obtain this favor for me by thy prayers.

III. FOR TUESDAY

Jesus is despised by Herod, and Barabbas preferred to Him.

When the morning was come, the Jews lead Jesus to Pilate that he may condemn him anew, and cause him to die. Pilate, after having examined all the crimes of which they accused the innocent Lord, replied that he found no cause of condemnation: *Ego nullam in eo invenio causam.* But to free himself from the insults of the priests, who persisted in wishing his death, and hearing that Jesus was a Galilean, and so subject to Herod, he sent him to Herod. Herod desired to see Jesus, with the hopes of beholding some miracle, of which he had heard that so many had been worked by our Saviour: so that when he was brought before him he asked him many questions; but the Lord answered him not a word. And therefore Herod, with his court, treated him as a fool, and in mockery clothed him with a white garment; and so sent him back to Pilate: *Sprevit autem illum Herodes cum exercitu suo, et illusit indutum veste alba, et remisit ad Pilatum* (*Luke,* xxiii. 11).

With reason, then, my Jesus, did Isaias foretell that Thou wert to be treated on this earth as the last and vilest of men, *novissimum virorum.* But since Thou, my Redeemer and God, wert pleased to be so despised for me, I accept and embrace all the scorn I may receive from men; and I will no longer resent it, as I have hitherto done, to Thy great displeasure.

Miserable Herod! by his impiety he made himself unworthy that Jesus should speak to him. My Jesus, I have in like manner deserved that Thou shouldst no longer speak to me, and shouldst abandon me; but no; in Thy mercy, speak to me: *Loquere, Domine, quia audit servus tuus.* In past times I have not been willing to listen to Thee; but now, because I love Thee, I wish to obey Thee in all things. Tell me what Thou willest of me, for I desire to please Thee in all things. Ah, Lord, when shall it be that I see myself wholly Thine, and no longer my own? No, I will no longer resist Thy loving calls.

O Mary, thy prayers are all-powerful; ask thy Son to make me as he desires me to be.

IV. FOR WEDNESDAY

Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns.

Pilate acknowledges the innocence of Jesus, but, to please the Jews, condemns him to be scourged, hoping in this way to deliver him at least from death. Jesus accepts this excessive torture to make satisfaction for the sins we have committed with the senses. In this the words of the Prophet were fulfilled: *Ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras, attritus est propter scelera nostra* (*Is.* liii. 5).

I then, my Saviour, by my sins, and not the scourges, have torn Thy flesh. If I had sinned less, Thou wouldst have suffered fewer torments. I love Thee, my sovereign Good; and I repent with my whole heart of having so despised Thee.

The Jews, not satisfied with this, persuade the soldiers to crown him with thorns, and to treat him as a mock king. They strip him again of his garments; they throw over his shoulders a purple cloak, and place a reed in his hand, and a bundle of thorns upon his head. My beloved Redeemer, my evil consentings to sin were the cruel thorns that pierced Thee with so much pain. I now detest them and hate them above every evil.

Then they mocked him, and saluted him as King of the Jews; and then smiting him on the face, *illudebant ei, dicentes: Ave rex Judæorum* (*Matt,* xxvii. 29). St. John adds, *Et dabant ei alapas* (*John,* xix. 3). Ah, my Jesus, now Thou hast only the semblance of a king of mockery and of pain; but I acknowledge Thee for my true King and Lord, and I thank Thee and love

Thee above every good. I love Thee, my Jesus; scourged for me, and crowned with thorns for me. Grant, I pray Thee, that I may quit all to love none other than Thee.

O Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.

V. FOR THURSDAY

Pilate shows Jesus to the people, saying, *Ecce Homo!*

Jesus is conducted back again to Pilate, who, seeing him so torn by the scourges, thinks to move the Jews to compassion by letting them see him. He goes out then on the balcony, and takes with him the afflicted Saviour, and says to the people, *Ecce Homo!* Jesus then appeared, crowned with thorns, and his shoulders covered with the purple cloak: *Exivit ergo Jesus, portans coronam spineam et purpureum vestimentum* (*John,* xix. 5). Do thou, O my soul, look at thy Redeemer upon that balcony, and consider to what a state thy Good Shepherd is reduced, in order to save thee, the lost sheep. My Jesus, I thank Thee. *Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.*

But the Jews, when they saw him, instead of pitying him, began to cry out, *Crucifige, crucifige eum!* Pilate, nevertheless, seeks to deliver him, acknowledging his innocence; but they continue to cry, *Tolle, tolle, crucifige eum!* Ah, my Jesus, I too once, in a certain way, wished Thee to die when I drove Thee from my soul; but Thou nevertheless, to pardon me, didst will to give Thy life upon the Cross. My dear Redeemer, I acknowledge the wrong I have done Thee, and would die of sorrow for it. I am sorry with my whole soul, O infinite Goodness, for having in past times so despised Thee; but now I love Thee above all things, and I prize Thy grace more than all the goods of heaven and earth. And of what profit are all the goods of the world without Thy grace? Thou hast loved me even unto death; I also will love Thee unto death. Give me holy perseverance, give me Thy holy love; grant that during the days that await me I may never displease Thee again, and may think of nothing but of loving Thee.

O blood of Jesus, inebriate me thoroughly with holy love. O death of Jesus, make me die to every earthly love. My beloved Saviour, deliver me from hell, which have so often deserved. In hell I could no longer love Thee, and should be obliged to curse Thy blood, Thy death, and the graces

Thou hast given me. No, my Jesus, I wish to love Thee, and to love Thee alone. Give me the grace to love Thee, and then do with me as Thou wilt.

O Mary, Mother of sinners, help a sinner who wishes to love God, and who recommends himself to thee. Thou listenest to all who pray to thee; listen then to me, for the love of Jesus Christ, whom thou lovest so much.

VI. FOR FRIDAY

Jesus is condemned by Pilale to death, and carries the Cross to Calvary.

Behold, Pilate is now on his judgment-seat, and condemns Jesus to die the death of the Cross. The unjust sentence given by Pilate is read out; but it has already been determined by the eternal Father, who willed the death of his Son for our salvation. Jesus listens to it, and, in perfect resignation to the divine will, humbly accepts it, in order that by his death he might deliver us from the eternal death which we had deserved: *Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis* (*Phil.* ii. 8).

My beloved Redeemer, Thou acceptest death to give me eternal life: if Thou hadst not died for me, I should now have been lost forever. I thank Thee for it, my love; Thy death is my hope. And since Thou, my God, hast accepted death for love of me, I for love of Thee accept of my death in the way and time most pleasing to Thee, together with all the pains that shall accompany it. I beseech Thee to give me the grace to die with the desire of pleasing Thee and of doing Thy will.

Behold, Jesus is leaving the house of Pilate with the Cross on his shoulder, and goes to Calvary, the place of his execution. This is the great sight which the world one day beheld,—a God, the Creator of all things, dying for his creatures!

Ah, Jesus, my Saviour; O love of my soul! Thou art taking this journey to die for me. I will not leave Thee; I will follow Thee, and die with Thee. Wretch that I am, in past times I have despised Thee; and have turned my back upon Thee; but now I love Thee above every good, and I repent with my whole heart of having offended Thee, and I promise never to leave Thee again until death. I embrace Thee with all affection, and in that embrace I wish to live and die. Do not, I pray Thee, abandon me with Thy grace.

And thou, O Mary, my dear advocate and protectress, do not cease to intercede for me.

VII. FOR SATURDAY

Jesus dies upon the Cross, consumed with sorrows, in the presence of his afflicted Mother.

As soon as Jesus had arrived on Calvary, the executioners strip him once more of his garments, and throw him upon the Cross. Jesus stretches out his hands, and offers to the eternal Father the great sacrifice of himself for the salvation of men.

Behold, they now take the nails and the hammers, and piercing through the hands and feet, they fix him to the Cross, and leave him there to die. O men, O men! how, I ask you, when you behold your God dying for love of you on that shameful wood, how can you behold him and live without loving him?

Jesus on the Cross! See the last appearance of the Lord of the world upon this earth! Behold the proof of God's love towards us! St. Francis of Paula, when one day contemplating Jesus on the Cross, began to exclaim: "O God, Love! O God, Love! O God, Love!" Ah, no one indeed will ever be able to explain or to comprehend the greatness of the love of this God for us, seen as it is in his willing to die for us, his miserable and ungrateful creatures.

And nevertheless, knowing this, my Jesus, I have despised Thy love and renounced Thy grace But Thy blood is my hope. I am sorry above every evil for having turned my back upon Thee, my Jesus. I love Thee with my whole soul, I love Thee above all things; and I promise from this day forth to love none but Thee.

Draw near, my soul, humbled and softened, to that Cross on which thy dying Lord is hanging. Kiss the altar on which thy very Creator is pleased to die for thee, sacrificed and consumed with sorrows. Bathe thyself in the blood which is running down from those sacred feet; in it wash away thy sins, and from it hope for every good. My dear Jesus, I will no longer belong to myself; I will be Thine, and Thine only. Tell me what Thou wiliest of me, for I desire to fulfil all. I hope for every thing from Thy goodness; and I also hope for all from thy protection, O my Mother Mary.

THANKSGIVING AFTER MASS

AFFECTIONS FOR EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK

I. FOR SUNDAY

MY beloved Jesus, I adore Thee; come into my breast under the humble appearances of bread and wine, and I cast myself at Thy feet and thank Thee for so great goodness in being pleased to come and visit me, a poor sinner, who have so often driven Thee from my soul.

I could dje of grief, my Redeemer, in thinking of the many insults I have offered Thee during my life. I thank Thee for giving me time to remedy the evil I have done. In past time I despised Thy love; but from this day forward I desire to love none but Thee, and to seek nothing but that which pleaseth Thee: *Deus mens et omnia.* Thou henceforth shalt be my only good, my only love.

O Love of my soul, I desire to give myself wholly to Thee: if I know not how to give myself as I ought, do Thou Thyself take me: *Trahe me post te in odorem unguentorum tuorum.* O incarnate Word, O God enamoured of men, detach me by Thy sweet and powerful drawings from all earthly affections, and draw me wholly to Thy holy love. Grant that I too may be able to say with truth: *Quid mihi est in cœlo, et a te quid volui super terram? Deus cordis met, et pars mea Deus in æternum.* Do Thou, O my Jesus, I pray Thee, dispose of my whole heart, of my whole will, so that I have no will but Thine, that I seek for nothing but to give Thee pleasure, and that nothing may please me save that which is pleasing to Thee; *Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.* Let others choose what portion they please in this world, Thou art, and shalt always be, my only portion.

I can do nothing of myself, but with Thy grace I can do all: *Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.* Thou hast promised to hear those who pray to Thee: *Petite, et accipietis.* These are the graces that I beg of Thee: give me holy perseverance, give me holy love, and I ask for nothing more. Hear me, O my Jesus, by the merits of Thy Passion.

Mary, my Queen and Advocate, thy prayers can obtain all. Pray to Jesus for me. Hear me, O my Mother, for the love which thou bearest to Jesus.

II. FOR MONDAY

O my divine shepherd, Thou didst come down from heaven to save me, the lost sheep, and I, by turning my back upon Thee, have gone again to destruction: *Erravi sicut ovis quæ periit; quære servum tuum* (*Ps.* cxviii. 176). I hope, my Jesus, that Thou hast pardoned my offences against Thee: but if Thou hast not yet pardoned me, do so now that Thou art come into my breast. I repent with my whole heart of having in past time so despised Thy grace: now I value it above every good, and I would, rather than lose it, lose my life a thousand times. And what profit is it to live in this world without Thy grace?

My beloved Redeemer, Thou hast died for all, in order that no one should live to himself, but to Thee who hast given Thy life for him: *Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsa mortuus est* (2 *Cor.* v. 15). Hitherto I have lived for myself, forgetful of Thee: henceforward I wish to live for Thee alone, who didst die for me: I desire to forget all, in order to think of loving Thee alone, who hast loved me so much. But in order to do this, Thou must help me, and this I most certainly hope for from Thy promise to grant that which is asked for in Thy name: *Si quid petieritis me in nomine meo, dabo vobis* (*John,* xiv. 14). I ask and hope for it through the merits of Thy Passion. *Adveniat regnum tuum.* Reign, my Jesus, reign over my whole soul, and never more let it rebel against Thee. I love Thee, infinite Goodness, and I beseech Thee, *Ne permittas me separari a te.* Let me die rather than see myself deprived of Thy friendship: *In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.*

O Mary, O powerful advocate of those who trust in thy intercession, I trust in thee, and hope for eternal life. I say to thee then with St. Bonaventure, full of joy: *In te, Domina, speravi; non confundar in æternum.*

III. FOR TUESDAY

Grant, I beseech Thee, my Jesus and my God, that I may always know more and more how infinite a good Thou art, and the immense love Thou hast shown me in having willed to suffer all Thy life and to die for me; and more than this, in having given Thyself to me so often in the holy Communion. St. John Chrysostom writes: *Semetipsum nobis immiscuit, ut unum quid simus; ardenter enim amantium hoc est.* In short, Thine ardent love for me, my Saviour, has forced Thee to make Thyself my food, in order that I might become one with Thee.

Come then, come, O God of my soul, and make it all Thine own: come and drive from it all earthly affections, so that I may love Thee alone, think of Thee alone, speak of Thee alone, desire Thee alone, and seek for Thee alone. And whom shall I love, if I love not Thee, who art infinite goodness, and hast loved me even so far as to die for me? Ah, my Jesus, how couldst Thou choose me, an ungrateful one, from the midst of so many of Thy faithful servants, to be Thy priest? I have so often turned my back upon Thee, and Thou every morning dost vouchsafe to come into my hands and into my breast. Unhappy shall I be, if, after the many graces Thou hast given me, I go back again and lose Thy grace. O Lord, I love Thee now with all my soul, and I am heartily sorry for having despised Thee: I will not offend Thee more, and I will love Thee with all my strength. Help me, and do not abandon me. *Vulnera tua merita mea* (St. Bern.). Thy wounds, Thy blood, Thy death, are my hope. Give me holy perseverance; grant that in all my temptations I may have recourse to Thee: increase in me Thy love; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Mary, my Oueen, obtain for me the grace to recommend myself always to thee: he who .has recourse to thee never remains overcome by the devil.

IV. FOR WEDNESDAY

O incarnate Word! what greater proofs hast Thou to make us understand the great love Thou dost entertain towards us, miserable and sinful worms?

Tell us, is there anything else Thou canst discover in order to force us to love Thee? Unhappy is he who lives deprived of Thy love; and unhappy me, who hitherto not only have not loved Thee, but have so greatly outraged Thy patience by the many insults I have offered Thee. How many times, O God of my soul, have I exchanged Thy grace for a miserable pleasure, and have told Thee to Thy face that I would not serve Thee! I repent of it, O God of my soul, from my whole heart. I hope for pardon from Thee through the merits of Thy death, and I hope for perseverance in Thy love. It is for this that Thou hast been following me for so many years. I will resist no longer: and, in truth, do I wish to wait until Thou Thyself shalt send me to hell? I love Thee, infinite Goodness; I love Thee, my God, worthy of infinite love; I love Thee, and I wish to repeat always in this life and in the next, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee.

In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine, Deus veritatis. My Jesus, do not Thou abandon me. Thou comest down every day from heaven to unite me to Thyself, and to feed me with Thy flesh. Ah, do not let me see myself separated again from Thee. Jesus, my love and my hope, now I desire nothing, save to be Thine, and wholly Thine, without reserve. Give me strength, my Redeemer, to execute this desire. *O bone Jesu, exaudi me.*

O Mary, my Mother, if thou prayest for me, I shall certainly obtain this grace. *O Maria, exaudi me.*

V. FOR THURSDAY

An nescitis quoniam . . . non estis vestri? Empti enim estis pretio magno. Such is the warning of the Apostle. So it is, my Jesus; but nevertheless I have forgotten Thee so many times for a mere nothing, and have renounced Thy grace and Thy love. All this is true; but it is likewise true that I am ono of those sinners who have been purchased with Thy blood: *Te ergo quæsumus tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.* I love Thee, my Jesus, above every good; and because I love Thee, I repent with my whole heart of having displeased Thee.

Miserable being that I am, how many years have I lost, in which I could have served Thee and have become holy! Instead of which, I have squandered them away in despising Thee, and in sending my soul to perdition But Thy goodness makes me hope that I may make up for lost time by redoubling the love that I owed Thee. My Jesus, Thou hast given Thyself to me upon the Cross, and in the most Holy Sacrament; and what shall I, a miserable sinner, give to Thee? I give Thee all my earthly satisfactions: I give Thee my body, my soul, my will, my liberty. If Thou foreseest that I shall ever take back again my will by sinning against Thee, let me die now that I hope I am in Thy grace. Eternal Father, Thou dost grant all graces which are asked of Thee in the name of Jesus Christ: I beseech Thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, give me holy perseverance, and Thy holy love.

O Mary, thou art the Mother of perseverance; thou listenest to those who pray to thee. I ask of thee, and I surely hope from thee, this holy perseverance.

VI. FOR FRIDAY

Christus dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis (*Ephes.* v. 2). Jesus Christ, then, the Son of God, has loved us so much that he has been pleased to die of sorrow for us upon a cross. And who could ever have caused a God to die, if he himself had not willed to die? *Ego pono animam meam,* He said: *nemo tollit eam a me; sed ego pono eam* (*John,* x. 17).

O my soul, if you doubt your Saviour's love for you, look at him dead upon that Cross for you; and what greater proof could he give of his love for you, than to give his life for love of you? *In hoc cognovimus caritatem Dei, quoniam ille animam suam pro nobis posuit* (I *John,* iii. 16).

My Jesus, Thou hast given Thy life for my salvation, and I have exchanged Thy friendship for nothing—for the satisfaction of a passion, for a miserable pleasure! I am sorry for it above every evil: would that I could die of sorrow! Pardon me, I beseech Thee, by the merits of Thy death; and in pledge of my pardon, give me a great sorrow for my sins and a great love for Thee. I feel within me, by Thy grace, a lively desire to love Thee, and a resolution to belong wholly to Thee; but I see my own weakness, I see my past treachery. Thou alone canst make me strong and faithful. Help me, O my love; make me love Thee: I ask Thee for nothing more.

In hoc enim Christus mortuus est et resurrexit, ut et mortuorum et vivorum dominetur (*Rom.* xiv. 9). So, then, my Saviour, Thou didst die in order to make Thyself the master of our hearts. Yes, my Jesus, I will that this heart of mine, which once was a rebel against Thee, be now wholly Thine: do Thou henceforward take the dominion of it, and let it be obedient to all Thy will. Tell me what Thou willest of me; for with the help of Thy grace I desire to do all.

O Mary, pray to Jesus for me: thou must make me faithful to God.

VII. FOR SATURDAY

Animam meam pono pro ovibus meis (*John,* x. 15). O divine Shepherd, who wert pleased, for the love of Thy sheep, to die upon an infamous gibbet consumed with sorrows, do not abandon me, as I have deserved by reason of my offences against Thee. I have been a sinner, but I will be so no longer. Now I love Thee, my dear Jesus, above all things; and there is no sorrow that afflicts me so much as the remembrance of having so greatly despised Thee in past years. I thank Thee for not having sent me to hell, and for having waited for me with so much patience. Ah, my true Lover, instead of abandoning me, Thou hast followed me, and hast knocked at the door of my heart with such sweet loving calls, that at length Thou hast drawn me to Thy love. My Jesus, I thank Thee, and I pray Thee to perfect the work. Give me light and strength to detach myself from all that does not tend to Thy love.

Thou hast said that Thou lovest him who loves Thee: *Ego diligentes me diligo.* Formerly I turned my back on Thee, and then I justly deserved Thy hatred; but now that I love Thee, my dear God, hate me no longer. Do Thou also love me: I prize Thy love more than the love of the whole world. Let all men look on me with horror; it is enough for me if Thou dost look on me with love. Provided I lose not Thy love, I am content to suffer every pain. Bind me, and press me to Thyself, so that I may never see myself separated again from Thee. *Jesu dulcissime, ne permittas me separari a te.*

Mary, Virgin most holy, thou must obtain for me this grace, never again to separate myself from the love of my God.

ACTS BEFORE COMMUNION

I. AN ACT OF FAITH

Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills.[12854] Ah, my most amiable Saviour, over how many, what rough and craggy mountains, hast Thou had to pass in order to come and unite Thyself to me by means of this most holy sacrament! Thou, from being God, hadst to become man; from being immense, to become a babe; from being Lord, to become a servant. Thou hadst to pass from the bosom of Thy eternal Father to the womb of a Virgin; from heaven into a stable; from a throne of glory to the gibbet of a criminal. And on this very morning Thou wilt come from Thy seat in heaven to dwell in my bosom.

Behold He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices.[12855] Behold, O my soul, thy loving Jesus, burning with the same love with which he loved thee when dying for thee on the Cross, is now concealed in the Most Blessed Sacrament under the sacred species; and what is he doing? *Looking through the lattices.* As an ardent lover, desirous to see you correspond to his love, from the Host, as from within closed lattices, whence he sees without being seen, he is looking at you, who are this morning about to feed upon his divine flesh; he observes your thoughts, what it is that you love, what you desire, what you seek for, and what offerings you are about to make him.

Awake, then, my soul, and prepare to receive thy Jesus; and, in the first place, by faith, say to him: So, then, my beloved Redeemer, in a few moments Thou art coming to me! O hidden God, unknown to the greater part of men, I believe, I confess, I adore Thee in the Most Holy Sacrament as my Lord and Saviour! And in acknowledgment of this truth I would willingly lay down my life. Thou comest to enrich me with Thy graces and to unite Thyself entirely to me; how great, then, should be my confidence in this Thy so loving visit!

II. AN ACT OF CONFIDENCE

My soul, expand thy heart. Thy Jesus can do thee every good, and, indeed, loves thee. Hope thou for great things from this thy Lord, who, urged by love, comes all love to thee.

Yes, my dear Jesus, my hope, I trust in Thy goodness, that, in giving Thyself to me this morning, Thou wilt enkindle in my poor heart the beautiful flame of Thy pure love, and a real desire to please Thee; so that, from this day forward, I may never will anything but what Thou willest.

III. AN ACT OF LOVE

Ah, my God, my God, true and only love of my soul, and what more couldst Thou have done to be loved by me? To die for me was not enough for Thee, my Lord; Thou wast pleased to institute this great sacrament in order to give Thyself all to me, and thus bind and unite Thyself heart to heart with so loathsome and ungrateful a creature as I am. And what is more, Thou Thyself invitest me to receive Thee, and desirest so much that I should do so! O boundless love! incomprehensible love! infinite love! a God would give himself all to me!—My soul, believest thou this? And what doest thou? what sayest thou? O God, O God, O infinite amiability, only worthy object of all love, I love Thee with my whole heart, I love Thee above all things, I love Thee more than myself, more than my life! Oh, could I but see Thee loved by all! Oh, could I but cause Thee to be loved by all hearts as much as Thou deservest! I love Thee, O most amiable God, and I unite my miserable heart in loving Thee to the heart, of the seraphim, to the heart of the most blessed Virgin Mary, to the Heart of Jesus, thy most loving and beloved Son. So that, O infinite Good, I love Thee with the love with which the saints, with which Mary, with which Jesus, love Thee. And I love Thee only because Thou art worthy of it, and to give Thee pleasure. Depart, all earthly affections, that are not for God, depart from my heart. Mother of fair love, most holy Virgin Mary, help me to love that God whom Thou dost so ardently desire to see loved!

IV. AN ACT OF HUMILITY

Then, my soul, thou art even now about to feed on the most sacred flesh of Jesus! And art thou worthy? My God, and who am I, and who art Thou? I indeed know and confess who Thou art that givest Thyself to me; but dost Thou know what I am who am about to receive Thee? And is it possible, O my Jesus, that Thou who art infinite purity desirest to come and reside in this soul of mine, which has been so many times the dwelling of Thy enemy, and soiled with so many sins? I know, O my Lord, Thy great Majesty and my misery; I am ashamed to appear before Thee. Reverence would induce me to keep at a distance from Thee; but if I depart from Thee, O my life, whither shall I go? to whom shall I have recourse? and what will become of me? No, never will I depart from Thee; nay, even I will ever draw nearer and nearer to Thee. Thou art satisfied that I should receive Thee as food, Thou even invitest me to this. I come then, O my amiable Saviour, I come to receive Thee this morning, all humbled and confused at the sight of my defects; but full of confidence in Thy tender mercy, and in the love which Thou bearest me.

V. AN ACT OF CONTRITION

I am indeed grieved, O God of my soul, for not having loved Thee during the time past; what is still worse, so far from loving Thee, and to gratify my own inclinations, I have greatly offended and outraged Thy infinite goodness: I have turned my back upon Thee, I have despised Thy grace and friendship; in a word, O my God, I was deliberate in my will to lose Thee. Lord, I am sorry, and grieve for it with my whole heart. I detest the sins which I have committed, be they great or small, as the greatest of all my misfortunes, because I have thereby offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness. I trust that Thou hast already forgiven me; but if Thou hast not yet pardoned me, oh, do so before I receive Thee: wash with Thy blood this soul of mine, in which Thou art so soon about to dwell.

VI. AN ACT OF DESIRE

And now, my soul, the blessed hour has arrived in which Jesus will come and take up his dwelling in thy poor heart. Behold the King of Heaven, behold thy Redeemer and God, who is even now coming; prepare thyself to receive him with love, invite him with the ardor of thy desire.

Come, O my Jesus, come to my soul, which desires Thee. Before Thou givest Thyself to me, I desire to give Thee, and I now give Thee, my miserable heart; do Thou accept it, and come quickly to take possession of it. Come, my God! hasten; delay no longer. My only and Infinite Good, my treasure, my life, my Paradise, my love, my all, my wish is to receive Thee with the love with which the most holy and loving souls have received Thee; with that with which the most blessed Virgin Mary received Thee; to their Communions I unite this Communion of mine.

Most holy Virgin and my Mother Mary, behold, I already approach to receive thy Son. Would that I had the heart and love with which thou didst communicate! Give me this morning thy Jesus, as thou didst give him to the shepherds and to the kings. I intend to receive him from thy most pure hands. Tell him that I am thy servant and thy client; for he will thus look upon me with a more loving eye, and now that he is coming, will press me more closely to himself.

ACTS AFTER COMMUNION

I. AN ACT OF FAITH

BEHOLD, my God is even now come to visit me; my Saviour to dwell in my soul. My Jesus is even now within me. He has come to make himself mine, and at the same time to make me his. So that Jesus is mine, and I belong to Jesus: Jesus is all mine, and I am all his.

O infinite Goodness! O infinite Mercy! O infinite Love! that a God should come to unite himself to me, and to make himself all mine! My soul, now that thou art thus closely bound to Jesus, that thou art thus one with him, what doest thou? Hast thou nothing to say to him; dost thou not converse with thy God, who is with thee? Ah, yes, renew thy faith; remember that the angels now surround thee adoring their God, who is within thy breast; do thou also adore thy Lord within thyself. Enter into thyself, and banish thence every other thought. Unite all thy affections, and, clinging closely to thy God, say:

II. AN ACT OF WELCOME

Ah, my Jesus, my love, my infinite good, my all, be ever welcome in the poor dwelling of my soul! Ah, my Lord, where art thou! to what a place art Thou come! Thou hast entered my heart, which is far worse than the stable in which Thou wast born; it is full of earthly affections, of self love, and ot inordinate desires. And how couldst Thou come to dwell there? I would address Thee with St. Peter: *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.*[12856] Yes, depart from me, O Lord, for I am indeed unworthy to receive a God of infinite goodness; go and find repose in those pure souls who serve Thee with so much love. But no, my Redeemer; what do I. say? Leave me not; for if Thou departest, I am lost. I embrace Thee, my life; I cling to Thee. Mad indeed have I been in having separated myself from Thee for the love of creatures; and in my ingratitude I drove Thee from me. But now I will never more separate myself from Thee, my treasure; I desire to live and die ever united to Thee. Most blessed Virgin Mary, Seraphim, and all souls, do ye who love God with pure love lend me your affections, that I may worthily attend on my beloved Lord.

III. AN ACT OF THANKSGIVING

My God and Lord, I thank Thee for the grace which Thou hast this morning bestowed upon me, of coming to dwell in my soul; but I would wish to thank Thee in a manner worthy of Thee and of the great favor which Thou hast done me. But what do I say? how can so miserable a creature as I am ever worthily thank Thee?

Father Segneri says, that the feeling most becoming a soul that communicates is that of wondering astonishment at the thought, and to repeat, “A God is united to me; a God is mine!” David said, *What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me?*[12857] But I! what return shall I make to Thee, my Jesus, who, after having given me so many of Thy good things, hast this morning, moreover, given me Thyself? My soul, bless, then, and thank thy God as best thou canst. And thou, my Mother Mary, my holy advocates, my guardian angel, and all ye souls who love God, *Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what great things He hath done for my soul.*[12858] Come and bless and thank my God for me, admiring and praising the indeed great graces which he has granted me.

IV. AN ACT OF OBLATION

My Beloved to me, and I to Him.[12859] Should a king go to visit a poor shepherd in his hut, what can the shepherd offer him other than his whole hut, such as it is? Since, then, O Jesus, my divine king, Thou hast come to visit the poor house of my soul, I offer and give Thee this house and my entire self, together with my liberty and will: *My Beloved to me, and I to Him.* Thou hast given Thyself all to me; I give myself all to Thee. My Jesus, from this day forward I will be no longer mine; I will be Thine, and all Thine. May my senses be Thine, that they may only serve me to please Thee. And what greater pleasure, says St. Peter of Alcantara, can be found, than that of pleasing Thee, most amiable, most loving, most gracious God? I at the same time give Thee all the powers of my soul, and I will that they shall be all Thine; my memory I will only use to recall to mind Thy benefits and Thy love; my understanding I will only use to think of Thee, who always thinkest of my good; my will I will only use to love Thee, my God, my all, and to will only that which Thou willest.

My most sweet Lord, I offer, then, and consecrate to Thee this morning all that I am and have-my senses, my thoughts, my affections, my desires, my pleasures my inclinations, my liberty; in a word, I place my whole body and soul in Thy hands.

Accept, O Infinite Majesty, the sacrifice of the hitherto most ungrateful sinner Thou hast ever had on earth; but who now offers and gives himself all to Thee. Do with me and dispose of me, O Lord, as Thou pleasest.

Come, O consuming fire, O divine love! and consume in me all that is mine, and that is displeasing in Thy most pure eyes, so that henceforward I may be all Thine, and may live only to execute, not Thy commands and counsels only, but also all Thy holy desires and Thy good pleasure. Amen.

O most holy Mary, do thou present this offering of mine to the Most Blessed Trinity with thine own hands; and do thou obtain their acceptance of it, and that they may grant me the grace to be faithful unto death. Amen, amen, amen.

V. AN ACT OF PETITION

O my soul, what art thou doing? The present is no time to be lost: it is a precious time, in which thou canst receive all the graces that thou askest. Seest thou not the Eternal Father, who is lovingly beholding thee? for within thee he sees his beloved Son, the dearest object of his love. Drive, then, far from thee all other thoughts; rekindle thy faith, enlarge thy heart, and ask for whatever thou willest.

Hearest thou not Jesus himself who thus addresses thee: *What wilt thou that I should do to thee?*[12860] O soul, tell me, what dost thou desire of me? I am come for the express purpose of enriching and gratifying thee; ask with confidence, and thou wilt receive all.

Ah! my most sweet Saviour, since Thou hast come into my heart in order to grant me graces, and desirest that I should ask Thee for them, I ask Thee not for the goods of the earth—riches, honors, or pleasures; but grant me, I beseech Thee, intense sorrow for the displeasure that I have caused Thee; impart to me so clear a light, that I may know the vanity of this world, and how deserving Thou art of love. Change this heart of mine, detach it from all earthly affections; give me a heart conformable in all things to Thy holy will, that it may seek only that which is more pleasing to Thee, and have no other desire than Thy holy love: *Create a clean heart in me, O God.*[12861]

I deserve not this; but Thou, my Jesus, deservest it, since Thou art come to dwell in my soul: I ask it of Thee through Thy merits, and those of Thy most holy Mother, and by the love which Thou bearest to Thy Eternal Father.

Here pause, to ask Jesus for some other particular grace for yourself and for your neighbors. Do not forget poor sinners, or the souls in Purgatory; and pray also for me, who composed this little book for your good.

Eternal Father, Jesus Christ himself, Thy Son, has said, *Amen, amen, I say to you, If you ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it you.*[12862] For the love, then, of this Son, whom I now hold within my breast, do Thou graciously hear me and grant my petition.

Amores mei dulcissimi, Jesu et Maria! pro vobis patiar, pro vobis moriar; sim totus vester, sim nihil meus.[12863] (“My most sweet Loves, Jesus and Mary, may I suffer for you, may I die for you; may I be all yours, and in nothing my own!”)

Loving Aspirations TO JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

They can be used either before or after Communion, or in visiting the Blessed Sacrament.

BEFORE COMMUNION

I

Egredimini et videte, filiæ Sion, regem Salomonem in diademate, quo coronavit illum mater sua in die desponsationis illius (*Cant.* iii. 11). O daughters of grace, O ye souls who love God, quit the darkness of earth, and behold Jesus, your king, crowned with a crown of thorns; the crown of contempt and suffering with which the impious synagogue, his mother, crowned him on the day of his espousals,—that is to say, on the day of his death, by the means of which he espoused himself on the Cross to our souls. Go forth again, and behold him all full of compassion and love, now that he comes to unite himself to thee in this sacrament of love.

Has it indeed, then, cost Thee so much, my beloved Jesus, before Thou couldst come and unite Thyself to souls in this most sweet sacrament? Wert Thou indeed obliged to suffer so bitter and ignominious a death? Oh, come then, without delay, and unite Thyself to my soul also. It was at one time Thy enemy by sin; but now Thou desirest to espouse it by Thy grace. Come, O Jesus, my spouse; for never more will I betray Thee; I am determined to be ever faithful to Thee. As a loving spouse, my whole thought shall be to find out Thy pleasure. I am determined to love Thee without reserve; I desire to be all Thine, my Jesus—all, all, all.

II

Fasciculus myrrhæ Dilectus meus mihi inter ubera mea commorabitur (*Cant.* i. 12). The myrrh plant when pricked sends forth tears, and a healthful liquor from the wounds. Our Jesus, from the beginning of his Passion, determined to pour forth his divine blood from his wounds with so much pain, in order to give it afterwards all to us for our salvation in this bread of Life.

Come, then, O my beloved bundle of myrrh, O my enamoured Jesus; Thou art indeed a subject of grief and pity to me when I consider Thee all wounded for me on the Cross; but then, when I receive Thee in this most sweet sacrament, Thou becomest indeed to me more sweet and delicious than a bunch of the choicest grapes can be to one who is parched with thirst: *Botrus Cypri dilectus meus mihi in vineis Engaddi* (*Cant.* i. 13). Come, then, to my soul, and revive and satiate me with Thy holy love. Ah, what sweetness do I feel in my soul at the thought that I have to receive within myself that same Saviour of mine, who for my salvation was pleased to be drained of all his blood, and sacrificed on across! *Inter ubera mea commorabitur.* No, my Jesus, never more will I drive Thee hence; and Thou shalt never more have to leave me. I am determined ever to love Thee, and to be always united to and closely bound up with Thee. I will always belong to Jesus, and Jesus will be always mine: forever, forever, forever *inter ubera mea commorabitur.*

III

Dum esset Rex in accubitu suo, nardus mea dedit odorem suurn (*Cant.* i. 11). When Jesus comes to dwell in a soul in holy Communion, oh how clearly does she see and know her own nothingness by the bright light which the King of heaven brings with him! As the spikenard is the most lowly among plants, so does the soul confess herself the most vile of all creatures; and when thus humbled, oh how sweet is the odor that she breathes forth to her beloved King! and for this reason he invites her to unite herself to him in closer and closer bonds.

If, then, my soul, thou desirest that thy Jesus should repose in thee, consider thy own nothingness. Who art thou? what dost thou deserve? Humble thyself as thou shouldst do, by casting away from thyself all selfesteem, which may keep Jesus at a distance from thee, or prevent his coming to repose in thee. Come to me, my dear Redeemer, come; and by Thy divine light make me see my own lowliness, my misery, my nothingness, that Thou mayest be enabled to repose in me with satisfaction to Thyself, to separate Thyself no more from me.

IV

Sentite de Domino in bonitate (*Sap.* i. 1). My soul, why art thou so timid and fearful at the sight of the goodness and infinite love of thy Lord? why such distrust? Now that thou art made worthy to receive within thee Jesus Christ, let thy sentiments correspond to this grace, by confiding in that goodness of God, who gives thee all himself. Truly his judgments are terrible, but they are terrible only to the proud and to the obstinate; but to the humble and penitent, who desire to love and please him, his judgments are all mercy and love, flowing from a heart full of compassion and kindness. So that David, considering these judgments of God, superabounds with hope: *In judiciis tuis supersperavi* (*Ps.* cxviii. 43). These judgments made him happy and consoled him: *Judicia tua jucunda* (*Ib.* 39): *Memor fui judiciorum tuorum et consolatus sum* (*Ib.* 52).

Ah, this great God is only too loving and generous to those who seek him with love: *Bonus est Dominus animæ quærenti illum* (*Lam.* iii. 25). How good is God to those who seek to unite their will with the divine will! *Quam bonus Isræl Deus his qui recto sunt corde!* (*Ps.* Ixxii. 1). My God, my love, my hope, my all, I desire Thee, and Thee alone,—to love Thee, to please Thee, and to do Thy will in all things. Let me always find Thee; make me agreeable to Thee; and never let me leave Thee again. *Fiat, fiat.* Amen, amen.

V

Vox dilecti mei pulsantis: aperi mihi, soror mea, amica mea, columba mea, immaculata mea (*Cant.* v. 2). Such are the words which Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament speaks to those who love and desire him. Open to me, he says, O soul, thy heart, and there I will come to unite myself to thee; so that, being one with me, thou mayest become my sister by resemblance, my friend by participation in my riches, my dove by the gift of simplicity, my undefiled by the gift of purity, which I shall communicate to thee.

And then he goes on to say, Open to me, *Quia caput meum plenum est rare, et cincinni mei guttis noctium* (*Ib.).* As if he said: Consider, my beloved, that I have waited for thee all the night of the bad life thou hast led in the midst of darkness and error. Behold now, instead of bringing scourges to chastise thee, I come in the Blessed Sacrament, with my hair full of heavenly dew, to extinguish in thee all impure desires towards creatures, and to kindle in thee the happy fire of my love. Come, then, O my beloved Jesus, and work in me what Thou wilt. I renounce the love of all things, in order to be all Thine, and that Thou mayest make me as Thou wouldst have me, entirely united to Thy will.

VI

Veniat dilectus meus in hortum suum, et comedat fructus pomorum suorum (*Cant.* v. 1). Cornelius à Lapide says that this is precisely the invitation that a soul desirous of the holy Communion makes to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Come, my Beloved, she says, into my poor heart, which at one unhappy time did not belong to Thee; but which now, by the help of Thy grace, has returned to Thee. *Veniat, et comedat fructus pomorum suorum:* Come and taste in me those virtues which Thou dost bring with Thyself when Thou comest to me. O my Lord, at least for the honor of Thy majesty, purify my heart, adorn it, inflame it with Thy love, and make it beautiful in Thy sight, that it may be a worthy dwelling-place for Thee.

VII

Ad ubera portabimini (*Is.* lxvi. 12). It is thus that Jesus from the sacred altars invites our souls. Come, he says, and suck my divine milk, which I give you in this Sacrament, wherein I offer you my own blood to drink. But what shepherd, says St. John Chrysostom, ever feeds his sheep with his own blood? Even mothers give their children to nurses to be fed. But Thou, O divine Pastor, art so enamoured of our souls as to wish to nourish them with Thine own blood. St. Catharine of Sienna, then, might well, in approaching holy Communion, pant, as it were, to suck the divine milk, in the same way as an infant presses anxiously to suck the milk from its mother’s breast. And well might the sacred spouse say to her beloved, *Meliora sunt ubera tua vino* (*Cant.* i. 1); signifying that she esteemed the milk of this sacrament, as the sacred interpreters explain it, above all the pleasures of the world, which are transitory and vain, as are transitory and vain also the joys and pleasures of wine.

O my beloved Jesus, since Thou wilt feed me this morning with Thine own blood in holy Communion, it is but reasonable that I should willingly renounce all the delights and pleasures that the world might give me. Yes, I give them all up; I protest that I choose rather to suffer all evils united to Thee, than to enjoy all the goods of the world away from Thee. It is sufficient happiness for me to please Thee, who art worthy of all that we can do to please Thee. I will say, then, with St. Ignatius of Loyola: *Amorem tuum solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis.*

VIII

Comedite, amici, et bibite, et inebriamini, carissimi (*Cant.* v. 1). The “friends,” that is beginners who scarcely enjoy the divine friendship, when they receive holy Communion feed indeed on the flesh of Jesus Christ, but they eat with labor; while those who are on the way to perfection eat with less difficulty. But by the “dearly beloved” are meant the perfect, who, inebriated with holy love, live almost out of the world, forgetting all things, even themselves, and think only how they may love and please their God.

My beloved Jesus, I am not yet perfect; but Thou canst make me perfect. I am not dear to Thee, and it is my own fault, because I have been ungrateful and unfaithful; but Thou canst make me become so, by inebriating me this morning with Thy love: *Adveniat regnum tuum.* Come, my beloved Lord, and take possession of my whole soul. Establish Thy kingdom in me; so that Thou alone mayst reign in me, that Thy love alone may command me, and that Thy love only may I obey. Inebriate me, inebriate me entirely; make me forget all creatures, myself, my interests, and all, that I may love nothing but Thee, my God, my treasure, all my good, my all; may I sigh for Thee alone, seek Thee alone, think of Thee alone, and please Thee alone. Do this by the merits of Thy Passion. This only do I ask of Thee: this I hope.

IX

Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis; quia amore langueo (*Cant.* ii. 5). The languor of the soul is when, forgetful of herself and her affairs, she thinks only of seeking refreshment for her languishing love by holy desires, which are the flowers, and by good works, which are the fruits, of Divine love.

O my God, O Blessed Sacrament, since Thou wilt have me to be all Thine, make me what Thou wouldst have me. Make me forget everything that does not belong to Thy love. Increase in me always more and more the desire of pleasing Thee. Grant that these flowers may not always remain flowers; make them also become fruits, by my doing and suffering something for Thee, who hast done and suffered only too much for me. O God, O God of my soul, make Thyself loved, but really loved, by me—not only in word, but in deed—before death comes upon me.

X

Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus, electus ex millibus (*Cant.* v. 10). Our beloved Jesus is all white by his purity, and all red by the flames of his divine love. My spotless Lamb, all burning with love for me, when wilt Thou make me like to Thyself? pure as Thou art, O purest lily? burning with love of Thee as Thou dost burn with love of me? Yes, I do renounce all other love, and choose for myself Thy sweet love, my God, my all. Begone, ye creatures; what do you want with me? Go and enjoy the love of those who seek you. I wish only for my God; for God alone will I keep all my heart and all my affections.

XI

Benignitas et humanitas apparuit Salvatoris nostri Dei (*Tit.* iii. 4). St. Paul says, that God, by making himself man, showed the world how far his goodness towards us went. But by giving himself in this sacrament he makes us know the depth of the tenderness of his love towards our souls: *Nonne insania videtur dicere: Manducate meam carnem, bibite meum sanguinem?* St. Augustine says, does it not seem a madness, Jesus Christ saying to us, as he said in that blessed night: *Accipite et comedite: hoc est corpus meum?* O men, he says, to make you understand how much I love you, I will that you should come and feed on my very flesh. O holy faith! And who among us would have been able to demand so much? Who could have even thought of it, if Jesus had not thought it and done it? Some of the followers of Jesus Christ, when they heard this from his mouth, that is, that he wished to give them his body to eat, said that this was too hard a thing, and that they could neither believe nor hear it: *Durus est hic sermo, et quis potest cum audire?* (*John,* vi. 61). And they went so far as to leave him, because they would not believe it: but yet it is of faith that so it is.

But what else does Jesus Christ ask of us by all this he has done for us, but that we should love him? as the Lord had once before instructed his people: *Et nunc, Israel, quid Dominus Deus tuus petit a tc nisi ut . . . diligas eum ac servias Domino Deo tuo in toto corde tuo ?*

O my most loving Jesus, what dost Thou not give, what dost Thou not promise to those that love Thee? Thou dost promise them Thy love: *Ego diligentes me diligo* (*Prov.* viii. 17). Thou dost promise them Thy caresses, even when they have already turned their backs upon Thee: *Convertimini ad me . . . et convertar ad vos* (*Zach.* i. 3). Thou dost promise to come with the Father and the Holy Spirit to abide forever in their souls: *Qui autem diligit me, diligetur a Patre meo . . . et ad eum veniemus, et apud eum mansionem faciemus* (*John,* xiv. 21, 23).

And what more hast Thou to promise and to give to entice men to love Thee? My dearest Lord, I see how it is; Thou dost wish also to be loved by me: yes, I love Thee with all my heart; and if I do not love Thee, do Thou teach me to love Thee; make me to love Thee, and to love Thee above all things: *Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis.*

XII

Nolite vie considerare, quod fusca sim, quia decoloravit me sol (*Cant.* i. 5). The heat of my passions, said the sacred spouse (and still more ought I to say it, O my dear Jesus), has deformed and blackened me: *Nigra sum, sed formosa* (*Cant.* i. 4). But if I am black by my own works, I am beautiful by Thy merits, O my Redeemer. I was black at one time, when I was alone and separated from Thee; but now that I am united to Thee, Thy grace, Thy beauty, Thy love has made me beautiful. Yes, my Jesus, so do I hope. Mayest Thou be blessed forever. Never permit me to lose Thee again, and to return to my former depravity. I love Thee, O infinite beauty; I wish also that my soul should be beautiful, always beautiful, that it may be always pleasing in Thy divine sight, and that Thou mayest always love it.

AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

I

Trahe me: post te curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum (*Cant.* i. 3). Since, then, O my dear Jesus, I cannot, while in this life, ascend to Thee, Thou hast willed to descend to me, to unite Thyself to me in this sacrament of love: draw me, my Lord, all to Thee. I do not wish to draw Thee to me, that Thou shouldst do my pleasure; but I desire that Thou shouldst draw me so entirely to Thee by Thy sweet attractions, that I may not be able to desire or do anything else but Thy most holy will. It is just that my inclinations should yield to Thy holy dispositions. Unite me wholly to Thyself; and so united, and free from earthly affections, I will run with Thee in the path of virtue, and so shall be able to repose wholly in Thy divine will both in this life and in the next: *In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam.*

II

Introduxit me rex in cellam vinariam; ordinavit in me caritatem (*Cant.* ii. 4). It is precisely by this cellar of wine that St. Bonaventure understands holy Communion, which introduces and then unites the soul to its divine king, and gives it to taste that wine of love which destroys the desire of created things, and infuses a well-regulated love, that is just towards itself, charitable towards its neighbor, supreme towards God, loving him above all things, who above all things deserves to be loved.

O Jesus, my King, only Lord of my heart, Thou hast already brought me into the beautiful cellar of Thy love, that is, into Thyself, uniting me to Thee by means of this sacrament of love. Yes, my Lord, I already feel my heart changed. I feel a holy desire, which gives me peace, and makes me loathe all impure affections, and enkindles in me the pure love of Thee. O my Jesus, since Thou hast given me an entrance to this beautiful cellar, let me no more depart from it. Since Thou hast united Thyself to me, do not leave me again. Detach me from the love of all creatures. Unite me to Thee continually more and more on this earth, that I may one day come to be perfectly united to Thee in heaven; where I shall love Thee face to face with all my strength, without interruption and without imperfection throughout all eternity.

III

Dilectus meus descendit ad hortum suuvi . . . ut pascatur in hortis, et lilia colligat (*Cant.* vi. 1). My sweetest Saviour, since Thou dost descend from heaven to come into my soul, by Thy grace do Thou make it become Thy garden, that Thou mayest gather in it lilies and fruits which are agreeable to Thee. Pardon me, if I have offended Thee. Receive me, if I have left Thee, now that I return penitent to Thee. Give me that purity which Thou dost desire to see in me. Give me strength to do what Thou desirest. Grant me Thy true love, and then shall I become pleasing to Thee. I sacrifice to Thee all my inclinations, and I desire and wish for nothing but to please Thee.

IV

The sacred spouse called her beloved *Totus desiderabilis.* Jesus, to those souls who love him as spouses, makes himself altogether desirable, whether he chastises or consoles them, whether he appears near or distant, because he does it all for love, and that he may be loved. Treat me, then, O my Jesus, as Thou wilt, I will always love Thee; whether Thou dost give me sweetness or tribulations, I know that all will come to me from Thy loving Heart, and that all will be for my greater good: *Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum.* Behold my will is ready, O Lord, to accept all that Thou shalt ordain. *Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore.* At all times, whether prosperous or adverse, I will bless Thee and love Thee, O my Creator. I neither seek nor merit any consolation from Thee; for I have given Thee nothing but bitterness by my sins: I seek only Thy good pleasure. Provided Thou art satisfied with me, I shall be content with any punishment. My Jesus, my Jesus, whether far off or near Thou shalt always be desirable to me, always dear; whether Thou dost console or afflict me, I will always love Thee, always thank Thee.

V

Quæ est ista, quæ ascendit de deserto, deliciis affluens, innixa super dilectum snum? (*Cant.* viii. 5.) Who, then, are those souls who, living on the earth, esteem it a desert; so that, detached from visible things, they live only to God, as if there was no one else but God, whom alone they love and desire to please, and in this way they almost go out of the world, and raise themselves above it, enjoying the delights which are experienced by those who wish for God alone, and who place in God all their hopes?

Who, then, are these faithful souls, if not those who often and with pure love unite themselves to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? Yes, my God, such do I also desire to be by the means of Thy grace, detached from all things, and all Thine. Henceforth the world shall be to me a desert, where, flying from all attachment to creatures, I will think of nothing but Thee; as if Thou and I were the only persons there. In Thee alone will I put all my confidence, all my love, O God, O beloved God, my hope, my love, my all.

VI

Si murus est, ædificemus super eum propugnacula argentea: si ostium est, compingamus illud tabulis cedrinis (*Cant.* viii. 9). This is precisely what Jesus does when he comes to a soul in holy Communion. He sees that she is a wall too weak to be able to resist the assaults of hell; therefore, by the virtue of the sacrament, he fortifies her with bulwarks of silver, that is, with his divine light. He sees that she is a door inclined easily to be corrupted, and he renews it, adjusting it with planks of strength and perseverance, as is signified by cedar, which is a strong and incorruptible wood; that is, with the gifts of holy fear, with detachment from creatures, with the love of prayer, with supplications, with holy desires, and still more with the gift of divine love, which are the support of holy perseverance. *Panis cor hominis confirmat.* Jesus teaches us, that as earthly bread preserves the life of the body, so the heavenly bread of holy Communion preserves the life of the soul: *Qui manducat me, et ipse vivet propter me. Qui manducat meam carnem, et bibit meum sanguinem in me manet, et ego in illo.* Such are the gracious promises which Jesus makes to him who receives him in the Blessed Sacrament.

Ah, my Jesus, who is weaker and more unfaithful than I? Thou knowest well how many times I have yielded to my enemies, and how many times they have seized the gate, that is, my will, by which they have entered to ruin me by causing me to lose Thy friendship. Oh, fortify me with Thy light and strength, that I may no more lose Thee or drive Thee from me. My Lord and my Redeemer, if I am to turn back and offend Thee again, oh! let me die now, while I hope that I am in Thy grace and united to Thee. I trust not myself, no; nor will I ever, my dear Jesus, live without Thee. But as long as I live I am in danger of changing my will and betraying Thee, as I have done before; do Thou help me. Help me also, most holy Mary; have pity on me: thou, who art the Mother of perseverance, obtain for me this gift from thy Jesus. Of thee I seek it, of thee I hope it, of thee I ask it.

VII

Inveni quem diligit anima mea; tenui eum, nec dimittam (Cant. iii. 4). So ought every soul to say who is united with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament: Creatures, depart from me; go out altogether from my heart. I loved you once, because I was blind; now I love you not, nor can I ever love you again. I have found another good, infinitely more delightful than you: I have found in myself my Jesus, who has enamoured me by his beauty; to this my beloved one I have given myself entirely. He has already accepted me, so that I am no longer my own. Creatures, farewell: I am not, nor shall I ever again be yours; but I am and shall be always Christ’s. He, too, is mine, and will always be mine: Tenui eum, nec dimittam. Now I have pressed him to my heart, receiving him in holy Communion; for the future I will hold him with my love, and will not let him leave me any more.

Permit me, O my most amiable Saviour, to embrace Thee so closely, that I may never more be separated from Thee. Behold, I press Thee to myself, my Jesus; I love Thee, I love Thee; and O that I could love Thee worthily! I wish that my only happiness and repose should be to love Thee and please Thee. Do Thou command all creatures to leave me, and not to disturb me; say to them: Adjuro vos . . . ne suscitetis, neque evigilare faciatis dilectam. Ah, if I do not wish it, creatures cannot enter in to disturb and divide me from Thee. Strengthen, then, my will, unite my miserable heart to Thy divine Heart, that it may always will what Thou wilt. Do this, Lord, by Thy merits. Amen, amen. So do I hope; so may it be.

VIII

Surge, aquilo, et veni, auster; perfla hortum meum, et fluant aromata illius (*Cant.* iv. 16). Fly from me, O north wind, hurtful and cold wind of earthly affections, and come, thou soft warm breeze of the sacred love of the Holy Spirit, which comes from the Heart of my Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Do thou alone breathe through my soul, which has been chosen by Jesus for his garden of delights. Blow; for by thy breath how many fresh and sweet odors of holy virtues shalt thou draw forth from me!

My Jesus, my Jesus, Thou canst do this; and this do I hope from Thee.

IX

Messui myrrham meam cum aromatibus meis (*Cant.* v. 1). A soul that has received Jesus must be careful to gather myrrh, that it may always offer the sweet odor of those virtues which arise from mortification. *Comedi favum cum melle meo* (*Ib.*). In like manner, the soul that loves God alone is not satisfied with the honey, but will also have the honeycomb; therefore she says to Jesus:

O Lord, Thy consolations are not sufficient for me unless Thou givest me Thyself, who art the fountain of consolation; the fruits of love are not enough for me, if Thou dost not give me also Thyself, who art the object of my love. So say I to Thee, my Jesus, that Thou alone wilt suffice for me; I am ready to renounce all Thy delights, provided I possess Thee alone, my God and my only good. I love Thee, not to please myself, but to please Thee; for Thou dost desire to be loved by me, and Thou art worthy of all our love, whether Thou dost console or try us.

X

Nihil mihi deerit; in loco pascuæ ibi me colocavit (*Ps.* xxii. 1, 2). Ah! my beloved Jesus, since Thou dost invite me in this feast of love to feed on Thy divine flesh, what more can I ever want? *Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea; quem timebo?* (*Ps.* xxvi. 1.) Whom shall I fear, if Thou, O God omnipotent, art my light and my salvation? I give myself all to Thee. Accept me, and then do with me what Thou wilt; chastise me, show Thine indignation towards me when Thou wilt; kill me, destroy me, and I will say always with Job: *Etiam si occiderit me, in ipso sperabo* (*Job,* xiii. 15). Whilst I am Thine, and Thou lovest me, I am content to be treated by Thee with every hardship; to be even annihilated, if it so pleases Thee.

XI

In manibus meis descripsi te: muri tui coram oculis meis semper (*Is.* xlix. 16). See the loving care that God takes of a soul that he wishes to have to himself. He carries it written in his hands, so that he may never forget it, and says, that sooner would a mother forget her own son than he a soul in grace: *Et si illa oblita fuerit, ego tamen non obliviscar tui* (*Ib.* 15).

Et muri tui coram oculis meis semper. His eyes are always open to watch over that soul, so that its enemies do it no harm: *Scuto bonæ voluntatis tuæ coronasti nos* (*Ps.* v. 13). Our good God surrounds us with the protection of his good-will, wholly solicitous for our good; and so he delivers us from all dangers. Ah, my God, infinite goodness, who more than any other lovest me and desirest my good, I abandon myself entirely to Thee: let every other hope fail me, provided Thou dost not fail me. I know that I also must co-operate by obeying Thy holy will: *Domine, quid me vis facere?* Nothing else can I say; behold me ready and determined, my sweet Saviour, to do what Thou pleasest: *Fiat voluntas tua.* Nothing else do I desire but to accomplish Thy will. But do Thou help me, otherwise I shall do no good at all. Teach me not only to know, but also to do, all that pleases Thee: *Doce me facere voluntatem tuam.* Eternal Father, grant that I may be able to say with truth, as Thy Jesus did whilst he was on earth: *Ego quæ placita sunt ei facio semper.* My God, this I desire, this I pray for, and this I hope, through the merits of Thy Son and the most holy Mary.

XII

Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi (*Prov.* xiii. 26). O my soul, behold this is all that thy Lord asks of thee, when he comes to visit thee; he would have thy heart and thy will. He gives himself to thee without reserve; it is but reasonable that thou shouldst also give him all thyself without reserve, taking care to follow his will in all things: *Revertetur enim Dominus, ut gaudeat super te in omnibus bonis* (*Deut.* xxx. 9). Act in such a manner that

Jesus, when he comes to thee again, may find that thou hast executed all his designs.

My Jesus, I wish to please Thee; help Thou my desire. Give me strength, and do with me whatsoever Thou pleasest.

XIII

Quid est quod debui ultra facere vineæ meæ et non feci? (*Is.* v. 4.) My soul, hear what thy God says to thee: what ought I to do more for thee than I have done? For love of thee I became man: *Verbum caro factus sum.* Instead of Lord, I have become servant: *formam servi accipiens.* I went so far as to be born in a stable, like a worm—for worms are born in stables: *vermis sum, et non homo.* I died for thee, I died upon the tree of shame: *Factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.* What remained more for me to do, but to give my life for thee? *Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam ponat quis pro amicis suis.* But my love has invented and done more for thee. After my death, I have chosen to leave myself in the most Blessed Sacrament, to give my whole self as food. Tell me what more could I have done to gain thy love?

It is true, my Lord and my Redeemer; what can I answer? I have nothing to say. Thou hast been too good to me, and I have been too ungrateful towards Thee. I wonder at Thy immense goodness; I see my own baseness, and I throw myself at Thy feet, and say: Have pity on me, my Jesus, though I have repaid Thy love with so much ingratitude. Avenge Thyself, therefore, I pray Thee, avenge Thyself upon me, and chastise me; but do not abandon me; chastise me and change me. Let me not live any longer ungrateful to Thee. Grant that I may love Thee at least out of gratitude, and that before I die I may make Thee some recompense for Thy love.

XIV

Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum (*Cant.* viii. 6). Yes, my beloved Jesus, since I have consecrated to Thee all my heart, it is but just that I should put Thee as a seal of love upon it, to close the entrance against any other affection; and thus to make known to all that my heart is Thine, and that Thou alone possessest dominion over it. But, my Lord, what dost Thou hope from me, if Thou dost not do the work Thyself? I can do nothing but give Thee my poor heart, that Thou mayest dispose of it according to Thy pleasure. Behold, I give it all to Thee, I consecrate it to Thee, I sacrifice it to Thee. Do Thou possess it forever; I will no longer have any part in it. If Thou lovest it, Thou knowest how to preserve it for Thyself. Leave it no longer in my hands, lest I should again take it from Thee. O God most loving, O infinite love, since Thou hast so constrained me to love Thee, I pray Thee make Thyself loved by me. I only wish to live that I may love Thee, I only wish to love Thee in order to please Thee. Thou who dost work so many miracles to be able to enter into my heart in this sacrament, work also this one, make my heart all Thine; but all, all, all, without division, without reserve, so that I may say, both in this life and in eternity, that Thou art the only Lord of my heart, and my only treasure: *Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.*

Most holy Mary, my Mother and my hope, do thou help me, and I shall certainly be heard. Amen, amen. This I wish, this I hope. So be it.

Aspirations of Love to Jesus FOR MEDITATION AND HOLY COMMUNION.[12864]

MY well-beloved, my love, my life, my repose, my only good. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

The grace that we should ask of God above all graces, says St. Francis de Sales, is the grace or gift of love. Hence we should endeavor in all our prayers, all our actions, all our sighs, all our intentions, to obtain from God this holy love, which is the gift of all gifts.

We shall here find many aspirations that a loving soul can make to God; but it must be observed, first, that the best are those that love itself infuses into our heart; and secondly, that when the soul feels itself united with God by anyone of the following inspirations, or by any other, one should not go farther, but should dwell upon it and repeat it as long as one finds therein nourishment and feeling.

My God, prostrate at Thy feet, I ask of Thee, not pleasures, nor riches, nor honors, but only Thy love; and at each step that I take, at each look, at each respiration, I intend to ask for Thy love.

My dearly beloved Jesus, Thou hast said that Thou wouldst permit Thyself to be found even by him who is seeking Thee, and Thou hast even gone so far as to seek me when I fled from Thee, wilt Thou flee from me now that I seek Thee, and I seek only Thee?

Ah! deign to bind me to Thee by these sweet bonds with which Thou bindest those that love Thee; but bind me in such a manner that I may never more be separated from Thee.

Inflame me with Thy love. Ah! one spark of this divine fire would be sufficient to make me forget everything; but I am not content with only a spark; I wish to have a flame, I wish to have a thousand flames, I wish to have a conflagration that will instantly destroy in me all affection for creatures, and make me burn entirely for Thee, O infinite and only good!

I give myself entirely to Thee. Dost Thou not accept me? Thou hast said that Thou dost not know how to repel him that comes to Thee: *Him that cometh to me, I will not cast out.*[12865] Ah! my God, receive me, take me entirely and unite me to Thee in such a manner that I may think only of Thee, that I may love only Thee, that I may seek and desire only Thee; be Thou the only object of all my thoughts, of all my love, of all my desires.

Ah! Thou who truly lovest me, tell me, what dost Thou intend to obtain from me by so many mercies that Thou heapest upon me, by so many invitations that Thou dost address to me, by so many lights that Thou givest me? Dost Thou wish to have my heart? Here it is: take it; I give it entirely to Thee.

Vain creatures, leave me; you shall see me no more. Ask me no more to have affection for you, since I desire to have nothing more from you. Give to whomsoever asks for them, your pleasures, your goods, your honors; as for myself, I have found him whom I love, I am satisfied with having him: *I found Him whom my soul loveth.*[12866] He who alone merits my affections has taken them all for himself.

My well-beloved! detach me from all that is not God. Console me Thyself when I am afflicted; sustain me, when I am losing courage; and chastise me also Thyself when necessary. I will kiss Thy lovely hand that strikes me through kindness towards me. Provided only that Thou dost not deprive me of the happiness of loving Thee, send me all chastisements.

Loving souls, you that live in this beautiful country of love, where everything breathes love! *Qualis est Dilectus vester, et quæremus eum vobiscum:* Tell us something of the beauties of your well-beloved, whom you now contemplate unveiled; inflame us with love, we who are poor exiles here below, in order that we also may seek him through love.

But I should rather say with the sacred Spouse: *Come, O south wind, blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow.*[12867] Come from the middle of the day, O breath of the Holy Spirit! Come, let me feel thy powerful influence in the garden of my soul, and then its perfumes of love will spread, and will satisfy the heart with my God.

O Jesus, sweet object of my love! wound my heart with one of these fiery darts that cause souls to die to all that is not Thee, and make them live only with Thy love.

My well-beloved, since Thou callest me again to Thy love by enlightening me with Thy light and making me hear Thy voice, *Trahe me post te:* for pity's sake, draw me to Thyself, and do not abandon me before Thou dost not see me belong entirely to Thee.

My God, I already feel a great desire to love Thee; but I feel myself too weak to accomplish this. O Lord! Thou who inspirest me with this good desire, grant me strength to accomplish this; give me all the love that Thou askest of me. Thou who by Thy grace makest me know the riches of Thy goodnes, lead me to love Thee as much as I can, and as much as I desire to love Thee.

Loving souls, you who in this world seek only God, raise your voice, and make intelligible to poor foolish worldlings how much Jesus, even in this valley of tears, obtains more contentment for his servants by the gift of his love than this world is able to give to its followers by bestowing upon them its goods.

O Lord! grant me Thy love, and I renounce all the other goods that Thou canst give me. Help me to love Thee, and I consent to be deprived of everything, to be despised, abandoned by every one, weighed down by all evils; for there is no sorrow capable of afflicting a soul that loves Thee with her whole heart.

BROTHER ALFONSUS.

DEVOUT ASPIRATIONS

TO BE MADE BEFORE AND AFTER COMMUNION, DRAWN FROM THE MANUSCRIPTS OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

I. BEFORE COMMUNION

O MY true and perfect Love! what affection is this that brings Thee to such a miserable thing as I? Come, yes come, desired of my heart; my soul sighs for Thee; I offer to Thee, O my God, this Communion, to satisfy the desire Thou hast to come and unite me to Thyself, my God and my all. Oh, what a wonder! A God descends from heaven for me, and hides his majesty under the vile clothing of the species of bread and wine! Oh, how true it is, my Lord, that having always loved Thine own, Thou hast loved them especially at the end, when Thou didst institute this divine sacrament.

O my God! Thou art goodness itself; how, then, is it possible that I can love anything else but Thee? Ah, Lord, draw me always closer and closer into Thy Heart. I prefer Thy love and Thy goodness above all that is to be found in the world. Thou art the only object of my affections. I wish for none other but Thee. I will leave all in order to love Thee. Give me grace to do it; without that I can do nothing.

Ah, my beloved, if Thou wouldst have me look to Thee, do Thou first turn to me, and by Thy spirit draw mine to Thee. I am nothing, I can do nothing, I am worth nothing; therefore let me not be ungrateful for all the graces that Thou hast deigned to grant me. I offer myself for Thy love, to be entirely deprived of every sensible consolation, and to suffer all the afflictions Thou shalt be pleased to send me, whether in time or eternity. I am, and will be all Thine; I dare to ask Thee not only for Thy gifts, but also for Thyself. I desire to receive Thee, to be more united to Thee.

O Eternal Father, I offer to Thee the Passion of Thy Son for my salvation and that of the whole world. Look not at my sins; but look at the love of

Thy beloved Son towards us, which has drawn him into this sacrament. By this love, my God, have pity on me!

My Redeemer, I acknowledge myself to be infinitely unworthy of approaching to receive Thee, by reason of my sins and my want of purity. Therefore I say to Thee, Lord, I am not worthy. Even if I had all the love of the seraphim, I should still be unfit to receive Thee; again, then, I repeat, Lord, I am not worthy.

Come, O my sweet Saviour, and work in me that which Thou dost come to me to do. I am nothing but wretchedness; but Thy goodness does not let Thee see my misery. Come into my soul and sanctify it; take possession of my heart and purify it; enter into my body and keep it; and never separate me from Thy love.

Burn, O consuming fire, all Thou dost see in me unworthy of Thy presence, and that may put an obstacle to Thy grace and love. O Mother of my Redeemer, have compassion on me a poor sinner; pray for me, that by thy help I may embrace thy Son with perfect love, and become a soul after his own Heart.

II. AFTER COMMUNION AND AT THE VISIT TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT

O excess of love! Sacred Host, I adore Thee within me. One heart is too little to love Thee, my Jesus; one tongue is not enough to praise Thy goodness. O my Saviour, how great are my obligations to Thee, for visiting such a poor creature as I am! I offer myself all to Thee, in gratitude for so great a favor.

No, I will no longer live in myself, but that Jesus alone should live in me. He is mine, and I am his, for all eternity. Oh, love, love; no more sins! I will never forget the goodness and mercy of God, my Saviour and my guest. Yes, my God, I firmly believe that Thou, body and soul, art in my breast: Thy divinity is now within me, and united to me.

I adore Thee, and I venerate Thee, as if I were the smallest worm crawling along in the dust of its own nothingness, to testify the desire I have to give Thee glory. But is it possible that Thy infinite Majesty should have deigned to visit the least of Thy creatures? With a softened heart, my dear Saviour, I thank Thee for this great gift. I thank Thee for it a thousand times. Grant that I may thank Thee for it as Thou dost deserve. May Thy most holy Mother, and all the angels and saints, give Thee thanks for it! On my part I offer Thee all the praises and thanksgivings that have been and ever shall be offered to Thee by all creatures.

O my God, Thou dost come to unite Thyself to me, to apply to my soul more abundantly the merits of Thy Passion, and to sanctify me. Accomplish in me, then, all that Thou didst come to do. My God, Thou art all-wise and all-powerful, let not the fruit of Thy coming be lost: unite Thyself to me, and me to Thee, by an inseparable union and a perfect love. Unite the abyss of Thy mercy with the abyss of my misery, and make me live a life all divine.

My Jesus, Thou knowest what is wanting in me; Thou knowest that without Thee I can do nothing; Thou knowest my weakness: have pity on me; give me humility, purity of heart, love, and conformity to Thy holy will, strength against my bad habits, remission of my sins, and grace never more to commit them. Give me a thorough contempt for all things, so that I may love none other but Thee. Give me patience to suffer for Thy love all that may happen to me. I hope all from Thee. O most holy Virgin, my dear Mother, beg of thy Son, by the love he bears thee, to grant me, for thy sake, all I ask.

My God, and my only good, I am more pleased in Thy infinite perfections than if they were my own. I rejoice that nothing in the world can take them from Thee, or diminish them. Come, then, Thou art always welcome; always perfect and infinite in Thy majesty, O my Jesus, my Love and my God. Come and make me all Thine.

My Saviour, by that infinite goodness which made Thee come down to this earth, I pray Thee, let me experience the effects of Thy love, in feeling my soul so absorbed in Thee, that, despising all earthly things, it may see nothing but Thee, and think of nothing but Thee; that the same love which made Thee die for me on the cross may make me in like manner die in Thee, to live in Thee for all eternity.

O God of my soul, who meritest to be loved above all creatures, I protest that I hold Thee as the only object of my affections, and I prefer Thee to all the goods of the world, and to myself. I desire to be faithful to Thee, and never more to see myself separated from Thee.

I resign and abandon myself entirely to Thee, embracing with all affection and respect Thy will, and Thy just designs over me. And I pray that whatever Thou hast ordained concerning me in time and in eternity may be accomplished; but I hope one day to see Thy divine face and Thy infinite beauty. My God, draw me to Thee, to love Thee and to burn with Thy love, by which I would be entirely consumed. Hide me, I pray Thee, in Thyself, that no creature may ever be able to find me again. O eternal Father, for the love of Thy Son, fill my memory with holy thoughts, which shall constrain it to have a continual remembrance of Thee and of Thy Son. Oh make me know and do all that Thou desirest of me. And Thou, O Holy Spirit, fill my will with holy affections, that shall bring forth all those fruits which proceed from Thy love. Illuminate me with Thy light; so shall I walk straight to Thee, and my will shall be no longer free to give itself to any but Thee.

My God and my all, I will no more seek anything out of Thee, now that I can find all things in Thee. O merciful Father, make me have a care for Thy service, as Thou hast had so much for my good. I wish to employ all my thoughts in seeking ways to please Thee, and in preserving me from offending Thee any more.

O incarnate Lord, make me love Thee, and none other than Thee. Remove from me all occasions that might drive me from Thy love. Let my heart be always occupied in contemplating Thee and serving Thee, Thou that art the master-love of all hearts. Thou didst but come into the world to dwell in the hearts Thou hadst redeemed with Thy blood; then may my heart be all Thine, do Thou possess it. See, then, all my wants, and enlighten me; excite me, and make me prompt to obey Thy will.

O Jesus Almighty, take from me all that can hinder the effects of Thy power and goodness. I renounce my liberty, and consecrate it entirely to the designs of Thy will. Have pity on me, and cure me of all my impurities and infidelity; fill me with Thy grace and wisdom. I abandon myself wholly to Thee, O my Jesus; I wish to be all Thine, I wish to employ myself with fervor for Thy glory, and to suffer patiently all tribulations at the sight of Thy sufferings. Enable me to employ myself solely in things that are pleasing to Thee. My God, let me discern Thee with a true faith, to know Thee and love Thee; let me know Thy will to fulfil it, let me see myself to confess my deformity, to abhor and humble myself; and in the end let me see Thy divine face in all eternity. Lord, I have wasted my substance, like the prodigal son; but I have not been able to exhaust Thy mercies. Grant that I may take Thy will for the sole guide of my life, and not my own senses nor human respect. Write in my heart the law of Thy love so deeply, that it may never be effaced.

My God, even if there were no place of torment for the wicked, I would not leave off loving Thee and suffering for Thee. Make me correspond to Thy desires. From this time forth Thou shalt be my portion forever. I submit myself with confidence to all that Thou shalt ordain for me in time and in eternity. O incarnate Word, wash my heart with Thy blood, and imprint there, as a sign of Thy love, Thy holy name of Jesus.

Lord, abandon me not into the power of my vices; remember that I am the work of Thy hands; permit me not to become the prey of demons. I am a sinner, it is true; but I have been redeemed by Thy blood. Eternal Father, look at the Passion of Thy Son, whose merits sue mercy for me: these I offer to Thee; by these do Thou detach me from worldly affections, and fill me with Thy love, and make me die with resignation, with faith, with confidence, and with perfect love.

O my Jesus, by that eternal love which Thou hast borne me, give me grace to love Thee during the short time that remains for me to live on this earth, that I may afterwards love Thee eternally in heaven. O God of love, make me live only for Thee. When shall I be all Thine, as Thou art all mine? When shall I die to myself, to live only for Thy love? I do not even know how to give myself to Thee as I ought. Ah, my God, take me, and make me all Thine!

My God, I wish for my eyesight only to look at Thee; for my tongue only to speak of Thee; for my heart only to love Thee; for my body only to offer it to Thee; for my life only to sacrifice it to Thee. O God of love, give me Thy love. Infinite Power, help my weakness. Eternal Wisdom, enlighten my darkness. Immense Goodness, pardon my malice. O infinite Goodness, too late have I loved and known Thee: do with me what Thou pleasest; I wish for nothing but what Thou shalt do.

O Blessed Virgin, I rejoice with thee in that thou hast gained the heart of thy God; ah, unite me wholly to thy Son, speak to him for me, and obtain for me the grace of following all his inspirations. Thou must teach me to practice the virtues thou didst exercise on earth, and detach me from affection to all that is not God, that I may love him with all my strength.

My God, enkindle Thy love in me, so that I may seek nothing else but Thy pleasure; so that nothing may please me that does not please Thee; and drive from my heart all things that are not agreeable to Thee. May I always be able to say with true affection: My God, Thee alone do I desire, and nothing more. My Jesus, give me a great love for Thy Passion, that, Thy sufferings and Thy death being always before my eyes, they may continually excite my love towards Thee, and make me desirous of rendering Thee some token of gratitude for so much love. Give me also a great love to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in which Thou hast revealed the great affection Thou dost bear us. Besides this, I beg of Thee to give me a tender devotion to Thy most holy Mother: give me grace always to love and serve her; always to have recourse to her intercession, and to induce others to honor her; and give to me and to all men a great confidence, first in the merits of Thy Passion, and next in the intercession of Mary.

I pray Thee to grant me a holy death. Enable me at that moment to receive Thee with great love in the most holy Viaticum; so that, united to Thee, burning with a holy fire, and with a great desire of seeing Thee, I may go forth from this life to embrace Thy feet the first time it shall be given me to see Thee.

O my King, come and reign alone in my soul; do Thou possess it entirely, that it may not serve nor obey anything but Thy love.

O my Jesus, would that I could annihilate myself all for Thee, who hast annihilated all Thy life for me!

O Lamb of God, sacrificed on the Cross, remember that I am one of those souls that Thou hast redeemed with so much suffering and grief. Let me never lose Thee. Thou hast given Thyself all to me, let me be all Thine; let all my eagerness be to please Thee. I love Thee, O immense Good, in order to please Thee; I love Thee because Thou art worthy of it: my greatest sorrow is to think I have been so long in the world without loving Thee.

My beloved Redeemer, make me feel the grief Thou hadst for my sins in the garden of Gethsemani. O my Jesus, would that I had died before, and had never offended Thee! Oh, love of my Jesus, Thou art my love and my hope! I will rather lose my life a thousand times than lose Thy grace.

My God, if I had died when I was in sin, I could never love Thee again: I thank Thee for giving me time, and calling me to love Thee. Now, then, that

I can love Thee, I will love Thee with all my soul. For this reason hast Thou borne with me, that I should love Thee; yes, I will love Thee.

Ah, by the blood which Thou hast shed for me, permit me not to betray Thee again: “In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.” What is the world? what are riches? what are pleasures? what are honors? God, God, I will have God alone. My God, Thou art sufficient for me, Thou art an infinite Good.

O my Jesus, bind me altogether to Thy love, and draw all my affections to Thee, that I may love none other but Thee: make me all Thine before I die.

Ah, my God, as long as I live I am in danger of losing Thee. When shall the day come that I can say to Thee: My Jesus, I cannot lose Thee more?

O Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, despise me not; accept of me to love Thee, and do Thou give me Thy love. I wish to love Thee much in this life, that I may love Thee much in the next.

O infinite Good, I love Thee; but make me know the great Good that I love, and give me such a love as Thou dost desire. May I conquer all things to please Thee!

O Mary, of thee, who so much desirest to see thy Son beloved, do I ask this grace, to love him during all the remainder of my life; and I desire nothing more. My Lady and my Mother, I trust in thee; thou dost obtain all thou dost ask of thy God; thou dost pray for all who are devoted to thee, pray also for me.

VARIOUS PRAYERS

I. PETITIONS TO JESUS CHRIST RECEIVED IN HOLY COMMUNION

O MY Jesus, now that Thou, who art the true Life, art come to me, make me die to the world, to live only to Thee, my Redeemer; by the flames of Thy love, destroy in me all that is displeasing to Thee, and give me a true desire to gratify and please Thee in all things.

Give me that true humility which shall make me love contempt and self-abjection, and take from me all ambition of putting myself forward, Give me the spirit of mortification, that I may deny myself all those things that do not tend to Thy love, and may lovingly embrace that which is displeasing to the senses and to self-love.

Give me a perfect resignation to Thy will, that I may accept in peace, pains, infirmities, loss of friends or property, desolations, persecutions, and all that comes to me from Thy hand. I offer Thee all myself, that Thou mayest dispose of me according to Thy pleasure. And give me grace always to repeat this entire offering of myself, especially at the time of my death. May I, then, so sacrifice my life to Thee, with all my affection, in union with the sacrifice that Thou didst make of Thy life for me to the eternal Father. My Jesus, enlighten me, and make me know Thy goodness, and the obligation I am under to love Thee above all, for the love Thou hast borne me in dying for me, and in leaving Thyself in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I pray Thee to give Thy light to all infidels who know Thee not, to all heretics who are out of the Church, and to all sinners who live deprived of Thy grace. My Jesus, make Thyself known, make Thyself loved. I recommend to Thee all the souls in purgatory, and especially N. N.; alleviate the pains they suffer, and shorten the time of their banishment from Thy sight; do this through Thy merits, and those of Thy most holy Mother and all the saints.

My God, enkindle the flame of Thy love within me, so that I may seek nothing but Thy pleasure; that nothing may please me but pleasing Thee. I drive from my heart everything which is not agreeable to Thee. May I always be able to say with real affection: O God, my God, I wish for Thee alone, and nothing more. My Jesus, give me a great love for Thy most sacred Passion, that Thy sufferings and death may be ever before my eyes to excite me to love Thee always, and to make me desire to give Thee some grateful compensation for Thy so great love. Give me also a great love for the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in which Thou hast made known the exceeding tenderness Thou hast for us. I also beg of Thee to give me a tender devotion to Thy most holy Mother: give me grace always to love and serve her, always to have recourse to her intercession, and to induce others to honor her and confide in her patronage; and grant to me and to all men ever to have a great confidence, first in the merits of Thy Passion, and then in the intercession of Mary.

I pray Thee grant me a happy death. Grant that I may then receive Thee with great love in the most holy Viaticum, that in Thy embrace, burning with a holy fire, and a great desire of seeing Thee, I may quit this life to throw myself at Thy feet the first time it shall be my lot to see Thee.

Above all, I pray Thee, O my Jesus, to give me the grace of prayer, that I may recommend myself always to Thee and Thy most holy Mother, especially in time of temptation; and I pray Thee, by Thy merits, to grant me holy perseverance and Thy holy love.

Bless me, my Jesus, and bless me altogether—my soul, my body, my senses, and my faculties. Bless especially my tongue, that it may only speak for Thy glory. Bless my eyes, that they may not look at anything that might tempt me to displease Thee. Bless my taste, that it may not offend Thee by intemperance; and bless all the members of my body, that they may all serve Thee and not offend Thee. Bless my memory, that it may always remember Thy love and the favors Thou hast accorded me. Bless my understanding, that it may know Thy goodness, and the obligation I have of loving Thee; and that it may see all that I must avoid, and all that I must do to conform myself to Thy holy will. Above all, bless my will, that it may love no other but Thee, the infinite Good; that it may seek for nothing but to please Thee and may take delight in nothing but what conduces to Thy glory.

O my King, come Thou and reign alone in my soul; take entire possession of it, that it may neither serve nor obey anything but Thy love.

Oh, my Jesus, that I might spend myself all for Thee, who hast spent all Thy life for me!

O Lamb of God, sacrificed on the Cross, remember that I am one of those souls which Thou hast redeemed with so much labor and sorrow. Never let me lose Thee again. Thou hast given Thyself all to me; make me to be all Thine, and let my only wish be to please Thee. I love Thee, O immense Good, in order to give Thee pleasure. I love Thee, because Thou art worthy of my love. I have no greater grief than that of thinking that I have been so long in the world without loving Thee.

My beloved Redeemer, give me a portion of that grief which Thou didst feel for my sins in the garden of Gethsemani. O my Jesus, would that I had died and never offended Thee! O love of my Jesus, Thou art my love and my hope! I will rather lose my life, and a thousand lives, than lose Thy grace.

My God, if I were to die in sin, I could no more love Thee. I thank Thee that Thou givest me time, and dost call me to love Thee. Now, then, that I can love Thee, I will love Thee with all my soul. Thou hast borne with me so long, that I might love Thee. Yes, and I will love Thee. Ah, by the blood that Thou hast shed for me, suffer me not to betray Thee again. *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me not be confounded forever.*[12868] What is the world? what are riches? what are pleasures? what are honors? God, God, I wish for God alone. My God, Thou art sufficient for me; Thou art an infinite Good.

O my Jesus, bind me wholly to Thy love, and draw all my affections to Thyself, so that I may love none other but Thee. Make me all Thine before I die.

Ah, my God, as long as I live I stand in danger of losing Thee. When shall the day come that I can say: My Jesus, I can no longer lose Thee?

O Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, despise me not; suffer me to love Thee, and give me Thy holy love. I wish to love Thee greatly in this life, that I may love Thee greatly in the next.

O infinite Good, I love Thee; but do Thou make me know the great good that I love, and give me the love Thou dost desire to see in me. Enable me to overcome all things to please Thee.

II. PRAYER OF ST. BONAVENTURE TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.[12869]

Wound, O my most tender Jesus, the inmost of my soul with the sweet dart of Thy love, that through Thy love and the desire of possessing Thee my soul may languish and melt within me, and so long to quit this life, to come and unite itself perfectly with Thee in a happy eternity. Make my soul always to hunger after Thee, the bread of angels, my Jesus, in the Blessed Sacrament. May it ever thirst after Thee, O fountain of life and light! May it ever desire Thee, seek Thee, speak to Thee alone, find Thee, and do all things to Thy praise and glory to the end! Thou, my Redeemer, art my only hope, my riches, my consolation, my peace, my refuge, my wisdom, my portion, and my treasure. On Thee may my heart and my mind be ever fixed! Amen.

III. PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY, TO OBTAIN THE LOVE OF JESUS, AND LOVE TOWARDS HER

O Mary, thou dost so much desire to see this thy Son Jesus loved; if thou lovest me, this is the grace I ask of thee, and which thou must procure for me; obtain for me a great love for Jesus Christ, and not to love any other than him. Thou obtainest from him all that thou dost wish; listen to me, then, pray for me and comfort me; bind me in such a manner to Jesus, that I shall no longer be able to leave off loving him. Obtain for me also a great love toward thee, who art of all creatures the most loving, the most lovely, and the most loved by God. I rely greatly on thy compassion, and I love thee, my Lady; but I love thee only a little: ask thy God to give me a greater love; for to love thee is a grace which God grants only to those whom thou dost wish to be saved.

LIVE JESUS OUR LOVE, LIVE MARY OUR HOPE!

IV. LITANIÆ SANCTISSIMI NOMINIS JESU

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.
Jesu, audi nos.
Jesu, exaudi nos.
Pater de cœlis Deus,
Fili Redemptor mundi Deus,
Spiritus Sancte Deus,
Sancta Trinitas unus Deus,
Jesu, Fili Dei vivi,
Jesu, splendor Patris,
Jesu, candor lucis æternæ,
Jesu, Rex gloriæ,
Jesu, sol justitiæ,
Jesu, Fili Mariæ Virginis,
Jesu, amabilis,
Jesu, admirabilis,
Jesu, Deus fortis,
Jesu, Pater futuri sæculi,

Jesu, magni consilii Angele,
Jesu potentissime,
Jesu patientissime,
Jesu obedientissime,
Jesu mitis et humilis corde,
Jesu, amator castitatis,
Jesu, amator noster,
Jesu, Deus pacis,
Jesu, auctor vitæ,
Jesu, exemplar virtutum,
Jesu, zelator animarum,
Jesu, Deus noster,
Jesu, refugium nostrum,
Jesu, pater pauperum,
Jesu, thesaurus fidelium,
Jesu, bone pastor,
Jesu, lux vera,
Jesu, sapientia æterna,
Jesu, bonitas infinita,
Jesu, via et vita nostra,
Jesu, gaudium Angelorum,
Jesu, Rex Patriarcharum,
Jesu, Magister Apostolorum,
Jesu, Doctor Evangelistarum,
Jesu, fortitude Martyrum,
Jesu, lumen Confessorum,
Jesu, puritas Virginum,
Jesu, corona Sanctorum omnium,
Propitius esto, *parce nobis, Jesu.*
Propitius esto, *exaudi nos, Jesu.*
Ab omni malo,
Ab omni peccato,
Ab ira tua,
Ab insidiis diaboli,
A spiritu fornicationis,

A morte perpetua,

A neglectu inspirationum tuarum,

Per mysterium sanctæ Incarnationis tuæ,

Per nativitatem tuam,

Per infantiam tuam,

Per divinissimam vitam tuam,

Per labores tuos,

Per agoniam et passionem tuam,

Per crucem et derelictionem tuam,

Per languores tuos,

Per mortem et sepulturam tuam,

Per resurrectionem tuam,

Per ascensionem tuam,

Per gaudia tua,

Per gloriam tuam,

Agn us Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, *parce nobis, Jesu.*

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, *exaudi nos, Jesu.*

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, *miserere nobis, Jesu.*

Jesu, audi nos.

Jesu, exaudi nos.

OREMUS.

Domine Jesu Christe, qui dixisti: Petite, et accipietis; quærite, et invenietis; pulsate, et aperietur vobis: quæsumus, da nobis petentibus divinissimi tui amoris affectum, ut te toto corde, ore, et opere diligamus, et a tua nunquam laude cessemus.

Sancti Nominis tui, Domine, timorem pariter et amorem fac nos habere perpetuum, quia nunquam tua gubernatione destituis quos in soliditate tuæ dilectionis instituis. Per Dominum.

V. LITANIÆ LAURETANÆ, B. M. V

Kyrie eleison.

Christe eleison.

Kyrie eleison.

Christe audi nos.

Christe exaudi nos.

Pater de cœlis Deus, *miserere nobis.*

Fili Redemptor mundi Deus, *miserere nobis.*

Spiritus Sancte Deus, *miserere nobis.*
Sancta Trinitas unus Deus, *miserere nobis.*
Sancta Maria,
Sancta Dei Genitrix,
Sancta Virgo virginum,
Mater Christi,
Mater divinæ gratiæ,
Mater purissima,
Mater castissima,
Mater inviolata,
Mater intemerata,
Mater amabilis,
Mater admirabilis,
Mater Creatoris,
Mater Salvatoris,
Virgo prudentissima,
Virgo veneranda,
Virgo prædicanda,
Virgo potens,
Virgo clemens,
Virgo fidelis,
Speculum justitiæ,
Sedes sapientiæ,
Causa nostræ lætitiæ,
Vas spirituale,
Vas honorabile,
Vas insigne devotionis,
Rosa mystica,
Turris Davidica,
Turris eburnea,
Domus aurea,
Fœderis arca,
Janua cœli,
Stella matutina,
Salus infirmorum,

Refugium peccatorum,

Consolatrix afflictorum,

Auxilium Christianorum,

Regina Angelorum,

Regina Patriarcharum,

Regina Prophetarum,

Regina Apostolorum,

Regina Martyrum,

Regina Confessorum,

Regina Virginum,

Regina Sanctorum omnium,

Regina sine labe originali concepta,

Regina sacratissimi Rosarii,

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi. *R.* Parce nobis, Domine.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi. *R.* Exaudi nos, Domine.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi. *R.* Miserere nobis.

Sub tuum præsidium confugimus, sancta Dei Genitrix: nostras deprecationes ne despicias in necessitatibus nostris,* sed a periculis cunctis libera nos semper, Virgo gloriosa et benedicta.

V. Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Genitrix.

R. Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

OREMUS.

Concede nos, famulos tuos, quæsumus Domine Deus, perpetua mentis et corporis sanitate gaudere, et gloriosa beatæ Mariæ semper Virginis intercession, a præsenti liberari tristitia et æterna perfrui lætitia. Per Christum Dominum nostrum.

R. Amen.

THE MASS AND THE OFFICE THAT ARE HURRIEDLY SAID

OR, ADMONITIONS TO PRIESTS TO INDUCE THEM NOT TO RENDER THEMSELVES GUILTY OF THE CRIME OF SHOWING CONTEMPT FOR THE SACRIFICE OF THE ALTAR AND FOR THE PRAISES DUE TO GOD

The present little work appeared in 1760 (Villecourt, 1. 6, p. 1, ch. 5 et 6). It has for its Italian title the words: *La Messa e l'Officio strappazzati.* The participle *strappazzati* expresses the idea of contempt, negligence, and especially precipitation. This treatise is a pressing exhortation to priests to celebrate Mass well, and to recite well the divine Office. We have put it at the end of the volume, because the first part of it is, as it were, the peroration or natural conclusion, and the second part may serve as a preface or transition to the following volume, which treats of the divine Office.—ED.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS HURRIEDLY SAID

I. IMPORTANCE OF THE HOLY SACRIFICE

UNLESS a priest esteems the holy Sacrifice as it deserves, he can never celebrate it with suitable devotion.

Assuredly there is no action which man can perform so sublime, so sacred, as the celebration of Mass. "We must needs confess," says the Council of Trent, "that no other work can be performed by the faithful so holy and divine as this tremendous mystery itself."[12870] God himself could not enable man to perform anything greater than the celebration of Mass.

All the ancient sacrifices, by which God was so much honored, were but shadows and figures of our sacrifice of the altar. All the honor that angels by their adorations, and men by their good works, austerities, and even martyrdoms, have ever rendered or will ever render to God, never could, and never will, give him so much glory as one single Mass; for, while the honor of all creatures is only finite, that which accrues to God from the holy

Sacrifice of the altar is infinite, inasmuch as the victim which is offered is of infinite value. The Mass, therefore, offers to God the greatest honor that can be given him, subdues most triumphantly the powers of hell, affords the greatest relief to the suffering souls in purgatory, appeases most efficaciously the wrath of God against sinners, and brings down the greatest blessings on mankind.

If, as it is promised, we may confidently hope to obtain from God whatever we ask in the name of Jesus: *If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you,*[12871] how much more confidently may we hope to obtain what we ask for, when we immolate to the Father Jesus himself? Our loving Redeemer is continually making intercession for us in heaven: *Who also maketh intercession for us.*[12872] But this he does more especially in the sacrifice of the Mass, in which, by the hands of the priest, he presents himself to his eternal Father, to obtain graces for us. Were we assured that all the saints and the blessed Mother of Christ were praying for us, with what great confidence should we expect to receive all graces necessary for us? But it is certain that one prayer of Jesus Christ will avail infinitely more than all the prayers of the saints. Poor, wretched sinners, what would become of us without this sacrifice to appease the Lord! “For the Lord, appeased by the oblation thereof, and granting the grace and gift of penitence, forgives even heinous crimes and sins,”[12873] says the Council of Trent. In a word, as the Passion of Jesus Christ was sufficient to save the whole world, so is a single Mass sufficient to save it. Hence, at the offertory of the chalice the priest says: “We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, . . . for our salvation, and for that of the whole world.”[12874]

The Mass is the good thing and the beautiful thing of the Church, according to the prediction of the prophet: *For what is the good thing of Him, and what is His beautiful thing, but the corn of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins?*[12875] In the Mass, the Word incarnate offers himself in sacrifice to his eternal Father, and gives himself to us in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is the end and aim of almost all the other sacraments, as the angelic Doctor teaches.[12876] Hence St. Bonaventure says, that in the Mass God manifests to us all the love that he has borne us, and includes in it, as in a compendium, all his benefits.[12877] On this account the devil has always endeavored to abolish the Mass throughout the world by means of heretics, making them the precursors of Antichrist, who before all things will endeavor to abolish, and in fact will, in punishment of the sins of men, succeed in abolishing the holy sacrifice of the altar, according to the prediction of Daniel: *And strength was given him against the continual sacrifice because of sins.*[12878]

The same St. Bonaventure says, that the Son of God in every Mass confers a benefit on the world not less than that which he conferred in taking upon himself our human nature.[12879] So that, as the learned teach, if Jesus Christ had never appeared in the world, a priest, by pronouncing the words of consecration, would bring him down from heaven upon the earth, according to that celebrated sentence of St. Augustine: "O venerable dignity of the priests in whose hands as in the womb of the Virgin the Son of God became incarnate!"[12880]

Moreover, as the sacrifice of the altar is the application and renewal of the sacrifice of the cross, the angelic Doctor teaches, that the Mass procures for man the same benefits and salvation that the sacrifice of the cross procured for him.[12881]

St. John Chrysostom says the same: "The celebration of Mass is of as much value as the death of Christ on the cross."[12882] And of this the Church still further assures us, saying: "As many times as this commemorative sacrifice is celebrated, so often is the work of our redemption performed."[12883] As the same Saviour, who offered himself for us on the cross, offers himself in sacrifice on the altar by the hands of the priest, as the Council of Trent teaches: "For the victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests, who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different;"[12884] so the sacrifice of the cross is applied to our souls by the sacrifice of the altar. The Passion of Jesus Christ rendered us capable of redemption; the Mass puts us in possession of it, and enables us to enjoy its merits.

II. THREE THINGS NECESSARY TO CELEBRATE WELL

The Mass, then, being the most holy and divine action in which we can be engaged, it plainly follows, says the Council of Trent, that all diligence ought to be used in order that so great a sacrifice may be celebrated with the greatest possible interior purity and exterior devotion.[12885] And it says that the malediction fulminated by Jeremias against those who performed negligently their sacred functions is especially to be directed against priests who irreverently say Mass, which sacrifice is the greatest and most sublime action that man can perform for the honor of his Creator; adding, that such irreverence cannot well be less than impiety. The words of the Council are: *Quæ ab impietate vix sejuncta esse potest.*

In order, therefore, that the priest of God may avoid such irreverence, and with it the malediction of heaven, let us see what he must do before he celebrates Mass, what during the celebration, and what after he has celebrated. Before he celebrates he must prepare himself. During the celebration he must behave with suitable reverence. After having celebrated he must make a thanksgiving.

1. PREPARATION BEFORE MASS

It has been said by a servant of God that the whole life of a priest ought to be a preparation and thanksgiving for Mass. It is true that the most holy Eucharist was instituted for the benefit of all the faithful, but it was especially bestowed upon priests. *Give not,* says our Lord, speaking to priests, *that which is holy to dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine.*[12886] Mark the words *your pearls.* In Greek the consecrated particles are called *pearls;* now these are here spoken of by our Blessed Saviour as belonging particularly to priests, *margaritas* VESTRAS. Hence, according to St. John Chrysostom, a priest leaving the altar ought to be so inflamed with divine love as to be the terror of hell.[12887] But do we see this exemplified? On the contrary, the greater number of priests leave the altar even more tepid, more impatient, proud, jealous, and more attached to their own interests, to self-esteem, and to worldly pleasures. “The defect is not in the food, but in the disposition of the one that eats it,”[12888] says Cardinal Bona. The fault is not in the food of which they partake at such a table, since such food, only once eaten, according to St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, is sufficient to make them saints; but in the neglect of preparation on the part of those who celebrate the holy Sacrifice.

Preparation for Mass is twofold—remote and immediate.

The *remote* consists in a pure and virtuous life, which a priest ought always to lead in order to celebrate worthily. If God required purity of the priests of the Old Law, to qualify them for the carrying only of the sacred vessels: *Be you clean that carry the vessels of the Lord,*[12889] how much greater purity must he require of a priest for bearing in his hands and in his breast the Word incarnate? says Peter of Blois.[12890] In order to be thus pure and holy, a priest should not only be free from mortal sins, but also from deliberate venial sins: otherwise, says St. Bernard, Jesus Christ will not allow him to *have part* with him.[12891] All the actions, therefore, of a priest, all his words, all his thoughts, ought to be so holy as to dispose him remotely for the worthy celebration of Mass.

The *immediate* preparation consists first in mental prayer. How can a priest celebrate Mass devoutly who does not prepare himself beforehand by meditation? Father Avila says that a priest ought to make an hour and a half's meditation before celebrating the holy Sacrifice. I should be satisfied with half an hour, and, for the more tepid, with even a quarter of an hour; but I cannot help saying that a quarter of an hour is too little. O God, how many beautiful books are there of meditation by way of preparation for Mass! but how few make use of them! Hence is Mass so frequently celebrated with such grievous negligence and want of devotion. St. Thomas says[12892] that our Blessed Redeemer instituted the most holy sacrament of the altar in order to keep alive within us the remembrance of his love shown to us in his Passion, and of the great benefits obtained for us by the sacrifice of himself on the altar of the cross; and hence the Apostle admonishes us that, as often as we receive the holy Communion, we should do so in remembrance of the death of our Lord.[12893] Now, if all the faithful are required to commemorate the Passion of Jesus Christ as often as they communicate, how much more is a priest required to do this, when he celebrates Mass; in which he not only receives the most sacred body and blood of Christ, but also represents and renews upon the altar, although in a different manner, the sacrifice itself of the cross!

Besides making his meditation, a priest should also, before he celebrates, recollect himself, at least for a short time, and reflect on the greatness of the action which he is about to perform. Thus it was ordained by the Council of Milan, in the time of St. Charles: “Before celebrating Mass, priests should become recollected, and praying should fix their thoughts upon the great mystery.”[12894] When a priest enters the sacristy to say Mass, let him leave behind him all worldly thoughts, saying to them with St. Bernard: Wait here all earthly cares and solicitude until after I have celebrated Mass, which will require all my attention. St. Francis de Sales writes in one of his letters to St. Jane Frances de Chantal: “When I approach the altar to begin Mass, I banish all temporal affairs from my mind.” Let a priest, therefore, consider that he is going to call down from heaven the Word incarnate, to treat familiarly with him, to offer him again in sacrifice to his eternal Father, and to nourish himself with his divine body and blood; after the example of the Venerable John of Avila, who was accustomed to excite himself to devotion by saying: “I am going to consecrate, to call down the body and blood of the Son of God; I am going to take him into my hands, to speak to him, and to treat with him, and to receive him into my breast.”

Let the priest also reflect that he is going to the altar to make intercession for all sinners. “The priest while celebrating,” says St. Laurence Justinian, “performs the office of mediator; wherefore he should be an intercessor for all those that commit sin.”[12895] So that a priest at the altar, according to St. John Chrysostom, stands between God and his creatures, offers up their prayers, and obtains for them the graces of heaven.[12896] In the Old Law the high-priest was permitted only once in the year to enter into the “Holy of Holies,” to pray for the people; but now every priest is permitted to offer the Lamb without spot to the eternal Father every day, to obtain for himself and for the whole Church all necessary graces and favors. Hence the Council of Basel observes that if a subject when he is to ask a prince for some favor does not fail to present himself in the best possible manner, in decent attire, with an humble countenance, modest language, suitable attention, how much more should the priest act in this way when he presents himself before the divine Majesty to pray for himself and for others![12897]

2. THE REVERENCE WITH WHICH MASS OUGHT TO BE CELEBRATED

In the second place, a priest celebrating Mass ought to behave with all the reverence due to so great a sacrifice. To induce him to do this is the intent, or at least the principal point, of this treatise. Let us then see what is meant by reverence. It means, first, a proper attention to the words of the Mass;

and secondly, an exact observance of the ceremonies prescribed by the rubrics.

As regards attention to the words, a priest sins by being voluntarily distracted during Mass; and as divines say, if it be during the consecration and elevation, or during a notable part of the canon, he sins mortally; such is the opinion of Roncaglia,[12898] of Concina,[12899] and of Tamburini, of whom the latter, although lenient, even too lenient, in his opinions, yet speaking on this point says: “If a priest while voluntarily distracted during a considerable time, recites those parts of Mass that contain the Canon, he will sin mortally. On the other hand, it seems to me to be a grave irreverence if any one, while professing that God should be venerated in the highest degree, should behave irreverently towards him by voluntary distraction.”[12900] And I am of the same opinion, whatever certain authors may say to the contrary: because, waiving the question whether the interior intention is or is not the essence of prayer, I maintain that the holy Sacrifice is not only an act of prayer, but also a most sublime act of religious worship, in which a priest appears to commit great irreverence if, while he actually professes religiously to honor God, he is voluntarily distracted with thoughts of other subjects. Hence this admonition of the Rubric: “The priest should take the greatest care to utter distinctly and fitly the words that are to be said in a loud voice, and not too fast, so that he may advert to what he reads.”[12901]

As regards the performing of the ceremonies prescribed by the Rubric for the celebration of Mass, St. Pius V. in the Bull inserted in the Missal commands, *districte, et in virtute sanctæ obedientiæ,* Mass to be celebrated according to the rubrics of the Missal: *Juxta ritum,* are the words, *modum, et normam in Missali præscriptam.* Hence Suarez very properly says that the omission of any ceremony prescribed in the rubrics, such as a sign of the cross, genuflection, inclination, etc., cannot be excused from venial sin. And this is declared by Benedict XIII. in the Roman Council, which says, that in the celebration of Mass, *Ritus in minimis etiam, sine peccato negligi, vel mutari haud possunt.* St. Teresa said: “I would lay down my life for only one of the ceremonies of the Church;”[12902] and shall a priest slight them?

La Croix[12903] says the same with Pasqualigo, if the said ceremonies are performed in too hurried a manner, or carelessly, as says Father

Concina[12904] also very properly, speaking of those who in saying Mass do not touch the ground with one knee when they genuflect, or who, when they should kiss the altar, only make an appearance of kissing it, or who do not properly form the crosses at the benedictions as prescribed in the rubrics; because, as Gavantus[12905] says with Ledesma, it is the same thing as to omit the ceremonies prescribed, to perform them improperly; according to the axiom of jurists: *Paria sunt non facere, et facere male.*

Moreover, the learned in general, Wigandt,[12906] Roncaglia,[12907] Concina,[12908] and La Croix[12909] in the places already cited, say, that if any one omits a notable part of the ceremonies of the Mass, although not of the most important, he cannot be excused from grievous sin. Such omissions, when repeated in the same Mass, amount to something grievous; and therefore are grievously irreverent to the Holy Sacrifice.

We know that even in the Old Law the Lord threatened with many maledictions those priests that were careless of the ceremonies of their sacrifices, which were but figures of ours: *But if thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God to keep and to do all His . . . ceremonies . . . all these curses shall come upon thee. . . . Cursed shalt thou be in the city, cursed in the field; . . . cursed shalt thou be coming in, and cursed going out. . . .* [12910]

Hence, seeing the greater part of priests say Mass with so much hurry and carelessness in the performance of the ceremonies, one ought to weep even with tears of blood. Well might be applied to such the reproach of Clement of Alexandria to the Gentile priests, that they made heaven a theatrical scene, and God the subject of a comedy: *O impietatem! Scenam cælum fecistis, et Deus factus est actus.*[12911] But why should I say a comedy? Oh, what attention would not such pay if they had to recite a part in a comedy! And in saying Mass what attention do they pay? Words mutilated, genuflections half made, acts of mockery rather than of reverence: crosses so formed that it would be impossible to know what they meant: such movements about the altar, and turnings, as even to excite ridicule and laughter: handling the consecrated Host and the consecrated chalice as though they were a piece of bread and a glass of wine: confounding the words and ceremonies together, placing the one before or after the other, contrary to the order prescribed by the rubrics; the whole Mass, in a word, from beginning to end, nothing but a tissue of carelessness, confusion, and irreverence.

And whence comes all this? It arises partly from ignorance of the rubrics, which they neither know nor endeavor to know; and partly from anxiety to finish Mass in as short a time as possible. They seem to be saying Mass as though the Church were going to fall, or the Turks were coming, and they should not have time to escape. Such priests, before saying Mass, will sometimes be engaged for hours in worldly affairs, or in useless conversation in a shop, or in the sacristy, and then hasten to begin Mass, and attend to nothing but to get through it as quickly as possible. There should be always some one at hand to say to such, as Father Avila, approaching the altar, once said to a priest who was celebrating in this manner: “Please to treat him better; for he is the son of a respectable Father.”[12912] God admonished the priests of the old law to tremble with awe when they approached the Sanctuary.[12913] And shall the priests of the New Law celebrating at the altar, in the presence of Jesus Christ really there, taking him into their hands, offering him in sacrifice, and even feeding upon him, dare to behave with irreverence?

A priest at the altar, as St. Cyprian says, and most truly, represents the person of Jesus Christ himself.[12914] And in the person of Jesus Christ he says: *Hoc est corpus meum. Hic est calix sanguinis mei.* But, O God! seeing the irreverent manner in which so many priests now celebrate Mass, who could say whether they were the representatives of Jesus Christ, or mountebanks earning their livelihood by tricks of sleight-of-hand? as it is written in the synod of Spalatro: “Many who celebrate endeavor not to celebrate Mass, but to finish it; not that they may perform an act of devotion, but that they may have a means of making a living; so that the celebration of Mass is performed not as a mystery of religion, but as an act of making profit.”[12915] And what is still more to be wondered at, or rather, to be lamented, is to see even Religious, and some even of reformed Orders, say Mass with so much haste, and with such mutilated ceremonies as would scandalize even idolaters, and scandalize them more than if such Religious had been the most lax secular priests.

Hence let priests who celebrate in this unworthy manner remember that they not only sin by the irreverence which they commit against the holy

Sacrifice, but also by the great scandal which they give to those who are present at it. In proportion as a devout Mass excites great devotion and reverence towards the sacred mysteries, so does an indevout Mass destroy all devotion and reverence due to so great a sacrifice. In the life of St. Peter of Alcantara it is related that the Mass which he said devoutly produced more fruit than all the sermons of the preachers of the province in which he then was. The Council of Trent says that the ceremonies of the Mass have been ordained by the Church for no other purpose than to instil into the faithful the reverence which is due to the sacrifice of the altar, and to the sublime mysteries which it embraces. "The Church," says the Council, "has likewise employed ceremonies whereby both the majesty of so great a sacrifice might be recommended, and the minds of the faithful be excited by those visible signs of religion and piety, to the contemplation of those most sublime things which are hidden in this sacrifice."[12916] But the ceremonies, when irreverently and hastily performed, not only do not excite, but destroy the veneration of the faithful for so sacred a mystery. Peter of Blois says, that the saying of Mass with but little reverence induces the people to make little account of the most holy Sacrament.[12917] And hence the Council of Turin, in the year 1583, ordained that priests should be well instructed in the ceremonies of the Mass. For what end? "Lest they withdraw from devotion the people intrusted to their care, rather than attract them to the veneration of the sacred mysteries."[12918]

How can priests by saying Mass indevoutly expect to obtain pardon for their sins and favors from God, if while they are offering it up to him they are offending him, and insult him rather than honor him? "Since every crime," says Pope Julius, "is wiped out by sacrifices what shall be given to the Lord for the expiation of guilt, when in the very offering of the sacrifice sins are committed?"[12919] A priest, by not believing in the sacrament of the Eucharist, would offend God; but he who does believe in it, would offend him more by not treating it with becoming respect; because he would, by so doing, destroy it in others who saw him celebrate with so little reverence. The Jews respected Jesus Christ at the beginning of his mission; but when they saw him despised by the priests, they lost all reverence for him, and at last unanimously, with the priests, cried out: *Tolle, tolle, crucifige eum.* And thus the laity, when they see priests celebrate Mass with disrespect and negligence, lose all esteem and veneration for it.

As it is said above, when Mass is said with devotion, it excites devotion; while, on the contrary, when it is disrespectfully celebrated, it extinguishes all devotion in those who attend it, and almost their faith also. A certain religious of great credit related to me a terrible example on this point, and we find it also recorded by Seraphin Maria Loddi, a Dominican, in his “Reasons for celebrating Mass without hurry,” etc. There was a certain heretic in Rome who had resolved to abjure his errors, and had promised the Pope Clement XI. to do so, but having seen Mass celebrated in a certain church in an indevout manner, was so scandalized, that he went to the Pope, and told his Holiness that he should not now abjure his errors, for that he was convinced that neither priests nor the Pope himself believed in the truth of the Catholic Church. But the Pope told him that the indevotion of one priest, or of many negligent priests, could not prejudice the truth of the faith taught by the Church. “Nevertheless,” replied the heretic, “if I were Pope, and knew of a priest saying Mass so irreverently, I would have him burnt alive: and seeing as I do that there are priests who celebrate in this manner with impunity, even in Rome, and in the face of the Pope, I am satisfied that the Pope himself does not believe.” And so saying, he departed, and obstinately refused to renounce his errors. I may add that a certain layman (this very morning, while I am writing this little work), as one of the brethren of our Congregation tells me, hearing a Mass of this kind, said to him: “Verily such priests and such Masses make one lose one’s faith.”

Hear how the pious Cardinal Bellarmine[12920] laments over the grievous scandals arising from the abuses committed by priests in the celebration of Mass, as referred to by Benedict XIV. “Another thing is also worthy of most copious tears, namely, that owing to the carelessness or impiety of some priests, the sacred mysteries are so unworthily treated that those who treat them seem not to believe that the majesty of the Lord is present. For thus some perform this duty without spirit, without affection, with incredible haste, as if they did not see Christ by faith, or did not believe that they are seen by him.”[12921] Woe to such! A certain priest dying immediately after having said only his first Mass, Father Avila exclaimed, “Oh, what an account will he have to give before God only for this, his first Mass!” And what think you would Father Avila say of priests, who, perhaps for thirty or forty years, have offered up the holy Sacrifice in the scandalous manner that we have seen above?

The following terrible example on this subject is narrated in the annals of the Capuchin Fathers.[12922] There was a certain Rector of a church, who celebrated Mass with much hurry and irreverence. One day, Father Matthew da Basso, the first General of the Capuchins, as soon as this priest returned into the sacristy, after saying Mass, hastened to him, and represented to him how his Mass could not edify, but must bring destruction upon the Church; and on this account besought him either to celebrate Mass with more suitable gravity, or to abstain from saying it at all, in order to avoid giving more scandal to the people. The Rector was so indignant at receiving this reproof, that having soon cast off his sacred vestments, he ran after the religious in order to he revenged upon him; but not finding him, retired into his own house, where it so happened that in a few minutes the miserable man was attacked by persons who were his enemies, and was so grievously wounded by them that within the space of an hour he unhappily died; on which there arose such a terrific tempest as to tear up oaks by the roots, and carry herds of cattle into the air. An obsessed person of the neighborhood being exorcised, declared that all the demons of that country had been engaged together in preventing this priest from being converted before he died; and that having succeeded, in testimony of their triumph they raised this tempest in the air.

I know not with what conscience parish priests and sacristans can admit priests who say Mass in an irreverent manner to celebrate in their churches. Pasqualigo says that he knows not how to excuse from grievous sin those who admit such. “Prelates,” he says, “even Regulars and Rectors of churches, sin mortally if they permit their subjects to celebrate with too great haste; because by reason of their office they are obliged to take care that the celebration takes place in a suitable manner.”[12923] And there is no doubt but that bishops are strictly bound to prohibit, without exception, all such priests from celebrating the sacred mysteries, as ordained by the Council of Trent: “The holy Synod decrees that the ordinary bishops of places shall take diligent care and be bound to prohibit and abolish all those things which . . . irreverence, which can hardly be separated from impiety, .

. . may have introduced."[12924] Mark the words, *prohibere curent ac teneantur,-shall prohibit and are bound to do so;* from which it is evident that prelates are obliged to watch and diligently inform themselves how Mass is celebrated throughout their dioceses, and to suspend from celebrating those priests who say it without due reverence. And this holds good even with respect to Regulars, inasmuch as bishops in their regard are declared by the Council to be apostolic Delegates: "Even as delegates of the Apostolic See, they may prohibit, ordain, reform, and establish, . . . and may compel . . . by ecclesiastical censures and other penalties inviolably to observe them.[12925]

We come now to inquire how much time is requisite for the saying of Mass in a proper manner. Father Molina[12926] says that an hour ought not to be considered too long. Nevertheless Cardinal Lambertini,[12927] agreeably to the general opinion of other authors, maintains that Mass ought not to exceed half an hour, nor to be less than twenty minutes; because, as he says, it cannot be celebrated with suitable reverence in less than twenty minutes; and if prolonged beyond half an hour it becomes tedious to those that are present.[12928] The same is found in the General Chapter of Clerics Regular: "No one should prolong Mass more than half an hour, nor say it in less than twenty minutes."[12929] We find the same again in the Constitutions of the discalced Carmelites. "The private Mass should last about half an hour, but not longer." The same again in the Rules of the Society of Jesus: "The saying of Mass should not much exceed half an hour, nor should it be so short as not fill up half an hour."[12930]

Father Gobato, speaking of the shortest time required by the Doctors for the celebration of Mass says, it is generally understood to be about half an hour.[12931] And he adds, that he should have great difficulty, ordinarily speaking, in believing that Mass could be said in a quarter of an hour,[12932] that is, without many faults. Hence Father Roncaglia maintains as certain that a priest who says Mass in less than a quarter of an hour cannot be excused from grievous sin.[12933] Pasqualigo and others in general say the same, after Cardinal Lambertini already cited, as Quarti, Bissus, Clericatus, etc. From all this it must follow, that a priest who celebrates any Mass in less than a quarter of an hour (even a Mass for the dead, or of the Votive of the Blessed Virgin), cannot, without great difficulty, not to say impossibility, be excused from mortal sin; because it is impossible to finish Mass in less time than a quarter, and not commit great irreverence against the holy Sacrifice, and give great scandal to the faithful.

But let us examine the excuses alleged by priests who commit such abuses.

1. Then some one may plead: I say in a short time Mass, but I omit nothing; for, thank God, I am naturally rapid in speech and in all my movements; and thus I soon pronounce all the words and perform all the ceremonies with exactness. But I reply, this is not sufficient for the proper celebration of Mass, merely to pronounce the words, and to hurry through the ceremonies. They ought to be performed with appropriate gravity, which is intrinsically necessary to the reverence which is required; otherwise, if hastily performed, they do not exhibit nor excite that reverence which is due to the holy Sacrifice; but, as shown above, they exhibit great irreverence and cause great scandal to the faithful. Father Quarti says: “It is certain that so much space of time is required as is needed to perform the ceremonies with the gravity that becomes so great a sacrifice.”[12934] Pasqualigo also says: “It must be said that it is better to incline to prolixity than to haste, because the majesty of the sacrifice requires the mode that is suitable to the gravity of the act, rather than the inclination to the opposite.”[12935] And he gives as the reason, that, in hurrying through the Mass, there may be not only sin, but scandal also; which would not follow from prolonging it, but only at most weariness in those who were present. “It is to be greatly feared,” concludes Father Quarti, “that a large number of priests who hurry through Mass will go to hell.”

2. It may be said that among the conditions for properly celebrating Mass, laid down by divines, brevity is one: *Alte, breviter, clare, devote, et exacte.*—But, I ask, why attend solely to one condition, *breviter,* and pay no regard to the other two, *devote* and *exacte?* Besides, the Rubric[12936] clearly explains what is meant by *breviter,* namely, that Mass should be said *non nimis morose, ne audientes tædio afficiantur.* And the Rubric after these words immediately adds: *nec nimis festinanter.* Hence the continuator of Tourneley very properly says: “A short Mass is here meant, that does not take away devotion; hence if it be said in less than half an hour it could not be called devout, and consequently it would be said badly.”[12937] Yet he

adds, that the term *brevis* is used in opposition to such an affected length of time in saying Mass as would weary those who heard it. Finally, the same author confirms what Pasqualigo says, to whom I have before referred: “It is better to incline to length than to brevity, because by length one cannot sin grievously, and scandal is not given as it is in a Mass said in too short a time.”[12938]

A certain priest, in excuse for having said a short Mass, once pleaded that St. Philip Neri said Mass in half a quarter of an hour. But with what a want of good sense! It is true, as related by the author of his life, that St. Philip, when he said Mass publicly, was only a short time in celebrating; but the writer does not mean by a short time half a quarter of an hour, nor a quarter of an hour; he only meant that the saint avoided that wearisome tediousness which the Rubrics censure. For in the same life we read that the saint celebrated Mass, even in public, with so much devotion, that he moved all that heard him to tears of compunction. By a Mass of half a quarter of an hour he would not have moved others to tears, but to laughter and ridicule.

3. It may be said: The people complain, and are impatient when Mass is long. In reply, I would first ask, whether the want of devotion in the people is to regulate the degree of reverence to be paid to the holy Sacrifice? Secondly, I would answer, that if priests said Mass with becoming reverence and solemnity, the people would be impressed with proper respect for so holy a sacrifice, and would not complain of half an hour in being present at it. It is because Mass is but too generally said hastily and carelessly, that it does not excite the people to devotion; and hence, following the example of those who so celebrate, they hear it indevoutly, and with but little faith. If they see a priest doing wrong for a quarter or half a quarter of an hour, they are disgusted, and complain. They can spend hours at a gaming table, or loitering in the streets to kill time, but are quite wearied with a Mass of half an hour. Priests are the cause of all this evil: *To you, O priests!* saith the Lord, *that despise My name, and have said: Wherein have we despised Thy name ? . . . In that you say: The table of the Lord is contemptible.*[12939] The meaning of which is, that the little account which priests make of the reverence due to the Mass is the cause why it is not respected by others.

Wherefore, my dear priest of God, be careful to say Mass in a proper manner, and heed not others who blame you. Be satisfied if God praises you and the angels who are present around the altar. And if any one, however great a personage, requests you to say a short Mass, answer him as St. Theotone, a Canon Regular, replied to Teresa, Queen of Portugal, when, on account of some pressing affairs, she requested him to be expeditious in saying Mass. There is a Oueen, said the saint, in heaven, more exalted than your majesty, in whose honor I am about to celebrate Mass; if your majesty cannot remain, go and attend to your affairs; but I cannot treat the holy Sacrifice with irreverence by shortening the time required for offering it.[12940] But what happened? The Queen, entering into herself, sent for the saint, and humbly casting herself at his feet, promised with tears to do penance for her rashness,

Let us endeavor then to reform ourselves, if hitherto we have celebrated this great Sacrifice with but little reverence and devotion. Let us consider how great is the action we are about to perform when we are going to celebrate Mass; and let us consider how great a treasure of merit we shall acquire by celebrating it devoutly. Oh, what a blessing for a priest is Mass well celebrated! The Disciple says: “Prayer is more quickly heard in the church in the presence of a priest celebrating.”[12941][12942]And if the prayer of a secular is more certainly heard by God when offered up in the presence of a priest celebrating Mass, how much more the prayer of the priest himself, if he celebrates devoutly? He who says Mass every day devoutly, will receive from God a constant supply of heavenly light and strength. Jesus Christ will constantly instruct him more and more, console him, animate him, and bestow upon him all the graces that he desires. Particularly after the consecration, a priest may be assured he will obtain from our Lord whatever he asks for. The Venerable Father Antony de Colellis says: “When I consecrate and hold Jesus Christ in my hands, I obtain whatever I desire.”

Lastly, in speaking of the respect that is due to Jesus Christ offering himself in sacrifice in the Mass, I would not omit the precept of Innocent III.: “We also command that the oratories, the vessels, corporals, and vestments, should be kept clean; for it appears to be too absurd to neglect in sacred things what is becoming in profane things.”[12943] This Pope had but too much reason for speaking in this manner, for, in truth, there were those of his day who did not blush to celebrate, or to cause others to celebrate, with corporals, purificators, and chalices, which they would not have suffered to be used at their own tables.

3. THANKSGIVING AFTER CELEBRATING MASS

Finally, a priest, after having celebrated Mass, must make a thanksgiving. St. John Chrysostom says that if men expect us to be grateful for every little favor that they do us, and to recompense them, how much more grateful ought we to be to God for the great benefits that he bestows upon us, since without any view to recompense, but only for our advantage, he would have us be grateful to him.[12944] If we, continues the saint, cannot thank God as he deserves, at least let us thank him as much as we are able. But what a misery, what an abuse, to see priests, as soon as Mass is finished, after having received from God the honor of offering up in sacrifice to him his own beloved Son, and after having partaken of his most sacred body, scarcely entered into the sacristy, with their lips still purpled with his blood, but after a short prayer muttered between their teeth, without devotion, and without attention, immediately begin to talk of useless things, or of the affairs of the world, and leave the church to pass through the streets, with Jesus Christ still present within them in the sacramental species! It would be well to do with such what Father Avila once did. Seeing a priest leaving the church immediately after celebrating Mass, he sent two clerics with lights to accompany him; on which the priest inquiring what priest they were going to attend, they answered: We are accompanying the Blessed Sacrament which you carry within you. To such might be said what St. Bernard wrote to the archdeacon Fulcone: “Alas! how can you so soon grow tired of Jesus Christ!”[12945]

Many are the devout books that inculcate and enforce thanksgiving after Mass; but how many priests are there who make it? Those who do make it may be easily distinguished. The wonder is, that while some are indeed diligent in meditation, and in other devotions, few or none remain after Mass to commune with Jesus Christ. Thanksgiving after Mass ought to terminate only with the day. Father Avila says that the time after Mass ought to be considered as of the greatest value. The time after Mass is a most precious time, in which we may treat with God and obtain from him treasures of grace. St. Teresa says, Let us not lose after Communion so fine an opportunity of treating with God: his divine Majesty is not accustomed to repay those ill with whom he takes up his abode when they afford him a suitable entertainment. In another place she says that Jesus Christ, after Communion, sits within us as upon the throne of graces, and says to each of us, as to the blind man whom he restored to sight, *What wilt Thou that I should do for Thee?*[12946] As though he said, I am here, O devout soul, to bestow upon thee my choicest graces: tell me, what wouldst thou that I should do for thee?

Moreover, it is the opinion of many learned writers, of Suarez,[12947] of Gonet,[12948] and of others, that the more the soul, after Communion, during the time that the sacramental species remain, disposes herself by fervent acts of devotion, the greater are the fruits which she reaps from it; because the Blessed Sacrament is in the nature of food, and as corporal food, so long as it remains in the stomach, nourishes the body: so with this spiritual and heavenly food—so long as it remains in the body, so long does it nourish the soul with divine graces, and the more plentifully in proportion as the soul disposes herself to receive them by continued acts of suitable devotion. Besides, during this time, every pious act is of greater value and merit, inasmuch as the communicant is united to Jesus Christ according to his own words: *He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in him.*[12949] And as St. John Chrysostom says, Jesus Christ makes us then one with himself.[12950] And hence acts of piety and devotion are more meritorious then than at any other time, because they proceed from the soul in union with Jesus Christ.

On the contrary, our Lord will not waste his graces on the ungrateful, as St. Bernard says.[12951] Father Avila used to spend two hours in prayer and in communing with Jesus Christ after celebrating Mass. Oh, with what tenderness and affection does Jesus Christ speak to the soul after Communion! with what endearing love does he treat her! It would not be much for a priest to spend an hour with Jesus Christ after Mass. At least, I beseech every priest to spend half an hour, or at the very least, a quarter. But, O God! a quarter is too little! St. Ambrose says: “A true minister of the altar is born for God, not for himself.”[12952] If, then, a priest, from the time of his ordination, belongs no more to himself, nor to the world, nor to his relatives, but only to God, for whom ought he to spend his whole life, but for God, and particularly after Communion, by uniting himself with Jesus Christ.

III. THE PRIEST WHO ABSTAINS FROM SAYING MASS

In conclusion, I would say a word, in passing, on the question whether it is more pleasing to God to say Mass, or to abstain from saying it through humility.

To abstain through humility is good, but not best. Acts of humility render to God a limited honor; but the Mass an infinite honor, as coming from a divine person. Mark what Venerable Bede says: “The priest who omits to say Mass, though he is not lawfully prevented, deprives, as far as in him lies, the Blessed Trinity of glory, the angels of joy, the sinners of pardon, the just of help, the souls in purgatory of solace, the Church of benefits, and himself of spiritual medicine.”[12953]

The glorious St. Cajetan, being in Naples, and hearing that a Cardinal, a friend of his, who had been accustomed to say Mass every day, began to celebrate less frequently in consequence of the multiplicity of affairs in which he was engaged, could not, although it was during the dog-days, be persuaded from going at the risk of his life to Rome, to entreat his friend to resume his former custom in this respect, and went, and then returned again to Naples.

It is related of Father John of Avila, that on one occasion going on his way to say Mass at a distant hermitage, he became so overcome with fatigue, that despairing of being able to reach the place, which was still at a considerable distance, he began to think of returning without saying Mass; on which Jesus Christ appearing to him as a pilgrim, and opening his bosom and showing him his wounds, particularly that in his sacred side, said, “When I was thus wounded, I was much more overcome and exhausted than thou art;” and so saying, disappeared. Father Avila roused himself, went forward, and celebrated Mass.

THE DIVINE OFFICE HURRIEDLY SAID

I. IMPORTANCE OF THE DIVINE OFFICE

To those who are deputed by the Church to recite the canonical hours, two very great and important offices are entrusted—that of praising and glorifying God, and that of imploring the divine mercies upon all Christian people.

I. In the first place, then, the supreme majesty of God is to be honored by the reciting of the Office. *The sacrifice of praise shall glorify Me: and there is the way by which I will show him the salvation of God.*[12954] I declare myself honored, saith the Lord, by him who offers me a sacrifice of praise; and thereby he shall find the way of obtaining eternal salvation. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, when she heard the bell for Office, was filled with consolation and hastened immediately to the choir, delighted with the thought that she was going to be engaged in the employment of the angels, whose constant occupation it is to praise God. And it is for this end that the Church has appointed her ministers to sing the divine Office, that men on earth may join with the blessed in heaven in honoring their common Creator:

Sed illa sedes Cœlitum
Semper resultat laudibus:
Deum trinum et unicum,
Jugi canore prædicat.
Illi canentes jungimur
Almæ Sionis æmuli.

St. Gregory Nazianzen says that the chanting of the psalms is a prelude of the praises with which the saints honor God in heaven.[12955] Thus, according to Tertullian, when we recite the canonical hours, we as it were take possession of heaven, inasmuch as we discharge the same duty as the inhabitants of that blessed country. Hence, St. Catharine of Bologna took so much delight in reciting the divine Office, that she wished her death might take place while she was so engaged.

II. By the Office God is to be thanked for all the graces and favors that he is continually bestowing on mankind, and his divine mercy is to be obtained for poor sinners. It is the duty of the faithful in general to thank God for all his benefits; and as all stand in need here below of the divine assistance, in order to resist their spiritual enemies, and to obtain eternal salvation, so all are likewise bound to implore by prayer the succor of his mercies. But, as seculars are constantly distracted with the affairs of the world, the holy Church has appointed her ministers to implore for themselves and for all the people of Christ the assistance of his divine majesty through the different hours of the day. For this end is the Office divided into seven canonical hours, that there may be always some praying for all, and in the best form of prayer; inasmuch as the divine Office is nothing less than a memorial drawn up for us by God himself, through which he may more readily hear our prayers and succor us in our necessities, as he declares to us by the prophet Isaias: *My spirit that is in thee, and My words that I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth.*[12956] In this our good God acts as a prince, who, wishing to relieve the miseries of his vassals, draws up for them himself a form of supplication suitable to his dignity and their own wants, that he may be the better able to console them. Many private prayers do not equal in value only one prayer of the divine Office, as being offered to God in the name of the whole Church and in his own appointed words. Hence St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi says that, in comparison with the divine Office, all other prayers and devotions are but of little merit and efficacy with God. Let us be convinced, then, that after the holy Sacrifice of the Mass the Church possesses no source, no treasure, so abundant as the Office, from which we may draw such daily streams of grace.

II. NECESSITY OF RECITING THE OFFICE WELL

But St. Gregory says that true prayer consists not only in the pronunciation of the words, but also in the attention of the heart; inasmuch as our good desires prevail much more with God in obtaining his divine mercies, than simply our voices.[12957] It is therefore necessary, if we would please God, to pray not only with the voice, but with the spirit and the mind, after the example of the Apostle: *I will sing with the spirit, I will sing also with the understanding.*[12958]

If priests and religious did all recite the Office as it ought to be recited, the Church would not behold herself in the miserable state to which she is reduced. How many sinners would be delivered from the slavery of the devil, and how many souls would love God with much greater fervor! And how would priests themselves not find themselves ever the same, imperfect, irritable, jealous, attached to their own interests, and led away by vanities! Our Lord has promised to hear every one who prays to him: *For every one that asketh, receiveth.*[12959] And how comes it that a priest offering up so many prayers in a day, were it only in the Office which he recites, is yet never heard? Lie is always the same, as weak and prone as ever to fall not only into slight sins (to which he is habituated, and takes neither pains nor care to correct himself of them), but into grievous sins against charity, justice, or chastity; hence when he recites the Office he pronounces sentence of condemnation against himself, in these words: *They are cursed who decline from Thy commandments.*[12960] And what is still worse, he feels little remorse, excusing himself as being of the same flesh and blood as other men, and not able to restrain himself. But if he said the Office with fewer distractions and less negligence, accompanying with his heart the many prayers that he offers to God in reciting it, he certainly would not be so weak, but would acquire fortitude and strength to resist all temptations, and to lead a holy life, such as becomes a priest of God.

But how, says St. Gregory,[12961] can God regard the prayers of him who knows not what he is asking, nor at all times desires to be heard? The Apostle tells us that the prayer only of the lips is fruitless: *If I pray in a tongue, . . . but my understanding is without fruit.*[12962] How can you pretend, adds St. Cyprian, to be heard by God, when you do not hear yourself?[12963] As prayer offered with attention and devotion is a sweet-smelling incense, which is most pleasing to God, and brings down for us treasures of grace; so, on the contrary, prayer offered with distractions and indevotion is an abomination in his eyes, which excites his indignation, and brings upon us his wrath.

The Almighty one day complained of this to St. Bridget, saying, that priests lost much time every day, in entertaining themselves with their friends on worldly topics; but that when they came to speak with him in the divine Office, they were in such haste, that instead of honoring they dishonored him. Hence St. Augustine said that the barking of a dog was more pleasing to God than the chanting of such priests. O God, how indignant would an earthly prince be were one of his vassals, while in the act of petitioning him for some favor, to be so distracted and taken up with other things as not to know what he was saying! Hence the angelic Doctor writes, that no one can be excused from sin, who at prayer, although not of obligation, is voluntarily distracted, because he thereby slights God, as one would do, who, speaking to another, paid no attention to what he was saying.[12964]

Alas! of how many priests will the Lord complain, as he complained of old of the Jews! *This people honoreth Me with their lips: but their heart is far from Me.*[12965] And of how many might be said what Peter of Blois writes: While their lips pronounce the psalms and canticles, their minds are in the pleasures of the table; thinking how they may best gratify their appetites or their vanity, their thirst for riches or similar worldly desires.[12966] The Council of Treves says: What else is it to chant the psalms with the voice, and in mind to be going through the streets and squares, but to deceive men, by making them believe that you are praising God, when in reality you are mocking him, speaking to him indeed with your lips, but giving your minds and hearts to anything rather than to praising him and praying to him?[12967] Hence St. Basil justly concludes, that as, in order to obtain favors, it is necessary to pray for them with attention and fervor, so he who prays with a mind wandering upon distracting objects will not obtain the favors which he asks, but will provoke the Lord to indignation.[12968]

Our Lord has said by his prophet Malachy, that he curses the praises of those priests who bless him only with their lips, while their hearts are engaged upon everything else but his honor and glory: *And now, O ye priests, this commandment is to you. If you will not hear, and if you will not lay it to heart, to give glory to My name, saith the Lord of hosts, . . . I will curse your blessings.*[12969] Hence may be said of that unhappy priest, who says his Office in this careless manner, what is written in the book of psalms: *May the devil stand at his right hand. When he is judged, may he go out condemned: and may his prayer be turned to sin.*[12970]

While he is reciting the divine praises with his lips only, sometimes only half pronouncing the words, at other times conversing or amusing himself with others, his mind dissipated and distracted with the affairs or pleasures of the world, the devil stands by his side, and his reward for such an Office will be eternal damnation, since his very prayer itself will be imputed to him as a sin, on account of the unworthy manner in which he offers it; which is the signification of those words: *and may his prayer be turned to sin.*

Hence the devil is so busy in putting into the mind, while we are reciting the Office, so many of the affairs, desires and pleasures of the world, that engaging our thoughts with such things, he may rob us of all the fruit we might otherwise reap from the Office, and render us culpable in the sight of God, by causing us to treat him with so little respect. On this account we ought to take the greatest care to recite the divine praises with proper attention. A good religious once said, that when pressed for time we had better shorten our mental prayer in order to have sufficient leisure to recite the Office with proper devotion. Agreeably with this, we find in the rules of the Carthusians that God is not pleased with any act of devotion which we perform, if by performing it we neglect that to which duty obliges us.[12971]

III REQUISITE ATTENTION AND DEVOTION

But omitting other reflections, let us come to the manner in which we are practically to recite the Office with becoming attention and devotion.

Before everything else, says St. John Chrysostom, when we enter the church, or take the breviary in our hands, to discharge our obligation of reciting the divine Office, let us leave the door and expel from our minds all worldly thoughts.[12972] To this does the Holy Spirit exhort us when he says: *Before prayer prepare thy soul.*[12973] Consider that then the Church charges you as her minister to go and praise the Lord, and to implore his divine mercies for all mankind. Imagine to yourself that the angels stand by you, as they were once seen by Blessed Herman, with censers in their hands, ready to offer up your prayers to God as sweet-smelling incense of holy love, as the psalmist says: *Let my prayer be directed, as incense in thy* *sight.*[12974] Thus the apostle St. John describes the angels as *having, . . . golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints.*[12975] In a word, think that you are going to speak with God, and to treat with him of your own welfare, and of that of the whole Church; and reflect that he then regards you with greater love, and listens more propitiously to your petitions.

In the beginning, then, offer to him the praises that you are about to pour forth in his honor, and beseech him to free you from distractions, and to give you light and help to praise him and to pray to him as he deserves; and for this end recite attentively the usual prayer: *Aperi Domine os meum ad benedicendum,* etc.

When you begin the Office, do not hurry yourself in order to get through it as soon as possible, as some do; and would to God they were not the greater number. O my God! the Office is to be said, and at once we are weary. And shall we, in order to spare ourselves a little more time required to recite it devoutly, displease God, and deprive ourselves of the graces and merits that we might otherwise gain by reciting it with proper attention?

We should then place ourselves in a modest and becoming posture. If we do not intend to say it kneeling or standing, but sitting down, let us at least carefully avoid any negligent attitude. It is related of two religious, that while they were reciting Matins together reclined as on a couch, the devil appeared to them, bringing with him an intolerable stench, and scornfully said to them: Such prayer deserves such incense.[12976] It would greatly contribute to our devotion to recite the Office before a crucifix and a statue or picture of the Blessed Virgin, that, casting a look now and then upon them, we may be enabled to renew our intentions and devout affections.

Endeavor, therefore, while you recite the psalms, if you would derive great advantage from them, to renew from time to time your attention and devout affections; that your devotion, says St. Augustine,[12977] which gradually grows cold unless frequent efforts be made to inflame it may not be entirely extinguished.

Attention during the recital of the divine Office is of three kinds; and I speak here of internal attention; because as regards external attention it is quite necessary that we should abstain from everything incompatible with internal attention, as writing, conversation with others, or listening to others speaking, and such like things, which require considerable application of mind. And it will be well here to note, what the learned remark, that such as recite their Office in the squares, streets, and other such places, where they are much exposed to distractions, are in great danger of not satisfying their obligation.

But to return to internal attention—it regards the words, the sense, and God, as divines in general teach with St. Thomas, who says: “There is a threefold attention that may be employed in vocal prayer: one that regards the words, so that one may not make a mistake in uttering the words; the second, by which we attend to the sense of the words; and the third, by which the attention is given to the end of prayer, namely, to God and to the thing for which the prayer is offered.”[12978]

The first kind of attention is to the *words*, by which a person is careful in pronouncing them entirely and distinctly. The second is to the *sense*, by attending to the signification of the words, in order that the heart may accompany them with appropriate affections. The third and the best is to *God*, by directing the mind to him during prayer, by adoring him, by thanking or loving him, or by imploring his graces. The first kind of attention, whenever there has been from the beginning an intention of praying, is sufficient to satisfy the obligation, the Church requiring no more, as St. Thomas teaches in another place: “The first is attention to the words by which we ask; secondly, to the petition itself, and whichever of these two is present, the prayer is not to be regarded as inattentive.”[12979] But he who says the Office with this kind of attention only, without either of the other two, will never say it with devotion, nor without many defects, nor with much fruit. And what benefit can a priest expect to derive from his Office if he says it merely with his lips, endeavoring all the time to dispatch it as quickly as possible, in order to free himself of a burden pressing heavily upon his shoulders? or as though he were swallowing a nauseous medicine? What benefit can he expect, if, worse than this, while he is reciting his Office, he allows his mind to be dissipated, now looking about him at distracting objects, and now sometimes even intermixing with what he is repeating irrelevant words and phrases? St. Bonaventure[12980] relates, that in Paris a good priest being asked a question by a certain prelate on some affair while he was saying his Office, replied that he was speaking with a person of higher dignity, and that therefore he could not attend to the question, and bowing his head continued his Office. On the other hand, the same saint relates of another ecclesiastic that he was condemned to very severe punishments in purgatory on account of the many interruptions which he had allowed in the recitation of his Office.

It is not, however, meant that we should disquiet or afflict ourselves on account of the involuntary distractions that molest us in our Office. So long as they are not voluntary, they are not sinful. Our Lord has compassion on our infirmity, through which distracting thoughts come into our minds without our seeking them, and hence will not hinder the fruit of the prayers which we recite. “He prays in spirit and in truth,” says St. Thomas, “who from an instinct of the spirit devotes himself to prayer, although through some weakness his mind may afterwards wander.”[12981] And he adds, that it happens even to souls who are raised to the exercise of contemplation, that they cannot remain long in the exercise of this high gift without being pressed down by the weight of human misery interrupting them with involuntary distraction.[12982]

On the other hand, the holy Doctor says, that he who is voluntarily and purposely distracted in prayer cannot derive any benefit from it, nor be excused from sin.[12983] By *purposely* is meant, as the learned in general say, when a person perceiving his distractions wilfully entertains them. Against such St. Cyprian exclaims, that it is an insupportable irreverence in the eyes, of God, for a person while he is praying to him to think of other things as though of more importance than his speaking with God in order to implore his divine graces.[12984] Hence St. Bernard teaches that as our will renders our thoughts efficacious in obtaining the fruits of the Spirit, so our will, if neglected, renders them unwortliy of God, and thus deserving chastisements instead of favors.[12985]

St. Bernard had a celebrated vision on this subject, which is related in the chronicles of the Cistercians. As he was one night chanting the Office in choir with his monks, he saw an angel writing at the side of each of them. Some of the angels were writing with gold, others with silver, others with ink, others with water, and others stood with their pens in their hands without writing anything. Our Lord made known to the saint that the gold signified the fervor of charity with which their prayers were recited; the silver, devotion, but less fervor; the ink, diligence in pronouncing all the words, but without devotion; the water, negligence, and but little attention to what was said; and that the angels who wrote nothing signified, that those who were voluntarily distracted were guilty of great irreverence to God. On the contrary, St. Robert, Abbot, being also in the choir, had a different vision. He saw the devil going round, and finding one drowsy, laughed at him; and another distracted, was greatly delighted, and showed that he was very much pleased with him.

When then, O priest of God, you take in hand your breviary, imagine that an angel is on one side noting down your merits in the book of life, if you say the Office with devotion; and on the other side that the devil is writing down your faults in the book of death, if you say it with wilful distractions. By such thoughts endeavor to excite yourself to recite it with all the devotion in your power. For this end not only begin the Office with attention, but renew your attention at the beginning of every psalm, that you may be able to accompany in heart all the sentiments which you utter. “When you pray to God,” writes St. Augustine, “let that be poured out in your heart which is uttered by your lips.”[12986] He again adds: “If the psalm prays, then pray.”[12987] St. Thomas observes that words pronounced devoutly with the lips excite devotion in the mind.[12988] And on this account he says our Lord has taught us to pray with the voice, that thereby in reciting our prayers we may apply the mind to ask what we pronounce with the tongue. And this is what we read in the celebrated Canon of the Fifth Council of Lateran,[12989] beginning with *Dolentes,* namely, that the Office be recited *Studiose et devote, quantum Deus dederit: Studiose,* by pronouncing all the words: *Devote,* by exercising the heart in the sentiments which are uttered. We should be thoroughly persuaded of what St. Augustine says, that the graces which we desire and beseech for ourselves and for others are obtained more by the effusions of the heart than by the sounds of the voice.[12990]

IV. LIGHTS AND GRACES DERIVED FROM THE OFFICE WELL RECITED

Cassian relates that the monks of Egypt held that it was better to sing ten verses deliberately and devoutly, than an entire psalm with distraction of mind.[12991] Oh, how many lights and graces are received through the psalms when recited with deliberation and reflection! St. Epiphanius says: The psalms enlighten the mind, rejoice the soul, direct it to heaven, and render it familiar with God.

It is true that many passages of the psalms are obscure and difficult to be understood without explanation; but there are many others easy and clear, which serve to reanimate our faith, our confidence in God, our love for him, and our good desires. We will here cite a few examples.

1. FAITH

They reanimate our faith by placing before our eyes the eternal truths of the existence of God, of the creation of the world, of the last things, and of the immortality of the soul. How especially do they invigorate our faith by the many prophecies that they contain of the great work of our Redemption, delivered so many ages before the event took place!

Holy David predicted in many places the coming of our Redeemer: “Redemisti me, Domine Deus veritatis;”[12992] “Redemptionem misit populo suo;”[12993] “Copiosa apud eum redemptio.”[12994]

He predicted in particular many things regarding the Passion. He predicted the council of the chief priests and elders, when they would assemble to bring about the death of Jesus Christ. “Principes convenerunt in unum adversus Dominum et adversus Christum ejus.”[12995] He predicted the crucifixion: “Foderunt munus meas et pedes meos: dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea.”[12996] He foretold how the executioners would divide his garments, and for his inner garment cast lots: “Diviserunt sibi vestimenta mea, et super vestem meam miserunt sortem.”[12997] He predicted the thirst of Jesus Christ, and the gall mixed with vinegar which they would give him to drink upon the cross: “Et dederunt in escam meam fel: et in siti mea potaverunt me aceto.”[12998]

He predicted also the conversion of the Gentiles: “Convertentur ad Dominum universi fines terræ, et adorabunt in conspectu ejus universæ familiæ gentium.”[12999]

2. CONFIDENCE IN GOD

How many beautiful sentiments of confidence in God do the Psalms contain!

> “Dominus, firmamentum meum, et refugium meum, et liberator meus. Laudans invocabo Dominum, et ab inimicis meis salvus ero. Protector est omnium sperantium in se.”[13000]
>
> “Dominus, illuminatio mea et salus mea; quem timebo?”[13001]
>
> “In te Domine, speravi, non confundar in æternum. In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.”[13002]
>
> “Sperantem autem in Domino misericordia circumdabit.”[13003]
>
> “Fiat misericordia tua, Domine, super nos, quemadmodum speravimus in te.”[13004]
>
> “Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.”[13005]
>
> “Quoniam in me speravit, liberabo eum.”[13006]
>
> “Vivet anima mea, et laudabit te.”[13007]
>
> “Spiritus tuus bonus deducet me in terram rectam!”[13008]

3. LOVE FOR GOD

How many acts of love!

> “Satiabor, cum apparuerit gloria tua.”[13009]
>
> “Diligam te, Domine, fortitudo mea.”[13010]
>
> “Magnificate Dominum mecum, et exaltemus nomen ejus in idipsum.”[13011]
>
> “Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus.—Quando veniam et apparebo ante faciem Dei?”[13012]
>
> “Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum.”[13013]
>
> “Sitivit in te anima mea; quam multipliciter tibi caro mea!”[13014]
>
> “Confiteantur tibi populi, Deus, confiteantur tibi populi omnes.”[13015]
>
> “Quid enim mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram ? . . . Deus cordis mei, et pars mea. Deus, in æternum.”[13016]
>
> “Memor fui Dei, et delectatus sum.[13017]

4. ACTS OF THANKSGIVING, OF HUMILITY, OF CONTRITION, AND OF FIRM PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT

How many acts of thanksgiving!

> “Venite, audite, et narrabo, omnes qui timetis Deum, quanta fecit animæ meæ.”[13018]

> “Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi?”[13019]

How many acts of humility!

> “Ego autem sum vermis, et non homo; opprobrium hominum, et abjectio plebis.”[13020]

> “Eruisti animam meam ex inferno inferiori.”[13021]

> “Nisi quia Dominus adjuvit me, paulo minus habitasset in inferno anima mea.”[13022]

> “Erravi sicut ovis quæ periit; quære servum tuum.”[13023]

> “Et non intres in judicium cum servo tuo, quia non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens.”[13024]

How many acts of contrition!

> “Fuerunt mihi lacrymæ meæ panes die ac nocte, dum dicitur mihi quotidie: Ubi est Deus tuus?”[13025]

> “Exitus aquarum deduxerunt oculi mei, quia non custodierunt legem tuam.—Iniquitatem odio habui et abominatus sum.”[13026]

How many acts of firm purpose of amendment!

> “Legem tuam in medio cordis mei!”[13027]

> “Docebo iniquos vias tuas.”[13028]

> “Custodiam legem tuam semper. In æternum non obliviscar justificationes tuas.—Juravi et statui custodire judicia justitiæ tuæ.”[13029]

5. VARIOUS PRAYERS

Nearly all the psalms abound in holy thoughts. In the fiftieth psalm alone, how many beautiful prayers!

> “Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.—Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis.—Cor mundum crea in me, Deus.—Ne projicias me a facie tua. Spiritu principali confirma me.”

How many other beautiful prayers in Psalm cxviii., which is every day recited in the Little Hours!

> “Doce me justificationes tuas.—Revela oculos meos.—Viam iniquitatis amove a me.—Averte oculos meos, ne videant vanitatem.—Da mihi intellectum, ut discam mandata tua.—Fiat misericordia tua ut consoletur me.—Non confundas me ab expectatione mea.—Adjuva me, et salvus ero.—Suscipe servum tuum in bonum.—Aspice in me, et miserere mei.—Intellectum da mihi et vivam.—Gressus meos dirige secundum eloquium tuum.—Clamavi ad te; salvum me fac,

> ut custodiam mandata tua.—Vide humilitatem meam, et eripe me.—Intret postulatio mea in conspectu tuo.—Tuus sum ego, salvum me fac.—Fiat manus tua ut salvet me.”

As regards other passages which are obscure, I do not say that there is an obligation of studying interpreters; but at the same time I say that such a study would be certainly one of the best and most useful to which a priest could apply himself, as the Council of Milan advises.[13030] For this purpose it would be well to read Cardinal Bellarmine on the psalms.

The petitions most pleasing to God are those which are contained in the *Pater noster,* which is the most excellent of all prayers, taught us from the mouth of Jesus Christ himself; and therefore does the Church require us to repeat it so often in the divine Office. How especially beautiful are the three first petitions! three most perfect acts of love! *Sanctificetur nomen tuum: Adveniat regnum tuum: Fiat voluntas tua sicut in cœlo et in terra!* In the first, *Sanctificetur nomen tuum,* we beg that God would make himself known and loved by all mankind. In the second, *Adveniat regnum tuum,* we beg of him to take entire possession of our hearts, that he may reign in them by his grace in this life, and by his glory in the next. In the third, *Fiat voluntas tua,* etc., we ask of him the gift of perfect conformity; so that we may do his will on earth as the blessed do in heaven.[13031] In repeating so frequently the *Gloria Patri,* how many devout acts of faith may we make, of praise, of thanksgiving, of delight in the happiness and perfections of God! St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, whenever she repeated the *Gloria Patri,* bowing her head imagined to herself that she was offering it to the executioner in honor of the faith.

Moreover, the Church requires us at the beginning of all the Hours of the Office to salute and have recourse to Mary the Mother of God; by means of whom we may obtain so many graces, she being the treasurer and dispenser of all the divine graces.

Let us conclude. Many priests think and speak of the obligation of saying Office as of a great burden; and I say, that those that say it negligently without devotion, and endeavor to get through it as quickly as possible, have great reason so to speak of it; because they have to labor, for at least an hour, to recite it, and that without any relish, but with much irksomeness. But to those that say it with devotion, entering with their minds into the many devout sentiments that are expressed in it, and accompanying with their hearts the holy affections that it pours forth to God, the Office is not a load, but a relief and delight to the soul, as all good priests find it; and if it must ever be called a load, it is a winged load, which elevates us and unites us with God.

THE DIVINE OFFICE

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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The Centenary Edition

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

EDITED BY

REV. EUGENE GRIMM,

Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

THE ASCETICAL WORKS

Volume XIV.

THE DIVINE OFFICE

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALMS AND CANTICLES

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THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION

RÑDE PATER:

Memoriam gloriosi Congregationis SS. Redemptoris Fundatoris, centesimo, ab ejus obitu, adventante anno, pio et admodum opportuno consilio recolere aggressus es, dum omnia ipsius opera anglice vertenda, et typis edenda curasti. Summus itaque Pontifex, cui tum S. Doctoris exaltatio, tum fidelium utilitas summopere cordi est libentissime excepit 9 volumina hue usque edita, quæ Ei offerre voluisti. Ac dum meritas Tibi laudes de hac perutili tua cura præbet, et gratias de filiali oblatione agit, Benedictionem, quam tuis obsequentissimis litteris petiisti, Emi quoque archiepiscopi Baltimorensis commendationi obsecundans, ex intimo corde impertiit.

Hæc ad Te deferens fausta cuncta ac felicia a Domino Tibi adprecor.

Paternitatis Tuæ,

Addictissimus,

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.

ROMAE, die 4 Junii, 1888.

TRANSLATION

REVEREND FATHER:

As the centenary of the death of the illustrious Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer drew near, you conceived the pious and appropriate plan of shedding a new lustre on his memory by translating all his works into English and publishing them. The Holy Father, therefore, who has at heart the spiritual advancement of the faithful, as well as the exaltation of the holy Doctor, has most graciously accepted the nine volumes thus far published, which you wished to present to him. While bestowing upon you well-deserved praise for your useful labor, and thanking you for the gift inspired by your filial love, he gives you from his heart the blessing which you humbly asked for in your letter, complying also with the request of the Most Rev. Archbishop of Baltimore.

As the bearer of this, I wish you all happiness in the Lord.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.

ROME, June 4, 1888.

APPROBATION

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Nicholas Mauron, Superior-General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled the "DIVINE OFFICE," etc., which is Volume XIV. of the new and complete edition in English of the works of St. Alphonsus de Liguori, called "The Centenary Edition."

ELIAS FRED. SCHAUER,

Sup Prov. Baltimorensis.

BALTIMORE, MD., March 25, 1889.

CONTENTS

- INDEX
- THE DIVINE OFFICE
  - CONTENTS
  - The Divine Office
    - NOTICE
    - THE DIVINE OFFICE
    - DEDICATION TO HIS HOLINESS CLEMENT THE FOURTEENTH
    - INTRODUCTION
      - I. GENERAL IDEA OF THE PSALMS
      - II. THE AIM AND PLAN OF THIS WORK
      - III. THE AUTHOR OF THE PSALMS
      - IV. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE VULGATE
      - V. THE TITLES OF THE PSALMS
      - VI. THE COMPOSITION OF THE PSALMS
      - VII. THE RECITATION OF THE OFFICE
  - Explanation of the Psalms and Canticles
  - Matins
    - SUNDAY AT MATINS
      - INVITATORY.—PSALM 94 OF THE PSALTER
      - PSALMS OF THE FIRST NOCTURN
      - PSALM 1 OF THE OFFICE AND OF THE PSALTER
      - PSALM 2 OF THE FIRST NOCTURN
      - PSALM 3 OF THE FIRST NOCTURN

- PSALM 6 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 7 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 8 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 9 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 10 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 11 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 12 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 13 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 14 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALMS OF THE SECOND NOCTURN
- PSALM 15 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 16 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 17 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALMS OF THE THIRD NOCTURN
- PSALM 18 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 19 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 20 OF THE PSALTER

MONDAY AT MATINS
- PSALM 26 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 27 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 28 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 29 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 30 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 31 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 32 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 33 OF THE PSALTER

  - PSALM 34 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 35 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 36 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 37 OF THE PSALTER
- TUESDAY AT MATINS
  - PSALM 38 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 39 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 40 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 41 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 43 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 44 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 45 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 46 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 47 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 48 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 49 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 51 OF THE PSALTER
- WEDNESDAY AT MATINS
  - PSALM 52 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 54 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 55 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 56 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 57 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 58 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 59 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 60 OF THE PSALTER

- PSALM 61 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 63 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 65 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 67 OF THE PSALTER

THURSDAY AT MATINS

- PSALM 68 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 69 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 70 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 71 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 72 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 73 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 74 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 75 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 76 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 77 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 78 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 79 OF THE PSALTER

FRIDAY AT MATINS

- PSALM 80 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 81 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 82 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 83 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 84 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 85 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 86 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 87 OF THE PSALTER

    - PSALM 88 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 93 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 95 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 96 OF THE PSALTER
  - SATURDAY AT MATINS
    - PSALM 97 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 98 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 99 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 100 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 101 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 102 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 103 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 104 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 105 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 106 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 107 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 108 OF THE PSALTER
- Lauds
  - SUNDAY AT LAUDS
    - PSALM 92 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 62 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 66 OF THE PSALTER
    - CANTICLE OF THE THREE CHILDREN (DAN. 3:57)
    - PSALM 148 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 149 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 150 OF THE PSALTER

- THE CANTICLE OF ZACHARY (LUKE, 1:68)
- MONDAY AT LAUDS
  - PSALM 50 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 5 OF THE PSALTER
  - CANTICLE OF THE PROPHET ISAIAS (CH. 12)
- TUESDAY AT LAUDS
  - PSALM MISERERE MEI DEUS OF MONDAY AT LAUDS
  - PSALM 42 OF THE PSALTER
  - CANTICLE OF EZECHIAS (IS. 38:9)
- WEDNESDAY AT LAUDS
  - PSALM MISERERE MEI DEUS AS ON MONDAY AT LAUDS
  - PSALM 64 OF THE PSALTER
  - THE CANTICLE OF ANNA, MOTHER OF SAMUEL
- THURSDAY AT LAUDS
  - THE PSALM MISERERE MEI DEUS AS ON MONDAY AT LAUDS
  - PSALM 89 OF THE PSALTER
  - CANTICLE OF MOSES (EXODUS 15)
- FRIDAY AT LAUDS
  - THE PSALM MISERERE MEI DEUS AS ON MONDAY AT LAUDS
  - PSALM 142 OF THE PSALTER
  - THE CANTICLE OF HABACUC
- SATURDAY AT LAUDS
  - THE PSALM MISERERE MEI DEUS AS ON MONDAY AT LAUDS
  - PSALM 91 OF THE PSALTER
  - CANTICLE OF MOSES

Prime, Terce, Sext, None

- Prime
  - SUNDAY AT PRIME
    - PSALM 53 OF THE PSALTER
    - (FOR OTHER PSALMS THAT ARE TO BE SAID, SEE BREVIARY.)
    - PSALM 117 OF THE PSALTER
  - MONDAY AT PRIME
    - PSALM 23 OF THE PSALTER
  - TUESDAY AT PRIME
    - PSALM 24 OF THE PSALTER
  - WEDNESDAY AT PRIME
    - PSALM 25 OF THE PSALTER
  - THURSDAY AT PRIME
    - PSALM 22 OF THE PSALTER
  - FRIDAY AT PRIME
    - PSALM 21 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 118 OF THE PSALTER
- Terce throughout the Week
    - PSALM 118—(CONTINUED)
- Sext throughout the Week
- None
- Vespers
  - SUNDAY AT VESPERS
    - PSALM 109 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 110 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 111 OF THE PSALTER
    - PSALM 112 OF THE PSALTER

- PSALM 113 OF THE PSALTER
- CANTICLE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, OR MANGNIFICAT

MONDAY AT VESPERS

- PSALM 114 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 115 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 116 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 119 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 120 OF THE PSALTER

TUESDAY AT VESPERS

- PSALM 121 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 122 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 123 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 124 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 125 OF THE PSALTER

WEDNESDAY AT VESPERS

- PSALM 126 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 127 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 128 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 129 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 130 OF THE PSALTER

THURSDAY AT VESPERS

- PSALM 131 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 132 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 134 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 135 OF THE PSALTER
- PSALM 136 OF THE PSALTER

FRIDAY AT VESPERS
  - PSALM 137 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 138 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 139 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 140 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 141 OF THE PSALTER

SATURDAY AT VESPERS
  - PSALM 143 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 144 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 145 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 146 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 147 OF THE PSALTER

COMPLINE
  - PSALM 4 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 30 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 90 OF THE PSALTER
  - PSALM 133 OF THE PSALTER

THE CANTICLE OF SIMEON

The Divine Office

NOTICE

ST. ALPHONSUS was seventy-eight years old when in 1774 he published his TRANSLATION OF THE PSALMS AND CANTICLES OF THE DIVINE OFFICE. This difficult work, composed at so advanced an age, amidst sufferings almost continual, and numerous occupations, excited at Naples the admiration of learned men. According to Canon Massa, professor of theology and ecclesiastical examiner, the author in his work explains so skilfully the sense and the obscure passages of the psalms, that without taking anything from the purity of the inspired word he aids both the heart and the mind of those that read it. The Holy See has frequently praised and recommended all the works of St. Alphonsus; but the decree of March 23, 1871, which conferred on St. Alphonsus the title of Doctor of the Church, makes special mention of this work, speaking of it as one of his most useful and salutary works. The decree says: “He [St. Alphonsus] has made clear dark passages of the Holy Scriptures, both in his ascetic writings, which are freighted with a celestial odor, and in a most salutary commentary, in which, for the nourishment of piety and the instruction of the soul, he has given expositions of the Psalms, as well as of the Canticles, for the benefit especially of those obliged to its recitation.”

Our holy author wished above all to give, not an explanation, but, as the title expresses it, a translation of the psalms, so that even those that do not understand Latin may avail themselves of it; and he thus proceeds in his work: He takes each verse of the psalms separately, and gives of it a more or less extended paraphrase, which is accompanied or interspersed by diverse explanations. We have judged it proper, and even necessary, to modify this method in the present volume; namely, we have given in parallel columns the Latin text and the English translation.[13032] Below the psalms we have placed the explanations that are given by the holy author, and at the bottom of the page foot-notes are here and there added whenever they were found to be necessary. It must be remarked that all the foot-notes have been added by the French translator, the Rev. Father Dujardin, C.SS.R., upon whose work the present translation is based. By the kind permission of the Rev. T. Livius, C.SS.R., we have freely used his translation in the preparation of this volume.—ED.

THE DIVINE OFFICE

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALMS AND CANTICLES

DEDICATION TO HIS HOLINESS CLEMENT THE FOURTEENTH

MOST HOLY FATHER:

It is to your Holiness that I present this book. To whom could I more justly dedicate it than to the supreme head of the Church—to him who holds on earth the place of Jesus Christ? In this work, composed in the last years of my life, when my infirmities warn me of approaching death, I undertake to explain the psalms of David, the recitation of which, after the administration of the sacraments and the preaching of the divine word, is the holiest occupation of persons consecrated to God; for by reciting here below the divine Office, they are associated with the angels, who celebrate in heaven the glory of the Saviour.

I will not here enlarge upon the many encomiums that your Holiness deserves in so many respects; in order not to offend your modesty, I refrain from praising so many virtues that shine forth before the whole world, and especially your mortified life, your detachment from the bonds of flesh and blood and from human considerations. But it is impossible for me not to exalt the prudence, of which your Holiness has given so glorious a proof by taking measures, so full of wisdom, whereby you have sought to calm the agitation caused by a diversity of opinion among those who are otherwise devoted to the welfare of the Church.

I venture to hope that your Holiness will receive my work, which, it seems to me, all those that recite the divine Office may advantageously use; for among them there are found some who, from their little knowledge of the Latin tongue, do not understand the words and still less the sense of the psalms; and this all the more because the greater number of them presents even to the learned insoluble difficulties. It is true that many have undertaken to explain this part of our holy books; but, written in Latin and in a lofty style, their works are not so generally useful as they might be. For this reason I have made it my study to render as clear as possible the thought of the psalmist, so that priests and religious, in reciting the breviary, may understand well what they say, and may consequently recite it with more attention.

I lay, then, this my book at the feet of your Holiness, begging you to correct it, if it merits correction, and to bless it if you think that it will produce some good among souls. Humbly prostrate at the throne of your Holiness, I kiss your feet, while at the same time I humbly ask your holy benediction, and declare myself

Ever the very humble, devoted, and obedient son and servant of your Holiness,

Alphonsus Maria,
Bishop of St. Agatha of the Goths.

INTRODUCTION

I. GENERAL IDEA OF THE PSALMS

A COMPENDIUM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

IN the preface to his commentary on the psalms, Cardinal Bellarmine says that the psalter is a compendium of the Old Testament. In fact, all that Moses has written concerning the Hebrew people and the law, all that the prophets have announced after him, we find in the chants of David, as St. Augustine observes: “The book of psalms contains all that the other canonical books contain as useful to souls; it is like an immense treasure in which each one finds, to his own greatest advantage, the riches of heavenly doctrine.”[13033] Every one that pays but slight attention will ascertain that the psalms abound in divine lights, in holy maxims, in fervent prayers, without counting the many prophecies that David alone gives us, particularly in relation to the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ.

A PROPHETIC HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Let one read on this subject PSALMS 2, 15, 21, 45, 68, and also other psalms: in them are clearly predicted the reign of Jesus Christ, his birth, his preaching, his miracles, his Passion, his resurrection, his ascension into heaven, and the establishment of his Church, as he himself declared to his disciples: *All things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me.*[13034]

AN ADMIRABLE BOOK OF PRAYERS

Moreover, in these inspired pages are everywhere found sentiments of divine love, acts of patience, of humility, of meekness, of forgetfulness of injuries, of strength of soul, and of confidence in God. In reciting, therefore, the divine Office every one should apply to himself the sentiments and the acts of the royal prophet—sentiments of holy fear, of confidence in God, of thanksgiving; acts of good desires, of humility, of offering of one’s self; of love, of praise; and especially all the prayers that he addresses to the Lord to obtain the pardon of his sins, as well as to obtain light and the help necessary for salvation. If God requires that in the whole Church these psalms should be recited, he certainly wishes that every one, while reciting them should apply to his own soul the acts and the prayers that David made for himself. Again, when we meet with a prayer that the psalmist addressed to God for the entire Hebrew people, we should have in view the Christian people. So also when the royal prophet speaks of his enemies—this being oftenest understood, according to the literal sense, of his many persecutors—we should think of the evil spirits, who are indeed our worst enemies, since they seek to deprive us of the life of the soul rather than of the life of the body.

II. THE AIM AND PLAN OF THIS WORK

Many of the psalms are easy to understand; but many others are difficult and obscure. Hence, to render the reading of them intelligible and profitable to the faithful, the holy Fathers employed every means—dogmatical interpretations, moral explanations, eloquent preaching, and even expositions easily understood by persons of ordinary intelligence.

SIMPLE TRANSLATION OF EASY VERSES

For my part, this is what I have proposed to do in the present work: In regard to those verses that are more easy, I shall content myself with giving a simple translation, in order that those whose duty it is to recite the breviary may acquit themselves of it with so much more pious attention and spiritual profit, and while grasping better the meaning of the words, they may be more penetrated with the heavenly maxims and holy affections that are contained in the psalms. Oh, how great is the merit of a single Office recited with devotion!

EXPLANATION OF DIFFICULT VERSES ACCORDING TO THE VULGATE

But now in regard to obscure passages, I must acknowledge that when I undertook this work it seemed to me to offer no difficulty, considering that I had taken care to supply myself with a large number of excellent commentators. I had made a mistake; for when I set to work it appeared to me extremely difficult and most laborious: often, in fact, I saw myself stopped short, being embarrassed and undecided among so many different explanations given by the commentators. Sometimes, having spent whole hours in consulting different authors about a text, I remained more perplexed than ever when I found so many opinions opposed to one another. Finally, not to abandon my undertaking altogether, I resolved not to give all the explanations furnished by interpreters, nor all the questions raised by the learned, but simply to propose the interpretation that should appear to me more generally adopted and most conformable to our Vulgate. This is the rule that I have followed.

THE VULGATE

As to the Vulgate. Xavier Mattei, in his translation of the psalms, a translation into verse which is scientific, and which has caused him much labor, observes that modern critics, especially Protestants, every time that they meet with a version different from that of the Vulgate, eagerly adopt it without examining whether or not it be preferable.

ACTUAL INFERIORITY OF THE HEBREW TEXT

There is no doubt that the Hebrew text, being the original text, deserves, when considered by itself, to be preferred to all the versions; but the learned generally agree in saying that the original Hebrew is no longer perfectly exact. Indeed, Salmeron, Morinus, and others teach that the Jews have altered it out of hatred to Christianity; many, with Bellarmine, think that many errors crept in through ignorance, or by the negligence of copyists. It should especially be remarked, that after the fifth century the Jewish doctors, called Masorites,[13035] have added to the Hebrew text signs that one never had seen, that is, points that should have taken the place of vowels, and that became the occasion of numerous equivocations and discordant interpretations.

SUPERIORITY AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE VULGATE

The Council of Trent, therefore, did not wish to do for the Hebrew text what it did for the Latin text of the Vulgate; for the latter it has declared to be authentic by presenting it as exempt from all error, at least in what concerns the dogmas of faith and moral precepts. Hence, in his dissertation on the transmission and preservation of the holy Scriptures, Xavier Mattei concludes that, there being given no matter what Hebrew passage or text, and the Vulgate not agreeing with it, one should keep to the Vulgate: “Not,” he adds, “that this version is more authentic than the Hebrew text, but because it may be believed, on the one hand, that the passage in question is no longer to be found in the Hebrew as it was there primitively; and on the other hand, that this primitive text is found exactly reproduced in the Vulgate—the only version that has merited to be approved by the Church.”

INSUFFICIENCY OF ALL OTHER VERSIONS

Moreover, let every one be persuaded that there are in many psalms many verses so obscure, that notwithstanding all the care that one bestows upon them, one will never understand their meaning without the special assistance of God.

PRACTICAL AIM OF THIS WORK

Some, no doubt, will say to me that it is useless to explain the psalms after so many illustrious interpreters have done so. I declare, however, that it has not been useless as far as I myself am concerned; since, in consequence of this work, I recite my breviary with much more attention than formerly when there were many passages that I did not understand; I hope that the same may happen to many other persons. In order, therefore, to aid as much as possible those who must recite the Office, I have resolved to follow, not the order of the psalms, but that of the breviary.

III. THE AUTHOR OF THE PSALMS

There at first present themselves certain preliminary questions which sacred interpreters discuss among themselves; namely, the authorship of the psalms; to which of three texts—Hebrew, Greek, Latin—one should give the preference; the titles of the psalms; their composition,—that is to say, whether they were composed in verse or in prose. On all these controverted points I only wish to set forth in a few words the opinions most generally received, leaving to the reader the task of further continuing his studies in order to find out the truth so far as it may be ascertainable.

DAVID THE PRINCIPAL AUTHOR OF THE PSALMS

That the holy king David is the author at least of a great part of the psalms, one cannot deny; for the Bible shows us the Levites occupied in the Temple chanting the psalms, of which David is declared the author: *And the priests stood in their offices: and the Levites with the instruments of music of the Lord, which king David made to praise the Lord; because His mercy endureth forever, singing the hymns of David by their ministry.*[13036] Several Fathers of the Church, as St. Augustine,[13037] St. John Chrysostom, Theodoret,[13038] and others, recognized David as the sole author of the whole psalter; but St. Hilary,[13039] St. Athanasius,[13040] St. Isidore of Pelusium, etc., are of opinion that many of the psalms have another origin, particularly those that bear in their titles the names of different personages, such as Asaph, Idithun, Ethan, etc. “We ascribe these inspired hymns,” says St. Jerome, “to the authors whose names appear in the titles.”[13041] It is true, St. Augustine and Theodoret give us these different names as the names of the singers, and not as those of the authors. But St. Jerome, maintaining his opinion, replies: “We know that it is an error to look upon David as the author of the whole psalter, to the exclusion of the persons mentioned in the titles.”[13042] St. Augustine himself, explaining the title of the first of the psalms, does not hesitate to say that “not all are David’s.”[13043] Hence we may rightly conclude with Dom Calmet[13044] and most of the interpreters, that David composed not all but the greater number of the psalms.

ALL THE PSALMS ARE INSPIRED

“Moreover,” says Theodoret, with much wisdom, “what advantage can it be to me to know the different authors? for it is certain that all have written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.”[13045] St. Gregory the Great expresses beautifully the same thought: “Since we regard the Holy Ghost as the author of the psalms, to ask then what hand has written them, is it not the same as asking when reading a letter what pen has been used in writing it?”[13046] Indeed, we read these inspired pages and we know that all are divine; what does it then matter what pen has formed the letters?

IV. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE VULGATE

It is certainly with the Hebrew text, as being the original text, that all the versions of the psalms should be made to agree.

THE HEBREW TEXT VERY MUCH ALTERED

But as we have already said, this rule is actually no longer sure, for the Hebrew text, as it exists at the present day, is full of faults, due to the negligence of copyists or to the incorrectness of printers; add to this that the Rabbinists have invented those vowel points that have caused so many ambiguities and even errors. Hence it follows: (1) That among the interpreters some understand the Hebrew text in one way, others in another way; (2) that, according to the remark of several commentators, one arrives at the true sense of the psalms much less by the aid of the original text than by the aid of the translations, and particularly of the version of the Septuagint, which is regarded as the most exact; for it was made before the alterations were effected in the Hebrew text.

TWO OLD LATIN TRANSLATIONS OF THE PSALMS

However, the Latin version of the Vulgate, called *Itala* by St. Augustine[13047] and *Vetus* by St. Gregory, is on the whole the best of all, notwithstanding its unadorned style; this we learn from the fact that it has generally been used in the primitive Church, after St. Jerome had corrected it according to the Septuagint version. It is well to remark that St. Jerome afterwards undertook another translation of the psalms, for which he used only the Hebrew text; but this second version, as Estius remarks,[13048] was not received by the faithful, and much less by the religious, who did not feel disposed to give up their ancient psalmody. Hence it has been the practice of reciting the ancient psalmody, corrected by St. Jerome.

THE VULGATE ALONE DECLARED TO BE AUTHENTIC

As regards ourselves, the question is decided; for the Council of Trent, having declared the Vulgate exempt from every substantial error, we regard it as the safest version. The Council says: "If any one receive not, as sacred and canonical, the said books entire with all their parts, as they have been used to be read in the Catholic Church, and as they are contained in the old Latin Vulgate edition, . . . and knowingly and deliberately contemn them, let him be anathema."[13049] This decree adds: "The holy Synod ordains and declares, that the said old and Vulgate edition, which, by the lengthened usage of so many ages, has been approved of in the Church, be in public lectures held as authentic; and that no one is to dare or presume to reject it under any pretext whatever."[13050]

THE VULGATE AGREES WITH THE SEPTUAGINT VERSION

Hence in this translation we shall for the most part adhere to the Vulgate; and that because in the first place this version, exempt, as we know it to be, from every substantial error, offers us the surest text; then, because it oftenest agrees with the Septuagint version, the authors of which labored on the Hebrew text long before the alterations to which it was afterwards subjected. Another consideration, no less powerful, is the end that I propose to myself, and of which I have spoken above, namely, to explain the sacred canticles as clearly as possible for the benefit of those that recite the divine Office.

AGREEMENT OF THE BREVIARY WITH THE VULGATE

Now, as Urban VIII. declares in his Bull *Divinam psalmodiam*, placed at the beginning of the breviary, there is but little difference between the psalms such as we recite them and the psalms such as are found in the Vulgate. I shall therefore usually follow the letter of the psalter such as is found in the breviary, without, however, renouncing the right of employing in other passages certain expressions in which it is not easy to understand the meaning either from the letter itself or from the context.

V. THE TITLES OF THE PSALMS

INSOLVABLE DIFFICULTIES ON THE SUBJECT OF TITLES

This question of titles is so confused that the interpreters, in spite of all their explanations, have not been able, it seems to me, to solve it. In fact, among these titles, many of them are very old; as for the others, they have been added it is not known by whom—some before and even long after the collection of Esdras; we also find in the Septuagint and in the Vulgate certain titles that one should seek in vain in the Hebrew text. Besides, it is unknown whether the names expressed in the titles designate the authors or only the singers of the psalms.

For these reasons I shall not undertake to explain these different titles; only I shall give at the head of each psalm a short summary of what it contains.

VI. THE COMPOSITION OF THE PSALMS

The learned discuss the question whether David and the other inspired authors wrote the psalms in verse or in prose.

Joseph Scaliger, in his “Notes on the Chronicle of Eusebius,” thinks that the psalms were not written in verse, but in prose; although one finds in them, he adds, all the ornateness of poetry. Dom Calmet expresses the same opinion.

THE PSALMS COMPOSED IN VERSE

St. Jerome,[13051] and after him nearly all the learned, hold, on the contrary, that the psalms were composed in verse.

IMPOSSIBILITY OF DETERMINING THE METRE

As for determining the kind of verses and for stating precisely whether they are prosodical or syllabical, with or without rhyme,—this is what no one has ever been able nor will be able to do, since the character of the metre in use among the Hebrews is unknown, their language having become entirely strange to us. We are also ignorant of the Hebrew pronunciation; for of old Hebrew was written without vowels, the number of which, owing to the vowel points introduced by the Rabbinists, went on increasing or diminishing according as the new punctuation increased or diminished the number of syllables. According to Xavier Mattei, the Hebrews wrote their poetic works in verses of free rhythm, without restricting themselves to any determined number of syllables, and without caring for artificial connections, the verses nearly resembling the choruses of the Greek tragedies.

Having said thus much about these preliminary questions, I pass to the explanation of the psalms. Nevertheless, before entering upon this matter I wish, for the benefit of those persons who are obliged to say the breviary, to offer a few more reflections which may help them much to recite it well, that is, with attention and devotion.

VII. THE RECITATION OF THE OFFICE

THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF THE DIVINE OFFICE AS REGARDS THE FAITHFUL

To praise God, to thank him for his benefits, to ask of him the graces necessary to eternal salvation—this is what should be here below the only occupation of all men. But because seculars are absorbed by worldly occupations, the Church wishes that not only ecclesiastics, but that religious of both sexes should consecrate at least certain hours of the day to praising God, and praying to him for all the faithful as well as for the welfare of Christian society. Hence when the clerics, personifying in some way the whole Christian people, present themselves before God in order to recite the divine Office, it is a prayer truly universal that they offer before the throne of the Divinity. “There is no doubt,” says St. Thomas of Aquin, “that the prayer is universal which the ministers of the Church offer to God in the name of the people.”[13052]

The same holy Doctor thus shows us that in the divine Office there is a public function, imposed upon clerics for the preservation and increase of the Church. He says: Since to the chant of the hymns and the psalms the divine Office is celebrated, there is accomplished in the Church of God a public ministry, organized for the good of all.”[13053] St. Bernard had already said that upon ecclesiastics is chiefly incumbent a triple charge: to preach the word of God, to give good example, and to pray for all. “There are three obligations that remain to us: preaching, good example, prayer; and the latter surpasses the other two;”[13054] this he adds, in order to exalt prayer above eloquence and the most beautiful examples of virtue.

THE DIVINE OFFICE SPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO PRIESTS

We thence understand what terrible punishments God reserves for those who, obliged to recite the Office, abstain from saying it either through wearisomeness or in order to give themselves to worldly amusements. But let us leave these persons who are struck with blindness, and let us speak of those who recite the Office in a careless manner. What a pity to see how certain priests recite the breviary in the streets, at some window, their eyes fixed on those passing by, or in the society of friends, with whom they laugh and jest, thus intermingling the divine praises with worldly and improper conversation, without paying any attention to the sacred words. If any one of them, when admitted to the presence of a great personage of this world, dared to speak to him in this way, he would certainly be driven away and punished. Alas! some priests have the audacity to treat God as if their mission was not to honor but to dishonor him.

WHAT TREASURES OF GRACE ONE FINDS IN THE OFFICE

On the other hand, when one recites the Office with attention, what merit and what profit does one derive from it. What lights are then obtained from the divine words! With what holy maxims is the soul penetrated! How many acts of love, of confidence, of humility, of contrition, may one not make by merely paying attention to the verses that one recites! Above all, what beautiful prayers are found in each psalm! There is no doubt that, when recited with faith and fervor, they merit treasures of grace, according to the infallible promise made by our Lord that he would hear whoever prays to him: *Ask, and it shall be given you.*[13055] *For every one that asketh, receiveth.*[13056]

WHAT HAPPINESS IS ENJOYED IN RECITING THE OFFICE

I add that the Office, recited without devotion and with the only thought of finishing it as soon as possible, becomes one of the heaviest burdens and at the same time is so tedious as to seem to be of an interminable length; on the contrary, when it is recited with devotion, with a true desire of profiting by it, by applying mind and heart to the sacred words, its burden becomes light and sweet: of this all the saints have had experience. The saints found more pleasure in reciting the Office than worldlings find in the midst of pastimes and amusements. One single Office recited with devotion may gain for us many degrees of glory in heaven. What treasures of merit will not they, then, amass after they have recited the breviary for thirty or forty years with the required devotion and piety!

This is what has inspired me with the difficult undertaking of translating the psalms. May those who by the duty of their state are bound to recite the breviary, recite it with merit and profit to their souls! May they, while escaping the misfortune of reciting the breviary badly, be spared the pain of having one day to render a terrible account before the tribunal of God and then to expiate the innumerable faults that they have committed!

Explanation of the Psalms and Canticles

Matins

SUNDAY AT MATINS

INVITATORY.—PSALM 94 OF THE PSALTER

Several corrections were made in this psalm by St. Jerome; but the Church, not having introduced them into the invitatory of the Office, it follows that we recite it in the breviary as it was recited according to the ancient version.

St. Paul declares (*Heb.* 3:7, and 4:7) that in this psalm everything directly refers to Jesus Christ; and since we understand this psalm as proclaiming God, the Creator, and at the same time the Saviour of the world, it is to him as to our supreme Pastor that the Holy Ghost exhorts us to address our praises, and to hearken to him.

1. **[94:1]** “*Præoccupemus faciem ejus in confessione.*” Before the rising of the sun, let us be found in the presence of the Saviour, to praise him and to confess to him our faults. St. Augustine says: “*Est confessio laudantis, confessio gementis.*—There is the confession of him who praises, and the confession of him who mourns.”

2. **[94:3]** “*Omnes deos*—All the false gods and all the kings of the earth.” “*Altitudines montium*—Earthly powers,” according to St. Augustine; that is to say: The Lord regards alike the powerful of the world and the poor whom the world despises; for all are in his power; therefore he does not reject any of his people.

4. **[94:8]** “*Sicut in exacerbatione . . .*” It must here be remarked that this passage is in the Office, as it was anciently read in the psalm; but it was afterwards corrected, as it is now in the psalter, where we read: “*Sicut in irritatione, secundum diem tentationis in deserto, ubi tentaverunt me patres vestri; probaverunt me, et viderunt opera mea.*” This version, with which the English translation agrees, better explains the text, of which the sense is as follows: It is God who here speaks to the Hebrews, and he says to them:

Harden not your hearts, as you did formerly when you provoked me to anger in the wilderness, where your fathers wished to tempt me, to see whether I was the true God, when in that barren and utterly destitute place they sought for water, bread, and flesh; they found by experience at the sight of my wonderful works that I can do all things according to my own pleasure.[13057]

5. **[94:10]** "*Proximus.*" Instead of this word, we read in the corrected version, or the psalter, *Offensus;* and St. Paul says, *Infensus* (*Heb.* 3:10). But it is the same thing, as Du Hamel and Bellarmine remark, if *Proximus* is put for *Proximus ad ulciscendum.*—"*Semper hi errant corde; ipsi vero non cognoverunt vias meas.*" They have always a perverse heart; they do not wish to know my righteous judgments.—"*Requiem meam.*" My rest, that is to say, the land that I promised them.[13058]

PSALMS OF THE FIRST NOCTURN

PSALM 1 OF THE OFFICE AND OF THE PSALTER

The object that David proposes to himself in this psalm is to convince us that God bestows happiness only upon the just in order to be happy; we must, therefore, begin to be just.

1. **[1:1]** "*In cathedra pestilentiæ non sedit.*" That is to say: Who does not teach false and pernicious doctrines.—Instead of the word *Pestilentiæ,* St. Jerome has *Derisorum,* which according to the proper Hebrew signification means scoffers, or impostors who teach falsehood. The Septuagint have understood the same expression in the sense of pests, or chair of pestilence. These renderings, however, come to much the same sense; for the impious, such as atheists and heretics, are, as is explained by St. Athanasius, St. Augustine, St. Basil, the pest of the world by the false and pernicious doctrines that they teach.[13059]

2. **[1:2]** The just man wills what God ordains in his law; hence he continually meditates on it.

4. **[1:3]** This tree will always preserve its leaves, which will help to ripen the fruit; thus will all the works of the just man prosper.[13060]

5. **[1:4]** “*Pulvis.*” Pagnini translates the Hebrew word by *Gluma:* chaff, light straw or husks that are separated from the seed by threshing, winnowing, etc.

6. **[1:5]** “*Non resurgent.*” That is, according to the Hebrew text: *Non stabunt, non subsistent*—they shall not stand, shall not keep their ground; and according to the Chaldee version: *Non justificabuntur*—they shall not be justified (Bossuet). This means that the wicked at the last judgment will not be able to oppose the just vengeance of Jesus Christ.—St. Augustine explains this verse by saying that the wicked will not rise again to be judged because they are already condemned to punishment—*Non resurgent ut judicentur, quia jam pœnis destinati sunt.* We should, however, here remark that the expression *Non resurgent* does not mean that the wicked will not rise on the day of judgment; since we read in St. Matthew (25:31–4) that all men, just and sinners, must then rise; and this St. Paul expresses still more clearly in this passage: “We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ—*Omnes enim stabimus ante tribunal Christi*” (*Rom.* 14:10). Moreover, the Apostle himself explains to us how we are to understand the expression, “*Non resurgent*” of the psalm, when he elsewhere says: “We shall all indeed rise again; but we shall not all be changed—*Omnes quidem resurgemus, sed non omnes immutabimur*” (1 *Cor.* 15:51). He wishes thereby to say that all men will rise again, but all will not obtain the happiness of having a spiritual and heavenly body, such as the just will receive, according to what he had written just before in verses 44–49: “It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body. . . . Therefore, as we have borne the image of the earthy, let us also bear the image of the heavenly—*Seminatur corpus animale, surget corpus spirituale. . . . Igitur, sicut portavimus imaginem terreni, portemus et imaginem cœlestis.*” The words *Non resurgent,* thus understood, agree well with the Hebrew text and with the Chaldee version, so that the verses “The wicked shall not rise again in judgment, nor sinners in the council of the just,” may easily be explained in this sense: that the wicked, as the dust or fine chaff or light straw which the wind carries away, will be separated from the just, who are the good grain,

according to what we read in the Gospel: “Gather up first the cockle . . . to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn. The angels shall go out and shall separate the wicked from among the just—*Colligite primum zizania . . . ad comburendum; triticum autem congregate in horreum meum. Exibunt Angeli, et separabunt malos de medio justorum* (*Matt.* 13:30, 49).

7. **[1:6]** *Novit.* That is to say, approves and blesses. *Peribit*, shall end in ruin.[13061]

PSALM 2 OF THE FIRST NOCTURN

This psalm taken in its literal sense is entirely a prophecy of the reign of Jesus Christ, as the Apostles themselves teach us in the fourth chapter of the Acts: “*Domine, . . . qui, Spiritu Sancto, per os patris nostri David, pueri tui, dixisti: Quare fremuerunt gentes, et populi meditati sunt inania? Astiterunt reges terræ, et principes convenerunt in unum, adversus Dominum, et adversus Christum ejus* . . . Lord, who by the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of our father David, thy servant, hath said: Why did the Gentiles rage, and the people meditate vain things: The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes assembled together against the Lord, and against His Christ” (*Acts*, 4:24). They then continue to speak of the conspiracies that were formed against Jesus Christ by Herod and Pilate in union with the Gentiles and the Jews. In fact, certain Protestant interpreters, and even some Catholic commentators, wish that this psalm should be understood, in a literal sense, of the reign of David. But D. Xavier Mattei wisely observes that this is a novel opinion, prevailing among Protestants, and worthy of our condemnation, since we should hold to the interpretation given by holy Scripture in the Acts of the Apostles; the more so since to apply this psalm to David we must do too great violence to the text, the expression of which so clearly refers to the reign of Jesus Christ. To which Xavier Mattei, conformably to the principles laid down in the preface of his work, adds that sometimes holy Scripture has for its literal sense only the spiritual sense, without supporting any other hidden sense. Consequently, he says, when according to the interpretation of the Apostles this psalm offers so evident a prophecy of the reign of Jesus Christ, what reason is there to apply it to the reign of David? “What rashness,” says St. Jerome, “to look for the sense of this psalm after St. Peter himself has given it to us! what boldness to dare to contradict what he says in the Acts of the Apostles!—*Audacia est hunc psalmum interpretari velle post Petrum; imo de eo sentire aliud quam in Actibus apostolorum dixerit Petrus.*” Bellarmine also says: “To seek in this psalm a literal sense applicable to David appears to me to be the height of error—*Omnino errare videntur qui ad litteram de Davide hunc psalmum explicare nituntur.*”

1. **[2:1]** This verse predicts that it will be in vain that so many enemies conspire against the Messias. St. Jerome translates the words *Fremuerunt* and *Meditati sunt* in the future tense; but Bellarmine rightly says that here the version of the Vulgate, which agrees with the Septuagint, should be preferred; for in the Acts of the Apostles, as we have seen, the two verbs are in the past tense. The words “*Meditati sunt inania*—they have devised vain things,” are used, because these enemies while endeavoring to destroy the kingdom of Christ only cooperated in its establishment.

2. **[2:2]** “*Reges . . . et principes.*” By these kings and princes are meant not only Herod, Pilate, and the chief priests of the Jews, but also all the emperors and all the kings of the Gentiles who have persecuted the Church of Jesus Christ. ‘*Adversus Dominum, et adversus Christum ejus.*” The prophet intimates thereby that the enemies in persecuting Christ have also made war against God; for the Messias, by his miracles had proved that he was the Son of God. As to the first word of the verse, “*Astiterunt,*” according to the sense of the Hebrew text, it is properly to be understood of the counsel that the Jews took among themselves to compass the arrest and the death of Jesus Christ.

3. **[2:3]** David makes the enemies of God and of Christ speak here. They say: Let us free ourselves from their rule and their laws. “*Jugum.*” Instead of *jugum ipsorum*—their yoke, St. Jerome has *laqueos corum*—their enares. The wicked hate the laws of God; they regard them only as a yoke, and as insupportable chains.

4. **[2:4]** David announces that God will dissipate and confound all the plots of his enemies, and will turn their designs to ridicule. This was

accomplished by the destruction of idolatry, the dispersion of the Jews, and the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith.

5. **[2:5]** God spoke to the wicked, and confounded them, not by words, but by the terrible punishments that he inflicted on them. "*In ira sua, et in furore suo.*" We here observe that God never does anything in anger, as men do when they act through passion and with trouble of mind; for the Lord disposes and does everything with moderation and in tranquillity. "Thou judgest with tranquillity—*Cum tranquillitate judicas*" (*Wisd.* 12:18). Hence, when one reads in Scripture that God becomes angry, we are to understand that he chastises sinners, not to conduct them to eternal salvation, as he often does in regard to some whom he chastises in order to bring them to repentance, but only that he is chastising them solely to punish them, and to give free course to his justice.

6. **[2:6]** "*Ego autem constitutus sum Rex ab eo super Sion, montem sanctum ejus.*" Here it is Jesus Christ that speaks; he will say to them: I have been made king, not by men, but by God, my Father, over his holy mountain of Sion; that is to say, over his Church, which, as St. Augustine says, was prefigured by the city of Jerusalem, of which Mount Sion was the principal part, and most beloved by God. "*Prædicans præceptum ejus.*" This means: I have been appointed king that I might publish his commandment. According to the Hebrew we here read: *Narrabo ad decretum*—I will declare for a decree. Substantially, the words *Præceptum* and *Decretum* signify the same thing; namely, the decree whereby God established the kingdom of Jesus Christ to be propagated throughout the world. The terms of the decree are as follows (see verse 7):

7. **[2:7]** "*Filius meus es tu, ego hodic genui te.*" The literal sense of this word of the eternal Father, in the mind of the Holy Ghost, is threefold, as Cardinal Bellarmine and Menochius well remark. The first sense is that of the eternal generation of Jesus Christ as the Word and the eternal Son of God, according to what St. Paul writes: "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels hath he said at any time: Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee?—*Tanto melior Angelis effectus, quanto differentius præ*

illis nomen hereditavit cum enim dixit aliquando Angelorum: Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te?" (*Heb.* 1:4.) Hence St. Augustine rightly says that this passage is to be understood literally of the eternal generation by which the Word was from all eternity begotten by the Father, in contradistinction to the angels who are the ministers of God created in time. We read the words: *Hodie genui te*—To-day have I begotten Thee; "Hodie"—*To-day*, because eternity is an actual duration, without beginning and without end, as St. Augustine well explains, speaking of this psalm: "In eternity nothing is either past or future, but only the present; because whatever is eternal, always is.—*In æternitate, nec præteritum quidquam est, nec futurum, sed præsens tantum; quia, quidquid æternum est, semper est.*" Bossuet (*Suppl. in Ps.* 2:7) says that it would be difficult to find in the psalms a passage in which Jesus Christ is more expressly affirmed to be the true Son of God. The second literal sense refers to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, according to what we read in the Acts of the Apostles: "And we declare unto you that the promise which was made to our fathers, this same God hath fulfilled to our children, raising up Jesus again, as in the sacred psalm also is written: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.—*Et nos vobis annuntiamus cam quæ ad patres nostros repromissio facta est: Quoniam hanc Deus adimplevit filiis nostros, resuscitans Jesum, sicut et in Psalmo secundo scriptum est: Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te*" (*Act.* 13:32, 33). The resurrection is, in fact, a certain regeneration, according to what we read in St. Matthew: "In the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit, etc.—*In regeneratione cum sederit Filius hominis,*" etc. (*Matt.* 19:28). The third sense, also literal, has reference to the temporal generation of Jesus Christ according to the flesh. Such is the opinion of St. Cyprian (*Testim. adv. Jud.1. 2. c. 8*), and of St. Fulgentius (*Contra Arian. resp.* 3); this is well confirmed by these words of the Apostle: "So Christ also did not glorify himself that he might be made a high-priest: but he that said unto him: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.—*Sic et Christus non semetipsum clarificavit, ut Pontifex fieret; sed qui locutus est ad eum: Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te*" (*Heb.* 5:5). In the Introit of the first Mass of Christmas the Church applies the quoted words of this psalm to the mystery of the day. We here add that the holy Fathers understand these words of Isaias: "Who shall declare his generation?—*Generationem ejus quis* *enarrabit?* (*Is.* 53:8), as referring not only to the divine generation, but also to the human generation of Jesus Christ.

8. **[2:8]** The eternal Father continues: Since Thou art my Son by nature, it is just that Thou shouldst have dominion over all the nations and over the whole earth, as Thy inheritance and possession.—St. Augustine understands this of the spiritual power that Jesus Christ has over the Church, which through his merits was to be spread through the entire world, according to what our Saviour has himself said: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth—*Data est mihi omnis potestas in cœlo et in terra*" (*Matt.* 28:18).

9. **[2:9]** This is understood of the power that Jesus Christ has to reward the good and to punish the wicked as easily as the potter can break with a rod of iron his vessels of clay. The rod of iron signifies, moreover, the righteous and inflexible justice of Jesus Christ, which no one can resist.

10. **[2:10]** That is to say: You, then, who are kings, and as such exercise the office of judges on earth, understand what is your duty, and learn to perform it well.[13062]

11. **[2:11]** "*Exsultate ei cum tremore.*" St. Augustine thus comments on these words: "In rejoicing, that we give thanks; in trembling, lest we fall.—*In exsultatione, ut gratias agamus, in tremore, ne cadamus*" (*In Ps. 1n. 4*). By the word *Timore,* according to the Hebrew, we understand the piety of the children towards their father; that is to say, that filial love with which kings and judges should serve God. The verse may therefore be thus explained: Serve the Lord with filial fear and with joy, hoping for reward if you observe justice, and fearing punishment if you do not observe it.

12. **[2:13]** This verse signifies: Accept lovingly the law of God, and observe it, lest he be angry with you if you do not observe it, and lest he permit you to stray from the path of justice.

13. **[2:13]** Unhappy those that wound justice and that are the cause why God becomes angry with them and hastens to punish them. Happy, on the

contrary, are those that trust in God, because he will give them light and strength which they will need in order not to stray from the right path.

PSALM 3 OF THE FIRST NOCTURN

This psalm has for its title: *Psalmus David*[13063] *cum fugeret a facie Absalonis filii sui*—David flying before his son Absalom. It was therefore to David fleeing from the persecutions of the unfortunate Absalom that is commonly applied the literal sense of this psalm. But in the mystical sense, according to St. Jerome, St. Augustine, Bede, Theodoret, and others, David here represents Jesus Christ considered in his Passion and in his resurrection. We would here once more remark on the subject of the enemies from whom the royal prophet endured persecution, that all the psalms when they speak literally are to be understood mystically of all the internal and external enemies, especially of our most powerful and most dangerous enemies,—I mean the devils who are plotting against our eternal salvation.

2. **[3:2]** They tell me that there is no salvation for me, although I trust in my God.

"*Ipsi . . . Ejus.*" According to the Greek, these pronouns are masculine. Striking features of resemblance: David is betrayed by Achitophel, who ends by hanging himself (2 *Kings*, 17:23); Jesus Christ is betrayed by Judas, who ends in the same way. David is persecuted by his own people; Jesus hears the Jews crying out to Pilate: "Away with him, away with him, crucify him. . . . We have no king but Cæsar.—*Tolle, crucifige eum. . . . Non habemus regem, nisi Cæsarem*" (*John*, 19:15). David hears these words: "There is no salvation for him in his God.—*Non est salus ipsi in Deo ejus.*" Jesus hears these other words: "He trusteth in God; let him now deliver him if he will have him.—*Confidit in Deo; liberet nunc, si vult eum*" (*Matt.*, 27:43).

3. **[3:3]** "*Gloria mea, et exaltans caput meum.*" That is to say: "Thou art the cause of my glory; it is Thou that consolest me: I walked with my head

bowed down under the weight of sorrows, and Thou hast now enabled me to lift it up again with joy.

4. **[3:4]** “*De monte sancto suo.*” That is, from his high heaven.

5. **[3:5]** This verse means: In the midst of persecution I took a tranquil and sweet repose; then I awoke and arose without disquietude, seeing that the Lord had taken me under his protection.—These are words that mystically apply to Jesus Christ when he wished to be stretched on the cross and there give up his life, and then wished to rise again from the dead by the power of his divinity.

7. **[3:7]** “*Percussisti omnes adversantes mihi sine causa.*” According to the Hebrew, we translate: *Percussisti omnes hostes meos in maxilla.* The Septuagint, however, have: *Sine causa.* Bellarmine thinks that the Septuagint have been able to translate thus, because the Hebrew text, which they used, was more correct than that which we have.

8. **[3:8]** “*Domini est salus.*” According to the Hebrew, it is *Domino salus.* That is, salvation should be referred to God, and it is only from him that we should hope for it. Salvation is the blessing that the Lord gives to his servants; for to bless on the part of God means to do good.

PSALM 6 OF THE PSALTER

According to the most probable opinion of the learned, this psalm, taken in the literal sense, properly refers to the penitence of David. Hence it is, conclusively, the prayer of the sinner who fears the blows of the divine justice, and who strives to become reconciled with his God. It is the first of the Penitential Psalms.

1. **[6:2]** This verse signifies: O Lord, punish me if Thou wilt, but not in Thy anger; that is to say: Chastise me as a father and not as a judge. Not to be punished here on earth after I have offended Thee would be to me the greatest punishment. I beg Thee, then, to punish me here below, in order that I may amend, and may avoid eternal death.—(See what is said on this point in Ps. 2:5.)

2. **[6:3]** “*Infirmus sum; sana me, Domine, quoniam conturbata sunt ossa mea.*” Have pity on me, O Lord! I am full of infirmities; heal me by strengthening me with Thy grace; for my very bones are troubled, that is, are trembling with weakness.

3. **[6:4]** That is to say: My soul also is troubled, and much more so than my body; how long wilt Thou delay to come to my assistance?

4. **[6:5]** “*Eripe animam meam.*” Deliver my soul from the many miseries and perils that surround it. “*Salvum me fac propter misericordiam tuam.*” Save me through Thy pure mercy; for I deserve nothing but punishment and hell itself.

5. **[6:6]** “*In morte.*” In eternal death.

7. **[6:8]** I have conceived great indignation against myself when considering the deformity of my sins, and when seeing myself growing old in the midst of my enemies, which are my vices and my bad habits.[13064]

8. **[6:9]** “*Qui operamini iniquitatem.*” Perverse enemies, who would also pervert me.

PSALM 7 OF THE PSALTER

Addressing himself to God, David represents to him his innocence and at the same time the anguish of his heart; this was at the time of the persecution that he had to endure from Saul or from Absalom—more probably from Saul. The holy king exhorts at the same time his enemies to be converted, and predicts to them the chastisement of heaven if they are not converted.[13065]

2. **[7:3]** “*Animam meam.*” My soul, or my life.

3. **[7:4]** “*Si feci istud.*” If I have done the wrong that is laid to my charge. This may mean that the enemies of David accused him of having wished to usurp the throne of Saul.

5. **[7:6]** “*Conculcet in terra vitam meam.*” May he trample with his feet the earth stained with my blood in the place where he will take away my life.[13066]

6. **[7:7]** This verse means: But if I am innocent, O Lord! show forth Thy just anger by punishing my enemies as they deserve. We should not here reproach David with having asked to be revenged upon his enemies; for we must understand him either as speaking in a prophetic manner, announcing the chastisements with which God would punish them, or as praying to God to send them temporal punishment that they may amend themselves.

7. **[7:7]** “*In præcepto quod mandasti.*” That is to say: My God, arise in order to save innocence, according to the precept that Thou hast given to men to defend the innocent. “*Synagoga populorum.*” According to the Hebrew, *Congregatio tribuum:* The congregation of the tribes. That is to say: And then all the people shall gather around Thee, to praise the justice of Thy judgments.

8. **[7:8]** “*Dominus judicat populos.*” It belongs to Thee, as the Lord of the universe, to judge the people.

10. **[7:10]** The astuteness of sinners shall not avail them; for Thou who art God, and who knowest the secrets of their hearts, well knowest how to direct the just man, so that he may escape their snares.

11. **[7:11]** The Lord will not fail to give me his just help; for he saves those that act with an upright heart.

12. **[7:12]** “*Justus, fortis, et patiens; numquid irascitur per singulos dies?*” It must be here observed that the Hebrew presents another sense, namely, *Justus et fortis, et comminans (irascens) tota die.* Hence, according to the present Hebrew text, we read that God threatens or is angry every day; in the Vulgate, on the contrary, it is said that God does not threaten and is not angry every day. The version of the Septuagint[13067] agrees with the Vulgate, and with Bellarmine I prefer to adhere to it for the reason already given, namely, that it is believed that the Hebrew text of the time of the Septuagint

was more correct than that which we now have; the more so since, as Bellarmine remarks, the sense as given in the Vulgate agrees better with the following verse.

13. **[7:13]** This verse, united with the preceding one, signifies that God is not always angry and in the mind of punishing sinners as they deserve; but when they are obstinate and will not be converted, he will draw his sword and will punish them according to his justice; for this reason he always holds in readiness and has bent his bow to let fly the arrow of his just vengeance.

14. **[7:14]** “*Vasa mortis.*” That is to say: The weapons that bring death.[13068] “*Sagittas suas ardentibus effecit.*” By this is meant thunderbolts; such is precisely the explanation given by St. Jerome: *Sagittas suas ad comburendum ignitas effecit:* He hath set his arrows on fire to burn.

15. **[7:15]** “*Concepit dolorem, et peperit iniquitatem.*” The sinner first conceives grief in his heart, that is, hatred against the just man, called grief, because it afflicts the soul of him who cherishes it; then he gives birth to iniquity by seeking to oppress the person whom he hates (*Job*, 15:35; *Is.* 59:4).

16. **[7:16]** He has opened and dug a precipice, or a covered trap; but God has permitted that he should himself fall into it.

17. **[7:17]** The evil that he wished to cause others shall descend upon himself.

18. **[7:18]** Conclusion: As for myself, I will praise the justice of the Lord.

PSALM 8 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm is a canticle composed in praise of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, and especially of his goodness towards man. The multitude of the benefits received from God is therefore the subject of this psalm. Thus it is commonly understood by commentators. Nevertheless there are some who, on the authority of a passage of St. Paul (*Heb.* 2:9), apply it not without probability to the person of Jesus Christ.

2. **[8:2]** "*Super cœlos.*" Above the heavens, since the whole world cannot contain it.

3. **[8:2]** "*Inimicum et ultorem.*" Satan Thy principal enemy, and the avenger of all Thy enemies. Some explain this verse, not according to the Vulgate, which has followed the Septuagint, but according to the Hebrew text, which instead of *Perfecisti laudem*—Thou hast perfected praise—signifies: *Fundasti fortitudinem*—Thou hast ordained strength. But be this as it may, we have translated it as is to be seen above: Even the very infants at the breast praise Thee perfectly, and confound Thy enemies. We must not depart from this interpretation, which is conformable to the Vulgate; for Jesus Christ himself rendered it authentic when after his entry into Jerusalem the children were heard to cry out: *Hosanna Filio David*—Hosanna to the Son of David! When the Pharisees murmured at this praise offered to our Lord, he said to them: "*Nunquam legistis, quia: Ex ore infantium et lactentium perfecisti laudem?*—Yea, have you never read: Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (*Matt.* 21:16.) We do not read the words: *Fundasti fortitudinem*—Thou hast ordained strength. Xavier Mattei justly observes that in all the passages of the psalter, or of any other book of the Old Testament, which are cited in the New Testament according to the version of the Septuagint, this version should be regarded as true and incontestable; and that if the Hebrew text differs from it, it should be corrected according to the Septuagint version. He adds that it is temerity to interpret such passages in a sense different from that given to them in the New Testament, excepting only certain passages that the Church has otherwise explained according to the Hebrew text, and that are susceptible of divers literal interpretations.

4, 5. **[8:4, 5]** That is to say: When I consider the marvels that Thou hast wrought in favor of man, how can I refrain from praising Thee and from crying out: What is man, for whom Thou hast so great mindfulness, and whom Thou dost favor with Thy visit? This agrees with what is said in the Canticle of Zachary: "*Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel, quia visitavit, et* *fecit redemptionem plebis suæ*—Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because he hath visited and wrought the redemption of his people.” The Son of God comes himself to visit man, to take human flesh, and to redeem him from the slavery of the devil.

6–7–8. **[8:6–9]** Although Thou hast given to man a nature little less than that of the angels, Thou hast nevertheless subjected to him all other creatures.[13069]

9. **[8:10]** Repetition of the first verse for the conclusion.

PSALM 9 OF THE PSALTER

Among the interpreters there are some that see in this psalm, when taken in the literal sense, David thanking God for having given him the victory over his enemy; and when taken in the spiritual sense, Jesus Christ accomplishing the work of the Redemption, and thus subduing the devil, the great enemy of the human race. Others, whose opinion does not lack probability, regard this psalm as the portrait of the unhappy end of the wicked, who have lived in prosperity, and of the glorious end of the just, who have been living in tribulation.

3. **[9:4]** “*Infirmabuntur.*” My principal enemy having been conquered, all those that follow him will be weakened and thrown into consternation.

6. **[9:7]** “*Inimici.*” This word, as Menochius and Mattei observe, is in the genitive; hence the phrase is thus construed: *Frameæ inimici defecerunt in finem*—The arms of the enemy have entirely failed.

7. **[9:7]** “*Cum sonitu.*” According to Bossuet: *Cum ingente rerum gestarum fama*—With the mighty fame of their deeds.

8. **[9:8]** “*In judicio.*” According to the Hebrew: *Ad judicium.*

10. **[9:11]** Therefore they that know and adore Thy name have great reason to trust in Thee, O Lord! because Thou hast never forsaken those that seek Thee in truth.

11. **[9:12]** Praise the Lord who dwells in Sion, where he is adored as true God, differently from the idols that are found in the temples of the Gentiles; publish his works even among the most barbarous nations, that they too may praise him.

12. **[9:13]** In examining the unjust deeds of men, he remembered the blood of the poor and their lamentations.

13. **[9:14]** Here David turns to God in prayer.

14. **[9:15]** "*De portis mortis.*" The perils of death. "*Filiæ Sion.*" That is to say, Jerusalem.[13070]

15. **[9:16]** I will rejoice in the salvation that Thou hast given me, since my enemies have fallen into the abyss of death, which they had prepared for me. "*In interitu.*" According to the Hebrew, *In fovea,* to which the word *Infixa* corresponds; and this signifies, according to Menochius: They are fallen into the mire, from which it is very difficult further to extricate themselves.

16. **[9:16]** "*Quem absconderunt.*" Which they had secretly laid to catch me.

17. **[9:17]** The Lord shall make himself known as the great God that he is, by exercising his just vengeance upon his enemies, and causing the sinner to be caught in the same toils that his hands had laid for others.

18. **[9:18]** Malvenda thus interprets this passage: "*Convertantur in infernum; quasi dicat: Male peribunt*—They shall be turned into hell; as if he said: They shall perish miserably.' According to Menochius by the word *Infernum* we must understand hell, properly so called, the place destined for the punishment of the wicked: "*Non enim sepulchrum tantum significatur hoc loco, nomine Inferni, sed etiam pœnarum locus*—By the word *hell,* in this passage, not only is meant the grave, but also the place of punishment." This is also the opinion of Gordona. Hence this is the sense of the verse: Those that forget God during their life, will make a bad death, and will be sent to hell.

19. **[9:19]** "*Non peribit in finem*" The patience of the poor shall not utterly perish; that is, shall not always remain without recompense.

20. **[9:20]** O Lord! show Thy power; let not sinful man prevail; let the nations be judged before Thee according to their merit.

21. **[9:21]** Give them a legislator who by the severity of his punishments will curb and subdue them, that so they may know that they are men, that is, weak and mortal, obliged to obey Thee.[13071]

22. **[9:22]** "*Despicis in opportunitatibus.*" Why dost Thou appear to despise me, by not consoling me when I needed Thy help? (See verse 9.)

23. **[9:23]** The proud man boasts in vain of his prosperity, and the poor man complains in vain of his misery.

25. **[9:25]** The wicked man has irritated God, and he should become reconciled to God; but blinded by an excess of anger or of pride he will not seek to appease him.

26. **[9:26]** "*Inquinatæ sunt viæ illius in omni tempore.*" All the actions of his life are always stained with sin.

27. **[9:26]** He no longer thinks, O Lord! of Thy judgments, that is, of Thy precepts, nor of the punishments with which Thou threatenest him; therefore he seeks to lord it over, that is, to oppress his enemies.

28. **[9:27]** "*Sine malo.*" St. Jerome translates: *Ero sine malo*—I shall be without evil.

29. **[9:28]** "*Sub lingua ejus labor et dolor.*" His tongue serves only to bring sorrow and distress upon others.[13072]

31. **[9:30]** "*Quasi leo in spelunca sua.*" As a lion that lies in ambush in his cave, to seize and devour those that are passing by.

32. **[9:30]** “*Oblitus est Deus.*” God does not care for the things here below; after having created them, he forgets them.

35. **[9:33]** “*Exaltetur manus tua.*” Let Thy power be exalted against the wicked.

36. **[9:34]** “*Non requiret.*” God does not care for human things; he does not trouble himself about them.

37. **[9:35]** Thou seest, O Lord! and Thou dost look upon the sufferings of the poor; and when the time comes Thou wilt cause the wicked to fall into Thy hands to punish them.

38. **[9:35]** “*Orphano.*” Those that are destitute of all help.

39. **[9:36]** “*Brachium.*” Power. “*Quæretur peccatum illius, et non invenietur.*” According to St. Augustine: *Judicabitur de peccato suo, et ipse peribit propter peccatum suum*—He shall be judged for his sin, and he shall be lost on account of his sin. This interpretation seems to agree with what is said in the following verse: *Peribitis, gentes, de terra illius*—Ye Gentiles shall perish from his land. Hence the sinner shall be judged according to his iniquity, and he shall no longer be found, because he will be forever lost.

41. **[9:38]** God will always hear the desire of the just who are afflicted; he will even hearken to the preparation of their heart; that is, the interior disposition that precedes their prayers.

42. **[9:39]** “*Ut non apponat ultra magnificare se homo super terram.*” In order that men on earth may not continue to exalt themselves, that is to say, may not grow proud by exalting themselves against Thee and against their neighbor.

PSALM 10 OF THE PSALTER

In this psalm the just are exhorted to place confidence in God during the time of persecution.

1. **[10:2]** This is a difficult verse; it is thus explained: In the Lord I put my trust; why, then, dost thou come to me[13073] and say: Fly to the mountain as a sparrow, to escape the vexations that afflict thee in the place in which thou art? This language is that of the just man who rejects the suggestions of the devil. When the sparrows fear to be taken in the nets of the fowlers, they flee to the mountains, which are the places more safe for them; but the just man, who trusts in God, seeks no change of place; for he knows that there are everywhere temptations of the enemy, and that everywhere God helps him who trusts in him.

2. **[10:3]** "*In obscuro.*" In the darkness of the night, according to the Greek version, to signify that it is difficult to guard against such attacks.

3. **[10:4]** O Lord! says the psalmist, the wicked have destroyed the laws that Thou hast made, by persecuting the just who have given them no cause for doing so.

5. **[10:5]** From the height of the heavens, where the Lord sits as a sovereign judge, his eyes look upon the poor man, and see all things; so that the Lord knows all that passes, as if he were interrogating men. Such is the explanation of Menochius: *Ac si interroganti, quid actum sit, responderent* —Just as if they were answering him when asking them what was done.[13074]

6. **[10:6]** The Lord puts questions, that is to say, he knows the just man to reward him, and he knows the wicked man to punish him; hence, says the psalmist, he that loves iniquity hates himself, because he draws down upon himself the divine vengeance.

7. **[10:7]** The Lord will shower down upon sinners in this life snares by which they shall be involved in greater sins;[13075] and in the next life he will rain upon them fire, sulphur, and storms; that is, most painful torments, which will be the portion of their chalice, or their inheritance, their eternal punishment; such shall be the fruit of their sins.

8. **[10:8]** “*Æquitatem vidit vultus ejus.*” He considers the merit of each one, in order to punish the wicked and reward the just according to justice.

PSALM 11 OF THE PSALTER

The confidence that we should have in the mercy of God and the fear that we should always have of his justice form the twofold subject of this psalm.

1. **[11:2]** “*Defecit sanctus.*” Men, even those that are reputed holy, have failed in keeping Thy precepts. “*Diminutæ sunt veritates a filiis hominum.*” They are found to be liars.

2. **[11:3]** One seeks to deceive one’s neighbor by telling him vain things that are nothing but knavish tricks; one speaks with a double heart when one thinks one thing and means another.[13076]

3. **[11:4]** Prophetic imprecation: the psalmist threatens with divine vengeance these deceivers and these proud men who boast of merits that they do not possess.

4. **[11:5]** “*Linguam nostram magnificabimus.*” We will make ourselves esteemed by causing our tongues to prevail. This accords with the Hebrew, which is thus translated: *Linguæ nostræ vires addemus*—We will strengthen our tongue. “*Labia nostra a nobis sunt*”—We have our own mouth with which to defend ourselves. “*Quis noster dominus est?*”—Who is the master that will prevent us from speaking?

6. **[11:6]** I will put the just into a place of safety; this I will do freely; no one will be able to resist me.

7. **[11:7]** The words and the promises of the Lord are pure and sincere, free from all falsehood and all deceit; they are as silver tried by the fire in a crucible, and refined seven times, so that it is entirely purified from the earth or dross. “*Probatum terræ.*” St. Jerome translates this: *Separatum a terra.*

8. **[11:8]** Thou wilt always preserve us from this race of proud and deceitful men.

9. **[11:9]** The wicked surround the just that they may oppress them; and Thou, according to the depth of Thy judgments, permittest the wicked to increase in numbers, and to delight in the good things of this world.

PSALM 12 OF THE PSALTER

Prayer that the just man addresses to God when he is tempted and afflicted by his enemies.

2. **[12:2]** How long shall I remain agitated and sorrowful, taking counsel with myself, to find out the means of delivering myself from my enemies?

3. **[12:4]** "*Respice, et exaudi me.*" Look down upon my affliction, and hearken to my prayers.

4. **[12:4]** "*Ne umquam obdormiam in morte.*" That I may never consent to temptations, which would bring death to the soul.

5. **[12:6]** "*In misericordia tua speravi.*" I have placed all my trust in Thy mercy; Thou wilt not permit me to fall beneath their attack.

6. **[12:6]** I will rejoice, because I have been saved by Thy help, and I will not cease to thank Thee for having assisted me.

PSALM 13 OF THE PSALTER

The prophet deplores the blindness and the corruption of the wicked, and especially of infidels.[13077]

1. **[13:1]** "*Insipiens.*" The fool; since the infidel who denies God is not only impious, but is also bereft of reason, for the existence of God is evident for every one that has the use of reason.—"*In corde suo.*" He says this in his heart, because he does not dare to say it to others, lest he should be laughed at as a fool.

2. **[13:1]** “*Corrupti sunt.*” The wicked say that there is no God; because they are corrupt, first in their will, and then in their understanding.—“*In studiis suis.*” In following their passions.

3. **[13:2]** The Lord has looked upon these unfortunate men to see whether any one of them knows God, and seeks him to love and obey him.

5. **[13:3]** “*Sepulchrum patens.*” An open sepulchre, which, filled with corruption, exhales an infectious odor.—“*Venenum aspidum sub labiis eorum.*” They seem to keep beneath their tongue the venom of asps, to defame and outrage others.

7. **[13:3]** Miserable that they are! their whole life is but affliction and sadness, because they did not wish to know the way to find peace, which consists in having before one’s eyes the fear of God.[13078]

9. **[13:5]** Their obstinacy arises from their unwillingness to call upon the Lord for help, so that he may give them his holy fear. They fear to lose the divine grace, which brings with it every good.

11. **[13:7]** But say the wicked: Who will come from Sion to save Israel?—But know that the Lord shall deliver his people from bondage, and its joy shall be great.

PSALM 14 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm presents the portrait of a worthy minister of the altar, and at the same time that of the predestined soul, who also will have the happiness of being admitted for all eternity into the heavenly country.

7. **[14:5]** “*Non movebitur in æternum.*” He shall surely dwell in heaven forever and ever.

PSALMS OF THE SECOND NOCTURN

PSALM 15 OF THE PSALTER

The subject of this psalm, as St. Peter testifies (*Acts*, 2:25),[13079] is a prayer addressed to God by our Lord Jesus Christ during the three days that his holy body was lying in the sepulchre.—Resting on the authority of the prince of the apostles, Xavier Mattei and Father Rotigni rightly think that the literal sense and the spiritual sense are one and the same, and that thus the whole psalm directly refers to Jesus Christ raising his voice to his heavenly Father to address to him from the depth of the sepulchre the following prayer:

1. **[15:2]** “*Bonorum meorum non eges.*” That is to say, that God is the sovereign master of all things.

2. **[15:3]** According to interpreters, Jesus Christ, who is here speaking, says: God, my Father, wishes that my will should tend in a marvellous manner to benefit the saints that live on earth.

3. **[15:4]** Jesus Christ continues to speak: Their former infirmities (that is their sins) were numerous; but afterwards healed by my merits, they became holy so that they were able to hasten to God.

4. **[15:4]** “*Non congregabo conventicula eorum de sanguinibus.*” St. Jerome translates this after this manner: *Non libabo libamina eorum de sanguine*—Their libations of blood I will not offer. That is to say: I will never approve of the assemblies that they before held in the state of their infirmity, to celebrate sacrifices of blood.

5. **[15:5]** “*Pars . . . calicis mei.*” In olden times those that presided at a banquet assigned to each guest the portion of wine that was due to him.—“*Restitues hereditatem meam mihi.*” Jesus Christ says these words to God his Father, when speaking of his resurrection.

6. **[15:6]** It must here be observed that in ancient times the fields were measured with cords, and the part that fell to the lot of each in an inheritance.

7. **[15:7]** I will bless the Lord, who has given me the understanding to choose himself for my inheritance; and all the affections of my heart (*renes*

mei) have excited me to suffer for him with patience all tribulations, even death itself (*usque ad noctem*).

8. **[15:8]** “*Ne commovear.*” That I may not be shaken in my desire and in the hope that I have placed in him.

9. **[15:9]** “*Caro mea requiescet in spe.*” My body, separated from my soul, shall rest in hope of the resurrection and of the glory that the Lord has prepared for me.

10. **[15:10]** Thou, O Lord! wilt not allow my soul to remain long in limbo, nor wilt Thou suffer my body, which is holy, to undergo corruption in the tomb.

11. **[15:11]** “*Vias vitæ.*” The ways of life, that is to say, of resurrection, which I know is soon to restore life to my body.—“*Delectationes in dextera tua usque in finem*” Thou wilt make me enjoy Thy glory, by placing me at Thy right hand for all eternity.

PSALM 16 OF THE PSALTER

The just man prays to God to be delivered from the persecutions to which he sees himself exposed.[13080]

1. **[16:1]** Show favor to my innocence by hearing me; lend me a gracious ear.

2. **[16:1]** Hear my petitions that I lay before Thee, not in words of falsehood, but of sincerity.

3. **[16:2]** I beseech Thee that the judgment of my cause may proceed from Thy mouth, and from no other; regard justice, and judge me according to its laws.

4. **[16:3]** “*Nocte.*” During the darkness of my desolation. “*Igne.*” By the penetrating fire of tribulation.[13081]

5. **[16:4]** In order to avoid speaking against my persecutors, I have been attentive to the words of Thee, who commandest me to be silent, and thereby have walked in hard and very toilsome ways. I have had much to suffer.

6. **[16:5]** Continue to direct me in Thy ways in which Thou wishest that I should walk, so that I may not go astray.

7. **[16:6]** I have invoked Thee, and Thou hast heard me; cease not to incline Thy ear towards me by hearing all the prayers that I shall address to Thee.

9. **[16:8]** "*Dexteræ tuæ.*" From those that resist Thy right hand, which defends me. "*Ut pupillam oculi.*" With great care.

10. **[16:8]** Hide me from the eyes of the wicked who seek to oppress me.[13082]

11. **[16:9]** "*Animam meam circumdederunt.*" They have surrounded me to take away my life. "*Adipem suum concluserunt.*" St. Jerome translates: *Adipe suo concluserunt; Viscera* being understood. That is to say, as in the human body fat closes the bowels, so the abundance of riches fills the wicked with pride, and shuts in them the bowels of compassion for others.

12. **[16:11]** "*Oculos suos statuerunt declinare in terram.*" Miserable men! they are determined not to lift their eyes from the ground to which they keep their hearts attached.

13. **[16:12]** "*In abditis.*" In secret places to devour those passing by. Father Rotigni observes that this verse is applied to Jesus Christ more easily than to David, who was never taken by his enemies.

14. **[16:13]** "*Animam meam.*" My life. "*Frameam tuam ab inimicis manus tuæ.*" Take away Thy sword, that is to say, the power to harm, which comes from Thee, from the enemies, that is to say, from those that abuse the gifts of Thy hand.

15. **[16:14]** “*A paucis de terra divide eos in vita eorum.*” This is a passage which some, such as Bellarmine, Gordona, and Lallemant, explain thus: Separate the multitude of the wicked from the small number of Thy servants who live upon earth. Others, as Bossuet, Tirinus, and Mattei, expound it as follows: Separate, that is to say, detach the wicked during life from that little portion of earthly goods which they possess and which renders them so proud. This last interpretation seems to me to be more probable; for St. Jerome translates the Hebrew: *Quoniam Pars in vita*—Whose portion is in their life; the meaning of this is, that they found on such things their present happiness; so that St. Jerome, or according to the Hebrew text the expression *A paucis,* has reference, not to the number of the just, but to the goods that the wicked enjoy in this life. In any case this passage is very obscure. “*De absconditis tuis adimpletus est venter eorum.*” They have their belly or their heart filled with their earthly goods, which they keep hidden, or which they carefully preserve; but in reality all these goods are Thine. This is the explanation also given of these obscure words: *De absconditis tuis.*

16. **[16:14]** “*Parvulis.*” Bossuet understands by this word grandchildren, descendants, *Nepotibus.*

17. **[16:15]** I hope to appear just in Thy eyes on the day when I am judged, that I may be admitted into heaven, where I shall be satiated by beholding Thy glory.

PSALM 17 OF THE PSALTER

David gives thanks to God for having delivered him from the hands of his enemies, and especially from the hands of Saul. This psalm is applicable to the Christian soul that sees itself delivered, with God’s help, from every grave persecution or every temptation of the devil.[13083]

3. **[17:3]** “*Cornu salutis meæ.*” That is to say, the strength that secures my salvation.[13084]

4. **[17:4]** Therefore, he wishes to say, I will do nothing but praise and call upon the Lord in all my wants; and while acting thus I am sure that I will

always be safe from the hands of my enemies.

5. **[17:5]** “*Torrentes iniquitatis conturbaverunt me.*” My enemies have filled me with terror, and have rushed upon me like a furious torrent. Instead of *Conturbaverunt,* St. Jerome translates, according to the Hebrew: *Terruerunt* —Have terrified.

6. **[17:6]** I have been frightened by the horrors of the tomb, that is to say, with the sadness which he feels who knows that he must soon be carried to the grave; for the snares that my enemies have laid to deprive me of life, have preoccupied me, or have filled my soul with terror.

9. **[17:8]** God, incensed against his enemies, manifested his anger by making the earth tremble and shaking the mountains in their very foundations.

10. **[17:9]** When God is angry there exhales from the gaping earth a terrific smoke, and from the breath of his wrath fire is kindled, with lightnings and thunders, which fall like burning coals.

11. **[17:10]** When the clouds are near the earth it seems as if the heavens were being lowered and God himself were descending upon these clouds.[13085]

13. **[17:12]** When the clouds are more charged with water, they become darker and they bring the rain; now, God hides himself therein as in a closed pavilion. Commentators give to this image a mystical sense, thus: The Lord, in this present life, does not make his presence sensible; he hides his majesty as in black clouds laden with dark rain; that is to say, from the depth of this obscurity he showers down graces upon his faithful souls. This may well be understood of souls that have arrived at the prayer of contemplation, and who, the more they are united with God, find themselves all the more involved in obscurity.

14. **[17:13]** “*Carbones ignis.*” Coals of fire, that is to say, lightnings and thunders.

15. **[17:14]** The hail, the lightning, and the thunder are the voice of the Lord by which he makes us know that he is the Most High.

17, 18. **[17:16]** Thus also has God in his anger at times brought to light the hidden sources and the innermost bowels of the earth.

19. **[17:17]** He has received me into his arms, and has withdrawn me from a multitude of dangers and tribulations which as a deluge were overwhelming me.

20. **[17:18]** “*Confortati sunt super me.*” St. Jerome translates: *Robustiores me erant*—They were stronger than I.

21. **[17:19]** “*Prævenerunt me.*” They sought to take me by surprise.[13086]

23. **[17:21]** The Lord has rewarded me, and he will reward me according to the uprightness of my heart and the purity of my deeds.

25. **[17:23]** All his laws are ever before my eyes, and I have never repelled from my heart his just commands.[13087]

26. **[17:24]** I hope with his help to remain faithful to him.

27. **[17:25]** The Lord in his goodness will grant me his graces according to the uprightness of my intention, and according to my actions that are free from defect, because they are done in his presence.

28. **[17:26]** According to the Hebrew, the word “*Sanctus*”—Holy—signifies here *merciful.*

29. **[17:27]** According to the Hebrew, the word “*Electus*”—Elect—signifies here *good.* “*Cum perverso perverteris.*” Thou wilt treat the perverse man as his perversity deserves.

30. **[17:28]** “*Oculos superborum.*” The text is thus expressed, because it is especially by their eyes that the proud show their pride.

31. **[17:29]** “*Lucernam meam.*” My lamp, that is to say, my mind, which without Thee would ever be deprived of light. “*Illumina tenebras meas.*” Enlighten my darkness by the light of Thy truth.

32. **[17:30]** “*Transgrediar murum.*” I shall leap over the walls, that is to say, I shall overcome the difficulties that I shall have to meet in Thy service.

33. **[17:31]** The path that God teaches me to keep is free from every defect or from every difficulty; his promises are tried by fire, that is to say, they are sincere and true.

34. **[17:32]** “*Quis Deus.*” The translation from the Hebrew gives: *Quis Deus* . . . *Quis petra;* . . . this signifies: Where shall we find a support so firm as that which we have in our God?

35. **[17:33]** “*Posuit immaculatam viam meam.*” He has given me the strength to pass my days free from all stain of sin.

36. **[17:34]** He has perfected my feet by rendering them swift like those of the hart; and he has placed me on the tops of the mountains, in order to withdraw me from the hands of my enemies.

40. **[17:37]** “*Non sunt infirmata vestigia mea.*” St. Jerome’s rendering is: *Non deficient tali mei*, that is, My ankles have not failed.

41, 42. **[17:38, 39]** This means: I have said, O Lord! relying on Thy help: I will pursue, etc.

47, 48. **[17:44, 45]** These verses and those that follow are properly applicable to our divine Redeemer. “*Populus quem non cognovi.*” The Gentiles.

49. **[17:46]** My natural subjects, whom I called my children, are alienated from me, and have deceived me by pretending to serve me; they have become strangers to me, and are grown old, by becoming (according to the Hebrew text) like dry withered leaves; they have turned aside from the

straight paths that they trod before.—This may well be understood of Jesus Christ speaking of the Jewish people, who had become unfaithful to him.

50. **[17:47]** “*Exaltetur Dens salutis meæ.*” May God be ever exalted, he who is the whole hope of my salvation.

53. **[17:49]** Here it is evidently Jesus Christ who is speaking of his victories over the world and the devil.

54. **[17:51]** We must here remark that Jesus Christ is called David by Ezeckiel and by the other prophets; and therefore the psalmist concludes by thanking the heavenly Father for all the graces bestowed upon his Son, and upon all the faithful that are his followers.

PSALMS OF THE THIRD NOCTURN

PSALM 18 OF THE PSALTER

In this psalm we hear exalted the perfections of God, the sanctity of his law, and the magnificence of his works. In the spiritual sense it is to Jesus Christ and his Apostles that all these praises apply, according to St. Augustine, Bellarmine, Rotigni, Malvenda, Tirinus, and Gordona.

1. **[18:2]** The heavens, by the prodigious works that we admire therein, make us know God. By the heavens the above-mentioned interpreters understand the Apostles, who by the preaching of the Gospel and by miracles have propagated upon earth the faith in Jesus Christ.

2. **[18:3]** Each day produces or communicates for the day following and night the succeeding night, the manner of praising God; so that the heavens are unceasingly publishing the glory of the Most High.

3, 4. **[18:4, 5]** This accords with the command that our Lord gave to his Apostles: *Euntes ergo docete omnes gentes*—Going, therefore, teach ye all nations (*Matt.* 28:19). And St. Paul, speaking of the preaching of the New Law by the ministry of the Apostles, says: *Numquid non audierunt? Et quidem in omnem terram exivit sonus eorum, et in fines orbis terræ verba* *eorum*—Have they not heard? Yea, verily: their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world (*Rom.* 10:18).

5. **[18:6]** "*In sole posuit tabernaculum suum.*" The Lord has placed his pavilion in the sun, as being the principal part of the heavens. This explanation which Bellarmine gives does not please Mattei; he prefers the sense of the Hebrew text, namely: *Soli posuit tentorium in eis*—He has set in them a pavilion for the sun. But Bellarmine observes that the version of the Septuagint, which the Vulgate has followed, says, as above, that God has set his pavilion in the sun; now we should here prefer the interpretation of the Septuagint, because we may reasonably believe that at that time the Hebrew text was more correct than it is at the present day.

8. **[18:8]**[13088] The law of the Lord is beautiful, without a defect, so that it converts souls or withdraws them from evil and from error. It is his testimony, that is to say, it makes us know his will; it is faithful in its promises, and it renders wise the little ones, that is to say, those that are docile and those that willingly submit to his precepts.

9. **[18:9]** "*Justitiæ Domini.*" The commandments of God. "*Illuminans oculos.*" This law is full of a heavenly light, which enlightens the mind: the mind is the eye of the soul.

10. **[18:10]** "*Timor Domini sanctus, permanens in sæculum sæculi.*" The divine law, which teaches holy fear, is permanent as to the eternal reward that it promises to him who observes it. "*Judicia.*" The precepts.

11. **[18:11]** The divine precepts are more agreeable to virtuous souls than anything in this world.

13. **[18:13]** "*Delicta, quis intelligit?*" What man is there that knows all the sins, or, according to the translation of St. Jerome, all the errors into which we are exposed to fall, so as to be able to avoid them? "*Ab alienis parce servo tuo.*" Do not permit Thy servant to associate with those that have

strange, that is, bad manners. St. Jerome translates: *A superbis quoque libera Servum tuum*—From the proud deliver Thy servant.

14. **[18:14]** If I do not let my sins[13089] get the mastery over me, then I shall be free from every fault, and pure especially from grievous sins.

15. **[18:15]** My word, or my prayers will be agreeable to Thee as well as my meditations, which I shall ever make in Thy presence.

16. **[18:15]** It is Thou that aidest me in need and deliverest me in danger.

PSALM 19 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm is a prayer which the people address to God for the success of the arms of David. But Bellarmine and Rotigni think that this psalm and the two following psalms, that is, the 20 and the 21 of the psalter, refer to the victories of Jesus Christ over the devil and the persecutors of the Church.

3. **[19:4]** “*Holocaustum tuum pingue fiat.*” May thy holocaust be agreeable to the Lord, as are the sacrifices of fat animals (*Dan.* 3:40).

5. **[19:6]** “*Salutari tuo.*” Thy safety and thy victory. “*Magnificabimur.*” Expression conformable to the Septuagint version. According to present Hebrew version, we would have: *Vexillum attolemus:* We shall lift up our banner. That is to say: We shall celebrate the victory that saves and exalts us by proclaiming the glory of the Lord, to whom it is due.

6. **[19:7]** “*Christum suum.*” His Christ, or the King whom he hath anointed with his grace.

7. **[19:7]** “*In potentatibus salus dexteræ ejus.*” St. Jerome’s translation is: *In fortitudinibus salutis dexteræ ejus.*

8. **[19:8]** Our enemies put their trust in terrestrial goods and means; but we will invoke the name of our God, who gives victory to those that trust in him.

9. **[19:9]** “*Obligati sunt.*” That is to say, according to the Septuagint version: *Colligati sunt, quasi compedibus*—They are tied down by earthly affections, as by so many fetters.

PSALM 20 OF THE PSALTER

Hymn of thanksgiving which the people address to God for the victories granted to the arms of David. According to Bellarmine, this psalm is understood in the spiritual sense of the victory which Jesus Christ gained through the merits of his Passion over sin and over hell.

1. **[20:2]** “*Super salutare tuum.*” On account of the salvation that he has received from Thee.

2. **[20:3]** “*Voluntate labiorum ejus non fraudasti eum.*” Thou hast not failed to hear his prayers.[13090]

6. **[20:7]** “*Dabis eum in benedictionem.*” According to the Hebrew: *Pones eum benedictiones*—Thou hast set him to be blessings. These words can be verified only in Jesus Christ, the eternal source of blessings, which all receive through him.[13091]

8. **[20:9]** “*Inveniatur manus tua omnibus inimicis tuis.*” According to the Hebrew: *Inveniet manus tua omnes inimicos tuos*—Thy hand shall find all Thy enemies.

9. **[20:10]** “*In tempore vultus tui.*” When Thy angry face shall make them see Thy just wrath.

11. **[20:12]** Most justly wilt Thou deal with them, since they have endeavored to heap evils upon Thee by the many outrages that they have done Thee.

12. **[20:13]** This verse is very obscure, and has given rise to different interpretations. Theodoret and Euthymius explain it thus: “*Pones eos dorsum.*” Thou shalt put them to flight by making them turn their back. “*In reliquiis tuis.*” That is, in their posterity. “*Præparabis vultum.*” Thou wilt

show Thy angry face. Bellarmine explains it thus: “*Pone eos dorsum*”—Thou shalt make them as though they were nothing but back, a part of the body exposed to the scourger. “*In reliquiis tuis præparabis vultum eorum.*” You will cause that their sight, for their greater punishment, be fixed in considering Thy elect, who are the remnant reserved and saved by Thee. Mattei, Menochius, Bossuet, and Tirinus take this whole verse all in one sense, and explain it thus: Thou wilt discharge Thy arrows so thick in their face that they will be forced to turn and take to flight. Let the reader choose whichever of these explanations he pleases; the last, however, agrees best with the Hebrew text, according to which, instead of the words “*In reliquiis tuis,*” it is *In nervis;* signifying the string of the bow on which the arrow is placed.[13092]

MONDAY AT MATINS

PSALM 26 OF THE PSALTER

David persecuted by Saul and surrounded by every kind of peril shows no less courage by the confidence that he has in the divine protection; he sighs at the same time after the sight of the Tabernacle. He is a figure of the just man who in the midst of the enemies of his salvation longs to leave this world, and to enter into the heavenly kingdom.

3, 4. **[26:2]** My enemies advance against me like ferocious beasts, to devour my body; but those that ill-treat me I have seen weakened and cast down.[13093]

8. **[26:4]** When visiting the Temple of the Lord, I may taste the sweetness that he communicates to those that love him.

10. **[26:6]** He has placed me as upon a high rock, so that now I hold my head above my enemies; that is to say, I have overcome them.[13094]

11. **[26:6]** "*Circuivi, et immolavi.*" In the Hebrew this is in the future, which agrees better with the rest of the verse. The sense, therefore, is: United with the priests, I will go around the altar, and will offer.

12. **[26:6]** "*Vocem meam, qua clamavi ad te.*" The urgent prayer that I have addressed to Thee.

13. **[26:7]** In the past, my heart, or my desire, which is well known to Thee, has already told Thee that my eyes have sought Thee; for the future, I will try to be always in Thy presence, to obey Thee and to love Thee.

14. **[26:9]** "*In ira.*" In wrath, as a punishment for my sins.

17. **[26:11]**[13095]Teach me, O God! to walk according to Thy law, and guide me in the right path that leads to Thee, in order that I may not fall into the hands of my enemies.

18. **[26:12]** “*Mentita est iniquitas sibi.*” Their iniquity has lied, that is, has been injurious to themselves.

19. **[26:13]** I hope to enjoy in the land of the living—that is, in the kingdom of the blessed, where death has no access—the good things that the Lord has prepared for those that love him.

20. **[26:14]** “*Sustine Dominum.*” Expect the help of the Lord; he will never fail Thee.

PSALM 27 OF THE PSALTER

David, in the midst of persecutions, implores the help of God, and foretells his triumph.[13096] There is not one among the faithful who cannot apply this psalm to himself in view of the temptations and perils of which his life here upon earth is so full.

1. **[27:1]** “*Ad te, Domine, clamabo.*” O Lord! I will not cease to cry to Thee to obtain help. “*Ne sileas a me.*” Keep not silence, as if Thou didst not hear my prayers. “*Assimilabor descendentibus in lacum.*” I shall become like those that find themselves shut up in the tomb, whence their voice can no longer be heard.

3. **[27:3]** “*Ne simul trahas me.*” Do not permit me to fall over precipices.

5. **[27:4]** “*Secundum nequitiam adinventionum ipsorum.*” According to their malice, which invents artifices to injure others.

6. **[27:4]** “*Redde retributionem eorum ipsis.*” Cause the evil that they are plotting for others to fall upon themselves.[13097]

7. **[27:5]** “*Non intellexerunt.*” They did not wish to understand.[13098] *Non œdificabis eos.*” Thou wilt not restore them to their former state.

10. **[27:7]** Through the help that I have received, my flesh, that is, my weakness, has regained its vigor;[13099] therefore I will always sing with all my heart the praises of my Saviour.

11. **[27:8]** “*Christi sui.*” Christ, or the anointed of the Lord. David thus calls himself, as having received from God the royal unction.

PSALM 28 OF THE PSALTER

The prophet here invites the people to come to adore God in his Temple.[13100] Under this figure the Gentiles are invited to receive the Gospel, which had to be preached in the midst of persecutions, here represented by the winds, the tempests, and the thunders, which are mentioned in this psalm.

1. **[28:1]** “*Filios arietum.*” Young rams, to offer them to him in sacrifice.

3. **[28:3]** The Lord makes his voice heard upon the waters during the storms; in the noise that is then produced by the abundance of the waters, mingled with peals of thunder, he makes the voice of his majesty heard.

4. **[28:4]** “*In virtute.*” According to the Hebrew: *In potentia*—In power. The Lord makes his voice known in his power and in his grandeur; for when he wills he makes the earth and the sea tremble.

5. **[28:5]** “*Cedros Libani.*” That is to say: The loftiest and strongest trees, which it destroys by the violence of the tempests.

6. **[28:6]** “*Comminuet.*” According to the Hebrew: *Saltare faciet*—He shall make them leap as a calf that goes bounding over the mountain of Libanon. “*Dilectus.*” The unicorn, when little, is admired for its beauty.

7. **[28:7]** “*Intercidentis flammam.*” St. Jerome’s translation is: *Dividens flammas;* that is to say, the thunder darts a number of lightning flashes one after the other. “*Desertum Cades.*” A vast desert of Arabia.

8. **[28:8]** “*Præparantis cervos.*” This means, according to some interpreters, that the thunder so terrifies the deer that parturition is hastened. These authors rest on the Hebrew text, which is thus translated: *Vox Domini parere faciens cervas*—The voice of the Lord makes hinds bring forth. But I prefer the interpretation of Mattei, who says that the voice of the Lord, or the thunder, so frightens the deer as to drive them from their thickets; and he observes that the Vulgate does not use the word *Cervas,* but *Cervos. “Et revelabit condensa; et in templo ejus omnes dicent gloriam.”* That is to say, the Lord lays open to daylight the thick forests by shivering and uprooting the trees with his thunderbolts; after which all men will go to render homage to the glory or to the power of the Most High in his Temple.

9. **[28:9]** God makes the deluge of waters that inundate the earth to dwell, to abide, or last; and he himself, as Lord and eternal King seated upon the clouds, disposes everything for his glory.

10. **[28:10]** The Lord will give to his people the virtue of trusting in his protection;[13101] and then blessing them he will fill them with peace.

PSALM 29 OF THE PSALTER

Thanksgiving addressed by David to God for having delivered him from a dangerous illness.[13102] This psalm is very suitable to every Christian who, having been assailed by his passions, is in danger of falling into temptations.

1. **[29:2]** I will praise Thee by giving thanks, because Thou hast taken me under Thy protection, and hast not allowed my enemies to sing victories over me.

3. **[29:4]** “*Eduxisti ab inferno animam meam.*” Thou hast brought me back from the tomb.[13103]

4. **[29:5]** “*Sancti ejus.*” You who are his faithful servants. “*Memoriæ sanctitatis ejus.*” That is to say: For his holy memory that he has of you, to do you good.

5. **[29:6]** The wrath of God, or chastisement, comes from the indignation that he conceives against the sinner on account of his sin, on the other hand, life or salvation comes from the will of God, who in his goodness desires to save man.

6. **[29:6]** “*Demorabitur.*” Pagnini translates: *Pernoctabit.* Hence the sense is: Though the Lord cause us to pass the night in sadness, in the morning he will give us joy.[13104]

7. **[29:7]** Finding myself in an abundance of consolations, I said: I shall never be deprived of my happiness.

8. **[29:8]** Thou hast wished to give to my glory and to my happiness strength; that is, solidity.

10. **[29:9]** Nevertheless, O Lord! I will never cease to cry to Thee, who art my God, and to pray to Thee to help me.[13105]

11. **[29:10]** What fruit couldst thou draw from my blood; that is to say, as St. Augustine explains this verse by applying it to Jesus Christ, from the shedding of my blood, or from my death? But, literally, it is better understood of David himself, who fears that he will not be able after death to do the good that he can do in life, as he explains in the following verse.

12. **[29:10]** Will, then, dust, or my body reduced to dust after death, be yet able to praise Thee, and to publish the faithfulness of Thy promises?

14. **[29:12]** “*Saccum.*” Garment of mourning and humiliation.

15. **[29:13]** “*Non compungar.*” Let not my sadness hinder me any longer from praising Thee. According to the Hebrew: *Non taceat.* That is to say: Let not my glory cease to praise Thee. “*In æternum confitebor tibi.*” I will never cease to celebrate Thy glories, and I will ever thank Thee for Thy benefits.

PSALM 30 OF THE PSALTER

Forced by his son Absalom to leave Jerusalem, David asks help of God. This psalm is perfectly suited to a Christian who sees himsel assailed by temptations, and who, animated by confidence, asks God for aid and protection.[13106] It must be remarked that our Lord Jesus Christ makes to himself the application of the sixth verse of this psalm: a proof that the persecution of David prefigures that which our Redeemer had to endure at the hands of the Jews.

1. **[30:2]** “*In justitia tua libera me.*” Deliver me from confusion by Thy justice, according to which Thou punishest the guilty and protectest the innocent.

2. **[30:3]** Incline Thy ear to my prayers, and hasten to deliver me from the peril in which I find myself.

4. **[30:4]** Thou art my strength in temptations, and my refuge in persecutions; I hope that for the glory of Thy name Thou wilt lead me safe through all dangers, and provide for me in all my wants.

6. **[30:6]** Into Thy hands I commit my life, because many other times Thou hast delivered me from death, Thou who art my Lord and my God, ever faithful in Thy promises. Some think that these words, and indeed the whole psalm, are to be understood of Jesus Christ, because before expiring he said on the cross: *Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.* Bellarmine, however, justly observes that our Lord, in dying, might well use these words, but not the following: *Redemisti me, Domine, Deus veritatis*—Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth; for Jesus Christ was himself the Redeemer, and not the redeemed.

7. **[30:7]** “*Observantes vanitates, supervacue.*” St. Jerome translates the passage thus: *Custodientes vanitates frustra*—Thou dost hate those who keep, that is, who love the vanities, or the false goods of this world; which they do uselessly, *supervacue,* for they will never find the peace for which they hope.

9. **[30:8]** Thou hast looked upon my weakness, and Thou hast saved my life from many dangers.

10. **[30:9]** Thou hast given me a large field, to deliver myself from the enemies that would close the way against me.

11. **[30:10]** Have pity on me, O Lord! for I see myself troubled by the remembrance of my sins; my eyes, my soul, and my bowels, that is to say, all my powers, exterior and interior, are troubled at the sight of Thy anger, provoked by my infidelity. Such is the explanation given by Bellarmine, who follows St. Augustine.

14. **[30:12]** “*Timor notis meis.*” My friends are afraid of being known to be my friends.

20. **[30:17]** “*Illustra faciem tuam super servum tuum.*” Turn Thy gracious eyes upon me. “*Non confundar.*” I hope that I shall not be abandoned by Thee.

21. **[30:18]** “*Erubescant impii, et deducantur in infernum.*” May confusion fall rather upon the wicked, and may they be buried in eternal oblivion.

22. **[30:19]** “*In abusione.*” According to the Hebrew and Greek: *In contemptu*—with contempt.

23. **[30:20]** “*Quam abscondisti.*” An expression that shows that this treasure is hidden from the wicked, who do not fear God.

25. **[30:21]** Thou wilt make them enjoy in secret Thy sensible presence, as happens to certain privileged souls. In this secret place they are sure not to be troubled by men of the world, or by human passions.

28. **[30:23]** “*In excessu mentis meæ.*” According to the Hebrew: *In stupore meo*—In the excess of my tribulation, which held me stupefied.

30. **[30:24]** “*Veritatem requiret.*” According to the Hebrew: *Sinceros stueturn*—He protects the sincere. The sense of the verse is: All you that

serve the Lord, love him; for he will test your innocence, and he will know well how to defend those that love him, as he knows how to punish the proud with terrible torments.

PSALM 31 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm teaches us what a happy life one leads when, having returned from wicked ways, one does penance; and, on the other hand, what an unhappy life one leads when one persists in remaining in sin.

1. **[31:1]** "*Quorum tecta sunt peccata.*" Whose sins have been covered, that is to say, blotted out. Protestants use these words, to prove, as they say, that sins, though forgiven by the mercy of God, are not removed from the soul, but are only covered, so that the stain of guilt remains in the soul, and that God always sees this stain; but he remits the penalty due, as if he did not see it. They add that God remits the sin only so far as he does not impute it to the sinner, according to what is said in the following verse: *Beatus vir cui non imputavit Dominus peccatum*—Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin. But all this is false; for God, in forgiving sins, does not cover them, but for the merits of Jesus Christ he takes them away from the penitent soul, as holy Scripture says: *Dominus quoque transtulit peccatum tuum*—The Lord also hath taken away thy sins (2 *Kings,* 12:13). *Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccatum mundi*—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sins of the world. Moreover, as the Council of Trent has declared, man is justified not only by the remission of sin, but by grace and inherent justice. And if it is said that God does not impute sin, this is, so far as he remits and blots it out, as the same Council also teaches (*Sess.* 6, *de Justif.* cap. 7, can. 11).

2. **[31:2]** "*Non imputavit peccatum.*" Has not imputed his sin, because he has forgiven it him. "*Nec est in spiritu ejus dolus.*" He has sincerely repented of his fault.[13107]

3. **[31:3]** I did not confess my sin, and this silence made me lament the whole day long, so that my bones have grown old; that is to say, my continual tears have weakened me, as if my bones had become old, or had

lost their strength and were broken. St. Jerome’s translation is: *Attrita sunt ossa mea, in rugitu meo tota die*—My bones are bruised so that the whole day I cried out through pain.

4. **[31:4]** Thou hast afflicted me with justice; and hence when tribulation was piercing me like a sharp thorn, the only course I took was to return to Thee, my God, beseeching Thy mercy. “*Configitur.*” According to the Hebrew: *Configitur mihi.*

6. **[31:5]** When I had resolved to confess my injustice, Thou didst at once pardon me my enormous fault.

7. **[31:6]** “*Pro hac.*” That is to say, according to Bellarmine and Mattei: For this reason. “*Omnis sanctus.*” According to the Chaldee: *Omnis pius.* That is to say: Every sinner truly penitent, who is holy and pious, because in stripping himself of his impiety he clothes himself with holiness by means of grace. “*In tempore opportuno.*” In this life, when we can obtain forgiveness of our sins before death.

8. **[31:6]** In the flood of many waters, that is to say, at death and at judgment, when scourges shall fall as a torrent upon the wicked, they shall then no more approach God, because there will then be no longer any pardon for them.[13108]

10. **[31:8]** Here David makes the Lord speak to the penitent sinner. “*Firmabo super te oculos meos.*” I will continue to look upon thee with a favorable eye, and to protect thee.

11. **[31:9]** The Lord addresses these words to those that are hardened sinners.

12. **[31:9]** Restrain, O Lord! those that keep far from Thee, and force them to obey Thee.[13109]

13. **[31:10]** Many are the chastisements reserved for sinners; but he that hopes in God shall be surrounded by his mercy so that he will not be able to go beyond its reach and be lost.

14. **[31:11]** “*Gloriamini.*” Let your glory be to serve and to love the Lord.

PSALM 32 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist exhorts the just to praise the Lord, to fear his judgments, and to confide in his mercy.

3. **[32:3]** “*Bene psallite ei in vociferatione.*” Bossuet understands the word *Psallite* in the sense of playing an instrument, and not in that of singing. Hence the phrase signifies: Let your voices be in accord with the sound of instruments.

5. **[32:5]** He loves mercy and justice; but the earth is filled with mercy rather than justice.

6. **[32:6]** “*Spiritu oris ejus omnis virtus eorum.*” For “*Virtus*” St. Jerome translates *Ornatus*—adornment, by which is meant the stars. The sense, then, is, that God by a breath of his mouth, or by another word, adorned the heavens with stars.

7. **[32:7]** “*Ponens in thesauris abyssos.*” The Lord holds the abysses, or the waters of the sea, in his treasures; that is to say, in reserve, to dispose of them according to his good pleasure, either for doing good to men or for punishing them.

8. **[32:8]** “*Ab eo autem commoveantur.*” St. Jerome translates: *Ipsum formident*—Let them fear him.

9. **[32:9]** Whatever God said, or wished, was done.

11. **[32:11]** All the thoughts of his mind, which are hidden to us, shall always have their fulfilment.

12. **[32:12]** Blessed is the nation that makes God, and not his creatures, its last end.

15. **[32:15]** It is he that created their hearts, or their souls. “*Singillatim.*” One by one, as Bellarmine, Menochius, and Tirinus explain it. “*Intelligit*

omnia opera eorum.” He well understands and penetrates all the motives of their actions.

PSALM 33 OF THE PSALTER

In this psalm the prophet exhorts us constantly to praise the Lord for his tender and continual care of his servants, and for the assistance that he deigns to grant us in all our tribulations.

2. **[33:3]** “*Laudabitur.*” According to the Hebrew: *Gloriabitur. “Audiant mansueti, et lætentur.*” Let the meek or the devout listen to the account of the benefits which I have received from the Lord, and let them rejoice with me thereat.

4. **[33:5]** “*Exaudivit me.*” He heard me, by giving me grace to find him.

5. **[33:6]** “*Facies vestræ non confundentur.*” You shall not be covered with confusion by the refusal of what you ask and hope for.

6. **[33:7]** “*Iste pauper.*” In proof of which, this man, poor in merit.[13110]

7. **[33:8]** “*Immittet.*” *Se* is understood.

8. **[33:9]** “*Gustate.*” Taste the Lord by applying yourselves to contemplate his goodness. “*Videte quoniam suavis est.*” You will see by experience how sweet he is to him who seeks and tastes him.

9. **[33:10]** “*Timete Dominum, omnes sancti ejus.*” All ye servants of the Lord, fear him. There is question here of a filial, not of a servile fear.

10. **[33:11]** The rich ones of this world, though possessing in abundance the good of this earth, suffer hunger and thirst, because they find no peace in them; but those that seek the Lord, even in poverty, are filled with every good.

12. **[33:13]** That is to say: What is the way to enjoy the true life, true happiness?

14. **[33:15]** “*Inquire pacem, et persequere eam.*” Seek true peace, and never leave off seeking it.

20. **[33:21]** The Lord keepeth all the bones of his servants, and not one of them shall be broken; so that at the general resurrection they will all be found whole and sound.

21. **[33:22]** “*Delinquent.*” According to the Hebrew: *Devastabuntur*—Shall be laid desolate.

22. **[33:23]** The Lord shall rescue from every danger the souls of his servants, and he will not permit any of them that trust in him to fail in their duties.

PSALM 34 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm is suitable to the just man who, seeing himself exposed here below to the temptations of the devil and to bad treatment on the part of impious men, seeks help from God.[13111]

1. **[34:1]** “*Judica.*” Punish as they deserve.

2. **[34:2]** “*Apprehende arma et scutum.*” Take Thy arms to strike my enemies, and Thy shield to protect me.[13112]

3. **[34:3]** “*Effunde.*” St. Jerome translates: *Evagina*—Unsheathe.

4. **[34:4]** “*Quærentes animam meam.*” Those that seek to take away my life.

6. **[34:5]** “*Angelus Domini.*” The angel, the minister of the Lord’s justice.

7. **[34:6]** “*Fiat via illorum tenebræ et lubricum.*” That is to say: Let them fall over a precipice. He that walks by night on a slippery path, can hardly avoid meeting with a dangerous fall.

8. **[34:7]** Without cause on my part they have set their snares, or laid ambush, to take my life, and loaded me with injuries.

9. **[34:8]** “*Laqueus.*” According to the Hebrew: *Calamitas.* That is to say: Let there come upon him a calamity which he did not expect. “*Captio.*” According to the Hebrew: *Retis*—A net.

10. **[34:9]** “*Super salutari suo.*” In the salvation received from him.[13113]

11. **[34:10]** “*Omnia ossa mea.*” All parts even of my body, to my very bones.

13. **[34:11]** “*Quœ ignorabam, interrogabant me.*” They asked me about things of which I was ignorant, in order to find matter for accusation against me.

14. **[34:12]** “*Sterilitatem.*” According to the Hebrew: *Orbitatem*—Privation, despoiling. That is to say: They sought to strip me of everything.

16. **[34:13]** I afflicted myself by fasting, humbling myself before God, as a man who is worthy of this bad treatment, and praying for my persecutors; if my prayer does not benefit them, it will turn at least to my own profit.

17. **[34:14]** I loved to pray for him who persecuted me, as if he had been my friend and my brother; I suffered for him, weeping and afflicted myself with his miseries, as a mother weeps for the sorrows of her son. Such is the sense of the Hebrew, according to the translation of St. Jerome: *Quasi ad amicum, quasi ad fratrem meum, sic ambulabam; quasi lugens mater, tristis incurvabar*—As a mother mourning and sad, so did I go my way.

18. **[34:15]** They, on the contrary, rejoiced at my ills: yet more, they conspired against me; and when I least thought of it, the scourges were gathered together over me.

19. **[34:16]** They have been scattered by the Lord; yet they have not repented: on the contrary, they have continued to tempt me, now mocking at me in scorn, and now gnashing their teeth at me in rage.

20. **[34:17]** When wilt Thou look upon me with an eye of pity? Ah! deliver me from the malice of those who, like lions, lie in wait for my life.[13114]

21. **[34:18]** If Thou art propitious to my prayer, I will give Thee thanks on the solemn days, when the nation is assembled, and there in the presence of a great people I will praise Thy mercy.

22. **[34:19]** “*Annuunt oculis.*” To deceive me, they pretend to look upon me with a good eye. On these words St. Augustine thus comments: *Quid est Annuentes oculis? Pronunciantes vultu, quod in corde non gestant*—What is, Winking with the eyes? To express by look what one has not in the heart.

23. **[34:20]** “*In iracundia terrœ.*” According to the anger of an earthly heart. Such is the explanation of Bellarmine and of Bossuet.

24. **[34:21]** “*Viderunt oculi nostri.*” We have seen what we wished to see.

25. **[34:22]** “*Ne sileas.*” Punish them.

27. **[34:24]** “*Non supergaudeant mihi.*” Let my enemies no more rejoice over my misfortunes (see verse 22).

31. **[34:27]** “*Pacem servi ejus.*” Peace or prosperity of the servant of God. Thus Bellarmine, Malvenda, and others, following St. Jerome, explain the verse.

PSALM 35 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist here shows how great, on the one hand, is the malice of sinners, and, on the other hand, how great is the mercy of God set forth to convert them. It also at the same time makes known with what goodness our Lord treats the just.

1. **[35:2]** The wicked man has said in his heart, or has resolved (as is explained by Bellarmine and Mattei), to sin freely; and he acts thus because he has no longer the fear of God before his eyes.

2. **[35:3]** This is a very difficult verse. St. Augustine explains it thus: *In odio, persequente iniquitate sua, dolose egit coram Deo*—Out of hatred, pursuing his path of crime, he acts deceitfully before God; words that are

applicable to sacrilegious confessions. The Rabbinists explain the Hebrew text thus: The wicked man sins, flattering himself that God does not see and does not abhor his iniquity. But Mattei believes that some words are wanting in the Hebrew text; his opinion is that the psalmist is not speaking here of deceitful hypocrites, but of obstinate sinners; and he explains the verse in this manner: The sinner acts perversely before the eyes of God, so that his iniquity may draw down the divine hatred upon himself. Such is also the explanation given by Bellarmine and Bossuet.

3. **[35:4]** “*Noluit intelligere ut bene ageret.*” He does not wish to understand what is good, so as not to be obliged to practise it.

4. **[35:5]** On his bed he premeditates to do evil, and he gives himself to every wicked means; for, far from hating evil, he loves it.[13115]

5. **[35:6]** That is to say: Thy mercy and Thy fidelity to Thy promises are immense and infinite.

6. **[35:7]** Thy justice is as great as a mountain, and as a divine mountain that is high beyond our sight; and Thy judgments are to us abysses very obscure and impenetrable.

7. **[35:8]** “*Homines et jumenta salvabis.*” Bellarmine explains this passage by saying that God wishes to save not only good men, but also those who, by following their sensual appetites, make themselves like brute beasts.

8. **[35:8]** “*In tegmine alarum tuarum.*” That is to say: Relying on Thy protection and Thy Providence.

9. **[35:9]** Thou wilt make them participate in the infinite joy that Thou Thyself dost experience.

10. **[35:10]** “*In lumine tuo, videbimus lumen.*” Illumined by Thy divine light, we shall see Thyself who art the Light by essence.

11. **[35:11]** “*Justitiam tuam.*” The just reward that Thou hast prepared for each one according to his deserts.

12. **[35:12]** St. Augustine thus explains this verse: O Lord! suffer not that pride set its foot on me, or gain dominion over me, nor that the hand of the sinner, that is, of the devil or of any of his followers, detach me from Thy service.

13. **[35:13]** “*Ibi.*” There, in pride. “*Expulsi sunt, nec potuerunt stare.*” They have been driven out of heaven, and it is precisely on account of their pride that they were not able to remain there.

PSALM 36 OF THE PSALTER

The prophet exhorts the just to persevere in the practice of virtue and to confide in the mercy of God, without allowing themselves to be moved by the prosperity which the wicked enjoy in this world.[13116]

1. **[36:1]** “*Neque zelaveris facientes iniquitatem.*” Do not allow yourself to be moved by zeal, that is to say, by envy of their happiness. Or rather: Be not inflamed against sinners on account of their happiness, as if complaining to God for favoring them as he does.

2. **[36:2]** They shall wither as the grass that falls under the scythe; they shall fall as the herb deprived of its root.

3. **[36:3]** “*Inhabita terraim, et pasceris in divitiis ejus.*” Therefore, dwell in the land, and God will feed thee with his delights. Or, as others understand this: Cultivate the land, and thou shalt be abundantly provided with its fruits.

4. **[36:4]** Make thy happiness to consist in pleasing God; or make the Lord thy delight, and he will satisfy all thy requests, or all thy desires.

5. **[36:5]** Lay before God all the wants and desires of thy life; put thy trust in him, and he will do all that thou desirest.

6. **[36:6]** He will even draw forth from the darkness thy innocence as a torch of flame, and he will cause it to shine as the sun at noonday; obey the Lord, and be attentive to pray for his help.

8. **[36:8]** “*Ut maligneris.*” So as to become wicked like them.

9. **[36:9]** The wicked shall be exterminated by the hand of God; but those that expect with patience the help of the Lord shall be heirs of the land of promise, which is heaven.

10. **[36:10]** Wait a little while, and thou wilt see that this sinner, now so puffed up with pride about his goods, shall be no more; thou wilt seek the place or the prosperous state in which he lived, and thou wilt no longer find it.

11. **[36:11]** On the contrary, the meek, like the humble, shall possess the land which was destined to them for their inheritance and shall enjoy great peace.[13117]

12. **[36:12]** The sinner will look with contempt on the life of the just man; and he will conceive great hatred for him so as to desire to oppress him.

13. **[36:13]** “*Dies ejus.*” The day on which he will be punished as he deserves.

16. **[36:15]** Understood: God grant that, etc.[13118]

17. **[36:16]** The just man is more content with the little that he possesses than are sinners in the midst of all their wealth.

18. **[36:17]** For all the power of sinners shall be destroyed; whilst that of the just shall be strengthened by the Lord.

19. **[36:18]** “*Novit Dominus dies immaculatorum.*” The Lord watches over the days of innocent men, and he approves of their ways.[13119]

20. **[36:19]** “*In tempore malo.*” In the time of divine vengeance. “*In diebus famis saturabuntur.*” When every one shall ardently desire his eternal salvation, they shall be satiated with joy by the benediction of God.

22. **[36:21]** “*Justus autem miseretur, et tribuet.*” But the just, who has compassion on the poor, helps them, and will always have means to help them.

23. **[36:22]** Those that bless God, as St. Augustine understands this, shall be blessed by God, and they shall inherit the land of the living; but those that curse him with blasphemies, shall be cursed and brought to ruin.

24. **[36:23]** “*Viam ejus.*” His conduct, his ways.

25. **[36:24]** If the just man happens to stumble, the Lord will not allow him to suffer hurt; for he himself, stretching out his hand, will support him.[13120]

27. **[36:26]** All day long having compassion on the poor, he helps them, at least by lending to them; and therefore his family shall always see itself blessed by God.

28. **[36:27]** “*Inhabita in sæculum sæculi.*” That is to say: Thou wilt be always happy.[13121]

31. **[36:29]** “*Terram.*” The land of the blessed.

32. **[36:30]** “*Os justi meditabitur sapientiam.*” The words of the just man are always prudent and wise.

34. **[36:32]** The wicked man sees that the life of the just man is opposed to his own, and through the hatred that he bears him he seeks to do him evil.[13122]

35. **[36:33]** “*Nec damnabit eum, cum judicabitur illi.*” When he has to judge him, he will not condemn him, however great the calumnies laid to his charge by the wicked.

36. **[36:34]** Wait, then, for the Lord, and continue to walk in the path by which he has led thee; he will exalt thee in such a manner as to make thee come to possess as thy inheritance the land that thou desirest; and when the

wicked shall be lost, thou shalt see the recompense that God shall give to thee according to his promise.

38. **[36:36]** "*Locus ejus.*" His greatness, of which there remained no more trace than if it had never been.

39. **[36:37]** "*Sunt reliquiæ homini pacifico.*" St. Jerome translates: The remainder of the life of the meek man shall have true peace, which will accompany him even unto death. Others interpret the passage thus: His virtuous actions, besides his good name, will leave a good example, which after his death will continue to be useful to others and be a consolation which the good man will always enjoy. Both explanations are good.[13123]

40. **[36:38]** "*Reliquiæ impiorum interibunt.*" The riches and the glory which the wicked thought of perpetrating on earth, all shall perish.

PSALM 37 OF THE PSALTER

David bewails his sins. This psalm is suitable for every penitent that looks upon his sufferings and his tribulations as just chastisements of his sins, for which he begs pardon from God.

1. **[37:2]** That is to say: Chastise me as a father, not as a judge; chastise me that I may amend, instead of being lost. See what is said in Psalm 2:5 and Psalm 5:2.

2. **[37:3]** "*Sagittæ tuæ.*" Thy arrows, Thy chastisements. "*Confirmasti super me manum tuam.*" Justly hast Thou pressed heavily Thy hand upon me, loading me with trials.

3. **[37:4]** At the sight of Thy anger, I have lost my health of body; and at the sight of my sins, I have lost peace, so that my bones are all trembling.

4. **[37:5]** My iniquities are so many that they rise even higher than my head; and so grievous, that they weigh me down as a heavy burden.

5. **[37:6]**[13124]“*A facie insipientiæ meæ.*” Because I have neglected to apply a timely remedy.

6. **[37:7]** “*Curvatus sum usque in finem.*” I have remained utterly bent down towards the earth, so that I am scarcely able to raise my eyes to heaven.

7. **[37:8]** “*Lumbi mei.*” That is to say: My concupiscence. “*Illusionibus.*” According to the Chaldee: *Ardore*—A malignant heart.

8. **[37:9]** I have been so afflicted and cast down, that the groans of my heart to heaven were like to the roarings of a lion.

10. **[37:11]** My heart, or my will, has continued in trouble, since all strength has left me; and my eyes, that is, my mind, have lost the light, which made me see the truth.

11. **[37:12]** They have drawn near, not to aid me, but to oppress me.

13. **[37:13]** “*Vanitates.*” Falsehoods, calumnies, to destroy me.

17. **[37:17]** I said within myself: Ah! may my enemies not have to rejoice over my ruin, since as my feet began to be unsteady, and they saw me tottering and likely to fall, they said great things at my expense, predicting my final overthrow.[13125]

18. **[37:18]** Lord, I am prepared to suffer all the evils that Thou mayest send me; for my sorrow, that is to say, my sin which is the object of my sorrow, is ever before my eyes.

19. **[37:19]** For I know and will always confess my fault; and I will ever think of my sin, that I may satisfy, as far as I can, my offended God, in order to obtain his forgiveness.

20. **[37:20]** “*Confirmati sunt.*” They continue to arm themselves.

TUESDAY AT MATINS

PSALM 38 OF THE PSALTER

David speaks here of the pain that he felt and of the silence that he kept when Semei annoyed him with insults. The royal prophet at the same time exposes the reflections that his sins and the vain cares of men suggested to him. Finally, he represents himself as a pilgrim here on earth, and points out to sinners with what sentiments they should be animated in order to do penance.

1. **[38:2]** I have resolved within myself that I will watch my ways that is, do my actions well; and therefore I have determined to be attentive not to sin with my tongue.

2. **[38:2]** I have placed a guard upon my mouth, in order to be silent when some insolent person should provoke me with injurious words.

3. **[38:3]** “*Silui a bonis.*” I refrained from reproaching my enemies with the good that I had done them.[13126] “*Dolor meus renovatus est*” I felt my grief renewed in thinking that I had well deserved their injuries by my sins.

4. **[38:4]** At the remembrance of my faults, confusion penetrated my heart; and in my meditation the heat of my pain was increased.[13127]

5. **[38:5]** I said: Lord, make me know when Thy anger against me shall have an end; or, as others explain the passage, how near my end is.

6. **[38:5]** Make known to me the number of my days, that I may know what is wanting to my penitences; or, according to others, how much longer I have to live.

7. **[38:6]** “*Mensurabiles.*” St. Jerome’s translation is: *Breves*—Short. Measurable, or so short that they are easy to count. “*Substantia mea.*” My life, according to St. Jerome.

8. **[38:6]** It is indeed true that every man who lives here on earth, with all the honors and riches that he possesses, is but mere vanity.

9. **[38:7]** Man passes through life like a phantom; that is to say, all the joys that he thinks he finds on earth will turn out to be empty: it is, then, in vain that he should trouble himself about them and that he should seek to procure for himself such goods as will never satisfy the heart.

11. **[38:8]** “*Substantia mea apud te est.*” All that I have, all my good, subsists in Thee, and depends on Thee, in whom are all my hopes. According to the Hebrew text: *Spes mea apud te est*—My hope is with Thee.

12. **[38:9]** “*Opprobrium insipienti dedisti me.*” It is supposed that Semei is here meant, who treated David as a usurper of the throne.

13. **[38:10]** I did not open my mouth to complain, because it was Thou that did this, or permitted this for my just punishment; I beseech Thee now to remove from me the other scourges that I have deserved.

15. **[38:12]** Thou makest him waste away his life, as the spider spends itself in forming its fragile web; hence it is in vain that any man should trouble himself to lay up the goods of this world.

18. **[38:14]** Before, then, I leave this world, where one day I shall be no longer, I beseech Thee to appease Thy just anger against me, that so I may find refreshment and relief.

PSALM 39 OF THE PSALTER

St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and Euthymius see in this whole psalm only Jesus Christ and the holy Church, that is, the Head of his mystical body. And, in fact, in his Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. 5:5 *et seq.*)

St. Paul applies to Jesus Christ certain verses of this psalm, which can really not be understood of David without counting several other passages which it would at least be difficult to apply to the holy king. If Jesus Christ addresses himself to his Father with so much humility and gratitude, it is because he speaks according to his humanity; he likewise speaks inasmuch as he is the Head of the predestined, and inasmuch as he has as man assumed our obligations towards God. And it is thus that, charged with our sins and as our established mediator between us and God, he prays, humbles himself, and trembles.

1. **[39:2]** “*Expectans expectavi Dominum.*”[13128] I have waited a long time for Lord as liberator and redeemer of his people. “*Intendit mihi.*” According to the Hebrew: *Inclinavit se ad me*—He has inclined himself to me to listen to me.

2. **[39:3]** “*De lacu miseriæ et de luto fæcis.*” These expressions denote, according to the Hebrew text, as Bellarmine remarks, a deep abyss, without light, filled with filthy mud, in which have fallen and flounder confusedly a miserable multitude; such are those that are plunged into the mire of their carnal appetites.

3. **[39:3]** “*Super petram*” That is to say: Upon myself,[13129] who am the foundation-rock of the Church: *Petra autem erat Christus*—The rock was Christ (1 *Cor.* 10:4). “*Et direxit gressus meos.*” He placed my feet on a way that is not only solid, but also straight; and he thus guided my steps.

4. **[39:4]** “*Canticum novum, carmen.*” A new canticle, a canticle of love, of thanksgiving, and of praise; according to the Hebrew, which would be *Laudem*—Praise, instead of *Carmen.*

5. **[39:4]** Many shall see, or shall come to know, the misery of the pit in which they are, and shall have fear or horror of it; they shall then see their deliverer, and shall put their trust in the Lord.

6. **[39:5]** “*Vanitates.*” Human supports, which are all vain. “*Insanias falsas.*” Earthly goods, from which it is only folly to hope for happiness.

7. **[39:6]** “*Cogitationibus tuis.*” In the inventions of Thy love which Thou hast conceived and carried into effect for our good.

8. **[39:6]** “*Multiplicati.*” Bellarmine thinks, according to the Hebrew text, that perhaps an error has here crept in, and that it should be: *Multiplicatæ* (*cogitationes tuæ*), or *Multiplicata* (*mirabilia tua*)—Thy thoughts or Thy marvels are multiplied. But St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine say that the verse is to be read as it stands: *Multiplicati sunt super numerum;* this is to be understood of unbelievers who have been converted to follow Jesus Christ.

9. **[39:7]** “*Sacrificium et oblationem noluisti.*”[13130] Thou hast refused the sacrifices and the offerings of the Law, which could not avail to purify the consciences. This means that God did not accept those sacrifices as sufficient to expiate for sin and to remove it from the soul; but that he accepted them only as figures of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Hence the Redeemer says: *Aures autem perfecisti mihi;*[13131] this St. Paul thus expresses: *Corpus autem aptasti mihi*—A body Thou hast fitted to me (*Heb.* 10:5). We must not deviate from this text of the Apostle, who by it explains that of David; so that it means: Thou hast formed for me a body fitted to suffer and to die.

10. **[39:7]** “*Tunc dixi: Ecce venio.*” Then—that is, on hearing Thy decree that I should assume human nature and offer myself on the cross as a sacrifice to atone for the sins of men—I said: Behold I come to obey Thee.

11. **[39:8]** “*In capite Libri.*” According to the Hebrew: *In volumine Libri.* That is to say: In the volume of the Law. By this St. Ambrose understands the beginning of Genesis, where we read: *Quamobrem relinquet homo patron suum et matrem, et adhærebit uxori suæ; et erunt duo in carne una*—Wherefore, a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh (*Gen.* 2:24). On this passage St. Paul comments thus: *Sacramentum hoc magnum est, ego autem dico in Christo et in Ecclesia*—This is a great sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church (*Eph.* 5:32). According to St. Jerome it refers to the Gospel of St. John, which begins with these words: *In principio erat Verbum . . . Et*

Verbum caro factum est—In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was made flesh. But Bellarmine thinks that the expression *In volumine Libri* denotes rather the whole volume of the Bible, which speaks throughout of the Messias who was to come, as say St. John Chrysostom and Theodoret, because Jesus Christ is the end of the Law.[13132]

St. Paul, after having said that God did not accept the ancient sacrifices that were offered for sin, quotes this text: *Tunc dixi: Ecce venio,* etc.—Then said I: Behold I come, etc. He then adds: *Aufert primum, ut sequens statuat. In qua voluntate sanctificati sumus per oblationem corporis Jesu Christi semel*—He taketh away the first, that he may establish that which followeth: in the which will we are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once (*Heb.* 10:7–10). He thus gives us to understand that by the one sacrifice of the cross, by which Jesus Christ delivered us from sin and sanctified us, all the ancient sacrifices were abolished.

12. **[39:10]** I have made known Thy just law in a great assembly, that is, to a numerous people; and Thou knowest that I have done so, and that I shall continue to do so by myself till my death, and after death by means of my disciples.

13. **[39:11]** I have preached publicly to a great multitude of people Thy justice and Thy truth, by which Thou renderest to every one to his works, and I have announced at the same time the salvation that Thou hast promised to him that hopes in Thee. "*Non abscondi in corde meo.*" In contrast with those that keep the truth shut up in their heart, and do not preach it through some human respect.

16. **[39:13]** "*Comprehenderunt me iniquitates meæ.*" My sins[13133] have laid hold of me to afflict me with remorse, so that I am unable to look at them for horror.

17. **[39:13]** My heart has abandoned, or failed me from sorrow.

21. **[39:16]** "*Euge, euge.*" Well done, well done, we have made an end of him.[13134]

22. **[39:17]** “*Salutare tuum.*” The salutation that they hope from Thee.

23. **[39:18]** Although I see myself poor and miserable, I console myself with the thought that the Lord takes care of me, that is, of my salvation.

24. **[39:18]** “*Ne tardaveris.*” Do not delay to help me when Thou seest me in danger.

PSALM 40 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm, like the preceding, refers to the Passion of Jesus Christ; it is so interpreted by St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and particularly by St. John Chrysostom, who says that it would be rash to interpret it otherwise; for Jesus Christ himself, as we see in the Gospel of St. John (*John*, 13:18), cites a verse of this Psalm (the 10th) to signify that the treason of Judas had long before been predicted by the prophet. This psalm speaks also of the mystical Body of Jesus Christ, of the Church.

1. **[40:2]** Happy is he that devotes himself to the work of helping the poor,[13135] or whoever is in need of assistance; in the evil day, that is, the day of his death, the Lord will deliver him from all his trials.

2. **[40:3]** “*Dominus conservet eum, et vivificet eum.*”[13136] The Lord will preserve him in the midst of dangers, and will so fortify him that he will come safe out of them. “*In animam.*” According to some Greek copies, as St. Ambrose remarks, it is: *In manus.* But Bellarmine justly observes that the sense is almost the same, except that the expression *In animam,* that is, *voluntatem, arbitrium*—to the will, or good pleasure, is more expressive than *In manus*—to the power.

3. **[40:4]** At the time of his last illness the Lord will bring him help in his sufferings: Thou, O good Master, wilt prepare his couch, so that, reduced to extremity, he may find some alleviation.[13137]

4. **[40:5]** “*Sana animam meam, quia peccavi tibi.*” Heal my soul, which has become sick through the offences that I have committed against Thee.[13138]

6. **[40:7]** “*Vana loquebantur.*” He feigned a cordial compassion. “*Congregavit iniquitatem sibi.*” He consoled himself by redoubling his wicked hope of seeing me die.[13139]

7. **[40:7]** He then went out to make others take part in his wickedness.

8. **[40:7]** “*Adversum me cogitabant mala mihi.*” They united to plot against me, and to wish me all the evil that could befall me.[13140]

9. **[40:9]** They are confirmed in their design upon my life, saying: Shall then he that dies think to return to life again?

10. **[40:10]** This verse refers to the treason of Judas, according to what we read in the Gospel of St. John: “*Ut adimpleatur Scriptura: Qui manducat mecum panem, levabit contra me calcaneum suum*”—That the Scripture may be fulfilled: He that eateth bread with me shall lift up his heel against me (*John,* 13:18). “*Magnificavit super me supplantationem.*” He has made it his boast to complete my ruin by offering to give me up into the hands of my enemies.

11. **[40:11]** “*Resuscita me; et retribuam eis.*” Prediction of the resurrection of Jesus Christ: After I shall be dead on the cross, make me rise again; and then, as judge, I shall inflict upon them the punishment that they deserve. The Son of God here prays his Father to raise him up again, because he is praying as a servant; but he was well able for that matter to raise up his body again by his own power, as the Word of the Father and true God equal to his Father. This is what in fact happened, as he himself declared: *Potestatem habeo ponendi eam* (*animam meam*), *et potestatem habeo iterum sumendi earn*—I have power to lay down my life; and I have power to take it up again (*John,* 10:18).

12. **[40:12]** “*Super me.*” Over me, on account of my death.

13. **[40:13]** On account of my innocence, Thou hast defended me from my enemies, and Thou hast placed me in heaven at Thy right hand for all eternity This happened at the Ascension of Jesus Christ.

14. **[40:14]** “*Fiat, fiat.*” In the Hebrew: *Amen, amen.* So be it; let all be for his praise and glory.

PSALM 41 OF THE PSALTER

Forced to fly from Saul, David is full of sadness in finding himself far from the Tabernacle; he consoles himself with the hope of seeing it again; at the same time he fosters the desire of enjoying the sight of God in the Temple of Heaven after his exile upon earth. This should be the desire of every Christian living in this world at a distance from his heavenly country. He should desire without ceasing for the moment when he can go to see face to face the God of his love.[13141]

2. **[41:3]** “*Deum fortem.*” The God Almighty. “*Vivum.*” The living God, very different from the gods of the Gentiles, who are dead gods.

3. **[41:4]** “*Dum dicitur mihi quotidie: Ubi est Deus tuus!*” As I hear my enemies continually saying to me in my affliction: Where then is now thy God, in whom thou so much hopest to console thee?

4. **[41:5]** I remembered these reproaches, and I poured out my soul, that is to say, I emptied or stripped it of all earthly affections, with the sweet thought that I should one day pass from this exile to the admirable tabernacle in which God has established his abode.

5. **[41:5]** “*Sonus epulantis.*” Then I shall take part in the banquet of the blessed, whose voice resounds with the ceaseless songs of joy and thanksgiving.

7. **[41:6]** Have confidence in God; for with his help I hope to go one day to heaven, there to celebrate his mercy and say to him: Thou art my God and the salvation of my face, that is to say, my Saviour always present to my eyes: Thou causest my face to see Thy face.[13142]

8. **[41:7]** “*Memor ero tui*” To console myself, I will always think of Thee in whatever place I am.

9. **[41:8]** One abyss of ills invites another, which pours down upon me with a crash. David speaks here of the tribulations or temptations that came upon him like billows raised by a storm with terrific roaring.

10. **[41:8]** All the waters of the heavens and all the floods of trials with which Thou triest Thy servants, seem to have passed over me.

11. **[41:9]** In the day time, or at the time of my consolations, the Lord has made me taste of the sweetness of his mercy; but now in this night of tribulations he wills that, resigned to his will, I cease not to sing his praises and to bless him.

12. **[41:9]** Therefore my prayer to God, the author and the preserver of my life, shall be continual in my heart; I will always say to him: Lord Thou art my protector, do not abandon me.

13. **[41:10]** “*Quare oblitus es mei?*” But why dost Thou deal with me as if Thou hadst forgotten me?

15. **[41:11]** Repetition of verses 3 and 6.

16. **[41:12]** Repetition of verse 7.

PSALM 43 OF THE PSALTER

What dominates in this psalm is the expression of the sentiments which should animate the just amid the afflictions of the present life. The psalmist, therefore, proposes to us a prayer that we should address to God in the time of tribulation.[13143]

3. **[43:3]** Thy powerful arm scattered the idolatrous nations that dwelt in the land of promise, and there Thou didst establish our fathers.[13144]

5. **[43:4]** But all was the work of Thy power, because Thou didst look upon them with a gracious eye, and Thou wast pleased to favor them.

6. **[43:5]** “*Qui mandas salutes Jacob.*” Thou who providest for the salvation of Jacob, that is to say, of Thy people who descend from Jacob.

7. **[43:6]** “*Inimicos nostros ventilabimus cornu.*” We shall scatter our enemies.[13145]

12. **[43:11]** “*Avertisti nos retrorsum post inimicos nostros.*” Thou hast subjected us to our enemies, so that they have made us their prisoners, and we are forced to follow them.

14. **[43:13]** Thou hast allowed Thy people to be sold for nothing; and there was none among the multitude who offered a price for the men of Thy people because they despised them as not worth buying.

20. **[43:19]** “*Declinasti semitas nostras.*” It is generally thought that the negative participle *Non*, which is found in the first part of the verse, is wanting here. St. Jerome translates the passage thus: *Non declinaverunt semitæ nostræ*. Hence the meaning of it is: Thou hast not permitted our steps to wander from Thy way.

21. **[43:20]** “*In loco afflictionis.*” To the depth of misery. St. Jerome’s translation is: *In locum draconum*—To a place of dragons, which means a place of horrors. “*Umbra mortis.*” The shadow of death, after which darkness alone remains; this denotes a great obscurity.

25. **[43:23]** “*Quare obdormis?*” Why dost Thou make as though Thou sleepest, and takest no more care of us?

27. **[43:25]** We see ourselves humbled and despised as the dust that is trodden under foot; hence, prostrate with our faces to the earth, we implore Thy mercy.

28. **[43:26]** “*Redime nos propter nomen tuum.*” Deliver us from so many evils for the glory of Thy name.

PSALM 44 OF THE PSALTER

A canticle in honor of Jesus Christ and of the Church, his Spouse. The prophet plainly announces the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word and the victory which the Redeemer was to gain over the world.[13146]

1. **[44:2]** My heart, full of divine illuminations, breaks out in holy words, and utters this hymn in honor of my King, who is the Messias.

2. **[44:2]** My tongue is as the pen in the hand of a rapid writer, who writes all that is dictated to him by the Holy Spirit.[13147]

3. **[44:3]** Thou, my King and my Saviour.

5. **[44:5]** “*Specie tua et pulchritudine tua.*” St. Jerome translates: *Gloria tua et decore tuo. “Intended.”* Go forward. “*Prospere procede, et regna.*” Do not cease to advance from victory to victory, and establish Thy reign in the world.

6. **[44:5]** Reign with truth, that is, with fidelity to Thy promises, with the meekness that Thou usest towards sinners, and with the justice that Thou exercisest in judging the obstinate; thus will Thy power lead Thee on wonderfully to extend Thy kingdom.

7. **[44:6]** The people, conquered by Thy arrows, or by the rays of Thy light which has power to penetrate hearts, will fall and submit themselves to Thee, so that Thy enemies, who before despised Thee, shall be brought to adore Thee.

8. **[44:7]** Thus, O God, Saviour of the world! Thy throne, or Thy reign, unlike the temporal reigns of other kings, shall be eternal in the Church; and Thy rod, that is, Thy sceptre or Thy government, shall ever be most just —“*Virga directionis*” means the same as *Virga rectissima*.[13148]

9. **[44:8]** “*Præ consortibus tuis.*” That is, Exalting Thee, so as to make Thee sit at his right hand—a glory that surpasses that of all the men and angels who shall be with Thee in heaven. It is here said that Jesus Christ is anointed or constituted King of the world. This is to be understood, not of his divinity, but of his humanity. We are to understand also that he is

anointed with the unction of grace as Head of the faithful, who through his merits shall receive graces from God.

10. **[44:9]** “*A vestimentis tuis, a domibus eburneis.*” Here by the garments and by the ivory houses is to be understood the most sacred humanity of the Redeemer. Hence the verse is thus explained: From Thy humanity comes the odor of most pure and sweet perfumes; an odor that leads the daughters of the kings, or great souls, to rejoice Thee by running to adore Thee.

11. **[44:10]** “*Regina.*” By this Queen is understood the Church, and we may also understand the Mother of God, or every holy soul that is a spouse of Jesus Christ, and therefore a queen, as St. Bernard says: *Singulæ animæ singulæ sponsæ*—Every soul, a spouse.

12. **[44:11]** Then is said to this Queen: “*Vide, et inclina aurem tuam.*” Behold the honor to which thou art raised, and listen to that which thou hast to do.

13. **[44:12]** The King shall love thy beauty, he who is thy Spouse, whom alone thou shouldst love, since he is the Lord, thy God, and whom in the end all must adore.

14. **[44:13]** This is addressed only to the Church: The daughters of Tyre, that is, the Gentile nations, shall honor thee with gifts and offerings; among them shall be seen all the great ones of the people prostrating themselves before thee, to implore thy protection.

15. **[44:14]** Her glory should consist in interior virtues of the soul, more than in exterior ornaments or in what is manifest to others.[13149]

16, 17. **[44:15, 16]** In the train of the Spouse many virgins shall be brought to the King in his temple; but they shall be those only that are her nearest, that is, united with the Queen and Spouse, who is the Church, according to the explanation of St. Basil and St. Augustine.

18. **[44:17]** According to St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine, these words are addressed to the Church, and their sense is: O

Spouse of the Saviour! instead of the fathers of old, the patriarchs and the prophets, who are now no more, there are born to thee sons, the apostles, the disciples and their successors, whom thou hast constituted princes over the whole earth; for by their preaching the Gospel thou hast subjected all the nations to thy obedience.

19. **[44:18]** O Lord! these apostles, these disciples and their successors in every age, shall continue to preach throughout all generations Thy name, that is, Thy power and Thy mercy towards men. "*Memores erunt*" Many, according to the present Hebrew text and the Greek version, read: *Memor ero*—I shall remember. But St. Jerome and St. Augustine follow the Vulgate.

20. **[44:18]** Therefore the nations, converted to the faith, will never cease to adore Thee.

PSALM 45 OF THE PSALTER

St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Euthymius, unanimously teach that this psalm is to be understood of the Catholic Church with regard to the victories that she has gained over her persecutors, and her stability under the protection of God.

3. **[45:4]** "*Eorum.*" Bossuet with St. Jerome, following the Hebrew, reads: *Ejus.*[13150]

4. **[45:5]** In the midst of these storms, the Lord will cause to flow down a river of peace which shall rejoice the city of God, that is, the holy Church, which the Most High has chosen for his temple by sanctifying it with his grace.

5. **[45:6]** God will always remain with her, assisting her from the first dawn of the morning, that is, from the moment of its birth.

6. **[45:7]** "*Inclinata.*" St. Jerome translates: *Concussa*—Shaken. When the Church was established the nations were troubled and the kingdoms were shaken.

7. **[45:8]** For ourselves we have no cause to fear, privileged as we are.

10. **[45:11]** “*Vacate.*” According to the Hebrew: *Cessate.* Therefore you who are my servants leave alone your earthly cares and employ yourselves in reflecting that I alone myself am God, for whom all things exist, and upon whom all things depend; a day will come when I shall be exalted, that is, acknowledged as the sovereign Lord of the universe, by the nations and through the whole earth.

11. **[45:12]** Repetition of verse 7 for the conclusion, that is to say: Let us then rejoice that we his faithful servants have on our side to protect us this great, all-powerful God.

PSALM 46 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm presents two literal senses: In the first, it refers to the triumph of the Ark when it was carried to Mount Sion (2 *Kings,* 6:15); in the second sense, it is applied, according to the opinion of several of the holy Fathers, to the glorious Ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven.

2. **[46:3]** He is the Lord, supreme above all by his majesty, terrible to all by his power; he is the great Monarch who holds dominion over the whole earth.

4. **[46:5]** Among all the nations, he has chosen us to be his especial inheritance, because we are the children of Jacob, whom he so much loved.[13151]

5. **[46:6]** “*Ascendit Deus.*” Our Lord ascends to heaven by his own power, because he is God.

7. **[46:8]** “*Psallite sapienter.*” Render to him (wisely) the praises that he deserves, and as he deserves.[13152]

8. **[46:9]** He shall reign as God over all nations; as God he shall sit upon his heavenly throne, at the right of the eternal Father.

9. **[46:10]** “*Principes populorum congregati sunt cum Deo Abraham.*” According to the Hebrew: *Congregati sunt, populus Dei Abraham*—The princes of the Gentile people are united with the people of the God of Abraham. “*Quoniam dii fortes terræ vehementer elevati sunt.*” This passage is very obscure. Some, as Mattei and Genebrard, say that by the Hebrew word *Elohim* (the plural for the singular) *Dii fortes terræ*, God himself is to be understood, and they explain the words thus: *Dens victoria elevatus est* —God is exalted in victory. But St. Cyril, Theodoret, and Didymus, understand by the words *Dii fortes terræ*—The princes of the earth. This agrees with the translation of St. Jerome: *Dii scuta terræ,* that is to say: The gods, the shields of the earth, that is, Protectors, those that have subjects under them. “*Elevati sunt.*” They have become exalted by being united in worshipping the true God. This last explanation pleases me more, because it is more in conformity with the Vulgate and the version of the Septuagint. The passage, then, may be thus explained: The princes, who are the protectors or rulers of the earth, have been greatly elevated by uniting in the worship of God.

PSALM 47 OF THE PSALTER

In the literal sense this psalm is to be understood of the protection of God over the earthly Jerusalem; and in the figurative sense, of the care with which he watches over the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, over his Church.

1. **[47:2]** “*In civitate Dei nostri, in monte sancto ejus.*” In the city of Jerusalem, and especially on the holy mountain of Sion, where our God makes his glory shine forth.

3. **[47:4]** God shall be known among the inhabitants of this city, when he shall defend it against the attacks of its enemies.

4. **[47:4]** “*Convenerunt in unum.*” They have assembled for the purpose of laying it waste.

5. **[47:6]** “*Ipsi videntes sic admirati sunt.*” On seeing that the hand of the Omnipotent protects it, they are seized with great astonishment.

6. **[47:7]** They shall suffer pains like those that a woman endureth in childbirth: Thou, O Lord! wilt raise stormy winds, which shall break in pieces the ships of Tharsis; that is, the largest ships, such as those that sailed to Tharsis.[13153]

7. **[47:9]** Mark now what the inhabitants of Jerusalem will say: What was promised us we have with our own eyes seen verified in the city of our God, who has made its foundations everlasting. This has indeed been verified in the Church, of which it is said: *Et portæ inferi non prævalebunt adversus eam*—The gates of hell shall not prevail against her (*Matt.* 16:8).

8. **[47:10]** "*In medio templi tui.*" In Thy Church, and in the sight of the whole world.

9. **[47:11]** As Thou hast made known, O Lord! Thy great name throughout the earth, so everywhere has Thy glory been proclaimed; and so also has Thy power been praised, which is always full of justice in rewarding the good and in punishing the wicked.

10. **[47:12]** "*Propter judicia tua.*" On account of the just judgments that Thou, O Lord! dost exercise on earth.[13154]

11. **[47:13]** Come, O nations! come all of you to dwell round about Sion so that she may be in the midst of you; then preach the Gospel from her towers, that is, publicly. "*Narrate in turribus ejus.*" According to the Hebrew: *Numerate turres ejus*—Count the high towers that defend her.

12. **[47:14]** Apply yourselves to consider her strength, and distribute or assign to the different inhabitants, or workmen, the places destined for the construction of their houses, that is, of their particular churches, so that when the city is built up and filled with a faithful people, we may transmit to posterity the knowledge of the true God.

PSALM 48 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist here addresses the faithful, to teach them to despise the goods of this world and to fear only a bad death which must be followed by the sentence of condemnation. Then he raises their thoughts to the consideration of this truth, that only in God can true happiness be found. Of course, all this is said in an obscure manner; but thanks to the light of the Gospel, we are able to see the thought of the prophet.

3. **[48:4]** I shall speak to you only of the things that it is necessary to know; I will tell you what I have meditated in my heart, that you may know how to act prudently in all that you do.

4. **[48:5]** I shall attentively hear the truths that are proposed to me in parable; and this enigma I will explain to you to the sound of the harp. "*Propositionem meam.*" According to the Hebrew: *Ænigma meum.*[13155]

5. **[48:6]** Why should I fear on the evil day, that is, on the day of my judgment? Only my iniquity makes me fear, especially the iniquity of my heel; that is, that which shall follow me unto death, which is the end of my life, as the heel is the end of my body.

7. **[48:8]** *"Frater non redimit, redimet homo." Non* is again understood before *homo*, according to the usage of Scripture, as Bellarmine remarks. The sense, then, is: At the moment of death their brother will be unable to deliver them from the peril; and much less will any other man be able to do so.[13156]

9. **[48:11]** "*Non videbit interitum.*" These words, according to Bossuet, are to be understood in an ironical sense as if the prophet said: *An putabit se non visurum interitum?*—Will he suppose that he will not see death? Others give this interpretation: He shall not see death, that is, he shall not die before having finished the natural course of his life, although he sees wise men die. Or, as Bellarmine says, we may understand the passage to mean: He shall neglect to provide for death, which is waiting for him at its time; for the sinners avoid thinking of death; but alike for the fool as for the wise, there must come a day when they must die.

11. **[48:12]** It is there that they shall dwell for several generations; there shall be nothing left of them in their lands but their names written on tablets

of marble, or on the walls of their houses.

12. **[48:13]** “*Non intellexit.*” He did not understand what he should have understood as man.[13157]

13. **[48:14]** “*Hæc via illorum scandalum ipsis.*” Such is their way, that is, their life, in which they find many dangerous occasions that may bring them to ruin.

14. **[48:15]** These miserable men, living like animals without reason, they will one day find themselves as victims of divine justice, cast into hell, where death shall feed on them; that is, where their death will be eternal. As sheep feed upon the blades of grass, and leave the roots to sprout forth again, so death torments unceasingly the reprobate, still leaving them life, that they may go on suffering eternally.

15. **[48:15]** At the general resurrection, which is “morning,” or the beginning of the age to come, the wicked shall see the just established their masters and their judges; then the power which they had in this world will be shattered and destroyed in hell, after all the vain glory of which they boasted during their life. “*Auxilium.*” According to the Hebrew: *Robur, potestas.*

16. **[48:16]** “*Cum acceperit me.*” When he shall receive me among his servants, after having completed the work of Redemption.

18. **[48:18]** “*Non sumet omnia.*” A Hebraism: He shall take nothing away with him.

19. **[48:19]** The sinner shall be blessed, that is, applauded by worldlings during his life upon earth; while he will not praise you, save when you load him with earthly goods.

20. **[48:20]** After his wicked life this wicked man shall go into the abode of his ancestors, whose bad example he has followed, and there he will remain forever, never more to see the light.

21. **[48:21]** Repetition of verse 12 for the conclusion.

PSALM 49 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm describes the second coming of Jesus Christ, which will be public and full of majesty, in contrast with his first coming, which was humble and hidden.

1. **[49:1]** The God of gods,[13158] the true God, the Sovereign Master of all created powers, has cited before his tribunal all men of the earth to give an account of their lives.

2. **[49:2]** He will make his voice heard from one extremity of the earth to the other; and he shall come down from the heavenly Sion, adorned with his glory and majesty.

3. **[49:3]** Our God shall come in sight of the whole world, and make himself known as the great God that he is; and then he shall no longer be silent, as he has been in the past, seeing the sins of the wicked, while seeming not to notice the injury that he received.

4. **[49:3]** The fire at his presence will burn with greater force, reducing the world to ashes, according to the words of St. Peter: *Terra autem, et qu in ipsa sunt opera, exurentur*—The earth and the works which are in it shall be burnt up (2 *Peter,* 3:10). And around him there shall be a great and universal tempest, which shall throw everything into confusion on earth, in the sea, and in the air.

5. **[49:4]** He will then call heaven and earth, that is, all the angels and all men, to be present at the judgment that he will make of his people, by separating the elect from the reprobate.

6. **[49:5]** Angels of heaven, gather around the Sovereign Judge his saints, that is, the elect; who besides sacrifices, that is, besides external worship, have kept his covenant by obeying his law.

7. **[49:6]** “*Deus judex est.*” The judge is God; he cannot err.

8. **[49:7]** Here the prophet makes Jesus Christ speak and say: Listen, my people, to what I shall say to thee; listen, Israel, that is, all the true faithful, to what I shall declare to thee, through my inspirations and by my ministers; thou shouldst believe me, for I am thy God, the true God, who knows all things, and who loves thee.

9. **[49:8]** My people, I will not reproach thee for the sacrifices that thou hast neglected to offer to me; for those that thou hast offered me suffice me, and they are ever before my eyes.

12. **[49:11]** I well know that all the birds are mine, and that which gives richness and beauty to the fields is mine.

15. **[49:14]** If thou wouldst please me, offer to me, thy God, a sacrifice of praise, which comes not only from the lips, but from a heart that loves me, and fulfil the promises that thou hast made to me.

16. **[49:15]** "*Honorificabis me.*" Thou shalt honor me by returning me thanks.[13159]

17. **[49:16]** We read in St. Jerome's translation: *Quid tibi est cum narratione præceptorum meorum, et ut assumas pactum meum in ore tuo?* The verse may, therefore, be thus explained: The Lord says to the sinner: Of what use is it to talk of my precepts, when thou dost not observe them, and of my covenant, when thou art wanting to it on thy part?

18. **[49:17]** "*Disciplinam.*" That is, my teaching.

21. **[49:20]** "*Ponebas scandalum.*" St. Jerome's translation is: *Fabricabaris opprobrium.* The sense of the verse is: Sitting in company with others, thou hast spoken ill of thy neighbor; thou hast sought to take away the good name of thy own brother; this thou hast done, and I have been silent.

22. **[49:21]** Didst thou think, O wicked man! that I was like to thee? and that I should take no account of thy offences against me? but the time will come when I shall bring up against thee thy wicked life, and I will take care

that thy crimes may ever be before thy eyes, that their very hideousness may ever be thy torment.

23. **[49:22]** “*Nequando rapiat.*” That so you may avoid being made one day the prey of the devil.

24. **[49:23]** Remember that the sacrifice of praise, that is, a good life, is the only sacrifice that honors me;[13160] and this is the way by which I give thee to understand that thou wilt obtain salvation, which consists in the enjoyment of the sight of God, and in loving him for all eternity.

PSALM 51 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm, taken in a literal sense, shows us David reproaching Doeg, the Edomite, for having excited against him and against the priest Achimelech the anger of Saul, and for having thus caused the ruin of many others (1 *Kings,* 1:22). In the mystical sense, Doeg represents all the wicked that persecute the good.

1. **[51:3]** “*In iniquitate.*” In doing injury to others.

2. **[51:4]** All the time thou hast employed thy tongue only to offend others unjustly; thou hast used it as a well-sharpened razor to deceive.”[13161]

3. **[51:5]** Thou hast loved to do evil to thy neighbor better than to do him good: thou hast sought to speak to his damage more readily than to his advantage.

5. **[51:6]** “*Radicem tuam.*” He will make thee disappear with all thy race, as a tree is felled and pulled up with all its roots.

6. **[51:8]** The just shall see all this, and they will have horror thereat; at the same time they will laugh at his ruin, and will say: Behold the man who refused to put his trust in God, as if he did not need his help.

7. **[51:9]** “*Prævaluit in vanitate sua.*” He reckoned on his vain supports, which gave him a promise of happiness.

9. **[51:11]** I will never cease to thank Thee for Thy benefits; and in all my tribulations I will wait for the help of Thy goodness, which never fails to succor Thy servants.

WEDNESDAY AT MATINS

PSALM 52 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist deplores the corruption of mankind, and prays God to deliver his people from the persecution of the wicked. He speaks also of God's goodness in waiting for sinners to do penance; and at the same time he sighs for the coming of the Redeemer to deliver man from the slavery of the devil, typified by the captivity of Babylon.[13162]

1. **[52:1]** "*Insipiens.*" The impious man becomes a fool by his impiety. A man must have lost his reason to think that there is no God.

2. **[52:2]** Miserable men! living a life of moral corruption, they have become abominable by their iniquity before God and before men; there is not one among them who does a good action.

3. **[52:3]** "*Intelligens, aut requirens Deum.*" Who understands his duty, and seeks to please God.

4. **[52:4]** "*Omnes declinaverunt, simul inutiles facti sunt.*" All are wanting to their duty, and thus render themselves useless to God and to men.

5. **[52:5]** Will these unhappy men then never know their perversity, and will they continue to oppress my people with as much ease as one eats bread?

6. **[52:6]** The cause of their wicked life comes from their not wishing to call upon the Lord in the dangers of offending him; they fear where there is no cause for fear, that is, they fear to lose some earthly good, and they are not afraid of losing the grace of God.

7. **[52:6]** God will utterly destroy those that displease him in order to please men; they shall be confounded; for as they despise God, so also shall they

be despised by God.

8. **[52:7]** The fools will say: Who will come from Sion to save Israel? But when God shall turn the slavery of his people into glorious liberty, this same people shall be filled with joy.

PSALM 54 OF THE PSALTER

David, persecuted by his son Absalom, and imploring the help of God: such, in the literal sense, is the subject of this psalm. But St. Hilary and St. Jerome apply this psalm to Jesus Christ, betrayed by Judas and persecuted by the Jews. Generally speaking, it may be applied to all the just, persecuted in this life by men or devils.

1. **[54:2]** “*Intende mihi.*” Consider my tribulation.

2. **[54:3]** I am afflicted in applying myself to consider my sufferings, and I am troubled at hearing of the persecution that my perverse enemy is plotting against me.

3. **[54:4]** My enemies have accused me of crimes that I have not committed; and moved by anger, they seek all means to hurt me.

5. **[54:6]** “*Contexerunt me tenebræ.*” I am encompassed all around with darkness, so that I am unable to see any escape from the dangers that threaten me.

6. **[54:7]** In this state I said: Who will give me wings, that like a timid dove, as I am at present, I may be able to fly and seek repose in some secure place?

7. **[54:8]** I would take flight if I could, and I should be content to remain in some unknown desert. This is the explanation given by Rotigni and Lallemant.

8. **[54:9]** There I would wait for him who has so often delivered me from my great fear of soul, and from the tempest that arose against me.

9. **[54:10]** Cast down those that seek to oppress me; confound their tongues, that is, put discord between them, so that their designs become fruitless; for I see their iniquity; I see the whole city in contradiction, that is, all in disorder and confusion.

14. **[54:14]** But he that persecutes me, who is he? It is thou, my guide and my friend, who I believed had but one and the same heart with me.[13163]

19. **[54:18]** At all times, I will publish the mercy of the Lord in assisting me, and I hope that he will ever graciously hearken to my prayers.[13164]

20. **[54:19]** He will establish me again in my former peace, and will deliver my life from those that approach me to oppress me; for they have come in great numbers against me to cast me down. This is according to the translation of St. Jerome, who has: *Multi enim fuerunt adversum me.*

21. **[54:20]** “*Qui est ante sæcula.*” He who is the Eternal.

22. **[54:20]** The Lord sees that for them there is no change, that is, he sees that they are obstinate, and that they have no fear of God; and for this reason he has already raised his hand to punish them according to their malice.

23. **[54:21]** “*Contaminaverunt testamentum ejus.*” They have violated his covenant. St. Jerome translates: *Contaminavit pactum suum,* that is, they have broken their given faith. “*Divisi sunt ab ira vultus ejus.*” But they have been scattered at the sight of the anger which the Lord showed against them. “*Appropinquavit cor illius.*” The heart of God has drawn near, that is, is set to take on them his just vengeance. Others refer the words *cor illius,* not to God, but to the rebellious. They say that such a rebel or traitor has one thing on his lips and another in his heart.[13165] But, according to Bellarmine, here is signified the heart of God aroused to anger.

24. **[54:22]** “*Ipsi sunt jacula.*” In reality their words are sharp arrows hurled when least expected.

25. **[54:23]** But the Lord encourages me to leave to his goodness the care of my salvation, and thus he will take thought to preserve my life; he will not permit that the just man should always be tossed about on the billows of fear.

26. **[54:24]** On the contrary, O Lord! as for my enemies, Thou wilt cast them down into the pit of death, that is, into hell, where has to be endured a never-ending death. Hell is called a pit, because it has a mouth to receive the damned, but has no door by which they can go out.

PSALM 55 OF THE PSALTER

David flying from the presence of Saul, who was seeking his death, retires among the Philistines; but when recognized by them who he was, he finds himself in great danger (1 *Kings,* 21:10). Under these circumstances he composes this prayer, which every Christian can use when he sees himself in danger of falling into sin and becoming the prey of the devil.

1. **[55:2]** The man, who is my enemy, has sought to tread me under foot; and therefore persecuting me the whole day, he has striven to afflict me.

2. **[55:3]** All my enemies have united to plot continually my ruin.

3. **[55:4]** "*Ab altitudine diei.*" Many, as Menochius, understand hereby the great dangers that threaten; but I prefer the interpretation of Calmet and Tirinus, which is more literal. According to it the verse is explained thus: During the whole day, from the rising of the sun, I am in a continual fear; but I hope from Thee, O Lord! the help that I need.

4. **[55:5]** "*Sermones meos.*" According to the Hebrew: *Verbum ejus.* The promises that he has made me, or the word that he has given me. "*Caro.*" The carnal man, who in regard to God is but weakness (see verse 11).

7. **[55:7]** "*Sustinuerunt animam meam.*" They have waited for the opportunity to take away my life. "*Pro nihilo salvos facies illos.*" So Thou wilt on no account save them. This is St. Jerome's explanation. St. Augustine, on the contrary, gives this interpretation: Thou wilt save them,

of pure grace, without any merit on their part. The sense of St. Jerome agrees better with the words that follow: “*In ira populos confringes.*” In Thy just wrath, Thou wilt break to pieces this crowd of enemies who would destroy me.

8. **[55:8]** I lay before Thee all the afflictions of my life; I hope that Thou wilt always have my tears before Thy eyes.

9. **[55:9]** As Thou hast promised, I hope that my enemies, filled with confusion, at seeing their designs brought to naught, will turn backwards.

10. **[55:10]** I shall not fail to call upon Thee every day; for I have well known that Thou art my God, coming to my assistance, as Thou hast every time that I have called on Thee.

11. **[55:11]** I shall always praise in my God and my Lord his faithfulness to his promises; and therefore, trusting in him, I will not fear that man can do me any harm (see verse 4).

12. **[55:12]** This is the explanation that Bellarmine gives with St. Jerome: In me, that is, in my memory are always “*Vota tua*” the promises that I have made to Thee; hence I will never cease to offer to Thee the praises and the thanksgivings that are contained in these promises.

13. **[55:13]** “*Ut placeam coram Deo in lumine viventium.*” In order that I may be well pleasing to Thee by means of the light of grace, whereby Thy servants live in the fidelity to Thee.

PSALM 56 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist here manifests his confidence in the protection of God, whose praises he proclaims.[13166]

2. **[56:2]** “*Donec transeat iniquitas*” Until the time when I see the end of the unjust persecution that I suffer.

5. **[56:4]** God sent from heaven the mercy that he had promised me, and he saved my life by withdrawing me from the midst of my enemies who like young lions were seeking to destroy me;[13167] nevertheless, I cannot as yet sleep in peace without being troubled with fears.

6. **[56:5]** I always fear this race of perverse men, who have their teeth and their tongue as sharp swords and darts, to wound me by their lies and calumnies. This is what, according to Bellarmine, is indicated by the Hebrew phrase.

7. **[56:6]** Raise Thy power above the heavens, and make Thy glory shine upon the whole earth by delivering me from my enemies.

8. **[56:7]** “*Incurvaverunt animam meam.*” They have made me bend under the weight of the evils with which they oppressed me.

10. **[56:8]** I am ready to suffer all that Thou hast appointed for me; so that in all that may happen I shall not cease to praise Thee.[13168]

11. **[56:9]** Arise my soul[13169] and glory in the Lord; and thou my harp and my lyre, hasten to praise the Lord; I wish to praise him without ceasing from the break of day.

13. **[56:11]** I shall say, from the earth till the heavens, all is full of Thy mercy and Thy faithfulness.

14. **[56:12]** See verse 7.

PSALM 57 OF THE PSALTER

The prophet describes in this psalm the perverse conduct of the wicked, and shows the chastisement that God usually inflicts upon them.

2. **[57:3]** You determine in your heart the wicked deeds, which afterwards your hands are ready unjustly to put in execution on earth.

6. **[57:7]** He will render them powerless to injure others.

7. **[57:8]** They shall be like a torrent that passes and is suddenly dried up; that is, their designs will quickly come to naught.

8. **[57:9]** “*Supercecidit ignis, et non viderunt solem.*” The fire of divine vengeance will fall upon them, and they shall no more see the day.

9. **[57:10]** St. Jerome translates: *Antequam crescant spinæ vestræ in rhamnum.* That is: Before you come to execute the evil that you design to do.[13170]

10. **[57:11]** “*Vindictam.*” The justice of divine vengeance. “*Manus suas lavabit in sanguine peccatoris.*” That is, as is explained by St. Augustine, while seeing the blood, or the death of the sinner, he will preserve himself pure and innocent.

11. **[57:12]** And then, seeing the fruit, or the profit that the just derive from the chastisement of the sinner, every one will recognize that there is in the world a God who knows how to judge over the earth, and to punish the wicked as they deserve.

PSALM 58 OF THE PSALTER

David, seeing himself surrounded by the soldiers of Saul (1 *Kings,* 19:11), invokes the Lord’s assistance and predicts the ruin of his enemies. This psalm applies in every point to Jesus Christ persecuted by the Jews.

2. **[58:3]** “*De viris sanguinum.*” From these cruel men that thirst for my blood.

4. **[58:5]** “*Neque iniquitas mea, neque peccatum meum.*” Thou knowest that there is in me no iniquity, nor any fault with which they can reproach me.

5. **[58:6]** Thou seest the peril in which I am; arise to help me, O mighty God, O God of Israel.[13171]

6. **[58:6]** “*Qui operantur iniquitatem.*” Who do not wish to cease to be unjust.

7. **[58:7]** There are those that thus understand this verse: They will arrive late in the evening; but, like stray dogs, they will suffer great hunger, that is, they will have a great desire to be just in order to find peace; they will go round about the city of God, but they will not find mercy. Others explain it better, thus: They will go and return from morning till evening; they will even surround the city, seeking like dogs to satisfy their hunger, and to oppress the just; but they will be disappointed (see verse 16).

8. **[58:8]** Their mouth will speak of nothing else than of laying snares and killing, saying at the same time: Who knows of it?

9. **[58:9]** Thou wilt make them an object of ridicule, and wilt destroy all their wicked people.

11. **[58:12]** God will make known to me the vengeance that he will take on my enemies. I pray Thee, O Lord! to punish them, but do not destroy them, so that my subjects, having always their chastisement before their eyes, may not forget Thy justice.

12. **[58:12]** "*Depone eos.*" That is: Reduce them to such a state that they may not be able to raise their heads to injure me.

13. **[58:13]** Let this be the punishment of their slanderous mouth and of their wicked discourse; may they be taken and confounded in their very pride.

16. **[58:15]** In the mean time they continue from morning till night laying snares for the just, to devour them like hungry dogs, and they surround the city, in order that the prey may not be able to escape them (see verse 7).

17. **[58:16]** They disperse in different places to devour the just; and if they do not succeed in satiating themselves with their blood, they do not cease at least to take away their good name.

20. **[58:18]** Thou art my helper and defender in all my wants; and therefore I will always sing Thy praises, calling Thee my God and my Mercy.[13172]

David, already so often victorious over his enemies, implores God's help against the Edomites (2 *Kings,* 8:10); (1 *Par.* 18.). This psalm applies very well to the Church, coming forth victorious amid so many persecutions.

1. **[59:3]** O great God! it seems that Thou hast deprived us of Thy protection, since Thou hast let us see ourselves defeated; but, though Thou didst at first show Thyself angry with me, Thou hast in the end had compassion on me.

2. **[59:4]** "*Sana contritiones ejus, quia commota est.*" It now remains for Thy mercy to repair the ruins made by this great shock.

3. **[59:5]** Thou hast given proof of chastising us severely; Thou hast made us taste of the bitter wine of compunction (or, according to the Hebrew, of fear), and that in order to see us holily contrite.

4. **[59:6]** "*Ut fugiant a facie arcus.*" In order that they may preserve themselves from the arrows of Thy wrath at the sight of the already bended bow.

5. **[59:7]** Thou hast acted in this manner in order to save those that love Thee; hear me, then, and let Thy hand save me.[13173]

6. **[59:8]** God has declared from his sanctuary that one day I shall have the joy of dividing at my will the country of Sichem or Samaria, and of measuring the plains of the Valley of Tents, beyond the Jordan, to distribute them at my pleasure.

7. **[59:9]** I already see under my sway Galaad, Manasses, and Ephraim, which are the strength of my head. Under these names are meant the provinces occupied by the tribes of Israel, which David called the strength of his head, that is, of his crown.

8. **[59:9]** "*Juda, rex meus.*" It is in the tribe of Juda that my throne is established, because God has willed that the kings should be chosen from

this tribe. “*Moab, olla spei meæ.*” The province of Moab, which is abundant as a platter filled with meat, is my hope. That is: I hope to satiate my people with the spoils of the Moabites.

9. **[59:10]** “*Alienigenæ.*” Foreigners.[13174]

10. **[59:11]** Who will lead me into Edom, and make me master of that kingdom whose capital city is very strong?

11. **[59:12]** Will it not be Thou, O Lord! who seemed at first to abandon us! And wilt Thou not Thyself go forth at the head of our troops to make us victorious?

12. **[59:13]** “*Vana salus hominis.*” It is in vain that we can hope for our salvation in human intercourse; Thou must aid us Thyself.

13. **[59:14]** In placing our hope in God we shall obtain the victory; he will destroy our enemies.

PSALM 60 OF THE PSALTER

Full of confidence in the power of God, the psalmist prays to him to come to his aid. St. Jerome and St. Hilary say that all afflicted souls find here an excellent prayer which they may recite in time of tribulation.[13175]

2. **[60:3]** From the lowest depths of the earth, O Lord! I have cried to Thee; and when my heart was in anguish through fear, Thou didst lift me upon a rock, that is, Thou didst place me as it were on a high rock where I see myself safe from my enemies.[13176]

3. **[60:3]** Thou hast led me by a sure way because Thou hast become for me as a strong tower in the face of my enemies.

5. **[60:6]** In this place that Thou hast given me I shall always dwell securely, since there I shall be protected by Thy wings.

6. **[60:7]** “*Annos ejus usque in diem generationis et generationis.*” Thou wilt even make his reign to endure from generation to generation.

7. **[60:8]** He will never cease to keep himself in the presence of his God; and who shall ever be able to see his goodness and his faithfulness fail?

8. **[60:9]** “*Ut reddam vota mea de die in diem.*” In order to render Thee all the days of my life the thanks that I owe Thee.

PSALM 61 OF THE PSALTER

David encourages himself and his followers to have confidence in God while persecuted and while oppressed by adversity.

3. **[61:2]** “*In hominem.*” Upon himself. You are all killing me, at least by the desire that you have to take my life, and consider me as a leaning wall that is ready to fall.

4. **[61:5]** “*Pretium meum.*” My honor, which is so precious to me. So this is understood by St. Ambrose and St. Augustine. “*Cucurri in siti.*” For this honor I so much toiled and sweated. Bossuet explains it thus: I fled like a thirsty stag pursued by the hunters. “*Benedicebant.*” They praised me.

5. **[61:6]** “*Ab ipso patientia mea.*” Thou wilt receive from him patience to suffer all.

6. **[61:7]** “*Non emigrabo*” I will not quit my kingdom. I shall not be driven out. I shall not fall from the state in which I am.[13177]

9. **[61:10]** “*In idipsum.*” That is, *Simul*, according to St. Jerome’s translation. They are deceiving one another.

10. **[61:11]** “*Divitiæ si affluant*” If riches come to you abundantly in the way of justice and honesty.

11. **[61:12]** “*Potestas Dei est, et tibi, Domine, misericordia.*” God has power to punish the wicked, and mercy to console the just.

PSALM 63 OF THE PSALTER

Pursued by calumny, David implores the help of God, and proclaims his hope of seeing this persecution turn to the ruin of his enemies and to the advantage of the just. In the mystical sense this psalm applies to the Passion of Jesus Christ.

6. **[63:7]** "*Iniquitates*" According to Bossuet: *Vias nocendi*—Their ways of injuring. The sense of the verse is: They have studied the ways of doing injury; but in this research they have found themselves foiled. This applies to the testimony brought forward against Jesus Christ.

7. **[63:7]** Bossuet well explains this verse: When the wicked man cannot find fault with the just on the score of his actions, he tries to give a wrong interpretation to the secret thoughts of his heart; but God, who defends the innocent, will be exalted by punishing the wicked.

8. **[63:8]** As the arrows discharged by children inflict only slight wounds, so the plots and calumnies of the wicked will have no effect; and therefore the arrows discharged by their tongues have become powerless to injure the objects of their calumny, and have fallen back upon themselves. This is according to the translation of St. Jerome: *Et corruent in semetipsos plagis suis.*

9. **[63:9]** Those that have seen their chastisement were seized with surprise; and every one will henceforth fear to follow them.

10. **[63:10]** In this all have recognized the hand of God, and have published it abroad.

PSALM 65 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm is a song of thanksgiving addressed by the people to God for having delivered them from their enemies. It may be applied to the Gentiles delivered from the tyranny of the devil.[13178]

2. **[65:3]** "*Mentientur tibi inimici tui.*" The very enemies, at the sight of Thy power, will come to submit themselves to Thy rule, but feignedly:

Mentientur.

5. **[65:6]** Reference is made to the passage of the Red Sea and the Jordan in the exodus from Egypt.

6. **[65:7]** He rules ever over the whole world; he watches over all nations, that the wicked who dare to offend him may not have reason to become proud.

8. **[65:9]** "*Ad vitam.*" That is: *Ad vivendum.* The sense of this verse is: He has preserved my life, and has not suffered my feet to stumble, or that I should fall over any precipice.

9. **[65:10]** Thou hast tried us with tribulations, as silver is tried in the fire.

10. **[65:11]** "*Imposuisti homines super capita nostra.*" Thou hast placed cruel men over us.

12, 13. **[65:13, 14]** I will go into Thy temple to offer to Thee the sacrifices, and to render to Thee the thanksgivings that I owe Thee, according to the vows that I made to Thee.

14. **[65:15]** "*Holocausta medullata.*" Victims, fat and full of marrow; that is, not only sacrifices of external works, but also of inward affections of the heart. "*Cum incenso arietum.*" Rams, fragrant with incense.

17. **[65:18]** If I had regarded with attachment any iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have heard me.

19. **[65:20]** May God be forever blessed, since he has not suffered me to forget to pray to him, because by my praying to him I have obtained his mercy so that he has not removed from me. St. Augustine has written this beautiful maxim: "*Cum videres non a te amotam deprecationem tuam. securus esto, quia non est a te amota misericordia ejus*—When thou seest that thy prayer is not removed from thee, be sure that neither is his mercy removed from thee."

In a figurative sense this psalm refers to Jesus Christ, who overcame death and ascended gloriously into heaven. It also foreshadows the sanctity of the Church and the protection that God, according to his promise, does not cease to give it—a protection that should firmly establish it and make it glorious by so many victories. The prophet describes various prodigies of the Old Testament, figures of the prodigies that occurred in the New Testament. This psalm is, moreover, very obscure.[13179]

3. **[67:4]** “*Delectentur in lætitia.*” Let them rejoice at their victory.

4. **[67:5]** “*Qui ascendit super occasum.*” Who ascends above the darkness of the grave. “*Dominus nomen illi.*” For his name is that of the Lord: all things are under his dominion.

5. **[67:5]** When he shall judge the world, sinners shall tremble with fear. while you shall stand rejoicing; for he is the Father of orphans, and the Judge who defends widows. This signifies that at the Last Judgment he will console all those that have been afflicted here on earth.

6. **[67:6]** God sits in his sanctuary in heaven; and there in his house he makes his servants dwell; “*Unius moris,*” of one manner, that is, as one in unity of virtue and sentiments.

7. **[67:7]** He sets free those that are held captive by their passions, and likewise those that have embittered him by their faults, and have dwelt in the sepulchre, the abode of death; that is, in his displeasure.

8, 9. **[67:8]** When Thou didst go forth in the sight of Thy people set free from Egypt, and didst go before them in the desert, in a cloud of light, the whole earth was moved, because the heavens showered down manna.

10. **[67:10]** In the same way Thou dost wish to store up a great outpouring of grace for Thy inheritance, that is, for Thy new Church; so that, however infirm it may be, Thou knowest how to heal her and make her perfect.

11. **[67:11]** There Thy flock shall abide, for which because of itself it is utterly poor, Thou hast in Thy goodness prepared abundant pastures.

12. **[67:12]** The Lord will inspire words to those that will announce the new law, giving them great power to convert entire nations.

13. **[67:13]** "*Rex virtutum dilecti dilecti.*" According to the Hebrew: *Reges exercituum confœderabuntur*—The most powerful kings of the earth will become subjects of the Well-Beloved (accordding to the Hebrew *Dilecti dilecti*); that is, of the Redeemer, who will be greatly beloved by them. "*Et speciei domus dividere spolia.*" And he, in order to render his house, that is, his Church, beautiful, will give her the power to divide the spoils of those kings converted by means of the Evangelists: that is, of the apostles, who divided among themselves all the kingdoms of the world, to lead them to embrace the faith.

14. **[67:14]** This verse is very obscure, says Bellarmine; hence it will be necessary to explain it in detail. "*Si dormiatis.*" If you who preach the word of God sleep, that is, if you repose. "*Inter medios cleros.*" The word *Clerus* in Greek signifies lot, or inheritance; meaning: In the midst of the Church. But St. Jerome, St. Augustine, Theodoret, and others, understand by the word *Cleros,* the Old and New Testaments, and explain the first part of the words thus: If you repose in the midst of the two Testaments. "*Pennæ columbæ deargentatæ.*" The Church, or the union of the faithful, will be like a dove with its wings silvered with the purity of wisdom. "*Et posteriora dorsi ejus in pallore auri.*" And with its back gilt by the fervor of charity, which makes it all beautiful.

15, 16. **[67:15, 16]** "*Dum discernit cœlestis reges.*" While the heavenly King, that is, Christ, will divide and send forth his preachers, raised to the dignity of kings by the spiritual power given them over souls. "*Super eam.*" Over the Church scattered throughout the kingdoms of the earth. "*Nive dealbabuntur*" Then the nations, purified from the blackness of their sins, will become whiter than snow. "*Mons Dei, mons pinguis, mom coagulatus.*" The mountain of God, the Church, is a fat, or rich mountain, a coagulated, that is, a very rich mountain; for the milk of divine grace, with which it abounds, does not run off, but remains there coagulated and firm. “*Ut quid suspicamini montes coagulatos?*” O men, why do you think that there is another Church as fat and as rich as this one?

18. **[67:18]** The chariot of the Lord is borne by many thousands of angels in great jubilee; it was thus the Lord was borne upon these celestial spirits, when he descended upon the holy mountain of Sinai.

19. **[67:19]** This passage is referred to by St. Paul (*Eph.* 4:8): *Ascendens in altum, captivam duxit captivitatem; dedit dona hominibus*—Ascending on high, He led captivity captive; He gave gifts to men. He adds: *Quod autem ascendit, quid est, nisi quia et descendit primum in inferiores partes terræ?*—Now, that he ascended, what is it, but because he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? The verse is, therefore, thus explained: Thou, O Saviour of the world! coming forth from the sepulchre, didst ascend to the highest heavens, and didst take with Thee those that were captives here below; and in heaven Thou didst receive the gifts from Thy Father, to dispense them to men.

20. **[67:19]** For Thou hast bestowed Thy gifts on those who before did not believe that the Lord dwells in his holy mountain, that is, in his Church.

22. **[67:21]** He is our God, whose property it is to save us; and it is his own gift to set us free from death. “*Exitus mortis.*” According to Bellarmine and Menochius: *Evasio mortis, ereptio et liberatio a morte*—Rescue and deliverance from death.

23. **[67:22]** “*Verticem capilli.*” Denoting the top of the hair of the head; which means, that God will bring down the summit of their proud locks, or the crest of those that walk with pride in their sins, and do not walk in the law of God.

24. **[67:23]** “*Ex Basan convertam.*” Mattei translates the Hebrew thus: *Ex Basan reducam.* That is: My people, I will deliver thee from the Basanites, or the people of Basan: and I will cast that people into the depths of the sea, as I did with Pharao.

26. **[67:25]** Then did they see Thy glorious march, and Thy triumphs, O my King and my God! who art now in the holy place; that is, according to Bellarmine and Menochius, in heaven, or in the Church.

27. **[67:26]** “*Principes.*” The heads of the people.

28. **[67:27]** “*De fontibus Israel.*” According to the Chaldee version: *De semine Israel*—From the race of Israel. This is the reading adopted by St. Hilary, Theodoret, Euthemius, Vatable, and Tirinus, who cites these authors; and it is applicable to Jesus Christ: *Christo Domino, ortum habenti ex Israel*—To the Lord God, who has sprung from Israel.

29, 30. **[67:28]** “*Ibi.*” There in that triumph, described in verses 26, 27, and 28. “*Benjamin adolescentulus.*” The tribe of Benjamin, who was the last of the children of Jacob. “*In mentis excessu.*” In a transport of joy, as if in ecstacy. St. Hilary, St. Jerome, Theodoret, Bellarmine, and others, apply this passage to the apostles, who were almost all from one of the four tribes here named: St. Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin; St. James and St. John, and other relatives of our Lord, were of the tribe of Juda; and Galilee comprised especially the whole tribe of Zabulon and Nephthali.

32. **[67:30]** “*A templo tuo.*” Mattei translates: *Post templum tuum;* and Bossuet: *Propter templum tuum.* The verse, then, is thus explained: After Thy temple has been built at Jerusalem, or, because of Thy temple that shall be built in Jerusalem, kings will offer Thee their gifts.

33. **[67:31]** “*Feras arundinis.*” Bellarmine says that by this we are to understand the wild animals that hide among rushes. “*In vaccis.*” According to the Hebrew: *In vitulis*—Calves. The verse therefore means: Frighten our enemies, who, as wild beasts, and like an assemblage or a troop of savage bulls, together with the calves of the people, that is, the dissolute young men, will seek to exclude from the temple those that have been proved as silver. Such is the explanation given by Bellarmine, Menochius, and Tirinus.

34. **[67:31]** “*Præveniet manus ejus Deo.*” St. Jerome thus translates the Hebrew: *Festinet manus Deo;* and Father Mariana’s interpretation is: *Junget*

manus pacem petens. The sense of the verse, then, is: Thou wilt scatter, O Lord! the nations that wish for war; then ambassadors from Egypt and Ethiopia will come running with joined hands to ask for peace.

36. **[67:33]** “*Cœlum cœli.*” A Hebraism, which signifies: The highest heaven. “*Ad Orientem.*” Towards the east; that is, towards the Mount of Olives situated at the east of Jerusalem. It is thus explained by Menochius and Tirinus, following St. Hilary and St. Jerome. The sense is, therefore: Give praise to God, who ascends from the Mount of Olives to the highest heaven.

37. **[67:34]** “*Vocem virtutis.*” A voice of power and efficacy. “*Deo super Israel.*” To the God of Israel. “*In nubibus.*” According to the Hebrew: *In cœlis*. According to St. Augustine, this may be understood of the day of judgment when Jesus Christ will come *in nubibus cœli*—in the clouds of heaven; then, *dabit voci suœ vocem virtutis*—he will give unto his voice the voice of power; he will speak with so great power, that he will cause a great terror by the sentence that he will pronounce against the reprobate.

38. **[67:36]** God will give to his people a virtue and a strength that will make them victorious over their enemies; let this great God be, therefore, ever blessed.

THURSDAY AT MATINS

PSALM 68 OF THE PSALTER

The holy Fathers and interpreters agree that this psalm refers to our Lord who was ill-treated by the Jews; it is also frequently quoted in the New Testament.[13180]

1. **[68:2]** “*Aquæ.*” The waters of affliction.

2. **[68:3]** “*Non est substantia.*” St. Jerome’s translation is: *Non possum consistere.* That is, according to the explanation of Menochius: There is no consistence or solidity.

3. **[68:3]** That is: I am as if engulfed in an abyss of bitterness that has overwhelmed me.

6. **[68:5]** Behold Jesus Christ, who in dying satisfies for sins that are not his own.

7. **[68:6]** Thou knowest the folly of which I am wrongly accused by men; and my sins, that is, those of men, which I have taken upon myself in order to atone for them. This agrees with what Isaias has said: *Iniquitates eorum ipse portabit*—He shall bear their iniquities (*Is.* 53:2).

8. **[68:7]** “*Non erubescant.*” Let them not blush, or let them not be ashamed. “*In me.*” According to Bellarmine: *Propter me. “Qui expectant me.”* Those that wait for Thee, or those that trust in Thee. “*Virtutum.*” According to the Hebrew: *Exercituum.*

9. **[68:7]** “*Super me.*” According to Bellarmine: *Mei causa.*

11. **[68:9]** “*Matris meæ.*” Of my mother, the Synagogue.[13181]

12. **[68:10]** “*Comedit me.*” Has devoured me; or, according to the Chaldee, has consumed me: *Consumpsit me.*

13. **[68:11]** This verse is very obscure. “*Operui in jejunio animam meam.*” According to the Hebrew: I overwhelmed myself with my tears in my fast.

15. **[68:13]** “*Qui sedebant in porta.*” Those that were sitting at the gate; that is, the magistrates, who had their station in the public place of judgment. “*Qui bibebant vinum.*” The drunkards.

16. **[68:14]** “*Tempus beneplaciti.*” St. Jerome’s translation is: *Tempus reconciliationis est.* For behold now the time of Thy good pleasure; that is, the time destined for the peace and reconciliation of men.

17. **[68:14]** “*In veritate salutis tuœ.*” That is, according to the faithfulness of the promise which Thou hast made to save us.

19. **[68:16]** “*Neque urgeat.*” According to Bellarmine and others: *Non claudat.* This is to be understood of the sepulchre from which Jesus Christ willed to rise, and to pass to life eternal.

23. **[68:20]** “*Reverentiam.*” St. Jerome’s translation is: *Ignominiam.*

27. **[68:23]** Their table, in retribution for their cruelty, shall become unto them a snare and an occasion of their ruin. Jesus Christ here predicts, under the form of imprecation, the evils that were to fall on the Jews. For this reason the text is given in the future tense; it is thus Menochius and the others understand it.

28. **[68:24]** Their eyes will remain darkened, so that they will not see the precipice over which they shall fall; Thou wilt cause them to bend the back forever: that is, Thou wilt always keep them under the yoke of strange masters.

31. **[68:27]** God has stricken his Son for the sins of the human race, as is written in Isaias (53:8): *Propter scelus populi mei percussi eum*—For the

wickedness of my people have I struck Him. Moreover, the Jews have persecuted and added pain upon pain to his wounds.

32. **[68:28]** On this text Bellarmine makes a wise remark: *Dicitur Deus facere, quando permittit fieri id quod sine ejus permissione fieret*—God is said to do, when he permits to be done, that which, without his permission, would not be done. The sense therefore is: Thou permittest these wicked men to add iniquity to iniquity, and that they should not enter into Thy justice, that is, that they should not be admitted to receive from Thee justification.

33. **[68:29]** "*De libro viventium.*" That is, from the number of the elect.

34. **[68:30]**[13182] "*Salus tua . . . suscepit me.*" Thy salvation has taken me, or withdrawn me from these pains, by causing me to rise again. Or, as others explain the text, in a prophetic sense Thy power will save me by withdrawing me from these pains.

36. **[68:32]** "*Cornua producentem et ungulas.*" That begins to have horns and hoofs.[13183]

37. **[68:33]** The poor and afflicted will see it and will rejoice: O men, seek God, and thus your souls will live forever.

38. **[68:34]** "*Vinctos suos non despexit.*" He does not despise his captives; that is, those that are loaded with the chains of their sins.

40. **[68:36]** By Sion is understood the Church in general, and by the cities of Juda, the particular Churches. This is the explanation given by Bossuet and others.

41. **[68:36]** In this happy land men redeemed shall dwell, and shall possess it as their own inheritance.

42. **[68:37]** "*Qui diligunt nomen ejus, habitabunt in ea.*" It shall always be inhabited by those that love the glory of the Lord.

PSALM 69 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm is almost the repetition of the last seven verses of Psalm 39. According to most of the Latin interpreters it is the prayer that Jesus Christ was to make on the cross. It may serve as a model to the faithful in their prayers, especially when they find themselves in grave danger.

2. **[69:3]** “*Qui quærunt animam meam.*” Those that seek to take my life.

4. **[69:4]** *Euge, euge.*” Well done, well done, we have struck him down. Instead of this word, St. Jerome translates: *Vah! vah!* a word, as Bossuet remarks, not of praise, but of mockery, just as people sometimes cry out in derision: Hurrah! hurrah!

5. **[69:5]** “*Qui diligunt salutare tuum.*” Those that love the salvation that Thou hast promised. Or, as Bossuet explains: Those that wish to be saved by Thee.

PSALM 70 OF THE PSALTER

David prays to God to come to his aid in the persecution raised against him by his son Absalom. This psalm will serve for all the faithful when they are afflicted by temptations in order to trust in God and ask his help.

1. **[70:1]** I have placed in Thee my hopes; I hope that I shall not be confounded forever; deliver me from the confusion in honor of Thy justice.

2. **[70:2]** Give ear to my prayers, and save me from the dangers that threaten me.

6. **[70:5]** “*Patientia.*” St. Jerome translates: *Exspectatio.* Hence the verse may be explained with Bellarmine: Thou art my patience, that is, Thou art that divine Lord from whom I expect with patience my deliverance, since from my youth Thou hast been my only hope.

7. **[70:6]** “*In te confirmatus sum.*” According to the Hebrew: *Super te innixus sum;* or, as St. Jerome’s translation is: *A te sustentatus sum.* This

means: In Thee I have been confirmed, that is, I have found my support and my prop.

8. **[70:6]** My chant shall always be occupied with Thee, that is, I will always celebrate Thy goodness with praises; I am admired by many as a prodigy, through the benefits that Thou hast conferred upon me; and Thou art looked upon as a strong defence of those whom Thou protectest.

11. **[70:10]** “*Qui custodiebant animam meam, consilium fecerunt in unum.*” St. Jerome translates: *Qui observabant animam meam, inicrunt consilium pariter.* Those that spied out my life, my way of living, have conspired against me. Others understand this of the guards whom David kept about his person, and explain it thus: Those that before guarded my life are now united to plot my ruin.

13. **[70:12]** “*In auxilium meum respice.*” St. Jerome’s translation is better: *Ad auxilium meum festina.*

15. **[70:14]** But I will always hope in Thee, my Lord, and I will add new praises to all those that I have given Thee. According to Bellarmine, Menochius, and Bossuet, something is here to be supplied.

16. **[70:15]** “*Salutare tuum.*” The salvation that I have received from Thee.

17. **[70:15]** “*Non cognovi litteraturam.*” I am little versed in human wisdom. Interpreters generally understand the word *Litteraturam* as if David meant to say: I have never made profession of that infamous cunning in which my enemy Achitophel abounds. “*Introibo in potentias Domini.*” I shall enter into the power of the Lord, that is, I shall set myself to praise the divine power. “*Memorabor justitiæ tuæ solius.*” I shall have nothing else before my eyes but the memory of Thy justice.

18. **[70:17]** “*Et usque nunc pronuntiabo mirabilia tua.*” Wherefore I will never cease to celebrate the wonderful graces that Thou hast done unto me.

20. **[70:18]** Till I succeed in proclaiming Thy arm, that is, Thy great power, to all the generations that shall come to inhabit this earth.

22. **[70:20]** *“Et conversus, vivificasti me, et de abyss is terræ iterum reduxisti me.”* Then, appeased, Thou hast so to say restored to me life, and hast brought me back from the abyss of the earth, that is, from the depth of miseries.

23. **[70:21]** *“Multiplicasti magnificentiam tuam.*” That is, Thou hast in many ways shown the greatness of Thy goodness towards me. “*Conversus.*” A Hebraism which signifies that the action is repeated.

24. **[70:22]** “*In vasis psalmi.*” According to Menochius and Bossuet: *In musicis instrumentis. “Veritatem tuam.”* The faithfulness of Thy promises.[13184]

25. **[70:23]** *“Anima mea, quam redemisti.*” My soul, which Thou hast redeemed, that is, hast set free from so many dangers.

26. **[70:24]** “*Meditabitur.*” That is: Shall praise while meditating.

PSALM 71 OF THE PSALTER

David speaks here of his son Salomon, the presumptive heir of the kingdom of Israel, a figure of the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ. Thus speak commonly the holy Fathers and the commentators. Indeed, it seems to me that the whole or nearly the whole psalm should be applied to Jesus Christ; for certain expressions that are found in it, and especially verses 5, 11, 12, and 17, can only refer to Jesus Christ, to his coming among us, and to the vocation of the Gentiles; all of which mysteries David clearly saw by the prophetic light.[13185]

1. **[71:2]** Give to the king the grace to judge justly, and grant to the son of David a righteous justice like Thine own.

3. **[71:3]** “*Montes.*” This word is variously understood. Maldonatus understands it as if it were *Undique;* and meaning: May peace be enjoyed everywhere, even on the mountains. Emmanuel Sa writes: *Montes, id est, primores, seu præfecti*—the chief men or rulers. Malvenda: *Montes, id est, totum regnum montibus abundans*—the whole kingdom abounding with

mountains. It is in this way Bossuet, with Bellarmine and Menochius, explains the verse: *Descendat de cœlo pax et justitia, et super regnum Israeliticum requiescat*—May peace and justice descend from heaven and rest upon the kingdom of Israel. Lastly, Mariana, and with him Tirinus, says: *Montes, ubi scilicet solent esse latrones et feræ*—Mountains, that is, where robbers and wild beasts are wont to be. This last interpretation, as Lallemant thinks, seems to be the most probable. Hence the sense would be: May the mountains and the hills receive peace for the good of the people, that is: may even the people of the mountains, who are usually fierce and turbulent, taste the sweetness of peace and enjoy the fruits of the justice of the prince.

5. **[71:5]** “*Ante lunam.*” Translation of St. Jerome: *Ultra lunam*—Beyond the moon. That is: His kingdom shall endure as long as the sun and the moon, and even beyond that.

6. **[71:6]** “*Vellus.*” About this word there is a great diversity of opinion. Malvenda, Bellarmine, Menochius, Tirinus, etc., understand by it the fleece, or skin covered with wool, upon which Gedeon asked that all the dew that fell from heaven might be collected (*Judges,* 6:37). Others, as Maldonatus, Mariana, Bossuet, Mattei, with Mark Marino, and Father Lallemant, are of opinion that the word *Vellus* here means something cut or shorn; hence Lallemant translates the passage thus: His coming to the throne will be like a rain that waters a meadow newly mown. But the first interpretation agrees better with that of St. Ambrose, Rupertus, and Procopius, who understand by the fleece the Mother of God, and by the dew the divine Word, who came down gently as the dew into the womb of the Virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, the verse taken in this sense, has a better connection with the following: *Orietur in diebus ejus justitia et abundantia pacis*—In his days shall justice spring up, and abundance of peace. This is certainly to be understood of the coming of the Messias.[13186]

7. **[71:7]** “*In diebus ejus.*” Under his reign. “*Donec auferatur luna.*” This happy state will last till the end of the world.

8. **[71:8]** “*A flumine.*” St. Augustine, Theodoret, etc., understand by the river, the Jordan, because it was there, at the baptism of Jesus Christ, the eternal Father’s voice was heard saying: *Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui*—This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased (*Matt.* 3:17).

9. **[71:9]** “*Terram lingent.*” Shall lick the earth, that is, shall bow down to kiss the earth that is under his feet.

10. **[71:10]** “*Reges Tharsis, et insulæ.*” The kings of India and the inhabitants of the isles.

11. **[71:11]** These verses, from verse 5th, can apply only to Jesus Christ.

12. **[71:12]** “*Pauperem.*” The weak, or the feeble.[13187]

13. **[71:13]** “*Parcet.*” According to the Chaldee: *Miserebitur*—He will have compassion.

14. **[71:14]** “*Ex usuris.*” According to the Chaldee: *Ab oppressione*—From oppression. “*Et iniquitate.*” And from iniquity, that is, from injustice.

15. **[71:15]** “*Vivet.*” He shall live, that is, his reign shall be everlasting. “*Vivet et dabitur ei.*” According to the Hebrew: *Vivet, et dabit ei.* Hence Maldonatus thus interprets this passage: The poor delivered by him shall live, and out of gratitude will give him gold of Arabia. “*Adorabunt de ipso.*” St. Jerome translates: *Orabunt de eo.* These words are thus commented upon by Emmanuel Sa: *De eo, id est, pro eo.* The people will continually pray for him and for the prosperity of his kingdom.[13188]

16. **[71:16]** “*Firmamentum.*” The Hebrew text, St. Jerome, Bellarmine, Mattei, Lallemant, and all the interpreters of the Compilation of Venice, attest that *Firmamentum* is put here for *Frumentum;* and this is the explanation that is given: There will be such an abundance of wheat upon earth, and even on the summits of the mountains, that its fruits will rise above Lebanon, that is, the ears will rise higher than the cedars of Lebanon;

and the inhabitants of the city of God, which is the Church, shall flourish or spring up like the herb of the field.

17. **[71:17]** “*Nomen ejus.*” The name of this new king. “*Ante solem.*” According to the Hebrew: *Coram sole;* and as St. Jerome translates: *Ultra solem.* “*Permanet.*” According to St. Jerome, Menochius, Bossuet, etc., this verb is to be understood in the future.

PSALM 72 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm describes the wretched happiness of the wicked and the blessed afflictions of the just, since the end of the one class will be very different from that of the other. We learn, hence, not to be astonished when we see the wicked prosper and the good afflicted.[13189]

1. **[72:1]** “*Israel*” To Israel, or towards the people of Israel. Father Lallemant has understood this name as if it were in the genitive; but in the Greek it is preceded by the article in the dative, and so in the Hebrew text, of which the sense is: *Certe bonus est Deus Israeli*—Truly, God is good to Israel. It is thus that Bossuet, with several others, explains it.

2. **[72:2]** That is to say: My belief was almost shaken through the emotion that I felt.

3. **[72:3]** “*Super iniquos.*” St. Jerome’s translation is: *Contra iniquos.* “*Pacem peccatorum videns.*”[13190] At seeing the peace in which sinners live on account of the prosperity which they enjoy, or to speak more correctly, which they flatter themselves that they enjoy.

4. **[72:4]** “*Quia non est respectus morti corum.*” St. Jerome translates: *Quod non recogitaverint de morte sua*—Because they have not reflected on their death. “*Et firmamentum in plaga eorum.*” This passage is obscure, and is differently explained by interpreters. The word *Firmamentum* presents the greatest difficulty; But Gordona observes that if the particle *Non* be repeated, by understanding *Et* as *Nec,* the sense becomes easy. Thus: “*Nec est firmamentum in plaga eorum;*” *hoc est: Si quod illis accidit malum, cito transit, leve est, et sine firmamento*—Nor is there firmness in their wounds;

that is, if any evil happens to them, it quickly passes, it is light and has no firmness. Hence the most natural explanation seems to be this: And in their wound, that is, when they feel themselves tormented by the fear of death, their affliction has no strength or firmness, and does not last long.

5. **[72:5]** They are not in the travail of men, that is, they are exempt from poverty, from fatigues, and from other evils that afflict the generality of men; so that they are not scourged, that is, they do not suffer with other men.

7. **[72:7]** “*Prodiit quasi ex adipe iniquitas eorum.*” Their iniquity has been produced by fatness, that is, by the abundance of their good things of the earth. Such is the explanation of Menochius. “*Transierunt in affectum cordis.*” According to the Hebrew: *Transierunt cogitationes cordis;* that is: *Omnia contingunt illis supra spem*—They all have come to surpass their desires by obtaining more than they wished and hoped for.

8. **[72:8]** They have meditated and uttered their wickedness, that is, they have employed their thoughts and their words to put in execution their wicked designs; and they have not been ashamed to publish their iniquity “*in excelso*” as from a high place, to make it known to the whole world.

9. **[72:9]** They have opened their mouth ever against heaven; that is, according to Bellarmine, against God and his saints, and they have not abstained either from employing their tongue on earth against men. Malvenda’s comment is: *Quasi dicat: Nec Deo nec hominibus parcunt*—As though he would say: They spare neither God nor man.

10. **[72:10]** Wherefore my people shall turn and see that for these impious men, notwithstanding their iniquity, these are days full of worldly satisfaction. Such is the explanation of Bellarmine and Lallemant.

11. **[72:11]** And the men of my people say: How can it be that God, in whom is the science or knowledge of all that comes to pass on earth, should know this; and it may be added, should permit it?

12. **[72:12]** “*Abundantes in sæculo.*” According to the Hebrew: *Pacifici sæculi.* Behold these sinners abound in riches in this world, so that they are esteemed as those who enjoy peace on earth.

13. **[72:13]** “*Sine causa justificavi.*” According to the Hebrew: *Frustra mundavi. “Inter innocentes.”* That is, with the innocent.

14. **[72:14]** “*Flagellatus.*” Scourged, chastised; that is, afflicted by the wicked.

15. **[72:15]** St. Jerome’s translation: *Et dixi: Si narravero sic, ecce generationem filiorum tuorum reliqui.* The sense of the verse is: But afterwards I said: If I spoke thus, I should do wrong, and I should come to abandon the society of Thy children, that is, to disapprove of the religion of Thy faithful.

16. **[72:16]** I thought to be able to understand this conduct of Thy Providence; but I perceived that my labor was vain. “*Labor est ante me.*” That is, above my comprehension.

17. **[72:17]** “*In sanctuarium.*” According to Bossuet: *In arcanum;* or according to Malvenda: *In sacratiora adyta.* The sense of the verse is: Until, by means of prayer, I enter into the sanctuary, that is, into the secret judgments of God; and then I came to understand the end of sinners, and what will be the miserable end of their happiness here on earth.

18. **[72:18]** “*Posuisti eis.*” Menochius says: *Subintellige “Mala,” ut habent aliqui textus græci*—Here we must supply *Mala,* as being understood, which some of the Greek texts have. The sense, then, is: Nevertheless, because of the deceits which they employ to exalt themselves, Thou hast prepared punishment for them; Thou hast caused their feet to fail them, and hast cast them down whilst they sought to raise themselves to power here on earth.

20. **[72:20]** “*Velut somnium surgentium.*” St. Jerome translates: *Quasi somnium evigilantis. “In civitate tua.”* According to Menochius: *In superna civitate.* That is: O Lord! at the end of all things, these miserable men shall

be afflicted, as those are afflicted who, after dreaming that they have come to a great fortune, find themselves on awaking in the same poverty as before; and whereas Thy faithful servants shall be honored, in Thy city of heaven, they on the contrary shall be excluded from it, and the great figure that they have made in the world will be brought to nothing.

21. **[72:21]** "*Inflammatum est cor meum, et renes mei commutati sunt.*" According to the Septuagint: *Lætatum est cor meum, et renes mei dilatati sunt;* and as Mattei says, the same version is found in St. Ambrose, as also in the ancient psalters. The passage is thus explained: Wherefore my heart was inflamed with joy and my reins were stirred with gladness, when I saw my fears vanish. "*Et ego ad nihilum redactus sum, et nescivi.*" And at the same time I was brought to naught, that is, I became aware of my own nothingness, of which I was before ignorant.

22. **[72:23]** I confess that hitherto I have been like a beast of burden, not knowing the truth of my nothingness; and, therefore, henceforth, I desire to be always united to Thee, who art my only good.

23. **[72:24]** Thou hast held my right hand; that is, Thou hast kept me up, so that I might not be lost; Thou hast led me to live according to Thy will, and Thou hast covered me with glory.

25. **[72:26]** My flesh and my heart have failed, that is, can no longer resist the attraction of Thy love, which draws me to Thee; Thou art the God of my heart; it is for Thee alone to possess it eternally; Thou alone must be my portion and all my good.

26. **[72:27]** Those that withdraw from Thee will in the end perish; for Thou justly sendest to perdition those that love other objects than Thee. It is thus that Menochius, Sa, Mariana, and Tirinus understand the expression: "*Qui fornicantur abs te.*"[13191]

27. **[72:28]** My only good is to adhere and entirely unite myself to God, and to place in him all my hopes.

28. **[72:28]** And thus I hope, one day, to publish Thy glories in Jerusalem, which is called the daughter of Jerusalem.[13192]

PSALM 73 OF THE PSALTER

The Jewish people, submissive and humbled, weep over their captivity and the destruction of the temple; then, imploring Heaven to favor their religion and their kingdom, the children of Israel called to mind the many prodigies worked by God and the numerous benefits received from his bounty. Bellarmine and other interpreters think that there is question here of the persecution of Antiochus at the time of the Machabees. This psalm may be used for asking God's help in the persecutions that the Church suffers at the hands of her enemies.

2. **[73:2]** "*Ab initio.*" Menochius understands by this the time when the people of Israel had no other king than God: *Quæ nullum habuit regem ante te.*

3. **[73:2]** "*Virgam.*" According to St. Augustine, Theodoret, Symmachus, Euthymius, Bellarmine, and Mattei: *Sceptrum* or *Regnum.* Explanation: Thou didst redeem the sceptre of Thy inheritance, that is, the kingdom of the Promised Land, by driving out the enemies that occupied it; there is Mount Sion, where Thou hast vouchsafed to dwell for our good.

4. **[73:3]** Raise the hands of Thy dread power, to strike down entirely their arrogance; Thou knowest how many evils this hostile people has wrought in the holy place; that is, in the holy city, or in the holy Temple.

5. **[73:4]** Those that hated Thee have gloried in their insults committed in the Temple when solemnities were offered to Thy name. "*In medio solemnitatis tuæ.*" According to Menochius: *Dum sacra solemnia peragerentur*—Whilst the sacred solemnities were going on.

6. **[73:4]** "*Posuerunt signa sua, signa*" They have placed their signs, that is, their banners, on the summit of the Temple. "*Et non cognoverunt.*" According to St. Jerome, Theodoret, Tirinus, etc.: *Neque curarunt quantus honor deberetur Templo tuo*—And had no thought of how great honor was

done to Thy Temple. “*Sicut in exitu*” According to Mattei: As a common thoroughfare; or, according to Lallemant: As the vilest place to be found in the whole city.

12. **[73:11]** Why holdest Thou Thy hand afar off, and almost wholly idle, in Thy bounteous bosom, without pouring upon us Thy accustomed graces?

13. **[73:12]** “*In medio terræ.*” Mazzocchi says that this is a Hebraism, and that it means the same as *In terra*.

14. **[73:13]** Here the psalmist begins to relate the wonders wrought in behalf of his people: By Thy virtue, or by Thy power, Thou didst make the sea firm and stable, after having divided it for the passage of the Hebrews; and Thou didst lay low, submerged in those waters, the heads of the dragons, that is, the chiefs of the Egyptians; as is explained by Euthymius and other interpreters.

15. **[73:14]** Thou didst break the pride of the dragon; that is, of this hostile people who, being sunk, was made by Thee the prey of the Ethiopians, who reaped the spoils. According to Malvenda and Menochius, by the Ethiopians are meant properly the Arabians who inhabit, the shores of the Red Sea, and are called Ethiopians in Scripture.

16. **[73:15]** “*Dirupisti fontes et torrentes.*” According to Bellarmine: *Dirupta petra, fecisti scaturire fontes et torrentes*—When Thy people passed through the desert, Thou, from a dry rock broken by Moses, didst cause to spring forth fountains and torrents of water. “*Siccasti fluvios Ethan.*” Thou didst dry up the river Ethan. Bellarmine, Menochius, Lallemant, and Panigarola understand here the river Jordan; but Mattei says that it is in vain to seek what is this river *Ethan*, and that this word is rather an adjective, which means *Rapid*. In fact, St. Jerome translates: *Flumina fortia*—Strong rivers. Bellarmine, Menochius, and Tirinus also give this meaning. Rotigni and Mattei say, however, with Bellarmine: *Interpretes cæteri relinquere maluerunt ipsam vocem hebraicam non interpretatam*—that is, they prefer to leave the word untranslated.

17. **[73:16]** “*Tuus est dies, et tua est nox.*” That is: Thou hast made both the day and the night.

18. **[73:17]** “*Æstatem et ver.*” By the summer and the spring is meant the whole year; because anciently, say the learned, the year was divided only in two parts; and in fact, according to the Hebrew, instead of “*Ver,*” it is *Hyemem*—Winter.

19. **[73:18]** “*Hujus.*” Some refer this pronoun to what has gone before as if the psalmist said: O Lord! remember this, namely, these works of Thine. But others more commonly, with Bellarmine, refer it to that which follows, in this sense: Have before Thy eyes what I am about to say to Thee. “*incitavit.*” Has provoked or blasphemed.

20. **[73:19]** “*Ne tradas bestiis animas confitentes tibi.*” Abandon not to the power of these wild beasts, as are these our enemies, the lives of those that are faithful to Thee.

21. **[73:20]** “*Testamentum tuum.*” That is, the covenant that Thou hast made with our fathers. “*Qui obscurati sunt terræ.*” According to Bellarmine: *Qui obscurati sunt in terra, viles et barbari homines.* “*Iniquitatem,*” that is, *Inique.* Hence this interpretation: Consider how these vile men have unjustly possessed themselves of our houses and of all our property. This second part of the verse is very obscure, as Mattei and others remark.

22. **[73:21]** Permit not, O Lord! that Thy people, after having been so humiliated, should be brought to confusion: they are poor, are needy; but raised up by Thee, they will know how to praise Thy name and to give Thee thanks.

23. **[73:22]** “*Causam tuam*” This cause which is not only ours, but in truth Thy own.

24. **[73:23]** “*Voces.*” The blasphemies.

PSALM 74 OF THE PSALTER

In this psalm a prayer is offered to God to hasten to the help of the good and the punishment of the wicked. Yet it is in some way a dialogue between God and his people who are in slavery. May the just here learn to reanimate their courage, and the wicked to tremble.[13193]

2. **[74:2]** “*Cum accepero tempus.*” That is: When the fitting time has come. (Here it is God that speaks). “*Justitias judicabo.*” *Quod justum est, decernam*—What is just I will determine. This is the explanation of Tirinus with St. Jerome and Theodoret.

3. **[74:4]** “*Liquefacta est.*” St. Jerome translates: *Dissolvetur.* Then in the time of my vengeance the earth shall be dissolved, and all its inhabitants with it through the terror that they shall feel; but I will again set up its columns, that is, its foundations, its solidity. This verse is obscure, and different interpretations are given of it.

4. **[74:5]** (Some think that God continues to speak; but Lallemant with more probability says that it is the psalmist who speaks here). “*Cornu.*” According to Bellarmine: *Superbiam*—Pride.

5. **[74:6]** “*Cornu vestrum.*” According to the Chaldee: *Gloriam vestram*—Do not take pride in your glory.

6. **[74:7]** “*Neque ab Oriente.*” . . . According to Bossuet and Mattei here should be supplied: *Veniet vobis auxilium.* The sense is: At the time of punishment there shall come to you no help, neither from the East nor from the West. . . . Others explain thus: In vain will you hope to fly for refuge in the East. . . . But the former explanation is more common, and pleases me better. “*Quoniam Deus judex est.*” God himself being judge, no one can hinder the execution of his judgments.

7. **[74:9]** “*Vini meri plenus misto.*” Full of pure wine, that is, of justice, and also, at the same time, of mixture, that is, of pity, so as to temper justice with mercy, as says St. Jerome (*In Malach.* 3.)

8. **[74:9]** “*Inclinavit.*” According to the Hebrew: *Effudit, propinavit.* From this cup thus tempered the Lord pours in turn one and the other on men,

giving them at one time graces, at another punishments. “*Verumtamen fæx ejus non est exinanita; bibent omnes peccatores terræ.*” But let sinners know that the dregs, that is, the bitterest part of this cup, is not entirely emptied; the wicked shall all drink of it. Bellarmine remarks that for sinners the greater part of their pains, besides those of this life, is reserved for them on the Day of Judgment.

10. **[74:11]** I will ever strive to repress and break down the pride of sinners; and will, on the other hand, publish the glory of the just, who shall be exalted.

PSALM 75 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm is a canticle of praise and thanksgiving which the Jews address to God for having aided them to be victorious over their enemies. Some Fathers believe that it was composed after the victory gained over the Assyrians and the defeat of the army of Sennacherib (4 *Kings,* 19:35), the title of it being according to the Vulgate: *Canticum ad Assyrios.* But Grotius and Xavier Mattei think that David composed it after his victory over the Ammonites (2 *Kings,* 10), and that afterward Ezechias recited it after the defeat of the Assyrians. It may be used by Christians to thank God for having delivered them from their enemies.

2. **[75:3]** “*In pace.*” According to the Hebrew: *In Salem.* The word *Salem* signifies *Peace;* but here it denotes the city of Jerusalem. Lallemant with others has, therefore, well translated the verse: He has chosen his dwelling-place in Jerusalem, and his habitation on the mountain of Sion.

3. **[75:4]** He has broken: “the powers of the bows,” that is, the bows of the hostile powers, and the shields, and the swords, and all the forces of their enemies who were making war.

4. **[75:5]** “*A montibus æternis.*” Nearly all the modern interpreters read according to the Hebrew: *A montibus prædæ* or *rapinæ;* and this agrees with the translation of St. Jerome: *A montibus captivitatis.* Whence it is thus explained: Thou, O Lord! hast caused a marvellous light to shine forth from the mountains of plunder, that is, where our army seized on the spoils of the

enemy. “*Turbati sunt omnes insipientes corde.*” St. Jerome’s translation is: *Spoliati sunt superbi corde.* The proud remained conquered and despoiled of everything.

5. **[75:6]** These men, so proud of their power and of their riches, stricken by the sleep of death, have no longer found anything in their hands. This is the translation of Lallemant; but according to this sense I should prefer to render the verse thus: To the rich of the earth, at the hour of death, all the riches that they have possessed will seem like a dream, since then they will find nothing any more in their hands. Others, however, following the Hebrew text, which instead of “*Divitiarum*” has *Fortitudinis,* explain the passage in a sense quite different, thus: They slept and on awaking they found no strength in their hands, that is, they saw that their strength was gone. Bossuet, quoting the translation of St. Jerome, in which we read the word *Exercitus* for *Fortitudinis* or *Divitiarum,* gives still another interpretation: *Parte exercitus casa, et somnum mortis dormiente, reliqui, conterriti, nec pugnare potuerunt.* A part of the army being killed, the rest, seized with terror, were unable to fight anymore. I see no reason for departing from the first sense. The word *Fortitudinis,* given in the Hebrew, makes nothing against it; for men of the world regard riches as their strength. This fully accords with the Hebrew text.

6. **[75:7]** By reason of Thy wrath, or of Thy chastisement, even those were smitten with death that thought themselves the strongest, because they were mounted on horseback.

7. **[75:8]** “*Ex tunc ira tua.*” According to Estius and others: *Cum ira tua fuerit commota*—When Thy anger is aroused.

8. **[75:9]** “*Judicium.*” The sentence of punishment launched against the enemy: “*Terra tremuit, et quievit.*” The earth quaked with terror, and then at once there was calm. But according to the Hebrew, instead of “*quievit*” it is “*siluit.*” That is: The inhabitants of the earth trembled and kept silence through terror.

9. 75:10 “*Mansuetos.*” All those that are meek, that is, his humble servants.

10. **[75:11]** This verse is obscure. Lallemant explains it thus: Hence Thy servants who have received mercies from Thee will never think of them without thanking and praising Thee for them; and the memory thereof will cause them to celebrate feasts in Thy honor. But others more commonly, as Maldonatus, Malvenda, Grotius, Mariana, Rotigni, Mattei, etc., supported by the Hebrew text, which instead of the word “*Cogitatio*” gives *Ira,* explain it thus: For the fury of hostile man will cause us to praise Thy goodness and power on seeing his defeat; and the remains of the enemy’s fury will serve Thee for a feast, since it will move us to celebrate a festival in Thy honor, in order to praise Thee and return Thee thanks.

12. **[75:13]** “*Qui aufert spiritum principum.*” Who takes away life from princes; or, following this translation from the Hebrew: *Qui coercet spiritum principum*—Who subdues the pride of princes.

PSALM 76 OF THE PSALTER

According to a large number of interpreters, we have here the prayer that the captive people at Babylon offered up to God. However this may be, this psalm finds a natural place on the lips of those that are in affliction, who aspire, as St. Augustine says, to leaving the exile of this earth in order to enter the heavenly country.

1. **[76:2]** “*Intendit mihi.*” The literal translation of the Hebrew is: *Aures mihi præbuit;* or according to St. Jerome: *Exaudivit me.*

3. **[76:3]** The following is the explanation of Lallemant: My soul plunged in sorrow, refused all consolation: I remembered God, and this memory filled me with joy; but the thought of my evils made me fall again into despondency. Other interpreters, as Malvenda, Maldonatus, Rotigni, and Mattei, follow the Hebrew text, which instead of the word “*Delectatus*” gives *Conturbatus.* St. Jerome understands it in the same sense; we read in his commentary: *Memor fui Dei, et conturbabar. Qui olim, quamvis afflictus, audito Dei nomine, respirabam, nunc, minis ejus territus, divini nominis recordatione conturbor.* I remembered God, and was troubled. I who formerly, however much afflicted when I heard the name of God, would again breathe freely (or revive), now, terrified by his threats, am

troubled at the recollection of the divine name. And so, following this interpretation of St. Jerome, which seems to be the one most received, the passage is explained thus: I remembered God, and instead of being consoled by his remembrance, I was thereby still more troubled. “*Exercitatus sum.*” St. Jerome translates thus: *Loquebar in memetipso.* The sense then of this latter part of the verse is: And speaking, complaining, in myself, I remained anxious and restless through sadness, so that my spirit fainted within me.

4. **[76:5]** My eyes looked forward to the dawn, that is, I passed the whole night without being able to sleep because of the trouble that I suffered, and without saying a word.

5. **[76:6]** “*Annos æternos.*” St. Jerome translates: *Annos sæculorum*—I thought of the ancient days, and I had in my mind the ages of the past. David recalled to his memory, in order to comfort himself, the graces and the favors that he had formerly received from God, and the benefits conferred upon his people.

6. **[76:7]** “*Et meditatus sum.*” According to the Hebrew: *Recordabar cantici mei;* or, following the translation of St. Jerome: *Psalmorum meorum.* At night I meditated in my heart the time when I sang canticles; and thus I exercised myself, and searched out my spirit, that is, I examined my conscience. “*Scopebam.*” St. Augustine in his day read: *Perscrutabar*—I searched through.

7. **[76:8]** “*Non apponet ut complacitior sit adhuc?*” Will he not show himself more appeased and propitious? Such is the sense that St. Jerome gives according to the Hebrew: *Non repropitiabitur ultra?* And thus also Bellarmine, Bossuet, etc., understand it.

10. **[76:11]** “*Hæc mutatio.*” Some understand this change in respect to God, following the translation of St. Jerome, who renders the verse thus: *Et dixi: Imbecillitas mea est hæc: commutatio dexteræ Excelsi.* That is: I said that my weakness, or my wickedness, is the cause of the change of the right hand of the Most High, who from being clement has changed so as to

become severe. But others, as Lallemant, with St. Augustine, understand the change to be wrought in the psalmist who speaks: *“Et dixi: Nunc cœpi . . .”;* which is explained thus: I said that now I begin to breathe again by means of hope; or, according to others, I have now determined to change my life, and this change is the work of the right hand of the Most High, that is, of divine grace, *dispellentis,* writes St. Augustine, *priorem nebulam et caliginem:* of grace, which delivering me from the cloud of darkness in which I was before, draws me to himself with a new light. St. Antony, the abbot, enjoined, upon his disciples to repeat every morning, when renewing the good intention of giving themselves entirely to God, these words: *Et dixi: Nunc cœpi.*

11. **[76:12]** “*Quia.*” According to the Hebrew: *Certe, quin etiam.* And assuredly, I shall continue to remember the wonderful things which Thou, O my God, hast wrought since the beginning of the world.

12. **[76:13]** “*In adinventionibus tuis exercebor.*” St. Jerome translates: *Adinventiones tuas loquar.* And Bossuet explains the passage thus: *Sapientiæ tuæ arcana, et ad salutem nostram excogitata consilia*—I shall exercise myself in praising the loving inventions of Thy wisdom with a view to our salvation.

13. **[76:14]** “*In sancto via tua.*” Bossuet: *Viæ tuæ sunctæ.* That is, following the explanation of Bossuet: Thy designs and Thy works are always in holiness.

14. **[76:16]** “*Redemisti.*” Thou hast redeemed or delivered Thy people from the hands of their enemies.[13194]

15. **[76:17]** The waters saw Thee, O God Almighty! they were stricken with terror, and out of reverence and awe they drew back to their abysses, that is, to their lowest depths. Bellarmine explains this of the waters of the Red Sea, which at the command of God divided to give a passage for the Hebrews.

16. **[76:18]** Then there was heard a great sound, that is, the great roaring of the waves of the sea, when they rushed on the Egyptians to overwhelm them; the clouds also gave forth their voice, raining with fury on the enemies.

17. **[76:19]** Lallemant translates: Thy lightnings flashed on all sides, and Thy thunderbolts broke up the wheels of the enemy's chariots. But other interpreters render the sense better thus: The hailstones struck like arrows, and the voice of Thy thunder, that is, the thunder made a noise like that of a wheel creaking by reason of its rapid motion. "*In rota.*" Bossuet says: *Instar rotæ rapide discurrentis.* Thus also is it explained by Maldonatus and Mariana.

19. **[76:20]** "*Vestigia tua non cognoscentur.*" St. Jerome translates: *Vestigia tua non sunt agnita.* Thy traces, that is, those of Thy people who passed over dry shod, were not known by the enemy, who remained submerged.

PSALM 77 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm recalls briefly all that the Lord has done for his people from the time of Moses till the days of David. The psalmist, while exalting the munificence of God, expresses his detestation of the ingratitude of the Hebrews.

1. **[77:1]** "*Legem meam.*" My precepts, or my teaching.

2. **[77:2]** "*In parabolis.*" The learned Mazzochi (*Spicil. Bibl.* in Num. 23:7) says, that in Scripture the word *Parabola* is used for every kind of poetical composition; whence it is explained: I will open my mouth to sing in verse. "*Loquar propositiones ab initio.*" St. Jerome translates: *Loquar ænigmata antiqua*—I will speak ancient enigmas. This agrees with the Gospel of St. Matthew (13:35), in which we read: *Eructabo abscondita a constitutione mundi*—I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world: I will declare unto you the mysteries of ancient deeds, come to pass since the beginning of the world.

3. **[77:3]** "*Quanta audivimus.*" St. Jerome translates: *Quæ audivimus.*

6. **[77:5]** “*Suscitavit.*” St. Jerome translates: *Statuit*—He established. “*In Jacob, . . . In Israel.*” Among the posterity of Jacob.

7. **[77:5]** “*Quanta.*” According to the Hebrew: *Quæ*—Which.

10. **[77:8]** “*Prava et exasperans.*” According to the Hebrew: *Amara et rebellis;* or, following the translation of St. Jerome: *Declinans et provocans*—Inconstant and irritating.

11. **[77:8]** “*Non est creditus cum Deo.*” St. Jerome has: *Non credit Deo*—Believe not God.

12. **[77:9]** “*Filii Ephrem.*” The tribe of Ephraim.[13195]

15. **[77:12]** “*Taneos.*” Tanis, the capital city of Lower Egypt (Menochius).

16. **[77:13]** “*Quasi in utre.*” According to the Hebrew: *Quasi cumulum;* or, according to St. Jerome: *Quasi acervum*—Piled up high in a heap.

17. **[77:14]** “*Diei, . . . In illuminatione.*” St. Jerome translates: *Pre diem . . . In lumine.* The Lord went before them to show the way by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire (*Exod.* 13:21).

18. **[77:15]** “*Adaquavit.*” According to the Hebrew: *Potum dedit.* “*Velut in abysso multa.*” Menochius explains: *Ac si essent ad ripam profundissimi fluminis*—As though they were on the bank of a deep river.

20. **[77:17]** “*Apaosuerunt adhuc peccare.*” According to the Hebrew: *Iterum peccaverunt;* or, according to the translation of St. Jerome: *Addiderunt ultra peccare.* “*In inaquosa.*” According to the Chaldee: *In arido deserto.*

21. **[77:18]** In the psalm of the *invitatorium*, verse 4, is explained what we read here. The Hebrews in asking of God for bread and flesh, in the midst of the desert (*Exod.* 16:3; *Num.* 11:4), wished to tempt him in order to see by this experiment whether he were really able to provide them with such food in a place deprived of everything.

22. **[77:20]** “*Parare mensam.*” Prepare for us a table such as we desire.

25. **[77:21]** “*Distulit.*” Mattei interprets: *Distulit implere*—He delayed to fulfil his promises; but it appears to me better to say: He suspended the course of his benefits to those ungrateful men. “*Jacob . . . Israel.*” The posterity of Jacob.

27. **[77:23]** “*Januas cœli aperuit.*” This is said to show the abundance of manna that came down from heaven.

28. **[77:24]** “*Manna.*” Bellarmine says that this name comes from the wonder excited in the people when they saw the earth covered with this extraordinary food, spread over the ground like hoar-frost, and said to one another: *Man Hu?* which signifies: *Quid est hoc*—What is this? (*Exod.* 16:15). The same author adds that manna was the seed of the coriander. “*Panem cœli.*” The manna was thus called, because it came from heaven or from the atmosphere.

29. **[77:25]** “*Panem angelorum.*” It was thus called, because it was formed by the operation of the angels.

30. **[77:26]** According to the interpretation of Lallemant, the Lord caused the Auster or east wind to cease, and made the Africus or south wind blow in its place. But Bellarmine remarks that the east wind, Auster (or Eurus), denoted in the Hebrew text is not opposed to the Africus, but is rather next to it and united with it. Hence Theodoret, Euthymius, and others, do not give to the word *Transtulit* the sense of *Cessare fecit*—Made to cease; but that of *Flare jussit*—Commanded to blow; as if it were said, following the explanation of St. Augustine: *Transtulit de cœlesti thesauro, et emisit in terram*—So that God ordained that these two winds together should bring the quails in the desert.

34. **[77:30]** “*Ascendit.*” The same expression as in verse 25. When the fire of anger is great, its flame rises on high.

35. **[77:31]** “*Pingues eorum.*” Bellarmine understands by this: The most voluptuous; Lallemant: The strongest. “*Electos Israel impedivit.*” This

means, according to Lallemant, that he struck with death the choice or the pick of their youth; and, according to Bellarmine, that the strongest among them were by God prevented from escaping death.

36. **[77:32]** “*Non crediderunt in mirabilibus ejus.*” Such wonders could not induce them to fear the Lord and trust in him.

37. **[77:33]** They consumed uselessly their days in the desert; and their years were shortened.

40. **[77:36]** They promised to love him; but this promise was only in their mouth, on their tongue, and they thus lied to God.

42. **[77:38]** “*Non disperdet eos.*” God, who is always compassionate towards others, notwithstanding their sins, would not utterly destroy all his people as they deserved.

44. **[77:39]** God remembers, that is, he considers that these sinners are men of flesh, weak, and filled with misery, whose life is as a passing wind that lasts but a short time, which comes and goes but does not return. Thus the young man passes on to old age, but does not return to youth.

47. **[77:42]** “*De manu tribulantis.*” From the hand of their enemy, Pharao, who oppressed them.

47. **[77:42]** “*Taneos.*” (See verse 15.)

49. **[77:44]** “*In sanguinem.*” Into the color of blood. “*Flumina.*” Bellarmine says that by these rivers are to be understood the different branches of the Nile which run through Egypt. “*Imbres.*” This properly is not rain, of which there is hardly any in that country, but every kind of water, especially the overflowing of the Nile (*Exod.* 7:20).

50. **[77:45]** “*Cœnomyiam*” (*Exod.* 8:24). It is a question whether this should be written *Cœnomyia,* the common fly, or *Cynomyia,* the dog-fly. The Vulgate has the first, but the Greek more commonly prefers the second; St. Jerome varies.

51. **[77:46]** “*Ærugini.*” To the rust. Caterpillars and locusts, according to St. Jerome’s explanation, devour the herbs like rust or mildew (*Exod.* 10:13).

52. **[77:47]** “*Moros.*” St. Jerome translates: *Sycomoros;* and St. Gregory makes this remark: *Sycomorus, quippe ficus fatua dicitur.* The word *Sycamore*, etymologically, meaning a foolish fig (*Mor.*1. 27, c. 27). “*In pruina.*” Mattei says that the Hebrew word signifies here great hail-stones.

53. **[77:48]** “*Igni.*” By this fire, Mattei understands with probability, frost; which also burns the fields. He does this to avoid introducing another plague of Egypt, that of fire, of which Moses makes no mention.[13196]

56. **[77:51]** “*Primitias omnis laboris eorum.*” Men labor hard to bring up their first-born, and for this reason they are called the first-fruits of their labors. “*In tabernaculum Cham.*” It was the descendants of Cham, son of Noe, who peopled Egypt after the deluge.

57. **[77:52]** It is thus, says the psalmist, that God delivered his people from the slavery of Egypt.

58. **[77:53]** He led the Israelites full of confidence and without fear, because their enemies were now sunk in the Red Sea; and thus their slavery was at an end.

59. **[77:54]** “*In montem sanctificationis suæ.*” This, as Bellarmine explains, signifies the Promised Land; a mountain, that is, a mountainous land, which God had chosen for himself to be there honored by his people; a mountain, or land, which he had acquired by his own right hand; having wrought so many miracles to help the Israelites in conquering and driving out the idolaters who inhabited it.

60. **[77:54]** “*Gentes.*” The hostile nations, or the Chanaanites, who inhabited the land. “*In funicula distributionis.*” The lands were measured with cords, according to the custom of those times, to be then distributed by lots to the families of the Israelites.

66. **[77:60]** “*Silo.*” A town of the tribe of Ephraim, where abode for some time the Ark of the Covenant, which God caused to be made in the desert, and where the Lord in some sense dwelt amongst men; since it was thence he gave to them his answers.

67. **[77:61]** “*Virtutem eorum et pulchritudinem eorum.*” The strength and the glory of the people of Israel was the holy Ark, as Menochius, Lallemant, and Bossuet, with St. Augustine, explain: God permitted that it should become the spoil of the enemy, namely, of the Philistines (1 *Kings*, 4:11).

68. **[77:62]** He suffered, moreover, that his people should be encompassed on all sides by the swords of their enemies; and thus he had to despise that people whom he had chosen as his heritage; that is, to be to him a peculiar and special people.

69. **[77:63]** “*Ignis.*” The fire of war, or rather of the divine wrath ‘*Lamentatæ.*” Some explain this word in an active sense; but Bellarmine, Lallemant, and Mattei think with more reason that it should be taken in the passive sense; thus the meaning is: After the death of the young men, the young maidens whom they were to marry had no one to lament their sad lot; because in the general massacre every one had to bewail the losses in his own family, rather than those of others; and this explanation agrees well with the Hebrew text, which St. Jerome renders thus: *Virgines ejus* (*populi*) *nemo luxit*—No one mourned the virgins of the people.

70. **[77:64]** “*Sacerdotes eorum.*” Ophni et Phinees, the sons of Heli (1 *Kings,* 4:11). “*Non plorabantur.*” St. Jerome translates: *Non sunt fletæ.* None consoled nor even pitied them, because all were occupied with weeping the death of their own relatives.

71. **[77:65]** But at last the Lord awoke, as wakes up a strong warrior who, heavy with wine, has fallen into a deep sleep. This is the interpretation given by Bellarmine, Menochius, Gordona, and Lallemant; they say that God when he does not punish the wicked seems to sleep a deep sleep. But Mattei justly remarks that the parallel of a drunken man waking up from

sleep is ill becoming to God; and he adds that the verse contains not one but two similes; the first is that of the awaking: “*Excitatus est tamquam dormiens;*” the second is that of the return that God makes against his enemies, like a mighty warrior, strengthened and whetted for fight by the wine that he has taken: *Tamquam potens miles exhilaratus a vino;* this agrees with the Hebrew text, which is rendered by *Ovans* or *Exhilaratus*—Cheered or Refreshed, instead of “*Crapulatus.*”

72. **[77:66]** “*Inimicos suos.*” The Philistines. “*In posteriora.*” That is: *In secretiori parte natium* (1 *Kings,* 5:6). God punished their pride by sores so disgraceful, that they were a perpetual cause of shame to them.

73. **[77:67]** “*Tabernaculum Joseph.*” That is, the Tabernacle containing the Ark of the Covenant, which was at Silo, a city of the tribe of Ephraim, son of Joseph.[13197]

74. **[77:68]** “*Elegit tribum Juda, montem Sion, quem dilexit.*” He chose the tribe of Juda, to establish his Tabernacle, Mount Sion, preferring it to all other places in Juda.

75. **[77:69]** And on this Mount Sion, that is, at Jerusalem, a land that he established to last forever, he built his sanctuary, firm and strong as the horn of the unicorn. Bellarmine says that Jerusalem, which was afterwards destroyed, is here a figure of the Church, which is to endure till the end of the world. Mattei adds that Mount Sion was compared to the unicorn because upon it was the Temple, which was the only temple of Judea.

77. **[77:71]** God took David from the humble condition of a shepherd, to place in his hand the royal sceptre and the government of his people, composed of the children of his servant Jacob.

78. **[77:72]** David governed this people with a right heart, and directed them with counsel and prudence in all the works that he did for their good.[13198]

PSALM 78 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm shows us the miserable state of the Jewish people during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, in the time of the Machabees. This at least is to be inferred from the first book of the Machabees, chapter 7 verse 17, in which the author cites the second verse of our psalm as a prophecy realized in his presence. But, according to St. Augustine, reference is here made to the persecutions that the Church suffered under the pagan emperors.

1. **[78:1]** “*In hereditatem tuam.*” Against Thy people, that is, Thy inheritance. “*In pomorum custodiam.*” St. Jerome translates: *In acervos lapidum*—They have made of it heaps of stone. In the first book of the Machabees, we read as follows: *Accepit spolia civitatis, et succendit eam igni, et destruxit domos ejus, et. muros ejus in circuitu . . . Et Jerusalem non habitabatur, sed erat sicut desertum*—He took the spoils of the city and burnt it with fire, and threw down the houses thereof round about . . . And Jerusalem was not inhabited, but was like a desert (1 *Mach.* 1:33; 3:45).

4. **[78:4]** “*Qui in circuitu nostro sunt.*” Namely, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Ammonites, and other Gentiles,

5. **[78:5]** “*In finem.*” According to the Hebrew and Chaldee: *In Perpetuum.* “*Zelus*” Tirinus explains this to be: *Indignatio*—Indignation. “*Velut ignis.*” Like fire which is not extinguished till it has reduced everything to ashes, says Bellarmine: *Qui crescere solet in immensum, et in cinerem omnia redigere.*

7. **[78:7]** “*Jacob.*” The children of Jacob, that is, Thy people. “*Locum ejus.*” Their country; or, according to the Hebrew, their Temple.

8. **[78:8]** “*Anticipent nos misericordiæ tuæ.*” That is: Prevent by Thy mercy the ruin with which our enemies threaten us.

9. **[78:9]** “*Propter gloriam nominis tui . . . propter nomen tuum.*” Not for our merits, but for the glory of Thy name. “*Libera nos.*” Deliver us from the miseries in which we are. “*Propitius esto peccatis nostris.*” Pardon us our sins which have drawn this persecution upon us.

10, 11. **[78:10, 11]** “*Innotescat . . . Ultio sanguinis servorum tuorum.*” Let Thy justice be manifest to all, by avenging the blood of Thy servants.

12. **[78:11]** “*Posside filios.*” Possess, that is, preserve the children who have escaped from slaughter.

13. **[78:12]** “*Vicinis nostris.*” To those enemies who are our neighbors. Some think that these are Edomites and Philistines; some others, as Bellarmine, those that brought ruin upon Jerusalem under Antiochus, king of Syria. “*Septuplum.*” Sevenfold, or many times as much, or simply the double, expressing a complete retribution. “*In sinu corum.*” In the centre of their hearts.

PSALM 79 OF THE PSALTER

We find in this psalm, according as we take it in the literal or the mystical sense, the prayer which the Jews who were prisoners addressed to God for their deliverance, or which the patriarchs offered up, that the Messias might put an end to the tyranny of the devil.

1. **[79:2]** “*Qui regis Israel.*” According to the Hebrew: *O Pastor Israel!* or, according to St. Jerome: *Qui pascis Israel:* O God, who as a shepherd rulest and feedest the people of Israel. “*Intende.*” St. Jerome translates: *Ausculta:* Hear, Thou who guidest as Thy flock the posterity of Joseph. “*Ovem.*” The Hebrew word, though singular, denotes a multitude, as Menochius remarks. “*Joseph.*” Menochius and Tirinus give the reasons why under the name of Joseph are comprised all the Israelites, descendants of Joseph and of his brethren. (See Psalm, 76:14.)

2. **[79:2]** “*Qui sedes super Cherubim.*” That is: Thou to whom the first angels in heaven serve as a throne. “*Manifestare.*” According to the Hebrew: *Splende, Inclarescere*—Make Thy power brilliantly shine forth. “*Coram Ephrem, Benjamin, et Manasse.*” By these three tribes are meant the whole people of Israel, according to the explanation of Bellarmine and others.[13199]

3. **[79:3]** “*Excita potentiam tuam.*” Awake Thy power; for, as Bellarmine explains, it seems to be asleep, when Thou permittest our enemies to afflict us in this way. “*Ut salvos facias nos.*” By delivering us from this captivity.

4. **[79:4]** “*Converte nos.*” According to the Hebrew: *Reduc nos*—Make us recover our liberty. “*Ostende faciem tuam.*” Look upon us with a benign countenance. This verse is thus well rendered by Mattei:

“Signor, da questi carceri,	Ah! from these prisons forth, O Lord,
Deh per pietà richiamaci;	In pity lead us, home restored;
Un sol tuo sguardo bastaci,	Enough, one gracious look from Thee,
E sarem sarem salvi e liberi.”	To save and set us captives free.

5. **[79:5]** “*Servi tui.*” That is: Of Thy people; as Bossuet and others explain with St. Jerome.

6. **[79:6]** “*In mensura.*” Bellarmine says that some misunderstand this phrase, as though it meant: With moderation; for the Hebrew word here means something great and multiplied, that is, in very full measure.[13200]

8. **[79:8]** Repetition of verse 4.

9. **[79:9]** Thou hast brought Thy vine, that is, Thy people, out of Egypt into the land of promise, after having driven there from the Gentiles; and there Thou hast planted it, that is to say, the Synagogue, which was the figure of the Christian Church.

10. **[79:10]** “*Dux itineris fuisti in conspectu ejus.*” Lallemant translates thus: Thou didst convey (wert conductor of) this vine in the journey, without ever losing sight of it. But others more commonly continue the allegory, following the sense of the Hebrew text, namely: *Præparasti locum coram ea;* or, according to St. Jerome: *Præparasti ante faciem ejus.* Hence they translate: Thou hast prepared this land for this vine. *Plantasti radices*, etc.—And Thou hast caused it to take such good root, that it has filled all this land.

11. **[79:11]** “*Arbusta.*” St. Jerome translates: *Rami.* “*Cedros Dei.*” That is, according to Bellarmine and Lallemant: *Cedros altissimas*—The most lofty cedars, as were those of Lebanon.[13201]

12. **[79:12]** “*Mare.*” The Mediterranean. “*Flumen.*” The Euphrates. Such is the interpretation of Bellarmine, Lallemant, and others.[13202]

14. **[79:14]** “*Aper de silva.*” Euthymius, Bellarmine, Malvenda, Mattei, and others understand by the wild boar Nabuchodonosor; and, allegorically, according to St. Jerome, it is the devil. “*Singularis ferus.*” Bellarmine, Mattei, and others say that according to the Hebrew phrase these words designate the same wild boar; it is the ordinary repetition.[13203]

15. **[79:15]** “*Vide, et visita vineam.*” Consider our miseries, and visit with Thy compassion this vine thus brought to ruin.

16. **[79:16]** “*Super Filium hominis.*” According to the Chaldee version: *Propter Regem Christum.* We beg Thee for the love of the Son of man; that is, the Messias, whom Thou hast confirmed; that is, hast established, as Thy Son. It is thus that St. Jerome, St. Augustine, Theodoret, Euthymius, Bellarmine, etc., explain this verse.

17. **[79:17]** “*Ab increpatione vultus tui peribunt.*” Some, as Estius, Sa, and Bossuet, explain this passage thus: But those that have thus laid it waste shall perish through the wrath of Thy angry countenance. Others, more commonly, as Malvenda, Menochius, Rotigni, Tirinus, and Mattei, with Vatablus, Genebrard, Maldonatus, and Mariana, apply it to the Jewish people in this sense: If Thy countenance continues to appear threatening, and to show forth Thy wrath, all those that belong to the Synagogue will perish.

18. **[79:18]** Cause Thy power to be known upon the Man of Thy right hand;[13204] and upon the Son of man whom Thou hast willed for Thy glory to send into the world to restore Thy vineyard.

19. **[79:19]** “*Discedimus.*” St. Jerome translates: *Recedemus.* “*Vivificabis nos.*” Thou wilt give us the strength to serve Thee.

20. **[79:20]** Repetition of verses 4 and 8.

FRIDAY AT MATINS

PSALM 80 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist reproves the people for the negligence with which they celebrate the praises of the Lord, and urges them to celebrate them with devotion and in thanksgiving for the benefits received from the Lord; for this end the feasts are instituted. Every Christian can apply this psalm to himself.

3. **[80:4]** “*Neomenia.*” We should here remark, that the Hebrews celebrated every month the Feast of the New Moon; but the most solemn Feast of the New Moon was in September, when the trumpets were sounded, and hence it was called the Feast of Trumpets: *Dies clangoris est et tubarum* (*Num.* 29:1). “*Vestræ.*” According to the Hebrew: *Nostræ*—Our.

4. **[80:5]** In the Book of Numbers, 10:10.

7. **[80:8]** “*In Joseph.*” That is: On the posterity of Joseph and his brethren; that is, on the people of Israel. “*Linguam quam non noverat.*” A language which he did not know, because this was the first time that God spoke to his people.

6. **[80:7]** According to the Hebrew: *Liberavi ab onere dorsum ejus, et manus ejus a cophinis cessaverunt.* The prophet recalls to mind the burdens, the baskets full of mud and bricks, that the Israelites were condemned to carry.

7. **[80:8]** Here it is God that speaks. “*Exaudivi te in abscondito tempestatis.*” This passage is variously interpreted. Mattei understands it as referring to the chastisements that God poured upon the enemies of his people; but I prefer the view of Genebrardus, who explains it thus: I heard thee in the tempest of afflictions which thou didst suffer at the hands of the

Egyptians, when it seemed to thee that I hid myself away, and did not hear thy prayer. (This applies well to souls in a state of desolation, to whom it appears as if God does not hear them any more, whilst the Lord in the midst of this storm secretly, that is, without letting them know it, listens to them and helps them.) "*Probavi te apud aquam contradictionis.*" And yet I tried them and found them to be unfaithful near the water of Meriba. The Hebrew word *Meriba,* meaning contradiction or strife, and so translated in the Vulgate, is the name of the place where the people, suffering from the want of water, contradicted Moses and first refused to obey him. Thus Mattei and others.

8. **[80:9]** "*Contestabor te*" Bellarmine explains: *Testatum faciam tibi quid a te requiram. "Si audieris me."* If thou wilt obey me. "*Neque adorabis deum alienum.*" St. Jerome's translates: *Et non adores deum peregrinum.*

9. **[80:11]** "*Dominus Deus tuus.*" Thy only Lord and God. "*Dilata os tuum.*" That is: Enlarge thy desires, and ask of me what thou wilt. "*Implebo illud.*" I will satisfy thee fully.

10. **[80:12]** "*Non intendit.*" According to the Hebrew: *Non acquievit,* or according to St. Jerome: *Non credidit,* that is, would not rest satisfied with believing my word.

11. **[80:13]** "*Secundum desideria cordis eorum.*" That is, according to their disordered appetites. "*Ibunt in adinventionibus suis.*" St. Jerome translates: *Ambulabunt in consiliis suis*—They will walk to their ruin through following their evil designs.

14. **[80:16]** "*Mentiti sunt ei.*" They have failed in keeping their word to him.[13205]

15. **[80:17]** "*Ex adipe frumenti.*" With the flower of the flow of wheat. "*De petra melle.*" With honey gathered from the rocks; that is, in abundance, since the bees had even made their honey in the midst of rocks.

PSALM 81 OF THE PSALTER

It is God whom the prophet makes speak in this psalm; he reproaches the princes and the judges of the earth for their evil administration of justice, and places before them the moment of death, when they themselves will have to be judged. The last verse shows us Jesus Christ coming to judge all men at the end of the world.

1. **[81:1]** "*Deorum.*" According to the Chaldee: *Judicum. "Deos dijudicat."* He weighs the judgments that they render.

2. **[81:2]** Here God is speaking to the judges. "*Facies peccatorum sumitis?*" Bellarmine says that *Sumere faciem alicujus in judicio,* is to judge, not according to the rule that justice demands, but according to the pleasure of him whom the judge wishes to favor. But Mattei says that *Sumere faciem peccatorum,* according to the proper sense of the Hebrew expression, signifies: *Erigere faciem peccatorum,* and says he, when judges favor the wicked, they cause the wicked to hold up their head; that is, their pride.

4. **[81:4]** "*De manu peccatoris.*" From the hands of the sinner who is more powerful and would oppress them.

5. **[81:5]** The wicked judges do not understand these maxims; they walk in the dark, and they put all the world in confusion by their unjust practices.

6. **[81:6]** O judges! I have set you up as gods of the earth, by giving you a share of my own power; by virtue of this authority that you have received from the Most High, you are his sons.

7. **[81:7]** But take note that you are men, and as men you have all to die, and one day each one of you will fall from his post, as the princes who went before you have fallen.

8. **[81:8]** "*Hereditabis in omnibus gentibus.*" Thy reign shall extend over all the nations as Thy heritage, and at the last day all these must submit to Thy justice and power.

PSALM 82 OF THE PSALTER

We have in this psalm the prayer that the Jewish people addressed to God, asking him for help against the Ammonites, the Moabites, and other Gentiles, who threatened to ruin the Temple and the holy city. This psalm may be used to pray to the intention of the Church whenever she suffers any special persecution.

1. **[82:2]** "*Quis similis crit tibi?*" Who shall have power to do what Thou canst? "*Neque compescaris.*" St. Jerome translates: *Et non quiescas.* Hide not Thy just indignation by keeping silence and peace.

2. **[82:3]** "*Sonucrunt.*" St. Jerome translates: *Tumultuati sunt.*

3. **[82:4]** "*Malignaverunt consilium.*" St. Jerome translates: *Nequiter tractaverunt. "Sanctos tuos."* Those that adore Thee.

4. **[82:5]** "*Disperdamus eos de gente.*" According to Mattei, this is a Hebraism, which means: Let us remove this people from the world:

5. **[82:6]** "*Testamentum disposuerunt*" St. Jerome translates: *Fœdus pepigerunt. "Tabernacula."* That is, the tents or the camp, the troops.

6. **[82:7]** "*Alienigenæ*" The strangers, or foreigners.[13206]

7. **[82:9]** "*Etenim Assur.*" St. Jerome translates: *Sed et Assur.* And even the host of the Assyrians. "*Filiis Lot.*" Mattei says that hereby we can only understand the Ammonites, the descendants of Ammon, son of Lot.[13207]

8. **[82:10]** "*Madian.*" The Madianites, defeated by Gedeon (*Jud.* 7:20).

10. **[82:12]** Oreb and Zeb, two of the chiefs of the Madianites, were slain by the Hebrews (*Jud.* 7:25). Zebee and Salmana, their kings, were killed by Gedeon himself (*Jud.* 8:21).

11. **[82:12]** "*Hæreditate possideamus sanctuarium Dei.*" Let us go to take possession of the Sanctuary of God, that is, Jerusalem, as an inheritance that belongs to us.

12. **[82:14]** “*Pone illos ut rotam*” Lallemant thus interprets these words: Send upon them a spirit of giddiness, to disconcert them. “*Sicut stipulam ante faciem venti.*” Scatter them as a heap of straw is scattered before the wind. Such is the explanation also given by Mattei.[13208]

13. **[82:15]** “*Flamma comburens montes.*” Genebrard and Rotigni understand this of volcanoes, as Vesuvius and Etna, which cause general devastation by the flames they send forth. Bellarmine understands it of the dry grass burning on the mountains; but Lallemant and Mattei interpret it of the lightning that strikes the mountains and sets then on fire.[13209]

14. **[82:16]** St. Jerome translates: *Sic persequere eos in tempestate tua, et in turbine tuo conturba eos*—So pursue them with the tempest of Thy vengeance, and confuse them with the whirlwind of Thy wrath.

15. **[82:17]** “*Quærent nomen tuum.*” That is, they will enter into themselves and be converted to Thee. But others more commonly explain it thus: They will ask to know Thy name, that is, Thy power; they will be instructed therein, and they will venerate it.

16. **[82:18]** If this is not enough to bring about their conversion, let them remain troubled with continual fear of Thy power all their lives, and let them die in confusion.

17. **[82:19]** Let them know that the name of the Lord belongs properly to Thee alone, since Thou alone art King of kings throughout the earth.

PSALM 83 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm shows us with what ardor the psalmist, desolate in finding himself far from the Temple of Jerusalem, sighed after the moment of seeing it again. And as the Temple was the figure of heaven, one must believe that he sighed at the same time after the happiness of going to contemplate God in the heavenly kingdom. Nothing is more fitted than this psalm to excite in us the desire of leaving the earth, and of entering the abode of the blessed.

1. **[83:2]** “*Atria Domini.*” See verse 10.

2. **[83:3]** That is: My soul and my body leap for joy in thinking of Thee, O living God! Our God is called the living God, in contrast with the gods of the Gentiles, who are dead gods.

3, 4. **[83:3, 4]** For the sparrow finds its dwelling in some house, and the turtle a nest in which it places its young in safety; and cannot I retire near Thy altars, that is, in Thy Temple, which would be my happy asylum and my happy nest.—This is thus understood by Bellarmine, Maldonatus, and Lallemant. Mattei translates: *Altaria tua*—Thy altar was my nest, my haven.

6. **[83:6]** This is the sense that St. Augustine gives to this verse: Happy the man that hopes to receive from Thee the help that he needs, having resolved in his heart to rise more and more to higher degrees of perfection, as long as he is in this valley of tears,—a place where God has placed him to gain merit. But Mattei with Bossuet interprets this in a very different manner. He says that the psalmist, sighing to return from Babylon to Jerusalem, imagines that he is already free, and exclaims: Happy he that hopes for and obtains Thy help; he already returns, he passes by the valley of Bocha, and is there refreshed by the water that Thou causest to rain down. The same author gives afterwards some explanations: 1. “*Ascensiones.*” This word, according to the Hebrew, expresses the return to Jerusalem, and it is this that the prophet represents to himself in spirit: “*In corde suo.*” 2. “*Disposuit.*” A verb that is found joined to the following words: “*In valle lacrymarum*” which are expressed in Hebrew by the name of *Bocha,* which was an arid valley, called the Place of Tears: *Locus flentium, sive Lacrymarum* (*Jud.* 2:5. In the Hebrew we read: *Bochim*). 3. “*In loco quem posuit.*” Here the Hebrew word instead of *Locus*—Place, signifies *Fons,* a Fountain; so that we translate: *Fons ibi ponetur*—There shall be set a fountain of water.

7. **[83:8]** Mattei, following the sense which he gives to the preceding verse, renders this verse as follows: *Etenim propitia dabitur pluvia; hinc ibit de cœtu in cœtum, donec videbit Deum deorum in Sion*—For a kindly rain shall

be granted; and thence he shall go from company to company, till he comes to see the great God in Sion. Thus the psalmist imagining himself refreshed in the valley of *Bocha* with the water of a most salutary rain, and that he is marching in the midst of the companies of Israelites who are going to Jerusalem, rejoices as if he were already in the Temple and saw the God of gods. But others, following the sense that they at first adopted, give this explanation: For God, who has given the law, which is the road to arrive at life eternal, will give them his blessing; and so they will walk from virtue to virtue till they see the God of gods in the heavenly Sion. What is certain is that these two verses, 6 and 7, are obscure; and interpreters have made them still more so.

9. **[83:10]** O God, who art our protector! regard us with a gracious eye, and especially look upon our king, who is the figure of the Saviour whom Thou art to send us. "*Christi.*" According to Bossuet: *Regis, qui est Christi figura*—The king who is a figure of Christ. But it may well be understood as applying principally to the Messias.

10. **[83:11]** "*In atriis tuis.*" These words designate the Temple, says Mariana: *Sic Templum vocat, in quo varia atria erant*—He thus speaks of the Temple, in which there were various courts. Tirinus observes that the Temple allegorically signifies the Church, and anagogically, that is, in a higher spiritual sense, heaven.

11. **[83:11]** "*In domo Dei mei.*" By this house of God Bellarmine with St. Augustine understands heaven; but Bossuet, Mattei, etc., understand the Temple, according to the Hebrew, and is thus translated: *Mallem esse custos liminis domus tuæ*—I would rather be a doorkeeper of the Temple; that is, amongst its most lowly servants, according to what we read of the most humble offices of the Levites (1 *Parall.* 9:19, and *seq.*). "*In tabernaculis.*" This expression here denotes the great houses, palaces.

12. **[83:12]** That is: God is merciful and faithful to his promises; hence he wishes to grant us grace in this life, and glory in the next.

13. **[83:13]** “*Bonis.*” Grace and glory are real good things. “*Qui ambulant in innocentia.*” Those that live, keeping away from sin.

PSALM 84 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist goes to show us, on the one hand, the Jewish people delivered from slavery; on the other hand, mankind redeemed from the slavery of Satan. He enumerates, moreover, the fruits of the Redemption. The Church recites this psalm in the office of Christmas, and we ourselves may recite it to obtain that the fruits of the Redemption may be applied to us.

1. **[84:2]** “*Benedixisti, Domine, terram tuam.*” St. Jerome translates: *Placatus es, Domine, terræ tuæ*—At last, O Lord, Thou hast been appeased in respect to Thy land,[13210] and Thou hast blessed it. “*Jacob.*” Of Jacob, or his children.

2. **[84:3]** “*Operuisti omnia peccata eorum.*” Thou hast covered all their sins; or, as is very well explained by Bellarmine, Thou hast hidden them from Thy face, in order not to see them, nor to punish them. When God covers sins, he effaces them and remits them as if they had never existed. See what has been said in Psalm 31, verse 1.

3. **[84:4]** “*Avertisti ab ira indignationis tuæ.*” St. Jerome translates: *Conversus es ab ira furoris tui*—Thou hast put off Thy wrath, as Bellarmine explains it; Thou hast turned away from Thy anger and Thy indignation: *Avertisti te ab ira et indignatione tua.*

4. **[84:5]** “*Deus salutaris noster.*” St. Jerome translates: *Deus, Jesus noster.*

6. **[84:7]** “*Deus, tu conversus.*” St. Jerome translates: *Nonne tu convertens . . . ?* That is: If Thou, O Lord, art appeased, and turnest Thy eyes towards us, Thou wilt give us life, by causing us to rise again from sin to grace; and Thy people will rejoice in Thee, singing Thy praises.

7. **[84:8]** “*Misericordiam tuam.*” The effects of Thy mercy. “*Salutare tuum da nobis.*” That is, according to Bellarmine and Menochius: Give us salvation by sending us the Saviour, or the expected Messias.

8. **[84:9]** “*Loquetur pacem in plebem suam.*” He will speak of peace for his people, that is, of the reconciliation that Jesus Christ their Redeemer will obtain for them, who is called by Isaias: *Princeps pacis* (*Is.* 9:6).

9. **[84:9]** He will make me understand that he wishes to save the just, and even the sinners, who entering into themselves will be converted, seriously and with all their heart; according to Bellarmine and Bossuet: *Qui serio resipiscunt.*

10. **[84:10]** “*Verumtamen.*” According to the Hebrew: *Certe, Utique*—Surely, of a truth; as Malvenda, Menochius, Sa, Tirinus, and Lallemant observe. “*Salutare ipsius.*” The salvation that God will give them with the coming of the Messias. “*Gloria.*” That is: Jesus Christ; *Splendor gloriæ* (*Heb.* 1:3). Thus Maldonatus et Malvenda.

11. **[84:11]** Mercy and truth, or justice, will meet at the coming of the Messias, so that then justice satisfied and peace bestowed shall embrace each other. St. Jerome and St. Augustine understand by *Mercy,* the coming of the Saviour for the Gentiles, to whom he was not promised; and by *Truth,* the faithfulness of the Messias with respect to the Jews, to whom he was promised. We have used the future *will meet* and *will embrace,* because in this psalm the coming of the Messias is predicted, as Bellarmine remarks, and the poetical language of the Orientals often expresses the future in the past tense, to denote the certainty of the prophecy.

12. **[84:12]** “*Veritas de terra orta est.*” That is, according to Lallemant: Innocence will again spring up on earth. Others explain it thus: The inhabitants of the earth will embrace the truth, or the true faith. But the interpretation that seems to me better is that of Bellarmine and of Menochius, namely: Truth shall spring from the earth, that is, from the virginal womb of Mary; so also St. Augustine understands it of the Eternal Word, who is the Truth itself, clothing himself with human flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin.[13211]

13. **[84:13]** God in his goodness will send his Son to become man; and our earth, the Blessed Virgin will give us her fruit, Jesus Christ, who was called

the fruit of Mary’s womb (*Luke,* 1:42); thus was accomplished the prophecy of Isaias: *Aperiatur terra, et germinet Salvatorem*—Let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Saviour (*Is.* 45:8).

14. **[84:14]** That is: All his actions and all his steps during his life shall be conformed to rectitude and justice, in order that men by following him may arrive at the country of the Blessed.

PSALM 85 OF THE PSALTER

We have in this psalm one of those fervent prayers that the royal prophet addressed to God in the midst of his tribulations. For, according to the common opinion, David is the author of this psalm. Moreover, he initiates us into the sentiments that filled the soul of Jesus Christ during his Passion, and he prophesies the conversion of the Gentiles. Afflicted souls may use it during their trials to implore the help of God.

2. **[85:2]** “*Custodit animam meam.*” Preserve my life. “*Sanctus sum.*” St. Jerome translates: *Sanctus ego.* According to the Syriac version and the Psalter of Milan: *Sanctus es;* but commonly the interpreters read: *Sanctus sum;* and Mattei says that we should not depart from the Hebrew. Hence this explanation: I am Thy faithful servant, devoted to Thy service.

3. **[85:3]** “*At te clamavi.*” I have cried to Thee by asking Thee for mercy. “*Ad te . . . animam meam levavi.*” Dom Calmet explains: I have desired Thy help with ardor. But Mattei’s translation is better: I have raised my heart to Thee.

4. **[85:5]** “*Mitis.*” St. Jerome translates: *Propitiabilis*—Ready to be propitiated, to pardon.

5. **[85:6]** “*Intende voci deprecationis meæ.*” Deign to listen to what I ask of Thee.

6. **[85:7]** “*Exaudisti me.*” That is, according to Bellarmine, Menochius, Sa, and Mariana: Thou hast always been willing to hear me.

7. **[85:8]** “*In diis.*” Among all the gods whom men adore.

8. **[85:9]** “*Venient.*” They will come not by leaving the country that they inhabit, but by embracing the faith.

10. **[85:11]** “*In via tua.*” In the way of Thy commandments. “*Ingrediar in veritate tua.*” Make me to enter it and walk in it with a firm step. Mattei says that according to the Hebrew the word *Veritas* marks the perfection of anything that is done. “*Lætetur cor meum.*” According to the Chaldee: *Uni cor meum;* that is, according to Mattei: *Collige cor meum;* this agrees with St. Jerome’s translation: *Unicum fac cor meum.* Unite, gather together to Thyself all the affections of my heart; make my heart to be only for Thee, so that it may fear nothing else than to give Thee displeasure.

12. **[85:13]** “*Ex inferno inferiori.*” That is, according to some: From great dangers which were for me a deep grave. But it is better to understand it, with Gordona, of the depth of hell where are the damned; or the abyss of sin, which according to St. Jerome is a kind of hell.

13. **[85:14]** “*Synagoga potentium quæsierunt animam meam.*” My powerful enemies have assembled in numbers to seek for me and to take away my life. “*Non proposuerunt te in conspectu suo.*” They have not set before their eyes that Thou protectest the just and punishest the guilty. This is thus understood by Bellarmine and Lallemant, with St. Augustine.[13212]

14. **[85:15]** “*Verax.*” That is: Faithful to Thy promises.

15. **[85:16]** “*Imperium.*” According to the Hebrew Mattei notes: *Robur,* strength; or following St. Jerome’s translation: *Fortitudinem.* This passage, as Mariana, Sa, and Rotigni say, may easily apply to Jesus Christ the Son of the Blessed Virgin, who is called herself the servant of the Lord: *Ecce ancilla Domini.*

PSALM 86 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm is consecrated to the praise of Jerusalem, this glorious city that God had chosen for his dwelling-place. And since Jerusalem is a figure of the Church, the Fathers and the interpreters refer unanimously this psalm to the Catholic Church; built upon the holy mountains, that is, upon the apostles, as St. Jerome, St. Augustine, Theodoret, Euthymius, explain, and as one may infer from these words of St. Paul: *Superædificati super fundamentum Apostolorum.* Built upon the foundation of the apostles (*Eph.* 2:20). This psalm is as obscure as it is short.

1. **[86:1]** "*Fundamenta ejus.*" That is, according to Bellarmine, Mattei, and others: The foundations of the holy city which I contemplate in spirit. "*In montibus sanctis.*" On the mountains of Sion and Moria, where the Temple is built; hence St. Jerome translates: *In montibus sanctcarii. "Portas Sion."* That is to say: The city of Jerusalem. "*Tabernacula Jacob.*" The habitation of Jacob, that is, according to Menochius, Bossuet, Mattei, Rotigni, etc.: The other cities of Judea.

2. **[86:3]** "*Gloriosa dicta sunt.*" Many glorious things have been said by the prophets; thus, Menochius, Mariana, and Tirinus.

3. **[86:4]** God here speaks. "*Rahab.*" According to the Hebrew: *Superbi;* but the interpreters, following the Chaldee, commonly understand Egypt.[13213] "*Scientium me.*" The inhabitants of which shall one day know me through the faith, and shall adore me. It is thus explained by Menochius, Lallemant, and several others.

4. **[86:4]** "*Alienigenæ.*" The Philistines. So it is understood by Lallemant, Mariana, and all the interpreters.[13214] "*Fuerunt.*" This past tense expresses here the future: All the people will be there. This is a prophecy that has been well verified in the Church of Jesus Christ by the conversion of the Gentiles, as Mattei observes.

5. **[86:5]** This verse is more obscure than the others. "*Numquid Sion dicet.*" In this phrase *Sion* is not in the nominative case. St. Jerome translates: *Ad Sion autem dicetur;* Estius with Symmachus has: *De Sion autem dicetur;* et Pagnini: *Et ipsi Sion dicetur. "Homo et homo."* A Hebraism, which, as Mattei says, can have two senses: it can signify the multiplicity of men, and so it is understood by Lallemant, or the excellence of man, a wise man, a

powerful man, etc., as St. Augustine, St. Jerome, Theodoret, Tertullian, and Bellarmine, and others understand it. Hence the verse is explained thus: What! Is there then no one there to say to Sion, that is to Jerusalem, that in the midst of her will be born a Man the most excelling, who will be the Most High, at once God and man, becoming man in the city founded by himself? *In ea factus est homo, et ipse eam fundavit.* Thus St. Augustine expresses it.

6. **[86:6]** The Lord will announce it, that is, will make it known in Holy Scriptures written for the instruction of the people, and especially in the writings of the apostles, who are the princes or the heads of the new Church. Thus following the explanation of Menochius, in these Scriptures shall be preserved the names of those distinguished men who have illustrated her.

7. **[86:7]** In a word, O city of God! O holy Church! those that shall dwell in thee will all be filled with joy on account of the peace that they shall enjoy.

PSALM 87 OF THE PSALTER

The coming Passion of Jesus Christ is the subject of this psalm, according to St. Augustine, who says: *Domini hic Passio prophetatur.* Here, then, under the figure of a soul overwhelmed with sufferings, insults, tribulations, which prays to God to come to its aid, we see Jesus Christ in the midst of his most bitter sufferings and in his total dereliction addressing himself as man to his heavenly Father to ask his help. This is the explanation given by Bellarmine and many others, with St. Jerome and St. Augustine, who makes this remark: *Oravit enim et Dominus non secundum formam Dei, sed secundum formam servi: secundum hanc enim passus est*—For the Lord, too, prayed: not according to the form of God, but according to the form of a servant; for according to this, too, he suffered. Every soul in desolation can profitably use this psalm to obtain relief from God.

1. **[87:2]** “*Deus salutis meæ.*” God, from whom I look for my salvation

3. **[87:4]** This verse agrees with what Jesus Christ said in the garden of Olives: *Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem*—My soul is sorrowful even

unto death (*Matt.* 26:38). It is thus applied by St. Augustine.

4. **[87:5]** “*Inter mortuos liber.*” Here the word *Liber* gives rise to different interpretations. St. Augustine applies it to Jesus Christ in two ways: first, in the sense of, Free from sin, in contrast with other men who are subject to death by reason of sin: *Inter peccatores solus sine peccato*—Though among sinners he himself alone without sin; and then in this sense that he died not through necessity, but only by an act of his free will. This second explanation is adopted by Bellarmine and Bossuet; it appears to me to be more adequate according to the letter in relation to Jesus Christ, typified under the person of David. But, speaking literally of the person of David, Mattei says that the words *Inter mortuos liber* signify: Separate from the other dead. He cites the example of king Azarias, who, on account of his leprosy, dwelt in a free house: *in domo libera* (4 *Kings,* 15:5); that is, in a free house—*in domo separata* (2 *Parall.* 26:21); and Josephus, the historian, attests that the same king when dead was also buried by himself in a place apart: *Seorsum solus sepultus est.* Hence Mattei, explaining this passage with regard to the person of David, renders it thus: I am reputed as separate even from the other dead, as though unworthy to remain amongst them.

5. **[87:6]** “*Vulnerati.*” St. Jerome translates: *Interfecti*—Killed. “*De manu tua repulsi.*” That is, according to Bellarmine and Tirinus: Deprived of all help from Thee.

6. **[87:7]** “*Posuerunt.*” St. Jerome translates: *Posuisti.* That is: Thou hast permitted that I should be deposed. “*In umbra mortis.*” St. Jerome translates: *In profundis.* According to Bellarmine, the sense is the same: he adds that the words *Umbra mortis* signify: A shadow so dense as it deprives of all light, like the shadow of death. He says, moreover, with St. Jerome, that this verse, applied to Jesus Christ, may be understood of his descent in Limbo.

7. **[87:8]** “*Furor.*” St. Augustine justly remarks that this word is better rendered by *Indignation*, because fury (wrath) is ordinarily found in those

that have a troubled mind. “*Omnes fluctus tuos induxisti super me.*” Thou hast heaped upon me all the floods of ills.

8. **[87:9]** This was truly accomplished in Jesus Christ when he was abandoned by his disciples: *Tunc discipuli omnes, relicto eo, fugerunt*—Then the disciples, all leaving him, fled (*Matt.* 26:56). *Stabant autem omnes noti ejus a longe*—And all his acquaintance . . . stood afar off (*Luke,* 23:49).

9. **[87:9]** “*Traditus sum.*” I have been given up to the power of my enemies. “*Non egrediebar.*” That is, as Bellarmine explains: *Non volebam egredi.* I did not wish to withdraw myself, my Father having decreed that I should suffer for the salvation of men. “*Oculi mei languerunt præ inopia.*” That is, according to the same interpreter: My eyes have become faint, as if drained by reason of shedding tears.

10. **[87:10]** To ask help according to what the Apostle says: *Preces supplicationesque, ad eum qui possit illum salvum facere a morte, cum clamore valido et lacrymis offerens*—Who in the days of his flesh with a strong cry and tears offering up prayers and supplications to him that was able to save him from death (*Heb.* 5:7).[13215]

12. **[87:12]** “*Veritatem tuam.*” Thy fidelity to Thy promises. “*In perditione.*” After having lost his life.

13. **[87:13]** Can the admirable prodigies of Thy goodness and justice be known in the darkness of the tomb and in this place of forgetfulness, to render Thee the homage that is due to Thee?[13216]

14. **[87:14]** “*Mane oratio mea præveniet te.*” I will not cease to present to Thee my prayers from the break of day.

15. **[87:15]** This may be understood of the prayer that Jesus Christ made in the garden of Olives: *Transeat a me calix iste*—May this chalice pass from me; a prayer that his Father did not hear because our Redeemer wished effectively to die, to save man; for, says Bellarmine, had the Son prayed absolutely, the Father would certainly have heard him.[13217]

16. **[87:16]** “*Exaltatus autem, humiliatus sum et conturbatus.*” That is: No sooner have I received some relief than immediately I saw myself humbled and weighed down with afflictions.[13218]

17. **[87:17]** “*Conturbaverunt me.*” St. Jerome translates: *Oppresserunt me.* That is: I am crushed under the blows of Thy justice, on account of the rigor with which all the sins of men have deserved to be punished.

19. **[87:19]** *“A miseria.”* According to the Hebrew: *Ab obscuritate, a tenebris.* Hence this explanation that Mattei gives with Marco Marino: *Tenebris se abdunt, ne videantur a me*—They hide themselves, not to be seen by me and obliged to help me in my misery.

PSALM 88 OF THE PSALTER

St. Jerome divides this psalm into three parts. The first recalls the promise, several times repeated, which God made to David to maintain always royalty in the family. The second teaches us that this promise was not entirely fulfilled in the sons according to the flesh, nor in the temporal kingdom of David. The third shows us the prophet sighing for the coming of the Messias, in whom all was to be fully realized, since he alone was to put an end to the tribulations of his people. This is the reason why the Church recites this psalm in the Office of Christmas.

2. **[88:2]** “*Veritatem tuam.*” According to the Hebrew: *Fidem tuam*—Thy fidelity to Thy promises.

3. **[88:3]** “*In æternum misericordia ædificabitur.*” That is: Mercy shall be for us an eternal edifice of graces. “*Præparabitur.*” According to the Chaldee: *Stabilietur*—Shall be established. “*Veritas tua.*” That is: Thy fidelity, or the accomplishment of Thy promises.

4. **[88:4]** “*Disposui testamentum.*” St. Jerome translates: *Percussi fœdus. “Electis meis.”* With my elect; namely, Abraham, Isaac, and the other Patriarchs, as is commonly understood by interpreters. “*Præparabo.*” St. Jerome translates: *Stabiliam.* God has promised (2 *Kings,* 7:12) to intrust forever his kingdom to the posterity of David, and this promise was verified

in the person of Jesus Christ, as is taught by St. Jerome, St. Augustine, Theodoret, etc. Mattei observes very well that the kingdom of David was perpetuated in Jesus Christ, his descendant, who has continued and will continue eternally to maintain and to govern the spiritual empire of the Church.

5. **[88:5]** That is: I will establish for thee a royal throne through all ages. Bellarmine justly remarks that this was properly verified only in our Saviour, of whom David was the figure.

6. **[88:6]** “*Etenim.*” According to the Hebrew: *Et, Etiam. “Veritatem tuam.”* Thy fidelity to the promises that Thou hast made.

7. **[88:7]** “*In nubibus.*” That is: In the heavens. “*In filiis Dei.*” According to the Chaldee: Among the angels.

8. **[88:8]** “*Sanctorum.*” That is: Of the angels.

9. **[88:9]** “*Veritas tua in circuitu tuo.*” That is: Thy faithfulness always accompanies Thee. Mattei understands this part of the verse thus: Thou art powerful; and therefore Thou dost promise much, and Thou art faithful to fulfil Thy promises.

10. **[88:10]** “*Potestati maris.*” St. Jerome translates: *Superbiæ maris*—The pride of the sea.

11. **[88:11]** “*Vulneratum.*” The Hebrew word signifies, according to Menochius: Mortally wounded. “*Superbum.*” In Hebrew: *Rahab*. That is: King Pharao, or else Egypt.[13219] “*Dispersisti.*” Thou hast scattered Thine enemies by drowning them in the Red Sea, according to the interpretation of Bellarmine.

12. **[88:12]** “*Aquilonem et mare.*” Bellarmine, Menochius, Lallemant, and Mattei, with Symmachus, hereby understand the North and the South.[13220]

13. **[88:13]** “*Thabor et Hermon.*” That is, as Lallemant explains: The East and the West.

14. **[88:14]** “*Firmetur.*” St. Jerome translates: *Roboretur. “Præparatio.”* According to the Hebrew: *Basis;* or, according to St. Jerome’s translation: *Firmamentum.*

15. **[88:15]** “*Veritas.*” Fidelity to Thy promises. “*Præcedent faciem tuam.*” That is: Are always before Thy eyes. “*Beatus populus qui scit jubilationem.*” Happy the people that know the joy that is felt in praising Thee! Thus Bellarmine, Menochius, Tirinus, and Bossuet.

16. **[88:16]** That is, according to Bellarmine and Menochius: Those that praise Thee shall walk in the light of Thy grace, in following the way of Thy precepts; they shall exult with joy all the day long in celebrating Thy name; and Thy justice, which will never fail to recompense Thy servants, will elevate them to a higher degree of perfection.

17. **[88:18]** Thou art the glory of their virtue, since all their vigor comes from Thy grace, and not from their own works; and it is only by Thy good pleasure that our strength will be raised against the enemy. “*Inbeneplacito tuo exaltabitur.*” St. Jerome translates: *In voluntate tua elevabis*—In Thy will shalt Thou raise up. “*Cornu.*” According to the Chaldee: *Robur*—Our strength.

18. **[88:19]** “*Assumptio.*” St. Jerome translates: *Protectio.*

19. **[88:20]** “*Sanctis tuis.*” To ye holy prophets. According to the Hebrew: *Sancto tuo;* which may be understood of the prophet Samuel; but Malvenda, Lallemant, and Mattei say that the other prophets may also be very well understood in accordance with the Vulgate.[13221] “*In potente.*” In a mighty man, who is David. “*Exaltavi.*” I have raised him to the throne.

20. **[88:21]** “*Unxi eum.*” I have anointed him, or I will cause him to be anointed as king of Israel; as was done by the ministry of Samuel (1 *Kings,* 16:13).

24. **[88:25]** “*Veritas mea.*” My fidelity to my promises. “*In nomine meo.*” That is: By my help. The interpreters say that the expressions of this verse and of the following verses apply better to the person of Jesus Christ.

25. **[88:26]** That is: I will give him the dominion of the sea and of the rivers. If one wishes to apply to David this verse, one may understand by the Sea the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Gulf, or the Red Sea, and the whole Erythræan Sea, where the Edomites, the Amalekites, and the Arabs, all tributaries of David, lived; and by the rivers, the Euphrates, the Orontes, and others subject to David, when he took Syria, Mesopotamia, and Damascus. But Maldonatus, Bellarmine, Menochius, and many others apply the verse better to Jesus Christ, of whom David was the figure, and to whom God made subject the seas, the rivers, and the whole earth.

26. **[88:27]** Jesus Christ, speaking of God, calls him his Father, as to his divinity, and his God, his Saviour, as to his humanity. Such is the explanation given by Bellarmine and Menochius.

27. **[88:28]** Bellarmine and Menochius say that Jesus Christ as God is the only Begotten, and that as man he is the First-born, because he was the Head of the predestined (*Eph.* 1.). Others apply this verse to the person of David. Mattei justly remarks that in the spiritual sense the expressions in the verse are fully verified only in Jesus Christ.

28. **[88:29]** St. Augustine also applies this verse to the person of Jesus Christ, saying: *Propter ipsum fidele testamentum;* which means that God on account of the merits of Jesus Christ kept his promise to save mankind. But others commonly apply it to David in this sense: I will be faithful to him in the promise that I have made him; namely, to give him a Son who shall be Jesus Christ, through whom his reign shall become eternal. This promise was made to David by the prophet Nathan (2 *Kings,* 7:12). Such is the explanation given by Bellarmine and Menochius.

29. **[88:30]** This verse corresponds to what we read in the Gospel: *Dabit illi Dominus Deus sedem David, patris ejus; et regnabit in domo Jacob in ætermum, et regni ejus non erit finis*—The Lord shall give unto him the throne of David, his father; and he shall reign in the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end (*Luke,* 1:32, 33). It also corresponds to the prophecy of Isaias: *Super solium David et super regnum ejus sedebit, ut confirmet illud, et corroboret in judicio et justitia, a modo et*

usque in sempiternum—He shall sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom; to establish it and strengthen it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth and forever (*Is.* 9:7). Jesus Christ was, in fact, to reign over all Israel and over the whole earth; not, indeed, with a temporal rule, which it was not his will to exercise, but with a spiritual rule, of which the earthly kingdom of David was a figure. Hence the verse may be thus explained: I will preserve his race by giving him the Messias for his son, through Whom I will make his throne to endure as long as the heavens; that is, forever. Gordona here remarks that the temporal reign of David ended under Jechonias; whence, he says, this promise of an eternal kingdom can be understood only of Jesus Christ typified by David.

32. **[88:33]** The Lord threatens the rod and stripes, and not the sword and death, to show that he will come as a father to correct, and not as an executioner to take their life.

33. **[88:34]** "*Misericordiam autem meam non dispergam ab eo.*" That is, the offence that the descendants of David will inflict upon me will not prevent me from keeping my promise of causing the Messias to be born in his family. "*Neque nocebo in veritate mea.*" According to the Hebrew: *Non mentiar in veritate mea*—I will not fail in the promise that I have made to him.

35. **[88:36]** "*Juravi in sancto meo.*" Mattei observes that this is a recognized expression in Scripture; thus we read: *Juravit Dominus Deus in sancto suo*—The Lord God hath sworn by his holiness (*Amos,* 4:2). "*Si David mentiar.*" The same interpreter says that in the imprecatory oaths the Hebrews left the second part of the imprecation to be understood; so that *Si mentiar* means the same as *Non mentiar;* it is as if God said: If I lie, I am no longer God. "*Semen ejus in æternum manebit.*" His posterity shall never come to an end, since Jesus Christ shall reign for all eternity.

36. **[88:38]** "*Testis in cœlo fidelis.*" That is, according to Bellarmine and Menochius: Like the rainbow which appears in heaven as a faithful witness of the peace which God wishes to keep with men (*Gen.* 9:16). But

Lallemant explains it thus: This throne placed in heaven for the Son of David shall be there forever, a faithful witness of the truth of my promises.

37. **[88:39]**[13222] "*Distulisti Christum tuum.*" Thou hast deferred sending the Messias whom Thou hast promised. St. Augustine says in regard to this passage: *Ergo, Domine, non imples quod promisisti*—Art Thou not, Lord, going to fulfil what Thou hast promised? He then adds: *Manet omnino, Deus, quod promisisti; nam Christum tuum non abstulisti, sed distulisti*—Thou still keepest Thy promise, for Thou hast not cast off Thy Christ, but Thou hast delayed him.

38. **[88:40]** "*Sanctuarium.*" According to the Hebrew: *Diadema*. The verse is thus explained: It seems as if Thou hast revoked the covenant and the promise Thou hast made to Thy servant David; for Thou hast permitted Thy sanctuary to be profaned on earth, by allowing the crown to pass into the hands of a Gentile king, who has seized upon the throne. This happened when Jechonias and Sedecias, descendants of David, were taken captive. But St. Augustine, Bede, Cassiodorus, and others, apply this text to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

39. **[88:41]** "*Destruxisti omnes sepes ejus*" Thou hast willed all the walls of the kingdom of David to be ruined, so that it remained as a vineyard without hedges. "*Posuisti firmamentum ejus formidinem*" According to the Hebrew: *Posuisti in munitionibus ejus formidinem;* or, according to the translation of St. Jerome: *Posuisti munitiones ejus pavorem.* That is: Thou hast set fear in the place of the fortresses of the kingdom. Thus Lallemant explains it: *Fecisti ut in locum munitionis succederet formido*—Thou hast caused terror to take the place of defence.

41. **[88:43]** "*Exaltasti dexteram.*" Thou hast increased the strength, the power.

42. **[88:44]** St. Augustine, applying this passage to the destruction of the Jewish people, and to the ruin of their kingdom for having put to death Jesus Christ, exclaims: *Terram perdidit, pro qua Dominum occidit!*—It has lost that land for which it killed the Lord!

43. **[88:45]** We translate this verse as Father Lallemant[13223] does. But St. Augustine explains differently the words "*Destruxisti eum ab emundatione;*" he says that the Jews not believing in Jesus Christ remained deprived of the grace which would have purified them: *Soluti sunt ab emundatione;* for faith alone was able to purify their hearts from their sins.

44. **[88:46]** "*Minorasti dies temporis ejus.*" St. Augustine says that the Jews believed that their kingdom would last forever: *Putabant se in æternum regnaturos.*

45. **[88:47]**[13224] "*Avertis.*" According to the Hebrew: *Absconderis*—Wilt Thou hide Thyself? "*In finem?*" Is it to be until our ruin is complete? The sense of the verse is: How long, O Lord, wilt Thou refuse to look graciously upon us? Is Thy anger, then, like fire, which is not quenched until it has utterly consumed whatsoever it lays hold of? Thus Lallernant explains the words with Bellarmine.

46. **[88:48]** "*Memorare quœ mea substantia.*" Bellarmine thus translates the Hebrew: *Memorare ego quanti temporis sim*—Consider how short the time is that remains for me to live. St. Augustine, explaining these words with reference to Jesus Christ, makes David say: Remember, O Lord, what is my substance, that is, that Thy Son is to take flesh from my blood.

48. **[88:50]** "*In veritate tua.*" That is, according to Thy fidelity.

49. **[88:51]** "*Quod continui in sinu meo.*" Mattei explains: *Quibus opprobriis plenus est sinus meus*—Of which reproach my own heart is full.

50. **[88:52]** "*Commutationem.*" According to the Hebrew: *Claudicationem*—Limping. That is: Thy enemies, O Lord, upbraid us, and for what? Because Thy Christ, or the Messias, comes limping with too slow a pace. When the Gentiles insulted the Jews, the latter answered them that the Messias would soon come to deliver them from their miseries; but the Gentiles, continuing their reproaches, rejoined: How is this? Is your Messias lame, that he never arrives?

51. **[88:53]** That is: But may the Lord be blessed forever, for he cannot fail in his promises; let us, then, humbly pray to him to accomplish with all speed the promise that he has made to send us the Saviour.[13225]

PSALM 93 OF THE PSALTER

The subject of this psalm is the Providence of God, attentive to the punishing of the wicked and to the rewarding of the just; although, by a judgment full of wisdom, it often happens that the wicked prosper in this world and the just are afflicted. The first fourteen verses of this psalm show us the just who are afflicted and who lament in seeing the prosperity of the wicked. The psalmist rebukes the just for their little faith, and exhorts them to be patient and to put their trust in God.

1. **[93:1]** The Lord is the God of vengeance, that is, he that punishes crimes; he punishes them, and there is no one that can prevent him from doing so. In the Hebrew this verse is in the imperative mood, and St. Jerome thus translates it: *Dens ultionum, Domine, Deus ultionum ostendere*—O Lord, God of vengeance, show the power That thou hast of punishing the wicked.[13226]

2. **[93:2]** “*Exaltare.*” That is: Let Thy all-powerful justice be known.[13227] St. Augustine here remarks that the prophet, under the imperative form, is simply predicting. He says: *Prophetia est prædicentis, non audacia jubentis*—The prophecy of one that predicts, not the presumptuousness of one that commands.

5. **[93:5]** “*Humiliaverunt.*” According to the Hebrew: *Attriverunt.* That is: They have oppressed and tormented this people who are Thy inheritance.

6. **[93:6]** That is: They did not hesitate to put to death all those that they found before them: the widows, the orphans, and even strangers whom they did not know.

7. **[93:7]** “*Nec intelliget Deus Jacob.*” According to St. Augustine: *Deus nee advertit ut sciat*—God does not pay attention to know these things.

9. **[93:9]** “*Plantavit.*” That is: Has formed.[13228] “*Considerat.*” St, Jerome translates: *Videbit*—Shall he not see?

10. **[93:10]** “*Corripit.*” St. Jerome and St. Augustine translate: *Erudit*—Instructs. “*Qui docet hominem scientiam.*” St. Augustine says: *Ipse non scit, qui te fecit scire?*—Does he not know who made thee know?

11. **[93:11]** “*Vanœ.*” Vain: or, as Mattei prefers, Evil; he says that in the language of the Bible vanity means sin.

12, 13. **[93:12, 13]** “*Ut mitiges ei.*” According to the Hebrew: *Ut quietem des illi*—That Thou mayest give him rest; or, according to St. Jerome’s translation: *Ut quiescat*—That he may rest. Hence it is thus explained: Happy he whom thou dost instruct, so as to mitigate his pain in the time of tribulation. “*Fovea.*” The pit of the grave, that is, death; this signifies that the sinner, though he is not afflicted in this life, yet has to die.

14. **[93:14]** “*Plebem suam, et hereditatem suam.*” His people who are faithful to him, and his inheritance which is the same faithful people. (See verse 7.)

15. **[93:15]** Different interpretations are given to this verse; but the following appears to me clear: God does not abandon his faithful servants until justice is resolved into judgment, and according to the same justice, all those that are upright in heart shall be judged. This sense seems to me to be that of St. Jerome’s translation, although it is expressed in different terms, namely: *Quoniam ad justitiam revertetur judicium, et sequentur illud omnes recti corde*—Because judgment shall return to justice, and all the upright in heart shall follow it (that is, judgment).

16. **[93:16]** “*Consurget mihi . . . Stabit mecum.*” St. Jerome repeats: *Stabit pro me*—Will stand up for me.

17. **[93:17]** “*In inferno.*” St. Augustine understands thereby the real hell of the damned; he thus explains: *Prope rueram in illam fossam quœ paratur peccatoribus*—I was on the point of falling into the pit which is prepared for sinners.

18. **[93:18]** “*Motus est pes meus.*” That is: I am in danger of falling.

20. **[93:20]** That is: Wouldst Thou have a throne like that of unjust judges, Thou who feignest or imaginest that Thy precepts are accomplished only with labor and irksomeness? Estius says that here in the Hebrew the word “*Laborem*” signifies Affliction. So also Bellarmine, whose explanation seems to be the best.

PSALM 95 OF THE PSALTER

We see, according to 1 *Paral.* 16:7–36, that David composed this psalm when the Ark was transferred from the house of Obededom to the Tabernacle erected on Mount Sion, which is the figure of our holy Church. In this psalm the Jews are exhorted to praise the Lord, and especially are Christians called on to serve Jesus Christ. With St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and with the generality of interpreters, Bellarmine says that David in this psalm aimed chiefly at foretelling the coming of the Messias and the establishment of his kingdom.[13229]

2. **[95:2]** “*Salutare ejus*” According to the Hebrew: *Salutem ejus;* and the Chaldee: *Redemptionem ejus.* That is: The salvation that he has procured us by Redemption.

5. **[95:5]** “*Dæmonia.*” According to the Hebrew: *Dii vani, falsi, nihil*—Vain, false gods, nothing.

6. **[95:6]** “*Confessio et pulchritudo in conspectu ejus.*” According to the Hebrew: *Gloria et decor coram eo;* and Mattei says that in the Bible the word *Confessio* is taken for the praise that is given to God.[13230] “*In sanctificatione ejus.*” Mattei understands: *In ipso Sancto*—In him the Holy One by essence. We may also transate these words according to the Hebrew: *In sanctuario ejus,*—In his Temple, or Tabernacle.

7. **[95:7]** “*Patriæ gentium.*” Estius, according to the Hebrew, says that we should read: *Familiæ gentium.* So also Menochius. Tirinus, and others, with St. Jerome, who translates: *Familiæ populorum.*

8. **[95:8]** “*Hostias.*” Bellarmine and Menochius say that the Hebrew word denotes an unbloody offering, and especially one made of flour; this points to the Holy Eucharist. Jansenius of Ghent, Tirinus, Rotigni, Sa, and others, make the same remark.

9. **[95:9]** “*Commoveatur.*” St. Jerome translates: *Paveat. “Regnavit.”* St. Justin (*Dial. cum Tryph.*), St. Augustine, and St. Leo read: *Regnavit a ligno*—Hath reigned from the wood. But the Church no longer uses this version, except in the hymn *Vexilla Regis,* in which she sings: *Regnavit a ligno Deus.*

10. **[95:10]** “*Correxit.*” According to the Hebrew and the Chaldee: *Firmavit*—Has made firm, or established.[13231]

11. **[95:11]** “*Plenitudo ejus.*” All that is in the sea, as the islands, the fishes, etc. “*Omnia quœ in eis sunt.*” All that is found in the fields, as the flocks and herds, the plants, etc.

13. **[95:13]** “*In œquitate . . . In veritate sua.*” That is: With an exact judgment as regards the good and the wicked.

PSALM 96 OF THE PSALTER

According to Xavier Mattei, the holy Fathers saw in this psalm the announcement of the first and the second coming of the Redeemer. Hence the psalm is chiefly to be understood in the spiritual sense.

1. **[96:1]** That is: Behold, the Lord has come to govern and to judge the world; let them all, the inhabitants of the earth, rejoice.

2. **[96:2]** “*Correctio.*” According to the Hebrew: *Firmamentum;* which signifies that the firmness of his tribunal will consist in the justice of his judgments.[13232]

3. **[96:3]** Fire will consume everything on the last day according to what St. Peter says: *Terra autem, et quœ in ipsa sunt opera, exurentur*—The earth and the works that are in it shall be burnt (2 *Peter,* 3:10).

7. **[96:7]** “*In simulacris suis.*” In the protection of the idols that they invoke.

8. **[96:7]** “*Audivit, et lætata est Sion.*” Sion, the faithful people, the Church, hearing of these things was full of joy, according to the invitation given in verse 1.

9. **[96:8]** “*Filiæ Judæ*” The same faithful people. “*Propter judicia tua.*” Knowing that Thou art to judge the world.

10. **[96:9]** “*Omnes deos.*” That is, according to Mattei: All the judges of the earth.

11. **[96:10]** “*Sanctorum suorum.*” Of his servants. “*De manu peccatoris.*” According to the Hebrew: *De manu impiorum*—From the hands of the ungodly.

12. **[96:11]** The gift of light is granted to the just man, and that of joy to all those that are right of heart.

13. **[96:12]** “*Confitemini memoriæ sanctificationis ejus.*” Praise him, ever mindful of the gift of sanctification which you have received from him.

SATURDAY AT MATINS

PSALM 97 OF THE PSALTER

The prophet thanks God for having delivered his people from captivity; he at the same time foretells in a figurative sense the coming of Jesus Christ and the Redemption of mankind.

1. **[97:1]** "*Quia mirabilia fecit.*" For the marvels that he has wrought in behalf of his servants.

2. **[97:1]** This verse may well be applied to Jesus Christ. "*Sibi.*" Bellarmine says that this word, according to the Hebrew, is to be understood as if it were *Ipsa;* which gives this meaning: It is his own right hand that has saved the world. But St. Augustine refers the pronoun *Sibi* to Jesus Christ, as to the end proposed, thus: Christ has saved men for himself, that is, for his own glory. "*Et brachium sanctum ejus.*" And all has been the work of his own holy arm.[13233]

3. **[97:2]** "*Salutare suum.*" The salvation that he has provided for the world. "*Revelavit justitiam suam*" He has by means of his apostles manifested his justice, that is, his fidelity in the accomplishment of the promised Redemption.

4. **[97:3]** God is said to remember when he fulfils a promise that he has made; now he had promised the people of Israel to come to save mankind; and he remembered his mercy and his fidelity by accomplishing this promise.

7. **[97:5]** "*Voce psalmi.*" That is, as explained by Bellarmine, Menochius, and Lallemant: *Sonitu psalterii*—With the sound of the psaltery. "*Ductilibus.*" Menochius thus explains them: *Mettalicis, ex laminibus*

malleo ductis—Long, straight, metal trumpets shaped and attuned by the hammer.

9. **[97:8]** “*Plaudent manu.*” As one does to praise any one, “*Judicare.*” To govern by excellent laws.

10. **[97:9]** “*In æquitate.*” According to the Hebrew, as Bellarmine remarks: *In rectitudine*—Rectitude, or righteousness.

PSALM 98 OF THE PSALTER

David invites his people to come to praise and invoke God on the Mount Sion. Now the Mount Sion is a figure of the Catholic Church, in the bosom of which we should invoke and praise Jesus Christ.

1. **[98:1]** The Lord has established his reign in spite of the idolatrous nations who are enraged thereat. He has his throne above the Cherubim, however much the earth be thereby troubled; this signifies that no one can resist his power.

3. **[98:3]** Let all praise and fear Thy great name; for it is terrible on account of its power and its sanctity, and the honor of a king, that is, his dignity, his authority, requires him to love justice, that is, to exercise righteous judgment by rendering to every one according to his deserts.

4. **[98:4]** Thou hast established righteous laws for the direction of the conduct of men, as Thou hast shown in the midst of the people of Israel, exercising justice and judgment, that is, judging always according to judgment.

5. **[98:5]** “*Scabellum pedum ejus.*” They invoked the Lord before the holy Ark. “*In columna nubis.*” According to St. Augustine, by the column of fire we must understand the obscure language that the Lord used.[13234]

8. **[98:7]** “*Testimonia ejus.*” That is, according to Bellarmine: All the precepts given in common to all. “*Preceptum quod dedit illis.*” The special

precept that he had given them, namely, to govern and to instruct the people.

9. **[98:8]** “*Propitius fuisti eis, et ulciscens in omnes adinventiones eorum.*” St. Augustine and Menochius give this explanation: Thou wast propitious to them in pardoning the people for their sake, but without letting go unpunished the injuries and the calumnies that they had to suffer from this people. Bellarmine says that these two interpretations are probable.

10. **[98:9]** “*Sanctus Dominus Deus.*” God is holy by essence, and consequently worthy of every homage.

PSALM 99 OF THE PSALTER[13235]

The royal prophet exhorts the faithful to praise God and to thank him first for having created us; then for having given us for our mother this holy Church which nourishes her children as young and tender sheep.

1. **[99:2]** All ye people of the earth, let all your joy be to praise your God, and to serve him as is meet.

3. **[99:3]** Have always before the eyes of your mind that the Lord is the true God; we did not of ourselves come into the world, nor did we make ourselves; it is he that gave us being.

4. **[99:3]** “*Introite portas ejus in confessione.*” Enter, therefore, the gates of his tabernacle, by confessing yourselves unworthy to stand in his presence. “*Confitemini illi.*” Acknowledge that all that you have has come from his beneficent hand.

5. **[99:4]** “*Veritas ejus.*” The truth of his teachings and of his promises.

PSALM 100 OF THE PSALTER

David here gives excellent instructions to those that govern, and particularly to princes how they should live well. Also, every father of a family will find in this psalm rules for his conduct.

2. **[100:1]** “*Psallam.*” I will sing Thy praises upon the psaltery. “*Intelligam in via immaculata.*” According to the Hebrew: *In via perfecta*. I will apply myself to know and to follow the pure and perfect way. “*Quando venies ad me?*” But when wilt Thou come to my help?[13236]

3. **[100:2]** “*Perambulabam.*” Some explain this and the following verse in the past tense, as they are in the Vulgate and in the Greek; but the Hebrew has them in the future, and thus St. Jerome translates: *Ambulabo*—I will walk. “*Domus meæ.*” That is, of those belonging to my house.

4. **[100:3]** That is, with the verbs in the future tense: I will never propose to do anything unjust; I will hate, or I hold in abomination, all the transgressors of Thy law.

5. **[100:4]** “*Non adhæsit mihi cor pravum.*” St. Jerome translates: *Cor pravun recedet a me*. Explanation of this verse: I will never associate with those who have their heart perverse; and if any one of those wicked persons keeps away from me, that is, does not wish to have me for a friend by changing his conduct, I will not know him, that is, I will show that I do not wish to know him.

6. **[100:5]** That is: For him who secretly rends the character of his neighbor, I will keep him at a distance, or I will ever persecute him by reproaching him with his vice.

7. **[100:5]** I will never sit at table with those who have a proud eye, that is, who look upon others with contempt; nor with the insatiable of heart, that is, with the ambitious and avaricious.

8. **[100:6]** My eyes shall be attentive to choose for my companions faithful men who live with me on this earth, and I will not have myself served or aided in my needs except by those that live apart from vice.

9. **[100:7]** The proud man shall not live in my house, and he that speaks unjustly, by lies or detraction, shall not remain long before my eyes, that is, I will drive him from my presence. “*Non dixerit.*” According to the Hebrew: *Non firmabitur*—shall not be established.

10. **[100:8]** I will hasten to exterminate all the wicked from the country, taking care that they are punished; thus I shall banish from the city of the Lord all those that lead bad lives, and who seek to have companions in evil.

PSALM 101 OF THE PSALTER

In this psalm, which is one of the seven penitential psalms, we see one humbling himself before God, praying for himself and for all the people.[13237] According to St. Augustine, it is Jesus Christ who prays for us; in fact, it cannot be denied that in certain verses the Messias and his coming are spoken of.

4. **[101:4]** "*Cremium.*" Du Hamel says: *Cremium est id omne quod facile crematur*—Whatever easily burns.

5. **[101:5]** Interpretation: My heart has been stricken as grass by Thy hand, and my spirit has remained in aridity so that I have forgotten to take my food.[13238]

7. **[101:7]** "*Pelicano.*" The pelican loves solitude. According to Mattei, this bird is said to exist, but in reality no one has any knowledge of it. "*Nycticorax.*" St. Jerome translates: *Bubo*—the owl which makes its dwelling in ruins and deserted places. "*Domicilio.*" Mariana says: *Vox hebrœa ruinas vel parrietinas significat*—The Hebrew word signifies ruins or crumbling walls.

8. **[101:8]** I have passed whole nights without sleep under the pressure of my woes, and I am become like a solitary sparrow which complains upon the roof, that is, sadness keeps me to within the most retired parts of my house.

9. **[101:9]** "*Jurabant.*" According to Du Hamel: *Conjurabant*—Conspired together.

10. **[101:10]** "*Cinerem tamquam panem manducabam.*" The bread that I ate seemed to me insipid as ashes.

11. **[101:11]** *“Elevans allsisti me.”* St. Jerome translates: *Levasti me, et allisisti me.*

13. **[101:13]** *“In æternum permanes.”* That is: Thou art, and Thou wilt always be the same. *“Memoriale tuum.”* According to the Chaldee: *Memoria tua.* Mattei says that the Hebrew may be so translated; and Menochius explains it thus: *Tui memoria, et mentio, et laus*—The memory, the mention, and the praise of Thee.

14. **[101:14]** *“Exsurgens.”* That is: As if rising from a profound sleep. “*Tempus.*” The time fixed in Thy decrees.

15. **[101:15]** Mariana says that here is meant the city of Jerusalem, when it was destroyed by its enemies. *“Lapides ejus.”* The heaps of stones, which is all that is left of the city. *“Terræ ejus.”* The Hebrew, according to Menochius, Bossuet, and Mattei, here signifies *Pulveris ejus*—The dust of its ruins.

16. **[101:16]** *“Gloriam tuam”* That is: They shall know and fear Thy power.

17. **[101:17]** Thus it shall happen when God shall build up Sion; and he shall be seen in his glory, that is, in his temple, according to Maldonatus, Mariana, and Mattei.

19. **[101:19]** *“Populus qui creabitur.”* Mattei says that this is to be understood of Christians, who, regenerated by baptism, are called by St. Paul: *Nova creatura*—New creature (*Gal.* 6:15).

21. **[101:21]** *“Filios interemptorum.”* According to the Hebrew: *Filios mortis.* Mattei observes that these two versions according to the Hebrew expression signify the same thing, namely: Those doomed to death; that is, men deprived of the grace before the Redemption.

23. **[101:23]** *“In unum.”* In one church, in one same faith. Du Hamel thus comments: *Hæc ad Ecclesiam sub Christo referuntur.* Bellarmine, Malvenda, Mariana, and Menochius say the same.

24. **[101:24]** Bellarmine and Mattei say that this verse is very obscure, as indeed it is. “*Respondit ei.*” Bellarmine thinks that it is the psalmist who answers God in regard to what the Lord ordained in verse 19. “*In via virtutis suæ.*” That is: In the time of the vigor of his age. “*Paucitatem dierum meorum nuntia mihi.*” O Lord, make me know the shortness of my days, that is, according to the interpreters, if my life shall be too short for me to see the end of these evils on the day of man’s redemption.

25. **[101:25]** “*Ne revoces me.*” St. Jerome translates: *Ne rapias me:* For mercy’s sake, do not withdraw me from the world. “*In generationem et generationem anni tui.*” Thou whose years are eternal, canst add to the number of my years.

26. **[101:26]** St. Paul applies to Jesus Christ this verse and the two following verses (*Heb.* 1:10).

27. **[101:27]** “*Permanes.*” St. Jerome translates: *Stabis:* Thou shalt ever remain the same. “*Veterascent.*” St. Jerome translates: *Atterentur*—They shall come to an end, as a garment worn out by long use.

28. **[101:27]** “*Opertorium.*” St. Jerome translates: *Pallium,* a cloak, Mattei here admires the images of the Oriental poetry.

29. **[101:29]** “*Habitabunt.*” shall dwell there, that is, in the holy city. “*Semen eorum in sæculum dirigetur.*” That is: Thou wilt ever have a care of their posterity.[13239]

PSALM 102 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist extols the divine mercy; but finding himself incapable of praising and thanking God as his benefits deserve, he invites the angels and all creatures to do so in his name.

1. **[102:1]** “*Omnia quæ intra me sunt.*” All my powers.

3. **[102:3]** “*Propitiatur omnibus iniquitatibus tuis.*” He is propitious that is, he pardons all thy sins. Thus nearly all interpret. “*Omnes infirmitates tuas.*”

That is, as Mattei observes: All thy infirmities, corporal and spiritual.

4. **[102:4]** *“De interitu.”* St. Jerome translates: *De corruptione:* and according to the Chaldee: *De gehenna:* That is: He delivers thy corporal life from the death of the body, and thy spiritual life from the death of the soul, whether it be from sin, or as we may also understand, from hell. “*Coronat te.*” According to Estius and others: He surrounds them on all sides.

5. **[102:5]** “*Renovabitur ut aquilæ juventus tua.*” He will make thy youth renewed, as the wings and the strength of the eagle are renewed. This may be understood, as Mattei says, of the renewal of the soul by baptism, and conversion to penance, according to the words of St. Paul: *Exspoliantes vos veterem hominem, cum actibus suis, et induentes novum, eum qui renovatur.* . . . Stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, him who is renewed . . . (*Col.* 3:9, 10).

7. **[102:7]** “*Vias suas.*” That is: The dispositions of his Providence.

8. **[102:8]** God is compassionate and merciful, and he will manifest to us the effects of his mercy. “*Longanimis.*” He is slow to punish, he is patient, but only up to a certain point.

9. **[102:9]** If he is angry with any one, and if he threatens to abandon him, his menaces will not last always if the sinner amends his life.

10. **[102:10]** Ah! let us never cease to thank him, knowing that he has not treated us as our sins deserve, and that he has not punished us according to our wickedness.

13. **[102:13]** “*Figmentum nostrum.*”[13240] That is: Our weakness.

14. **[102:14]** He knows that we are only dust, and that man, living on this earth, is like the grass, which to-day flowers in the field and to-morrow withers and dies.

15. **[102:16]** “*Spiritus pertransibit in illo, et non subsistet.*” In this life the spirit is not in man; but is passing on its way to eternity. “*Non cognoscet*

amplius locum suum.” That is: He does not return to know his place any more, that is, to begin over again his past years.

17. **[102:17]** “*Justitia illius.*” His beneficent justice. “*Testamentum ejus.*” His covenant, or his law,

19. **[102:19]** “*Regnum ipsius omnibus dominabitur,*” That is: All will have to obey his rule.

PSALM 103 OF THE PSALTER

According to the interpreters, this psalm presents a brilliant description of the glory of the Saviour as manifested in the works of nature. In it we find a eulogy of the wisdom and of the power that God has shown forth in creating heaven and earth. The author of the arguments, placed at the head of the psalms in the Compilation of Venice, adds that we learn here how to see nature and the manifold variety of created things.

1. **[103:1]** “*Vehementer.*” St. Jerome translates: *Nimis:* Beyond all measure, exceedingly. That is: Thou hast made Thy greatness known by Thy works in a wonderful manner.

2. **[103:2]** “*Confessionem.*” According to the Hebrew: *Gloriam*—Glory.[13241]

3. **[103:2]** “*Pellem.*” According to the Hebrew: *Tentorium. “Aquis.”* Estius understands by this the clouds. According to Mattei, this part of the heavens is really covered with waters.[13242]

4. **[103:3]** Thou ridest upon a cloud, as upon a chariot which goes whither Thou willest; Thou walkest flying on the winds as if they were birds that had their wings extended.

5. **[103:4]** Thou makest the celestial spirits who are always before Thy throne Thy angels; and of these same spirits who burn with the fire of Thy love Thou makest messengers, to execute Thy orders with promptitude and efficacy. Thus St. Augustine interprets this verse; so also St. Gregory (*In*

Evang. hom. 54); and this agrees with the absolute application that St. Paul makes of it to the angels.

6. **[103:5]** “*Stabilitatem suam.*” St. Jerome translates: *Bases suas.* That is, as Lallemant well explains: Thou hast made it firm by its own weight; so that, as Mattei adds, it supports itself.

7. **[103:6]** “*Abyssus.*” Mattei says that this word in the language of the Bible signifies an accumulation of waters. “*Stabunt.*” According to the Hebrew: *Stabant.* The sense of the verse is: There was a time when Thou didst cover the earth with waters in such a manner that these waters were higher than the mountains (*Gen.* 7:20).

8. **[103:7]** Then at the sound of Thy voice, that is, of Thy command, as at the roar of threatening thunder, these waters withdrew, as if seized with terror in the place assigned to them, which was the sea.

9. **[103:8]** At this command it seems that the mountains rose up and the plains descended to the place which Thou didst destine for them.[13243]

12. **[103:11]** “*Onagri.*” Wild asses, by which may be understood all wild animals.

13. **[103:12]** “*Super ea.*” According to the Chaldee: *Juxta eos.* Above or beside these fountains or these springs of water. “*De medio petrarum.*” According to the Hebrew: *Inter ramos;* or according to St. Jerome’s translation: *De medio nemorum*—In the midst of the neighboring groves.

14. **[103:13]** Thou waterest the mountains with the upper waters, which descend from the clouds; thus the earth by Thy Providence shall be satisfied, and shall abound in fruit.

16. **[103:14]** “*Vinum lætificet cor hominis.*” Here St. John Chrysostom makes this reflection: “Some say: Let there be no wine; but we should rather say: Let there be no drunkenness; for wine is the work of God, but drunkenness the work of the devil” (*Ad pop. Ant. Hom.* I).

17. **[103:15]** We should here remark, that according to Theodoret, Maldonatus, Menochius, Tirinus, and others, the Orientals used to anoint the face with oil to show a cheerful countenance. The sense then is: Thou producest the olives, the oil of which serves to anoint the countenance to make it look joyous, and grain to make bread wherewith to sustain the life of man.

18. **[103:16]** "*Saturabuntur.*" Shall be sated with these waters of fountains and of rains. "*Ligna campi.*" Mattei hereby understands wild plants. "*Passeres.*" The sparrows and the other birds.

19. **[103:17]** "*Herodii.*" It is uncertain what kind of bird this name denotes: according to St. Jerome, it is the kite; but Estius, Lallemant, and others, following the Chaldee, say that it is the stork. "*Herodii domus dux est eorum.*" According to the Hebrew: *Herodii abies est domus ejus.* That is: The top of the fir-tree is her house. "*Herinaciis.*" According to the Greek, *Leporibus*—For the rabbits. See Mattei.

20. **[103:19]** "*Fecit lunam in tempore.*" The Hebrews used to regulate their calendar by the moon: *A luna signum diei festi*—From the moon is the sign of the festival day (*Ecclus.* 63:7). "*Sol cognovit occasum suum.*" The sun runs its course to its setting; or as Malvenda explains the verse, the sun knows how to go through its course without the variations incident to the moon.

22. **[103:21]** The lions come forth roaring with their cubs to seek for prey in the forests; and by their roaring they seem to ask of God their food.

25. **[103:24]** "*Possessione tua.*" According to the Greek: *Creatura tua*—With Thy creatures. Menochius and Mattei explain thus: The earth is filled with the goods that Thou hast created.

26. **[103:25]** "*Reptilia.*" Properly: Reptiles, animals without legs, that crawl on their bellies. Here the word signifies every kind of fish.

28. **[103:26]** "*Draco.*" St. Jerome writes: *Leviathan.* Others, as Lallemant, and perhaps all, commonly say that it is the whale; but according to Mattei

this is not certain; it is only certain that some sea-monster is signified. “*Ad illudendum ei.*” According to the Hebrew: *Ut luderet in eo.* Thus it is understood by Maldonatus, Estius, Sa, Malvenda, Mattei, etc.

30. **[103:29]** That is: If Thou withdraw Thy gracious looks, they wlli languish; Thou wilt take away their life and they will cease to be; they return to the dust whence Thou didst draw them.

31. **[103:30]** That is: Thou wilt send forth the breath of life into other animals, to which Thou wilt give being, and thus Thou wilt renew the face of the earth. Du Hamel applies this in a mystical sense to the Holy Ghost, who by his grace renews the face of the earth, that is, of the souls living in this world; and thus the Church uses this verse in her Liturgy at Pentecost.

32. **[103:31]** That is: Let then the Lord be glorified forever! and let us act in such a manner that he may rejoice in us, who are his works, and that he may not be saddened by our faults.

33. **[103:32]** That is: Let us beware of provoking this powerful Lord, who with a single glance makes the earth tremble, and who by touching the mountains causes them to smoke with his thunder and lightning, as he did on Mount Sinai: *Totus autem mons Sinai fumabat*—And all Mount Sinai was in a smoke (*Exod,* 19:18).

PSALM 104 OF THE PSALTER

The prophet urges the Jews to praise God, and to thank him for all the benefits bestowed on their fathers.[13244]

3. **[104:3]** “*Laudamini in nomine sancto ejus.*” That is: Render yourselves worthy of praise by your zeal in procuring glory to his holy name.[13245]

4. **[104:4]** Be constant in seeking God; try to be in spirit always in his presence.[13246]

5. **[104:5]** “*Judicia oris ejus.*” His commandments, or his law.

6. **[104:6]** I say this to you who are the posterity of Abraham, and the servants of the Lord; to you, children of Jacob, who are the chosen people of God.[13247]

7. **[104:7]** “*In universa terra judicia ejus.*” That is: He governs the whole earth.

8. **[104:8]** He has always been mindful of his covenant with his servants, and of the promise that he made them in words that expressed his will, to make all subsequent generations have part therein.

10. **[104:10]** *“Præceptum.*” According to the Hebrew: *Statutum, Decretum. “Testamentum aternum.”* A covenant or compact that was always to be observed.

11. **[104:11]** *“Terram Chanaan.*” The Land of Promise, where the Chanaanites dwelt. “*Funiculum hereditatis vestæ.*” This land will be possessed by your children as an inheritance distributed with a line of cord.[13248]

12. **[104:12]** *“Incolæ.*” According to the Hebrew: *Peregrini, Advenæ.*

13. **[104:13]** The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had to pass from one country to another, as from Palestine to Egypt (*Gen.* 7, 20, 26, 28, 31, 50).

15. **[104:15]** “*Christos meos* . . . *Prophetis meis.*” My anointed . . . my prophets; that is, the patriarchs.[13249]

16. **[104:16]** “*Firmamentum panis.*” That is: The support of human life, which consists in bread.[13250]

17. **[104:17]** He ordained that Joseph, who had been sold by his brethren, should be taken before them into Egypt, and thus deliver them from famine (*Gen.* 37:28).

18. **[104:18]** “*Ferrum pertransiit animam ejus.*” According to the Greek: *Anima,* instead of “*Animam.*” The Hebrew may be understood either way; but Bellarmine says that in the Vulgate the sense is clearer, and that thus St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and others explain the passage; namely: The pain caused by the iron fetters afflicted the soul of Joseph. “*Donec veniret verbum ejus.*” That is: Until the accomplishment of his prophecy concerning the release from prison of Pharao’s chief butler, which release was followed by his own (*Gen.* 40:12, 41:9).

19. **[104:19]** The spirit of prophecy with which Joseph felt himself inspired was as a torch which inflamed him; that is, which encouraged him to make this prediction. Then king Pharao, this prince of many peoples, set him at liberty.

20. **[104:21]** “*Principem omnis possessionis suæ.*” Chief of his whole kingdom.

21. **[104:22]** “*Principes ejus.*” The great men of his court, of his possessions. “*Senex ejus.*” The ancients of his council.

22. **[104:23]** “*Israel . . . Jacob.*” Jacob with his family. “*Terra Cham*” Egypt. We have already said (see Psalm 77:56) that this country was peopled by the descendants of Cham, son of Noe; it was Mesraim, son of Cham, who first established himself in Egypt.

24. **[104:25]** That is: By multiplying the Israelites, God gave occasion to the Egyptians to be exasperated against his faithful people, to seek every means of oppressing his servants (*Exod.* 1.).

25. **[104:26]** Then the Lord sent his servant Moses, and Aaron his brother whom he chose to be his fellow-helper. “*Ipsum.*” Bellarmine observes that the Hebrew may be rendered by *Ei;* but he says, with St. Augustine, that among the Hebrews the word *Ipsum* is used simply for elegance, and therefore adds nothing to the sense.[13251]

26. **[104:27]** “*Verba signorum.*” A Hebraism, which means: The power to work miracles.

27. **[104:28]** In this verse, and in the eight following verses, David describes the miraculous prodigies wrought to punish the Egyptians. “*Misit tenebras.*” This darkness lasted three days (*Exod.* 10:22). “*Non exacerbavit sermones suos.*” Some would omit the particle *Non;* but according to Bellarmine this correction is admissible; for the Vulgate here agrees with the Hebrew text, of which the rendering is: *Non exacerbaverunt sermones ejus.* That is: Moses and Aaron did not resist the orders of God, who had commanded them to work those wonders.[13252]

38. **[104:39]** “*Expandit nubem in protectionem eorum.*” The Lord spread a cloud above the waters to protect them from the heat of the day. But here we must remark with Bellarmine that this cloud is not the pillar spoken of in Exodus: *Dominus autem præcedebat eos, ad ostendendam viam, per diem in columnam nubis*—And the Lord went before them to show the way by day in a pillar of cloud (*Exod.* 13:21). The pillar was to go before them to show them the way, and not to be spread out over their heads; moreover, the cloud spread out above them could not take the shape of a pillar. Hence, adds Bellarmine, we are justified in saying that besides the pillar of cloud which went before the Israelites, and which once we read went behind them to protect them against the Egyptians (*Exod.* 14:19), there was another cloud spread out over them to shelter them from the heat during their journey. This explanation is supported by the Hebrew text, which St. Jerome thus renders: *Expandit nubem in tentorium*—He spread out a cloud for a tent or covering; as well as by the following words in the Book of Wisdom: *Fuit illis in velamento diei, et in luce stellarum per noctem*—She was to them for a covert by day, and for the light of stars by night (*Wisd.* 10:17).[13253]

39. **[104:40]** The Israelites asked for means to feed on flesh and bread; the Lord sent among them an abundance of quails, and he satiated them with manna, which he caused to fall from heaven.

40. **[104:41]** They were thirsty, and the Lord by the hand of Moses broke a rock, whence ran waters seen flowing as torrents in that arid place (*Num.* 20:11).[13254]

43. **[104:44]** “*Labores populorum possederunt.*” They came into possession of the labors of those nations, that is, of the cities which they had built, and of the fields which they had cultivated.

PSALM 105 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist exhorts the Israelites to thank the Lord for all the wonders wrought in their behalf from the time that they left Egypt till the time of the Judges, and reproaches them for their ingratitude to the Lord. A matter of confusion for us Christians, who have received from God far greater benefits.

1. **[105:1]** “*In sæculum.*” St. Jerome translates: *In æternum.*

2. **[105:2]** “*Loquetur.*” According to the Chaldee: *Eloqui poterit.* That is: Who shall show forth . . . ?[13255]

3. **[105:3]** “*Judicium.*” Judgment, equity, or the law of God.[13256]

4, 5. **[105:4, 5]** In the Hebrew, according to St. Jerome and the other interpreters, instead of the plural, “*Nostri,*” etc., is found the singular, namely: *Mei, Me, Videam, Læter.*[13257] “*In beneplacito populi tui.*” St. Jerome translates: *In repropitiatione populi tui.* That is: According to the goodness which Thou hast so often shown towards Thy people. “*In salutari tuo.*” According to the Hebrew: *In salute tua;* and according to the Chaldee: *In redemptione tua.* That is: By sending us salvation, or redemption through Jesus Christ, as St. Augustine explains: *Ipse est enim Salvator* . . . *; de illo quippe dixit Simeon senex: Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum*—Because my eyes have seen Thy salvation. *“Ad videndum in bonitate.” According to the Hebrew: Ut videam bonum;* or, according to St. Jerome, *oona*—In order that I may see the good things prepared for Thy elect. “*Ad lætandum in lætitia gentis tuæ.*” That is, according to the Hebrew: That I may rejoice in the joy, or that I may have part in the joy, of Thy faithful people. “*Ut lauderis cum hereditate tua.*” That is: That Thou mayest be forever praised in the midst of this people who are Thy inheritance, or Thy domain, chosen for all eternity.

7. **[105:7]** That is: They did not appreciate the wonders wrought by Thee for their deliverance, and too soon they forgot Thy many mercies towards them.

8. **[105:7]** “*Ascendentes in mare.*” According to the Hebrew: *Juxta mare.* That is: They provoked Thy anger near the Red Sea, where they received so many benefits (*Exod.* 14.).

10. **[105:9]** Here the prophet returns to speak of the benefits done them in their progress through the Red Sea. “*Increpuit Mare Rubrum.*” St. Jerome translates: *Comminatus est Mari Rubro.* God threatened the Red Sea to make it obey; that is, he bade the Red Sea to dry up, its waters withdrawing on both sides to make a way for the Israelites.

13. **[105:12]** They then chanted the Canticle of Moses (*Exod.* 15.).

14. **[105:13]** “*Fecerunt.*” They made a change. “*Obliti sunt operum ejus.*” They forgot all the wonders that God had wrought in their favor. “*Non sustinuerunt consilium ejus.*” St. Jerome translates: *Non expectaverunt voluntatem ejus*—They would not wait for the execution of his will.

15. **[105:14]** “*In inaquosa.*” St. Jerome translates: *In solitudine.*[13258]

16. **[105:15]** “*Misit saturitatem in animas eorum.*” That is: God sent them to satiety the food that they craved.

17. **[105:16]** “*Irritaverunt.*” According to the Hebrew: *Inviderunt;* and the Chaldee: *Invidia commoti sunt.* Reference is here made to the envy that Dathan and Abiron, named in the following verse, had conceived against Moses and Aaron on seeing them constituted leaders of the people, envy that led them to address to Moses and Aaron these words: *Cur elevamini super populum Domini?*—Why lift you up yourselves above the people of the Lord? (*Num.* 16:3.) “*Sanctum Domini.* Aaron, consecrated to God as his priest.

18. **[105:17]** The earth swallowed them both up, with all those that had joined their party of revolt (*Num.* 16:32).

19. **[105:18]** “*Synagoga eorum.*” The multitude of those that murmured the following day (*Num.* 16:41).

20. **[105:19]** The psalmist refers here to another rising of the Israelites, when they worshipped the golden calf (*Exod.* 32.). “*In Horeb,*” near Mount Horeb, or Sinai.

21. **[105:20]** “*Gloriam suam.*” Some understand these words to mean the glory of the Israelites; but according to the Chaldee we read: *Gloriam Domini sui;* and Estius says the sense of the verse is: They gave to the image of a calf the glory that is due to God.[13259]

23. **[105:23]** That is: God then declared that he would destroy his people (*Exod.* 22:10), and so he would have done if Moses, whom he had chosen to be their leader, had not interposed in his presence as their mediator.[13260] “*In confractione.*” According to the Hebrew: *In ruptura,* or *divisione;* and St. Jerome translates: *Medius (stetisset medius contra faciem illius).*

24. **[105:23]** “*Terram desiderabilem.*” The land that God had promised them, and that was so worthy of their desires.

26, 27. **[105:26, 27]** “*Manum suam.*” His hand armed with the sword of justice. Bellarmine here remarks that the first of these chastisements was inflicted in the desert itself, where all the murmurers twenty years old and upwards were condemned to die (*Num.* 14:29); the second, namely, the dispersion, had its accomplishment later on, at first by means of the king of Babylon, and more fully afterwards by Titus and Vespasian.

28. **[105:28]** Here David mentions another sin of the Israelites which they committed when, led away by the daughters of Moab, they began to worship their idol Beelphegor (*Num.* 25.). Don Calmet, in a dissertation at the beginning of the Book of Numbers, shows that Beelphegor is the same as Adonis. “*Sacrificia mortuorum.*” St. Jerome translates: *Victimas mortuorum.* That is: Sacrifices offered to dead gods, such as are the gods of the Gentiles; while our true God is a living God.

29. **[105:29]** “*In adinventionibus suis.*” With their perverse inventions, that is, with their superstitions. “*Multiplicata est in eis ruina.*” According to the Hebrew: *Erupit in eos plaga.* That is: A great slaughter was made of them on account of this sacrilege; the number of those that perished on this occasion amounted to twenty-four thousand (*Num.* 25:9).

30. **[105:30]** Phinees, grandson of Aaron, burning with zeal for God, slew one of the transgressors of the law, with his accomplice. “*Stetit.*” He stood firm for the honor of the law. “*Placavit.*” St. Jerome translates: *Dijudicavit*—He judged and punished the guilty one. Others, according to the Chaldee: *Oravit;* or *Oratione placavit*—He interposed by praying for his people, and appeased the anger of God.[13261] “*Cessavit quassatio.*” That is, according to some interpreters: The disorder ceased. But the sense of the Chaldee is: *Cessavit mors;* and St. Jerome translates in the same sense: *Est retenta percussio*—The slaughter ceased. This last interpretation is the best; for we read in Numbers: *Cessavitque plaga a filiis Israel*—And the scourge ceased from the children of Israel (*Num.* 25:8).

31. **[105:31]** This act of Phinees was ascribed to him for merit, as a work of justice and of true zeal. He received in recompense the dignity of high-priest (*Num.* 25:13), which continued in his family for more than thirteen centuries, according to Mattei, with Mariana, Menochius, etc. “*In sempiternum.*” That is: He received this reward for as long as the Mosaic law should last; *Quamdiu lex duraret,* says Emmanuel Sa.

32. **[105:32]** The Israelites committed another sin (*Num.* 20.) when, suffering from want of water in the desert, they broke out in unjust murmurings. Moses then, though he had received from God the command to speak to the rock, hesitated somewhat, having conceived a certain feeling of diffidence; however, he struck the rock and water flowed from it in great abundance. God, displeased with Moses on account of his hesitation, punished him by making him die before entering the Promised Land. “*Ad aquas contradictionis.*” That is: In the place where on account of the want of water there arose a contradiction and a contest against Moses. “*Exacerbaverunt spiritum ejus.*” They so embittered his soul that he

hesitated to execute the order that God had given him to speak to the rock.[13262]

33. **[105:33]** God with his own mouth rebuked the Hebrews, reproving them for not having exterminated the Gentiles, as he had commanded them.[13263]

37. **[105:38]** "*Fornicati sunt.*" In the Bible apostasy from the faith is called Fornication, or treason like to that of unfaithful spouses, who are false to their plighted troth.[13264] "*In adinventionibus suis.*" That is: With their superstitions.

38. **[105:40]** "*Hereditatem suam.*" Those whom he had chosen for his own people.

41. **[105:43]** "*In consilio suo.*" According to the Hebrew: *In consilio ipsorum*—By the purpose, as Menochius explains, which they formed of serving idols. "*Humiliati sunt in iniquitatibus suis.*" According to Mattei we are by thus not to understand that they were humbled in their wickedness, but that they grew more wicked in their humiliations.[13265]

42. **[105:44]** However, the Lord, seeing them thus afflicted, had pity on them and lent his ear to their prayers.

43. **[105:45]** "*Testamenti sui.*" That is, of the promises made to their fathers. "*Pœnituit eum.*" According to the Chaldee: *Conversus est ab ira sua.* He turned aside from his anger, as though he felt sorrow for having punished them.

44. **[105:46]** That is, according to Maldonatus, Mariana, Tirinus, and Mattei: He caused them to meet with compassion from their enemies, who held them captives.[13266]

45. **[105:47]** "*Congrega nos de nationibus.*" Gather us together by delivering us from the midst of the Gentiles, where we are scattered.

46. **[105:47]** That is: In order that we may come to render Thee thanks in celebrating . . .

47. **[105:48]** Then we shall sing: Blessed be, etc.

PSALM 106 OF THE PSALTER

In the literal sense this psalm sets forth the sufferings that the Jews endured in their captivity and in the desert, and it exhorts them to return thanks to God for having delivered them therefrom. In the figurative sense it represents the miseries from which Jesus Christ has delivered Christians. In it, moreover, the prophet clearly announces the ruin of the Synagogue, the vocation of the Gentiles, and the establishment of the Church.[13267]

3. **[106:3]** From the East and from the West, from the North and from the South.[13268]

4. **[106:4]** “*Erraverunt.*” The Israelites wandered, etc.[13269]

9. **[106:9]** He provided in the desert a marvellous food, and he satisfied those that were famishing.

10. **[106:10]** He assisted them when they were in dark prisons, which were as the shadow of death;[13270] in want of everything and bound with iron chains.

12. **[106:12]** Then was their heart humbled by labors, that is, the pride of their heart was brought low by the hardships that they suffered in the midst of all their afflictions. They grew too weak to resist their enemies, and there was no one to help them to deliver themselves from their hands.

14. **[106:14]** “*De tenebris et umbra mortis.*” See verse 10.

16. **[106:16]** That is, he has delivered them from prison or from captivity.

18. **[106:18]** By reason of their infirmity or sickness.

19. **[106:19]** In repeating this verse several times, the prophet wishes to make us understand the compassion that God has for our miseries, and at the same time the efficacy of prayer which makes the Lord not know how to refuse help to him who asks it of him.

20. **[106:20]** “*Verbum suum.*” His word, or his orders.[13271]

25. **[106:25]** “*Dixit.*” God commanded. “*Stetit spiritus procellæ.*” The wind that makes the storm went forth immediately.

26. **[106:26]** The waves of the sea mount and then sink again; the mariners are troubled by fear and their strength begins to fail.

27. **[106:27]** “*Omnis sapientia eorum devorata est.*” In the midst of their confusion they have lost all their seaman’s craft.

30. **[106:30]** “*Deduxit eos.*” The Lord has conducted them.

32. **[106:32]** “*Seniorum.*” The ancients, or the chiefs of the people.

33. **[106:33]** “*Posuit.*” The Lord has wrought these other wonders; he has, etc.[13272]

39. **[106:39]** Afterwards, in punishment for their sins, they were reduced, etc.

40. **[106:40]** Contempt was also cast upon their princes, that is, the Lord made the chiefs who ruled them to be despised by allowing them to fall into many mistakes, when they strayed from the path of justice and prudence.[13273]

42. **[106:42]** The just shall see these mercies and rejoice thereat; while the wicked for shame of their iniquity shall not dare to open their mouth.

43. **[106:43]** He that is wise will remember these things; and while meditating on them will understand how far reach the mercies of the Lord.

David consecrates this chant to giving thanks to God for his benefits, and to praying to him for victory over the Edomites. It must be remarked that this psalm has already been explained, partly in verses 1–5; in Psalm 56 verses 10–14; and for the rest, in Psalm 59 verses 5–13. We shall content ourselves with giving here a succinct explanation.

1. **[107:2]** My heart is disposed to write whatever Thou ordainest; in all I will bless Thee, and I will sing Thy praises.[13274]

2. **[107:3]** “*Gloria mea.*” My spirit, which loves to praise God. “*Exurgam diluculo.*” I wish to praise Thee at early morn.

4. **[107:5]** I shall say that for all, from earth even to the heavens, is full of Thy mercy and fidelity.

5. **[107:6]** “*Ut liberentur* . . .” Psalm 59:5.

6, 7. **[107:7, 8]** Hear me, O Lord, and let Thy right hand save me. God has declared from his sanctuary that I shall one day have the joy of dividing the country of Sichem, or Samaria, and of measuring the lands of the valley of Tents beyond the Jordan, to distribute them at my will.

8. **[107:9]** The names of Galaad, Manasses, and Ephraim designate the provinces occupied by the tribes of Israel, whom David called the strength of his head or crown.

9. **[107:9]** It is in the tribe of Juda that my throne is established; and the land of Moab which is abundant, makes me hope fully to satisfy my people.

10. **[107:10]** “*Alienigenæ.*” Strangers.[13275]

11. **[107:11]** Who will lead me into Edom, to take possession of this country, the capital of which is very strong?

12. **[107:12]** Shall it not be Thou, my God, who at first didst repel us? Wilt not Thou Thyself go forth with our troops to give us victory?

13. **[107:13]** “*Vana salus hominis.*” In vain can we hope for help from others.

14. **[107:14]** Placing our hopes in God, we shall obtain the victory; he will exterminate our enemies.

PSALM 108 OF THE PSALTER

Interpreters have given various explanations of this psalm. Some apply it to Saul giving vent to his anger against Doeg and those that resemble him. Others to David predicting in form of imprecation the chastisements reserved for Doeg and Achitophel, his enemies. Others, as Xavier Mattei, Mark Marius, and Louis Mingarella suppose that the imprecations are uttered against David and Jesus Christ by their enemies. But commonly the Fathers and the other interpreters regard these imprecations as pronounced against Judas and the other enemies of our Lord. This interpretation, which we follow, agrees especially with that of St. Augustine.

1. **[108:2]** Hide not my praise, that is, make known my innocence; for the mouth of an impious man and traitor is opened against me.[13276] “*Super me.*” St. Jerome translates: *Contra me.* St. Augustine explains: *Odium, quod dolo tegebatur, erupit in vocem*—The hatred, treacherously concealed, broke forth in words.

3. **[108:4]** “*Detrahebant.*” St. Jerome translates: *Adversabantur*—They contradicted me. “*Orabam.*” St. Augustine adds: *Pro eis ipsis*—At the same time I prayed for these very men.

5. **[108:6]** St. Augustine applies this verse to Judas, and by the sinner he understands Satan himself, which he thus explains: *Diabolo subditus sit, qui Christo subditus esse noluit*—Let him be subject to the devil, who refused to be subject to Christ. And in fact Judas was possessed by Satan: *Post buccellam, introivit in eum Satanas*—After the morsel (that is, after Holy Communion) Satan entered in him (*John*, 13:27).

6. **[108:7]** “*Cum judicatur.*” When he shall be judged at the tribunal of God. “*Oratio ejus fiat in peccatum.*” That is, as Lallemant very well explains: If

he dares speak in self-defence, may it be ascribed to him as a new crime on account of his temerity.

7. **[108:8]** “*Episcopatum ejus.*” Some understand by this his place of honor or administration; but it may be justly remarked that by the word Episcopate we must understand the apostolate, as St. Peter interprets it in applying this passage to Judas in the assembly of the apostles, who afterwards addressed this prayer to the Lord: *Ostende quem elegeris ex his duobus unum, accipere locum ministerii hujus, et apostolatus, de quo prævaricatus est Judas*—Show which of these two Thou hast chosen, to take the place of his ministry and apostleship, from which Judas hath by transgression fallen (*Acts,* 1:20–24).

8. **[108:9]** Here we must remark, that St. John Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Euthymius are of opinion that Judas was never married. Moreover, Genebrardus and Tirinus think that these imprecations against Judas did not all have their effect in his person, but those only that could reach him. On the other hand, St. Augustine teaches that they were verified with regard to the Jewish people, of whom Judas is here the figure: for by the destruction of Jerusalem the Synagogue became a widow, and the Jews, her children, were made orphans.[13277]

9. **[108:10]** This happened after the destruction of Jerusalem. “*Nutantes transferantur.*” St. Jerome translates: *Justabiles vagentur.*

10. **[108:11]** Here Menochius remarks: *In excidio Hierosolymitano, adeo Judæorum divitias scrutabantur milites Romani, ut etiam, corporibus sectis aliquorum, viscera scrutati sint, sperantes se aurum, quod deglutivissent, inventuros. Testis Josephus*—In the destruction of Jerusalem the Roman soldiers made such a close search after the riches and property of the Jews, that they even ripped up the bodies of some and searched their bowels to find gold which they might have swallowed, as Josephus testifies (*De Bello Judaic0,*1. 6, c. 15).

12. **[108:13]** That is, as Lallemant explains: May death carry off his children before they are able to have their father’s name pass to a second

generation.[13278]

13. **[108:14]** “*Iniquitas patrum ejus.*” The iniquity of the fathers of this same people, to be punished in him, as St. Augustine explains, applying the text of the Gospel: *Ut veniat super vos omnis sanguis Justus, qui effusus est super terram, a sanguine Abel* . . . That upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth from the blood of Abel . . . (*Matt*, 23:33). “*Matris ejus.*” By this the holy Doctor understands Jerusalem.

14. **[108:15]** “*Fiant contra Dominum semper.*” May the iniquity of their fathers and the sin of their mother, with their own crimes, be always before the eyes of God in punishment.

15. **[108:17]** “*Hominem inopem* . . .” Jesus Christ himself, who was thus treated without pity.

16. **[108:18]** “*Dilexit maledictionem.*” St. Augustine applies this to the time when the Jewish people cried out: *Sanguis ejus super nos et super filios nostros*—His blood be upon us and upon our children (*Matt*, 27:25).

17. **[108:18]** That is, as St. Augustine explains: May cursing wrap round his body and penetrate within his soul.

19. **[108:20]** “*Hoc opus.*” St. Jerome translates: *Hæc est retributio*—This is the punishment.[13279]

20. **[108:21]** “*Propter nomen tuum.*” For the glory of Thy name. “*Suavis.*” St. Jerome translates: *Bona.* Bent on helping the afflicted.

21. **[108:22]** “*Cor meum conturbatum est intra me.*” St. Augustine refers this passage to what Jesus Christ said in the garden: *Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem*—My soul is sorrowful even unto death (*Matt.* 26:38).

22. **[108:23]** “*Excusans sum sicut locustæ.*” The locust goes lopping from place to place; and thus, says Du Hamel, did it happen to Jesus Christ: *Ex uno tribunali in aliud jactatus*—Who was cast about from one tribunal to another.

23. **[108:24]** “*Propter oleum.*” St. Jerome translates: *Absque oleo*—Without oil. We should then understand that ill and infirm condition of body was brought on not by the use of oil, but through being debarred from its use; for Estius, Sa, Mariana, Malvenda, Tirinus, and Mattei say that unctions with the use of oil were customary among the Hebrews, and that their health suffered if they failed to use them. Hence Mattei asserts that to understand here that flesh was lost by the use of oil is a most evident error. Besides, Bellarmine thus translates and explains the Hebrew literally: *Caro mea immutata est a pinguedine; id est, ex pingui macilenta reddita est.* And according to the Chaldee we read: *Macilenta est absque pinguedine.* The sense, therefore, is: My flesh has been changed from being fat, and is become lean for want of food that produces fatness. Otherwise, I do not see how this verse can with propriety be applied to Jesus Christ.

24. **[108:25]** “*Moverunt capita sua.*” They shook their heads to insult me. This was verified, as Bellarmine remarks, when the enemies of Jesus Christ blasphemed him as he was on the cross: *Prætereuntes autem blasphemabant eum, moventes capita sua*—And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads (*Matt,* 27:39).

26. **[108:27]** That is, as Menochius explains it: Let them know that all that I have suffered, I have suffered by Thy will, according to the words of Isaias: *Propter scelus populi mei percussi eum*—For the wickedness of my people have I struck him (*Is.* 53:8).

27. **[108:28]** “*Maledicent illi.*” They will curse me. And thus St. Paul wrote: *Christus nos redemit de maledicto legis, factus pro nobis maledictus*—Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (*Gal.* 3:13). Du Hamel comments on the last words thus: *Nostram ipse suscipiens maledictionem*—Taking upon himself our curse. “*Confundantur.*” May they remain confounded, and be converted, as St. Augustine understands it.

28. **[108:29]** “*Diploide.*” With a double cloak, that is, according to St. Augustine, both within and without.

29. **[108:30]** “*Nimis . . . In medio multorum.*” St. Jerome translates: *Vehementer . . . In medio populorum*—In the midst of the people.

30. **[108:31]** He has stood at my side in my misery, to defend me and to save my life from the hands of my persecutors. Bellarmine understands this of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, whereby ne resumed the life which the Jews had taken from him.

Lauds

SUNDAY AT LAUDS

PSALM 92 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist exalts the power that God manifested in creating heaven and earth; and transporting himself in thought to the first moment of creation, he represents to himself God, who in some way proceeds from the mystery of his eternal existence, in order to reveal himself in the production of creatures.[13280]

1. **[92:1]** The Lord has established his kingdom over the whole universe; he has clothed himself with majesty; he has girt himself ready to govern the world and to fill it with his benefits.

3. **[92:2]** Lord, thy throne or thy reign was established from all eternity, since Thou hast existed eternally before all creatures.

4, 5. **[92:3]** The rivers seem to have raised their voice to praise Thee; the sound of many waters has served them for voice to give Thee glory.

6. **[92:4]** Marvellous are the heavings of the waves of the sea when agitated by the winds; yet more marvellous[13281] is the Lord, who from the height of heaven bridles the rage of the billows, and governs all things.

7. **[92:5]** The tokens of Thy goodness and grandeur, which are proclaimed from Thy house, that is, from the Church, are but too clear and evident; it is fitting then that this Thy house should by Thy divine Providence ever be kept holy and pure of all stain.

(For Psalm 2, see Psalm 99, *Jubilate Deo,* page 286.)

PSALM 62 OF THE PSALTER

A prayer of David when he was in the desert, pursued by his enemies. He thanks God for his protection; and it is in his mercy that he always wishes to hope.

1. **[62:2]** At break of day I wake from sleep and come to Thee.

2. **[62:2]** My soul has so great thirst for Thee, that my body also feels the ardor.[13282]

4. **[62:4]** "*Labia mea laudabunt te.*" My lips shall always be employed in praising Thee.

5. **[62:5]** Thus throughout my life I will do nought but bless Thee, and I will lift up my hands continually to invoke Thy name.

6. **[62:6]** "*Sicut adipe et pinguedine.*" As with an agreeable and nourishing fatness, that is, with the abundance of Thy grace and consolations.

7. **[62:7]** If in the time of my repose, when in my bed, I was mindful of Thee, much more when day comes will I meditate upon Thy goodness in having thus protected me.

8. **[62:8]** "*In velamento alarum tuarum.*" At seeing that Thou coverest me with Thy wings.

9. **[62:9]** It is in vain that my enemies have sought to take my life; they shall lose their own instead, and shall be buried in the abyss of hell; there they shall be given into the hand of the avenging sword of God; they shall become the prey of foxes, that is, of devils who as foxes deceive men by their cunning.

10. **[62:10]** "*Rex . . . in eo.*" Some refer these words to David, and believe that there is question here of the oath of fidelity which had to be made to him when he came to the throne. But Rotigni and Lallemant say, with greater probability, that they refer to the Messias, the King of the world and true God; for it is one thing to swear allegiance to a king, and another to swear by the name of a king. This is the meaning of the words: *Jurant in eo.*

PSALM 66 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist addressed to God a fervent prayer, beseeching him to send the Messias, that he may thus make himself known and adored by all nations.

1. **[66:2]** “*Illuminet vultum suum super nos.*” May God illuminate us by the splendors of his presence.

2. **[66:3]** O Lord, let us know here on earth the way to please Thee, and cause that among all nations the Saviour, Thy Son, be known.

3. **[66:4]** May all the nations thus enlightened confess that Thou art their God. May they praise and give Thee thanks.

5. **[66:6]** May all the people praise Thee, O my God! and thank Thee for all Thy benefits; and especially because the earth, that is, the most pure womb of a Virgin, such as Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, has brought forth the Fruit so greatly desired, the Saviour of the world. Wherefore, Jesus Christ was called by the angel the Blessed Fruit of Mary.[13283]

6. **[66:7]** “*Deus, Deus noster, . . . Deus.*” In this triple repetition of the name of God interpreters recognize a sufficiently clear indication of the Mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity.[13284] “*Metuant eum omnes fines terræ.*” May all men on earth, even to its farthest limits, fear and adore him.

CANTICLE OF THE THREE CHILDREN (DAN. 3:57)

A hymn sung at Babylon by the three young Israelites, Ananias, Misael, and Azarias, while they were in the midst of the fiery furnace wherein King Nabuchodonozor had condemned them to die for having refused to adore his statue (*Dan.* 3:57). This canticle, in which all creatures are invited to bless God, is very easy to understand. We therefore omit to explain it, because such an explanation instead of pleasing and instructing the reader would rather be wearisome to him.[13285]

PSALM 148 OF THE PSALTER

In this psalm, as well as in the two following, all creatures are called upon to praise and thank the Lord for the victory gained over the enemies of his holy name. In an allegorical sense all Christians are invited to bless God for the victory that he helped them to gain over the devil, the world, and the flesh; a victory so great that for it they will be honored by being appointed judges at the day of judgment.

4. **[148:4]** "*Aquæ omnes quæ super cælos sunt.*" With regard to these waters there are various opinions. Some, as St. Bonaventure, Ambrose and Catharinus, etc., say that they are the crystalline heaven. Others, as St. Athanasius (*Cont. Arian.* or. 2, n. 28, *E. B.*), St. Basil (*In Hexam.* hom. 3), St. Ambrose (*Hexam.*1. 2, c. 2, 3), St. John Chrysostom (*In Genes.* hom. 4), Bede (*In Hexam.*), etc., believe that these waters are above the firmament or starry heavens, and they cite for this opinion Genesis: *Et fecit Deus firmamentum, divisitque aquas quæ erant sub firmamento, ab his quæ erant super firmamentum*—And God made a firmament, and divided the waters that were under the firmament from those that were above the firmament (*Gen.* 1:7). And St. Augustine, who holds the same view, says: *Major est Scripturæ hujus auctoritas, quam omnis humani ingenii capacitas*—The authority of this Scripture is greater than all the capacity of the human mind (*De Gen. ad litt.*1. 2, c. 5, n. 9). This opinion is also followed by many modern interpreters cited by Tirinus. Others, in fine, such as Rupert, Lorinus, Mariana, etc., with the greatest number of modern commentators, understand by these waters the clouds that are suspended over the earth.[13286]

6. **[148:6]** "*Ea.*" That is, the angels and the heavenly bodies.

7. **[148:7]** "*Dracones.*" This is the name given by Scripture to seamonsters. "*Abyssi.*" Abysses, that is, deep waters.

8. **[148:8]** "*Spiritus procellarum.*" These are violent winds.

10. **[148:10]** "*Serpentes.*" Animals that crawl upon the earth. "*Volucres pennatæ.*" Birds that fly in the air.

12. **[148:12]** “*Exaltatum est nomen ejus solius.*” God is raised above everything; it is to him alone all glory belongs.

13. **[148:14]** Let then the praises of the Lord resound through heaven and earth, since he has willed to exalt by his power his faithful people, in giving them Jesus Christ, who has made his servants victorious over the devils.

14. **[148:14]** Let praise be given at the same time to all his saints, and to all the true children of Israel who form the people that by their faith and virtue approach near to God.

PSALM 149 OF THE PSALTER

1. **[149:1]** Sing to the Lord a new canticle for all the new benefits that he has bestowed upon us, and especially for having given us Jesus Christ for our Redeemer: it is just that in the assembly of the saints, that is, of Christians, the praises of the Lord should ever resound.

2. **[149:2]** Let the children of the holy Church exult in their God who has created them, and who reigns in them by his grace.

4. **[149:4]** “*Exultabit mansuetos in salutem.*” He will exalt the meek by giving them eternal salvation.

5. **[149:5]** “*In gloria.*” In the glory of heaven, where they shall enjoy eternal gladness.

7. **[149:7]** Wherewith to execute a just vengeance upon the nations who had persecuted them by reproaching them with their iniquities.[13287]

9. **[149:9]** “*Ut faciant in eos judicium conscriptum.*” So they shall execute upon the persecutors the judgment spoken of in Holy Scripture. *Judicabunt nationes, et dominabuntur populis*—They shall judge nations, and rule over people (*Wis.* 3:8).

PSALM 150[13288] OF THE PSALTER

1. **[150:1]** “*In sanctis ejus.*” According to the Hebrew: *In sanctuario ejus*—In his sanctuary, which is principally heaven. “*In firmamento virtutis ejus.*” St. Jerome translates: *In fortitudine potentiæ ejus*—In the strength of his power. The almighty power of God shines forth in a special manner in the firmament, or in the heavens, as is the meaning of the word *Firmamentum* given in the first chapter of Genesis.

2. **[150:2]** “*In virtutibus ejus.*” In the effects of his power, or in the marvels that he works.

4. **[150:4]** “*Choro.*” Some think that this expression means here some musical instrument, now unknown to us; others that it signifies a concert of voices. We are ignorant as to what instruments correspond to those mentioned by the psalmist. Dom Calmet has treated this subject in a special dissertation.

THE CANTICLE OF ZACHARY (LUKE, 1:68)

In this canticle we hear the prophet Zachary praising and thanking the Messias who comes to save mankind: he then shows his own son, St. John the Baptist, chosen to be the precursor of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. **[1:69]** “*Cornu salutis.*” The strength that saves, that is, the Saviour.

8. **[1:75]** “*In sanctitate et justitia coram ipso.*” That is to say: Not merely with external worship, but also with piety and interior justice, which renders us likewise interiorly just in the sight of God.

9. **[1:76]** Thou shalt be the prophet of the Lord; for before he manifests himself on earth, thou shalt go forth to prepare souls to follow his teaching.

11. **[1:78]** “*Per viscera misericordiæ.*” That is: Through the immense and tender pity. “*Oriens.*” The word *Oriens* is not the participle of the verb *Orior,* but according to the Hebrew and the Greek text, is a noun substantive, which, as explained by St. Jerome, St. Cyril, and others cited by Tirinus in his comments on *Zachary,* iii. 8, denotes the eternal Word begotten by God. Hence the following is the antiphon which the Church

sings on the 21st of December in addressing our divine Saviour: *O Oriens, Splendor lucis æternæ, et Sol justitiæ! veni, et illumina sedentes in tenebris et umbra mortis*—O Orient, Splendor of eternal light, and Sun of justice, come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

12. **[1:79]** "*Qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis sedent*" That is: Those that are deprived of the grace of God, a privation which is the shadow of the eternal death. "*In viam pacis.*" In the path that conducts to eternal beatitude.

MONDAY AT LAUDS

PSALM 50 OF THE PSALTER

David, contrite and humbled, bewails his sins.[13289]—In this psalm is perfectly expressed the sorrow that a sinner feels when repenting of his faults he humbly asks God's pardon. It is the fourth penitential psalm.

1. **[50:3]** Show to me great mercy because I am a great sinner.

2. **[50:3]** "*Dele iniquitatem meam.*" Blot out from my soul all my sins.

4. **[50:5]** I well know the enormity of my sin, which is continually before my eyes, reproaching me with the evil that I have done.

5. **[50:6]** O Lord, against Thee alone I have sinned, and I have dared to do evil before Thy eyes; but I hope to receive from Thee the pardon which Thou hast promised to repentant sinners so that Thou mayest be justified in Thy words. *In sermonibus tuis,* that is, in regard to Thy promises to pardon him who repents, and that Thou wilt overcome, that is, Thou wilt shut the mouth of my enemies, who think and dare to say that it is not just that I should receive pardon for so great a sin, when Thou shalt judge me.

It must be remarked that this verse is variously explained by others. "*Tibi soli peccavi.*" Bellarmine, Tirinus, and Mattei, following the commentary of St. Cyril and of St. Gregory, explain thus: *Tibi soli peccavi ut judici*—Against Thee only have I sinned as Judge. I have sinned against Thee alone, in this sense, that Thou alone art to judge me; for though it is true that I have also sinned against my neighbor by causing the death of Urias and by scandalizing the people, nevertheless I am afraid of Thee alone; because as king I have no one on earth to judge me, and yet I have to be judged, and by Thee alone be punished, and not by men. This commentary is beautiful, but the interpretation given above appears to me more simple and more appropriate: “Lord against Thee alone I have sinned,” for it was God’s law only that David transgressed. It is no objection that he had also offended against Urias and the people; for these offences were sins only so far as they were transgressions of the law of God, since all the malice of sin consists in the transgression of the divine law, according to what the Apostle says: “*Peccatum non cognovi, nisi per legem*”—But I did not know sin, but by the law (*Rom.* 7:7). Hence David said with good reason: Against Thee only I have sinned; for Thy law alone I have transgressed. “*Ut justificeris.*”[13290] Theodoret says that the particle *Ut* does not here signify cause but consequence. “*Judicaris.*” According to the Hebrew: *Judicaveris*—Thou shalt judge.

6. **[50:7]** I have had the misfortune of being conceived in sin; when my mother conceived me I appeared in the world already a sinner.—As if he would say: what, O Lord! couldst Thou expect from a man conceived in sin?—Grotius explains this passage thus: I was guilty from my birth. But this interpretation seems to favor the opinion of Socinus, who denied original sin. and denied that it was contracted from the moment of conception; whereas this text proves perhaps more clearly than any other that all men are conceived in original sin.

7. **[50:8]** Thou lovest the truth, and him also who confesses his fault: I confess my ingratitude, inasmuch as Thou hast favored me by making known to me the secrets of Thy wisdom, secrets uncertain and hidden to others.

8. **[50:9]** Reference is here made to the sprinkling of the blood of the victims, which was made over the lepers with hyssop to purify them (*Levit.* 14:6). That is to say: Cleanse me, O Lord! ever more and more.[13291]

9. **[50:10]** In making me hear that Thou hast pardoned me, Thou wilt give to my soul a joy and gladness so great that my very bones, that is, all my interior powers, which have been so greatly afflicted, shall leap for joy.

10. **[50:11]** My God, turn, then, Thy face from my sins, that is, look no longer upon them; and blot out from my soul all my faults, which gave

Thee horror.

11. **[50:12]** Change my heart, and give me a pure heart, that loves none but Thee: and renew within my bowels, that is, my interior, that right spirit which I had lost by sin.

13. **[50:14]** Restore to me the joy of the salvation which Thou hast given me, and confirm me in good by means of a *principal* spirit, that is, one that is strong, inspired by Thee.

14. **[50:14]** I promise Thee, on account of the scandal that I have given, to instruct sinners in Thy law, and I hope that they will be converted to Thee.

15. **[50:16]** “*Sanguinibus.*” Rotigni and Lallemant give to this word a sense that is very probable, by explaining it to refer to the remorse of conscience with which David was afflicted on account of the blood of Urias.[13292]—“*Justitiam tuam.*” Bellarmine says that the pardon of sin is mercy with respect to us; but that it is justice with regard to Jesus Christ who, by his death, has merited for us pardon; and this is the divine justice of which David meant to speak.

17. **[50:18]** If to satisfy for my sins Thou hadst required of me sacrifices, I would willingly have offered them to Thee; but I well know that with holocausts Thou art not satisfied.

18. **[50:19]** The sacrifice that is pleasing to Thee, O my God! is a soul afflicted on account of its sin; when a heart is contrite and humbled Thou knowest not how to despise it.

19. **[50:20]** That is: If I do not deserve to be heard, look, O Lord! with a gracious eye upon Thy city Sion, and according to Thy good-will, that is, in accordance with the purpose of Thy good pleasure, which Thou hadst in choosing it as Thy dwelling place, show to it Thy favor, so that the walls of Jerusalem, now fallen in ruins, may be rebuilt.

20. **[50:21]** Then wilt Thou accept with joy my sacrifices of justice, that is, as Bellarmine understands it, my homage justly due to Thee, and all my

offerings and holocausts; and many, after my example, will offer to Thee upon Thy altar, calves, that is, choice victims, amongst which the calf was the noblest.[13293]

PSALM 5 OF THE PSALTER

The just man may here understand perfectly how he should conduct himself in adversities and then be consoled by confiding in God. At the end, the psalm shows us the happiness of heaven as a reward promised to souls that suffer patiently here below.

1. **[5:2]** 2. God hears and understands everything; but sometimes he seems not to hear, or not to understand, because the prayer that we make to him is either not just or because it is ill-made. Hence David said: O Lord, hear me, understand me.

3. **[5:4]** I will always have recourse to Thee; and I know of a certainty, according to Thy promises, that Thou wilt always hearken to my prayer.

4. **[5:5]** I will place myself in Thy presence to pray to Thee, and I will always have before my eyes that Thou hatest all iniquity.[13294]

9. **[5:9]** “*Propter inimicos meos, dirige in conspectu tuo viam meam.*” To confound my enemies so direct me that I may always walk in Thy presence.

11. **[5:11]** An open sepulchre that exhales a malignant infection; for they use their tongues to weave deceits; judge them, and punish them as they deserve.

15. **[5:13]** Thou hast surrounded us on all sides with the shield of goodwill which renders us secure from all the assaults of our enemies.

CANTICLE OF THE PROPHET ISAIAS (CH. 12)

Isaias, after having prophesied the coming of the Messias, the call of the Gentiles, the end of the captivity, and the return of the Jews to the Land of Promise, composed this canticle that it might be chanted by the people in thanksgiving to the Lord. (*Is.* 12.)—The Church appoints it to be sung as a thanksgiving to Jesus Christ for having given us the law of grace and for having by this signal benefit delivered us from the slavery of the devil.

1. **[12:1]** I will ever thank Thee, because after being justly angry with me for my sins, Thy wrath is turned to clemency, and has consoled me.

2, 3. **[12:2]** My God has come himself to save me; I shall then live henceforward in confidence and without fear; for the Lord will be my strength and the object of my praise, since he has willed to become my Saviour.

4, 5. **[12:3, 4]** The prophet here addresses his words to the faithful, and says to them: You will draw with joy from the very fountains of the Saviour the waters[13295] of salvation; that is, according to St. Cyril and St. Jerome, his holy doctrine; or, according to St. Ambrose and Origen, the sacraments; or, according to St. Bernard, the gifts of the Holy Ghost. And in that day you will say one to another: Give praise to the Lord, and invoke his name; make known to the people the inventions[13296] of his love, and remember always to praise him, for his name is exceedingly great, even high above all praise.

6. **[12:5]** “*Quoniam magnifice fecit.*” For the magnificence that he has wrought in making us pass from death to life.

7. **[12:6]** “*Habitatio Sion.*” The assembly of the faithful, the holy Church. —“*Magnus in medio tui, Sanctus Israel.*” That is: Emmanuel, the expected of Israel, is in the midst of thee, to enrich thee with his graces.

TUESDAY AT LAUDS

PSALM MISERERE MEI DEUS OF MONDAY AT LAUDS

PSALM 42 OF THE PSALTER

David begs of God to be delivered from his enemies, and consoles himself with the hope of again seeing the Tabernacle of the Lord. In the spiritual sense this psalm applies to the just man who in the trials of the present life longs to leave this world, and to go to his heavenly country.[13297]

1. **[42:1]** "*De gente non sancta.*" Against the wicked who persecute me.

2. **[42:2]** "*Quare me repulisti?*" Why dost Thou seem to have cast me off?

3. **[42:3]** Send forth Thy light, and make me enjoy Thy promises; they will bring me out of sadness, and will lead me to Thy holy mountain of Sion, and to Thy tabernacle.—"*Deduxerunt et adduxerunt.*" According to the Hebrew: *Deducent et adducent.*

4. **[42:4]** Having entered therein, I will approach the divine altar, and even to my God, who will restore to me the gladness that rejoiced my youth.

5. **[42:5]** "*Confitebor tibi.*" There I will sing Thy praises.[13298]—"*Quare tristis es, anima mea?* Why, my soul, having such a hope, art thou sad?

6. **[42:6]** Have confidence in thy God, for I hope to go one day to bless him and to thank him forever in heaven, while saying to him: Thou art my God and the salvation of my face, that is, Thou my Saviour wilt be ever present to my eyes, and to see Thy beautiful face will be my salvation and beatitude.

(Here follow the Psalms *Deus, Deus meus,* and *Deus misereatur,* as on Sunday at Lauds.)

CANTICLE OF EZECHIAS (IS. 38:9)

The title of this canticle sufficiently explains its contents, thus: *Scriptura Ezechiæ, regis Juda, cum ægrotasset, et convaluisset de infirmitate sua*—The writing of Ezechias, king of Juda, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness. In the first part Ezechias complains of his sad state, and in the second he thanks God for having restored him to health. This canticle perfectly applies to the Christian who bewails his spiritual infirmities and who then thanks the Lord for the help that he has given to him.

1. **[38:10]** I said: In the middle of my life's course[13299] I shall enter the tomb.

2. **[38:10]** I set myself to consider the rest of the years which I might have lived, and I said: So here on earth I shall not any more have the joy of going to the temple, there to visit and to adore my Lord and my God.

3. **[38:11]** I shall see no more the inhabitants of my kingdom, who now live in peace.

4. **[38:12]** Behold I remain deprived of all posterity, and my family will be destroyed, as is the wont to destroy a shed of shepherds. Such is the explanation of St. Jerome, St. Thomas, and others.[13300]

5. **[38:12]** My life is being cut off like a web that is cut off by the weaver; I was still weaving it when the Lord cut it off; thus, my God, from morning till evening, Thou wilt make an end of me, that is, within the space of one day Thou wilt bring my life to a close.

6. **[38:13]** I hoped to live until the morning of the second day; but the violence of the disease, like a lion, has broken all my bones, that is, has taken away all my strength.

7. **[38:13]** My state is such that I cannot now last to see the evening. Like a little callow swallow that is in the nest, without feathers, suffering from cold and hunger, I cry out and beg for pity; and like a plaintive dove, so do I meditate upon my miseries, and implore for help by my moanings.

9. **[38:14]** O Lord! I am oppressed by evil; do Thou answer for me.[13301] But what is it that I ask for, or what will the Lord reply to me since it is he himself who has done it, that is, it is he that has reduced me to the state in which I am?

10. **[38:15]** This being so, I will go over in thought all my past years, in bitterness of soul for the sins that I have committed.

11. **[38:16]** If this be man’s life, that is, a life of sin, and if thus my life has been passed, punish me, and thus preserve my life. Behold, in the time even of my great bitterness I have regained peace.

12. **[38:17]** But Thou, O my God! hast delivered me from death; and in order to deliver me therefrom, Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back, no more to behold them.

13. **[38:18]** He that is dead in the tomb can no longer praise Thee, nor can he hope to see the fulfilment of Thy promises.

14. **[38:19]** Only the living sing Thy praises, as I am doing this day; and so fathers shall recount to their children Thy fidelity to the promises which Thou hast made to them.

15. **[38:20]** Save me, and so I shall celebrate Thy glories in Thy temple all the days of my life.

Bellarmine (*Ps.* 6:5) thinks, with St. Jerome and other Fathers, that Ezechias speaks here of eternal death and hell, as the preceding verse *Eruisti animam,* etc., would seem to indicate.—The just soul, he adds, after the death of its body, is always alive and continues to praise God; and even without its body, in the tomb, it awaits the truth of God, who has promised to resuscitate it. We may see similar passages in the psalm 5:5; 87:11–13;

113:26, 27.—As we recite this canticle in the Office of the dead, it is then proper to apply it to the souls of the dead in the sense given by the holy Fathers; hence the House of the Lord, v. 15, can only be heaven.

(The psalm *Laudate Dominum* as on Sunday at Lauds.)

WEDNESDAY AT LAUDS

PSALM MISERERE MEI DEUS AS ON MONDAY AT LAUDS

PSALM 64 OF THE PSALTER

The people ask with the greatest confidence that God may put an end to their captivity in Babylon. The Jews, slaves of the Chaldeans, represent here the Gentiles, the slaves of the devil.—This psalm well applies to the just, who sigh for the end of their exile here on earth.

1. **[64:2]** Thou art worthy of being praised in Sion, and in Jerusalem shall worthy homage be paid to Thee.[13302]

2. **[64:3]** If Thou wilt hear me, we shall come to Thee with all the people.

3. **[64:4]** "*Verba.*" A Hebraism for *Opera.* Accordingly the verse is thus explained: The unjust deeds or plots of the enemy have prevailed against us; but Thou, O Lord! wilt have compassion on our sins, which have reduced us to slavery, and Thou wilt take us out of these great miseries.

4. **[64:5]** Happy he whom Thou choosest for Thine own, and whom Thou hast taken under Thy protection: he shall dwell securely in Thy temple.

5. **[64:5]** There in Thy house we shall be filled with good things; this Thy temple is all holy, and admirable for the love of justice which it inspires. It is said: "Of justice," because the saints are admitted into this house while the wicked are excluded from it.

6. **[64:6]** Hearken to us, O God, our Saviour, Thou who art the hope of all nations, even of those that dwell at the uttermost limits of the earth and in the most distant isles!

8. **[64:8]** “*A signis tuis.*” When they behold the signs of Thy wrath. “*Exitus matutini et vespere delectabis.*”[13303] On the other hand, Thou shalt delight with Thy benefits the goings forth of the morning and of the evening; that is, of Thy servants who are in the East and in the West, where the sun rises and where it sets.

9. **[64:10]** “*Inebriasti eam.*” That is: Thou hast poured upon it abundance of rain.

10. **[64:10]** The river which Thou causest to run through the country[13304] is full of water, so as not to fail for Thy providing food for Thy people; since in this way art Thou wont to prepare the earth to bring forth its fruit.

11. **[64:11]** Thou wilt satiate its furrows[13305] with water, and Thou wilt multiply its plants; the showers of rain shall be such that the earth will rejoice therein, and abound with fruit.

12. **[64:12]** Throughout the circle of the year Thou wilt bless it with the signs of Thy goodness; and the fields will be filled by Thee with a rich harvest.

13. **[64:13]** Even the deserts will become fertile and pleasant; and the hills will be girded with joy; that is, they shall be clothed with smiling verdure.

14. **[64:14]** These fields and these hills will be covered with flocks; the valleys will abound with corn, and then all will resound with the voice of jubilee and hymns of praise to God.

(The psalms *Deus, Deus meus,* and *Deus misereatur,* see Sunday at Lauds.)

THE CANTICLE OF ANNA, MOTHER OF SAMUEL

Inspired by the Holy Ghost, Anna thanks God for having freed her from the reproach of sterility, and she predicts clearly the mystery of the Incarnation and the glories of the Church.—There is no Christian that cannot use this canticle to thank God for all his benefits, and especially for the benefits of Redemption.

1. **[2:1]** My heart has exulted with joy in the Lord; and my glory, as a mother, has been exalted by the power of my God.

2. **[2:1]** My enemies insulted me; I was able to answer them that Thou hast consoled me by granting me the favor of delivering me from sterility.

5. **[2:3]** “*Vetera.*” The Hebrew word, as Du Hamel remarks, also signifies: *Dura*—Hard. The explanation of this verse is: Let your hard and cutting words of the past cease; for God is the Lord of wisdom, and it is before him that all our thoughts should be prepared or directed.

8. **[2:5]**[13306]“*Infirmata est.*” Has become weak, that is, sterile.

16. **[2:10]** The Lord will judge the whole earth, and will give it over to be governed by the King of his choice, and he will exalt the glory of his Christ, that is, of the Messias.

THURSDAY AT LAUDS

THE PSALM MISERERE MEI DEUS AS ON MONDAY AT LAUDS

PSALM 89 OF THE PSALTER

According to St. Jerome, it is Moses who in this psalm[13307] represents to God the brevity and the miseries of human life, and prays to him to have pity on his people. Other interpreters, however, apply it to the Jews who are captives at Babylon and implore help from God.

1. **[89:1]** Thou hast been at all times our refuge, and Thou wilt be so to the end.

2. **[89:2]** Thou hast ever been and wilt ever be the God that Thou art.[13308]

3. **[89:3]** Some explain this verse thus: Do not Thou suffer that men should turn their back upon Thee to give themselves up to worthless creatures; for Thou hast said to them: O men! turn ye unto me, and I will make you feel the effects of my mercy. But others, as Maldonatus, Bossuet, Mattei, etc., follow the Hebrew text, which says: *Convertis hominem in pulverem,* or, according to St. Jerome: *Convertes hominem usque ad contritionem, et dices: Convertimini,* or *Revertimini, filii Adam;* and they explain the verse thus: Thou, O Lord, art eternal; but Thou hast ordained that all men should one day return to the dust out of which they are formed. This explanation is founded on the Hebrew text; but the former, which follows the Vulgate, appears more simple and natural.

4. **[89:4]** Even if we were to live a thousand years, what more would these be in Thy sight, that is, compared with Thy eternity, than as yesterday which is already past? Such is the explanation that the learned commonly give, as Malvenda thus attests: *Omnes fere.*

5. **[89:5]** All these thousand years are no more than one of the four watches into which the night is divided, and which are counted as nothing; what then do all the years of men count when compared with eternity?

6. **[89:6]** St. Jerome translates: *Mane floruit et abiit; ad vesperam conteretur atque siccabitur*—The life of man is like a blade of grass that soon passes; in the morning it flourishes and in the evening it falls, withers, and dries up.

7. **[89:7]** Such is our lot, because by our sins we have provoked Thy wrath; we have become mortal, and we are afflicted by the horror and the fear of death on account of Thy just anger. So it is explained by Bellarmine and many others.

8. **[89:8]** When God wills to punish the sinner, he keeps his eyes fixed on his faults; when, on the contrary, he wills to show him mercy, he turns away his eyes in order not to see them: *Avertit faciem.* It is for this reason that David says in Psalm 1.: *Avertit faciem tuam a peccatis meis*—Turn away Thy face from my sins. "*In illuminatione vultus tui.*" Thou exposest to the light and examinest our most secret faults. These explanations are given by Bellarmine, Lallemant, etc.

9. **[89:9]** That is: Our life is shortened, and we succumb under the weight of Thy wrath which we have excited by our sins. This is the sense given by Bellarmine and Menochius.

10. **[89:10]** Our life is like the web which the spider wastes its own self to make, and which is destroyed by the least touch. As to the number of our years, they do not generally exceed seventy. "*Anni nostri sicut aranea meditabuntur.*" The Hebrew according to Bellarmine is: *Anni nostri sicut meditatio;* and according to St. Jerome: *Consumpsimus annos nostros quasi sermonem loquens.* But these different renderings signify the same thing, namely, that our life passes away like a thought, a meditation, or like a word that is over the moment that it is uttered.[13309]

12. **[89:10]** When we shall reach that age, seeing ourselves near death we shall correct the sentiments of pride which we had during our life. This interpretation will agree with the Hebrew text, which is thus rendered: *Quoniam tonsio celeriter, et avolabimus.*—For quickly is the cutting off, and we have fled away. And with St. Jerome: *Transibimus cito, et avolabimus*—We have passed away quickly and have fled.[13310]

13. **[89:11]** Who has ever understood how great, O Lord! is the power of Thy wrath, and who can measure the greatness of Thy indignation, which surpasses all that we can conceive, and all that is commonly believed?

14. **[89:12]** Make us know the strength of Thy arm, and cause us to be fully informed of Thy avenging justice; and thus made wise we shall come to Thee. St. Jerome translates it thus: *Sic ostende, et veniemus corde sapienti*—Thus show to us, and we shall come to Thee with a wise heart.

15. **[89:13]** Turn to us with a gracious countenance; how long wilt Thou show Thyself in anger? Suffer Thyself to be moved by the prayers of Thy servants.

16. **[89:14]**[13311] And thus we shall at once see ourselves filled with Thy mercy; we shall exult with joy and we shall be glad all the days of our life.

18. **[89:16]** "*In servos tuos et in opera tua.*" That is, according to Menochius and Tirinus: Upon Thy servants, who are the work of Thy hands—"*Et dirige filios eorum.*" Look graciously upon their children, and direct them in the way of salvation.

19. **[89:17]** May the grace of our Lord shine upon us: direct in us our actions and all that we do.

(The psalms *Deus, Deus meus,* and *Deus misereatur,* as on Sunday at Lauds.)

CANTICLE OF MOSES (EXODUS 15)

Moses composed this canticle that the people might chant it in thanksgiving for the miraculous passage of the Red Sea. He predicts in it the conquest by the Israelites of the promised land through the defeat of their enemies.[13312]

1. **[15:1]** "*Æquum et ascensorem.*" The horses and riders who pursued us.[13313]

2. **[15:2]** The Lord is our strength and the object of our praise; he has made himself our Saviour.[13314]

3. **[15:2]** He is my God, the God of our father Abraham; I will always proclaim his glory.

4. **[15:3]** "*Quasi vir pugnator.*" He has come forth as a warrior to defend us.[13315]

7. **[15:7]** "*Congregatæ sunt aquæ.*" The waters have gathered together, that is, have risen up on both sides to give passage to Thy servants.

9. **[15:9]** "*Implebitur anima mea.*" I shall be fully satisfied.

11. **[15:10]** "*Flavit spiritus tuus.*" The wind sent by Thee blew waves.

12. **[15:11]** Who among the mighty[13316] can be found like unto Thee who art so great in holiness, so terrible in power, and so worthy of all praise for Thy goodness? And who can work the admirable marvels that Thou hast made.

13. **[15:12]** "*Devoravit eos terra.*" Lallemant translates: Our enemies have disappeared from the face of the earth. But the explanation that Rotigni gives seems to be better, namely: The sea having cast them on the shore, they were covered by the sand. "*Quem redemisti.*" Whom Thou hast delivered from the hands of their enemies.

14. **[15:13]** From the beginning of this verse to the end of the canticle, Moses speaks of the entrance and establishment of the people in the Land of Promise.

15. **[15:14]**[13317] The people of that land rose up enraged against Thy people; the Philistines had the grief of seeing themselves driven out from the country where they dwelt.

18. **[15:16]** Lallemant applies this verse to the passage of the Red Sea; but Rotigni applies it to the entrance of the people into the Land of Promise, spoken of in the following verse. Notwithstanding this reason, the first explanation seems to me more proper.[13318] "*Quem possedisti*." This people whom Thou hast won for Thyself, and hast made Thy own possession.

19. **[15:17]** Thou wilt bring in this Thy people, and wilt establish[13319] them on Mount Sion, which Thou hast chosen for Thy inheritance and for Thy fixed abode, having prepared it in order to found there Thy temple.

20. **[15:17]** This sanctuary, which Thou, O Lord! hast established to make there Thy perpetual abode, will serve for Thee to reign in throughout the ages and world without end. Here the canticle finishes: what follows is a summary of the history of the passage of the Red Sea, as recorded in Exodus.[13320]

FRIDAY AT LAUDS

THE PSALM MISERERE MEI DEUS AS ON MONDAY AT LAUDS

PSALM 142 OF THE PSALTER

Driven and pursued by Absalom,[13321] David regards his removal from Jerusalem as a just punishment for his sins, and gives utterance to sentiments of repentance, and prays to the Lord.

(The Psalms *Deus, Deus meus,* and *Deus misereatur,* as on Sunday at Lauds.)

1. **[142:1]** “*In veritate tua.*” According to Thy faithful promise. “*In tua justitia.*” According to the goodness which Thou showest to the truly penitent. Thus St. John Chrysostom understands the word.[13322]

2. **[142:2]** “*Non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens.*” There is no one who, living on earth, can be called just before Thee.

3. **[142:3]** The enemy, that is, the devil, has persecuted my soul in tempting me to those offences that I have committed; and thus he has humbled my life here on earth, making me become vile in Thy eyes.

4. **[142:4]** He has placed me in darkness, making me like a man of the world who no more sees the light by which to walk as he should; and my spirit is restless with anxiety at the sight of my misery, and my heart within me is afflicted and troubled.

5. **[142:5]** I was mindful and I reflected on all the wonderful works wrought in our behalf by the Almighty hand.

6. **[142:6]** I have stretched forth my hands towards Thee, to obtain mercy, for my soul is become as dried up earth; it is unable to serve Thee, seeing itself deprived of the water of Thy grace.

7. **[142:7]** Make haste to hear me, O Lord! and strengthen me by Thy grace, for I feel my spirit fainting in me.

9. **[142:8]** Make me soon hear the voice of Thy mercy; telling me that Thou hast pardoned me; for in Thee alone have I placed all my hope of salvation.

10. **[142:8]** "*Ad te levavi animam meam.*" That is: I have resolved to detach myself from all earthly affections, to please only Thee.

11. **[142:9]** "*Deus meus es tu.*" Thou art my God; and therefore Thou deservest that I should not do anything except what Thou willest.

12. **[142:10]** Thy good spirit, that is, the Holy Ghost, will conduct me, while here upon earth, by the right way; I hope, for the glory of Thy name, that Thou wilt grant me vigor and strength to live according to Thy justice, that is, to lead the life of the just. "*In æquitate tua.*" According to the Hebrew: *In justitia tua.*

13. **[142:12]** I hope that Thou wilt deliver my soul from eternal tribulation.

THE CANTICLE OF HABACUC

Having learnt by revelation, of the captivity in Babylon in store for the Jews on account of their sins, the prophet prays for his unfortunate countrymen; then he announces their deliverance by Cyrus, king of Persia. According to St. Jerome, Theodoret, Theophylact, Rupert, Euthymius, Jansenius of Ghent, Cornelius à Lapide, and most of the other commentators, we have here a manifest figure of the divine work wrought by Jesus Christ to deliver mankind from the slavery of the devil.[13323]

1. **[3:2]** "*Auditionem tuam.*" That is: All that Thou hast revealed to me.

2. **[3:2]** “*Vivifica.*” According to Du Hamel: *Perfice*—Perfect. Lallemant gives this explanation: Complete Thy work, the deliverance of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon, and in mercy shorten the time of our chastisement. But this passage is better understood in the figurative sense, thus: Bring to perfection the work of man’s redemption by means of the Messias: Grant that it may have its full force and effect within the space of years which Thou hast determined.

3. **[3:2]** In the midst of those years appointed; that is, anticipating the time fixed, Thou wilt make manifest the work of the deliverance of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon. (This is in the literal sense; but in the mystical sense is signified the redemption of mankind.) And though angry at the sons of men, yet Thou wilt be mindful of Thy mercy, and wilt not withhold it from us: *Licet peccatis hominum iratus,* says Du Hamel, *misericordiam tuam non subtrahes.*

4. **[3:3]** God will come from the South to deliver his people, as the Holy One of Israel came of old on Sinai, appearing from Mount Pharan (*Deut.* 33:2). So too, from Persia and Media, lying to the South, came Cyrus and Darius to deliver the Jews from Babylon. In the figurative sense this verse, as understood by St. Jerome, Theodoret, Theophylact, and others cited by Tirinus, this verse applies to the Messias who was to be born at Bethlehem situated to the south of Jerusalem. “*Sanctus de monte Pharan.*” Tirinus says that hereby is meant the Holy Ghost, who descended on Mount Pharan and communicated the spirit of prophecy to the seventy judges of the people (*Num.* 11:25).

5. **[3:3]** His glory overspread the heavens, causing their brightness to pale, and the whole earth was filled with their praises. In a figurative sense this signifies: The Messias who is to come will fill heaven with glory, and the angels will praise him on earth. It is thus that they chanted at his birth: *Gloria in altissimis Deo*—Glory to God in the highest (*Luke*, 2:14).

6. **[3:4]** He shall appear resplendent with light as the sun, and his hands shall be armed with power. “*Splendor ejus ut lux erit.*” This may mean, in the literal sense, that at the coming of Cyrus the light of liberty will shine

forth for the Jews; and in the figurative sense that at the coming of the Messias, of whom Cyrus was a figure, the true light shall shine forth on the world, according to what is said in the Gospel: *Erat Lux vera, quæ illuminat omnem hominem*—That was the true light which enlighteneth every man (*John,* 1:9). *“Cornua in manibus ejus.” Cornu* and *Cornua* in Scripture mean strength. Tirinus and Du Hamel, with St. Cyprian and St. Augustine, thus apply this passage to Jesus Christ: All his strength to conquer the devil and the world shall be in his hands pierced upon the cross. St. Augustine says: *Quid fortius manu hac, quæ mundum vicit, non ferro armata, sed transfixa?*—What is there stronger than that hand which conquered the world, not armed, but transfixed with iron? (*In Ps.* xxxiv. s. I, n. I.)

7. **[3:4]** In the figurative sense: There (that is, in his pierced hands) is hidden his power; so that before his power, death will fly, conquered by his death: *Absorpta est mors in victoria*—Death is swallowed up in victory (1 *Cor.* 15:54).

8. **[3:5]** At the entrance of the people into the Land of Promise the Lord was preceded by the devil, the executor of his vengeance; whereupon the enemies being vanquished, he distributed their lands to his people. “*Egredietur diabolus ante pedes ejus.*” This is explained figuratively: The devil shall be utterly vanquished, and shall go forth with shame, to be led in triumph before the feet of Jesus Christ, his conqueror, who will despoil him of his power, according to the words of St. Paul: *Exspolians principatus et potestates, traduxit confidenter, palam triumphans illos in semetipso*—Despoiling the principalities and powers, he hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in himself (*Col.* 2:15). “*Stetit, et mensus est terram.*” Then Jesus as conqueror seated at the right hand of his Father, as Du Hamel says, and looking over the earth, divided it among his Apostles, that they might fill it with the light of the Gospel: *Qui, sedens ad dexteram Patris, terram Apostolis suis divisit, ut Evangelii luce eam complerent.*

9. **[3:6]** With his looks he broke asunder the nations; and the great ones of the world, who seemed like mountains, were brought to naught. In the figurative sense: He looked upon the earth and the nations, and, giving them

the light of faith, he set them free from the yoke of Satan; and as for the princes of the world, who as mountains were lifted up, they were brought low and shattered at the coming of Jesus Christ.

10. **[3:6]** These proud hills of the world have been laid low beneath the feet of the Eternal. In the figurative sense: These princes of the world shall bow down before the Redeemer, bending the knee to adore him. as they consider that on him depends the course of eternal ages. “*Ab itineribus æternitatis ejus.*” According to the Hebrew: *Itinera sæculi ætcrni ejus sunt*—His are the journeys of the eternal age.

11. **[3:7]** I saw the tents of the Ethiopians cast down for their wickedness, and the tabernacles of the Madianites thrown to the earth. In the mystical sense: As the hosts of the Ethiopians and of the Madianites were seen destroyed on account of their wicked doings against God’s people, so shall those that oppose the Gospel be likewise punished.

13. **[3:8]** Thou didst save Thy people, and didst deliver them from the Egyptians, mounting upon the clouds as on horses which draw the chariot.

14. **[3:9]** Thou wilt resume Thy bow, that is, the bow of Thy power, and wilt fulfil the promises that Thou hast sworn to the tribes of Israel. Thus Tirinus, Du Hamel, and Rotigni explain it.

15. **[3:9]** Thou didst cut in twain the course of the Jordan, that Thy people might pass over. Its waters saw Thee, that is, understood Thy command, and raising themselves like mountains, remained suspended in the air, as if grieving to see themselves stopped in their course;[13324] and thus Thy people crossed over the river.

16. **[3:10]** The waters flowed back with noise, and in lifting themselves on high they seemed to raise up their hands to implore Thy permission to return again to their course.

17. **[3:11]** At Josue’s voice, in the battle with the Amorrhites, Thou didst cause the sun and the moon to stand still in their course (*Jos.* 10:13); and

didst make his army march by the glare of Thy lightnings, and by the glitterings of Thy spear from which thunderbolts flashed.

18. **[3:12]** Thou didst tread underfoot, that is, Thou didst go through the earth with the roar of thunderings and of lightnings; and the hostile nations were astonished and in dismay at Thy wrath.

19 **[3:13]** “*Cum Christo tuo.*” Such was Cyrus who came to set free the people from captivity, as Isaias had foretold: *Hæc dicit Dominus Christo meo Cyro, cujus apprehendi dexteram, ut subjiciam ante faciem ejus gentes*—Thus said the Lord to my anointed Cyrus, whose right hand I have taken hold of to subdue nations before his face (*Is.* 45:1). Now, Cyrus was a type of Jesus Christ, who has saved us by his merits, as remark St. Jerome, St. Augustine (*De Civ. D.*1. 18, c. 32), and others. The verse is translated thus according to the sixth Greek version: *Egressus es ut salvares populum per Jesum Christum tuum.*

20. **[3:13]** “*Percussisti caput de domo impii.*” Thou hast struck the head of the house of the impious one, that is, king Balthassar, the head of the Chaldeans, and Thou hast utterly ruined him (*Dan.* 5.). In the mystical sense: Thou hast laid prostrate the devil, the head of impiety. “*Denudasti fundamentum ejus usque ad collum.*” Tirinus thus interprets this: *Denudatum evertisti ab imo sursum.* Thou hast despoiled him of his empire, and hast upset him from top to bottom, that is, Thou hast taken from him all his tyrannical power. It is thus, O Lord! that Thou hast willed to save Thy people by means of Jesus Christ.

21. **[3:14]** Thou hast cursed his empire,[13325] that, namely, of king Balthassar, along with the head of his soldiers, who are come as a whirlwind to destroy Thy people. This is understood mystically of the curse pronounced on the devil, who held sway over the human race, and on his associates, who all contrived our ruin.

22. **[3:14]** “*Qui devorat pauperem in abscondito.*” Who robs and kills a poor man in a secret place where no one can come to his help.

23. **[3:15]** Thou didst open a passage in the Red Sea, making the horses of Thy people pass upon its muddy bed in the midst of the piled-up masses of waters. Tirinus observes that here the canticle ends, and that the prophet adds what follows.[13326]

24. **[3:16]** The prophet, knowing by revelation what God's people would have to suffer before their deliverance, says: I heard this prediction and my heart was troubled; at what was told me my lips quivered, so that I was unable to utter a word.

26. **[3:16]** So that I may find myself at rest in the tomb on the day of so great a tribulation, and thus be united with our people who have already fought the fight against the enemy. But we read in the old Vulgate: *Ad populum peregrinationis meæ.* That is: To the people who regard this life as a pilgrimage, as I myself regard it.

27. **[3:17]** In the mystical sense, this is what it may mean: In the desolation to which the Jews shall be brought in punishment for having put their Saviour to death, they will cease to produce any fruit of good works, having lost the kingdom of God, which shall be given to the Christian people who will bring forth fruits of holiness, according to the words of Jesus Christ: *Ideo dico vobis, quia auferetur a vobis regnum Dei, et dabitur genti facienti fructus ejus*—Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof (*Matt.* 21:43).

28. **[3:17]** "*Mentietur opus olivæ.*" The olive crop shall lie; that is, shall disappoint expectation.

29. **[3:17]** St. Augustine (*De Civ. D.* 1. 18, c. 32) applies this passage to the Jews, who after having put Jesus Christ to death, were to remain without pastors, without Temple, and without spiritual food.

30. **[3:18]** "*In Deo, Jesu meo*" In the Hebrew, according to Pagnini, Vatablus, and others, we have: *In Deo, salute mea.* But some, says Tirinus, interpret the Hebrew in the sense of the Septuagint, which agrees with the

Chaldee and Syriac, namely: *In Deo, Jesu,* or *Salvatore,* or *Redemptore meo.* Thus St. Augustine and others understand it.

31. **[3:19]** That is understood of the return of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon. In the mystical sense it is applied to the Gentiles hastening to come to God when set free by Jesus Christ from the bondage of Satan.

32. **[3:19]** The vanquisher of enemies will lead me up to Mount Sion, there to sing his glories. In the spiritual sense, according to St. Jerome: He will bring me to heaven, there to glorify him with hymns of praise and thanksgiving.

(The psalm *Laudate Dominum de cœlis* and the canticle *Benedictus* as on Sundays at Lauds.)

SATURDAY AT LAUDS

THE PSALM MISERERE MEI DEUS AS ON MONDAY AT LAUDS

PSALM 91 OF THE PSALTER

David here exhorts the people to praise God for the protection that he has given to the just, and for the chastisements inflicted on sinners in order to correct them.[13327]

1. **[91:2]** It is just to give glory to God by rendering him thanks for his benefits, and by singing his praises.[13328]

2. **[91:3]** "*Veritatem tuam*" Thy faithfulness to Thy promises.[13329]

3. **[91:4]** "*In decachordo psalterio.*" Mariana and Sa understand thereby two different instruments, following in this the Hebrew, which St. Jerome thus translates: "*In decachordo et in psalterio.*" But Bellarmine thinks that the copulative particle in the Hebrew is redundant; he depends, moreover, on the version of the Septuagint, and on other like expressions that we find in Psalms 32:2, and 143:10.

4. **[91:5]** "*In factura tua, et in operibus manuum tuarum.*" Mattei says with reason that these two expressions are synonymous.

5. **[91:6]** "*Magnificata.*" According to the Chaldee: *Magnifica,* magnificent. "*Cogitationes tuæ.*" Thy thoughts, or, according to Sa and Mariana, Thy counsels; or with Menochius, the designs of Thy Providence. "*Nimis profundæ.*" Impenetrable to our weak intelligence.

7, 8.[13330] **[91:8, 9]** "*Apparuerint.*" According to the Hebrew: *Floruerint.* Explanation of these two verses: When sinners are born into this world, they are multiplied as the grass which grows up thick apace; and when all the wicked have made a show upon earth, with their dignities and riches, they still perish forever, while Thou, O Lord! shalt ever be the same that Thou art.

10. **[91:11]** My strength, or glory, by Thy grace, shall rise on high, as on the head of the unicorn rises its single horn, which is its strength and glory; and my old age shall be consoled by Thy mercy, abounding in gifts and helps.

11. **[91:12]** "*Despexit.*" St. Jerome translates: *Respiciet*—My eyes shall see my enemies cast down so that, far from fearing them, I shall despise them, and my ears shall hear the chastisement inflicted on those that are risen against me in their malice to plot my ruin.

12. **[91:13]** The just shall flourish and shall endure as the palm-tree, which always remains green; they shall grow to a great height, like a cedar of Libanon.

13. **[91:14]** Planted in the house of the Lord, and cultivated by him, they shall flourish; that is, they will always preserve their vigor and their beauty.[13331]

14. **[91:15]** "*Uberi.*" Abundant in fruits of virtue. "*Bene patientes.*" According to the Hebrew: *Virentes et florentes*—Green and flowering; and St. Jerome translates: *Frondentes*—Leafy. That is: Of a temperament full of strength, they will be well able to bear up against fatigues. "*Ut annuntient.*" Bellarmine says that this verb should be joined to the following verse.

15. **[91:16]** To make known to all the world, by word and example, that the Lord is right and just in all things, and that there is no iniquity or injustice in him because he allows the wicked to prosper; for in his own time, he will reward the just and punish sinners as they deserve.

(The psalms *Deus, Deus meus,* and *Deus misereatur* as on Sunday at Lauds.)

CANTICLE OF MOSES

It is by God’s order[13332] that Moses, just before his death, intones this canticle in the presence of the people. In it he recounts the benefits done to the Israelites, the faults, and the chastisements sent by God to convert them (*Deut.* 32.).

2. **[32:2]** “*Concrescat.*” According to the Hebrew: *Stillet. “Fluat ut ros eloquium meum.”* Let my speech drop down as dew into the minds of those that hear me.

3. **[32:2]** “*Nomen Domini invocabo.*” I will invoke the name of the Lord, that my words may be of profit.

5. **[32:4]** God is faithful to his promises, and in him there is no iniquity, for he is just and righteous; but for all that, the Israelites have turned their back upon him, and by their shameful action have made themselves unworthy to be called his children.

7. **[32:6]** “*Possedit te.*” That is: Has chosen thee out of all nations for his own property.

9. **[32:7]** Ask of your fathers, and they will recount to you what they have seen; question your elders, and hear what they will tell you.

11. **[32:8]** He fixed the boundaries of the people who were to be the first to dwell in the Land of Promise, according to the number of the children of Israel who should possess that land.

12. **[32:9]** For the portion which the Lord reserved to himself, as specially his own, was the people of his choice; he thus destined Jacob to be his inheritance. In Scripture the portion of inheritance is called *Funiculus,* a line, because the portions were marked out by a line of cord.

14. **[32:10]** “*Docuit.*” He instructed him in his law.

19. **[32:13]** That is: That he might draw honey even from the rocks, where the bees made their combs, and gather oil from the olives planted amongst the rocks.

20. **[32:14]** “*Cum adipe agnorum et arietum.*” That is: With the flesh of the fat lambs and sheep; for it was forbidden to the Israelites to eat the fat of these animals (*Levit. 7:23*). “*Filiorum Basan.*” That is: The country of Basan, east of the Jordan, were there were excellent pasturages, and therefore the best flocks.

22, 23. **[32:15]** This people, so beloved by God, after being thus fattened on his gifts, became stubborn: they struck out their heels against him by disobeying his precepts; in fine, having grown fat, and big, and bloated, they forsook their God who created them, and separated themselves from that God who alone could save them.

24. **[32:16]** “*Provocaverunt eum.*” These ungrateful ones provoked him to anger.

26. **[32:17]** They brought into the world certain new gods, unknown to their fathers.

27. **[32:18]** Apostrophe to these foolish people.

28. **[32:19]** The Lord saw, and was inflamed with indignation, because those that thus offended him were his own sons and daughters.

29. **[32:20]** “*Considerabo novissima eorum.*” I will have before my eyes their last excesses; these were the outrages and torments that the Jews inflicted on Jesus Christ, for which they were left abandoned in their obstinate unbelief.

30. **[32:20]** They have rendered themselves undeserving of my mercy.

31, 32. **[32:21]** They have provoked me by adoring as god what was not God, by setting themselves to honor vain and false deities; and I will afflict them by substituting for them a people which is not my people, a foolish nation, which knows me not.

33. **[32:22]** The wrath is kindled within me against them, and it shall burn them even to the lowest hell, where they shall be forever condemned.

35. **[32:23]** “*Sagittas meas complebo in eis.*” That is: I will discharge against them all the arrows of my wrath, all the plagues.

39. **[32:26]** “*Dixi.*” After that, I will say.

40. **[32:27]** “*Propter iram inimicorum distuli.*” I have delayed the chastisement on account of the hatred borne me by their enemies.

42. **[32:28]** These enemies have neither discernment nor prudence; would to God that they had wisdom enough to understand, and prudence enough to provide for the last things, that is, for death and judgment!

43, 44. **[32:30]** They should say: How can it be that a single one of us goes against a thousand Hebrews, or two of us against ten thousand, and put them to flight? This could not happen were it not that their God had sold them, and because the Lord had so hemmed them in as to be unable to go forth and deliver themselves from their straits.

46. **[32:32]** Tirinus here observes that Moses or the Lord who speaks, returns to the Israelites, and assigns the cause of their chastisement, namely, because their vine[13333] has become like the vine of the Sodomites, which bears only fruits of iniquity.

49. **[32:34]** “*In thesauris meis.*” Among the treasures of my judgments?

50. **[32:35]** To me it belongs to punish sins,[13334] and when the time arrives I will send the chastisement whereby they shall fall into the pit that is prepared for them, their feet stumbling against the stone, that is, as Rotigni explains, Jesus Christ, the corner-stone, set by God for their salvation. The Jews, by rejecting their Saviour, fell into perdition.

53. **[32:37]** But this shall not come to pass until the Jews shall be reduced to such weakness that those even who guarded the citadels shall themselves have yielded, and the others shall have perished.

55. **[32:38]** They partook of the fat of victims offered to such deities, arid drank the wine consecrated to them. The Gentiles consecrated wine to their

gods, and such consecrations were called Libations.

56. **[32:38]** “*Surgant.*” Let these gods arise. “*In necessitate.*” In the extremities to which you are reduced.

59. **[32:40]** “*Vivo ego in æternum.*” A form of oath which God pronounces to confirm the threat that follows.

62, 63. **[32:42]** That is, as Tirinus explains: My vengeance shall strike them all, but in different ways: some shall be put to death, others shall be made slaves, and others shall have their heads shaved. In ancient times the victors shaved the heads of the vanquished to disgrace them, as it is related that the Scipios did in Africa.

64. **[32:43]** “*Populum ejus.*” The people of the Lord.

65. **[32:43]** “*Propitius erit terræ populi sui.*” He will bless the land where his people shall dwell.

(The Psalms *Laudate Dominum de cœlis* and the *Benedictus* as on Sundays at Lauds.)

Prime, Terce, Sext, None

Prime

SUNDAY AT PRIME

PSALM 53 OF THE PSALTER

Prayer that David addresses to God to deliver him from the soldiers of Saul by whom he was surrounded.[13335] This psalm may serve for all Christians that find themselves assailed by the temptations of the devil. We may remark with Cardinal Bellarmine that the holy Church wishes to teach us how to arm ourselves with prayer against the tribulations and temptations that may assail us every day.

1. **[53:3]** Save me, by the virtue and for the glory of Thy holy name, from the danger in which I am; judge me according to my innocence, and according to Thy power, which protects the innocent.

3. **[53:5]** My own fellow-countrymen have separated themselves from me and, as foreign enemies, have armed themselves against me, in order to take away my life, having lost sight of God's justice.[13336]

4. **[53:6]** "*Ecce enim.*" But I already know that, etc.

5. **[53:7]** "*Averte mala.*" According to the Hebrew: *Revertatur malum*—May evil return. Make, O God! to retort upon my enemies the evil that they have planned for me; scatter them according to Thy promises, which are always faithful and true.[13337]

6. **[53:8]** Then with ready heart will I offer Thee sacrifices; and I will praise Thy holy name, so full of goodness to him that invokes Thee.

7. **[53:9]** Through Thy mercy I find myself delivered by Thy hand from all anxiety, and my eyes shall be able to see with scorn my enemies cast down.

(FOR OTHER PSALMS THAT ARE TO BE SAID, SEE BREVIARY.)

David offers here his solemn thanksgiving for the victory that he gained over his enemies, and for all the other benefits that had been conferred upon him; he thanks him specially for having given to the world Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of mankind.

1, 2, 3, 4. **[117:1, 2, 3, 4]** The prophet begins by inviting all men to praise God for the mercy that he continually exercises towards them. He then calls specially on the Israelites, among whom were all the apostles; he next invites all the priests, who were to propagate the holy faith; and lastly all the faithful.

5. **[117:5]** “*In latitudine.*” By sending me abundant help.[13338]

6, 7. **[117:6, 7]** God is my protector; this is the reason why I shall fear nothing of all the evils that men think to do me; I will despise all the efforts and snares of my enemies.

10, 11, 12. **[117:10, 11, 12]** “*Ultus sum.*” I have been revenged. It must be observed that this expression is not to be understood here of vengeance properly speaking, but of a victory gained over the enemy. It applies specially to Jesus Christ triumphing over his enemies, and to all the faithful who by his help overcome their temptations. We may, then, take these three verses together, and explain them thus: My enemies have closed in around me from every side, as an angry swarm of bees, or as a burning flame in a bundle of thorns; but thanks to the protection of the Lord, I have been avenged on them, that is, I have overcome them all.

15. **[117:15]** In the tabernacles or tents of the just, no voices were heard but of gladness and victory in thanksgiving to God for having saved me, and caused me to triumph over my enemies.

16. **[117:16]** The hand of God in aiding me has shown forth its strength.[13339]

17. **[117:17]** “*Non moriar.*” As I shall not die as my enemies had hoped.

18. **[117:18]** “*Castigans castigavit me.*” He has chastised me, but with the tender compassion of a father.

19. **[117:19]** The gates of justice are the gates of heaven; for justice is the gate of the kingdom of God; hence we should seek it before all things: *Quœrite ergo primum regnum Dei, et justitiam ejus*—Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice (*Matt.* 6:33). Since justice is the only gate by which we can come to God, it is only the just that enter through it. Such is the sense given to this passage by St Jerome, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Augustine.

20. **[117:21]** Once having entered this gate, as I have desired, I will, O my God! sing Thy praises always, and render Thee thanks for having heard my prayer, and for having become my Saviour.

21. **[117:22]** This verse is to be understood only of Jesus Christ and his Church as St. Peter explains it to the Jews: *Hic est lapis qui reprobatus est a vobis ædificantibus, qui factus est in caput anguli*—This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders: which is become the head of the corner (*Acts*, 4:11).[13340] God sent upon earth this most precious Stone, that is, his own beloved Son; but the Jews, who at that time formed the Church, rejected him. This Stone, however, became the head of the corner, joining together the two walls, namely, the Hebrew nation and the Gentile people, into one Church.

23. **[117:24]** This is specially a happy day; it is a particular work of God: let it ever be a day of joy and thanksgiving for the immense benefits received.

24. **[117:25]** Save me, O Lord! and be ever gracious to me, so that I may never cease to repeat: Blessed be he that is come in the name of the Lord to save us! This precisely was the cry of the multitude when Jesus Christ made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem: *Hosanna Filio David! benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini!*—Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord (*Matt.* 21:9).[13341]

25, 26. **[117:26, 27]** We wish and bespeak you a thousand blessings, you who are of the Church of the Lord; for he is the true God, and he has manifested himself to us by taking to him our human flesh. Celebrate, then, this day with solemn pomp by adorning the temple even to the altar with green and leafy boughs.[13342]

MONDAY AT PRIME

PSALM 23 OF THE PSALTER

David here announces, according to the exclusively literal sense of the psalm, the principal mysteries of the natural law. He predicts the vocation of the Gentiles; he describes the character of the predestined; he speaks of the interior justice with which the souls of the faithful will be adorned by the grace of Jesus Christ; in fine, after having referred to the divinity of our Lord, he prophesies his victories and his glorious ascension into heaven.

2. **[23:2]** God has thus prepared the earth to be the habitation of man.

3. **[23:3]** Heaven is called a mountain by reason of its elevation; and it is the sanctuary of God, where he has his throne.[13343]

4. **[23:4]** He shall ascend thither who has not sinned in his works, and has kept his heart pure, that is, detached from creatures; he who has not received his life in vain, that is, who has not only avoided evil, but has also fulfilled what God has enjoined on him; he who loves truth, and has not sworn falsely to deceive his neighbors.[13344]

6. **[23:6]** Such is the happy generation of those that seek God by being attentive to serve him, and that long to go to see in heaven the God of Jacob. According to the Hebrew text, we read: *Quœrentium faciem tuam, O Jacob!* Bellarmine says that this phrase is obscure; hence the Septuagint-interpreters supplied here the word *God*, and have rendered the verse as we have it in the Vulgate, for it is only God who makes the joy of the saints.

7. **[23:7]** O angels, princes of the heavenly city! lift up, open the gates which have been given to you to guard; and yourselves, O eternal gates! (that is, you who have been shut from all eternity, as is explained by Rotigni) be ye lifted up, be ye opened, and the King of Glory shall enter.

8. **[23:8]** “*In prœlio.*” In the battle with his enemies whom he has conquered and discomfited.

TUESDAY AT PRIME

PSALM 24 OF THE PSALTER

Exposed to persecution, David begs God’s help; and regarding his afflictions as a just punishment for his sins, he renews his acts of repentance. We may therefore recite this psalm for ourselves when we are assailed and tormented by temptations which men and demons raise against us.

1. **[24:1]** “*Non erubescam.*” I hope by Thy help that I shall not have the confusion of seeing myself conquered by my enemies.

2. **[24:3]** Suffer not that they have me in derision by gaining a victory over me; for all those that wait on Thee shall never be confounded.

3. **[24:4]** Let all the wicked rather be speedily put to confusion at seeing how they have worked their iniquity in vain, without the fruit they hoped for.

4. **[24:4]** Show me the ways by which Thou wouldst have me walk; teach me to keep the paths that lead to Thee.

5. **[24:5]** “*In veritate tua.*” In the straight way of Thy law.[13345] “*Te sustinui tota die.*” From Thee I continually look for the help that I need.

6. **[24:6]** “*Quœ a sœculo sunt.*” Which Thou showest to the world for so many ages.

9. **[24:8]** “*Legem dabit delinquentibus in via.*” To those that have sinned in this life he will give the rule to follow so as to be able to return to the right way.

10. **[24:9]** He will guide the gentle by the straight paths of his law, which in the Scriptures is called *Judicium*—Judgment; he will teach the docile of heart to walk in his ways.[13346]

11. **[24:10]** The whole conduct of the Lord is full of mercy and of fidelity to his promises towards his servants, who keep before their eyes the covenant made between God and those that are faithful to his precepts.

12. **[24:11]** Thou wilt show mercy with regard to my sins, and their pardon will cause Thy glory to shine forth all the more brightly because they have been grievous and many.

13. **[24:12]** Who is the man that truly fears God? It is he to whom the Lord has taught the way he has chosen to walk.[13347]

14. **[24:13]** His soul shall dwell in good things, that is, it shall be continually enriched with goods spiritual and temporal; and his children, following his good example, shall be heirs of the Promised Land, that is, of heaven.

15. **[24:14]** “*Testamentum ipsius, ut manifestetur illis.*” To those to whom he manifests the covenant that he has made to protect his faithful servants.

16. **[24:15]** I will then keep my eyes ever fixed upon the Lord, for he it is that shall deliver me from the snares that Thy enemies lay for me.

17. **[24:16]** My God, turn Thy eyes towards me, and have pity upon me, for I am alone and poor, and my enemies are many and powerful.

18. **[24:17]** “*De necessitatibus.*” According to the Hebrew: *De pressuris*—Distresses.

19. **[24:18]** “*Delicta mea.*” My sins, which I know to be the cause of my affliction.

21. **[24:20]** “*Non erubescam, quoniam speravi in te.*” Verily I shall not be confounded, after having placed all my confidence in Thee.

22. **[24:21]** The just and the upright of heart have united to defend me, seeing that I have put my trust in Thee.

23. **[24:22]** Have pity on those that belong to the people of Israel, and deliver them from all their affliction.

WEDNESDAY AT PRIME

PSALM 25 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm teaches all those that are unjustly persecuted what virtues they should practise during their trial. Moreover, it makes and explains in detail what are the dispositions with which we should approach the altar, whether to communicate or to offer the holy Sacrifice.

1. **[25:1]** Be my judge against my persecutors, since I present myself with an unblemished conscience, having nothing to reproach myself with; I hope that Thou wilt not permit that I be declared guilty.

2. **[25:2]** Try my fidelity; put to the test in the fire of tribulation my heart and all its secret folds.

3. **[25:3]** I abide in peace, because I have not lost sight of Thy mercy, and have tried to live according to the truth, that is, Thy law.[13348]

4. **[25:4]** I have avoided the company of vain and lying men,[13349] and I will ever guard against entering the society of the wicked.

5. **[25:5]** “*Malignantium.*” Malicious persons, who turn even good actions to evil.

6, 7.[13350] **[25:6, 7]** I will seek to wash my hands, that is, to purify myself together with the just; and so united with them, I will also join in surrounding Thy altar; that there I may hear the voices of those that praise Thee; and that I may publish all the marvels that Thou hast wrought.

10. **[25:10]** They commit acts of injustice in order to receive gifts.

THURSDAY AT PRIME

PSALM 22 OF THE PSALTER

The principal end of this psalm is to represent God as a good shepherd who omits nothing, so that in the order of eternal salvation his servants may be abundantly provided with help and spiritual means. The verses 1, 2, 6, and 7 plainly refer to this pre-eminent benefit, which consists in the partaking of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

2. **[22:2]** He has nourished me near waters that flow in the very place of my pasturage; and when my soul like a silly, wayward sheep, went away from him, he brought it back again to his fold.

4. **[22:4]** "*In medio umbræ mortis.*" In the midst of a thousand dangers that seem to me to be the figure of death.

5. **[22:4]** The shepherd's crook and the staff which Thou hast in hand console me; for with the crook Thou correctest me when I go out of the path, and with the staff Thou dost drive away the wolves that seek to devour me. "*Virga.*" Some commentators understand by this the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was called *Virga de radice Jesse*—a rod out of the root of Jesse (*Is.* 11:1), of whom was born Jesus.[13351]

6. **[22:5]** Thou hast prepared before me a table where I shall take a food that will make me strong against my enemies. By this table we may well understand the altar, where we receive as food the body of Jesus Christ, which renders us strong against all the assaults of hell.

7. **[22:5]** "*In oleo.*" With the unction of Thy grace.[13352] "*Calix meus inebrians.*" The chalice that Thou offerest me contains a wine that holily inebriates him that drinks it, making him forget the world to remember only Thee and Thy love. "*Quam præclarus est!*" How noble and precious is it!

9. **[22:6]** “*In longitudinem dierum.*” During all eternity.

FRIDAY AT PRIME

PSALM 21 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm is to be understood in the literal sense of Jesus Christ, and especially of the prayer which he said before his death from the height of the cross, as also of his glorious resurrection. According to Cardinal Bellarmine, it would be an act of temerity to seek to turn it to any other sense. We have then in this psalm an express prophecy of all that which our Lord suffered when dying on the cross.

1. **[21:2]** My God, look upon the affliction in which I am; why hast Thou abandoned me? I see well that my sins,[13353] that is, the sins of my people, which I have taken upon myself to expiate, as if they were my own. Keep me far from my salvation, that is, make it impossible for me not to die. We make here the following observation on the abandonment of Jesus Christ: It is certain that the divine Word did not abandon the humanity of Jesus Christ when he was dying upon the cross. But why did our Saviour say: *Deus meus, Deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti me?*—My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? (*Matt.* 27:46.) St. Leo answers: *Vox ista doctrina est. non querela*—That voice utters teaching, not complaint (*De Pass.* s. 16). Jesus Christ did not thus speak to the eternal Father to be delivered from death, nor was he speaking of his own abandonment, but of the abandonment of grace, of which all men would have remained deprived if he had not died for our salvation. He was praying then in our name, that we might be delivered from eternal death; in our name also he prayed for his resurrection, to make us also have a share therein. So that he then put himself in our place, and thus prayed not to be abandoned, whilst at the same time he offered up his own death in order to save us from the abandonment that we had deserved, and he did not die himself until he had at first made our salvation secure. This is the reason why, towards the end

of the psalm, he gives thanks to his Father, and sings the fruits of his victory.

2. **[21:3]** I invoke Thee by day, and Thou dost not hear me; I invoke Thee also by night; ah! attribute not my prayers to imprudence and indiscretion.[13354]

3. **[21:4]** "*Laus Israel.*" Thou art the praise of Israel on account of the many graces that Thou hast vouchsafed to him; but now it seems to me that Thou wilt not listen to me.

4. **[21:5]** Our Lord is here speaking of the deliverance which the holy Fathers under the Old Law were to obtain by his death.

6. **[21:7]** "*Sum vermis, et non homo*" Behold! I am no longer looked upon as a man, but as a worm of the earth.

7. **[21:8]** All seeing me reduced to this miserable state have set themselves to mock me: they have spoken against me, and insult me by wagging their heads. A reference to the words that we read in the Gospel: *Prætereuntes autem blasphemabant eum, moventes capita sua*—And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads (*Matt.* 27:39).

8. **[21:9]** They have said: He put his hope in the Lord; let then the Lord deliver him, since he has a will for him and protects him.[13355] Moreover, we read in the Gospel: *Confidit in Deo; liberet nunc, si vult eum*—He trusted in God; let him now deliver him, if he will have him (*Matt.* 27:43).

9, 10. **[21:10, 11]** It was Thou, O Lord, who hast drawn me out of the womb of my mother, and from her breasts; since then I have placed in Thee all my hopes; I have always acknowledged Thee for my God; in mercy, then, do not abandon me.[13356]

11. **[21:12]** Bellarmine says that Jesus Christ is here speaking of his death which is approaching, as what precedes and what follows clearly prove.

12. **[21:13]**[13357] By bulls are meant the chief priests and Pharisees, who by their sharp words and mocking jeers, as if with thrusts of horns, insulted Jesus Christ, saying: *Alios salvos fecit, seipsum non potest salvum facere; si rex Israel est, descendat nunc de cruce, et credemus ei*—He saved others; himself he cannot save; if he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him (*Matt.* 27:42).

13. **[21:14]** “*Sicut leo rapiens et rugiens.*” Like so many famished lions greedy to devour me, roaring with rage Such were, the Jews when they cried out to Pilate: *Tolle, tolle; crucifige eum*—Away with him, away with him, crucify him (*John*, 19:15).

14. **[21:15]** “*Sicut aqua effusus sum.*” I am spent of all my strength through the shedding of my blood, which has poured forth from my body like water from a vase. “*Dispersa.*” According to the Hebrew: *Divulsa*—Torn from their sockets, out of joint.

15. **[21:15]** Notwithstanding all that, my heart, far from being hardened against my enemies, has become soft like melted wax, through the compassion that I have for their evils.[13358]

16. **[21:16]** “*Et in pulverem mortis deduxisti me.*” In short, Thou hast, O my God, brought me to lie beneath the dust of the tomb that covers the dead.

18. **[21:17]** They have pierced my hands and my feet with nails; they have so stretched my body upon the cross that all my bones can be counted. In these words David clearly describes the crucifixion of Jesus Christ; thus St. Jerome, St. Augustine, Theodoret, and Euthymius explain the passage.

19. **[21:18]** My executioners after crucifying me have set themselves to watch me with contempt, and to gaze upon my sufferings with complacency. They have parted my garments among them, and for my under-tunic, which was woven entire, and without seam, they cast lots. This text is quoted in the Gospel where we read: *Ut impleretur quod dictum est per Prophetam, dicentem: Diviserunt sibi,* etc.—That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: They divided my garments, etc.

(*Matt.* 27:35). This is a certain proof that our Saviour died naked upon the cross.

21. **[21:21]** Save my life promptly from the sword of death by raising up my body after I shall be dead. Cause my soul, which appears now left alone and abandoned, to triumph over the infernal dog.

22. **[21:22]** Save me from the lion, which keeps its mouth open to devour me; and protect my weakness from the assaults of these ferocious unicorns.

23. **[21:23]** The prophet here speaks more expressly of the resurrection of our Lord, and of the fruit that it would produce, namely, the conversion of the Gentiles. He says: I will publish the glory of Thy name by means of my brethren the apostles, etc.

24. **[21:24]** "*Semen Jacob.*" By this is meant Christians who have the faith of Jacob.

25. **[21:25]** "*Pauperis.*" This poor man is Jesus Christ himself, who died upon the cross naked and abandoned by all.

27. **[21:26]** I will praise Thee, O Lord, in the great assembly, the Church of the faithful gathered together from all the nations. In their presence I will pay my vows, renewing my sacrifice, by the ministry of my priests.

28. **[21:27]** The poor in spirit, who are conscious of their spiritual misery, shall feed upon and be satiated with grace; and they that seek the Lord shall praise him, and hence their souls shall live eternally.

29, 30. **[21:28, 29]** All the nations even to the farthest bounds of the earth shall call to mind the benefits of God, and the mysteries of the Redemption, which shall be preached to them, and they shall be converted to the Lord; so that all the nations of the Gentiles shall enter the Church to adore the true God.

32. **[21:30]** Not only the poor, but also "*Pingues terrœ,*" the great and powerful of the earth, who abound in riches, shall eat at the table of the

Lord, and shall adore him; and in bowing down to adore, they shall humble themselves even to the earth. “*In terram.*” According to the Hebrew: *In pulverem*—To the dust. Hence this other interpretation, which is also probable: All men, who since they are mortal must return to dust, shall prostrate themselves before him.

34. **[21:32]**[13359] The generation to come of believers shall receive the good tidings of the Lord, that is to say, the knowledge of the faith; and the heavens, or heavenly men, shall publish the justice of God, or the justice of faith, which makes men just,—to the new people that shall be born to the life of grace; a people which the Lord has made, that is, a special people of God, created in Jesus Christ.

PSALM 118 OF THE PSALTER

In the Hebrew text the first eight verses of this psalm begin each by the first letter of the alphabet, the eight following by the second, and so on with the twenty-two letters of the alphabet. This seems to have been done to help the memory. The learned say that this psalm is so long because it was composed with a view of giving pious and profitable occupation to the people who used to recite or chant it on their way three times a year when they visited the Temple. It is filled with praises of the divine law,[13360] with prayers for grace to observe it perfectly, with petitions for help in the dangers that beset us, whether on the part of men, or especially of the evil spirits who seek to destroy the life of our soul. In the divine Office the psalm is divided into eleven parts of sixteen verses each, distributed among the Little Hours, namely: Prime, Terce, Sext, and None. As the Little Hours are always the same, and have to be recited daily, it will be of much help when reciting them to give the attention of the mind to the petitions which the verses contain.

1. **[118:1]** “*Immaculati in via.*” Those that keep themselves without stain in the course of their life. “*In lege.*” Without deviating from the law.

2. **[118:2]** “*Testimonia ejus.*” The divine commandments, which testify what is the will of God.

3. **[118:3]** “*In viis ejus.*” According to his laws, which are the way to go in order to find him.

5. **[118:5]** Grant, O Lord, that my conduct may always be so directed that I keep Thy precepts.[13361]

6. **[118:6]** I shall not be confounded at Thy judgment, I have always the intention to observe what Thou dost command me.

7. **[118:7]** I will give thanks to Thee with an upright, sincere heart, for having taught me to observe Thy just commandments.

8. **[118:8]** I hope with Thy help to observe them faithfully; O Lord! cease not to assist me.

9. **[118:9]** “*Viam suam.*” The errors of his life, of his conduct.

10. **[118:10]** “*Ne repellas me.*” Permit me not to go astray.

11. **[118:11]** I have endeavored to impress Thy laws on my heart, in order to avoid in any way to offend Thee.

12. **[118:12]** Thou art blessed by Thy creatures for the graces that Thou vouchsafest them. Grant me the grace to know Thy commandments.

13. **[118:13]** My voice has published all the laws that have come from Thy mouth.[13362]

17. **[118:17]** Restore to me the life that I have lost through sin, and thus re-established in Thy grace, I shall be faithful to Thee.

18. **[118:18]** Enlighten me with Thy light, and thus I shall see how admirable is Thy law.

19. **[118:19]** I am a pilgrim here below, always exposed to go astray; wherefore conceal not from me Thy precepts, by the observance of which I hope to arrive at the heavenly country.

20. **[118:20]** I desire with all my heart to keep Thy law now and forever.[13363]

21. **[118:21]** “*Superbos.*” Those who through pride refuse to obey Thee.

22. **[118:22]** Deliver me from the reproach of seeing myself despised and cursed by Thee. so that the devil should be able to say of me: I have conquered him, I have made him fall. Thus we read in Psalm 12:4: *Nequando dicat inimicus meus: Prævalui adversus eum*—Lest my enemy say at any time, I have prevailed against him. Preserve me from this misery, because I wish to accomplish in all things Thy holy will.

23, 24. **[118:23, 24]** The powerful ones of the earth have designedly set themselves to speak evil of me; but Thy servant, nevertheless, has not ceased to exercise himself in all Thy just ordinances; for I meditate ever upon these testimonies of Thy will, and they counsel me how I should conduct myself.

25. **[118:25]** “*Pavimento.*” According to the Hebrew: *Pulveri*—To the dust. My soul has become attached to the earth, and thus has lost the life of Thy grace. Restore to me, O Lord, this life according to the promise that Thou hast made to hear him that prays.[13364]

26. **[118:26]** I have exposed to Thee the disorders of my life, and my needs, and when imploring Thy mercy Thou didst hear me. Deign then to teach me what I must do in future to observe all Thy precepts.

27. **[118:27]** Instruct me how to walk always in the way of Thy commandments, and so shall I exercise myself in keeping Thy precepts, which are wonderful, that is, difficult, nay, impossible to observe without Thy help, but easy with Thy grace.

28. **[118:28]** My soul has slumbered, that is, has become lukewarm in Thy service, through the weariness that I found therein. Give me strength to fulfil whatever Thou commandest me.

29. **[118:29]** *“De lege tua, miserere mei.”* According to the Hebrew: *Et legem tuam dona mihi*—And give me Thy law. In Thy mercy grant me the grace to keep Thy law.

30. **[118:30]** I have chosen to walk in the way of truth, that is, of faith and of Thy holy precepts, which I have not forgotten.

31. **[118:31]** Thou hast given me the grace of being enamoured of Thy law; suffer me not to merit the shame of trangressing it.

32. **[118:32]** I have made rapid progress in the way of Thy commandments when Thou hast enlarged my heart by Thy grace, inflaming it with Thy holy love.

Terce throughout the Week

PSALM 118—(CONTINUED)

33. **[118:33]** “*Legem pone mihi.*” According to the Hebrew: *Doce me*—Teach me. The passage is thus explained: Give me as a law Thy way, that is, the rule of Thy commandments, or, grant that I take not pleasure in the laws of the world and of the flesh, but only in Thy law, and thus I shall always seek to put it in practice.

35. **[118:35]** “*Ipsam volui.*” Therein only I wish to walk.

36. **[118:36]** Incline my heart towards the observance of Thy law by means of Thy holy love, which by the weight of its influence inclines hearts to Thee, and deliver it from the concupiscence of earthly things.

37. **[118:37]** Turn away my eyes from looking at the vanities of the world, that I may avoid looking at them; grant that I may live only for Thee, and that my life may consist in walking by the way that leads to Thee.

38. **[118:38]**[13365] Establish Thy law in the heart of Thy servant, so that he may pay attention to observe it through fear of displeasing Thee.

39. **[118:39]** Take from me the reproach that I dread, namely, of transgressing Thy precepts, which are so pleasant to those that observe them.

40. **[118:40]** I have set my heart upon Thy law; it is just, then, that Thou shouldst give me strength to observe it.

41. **[118:41]** Let Thy mercy come upon me, and Thy saving help according to the promise that Thou hast made to him who prays to Thee in the name of the Saviour.

42. **[118:42]** To those that reproach me for living in this state of humiliation, I will answer that I hope in Thy promises, which can never fail.[13366]

43. **[118:43]** Permit not that I ever fail of telling the truth, for I have placed all my hopes in Thy judgments, which are full of mercy.

45. **[118:45]** By the effect of Thy love which enlarges hearts, I have found myself at large walking in the way of Thy precepts, for I have sought to observe them with exactness.

49. **[118:49]** "*Verbi tui.*" The promise that Thou hast made.

50. **[118:50]** This hope has consoled me in my tribulations, for Thy promise has given me strength to suffer them with patience.

51. **[118:51]** My enemies, proud of their power, have hitherto unjustly persecuted me, but I have never failed in the observance of Thy law.

52. **[118:52]** We here remark that we should fear the judgments of God if we are unfaithful to him; but when we are faithful to him, with his help, which we shall certainly obtain if we are careful to ask it of him by prayer, the judgments of God should not terrify, but should rather console us; for these judgments are full of joy and comfort, because full of mercy, as David says in verse 39: *Judicia tua jucunda*—Thy judgments are pleasant. This is the reason why he adds in verse 43, that in his confidence in these same judgments he places all his hope of salvation: *Quia in judiciis tuis supersperavi*—For in Thy judgments I have hoped exceedingly.[13367]

53. **[118:53]** I have felt myself as if fainting away for sorrow at the sight of so many sinners, who despise Thy law. See verses 139 and 158.

54. **[118:54]** For myself, whilst here on earth, I have ever praised Thy ordinances.

55. **[118:55]** During the night I have been mindful of Thy name; I have invoked it, and so have had strength to keep Thy law.

56. **[118:56]** All this has happened to me because I have striven to obey Thy just commands.

57. **[118:57]** “*Portio mea.*” My portion, my riches.

58. **[118:58]** “*Secundum eloquium tuum.*” According to Thy promise.

59. **[118:59]** I have considered the ways that I should keep, and have directed my steps in the path of Thy commandments.

60. **[118:60]** “*Paratus sum, et non sum turbatus.*” I have prepared myself to suffer all tribulations, and am not troubled at the sight of difficulties.

62. **[118:62]** “*Judicia justificationis tuæ.*” Thy just judgments, decrees, ordinances.

64. **[118:64]** “Justificationes tuas doce me.” Teach me Thy just ordinances, and give me strength to observe them.

65. **[118:65]** “*Verbum tuum.*” Thy promise.

66. **[118:66]** Deign to teach me after Thy example the goodness that I should show forth to others; instruct me in the rule of how to live well, and give me the science of the saints, which consists in knowing how to love Thee; for I have placed all my hopes in the fulfilment of Thy precepts.

67. **[118:67]** I sinned, and then Thou didst humble me with tribulations; these have taught me to keep Thy law. See verse 71.

69. **[118:69]** The iniquity of the proud, who are properly the infernal spirits, is multiplied against me, to make me transgress Thy law; but I will ever study with all my heart to enter into the purposes of Thy holy will concerning me, that I may accomplish them.

70. **[118:70]** “*Coagulatum est sicut lac.*” Is hardened like curdled milk.

71. **[118:71]** “*Ut discam justificationes tuas.*” That I may learn how to keep Thy precepts. We may here remark how necessary it is to keep ourselves

humble before God and before men; for the Lord, as he did with David, is wont to chastise the proud, by permitting them to fall into shameful sins such as they had previously held in abhorrence.

73. **[118:73]** Thy hands have formed me so that I am the work of Thy hands; but by sin I have lost the knowledge and the love of Thy law; give me, then, understanding to know it, and love to keep it.

74. **[118:74]** Those that fear Thee will rejoice to see that I keep Thy law, and that I have put all my hopes in Thy promises.

75. **[118:75]** "*In veritate tua.*" In Thy justice.

76. **[118:76]** "*Secundum cloquium tuum.*" According to the promises that Thou hast made.

77. **[118:77]** Make me feel the effects of Thy mercy, and then I shall always live in Thy grace, because I meditate only upon Thy law in order not to transgress it.

80. **[118:80]** May my heart become pure through the observance of Thy precepts, that I may not one day incur the confusion of having transgressed them.

Sext throughout the Week

81. **[118:81]** My soul has fainted away for desire to see myself saved from so many anguishes and fears that torment me; all my hope is in Thy promise.

82. **[118:82]** My eyes too have grown faint through keeping them fixed on Thee, expecting the effect of Thy word.

83. **[118:83]** “*Pruina.*” This word has given rise to different interpretations. Mattei thinks that it is put in place of *Fumo:* In the smoke; because the Hebrew word is thus rendered by St. Jerome in Genesis (19:28),[13368] and Emmanuel Sa explains it in the same sense according to the Chaldee: *Ad fumum.* So that the meaning of the passage would be: By reason of my sufferings I am become like a skin that has become shrivelled and blackened by the smoke. But others keeping to the Vulgate explain it thus: The sufferings that I have endured have made me become like a skin grown slack by the damp, and then is contracted and hardened by the frost; that is to say, have made me become tepid. Of these two interpretations the reader can choose the one that most approves itself to him. For my part, I prefer the second, because it is in conformity with the letter of the Vulgate and is the one most commonly received.

84. **[118:84]** How many days must Thy servant remain thus tried? When wilt Thou pass judgment on my persecutors, and punish them as they deserve?

85. **[118:85]** These wicked men have set before my eyes the goods of this world, which in truth are all deceitful fables when confronted with Thy law, which alone satisfies him who keeps it.

86. **[118:86]** “*Veritas.*” They are the very truth, which gives true peace to him who observes them.[13369]

87. **[118:87]** They had all but ruined me here on earth with their temptations; but with Thy help I have not ceased to obey Thy precepts.

89–92. **[118:89–92]** These four verses are variously interpreted. The best and most suitable explanation appears to me to be that given by Mattei, with Bossuet and several others, according to which David means here to say: O Lord, the heavens obey Thee, by always remaining in the state wherein Thou hast placed them; in like manner the earth remains the same as when Thou didst first establish it; so, too, the day and all irrational creatures obey Thee. After this the psalmist concludes: If I had not obeyed Thee myself, by meditating and observing Thy law in the numerous persecutions that I have suffered, I should have perished through my weakness.[13370]

93. **[118:93]** “*Vivificasti me.*” Thou hast preserved my life.

94. **[118:94]** I belong to Thee, and I have given myself to Thee; Thou hast to save me, for I have tried to obey Thy ordinances.

95. **[118:95]** Sinners watched their opportunity to strike me down; but I have taken care not to withdraw from Thy precepts.

96. **[118:96]** I have seen that all things come to an end; but the law that Thou hast given us will endure forever. Thus Mattei and Bossuet explain this verse after Theodoret.

97. **[118:97]** In what way have I loved Thy law? I have loved it by meditating upon it every day.[13371]

98. **[118:98]** “*Mandato tuo.*” Not by craft, but by means of Thy law, which is full of wisdom.

99. **[118:99]** I have understood Thy law better than my masters, because I have constantly meditated upon Thy precepts.

103. **[118:103]** How sweet it is to speak of Thy precepts! Thy words are sweeter than honey to my mouth.

104. **[118:104]** "*Intellexi.*" I have received the true understanding of my duties.

105. **[118:105]** Thy law is to me as a torch, which makes me see where I have to place my steps; and as a light, which shows me the way that I have to keep.

107. **[118:107]** I have been everywhere afflicted and persecuted; do not fail to give me strength as Thou hast promised.

108. **[118:108]** Graciously accept the free offerings of my mouth, and teach me to observe Thy law.[13372]

109. **[118:109]** "*Anima mea in manibus meis.*" That is: My life is in danger. In the same way it is said of David: *Posuit animam suam in manu sua*—He put his life in his hand (1 *Kings*, 19:5). The proper version, therefore, of this verse is: My life is always in danger, because I wish to keep Thy law; but I will never forget it.

111. **[118:111]** I have chosen for my heritage to accomplish always Thy will, for it is the joy of my heart.

112. **[118:112]** "*Propter retributionem.*" Mindful of the recompense that Thou hast promised to Thy faithful servants.[13373]

114. **[118:114]** "*In verbum tuum supersperavi.*" In Thy promise I have put all my confidence.

115. **[118:115]** Come not to disturb me; I wish to give myself to search into the precepts of my God, that I may observe them with exactness.

116. **[118:116]** O Lord, take me under Thy protection, as Thou hast promised, that I may live to Thee; do not, I beseech Thee, permit me to fall

into the confusion of being deprived of the help that I expect from Thee.[13374]

118. **[118:118]** “*Injusta cogitatio eorum.*” They give themselves to thoughts contrary to justice.[13375]

119. **[118:119]** Sinners are such so far as they transgress the divine law; for where there is no law there is no sin.

120. **[118:120]** Pierce through and restrain my flesh, that is, my carnal appetites, with Thy holy fear, for Thy judgments make me tremble.

121. **[118:121]** I have always taken care to observe justice; suffer not that I remain abandoned in the hands of my calumniators.

122. **[118:122]** Take care of me and confirm me unto good, so that the proud, my enemies, whether men or demons, may not overwhelm me by their calumnies.

123. **[118:123]** See verses 81, 83.

124. **[118:124]** “*Justificationes tuas doce me.*” Teach me how I should obey Thy precepts.

125. **[118:125]** I am Thy servant, obliged to obey Thee; make me understand well Thy commands, that I may know them and put them in execution.

126. **[118:126]** It is time to manifest Thy justice against those that destroy Thy law.

127. **[118:127]** For my part, this shameful conduct of theirs moves me to love Thy precepts more than gold and precious stones.

128. **[118:128]** Therefore have I set myself not to transgress any one of Thy precepts; and I have abhorred not iniquity only, but also every occasion that might lead me to sin.

None

129. **[118:129]** Thy law and all the truths that Thou hast revealed to us are indeed worthy of our admiration; therefore has my soul studied to penetrate them.

130. **[118:130]** When the hidden sense of the divine Scriptures is explained by the holy Doctors, there arises a light that dispels the darkness and that gives to the humble the true intelligence in which the proud can have no part.

131. **[118:131]** I opened my mouth in prayer to Thee, and have received from Thee the good spirit,[13376] that is, the help to keep Thy commandments; for my desire is to fulfil them exactly.

132. **[118:132]** “*Secundum judicium.*” According as Thou art wont to deal with.[13377]

133. **[118:133]** Make me conduct myself according to Thy law, and permit not that any unjust passion should have dominion over me.

135. **[118:135]** Enlighten me by looking upon Thy servant with a gracious eye and render him faithful to Thy service.

137. **[118:137]** “*Justus es.*” Thou art just by essence; Thou art justice itself.

138. **[118:138]** Whatsoever Thou hast commanded and attested, all is justice and evident truth.

139. **[118:139]** “*Zelus meus.*” My zeal for Thy glory. “*Verba tua.*” Thy commandments. See verses 53 and 158.

140. **[118:140]** “*Ignitum.*” According to the Hebrew: *Probatum et examinatum igne*—Proved and tried in the fire. That is: Thy law is most pure, as gold refined by fire; and it inflames hearts with an ardent love; therefore I have always loved Thee.[13378]

141. **[118:141]** I am a young man of but few years and without consideration; but I do not forget Thy precepts.[13379]

142. **[118:142]** “*Veritas.*” See verses 86 and 151.

143. **[118:143]** In the pains that afflict me, I am sustained by meditating upon Thy law.

144. **[118:144]** Thy precepts are and will ever be just; grant that I may understand them well, and thus I shall always live faithful to Thee.

145. **[118:145]** “*Justificationes tuas requiram.*” Thus shall I strive to discover Thy holy will, in order to accomplish it.

146. **[118:146]** “*Salvum me fac.*” Save me by giving me needful help.

147. **[118:147]** “*In maturitate.*” According to the Hebrew and the Greek: *In diluculo*—At the dawn. I have begun at break of day to call upon Thee, because I have hoped much in Thy promises.

149. **[118:149]** “*Secundum judicium tuum, vivifica me.*” According to Thy promise, give me strength to be faithful.

150. **[118:150]** My persecutors have made themselves friends of iniquity by seeking to pervert others. But woe to them! the nearer they approach to iniquity, the farther do they depart from Thy law.

151. **[118:151]** Thou art ever at hand to succor him that loves Thy law, which is all just and faithful. “*Veritas.*” See verses 86 and 142.

152. **[118:152]** From the beginning when I knew Thy commandments, I knew at the same time that they are eternal, that is, unchangeable.

154. **[118:154]** According to Thy justice, rescue me from the hands of my enemies; according to Thy promise, give me strength to resist them.

155. **[118:155]** Sinners are far from salvation, because they do not take care ever to know Thy law.

156. **[118:156]** See verse 149.

158. **[118:158]** In the presence of the prevaricators of Thy law I pined away with fretting, observing the little account that they made of Thy commandments. See verses 53 and 139.

159. **[118:159]** “*Vivifica me.*” Give me strength to continue to love them.

160. **[118:160]** Thy words proceed from truth, as from their source: Thy decrees, therefore, can never be wanting in justice.

161. **[118:161]** The great ones of the earth have persecuted me without cause, but I have had no other fear than to violate Thy ordinances.

162. **[118:162]** I shall rejoice over Thy promises as the soldier after a victory gained over the enemy, rejoices when he finds rich and abundant spoils. See verse 14.

164. **[118:164]** I have frequently celebrated Thy praises, at seeing how just are Thy judgments.

165. **[118:165]** “*Non est illis scandalum.*” To such Thou givest strength to avoid the snares of the enemy, and to escape all danger.[13380]

168. **[118:168]** I have fulfilled Thy precepts and Thy will, for I have ever walked in Thy presence.

169. **[118:169]** Permit the prayer that I address to Thee to be before Thy eyes; according to Thy promise, make me well understand what Thou wiliest of me.[13381]

170. **[118:170]** “*Eripe me.*” Deliver me from my afflictions and from what hinders me to do Thy holy will.

171. **[118:171]** I will celebrate Thy praises when Thou shalt have instructed me in Thy ordinances.

172. **[118:172]** “*Eloquium tuum.*” Thy law.

173. **[118:173]** “*Elegi.*” I have resolved always to keep.

174. **[118:174]** I much desired Thy grace, which is to save me; and therefore do I meditate solely upon Thy law.

175. **[118:175]** I hope that my soul will always live united to Thee, and will ever praise Thee; and Thy judgments, which are full of mercy, will help me to be faithful to Thee.

176. **[118:176]** In time past I have gone astray like a sheep that through leaving its shepherd, was lost; mayest Thou prevent this misfortune from coming over me; and if I should fall into it, deign to bring me back; for notwithstanding my wanderings I have never entirely forgotten Thy law; I have always desired to be Thy servant.

Vespers

SUNDAY AT VESPERS

PSALM 109 OF THE PSALTER

The reign of Jesus Christ, his eternal and temporal generation, his priesthood and his Passion, form the subject of this psalm. It is in the literal sense that we must understand it as referring to our Lord Jesus Christ; for he himself applies it to himself to convince the Jews that he is the true Son of God, as we read in the Gospel of St. Matthew, 22:44. In fact, after asking them how David can proclaim Christ his Lord, since Christ was to descend from him, David, he stated this irrefutable argument: If David calls him his Lord, how being his Lord could he be also his Son?—*Si ergo David vocat eum Dominum, quomodo filius ejus est?* (*lb.* 45.) The Jews did not answer that the Messias could not be the Lord of David, as true God; but they would not allow that Jesus was the Messias or Christ of whom David had spoken. We Christians all believe that Jesus Christ was the true Messias. Thus are refuted the Arians who refuse to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the true Son of God, and true God as his Father. And in fact how can they speak thus since David proclaims as his Lord this same Jesus Christ as his Son?

1. **[109:1]** "*Dixit Dominus Domino meo.*" That is: The eternal Father said to Jesus Christ. For "*Dominus Domino meo,*" the Hebrew reads: *Jehova Ladoni*. *Jehova* is a name that belongs to God only; it signifies HE WHO IS. The Hebrews through reverence did not pronounce the name of God. *Ladoni*, the dative of the word *Adoni,* means: To my Lord; the name that is applied to the Messias, not only as God, but also as man; and it is for this reason that David uses it here; for if he had designated Jesus Christ by the name of *Jehova,* he would have been understood as speaking of him as God only, and not as man. "*Sede a dextris meis.*" Be seated. "*Sede*" signifies supreme authority given to Jesus Christ as sitting at the right hand of God. "*A dextris meis.*" Equality of elevation. In reality Jesus Christ has the same dominion as his Father, not only as God, but as man, since his most sacred

humanity has been raised to this exaltation by virtue of his hypostatic union with the Word, according to the words of St. Paul: *Qui, cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse se æqualem Deo. . . . Jesus Christus in gloria est Dei Patris*—Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. . . . Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father (*Phil.* 2:6, 11). There is no doubt that *In gloria Dei—In the glory of God*—is the same as *A dextris Dei—At the right hand of God;* that is: *In majestate Dei—In the majesty of God.* So St. Mark (16:19), speaking of our Saviour ascended into heaven, says: *Assumptus est in cælum, et sedet a dextris Dei*—He was taken into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God. St. Ambrose thus comments: *Audit quasi Homo, sedet quasi Dei filius*—He hears as man, he sits as the Son of God (*De David. apol.* 2).

2. **[109:1]** That is: Thou shalt reign at my right hand, even during the time that Thou shalt subdue Thy enemies; according to what St. Paul writes: *Oportet autem illum regnare, donec ponat omnes inimicos sub pedibus ejus* —For he must reign until he hath put all his enemies under his feet (1 *Cor.* 15:25). The word *Donec* here signifies according to interpreters *As long as,* since, as Mattei says, *Donec* does not always imply the termination of what is spoken of.[13382]

3. **[109:2]** Here David speaks to Jesus Christ, and says to him: The Lord, that is, Thy eternal Father, will cause to come forth from Sion, or from Jerusalem, the sceptre of Thy power, and Thy reign shall extend over the whole earth. This accords with the command given by the divine Master to his disciples to go to preach salvation to all nations beginning with Jerusalem: *Prædicari, in nomine ejus, pænitentiam et remissionem peccatorum in omnes gentes, inicipientibus ab Jerusalem*—That penance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, . . . beginning at Jerusalem (*Luke,* 24:4). Mattei observes that by "*Virgam*" many of the holy Fathers understand the cross, which is the sceptre of Jesus Christ.

4. **[109:3]** There are in this verse several words difficult to understand: of these the interpreters give various explanations. "*Tecum principium.*" Some understand by "*Principium*" the divine Word himself, who is also the principle, according to the words of Jesus Christ: *Sicut tu, Pater, in me, et*

ego in te—As Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee (*John,* 17:21). But *Principium* is commonly explained as *Principatus:* Principality, or Dominion, and this agrees with the rendering of the Septuagint. Thus Tertullian understands it, who writes; *Principium pro principatu sumetur* (*Adv. Hermog.* c. 9). "*In die virtutis tuæ.*" Mattei, according to the authority, as he says, of several holy Fathers, explains this of eternity: *Ab æterno.* But others, with great probability, apply it to the day of the last judgment, when Jesus Christ will display his power over all creatures; and this is the explanation of St. Augustine, Theodoret, Lallemant, and many others. "*In splendoribus sanctorum.*" That is: When the eternal Judge shall be surrounded by the saints, who will shine forth as so many suns. *Tunc justi fulgebunt sicut sol*—Then shall the just shine as the sun (*Matt.* 13:43). "*Ex utero ante luciferam genui te.*" This is to be understood, according to St. Thomas, of the eternal generation of the Word: I have begotten Thee before the star called Lucifer, that is, to put a part for the whole, before all creatures; and I have begotten Thee from my womb—"*Ex utero,*" that is to say, from my substance, as St. Jerome explains: *De sua natura, substantia.* The sense, then, of the verse is this: My Son, Thy princedom over all created things shall appear when Thou shalt sit on Thy throne in the midst of the saints, who shall shine as stars or suns, to judge the world; for I have begotten Thee of my substance before the existence of the stars and ot all other creatures, even from eternity.[13383]

5. **[109:4]** The Lord has sworn, and will never repent of it; it is an oath and an immutable decree. He has said: Thou art priest eternal, according to the order of Melchisedech, in contradistinction to the priests according to the order of Aaron, who were subject to change and death. Jesus Christ is a Priest forever, because even in heaven he offers the merits of his Passion for the salvation of men who live on this earth; and even after the end of the world he will ever continue to offer them on behalf of men in thanksgiving for the graces bestowed upon them by God. There is also this difference between the sacrifices of the Old Law that in it animals were offered; while that of Melchisedech, in which bread and wine were offered, was a figure of the sacrifice of Mass, wherein Jesus Christ is the principal Sacrificer.[13384]

6. **[109:5]** The Lord shall always be at Thy side, and in the day of his just vengeance he will overthrow the power of those kings who are Thy enemies. Here Mattei justly remarks that according to the Hebrew, instead of "*A dextris tuis,*" it is *Super dextera tua.* Hence these words mean here, not that Jesus Christ is to sit at the right hand of God, as some understand them, but that the eternal Father, "*Dominus,*" will give to Jesus Christ the strength to vanquish all his enemies.[13385]

7. **[109:6]** Jesus Christ shall judge the rebellious nations, and will carry into effect the chastisements with which they have been threatened; he shall shiver in pieces on the earth the proud heads that rose up against him.[13386]

8. **[109:7]** Mattei with Marcus Marinus gives this interpretation: He shall cause the blood of his enemies to flow like a torrent in which he will quench his thirst. But others give this explanation: Nevertheless this God made man shall first during his mortal life drink the water of the torrent, that is, the chalice of his Passion, which like a torrent of pains shall overwhelm him to death; but in consequence of this death, he shall lift up his head; for thereby he shall be exalted to a throne of glory, according to the words of the Apostle: *Videmus Jesum, propter passionem mortis, gloria et honore coronatum, ut, gratia Dei, pro omnibus gustaret mortem*—We see Jesus . . . for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, . . . that through the grace of God he might taste death for all (*Heb.* 2:9). Blessed death, which has restored life to all men![13387]

PSALM 110 OF THE PSALTER

In this psalm the perfections of God are exalted, and he is praised for the wonders that he has wrought in behalf of his people.

1. **[110:1]** "*In consilio . . . et congregatione.*" According to the Hebrew: *In secreto . . . et synagoga.* That is: In private gatherings and in public assemblies.

2. **[110:2]** All the works of the Lord are great; for in all, his infinite wisdom and power shine forth; and all are perfect, since they all correspond to the intentions of his holy will.

3. **[110:3]** All his works are so many motives for us to praise and magnify him; he it is that does all things; and everything that he does is always just.

4. **[110:4]** The Lord, who is merciful and (according to the Hebrew text) full of paternal tenderness, has left the memorial of his admirable prodigies which he has wrought in favor of his people, especially in the miraculous food, the manna, which he gave to our fathers, who had the gift of his holy fear. Every one knows that this manna was a figure of the Holy Eucharist, that most admirable work which Jesus Christ left on earth as a memorial of the death which he suffered for us.

5. **[110:5]** "*Virtutem.*" That is: The grandeur, the strength, the wisdom.

6. **[110:7]** "*Hæreditatem gentium.*" The Land of Promise in possession of the Gentiles. "*Opera manuum ejus, veritas et judicium.*" In a word, his works show forth to us his fidelity and his justice.[13388]

7. **[110:8]** His laws ever righteous are unchangeable.

8. **[110:9]** He has sent redemption to his people, that is, the Redeemer, as St. Augustine and Euthymius explain, and he has made a covenant with them which shall never be broken.[13389]

9. **[110:9]** His name is holy and terrible; we must, therefore, greatly fear to violate his covenant, and be careful to preserve the fear of the Lord, without which we cannot possess wisdom.

10. **[110:10]** They have a good intelligence, that is, they rightly understand this salutary fear who act up to it; hence he who keeps this fear shall be forever praised. "*Facientibus eum.*" According to the Hebrew: *Facientibus ea,* that is, *mandata,* the commandments. Mattei says that it is the same in substance, though the Hebrew makes us better understand that speculative fear is not enough if we would have the wisdom of the saints, but that we must live practically according to this fear in order to be truly wise. Among those that have the fear of God there are many who, because they lead a bad life, are the greatest fools in the world.

PSALM 111 OF THE PSALTER

The prophet describes in this psalm the character of the just man and his temporal happiness which he enjoys here below, according to the promises that God made in the Old Law. But we, who love in the New Law, should raise ourselves to the thought of the spiritual happiness that God makes the just taste in this life and in the next.[13390]

1. **[111:1]** He that fears God as he ought, that is, with a fear not servile but filial, takes all his delight in observing his precepts. St. Jerome says: *Anxie mandata ejus non facit, sed vult:* The just man obeys not by force, but with a good will, and loves to obey.

3. **[111:3]** His house shall enjoy honors and riches; and with all his honors and riches he will firmly persevere in his holy life, and will not regret at leaving them, because the reward due to his justice shall be everlasting in the life to come.

4. **[111:4]** The light that comes from the Lord shall not fail the righteous in the darkness of their afflictions; for God will come to their aid, since he is full of mercy and goodness, and a just rewarder of his servants.

5. **[111:5]** "*Jucundus.*" Mattei says that according to the Hebrew this word signifies *Beatus.* Happy is the man that exercises mercy towards the poor, at least in lending them what they need; he will regulate his words and his temporal affairs, or will manage his possessions "*in judicio,*" with prudence, so that he will never be disturbed in his happiness.

6. **[111:7]** The just man shall live forever in the memory of men, and he will not fear to lose his character by the calumnies of his enemies.

8. **[111:9]** He has given generously of his goods to the poor; his justice, that is, his good deeds, his merits, shall ever be before the eyes of God, to be recompensed eternally in heaven, and he shall be exalted in power and in glory.

9. **[111:10]** At seeing this the sinner will be angry; he will gnash with his teeth for rage, and pine away with spite and envy; he would wish to deprive the just man of his happiness, but the desires of the wicked shall vanish as smoke.

PSALM 112 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist invites just souls to praise God for the care that he takes of all his creatures, even of the most humble.

1. **[112:1]** "*Pueri.*" According to the Hebrew: *Servi*—Servants.

5. **[112:5]** Who can be compared with our God, whose goodness is such that from the highest heaven where he dwells he does not disdain to look upon the creatures that are the most lowly.[13391]

8. **[112:9]** This verse applies well to Jesus Christ, who, when the Church was bereaved of children by the perversion of the Jews, made her by his redemption the mother of all the faithful.

PSALM 113 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist shows the wonders wrought by the Lord to deliver the people from the slavery of Egypt. He then exhibits what is the folly of the Gentiles to put their trust in vain idols, and he urges the faithful people to put their confidence in our true God, and to perseverance in his service.

1, 2. **[113:1, 2]** When the people of Israel were delivered from the yoke of the Egyptians, God consecrated them to his service, wishing henceforth to rule over them alone.[13392]

3. **[113:3]** The Red Sea beheld the Hebrews pursued by the Egyptians, and fled, that is, drew back to afford an open passage to the people of God. The river Jordan turned back, that is, its waters stopped in their course, and lifted themselves up on high (*Jos.* 3:13) that the faithful people might pass over.

4. **[113:4]** Then the mountains exult with joy. Others apply this verse to the trembling of the mountains when the law was given to Moses. I prefer the first sense as agreeing better with the following verse.[13393]

10. **[113:10]** Protect us for Thy mercy's sake, and according to the faithfulness of Thy promises, lest the impious should say in case Thou shouldst abandon us: Where now is their God to help them?

16. **[113:16]** Let those who with their own hands make to themselves such gods, and all those that put their trust in them, become like unto them.[13394]

20. **[113:20]** "*Benedixit nobis.*" He has blessed us, loading us with graces.[13395]

25. **[113:24]** "*Cœlum cœli.*" The Empyrean, as Lallemant and others explain it. The Lord has created the empyrean heaven for himself, that is, to reign there; and he has given the earth to men for their habitation, that they may there gain merit to be raised to the empyrean.

26. **[113:25]** That is: After death no one can do good works any more.[13396]

27. **[113:26]** That is: We who enjoy the life of grace, let us bless the Lord at the present time, and let us hope to bless him for all eternity.

CANTICLE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, OR MANGNIFICAT

The Most Blessed Virgin extols in this canticle the goodness of God for having chosen her to be his Mother, and for having redeemed the world by means of Jesus Christ. This canticle may be divided into three parts. In the first, the Blessed Virgin thanks the Lord for the favors that have been conferred upon her. In the second, she praises him for the benefits granted to the Hebrew people. In the third, she glorifies him for the grace that he has bestowed upon all men in giving them Jesus Christ for their Saviour.[13397]

1. **[1:46]** "*Magnificat.*" That is, according to the Greek text: It extols the greatness of.

2. **[1:47]** “*Salutari.*” According to the Hebrew and the Greek: *Jesu*, or *Salvatore*. The Blessed Virgin found all her delight in rejoicing in her God; and such also should be ours.

3. **[1:48]** “*Humilitatem.*” According to the Greek: *Vilitatem, Abjectionem*—Meanness, Littleness, Lowliness.[13398] The most humble Mary could not mean by this word the virtue of humility, for if so she would be praising herself; whereas humility, says Euthymius, alone amongst the virtues does not know itself: *Sola inter virtutes humilitas seipsam ignorat. “Ecce enim . . .”* For behold from this time forth all nations and all ages shall call me BLESSED. This prophecy has been perfectly verified; for there is not one among Catholics that does not in a special manner venerate this great Mother of God.

4. **[1:49]** Because the Almighty, whose name is holy, has wrought great and marvellous things in me, making me Virgin and Mother of my Creator.

5. **[1:50]** “*Timentibus eum.*” Extends itself to all those that fear him with a filial fear.[13399]

6. **[1:51]** God has shown forth his power by putting to rout the proud, that is, the haughty princes of the earth (we may also here understand the rebel angels), and he has defeated all their wicked designs whereby they sought to oppress the innocent.

7. **[1:52]** “*Potentes.*” These proud princes.

9, 10. **[1:54, 55]** He has taken under his protection Israel, his servant, that is, his chosen people, being mindful of the promise which, in his mercy, he had made to him, to send the Messias to redeem him, as he promised to our fathers, especially to Abraham, and to all his descendants.

MONDAY AT VESPERS

PSALM 114 OF THE PSALTER

In this psalm David thanks God for having delivered him from the persecution of Absalom. The royal prophet is here the figure of the Christian soul, which, after suffering many dangerous temptations, finds itself at the approach of death victorious over its enemies and on the point of going to heaven to enjoy its God.

1. **[114:1]** I have loved and love my Lord; for he has heard, and I hope will always hear my prayer.

2. **[114:2]** He has inclined his ear to my voice; therefore I will never cease to call upon him all the days of my life, confiding in his mercy.

3. **[114:3]** Lallemant and Mattei explains this verse as referring to the fears and dangers of losing the life of the body; but Bellarmine interprets it thus: Deadly temptations have surrounded me which would draw me to eternal death, and these temptations have brought me near to the danger of being condemned to hell.

4, 5. **[114:4, 5]** In this state I found nothing on all sides but afflictions and sorrows; then I had recourse to the Lord, and called upon his name, saying: My God, deliver my soul from these perils. The Lord is as merciful as he is just; he is our God, and he shows mercy to those that have recourse to him.

6. **[114:6]** “*Parvulos.*” The little ones who are humble.

7. **[114:7]** “*In requiem tuam.*” To the place of thy repose, that is, to the heavenly country, as Bellarmine with St. Basil understand it. “*Benefecit tibi.*” According to the Hebrew: *Retribuit super te*—The Lord will recompense thee according to thy good works, by giving thee eternal life,

which is a crown of justice. Thus again Bellarmine with St. Basil interprets the words.

9. **[114:9]** I hope, then, to find myself in the land of the living, far from hell, where all are dead, and far from this world, where so many are also dead through sin, and there I shall be happy, occupied forever in pleasing the Lord.

PSALM 115 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm does not differ from the preceding; but in it David shows yet more his gratitude for the graces which he acknowledges that he has received from his goodness.[13400]

1. **[115:10]** This verse is clearly explained by St. Paul: *Habentes autem eumden spiritum fidei, sicut scriptum est: Credidi propter quod locutus sum; et nos credimus, propter quod et loquimur*—But having the same spirit of faith, as it is written: I believe, for which cause I have spoken: we also believe, for which cause we speak also (2 *Cor.* 4:13.) Hence this explanation: Resting on faith I have hoped in God; and I therefore said: Thou art my hope; and this I said on beholding myself so deeply humiliated and afflicted.

2. **[115:11]** The following is the explanation given by Bellarmine, with Euthymius: In my ecstasy when my spirit was raised to the knowledge of the land of the living, I said that every man is a liar, that is, that when men talk of this world’s happiness they only speak lies.

4. **[115:13]** By the chalice of salvation St. Basil, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, Theodoret, and Euthymius, according to Bellarmine, understand the chalice of the Passion of Jesus Christ, of which he himself spoke thus: *Calicem quern dedit mihi Pater, non bibam illum?*—The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? (*John,* 18:11.) Hence this explanation: Having nothing to present to God for the graces that he has bestowed upon us, I will offer him in thanksgiving the sufferings of Jesus Christ, to which I will unite those that I endure; and I will always invoke the name of the Lord, that he may enable me to bear my pains with patience.

6. **[115:16]** “*Quia ego servus tuus.*” That is: I will pay my vows to Thee, for I am Thy servant.

PSALM 116 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm invites all the people to praise the mercy and the faithfulness of the Lord for having united them all in one and the same Church. It is thus that the Apostle interprets this psalm in his Epistle to the Romans (15:8–11).

2. **[116:2]** That is: He has multiplied upon us the effects of his mercy; and his faithfulness in the promises that he has made to us shall never fail.[13401]

PSALM 119 OF THE PSALTER

David asks God to defend him against the calumnies of his enemies and he complains that his exile is prolonged during the persecution of Saul. This psalm is suitable to every Christian who struggling with adversity looks forward to the end of his exile here on earth.[13402]

3. **[119:3]** What greater evil canst thou have to fear, O my soul, than that of a deceitful tongue?

4. **[119:4]** The shafts that go forth from the mouth of a man of power are so sharp and hurtful that they are as burning coals dealing destruction all around.

5. **[119:5]** “*Cum habitantibus Cedar.*” That is: With barbarians. *Cedar,* says Bellarmine, is a Hebrew word which means *Swarthiness.*[13403]

PSALM 120 OF THE PSALTER

Here the psalmist makes a just man speak, who lifts his eyes to the blessed mountains, where is seated the holy city, and whence he hopes for divine help.

3. **[120:3]** The Lord will not suffer thee to fall, when thou hast recourse to him.

6. **[120:6]** Thou wilt not have to fear the burning of the sun, nor the noxious influences of the moon.[13404]

8. **[120:8]** May he protect thee in all thy doings, from the beginning to the end, now and forever.

TUESDAY AT VESPERS

PSALM 121 OF THE PSALTER

In this psalm is expressed the joy that the Jews felt when they heard that they were to leave Babylon and be released from captivity. Every Christian may use this psalm to stimulate his desires for heaven.

2. **[121:2]** We rejoice at seeing our feet as if already arrived at the threshold of thy gates.

3. **[121:3]** “*Ejus.*” Redundance common in the Hebrew. “*In idipsum.*” That is: *Simul:* Altogether. “*Participatio in idipsum.*” Bellarmine explains: Charity which unites friends, makes all goods common among them, and all become the joy of each.

4. **[121:4]** “*Testimonium Israel.*” This is understood of the law by which the Israelites were obliged at fixed periods to worship God in the Temple; but on applying it to heaven, it has reference to the souls of the just, who will ascend thither to be solely occupied in praising the Lord.

6. **[121:6]** Pray for the prosperity of Jerusalem. May those that love thee, O holy city, possess in thee the abundance of every good.

9. **[121:9]** Because thou art the house of the Lord, I desire for thee an abundance of every good.

PSALM 122 OF THE PSALTER

Prayer that the Hebrews address to the Lord that he may put an end to the captivity at Babylon. Thus does the Church in her persecutions implore deliverance from God.[13405]

PSALM 123 OF THE PSALTER

A hymn of thanksgiving which the Jews addressed to God after the captivity at Babylon. Thus may the just man also address God after his victory over a temptation.

3. **[123:3]** “*Aqua.*” That is, this their rage like a torrent of water.

4. **[123:5]** We have happily passed through that torrent; but without the assistance of God we could never have passed through so great a flood.

PSALM 124 OF THE PSALTER

Released from the captivity at Babylon, the Jews receive the assurance that God will never fail as long as they confide in him, to assist them against their enemies.

2. **[124:2]** Jerusalem shall be defended by the mountains that surround it, and his people shall ever be protected by the Lord who will stand round about them.

5. **[124:5]** The Lord will treat those that fail in their duties, departing from the right way, as he treats the wicked; but Israel shall always enjoy peace. “*obligationes.*” According to the Hebrew and the Greek, as Bellarmine explains it with St. Jerome and Euthymius: *Pravitates, Obliquitates*—Crooked ways. The prophet said, v. 4, that God will reward the just; he adds here that as to those that turn from an upright heart by engaging in crooked ways, by compounding with their consciences, shall end by finding themselves among the declared enemies, in the midst of the evils that await them, while peace with all its happiness shall be shared by the true servants of God.

PSALM 125 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm contains the sighs of the Jews to be released from captivity at Babylon. It is of service to sinners who wish to be delivered from this slavery of sin, and to the just who sigh for the end of their exile here on earth.

1. **[125:1]** St. Jerome translates: *Cum converteret Dominus captivitatem Sion, facti sumus quasi somniantes*. The verse is explained thus: When the Lord shall bring forth Sion, or his people from captivity, we shall be filled with such consolation that we shall seem to be in a dream.[13406]

2. **[125:2]** Then we shall be so full of joy that our tongue will break forth in canticles of gladness.

4. **[125:3]** And we, too, shall say: The Lord hath wrought great things in our behalf; for this reason we rejoice.

5. **[125:4]** Deliver us, then, O Lord! from our captivity, and grant that we may be consoled as are consoled those that dwell in the South when there conies to them an abundance of water.[13407]

WEDNESDAY AT VESPERS

PSALM 126 OF THE PSALTER

Returned from Babylon, the Jews had undertaken to rebuild the city and the Temple, and as they were hindered from doing so by the in cursions of their enemies, the prophet exhorts them to trust in God.

3. **[126:2]** In vain do you rise before daybreak, if the Lord does not come to your aid; moreover, you should not rise until you have taken your repose, since you have eaten the bread of sorrow, that is, you have lived in the midst of so great evils.

4. **[123:3]** “*Cum dederit dilectis suis somnum.*” After the Lord shall have given to his beloved, that is, to his people, sleep, that is, peace by means of the promised Redeemer. “*Ecce hereditas Domini, filii.*” Then shall appear the inheritance of Jesus Christ the Lord, an inheritance that shall consist in the multitude of the children born in his Church according to the prophecy; *Postula a me, et dado tibi gentes hereditatem tuam*—Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thine inheritance (*Ps.* 2:8). “*Merces, fructus ventris.*” The recompense of the Lord shall be the fruit of the womb; that is, these same children shall be the recompense of Jesus Christ according to another prophecy: *Si posuerit pro peccato animam suam, videbit semen long ævum*—If he shall lay down his life for sin, he shall see a long-lived seed (*Is.* 53:10). This is well expressed in the Greek version in this sense: The multitude of children shall be the inheritance of the Lord, and the recompense of Jesus Christ, who was properly the fruit of Mary’s womb.

5. **[126:4]** These children, tormented by persecutions, shall be against their enemies as so many arrows in the hand of a strong man.[13408]

6. **[126:5]** Blessed is he that shall see his desire satisfied by the birth of so many children; he shall not suffer confusion when he shall have to treat

with his enemies before the gate of the city,[13409] that is, according to Bellarmine, at the last judgment, which shall take place at the great gate or before the whole world, when Jesus Christ shall confound the demons, who thought to drag the whole human race down to hell.

PSALM 127 OF THE PSALTER

The prophet announces to the Jews after their return from Babylon the blessings that they will receive from God if they keep his laws. These blessings are temporal; belong, properly speaking, to the just under the Old Law.[13410]

2. **[127:2]** The labors of thy hands shall be blessed, for thou shalt taste of their fruits; thou shalt be happy and rest content.

3. **[127:3]** Thy wife, living retired in thy house, shall be fruitful in children as a vine abundant with grapes. "*In lateribus*" St. Jerome translates: *In penetralibus*—In the inner part.

6. **[127:5]** "*Ex Sion.*" That is: From heaven.[13411]

PSALM 128 OF THE PSALTER

Many interpreters refer this psalm to the time when the Jews, freed from captivity, strove to rebuild Jerusalem. The psalmist exhorts the people to put their trust in the Lord, who had already delivered them from their past evils.

1. **[128:1]** Many times from my youth up I have been combated by my enemies; thus the people of Israel should now speak.[13412]

2. **[128:2]** "*Etenim.*" St. Jerome translates: *Sed.* But they could not crush me.

3. **[128:3]** "*Fabricaverunt.*" According to the Hebrew, this word signifies properly the repeated strokes on the anvil; hence the more precise meaning would be: Sinners have struck on my back with repeated blows.

4. **[128:4]** “*Cervices.*” Their heads, that is, their pride. “*Sion.*” The people of Israel.

5. **[128:6]** “*Fiant sicut fenum tectorum.*” Let them become as the grass which grows on the roofs of houses.[13413]

PSALM 129 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm expresses the lamentations of the Israelites who are yet prisoners at Babylon. It is suitable in the mouth of the sinner, who, groaning under the weight of his sins, implores aid from God.

1, 2. **[129:1, 2]** From the deep abyss of my miseries, I cry out to Thee, O Lord; hear my prayer.

3. **[129:3]** If Thou requirest a strict account of our sins, who will be able to endure it?

4. **[129:4]** But Thy mercy gives me courage, for in Thee there is an exhaustless fountain of compassion and goodness; and what causes me to hope in Thee is, that Thou makest it a law to have pity on every sinner who in humility seeks Thy pardon.

5. **[129:5]** My soul awaits the mercy of God, relying on his promise; thus having hoped in the Lord, it will not be confounded.[13414]

6. **[129:6]** From break of day, even until night, Israel will not cease to trust in the Lord.

7. **[129:7]** The prophet points out here the foundation of all our hopes, namely, the blood of Jesus Christ by which he was to redeem the human race. He says: For mercy with God is infinite; and he is well able to redeem us by abundant help from our evils.

PSALM 130 OF THE PSALTER

David complains that Saul and his followers accuse him of being proud, and calls God to witness against this calumny.

1. **[130:1]** My God, Thou knowest that I have not had in my heart, nor shown in my looks, proud sentiments.

2. **[130:1]** That is: I have not conducted myself in such a manner as is above my condition.

3, 4. **[130:2, 3]** If instead of thinking humbly of myself, I have been exalted in mind above what is becoming, I am content to be punished, and treated as a babe that lies wailing at its mother’s breast when deprived of milk.

THURSDAY AT VESPERS

PSALM 131 OF THE PSALTER

King Salomon prays to God to come to dwell in the Temple which is prepared for him, and at the same time to perform the promises that David had received for the benefit of his descendants. It is believed that this psalm was chanted when Salomon had the Ark borne into the Temple which he had built.[13415]

2–5. **[131:2–5]** While the Ark was still under the tent, David made to God this vow, which he confirmed with an oath:[13416] I promise not to enter my house, nor to give myself any repose, until I have found a place for my Lord, which may be a dwelling worthy of the Lord.

6. **[131:6]** “*Eam.*” That is: The Ark.[13417]

7. **[131:7]** But now we shall enter with joy his own tabernacle, and we shall adore the Lord in this holy place where he has set his feet, that is, where he has begun to dwell.

8. **[131:8]** Arise, then, O Lord! and enter the place of Thy repose, with the Ark of Thy sanctification, that is, the Ark by which Thou hast been so glorified.

9. **[131:9]** May Thy priests be invested with justice, that is, with holiness, and all Thy holy ministers serve Thee with gladness.

10. **[131:10]** For the love of David, Thy beloved servant, reject not his Son who is Thy Christ.[13418]

12. **[131:12]** “*Testamentum.*” St. Jerome translates: *Pactum.* “*Testimonia mea.*” My precepts, tokens of my will.

13. **[131:12]** If their descendants shall do likewise, they in perpetuity shall sit upon this same throne of Thine.

15. **[131:14]** The Lord said: This is, etc.

16. **[131:15]** “*Viduam ejus benedicens benedicam.*” Here I will bless the widow by succoring her abundantly.

17. **[131:16]** I will vest with salvation, that is, I will sanctify her priests, and her ministers shall live in joy.

18. **[131:17]** Here I will cause the power of David to flourish; for I have prepared for him a lamp, that is, a brilliant posterity.

19. **[131:18]** *Sanctificatio mea.*” That is: The sacred crown by which I have sanctified him.[13419]

PSALM 132 OF THE PSALTER

The prophet exhorts all the ministers of the sanctuary to live together in peace, and to praise God with one accord by praying to him for the people.

1. **[132:1]** How useful and sweet it is for brethren to dwell together in perfect union!

2, 3. **[132:2, 3]** This union is like a perfumed ointment which, poured on the head of Aaron, flowed down by his beard even to the border of his vestment; it is also like the dew that falls down upon the mountains of Hermon and of Sion, and renders them so fertile.[13420]

4. **[132:3]** Because, where such a union reigns, God showers down blessings in abundance, and vouchsafes the joy of a life that is eternal.

PSALM 134 OF THE PSALTER

In this psalm the prophet exhorts the priests and the levites to praise the Lord for his power, which so greatly distinguishes him from the gods of the

Gentiles, and to render him thanks for the benefits that he has bestowed upon his people.

3. **[134:3]** “*Suave.*” It is sweet on account of the blessings that he pours on his creatures.

8. **[134:8]** He makes the winds issue forth from the places where he keeps them stored, as in a treasure-house, to use them when he pleases; he it is who in Egypt struck with death the first-born of men and of beasts.

14. **[134:14]** “*Judicabit.*” That is: With a just judgment he will punish the persecutors of his people. “*Deprecabitur*” Bellarmine says that this verb must be taken in a passive sense; that is: *Exorabitur.* In his mercy he will be moved by their prayers, and he will answer them.[13421]

15. **[134:15]** The true God is all-powerful; but these idols have no power.[13422]

17. **[134:17]** “*Neque enim est spiritus in ore ipsorum.*” That is: They have no breath; they did not show any sign of life.

19. **[134:19]** “*Domus Israel.*” The family or people of Israel.[13423]

21. **[134:21]** Blessed be the Lord who dwells in Jerusalem, and who pours forth his graces upon us from Mount Sion.

PSALM 135 OF THE PSALTER

The prophet exhorts the Israelites to thank the Lord for all the benefits that he has bestowed upon men, and especially upon the Jewish people.

1. **[135:1]** “*Confitemini.*” Render thanks to the Lord.

2. **[135:2]** “*Deo deorum.*” The true God of false gods.[13424]

25. **[135:25]** *Omni carni.*” All men and beasts.[13425]

PSALM 136 OF THE PSALTER

This psalm shows us the Jews, who, captives at Babylon, bewail their miseries and sigh for their return to Jerusalem. It is most suitable to the Christian soul that mourns in this exile here below and desires to go to its heavenly country.[13426]

1. **[136:1]** “*Sedimus*.” We sat down oppressed with sadness.

4. **[136:3]** They said to us: Sing us one of those hymns which you were used to sing on Mount Sion.

5. **[136:4]** But we answered: How, etc.

6. **[136:5]** If ever I forget thee, O Jerusalem! in this bondage where I now am, may my right hand become helpless.[13427]

7, 8. **[136:6]** May my tongue be dried up and cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I fail to be ever mindful of thee, O Jerusalem! if I do not make Jerusalem the beginning of all my joy, that is, if I ever give myself to joy while I am afar from my fatherland.

9, 10. **[136:7]** Bear in mind the barbarity which the Edomites showed on the day when they took Jerusalem, and said: Destroy it entirely.

FRIDAY AT VESPERS

PSALM 137 OF THE PSALTER

In this psalm David thanks God for having heard his prayers and for delivering him from the hands of his enemies.[13428]

1. **[137:1]** I will ever give thanks to Thee with my whole heart, because Thou hast graciously heard my prayers.

3. **[137:2]** I will praise Thy mercy and Thy faithfulness to Thy promises, because Thou hast made known how great above everything else is Thy holy name.[13429]

4. **[137:3]** Every time that I shall invoke Thee, hear me speedily by augmenting in me the strength that I need to be able always to serve Thee.

5. **[137:4]** "*Audierunt omnia verba oris tui.*" They have been instructed in all the words that Thou hast said, and Thou hast brought them to pass.

6. **[137:5]** Let them praise the ways pursued by the Lord; for very great is his glory in fulfilling all his divine counsels.

7. **[137:6]** Let them say that the Lord is high above all, and yet that he does not disdain to look with gracious favor on things that are mean and low, that is, on the humble; while he knows from afar off the things that are lofty, that is, he holds himself aloof from the proud, and despises them.

8. **[137:7]** If I find myself in the midst of tribulations, Thou wilt give me strength to bear them in peace; when my enemies advanced upon me in rage, Thou didst stretch forth Thy hand, and it saved me.

9. **[137:8]** “*Dominus retribuet pro me.*” The Lord will avenge himself on those that persecute me.

PSALM 138 OF THE PSALTER

The prophet shows here that the knowledge and the providence of God extend to all things. He seeks, moreover, to induce us to unite ourselves to the just, whom God enriches with blessings, and to detach ourselves from sinners, whom his justice constrains him to punish.

1. **[138:1]** “*Tu cognovisti sessionem meant et resurrectionem meam.*” Thou hast known perfectly the time when I should sit down and when I should rise up, that is, when I should take repose and when I should work; this taken in a moral sense may mean: the time when I should be humbled and when exalted. Bellarmine says that this verse may well be applied to Jesus Christ, speaking of his death and of his resurrection, as, indeed, the Church does apply it on Easter Sunday in the Introit.

2. **[138:3]** “*Semitam meam et funiculum meum.*” The path that I should follow, and the term at which I should arrive.[13430]

3. **[138:4]** Thou hast foreseen my ways, that is, my actions, before my tongue has uttered a word to reveal them.[13431]

4. **[138:5]** Thou hast known all things that concern me, whether old or new; for Thou hast formed me; Thou hast busied Thy hands to create me, and make me Thy servant.[13432]

5. **[138:6]** “*Ex me.*” A Hebraism, says Bellarmine, for *Super me*—Above, beyond me; this is explained by the following words: “*Confortatus est, et non potero ad eam.*” That is: Thy knowledge is too high for me to comprehend it.

6. **[138:7]** “*A spiritu tuo.*” That is: Away from Thy knowledge. “*A facie tua.*” Away from Thy gaze.

7, 8, 9. **[138:8, 9, 10]** That is: Thou art in every place through Thy immensity, and Thou exercisest everywhere Thy power. I shall be unable to free myself.[13433]

10. **[138:11]** St. Jerome translates this verse thus: *Si dixero: Forte tenebræ operient me; nox quoque lux erit circa me.* Hence the verse is thus explained: If I should say that perhaps darkness will hide me from Thy eyes, I should deceive myself; for night from Thy eyes is a light that surrounds me, and discovers to Thee all my actions. But we may also, as Bellarmine observes, explain the words of the Vulgate in this manner: If I should hide myself in the darkness of the night in order not to be seen, while indulging in pleasures so shameful as shun the light of day, still I could not for all that withdraw myself from Thy gaze.

12. **[138:13]** "*Renes meos.*" That is: The most inward parts of my body, and consequently my affections and my desires.

13. **[138:14]** O Lord! I will praise Thee always, because Thou hast made me know Thy greatness in a fearful manner, that is, Thou who commandest respect and a holy fear in Thy admirable works which my soul knows too well not to be greatly impressed.

14. **[138:15]** Of all that Thou hast in secret formed within me, that is, my bowels and bones, nothing is hidden before Thee; so that the whole substance of my body is known to Thee, as also whatever is hidden in the deepest bowels of the earth.

15. **[138:16]** Thy eyes have seen my imperfection, that is, my body, when it was shapeless, without distinction of members; for in Thy book, that is, in Thy mind, all men are found written, so that Thou knowest what is to become of them. The meaning is brought out better by what follows: "*Dies formabuntur, et nemo in eis.*" Menochius explains: Days shall succeed to days, and not one of them shall be missing in Thy book so as to escape Thy knowledge.[13434]

16. **[138:17]** “*Mihi.*” To my mind, according to my judgment. Thou honorest and Thou exaltest Thy enemies in calling them to enjoy eternal glory when they shall be made princes of the eternal kingdom.

17. **[138:18]** “*Exsurrexi.*” According to the Hebrew: *Evigilavi*—Have wakened from sleep. “*Adhuc sum tecum.*” That is: I am united with Thee up to the present moment, and I hope to continue thus united till the end.

18, 19. **[138:19, 20]** I know, on the other hand, that Thou wilt destroy the wicked, and I say to them: Men of blood, depart from me; for you say in your thought, that is, among yourselves: In vain, O Lord! will Thy servants occupy the cities that Thou hast given them.

22, 23. **[138:23, 24]** Prove me, and penetrate all the affections of my heart; interrogate me, that is, examine me and weigh all my ways, all my actions, and if Thou seest that I am in the way of iniquity, do Thou lead me into the eternal way, that is, make me walk by that way which will bring me to the possession of eternal good.[13435]

PSALM 139 OF THE PSALTER

David implores help from God against Saul, and against those that spoke calumniously of him to that prince.[13436]

5, 6. **[139:5, 6]** That is: They use every means in their power to make me fall into their hands.

8. **[139:8]** “*Obumbrasti.*” Thou hast extended Thy shadow, Thy protection.

9. **[139:9]** “*Ne tradas me . . . peccatori.*” Bellarmine renders these words thus: *Ne sinas me tradi . . . dæmoni*—Suffer me not to be given over to the devil. The verse, then, is explained as follows: Permit not that, drawn by my concupiscence, I give myself over into the hands of the enemy. These enemies have no other thought than to injure me; do not Thou abandon me lest they should boast of having conquered me.

10. **[139:10]** If Thou dost assist me, the whole force of their wiles with which they seek to circumvent me in various ways, and the evil they strive so hard to do me by their calumnies, all this will cover their own selves by falling back upon them.[13437]

11. **[139:11]** “*Carbones.*” Burning coals, that is, the afflictions that they devised for me. “*In miseriis non subsistent.*” Their miseries shall be such that they will not fail to be crushed by them.

12. **[139:12]** The man that makes an ill use of his tongue to lie, to detract, and to injure his neighbor; and the evils that shall afflict him, far from making him gain merit by patience, will only serve to sink him deeper in eternal death.

14. **[139:14]** “*Cum vultu tuo.*” That is: In that blessed kingdom where they shall see Thy beautiful face.

PSALM 140 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist implores the lord to protect him from his enemies; he also prays God to preserve him from such faults as may render his prayers useless.[13438]

2. **[140:2]** May my prayer ascend to Thee as the smoke of innocence rises in Thy sight; and when I lift my hands to Thee to implore Thy help may this be acceptable to Thee as the sacrifice that is offered to Thee at evening time.[13439]

3. **[140:3]** That is: Permit not that any inconsiderate word escape me that could cause Thee displeasure.

4, 5. **[140:4]** And if even through weakness I should offend Thee, suffer me not to speak maliciously by seeking to excuse my ins. This is what wicked men do; but I do not wish to have part with them, nor share in the disorders that are their chief delight.

6. **[140:5]** That is: I prefer the charitable corrections and reproaches of the just to the flatteries of the wicked.

7. **[140:5]** This verse is very obscure; according to St. John Chrysostom it is thus explained: I will not only have no communication with the wicked, but moreover my prayer to God is that he will not allow me to find delight in those things that please them; they will perish along with their judges, that is, their chiefs who lead them on to evil; these indeed have already perished by striking against the rock which has caused their wreck.

8. **[140:6]** This verse is also very obscure; it is thus explained: I hope nevertheless that they will hear my words; for they are such as will have power to make them repent, and as the hardened earth yields to the spade and is broken up, so their obstinacy will be broken and yield to my persuasions.

9. **[140:7]** Our bones have been scattered, that is, our strength is weakened, so that we find ourselves as it were on the brink of the grave; but, O Lord, my eyes turn to Thee; in Thee have I put my hopes, give me not up to death.

11. **[140:10]** The wicked ones shall be caught in the snares that they laid for me; for myself, I hope to be in a special manner protected by Thee until I am out of danger.[13440]

PSALM 141 OF THE PSALTER

According to interpreters, this psalm is the prayer that David, hiding in the cave of Odollam, addressed to God in order to be delivered from the imminent danger in which he found himself.[13441]

3. **[141:4]** Seeing that I have not the strength to resist my enemies, I have recourse to Thee, my God, who knowest how perilous are the ways that I have to tread.

5. **[141:5]** I turned to my right hand[13442] to see whether any one would help me; and I found not even one who seemed to know me.

6. **[141:5]** It is not permitted me to save myself even by flight, and there is no one to have a care of my life.

7. **[141:6]** “*Portio mea.*” My portion, that is, my inheritance, all my goods.

10. **[141:8]** Take me out of this prison, in order that I may be able to praise Thy name; the just await me, till Thou restore to me the freedom which I desire.

SATURDAY AT VESPERS

PSALM 143 OF THE PSALTER

David returns thanks to the Lord for his victory gained over Goliath, and for all the other benefits that he had received; he also begs him for strength to vanquish the Philistines.[13443]

5. **[143:4]** Man is not vanity, since he is Thy creature; but his littleness is such that he is like unto vanity; the days of his life pass by as a shadow.[13444]

6. **[143:5]** Come down to defend me from my enemies; place Thy powerful hand on these proud mountains, and they shall pass away in smoke.[13445]

8. **[143:7]** Stretch forth Thy hand from the height of heaven, save me, and deliver me from the hands of these foreign foes,[13446] who rush forward like a torrent of water to swallow me up.

9. **[143:8]** Their mouth utters words only of vanity and pride; and their hands work naught but iniquity.

10. **[143:9]** Save me, and I will celebrate Thy praises in thanksgiving.

18. **[143:15]** “*Beatus populus.*” Understood: As for us, we say: Blessed the people, etc.

PSALM 144 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist here exalts the perfection of God, and especially his goodness and mercy.[13447]

14. **[144:13]** “*Verbis.*” Words, or Promises.[13448]

15. **[144:14]** “*Allevat.*” According to the Hebrew: *Sustentat*—Sustains. Those that have fallen are never left without means on the part of God to raise themselves.

17. **[144:16]** “*Benedictione.*” That is: With Thy benefits.[13449]

18. **[144:17]** “*In omnibus viis tuis.*” In all the dispositions of his Providence.

19. **[144:18]** “*In veritate.*” That is: With confidence.[13450]

21. **[144:20]** “*Peccatores.*” Obstinate sinners.

PSALM 145 OF THE PSALTER

Addressing himself to the Jews, captives in Babylon, the psalmist exhorts them to hope only in God for their deliverance.[13451]

2. **[145:1]** Beware of putting your trust in the powerful of this world; they are but men, and therefore cannot give you the salvation that you expect.

3. **[145:4]** They are but men, I say; one day their spirit will go forth, and their body will return to the earth from which they were formed;[13452] then all their projects will come to an end.

5. **[145:7]** “*Qui custodit veritatem.*” The Lord our God is faithful in keeping his word, or his promises.

8. **[145:9]** “*Custodit advenas.*” He has care of strangers, who are far from their country. “*Vias.*” The designs, machinations, undertakings.

PSALM 146 OF THE PSALTER

Same subject as in the preceding psalm.[13453]

1. **[146:1]** Let all praise the Lord, because to praise him is good and profitable to ourselves; but see that your praises are acceptable to God and worthy of his majesty.

2. **[146:2]** The Lord will rebuild Jerusalem, and will reunite the people of Israel who are scattered among the nations.[13454]

3. **[146:3]** “*Contritos.*” That is: The afflicted.

4. **[146:4]** He knows the number of the stars, and he gives to all of them their names.

10. **[146:9]** “*Invocantibus eum.*” That by their cries seem to call upon him.[13455]

11. **[146:10]** He has no will to help the man that trusts to the strength or fleetness of his horse: nor him who glories and confides in the agility and speed of his legs.

PSALM 147 OF THE PSALTER

The prophet exhorts the people to thank the Lord for his benefits. This psalm regards the Jews now returned from captivity, in the sweet enjoyment of peace.[13456]

2. **[147:13]** “*Benedixit.*” That is: He has filled with good things.

4. **[147:15]** He sends his commands, and they arrive promptly.

5. **[147:16]** “*Dat nivem sicut lanam.*” That is: He showers down snow from heaven in such quantities to benefit the earth, that its flakes form as it were a quilt of wool. “*Nebulam.*” St. Jerome translates: *Pruinam*—Hoar-frost.

6. **[147:17]** Moreover, he covers the earth with ice as with pieces of crystal; how shall he that is exposed to so great cold be able to endure this? “*Ante faciem.*” A Hebraism, says Bellarmine, for *Coram,* that is, in its presence.

7. **[147:18]** Then the Lord will issue another command, and will cause the snow to melt by sending forth the South wind.

8, 9. **[147:19, 20]** “*Verbum suum . . . justitias et judicia sua.*” That is, his precepts, his holy law.

COMPLINE

PSALM 4 OF THE PSALTER

According to interpreters this psalm was composed by David, happy to see himself delivered from the hands of Saul, or of Absalom. In a mystical sense it is applied to Jesus Christ inasmuch as he is the end of the law and of the prophets.[13457]

1. **[4:2]** When I called upon my God, he heard me, he who is the defender of my innocence: Yea, Lord, when I was in tribulation, Thou didst enlarge my heart by Thy consolations.

2. **[4:2]** Continue, then, to have pity on me, and hearken to my prayers whenever I have recourse to Thee.

3. **[4:3]** “*Usquequo gravi corde?*” How long do you wish to have your heart thus heavy, that is, so bowed down to earth, and inclined to earthly passions? “*Vanitatem . . . mendacium.*” Vain and deceitful things, false goods.

4. **[4:4]** Know that the Lord has made his holy one admirable, that is, me his servant, whom he has sanctified as King and Prophet; he will, therefore, continue to hearken to me whenever I shall have recourse to him in prayer.

5. **[4:5]** If you become angry, take care not to commit sin, that is, be angry with a just anger, when the honor of God or your own duty require you to do so, and then do not be disturbed. St. Paul says: *Irascimini, et nolite peccare; sol non occidat super iracundiam vestram*—Be angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger (*Eph.* 4:26). And if your conscience reproaches you for having yielded to some fit of passion, then retire to your chambers at night, and ask God’s pardon with compunction.

“*Compungimini.*” According to the Chaldee: *Deum apud vos cogitate*—Think with yourselves on God.

6. **[4:6]** Offer to God the sacrifice of justice, that is, of a just life, and put all your trust in the Lord. “*Quis ostendit nobis bona?*” Interpreters refer these words to the followers of David, who, seeing themselves persecuted with him, said: When shall we recover peace? According to Bellarmine, we can explain them in two ways—either by supposing them as coming from the mouth of worldlings, who make but little account of heavenly goods, and say: Who has ever come back from the other world to tell us of these goods, which we do not see? Or else: What is this holiness, this justice, which you so much recommend to us? who will show us the way to acquire them?

7. **[4:7]** “*Signatum est.*” According to the Hebrew: *Eleva*—Lift up; or: *Elevatum est ut signum*—Is lifted up as a sign; which comes to the same thing. The sense, then, of the verse is Thou hast shown us the light of Thy face, that is, Thy goodness, and thereby Thou hast rejoiced my heart.[13458]

8. **[4:8]** That is: I behold my enemies multiplying with the good things that they enjoy.

9. **[4:9]** But for me, confiding in Thy goodness, I shall continue to sleep and to repose in peace.

10. **[4:10]** “*Singulariter.*” In a singular manner. According to the Greek: *Solitarie.* That is as much as to say: Thou takest care of me as if Thou hast none else than me to look after.

PSALM 30 OF THE PSALTER

Here the first six verses of the Psalm 30: *In te, Domine, speravi,* page 93, are read.

PSALM 90 OF THE PSALTER

The psalmist here exhorts those that have put all their hope in God to fear no danger. This psalm is somewhat in the form of a dialogue; for the psalmist, the just man, and God himself speak successively.[13459]

1. **[90:1]** He that lives in the confidence of the help[13460] of God shall be assured of his protection.

3. **[90:3]**[13461]“*Venantium.*” That is: Of enemies who sought to make me their prey. “*A verbo aspero.*” Some interpret this of every calamity; Bellarmine, with others, understands it of the condemnation of the reprobate, that is, of the sentence of eternal death.

4. **[90:4]** If thou trustest in the Lord, he will cover thee with his shoulders, that is, with his wings, and under the wings of his protection thou mayest hope to be sheltered from every danger.

5, 6. **[90:5, 6]** “*Veritas ejus.*” The faithfulness of his promises. “*A timore nocturno.*” Of the secret plots of thy enemies. “*A sagitta volante in die.*” Of arrows that shall be shot at thee unexpectedly during the day, that is, sudden and unforeseen dangers. *A negotio perambulante in tenebris.*” All hurtful things brought about by unknown causes. “*Ab incursu et dæmonio meridiano.*” Of any assault of the devil, made with open attack in the middle of the day. In a word, as St. Augustine says, if God protects thee, thou wilt not have to fear any evil planned against thee, by day or by night, in public or in private, whether on the part of men or of demons.

7. **[90:7]** Thou shalt see thy enemies fall around thee in great number, and they will not be able to hurt thee.[13462]

8. **[90:8]** With thy eyes thou shalt see the protection of God over thee, and the vengeance that he will take of thy unjust persecutors.

9. **[90:9]** And whereas thou hast trusted in the Lord, saying: O Lord, thou art my hope; thou hast procured for thyself a most high refuge, that is, one most safe, wherein thou hast nothing to fear.[13463]

10. **[90:10]** Know that here no evil shall happen to thee, and no scourge shall come nigh thy dwelling.

11, 12. **[90:11, 12]** For the Lord has commended thee to his angels, that they may guard thee in all thy ways: if even thou art in some perilous road, they will bear thee up in their hands, so that thy feet may not chance to stumble against any stone of scandal, that is, any dangerous occasion of sin.[13464]

13. **[90:13]** That is: Thou wilt have nothing to fear from evil encounters. In a spiritual sense, by the asp is understood the demon who inspires despair; by the basilisk, the demon who inspires presumption; by the lion, pride; and by the dragon, attachment to earthly goods.

14. **[90:14]** "*Cognovit.*" He has known and invoked.

16. **[90:16]** I will give him a long life, and will make him enjoy the health and salvation that I shall bestow upon him in this life, and eternal salvation which I reserve for him in the next.[13465]

PSALM 133 OF THE PSALTER

The prophet here exhorts the priests and levites to praise the Lord and to pray for the people.[13466]

4. **[133:3]** "*Te.*" This pronoun applies to the assembly of those whom the prophet exhorts to praise God. "*Ex Sion.*" From Mount Sion where he takes up his abode.

THE CANTICLE OF SIMEON

The holy old man Simeon intoned this canticle while he held in his arms the Infant Jesus whom the Blessed Virgin had brought into the Temple to present him to God.

1. **[2:29]** Now, dost Thou let Thy servant depart in peace from this life, according to Thy promise.[13467]

2. **[2:30]** “*Salutare tuum.*” The Saviour whom Thou hast sent.

3. **[2:31]** Whom Thou hast set forth in the sight of all the people.

PREACHING

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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The Centenary Edition

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

EDITED BY

REV. EUGENE GRIMM,

Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

THE ASCETICAL WORKS

Volume XV.

PREACHING.

LETTER TO A RELIGIOUS. LETTER TO A BISHOP. THE EXERCISES OF THE MISSIONS. INSTRUCTIONS ON THE COMMANDMENTS AND THE SACRAMENTS.

THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION

RNDE PATER:

Memoriam gloriosi Congregationis SS. Redemptoris Fundatoris, centesimo, ab ejus obitu, adventante anno, pio et admodum opportuno consilio recolere aggressus es, dum omnia ipsius opera anglice vertenda, et typis edenda curasti. Summus itaque Pontifex, cui tum S. Doctoris exaltatio, tum fidelium utilitas summopere cordi est libentissime excepit 9 volumina huc usque edita, quae Ei offerre voluisti. Ac dum meritas Tibi laudes de hac perutili tua cura praebet, et gratias de filiali oblatione agit, Benedictionem, quam tuis obsequentissimis litteris petiisti, Emi quoque archiepiscopi Baltimorensis commendationi obsecundans, ex intimo corde impertiit.

Haec ad Te deferens fausta cuncta ac felicia a Domino Tibi adprecor.

Paternitatis Tuae,

Addictissimus,

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.

Romae, die 4 Junii, 1888.

TRANSLATION.

Reverend Father:

As the centenary of the death of the illustrious Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer drew near, you conceived the pious and appropriate plan of shedding a new lustre on his memory by translating all his works into English and publishing them. The Holy Father, therefore, who has at heart the spiritual advancement of the faithful, as well as the exaltation of the holy Doctor, has most graciously accepted the nine volumes thus far published, which you wished to present to him. While bestowing upon you well-deserved praise for your useful labor, and thanking you for the gift inspired by your filial love, he gives you from his heart the blessing which you humbly asked for in your letter, complying also with the request of the Most Rev. Archbishop of Baltimore.

As the bearer of this, I wish you all happiness in the Lord.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.

Rome, June 4, 1888.

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APPROBATION.

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Nicholas Mauron, Superior-General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled “Preaching,” which is Volume XV. of the new and complete edition in English of the works of St. Alphonsus de Liguori, called “The Centenary Edition.”

Elias Fred. Schauer,

Sup. Prov. Baltimoresis.

Baltimore, MD., May 12, 1889.

CONTENTS

INDEX

PREACHING

- CONTENTS
- Preaching
  - NOTICE
  - A Letter TO A RELIGIOUS
  - Refutation OF A FRENCH BOOK ENTITLED “ON PREACHING, BY THE AUTHOR OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL DICTIONARY.”
    - 1. EXPOSITION OF THE AUTHOR’S IDEAS
    - 2. REFUTATION
  - A LETTER
- The Exercises of the Missions
  - INTRODUCTION
  - THE EXERCISES OF THE MISSIONS
  - *Chapter I* EXHORTATIONS (SENTIMENTI)
    - I. THE EXHORTATION OF THE EVENING.
    - II. THE EXHORTATION GIVEN DURING THE DAY
    - III. EXHORTATION OF THE DISCIPLINE.
    - IV. THE EXHORTATION OF PEACE
  - *Chapter II* THE ROSARY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN
    - I. NARRATION
    - II. THE MYSTERIES

Chapter III
PREPARATORY ACTS FOR THE CONFESSION OF CHILDREN

Chapter IV
SOLILOQUIES FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Chapter V
THE LITTLE CATECHISM, OR THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE TAUGHT THE CHILDREN, AND THE LITTLE SERMON THAT IS PREACHED TO THEM AFTERWARDS

- I. THE METHOD TO BE FOLLOWED IN TEACHING CATECHISM
- II. WHAT SHOULD BE EXPLAINED TO THE CHILDREN DURING THE MISSION
- III. THE LITTLE SERMON, ADDRESSED TO THE CHILDREN, AFTER CATECHISM

Chapter VI
THE LARGE CATECHISM, OR Instruction FOR THE PEOPLE

Chapter VII
THE SERMON

- I. THE INVENTION, OR THE CHOICE OF MATERIALS FOR COMPOSING A SERMON
- II. THE DISPOSITION OF THE PARTS THAT BELONG TO THE SERMON
- III. ELOCUTION
- IV. MEMORY, PRONUNCIATION, AND GESTURE
- V. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS IN REGARD TO MISSION SERMONS
- VI. THE EXERCISE OF THE DEVOUT LIFE
- VII. THE LAST SERMON, ON PERSEVERANCE, WITH THE PAPAL BLESSING
- VIII. OTHER REMARKS REGARDING THE SERMON

Chapter VIII
OTHER EXERCISES THAT TAKE PLACE DURING THE MISSION

- I. THE MORNING MEDITATION
- II. THE DISCOURSE FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE CONFRATERNITY
- III. THE DISCOURSE TO MAIDENS

Chapter IX
EXERCISES OF PIETY WHICH ARE RECOMMENDED TO BE PERFORMED AFTER

THE MISSION

I. EXERCISES TO BE PERFORMED BY THE PEOPLE

II. THE EXERCISES THAT ARE TO BE RECOMMENDED TO THE PRIESTS

Chapter X
GENERAL REMARKS ABOUT THE GIVING OF MISSIONS

Chapter XI
THE DUTIES OF THE SUPERIOR OF THE MISSION

Chapter XII
VIRTUES THAT THE MISSIONARIES SHOULD ESPECIALLY PRACTISE DURING THE MISSIONS

APPENDIX

I. LOVE FOR JESUS CRUCIFIED

II. DEVOTION TO THE MOTHER OF GOD

III. NECESSITY OF PRAYER IN ORDER TO SAVE OUR SOULS

IV. THE FLIGHT FROM DANGEROUS OCCASIONS

V. THE RUIN OF SOULS WHO THROUGH SHAME OMIT TO CONFESS THEIR SINS

PIOUS ACTS

METHOD OF GIVING MISSIONS.

1. THE BEGINNING OF THE MISSION

2. VARIOUS EXERCISES

3. RULES OF CONDUCT FOR THE FATHERS ON MISSIONS

TABLE OF MISSION SERMONS.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE MISSION

2. PERSEVERANCE IN CONVERSION

TABLE OF SERMONS TO BE PREACHED IN A RETREAT

Instructions for the People

HINTS TO THE CATECHIST IN ORDER TO MAKE HIS INSTRUCTIONS MORE PROFITABLE.

1. INTRODUCTION
2. THE EXPOSITION
3. THE MORAL
INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND ON THE SACRAMENTS
PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION
1. ORIGINAL SIN
2. ACTUAL SINS
3. CONCLUSION
PART I
Instructions on the Commandments
Chapter I
THE FIRST COMMANDMENT
I. FAITH
II. HOPE
III. CHARITY
IV. ACTS OF FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY
V. PRAYER
VI. CHARITY TO OUR NEIGHBOR.
VII. RELIGION
Chapter II
THE SECOND COMMANDMENT
I. BLASPHEMY
II. OATHS
III. THE VOW
Chapter III
THE THIRD COMMANDMENT
I. THE OBLIGATION OF ABSTAINING FROM SERVILE WORKS

II. THE OBLIGATION OF HEARING MASS

III. FASTING ON VIGILS AND DURING LENT

Chapter IV
THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

I. THE OBLIGATION OF CHILDREN TOWARDS THEIR PARENTS

II. OBLIGATION OF PARENTS TOWARDS THEIR CHILDREN

III. THE OBLIGATION OF MASTERS, SERVANTS, AND MARRIED PERSONS

Chapter V
THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

Chapter VI
THE SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS

Chapter VII
THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

I. ON THEFT

II. RESTITUTION

Chapter VIII
THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

PART II
Instructions on the Holy Sacraments

Chapter I
THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL

Chapter II
SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Chapter III
THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

Chapter IV
THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Chapter V
THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

I. EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

II. SORROW

III. PURPOSE OF SINNING NO MORE

IV. CONFESSION

V. THE PENANCE IMPOSED BY THE CONFESSOR

Chapter VI
EXTREME UNCTION, HOLY ORDERS, AND MATRIMONY

APPENDIX

Preaching

NOTICE

We have gathered in this volume all that has reference to the holy ministry of preaching, its importance, the good that it accomplishes, and the manner of exercising it, so that the greatest amount of fruit may be derived from it. In regard to the ministry of preaching, we must distinguish its three parts, namely: the first has for its object *PREACHING IN GENERAL,* its necessity from a point of view of divine Providence, and the manner in which one should preach in order to make preaching successful under all circumstances; the second regards the *MISSIONS,* their various exercises, and the means that one should employ to make them a success; the third is *INSTRUCTION,* or the Large Catechism, which one should use while giving it, and the best method that should be followed in order to interest, to enlighten, and to move others, either during the mission 0r at any other time.

We shall not fail to remark the persistency with which our holy Doctor recommends 0n every occasion natural simplicity of language, and reprobates every expression that savors of grandiloquence, studied eloquence, or any pretension to elegance. This is a rule that he rigorously imposed upon all those that lived under his authority; he himself always followed this rule, not only in his discourses, but also in all his writings.

St. Alphonsus, in preaching and in having others to preach in this manner, which is joined to the practice of all the virtues that make men truly apostolic, has effected and does not cease to effect through his children an immense deal of good. With feelings of gratitude to God, he thus congratulates himself in a circular addressed to the worthy companions of his labors, who had been formed after his school:

“My dearest Brothers in Jesus Christ: I he principal thing that I *recommend* to you is the love *of* Jesus Christ. Very much are we bound to love him. For this end he has chosen us from all eternity, and called us *into* his *Congregation,* there to love him, and to make others also love him.

What greater honor, what greater mark of love, could Jesus Christ have shown us? He has snatched us from the midst of the world, in order to draw us to his love, and that, during the pilgrimage of this life, by which we must pass into eternity, we might think of nothing but of pleasing him, and of bringing those crowds of people to love him who every year, by means of our ministry, abandon sin, and return to the grace of God. It is generally the case that when we begin a mission the greater number of the people of the place are at enmity with God, and deprived of his love; but five or six days have scarcely elapsed when, behold, numbers, as if roused from *a* deep sleep, begin to listen to the exhortations, the instructions, and the sermons; and when they see that God offers them his mercy, they begin to weep over their sins, and conceive the desire of being reconciled with him; the way of pardon is opened before them, and seeing it, they begin to abhor that manner of life which they had previously loved, a new light begins to shine upon them, and a peace hitherto unknown touches their hearts. Then they think of going to confession, to remove from their souls those vices which kept them separated from God; and whereas before a Mass of a quarter of an hour appeared to them too long, five decades of the Rosary too tedious, and a sermon of half an hour unendurable they now gladly hear a second and a third Mass, and they are sorry when the sermon, which has lasted an hour and a half, or perhaps two hours, is over. And of whom does the Lord make use, if not of us, to work so wondrous changes, and to bring the people to delight in those very things that before they despised? When the mission is over, we leave in the place two or three thousand persons who love Almighty God, who before were living at enmity with him, and who were not even thinking of recovering his grace."

And while, on the one hand, the holy Founder of an Order which is altogether apostolic has accomplished and is still accomplishing so much good by his word; on the other hand, by his admirable writings, which have raised him to the rank of Doctor of the universal Church, he does not cease to preach, every day, with the greatest fruit, to a countless number of souls in all parts of the world. ED.

St. ALPHONSUS published his LETTER TO A RELIGIOUS in 1761; as he was promoted to *the* episcopate only in the following year, the signature of bishop which we see at the end of the letter, was added after that period. It is a complete dissertation 0n the matter and the form required in pulpit oratory, for mission sermons, for sermons preached in Lent and on Sundays, for panegyrics, or simple instructions and catechetical instructions.

“He took care to send it,” says Tannoia (B. 2, ch. 50), “to the General Superiors of the religious Orders, and all admired the high degree of sacred eloquence that he possessed, as well as the zeal with which he tried to induce preachers, to preach Jesus Christ, and not to preach themselves.”

He also sent copies of this letter to a large number of bishops, and added to it a note, dated May 10, 1761, in which he thus expresses himself: “I feel great pain when I see so many poor ignorant people who listen to sermons, but derive very little fruit therefrom; and this because of preachers who use an elevated and a florid style, and disdain to lower themselves to break to them the bread of the divine word. It is this that has determined me to publish the present letter, which I have the honor to send to your Lordship. I beg you you to read it, and to have it afterwards read by the priests of the diocese who are engaged in preaching. I would also ask you to send it to the convents of religious priests, and to recommend it to the Superiors to have it read by those that preach. You would also do me a favor if you asked those to read the letter who come to preach the sermons during Advent and during Lent. It is true that the latter bring with them their sermons prepared; but who knows whether by reading it they would not correct themselves in the future, and think of the great account that those preachers will have to render to God who do not make themselves understood by poor ignorant people?” (Villecourt, 1. 6, p. 4, ch. 3, a. 8.)

All that we read above shows the importance that our illustrious Doctor attaches to this letter. ED.

A Letter TO A RELIGIOUS

IN WHICH HE TREATS OF THE ADVANTAGES OF PREACHING IN A SIMPLE AND APOSTOLIC MANNER, AND OF THE NECESSITY OF AVOIDING AN ELEVATED AND FLORID STYLE

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

I have received your esteemed letter, in which you say that what I have written in the *Selva*, or Collection of Materials,[13468] for the spiritual exercises of priests, on the style to be employed in sermons preached for congregations consisting both of the illiterate and the learned, has been criticised by a distinguished literary character. In the *Selva* I have asserted that the style of all sermons preached before the ignorant and the learned should be simple and popular. My critic, you say, maintains that, though sacred orators should preach in a clear and orderly manner, they should never condescend to speak in a popular style; because, according to him, such a style is unworthy of the dignity of the pulpit and degrading to the word of God. This proposition has astonished me; but, to speak with the sincerity of a friend, what you have added has scandalized me. The objections of my critic, you say, appear somewhat reasonable to you, because a sermon should have all the properties of a discourse, and it is admitted that one of the most essential is to delight the audience; and therefore, when the audience consists both of the ignorant and the learned, the sacred orator should not, by a low, popular style, disgust the latter, who are the respectable part of his hearers, but should speak in a manner calculated to please and delight them.

Now, to explain fully my sentiments on this point, which I shall show are the sentiments of all wise and pious men, and to answer every objection that can be proposed against my opinion, it will be necessary to repeat much of what has been already written in the Selva.

It cannot be doubted that by preaching the world has been converted from paganism to the faith of Jesus Christ. *How,* says the Apostle, *shall they hear* *without a preacher? Faith then cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*[13469] As the faith has been propagated, so it has been preserved by preaching, and so are Christians induced by preaching to live according to the maxims of the Gospel: for it is not enough for the faithful to know what they must do in order to be saved; it is, moreover, necessary for them, by hearing the word of God, to be reminded of the eternal truths and of their obligations, and also to adopt the means of obtaining eternal life. Hence St. Paul commanded Timothy continually to instruct and admonish the flock committed to his care: *Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine.*[13470] Hence also the Lord addressed the same command to the prophet Isaias: *Cry, cease not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew My people their wicked doings.*[13471] *A*nd again he said to Jeremias, *Behold I have given My words in thy mouth: Lo, I have set thee this day over the nations, and over kingdoms, to root up, and to destroy,* etc.[13472] Jesus Christ has imposed the same obligation on his apostles, and through them on all priests who are called to the office of preaching. *Going therefore, teach ye all nations: to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*[13473]

And if, through the fault of those who are bound to announce the divine word, a sinner perish, God will demand an account of his soul at their hands. *If, when I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, thou declare it not to him, nor speak to him, that he may be converted from his wicked way, and live, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand.*[13474]

But let us come to the point. My proposition is that, when the audience is composed of the learned and of the ignorant, the style of the sermon (I do not here speak of funeral orations or of panegyrics—of these I shall say something hereafter) should be simple and popular. This proposition is not mine only: it is that of the celebrated Louis Muratori, who is regarded as one of the first literary characters of the day. It cannot be said that such a man censured a lofty and polished style because he was but little acquainted with it: for the whole world knows that he was a man of great genius, and of extraordinary literary acquirements. In his golden book on *popular eloquence* which is in the hands of every one, he asserts, and proves most learnedly, the proposition that I have laid down.

But, to confirm my assertion, I shall take many reflections from other authors, and particularly from the holy Fathers; and I entreat you, and every one into whose hands this book shall fall, to read the whole of it; for it contains a great deal of matter most useful for those that are engaged in preaching, and that are desirous of gaining souls to Jesus Christ. St. Basil says: “The sacred school does not follow the precepts of the rhetoricians.”[13475] The saint does not mean to say that the sacred orator should not employ the art of rhetoric in his sermons, but that he should not imitate the empty eloquence of the ancient rhetoricians, who in their orations sought only their own glory. It is not denied that we should avail ourselves of the rules of rhetoric in all our sermons. But what, I ask, is the principal end that every preacher should propose to himself in using the art of oratory? Certainly he should have no other object in view than to persuade and to induce the people to practise what he preaches. Such is the doctrine of the learned Marquis Orsi, who, in a letter to Father Platina, says: “Let eloquence be employed to move rather than to delight; for to move is the same thing as to persuade, which is the only object of the art.” In his work on popular eloquence Muratori says that “rhetoric is necessary, not to fill sermons with flowers, but to teach the method of persuading and of moving.” I shall occasionally take passages from this book; because the opinions of so great a man cannot, like mine, be treated with contempt. In his life of the younger Father Segneri he says: “Good rhetoric is nothing else than a perfect imitation of the natural and popular method of reasoning with others, and of persuading, everything superfluous being removed. The more the reasoning of the sacred orator is natural and intelligible,—not to the few men of learning who may be present, but to the people to whom he speaks,—the more effective will be his eloquence.” Speaking of the style to be adopted by the preacher of the divine word, St. Augustine says: “Let him try as much as possible to be understood, and to be listened to with docility.”[13476] St. Thomas says, “that the preacher whose principal object is to show his eloquence, does not so much intend to induce the people to practise what he teaches, as to imitate himself in the elegance of his language.”[13477]

The language of sermons preached before mixed congregations should be so plain and simple that the audience may clearly understand all that is said, and may be moved to practise all that is taught. Hence the preacher should avoid two things: *loftiness of thought and superfluous elegance of language.*

With regard to the first, would to God that Superiors would imitate the example of St. Philip Neri. It is related in his life that he commanded those who gave instructions to the people to speak on subjects that are useful and popular, and never to enter into scholastic questions, or to seek after sublime conceptions. Hence when he heard the members of his Congregation introduce subjects that were too subtle or curious, he made them descend from the pulpit, even though they were in the middle of the sermon. Finally, he exhorted all to employ their eloquence in showing, in a plain and easy style, the beauty of virtue and the deformity of vice. Of some preachers we may say, with the prophet Isaias, *Who are these that fly as clouds?*[13478] And as lofty clouds seldom forebode rain, so, from the sermons of those that preach in a lofty style it cannot be hoped that the waters of salvation will ever flow. Hence the holy Council of Trent has commanded all parish priests to preach in a style accommodated to the capacity of their flock. “Archpriests, . . . either personally, or by others who are competent, shall feed the people committed to them with wholesome words, according to their own capacity.”[13479] Hence also the celebrated Muratori wisely observes, “The preacher must speak to the people in the language in which a man of learning would endeavor to persuade a peasant, and thus he will make an impression on the learned as well as on the ignorant.”

Except, says St. Paul, *you utter by the tongue plain speech, how shall it be known what is said? For you shall be speaking unto the air.*[13480] Hence, according to the Apostle, they that preach in language not easily understood by the people, only speak to the air. But, alas! how many preachers are there that labor hard, through a miserable desire of acquiring the praises of their hearers, to fill their sermons with sublime conceptions and subtle thoughts, unintelligible to the people, and recite their discourses in the tone and manner of a comedian? What fruit can such preachers expect from their instructions? Louis of Grenada says that the ruin of the w0rld is to be ascribed to this crying evil, that the greater number of preachers seek applause rather than the glory of God and the salvation of souls.[13481] Would to God it were not too true! And Father John d’Avila, in one of his letters, in which he describes the miseries and iniquities of the world, says: “There is no remedy for so great an evil, principally on account of the preachers, who are the medicine of these wounds; but such dangerous diseases are not cured by the soft lenitives of polished and delicate discourses—they require strokes of fire.” One would imagine that some of those lofty preachers study to make themselves unintelligible, or rather, as Muratori says, that they are ashamed to speak in language that all can understand. *The little ones,* says the prophet Jeremias, *have asked for bread, and there was no one to break it unto them.*[13482] In his comment on this passage, St. Bonaventure says,[13483] that the bread of the divine word is not to be divided in a manner calculated to indulge curiosity, but must be broken in small pieces on which the little ones may feast. What profit can the poor and illiterate derive from sublime conceptions, from irrelevant erudition, or from long descriptions of a tempest or of a pleasant garden, the study of which has cost the preacher a week’s labor, though the entire discourse does not last longer than a quarter of an hour?

And here let it be observed that lofty thoughts and ingenious reflections, or facts of a curious and distracting nature, though they may please the learned, still injure the effect of the sermon; for, as Muratori well observes, he that understands them dwells with delight on the sublimity of the thoughts or on the novelty of the facts, and does not attend to his own spiritual profit: thus the will is not affected, and no fruit is produced.

It was not in a lofty style that St. Paul preached to the Corinthians: And *I,* brethren, when I came to you, I came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of Christ; for I judged not myself to know *any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*[13484] I, brethren, in preaching to you, have not had recourse to sublime discourses, or to human wisdom: I have desired only to know Jesus Christ crucified, that is, that ail our hope and our salvation consists in imitating his sorrows and his ignominies. The sentiments of Natalis Alexander on this passage of St. Paul are worthy of attention: “It is not to be wondered at that most preachers derive no fruit, since they make their preaching consist in the artifice of secular eloquence, in measured periods, in excessive ornament of words and flights of human reason. They do not teach the Gospel, but their own inventions; they know not Jesus crucified, but rather propose to themselves the imitation of academic orators than that of the apostles and of apostolic men. Let the humility of the preacher accompany the simplicity of the sermon, of which Christian eloquence is not altogether deprived, which is adorned with a natural, not a counterfeit, beauty. Let him fear lest by his pride, and by the captivation of human glory and applause, and by the ostentation of eloquence he may hinder the work of God. The fewer, continues the learned author, the ornaments of secular eloquence the preacher employs, and the less his confidence in human means, the more fruitful will his sermons be in converting sinners."[13485]

The learned and celebrated missionary, Father Jerome Sparano, of the venerable Congregation of the Pious Workmen, used to compare those that preach in a lofty and florid style to artificial fireworks, which, while they last, make a great noise, but leave after them only a little smoke. St. Teresa[13486] then had just reason to say that the sacred orator who preaches himself does great injury to the Church. "The apostles," she would say, "though few, have converted the world; because they preached with simplicity and with the true spirit of God, and now so many preachers produce but little fruit." And why? "Because," says the saint, "the preachers of the present time have too much of human wisdom and human respect, and therefore few only of their hearers give up the habits of vice." St. Thomas of Villanova says: "Many preachers there are, but few that preach as they should."[13487] Philip Neri used to say: "Give me ten priests with the true spirit of the apostles, and I will convert the whole world."

By the mouth of the prophet Jeremias the Lord asks: *Why then is not the wound of the daughter of My people healed?*[13488] In his exposition of this passage St. Jerome answers: "Because there are not priests to apply the necessary remedy."[13489] Speaking of preachers who adulterate his word, the Lord says, in another place: *If they had stood in My counsel and had made My words known to My people, I should have turned them from their evil way and their wicked doings.*[13490] "They would," says Cardinal Hugo, commenting on this passage, "have made known My words, not their own." Preachers who speak not in simple language, preach not the word of God, but their own; and therefore, says the Lord, sinners remain in their wicked ways. O God! what an abuse is it to see sometimes religious, even of the reformed Orders, who, from their penitential garments, and from the appearance of their mortified lives, seem to breathe zeal and sanctity, and from whom the people expect to hear sentiments and words burning with divine love; what an abuse, I say, is it to see such religious ascend the pulpit, and deliver a discourse which is only a collection of ingenious thoughts, of descriptions, of antitheses and of other such trifles, of inflated language and rounded periods, which the hearers scarcely understand, and from which they derive no benefit! What a pity to see so many of the poor come to learn the means of saving their souls, and obliged, after listening to the preacher for more than an hour, to go away without having understood any part of the sermon! They return home as ignorant as before, and full of discontent at having spent so much time in attending to a discourse which they could not understand.

Those orators who preach themselves, and are not understood by their audience, sometimes say: “The people were all attentive to the discourse.” I also say that the people were attentive; they wished to understand the discourse, but have they understood it? Muratori says that he had seen the poor listen with open mouths to panegyrics, of which they scarcely understood a single word. Hence it happens, that, having found by experience that they do not understand the discourses preached in the Church, they become disgusted with religious discourses, they cease to attend to them, and thus become more and more obstinate in vice. Justly, then, has Father Gaspar Sanchez called those who do not preach in a simple style the greatest persecutors of the Church; for, in reality, there cannot be a greater persecution or evil that can befall the people than the adulteration of the word of God; for, when mixed up with flowers and trifles, it is either not understood, or is at least deprived of its efficacy; so that it cannot give to the people the light and help which they might receive from it.

Secondly, the preacher should employ *words that are in common use,* and should avoid those that are not understood by the illiterate. Preachers of long standing and of high character must be particularly careful to use language easily understood by the people; for, should they speak in a polished style, young preachers, being naturally desirous of applause, will study to imitate them. Thus the abuse will be more widely extended, and the poor will be deprived of the fruit of the word of God. St. Jerome compares vain preachers, who employ only sounding and polished words, to women who by their vain ornaments please men, but do not please God.[13491]

But Father Bandiera, in the preface of his *Gerotricameronce,* controverts the opinion of those who maintain that in sermons a selection of words, and careful attention to the collocation necessary for elegant diction, do not edify the people, but, on the contrary, destroy the simplicity suited to spiritual subjects, and take up the preacher’s time in the study of empty words. He asserts that ornaments of style throw a splendor round spiritual subjects, such as the maxims of faith, the beauty of virtue, and the deformity of vice. He says that the holy Fathers employed these ornaments, and that without their aid the word of God cannot be preached with dignity from the pulpit. He also adds, that some persons censure select language as unsuited and injurious to devotion, because they themselves have not a command of polished expression. To remove every erroneous impression that might be made on the minds of his readers I shall answer his arguments and refute his assertions.

First; I cannot conceive what could have induced Father Bandiera to give expression to so unreasonable sentiments in his preface; for in the body of his work he says that, when the greater part of the audience consists of the poor, the style of the sermon should be easy and simple, and that sometimes it should be low, when otherwise the hearers would not derive profit from the discourse. He also says that the style of academic discourses is very different from that of sermons. He adds that preachers who, in their instructions, should adopt the style of his own work, would act improperly. He then agrees in opinion with us, that, when the greater part of the audience is composed of the illiterate, the style of the sermon must, if the preacher wishes to produce fruit, be simple, and be accommodated to the capacity of the hearers. What, then, has induced him to assert that the dignity of the divine word, delivered from the pulpit, requires the ornaments of style, and that those ornaments give splendor to spiritual things; or that some writers, because they themselves have not a command of language, censure, as injurious to devotion, a nice selection of words?

Let us now come to the refutation of the assertions of Father Bandiera: his opinion should be received with caution, for, being an eminent professor of the Tuscan language, he may have been induced to adopt it by too great an attachment to eloquence of expression. He says that “it is necessary to give splendor to spiritual subjects.” Such is not the language of St. Ambrose. This Father says that Christian preaching stands not in need of the pomp or elegance of words, and that therefore ignorant fishermen were chosen by the Lord to preach the Gospel, and to sow the word of God pure and unadulterated.[13492]

Natalis Alexander answers Father Bandiera, and says that the word of God requires not affected and flowery ornaments, since it is adorned by the natural beauty which it contains in itself; and therefore the more simply it is expounded, the more luminous and splendid it appears. The words of the same author, which have been already quoted, are so appropriate, that I shall repeat them in this place: “Let the humility of the preacher accompany the simplicity of the sermon, of which Christian eloquence is not altogether deprived, which is adorned with a natural, not a counterfeit, beauty. . . . The fewer the ornaments of secular eloquence the preacher employs, and the less his confidence in human means, the more fruitful will his sermons be in converting sinners.”[13493] Thus the more purely and nakedly the word of God is preached, the more forcibly it strikes the hearts of the hearers; for, according to the Apostle, it is in itself living and effective; so that it is more piercing than a two-edged sword.[13494] And God himself, by the mouth of the prophet Jeremias, has declared that his word is a fire which inflames, and a hammer which breaks the rock in pieces—that is, the most hardened hearts: *Are not My words as a fire, saith the Lord: and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.*[13495]

Let us examine the sentiments of the author of the *Imperfect Work* on this subject. “The word of God,” he says, “though simple and popular, is in itself living, and gives life to those who hear it, because it contains in itself the truth of God, which persuades and moves the hearts of men; but human language, though polished and select, is, for want of God’s co-operation, dead, and therefore produces no fruit.”[13496] The learned Mansi says that when it is naked and divested of ornament the word of God strikes the heart, but adorned with flowers, it is like a sword within its scabbard—it cannot cut.[13497]

Father Bandiera asserts that the holy Fathers have in their writings employed the ornaments of style. In answer I say, that we have not heard the sermons of these Fathers, nor are we acquainted with their style of preaching. We only read their written discourses, and we know that sermons which were preached in a simple and popular style are usually polished before they are committed to writing or given to the public. This remark has been made by the celebrated Muratori. “It is,” he says, “true that St. Ambrose very frequently spoke in an abstruse manner; but we have not the sermons which he preached to the people.” He reduced to treatises the discourses delivered from the pulpit, and added to them various ornaments, so that the original form of his popular instructions has disappeared. But Muratori says that, in their sermons to the people, the most celebrated Fathers of the Church, namely, St. Basil, St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Gregory the Great, St. Maximus, and St. Gaudentius, preferred popular to sublime eloquence; and this is evident, as well from the sermons as from the other works of these saints. Let us hear how St. John Chrysostom speaks of sermons embellished with pompous words and well-turned periods: “We seek by those words and beautiful compositions to delight our neighbors. We try to be admired, but we are not anxious to heal the diseases of our neighbors.”[13498] And he adds, that the preacher who studies to delight others and to attract admiration by elegant compositions should be denominated “Miserable and unhappy traitor.”[13499] St. Augustine says: “We do not make use of high-sounding and poetical words of secular eloquence, but we preach Christ crucified.”[13500]

Father John d’Avila used to say, that every preacher should ascend the pulpit with a thirst for the salvation of souls, which would make him endeavor and hope, with the divine aid, to gain to God the souls of all his hearers. Hence St. Gregory says that the sacred orator should descend to the level and should accommodate his language to the weak understanding of the people.[13501] This is the doctrine of Muratori, who says that every one who preaches to the illiterate “ought to imagine that he is one of them, and that he wishes to teach and convince them of some truth.” And therefore he says he is bound to adopt the most popular and lowest kind of eloquence, and to proportion his language to their gross understandings, by speaking to them in a familiar manner, using short sentences, and sometimes even proposing questions and giving the answers. The merit of such sermons consists in employing the language and figures which usually make an impression in common conversation.

St. Gregory deemed it unworthy of a preacher of the Gospel to confine himself to the rules of grammar, and therefore he says that in his sermons he frequently exposed himself to the imputation of ignorance, by uttering even barbarisms.[13502] In his exposition of the words of David, *My bone is not hid from Thee, which Thou hast made in secret,*[13503] St. Augustine, knowing that the word *so* signified either the mouth or a bone, used the barbarous word *ossum* to express the meaning of the prophet; for he preferred to be censured by grammarians rather than to be unintelligible to the people.[13504]

Such was the contempt of the saints for elegance of style when they spoke to the people. In the fourth book on the *Christian Doctrine,* the same Father says that the preacher should not be the servant of his words, and thus expose himself to the danger of not being understood; but he should employ the language best calculated to convey his meaning and to persuade his hearers.[13505] It is in this manner, as the prophet says, “bread is broken to the little ones.” *The little ones have asked for bread, and there was none to break it unto them.*[13506] Hence the sermons of the missions and of the spiritual exercises produce so much fruit, because in them the bread of the divine word is minutely broken to the people.

I may be asked: Do you mean that all sermons should be composed in the same style as the sermons for the missions? In answer, I in the first place ask: What is understood by sermons for the missions? Is it a discourse composed of vulgar expressions, without order and without method? No: vulgar phrases are not necessary; they are not becoming even in familiar instructions, much less in sermons. Order is indispensable in all sermons. The art of oratory, and the occasional use of tropes and figures, are also necessary; and therefore you must have observed that, in the third part of the *Selva,*[13507] speaking of the style of preaching to be adopted in the missions, I have given a comprehensive abstract of rhetoric, for the instruction of the young men of our congregation. But the rules of rhetoric are, as Muratori says, suited even to popular eloquence, provided the preacher employ them, not to win applause, but to move his hearers to lead a Christian life. The art of oratory should, adds Muratori, be used, but only in such a way that it may not be perceived by the people.

There is no doubt that the sermons prepared for the missions should be more easy and simple, and less encumbered with Latin quotations, than other discourses. Some young missionaries fill their sermons with a confused medley of texts of Scripture, and long passages of the holy Fathers; but what profit can a poor illiterate peasant derive from so many Latin quotations, which he does not understand? Texts of Scripture serve to give authority to our instructions, but only when they are few, and explained in a manner proportioned to the capacity of our audience. One text well expounded, and accompanied with appropriate moral reflections, will be more profitable than many passages heaped together. An occasional passage from the holy Fathers is also very useful; but it should be short and forcible, and peculiarly applicable to the subject. Look at the sermons of that celebrated preacher, the Venerable Father Paul Segneri, and you will find that they contain few Latin passages, but a great many practical reflections and moral deductions.

The style to preaching in the missions must certainly be more simple and popular, that the poor may be persuaded and moved to virtue. The language should be plain and the periods concise, so that a person may understand any sentence without having heard or understood the preceding one, and that they who come to the church in the middle of the sermon may immediately understand what the preacher says. If the style of the sermon be close and connected, the illiterate, who have not heard the first period, will not understand the second, nor he third. Moreover, as Muratori well observes, in order to keep up the attention of the people it is necessary to make frequent use of the figure called *Antiphora,* by proposing questions and replying to them. With regard to the modulation of the voice, it is necessary to avoid the sonorous and inflated tones used in panegyric. We should also abstain from the violent efforts of the voice made by some missionaries, who expose themselves to the danger of bursting a bloodvessel, or at least of losing their voice, and at the same time disgust their audience. The best way to excite and fix the attention of the people is, to speak at one time in a loud, at another in a low, tone of voice, but without violent and sudden transitions; at one time to make a long exclamation, at another to pause and afterwards to begin with a sigh, etc. This variety of tone and manner keeps the audience always attentive.

The act of contrition is the most important part of sermons for the mission, and therefore in such sermons it should never be omitted; for little indeed would be the fruit of the sermon if the people are not excited to compunction, or not induced to resolve on a change of life. It is to effect this object that the act of contrition is proposed to them. It is even necessary to repeat several acts of sorrow, in order to move the people to contrition, not by loud exclamations, but by solid motives and reasons. In the purpose of amendment which accompanies the act of sorrow the preacher should recommend, in a particular manner, the people to avoid the occasions of sin, and to have recourse in their temptations to the assistance of Jesus and of Mary; and should therefore, at the end of the sermon, make them ask the divine Mother to obtain some favor for them, such as the pardon of sin, the gift of perseverance, and the like. These observations are particularly applicable to sermons for the missions; but I wished to insert them in this place, because they may be useful to some of those who are devoted to the missions.

Sermons for *Lent,* or for *Sundays,* should certainly differ somewhat from those that are prepared for the missions; but, where the audience consists of the ignorant and the learned, all sermons should, as Muratori says, be simple and popular, if the preacher wish to produce substantial fruit, and to induce the people to approach the tribunal of penance. I remember that when a celebrated missionary preached in Naples, in a simple and popular style, the churches were thronged, and the confessionals were surrounded by crowds, who, after the sermon, ran to confess their sins. Muratori says that in the small towns, and even in the churches of cities which are frequented by the common people, the preacher is obliged to adopt the most popular and even the lowest style, in order to accommodate himself to their gross understandings. I have seen a whole town sanctified by the Lenten sermons of those who addressed the people in simple and popular language.

Oh, what a pity to see so many Lenten sermons preached in the villages, and so little fruit! In the beginning of Lent the poor come to the sermons, but finding that they do not understand the preacher, and consequently derive no fruit from his instructions, they cease to frequent the church. I would entreat those who preach in the villages, that, if they will not consent to change the discourses which they have already composed in an elevated style, they will at least, towards the last weeks of Lent, after the people return from, give the spiritual exercises in the manner in which they are given during the missions. The laboring Poor cannot, particularly on working days, attend in the mornings at the hour at which the sermon is usually preached. I assure these preachers that they will reap more fruit from the spiritual exercises proposed in simple language, then from a hundred Lenten sermons. Some will excuse themselves from giving these exercises, saying that they are preachers, and not missionaries. Some are perhaps even ashamed to give these exercises in which a simple and popular style is indispensably necessary, lest their reputation might be injured, or lest they should be regarded as preachers of little note. But I am consoled by the conviction that not only priests, but also many religious, are accustomed during the Lent to give these exercises with so much advantage to the people.

Oh, what universal benefit would flow from the Sunday sermons if preachers always addressed the people in plain and simple language! At Naples the Holy Sacrament is exposed every day in several churches, in particularly in those in which the devotion of the Forty Hours is performed. These churches are frequented by great numbers of the faithful, but particularly of the poor. How great would be the fruit of the sermons preached in these churches if the sacred orators adopted a popular style, instructing the people in the practice of the different virtues, in the practical method of preparing for Communion, in the manner of visiting the Blessed Sacrament, of making mental prayer, of attending Mass, of meditating on the Passion of Jesus Christ, and of performing the other exercises of devotion? But are the discourses delivered in their churches of this description? No; the style is generally high and flowery, and therefore they are but little understood by the people. Father John d’Avila being once asked for a rule for preaching, answered, that the best rule for preaching well was to love Jesus Christ fervently. The answer was most just; for the preacher who loves Jesus Christ ascends the pulpit, not to gain applause, but to gain souls to Jesus Christ. St. Thomas of Villanova used to say that to pierce the heart of sinners, to effect their conversion, darts burning with divine love are necessary. But can darts of fire proceed from the frozen heart of the preacher who seeks by his preaching to acquire a great name?

Should we then conclude from this that whoever then preaches in a polished style does not love Jesus Christ? I do not mean to assert that; but I know well that the saints did not preach in that manner. In all the lives that I have read of holy missionaries I have not found any one of them commended because he preached in an elevated and ornate style; I find, on the contrary, those commended in a special manner who preached in a style simple and popular. Thus in truth did the holy apostle Paul teach us by his own example how to preach, saying: *My reasoning consists not in the embellishments of human eloquence, but in making the people comprehend sincerely the truths of religion.*[13508] "It was the task of the apostles," says Cornelius a Lapide, commenting on the text just cited, "to show how their spirit manifested the spirit of the divine mysteries so that others might receive the Holy Spirit through them."[13509]

It is said of St. Thomas of Aquin, by the author of his life, that "he accommodated himself to the capacity of his audience, lowering the wings of his genius, proposing simply such reflections as served to inflame the heart rather than feed the mind. For this purpose he used only such words as were most common and familiar, being accustomed to say: 'The language of the preacher should be so clear that the meanest capacity may understand it.'"[13510]

In the life of St. Vincent Ferrer we read that the saint composed his sermons, not on the model of discourses written in select and studied language, but at the foot of the crucifix; and from this source he derived his eloquence. P. Bartoli writes as follows, in his life of St. Ignatius of Loyola: "Where others seek to recommend the word of God by clothing it with ornaments, he, by divesting it of all such elegance, made it appear beautiful and grand; for his method was to reduce the arguments to a certain nudity which exhibited them in their true form and genuine character." And therefore the same P. Bartoli relates that the learned who heard him were wont to say: "That in his mouth the word of God had its true weight." The same practice was observed by St. Philip Neri, of whom I already mentioned, as it is written in his life, that he prescribed to the members of his Congregation, in preaching, to treat each subject in an easy and popular manner; and when they indulged in lofty and curious speculations he made them come down from the pulpit.

It is also mentioned of St. Francis de Sales, that when preaching he accommodated himself to the capacity of the rudest among his audience.

The incident is well known which occurred to the Bishop of Belley. This prelate being invited by the saint to preach, delivered a very elegant and florid discourse, so that he received the highest applause from his auditors; but St. Francis was silent, and the prelate, surprised at this, asked him at last how he liked the sermon, the saint replied: “You pleased all but one.” The Bishop of Belley was invited a second time to preach, but as he understood that his former discourse was not pleasing to the saint, because it was too highly embellished, he made the second quite simple and moral; and then St. Francis assured him that he was very much pleased with the second discourse. On another occasion he addressed to him the following words: “A sermon is excellent when the auditors retire from the church in silence, reflecting but not speaking; and instead of praising the preacher, think on the necessity they are under of amending their lives.” And as the saint thought, so did he practise. The author of his life states, that although he preached in Paris before an auditory composed of princes, bishops, and Cardinals, he always preached in a solid, simple manner, not seeking to acquire the character of an eloquent preacher, but to gain souls to God. In conformity with this, the same saint wrote from Paris to a religious of his Order in the following terms: “On the vigil of the Nativity I preached in presence of the Queen in the Church of the Capuchins; but I assure you I did not preach better before so many princes and princesses than I do in your poor little convent at Annecy.” But because the saint preached from the heart and to draw souls to God, although he preached without ornament, the fruit he produced was immense; wherefore Madame de Montpensier said, as we find it related in the life of the saint: “Others in their sermons fly, as it were, in the air; but the Bishop of Geneva descends to his prey, and this orator of holy love suddenly besieges the heart, and makes himself master of it.”

I shall relate in the sequel what the saint wrote in one of his letters, concerning the manner of preaching, and what he thought of those preachers who employ frivolous ornament in their discourses. It is mentioned in the life of St. Vincent de Paul that in his sermons he used not only a simple, but even an humble style. Above all, he required of his brethren that they should preach to the candidates for orders in a simple and familiar manner; because it is not, he said, pomp of expression that is conducive to the salvation of souls, but simplicity and humility, which dispose the heart to receive the grace of God. And for this purpose he was accustomed to adduce the example of Jesus Christ, who although he could have explained the mysteries of faith in a style proportioned to their sublimity, he being the wisdom of the eternal Father, nevertheless made use of familiar terms and similitudes, to accommodate himself to the capacity of the people, and to leave to us the true model of explaining the word of God. Of St. Francis Regis it is likewise written in his life, “that he explained the truths of faith with such clearness and simplicity, that he made himself intelligible to the meanest capacity.”

The case of Father Tauler, the Dominican, is also well known. He preached at first in a very lofty style, but being afterwards led to embrace a more perfect life, by means of a poor man who was sent him by God as his spiritual guide, he ceased to preach for many years; but the poor man having enjoined him to resume this function, he changed his style of preaching from the sublime to the popular; and we are told that in the first sermon he preached the compunction of the people was such that several swooned away in the church. We are told of Father John d’Avila, that in his sermons he used such familiar language that by some he was considered to be an ignorant person; so that once a certain individual, who was a man of letters, but of depraved morals, said to his companion, 0n an occasion when Father d’Avila was to preach, “Come, let us go hear this ignoramus;” but during the sermon he was struck by the grace of God and he totally reformed his life. Now let us hear the sentiments of this great servant of God. According to the author of his life, he said: “If the preacher does not faithfully fulfil his office, if he is attentive rather to gratify the taste of his auditors than touch their hearts, and seeks for fine words rather than the conversion of souls; in fine, if by loftiness of thought he preaches himself rather than Jesus Christ, he stands in imminent danger of eternal ruin; he frightfully abuses and betrays the commission confided to him.” The same we find written in the life of Father Louis Lanusa, and of Father Paul Segneri, junior, and of other servants of God, particular mention of whom for brevity’s sake I omit.

Hence we see the account that these preachers will have to render to God, who preach themselves and not Jesus Christ, as well as the Superiors who allow them to preach in this manner. For myself, once hearing a young man of our Congregation preaching in a grand and elevated style, I made him leave the pulpit in the middle of his discourse. But let them not entertain a doubt that, if they are not corrected by their Superiors, they will be assuredly chastised by God; for the preacher is bound to promote the good of each person who hears him, as in the pulpit he fulfils the office of ambassador of Jesus Christ, as the Apostle affirms of all priests: *He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, . . . He hath placed in us the word of reconciliation. . . . For Christ therefore we are ambassador, God as it were exhorting by us.*[13511] The preacher then occupies in the pulpit the place of Jesus Christ, and speaks on the part of Jesus Christ to sinners who hear him, in order that they may return into favor with God. Now if a king, as Father John d'Avila observes in one of his letters, commissioned one of his subjects to negotiate a marriage with a lady on his behalf, and the ambassador concluded it for himself, would not such a man be a traitor? And such exactly, said Father d'Avila, is the preacher who, commissioned by God to effect the conversion of sinners, studies to procure glory for himself, and thus renders the divine word useless, by adulterating it so that it produces no fruit. And thus does St. John Chrysostom also denominate every preacher who preaches from vanity—"A miserable and unhappy traitor."[13512]

The embellishment of a sermon with lofty sentiments and elaborate expression, to gain a character for one's self, is precisely that adulteration of the word of God which the Apostle avoided; as he writes to the Corinthians: *For we are not as many, adulterating the word of God, but with sincerity, but as from God, before God, in Christ we speak.*[13513] On which words St. Gregory observes, that adulterers are not desirous to have children: on the contrary, they abhor them; they propose to themselves nothing else but the gratification of their unlawful passions: such are those who do not preach to gain souls, but to acquire a name and reputation.[13514]

But let preachers tremble lest God should cut them off, as he threatens by the prophet Jeremias: *Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, who steal my words every one from his neighbor.*[13515] Who are they who unjustly employ the divine word? They are precisely those who make use of it only to acquire the name of great orators, robbing God of his glory to transfer it to themselves. St. Francis de Sales said that the preacher whose discourses abound in foliage, that is, curious thoughts and elegant expressions, is in danger of being cut down and consigned to the fire, like to the unfruitful tree in the Gospel; whilst our Lord said to his disciples, and through them to all priests, that he had chosen them to bring forth fruit—lasting fruit. Hence Cornelius a Lapide, speaking of such orators, hesitates not to assert that they sin mortally, both because they pervert the office of preaching to their own exaltation, and also because by preaching in a lofty and elegant style they oppose an obstacle to the salvation of so many souls that would be converted if they preached in an apostolic manner.[13516] The same was said by Father John d'Avila, as we have remarked above: "If the preacher do not faithfully fulfil his office," etc.

Nor does it avail such a person to say: What I principally propose is the glory of God. He who makes use of lofty and uncommon language, so as not to be understood by all, opposes an obstacle to the glory of God, by preventing the conversion of many who hear him, since, as Muratori well remarks, whoever preaches is bound to procure the salvation of each individual, be he learned or ignorant, as if there were no other who heard him. And if any one of them be not converted, because he could not comprehend what was said, the preacher will have to render an account, as God himself declared by the mouth of Ezechiel (this all preachers are sufficiently aware of, but in practice they attend but little to it; hence I repeat it here): *If when I say to the wicked: Thou shalt surely die; thou declare it not to him, . . . the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand.*[13517] And undoubtedly it is the same not to preach the word of God, as to adulterate it by a florid style, so that it does not produce the fruit that it certainly would if it were expounded in a clear and simple manner. St. Bernard says that on the day of judgment those poor ignorant persons will appear to arraign those preachers who have lived on their bounty, but have neglected to heal, as they ought, the diseases of their souls.[13518]

We should be persuaded that when the word of God is adulterated by studied elegance of expression it becomes feeble and enervated, so as not to be of any service either to the learned or unlearned. I do not assert this of myself: it is stated by St. Prosper, or, if you will, another ancient author who goes under his name.[13519] And this sentiment he borrowed from St. Paul, who writes as follows: *Christ sent me . . . to preach the Gospel, not in* *wisdom of speech, lest the cross of Christ should be made void.*[13520] On which text St. John Chrysostom observes: “Some devote themselves to external wisdom: the Apostle shows that this wisdom does not only aid the cross, but it even annihilates it.”[13521] Lofty conceptions, then, and elaborate expression in sermons hinder and, as it were, annihilate the spiritual profit of souls, which is the fruit of the redemption of Jesus Christ. Hence St. Augustine said: “I should not presume to employ wisdom of speech, lest the cross of Christ become enervated; satisfied with the authority of the divine word, I would rather serve the simplicity of the Gospel than vanity.”[13522]

St. Thomas of Villanova inveighs against those hearers who, whilst their souls are lost in sin, go in quest of flowery discourses. “O fool,” he says, “thy house is burning, and thou expectest artificial discourse!”[13523] But this reproof is better directed to those preachers who address a congregation of which probably there are many in a state of sin: these miserable souls require rather the thunder and lightning which would arouse them from their lethargy, and strike them with terror, and for this purpose are required words not borrowed from the academy, but springing from the heart and from a true zeal and desire to rescue them from the hands of the enemy, and yet we would amuse them with polished phrases and sounding periods. If a house were on fire, what folly would it be, says Father Mansi,[13524] to attempt to extinguish it with a little rose-water. Thus, when I hear any one praised who preaches with studied elegance, and hear it said that his sermons have produced great fruit, I smile, and say: It is impossible; and why? because I know that God does not lend his co-operation to such preaching. *My preaching*, says the Apostle, *was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in shewing of the spirit and power.*[13525] “To what purpose, says Origen, commenting on the text cited above, ‘‘does all our eloquence serve if it be not animated by the spirit and virtue of divine grace?[13526] The Lord lends his aid to him who preaches his word in a plain and simple manner, without vanity, imparting a force and power to his language that moves the hearts of all who hear him. But this efficacy he does not communicate to studied and polished expression. The diction that is refined and adorned according to the dictates of human wisdom, says the Apostle, as we have before observed, enervates the divine word, and destroys the profit which might be expected from it.

Oh, what a fearful account will those priests have to render to God who preach through vanity! St. Bridget[13527] saw the soul of a preacher, who was a religious, condemned to hell for having preached in this spirit; and the Lord said to the saint that he does not speak by vain preachers, but rather the devil. In discoursing one day with that great missionary, Father Sparano, mentioned above, he related to me an awful occurrence. He told me that a certain priest who preached in a polished style, being at the point of death, and feeling a great aridity and indisposition to conceive a hearty sorrow for his sins, almost despaired of his salvation; and then the Lord spoke to him from a crucifix near him, in a voice which was also heard by all present: “I give you that compunction which you excited in the hearts of others when you preached.” But more terrible is the circumstance related by Father Cajetan Mary de Bergamo, a Capuchin, in his book entitled *The Aposlolic Man in the Pulpit.* This author relates that a preacher, then a Capuchin, related to him the following occurrence, which happened to himself a few years before. He being a young man and accomplished in polite literature, had already begun to preach in the cathedral at Brescia; but when preaching there a second time, after an interval of some years, he was observed to preach quite in an apostolic manner. Being afterwards asked why he had thus changed his style of preaching, he replied: “I knew a celebrated preacher, a religious, a friend of mine, and who, like me, preached in a spirit of vanity; when he was at the point of death it was found impossible to induce him to make his confession. I went to see him, and spoke to him strongly; but he looked at me steadfastly without making a reply. In the mean time the Superior conceived the idea of bringing to him in his cell the Blessed Eucharist, in order to move him by this means to receive the sacraments. The most Holy Eucharist was brought, and those who were present said to him: ‘Behold, Jesus Christ is come to grant you pardon.’ But the sick man began to exclaim in a voice of despair: ‘This is the God whose holy word I have betrayed.’ We all then commenced to pray to the Lord that he would have compassion 0n him, or to exhort him to confide in the divine mercy; but he in a louder voice exclaimed: ‘This is the God whose holy word I have betrayed;’ and then added: ‘There is n0 more mercy for me.’ We continued to suggest to him sentiments of confidence, when a third time he cried out: ‘This is the God whose holy word I have betrayed;’ and then he said, ‘By the just judgment of God I am condemned,’ and suddenly expired. And this is the reason, observed this Father, why I have so much reformed my manner of preaching.”

Wh0 knows but some one will smile at those facts, and the whole of my letter; but such a one I shall expect to meet before the tribunal of Jesus Christ. Besides, I do not intend that at all times and before all sorts of persons the same style of expression should be used. When the audience is composed entirely of priests or educated persons, the preacher should make use of more select language; but his discourse should be always simple and familiar, as if he were discoursing in familiar conversation with the learned, and not decorated with lofty ideas and elaborate expressions; otherwise, the more florid the discourse, the less will be the fruit derived from it,” says St. Ambrose.[13528] The pomp and luxury which appear in the flowers of eloquence make it useless for the production of fruit. St. Augustine said that the preacher who seeks to please his auditors by an ornamental style is not an apostle that converts, but an orator that deludes; whence it may be said of his hearers what is said of the Jews, who, hearing Jesus Christ, admired his doctrine, but were not converted.[13529] They will exclaim, “He spoke extremely well;” but they will have derived no profit whatever from the discourse. St. Jerome wrote to his friend Nepotianus that in preaching he should endeavor to elicit tears rather than applause from his auditory.[13530] St. Francis de Sales expresses the same idea in a more emphatic manner in a letter to an ecclesiastic: “In leaving the church I would not wish it should be said, O how great an orator! he has a prodigious memory; he is very learned; he spoke admirably: but I would wish to hear the hearers say, How beautiful, how necessary is penance! My God, how good, how just Thou art! and the like: or that the words of the preacher having made a breach in the hearts of the hearers, they were unable to render any testimony in favor of their merit but the amendment of their lives.”[13531]

Perhaps the preacher who studies to speak elegantly may entertain a hope that he will obtain universal applause: let him divest himself of this persuasion. Many will praise, many will criticise him; some will offer one opinion, some another. And such is the folly of those orators who preach themselves and not Jesus Christ that, with all their efforts to obtain a vain appplause, they do not, notwithstanding, obtain it from all; whilst, on the other hand, he who preaches Christ crucified always secures the fruit of his discourse, as by it he pleases God, which should be the only end of all our actions. Hence generally a simple and familiar style of preaching, as Muratori remarks, “will please and delight even persons of cultivated understandings; for, when the preacher speaks in a lofty and florid style, the hearer then is satisfied with relishing and admiring his genius, and pays little or no attention to his own spiritual profit; on the other hand, even the learned commend a preacher who, with a view to benefit all, breaks for them that spiritual bread—the word of God. They will not praise his genius, but his fervor; by which, without making a display of talent, he proposes solely to serve the souls of his hearers—this is the true glory to which the sacred orator ought to aspire. Moreover, the learned who desire to derive fruit from the sermon seek not him who enlightens their minds, but him who heals their souls; and on this account both learned and unlearned crowd to hear him who preaches in a popular manner, because every one finds there the spiritual nourishment that is necessary for him.”

Seneca says that the sick man does not seek for the physician who speaks well, but who will cure him. To what purpose does it serve, he says, for you to entertain me with fine words when I stand in need of the cautery and the knife to cure me.[13532] Wherefore St. Bernard says: “I like to hear the voice of that teacher who seeks to gain of me, not applause, but tears.”[13533] I recollect that the renowned D. Nicholas Capasso, a man so distinguished for learning, went every day to hear the Canon Gizzio whilst he was giving the spiritual exercises to the members of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost; he said that he went to hear that servant of God because he preached the word of God in an apostolic manner, and without studied elegance. Oh how does the pure and simple word of God please even the learned! Muratori relates in the life of Paul Segneri the younger, which he wrote, that, although he preached in a familiar and popular style, he delighted all so much that he touched the hearts even of the most enlightened among his audience.

In like manner, in the life[13534] of St. John Francis Regis I find the following passage: “His discourses were simple: he preached only to instruct the people; and, notwithstanding, the gentry as well as seculars and clergy of the town of Puy crowded to his catechetical discourses so eagerly that for two or three hours before he began every place was occupied; and it was the common saying of the inhabitants of Puy that they admired more his holy simplicity than the studied elegance of the most distinguished preachers. He, they observed, preaches Jesus Christ and the divine word as it really is; while the others come here to preach themselves, and, instead of the divine word, display their own eloquence, which is altogether human." And the following fact, which is afterwards mentioned, is remarkable: There was a certain preacher who gave a series of instructions in the cathedral during the same Lent in which the saint was giving a mission. Being astonished how it was that the people left him to go hear an ignorant priest, as he considered St. Francis compared with himself, he went to find the Provincial, who at that time was making his visitation, and said to him that Father Regis was indeed a saint, but that his manner of preaching was not suitable to the dignity of the pulpit, and that the meanness of his style and the trivial things he said dishonored his ministry. The Provincial replied: "Let us both, before we condemn him, go and hear him." The Provincial was so much affected with the force and unction with which he explained the evangelical truths, that during the entire discourse he was shedding copious tears; then, on leaving the church, turning to his companion, he said, "Ah, my Father, would to God that all sacred orators preached in that manner! Let us allow him to preach with his own apostolic simplicity—the finger of God is there." The same preacher, says the writer of his life, was touched with such compunction in hearing the discourse, that instead of censuring him, as he had proposed, he even praised him as he deserved.

Let us now say something of panegyrics, as we promised. Why, I ask, do panegyrics, as they are composed nowadays, produce no fruit? How fruitful would they be were they delivered with simplicity, detailing with devout reflections the virtues of the saints; thus would the people be moved to imitate their example. This undoubtedly is the object of panegyrics, and hence the masters of the spiritual life recommend strongly the reading of the lives of the saints. Therefore St. Philip Neri, as the writer of his life relates, recommended the members of his Congregation to adduce, in preaching, some example from the life of a saint, in order that the doctrine might be more firmly impressed on the minds of the hearers; but he wished that such facts should be mentioned as would move the auditors to compunction rather than excite their wonder. Father John Dielegis, who wrote on the manner of composing panegyrics, says that panegyrics do not produce fruit through the fault of the auditors who come to hear the discourse, not to derive any benefit from it, but to listen to exquisite thoughts and an elegant discourse; but he would have said with more truth, that the fault is generally imputable to orators who fill their discourses with conceits and affected language, for the purpose of obtaining empty praise, when their only object should be, as the same author observes, to move their hearers to the imitation of the virtues of the saints of whom they speak. But let us hear what Muratori says on modern panegyrics. In his work already cited, *On Modern Eloquence,* in the 13th chapter, he writes thus: "Why do sacred orators for the most part heap together gems and flowers, and make a parade of their eloquence? The end of panegyrics is to lead the auditory, by such examples, to the practice of virtue; but few indeed think of this. Good God! how many extravagant hyperboles! how many fantastic ideas! in a word, how many silly conceits!"

And in truth, what fruit can be derived from the panegyrics of certain learned preachers, who fill them with flowers, subtleties, ingenious thoughts, curious descriptions, high-sounding words, unintelligible to persons of ordinary capacity, rounded periods, so long that, to comprehend their meaning, even the learned require to exert all the powers of their minds, so that they nearly resemble academical discourses, in which his own glory is the only object of the speaker. O God! what a disorder to see a minister of Jesus Christ expend uselessly many months and much labor (one of this class of preachers, who is now in eternity, said, that to compose a panegyric he required at least six months), and for what purpose?—to round periods, and heap together figures and flowers. And what profit does the orator derive from this either for himself or for others? For himself, nothing but a little smoke; and as for the hearers, they derive from it nothing, or almost nothing, because either they do not understand it, or, it they do, their attention is distracted by those sounding words and ingenious thoughts; and thus they lose their time. It has been related to me by several persons deserving of credit, that the preacher mentioned above, who said that to compose one panegyric he required six months, being at the point of death, gave directions that all his manuscripts should be burned. I was moreover assured that this same person, being once complimented by others for his panegyrics, was much troubled, and replied: “Alas! these discourses will be one day my condemnation.”

Muratori, in a work entitled *Christian Charity,* writes as follows: “Oh, why have we so many panegyrics, which invariably terminate in a vain display of talent and ingenious subtleties, devised by volatile imaginations, unintelligible to the people?” And then he adds: “Let a panegyric, if intended to be useful, be composed in that popular and intelligible style of eloquence which instructs and moves the ignorant no less than the learned; but this is oftentimes not understood by him who fancies himself more learned than others.” Oh! that these frothy panegyrics were abolished in the Church, and that these discourses were composed in a simple and familiar manner, as this writer says, who was eminent at once for piety and learning.

But, before I conclude, it is necessary that I should reply to the observation which your letter contains—that to entertain is one of the principal objects of the orator, and therefore, when persons of education assist at a sermon, the preacher should speak in a polished and ornamental style in order to please them.

Reverend Father, I will not reply to you: St. Francis de Sales answers for me, who, in the letter already cited, which he addresses to an ecclesiastic on the manner of preaching, in confirmation of all we have advanced above in the fifth chapter, writes as follows: “Lengthened periods, polished language, studied gesture, and the like, are the bane of preaching. The most useful and elegant artifice is, to employ none. Our words should be inflamed by an interior charity, and should come from the heart rather than the mouth: the heart speaks to the heart; the tongue speaks but to the ear. The texture of the discourse should be natural, without vain ornament, without affected expression. Our forefathers, and all those whose preaching has brought forth fruit, have abstained from speaking with too much elegance, and from using the ornaments of worldly eloquence, because they spoke from the heart, as good parents do to their children. The object of the preacher is to convert sinners and to make the just perfect; whence, ascending the pulpit, he should say in his heart: *Ego veni ut isti vitam habeant et abundantius habeant.*”[13535] Then the saint, speaking of the pleasure the preacher should afford, uses the following words: “I know that many say the preacher should delight; but as for me, I distinguish, and say, that there is a pleasure consequent on the doctrine which is preached and the impression made upon the hearers; for what soul is so insensible as not to feel extreme pleasure in learning the way to heaven; how to gain Paradise; in comprehending the love which God bears us? And, in order to impart this pleasure, all diligence should be used to instruct and to move. But there is another sort of pleasure which oftentimes is an obstacle to instruction and to persuasion—a tickling of the ear by a profane elegance of language and a certain balancing of words, which is altogether artificial. And as to this, I say without hesitation, that a preacher should not make use of it, because it belongs to profane orators; and whosoever preaches in this manner preaches not Christ crucified, but himself. St. Paul detests preachers who are *prurientes auribus*, and consequently such as are solicitous to please their hearers.[13536] So far the saint: and let it be observed, that the writings of this saint are, in a special manner, approved and adopted by the Church, which prays that by their guidance we may arrive at eternal happiness.[13537] Such is the prayer we recite in the Office of the saint.

In conformity with this, the learned theologian Habert, speaking of the style which the ministers of the Gospel should adopt in preaching, says that the preacher then should endeavor to please, by a style clear, easy, and accommodated to the capacity of each of his auditors.[13538] Then the audience will be gratified, as St. Francis de Sales observes, by understanding the eternal truths, the maxims of the Gospel, and by knowing what they have to do, or to avoid, in order to be saved; they will be pleased whilst they feel themselves touched with compunction, animated with confidence, and inflamed with the love of God.

St. Augustine says that if the pleasures of sense delight, much more delightful is the knowledge of the truth; and hence, he adds, there is nothing which the soul so ardently desires as to know the truth.[13539] Agreeably to this, St. Francis observes, in his treatise on the love of God: “Truth is the object of the understanding, and hence it finds all its pleasure in knowing the truth; and the more sublime it is, the greater its gratification: whence the ancient philosophers abandoned riches, honors, and pleasures, that they might understand the truths of nature. And Aristotle said that human felicity consists in wisdom; that is, in knowing the truth of the most excellent things.”[13540] Hence the saint concludes, that a soul cannot enjoy greater delight than in acquiring a knowledge of the truths of faith; the more as the knowledge of them is not only a source of pleasure to us, but also eminently useful, as upon them depends all our happiness for time and eternity.

Wherefore St. Antoninus says that the preacher ought indeed to delight his audience; but for what end? In order that, being moved by the discourse they may be induced to practise what they have learned.[13541] On the other hand, St. John Chrysostom affirms that the ruin of the Church is the great eagerness of sacred orators, not to move their hearers to compunction, but to please them with fine words; as if they came to hear a singer chant a piece of sacred music in the pulpit. "Such preachers," continues the saint, "act like a father who gives to his sick child what it wants. Such a one, however, does not deserve the name of father. This happens every time that one seeks flowery language, not to inspire compunction, but to win vain praise."[13542] Yes, reverend Sir, there are many sacred orators who delight their auditory by their elegant and pompous diction, and attract crowds to their sermons. But I would wish to know how many of those who are so highly pleased with their discourses, full of elegance and ornament, leave the church with a contrite heart, and afterwards amend their lives. Such precisely was the language of St. Francis when mention was made before him of preachers who had obtained great applause. "Be so good as to tell me," he would say, "how many were converted by their preaching." The accursed passion for display spoils the sermons of many preachers, and destroys the fruit of them for those who hear him. This made St. Vincent de Paul exclaim, as we read in his life: "O cursed ambition of display! how many virtues do you infect! of how many evils are you the cause! You make him who should preach Jesus Christ, preach himself, and destroy when he should save."[13543]

Some, in order to entertain the audience, ornament, or rather disfigure, their sermons with witticisms and ridiculous anecdotes, and even go so far as to say that this is necessary in instructions or catechetical discourses addressed to the people, in order to excite and keep alive their attention and interest. But I know that the saints in their sermons did not make the people laugh, but weep. When St. John Francis Regis preached (and his sermons were always familiar) the audience wept from the beginning to the end of the discourse. A facetious remark, naturally suggested by the occasion, may perhaps be allowed; but to reduce the exhortation to a comic scene, as some do, by introducing ridiculous trifles or curious stories, with attitudes and gestures designed to make the audience laugh—I do not know how they can reconcile such an exhibition with the respect due to the temple of God, and to the pulpit from which is announced the word of God, and in which the preacher fulfils the office of ambassador of Jesus Christ. The auditors indeed will laugh and be merry but afterwards they will be distracted and indevout, and instead of attending to the moral instruction, will continue to reflect upon the witticism or ridiculous story which they have heard.

From all I have written, your Reverence will be able to infer what surprise the assertion contained in your letter caused me, that the preacher should delight his auditory by a polished and ornamented style. I hope in the Lord that you will remove from your mind this prejudice, this grievous error, hurtful to your own soul, and to all those that will assist at your instructions.

And as your Reverence is so very humble as to condescend, towards the close of your letter, to ask of an unworthy sinner some instructions for preaching with advantage to the people, I recommend you for the most part, in your sermons to speak of the last things—death, judgment, hell, eternity, and the like; because the eternal truths make the deepest impression, and incline the heart to the love of virtue. I beg of you, repeatedly in your discourses to explain to the people the peace enjoyed by the soul that is in favor with God. St. Francis de Sales by this means drew away many souls from a vicious life, and on that account Henry IV., King of France, commended him much, blaming other preachers who make the way of virtue appear so difficult that they deter souls from entering upon it. I entreat you also to speak often of the love that Jesus Christ has shown us in his Passion, in the institution of the most Holy Sacrament, and of the love we should bear in turn towards our most blessed Redeemer, by often calling to mind those two great mysteries of love. I say this because few preachers, or at least too few, speak of the love of Jesus Christ; and it is certain that what is done solely through fear of punishment and not through love will be of short duration. A great servant of God, and a great laborer in the vineyard of the Lord, Father Gennaro Sarnelli, used to say: “I would wish to do nothing else but proclaim without ceasing: love Jesus Christ, love Jesus Christ, because he is deserving of your love.” In like manner often recommend, in preaching, devotior to the most Holy Virgin, through whose intercession all graces come to us, by making the people have recourse to her at the end of the discourse to obtain some special grace, as the forgiveness of their sins, holy perseverance, and the love of Jesus Christ. Above all, I beg of you to give practical advice to your audience, by suggesting the means of persevering in the grace of God, such as to guard the eyes from looking at dangerous objects, to fly evil occasion—from conversing with persons of a different sex or vicious companions; to frequent the sacraments; to hear Mass every day; to enter into some pious sodality, to practise mental prayer, instructing them at the same time practically in the manner of making it; to read spiritual books; to visit the most Holy Sacrament; to make the examination of conscience; to recite the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary. You should often inculcate conformity to the divine will amidst contradictions, as upon this conformity our perfection and salvation depend. Exhort them particularly to have recourse each day to Jesus and Mary, to obtain holy perseverance, and in particular, in the time of temptation; and I strenuously recommend you constantly to suggest to the people that great means of salvation, prayer—a subject which I remark preachers treat very seldom, and very slightly, although upon prayer depend our eternal salvation and all our good.

I am aware that speaking upon such practical subjects has little attraction for those preachers who aim at loftiness of speech, because they appear to them to be trivial matters, and they do not admit of ingenious thoughts and sounding periods. But it was thus St. Francis de Sales preached, who converted by his sermons innumerable souls: he always enforced the practices of a Christian life, so that in one country district the people desired to have in writing the practical rules which he recommended from the pulpit, that they might be the better able to put them in practice.

Oh, if all sacred orators preached solely with the view of pleasing God, in an easy and popular style, and discoursed on the truths and the maxims of the Gospel, in a manner plain, simple, and unadorned, and enforced practically the remedies against sins, and the means of persevering and of advancing in the divine love, the world would change its face, and God would not be offended as we now see him. We may remark, that the country parish in which there is a fervent priest, who truly preaches Christ crucified, is soon reclaimed and sanctified. I say, moreover, if a pious and simple discourse is delivered in a church the whole auditory is touched with compunction, and if they are not all converted, they are at least moved and affected; if such a style of preaching, then, were universal, what advantage would we see universally accrue to souls!

I will trespass on you no longer; but as you had the patience to read this long letter, I beg of you to join me in the following prayer to Jesus Christ:

O Saviour of the world, who art little known and loved less by the world, especially through the fault of Thy ministers; Thou who didst give up Thy life for the salvation of souls,—I beseech Thee through the merits of Thy Passion to enlighten and inflame so many priests who might convert sinners, and sanctify the entire earth if they preached Thy word with humility and simplicity, as Thou and Thy disciples preached it. But, alas! they do not do so; they preach themselves, and not Thee: and thus the world is full of preachers, and in the mean time hell is constantly crowded with souls. O Lord, repair this mighty ruin which preachers cause in Thy Church; and if it be necessary, humble, I pray Thee, as an example to others, by some visible sign, those priests who for their own glory adulterate Thy holy word, that they may amend, and that they may not thus obstruct the spiritual profit of the people. Thus I hope, thus I pray.

I recommend myself to your prayers, and remain your Reverence’s most devoted and obliged servant,

ALPHONSUS M.,

Bishop of S. Agatha, *ect.*

Refutation OF A FRENCH BOOK ENTITLED “ON PREACHING, BY THE AUTHOR OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL DICTIONARY.”[13544]

1. EXPOSITION OF THE AUTHOR’S IDEAS

While the last pages of the present work *(The Truth of Faith)* were being printed, this book fell into my hands. By appearing as a new production by the author, who wrote the *Philosophical Dictionary,* which has already been condemned everywhere, it announces for this very reason a suspicious doctrine. In fact, I have found therein several unsound propositions, and even an impious proposition, which is clearly opposed to holy Scripture.

Moreover, on seeing the title of the work, *On Preaching,* one would have thought that it treated of the utility and even of the necessity there is in this world of preaching to the people in order to enlighten them, because in consequence of sin and the corruption of their nature they are enveloped in darkness, and naturally inclined, not to what is good and virtuous, as the author wishes, but to evil and to vices. Now this is not the case: the end of the work is to discredit preaching, by representing it as entirely useless for the reformation of morals.

I do not wish to quote here all that the author says: I shall give only a short sketch of it, to make the reader understand what the book contains.

The author distinguishes the conversion of the *mind* from that of the *heart,* and says that preaching can bring about the conversion of the mind, but not that of the heart; that is, it may effect a change of *religion,* but not a change of *morals.* And here is the way in which he pretends to prove this:

He says that preaching began when men united to live together in society. Cain, he says, having built the first city, which he called Henoch, and this city having become peopled with a race as wicked as himself, Enos preached against vice, but without success. Then came Henoch, who added threats, but his preaching was just as fruitless, or rather, it became injurious; for the faithful, by mingling with the Gentiles to convert them to the worship of the true God, married their daughters, and thus the corruption extended throughout the world.

He continues by saying that the Lord, seeing the whole world corrupted by sin, ordered Noe to inform men of the near approach of the deluge; and Noe in the presence of the Ark, which he had begun to build, preached against vice; but all this was useless, so that God was obliged to submerge the world; and so it happened.

After the deluge generations multiplied again, *and* there were two empires—that of Babylon and that *of* Ninive. Noe continued to preach, and did so with more force recalling to people's minds the chastisement that had been administered. The prophets afterwards preached; but the people, instead of amending, added new crimes to their old ones in such a manner that the manner that the Lord sent fire from heaven, which consumed five cities.

After the coming of the Messias St. John the Baptist preached penance; but how many persons practised it?

Jesus Christ himself preached, and gathered together only a small number of disciples, who after his death were dispersed and began to preach throughout the world; but they ended by being put to death in different countries by those very men to whom they had preached.

Thus speaks the author, and then adds:

Under the reign of Constantine the Gospel began to be preached everywhere; many people embraced the faith, but did not renounce vice: they thus changed their religion without changing their manners. Preaching was much more multiplied in the 12th century, thanks to the zeal of the children of St. Francis and of St. Dominic. Then came the children of St. Ignatius, and many other new religious, who filled the Church with preachers; and notwithstanding all this, the world found itself more than before filled with vice and wickedness. What means can we therefore employ in order to effect a reform of morals, since so far preaching has always been ineffectual?

The author, arriving at his conclusion, says that the preacher who is really capable of reforming the world is a good government, which rewards the virtuous and punishes the wicked. Preachers, he says, preach about eternal goods and eternal evils, as faith teaches them; but these future goods and evils are far off, and make little or no impression, because men are more touched by what they see than by what they hear. The author then suggests different ways of extirpating vices.

This is what he first proposes: 1. To the fathers of families should be left, as was given by Romulus and Remus, the absolute power of chastising at their will their own children, except that they should not be allowed to sell or kill them, as was allowed to the Romans; 2. The husbands should be the judges of their wives; 3. The masters should have over their servants the authority that generals have over their soldiers.

But his principal project is to establish in every city or village a censor, who should be charged with presiding over the families; then to establish a college of twelve censors from the nearest places, forming a distinct tribunal of the tribunals of justice. This tribunal would have to chastise the vices that magistrates are not charged with punishing, and to reward the virtues that have not received the reward that they deserve. After this he makes an attack upon the author of the *Spirit of the Laws*, who had said that a monarchical government remedies all things, and replies to him that the universe is an altogether too convenient a censor, since it leaves vices without punishment and virtues without reward.

2. REFUTATION

What displeases me above all in these projects is, that the author, in order to induce people to live well, speaks only of human means, and does not even mention the necessity of divine grace, without which all human forces can certainly do nothing for the conversion of hearts. Human governments in punishing bad subjects and in rewarding the good only serve, without divine grace, to make Pharisees, who outwardly appear to be saints, but inwardly are filled with vice. It is grace only that is successful in reforming hearts; hence the Church teaches us to pray thus: *Tua nos quaesumus, Domine, gratia semper et praeveniat et sequatur, ac bonis operibus jugiter praestet esse intentos*—(Let Thy grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord, ever precede and follow us, and make us continually intent upon good works). Now holy preaching, of which I will afterward speak, serves to make us know the necessity of grace, and at the same time the necessity of prayer in order to obtain grace.

As regards the second part of this book, which refers to civil government, it is not my business to discuss it; for it is not a subject about which I am concerned. I only say that if this college of censors, which the author proposes should depend on a higher authority, I would leave it to this latter authority, as belonging to it, the right of determining whether or not it is expedient to establish a tribunal of this kind; for, on the one hand, it seems that it can be made useful, but on the other hand the greatest inconveniences would result therefrom. If, on the contrary, one should wish to make it independent by establishing a democratic regime instead of a monarchical government, it would be in opposition to the common opinion of wise men, all of whom hold that the monarchical government is better and more suited to preserve harmony in society.

But let us return to the first part concerning *preaching,* which is of particular interest to me: the author declares it to be useless for the reformation of morals.

If he wishes to speak of vain and ornate preaching, as he really speaks of it in some parts of his book, he is right, and I agree with him; for I myself have published a little work in which I have proved that preachers who in their discourses seek their own glory, and not the glory of God, are, as far as the public are concerned, not only useless, but are often even pernicious; since most of the hearers being illiterate people, these discourses, which they do not understand, only cause them tediousness, and they go with disgust to hear the word of God. For myself, I say that if the divine word were not altered, if it were preached in its purity and in a simple manner, every one would become a saint. Very severe will therefore be the account that will have to be rendered to God by those priests who profane holy preaching by a lofty and pompous style, beyond the capacity of the people, causing thereby the loss of so many souls. We should read what is said about this matter by Muratori in his golden book entitled *Popular Eloquence.*

In short, if the author means this kind of vain preaching, he is right when he says that it cannot be conducive to the amendment of bad morals; but if lie speaks in general, as he really does, of holy preaching, I say that his thesis is not only most false, but it is, moreover, pernicious and impious, since it is contrary to holy Scripture.

Holy Scripture teaches us that good morals, like faith, are propagated and cultivated by preaching. Jesus Christ has declared that to save men his Passion alone was not sufficient, but that preaching was also necessary in order that men might do penance for their sins and amend their lives: *And thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead on the third day : and that penance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all nations.*[13545] For this reason, therefore, he commanded his disciples to go out into the whole world, to teach not only the mysteries that men should believe, but also the commandments that they should keep: *Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.*[13546] *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*[13547] In obedience to this command the apostles preached, and their preaching produced fruit in the entire world, as is testified by St. Paul: *In the word of the truth of the Gospel, which is come unto you, as also it is in the whole world, and bringeth forth fruit and groweth, even as it doth in you, since the day you heard it.*[13548] And this came to pass because the Lord co-operated in making successful their zeal: *And they going forth preached everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed.*[13549]

The author says that preaching is inefficacious for the reformation of morals. But God does not speak thus: the Lord declares that as the rain makes the earth fruitful and makes it produce wheat, in the same way the word of God does not remain sterile; it produces in souls fruits of good works: *And as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return no more thither, but soak the earth, and water it, and make it to spring, and give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall My word be, which shall go forth from My mouth: it shall not return to Me void; but it shall do whatsoever I please, and shall prosper in the things for which I sent it!*[13550] St. Paul adds that the word of God is so efficacious that it penetrates the hearts more than a two-edged sword: *For the word of God is living and effectual and more piercing than any two-edged sword; and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit.*[13551] By the word *animae*—soul—we understand the inferior part of man, which is called *animal;* and by the word *spiritus*—spirit—we understand the superior part, which is called *spiritual.* Hence the word of God prevents the superior part from uniting with the inferior part, as happens among the wicked in whom the inferior drags down the superior part; so that holy preaching, or rather, the grace by means of preaching, separates the inferior part from the superior, and prevents the superior part from being dragged down, and dominates overall the actions and all the desires of men.

St Paul, moreover, writes: *It pleased God by the foolishness of our preaching to save them that believe.*[13552] He says, *By the foolishness of preaching:* this is because the mystery of the Redemption, which the apostles preached, was regarded as foolishness by the Gentiles, just as we afterwards read in the same place: *But we preach Christ crucified: unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles, foolishness.*[13553] The Apostle then declares that it is by means of the preaching of such folly that the Lord has wished to save believers. Now in order to save men, they must be led not only to believe the truths of faith, but also to do what faith teaches; for faith alone without works cannot save any one. Hence the Apostle assures us, in another text already cited, that the faith of Jesus Christ produced fruits of good works in the whole world: *It is in the whole world, and bringeth forth fruit.*[13554]

Origen also attests[13555] that in his time in all parts of the world those that had abandoned their divinities as well as the laws of their country, and consequently their wicked morals, in order to follow the law of Jesus Christ, were innumerable. Hence the apostles, as the fruit of their preaching, had the consolation of seeing the Gentiles not only despise and trample under foot their gods, but also extirpate their vices, which were inveterate for so many centuries, abhor earthly pleasures, renounce the riches and the honors of the world, in order to embrace sufferings, opprobrium, poverty, persecution, exile, tortures, and death.

The author says that preaching has not served to extirpate vice. It is not denied that, notwithstanding all the preaching, there were, there are, and there will be obstinate people who, in order not to give up their vices, renounce God; but on the other hand, how many are there who, after having heard the divine word, have changed their lives and given themselves to God! And these conversions were not dramatic conversions, which were only apparent as would be those that were only accomplished because of temporal rewards and punishments, of which the author speaks: they were true conversions of the heart. This was especially shown by so many martyrs, who, in order to confess their faith according to the precept of the Gospel, sacrificed their lives amid torments, and had so great a desire to die, that Tiberian, governor of Palestine, was forced to write to the Emperor Trajan that it was impossible to put to death all the Christians, so great was the number of those that offered themselves to die for Jesus Christ. This subsequently induced Trajan to leave the Christians in peace. Those that were thus converted by holy preaching were not only the common, ignorant people; but there were among them nobles, learned men, decurions, judges, senators, so that Tertullian in his Apology could say to the Gentiles: "We are filling all your places,—cities, islands, meetings, camps, decurions, the senate, the forum."[13556] After the first three centuries, which were centuries of blood, the fourth and fifth were centuries of self-inflicted penances, and of renouncing of the world; for many men and women retired to the desert, leaving behind their country, their relatives, their property, and everything, in order to give themselves up entirely to God by the practice of the holy virtues. St. Jerome, when he was living in Palestine, wrote[13557] that thither came every day from India, from Persia, from Ethiopia, companies of monks living in solitude, for the purpose of visiting the holy places of Jerusalem. And Rufinus[13558] assures us, that particularly in the territory of a single city of Egypt there lived at the beginning of the fourth century twenty thousand religious virgins who led a holy life. All this was the fruit of holy preaching.

I do not wish to continue any longer, nor fatigue my readers, to prove the utility and the necessity of holy preaching; for this it suffices to recall to mind what the Apostle says: *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher.*[13559] It seems to me, moreover, that the little that I have said above sufficiently proves how impious is the thesis of the book in question, in which the author pretends to prove that preaching has never been a useful and proper means for the reformation of morals, when, on the contrary, without preaching we should be deprived of one of the principal means destined by God to bring about the true conversion of hearts.

A LETTER

ON THE ADVANTAGES OF THE HOLY MISSIONS, TO A BISHOP RECENTLY APPOINTED, BY WHOM THE SAINT HAD BEEN CONSULTED ON THE SUBJECT.[13560]

I HAVE received your lordship's most esteemed letter, in which I see your zeal for procuring missions for all the villages of your diocese, and in which your lordship states several objections which have been made against the advantages of the missions. In obedience to your lordship's commands I shall detail at full length my views on the matter, and shall answer all the groundless objections which have been put forward against the holy missions.

It is certain, my lord, that the conversion of sinners is the greatest benefit that God can bestow upon man. St. Thomas[13561] says that the gift of grace by which God justifies the sinner is a greater favor than the beatitude of glory. But the conversion of sinners is precisely the end of the missions; for, by the instructions and sermons of the missions, they are convinced of the malice of sin, of the importance of salvation, and of the goodness of God, and thus their hearts are changed, the bonds of vicious habits are broken, and they begin to live like Christians.

In the old as well as in the new law the Lord ordained that the world should be saved by means of the missions. The faith, according to St. Paul, has been propagated by preaching; but preaching would have been ineffectual if God had not sent the preachers. *How,* says the Apostle, *shall they believe him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach unless they be sent?*[13562] Hence, according to St. Gregory, the missions began at the commencement of the world: for God has never at any time neglected to send workmen to cultivate his vineyard.[13563] In the Old Testament he sent the prophets to preach the law, and in the New he has sent his own Son to teach us the new law of grace, which is the perfection and accomplishment of the old law.

God who in times past spoke to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by his Son.[13564]

But because Jesus Christ was sent to preach only in Judea, he appointed the apostles that, after his death, they might preach the Gospel to all nations.[13565] By the preaching of the apostles the Gospel began, as we learn from St. Paul, to fructify throughout the world.[13566] The apostles sent their disciples to propagate the faith in the other nations, which they themselves had not been able to reach. And in after years, as we know from ecclesiastical history, holy workmen were sent by the Sovereign Pontiff and by other bishops to preach the Gospel in other kingdoms. In the fourth century St. Ireneus was sent to France. In the fifth, St. Palladius was sent to Scotland, and St. Patrick to Ireland. In the sixth, St. Gregory sent St. Augustine to England. In the seventh, St. Eligius was sent to Flanders, St. Kilian to Franconia, Sts. Swidbert and Willibrord to Holland. In the eighth century Gregory the Second sent St. Boniface to Germany, St. Wulfran to Friesland, and St. Hubert to Brabant. In the ninth, St. Ascanius was sent to Denmark and Sweden, and St. Methodius to Bohemia, Moravia, and Bulgaria. In the tenth, St. Maynard was sent to Livonia, and St. Ottone to Pomerania. In the thirteenth century the Pope sent Dominicans and Franciscans to Greece, Armenia, Ethiopia, Tartary, and Norway. These facts have been taken from a work entitled *Historical Notices of the Church.*

Finally, we know that in later times immense numbers have been converted from paganism in the East Indies and Japan by St. Francis Xavier, and in the West Indies by St. Louis Bertrand. I abstain from mentioning the many provinces of infidels and heretics which were converted by missionaries. St. Francis de Sales was sent to the province of Chablais, and converted seventy-two thousand heretics. We also know that St. Vincent de Paul instituted a Congregation of priests, which was approved by the Holy See. The priests of this Congregation are called “The Fathers of the Mission,” because their lives are spent in giving missions in all places to which they are invited.

In a word, wherever the faith has been planted or a reformation of morals introduced, all has been effected by means of the missions; and when the scourges of heaven—earthquakes, wars, famine, and pestilence—have failed to convert the people, when the civil laws with all their penalties have not succeeded in preventing murders, thefts, adulteries, and blasphemies, the missions have been found effectual; hence, the learned Contenson of the Order of St. Dominic says that by the missions alone souls obtain eternal life.[13567] Hence, when a mission is to be given in any place, we can clearly perceive the efforts of hell to prevent it. For there is always some dissolute person who does all in his power to prevent the mission, because he knows that it will be an effectual obstacle to the execution of his wicked designs. But if in cities the missions are most useful, they are necessary in the villages and small towns as well for the instruction of the people as to give them an opportunity of making a good confession. First, in the small towns the missions are necessary for the instruction of the people. It is true, in all or in almost Catholic countries, sermons are preached to the people during the Lent. But the people derive far greater fruit from the sermons of the missionaries than from the Lenten discourses. For the preachers for Lent ordinarily preach in a high and flowery style, or at least in a manner not adapted to the capacity of the poor. They have their sermons committed to memory, and cannot change them, whether their audience consists of the learned 0r ignorant. When the preachers of the villages came to ask the blessing of Cardinal Pignatelli, Archbishop of Naples, his Eminence recommended them to address the people in a simple and popular style. For, said his Eminence, the greater part of the people being illiterate they derive no fruit from the sermons unless the language be accommodated to their capacity. He then added, Perhaps you will tell me that the prescription is already written. I then answer, Oh, what a pity for the patients!

The remarks of this holy prelate were most just; for, what benefit can a sick man derive from remedies which have been prescribed without a knowledge of his disease?

Hence when the poor people of the country places are asked what fruit they have received from the sermon, they answer that they could not understand it because the preacher spoke Latin. It is not true that these preachers always speak Latin, but their language is so little adapted to the weak understanding of the ignorant that to them it is as unintelligible as if it were Latin. I assert, and in this assertion I believe I am not rash, that it would be sometimes better for the ignorant to be absent from these sermons. For after listening for an hour to a sermon, in the hope of deriving from it spiritual profit, they find that their time has been lost, and thus they conceive a dislike for the word of God, and become worse than they were before. Hence it is that after the sermons of Lent we see the same bad practices, the same animosities, and hear the same blasphemies and the same obscenities. The greatest misery of the poor in the country is, as Contenson says, that there is no one to break to them the word of God; and therefore, he says, woe to the bishops, woe to the negligent priest![13568]

But, it will be asked, are there not over the poor in the villages pastors who preach every Sunday? Yes, there are pastors who preach; but we must consider that all pastors do not, or cannot break the bread of the divine word to the illiterate in the manner prescribed by the Council of Trent. “They shall feed the people committed to them with wholesome words, according to their own capacity, and that of their people, by teaching them the things which it is necessary for all to know unto salvation, and by announcing to them, with briefness and plainness of discourse, the vices which they must avoid, and the virtues which they must follow after.”[13569] Hence it often happens that the people draw but little fruit from the sermon of the pastor, either because he has but little talent for preaching, or because his style is too high or his discourse too long. Besides, many of those who stand in the greatest need of instruction do not go to the sermon of the parish priest. Moreover, Jesus Christ tells us that *No prophet is accepted in his own country.*[13570] And when the people always hear the same voice, the sermon makes but little impression upon them.

But the sermons of the missionaries who devote their lives to the missions are well arranged, and are all adapted to the capacity of the ignorant as well as of the learned. In their sermons, as well as in their instructions, the word of God is broken. Hence, in the mission the poor are made to understand the mysteries of faith and the precepts of the Decalogue, the manner of receiving the sacraments with fruit, and the means of persevering in the grace of God: they are inflamed with fervor, and are excited to correspond with the divine love, and to attend to the affair of salvation. Hence we see such a concourse of the people at the missions, where they hear strange voices and simple and popular discourses. Besides, in the missions, the eternal truths which are best calculated to move the heart, such as the importance of salvation, the malice of sin, death, judgment, hell, eternity, etc., are proposed in a connected manner, so that it would be a greater wonder that a dissolute sinner should persevere in his wickedness, than that he should be converted. Hence, in the missions, many sinners give up their evil habits, remove proximate occasions of sin, restore ill-gotten goods, and repair injuries. Many radically extirpate all sentiments of hatred, and forgive their enemies from their hearts; and many who had not approached the sacraments for many years, or who received them unworthily, make good confessions during the missions.

It has been said that, during the ten or fifteen days which the mission lasts, the missionaries have given absolution to many relapsing sinners, who would require a trial of many months before they could be safely absolved. Would to God that all confessions were made with the same dispositions with which they are made in the missions. Oh, how small should be the number of damned souls! Surely length of time is not the only means of ascertaining the dispositions of a penitent; it may be a very fallacious means. How many are there who, in order to receive absolution during the time of the paschal precept, abstain for a month and more from the habits of sin, who interrupt their evil practices, and relapse immediately after? I therefore am of opinion that the disposition of a penitent may be better known from the deep impression made by the sermons, from the compunction of heart which he manifests, from the resolution which he makes, and from the means which he adopts in order to avoid sin, than from length of time. St. Cyprian says that charity is perfected, not so much by length of time, as by the efficacy of grace. And St. Thomas says that God sometimes infuses so much compunction into the hearts of sinners that they instantly acquire perfect sanctity.[13571] At a synod of the Bishops at Flanders, held at Brussels, the following decree was made: “The confessor, in the case of greater sinners, even when they are backsliders, should not ask that they should perform works of penance for a notable time, but he should with the holy Fathers be mindful that God in the conversion of the sinner considers not the measure of time but of sorrow.[13572] Moreover, since the matter of the sacrament of penance is moral and not physical, it is sufficient for the confessor to have a moral certainty which (as the author of the Instructor of Young Confessors says) is nothing else than a prudent probable judgment, not opposed by a prudent doubt of the dispositions of the penitent. Those who have assisted in giving missions, and who are accustomed to hear confessions, know well the difference between the confessions made on other occasions and the confessions made during the missions. They are fully convinced that in the missions penitents confess their sins with true sorrow, and with a firm purpose of amendment.

The reparation of so many sacrilegious confessions in which sins are concealed through shame, particularly by women, should of itself be sufficient to render the missions very desirable. This great evil of bad confessions is more common in small villages in which there are but few confessors, who are acquainted with all the inhabitants. Penitents are ashamed to confess their sins to confessors whom they meet every day, and thus through shame they continue to make sacrilegious confessions during their whole lives. Many, through this accursed shame, conceal their sins even at the hour of death, and thus sacrilegiously receive the last sacraments. Hence, the reparation of so many bad confessions is one of the greatest advantages of the missions. The people, knowing that the missionaries are strangers who will remain only for a few days, and whom they shall never see again, are easily induced, by the terrors of the divine judgments proposed in the sermons of the mission, to confess the sins which they had before concealed.

Hence I say that in every village the mission should continue as long as will be necessary for the missionaries to hear the confessions of all the inhabitants; otherwise, many persons will not be able to make their confession to the Fathers, and thus their consciences will be perplexed and troubled. For, by the sermons, scruples are excited; but by the sermons alone, a person addicted to bad habits, to unjust contracts, or inveterate hatred is not sufficiently taught what he must do in order to tranquillize his conscience. But in confession everything is adjusted, and the penitent is instructed how to make restitution for injuries done to others in their property or character, how to remove the occasions of his sins, and how to pardon injuries. But if the doubts and scruples excited by the sermons be not removed in the confessional, many persons will be more perplexed and troubled in mind than they were before the mission began. And if a person whose past confessions were sacrilegious cannot confess to the missionaries, he will, being obliged to make his confession to the priests of the village, continue, as before, to conceal his sins. Where the mission is so short that all the inhabitants of the place have not time to make their confession to the missionaries, it will do more injury than service to many souls. For, some persons whose ignorance rendered the omission of certain sins in confession excusable, being instructed in their obligation, will be found to confess these sins, but will not have courage to disclose these to the confessor of the place: thus, they will commit sacrileges and be lost.

Finally, all the world knows the immense good which has been and is daily done by the missions. A description of the innumerable conversions of sinners, produced by means of the missions, would be too long for this letter: but I shall mention a few.

Speaking of the missions of Father Segneri the younger, the celebrated Muratori says that the entire people gave up their employments to attend his sermons. He says that hatred for their sins and compunction of heart were plainly depicted in the countenances of all. Human respect and human feelings were trodden under foot, the most obdurate sinners were converted, and the confessors were obliged to hear confessions not only by day but by night. He adds that after the mission the whole town appeared to be changed: scandals were removed, abuses corrected, inveterate and obstinate animosities ceased, and blasphemies, imprecations, and obscenities were no longer heard. A similar description has been published of the fruits of the missions of Father Joseph Carabantes, a Capuchin; but in one city the people were so deeply penetrated with compunction that almost all of them went through the streets in the garments of penance, scourging themselves, and with tears asking of God the pardon of their sins.

Speaking of the missions given by the venerable priests of the congregation of St. Vincent de Paul, the author of his life says that, during a mission in the diocese of Palestrina in 1657, a young man whose arm had been cut off by an enemy, having met his enemy in a public street after the sermon, cast himself at his feet, asked pardon for the hatred he had borne him, and, rising up, embraced him with so much affection that all who were present wept through joy, and many, moved by his example, pardoned all the injuries that they had received from their enemies. In the same diocese there were two widows who had been earnestly entreated but constantly refused to pardon certain persons who had killed their husbands. During the mission they were perfectly reconciled with the murderers, in spite of the remonstrance of a certain person who endeavored to persuade them to the contrary, saying that the murders were but recent, and that the blood of their husbands was still warm. The following fact is still more wonderful: In a certain town, which shall be nameless,[13573] vindictiveness prevailed to such an extent that parents taught their children how to take revenge for every offence, however small; this vice was so deeply rooted that it appeared impossible to persuade the people to pardon injuries. The people came to the exercises of the mission with sword and musket, and many with other weapons. For some time the sermons did not produce a single reconciliation; but on a certain day, the preacher, through a divine inspiration, presented the crucifix to the audience, saying: Now let every one who bears malice to his enemies come and show that for the love of his Saviour he wishes to pardon them: let him embrace them in Jesus Christ. After these words a parish priest whose nephew had been lately killed came up to the preacher and kissed the crucifix, and, calling the murderer, who was present, embraced him cordially. By this example and by the words of the preacher the people were so much moved that for an hour and a half they were employed in the church in making peace with their enemies and embracing those whom they had before hated. The hour being late, they continued to do the same 0n the following day, so that parents pardoned the murder of their children, wives of their husbands, and children of their fathers and brothers. These reconciliations were made with so many tears and so much consolation that the inhabitants long continued to bless God for the signal favor bestowed 0n the town. It is also related that many notorious robbers and assassins, being moved by the sermon, or by what they heard from others of it, gave up their arms and began to lead a Christian life. Nearly forty of these public malefactors were converted in a single mission.

We read in his life of the stupendous effects produced by the missions of Father Leonard of Port Maurice, of the reformed Franciscans. In a village of Corsica called Mariana murders were so frequently committed through revenge that entire families were extinguished; such was the fruit of a mission given by Father Leonard that at the end of it there was not a single individual in the town who had not made peace with his enemies. In another place, called Casaccone, there was a family who obstinately refused to be reconciled with certain persons who had offended them. But when, at the close of the mission, the preacher declared that he did not intend to bless those who retained sentiments of hatred in their hearts, all the members of that family came forward, and with many tears made peace with their opponents. During the mission in this place, a young man came from a distance, for the purpose of killing an enemy, whom he expected to find at the exercises of the missions; but by hearing the sermon he was converted, laid aside his hatred and made a general confession. In a town called Castel d'Acqua, there was a great number of opposite factions: during the mission they came one day, armed, to the church. Great slaughter was apprehended; but by the sermon their hearts were filled with compunction, they went of their own accord to the preacher, and a common peace was established. In another place there were two parties who had been at variance for twenty years; in these contentions many persons were killed. Through the obstinacy of their chief, whose name was Lupo, one of the parties at the beginning of the mission refused to make peace; but at the end of the mission, seeing that his opponents were reconciled with God, and that he was still the enemy of God, Lupo was struck with remorse, and offered to make peace: thus the two parties were reconciled. In Livorno great preparations were made for the amusement of the carnival; but as soon as the mission began, the masks and dances and, because no person would go to the theatres, even the public comedies were given up. These are ordinary, not extraordinary, fruits of all missions. I therefore abstain from saying more on this subject.

Let us now come to the objections that are made against the utility of the missions. It is said in the first place that the fruit of the missions is only temporary, that, though it appears great, it lasts but a short time, and that the wicked become worse than they were before. I answer, would to God that all who are converted would persevere! It is one of the miseries of human nature that many who recover the grace of God lose it again by sin. But though it should be admitted that the fruits of the missions are not permanent, it is at least certain that, during the mission, bad practices are given up, scandals are removed, blasphemies cease, a great deal of ill-gotten property is restored, and many bad confessions are repaired. But it is not true that, after the missions, all sinners become worse than they were before; many persevere in the grace of God, and others, if they relapse, abstain for many months from mortal sin. Moreover, by listening to the sermons of the missions, the people acquire a more perfect knowledge of God and of the importance of salvation, and a greater horror of sin; and if they relapse into sin, they endeavor to rise again at the time of the Paschal Communion. I hold for certain that, if among all those who have attended the sermons any one die within a year after the missions, he will scarcely be lost. The fruits of the mission are always visible at least for a year or two; and if they do not last longer, it is because the priests of the place do not labor to preserve and maintain them by assembling the people to meditation and to the visitation of the Blessed Sacrament, and, above all, by attending to the confessional. *“Vae,”* says the learned Contenson, *“praelatis dormientibus, vae presbyteris otiosis.”* But when, after three or four years, the land becomes dry, it is necessary to refresh it by another mission.

The second objection against the missions is that the consciences of many are disturbed by scruples excited by the sermons. Oh what an objection! Then, rather than disturb their conscience, it is better to allow sinners to slumber in the lethargy of sin, and in an accursed peace which is the seal of damnation! The devil wishes that the false peace of sinners, which keeps them in a state of perdition, should not be disturbed! But it is the duty of a pastor to awaken those who sleep in sin, and to warn them of the danger of damnation to which they are exposed; and surely than the missions, there is no better means of arousing sinners to a sense of the perils by which they are beset.

Hence, bishops should take care that missions be given in every village, however small. Where there are many villages near one another, some missionaries select for the mission a place in the midst of these villages. The greatest sinners, who are consequently the most blind and the most careless of their salvation, do not go to the exercises of the mission unless they are performed in their own church. They remain at home under the pretext that the church in which the mission is given is too distant, or that the weather is bad, and thus they continue in their miserable state of perdition. I speak from experience, for we found that many places derive little or no profit from the missions, either because these missions were given in the midst of several villages or because they were too short. Hence, when the missionaries of our little Congregation go into any diocese, it is usual to give the mission in every village, however small, at least for eight days, and in populous towns for fifteen, twenty, or thirty days, until the confessions of all are heard.[13574]

The third objection is that the exercises of the missions generally end at night, and are therefore a cause of much scandal. I answer that they who attend the exercises are struck with the terror of God’s judgments; and should any one during that time be disposed to tempt others to sin, he could not expect to succeed: but even though some attempt should be made to draw others into sins, must the mission be given up? If, to avoid all danger of evil, it were necessary to abstain from what is good and profitable, we should prohibit festivals of the saints, processions, and pilgrimages to holy places, because in these things there is always some disorder; we should prohibit confession, Communion, and hearing Mass, because even in these there are sometimes scandals and sacrileges. But we know that the Church not only permits but even approves and commands these things.

But it is said that from preaching at night many sins arise: and will there be no sins if the missions be given up? Ah, if the missions be given up, bad habits, quarrels, blasphemies, and all scandals will continue. But at least, during the mission, thousands of sins are avoided. But you will ask why are the sermons preached at night? I answer that, where the people attend by day, the sermons should be preached during the day and not at night; but, where they cannot attend by day, what can be done? It is certain that if, in the country places, the poor laboring classes, who form almost the entire audience, do not attend the sermons, the mission will be lost; but however strongly they may be exhorted to attend at an early hour, these poor people cannot come till after the work of the day. Masters and employers are recommended to allow their servants and workmen to give up their work at an early hour during the days of the mission; but these employers look to their own interest and pay but little attention to such recommendations. The workmen, unless they complete the day’s work, are not paid. Without their wages they are not able to provide food for themselves or their families: hence in the villages the poor cannot attend till about sunset; and if they do not attend, I say the mission is lost.[13575]

The fourth objection is that some imprudent missionaries preach from the pulpit against the sins which they hear in the confessional, and excite in the people a hatred for confession. This objection has been made by some wicked persons who hate the missions, and is utterly destitute of foundation. The first thing the missionaries do after their arrival at the place of the mission, is to inform themselves of the prevailing sins and abuses of the place, and these they attack in their sermons. But they are careful never to mention in the pulpit any circumstance which could in the most remote manner reveal any sin heard in confession. But of what are they to speak in the pulpit? Is it of ecstasies, raptures, visions, or of revelations? No, they must preach against the vices which are most common, and which are ordinarily committed in all places, such as impurity, blasphemies, hatred, theft, and the like.

*F*inally, it is said that the missions, being repeated every three years, are too frequent, and therefore produce little or no impression on the minds of the people. I admit that, between two successive missions in the same place, there should be a considerable interval of time; but an interval of three years is quite sufficient. For, ordinarily speaking, in that space of time many forget the sermons of the missons, many relapse into sin, and very many fall into tepidity. A new mission will renew the fervor of the tepid, and will restore God’s grace to those who have relapsed. But it is not true that repeated missions do not produce much fruit. For although in the second mission the people do not manifest so much compunction as in the first, the fruit is notwithstanding very great. For, as I have already said, many who have returned to their former bad habits rise again from sin, many who became tepid begin again to serve God with fervor, and many are more firmly established in the practice of virtue. Hence, to renew the fervor and resolution of the people, the missionaries of our little Congregation usually return after some months to the place in which they have given missions. And we have learned by experience the great advantages which flow from these renewals.

I have said enough; I only entreat your Lordship to continue with your wonted zeal to procure every three years a mission for every village in your diocese. Do not attend to the objections of those who speak against the missions through interested motives or through ignorance of the great advantages of the missions. I also pray you to oblige the pastors and priests of the villages to continue the exercises recommended to them by the missionaries, such as common mental prayer in the church, visit to the most holy sacrament, familiar sermons every week, the Rosary, and other similar devotions. For it frequently happens that, through the neglect of the priests of the place, the greater part of the fruit produced by the mission is lost. I recommend myself to your prayers and remain,

Your very devoted and obedient servant,

ALPHONSUS, MARIA,

Bishop of St. Agatha, etc.

The Exercises of the Missions

OUR saint describes in this treatise the exercises of the missions such as they are given or were given at his time at Naples; but we may clearly gather from what he says, that he does not pretend that the same method should be followed and the same means employed in every place and at all times. This is what he himself, in his old age, gives us to understand when he heard that there was an intention of introducing his Institute into Austria. “The missions,” he said, “are not there given in the way in which we give ours: instruction or catechism is more useful there than preaching, because the people are living in the midst of Lutherans and Calvinists.” Moreover, the statutes of his Congregation lay down this regulation for the missionaries: “Those ceremonies that are obsolete, ludicrous, and unusual in the country or places where they preach, shall be omitted; and as a general rule, the means of exciting the feelings of the people shall be used but sparingly, or shall even he omitted, especially in large places, and in places where the people are well educated.” He that presides over the mission should, therefore, consider the circumstances of time and place where the mission is given, and, above all, the character of the people, so as to select and direct the exercises in a manner that will produce most fruit.—*Ed.*

INTRODUCTION

There are some who assert that the missions do more harm than good, because they trouble, they say, the people and their consciences, and because, if the people abstain from committing sin during the mission, they fall back into vice as soon as it is over, and become worse than they were before. Those that speak in this way, having had no experience in regard to missions, are ignorant of the great number of souls that are thereby gained for God. But he that practically knows what missions are, is fully aware how many inveterate enmities they remove, how many bad habits they root out, how many restitutions of ill-gotten goods they bring about, how many law-suits—a fruitful source of hatred—they adjust, and above all, how many bad confessions they repair, especially in the country in small places, where in this respect one may say that the missions are not only useful, as in large cities, but are even necessary. Indeed, as in these places the inhabitants know one another, it is not a rare thing that shame prevents them from manifesting their sins to the confessors of the place.

It is true, many at the opening of the mission complain that the missionaries have come to create disturbance among them; but these complaints are not uttered by good people: they are uttered by those that live thoughtlessly in their sins, and do not wish to be disturbed. Such is the aim of the devil: he does not wish that his unhappy slaves should be roused from their false peace in which they live—a peace that is to be the cause of their eternal torment and their eternal despair!

It is also true that after the mission many will relapse into sin. Ah! would to God that all those that are once converted would have the happiness of persevering in the state of grace till death; but so great is human frailty, that many sinners after having recovered the grace of God, again lose it. Nevertheless, even if no other advantage could be gained, it is certain that, at least during the time of the mission, many sins are avoided. The missions, however, bring back to God many souls, who afterwards persevere in God’s grace till death; and if many should happen to relapse, they keep from sin at least for several months, and will acquire during the mission a greater horror of sin, a better knowledge of God and of the importance of their eternal salvation.[13576]

As for the exercises of the missions, there are many books that treat of them at length, especially the beautiful work of the venerable priest Philip de Mura, which bears the title, *The Missionary instructed,* from which I confess that I have taken the greater part of the present little work. However, it was for the greater convenience of the young members of our Congregation that I made this abridgment, in which I have briefly set forth rules and examples of all the exercises in accordance with the usage of the missions given by our Institute. To these I have added many things and many reflections which an experience of thirty-four years has made me regard as very useful to souls. I hope that this little work will also be profitable to many other priests; for therein they will find expressed in a clear and succinct manner what is said diffusely in other books, the more so since a plain and concise style is more pleasing at the present time, in which one wishes to read little and know much. Besides, in this book will be found examples written in a familiar style, proper for missions, in which Sunday or Lenten sermons are preached.

THE EXERCISES OF THE MISSIONS

Chapter I

EXHORTATIONS (SENTIMENTI)

THERE are four kinds of exhortations; namely, the exhortations of the evening, the exhortations of the day, the exhortations during the taking of the discipline, and the exhortations of peace.

To give to each of these exhortations the suitable form, it is necessary to consider the aim and purpose of each. Thus:

1. The exhortation of the *evening* is given in order to rouse the sinner and to call him to the mission.
2. The exhortation of the *day* is given to gather together the faithful and to lead them to the church.
3. The exhortation of the *discipline* is given to move sinners to contrition, and to do penance for their sins.
4. Finally, the exhortation of *peace* is given to reconcile enemies.

I. THE EXHORTATION OF THE EVENING.[13577]

1. PRELIMINARY REMARKS

1. The exhortations of the evening contribute greatly to inspire the people with fervor from the very beginning of the mission. To arouse sinners and to induce them to come to church in order to hear the sermons, it is not sufficient that the opening of the mission be announced to them, or that they be called by the sound of the bell; they must be moved by the power of the word, and by the fear of the chastisements that God has reserved for them. Without these exhortations, at least during the first four or five days, we shall see the church but little frequented by those that need the mission most. On the contrary, we know by experience that the evening exhortations awaken in a wonderful way these destitute souls, and determine them to go to the church with the rest.

2. These exhortations should be short, and even very short, so that they do not last longer than half or quarter of an hour, either because being given in the evening, in the open air, and mostly in winter, they may become inconvenient both for the speaker and for the listeners, or even because several exhortations are given in the same evening, and must be given with fervor and vehemence, by using startling expressions which, like arrows, strike the ears and hearts of the hearers. Young missionaries often have this defect, that they prolong these exhortations as well as the other smaller exercises of the mission, and almost make sermons out of them. They thereby grow tedious to the listeners and disturb the order of the mission, so that there is no time left for other more necessary exercises.

3. *The evening exhortations are concluded, not by an* act 0f contrition, but, by a terrible Sentence (*sentenza terribile*). Only at the end, after returning to the church, another very short exhortation is made, and is *concluded by* an act *of* contrition expressed in *a* few *words.*

2. DIVISION OF THE DISCOURSE

The evening exhortation contains five parts; namely:

1. The Introduction with the Proposition; 2. The Amplification; 3. Moral reflection with the invitation to penance; 4. The Announcement of the powers with which the missionaries are invested, as also of the exercises of the mission, and of the indulgences that are attached to the mission; 5. The terrible Sentence.

I. The INTRODUCTION, preceded by the singing of a hymn, may be begun in different ways, of which the following are examples: *1.* By an EXCLAMATION: “O eternal God! how good Thou art! Men despise Thee, flee from Thee; and Thou goest in search of them; Thou callest to them in order to offer them pardon.”

1. By a REPROACH: “Sinner! tell me: When will you cease to offend God?” (It must here be remarked that the exhortation should not be begun by the use of abusive words, such as *wretched, villianous, crime-laden souls,* and the like, for the hearers grow angry when they hear themselves thus called at the beginning of the discourse.) *3.* By an INTERROGATION: “My dear brother, tell me: At the end of this kind of life that you are leading, what will become of you?” 4. By expressing a sentiment of

COMPASSION: “Poor sinner! who would not pity your unhappy state, knowing that you are in disgrace with God, etc.?” 5. By an EXPOSITION: “My dear Christian, I have come to tell you in the name of God, that he is ready to pardon you, if, etc.”

After this introduction or the like, the PROPOSITION, or the argument of the exhortation, is announced. The proposition is drawn from the hymn that is sung before. Let us suppose that the hymn is as follows:

“Lo! a God of all compassion
Calls thee; shall he call in vain?
If thou yet reject his mercy,
Will he ever call again?”

After the people have heard this hymn, we may thus address them: “My dear Christians, I have come this evening to bring you two messages; the one a message of joy, the other a message of terror: if you return to God, who calls you back to him during this holy mission, he will embrace you as his dear children; but if you do not return, and do not return soon, God will no longer call you, and you will be damned.” Sometimes it will be well to begin the introduction by the proposition itself; thus: “You understand me, ye sinners: if now you return to God, you will find him full of mercy; but if you do not return to him immediately, he will turn his back upon you and will n0 more call you.” Sometimes, also, it will be well to repeat the very words of the hymn; for example: “My Brethren, you have heard what the hymn says:

“Soon thy life will end, poor sinner,—
Know’st thou *when* the end will he?’ ”

I. As regards the *Amplification*, the following rules must be observed:

If the proposition is not a truth of faith, as for example, that God after a certain number of sins abandons the sinner, it should be confirmed by some succinct arguments, presented in short, clear, and quite simple periods. Some short reflection should also be *made, without employing comparisons, frightful examples, or texts of Scripture, unless these texts are short and generally known, such as: God is not mocked. It is appointed unto men once to die. Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire; etc. The following is an example of amplification: If we take the proposition given above,* namely, that God abandons obstinate sinners, we may briefly give the following reason: “He does not deserve mercy who uses God’s mercy only to offend him more. The Lord bears with the sinner and gives him time, so that he may be converted and may weep over the evil that he has done; but when God sees this ungrateful sinner, instead of profiting by the time that he has given him to be converted, using it only to heap sin upon sin, he deprives him of life by a just judgment.” Afterwards this short reflection may be added: “Put an end to all this sin—put an end to it, my dear Brethren: know that the greater the patience that God has had with you, the greater will be the chastisement that he reserves for you, if you do not hasten to amend your life.”

But if the proposition has for its object some truth of faith, as the certainty of death, of judgment, etc., it will suffice to amplify it by reflections; for example, in speaking of death: “What torture and what despair will you not experience when you see by the light of the candle that the time for doing good has passed for you, and that at this last moment, with your head quite stupefied by fear and confusion, you are no longer capable of doing anything?” etc.

I. The amplification is followed by the MORAL APPLICATION and by the INVITATION TO PENANCE. Example: “What then would be your folly, my dear Brethren, if instead of returning to God, now that he calls you, you expose yourselves to the danger of being abandoned by God, and consequently of going to endure an eternity of torments in hell! Return to him; do not delay; profit by this favorable moment, in which Jesus Christ himself comes to seek you by a holy mission in your own home.”

It must here be remarked, that in the moral application no particular vice should be named; for some one of the hearers might take offence, thinking that on his account the exhortation was given. And when the exhortation is given purposely for the benefit of some scandalous person, it should not be given too near his house, but at a certain distance, so that he may hear it without suspecting that the exhortation is given expressly on his account.

I. Here follows the ANNOUNCEMENT of the mission, which begins or has already begun, by making known the powers with which the missionaries are invested, the exercises that are to take place in the church, and the indulgences that may be gained according to a plan that will afterwards be given.

II. We conclude by the TERRIBLE SENTENCE which should correspond to the proposition of the exhortation. This sentence should be short, but should consist of words grave and striking, which will remain engraven on the minds of the hearers; for example: “Tremble, yes, tremble, ye sinners; perhaps this very night, if you do not resolve to amend your life, God may permit death to surprise you, and you may die and be condemned to hell! Or: “If you do not now weep over your sins, think that you may have to weep over them for all eternity in hell.” Or: “Continue, O obstinate sinner! continue to offend God. But remember: In the valley of Josaphat I await you; there you will hear the sentence which Jesus Christ will pass upon you: Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire!” Sometimes we may finish by the very words of the hymn, if they well express the terrible sentence. Example:

“Who can tell?—perhaps, my brother,
Death this night will come to thee.”

3. EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT EVENING EXHORTATIONS WITH THEIR DISTINCT PARTS

FIRST EXAMPLE

“ Lo! a God of all compassion
Calls thee; shall he call in vain?
If thou yet reject his mercy,
Will he ever call again?”

1. INTRODUCTION.—Dear Christians, I have come this evening to bring you two messages; the one a message of joy, the other a message of terror: if you return to God, who calls you back to him during this holy mission, he will embrace you as his own dear children; but if you do not return, and do not return soon, God will no longer call you, and you will be damned.

2. *AMPLIFICATION.*—Hear, my Brethren: the Lord pardons the sins of him who repents of them; but he does not pardon him who has the will to commit sin. See for how many years God has borne with you, and is saying to your heart: Cease, my child; amend your life; offend me no more!—And what have you done? Always the same thing: you have confessed, you have promised; yet you have always begun again to sin, you always continue to offend God! For what are you waiting? That God may take you from this

world and cast you into hell? Do you not see that God cannot bear with you any longer?

3. *Moral APPLICATION.*—Let us, then, my Brethren give up evil, now that a mission is offered to you; give yourselves to God, who deigns still to wait for you, and who is ready to pardon you all the offences that you have committed, if you wish to amend your life. Come to the church where the mission is going on, come to hear the sermons, and make a good confession. Do not doubt that if you truly desire to abandon sin, I promise you on the part of Jesus Christ that you will receive the grace of pardon.

4. *ANNOUNCEMENT.*—See, Jesus Christ has come among you with his holy mission, which begins to-morrow. The missionaries have the power of absolving all reserved cases, even censures reserved to the Pope; they can also dispense from vows. In the church there will be every day, morning and evening, various touching and salutary exercises, such as the recitation of the Rosary, with instructions and sermons. Moreover, those that attend these exercises, if they confess and communicate, will gain a plenary indulgence when they receive at the end of the mission the Papal blessing. You see that God opens at this moment the treasury of his mercy; you can sanctify yourselves if you wish.

5. *SENTENCE.*—What do you say? What do you *re*solve to do? Yes or no; do you desire no *more to* offend God? Who knows whether it is not the last appeal that the Lord addresses to you? Hasten to take a resolution. Do you wish to wait until God puts an end to your disorders by casting you into hell without the least hope of ever remedying your misfortune? Go, my dear Brethren, enter your homes, and reflect on what you have heard this evening; recommend yourselves *to* the Blessed Virgin, and ask her to enlighten you.

SECOND EXAMPLE

Sinner, thou art foe of heaven,
And thou tremblest not with fear?
Cease those sins, my child, ah! leave them Death advances, hell is near.”

*1. INTRODUCTION.—O sinner, you remain an enemy of your God without trembling! . . . My dear Brethren, if you are in the state of sin, it is certain that God is your enemy: God, I say, who if he wishes can this very mo*ment cast you into hell! And you sleep, and you laugh, and you do not tremble, and you do not weep . . . !

2. *AMPLIFICATION.*—Ah! for myself, I pity you, because sin has blinded you, and does not allow you to see the danger in which you are of dying at any moment, and of going to burn in an abyss of fire for all eternity! Have you perhaps as your enemy only a great man of the world from whom you can hide yourselves, from whom you can escape by flight, or against whom you can defend yourselves? Oh no! it is God whom you have as your enemy—God who sees you everywhere whithersoever you may go, who can reach you wherever you are; if he wishes to chastise you, how could you defend yourselves against his hand?

3. *MORAL APPLICATION.*—My dear Brethren, tell me: In living as you do, how can you save yourselves? Do you not see, unhappy sinners, that you are damned? Do you not see that God cannot have patience with you any longer? Listen to me this evening: you are now the enemies of God, it is true, since you have offended him much; but he is ready to pardon you if you wish to amend your life. Courage, then, my dear Christians! come to the mission, go to confession, and renounce sin: hasten to give yourselves to God, who is still waiting for you, who is still calling for you; do not anger him any more.

4. *ANNOUNCEMENT.*—See, Jesus Christ has come to your very dwellings to invite you to return to him; it is on your account that he has sent hither missionaries who have the power, etc.

5. *SENTENCE.—O* sinners! what more do you wish God to do? Do not, therefore, lose confidence, hope, but hope and tremble: if you wish to amend your life, hope; if you wish to continue to have God as your enemy, tremble—yes, tremble that the present appeal may not be the last one for you; it you do not resolve to give yourselves to God, perhaps this very evening God will abandon you, and you will be damned! Go, my dear Brethren, enter your houses, and reflect, etc.

THIRD EXAMPLE

“Soon thy life will end, poor sinner;

Know’st thou *when* the end will be?

Who can tell?—perhaps, my brother,

Death this night will come to thee.”

1. *INTRODUCTION.*—My Brethren, have you understood what this hymn says to you: “Thy life will end, and thou knowest not when the end will be”? See, poor sinners, the beautiful life that you are leading, alas! far from God, far from the sacraments, far from the church. You scarcely hear a Mass on feast days, and when you hear it, you do so in a careless manner; and then how do you spend the rest of the time? To offend, to anger God! In fact, you live as if you were never going to die.

2. *AMPLIFICATION.*—Unfortunate sinner! do you not think of death? But whether you think of it or not, whether you wish it or not, a day will come when your life will end; you will have to leave this world; your body will be buried in the earth, and your soul will enter eternity. Do you, my Brethren, believe or do you not believe that? It is certain, it is of faith, that you must die, and that after this life a life is to begin that will never end; and if you are damned, your life will be unhappy, you will be in despair forever, as long: as God will be God.

3. *MORAL APPLICATION.—Tell me: if this night*, or even this moment, while I am speaking to you, *death* were to surprise you, what would become of your *poor* soul? whither would you go, O miserable man? *Let* us, my Brethren, quickly profit by the means of salvation, now that God is waiting for you, and gives *you* time to confess and to regulate your accounts before death comes upon you. What do you say? what do you intend to do? You must decide.

4. *ANNOUNCEMENT.*—See, Jesus Christ has come to call you to himself by a mission, and to pardon you if you wish to do so. The missionaries have the power, etc.

5. *SENTENCE.*—I ask again: What do you say? what do you wish to do? do you wish to return to God? Consider: How many have died since the last mission given in this place? How many of those that have died are now burning in hell? Why?—because they did not wish to give up their wicked lives, and God himself has put an end to them. Now do you wish that the same thing should happen to you, and that you should be condemned to weep in the flames of hell during all eternity? Go, my Brethren, into your houses, and reflect, etc.

FOURTH EXAMPLE

“Love God who, loveth thee,
For love itself is he;
Me bids the sinner weep;
He saith: Poor child, from sin depart;
Rest thee within thy Father’s heart;
Turn to thy Shepherd, wandering sheep.”

1. INTRODUCTION.—O my God, how good and merciful art Thou towards men! They leave Thee, and Thou goest in search of them. They outrage Thee, and Thou offerest them pardon and peace.

2. *AMPLIFICATION.*—My dear Brethren, I come this evening on behalf of Jesus Christ to offer you pardon and salvation, if you wish to accept them, Tell me: Do you merit this grace? The Lord could make you die and send you to hell the moment that you offend him, yet, see the great mercy which he now shows you: instead of punishing you, you see him coming to you with this holy mission, in order to pardon you; he comes himself to seek you, to make peace with you; it will suffice if you repent of having offended him, and if you promise not to offend him any more.

3. *MORAL APPLICATION.—Here is what the hymn says:*

“He saith: Poor child, from sin depart; Rest thee within thy Father’s heart; Turn to thy Shepherd, wandering sheep.”

Now what do you say? how do you respond to the appeal that the Lord addresses to you? Ah! do not delay any longer, cast yourselves at his feet; come to the church, and make a good confession.

2. *ANNOUNCEMENT.*—The mission has already begun. The missionaries have the power, etc.

3. *SENTENCE.*—My dear Brethren, listen: if you wish to profit by this beautiful occasion of returning to God, he has his arms open to receive you; but if you continue to shut your ears to his voice, tremble lest he may abandon you and may call you no longer. Now if God abandons you, woe be to you! You will die in your sins, and you will be cast into hell to weep there without any hope of ever remedying your eternal ruin. Go, my Brethren, etc.

FIFTH EXAMPLE

“Souls to hell are blindly running,

Ah! what myriads, who can tell?
On they go, because they think not
What a fearful thing is hell!”

1. *INTRODUCTION.*—Sinner, what do you say? You say: If I go to hell, I shall not be there alone? If I am damned, I must have patience!—Yes, O heavens! this is what so many blind sinners say, and see how they go to hell! And why? You have heard the words of the hymn: “On they go, because they think not what a fearful thing is hell!”

2. *AMPLIFICATION.*—Listen: What you now say was also said by so many damned souls that now burn in the eternal fire: “If I go there, I shall not be there alone! If I am damned, I must have patience!” But at present they do not speak thus. Ah! would that this evening one of the damned came from hell and spoke in my place; you would hear him cry out: Unhappy me! I said that in hell I should not be alone; now that I am damned, would that I could be alone in my punishment! Alas! in the midst of this fire, which devours me, in the midst of the darkness, of the smoke that envelops me, in the midst of so many other torments, I must still bear the torment of being in the midst of all these damned persons, whose number suffocates me, whose cries stupefy me, whose stench becomes insupportable to me. I said: “If I go to hell, I must have patience!” Alas! what patience! I am dying with rage at every moment; I do nothing but utter cries and shrieks of despair. I should like to die, and I cannot even hope to die.

1. *MORAL APPLICATION.*—You hear, my Brethren, how the damned speak who cared little about hell, and it is they whom you are imitating. Hear now what God says to you by my mouth: My children, for these miserable beings there is no remedy; but there is a remedy for you if you wish to use it: ask my pardon; I will pardon you, and I will deliver you from hell.

2. *ANNOUNCEMENT.*—It is for this reason that the Lord sends you this mission. The missionaries have the power, etc.

3. *SENTENCE.*—O sinners! who knows whether this is not the last notice, the last mercy, which you receive from God? Put an end to all this; the Lord cannot bear with you any longer; his vengeance is near. Will you believe in hell only when you have arrived there? Ah! take care, you are

going there; and if you once arrive there, remember that there will be no remedy for your misfortune; think that if you ever fall into that abyss of fire, you will never come forth from it; never, never. Go, my Brethren, etc.

SIXTH EXAMPLE

> “Think, then, ere yet this life is o’er,
> On that whereon thy *all* depends—
> *That* evermore *or* nevermore,
> Eternity which never ends!”

1. *INTRODUCTION.—O* eternity, eternity*!* The saints tremble at the mere thought of eternity; and ye sinners, who are in disgrace with God, you do not fear? You do not tremble? It is of faith that he who dies in the state of sin goes to burn in the fire of hell for all eternity!

1. *AMPLIFICATION.*—What is hell? It *is a* dark place, where one sees only horrible monsters; where one hears only cries, shrieks, howling; where one feels only the torture of fire and other torments. And how long will all these horrors last? During all eternity: always, always! Will they ever end? No; never, never!—Come here, unhappy Judas, thou who hast been in hell for so many ages! tell me: How long will thy punishment last?—Judas answers: Always, always!—And thou, unfortunate Cain! tell me: How long hast thou been suffering in this abyss of fire? Alas! answers Cain: for many thousand years! And when will thy punishment be over?—Ah! never, never!

3. *MORAL APPLICATION.*—My dear Brethren, what think you? Tell me: How can you sleep with sins upon your souls, and as enemies of God? Does not an eternal hell await you? Why do you not resolve to give up the wicked life which you are leading? Now that you can do so, why do you not remedy this great ruin that threatens you if you do not become reconciled with God? Hasten to prevent this misfortune; make a good confession, return to God’s grace; for he certainly does not desire you to be damned.

4. *ANNOUNCEMENT.*—You already know that the mission has been begun. What is a mission? It is Jesus Christ, who comes to save his lost children and to deliver them from hell. Know that the missionaries have the power, etc.

5. *SENTENCE.*—My Brethren, do not fail to profit by this great mercy that God has bestowed upon you today. Now, while shedding tears at the feet of a confessor, you can deliver yourselves from hell; but if you do not amend your lives, pay attention to what I am going to say to you this evening: you will have the misfortune of ending by going to weep in hell during all eternity, as long as God will be God! Go, my Brethren, etc.

4. STANZAS FOR THE EVENING EXHORTATIONS AT A MISSION

(Per li sentimenti di notte.)

1.

Love God, who loveth thee,
For love itself is he;
He bids the sinner weep;
He saith: Poor child, from sin depart;
Rest thee within thy Father’s heart;
Turn to thy Shepherd, wandering sheep.

2.

’Tis the Lord hath sent me hither,
Messenger of pardon free;
Day of grace and hour of mercy—
Grace perhaps the last for thee!

3.

Lo! a God of all compassion
Calls thee; shall he call in vain?
If thou yet reject his mercy,
Will he ever call again?

4.

Sinner, thou art foe of heaven,
And thou tremblest not with fear?
Cease those sins, my child, ah! leave them;
Death advances, hell is near.

5.

Now thy Lord is waiting, waiting;

But he will not always wait:
When the day of vengeance breaketh,
Cries for mercy come too late.

6.

Turn to God in humble penance,
Sinner, do not still delay;
Do not scorn the love of Jesus,
Cast his mercy not away.

7.

Lost in sin, and yet rejoicing!
Far from God, and canst thou sleep?
On the brink of fell damnation,
And thou carest not to weep?

8.

Soon thy life will end, poor sinner,—
Know’st thou *when* the end will be?
Who can tell?—perhaps, my brother,
Death *this night* will come to *thee.*

9.

Think of death!—that awful moment
When thy dream of life must end;
Boundless bliss or ceaseless torments
On that moment, death, depend.

10.

Live thy life of sinful pleasures,
Sinners, yet the end must come!
Then, bold man, thy outraged Saviour
Shall be Judge to seal thy doom.

11.

Whither shalt thou fly for refuge
From that justly angered One,
Sinner, when he shall reproach thee
All the evil thou hast done?

12.

Souls to hell are blindly running,
Ah! what myriads, who can tell?
On they go, because they *think not*
*W*hat a fearful thing is *hell!*

13.

And when shall hell’s sharp pains be o’er?
The insult to God’s majesty
Has been so deep that evermore
Those pains shall last, eternally.

14.

Think on that dread eternity
To which thou art hast’ning ever;
Think of that long futurity
Of pains that will leave thee never.

5. SIMULTANEOUS EXHORTATIONS

Simultaneous exhortations are given but rarely. This means is employed only in certain places when the inhabitants do not come in sufficient numbers to the church, or when there are many scandalous persons who do not come to the sermons.

The object that is proposed in these exhortations is, to strike fear into the minds of the hearers; hence the exhortations should be filled with threats of the divine |

chastisements, such as an unhappy death, abandonment on the part of God, eternal punishments.

The following is the manner of performing this exercise:

1. The missionaries should be so numerous[13578] as to be able to surround the place by keeping themselves at a certain distance from one another, so that their voices do not mingle.

2. They should leave the church in the evening at a later hour than usual, without lights, without the crucifix, and unaccompanied. Each one goes alone and secretly to the place that is designated; then at the signal given by

a stroke of the large bell all begin the exhortation at the same time, and they also finish it at a second stroke.

3. This exhortation, as to its parts, is similar to the evening exhortation that has been described above, but with this difference: the *Introduction* is shorter, and it is made *ex abrupto* (abruptly) by beginning with the proposition itself, the object of which will be, for example, the proximate abandonment on the part of God, or the ingratitude of those that close their ears to his voice, or justice which he exercises toward those that despise his mercy. To the introduction is joined the *Amplification* with the reflection; then comes the *Moral Application;* but each of these parts should be very short, so also the invitation to penance, which shall be without the exposition of motives, without effective words, and without any announcement of powers or faculties, etc.; hence the simultaneous exhortation is in substance composed only of three parts; namely: The introduction, with a short amplification and reflection, the Moral Application with the invitation to penance, and the terrible Sentence.

6. EXAMPLE OF A SIMULTANEOUS EXHORTATION

1. *INTRODUCTION.*—Do you then, O sinner! really wish to damn yourself? Do you wish God to punish and abandon you? A few days ago the mission began, and you do not even wish to come to the church. Instead of punishing you, God has sent you the holy mission, during which he does not cease to call you night and day, at every hour, in every place, in the church, in the public places, at your very dwellings! What greater mercy could God have shown you? And you have become more and more deaf to his voice, you have become more and more obstinate! Continue, O ungrateful man! continue to despise the invitations and the graces which the Lord offers to you; but you must know that the justice of God is at hand: soon you will be the victim of an unhappy death. The demons of hell demand of God vengeance against you, and God can no longer bear with you. Unfortunate man! I pity you; it would have been better had you not been born! Now, you laugh at the mission; but listen: a time will come when this grace, which God gives you to-day and by which you do not wish to profit, will be a cruel sword which will pierce your soul in hell forever.

Then you will open your eyes to weep over and to curse your obstinacy; but then there will be no longer any remedy.

2. *MORAL APPLICATION.*—Cease then to be deaf, O ungrateful sinner! cease to excite the anger of God. Come to *church* tomorrow; come to hear the rest of the sermons; the end of the mission approaches. Come; Jesus Christ is waiting for you; make a good confession, but do so soon, soon, soon, before the mission is over. Lose no time; resist n0 longer God, who is calling you.

3. *SENTENCE.*—If you do not accept my invitation, I announce to you this evening a great chastisement which God will send *you*, and I inform you that this mission which God has sent you to save you, will serve, if you neglect it, to make God abandon you, and make you weep in hell with greater grief; without any hope, then, of ever being able to remedy your eternal loss.

II. THE EXHORTATION GIVEN DURING THE DAY

We have already said in the beginning that the exhortation given during the day has for its object to collect the inhabitants and to lead them from the public places and their places of work to the church; the aim of the moral application should therefore be to induce the hearers to come to the church, in order to hear the sermon that is about to be preached.

This exhortation is composed of the same parts as the evening exhortation, but with the following differences:

1. It should be longer; may last a quarter of an hour; the arguments may be more extended, and a few—two or three—short Latin sentences may be added; there may also be related an example, which however should have reference to the proposition of the exhortation.

2. The form of this exhortation should also be simple and popular, but less terrible and less vehement.

3. It is not necessary always to begin with a hymn, especially when the people are already disposed to listen.

4. At the end of this exhortation, especially during the first days of the mission we may add the act of contrition, but in a few words.

5. Instead of the terrible Sentence, we finish by a special motive, to induce the people to come to the church.

EXAMPLE OF AN EXHORTATION GIVEN DURING THE DAY

1. INTRODUCTION.—My Brethren, have you ever heard of the following incident: A king having been offended by one of his subjects, justly condemned him to death, but before the execution of the sentence this good prince charged one of his ministers to tell the condemned man that if he repented and asked the king's pardon he should obtain forgiveness?—Similar traits are not seen between the princes of the earth and their subjects; but this is what has taken place between God and you. You are condemned to hell on account of the offences that you have committed against God; but the Lord, instead of treating you according to justice, has sent us to you through this mission. *For Christ we are ambassadors.*[13579] We are ambassadors of God, but ambassadors of peace and of pardon.

2. *AMPLIFICATION.*—We therefore announce to you on behalf of Jesus Christ, that he is disposed to pardon you, if you repent of having offended him, and if you promise him that you will amend your lives. Well, what say you? What answer do you give? Dear Brethren, hear well that about which there is question: the mission is a great mercy of God for those that wish to profit by it; but for the obstinate, it will only serve to attract sooner the abandonment and the chastisements of the Lord. Our Lord wept at the sight of Jerusalem: *Seeing the city he wept over it.*[13580] And why? Because he saw that this ungrateful city did not wish to profit by the merciful visit that he made to it: *Because Thou hast not known the time of Thy visitation.*[13581] It is for this reason that he announces to you with tears in his eyes the chastisement that he has reserved for you.

3. MORAL APPLICATION.—Ye inhabitants of *N.*, Jesus Christ has come to-day to visit you also by this holy mission in order to show you mercy. Let him who despises this visit of our Lord tremble, and let him expect to receive soon an exemplary punishment. You must, therefore, my dear Brethren, return without delay to God, now that God calls you: the Lord calls you; but he will not call you always; and when he calls anyone he wishes to be obeyed without delay. If you, therefore, hear to-day his voice, do not harden your hearts. *To-day if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts.*[13582] Let us suppose that the condemned man mentioned above, to whom the King made an offer of pardon on condition that he would immediately repent of his crime, would have answered that he would think over the matter, and that afterwards he would speak about it: tell me, would not the King have ordered the sentence to be executed immediately? Indeed, this is precisely what he should expect who is not converted at once when God calls him.

4. ANNOUNCEMENT.—You see, my Brethren, that the mission has come; to-day it begins. Jesus Christ calls you at this moment, and says to you: *Turn ye to Me, . . . and I will turn to you.*[13583] Sinners, you have left me by offending me; but return to me, and I will receive you into my arms. What more can you ask of so good a God? Ah! no; let no one among you be so ungrateful as to add to the injuries already done to God the injury of despising the pardon that God offers him today.

5. *ACT OF CONTRITION.*—Come, let us cast ourselves *at* the; feet of Jesus Christ; let each one of you say to him: O Lord! I thank Thee for having waited for me till the present day, and for not having sent me to hell. I repent. . . . In future I will amend my life, ect.

MOTIVE FOR INDUCING THE PEOPLE TO COME TO THE CHURCH.—Now let all come to the church. Jesus Christ says that his sheep hear his voice: *My sheep hear My voice.*[13584] At this moment one may see who are the sheep of Jesus Christ, who are those that follow Jesus Christ, etc.

III. EXHORTATION OF THE DISCIPLINE.[13585]

The exhortation of the discipline should be still shorter than the evening exhortation: it should be conceived in terms that produce compunction rather than terror, and pronounced in a voice that expresses grief, since its only aim is to induce the hearers to repent of their faults, and to give themselves up to penance at that very moment.

This exhortation has three parts: the Reflection, the *Moral Application, and the Conclusion.* In the *REFLECTION some important proposition of the sermon,* which *has preceded, is expounded; in the MORAL APPLICATION the necessity of penance is shown; in the CONCLUSION the hearers are induced to practise penance.*

1. EXAMPLES OF VARIOUS EXHORTATIONS TO TAKE THE DISCIPLINE

FIRST EXAMPLE

AFTER THE SERMON ON ABANDONMENT BY GOD

1. *REFLECTION.*—Have you heard, my dear Brethren, what chastisement you have deserved by your sins? You have deserved that God should abandon you and should no more pardon you. But no: the Lord is still waiting for you; he calls you; his arms are open to receive you, if you wish to return to him. O my Brethren! do no longer offend this God, who has shown so much kindness to you; change your conduct; or do you wish that he should really abandon you?

2. *MORAL APPLICATION.*—Hasten, O sinners, hasten to give yourselves to God. Tell him that in future you will no more offend him; and as to the past, beg him to pardon you the great offence that you have given him.

3. *CONCLUSION.*—Weep, then, do penance, chastise your bodies, by which you have displeased God. Now raise your hand, raise your voice, and ask pardon: Pardon me, O Lord! mercy; I repent of having offended Thee; mercy!

Here the missionary intones at once the *Miserere*, which is continued by the ecclesiastics who are present. About the middle of the psalm, at the verse that best suits his subject, he interrupts it by a stroke of the bell, and makes a second exhortation, but still shorter, by following the same rule as above; for example:

1. Cast me not away from Thy face. David, while thinking of the sins which he committed against God, trembled and said: Cast me not away from Thy face: O Lord! do Thou not reject me, as I have deserved.

2. And you, my dear Brethren, what say you? How many times have you not driven God from your hearts? You would deserve that at this moment God should drive you from this church.

3. But no; see what he says this evening to each one of you: My son, ask my pardon, and I will pardon you. Raise again your voice and say: Pardon, O Lord! mercy.

We must take care that this exercise should always be concluded with fervor. If the fervor of the participants grows weak, the discipline should be abridged by intoning the *Gloria Patri.* We afterwards say to the people: Now respond to the hymn while saying with tears:

“I have offended Thee, my God,
Alas! my dearest Lord;
Thou Sea of Goodness Infinite,
And Fount of Love adored.
Ungratefully, without a cause,
I have offended Thee,
Who on the cross to give me life
Didst die through love for me.
But I am sorry, O my God!
In mercy, Lord, forgive;
I never will offend Thee more,—
No, never, while I live.
May every moment of my life
Be spent in bitter tears,
To mourn my past ingratitude,
The sins of former years!”

After the hymn the *Hail Mary* is recited three times by the people, with the face on the floor; and then we conclude by saying: “May the most Blessed Sacrament be praised and thanked! Blessed be the holy, immaculate, and most pure Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary!”

At the end of the exercise all those that wish to go to confession are invited to proceed to the place destined for this purpose. It must be here remarked that the missionaries, especially those that are charged with the duty of giving instructions and of preaching, should always urge the people, and particularly the men, to come to confession very soon, by telling them that if they wait till the great crowds come to confession, it may not be possible to satisfy them. This advice should be often repeated with much force from the very beginning; for otherwise the missionaries will remain unoccupied for several days, and will afterwards be overwhelmed by crowds, and this will cause confusion and embarrassment.

SECOND EXAMPLE

AFTER THE SERMON ON DEATH

1. REFLECTION.—Have you understood, my Brethren: A day will come when you must die; and then the world coming to an end for you, you will find yourself extended on your bed and abandoned by all men.

2. *MORAL APPLICATION.*—Then there will be no more time to make peace with God: your conscience being confused, God angered, your head weakened, your heart hardened—such will be your state; help yourself then if you can. Now, sinners, it is time to regulate your accounts and become reconciled with God; for this end he has waited for you up to the present time; he has opened his arms to receive you. Know that if to-day you weep over your past offences, God will forgive all your sins.

3. *CONCLUSION.*—Weep, then, do penance, chastise your bodies.

THIRD EXAMPLE

AFTER THE SERMON ON JUDGMENT

1. REFLECTION.—A day will come, my Brethren, when you will appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ to render an account of your whole life. Tell me: if Jesus Christ wished to judge you this very evening, what sentence would he pronounce against you?

2. MORAL APPLICATION.—Pay attention to what I say: On that day there will be no more mercy; then Jesus Christ will be the just Judge, while now he is a Father, and he opens his arms to receive and to pardon you.

3. CONCLUSION.—Hasten then to weep, *etc.*

FOURTH EXAMPLE

AFTER THE SERMON ON HELL

1. *REFLECTION.*—My dear Brethren, have you heard this evening the sermon on hell? Have you reflected where you should be now 0n account of your sins? You should now find yourselves in this abyss of fire, in profound darkness, in the midst of terrible torments. Do you not thank God that you still find yourselves in this church, with the certain hope of obtaining pardon if you only wish it? Ah! if one that is damned were present here this

evening, and could repent of his sins, and obtain grace, what penance would he not perform in order to be released from hell!

2. *MORAL APPLICATION.*—And you who have so many times deserved hell, more than many others who are now condemned for fewer and less grave sins than yours, what do you do? Do you not weep? do you not ask pardon of God?

3. *CONCLUSION.*—Ah! do not delay to weep, etc.

2. EXHORTATION TO TRAIL THE TONGUE ON THE GROUND

The exercise of the discipline ordinarily continues every evening till the evening before the day on which the Papal blessing is given; but on the last evening, instead of the discipline, it is customary to trail the tongue on the ground, an exercise very useful for those that have the habit of blaspheming and of uttering immodest language. This is done in the following manner:

After the women have left the church, and the door has been locked, the chairs and benches are removed, and the men are assembled at the main entrance of the church. Then the Father who is to give the exhortation places himself opposite to the people on an elevated place, with the crucifix held by a cleric who is between two others carrying lighted candles; at the same time all the other missionaries keep the multitude together in front of the crucifix, and hold back the children, if any have moved forward. Immediately after this the exhortation is given; and at the end, when the Father exhorts all to trail the tongue 0n the ground, the other missionaries begin by setting the example; but afterwards, as soon as they see the men prostrating themselves with the face on the ground, they rise, place themselves in the church at a distance from one another, and all together, in a loud voice, continue to animate the people to perform this penance with compunction.

The end of this exhortation is no other than to inspire people with horror of the sins of the tongue. As to the form, it may be the following; but the discourse may be more extended, as I give here only an idea of what is to be done.

3. EXAMPLE OF THE EXHORTATION TO TRAIL THE TONGUE ON THE GROUND

O goodness of God, how great art thou! O justice of God, how terrible art thou! O cursed sin, how cruel art thou! Raise your eyes, my Brethren; see the image of the man hanging on the cross, after having been scourged, crowned with thorns, and all covered with wounds from head to foot. Could you tell me who is this man and what he has done? It is the august Son of God, innocent and holy. Why did his eternal Father condemn him to so painful a death? Hear what his Father answers: *For the wickedness of My people have I struck him.* It was for the crimes of my people that I *have* struck him. Consider then the humiliation and the pain inflicted by your sins upon this innocent Lamb: it was because of your impurities that his flesh was torn; it was because of your bad thoughts that he was crowned with thorns; his feet and his hands were nailed to the cross because of your sinful steps and impure touches; his heart was pierced on account of your obstinacy. But, O my Jesus! be consoled; for these poor sinners are no longer obstinate; Thou already knowest that during these days of the mission they have tried to repair the evil that they have done: Thy painful wounds they have tried to heal by the scourges that they inflicted upon themselves; the spittle that covered Thy eyes they have tried to wipe off by tears; the pain of Thy feet pierced with nails they have tried to alleviate by coming to the church; the wounds made by the thorns they have tried to lessen by holy resolutions. Yes my Brethren, all this is true; but this divine mouth of Jesus Christ I see still tormented by the gall of your blasphemies, of your lies, of your immodest language. Well, this evening you should sweeten all the bitterness that you have caused our Lord in the past. And what must you do to accomplish this? At first, you should weep over the displeasure that you have given to so good a God, who died for you; and then you should chastise yourselves by trailing a little on the ground that tongue that has put so much gall into the mouth of Jesus Christ. Come, then, let us this evening offer him this consolation. My Fathers, be ye the first to give the example; and you, my Brethren, follow the priests. Weep, then, etc.

4. MOTIVES TO HE ANNOUNCED HY TIIE MISSIONARIES DURING THE TRAILING OF THE TONGUE ON THE GROUND

1. Suffer, cursed tongue, for having dared to offend Jesus Christ. Think, my Brother, that your tongue should now be burning in hell, etc.

2. Say from the bottom of your heart: O my Jesus! accept this penance, however small, and pardon me all the sins that I have committed by my words.

3. Most Holy Virgin Mary, my Mother, offer to God this mortification, and pray to him to pardon me.

4. O my Brother! what joy this evening for the angels to see, etc. And what torment for the devils to see that God receives you this evening into his arms, etc.

5. At the same time make an act of contrition and ask pardon, etc.,—O Lord, I am sorry, etc.; and then a firm resolution, etc.,—O Lord, I will rather die. Oh, I have given Thee enough gall, my sweet Jesus! If I should offend Thee again by my cursed tongue, let me rather die.

6. Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, and by the merit of the gall which he tasted on the cross, pardon me, etc.

7. My dear Brother, if you were in hell, which you have deserved, what penance would you not do to be redeemed out of it? Well, this evening, 0n account of this mortification God will deliver you from the pains that you should suffer in hell, etc.

IV. THE EXHORTATION OF PEACE

The exhortation of peace, which is delivered after the discipline, as distinguished from that which precedes the general Communion, according to Bari, is composed of six parts. 1. Recapitulation; 2. Application; 3. Proof; 4. Example; 5. Moral application; 6. Conclusion.

1. A point of the sermon that has preceded is briefly recapitulated.

2. It is applied to those that cherish hatred against their neighbor by announcing to them the chastisement reserved for the revengeful.

3. It is proved by some passage from holy Scripture or from the holy Fathers, and by reasons, showing how much he should fear divine vengeance who wishes to be revenged, and how, on the contrary, he should hope for pardon from God who forgives others.

4. The proof is confirmed by an example given somewhat in detail.

5. The moral application is then made.

6. At the end the hearers are invited to become reconciled with one another by forgiving one another the injuries that have been received.

After the conclusion of the discourse, the Father still continues to urge those present to the forgiveness of injuries, and this by various motives that are found at the end of the following example.

It should be explained that it is the business, not of him who has given offence, but of him who has received it, and who wishes to forgive, to come to tell the missionary in secret what is that offence. If only the one that gave offence presents himself, he should be dismissed with a few kind words, and should not be allowed to mention the fact nor the person who has been offended. When the person offended presents himself, if the offence has been secret, care should be taken to have the reconciliation brought about in secret; but if it has been public, he who is the author of it is called, provided it is not an ecclesiastic, so that both may embrace each other at the foot of the crucifix; and if the author of the offence is not present, he is to be replaced by one of his near relatives. It must, however, be observed, that if the hatred proceeds from a cause concerning honor, it suffices to say to the person offended that he should pardon the offence in his heart, and this need not be followed by an embrace, which might create scandal and some sinful affection.

EXAMPLE OF AN EXHORTATION TO PEACE

1. *RECAPITULATION*.—You have heard, my dear Brethren, the account which you have inevitably to render to Jesus Christ, and the terrible sentence which the divine Judge will pronounce against sinners.

2. *APPLICATION*.—Job, who was so holy a man, thinking of God’s judgments, cried out: *For what shall I do when God shall rise to judge? and when he shall examine, what shall I answer him.*[13586] And you, my Brethren, what will you answer God when he asks you an account of your life? Tell me, what will you answer him, you especially who bear hatred towards your neighbor, and who, after having heard the sermon of this evening, still think of revenging yourselves?

3. *PROOF*.—Vengeance belongs to God only; he is the just avenger of sins, and for this reason he is called *the God of revenge.*[13587] And you, miserable worm of the earth, you wish to act as if you were God? But think of the chastisement with which St. James menaces those that refuse to forgive others: he will be judged without mercy: *For judgment without*

mercy to him that hath not done mercy.[13588] Now you do not wish to forgive your neighbor the offence that he has given you: well, when on the day of judgment you wish to obtain pardon from Jesus Christ, it will with justice be refused to you. You yourselves, then, according to St. Augustine,[13589] will not dare to ask mercy of God, who himself has given you the command to forgive your neighbor. Now you wish to take revenge upon your neighbor: then Jesus Christ will also take revenge upon you. Our Lord has said: *Revenge is mine, and I will repay them in due time.*[13590] Should you not have committed other offences against God, you should think it no little injury that you heap upon him this evening by wishing to persist in hating your neighbor, when Jesus Christ exhorts you to pardon him for the love of him, when he commands you to do so, and when he seems even to beg you to do so!

4. *EXAMPLE.*—It is related that St. John Gualbertus, whose relative had been assassinated, met one day the murderer, who asked his pardon for the love of Jesus Christ. On hearing this name the saint pardoned him. Having afterwards entered the church, he saw the image of Jesus crucified bend its head and salute him as if to thank him for having pardoned the murderer for the love of his Saviour.

Instead of this incident, the following may be related: A powerful man had seven enemies, and wished to take revenge on all seven. St. Catharine of Siena begged him to pardon at least one of them for the love of Jesus Christ. He did so, and while doing so he felt such interior consolation that he at once called upon St. Catharine to tell her that for the love of Jesus Christ he pardoned all his enemies.

1. *MORAL APPLICATION.*—You see then how our Lord presses to his heart all those who for the love of him pardon the injuries that have been heaped upon them. Hence, my dear Brethren, if you wish also to be embraced by Jesus Christ, you must pardon your neighbor and embrace him who has offended you. Our Lord says: *Forgive and you shall be forgiven.*[13591].[13592] Know, then, if this evening, to please God, you forget to pardon the offences that you have received, God will forgive the offences that you have committed against him, and he will embrace you as his children.

2. Well then, my dear Brethren, if your neighbor has offended you, come first to mention this in secret to the missionary, and then become reconciled with one another at the foot of the crucifix. Oh, happy he that is the first this evening to perform this noble deed and to set the good example! Come then, Jesus Christ is waiting for you, etc.

This exhortation is here given in an abridged form, merely to give a succinct idea of it; he that has to give it, should take care to develop it in any way that he thinks fit. We think it useful to indicate here, in conclusion, various motives, which may be given for the purpose of inducing those who have been offended to grant full pardon; for example:

1. Come, give to-day this satisfaction to Jesus Christ, come to pardon, etc.; I do not ask this on my account, but for the love of Jesus crucified, who, if you pardon others, will pardon you; and if, on the contrary, you refuse to pardon others, do not ask his pardon; for he will withdraw from you, and on the day of judgment, etc.

2. You see that at this moment the devil is occupied in tempting you, so as to prevent you from pardoning your neighbor; he says to you that it would be a shame for you to pardon others. Answer him by asking whether it was a shame for Jesus crucified to pardon his executioners. Ah! do not listen to the devil; listen to Jesus Christ, who says to you this evening: If you wish me to make peace with you this evening, make, first, peace with your neighbor.

1. Come, why are you waiting? Do violence to yourselves: do not allow yourselves to be conquered by the devil. Give this pleasure to Jesus Christ and to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who now have their eyes upon you to see what you are going to do.

2. Oh, what consolation will you feel after this beautiful act! Hasten, come, etc.

3. See, and tremble: if you do not forgive your neighbor this evening, God will abandon you, and you will be damned.

4. Pay attention: see who is coming; do not allow him to pass by. Come to Jesus Christ, the King of peace. Live Jesus, and may the power of hell burst with anger! Courage! etc.

(As for the example of another exhortation to peace, given to the people before General Communion, see farther on, in Chapter IV.

Chapter II

THE ROSARY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

I. NARRATION

THE recitation of the Rosary may be preceded by *an* introduction in which is related some example of the protection which the Blessed Virgin grants to those that practise this devotion. But it must be observed that this introduction should be given only when there is time for it, and when it becomes necessary in order to keep the people occupied; this is, however, rarely the case. Ordinarily, in winter, and in those places where the instruction is given during the day, according *as* it is commonly practised, there is little time for it. It is, therefore, better to omit the introduction, and to recite the Rosary immediately, as it greatly contributes to the success of the mission. It will then be well to begin by giving out the mysteries on which the meditation is to be made, by joining to them some short reflection and a short moral, as will be said farther on. If afterwards time permits, the narration may be given at the end of the Rosary; we give here the rules for it.

The narration contains three parts: The Introduction, the Fact, and the Moral Application.

1. As to the INTRODUCTION, the proposition which is its subject is drawn from the very fact that one wishes to relate by passing from a general proposition to the particular proposition of this fact. If there is question, for instance, of the help given by the Blessed Virgin to one of her pious clients at the hour of death, one may say: “At all times, under all circumstances, Mary, our good Mother, comes to the assistance of her clients; but it is, above all, at the hour of death that they stand in the greatest need of her protection, etc.”

2. As to the *FACT,* only that is given which has connection with the proposition without speaking of the circumstances that are foreign to it, and

without speaking parenthetically. It will always be well to mention the name of the author who relates the fact, as well as the circumstances of time and place.

3. As to the *MORAL APPLICATION*, we begin by drawing the conclusion from the fact related, according to the particular proposition which precedes it; for example: “You see, my dear Brethren, how the recitation of the Rosary is useful to obtain the protection of Mary at the moment of death.” Then comes the moral application: “Hence, in future, do not omit to recite it every day with devotion and with confidence. Let us then say it together this evening: *Deus, in adjutorium,* etc.”[13593]

EXAMPLE OF NARRATION

1. *INTRODUCTION.*—He that has a true devotion to Mary may be called happy even in this life, and may be sure of paradise, according to the words of the Gospel: *He that shall find Me, shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.*[13594] But who is he that finds Mary? It is he who loves her, and who honors her by special devotions. Now among all the devotions I know none that is more pleasing to the Mother of God than the Rosary. Oh, what a beautiful hope of salvation have those who recite every day the Rosary with piety and perseverance! The books are full of examples of souls saved by this means. Hear what the devils themselves, forced by a command from St. Dominic, have said in praise of the Rosary.

2. *FACT.*—Father Pacciucchelli[13595] relates that one day while St. Dominic was preaching about the devotion of the Rosary, a heretic was brought in who, for having publicly spoken ill of the Rosary, had been by a just judgment of God become possessed of devils; he had been bound, and he uttered horrible cries. Then the saint commanded the devils, in the name of Mary, to answer all the questions that he would address to them. At first he asked them why they had taken possession of this sinner, and how many they were. They answered that it was on account of the irreverence committed against Mary, and that they numbered fifteen thousand, on account of the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary. Then the saint asked them whether what he had preached on the Rosary was true. The evil spirits then began to howl and to curse the moment in which they had entered this body,

since they now found themselves forced to confess what would do them so much injury.

"Hear, O Christians!" they said all that our enemy has said of Mary and of the Rosary is true." They added that they had no power against the servants of Mary, and that many sinners at death by invoking Mary, notwithstanding their unworthiness, succeeded in saving their souls. They concluded with these words: "We are compelled to make known that he who perseveres in devotion to Mary and to the Rosary will not be damned; for Mary will secure for him eternal salvation." Then St. Dominic told the people to recite the Rosary. At each *Ave Maria* there departed from the unhappy man a multitude of devils like burning coals, so that at the end of the recitation of the Rosary he was entirely delivered from these infernal spirits. Such a prodigy brought back many heretics to the true faith, and filled every one with an ardent devotion to the Rosary.

1. *MORAL APPLICATION.*—You see, my dear Brethren, what a beautiful hope we have of being saved by the protection of Mary when we honor her by devotion to the Rosary. Do not, therefore, in future, fail to recite it every day with much affection and confidence; if any one has neglected this practice in the past, let him begin it this evening, and never discontinue it. Let us, then, begin and recite the Rosary during these days of the mission, so that the Blessed Virgin may obtain for all the inhabitants of this place the grace of true conversion. *Deus, in adjutorium,* etc.

II. THE MYSTERIES

After the exposition of the mystery come the Consideration, the Moral Application, and the Prayer, for example:

THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES

In the 1st, the *ANNUNCIATION*, we contemplate how the Blessed Virgin was informed by the archangel Gabriel that she should conceive and bring forth our Lord Jesus *Christ.—(CONSIDERATION):* Consider here, my dear Brethren, the love of our God: he could have saved us by sending an angel to redeem us; but he wished to come himself to die for our salvation, so that our hearts might not be divided, says St. Bernard: "In order that our hearts might not be divided, he wished to be our Creator and Redeemer,”[13596] etc.—*(MORAL APPLICATION):* However, where is the love, where is the gratitude, of men towards a God who has loved them so much?—*(PRAYER):* Let us ask Mary, in this first decade of the Rosary, to obtain for us this holy love of God: O holy Mother of God! so full always of love for this good Lord Jesus Christ, who became thy Son, that he might deliver us from hell, obtain for us the grace to love him with our whole heart, etc.

In the 2d, the *VISITATION,* we contemplate how the Blessed Virgin Mary, having learned that Elizabeth, her cousin, was with child, set out immediately to visit her, and remained with her three months.—(Cons.) The visit of Mary was the source of grace to this whole family.—(Mor. applic.) Happy the soul that is visited by Mary, etc.—(Pr.) Let us pray, then, to our dear Lady, that she may deign, during this mission, often to visit our souls, so that they may be sanctified, etc.

In the 3d, the *BIRTH OF OUR LORD,* we contemplate how, the time having arrived, the Blessed Virgin brought forth our Redeemer at midnight, in a stable, between two animals, and she laid him in a manger.—(Cons.) When the time of her delivery arrived, Mary was at Bethlehem; but not being able to procure any lodging in the city, she was obliged to take shelter in a cave, which was used as a stable for cattle; and there she gave birth to the Son of God, etc.—(Mor. applic.) Jesus wished to make his first appearance in this world in the form of a babe lying in a manger, in order to inspire sinners with greater confidence, etc. . . . Let no one, then, entertain sentiments of distrust, etc.—(Pr.) Let us beseech the Blessed Virgin to obtain for us true confidence, etc.

In the 4th, the *PRESENTATION*, we contemplate how, forty days after the birth of our Lord, that she might fulfil the precepts of legal purification, the Blessed Virgin offered her divine Son in the Temple, and placed him in the arms of the aged Simeon.—(Cons.) Mary had no need to be purified, because she was always free from every stain; but in order to obey the law, and through humility, she went to be purified, and to appear sullied like other women.—(Mor. applic.) Since, then, the Mother of God, who was so pure, was not ashamed to appear as if she needed to be purified, how shall you ever be ashamed to confess your sins during this holy mission?—(Pr.)

Pray to the Blessed Virgin to help you to overcome every repugnance to confess your sins, etc.

In the 5th, the *FINDING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE,* we contemplate how Mary, having lost her Son, and having sought for him during three days, found him again disputing in the midst of the Doctors, when he was twelve years of age.—(Cons.) The Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, having gone to Jerusalem to visit the Temple, took with them the little child Jesus; but at the return they lost him. For three days, then, they sought after him with many sighs and tears, and found him at last in the Temple.—(Mor. applic.) The Blessed Virgin never lost the grace of her divine Son; she was only deprived of his sensible presence; and, nevertheless, she sought after him with tears. Oh, how much greater reason has the sinner to search with tears for Jesus Christ, when he has lost his grace! Whoever seeks for him in this way will surely find him.—(Pr.) Let us pray to the Blessed Virgin to obtain for us a true sorrow for our sins, etc.

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

In the 1st, the *AGONY IN THE GARDEN,* we contemplate how Jesus Christ, while praying in the Garden of Olives, sweat drops of blood.—(Cons.) When our Saviour reached the Garden of Olives, he was seized with so great a sadness that he said it was sufficient to take away his life: *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*—(Mor. applic.) What was it, then, that afflicted the heart of Jesus so much, that made him sweat drops of blood? It was the sight of our sins that caused him this cruel agony. Let us also unite our sorrow to that of Jesus Christ.—(Pr.) Let us pray to the Blessed Virgin to obtain for us this sorrow.

In the 2d, the *SCOURGING,* we contemplate how cruelly Jesus Christ was scourged in the house of Pilate, where, according to a revelation made to St. Bridget, he received six thousand six hundred and sixty-six blows.—(Cons.)

This scourging of Jesus Christ was so cruel that his body became like a leper’s, that is, one continual wound from head to foot, according to the prophecy of Isaias: *And we have thought him as it were a leper.*—(Mor. applic.) Holy writers teach that our Saviour was pleased to suffer this great punishment especially to satisfy for the sins committed against chastity.

Sinners, have you heard this? Your impurities are the scourges that made our Saviour suffer; ah! do no longer scourge him, etc.—(Pr) Pray to the Blessed Virgin to deliver you from this vice, which makes hell so full, and in temptations invoke Mary, etc.

In the. 3d, the *Crowning with Thorns,* we contemplate how Jesus Christ was crowned with thorns and treated like a mock king.—(Cons.) After having been scourged he was made to sit upon a stone; a reed was put into his hand to represent a sceptre, a rag upon his shoulders for a royal mantle, and on his head, in place of a crown, a wreath of thorns, which they struck with a cane to make them penetrate. Then the soldiers insulted him, saying: “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they buffeted him.—(Mor. applic.) Sinners do the same: for they confess; but scarcely risen from the feet of their confessor, they leave the church to give Jesus Christ new blows on the face.—(Pr.) Let us beseech the Blessed Virgin to obtain for us the grace to die rather than ever offend God any more, etc.

In the 4th, the *CARRYING OF THE CROSS*, we contemplate how Jesus Christ, having been condemned to death by Pilate, was made to bear the cross upon his shoulders in order to increase his humiliation and his pain.—(Cons.) With great affection Jesus embraced this cross, wishing by this means to satisfy for our sins.—(Mor. applic.) It is therefore just that we, in our turn, to satisfy for the many offences which we have given him, should embrace the crosses that God sends us, etc.—(Pr.) Let us pray to Mary to obtain for us resignation and patience in all our tribulations, etc.

In the 5th, the *Crucifixion,* we contemplate how Jesus Christ, having arrived at Calvary, was stripped, then nailed to the cross, where he died for love of us, in the presence of his afflicted Mother.—(Cons.) Consider what a bitter death our Saviour suffered to purchase our love.—(Mor. applic.) Let us always keep by us some beautiful image of Jesus crucified, and often, while looking at it, let us say: I love Thee, my Jesus, because Thou hast died for me.—(Pr.) *Let us ask* the Mother of sorrows to obtain for us the grace to think often of the dying love of Jesus Christ, which he bore to us by dying for us.

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

In the 1st, the *RESURRECTION*, we contemplate how, the third day after his death, Jesus Christ rose again triumphant and glorious, to die no more. (Cons.) Let us consider the glory of our Redeemer when he arose from the sepulchre, after having vanquished Satan, and delivered the human race from bondage.—(Mor. applic.) How great is the folly of the sinner who, having been once delivered from the tyranny of the devil, consents to become again his slave for some wretched gain or some miserable pleasure of this world!—(Pr.) Let us pray to the Blessed Virgin to unite us by love so closely to Jesus Christ that we may never again by mortal sin become the slaves of Lucifer.

In the 2d, the *ASCENSION*, we contemplate *how* Jesus Christ, forty days after his resurrection, ascended *into* heaven in triumph, surrounded by wonderful glory, *in* the sight of his most holy Mother and of his disciples.—(Cons.) Before Jesus Christ died for us, Paradise was closed against us; but by his death, Jesus has opened *it* for all those that love him.—(Mor. applic.) *Ah*, what a pity that, after our Saviour has suffered so much *to* obtain Paradise, this happy kingdom, in which, etc.; and then so many foolish sinners should renounce *it* and give themselves up to hell for a worthless pleasure, for a mere nothing!—(Pr.) Let us beseech Mary to obtain for us the light to see clearly how miserable are the goods of this world, and how great the delights that God offers in the world to come to those that love him.

In the 3d, the *MISSION OF THE HOLY GHOST*, we contemplate how Jesus Christ, seated at the right hand of his Father, sent down the Holy Ghost to the chamber where the apostles with the Virgin Mary were assembled.—(Cons.) Before receiving the Holy Ghost, the apostles were so feeble, so cold, in the love of God, that, at the time of the Passion of our Lord, one betrayed him, another denied him, and all abandoned him; but as soon as they had all received the Holy Ghost, they were so much inflamed with love that they gave up their lives generously for Jesus Christ.—(Mor. applic.) St. Augustine says: *He who loves, does not labor.* He who loves God feels no affliction under crosses, but rather rejoices, ect.—(Pr.) Let us ask of Mary to obtain for us from the Holy Ghost the gift of divine love; for then all the crosses of this life will seem sweet to us.

In the 4th, the *ASSUMPTION OF OUR BLESSED LADY*, we contemplate how Mary, twelve years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, departed this life, and was carried up by angels to heaven.—(Cons.) The death of Mary was full of peace and consolation, because her life had been all holy, etc.—(Mor. applic.) Our death will not be like hers, for our sins will then be a subject of alarm. But hear: for as to him who renounces a bad life and consecrates himself to the service of Mary, this good Mother will not fail to comfort him in that last moment, and obtain for him the grace of dying consoled, as she has done to so many of her faithful servants.—(Pr.) Let us place ourselves, then, under her protection, with the firm purpose to amend our lives; and let us always ask her to assist us in the hour of death, etc.

In the 5th, the *CORONATION OF OUR BLESSED LADY,* we consider how Mary was crowned by her divine Son, and we contemplate at the same time the glory of all the saints.—(Cons.) When Mary was crowned in heaven by the hand of God, she was also appointed to be our advocate; for this reason, Blessed Amadeus says that she prays for us incessantly.—(Mor. applic.) It is true that Mary prays for all men, but she especially prays for those that often and confidently have recourse to her intercession.—(Pr.) Let us beseech her always to pray for us, by saying with the Church: *Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us;* and with St. Philip Neri: *O Mary, Mother of God! pray to Jesus for us.*

Chapter III

PREPARATORY ACTS FOR THE CONFESSION OF CHILDREN

BEFORE the acts that are made to dispose the children for confession, we address to them an instruction which is composed of three parts: the Introduction, the Proof, and the Fact.

1. To the *INTRODUCTION* is joined the Proposition, which has for its subject the injury that is done to God by sin, or the ingratitude of the sinner, or the mercy of God towards him who repents. It will be well to begin the introduction by a truth opposed to the proposition. For example: if one takes for the subject the injury done to God by sin, the introduction should at first show how God deserves to be honored; if it is the ingratitude of the sinner, one should speak of the great obligation of loving God for so many benefits, etc.; and if it is of the mercy of God, one should speak of the chastisements that he merits who offends God.

2. Here follows the *PROOF,* giving reasons or authorities, which should be few in number, expressed briefly and simply, according to the capacity of the children. A short moral is added to the proof.

3. After this a *FACT* is selected, which should correspond to the proposition, and be conducive towards exciting compunction so as to dispose the children to make a good act of contrition.

We pass, then, to the Acts.

We begin by the acts of theological virtues; that is, Faith, Hope, and Charity. Care should be taken that these acts be preceded by their corresponding motives, namely: for the act of faith, that we should believe what the Church teaches, because God has revealed it to her; for the act of hope, that we should hope for paradise and the graces necessary to reach it, because we have the promise of God, who is all-powerful, merciful, and faithful; for the act of charity, that we should love God, because he deserves to be loved by men by reason of his infinite goodness.—I have said that these motives should precede the acts, and not follow them, as they are made to do by some; for the motive is called *motive* because it should move us to act. This is what should be observed in regard to the acts that are made at the end of each instruction. Besides, we should be careful that the acts preparatory for the confession of the children has special relation to confession that they are going to make, namely: to believe specially that in the sacrament of penance sins are pardoned, to hope especially for pardon through the merits of Jesus Christ, etc.

We finish with the act of contrition, preceded by the motive, the reflection or reason that moves one to repentance, and by the invitation through which one is urged to repent; for example:—*(MOTIVE):* Jesus Christ has said: *Him that cometh to Me, I wilt not cast out (John,* $^{\text{v.}}$ 37).—*(INVITATION):* Ah, my children, you would deserve to be rejected to-day by Jesus Christ; but since he says to you that he will not reject you, hasten to cast yourselves at his feet, weep, repent, etc., and say to him. *(Act)* My Jesus, it is true that I have offended Thee, but I love Thee with my whole heart; and because I love Thee, I repent, etc.—It will also be good for the children, and for persons but little instructed, to make them conceive the act of contrition by asking them, for example: My children, do you not love with your whole heart this God who is so good? And because you love him, do you repent of having offended him?—It will be well to repeat these acts of contrition three times, by giving them different motives: the first motive should be drawn from the proposition; at the second, the crucifix should be kissed; the third, finally, should be stronger and more touching.

EXAMPLE OF THIS EXERCISE

1. *INTRODUCTION.*—My dear children, if you have offended God, you have committed a great crime, and very great is the punishment that you have deserved. How have you had the boldness to offend a God so great and so good? He has created you, he has loved you so much that he gave his life for you, etc.—But thank the infinite mercy of your God.—*(PROPOSITION):* Know that this God, whom you have so much despised, wishes to pardon and embrace you to-day if you sincerely repent of having offended him.

2. *PROOF.*—Do not fear; have confidence. God says that he does not wish the death of the sinner, but that he be converted, and that he live: *I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live (Ezech.* xxxiii. II). (All these texts, if one wishes to quote them, should be briefly but clearly explained.) Hence our Lord invites all sinners, etc. *Turn ye to Me . . . and I will turn to you* (*Zach.* i. 3).

3. *FACT.*—(Here is narrated in a few words an example of the mercy of God. The most touching is that of the prodigal son *[Luke,* xv.]. We briefly describe his departure from the paternal house, the miserable state to which he, was reduced; for to keep himself from starving he was obliged to take care of the swine. Then we mention the reception given him 0n his return by his father, who embraced him, and clothed him with a precious garment, which signifies grace, etc. Hence we pass on to the *MORAL APPLICATION.)* You see in this example, my dear children, how good God is towards those that return to him with a repentant heart, etc.—Let us, then, have confidence, etc.—If you make to-day a good confession, Jesus Christ will embrace you, etc.—(Here there must be added, in a few words, an example of the chastisements that God sends to those who in confession omit through shame to tell some mortal sin. We should forcibly dwell upon this point, in order that the children at present and in the future conceive great horror for concealing their sins through shame. Afterwards, we let them make the Acts, saying:) Now, before you go to confession, it is necessary that you perform the acts in order to obtain the pardon of God in confession.

ACT OF FAITH.—My God, because Thou hast revealed it to the holy Church, I believe all that the holy Church teaches me as of faith. I believe that Thou art my God, the Creator of all things, who, during an eternity, rewardest the just in paradise and punishest the sinners in hell. I believe the mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three Persons, but one God. I believe that God the Son, the second Person, was made man by taking the name of Jesus Christ, who died for us, who arose again on the third day, who is now sitting at the right hand of the Father in heaven,—that is, equal in glory to God his Father,—and who will come one day from heaven to judge all men. I believe that only the Roman Catholic Church is the Church of Jesus Christ, in which alone we can obtain eternal salvation. I believe the Communion of the Saints; that is, the participation in the good works among all those that are in the grace of God. I believe the seven sacraments, and especially the sacrament of baptism, by which the soul is washed, cleansed from *sin, and* receives the grace of God; the sacrament of penance, by which we recover the grace that has been lost; and the sacrament of the Eucharist, in which we really receive Jesus Christ, the body, the soul, and the divinity. My God, I thank Thee for having made me a Christian; and I protest that I wish to live and to die in this holy Faith.

ACT OF HOPE.—My dear children, when you have sinned, the devil wishes to make you despair; but God does not wish us to despair: he even commands us always to hope for the pardon of our sins, provided we repent of them: My God, because Thou art faithful, all-powerful, all-merciful, trusting in Thy promises, I hope, by the merits of Jesus Christ, the pardon of my sins, final perseverance, and the glory of paradise.

ACT OF CHARITY.—Now, my children, God wishes *to* pardon you, but he wants you to love him. What *do* you say? Does not this God, who is the sovereign good, deserve to be loved? Let us, then, make an act of love for God, who is so good: My God, because Thou art infinite goodness, the sovereign good, worthy of infinite love, I love Thee above all things, with my whole heart.

ACT OF CONTRITION.—But, in the past, have you always loved our good God? have you not offended him? Ah, make an act of contrition, with the intention of applying it to the confession that you are going to make; and pay attention: for if you do not truly repent of your sins, Jesus Christ will not pardon you. (We make first an act of *ATTRITION):* Think, my children, that you should at this moment burn in hell forever, separated from God and excluded from paradise. Now, on account of hell, which you have deserved, and paradise, which you have lost, are you sorry for all the sins that you have committed against God?—(We then make an act of *CONTRITION).* But, above all, think how great is this God, and how much he deserves to beloved by you, at least out of gratitude for the love that he has borne you by having even died for you. Still, you have done him an injury: you have preferred nothingness to him you have turned your back upon him. Are you sorry for all this? Say, then: My God, during the past I have despised Thee; but now I love Thee with my whole soul: and because I love Thee, I am sorry for the sins that I have committed against Thee, for all the displeasure that I have caused Thee; I regret all this with my whole heart; I should like to die of sorrow, and should have rather suffered every evil than have but once offended Thee.

At the end we let the children make a firm purpose of never more offending God, by raising the hand as a sign of the promise that they are making. They should also be told to make now a special resolution never to conceal any sin through shame.

However, before making this formal act of contrition, we should take care to have the children to feel sorrow several times and for various motives, as has been said above, by taking the crucifix when the second motive is mentioned.

After these acts it is customary to take a child that is distinguished for its innocence, and to have him embrace the crucifix on the top step of the altar.

Chapter IV

SOLILOQUIES FOR HOLY COMMUNION

During the mission two soliloquies are given: one being for the children, the other for the people. The only difference between the two is that the first should be given in a more plain and familiar manner, according to the capacity of the children; but to the second the exhortation to penance is added, and is given after the act of contrition, as we may see in the example given. Both have, however, the same parts and the same acts as well for the preparation for Communion as for thanksgiving.

The acts for the preparation are usually the acts of faith, adoration, humility, contrition, love, and desire; but substantially they may be reduced to three—the acts of faith, humility, and love: the act of faith is joined to that of contrition; and to the act of love, that of desire. It will be well to relate between these acts some little touching incidents. We begin the whole by a short introduction, as may be seen further on in the example of the soliloquy for the people, which, excepting the exhortation to peace, resembles the soliloquy for the children, as has already been said.

After the act of contrition, before the Communion of the people, the exhortation to peace is given, and before the Communion of the children the procession takes place, which they make outside of the church, all wearing a crown of thorns on their heads, and the girls having, besides, their faces covered with a white veil.

(As to the girls, we understand here those that are not more than fifteen years old; for those that are older go to Communion by themselves, without procession). When the children return to the church, before they enter, the Communion tickets, received from the missionary who teaches the catechism, are collected. Then the children are placed in a line before the altar, the boys being separated from the girls, and the soliloquy is concluded by acts of love and of desire, etc.

INTRODUCTION.—Let us be glad and rejoice: and give glory to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath prepared herself.[13597] O my dear Brethren! there are no longer tears of grief, but tears of joy and of love which I ask of you this morning. Let us be glad and let us rejoice: Yes, let us be glad; why? the marriage of the Lamb is come: Jesus Christ, the divine Lamb, pacified by your repentance, wishes to come this morning to espouse your souls in Holy Communion. You have longed so much for this day; it has come. Prepare yourselves, then: for the heavenly Spouse is near; he is ready to enter your hearts.

ACT OF FAITH AND OF ADORATION.—St. Teresa is astonished that so many envied the happiness of those that lived in the time when Jesus Christ was visible on earth, when every one could enjoy his presence, speak to him face to face, and ask him for favors: “But,” she said, “have we not in the Blessed Sacrament this same Jesus, our Saviour, who not only causes us to enjoy there his presence, but gives us as food his sacred flesh and his entire self?” Such is the assurance which Jesus Christ himself gives you to-day from this altar, from which he says to you: My children, you must know that this bread with which you are soon to nourish yourselves is not bread, but it is my own body: *Take ye, and eat: This is My body.*[13598] Reanimate, then, your faith. You must have a lively faith to communicate with devotion. Tell me: who is it that lives in the Blessed Sacrament? It is Jesus Christ. Let each one say to himself: Ah, my Jesus, I believe firmly, because Thou hast said so, that Thou art all entirely with body, soul, divinity, in the consecrated Host. I believe that in receiving Thee I receive this same Son of God, who was made man and who died for me on the cross. Yes, my Saviour and my God, in this sacrament I adore Thee with my whole heart, and I unite my adoration to that which is paid to Thee by the angels and the Most Blessed Virgin.

Act of Humility and of Contrition.—In olden times the deacon before Holy Communion addressed to the people these words: If any one is not holy let him not approach the Blessed Sacrament. My dear Brethren, you wish this morning to receive Jesus Christ; but are you holy? If you are not, at least humble yourselves and say: I am not worthy. O Lord! I am not *worthy to receive Thee; I am not worthy even to appear in Thy presence. On account of my sins, I should merit to be driven from the church and to be cast into hell. But no, my Brethren, Jesus Christ does not wish, that you should omit approaching him and even receiving him; he has said: Him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out.*[13599] *He who comes to me with a repentant heart, etc, I will not repel. Have you understood me? Approach, then, this sweet Master; but approach with tears, on account of the sins that you have committed. (Here the crucifix is held in the hand.) Say to him: See, O Lord! the traitor whom Thou hast loved so much and who has been so* ungrateful to Thee. My God, I trust that Thou hast already pardoned me; but if Thou hast not yet pardoned me, ah! do pardon me now before I received Thee; I am sorry, etc.

EXHORTATION OF PEACE BEFORE COMMUNION.[13600]

But you must know, my Brethren, that Jesus Christ declares in the Gospel that pardon is granted to him who pardons: *Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.*[13601] He who does not forgive, how can he hope for forgiveness? How could this Lamb, who is so full of love and mercy, contentedly enter a soul filled with hatred? He has specially ordained that priests should refuse Communion to those that bear hatred toward others when he says: *Give not that which is holy to dogs.*[13602] By the word *dogs* we here understand, according to the interpreters, those that bear hatred like infuriated dogs. The angels also give notice that the dogs should be kept out of the church: *Without arc dogs.*[13603] St. Augustine says that hatred toward our neighbor renders us children of the devil; and according to St. Thomas, the sacrament of the altar, this heavenly bread, should be given only to the children of God, and not to vindictive dogs who are the children of the devil.

Let him, therefore, tremble who wishes to receive holy Communion with hatred in his heart; he might experience to-day what is related of a woman who, preserving in her heart enmity towards another woman, dared to present herself before the Holy Table to fulfil the Paschal duty. As this enmity was public, the priest refused her Communion; then, in order not to undergo this affront she declared, yet not with sincerity, that she forgave her enemy. After Mass, the other woman having advanced towards her at the door of the church to thank her for her pardon, she answered: “What pardon? What are you talking about? I would rather die on the gallows than pardon you.” Scarcely had she uttered these words when she became black in the face and fell dead to the floor; before the eyes of all, her mouth immediately opened, and the consecrated Host, which she had just received, came out of it and remained suspended in the air until a priest came and respectfully placed it upon the paten. The corpse of the unfortunate woman, like that of a dog, was afterwards thrown upon a dunghill. Would any of you wish to be exposed this morning to the same fate? He who desires to communicate should banish from his heart all rancor, etc.

Now, my dear Brethren, you have a sweet consolation to give to the heart of Jesus Christ. Arise, then, all of you, and hear what you should do: you should all become reconciled with one another; let every one who has received an injury, go to embrace the person who has offended him, and forgive him, for the love of Jesus Christ. Ye boys and girls, go each of you in search of your father and your mother, and on your knees before them ask their pardon for all the displeasure that you have caused them, etc. Afterwards, let all approach those who have given offence; let the men embrace the men, and let the women embrace the women. Well, then, let all of you obey. Peace! peace! let hatred be far from you, now that the King of peace is about to enter your hearts, etc. (At this moment all the missionaries, surrounding the hearers, exhort the faithful to become reconciled with one another.)

ACTS OF DESIRE IMMEDIATELY BEFORE COMMUNION

One day St. Catharine of Sienna, arriving late at the church for receiving holy Communion, Jesus appeared to her, his face very pale, as if he were about to faint away. The saint asked him the reason of this, and Jesus answered: “My daughter, it is to make known to thee how greatly I desire that thou shouldst come to receive me; come and receive me immediately.” Devout souls, you desire to receive Jesus Christ; but know that he still more desires to receive you. This whole past night our Lord has been, so to speak, occupied in counting the moments, waiting for the morning, in order to give himself to your hearts. Prepare yourselves, then; in a few moments he will come. Let us say the *Confiteor.* (The missionary himself recites the *Confiteor* in a loud voice; and when the priest who is at the altar has said the *Misereatur,* etc., he continues): Come, ye ministers of God, hasten to give Jesus Christ to these faithful souls, who desire to unite themselves to their wellbeloved Lord, and to satisfy Jesus Christ himself who wishes to console them. (Here *Ecce Agnus Dei* is said.) Already, my Brethren, Jesus is coming to you; here he is; but before he enters your hearts, ardently invite him, saying: Come, my Jesus, the desire of my soul! Pray to the Blessed Virgin to present you to her divine Son herself. Oh, what a joy, what a feast, for the angels this morning! Let the bells ring, let the organ resound. Here the king of heaven, the divine Spouse, is coming to unite himself to you; receive him with a heart binning with love; call him by sighs full of tenderness. Come, my Jesus! come, my God! I love Thee, and I wish to love Thee always. (At this moment, during the ringing of the bells and the playing of the organ, the preacher is silent; only from time to time, during holy Communion and the playing of the organ, he proposes in a few words some motive of fervor and pronounces some act or resolution; for example): O Lord! in future I will amend my life. Deign to receive me today; I give myself entirely to Thee. Thou shalt be in future my only love. If I should be ever in danger of offending Thee, rather let me die at this moment. Tell me what Thou wishest of me; I will do in all things Thy holy will. Most Holy Virgin Mary, attach me entirely to my Jesus, etc.

THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION

Thanksgiving is usually composed of five acts; namely: acts of welcome, thanksgiving, oblation, good resolution, and petition. We give here some examples:

1. *ACT OF WELCOME.*—Faithful soul, now that you have communicated, see you are now with your God; he dwells in you, as he himself has said: *He that eateth My flesh . . . abideth in Me, and I in him.*[13604] Reanimate, then, your faith; adore Jesus Christ, who has come to you; welcome him, embrace him, entertain him. Think that Jesus Christ has given himself entirely to you, and say to him: O Lord! whither hast Thou come? what good didst Thou see in me that could have induced Thee to dwell in my heart? Ah! be Thou welcome; I adore Thee; I embrace Thee; I press Thee to my bosom so that Thou mayest never leave me.

2. *ACT OF THANKSGIVING.*—What do you say? He well deserves to be thanked, he who is the King of heaven, who has deigned this morning to enter your heart. If a king of this earth would enter your house, what thanks, etc.! Thank him, therefore. But what words can suffice to thank a God who descends from heaven to visit a wretched being who has offended him? Thank him at least as well as you can; tell him: O Lord! what can I say to Thee, what can I do, to thank *Thee* as Thou dost deserve? O saints of paradise! O holy angels! O most blessed Virgin Mary! help me to thank Jesus Christ, who has given himself to me.

3. *ACT OF LOVE.*—But do you wish to know, devout soul, what is the best thanks that you can give to Jesus Christ? It is to say to him: My Jesus, I love Thee.—He wishes that you should love him; it is in order to be loved by you that he has given himself to you. Love him, then; and offer yourself entirely to him by saying to him: Yes, my Jesus, I love Thee with my whole heart; and as Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me, I give myself entirely to Thee. Deign to receive me; I give Thee my body, my understanding, my will, and all that I am. I belong no longer to myself, I belong to Thee; dispose of me as Thou pleasest. It is sufficient for me to love Thee, my Jesus; I desire nothing more.

4. *ACT OF A GOOD RESOLUTION.*—Oh, what consolation do I feel this morning, my dear Brethren, in seeing you all united with Jesus Christ! But a sad thought troubles me; it is this: Who knows whether some one among you may not again banish Jesus Christ from his soul? Our Lord, on the night before his Passion, and on which he instituted the Blessed Sacrament, turned to his disciples and sorrowfully said to them that one of them would betray him: *One of you is about to betray Me.*[13605] Ah! it seems to me that I hear Jesus Christ saying at this moment: Many of you who have just received me will again betray me. Alas! my Brethren, could there be among you any one who, after so many graces, would yet be disposed, etc.? I beg you to renew your good resolution; promise the Lord to suffer all evils rather than lose him again. Say to him: Yes, my God, I have offended Thee; I have lived long enough away from Thee; the time that remains to me I no longer wish to employ to offend Thee any more: no, it is not what Thou hast deserved; I wish to use my time only to love Thee. To-day I give Thee my

word: I am resolved to die rather than displease Thee again; I am resolved to lose all rather than Thy holy grace.

5. *ACT OF PETITION.*—But of what use are these promises if God does not give you the grace to keep them? Now, our Lord, in order to give us his graces, wishes that we should ask him for them, especially after Communion. St. Teresa says that, when Jesus Christ comes into the soul, he there places himself, as it were, on a throne of mercy and says: *What wilt thou that I should do to thee?*[13606] Cherished soul, ask me what thou desirest; I have come to grant thee graces, etc.—Open, then, your hearts, represent to the Lord your miseries, your wants, and ask him for graces; ask him, above all, for holy perseverance and for his love.—Say with me: O Lord, my God! since instead of sending me to hell Thou didst wish with so much love to visit my soul to-day, deign to console me by granting me holy perseverance; do not allow it ever to happen that I should separate myself from Thee. If Thou seest that I shall lose Thee, let me rather die before I leave this church. Ask him also for the grace of loving him: My God change in me this ungrateful heart: let me forget all, in order to love only Thee, who hast loved me so much; give me Thy love; I wish nothing more.—Jesus Christ has promised us that all the graces that we ask of his eternal Father in his name will be granted to us: *Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[13607] Let us then pray to the eternal Father in the name of Jesus Christ, that he may grant us these graces of holy perseverance and of his love: My God, for the love of Thy Son, give me and to us all holy perseverance and Thy love.—Ask him at the same time for the grace of always praying to him for perseverance; for he who does not continue to ask for it, will not have it. Let us also pray to the Blessed Virgin to obtain it for us, etc.

Then a *Pater* and an *Ave* are recited for the bishop, the authorities of the place, the parish-priest, and the priests, the governor, the landlord of the house where the Fathers are staying, and finally for the Fathers themselves. We finish by giving the benediction with the holy ciborium, and then make the people ask again for perseverance, and say at the moment when the Blessed Sacrament is inclosed in the tabernacle: Now, my Brethren, send your hearts into this tabernacle to be inclosed there with Jesus Christ, in order that they may always remain united with him. The tabernacle, having been shut, its key is put into the hands of the statue of Mary with the petition that she should herself guard the hearts of all those that are present, so that they may never more be separated from Jesus Christ.

Chapter V

THE LITTLE CATECHISM, OR THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE TAUGHT THE CHILDREN, AND THE LITTLE SERMON THAT IS PREACHED TO THEM AFTERWARDS

I. THE METHOD TO BE FOLLOWED IN TEACHING CATECHISM

THE VARIOUS POINTS TO BE OBSERVED ARE THE FOLLOWING:

1. The manner of explaining the doctrine should be simple and familiar, and adapted to the intelligence of the children, and of uninstructed adults who often come to listen.

2. To the explanation of the mystery or of a precept some short moral should always be added; for example: After having explained what one understands by a God who is a rewarder, we may say: See what good is derived from the service of God, and what evil is caused by sin, etc.—In the same way, when treating of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ: See what love the Son of God has had for us.—When speaking of the second commandment of God: It is a great sin to blaspheme, and great will be the punishment of the blasphemer in hell, ect.—Besides, it will be well to quote some appropriate example, and also to counsel some practice, such as: When you are tempted to anger, say: O Lord! give me patience. Mary, my Mother, help me.—But these moral applications should be short; otherwise they become instructions, sermons, as is the case with some missionaries who make sermons out of all the exercises.

3. After the explanation of the mystery, the precept, or the sacrament, we put questions to two or three children, in order that the truths taught may remain impressed on their minds; we then present to them a little picture, telling, however, the children that such a present is never given to those that ask for it.

4. We should frequently recall to the mind of the hearers the three great means of keeping one’s self in the grace of God, namely: the first, to avoid sinful occasions and bad companions; the second, always to recommend one’s self to God by prayer, and especially in temptations by invoking Jesus and Mary; the third, to frequent the sacraments.

5. The catechist should show authority from the beginning, so that the children may not become too familiar. Moreover, he should guard against using abusive language against those that do not answer well, or charging the priests of the place with negligence; he should rather blame the children for having been careless in coming to instructions in catechism. He shall positively keep from striking the children, either with the hand or with a stick, even though they should behave improperly, because thereby great trouble may arise. He should rather call to his assistance the priests of the place, that they may keep the children quiet.

II. WHAT SHOULD BE EXPLAINED TO THE CHILDREN DURING THE MISSION

We should explain to the children during the mission the following three points:

1. *The mysteries of our holy faith; 2. The sacraments, especially penance and Eucharist; 3. The commandments of God and those of the Church, except the sixth commandment of the Decalogue, which should not be explained to the children,—it will suffice to tell them, without comment, that this commandment forbids all* shameful sins.

1. THE MYSTERIES OF OUR HOLY FAITH

We therefore explain, in the first place, the mysteries that we should believe, and before all, the four principal ones: 1. The existence of God, and his perfections; 2. This God is a just rewarder; 3. The mystery of the Holy Trinity; 4. The incarnation and the death of Jesus Christ.

Previously we explain the motive for believing the truths of faith, that God himself, the infallible truth, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, has revealed them to the holy Church, and that the Church teaches us these truths.

1. We explain that there exists only one God, the sovereign good, who possesses all perfections: he is infinite in goodness and beauty; he is the

Creator of the universe; all-powerful, he can do all that he wishes; immense, he is in every place; eternal, he has always been, and will always be.

2. We explain that God is a just rewarder; on the one hand, he rewards the just eternally in paradise after having made them pass through purgatory if there still remains any temporal punishment due to the faults that they have committed; on the other hand, he condemns sinners to hell, where they must suffer for all eternity.

3. We explain the mystery of the Holy Trinity,, namely: in God there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; but these three Persons are only one God, because they are only one and the same substance, one and the same essence, and they have the same divinity and the same perfection: hence, as the Father is eternal, the Son is also, etc.; the Father does not proceed from any other, the Son, who is also called the Word, proceeds from the Father from all eternity, being begotten of the Father by intelligence; the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son by the will, or by the love that the Father and the Son bear to each other.

4. We explain the incarnation and the death of Jesus Christ by saying that the Son of God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, has taken a body and has become man in the womb of Mary, always Virgin, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, and that he is called Jesus Christ. Hence Jesus Christ is true God and true man: as man he suffered and he died on the cross to save sinners; but he arose the third day after his death; he afterwards ascended to heaven, where he sits at the right hand of the Father: this means that he possesses a glory equal to that of his Father. At our death he comes to judge us in the particular judgment; and at the end of the world, he will come to judge all men in the universal judgment after they have risen, their souls being united again with their own bodies.

Afterwards we also explain that there is only one true Church, the Roman Catholic Church, outside of which there is no salvation. We explain the Communion of the Saints, which consists in this: that all the faithful in the state of grace participate in the merits of the good works of one another.

2. THE SACRAMENTS

In the second place, we explain the seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. We say that these sacraments have been instituted by Jesus Christ, and that they are the means by which we receive the graces which our Saviour has merited for us by his Passion.

1. By Baptism our souls receive the grace of God, and are purified from every sin, original and actual.

2. *By Confirmation they acquire the power of resisting temptations and combating fearlessly for the faith.*

3–4. (As to Eucharist and Penance, we shall speak of them afterwards.)

1. By Extreme Unction we receive the help necessary to overcome the temptations of the devil at the hour of death, the rest of the sins are effaced, and we even obtain the health of the body if it be useful for the soul.

2. By the Sacrament of Holy Orders *we* receive the spiritual power and the graces necessary to exercise it well.

3. By the Sacrament of Matrimony man and woman receive the grace necessary to fulfil the duties of the conjugal state, and to bring up their children according to the law of God.

We afterwards explain more at length the Sacrament of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance.

I. As for the *EUCHARIST,* there are several things that must be explained, namely:

1. This sacrament really contains Jesus Christ living, as he is in heaven, his body, his soul, and his divinity; for after the priest at Mass has consecrated the Host, this Host, although it preserves the color and the taste of bread, yet it is no longer bread, but the body of Jesus Christ; so the consecrated wine is n0 longer wine, but the blood of Jesus Christ; so that we must adore the sacrament of the altar as we adore God.

2. When the Host is broken, Jesus Christ is not divided; he remains entire in each particle. Besides, Jesus Christ really remains in him who receives him, until the sacramental species are consumed.

3. He that communicates receives help and strength to live in the grace of God; for as earthly bread preserves the temporal life of the body, so the heavenly bread preserves the spiritual life of the soul.

4. To communicate well there are dispositions required on the part of the body and on the part of the soul. On the part of the body, we must be

fasting, having neither eaten nor drunk anything since midnight. If we have taken anything in the mouth without swallowing it, this would not prevent us from receiving Communion. On the part of the soul, we must be in the state of grace. If we commit a mortal sin, we must confess it before communicating; and if we do not confess it, we would render ourselves guilty of sacrilege, excepting only in certain rare cases of necessity, for example: if we remember the sin only when we are at the altar railing, and when we could not withdraw without scandalizing those that are present, it will then be sufficient to make an act of contrition. We should be still more guilty if we dared to communicate after having omitted, through shame, to declare to the confessor a mortal sin that we have committed. Those who have only venial sins, will do well to confess them; but if we communicate with these sins on our consciences, we would not commit a sacrilege.

5. We conclude by instructing the children on the great good that is derived from holy Communion; we tell them how advantageous it is to receive it frequently, and above all to occupy one’s self after having received it with thanking Jesus Christ for such a favor, and with asking for the graces of which one stands in need.

II. As for the sacrament of *PENANCE,* we should explain more at length the five things that are necessary to make a good confession, that is: Examination of conscience, sorrow, purpose of amendment, confession, and penance.

1. On the subject of the *examination* of conscience, we explain that it should precede confession, and should be made carefully, according to the time since we have not confessed, and according to the number of sins that we have committed.

2. *SORROW, or contrition, should be true, super natural,* universal, sovereign, and full of confidence: *TRUE,* that is, produced by a sincere regret of having offended God; *SUPERNATURAL,* or conceived not on account of natural motives, as the loss of goods or of reputation, but on account of having offended God, the infinite goodness, or of having deserved hell, etc., according as one has contrition or attrition with a beginning of love, as we shall afterwards explain; *UNIVERSAL,* comprising all the mortal sins committed since the last confession, which was well made; *SOVEREIGN, SO* that one regrets the loss of the grace of God more than any other loss; *FULL OF CONFIDENCE,* by hoping to obtain from

God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, the pardon of all our sins.—Moreover, this sorrow is either perfect or imperfect. It is perfect, and it is called *CONTRITION,* when one repents of sin because it has offended the goodness of God. It is imperfect, and it is called *ATTRITION,* when, after having offended God (the offence given to God should always be the object of sorrow), one repents on account of paradise, which one has lost, or on account of hell, which one has deserved, or on account of the supernatural and particular heinousness of the sin committed. We therefore detest sin with contrition, because it is an evil in regard to God, and with attrition, because it is an evil in regard to ourselves. It must be added that with attrition alone one receives only pardon when one receives the absolution of the confessor; while with contrition one obtains it at once before receiving absolution, provided one has the intention of confessing one's sins. All theologians agree that to attrition should be united INITIAL LOVE, that is, a beginning of the love that we owe to God, which beginning of love already exists implicitly, as theologians commonly say, in the hope or even in the desire which the penitent has of obtaining by confession the pardon of his sins and the friendship of God.

1. *The PURPOSE of amendment must be firm, univer*sal, and efficacious: FIRM, that is, one should be able resolutely to say: I wish (and not I should wish) with God's help to keep from sin; *UNIVERSAL, so* that one wishes to keep from every sin without exception; *EFFICACIOUS,* we are thereby induced to use all the necessary means not to fall back again into them, and to avoid the voluntary proximate occasions; for if one promises only to avoid sin, without avoiding the proximate occasions, the purpose is not good.

2. In *CONFESSION,* it is useful to declare venial sins; however, it is not necessary, since we can obtain pardon of them by other means, such as an act of contrition or an act of love. But we must necessarily confess the mortal sins that we remember to have committed; and if we do not confess them, the confession would be sacrilegious and null: we would then have to confess them again by declaring not only the sin or the sins that we have omitted to tell, but also those sins that we told in the bad confession, together with the sacrilege that we have committed. If the penitent forgets some grievous sin without his fault, the confession is good; but when he remembers the sin, he must confess it in his next confession.

Finally, we must accept the PENANCE imposed by the *confessor, and perform* it as soon as possible; if it *should happen that it* is impossible for us to perform it, *we should have it* commuted either by the same confes*sor or by another.*

3. THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH

In the third place, we briefly explain the precepts of the Decalogue.

The first commandment, which ordains the adoration *of God,* commands the exercise of the three theological virtues, namely: of faith, by believing all the truths of faith enumerated above; of hope, by hoping in the mercy and power of God, and in the promises that he has made to us, through the merits of Jesus Christ, of obtaining paradise, and all the graces necessary to obtain it; of charity, by loving God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves. This first commandment also imposes upon us the obligation of asking God for help, that we may keep ourselves in the state of grace and obtain salvation.

The second, which forbids the taking of the name of God in vain, forbids us to blaspheme God, or the saints, or the holy days, or things holy. It also forbids false oaths. (We here explain that to SWEAR *BY MY CONSCIENCE* is not a real oath.) Moreover, it imposes the duty of fulfilling the vows that one makes with the intention of binding one’s self.

The third, which ordains the sanctification of holy days, commands us to hear Mass, and to abstain from servile work, unless there is a necessity, such as may arise during the vintage, the harvest, etc.

The fourth commands us to honor our parents; that is, to respect them, to obey them, and to love them by helping them in their spiritual and temporal wants.

The fifth forbids us to kill or unjustly to strike our neighbor, and even to wish him any evil, as also to rejoice at the evil and to grow sad at the good that befalls him.

The sixth forbids all immodest thoughts, words, and actions.

The seventh forbids us to take, to retain, or to damage the property of another against his will.

The eighth forbids us not only to give false testimony, but also (1) to form rash judgments by misjudging our neighbor without a reason; (2) to speak ill of our neighbor either by falsely ascribing to him some fault; or by making known his hidden though real faults, unless it be necessary to manifest them in order to remedy a great evil,—and on this point it must be observed that it is a sin not only to detract or to calumniate any one, but even to listen voluntarily to detraction or calumny; (3) to dishonor our neighbor by action or by word; (4) to tell lies, especially when the lies are injurious to others.

The ninth forbids us to give consent to impure thoughts.

The tenth forbids us to covet what belongs to our neighbor, as also to wish him evil, or to rejoice at the evil done, with regard to his worldly goods.

There are live commandments of the Church, namely:

1. To hear Mass every Sunday and holy day; 2. To fast during Lent, on the Ember days, and on the vigils, and to abstain from meat on Friday and Saturdays;[13608] 3. To confess at least once a year, and to receive Communion at least at Easter in one’s own parish; 4. To pay tithes wherever they are due;[13609] 5. Not to solemnize marriage at the forbidden times.

III. THE LITTLE SERMON, ADDRESSED TO THE CHILDREN, AFTER CATECHISM

There is no doubt that the missions are useful not only to adults, but also to children; nevertheless it has been remarked that during the great sermon, which is the most important of the mission, the children create the greatest disorder; for understanding only a little of what is preached they pay but little attention, and spend the time in talking, playing, and pushing one another; this is a source of constant trouble to the preacher and the hearers. It has therefore been thought expedient, as is practised in the missions of our Congregation, to make the children leave the church at the beginning of the great sermon, and to assemble them in another church or in a chapel, where, after they have received an instruction in catechism, we address to them a short discourse, which is followed by an act of contrition. This special exercise is certainly much more profitable to the children than if they listened to the great sermon; for the discourse is in accordance with their weak comprehension; we employ in it forms and expressions that, are suitable to them, without Latin texts and without division of points. We conclude by having them make an act of contrition before the crucifix. Before beginning, some pious hymn is chanted.

This discourse is composed of five parts: 1. The introduction with the proposition, which may take its place; 2. The amplification; 3. The example; 4. The moral application; 5. The conclusion, with the act of contrition.

EXAMPLE OF A LITTLE SERMON ADDRESSED TO THE CHILDREN AFTER CATECHISM

DEATH

1. *INTRODUCTION.*—Death is certain. Whoever is born into this world is born condemned to death. Sooner or later, young or old, each one must die.

2. *AMPLIFICATION.*—My dear children, it is certain that you all must die. We know not whether you will be rich or poor, whether you will have good or bad health, whether you will die in bed or elsewhere, whether you will die old or young; it may be that you will die before having reached the age of fifteen or twenty: how many are there who have died in this place even before this age! But, however this may be, my friends, had you many years to live, a day will come when you will find yourselves about to die, and abandoned by every one; for then from the room of the dying person are dismissed his parents, his brothers, his sisters, and all the rest; you will then remain alone with the crucifix on one side, and on the other your spiritual Father, who will make the recommendation of the soul, and will say to you, mentioning your name: N., go forth from this place, go forth from this world.—And whither should *you* go? Into eternity, into paradise or into hell, to rejoice forever with God, etc., or to burn forever, etc.—Then the devils will surround you, to make you despair by placing before your eyes all your sins. How you are to be pitied at this moment! etc. And if you were to die suddenly?

3. *EXAMPLE.*—Listen to this example. A boy used often to go to confession; and everyone took him to be a saint. One night he had a hemorrhage, and he was found dead. His parents went at once to his confessor, and crying begged him to recommend him to God; and he said to them: “Rejoice; your son, I know, was a little angel; God wished to take him from this world, and he must now be in heaven; should he, however, be

still in purgatory, I will go to say Mass for him.” He put on his vestments to go to the altar; but before leaving the sacristy, he saw himself in the presence of a frightful spectre, whom he asked in the name of God who he was. The phantom answered that he was the soul of him that had just died. Oh! is it you? exclaimed the priest; if you are in need of prayers, I am just going to say Mass for you.—Alas! Mass! I am damned, I am in hell!—And why?—“Hear,” said the soul: “I had never yet committed a mortal sin; but last night a bad thought came to my mind; I gave consent to it, and God made me die at once, and condemned me to hell as I have deserved to be. Do not say Mass for me; it would only increase my sufferings.” Having spoken thus, the phantom disappeared.

4. Moral Application.—*NOW*, my dear children, tell me: if you were to die now, what would be your death? where would you go? Take courage, then! profit by this mission and make the resolution to sanctify yourselves, never to commit those shameful sins, nevermore to utter curses, blasphemies, bad words, never to take what does not belong to you, never to bear hatred against your neighbor, etc.—Reflect well on this: would you like to die as this unfortunate boy died, whose end you have heard was so terrible?

5. *CONCLUSION.*—As for the past, for the sins that you have committed, what are you to do now? Should you despair? No; God does not wish you to despair; he wishes that you should ask his pardon, because he wishes to pardon you. Now kneel down, and amid tears and sighs ask pardon of God, etc. (Here the act of contrition is made, two or three motives of repentance being given, for example): Ah! if you were to die this day, this night, on which you had fallen into sin, what would become of you? where would you be? Thank Jesus Christ, your Saviour, with a sincere repentance, etc. What do you say? do you wish to die in the arms of Jesus Christ? But if you wish that Jesus should embrace you, you should weep, etc. (While speaking of death, in the act of contrition, it will be well to exhibit a skull, and also to call to mind a boy now dead who was known to the children, by mentioning his name; for example): O N.! where are you now? What a misfortune if you are damned!

This example of a little sermon is given here in an abridged form; it should be made longer; for with the act of contrition it may last about half an hour or three quarters of an hour, after the instruction in catechism, which lasts half an hour. It must be remarked that not many things should be said to the children, and that it is better to repeat to them the same truths or practices, in order that they may fix them upon their minds, and thus begin to put them in practice.

Chapter VI

THE LARGE CATECHISM, OR Instruction FOR THE PEOPLE

THE large catechism, or instruction for the people, is one of the most important of the mission; the priest who is charged with this duty should be well instructed, and should have had great experience in the office of hearing confessions, in order to know how to discover the illusions and the innermost recesses of consciences, so as to apply suitable remedies.

This instruction[13610] is composed of several parts. It begins with the introduction, the exposition of the subject, and the division; these form the *EXORDIUM*.—Then comes the *EXPLANATION* of the mystery, or of the sacrament, or of the commandment, to be followed by the *MORAL APPLICATION*, with the practice. At the end we answer objections, or excuses brought forward by persons that have no tender consciences; then we briefly sum up, in the form of an *EPILOGUE*, what has been said in the instruction, and finish with the Christian acts.

1. The *INTRODUCTION* is drawn from the preceding instruction, so as to unite the material and to refresh the memory by summing up what has been said the evening before. This is done, however, only when the things have some connection with one another; otherwise the introduction is formed by announcing the importance of the subject which one wishes to treat. As for the *EXPOSITION*, if there is question of a commandment, we take care to distinguish all that it contains.

The DIVISION of the points serves to elucidate better the material, and to impress better on the minds of the hearers the truths that one exposes to them. These three members, as has already been said, form a sort of EXORDIUM; hence they should be very short.

1. We enter, then, into the *EXPLANATION* of the mystery, or of the sacrament, or of the commandment. What one teaches should be confirmed by authorities—a few of them to be cited briefly—as well from reasons as

from facts that refer to the subject. It is especially useful to employ comparisons, which should be clearly exposed.

2. Thence we pass to the *MORAL APPLICATION* by observing that one should not only enlighten the mind, but should also move the will of the hearers to flee from vice, and to use the remedies and the means necessary to avoid them; many more sins are committed by a bad disposition of the will than by ignorance. The moral application should also be short; it should be announced with animation, but without adopting the preaching tone and without outbursts of the voice. Sometimes, in the instruction, it is useful to raise the voice against a vice, or a maxim of the world, or an excuse made by people who lead a bad life; but these oratorical bursts should be short and rare, in order to avoid the defect of some who make sermons out of their instructions, confounding this last exercise with the first.

We should, above all things, take care, in giving the instruction, to insinuate practical things by teaching the people the very words that it will be proper for them to say when an occasion presents itself of putting in practice what has been indicated; for example: if one receives from another an injury or some annoyance, let him say to him: May God make you a saint! I shall pray to God to enlighten you.—So also when any one has met with some loss or other adversity, let him say: May all be for the love of God! May the will of God be done!—This kind of practice should be repeated many times, in order that it may remain impressed upon the memory of simple and uninstructed people, who do not understand, or who soon forget the Latin texts and other things; they can remember only these short and easy practices which are taught them, and which are often repeated to them.

The catechist should also speak of certain excuses or frivolous difficulties which some are accustomed to bring forward in order to palliate their faults; these are, for example, some of the false reasons: that they have not the means of living without taking the property of another; that others do the same; that they are not saints; that they are flesh and blood; that such a neighbor or such a relative is the cause of their sins. Moreover, it should be declared that if any one would be inclined to revenge himself in case he had received an injury, he would be continually in a state of sin and that he could not justify himself by the worldly maxim that a man must take care of his honor. These false and wicked reasons should be forcibly and warmly refuted, so that the hearers may free their minds from certain prejudices which they hold to be maxims. This is the cause why many always remain in sin, and end in losing their souls.

The instruction is concluded in the *EPILOGUE,* which is a summary, as short and as substantial as it can be, of the doctrine that has been taught; and at the end we leave to the hearers, as a remembrance, a maxim of religion adapted to the subject and capable of making an impression.

These rules are common to all catechetical instructions; but as for those that are given during the missions a few more remarks should be made.

I.—In the first place, as to the subjects which are to be explained in the missions, the instruction is restricted chiefly to three points, the same that have already been spoken of in the little catechism, namely: 1. The mysteries; 2. The sacraments, especially the sacrament of penance; 3. The commandments of God and of the Church. But in the large catechism these subjects should be explained more at length, with more details, and in another manner, by making the things that we teach rest on authorities and reasons.

There are catechists who think that it is better to speak first of confession, and then of the commandments. For my part I find it preferable to begin by the commandments; for if we explain them towards the end of the mission, it will easily happen that this explanation will raise scruples in the consciences of the hearers; this will oblige them to go to confession again, and thus we should lose much time. If, however, we should wish to join the explanation of the commandments to that of the first part of the confession, which is the examination of conscience, this would also be well.

And as the greatest utility of the missions consists perhaps, and even without doubt, in the reparation of sacrilegious confessions, we must insist on this point in every instruction: in showing how great is the malice of sacrilege, and how many souls are lost through the weakness that they show when they conceal their sins in confession. Many unfortunate persons, overcome by shame, even when they confess to the missionaries, as we know from experience, continue to conceal their sins; now, if there be one who in the mission has not the coinage to repair the confessions he has made badly, how can he escape losing his soul? If he has not overcome his shame when he confesses to a missionary, how will he overcome it when he returns to his ordinary confessor? It is for this reason, as has been already said, that we must always insist on this point. For this purpose it is customary in our missions that the catechist, at the end of his instruction and before the recitation of the Christian acts, always recites a terrible example—and these examples are numerous—of a soul damned for having concealed sins in confession. This is not conformable to the rules of art, since the example does not always correspond to the instruction; but it corresponds to the end of the missions, which are chiefly given to remedy sacrilegious confessions. It is sufficient to introduce the example in these words: Take care, then, to confess all the sins that you have committed, according as I have told you to-day, and do not through shame omit anything.

II.—It is a strange error on the part of catechists when they fill their instructions with fine words, scholastic questions, and witticisms, while the poor people are asking for substantial bread, with which they could be nourished so easily.

1. As for expressions, the common rule is that the style of the instruction should be altogether simple and popular without descending to what is silly and low; this is never necessary, and is unsuitable to the pulpit. The period should be short and concise. It is often useful to ask questions, which the catechist answers himself; this is a means of keeping the hearers more attentive, and of impressing better 0n their memory the things that are said.

2. As for scholastic questions, they are suitable for the literary exercises of theologians, and not for the instruction of the people from the pulpit; since the hearers consist mostly of those that are but little instructed, and that do not understand these questions, or at least cannot derive any profit from them. If there happens to be among the hearers a learned man, if he is prudent and discreet, he will praise this simple manner of instructing the people, and he will blame the catechist who acts otherwise.

3. Finally, as to witticisms, I beg my dear reader to consider well what I am now writing. I do not deny that certain catechists adopt this style, saying that it is useful in order to attract the people to the instruction as well as to keep their attention, and to prevent them from growing tired. But for myself I know thus much: it is this: that the saints, in their instructions, did not make people laugh, but they made them cry. We read in the life of St. John Francis Regis that in his missions the people who heard his sermons, as well as his many instructions, did not cease to weep from beginning to end.

Here at least is what I say: If any one wishes to indulge in some pleasantry which naturally arises from the subject that is treated, such a thing might be allowed; while speaking, for example, of men that have a bad conscience, it would be proper to relate the ridiculous excuses that they make; the same thing may be said of other similar cases. But to wish to make a comical scene of the instruction by relating witty anecdotes, odd stories, with expressions and gestures, the object of which is to excite the laughter of the hearers, I do not know how that can agree with the respect due to the church in which one is, and with the pulpit from which one teaches the word of God, and in which the catechist appears as the minister of Jesus Christ. It is true that people take pleasure in hearing witty things, and things that will make them laugh; but I ask, What benefit can be derived from such a practice? Certainly, after they have laughed, the hearers will find themselves so distracted and so much deprived of piety that it will be difficult for them to recollect themselves again; and often, instead of listening to the moral application which our facetious catechist must draw from his witty remarks in order not to be regarded as a charlatan, they will think only of that which has made them laugh. Were there even no other inconvenience connected therewith, the catechist who delights in saying facetious things, and in indulging in pleasantries, will surely not acquire among the hearers the reputation of a saint, or of a soul filled with the love of God; the most that he can obtain would be to be regarded as an amusing and agreeable man. Moreover, it is a mistake to believe that without these pleasantries many people will not come to the instruction nor pay attention to it. I even say that many more will come, and that they will listen with greater attention, when they see that they do not lose any time, that the hearing of an instruction is not merely a simple amusement, but that it is a useful exercise disposing them to virtue and to piety.

III.—We should guard against exposing certain doctrines that might produce some laxity of conscience. Such doctrine may well be applied to some one in particular when he comes to confession; but when announced in the pulpit, it may injure the hearers who are inclined to be lax: for from this doctrine, which is otherwise just and useful when it is applied under the required circumstances, they may perhaps draw lax and unwarrantable conclusions.

Nevertheless, it is good and even necessary to enlighten the erroneous consciences of those that look upon that to be a sin which is not a sin. There are, for example, persons that think that they have rash suspicions or rash judgments, and that they commit sin even when there exists a reason sufficient for suspecting or judging. Some take it to be a grave sin to curse the years, the days, the wind, or the rain: others think that it is wicked slander if they make known to parents the thefts, the bad habits, or other faults of their children, even when this is necessary so as to remedy the evil. Others believe that they are committing sin when they do not keep a certain commandment of the Church, for example, to hear Mass, to fast, even in cases when they have received a dispensation, etc.—It must be explained that these are not sins, or that in regard to the circumstances they are not mortal sins.

We should, on the other hand, indicate the sins that are certain, especially those that are the cause of other grievous sins; for example: we must teach the people that he who does not avoid the voluntary proximate occasion of mortal sin sins grievously even when he would not have the intention of committing sin, and when he would not know that it is a grave sin to expose one's self to this occasion; for, when one exposes one's self to a similar occasion, it is morally certain that he will fall into sin.

We should instruct women in regard to superstitious things or vain observances, although they practice them in good faith. We must also inform them that they are in a bad state when they take pleasure in having and seek to have men to long for them without intending to be married.

Besides, there are persons that do not look upon it as a grievous sin to curse holy-days or holy things; we should enlighten them on this point: otherwise they will contract a habit of it; and if this habit is once contracted, they cannot get rid of it, even after they acknowledge that such curses are grievous faults.

When speaking of the sixth commandment, we should avoid scandalizing the innocent by awakening their curiosity in regard to the evil of which they are ignorant; it is sufficient, on this point, to condemn in general what offends chastity, without explaining the species or the circumstances; so that those that are guilty may understand how they should confess them, and those that are innocent may remain in their ignorance. We must, however, teach the people when in this matter bad thoughts and words are or are not sins. But we should especially speak of the remedies against the impure vice, by often recommending among other things the three great means, which are: the flight of the occasion, the frequentation of the sacraments, and, above all, prayer, without which no one can be chaste.

The reader is asked to see what has been said in the preceding chapter, for the little catechism; in it may be found many things which may also serve for the large catechism, or catechetical instruction for adults, and which are here omitted.

We afterwards narrate some terrible examples of persons who, for having omitted, through shame, to confess their sins, have had an unhappy end. We may relate one of these examples every day before reciting the Christian acts, as we have indicated above.[13611] We quote these examples succinctly; he that wishes to use them may lengthen them and express them more forcibly, according as he sees fit.[13612]

Then we make the Christian acts in the following manner:

The acts of faith and hope are made like those that are found in the acts preparatory to the confession of the children.[13613] As to the act of faith particularly, we should make it in all its extent, by maintaining in it not only the four principal mysteries, which must be believed as a necessary means to salvation, but also the others that are contained in the Symbol, or Creed, and which must be believed by necessity of precept; in it we should also mention the sacraments by at least specifying the four sacraments necessary to every Christian, namely baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, and penance. We include confirmation among the sacraments necessary to all Christians, because Benedict XIV.[13614] has declared that those that neglect to receive it commit a mortal sin.

We must add the acts of charity, contrition, and firm purpose, but in form other than is indicated above; for example:

ACTS OF CHARITY, CONTRITION, AND FIRM PURPOSE.—My God, because Thou art infinite goodness, worthy of infinite love, I love Thee above all things with my whole heart. And because I have offended Thee, Thou who art infinite goodness, I repent of all my sins; I am sorry for them with my whole heart. By Thy grace, which I ask of Thee now and always, I firmly resolve to die rather than offend Thee any more. I also purpose to receive the sacraments during my life and at my death.

Chapter VII

THE SERMON

To proceed with order in speaking of the great sermon, which is the most important exercise of the mission, we shall treat separately of the three parts to which, according to rhetoricians, one should pay especial attention; we shall speak, then, 1, of the Invention; 2, of the Disposition; and, 3, of Elocution.[13615].[13616]

I. THE INVENTION, OR THE CHOICE OF MATERIALS FOR COMPOSING A SERMON

Great is the error of some who, before having found the materials, set themselves to determine the points and to compose the sermon. One must, before all, prepare the materials, that is, the texts of Scripture, the arguments, the comparisons, etc.; which are to serve to prove the proposition that one has in view. For this purpose one may profit by the many collections that exist, such as those of Joseph Mansi of Beyerlinck, of Lohner, of Spanner, of Father Houdry, and of others. Rhetoric, moreover, indicates to us the places whence we may draw, as from certain sources, the proofs needed for the sermon: some are called *COMMON PLACES* or *TOPICS {Loci Communes);* others *PARTICULAR PLACES.* The *common* places or topics are those that are serviceable for every kind of discourse; the *particular,* those that are proper to every particular discourse, to establish the fitness or unfitness, the necessity or special utility of that which one wishes to persuade.

But, ordinarily speaking, the common places or topics are those that serve to compose all the sermons; and it is of these that we shall here treat. They are divided into *INTRINSIC PLACES* or *TOPICS,* which are those that one finds in the nature of the subject itself, and into *EXTRINSIC PLACES* or *TOPICS,* which exist outside of the nature of the subject.

1. COMMON INTRINSIC PLACES OR TOPICS. (LOCI COMMUNES INTERIORES.)

The common *INTRINSIC* places or topics are fifteen in number:

1. The *DEFINITION* of the thing; for example: in establishing that sin is a great evil, because it removes us from God.

2. The *ETYMOLOGY* of the name; for example: *Sacerdos* signifies, according to St. Thomas, *Sacra dans* and *Sacra docens* [one who gives sacred things, and one who teaches them].

3. *The ENUMERATION of parts (Enumeratio partium); for* example: Temperance is useful for soul and body, for eternal life and for temporal life.—Or, when one affirms on the one hand what one denies on every other; for example: One is unhappy at death, not for having lived in poverty, in a low state of life, etc., but for having led a bad life.

4. The *CONJUNCTION* of words; that is, when one *is* derived from the other; as *hated* from *hatred.* It is thus that one says: God bears a sovereign hatred to sin: this is the reason why he that is united with sin is sovereignly hated by God.

5. *GENUS,* as in this reasoning: It is sin that brings ruin upon men; so this unlawful friendship, your possession of what belongs to another, etc., will be your ruin.

6. *SPECIES,* as when one says: This man is just; therefore he is virtuous.

7. *SIMILITUDE* and *COMPARISON (Similitudo et Comparatio).* It must be observed that similitude requires a total resemblance between two objects. For a comparison it is sufficient that the objects resemble one another in some point; it may also take place either between equal things, or between things greater and smaller. From similitude we here draw the argument: The farmer, when he does not cultivate the earth, cannot expect a crop; so he that does not apply himself to the cultivation of the mind will never make progress, etc. To similitude belong *examples, parables,* and *FABLES.* The parable is a fiction in which one exposes possible facts; the fable, or apologue, is a fiction in which one exposes impossible facts, as when one should make animals or plants speak. Sermons more easily admit parables, rarely, however, fables; sometimes one may better employ fables in the instructions, in order to urge men to the practice of a virtue.

8. *RESEMBLANCE,* as when one says: It is proper to the brute to live according to the desires of its senses; the Christian should live according to

the maxims of faith.

9. *CAUSE (causa),* which can be efficient or final, formal or material.—*Efficient* cause, for example: God has created us; therefore he is our absolute master. *Final* cause: God has created us, not for the vile and transient pleasures of the earth, but for the immense and eternal delights of paradise.—*Formal* cause: The soul is created after the image of God; therefore it is more noble than all the treasures of the earth.—*MATERIAL* cause: Our body is composed of dust, therefore it must return to dust.

10. *EFFECT;* for example: Patience renders us agreeable to God, and helps us to remain in peace.

11. *CONTRARIES,* of which there are several kinds, namely: 1. *OPPOSITES;* for example: Meek persons are loved by God and men; the irascible are hatred by God and men.—*2. PRIVATIVES:* The sinner is deprived of God's grace, and consequently of peace, which is the companion of grace.—*3. CONTRADICTORIES:* He that loves God has everything, so that he is always content; he that does not love God finds himself deprived of the most precious good, which is the grace of God, and in this state he is always dissatisfied.—*4. INCOMPATIBLES,* or things that cannot coexist in the same subject: The love of God and the love of the world cannot exist together.

12. *ANTECEDENTS;* for example: *Quae enim seminaverit homo, haec et metet*—"What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap" *(Gal.* vi. 8).

13. *CONSEQUENTS;* for example: He that is *unquiet* shows that he is not resigned to the will of God.

14. *RELATIVES;* for example: If God is our master, we are his servants; consequently we are obliged to obey.

15. *ADJUNCTS,* or circumstances of the fact, which are enumerated in the well-known verse: *Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando.*—1. *Quis;* for example: The sinner offends a God so great, so powerful, and so good.—2. *Quid;* sin is a sovereign evil, because it deprives us of God, of paradise, and of peace.—3. *Ubi:* The sinner offends God in his presence.—4. *Quibus auxiliis:* The sinner, in order to offend God, uses the very gifts of God, such as health, riches, etc.—5. *Cur:* Why does the sinner consent to lose God, the sovereign good? To procure a little smoke, a miserable interest, a short pleasure.—6. *Quomodo:* The Christian sins more grievously than the unbeliever, because he sins with more light

and with greater remorse.—7. *Quando:* The sinner offends God during the very time in which God bestows favors upon him, preserves him, and provides for his wants.

2. COMMON EXTRINSIC PLACES OR TOPICS

COMMON EXTRINSIC PLACES OR TOPICS FOR THE SERMON ARE THE FOLLOWING:

1. *HOLY SCRIPTURE*, from which we draw the strongest and most appropriate arguments for eternal salvation, as has been done by all the holy Fathers, and by Jesus Christ himself when he preached. St. Jerome says that there exists no more unworthy preacher than he that does not rest his sermons on holy Scripture. However, in sermons we must use texts of Scripture that are short, and that are taken in their proper sense, and we must avoid all forced and odd interpretations.

2. *TRADITION and COUNCILS.*

3. The *OPINION OF THE HOLY FATHERS;* and to give great authority to what one wishes to prove, it will be good to quote their own Latin words, and afterwards explain them more clearly to the people.

4. *SCHOLASTIC THEOLOGY* conduces greatly to prove certain maxims; but in the pulpit we should avoid treating of any point of controversy, and bringing forward subtilties which are more apt to confuse than to persuade the minds of the people.

5. The *TEXTS OF THE CANONS AND THE DECREES OF THE POPES,* whenever a case is presented.

6. *HISTORICAL FACTS,* especially the facts drawn from Scripture. As for other historical facts it will be proper to support them by indicating the author, the time, and the place; and they should be rarely given, so as to avoid the defect of those whose sermons are a complication of facts related one after another.

THE MANNER OF GATHERING MATERIALS

The collection of materials for the sermon is made in the following manner. The proposition having been found, we write promiscuously on a sheet of paper the opinions, the arguments, the similitudes, and the examples that we have succeeded in discovering. Then after re-reading all, we examine the points to which the sermon may be reduced. After this, on another sheet we write separately every point designated by a special title, under which we again promiscuously inscribe the materials that belong to this point, giving to each a distinct number. When we are in possession of materials sufficient for each point, we set about putting in order the authorities, the arguments, the moral application, etc., everything in its place. This done, we begin to work out the sermon according to the following rules, of which we are now going to speak.

II. THE DISPOSITION OF THE PARTS THAT BELONG TO THE SERMON

The parts of the sermon are nine in number, namely: The Exordium, the Introduction, the Proof, the Refutation, the Epilogue, the Moral Application, and the Exhortation. But all these are reduced to three principal parts, which are the Exordium, the Proof, and the Peroration: for in the Exordium are united the proposition and the division; in the Proof are united the Introduction which precedes and the refutation which follows it; finally, the Peroration, or CONCLUSION, comprises the epilogue, the moral application and the exhortation.

It must, however, be observed that the foregoing nine parts are not always found in the sermon, the most of them being accidental: only the proposition and the proof are the essential and absolutely necessary parts; but I add that in regard to mission sermons one should regard as necessary and essential the moral application and the exhortation.

We shall speak of each of these parts in particular.

1. THE EXORDIUM

The exordium we may draw from innumerable sources, the principal one of which we here indicate.

1. *Ex visceribus causae;* for example: if the proposition, or the aim is to show how much one should fear a bad death, the exordium may be as follows: Every man that is born is born to die; for this earth is only a place through which we are passing to eternity, etc.

2. *Ab opinione sive judicio;* for example: To believe that it is easy to die a good death after a life of dissipation, of wickedness, is folly. Or; To wish to

defer one’s conversion, and to wish to be damned, we should be convinced, are one and the same thing.

3. *A contrario;* that is: When one begins by a proposition contrary to that which one wishes to prove; for example: It is certainly a great happiness for some sinners who after a bad life are converted at their death, and are saved; but these cases are very rare: ordinarily he that leads a bad life dies a bad death. (This last proposition will be the subject of the sermon.)

4. *Ab exemplo:* By beginning with the narration of an example, which one afterwards adapts to the proposition of the sermon.

5. *Ab expositione:* By exposing some text of Scripture, or, the importance of the subject which one wishes to treat; for example: He that thinks of hell will not go to hell; hence, my dear Brethren, I wish to place before your eyes to-day the pains of hell, so that none of you may have to undergo this punishment.

6. *Ex abundanti;* that is: When the preacher announces at the beginning that the subject that he has in hand is very vast, and that therefore he must confine himself to some points which he regards as the most important.

7. *Ex adjunctis:* When one begins with some circumstance of person, of place, or of time.

8. *Ex abrupto:* The exordiums drawn from the sources that precede are called *LEGITIMATE;* the exordium *ex abrupto* is called *EXTRAORDINARY,* and is rarely employed: it occurs when without any preamble one begins by an exclamation of reproach, of compassion, or of astonishment; for example: O sinner! when will you cease to flee from God, who has been seeking for you so long a time? Or: Poor sinners, poor unfortunate beings, who lead an unhappy life in this world, to spend afterwards a more unhappy life in the next!—Or: O all-powerful God! how canst Thou bear with these ungrateful men, who, enlightened and called by Thy mercy, always continue to offend Thee?

We note here that the exordium may be found defective either by being too long or too common, being applicable to every kind of discourse, or by having but little connection with the sermon, while the exordium should agree with the subject that one wishes to treat.

Rhetoricians assign to the exordium seven parts, namely: The introduction, the general proposition, the confirmation, the repetition, the connection, the particular proposition, and the division.

1. *The INTRODUCTION is a little insinuation in order to arrive at the general proposition.*

2. The *GENERAL DISPOSITION* is that which one promises in order afterwards to come to the particular or principal proposition of the sermon.

3. The *CONFIRMATION* is another proof of the general proposition.

4. *The REPETITION reproduces the general proposition, in order to pass to the particular proposition.*

5. The *CONNECTION* is the bond that unites the general proposition with the particular proposition.

6. The *PARTICULAR PROPOSITION* is the principal proposition, or that which one wishes to prove; which must always be understood when one says simply: The proposition.

7. The *DIVISION* is the indication of the different points of the particular proposition.

It must be observed that not all these parts of the exordium are necessary, especially in mission sermons, for which the three principal may be sufficient, namely: the general proposition, the connection, and the particular proposition.

The following is briefly an example of the exordium. If one wishes to prove how difficult it is *to* die *a good* death after a bad life, one should say: *(GENERAL PROPOSITION*, with the *CONFIRMATION):* We must *be saved;* for if we are not saved, we shall be damned; *there is no* middle way. *(CONNECTION): NOW,* in order *to be saved we* must die a good death by leaving the world *in the grace* of God. *(PARTICULAR PROPOSITION):* But *it is difficult* to die a good death when we have lived a bad life, *etc.*—The general proposition may be amplified in *various* ways; for example: It is not necessary *to* be noble *or* rich in this world; but it is necessary to be saved.

The *PARTICULAR PROPOSITION*, or principal, is drawn from the subject which one wishes to treat; for it is the centre to which all the proof should converge, like so many rays. It should announce clearly and briefly a truth that one wishes to prove, never anything extravagant. Moreover, it is an absolute rule that unity should be preserved; otherwise one would have, not one sermon, but several. This unity, however, does not prevent a division into different points; this makes the hearers more attentive, and better impresses on their minds the truth one preaches to them; but the points should always agree to form a single proposition.

The *DIVISION* may be made in various ways:

1. By the *QUALITIES OF THE SUBJECT;* example: We should always be prepared for death, first, because death is certain, and, secondly, because the hour of death is uncertain.

2. By the *EFFECTS:* The bad habit of sin renders salvation very difficult, first, because it blinds the mind of man, and, secondly, because it hardens his heart.

3. By the *CAUSES:* The death of the sinner will be very bad, first, because of the temptations of the devil; secondly, because of the remembrance of the sins committed; and, thirdly, because of the abandonment by God.

4. By the *ENUMERATION OF THE PARTS:* The general judgment will be terrible, first, on account of the presence of the divine Judge; secondly, on account of the examination; and, thirdly, on account of the sentence.

5. By the *DIVERSITY OF CIRCUMSTANCES* contained in this verse already quoted: *Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando.* Example: *Quis:* The sinner offends God, who is his Creator, his Redeemer, and his Preserver.—*Quid:* Sin is an offence against God, and an evil to the soul that commits it.—We explain in the same way the other circumstances.

The rule in regard to the points is that they should be announced in a few words, as briefly as possible, and that they should be restricted as to the number—two or three at the most. To subdivide afterwards the points into other points is a defect. It is not a defect, on the other hand, to restrict the sermon to the simple demonstration of the particular proposition without making any division of points; for example: He that abuses the divine mercy will be abandoned by it.—Or: Sin is the greatest of all crimes, because it shows contempt for God.—The method is sometimes useful in order to have more liberty to enlarge on the matter that one treats, as one is not restricted to determined points.

2. THE PROOF

We have already said that the proof contains three parts, namely: the Introduction, the Proof itself and the Refutation.

I.—The *INTRODUCTION* is only a preamble in order to enter upon the proof; it may be drawn from the following sources, namely:

1. From the *DEFINITION;* for example: If we speak of scandal we may give the definition of St. Thomas: "Scandal is a word or action that is not becoming and is an occasion of sin to another."[13617] We shall afterwards explain it.

2. From the *DISTINCTION:* If there is question of the occasion of sin, the introduction may be made as follows: To proceed with order we must distinguish the proximate occasion from the remote. The first is, etc.

3. From the *DIFFICULTY OF THE SUBJECT:* In speaking of the malice of mortal sin we may say: To understand what a great evil mortal sin is, we must understand what a great good God is; now, who will ever be able to understand the goodness, the power, the wisdom of God? etc.

4. From some *GENERAL PROPOSITION* to pass thence to a particular proposition: In speaking of the sacrilegious confession one may begin by describing the malice of sacrilege in general.

5. *From some SYLLOGISM or EUTHYMEME, the conclusion* of which leads to the proof of the proposition.

6. From some celebrated *QUESTION,* or some *OPINION of* a holy Father, or some *EXAMPLE.*

In every case one must take care that this introduction should be short and proximate: *SHORT,* so that one passes at once to the proof; *PROXIMATE,* or drawn from the intrinsic principles of the subject which one treats.

II.—As to the *PROOF,* one must understand that the body of the discourse should be composed of the proof of the principal proposition; so that in order to persuade the hearers it should have the form of perfect reasoning—of course not after the manner of logicians but of orators; that is, exposed in a clearer and more extended manner. One should observe that it is always better to present few proofs by choosing the more convincing, and by explaining them well, than by amassing a large number that are of little value or are but little developed.

The following are the various modes of argumentation used by rhetoricians:

1. The *SYLLOGISM;* which is composed of three propositions, namely: the major, the minor, and the conclusion, exposed, as has been said above, in a way that is more ample than in simple reasoning. One proves the major before passing to the minor, and the minor before coming to the conclusion; this is, however, only done when the major or the minor stands in need of a proof; for if they are known and held to be certain, it is sufficient if one amplifies them without proving them.

2. The *ENTHYMEME;* which is a syllogism reduced to two propositions, the antecedent and the conclusion; one adds the proof to the antecedent if it is necessary.

However, the preacher should take care to invest the syllogism and the enthymeme with an oratorical form, so that they may not appear as such.

1. The *DILEMMA;* which consists of two different propositions, one of which being denied, the other is necessarily to be admitted; for example: Either God deceives man, or man deceives himself; now, God cannot deceive: therefore, it is certain that man deceives himself.

4. *T*he *INDUCTION;* which consists in drawing a *conc*lusion from a certain premise; thus: If the just tremble while living amid penances, prayers, etc., how much more should a sinner tremble who lives amid pleasures, honors, etc.!

5. The *SORITES;* that *is,* when, from several propositions or truths announced, one draws a particular conclusion; example: Blasphemy brings neither honor nor pleasure; why, then, blaspheme?

6. The *EXAMPLE;* when one argues from one case to another similar case.

We here remark that it is always good to vary the forms of reasoning by employing now the syllogism, now the dilemma, etc., and also by using interrogation, reproach, etc.

As for the order of *PROOFS,* some think that it is better to begin with the weaker, continue with the stronger, and conclude with the strongest. Others, on the contrary, and such is my opinion, think it preferable to give, in the first place solid reasons, in the last place the most decisive, and in the middle the weakest, by grouping them together so that thus united they may acquire more authority; for by beginning with the weakest reasons one might produce a bad impression upon some one of the hearers. For the rest the ordinary method consists in presenting first the reasons that carry conviction, then those that amplify the subject, and finally those that are most suitable to touch the heart.

The *TRANSITIONS* from one point to another should be natural, and should always preserve the unity of the sermon. To mark these passages, the most common forms are the following: Let us see, in the second point, etc.; After having seen, etc. When passing from one argument to another, one may say: Add to this; . . . Moreover; . . . So much the more, . . . etc.—There are other more elegant forms of transition; for example: by uniting the end of the point or of the reasoning which one finishes to the beginning of that which follows. This union should be made at least in words if it cannot take place in the substance of things. One should take care never to pass abruptly from one object to a different object. For this purpose one may use the figures called Preterition, Concession, etc.

The *AMPLIFICATION* of proofs is *REAL* in reference *to* things, or *VERBAL* in reference to words: the first tends to convince the mind by the development of proofs; the second tends to determine the will.

The *REAL* amplification may be made by the reunion of several things, following this example of the Apostle: *Serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope: Patient in tribulation: Instant in prayer.*[13618] Or, by *GRADATION;* example: It is a virtue to bear patiently with contempt; a greater virtue, to desire it; a virtue that is greater still, to rejoice at it.—Or, by *REASONING*, which one does by developing the circumstances of the thing.—Or, by *COMPARISON*, which one does by comparing the thing with another that is reported to be great, to show that that of which one speaks is still greater.

The *VERBAL* amplification may be made by expressive sayings, by epithets and synonymes, and also by metaphors and hyperboles.

But it must be observed that this vain luxury of words, of which certain preachers make a display, causes the hearers to feel wearied, and serves rather to weaken the sermon than to amplify it. We remark, moreover, that one should amplify not all that one says, but only the principal things.

What has been said of amplification may also be said of *ATTENUATION;* for, as Quintilian says, he that knows how to ascend, knows how to descend.

As regards *MORAL DIGRESSIONS*, we must observe that, although the proper place for moral applications is found in the peroration, yet it may well be permitted to make moral reflections in the course of the sermon by speaking especially of a vice or of a virtue, particularly after having given sufficient proof; this holds good above all in mission sermons. One should always take care that these moral applications should not be so long as to form another sermon in the sermon itself, nor should they be so forced as to appear, as we say, to have been lugged in by the head and shoulders, nor so frequent as to render the discourse tedious and languid, as happens to some who, while relating an example, are too much given to making moral digressions. It is indeed permitted to make incidentally a moral application, but excess fills the hearers with disgust. There is, however, no doubt that mission sermons should be more supplied with moral reflections; for it is this that makes most impression on persons that are but little instructed, and that form during missions most of the audience. However, these moral applications should be appropriate to the sermon, and put in a proper place, so as not to weaken the force of the proofs.

II.—After the proofs comes the *REFUTATION* of the objections. The various modes of *REFUTATION* are:

1. *NEGATION,* by exposing the falsity of the contrary argument.

2. *CONTESTATION,* by showing that the proposition that one sustains is more probable than that which is opposed to it.

3. *ANTICIPATION, by* opposing, to the difficulties that may be alleged, other more grave difficulties.

4. *CONTEMPT* for the contrary reasons, by simply saying that their falsity is evident.

5. *RETORTION, by retorting the opposed argument.* Regularly, the refutation is put after the proofs; but sometimes it is put immediately after the reason that one exposes and that can meet with some difficulty.

3. THE PERORATION

The peroration, or conclusion, contains three parts: the epilogue, the moral application, and the exhortation.

I.—The *EPILOGUE* is only a recapitulation of the sermon. It should be short, so as not to form a new sermon; but it should contain the most convincing reasons of the discourse presented in another manner in view of the exhortation that is to follow; so that even in this recapitulation the preacher begins to move the hearts of the hearers.

II.—As for the *MORAL APPLICATION,* in regard to the correction of vices, one must at first be careful to avoid wounding particular persons; for such corrections made in public serve only to irritate the minds in such a way that these persons, seeing themselves thus publicly humbled, will conceive a hatred for the preacher and even for the mission, and become more and more perverse.

Moreover, it must be observed that by moral application we understand not only reprimands and reproaches uttered against vice, but also the pointing out of the remedies to be employed to correct one's self, and the means to be used to persevere in good conduct. The missionaries should, therefore, persuade themselves that what is most important and profitable to the people in the mission is to teach them practical things, that is, remedies against vice and the means to persevere in virtue, such as the following: To flee from the occasions, as public houses, dangerous places, bad company. To do violence to one's self to control movements to anger, to have ready on one's tongue some good words, in order to avoid blasphemies and imprecations; for example: O Lord! give me patience. O holy Virgin Mary! help me. I beg God to sanctify you. And similar utterances. To join some confraternity. To hear Mass every day. To go to confession every week. To make every day a spiritual reading. To make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and also to the Blessed Virgin before one of her images. Every day, in the morning, to renew the good resolution not to offend God by asking him for the grace of perseverance; and in the evening, to make an examination of conscience with the act of contrition. If one falls into some sin, one should hasten to make an act of contrition with a firm purpose of amendment, and then go to confession as soon as possible. Above all, to have recourse to God and to the Blessed Virgin in temptations by often repeating the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and by continuing to invoke them until the temptation ceases.

These remedies and these means the preacher should repeat and recommend many times in the course of the sermons without allowing himself to be prevented by the fear of some learned critic who might reproach him for saying always the same thing. The preacher, and especially the missionary, must not look for the praise of the learned, but for the good pleasure of God and the salvation of souls, particularly of the poor ignorant people, who come in great numbers to the missions, and who derive less profit from the opinions and reasonings that one makes them hear, than from these easy practices that one takes care to inculcate on them by repeating them. I say, “By repeating them;” for the minds of these poor people, which are but little cultivated, easily forget what one teaches them, if one does not take care to repeat it several times, as one knows by experience.

III.—The *EXHORTATION* is one of the most important and most necessary parts of the sermon, especially during missions; for the profit derived by the hearers not only consists in convincing themselves of Christian truths, but also, and above all, in taking the resolution to amend their lives, and in giving themselves to God. The missionary should, therefore, not act like some who at the end of the sermon begin at once to cry out to the people: Ask pardon of God, cry for mercy!—and, taking the crucifix, the cords, the torches,[13619] are satisfied with this clamor, which will produce a great deal of noise, but very little fruit.

To obtain fruit one must study to find out the best means of touching the hearers, and of exciting not an apparent but a true compunction in their hearts. Without doubt, this compunction is the work of the hand of God; but the Lord wishes us to co-operate so as to make it as perfect as possible. This is the reason why it will be useful to speak here specially of the manner of moving the heart and of regulating the passions, which are the maladies of the soul: they darken the mind and weaken the will. Now, what does one need in order to subdue one’s passions? One needs the hand of God. The preacher should, therefore, for this purpose, count more on the divine help by humbly invoking it than on all the eloquence in the world; otherwise his hearers will only admire his talent without being converted, like those of whom St. Augustine[13620] spoke: “They admired, but were not converted.” They will say: What a good preacher! what a beautiful sermon!—and they will continue to slumber in their vices. Moreover, to move others, it is of great importance that the preacher shows that he himself is penetrated with the truths that form the subject of his discourses.

Human passions are numerous: some belong to the CONCUPISCIBLE appetite, others to the *IRASCIBLE* appetite. According to St. Thomas,[13621] the first are:

1. *LOVE,* which has the good for its object: it *is* the strongest of all the passions. The preacher should especially strive by proper motives to inspire the people with love for God and for their neighbor: for God, because he deserves this love, first on account of his goodness, and then on account of his benefits; for their neighbor, because God commands this love.

2. *HATRED:* one inculcates hatred for sin by showing what is its malice, and what injury it causes; one takes away hatred for one’s neighbor by setting forth how pleasing to God and how profitable to our soul is the pardon of injuries.

3. *DESIRE,* which is a movement of the soul towards a distant good. One shows that the goods in this life are of little value and of short duration, and that they are dangerous to salvation, while the goods of the next life are immense and eternal, and alone worthy of our desires.

4. *AVERSION,* which is opposed to desire, and makes us have a horror of the things that are hurtful to us.

5. *JOY, which is a satisfaction produced by the possession of good. It is very useful, among other things, to set forth the peace that the grace of God brings to him that possesses it.*

6. SADNESS, or grief, which is a pain that one feels at a present evil. One shows the pain that remorse of conscience causes sinners.

The following are the passions that belong to the IRASCIBLE appetite:

1. *HOPE, which is a movement towards a distant but possible good.*

2. DESPAIR, which is the contrary; one tries to persuade the hearers that it is impossible to find happiness in the goods of this world.

3. FEAR, which is *a* movement born of the apprehension of future evil.

4. AUDACITY, which is a movement that gives one strength not to fear the obstacles in the way of acquiring a desired good.

5. ANGER, which is a movement that leads to revenge. This passion may excite the love of penance in the sinner, who will wish to chastise his body by which he has offended God; for according to St. Augustine, the true penitent is a man justly angry with himself.

We must remark that in general one should in this exhortation guard against being too long; otherwise, one shall lose more than one gains.

III. ELOCUTION

After having treated of the disposition of the parts, we must speak of the means and the methods suitable for rendering the discourse capable of convincing the understanding and determining the will.

Good elocution requires the concurrence of three things, namely, elegance, composition, and dignity.

I. ELEGANCE results from clearness and proper expressions, by avoiding new or antiquated, affected, or vulgar terms. It must be understood that eloquence consists in expressing the idea that one has conceived, and in making the hearers seize it with the same vividness with which it has been conceived.

II. *COMPOSITION is the harmony of the discourse which is obtained from the good arrangement of periods and from their number expressed in suitable words. The period is a phrase composed of several parts, united with one another, to render entire the* idea that one wishes to express; the principal parts are called Members and the others Incidental. We distinguish three kinds of periods: the concise, the round, and the composite.

1. The *CONCISE* period, which is the shortest, should have at least two members, but not more than four. It has three qualities, but these are not always found together, namely, equality in the number of words, the harmonious correspondence between both members, and the opposition between the two, as in this text: *For you were heretofore darkness; but now light in the Lord.*[13622]

2. The *ROUND* period—that of which the parts form a harmonious union of sentences, of thought, and of words, to express a complete sense. One should therein avoid superfluous vowels and consonants, as well as repetition of the same words, or words formed of the same letters by having the same quantity of syllables, as also turns that represent the measure and cadence of verse.

3. The *COMPOSITE* period, finally, is that which is formed of several round or concise periods.

III. The *DIGNITY* of elocution results from the use of tropes and of figures, of which we shall speak farther on.

First of all, we must remind young preachers that what is said of periods rounded and composed of sonorous words, belongs properly to discourses pronounced in academies and in secular assemblies, but not to those that one pronounces in the churches. I know that there are orators who pretend that this is necessary even in sacred discourses in order to attract the people and to induce them to hear the divine word; but I also know that St. Paul protested against it when he said: *I came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom. . . . And my speech and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in showing of the spirit and power.*[13623] I also say that men of zeal and of charity do not go in search of choice expressions or of harmonious periods; they try to find the most efficacious method to deliver souls from hell and to persuade them to love God. I grant that preachers who attract the people by the charm of florid discourses have many hearers; but where is the fruit that they derive? Who, after having heard them, go to confession with compunction, moved by those ingenious descriptions and those rounded periods, in a word, by those flowers and those leaves, of which the sermon is composed? Origen,[13624] comparing such preachers to women, says that the latter *by* their vanities succeed in pleasing men but do not please God, and their souls are without fruit. A sick man, as Seneca[13625] remarks, does not ask for a physician that speaks well, but for one that is able to cure him. What good, he would say to him, will your fine discourses do me when iron and water must be employed to cure me? St. Jerome,[13626] writing to Nepotian, gave him this advice: “When you teach in the church, not the clamor *(viva! viva!)* of the people should be excited, but the tears of the hearers will be your best praise.”

Vain preachers may win the praises of some among the learned men, but they will bring no profit to any one. I say, “Of some;” for, whatever may be the trouble that one takes, one hardly succeeds in making one of those florid discourses in which the learned do not find now this, now that, to criticise. Such is then the folly of these orators who preach themselves instead of preaching Jesus Christ; they do all that they can in order to gain a vain approbation, and they do not even, know how they may obtain it from everyone. He who, on the other hand, wishes to preach Jesus crucified is always sure of success in his work, since he thereby pleases God; this should be the end of all our actions.

Oh, would to God that there were banished from the church such a vain mode of preaching! It is certain that if all preachers spoke in a simple and in an apostolic manner one would see the world changed. “Christian preaching," says St. Ambrose, "does not need pomp and cultured discourse; therefore fishermen, uneducated men, were chosen to preach the Gospel.[13627] The Apostle, speaking of those that preach with pomp, speaks of them as *adulterating the word of God.*[13628] Oh how expressive is this word *adulterating!* This is what St. Gregory well explains in the following passage: "The perverse man who serves vainglory is rightly said to adulterate the word of God, because by sacred eloquence he desires not to gain children to God, but to show his own science, and he devotes himself rather to his own pleasure than to the generation of spiritual children."[13629]

Sermons preached with vanity serve only to render proud him who preaches, to make him who listens lose time, and what is worse, to enervate the word of God: for the florid style takes from the eternal truths the force that they have in themselves, as is said by St. Prosper or some other ancient author: "A sermon purposely cultured enervates the vivacity of the sentences."[13630] Hence St. Paul thus declares: *For Christ sent me . . . to preach the Gospel: not in wisdom of speech, lest the cross of Christ should be made void.*[13631] On this text St. John Chrysostom has written: "Some bestow labor upon external wisdom; he (Paul) shows that it not only does not help the cross, but it even destroys it;" so that the refinement of thoughts and elegance of expressions destroy, so to speak, the fruit of the Redemption wrought by Jesus Christ.[13632]

Oh what a fearful account will those orators have to render to God at their death for having preached with vanity! St. Bridget[13633] saw the soul of a religious damned for having preached in this manner; and the Lord afterwards declared to the saint that through the organ of vain preachers it is not he that speaks, but the devil. A still more terrible example is that which is related by Father Cajetan Maria of Bergamo, a Capuchin, in his book entitled "*The Apostolic Man in the Pulpit.*" He says that a preacher of his Order related to him the following occurrence that happened to him a few years before: When still a young man and a lover of belleslettres, he had preached with a vain eloquence in the cathedral of Brescia; but returning thither a few years afterwards, he spoke in a manner entirely apostolic. When asked the cause of this change, he answered: I knew a celebrated preacher, who was a religious and my friend, and had, like myself, a liking for vain eloquence.

At the hour of death it was not possible to persuade him to make his confession. I went to him myself and spoke earnestly to him; but he only stared at me without saying a word. Then the Superior conceived the thought of having the Blessed Sacrament taken to his cell so as to touch him and induce him to receive holy Communion. The ciborium was brought, and those present said to the sick man: “Here is Jesus Christ, who has come to pardon you.” But he cried out in a voice of despair: “It is this God whose holy word I have betrayed!” Then we all occupied ourselves, some with praying to the Lord to have mercy upon him, and others with begging the dying man to trust in God’s mercy; but he began again to cry out with still greater force: “It is this God whose holy word I have betrayed!” Then he added: “There is no longer any mercy for me!” We continued to encourage him, but he cried out a third time: “It is this God whose holy word I have betrayed!” Then he said: “By a just judgment of God I am damned!” And immediately after he expired. The Father concluded by saying that this event had determined him to change his manner of preaching.

At least in purgatory the Lord will not fail to punish all these vanities that one shows in preaching. It is related of Father Francis dell’ Aredo, who converted a great number of souls, that after his death he appeared to his confessor, and said that he had to spend several days in purgatory on account of some florid sermons that he had preached in his youth. This example is cited by Father Nadasi, and here is another which he also quotes: While a Father of the Society of Jesus, Rector of the college at Maiorica, was preaching a very elegant sermon, our Lord said to the Venerable Alphonsus Rodriguez: “Your Rector will have to pay up for this sermon by the fire of purgatory.”

It is certain that all the vanities shown in the pulpit and all the applause received are not what gives confidence when one is dying. Several persons worthy of belief have assured me that a celebrated preacher of our time who preached in this manner with the applause of crowds of people, finding himself near death, ordered all his writings to be burnt. Moreover, it has been told me of the same preacher, that hearing on one occasion eulogies addressed to him on account of his pompous discourses, he answered: “These discourses will one day be the cause of my condemnation.”

We should note what Muratori says in speaking of panegyrics in his book entitled *Christian Charity.* Here is what he says: “Ah! why so many panegyrics, which often end in a vain mental pomp, in far-fetched subtilties of a brain filled with self-love, which are beyond the comprehension of most people? . . . If the panegyric is to be profitable, it should be given with that popular and intelligible eloquence which enlightens and touches not only the ignorant, but also the learned. But this kind of eloquence is not always well known by him who imagines himself more learned than others.” Seneca, writing to Lucillus, says that the orator should be more attentive to things than to expressions; then he adds, that the orator gives a bad idea of himself when he shows himself fond of such a trifling thing as the adorning of his discourse with leaves and flowers.[13634] So spoke a pagan; how much more should a Christian speak in like manner!

But some one will say, What do you wish?—do you wish that all the sermons should be mission sermons? I answer by asking what one understands by mission sermons: if one understands sermons made at random and negligently, without following any rule and without order, I condemn, as every one does, such sermons. But if one understands sermons made after the apostolic fashion, in a simple style, within the comprehension of the people who make up the audience, I have already cited elsewhere[13635] what has been written on this point in his golden book, *Popular Eloquence,* by the above mentioned Muratori, who has certainly held and still holds to-day a distinguished place among the first literary men of Europe. He says that when one preaches to an audience in which are found not only the learned, but also the uninstructed, who ordinarily form the greater part, it is expedient to preach in a simple and popular style; for this kind of preaching will profit the common people, and the learned, if they do not find the charm of diction, will nevertheless draw more fruit by seeing themselves enlightened and impelled to devote themselves more to the good of their souls. Moreover, one admits that before an audience composed of people who are well instructed, the preacher should use more choice language. But to apply one’s self to interweaving the sermon with flowers and leaves, that is, with learned researches, subtle and lofty reflections, pompous descriptions, choice terms and sonorous periods—all this is not suitable for the pulpit; for God does not cooperate with the success of such sermons; and without God’s co-operation, what fruit can one ever hope to derive? Pastors of souls should, above all, guard against such vanities; for preaching by virtue of their office and their duty they are bound by a strict obligation to make themselves understood by all the members of their flock.

Besides, I also admit that Lenten sermons should be different from mission sermons; however, when an audience is composed mostly of people that are but little instructed, Muratori teaches, as has been said, that all the sermons should be simple and popular in order that one may derive fruit therefrom, and have the consolation that the hearers will go to confession after the sermon. I remember that when Father Vittelleschi preached in this simple way at Naples, not only was the church filled, but the confessionals were besieged by a crowd of persons who wished to go to confession. And as for the Lenten sermons, which are given in the country, where nearly the whole audience is composed of poor villagers, one should use, as Muratori expressly says, the simplest and commonest possible words in order to adapt the discourse to the gross intelligence of the hearers. At least, I would wish the preachers who go through the country, and do not care about changing the lofty style of their sermons, to give during the last week, in the evening, when the people return from the fields, the spiritual exercises in the form of a mission. I assure them that they will produce more fruit by these familiar exercises than by a hundred Lenten sermons.

However, as for the Lenten sermons, it is a consolation for me to know that even in great cities like Naples, this foolish and, so to speak, barbarous style, which was in use in the last century, has been rejected; at present priests commonly preach in a familiar and an easy style, and I am glad of that. On the other hand, I regret to hear that on the missions some young preachers have introduced the use of the florid style; and I am astonished that the Superiors permit such subjects, who boast of being called missionaries, to preach in this fashion. In every sermon the missionary should preach as a missionary. One of our young subjects, while preaching one day a sermon on the Blessed Virgin, used a lofty and polished style; not only did I make him come down at once from the pulpit, but I forbade him to say Mass for three days.

The missionary, I say, should always preach as a missionary, but especially during the missions; otherwise he will have to render a twofold account to God, either on account of the little fruit which he derives from the sermons, or on account of the bad example which he gives to others by departing from the mission style, which should be entirely simple and popular. I do not contend, as I have said above, that the mission sermons should not be composed with the order that is suitable to them according to the rules of the oratorical art, and even with the use, wherever necessary, of tropes and of figures, of which we will afterwards speak; but as Muratori says, all this should be arranged with simplicity, without the appearance of being so arranged; for mission sermons should be composed of easy teachings, of suitable applications, and of Christian practices. This is to break the bread, as God requires of all preachers, and especially of missionaries: *Deal thy bread to the hungry.*[13636]

I beg my reader to make with me the following prayer:

My Lord Jesus Christ, Thou who, to save souls, hast given Thy life, deign to enlighten and animate so many priests who could convert many sinners and sanctify the world if they preached Thy word without vanity and with simplicity, as Thou hast preached it Thyself and Thy disciples have followed Thy example. These priests, however, act otherwise: they preach themselves; and thence it happens that although the world is full of preachers, yet hell is filled with lost souls. O Lord! remedy this great evil, which afflicts Thy Church through the fault of preachers.

1. TROPES

A trope is the employment of a word or a phrase in a signification different from its own on account of some resemblance. Tropes differ from figures in this, that they apply to words a sense other than their natural sense; this is not the case with figures, as we shall see later on. There are six principal tropes: metaphor, allegory, irony, hyperbole, antonomasia, and metonymy.

1. A *METAPHOR* is the transfer of a word to a sense that does not belong to it; it suffices for a metaphor that there be some resemblance among the things. It is thus, for example, that the priests are called the light of the world and the salt of the earth. The transfer may be made from an animate thing to an inanimate, and conversely. The use of metaphors should not be frequent; and they should not be obscure, or taken from objects either too sublime or too common.

2. An *ALLEGORY* is a continued metaphor, as when one says that Jesus Christ is the vine and we are the branches; that the branches united to the

vine produce fruit, while those that are separated from it can only be thrown into the fire.

3. *IRONY* is when one says the contrary of what one wishes others to understand. It is necessary, especially in speaking of God, that irony be clearly apprehended by the hearers, and that they understand it in its ironical sense.

4. *HYPERBOLE* consists in exaggerating or diminishing the expression of a thing beyond measure for fear of not saying enough, as when God says to Abraham: *I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven.*[13637] The use of the hyperbole should be rare.

5. *ANTONOMASIA* is when, instead of the proper name, we give to a subject another name to express what is good or what is bad in the subject; as when Lucifer is called “the Proud” or “the Dragon.” Antonomasia may be used in four ways: (1) by attributing specially to some one a name common to several, as when St. Paul is called by way of eminence “the Apostle,” and St. John “the well-beloved Disciple;” (2) by giving to some one for a name the title that designates a particular function, as when a lover of feasting is called “a Gourmand;” (3) by taking the name of the place, as when St. Augustine is called “the Doctor of Hippo;” (4) by forming the name from remarkable deeds, as when St. Francis Xavier is called “the Apostle of the Indies.”

6. *METONYMY,* by which one names an object for another on account of the natural bond that unites them; it is thus that one names the cause for the effect, and conversely, the container for the contained, the subject for the attribute, as in the following examples: 1. *They have Moses and the prophets:*[13638] we understand thereby the books of Moses and the prophets; 2. *Death is in the pot;*[13639] we take the vessel instead of the poisonous herbs that it contains, or death instead of these same herbs that caused it; 3. *My son, give Me thy heart;*[13640] God is asking a man for his heart, asks of him his love, which has its seat in the heart.

2. FIGURES

The Figure is an ornament of words or of thought, which elevates the discourse above ordinary language. We shall at first speak of the figures of *WORDS,* and then of the figures of *THOUGHT.*

FIGURES OF WORDS

Figures of words are produced in three ways—by addition, by subtraction, or by similitude.

I.—*Figures by ADDITION are the following:*

1. *ANAPHORA,* which consists in repeating the same word at the beginning of several phrases or various members of a period; it is thus that St. Ambrose, speaking of Debora, says: “A woman judged, a woman disposed, a woman prophesied, a woman triumphed.”[13641]

2. *EPIPHORA,* by which one repeats the same words, not at the beginning but at the end of the phrases, as in the text of St. Paul: *They are Hebrews, so am I: They are Israelites, so am I: They are the seed of Abraham, so am I.*[13642]

3. *SYMPLOCE,* or *COMPLICATION,* which is done by uniting the anaphora and the epiphora.

4. *ANADIPLOSIS,* or *CONDUPLICATION,* which consists in repeating one word or several words of the phrase that precedes; such as this passage of St. Gregory: “What do we admire, brethren? Mary coming or receiving the Lord? May I say receiving or attracting? but I should rather say attracting and receiving.”[13643] When we repeat the word immediately, the figure is called EPIZEUXIS; example: *Be comforted, be comforted, My people.*[13644] But when one repeats the last word of the phrase, the figure is confounded with the anadiplosis; example: *Our feet were standing in Thy courts, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem which is built like a city.*[13645] And when the word that begins a phrase is repeated at the end of the following phrase, it is called *EPANALEPSIS;* thus: *O God, who shall be like to Thee?*[13646] *hold not Thy peace, neither be Thou still, O God.*

5. *POLYPTOTON,* or *TRADITION,* when a word is repeated in different cases and at different times; thus St. Paul: *Now I make known unto you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received and wherein you stand, by which also you are saved.*[13647]

6. *CLIMAX, or GRADATION, when the last word of the phrase that precedes becomes the first of the following, and when one thus advances by degrees from phrase to phrase, as the Apostle in this passage: Tribulation worketh patience; and patience trial, and trial hope; and hope confoundeth not.*[13648]

II. Figures by SUBTRACTION are the following:

1. *ASYNDETON,* or *DISJUNCTION,* or *DISSOLUTION, when* several words or phrases follow without a conjunction, *as* in this passage of Salvian when speaking of the penitent David: “He took off his garments, laid aside his purple, removed his diadem; he is changed in appearance *and* in heart.”[13649]

2. *SYNECDOCHE,* or *COMPREHENSION,* when one admits in the discourse some word that is implicitly understood, as when one puts the part for the whole, or the whole for a part; example: *I will visit the evils of the world.*[13650] By the word *world* we here understand Babylon.

3. *APOSIOPESIS,* or *ELLIPSIS, OMISSION, RETICENCE,* when one suppresses something in the discourse, but in *such* a manner as to leave understood what one does not *say.* Thus David says: *And my soul is troubled exceedingly; but Thou, O Lord, how long?*[13651] This, according to St. Thomas, means: “How long wilt thou delay to come to my assistance, so that I may rise?”[13652]

4. *ZEUGMA, or ADJUNCTION, when one refers several subjects to one and the same verb; thus St. Paul: Let all bitterness and anger, and indignation and clamor, and blasphemy be put away from you, with all malice.*[13653]

III. Figures by SIMILITUDE are the following:

1. *PARONOMASIA, or ANNOMINATION, or ALLITERATION,* when one repeats the same word with some modification to signify another thing; it is thus that St. Augustine has said, in speaking of the Publican: *Quid miraris, si Deus ignoscit, quando ipse se agnoscit?*[13654] And St. Ambrose: *Fluctus est quidam maris, non fructus.*[13655]

2. *HOMCEOPTOTON,* or in Latin, *Similiter cadens* (similar case-endings), occurs when several phrases or several members of a period terminate by words in the same case, as in this text of Isaias: *Quaerite Judicium: subvenite oppresso, judicate pupillo.*[13656]

3. *HOMCEOTELEUTON,* or in Latin, *Similiter desinens* (like ending), occurs when several phrases or several members of a period terminate in the same manner, or in verbs with the same ending; such is the passage from St. John Chrysostom: *Considera pactum quod spopondisti, conditionem qua accessisti, militiam cui nomen dedisti.*[13657]

4. *ISOCOLON,* or in Latin, *Compar,* exists when the members of a period are nearly equal in the number of syllables; thus Isaias: *Occidere vitulos et jugulare arietes, comedere carnes et bibere vinum.*[13658]

5. *EPANORTHOSIS, or CORRECTION, when one feigns to* correct or to retract an expression, by replacing it by another that is more proper; thus, St. Augustine: *Magna* pietas, quod thesaurizat pater filiis; immo magna vanitas: thesaurizat moriturus morituris.[13659]

6. ANTITHESIS, or OPPOSITION, when several terms are opposed to one another in a period, as in this passage of St. Paul: *By honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true.*[13660]

FIGURES OF THOUGHT

Among the figures of thought some serve to teach, some to please, and others to move.

I.—Those that serve to TEACH, are the following:

1. *DEFINITION.*

2. *DISTRIBUTION* or *ENUMERATION* of parts.

We have spoken above of these two figures when treating of the common, intrinsic places or topics.[13661]

1. *PROLEPSIS*, or *ANTICIPATION,* when the orator anticipates the objection and refutes it.

2. *PAROMOLOGY,* or *CONCESSION*, when one grants something to opponents, in order to obtain what one desires and something more; thus St. Augustine: “If you wish to sin, seek a place where God does not see you, and do what you wish.”[13662]

3. *HYPOMONE, or SUSPENSION, when one excites the curiosity of the hearers and keeps them for some time in suspense.*

4. *PARALEIPSIS,* or *PRETERITION*, when one briefly says what one declares one wishes to pass over in silence; thus St. Augustine: *Omitto dicere quia forte, dum vivis, thesaurizas furi.*[13663]

5. *PARADOX,* when one ascribes to the same subject attributes that seem irreconcilable, and are yet true in fact; thus Origen: *Audi ineffabile paradoxum: per non factum, sed genitum, omnia facta, sed non genita.*

II.—*The figures that serve to PLEASE are the following:*

1. APOSTROPHE, or CONVERSION, when the orator, show*ing* emotion, addresses mountains, animals, or absent persons.

2. *HYPOTYPOSIS*, or *DESCRIPTION,* when one describes things in lively colors.

3. *PROSOPOPOEIA,* when one introduces into the discourse either a dead, absent, or fictitious person, or an inanimate thing, and makes them speak or act. One must take care to adapt the language to the thing or to the person; one should not make a king speak as a plebian.

4. *PERIPHRASE,* or *CIRCUMLOCUTION,* a term that one uses to express in a longer way, but more suitable, what one does not wish to say in proper words.

5. *DIALOGISM,* when one makes one or several persons speak among themselves or with others; such is the monologue of the prodigal son in St. Luke: *How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and here I perish with hunger!*[13664]

III.—The figures that serve to *MOVE* are the following:

1. *EROTESIS,* or *INTERROGATION,* when one addresses some one: either to show compassion, as when God called Adam after his sin and said to him: *Where art thou?*[13665]—or to complain; for example: *If I be a master, where is my fear?*[13666]—or to reprove, as the Lord, speaking to his people: *What iniquity have your fathers found in Me, that they are gone far from Me . . . ?*[13667]

2. *ANTIPHORA,* or *SUBJECTION,* when to a question addressed to one's self one adds the answer; thus St. Augustine: Tell me for whom are you hoarding riches? For myself, you say.[13668]

3. *EPHONESIS,* or *EXCLAMATION,* when one raises the voice to excite fear or some other emotion; for example: O folly of sinners, to lead an unhappy life upon earth in order to lead a still more unhappy life in hell!

4. *EPIPHONEMA,* a sententious exclamation by which one finishes an interesting recital; thus after having related the deed of a young idolater who, while present at a sacrifice offered by Alexander, preferred to have his hand burn rather than to disturb the ceremony, Tertullian adds: "So great was in this pagan youth the reverence for discipline that he conquered nature!"[13669]

5. APORIA, or DOUBT, when the orator is *at a* loss *what* course to pursue.

6. *PARRHESIA*, or *LICENSE, LIBERTY,* when the orator freely makes known some truth without fear of reproach.

7. *DEPRECATION, when, after having moved the minds of the hearers by reason, one begs them to put in execution what one has said.*

8. *COMMISERATION*, when one shows compassion for the misfortune of others.

9. *REPREHENSION,* when one reproves the hearers; this one should never do in words that irritate.

IV. MEMORY, PRONUNCIATION, AND GESTURE

I.—As for the *MEMORY,* but little is to be said; for memory is a gift of nature, and is perfected according as one cultivates it by continual practice. It is, however, very useful, in order to render the memory local, to mark the points of the sermon, and the beginnings of sentences and of arguments, or at least of the longer periods with letters larger than usual, and with additional numbers.

It is also useful to make an abridgment of the sermon by indicating in a brief and distinct manner the beginnings, as has been just said, of the periods, of the sentences, etc.; this may at least be of service to the preacher, who, if he should forget some part of the sermon, can remember the part that follows, and thus free himself from an embarrassment which, as has happened to many, might oblige him to come down from the pulpit.

II.—As for *PRONUNCIATION,* as one expresses things by words, one should express the different sentiments of the soul by the modification of the voice: the preacher should speak, now by raising the voice, now by lowering it; now quickly, now more slowly; now with dignity, as when he quotes the words of Scripture; now with severity, and now with gentleness and feeling. In this many fail to such an extent that they annoy and weary the hearers, by adopting a kind of sing-song; by dragging the voice in the articulation of words; by being precipitate in their delivery; by excessively raising or lowering their voice; or by suddenly passing from a high to a too low tone of voice.

Without doubt, in order to captivate the attention of the hearers, to impress better on their minds the things that one preaches, especially in mission sermons, it is very useful to vary the tone of voice; for a monotonous discourse gives but little prominence to the things that are said, and that should be expressed with more or less warmth or gentleness. Nevertheless, immediate transitions from one tone to another always cause disorder and trouble. Ordinarily, the exordium should be pronounced in a moderate and grave tone; for the proposition and the division of the points, the voice is raised and becomes more distinct; in the proofs, it is modified conformably to the quality of the things that one says. Arrived at the peroration, or the final exhortation, the preacher should show himself moved in order to move the hearers by speaking to them in such a manner as to excite in them the passion with which he wishes to penetrate them; for example: anger and hatred require an impetuous tone; hope and love, a gentle voice; joy, a jubilant tone; grief, a plaintive voice, broken by groans and sighs. On missions, in the moral applications, the voice should be raised, especially when one speaks against vice.

On missions it has been the custom to use a *THIRD TONE,*[13670] *W*hich consists in pronouncing the words in a loud voice by prolonging the last syllable but one, especially in the last words of the members of a period. It is expedient to employ this means from time to time when it is suitable; for example, when there is question of threats, complaints, or chastisements, etc. I said: “From time to time;” for if one uses this third tone too often, as some do, one ends in producing no longer any impression, and one even gives annoyance, the ear of the hearers becoming accustomed to it.

II.—As *for GESTURE, one should avoid gestures that are affected or too uniform, that are always the same, or* so *impetuous* as *to give to the body an excessive agitation by moving inordinately the hands, the head, or the eyes.*

The gestures of the hands should be grave. It is ordinarily the right hand that makes the gestures; one uses the left hand only to point out objects placed at its side, or things that are separated or opposed to one another. One should not raise the hand higher than the head, nor extend it too much, nor hold it too short, or only before one’s breast. In the exordium, however, at the first period, one should not make any gesture; it is only at the second period that one may begin to move the hands, which during the whole exordium should be moved but little, and it would be better for one to remain always standing in the middle of the pulpit.[13671] While the right hand is raised, the left, if it is not moved, rests on the pulpit, and not on the breast. One should avoid putting the hands on the hips or on the back, raising them in the form of a cross, striking them together, or striking the pulpit; which should be done but rarely. Moreover, one should guard against taking off the surplice and casting it at one's feet, or making with the body any other improper movement; for by the name of gesture one understands not only the movement of the hands, but also that of every part of the body, and especially of the head and eyes.

The movement of the head should be regulated by the movement of the hand by turning the head in the same direction, except when the preacher desires to excite in the hearers a horror of something, and in this case it is proper to turn the head in the opposite direction. It is a fault to turn violently the head, to shake it too much, always to keep it erect, or bent, or often inclined on the breast, or always in the same attitude.

As for the eyes, it is a fault to keep them closed, or always cast down, or always fixed on one side, especially on the side where the women are, as if one made more of one part of the hearers than of the other. The eyes should, moreover, accompany the movement of the head. The expression of the countenance should be varied according to the subject by expressing therein, for example, sadness in things that are sad, such as terrible things, or grievous sins, gravity in things that are grave, and joy in things that are joyous.

Finally, every posture should be modest. One may sit down, but only sometimes. One may also pass from one side of the pulpit to the other, but without precipitation. Ordinarily, it is proper to remain in the middle of the pulpit in order to be understood by all; it is, however, good to turn from time to time, now towards the right, now towards the left, but without going so far as to turn one's back to the opposite side. It is also a defect to make contortions, or to incline the body too much over the pulpit. In a word, the preacher represents Jesus Christ, of whom he is the organ; hence the language, the gestures, everything, should be grave, as is befitting a minister of Jesus Christ.

It must also be here remarked, that when one takes in one's hand the crucifix, one should not wave it as if it were a banner, as some are accustomed to do; it should be taken and held with gravity and respect.

V. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS IN REGARD TO MISSION SERMONS

We have already spoken of several things that are to be observed in mission sermons; but it will be well to reunite here in an abridged form the principal instructions, in order that the missionary may have them all united before him. Besides, we shall also indicate here the different other things that refer only to the manner of preaching during the missions.

1. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SERMONS

Mission sermons should have fewer Latin texts. If we examine the sermons of the Venerable Paul Segneri, a great master in the art of preaching, we shall find few Latin passages, but many practical reflections and moral applications. The quotations from Scripture should be few, but should be well explained and well pondered. It will be better to present a single text well pondered by taking care to draw from it suitable moral applications, than to group together several passages which serve more to gratify the vanity of the preacher than to benefit the people. So also in regard to the opinions of the holy Fathers, they should be few in number, should be short and ingenious, that is, of such a nature as to explain the subject with taste and with a special emphasis.

The comparisons should be exposed in a simple and popular manner, but should not be so common as to be unsuitable for the pulpit.

Only a few examples should be given—two or three at the most will suffice for a sermon; and they should not be too long—this being accomplished by leaving out unimportant details.

The moral applications should be strong and well discussed. It will be observed, as has been said above,[13672] that from them the greatest part of the fruit of the mission is derived. There should not be in every sermon a long string of moral applications, mentioned superficially in passing, for example, against enmity, theft, impurity, lying, etc. It will be better to endeavor every time to combat firmly and in detail one or two of the more common vices, such as blasphemy, hatred, theft, and especially impurity, which being the most common of all, needs to be more frequently combated in the sermons. One should, however, take special care to speak with modesty when one treats of this shameful vice. Moreover, in the moral applications one should avoid hurting the feelings of any one; for those that recognize themselves in any humiliating allusion, which the hearers may apply to them, will not only not derive any benefit therefrom, but will become prejudiced, because they will become incensed and more hardened in evil. One should also guard against ever censuring priests or religious, even in general.

2. THE FORM OF THE SERMONS

As for the manner of preaching on missions, we have already spoken of this above,[13673] when we spoke of the dignity of elocution. We have there quoted[13674] the opinion of the celebrated Muratori, who thinks that when one speaks to an audience composed of many uninstructed persons all the sermons should be preached in a simple and familiar style; and when addressing country people, one should adopt a style that is as popular as can be, provided it be not coarse, so that these poor people may be instructed and moved in their own way. Moreover, as distinguished from Lenten and Sunday sermons, the manner of preaching on missions should be more free and unconnected; for the periods should be concise and detached, so that he who has not heard or understood the first may understand the second, and he that enters the church at the middle of the sermon may at once understand what the preacher is saying. This could hardly be successful in the case of persons who are but little instructed if the discourse is unbroken; hence he who has not heard the first sentence will understand neither the second nor the third.

We must, furthermore, take notice of the good advice given by Muratori, namely, that in order to have the people continually attentive, it is very useful to employ often the interrogation or the figure called *ANTIPHORA*, or *SUBJECTION*, described above,[13675] by which the orator puts a question and answers it himself; example: Tell me: Why are there so many that relapse after the mission? It is because they do not keep away from the occasion of sin. Or: What do these words of the Holy Ghost mean: *Desires* *kill the slothful?*[13676] We thereby understand those who, having bad habits, always desire to amend their lives and never employ the means of doing so. Or, one makes this exclamation. Oh how touching are the words of Jesus Christ: *Him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out!*[13677] What also serves to keep the hearers attentive, is often to claim their attention by saying: Pay attention to what I am going to tell you. Or: Hear the beautiful reflection made by a celebrated author. One should, however, avoid always using the same form and employing too often this means, and thus causing the hearers to grow weary.

To move the feelings of the hearers it is very useful to make an invocation, even in the middle of the sermon; for example: My God, how many unfortunate beings are damned in consequence of this illusion! Or: O Lord! how canst Thou tolerate these traitors, who promise Thee, and immediately afterwards, etc. Or: O holy Virgin Mary, obtain that these poor blind creatures may be enlightened, etc. Or: O God of goodness, Thou comest to seek us in order to save us, and we flee far from Thee in order to damn ourselves! It is also good sometimes to repeat in a grave manner some strong maxim; for example: We must die; we must die; it is an evil without a remedy! Or we may use some weighty exclamation; for example: O cursed sin! O great moment, the moment of death! or: eternally happy or eternally unhappy!

As regards the modulation of the voice, one must avoid the uniform and emphatic tone of the panegyrists: I am speaking of those that preach their own praises, and not those of a saint; for even panegyrics should, according to Muratori, be pronounced in such a way as to produce fruit and not merely wind. It is good sometimes, as has been said above, to use the *THIRD TONE* when there is question of inspiring fear or compassion. Besides, one should guard against always speaking in a forced tone, as is done by certain missionaries, who run the risk of bursting a blood-vessel, or at least of losing their voice, while, on the other hand, this manner of speaking wearies the audience without any special benefit. What rouses and conciliates the attention of the people is to speak in a tone, now high, now low, but without excessive and sudden transitions; at one time to make a longer exclamation, at another, to make a pause, and then to continue with a sigh, etc. This variety of tone always keeps the hearers attentive.

3. THE ACT OF CONTRITION AND THE END OF THE SERMON

It will be useful to mention here several things concerning the act of contrition, which is the most important part of the mission sermons. One shall derive but little profit from the sermon if the hearers remain convinced, without, however, being penetrated with compunction and without being resolved to amend their life;[13678] now it is this last effect that it is intended to be produced by making an act of contrition.

At first, before making the people kneel down, one should endeavor to move them as much as possible to kneel down of themselves. At last, when the hearers are on their knees, before showing them the crucifix, one should make them all say: O Lord, pardon! O Lord, mercy! Afterwards, the torches having been brought in, and then the crucifix, one should make them recite several acts of contrition—two or three of them—each with its proper and distinct motive, in order that the sinners may repent and sigh, not inconsiderately, but with a motive and with reason. Otherwise if one contents one's self with saying, as some do: All should weep, should repent, should ask pardon of God;—all this without proposing the motives, then, undoubtedly, many people will cry out, will shed tears, when they hear others crying out, shedding tears, but they will do this without knowing the reason why; and the result will be a great deal of noise but no fruit. The preacher should, therefore, take care to wait till the cries cease before proposing the motive, so that the hearers may hear and understand him; if this is not done, he will by speaking during this commotion exhaust himself in vain. Hence the motive is to be proposed when the people are quiet. One shall say, for example: Sinners, my brethren, let each one of you address to Jesus Christ this petition: O Lord! why hast Thou waited for me till now, and hast borne with me after the many offences that I have heaped upon Thee? Hear what answer our Lord gives to you: I have waited for you, and I have borne with you in order to pardon you; repent, and I will pardon you, etc. (We will afterwards give other examples of these motives for the convenience of preachers.) After having proposed the motive, one should inculcate repentance by saying, for example: Let us now take courage! ask pardon of God; raise your voices, and say amidst tears and sighs: O Lord! I have offended Thee; I repent of my sins; I am sorry for them, etc.

It will also be very useful, when finishing, to have the people make a more formal and more extended act of contrition by calling upon them to repeat the words that one shall suggest one after the other. At first one shall tell the people to make an act of love to Jesus crucified by preparing them for it by some motive briefly expressed; then an act of hope of pardon by reposing confidence in the blood of Jesus Christ; and finally, the act of attrition followed by the act of contrition. But before forming this act, one should induce the hearers to make it for the confession for which they are preparing themselves; for, according to the probable opinion of a good number of authors, the act of repentance, as the matter of the sacrament, should be made in view of the absolution that is to be received. Then is to be added the good resolution never more to offend God, with the intention of going to confession the same evening or the day after, and to confess all sins without omitting any one of them through shame.

It must also be here remarked, that the preacher, at the beginning and at the end of every sermon, as also in the sermon itself, should always exhort the hearers to hear the sermon with the intention of confessing as soon as possible—that very evening or the following morning; for if one does not take this precaution in the beginning, it will easily happen that the people will put off confession till the last moment, and thus the mission will end in confusion and with little profit. Moreover, in telling the people to make a firm purpose of amendment, the preacher should at times insinuate, at the end of the act of contrition, a special resolution in regard to certain more habitual sins, as, for example, to avoid blasphemy, to restore the goods of others, to forgive enemies, not to violate chastity, and above all to flee from the occasion by reminding them several times during the sermons, that he who does not remove the proximate occasion cannot be absolved; this is also to be understood in regard to fathers and mothers that permit the betrothed of their daughters to enter the house. It is good to insist, and insist repeatedly, upon that which refers to the good resolution by saving, for example: Do not defer, make now, the resolution to do what God asks of you; make haste; do you perhaps wish that God should abandon you? This will surely happen if you do not make up your mind.

Before finishing the sermon, the preacher should urge the people always to have recourse to Mary by asking her for some particular grace, as holy perseverance, a happy death, love for God, etc.

At the end, when giving the people the blessing with the crucifix, one should suggest to them what they must say while receiving it; for example: O My God! I do not wish to lose Thee any more. Or: O Lord! if I should still offend Thee, let me rather die. O Lord! do not permit that I should again separate myself from Thee. I have offended Thee enough; I do not wish to offend Thee any more in future. O my God! in the past, I have offended Thee; hereafter, I will love Thee.

The sermon concluded, one should avoid imposing upon the people the recitation of "Hail Marys" for the persons that have asked for them; they should be recited before the sermon; for if they are recited afterwards, the compunction produced by the sermon will grow cold. The best thing will be, to tell the women that they should return home with a contrite heart by thinking of the sermon that they have heard; as for the men, they should be told to remain, either to follow the missionaries who are to give the evening exhortation,[13679] or to participate in the exercise of taking the discipline.[13680]

4. EXAMPLES OF VARIOUS MOTIVES FOR THE ACT OF CONTRITION

1. Sinners, my brethren, rid yourselves this evening of all fear. Of what are you afraid? During the many years that you have lived away from God, he did not cease to go in search of you; and now that you are disposed to change your life, would he repel you? Ah! do not hesitate; repent, weep, etc.

2. St. Augustine says: If a poor shepherd loses a heifer, he weeps; if he loses a sheep, he weeps; and you who have lost God, the sovereign good, do not weep.

3. My dear brethren, God comes in search of you to make peace with you; and you do not wish to make peace with God? Come then, etc.

4. Do you fear that Jesus Christ will reject you? Well, listen to what he says in the Gospel: *Him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out.*[13681] I cannot repel him who comes to me repentant. Do you understand this? Come, etc.

5. Oh, how God rejoices when he sees a sinner weeping over his sins! My brethren, how much displeasure have you not caused Almighty God! Give him, therefore, this evening, this pleasure by saying to him with your whole heart: O Lord, my God! I repent of having offended Thee.

6. Tell me, sinners: Did Jesus Christ deserve to be treated as he was treated? But this good Lord does not wish that you should despair; ask his pardon, etc.

7. Have you the desire to obtain pardon of God? Know that God desires still more to grant it to you.

8. You see here Jesus Christ; you see what your soul has cost him; you see what he has done for you; and you wished to lose Jesus Christ for a mere nothing!

9. You have turned your back upon God, and God has done the same to you; but hear what Jesus Christ says to you this evening: *Turn ye to Me . . . and I will turn to you.*[13682] Leave sin, and return to me; I embrace you.

10. Sinners, during how many years have you fled from the Lord who comes to you? Hear what he says this evening to each one of you: My dear little sheep, stop, cease to run away from me, who wishes to do you good, who wishes to serve you.

11. The Lord speaks to you this evening as if bewailing your loss: *Why will you die, O house of Israel?*[13683] But you answer: What shall I do? the sins have been committed. And thereupon the Lord answers: *Return ye, and live.*[13684] Return to me, repent, and I will pardon you.

12. See Jesus Christ, with open arms, calling you and saying to each one of you: My child, ask my pardon; for I will pardon you.

13. Sinners, you would no doubt like also to hear the *words* addressed by Jesus Christ to Magdalen: *Thy sins are forgiven thee.*[13685] Well, if you wish to hear them, cast yourselves weeping, like Magdalen, at the feet of your Saviour, etc.

14. Rejoice sinners, because you have not to treat with a man of this earth, but with God. If you had offended any person as you have offended God, I should say to you that there would be but little hope for pardon; but you have to treat with God, whose mercy is infinite. Should you have offended him for fifty consecutive years by committing every day a thousand mortal sins, it would be sufficient for you to say this evening: O Lord, I repent, etc. God will immediately answer you: And I will pardon you all the displeasure that you have caused me.

These motives are here presented as examples; one may form many others like them.

5. CONCLUSION

Such are the rules of preaching; but the first rule is that which was given by the Venerable John d’Avila to a priest who had asked him for some good rule in order to preach well: “If you wish to preach well,” he said to him, “love Jesus Christ much.” To preach well is to attain the end of the sermon, that is, that the hearers are converted to God and that they put in practice what they are taught; now this is attained by those preachers that love God. We read in the chronicles of the discalced Carmelites that a Father, named Julian of St. Paul, although he had studied but little, preached with such success that the people came in crowds to hear him and were converted, every one of them deriving much fruit from his sermons. Some one having asked what good could be found in this preacher, whom every one went to hear, the following answer was given to him: “We go to hear him, because he is a saint: he sheds tears during Mass, he sleeps little, he always goes about with his eyes cast down, he is always praying, he speaks only of God and of our welfare; and therefore we do what he tells us.” John d’Avila had then reason to say that the first and most important rule for preaching well is to love God.

6. NOTE AS TO THE SERMONS USUALLY PREACHED IN OUR MISSIONS

Beside the sermon on mortal sin, in which one shows precisely the malice of sin considered as a contempt for God, and besides the three sermons on the Last Things, or on death, judgment, and hell, which should always be given, one must not fail, before beginning to preach on the Last Things, to preach a sermon on confession, in which one should show especially the gravity of the sacrilege and the ruin brought upon the soul by the sin of concealing sins in confession.

Moreover, one should not omit to preach, immediately after the sermon on hell, a sermon on the Blessed Virgin, in which one should speak chiefly on the confidence that we should have in the protection of this divine Mother by having recourse to her in order to overcome the temptations and obtain a happy death.

Again, one should not omit the sermon on prayer, or the absolute necessity in which we are of always recommending ourselves to God to obtain perseverance in what is good and eternal salvation; and in this sermon one should suggest to the people the practical manner of recommending themselves to God, in the morning on rising, in the evening on retiring, when they visit the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin, and above all when they are assailed by temptations. This sermon should be preached on all the missions, since, without prayer, one cannot obtain perseverance; and when on any little mission time is wanting, one must speak at length of prayer in the last sermon that is followed by the blessing.

The other sermons are arbitiury, one may choose, as one thinks fit, among them the sermon on the mercy of God, the spiritual and temporal chastisements of sin, the divine vocation, the importance of salvation, the vanity of temporal goods and temporal evils in comparison with eternal good and eternal evils, the number of sins, or abandonment on the part of God—a sermon of great use for the perseverance of sinners who are converted—final impenitence, scandal, and perseverance, a subject that is treated in the last sermon when the blessing is given.

VI. THE EXERCISE OF THE DEVOUT LIFE

The exercise of the devout life is one of the most useful of the mission. Souls that give up sin only when moved by the fear of divine chastisements, when the mission is finished and their emotion dissipated, easily return to their old vices; but those that remain attached to God by love, easily persevere. Hence I say that the exercise of the devout life is very useful; for one’s only aim thereby is to point out the means necessary for perseverance while penetrating the hearers with love for Jesus Christ by the consideration of his Passion and of the love that he has borne to us. It is indeed great misery to see that preachers usually treat of everything else except of the love for Jesus Christ after God has done so much and suffered so much to gain our love. But let us come to our subject.

On the last days of the mission, before its close, the usual sermon is replaced by the exercise of the devout life, which exercise lasts three days, or at least two in small places.

On each of these evenings the preacher begins by giving a half hour’s practical instruction on the means to be used to lead a Christian life. He should especially teach therein the manner of making mental prayer; at first he should show them how useful and even how necessary it is to all kinds of persons in order that they may keep themselves in the grace of God; for Christians well know the truths of faith, but as they neglect to think of them, they do not live as Christians. Then he explains the manner of making meditation with facility so that every one can practise it. I have already shown in my little work *Instruction and Practice for Confessors*[13686] the manner of making mental prayer, which should be taught by pastors of souls. The teaching of this method is substantially reduced to the following points: At first, the one that wishes to meditate, places himself in God's presence, humbles himself before him, asks him for the light that he needs; afterwards, he begins to read, if he knows how to read, either to consider some point, whether of the Last Things, or of the Passion of Jesus Christ, or some other similar subject; and then he makes acts of contrition, of love, of confidence, of petition, and makes good resolutions.

One should recommend to the pastors to have daily meditation made in common with the people, either in the evening, or in the morning during Mass, by having some point of meditation read twice, namely, immediately before the beginning of Mass, and after the consecration.[13687]

One should announce this to the people, but should add that those that cannot come to the church to make meditation with the others, should make it at least privately at home, in some retired place, and at a time when there is less noise in the house, and that, if they have no other time or no other way, they should at least make it while working or walking. Moreover, one should exhort the fathers and the mothers to send their sons and daughters to church to make this exercise there, or to introduce it at home for the whole family, as some have already done.

The foregoing instruction finished, the preacher kneels down and announces a mystery of the Passion of Jesus Christ which should be meditated upon; one may also unite two mysteries, as the scourging and the crowning with thorns, or the journey to Calvary and the crucifixion. In this exercise one may use the *Reflections and Affections on the Passion,* a little work which I have added to the *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament.* Before beginning the meditation it will be well to sing a hymn of the Passion, the better to dispose souls for compunction and tender affections; for in these meditations one does not speak of things that inspire fear; all the moral applications and all the affections should have for their object the practice of virtues, and especially of a tender love for Jesus Christ. The preacher should, therefore, say at the beginning: I wish this evening no more tears of fear, but tears of tenderness and of love.

One begins the exercise for the preparation by making the ordinary acts: the act of faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament with the act of adoration, the act of humility with the act of contrition and the petition for light. Then, after having said an *Ave Maria,* one passes to the meditation of the mystery, which contains four parts: the representation, the reflection, the affection, and the firm purpose of amendment.

1. The REPRESENTATION consists in exposing in a lively manner, before the eyes of the hearers, the mystery with all the most touching and most important circumstances; or example: Imagine, my brethren, that you see Jesus bound to the column, his head bent, his eyes fixed upon the ground, waiting for the tortures that the executioners are preparing for him, etc.

The REFLECTION; for example: Consider the pains of Jesus Christ and his confusion by seeing himself treated like a slave, and think that by your sins you have been the cause of the sufferings that your Saviour endures.

2. The *AFFECTIONS*, not only of compassion for Jesus Christ, a sentiment on which some dwell too much, but also of hatred for sin, and above all of love for our Redeemer. One should remark that in these meditations the principal part is the movement of the affections, and that the missionary should dwell thereon at greater length; for example: Say to him then: Here I am, O my Jesus! let me know what Thou desirest of me; I wish to perform it immediately. At this moment I should be in hell where I could no longer love Thee; but since it is permitted to me to love Thee still, I wish to love Thee.—Or: Faithful soul, dost thou not see that God calls thee to his love? Render thanks to him, and say to him: O my God! how could I in the past have been so ungrateful to Thee, who hast loved me so much? The life that remains to me I will spend entirely in weeping over the displeasure that I have caused Thee, and in loving Thee with my whole heart. O cursed years! what have you done? you have made me offend my dear Saviour, who has wished to die for me. O my God! I give myself entirely to Thee; accept me, O Lord, for hereafter I will belong entirely to Thee!

3. The *FIRM PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT*, or the resolution to put in practice the means given to each one to sanctify himself. It is this that

should be inculcated from time to time: Courage, faithful soul, decide now to give thyself to God. Thou seest that Jesus Christ calls thee to his love; thou seest that he wishes to be loved by thee; do not resist any longer. He wishes you to give up that attachment . . . The mission is already coming to a close; make without delay a generous resolution, and thou wilt see the graces that God will bestow upon thee if thou obeyest his voice. Say without hesitation: Yes, my Jesus, I wish to please Thee; I wish to do all that Thou wishest me to do; help me; give me Thy love; I desire nothing more.

Following these examples, one should interweave the meditation with other acts of a firm purpose, of thanksgiving, of self-oblation, of resignation, and of petition, by specially asking for holy perseverance and the love of God. At the end one should briefly make the Christian acts of faith, of hope, of love, and of contrition; but the preacher should stop longer at the act of love and of contrition. The first evening he may exhibit a picture of the *Ecce Homo;* the second evening, the image of Christ crucified.[13688]

VII. THE LAST SERMON, ON PERSEVERANCE, WITH THE PAPAL BLESSING

After the evenings consecrated to the exercise of the devout life comes the last sermon, with the papal blessing. I know that other Congregations have the custom of giving it before this exercise, and we ourselves followed this custom for some time; but experience has taught us that it is better to finish it in a different manner; for when the people have received the papal blessing, they easily neglect to be present at the exercise of the devout life, believing in some way that the mission is over; on the other hand, it is easy to have every one at this exercise in expectation of the blessing.

1. MANNER OF GIVING THE LAST SERMON

On the day of the blessing there is no instruction; but the people should be kept occupied with the recitation of the Rosary, which the missionary prolongs by examples and moral applications. Then, before beginning the sermon, a short procession takes place with the Blessed Sacrament, accompanied only by priests: I have used the word *short,* because one should make only a few steps outside of the door of the church, where one should give with the Blessed Sacrament three blessings, one in the middle and two at the sides towards the fields, the priests chanting at each blessing the prayer of the Church: *Ut fructus terrae dare et conservare digneris: te rogamus, audi nos.*

After the procession has re-entered the church, the Blessed Sacrament is placed on the altar, where it is veiled. Then the sermon begins; in it one should speak of the necessity of perseverance for salvation, and should point out the means that are to be used in order to overcome the enemies of our salvation, namely, the world, the devil, and the flesh. One becomes victorious over the world by not caring for human respect. One should speak at length against this vice; because many souls who in the mission are converted and begin to lead a good life, yielding afterwards to this cursed human respect, for fear of being laughed at, abandon the Christian life and return to their old habits. At the same time, the hearers should be put on their guard against those impious men who, not wishing to do what is good, cannot see it in others without turning them into ridicule and making satirical songs on them.—One overcomes the *devil* and his temptations by recommending one's self to God. Here one should again inculcate what should be repeated several times in the sermons, namely, that in temptations we must immediately have recourse to Jesus and Mary by invoking their holy names in order to obtain help.—The means of overcoming the *flesh,* or the impure vice, is also prayer, but the flight of the occasions must be joined to it. On this subject one should speak at length about the sad consequences of visiting persons of the opposite sex, and of going into bad company.

The advice that is to be left as a memento for the hearers is, chiefly, to frequent the sacraments, to make meditation every day, as also to visit the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin. Moreover, one should recommend to each family to recite the Rosary in common, and to every one in particular to say three "Hail Marys" in honor of the purity of Mary, in the morning after rising and in the evening before going to bed, adding a prayer for the grace of perseverance; to fast on Saturdays; to confess and communicate especially on each of the seven principal feasts of the Mother of God. One should also recommend the recitation, at the sound of the bell at three o'clock in the afternoon, of three "Our Fathers and Hail Marys," in memory of the agony of Jesus Christ. The following beautiful devotion should also be recommended: When a sick person is in his agony this should be announced by five or seven strokes of the large bell, and then every one should recite three “Our Fathers and Hail Marys” to obtain for the one that is dying a happy death. This is a salutary practice, not only for the sick, but also for all the rest who are reminded of death, which will one day overtake them. Finally one should recommend the act of contrition that is to be made every evening.

This advice having been given, the preacher tells all to kneel down; then he says: The mission is now finished; before departing from you, I wish to leave you under the protection of the Blessed Virgin. Let each one of you repeat after me this prayer:

O my Queen, my Advocate, my Hope, and my Mother! I should have deserved to be banished from thy presence; but I know that thou, who art the Mother of mercy, doth not reject any one of those that have recourse to thy protection; I therefore, O my merciful Sovereign! take refuge under thy mantle. I promise to love thee and to serve thee hereafter, and to do all that I can that thou mayest also be loved by others. I likewise promise thee that when I am tempted to offend thee I shall always have recourse to thee, and shall say: My Mother, help me.—And thou, O my Queen! support me in all the temptations and all the dangers to which I shall be exposed to lose God. Above all, at the hour of death, do not abandon me, O my dear Mother! protect me and save me; for I protest that I shall live and die under thy protection.

2. MANNER OF TAKING LEAVE

The foregoing prayer to the Mother of God having been finished, the preacher, before giving the blessing, takes leave of the people in the following manner:

You see now, my dear brethren, that the mission has drawn to a close. Before my departure, I wish you to pardon me if in my discourses I have caused displeasure to any one. For the rest, I have always spoken in general, without intending to offend any one in particular. All that was harsh and severe in what I said, was not said against you but against vice, because I should like to see every one of you saved. If, however, I have gone too far, if I have caused weariness, if I have been indiscreet in my reprimands, I ask your pardon. I ask you especially to pardon me all the obstacles that I have placed, by my defects, in the way of your spiritual profit, and to pray to Jesus Christ also to pardon me.

I thank you for your attendance at the exercises of the mission, as well as for the obedience that you have shown. I bless all the sweat and all the labor that you have cost me during these days, and I offer all to God for your eternal salvation; I even protest that I am ready to give my life for each one of you, in order that we all that are here may have the happiness of saving our souls and of seeing ourselves all together in heaven.

I part from you, satisfied with the great work wrought in this mission. A simple thought fills me with sorrow, namely, whether there is any one among you who, notwithstanding the mission, still remains an enemy of God. Suppose that there is such a one among you, I would say to him: Poor sinner, you must know that, although the mission has come to an end, yet the mercy of God has not come to end for you. Do not despair; if you wish to make your peace with God, there is yet time: ask his pardon, and he will pardon you; here is Jesus Christ (here the crucifix is shown), who still calls you, having his arms open to receive you and to pardon you. My brethren, let each one among you now say to Jesus: O Lord! I trust that Thou hast already pardoned me; but if through my fault I have not yet been pardoned, deign to grant me pardon on this evening of the last day of the mission; for, O my God, infinite good! I repent of having offended Thee, etc. Ah! be assured, ye children of so good a Father. I do not doubt that he has pardoned you all. What you have to do in future for your salvation is to continue to live in the grace of God; for if you betray him again after the mission, I very much fear that he will abandon you. Courage, then, my brethren; make a good resolution; if that has not yet been made, make it this evening; renounce the world. What have you profited by having committed so many sins? Ah! give yourselves now to God; begin to love this God, who has shown you so much mercy, and who, as I trust, now loves you so much; do not lose all the good that you have gained during these days.

My dear children, I depart from you; but see him whom I am leaving behind for you (here the crucifix is shown): I leave you this infinitely amiable God; learn how to love him.—Ye men, my brethren, I depart from you; but I leave you this excellent Friend, who loves you more than any other friend, more than any relative, more than your brother, more than your father, more than any person in this world.—Ye Christian women, I depart from you; but I leave in your hearts this God of love, who died for you; unite yourselves to him, learn how to return love for love.—And now I address myself to all of you: Souls redeemed by Jesus Christ, do not any more offend this good Saviour. What do you say? do you wish to offend him again? Say then: No, never, never. Ah! you say this too coldly; speak in a loud voice and say: O my God! never more will I offend Thee; rather will I die a thousand times than lose Thy grace. Now, if such is your resolve, raise your hand and give your word to Jesus Christ that you will no more offend him.

Now I am going to bless you; but before doing so, let me make an agreement with you: you will pray for me and I will pray for you; I will recommend you every day to God at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and you will say three “Hail Marys” every day for me after the recitation of the Rosary; and when you hear of my death, you must offer up a holy Communion for the repose of my soul.

3. MANNER OF GIVING THE BLESSING

Although I am only an unworthy minister of Jesus Christ, yet I bless you all this evening, in the name of the Most Blessed Trinity, of the Father who created you, of the Son who redeemed you, and of the Holy Ghost who enlightened you, in the name of Mary, the Immaculate Virgin, in the name of St. Joseph, of St. Michael the archangel, and of the Guardian Angels, in the name of St. N., your Patron, and of all your holy Advocates, in the name of all the angels and of all the saints of paradise. I do not take the liberty of blessing your worthy bishop—rather should I receive the blessing from him; but I pray to God to bless him and to sanctify him more and more. You, my dear brethren, should always recommend him to God; for he does not cease to think of your welfare, and you are obliged to pray for him. Nor am I so bold as to bless the Very Reverend Vicar-General, the Very Reverend Canons, your pastor, or the other priests: I pray to Jesus Christ to bless them. Reverend Pastor, here are the members of your flock; we leave them all united with God; it is your duty to guard them in order that on the day of judgment you may present them in the state of grace to Jesus Christ. As a priest, I bless all the civil authorities, the Superiors of the congregations, and all those who during the mission have rendered us services, and have shown us so much charity.

Now, my dear brethren, it is you whom I wish to bless. In the name of Jesus Christ, I bless you soul and body—. I bless your body and all its senses. I bless your eyes, in order that they may always be modest by never looking at any object that may lead you into temptation; I therefore specially bless your eyes. (Here the blessing is given with the crucifix.) I bless your ears, that you may never misuse them by listening to things that offend God. I bless your mouth, that you may never employ it in uttering blasphemies, imprecations, immodest words, and wicked songs. (Here a second blessing is given.) I bless your feet, that when you can you may come to church to make mental prayer, as also visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin. I bless your hands. Young people, raise your hands: I wish to bless them. (Again the blessing is given towards the men.)—I bless all your children; devote yourselves to their sanctification, in order that one day you may find them all together in paradise. I bless all your relatives that cannot come to church—I bless all your lands, that they may bring forth abundant fruit. (Here the blessing is given towards the fields, on the right and on the left.) I also bless all your affairs, your goods, your animals, your hopes. My dear brethren, behave towards God as you should, and he will heap upon you spiritual and temporal goods. In fine, I bless all the bread that you eat, the ground upon which you walk, the air that you breathe; I include in this blessing all that concerns you.

But, above all, I bless your soul: this soul which was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ; I bless your soul and all its powers, the memory, the understanding, and the will.—I bless your memory, that you may not cease to recall to your mind all the graces that God has conferred upon you in this mission, and especially in this church. When you see this pulpit from which the Lord has spoken to you, this altar at which you have communicated, this confessional where Jesus Christ has pardoned you, remember all the graces that you have received there, and learn how to be grateful.—I bless your understanding, that you may every day make mental prayer, and that you may think often of God, who always thinks of you and of your welfare.—I especially bless your will, that you may love this God who deserves so much to be loved, and who loves you so much.—I bless, moreover, all the steps that you have taken to come to the church to hear the word of God, all the confessions and the communions that you have made, all the tears that you have shed during these days, as well as all the resolutions that you have taken, and all the promises that you have made to Jesus Christ, in order that you may be faithful to them.

Before I give you the last blessing, pray to the Blessed Virgin to bless you herself from on high, and to cause you to be blessed this evening by her divine Son. Receive now the papal blessing.—My Lord Jesus Christ, as I bless them on earth, so bless them from on high, and pardon them all their sins.—And you, my dear brethren, make again an act of contrition for your sins both mortal and venial, in order that you may receive in the blessing that I am going to give you a plenary indulgence of all your sins. Raise your voice while I bless you, and say: O Lord! I am sorry for all the offences that I have committed against Thee; henceforth I will love Thee.

Here the blessing is given with the crucifix by pronouncing, in a loud voice and intermittingly, these words: *Benedictio Dei omnipotentis, Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, descendat super vos et maneat semper.* Then the preacher will say:

During the singing of the *Te Deum* recite five “Our Fathers” and five “Hail Marys” and a “Glory be to the Father,” to the intention of the Holy Father, in order to gain the indulgence. The *Te Deum* is now sung, in order to thank God for all the graces that he has conferred upon you; therefore, while the priests are chanting, thank God with tears of love for all the graces that you have received.—Let the Blessed Sacrament be unveiled. (The Blessed Sacrament having been unveiled the preacher from the pulpit intones the *Te Deum*, which is continued by the clergy, who are assembled before the altar; then turning himself towards the people, he adds): Behold Jesus Christ; thank him with tears in your eyes, and promise him that you will sanctify yourselves.

The *Te Deum* finished, the celebrant, who should be one of the missionaries, after the prayers indicated in the Ritual, says five prayers: the first, that of thanksgiving, *Deus cujus misericordiae;* the second, that of the Blessed Virgin, *Concede nos;* the third, that of the titulary saint of the church; the fourth, for the Sovereign Pontiff; and the fifth for the civil authorities. Then the *Pange lingua*[13689] is sung, the Blessed Sacrament is incensed as usual; then the verse *Panem de coelo* and the prayer *Deus qui nobis* are sung. After the prayer, the deacon takes the Blessed Sacrament, and gives it to the priest kneeling on the highest step of the altar; the priest turns with the Blessed Sacrament towards the people, and then, at the foot of the altar the preacher says: Brethren, I have blessed you with the crucifix; now Jesus Christ himself wishes to bless you in the Blessed Sacrament. See him here; reanimate your faith, and beg of him that, as we are this evening reunited in this church, we may one day have the happiness of finding ourselves all together in paradise. But in order to enter paradise, we must love God; say then to Jesus Christ while he is blessing you: My Jesus, I love Thee, and I do not wish to cease loving Thee.—O Lord! deign to bless them. Let the organ resound; let the bells be rung; and you, raising your voices, say with tears: My Jesus! etc.

VIII. OTHER REMARKS REGARDING THE SERMON

1. PRACTICES[13690] AT THE END OF THE SERMON

1. At the end of the act of contrition,[13691] the preacher shall strike himself two or three times with a rope: I say, with a rope, and not with a chain; for a chain, if composed of massive rings, may very much injure the preacher, who, finding himself in fervor, would easily be led to strike himself without discretion; and if it is composed of hollow links it would indeed make a noise, but would inflict no pain. He should, therefore, take a rope, on two or three evenings of the mission, and strike himself during a considerable time in order that one may not judge this whole ceremony to be a mere sham. But he should refrain from tying the rope around his neck, as if he wished to strangle himself, as some do; this would appear to be a mere fiction. The preacher before striking himself shall take care to notice that he does this penance, not to expiate his own sins, but to obtain from God the grace of pardon for every obstinate soul that happens to be in the church.

2. In the sermon on death, before the act of contrition, it is usual to show a skull, to which the preacher should speak as follows:

Tell me, O skull: where is thy soul? is it in paradise, or hell? Tell me: on the day of judgment in what state shall I find thee? wilt thou be crowned with stars, or surrounded by serpents and flames? Tell me: art thou the head of a man, or the head of a woman? If thou art the head of a man, tell me: What has become of all thy plans of fortune and ambition? whither has gone thy pride, thou who didst claim that every one should respect thee?—If thou art the head of a woman, what has become of thy beauty? what has become of thy beautiful hair? Alas! worms have made them disappear. Where are thy beautiful eyes? Worms have consumed them. Where is thy tongue, with which thou didst sing so beautiful songs? Worms have devoured it. In a word, thou who didst flatter thyself to be so charming, see now thou art so hideous as to inspire terror.

After this the preacher, addressing the people, says: My dear brethren, you see what this skull is; so each one of you will be one day. There is no remedy: we must die! we must die! The act of contrition is then made.

1. In the sermon on hell it is customary to show the picture of a person that is damned. It has happened in our missions that sinners who remained insensible to all the other sermons, were moved at the sight of this picture and were converted. The manner of proceeding is as follows: The preacher, after having made the act of contrition, says:

I have spoken to you in this sermon about hell; but what could I say about hell? Nothing; for hell is known only by him who endures it. Ah! if this evening there came forth from hell a soul that is damned, in order to speak to you, it would know how to tell you what hell is. At least, my brethren, allow me to let you see a picture of one that is damned, in order that he may speak to you in his own way; here he is. Sinners, recognize yourselves in this picture, and see what you should be on account of your sins.

This picture should be carried by a missionary at the height of about ten or twelve palms above the ground; two other missionaries walk before him with two large torches, which they should take care to hold low enough and far enough from the picture so that the smoke does not prevent it from being seen. The priests then move from the high altar and go to the door through the church, stopping from time to time, and turning the picture slowly now on one side, now on the other; the picture is then given to the preacher, who shows it from the pulpit, where he leaves it till the following evening exposed to the gaze of all; then he takes the crucifix and gives the blessing.

1. Another very touching practice is to carry the Statue of the Blessed Virgin in procession to the church at the end of the sermon; this is the way it

is done: Every evening this statue is exposed; but on this day we take it out of the church; immediately after the act of contrition, everything having been arranged beforehand, the door is opened, all the priests, in surplice and with lighted torches, are seen entering, carrying the statue of the Blessed Virgin, which they proceed to put, after walking through the church, in its usual place, near the pulpit.

2. It is also very useful if the missionaries walk in procession, in a penitential garb, strewn with ashes, and with a rope around their necks; they enter the door in procession, and afterwards take the discipline in the middle of the church. On another evening the priests of the place can hold a similar procession.

3. It might also be well, on one evening, after the sermon and the act of contrition, to have the people to make a general reconciliation, the women embracing the women, and the men embracing the men. But before this the preacher should call upon them to stand up, then he tells them that while peace is being made, the daughters should ask pardon of their mothers, the *sons* of their fathers, and that the persons who have offended their neighbors should go in search of those whom they have offended. All the missionaries should be present at this exercise, to see that the men are separated from the women, and to prevent disorder; moreover, when the people show themselves insensible, it will sometimes be-opportune for the missionaries to come forward to exhort and persuade them.

2. THE ERECTION OF CROSSES

This ceremony is very touching; it is performed in the following manner:

After the last meditation of the exercise of a devout life, the preacher announces that as a remembrance not only of the Passion of our Saviour, but also of the mission, five crosses would be erected, and that the faithful who visit them can gain ten thousand years of indulgence by reciting five “Our Fathers” and five “Hail Marys” in memory of the Passion of Jesus Christ and of the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin (*Ap. P. Viva, in append. Jubil. in calce Trutinae,* § ult.).[13692]

We may see what has been said above about this exercise (pages 126 and 151).

Hence, the meditation finished, five missionaries come from behind the high altar, carrying each a cross upon his shoulder, and walking one after the other with two torches before each cross. When they have reached the place destined to receive the crosses, they place them on the ground; and at the erection of each cross a suitable exhortation is given.

The preacher should take care that during the procession the men leave the church first, and then the women, so as to avoid confusion; and during the exhortations the missionaries should watch that the two sexes remain separated, in order that everything that is unseemly may be prevented, as this ceremony usually takes place in the evening.

The exhortations should be very short, in order that they may be animated and may not cause weariness in those that are present. As five crosses are to be erected, five exhortations are to be given in memory of the five principal mysteries of the Passion, the same as those of the Rosary, namely: the agony, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the carrying of the cross, and the crucifixion. Every exhortation contains three parts: the exposition of the mystery, the announcement of the grace for which one asks, and the prayer. Thus:—In the first place, one exposes the mystery in memory of which the cross is erected.—Secondly, one announces the grace that should be asked of the eternal Father, through the merits of Jesus Christ, by the faithful who should come to visit this cross, in accordance with the mystery that is announced; for example: at the agony, one should ask pardon for one's sins; at the crowning with thorns, for victory over bad thoughts; at the scourging, one should ask for the virtue of chastity; at the carrying of the cross, for patience in trials; at the crucifixion, for holy perseverance.—Thirdly, at the erection of each cross one actually begs for the grace that refers to the mystery.

At the end of each exhortation a missionary sings the following hymn:

I adore thee, holy cross,
My Saviour's painful bed,
Whereon for sinful man
Was placed that sacred head;
I adore thee, holy cross.

The following is an example of the first exhortation, which, differing from the four that follow, should be preceded by a short introduction; then follow the three parts designated above.

INTRODUCTION.—My brethren, the mission is already at an end, and it closes by leaving to your consideration how much Jesus Christ has suffered in order to save us. You should, then, in future unceasingly keep before your mind the remembrance of the love that your Redeemer has shown you in his Passion, as well as of the promises that you have made; this is the only reason why we erect these crosses.

EXPOSITION OF THE MYSTERY.—The first is erected here in memory of the bloody sweat endured by our Saviour in his prayer in the Garden of Olives. When you come to visit this cross, recite an "Our Father" and a "Hail Mary," and remember the bloody sweat and the agony which Jesus Christ suffered in the Garden of Olives while he was thinking of your ingratitude, etc.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF GRACE.—Through the merits of this pain which Jesus Christ felt, you should ask the eternal Father to grant you a great sorrow and pardon for your sins.

PETITION FOR GRACE.—Well, let us begin this evening. Raise the cross. (Here the cross is raised, and is to remain so.) Let all of you kneel down; let us adore this cross, and let us pray: O holy cross! we adore thee in memory of the bloody sweat and the agony which Jesus Christ suffered in the Garden of Olives.—And Thou, O eternal Father! by the merits of these sufferings of Thy well-beloved Son, give us a great sorrow for our sins and the pardon of all the offences that we have committed against Thee.

After this prayer the foregoing hymn is intoned. Afterwards, in the same way, exhortations are given for the four other crosses.

3. THE PLACING OF THE AUDIENCE AND OF THE PULPIT

The placing of the audience and of the pulpit is of great importance to the success of the mission; the Superior should therefore pay considerable attention to this point. The following is a way of arranging the audience: The women are put together in the upper part of the church, that is, towards the high altar; and the men are to be in that part near the door. Care should be taken that the hearers are not placed too far from the pulpit; for when they see the preacher from afar, his words make but little impression, because they seem to them to be addressed to others, and not to themselves.

The pulpit should be placed in the middle or nearly in the middle, between the men and the women. In our missions we are accustomed to use portable pulpits; for these can be more easily put in the desired place, and they are more suitable for familiar language, which is the language of the missions. It is, however, true, that in places where the population is numerous, and where the churches are large, especially if they are very long, it is not opportune to use portable pulpits, which are very often low; for then those that are far off do not well see nor understand the preacher, whose voice remains as it were stifled: under these circumstances one must preach from the pulpit of the church.

One should, moreover, always take care, as much as possible, to separate the men from the women by means of curtains or benches, so that they may not even see one another.

In our missions it is not customary to expose the Blessed Sacrament every day; this is done only *at* the last sermon, when Benediction is given.

Near the pulpit it is usual to place a large statue of the Blessed Virgin, in such a manner that the feet of the statue may be nearly at the height of the pulpit.

4. THE HOUR WHEN THE SERMON IS PREACHED

There are pastors who desire that the sermon should be finished before the close of the day; for they say that if it is given in the evening many scandals will be the consequence. But this is mere prejudice, and altogether a mistake when there is question of missions. During the time of the mission, especially in villages, the hearers are composed mostly of workmen who live from hand to mouth, and who consequently are obliged to work every day to make a living. This being the case, if the sermon is given during the day it will be attended only by priests, by a few people of leisure, and by a small number of devout women who can leave their occupation; while most of the women, and especially the men, who need the mission most, will not be able to attend. They will scarcely come on holydays and on the last day, the day of the blessing, when they will be found insensible, because they have not heard the sermons: they will not then be absolved, and they will remain in the bad state in which they were before; so that the mission will be a failure, as this has happened in a certain place, because the sermon was preached before the men returned from the fields. It should be understood that the greatest fruit of the mission consists in the conversion of the men; for if the men remain bad, the women will also be bad.

But to this you may reply: If the mission is permitted to go on in the evening, many inconveniences will result therefrom; for every one knows the old proverb: Evil should not be done that good may arise therefrom—*Non sunt facienda mala, ut eveniant bona.* I reply: The proverb says: Evil should not be done—*Non sunt facienda mala.* But it is not said: Evil is not permitted that good may arise therefrom—*Non sunt permittenda mala, ut eveniant bona.* Sometimes it is good to permit some evil in order that good may not be omitted, especially when there is question of the common good; for if one had to avoid all the inconveniences that may be caused in the exercises of piety, we should have to abolish in the Church all the feasts, the processions, the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and even the confessions and the communions, since all these works give rise to inconveniences; but the Church rightly permits these inconveniences in order not to hinder the common good.—Moreover, I answer that during the mission these supposed scandals hardly occur: then the people are more timorous; the wicked themselves abstain from committing any impertinence for fear of being regarded as men who have lost the faith, or at least, because they presume that they would not find those whom they wish to tempt ready to yield to their wicked designs. O God! can we suppose that those perverse men, who have so many occasions and means to do evil, will want to do so all the time of the mission? Let us add that, as to what concerns shameful scandals, the danger does not morally exist: care is taken that the church is always well lighted as soon as it becomes dark; there are many lights and many eyes; and as for things outside of the church, the women always return home in the company of persons who will not allow the least scandal to be committed before their eyes.

After all, let us concede that sometimes an impropriety may occur in some place; but which is a greater evil—to permit some rare impropriety of this kind, or to leave the whole population in the state in which it is, with its habitual sins, its wicked morals, its inveterate vices, its sacrileges, its scandals? For my part, I do not understand the zeal of those who, through fear of some *rare* impropriety which scarcely occurs, believe it their duty to hinder the certain good of the mission, by taking away from the people the opportunity to hear the sermon. In the spring, when the days are long, the sermon may be successfully preached during the day; but in winter it is impossible for the mission to succeed when the sermon is given before the evening. During this season it should be given only about half an hour before the setting of the sun; often even, where the fields are distant from the centre of habitation, it will be necessary to begin it half an hour after sunset, and sometimes even later.

Chapter VIII

OTHER EXERCISES THAT TAKE PLACE DURING THE MISSION

I. THE MORNING MEDITATION

DURING the mission, in the morning, before daybreak, a meditation is given for the convenience of persons who must work. There is no question here of the common and daily meditation which is usually made by pious persons or by communities, but of that which takes place in the missions, and which in substance is, composed of all the parts requisite for the sermon, with this difference, that it demands a more moderate and more emotional style, admits less reasoning and fewer proofs, and should be shorter. The sermon usually lasts an hour and a quarter, inclusively of the act of contrition; but the meditation should not continue beyond three quarters of an hour.

The parts of meditation are: First, the exordium with the proposition, the preparation, and the proofs; then the reflections, the applications, and the practices; and finally, the act of contrition with the resolution. In regard to all these parts, we should observe what has been said on the subject of the sermon, Chapter VII., §2.[13693] As for the preparation, which is made in the meditation differently from the sermon, we have spoken of it in, § 6[13694] which treats of the devout life.

It must be here remarked that in the places the population of which is numerous, on the days on which many people come to church, especially on feast days, besides the meditation, it is usual to preach another sermon, though at a later hour.

II. THE DISCOURSE FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE CONFRATERNITY

Nothing can be more useful to keep men in the path of virtue than to induce them to frequent a confraternity, the spiritual Father of which gives them an instruction on Sundays, and hears their confessions. We should, therefore, endeavor, as much as possible, to urge the men to have themselves admitted into the confraternity.

The preacher should specially exhort them to join it; moreover, the evening after the sermon, it will be well to invite all those that wish to enter the confraternity to have their names registered in the church by a missionary. After this it will also be well for the preacher himself, or another missionary, on the morning of a feast day, to go to the chapel where the confraternity is to meet, and give a special instruction to the members; he should take care to give notice of this from the pulpit on the preceding evening, so that on the following day he may find them all assembled. The purpose of this instruction is to make known the great good that results from the frequentation of the confraternity, especially in the case of those that have been consecrated to the Blessed Virgin.

EXAMPLE OF THIS DISCOURSE

Now all good things came to me together with her.[13695] The great deluge at the time of Noe was the cause why all mankind perished, with the exception of eight persons who were saved in the Ark. In our time a deluge, not of water, but of sins, continually inundates the earth, and few persons escape it, especially among seculars; hardly are those saved that take refuge in an ark of salvation, that is, some confraternity of the Blessed Virgin. Among so many seculars, how many are there in the grace of God? There are some, but these frequent the confraternity.

My dear brethren, you have attended the mission; I trust that God, by the light of his grace, has made you see that there is no other good or happiness in this life than to save one’s soul. The world calls him happy who is rich, who is honored, and it calls unhappy him who is poor and despised; but the truth is no one is happy but he who is in the grace of God and is saved, and that no one is unhappy but he who lives as an enemy of God and is damned. In a few days all things have an end for man; what will it then profit him to have gained the whole world if after dying he loses his soul, and goes to weep in hell for all eternity? Now I wish to show what hope of salvation there is for him who frequents the confraternity of the Blessed Virgin.

When a secular asks me what he should do in order to save his soul, I know of no more useful and sure means to counsel him than to enter a confraternity. The confraternity contains the most efficacious means to attain eternal salvation, so that every member of the confraternity may rightly say that he finds therein all that is needful: *All good things came to me together with her.*

In the first place, it is a great means of salvation for a secular to hear often the word of God, while, on the other hand, the holy Fathers regard him as damned who despises it; for the sheep of Christ willingly hear his voice, which he makes them hear through the mouth of his ministers: *My sheep hear My voice.*[13696] In fact, seculars that give themselves up to the affairs of the world and hear no sermons, easily lose the remembrance of the good and of the evil of the next world; and consequently, abandoning themselves to earthly pleasures, they live and die in the state of sin. But he who frequents the confraternity, hearing the priest speak of death, judgment, hell, eternity, easily resists with God's help the temptations that assail him, according to what the Holy Ghost says to us: *In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.*[13697]

Secondly, to keep one's self in the grace of God it is necessary to frequent the sacraments; for they are the nourishment of the soul; they preserve its life; this is especially done by holy Communion, which is called bread: as the earthly bread preserves the life of the body, so the heavenly bread preserves the life of the soul. This is taught by the Council of Trent, which says: "This sacrament frees us from daily faults, and preserves us from mortal sins."[13698]

Thirdly, he who visits the confraternity of the Blessed Virgin is enriched with graces by this divine Mother, through whose hands the Lord dispenses all his graces; this she tells us in these words that the Church applies to her: *With me are riches . . that I may enrich them that love me.*[13699]—And St. Bonaventure says: "He who obtains grace from Mary shall be recognized by the citizens of paradise; and he who bears the impress of her name shall be inscribed in the Book of life."[13700] This is especially to be understood of the confraternity of Mary. We may see that to be enrolled as a member of the confraternity is the same as to be inscribed in the Book of life, provided we persevere in being faithful in frequenting the confraternity and in observing its rules; for, of what use would it serve to have one's name inscribed on the register, or if one enters it without frequenting the sacraments; this being one of its most important rules? There are some that enter the confraternity, not to honor the Blessed Virgin, nor to save their souls, but to domineer, to rule; and sometimes they begin to shout, to dispute in a manner more noisy than if they were at a house where gaming is going on. Those that act thus would do better to stay away from the confraternity.

I therefore recommend to each one of you, first, to frequent the confraternity, and not to omit to be present through frivolous reasons, as some do, who either in order to play, or to take a walk, or to perform some trifling thing, will say that their business prevented them. But I say to them in reply: Know that in this world, whatever may be your business, you have nothing more important than the salvation of your soul; for if you lose your soul, all will be lost to you. Tell me: would you neglect to gain a thousand pieces of gold in your efforts to gain a few little pieces of money? Hence it is, etc.—Rather lose all than lose one's soul. When Sunday comes, my dear brethren, leave everything in order to go to the confraternity. Be convinced that the Blessed Virgin will not allow you to suffer any loss on this account. It is said that her servants are clothed with double garments: *All her domestics are clothed with double garments.*[13701] This means that they are provided with two kinds of goods, spiritual and temporal.

Besides the attendance at the meetings, I recommend to you not to omit confession and Communion, which the Rule prescribes; otherwise, if you happen to fall into sin and remain in the same state, of what use will the confraternity be to you?

Finally, I recommend to you to come to the confraternity for the sole purpose of attending to your devotions. Let each one occupy his place, observe obedience, and fulfil the task that has been given to him, seeking only to save his soul in the confraternity. If you act in this way, you will see that the Mother of God will protect you, soul and body; particularly at the hour of death will she assist you with maternal tenderness.

Oh, how consoling it is at death to have served Mary! Father Binet relates that a pious servant of the Blessed Virgin, whom he assisted in his last moments, said these words to him before dying. “O my Father! if you only knew what contentment I feel for having served the Mother of God! I cannot express to you the joy that I experience at this moment.” And he died in celestial peace.—I believe that a death full of consolation is reserved specially for the members who frequent the confraternity. The Duke of Popoli said that all the graces that he had received from God had been given to him through the hands of Mary, because he had frequented the confraternity. At the moment of death he called his son and said to him; “My son, frequent the confraternity of the Blessed Virgin; it is the greatest inheritance that I can leave you; it is that which I leave you.”

ACTS OF THANKSGIVING AND PROMISE TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Now, my dear brethren, let us all prostrate ourselves at the feet of our Sovereign, and let us promise her not to neglect the confraternity; let each one repeat after me the following prayer:

Ah! my Queen and mother, I should now be in hell; it is thou who through thy intercession hast hitherto preserved me from it: I thank thee to-day for this benefit, and I ask thy pardon for the number of times that I have without a reason neglected to attend the confraternity. How many sins would I have avoided had I attended it! Pardon me, O my Mother! and pray thy divine Son to pardon me all the offences that I have given to him.—Yes, O my Jesus! by the blood that Thou hast shed for me, and also by the love of Mary, pardon me; for I repent, etc.—(Let us now make our promise by saying:) O Mother of God! I promise thee that in future I will never without a good reason neglect any more the confraternity; I promise this to thee, and I give my consent that thou shouldst punish me if I fail to keep it. And thou, my Queen, help me in all my necessities, and principally in all the dangers in which I shall find myself of offending God. Above all, O my tender Mother! do not abandon me at the hour of death; assist me at this decisive moment, and let me die under thy mantle.

But you, my brethren, do not forget then to invoke her, and she will certainly come to your aid. Be, therefore, faithful to the promise that you have to-day made to Mary, and I promise you in her name that she will protect you during life and at your death. If you come to honor her in this chapel, she will one day lead you to paradise to reign there with her. Now I am going to bless you also in the name of Mary, in order that you may keep the promise that you have made to her. (Here the blessing is given with the crucifix.)

THE SECRET CONFRATERNITY

It would also be of very great benefit to establish in honor of the Mother of God the *SECRET CONFRATERNITY* of the most fervent members. I will here briefly indicate the exercises that are usually performed in the secret confraternities: 1. A half-hour's spiritual reading is made; 2. The Vespers and Compline of the Holy Ghost are recited; 3. The Litany of the saints is said, and the members appointed then perform some act of mortification, as the carrying of the cross on the shoulders, and the like; 4. A quarter of an hour's meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ is made; 5. Each one accuses himself of the faults committed against the rules, and receives a penance therefor from the Director; 6. A member appointed reads the *nosegay* of mortifications practised during the week, and announces the coming novenas, etc.; 7. Finally, the discipline is taken during a *Miserere* and a *Salve Regina*, and every one kisses the feet of the crucifix placed at the foot of the altar. As for the rules, the following are what the members should observe: 1. Every day, mental prayer of half an hour, visit to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin, examination of conscience in the evening, spiritual reading, recommendation to God of souls in purgatory and of sinners; 2. The avoiding of plays and of worldly amusements; 3. Frequent Communion, and the practice of some mortification, as the *cilicium*, the discipline, etc.; 4. When a member becomes sick, all the rest are obliged to visit him.[13702]

III. THE DISCOURSE TO MAIDENS

St. Ignatius, Martyr, writing to his disciples, exhorted them carefully to watch over the virgins, so that they might be constant in the promise that they had made to Jesus Christ of their virginity, which is so precious a gift before God. Virgins consecrated to the love of the divine Spouse are called by St. Cyprian the most noble part of the Church.[13703] Therefore, besides St. Cyprian, several among the holy Fathers, as St. Ephrem, St. Ambrose, St. John Chrysostom, and others, have composed works that treat entirely of the praises of virginity.

The glorious Apostle St. Matthew, as Denis the Carthusian relates, did not wish to allow the virgin St. Iphigenia, who was consecrated to Jesus Christ, to marry a monarch, although he promised to embrace the faith with all his people. Thomas Cantipratensis relates that at Rome the sister of the Count of Puglia, promised in marriage by his brother to a lord, fled in the disguise of a man so as not to be forced to marry; but she was pursued by her brother, and overtaken near a rock that projected into the sea. Putting her confidence in God, she threw herself into the abyss, and afterwards walked upon the water as far as a desert in Greece, where she remained safe. I wished to quote these examples to show that it is not a useless work, but a work that is very agreeable to God, when priests take care to exhort young persons to consecrate to Jesus Christ the lily of their virginity. This is the reason why in our missions it is customary, on the morning of one of the last days, that a missionary, assisted by another priest advanced in years, addresses in a retired place an instruction on this point to all the young women.

EXAMPLE OF A DISCOURSE TO YOUNG WOMEN

My dear sisters, I do not pretend to explain to you in this discourse all the merits and all the advantages obtained by young maidens in consecrating their virginity to Jesus Christ. I will confine myself to pointing them out briefly.

First, they become in the eyes of God beautiful as the angels of heaven: *They shall be as the angels of God in heaven.*[13704] Baronius[13705] relates that at the death of a pious virgin, named Geogia, a great number of doves were seen flying about her; and when her body was carried to the church, these doves placed themselves on the part of the roof which corresponded to the place where the coffin was put, and flew away only after the burial of the deceased. Every one believed that these doves were angels, who thus honored her virginal body.

Moreover, when a young person renounces the world and devotes herself to the love of Jesus Christ, she becomes the spouse of the Son of God. In the Gospel our Saviour is called now Father, now Mother, now Shepherd of Souls; but in regard to virgins he calls himself their Bridegroom or Spouse: *They went out to meet their bridegroom.*[13706]

A young person who wishes to establish herself in the world, if she is prudent, makes careful inquiries about those that aspire to her hand, and tries to know which among them is the noblest and richest. Let us, then, address ourselves to the Spouse of the Canticles, who knows very well the prerogatives of the divine Spouse, and let us ask him what he is:—Tell me, O divine Spouse! what is he who loves thee and renders thee the most happy among all women?—*My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.*[13707] My beloved, she says, is all white by his purity, and is ruddy by the love with which he is inflamed; he is, in a word, so beautiful, so noble, so affable, that one finds him to be the most amiable among all spouses.

When to St. Agnes was offered as her spouse the son of the Prefect of Rome, this glorious virgin was right when she answered, as St. Ambrose tells us, that she had found a far better match.[13708]

Such was also the answer of St. Domitilla, niece of the Emperor Domitian, which she gave to persons who tried to persuade her that she could be married to Count Aurelian, since he consented that she should remain a Christian: “But, tell me,” she answered them, “if to a young woman there was presented, on the one hand, a great monarch, and on the other, a poor plebeian, which of the two would she choose for a husband? To accept Aurelian, I should have to renounce the King of heaven; this would be folly, and I do not wish to be guilty of it.” Hence in order to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, to whom she had consecrated her virginity, she gave herself up to be burnt alive—a punishment to which her barbarous lover had condemned her.[13709]

Generous souls who renounce the world for the love of Jesus Christ, become the cherished spouses of the Son of God. They are called First-fruits of the Lamb: *First-fruits to God and to the Lamb.*[13710] Why the First-fruits? Because, says Cardinal Hugo, as the first-fruits are more agreeable than others, so virgins are objects of the Lord’s predilection. The divine

Spouse is nourished among the lilies: *Who feedeth among the lilies.*[13711] And what are these lilies, if not fervent souls who consecrate their virginity to Jesus Christ? Venerable Bede assures us that the chant of the virgins, that is, the honor which the virgins render to God by preserving to him intact the lily of their purity, is more agreeable to the Lord than the chant of all the other saints. In fact, the Holy Ghost declares that no good can compensate for the merit of virginity. *No price is worthy of a continent soul.*[13712] For this reason, according to Cardinal Hugo, one can obtain a dispensation from all other vows, but not from the vow of virginity. It is also on this account that theologians believe that the Blessed Virgin would have been disposed to renounce the sublime dignity of the Mother of God rather than lose the treasure of her virginity.

Who then here below can ever comprehend the glory that God reserves in paradise for his chaste spouses? Doctors teach that in heaven virgins have their own glory, which is a certain crown or a special joy, of which other holy souls are deprived.

But let us pass to what directly refers to the subject that we actually have in view.

A young person will say: If I marry can I not also sanctify myself?—I wish you to hear the answer to this, not from my mouth, but from that of St. Paul; you will also see at the same time the difference between virgins and married persons. The following are the words of the Apostle: The unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord: that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she that is married thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband.[13713] *Then he adds: This I speak for your profit: . . . for that which is decent, and which may give you power to attend upon the Lord without impediment.*[13714]

Let us ponder well this advice of the Apostle. In the first place, I must remark that married women can, it is true, be holy in spirit but not in body, while a virgin that sanctifies herself is holy in spirit and in body, having consecrated to Jesus Christ her virginity: *Holy both in body and in spirit.* Note, moreover, these words: *Which may give you power to attend upon the Lord without impediment.*—Ah! how many obstacles have not married women in order to sanctify themselves! the higher their rank the greater obstacles do they encounter. In order to sanctify one's self one must use the means, especially apply one’s self much to mental prayer, frequent often the sacraments, and think without ceasing of God. But how can a married woman find time to occupy herself with the things of God? *She that is married thinks on the things of the world, how she may please her husband.* She must, says St. Paul, occupy herself with the things of the world; she has to provide for the wants of her family, for food, for clothing; she has to watch over the education of her children, to please her husband and the relatives of her husband; and this will be the cause, adds the Apostle, why her heart will be divided, as she is obliged to divide her affections between her husband, her children, and God. How can a married woman devote herself much to mental prayer and go frequently to Holy Communion if she does not find enough at home to provide for the wants of her family? The husband wishes to be served; the children cry, scream, or ask for a thousand things; how can she go to make meditation amidst so many occupations and embarrassments? It will hardly be permitted her to go to church to recollect herself and to receive Communion on Sundays. She will still have a good will; but it will be very difficult for her to attend to the things of God as she should. It is true that by this very privation she may gain merit by resigning herself to the will of God, who in this state requires of her only a continual sacrifice of resignation and of patience. But in the midst of so many distractions, of so much noise without meditation, without the sacraments, it will be morally impossible for her to have this heroic virtue of patience and resignation.

Ah, would to God that married women would have nothing else to deplore than to be deprived of the time necessary to attend to their devotions! The greatest evil is the danger in which these unfortunate persons continually find themselves of losing the grace of God, being obliged to see frequently their brothers-in-law or other relatives, or friends of their husband, either at home or elsewhere. Of this young persons are ignorant; but this is well known by married women, who are every day exposed to all these dangers, and is also well known by the confessors who hear them. We do not speak of the sad days which all married women must spend. The bad conduct of the husband, the disagreeable things caused by the children, the necessities of housekeeping, dependence on a mother-in-law or sisters-in-law, the pains of child-birth that is always accompanied by danger of death, suspicions, troubles of conscience in regard to the education of the children—all this forms a chain of tribulations in which married women can only lament, happy indeed if they do not lose their soul, and if God gives them the grace not to pass from the hell of this life to an eternal hell in the next. Such is the lot that awaits young women who give themselves up to the world. But you will say, Among all the married women are there none that have sanctified themselves?—I beg your pardon, there are some; but who are they? Those that sanctify themselves by martyrdom, those that know how to suffer everything for God, with a patience that nothing can overcome. How many are there that rise to such perfection? They are as rare as white flies. And if you meet with any one of these, you will learn that she is always weeping for regret of having entered the world, while she could have consecrated herself to Jesus Christ. For myself, I do not remember to have ever found among married women a single pious person who was content with her state of life.

True happiness is therefore the inheritance of virgins consecrated to Jesus Christ. They are free from the dangers to which married persons are necessarily exposed. Their affections are not fixed on children, nor on men of the world, nor on perishable goods, nor on vain ornaments, nor on any kind of dependence. While married women are obliged to adorn themselves with care, and at great expense, to appear in the world according to their rank and to please their husbands, a virgin consecrated to Jesus Christ needs to cover herself only with a garment, however common it may be; she would even create scandal if she dressed herself with elegance. Moreover, virgins are not troubled with the care of a house, a family, a husband; their sole concern, the only desire of their hearts, is to please Jesus Christ, to whom they have dedicated their souls, their bodies, and all their affections. Thus they have more liberty of spirit to think of God, and more time to give themselves up to prayer and the frequentation of the sacraments.

But let us hear the excuses put forward by certain persons that have but little love for Jesus Christ.

I would renounce the world, one says, if I could enter a convent, or at least if it were always permitted me to go to church to make my devotions there; but I cannot remain at home, or I have brothers who ill-treat me, and on the other hand, my relatives refuse to allow me to frequent the church.—Before answering you, I shall put this question to you: Do you wish to leave the world to lead a comfortable life or to sanctify yourself; to do your will or that of Jesus Christ? And if you wish to leave the world, to sanctify yourself, and to please Jesus Christ, I ask you a second question: Tell me: in what does sanctity consist? Sanctity does not consist in remaining in the convent, nor in spending the entire day in the church, but it consists, on the one hand, in practising mental prayer and going to communion when one can, and on the other, in obeying, in rendering one's self useful to the house, in living in retirement, and in suffering pain and contempt for God. And if you were going to a convent, what, think you, would you do there? Would you always be there in the choir, or in your cell, leaving it only in order to go to the refectory and to recreation? In the convent there is no doubt a time fixed for meditation, for Mass, and for Communion; but after that, the religious must be employed in the service of the house, especially the lay-sisters, who, as they do not go to the choir, are engaged in work, and have consequently less time to devote to prayer. All say, the convent, the convent! Ah! pious persons who are poor have greater facility to devote themselves to prayer and to sanctify themselves in their own house than in the convent! How many are there who to my knowledge are sorry for having entered the convent, especially in certain houses where the community is large, and where the poor lay-sisters have scarcely time to say the Rosary.

But you will reply: I have a father and a mother who have a disagreeable temper; I have at home impertinent brothers, who ill-treat me; I cannot remain there.—Well, if you go out into the world, will you find no one to contradict you; no mother-in-law, no sisters-in-law, no children, no husband? Ah! how infamous the treatment on the part of husbands, who at first make line promises, and afterwards are no longer husbands, but become the tyrants of their unfortunate wives, whom they treat no longer as their companions, but as slaves! Ask all married women whether what I say is not true; or rather, without making inquiries, have you not already learnt this truth from the example of your mothers? At least, when you have given yourselves to God, if you have to suffer at home, you bear all for the love of Jesus Christ, and the Lord well knows how to make your cross light and sweet; but what a pain to have to suffer, and to suffer for the world, without consolation and without merit! Believe me, if Jesus calls you to his love, if he wishes you for his spouses, listen without fear to his voice; you will not fail to be consoled and even to rejoice in the midst of sufferings. This will, however, only be the case as long as you love him and conduct yourselves as his true spouses.

Learn, then, what are the means that you should use so as to live as true spouses of Jesus Christ, and to attain sanctity.

In order that a virgin may be holy, it is not sufficient that she should preserve her virginity and that she be called a spouse of Jesus Christ: it will be necessary that she should practise the virtues that are proper to a spouse of Jesus Christ. We read in the Gospel[13715] that heaven is like virgins; but what virgins?—no doubt wise, but not foolish, virgins. Wise virgins were led to the nuptials; but the foolish found the doors shut, and the Bridegroom said to them: I know you not: You are virgins, but I do not recognize you as my spouses.—The true spouses of Jesus Christ follow their divine Spouse wherever he goes: *These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.*[13716] What is it to follow the spouse? St. Augustine[13717] explains this to us: It is to imitate him by walking in his footsteps in body and in soul. After having consecrated to him your body, you must give him your whole heart, so that your heart may be entirely occupied in loving him.

1. The first means is mental prayer, to which you should particularly apply yourselves. But do not believe that in order to make mental prayer it is necessary to be in the convent or to spend the entire day in the church. It is true that at home there is often noise, and there is much disturbance caused by persons who come and go; however, if one wishes one can always find a place and a time for devoting one's self to prayer, as when the house is more quiet, either in the morning before others rise, or in the evening after they have retired. Nor is it necessary, in order to pray, that one should always be on one's knees: one may meditate even while working or while walking, when there is no other more suitable time; it is sufficient if one occupies one's self with God, as when one reflects on the Passion of Jesus Christ or on some other pious subject.

2. The second means is the frequentation of the sacraments of confession and Communion.—For confession we should choose a Director to whom we should be entirely submissive; without doing so we should not walk on the right road.—As for Communion, it must depend entirely on obedience; but we must desire it and ask for it. This divine bread needs a soul that hungers after it; Jesus Christ wishes us to have a longing for him. It is

frequent Communion that makes the spouses of Jesus Christ faithful to this heavenly Spouse, particularly in keeping them in holy purity. The Blessed Sacrament preserves in the soul all the virtues; but it is especially effective in preserving intact the lily of virginity, according to the words of the Prophet, who calls it: *The corn of the chosen ones, and wine which maketh virgins to spring forth.*[13718]

3. The third means is retirement and vigilance.—The divine Spouse compares his well-beloved to a lily surrounded by thorns: *As the lily among thorns, so is My love among daughters.*[13719] If a virgin wishes to live in the midst of society, of amusements, and other worldly frivolities, it will be impossible for her to remain faithful to Jesus Christ; she must, therefore, keep herself constantly among the thorns of obedience and of mortification, and should behave, especially towards men, not only with the greatest reserve and the greatest modesty in her looks and her words, but also when necessary with a rigid austerity, and even with rudeness. Such are the thorns that preserve lilies, that is, virgins; without these precautions they would soon go astray.—The Lord also compares the beauty of his spouse to that of the turtle dove: *Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle-dove's.*[13720] Why? Because the turtle-dove is naturally inclined to flee the company of other birds, and loves to be always alone. A virgin, therefore, appears beautiful in the eyes of Jesus Christ when she leads a retired life, and does all she can to keep herself retired and hidden from the eyes of others. St. Jerome says that this Spouse of souls is jealous.[13721] Hence it is very displeasing to him to see a virgin, after having consecrated herself to his love, seeking to appear in the world and to please men. Those persons that are truly virtuous prefer to disfigure themselves rather than be the object of a bad desire.—The venerable Sister Catharine of Jesus, before becoming a religious of St. Teresa, washed herself with dirty water, and then exposed herself to the sun so as to spoil her complexion.—Bollandus[13722] relates that St. Andregesina, having been promised in marriage, begged the Lord to make her quite deformed, and her prayer was immediately heard. She at once appeared covered with leprosy so that every one fled from her; but after the espousals had been dissolved, she recovered her former beauty.—We read in the *Mirror of Examples*, that there was in a convent a young virgin who had consecrated herself to God, and whose eyes had charmed a prince. The

latter having threatened to set fire to the convent if she did not yield to his desires, what did she do? She tore out her eyes, and sent them to him in a basin with this message: "Here are the darts that have wounded your heart; take them, and leave me untouched."—The same author also quotes the example of St. Euphemia, whom her father had promised in marriage to a count. Seeing that this suitor neglected no means to make her his wife, she one day took a knife and cut off her nose and her lips, saying: "Vain beauty, thou shalt not be to me any longer an occasion of sin!" Baronius[13723] also relates that St. Ebba, abbess of the monastery of Coldingham, fearing an invasion of the barbarians, cut off her nose and her upper lip as far as the teeth, and that after her example all the other religious, to the number of thirty, did the same thing. The barbarians actually came, and seeing them thus disfigured, they became furious, set fire to the monastery, and made all perish in the flames. The Church honors them as martyrs.—They were incited to this heroic act by an impulse of the Holy Ghost; it is not permitted to others to act in this way. You see, moreover, in these examples what virgins who love Jesus Christ have done in order to escape the lust of men. Every fervent young maiden should at least endeavor to conduct herself with modesty, and expose herself as little as possible to the gaze of the world. If it should unfortunately happen that a virgin should be the victim of any violence, without her fault, let her be assured that her purity has not been tarnished. Hence St. Lucia answered the tyrant, who threatened to have her dishonored: "If I am outraged against my will, I shall obtain a double crown." We know the adage: "Not the feeling, but the consent, wounds the soul." Besides, you must be convinced that a young maiden who conducts herself with modesty and reserve will not fail to make herself respected.

4. The fourth means in order to preserve purity is the mortification of the senses—St. Basil says: "It is altogether improper for a virgin to violate chastity, with the tongue, with the ears, with the touch, much less with the heart."[13724] A virgin, in order to remain pure, should be chaste with her *tongue*, by always speaking modestly, and only through necessity with men, and in this case in a few words; chaste with her *ears*, by avoiding to listen to discourses about the things of the world; chaste with her *eyes*, by keeping them shut or lowered to the ground in the presence of men; chaste with

regard to the *touch*, by using the greatest precaution both in regard to others and in regard to herself; but she should be especially chaste in her *heart* by trying to resist every immodest thought by promptly having recourse to Jesus and Mary.—For this purpose it will also be necessary for her to mortify her body by fasts, by abstinence, by disciplines, by *ciliciums;* but in order to practise these mortifications permission from the confessor must be asked: without this they would be rather hurtful to the soul, as they might inspire one with pride. No one should therefore practise such penances without having obtained permission from one's Director; but one should desire the permission and ask it, for Directors do not grant it as long as we do not show them a desire to obtain it. Jesus is a Spouse of blood; he has espoused our souls on the cross, on which he has shed the last drop of his blood: *A bloody spouse thou art to me.*[13725] This is the reason why spouses that love him love to suffer tribulations, diseases, pains, ill-treatment, injuries, and they receive them not only with patience, but with joy. In this sense the passage of Scripture is understood, namely: *These follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.*[13726]

They follow Jesus their divine Spouse by singing his praises with joy, even in the midst of reproaches and pains, after the example of so many holy martyrs who expressed their happiness amid tortures, or while they were on their way to the place of execution.

2. Finally, in order to obtain the grace of perseverance in a holy life, you should take care often to recommend yourselves to the Queen of heaven, the most pure Mother of God. She is the mediatress who prepares and who concludes the union of souls with her divine Son; it is she that introduces and presents them to him as his spouses: *After her shall virgins be brought to the King.*[13727] It is she, finally, that obtains for these chosen spouses the virtue of perseverance; without the help of Mary they would become so many faithless spouses.

PRAYER TO JESUS CHRIST

(The preacher, after having made all his hearers go down on their knees at the foot of the crucifix, or a statue of the Infant Jesus, which would suit better under the circumstances, thus continues:)

You, then, who are listening to me—I am addressing myself to young maidens who feel themselves called by the divine Spouse to renounce the world for the love of him—you who have conceived the pious design of not belonging to the world, but to Jesus Christ, I do not wish that you should on this very day make this vow, and that you should contract immediately the engagement to keep perpetual chastity; you should make this vow when God inspires you and when you have obtained for this purpose the consent of your confessor. I wish only that by a simple act, without contracting any obligation, you should render thanks to Jesus Christ for the favor that he has done you of having called you to his love, and that you should offer yourselves to belong entirely to him during your whole life. Speak to him in the following manner:

Ah! my Jesus, my God and my Redeemer, who didst die for me; pardon me if I also call Thee my Spouse: I am bold enough to do so, because I see that Thou deignest to invite me to this honor; it is a favor for which I know not how to thank Thee. At present I deserve to be in hell, and instead of punishing me Thou wishest me to become Thy spouse. Yes, my divine Spouse, I renounce the world, I renounce everything for love of Thee, and I give myself entirely to Thee. What is the world to me? My Jesus, Thou shalt henceforth be my only good, my only love. I see that Thou wishest to possess my whole heart; I wish to give it to Thee entirely: please accept my offering; do not repel me as I deserve to be repelled. Forget all the displeasure that I have given Thee in the past; I repent of it with my whole soul; ah! would that I had died before offending Thee! Pardon me, inflame me with Thy holy love, and grant me the grace to be faithful to Thee, and never more to turn my back on Thee. Thou, my Spouse, hast given Thyself entirely to me; here I am, I give myself entirely to Thee.

O Mary, my Queen and my Mother! bind, chain my heart to Jesus Christ, and attach it in such a manner that it may never be separated from him.

(At the end, the preacher gives them the blessing with the crucifix, saying:)

Now I am going to bless you, and by this blessing I wish to unite you to Jesus Christ in order that you may never more leave him; and while I am blessing you, you should give him your heart, saying:

My Jesus, my divine Spouse, in future I will love Thee, Thee alone, and nothing more.

Chapter IX

EXERCISES OF PIETY WHICH ARE RECOMMENDED TO BE PERFORMED AFTER THE MISSION

I. EXERCISES TO BE PERFORMED BY THE PEOPLE

1. *We* should recommend to the people *meditation* in common in the church;[13728] this can be more easily done in the morning during the first Mass in the following manner: A priest or a cleric, before the beginning of Mass, reads at first the preparatory acts mentioned in the book, then a short point of meditation, and the Mass begins immediately, the people continuing to meditate on the point that has been read; after the consideration another point is read; and at the end of Mass the Christian Acts, which are also found in the book, are recited.

It must be remarked that the priest who presides at the meditation should read and not dictate it. It is true that many priests would have the talent to develop the subject of meditation; but if one adopted this method, two inconveniences would result therefrom. The first is that the priest who dictates the meditation would be easily led to speak the whole time, and the people would thus become accustomed, not to meditate, but to listen; so that if any one should not be able to come to the church, and should have no one to dictate the meditation, not knowing how to meditate by himself, he would do nothing. The second inconvenience is that this priest will not be able, nor would he be willing, to be always present at the exercise, and if he were absent, this useful devotion would not take place. This has occurred in certain places where a priest had begun to dictate every day the meditation for the people; but afterwards, either because he found the number that attended too small, or because he grew tired of such an office, he omitted it, and thus the meditation in common was given up. The meditation should, therefore, be read, and be read in a loud voice and with pauses, so that all may hear it and understand it. Moreover, it is strongly recommended never to omit this pious and useful exercise, even when only a few persons attend, as very often happens; it suffices if one sees some of the faithful persevere in this exercise.

1. The *visit to the Blessed Sacrament* should be recommended; it is made in the following manner: A priest, vested in surplice and stole, exposes the Ciborium before six burning candles, and then reads the Christian Acts, such as are found in the little book composed for this exercise. It will be well to make this visit about sunset, when the people have returned from the fields. After this the acts are read out of the book composed for this purpose.[13729]

2. The devotion of *visiting the crosses* should also be recommended.[13730]

3. One should recommend *devotion for the dying,* namely, when a person of the place is in his agony: this should be announced by five strokes of the large bell, and every one should recite a *Pater* and an *Ave* for the happy passage of this soul into eternity.

4. One should recommend the *pious exercises for young women* to be performed every Sunday in some church or chapel, in the following manner:

At first the Rosary is recited, and is concluded by the singing of a pious hymn. Then the priest, who has been appointed, gives a short instruction on all that those present have to practise during the week, according to the rules given afterwards. He then teaches them how they should make mental prayer, the acts for Communion, for the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, for the Mass, and even for the time of work; how they should frequently raise their mind to God. He also instructs them on the virtues, mortification, humility, patience, and particularly prayer; how they should recommend themselves to God, in the morning, the evening, during the day, and especially in temptations, by often invoking the holy names of Jesus and Mary until the temptation ceases.

After this instruction the Rosary of the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin is recited. A conclusion is made by a little sermon or a short meditation, which lasts only a quarter of an hour, inclusively of the act of contrition. The matter of the discourse, or meditation, should usually be sin, death, judgment, hell, paradise, eternity, or the Passion of Jesus Christ.

The discourse finished, all those present are sent to make together a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin; after this they return home. The whole exercise should not last longer than an hour and a half.

The preacher will appoint two of the older members, who shall have the care of the others, shall see that the recitation of the Rosary is begun, and also who are absent, so as to give information of such absence to their parents. He will also appoint two others to act as overseers, whose duty it will be to notify the authorities if any one should behave badly, that thus she may be corrected.

RULES OF CONDUCT AND PRACTICES OF DEVOTION WHICH SHOULD BE OBSERVED BY EVERY UNMARRIED WOMAN WHO PERFORMS THE PIOUS EXERCISES

1. In the morning, on rising, she should thank the Lord, then make an offering of all that she is to do and to suffer during the day; then she shall say three "Hail Marys," that the Blessed Virgin may keep her under her protection during the day and preserve her from every sin.

2. She should make mental prayer during half an hour, or at least a quarter of an hour, on the Passion of Jesus Christ or on the eternal truths, and this at the time and at the place most suitable for her—either in the church or at home.

3. She should hear Mass every time that she is able, and make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, if not in the church, at least at home.

4. In the evening she should make the examination of conscience with the Christian Acts, of faith, hope, charity, and contrition; and before going to bed, she should again place herself under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by saying three "Hail Marys."

5. She should receive Communion every Sunday, and oftener if she can, but always in accordance with the advice of her spiritual Father.

6. In honor of Mary she should recite every day five decades of the Rosary; she should fast every Saturday on bread and water, or as well as she can, and during the novenas of the seven feasts of the Blessed Virgin, according as the preacher may direct.

7. She should try always to lead a retired life, avoid going to banquets, to festivals, and frequenting the houses of others, even of relatives. She should flee as from death the danger that is to her of joking and laughing with men;

if through necessity she must speak to them, she should do so in a few words and with her eyes cast down. She should never remain at the window or be seated at the door of the house, and should never sing profane songs.

8. She should keep silence in the church and in the streets; she should even keep silence for an hour when at home.

9. She should dress modestly, wearing a garment of a dark color and a veil when she goes to church or walks the streets. She should wear neither gold nor jewels, nor any other object of vanity.

10. She should avoid every venial sin committed wilfully, especially lies, imprecations, and acts of impatience. She should patiently bear sufferings, injuries, and all contradictions, and then say: My Jesus, may all be for Thee. Mary, my Mother, give me patience. May God sanctify me! etc.

11. She should obey her confessor in all that regards her soul, and her parents in whatever regards the government of the house. I said: “The government of the house;” for if her parents wished to marry her by force, she would not be obliged to obey.

12. At the death of any member who has frequented the exercises, all the others should offer up for her five Communions, and say the Rosary for her for a week.

II. THE EXERCISES THAT ARE TO BE RECOMMENDED TO THE PRIESTS

As for the priests of the place, we should recommend to them, chiefly, the frequentation of their Congregation, at which, first, a quarter of an hour’s spiritual reading should be made, then a quarter of an hour’s meditation; afterwards a case of conscience is proposed. It would also be well for the instruction of young ecclesiastics to exercise them in preaching sermons, or instructions, or exhortations, which are to be given at Christmas or during Passion week. At least, the conference of cases of conscience should not be omitted, and should be given in the following manner: First, he who has been appointed shall propose some question and give the reasons for and against, and conclude by expressing his own opinion; then the others shall bring forward their own views and raise difficulties.

Besides this exercise of the Congregation, an effort should be made to establish, if possible, an academia for moral cases, in which, two or three times a week, every one in his turn shall explain a treatise, so that when one has finished, another may begin; the most important treatise may thus be discussed, for example: *De Restitutione, de Contractibus, de Paenitentia, de Matrimonio, de Censuris, de Conscientia, de Legibus, de Praeceptis Decalogi*, etc.—It is certain that we learn much more in these conferences than in all the studies to which we apply ourselves in our rooms. The fact is, Moral Theology is a science so vast and so complicated that he that studies it by himself without discussing it with others reads much, but will retain little. In the academia, however, not only are the principles learnt better, but they are better impressed upon the mind, and by thus applying themselves many priests render themselves capable of assisting souls and avoiding at the same time idleness, which usually is the cause that leads so many secular priests astray.

It is also to be recommended to parish priests, and to other capable priests, to preach every Saturday evening, in honor of the Blessed Virgin, a little sermon, which is to be concluded by the narration of some grace granted by the Blessed Virgin to her servants, with a prayer at the end asking for her protection. Moreover, we should also recommend that the priests should make every year, on some feast of Mary, a solemn novena, with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and sermon every day of the novena. The priests should keep before their minds the promises made by this divine Mother to those that seek to honor her, according to what is read in her Office: *They that work by we, shall not sin. They that explain me, shall have life everlasting.*[13731]

Chapter X

GENERAL REMARKS ABOUT THE GIVING OF MISSIONS

I.—WHEN several villages happen to be situated at *a* short distance from one another, there are Superiors who are accustomed to give a mission in a church that occupies a central position, imagining that the people of the surrounding places will attend this mission, and thus a single mission will suffice for all the villages together. In this way these Superiors reason, and act accordingly.

For myself, I say that such a mission will not be of use to any of the neighboring villages; it will hardly be of benefit to the place where it is given; and even for the latter it can have but little success on account of the confusion and the concourse of inhabitants from other places; for if only a few people were to come from the different villages, they would form a large number, but usually very little fruit would be produced. Missions of this kind would serve only for the purpose of being able to say that a mission has been given in those places; but to tell the truth, one should say that none has been given. The following are my reasons: The fruit derived by the people in attending the mission consists in hearing the sermons, and in hearing all or nearly all of them in the order in which they are preached in the missions. This series of sermons on the eternal truths, namely, the importance of salvation, the malice of sin, final impenitence, etc., with the four Last Things, is that which makes, so to speak, a powerful assault upon souls plunged in the mire of sin, and gains them to Jesus Christ. Now when the mission is given in a church for several of the neighboring places, it happens that the greater part of those that come from the surrounding villages do not hear all the sermons; they scarcely hear two or three of them; for as the mission is given outside of their place, they attend it, each one in his turn, so as not to leave their homes without protection; and then, in order to be soon enough back to their homes, those that come from afar often leave the sermon at the most important part of it. Moreover, such a mission is profitable to the devout souls of those places, but not to others, who, however, stand most in need of it; for having troubled consciences, and feeling a repugnance for the word of God, they easily dispense themselves from going to the mission, alleging various excuses, such as: It is too far, the sermon is over too late, it is cold, the church is small, etc.—But when the mission is given in the place itself, and all attend it, men and women, sinners will also attend, although they will do so with repugnance; yet they will do so through human respect, in order that others may not point their finger at them. They will attend, and God will touch their hearts, as frequently happens in the missions.

From all this I conclude that it is better to give the mission separately in every village, even if this cannot be done in the same year; for in those places where it is given, every one will profit by it, and especially those that need it most. As for the other villages, it may, at least, be hoped that emulation will prompt the people also to procure for themselves during the subsequent years the benefit of a mission; then, finally, it will not be said that all have received this benefit, when in reality they did not receive it.

Moreover, when a mission is to be given in some city or village, the population of which is very large, especially if many of the habitations are far distant from the principal church, and more so if this church cannot hold all the people, it will be well, and even necessary, to give several missions at the same time in different, churches. This is what we have done with great fruit in several cities, as at Nola, Sarno, etc.; particularly at Foggia and at Salerno, where, besides the mission at the cathedral, five other missions were given in as many different churches. To proceed with order, the following method has been followed: At first the mission is begun in the principal church, in which it should last at least for two weeks; during this mission, eight or ten days after it has been begun, a feast day is chosen to open the little missions, the exercises of which should continue for about twelve days. Experience has proved that these small missions have sometimes been more successful than the large missions.

II.—The Superior should take care that in each mission there be a sufficient number of missionaries to hear the confessions, according to the population of the place; for it should be borne in mind that the principal fruit of the missions, above all in country places where there are few confessors, and where the latter belong to the place itself, consists in repairing many of the sacrilegious or invalid confessions, on account of the great repugnance that penitents feel of making known their miseries to one whom they know, and whom they see every day. Monsignor Falcoia, Bishop of Castellamara, who formerly belonged to the Institute of Pious Workers, and who was the first director of our Congregation,[13732] said that after having spent forty years in the missions when in certain places there are few missionaries, the mission is conducive to the ruin rather than to the saving of souls. He does not speak thus without a reason; for the exercises of the mission rouse consciences, and those that before were quiet and in good faith, after having heard the instructions and the sermons, begin to have a thousand doubts. Now if these souls have not the opportunity to confide their scruples, of which they feel ashamed, to strange confessors, since they feel a repugnance to manifest them to those of the place, and find themselves in bad faith on account of the doubts that they now have, they will make sacrilegious confessions, and will lose their souls in consequence of the mission.

For myself, in the missions that I had to conduct when I had not a number of missionaries in proportion to that of the faithful of the place, I found it better not to give the mission, and to give it at another place for which the number of confessors was sufficient; for when it becomes necessary to call the resident priests to hear confessions, all or most of the sacrileges that exist will continue to exist. If many souls, overcome by shame, continue to confess sacrilegiously when even confessing to us missionaries, although we do not know them, and we are soon to leave them, what hopes will there be that they will rid themselves of their shame when they confess to the same confessors of the place or of the neighborhood that know them? One cannot say that these persons, having then an opportunity to confess to strangers, will leave those of the place; for while seeing their ordinary confessor in the confessional, they will feel too great a repugnance to allow themselves to be seen going to a stranger, and they thus continue to commit sacrileges.

It is, therefore, always expedient for the bishop to suspend from the power of hearing confessions during the mission all the priests of the place where the mission is given. If the bishop does not do this, let at least the missionary who gives the exercises to the priests beg the confessors of the place to be kind enough to allow their penitents during this time the liberty of confessing to the missionaries, and even to impose this upon them by virtue of obedience, because it is not a rare thing that persons of whom one thinks the least are precisely those that need this the most.

Our confessors should here take notice that, although it is not necessary to have every one to make a general confession, especially if one is pressed for time, and a large number of persons must confess, yet, when the penitent asks to make a general confession, there being a necessity of making it, because the preceding confessions were sacrilegious or invalid, one should allow them to make it by distinguishing the species and the number of sins as exactly as one can. If one, however does not see that the preceding confessions have been certainly null, one should permit the penitent to say what he wishes, and should afterwards put this question to him: Well, now, do you accuse yourself of all the sinful thoughts, words, etc., which you committed from your youth?—But one should take care to let him say so; otherwise not receiving the satisfaction that he expected in making a general confession, he will, as often happens, go to other missionaries, and much time will be lost.

The missionaries should, finally, observe that during the mission, especially when there is a great concourse at the confessionals, it is not necessary to stop too long to examine and to instruct devout souls in the matter of advancing in perfection. This is not the opportune moment to occupy one’s self with the care of such a thing, when other souls are waiting to be delivered from the miserable state of damnation in which they find themselves.

III—During the sermon, and even during the instruction, it would be well if one ceased to hear confessions, first, because the noise that is made by the preacher’s voice will prevent the confessor from hearing the words of the penitent, and the penitent from hearing the words of the confessor; so that the confessions take up twice the usual time, and also leave behind them trouble and disquietude. Moreover, in order that the mission may produce its fruit, it is necessary for every one to hear the great or principal sermon, which is its most important exercise. Now when confessions are heard during the sermon, it happens that this exercise is lost, not only to the persons that confess, but also to all those that surround the confessional, and who, desirous of confessing soon, will think only of entering the confessional as soon as possible; thus preoccupied, they pay but little attention to the sermon. Hence for one person that is confessing, there are twenty or thirty others who, while waiting for their turn, lose the fruit of the sermon; and besides, by the noise that they make in entering the confessional, they disturb the preacher and the whole audience.

IV.—Before beginning the mission we should obtain from the bishop all the powers necessary for producing fruit, as the power of absolving cases reserved to the bishop, either *Nobis* or *A nobis,* also with the censure, as also the communication of the chapter *Liceat,* and the faculty of dispensing from vows, oaths, and impediments of marriage. Moreover, no mission should be accepted except at the request of the inhabitants of the place, or at least of the parish priest.

V. The mission usually lasts twelve days, of which the first eight are devoted to moral sermons and the Last Things, the three following days to the exercise of a devout life and the last to the blessing. In small places it lasts at least ten days, of which seven are for the sermons, two for the exercise, and the last for the blessing. But in large places, with a population of four thousand or more souls, the mission should be prolonged as long as it is necessary; it has happened to us that we continued it for eighteen, twenty-four, and even thirty-six days, as at Foggia. In a word, the Superior should see that the mission be continued till he can prudently judge that all the faithful have had time to confess.

VI.—It must be remarked that the missions should not be renewed too frequently in the same place; it is expedient that they be given at an interval of at least three or four years. If in the second mission one does not see the minds of the people as much moved as they were in the first mission it does not follow that it is less fruitful. When a mission is given in a place where there has been none for a number of years, it always produces a more lively impression than a second one given at an interval of three or four years; but if the minds are less moved, the fruit derived is often greater: those that have relapsed into sin enter again the right path; and those that have persevered are confirmed more in that which is good.

VII.—In conclusion, I find it proper to quote some other excellent counsels, which the venerable Father Segneri, the great missionary of Italy, has left for the good direction of missions and of missionaries.

1. The confessions of women should be heard only in the confessionals.

2. Public confessions, especially of women, should not be permitted. Nor should enemies be allowed to ask the pardon of their adversaries before the parties have been well disposed for reconciliation.

3. The confessors should not without necessity charge themselves with making personally restitution for their penitents; and in the case in which the latter would not intrust the matter to others, one should at least take care to procure a receipt from him to whom the restitution is made.

4. Without some special necessity, one should avoid collecting alms for the poor; also one should accept no money to distribute as alms, as this gives rise to troubles and to calumnies.—I add that one should also avoid meddling in certain temporal affairs, which, although useful to some, may injure or displease others; for this may be the cause of wicked talk and destroy for many the fruits of the mission.

5. The missionaries should not disperse among the different houses to take their meals or their rest.

6. The mission finished, they should depart immediately and refuse every invitation to remain in order to rest themselves.

7. They should not trouble themselves if they see that obstacles are being put in the way to hinder the success of the mission, and they should not be discouraged if at the beginning they meet with a poor reception, for they should rest assured that in the end they will win the affection of all.

8. As a reward for all their labors and all their sufferings, they should expect (admirable advice) on the part of men, contempt, detraction, and ingratitude; for this is the usual reward of those that labor only for the glory of God.

Chapter XI

THE DUTIES OF THE SUPERIOR OF THE MISSION

I. On arriving at the place where the mission is to be given, the Superior fixes the hours of the exercises and of all other matters, in the following manner:[13733] Leaving the house in the morning at 13 o’clock; return home at 19 o’clock (midday). Instruction and catechism (these two exercises begin at the same time), at 22 o’clock. Sermon at 23 o’clock. Supper at 3.30. Examination of conscience before going to bed at 4.30. Retiring at 5 o’clock.

Such is the time-table that is usually followed during winter, which is besides the season most suitable for missions.—I use the word *usually,* for when there is a concourse of penitents, we remain in the confessional for seven hours in the morning, our custom being not to hear confessions in the afternoon, and no missionary can leave the church without the permission of the Superior.—I have also used the words *during winter;* for in spring there are not seven hours of sleep, but six, or at least six and a half, because then we have an hour or an hour and a half of sleep after dinner. At this season we rise at about 8 o’clock, and we go to bed at night at 1 or at 1.30 o’clock; half an hour having elapsed after rising, we go at once to the church, the meditation at this time of the year following the rest given after dinner. In winter after the half hour given for rising, and during which all should observe silence, we make a half-hour’s meditation, which should never be omitted; then we go at once to the church.

At table when all are seated in order, silence is always observed, and the Life of a saint is read, the Superior beginning by reading a little, and the others continuing the same one after the other. In the evening, however, it suffices if one of the missionaries reads a little while out of a book treating of the Blessed Virgin.

As regards the food, it must be observed that nothing edifies the people so much as the mortification and the frugality of the missionaries, while on the contrary nothing scandalizes them more than when they see men treating themselves well in regard to eating and drinking. During the mission the people are always curious to know what the missionaries eat; and in certain places where a mission had been given several years before, we have found persons who related with indignation that the missionaries had themselves well treated by living on fowl, choice fruit, with foreign wines, and the like. In another place of this kingdom a mission was given by good preachers and good confessors; but I was told that very little good was done, because the missionaries had a first-class table. Hence in our missions it is an established rule, that at dinner on days on which flesh-meat is allowed there is to be given only soup with boiled meat, and on fasting-days soup with another frugal portion; at supper, salad and other similar food, with a little cheese and fruit. Only on the last day, the day of the blessing, there may be more food, but never fowl, game, choice fish, pastry, or other sweetmeats. The subjects should wait at table, each one in his turn, according as they are appointed by the Father Econome.

After dinner and after supper there will be a half-hour's recreation. As soon as the time of recreation has passed, the missionaries are exhorted to cease their pleasantries and all useless discourse, and each one should attend to the duties of his employment; those that are free should occupy themselves with hearing confessions till the hour of instruction, of prayer, or of study. During the instruction and the sermon those that have some exercise to give on the following day should strive to prepare themselves as well as possible for it. Besides, unless any one has received from the Superior permission to remain at the house, all the missionaries, especially those that are young, if they have no other occupation, should be present at the instruction, or at least at the great sermon. After the sermon and the discipline they all retire to the house, where they hear the confessions of the men till the hour for supper.

In all these observances the Superior should endeavor to set the example, being the first especially in rising at the signal in the morning, in retiring in the evening to go to bed, in keeping silence, and in hearing confessions; for if he fails in his duty he will easily see that the others will also fail, and what is worse, by failing himself he will not have the courage to reprove others.

II. The Superior should appoint the missionaries for each exercise of the mission, namely, one for the sermon, another for the instruction; one for the meditation in the morning, another for the catechism, which is usually given by the Prefect of the church. The latter should take care to notify the priests of the hour in which they may say Mass, one after the other, in order that they may not come together to say Mass at the last hour.

The Superior also appoints a missionary for the exercises that are to be given to the *priests*, and another for giving them separately to the *seminarians*, if there is a seminary in the place; for if the seminarians are present at the exercises of the priests they will profit very little.

Moreover, he appoints one to give in the morning separate exercises to the *gentlemen* in some chapel or other place of meeting. These special exercises are of great benefit to the instructed persons of the place, because in certain places such people hardly attend the mission; but when the exercises are expressly given to them, they all usually attend them. Then when *we* speak familiarly with them and *ad cor*, many give themselves to God, and their good example leads to the reform of the entire population.

He should, likewise, appoint some one to give the exercises to the *nuns* or religious Communities, if there are such in the place, and if they request to have them; but they should not be offered to them nor should any engagement be made with them.

Another Father should be appointed by him to give the exercises to the *prisoners*, and to hear their confessions.

He will give to the Fathers, in turn, the less important exercises, as the exhortations, the Rosary, the discipline, etc.—He should, moreover, appoint one or two to go to hear the confessions of the sick who may call them.—He also chooses one or two, especially at the beginning of the mission, to go, before the sermon, to invite the people to come to church.

Besides, at the beginning of the mission he should charge some missionaries to visit the most respectable people of the place, such as the principal functionaries, and also other persons of distinction, it there be any. As for the bishop, the vicar-general, and the principal man of the place, the Superior himself should visit them; and if these dignitaries do not live in the place, but in the neighborhood, he should at least take care to send two missionaries to visit them, and to ask the bishop for his blessing, and the chief magistrate for his protection, if it be necessary for the success of the mission.

III. Finally, the Superior appoints an *Econome* who is to take charge of the house, in regard to the food, beds the means of travelling, and all the expenses that are incurred during the mission.

The Superior should also appoint the *Prefect of the church*, who is charged with the duty of placing the pulpit and the statue of Mary at the side of it, of preparing the crucifix and the torches, and of finding clerics to carry them; the Prefect has, moreover, to arrange all that is needed for the general Communion and for the blessing on the last day, as also to prepare the Calvary or the crosses that are to be erected.

Besides, he is to appoint the *Prefect of peace,* who is to gather information in regard to the enmities that exist in the place, and to devote himself to the work of reconciliation.

Chapter XII

VIRTUES THAT THE MISSIONARIES SHOULD ESPECIALLY PRACTISE DURING THE MISSIONS

1. OBEDIENCE

IF during the mission one does not obey the Superior with exactness, all will be disorder, confusion, and trouble, and success will not be attained; for when there is no obedience to the orders of the Superior, all the exercises of the mission are thrown into confusion, and the consequence will be innumerable misunderstandings, either between the Superior and the subjects, or among the subjects themselves, because this will give rise to rivalries, jealousies, murmurs, which will create many annoyances and disappointments. How can such a mission redound to the greater glory of God? A vessel directed by different pilots cannot but make a disastrous voyage.

Every missionary should therefore be blindly obedient in everything that the Superior ordains. We may draw his attention to that of which he is ignorant or to that which he does not notice; but after having represented the case, we should be satisfied, abstain from replying, and especially from disputing; otherwise the Superior as well as the subject will become disquieted, and in the agitation that follows the work will be done unwillingly, while to the labors of the mission it is necessary that we bring a tranquil and cheerful mind.

2. HUMILITY

No one should have the temerity to ask for any office or to be employed as preacher. One would cause great scandal if one showed, directly or indirectly, a desire to preach or to give an instruction, or some other exercise of which one has not the care. One would deserve to be taken no longer on the missions, or to be always kept, so to speak, in the corner. Let every one show rather a desire to be engaged in the most humble employments; for example, to teach catechism, to say the Rosary, and the like. The best thing would be to appear always ready to hear confessions, especially the confessions of men. Here, in passing, we would remind confessors that when penitents come who are not disposed, they should never be sent away to examine their conscience, especially if they are but little instructed, as we have said in the *Instruction and Practice for Confessors*[13734] the confessors should examine them themselves according to the order of the commandments. In fact, to hear confessions in the missions is a less brilliant employment, but the most important and the most useful for the glory of God. The preacher is honored by every one; he is called a saint, an excellent missionary; his hands, his garments, are kissed, people recommend themselves to his prayers, whilst he that spends nine or ten hours every day in the confessional is not mentioned, not even looked at. But perhaps this confessor will acquire more praise before God in a single day than the preacher with all his sermons and all his efforts, with all the acclamations and applause that he receives from the people.

Father Segneri wisely remarks that the missionary should expect from his labors only the glory of God and the good of souls, taking for himself detraction, contempt, and vexations, and referring to God all the honors that are paid to him; otherwise, if he views with complacency his talents and his success, he will lose more than he gains of all his labors. To him will be said: *You have received your reward.* All the missionaries should be disposed to suffer with humility the cold reception or any other unpleasantness that they may meet with from the inhabitants of the place. The same Father Segneri said that he who has not the courage to bear with contempt and with bitterness, is not fit to be a missionary.

3. MORTIFICATION

Every one should be satisfied with the food and with the bed that are given to him, without asking for anything. When we go on a mission, we should go with the thought and the resolution not to take a walk for recreation's sake, but to suffer in order to gain souls for Jesus Christ. We should abstain from going to see the curiosities that are in the place, unless they happen to be objects of devotion; we should also refrain from going out of the house for the purpose of distracting ourselves or even from remaining at the windows or on the balcony of the house in which we live. The people look upon the missionaries as saints, as men dead to all the things of this world, as if they had neither flesh nor senses, so that every act on their part that does not appear holy astonishes and scandalizes them.

4. PIETY

This virtue should be especially conspicuous when we celebrate the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Every priest whom we see saying Mass hurriedly and with but little piety, as we have said in several places of our writings, gives scandal to the people; but the scandal would be greater if a missionary were seen celebrating Mass after the manner of indevout priests. It would not be proper to say that during the mission devotions should be abridged in order that more time may be given to confessions and to other exercises; for the words of the confessor and of the preacher will make little impression if the audience is not convinced of the sanctity of him who speaks.

Every one should, therefore, endeavor to celebrate Mass with suitable devotion, and even during the time of the mission with a little more devotion than usual, in order to edify the people. Besides, we should not fail to make thanksgiving after Mass, as is prescribed in our Constitutions; however, during the mission it would be a fault to spend more than a quarter of an hour in making it when there are many penitents waiting to go to confession.

5. MODESTY

The missionaries should observe great modesty both in their looks and in their words.

They should take care always to observe modesty of the eyes in the church, in the streets, and in the houses where there are women. They should know that the people are very attentive in observing whether any missionary looks women in the face. A missionary, now dead, was a holy man; nevertheless in a certain place he had neglected to keep his eyes under control, and it was said of him: “He may have been a saint, but he used to look women in the face.”

Especially should the missionary be modest in his words; let him never speak of the defects of others, and let him speak well of every one. Religious and priests should always be held in great esteem, and when others are detracting their neighbor, he should at least be silent if he cannot excuse him.

6. COURTESY AND GRAVITY

The missionaries should be courteous to every one especially by saluting all those whom they meet on the way, however humble may be their condition. Nothing attaches the people to the missionaries and draws them to God so much as to see themselves saluted by them. This is, however, to be understood of men, not of women; for when they meet women, they should salute them with uncovered head without raising the eyes. All courtesy and deference should therefore be paid to the people of the place; they should avoid disputing with them, and yield to them in all that does not compromise the interests of the mission.

But to this courtesy and deference must be joined gravity and proper reserve; hence the missionaries should avoid being intimate with any person of the place and for this reason they should abstain from talking to others about news and about anything that does not profit the mission. For a greater reason should they refrain from entering the houses without necessity and without the permission of the Superior.

APPENDIX

WE shall here treat of five points on which it is necessary to instruct the people so that the mission may be successful: 1. Love for Jesus crucified; 2. Devotion to the Mother of God; 3. Necessity of prayer in order to be saved; 4. Flight from dangerous occasions; 5. Ruin of souls who through shame omit to confess their sins.

I. LOVE FOR JESUS CRUCIFIED

In the missions we usually speak only of the four Last Things and of other subjects apt to excite fear; little is said, except incidentally, of the love that God bears us, and of the obligation that we have to love him. No one will deny that terrifying sermons are useful, and even necessary, in order to awaken sinners who have fallen asleep in their sins; but we should be convinced that conversions brought about only by the fear of divine chastisements are of short duration; they last only as long as this fear continues in full strength; when, however, it is dissipated, the soul, having become quite feeble by the sins committed, easily succumbs to every new attack of temptation; if the holy love of God enters not the soul it will be difficult for it to persevere.

Persuaded of this truth, St. Peter of Alcantara usually, treated in his sermons of terrible subjects, as death, judgment, hell, by which he startled his hearers by representing to them the rigor of the divine justice against the obstinate; at the same time, however, he allayed their fears by pointing out to them the remedies for the sins committed. He inspired them with hope of pardon through the merits of Jesus Christ according to the sweet promises made by our Lord, who wished to suffer so much and to die of sorrow on the cross in order to obtain for sinners pardon and grace to resist in future the temptations of the flesh and of hell. It is thus that the saint attracted to Jesus Christ all that came to him—the learned and the unlearned,—in such crowds that the churches where he preached could not contain the people, and conversions became general.

The missionary should therefore chiefly endeavor in every sermon that he preaches to leave his hearers inflamed with this holy love. But this end is not attained by speculative sermons, in which one demonstrates the excellence of divine love, to attain which it is above all important for us to make others understand the love that Jesus Christ has borne us in his Passion. St. Francis de Sales says: “All love that does not take its origin in the Passion of our Lord is frivolous.” When, on the other hand, a Christian believes and practically represents to himself all that Jesus Christ has suffered in order to save him, he cannot but be penetrated with love for Jesus Christ; and therefore we may rightly hope that he will persevere till death in the state of grace.

In reference to this matter I find it proper to note here what was told me of a celebrated missionary, who is now dead. As he was charged to preach the principal sermon in a place of several thousand inhabitants, he preached among others a speculative sermon on divine love, and invited a well-informed priest to come to hear him. This priest told me that the discourse was learned, filled with texts of Scripture and of the holy Fathers, and of theological teachings; he was praised by the small number of hearers that could understand him; but the greater part of the people derived no fruit or nearly none, because they could understand very little of what he said. The preacher would certainly have produced much more fruit if he had confined himself to explain in an humble way the love that Jesus Christ bore to us by coming into the world to suffer and to die for us.

Hence in our missions, especially on the last three days, we speak only of the Passion of our Lord, so that the souls may become attached to Jesus Christ; and not only on the last three days, but on every day of the mission, it will be well for the preacher to interweave, wherever this is suitable, some exhortation on the love that we owe to Jesus Christ. Moreover, we would do well to induce the audience to procure, each one, a pious image of Jesus crucified, to whom they should take care often to recommend themselves during the day by asking of him the graces that they desire, above all the grace of loving him till death; and this grace every one should ask of the divine Mother, of his guardian angel, and of all his holy patrons, that is, the grace of loving Jesus Christ, which comprises all graces.

It will also be useful for the preacher to teach the people, from time to time, some holy maxims which every good Christian should keep engraven on his heart, in order to continue in the grace of God and in union with his holy will; for example: To lose everything rather than to lose God. If God is lost, all is lost. What friend have we who has loved us as much as God? All that God wishes is good. We should therefore accept everything that comes from his hand.

It will also be useful to teach some ejaculatory prayers, to reanimate in the heart the love for God; for example: *Deus meus, et omnia*—My God and my all. My God, it is only Thee that I wish, and nothing else. Whom shall I love if I do not love Thee, my Jesus, who hast died for me? etc.—These pious affections will contribute much to keep burning in the heart the sacred fire of divine love.

II. DEVOTION TO THE MOTHER OF GOD

During the mission we should often recommend devotion to the Blessed Virgin. This devotion is not one of those that one calls supererogatory. According to the teaching of many saints and all the masters of the spiritual life, it is regarded as necessary, not by absolute necessity, but at least by moral necessity; so that one fears for him who lives habitually a stranger to such a devotion. To convince ourselves of this truth, it is sufficient to know that the holy Church in her hymns makes us call the Blessed Virgin *our hope—Spes nostra, salve.*

This agrees with what St. Bernard writes; he thus calls Mary: “A full aqueduct, so that others may receive from her plenitude.”[13735] He afterwards says: “The Redeemer when about to redeem mankind conferred upon Mary the price of the redemption.”[13736] And he concludes: “If there is any hope in us, if there is any grace, if any salvation, we know that it all comes from Mary.”[13737] He again says: “No grace comes from heaven to the earth unless it passes through the hands of Mary.”[13738] And elsewhere he says: Such is his wish that we should have everything through Mary.”[13739] Father Natalis Alexander, dwelling on these last words of St. Bernard, thus expresses himself: “God wishes that all the good that we expect from him should be obtained through the most powerful intercession of Mary.”[13740] And Father Contenson wishes the same thing to be understood when he says that none will participate in the blood of Jesus Christ except through the intercession of his divine Mother, and puts into the mouth of our Lord these words: “No one shall participate in my blood except through the intercession of my Mother.”[13741]

And why should we expect everything good from God through the intervention of Mary? The same St. Bernard gives us the reason of this in another place, by saying that it is because Mary is wanting neither in power with God to obtain for us all the graces that we desire, nor in good-will to save our souls: “She is wanting neither in the power nor in the will.”[13742] In another place he declares that Mary is the whole foundation of his hope: “She is my greatest reliance, she is the entire motive of my hope.”[13743] And he exhorts us to ask in the name of Mary for all the graces that we desire to receive from God: “Let us ask for grace, and let us ask for it through Mary.”[13744] Finally, the saint assures us of divine grace and eternal salvation if we persevere in devotion to Mary. He thus beautifully expresses himself: “Following her, you will not wander from the path; invoking her, you will not despair; thinking of her, you will not err; clinging to her, you will not fall; having her as your protectress, you need fear nothing; having her as your guide, you will not grow weary; being propitious to you, she will help you to arrive at your destiny.”[13745] To the writings of St. Bernard may be added what many other saints say of the Blessed Virgin. St. Ephrem addresses these words to her: “In no other except in thee, O most faithful virgin! do we put our confidence.”[13746] St. Bonaventure writes: “No one can enter heaven, unless he enters through Mary as through a door.”[13747] And St Bernardine of Sienna: “All the gifts and graces are dispensed by God through Mary’s hands, to whom she wishes, when and how she wishes.”[13748] In another place he says to her: “Thou art the dispenser of all graces; our salvation is in thy hands.”[13749] St. Peter Damian also says to her: “Nothing is impossible to thee, to whom it is possible to inspire with confidence even those that have despaired of salvation.”[13750] And he adds at the end, that the Son honors his Mother in refusing her nothing for which she asks him: “The Son honors thee by refusing thee nothing.”[13751]

In order not to be too diffuse I omit here very many other passages taken from authors who express the same thing; but from all that precedes, we rightly conclude that devotion to the Blessed Virgin is not only useful, but even morally necessary, according to what St. Bernard says, as is quoted above: “No grace comes from heaven to the earth unless it passes through the hands of Mary.” At the present time this is a very common opinion among Catholics, as we have proved in our book the *Glories of Mary,*[13752] in which I quote many theologians who call this an opinion that is absolutely common.

However, this opinion does not please Muratori, who in his book entitled *Well-regulated Devotion,* says of the maintained proposition, “God does not grant any grace except through the mediation of Mary,”[13753] that it is a hyperbole, an exaggeration that has escaped the lips of some saints. But I do not know how this great scholar has been able to see in this a hyperbole, after Jesus Christ has deigned to choose this privileged creature for his Mother and for his co-operatrix in the redemption of the human race. It cannot be denied that it was a most proper thing that, since Mary had honored and loved Jesus Christ more than all men and all angels, he should have wished to raise her to this prerogative, namely, that all the graces which are to be dispensed to redeemed men—graces which are the fruit of his merits—should pass through the hands of his Mother, as through a channel of graces, according to the opinion of St. Bernard. What conduces much in favor of our proposition is that the holy Church in the *Salve Regina* tells us to call this divine Mother, *Vita, spes nostra*—our life, our hope. One should then fear very much for the salvation of him who esteems but little the devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and neglects to obtain her intercession; for according to the opinion of St. Bernard, he thereby closes to himself the channel of graces necessary to his salvation; and it is this that the preacher should above all inculcate.

III. NECESSITY OF PRAYER IN ORDER TO SAVE OUR SOULS

In regard to the necessity of prayer it must be remarked that although God wishes the salvation of all men, as the Apostle declares: *Who will have all men to be saved;*[13754] and that according to the remark of St. Thomas on these words, the Lord, wishing the salvation of all men, does not allow any one to be in want of the grace of which he stands in need: “And, therefore, grace is wanting to no one, but communicates itself to all as far as possible;”[13755] nevertheless, theologians teach that no one is saved except with the help of God, and this help he does not obtain unless he prays for it.[13756] Thus Gennadius[13757] expresses himself, and St. Augustine adds that except the first graces, as the vocation to the faith, or to penance, God does not grant the rest, and especially the grace of final perseverance, except to him who asks for it.[13758] Hence theologians commonly conclude, with St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, and the same St. Augustine, that for adults prayer is necessary by necessity of means, so that without prayer it is impossible, according to the present disposition of Providence, to save one's soul.

This is what is signified by Scripture when it says: We ought always to pray.[13759] *Ask and you shall receive.*[13760] *Pray without ceasing.*[13761] For St. Thomas[13762] says that the words We ought, Ask, Pray express a precept which imposes a grave obligation, especially in three cases: 1. When any one is in the state of mortal sin; 2. When any one is in danger of committing sin; 3. When any one is in great danger of death. Outside of these cases, theologians *(see Lessius, de Inst.,* 1. 2, c. 37, d. 3, n. 9, et seq.) say that he who neglects for a month, or at least for two months, to recommend himself to God, is not excused from mortal sin. The reason of this is that ordinarily during this time the devil, who unceasingly is trying to gain souls, will not fail to cause him some grave temptation, and that in grave temptations he who does not pray, and does not ask God's help, of which he stands in need in order not to fall, will very easily fall. In fact, we should be convinced that without the help of God we have not the strength to resist the violent movements of bad passions and the vehement suggestions of the enemy who comes to assail us, even though we should have taken a thousand good resolutions and made to God a thousand promises; if we then do not recommend ourselves to God, we shall certainly be conquered. We must add that the Council of Trent condemns him who should say that man in the state of grace can persevere in it without the special help of God: "If any one saith that the justified either is able to persevere, without the special help of God, in the justice received; or that, with that help, he is not able; let him be anathema."[13763] Hence, in order to persevere, the ordinary divine help does not suffice; we need extraordinary help, which is not obtained except through prayer.

In this we should be greatly encouraged by the innumerable promises that the Lord has made us, as well in the Old as in the New Testament, that he will hear any one that prays to him. What should, above all, inspire us with great confidence is the consideration of the two promises made by Jesus Christ, in which he teaches us to pray with the certainty of obtaining the graces that we ask in his name. In one promise he says: *Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you;* in the other: *If you shall ask Me anything in My name, that I will do.*[13764] When we, therefore, pray to God in the name of the Son, or to the Son in his name, we should be sure of obtaining the grace that we ask; for God cannot fail in his promises. This is to be, however, understood whenever the graces asked for are spiritual goods, the before-mentioned promises not having for their object temporal goods, which the Lord grants to us only so far as they are more profitable to the soul. As for spiritual goods, the Apostle St. James wishes us to ask for them with great confidence, because God grants them in abundance to all: *Ask of God, Who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not.*[13765] The last two words signify much: they signify that when anyone addresses God prayers useful to his eternal salvation, and when he prays with faith, God will certainly hear him; even when the soul has been unfaithful to him he grants it the grace that it asks, and does not reproach it for the faults that it has committed. When, therefore, we solicit spiritual goods, we should firmly believe that we shall obtain them, and they will be granted to us, as our divine Master has assured us when he says: *All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.*[13766] After this, the preacher should not omit to recommend to him who prays always to be careful to interpose the intercession of Mary, according to the advice given by St. Bernard quoted above: “Let us ask for grace, and let us ask it through Mary.”

In concluding this point about the necessity of prayer, I cannot but complain of those preachers, and also of the authors of books of piety, who speak little of prayer; but I especially complain of confessors who take little care to remind their penitents of this necessity of praying in temptations: they carefully tell them to make a firm resolution and to promise to God never more to offend him; but they do not take the trouble to make them understand that when one is tempted, especially against purity, good resolutions and promises are of little use if one does not invoke God’s help. When the temptation is strong, we should at once recommend ourselves fervently to God; and if the temptation continues, we should continue to implore the help of God in order not to fall until it ceases, or at least until it grows weaker. Experience proves that the invocation of the holy names of Jesus and Mary, in temptations, is an excellent means not to give consent to them. But I say that if one sees so much backsliding among penitents who are contrite, it is because confessors pay so little attention to persuading them that in the suggestions of the devil they should immediately ask God to assist them.

Some will be astonished at seeing me requiring of preachers that during the missions they should attend to inculcating these two practices on the minds of the hearers, namely, to have recourse to God in temptations, and as is said in the second point, to recommend one’s self often to the Blessed Virgin. I say that they will be astonished, because commonly these are two things that preachers always recommend and leave as remembrances, especially in their last sermon.—Yes, I say that such is the custom; but I answer that in order to induce the hearers to take the firm resolution to execute these two things that are so important to salvation, it is not sufficient to recommend them once and to leave them as remembrances in the last sermon: we should recommend them in all the sermons in order that the people may keep them engraven on the memory, and put them in practice in the future.

IV. THE FLIGHT FROM DANGEROUS OCCASIONS

This fourth point should often be recommended in the mission; for an innumerable multitude of souls are lost by not wishing to avoid the occasions of sin. Oh, how many souls are now in hell who cry out, weeping: Unhappy me, if I had kept from this occasion I should never have damned my soul for all eternity!

The Holy Ghost reminds us that he who loves the danger will fall into sin,—will perish: *He that loveth danger shall perish in it.*[13767] St. Thomas explains to us the reason; commenting on this text, he says that when we voluntarily expose ourselves to danger, or when we neglect to keep from it, God abandons us in it.[13768] And St. Bernardine of Sienna[13769] assures us that among the counsels of Jesus Christ the counsel of fleeing from the occasion of sin is the most important, is, as it were, the foundation of religion.

The preacher should then take care to remind the people that when they are tempted, especially it the occasion presents itself, they should avoid reasoning with the temptation. What the devil desires is precisely that we should parley with it; for thereby he will easily conquer us. We must in this case flee from the occasion at once, and invoke the names of Jesus and Mary without listening to the enemy who tempts us.

St. Peter assures us that the devil prowls around every soul to devour it.[13770] On this text St. Cyprian says that the devil goes about without ceasing, and examines by what door he may enter. When a dangerous occasion presents itself, the devil at once says to himself: Here is the door by which I can enter this soul. And immediately he begins to tempt the soul. If we then neglect to flee from the occasion, we shall certainly yield to it, especially when the object of the temptation is a carnal sin. Hence the devil is not so much afraid of our good resolutions and our promises not to offend God as to see us flee from the occasion; for, if we do not flee from it, it becomes a bandage which is put over our eyes, and makes us forget all the eternal truths, all the lights received, and all the promises made to God. And if any one finds himself sunken in impure sins, he should avoid as much as possible the occasions, not only the proximate, but also the remote occasions, for he is less capable of resisting. We should not, then, labor under the illusion by pretending that it is a necessary occasion which we need not avoid; for Jesus Christ has said: *If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee*.[13771] Even if it weie your right eye, to escape damnation it would be necessaiy to pluck it out and cast it from you, that is, by fleeing from this occasion, however remote it may be; for on account of your weakness it is proximate for you.

St. Francis of Assisi, speaking of persons who have the fear of God, gives an excellent advice concerning remote occasions: he says that for persons who fear to lose God, the devil, in the occasions, does not at first excite them to grave faults; he begins by attaching them with a hair, which afterwards, in time, may through his suggestions become a chain, and he thus succeeds in dragging them into mortal sin. Hence in our relations with persons of the other sex, we should take care to break off from the beginning every kind of attachment, however feeble it may be, by avoiding even the remote occasions, such as looking them in the face, saluting them with affection, receiving notes or presents from them, and much more, saying tender words to them.

We should, above all, be convinced that we who are by nature sensual have not the strength to preserve the virtue of chastity; God only in his goodness can grant us this strength. Now it is true that the Lord hears him who prays to him; but if any one exposes himself to the occasion, and knowing it, does not remove from it, his prayers are not heard, according to the words of the Holy Ghost already quoted: *He that loveth danger shall perish in it.* Alas! how many are there who, for not having fled from the occasions of this kind, although they led holy lives, ended by falling into sin and becoming hardened in it? *With fear and trembling,* says the Apostle, *work out your salvation.*[13772] He that does not tremble, and dares to expose himself to dangerous occasions, above all to occasions of carnal sins, will be saved with difficulty.

Since these counsels about the flight of dangerous occasions is so important, it is not sufficient if the preacher speaks about it once to his people, or even devotes an entire sermon to it, as some do, and do well; but as these occasions are numerous, and men are careless about avoiding them, the world becoming thereby so corrupt, we must come back to this point and insist upon it several times during the mission. On this depends the salvation of those persons who, although they come to the mission, yet are not present at the sermon on the flight from dangerous occasions.

I add another remark, which it would be well to make all understand, and especially confessors. When a penitent has never avoided the occasion in which he has been accustomed to sin, it will be necessary for him to make a general confession, because one should judge that all the confessions that he has made in this state are null. One should also presume the same thing in the case of those who, although they have always confessed their sins, yet never gave any sign of amendment, and fell back a little while after into sin; only a general confession can induce these people to amend their lives.

V. THE RUIN OF SOULS WHO THROUGH SHAME OMIT TO CONFESS THEIR SINS

In the missions we should moreover strongly and often inculcate the necessity of overcoming the shame that one feels in confessing one's sins. Those who are experienced missionaries know that this cursed shame has been the cause of the loss of many souls. It follows that as the principal fruit of the missions consists in the remedy that they apply to this evil, they are not only useful but even necessary for country places; for as there is only a small number of confessors, who are very often the relatives or friends of their penitents, false shame has more force in making the people conceal sins in confession.

It is a pity to see how many souls the devil gains by this means, especially in matters concerning impure sins; for he makes them lose shame at the moment of committing them, and gives this shame back to them when there is question of mentioning them in confession. St. Antonine, speaking of this matter, relates that a holy hermit, seeing one day the devil in the church going among those that wished to confess, asked him what he was doing there; the evil spirit answered: "To induce these people to commit sin. I have taken shame from them; now I return it to them in order that they may not confess it." St. John Chrysostom also says: "God has given shame to the commission of sin, and confidence to the confession of it. The devil inverts this: he inspires him who sins with confidence, and him who confesses with shame.[13773]

Alas! Christian soul, you have sinned; if you do not confess your sins you will certainly be damned. Why then do you not confess your sin? You answer: I am ashamed.—Hence rather than overcome this shame you wish to be condemned for all eternity to the fire of hell? It is a shame to offend so good a God who has created us; it is not a shame to confess to have offended him. But since you do not wish to manifest your sin, refrain at least from going to confession. To the sin that you have committed do you wish to add the sacrilege of a bad confession? Do you know what you are doing when you commit a sacrilege? For the sins on account of which you have deserved hell there is no other remedy than the blood of Jesus Christ, who will purify you if you confess it well; but by concealing your sin, you even tread under foot the blood of Jesus Christ.

The present mission is for you a good occasion for making your confession to a priest who does not know you, whom afterwards you will see no more, and who will no more see you; if you do not wish to profit by this occasion, God will perhaps not grant it to you again, and you will be damned. Remember that if you do not confess now, the devil will gain absolute sway over you, and then perhaps God will abandon you, and there will be no more hope for you. Courage, then! go to confession immediately.

What do you fear? Ah! here are no doubt the pretexts that the devil will suggest to you:

1. What will my confessor say when he hears that I have fallen in such a way?—Well! he will say that you have been weak, as happens to so many others who live in this world; he will say that you did wrong to sin, but that you afterwards performed a noble deed in overcoming shame to confess your sins.

2. At least he will not fail to give me a scolding.—Oh no, why should he scold you? Know that confessors cannot have greater consolation than when they hear a person accusing himself of a sin that he has committed; for then he can securely absolve him and thus deliver him from hell.

3. I have not enough confidence to manifest this sin to my spiritual Father.—Well! go to confession to another priest of the place or to a stranger.—But if my confessor hears that I have gone to confession to another, he will be offended, and will no more hear my confession.—And you, in order not to displease your confessor wish to commit a sacrilege and to damn your soul? If you go to hell, will your confessor be able to talk you out of it?

4. Who knows whether the confessor will not make known my sin to others?—What folly to think that a confessor could wish to commit so great a crime as to break the seal of confession by manifesting your sin to others! To how many confessors are you to declare your sin? It suffices that you tell it once to one priest only, who hears your sin as he hears a thousand others in other confessions. But why have you so many unreasonable fears, and have not the fear of damning yourself by not confessing your sin? This should deprive you of all consolation and all peace; for, if you do not confess your sin, there will remain in your conscience a viper that will gnaw your heart during your whole life in this world, and after death, during all eternity in hell.

Well now, let us take courage, and make known to the confessor the recesses of your conscience; immediately after confession you will find the peace that you have lost, and you will ever thank God for having given you the strength to overcome the devil. Hasten, therefore, to be delivered from this viper that causes you so much pain, and become reconciled with God. Hear what I say: It is sufficient for you to say to the confessor: My Father, I have a scruple about my past life; but I am ashamed to mention it.—Speak thus, and then it will be the confessor's duty to deliver you from the serpent that torments you as if you were one of the damned, although you are not yet in hell.

I have wished to mention here in a practical manner those pretexts which induce so many poor souls to conceal their sins and are the cause of their damnation. As this cursed shame is everywhere prevalent, especially among women, we must make them understand the answers given above to the false pretexts which the devil puts before them in order to make them conceal their sins.

It is true, I am well aware that, in the missions, usually a special sermon is preached to move the hearers not to hide any sin through shame; but I say that this point is so important that even an entire sermon is not sufficient: first, because it may happen that souls needing it most are not present; secondly, because for persons who have concealed their sins for a long time, it is not enough to hear the remedy spoken of but once; the preacher should often insist upon this matter, which I regard as the most important that one has to treat in the missions; for even in the missions many persons, although they have been present at the sermons, have continued to hide their sins. This is particularly necessary when one preaches in conservatories in which many girls and women are living together. As the occasions of sin are more frequent there, sins are also more frequent; and for persons that live in these establishments it is more difficult to have a confessor to whom they would confess with less repugnance; hence we should oftener speak to them about false shame, which causes them to conceal sins in confession, and it is very useful to make a deep impression upon their minds by relating to them melancholy examples.

In all the missions given by our Congregation it is customary for him who explains the catechism to relate every day one of the terrible examples of persons damned for having concealed sins in confession. Many of these examples are found in good authors, and I have given some of them in my treatise *INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PEOPLE ON THE COMMANDMENTS.*

I think the preacher would do well to put to a profitable use similar examples. They may be of benefit not only to him who preaches the sermon, but also to him who gives the instruction or meditation, and even to him who gives the exercises to priests; for among them are often found parish priests, preachers of Lenten sermons, and other ecclesiastics who are anxious to preach in a profitable manner.

PIOUS ACTS

TO BE MADE IN THE COMMON VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

IN THE VISIT WHICH THE PEOPLE ARE TO MAKE THE PRIEST SHOULD READ THESE ACTS IN A LOUD VOICE AND WITH PAUSES, AND THE PEOPLE SHOULD REPEAT THEM AFTER HIM

VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

O my soul! revive thy faith and thy confidence: thou art in the presence of the infinite majesty of thy God, who for the love of thee descended one day from heaven to the earth, became man, and wished to die on the cross to save thee, and who now remains here in the Blessed Sacrament to hear thee, and to grant thee the graces that thou askest of him; speak to him, then, and say:

ACT OF FAITH AND OF ADORATION

My God, because Thou art infallible truth, and hast revealed what we should believe, I believe all that Thou teachest me to believe. I believe that Thou art the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, and that in eternity Thou rewardest the just in paradise and punishest the wicked in hell. I believe that Thou art only one God in essence and three in Persons, the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. I believe, O eternal Son of God! that, becoming incarnate and being made man in the womb of Mary, Thou was crucified for our salvation, and that now Thou remainest in the Blessed Sacrament to nourish us with Thy flesh in holy Communion, and to hear our prayers on Thy altars when we come to visit Thee. Prostrate, therefore, at Thy feet, I, a miserable sinner, unworthy to appear before Thee, and worthy only of being in hell, as I have so often deserved, I adore Thee, O infinite Majesty, by uniting myself to the adorations that are rendered to Thee by all the angels and all the saints, with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

ACT OF HOPE

My dear Redeemer, trusting in Thy promises, because Thou art faithful, powerful, and merciful, I hope that Thou wilt grant me through the merits of Thy Passion the pardon of my sins, perseverance in Thy grace till death, and finally the happiness of going to see and love Thee eternally in paradise.

ACT OF LOVE

My dear Lord and my God, because Thou art an infinite good, worthy of an infinite love, I love Thee with my whole heart above all things, and I would wish to see Thee loved by all men of this world as much as Thou deservest to be. I rejoice that Thou art and wilt always be infinitely happy.

ACT OF CONTRITION AND OF A FIRM PURPOSE

My dearly beloved Redeemer, if I had abandoned all for Thee by spending my whole life in the desert, and if afterwards I had died by the violence of the torments endured for Thy love, it would certainly be nothing in comparison with the cruel death that Thou my God hast wished to suffer for me. But how have I treated Thee in the past? I have repaid Thee with ingratitude. Instead of loving Thee, how many times have I offended Thee by turning my back upon Thee, by despising Thy grace and Thy love! I repent of this, O my Jesus! I regret with my whole heart of having offended Thee—Thou who art infinite goodness. Ah! would that I had died rather than have ever displeased Thee! I hate and I detest more than every evil all the injury that I have heaped upon Thee. O Lord, my God! I promise Thee, and I am resolved for the future to die rather than offend Thee again; I also make the resolution to receive the sacraments during my life and at my death. The time that remains to me to live, whether it be short or long, I will spend entirely in loving Thee, O infinite Majesty, my only good, more amiable than every other good! But of what use will be all these promises that I have made to Thee, if Thou dost not help me, O God of my soul! Without Thy help I should betray Thee again, and I should do worse than before. This is, then, the grace that I ask of Thee, and that I hope through the merits of Thy Passion: give me holy perseverance, and do not permit it to happen that I should ever again be separated from Thee; let me die rather than see myself again incur Thy displeasure.

ACT OF THANKSGIVING

My Jesus, I thank Thee for all the graces that Thou hast conferred upon me: for having created me, for having redeemed me by Thy blood, for having made me a Christian by the sacrament of baptism, and for having borne with me so long a time, when I was in disgrace with Thee. How unhappy should I be had I died in this state! I should now be in hell, I should be lost there forever, O my God! and I could no longer love Thee. I thank Thee, therefore, for having waited for me with so much patience, and for having pardoned me, as I trust that Thou hast done, with so much mercy. I especially thank Thee for having left Thyself for us in the Blessed Sacrament, for having so many times given Thyself entirely to me in Holy Communion by making Thyself our food, and for having at this moment deigned to admit me to Thy presence. I thank Thee for all these benefits, and I am confident that I will render Thee more perfect thanksgiving during all eternity in paradise, where I hope to sing Thy praises forever.

OFFERING

My Jesus, through love of me Thou didst wish to die in torments and insults on an infamous gibbet; what can I render Thee in return for so much goodness: I have only myself to offer Thee; I therefore, O Lord, my God, offer and consecrate myself entirely to Thee; I give Thee my soul, my body, my will, by submitting myself in all things and forever to Thy holy will; do with me as Thou willest. Make that I shall always love Thee in this life and in the next, and then dispose of me and of all that I am as Thou wishest. Tell me what Thou wishest of me; I am ready to do all with the help of Thy grace.

PRAYER

O Lord! I recommend to Thee the Sovereign Pontiff, all the Prelates, and all the priests: fill them with Thy spirit, in order that they may sanctify the whole world. I recommend to Thee unbelievers, heretics, and all sinners:

give them the light and the strength that they need, in order to give up sin and to study to love only Thee, who art the sovereign good. I recommend to Thee all the dying, all my relatives, my benefactors, and my friends; and I recommend to Thee also, in a special manner, my enemies; for Thou hast given me the command to do so: make them happy, and make them saints. I recommend to Thee the holy souls in purgatory: alleviate their sufferings, and abridge the time of their exile, in order that they may soon go to enjoy Thy presence in heaven.

Finally, in regard to myself, I pray to Thee, O my Jesus, whom I adore on this altar in the Blessed Sacrament! from the height of this throne of love, grant me by Thy merits a great sorrow for my sins, and the pardon of all the offences that I have committed against Thee. Give me holy humility and meekness, in order that I may bear with patience all kinds of contempt and all persecutions. Give me the grace to mortify myself by abstaining from all that is not pleasing to Thee. Give me perfect resignation to Thy holy will, so that I may embrace with peace all the crosses that come to me from Thy hand. Give me sufficient light to know Thy holy wishes, and sufficient strength to fulfil them. Give me great confidence in Thy holy Passion and in the protection of Mary, Thy Mother. Give me the sovereign gift of Thy love, with a great desire of loving and pleasing Thee, so that in future I may always say to Thee what I now say: My God, it is Thou only whom I wish, and nothing more. Give me perseverance in Thy love till death, so that I may never lose Thy holy grace. Above all, do I ask Thee to help me always to ask of Thee this holy perseverance, by recommending myself always to Thee and to Thy holy Mother, especially when I am tempted to offend Thee; make me always repeat then: Jesus and Mary, help me.—Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus, Thy Son, grant me all these graces.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus, I love Thee with my whole heart, and I desire to be always united with Thee. Since I cannot now receive Thee sacramentally, I receive Thee spiritually. Come, then, into my heart; I embrace Thee, and unite myself wholly to Thee, and I beg Thee not to permit me to be ever separated from Thee.

After this we may recite the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and then the following hymn should be sung:

Pange, lingua, gloriosi Corporis mysterium,
Sanguinisque pretiosi
Quem in mundi pretium,
Fructus ventris generosi,
Rex effudit gentium.
Tantum ergo Sacramentum Veneremur cernui;
Et antiquum documentum Novo cedat ritui;
Praestet fides supplementum Sensuum defectui.
V. Panem de coelo praestitisti eis.
R. Omne delectamentum in se habentem.

OREMUS

Deus, qui nobis, sub Sacramento mirabili, passionis tuae memoriam reliquisti: tribue, quaesumus, ita nos Corporis et Sanguinis tui sacra mysteria venerari, ut redemptionis tuae fructum in nobis jugiter sentiamus. Qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

O great Queen of heaven, Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary! I, a miserable sinner, salute and honor thee as the Mother of my God. Thou art among all creatures the most beautiful, the most holy, the most amiable, and the best beloved of the Lord. My Sovereign, I love thee above all things after God; I wish to see thee loved by every one. I exceedingly rejoice at thy greatness, and I thank the Lord for having so much glorified thee. I also thank thee, who art my Mother, for all the graces that thou hast obtained for me from God in the course of my whole life. I offer myself to thee to be thy perpetual servant, and I place myself under thy protection, I place in thee all my hopes. Accept me, O my Queen! and do not reject me as I deserve to be rejected. I know that thou art so powerful with God that he grants thee everything for which thou dost ask him. O Mother of mercy! O Refuge of Sinners! I place my soul into thy hands; pray, have pity on me: recommend me to thy divine Son, and obtain for me the pardon of all my sins, the love for God, and holy perseverance in his grace till death. Above all, I beg thee to obtain for me the grace of always recommending myself to thee, especially when I am tempted to offend God. Do not cease to help me during my life and my death. My tender Mother, I confide in thee; it is thou that is to save me through the merits of Jesus, thy Son, and through thy intercession. Amen. So I hope; so may it be.

PRAYER OF ST. BONAVENTURE

O Jesus, who for my sake didst not spare Thyself in anything! impress upon me Thy Passion, in order that, on whatever side I may turn, I may look upon Thy wounds, and may find rest only in Thee and in meditating on Thy sufferings. Amen.

METHOD OF GIVING MISSIONS.[13774]

1. THE BEGINNING OF THE MISSION

IN the first place, it must be remarked that no one should go on a mission without having been sent by the Superiors; and the latter should never send missionaries, if they have not been asked for by the bishop or by the people of a place, with the consent of the bishop, of whom a request should be made for permission in writing and for the necessary powers. The subjects may not only show themselves disposed to give the mission, but may also modestly and resignedly manifest a desire to do so.

Then, when they are on the point of setting out, they should inform the bishop, the arch-priest, or the parish priest of the time when they will arrive at the place where the mission is to be given, in order that the people may receive notice by the placards that are to be posted in conspicuous places; so also, in order that on their arrival the bells may be rung as on a festival, and the clergy may come to receive them, at the entrance of the city or village, with the cross which is afterwards handed to the Superior. The giving of this notice will also be necessary in order that the house, the beds, and the things necessary for the kitchen may be prepared or provided for.

Before their departure they shall recite in common, in the church, the *Itinerarium Clericorum;* then, after having received the blessing from the Superior, who at this time will appoint him whom they should obey in his stead, they shall set out. On the journey they should select a suitable time for making their exercises of piety.

On their arrival at the place of their destination, the clergy having come to meet them, as has been said above, the Superior shall take the cross, and they shall go in procession to the church while reciting in a loud voice the *Benedictus.* Arrived at the church, they shall visit, before all, the Blessed Sacrament, then the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and the altars of the holy patrons and titular saints, and pray to them most fervently that they may assist them in this great undertaking. They shall specially offer their homage to the guardian angels of the place, of the church, and of individuals, and implore their help for the sanctification of those souls confided to their care.

When the fatigue of the journey does not prevent them, and the hour on a festival is suitable, especially if the number of the people in the church is sufficiently large, they may on that very day begin the mission by preaching the first sermon, which should be preceded by the recitation of one of the three parts of the Rosary. But as this rarely happens, a short address should usually be given to the people assembled, by informing them of the end that the missionaries propose to themselves in coming to that place. They should be told that the missionaries bring with them a heart filled with charity towards all the people; that they come to work for the salvation of their souls by placing before their eyes the eternal truths—truths of which they have neglected to think; by instructing them in the things necessary to save their souls, and by hearing their confessions with all the charity and patience that their state requires. Then without making an act of contrition, the people shall be dismissed, after they have been informed of the time when the mission is to begin on the following day.

It should, however, be understood that, in regard to the beginning of the missions, one should not be positively restricted to an inviolable rule; the circumstances of the places, persons, etc., should be considered, and one should begin the missions in a most suitable manner, either by a discourse on the spot and making briefly an act of contrition, or by a discourse in the church, after having walked through the place, or by a regular sermon with or without an act of contrition.

When the mission does not begin on the day of arrival, the evening exhortation[13775] should not be omitted, and it should continue during three or four evenings, according to the necessities of the place. The first exhortations given as an invitation should be more tender, expressing compassion for souls; the others shall be strong. They shall not be long, and should last a half or a quarter of an hour. They should not be given every evening in the same place; nor shall they be given immediately near suspected places, but where they can be heard by a large number. To give these exhortations the missionaries should always leave the church with the cross, burning candles, and the little bell, while singing the Litany of the

Blessed Virgin. Arrived at the place where a stop is to be made, the little bell should be rung, and there shall be said with a loud voice. Praised be the Most Blessed Sacrament and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin! Then, after having announced to the people that the mission has begun or is to begin the day after, the exhortation should be given. When it is finished, the people, who are accustomed to follow, should be conducted to the church or at the entrance, where an act of contrition is made, and then they may be dismissed with a blessing with the crucifix. The women should be notified not to follow; for after having heard the exhortation, they should go home. The missionaries should attach great importance to these exhortations, which usually produce very great fruit in the holy missions; they should not on any account be omitted; they should not be improvised; and before going forth to give them, one shall take care to prepare for them by fervent prayers.

If the day after the arrival is a festival, and the mission has not been begun by the first sermon, confessions should not be heard in the morning of this festival, but an impassioned sermon should be delivered on the efficacy of the holy mission in securing the eternal salvation of Christians, or on the miserable state in which Christianity is found, or on the dangers to which those that have sinned have exposed themselves, etc.—This sermon should not be concluded by an act of contrition, but by an exhortation to profit by the grace that our Lord has sent in this mission, with an explanation of the exercises that are performed in the course of it; and an invitation that all should attend all these exercises, especially the procession which is to leave the church after dinner. The clergy should specially be invited to come to this procession, clad in long cassocks without surplice.

At twenty-one o’clock,[13776] when all the priests have assembled in the church, the procession with the cross should start from the church and pass through the city or village while singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin; the place most populated having been reached, a stop should be made, and a Father from an elevation shall deliver a short discourse to the people, to induce them to profit by this occasion to change their lives; but no act of contrition need be added. Then all should re-enter the church. During the procession the Fathers who take part in it may say a few words of exhortation wherever they meet people congregated, by inviting all of them to come to the sermon. The church being reached, one of the three parts of the Rosary with its mysteries should be recited (this should be done every day before the sermon), and then the Father shall ascend the pulpit to preach, but without surplice and without stole, and he shall conclude it with a fervent act of contrition drawn from a motive suggested by the sermon.

If the exercises of the mission has not been announced in the morning, as has been said above, the people should be informed of this after the first evening sermon; they should be exhorted to frequent all these exercises with all possible fervor, the hour for each exercise being mentioned to them. The ecclesiastics, the magistrates, the principal men, should be requested to be the first to be present for the sake of good example; and even when it is possible, two Fathers shall go, in the name of all, to visit and invite the chief man of the place, the governor, or any other distinguished person, to obtain their assistance and their favor; and if the mission is given in the city, they should send a similar invitation to the Chapter when it has assembled before or after Vespers; and its assistance and support should also be asked.

2. VARIOUS EXERCISES

The exercises should take place punctually at the time fixed, namely, the meditation at an early hour in the morning; Christian doctrine or catechism, early after dinner; the exercises for priests in a retired place, after Vespers; and the evening sermon at an hour convenient for the close of the day; however, if the people cannot assemble so soon, as frequently happens in winter where there are workingmen, the sermon may be given later, unless the will of the bishop, or some other reasonable cause, is opposed to such an arrangement.

I. In the morning, as soon as a sufficient number of people have assembled, one of the three parts of the Rosary is recited, unless this would interfere with the Masses, and much more, with hearing confessions. Then a Father shall enter the pulpit and salute the people, saying: Praised be the Most Blessed Sacrament and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary! After this he shall say the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. Then he shall give, remaining on his knees, a short familiar *MEDITATION,*[13777] preceded by the Christian Acts. This meditation shall be made on a subject pertaining to the purgative way; but care should be taken not to take the subject that is to be treated in the evening sermon, or at least, the same points. The Father shall conclude by making acts of contrition, without however taking the crucifix. This exercise, including all the acts, should not last more than three quarters of an hour.

II. During the day, the exercise of the *CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE*, or *CATECHISM,*[13778] shall take place. It shall be intrusted by the Superior to a subject whom he shall judge to be the most capable; and this exercise should be regarded as one of the most precious and most important of the holy mission.

An instruction shall be given on the precepts of the Decalogue and on the manner of confessing, and shall be given at a time most convenient for the people. If the people can come in the morning at the first hour, the instruction is to be given first, and then the meditation; in case the number of missionaries is insufficient, one may even omit the meditation, but never the instruction; however, when only the instruction is given, one should make moral reflections, and finish with acts of contrition, etc.; and in smaller and poorer places only an instruction made in this manner will do good.

Afterwards, the Prefect of the church shall assemble the children to instruct them on confession and Communion.[13779]

I. Before the sermon a Father shall say the *ROSARY*[13780] of the Blessed Virgin, and begin by a short introduction or a short example, in order to dispose the people to recite it with devotion; he shall announce the mysteries with some short consideration, having always in view to make the people recite one of the three parts of the Rosary; for the principal end for which this exercise has been introduced is to obtain from the Blessed Virgin that she should deign to co-operate in the success of the mission. However, when the instruction takes place after dinner, it will be better to recite the Rosary before the instruction, in order to have more people to recite it; then, between the instruction and the sermon, a hymn shall be sung, but these hymns should never be sung in the pulpit.

II. Then the principal or great sermon[13781] is to be given at the most convenient hour, as has been said, and without surplice or stole; it should last at most an hour and a half, inclusively of all the acts that are to be performed at the end with the crucifix and the torches. The preacher should be mindful not to finish the sermon without urging the people to invoke the Blessed Virgin; and for this purpose a statue of Mary should be exposed.

In regard to the ceremonies, it is forbidden to letter maledictions, to use the chain or any other instrument to draw blood, to burn one's self with the torch, and the like. But the Superior may sometimes permit the use of the rope and of the skull, when this is done with zeal, prudence, and discretion.

It has been established by the General Chapter, that in the missions and spiritual exercises a sermon on the Blessed Virgin should always be preached, this being most profitable, as experience proves. The Fathers should endeavor, in all their sermons, always to make mention of the love for Jesus Christ and of recourse to the Blessed Virgin; since all of us, if we wish to save our souls, should truly love Jesus Christ, and often have recourse to the divine Mother.[13782]

The Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament shall take place only on the day of the blessing, as is seen farther on.

I. After the evening sermon the exercise of the *DISCIPLINE*[13783] shall be performed for the men, four or five times during the mission; and on the last evening the exercise of trailing the tongue; but when the exercise of the discipline takes place, the evening exhortations shall cease.

As for the discipline, a Father shall, first, give a short exhortation drawn from the sermon, and then, in the middle of the discipline, at some verse of the *Miserere*, he shall also say a few words of compunction. The discipline shall last only during this *Miserere;* then one of the people should be made to say three "Hail Marys" in honor of the Immaculate Conception, with the face on the ground, and finish by a penitential hymn.

On the two or three last evenings, after the discipline, an *EXHORTATION OF PEACE*[13784] should be given, and those that come to be reconciled shall embrace each other before the crucifix; but before calling the enemy, a Father shall secretly listen to the one that presents himself; he should gather information about the cause of the enmity, and shall see whether he that has come is the offended party who wishes to pardon, whether the enmity is not secret, or whether the reconciliation might not have some other inconveniences.

I. The last day before the exercise of a devout life,[13785] the sermon of the *BLESSING*[13786] shall be preached after dinner, in the following manner:

At first the recitation of the Rosary shall be begun; and there will be no instruction; in the middle of the Rosary the procession of the Blessed Sacrament will take place, which a Father shall carry only outside of the door of the church, when he shall give three blessings towards the fields, the first blessing being given in the middle, and the other two at the right and the left; then the procession returns, and the Blessed Sacrament is exposed on the altar; and if the preacher has not yet arrived, the Rosary should be continued. The preacher having ascended the pulpit, on this day, with surplice and stole, the Blessed Sacrament should be veiled; then follows the sermon, with the benediction with the crucifix. Afterwards five “Our Fathers” and five “Hail Marys” are recited to gain the indulgence of the mission just finished, and the preacher shall intone the *Te Deum.* The priest at the altar shall sing the prayer *Deus cujus misercordioe.* After this the *Pange lingua* and the *Tantum ergo,* etc., should be sung; and before the blessing, the preacher shall address from the altar another exhortation to the people, by having them promise to come to the exercises of the devout life.

VII. On the morning of this same day there shall be a *GENERAL COMMUNION* of grown persons; for the Communion of children of fifteen years of age and over should be made separately on another day, either before or after, as may appear best.

Before the Communion of grown persons, the preacher or another Father shall ascend the pulpit, placed in the middle of the church, and as a preparation for Communion, shall make with the crucifix the acts of faith, humility, love, and contrition; then he shall have them make peace; after that he shall make the act of desire, and then Communion shall be given; he shall conclude with thanksgiving.

At the Communion of children, peace shall not be made, but hymns in honor of the Blessed Sacrament are to be sung as preparation and thanksgiving. After the thanksgiving, they shall go in procession through the city or village, singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin; on their return to the church, some instruction adapted to their age should be given, and after the blessing with the crucifix they shall return home.

VIII. The last three days, or at least, in certain places, the last two, the *EXERCISES OF THE DEVOUT LIFE*[13787] are to be given, and should never be omitted, according to a decree of the Chapter; one should try to introduce them permanently. In the afternoon, after having recited the little chaplet of the Sorrows of Mary, or of the Infant Jesus, and the Rosary if time permits, the preacher himself shall give from the pulpit a half-hour’s instruction on mental prayer, on the preparation for Communion and thanksgiving after it, and on the rule of life that is to be followed for self-sanctification. Then, on his knees and without a surplice, he shall give a meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ and on the Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, whose statue should be draped in mourning. He shall conclude by acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition firm purpose, with the protestation of wishing to die fortified with the sacraments, and by putting into the act of contrition some pious hymn on the Passion of Jesus Christ; and he will dismiss the people with the blessing with the crucifix.

IX. One should not fail to make the mission last at least ten or twelve days in small places.

Moreover, it must be observed that if there should be some little hamlet away from the place of mission, the Superior may send some Fathers there to preach and to hear confessions as long as he shall judge this to be necessary.

It will be the duty of the Prefect of the church (1) to read the prayers; (2) to give notice to the Fathers of the time in which they may say Mass in succession, so that they may finish before the hour of going to the house; (3) to notify the Fathers of the time when the exercises are to take place; (4) after having been told by the Superior, to give the sign when the Fathers should retire; (5) to procure what is needful for the church; (6) to give instructions in catechism, to give the colloquies, exhortations, to say the Rosary, etc.

3. RULES OF CONDUCT FOR THE FATHERS ON MISSIONS

I. No one shall go on missions by himself; in little missions there should be at least two, or at least, in case of necessity, the Father should be accompanied by a lay-brother or a strange priest.[13788] They shall always go united by that charity *qua major esse non potest,* remembering that it is a special commandment given by his divine Majesty to the apostles, and through the apostles *to* all the missionaries who should follow them: *Hoc est praeceptum meum, ut diligatis invicem, sicut dilexi vos. Mandatum* *novum de vobis, ut diligatis invicem. Pater sancte serva eos, . . . ut sint unum, sicut et nos.*[13789] They should also remember the qualities of charity, enumerated by the Apostle: *Charitas patiens est, benigna est; charitas non cemulatur, non agit perperam, non inflatur,* etc.[13790]—However, when they must go to give invitations, or do anything that regards the service of God, and have not to spend the night elsewhere, they may be accompanied by some priest or cleric, if their own companions are too few.

II. They shall always travel to the missions on foot, as was done by his divine Majesty, and as was done by the holy apostles, unless strict necessity obliges them to use an ordinary and plain conveyance; they shall not travel on horseback without necessity. No entreaties whatsoever should induce them to accept any other convenience for travelling, unless they must make the journey by water.

Outside of the missions, if a carriage is offered them, they may use it, provided they need not change their dress; the same thing holds good if any person of distinction should invite a Father to ride in his carriage.

I. The place where the mission is to be given having been reached, the time for the exercises should be arranged, and the arrangement should be adhered to as much as possible. There shall be seven hours of sleep in winter, and in spring six and a half hours, with an hour of rest after dinner. Missions should not be given in summer.

The Fathers during the mission should regularly retire from the church about noon, and they should go to bed in the evening about two hours before midnight.

The Superior shall at the same time appoint the Fathers who have to take charge of the church, of the reconciliations, and of the domestic arrangements.

I. In the church the Fathers shall keep the confessionals to which they have been assigned.

II. In the place where the mission is given they should take care always to avoid familiarity and useless conversation with externs.

III. At the house they shall make a half-hour’s meditation twice a day, and at least once when they have not sufficient time.

IV. At table silence should be kept. They shall read the lives of the saints during dinner, and a book on the Blessed Virgin at least during part of the supper; but on days of general Communion, and when they are tired from hearing confessions or from some other cause, the reading should continue only a little while.

A half-hour's recreation will be sufficient as well after dinner as after supper.

I. In regard to the expenses of the mission, nothing should ever be asked unless it be a house, beds, furniture, and some kitchen utensils.[13791] If afterwards some one offers them food or wine, or even all that is needed for their meals, they shall receive all with thanks; but they must not fail to refuse whatever is superfluous, and all delicacies. They should usually have only two portions, namely, soup and boiled meat, there being added at most some other frugal portion, as cheese and fruit; they shall touch nothing else, and shall plead their Rule in excuse; for in this manner others will be edified, expense and even scandal will be avoided.

It shall never be permitted to accept money, even for Masses, nor delicacies, as fowl, birds, dainties, sweetmeats, fine confectionery, and the like; nor, finally, presents to be carried away, of whatever kind they may be.

Here is what should be the ordinary food in the missions: at dinner, soup, boiled meat, cheese and fruit; at supper, salad and another portion, cheese and fruit when they can be had: otherwise, one must arrange things as well as one can; but one should always be careful to avoid luxury, delicacy, and what is superfluous in the quantity of food.

I. In the missions or other exercises of devotion for the people, when the bishop asks for them or prescribes them, the spiritual exercises shall be given to the religious or nuns, and one may be extraordinary confessor; but outside of these occasions, such a thing is forbidden, except for the nuns of the Most Holy Saviour when they show a great veneration for these exercises.

TABLE OF MISSION SERMONS.[13792]

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE MISSION

Good that is effected by the holy missions, see Letter to a bishop, page 73

2. *Motives for Conversion.*

The importance of salvation, sermon *XII.*

Dangers to eternal salvation, S. IX.

Death is certain and uncertain, S. XXXIII.

The death of the sinner, s. XXXVIII.

The practical death, or what ordinarily happens at the death of men of the world, S. XLIV.

Straits and anguish of dying Christians who have been negligent during life about the duties of religion, S. LI.

The death of the just, S. XI.

The particular judgment, S. XXXVII.

The general judgment, S. L.

The pains of hell, S. X.

The remorse of the damned, S. VIII.

The eternity *of* hell, S. L.

The unhappy life of sinners, and the happy life of those that love God, S. XIII.

The mercy of God towards sinners, S. XXXII.

The vanity of the world, S. XXXV.

All *ends and soon ends, S. XLIII.*

3. Obstacles to Conversion.

Dangers to eternal salvation, S. IX.

Delusions of sinners, S. XIV.

The malice of mortal sin, S. VI.

The evil effects of bad habits, S. XX.

Bad *thoughts, S. XLVII.*

The predominant passion, s. *XLIX.*

Scandals, S. XXIII.
The sin of anger, S. XXXIV.
Blasphemy, s. *LIII.*
Impurity, *s. XLV.*
The vice of speaking immodestly, S. *XL.*
Concealing sins in confession, s. *XVII.*
Means of Conversion.
In what true wisdom consists, S. V.
Means necessary for salvation, S. III.
The conditions of prayer, S. XXVI.
Heaven, S. XVI.
The love of Jesus Christ for us, and our obligation to love him, S. IV.
The love of the three divine Persons for men, S. XXIX.
The tender compassion that Jesus Christ entertains towards sinners.
The value of time, S. XXIV.

2. PERSEVERANCE IN CONVERSION

In the last sermons of the mission we recommend perseverance to the people. We speak to them chiefly of the great danger to which those expose themselves who fall back into sin after the mission; and therefore we try to impress upon the memory of the faithful the means to be employed to avoid a relapse into sin, namely, in the first place, the avoiding of the occasions, of bad company, and of human respect; in the second place, the frequentation of the sacraments and prayer, or recourse to God in temptations, being careful to ask him every day for the grace of holy perseverance.

We add the sermon on the Blessed Virgin, which we recommend in such a way that it should never be omitted; for it produces greater fruit than all the rest. I know by experience that a certain sinner, who had been insensible to all other sermons, was converted by the sermon on the Blessed Virgin. We should not regard this sermon as an extraordinary thing on missions: Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice, in all his missions, never omitted the sermon on the Blessed Virgin; the same thing must be said of Father Segneri, Junior. This is the practice in our Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, and I know that other missionaries have followed the same custom. It is certain that if a soul acquires a true devotion to the Mother of God, and continues to recommend itself often to her intercession, this great Queen will obtain for it the grace of persevering in virtue; for she is called the Mother of Perseverance.

The sermon on prayer should also never be omitted, since it is of the highest importance; for if those that have followed the mission do not continue to recommend themselves to God, it is certain that they will not persevere. When there is no time to treat this sermon separately, the preacher, at least in the other sermons that he preaches in the mission or spiritual exercises, should not omit frequently to exhort his hearers always to recommend themselves to Jesus and to Mary, since prayer, according to the teaching of St. Augustine, is the only means of obtaining God's grace, and especially holy perseverance.

The following are the sermons that refer to perseverance:

The abuse of divine mercy, sermon XLI.

The miserable state of relapsing sinners, S. XXI.

The avoiding of the occasions of sin, S. XXII.

The *avoiding of bad company, S. XLII.*

Human respect, S. XXVII.

Obedience to the confessor, S. XXV.

Holy Communion, S. XXXI.

The efficacy and necessity of prayer, S. XXIX.

Confidence with which we should recommend ourselves to the Mother of God, S. VII.

Moreover, before preaching the last sermon, several Congregations of Missionaries, such as the Pious Workers, the priests of the Purity of Mary, and our Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, are accustomed, on two or three days, to give, instead of a sermon, a meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ; this exercise is very useful for the perseverance of the faithful who have made the mission. He that leaves sin only through fear of chastisement, after the mission is finished loses sight of what has frightened him, and easily relapses into his old sins; but he that is attached to God through love, easily perseveres in a good life. Hence, on these two or three days, the preacher of the mission will give a half-hour's instruction on mental prayer by teaching the people the manner of easily making it; he shall also teach them the manner of making preparation and thanksgiving for Communion. Then he shall make the meditation by considering the mysteries of the Passion, and by interspersing it with pious affections, acts of contrition and of love, and holy resolutions.—The missionaries shall recommend to the parish priest to have meditation made every day in common for the people.

TABLE OF SERMONS TO BE PREACHED IN A RETREAT

Advantages of the spiritual exercises (as an introduction), see Volume III, page 285.

In what true wisdom consists, sermon V.

The value of time, S. XXIV.

The abuse of divine mercy, S. XLI.

The straits and anguish of dying Christians who have been negligent during life about the duties of religion, S, LI.

The particular judgment, S. XXXVII.

The pain of loss which the damned suffer in hell, is XLVIII.

The confidence with which we should recommend our selves to the Mother of God, S, VII.

The love of Jesus Christ for us, and our obligation to love him, S. IV.

Instructions for the People

ST. ALPHONSUS published these INSTRUCTIONS in Italian in the course of the year 1767, during his episcopate. In the following year he published the same in Latin, with this title: Institutio catechistica ad populum in praecepta Decalogi et Sacramenta. The literal translation of the title of the Italian edition is as follows: "Instructions for the people on the precepts of the Decalogue, in order that they may be better observed, and on the sacraments, in order that they may be better received, for the use of parish priests and of missionaries and of all ecclesiastics that are employed in teaching Christian doctrine."

We read in the Life of the holy author: "This work forms, it is true, only a small volume, but its usefulness is very great; it was also favorably received especially by the parish priests. The royal examiner speaks of it thus: 'Whether one considers the matter of the thoughts of his treatise, or the manner in which they are expressed, every one that examines it with attention must see that it is worthy of its author's name, that is to say, of a learned man full of zeal for God's honor and the salvation of souls.'

"In this work the holy prelate again attacks those rigorous minds who, in affecting great purity of doctrine, and in pretending to bring back the faithful to the favor of the Christianity of primitive ages, oppress souls by an insupportable yoke, with which Jesus Christ never loaded them. 'This is not the doctrine of the Church,' he said, 'for she glories in being a mother, and not a cruel step-mother. Jansenius and his followers have invented this severity; I would ask if the number of souls whom they have caused to fall into hell through an erring conscience does not exceed the number of those whom they have led to paradise. Besides, it is clear that the sentiments which they have adopted are not those of the holy bishops whom we honor on our altars, nor of those saintly laborers who have sacrificed their blood and their life for the salvation of but one soul. We have not yet seen a

Jansenist who has lost an hour's sleep to insure the salvation of a soul.' " (Tannoia and Villecourt, I. iii. ch. 38.)

He who spoke thus was himself one of those evangelical laborers so denoted to the salvation of souls, and one of those bishops of high perfection whom the Church honors on her altars. The wise teachings that he gives us have produced and do not cease to produce in the whole Church wonderful fruits of salvation.—Ed.

HINTS TO THE CATECHIST IN ORDER TO MAKE HIS INSTRUCTIONS MORE PROFITABLE.[13793]

I. *THE* catechetical instruction to the people consists *of* three parts: 1. The *INTRODUCTION; 2*. The *EXPOSITION* of the mystery, sacrament, or precept to be spoken of; and, *3*. The *MORAL*, with the means and remedies to be employed against the different vices.

1. INTRODUCTION

The *INTRODUCTION* must consist in a statement of the subject-matter of the instruction, and of the different points into which the subject is divided. If the matter be connected with that of the preceding instruction, the catechist may begin by briefly repeating the points explained in that instruction; but if the matter be different, he may begin by showing the importance of the subject of which he is about to speak.

2. THE EXPOSITION

With regard *to* the *EXPOSITION* of the mystery, sacrament, *or* precept, the catechist must attend to several things.

I. He must prove the mystery, sacrament, or precept to be explained by authorities, by reasons, by similes, and authentic facts. I say authorities, but let them be few, and be sparing of Latin quotations, as the illiterate, of whom the audience at catechism generally consist, understand little or no Latin. Scholastic questions are not suited to the pulpit, and must therefore be altogether avoided, but particularly before the uninstructed, who are easily disturbed by such questions, and may often draw from them erroneous conclusions.

II. Care must be taken not to propound doctrines which may lead the hearers to a pernicious looseness of conscience. It is one thing to speak in the confessional, where all the circumstances of the case are weighed, and you have to deal with a particular person, and another to speak in the pulpit, where a proposition may be misunderstood by those who are inclined to laxity, and may lead them to loose and improbable conclusions. However, it is necessary to correct the erroneous consciences of some, who believe there is sin where there is none. For example: Some uninstructed persons imagine that their judgments and suspicions are rash even when they have sufficient foundation to judge and suspect. It is necessary to teach them that such judgments or suspicions are neither rash nor sinful, and therefore not matter for confession. Others believe it to be a mortal sin simply to curse a creature—such as the day, the wind, the rain, and the like; others think it a grievous detraction to make known to a parent the sins of his children, even though it be necessary for their correction; others imagine that they sin by not observing a precept of the Church, such as hearing Mass, abstaining from servile work, or fasting, even when they are excused by a legitimate cause. In all these, and similar cases, the catechist should explain that there is no sin.

III. When any actions are certainly sinful, it is the duty of the instructors to teach that they are so, even though some persons should think the contrary; *but* particularly when there is reason, to fear that these persons will contract a habit of these acts, which they will not be able to correct without great difficulty after they have come to the knowledge of their sinfulness. For example, some think it only a venial sin to curse holidays, such as Holy Saturday, Easter, and Pentecost; it is necessary to teach them that such curses are really injurious to God, and mortal sins. Some also believe that it is only a venial sin to expose themselves to the proximate occasion of sin. The catechist must explain that those who do not abstain from voluntary proximate occasions of grievous sin are guilty of a mortal sin, even though they have the intention of not committing the bad act, to the danger of which they expose themselves. It is also necessary to teach that those who use superstitious and *vain observances* for the cure of diseases, or the like, are guilty of mortal sin. He must also inculcate on those who are prepared to take revenge for an insult which they may receive, that they are continually in a state of sin, and that, if they die in that disposition, they will be lost. So, also, women must be taught it is a sin to take pleasure in being admired and desired by men, if this pleasure arises from vanity, and not from a wish to be married to them.

IV. There are some catechists who are fond of filling their instructions with amusing and curious stories, and assert that this is necessary to draw a large audience, and to keep up their attention and prevent tediousness. This one thing I know, that the saints, in their instructions, instead of exciting laughter, moved the people to tears. We read in the life of St. John Francis Regis, that the people wept throughout the catechetical instructions which he gave in the missions. I do not censure a jest which naturally arises from the subject treated; but to tell ridiculous stories, for the purpose of making the people laugh, is to turn the instruction into a farce, and is unbecoming the sanctity of the church, and the dignity of the pulpit from which the word of God is announced, and in which the instructor fulfils the office of an ambassador of Jesus Christ. *For Christ therefore,* says St. Paul, *we are ambassadors.*[13794] The people certainly take delight in hearing and laughing at such trifles; but what profit do they draw from it? After the laughter, the hearers will be so distracted, that it will be very difficult afterwards to compose their thoughts; and instead of listening to the moral (which our witty catechist will find rather hard to adduce from his jokes, and at the same time avoid appearing to be a quack), if nothing worse happens they will continue to revolve in their minds the witty expressions and ridiculous incidents which they have heard. Such a catechist may acquire the character of a facetious and pleasing instructor, but he will not be considered a man of sanctity and zeal, and therefore will produce but little fruit in the hearts of his hearers. It is a mistake to imagine that without jests of this sort the people will not come to the catechism, nor be attentive to it. I say that greater numbers will come to the church, and will pay more attention to the instruction, when they find that they draw fruit and devotion from it, and that their time is not spent unprofitably.

V. The catechist must pay great attention to the language of his instructions. The style of catechetical lectures should be altogether simple and popular, and does not admit of polished language or rounded periods. These are, as St. Francis de Sales says, the pest even of sermons. Preachers who are full of the Spirit of God do not seek after leaves and flowers of this kind, for by them the fruit of God’s word is lost, while hell gathers its harvest of souls. The word of God has no need of ornaments; the simpler it is, the more fruit it bears. Oh! how many preachers shall we see condemned to eternal torments, for having adulterated God’s word with their flowery language! If all preached like the apostles, hell could not make such havoc among souls as it does at present, with all these elegant and pompous sermons. Even panegyrics, as the great Muratori says, should be simple, so as to move the people to imitate the virtues of the saints, not so as to make them bestow a little smoke and empty praise on the preacher. But I have written a little work[13795] on this point, in which I show, with Muratori, that all sermons and panegyrics should be simple and popular. For the chief part of the audience is made up of the lower orders, who will find little or no profit unless the language is popular and adapted to their capacity; and this applies to all sermons. But in missions it is an unpardonable mistake to preach in an elegant style, particularly at catechism, where the object is to teach the illiterate what they must believe and practise, how they must make their confessions, and how they should recommend themselves to God. If the style is not altogether popular, and suited to their capacity, the time both of the instructor and of the people is lost. I said that the style should be popular, not childish; some speak with the most childish simplicity; but childishness is never fit for the pulpit. I also said that the language should be accommodated to the capacity of the people. The instructor, then, must use short sentences, so he will have his audience more attentive. It is useful frequently to propose questions, and to reply to them; it contributes greatly to keep up the attention of the people, and to fix the instruction in their memory. Many practical examples of this will be found in the following pages.

3. THE MORAL

In the *MORAL*, the catechist must not only instruct the understanding, but also more particularly endeavor to move the will of his hearers to avoid sins and to adopt the remedies against them. The sins committed through the malice of the will are much more numerous than those that are committed through ignorance of the understanding. The moral of a catechetical instruction should be shorter than that of a sermon. It should be delivered with warmth, but not in the style of a sermon, and without declamation. It is sometimes useful in the instruction to exclaim against some commoner form of vice, against some current worldly maxim, or against those frivolous pretences which wicked men employ to excuse their vices, or as when they say: “All are not to be saints; we are but flesh and blood; God is merciful; others do as we do.” These excuses must be answered with great vigor, so as to root out the prejudices by which many persons regulate their conduct, and therefore never amend their lives. But these declamations must be rare; otherwise the instruction will assume the appearance of a sermon, which is quite out of order.

Let the catechist, then, not only aim at completely extirpating these false maxims, but also labor to impress on the minds of his hearers some really salutary truths, which will contribute greatly to preserve souls in the grace of God. For example: “What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?” Death puts an end to all things. Eternity has no end. Let all be lost, provided God be not lost. Sin is the only evil which we have to fear. He possesses all things who possesses God. All pains are little to him who has merited hell. A man must conquer all his passions to preserve his soul. What does a Christian know, if he has not learned to bear an insult for God’s sake? He who prays receives all he wants. What comes from God is all really good and supremely useful. Sanctity consists in loving God. The love of God consists in doing his will in all things. This kind of maxims of Christian morality should be often repeated, as occasion offers, that they may be impressed on the minds of the people, and take deep root in them.

The catechist must frequently repeat, in his instructions, certain admonitions which are peculiarly necessary for the salvation of souls:

1. He must caution people against making *sacrilegious confessions* by concealing sins through shame. It is certain that through this accursed shame numberless souls are lost. Some are so much under its influence that they make sacrilegious confessions even to the missionaries. Hence, it is necessary to speak frequently on this subject, but particularly in the missions; for the person who conceals a sin during the retreat will never afterwards confess it. To deter the people from these sacrileges, it will be useful to relate a number of instances of souls that have been damned for sacrilegious confessions. I have given several such examples at the end of this book.

2. It is necessary to inculcate frequently the necessity of avoiding dangerous occasions; for, if proximate occasions, especially of carnal sins,

are not avoided, all other means will be useless for our salvation.

3. It is necessary to inculcate the *necessity of prayer,* or of frequently asking help from God to avoid sin. He who does not recommend himself to God, but particularly in the time of temptation, is certainly lost; and, therefore, the catechist must, in his instructions, frequently exhort the people, in all temptations, but particularly in temptations against purity, to invoke Jesus and Mary, and to continue to invoke them as long as the temptation lasts. He who prays is not afraid of falling into sin, for he has God to help him. St. Teresa used to say that she would like to stand on a mountain, and cry out only these words, “O souls! pray, pray, pray.”

4. The instructor must frequently exhort the people to the love of God; he who does not love God, and only abstains from sin through fear of hell, is in great danger of relapsing into sin as soon as the lively sensation of fear ceases; but he who has once come to love Jesus Christ, will afterwards find it hard to fall into mortal sin. For this purpose the meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ is most profitable. St. Bonaventure says that the wounds of Jesus Christ are wounds which would soften hearts of stone and inflame minds of ice.[13796] Hence it is necessary to make a short mental prayer every day, and to make frequent acts of love to Jesus Christ, and to ask frequently of God the gift of his love.

5. The instructor must, above all, recommend to the people *frequent confession and Communion,* from which souls receive strength to persevere in the grace of God. It is not enough to say this once; he must repeat it over and over again; because all the people are not present at the instruction on confession and Communion, and also because the frequent repetition of an advice contributes to impress on them the necessity of putting it in practice. But it may be said, that the people grow tired of hearing the one thing over and over again. But what then? Some fastidious people may be annoyed, but all the rest will derive profit, especially the uninstructed, who, unless they hear the same thing over and over again, forget it at once.

6. The instructor should, as often as an opportunity presents itself, teach practical lessons to the people, and even suggest the words which they should use in certain circumstances. For example, when a person receives an injury or insult from another, he should be taught to say to his enemy, “God make you a saint; God give you light!” But if this does not allay the

other’s rage, let him be ready to hold his tongue. When any misfortune happens, let him say, “God’s will be done! O Lord, I suffer this willingly for my sins.” These, and such practical lessons, should be frequently repeated that they may be fixed in the minds of the people, who will certainly forget all the Latin quotations and the curious erudition of the instructor, and will only remember what they are taught to practise.

All these hints will appear trifling to your pedants, but they will be really very useful for the soul.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND ON THE SACRAMENTS

PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION

1. ORIGINAL SIN

To fulfil his duties, it is, first of all, necessary for man to know what is his last end, in which he may find his perfect happiness. The last end of man is to love and serve God in this life, and to enjoy him for eternity in the next. Thus, God has placed us in this world not to acquire riches, honors, or pleasures, but to obey his commands, and, by obedience to them, to gain the eternal beatitude of paradise.

For this end, the Lord created Adam, who was the first man, and gave him Eve for his wife, that from them mankind might be propagated. He created them in his grace, and placed them in the terrestrial paradise, with the promise that they should be thence transferred to heaven to enjoy complete and eternal felicity. During their sojourn on this earth he gave them for their food all the fruits of that garden of delights; but, to try their obedience, he forbade them to eat the fruit of only one tree, which he pointed out to them. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and would eat the forbidden fruit, and for this sin they were deprived of divine grace, were instantly banished from paradise, and, as rebels to the divine Majesty, were, with all their posterity, condemned to temporal and eternal death. Thus was heaven shut against them and all their descendants.

This is the original sin in which, as children of a rebellious father, we are all born children of wrath and enemies of God. When a vassal rebels against his sovereign, all the descendants of the rebel become hateful to the prince, and are banished from the kingdom. Thus original sin, by the disobedience of Adam, deprives us of the grace of God.

According to the doctrine of the Church, the Blessed Virgin Mary had the privilege of being exempt from original guilt. It is certain that she was also free from all actual sin. Such is the doctrine of the Church, as the Council of Trent has declared: “If any one saith, that a man once justified. . . . is able, during his whole life, to avoid all sins, even those that are venial,—except by a special privilege from God, as the Church holds in regard of the Blessed Virgin,—let him be anathema.[13797] [In the Bull *“Ineffabilis Deus,”* published by Pius IX., in the year 1854, it was solemnly defined that the Blessed Virgin was, from the first moment of her conception, preserved from all stain of original sin.] But, if she contracted no guilt from which she required to be redeemed, must it be said that she was not redeemed by Jesus Christ as well as all the other children of Adam? No; she was redeemed, but redeemed in a more excellent manner. Others are redeemed after having incurred original guilt; Mary was redeemed by being preserved from it. And this privilege was justly given to her alone—that blessed woman whom God had predestined to be his own Mother.

But all the rest are born with the infection of the sin of Adam, in punishment of which we have our understanding darkened to the knowledge of eternal truth and out will inclined to evil. But by the merits of Jesus Christ at our baptism we obtain the divine grace and the remedy for all our misery. We thus become the adopted sons of God and heirs of paradise, provided we preserve till death the grace given to us in baptism. But if we lose it by mortal sin we shall be condemned to hell, and can obtain pardon only by the sacrament of penance.

2. ACTUAL SINS

With regard to the sins that we actually commit, we must distinguish mortal from venial sin.

I. To understand the nature of *mortal sin*, it is necessary to know that, as the soul gives life to the body, so the grace of God gives life to the soul. Hence, as the body without the soul is dead, and fit only for the grave, so by sin the soul dies to the grace of God and is doomed to be buried in hell. Hence grievous sin is called mortal because it kills the soul. *The soul that sinneth, the same shall die.*[13798] I said that the soul is doomed to hell. But what is this hell? It is a place to which all who die in sin go to suffer eternal torments. *These shall go into everlasting punishment.*[13799] But what pains shall they suffer in hell? Every conceivable pain: there the damned are immersed in a sea of fire, tortured by all sorts of torments, overwhelmed with despair, and abandoned by all for all eternity.

But is it reasonable that a soul should suffer an eternity of torments for a single mortal sin?—He who speaks thus shows that he does not understand what a mortal sin is. Mortal sin is to turn your back upon God. Thus it is defined by St. Thomas[13800] and St. Augustine[13801] a turning away from the unchangeable good. Hence God says to the sinner, *Thou hast forsaken Me, thou hast gone backward.*[13802] Mortal sin is an insult offered to God by sinners. *I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have despised Me.*[13803] It is a dishonor done to the divine Majesty. *By the transgression of the law thou dishonorest God.*[13804] It is to say to God, I will not obey Thee. *Thou hast broken My yoke, . . . and thou saidst, I will not serve.*[13805] This is the essence of mortal sin; and for it one hell is not enough: a hundred or a thousand hells would not be sufficient to punish a single mortal sin. If a person unjustly injures a peasant he deserves to be punished: if he does it to a nobleman, a prince, or an emperor, he merits far greater chastisement. But what are all the kings of the earth and even all the saints of heaven in comparison with God? They are as nothing. *All nations are before him as if they had no being at all.*[13806] Now, I ask, what chastisement is due to an insult offered to God, and to a God who has died for the love of us?

However, it must be observed that for mortal sin three things are required: full advertence, perfect consent, and grievous matter. If any of these three be wanting, the sin is not mortal: it can be only venial, or perhaps no sin at all.

I. *Venial sin* does not kill, but it wounds the soul. It is not a grievous offence, but still it is an offence against God. It is not so great an evil as mortal sin; but it is a greater evil than all the other evils that can happen to creatures. A lie, a venial curse, is a greater evil than if all men, all the saints, and all the angels were to be sent to hell.

Some venial sins are deliberate, others are indeliberate.

1. *Indeliberate* venial sins, or sins committed without full advertence or perfect consent, are less culpable; all men fall into such sins. The Blessed Virgin only had the privilege of being exempt from them.

2. *Deliberate* venial sins, which are committed with full advertence and consent, are more criminal, particularly when there is an affection for them; such as certain feelings of hatred, of ambition, certain rooted attachments,

and the like. “Who,” says St. Basil, “shall dare to call any sin light?”[13807] It is enough to understand that it offends God, to make us avoid it more than any other evil. The deformity of a venial sin was once shown to St. Catharine of Genoa; she afterwards felt surprised that she did not die of horror at the sight of it. And let him who thinks little of venial sin remember, that if he does not amend, he will be on the point of falling into some mortal sin. The more venial sins the soul commits, the weaker she becomes, the greater the power which the devil acquires over her, and the fewer the helps that God bestows upon her. *He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little.*[13808]

3. CONCLUSION

Let us, then, be careful to avoid sin, which alone can make us unhappy in this life and in the next; and let us continually thank the goodness of God for not having already sent us to hell for our sins. Let us henceforth attend to the salvation of our souls, and let us consider how little is all that we do for the salvation of our souls—all that we do for eternal life.

St. Augustine[13809] relates that when the Emperor Gratian was in the city of Treves, two of his courtiers went one day to visit a monastery of certain good religious, which was outside the city. In that holy solitude they began to read the life of St. Antony, which lay on the table of one of the religious. One of them, enlightened by God, said to the other: “My friend, after all the anxieties and labors of the world which we endure, what can we obtain? While we remain at court, the most we can hope for is to gain the emperor’s favor. This is the greatest happiness that we can expect, and if we gain it, how long will this happiness last? But if I wish for the friendship of God, I can have it this moment.” After this he went on reading, and by God’s illumination saw more and more clearly the vanity of the world, and resolutely said to his companion: “Now, I will forsake all things and save my soul. I this moment resolve to remain in this monastery to think only of God. If you will not follow my example, at least, I beseech you, do not oppose my design.” His companion said that he was resolved to follow his example. Two young women also, who had been betrothed to them, when they heard of their change, left the world and consecrated their virginity to God.

But, to make sure of our eternal salvation, it is not enough to begin: it is necessary to persevere; and in order to persevere, it is necessary to be humble, always distrusting our own strength, confiding only in God, and continually asking his help to persevere. Woe to that man who trusts in himself and glories in his own works.

Palladius[13810] relates that a certain solitary, in a desert, spent day and night in prayer, and led a most austere life, and therefore was honored by many. The unhappy man began to think well of himself, and, on account of his virtues, regarded himself sure of perseverance and salvation. But afterwards, when the devil appeared to him in the form of a woman, and tempted him to sin, the unhappy man was unable to resist the temptation, and fell. Immediately after his fall, the devil burst into loud laughter and disappeared. The solitary afterwards left the desert, returned to the world, and fell into all kinds of vice; thus he became a warning to show how dangerous it is to trust in your own strength.

Still more frightful was the end of the celebrated Brother Justin, who, after refusing offices of great dignity that were offered to him by the King of Hungary, became a religious of the Order of St. Francis, and made such progress in the spiritual life, that he had frequent ecstasies. One day, during dinner, in the convent of *Ara Coeli,* he was, in the presence of the entire Community, raised into the air, and borne aloft to venerate an image of the Blessed Virgin, which was hanging on the wall. On account of this prodigy, Eugene IV. sent for him, embraced him and made him sit down, and had a long conversation with him. By this act of respect on the part of the Pope the unhappy man was so puffed up, that St John Capistran said to him when he saw him, “Brother Justin, you went out an angel, and you have come back a devil.” He afterwards fell into pride and many other vices, and at last he killed a brother in religion. He then fled into the kingdom of Naples, where he committed many other crimes, and died in prison an apostate monk.

PART I

Instructions on the Commandments

Chapter I

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt have no other God before me.”[13811]

THIS first commandment obliges us to give to God due worship and honor. What this God is, it is impossible to understand. But let it be enough for us to know that his principal attributes are as follows:

1. God is *independent.* All things depend on God, but he depends on no one; and, therefore, he possesses all perfections, in regard to which no one can set any bounds to him.

2. God is *Almighty;* for he can do whatever he wishes; by one act of his will he created the world. He first created the heavens, and the angels, who are pure spirits, and he created them in the state of grace. But Lucifer, when he was commanded to adore the Son of God, who was to be made man, through pride refused to obey, and induced a third part of the angels to join with him in his rebellion against God. These rebellious angels were instantly banished from heaven by the Archangel Michael, and condemned to hell. They are the devils, who tempt us to sin, in order to make us companions of their torments. Miserable should we be, if we had not God to assist us. We should not have strength to resist their temptations. But God requires, as the condition of giving us this assistance, that in our temptations we instantly turn to him, and ask his assistance; if we act otherwise, we shall be defeated by our enemies. The angels who remained faithful were immediately admitted into the enjoyment of the glory of paradise; and from among these angels, the Lord has appointed those who were to be our guardians: *He hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*[13812] Let us every day give thanks to our angel guardian, and entreat him to assist us always, and never abandon us. Next the Lord created the earth and all those things that we see. He then made man, that is, Adam and Eve, as we have already said. So God is the Lord of

all things, for he created all things; and as he created all things by one act of his will, so by another act he can, if he pleases, destroy all things. This is what is meant by God’s *omnipotence.*

3. God is also *most wise.* He governs all things created without labor or inconvenience. He sees and has before him all things, past and future, and knows all our thoughts better than they are known to ourselves.

4. God is *eternal;* he always has been, and always will be, and nothing in him ever had a beginning, or shall have an end.

5. God is *immense;* he is in heaven, on earth, and in all places.

6. God is *holy* in all his works, and it is impossible for him to be in any way wicked.

7. God is *just;* he leaves no sinful act unpunished, and no good act without reward.

8. God is all mercy to penitent sinners, and all love to the souls that love him. In a word, God is infinite goodness; so that he cannot be better nor more perfect than he is.

This God, our Creator and Preserver, we are bound to love and honor, principally by acts of the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. “God,” said St. Augustine, “is to be worshipped with faith, hope, and charity.”[13813]

I. FAITH

1. WHAT IS FAITH?

Faith is a virtue, or a gift which God infuses into our souls in baptism; a gift by which we believe the truths which God himself has revealed to the holy Church, and which she proposes to our belief.

2. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

By the *Church* is meant the congregation of all who are baptized (for persons not baptized are out of the Church), and profess the true faith under a visible head, that is, the Sovereign Pontiff. I say *the true faith,* to exclude heretics, who, though baptized, are separated from the Church; I say *under a visible head,* to exclude schismatics, who do not obey the Pope, and, on that account, easily pass from schism to heresy. St. Cyprian well says:

"Heresies and schisms have no other origin than this—the refusal to obey the priest of God and the notion that there can be more than one priest at one time presiding over the Church, and more than one judge at a time filling the office of Vicar of Christ."[13814]

We have all revealed truths in the sacred Scriptures, and in the traditions gradually communicated by God to his servants. But how should we be able to ascertain what are the true traditions and the true Scriptures, and what is their true meaning, if we had not the Church to teach us? This Church Jesus Christ established as the pillar and ground of the truth.[13815] To this Church our Saviour himself has promised that she shall never be conquered by her enemies. *The gates of hell shall not prevail against her.*[13816] The gates of hell are the heresies and heresiarchs that have caused so many miserable, deluded souls to wander from the right way. This Church it is that teaches us, through her ministers, the truths that we are to believe. Thus, St. Augustine says: "I would not believe the Gospel, were I not moved by the authority of the Church."[13817]

3. WHAT IS THE MOTIVE OF FAITH, AND HOW SHOULD WE MAKE AN ACT OF FAITH?

The cause or motive, then, which imposes on me the obligation to believe the truths of faith is, because God, the infallible Truth, has revealed them, and because the Church proposes them to my belief. So we should make out a rule of faith in this way: "My God, because Thou, who art the infallible truth, hast revealed to the Church the truths of faith, I believe all the Church proposes to my belief."[13818]

This is the reason or motive which makes me believe the truths of revelation. Let us now see what are those truths which we are obliged to believe.

4. WHICH ARE THE PRINCIPAL ARTICLES OF FAITH?

There are four principal articles of faith:

1. There is an ever-present God.
2. He is a rewarder who rewards with the eternal glory of paradise all who observe his law, and punishes all who transgress it with the everlasting torments of hell.

3. In God there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these Persons, though distinct from one another, are but one God, because they are one essence and one divinity. Hence, as the Father is eternal, omnipotent, infinite, so are the Son and the Holy Ghost equally eternal, omnipotent, and infinite. The Son is begotten of the intelligence of the Father. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the will of the Father and the Son, by the love with which they love each other.

4. The Incarnation of the Eternal Word—that is, of the second Person—the Son, who, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, was made man in the womb of the Virgin Mary—for the person of the Word assumed the nature of man, so that the two natures, the divine and the human, were united in the person of Jesus Christ, who suffered and died for our salvation. But what necessity was there that Jesus Christ should suffer for our redemption? Man had sinned; and to obtain pardon it was necessary that man should make a full satisfaction to God for the sins that had been committed. But how could man make such satisfaction to the infinite majesty of God? What, then, did God do? The Father sent the Son to take upon himself our nature; and the Son, Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, atoned to the divine justice in behalf of man. Such is the debt and the love that we owe to Jesus Christ. Denis the Carthusian tells us of a young man who, at Mass, did not kneel down at the words of the Creed, *Et homo factus est;* upon which a devil with a club appeared to him, and said: “Thou ungrateful wretch, dost thou not thank the God who was made flesh for thee? If he had done for us what he has done for thee, we should be always prostrate in thankful adoration. And thou dost not even make a sign of thankfulness.” Then he gave him a terrible blow with his club, and left him half dead.

5. *Which are the Things that we Must Know and Believe as Necessary BY Necessity of Means, and Others by NECESSITY OF PRECEPT?*

Moreover, we must know that some articles are to be believed by necessity of means, without which we cannot obtain salvation, others by necessity of precept.—The necessity of *means* implies that if we do not believe certain articles of faith, we cannot be saved.—The necessity by *precept* signifies that we must believe certain other articles; but if it happens that we are ignorant of them by an invincible ignorance, we are excused from sin and may be saved.

I. To know and believe the first two articles already laid down, namely, that there is a God, and that he is a just rewarder of virtue and punisher of vice, is certainly necessary as a *means* of salvation, according to the words of the Apostle, *For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him.*[13819] Some authors hold that the belief of the other two articles—the Trinity of Persons, and the Incarnation of the Word—is necessary by necessity of precept, but not necessary as a means without which salvation is impossible; so that a person inculpably ignorant of them may be saved. At any rate it is certain, as Innocent XI. declared,[13820] when condemning a contrary proposition, that he who is ignorant of the two mysteries of the Most Holy Trinity, and of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, cannot receive absolution.

II. We are obliged only by necessity of *precept,* which, however, binds under grievous sin, to know and believe the other articles of the Creed, at least the principal articles among them—such as, that God has created heaven and earth; that he preserves and governs the universe; that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the true Mother of God, and is ever a Virgin; that on the third day after his death Jesus Christ rose from the dead by his own power; that he ascended into heaven, and there sits on the right hand of his Eternal Father. By this it is meant that Jesus Christ, even as man, sits at the right hand of God—that is, that he permanently possesses a glory equal to that of the Father, as Bellarmine explains in his catechism.[13821] I said *even as man.* For as God, Jesus Christ is, in all things, equal to the Father; but, as man, he is inferior to the Father, but, because our Saviour is at the same time both God and man, and only one person, therefore the humanity of Jesus Christ in heaven has a glory and majesty equal to that of the Father, not by its own dignity, but because it is united with the person of the Son of God. When a king sits on his throne, the regal purple that he wears is there upon the throne with him; thus the humanity of Christ by itself is not equal to God, but because it is united with a divine Person, it is seated on the same throne with God, with a glory equal to that of God.

We are also bound to know and believe that, on the last day of the world, all men shall rise, and shall be judged by Jesus Christ; we must also believe that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true Church. Hence they who are out of our Church, or separated from it, cannot be saved, except infants who die after baptism. We are obliged to believe the communion of saints—that is, that each of the faithful in the state of grace partakes of the merits of all the saints, living and dead. We must also believe in the remission of sins—that is, that our sins are remitted in the sacrament of penance, provided we are sincerely penitent for them. Lastly, we must believe in eternal life—that is, that he who is saved by dying in a state of grace will go to heaven, where he will enjoy God for all eternity; and, on the other hand, that he who dies in sin will be sent to hell, where he will be tormented for all eternity.

Moreover, every Christian is obliged to know the precepts of the Decalogue, and those of the Church, and the principal obligations of his own state of life, whether he be an ecclesiastic or secular, married or single, lawyer or doctor, etc.

Every one is bound also to know and believe the seven sacraments, and their effects, particularly the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, and Eucharist, and the other sacraments when he is about to receive them.

All are obliged to know the "Our Father." The "Our Father," or Lord's Prayer, is a prayer that Jesus Christ himself composed, and left to us, that we may know in what manner to ask the graces that are most necessary for our salvation. St. Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble, on one occasion, when he was ill, repeated the "Our Father" three hundred times in one night. His chamberlain advised him not to repeat it so often, for fear of increasing his illness. The saint answered, that the oftener he said it, the faster he recovered. It is particularly useful to repeat over and over again the words, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;" for the greatest grace that God can bestow upon us is to make us do his holy will here on earth. It is also very profitable to repeat the petition, "and lead us not into temptation," begging the Lord to deliver us from the temptations in which he foresees that we should fall.

Moreover, every one should learn the "Hail Mary" in order to know how to recommend ourselves to the Mother of God, through whom, as St. Bernard says, we receive all the graces God gives us.

All should likewise know that there exists a purgatory, a place for expiating sins after death, where the faithful suffer those temporal punishments for their sins that they did not fully undergo in this life. We should, therefore, be mindful to pray and offer our suffrages for the holy souls in purgatory, whom we are, as far as we can, bound to relieve in their sufferings; indeed, the least pain of purgatory is greater than all the pains of this life put together; for the pains of these spouses of Christ are most intense, and these poor souls are unable to assist themselves. If, on this earth, our neighbor were suffering great pain, and we could relieve him without any great inconvenience, should we not be obliged to do so? We are equally bound to render assistance to these holy souls, at least by our prayers.

We should also know that it is very useful to us to obtain the intercession of the saints, and particularly of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is of faith, as the Council of Trent[13822] has declared against the impious Calvin, who said it was wrong to ask the assistance of the saints. Nay, according to the doctrine of St. Thomas we mortals are absolutely bound to go to the saints, in order to obtain, through their intercession, the divine graces necessary for our salvation; not because God cannot save us without the intercession of the saints, but because the order established by God requires that, while we remain in this life, we should he converted. The order of the divine law requires that we who are absent from the Lord, while we remain in our mortal body, should be brought back to him by means of the saints—to God by the prayers of the saints.[13823] This doctrine is also held by other theologians.[13824] We should likewise venerate the relics of the saints, the cross, and sacred images.

5. WHICH ARE THE PROOFS OF THE TRUTH OF OUR FAITH?

Before I proceed farther, I will answer an objection which may be made. A man may say, the truth of our faith is clear and evident: but how can it be clear when there are so many mysteries, such as the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Word, and the Eucharist, which are obscure and incomprehensible?

I answer, the mysteries of the faith are obscure, but not its truth. The truth of our faith, that is, that our faith is true, is evident by the plainest and most irrefragable arguments. The mysteries of faith are obscure to us, and God himself wishes them to be obscure: first, because he wishes to be honored by our believing, though we cannot comprehend all the truths that he has revealed: and, secondly, because we acquire merit by believing what we do not see. What merit should a man have for believing something because he sees and comprehends it? St. Gregory says that faith has no merit if human reason furnishes a proof for it.[13825] But if we are unable to comprehend the material things of this world—for who is there that comprehends how the magnet attracts iron? how a single grain of corn, sown in the earth, produces a thousand other grains? Who comprehends the action of the moon, or that of lightning?—what wonder is there if we cannot comprehend the mysteries of God?

The objects, then, of our faith are obscure; but the truth of our faith is established by so many evident proofs, that he who does not embrace it can only be called a fool. These proofs are numerous. We shall mention only three of them:

I. The first is taken from the prophecies written in the Holy Bible so many ages before the event, and afterwards exactly fulfilled. Long before it happened, the death of our Redeemer was foretold by several prophets—David, Daniel, Aggeus, and Malachy foretold the time and circumstances of his death. It was foretold that in punishment of the murder of Jesus Christ by the Jews, their temple should be destroyed, and they should be driven from their country; that they should remain blinded in their sin, and should be scattered over the whole earth. We know that all this has taken place. It was also foretold that, after the death of the Messias, the world should be converted from idolatry to the worship of the true God—and this was done by the holy apostles, who, unaided by learning, nobility, riches, or the protection of the great, and even in spite of the opposition of the potentates of the earth, recalled the world to the worship of the true God, inducing men to forsake their gods and their inveterate habits of vice, in order to embrace a faith that taught them to believe so many mysteries which they could not comprehend, and imposed on them so many precepts hard to be observed, because they are so contrary to our bad passions; such as to love our enemies, to abstain from pleasures, to bear insults, and to place all our affections, not on the goods that we see, but on the goods of a future life that we do not see.

2. We have further evident proofs of our faith in the multitude of miracles wrought by Jesus Christ, by the apostles and other saints, in the presence of the very enemies of the faith, who, when they could not deny the prodigies, said that they were performed by diabolical agency. But true miracles that

surpass the power of nature, such as the raising of the dead to life, giving sight to the blind, and the like, cannot be wrought by devils; they have no power to work such miracles. God cannot permit a miracle except in confirmation of the true faith; should he permit a miracle in confirmation of error, he himself would deceive us. Therefore, the true miracles that we witness in the Catholic Church (it is sufficient to mention the miracle of St. Januarius[13826]) are infallible proofs of the truth of our faith.

3. The constancy of the martyrs is again a very strong argument in favor of our faith. In the first ages of the Church, in the reign of the tyrants, there were so many millions of persons, and among them so many tender virgins and children, who, rather than deny the faith of Jesus Christ, endured with joy torments and death. Sulpitius Severus writes[13827] that, in the time of Diocletian, the martyrs presented themselves to their judges with a desire of martyrdom that surpassed the avidity with which men of the world pursue the riches and honors of the earth.

The martyrdom of St. Mauritius, and the whole Theban legion, is one famous in history. The Emperor Maximian commanded all his soldiers to assist at an impious sacrifice which he was going to offer to his false deities. St. Mauritius and his soldiers, because they were all Christians, refused to obey the order of the emperor. Having heard of their refusal, Maximian, to punish their disobedience, ordered them to be decimated—that is, the head of every tenth man in the legion to be cut off Each of them desired to die; and the soldiers who were left alive envied the happiness of those who were put to death for Jesus Christ. As soon as this was made known to Maximian, he ordered them to be decimated a second time; but this only increased their desire of martyrdom. In the end the tyrant ordered them all to be beheaded; and all, with joy in their faces, laid down their arms, and, like so many meek lambs, gladly and without resistance submitted to death.

Prudentius[13828] relates that a child seven years old, whose name is unrecorded, was tempted by Asclepiades to deny the faith of Christ; but when the boy refused, saying that he had been taught this faith by his mother, the tyrant sent for her, and in her presence caused the child to be scourged till his whole body became one wound. All the spectators shed tears of pity; but the mother exulted with joy at the sight of the fortitude of her son. Before death, the child, being thirsty, asked his mother for a little water. “Son,” said the mother, “have patience a little while; you shall soon be satiated in heaven with every delight.” The prefect, enraged at the constancy of the mother and the son, commanded his head to be cut off instantly. After the execution of the order, the mother took the dead child in her arms, and kissed him with feelings of the most joyful triumph because he had laid down his life for Jesus Christ.

1. Practical Conclusion.

From all that we have said, we ought to gather that we are bound to return God the most heart-felt thanks for having given us the gift of the true faith. How great is the number of infidels, heretics, and schismatics! Catholics do not amount to a tenth part of the human race. God has placed us in this number; by his providence we were born in the bosom of the true Church. Few thank him for this great benefit. Let us at least be careful to thank him for it every day.

II. HOPE

1. WHAT IS HOPE?

Hope is a virtue which God infuses into our souls, by which we expect from the divine mercy, with certain confidence, eternal beatitude through the merits of Jesus Christ, and also by means of the good works that we shall perform with God’s assistance.

2. WHAT IS THE OBJECT OF HOPE?

Hence the primary object of Christian hope is eternal life—that is, God himself, whom we hope to enjoy; the secondary objects are the means to obtain everlasting happiness, which are God’s grace, and our good works which we shall perform with the assistance of grace.

3. WHAT IS THE MOTIVE OF HOPE?

The motive or formal object of hope is the omnipotence of God, by which he is able to save us; his mercy, by which he wishes to save us; and the fidelity of God to his promise to bring us to glory through the merits of

Jesus Christ, provided we pray to him for salvation through the merits of Jesus Christ. Behold the promise: *Amen, amen, I say to you, if ye ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[13829] Without this promise we should have no certain grounds to hope for our salvation, and for God's grace to obtain it.

4. HOW IS THE BLESSED VIRGIN OUR HOPE?

But if God is our hope, for what reason does the holy Church make us call the Blessed Virgin Mary our hope: *Spes nostra salve?*

We must make a distinction: God, as the author of grace and of every good, is our principal hope; and Mary is our hope, because she prays for us to Jesus Christ. Hence, St. Bonaventure thus addresses her: "Through thee, O first finder of grace, Mother of salvation, we have access to the Son, that, through thee, he may receive us, who through thee was given to us."[13830] He meant to say, that as we have access to the Father only through Jesus Christ, who is the mediator of justice, so we have access to the Son only through Mary, who is a mediatrix of grace, and by her prayers obtains for us and dispenses those graces that Christ merited and provided for us. Hence, St. Bonaventure called Mary the entire ground of his hope.[13831] So also the holy Church teaches us to call her "our life, our sweetness, and our hope."[13832]

5. HOW DO WE SIN AGAINST HOPE?

How is the precept of hope violated? It is violated—

1. By despair of the divine mercy. Thus Cain sinned when, after having killed his brother Abel, he said: *My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon.*[13833] As if God, who has said: *Turn ye to Me . . . and I will turn to you,*[13834] could not pardon him even though he should repent of his sin.

2. The precept of hope is violated by presumption, or thinking to be saved either without God's assistance, or without renouncing sin.

If we wish, therefore, to obtain holy perseverance, we must always distrust ourselves, and place our confidence in God. He who trusts in his own strength to conquer temptations will receive no aid from God, and will be defeated by his enemies. They who wish to overcome temptations must have recourse immediately, and with confidence, to God. *None of them,* said David, *that trust in Him shall offend.*[13835] And God himself says: *Because he hoped in Me, I will deliver him.*[13836]

6. HOW DO WE MAKE AN ACT OF HOPE?

This, therefore, is the way of making an act of hope: My God, trusting in Thy promises, through the merits of Jesus Christ, because Thou art almighty, merciful, and faithful, I hope to receive from Thee the glory of paradise hereafter, and the means necessary to obtain it here.[13837]

Hope is necessary for the attainment of eternal life; but hope alone is not sufficient for salvation: in order to gain everlasting glory, good works are also necessary. The saints have made all conceivable sacrifices to gain heaven.

St. John Damascene, in his life of Josaphat, the monk, relates that this young man was the son of a king, and heir to the throne, but, enlightened by a celestial admonition, in order to secure his salvation, he despised all the riches and delights of the earth, and fled from the royal palace, and retired into a desert, where he spent all the remaining days of his life in prayer and penitential austerities. At his death, angels were seen carrying his blessed soul to heaven.

Listen to what a woman did in order to gain heaven. Socrates[13838] relates that when the Arian Emperor Valens had commanded the prefect of the city to put to death all the Catholics who should assemble at a certain place in order to perform their devotions, the prefect, on his way to execute the barbarous order, met a young woman carrying an infant in her arms, and walking very quickly. Being asked where she was going, she replied: “I am going to the place where the other Catholics assemble.” “But do you not know,” said the prefect, “that they are all to be put to death?” “It is for that very reason,” rejoined the woman, “that I am hastening thither with this my only child, that we may have the happiness of dying for Jesus Christ, and of going to enjoy him in heaven. As soon as the prefect heard this, he returned to the emperor, and related the fact. Confounded by the generous resolution of the woman, the emperor ordered her to be left in peace.

III. CHARITY

1. WHAT IS CHARITY?

Charity is a virtue which God infuses into the soul, by which we love God above all things, because he is infinite goodness, and by which we love our neighbors as ourselves, because God commands us to love them.

2. WHAT IS THE MOTIVE OF CHARITY?

The motive of loving God is his infinite goodness, for which he deserves to be loved for himself alone, though there were no reward for loving him, nor any chastisement for not loving him.

While St. Louis, King of France, was once travelling, he encountered a woman on the road with a lighted torch in one hand, and a vessel filled with water in the other. When she was asked why she carried them she answered: "I should like to set fire to heaven with my torch, and to extinguish hell-fire with the water, that God might be loved, not for the hope of heaven, nor for the fear of the torments of hell, but simply and solely because he deserves to be loved."

3. WHEN SHOULD WE MAKE ACTS OF CHARITY OR LOVE OF GOD?

Let us now examine when we are bound to make acts of faith, hope, and charity. These acts should be made from time to time because it is by acts that virtues are preserved. We are obliged to make acts of the love of God more frequently than acts of faith and hope; for in the Holy Scripture God tells us that we ought to meditate constantly on this precept of loving God, sitting in our house, walking in our journey, sleeping and rising: that we should bind it as a sign on our hands, keep it before our eyes, and write it on the entry and doors of our house.[13839] This passage of Deuteronomy signifies that we should continually endeavor to make acts of divine love; for he who does not frequently exercise himself in loving God can scarcely observe his law. St. Teresa used to say that acts of love are the fuel that keeps the holy fire of divine charity burning in our heart.

Some theologians hold that we are bound to make an act of charity at least on every festival; others, once a week. I say that we are obliged to make an act of divine love at least once a month. But it is right that every Christian should make acts of faith, hope, and charity every day.[13840]

4. WHEN SHOULD WE MAKE ACTS OF LOVE FOR OUR NEIGHBOR?

Hence we should, at least once a month, make a formal act of the love of our neighbor; because, without frequent acts of fraternal charity, we shall scarcely practise the charity that we owe to our neighbor.

With regard to the precept of fraternal charity, it is necessary to know that Pope Innocent XI. condemned the following proposition: “We are not bound to love our neighbor by an internal and formal act.”[13841] This proposition has been condemned; because we are bound to love all men, not only externally, but also internally with the heart, and by formal acts of love. Hence, it is a sin to take complacency in the misfortune of a neighbor, or to be grieved at his welfare. This is the meaning of the precept: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*.[13842]

However, it is not sinful to desire or to be glad at the temporal misfortunes of an obstinate sinner, in order that he may amend his life, and cease to give scandal, or to oppress the innocent. It may often happen that, without losing charity, we may rejoice at the ruin of an enemy, or be sorry for his exaltation, if we believe that his ruin will be the salvation of others, and that his prosperity will bring oppression and injustice in its train. Such is the doctrine of St. Gregory.[13843] But he who delights in the death or in any other misfortune of a neighbor, for any temporal benefit to himself, is guilty of sin. But observe, that it is one thing to rejoice in the cause which is productive of any advantage, and another to take complacency in the effect produced by that cause. It is lawful to rejoice in the effect, but sinful to be glad at the cause. For example: it is lawful to rejoice at the acquisition of property which comes to us after the death of a parent; but it is unlawful to rejoice at his death; for Innocent XI. has condemned the proposition[13844] which asserts that it is lawful for a son to rejoice at the death of his father, on account of the inheritance that shall fall to him.

We are bound, then, to love our neighbor with an internal love ; and, therefore, we ought, at least once a month, as has been already said, to make an explicit act of fraternal charity. We will speak in the sequel of the external acts of charity that we owe to our neighbor.

IV. ACTS OF FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY

Let us now see how we are to make all the acts of which I have spoken.

1. AN ACT OF FAITH

“My God, because Thou who art the infallible truth hast revealed to the Church the truths of faith, I believe all that the Church proposes to my belief: and I believe that Thou art my God, the Creator and Lord of all things, who rewardest for all eternity the just in heaven, and chastisest forever the wicked in hell. I believe that Thou art one in essence, and three in Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons and only one God. I believe that the second Person, that is, the Son, in order to save us sinners, was made man, died on a cross, and rose again from the dead.”

These are the four principal mysteries. Let us also make an act of faith in the other truths, which we are bound by a strict precept to believe:

“I also believe that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the true Mother of God, and is and has always been a virgin. I believe that on the third day after his death, Jesus Christ rose again by his own power, and, after forty days, ascended into heaven, where he sits at the right hand of his Eternal Father, that is, in equal majesty and glory with the Father. I believe that on the last day, when all men shall rise again from the dead, Jesus Christ will come to judge them. I believe that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true Church, out of which no one can be saved. I believe in the communion of saints—that is, that each of the faithful, while he remains in the state of grace, shares in all the merits of the just. I believe that God remits sins to penitent sinners. I believe in the seven sacraments, and that through them the grace of Jesus Christ is communicated to us. I believe in the Ten Commandments of the Decalogue. In fine, I believe all that the holy Church believes. I give Thee thanks, O my God ! for having made me a Christian, and I protest that in this holy faith I wish to live and die.”

2. AN ACT OF HOPE

“My God, trusting in Thy promises, because Thou art faithful, powerful, and merciful, I hope, through the merits of Jesus Christ, for the glory of heaven and the means to obtain it; that is, the pardon of my sins, and final perseverance in Thy grace.”

3. AN ACT OF LOVE AND CONTRITION

“My God, because Thou art infinite goodness, worthy of infinite love, I love Thee above all things with my whole heart, and for the love of Thee I also love my neighbor: and I am sorry, and repent with my whole soul for having offended Thee, the sovereign good. With the aid of Thy grace, which I ask for this moment and for my whole life, I purpose to die rather than evermore offend Thee, and I purpose to receive the holy sacraments in life and at death.”

Every Christian is bound to make these acts when he comes to the use of reason, and when he is in danger of death. During life, we are, as has been already said, obliged to make acts of the love of God and our neighbor, at least once a month. At any rate, we are not obliged to make these acts as frequently as the acts of charity. However, we are sometimes bound indirectly, or by accident, to make these acts, such as when we receive the sacraments, or when we are tempted grievously against faith, or hope, or charity, or chastity; and when, by any of the preceding acts, we can free ourselves from the temptation. Nevertheless, let us be careful to make them always at least once a day: and let us make the act of charity more frequently. Because, my dear Christians, we may be sure that he who does not come to love God truly, will scarcely persevere in the grace of God; for, it is very difficult to renounce sin merely through fear of chastisement; and he who abstains from sin through such a motive, perseveres but a short time. Let us, then, implore of God to give us his holy love, and let us endeavor continually to make acts of love, which are so pleasing to him.

V. PRAYER

1. NECESSITY OF PRAYER

Let us also attend to the obligation we are under to recommend ourselves to God, that he may give us his aid to conquer temptations and to persevere in his grace. We cannot merit the grace of final perseverance, as the Council of Trent[13845] has declared. It is a gift which God gives gratuitously to whom he pleases, but he infallibly gives it to all who ask it with humility and confidence. Theologians commonly teach that to pray, that is, to recommend ourselves to God and to ask his graces, is necessary for all adults as a means of salvation ; and that, for him who neglects prayer, it is impossible to persevere in grace and to be saved. And they therefore conclude that a Christian who neglects for an entire month to recommend himself to God is guilty of mortal sin.

2. EFFICACY OF PRAYER

The Lord desires to give us his graces; but he will have us ask them. For, every one that asketh, receiveth.[13846] Mark the words every one, which shows that even sinners, who ask God's grace, obtain it: "Every one," says the author of the Imperfect Work, "whether he be a just man or a sinner."[13847] It is true that a sinner is unworthy of God's graces, but according to St. Thomas[13848] the efficacy of prayer is founded, not on the merits of the person who prays, but on the mercy of God, and his fidelity to his promises. He has said: *Ask and you shall receive.*[13849] These are the words of God, they cannot fail.

It is necessary to observe that this promise has been made only for spiritual, but not for temporal, favors. Because he loves us, the Lord often refuses temporal blessings such as riches, honors, and bodily health. He foresees that they would be injurious to the soul, and therefore he withholds them. Therefore, when we ask temporal favors, we should pray for them with resignation, and on condition that they may be profitable to our souls, otherwise the Lord will not grant them to us. But we ought to ask spiritual graces absolutely and unconditionally.

3. QUALITIES OF PRAYER THAT IT MAY BE EFFICACIOUS

We should pray with confidence, with humility, and with perseverance.

1. *With confidence. All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.*[13850]

2. *With humility. God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*[13851]

3. With *perseverance*. Thousands of graces are necessary for the attainment of salvation. To save our souls, we stand in need of a chain of graces, which must come from God. And there must be on our part a chain of prayers to correspond to this chain of graces. If our petitions cease, God's aid will also cease, and we shall never be saved. Hence, as we are continually tempted to offend God, we must continually pray to him for aid. We must always act like beggars with God, always saying: Lord, assist me; Lord, be with me; keep Thy hand upon me; give me perseverance, give me the gift of Thy love. We must begin to make these petitions as soon as we rise in the morning, and continue to repeat them during the day, in hearing Mass, in our visits to the Most Holy Sacrament, before going to bed at night, and particularly when we are tempted, saying: My God, assist me; Mother of God, help me. In a word, if we wish to be saved, it is necessary to have always on our tongue a prayer to Jesus Christ and our Mother Mary, who obtains from her Son whatsoever she wishes.[13852]

VI. CHARITY TO OUR NEIGHBOR.[13853]

The love of God and the love of our neighbor are but two sides of the same thing. *This commandment,* says St. John, *we have from God. That he who loveth God, loves also his brother.*[13854] He who loves not his neighbor loves not God. However, charity has its proper order.

1. WHAT ORDER IS TO BE PRESERVED IN OUR CHARITY TO OUR NEIGHBOR

We ought to love God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves.[13855] "*Sicut te ipsum,"*—as ourselves, but not more than ourselves. Hence, we are not bound to prefer the good of a neighbor to our own unless when the good of the neighbor is of an order superior to ours, and when he is in extreme necessity. The order of goods is this: first, the spiritual life of the soul; then, the temporal life of the body; next, reputation or character; and after that property. Therefore, when he is in extreme necessity, we are obliged to prefer a neighbor's good to our own of an inferior order; that is, his spiritual salvation to our temporal life; his life to our reputation; and his reputation to our property. But we are bound by this obligation, as I have said, only when he is in extreme necessity. If he is not in such necessity, we are not bound to prefer his good, though it be of a superior order. So, if I am unjustly assailed by another, who attempts to kill me, I can lawfully defend myself, and (provided I have no other means of escaping death) I can take away his life, though, by dying in that state of sin, he should lose his spiritual life and be damned: for, in that case, it is not necessary for my neighbor to kill me in order to save his soul.

2. WHOM SHOULD WE LOVE AS OUR NEIGHBOR?

By the precept of charity we are bound to love all who have died in favor with God. We cannot love the damned; on the contrary, we are bound to hate them eternally as the enemies of God.

We must love all the *living*, even though they be sinners, and even though they be our own enemies.

I say *even sinners;* for, though they are now indeed enemies of God, they may still be reconciled with him, and may obtain eternal life.

I also say, *even our enemies;* because the law of Jesus Christ is a law of love. God wishes that all, even our enemies, should love us; and in like manner, he commands us to love even those who hate us. The pagans love all who love them; but we Christians are obliged to love even those who wish us evil. *But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.*[13856] When a Christian forgives an enemy, he may be sure of obtaining from God the pardon of his sins; for the Lord has said: *Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.*[13857] But, on the other hand, he who will not pardon others, cannot expect forgiveness from God. *For,* says St. James, *judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy.*[13858] It is but just that God should not have compassion on the man who has not compassion on his neighbor. “With what face,” says St. Augustine, “can he ask forgiveness of his sins, who refuses to obey him that commands him to pardon others?”[13859] Do you wish to take revenge for the injuries that your neighbor has done you? If you do, God will take vengeance on you for the numberless insults that you have offered to his divine Majesty.

It is not thus the saints act: the saints seek to do good to those from whom they have received evil. St. Ambrose settled a pension sufficient for his comfortable maintenance on an assassin who had made an attempt on his life. St. Catharine of Siena performed the office of a servant for a woman who had endeavored to destroy her reputation. In the life of St. John the Almoner, it is related that one of his relatives, who had been outrageously insulted by an inn-keeper in Alexandria, laid his complaint before the saint. St. John said to him: “As this publican has been so audacious, I will teach him his duty, and will treat him so as to excite the wonder of the whole city.” And what did the saint do? He ordered his steward never afterwards to exact the yearly rent that the inn-keeper had to pay him. Such was the revenge that the saint inflicted, and that truly excited the wonder of the whole city. Thus the saints sought revenge, and thus they became saints.

But, on the other hand, how miserable is the soul that bears hatred to a neighbor! The author of the “Parish Priest’s Companion” relates a story of two men who hated each other, one of whom, being on the point of death, was persuaded by his confessor to be reconciled to his enemy. The sick man consented; the other came, and peace was made between them. But as he was going out of the sick man’s room, he said: “This fellow would never be reconciled to me if he had not lost all hopes of ever being able to take revenge.” The dying man overheard the words, and answered: “If I recover you shall see whether I will not take revenge.” But he was choked with passion and died. Nevertheless he had his revenge as he had promised. For one day, while his enemy was in the street, a frightful spectre appeared with an iron mace in his hand, and said to him: “I have come to have revenge; as we have been enemies in life, we will be enemies forever in hell.” And he killed him with his mace.

3. WHAT ARE OUR DUTIES TOWARD OUR NEIGHBOR?

I. Among the obligations, then, of the precept of charity, the first is to love all men, not only with an internal, but also with an external love. Hence, we are bound to exhibit to an enemy all the ordinary signs of benevolence which we show to friends. We are bound to salute him when he salutes us; and with regard to Superiors, and persons whose rank is superior to ours, it is our duty to salute them before they salute us. And if without a grievous inconvenience I can salute even an equal, and thus free him from the hatred that he bears me, I am obliged to do so. Moreover, if a person who had received an injury or wound from another should say, that he forgave the person who inflicted the injury or wound, but should refuse to remit the injury, on the pretence that it is useful to punish malefactors, I should scarcely absolve him, because I can hardly be persuaded, if there are no other just causes to excuse him, that he is free from the desire of revenge.

II. The second obligation that we owe to our neighbor is to give him alms when he is in need, particularly if he is ashamed to beg, and we have it in our power to assist him. *But yet that which remaineth, give alms,*[13860] is the precept of Jesus Christ. However, it is necessary to make a distinction: when a poor person is in extreme necessity, and in danger of death, we are obliged to relieve him with those goods that are not necessary for the preservation of our life. When he is in grievous necessity, we are bound to assist him with our superfluities, that is, those things that we have beyond what is necessary for our state or condition.

How many blessings will God bestow upon us if we give relief to the poor! The Archangel Raphael said to Tobias, *Alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting.*[13861] Alms delivereth from death—that is, eternal death; for no one can escape temporal death. It purgeth away sins that is, it obtains for us the divine graces to enable us to cleanse our souls from sin. And maketh to find mercy and life everlasting; because by the mercy we show to others, God is moved to extend mercy to us, and to bring us to the glory of heaven. *He that hath mercy on the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and He will repay him.*[13862] When we can do nothing else, let us at least assist our neighbor by recommending him to God. If we have nothing else to give him, let us at least say a “Hail Mary” for his soul.

In the life of St. Francis Xavier, it is related that he one day asked of Peter Veglio, a man who was in comfortable circumstances, a marriage-portion for a young woman who was exposed to great danger. Peter was playing chess, and jocosely said to the saint: “How can you expect that I will give you my own property, when I am trying to win what belongs to another?” And then added immediately: “Here is the key of my desk; go, and take as much as you want.” The saint took three hundred crowns, and afterwards said to his friend: “Peter, know that God has accepted your alms, and on his part I promise that, during life, you shall always have the means of living in comfort; and before you die, in order that you may be well prepared for death, you shall be warned of its approach by wine tasting bitter in your mouth. The prediction was verified. One day as Peter was drinking, his wine tasted bitter; and immediately he began to prepare for death. Thus he led a happy life, and died a happy death.

Alms, then, “make us find the divine mercy that is, mercy for past sins, but not license to sin with impunity. “For,” says St. Augustine, “he who would corrupt, as it were, the divine justice by charity to the poor, shall be damned in spite of all his alms, and shall experience the divine justice.”

I. The third obligation is fraternal correction, which we ought to apply to our neighbor when he is in mortal sin, or in danger of falling into mortal sin, and when there is reason to hope that the correction will be profitable to him. *Go and rebuke him,*[13863] says Jesus Christ. You are obliged to do this, even when the person who sins is your Superior, or even your father. And, according to St Thomas, if the first admonition has not been effectual, you are bound to repeat the correction several times, where there is reason to hope that it will be useful.

We are bound to this obligation:

1. When the sin of our neighbor is certain, but not when it is doubtful;

2. When there is no other person capable of giving the admonition, and when it is not expected that any other will give it;

3. When there is no ground for a prudent fear that by correcting him, we shall suffer a grievous loss or inconvenience. For when we have just reason to apprehend such loss or inconvenience, we are excused from the obligation of correction, because it is only an obligation of charity. But fathers and mothers are bound to correct their children, even when the correction is attended with grievous inconvenience. But we shall speak at length on this point in treating of the fourth commandment.

Remember, however, that it is frequently requisite to defer the correction, and wait for a more convenient time and occasion, that the admonition may be more profitable.

IV. The fourth obligation of fraternal charity is, when we are able to *comfort the afflicted,* and particularly the sick. Jesus Christ says that what is done to the poor he accepts as done to himself. *As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.*[13864] St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that it was more pleasing to her to be employed in assisting a neighbor than to be united with God in ecstasy: and for this she assigned the following reason—"When I am in ecstasy God assists me; but, in relieving a neighbor, I assist God." Hence, St. Cyprian writes, "that he who assists his neighbor makes God his debtor."[13865]

I may here relate that act of heroic charity towards a neighbor which the ecclesiastical historians tell us of St. Didymus. St. Theodora was a virgin, whom a tryannical magistrate, in hatred to the faith, sent to a brothel. St. Didymus went to see her there, and said to her: "Theodora, fear no injury from me; I am come to save your honor. Take my clothes and put them on, and leave me yours. In this way you may escape unsullied from this place of infamy;" and so it was. St. Theodora, in her soldier's dress, was not recognized, and escaped unsullied; and St. Didymus remained there dressed as a woman. For this act he was condemned to death by the tyrant. Theodora, hearing of this, went to see him in his prison, and said to him: "I consented that you should save my honor, but not that you should rob me of the crown of martyrdom: this belongs to me of right. If you intended to rob me of it, you deceived me." The judge, when he heard of this holy contest, condemned both to be beheaded; and both had the happiness of suffering martyrdom for Jesus Christ.

V. The fifth obligation of fraternal charity is, to *show good example* and *not to give scandal* to our neighbor. Scandal is defined an improper word or act that leads another to sin.

Scandal is twofold—*direct* and *indirect.* It is direct when a person deliberately intends to induce others to commit sin; and indirect when he uses language, or gives an example, calculated to lead others into sin. Both the one and the other are mortal sins when they are actually the occasion of any one committing a grievous fault.

There are also two other kinds of scandal—*scandal of the weak,* and *Pharisaical scandal.* A person gives scandal to the weak when he does an indifferent, or even a good act, which is to others, on account of their weakness, an occasion of sin; for example, a young woman knows that by going to the chapel, or to the park, she gives a dissolute young man, who waits there for her, an occasion of bad thoughts. She is, in such a case, obliged, if she can do it without great inconvenience, to take away the occasion by abstaining from going there. But for how long? Must she forever abstain from going to these places? No; but only as long as Christian prudence dictates; otherwise it would be a grievous inconvenience, and to that charity does not oblige her.

Pharisaical scandal is the scandal taken by those who, without reason, and through their own malice, wish to be scandalized at any action. The occasions of this kind of scandal we are not bound to avoid, because it is not true scandal.

The worst kind of scandal is that which is given by those who are tale-bearers. They hear one person speaking ill of another, and immediately go and relate to the other what they have heard; from tale-bearing of this kind arise hatred, discord, and quarrels. For all these sinful consequences, tale-bearers have to render an account to God. Observe the advice of the Holy Ghost on this point: *Hast thou heard a word against thy neighbor?—let it die within thee.*[13866] Have you heard a person speaking ill of another?—let what you have heard die within you; tell it to no one.[13867] Others, though there is no intention of marriage, carry love-messages to married or unmarried women. Others perform the very office of the devil by positively tempting a neighbor to sin; and some go so far as to teach others to sin, and to point out the means of committing it—the devil himself does not go so far as this. Some (and this is a common scandal) speak immodestly before women, before young persons, and even in the presence of innocent little children. Oh, what havoc of souls do they cause! It is a saying of William of Peraldo that obscene words are the spittle of the devil,[13868] which murders souls. “It is but one person who speaks,” says St. Bernard, “and he speaks but one word, and destroys thereby a multitude of souls.”[13869]

Miserable is the man that gives scandal! Our Lord says: *He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea.*[13870] Is there the least glimmer of hope for a man who is cast into the sea with a millstone about his neck? The Gospel appears to say that there is no greater hope for the salvation of the authors of scandal. St. John Chrysostom writes that the Lord is more inclined to show mercy to those who commit other more grievous sins, than to those who are guilty of the sin of scandal. What! says the Lord to the authors of scandal, are you not satisfied with offending me by your own sins? Do you wish to induce others also to insult me? In the *Mirror of Examples*, it is related that Jesus Christ said one day to a scandalous sinner, “Accursed wretch, you have despised what I have purchased by my blood.”

A mortal sin of scandal is committed by women who go about with their bosom immodestly exposed, or who expose their limbs improperly. Also by actors in immodest comedies, and still more by the persons who compose such comedies; also by painters who paint obscene pictures, and by the heads of families who keep such pictures in their houses. The father who speaks obscenely, or blasphemes the saints, in presence of his children, and the mother who brings into her house to live among her daughters young men who are in love with them, or betrothed to them, or other suspected persons, are guilty of a still more grievous sin of scandal. Some mothers say: *I do not suspect any evil.* I answer, that it is their duty to suspect; otherwise they will have to render to God an account of all the sins which may follow.

Woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh.[13871] Listen to a horrible thing that happened in the city of Savona in the year 1560. I have read it in the chronicles of the Capuchins, and it is also related by Father Ardia. There was a woman who, even after marriage, did not cease giving scandal. This woman one day fell into a fit, and while she was in a state of unconsciousness, she saw the Lord condemning her to eternal fire. When she recovered the use of her senses, she did nothing but cry out, “Alas! I am damned, I am damned!” A confessor came to comfort her, but she answered, “What have I to do with confession? I am damned.” Then her daughter approached the bed, in order to encourage her, but she cried out: “Ah, accursed child! on your account, too, I am damned: for through you I have given scandal to others. After these words the devils, in presence of all who were in the apartment, raised her up to the ceiling, and then dashed her so violently against the floor that she instantly expired.

The author of the *Parish Priest’s Companion* relates that a boy, who associated with a dissolute young man was scandalized by his bad example, and lost his innocence. On the following morning, the boy went to the house of his companion, that they might, as usual, go to school together. The father of this wicked young man went to the room in which he slept, to reprove him for his sloth; but on opening the door he was driven back by a frightful spectre. The mother ran to the window, and saw her unhappy son dead on the bed, with his head hanging down, black as a coal, and covered with marks of fire. The parents learned from the boy the scandal that had been given to him on the previous day, and thus perceived the cause of the vengeance inflicted on their unhappy son.

Is there, then, no hope of salvation for him who has been guilty of the sin of scandal to others? Yes; the mercy of God is infinite; but he who has given scandal must do great penance, and must unceasingly ask pardon of God; he must also repair the scandal by giving good example, by frequenting the sacraments, and leading a life of piety.

Fearing that he had given scandal by dissuading a person from a religious vocation, St. Raymond de Pennafort left the world, and became a religious of the Order of St. Dominic.[13872] We read in the *Mirror of Examples* of a young woman who was tormented by the attention of a young man who had fallen in love with her eyes, that she tore out her eyes and sent them to him, with this message: “Take my eyes and do not trouble me any more.” St, Euphemia cut off her nose and lips to prevent herself from being seduced. St. Euphrasia said to a soldier who made an attempt on her virtue: “If you will leave me alone I will tell you of certain herbs that will make you invulnerable,” and she consented that the soldier might first try the efficacy of her receipt upon herself. After she had prepared the herbs, the simple soldier struck a hard blow with his sword upon her neck and of course cut her head off. Such were the deeds which these great women performed in order to take away all occasion of scandal.

VII. RELIGION

1. WHAT IS RELIGION?

By the first precept of the Decalogue we are also obliged to practise the virtue of religion.

It is *a virtue which renders to God the honor due to him.* It also includes the duty of venerating the divine Mother, the angels, and the saints. We should venerate their relics and sacred images, for in these we do not venerate the metal, the wood, or the canvas of the images, as the idolaters did, but the saints whom these images represent to us.

The vices opposed to the virtue of religion are *superstition* and *irreligion.*

2. WHAT IS SUPERSTITION?

Superstition consists in giving to God or the saints a false honor, as would be the case if a person gave to the Blessed Virgin the adoration due to God, as some heretics did, or if a person exposed false relics of the saints to the veneration of the faithful, or should publish false miracles. It is also superstition, and a most grievous sin, to give to creatures what is due to God.

Superstition contains four kinds of sin: *Idolatry, divination, magic,* and *vain observance.*

1. *Idolatry,* such as the worship of the pagans, who adored as gods men who were dead, and even animals, statues, and other creatures.

2. *Divination* consists in seeking, by an express or tacit compact with the devil, to know things that are future or occult, through his agency, as those who try to discover a theft by turning a Sieve.

3. *Magic* is nearly the same thing as divination, and consists in seeking to produce, through the devil, any effect that exceeds human power.

All these are most grievous sins, against which God has threatened the most severe chastisements. The soul that shall go aside after magicians and soothsayers, and shall commit fornication with them, I will set my face against that soul, and destroy it out of the midst of its people.[13873]

1. *Vain observance* consists in endeavoring to attain any object, or to get rid of any infirmity or pain, by the employment of certain vain and disproportionate means, such as by uttering certain words, by saying a prayer in a certain posture, with yellow candles, or with a fixed number of candles, or with the eyes closed, or making the sign of the cross with the left hand. Give up all such vain, foolish practices. Either you expect the favor from God, and in that case these things are not wanted, or you expect it from the devil, and that is a most grievous sin, because it is not lawful to have any communication with the enemy of God.

Abstain, then, from all these kinds of superstition: such as from those signs, cards, or words that persons employ in order to prevent worms from doing injury; to tie up dogs in order to remove pain, stop the flowing of blood, make tempests cease, gain the affection of others, and the like. All these are most grievous sins. He assured that all these superstitions are lies, deceits, and thefts; if you believe in them, you will lose, not only your money, but your soul also. When you meet with any tribulation, have recourse to the Most Holy Sacrament, to the crucifix, to the Virgin Mary, to St. Antony of Padua, to St. Vincent Ferrer; get some of the oil from their lamps, get a medal of the Immaculate Virgin or a little picture of a saint; so without sinning you will obtain the favor you seek; but if you have recourse to any superstitious means, you will not receive the favor you want, and you will lose your soul.

3. WHAT IS IRRELIGION?

Let us now say something on *irreligion*, which is an irreverence offered to God, and contains three species—*tempting God, sacrilege,* and *simony.*

1. A person would be guilty of tempting God if he threw himself into a deep pool of water to try whether God is able to save him; to tempt God in such a manner is a mortal sin.

2. *Sacrilege* may be committed in three ways:

First, by offering an injury to a person consecrated to God—that is, by striking an ecclesiastic or a religious. A person who strikes an ecclesiastic or a religious incurs excommunication. It is also a sacrilege to commit a sin against purity with a person who has made a vow of chastity.

Secondly, it is a sacrilege to defile a holy place by any external sin, whether in act, or in word, by theft, by speaking obscenely, by blaspheming God or the saints, etc.

Thirdly, it is a sacrilege to profane holy things, such as to receive a sacrament in the state of mortal sin, to treat with contempt the relics of the saints, the cross, sacred images, beads, and the like. It would be a still greater sacrilege to employ sacred things as a means of committing any sin.

2. Finally, *simony* consists in buying or selling anything spiritual for a temporal price. Hence, it is a sin against religion to endeavor to purchase by money, service, or anything temporal a relic of a saint, absolution from a confessor, any ecclesiastical order any benefice from a bishop, and other things of the same kind.

Chapter II

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not take the name of thy God in vain.”[13874]

THIS commandment imposes three obligations, not to utter blasphemies, not to be guilty of false oaths, and to fulfil vows. Let us treat each of these separately.

I. BLASPHEMY

God is honored by praise and prayer: he is dishonored by blasphemy.

1. WHAT IS BLASPHEMY?

1. Blasphemy is committed by attributing to *any* creature a divine attribute; for example, by saying that the devil is omnipotent—that he is infinitely holy or wise. Hence, it is a sin to believe that the devil knows all future contingent things, such as what numbers a man will throw with the dice, and the like. God alone knows all the things that are future; the devil can only know external things that have already happened, and from present things make some guess at the future.

2. Blasphemy is also committed by ascribing to God what is injurious to him: by saying, for example, *Cursed be God,* or *bad luck to God,* or *in spite of God.* But to say *that God does what is unjust, that he creates men and afterwards forgets them,* is a heretical blasphemy.

3. But blasphemy may also be committed by acts; for example, if a person should contemptuously spit against heaven, or if he should trample on the cross, on beads, or images.

4. It is also grievous blasphemy to curse the saints or holy things, such as the Mass, the Church, holidays, Easter Sunday, Christmas Day, Holy Saturday, or the like.

5. It is blasphemy to curse the souls of men, particularly of the dead, unless the curse be intended for the souls of the damned.

6. To say—not, *ill befall such a saint*, but—something else which conveys n0 grievous insult, is no very great blasphemy. Nor is it blasphemy to say, ill befall St. Giles, St. George, when you only refer to the place so called, not to the saint.

7. To curse creatures—such as the wind, the rain, the year, the day, and the like—is not blasphemy nor a grievous sin, but only a venial fault, provided such maledictions are not referred to God, as would be the case if a person said, *Cursed be the wind of God, the day of God;* and provided also that they are not creatures in which the power and greatness of God are shown forth in a special manner, as they are in heaven and the human soul. It would be blasphemy to curse the world, unless the malediction were confined to the wicked world, of which St.John says: *The whole world is seated in wickedness.*[13875]

8. It is not blasphemy to curse in general terms the faith of another person, provided no words such as *the Christian faith*, or *the holy faith*, be used, for, if such words be not used, the curse may be intended for the human faith, or the fidelity of the person to his word.

9. Neither is it blasphemy to curse the dead, unless the malediction be uttered or intended against the saints, or the souls of the dead. The reason why it is not blasphemy nor a grievous sin to curse the dead in general terms is, because the word *dead* signifies men deprived of life; particularly since the word *dead* is applicable, not to the souls, but, strictly speaking, to the bodies; for the bodies only die, but not the souls. I add, it is certain that a man who is living has both a body and soul: and, according to St. Thomas[13876] and the generality of theologians, it is not a mortal sin to utter an imprecation or curse against him, unless the evil implied in the curse be interiorly desired. Now, if to utter a curse against a living person, in whom there certainly are a soul and a body (without internally wishing evil to him) is not a grievous sin, why should it be mortally sinful to utter an imprecation against a dead man, without desiring any evil to befall him? I add, moreover, that they who curse the dead ordinarily do not intend to curse their souls. In general, they intend to injure not the dead, but the living, against whom they are enraged. This is not merely my opinion; I

have seen only three authors who have written on this point. They all hold the doctrine I have laid down. Besides, I have asked the opinion of several learned men in Naples, and of the three celebrated Congregations of secular missionary priests, of Father Pavone, of the Archbishop and of St. George, which Congregations contain the flower of the Neapolitan clergy; and all have been of my opinion.[13877]

For my part, I know not how some persons can have courage to condemn certain actions as mortal sins, when all theologians, ancient and modern, teach that no act should be condemned as a mortal sin unless it be certain that it is mortally sinful. “One thing,” wrote St. Raymond to one of his friends, “I advise you, do not be too prone to decide sins to be mortal where you have no certain proof from Scripture.”[13878] And St. Antoninus taught, “unless there is express authority of Holy Scripture, or of a canon or definition of the Church, or an evident reason, it is very dangerous to determine a sin to be mortal; for even though it be not mortal, if it is defined to be so, the person who acts against this decision will sin mortally.”[13879] But if the confessor cannot clearly make out that it is a mortal sin, it is not fitting that he should burden the conscience with the guilt of mortal sin. But, to curse the dead, even without internally wishing evil to them, is a sin; it is at least a venial sin, and more grievous than other venial sins. Some people have the dead always in their mouth. What a shameful vice!

2. HOW GREAT IS THE SIN OF BLASPHEMY?

Let us now say something on the enormity of any blasphemy. In the Old Law, God ordained that every blasphemer should be banished from the city and the camp, and that he should be stoned by all the people. *Bring the blasphemer without the camp . . . and let all the people stone him.*[13880] Not very long ago, when a man uttered a blasphemy in Venice, an officer was sent from the court to seize the blasphemer in his own house; his tongue was cut out. Even at the present day, the penalty sanctioned by the King of Naples against blasphemy is, to brand the forehead of the blasphemer with a red-hot iron, and then to send him to the galleys; but the penalty is not often inflicted, because human motives prevent the witnesses from giving testimony against blasphemers. To accuse a blasphemer through hatred of his person is not right; but it is a good and holy act to convict blasphemers, in order that the accursed vice of blasphemy, and the scandal that it gives to those who hear it, may be abolished by the infliction of chastisement.

I say the *scandal;* for children, by listening to the blasphemies of grown-up persons, learn to become blasphemers. What a misery to see so many little ones who know nothing about the things of God and yet know very well how to curse St. Peter 0r St. Mark. St. Peter! St. Mark! What evil have these saints done you, that you should blaspheme them? You quarrel with your wife, your master, or with a servant, and you assail the saints! The saints continually pray to God for us; and will you blaspheme them? I wonder that the earth does not open and swallow up the blasphemer! Some are found to blaspheme him who keeps them in existence! Instead of thanking God for preserving their life, and not sending them to hell, they blaspheme his divine Majesty.

Every blasphemy uttered against a saint or a holiday is a most grievous sin. St. Jerome says that compared with blasphemy, every sin is small.[13881] St. John Chrysostom says that when a person blasphemes, his mouth should be instantly closed. The holy Doctor says: “Strike him 0n the mouth; bruise it so that he cannot speak.[13882] Blasphemers are worse than the damned, for they blaspheme the author of their torments, but you blaspheme your benefactor.

Oh! what frightful chastisements have I seen inflicted by God on blasphemers! In the kingdom of Naples, a man who had blasphemed the crucifix of a certain place suddenly fell dead as he was passing before the crucifix. Not many years ago, in another place (I have spoken with a person who was present), a coachman blasphemed a saint, and was immediately upset into the water; the pole of the carriage pressed on his neck, and he was drowned. But if a blasphemer escapes chastisement in this life he shall be punished all the more in the next. Our Lord showed St. Frances of Rome the special and horrible torments of the tongue that blasphemers suffer in hell.

3. EXHORTATION

My brother, if you have been hitherto in the habit of blaspheming, endeavor now with all your strength to get rid of that accursed vice. What profit do you derive from your accursed blasphemies? You gain nothing by them; on the contrary they keep you always in beggary. You receive no pleasure from them; what pleasure can you feel in cursing holy things? You receive no honor from them, but infamy; blasphemers are avoided and hated, even by their fellow blasphemers.

But I want you to understand that unless during this mission you renounce this vice, you will never get rid of it. It increases with years, because with years your sorrows and infirmities increase; and thus acts of impatience become more frequent. Thus, you will take this vice with you to the grave. A blasphemer, who had been sentenced to be hanged, the moment he was thrown off the gibbet, gave way to the bad habit he had contracted, burst out into a blasphemy against a saint, and so ended his life. A coachman, who had the habit of this vice, blasphemed at the hour of his death, and died miserably. Make now a good confession; make a firm resolution during this mission to blaspheme no more. And for the future say every morning, as soon as you rise, three “Hail Marys,” in honor of the Blessed Virgin, that she may obtain for you the grace to be delivered from so horrible a vice. And when you meet with any occasion of impatience, accustom yourself to curse the devil or your sins, and leave the saints alone. Banish forever from your mouth the curse and imprecation, and say instead: Mary, pray for me; Virgin Mary, give me patience and strength. In the beginning you will have great trouble in conquering yourselves, and shaking off the habit of blaspheming. But when the habit is once overcome, you will, by God’s assistance, easily abstain altogether from this vice.

But that you may conceive a greater horror of blasphemy, listen to the vengeance that God once inflicted 0n a blasphemer. Cardinal Baronius relates in his *Annals*[13883] that an inhabitant of Constantinople, after having uttered a blasphemy, went to take a bath. After washing, he suddenly rushed out of the bath, crying out that he was a dead man, at the same time lacerating his legs with his nails, and tearing the flesh off his arms with his teeth. He was seized, and wrapped up in a sheet; but this, instead of mitigating, only increased his tortures, so they took it away again; but his skin adhered to it, and came away with it, and thus the miserable man died, and became the prey of the devils, who carried him off to be tormented forever in hell.

St. Gregory also relates[13884] in his dialogues that a child five years old, the son of a Roman nobleman, by listening to the blasphemies of the servants, contracted a habit of blaspheming, and was not corrected for it by his father. One evening, after having been guilty of several blasphemies during the day, he was suddenly seized with terror in the presence of his father, and began to cry out: Oh! look at those black men, who want to take me away with them! He threw himself in the arms of his father, and began as usual to blaspheme, and so expired in the act. Woe to you, O fathers! who do not correct your children when they blaspheme; and still greater woe, if you give them bad example by blaspheming in their presence.

II. OATHS

1. WHAT IS AN OATH?

An oath is an invocation of the name of God to attest the truth of what is asserted.

It is an oath to say, in confirmation of an assertion: *By God*, or *by any saint*, or *by anything sacred; by the sacraments, by the Gospel, by the Church, by the cross, by the Mass.* It is also an oath to swear by any creature in which the goodness and power of God shine forth in a special manner, such as when a person swears by his soul, by heaven, or by the earth.

Is it an oath to say, *God lives; God sees it?* It is necessary to make a distinction. If God be called on to attest the truth of what is asserted, it is an oath; but if the words be uttered by way of assertion, without calling God as a witness, there is no oath.

Neither is it an oath to say, *By my conscience;* or *By my faith;* unless divine faith is expressed or understood.

It is not an oath simply to say, *I swear that such is the case;* that is, provided the person who uses the words has not been asked to swear by God, or by any saint, or by anything sacred.

2. HOW MANY KINDS OF OATHS ARE THERE?

There are four kinds of oaths:

1. An *assertory* oath, by which a person swears to the truth of an assertion.

2. A *promissory* oath, by which a person swears to fulfil a promise.

3. *An imprecatory oath, when, for example, a person says, May God chastise me unless I do such a thing.*

4. *A comminatory oath, when a person says, Unless you do such a thing, by God, I will make you repent.*

3. WHEN DOES ONE SIN ON ACCOUNT OF AN OATH, AND TO WHAT IS ONE OBLIGED?

In assertory oaths, he who asserts a falsehood is guilty of sin.

In promissory oaths, it is a sin to swear without the intention of fulfilling the promise. But if, in a matter of small moment, a person swore with the intention of performing his promise, that afterwards did not adhere to it, it is very probable, as several theologians say, that he would not be guilty of a mortal sin, because God is called on to attest the present intention of the man who makes the promise, and not the future execution of the promise.

Two rules ought to be observed with regard to promissory oaths. The first is, that the oath can never oblige a person to do what is unlawful.[13885] The second is that when the thing promised is lawful, the oath is always binding.[13886] For example: if through fear of injuries threatened by a robber you promise on oath to send him what he asks, are you bound to fulfil your promise? Yes, you are bound to adhere to your promise, because, although the robber extorted the promise unjustly, there is nothing unlawful in its fulfilment. However you may go to the bishop for a dispensation from the oath, and then you will be no longer bound by the promise that had been extorted by threats. “If there is a sufficient cause, it is lawful to swear, without the intention of swearing, whether the matter is small or great.”[13887] This proposition is a proposition condemned by Pope Innocent XI. But can a person swear to fulfil a promise without having the intention of taking an oath? No; that cannot be done; it would be contrary to the declaration of Innocent XI.

Imprecatory oaths bind only when the name of God or something sacred is invoked.

The same is to be said of *comminatory* oaths. But when the punishment threatened is unjust, the oath does not bind. Thus the oaths that fathers unjustly make in threatening their children are not obligatory; such as “By God! I will kill you, if you do not return soon, if you do not finish this work,” etc.

To be lawful, an oath must have three conditions: *truth, justice,* and *judgment.*[13888] It must have *truth*—that is, the person who swears must be certain of the truth of his assertion; it is a sin to swear to what is doubtful. An oath must have *justice,* hence a person is guilty of a double sin by swearing to do what is unjust or unlawful. It must have *judgment*—that is, there must be a reasonable cause for taking the oath; otherwise, though the oath may have truth and justice, the person who takes it will be guilty, not of mortal, but of venial sin.

It is necessary also to remark, that he who swears falsely before a judge in a court of justice is guilty of a double sin; and should his testimony do injury to a neighbor, he is bound to make restitution for the damage done. A witness is always bound to give true answers whenever he is lawfully interrogated by a judge.[13889] But some one may say: “Father, if I told the truth, my neighbor would be damaged; through charity for him, I said that I knew nothing about him.” Oh, what charity! Will you, in order to treat a neighbor with charity, commit a most grievous sin, and condemn your self to hell? It is thus that crimes are multiplied; witnesses deny what they have seen, malefactors are acquitted, and thefts, homicides, and so many other evils increase. If the guilty were punished, we should not hear of so many crimes.

4. WHEN DOES THE OBLIGATION OF AN OATH CEASE?

How is the obligation of an oath taken away? It may be taken away by *annulment,* by *dispensation, commutation,* and *relaxation.*

1. It may be *annulled* by any one who has dominative power, such as a father, a husband, a guardian, prelate or abbess; and to annul an oath a just cause is not necessary.

2. By *dispensation* or *commutation,* and such dispensation or commutation may be given by the Pope or bishop; but to grant a dispensation or commutation a just cause is required.

3. By *relaxation:* this may be given by the bishop, and by all who have episcopal faculties.

III. THE VOW

With regard to the obligation of a vow, I have to say to the people a few things that all ought to know: the knowledge of the rest is necessary only for Superiors or confessors.

1. WHAT IS A VOW?

It is a deliberate promise made to God to do or to omit some act, the performance or omission of which is possible, and more perfect than the opposite.

1. I said that it is *a promise* which is understood to be made with the intention of imposing an obligation; for if the promise be made without an intention of imposing an obligation, it is not a vow. When there is a doubt whether there was any intention of imposing an obligation, it is presumed that there was such an intention; because every act is presumed to be done as it ought. When it is doubtful whether a person has made a vow, or only a simple resolution, he should be asked whether in making it he was under the impression that, were he to transgress it, he would commit a grievous sin. If such were his impression, the vow must be regarded as a true and valid one.

2. I said *a deliberate* promise; because, for a vow, the perfect use of reason and free will are necessary. Hence, vows made by children before the age of seven years are not obligatory, unless it be certain that at the time of making the vow they had the perfect use of reason. Hence, also, a vow made by a person through fear excited by another in order to extort the vow imposes no obligation.

3. I have said, to do or to omit some act, the performance or omission of which is *possible* and *more perfect* than the opposite; for if the matter of the vow be impossible, the promise does not bind. But if it be in part possible, and it the object of the promise be divisible, the vow obliges to what is possible, provided it be the principal matter of the vow. I have also said, *more perfect,* for if the object of the vow be indifferent, or an inferior good, the vow is invalid, unless the circumstances render it more perfect.

Remember that if a person do the thing to which he bound himself by vow, although at the time of doing it he did not advert to the vow, he is not obliged to do it again in order to fulfil his promise; for, every one has a general intention of first satisfying his obligation, and then doing what is merely an act of devotion. For a person who is in doubt about having made a vow it is safer to fulfil it, but he is not strictly bound to do so. A person who is certain of having made a vow, and not certain of having fulfilled it, is obliged to do what he promised, because the obligation of the vow still holds good.

2. WHEN DOES THE DELAY IN THE EXECUTION OF A VOW BECOME A MORTAL SIN?

Many theologians say that, if one defers it for two, or at most for three years, he is guilty of a mortal sin. This is to be understood of vows the matter of which is not perpetual, but temporary—such as, to visit a holy place; to get Masses said; and the like. But when the matter of the vow is perpetual, theologians say that then to defer the execution of the vow for six months is a grievous sin.

But I entreat all, and particularly women (ordinarily speaking), to abstain from making vows. So many persons make vows, and afterwards years and years pass away, and the vows are not fulfilled. When you wish to offer anything to God, make not a vow, but a simple resolution, which imposes no obligation. And it any one sees that he can scarcely fulfil a vow already made, let him procure a commutation from the bishop, or from a confessor to whom the bishop has given power to commute the vow.

3. HOW DOES THE OBLIGATION OF THE VOW CEASE?

It is taken away, 1, by *a change of the matter;* that is, when some circumstance occurs, which, had it been foreseen, would have prevented the person from making the vow.

2. It is taken away by *annulment,* as we have said regarding oaths. A vow may be annulled by a father, a husband, or any other person who has dominative power. And to take away the obligation of a vow in this manner a cause is not necessary. A father or a husband may, without cause, invalidate the vow of a child or of his wife, and then the obligation of the vow ceases.

3. The obligation of a vow is taken away by *dispensation* or by *commutation,* which may be obtained from the Pope or from one’s own

bishop. But for the validity of a dispensation or commutation a just cause is necessary; without it it is null.

There are five vows from which no one but the Pope can dispense, namely, a vow of perpetual chastity, of entering a religious Order, of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome, and of St. James in Compostella. These are called the five reserved vows. They are reserved only when the vows are made through *a love of virtue,* not when they are penal or conditional vows. For example, when a person makes a vow to enter religion if he returns to gaming, or on condition that he is freed from a certain infirmity, the vow is not reserved. It may be dispensed or commuted by the bishop, because it has not been made through a love of virtue.

Chapter III

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

“ Remember to sanctify the Sabbath-day.”[13890]

THIS precept imposes two obligations: the first *is, to* abstain from servile works on Sundays and holidays; the second is, to hear Mass on these days.

In the Old Law the festival day was Saturday; but the apostles changed it to Sunday, a day sanctified by God over and over again, as St. Leo has remarked. For it was on Sunday that the world was created; that Jesus Christ rose from the dead; and that the Holy Ghost descended on the apostles. The precept of sanctifying the Sunday, according to St. Thomas,[13891] and the generality of theologians, is *moral,* so far as it is the duty of all men to employ some part of their life in the worship of God; but *ceremonial,* so far as it determines the exact time of this worship. So far as it is moral, all men are bound to observe it. As a ceremonial precept it is no longer obligatory; because the Old Law has ceased. Hence we are bound to the observance of festivals by a precept of the Church, which has determined the days that are to be kept holy.

I now ask, Why has God instituted festival days? He has instituted them that every Christian, having attended *to the concerns of his body during the other days of the week, may attend on the festivals to the concerns of his soul, not only by hearing Mass, but also by hearing a sermon, visiting the Blessed Sacrament, recommending himself to God, and by performing other acts of piety. But how do many persons spend the holidays? In gambling, in drinking to excess, in obscene discourses. I may here tell you a story related by Surius.*[13892] *In the city of Dia there was a holy bishop called Stephan. Being unable to correct a great irregularity among his people who spent the holidays and Sundays in gaming, dancing, and drunkenness, he begged of God that a multitude of hideous devils might appear in the city on a certain day. So it happened, and so much terror was excited, that all cried aloud for* *mercy. The people promised to amend and the holy bishop by his prayers delivered them from these horrible monsters.*

I. THE OBLIGATION OF ABSTAINING FROM SERVILE WORKS

1. HOW MANY KINDS OF WORKS ARE THERE?

It is necessary to distinguish three kinds of works—*servile, liberal,* and *common.*

1. Servile works, as St. Thomas[13893] teaches, are in the mystic sense sins, but literally they are the works that are usually performed only by servants. They are also called corporal works—such as building, digging, sewing, working iron, stone, or wood, and similar occupations, which require bodily labor. These are, properly speaking, the works which were forbidden in the Old Law. *You shall do no servile work thereon.*[13894]

2. *Liberal works* or occupations, which are called works of the mind, are those that are performed by men in a liberal condition of life—such as to study, to teach, to play music, to write, and the like. These are permitted on holidays, even though performed for gain. Theologians also reckon transcribing among the *Liberal* works, because transcribing is connected with the instruction of the mind.

3. Finally, *common* works, called also *intermediate works,* are those that are performed, not only by servants, but also by men in a liberal condition of life.

2. WHICH ARE THE WORKS FORBIDDEN ON FESTIVALS?

On festivals, servile works only are prohibited, but not those which are called *liberal or* common. This is the doctrine of theologians who follow the opinion of St. Thomas.[13895] Corporal works that have nothing to do with the ceremonies of worship, are called servile only so far as they properly belong to servants, but not so when they are commonly performed as well by persons of liberal condition as by servants. Before this passage, the saint had explained that in the precept of sanctifying holidays servile works only are understood to be forbidden. Hence, according to the more common and more probable opinion, it is not forbidden on holidays to travel or to fowl; because these are at least common to persons in a servile and liberal condition of life. Fishing, when attended with great labor, appears to be a servile work, as may be inferred from the canon law in which the Pope[13896] has given the dispensation to fish for sardines.

It is necessary to remark that the third commandment forbids all work connected with the law courts, such as to cite parties, to carry on trials, to pronounce or execute sentences, unless they are excused by necessity or piety.[13897]

It is also forbidden on festivals to sell goods in public shops; but this is permitted at fairs and markets where it is the custom to do so, or when the things sold are necessary for daily use, such as food, wine, beer, and the like.

3. WHAT CAUSES PERMIT SERVILE WORK ON A HOLIDAY?

1. A *dispensation* of the bishop or even of the parish priest, when there is a just cause for dispensation, excuses servile work on festivals.

2. Servile work on holidays is excused by any *custom* existing in the place, provided the custom is permitted and not censured by the bishop.

3. *Charity*, or the relief of a neighbor who is need, is a sufficient excuse.

4. *Necessity*, as when a person would not have food for the day it he did not work, or when a person works in order to avoid a grievous loss. Hence it is lawful to reap corn, to gather grapes in the vintage, to gather coin, hay, olives, chestnuts, and other fruits that are in danger of being damaged. It is also lawful to do whatever is necessary for the day, such as to prepare food, to arrange and sweep the house, to make the beds, etc.

5. *Piety* excuses servile work; thus, it is lawful to cultivate the ground belonging to poor churches, or to build them through charity; but this cannot be done without the leave of the bishop, or without great actual necessity.

6. *Smallness of matter* excuses from the violation of the precept. But what should we consider to be sufficient matter for mortal sin? Some theologians say, that to work for an hour is a mortal sin; others extend the time to two hours; but unless there is a just cause, the shortness of the time employed in work does not excuse from venial sin.

4. CONCLUSION

Some will not work on the other days of the week, and 0n holidays they are not ashamed to work for half the day, and even compel their servants and children to work. “Father,” they say, “we are poor.” But it is not every kind of poverty that excuses from working on festivals. Your poverty or necessity must be such that, unless you work, you will not have food for the day for yourself and for your family. Every one who lives by his labor is poor, and in some necessity; but such necessity does not excuse from sin.

Let children remember that when a parent commands them to work on a holiday, in opposition to the law of God, they are not bound to obey him: on the contrary, if they work, they are guilty of sin. They are excused from sin only when, if they do not work, they will suffer a great loss, or at least a grievous inconvenience; for the precepts of the Church are not binding when the observance of them is attended with grievous inconvenience.

But the servants of a master who obliges them to work on holidays of obligation should plainly say to him: “This is a holiday; I am a Christian, and I will not work.” If the master compels them by grievous threats, it is their duty to leave him, and to seek a master who observes the Christian law.

I will tell you how God punishes those who work on holidays of obligation. In the diocese of Fano (Pontifical States) they were celebrating the feast of St. Ursus, the bishop and the patron of the place. A countryman went on that day to plough as usual; and when he was asked why he did not respect the festival of St. Ursus, he answered: “If he is Ursus, I am a man in want of bread.” At these words the earth opened, and swallowed him up alive, with his plough and oxen; and the marks of the chasm may still be seen in the place where it happened, which is now called Villa de Rossano.

My good man, what do you expect? Do you imagine that by working on festivals you will improve your fortune? You are mistaken. By your work you will only increase your misery. There were two shoemakers; one of them lived in comfort with his family; the other, though he was always working, Sundays and week-days, was ever starving, and had nothing to give to his children. This man began once to complain of his misery, and said to the other, who always observed the festivals: “Friend, how do you contrive to live? I work and toil unceasingly, and yet I am not able to provide food for my family.” The other replied: “I have a friend to whom I go every morning—he supplies me with whatever I want.” The former rejoined: “Introduce me to your kind friend. The other promised to comply with his request, and brought him one morning to the church, where they heard Mass. On leaving the church the former said: “Where is the friend who provides for you?” The other answered: “Did you not see Jesus Christ on the altar? He is the friend who supports me.” Thus my brethren, be assured that it is God alone, and not sin, that provides for us. He provides for all who observe his law, and not for those who despise it.

It is right that all should know (many already know it) that in 1748 Benedict XIV. permitted the inhabitants of the kingdom of Naples and Sicily to work on all holidays, except on the Sundays and principal festivals; but did not exempt them from the obligation of hearing Mass. The festivals on which they are not allowed to work are all Sundays, Christmas-day, the Circumcision (that is, New Year’s Day), the Epiphany, Ascension Day, Corpus Christi; the festivals of the Conception, Nativity, Annunciation, Purification, and Assumption of the Most Holy Mary; the feasts of St. Peter and St. Paul, of All Saints, and of all the principal patrons of *every* city or town of the diocese. [In the United States: All Sundays in the year, the Circumcision of our Lord (January 1), the Ascension of our Lord, the Assumption of the B. V. Mary (August 15), All Saints (November 1), Immaculate Conception (December 8), Nativity of our Lord, or Christmas-day.]

II. THE OBLIGATION OF HEARING MASS

1. WHAT IS MASS?

It is the sacrifice which is offered to the divine Majesty of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine.

2. HOW SHOULD ONE HEAR MASS?

To satisfy the obligation of hearing Mass, two things are necessary: an intention and attention.

1. It is necessary to have an *intention* of hearing Mass, so that a man who is forced into church against his will, or who enters only to look about him and see the place, or to wait there for a friend, or for any other purpose except hearing Mass, does not fulfil the obligation. But, should a person

hear Mass through devotion, believing that the day is not a holiday, is he bound, when he finds that it is a holiday, to hear another Mass? No; it is enough to have done the work commanded without having adverted to the intention of fulfilling the precept of hearing Mass.

2. It is necessary to hear Mass with *attention*—that is, to attend to the sacrifice that is celebrated. This attention may be external and internal. It is certain that a person who hears Mass without external attention does not fulfil his obligation; for example, if during the Mass you are asleep, or are drunk, or are employed in writing, talking, or other external operations, you do not fulfil the precept of hearing Mass.

It is disputed among theologians whether a person who attends Mass without internal intention satisfies his obligation; that is, if he sees what is going on, but is at the same time interiorly distracted, and employed in thinking not on God, but on other things. Many theologians say that he is guilty of a venial, but not of a grievous sin, as often as he is voluntarily distracted, and that he fulfils the substance of the precept because he hears Mass with a moral presence. But the greater number of theologians, following St. Thomas, teach that such a person does not fulfil the obligation of hearing Mass, namely, when he is conscious that he is distracted, and not attending to the Mass, and positively wishes to continue in his distractions.

Hence I exhort you, in hearing Mass, to reflect on the great sacrifice which is being offered. Meditate on the Passion of Jesus Christ; for the Mass is a renewal of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ offered on the cross. Or meditate on some eternal truth—on death, judgment, or hell. Let him who knows how to read make use of some little book, or let him recite the office of the Blessed Virgin. Let those who cannot read, if they will not meditate, say the Rosary, or some other vocal prayers: let them, at least, attend to what the priest is doing.

Does a person who makes his confession during Mass satisfy the obligation of hearing Mass? No; for then he would attend it as a criminal accusing himself of his sins, and not as a person offering sacrifice; and it is certain that all who hear Mass offer sacrifice along with the priest.

Hence it would be advisable during Mass to offer the holy sacrifice for the ends for which it was instituted. The Mass was instituted, 1. In order to honor God; 2. To thank him; 3. To obtain the satisfaction for sin; 4. To obtain the graces we stand in need of.

During the Mass, then, we ought, *first,* to offer to God the sacrifice of his Son in honor of his divine Majesty; *secondly,* in thanksgiving for all the benefits we have received from him; *thirdly,* in satisfaction for our sins; and *fourthly,* to implore of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, the graces necessary for our salvation. At the elevation of the Host, let us ask God to pardon our sins, for the sake of Jesus Christ, and at the elevation of the chalice, let us beg of God, through the merits of that divine blood, the gift of his love and holy perseverance. And during the Communion of the priest, let us make a spiritual Communion, saying: My Jesus, I desire to receive Thee; I embrace Thee; do not permit me to be ever separated from Thee.

3. WHAT SIN IS IT WHEN ONE IS ABSENT FROM A PART OF MASS?

There are several other things that must be noticed. *First,* he who is absent from a considerable part of the Mass is guilty of mortal sin. But what part of the Mass is to be regarded as considerable? According to some theologians, a person who is present from the beginning of the Offertory, or of the secret prayer which the priest says after the Gospel, to the end of the Mass, is not guilty of mortal sin; because, as St. Isidore writes, in ancient times the Mass began with the Offertory. However, the more probable and more common opinion is that it is a grievous sin to be absent from the beginning of the Mass to the end of the first Gospel. But it is commonly taught that a person who is absent from the beginning of the Mass to the Epistle, or during the part of the Mass that follows the Communion of the priest, does not sin mortally. I say that he who is not present at the Consecration, or at the Communion of the priest, does not satisfy the obligation of hearing Mass.

In the second place, you take notice that Innocent XI. condemned a proposition[13898] which asserted that the obligation of hearing Mass is fulfilled by being present at the half of two Masses celebrated at the same time by two different priests. But is the obligation fulfilled by a person who hears the half of two Masses successively—that is, the half of a Mass celebrated by one priest, and another half of a Mass afterwards celebrated by a different priest? Many theologians answer in the affirmative, provided the person is present at the Consecration and Communion of the same Mass.

4. WHERE SHOULD ONE BE TO HEAR MASS?

It must be remembered that a person satisfies his obligation, who, in hearing Mass, remains in the choir behind the high altar, or behind a wall or a pillar in the Church, 0r immediately outside the Church, though he does not see the priest, provided he is united with the people in the church, so that at any rate, from what they are doing, he may know what the priest is doing at the altar.

With respect to those who have oratories in their houses, only the following persons can satisfy the obligation of hearing Mass there: 1. The heads of the family to whom the privilege is granted ; 2. Their family, that is, their relatives and connections to the fourth degree, provided always they live in the same house, and at the expense of the privileged party, and provided that one of the privileged persons is present at the Mass; 3. With regard to servants, it is only those that board in the house, and are required by the master during the Mass—either to serve the priest, or to assist the master when he kneels or sits down, to read the meditation, or the like. [Only these persons can satisfy the obligation by hearing Mass in the oratory; the rest must go to the parish church; but this usually applies only to Catholic countries.]

5. WHAT ARE THE CAUSES THAT EXCUSE FROM THE OBLIGATION OF HEARING MASS?

1. A physical or moral impossibility is an excusing cause. A person is in a *physical* impossibility when he is confined to bed by sickness, when he is in prison, or when he is blind, and has no one to conduct him to the church.

2. A person is in a *moral* impossibility of hearing Mass when he cannot go to the church without exposing himself to the danger of some grievous temporal or spiritual evil.

Hence the persons 0n guard in cities, or in armies, or entrusted with the care of herds of cattle, or of houses, or of infants, or of the sick, are exempt from the obligation of hearing Mass, when they have no person to take their place.

Any grievous inconvenience is also an excusing cause; hence the sick who are convalescent, and unable to go to the church without great pain, or danger of relapse, are excused from the obligation of hearing Mass.

Also servants who cannot leave the house without grievous inconvenience to their master or to themselves, who, for example, if they left the house, would be in danger of being dismissed, and would scarcely be able to get employment from others.

A notable distance from church (theologians say three miles) is a sufficient excuse; a less distance excuses from sin when it is raining or snowing, or when a person is infirm, or the road to the church is very bad.

In those places where it is prevalent, the custom of not leaving home for some time after childbirth, or after the death of a near relative, is a sufficient excuse for not hearing Mass. But some absent themselves from the church, and go to public places. Such persons are not excused by the custom of the place from hearing Mass.

Persons may sometimes be excused by want of clothes, or the means of appearing in church in a manner suited to their condition; but if there be a chapel in the neighborhood in which Mass is celebrated at an early hour, they are bound to go there and hear Mass.

My dear Christians, would that I could persuade you all to hear Mass every day! Oh, how great a treasure is the Mass to all who hear it with devotion and piety! Besides the indulgences which are granted for hearing Mass, great graces are obtained (Innocent VI. annexed an indulgence of more than three thousand years to each Mass that is heard). The fruits of the Passion of Jesus Christ are applied to every one that hears Mass; for, as I have already said, each person who hears Mass offers sacrifice along with the priest, and offers to God, for himself and for others, the death and all the merits of the Saviour.

Now see what great temporal and spiritual blessings are bestowed on those who hear Mass. Three merchants one day agreed to set out together from Gubbio. One of them wished to hear Mass before his departure; but the others would not wait for him, and set out by themselves. But in passing over the river Corfuone, which had swelled to a great height in consequence of the rain that had fallen during the night, the bridge gave way, and they were drowned. The third, who had waited to hear Mass, found his two companions dead on the bank of the river, and thankfully acknowledged the grace he had received on account of having heard Mass.

Listen to another fact still more appalling. It is related that in the court of a certain prince there was a page who was so devout that he never omitted to hear Mass every day. Another page, through envy, accused him to the prince, saying that he was too familiar with the princess, his wife. The prince was so enraged, that without further examination he gave orders to some iron-founders, who had care of a furnace, to throw into it the first of his pages that should go to the place, and immediately to make known to him the result. He then sent the page who had been accused to the place in which the furnace was. On his way the page heard the bell for Mass, and waited to be present at the holy sacrifice. Not hearing immediately what he expected from the persons employed at the furnace, the prince sent the other page to see what had happened. The miserable accuser, being the first that arrived, was cast into the furnace, and burned alive. The innocent page afterward appeared, and being reproved by the prince for not having promptly obeyed his order, said that he had stopped on his way to hear Mass. The prince began to suspect the accusation to be false, sought for better information, and discovered the innocence of the devout page.

6. WHY HAVE FESTIVALS BEEN INSTITUTED, AND HOW SHOULD WE USE THEM?

God has instituted festivals that we may honor him, and lay up merits for heaven, by going to the confraternity, or to the church, to hear a sermon, to say the Rosary, to visit the Most Holy Sacrament, to recommend ourselves to the Virgin Mary, or to our holy advocates.

But how many are there who spend the festivals in dishonoring God, and gaining greater merits for hell? How do so many spend the holidays? In disputes and quarrels (how many murders are committed on festivals!); in making love, even in the church; in standing in a public place to indulge in bad thoughts, in immodest discourses with wicked companions, or in going to the tavern to gamble, to blaspheme, and to get drunk. The parish priest preaches, and some will not hear his Mass in order to avoid the trouble of hearing a sermon. Of what use, then, are holidays to such persons? They serve only to bury the soul deeper in hell by multiplying sins.

I have said that some, for the purpose of escaping the sermon, absent themselves from the church. St. John Chrysostom says that it would be better for some if they never entered the church; because they commit greater sins by their irreverences than they would by not coming at all. It would not be so criminal not to come at all to church, as it is to come in such a manner. Oh, what a horrible thing to see the irreverences which are committed nowadays in churches! And after all this, we hear of persons complaining of the rigor of the divine chastisements!

Many authors state that it was in punishment of irreverences committed in the church that the kingdom of Cyprus was lost, and fell into the hands of the Turks Eugene Cistenius, who was ambassador of Ferdinand I. at the court of Soliman, relates that at the sepulchre of Mohammed the Turks neither speak, nor spit, nor cough, nor turn about to look at any object of curiosity; and in leaving the temple they walk backwards, in order to avoid turning their back to the sepulchre. Compare this with the conduct of Christians in church! They speak in a loud tone; they look about in every direction to gaze at the women, and see who is pretty and who is ugly; they indulge in bad thoughts; and some even have the temerity to come to the church to make love, without one thought of the reverence due to Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament. Ah, my God, how does it happen that the church does not fall upon such persons? Why does not Jesus Christ depart from us, as he has done before now?

Verme tells us that in a church where scandalous irreverence was committed, a horrible voice was once heard at the elevation of the Host, pronouncing these words: “People, I depart hence.” Then the Host was seen raised up to about the middle of the church, and the same words were again heard: “People, I depart hence.” Then it gradually ascended as high as the roof, when the same words were heard for the third time: “People, I depart hence.” The Host then vanished, and immediately the church fell, and the miserable congregation was crushed beneath the ruins. Ah, brethren! how can God bear with us when he sees that in order to offend him we go to the church in which he dispenses his graces to us?

III. FASTING ON VIGILS AND DURING LENT

Before I conclude this precept of sanctifying holidays, I will explain briefly the fast which the holy Church commands us to observe on vigils in honor of the festivals which occur on the subsequent day, and in Lent, as a preparation for the celebration of Easter. [We must here include the fast of the Ember days, and add the abstinence that is to be observed on Fridays throughout the year.]

1. WHAT MUST WE DO IN REGARD TO FASTING?

In the fast of the Church three things are commanded:

1. To abstain from forbidden meats; 2. To eat but one meal in the day; 3. Not to eat the meal before the hour prescribed.

With regard to the abstinence, the use of flesh-meat and of white-meats (milk food) is forbidden, except in places in which the custom exists of eating white-meat (milk food) and eggs. But this is to be understood only for vigils; for, with regard to Lent, it is certain that the use of white-meats is opposed to the condemnation of the thirty-second proposition by Alexander VII. Benedict XIV.[13899] has declared that a person who has obtained the permission of his physician and parish priest or confessor, to eat flesh-meat during Lent, or on vigils of the saints, cannot take flesh-meat and fish at the one meal, but must abstain from fish if he eats flesh-meat, but not if he uses only white-meats (milk food). [See diocesan regulations as to fasting.]

2. The *second* obligation of the fast is to eat but one meal in the day, and a small collation, which must not exceed eight ounces. Some persons eat at collation more—ten, fifteen, or even twenty ounces: what a fast! “But, Father, I eat so that I am still hungry after eating.” But this is not enough. In ancient times Christians ate only once a day—in the evening; and except at that meal, they tasted nothing during the day. The Church afterwards permitted a collation, but not to exceed eight ounces. A person who notably exceeds the quantity allowed for collation is guilty of a mortal sin. However, young persons who have not attained the age of twenty-one, and the old who have completed their sixtieth year, and require to eat more frequently than once a day, are excused from the obligation of fasting. They also are excused who are employed in laborious business, such as laborers, weavers, masons, etc. Women who are pregnant, or who give suck, are exempt from the obligation to fasting, and also the poor, who at their one meal could not get sufficient food to support them during the day.

3. The *third* obligation imposed by the law of fasting is, according to the present custom, not to take the meal before mid-day. Hence to dine an hour before mid-day 0n fast days is a mortal sin, as the generality of theologians rightly maintain, in accordance with St. Thomas,[13900] who says that he who notably anticipates the hour prescribed for the meal violates the fast.

It is necessary also to remember that Benedict XIV., and still more clearly Clement XIII.,[13901] declared that persons who have obtained permission to eat flesh-meats or white-meats (milk food) are obliged to take but the one meal in the day; and at their collation they can use no other food than that which is permitted to those who are bound to fast, and are not dispensed; that is, at their collation they cannot use either flesh-meat or white-meats.

Chapter IV

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

> “Honor thy father and thy mother.”[13902]

THIS commandment principally regards the duty of children to their parents; but it also comprehends the duty of parents to their children; the mutual obligations of masters and servants, and of husband and wife.

I. THE OBLIGATION OF CHILDREN TOWARDS THEIR PARENTS

A child is obliged to love, to respect, and to obey his parents. He is bound first to love them.

1. HOW DOES ANY ONE SIN AGAINST THE LOVE THAT HE OWES TO HIS PARENTS, OR AGAINST FILIAL PIETY?

He commits a mortal sin against this obligation of love:

1. If he desires any grievous evil to his father or mother; and in this he is, guilty of a double sin: he sins against charity and against the filial piety due to a parent.

2. He sins if he detracts from the reputation of his parents, and he then commits three sins, one against charity, another against filial piety, and the third against justice.

3. He is guilty of sin if he neglects to assist his parents, as well in their temporal as in their spiritual necessities; thus, if a parent is dangerously ill, his children are bound to admonish him of his danger, and to induce him to receive the last sacraments. A child is obliged to support a father or mother when they are in great want. *Son*, says Ecclesiastics, *support the old age of thy father.*[13903] Our parents have provided for us in our childhood; it is but just that we support them in their old age. St. Ambrose[13904] says that the stork supplies its parents with food when it sees them old and unable to

provide for their wants. How horrible the ingratitude of the son who, though he knows that his mother is dying of hunger, squanders away his money in the tavern!

It is wonderful what love has been shown by children to their parents. In Japan, in 1604, there were three brothers, laborers, who had to support their mother, but with all their efforts they could not give enough. What then had they to do? It so happened that the emperor had issued an edict promising a large reward to any one who should bring a thief to justice. The brothers, therefore, agreed among themselves that one should pretend to be a thief, and that the other two should bring him to prison, and so support their mother with the reward they would obtain. They then cast lots which of them was to die—for death was in that country the punishment of theft; the lot fell on the youngest, who was bound and taken to prison; but when his two brothers left him there it was observed that they embraced him with tears. When this was told to the judge he ordered the other two to be followed to their home. On their arrival there the mother was told what had been done; but she said that she would rather die than that her son should die for her sake. “Take back the money,” she said, “and restore me my son.” When the judge heard of this he acquainted the emperor with it, who so admired their filial piety that he settled a large pension on the three brothers. Thus did God reward their love and affection to their mother.

But now listen, on the other hand, to the chastisement that God inflicted on an ungrateful child. Bishop Abelly[13905] mentions a fact related by Thomas Cantipratensis, which occurred in his own time. There was a rich man in France who had an only son whom he wished to marry to a person far superior to him in rank. The parents of the lady consented to the marriage on the condition that the father of the young man would transfer all his property to the son, and depend on him for his support. The father consented. In the beginning he was treated with great kindness; but after some time, in order to please his wife, the son banished him from his house, and gave him but little assistance. The father came to ask relief one day when his son had prepared a great banquet for his friends, but his son drove him away with harshness and disrespect. He was, however, soon punished, for as soon as he had sat down to table a toad flew on his face which no skill could remove. Then he began to repent of the ingratitude with which he had treated his father, and went to the bishop to receive absolution. The bishop enjoined as a penance that he should go through all the provinces of the kingdom with his face uncovered, confessing his sins, as an example for other children. Cantipratensis states that the fact was related to him by a Father of the Order of St. Dominic, who had seen the unhappy man in Paris with his face horribly disfigured, and had heard the circumstances from him.[13906] Be careful, then, O children! to love your parents, and to assist them when they are in poverty, in sickness, or in prison. If you do not, you must expect to receive great chastisement from God. At the very least, he will permit your children to treat you as you have treated your parents. Verme relates that a son had banished his father from his house; the father fell sick and went to the hospital, and sent to his son for a pair of sheets. The son sent them to him by one of his own children. The child took only one of them to his grandfather; and when his father asked him why he had not taken both, he answered, I have kept the other for you when you go to the hospital. You see, then, as you treat your parents so your children will treat you.

2. HOW DOES ONE SIN AGAINST THE RESPECT DUE TO ONE’S PARENTS?

In the second place, a child is obliged to show respect to his father and mother. *Honor thy father in work, and word, and all patience,*[13907] says God. It is, then, the duty of a child to honor his father *in work and word.*

Hence it is a sin to reply to parents in a tone of resentment, or in a loud, disrespectful tone of voice. It is a greater sin to deride them, to mock them, to utter imprecations against them, to insult them by calling them *fools, beasts, robbers, drunkards, sorcerers, miscreants,* or any such opprobrious names. Words of this kind, when uttered in their presence, are mortal sins. In the Old Law, they who injured their father or mother were condemned to death. *He that cursed his father or mother shall die the death.*[13908] At present they are not punished with temporal death, but they are accursed by God and condemned to eternal death. *He is cursed of God that angereth his mother.*[13909]

It would be a still greater sin to raise the hand, or to threaten, as though you were going to strike a parent. Few shall be your days, you who have struck your mother. For the Scripture says,—*Honor thy father and thy* *mother, that thou mayest live a long time, and that it may be well with thee in the land.*[13910] If, then, he that honors his parents shall have a long life, and comfort in this world, surely the child that maltreats a father or mother shall live but a short time, and shall live in misery.

St. Bernardine of Siena[13911] relates that a young man who had died on the gibbet appeared to have the hoary beard of old age. It was revealed to the bishop, while praying for his soul, that if, in punishment of his disobedience to his parents, God had not abandoned him to the crimes which brought him to a shameful death, he should have lived to a great age.

St. Augustine[13912] tells us of a still more terrible case. In the province of Cappadocia there was a mother who had a great number of children. One day her eldest son first insulted her and then beat her. The other children did not interfere with their brother as they ought to have done. The mother was enraged at this conduct, and committed another sin; she went to the church, and, before the baptistery in which her children had been baptized, she cursed them all, begging of God to inflict on them a chastisement that would excite the terror of the whole world. All her children, accordingly, were seized with great tremor in all their limbs. They were afterwards dispersed in different places, carrying with them the marks of their mother's malediction; and she, grieving at the scourge that had fallen on her children, yielded to despair, and strangled herself. St. Augustine adds that while he was one day in a church which contained the relics of St. Stephen, two of these young men came in trembling to such a degree that every one took notice of them, but through the intercession of St. Stephen they were restored to health before the relics of the saint.

I will give another example. A young man was barbarously dragging his father by the feet along the road. When they had reached a certain place the father said: "Have done, my son; no farther: for I once dragged my father thus far; and in punishment of my sin God has justly permitted me to be dragged here by you."

O children, have you heard how God punishes those who maltreat their parents? You will perhaps say: "I have a father and a mother who are unendurable." But attend to what God says: *Son, support the old age of thy father, and grieve him not in his life.*[13913] "Son," says the Lord, "do you not see that your father is a poor old man, afflicted with the evils of old age?

You must not grieve him in the few remaining years of his life.” The Scripture adds: *And if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not when thou art in thy strength.*[13914] The aged sometimes appear to be unreasonable; but it is in bearing with their fits of impatience that the virtue of children consists.

2. HOW DOES ONE SIN AGAINST THE OBEDIENCE DUE TO ONE’S PARENTS?

In the third place, a child owes obedience to a parent in all things that are just. *Children,* says St. Paul, *obey your parents in the Lord.*[13915] Hence, a child is bound to obey his parents in what concerns the service of the family, and particularly in all that regards morals—for instance, when they command him not to play or associate with low companions, or to enter a suspected house, and if he disobeys he is guilty of sin.

Theophilus Rainaud relates that on the borders of France and Savoy there was a young nobleman who was disobedient to his widowed mother; for though she had over and over again commanded him to come home before dusk, and not to stay out till midnight, as was his habit, he still persisted in doing so. So one night she ordered the door to be locked. When he came and found it closed against him, and could not make himself heard, call as loud as he would, he began to curse and reproach his mother, and then, along with his brother and a servant, who were with him, he took shelter in a neighboring house. After going to rest the brother and servant heard a frightful noise, and saw a hideous giant entering the room in which the young man lay. The giant took him by the feet, stretched him on a table, and cut him in pieces with a sabre, and then gave him to be devoured by four horrible dogs. The brother and servant afterwards made search for his body, but could not find it. The brother was so terrified that he became a Carthusian, and after a holy life died a holy death.

This is how God chastises children who are disobedient to their parents. But I must say one word on the text of St. Paul, already quoted: *Children, obey your parents in the Lord.*[13916] Mark the words *in the Lord.* They mean that we should obey parents in all things that are pleasing to God, but not in what is offensive to him.

If, for example, a mother commanded a child to commit theft, or to strike a person, is he obliged to obey her? Not at all—he sins if he does obey.

Thus, also, in choosing a state of life, whether to be married or to remain single, to become a priest or a religious, a son, according to St. Thomas,[13917] and all theologians, is not bound to obey his parents. However, a son who contracts a marriage that brings dishonor on the family is guilty of sin. With regard to entering religion, if your parents are poor and in great necessity, and if you can by your industry relieve them, it is not lawful for you to abandon them and become a religious. But, on the other hand, fathers or mothers who oblige their children to become priests or monks commit a mortal sin; and if they force their daughters to become nuns, or to enter a monastery, they incur excommunication, according to the Council of Trent.[13918]

Parents are guilty of sin if they force a child to marry who wishes to lead a life of celibacy, or if they hinder a child from entering a religious Order. Some parents make no scruple of turning away children from their vocation; but they ought to know that it is a mortal sin to do so. We are to be saved according to the vocation God gives us; and, therefore, the child, if he enter the religious Order to which God calls him, will be saved; but if, at the instigation of his father or mother, he remain in the world, he will lead a wicked life, and be damned. But some parents care not whether a child is damned or not, provided he remains in the family. “Such fathers,” says St. Bernard, “should not be called fathers, but murderers of their children.”[13919] But God will chastise them severely, not only in the next, but also in this world; he will make the very child whom they diverted from his vocation the instrument of their chastisement; for, having lost his vocation, he will abandon himself to vice, and bring ruin on the family. Oh, how many families have been ruined on account of parents making children give up their vocation! I will give you an instance.

In his exposition of the 4th and 25th psalms, Father Alexander Faia, of the Society of Jesus, relates that at Tudela, in Spain, in Old Castile, a very rich man had an only son, whom he had destined to perpetuate the family. But the son, having a vocation for the Society of Jesus, sought admission with so much earnestness that the Superiors at last received him. When his father heard of this, he went to the novitiate and made so many complaints, that to please him the son went home again. But he felt himself again called to forsake the world. Being unwilling to return to the Society, he entered into the Order of St. Francis. But the father induced him a second time to renounce the religious state. Soon afterward it happened that the old man wanted his son to marry a person he had fixed upon; but his son had selected another lady. This gave rise to so many altercations, and even hatred, that one day, in a quarrel, the son killed his father. For this he was taken, tried, and hanged.

Fathers and mothers, take care not to interfere with the vocation of your sons or daughters: do not hinder them from giving themselves to God. What greater source of consolation can a father or mother have than to see a son or a daughter consecrated to God, and leading the life of a saint? The mother of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, who was the Marchioness of Castiglione, seeing him called to the Society of Jesus, endeavored, though he was her eldest and only son, to facilitate his entrance into religion. This is the real duty of parents, to help and induce their children to become saints. And should your parents even endeavor to prevent you from entering a more perfect state, where you could serve God better, do as Theodore, a young man mentioned in the life of St. Pachomius, did. He was an Egyptian, an only son, and heir to large possessions. On a certain festival he prepared a great banquet: on that day God made him feel that all his riches would profit him nothing at the hour of his death. That very day he shut himself up in his chamber, and besought the Lord, with many tears, to make known to him the state that he ought to choose in order to secure his eternal salvation. God inspired him to go to the monastery of Pachomius. He forsook all things, and fled from his family. His mother went to St. Pachomius with an order from the emperor to restore her son; but Theodore prayed to God with so much fervor that he obtained also for his mother the grace to leave the world, and retire into a convent of nuns.

II. OBLIGATION OF PARENTS TOWARDS THEIR CHILDREN

There are two principal obligations of parents towards their children—to provide food for them, and to give them a religious education.

1. WHAT IS THE DUTY OF PARENTS IN REGARD TO THE SUSTENANCE OF THEIR CHILDREN?

A father is bound to give sustenance to his children, though they are disorderly, though they have squandered away their portion, and though they have contracted an unsuitable marriage. And why? Because they are still his children. Therefore, a father is guilty of sin if, without a just cause, he banishes a son from his house, or if at death he deprives a child of his legitimate portion, or if he refuses a dowry to a daughter who wishes to marry a person suited to her condition. But what are we to say to those inhuman fathers who squander their money in eating and gaming in the tavern, and leave their poor children in want of bread?

The most savage beasts are careful to provide food for their offspring. Men alone are brutal enough to suffer their children to die of hunger!

We may here remark, that brothers also, when they are able, are bound to provide for their brothers, and give a dowry to their sisters, when in great distress. This is the common opinion of theologians.

2. WHAT IS THE DUTY OF PARENTS IN REGARD TO THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN?

With regard to education, it is certain that the good or ill success of children depends 0n the good or bad education that they receive from their parents. God has instituted matrimony, that, with the direction and instruction of their parents, children may come to serve God, and be saved; otherwise they would be mere outcasts, if they had no one to tell them what to do, nor to correct and chastise them if they neglected to correct their vices and improve their lives; for it often happens that, when admonition fails, the fear of punishment is effectual.

We see, by experience, that holy parents bring up holy children. St. Catharine of Sweden, because she was the daughter of St. Bridget, became a saint. St. Henry the Emperor became a saint because he was the son of St. Stephen, King of Hungary. Queen Blanche, the mother of St. Louis, King of France, was a great servant of God, and thus he became a saint. This good mother used to say to her son in his childhood, “My son, I would rather see you dead in your coffin than guilty of mortal sin.” I remember another good mother, whose great care was the sanctification of her children. She would say, “I do not want to be the mother of children damned in hell.”

But, on the other hand, there are fathers and mothers who care not whether their children are virtuous or wicked—whether they are saved or damned. Origen has justly said, that parents shall have to answer for all the vices of their children. It is unquestionably the fact that, ordinarily, parents are the cause of the sins of their children, though the children will have to answer for their own faults. Some fathers and mothers, through fear of displeasing a child, neglect to reprove and chastise him, and are thus the cause of his ruin. Barbarous and cruel fathers and mothers! Tell me now, if a father saw his child fall into the water and, though the child might easily be saved by dragging him out by the hair, were to let him be drowned for fear of hurting him by pulling his hair, would you not call that father cruel and unfeeling? Far more cruel is the father who, through fear of giving them pain, neglects to correct or chastise his children for their faults. Would it not be cruelty in a father to give to an inexperienced child a razor with which he might inflict on himself a deadly wound? Much more cruel is the father who gives money to his children to spend on their appetites, or who permits them to associate with bad companions, or to frequent a dangerous house; for the greatest concern of parents should be to remove their children from the occasions of sin.

When admonition or correction is not sufficient, it is necessary to inflict corporal chastisement, especially while the children are young; for when they are grown up, it is impossible to restrain them. *He that spareth the rod hateth his son.*[13920] Parents hate the child whom they neglect to chastise when he stands in need of chastisement, and they shall be chastised by the Lord. In punishment of not having chastised his children as he ought, the high-priest Heli and his sons all perished together in one day, by the judgment of God, as we read in the Scriptures.[13921]

But a parent must chastise his children in moderation, not in passion, as some fathers and mothers do; such chastisement produces no fruit; on the contrary, it makes children more perverse. First, they should admonish, then threaten, and in the end chastise; but always with the tenderness of a parent, and not with the harshness of a galley-sergeant; with discretion, and without imprecations or offensive words. It will be sufficient to shut them up in a room, to diminish their food, to forbid them to wear their best clothes, and, when necessary, to use the rod, but not a thick stick. Do not, therefore, touch your children while your passion continues. First allow your anger to cool, and then calmly inflict chastisement.

3. HOW DO PARENTS SIN IN REGARD TO THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN?

1. Parents, then, are guilty of sin against the duty of educating their children, if they do not instruct them in matters of faith, and in what regards their eternal salvation. They ought at least to send them on Sundays to the parish church to learn the Christian doctrine, and not send them on errands, as some do. So their children grow up without knowing how to make their confession, and are even ignorant of the principal articles of faith; they know not what is meant by the Trinity, by the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, by mortal sin, judgment, hell, heaven, 0r eternity; and through their ignorance they are damned. But their parents will have to account to God for them.

2. A parent violates his duty towards his children, if he does not correct them when they are guilty of blaspheming, of stealing, or of uttering obscene words, or if he neglects to chastise them when chastisement is necessary; and parents are bound to inquire what kind of life their children lead, what places they frequent, and with what sort of persons they associate when they leave home. This is a duty of every parent. I should like to know, then, how is it possible to excuse mothers who allow their daughters to keep company with persons in love with them? They desire to see their daughters married, but they do not care whether they commit sin. These are the mothers of whom David speaks, who, for the interest of the family, immolate their daughters to the devil. *And they sacrificed their sons and their daughters to devils.*[13922] Some mothers bring young men into the house to amuse themselves with their daughters, that they may be under an obligation of marrying them, and that they may be bound with the chain of sin. But do not such mothers see that for every sin that these lovers commit they themselves are bound by a new chain of hell? “Father,” they say, “there is no harm in it.” Is there n0 evil in it? Do you expect that tow thrown into the fire will not burn? Oh, how many mothers shall we see condemned on the day of judgment for seeking to hasten the marriage of their daughters by such means as this!

3. Parents are guilty of sin if they neglect to make their children receive the sacraments at the proper time, or to make them observe the festivals and precepts of the Church.

4. They commit a sin (and this is a double sin) if they give scandal to their children by blaspheming, or by speaking immodestly, or by committing any other scandalous sin in their presence; for a father is bound to give good example to his children, who, like young monkeys, imitate whatever they see, but with this difference, that they more readily imitate bad actions to which our corrupt nature is inclined, than examples of virtue, to which nature has a repugnance. How can children begin to lead a life of virtue when they hear their father blaspheming, talking scandal, and insulting his neighbor, uttering imprecations, expressions of revenge and obscenity, and indicating his diabolical maxims: You must not submit to maltreatment from any one. God is merciful: there are some sins that he tolerates. Mothers say to their daughters, "You must talk, and not be so stiff and unyielding." What virtue can be expected from children who know that their father spends the whole day in the public-house, and comes home drunk; that he frequents a house of ill-fame, that he goes to confession only at Easter, or perhaps not even then? St. Thomas[13923] says, that such parents, as much as in them lies, oblige their children to commit sin. Hence arises the ruin of so many souls that are damned; because children take bad example from their parents, and afterwards give bad example to their children: and thus fathers, children, and grandchildren all go to hell. Some parents complain that their children are vicious. *Do men,* says Jesus Christ, *gather grapes off thorns?*[13924] Did you ever see grapes gathered from thorns? How, then, can the children be virtuous when the parents are vicious? It would be a miracle if they were.

Hence we see that a father who leads a bad life never corrects the vices of his children. For, after giving bad example to his children, he is ashamed to reprove them for the sins that he himself commits. And if he ever does correct them, the children disregard his admonitions. Did you ever hear of the crab that saw his little ones walking sideways, and at once scolded them, and said: "Why do you walk sideways like that?" They replied: "Father, let us see how you walk." The father walked more crookedly than they did, and therefore he never dared to rebuke them after. It is the same with the parent who gives bad example. He is ashamed to correct the faults of his children. He sees them running to the precipice, and remains silent, because he has not courage to censure what he himself does. But it is certain that a parent who does not correct the faults of his children is guilty of sin. What, then, must a parent who scandalizes his children do? St. Thomas says, that he should at least entreat his children not to imitate his bad example. But of what use, I ask, is this ignominious reproof, if the father continues to give bad example? The truth is, that when a parent gives bad example, neither corrections nor entreaties nor chastisements produce any fruit; all is lost.

4. RULE OF LIFE FOR A FATHER OF A FAMILY

A father who desires to regulate his family well should endeavor first to remove from his house all evil, and afterwards to promote virtue. What I say of fathers is intended also for mothers.

5. WITH REGARD TO REMOVING EVIL

1. A father must prevent his children from associating with bad company, or with ill-conducted servants, or with a master who does not give a good example.

2. He must remove from his house any male or female servant that may be a source of temptation to his daughters or sons. Virtuous parents do not admit into their house young female servants when their sons are grown up.

3. He should banish from his house all books that treat on obscene subjects, or on profane love, romances, and all similar works; such books are the ruin of innocent young persons. Videumaun tells us of a young man who was an example to all his fellow-citizens. He accidentally read an obscene book, and fell into such horrid crimes that he became the scandal of the entire people. His conduct was so scandalous that the magistrates were obliged to banish him from the city. Another young man, who had failed in his efforts to seduce a woman, put a book in her way that treated on love, and thus he made her lose her honor and her soul. A parent is still more strictly bound to remove the class of books that has now become so common, which, besides the other poison, contains also errors against faith or against the Church.

4. He is bound to remove from his house immodest pictures, particularly if they are obscene. Father Rho tells us that Cardinal Bellarmine went into a private gentleman’s house, where he happened to see some immodest pictures; so he said to him: “My friend, I am come to entreat you for God’s sake to do a work of charity in clothing the naked.” The gentleman promised to do so; so the Cardinal pointed to the picture, saying: “There are the naked people I mean.” Oh, how delighted is the devil when he sees in any house an immodest picture! It is related in the life of Father John Baptist Vitelli that a troop of devils was once seen in the hall of a certain nobleman offering incense to an immodest picture that hung there, in return for the souls which they gained by it.

5. A parent should forbid his children to frequent masquerades or public dancing-houses, or to act a part in comedies. He should not allow his daughters to be taught by any strange man. Oh, how dangerous is it for young women to receive instructions from men! Instead of learning to read, they learn to commit mortal sins. A parent should get his daughters instructed by a woman, or by a little brother; I say *little*, for even in a brother, when he is grown up, there is some danger.

Parents must be very particular never to allow their sons and daughters to sleep in the same bed, and much less in the same bed with their father and mother. They should also take care not to permit their daughters to converse alone and familiarly with any man, though he be the first saint in the world. The saints in heaven only are incapable of falling; but the saints on earth are flesh like others, and if they do not avoid the occasions of sin, may become devils. Hence, a father will do well to recommend the most virtuous and steady of his daughters to let him know secretly whenever she sees any of her sisters keep up such familiarity, or when she sees any other disorder in the family.

6. WITH REGARD TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF PIETY

1. A father should make all the members of the family ask of God every morning the grace not to offend him during the day. For this purpose they may say three “Hail Marys” to the Mother of God. The best thing would be to have half an hour’s meditation in common for all the members of the

house, and to make one of them read aloud the points for consideration, as is done in many families.

2. A parent should make his children receive the sacraments at the proper time; that is, the sacrament of confession at the age of seven, and that of Communion at the age of ten, as St. Charles Borromeo ordered; he should also make them receive the sacrament of confirmation at the latter age. Let him make them go afterwards to confession and Communion at least every fifteen days; but he must not force nor oblige them to go to a fixed confessor, lest they might be guilty of sacrilege. To make children fulfil strict duties, it will be very useful to accustom them to do things that are not obligatory; such as to fast on Saturdays, to say the Rosary and Litany of the Blessed Virgin every day, to make an examination of conscience at night; to make acts of faith, hope, and charity; to visit the Most Holy Sacrament; to make a novena before the seven festivals[13925] of the Blessed Virgin. For the same reason he should send his children to sermons, to the Exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament, and to other devotions that are performed in the church. *Bow down their neck from their childhood,*[13926] says the Holy Ghost. St. Louis, King of France, whenever he was beginning anything, used to sign himself with the sign of the cross, and say: "Thus my mother taught me when I was a child." Oh, that all parents would endeavor to bring up their children in such habits! But the misfortune is, that they are more careful to provide for the temporal than for the spiritual welfare of their children, who thus lose both.

3. A parent should often try to instil Christian maxims into the minds of his children, and inculcate the necessity of avoiding bad company and dangerous occasions; of conforming to the will of God; and of patience under crosses and contradictions. Let him place before their eyes the unhappy state of those who live in sin; the importance of salvation; the vanity of the world; the hour of death, which puts an end to all earthly pains and pleasures; the necessity of recommending themselves to God in time of temptations; and the advantages and efficacy of devotion to the Virgin Mary. These maxims make a deep impression on the tender minds of children, they begin to practise them, and thus they persevere in virtue all their life.

III. THE OBLIGATION OF MASTERS, SERVANTS, AND MARRIED PERSONS

1. HOW DO MASTERS SIN IN REGARD TO THEIR SERVANTS?

A master is guilty of sin—

1. If he hinders his servants from observing the holidays by obliging them to work, or by not allowing them time to hear Mass. On the other hand, he is obliged to see that his servants make the paschal Communion, and fulfil the other obligations of a Christian.

2. A master is guilty of sin if he does not correct his servants when they offend God by blasphemies, by obscene words, by scandalous acts, and the like.

3. He commits a sin if he refuses or defers the payment of the wages that he promised.

2. HOW DO SERVANTS SIN IN REGARD TO THEIR MASTERS?

A servant is guilty of sin—

1. If he fails in the performance of the work for which he was hired, or if he does not obey his master as he ought.

2. If he permits any injury to his master, when he can, without inconvenience, prevent it. Indeed when such injury is not done by his fellow-servants, but by a stranger, if he does not prevent it, he is bound to make restitution.

3. A servant is guilty of sin if he leaves his master before the expiration of the time for which he was engaged.

4. He is guilty of sin if he takes occult compensation for services which he judges to be deserving of more wages than his master agreed to give him; for the following proposition was condemned by Innocent XI. “Men and women servants can secretly abstract from their masters sufficient to remunerate them for services which they judge to be worth more than the wages they receive.”[13927] This proposition is condemned as false.

5. A servant is guilty of sin if he co-operates in the sin of his master, even against his will. He can be excused only in some cases, when, by refusing to obey, he would suffer a great loss, and when his co-operation is not in itself intrinsically bad.

3. HOW DO HUSBANDS SIN IN REGARD TO THEIR WIVES?

With regard to married persons, the husband commits sin—

1. If through his fault he leaves his wife in want of food or clothes.

2. If he maltreats her by beating her, slapping her face, or calling her insulting names. The wife is a companion, not a slave. Before marriage, some husbands make great promises: “You shall be the mistress of the house, mistress of me.” And after the lapse of a few months, they treat their wives as slaves. “What! can I not chastise my wife when she is guilty of misconduct?” Yes; if there is a just cause (particularly if your wife fails in chastity), and if, after being corrected several times, she does not amend, you can chastise her, but with moderation. But it is not lawful to beat your wife for trifling defects, such as for saying a word in anger, or for disobedience in a matter of little importance.

3. A husband is guilty of sin if he hinder his wife from fulfilling her obligations as a Christian, hearing Mass, making her Easter Communion, and going to confession several times in the year; for a person in the world can scarcely preserve himself in the grace of God by going to confession only once in the year. “But, Father, she wants to go to confession and Communion every day.” I answer, if, by frequenting the sacraments, she neglects the care of the family, you can then forbid her to go so often to confession and Communion; but it is not lawful for you to interfere, unless she fails in the good government of the house, or unless some other inconvenience arises from her frequenting the sacraments.

4. HOW DO MARRIED WOMEN SIN IN REGARD TO THEIR HUSBANDS?

A wife commits sin—

1. If she is not obedient to her husband in those things in which she is bound to obey him, and particularly in the matrimonial dues; and let wives remember that, as often as they disobey, they are guilty of a mortal sin.

2. A wife commits sin if, of the goods that are common, she spends, against her husband’s will, more than her equals usually spend; for of these goods the husband, and not she, is the master. She can only spend what is necessary for the family, when the husband neglects to make provision.

3. She commits sin if she unjustly refuses to go with her husband to any place in which he wishes to live; for a wife is bound to accompany her husband wherever he goes, unless at their espousal an agreement was made

to the contrary, or unless by accompanying him she would suffer serious damage, or be exposed to great danger.

4. She commits sin, when, by angry answers, she gives occasion to her husband to blaspheme. Certain wives complain that their husbands beat them continually; but when you see your husband in a passion, why do you provoke him still more?—why do you not remain silent? Do you know the fable of the oak and the bulrush? An oak and a bulrush were growing in the same place; a furious storm sprung up; the oak would not bend, and so was broken to pieces; the bulrush bent its head, and let the storm pass over it, and so received no injury. Do you understand what I mean? Be silent when you see your husband in a fury; allow the storm of his indignation to go down by itself, and you will not be beaten. This is precisely what happened to a woman who was always complaining of being beaten by her husband. An honest man said to her: "I will give you some water: if you keep it in your mouth when your husband is in a passion, he will maltreat you no more." He gave her the water: she kept it in her mouth the first time she saw her husband in a rage, and he left her in peace. She afterwards asked the man who gave her the water where he had got it. He answered: "It is to be had in every well; be silent hereafter when your husband is angry, and you will receive no more maltreatment from him."

5. St. Augustine says that St. Monica, his mother, always lived in great peace with her husband, though he was hard to be pleased, and prone to anger. Her neighbors, who had frequent quarrels with their husbands, asked her one day how she managed to live in such peace with her husband. She said, in reply: "Sisters, the disputes that you have with your husbands do not arise from their imperfections so much as from yours. You answer and rejoin, and thus exasperate their minds; and so you are always in trouble. When I see my husband in a passion I do not speak; I bear with him, and pray to God for him; and thus I live in peace. Do you the same, and you too shall have peace."

Chapter V

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt not kill."[13928]

GOD forbids us to do any injury to a neighbor in his person, in his property, or in his reputation. Of the injuries done to property or character we shall speak in treating the seventh and eighth commandments. Here we will speak only of the injuries done to his person.

1. WHAT DOES THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT FORBID?

This commandment principally forbids us to kill any man, or to injure his person by wounding or striking him.

The vindictive man says: "I will have your life." Life! Have you dominion over a neighbor's life? God alone is the Lord of our life. *It is Thou, O Lord, that hast power of life and death.*[13929] Oh, how hateful to God is the bloodthirsty man; even in this life God punishes them who shed blood. David says that they shall not live half the time that God would have given them had they not indulged in revenge. *Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.*[13930] The Scripture tells us that Cain, after having murdered his brother Abel, *dwelt as a fugitive on the earth.*[13931] Such is the chastisement of murderers. When the deed is done, there is no rest for them; they run first here and then there, to conceal themselves from justice, or from the relatives of the murdered man, and nowadays more than formerly, for now there are no churches to fly to which have the privilege of sanctuary.

And though no one should pursue them, they will he unceasingly persecuted by their own conscience. In the "Geographical and Historical Atlas," vol. ii., we read, that Constans II., after having put to death his brother Theodosius, could never lie down in his bed without fancying that he saw his murdered brother by his side, holding in the hand a cup filled with blood, and saying, “Drink, brother, drink.” To escape the torments of this vision Constans wandered through the world, but it never left his eyes, till at last he died miserably. There was also a robber who had murdered a child; after having committed the murder he imagined that he saw the child before him, and heard the child cry out: “Barbarous wretch, why did you murder me?” This apparition continued for nine years. At last the robber, being unable to bear its reproaches any longer, voluntarily confessed his crime before the judge, and was executed.

2. IS IT ALLOWED TO DESTROY ONE’S LIFE, TO DESIRE ONE’S DEATH, OR TO INJURE ONE’S HEALTH?

God alone, then, is the Lord of our life; even we ourselves have no right to destroy our own life. If any of the saints have ever caused their own death, as is related of St. Apollonia, who threw herself into the fire prepared for her by the tyrant, they did so from an inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and therefore they did not sin. But it was only folly and crime in the Donatist heretics to kill themselves and call themselves martyrs: martyrs they were, but of the devil, not of Christ; for in destroying their bodies they lost their souls.

It is also a sin wilfully to produce any serious illness, by eating to excess, or by eating food injurious to health; for we are bound to preserve our life, and to avoid all danger of death. It is likewise a sin to desire one’s own death. It is, however, lawful[13932] to desire death, as St. Paul did when he said: *I am straitened, . . . having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ,*[13933] in order to go to heaven and be with Christ; or in order to be delivered from the danger of offending God, or from some great calamity, which might lead to despair, or any other sin; as Elias[13934] desired to die, in order to be rescued from the persecution of Queen Jezabel. But it is not lawful to desire one’s own death through rage or impatience.

It is a mortal sin to get drunk so as to lose your senses; that is, to make yourself a beast instead of a man. What a brutal vice it is, that people cannot leave the bottle till they cannot stand, but reel every step they take, and cannot see out of their eyes! I say again that this is a mortal sin, and that it includes several mortal sins; for to the drunkard is imputed the guilt of all the sins, all the blasphemies, immodest acts, and injuries to his neighbors, which he foresees, or ought to foresee, that he will commit during his drunkenness. If in drunkenness there were no other evil, you at least wilfully deprive yourself of your senses and of the use of reason; and this cannot be excused from mortal sin. You may say, “I go to sleep, and thus digest what I have drunk.” But to commit sin it is enough to take a quantity which you know from experience will be sufficient to deprive you of the use of the senses. On this vice of drunkenness you may read the learned work lately published by Father Aniello Cyril, of the Congregation of St. Peter in Cesarano: in that work he shows the great evils that flow from drunkenness.

3. WHICH ARE THE CAUSES THAT PERMIT THE KILLING OF ANY ONE?

What has been already said regards ourselves; with regard to others, I say that there are only three causes that render it lawful to take away the life of man: *Public authority, self-defence, and a just war.*

1. It is lawful to put a man to death by *public authority:* it is even a duty of princes and of judges to condemn to death criminals who deserve it; and it is the duty of the officers of justice to execute the sentence; God himself wishes malefactors to be punished.

2. It is lawful in *self-defence* to kill an unjust aggressor, when there is no other means at hand for saving your own life. This is the common opinion of all theologians: it is taught by St. Thomas,[13935] by the Roman Catechism,[13936] and in the canon law,[13937] in which it is said that *all laws permit us to repel force by force.* It is also commonly held by theologians, by St. Antonine[13938] and by St. Thomas,[13939] that it is lawful to kill a robber who, after being admonished to desist, obstinately perseveres in the robbery; and they ground their doctrine on the following passage in Exodus: *If a thief be found breaking open a house or undermining it, and be wounded so as to die, he that slew him shall not be guilty of blood.*[13940] But this decision is to be admitted only when the theft is very considerable; and, as several theologians hold, only when the owner or his family would be reduced to great want and inconvenience if he permitted the robbery. Theologians also teach that it is lawful to kill a person who attempts to violate your chastity, if you have no other means of preserving it.

3. It is lawful to kill enemies in a *just war;* and even in a war when its justice is doubtful, if you are commanded by your own sovereign.[13941] Duels and private challenges are unlawful, and are forbidden under pain of excommunication, which is incurred not only by the principals, but also by their seconds. He who dies in a duel is deprived of Christian burial. They who advise persons to fight duels incur the same excommunication.

Except in these three cases, it is always a sin to kill a man, or to wound or beat him.

4. HOW DOES ONE SIN BY CAUSING ABORTION AND BY EXPOSING THE LIFE OF AN INFANT?

It is also forbidden to cause an abortion, though the foetus should be inanimate. But when it is animated, the sin is reserved, and an excommunication incurred by the person who causes the abortion, and by all who co-operate in it by act or counsel. Oh, what an enormous sin it is to cause an abortion! to make an infant die without baptism—that is, to cause a soul to be lost for all eternity! What a barbarous remedy, to endeavor to repair the evil of sin committed by a far greater sin!

And here allow me to remind you of the great danger to which mothers expose their infants by keeping them in their own bed. For it not unfrequently happens that in the morning infants are found dead, smothered in the arms of the mother.

5. IS IT ALSO A SIN TO WISH EVIL TO ONE’S NEIGHBOR?

As it is a sin to injure a neighbor, so it is a sin to desire evil to him: therefore, as often as you by imprecation call down a curse 0n another, and desire that the evil may happen to him, you sin mortally. It is not necessary that the evil desire should last for a long time. To sin mortally, it is enough that you for a single instant deliberately desire death, or any other grievous evil, to a neighbor.

Banish, then, forever from your mouth these accursed imprecations, and accustom yourself to say, “God make you a saint; God bless you.” And when any person addresses you in a tone of anger, adopt the great remedy taught by the Holy Ghost: *A mild answer breaketh wrath.*[13942] Answer with sweetness, “Have compassion on me; have patience with me; excuse me, I did not perceive the evil I was doing; I did not mean to offend and you will soon calm the anger of the person, and he will offer you no further offence. If a person say to you, “I wish I were dead,” let your answer be: “And I wish to see you happy and in good health.” Thus you will extinguish his fury. But when you feel angry, it is better to remain silent, and not to speak at all; for passion will make certain answers appear necessary; but when it has subsided, you will see that you have said what you ought not to have said, and that you have committed many sins, venial at least, if not mortal.

When you receive an injury or insult, recommend yourself immediately to God: and should a thought of resentment spring up within you, reflect on the offences that you have offered to God. He has borne with you: is it too much for you to submit to an offence from a neighbor for God’s sake?

If you wish to know what sort of revenge is lawful and holy, I will tell you what a father inflicted on the murderer of his son. The history is told by Father Gifolfi, in his life of Caesar de Consulibus, whose only son it was that was murdered. The murderer, not knowing whose it was, took shelter in the palace of Caesar himself. But Caesar knew that he was the murderer of his child, and what did he do? He received him kindly, and gave him money and a horse, that he might save his life. This is the manner in which true Christians take revenge.

Chapter VI

THE SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”[13943]

OF this commandment we can say but little. St. Francis de Sales says that chastity is sullied by the bare mention of it. Hence, let each person in his doubts on this subject take advice from his confessor, and regulate his conduct according to the direction that he receives.

1. WHAT IS ONE OBLIGED TO CONFESS IN THE MATTER OF IMPURITY?

I will only observe here, in general, that it is necessary to confess not only all the acts, but also improper touches, all unchaste looks, all obscene words, especially when spoken with pleasure, or with danger of scandal to others. It is, moreover, necessary to confess all immodest thoughts.

Some ignorant persons imagine that they are bound only to confess impure actions: they must also confess all the bad thoughts to which they have consented. Human laws forbid only external acts, because men only see what is manifested externally; but God, who sees the heart, condemns every evil thought: *Man sees those things that appear; but the Lord beholdeth the heart.*[13944] This holds good for every species of bad thoughts to which the will consents. Indeed, whatever it is a sin to do, it is also in the sight of God a sin to desire.

2. WHAT DISTINCTION IS TO HE MADE IN REGARD TO BAD THOUGHTS?

I said, *thoughts to which the will consents*. Hence, it is necessary to know how to determine when a bad thought is a mortal sin, when it is venial, and when it is not sinful at all. In every sin of thought there are three things: the suggestion, the pleasure, and the consent.

1. The *suggestion* is the first thought of doing an evil action that is presented to the mind. This is no sin; on the contrary, when the will rejects it we merit a reward. “As often,” says St. Antonine, “as you resist, so often you are crowned.”[13945] Even the saints have been tormented by bad thoughts. To conquer a temptation against chastity, St. Bernard threw himself among thorns, St. Peter of Alcantara cast himself into an icy pool. Even St. Paul writes that he was tempted against purity. *There was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me.*[13946] He several times implored the Lord to deliver him from temptation. *For which thing thrice I besought the Lord that it might depart from me.*[13947] The Lord refused to free him from the temptation, but said to him: *My grace is sufficient for thee*.[13948] And why did God refuse to remove the temptation? That, by resisting it, the saint might gain greater merit. *For power is made perfect in infirmity.*[13949] St. Francis de Sales says that when a thief knocks at the door outside, it is a sure sign he has not yet got in; thus when the devil tempts us we have a strong proof that the soul is in the state of grace. St. Catharine of Siena was once assailed by the devil for three days with impure temptations; after the third day our Lord appeared to her in order to console her. She said to him: “Ah, my Saviour, where hast Thou been these three days?” He replied: “I was in your heart to give you strength to resist the temptation by which you were attacked.” He then showed her that her heart had become purer than it was before.

2. After the suggestion comes the *pleasure*. When a person is not careful to banish the temptation immediately, but stops to reason with it, the thought instantly begins to delight him, and give him pleasure, and thus draws the person on to give his consent to it. As long as the will withholds the consent, the sin is only venial, and not mortal. But if the soul does not then turn to God, and make an effort to resist the pleasure, it will easily go on to give its consent. “Unless,” says St. Anselm, “a person repel the pleasure, it passes into consent, and kills the soul.”[13950] A woman who had the reputation of a saint was tempted to sin with one of her servants; she neglected to banish the thought instantly, and so in her heart consented, and fell into sin, but only in thought. She afterwards fell into a more grievous sin, for she concealed in confession the complacency she had taken in the bad thought, and died miserably. But because she was believed to be a saint,

the bishop had her buried in his own chapel. On the morning after her burial she appeared to him, enveloped in flames, and confessed, but without profit, that she was damned on account of the bad thought to which she had consented.

3. The soul loses the grace of God and is condemned to hell the instant a person *consents* to the desire of committing sin, or delights in thinking of the immodest action as if he were then committing it. This is called *morose delectation,* which is different from the sin of desire.

My dear Christians, be careful to banish these bad thoughts, by instantly turning for help to Jesus and Mary. He who contracts the habit of consenting to bad thoughts exposes himself to great danger of dying in sin, for the reason that it is very easy to commit sins of thought. In a quarter of an hour a person may entertain a thousand wicked desires, and for every evil desire to which he consents he deserves hell. At the hour of death the dying cannot commit sins of action, because they are unable to move; but they can easily indulge sins of thought, and the devil suggests every kind of wicked thought and desire to them when they are in that state. St. Eleazar, as Surius[13951] relates, was so violently and frequently tempted by bad thoughts at the hour of death, that he exclaimed: “Oh, how great is the power of the devils at the hour of death!” The saint, however, conquered his enemies, because he was in the habit of rejecting bad thoughts; but woe to those who have acquired a habit of consenting to them! Father Segneri[13952] tells us of a man who during his life had often consented to bad thoughts. At the hour of death he confessed his sins with great compunction, so that every one regarded him as a saint; but after death he appeared and said that he was damned; he stated that he made a good confession, and that God had pardoned all his sins; but before death the devil represented to him that, should he recover, it would be ingratitude to forsake the woman who loved him so much. He banished the first temptation: a second came; he then delayed for a little, but in the end he rejected it: he was assailed by a third temptation, and consented to it. Thus, he said, he had died in sin, and was damned.

3. IS IMPURITY A GREAT EVIL?

4. *My brother, do not say, as many do, that sins against chastity are light sins, and that God bears with them.*

I. *What! Do you say that is a light sin? But it is a mortal sin: and if it is a mortal sin, one act of it, though it be only the consent to a wicked thought, is sufficient to send you to hell. No fornicator . . . hath inheritance in the kingdom of Jesus Christ and of God.*[13953] *Is it a light sin? Even the pagans held impurity to be the worst of vices on account of the miserable effects that it produces. Seneca says: “Immodesty is the greatest evil of the world;*[13954] *and Cicero writes: “There is no plague so fatal as bodily pleasure;”*[13955] *and (to come to the saints) St. Isidore says: “Run through all sins, you will find none equal to this crime.”*[13956]

In the lives of the ancient Fathers it is related that a hermit, who once by God’s grace was walking with an angel, met with a dead dog that stank horribly, but the angel gave no sign of disgust at the smell that it exhaled. They afterwards met a young man elegantly dressed and highly perfumed; the angel stopped his nostrils. When the hermit asked him why he did so, he answered that the young man, on account of the vice of impurity in which he indulged, sent forth a far more intolerable stench than the putrid dog that they had passed. Lyranus writes that impurity is an object of horror even to the devils: “Luxury is hateful to the devils themselves.[13957] *So much so that a magician who* had frequent communication with the devil, on one occasion invoked him after having once committed a sin of impurity. The devil appeared, but would not come near him, and kept his back turned to him. The magician asked him why he treated him in that manner. The devil answered that it was on account of his impurity: “Your lust does not permit me to approach you.[13958]

Nevertheless, as St. Thomas says, the devils delight in no sin so much as in those against chastity. The reason why the devil takes so much delight in this vice is that it is difficult for a person who indulges in it to be delivered from it.[13959] And why? First, because this vice blinds the sinner, and does not allow him to see the insult that he offers to God, nor the miserable state of damnation in which he lives and slumbers. The prophet Osee says that sinners of this kind lose even the desire of returning to God. *They will not,* he says, *set their thoughts to return to their God.* And why? *For the spirit of fornication is in the midst of them.*[13960] Secondly, because this vice hardens the heart, and makes it obstinate. Thirdly, the devil takes peculiar delight in this vice, because it is the source of a hundred other sins—of thefts, hatred, murder, perjury, detraction, etc. Do not, then, my dear Christians, ever say again that impurity is but a light sin.

I. *You say: But God bears with it and winks at it.* Does he, indeed? I tell you that God has chastised no vice so severely in men as the vice of impurity. Read the Scriptures,[13961] and you will find that in punishment of this sin God sent fire from heaven and burnt five cities, along with all their inhabitants. In punishment of this vice he sent the universal deluge. *For all flesh has corrupted its way upon the earth.*[13962] Men were polluted with this sin; and God caused the rain to fall forty days and forty nights: thus all were destroyed, except eight persons who were saved in the ark. *The deluge came and destroyed them all.*[13963] We also read in the Scriptures that the Hebrews, having entered Setim, a city of the Moabites, fell into sin with the women of the place, and, by an order from God, Moses put twenty-four thousand of the Hebrews to the sword. *The people committed fornication with the daughters of Moab. . . . And there were slain twenty-four thousand men.*[13964] We may see any day that God chastises the sin of impurity even in this life. Enter into the hospital of incurables, and ask why so many miserable young persons of both sexes are obliged to submit to the most painful operations, to the knife and the branding-iron, and you will be told that it is on account of sins of impurity. *Because thou hast forgotten Me,* said the Lord, *and cast Me off behind thy back, bear thou also thy wickedness and thy fornication.*[13965] Because you have forgotten Me, and have banished Me from you, in order to gratify the flesh, suffer, even on this earth, the chastisement of your impurities.

Hitherto I have only spoken of the *temporal* punishment inflicted in this life on impure persons. But what shall become of them in the next? You say that God bears with this sin; but St. Remigius says that not many Christian adults are saved, and that the rest are damned for sins of impurity.[13966] Father Segneri says[13967] that three fourths of the reprobate are damned for this vice.

St. Gregory relates[13968] that a nobleman committed a sin against purity. In the beginning he felt great remorse of conscience; but, instead of going to confession immediately, he deferred it from day to day, until, disregarding his sin, and the voice of God, which called him to repentance, he was suddenly struck dead without giving any sign of conversion. After he was buried a flame was seen issuing from his grave for three successive days, which reduced to ashes not only the flesh and bones of the unhappy man, but also the entire sepulchre.

Listen to another horrible fact related by the celebrated Fortunatus, Bishop of Triers, in his life of Marcellus, Bishop of Paris. A lady of high rank defiled herself with this sin; she died, and was buried. After that a large serpent was seen every day entering her tomb to feed on her flesh. The inhabitants were filled with terror at the sight; so St. Marcellus went and struck the serpent with his pastoral staff, and commanded him to come no more to the place: whereupon the serpent disappeared never to return.

4. WHICH ARE THE REMEDIES AGAINST UNCHASTE TEMPTATIONS?

For those who are unable to abstain from impurity, or who are in great danger of falling into it, God has instituted a remedy in the marriage state as St. Paul says, *But if they do not contain themselves, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to be burnt.*[13969] "But, some may say, "Father, marriage is a great burden." Who denies it? But have you heard the words of the Apostle? It is better to marry, and to bear this great burden, than to burn forever in hell.

But do not imagine that for those who are unwilling or unable to marry there is no other means but marriage by which they may preserve chastity, for those who recommend themselves to God may by his grace conquer all the temptations of hell. What, then, are these means? I will tell you.

I. The first remedy is to *humble, ourselves* constantly before God. The Lord chastises the pride of some by permitting them to fall into a sin against chastity. It is necessary, then, to be humble, and to distrust altogether our own strength. David confessed that he had fallen into sin in consequence of not having been humble, and of having trusted too much in himself. *Before I was humbled, I offended.*[13970] We must then be always afraid of ourselves, and must trust in God only, to preserve us from this sin.

II. The second remedy is *instantly to have recourse to God* for help, without stopping to reason with the temptation. When an impure image is presented to the mind we must immediately endeavor to turn our thoughts to God, or to something which is indifferent. But the best rule is immediately to invoke the names of Jesus and Mary, and continue to invoke them until the temptation ceases, or at least till the heat of it is over. When the temptation is violent, it is useful to renew our purpose of never consenting to any sin, saying: “My God, I would rather die than offend Thee.” And then let us ask aid: “My Jesus, assist me; Mary, pray for me.” The names of Jesus and Mary have special power to banish the temptation of the devil.

III. The third remedy is to frequent the *sacraments of Penance and Eucharist*. It is very useful to disclose unchaste temptations to your confessor. St. Philip Neri says that *a temptation disclosed is half conquered*. And should a person have the misfortune to fall into sin against purity, let him go to confession immediately. It was so that St. Philip Neri delivered a young man from the chains of sin—he ordered him to go to confession immediately whenever he fell into it. The Holy Communion has great efficacy in giving strength to conquer temptations against chastity. The most holy sacrament is called *Wine springing forth virgins*.[13971] That is, the wine that is converted into the blood of Jesus Christ by the words of consecration. Earthly wine is injurious to chastity; but the celestial wine preserves it.

IV. The fourth remedy is devotion to Mary the Mother of God, who is called the *Virgin of virgins*.[13972] How many young men have, by devotion to the Blessed Virgin, preserved themselves pure and chaste as angels! Father Segneri[13973] relates that a young man, so polluted with the vice of impurity that his confessor could not absolve him, went one day to confession to a Father of the Society of Jesus. The Father dismissed him, and told him to say every morning three “Hail Marys” in honor of the purity of the Blessed Virgin, in order to obtain through her intercession the grace to be delivered from the bad habit. After several years the young man returned to the same Father, but had scarcely a venial sin to confess; when he had finished his confession he said to the confessor: “Father, do you know me? I am the person whom you could not absolve some years ago, on account of my sins against purity; but by saying the three “Hail Marys” every morning I have, by the grace of God, got rid of the bad habit.” He gave leave to the confessor to state the fact in general terms from the pulpit. A soldier who was on terms of criminal intimacy with a woman heard the story told in a sermon. He began to say the three “Hail Marys,” and was freed from the habit of sin. One day the devil tempted him to go to the house of the woman in order to convert her. But what happened? When he was on the point of entering he was driven back by some invisible but powerful hand, and carried to a considerable distance. He thus became more and more convinced of the protection of the Blessed Virgin; for had he entered the house, he would probably have relapsed in consequence of being exposed to the proximate occasion of sin. Let each one practise this little devotion of saying every day three “Hail Marys,” in honor of the Blessed Virgin, adding after each “Hail Mary,” “Through thy pure and immaculate conception, O Mary, obtain for me purity and sanctity of body and soul.”

V. The fifth remedy, which is the most necessary for avoiding sins against chastity, is to fly from dangerous occasions. Generally speaking, the first of all the means of preserving yourself always chaste is to avoid the occasions of sin. There are many means, such as to frequent the sacraments, to have recourse to God in temptations, to be devoted to the Blessed Virgin; but the first of all is to avoid the occasions of sin. The Scripture says, *Your strength shall be as the ashes of tow,. . . . and there shall be none to quench it.*[13974] Our strength is like the strength of tow thrown into the fire: it is instantly burned and consumed. Would it not be a miracle if tow cast into fire did not burn? It would also be a miracle if we exposed ourselves to the occasion, and did not fall. According to St. Bernardine of Siena,[13975] it is a greater miracle not to fall in the occasion of sin, than to raise a dead man to life. St. Philip Neri used to say that in the warfare of the flesh, cowards—that is, they who fly from occasions—are always victorious. You say: *I hope that God will assist me.* But God says: *He that loveth the danger shall perish in it.*[13976] God does not assist those who, without necessity, expose themselves voluntarily to the occasion of sin. It is necessary to know that he who puts himself in the proximate occasion[13977] of sin is in the state of sin, though he should have n0 intention of committing the principal sin to which he exposes himself.

By proximate occasions even saints have fallen, and persons on the point of expiring have been lost. Father Segneri relates[13978] that a woman who had lived in the habit of sin with a young man called for a confessor at the hour of death, and with tears confessed all the wickedness of her life. She afterwards sent for her friend, with the intention of bringing him to God by her example. But what happened? Listen to the consequences of the occasion of sin: when the young man arrived, she fixed her eyes upon him for some time, and at last, with a gush of carnal affection, said to him: “Dearest friend, I always loved you, and I love you now more than ever. I know that on your account I shall go to hell; but n0 matter: I am willing to be damned for love of you.” With these words on her lips she expired.

We must, then, avoid the occasions of sin if we wish to be saved.

1. We must carefully abstain from looking at persons, the sight of whom may tempt us to bad thoughts. St. Bernard says: “Through the eyes the arrows of impure love enter, and kill the soul.”[13979] And the Holy Ghost says: *Turn away thy face from a woman dressed up.*[13980] Is it, then, a sin to look at a woman? Yes, it is at least a venial sin to look at young women; and when the looks are repeated, there is also danger of mortal sin. St. Francis de Sales says that to look at dangerous objects is bad, but to look a second time is still more injurious. One of the ancient philosophers blinded himself voluntarily in order to be freed from unchaste suggestions. It is not lawful for us Christians to destroy our sight physically, but we should destroy it morally by turning the eyes away from objects which may excite temptations. St. Aloysius Gonzaga never looked at women; even speaking to his mother he kept his eyes cast down upon the ground. It is equally dangerous for women to look at young men.

2. It is necessary to avoid all bad company, and all assemblies where light bantering and flirting go on between men and women. *With the holy thou wilt be holy . . . and with the perverse thou wilt be perverted.*[13981] If you keep company with the virtuous, you shall be virtuous; if you associate with the unchaste, you too will indulge in impurity. St. Thomas says that a man will be like the companions with whom he converses.[13982] And should you ever find yourself in dangerous society from which you cannot withdraw, follow the advice of the Holy Ghost. *Hedge in thy ears with thorns.*[13983] Place a hedge of thorns about your ears that you may not hear the obscene words which others utter. When very young, St. Bernardine of Siena used to blush as often as he heard an immodest word; hence his companions were careful never to use improper language in his presence. Such was the horror

which St. Stanislaus Kostka felt for obscene conversation that on hearing an immodest word he swooned away, and lost the use of his senses. Young girls, whenever you hear any one speak immodestly, turn your back and go away. It was thus St. Edmund acted, as we read in his life;[13984] and one day, after having left his companions because their language was obscene, he met on his way a most beautiful boy who said to him: "God save you, my beloved." The saint asked who he was. The young boy answered: "Look at my forehead: there you may read my name.'' The saint raised his eyes, and read the words, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Jesus Christ immediately disappeared, but left the saint consolation and joy. Whenever you find yourself in the society of young persons who speak improperly, and cannot leave them, be careful at least not to listen to them: turn away your face, and show that such language is displeasing to you.

3. I will here mention the chastisement inflicted on two persons for obscene language. Turlot[13985] relates that St. Valerius, returning on a winter's day to his monastery, and not being able to reach it before night, took shelter in a private house. On entering, he found the master engaged with another man in obscene conversation; he reproved them, but they persevered in their sin. St. Valerius, though the evening was very cold, fled from the house. As soon as he departed, the owner of the house was struck blind, and his companion was attacked with a loathsome disease. They ran after the saint, and entreated him to return, but he refused. One remained blind, and the other died after being consumed by the disease. Oh! how great is the evil caused by immodest language! An obscene word may be the cause of the perdition of all who hear it. Some excuse themselves, saying that they only use such words in jest. Yet in uttering them you feel complacency! and then the scandal which you give to others! Miserable man, these jests shall make you weep for all eternity in hell.

4. But let us return to the necessity of avoiding the occasions of sin. It is necessary, also, to abstain from looking at immodest pictures. St. Charles Borromeo forbids all fathers of families to keep such pictures in their houses.

It is necessary, also, to abstain from reading bad books, and not only from those that are positively obscene, but also from those that treat of profane love, such as Ariosto's poems, the "Pastor Fido," and all such works.

Fathers should not allow their children to read romances. These sometimes do more harm than even obscene books; they put fantastical notions and affections into young persons' heads, which destroy all devotion, and afterwards impel them to give themselves up to sin. "Vain reading," says St. Bonaventure, "begets vain thoughts and extinguishes devotion."[13986] Make your children read spiritual books, ecclesiastical histories, and the lives of the saints. And here I repeat: Do not allow your daughters to be taught their lessons by a man, though he be a St. Paul or a St. Francis of Assisi. The saints are in heaven.

1. Be careful, also, not to permit your sons to act plays, nor even to be present at an immodest comedy. St. Cyprian says: "Who went chaste to the play, returned unchaste."[13987] A young man or woman goes to the play full of modesty and in the grace of God, and returns home without modesty and at enmity with God. Do not allow your children to go to those feasts of the devil where there is dancing, courting, immodest singing, and sinful amusements. "Where there is dancing," says St. Ephrem, "there a feast of the devil is celebrated."[13988] "But you will say: "What harm is there in a little relaxation and amusement?" St. Peter Chrysologus says: "They are not amusements, but grievous offences against God."[13989] A certain companion of the servant of God, Father John Baptist Vitelli, wished, against the will of the father, to go to a festivity of this kind which was celebrated at Norcia; the consequence was, first, he lost the grace of God, then he abandoned himself to a wicked life, and in the end was killed by the hand of his own brother.

2. Finally, some one may ask whether it is a morta sin to make love. What can I say? Ordinarily speaking, I say that persons who give themselves up to love-making are scarcely free from the proximate occasion of sinning mortally. Experience shows that few of them are exempt from grievous sins. If they do not commit mortal sin in the beginning of their courtship, they will in the course of time very easily fall into it: for at first they speak together through a predilection for each other's conversation; this predilection afterwards grows into a passion; when the passion has taken root, it blinds the mind, and precipitates the soul into a thousand sins of bad thoughts, of immodest words, and, in the end of sinful acts. Cardinal Pico de la Mirandola, bishop of Albano, forbade the

confessors of his diocese to absolve those lovers who, after being duly admonished, continued to hold long conversations together, particularly if they should be alone, or if the conversations should be of great length, or clandestine, or by night. “But, Father,” some of them will say, “I have no bad intention. I have not even bad thoughts.” Young men and young twirls, avoid these amatory conversations with persons of a different sex. In the beginning the devil does not suggest bad thoughts, but when the affection has taken root it will not allow you to see the evil you do; and almost without knowing how, you will find that you have lost your soul, your God, and your honor. Oh! how many innocent young persons does the devil gain in this way!

Chapter VII

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not steal.”[13990]

I. ON THEFT

1. WHAT IS THEFT?

It consists in taking the property of another, without a just cause, and against his will.

I have said *without a just cause;* for if a person were in extreme necessity, or had no other means of recovering a debt due to him, he can then take the property of another, even against his will. With regard to *necessity,* this can hold good when the necessity is *extreme;* that is, when a person would be in proximate danger of death, or of a most grievous evil, if he did not take what belonged to another; and then he can take only so much as is necessary to rescue him from the proximate danger to which he is exposed. But a person who is only in *great* and not *extreme* necessity cannot take the property of another without his consent, as appears from the condemnation of the 36th proposition by Innocent XI. And next, with regard to compensation, you may not take your neighbor’s property to recover a debt due from him to you, unless the debt is certain, and you have no other means of obtaining satisfaction for it. Hence, as has been already said in the instruction 0n the fourth commandment,[13991] a servant cannot make to himself occult compensation for services which he judges to be deserving of more wages than he has received. To assert that he can make such compensation has been condemned by Innocent XI. I also said *against the will of the owner;* for it is not theft to take the property of another with his consent, or when his consent is presumed to be certain.

2. IS THEFT A GREAT SIN?

Theft, when committed in a matter of great moment with regard to the person whose property is taken away, is certainly a mortal sin, and the person who is guilty of it is condemned to hell *Nor thieves, nor covetous, . . . nor extortioners, shall possess the kingdom of God.*[13992] This is a sin which is punished by human justice even with death, for security of property is necessary for the peace of all states, and thefts destroy this security.

Every theft of anything of value, then, is a mortal sin, even though the whole amount should be taken away on several occasions in small quantities; so many small sums make up a large amount. If the theft be committed, not secretly, but by force, it is a double sin, because it is a double injustice. If the thing stolen belong to the church, or if the theft be committed in the church, it is a sacrilege.

3. WHO ARE THOSE THAT SIN AGAINST THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT?

1. Not only they who take away the property of another are guilty of theft, but also all who neglect (when they are able) to pay to servants their wages, or what is due to artisans, 0r other persons. These are called *honorable thefts—the thefts of nobles,* who have no great scruple about them; but how many go to hell for this sin! *The bread of the needy is the life of the poor; he that defraudeth them thereof is a man of blood.*[13993] They who defraud or neglect to pay the poor man, take away his life; for he lives by the labor of his hands. St. James says that the wages due to the laborer, and not paid, cry to God for vengeance against him who withholds them. *Behold the hire of the laborers . . . which by fraud has been kept back by you, crieth; and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.*[13994] The Holy Ghost exhorts us to pay before night (that is, as soon as we can) what we owe to the poor. *But thou shalt pay him the price of his labor on the same day, before the going down of the sun, because he is poor.*[13995] You say, I will pay him tomorrow; and in the mean time he is dying of hunger. Joseramnus, the son of Lideric, Count of Flanders, in a time of scarcity, deferred to pay for a basket of fruit which he had purchased from a poor woman; in consequence of the delay three of her sons died of hunger. In

punishment of this crime the count commanded the head of his son to be cut off. This fact is related by Verme.[13996] We should be ashamed to defraud the poor, whom we are bound to relieve.

2. They also are condemned to hell who do not pay pious legacies left by their ancestors. The poor souls remain in the fire of purgatory, and cannot speak. The rectors or administrators of churches are afraid to say a word, and so the Masses remain unsaid and the alms are not given away. Oh! what calamities fall 0n many families because they will not pay the money left by their ancestors for pious purposes!

3. They also are guilty of sin who do not pay dues to their pastors. The obligation of paying dues to pastors is imposed by a human and divine law: for they are given to the pastors for their maintenance. The pastor is bound to preach, to administer the sacraments, to assist the dying, and correct sinners, even at the risk of his life. The servant who assists you in your bodily wants has a right to support; and will you refuse to give him who serves your soul the means of living, that he may be able to assist you?

4. What shall we say of *lay administrators?* To them we may apply the text of David: *They eat the sacrifices of the dead . . . and destruction was multiplied among them.*[13997] They eat the sacrifices of the dead; they spend in banquets and drunken feasts the revenues left by the dead for Masses, for the marriage portion of poor women, and for other pious works; and what are the consequences? “Destruction is multiplied among them.” Destruction follows destruction; fathers, sons, grandsons, great-grandsons, entire families, are damned.

5. “But, Father, I have a family, a wife and children; I am in great want; what can I do?” And will you go to hell for your family and children? Listen to what happened to a father of a family, who had defiled his conscience by taking the property of others in order to assist his children. At death he called for a notary in order to make his will. As soon as the notary arrived, the dying man said: “Write the following bequests: I leave my soul to the devil.” The family began to exclaim: “O Jesus, Jesus, the poor man is delirious!” He replied. I am not delirious, I am not delirious; notary, write. I leave my soul to the devils, that they may carry it to hell, in punishment of the thefts I have committed. I also leave to the devils the soul of my wife, who encouraged me to steal, that she might indulge her vanity. I

also leave to the devils my children, who have been the cause of my thefts." The confessor who heard his confession during life, and who was then assisting him, exhorted him not to despair, but to have confidence in God. But the dying man concluded his will, saying: "I also leave to the devils my confessor, because during life he always absolved me, and did not oblige me to make restitution."

6. *Usury* also is a theft. The man who lends money on the condition of (usurious) interest being paid to him annually, or even every month, commits a true theft. "But he pays the interest willingly." He pays willingly, but he *must* pay. What do you lose by lending that sum to your neighbor? If you do lose anything, if you could be sure of gaining something by using the money yourself, then you can make the borrower make up for your loss; this is fair interest, but then you must explain all this to him if you do exact interest. But if you lose nothing by it, what right have you to charge anything? I his is a real theft. "Lend, hoping for nothing thereby," says the Gospel. Hoping for nothing thereby; that is, you ought to lend for kindness and charity, not for gain. I will say no more, for I cannot now discuss the many questions connected with usury; for I am giving an instruction, not a lecture on moral theology. I only admonish each of you, whenever doubts arise, not to resolve them by yourself,—for passion will make you see things with a jaundiced eye, but to consult a confessor or other learned man, and to act according to the advice received.[13998] Let public usurers remember that by a decree of the Council of Lateran[13999] they are excommunicated, forbidden to receive the body of Christ, and after death are to be deprived of Christian burial. Let it also be remembered that sometimes usury is not open, but is palliated by being taken under some other pretext; all gain received must be restored. Alas! how many poor souls go to hell on account of this accursed usury! If any one feel a scruple on this point, let him confess it immediately, and apply a remedy, now that he has time; otherwise he will go to hell, where he will be no longer able to repair the evil. A virtuous young man became a monk; while in the monastery he saw his father and brother damned for the usury which they had practised, and heard one of them cursing the other. The afflicted monk asked if he could give them any relief. They answered: "No; for in hell there is no redemption."

7. They also are guilty of sin who unjustly injure the property of another, and are as much bound to make restitution as if they had committed theft, as soon as they are aware of the injury they have done. He also is guilty of sin, and bound to restitution, who hinders another to obtain what is due to him in justice; or who, by fraudulent means, by force, or by calumnies, hinders a person from getting a present or legacy, which he would probably have obtained, though it could not be said to be due to him in justice.

8. They, too, are all guilty of sin, and obliged to restitution who co-operate in theft, or in an injury to a neighbor, by command, by counsel, or by not preventing the injury when they are able to do so. Thus a servant charged with the care of any part of his master's property is bound to make restitution, if when able he does not prevent it from being injured. Servants who do not prevent an injury being done to their master, not by one of their fellow-servants, but by a stranger, are also obliged to make restitution; but others who can, with a trifling inconvenience to themselves, prevent an injury to a neighbor, are not bound to restitution; because, though they sin grievously against charity, they do not violate justice.

9. They also are guilty of theft who accidentally find the property of another and neglect to return it to the owner, when they know him, or who, when they do not know the owner, neglect to make a diligent search in order to find him. Goods accidentally found should be preserved as long as there remains a hope of finding the owner; and I add, that when the thing found is of great value, such as a costly ornament, a valuable ring, a purse containing a large sum of money, there is always reason to hope that the owner will be found, if not immediately, at least in the course of time; for he will take care to publish the loss in everyplace through which he has passed; and thus in the course of time the owner of the article lost will be ascertained.

10. They who purchase stolen goods are also guilty of sin. It is useless to say: "If I had not purchased them, another would have bought them. It is related by Verme, that a soldier stole a calf from a poor woman. With tears in her eyes, she said to the soldier: "Why will you take this calf?" The soldier replied: "If I do not take it, another will steal it." So he carried off the calf. After a time the soldier was killed, and a person saw him tormented in hell, with a devil at his side who was scourging him cruelly. The miserable man was crying out: "Why do you scourge me?" The devil

answered: “If you are not scourged by me, you will be scourged by another.” Do not, then, allow yourself to be deceived by the devil; do not say: “If I do not take this article, it will be taken by another.” If another take it, he will be damned; if you take it, you will be damned. But you will say: “I have paid for it.” But do you not know that it is stolen property? How, then, can you keep it? You have done wrong in buying it; you must now restore it.

11. They also are guilty of theft who commit fraud or injustice in buying or selling, or who do not stand to their bargains or contracts. (The catechist may here go through the different trades, and show what frauds are usually committed in each; but he should be careful not to talk of things that do not occur, or are not known in the place where he is giving instruction.) It is a theft when *tailors* cut more cloth than is wanted, or make people purchase an unnecessary quantity, and afterwards keep what is left, or who retain the remnants of cloth, or who charge more than they pay for the cloth that they purchase for others. Or when *shoemakers* glue together two pieces of leather for the sole, to make it look thicker, or make the undersoles of felt or brown paper; or use rotten old leather which they bring into shape with their pincers and hammer. *Carpenters* who varnish over an unsound place in the wood, or stop it up with putty, or make the person buy more nails than they use. *Shopkeepers*, who use light weights or scanty measures. *Neither shall there be in thy house, says the Lord, a greater bushel and a less; . . . for the Lord thy God abhorreth him that doth these things.*[14000] They who use light weights and scanty measures are an abomination to the Lord. Some one may inquire, if a shopkeeper who has for a long time given less than the just weight or measure to others is bound to make restitution, how is he to do so, after having defrauded so many different persons? The best way to make restitution, without injury to his reputation, is to give a little more than the just weight or measure to all who come from the quarter in which the persons whom he defrauded live. Let us proceed. *Cloth carders* are bound to adhere literally to their bargain. It is a theft for *publicans* to mix water with wine, and then demand the price of pure wine, or to make others pay for more wine or spirits than they get. Persons who mix water or earth with the coals which they sell, or who deceive the purchaser in weighing the coals. Persons who spin flax or silk, and damp it to make it weigh heavier,

or mix soap or sand with it. Persons who sell goods for others, and keep a part of the price received; the entire price belongs to the owner of the goods; the sellers can retain only the wages of their labor. Then, are all these condemned to hell? Who doubts this? He who has received the property of another, and does not restore it, is damned. Oh! do you who are engaged in business or trade wish to make great profit? Always tell the truth. Cesarius[14001] relates that two merchants who had always to accuse themselves in confession of having told lies in their dealings with others, were always in poverty. The confessor said to them: “Do not tell any more lies, and I promise you that you shall realize great profit. They obeyed; and his words were verified. Having the truth always in their mouth, they obtained the character of honest men; thus they gained more in one year by the truth than they had gained in ten years by lies. Let us now proceed to speak of restitution.

II. RESTITUTION

1. WHAT OBLIGATION IS THERE OF MAKING RESTITUTION?

Some, who have taken away the property of another, regard restitution, when imposed by a confessor, as a very severe penance. But it is not a penance: it is an obligation from which neither the confessor, nor the bishop, nor the Pope can dispense. *Render, therefore,* says St. Paul, *to all men their dues.*[14002] The goods of others must be restored, or, if they be consumed, their value must be given to the owner; and if he is dead, the restitution must be made to his heirs. If the owner cannot be found, or if he have no heir, the value must be given to the poor, or must be employed in procuring Masses for the soul of the owner.

2. CAN ONE DEFER MAKING RESTITUTION?

It is also necessary to make restitution immediately. Some keep the property of others, and wish to make restitution, but say: “When I am dying, then I will restore it.” So you would make restitution when you have no longer any use for the property—when you cannot take it with you! When a person is able to make restitution, and defers it for a notable time, he is guilty of mortal sin, though he should have the intention of making the restitution.

He is excused from mortal sin if he defers the restitution for a short time—for ten or fifteen days, but not longer. And should his creditor suffer a loss on account of this short delay, he is bound to repair the loss; for it is certain that a thief is obliged to compensate the owner for all the damage done him by the theft. He who is able to make restitution, and will not make it immediately, cannot be absolved. For most persons find it very difficult to make restitution; and therefore he who, though able, does not make it immediately, is in danger of not making it at all.

A gentleman stole and kept a hundred pieces of gold. He went to confession, and was required by his confessor to make restitution, and perhaps under pain of being refused absolution. “Father,” said he to the confessor, “I will make restitution as soon as I return home.” But he did not fulfil his promise; he frequently made similar promises, but afterwards violated them. In the end the confessor said to him: “If you wish to receive absolution, go home and bring me the stolen property; otherwise I will not absolve you.” He went home and brought back the money. The confessor said to him: “Give it to me.” He replied: “Father, you must take it yourself; I will not give it you.” Thus he made restitution. From this fact, brethren, you may learn how improbable it is that a person who has been absolved before he has made restitution will afterwards restore what belongs to others. It is certain that, unless he make restitution, he can never obtain pardon. “The sin,” says St. Augustine, “is not remitted unless the property taken away is restored.”[14003] Hence, St. Antonine[14004] has justly said that n0 sin is more dangerous to the soul than the sin of theft. The reason is that in other sins it is enough for the sinner to repent; but in theft the sinner cannot be pardoned without making restitution, if he is able to make it, although he should perform all possible penances.

Miserable the man who keeps in his hands the property of others! The following fact is vouched for by several authors: A usurer was obliged, in his last illness, to restore all that he was possessed of. The sick man consigned to four persons all the money and goods that he had unjustly acquired that they might restore them to the lawful owners. After having retired to his convent, the confessor, while at prayer, saw a devil weeping because he had lost the soul of the usurer, and afterwards heard another devil saying to the devil that was weeping: “What a fool you are to weep!

Do you not see that though you have lost one soul you have gained four? Attend to these four; they will easily become yours.”

I repeat, miserable the man who keeps the property of another! for he will scarcely make restitution, and will probably be damned. And will he ever, even in this life, have comfort in the enjoyment of the goods of others? No; he will be continually tortured by remorse of conscience. A robber stole an ox from St. Medard; the ox had a bell suspended from its neck. The robber brought the ox to his house; and, though the ox remained motionless, the bell never ceased to ring. The night came; fearing that he should be discovered, the robber stuffed the bell with hay; but it still continued to ring. What did he then do? He took the bell off the ox, and shut it up in a box; but the bell did not cease to ring; then he buried it, but all to no purpose. At last he was thoroughly frightened, and took the ox and restored it to St. Medard, and the ringing ceased. Let us now make the application to ourselves. He who keeps the goods of another has within himself a bell which rings unceasingly, and says to him: “Unless you make restitution, you shall be damned.” How can you expect peace with your conscience continually troubling you?

3. WHAT MUST HE DO THAT HAS NOT THE MEANS TO MAKE RESTITUTION?

“But, Father, I cannot make restitution.” He who is really unable to make any restitution because he has a bare subsistence from day to day for himself and his family is excused from sin. For him it will be enough to have the intention of restoring the ill-gotten goods as soon as he shall be able, and of restoring as much as it shall be in his power to restore. If a person is unable to restore all that belongs to his neighbor, he is bound to restore at least as much as he is able, by saving, for example, a few pence every week. But you say: “I shall never be able to restore all I owe.” No matter; it is enough for you to restore as much as you can.[14005]

What shall we say of the man who is able to make restitution, and says: “If I make restitution, what will become of my children?” And if you go to hell, what will become of you? In the life of the Venerable Father Louis la Nuza, a celebrated missionary in Sicily, who died in 1656, we read that he once heard the confession of a gentleman laboring under a serious malady, who possessed the property of others to a large amount. He exhorted him to make restitution. But the rich man answered: “If I make restitution my son will not be able to live like his equals.” Father Louis entreated and conjured him not to expose his soul to certain damnation; but the gentleman remained obstinate; so he went away. On the following morning, as he was walking on a solitary road, he met four negroes conducting a man bound 0n a beast of burden. He asked where they were carrying the miserable man. They answered. “To the fire.” The Father looked at the man, and discovered that he was the person who obstinately refused to make restitution. He afterwards went into the city, and was informed that the unhappy gentleman was dead. This is the end of those who refuse to make restitution, in order to leave their children in affluence.

What an excess of folly, to go to hell for the sake of leaving your children comfortable! If you go to hell, will your children release you? Listen to a story related by Peter de Paludo. A certain father of a family, through fear of leaving his children in poverty, refused to make restitution. To bring him to a sense of his folly, his confessor had recourse to the following ingenious artifice. If, said he to the sick man, you wish to recover from your infirmity, call one of your children, and make him anoint your body with a little fat extracted from his own flesh by fire. The sick man had three sons; but none of them would submit to suffer such a torment for the recovery of his father. Then the father became sensible of his folly, and said: “So you will not bear a little fire, to save me from death; and must I go to hell, to burn for eternity, in order that you may live in greater comfort? I should be a madman if I did so.” He then restored all that he owed.

4. CAN ONE MAKE RESTITUTION BY HAVING MASSES SAID?

“And if I have Masses said for the sum which I owe, will not that be sufficient?” No; to employ the sum which is due in procuring Masses, the obligation of restitution to the owner will forever remain. But you may say: “I have given the money for Masses.” But the owner wants his property, which you have taken. The only case in which it is lawful to expend the money in procuring Masses, or in alms for the soul of the owner, is when he is unknown, and when it is impossible to find him.

But there are few who make restitution. This we see experience. How many thefts are committed every day, but how few restitutions! According to the common saying: “Dressed meat does not return to the market.” Verme tells us that a hermit once had a vision of Lucifer on a throne, and a devil who had just come from the earth standing before him: “Where have you been all this time?” asked Satan. “I have been waiting to tempt a thief not to make restitution,” answered the devil. “Oh,” said Satan, “give this fool a flogging. Don’t you know, fool, that the man who has taken another’s property never makes restitution? And you have been losing all this time in tempting him not to make restitution! Quick, the flogging!” Lucifer was right: “Cooked meat does not come back to market.”

5. CONCLUSION

Let us conclude the instruction on this precept.

He who is aware of having in his possession the property of another, must examine whether he has got it in bad faith or in good faith. If he has received it in good faith,—that is, through inculpable ignorance that it was the property of another,—and has it still in his possession, he is certainly bound to restore it. If, during his good faith, he consumed it, he is obliged to restore as much as he is made richer by the consumption of it; that is, what has been spared and still remains of his own property, which would have been spent, had he not used what belonged to another.

If, during his good faith, or sincere belief that the goods of another in his possession were his own, he consumed them all, and is not made richer by the use of them, he is not bound to any restitution. But if he has, in bad faith, or culpably, got possession of the property of another, he is bound to restore what he has taken, and to indemnify the owner for all the losses caused, even accidentally, by his injustice. To this he is bound, if he wishes to be saved. If he is unwilling to make restitution, and wishes to be damned, he has his choice; but let him remember that he will have to repent, not only in the next life in hell, but also in this life.

The prophet Zachary says, that a malediction falls on the house into which a neighbor’s property enters. *This is the curse that goeth over the face of the earth, . . . it shall come to the house of the thief, . . . and shall consume it.*[14006] Hence, St. Gregory Nazianzen says: He who possesses wealth unjustly, shall lose even his own riches.[14007] The goods of others are a fire that consumes themselves and the goods of the possessor. Such are the effects of the divine malediction. Let us, then, says St. Gregory,[14008] possess the goods that the Lord sends us; but let us not allow ourselves to be possessed by the goods of this earth. Some become the slaves of earthly goods to such a degree that for them they voluntarily condemn themselves to hell. O misery! how many poor souls go to hell on account of other men's property!

How differently does the wise man act who loves his soul better than other people's goods! Henry, King of Castile, left his son the heir to his kingdom; but because the son was only a child, he entrusted the government to his brother. The brother governed the kingdom with so much rectitude, that the people wished him to assume the absolute dominion of the kingdom. What did he do? He one day appeared before the people with his infant nephew in his arms, and said that the kingdom belonged to the child, and that he would spend his blood and his life in order to secure it for him. What a noble act, to renounce a kingdom rather than offend God! But God amply rewarded his fidelity; for he brought him to the throne of Aragon, where he reigned in peace, and his family was replenished with abundance of blessings.

St. Augustine relates an act of similar generosity. In the city of Milan a poor man found a purse containing two hundred pounds. He was told that since the owner was not known he might keep the money. But he feared God, and put up along the public road many notices, stating that he had found the purse. The owner appeared, and having accurately described the lost property, received the purse from the poor man He offered the poor man twenty pounds as a reward, but he refused to accept them. The owner then entreated him to take ten or at least five pounds. But the poor man refused, saying that they all belonged to the owner. The owner, as if angry, threw the purse at the feet of the poor man, saying: "Since you will take nothing from me, I will take nothing from you." The poor man was thus forced to accept the offer; but he did not retain the money. He went instantly and distributed it among the other poor of the city.

Chapter VIII

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

> "Thou shall not bear false witness."[14009]

1. WHAT DOES THIS COMMANDMENT FORBID IN THE FIRST PLACE?

THE chief thing forbidden in this commandment is to give false testimony in a court of justice. When you are interrogated by a legitimate judge, you are bound to tell the truth; and if you do not disclose it, and say that you know nothing about it, you are guilty of sin. But some one may say: "I have concealed the truth that my neighbor might not be injured." This excuse is not sufficient, as I have already said,[14010] in treating of the second commandment. When asked by lawful authority, you are bound to tell what you know, though it should be the cause of a loss to your neighbor. This is a just loss; for the public good requires that malefactors should be punished. But they cannot be punished if witnesses do not depose to what they know.

He, however, commits a more grievous sin who in a court of justice attests a falsehood detrimental to his neighbor. A lie is always sinful, though it should be told in jest, or even for a useful purpose; even though it be in order to escape death. The author of the "Parish Priests Companion" relates that the Emperor Maximian sent his officers to take St Anthimus, Bishop of Nicomedia, and put him in prison. The soldiers who were in search of him went by chance to the saint's own house to get something to eat. St. Anthimus gave them what they required, and treated them kindly. Afterwards they asked him where they could find Anthimus the bishop. The saint answered: "I am the very person; I am Anthimus." The soldiers, through gratitude, said: "We will not take you to the emperor; we will say that we have not been able to find you." The saint replied: "No, my children, I do not wish you to be guilty of a lie; I would rather die than cause you to tell a lie." He then went with them to the emperor.

A lie, then, is always a sin. To tell a lie which is not injurious to a neighbor is only a venial sin; but when it does a grievous injury to another, it is a mortal sin. It is of such lies that we are to understand the text of Scripture, *The mouth that belieth, killeth the soul.*[14011] A lie told before a judge is a double mortal sin; and when accompanied with an oath, as is always the case in courts of justice, it contains the additional guilt of sacrilege, on account of the false oath, which is a most grievous sin, and a reserved sin. Tenesius, the legislator, ordained that an executioner should stand at the right hand of the judge, with an axe in his hand, to put to death any one that perjured himself in judgment. *Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment, . . . and all the people shall say, Amen.*[14012] Eusebius[14013] relates that three witnesses made false accusations before a judge against Narcissus the bishop. The first said: “If the charge is not true, I am willing to be burnt alive. The second said: “I am satisfied to die of the jaundice.” The third said: “I am willing to be deprived of sight.” In a little time the three imprecations were verified. One became blind, another died of jaundice, and the third was reduced to ashes by lightning.

2. WHAT DOES THIS COMMANDMENT FORBID IN THE SECOND PLACE?

This commandment forbids detraction. This, too, is a very common sin. You will, says St. Jerome, find few persons who do not willingly censure the conduct of others.[14014] Find me a man, says St. James, who does not sin with the tongue, and I will admit that he is a saint. *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.*[14015] When the tongue of a sick man is black, we may infer that he is in danger. The tongue is often a better index than the pulse of the malignity of disease: sometimes the pulse does not show symptoms of high fever; but when the tongue is black and foul, it is (as Hippocrates says) a sign of the approach of death. Many come to the church, frequently hear Mass, and say the Rosary; but their tongue, black with the sin of detraction, gives a token of eternal death. St. Bernard says that detraction is a three-edged sword, which, with a single stroke, inflicts three wounds: it wounds the detractor with sin, the person detracted by the loss of his character, and it wounds those who listen to it; for he who listens to detraction, and shows that it is pleasing to him, is also guilty of sin.

3. WHAT IS DETRACTION?

Let us now explain what this sin is. Detraction is twofold: *calumny* and *defamation.*

1. *Calumny* consists in telling a falsehood injurious to a neighbor, or in aggravating his guilt. When grievously injurious to another, it is a mortal sin, and the author of it is bound to restore the character of his neighbor.

2. *Defamation* consists in telling a secret sin of another to those who are ignorant of it; this, too, when grievous, is a mortal sin, because the person defamed, as long as his sin is occult, retains his good name; you rob him of it by revealing his sin, and when he has lost his reputation, he can no longer show himself in the world.

4. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF SINNING BY DETRACTION?

There are various ways of taking away the reputation of another.

1. By open defamation—by saying: *Such a person has been guilty of such a sin, etc.*

2. By indirect defamation; by saying, for example: *Such a man goes frequently to confession; but, I . . . had better not say.* It is sometimes less injurious to tell the sin openly, for the insinuation conveyed by that little *but* will make persons think that the evil is greater than it is in reality.

3. By censuring the motive of a person's actions. Some cannot find fault with their neighbor's conduct, because it is blameless. What, then, do they do? They censure his motive or intention. They say: *He has acted thus in order to deceive others.*

4. By signs. He who is guilty of this kind of detraction is called in Scripture *a man full of tongue.*[14016] *A man full of tongue;* that is, a man who makes all his limbs into tongues, who detracts his neighbor not only with the tongue, but also with the hands, with the feet, and with the eyes. A young man of this character, who could not speak without calumniating his neighbor, was punished in a terrible way for his sin. He became mad, and bit off his tongue, the smell of his breath became intolerable, and so he died. Would to God that there were not many addicted to this vice! *The poison of asps is under their lips.*[14017] Their mouth appears to be full of poison, so that they cannot speak without destroying the reputation, now of this man, now of that one.

5. Some are in the habit of listening and of afterwards relating what they have heard. They hear a person speak ill of another, and instantly go to the other and tell what they have heard. These are called *backbiters*, and are accursed by God, because they perform the office of the devil: they disturb the peace of families, of entire towns, and are the cause of so much hatred and of so many quarrels. Of this vice I have already spoken in the instruction on the precept of charity.[14018]

Take heed, my dear Christians, how you speak; . . . be careful not to allow your tongue to send you to hell. In *The Mirror of Examples* it is related that one of the damned was seen, in a vision, biting and gnawing his ulcerated and scorched tongue, and saying: “This accursed tongue has sent me to hell.”

When a person’s sin is public, to tell it, without a just cause, to one who is ignorant of it, is not a mortal sin, but it is a venial sin against charity; but remember that it is a mortal sin to reveal a fact that was once notorious but is now occult; because the person who had lost his reputation has now regained it.

5. HOW ARE WE TO REPAIR THE EVIL CAUSED BY DETRACTION?

Let us now come to the remedies. He who has injured the character of another must not only confess the sin, but must also restore the good name that he has taken away. In this there is great difficulty: it is easy to take away, but most difficult to restore, a good name.

When the defamation is effected by falsehood, the author of it is obliged to retract his calumny in the presence of all those before whom it was uttered; but this is the difficulty. Menochius relates that a nobleman had defamed a married lady, and confessed his sin to a Dominican friar, who told him: “You must retract what you have said.” The nobleman replied. “I cannot do that; for I cannot destroy my own reputation.” The confessor replied, he could not give him absolution on any other condition; but the obstinate man again declared that he *could* not do so. The friar at last, seeing that he was only wasting his time, said to him: “Go away: you are damned,” and turned his back upon him.

If the sin were true, but hidden, there is also, as I have already said,[14019]an obligation of restoring the injured character; and in this there is still greater difficulty; for, if the person really committed the sin, it cannot be said that he was innocent of it, for that would be a lie, and it is never lawful to tell a lie. What, then, is to be done? The detractor must use some other and more convenient means, some equivocation, for instance, such as: “It was only a joke what I said of that man—it was all out of my own head.” Sometimes it is better to speak well of the person whom you have calumniated without making any allusion to the sin you have told of him, particularly when you have reason to presume that this would be more pleasing to him than to revive the remembrance of his fault.

It is, however, necessary to know that it is not detraction, nor a sin, to tell a fault of another to his Superiors, parents, guardians, or masters, that they may prevent evil to the public, or to an innocent person, or to the delinquent himself. For example, if a girl is familiar with a young man, or if a young man goes to a house of bad character, and you make it known to the father that he may apply a remedy, you are not guilty of sin.

On the contrary, you are obliged to do this when it can be done without danger of any great harm to yourself. Nor is this, as I have said, detraction. St. Thomas[14020] says that to speak ill of another is sinful when it is done to blacken his character, but not when it is done to prevent his sin or injury.

6. IS IT ALSO A SIN TO LISTEN TO DETRACTION?

I said that detraction is sinful. But is it a sin to listen to detraction? A very great sin if you encourage the detraction, or if you take pleasure in it and show you are pleased with it. But if a person does not show himself pleased with the detraction, but through a certain fear neglects to reprove the detractor, he is not, according to St. Thomas,[14021] guilty of a mortal sin, because he is not sure that his correction will have the effect of preventing the detraction. But this is to be understood only of those who are not Superiors; for the Superior of a person who is guilty of detraction is always obliged to correct him and to stop the detraction. When a person hears detraction going on, and perceives that the matter is important and secret, he should either correct the detraction, or endeavor to change the subject of conversation, or go away, 0r at least show by his countenance that he is displeased with the detraction.

7. WHAT DOES THIS COMMANDMENT FORBID IN THE THIRD PLACE?

*T*his commandment forbids *contumely.* Contumely is an insult offered to a person in his presence. Detraction destroys the character of a neighbor; contumely takes away his honor. When contumely contains defamatory matter, it is a double sin, because it injures the honor as well as the good name of the neighbor.

Hence, as there is an obligation of restoring a neighbor's reputation, so there is also an obligation of repairing the injury done to his honor by asking pardon, or by some other act of humility towards him.

When contumely is offered (and it may be offered either by acts or by words) in the presence of others, the reparation must be made before the same persons.

To open another's letter is a species of contumely, and therefore it is always a sin, unless there is a presumption that the person who sends the letter or the person to whom it is sent is not unwilling that it be read.

It is also a sin to disclose, without a just cause, a secret which is entrusted to you or which you promise to keep. With regard to the just causes of revealing a secret, ask your confessor and follow his advice.

Is it a sin to entertain rash judgment? Yes; to judge rashly—a very great sin when the judgment is on an important matter, and really *rash,* that is, made without any reason, without certain grounds. But when there is any foundation for judging so, it is not a sin. To suspect evil of another without grounds is a venial sin; it scarcely amounts to a mortal sin unless when a person voluntarily and without any grounds suspects a neighbor of a most grievous sin. I have said *without any reason;* for when there is some foundation for the suspicion there is no sin. However, the virtuous always think well and the wicked think badly of their neighbors. *The fool* . . . *whereas he himself is a fool, esteemeth all men fools.*[14022]

We have treated of the eighth commandment; the ninth and the tenth which forbid Christians to covet the goods and the wife of another, remain to be explained. But in the sixth commandment we have spoken of the sin of impurity, and in the seventh of the sin of theft. By the ninth and the tenth are forbidden only the desires of these sins.[14023] Hence it is sufficient to say that what it is a sin to do it is also a sin to desire.

I also omit the commandments of the Church, because, in treating the Ten Commandments, I have explained what is most necessary to be known regarding the commandments of the Church.

The six principal commandments of the Church are expressed in the following verses:

1. Sundays and holy days observe
As feasts of obligation;
Attend at holy Mass, and keep
From servile occupation.
1. Lent, Ember-days, and Vigils, fast,
With one meal and collation.
1. On Friday, meat thou must not eat,
For sake of Christ's dear Passion.
1. Once in the year at least confess
With due examination.
At Easter-time receive thy Lord
With thanks and adoration.
1. In Lent or Advent marry not
With pomp and ostentation;
Wed before witnesses, and seek
The Church's approbation.
1. The worship of the Church maintain
With generous contribution.

The first of these commandments, which ordains the hearing of Mass and abstaining from servile work on Sundays and feast days of obligation, is found explained in Chapter III., page 419. The second and the third concerning fasting and abstinence are also explained at the end of Chapter III., page 433. The fourth, about Confession and Communion, belongs to Part II., Chapters IV. and V.—*ED.*

PART II

Instructions on the Holy Sacraments

Chapter I

THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL

JESUS CHRIST himself instituted the sacraments, as means to make us partakers of his merits. The sacraments, therefore, are so many sacred channels, through which Jesus Christ communicates his graces, which are the fruits of his Passion.

It is necessary to know that every sacrament confers two kinds of grace, namely, *sanctifying* grace and *sacramental* grace. *Sanctifying* or *habitual* grace is that which sanctifies the soul that receives the sacrament, provided it be received with the requisite dispositions. *Sacramental* grace is that which gives the soul a special aid to obtain the end for which each sacrament was instituted. Thus, Baptism confers a special grace to wash the soul and cleanse it from sin. Confirmation gives strength to confess the faith of Jesus Christ. The Eucharist preserves and augments in us the divine grace, which is the spiritual life of the soul. Penance enables us to recover the grace that we have lost. Extreme Unction gives strength to resist at death the assaults of hell. Orders enable the ministers of the Church to fulfil their obligations. Finally, Matrimony confers on husband and wife help to bear the burdens of the married state, and to bring up their children in virtue.

Three of these sacraments, namely, Baptism, Confirmation, and Orders, have the special effect of impressing on the soul a certain character or spiritual mark which can never be effaced. Hence these three sacraments can be received only once; but the others maybe received several times.[14024]

My principal object is to speak of the sacrament of penance that each one may be well acquainted with the manner of confessing his sins; however, I will say a few words on the other sacraments, that each person may know their essence, their effects, and the dispositions necessary for receiving them.

Chapter II

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

LET us briefly touch on four points regarding Baptism: its *necessity,* its *effects,* its *minister,* and *what is required for it.*

1. With regard to its *necessity,* it should be known that Baptism is not only the first but also the most necessary of all the sacraments. Without Baptism n0 one can enter heaven. *Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*[14025] It is also the most necessary, inasmuch as n0 one is capable of receiving any other sacrament if he has not previously received Baptism. Hence, Baptism is called the gate of all the sacraments. Is it impossible for a person who does not actually receive Baptism to be saved? I answer: He can be saved, if he receives it in desire; that is, by desiring to be baptized, and by believing in Jesus Christ; as has happened to many who, when unable to receive Baptism actually, have received it in desire. Faith is requisite as a preparation for receiving the grace of Baptism—but not charity; for attrition is sufficient, without contrition.

2. The *effect* of Baptism is to wash the soul and to cleanse it from all sins, as well from original as from actual sins, and to deliver it from all the punishment due to these sins.

3. The *minister* of Baptism is the parish priest, by whom, or by another priest, with his permission, it should be ordinarily administered; however, in case of necessity, when an infant is in danger of death, any man or woman, even an infidel or heretic, can confer Baptism.

4. Let us now come to what is necessary for Baptism.

With regard to the person to be baptized, if he has attained the use of reason he should have the intention of receiving Baptism, and sorrow for his sins. Some require that this sorrow should amount to contrition; but others more commonly hold that attrition is sufficient; and this is the opinion of St. Thomas: “For a man to prepare himself to receive the graces of baptism, faith is required, but not charity; because attrition preceding it is sufficient; it need not be contrition."[14026] We shall explain the nature of contrition and attrition in speaking of confession.[14027] The intention, then, of receiving Baptism is necessary for adults; but the intention of the Church supplies for those who have not attained the use of reason. All infants who, like the Holy Innocents, are put to death from hatred to the faith, are saved through the merits of Jesus Christ.

For Baptism are also required the *matter* and *form,* and the *intention of the minister.* The *matter* is natural water. The *form* consists in the words pronounced by the minister during the triple infusion of water on the head of the person to be baptized; but if the water cannot be poured 0n the head of the infant, it is sufficient to pour it on the breast or shoulders, or any other part, when it is impossible to pour it on some principal part of the body. The words of the form are, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Persons, particularly midwives, must be very careful to remember not to leave out the conjunction *and;* hence it would not then be sufficient to say, "In the name of the Father, of the Son, of the Holy Ghost." You must say, "In the name of the Father, *and* of the Son, *and* of the Holy Ghost." The minister must have the intention to confer Baptism, or at least to do what the Church does, as the Council of Trent has defined: "If any one says that it is not requisite for ministers while consecrating or administering the sacraments to have an intention at least of doing what the Church does, let him be anathema."[14028]

Sponsors, that is, a godfather and godmother, are required in Baptism. It is enough to have one; but there cannot be more than two—one male and one female. Sponsors are obliged to attend to the instruction of the child in what regards faith and morals, when there is no one to instruct him; but they are not bound by this obligation in Catholic countries, where parish priests are diligent in the discharge of their duty. It is also necessary to know that the sponsors contract a spiritual relationship with the person baptized, and with his father and mother, so that they cannot be married to any of them.

Baptism should be administered in the Church; to administer it in private houses, without urgent necessity, would be a great sin; such necessity is either the imminent death of the infant, or infamy and scandal that would attach to the mother if the child were taken to the public church. But the children of kings and princes have the privilege of being baptized at home.[14029]

Remember that to defer the baptism of infants for more than ten or eleven days is, according to the more common opinion of theologians, a mortal sin, except there is some extraordinary reason for it.

Chapter III

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

CONFIRMATION is one of the seven sacraments, as has been declared by the Council of Trent,[14030] and after it the Council of Florence.[14031] It increases the grace received in Baptism.

The *matter* of the sacrament of confirmation is the sacred chrism composed of the oil of olives and balsam, consecrated by the bishop as the Roman Catechism[14032] teaches, and as Benedict XIV,[14033] has declared. The *oil* signifies the abundance of the grace of the Holy Ghost which is poured on the person confirmed; and the *balsam* signifies the odor of virtues, which a Christian strengthened by so great a sacrament ought to send forth.

The *form* of confirmation consists in the words pronounced by the bishop when he anoints the forehead of the person with the sacred chrism, and with the sign of the cross. The words are: *N.* (naming the person to be confirmed) *I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*[14034] A person present answers, *Amen.* Afterwards the bishop strikes the person confirmed lightly on the cheek, to remind him that he should be prepared to suffer every pain and every injury for the sake of Jesus Christ. He then dismisses him, saying: *Pax tecum—Peace be with thee.* At the words, “I sign thee with the sign of the cross,” the person confirmed is sealed or inscribed with the sign of the cross, as a soldier of Jesus Christ; and by the words, “I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation,” he receives the grace of strength to resist the enemies of the faith and the assaults of hell.

He who receives this sacrament should know the mysteries of the holy faith, and should be in the state of grace; otherwise he is guilty of sacrilege. Hence the person who is to be confirmed would do well to go to confession and Communion before he receives confirmation. In ancient times confirmation was given to infants; but Benedict XIV. in his Constitution 129, *Eo quamvis,* of the year 1745, has declared that at present it should be given only to those that have attained the use of reason, at any rate not before the age of seven years, as the Roman Catechism[14035] teaches. However, the same Pontiff[14036] in another place admits, with other theologians, that it may be given infants when there is an urgent cause; as, for example, when the child is in danger of death, or when the bishop is about to be absent for a considerable time from the diocese.

There was once a question raised, whether all Christians were bound under grievous sin to receive the sacrament of confirmation, or whether the obligation extended only to those that were destined for holy Orders. But it is now decided that all are bound, as appears from the following words of Benedict XIV.: "The faithful are to be admonished by the Ordinaries of the different places, that they are guilty of grievous sin, if, when they have the opportunity, they refuse or neglect to come to be confirmed."[14037]

In receiving this sacrament, it is commanded, under pain of grievous sin, that there be a sponsor;[14038] but there can be only one, who must, under penalty of mortal sin, have received confirmation, and must be of the same sex as the person confirmed. While the sacrament is conferred, the sponsor should keep his right hand on the right shoulder of the person who receives the sacrament. This sponsor also contracts a spiritual relationship in the same manner as sponsors for Baptism. It should be known that monks and nuns are forbidden to act as sponsors.

To understand the great efficacy of this sacrament in imparting spiritual strength to the faithful, it is enough to relate one fact, vouched for by St. Gregory Nazianzen and Prudentius. Julian the Apostate wished one day to offer sacrifice to his false gods, and had everything prepared; but at the moment they wished to offer the sacrifice, the knives would not pierce the victims, the fire was instantly extinguished, and the ministers became immovable as a rock. The sacrificing priest said, "There must be some one present who has been baptized or confirmed." The emperor asked if there were any such person present in the assembly, and then a young man, who had received confirmation a little before, came forward and said boldly: "Yes, sir, I have been confirmed, and therefore I have besought my God to prevent the impiety of the sacrifice, and he has heard my prayer.” Julian was struck with astonishment, and, covered with confusion by the prodigy, he gave up the sacrifice, and withdrew from the temple.

Chapter IV

THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

IN this sacrament Jesus Christ gives us his body and blood under the species or appearances of bread and wine, that by the holy Communion his grace and holy love may be preserved and increased in our souls. We must then believe that in consequence of the words of consecration pronounced by the priest in the Mass, the bread and wine lose their proper substance, and are converted into the body and blood of Jesus Christ; and that nothing remains of the bread and wine but the species or appearances, the color, the taste, and figure; so that it is a dogma of the faith, that the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar contains Jesus Christ, really and entirely, his body, his soul, and divinity.

We must, consequently, believe that Jesus Christ, at the same time that he is in heaven, is also really and entirely in all places upon earth where the consecrated Host is reserved; and that when the most holy Host is divided Jesus Christ is not divided, but remains entire in every separate particle of the Host, as has been declared by the Council of Trent,[14039] by the Council of Nice,[14040] and by the Council of Lateran under Innocent III.[14041]

The principal *effect* of this sacrament is to preserve and perfect in us the spiritual life of the soul. As earthly bread nourishes the body, so this heavenly bread nourishes the soul, and makes it advance in divine love. It also serves, says the Council of Trent,[14042] as an antidote to cleanse us from venial and to preserve us from mortal sins. Another effect of this sacrament is resurrection and glorification of our bodies, which we expect at the last judgment; for Jesus Christ says: *He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath life ever—lasting, and I will raise him up at the last day.*[14043] But the most desirable of all the effects of the holy Communion is, that it unites and makes us one with Jesus Christ. *He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.*[14044] In order to receive these holy effects, it is necessary to be in the state of grace; he who receives the holy Communion with a conscience laden with mortal sin, receives Jesus Christ, but not his grace; on the contrary, he merits the malediction of Jesus Christ, and, according to the Apostle, he receives the sentence of his own condemnation; because he is guilty of a most enormous sacrilege. *He eateth and drinketh judgment* to himself.[14045]

It is related that a person in the state of mortal sin went to Communion, but what was the consequence? The consecrated particle became like a sword and pierced his throat, and the person fell instantly dead at the foot of the altar.

There is a more terrible example related in the “Teresian Chronicles.” A girl fell into a sin, which she was ashamed to conless, and afterwards made three sacrilegious Communions. After the third Communion she was suddenly struck dead before the altar. Her countenance appeared, not black, but full of splendor. All cried out; “A saint! a saint!” and her body was carried in procession through the whole neighborhood. But mark what happened, and tremble at the thought of receiving Communion in mortal sin. An angel appeared to a Teresian Carmelite friar, who was in his cell, during the night on which the body of the unhappy girl lay unburied in the church. The angel conducted the Father to the church, and commanded him to open the mouth of the deceased. He opened her mouth, and found the three Hosts that she had received in the state of sin, and placed them in a ciborium. After the removal of the Hosts her countenance appeared no longer bright and resplendent, but black and horrible.

Let us return to our subject. For a person in the state of mortal sin, if he wishes to receive the body of Christ, it is not enough to make an act of contrition, though this is sufficient for the reception of other sacraments. It is necessary for such a person to go to confession, and to receive absolution, before he approaches the holy Communion. The only case in which a person can communicate after committing mortal sin, without confession and absolution, is, when he forgot the sin until he had come to the altar; in such a case, in order to avoid the scandal that should arise from rising up to go back to confession, it is enough to make an act of contrition; after making an act of contrition, he may receive the holy Communion.

This is the disposition necessary for Communion on the part of the soul. With regard to the disposition of the body, which is necessary for Communion, a person must be fasting from midnight; that is, he must not have taken into the stomach any digestible substance, whether liquid 0r solid. The sick, when in danger of death, are excepted; for they can receive the most holy viaticum after having broken their fast.

These are dispositions absolutely necessary for Communion. But to communicate with greater fruit, it is necessary to purify the soul from venial sins—at least, from venial sins which are fully deliberate. Hence, tepid souls that habitually commit venial sins have not the dispositions necessary for frequent Communion. At most, they can be permitted to go to Communion once a week, that from the sacrament they may receive strength to avoid mortal sin. But persons who do not commit deliberate venial sins, and have a desire of advancing in divine love, may communicate more frequently, according as their confessor may advise. St. Francis de Sales says that Jesus Christ gives himself to us only through love, and therefore we should receive him only through love. The best disposition, then, for holy Communion is, to receive the holy Eucharist in order to advance in the love of Jesus Christ.

All know that every Christian is bound, under pain of grievous sin, to communicate at least once a year, and so to fulfil his Easter duties: this ought to be done within the time prescribed for the fulfilment of the Paschal precept; and to this all are obliged, under the penalty of being interdicted from entering the Church, and of being deprived of Christian burial after death. Every Christian is also obliged to communicate, and to receive the holy viaticum, whenever he is in danger of death. I say, in *danger,* without waiting till there is no hope of recovery. By waiting so long, the sick man runs the risk of dying without receiving the viaticum, as has happened to many.

The Church, then, has declared that every Christian is bound, under pain of grievous sin, *to* communicate on two occasions, namely, at Easter, and in danger of death. But it is also necessary to know that a person will scarcely preserve himself in the grace of God, if, like some who are negligent about their eternal salvation he communicates only once a year. This we know by experience; and reason teaches us, that when the soul is a long time without this divine food, it scarcely has strength to resist temptations, and therefore easily falls into sin. The Most Holy Sacrament is called celestial bread; because, as earthly bread supports the life of the body, so this heavenly bread preserves the life of the soul. Therefore, let every Christian communicate at least every eight days, as has been already said; but persons who lead a spiritual life, make mental prayer, and abstain from deliberate venial sins, ought, with the consent of their confessor, to communicate several times in the week. For the rest, who live without much devotion, that they may at least preserve themselves in God's grace, it is advisable to go to Communion every Sunday, or at least every fortnight.

Children, as St. Thomas[14046] says, should be obliged to go to Communion as soon as they are capable of understanding the difference between this divine food and earthly bread. Some children are capable of understanding this difference sooner than others. But, ordinarily speaking, the obligation of going to Communion does not begin until after the ninth or tenth year; but their first Communion cannot be deferred beyond the age of twelve, or, at the most, beyond the age of fourteen years. We know that St. Charles Borromeo commanded his parish priests to endeavor to make the children go to Communion as soon as they had attained the age of ten years. And for children, in danger of death, theologians, along with Benedict XIV.[14047] commonly teach that so great an age is not necessary; it is sufficient if they are capable of making their confession.

It is necessary to communicate; but, as has been said, it is necessary to communicate in a state of grace; otherwise the Communion will become a poison, or rather a halter to strangle the unworthy communicant. St. Cyprian[14048] relates that a Christian woman who, in order to conceal herself, had through fear of the persecution done an action contrary to faith, came to the church, and went to Communion without confessing her sin. But what was the consequence? The sacred Host remained in her throat; the throat instantly swelled in such a manner that she began to tremble from head to foot, and so expired.

Chapter V

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Penance is a sacrament in which, by the absolution of a confessor, sins committed after Baptism are remitted. For priests have received from Jesus Christ the power of remitting sins, as appears from the words: *Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.*[14049] Therefore, the Council of Trent excommunicates all that say that this sacrament has not the power to remit sin. By this sacrament the sinner recovers not only the divine grace, but also the merits of the good works performed in the state of grace, which he had lost by sin. The soul also receives additional strength to resist temptations; for the same Council says that by justification we are renewed in the spirit of our mind.[14050] All these graces we receive through the merits of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

To receive this sacrament, three things are particularly necessary on the part of the penitent: *First,* sorrow for sins committed, together with a purpose or resolution to commit them no more. *Secondly,* an entire confession of all the sins committed. *Thirdly,* the performance of the penance enjoined by the confessor. But, in order to be able to confess all his sins, and to conceive a true sorrow for them, the sinner must first make a diligent examination of his conscience.

I. EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

This examination consists in making a diligent search, in order to call to mind the sins committed since the last confession, which was made with the requisite conditions.

In this search many fail by too minute an examination, and many others by not examining enough. The former are the scrupulous; they are always examining their conscience, and are never satisfied; thus they fail in exciting a true sorrow for their sins and a firm purpose of amendment.

Moreover, their scruples render the sacrament so odious, that going to confession appears to them like going to be martyred. This examination for confession need not be made with *extreme* diligence; it is enough for the penitent to apply himself with attention, in order to discover all the sins committed since his last confession. This diligence must be proportioned to the conscience of the penitent. If he has been a long time absent from confession, and has fallen into many mortal sins, greater diligence is necessary; less is required if he has been lately at confession, and has committed but few sins. If, after making a diligent search, a person forgets a certain sin, but has a general sorrow for all his sins, the one that he has forgotten in confession is pardoned, and he is only bound to confess it at his next confession. When a confessor tells a scrupulous penitent to make no further examination, and never again to confess what he has now told, the penitent should be silent, and obey the confessor. St. Philip Neri used to say: “Let all who desire to advance in the way of God obey their confessor, who is in the place of God; he who acts thus may be certain that he shall not have to render to God an account of the actions which he performed through obedience.”[14051] And St. John of the Cross said, that “not to trust in what a confessor says, is pride and a want of faith.” The great reason of this is because our Lord said to his ministers: *He that heareth you heareth Me*.[14052]

But would to God that all were scrupulous! Generally, such souls have a tender conscience: let them be obedient, and they are safe. The misfortune is, that the majority of Christians have not many scruples: they commit numberless mortal sins, which they forget; and afterwards they barely confess the sins that occur to them at the moment of confession. Thus it sometimes happens that they do not accuse themselves of half their sins. Confessions made in this manner are fruitless; it would be even better to omit them. A historian, *Nicius Erithroeus* or Victor Rossi, relates that a young man, who had usually made his confession in this way, sent for a confessor at the hour of death; but before the confessor arrived, a devil came, and showed the young man a long list of sins omitted in his past confessions, through want of diligence in examining his conscience. The poor young man despaired of salvation, and died without making his confession.

Good Christians make an examination of conscience and an act of contrition every evening. There was a devout monk lying at the point of death; when his Superior came and told him to make his confession, he answered: “Blessed be God! I have for thirty years made an examination of conscience every evening, and have made my confession every day as if I were at the point of death.” (bottom of book’s page (526) is dog-eared; complete text and footnotes are not available for editing) children, when you are preparing for confession, etired part of the church; first of all, thank aving waited for you till that moment, and then beg of him to make known to you the number and the grievousness of your sins. Then begin to pass over in your mind the places you have frequented, the persons with whom you have kept company, and the dangerous occasions in which you have been since your last confession. Examine in this manner all the sins committed during that time by thoughts, by words, and by deeds: above all, examine yourself on the sins of omission, particularly if you are the head of a family, a magistrate, or in any similar situation in which persons do not generally accuse themselves of sins of omission. But to make the examination in a more orderly manner, it is better for those who have committed different kinds of sin to examine themselves 0n the Ten Commandments, and see what commandment they have violated, and whether the violation has been grievous or venial.

He who has had the misfortune of having committed a mortal sin must go to confession immediately; for he may die any moment, and be damned. You may say: “I will go to confession at Easter 0r Christmas.” And how do you know that you will not die suddenly in the mean time? “I hope in God that I shall not!” But should it happen, what must become of you? How many have kept saying, *Hereafter, hereafter,* and are now in hell: because death came upon them, and they were not able to make their confession.

St. Bonaventure[14053] relates, in the life of St. Francis, that while the saint was going about and preaching, a gentleman gave him lodging in his house. Moved with gratitude, St. Francis recommended him to God, and the Lord revealed to the saint that the gentleman was in a state of sin, and that his death was at hand. The saint instantly called him, and made him go to confession to a priest, the companion of the saint. Soon afterwards the gentleman sat down to dinner, but before he could swallow the first mouthful, he was struck down with sudden death.

A similar misfortune befell a sinner who was damned on account of having deferred his confession. Venerable Bede[14054] relates that this man, who had been fervent, fell into tepidity and mortal sin, and deferred confession from day to day. He was seized with a dangerous illness; and even then put off his confession saying that he would afterwards go to confession with better dispositions. But the hour of vengeance had arrived: he fell into a deadly swoon in which he thought that he saw hell open under his feet. After he had come to his senses again, the persons who stood round his bed begged him to make his confession, but he answered: “There is no more time; I am damned.” They continued to encourage him. “ You are losing time,” said he; “ I am damned, I see hell opened; I there see Judas, Caiphas, and the murderers of Jesus Christ; and near them I see my place, because, like them, I have despised the blood of Jesus Christ by deferring confession for so long a time.” Thus the unhappy man died in despair without confession, and was buried like a dog outside the church without having a prayer offered for his soul.

With regard to *venial sins,* it is useful to confess them; because the absolution of a confessor remits them. But there is no obligation of confessing them; for, according to the Council of Trent, the pardon of them may be obtained by other means without confession—such as by acts of contrition and of charity, or by saying the “Our Father” with devotion.

Are venial sins also remitted by the use of *holy water?* Yes; not directly, but indirectly *by way of impetration;* for the Church, by the blessing of the water, obtains for the faithful who use it acts of repentance and love, by which sins are cancelled. Hence, after taking holy water, it will be useful instantly to make an act of sorrow or of the love of God, that the Lord may, in consequence of those acts, remit all venial sins that remain in the soul. Holy water helps also to dispose us to devotion, and to banish the temptations of the devil, particularly at the hour of death. Surius tells us of a dying monk who asked his prior to send away a blackbird from the window. The prior sprinkled the window with holy water, and the bird, which was really the devil, flew away. It is also mentioned by Father Ferrerio that a monk of Cluni at the hour of death saw his chamber full of devils, but on sprinkling the cell with holy water they immediately disappeared.

Let us now proceed. We have spoken of the examination regarding mortal and venial sins. But were a person to do an action with a doubt whether it was a mortal or a venial sin, what kind of sin would he commit? He would be guilty of mortal sin, because he exposes himself to the danger of grievously offending God. Hence, before he acts he must lay aside the doubt; and if he has not hitherto done so, he must confess it, at least, as it is before God. But the scrupulous, who have doubts about everything, must follow another rule: they must obey their confessor. When he tells them to conquer their doubts, and to act against scruples, they should obey with exactness; otherwise they will render themselves unable and unfit to perform any spiritual exercise.

Before I proceed farther I exhort every one of you to make a general confession, if you have not as yet made one. And I now speak not only of those whose confessions have been sacrilegious on account of having concealed sins, or invalid for want of sufficient examination of conscience, or of sufficient sorrow; but I speak of all who wish to be permanently converted to God. A general confession is a great means of bringing about a true change of life. After her conversion to God, St. Margaret of Cortona told all her sins to her confessor, and thereby made herself so pleasing and dear to God, that our Lord himself spoke to her and called her, “My sinful one; my poor little one.” She one day said to Jesus Christ: “Lord, when wilt Thou call me Thy daughter?” Jesus Christ answered: “When thou hast made a general confession of thy whole life then I will call you my daughter.” She made a general confession, and from that time Jesus Christ always called her his child.

II. SORROW

Sorrow for sin is so necessary, in order to obtain forgiveness, that without it even God himself (at least in his ordinary Providence) cannot pardon sin. *Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish.*[14055] A person who dies without making an examination of conscience, or a confession of his sins, may be saved by making an act of sincere contrition when he has not time to confess his sins, nor a priest to whom he can confess them; but without sorrow it is impossible to be saved.

And here is the mistake of those people who, in preparing for confession, endeavor only to call to mind their sins, but make no effort to excite a true sorrow for them. This sorrow we must earnestly ask of God; and before we go to the confessional let us say a “Hail Mary” in honor of the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, that she may obtain for us a true sorrow for our sins.

To obtain the remission of our sins in the sacrament of penance, our sorrow for them must have five conditions. It must be *sincere, supernatural, sovereign, universal,* and *accompanied with a hope of pardon.*

1. Our sorrow must be *sincere;* it must be not in the mouth only, but also in the heart. This is the kind of sorrow required by the Council of Trent: “A sorrow of the soul, and detestation of sin committed, with a purpose of sinning no more.”[14056] The soul, then, must conceive a true sorrow, a true displeasure, or regret, and true bitterness of heart, for the sins that have been committed; it must detest and abhor them, saying, with the penitent king Ezechias: *I will recount to thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul.*[14057]

2. The sorrow must be *supernatural;* that is, it must arise not from a natural but from a supernatural motive. It would not be sufficient to repent of your sin because it has been injurious to your health, your property, or your reputation. This would be a natural motive, and sorrow proceeding from such a motive is of no use. The motive, then, of our sorrow must be supernatural; we must repent of sin either 0n account of its deformity and brutality, or because it has offended the infinite goodness of God, or because by it we have deserved hell, or lost heaven; and thus our sorrow will be either perfect, that is, contrition, or imperfect, that is, attrition, as shall be hereafter explained.

3. Our sorrow must be *sovereign.* Not that it need be accompanied with tears and positive sensibility, it is enough if it be a deliberate calculation of the will, that it would rather wish to have suffered any positive evil than to have offended God. Let timid souls who are always troubled at not feeling sensible sorrow for their sins attend to this; it is enough for them to repent with the will—that is, to be sorry for their sins, desiring to have lost all things rather than to have offended God. St. Teresa has given an excellent

method for knowing whether a soul has true sorrow for her sins: if she has a sincere purpose to sin no more, and would be content to lose all things rather than the grace of God, let her have confidence; for then there is no doubt that she has true sorrow for her sins.

4. Our sorrow must be *universal*—extending to all grievous offences offered to God, so that there is no mortal sin that the soul does not detest above all other evils.

I have said, *mortal sin;* for to obtain the pardon of one venial sin it is not necessary to have sorrow for all our venial sins; one venial sin may be remitted without the remission of another; to obtain forgiveness of any venial sin it is enough to have sorrow for it.

But whether the sin is mortal or venial, God cannot pardon it unless the soul sincerely repents of it. Let those who confess only venial sins, for which they have not sorrow, remember that their confessions are null. So, when they wish to receive absolution, they must have sorrow for at least some of the venial faults that they confess, or must accuse themselves of some sin of their past life for which they are sincerely sorry.

But, with regard to mortal sins, it is necessary to have true sorrow for all, and a sincere purpose not to commit them again; otherwise none of them will be remitted; for no mortal sin is pardoned without the infusion of grace into the soul; but this grace cannot exist in the soul along with mortal sin. Therefore, no one can obtain the pardon of one mortal sin without receiving pardon of them all. It is related of St. Sebastian the Martyr, that he used to heal diseases by the sign of the cross. One day the saint went to see Cromatius, who was sick, and promised him health, provided he would burn his idols. Cromatius burned them, but reserved one of them, for which he had a special affection; he, therefore did not recover his health, and began to complain to the saint; but the saint told him that it was useless to have burned the other idols as long as he retained one of them. Thus, it is not enough for the soul to detest some mortal sins; it must detest them all. For a person who has committed several mortal sins, it is not necessary to detest them one by one; it is enough to detest them all with a general sorrow, as grievous offences against God. If all be thus detested, though some sin may have been forgotten, it is forgiven.

4. Our sorrow must be accompanied with *the hope of pardon*, otherwise it will be like the sorrow of the damned, who are sorry for their sins, not

because they are offences against God, but because they are the cause of their sufferings; but their sorrow is without hope of pardon. Even Judas repented of his treason. *I have,* said he, *sinned in betraying innocent blood.*[14058] But because he did not hope for pardon, he hanged himself on a tree, and died in despair. Cain also acknowledged that he had sinned in killing his brother Abel; but he despaired of pardon, and said: *My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon;*[14059] and therefore he died in a state of damnation. St. Francis de Sales says that the sorrow of true penitents is a sorrow full of peace and consolation; for the more a true penitent grieves for having offended God, the greater his confidence of obtaining pardon, and the greater his consolation. Hence St. Bernard used to say: “O Lord! if it is so sweet to weep for Thee, what will it be to rejoice in Thee?”[14060]

In order, then, to dispose a soul for the divine pardon in the sacrament of penance, its sorrow must have these five conditions. It is necessary also to know that sorrow for sin is of two kinds: perfect and imperfect. The former is called *contrition,* the latter *attrition.*[14061]

Contrition is a sorrow for sin, because it is an offence against the divine goodness. Theologians say that contrition is a formal act of perfect love of God; for he who has contrition, is moved by the love which he bears to the goodness of God to repent of having offended him. Hence, to make an act of the love of God, saying: “My God, because Thou art infinite goodness, I love Thee above all things; and because I love Thee I am sorry above all things for having offended Thee,” will greatly assist the soul to make an act of contrition.

The sorrow of *attrition* is a sorrow for having offended God, which the soul conceives from a less perfect motive, such as from the consideration of the deformity of sin, of having deserved hell, or of having lost heaven, in punishment of its sin.

Thus *contrition* is a sorrow for sin on account of the injury offered to God; *attrition* is a sorrow for an offence offered to God on account of the injury it does to us.

By *contrition* the soul immediately obtains the grace of God, before the penitent receives sacramental absolution from a confessor, provided he has at least the implied intention of going to confession and receiving the sacrament of penance. This we know from the Council of Trent. “The Holy

Synod teaches that, although it may sometimes happen that this contrition is perfected by charity, and reconciles man to God, before the actual reception of this sacrament,”[14062] etc.

But by *attrition* the penitent obtains sanctifying grace only when he actually receives absolution, as we learn from the same Council. “Although (attrition) without the sacrament of penance cannot by itself bring the sinner to justification, still it disposes him to obtain the grace of God in the sacrament of penance.”[14063] The word *disposes* is understood by Gonet, and most commonly by other theologians, of the proximate disposition for receiving grace in the sacrament of penance; nor can it be understood of the remote disposition; for, even unconnected with the sacrament, attrition is a good act, and disposes to grace. But the Council speaks of attrition as a disposition in the sacrament, and therefore it is necessarily to be understood of the proximate disposition.

Here it may be asked whether, in order to obtain absolution from sins, it is necessary that attrition be united with *inchoate* charity—that is, with the first beginning, the first spark, of charity. There is no doubt that this inchoate love is necessary for justification; for the Council itself teaches that one of the dispositions that the sinner must have in order to be justified is that he begin to love God. “They begin to love God, as the fountain of all justice.”[14064] But a question may be raised as to what is meant by the beginning of love.

Some say that it means an act of predominant love, or that the sinner should love God above all things; but for this they have no just grounds; for he who loves God above all things, loves him with perfect love, and perfect love remits and destroys sin. Gregory XIII. condemned a proposition of Michael Baius, which asserted that “the love of God can exist in the soul along with sin; that charity, which is the fulfilment of the law, is not always united with the remission of sins.”[14065] Baius spoke of charity which, according to St. Paul, is the fulfilment of the law.[14066] Now what is the charity by which the law is fulfilled? It is precisely the predominant love by which God is loved above all things. St. Thomas teaches, that by loving God above all things we fulfil the precept of Jesus Christ: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*[14067] These are the words of the holy Doctor: “When we are commanded to love God with our whole heart we are given to understand that we ought to love God above all things."[14068] He, then, who loves God above all things, cannot be in the state of sin. St. Thomas confirms this doctrine in another place, where he says: "An act of mortal sin is destructive of charity, which consists in loving God above all things."[14069] Hence he teaches that "Charity cannot exist with mortal sin."[14070] Besides, we have several passages of Scripture, which assure us that they who love God are loved by him*: I love them that love Me.*[14071] *He that loveth Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him.*[14072] *He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him.*[14073] *Charity covereth a multitude of sins.*[14074]

Hence it follows, that any act of contrition (which is also, as we have said, an act of charity), though not intense, provided it amounts to contrition, remits all mortal sins. Hence the angelic Doctor has written: "How small soever sorrow may be, provided it is sufficient for the nature of contrition, it cancels every sin."[14075]

Hence, by *inchoate* love, united with attrition, we cannot understand *predominant* love; for such love, though it be remiss, and not intense, is perfect charity; and therefore sorrow united with such love would be, not attrition, but contrition. Hence, were such attrition necessary, every sinner would be already absolved before he went to confession; the sacrament of penance would be, not a sacrament of the *dead,* but of the living; and the absolution would be, not a true absolution, but, as Luther taught, rather a simple declaration of the absolution already granted. But this is contrary to the definition of the Council of Trent.[14076]

Therefore, the beginning of charity, which must accompany attrition, need not be predominant love; it is sufficient if it be a simple beginning of love, such as is the fear of eternal chastisements. *The fear of God is the beginning of His love.*[14077] Thus the will to offend God no more is also the beginning of his love. So also the hope of pardon and of the eternal goods which God promises to penitents. St. Thomas says that from the moment that we expect to gain good things from a person, we begin to love him.[14078] Hence, in preparing for confession, it is useful to unite with the act of sorrow an act of hope of pardon through the merits of Jesus Christ. The Council of Trent says that by this hope the penitent ought to prepare himself to receive from God the remission of his sins. *Trusting that God will pardon them for Christ's sake.*[14079]

Let it, however, be remembered, that:

1. For attrition, the fear of the temporal punishments with which God chastises sinners in this life is not sufficient; for theologians say, that as the punishment of mortal sin is eternal, so the motive of sorrow for it ought to be the chastisement of eternal torments.

2. Let it be also observed, that in the act of attrition it is not enough for the sinner to repent, merely because he has deserved hell; he must also repent of having offended God, by deserving hell.

3. Let it also be remembered that the Council of Trent requires that the act of attrition should be accompanied not only with the hope of pardon, but also with the will of sinning no more—with a hope of pardon,[14080] to the exclusion of all will of sinning again. Hence, were a person sorry for his sins, because by them he had deserved hell, but so disposed that, if there were no hell he would not give up sin, his sorrow would not only be insufficient, but it would be sinful on account of the bad disposition of his will.

It follows, then, that an act of *attrition* should be made in this way: "My God, because by my sins I have lost heaven, and have merited hell for all eternity, I am sorry above all things for having offended Thee." An act of *contrition* may be made in this manner: "My God, because Thou art infinite goodness, I love Thee above all things, and because I love Thee, I am sorry above all things for all the offences I have offered to Thee, O Sovereign Good! My God, I purpose never more to offend Thee. I would rather die than ever offend Thee more."

And let me here remark that, though attrition alone is, as has been said, sufficient in order to obtain the grace of God in the sacrament of penance, still every person, in preparing for confession, should endeavor to add to the act of attrition an act of contrition, as well for greater security as for his own greater profit.

III. PURPOSE OF SINNING NO MORE

Sorrow and a purpose of amendment necessarily go together. "A sorrow of the soul and a detestation of sin," says the Council of Trent, "along with the purpose of sinning no more."[14081] The soul cannot have a true sorrow for sin without a sincere purpose never more to offend God. Now, in order to be a true purpose, it must have three conditions: it must be *firm, universal, and efficacious.*

1. It must be *firm,* so that the penitent resolutely purposes to suffer every evil rather than offend God.

Some say: "Father, I do not wish ever more to offend God; but the occasions of sin and my own weakness will make me relapse: I wish, but shall scarcely be able, to persevere." My son, you have not a true purpose, and therefore you say: I wish, I wish. Know that hell is full of such wishes. It is a mere empty *wish,* not a true resolute *will* or purpose; a true purpose is a firm and resolute will to suffer every evil rather than to relapse into sin. It is true that there are occasions of sin, that we are weak, particularly if we have contracted a habit of any sin; and that the devil is strong: but God is stronger than the devil, and with his aid we can conquer all the temptations of hell. *I can do all things,* says St. Paul, *in Him who strengthened me.*[14082] It is true that we ought to tremble at our weakness, and distrust our own strength; but we ought to have confidence in God that by his grace we shall overcome all the assaults of our tempters. *Praising, I will call upon the Lord*, said David, *and I shall be saved from my enemies.*[14083] I will invoke the Lord, and he will save me from my enemies. He who recommends himself to God in temptations shall never fall.

"But, Father, I have recommended myself to God, and the temptation continues." Do you, then, also continue to ask help from God as long as the temptation lasts, and you will never fall. God is faithful; he will not permit us to be tempted above our strength. *God,* says the Apostle, *is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able.*[14084] He has promised to give aid to all who pray for it. *For every one that asketh receiveth.*[14085] And this promise is made to all—to sinners, as well as to the just: "For every one that asketh receiveth." So there is no excuse for those who consent to sin; for if they recommend themselves to God, he will stretch out his hand, and support them, and they will not fall. He, then, who falls into sin falls through his own fault, either because he will not ask aid from God, or because he will not avail himself of the aid which the Lord offers to him.

The purpose must be *universal;* that is, it must be a purpose of avoiding every mortal sin. Saul was commanded by God to put to death all the Amalecites, and all their cattle, and to burn all their goods. What did he do? He slew a great multitude of men and of cattle, and burnt a large quantity of their goods; but he saved the life of the king, and preserved what was most valuable of the property; and on account of this contempt of God's commandment he merited his malediction. Many penitents imitate Saul; they purpose to avoid some sins, but they cannot give up some dangerous familiarity, or some goods that they have a scruple about retaining, or some cherished feelings of anger and ill-will against a neighbor, or some hankering after revenge. Such persons wish to divide their heart, giving one half to God, and the other to the devil. The devil is content with his portion, but God is not satisfied with a part of their heart. Every one knows the history of Solomon—how two women came to him, each claiming to be the mother of the child who was still left alive. He ordered the infant to be divided, and one half to be given to each of them. *Divide the living child in two.*[14086] The woman who was not the mother of the child remained silent and was satisfied with the order of the king; but the true mother said: *I beseech thee, my lord, give her the child alive, and do not kill it.*[14087] "No, my lord, if my child must die, I prefer that she should have it entire." Solomon concluded that she was the true mother of the child, and gave it to her. Thus, the devil because he is our enemy, and not our father, is content to have a part of our heart; but God, who is our true Father, is not satisfied unless he has the whole of it. *No man,* says Jesus Christ, *can serve two masters.*[14088] God does not accept for his servants those who wish to serve two masters; he wishes to be our only Lord, and he justly refuses to be the companion of the devil in the possession of our hearts.

Our purpose, then, must be *universal:* it must be a purpose of avoiding all mortal sins. I say *mortal sins;* for, with regard to venial sins, a person may have a purpose of avoiding one and not another, and such a purpose is sufficient for a good confession. However, souls that fear God purpose to abstain from all fully deliberate venial sins; and with regard to indeliberate venial sins, or sins committed without a full consent of the will, they purpose to commit as few of them as possible; to avoid all such sins is impossible on account of the weakness of our nature. Most Holy Mary only (as we have said in the beginning of this work)[14089] was free from all, even indeliberate venial sins, as the Council of Trent has declared, saying that it is impossible for a man "to avoid during his whole life all sins, venial as well as mortal, unless by a special privilege of God, as the Church holds with regard to the Blessed Virgin."[14090] And this is one of the strongest proofs that the divine Mother was exempt from original sin; for, had she been stained with it, she could not, in the course of nature, have been free from all, even indeliberate venial sins. Let us proceed.

3. The purpose must be *efficacious*—that is, it must make us practise all the means necessary to avoid sin; and one of the most necessary of these means, is to avoid the occasions of relapsing into sin. This is a most important point; for were men careful to fly from evil occasions, from how many sins would they abstain, and thus how many souls would escape damnation! The devil does not gain much without an occasion. But when a person voluntarily exposes himself to the occasion of sin, particularly of sins against chastity, it is morally impossible for him not to fall.

It is necessary to distinguish *proximate* from *remote* occasions. The *remote* occasion is that to which all are exposed, or in which men seldom fall into sin. The *proximate* occasion is that which by itself ordinarily induces to sin, such as unnecessary familiarity of young men with women of bad reputation. An occasion in which a person has frequently fallen is also called a proximate occasion. But occasions which are not proximate for others may be proximate for a particular person, who on account of his bad disposition or on account of a bad habit has frequently fallen into sin. They are in the proximate occasion of sin: 1. Who keep in their house a woman with whom they have committed sin. 2. They who go to taverns, or to any particular house in which they have frequently fallen into sin by quarrelling, or drunkenness, or immodest words or actions. 3. They who in gaming have been frequently guilty of fraud, or quarrels, or of blasphemies. Now, no one can receive absolution unless he purpose firmly to avoid the occasion of sin; because to expose himself to such occasions, though sometimes he should not fall into sin, is for him a grievous sin. And when the occasion is voluntary and is actually existing at the present time, the penitent cannot be absolved until he has actually removed the occasion of sin. For penitents find it very difficult to remove the occasion; and if they do not take it away before they receive absolution they will scarcely remove it after they have been absolved.

Much less is he fit for absolution who refuses to remove the occasions, and only promises that in them he will not commit sin for the future. Tell me, my brother, do you expect that tow thrown into the fire will not burn? And how can you expect that if you expose yourself to the occasion of sin you will not fall? *And your strength,* says the prophet, *shall be as the ashes of tow, . . . and both shall burn together, and there shall be none to quench it.*[14091] Our strength is like the strength of tow to resist fire. A devil was once compelled to tell what sermon was most annoying to him. He answered: “The sermon on the occasions of sin.” As long as we do not remove the occasions of sin, the devil is satisfied: he cares not about our purposes, promises, or oaths; for as long as the occasion is not removed the sin will not cease. The occasion (particularly of sins against chastity) is like a veil placed before the eyes, and does not allow us to see God, or hell, or heaven. In a word, the occasion blinds the sinner; and how can the blind keep himself in the straight way to heaven? He will wander into the road to hell without knowing where he is going; and why? Because he does not see. For all, then, who are in the occasion of sin, it is necessary to do violence to themselves in order to remove the occasion: otherwise they will remain always in sin.

Here it is necessary to remark that for some who are more strongly inclined to evil, and who have contracted a habit of any vice, particularly the vice of impurity, certain occasions are proximate or nearly proximate which for others would be remote. Hence, if they do not avoid them they will be always relapsing into the same crimes like a dog returning to his vomit.

“But, Father,” some one may say, “I cannot separate from such a person; I cannot leave such a house without sustaining great loss.” Do you then mean that the occasion to which you are exposed is not voluntary, but necessary? If it be necessary, you must, if you cannot remove it, at least adopt the means of making it remote. What are these means? There are three means: the frequentation of the sacraments, prayer, and avoiding familiarity with the person with whom you have sinned.

The frequentation of the sacraments of penance and Eucharist would be in one respect the best means; but it ought to be known that in necessary proximate occasions of incontinence it is a great remedy to withhold absolution in order to make the penitent more diligent in adopting the other two means, namely, to recommend himself frequently to God, and to avoid familiarity. When you rise in the morning, you must renew the resolution of not yielding to sin all that day; and you must pray for help, not only in the morning, but also several times during the day before the Most Holy Sacrament, or before the Crucifix; and must beg of the Most Holy Mary to obtain for you grace not to relapse. The other means to which it is absolutely necessary to attend is to avoid all familiarity with the accomplice by not remaining with her alone, by not looking at her face, not conversing with her, and by speaking to her (when strictly necessary) in such a manner as to show a dislike for her society. This is the most important means of making proximate occasions become remote, but he who has already received absolution will scarcely practise this means; and, therefore, in such cases, it is expedient to defer absolution until the proximate occasion becomes remote. But to render such occasions remote, eight or ten days are not sufficient; a long time is necessary.

But should the penitent after adopting all these means always relapse, what is the last remedy? It is that which the Gospel recommends: *If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee*.[14092] Although it were your right eye, you must pull it out, and cast it to a distance from you. “It is better,” says our Lord, “to lose thy eye than having it to be cast into hell.” In such a case, then, you must remove the occasion, or you must certainly go to hell.

IV. CONFESSION

Confession, in order to be good, must be entire, humble, and sincere.

1. THE CONFESSION MUST BE ENTIRE

He who has offended God by mortal sin has no other remedy to prevent his damnation but the confession of his sin. “But, if I am sorry for sin from my heart? If I do penance for it during my whole life? If I go into the desert and live on wild herbs, and sleep on the ground?” You may do as much as you please; but if you do not confess every mortal sin that you remember, you cannot obtain pardon. I said, *a sin that you remember;* for should you have involuntarily forgotten a sin, it has been pardoned indirectly if you had a general sorrow for all your offences against God. It is sufficient for you to confess it whenever you remember it. But if you have concealed it voluntarily, you must then confess not only the sin that has been concealed, but also the others that have been confessed; for the confession was null and sacrilegious.

Accursed shame: how many poor souls does it send to hell! St. Teresa used to say over and over again to preachers: “Preach, O my priests, preach against bad confessions; for it is on account of bad confessions that the greater part of Christians are damned.”

A disciple of Socrates went one day into the house of a woman of bad repute. As he was leaving the house he perceived that his master was passing, and to avoid being seen by him he went back into the house. But Socrates, who had seen him at the door, put his head in at the door, and said to him: “It is a shame to enter, but it is no shame to depart from this house.’’ In the same way I say to those who have committed sin, and are afterwards ashamed to confess it, “My child, it is a shame to commit sin, but it is no shame to free yourself from sin by telling it in confession.” The Holy Ghost says, *There is a shame that bringeth sin, and there is a shame that bringeth glory and grace.*[14093] We ought to avoid the shame that makes us the enemies of God, but not the shame that arises from the confession of sin, and that enables us to recover the grace of God and the glory of paradise.

What shame! What shame! Was it a shame in so many holy penitents—in St. Mary Magdalene, in St. Mary of Egypt, in St. Margaret of Cortona—to confess their sins? Their confessions have enabled them to attain paradise, where, as queens of that great kingdom, they enjoy God, and shall enjoy him for all eternity. St. Augustine, after his conversion to God, not only confessed the wickedness of his life, but also wrote a book, in which he published his sins, that the whole world might know them.

St. Antonine relates that a prelate once saw a devil beside a woman at confession. The prelate asked him what he was doing. The devil answered: “I am fulfilling the precept of restitution: when I tempted this woman to sin, I took away her shame; I am now restoring it, that she may not confess her sin.” This, as St. John Chrysostom says, is one of the artifices of the devil. “God joined shame to sin, confidence to confession. The devil inverts the whole thing. He joins confidence to sin, shame to confession.”[14094] The wolf seizes the sheep by the throat, that it may not be able to cry out; thus he carries it off and devours it. This the devil does with certain miserable souls; he catches them by the throat, that they may not confess their sins, and thus he drags them to hell.

In the life of Father John Ramirez, of the Society of Jesus, it is related that, while preaching in a certain city, he was called to hear the confession of a girl who was dying. She was of noble birth, and had apparently led a holy life; she went frequently to Communion, fasted, and performed other mortifications. At death she confessed her sins to Father Ramirez with many tears, so that he was greatly consoled. But, after returning to the college, his companion said that while the young lady was making her confession he saw a black hand squeezing her throat. The Father immediately returned to the house of the sick lady, but before entering he heard that she was dead. He then returned to his college, and while he was at prayer the deceased appeared to him in a horrible form, surrounded by flames, and bound in chains, and said that she was damned on account of a sin committed with a young man, which she voluntarily concealed in confession through shame, and that at death she wished to confess it, but the devil induced her, through the same shame, to conceal it. After these words she disappeared, amid the most frightful howling and terrific clanking of chains.

My daughter, have you committed sin? Why are you now unwilling to confess it? You may say, I am ashamed. “Unhappy soul,” says St. Augustine, “you think only of the shame, but do not reflect that unless you confess the sin you will be damned! You are ashamed, but,” adds the saint, “you are not ashamed to inflict a wound on your soul, and are you now ashamed to apply a healing band?” “O madness,” adds the saint, “you do not blush for the wound; all your blushes are for the bandage of the wound!”[14095] *The Council of Trent says, the physician cannot heal a wound unless he sees and understands it.*[14096]

Oh! what destruction falls on the soul that conceals a mortal sin in confession through shame! “The remedy,” says St. Ambrose, “becomes a *triumph to the devil."*[14097] *After a victory soldiers make a pompous display of the arms taken from the enemy. The devil makes the same triumphal display of the sacrilegious confessions, boasting of having taken from the souls the arms with which they might conquer him! Miserable the soul that thus converts a remedy into poison! That unhappy woman had but one sin on her conscience; but because she concealed it in confession, she committed sacrilege, and so the devil triumphed.*

Tell me, my sister, if, in punishment of not confessing a certain sin, you were to be burnt alive in a caldron of boiling pitch, and if, after that, your sin were to be revealed to all your relatives and neighbors, would you conceal it? No, indeed, if you knew that by confessing it your sin would remain secret, and that you would escape being burnt alive. Now, it is more than certain that, unless you confess that sin, you will have to burn in hell for all eternity, and that on the day of judgment it will be made known to the whole human race. We must all, says the Apostle, be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ.[14098] *If, says the Lord, you do not confess the evil you have done, I will proclaim your ignominy to all nations; I will discover thy shame to thy face, and will show . . . thy shame to kingdoms.*[14099]

Have you committed sin? If you do not confess it you shall be damned. Therefore, if you wish to be saved, you must confess it some time or other. And if at some time or other, why not now? as St. Augustine says.[14100] *What do you wait for? Is it for death, after which you will not be able to make a confession? And know that the longer you conceal your sin and multiply sacrileges, the greater your shame and obstinacy in concealing it will become. "Obstinacy proceeds from the keeping back of sin," says St. Peter de Blois.*[14101] *How many miserable souls, who have formed a habit of concealing their sins, saying, "When death is near, then I will confess it," have not confessed it even at the hour of death!*

I would have you also to know that, unless you confess the sin you have committed, you will never have peace during your whole life. O God! what a hell will that miserable woman have within herself who departs from the confessional without having confessed her sin. She always carries within her a viper that unceasingly rends her heart. The miserable being shall suffer a hell in this life and a hell in the next.

Come, then, my children, if any of you has unfortunately fallen into this abyss of misery, if there is any one among you who has concealed a sin through shame, come and confess it at once. It is enough for you to say to the confessor, “Father, I feel ashamed to tell a certain sin? or to say, “Father, I have a scruple regarding my past life.” This is sufficient; for the confessor will take care to pluck out the thorn that tortures you, and thus give peace to your conscience. And oh, what joy shall you feel after having expelled the viper from your heart!

To how many persons must you disclose the sin? You need only tell it once to one confessor; the evil is then repaired. And that the devil may not deceive you, know that we are bound to confess only mortal sins. Hence, if the sin that you are ashamed to confess were not mortal, or if, when you were committing it, you thought it was not mortal, you are not obliged to confess it. There are persons who committed some act of indecency in their childhood, but they then had no idea nor scruple that it was a mortal sin, and so are not bound to confess it.

But, Father, it may happen that my confessor will make known my sin to another. What do you say? Know that the confessor is bound to suffer himself to be burnt alive sooner than disclose a single venial sin confessed by a penitent. The confessor cannot speak of what he has heard in confession even to the penitent himself. [That is, without the permission of the penitent.]

But I am afraid that the confessor will speak harshly to me when he has heard the sins I have committed. What is it you say? Why should he speak harshly to you? All these are false suspicions that the devil puts into your head. Confessors sit in the confessionals not to hear ecstasies and revelations, but to hear the sins of those who come to confession; and they cannot experience greater consolation than when a penitent comes to make known to them his miseries. Were it in your power to rescue from death, without inconvenience to yourself, a queen wounded by her enemies, what consolation would you feel in saving her life! This the confessor does in the confessional when penitents come to him to disclose the sins they have committed. By giving them absolution he delivers the souls of his penitents that had been wounded by sin, and he delivers them from the eternal death of hell.

St. Bonaventure[14102] *relates in the life of St. Francis that a certain lady, after she was seen to breathe her last and before she was buried, suddenly rose up in the bed, and trembling, and full of terror, said that her soul, having departed from her body, was on the point of being plunged into hell for having concealed a sin in confession, but that she was brought into this life again by the prayers of St. Francis. She then called for a confessor, made her confession with many tears, and afterwards told the bystanders to beware of concealing sins in confession, because God will not show to all the mercy with which he had treated her. After these words she again gave up the ghost.*

Should the devil tempt you to conceal a sin in confession, give him the answer that he received from a woman called Adelaide. She had been in the habit of sin with a young man who, through despair, had put an end to his life with his own hands, and was damned. She then entered into a monastery to do penance; and as she was going one day to confession the devil said to her: "Adelaide, where are you going?" She answered: "I am going to confound myself and you by confessing my sins."[14103] *When the devil tempts you to conceal your sins in confession, let your answer be: "I am going to confound myself and you."*

I have, at the end of this little book, written down some instances of persons who have been damned for concealing their sins in confession through a false shame.

2. THE CONFESSION MUST BE HUMBLE

A penitent at confession should imagine himself to be a criminal condemned to death, bound by as many chains as he has sins to confess; he presents himself before the confessor, who holds the place of God and who alone can loose his bonds and deliver him from hell. Therefore he must speak to the confessor with great humility. The Emperor Ferdinand, wishing to go to confession in his chamber, handed a chair to the confessor. When those who were in the room appeared surprised at so great an act of humility, the emperor said: "Father, I am now a subject, and you are my Superior."

Some argue with the confessor, and speak to him with as much haughtiness as if they were his Superiors; what fruit can they derive from *such confessions? It is necessary then, to treat your confessor with respect. Speak to him always with humility, and with humility obey all his commands. When he reproves you, be silent, and receive his admonitions with humility; accept with humility the remedy that he prescribes for your amendment.*

Do not get into a passion with him nor think him unjust and uncharitable. What would you say if you saw a sick man, who, while the surgeon opens the imposthume, treats him as a cruel and uncharitable man? Would you not say that he was mad? “But he tortures me.” Yes; but it is by this torture that you are cured: without it you would die.

If the confessor tells you that he cannot absolve you until you have restored certain goods belonging to another, obey him, and do not be importunate for absolution: do you not know that he who has received absolution does not afterwards make restitution?

Does the confessor order you to return for absolution in a week or a fortnight, and in the mean time to remove the occasion of sin, to pray to God, to be firm in resisting all temptations to relapse into sin, and to practise all the other means that he recommends to you? Obey, and you shall thus free yourself from sin; do you not see that hitherto, when you were absolved immediately, you have, after the lapse of a few days, fallen again into the same crimes? “But if in the mean time death comes upon me?” But God has not hitherto taken away your life, when you continued so long a time in sin, and never thought of returning to him; will he, now that you desire to amend your life, send you a sudden death? “But it maybe that death will come upon me during the time for which absolution is deferred.” And if this may happen during that time, make acts of contrition continually. I have already said[14104] *that he who has the intention of going to confession and makes an act of contrition instantly receives pardon from God.*

Of what use is it to receive absolution as often as you go to confession when you do not renounce sin? All these absolutions shall add to the fire that will torment you in hell. Listen to this fact. A gentleman contracted a habit of sin; he found a confessor who always absolved him, though he always relapsed. Me died, and was seen in hell carried on the shoulders of another person who was also damned. Being asked who it was that carried *him, he answered: "He is my confessor, who, by absolving me as often as I went to confession, has brought me to hell. I am damned, and he who brought me to hell is also damned."*

Do not then, O my brother, be angry when the confessor defers absolution, and wishes to see how you conduct yourself in the mean time. If you always relapse into the same sin, although you have confessed it, the confessor cannot absolve you unless you give some extraordinary and manifest sign that you have the necessary dispositions. And, if he gives you absolution, you and he are condemned to hell. Be obedient, then; do what he bids you; for, when you return, after having done what he prescribed, he will certainly absolve you, and thus you shall be delivered from the sin that you have been in the habit of committing.

3. THE CONFESSION MUST BE SINCERE

The confession must be sincere, that is, without lies or excuses.

1. Without *lies:* lies told in confession, when they are in matters of small moment, are not mortal sins; but they are more grievous than other lies. But when the matter is grievous, such lies are mortal sins. For example, it would be a mortal sin for a pentitent to accuse himself of a mortal sin that he has not committed or to deny a mortal sin that he has committed and has never confessed, or to deny that he had a habit of a certain sin; for in all these he would be guilty of grievously deceiving the minister of God.

2. Without lies, and *without excuses.* In the tribunal of penance the criminal must be his own accuser; he must be an accuser, not an advocate to excuse his guilt. The more sincerely a man accuses himself, without extenuating his fault, the more readily shall he obtain absolution and mercy from God. It is related that the Duke of Ossuna, being one day in a galley, went about among the slaves, asking for what crime they had been condemned. All answered that they were innocent, only one acknowledged that he deserved severer punishment. The viceroy said: "Then it is not right to have you here among so many innocents;" and therefore ordered him to be released. Now, how much more will God pardon him who confesses his sins, without excuses, in the tribunal of penance.

How many are there who make their confession badly! Some tell their confessor the few good actions that they perform, but do not speak of their sins. “Father,” they say, “I hear Mass every day; I say the beads; I do not blaspheme; I do not swear; I do not take my neighbor’s property.” Well, what then? Do you want to be praised by the confessor? Confess your sins; examine your conscience, and you will find a thousand things to be corrected: detractions, unclean expressions, lies, imprecations, unclean thoughts, hatred.

Others, instead of accusing themselves, begin to defend their sins, and to dispute with the confessor. “Father,” they say, “I blaspheme because I have a master that cannot be borne; I have indulged myself in hatred to a neighbor, because she has spoken ill of me; I have committed sin with men, because I had nothing to eat.” What benefit do you expect from such confessions? What is your object? Is it that the confessor may approve of your sins? Listen to what St. Gregory says: “If you excuse yourself, God will accuse you; if you accuse yourself, God will excuse you.”[14105] Our Lord complained bitterly to St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi of those who excuse their sins in confession, and throw the blame of their own faults upon others, saying: “Such a person has been the occasion of my sin: such another has tempted me.” Thus they come to confession to commit new sins; for, in order to excuse their own sins, they injure a neighbor’s reputation without necessity. Such persons should be treated as a confessor treated a woman who, in order to excuse her own sins, told all the bad actions of her husband. “For your own sins,” said the confessor, “you will say the ‘Hail Holy Queen!’ once; and for the sins of your husband, you will fast every day for an entire month.” But must I do penance for the sins of my husband? Yes, if you confess all the sins of your husband in order to excuse your own sins. Thus, my sisters, confess henceforth your own sins, and not the sins of others, and say: “Father, it was not my companion, nor the occasion of sin, nor the devil, but my own malice, that made me voluntarily offend God.”

It is, indeed true, that you must sometimes make known to the confessor the sin of another, either in order to explain the species of some sin, or to make the confessor understand the danger to which you were exposed, that he may be able to give you useful advice for the regulation of your conduct. But when you can go to another confessor, to whom the person is unknown, go to him. If, in changing your confessor, you should suffer a notable inconvenience; or if you think that your ordinary confessor, because he is better acquainted with the state of your conscience, can give you more useful counsel,—you are not obliged to go to another confessor. However, you should endeavor to conceal the accomplice as well as you can; for example, it is sufficient to tell the state of the person, if she is a young girl, if she is married, or if she has made a vow of chastity, without mentioning her name.

St. Francis de Sales warns penitents not to make useless accusations in confession, nor to mention circumstances through habit. “I have not loved God with all my strength; I have not received the sacraments as I ought; I have had but little sorrow for my sins. All these are useless words; they are a loss of time. “I accuse myself of the seven deadly sins, of the five senses of the body, and of the ten commandments of God.” Give up these useless accusations; it is better to tell the confessor some defect into which you are for a long time accustomed to fall, without any amendment. Confess, then, the faults that you wish to correct. Of what use is it to say: “I accuse myself of all the lies I have told, of all my detractions, of all the imprecations I have uttered? When you do not give up these vices, and when you say that you cannot avoid them, of what use is it to confess them? It is only a mockery of Jesus Christ, and of the confessor. When, then, my children, you accuse yourselves of such faults, even though they should be only venial sins, confess them with a purpose of not relapsing into them.

V. THE PENANCE IMPOSED BY THE CONFESSOR

Satisfaction, which we call the *penance*, is a necessary part of the sacrament of penance. It is not precisely essential, because without it the confession may be valid, as would be the case if a penitent were dying and unable to perform suitable penance. But it is an integral part; so that, should a person at confession not have the intention of performing the penance enjoined the confession is null; for the penitent is obliged, in confessing his sins, to have the intention of complying with the penance imposed by the confessor. But if he has the intention of performing the penance, and afterwards neglects to fulfil it, the confession is valid; but he is guilty of a mortal sin if the penance be great.

It is necessary to know that, when a person commits a sin, he contracts the guilt, and renders himself liable to the punishment due to the guilt of sin. By the absolution of the confessor the guilt and the eternal punishment are remitted, and when the penitent has intense contrition, all the temporal punishment is also remitted. But when the contrition is not so great the temporal penalties remain to be suffered either in this life or in purgatory, as the Council of Trent teaches[14106] where it says, that the sacramental penance is not only a payment of the penalty that we have deserved, but also a means of cure for the base affections left in us by sin—our passions, bad habits, and hardness of heart; and that, moreover, it strengthens us against a relapse into the same sin. Therefore, my children, go to confession every week, or at least every fortnight, but never allow a month to pass without approaching the tribunal of penance.

What sort of sin is it not to perform the penance imposed by a confessor? If the penance is light, the omission of it is a venial sin: if great, it is a mortal sin. If the fulfilment of the penance enjoined should become very difficult, it may be changed by the same or by another confessor.

How soon after confession must the penance be performed? It must be performed within the time fixed by the confessor; and should he not fix a time, it ought to be performed within a short time; for when the penance is great, and particularly when it is medicinal, to defer the performance of it for a long time would be a mortal sin.

Should a penitent have the misfortune of falling into mortal sin after confession, is he still bound to fulfil the penance? Yes; he is obliged to fulfil it. And does he satisfy his obligation by performing the penance in the state of sin? Yes: he *also* complies with his obligation.

But, alas! many go to confession, accept the penance enjoined, but afterwards do not comply with it. “But, Father, I am not able to do all that my confessor has imposed upon me.” And why did you accept a penance that you knew you could not perform? I recommend you to speak plainly, and to say to the confessor: “Father I am afraid that I shall not do all that you have imposed on me; give me a lighter penance.” Of what use is it to say: Father, I will do it; Father, will do it; and afterwards to do nothing?

But know that, if you omit your penance in this life, you will have to perform far greater penance in purgatory. Turlot[14107] relates that a sick man, who was confined to bed, and afflicted with many pains for a year, prayed to God to release him from life. God sent an angel to tell him to choose either to go to purgatory for three days, or to submit to his pains for another year. The sick man chose the three days in purgatory, where after his death, he was visited by the angel. He complained that the angel had deceived him, and that he was suffering there, not for three days, but for several years. The angel said to him, “What! a day has scarcely passed; your body is not yet buried; and you say that you are suffering here for several years!” The deceased then besought the angel to bring him back again to life, that he might suffer his former infirmities for another year. His prayer was heard; and after having returned to life, he encouraged all that came to visit him, to suffer with cheerfulness all the pains of the present rather than wait for the pains of the next life.

Would to God the penitents performed all the penance due to their sins! Ordinarily speaking, almost all have to suffer some of the temporal punishment that awaits them. Of several persons who led a holy life, we read that they have been for some time in purgatory. Let us, then, endeavor, in addition to our sacramental penance, to perform other good works, alms, deeds, prayers, fasts, and mortifications. Let us also endeavor to gain as many indulgences as we can. Holy indulgences diminish the pains that we must suffer in purgatory. I will here mention some of the many indulgences which you can obtain.[14108]

1. He who hears Mass gains an indulgence of 3800 *years.*

1. He who wears the scapular of Mount Carmel, observes chastity, according to his state, abstains from meat on Wednesdays, and recites every day the “Our Father,” “Hail Mary!” and “Glory be to the Father,” etc., seven times, will soon be delivered from purgatory, as we read in the Office of the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel. There are also many indulgences gained by wearing the scapulars of the Blessed Virgin in Sorrow, of the Conception, and of Mercy.

2. He who says the “*Angelus Domini,*” when the bell rings for it, gains many indulgences.

3. They who say: “Blessed be the holy, immaculate and most pure Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary,” gain an indulgence of a hundred years.

4. To those who say the “Hail Holy Queen!” is granted an indulgence of forty days.

5. For saying the “Litany of the Blessed Virgin” there is an indulgence of two hundred days.

6. For pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary, twenty-five days, and for bowing the head at these names, twenty days more.

7. They who say the “Our Father” and the “Hail Mary” five times in honor of the Passion of Jesus Christ and the Dolors of the Virgin Mary, gain an indulgence of ten thousand years.

8. An indulgence of seven years is granted to those who make the Christian Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, with the purpose of receiving the sacraments during life and at death; and they who make these Acts every day during a month gain a plenary indulgence.

9. An indulgence of many days is granted for every time that these Acts are made even when they are repeated on the same day.

10. An indulgence of many days is granted to those who make half an hour’s meditation; and a plenary indulgence to those who make it every day for a month, provided they go to confession and Communion in the same month.

11. An indulgence of five years is granted to those who accompany the viaticum, and of six years to those who accompany it with light; and an indulgence of a hundred days to those who, when unable to accompany it, recite a Pater and Ave for the intention of the Pope.

12. An indulgence of a hundred days is granted to those who genuflect before the Most Holy Sacrament; to those who kiss the cross, an indulgence of a year and four days; to those who bow at the “Gloria Patri,” thirty days; to those who kiss the religious habit, five years; to priests who recite before Mass, *Ego volo celebrare missam,* etc., fifty days.

I beseech you to apply to the souls in purgatory as many indulgences as you can. Fear not that, in consequence of applying them to these holy souls, you shall have to suffer the temporal pains due to your sins. Father Rossignoli[14109] states that at the hour of death St. Gertrude was afflicted at having done nothing for her own soul; for she applied all the good that she had done to the souls in purgatory. Jesus Christ appeared to her, and said: “Gertrude, be comforted; for your charity to the souls in purgatory has been so pleasing to me, that at death you shall escape purgatory, and shall be accompanied to heaven by all my beloved spouses, whom your suffrages have delivered from purgatory.”

Chapter VI

EXTREME UNCTION, HOLY ORDERS, AND MATRIMONY

I HAVE still to speak of these last three sacraments; but there is little to be said on them for the *instruction* of seculars.

I. THE SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION

Extreme Unction is a sacrament in which the sick, in consequence of being anointed by the priest, receive grace to resist the temptations of the devil, to bear patiently the pains of sickness, and also to recover their health, if it should be conducive to the good of their souls.

The prayer of faith, says St. James, shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him.[14110]

1. "Shall save the sick man;" this sacrament principally saves and heals the soul; but it also, as the Council of Trent[14111] teaches, sometimes heals the body, when the restoration of health is profitable to the soul. Hence we can infer how useful it may be to the health of the body to receive Extreme Unction as soon as possible; that is, as soon as the physician declares the disease to he grievous and dangerous to life, without waiting till there is no hope of recovery; because it is then impossible, in the natural course of things, for the sick man to recover, and for the restoration of his health it would be necessary that God should work a miracle. But when the sick man is in a state capable of being cured by natural means, the virtue of this sacrament will, as has been said, obtain for him bodily health, if his recovery be conducive to his spiritual welfare. Thus, in order to give this sacrament to the sick, it is sufficient that their infirmity be grievous, as Benedict XIV.[14112] has declared; and the Roman Catechism tells us that "Parish priests commit a most grievous sin if they wait for the disease to

become desperate, when life and sensation are beginning to fail, before they will administer the unction."[14113]

2. But this sacrament principally regards the health of the soul. "And the Lord shall raise him up." The Council of Trent explains these words as follows: "It raises up the soul of the sick man, by exciting in him a trust in God's mercy, by which he is so lightened, that it enables him to bear more lightly the pains of his disease, and to resist more easily the temptation of the devil."[14114] I agree, therefore, with the theologians who say, that a person who refuses at death to receive Extreme Unction can scarcely be excused from grievous sin, because he voluntarily deprives himself of a great help to resist the great temptations by which the devil assails dying persons. After having recovered from a deadly disease, St. Eleazar said, for the instruction of all, that "we cannot comprehend how terrible are the assaults that the devil makes upon us at death, in order to effect our perdition."

3. "And if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." This sacrament, as the Council declares, takes away sins, if any still remain to be expiated, and also the relics of sin.[14115] That is, the Extreme Unction delivers us from the temporal punishments that remain due to our sins and it also frees us from the relics of sins already pardoned,—that is, from the darkness of the understanding, the hardness of heart, from affections to sensible things, from diffidences, and the like. All these are the relics and effects of past sins, and these the Extreme Unction takes away.

But to receive all the fruits of this sacrament it is necessary to be in the state of grace; the sick should, therefore, first of all confess their sins, and then receive the most holy viaticum, and afterwards Extreme Unction; for, as the Roman Catechism says,[14116] this is the perpetual practice of the Church.

That you may be careful, when attacked by grievous illness, to receive this sacrament as soon as possible, in order to recover bodily health, if it be expedient for the soul (as has been already said), listen to an extraordinary fact, related by St. Bernard, in his life of St. Malachy, Archbishop of Armagh. The saint relates that St. Malachy having gone to visit a devout lady, who was near her end, found her somewhat better, and therefore deferred till the following day the administration of the sacrament of

Extreme Unction. But scarcely had he left the house when he heard that the lady was dead. He was greatly afflicted because she had in consequence of his deferring the sacrament died without Extreme Unction. What did he do? He began to pray with great fervor that God would restore the deceased to life and continued to pray till she returned to life. The holy prelate instantly gave her the sacrament, and by its efficacy she perfectly recovered her health, and lived many years after.

II. THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

The sacrament of Order comes next. In this sacrament is given the power of consecrating the body of Jesus Christ, and of absolving from sin, and of performing other functions to the honor of God; he who receives this sacrament receives by it also grace to perform worthily these sacred duties.

On this point seculars should mind two things.

The first is, that to become a good ecclesiastic a divine vocation is necessary. There are three marks by which a person may know whether he has a divine vocation: 1. a virtuous life; 2. the intention of serving God in the ecclesiastical state; 3. the advice and approbation of his confessor. He who takes orders without these three necessary conditions is guilty of sin, and exposes his eternal salvation to great danger. And if he commits a sin, fathers and mothers are guilty of a far greater sin when they force their children to become priests in order to assist the family. God has instituted the office of priesthood, not for the advancement of families, but for the honor of his divine Majesty, and for the salvation of the souls which Jesus Christ has redeemed. Oh! how many fathers and mothers shall we see condemned on the day of judgment for having compelled their sons to become priests without a divine vocation!

2. The second thing that seculars should mind is the respect that they ought to pay to priests, because they are the ministers of Jesus Christ, and because through them we must be saved; for men are not saved without the sacraments, and the sacraments are administered only by the hands of priests. Hence it is necessary to respect their person as well as their reputation. *Touch not My anointed.*[14117] And in another place our Lord says to the priesthood: *He that heareth you heareth Me.*[14118] Be afraid, then, to despise or calumniate the priest, for God chastises this sin with great rigor.

Theodoret,[14119] Bishop of Cirus, relates that St. James, Bishop of Nisibis, before he was consecrated bishop, went into Persia to visit the Christians of that country. As he passed by a fountain, some girls who were washing clothes treated him with derision. The saint raised his eyes to heaven to recommend himself to God, and by a divine inspiration cursed the fountain, and it instantly became dry. He then cursed the insolence of the girls, and their hair immediately became white as if they were in the decrepitude of old age, and remained white during their whole life as a sign of the respect that is due to priests.

III. THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

Matrimony is a sacrament by which man and woman, giving their consent before the parish priest and two witnesses, to take each other for husband and wife, remain bound together for life, and receive the grace to bring up their children in virtue, and to bear the burdens of the married state. But in order to receive this grace they must be in the state of grace when they are married. Hence before marriage they must make a good confession, and they ought also to receive the Holy Communion on the morning of their marriage.

They should also know well the articles of faith. For how can they teach them to their children if they themselves are ignorant of them? For this reason Bendedict XIV. ordained that all who wish to be married should be first examined by the parish priest whether they know the points of their faith; and that if they be found ignorant of them, they should be required to learn them before they are married.

Matrimony is free; but let children remember that it rarely happens that they can be excused from mortal sin if they contract marriage against the will of their father and mother, particularly if they marry without the knowledge of their parents. From marriages contracted against the consent of parents arise a thousand evils—disputes, hatred, and quarrels. Fathers cannot without a just cause hinder their children from marrying. On the other hand, children should, when they wish to marry, always endeavor to procure the consent of their parents, except when it is certain that the parents will unjustly and unreasonably refuse their consent.

Of the obligations of husbands and wives I have already spoken in explaining the fourth commandment.[14120]

But before we conclude, let us observe in the example of the son of Tobias[14121] the manner in which young persons should contract marriage. In the city of Rages, in Media, there was a holy girl called Sara, the daughter of Raguel, who was greatly afflicted, because seven young men on the night of their nuptials with her were, one after the other, strangled by the devil Asmodeus. The son of Tobias was afterwards destined to be the spouse of Sara. Having heard of the unhappy death of her former husbands, he was afraid to contract marriage with her. But to remove his fear, the angel Raphael, who accompanied him, said: “Know that the persons over whom the devil has power are those who engage in matrimony, not to please God, but for sensual gratification. Do not imitate such persons; take Sara for your wife, not to indulge your concupiscence, but rather to bring up children who shall serve and bless God, and thus you shall have nothing to fear from the devil.” Thus the holy youth acted, and blessings were showered down on his marriage. Attend to the four admonitions which her parents gave to Sara when she took leave of them.[14122] *First*, said they, show respect to your father-in-law and mother-in-law. *Secondly,* love your husband. *Thirdly,* attend to the government of the family. *Fourthly,* conduct yourself in such a manner that none of your actions may deserve censure. All women who engage in the married state should attend to these admonitions.

APPENDIX

MELANCHOLY EXAMPLES OF PERSONS WHO HAVE MADE SACRILEGIOUS CONFESSIONS.[14123]

I

IN the chronicles of St. Benedict it is related that a solitary named Pelagius, who kept sheep for his poor parents, led a life so exemplary that all called him a saint. He lived in this manner many years. After the death of his parents he sold the little property that they had left him and retired into a hermitage. He, unfortunately, consented once to an unchaste thought. After this sin he fell into a state of great melancholy because he would not confess it, lest he should lose the good opinion of his confessor. While he was in this state of melancholy a pilgrim who passed by said to him: “Pelagius, confess your sin: God will pardon you, and your peace shall be restored.” The pilgrim then disappeared. After this Pelagius resolved to do penance for his sin, but not to confess it, flattering himself that God would perhaps pardon him without confession. He entered into a monastery, in which he was immediately received on account of his reputation for sanctity, and there led an austere life, crucifying himself with fasts and penances. At last the hour of death came: he made his last confession; as he had always through shame concealed the sin during life, so he also concealed it at death; he received the viaticum, died, and was buried, with the reputation of a saint. On the following night the sacristan found the body of Pelagius out of its grave. He buried it again; but on the second and third nights he found the body out of the grave. He called the abbot, who, in the presence of the other monks, said: “Pelagius, you were always obedient during life; be obedient now also in death. Tell me, on the part of God, if it be the divine will that your body be kept in a particular place?” The deceased, howling, said: “Alas! I am damned for having concealed one sin in confession. O Abbot, look at my body!” And behold! his body appeared like red-hot iron sending forth sparks of fire. All fled away; but Pelagius called back the abbot, that he might remove the consecrated particle that still remained in his mouth. The abbot removed the sacred host. Pelagius then told them to take his body out of the church and to throw it on a dunghill like a dog. It was done as he desired.

II

In the annals of the Capuchins we read of one who was esteemed a saint, but made bad confessions. Being seized with a grievous illness, he was told to go to confession. He sent for a certain Father, to whom he said, “My Father, you tell me to go to confession; but I will not make any confession.” “And why?” said the Father. “Because,” replied the sick man, “I am damned; for I have never confessed all my sins; and now God deprives me of the power of making a good confession.” After this he began to howl, and to tear his tongue, saying, “Accursed tongue, that would not confess sins when you were able.” And thus, gnawing his tongue to pieces, and howling, he breathed forth his soul into the hands of the devil. After death he became black as a cinder, a terrible noise was heard, and the room filled with an intolerable stench.

III

Father Seraphine Razzi relates that in a city in Italy there was a married lady of noble rank who was reputed a saint. On her deathbed she received all the sacraments, and died with a high reputation for sanctity. After death her daughter, who always recommended to God the soul of her mother, heard one day, while she was at prayer, a great noise at the door. She turned round, and saw a horrible figure all on fire, and exhaling a great stench. At this sight she was so much terrified, that she was on the point of throwing herself out of the window; but she heard a voice saying: “Stop, stop, my daughter: I am your unhappy mother, who was considered a saint; but for some sins committed with your father, which I was ashamed ever to confess, God has condemned me to hell. Do not pray to God for me any more; for you only increase my pains.” She then began to howl, and disappeared.

IV

The celebrated Doctor John Ragusino relates that a certain very spiritual woman practised meditation and frequented the sacraments, so that she was considered by her Bishop to be a saint. The unhappy woman looked one day at a servant, and consented to an unchaste thought; but because the sin was only one of thought, she flattered herself that she was not bound to confess it. However, she was always tortured with remorse of conscience, and particularly in her last illness. But even at death she concealed the sin through shame, and died without confessing it. The bishop who was her confessor, and believed her to be a saint, caused her body to be carried in procession through the whole city, and through devotion got her buried in his own chapel. But on the following morning on entering the chapel he saw a body above the grave, laid on a great fire. He commanded it in the name of God to tell what it was. A voice answered that it was his penitent, and that she was damned for a bad thought. She then began to howl and to curse her shame, which had been the cause of her eternal ruin.

V

Father Martin del Rio relates that in the province of Peru there was a young Indian called Catharine, who was a servant to a respectable lady. Her mistress induced her to receive baptism, and to frequent the sacraments. She often went to confession, but concealed some of her sins. Just before her death she made nine confessions; but they were all sacrilegious. After her confession she said to her fellow-servants that she concealed her sins. They told her mistress, who, on questioning her, found out that these sins were certain acts of impurity. She therefore told the confessor, who returned, and exhorted his penitent to confess all her sins. But Catharine obstinately refused, and got into such a state of desperation, that she turned and said to her confessor, "Father, leave me; take no more trouble: you are only losing your time;" and then she turned her face to him and began to sing some profane songs. When she was near her end her companions exhorted her to take the crucifix. She answered: "What crucifix? I know not Christ crucified, and I do not wish to know him." And thus she died. So great were the noise and stench during the night, that the mistress was obliged to leave the house. The deceased afterwards appeared *to one of her companions, and said that she was damned on account of her bad confessions.*

VI

Father Francis Rodriguez relates that in England, when the Catholic religion flourished in that country, King Augubert had a daughter, who, on account of her rare beauty, was sought by many princes. Being asked by her father whether she wished to marry, she answered that she had made a vow of perpetual chastity. The father obtained a dispensation from the Holy See, but she resolutely refused to accept it, saying that she wished for no other spouse than Jesus Christ. She only asked of her father permission to live a solitary life in his house. The father, because he loved her, complied with her request, and assigned to her a suitable maintenance. In her retirement she began to lead a saintly life in meditation, fasting, and works of penance, frequenting the sacraments, and frequently going to the hospitals to attend the sick. While she lived in this manner she fell sick in her youth and died. A certain lady who had been in her governess, while at prayer one night, heard a great noise, and saw a soul in the form of a woman in a strong fire, and bound in chains, in the midst of a multitude of devils. The soul said, "Know that I am the unhappy daughter of Augubert. "What!" replied the governess; "are you damned after a life so holy?" "Yes," replied the soul; "I am justly damned through my own fault. "And why? You must know that in my youth I took pleasure in listening to one of my pages, for whom I had an affection, reading a certain book. Once, after reading the book for me, the page kissed me; the devil began to tempt me, till in the end I committed sin with the page. I went to confession, and began to tell my sin; my indiscreet confessor instantly reproved me, saying, "What! has a queen been guilty of such a sin?" I then, through shame, said it was a dream. I afterwards began to perform penitential works and give alms, that God might pardon me without confessing the sin. At death I said to the confessor that I was a great sinner; he told me to banish the thought as a temptation. After this I expired, and am now damned for all eternity." She then disappeared amid such noise, that the whole world appeared to be falling in pieces, and left in the chamber an intolerable stench, which lasted for many days.

VII

Father John Baptist Manni, of the Society of Jesus relates that a certain lady had for several years concealed in confession a sin of impurity. Two religious of the Order of St. Dominic passed by the place. The lady, who was always waiting for a strange confessor, entreated one of them to hear her confession. When the Fathers departed, his companion said to the confessor of the lady that while she was confessing her sins he saw many serpents coming from her mouth, but that there was a large, horrible-looking serpent, whose head only came out, but afterwards went back entirely into the lady's mouth. He then saw all the serpents that came out return again. The confessor went back to the house of the lady, and on entering heard that she had died suddenly. Afterwards, when he was at prayer, the unhappy woman appeared and said to him, "I am the unfortunate person that made my confession to you; I committed one sin, which I voluntarily concealed from the confessors of the place. God sent you to me; but even then I could not conquer the shame of telling it. He therefore struck me suddenly dead when you entered the house, and has justly condemned me to hell." After these words the earth opened, and she fell into the chasm and instantly disappeared.

VIII

Saint Antony relates that there was a widow who began to lead a holy life, but afterwards, by familiarity with a young man, was led into sin with him. After her fall she performed penitential works, gave alms, and even entered into a monastery, but never confessed her sin. She became abbess. She died, and died with the reputation of a saint. But one night a nun who was in the choir heard a great noise, and saw a spectre encompassed with flames. She asked what it was. The spectre answered, "I am the soul of the abbess, and am in hell." "And why?" "Because in this world I committed a sin, and have never confessed it. Go, and tell this to the other nuns, and pray no more for me." She then disappeared amid great noise.

IX

In the annals of the Capuchins it is related that a certain mother, on account of having made sacrilegious confessions, began at death to cry out that she was damned for her grievous sins and for her bad confessions. Among other things, she said that she was bound to make restitution to certain persons, and that she had always neglected to do so. Her daughter then said to her, “My mother, let what you owe be restored; I am satisfied to sell all, provided your soul be saved.” The mother answered: “Ah, accursed child! I am damned also on your account; for I have scandalized you by my bad example.” Thus she continued to howl like one in despair. They sent for one of the Capuchin Fathers. When he arrived he exhorted her to trust in the mercy of God; but the unhappy woman said “What mercy! I am damned: sentence is already passed upon me, and I have already begun to feel the pains of hell.” While she spoke thus, her body was raised to the ceiling of the chamber, and dashed with violence against the floor, and she instantly expired.

SERMONS FOR ALL THE SUNDAYS IN THE YEAR

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

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Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

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CONTENTS

- INDEX
- SERMONS FOR ALL THE SUNDAYS IN THE YEAR
  - CONTENTS
  - Sermons for All the Sundays in the Year
    - OBJECT OF THE WORK
    - PROTEStation
    - INSTRUCTIONS TO PREACHERS
  - Sermons of Saint Alphonsus Liguori
    - *Sermon I*
      FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
      - ON THE GENERAL JUDGMENT
      - FIRST POINT. ON THE DIFFERENT APPEARANCE OF THE JUST AND OF SINNERS IN THE VALLEY OF JOSAPHAT.
      - SECOND POINT. THE SCRUTINY OF CONSCIENCE.
      - THIRD POINT. SENTENCE OF THE ELECT, AND OF THE REPROBATE.
    - *Sermon II*
      SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
      - ON THE ADVANTAGES OF TRIBULATIONS
      - FIRST POINT. ON THE GREAT ADVANTAGES WE DERIVE FROM TRIBULATIONS.
      - SECOND POINT. ON THE MANNER IN WHICH WE SHOULD BEAR TRIBULATIONS.
    - *Sermon III*
      THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
      - ON THE MEANS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION
      - FIRST MEANS. DIFFIDENCE IN OURSELVES.
      - SECOND MEANS. CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

THIRD MEANS. RESISTANCE TO TEMPTATIONS.

Sermon IV
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

ON THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST FOR US, AND ON OUR OBLIGATIONS TO LOVE HIM

FIRST POINT. ON THE GREAT LOVE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN TO US.

SECOND POINT. ON THE GREATNESS OF OUR OBLIGATIONS TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST.

Sermon V
SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY

IN WHAT TRUE WISDOM CONSISTS

FIRST POINT. SINNERS ARE TRULY FOOLISH.

SECOND POINT. THE SAINTS ARE TRULY WISE.

Sermon VI
MALICE OF MORTAL SIN

FIRST POINT. MORTAL SIN IS A GREAT CONTEMPT SHOWN TO GOD.

SECOND POINT. MORTAL SIN IS A GREAT OFFENCE OFFERED TO GOD.

Sermon VII
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

ON THE CONFIDENCE WITH WHICH WE OUGHT TO RECOMMEND OURSELVES TO THE MOTHER OF GOD

FIRST POINT. THE GREATNESS OF MARY’S POWER TO OBTAIN FROM GOD FOR US ALL THE GRACES WE STAND IN NEED OF.

SECOND POINT. ON THE TENDER COMPASSION OF MARY, AND HER READINESS TO ASSIST US IN ALL OUR WANTS.

Sermon VIII
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

ON THE REMORSE OF THE DAMNED

FIRST REMORSE OF THE DAMNED CHRISTIAN, ARISING FROM THE THOUGHT OF THE LITTLE WHICH HE REQUIRED TO DO IN ORDER TO SAVE HIS SOUL.

SECOND REMORSE OF THE DAMNED, ARISING FROM THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE TRIFLES FOR WHICH THEY LOST THEIR SOULS.

THIRD REMORSE OF THE DAMNED, ARISING FROM THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GREAT GOOD WHICH THEY HAVE LOST BY THEIR OWN FAULT.

Sermon IX
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

DANGERS TO ETERNAL SALVATION

ON THE GREATNESS OF THE DANGERS TO WHICH OUR ETERNAL SALVATION IS EXPOSED, AND ON THE MANNER IN WHICH WE OUGHT TO GUARD AGAINST THEM.

Sermon X
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

ON THE PAINS OF HELL

Sermon XI
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

ON THE DEATH OF THE JUST

FIRST POINT. DEATH DELIVERS US FROM THE MISERIES OF THIS LIFE, AND FROM THE ASSAULTS OF OUR ENEMIES.

SECOND POINT. DEATH FREES US FROM ACTUAL SINS.

THIRD POINT. DEATH DELIVERS US FROM THE DANGER OF FALLING INTO HELL, AND OPENS PARADISE TO US.

Sermon XII
SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SALVATION

FIRST POINT. IF THE SOUL IS LOST, ALL IS LOST.

SECOND POINT. IF THE SOUL BE ONCE LOST, IT IS LOST FOR EVER.

Sermon XIII
SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

ON THE UNHAPPY LIFE OF SINNERS, AND ON THE HAPPY LIFE OF THOSE WHO LOVE GOD

FIRST POINT. UNHAPPY LIFE OF SINNERS.

SECOND POINT. THE HAPPY LIFE OF THOSE WHO LOVE GOD.

Sermon XIV
QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

DELUSIONS OF SINNERS

Sermon XV
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

ON THE NUMBER OF SINS BEYOND WHICH GOD PARDONS NO MORE

Sermon XVI
SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

ON HEAVEN

Sermon XVII
THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

ON CONCEALING SINS IN CONFESSION

Sermon XVIII
FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

ON THE TENDER COMPASSION WHICH JESUS CHRIST ENTERTAINS TOWARDS SINNERS

Sermon XIX
PASSION SUNDAY

ON THE DANGER TO WHICH TEPIDITY EXPOSES THE SOUL

Sermon XX
PALM SUNDAY

ON THE EVIL EFFECTS OF BAD HABITS

FIRST POINT. A BAD HABIT BLINDS THE UNDERSTANDING.

SECOND POINT. A BAD HABIT HARDENS THE HEART.

THIRD POINT. A BAD HABIT DIMINISHES OUR STRENGTH.

Sermon XXI
EASTER SUNDAY

ON THE MISERABLE STATE OF RELAPSING SINNERS

Sermon XXII
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

ON AVOIDING THE OCCASIONS OF SIN

Sermon XXIII
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

ON SCANDAL

FIRST POINT. ON THE GREAT DISPLEASURE WHICH THE SIN OF SCANDAL GIVES TO GOD.

SECOND POINT. THE GREAT PUNISHMENT WHICH GOD THREATENS TO THOSE WHO GIVE SCANDAL.

Sermon XXIV
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

ON THE VALUE OF TIME

Sermon XXV
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

ON OBEDIENCE TO YOUR CONFESSOR

FIRST POINT. HOW SECURE OF SALVATION ARE THEY WHO OBEY THEIR CONFESSOR.

SECOND POINT. HOW GREAT IS THE DANGER OF PERDITION TO WHICH THEY WHO DO NOT OBEY THEIR CONFESSOR ARE EXPOSED.

Sermon XXVI
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

ON THE CONDITIONS OF PRAYER

FIRST POINT. WE MUST PRAY WITH HUMILITY.

SECOND POINT. WE MUST PRAY WITH CONFIDENCE.

THIRD POINT. WE MUST PRAY WITH PERSEVERANCE.

Sermon XXVII
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, OR THE SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION

ON HUMAN RESPECT

FIRST POINT. ON THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT BEING INFLUENCED BY HUMAN RESPECT.

SECOND POINT. ON THE MEANS OF OVERCOMING HUMAN RESPECT.

Sermon XXVIII
PENTECOST SUNDAY

ON CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

FIRST POINT. OUR SANCTIFICATION CONSISTS ENTIRELY IN CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD.

SECOND POINT. HOW, AND IN WHAT, WE OUGHT TO PRACTISE CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD.

Sermon XXIX
TRINITY SUNDAY

ON THE LOVE OF THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS FOR MAN

FIRST POINT. THE LOVE SHOWN TO US BY THE FATHER IN OUR CREATION.

SECOND POINT. THE LOVE WHICH THE SON OF GOD HAS SHOWN TO US IN OUR REDEMPTION.

THIRD POINT. ON THE LOVE SHOWN TO US BY THE HOLY GHOST IN OUR SANCTIFICATION.

Sermon XXX
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON CHARITY TO OUR NEIGHBOUR

FIRST POINT. HOW WE SHOULD PRACTISE CHARITY TO OUR NEIGHBOUR IN OUR THOUGHTS.

SECOND POINT. ON THE CHARITY WHICH WE OUGHT TO PRACTISE TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR IN WORDS.

THIRD POINT. ON THE CHARITY WE OUGHT TO PRACTISE TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR BY WORKS.

Sermon XXXI
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON HOLY COMMUNION

FIRST POINT. ON THE GREAT LOVE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN US IN GIVING US HIMSELF IN THIS SACRAMENT.

SECOND POINT. ON THE PREPARATION WE OUGHT TO MAKE IN ORDER TO DERIVE GREAT FRUIT FROM THE HOLY COMMUNION.

Sermon XXXII
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE MERCY OF GOD TOWARDS SINNERS

FIRST POINT. MERCY OF GOD IN CALLING SINNERS TO REPENTANCE.

SECOND POINT. MERCY OF GOD IN WAITING FOR SINNERS TO RETURN TO HIM.

THIRD POINT. MERCY OF GOD IN RECEIVING PENITENT SINNERS.

Sermon XXXIII
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

DEATH IS CERTAIN AND UNCERTAIN

FIRST POINT. IT IS CERTAIN THAT WE SHALL DIE.

SECOND POINT. IT IS UNCERTAIN WHEN WE SHALL DIE.

Sermon XXXIV
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE SIN OF ANGER

FIRST POINT. THE RUIN WHICH ANGER UNRESTRAINED BRINGS ON THE SOUL.

SECOND POINT. HOW WE OUGHT TO RESTRAIN ANGER IN THE OCCASIONS OF PROVOCATION WHICH OCCUR TO US.

Sermon XXXV
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE VANITY OF THE WORLD

Sermon XXXVI
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

FIRST POINT. HOW VERY IMPORTANT IT IS TO BRING UP CHILDREN IN HABITS OF VIRTUE.

SECOND POINT. ON THE CARE AND DILIGENCE WITH WHICH PARENTS OUGHT TO ENDEAVOUR TO BRING UP THEIR CHILDREN IN HABITS OF VIRTUE.

Sermon XXXVII
EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

FIRST POINT. TERROR OF THE SOUL WHEN SHE SHALL BE PRESENTED TO THE JUDGE.

SECOND POINT. TERROR OF THE SOUL WHEN SHE SHALL BE EXAMINED.

THIRD POINT. TERROR OF THE SOUL WHEN SHE SHALL BE CONDEMNED.

Sermon XXXVIII
NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE DEATH OF THE SINNER

FIRST POINT. THE SINNER AT DEATH SHALL BE TORTURED BY REMORSES OF CONSCIENCE.

SECOND POINT. THE DYING SINNER SHALL BE TORTURED BY THE ASSAULTS OF THE DEVILS.

THIRD POINT. THE DYING SINNER SHALL BE TORTURED BY THE FEARS OF ETERNAL DEATH.

Sermon XXXIX
TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE EFFICACY AND NECESSITY OF PRAYER

FIRST POINT. ON THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

SECOND POINT. ON THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

Sermon XL
ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE VICE OF SPEAKING IMMODESTLY

FIRST POINT. THE MAN WHO SPEAKS IMMODESTLY DOES GREAT INJURY TO OTHERS WHO LISTEN TO HIM.

SECOND POINT. HE WHO SPEAKS IMMODESTLY DOES GREAT INJURY TO HIMSELF.

Sermon XLI
TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE ABUSE OF DIVINE MERCY

Sermon LXII
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON AVOIDING BAD COMPANY

Sermon XLIII
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ALL ENDS, AND SOON ENDS

FIRST POINT. EVERYTHING ENDS.

SECOND POINT. ALL SOON ENDS.

Sermon XLIV
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE PRACTICAL DEATH, OR ON WHAT ORDINARILY HAPPENS AT THE DEATH OF MEN OF THE WORLD

FIRST POINT. WHAT HAPPENS AT THE TIME OF THE LAST ILLNESS.

SECOND POINT. WHAT HAPPENS AT THE TIME IN WHICH THE SACRAMENTS ARE RECEIVED.

THIRD POINT. WHAT HAPPENS AT THE TIME OF DEATH.

Sermon XLV
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON IMPURITY

FIRST POINT. DELUSION OF THOSE WHO SAY THAT SINS AGAINST PURITY ARE NOT A GREAT EVIL.

SECOND POINT. ILLUSION OF THOSE WHO SAY THAT GOD TAKES PITY ON THIS SIN.

Sermon XLVI
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE LOVE OF GOD

FIRST POINT. HOW DEAR THIS COMMAND OF LOVING GOD WITH OUR WHOLE HEART OUGHT TO BE TO US.

SECOND POINT. WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO IN ORDER TO LOVE GOD WITH OUR WHOLE HEART.

Sermon XLVII
EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON BAD THOUGHTS

FIRST POINT. WHEN BAD THOUGHTS ARE SINFUL.

SECOND POINT. THE GREAT DANGER OF BAD THOUGHTS.

THIRD POINT. ON THE REMEDIES AGAINST BAD THOUGHTS.

Sermon XLVIII
NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE PAIN OF LOSS WHICH THE DAMNED SUFFER IN HELL

Sermon XLIX
TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE PREDOMINANT PASSION

Sermon L
TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE ETERNITY OF HELL

Sermon LI
TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

STRAITS AND ANGUISH OF DYING CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE BEEN NEGLIGENT DURING LIFE ABOUT THE DUTIES OF RELIGION

FIRST POINT. O GOD! I COULD HAVE, BUT HAVE NOT, BECOME A SAINT.

SECOND POINT. OH! THAT I HAD TIME TO REPAIR THE EVIL I HAVE DONE! BUT NOW TIME IS AT AN END.

THIRD POINT. OH! THAT I COULD, IN THE LITTLE TIME THAT REMAINS, REPAIR THE PAST! BUT, ALAS! THIS TIME IS NOT FIT FOR REPAIRING PAST EVILS.

Sermon LII
TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON IMPENITENCE

FIRST POINT. THE DANGER TO WHICH A PERSON IN SIN, WHO DEFERS HIS CONVERSION, IS EXPOSED.

SECOND POINT. THE REMEDY FOR THOSE WHO FIND THEMSELVES IN SIN, AND WISH TO SAVE THEIR SOULS.

Sermon LIII
TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON BLASPHEMY

FIRST POINT. ON THE GREAT ENORMITY OF THE SIN OF BLASPHEMY.

SECOND POINT. ON THE GREAT RIGOUR WITH WHICH GOD PUNISHES THE SIN OF BLASPHEMY.

Sermons for All the Sundays in the Year

OBJECT OF THE WORK

THE present Work is entitled, ABRIDGED SERMONS FOR ALL THE SUNDAYS IN THE YEAR. They are called *Abridged Sermons,* because, although each contains abundant matter for a sermon, the sentiments are briefly expressed—not, however, so briefly as to render the sense obscure. Hence the work may be used for spiritual lectures. Diffuseness has been purposely avoided, that the preacher may extend the subject treated in the way which may appear best to him. A preacher will scarce ever deliver, with zeal and warmth, sentiments which he has not made in some manner his own. Hence the matter of each sermon has been condensed into a small compass, that the preacher may extend it according to his pleasure, and thus make it his own.

In each sermon there are many passages from the Scriptures and Holy Fathers, and a variety of reflections—perhaps too many for a single discourse—that the reader may select what will be most pleasing to him. The style is easy and simple, and therefore calculated to render the preaching of the Divine Word conducive to the salvation of souls.

PROTEStation

IN obedience to the decrees of Urban VIII., I protest that, of the miraculous works and gifts ascribed in this work to certain servants of God, and not already approved by the Holy See, I claim no other belief than that which is ordinarily given to history resting on mere human authority; and that in bestowing the title of Saint or Blessed, on any person not canonized or beatified by the Church, I only intend to do it according to the usage and opinion of men.

INSTRUCTIONS TO PREACHERS

1. IN the first place, the preacher, if he wishes that his preaching shall produce abundant fruit, should propose to himself the proper end—that is, to preach, not with a view to obtain honour, or applause, or any temporal advantage, but solely to gain souls to God; and hence it is necessary, that when he enters upon his exalted office of divine ambassador, he should pray to God fervently to inflame his heart with his holy love; because it is by this means that his preaching will be productive of much fruit. The venerable Father John D'Avila being once asked, what was most conducive towards preaching well, replied in those short but expressive words—"*To love Jesus Christ well.*" It has been therefore found by experience, that preachers who love Jesus Christ have often effected more by a single discourse, than others by several.

2. St. Thomas of Villanova said, that the words of a sermon should be like so many darts of fire, which would wound and inflame the hearers with divine love. "But how," he subjoined, "can the heart be set on fire by those sermons which, though long and elaborate, issue, notwithstanding, from a frozen heart?" St. Francis de Sales observes, that the tongue speaks to the ear, but the heart speaks to the heart. He proceeds to say, that when the sentiments do not spring from the heart of the preacher, it is with difficulty they draw the hearts of others to divine love; he must himself be first inflamed with it. "Lampades ejus lampades ignis, atque flammarum." (Cant. 8:6.) He must be first a fire to burn, and afterwards a flame to set others on fire. St. Bernard explained this in other terms, when he said, that he must be first a cistern, and then a canal; first a cistern—that is, full of the fervour and zeal which are collected in mental prayer; and then a canal, to communicate it to others.

3. With regard to the subject matter of sermons. Those subjects should be selected which move most powerfully to detest sin and to love God; whence the preacher should often speak of the last things—of death, of judgment, of

Hell, of Heaven, and of eternity. According to the advice of the Holy Spirit, “Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis,” (Eccl. 7:40,) it is particularly useful often to mae mention of death, by delivering several discourses on that subject during the year, speaking at one time on the uncertainty of death, which terminates all the pleasures as well as all the afflictions of this life; at another, on the uncertainty of the time at which death may arrive; now, on the unhappy death of the sinner; and again, on the happy death of the just.

4. The preacher should often speak of the love which Jesus Christ bears towards us, of the love which we should bear to Jesus Christ, and of the confidence we should have in his mercy whenever we are resolved to amend our lives. It would appear that some preachers do not know how to speak of anything but the justice of God, terrors, threats, and chastisements. There is no doubt but that terrifying discourses are of use to arouse sinners from the sleep of sin; but we should be persuaded at the same time, that those who abstain from sin solely through the fear of punishment, will with difficulty persevere for a long time. Love is that golden link which binds the soul to God, and makes it faithful in repelling temptation and practising virtue. St. Augustine said: “Ama et fac quod vis.” He who truly loves God, flies from everything displeasing to Him, and seeks to please Him to the utmost of his power. And here let us cite that remarkable saying of St. Francis de Sales: “The love that does not spring from the passion of Christ is weak.” By this the saint gives us to understand that the passion of Christ moves us most effectually to love him.

5. Thus it is very useful, and most conducive to inspire the love of God, to speak to sinners of the confidence which we should have in Jesus Christ if we abandon sin. “Viam mandatorum, tuorum cucurri, cum dilatasti cor meum” (Ps. 118:32.) When the heart is dilated with confidence it easily runs in the way of the Lord. In like manner the preacher should often speak of the confidence which we should have in the intercession of the Mother of God. Besides the discourses delivered during the course of the year, on the principal festivals of the Blessed Virgin Mary—as the Annunciation, the Assumption, her Patronage, and her Dolours—let him oftentimes, in his addresses to the people, inculcate upon the minds of his auditors devotion to the Mother of God. Some preachers have a very laudable custom of introducing into every sermon something regarding the Blessed Virgin,

either by relating some example of graces bestowed on her clients, or of some act of homage performed by her votaries, or some prayer which we should offer to her.

6. Moreover, the preacher should often speak of the means by which we are preserved in the grace of God: such as, flying dangerous occasions and wicked companions, frequenting the sacraments, and especially recommending ourselves often to God and the Virgin Mother, in order to obtain the graces necessary for salvation, and principally the graces of perseverance and of the love of Jesus Christ, without which we cannot be saved.

7. The preacher should likewise often speak against bad confessions, in which sins are concealed through shame. This is an evil not of rare occurrence, but frequent, especially in small country districts, which consigns innumerable souls to hell. Hence it is very useful to mention, from time to time, some example of souls that were damned by wilfully concealing sins in confession.

8. We shall now speak briefly of the parts of a discourse, which are nine:—the exordium, the proposition, the division, the introduction, the proof, the confutation, the amplification, the peroration or conclusion, the epilogue, and the appeal to the passions. These are again reduced to three principal divisions: 1—the exordium; 2—the proof, which comprises the introduction that precedes, and the confutation of the opposite arguments, that follows it; 3—the peroration or conclusion, which comprises the epilogue, the moral exhortation, and the appeal to the passions. To the exordium rhetoricians assign seven parts:—the introduction, general proposition, confirmation, repetition of the proposition, connection, particular proposition, and division. But, commonly speaking, the substantial parts of the exordium are three: 1—the general proposition; 2—the connection or the link by which it is connected with the particular proposition; 3—the particular proposition, or the principal one of the discourse, which includes the division of the points. For example: 1—“We must work out our salvation, because there is no alternative: whosoever is not saved is damned:” that is the general proposition. 2—“But, to be saved, we must die a happy death:” that is the connection or application. 3—“But it is exceedingly difficult to die a happy death after a wicked life:” and that is the particular proposition, or principal one of the discourse, which ought

to be clear, concise, and simple, and, at the same time, one; otherwise, if unity be not observed in the proposition, it would not be one sermon, but several; and, therefore, the points into which the discourse is divided ought all tend to prove one single proposition. For example: “The person who is addicted to a bad habit is with difficulty saved, because the bad habit (1) darkens the understanding, (2) hardens the heart:” and these will be the two points of the discourse. Let the points be short and few, not exceeding two, or, at most, three; and sometimes a single point will be sufficient. For example: “Mortal sin is a great evil, because it is an injury done to God;” or, “He who abuses too much the mercy of God will be abandoned by Him.”

9. With regard to the body of the discourse, and, in the first place, the proof, it ought to be a perfect syllogism, but without appearing to be so. The major proposition should be proved before we pass to the minor; and the minor before we pass to the conclusion. This, however, is to be understood when the major or minor proposition requires proof: otherwise, when they express truths already known and certain, it is sufficient to amplify, without proving them.

10. As far as regards the order of the proofs, generally speaking, the authority of the Scriptures and of the Holy Fathers should be first adduced; then the arguments from reason; and afterwards the illustrations and examples. The texts of Scripture should be cited in an impressive and emphatic manner. It is better than to dwell on the exposition of one or two texts of Scripture than to cite many at once, without considering well their import. The citations from the Fathers should be few and brief, and containing some sentiment that is strong and animated, and not trivial. After the citations, the arguments from reason should be adduced; concerning which, some assert that the weaker reasons should be adduced in the first place, and then the stronger; but I am disposed to adopt the opinion of others, who think it better that the strong arguments should be advanced; and that the weaker ones should occupy the middle place; because, were a weak argument adduced in the commencement, it might make a bad impression on the minds of the auditors. After the arguments from reason come the examples and illustrations. I have said that this arrangement should be observed *ordinarily;* but, occasionally, it will be of use to give some one of the forementioned proofs precedence of the others: this must be left to the discretion of the preacher.

11. Care should be taken that the transition from one point to the other be made naturally, without passing from one thing to another that has no relation to it. The most ordinary and easiest modes are these: “Let us proceed to the other point,” etc.; or “Thus, after having seen,” etc. And passing from one argument to another, you may say: “Besides, we should consider,” etc., taking care, as far as it is possible, that the last part of the preceding argument has some connection with the following point or argument.

12. We have spoken of proofs. As far as regards the amplification of proofs, one is verbal, which consists in words; another is real, which may consist either in climax; for example: “It is a virtue to suffer tribulations with patience—a greater virtue to desire them; it is a greater still to take delight in them;” or it may be borrowed from the circumstances of the subject, or from comparison with another subject of equal or lesser consideration. The morals have their proper place, as we shall remark in the peroration. It is, however, occasionally allowed, after a satisfactory proof has been adduced, to address a short exhortation; and this is particularly the case in the sermons of the Mission, in which the audience is generally composed of rude, uneducated persons, on whom moral exhortation makes more impression; but these moral exhortations that are incidentally introduced should not be too long or too frequent, so as to render the discourse tedious or languid.

13. The peroration contains three parts—the epilogue, the moral exhortation, and the appeal to the passions. The epilogue is a recapitulation of the discourse, in which the most convincing arguments that have been already advanced are repeated, but which must be handled with a view to the movement of the passions which is to follow; whence the preacher, in his recapitulation, should commence to move the passions.

14. As to the moral exhortation, it may be observed, that oftentimes the principal fruit of the sermon consists, especially in discourses addressed to the people, in explaining the moral truths suitable to the subject of the discourse, with propriety and earnestness. The preacher, therefore, should take care to speak against the most prevalent vices, viz.: hatred, impurity, blasphemy; against evil occasions, wicked companions; against parents who allow their children to hold intercourse with persons of different sex; and especially against mothers who invite young men into their houses to

converse with their daughters. Let him also exhort the heads of families to remove from their houses bad books, and particularly novels, which insinuate a secret poison that corrupts youth. Let him speak against games of hazard, which are the ruin of families and of souls.

15. In a word, let the preacher endeavour, in his sermons, always to insinuate whatever he can that is practical—that is, the remedies of the different vices; the means of persevering in a virtuous life; such as, to fly dangerous occasions and bad company; to offer violence to one's self in motions of anger, so as not to break out into injurious actions or words; by suggesting to the hearers some form of expression, to avoid blasphemies or imprecations; for example, "Lord, give me patience!" "Virgin Mary, assist me!" and the like. Let him recommend the people to hear Mass every morning: to read every day some spiritual book; every morning to renew the resolutions of not offending God, and to ask the Divine assistance in order to persevere; to make each day a visit to the most holy sacrament and the Blessed Virgin, in some representation of her; each evening to make the examination of conscience, with an act of sorrow; after having committed a sin, immediately to make an act of contrition, and to confess it as soon as possible: above all, let him recommend his hearers to have recourse to God and to the Blessed Virgin in the time of temptation, by repeating oftentimes the name of Jesus and Mary, and continuing to invoke their aid until the temptation ceases. Those means and remedies should be often repeated by the preacher, and recommended frequently in the course of his sermons; and he must not be deterred by the apprehension of being criticised by some learned person, who may remark that the preacher repeated the same things. In preaching we must not seek the applause of the learned, but the divine approbation and the advantages of souls, and particularly of poor ignorant persons, who do not profit so much by thoughts and arguments, as by those easy practices which are suggested and repeated to them. I say repeated, since those rude and unlettered persons will easily forget what they hear, unless it is oftentimes repeated to them.

16. Let young preachers also take care to develop, and to commit to memory, their sermons, before they deliver them from the pulpit. To preach extempore is useful, inasmuch as the discourse becomes thus more natural and familiar; this, however, is not the case with young men, but only with those who have been in the habit of preaching for many years; otherwise,

young men would contract a habit of speaking without preparation, and of preaching at random, saying whatever occurred to them, without any order or arrangement. However, young preachers should take care to develop their sermons, not in the florid style of elaborate expression, lofty thoughts, and sounding periods. Read the golden treatise on popular eloquence by the celebrated scholar, Louis Muratori; in which he proves that all sermons addressed to an audience composed of learned and unlearned, ought to be not only familiar, but also popular; composed in an easy and simple style, such as the people are in the habit of using; avoiding, however, all low and vulgar expressions, which are not suited to the dignity of the pulpit. "The people," says Muratori, "are composed for the most part of the ignorant; if you address to them abstruse doctrines and reflections, and use words and phrases that are not adapted to ordinary comprehensions, what fruit do you hope for from persons who do not understand you? Wherefore, the practice of those preachers will never be conformable to the rules of the art, or the principles of genuine eloquence, who, instead of accommodating themselves to the limited capacity of so many of their hearers, appear to study to make themselves intelligible to the learned only; as if they were ashamed to make themselves understood by the poor, who have as good a right to the word of God as the learned. Nay more, a Christian preacher is bound to each one of his auditory in particular, as if there were no other who heard him. He who employs lofty reasoning, and is not careful to make himself understood by all, betrays the cause of God and his own duty, and disregards the spiritual necessities of a great portion of his audience." Hence the Council of Trent prescribes to all parish priests, to compose their discourses in a manner adapted to the capacity of their audience: "Archipresbyteri et parochi per se vel alios idoneos, plebes sibi commissas pro earum capacitate pascant salutaribus verbis." (Sess. v. cap. i. de Reform.)

17. St. Francis de Sales said, that select language and sounding periods are the bane of sacred eloquence; and the principal reason of this is, that sermons composed in this style have not the divine sanction and concurrence. They may be of use to the learned, but not to the illiterate, who generally constitute the principal part of every audience. On the other hand, sermons composed in a familiar style are useful to the illiterate as well as to the learned. Muratori adds, that when the preacher addresses the

humbler classes alone, or country people, he ought to make use of the most popular and familiar style possible, in order to accommodate himself to the gross understanding of such ignorant persons. He says, that the preacher, when speaking to those rude people, should imagine himself to be one of them, who was desirous to persuade a companion of something; that, on this account also, the periods of sermons addressed to the common people should be concise and broken, so that whoever has not caught the meaning of the first sentence, may be able to comprehend the second; which cannot be done when the sentences are long and connected; for then, whoever does not understand the first period will not understand the second nor the third.

18. Muratori also observes, that, in preaching to the people, it is very useful to make frequent use of the figure called *antiphora;* by which a question is asked, and replied to by the speaker. For example: "Tell me why so many sinners relapse, after confession, into the same sins? I will tell you: because they do not remove the dangerous occasions of sin." It is also useful oftentimes to call on the auditory to attend to what is said, and especially to certain things that are more important. For example: "O good God! you come to us in order to save us, and we fly from you to destroy ourselves." It is useful likewise to repeat with emphasis some striking maxim of religion; as, for example: "There is no alternative: sooner or later we must die—sooner or later we must die;" or, "My brethren, it is certain that, after this life, we must be eternally happy, or eternally miserable."

19. I do not enlarge more on this subject, which I deem most important, as I have found it necessary to write more at length on it in a letter of apology which I published in reply to a religious who censured me for approving of sermons composed in a simple and popular style. I there premised in a sufficient manner whatever Muratori has observed on this subject, and subjoined what the Holy Fathers have written on it, as far as I was able to discover. I pray the reader not to omit to read this letter: it is an uncommon little treatise, which contains matter not treated by any preceding writer.

20. I do not, however, deem it right to omit to say something on the modulation of the voice, and on the gesture which should be used in preaching. As far as regards the voice, the preacher should avoid speaking in an inflated tone, or in a monotonous and invariably loud tone of voice. What moves and engages the attention of the hearers is, to speak at one time

in a strong, at another time in a middle voice, and at another in a low voice, according as it suits the sentiment that is expressed, but without any sudden or violent fall or elevation; now to exclaim; now to pause; and now to resume with a sigh. This variety of tone and manner keeps the audience always attentive.

21. The preacher should avoid gesture that is affected, or oftentimes repeated in the same form, or too vehement, with much agitation of the body. The arms should be moved with moderation: ordinarily the right hand should be used; the left but seldom. The hands should not be raised above the head, nor too much extended sideways, nor held too confined. In delivering the exordium the preacher should remain stationery, and should not move from a middle position in the pulpit: in delivering the first sentence he should not use gesture; in the second, he should only commence to move the right hand, keeping the left resting on the pulpit or the breast. Let him take care not to keep the arms attached close to the sides, or to raise them both at the same time in form of a cross, or throw them behind the shoulders. He must rarely strike them against each other or against the pulpit: to stamp the feet is very unbecoming. The motion of the head should correspond with that of the hand, accompanying it in the direction in which it moves. It is a fault to twist the head, or move it too often or too violently, or to hold it always raised, or always inclined upon the breast. The eyes ought to accompany the motion of the head; whence it is a fault to keep them always closed or cast downwards, or fixed immoveably in one direction. It may be permitted sometimes to sit down, but it should be seldom. The same may be said of moving back and forward: but the preacher should never run from one side of the pulpit to the other. He should, for the most part, speak from a middle position, so as to be seen equally from either side; but it is useful to incline occasionally to the right or left, without, however, turning the back to the opposite direction. Finally, as far as regards the length of the sermon. The Lent sermons should not exceed an hour; and the Sunday discourses should not occupy more than three quarters of an hour; but the parochial instructions should not be longer than a half-hour, including the act of contrition, to which, ordinarily, it is advisable to accustom the common people; making them, at the close of the sermon, have recourse to the mother of God, to ask of her some particular grace—as, holy perseverance, a happy death, the

love of Jesus Christ, and the like. Nor does it signify, that in order to make room for the act of contrition, the time of the sermon must be shortened; for these acts are the most precious fruit to be derived from it.

It were well that the preacher should sometimes exhort the audience to relate to others what they have heard in the sermon; as by this means it may be made useful even to those who have not heard it.

Sermons of Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Sermon I

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

ON THE GENERAL JUDGMENT

> "And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with much power and majesty."—MATT. 24:30.

AT present God is not known, and, therefore, he is as much despised by sinners, as if he could not avenge, whenever he pleases, the injuries offered to him. The wicked "looketh upon the Almighty as if he could do nothing." (Job 22:17.) But the Lord has fixed a day, called in the Scriptures "the day of the Lord," on which the Eternal Judge will make known his power and majesty. "The Lord," says the Psalmist, "shall be known when he executeth judgment." (Ps. 9:17.) On this text St. Bernard writes: "The Lord, who is now unknown while he seeks mercy, shall be known when he executes justice." (Lib. de xii. Rad.) The prophet Sophonias calls the day of the Lord "a day of wrath—a day of tribulation and distress—a day of calamity and misery." (1:15.)

Let us now consider, in the first point, the different appearance of the just and the unjust; in the second, the scrutiny of consciences; and in the third, the sentence pronounced on the elect and on the reprobate.

FIRST POINT. ON THE DIFFERENT APPEARANCE OF THE JUST AND OF SINNERS IN THE VALLEY OF JOSAPHAT.

1. This day shall commence with fire from Heaven, which will burn the earth, all men then living, and all things upon the earth. "And the earth and the works which are in it shall be burnt up." (2 Pet. 3:10.) All shall become one heap of ashes.

2. After the death of all men, "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again." (1 Cor. 15:52.) St. Jerome used to say: "As often as I consider the day of judgment, I tremble. Whether I eat or drink, or whatever else I

do, that terrible trumpet appears to sound in my ears, ‘arise ye dead, and come to judgment,’ ” (in Matt., *c.* v.); and St. Augustine declared, that nothing banished from him earthly thoughts so effectually as the fear of judgment.

3. At the sound of that trumpet the souls of the blessed shall descend from Heaven to be united to the bodies with which they served God on Earth; and the unhappy souls of the damned shall come up from Hell to take possession again of those bodies with which they have offended God. Oh! how different the appearance of the former, compared with that of the latter! The damned shall appear deformed and black, like so many firebrands of Hell; but “the just shall shine as the sun.” (Matt. 13:43.) Oh! how great shall then be the happiness of those who have mortified their bodies by works of penance! We may estimate their felicity from the words addressed by St. Peter of Alcantara, after death, to St. Teresa: “O happy penance! which merited for me such glory.”

4. After their resurrection, they shall be summoned by the angels to appear in the valley of Josaphat. “Nations, nations, in the valley of destruction, for the day of the Lord is near.” (Joel 3:14.) Then the angels shall come and separate the reprobate from the elect, placing the latter on the right, and the former on the left. “The angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just.” (Matt. 13:49.) Oh! how great will then be the confusion which the unhappy damned shall suffer! “What think you,” says the author of the Imperfect Work, “must be the confusion of the impious, when, being separated from the just, they shall be abandoned?” (Hom. liv.) This punishment alone, says St. Chrysostom, would be sufficient to constitute a hell for the wicked. “Et si nihil ulterius paterentur, ista sola verecundia sufficerit eis ad pœnam,” (in Matt., *c.* xxiv.) The brother shall be separated from the brother, the husband from his wife, the son from the father, etc.

5. But, behold! the heavens are opened—the angels come to assist at the general judgment, carrying, as St. Thomas says, the sign of the cross and of the other instruments of the passion of the Redeemer. “Veniente Domino ad judicium signum crucis, et alia passionis indicia demonstrabunt.” (Opusc. ii. 244.) The same may be inferred from the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew: “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn.” (24:30.) Sinners shall weep at

the sign of the cross; for, as St. Chrysostom says, the nails will complain of them—the wounds and the cross of Jesus Christ will speak against them. “Clavi de te conquerentur, cicatrices contra et loquentur, crux Christi contra te perorabit.” (Hom. xx., in Matt.)

6. Most holy Mary, the queen of saints and angels, shall come to assist at the last judgment; and lastly, the Eternal Judge shall appear in the clouds, full of splendour and majesty. “And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with much power and majesty.” (Matt. 24:30.) Oh! how great shall be the agony of the reprobate at the sight of the Judge! “At their presence,” says the Prophet Joel, “the people shall be in grievous pains.” (Joel 2:6.) According to St. Jerome, the presence of Jesus Christ will give the reprobate more pain than Hell itself. “It would,” he says, “be easier for the damned to bear the torments of Hell than the presence of the Lord.” Hence, on that day, the wicked shall, according to St. John, call on the mountains to fall on them and to hide them from the sight of the judge. “And they shall say to the mountains and the rocks: Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.” (Apoc. 6:16.)

SECOND POINT. THE SCRUTINY OF CONSCIENCE.

7. “The judgment sat, and the books were opened.” (Dan. 7:10.) The books of conscience are opened, and the judgment commences. The Apostle says, that the Lord “will bring to light the hidden things of darkness.” (1 Cor. 4:5.) And, by the mouth of his prophet, Jesus Christ has said: “I will search Jerusalem with lamps.” (Soph. 1:12.) The light of the lamp reveals all that is hidden.

8. “A judgment,” says St. Chrysostom, “terrible to sinners, but desirable and sweet to the just.” (Hom. iii. de Dav.) The last judgment shall fill sinners with terror, but will be a source of joy and sweetness to the elect; for God will then give praise to each one according to his works. (1 Cor. 4:5.) The Apostle tells us that on that day the just will be raised above the clouds to be united to the angels, and to increase the number of those who pay homage to the Lord. “We shall be taken up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ, into the air.” (1 Thess. 4:16.)

9. Worldlings now regard as fools the saints who led mortified and humble lives; but then they shall confess their own folly, and say: “We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints.” (Wis. 5:4, 5.) In this world, the rich and the noble are called happy; but true happiness consists in a life of sanctity. Rejoice, ye souls who live in tribulation; “your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” (John 16:20.) In the valley of Josaphat you shall be seated on thrones of glory.

10. But the reprobate, like goats destined for the slaughter, shall be placed on the left, to await their last condemnation. “Judicii tempus,” says St. Chrysostom, “misericordiam non recipit.” On the day of judgment there is no hope of mercy for poor sinners. “Magna,” says St. Augustine, “jam est pœna peccati, metum et memoriam divini perdidisse judicii.” (Serm. xx. de Temp.) The greatest punishment of sin in those who live in enmity with God, is to lose the fear and remembrance of the divine judgment. Continue, continue, says the Apostle, to live obstinately in sin; but in proportion to your obstinacy, you shall have accumulated for the day of judgment a treasure of the wrath of God. “But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath.” (Rom. 2:5.)

11. Then sinners will not be able to hide themselves; but, with insufferable pain, they shall be compelled to appear in judgment. “To lie hid,” says St. Anselm, “will be impossible—to appear will be intolerable.” The devils will perform their office of accusers, and, as St. Augustine says, will say to the Judge: “Most just God, declare him to be mine, who was unwilling to be yours.” The witnesses against the wicked shall be, first, their own conscience—“Their conscience bearing witness to them,” (Rom. 2:15.); secondly, the very walls of the house in which they sinned shall cry out against them—“The stone shall cry out of the wall,” (Hab. 2:11.); thirdly, the Judge himself will say—“I am the judge and the witness, saith the Lord.” (Jer. 29:23.) Hence, according to St. Augustine, “He who is now the witness of your life, shall be the judge of your cause.” (Lib. x. de Chord., *c.* ii.) To Christians particularly he will say: “Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida; for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matt. 11:21.) Christians, he will say, if the graces

which I have bestowed on you had been given to the Turks or to the Pagans, they would have done penance for their sins; but you have ceased to sin only with your death. He shall then manifest to all men their most hidden crimes. “I will discover thy shame to thy face.” (Nahum 3:5.) He will expose to view all their secret impurities, injustices, and cruelties. “I will set all thy abominations against thee.” (Ezech. 7:3.) Each of the damned shall carry his sins written on his forehead.

12. What excuses can save the wicked on that day? Ah! they can offer no excuses. “All iniquity shall stop her mouth.” (Ps. 106:42.) Their very sins shall close the mouth of the reprobate, so that they will not have courage to excuse themselves. They shall pronounce their own condemnation.

THIRD POINT. SENTENCE OF THE ELECT, AND OF THE REPROBATE.

13. St. Bernard says, that the sentence of the elect, and their destiny to eternal glory, shall be first declared, that the pains of the reprobate may be increased by the sight of what they lost. “Prius pronunciabitur sententia electis ut acrius (reprobi) doleant videntes quid amiserunt.” (Ser. viii., in Ps. xc.) Jesus Christ, then, shall first turn to the elect, and with a serene countenance shall say: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom preparad for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matt. 25:34.) He will then bless all the tears shed through sorrow for their sins, and all their good works, their prayers, mortifications, and communions; above all, he will bless for them the pains of his passion and the blood shed for their salvation. And, after these benedictions, the elect, singing alleluias, shall enter Paradise to praise and love God for eternity.

14. The Judge shall then turn to the reprobate, and shall pronounce the sentence of their condemnation in these words. “Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire.” (Matt. 25:41.) They shall then be for ever accursed, separated from God, and sent to burn for ever in the fire of hell. And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just into life everlasting.” (Matt. 25:46.)

15. After this sentence, the wicked shall, according to St. Ephrem, be compelled to take leave for ever of their relatives, of Paradise, of the saints, and of Mary the divine Mother. “Farewell, ye just! Farewell, O cross! Farewell, O Paradise! Farewell, fathers and brothers: we shall never see you

again! Farewell, O Mary, mother of God!” (St. Eph. de variis serm. inf.) Then a great pit shall open in the middle of the valley: the unhappy damned shall be cast into it, and shall see those doors shut which shall never again be opened. O accursed sin! to what a miserable end will you one day conduct so many souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. O unhappy souls! for whom is prepared such a melancholy end. But, brethren, have confidence. Jesus Christ is now a Father, and not a judge. He is ready to pardon all who repent. Let us then instantly ask pardon from him.

[*Let the preacher here propose for the people an act of sorrow, a purpose of amendment, and a prayer to Jesus and to Mary for the gift of holy perseverance. Let him repeat the same at the end of every sermon.*]

Sermon II

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

ON THE ADVANTAGES OF TRIBULATIONS

“Now when John had heard of the wonderful works of Christ,” etc. MATT. 9:2.

IN tribulations God enriches his beloved souls with the greatest graces. Behold, St. John in his chains comes to the knowledge of the works of Jesus Christ: “When John had heard in prison the works of Christ.” Great indeed are the advantages of tribulations. The Lord sends them to us, not because he wishes our misfortune, but because he desires our welfare. Hence, when they come upon us we must embrace them with thanksgiving, and must not only resign ourselves to the divine will, but must also rejoice that God treats us as he treated his Son Jesus Christ, whose life upon this earth was always full of tribulation. I shall now show, in the first point, the advantages we derive from tribulations; and in the second, I shall point out the manner in which we ought to bear them.

FIRST POINT. ON THE GREAT ADVANTAGES WE DERIVE FROM TRIBULATIONS.

1. “What doth he know that had not been tried? A man that hath much experience shall think of many things, and he that hath learned many things shall show forth understanding.” (Eccl. 34:9.) They who live in prosperity, and have no experience of adversity, know nothing of the state of their souls. In the first place, tribulation opens the eyes which prosperity had kept shut. St. Paul remained blind after Jesus Christ appeared to him, and, during his blindness, he perceived the errors in which he lived. During his imprisonment in Babylon, King Manasses had recourse to God, was convinced of the malice of his sins, and did penance for them. “And after that he was in distress he prayed to the Lord his God, and did penance exceedingly before the God of his fathers.” (2 Paral. 33:12.) The prodigal,

when he found himself under the necessity of feeding swine, and afflicted with hunger, exclaimed: “I will arise and go to my father.” (Luke 15:18.)

Secondly, tribulation takes from our hearts all affections to earthly things. When a mother wishes to wean her infant she puts gall on the paps, to excite his disgust, and induce him to take better food. God treats us in a similar manner: to detach us from temporal goods, he mingles them with gall, that by tasting its bitterness, we may conceive a dislike for them, and place our affections on the things of Heaven. “God,” says St. Augustine, “mingles bitterness with earthly pleasures, that we may seek another felicity, whose sweetness does not deceive.” (Ser. xxix., de Verb. Dom.)

Thirdly, they who live in prosperity are molested by many temptations of pride, of vain-glory; of desires of acquiring greater wealth, great honours, and greater pleasures. Tribulations free us from these temptations, and make us humble and content in the state in which the Lord has placed us. Hence the Apostle says: “We are chastised by the Lord that we may not be condemned with this world.” (1 Cor. 11:32.)

2. Fourthly, by tribulation we atone for the sins we have committed much better than by voluntary works of penance. “Be assured,” says St. Augustine, “that God is a physician, and that tribulation is a salutary medicine.” Oh! how great is the efficacy of tribulation in healing the wounds caused by our sins! Hence, the same saint rebukes the sinner who complains of God for sending him tribulations. “Why,” he says, “do you complain? What you suffer is a remedy, not a punishment.” (In Ps. lv.) Job called those happy men whom God corrects by tribulation; because he heals them with the very hands with which he strikes and wounds them. “Blessed is the man whom God correcteth. . . . For he woundeth and cureth. He striketh, and his hand shall heal.” (Job 5:17, 18.) Hence, St. Paul gloried in his tribulations: “Gloriamur in tribulationibus.” (Rom. 5:3.)

3. Fifthly, by convincing us that God alone is able and willing to relieve us in our miseries, tribulations remind us of him, and compel us to have recourse to his mercy. “In their affliction they will rise early to me.” (Osee 6:1.) Hence, addressing the afflicted, the Lord said: “Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.” (Matt. 11:28.) Hence he is called “a helper in troubles.” (Ps. 45:1.) “When,” says David, “he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned.” (Ps. 77:34.) When the Jews

were afflicted, and were slain by their enemies, they remembered the Lord, and returned to him.

4. Sixthly, tribulations enable us to acquire great merits before God, by giving us opportunities of exercising the virtues of humility, of patience, and of resignation to the divine will. The venerable John d'Avila used to say, that a single *blessed be God,* in adversity, is worth more than a thousand acts in prosperity. "Take away," says St. Ambrose, "the contests of the martyrs, and you have taken away their crowns." (In Luc., *c.* iv.) Oh! what a treasure of merit is acquired by patiently bearing insults, poverty, and sickness! Insults from men were the great objects of the desires of the saints, who sought to be despised for the love of Jesus Christ, and thus to be made like unto him.

5. How great is the merit gained by bearing with the inconvenience of poverty. "My God and my all," says St. Francis of Assisium: in expressing this sentiment, he enjoyed more of true riches than all the princes of the Earth. How truly has St. Teresa said, that "the less we have here, the more we shall enjoy hereafter." Oh! how happy is the man who can say from his heart: My Jesus, thou alone art sufficient for me! If, says St. Chrysostom, you esteem yourself unhappy because you are poor, you are indeed miserable and deserving of tears; not because you are poor, but because, being poor, you do not embrace your poverty, and esteem yourself happy." "Sane dignus es lachrymis ob hoc, quod miserum te extimas, non ideo quod pauper es." (Serm. ii, Epis. ad Phil.)

6. By bearing patiently with the pains of sickness, a great, and perhaps the greater, part of the crown which is prepared for us in Heaven is completed. The sick sometimes complain that in sickness they can do nothing; but they err; for, in their infirmities they can do all things, by accepting their sufferings with peace and resignation. "The Cross of Christ," says St. Chrysostom, "is the key of Paradise." (Com. in Luc. de vir.)

7. St. Francis de Sales used to say. "To suffer constantly for Jesus is the science of the saints; we shall thus soon become saints." It is by sufferings that God proves his servants, and finds them worthy of himself. "Deus tentavit es, et invenit eos dignos se." (Wis. 3:5.) "Whom," says St. Paul, "the Lord loveth, he chastiseth; and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. 12:6.) Hence, Jesus Christ once said to St. Teresa: "Be

assured that the souls dearest to my Father are those who suffer the greatest afflictions.” Hence Job said: “If we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?” (Job. 2:10.) If we have gladly received from God the goods of this Earth, why should we not receive more cheerfully tribulations, which are far more useful to us than worldly prosperity? St. Gregory informs us that, as flame fanned by the wind increases, so the soul is made perfect when she is oppressed by tribulations. “Ignis flatu premitur, ut crescat.” (Ep. xxv.)

8. To holy souls the most severe afflictions are the temptations by which the Devil impels them to offend God: but they who bear these temptations with patience, and banish them by turning to God for help, shall acquire great merit. “And,” says St. Paul, “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will also make issue with the temptation that you may be able to bear it.” (1 Cor. 10:13.) God permits us to be molested by temptations, that, by banishing them, we may gain greater merit. “Blessed,” says the Lord, “are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (Matt. 5:5.) They are blessed, because, according to the Apostle, our tribulations are momentary and very light, compared with the greatness of the glory which they shall obtain for us for eternity in Heaven. “For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.” (1 Cor. 4:17.)

9. It is necessary, then, says St. Chrysostom, to bear tribulations in peace; for, if you accept them with resignation, you shall gain great merit; but if you submit to them with reluctance, you shall increase, instead of diminishing, your misery “Si vero ægre feras, neque calamitatum minorem facies, et majorem reddes procellam.” (Hom. lxiv., ad Pop.) If we wish to be saved, we must submit to trials. “Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:21.) A great servant of God used to say, that Paradise is the place of the poor, of the persecuted, of the humble and afflicted. Hence St. Paul says: “Patience is necessary for you, that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise.” (Heb. 10:36.) Speaking of the tribulations of the saints, St. Cyprian asks “What are they to the servants of God, whom Paradise invites?” (Ep, ad Demetr.) Is it much for those to whom the eternal goods of Heaven are promised, to embrace the short afflictions of this life?

10. In fine, the scourges of Heaven are sent not for our injury, but for our good. “Let us believe that these scourges of the Lord, with which, like servants, we are chastised, have happened for our amendment, and not for our destruction.” (Judith 8:27.) “God,” says St. Augustine, “is angry when he does not scourge the sinner.” (In Ps. lxxxix.) When we see a sinner in tribulation in this life, we may infer that God wishes to have mercy on him in the next, and that he exchanges eternal for temporal chastisement. But miserable the sinner whom the Lord does not punish in this life! For those whom he does not chastise here, he treasures up his wrath, and for them he reserves eternal chastisement.

11. “Why,” asks the Prophet Jeremy, “doth the way of the wicked prosper?” (12:1.) “Why, O Lord, do sinners prosper? To this the same prophet answers: “Gather them together as sheep for a sacrifice, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.” (Ib. v. 3.) As on the day of sacrifice the sheep intended for slaughter are gathered together, so the impious, as victims of divine wrath, are destined to eternal death. “Destine them,” says Du Hamel, in his commentary on this passage, “as victims of thy anger on the day of sacrifice.”

12. When, then, God sends us tribulations, let us say with Job: “I have sinned, and indeed I have offended, and I have not received what I have deserved.” (Job 33:27.) O Lord, my sins merit far greater chastisement than that which thou hast inflicted on me. We should even pray with St. Augustine, “Burn—cut—spare not in this life, that thou mayest spare for eternity.” How frightful is the chastisement of the sinner of whom the Lord says: “Let us have pity on the wicked, but he will not learn justice.” (Is. 26:10.) Let us abstain from chastising the impious: as long as they remain in this life they will continue to live in sin, and shall thus be punished with eternal torments. On this passage St. Bernard says: “Misericordiam hanc nolo, super omnem iram miseratio ista.” (Serm. xlii., in Cant.) Lord, I do not wish for such mercy, which is a chastisement that surpasses all chastisements.

13. The man whom the Lord afflicts in this life has a certain proof that he is dear to God. “And,” said the angel to Tobias, “because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptations should prove thee.” (Tob. 12:13.) Hence, St. James pronounces blessed the man who is

afflicted: because after he shall have been proved by tribulation, he will receive the crown of life.” (Jam. 1:12.)

14. He who wishes to share in the glory of the saints, must suffer in this life as the saints have suffered. None of the saints has been esteemed or treated well by the world—all of them have been despised and persecuted. In them have been verified the words of the Apostle: “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.” (2 Tim. 3:12.) Hence St. Augustine said, that they who are unwilling to suffer persecutions, have not as yet begun to be Christians. “Si putas non habere persecutiones, nondum cæpisti esse Christianus.” (In Ps. lv.) When we are in tribulation, let us be satisfied with the consolation of knowing that the Lord is then near us and in our company. “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart.” (Ps. 33:19.) “I am with him in tribulation.” (Ps. 90:15.)

SECOND POINT. ON THE MANNER IN WHICH WE SHOULD BEAR TRIBULATIONS.

15. He who suffers tribulations in this world should, in the first place, abandon sin, and endeavour to recover the grace of God; for as long as he remains in sin, the merit of all his sufferings is lost. “If,” says St. Paul, “I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Cor. 13:3.) If you suffered all the torments of the martyrs, or bore to be burned alive, and were not in the state of grace, it would profit you nothing.

16. But, to those who can suffer with God, and with resignation for God’s sake, all the tribulations shall be a source of comfort and gladness. “Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” (John 16:20.) Hence, after having been insulted and beaten by the Jews, the apostles departed from the council full of joy, because they had been maltreated for the love of Jesus Christ. “And they indeed went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.” (Acts 5:41.) Hence, when God visits us with any tribulations, we must say with Jesus Christ: “The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11.) It is necessary to know that every tribulation, though it may come from men, is sent to us by God.

17. When we are surrounded on all sides with tribulations, and know not what to do, we must turn to God, who alone can console us. Thus King

Josaphat, in his distress, said to the Lord: “As we know not what to do, we can only turn our eyes to thee.” (2 Par. 20:12.) Thus David also in his tribulation had recourse to God, and God consoled him: “In my trouble I cried to the Lord, and he heard me.” (Ps. 119:1.) We should turn to God, and pray to him, and never cease to pray till he hears us. “As the eyes of the handmaid are on the hands of her mistress, so are our eyes unto the Lord our God, until he have mercy on us.” (Ps. 122:2.) We must keep our eyes continually raised to God, and must continue to implore his aid, until he is moved to compassion for our miseries. “We must have great confidence in the heart of Jesus Christ, and ought not to imitate certain persons, who instantly lose courage because they do not feel that they are heard as soon as they begin to pray. To them may be applied the words of the Saviour to St. Peter: “O thou of little faith! why didst thou doubt?” (Matt. 14:31.) When the favours which we ask are spiritual, or can be profitable to our souls, we should be certain of being heard, provided we persevere in prayer, and do not lose confidence. “All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.” (Mark 11:24.) In tribulations, then, we should never cease to hope with confidence that the divine mercy will console us; and if our afflictions continue, we must say with Job: “Although he should kill me, I will trust in him.” (13:15.)

18. Souls of little faith, instead of turning to God in their tribulations, have recourse to human means, and thus provoke God’s anger, and remain in their miseries. “Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.” (Ps. 126:1.) On this passage St. Augustine writes: “Ipse ædificat, ipse intellectum aperit, ipse ad finem applicat sensum vestrum: et tamen laboramus et nos tanquam operarii, sed nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem,” etc. All good—all help must come from the Lord. Without him creatures can give us no assistance.

19. Of this the Lord complains by the mouth of his prophet: “Is not,” he says, “the Lord in Sion? . . . Why then have they provoked me to wrath with their idols . . . Is there no balm in Galaad? or is there no physician there? Why then is not the wound of the daughter of my people closed?” (Jer. 8:19, 22.) Am I not in Sion? Why then do men provoke me to anger by recurring to creatures, which they convert into idols by placing in them all their hopes? Do they seek a remedy for their miseries? Why do they not

seek it in Galaad, a mountain full of balsamic ointments, which signify the divine mercy? There they can find the physician and the remedy of all their evils. Why then, says the Lord, do your wounds remain open? Why are they not healed? It is because you have recourse not to me, but to creatures, and because you confide in them, and not in me.

20. In another place the Lord says: “Am I become a wilderness to Israel, or a lateward springing land? Why then have my people said: We are revolted; we will come to thee no more? . . . But my people have forgotten me days without number.” (Jer. 2:31, 32.) God complains, and says: “Why, my children, do you say that you will have recourse to me no more? Am I become to you a barren land, which gives no fruit, or gives it too late? Is it for this reason that you have so long forgotten me? By these words he manifests to us his desire that we pray to him, in order that he may be able to give us his graces; and he also gives us to understand that when we pray to him, he is not slow, but instantly begins to assist us.

21. The Lord, says David, is not asleep when we turn to his goodness, and ask the graces which are profitable to our souls: he hears us immediately, because he is anxious for our welfare. “Behold, he shall neither slumber nor sleep that keepeth Israel.” (Ps. 120:4.) When we pray for temporal favours, St. Bernard says that God “will give what we ask, or something more useful.” He will grant us the grace which we desire, whenever it is profitable to our souls; or he will give us a more useful grace, such as the grace to resign ourselves to the divine will, and to suffer with patience our tribulations, which shall merit a great increase of glory in Heaven.

[*Act of sorrow and amendment, prayer to Jesus and Mary.*]

Sermon III

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

ON THE MEANS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION

> “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord.”—JOHN 1:23.

ALL would wish to be saved and to enjoy the glory of Paradise; but to gain Heaven, it is necessary to walk in the straight road that leads to eternal bliss. This road is the observance of the divine commands. Hence, in his preaching, the Baptist exclaimed: “Make straight the way of the Lord.” In order to be able to walk always in the way of the Lord, without turning to the right or to the left, it is necessary to adopt the proper means. These means are, first, diffidence in ourselves; secondly, confidence in God; thirdly, resistance to temptations.

FIRST MEANS. DIFFIDENCE IN OURSELVES.

1. “With fear and trembling,” says the Apostle, “work out your salvation.” (Phil. 2:12.) To secure eternal life, we must be always penetrated with fear, we must be always afraid of ourselves (*with fear and trembling*), and distrust altogether our own strength; for, without the divine grace we can do nothing. “Without me,” says Jesus Christ, “you can do nothing.” We can do nothing for the salvation of our own souls. St. Paul tells us, that of ourselves we are not capable of even a good thought. “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.” (2 Cor. 3:5.) Without the aid of the Holy Ghost, we cannot even pronounce the name of Jesus so as to deserve a reward. “And no one can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost.” (1 Cor. 12:8.)

2. Miserable the man who trusts to himself in the way of God. St. Peter experienced the sad effects of self-confidence. Jesus Christ said to him: “In

this night, before cock crow, thou wilt deny me thrice.” (Matt. 26:34.) Trusting in his own strength and his good will, the Apostle replied: “Yea, though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee.” (*v.* 35) What was the result? On the night on which Jesus Christ had been taken, Peter was reproached in the court of Caiphas with being one of the disciples of the Saviour. The reproach filled him with fear: he thrice denied his Master, and swore that he had never known him. Humility and diffidence in ourselves are so necessary for us, that God permits us sometimes to fall into sin, that, by our fall, we may acquire humility and a knowledge of our own weakness. Through want of humility David also fell: hence, after his sin, he said: “Before I was humbled, I offended.” (Ps. 118:67.)

3. Hence the Holy Ghost pronounces blessed the man who is always in fear: “Blessed is the man who is always fearful.” (Prov. 28:14.) He who is afraid of falling distrusts his own strength, avoids as much as possible all dangerous occasions, and recommends himself often to God, and thus preserves his soul from sin. But the man who is not fearful, but full of self-confidence, easily exposes himself to the danger of sin: he seldom recommends himself to God, and thus he falls. Let us imagine a person suspended over a great precipice by a cord held by another. Surely he would constantly cry out to the person who supports him: *Hold fast, hold fast; for God’s sake, do not let go.* We are all in danger of falling into the abyss of all crime, if God does not support us. Hence we should constantly beseech him to keep his hands over us, and to succour us in all dangers.

4. In rising from bed, St. Philip Neri used to say every morning: O Lord, keep thy hand this day over Philip; if thou do not, Philip will betray thee. And one day, as he walked through the city, reflecting on his own misery, he frequently said, *I despair, I despair.* A certain religious who heard him, believing that the saint was really tempted to despair, corrected him, and encouraged him to hope in the divine mercy. But the saint replied: “I despair of myself, but I trust in God.” Hence, during this life, in which we are exposed to so many dangers of losing God, it is necessary for us to live always in great diffidence of ourselves, and full of confidence in God.

SECOND MEANS. CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

5. St. Francis de Sales says, that the mere attention to self-diffidence on account of our own weakness, would only render us pusillanimous, and expose us to great danger of abandoning ourselves to a tepid life, or even to despair. The more we distrust our own strength, the more we should confide in the divine mercy. This is a balance, says the same saint, in which the more the scale of confidence in God is raised, the more the scale of diffidence in ourselves descends.

6. Listen to me, O sinners who have had the misfortune of having hitherto offended God, and of being condemned to hell: if the Devil tells you that but little hope remains of your eternal salvation, answer him in the words of the Scripture: “No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.” (Eccl. 2:11.) No sinner has ever trusted in God, and has been lost. Make, then, a firm purpose to sin no more; abandon yourselves into the arms of the divine goodness; and rest assured that God will have mercy on you, and save you from Hell. “Cast thy care upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.” (Ps. 54:23.) The Lord, as we read in Blosius, one day said to St. Gertrude: “He who confides in me, does me such violence that I cannot but hear all his petitions.”

7. “But,” says the Prophet Isaias, “they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall take wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.” (40:31.) They who place their confidence in God shall renew their strength; they shall lay aside their own weakness, and shall acquire the strength of God; they shall fly like eagles in the way of the Lord, without fatigue and without ever failing. David says, that “mercy shall encompass him that hopeth in the Lord.” (Ps. 31:10.) He that hopes in the Lord shall be encompassed by his mercy, so that he shall never be abandoned by it.

8. St. Cyprian says, that the divine mercy is an inexhaustible fountain. They who bring vessels of the greatest confidence, draw from it the greatest graces. Hence, the Royal Prophet has said: “Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have hoped in thee.” (Ps. 32:22.) Whenever the Devil terrifies us by placing before our eyes the great difficulty of persevering in the grace of God in spite of all the dangers and sinful occasions of this life, let us, without answering him, raise our eyes to God, and hope that in his goodness he will certainly send us help to resist every attack. “I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from whence help shall come to me.” (Ps. 120:1.)

And when the enemy represents to us our weakness, let us say with the Apostle: “I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.” (Phil. 4:13.) Of myself I can do nothing; but I trust in God, that by his grace I shall be able to do all things.

9. Hence, in the midst of the greatest dangers of perdition to which we are exposed, we should continually turn to Jesus Christ, and throwing ourselves into the hands of him who redeemed us by his death, should say: “Into thy hands I commend my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.” (Ps. 30:6.) This prayer should be said with great confidence of obtaining eternal life, and to it we should add: “In thee, O Lord, I have hoped; let me not be confounded for ever.” (Ps. 30:1.)

THIRD MEANS. RESISTANCE TO TEMPTATIONS.

10. It is true that when we have recourse to God with confidence in dangerous temptations, he assists us; but, in certain very urgent occasions, the Lord sometimes wishes that we coöperate, and do violence to ourselves, to resist temptations. On such occasions, it will not be enough to have recourse to God once or twice; it will be necessary to multiply prayers, and frequently to prostrate ourselves, and send up our sighs before the image of the Blessed Virgin and the crucifix, crying out with tears: Mary, my mother, assist me; Jesus, my Saviour, save me, for thy mercy’s sake—do not abandon me, do not permit me to lose thee.

11. Let us keep in mind the words of the Gospel: “How narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it.” (Matt. 7:14.) The way to Heaven is strait and narrow: they who wish to arrive at that place of bliss by walking in the paths of pleasure shall be disappointed: and therefore few reach it, because few are willing to use violence to themselves in resisting temptations. “The kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent hear it away.” (Matt. 11:12.) In explaining this passage, a certain writer says: “Vi queritur, invaditur, occupatur.” It must be sought and obtained by violence: he who wishes to obtain it without inconvenience, or by leading a soft and irregular life, shall not acquire it—he shall be excluded from it.

12. To save their souls, some of the saints have retired into the cloister; some have confined themselves in a cave; others have embraced torments

and death. “The violent bear it away” Some complain of their want of confidence in God; but they do not perceive that their diffidence arises from the weakness of their resolution to serve God. St. Teresa used to say: “Of irresolute souls the Devil has no fear.” And the Wise Man has declared, that “desires kill the slothful.” (Prov. 21:25.) Some would wish to be saved and to become saints, but never resolve to adopt the means of salvation, such as meditation, the frequentation of the sacraments, detachment from creatures; or, if they adopt these means, they soon give them up. In a word, they are satisfied with fruitless desires, and thus continue to live in enmity with God, or at least in tepidity, which in the end leads them to the loss of God. Thus in them are verified the words of the Holy Ghost, “desires kill the slothful.”

13. If, then, we wish to save our souls, and to become saints, we must make a strong resolution not only in general to give ourselves to God, but also in particular to adopt the proper means, and never to abandon them after having once taken them up. Hence we must never cease to pray to Jesus Christ, and to His holy Mother for holy perseverance.

Sermon IV

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

ON THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST FOR US, AND ON OUR OBLIGATIONS TO LOVE HIM

“And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”—LUKE 3:6.

THE Saviour of the world, whom, according to the prediction of the prophet Isaias, men were one day to see on this Earth—“and all flesh shall see the salvation of God,”—has already come. We have not only seen him conversing among men, but we have also seen him suffering and dying for the love of us. Let us, then, this morning consider the love which we owe to Jesus Christ at least through gratitude for the love which he bears to us. In the first point we shall consider the greatness of the love which Jesus Christ has shown to us; and in the second we shall see the greatness of our obligations to love him.

FIRST POINT. ON THE GREAT LOVE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN TO US.

1. “Christ,” says St. Augustine, “came on Earth that men might know how much God loves them.” He has come, and to show the immense love which this God bears us, he has given himself entirely to us, by abandoning himself to all the pains of this life, and afterwards to the scourges, to the thorns, and to all the sorrows and insults which he suffered in his passion, and by offering himself to die, abandoned by all, on the infamous tree of the cross. “Who loved me, and delivered himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20.)

2. Jesus Christ could save us without dying on the cross, and without suffering. One drop of his blood would be sufficient for our redemption. Even a prayer offered to his Eternal Father would be sufficient; because, on account of his divinity, his prayer would be of infinite value, and would therefore be sufficient for the salvation of the world, and of a thousand worlds. “But,” says St. Chrysostom, or another ancient author, “what was

sufficient for redemption was not sufficient for love.” To show how much he loved us, he wished to shed not only a part of his blood, but the entire of it, by dint of torments. This may be inferred from the words which he used on the night before his death: “This is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many.” (Matt. 26:28.) The words *shall be shed* show that, in his passion, the blood of Jesus Christ was poured forth even to the last drop. Hence, when after death his side was opened with a spear, blood and water came forth, as if what then flowed was all that remained of his blood. Jesus Christ, then, though he could save us without suffering, wished to embrace a life of continual pain, and to suffer the cruel and ignominious death of the cross. “He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil. 2:8.)

3. “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13.) To show his love for us, what more could the Son of God do than die for us? What more can one man do for another than give his life for him? “Greater love than this no man hath.” Tell me, my brother, if one of your servants—if the vilest man on this Earth had done for you what Jesus Christ has done in dying through pain on a cross, could you remember his love for you, and not love him?

4. St. Francis of Assisium appeared to be unable to think of anything but the passion of Jesus Christ; and, in thinking of it, he continually shed tears, so that by his constant weeping he became nearly blind. Being found one day weeping and groaning at the foot of the crucifix, he was asked the cause of his tears and lamentations, He replied: “I weep over the sorrows and ignominies of my Lord. And what makes me weep still more is, that the men for whom he has suffered so much live in forgetfulness of him.”

5. O Christian, should a doubt ever enter your mind that Jesus Christ loves you, raise your eyes and look at him hanging on the cross. Ah! says St. Thomas of Villanova, the cross to which he is nailed, the internal and external sorrows which he endures, and the cruel death which he suffers for you, are convincing proofs of the love which he bears you: “Testis crux, testes dolores, testis amara mors quam pro te sustinuit.” (Conc. 3.) Do you not, says St. Bernard, hear the voice of that cross, and of those wounds, crying out to make you feel that he truly loves you? “Clamat crux, clamat vulnus, quod vere dilexit.”

6. St. Paul says that the love which Jesus Christ has shown in condescending to suffer so much for our salvation, should excite us to his love more powerfully than the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the painful journey to Calvary, the agony of three hours on the cross, the buffets, the spitting in his face, and all the other injuries which the Saviour endured. According to the Apostle, the love which Jesus has shown us not only obliges, but in a certain manner forces and constrains us, to love a God who has loved us so much. “For the charity of Christ presseth us.” (2 Cor. 5:14.) On this text St. Francis de Sales says: “We know that Jesus the true God has loved us so as to suffer death, and even the death of the cross, for our salvation. Does not such love put our hearts as it were under a press, to force from them love by a violence which is stronger in proportion as it is more amiable?

7. So great was the love which inflamed the enamoured heart of Jesus, that he not only wished to die for our redemption, but during his whole life he sighed ardently for the day on which he should suffer death for the love of us. Hence, during his life, Jesus used to say: “I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.” (Luke 12:50.) In my passion I am to be baptized with the baptism of my own blood, to wash away the sins of men. “And how am I straitened!” How, says St. Ambrose, explaining this passage, am I straitened by the desire of the speedy arrival of the day of my death? Hence, on the night before his passion he said: “With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer.” (Luke 22:15.)

8. “We have,” says St. Lawrence Justinian, “seen wisdom become foolish through an excess of love.” We have, he says, seen the Son of God become as it were a fool, through the excessive love which he bore to men. Such, too, was the language of the Gentiles when they heard the apostles preaching that Jesus Christ suffered death for the love of men. “But we,” says St. Paul, “preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, unto the Gentiles foolishness.” (1 Cor. 1:23.) Who, they exclaimed, can believe that a God, most happy in himself, and who stands in need of no one, should take human flesh and die for the love of men, who are his creatures? This would be to believe that a God became foolish for the love of men. “It appears folly,” says St. Gregory, “that the author of Life should die for men.” (Hom vi.) But, whatever infidels may say or think, it is of

faith that the Son of God has shed all his blood for the love of us, to wash away the sins of our souls. “Who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” (Apoc. 1:5.) Hence, the saints were struck dumb with astonishment at the consideration of the love of Jesus Christ. At the sight of the crucifix, St. Francis of Paul could do nothing but exclaim, *O love! O love! O love!*

9. “Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” (John 13:1.) This loving Lord was not content with showing us his love by dying on the cross for our salvation; but, at the end of his life, he wished to leave us his own very flesh for the food of our souls, that thus he might unite himself entirely to us. “Take ye and eat, this is my body.” (Matt. 26:26.) But of this gift and this excess of love we shall speak at another time, in treating of the most holy sacrament of the altar. Let us pass to the second point.

SECOND POINT. ON THE GREATNESS OF OUR OBLIGATIONS TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST.

10. He who loves wishes to be loved. “When,” says St. Bernard, “God loves, he desires nothing else than to be loved.” (Ser. lxxxiii., in Cant.) The Redeemer said: “I am come to cast fire on the Earth, and what will I but that it is kindle?” (Luke 12:49.) I, says Jesus Christ, came on earth to light up the fire of divine love in the hearts of men, “and what will I but that it be kindled?” God wishes nothing else from us than to be loved. Hence the holy Church prays in the following words: “We beseech thee, O Lord, that thy Spirit may inflame us with that fire which Jesus Christ cast upon the Earth, and which he vehemently wished to be kindled.” Ah! what have not the saints, inflamed with this fire, accomplished! They have abandoned all things—delights, honours, the purple and the sceptre—that they might burn with this holy fire. But you will ask what are you to do, that you too may be inflamed with the love of Jesus Christ. Imitate David: “In my meditation a fire shall flame out.” (Ps. 38). Meditation is the blessed furnace in which the holy fire of divine love is kindled. Make mental prayer every day, meditate on the passion of Jesus Christ, and doubt not but you too shall burn with this blessed flame.

11. St. Paul says, that Jesus Christ died for us to make himself the master of the hearts of all. “To this end Christ died and rose again, that he might be

Lord both of the dead and of the living." (Rom. 14:9.) He wished, says the Apostle, to give his life for all men, without a single exception, that not even one should live any longer to himself, but that all might live only to that God who condescended to die for them. "And Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto him who died for them." (2 Cor. 5:15.)

12. Ah! to correspond to the love of this God, it would be necessary that another God should die for him, as Jesus Christ died for us. O ingratitude of men! A God has condescended to give his life for their salvation, and they will not even think on what he has even done for them! Ah! if each of you thought frequently on the sufferings of the Redeemer, and on the love which he has shown to us in his passion, how could you but love him with your whole hearts? To him who sees with a lively faith the Son of God suspended by three nails on an infamous gibbet, every wound of Jesus speaks and says: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." Love, O man, thy Lord and thy God, who has loved thee so intensely. Who can resist such tender expressions? "The wounds of Jesus Christ," says St. Bonaventure, "wound the hardest hearts, and inflame frozen souls."

13. "Oh! if you knew the mystery of the cross!" said St. Andrew the Apostle to the tyrant by whom he was tempted to deny Jesus Christ. O tyrant, if you knew the love which your Saviour has shown you by dying on the cross for your salvation, instead of tempting me, you would abandon all the goods of this Earth to give yourself to the love of Jesus Christ.

14. I conclude, my most beloved brethren, by recommending you henceforth to meditate every day on the passion of Jesus Christ. I shall be content, if you daily devote to this meditation a quarter of an hour. Let each at least procure a crucifix, let him keep it in his room, and from time to time give a glance at it, saying: "Ah! my Jesus, thou hast died for me, and I do not love thee." Had a person suffered for a friend injuries, buffets, and prisons, he would be greatly pleased to find that they were remembered and spoken of with gratitude. But he should be greatly displeased if the friend for whom they had been borne, were unwilling to think or hear of his sufferings. Thus frequent meditation on his passion is very pleasing to our Redeemer; but the neglect of it greatly provokes his displeasure. Oh! how great will be the consolation which we shall receive in our last moments from the sorrows and death of Jesus Christ, if, during life, we shall have

frequently meditated on them with love! Let us not wait till others, at the hour of death, place in our hands the crucifix; let us not wait till they remind us of all that Jesus Christ suffered for us. Let us, during life, embrace Jesus Christ crucified; let us keep ourselves always united to him, that we may live and die with him. He who practises devotion to the passion of our Lord, cannot but be devoted to the dolours of Mary, the remembrance of which will be to us a source of great consolation at the hour of death. Oh! how profitable and sweet the meditation of Jesus on the cross! Oh! how happy the death of him who dies in the embraces of Jesus crucified, accepting death with cheerfulness for the love of that God who has died for the love of us!

Sermon V

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY

IN WHAT TRUE WISDOM CONSISTS

> "Behold, this CHILD is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel."—LUKE 2:34.

SUCH was the language of holy Simeon when he had the consolation to hold in his hands the infant Jesus. Among other things which he then foretold, he declared that "this child was set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel." In these words he extols the lot of the saints, who, after this life, shall rise to a life of immortality in the kingdom of bliss, and he deplores the misfortune of sinners, who, for the transitory and miserable pleasures of this world, bring upon themselves eternal ruin and perdition. But, notwithstanding the greatness of his own misery, the unhappy sinner, reflecting only on the enjoyment of present goods, calls the saints fools, because they seek to live in poverty, in humiliation, and self-denial. But a day will come when sinners shall see their errors, and shall say. "We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour." (Wis. 5:4.) *We fools;* behold how they shall confess that they themselves have been truly fools. Let us examine in what true wisdom consists, and we shall see, in the first point, that sinners are truly foolish, and, in the second, that the saints are truly wise.

FIRST POINT. SINNERS ARE TRULY FOOLISH.

1. What greater folly can be conceived than to have the power of being the friends of God, and to wish to be his enemies? Their living in enmity with God makes the life of sinners unhappy in this world, and purchases for them an eternity of misery hereafter St. Augustine relates that two courtiers of the emperor entered a monastery of hermits, and that one of them began to read the life of St. Anthony. "He read," says the saint, "and his heart was

divested of the world.” He read, and, in reading, his affections were detached from the Earth. Turning to his companion, he exclaimed: “What do we seek? The friendship of the emperor is the most we can hope for. And through how many perils shall we arrive at still greater danger? Should we obtain his friendship, how long shall it last?” Friend, said he, fools that we are, what do we seek? Can we expect more in this life, by serving the emperor, than to gain his friendship? And should we, after many dangers, succeed in making him our friend, we shall expose ourselves to greater danger of eternal perdition. What difficulties must we encounter in order to become the friend of Cæsar! “But, if I wish, I can in a moment become the friend of God.” I can acquire his friendship by endeavouring to recover his grace. His divine grace is that infinite treasure which makes us worthy of his friendship. “For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.” (Wis. 7:14.)

2. The Gentiles believe it impossible for a creature to become the friend of God; for, as St. Jerome says, friendship makes friends equal. “Amicitia pares accipit, aut pares facit.” But Jesus Christ has declared, that if we observe his commands we shall be his friends. “You are my friends, if you do the things I command.” (John 15:14.)

3. How great then is the folly of sinners, who, though they have it in their power to enjoy the friendship of God, wish to live in enmity with him! The Lord does not hate any of his creatures: he does not hate the tiger, the viper, or the toad. “For thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things which thou hast made.” (Wis. 11:25.) But he necessarily hates sinners. “Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity.” (Ps. 5:7.) God cannot but hate sin, which is his enemy and diametrically opposed to his will; and therefore, in hating sin, he necessarily hates the sinner who is united with his sin. “But to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.” (Wis. 14:9.)

4. The sinner is guilty of folly in leading a life opposed to the end for which he was created. God has not created us, nor does he preserve our lives, that we may labour to acquire riches or earthly honours, or that we may indulge in amusements, but that we may love and serve him in this world, in order to love and enjoy him for eternity in the next. “And the end life everlasting.” (Rom. 6:22.) Thus the present life, as St. Gregory says, is the way by which we must reach Paradise, our true country. “In the present

life we are, as it were, on the road by which we journey to our country." (St. Greg. hom. xi. in Evan.)

5. But the misfortune of the greater part of mankind is, that instead of following the way of salvation, they foolishly walk in the road to perdition. Some have a passion for earthly riches; and, for a vile interest, they lose the immense goods of Paradise: others have a passion for honours; and, for a momentary applause, they lose their right to be kings in Heaven: others have a passion for sensual pleasures; and, for transitory delights, they lose the grace of God, and are condemned to burn for ever in a prison of fire. Miserable souls! if, in punishment of a certain sin, their hand was to be burned with a red-hot iron, or if they were to be shut up for ten years in a dark prison, they certainly would abstain from it. And do they not know that, in chastisement of their sins, they shall be condemned to remain for ever in Hell, where their bodies, buried in fire, shall burn for all eternity? Some, says St. John Chrysostom (*Hom. de recup. laps.*), to save the body, choose to destroy the soul; but, do they not know that, in losing the soul, their bodies shall be condemned to eternal torments? "*If we neglect the soul, we cannot save the body.*"

6. In a word, sinners lose their reason, and imitate brute animals, that follow the instinct of nature, and seek carnal pleasures without ever reflecting on their lawfulness or unlawfulness. But to act in this manner is, according to St. Chrysostom, to act not like a man, but like a beast. "*Hominem illum dicimus,*" says the saint," "*qui imaginem hominis salvam retinet: quæ autem est imago hominis? Rationalem esse.*" To be men we must be rational: that is, we must act, not according to the sensual appetite, but according to the dictates of reason. If God gave to beasts the use of reason, and if they acted according to its rules, we should say that they acted like men. And it must, on the other hand, be said, that the man whose conduct is agreeable to the senses, but contrary to reason, acts like a beast. He who follows the dictates of reason, provides for the future. "Oh! that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last end." (Deuter. 32:29.) He looks to the future—that is, to the account he must render at the hour of death, after which he shall be doomed to Hell or to Heaven, according to his merits, "Non est sapiens," says St. Bernard, "qui sibi non est." (Lib. de consid.)

7. Sinners think only of the present, but regard not the end for which they were created. But what will it profit them to gain all things if they lose their last end, which alone can make them happy. “But one thing is necessary.” (Luke 10:42.) To attain our end is the only thing necessary for us: if we lose it, all is lost. What is this end? It is eternal life. “Finem vero vitam æternam.” During life, sinners care but little for the attainment of their end. Each day brings them nearer to death and to eternity; but they know not their destination. Should a pilot who is asked whither he is going, answer that he did not know, would not all, says St. Augustine, cry out that he was bringing the vessel to destruction? “Fac hominem perdidisse quo tendit, et dicatur ei: quo is? et dicat, nescio: nonne iste navem ad naufragium perducet?” The saint then adds: “Talis est qui currit præter viam.” Such are the wise of the world, who know how to acquire wealth and honours, and to indulge in every kind of amusement, but who know not how to save their souls. How miserable the rich glutton, who, though able to lay up riches and to live splendidly, was, after death, buried in Hell! How miserable Alexander the Great, who, after gaining so many kingdoms, was condemned to eternal torments? How great the folly of Henry the Eighth, who rebelled against the Church, but seeing at the hour of death that his soul should be lost, cried out in despair: “Friends, we have lost all!” O God, how many others now weep in Hell, and exclaim: “What hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow.” (Wis. 5:8.) In the world we made a great figure—we enjoyed abundant riches and honours; and now all is passed away like a shadow, and nothing remains for us but to suffer and weep for eternity. St. Augustine says, that the happiness which sinners enjoy in this life is their greatest misfortune. “Nothing is more calamitous than the felicity of sinners, by which their perverse will, like an internal enemy, is strengthened.” (Ep. v. ad Marcellin.)

8. In fine, the words of Solomon are fulfilled with regard to all who neglect their salvation: “Mourning taketh hold of the end of joy.” (Prov. 14:13.) All their pleasures, honours, and greatness, end in eternal sorrow and wailing. “Whilst I was yet beginning, he cut me off.” (Is. 38:12.) Whilst they are laying the foundation of their hopes of realizing a fortune, death comes, and, cutting the thread of life, deprives them of all their possessions, and sends them to Hell to burn for ever in a pit of fire. What greater folly

can be conceived, than to wish to be transformed from the friend of God into the slave of Lucifer, and from the heir of Paradise to become, by sin, doomed to Hell? For, the moment a Christian commits a mortal sin, his name is written among the number of the damned! St. Francis de Sales said that, if the angels were capable of weeping, they would do nothing else than shed tears at the sight of the destruction which a Christian who commits mortal sin brings upon himself.

9. Oh! how great is the folly of sinners, who, by living in sin, lead a life of misery and discontent! All the goods of this world cannot content the heart of man, which has been created to love God, and can find no peace out of God. What are all the grandeurs and all the pleasures of this world but "*vanity of vanities?*" (Eccl. 1:2.) What are they but "*vanity and vexation of spirit?*" (Ibid. 4:16.) Earthly goods are, according to Solomon, who had experience of them, vanity of vanities; that is mere vanities, lies, and deceits. They are also a "*vexation of spirit:*" they not only do not content, but they even afflict the soul; and the more abundantly they are possessed, the greater the anguish which they produce. Sinners hope to find peace in their sins; but what peace can they enjoy? "There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord." (Is. 48:22.) I abstain from saying more at present on the unhappy life of sinners: I shall speak of it in another place. At present, it is enough for you to know that God gives peace to the souls who love him, and not to those who despise him. Instead of seeking to be the friends of God, sinners wish to be the slaves of Satan, who is a cruel and merciless tyrant to all who submit to his yoke. "Crudelis est et non miserebitur." (Jer. 6:23.) And if he promises delights, he does it, as St. Cyprian says, not for our welfare, but that we may be the companions of his torments in hell: "Ut habeat socios pœnæ, socios gehennæ."

SECOND POINT. THE SAINTS ARE TRULY WISE.

10. Let us be persuaded that the truly wise are those who know how to love God and to gain Heaven. Happy the man to whom God has given the science of the saints. "Dedit illi scientiam sanctorum." (Wis. 10:10.) Oh! how sublime the science which teaches us to know how to love God and to save our souls! Happy, says St. Augustine, is the man "*who knows God, although he is ignorant of other things.*" They who know God, the love

which he merits, and how to love him, stand not in need of any other knowledge. They are wiser than those who are masters of many sciences, but know not how to love God. Brother Egidius, of the order of St. Francis, once said to St. Bonaventure: Happy you, O Father Bonaventure, who are so learned, and who, by your learning, can become more holy than I can, who am a poor ignorant man. Listen, replied the saint: if an old woman knows how to love God better than I do, she is more learned and more holy than I am. At hearing this, Brother Egidius exclaimed: “O poor old woman! poor old woman! Father Bonaventure says that, if you love God more than he does, you can surpass him in sanctity.”

11. This excited the envy of St. Augustine, and made him ashamed of himself. “Surgunt indocti,” he exclaimed, “et rapiunt cœlum.” Alas! the ignorant rise up, and bear away the kingdom of Heaven; and what are we, the learned of this world, doing? Oh! how many of the rude and illiterate are saved, because, though unable to read, they know how to love God; and how many of the wise of the world are damned! Oh! truly wise were St. John of God, St. Felix of the order of St. Capuchins, and St. Paschal, who were poor lay Franciscans, and unacquainted with human sciences, but learned in the science of the saints. But the wonder is, that, though worldlings themselves are fully persuaded of this truth, and constantly extol the merit of those who retire from the world to live only to God, still they act as if they believed it not.

12. Tell me, brethren, to which class do you wish to belong—to the wise of the world, or to the wise of God? Before you make a choice, St. Chrysostom advises you to go to the graves of the dead! “*Proficiscamur ad sepulchra.*” Oh! how eloquently do the sepulchres of the dead teach us the science of the saints and the vanity of all earthly goods! “For my part,” said the saint, “I see nothing but rottenness, bones, and worms.” As if he said: Among these skeletons I cannot distinguish the noble, the rich, or the learned; I see that they have all become dust and rottenness: thus all their greatness and glory have passed away like a dream.

13. What then must we do? Behold the advice of St. Paul: “This, therefore, I say, brethren: the time is short: it remaineth that . . . they that use this world BE as if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away.” (1 Cor. 7:29–31.) This world is a scene which shall pass away and end very soon. “The time is short.” During the days of life that remain, let

us endeavour to live like men who are wise, not according to the world, but according to God, by attending to the sanctification of our souls, and by adopting the means of salvation; by flying dangerous occasions; by practising prayer; joining some pious sodality; frequenting the sacraments; reading every day a spiritual book; and by daily hearing Mass, if it be in our power; or, at least, by visiting Jesus in the holy sacrament of the altar, and some image of the most holy Mary. Thus we shall be truly wise, and shall be happy for time and eternity.

Sermon VI

MALICE OF MORTAL SIN

“Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.”—LUKE 2:48.

MOST holy Mary lost her Son for three days: during that time she wept continually for having lost sight of Jesus, and did not cease to seek after him till she found him. How then does it happen that so many sinners not only lose sight of Jesus, but even lose his divine grace; and instead of weeping for so great a loss, sleep in peace, and make no effort to recover so great a blessing? This arises from their not feeling what it is to lose God by sin. Some say: I commit this sin, not to lose God, but to enjoy this pleasure, to possess the property of another, or to take revenge of an enemy. They who speak such language show that they do not understand the malice of mortal sin. What is mortal sin?

First Point. It is a great contempt shown to God.

Second Point. It is a great offence offered to God.

FIRST POINT. MORTAL SIN IS A GREAT CONTEMPT SHOWN TO GOD.

1. The Lord calls upon Heaven and Earth to detest the ingratitude of those who commit mortal sin, after they had been created by him, nourished with his blood, and exalted to the dignity of his adopted children. “Hear, O ye Heavens, and give ear, O Earth; for the Lord hath spoken. I have brought up children and exalted them; but they have despised me.” (Isa. 1:2.) Who is this God whom sinners despise? “He is a God of infinite majesty, before whom all the kings of the Earth and all the blessed in Heaven are less than a drop of water or a grain of sand. As a drop of a bucket, . . . as a little dust.” (Isa. 40:15.) In a word, such is the majesty of God, that in his presence all creatures are as if they did not exist. “All nations are before him as if they had no being at all.” (Ibid. 40:17.) And what is man, who insults him? St. Bernard answers: “Saccus vermium, cibus vermium.” A heap of worms, the

food of worms, by which, he shall be devoured in the grave. “Thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (Apoc. 3:17.) He is so miserable that he can do nothing, so blind that he knows nothing, and so poor that he possesses nothing. And this worm dares to despise a God, and to provoke his wrath. “Vile dust,” says the same saint, “dares to irritate such tremendous majesty.” Justly, then, has St. Thomas asserted, that the malice of mortal sin is, as it were, infinite: “Peccatum habet quandam infinitatem malitiæ ex infinitatem divinæ majestatis.” (Par. 3, q. 2, a. 2, ad. 2.) And St. Augustine calls it *an infinite evil.* Hence Hell and a thousand Hells are not sufficient chastisement for a single mortal sin.

2. Mortal sin is commonly defined by theologians to be “a turning away from the immutable good.” St. Thom., par. 1, q. 24, a. 4; a turning one’s back on the sovereign good. Of this God complains by his prophet, saying: “Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord; thou art gone backward.” (Jer. 15:6.) Ungrateful man, he says to the sinner, I would never have separated myself from thee; thou hast been the first to abandon me: *thou art gone backwards;* thou hast turned thy back upon me.

3. He who contemns the divine law despises God; because he knows that, by despising the law, he loses the divine grace. “By transgression of the law, thou dishonourest God.” (Rom. 2:23.) God is the Lord of all things, because he has created them. “All things are in thy power . . . Thou hast made Heaven and Earth.” (Esth. 13:9.) Hence all irrational creatures—the winds, the sea, the fire, and rain—obey God. “The winds and the sea obey him.” (Matt. 8:27.) “Fire, hail, snow, ice, stormy winds, which fulfil his word.” (Ps. 148:8.) But man, when he sins, says to God: Lord, thou dost command me, but I will not obey; thou dost command me to pardon such an injury, but I will resent it; thou dost command me to give up the property of others, but I will retain it; thou dost wish that I should abstain from such a forbidden pleasure, but I will indulge in it. “Thou hast broken my yoke, thou hast burst my bands, and thou saidst: ‘I will not serve.’ ” (Jer. 2:20.) In fine, the sinner when he breaks the command, says to God: I do not acknowledge thee for my Lord. Like Pharaoh, when Moses, on the part of God, commanded him in the name of the Lord to allow the people to go into the desert, the sinner answers: “Who is the Lord, that I should hear his voice, and let Israel go?” (Exod. 5:2.)

4. The insult offered to God by sin is heightened by the vileness of the goods for which sinners offend him. “Wherefore hath the wicked provoked God.” (Ps. 9:34.) For what do so many offend the Lord? For a little vanity; for the indulgence of anger; or for a beastly pleasure. “They violate me among my people for a handful of barley and a piece of bread.” (Ezec. 13:19.) God is insulted for a handful of barley—for a morsel of bread! O God! why do we allow ourselves to be so easily deceived by the Devil? “There is,” says the Prophet Osee, “a deceitful balance in his hand.” (12:7.) We do not weigh things in the balance of God, which cannot deceive, but in the balance of Satan, who seeks only to deceive us, that he may bring us with himself into Hell. “Lord,” said David, “who is like to thee?” (Ps. 34:10.) God is an infinite good; and when he sees sinners put him on a level with some earthly trifle, or with a miserable gratification, he justly complains in the language of the prophet: “To whom have you likened me or made me equal? saith the Holy One.” (Isa. 40:25.) In your estimation, a vile pleasure is more valuable than my grace. Is it a momentary satisfaction you have preferred before me? “Thou hast east me off behind thy back.” (Ezec. 23:35.) Then, adds Salvian, “there is no one for whom men have less esteem than for God.” (Lib. v., Avd. Avar.) Is the Lord so contemptible in your eyes as to deserve to have the miserable things of the Earth preferred before him?

5. The tyrant placed before St. Clement a heap of gold, of silver, and of gems, and promised to give them to the holy martyr if he would renounce the faith of Christ. The saint heaved a sigh of sorrow at the sight of the blindness of men, who put earthly riches in comparison with God. But many sinners exchange the divine grace for things of far less value; they seek after certain miserable goods, and abandon that God who is an infinite good, and who alone can make them happy. Of this the Lord complains, and calls on the Heavens to be astonished, and on its gates to be struck with horror: “Be astonished, O ye Heavens, at this; and ye gates thereof, be very desolate, saith the Lord.” He then adds: “For my people have done two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns—broken cisterns—that can hold no water.” (Jer 2:12 *and* 13.) We regard with wonder and amazement the injustice of the Jews, who, when Pilate offered to deliver Jesus or Barabbas, answered: “Not this man, but Barabbas.” (John 18:40.) The conduct of sinners is still worse; for,

when the Devil proposes to them to choose between the satisfaction of revenge—a miserable pleasure—and Jesus Christ, they answer: “Not this man, but Barabbas.” That is, not the Lord Jesus, but sin.

6. “There shall be no new God in thee,” says the Lord. (Ps. 80:10.) You shall not abandon me, your true God, and make for yourself a new god, whom you shall serve. St. Cyprian teaches that men make their god whatever they prefer before God, by making it their last end; for God is the only last end of all: “Quidquid homo Deo anteponit, Deum sibi facit.” And St. Jerome says: “Unusquisque quod cupit, si veneratur, hoc illi Deus est. Vitium in corde, est idolum in altari.” (In Ps. lxxx.) The creature which a person prefers to God, becomes his God. Hence, the holy doctor adds, that as the Gentiles adored idols on their altars, so sinners worship sin in their hearts. When King Jeroboam rebelled against God, he endeavoured to make the people imitate him in the adoration of idols. He one day placed the idols before them, and said: “Behold thy gods, O Israel!” (3 Kings 12:28.) The Devil acts in a similar manner towards sinners: he places before them such a gratification, and says: Make this your God. Behold! this pleasure, this money, this revenge is your God: adhere to these, and forsake the Lord. When the sinner consents to sin, he abandons his Creator, and in his heart adores as his god the pleasure which he indulges. “Vitium in corde est idolum in altari.”

7. The contempt which the sinner offers to God is increased by sinning in God’s presence. According to St. Cyril of Jerusalem, some adored the sun as their god, that during the night they might, in the absence of the sun, do what they pleased, without fear of divine chastisement. “Some regarded the sun as their God, that, after the setting of the sun, they might be without a god.” (Catech. iv.) The conduct of these miserable dupes was very criminal; but they were careful not to sin in presence of their god. But Christians know that God is present in all places, and that he sees all things. “Do not I fill Heaven and Earth? saith the Lord,” (Jer. 23:24); and still they do not abstain from insulting him, and from provoking his wrath in his very presence: “A people that continually provoke me to anger before my face.” (Isa. 65:3.) Hence, by sinning before him who is their judge, they even make God a witness of their iniquities: “I am the judge and the witness, saith the Lord.” (Jer. 29:23.) St. Peter Chrysologus says, that, “the man who commits a crime in the presence of his judge, can offer no defence.” The

thought of having offended God in his divine presence, made David weep and exclaim: “To thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before thee.” (Ps. 1:6.) But let us pass to the second point, in which we shall see more clearly the enormity of the malice of mortal sin.

SECOND POINT. MORTAL SIN IS A GREAT OFFENCE OFFERED TO GOD.

8. There is nothing more galling than to see oneself despised by those who were most beloved and most highly favoured. Whom do sinners insult? They insult a God who bestowed so many benefits upon them, and who loved them so as to die on a cross for their sake; and by the commission of mortal sin they banish that God from their hearts. A soul that loves God is loved by him, and God himself comes to dwell within her. “If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him.” (John 14:23.) The Lord, then, never departs from a soul, unless he is driven away, even though he should know that she will soon banish him from her heart. According to the Council of Trent, “he deserts not the soul, unless he is deserted.”

9. When the soul consents to mortal sin she ungratefully says to God: Depart from me. “The wicked have said to God: Depart from us.” (Job 21:14.) Sinners, as St. Gregory observes, say the same, not in words, but by their conduct. “Recede, non verbis, sed moribus.” They know that God cannot remain with sin in the soul: and, in violating the divine commands, they feel that God must depart; and, by their acts they say to him: since you cannot remain any longer with us, depart—farewell. And through the very door by which God departs from the soul, the Devil enters to take possession of her. When the priest baptizes an infant, he commands the demon to depart from the soul: “*Go out from him, unclean spirits, and make room for the Holy Ghost.*” But when a Christian consents to mortal sin, he says to God: *Depart from me; make room for the Devil, whom I wish to serve.*

10. St. Bernard says, that mortal sin is so opposed to God, that, if it were possible for God to die, sin would deprive him of life; “Peccatum quantum in se est Deum perimit.” Hence, according to Job, in committing mortal sin, man rises up against God, and stretches forth his hand against him: “For he

hath stretched out his hand against God, and hath strengthened himself against the Almighty.” (Job. 15:25.)

11. According to the same St. Bernard, they who wilfully violate the divine law, seek to deprive God of life in proportion to the malice of their will; “Quantum in ipsa est Deum perimit propria voluntas.” (Ser. iii. de Res.) Because, adds the saint, self-will “would wish God to see its own sins, and to be unable to take vengeance on them.” Sinners know that the moment they consent to mortal sin, God condemns them to Hell. Hence, being firmly resolved to sin, they wish that there was no God, and, consequently, they would wish to take away his life, that he might not be able to avenge their crime. “He hath,” continues Job, in his description of the wicked, “run against him with his neck raised up, and is armed with a fat neck.” (15:26.) The sinner raises his neck; that is, his pride swells up, and he runs to insult his God; and, because he contends with a powerful antagonist, “he is armed with a fat neck.” “*A fat neck*” is the symbol of ignorance, of that ignorance which makes the sinner say: *This is not a great sin; God is merciful; we are flesh; the Lord will have pity on us.* O temerity! O illusion! which brings so many Christians to Hell.

Moreover, the man who commits a mortal sin afflicts the heart of God. “But they provoked to wrath, and afflicted the spirit of the Holy One.” (Isaias 63:10.) What pain and anguish would you not feel, if you knew that a person whom you tenderly loved, and on whom you bestowed great favours, had sought to take away your life! God is not capable of pain; but, were he capable of suffering, a single mortal sin would be sufficient to make him die through sorrow. “Mortal sin,” says Father Medina, “if it were possible, would destroy God himself: because it would be the cause of infinite sadness to God.” As often, then, as you committed mortal sin, you would, if it were possible, have caused God to die of sorrow; because you knew that by sin you insulted him and turned your back upon him, after he had bestowed so many favours upon you, and even after he had given all his blood and his life for your salvation.

[An act of sorrow, etc.]

Sermon VII

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

ON THE CONFIDENCE WITH WHICH WE OUGHT TO RECOMMEND OURSELVES TO THE MOTHER OF GOD[14124]

“And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine.”—JOHN 2:3.

IN the Gospel of this day we read that Jesus Christ, having been invited, went with his holy mother to a marriage of Cana of Galilee. “The wine failing,” Mary said to her divine Son: “They have no wine.” By these words she intended to ask her Son to console the spouses, who were afflicted because the wine had failed. Jesus answered: “Woman, what is it to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come.” (John 2:4.) He meant that the time destined for the performance of miracles was that of his preaching through Judea. But, though his answer appeared to be a refusal of the request of Mary, the Son, says St. Chrysostom, resolved to yield to the desire of the mother. “Although he said, ‘my hour is not yet come,’ he granted the petition of his mother.” (Hom. in ii. Joan.) Mary said to the waiters: “Whatever he shall say to you, do ye.” Jesus bid them fill the water-pots with water—the water was changed into the most excellent wine. Thus the bridegroom and the entire family were filled with gladness. From the fact related in this day’s gospel, let us consider, in the first point, the greatness of Mary’s power to obtain from God the graces which we stand in need of; and in the second, the tenderness of Mary’s compassion, and her readiness to assist us all in our wants.

FIRST POINT. THE GREATNESS OF MARY’S POWER TO OBTAIN FROM GOD FOR US ALL THE GRACES WE STAND IN NEED OF.

1. So great is Mary’s merit in the eyes of God, that, according to St. Bonaventure, her prayers are infallibly heard. “The merit of Mary is so

great before God, that her petition cannot be rejected.” (De Virg., c. iii.) But why are the prayers of Mary so powerful in the sight of God? It is, says St. Antonine, because she is his mother. “The petition of the mother of God partakes of the nature of a command, and therefore it is impossible that she should not be heard.” (Par. 4, tit. 13, c. xvii., § 4.) The prayers of the saints are the prayers of servants; but the prayers of Mary are the prayers of a mother, and therefore, according to the holy doctor, they are regarded in a certain manner as commands by her Son, who loves her so tenderly. It is then impossible that the prayers of Mary should be rejected.

2. Hence, according to Cosmas of Jerusalem, the intercession of Mary is all-powerful. “Omnipotens auxilium tuum, O Maria.” It is right, as Richard of St. Lawrence teaches, that the son should impart his power to the mother. Jesus Christ, who is all-powerful, has made Mary omnipotent, as far as a creature is capable of omnipotence; that is, omnipotent in obtaining from him, her divine Son, whatever she asks. “Cum autem eadem sit potestas filii et matris ab omnipotente filio, omnipotens mater facta est.” (Lib. 4, de Laud. Virg.)

3. St. Bridget heard our Saviour one day addressing the Virgin in the following words: “Ask from me whatever you wish, for your petition cannot be fruitless.” (Rev.1. 1, cap. iv.) My mother, ask of me what you please; I cannot reject any prayer which you present to me; “because since you refused me nothing on earth, I will refuse you nothing in Heaven.” (Ibid.) St. George, Archbishop of Nicomedia, says that Jesus Christ hears all the prayers of his mother, as if he wished thereby to discharge the obligation which he owes to her for having given to him his human nature, by consenting to accept him for her Son. “Filius, exolvens debitum petitiones tuas implet.” (Orat. de Exitu Mar.) Hence, St. Methodius, martyr, used to say to Mary: “Euge, euge, quæ debitorum habeas filium, Deo enim universi debemus, tibi autem ille debitor est.” (Orat. Hyp. Dom.) Rejoice, rejoice, O holy virgin; for thou hast for thy debtor that Son to whom we are all debtors; to thee he owes the human nature which he received from thee.

4. St. Gregory of Nicomedia encourages sinners by the assurance that, if they have recourse to the Virgin with a determination to amend their lives, she will save them by her intercession. Hence, turning to Mary, he exclaimed: “Thou hast insuperable strength, lest the multitude of our sins should overcome thy clemency.” O mother of God, the sins of a Christian,

however great they may be, cannot overcome thy mercy. “Nothing,” adds the same saint, “resists thy power; for the Creator regards thy glory as his own.” Nothing is impossible to thee, says St. Peter Damian: thou canst raise even those who are in despair to hopes of salvation. “Nihil tibi impossibile, quæ etiam desperatos in spem salutis potes relevare.” (Ser. i. de Nat. B.V.)

5. Richard of St. Lawrence remarks that, in announcing to the Virgin that God has chosen her for the mother of his Son, the Archangel Gabriel said to her: “Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God.” (Luke 1:30.) From which words the same author concludes: “Cupientes invenire gratiam, quæramus inventricem gratiæ.” If we wish to recover lost grace, let us seek Mary, by whom this grace has been found She never lost the divine grace; she always possessed it. If the angel declared that she had found grace, he meant that she had found it not for herself, but for us miserable sinners, who have lost it. Hence Cardinal Hugo exhorts us to go to Mary, and say to her: O blessed lady, property should be restored to those who lost it: the grace which thou hast found is not thime—for thou hast never lost the grace of God—but it is ours; we have lost it through our own fault: to us, then, thou oughtest to restore it. “Sinners, who by your sins have forfeited the divine grace, run to the Virgin, and say to her with confidence: Restore us to our property, which thou hast found.”

6. It was revealed to St. Gertrude, that all the graces which we ask of God through the intercession of Mary, shall be given to us. She heard Jesus saying to his divine mother: “Through thee all who ask mercy with a purpose of amending their lives, shall obtain grace.” If all Paradise asked a favour of God, and Mary asked the opposite grace, the Lord would hear Mary, and would reject the petition of the rest of the celestial host. Because, says Father Suarez, “God loved the Virgin alone more than all the other saints.” Let us, then, conclude this first point in the words of St. Bernard: “Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary; for she is a mother, and her petition cannot be rejected.” (Serm. de Aquæd.) Let us seek through Mary all the graces we desire to receive from God, and we shall obtain them; for she is a mother, and her son cannot refuse to hear her prayers, or to grant the graces which she asks from him.

SECOND POINT. ON THE TENDER COMPASSION OF MARY, AND HER READINESS TO ASSIST US IN ALL OUR WANTS.

7. The tenderness of Mary’s mercy may be inferred from the fact related in this day’s Gospel. The wine fails—the spouses are troubled—no one speaks to Mary to ask her Son to console them in their necessity. But the tenderness of Mary’s heart, which, according to St. Bernardine of Sienna, cannot but pity the afflicted, moved her to take the office of advocate, and, without being asked, to entreat her Son to work a miracle. “Unasked, she assumed the office of an advocate and a compassionate helper.” (Tom. 3, ser. ix.) Hence, adds the same saint, if, unasked, this good lady has done so much, what will she not do for those who invoke her intercession? “Si hoc non rogata perfecit, quid rogata perficiet?”

8. From the fact already related, St. Bonaventure draws another argument to show the great graces which we may hope to obtain through Mary, now that she reigns in Heaven. If she was so compassionate on earth, how much greater must be her mercy now that she is in Paradise? “Great was the mercy of Mary while in exile on earth; but it is much greater now that she is a queen in Heaven; because she now sees the misery of men.” (St. Bona. in Spec. Virg., cap. viii.) Mary in Heaven enjoys the vision of God; and therefore she sees our wants far more clearly than when she was on earth; hence, as her pity for us is increased, so also is her desire to assist us more ardent. How truly has Richard of St. Victor said to the Virgin: “So tender is thy heart that thou canst not see misery and not afford succour.” It is impossible for this loving mother to behold a human being in distress without extending to him pity and relief.

9. St. Peter Damian says that the Virgin “loves us with an invincible love.” (Ser. i. de Nat. Virg.) How ardently soever the saints may have loved this amiable queen, their affection fell far short of the love which Mary bore to them. It is this love that makes her so solicitous for our welfare. The saints in Heaven, says St. Augustine, have great power to obtain grace from God for those who recommend themselves to their prayers; but as Mary is of all the saints the most powerful, so she is of all the most desirous to procure for us the divine mercy: “Sicut omnibus Sanctis potentior, sic omnibus est pro nobis sollicitior.”

10. And, as this our great advocate once said to St. Bridget, she regards not the iniquities of the sinner who has recourse to her, but the disposition with which he invokes her aid. If he comes to her with a firm purpose of amendment she receives him, and by her intercession heals his wounds, and

brings him to salvation. “However great a man’s, sins may be, if he shall return to me, I am ready instantly to receive him. Nor do I regard the number or the enormity of his sins, but the will with which he comes to me; for I do not disdain to anoint and heal his wounds, because I am called, and truly am, the mother of mercy.”

11. The blessed Virgin is called a “fair olive tree in the plains:” “Quasi oliva speciosa in campis.” (Eccl. 24:19.) From the olive, oil only comes forth; and from the hands of Mary only graces and mercies flow. According to Cardinal Hugo, it is said that she remains in the plains, to show that she is ready to assist all those who have recourse to her: “Speciosa in campis ut omnes ad eam confugiant.” In the Old Law there were five cities of refuge, in which not all, but only those who had committed certain crimes, could find an asylum; but in Mary, says St. John Damascene, all criminals, whatever may be their offences, may take refuge. Hence he calls her “the city of refuge for all who have recourse to her.” Why, then, says St. Bernard, should we be afraid to approach Mary? She is all sweetness and clemency; in her there is nothing austere or terrible: “Quid ad Mariam accedere trepidat humana fragilitas? Nihil austerum in ea, nihil terribile, tota sauvis est.”

12. St. Bonaventure used to say that, in turning to Mary, he saw mercy itself receiving him. “When I behold thee, O my lady, I see nothing but mercy.” The Virgin said one day to St. Bridget: “Miser erit, qui ad misericordiam cum possit, non accedit.” Miserable and miserable for eternity shall be the sinner who, though he has it in his power during life to come to me, who am able and willing to assist him, neglects to invoke my aid, and is lost. “The devil,” says St. Peter, “as a roaring lion goeth about seeing whom he may devour.” (1 Pet. 5:8.) But, according to Bernardine a Bustis, this mother of mercy is constantly going about in search of sinners to save them. “She continually goes about seeking whom she may save.” (Maril. par. 3, ser. iii.) This queen of clemency, says Richard of St. Victor, presents our petitions, and begins to assist us before we ask the assistance of her prayers; “Velocius occurrit ejus pietas quam invocetur, et causas miserorum anticipat.” (In Can., *c.* xxiii.) Because, as the same author says, Mary’s heart is so full of tenderness towards us, that she cannot behold our miseries without affording relief. “Nee possis miserias scire, et non subvenire.”

13. Let us, then, in all our wants, be most careful to have recourse to this mother of mercy, who is always ready to assist those who invoke her aid. “Invenies semper paratam auxiliari,” says Richard of St. Lawrence. She is always prepared to come to our help, and frequently prevents our supplications: but, ordinarily, she requires that we should pray to her, and is offended when we neglect to ask her assistance. “In te domina peccant,” says St. Bonaventure, “non solum qui tibi injuriam irrogant, sed etiam qui te non rogant.” (In Spec. Virg.) Thou, O blessed lady, art displeased not only with those who commit an injury against thee, but also with those who do not ask favours from thee. Hence, as the same holy doctor teaches, it is not possible that Mary should neglect to succour any soul that flies to her for protection; for she cannot but pity and console the afflicted who have recourse to her. “Ipsa enim non misereri ignorat et miseris non satisfacere.”

14. But, to obtain special favours from this good lady, we must perform in her honour certain devotions practised by her servants; such as, first, to recite every day at least five decades of the Rosary; secondly, to fast every Saturday in her honour. Many persons fast every Saturday on bread and water: you should fast in this manner at least on the vigils of her seven principal festivals. Thirdly, to say the three *Aves* when the bell rings for the *Angelus Domini;* and to salute her frequently during the day with an *Ave Maria*, particularly when you hear a clock strike, or when you see an image of the Virgin, and also when you leave or return to your house. Fourthly, to say every evening the Litany of the Blessed Virgin before you go to rest; and for this purpose procure an image of Mary, and keep it near your bed. Fifthly, to wear the scapular of Mary in sorrow, and of Mount Carmel. There are many other devotions practised by the servants of Mary; but the most useful of all is, to recommend yourself frequently to her prayers. Never omit to say three *Aves* in the morning, to beg of her to preserve you from sin during the day. In all temptations have immediate recourse to her, saying: “Mary, assist me.” To resist every temptation, it is sufficient to pronounce the names of Jesus and Mary; and if the temptation continues, let us continue to invoke Jesus and Mary, and the devil shall never be able to conquer us.

15. St. Bonaventure calls Mary the salvation of those who invoke her: “O salus te invocantium.” And if a true servant of Mary were lost (I mean one truly devoted to her, who wishes to amend his life, and invoke with

confidence this advocate of sinners), this should happen either because Mary would be unable or unwilling to assist him. But, says St. Bernard, this is impossible: being the mother of omnipotence and of mercy, Mary cannot want the power or the will to save her servants. Justly then is she called the salvation of all who invoke her aid. Of this truth there are numberless examples: that of St. Mary of Egypt will be sufficient. After leading for many years a sinful and dissolute life, she wished to enter the church of Jerusalem in which the festival of the holy cross was celebrated. To make her feel her miseries, God closed against her the door which was open to all others: as often as she endeavoured to enter, an invisible force drove her back. She instantly perceived her miserable condition, and remained in sorrow outside the church. Fortunately for her there was an image of most holy Mary over the porch of the church. As a poor sinner she recommended herself to the divine mother, and promised to change her life. After her prayer, she felt encouraged to go into the church, and, behold! the door which was before closed against her she now finds open: she enters, and confesses her sins. She leaves the church, and, under the influence of divine inspiration, goes into the desert, where she lived for forty-seven years, and became a saint.

Sermon VIII

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

ON THE REMORSE OF THE DAMNED

> “But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”—MATT. 8:12.

IN the Gospel of this day it is related that, “when Jesus Christ entered into Capharnaum, there came to him a centurion beseeching him” to cure his servant, who lay sick of the palsy. Jesus answered: “I will come and heal him.” “No,” replied the centurion, “I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.” (v. 8.) Seeing the centurion’s faith, the Redeemer instantly consoled him by restoring health to his servant; and, turning to his disciples, he said: “Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” By these words our Lord wished to signify, that many persons born in infidelity shall be saved, and enjoy the society of the saints, and that many who are born in the bosom of the Church shall be cast into Hell, where the worm of conscience, by its gnawing, shall make them weep bitterly for all eternity.

Let us examine the remorses of conscience which a damned Christian shall suffer in Hell. First remorse, arising from the thought of the little which he required to do in order to save his soul. Second remorse, arising from the remembrance of the trifles for which he lost his soul. Third remorse, arising from the knowledge of the great good which he has lost through his own fault.

FIRST REMORSE OF THE DAMNED CHRISTIAN, ARISING FROM THE THOUGHT OF THE LITTLE WHICH HE REQUIRED TO DO IN ORDER TO SAVE HIS SOUL.

1. A damned soul once appeared to St. Hubert, and said, that two remorses were her most cruel executioners in Hell: the thought of the little which was necessary for her to have done in this life to secure her salvation; and the thought of the trifles for which she brought herself to eternal misery. The same thing has been said by St. Thomas. Speaking of the reprobate, he says: “They shall be in sorrow principally because they are damned for nothing, and because they could most easily have obtained eternal life.” Let us stop to consider this first source of remorse; that is, how few and transitory are the pleasures for which all the damned are lost. Each of the reprobate will say for eternity: If I abstained from such a gratification; if in certain circumstances I overcame human respect; if I avoided such an occasion of sin—such a companion, I should not now be damned; if I had frequented some pious sodality; if I had gone to confession every week; if in temptations I had recommended myself to God, I would not have relapsed into sin. I have so often proposed to do these things, but I have not done them. I began to practise these means of salvation, but afterwards gave them up; and thus I am lost.

2. This torment of the damned will be increased by the remembrance of the good example given them by some young companions who led a chaste and pious life even in the midst of the world. It will be still more increased by the recollection of all the gifts which the Lord had bestowed upon them, that by their co-operation they might acquire eternal salvation; the gifts of nature—health, riches, respectability of family, talents; all gifts granted by God, not to be employed in the indulgence of pleasures and in the gratification of vanity, but in the sanctification of their souls, and in becoming saints. So many gifts of grace, so many divine lights, holy inspirations, loving calls, and so many years of life to repair past disorders. But they shall for ever hear from the angel of the Lord that for them the time of salvation is past. “The angel whom I saw standing, swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever . . . that time shall be no longer.” (Apoc. 10:6.)

3. Alas! what cruel swords shall all these blessings received from God be to the heart of a poor damned Christian, when he shall see himself shut up in the prison of Hell, and that there is no more time to repair his eternal ruin! In despair he will say to his wretched companions: “The harvest is past; the summer is ended; and we are not saved.” (Jer. 8:20.) The time, he will say, of gathering fruits of eternal life is past; the summer, during which

we could have saved our souls, is over, but we are not saved: the winter is come; but it is an eternal winter, in which we must live in misery and despair as long as God shall be God.

4. O fool, he will say, that I have been! If I had suffered for God the pains to which I have submitted for the indulgence of my passions—if the labours which I have endured for my own damnation, had been borne for my salvation, how happy should I now be! And what now remains of all past pleasures, but remorse and pain, which now torture, and shall torture me for eternity? Finally, he will say, I might be for ever happy, and now I must be for ever miserable. Ah! this thought will torture the damned more than the fire and all the other torments of Hell.

SECOND REMORSE OF THE DAMNED, ARISING FROM THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE TRIFLES FOR WHICH THEY LOST THEIR SOULS.

5. Saul forbid the people, under pain of death, to taste food. His son Jonathan, who was then young, being hungry, tasted a little honey. Having discovered that Jonathan had violated the command, the king declared that he should die. Seeing himself condemned to death, Jonathan said with tears: "I did but taste a little honey, . . . and behold I must die." (1 Kings 14:43.) But the people, moved to pity for Jonathan, interposed with his father, and delivered him from death. For the unhappy damned there is no compassion; there is no one to intercede with God to deliver them from the eternal death of Hell. On the contrary, all rejoice at the just punishment which they suffer for having wilfully lost God and Paradise for the sake of a transitory pleasure.

6. After having eaten the pottage of lentiles for which he sold his right of primogeniture, Esau was tortured with grief and remorse for what he had lost, and "roared out with a great cry." (Gen. 27:34.) Oh! how great shall be the roaring and howling of the damned, at the thought of having lost, for a few poisonous and momentary pleasures, the everlasting kingdom of Paradise, and of being condemned for eternity to a continual death!

7. The unfortunate reprobate shall be continually employed in reflecting on the unhappy cause of their damnation. To us who live on earth our past life appears but a moment—but a dream. Alas! what will the fifty or sixty years which they may have spent in this world appear to the damned, when

they shall find themselves in the abyss of eternity, and when they shall have passed a hundred and a thousand millions of years in torments, and shall see that their miserable eternity is only beginning, and shall be for ever in its commencement? But have the fifty years spent on this earth been full of pleasures? Perhaps the sinner, living in enmity with God, enjoyed uninterrupted happiness in his sins? How long do the pleasures of sin last? Only for a few minutes; the remaining part of the lives of those who live at a distance from God is full of anguish and pain. Oh! what will these moments of pleasure appear to a damned soul, when she shall find herself in a pit of fire?

8. “What hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things have passed away like a shadow.” (Wis. 5:8.) Unhappy me! each of the damned shall say, I have lived on earth according to my corrupt inclinations; I have indulged my pleasures; but what have they profited me? They have lasted but for a short time; they have made me lead a life of bitterness and disquietude; and now I must burn in this furnace for ever, in despair, and abandoned by all.

THIRD REMORSE OF THE DAMNED, ARISING FROM THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GREAT GOOD WHICH THEY HAVE LOST BY THEIR OWN FAULT.

9. A certain queen, blinded by the ambition of being a sovereign, said one day: “If the Lord gives me a reign of forty years, I shall renounce Paradise.” The unhappy queen reigned for forty years; but now that she is in another world, she cannot but be grieved at having made such a renunciation. Oh! how great must be her anguish at the thought of having lost the kingdom of Paradise for the sake of a reign of forty years, full of troubles, of crosses, and of fears! “Plus cœlo torquetor, quam gehenna,” says St. Peter Chrysologus. To the damned the voluntary loss of Paradise is a greater loss than the very pains of Hell.

10. The greatest pain in Hell is the loss of God, that sovereign good, who is the source of all the joys of Paradise. “Let torments,” says St. Bruno, “be added to torments, and let them not be deprived of God.” (Serm. de Jud. fin.) The damned would be content to have a thousand Hells added to the Hell which they suffer, provided they were not deprived of God; but their Hell shall consist in seeing themselves deprived for ever of God through

their own fault. St. Teresa used to say, that when a person loses, through his own fault, a trifle—a small sum of money, or a ring of little value—the thought of having lost it through his own neglect afflicts him and disturbs his peace. What then must be the anguish of the damned in reflecting that they have lost God, a good of infinite value, and have lost him through their own fault?

11. The damned shall see that God wished them to be saved, and had given them the choice of eternal life or of eternal death. “Before man is life and death, . . . that which he shall choose shall be given to him.” (Eccles. 15:18.) They shall see that, if they wished, they might have acquired eternal happiness, and that, by their own choice, they are damned. On the day of judgment they shall see many of their companions among the elect; but, because they would not put a stop to their career of sin, they have gone to end it in Hell. “Therefore we have erred,” they shall say to their unhappy associates in Hell; we have erred in losing Heaven and God through our own fault, and our error is irreparable. They shall continually exclaim: “There is no peace for my bones because of my sins.” (Ps. 37:4.) The thought of having been the cause of their own damnation produces an internal pain, which enters into the very bones of the damned, and prevents them from ever enjoying a moment’s repose. Hence, each of them shall be to himself an object of the greatest horror. Each shall suffer the pain threatened by the Lord: “I will set THEE before thy face.” (Ps. 49:21.)

12. If, beloved brethren, you have hitherto been so foolish as to lose God for a miserable pleasure, do not persevere in your folly. Endeavour, now that you have it in your power, to repair your past error. Tremble! Perhaps, if you do not now resolve to change your life, you shall be abandoned by God, and be lost for ever. When the Devil tempts you, remember Hell—the thought of Hell will preserve you from that land of misery. I say, remember Hell and have recourse to Jesus Christ and to most holy Mary, and they will deliver you from sin, which is the gate of Hell.

Sermon IX

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

DANGERS TO ETERNAL SALVATION

> “And when he entered into the boat, his disciples followed him; and, behold, a great tempest arose in the sea.”—MATT. 8:23, 24.

ON THE GREATNESS OF THE DANGERS TO WHICH OUR ETERNAL SALVATION IS EXPOSED, AND ON THE MANNER IN WHICH WE OUGHT TO GUARD AGAINST THEM.

1. IN this day’s Gospel we find that, when Jesus Christ entered the boat along with his disciples, a great tempest arose, so that the boat was agitated by the waves, and was on the point of being lost. During this storm the Saviour was asleep; but the disciples, terrified by the storm, ran to awake him, and said: “Lord, save us: we perish.” (v. 25.) Jesus gave them courage by saying: “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising up, he commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm.” Let us examine what is meant by the boat in the midst of the sea, and by the tempest which agitated the sea.

2. The boat on the sea represents man in this world. As a vessel on the sea is exposed to a thousand dangers—to pirates, to quicksands, to hidden rocks, and to tempests; so man in this life is encompassed with perils arising from the temptations of Hell—from the occasions of sin, from the scandals or bad counsels of men, from human respect, and, above all, from the bad passions of corrupt nature, represented by the winds that agitate the sea and expose the vessel to great danger of being lost.

3. Thus, as St. Leo says, our life is full of dangers, of snares, and of enemies: “Plena omnia periculis, plena laqueis: incitant cupiditates, insidiantur illecebræ; blandiuntur lucra.” (S. Leo, serm. v, de Quad.) The first enemy of the salvation of every Christian is his own corruption. “But every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and

allured.” (St. James 1:14.) Along with the corrupt inclinations which live within us, and drag us to evil, we have many enemies from without that fight against us. We have the devils, with whom the contest is very difficult, because they are stronger than we are.” “Bellum grave,” says Cassiodorus, “qui cum fortiore.” (In Psal. v.) Hence, because we have to contend with powerful enemies, St. Paul exhorts us to arm ourselves with the divine aid: “Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the Devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in high places.” (Eph. 6:11, 12.) The Devil, according to St. Peter, is a lion who is continually going about roaring, through the rage and hunger which impel him to devour our souls. “Your adversary, the Devil, like a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Peter, 5:8.) St. Cyprian says that Satan is continually lying in wait for us, in order to make us his slaves: “Circuit demon nos singulos, et tanquam hostis clausos obsidens muros explorat et tenat num sit pars aliqua minis stabilis, cujus auditu ad interiora penetretur.” (S. Cyp. lib. de zelo, etc.)

4. Even the men with whom we must converse endanger our salvation. They persecute or betray us, or deceive us by their flattery and bad counsels. St. Augustine says that, among the faithful there are in every profession hollow and deceitful men. “Omnis professio in ecclesia habet fictos.” (In Ps. xciv.) Now if a fortress were full of rebels within, and encompassed by enemies from without, who is there that would not regard it as lost? Such is the condition of each of us as long as we live in this world. Who shall be able to deliver us from so many powerful enemies? Only God: “Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.” (Ps. 126:2.)

5. What then is the means by which we can save our souls in the midst of so many dangers? It is to imitate the holy disciples—to have recourse to our Divine Master, and say to him: “Save us; we perish.” Save us, O Lord; if thou do not we are lost. When the tempest is violent, the pilot never takes his eyes from the light which guides him to the port. In like manner we should keep our eyes always turned to God, why alone can deliver us from the many dangers to which we are exposed. It was thus David acted when he found himself assailed by the dangers of sin. “I have lifted up my eyes to

the mountains, from whence help shall come to me." (Ps. 120:1.) To teach us to recommend ourselves continually to him who alone can save us by his grace, the Lord has ordained that, as long as we remain on this earth, we should live in the midst of a continual tempest, and should be surrounded by enemies. The temptations of the Devil, the persecutions of men, the adversity which we suffer in this world, are not evils: they are, on the contrary, advantages, if we know how to make of them the use which God wishes, who sends or permits them for our welfare. They detach our affections from this earth, and inspire a disgust for this world, by making us feel bitterness and thorns even in its honours, its riches, its delights, and amusements. The Lord permits all these apparent evils, that we may take away our affections from fading goods, in which we meet with so many dangers of perdition, and that we may seek to unite ourselves with him who alone can make us happy.

6. Our error and mistake is, that when we find ourselves harassed by infirmities, by poverty, by persecutions, and by such tribulations, instead of having recourse to the Lord, we turn to men, and place our confidence in their assistance, and thus draw upon ourselves the malediction of God, who says, "Cursed be the man who trusteth in man." (Jer. 17:5.) The Lord does not forbid us, in our afflictions and dangers, to have recourse to human means; but he curses those who place their whole trust in them. He wishes us to have recourse to himself before all others, and to place our only hope in him, that we may also centre in him all our love.

7. As long as we live on this earth, we must, according to St. Paul, work out our salvation with fear and trembling, in the midst of the dangers by which we are beset. "Cum metu et tremore vestram salutem operamini." (Phil. 2:12.) Whilst a certain vessel was in the open sea a great tempest arose, which made the captain tremble. In the hold of the vessel there was an animal eating with as much tranquillity as if the sea were perfectly calm. The captain being asked why he was so much afraid, replied: If I had a soul like the soul of this brute, I too would be tranquil and without fear; but because I have a rational and an immortal soul, I am afraid of death, after which I must appear before the judgment-seat of God; and therefore I tremble through fear. Let us also tremble, beloved brethren. The salvation of our immortal souls is at stake. They who do not tremble are, as St. Paul says, in great danger of being lost; because they who fear not, seldom

recommend themselves to God, and labour but little to adopt the means of salvation. Let us beware: we are, says St. Cyprian, still in battle array, and still combat for eternal salvation. “Adhuc in acie constituti de vita nostra dimicamus.” (S. Cypr., lib. 1, cap. i.)

8. The first means of salvation, then, is to recommend ourselves continually to God, that he may keep his hands over us, and preserve us from offending him. The next is, to cleanse the soul from all past sins by making a general confession. A general confession is a powerful help to a change of life. When the tempest is violent the burden of the vessel is diminished, and each person on board throws his goods into the sea in order to save his life. O folly of sinners, who, in the midst of such great dangers of eternal perdition, instead of diminishing the burden of the vessel—that is, instead of unburdening the soul of her sins—load her with a greater weight. Instead of flying from the dangers of sin, they fearlessly continue to put themselves voluntarily into dangerous occasions; and, instead of having recourse to God’s mercy for the pardon of their offences, they offend him still more, and compel him to abandon them.

9. Another means is, to labour strenuously not to allow ourselves to become the slaves of irregular passions. “Give me not over to a shameless and foolish mind.” (Eccl. 23:6.) Do not, O Lord, deliver me up to a mind blinded by passion. He who is blind sees not what he is doing, and therefore he is in danger of falling into every crime. Thus so many are lost by submitting to the tyranny of their passions. Some are slaves to the passion of avarice. A person who is now in the other world said: Alas! I perceive that a desire of riches is beginning to rule over me. So said the unhappy man; but he applied no remedy. He did not resist the passion in the beginning, but fomented it till death, and thus at his last moments left but little reason to hope for his salvation. Others are slaves to sensual pleasures. They are not content with lawful gratifications, and therefore they pass to the indulgence of those that are forbidden. Others are subject to anger; and because they are not careful to check the fire at its commencement, when it is small, it increases and grows into a spirit of revenge.

10. “Hi hostes cavendi,” says St. Ambrose, “hi graviores tyranni. Multi in persecutione publica coronati, in hac persecutione cecidcrunt.” (In Ps. cxviii. serm. 20.) Disorderly affections, if they are not beaten down in the beginning, become our greatest tyrants. Many, says St. Ambrose, after

having victoriously resisted the persecutions of the enemies of the faith, were afterwards lost because they did not resist the first assaults of some earthly passion. Of this, Origen was a miserable example. He fought for, and was prepared to give his life in defence of the faith; but, by afterwards yielding to human respect, he was led to deny it. (Natalis Alexander, His. Eccl., tom. 7, dis. xv., q. 2, a. 1.) We have still a more miserable example in Solomon, who, after having received so many gifts from God, and after being inspired by the Holy Ghost, was, by indulging a passion for certain pagan, women, induced to offer incense to idols. The unhappy man who submits to the slavery of his wicked passions, resembles the ox that is sent to the slaughter after a life of constant labour. During their whole lives worldlings groan under the weight of their sins, and, at the end of their days, fall into Hell.

11. Let us conclude. When the winds are strong and violent, the pilot lowers the sails and casts anchor. So, when we find ourselves assailed by any bad passion, we should always lower the sails; that is, we should avoid all the occasions which may increase the passion, and should cast anchor by uniting ourselves to God, and by begging of him to give us strength not to offend him.

12. But some of you will say, What am I to do? I live in the midst of the world, where my passions continually assail me even against my will. I will answer in the words of Origen: “Donec quis in tenebris sæcularibus manet et in negotiorum obscuritate versatur, non potest servire Domino. Exeundum est ergo de Egypto, relinquendus est mundus, non loco sed animo.” (Hom. iii. in Exod.) The man who lives in the darkness of the world and in the midst of secular business, can with difficulty serve God. Whoever then wishes to insure his eternal salvation, let him retire from the world, and take refuge in one of those exact religious communities which are the secure harbours in the sea of this world. If he cannot actually leave the world, let him leave it at least in affection, by detaching his heart from the things of this world, and from his own evil inclinations: “Go not after thy lusts,” says the Holy Ghost, “but turn away from thy own will.” (Eccl. 18:30.) Follow not your own concupiscence; and when your will impels you to evil, you must not indulge, but must resist its inclinations.

13. “The time is short: it remaineth that they also who have wives be as if they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that

rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as if they possessed not; and they that use this world, as if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away.” (1 Cor. 7:29, etc.) The time of life is short; we should then prepare for death, which is rapidly approaching; and to prepare for that awful moment, let us reflect that everything in this world shall soon end. Hence, the Apostle tells those who suffer in this life to be as if they suffered not, because the miseries of this life shall soon pass away, and they who save their souls shall be happy for eternity; and he exhorts those who enjoy the goods of this earth to be as if they enjoyed them not, because they must one day leave all things; and if they lose their souls, they shall be miserable for ever.

Sermon X

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

ON THE PAINS OF HELL

“Gather up first the cockle, and bind into bundles to burn.”—MATT. 13:30.

I shall first speak of the fire, which is the principal pain that torments the senses of the damned, and afterwards of the other pains of hell.

1. BEHOLD! the final doom of sinners who abuse the divine mercy is, to burn in the fire of hell. God threatens hell, not to send us there, but to deliver us from that place of torments. “Minatur Deus gehennem,” says St. Chrysostom, “ut a gehenna liberet, et ut firmiac stabiles evitemus minas.” (Hom. v. de Pœnit.) Remember, then, brethren, that God gives you to-day the opportunity of hearing this sermon, that you may be preserved from hell, and that you may give up sin, which alone can lead you to hell.

2. My brethren, it is certain and of faith that there is a hell. After judgment the just shall enjoy the eternal glory of Paradise, and sinners shall be condemned to suffer the everlasting chastisement reserved for them in hell. “And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting.” (Matt. 25:46.) Let us examine in what hell consists. It is what the rich glutton called it—a place of torments. “In hunc locum tormentorum.” (Luc. 16:28.) It is a place of suffering, where each of the senses and powers of the damned has its proper torment, and in which the torments of each person will be increased in proportion to the forbidden pleasures in which he indulged. “As much as she hath glorified herself and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her.” (Apoc. 18:7.)

3. In offending God the sinner does two evils: he abandons God, the sovereign good, who is able to make him happy, and turns to creatures, who are incapable of giving any real happiness to the soul. Of this injury which men commit against him, the Lord complains by his prophet Jeremy: “For

my people have done two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have digged to themselves cisterns—broken cisterns—that can hold no water.” (Jer. 2:13.) Since, then, the sinner turns his back on God, he shall be tormented in hell, by the pain arising from the loss of God, of which I shall speak on another occasion [*see the Sermon for the nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost*], and since, in offending God, he turns to creatures, he shall be justly tormented by the same creatures, and principally by fire.

4. “The vengeance on the flesh of the ungodly is fire and worms.” (Eccl. 7:19.) Fire and the remorse of conscience are the principal means by which God takes vengeance on the flesh of the wicked. Hence, in condemning the reprobate to hell, Jesus Christ commands them to go into eternal fire. Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire.” (Matt. 25:41.) This fire, then, shall be one of the most cruel executioners of the damned.

5. Even in this life the pain of fire is the most terrible of all torments. But St. Augustine says, that in comparison of the fire of hell, the fire of this earth is no more than a picture compared with the reality. “In cujus comparatione noster hic ignus depictus est.” St. Anselm teaches, that the fire of hell as far surpasses the fire of this world, as the fire of the real exceeds that of painted fire. The pain, then, produced by the fire of hell is far greater than that which is produced by our fire, because God has made the fire of this earth for the use of man, but he has created the fire of hell purposely for the chastisement of sinners; and therefore, as Tertullian says, he has made it a minister of his justice. “Longe alius est ignis, qui usui humano, alius qui Dei justitiæ, deservit.” This avenging fire is always kept alive by the wrath of God. “A fire is kindled in my rage.” (Jer. 15:14.)

6. “And the rich man also died, and he was buried in hell.” (Luke 16:22.) The damned are buried in the fire of hell; hence they have an abyss of fire below, an abyss of fire above, and an abyss of fire on every side. As a fish in the sea is surrounded by water, so the unhappy reprobate are encompassed by fire on every side. The sharpness of the pain of fire may be inferred from the circumstance, that the rich glutton complained of no other torment. “I am tormented in this flame.” (Ibid. v. 24.)

7. The Prophet Isaias says that the Lord will punish the guilt of sinners with the spirit of fire. “If the Lord shall wash away the filth of the daughters of Sion by the spirit of burning” (4:4). “The spirit of burning” is the pure

essence of fire. All spirits or essences, though taken from simple herbs or flowers, are so penetrating, that they reach the very bones. Such is the fire of hell. Its activity is so great, that a single spark of it would be sufficient to melt a mountain of bronze. *The disciple* relates, that a damned person, who appeared to a religious, dipped his hand into a vessel of water; the religious placed in the vessel a candlestick of bronze, which was instantly dissolved.

8. This fire shall torment the damned not only externally, but also internally. It will burn the bowels, the heart, the brains, the blood within the veins, and the marrow within the bones. The skin of the damned shall be like a caldron, in which their bowels, their flesh, and their bones shall be burned. David says, that the bodies of the damned shall be like so many furnaces of fire. “Thou shalt make them as an oven of fire in the time of thy anger.” (Ps. 20:10.)

9. O God! certain sinners cannot bear to walk under a strong sun, or to remain before a large fire in a close room; they cannot endure a spark from a candle; and they fear not the fire of hell, which, according to the Prophet Isaias, not only burns, but devours the unhappy damned. “Which of you can dwell with devouring fire?” (Isaias 33:14.) As a lion devours a lamb, so the fire of hell devours the reprobate; but it devours without destroying life, and thus tortures them with a continual death. Continue, says St. Peter Damian to the sinner who indulges in impurity, continue to satisfy your flesh; a day will come, or rather an eternal night, when your impurities, like pitch, shall nourish a fire within your very bowels. “Venit dies, imo nox, quando libido tua vertetur in picem qua se nutriet perpetuus ignis in visceribus tuis.” (Epist. 6.) And according to St. Cyprian, the impurities of the wicked shall boil in the very fat which will issue from their accursed bodies.

10. St. Jerome teaches, that in this fire sinners shall suffer not only the pain of the fire, but also all the pains which men endure on this earth. “In uno igne omnia supplicia sentient in inferno peccatores.” (Ep. ad Pam.) How manifold are the pains to which men are subject in this life. Pains in the sides, pains in the head, pains in the loins, pains in the bowels. All these together torture the damned.

11. The fire itself will bring with it the pain of darkness; for, by its smoke it will, according to St. John, produce a storm of darkness which shall blind the damned.” “To whom the storm of darkness is reserved for ever.” (St. Jude 13.) Hence, hell is called a land of darkness covered with the shadow

of death. “A land that is dark and covered with the mist of death a land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death, and no order but everlasting horror dwelleth.” (Job 10:21, 22.) To hear that a criminal is shut up in a dungeon for ten or twenty years excites our compassion. Hell is a dungeon closed on every side, into which a ray of the sun or the light of a candle never enters. Thus the damned “shall never see light.” (Ps. 48:20.) The fire of this world gives light, but the fire of hell is utter darkness. In explaining the words of David, “the voice of the Lord divideth the flame of fire,” (Ps. 28:7,) St. Basil says, that in hell the Lord separates the fire that burns from the flame which illuminates, and therefore this fire burns, but gives no light. B. Albertus Magnus explains this passage more concisely by saying that God “divides the heat from the light.” St. Thomas teaches, that in hell there is only so much light as is necessary to torment the damned by the sight of their associates and of the devils: “Quantum sufficit ad videndum illa quæ torquere possunt.” (3 p., q. 97, art. 5.) And according to St. Augustine, the bare sight of these infernal monsters excites sufficient terror to cause the death of all the damned, if they were capable of dying. “Videbunt monstra, quorum visio postet illos occidere.”

12. To suffer a parching thirst, without having a drop of water to quench it, is intolerably painful. It has sometimes happened, that travellers who could procure no refreshment after a long journey, have fainted from the pain produced by thirst. So great is the thirst of the damned, that if one of them were offered all the water on this earth, he would exclaim: All this water is not sufficient to extinguish the burning thirst which I endure. But, alas! the unhappy darned shall never have a single drop of water to refresh their tongues. “He cried out and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.” (St. Luke 16:24.) The rich glutton has not obtained, and shall never obtain, this drop of water, as long as God shall be God.

13. The reprobate shall be likewise tormented by the stench which pervades hell. The stench shall arise from the very bodies of the damned. “Out of their carcasses shall arise a stink.” (Isaiah 34:3.) The bodies of the damned are called carcasses, not because they are dead (for they are living, and shall be for ever alive to pain), but on account of the stench which they exhale. Would it not be very painful to be shut up in a close room with a

fetid corpse? St. Bonaventure says, that if the body of one of the damned were placed in the earth, it would, by its stench, be sufficient to cause the death of all men. How intolerable, then, must it be to live for ever in the dungeons of hell in the midst of the immense multitudes of the damned! Some foolish worldlings say: *If I go to hell, I shall not be there alone.* Miserable fools! do you not see that the greater the number of your companions, the more insufferable shall be your torments? “There,” says St. Thomas, “the society of the reprobate shall cause an increase and not a diminution of misery.” (Suppl., q. 86, art. 1.) The society of the reprobate augments their misery, because each of the damned is a source of suffering to all the others. Hence, the greater their number, the more they shall mutually torment each other. “And the people,” says the prophet Isaias, “shall be ashes after a fire, as a bundle of thorns they shall be burnt with fire.” (Isa. 33:12.) Placed in the midst of the furnace of hell, the damned are like so many grains reduced to ashes by that abyss of fire, and like so many thorns tied together and wounding each other.

14. They are tormented not only by the stench of their companions, but also by their shrieks and lamentations. How painful it is to a person longing for sleep to hear the groans of a sick man, the barking of a dog, or the screams of an infant. The damned must listen incessantly to the wailing and howling of their associates, not for a night, nor for a thousand nights, but for all eternity, without the interruption of a single moment.

15. The damned are also tormented by the narrowness of the place in which they are confined; for, although the dungeon of hell is large, it will be too small for so many millions of the reprobate, who like sheep shall be heaped one over the other. “They are,” says David, “laid in hell like sheep.” (Ps. 48:15.) We learn from the Scriptures that they shall be pressed together like grapes in the winepress, by the vengeance of an angry God. “The winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God the Almighty.” (Apoc. 19:15.) From this pressure shall arise the pain of immobility. “Let them become unmoveable as a stone.” (Exod. 16:16.) In whatever position the damned shall fall into hell after the general judgment, whether on the side, or on the back, or with the head downwards, in that they must remain for eternity, without being ever able to move foot or hand or finger, as long as God shall be God. In a word, St. Chrysostom says, that all the pains of this life, however great they may be, are scarcely a shadow of the torments of

the damned. “Hœc omnia ludicra sunt et risus ad illa supplicia: pone ignem, ferrum, et bestias, attamen vix umbra sunt ad illa tormenta.” (Hom. xxxix. ad pop. Ant.)

16. The reprobate, then, shall be tormented in all the senses of the body. They shall also be tormented in all the powers of the soul. Their memory shall be tormented by the remembrance of the years which they had received from God for the salvation of their souls, and which they spent in labouring for their own damnation; by the remembrance of so many graces and so many divine lights which they abused. Their understanding shall be tormented by the knowledge of the great happiness which they forfeited in losing their souls, heaven, and God; and by a conviction that this loss is irreparable. Their will shall be tormented by seeing that whatsoever they ask or desire shall be refused. “The desire of the wicked shall perish.” (Ps. 111:10.) They shall never have any of those things for which they wish, and must for ever suffer all that is repugnant to their will. They would wish to escape from these torments and to find peace; but in these torments they must for ever remain, and peace they shall never enjoy.

17. Perhaps they may sometimes receive a little comfort, or at least enjoy occasional repose? No, says Cyprian: “Nullum ibi refrigerium, nullum remedium, atque ita omni tormento atrocius desperatio.” (Serm. de Ascens.) In this life, how great soever may be the tribulations which we suffer, there is always some relief or interruption. The damned must remain for ever in a pit of fire, always in torture, always weeping, without ever enjoying a moment’s repose. But perhaps there is some one to pity their sufferings? At the very time that they are so much afflicted the devils continually reproach them with the sins for which they are tormented, saying: Suffer, burn, live for ever in despair: you yourselves have been the cause of your destruction. And do not the saints, the divine mother, and God, who is called the Father of Mercies, take compassion on their miseries? No; “the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven.” (Matt. 26:29.) The saints, represented by the stars, not only do not pity the damned, but they even rejoice in the vengeance inflicted on the injuries offered to their God. Neither can the divine mother pity them, because they hate her Son. And Jesus Christ, who died for the love of them, cannot pity them, because they have despised his love, and have voluntarily brought themselves to perdition.

Sermon XI

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

ON THE DEATH OF THE JUST

> "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened."—MATT. 13:33.

IN this day's gospel we find that a woman, after putting leaven in the dough, waits till the entire is fermented. Here the Lord gives us to understand that the kingdom of heaven—that is, the attainment of eternal beatitude—is like the leaven. By the leaven is understood the divine grace, which makes the soul acquire merits for eternal life. But this eternal life is obtained only when "the whole is leavened;" that is, when the soul has arrived at the end of the present life and the completion of her merits. We shall, then, speak to-day of the death of the just, which we should not fear, but should desire with our whole souls. For, says St. Bonaventure, "Triplex in morte congratulatio, hominem ab omni labore, peccato, et periculo liberari." Man should rejoice at death, for three reasons—First, because death delivers him from labour—that is, from suffering the miseries of this life and the assault of his enemies. Secondly, because it delivers him from actual sins. Thirdly, because it delivers him from the danger of falling into hell, and opens Paradise to him.

FIRST POINT. DEATH DELIVERS US FROM THE MISERIES OF THIS LIFE, AND FROM THE ASSAULTS OF OUR ENEMIES.

1. What is death? St. Eucherius answers, that "death is the end of miseries." Job said that our life, however short it may be, is full of miseries, of infirmities, of crosses, of persecutions, and fears. "Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries." (Job 14:1.) What, says St. Augustine, do men who wish for a prolongation of life on this earth desire but a prolongation of suffering?" "Quid est diu vivere nisi diu tor

queri.” (Serm. xvii de Serb. Dom.) Yes; for, as St. Ambrose remarks, the present life was given to us not for repose or enjoyment, but for labour and suffering, that by toils and pains we may merit Paradise. “Hæc vita homini non ad quitem data est, sed ad laborem.” (Serm. xliii.) Hence the same holy doctor says, that, though death is the punishment of sin, still the miseries of this life are so great, that death appears to be a relief rather than a chastisement: “Ut mors remedium videatur esse, non pœna.”

2. To those who love God, the severest of all the crosses of this life are the assaults of hell to rob them of the divine grace. Hence St. Denis the Areopagite says, that they joyfully meet death, as the end of their combats, and embrace it with gladness, because they hope to die a good death, and to be thus freed from all fear of ever again falling into sin. “Divino gaudio et mortis terminum tanquam ad finem certaminum tendunt, non amplius metuentus pervertii.” (De Hier. Eccl., cap. vii.) The greatest consolation which a soul that loves God experiences at the approach of death, arises from the thought of being delivered from so many temptations, from so many remorses of conscience, and from so many dangers of offending God. Ah! says St. Ambrose, as long as we live, “we walk among snares.” We walk continually in the midst of the snares of our enemies, who lie in wait to deprive us of the life of grace. It was the fear of falling into sin that made St. Peter of Alcantara, in his last moments, say to a lay brother who, in attending the saint, accidently touched him: “Brother, remove, remove from me, for I am still alive and in danger of being lost.” The thought of being freed from the danger of sin by death consoled St. Teresa, and made her rejoice as often as she heard the clock strike, that an hour of the combat was past. Hence she used to say: “In each moment of life we may sin and lose God.” Hence the news of approaching death filled the saints not with sorrow or regret, but with sentiments of joy; because they knew that their struggles and the dangers of losing the divine grace were soon to have an end.

3. “But the just man, if he be prevented with death, shall be in rest.” (Wis. 4:7.) He who is prepared to die, regards death as a relief. If, says St. Cyprian, you lived in a house whose roof and walls were tottering and threatening destruction, would you not fly from it as soon as possible? In this life everything menaces ruin to the poor soul—the world, the devils, the flesh, the passions, all draw her to sin and to eternal death. It was this that

made St. Paul exclaim: “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24.) Who shall deliver me from this body of mine, which lives continually in a dying state, on account of the assaults of my enemies? Hence he esteemed death as a great gain, because it brought to him the possession of Jesus Christ, his true life. Happy then are they who die in the Lord: because they escape from pains and toils, and go to rest. “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours.” (Apoc. 14:13.) It is related in the lives of the ancient fathers, that one of them who was very old, when dying, smiled, while the others wept. Being asked why he smiled, he said: “Why do you weep at seeing me go to rest?—Ex labore ad requiem vado, et vos ploratis?” At the hour of death, St. Catherine of Sienna said to her sisters in religion: Rejoice with me: for I leave this land of suffering, and am going to the kingdom of peace. The death of the saints is called a sleep—that is, the repose which God gives to his servants as the reward of their toil. “When he shall give sleep to his beloved, behold the inheritance of the Lord.” (Ps. 126:2.) Hence the soul that loves God neither weeps nor is troubled at the approach of death, but, embracing the crucifix, and burning with love, she says: “In peace in the self same I will sleep and I will rest.” (Ps. 4:9.)

4. That “Proficiscere de hoc mundo,” (“Depart, Christian soul, from this world,”) which is so appalling to sinners at the hour of death, does not alarm the saints. “But the souls of the just are in the hands of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them.” (Wis. 3:1.) The saint is not afflicted, like worldlings, at the thought of being obliged to leave the goods of this earth, because he has kept the soul detached from them. During life, he always regarded God as the Lord of his heart and as the sole riches which he desired: “What have I in heaven? and, besides thee, what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart and the God that is my portion for ever.” (Ps. 72:25, 26.) He is not afflicted at leaving honours, because the only honour which he sought was, to love and to be loved by God. All the honours of this world he has justly esteemed as smoke and vanity. He is not afflicted at leaving his relatives, because he loved them only in God. In his last moments he recommends them to his heavenly Father, who loves them more than he does. And having a secure confidence of salvation, he hopes to be better able to assist his relatives from Paradise, than on this earth. In a

word, what he frequently said during life, he continues to repeat with greater fervour at the hour of death—“My God and my all.”

5. Besides, his peace is not disturbed by the pains of death; but, seeing that he is now at the end of his life, and that he has no more time to suffer for God, or to offer him other proofs of love, he accepts those pains with joy, and offers them to God as the last remains of life; and uniting his death with the death of Jesus Christ, he offers it to the Divine Majesty.

6. And although the remembrance of the sins which he has committed will afflict, it will not disturb him; for, since he is convinced that the Lord will forget the sins of all true penitents, the very sorrow which he feels for his sins, gives him an assurance of pardon. “If the wicked do penance. . . . I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done.” (Ezec. 18:21 and 22.) “How,” asks St. Basil, “can any one be certain that God has pardoned his sins? He may be certain of pardon if he say: I have hated and abhorred iniquity.” (In Reg. inter. 12.) He who detests his sins, and offers to God his death in atonement for them, may rest secure that God has pardoned them. “Mors,” says St. Augustine, “quæ in lege naturæ erat pœna peccati in lege gratiæ est hostia pro peccato.” (Lib. iv. de Trin. c. xxii.) Death, which was a chastisement of sin under the law of nature, has become, in the law of grace, a victim of penance, by which the pardon of sin is obtained.

7. The very love which a soul bears to God, assures her of his grace, and delivers her from the fear of being lost. “Charity casteth out fear.” (1 John 4:18.) If, at the hour of death, you are unwilling to pardon an enemy, or to restore what is not your own, or if you wish to keep up an improper friendship, then tremble for your eternal salvation; for you have great reason to be afraid of death; but if you seek to avoid sin, and to preserve in your heart a testimony that you love God, be assured that he is with you: and if the Lord is with you, what do you fear? And if you wish to be assured that you have within you the divine love, embrace death with peace, and offer it from your heart to God. He that offers to God his death, makes an act of love the most perfect that is possible for him to perform; because, by cheerfully embracing death to please God, at the time and in the manner which God ordains, he becomes like the martyrs, the entire merit of whose martyrdom consisted in suffering and dying to please God.

SECOND POINT. DEATH FREES US FROM ACTUAL SINS.

8. It is impossible to live in this world without committing at least some slight faults. “A just man shall fall seven times.” (Prov. 24:16.) He who ceases to live, ceases to offend God. Hence St. Ambrose called death the burial of vices: by death they are buried, and never appear again. “Quid est mors nisi sepultura vitorum?” (De Bono Mort. cap. iv.) The venerable Vincent Caraffa consoled himself at the hour of death by saying: now that I cease to live, I cease for ever to offend my God. He who dies in the grace of God, goes into that happy state in which he shall love God for ever, and shall never more offend him. “Mortuus,” says the same holy doctor, “nescit peccare. Quid tanto pere vita mistam desideramus, in qua quanto diutius quis fuerit, tanto majori oneratur sarcina peccatorum.” How can we desire this life, in which the longer we live, the greater shall be the load of our sins?

9. Hence the Lord praises the dead more than any man living: “I praised the dead rather than the living.” (Eccl. 4:2.) Because no man on this earth, however holy he may be, is exempt from sins. A spiritual soul gave directions that the person who should bring to her the news of death, should say: “Console yourself, for the time has arrived when you shall no longer offend God.”

10. St. Ambrose adds, that God permitted death to enter into the world, that, by dying, men should cease to sin: “Passus est Dominus subintrare mortem ut culpa cessaret.” (Loco cit.) It is, then, a great error to imagine that death is a chastisement for those who love God. It is a mark of the love which God bears to them; because he shortens their life to put an end to sin, from which they cannot be exempt as long as they remain on this earth. “For his soul pleased God: therefore he hastened to bring him out of the midst of iniquities.” (Wis. 4:14.)

THIRD POINT. DEATH DELIVERS US FROM THE DANGER OF FALLING INTO HELL, AND OPENS PARADISE TO US.

11. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of the saints.” (Ps. 115:16.) Considered according to the senses, death excites fear and terror; but, viewed with the eye of faith, it is consoling and desirable. To the saints it is as amiable and as precious, as it appears terrible to sinners. “It is precious,” says St. Bernard, “as the end of labours, the consummation of

victory, the gate of life.” The joy of the cup-bearer of Pharaoh, at hearing from Joseph that he should soon be released from prison, bears no comparison to that which a soul that loves God feels on hearing that she is to be liberated from the exile of this earth, and to be transported to the enjoyment of God in her true country. The Apostle says, that, as long as we remain in the body, we wander at a distance from our country in a strange land, and far removed from the life of God: “While we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord.” (2 Cor. 5:6.) Hence, St. Bruno teaches, that our death should not be called death, but the beginning of life. “Mors dicenda non est, sed vitæ principium.” And St. Athanasius says: “Non est justis mors sed translatio.” To the just, death is but a passage from the miseries of this earth to the eternal delights of Paradise. O desirable death! exclaimed St. Augustine; who is there that does not desire thee? For thou art the term of evils, the end of toils, and the beginning of everlasting repose! “O mors desirabilis, malorum finis, laboris clausula, quietis principium.”

12. No one can enter into heaven to see God without passing through the gate of death. “This is the gate of the Lord—the just shall enter into it.” (Ps. 117:20.) Hence, addressing death, St. Jerome said: “Aperi mini soror mea.” Death, my sister, if you do not open the gate to me, I cannot enter to enjoy my God. And St. Charles Borromeo, seeing in his house a picture of death with a knife in the hand, sent for a painter to cancel the knife, and substitute for it a key of gold; because, said the saint, it is death that opens Paradise. Were a queen confined in a dark prison, how great would be her joy at hearing that the gates of the prison are open, and that she is to return from the dungeon to her palace! It was to be liberated by death from the prison of this life that David asked, when he said: “Bring my soul out of prison.” (Ps. 141:8.) This, too, was the favour which the venerable Simeon asked of the infant Jesus, when he held him in his arms: “Now thou dost dismiss thy servant.” (Luke 2:29.) “As if detained by force,” says St. Ambrose, “he asked to be dismissed.” Simeon sought to be delivered by death, as if he had been compelled by force to live on this earth.

13. St. Cyprian says, that the sinner who shall pass from temporal to eternal death, has just reason to be afraid of death. “Mori timeat, qui ad secundum mortem de hac morte transibit.” But he who is in the state of grace and hopes to pass from death to eternal life—which is the true life—fears not death. It is related that a certain rich man gave to St. John the

Almoner a large sum of money to be dispensed in alms, for the purpose of obtaining from God a long life for his only son. The son died in a short time. The father complained of the death of his son; but, to console him, the Lord sent an angel to say to him: “You have sought a long life for your son, and the Lord has heard your prayer; for your son is in heaven, where he enjoys eternal life.” This is the grace which, according to the promise of the prophet Osee, the Redeemer obtained for us. “O death, I will be thy death.” (13:14.) By his redemption, Jesus Christ destroyed death, and changed it into a source of life to us. When St. Pionius, martyr, was asked how he could go to death with so much joy, he answered: “You err; I do not go to death but to life.” “Erratis non ad mortem, sed ad vitam contendo.” (Apud Eusub., lib. iv. cap. xiv.) Thus also St. Symphorosa exhorted her son, St. Symphorian, to martyrdom: “My son,” said she, “life is not taken away from you; it is only changed for a better one.”

14. St. Augustine says, that they who love God desire to see him speedily, and that, therefore, to them life is a cause of suffering, and death an occasion of joy. “Patienter vivit, delectabiliter moritur.” (Trac. ix. in Ep. Joan.) St. Teresa used to say, that to her life was death. Hence she composed the celebrated hymn, “I die because I do not die.” To that great servant of God D. Sancia Carriglio—a penitent of Father M. Avila—it was one day revealed, that she had but a year to live; she answered: “Alas! must I remain another year at a distance from God? O sorrowful year, which will appear to me longer than an age.” Such is the language of souls who love God from their heart. It is a mark of little love of God not to desire to see him speedily.

15. Some of you will say: I desire to go to God, but I fear death. I am afraid of the assaults which I shall then experience from hell. I find that the saints have trembled at the hour of death; how much more ought I to tremble! I answer: It is true that hell doos not cease to assail even the saints at death, but it is also true that God does not cease to assist his servants at that moment; and when the dangers are increased, he multiplies his helps. “Ibi plus auxilii,” says St. Ambrose, “ubi plus periculi.” (ad Jos. cap. v.) The servant of Eliseus was struck with terror when he saw the city surrounded by enemies; but the saint inspired him with courage by showing to him a multitude of angels sent by God to defend it. Hence the prophet afterwards said: “Fear not, for there are more with us than with them.” (4

Kings 6:16.) The powers of hell will assail the dying Christian; but his angel guardian will come to console him. His patrons, and St. Michael, who has been appointed by God to defend his faithful servants in their last combat with the devils, will come to his aid. The mother of God will come to assist those who have been devoted to her. Jesus Christ shall come to defend from the assaults of hell the souls for which he died on a cross: he will give them confidence and strength to resist every attack. Hence, filled with courage, they will say: “The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear?” (Isa. 26:1.) Truly has Origen said, that the Lord is more desirous of our salvation than the devil is of our perdition, because God’s love for us far surpasses the devil’s hatred of our souls. “Major illa cura est, ut nos ad veram pertrahat salutem, quam diabolo, ut nos ad æternam damnationem impellat.” (Hom. xx.)

16. God is faithful, he will never permit us to be tempted above our strength: “Fidclis Deus non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis.” (1 Cor. 10:13.) It is true that some saints have suffered great fear at the hour of death; but they have been few. The Lord, as Belluacensis says, has permitted this fear to cleanse them at death from some defect. “Justi quandoque dure moriendo purgantur in hoc mundo.” But we know that, generally speaking, the saints have died with a joyful countenance. Father Joseph Scamacca, a man of a holy life, being asked if, in dying, he felt confidence in God, answered: Have I served Mahomet, that I should now doubt of the goodness of my God, or of his wish to save me? Ah! the Lord knows well how to console his servants in their last moments. Even in the midst of the agony of death, he infuses into their souls a certain sweetness and a certain foretaste of that happiness which he will soon bestow upon them. As they who die in sin begin to experience from the bed of death a certain foretaste of hell—certain extraordinary terrors, remorses, and fits of despair; so, on the other hand, the saints, by the fervent acts of divine love which they then make, and by the confidence and the desire which they feel of soon seeing God, taste, before death, that peace which they shall afterwards fully enjoy in heaven.

17. Father Suarez died with so much peace, that in his last moments he said: “I could not have imagined that death was so sweet.” Being advised by his physician not to fix his thoughts so constantly on death, Cardinal Baronius said: Is it lest the fear of death should shorten my life? I fear not;

on the contrary, I love and desire death. Of the Cardinal Bishop of Rochester, Saunders relates, that, in preparing to die for the faith, he put on his best clothes, saying that he was going to a nuptial feast. When he came within view of the place of execution, he threw away his staff, and said: O my feet, walk fast; for we are not far from Paradise. “Ite pedes, parum a paradiso distamus.” Before death, he wished to recite the TE DEUM, in thanksgiving to God for permitting him to die for the holy faith; and, full of joy, he laid his head on the block. St. Francis of Assisium began to sing at the hour of death. Brother Elias said to him: Father, at the hour of death, we ought rather to weep than to sing. But, replied the saint, I cannot abstain from singing at the thought of soon going to enjoy God. A nun of the order of St. Teresa, in her last moments, said to her sisters in religion, who were in tears: O God! why do you weep? I am going to possess my Jesus; if you love me, weep not, but rejoice with me. (Dis. Parol. i. § 6.)

18. Father Granada relates, that a certain sportsman found in a wood a solitary singing in his last agony. How, said the sportsman, can you sing in such a state? The hermit replied: Brother, between me and God there is nothing but the wall of this body. I now see that since my flesh is falling in pieces, the prison shall be destroyed, and I shall soon go to see God. It is for this reason I rejoice and sing. Through the desire of seeing God, St. Ignatius, martyr, said, that if the wild beasts should spare him, he would provoke them to devour him. “Ego vim faciam, ut devorer.” St. Catherine of Genoa was astonished that some persons regarded death as a misfortune, and said: “O beloved death, in what a mistaken light do men view you! Why do you not come to me? I call on you day and night.” (Vita, *c.* 7.)

19. Oh! how peculiarly happy is the death of the servants of Mary! Father Binetti relates, that a person whom he assisted in his last moments, and who was devoted to the Blessed Virgin, said to him: “Father, you cannot conceive the consolation which arises at death from the remembrance of having served Mary. Ah! my father, if you knew what happiness I feel on account of having served this good mother! I cannot express it.” What joy shall the lovers of Jesus Christ experience at his coming to them in the most holy viaticum! Happy the soul that can then address her Saviour in the words which St. Philip Neri used when the viaticum was brought to him: “Behold my love! behold my love! give me my love!” But, to entertain

these sentiments at death, we must have ardently loved Jesus Christ during life.

Sermon XII

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SALVATION

“He sent them into his vineyard.”—MATTHEW 20:2.

THE vines of the Lord are our souls, which he has given us to cultivate by good works, that we may be one day admitted into eternal glory. “How,” says Salvian, “does it happen that a Christian believes, and still does not fear the future?” Christians believe death, judgment, hell, and Paradise: but they live as if they believed them not—as if these truths of faith were fables or the inventions of human genius. Many live as if they were never to die, or as if they had not to give God an account of their life—as if there were neither a hell nor a heaven. Perhaps they do not believe in them? They believe, but do not reflect on them; and thus they are lost. They take all possible care of worldly affairs, but attend not to the salvation of their souls. I shall show you, this day, that the salvation of your souls is the most important of all affairs.

First Point.—Because, if the soul is lost, all is lost.

Second Point.—Because, if the soul is lost once, it is lost for ever.

FIRST POINT. IF THE SOUL IS LOST, ALL IS LOST.

1. “But,” says St. Paul, “we entreat you . . . that you do your own business.” (1 Thess. 4:10, 11.) The greater part of worldlings are most attentive to the business of this world. What diligence do they not employ to gain a law-suit or a post of emolument! How many means are adopted—how many measures taken? They neither eat nor sleep. And what efforts do they make to save their souls? All blush at being told that they neglect the affairs of their families; and how few are ashamed to neglect the salvation of their

souls. “Brethren,” says St. Paul, “I entreat you that you do your own business;” that is, the business of your eternal salvation.

2. “Nugæ puerorum,” says St. Bernard, “nugæ vocantur, nugæ malorum negotia vocantur.” The trifles of children are called trifles, but the trifles of men are called business; and for these many lose their souls. If in one worldly transaction you suffer a loss, you may repair it in another; but if you die in enmity with God, and lose your soul, how can you repair the loss? “What exchange can a man give for his soul:” (Matt. 16:26.) To those who neglect the care of salvation, St. Euterius says: “Quam pretiosus sis, O homo, si Creatori non credis, interroga Redemptorem.” (Hom. ii. in Symb.) If, from being created by God to his own image, you do not comprehend the value of your soul, learn it from Jesus Christ, who has redeemed you with his own blood. “You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold or silver, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled.” (1 Pet. 1:18, 19.)

3. God, then, sets so high a value on your soul; such is its value in the estimatien of Satan, that, to become master of it, he does not sleep night or day, but is continually going about to make it his own. Hence St. Augustine exclaims: “The enemy sleeps not, and you are asleep.” The enemy is always awake to injure you, and you slumber. Pope Benedict the Twelfth, being asked by a prince for a favour which he could not conscientiously grant, said to the ambassador: Tell the prince, that, if I had two souls, I might be able to lose one of them in order to please him; but, since I have but one, I cannot consent to lose it. Thus he refused the favour which the prince sought from him.

4. Brethren, remember that, if you save your souls, your failure in every worldly transaction will be but of little importance: for, if you are saved, you shall enjoy complete happiness for all eternity. But, if you lose your souls, what will it profit you to have enjoyed all the riches, honours, and amusements of this world? If you lose your souls, all is lost. “What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?” (Matt. 16:26.) By this maxim St. Ignatius of Loyola drew many souls to God, and among them the soul of St. Francis Xavier, who was then at Paris, and devoted his attention to the acquirement of worldly goods. One day St. Ignatius said to him: “Francis, whom do you serve? You serve the world, which is a traitor, that promises, but does not perform. And if it

should fulfil all its promises, how long do its goods last? Can they last longer than this life? And, after death, what will they profit you, if you shall not have saved your soul?” He then reminded Francis of the maxims of the Gospel: “What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?” “But one thing is necessary?” (Luke 10:42.) It is not necessary to become rich on this earth—to acquire honours and dignities; but it is necessary to save our souls; because, unless we gain heaven we shall be condemned to hell: there is no middle place: we must be either saved or damned. God has not created us for this earth; neither does he preserve our lives that we may become rich and enjoy amusements. “And the end life everlasting.” (Rom. 6:22.) He has created us, and preserved us, that we may acquire eternal glory.

5. St. Philip Neri used to say, that he who does not seek, above all things, the salvation of his soul, is a fool. If on this earth there were two classes of men, one mortal, and the other immortal, and if the former saw the latter entirely devoted to the acquisition of earthly goods, would they not exclaim: O fools that you are! You have it in your power to secure the immense and eternal goods of Paradise, and you lose your time in procuring the miserable goods of this earth, which shall end at death. And for these you expose yourselves to the danger of the eternal torments of hell. Leave to us, for whom all shall end at death, the care of these earthly things. But, brethren, we are all immortal, and each of us shall be eternally happy or eternally miserable in the other life. But the misfortune of the greater part of mankind is, that they are solicitous about the present, and never think of the future. “Oh! that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last end.” (Deut. 32:29.) Oh! that they knew how to detach themselves from present goods, which last but a short time, and to provide for what must happen after death—an eternal reign in heaven, or everlasting slavery in hell. St. Philip Neri, conversing one day with Francis Zazzera, a young man of talent who expected to make a fortune in the world, said to him: “You shall realize a great fortune; you shall be a prelate, afterwards a cardinal, and in the end, perhaps, pope. But what must follow? what must follow? Go, my son, think on these words.” The young man departed, and after meditating on the words, *what must follow? what must follow?* he renounced his worldly prospects, and gave himself entirely to God; and,

retiring from the world, he entered into the congregation of St. Philip, and died a holy death.

6. "The fashion of this world passeth away." (1 Cor. 7:31.) On this passage, Cornelius a Lapide, says, that "the world is as it were a stage." The present life is a comedy, which passes away. Happy the man who acts his part well in this comedy by saving his soul. But if he shall have spent his life in the acquisition of riches and worldly honours, he shall justly be called a fool; and at the hour of death he shall receive the reproach addressed to the rich man in the gospel: "Fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:20.) In explaining the words "they require," Toletus says, that the Lord has given us our souls to guard them against the assaults of our enemies; and that at death the angel shall come to require them of us, and shall present them at the tribunal of Jesus Christ. But if we shall have lost our souls by attending only to the acquisition of earthly possessions, these shall belong to us no longer—they shall pass to other hands: and what shall then become of our souls?

7. Poor worldlings! of all the riches which they acquired, of all the pomps which they displayed in this life, what shall they find at death? "They have slept their sleep: and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands." (Ps. 75:6.) The dream of this present life shall be over at death, and they shall have acquired nothing for eternity. Ask of so many great men of this earth—of the princes and emperors, who, during life, have abounded in riches, honours, and pleasures, and are at this moment in hell—what now remains of all the riches which they possessed in this world? They answer with tears: "Nothing, nothing." And of so many honours enjoyed—of so many past pleasures—of so many pomps and triumphs, what now remains? They answer with howling: "Nothing, nothing."

8. Justly, then, has St. Francis Xavier said, that in the world there is but one good and one evil. The former consists in saving our souls; the latter in losing them. Hence, David said: "One thing I have asked of the Lord; this I will seek after—that I may dwell in the house of the Lord." (Ps. 26:4.) One thing only have I sought, and will for ever seek, from God—that he may grant me the grace to save my soul; for, if I save my soul, all is safe; if I lose it, all is lost. And, what is more important, if my soul be once lost, it is lost for ever. Let us pass to the second point.

SECOND POINT. IF THE SOUL BE ONCE LOST, IT IS LOST FOR EVER.

9. Men die but once. If a Christian died twice, he might lose his soul the first, and save it the second time. But we can die only once: if the soul be lost the first time, it is lost for ever. This truth St. Teresa frequently inculcated to her nuns: “One soul,” she would say, “one eternity.” As if she said: We have but one soul: if this be lost, all is lost. There is but “one eternity;” if the soul be once lost, it is lost for ever. “Periisse semel æternum est.”

10. St. Eucherius says that there is no error so great as the neglect of eternal salvation. “Sane supra omnem errorem est dissimulare negotium æternæ salutis.” It is an error which surpasses all errors, because it is irremediable. Other mistakes may be repaired: if a person loses property in one way, he may acquire it in another; if he loses a situation, a dignity, he may afterwards recover them; if he even loses his life, provided his soul be saved, all is safe. But he who loses his soul has no means of repairing the loss. The wailing of the damned arises from the thought, that for them the time of salvation is over, and that there is no hope of remedy for their eternal ruin. “The summer is ended, and we are not saved.” (Jer. 8:20.) Hence they weep, and shall inconsolably weep for ever, saying: “Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us.” (Wis. 5:6.) But what will it profit them to know the error they have committed, when it will be too late to repair it?

11. The greatest torment of the damned arises from the thought of having lost their souls, and of having lost them through their own fault. “Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only from me.” (Osee 13:9.) O miserable being! God says to each of the damned; thy perdition is thine own; that is from thyself; by sin thou hast been the cause of thy damnation; for I was ready to save thee if thou hadst wished to attend to thy salvation. St. Teresa used to say, that when a person loses a trifle through negligence, his peace is disturbed by the thought of having lost it through his own fault. O God! what shall be the pain which each of the damned shall feel on entering into hell, at the thought of having lost his soul—his all—and of having lost them through his own fault!

12. “We must, then, from this day forward, devote all our attention to the salvation of our souls. There is no question, says St. John Chrysostom, of

losing some earthly good which we must one day relinquish. But there is question of losing Paradise, and of going to suffer for ever in hell: “De immortalibus suppliciis, de cœlestis regni amissione res agitur.” We must fear and tremble; it is thus we shall be able to secure eternal happiness. “With fear and trembling work out your salvation.” (Phil. 2:12.) Hence, if we wish to save our souls, we must labour strenuously to avoid dangerous occasions, to resist temptations, and to frequent the sacraments. Without labour we cannot obtain heaven. “The violent bear it away.” The saints tremble at the thought of eternity. St. Andrew Avellino exclaimed with tears: Who knows whether I shall be saved or damned? St. Lewis Bertrand said with trembling: What shall be my lot in the other world? And shall we not tremble? Let us pray to Jesus Christ and his most holy mother to help us to save our souls. This is for us the most important of all affairs: if we succeed in it, we shall be eternally happy; if we fail, we must be for ever miserable.

Sermon XIII

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

ON THE UNHAPPY LIFE OF SINNERS, AND ON THE HAPPY LIFE OF THOSE WHO LOVE GOD

> "And that which fell among the thorns are they who have heard, and, going their way, are choked with the cares and riches of this life, and yield no fruit."—LUKE 8:14.

IN the parable of this day's gospel we are told that part of the seed which the sower went out to sow fell among thorns. The Saviour has declared that the seed represents the divine word, and the thorns the attachment of men to earthly riches and pleasures, which are the thorns that prevent the fruit of the word of God, not only in the future, but even in the present life. O misery of poor sinners! By their sins they not only condemn themselves to eternal torments in the next, but to an unhappy life in this world. This is what I intend to demonstrate in the following discourse.

First Point. The unhappy life of sinners.

Second Point. Happy life of those who love God.

FIRST POINT. UNHAPPY LIFE OF SINNERS.

1. The devil deceives sinners, and makes them imagine that, by indulging their sensual appetites, they shall lead a life of happiness, and shall enjoy peace. But there is no peace for those who offend God. "There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord." (Isa. 48:22.) God declares that all his enemies have led a life of misery, and that they have not even known the way of peace. "Destruction and unhappiness in their ways: and the way of peace they have not known." (Ps. 13:3.)

2. Brute animals that have been created for this world, enjoy peace in sensual delights. Give to a dog a bone, and he is perfectly content; give to an ox a bundle of hay, and he desires nothing more. But man, who has been created for God, to love God, and to be united to him, can be made happy

only by God, and not by the world, though it should enrich him with all its goods. What are worldly goods? They may be all reduced to pleasures of sense, to riches, and to honours. “All that is in the world,” says St. John, “is the concupiscence of the flesh,” *or sensual delights,* “and the concupiscence of the eyes,” *or riches,* “and the pride of life”—that is, earthly honours. (1 John 2:16.) St. Bernard says, that a man may be puffed up with earthly goods, but can never be made content or happy by them. “Inflari potest, satiari, non potest.” And how can earth and wind and dung satisfy the heart of man? In his comment on these words of St. Peter—“Behold, we have left all things”—the same saint says, that he saw in the world different classes of fools. All had a great desire of happiness. Some, such as the avaricious, were content with riches; others, ambitious of honours and of praise, were satisfied with wind; others, seated round a furnace, swallowed the sparks that were thrown from it—these were the passionate and vindictive; others, in fine, drank fetid water from a stagnant pool—and these were the voluptuous and unchaste. O fools! adds the saint, do you not perceive that all these things, from which you seek content, do not satisfy, but, on the contrary, increase the cravings of your heart? “Hæc potius famem provocant, quam extinguunt.” Of this we have a striking example in Alexander the Great, who, after having conquered half the world, burst into tears, because he was not master of the whole earth.

3. Many expect to find peace in accumulating riches; but how can these satisfy their desires? “Major pecunia,” says St. Augustine, “avaritiæ fauces non claudit, sed extendit.” A large quantity of money does not close, but rather extends, the jaws of avarice;—that is, the enjoyment of riches excites, rather than satiates, the desire of wealth. “Thou wast debased even to hell; thou hast been wearied in the multitude of thy ways; yet thou saidst not, I will rest. (Isa. 57:9, 10.) Poor worldlings! they labour and toil to acquire an increase of wealth and property, but never enjoy repose: the more they accumulate riches, the greater their disquietude and vexation. “The rich have wanted, and have suffered hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good.” (Ps. 33:11.) The rich of this world are, of all men, the most miserable; because, the more they possess, the more they desire to possess. They never succeed in attaining all the objects of their wishes, and therefore they are far poorer than men who have but a competency, and seek God alone. These are truly rich, because they are

content with their condition, and find in God every good. “They that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good.” To the saints, because they possess God, nothing is wanting; to the worldly rich, who are deprived of God, all things are wanting, because they want peace. The appellation of fool was, therefore, justly given to the rich man in the gospel (Luke 12:19.), who, because his land brought forth plenty of fruits, said to his soul: “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take rest, eat, drink, make good cheer.” (Luke 12:19.) But this man was called a fool. “Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?” (*v.* 20.) And why was he called a fool. Because he imagined that by these goods—by eating and drinking—he should be content, and should enjoy peace. “Rest,” he said, “eat, drink.” “Numquid, says St. Basil of Seleucia, “animam porcinam habes?” Hast thou the soul of a brute, that thou expectest to make it happy by eating and drinking?

4. But, perhaps sinners who seek after and attain worldly honours are content? All the honours of this earth are but smoke and wind (“Ephraim feedeth on the wind”—Osee 12:1), and how can these content the heart of a Christian? “The pride of them,” says David, “ascendeth continually.” (Ps. 73:23.) The ambitious are not satisfied by the attainment of certain honours: their ambition and pride continually increase; and thus their disquietude, their envy, and their fears are multiplied.

5. They who live in the habit of sins of impurity, feed, as the Prophet Jeremiah says, on dung. “Qui voluptuose vescebantur, amplexati sunt stercora.” (Thren. 4:5.) How can dung content or give peace to the soul? Ah! what peace, what peace can sinners at a distance from God enjoy? They may possess the riches, honours, and delights of this world; but they never shall have peace. No; the word of God cannot fail: he has declared that there is no peace for his enemies. “There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord.” (Isaias, 48:22.) Poor sinners! they, as St. Chrysostom says, always carry about with them their own executioner—that is, a guilty conscience, which continually torments them. “Peccator conscientiam quasi carnificem circumgestat.” (Serm. x. de Laz.) St. Isidore asserts, that there is no pain more excruciating than that of a guilty conscience. Hence he adds, that he who leads a good life is never sad. “Nulla pœna gravior pœna conscientiæ: vis nunquam csse tristis? bene vive.” (S. Isid., lib. 2, Solit.)

6. In describing the deplorable state of sinners, the Holy Ghost compares them to a sea continually tossed by the tempest. “The wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest.” (Isa. 57:20.) Waves come and go, but they are all waves of bitterness and rancour; for every cross and contradiction disturbs and agitates the wicked. If a person at a ball or musical exhibition, were obliged to remain suspended by a cord with his head downwards, could he feel happy at the entertainment? Such is the state of a Christian in enmity with God: his soul is as it were turned upside down; instead of being united with God and detached from creatures, it is united with creatures and separated from God. But creatures, says St. Vincent Ferrer, are without, and do not enter to content the heart, which God alone can make happy. “Non intrant ibi ubi est sitis.” The sinner is like a man parched with thirst, and standing in the middle of a fountain: because the waters which surround him do not enter to satisfy his thirst, he remains in the midst of them more thirsty than before.

7. Speaking of the unhappy life which he led when he was in a state of sin, David said: “My tears have been my bread, day and night, whilst it is said to me daily: Where is thy God?” (Ps. 41:4.) To relieve himself, he went to his villas, to his gardens, to musical entertainments, and to various other royal amusements, but they all said to him: “David, if thou expectest comfort from us, thou art deceived. Where is thy God? Go and seek thy God, whom thou hast lost; for he alone can restore thy peace.” Hence David confessed that, in the midst of his princely wealth, he enjoyed no repose, and that he wept night and day. Let us now listen to his son Solomon, who acknowledged that he indulged his senses in whatsoever they desired. “Whatsoever my eyes desired, I refused them not.” (Eccl. 2:10.) But, after all his sensual enjoyments, he exclaimed: “Vanity of vanities: . . . behold all is vanity and affliction of spirit.” (Eccles. 1:2 and 14.) Mark! he declares that all the pleasures of this earth are not only vanity of vanities, but also affliction of spirit. And this sinners well know from experience; for sin brings with it the fear of divine vengeance. The man who is encompassed by powerful enemies never sleeps in peace; and can the sinner, who has God for an enemy, enjoy tranquillity? “Fear to them that work evil.” (Prov. 10:29.) The Christian who commits a mortal sin feels himself oppressed with fear—every leaf that moves excites terror. “The sound of dread is always in his ears.” (Job 15:21.) He appears to be always flying away,

although no one pursues him. “The wicked man fleeth when no man pursueth.” (Prov. 28:1.) He shall be persecuted, not by men, but by his own sin. It was thus with Cain, who, after having killed his brother Abel, was seized with fear, and said: “Every one, therefore, that findeth me shall kill me.” (Gen. 4:14.) The Lord assured him that no one should injure him: “The Lord said to him: “No; it shall not be so.” (*v.* 15.) But, notwithstanding this assurance, Cain, pursued by his own sins, was, as the Scripture attests, always flying from one place to another “He dwelt a fugitive on the earth.” (*v.* 16.)

8. Moreover, sin brings with it remorse of conscience—that cruel worm that gnaws incessantly, and never dies. “Their worm shall not die.” (Isa 66:24.) If the sinner goes to a festival, to a comedy, to a banquet, his conscience continually reproaches him, saying: Unhappy man! you have lost God; if you were now to die, what should become of you? The torture of remorse of conscience, even in the present life, is so great that, to free themselves from it, some persons have put an end to their lives Judas, through despair, hanged himself. A certain man who had killed an infant, was so much tormented with remorse that he could not rest. To rid himself of it he entered into a monastery; but finding no peace even there, he went before a judge, acknowledged his crime, and got himself condemned to death.

9. God complains of the injustice of sinners in leaving him, who is the fountain of all consolation, to plunge themselves into fetid and broken cisterns, which can give no peace. “For my people have done two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns—broken cisterns—that can hold no water.” (Jer. 2:13.) You have, the Lord says to sinners, refused to serve me, your God, in, peace. Unhappy creatures! you shall serve your enemies in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and in want of every kind. “Because thou didst not serve the Lord thy God with joy and gladness, . . . thou shalt serve thy enemy in hunger, and thirst, and “nakedness, and in want of all things.” (Deut. 28:47, 48.) This is what sinners experience every day. What do not the vindictive endure after they have satisfied their revenge by the murder of an enemy? They fly continually from the relations of their murdered foe, and from the minister of justice. They live as fugitives, poor, afflicted, and abandoned by all. What do not the voluptuous and unchaste suffer in order

to gratify their wicked desires? What do not the avaricious suffer in order to acquire the possessions of others? Ah! if they suffered for God what they suffer for sin, they would lay up great treasures for eternity, and would lead a life of peace and happiness: but, by living in sin, they lead a life of misery here, to lead a still more miserable life for eternity hereafter. Hence they weep continually in hell, saying: "We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways." (Wis. 5:7.) We have, they exclaim, walked through hard ways, through paths covered with thorns. We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity: we have laboured hard: we have sweated blood: we have led a life full of misery, of gall, and of poison. And why? To bring ourselves to a still more wretched life in this pit of fire.

SECOND POINT. THE HAPPY LIFE OF THOSE WHO LOVE GOD.

10. "Justice and peace have kissed." (Ps. 84:11.) Peace resides in every soul in which justice dwells. Hence David said: "Delight in the Lord, and he will give thee the requests of thy heart." (Ps. 36:4.) To understand this text, we must consider that worldlings seek to satisfy the desires of their hearts with the goods of this earth; but, because these cannot make them happy, their hearts continually make fresh demands; and, how much soever they may acquire of these goods, they are not content. Hence the Prophet says: "Delight in the Lord, and he will give thee the requests of thy heart." Give up creatures, seek your delight in God, and he will satisfy all the cravings of your heart.

11. This is what happened to St. Augustine, who, as long as he sought happiness in creatures, never enjoyed peace; but, as soon as he renounced them, and gave to God all the affections of his heart, he exclaimed: "All things are hard, O Lord, and thou alone art repose." As if he said: Ah! Lord, I now know my folly. I expected to find felicity in earthly pleasures; but now I know that they are only vanity and affliction of spirit, and that thou alone art the peace and joy of our hearts.

12. The Apostle says, that the peace which God gives to those who love, surpasses all the sensual delights which a man can enjoy on this earth. "The peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding." (Phil. 4:7.) St. Francis of Assisium, in saying "My God and my all," experienced on this earth an

anticipation of Paradise. St. Francis Xavier, in the midst of his labours in India for the glory of Jesus Christ, was so replenished with divine consolations, that he exclaimed: “Enough, O Lord, enough.” Where, I ask, has any lover of this world been found, so satisfied with the possessions of worldly goods, as to say: Enough, O world, enough; no more riches, no more honours, no more applause, no more pleasures? Ah, no! worldlings are constantly seeking after higher honours, greater riches, and new delights; but the more they have of them, the less are their desires satisfied, and the greater their disquietude.

13. It is necessary to persuade ourselves of this truth, that God alone can give content. Worldlings do not wish to be convinced of it, through an apprehension that, if they give themselves to God, they shall lead a life of bitterness and discontent. But, with the Royal Prophet, I say to them: “O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet.” (Ps. 33:9.) Why, O sinners, will you despise and regard as miserable that life which you have not as yet tried? “O taste and see.” Begin to make a trial of it; hear Mass every day; practise mental prayer and the visitation of the most holy sacrament; go to communion at least once a week; fly from evil conversations; walk always with God; and you shall see that, by such a life, you will enjoy that sweetness and peace which the world, with all its delights, has not hitherto been able to give you.

Sermon XIV

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

DELUSIONS OF SINNERS

“Lord, that I may see.”—LUKE 18:41.

1. THE Devil brings sinners to hell by closing their eyes to the dangers of perdition. He first blinds them, and then leads them with himself to eternal torments. If, then, we wish to be saved, we must continually pray to God in the words of the blind man in the gospel of this day, “Lord, that I may see.” Give me light: make me see the way in which I must walk in order to save my soul, and to escape the deceits of the enemy of salvation. I shall, brethren, this day place before your eyes the delusion by which the devil tempts men to sin and to persevere in sin, that you may know how to guard yourselves against his deceitful artifices.

2. To understand these delusions better, let us imagine the case of a young man who, seized by some passion, lives in sin, the slave of Satan, and never thinks of his eternal salvation. My son, I say to him, what sort of life do you lead? If you continue to live in this manner, how will you be able to save your soul? But, behold! the devil, on the other hand, says to him: Why should you be afraid of being lost? Indulge your passions for the present: you will afterwards confess your sins, and thus all shall be remedied. Behold the net by which the devil drags so many souls into hell. “Indulge your passions: you will hereafter make a good confession.” But, in reply, I say, that in the meantime you lose your soul. Tell me: if you had a jewel worth a thousand pounds, would you throw it into a river with the hope of afterwards finding it again? What if all your efforts to find it were fruitless? O God! you hold in your hand the invaluable jewel of your soul, which Jesus Christ has purchased with his own blood, and you cast it into hell! Yes; you cast it into hell; because according to the present order of providence, for every mortal sin you commit, your name is written among

the number of the damned. But you say. “I hope to recover God’s grace by making a good confession.” And if you should not recover it, what shall be the consequences? To make a good confession, a true sorrow for sin is necessary, and this sorrow is the gift of God: if he does not give it, will you not be lost for ever?

3. You rejoin: “I am young; God compassionates my youth; I will hereafter give myself to God.” Behold another delusion! You are young; but do you not know that God counts, not the years, but the sins of each individual? You are young; but how many sins have you committed? Perhaps there are many persons of a very advanced age, who have not been guilty of the fourth part of the sins which you have committed. And do you not know that God has fixed for each of us the number of sins which he will pardon? “The Lord patiently expecteth, that, when the day of judgment shall come, he may punish them in the fulness of their sins.” (2 Mach. 6:14.) God has patience, and waits for a while; but, when the measure of the sins which he has determined to pardon is tilled up, he pardons no more, but chastises the sinner, by suddenly depriving him of life in the miserable state of sin, or by abandoning him in his sin, and executing that threat which he made by the prophet Isaias—“I shall take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be wasted.” (Isa. 5:5.) If a person has cultivated land for many years, has encompassed it with a hedge for its protection, and expended a large sum of money on it, but finds that, after all, it produces no fruit, what will he do with it? He will pluck up the hedge, and abandon it to all men and beasts that may wish to enter. Tremble, then, lest God should treat you in a similar manner. If you do not give up sin, your remorse of conscience and your fear of divine chastisement shall daily increase. Behold the hedge taken away, and your soul abandoned by God—a punishment worse than death itself.

4. You say: “I cannot at present resist this passion.” Behold the third delusion of the devil, by which he makes you believe that at present you have not strength to overcome certain temptations. But St. Paul tells us that God is faithful, and that he never permits us to be tempted above our strength. “And God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted above that which you are able.” (1 Cor. 10:13.) I ask, if you are not now able to resist the temptation, how can you expect to resist it hereafter? If you yield to it, the Devil will become stronger, and you shall become weaker; and if

you be not now able to extinguish this flame of passion, how can you hope to be able to extinguish it when it shall have grown more violent? You say: “God will give me his aid.” But this aid God is ready to give at present if you ask it. Why then do you not implore his assistance? Perhaps you expect that, without now taking the trouble of invoking his aid, you will receive from him increased helps and graces, after you shall have multiplied the number of your sins? Perhaps you doubt the veracity of God, who has promised to give whatever we ask of him? “Ask,” he says, “and it shall be given you.” (Matt. 7:7.) God cannot violate his promises. “God is not as man, that he should lie, nor as the son of man, that he should be changed. Hath he said, then, and will he not do?” (Num. 23:19.) Have recourse to him, and he will give you the strength necessary to resist the temptation. God commands you to resist it, and you say: “I have not strength.” Does God, then, command impossibilities? No; the Council of Trent has declared that “God does not command impossibilities; but, by his commands, he admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask what you cannot do; and he assists, that you may be able to do it.” (Sess. 6. *c.* xiii.) “When you see that you have not sufficient strength to resist temptation with the ordinary assistance of God, ask of him the additional help which you require, and he will give it to you; and thus you shall be able to conquer all temptations, however violent they may be.

5. But you will not pray; and you say that at present you will commit this sin, and will afterwards confess it. But, I ask, how do you know that God will give you time to confess it? You say: “I will go to confession before the lapse of a week.” And who has promised you this week? Well, then you say: “I will go to confession to-morrow.” And who promises you to-morrow? “Crastinum Deus non promisit,” says St. Augustine, “fortasse dabit, et fortasse non dabit.” God has not promised you to-morrow. Perhaps he will give it, and perhaps he will refuse it to you, as he has to so many others. How many have gone to bed in good health, and have been found dead in the morning! How many, in the very act of sin, has the Lord struck dead and sent to hell! Should this happen to you, how will you repair your eternal ruin? “Commit this sin, and confess it afterwards.” Behold the deceitful artifice by which the devil has brought so many thousands of Christians to hell. We scarcely ever find a Christian so sunk in despair as to intend to damn himself. All the wicked sin with the hope of afterwards

going to confession. But, by this illusion, how many have brought themselves to perdition! For them there is now no time for confession, no remedy for their damnation.

6. "But God is merciful." Behold another common delusion by which the devil encourages sinners to persevere in a life of sin! A certain author has said, that more souls have been sent to hell by the mercy of God than by his justice. This is indeed the case; for men are induced by the deceits of the devil to persevere in sin, through confidence in God's mercy; and thus they are lost. "God is merciful." Who denies it? But, great as his mercy, how many does he every day send to hell? God is merciful, but he is also just, and is, therefore, obliged to punish those who offend him. "And his mercy," says the divine mother, "to them that fear him." (Luke 1:50.) But with regard to those who abuse his mercy and despise him, he exercises justice. The Lord pardons sins, but he cannot pardon the determination to commit sin. St. Augustine says, that he who sins with the intention of repenting after his sins, is not a penitent but a scoffer. "Irrisor est non pœnitens." But the Apostle tells us that God will not be mocked. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." (Gal. 6:7.) It would be a mockery of God to insult him as often and as much as you pleased, and afterwards to expect eternal glory.

7. "But," you say, "as God has shown me so many miseries hitherto, I hope he will continue to do so for the future." Behold another delusion! Then, because God has not as yet chastised your sins, he will never punish them! On the contrary, the greater have been his mercies, the more you should tremble, lest, if you offend him again, he should pardon you no more, and should take vengeance on your sins. Behold the advice of the Holy Ghost: "Say not: I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me? for the Most High is a patient rewarder." (Eccles. 5:4.) Do not say: "I have sinned, and no chastisement has fallen upon me." God bears for a time, but not for ever. He waits for a certain time; but when that arrives, he then chastises the sinner for all his past iniquities: and the longer he has waited for repentance, the more severe the chastisement. "Quos diutius expectat," says St. Gregory, "durius damnat." Then, my brother, since you know that you have frequently offended God, and that he has not sent you to hell, you should exclaim: "The mercies of the Lord, that we are not consumed." (Thren. 3:22.) Lord, I thank you for not having sent me to hell, which I have so often deserved. And therefore you ought to give yourself entirely to God,

at least through gratitude, and should consider that, for less sins than you have committed, many are now in that pit of fire, without the smallest hope of being ever released from it. The patience of God in bearing with you, should teach you not to despise him still more, but to love and serve him with greater fervour, and to atone, by penitential austerities and by other holy works, for the insults you have offered to him. You know that he has shown mercies to you, which he has not shown to others. “He hath not done in like manner to every nation.” (Ps. 147:20.) Hence you should tremble, lest, if you commit a single additional mortal sin, God should abandon you, and cast you into hell.

8. Let us come to the next illusion. “It is true that, by this sin, I lose the grace of God; but, even after committing this sin, I may be saved.” You may, indeed, be saved: but it cannot be denied that if, after having committed so many sins, and after having received so many graces from God, you again offend him, there is great reason to fear that you shall be lost. Attend to the words of the sacred Scripture: “A hard heart shall fare evil at the last.” (Eccles. 3:27.) The obstinate sinner shall die an unhappy death. “Evil doers shall be cut off.” (Ps. 36:9.) The wicked shall be cut off by the divine justice. “For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap.” (Gal. 6:8.) He that sows in sin, shall reap eternal torments. “Because I called and you refused, . . . I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared.” (Prov. 1:24, 26.) I called, says the Lord, and you mocked me; but I will mock you at the hour of death. “Revenge is mine, and I will repay them in *due* time.” (Deut. 32:35.) The chastisement of sins belongs to me, and I will execute vengeance on them when the time of vengeance shall arrive. “The man that with a stiff neck despiseth him that reproveth him, shall suddenly be destroyed, and health shall not follow him.” (Prov. 29:1.) The man who obstinately despises those who correct him, shall be punished with a sudden death, and for him there shall be no hope of salvation.

9. Now, brethren, what think you of these divine threats against sinners? Is it easy, or is it not very difficult, to save your souls, if, after so many divine calls, and after so many mercies, you continue to offend God? You say: “But after all, it may happen that I will save my soul.” I answer: “What folly is it to trust your salvation to a perhaps?” How many with this “perhaps I may be saved,” are now in hell? Do you wish to be one of their

unhappy companions? Dearly beloved Christians, enter into yourselves, and tremble; for this sermon may be the last of God’s mercies to you.

Sermon XV

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

ON THE NUMBER OF SINS BEYOND WHICH GOD PARDONS NO MORE

“Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”—MATT. 4:7.

IN this day’s gospel we read that, having gone into the desert, Jesus Christ permitted the devil to “set him upon the pinnacle of the temple,” and say to him: “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down;” for the angels shall preserve thee from all injury. But the Lord answered that, in the Sacred Scriptures it is written: “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” The sinner who abandons himself to sin without striving to resist temptations, or without at least asking God’s help to conquer them, and hopes that the Lord will one day draw him from the precipice, tempts God to work miracles, or rather to show to him an extraordinary mercy not extended to the generality of Christians. God, as the Apostle says, “will have all men to be saved,” (1 Tim. 2:4); but he also wishes us all to labour for our own salvation, at least by adopting the means of overcoming our enemies, and of obeying him when he calls us to repentance. Sinners hear the calls of God, but they forget them, and continue to offend him. But God does not forget them. He numbers the graces which he dispenses, as well as the sins which we commit. Hence, when the time which he has fixed arrives, God deprives us of his graces, and begins to inflict chastisement. I intend to show, in this discourse, that, when sins reach a certain number, God pardons no more. Be attentive.

1. St. Basil, St. Jerome, St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and other fathers, teach that, as God (according to the words of Scripture, “Thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight” (Wis. 11:21), has fixed for each person the number of the days of his life, and the degrees of health and talent which he will give him, so he has also determined for each the number of sins which he will pardon; and when this number is

completed, he will pardon no more. “Illud sentire nos convenit,” says St. Augustine, “tamdiu unumquemque a Dei patientia sustineri, quo consummato nullam illi veniam reserveri.” (De Vita Christi, cap. iii.) Eusebius of Cesarea says: “Deus expectat usque ad certum numerum et postea deserit.” (Lib. 8, cap. ii.) The same doctrine is taught by the above mentioned fathers.

2. “The Lord hath sent me to heal the contrite of heart.” (Isa. 61:1.) God is ready to heal those who sincerely wish to amend their lives, but cannot take pity on the obstinate sinner The Lord pardons sins, but he cannot pardon those who are determined to offend him. Nor can we demand from God a reason why he pardons one a hundred sins, and takes others out of life, and sends them to hell, after three or four sins. By his Prophet Amos, God has said: “For three crimes of Damascus, and for four, I will not convert it.” (1:3.) In this we must adore the judgments of God, and say with the Apostle: “O the depth of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments.” (Rom. 11:33.) He who receives pardon, says St. Augustine, is pardoned through the pure mercy of God; and they who are chastised are justly punished. “Quibus datur misericordia, gratis datur: quibus non datur ex justitia non datur.” (1 de Corrept.) How many has God sent to hell for the first offence? St. Gregory relates, that a child of five years, who had arrived at the use of reason, for having uttered a blasphemy, was seized by the devil and carried to hell. The divine mother revealed to that great servant of God, Benedicta of Florence, that a boy of twelve years was damned after the first sin. Another boy of eight years died after his first sin and was lost. You say; I am young: there are many who have committed more sins than I have. But is God on that account obliged to wait for your repentance if you offend him? In the gospel of St. Matthew (21:19) we read, that the Saviour cursed a fig tree the first time he saw it without fruit. “May no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig tree withered away.” You must, then, tremble at the thought of committing a single mortal sin, particularly if you have already been guilty of mortal sins.

3. “Be not without fear about sins forgiven, and add not sin to sin.” (Eccl. 5:5.) Say not then, O sinner: As God has forgiven me other sins, so he will pardon me this one if I commit it. Say not this; for, if to the sin which has been forgiven you add another, you have reason to fear that this new sin

shall be united to your former guilt, and that thus the number will be completed, and that you shall be abandoned. Behold how the Scripture unfolds this truth more clearly in another place. “The Lord patiently expecteth, that when the day of judgment shall come, he may punish them in the fulness of sins.” (2 Mac. 6:14.) God waits with patience until a certain number of sins is committed, but, when the measure of guilt is filled up, he waits no longer, but chastises the sinner. “Thou hast sealed up my offences as it were in a bag.” (Job 14:17.) Sinners multiply their sins without keeping any account of them; but God numbers them that, when the harvest is ripe, that is, when the number of sins is completed, he may take vengeance on them. “Put ye in the sickles, for the harvest is ripe.” (Joel 3:13.)

4. Of this there are many examples in the Scriptures. Speaking of the Hebrews, the Lord in one place says: “All the men that have tempted me now ten times . . . shall not see the land.” (Num. 14:22, 23.) In another place he says, that he restrained his vengeance against the Amorrhites, because the number of their sins was not completed. “For as yet the iniquities of the Amorrhites are not at the full.” (Gen. 15:16.) We have again the example of Saul, who, after having disobeyed God a second time, was abandoned. He entreated Samuel to interpose before the Lord in his behalf. “Bear, I beseech thee, my sin, and return with me, that I may adore the Lord.” (1 Kings 15:25.) But, knowing that God had abandoned Saul, Samuel answered: “I will not return with thee, because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee,” etc. (*v.* 26.) Saul, you have abandoned God, and he has abandoned you. We have another example in Balthassar, who, after having profaned the vessels of the temple, saw a hand writing on the wall, “Mane, Thecel, Phares.” Daniel was requested to expound the meaning of these words. In explaining the word Thecel, he said to the king: “Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting.” (Dan. 5:27.) By this explanation he gave the king to understand that the weight of his sins in the balance of divine justice had made the scale descend. “The same night, Balthassar, the Chaldean king, was killed.” (Dan. 5:30.) Oh! how many sinners have met with a similar fate! Continuing to offend God till their sins amounted to a certain number they have been struck dead and sent to hell. “They spend their days in wealth,

and in a moment they go down to hell.” (Job 21:13.) Tremble, brethren, lest, if you commit another mortal sin, God should cast you into hell.

5. If God chastised sinners the moment they insult him, we should not see him so much despised. But, because he does not instantly punish their transgressions, and because, through mercy, he restrains his anger and waits for their return, they are encouraged to continue to offend him. “For, because sentence is not speedily pronounced against the evil, the children of men commit evil without any fear.” (Eccles. 8:11.) But it is necessary to be persuaded that, though God bears with us, he does not wait, nor bear with us for ever. Expecting, as on former occasions, to escape from the snares of the Philistines, Samson continued to allow himself to be deluded by Dalila. “I will go out as I did before, and shake myself.” (Judges 16:20.) But “the Lord was departed from him.” Samson was at length taken by his enemies, and lost his life. The Lord warns you not to say: I have committed so many sins, and God has not chastised me “Say not: I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me? for the Most High is a patient rewarder.” (Eccl. 5:4.) God has patience for a certain term, after which he punishes the first and last sins. And the greater has been his patience, the more severe his vengeance.

6. Hence, according to St. Chrysostom, God is more to be feared when he bears with sinners than when he instantly punishes their sins. “Plus timendum est, cum tolerat quam cum festinanter punit.” And why? Because, says St. Gregory, they to whom God has shown most mercy, shall, if they do not cease to offend him, be chastised with the greatest rigour. “Quos diutius expectat durius damnat.” The saint adds that God often punishes such sinners with a sudden death, and does not allow them time for repentance. “Sæpe qui diu tolerati sunt subita morte rapiuntur, ut nee flere ante mortem liceat.” And the greater the light which God gives to certain sinners for their correction, the greater is their blindness and obstinacy in sin. “For it had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than, after they had known it, to turn back.” (2 Pet. 2:21.) Miserable the sinners who, after having been enlightened, return to the vomit. St Paul says, that it is morally impossible for them to be again converted. “For it is impossible for those who were once illuminated—have tasted also the heavenly gifts, . . . and are fallen away, to be renewed again to penance.” (Heb. 6:4, 6.)

7. Listen, then, O sinner, to the admonition of the Lord: “My son, hast thou sinned? Do so no more, but for thy former sins pray that they may be forgiven thee.” (Eccl. 21:1.) Son, add not sins to those which you have already committed, but be careful to pray for the pardon of your past trangressions; otherwise, if you commit another mortal sin, the gates of the divine mercy may be closed against you, and your soul may be lost for ever. When, then, beloved brethren, the devil tempts you again to yield to sin, say to yourself: If God pardons me no more, what shall become of me for all eternity? Should the Devil, in reply, say: “Fear not, God is merciful;” answer him by saying: What certainty or what probability have I, that, if I return again to sin, God will show me mercy or grant me pardon? Because the threat of the Lord against all who despise his calls: “Behold I have called and you refused . . . I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared.” (Prov. 1:24, 26.) Mark the words *I also;* they mean that, as you have mocked the Lord by betraying him again after your confession and promises of amendment, so he will mock you at the hour of death. “I will laugh and will mock.” But “God is not mocked.” (Gal. 6:7.) “As a dog,” says the Wise Man, “that returneth to his vomit, so is the fool that repeateth his folly.” (Prov. 26:11.) B. Denis the Carthusian gives an excellent exposition of this text. He says that, as a dog that eats what he has just vomited, is an object of disgust and abomination, so the sinner who returns to the sins which he has detested and confessed, becomes hateful in the sight of God. “Sicut id quod per vomitum est rejectum, resumere est valide abominabile ac turpe sic peccata deleta reiterari.”

8. O folly of sinners! If you purchase a house, you spare no pains to get all the securities necessary to guard against the loss of your money; if you take medicine, you are careful to assure yourself that it cannot injure you; if you pass over a river, you cautiously avoid all danger of falling into it; and for a transitory enjoyment, for the gratification of revenge, for a beastly pleasure, which lasts but a moment, you risk your eternal salvation, saying: “I will go to confession after I commit this sin.” And when, I ask, are you to go to confession? You say: “On to-morrow.” But who promises you to-morrow? Who assures you that you shall have time for confession, and that God will not deprive you of life, as he has deprived so many others, in the act of sin? “Diem tenes,” says St. Augustine, “qui horam non tenes.” You

cannot be certain of living for another hour, and you say: “I will go to confession to-morrow.” Listen to the words of St. Gregory: “He who has promised pardon to penitents, has not promised to-morrow to sinners.” (Hom. xii. in Evan). God has promised pardon to all who repent; but he has not promised to wait till to-morrow for those who insult him. Perhaps God will give you time for repentance, perhaps he will not. But, should he not give it, what shall become of your soul? In the meantime, for the sake of a miserable pleasure, you lose the grace of God, and expose yourself to the danger of being lost for ever.

9. Would you, for such transient enjoyments, risk your money, your honour, your possessions, your liberty, and your life? No, you would not. How then does it happen that, for a miserable gratification, you lose your soul, heaven, and God? Tell me: do you believe that heaven, hell, eternity, are truths of faith? Do you believe that, if you die in sin, you are lost for ever? Oh! what temerity, what folly is it, to condemn yourself voluntarily to an eternity of torments with the hope of afterwards reversing the sentence of your condemnation! “Nemo,” says St. Augustine, “sub spe salutis vult ægrotare.” No one can be found so foolish as to take poison with the hope of preventing its deadly effects by adopting the ordinary remedies. And you will condemn yourself to hell, saying that you expect to be afterwards preserved from it. O folly! which, in conformity with the divine threats, has brought, and brings every day, so many to hell. “Thou hast trusted in thy wickedness, and evil shall come upon thee, and thou shalt not know the rising thereof.” (Isa. 47:10, 11.) You have sinned, trusting rashly in the divine mercy: the punishment of your guilt shall fall suddenly upon you, and you shall not know from whence it comes. What do you say? What resolution do you make? If, after this sermon, you do not firmly resolve to give yourself to God, I weep over you, and regard you as lost.

Sermon XVI

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

ON HEAVEN

“Lord, it is good for us to be here.”—MATT. 17:4.

IN this day’s gospel we read, that wishing to give his disciples a glimpse of the glory of Paradise, in order to animate them to labour for the divine honour, the Redeemer was transfigured, and allowed them to behold the splendour of his countenance. Ravished with joy and delight, St. Peter exclaimed: “Lord, it is good for us to be here.” Lord, let us remain here; let us never more depart from this place; for, the sight of thy beauty consoles us more than all the delights of the earth. Brethren, let us labour during the remainder of our lives to gain heaven. Heaven is so great a good, that, to purchase it for us, Jesus Christ has sacrificed his life on the cross. Be assured, that the greatest of all the torments of the damned in hell, arise from the thought of having lost heaven through their own fault. The blessings, the delights, the joys, the sweetness of Paradise may be acquired; but they can be described and understood only by those blessed souls that enjoy them. But let us, with the aid of the holy Scripture, explain the little that can be said of them here below.

1. According to the Apostle, no man on this earth can comprehend the infinite blessings which God has prepared for the souls that love him. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him.” (1 Cor. 2:9.) In this life we cannot have an idea of any other pleasures than those which we enjoy by means of the senses. Perhaps we imagine that the beauty of heaven resembles that of a wide extended plain covered with the verdure of spring, interspersed with trees in full bloom, and abounding in birds fluttering about and singing on every side; or, that it is like the beauty of a garden full of fruits and flowers, and surrounded by fountains in continual play. “Oh!

what a Paradise,” to behold such a plain, or such a garden! But, oh! how much greater are the beauties of heaven! Speaking of Paradise, St. Bernard says: O man, if you wish to understand the blessings of heaven, know that in that happy country there is nothing which can be disagreeable, and everything that you can desire. “Nihil est quod nolis, totum est quod velis.” Although there are some things here below which are agreeable to the senses, how many more are there which only torment us? If the light of day is pleasant, the darkness of night is disagreeable: if the spring and the autumn are cheering, the cold of winter and the heat of summer are painful. In addition, we have to endure the pains of sickness, the persecution of men, and the inconveniences of poverty; we must submit to interior troubles, to fears, to temptations of the devil, doubts of conscience, and to the uncertainty of eternal salvation.

2. But, after entering into Paradise, the blest shall have no more sorrows. “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” The Lord shall dry up the tears which they have shed in this life. “And death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow, shall be any more, for the former things are passed away. And he that sat on the throne, said: “Behold, I make all things new.” (Apoc. 21:4, 5.) In Paradise, death and the fear of death are no more: in that place of bliss there are no sorrows, no infirmities, no poverty, no inconveniencies, no vicissitudes of day or night, of cold or of heat. In that kingdom there is a continual day, always serene, a continual spring, always blooming. In Paradise there are no persecutions, no envy; for all love each other with tenderness, and each rejoices at the happiness of the others, as if it were his own. There is no more fear of eternal perdition; for the soul confirmed in grace can neither sin nor lose God.

3. “Totum est quod velis.” In heaven you have all you can desire. “Behold, I make all things new.” There everything is new; new beauties, new delights, new joys. There all our desires shall be satisfied. The sight shall be satiated with beholding the beauty of that city. How delightful to behold a city in which the streets should be of crystal, the houses of silver, the windows of gold, and all adorned with the most beautiful flowers. But, oh! how much more beautiful shall be the city of Paradise! the beauty of the place shall be heightened by the beauty of the inhabitants, who are all clothed in royal robes; for, according to St. Augustine, they are all kings. “Quot cives, tot reges.” How delighted to behold Mary, the queen of

heaven, who shall appear more beautiful than all the other citizens of Paradise! But, what it must be to behold the beauty of Jesus Christ! St. Teresa once saw one of the hands of Jesus Christ, and was struck with astonishment at the sight of such beauty. The smell shall be satiated with odours, but with the odours of Paradise. The hearing shall be satiated with the harmony of the celestial choirs. St. Francis once heard for a moment an angel playing on a violin, and he almost died through joy. How delightful must it be to hear the saints and angels singing the divine praises! “They shall praise thee for ever and ever.” (Ps. 83:5.) What must it be to hear Mary praising God! St. Francis de Sales says, that, as the singing of the nightingale in the wood surpasses that of all other birds, so the voice of Mary is far superior to that of all the other saints. In a word, there are in Paradise all the delights which man can desire.

4. But the delights of which we have spoken are the least of the blessings of Paradise. The glory of heaven consists in seeing and loving God face to face. “Totum quod expectamus,” says St. Augustine, “duæ syllabæ sunt, Deus.” The reward which God promises to us does not consist altogether in the beauty, the harmony, and other advantages of the city of Paradise. God himself, whom the saints are allowed to behold, is, according to the promises made to Abraham, the principal reward of the just in heaven. “I am thy reward exceeding great.” (Gen. 15:1.) St. Augustine asserts, that, were God to show his face to the damned, “Hell would be instantly changed into a Paradise of delights.” (Lib. de trip. habit., tom. 9.) And he adds that, were a departed soul allowed the choice of seeing God and suffering the pains of hell, or of being freed from these pains and deprived of the sight of God, “she would prefer to see God, and to endure these torments.”

5. The delights of the soul infinitely surpass all the pleasures of the senses. Even in this life divine love infuses such sweetness into the soul when God communicates himself to her, that the body is raised from the earth. St. Peter of Alcantara once fell into such an ecstacy of love, that, taking hold of a tree, he drew it up from the roots, and raised it with him on high. So great is the sweetness of divine love, that the holy martyrs, in the midst of their torments, felt no pain, but were on the contrary filled with joy. Hence, St. Augustine says that, when St. Lawrence was laid on a red-hot gridiron, the fervour of divine love made him insensible to the burning heat of the fire. “Hoc igne incensus non sentit incendium.” Even on sinners

who weep for their sins, God bestows consolations which exceed all earthly pleasures. Hence St. Bernard says: “If it be so sweet to weep for thee, what must it be to rejoice in thee!”

6. How great is the sweetness which a soul experiences, when, in the time of prayer, God, by a ray of his own light, shows to her his goodness and his mercies towards her, and particularly the love which Jesus Christ has borne to her in his passion! She feels her heart melting, and as it were dissolved through love. But in this life we do not see God as he really is: we see him as it were in the dark. “We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face.” (1 Cor. 13:12.) Here below God is hidden from our view; we can see him only with the eyes of faith: how great shall be our happiness when the veil shall be raised, and we shall be permitted to behold God face to face! We shall then see his beauty, his greatness, his perfection, his amiableness, and his immense love for our souls.

7. “Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred.” (Eccl. 9:1.) The fear of not loving God, and of not being loved by him, is the greatest affliction which souls that love God endure on the earth; but, in heaven, the soul is certain that she loves God, and that he loves her; she sees that the Lord embraces her with infinite love, and that this love shall not be dissolved for all eternity. The knowledge of the love which Jesus Christ has shown her in offering himself in sacrifice for her on the cross, and in making himself her food in the sacrament of the altar, shall increase the ardour of her love. She shall also see clearly all the graces which God has bestowed upon her, all the helps which he has given her, to preserve her from falling into sin, and to draw her to his love. She shall see that all the tribulations, the poverty, infirmities, and persecutions which she regards as misfortunes, have all proceeded from love, and have been the means employed by Divine Providence to bring her to glory. She shall see all the lights, loving calls, and mercies which God had granted to her, after she had insulted him by her sins. From the blessed mountain of Paradise she shall see so many souls damned for fewer sins than she had committed, and shall see that she herself is saved and secured against the possibility of ever losing God.

8. The goods of this earth do not satisfy our desires: at first they gratify the senses; but when we become accustomed to them they cease to delight. But the joys of Paradise constantly satiate and content the heart. “I shall be

satisfied when thy glory shall appear.” (Ps. 16:15.) And though they satiate they always appear to be as new as the first time when they were experienced; they are always enjoyed and always desired, always desired and always possessed. “Satiety,” says St. Gregory, “accompanies desire.” (Lib. 13, Mor., c. xviii.) Thus, the desires of the saints in Paradise do not beget pain, because they are always satisfied; and satiety does not produce disgust, because it is always accompanied with desire. Hence the soul shall be always satiated and always thirsty: she shall be for ever thirsty, and always satiated with delights. The damned are, according to the Apostle, vessels full of wrath and of torments, “vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction.” (Rom. 9:22.) But the just are vessels full of mercy and of joy, so that they have nothing to desire. “They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house.” (Ps. 35:9.) In beholding the beauty of God, the soul shall be so inflamed and so inebriated with divine love, that she shall remain happily lost in God; for she shall entirely forget herself, and for all eternity shall think only of loving and praising the immense good which she shall possess for ever, without the fear of having it in her power ever to lose it. In this life, holy souls love God; but they cannot love him with all their strength, nor can they always actually love him. St. Thomas teaches, that this perfect love is only given to the citizens of heaven, who love God with their whole heart, and never cease to love him actually. “Ut totum cor hominis semper actualiter in Deum feratur ista est perfectio patriæ.” (2, 2 quæst. 44, art. 4, ad. 2.)

9. Justly, then, has St. Augustine said, that to gain the eternal glory of Paradise, we should cheerfully embrace eternal labour. “Pro æterna requie æternus labor subeundus esset.” “For nothing,” says David, “shalt thou save them.” (Ps. 55:8.) The saints have done but little to acquire Heaven. So many kings, who have abdicated their thrones and shut themselves up in a cloister; so many holy anchorets, who have confined themselves in a cave; so many martyrs, who have cheerfully submitted to torments—to the rack, and to red-hot plates—have done but little. “The sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared to the glory to come.” (Rom. 8:18.) To gain heaven, it would be but little to endure all the pains of this life.

10. Let us, then, brethren, courageously resolve to bear patiently with all the sufferings which shall come upon us during the remaining days of our lives: to secure heaven they are all little and nothing. Rejoice then; for all

these pains, sorrows, and persecutions shall, if we are saved, be to us a source of never-ending joys and delights. “Your sorrows shall be turned into joy.” (John 16:20.) When, then, the crosses of this life afflict us, let us raise our eyes to heaven, and console ourselves with the hope of Paradise. At the end of her life, St. Mary of Egypt was asked, by the Abbot St. Zozimus, how she had been able to live for forty-seven years in the desert where he found her dying. She answered: “With the hope of Paradise.” If we be animated with the same hope, we shall not feel the tribulations of this life. Have courage! Let us love God and labour for heaven. There the saint expects us, Mary expects us, Jesus Christ expects us; he holds in his hand a crown to make each of us a king in that eternal kingdom.

Sermon XVII

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

ON CONCEALING SINS IN CONFESSION

“And he was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb.”—LUKE 11:14.

THE devil does not bring sinners to hell with their eyes open: he first blinds them with the malice of their own sins. “For their own malice blinded them.” (Wis. 2:21.) He thus leads them to eternal perdition. Before we fall into sin, the enemy labours to blind us, that we may not see the evil we do and the ruin we bring upon ourselves by offending God. After we commit sin, he seeks to make us dumb, that, through shame, we may conceal our guilt in confession. Thus, he leads us to hell by a double chain, inducing us, after our transgressions, to consent to a still greater sin—the sin of sacrilege. I will speak on this subject to-day, and will endeavour to convince you of the great evil of concealing sins in confession

1. In expounding the words of David—“Set a door O Lord, round about my lips,” (Ps. 140:3)—St. Augustine says: “Non dixit claustrum, sed ostium: ostium et aperitur et clauditur: aperiatur ad confessionem peccati: claudatur ad excusationem peceati.” We should keep a door to the mouth, that it may be closed against detraction, and blasphemies, and all improper words, and that it may be opened to confess the sins we have committed. “Thus,” adds the holy doctor, “it will be a door of restraint, and not of destruction.” To be silent when we are impelled to utter words injurious to God or to our neighbour, is an act of virtue; but, to be silent in confessing our sins, is the ruin of the soul. After we have offended God, the devil labours to keep the mouth closed, and to prevent us from confessing our guilt. St. Antonine relates, that a holy solitary once saw the devil standing beside a certain person who wished to go to confession. The solitary asked the fiend what he was doing there. The enemy said in reply: “I now restore to these penitents what I before took away from them; I took away from

them shame while they were committing sin; I now restore it that they may have a horror of confession." "My sores are putrefied and corrupted, because of my foolishness." (Ps. 37:6.) Gangrenous sores are fatal; and sins concealed in confession are spiritual ulcers, which mortify and become gangrenous.

2. "Pudorem," says St. Chrysostom, "dedit Deus peccato, confessioni fiduciam: invertit rem diabolis, peccato fiduciam præbet, confessioni pudorem." (Proem. in Isa.) God has made sin shameful, that we may abstain from it, and gives us confidence to confess it by promising pardon to all who accuse themselves of their sins. But the devil does the contrary: he gives confidence to sin by holding out hopes of pardon; but, when sin is committed, he inspires shame, to prevent the confession of it.

3. A disciple of Socrates, at the moment he was leaving a house of bad fame, saw his master pass: to avoid being seen by him, he went back into the house. Socrates came to the door and said: My son, it is a shameful thing to enter, but not to depart from this house. "Non te pudeat, fili egredi ex hoc loco, intrasse pudeat." To you also, O brethren, who have sinned, I say, that you ought to be ashamed to offend so great and so good a God. But you have no reason to be ashamed of confessing the sins which you have committed. "Was it shameful in St. Mary Magdalene to acknowledge publicly at the feet of Jesus Christ that she was a sinner? By her confession she became a saint. Was it shameful in St. Augustine not only to confess his sins, but also to publish them in a book, that, for his confusion, they might be known to the whole world? Was it shameful in St. Mary of Egypt to confess, that for so many years she had led a scandalous life? By their confessions these have become saints, and are honoured on the altars of the Church.

4. We say that the man who acknowledges his guilt before a secular tribunal is condemned, but in the tribunal of Jesus Christ, they who confess their sins obtain pardon, and receive a crown of eternal glory. "After confession," says St. Chrysostom, "a crown is given to penitents." He who is afflicted with an ulcer must, if he wish to be cured, show it to a physician: otherwise it will fester and bring on death. "Quod ignorat," says the Council of Trent, "medicina non curat." If, then, brethren, your souls be ulcerated with sin, be not ashamed to confess it; otherwise you are lost. "For thy soul be not ashamed to say the truth." (Eccl. 4:24.) But, you say, I feel greatly

ashamed to confess such a sin. If you wish to be saved, you must conquer this shame. “For there is a shame that bringeth sin, and there is a shame that bringeth glory and grace.” (lb. 4:25.) There are, according to the inspired writer, two kinds of shame: one of which leads souls to sin, and that is the shame which makes them conceal their sins at confession; the other is the confusion which a Christian feels in confessing his sins; and this confusion obtains for him the grace of God in this life, and the glory of heaven in the next.

5. St. Augustine says, that to prevent the sheep from seeking assistance by her cries the wolf seizes her by the neck, and thus securely carries her away and devours her. The devil acts in a similar manner with the sheep of Jesus Christ. After having induced them to yield to sin, he seizes them by the throat, that they may not confess their guilt; and thus he securely brings them to hell. For those who have sinned grievously, there is no means of salvation but the confession of their sins. But, what hope of salvation can he have who goes to confession and conceals his sins, and makes use of the tribunal of penance to offend God, and to make himself doubly the slave of Satan? What hope would you entertain of the recovery of the man who, instead of taking the medicine prescribed by his physician, drank a cup of poison? O God! What can the sacrament of penance be to those who conceal their sins, but a deadly poison, which adds to their guilt the malice of sacrilege? In giving absolution, the confessor dispenses to his patient the blood of Jesus Christ; for it is through the merits of that blood that he absolves from sin. What, then, does the sinner do, when he conceals his sins in confession? He tramples under foot the blood of Jesus Christ. And should he afterwards receive the holy communion in a state of sin, he is, according to St. Chrysostom, as guilty as if he threw the consecrated host into a sink. “Non minus detestabile est in os pollutum, quam in sterquilinum mittere Dei Filium.” (Hom. lxxxiii., in Matt.) Accursed shame! how many poor souls do you bring to hell? “Magis memores pudoris,” says Tertullian, “quam salutis.” Unhappy souls! they think only of the shame of confessing their sins, and do not reflect that, if they conceal them, they shall be certainly damned.

6. Some penitents ask: “What will my confessor say when he hears that I have committed such a sin?” What will he say? He will say that you are, like all persons living on this earth, miserable and prone to sin: he will say

that, if you have done evil, you have also performed a glorious action in overcoming shame, and in candidly confessing your fault.

7. “But I am afraid to confess this sin.” To how many confessors, I ask, must you tell it? It is enough to mention it to one priest, who hears many sins of the same kind from others. It is enough to confess it once: the confessor will give you penance and absolution, and your conscience shall be tranquillized. But, you say: “I feel a great repugnance to tell this sin to my spiritual father.” Tell it, then, to another confessor, and, if you wish, to one to whom you are unknown. “But, if this come to the knowledge of my confessor, he will be displeased with me.” What then do you mean to do? Perhaps, to avoid giving displeasure to him, you intend to commit a heinous crime, and remain under sentence of damnation. This would be the very height of folly.

8. Are you afraid that the confessor will make known your sin to others? Would it not be madness to suspect that he is so wicked as to break the seal of confession by revealing your sin to others? Remember that the obligation of the seal of confession is so strict, that a confessor cannot speak out of confession, even to the penitent, of the smallest venial fault; and if he did so,[14125]

9. But you say: “I am afraid that my confessor, when he hears my sin, will rebuke me with great severity.” O God! Do you not see that all these are deceitful artifices of the devil to bring you to hell? No; the confessor will not rebuke you, but he will give an advice suited to your state. A confessor cannot experience greater consolation than in absolving a penitent who confesses his sins with true sorrow and with sincerity. If a queen were mortally wounded by a slave, and you were in possession of a remedy by which she could be cured, how great would be your joy in saving her life! Such is the joy which a confessor feels in absolving a soul in the state of sin. By his act he delivers her from eternal death: and by restoring to her the grace of God, he makes her a queen of Paradise.

10. But you have so many fears, and are not afraid of damning your own soul by the enormous crime of concealing sins in confession. You are afraid of the rebuke of your confessor, and fear not the reproof which you shall receive from Jesus Christ, your Judge, at the hour of death. You are afraid that your sins shall become known (which is impossible), and you dread not

the day of judgment, on which, if you conceal them, they shall be revealed to all men. If you knew that, by concealing sins in confession, they shall be made known to all your relatives and to all your neighbours, you would certainly confess them. But, do you not know, says St. Bernard, that if you refuse to confess your sins to one man, who, like yourself, is a sinner, they shall be made known not only to all your relatives and neighbours, but to the entire human race? “Si pudor est tibi uni homini, et peccatori peccatum exponere, quid faturus es in die judicii, ubi omnibus exposita tua conscicntia patebit?” (S. Ber. super illud Joan., cap. xi.) “Lazare veni foras.” If you do not confess your sin, God himself shall, for your confusion, publish not only the sin which you conceal, but also all your iniquities, in the presence of the angels and of the whole world. “I will discover thy shame to thy face, and will show thy wickedness to the nations.” (Nah. 3:5.)

11. Listen, then, to the advice of St. Ambrose. The devil keeps an account of your sins, to charge you with them at the tribunal of Jesus Christ. Do you wish, says the saint, to prevent this accusation? Anticipate your accuser: accuse yourself now to a confessor, and then no accuser shall appear against you at the judgment-seat of God. “Præveni accusatorem tuum; si to accusaveris, accusatorem nullum timebis.” (Lib. 2 de Pænit., cap. ii.) But, according to St. Augustine, if you excuse yourself in confession, you shut up sin within your soul, and shut out pardon. “Excusas te, includis peccatum, excludis indulgentiam.” (Hom. xii. 50.)

12. If, then, brethren, there be a single soul among you who has ever concealed a sin, through shame, in the tribunal of penance, let him take courage, and make a full confession of all his faults. “Give glory to God with a good heart.” (Eccl. 35:10.) Give glory to God, and confusion to the devil. A certain penitent was tempted by Satan to conceal a sin through shame; but she was resolved to confess it; and while she was going to her confessor, the devil came forward and asked her where she was going. She courageously answered: “I am going to cover myself and you with confusion.” Act you in a similar manner; if you have ever concealed a mortal sin, confess it candidly to your director, and confound the devil. Remember that the greater the violence you do yourself in confessing your sins, the greater will be the love with which Jesus Christ will embrace you.

13. Courage, then! expel this viper which you harbour in your soul, and which continually corrodes your heart and destroys your peace. Oh! what a hell does a Christian suffer who keeps in his heart a sin concealed through shame in confession! He suffers an anticipation of hell. It is enough to say to the confessor: “Father, I have a certain scruple regarding my past life, but I am ashamed to tell it.” This will be enough: the confessor will help to pluck out the serpent which gnaws your conscience. And, that you may not entertain groundless scruples, I think it right to tell you, that if the sin which you are ashamed to tell be not mortal, or if you never considered it to be a mortal sin, you are not obliged to confess it; for we are bound only to confess mortal sins. Moreover, if you have doubts whether you ever confessed a certain sin of your former life, but know that, in preparing for confession, you always carefully examined your conscience, and that you never concealed a sin through shame; in this case, even though the sin, about the confession of which you are doubtful, had been a grievous fault, you are not obliged to confess it; because it is presumed to be morally certain that you have already confessed it. But, if you know that the sin was grievous, and that you never accused yourself of it in confession, then there is no remedy; you must confess it, or you must be damned for it. But, O lost sheep, go instantly to confession. Jesus Christ is waiting for you; he stands with arms open to pardon and embrace you, if you acknowledge your guilt. I assure you that, after having confessed all your sins, you shall feel such consolation at having unburdened your conscience and acquired the grace of God, that you shall for ever bless the day on which you made this confession. Go as soon as possible in search of a confessor. Do not give the devil time to continue to tempt you, and to make you put off your confession: go immediately; for Jesus Christ is waiting for you.

Sermon XVIII

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

ON THE TENDER COMPASSION WHICH JESUS CHRIST ENTERTAINS TOWARDS SINNERS

“Make the men sit down.”—JOHN 6:10.

WE read in this day’s gospel that, having gone up into a mountain with his disciples, and seeing a multitude of five thousand persons, who followed him because they saw the miracles which he wrought on them that were diseased, the Redeemer said to St. Philip: “Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” “Lord,” answered St. Philip, “two-hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient that every one may take a little.” St. Andrew then said: There is a boy here that has five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are these among so many? But Jesus Christ said: “Make the men sit down.” And he distributed the loaves and fishes among them. The multitude were satisfied: and the fragments of bread which remained filled twelve baskets. The Lord wrought this miracle through compassion for the bodily wants of these poor people; but far more tender is his compassion for the necessities of the souls of the poor—that is, of sinners who are deprived of the divine grace. This tender compassion of Jesus Christ for sinners shall be the subject of this day’s discourse.

1. Through the bowels of his mercy towards men, who groaned under the slavery of sin and Satan, our most loving Redeemer descended from heaven to earth, to redeem and save them from eternal torments by his own death. Such was the language of St. Zachary, the father of the Baptist, when the Blessed Virgin, who had already become the mother of the Eternal Word, entered his house. “Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high hath visited us.” (Luke 1:78.)

2. Jesus Christ, the good pastor, who came into the world to obtain salvation for us his sheep, has said: “I am come that they may have life, and

may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10.) Mark the expression, “more abundantly,” which signifies that the Son of Man came on earth not only to restore us to the life of grace which we lost, but to give us a better life than that which we forfeited by sin. Yes; for as St. Leo says, the benefits which we have derived from the death of Jesus are greater than the injury which the devil has done us by sin. “Ampliora adepti sumus per Christi gratiam quam per diaboli amiseramus invidiam.” (Ser. i., de Ascen.) The same doctrine is taught by the Apostle, who says that, “where sin abounded, grace did more abound.” (Rom. 5:20.)

3. But, my Lord, since thou hast resolved to take human flesh, would not a single prayer offered by thee be sufficient for the redemption of all men? What need, then, was there of leading a life of poverty, humiliation, and contempt, for thirty-three years, of suffering a cruel and shameful death on an infamous gibbet, and of shedding all thy blood by dint of torments? I know well, answers Jesus Christ, that one drop of my blood, or a simple prayer, would be sufficient for the salvation of the world; but neither would be sufficient to show the love which I bear to men: and therefore, to be loved by men when they should see me dead on the cross for the love of them, I have resolved to submit to so many torments and to so painful a death. This, he says, is the duty of a good pastor. “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep . . . I lay down my life for my sheep.” (John 10:11, 15.)

4. O men, O men, what greater proof of love could the Son of God give us than to lay down his life for us his sheep? “In this we have known the charity of God; because he hath laid down his life for us.” (1 John 3:16.) No one, says the Saviour, can show greater love to his friends than to give his life for them. “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13.) But thou, O Lord, hast died not only for friends, but for us who were thy enemies by sin. “When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” (Rom. 5:10.) O infinite love of our God, exclaims St. Bernard; “to spare slaves, neither the Father has spared the Son, nor the Son himself.” To pardon us, who were rebellious servants, the Father would not pardon the Son, and the Son would not pardon himself, but, by his death, has satisfied the divine justice for the sins which we have committed.

5. When Jesus Christ was near his passion he went one day to Samaria: the Samaritans refused to receive him. Indignant at the insult offered by the Samaritans to their Master, St. James and St. John, turning to Jesus, said: “Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” (Luke 9:54.) But Jesus, who was all sweetness, even to those who insulted him, answered: “You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save.” (*v.* 55 and 56.) He severely rebuked the disciples. What spirit is this, he said, which possesses you? It is not my spirit: mine is the spirit of patience and compassion; for I am come, not to destroy, but to save the souls of men: and you speak of fire, of punishment, and of vengeance. Hence, in another place, he said to his disciples: “Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.” (Matt. 11:29.) I do not wish of you to learn of me to chastise, but to be meek, and to bear and pardon injuries.

6. How beautiful has he described the tenderness of his heart towards sinners in the following words: “What man of you that hath an hundred sheep: and, if he lose one of them, doth he not leave ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which is lost until he find it: and when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulder rejoicing; and coming home, call together his friends and neighbours, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost?” (Luke 15:4, 5, and 6.) But, O Lord, it is not thou that oughtest to rejoice, but the sheep that has found her pastor and her God. The sheep indeed, answers Jesus, rejoices at finding me, her shepherd; but far greater is the joy which I feel at having found one of my lost sheep. He concludes the parable in these words:—“I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven for one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance.” (Luke 15:7.) There is more joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner, than upon ninety-nine just men who preserve their innocence. What sinner, then, can be so hardened as not to go instantly and cast himself at the feet of his Saviour, when he knows the tender love with which Jesus Christ is prepared to embrace him, and carry him on his shoulders, as soon as he repents of his sins?

7. The Lord has also declared his tenderness towards penitent sinners in the parable of the Prodigal Child. (Luke 15:12, etc.) In that parable the Son of God says, that a certain young man, unwilling to be any longer under the control of his father, and desiring to live according to his caprice and

corrupt inclinations, asked the portion of his father's substance which fell to him. The father gave it with sorrow, weeping over the ruin of his son. The son departed from his father's house. Having in a short time dissipated his substance, he was reduced to such a degree of misery that, to procure the necessaries of life, he was obliged to feed swine. All this was a figure of a sinner, who, after departing from God, and losing the divine grace and all the merits he had acquired, leads a life of misery under the slavery of the devil. In the gospel it is added that the young man, seeing his wretched condition, resolved to return to his father: and the father, who is a figure of Jesus Christ, seeing his son return to him, was instantly moved to pity. "His father saw him, and was moved with compassion" (*v.* 20); and, instead of driving him away, as the ungrateful son had deserved, "running to him, he fell upon his neck and kissed him." He ran with open arms to meet him, and, through tenderness, fell upon his neck, and consoled him by his embraces. He then said to his servants: "Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him." According to St. Jerome and St. Augustine, *the first robe* signifies the divine grace, which, in addition to new celestial gifts, God, by granting pardon, gives to the penitent sinner. "And put a ring on his finger." Give him the ring of a spouse. By recovering the grace of God, the soul becomes again the spouse of Jesus Christ. "And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry" (*v.* 23). Bring hither the fatted calf—which signifies the holy communion, or Jesus in the holy sacrament mystically killed and offered in sacrifice on the altar; let us eat and rejoice. But why, O divine Father, so much joy at the return of so ungrateful a child? Because, answered the Father, this my son was dead, and he is come to life again; he was lost, and I have found him.

8. This tenderness of Jesus Christ was experienced by the sinful woman (according to St. Gregory, Mary Magdalene) who cast herself at the feet of Jesus, and washed them with her tears. (Luke 7:47 and 50.) The Lord, turning to her with sweetness, consoled her by saying: "Thy sins are forgiven; . . . thy faith hath made thee safe; go in peace." (Luke 7:48 and 50.) Child, thy sins are pardoned; thy confidence in me has saved thee; go in peace. It was also felt by the man who was sick for thirty-eight years, and who was infirm both in body and soul. The Lord cured his malady, and pardoned his sins. "Behold," says Jesus to him, "thou art made whole; sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee." (John 5:14.) The

tenderness of the Redeemer was also felt by the leper who said to Jesus Christ: “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” (Matt. 8:2.) Jesus answered: “I will: be thou made clean” (*v.* 3). As if he said: Yes; I will that thou be made clean; for I have come down from heaven for the purpose of consoling all: be healed, then, according to thy desire. “And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed.”

9. We have also a proof of the tender compassion of the Son of God for sinners, in his conduct towards the woman caught in adultery. The scribes and pharisees brought her before him, and said: “This woman was even now taken in adultery. Now Moses, in the law, commands us to stone such a one. But what sayest thou?” (John 8:4 and 5.) And this they did, as St. John says, tempting him. They intended to accuse him of transgressing the law of Moses, if he said that she ought to be liberated; and they expected to destroy his character for meekness, if he said that she should be stoned. “Si dicat lapidandam,” says St. Augustine, “famam perdet mansuetudinis; sin dimmittendam, transgressæ legis accusabitur.” (Tract. xxxiii. in Joan.) But what was the answer of our Lord? He neither said that she should be stoned nor dismissed; but, “bowing himself down, he wrote with his finger on the ground.” The interpreters say that, probably, what he wrote on the ground was a text of Scripture admonishing the accusers of their own sins, which were, perhaps, greater than that of the woman charged with adultery. “He then lifted himself up, and said to them: ‘He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her’ ” (*v.* 7). The scribes and pharisees went away one by one, and the woman stood alone. Jesus Christ, turning to her, said: “Hath no one condemned thee? neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more” (*v.* 11). Since no one has condemned you, fear not that you shall be condemned by me, who hath come on earth, not to condemn, but to pardon and save sinners: go in peace, and sin no more.

10. Jesus Christ has come, not to condemn, but to deliver sinners from hell, as soon as they resolve to amend their lives. And when he sees them obstinately bent on their own perdition, he addresses them with tears in the words of Ezechiel: “Why will you die, O house of Israel?” (18:31). My children, why will you die? Why do you voluntarily rush into hell, when I have come from heaven to deliver you from it by death? He adds: you are already dead to the grace of God. But I will not your death: return to me, and I will restore to you the life which you have lost. “For I desire not the

death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: return ye and live” (*v.* 32). But some sinners, who are immersed in the abyss of sin, may say: Perhaps, if we return to Jesus Christ, he will drive us away. No; for the Redeemer has said: “And him that cometh to me I will not cast out.” (John 6:37.) No one that comes to me with sorrow for his past sins, however manifold and enormous they may have been, shall be rejected.

11. Behold how, in another place, the Redeemer encourages us to throw ourselves at his feet with a secure hope of consolation and pardon. “Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.” (Matt. 11:28.) Come to me, all ye poor sinners, who labour for your own damnation, and groan under the weight of your crimes; come, and I will deliver you from all your troubles. Again, he says, “Come and accuse me, saith the Lord; if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow; and if they be red as crimson, they shall be made white as wool.” (Isa. 1:18.) Come with sorrow for the offences you committed against me, and if I do not give you pardon, accuse me. As if he said: upbraid me; rebuke me as a liar; for I promise that, though your sins were of scarlet—that is, of the most horrid enormity—your soul, by my blood, in which I shall wash it, will become white and beautiful as snow.

12. Let us then, O sinners, return instantly to Jesus Christ. If we have left him, let us immediately return, before death overtakes us in sin and sends us to hell, where the mercies and graces of the Lord shall, if we do not amend, be so many swords which shall lacerate the heart for all eternity.

Sermon XIX

PASSION SUNDAY

ON THE DANGER TO WHICH TEPIDITY EXPOSES THE SOUL

“But Jesus hid himself.”—JOHN 8:59.

JESUS CHRIST “is the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.” (John 1:9.) He enlightens all; but he cannot enlighten those who voluntarily shut their eyes to the light; from them the Saviour hides himself. How then can they, walking in darkness, escape the many dangers of perdition to which we are exposed in this life, which God has given us as the road to eternal happiness? I will endeavour to-day to convince you of the great danger into which tepidity brings the soul, since it makes Jesus Christ hide his divine light from her, and makes him less liberal in bestowing upon her the graces and helps, without which she shall find it very difficult to complete the journey of this life without falling into an abyss—that is, into mortal sin.

1. A tepid soul is not one that lives in enmity with God, nor one that sometimes commits venial sins through mere frailty, and not with full deliberation. On account of the corruption of nature by original sin, no man can be exempt from such venial faults. This corruption of nature renders it impossible for us, without a most special grace, which has been given only to the mother of God, to avoid all venial sins during our whole lives. Hence St. John has said: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8.) God permits defects of this kind, even in the saints, to keep them humble, and to make them feel that, as they commit such faults in spite of all their good purposes and promises, so also, were they not supported by his divine hand, they would fall into mortal sins. Hence, when we find that we have committed these light faults, we must humble ourselves, and acknowledging our own weakness, we must be careful to recommend ourselves to God, and implore of him to preserve us,

by his almighty hand, from more grievous transgressions, and to deliver us from those we have committed.

2. What then are we to understand by a tepid soul? A tepid soul is one that frequently falls into fully deliberate venial sins—such as deliberate lies, deliberate acts of impatience, deliberate imprecations, and the like. These faults may be easily avoided by those who are resolved to suffer death rather than commit a deliberate venial offence against God. St. Teresa used to say, that one venial sin does us more harm than all the devils in hell. Hence she would say to her nuns: "My children, from deliberate sin, however venial it may be, may the Lord deliver you." Some complain of being left in aridity and dryness, and without any spiritual sweetness. But how can we expect that God will be liberal of his favours to us, when we are ungenerous to him? We know that such a lie, such an imprecation, such an injury to our neighbour, and such detraction, though not mortal sins, are displeasing to God, and still we do not abstain from them. Why then should we expect that God will give us his divine consolations?

3. But some of you will say: Venial sins, however great they may be, do not deprive the soul of the grace of God: even though I commit them I will be saved; and for me it is enough to obtain eternal life. You say that, "for you it is enough to be saved." Remember that St. Augustine says that, "where you have said, 'It is enough,' there you have perished." To understand correctly the meaning of these words of St. Augustine, and to see the danger to which the state of tepidity exposes those who commit habitual and deliberate venial sins, without feeling remorse for them, and without endeavouring to avoid them, it is necessary to know that the habit of light faults leads the soul insensibly to mortal sins. For example: the habit of venial acts of aversion leads to mortal hatred; the habit of small thefts leads to grievous rapine; the habit of venial attachments leads to affections which are mortally sinful. "The soul," says St. Gregory, "never lies where it falls." (Moral., lib. xxxi.) No; it continues to sink still deeper. Mortal diseases do not generally proceed from serious indisposition, but from many slight and continued infirmities; so, likewise, the fall of many souls into mortal sin follows from habitual venial sins; for these render the soul so weak that, when a strong temptation assails her, she has not strength to resist it, and she falls.

4. Many are unwilling to be separated from God by mortal sins; they wish to follow him, but at a distance, and regardless of venial sins. But to them shall probably happen what befel St. Peter. When Jesus Christ was seized in the garden, St. Peter was unwilling to abandon the Lord, but “followed him afar off.” (Matt. 26:58.) After entering the house of Caiphas, he was charged with being a disciple of Jesus Christ. He was instantly seized with fear, and three times denied his Master. The Holy Ghost says: “He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little.” (Eccl. 19:1.) They who despise small falls will probably one day fall into an abyss; for, being in the habit of committing light offences against God, they will feel but little repugnance to offer to him some grievous insult.

5. The Lord says: “Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines.” (Cant. 2:15.) He does not tell us to catch the lions or the bears, but the little foxes. Lions and bears strike terror, and therefore all are careful to keep at a distance through fear of being devoured by them; but the little foxes, though they do not excite dismay, destroy the vine by drying up its roots. Mortal sin terrifies the timorous soul; but, if she accustom herself to the commission of many venial sins with full deliberation, and without endeavouring to correct them, they, like the little foxes, shall destroy the roots—that is, the remorse of conscience, the fear of offending God, and the holy desires of advancing in divine love; and thus, being in a state of tepidity, and impelled to sin by some passion, the soul will easily abandon God and lose the divine grace.

6. Moreover, deliberate and habitual venial sins not only deprive us of strength to resist temptations, but also of the special helps without which we fall into grievous sins, Be attentive, brethren; for this is a point of great importance. It is certain, that of ourselves we have not sufficient strength to resist the temptations of the devil, of the flesh, and of the world. It is God that prevents our enemies from assailing us with temptations by which we would be conquered. Hence Jesus Christ has taught us the following prayer: “And lead us not into temptation.” He teaches us to pray that God may deliver us from the temptations to which we would yield, and thus lose his grace. Now, venial sins, when they are deliberate and habitual, deprive us of the special helps of God which are necessary for preservation in his grace. I say *necessary,* because the Council of Trent anathematizes those who assert that we can persevere in grace without a special help from God. “Si quis

dixerit, justificatum vel sine speciali auxilio Dei in accepta justitia perseverare posse, vel cum eo non posse; anathema sit.” (Sess. 6, can. xxii.) Thus, with the ordinary assistance of God, we cannot avoid falling into some mortal sin: a special aid is necessary. But this special aid God will justly withhold from tepid souls who are regardless of committing, with full deliberation, many venial sins. Thus these unhappy souls shall not persevere in grace.

7. They who are ungenerous to God well deserve that God should not be liberal to them. “He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly.” (2 Cor. 9:6.) To such souls the Lord will give the graces common to all, but will probably withhold his special assistance; and without this, as we have seen, they cannot persevere without falling into mortal sin. God himself revealed to B. Henry Suson, that, for tepid souls who are content with leading a life exempt from mortal sin, and continue to commit many deliberate venial sins, it is very difficult to preserve themselves in the state of grace. The venerable Lewis da Ponte used to say: “I commit many defects, but I never make peace with them.” Woe to him who is at peace with his faults! St. Bernard teaches that, as long as a person who is guilty of defects detests his faults, there is reason to hope that he will one day correct them and amend his life: but when he commits faults without endeavouring to amend, he will continually go from bad to worse, till he loses the grace of God. St. Augustine says that, like a certain disease of the skin which makes the body an object of disgust, habitual faults, when committed without any effort of amendment, render the soul so disgusting to God, that he deprives her of his embraces. “Sunt velut scabies, et nostrum decus ita exterminant ut a sponsi amplexibus separent.” (Hom. 1., cap. iii.) Hence the soul, finding no more nourishment and consolation in her devout exercises, in her prayers, communions, or visits to the blessed sacrament, will soon neglect them, and thus neglecting the means of eternal salvation, she shall be in great danger of being lost.

8. This danger will be still greater for those who commit many venial sins through attachment to any passion, such as pride, ambition, aversion to a neighbour, or an inordinate affection for any person. St. Francis of Assisium says that, in endeavouring to draw to sin a soul that is afraid of being in enmity with God, the devil does not seek in the beginning to bind her with the chain of a slave, by tempting her to commit mortal sin, because she

would have a horror of yielding to mortal sin, and would guard herself against it. He first endeavours to bind her by a single hair; then by a slender thread; next by a cord; afterwards by a rope; and in the end by a chain of hell—that is, by mortal sin; and thus he makes her his slave. For example: A person cherishes an affection for a female through a motive of courtesy or of gratitude, or from an esteem for her good qualities. This affection is followed by mutual presents; to these succeed words of tenderness; and after the first violent assault of the devil, the miserable man shall find that he has fallen into mortal sin. He meets with the fate of gamesters, who, after frequently losing large sums of money, yield to an impulse of passion, risk their all, and, in the end, lose their entire property.

9. Miserable the soul that allows herself to be the slave of any passion. “Behold, how small a fire what a great wood it kindleth.” (St. James 3:5.) A small spark, if it be not extinguished, will set fire to an entire wood; that is, an unmortified passion shall bring the soul to ruin. Passion blinds us; and the blind often fall into an abyss when they least expect it. According to St. Ambrose, the devil is constantly endeavouring to find out the passion which rules in our heart, and the pleasures which have the greatest attraction for us. When he discovers them, he presents occasions of indulging them: he then excites concupiscence, and prepares a chain to make us the slaves of hell. “Tune maxime insidiatur adversarius quando videt in nobis passiones aliquas generari: tunc fomites movet, laqueos parat.”

10. St. Chrysostom asserts, that he himself knew many persons who were gifted with great virtues, and who, because they disregarded light faults, fell into an abyss of crime. When the devil cannot gain much from us, he is in the beginning content with the little; by many trifling victories he will make a great conquest. No one, says St. Bernard, suddenly falls from the state of grace into the abyss of wickedness. They who rush into the most grievous irregularities, begin by committing light faults. “Nemo repente fit turpissimus: a minimis incipiunt qui in maxima proruunt.” (Tract de Ord. vitæ.) It is necessary also to understand that, when a soul that has been favoured by God with special lights and graces, consents to mortal sin, her fall shall not be a simple fall, from which she will easily rise again, but it will be a precipitous one, from which she will find it very difficult to return to God.

11. Addressing a person in the state of tepidity, our Lord said: “I would that thou wert cold or hot; but because thou art luke-warm, and neither hot nor cold, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth.” (Apoc. 3:15, 16.) “I would thou wert cold”—that is, it would be better for thee to be deprived of my grace, because there should then be greater hopes of thy amendment; but, because thou livest in tepidity, without any desire of improvement, “I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth.” By these words he means, that he will begin to abandon the soul; for, what is vomited, is taken back only with great horror.

12. A certain author says, that tepidity is a hectic fever, which does not excite alarm, because it is not perceived; but it is, at the same time, so malignant that it is rarely cured. The comparison is very just; for tepidity makes the soul insensible to remorses of conscience; and, as she is accustomed to feel no remorse for venial faults, she will by degrees become insensible to the stings of remorse which arise from mortal sins.

13. Let us come to the remedy. The amendment of a tepid soul is difficult; but there are remedies for those who wish to adopt them. First, the tepid must sincerely desire to be delivered from a state which, as we have seen, is so miserable and dangerous; for, without this desire, they shall not take pains to employ the proper means. Secondly, they must resolve to remove the occasions of their faults; otherwise they will always relapse into the same defects. Thirdly, they must earnestly beg of the Lord to raise them from so wretched a state. By their own strength they can do nothing; but they can do all things with the assistance of God, who has promised to hear the prayers of all. “Ask, and it shall be given; seek, and you shall find.” (Luke 11:9.) We must pray, and continue to pray without interruption. If we cease to pray we shall be defeated; but if we persevere in prayer we shall conquer.

Sermon XX

PALM SUNDAY

ON THE EVIL EFFECTS OF BAD HABITS

> "Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied."—MATT. 21:2.

WISHING to enter Jerusalem, to be there acknowledged as the promised Messiah sent by God for the salvation of the world, the Saviour said to his disciples: "Go to a certain village, and you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them, and bring them to me." "The ass which was tied," says St. Bonaventure, "denotes a sinner." This exposition is conformable to the doctrine of the Wise Man, who says, that the wicked are bound by the chains of their own sins. "His own iniquities catch the wicked, and he is fast bound with the rope of his own sins." (Prov. 5:22.) But, as Jesus Christ could not sit on the ass before she was loosed, so he cannot dwell in a soul bound with her own iniquities. If, then, brethren, there be among you a soul bound by any bad habit, let her attend to the admonition which the Lord addresses to her this morning. "Loose the bond from off thy neck, O captive daughter of Sion." (Isa. 52:2.) Loose the bonds of your sins, which make you the slave of Satan. Loose the bonds before the habit of sin gains such power over you, as to render your conversion morally impossible, and thus to bring you to eternal perdition. This morning I will show, in three points, the evil effects of bad habits.

FIRST POINT. A BAD HABIT BLINDS THE UNDERSTANDING.

Second Point.—It hardens the heart.

Third Point.—It diminishes our strength.

First Point.—A bad habit blinds the understanding.

1. Of those who live in the habit of sin, St. Augustine says: “Ipsa consuetudo non sinit videre malum, quod faciunt.” The habit of sin blinds sinners, so that they no longer see the evil which they do, nor the ruin which they bring upon themselves; hence they live in blindness, as if there was neither God, nor heaven, nor hell, nor eternity. “Sins,” adds the saint, “however enormous, when habitual, appear to be small, or not to be sins at all.” How then can the soul guard against them, when she is no longer sensible of their deformity, or the evil which they bring upon her?

2. St. Jerome says, that habitual sinners “are not even ashamed of their crimes.” Bad actions naturally produce a certain shame; but this feeling is destroyed by the habit of sin. St. Peter compares habitual sinners to swine wallowing in mire. “The sow that was washed *is returned* to her wallowing in the mire.” (2 Pet. 2:22.) The very mire of sin blinds them; and, therefore, instead of feeling sorrow and shame at their uncleanness, they revel and exult in it. “A fool worketh mischief as it were for sport.” (Prov. 10:23.) “Who are glad when they have done evil.” (Prov. 2:14.) Hence the saints continually seek light from God; for they know that, should he withdraw his light, they may become the greatest of sinners. How, then, do so many Christians, who know by faith that there is a hell, and a just God, who cannot but chastise the wicked, how, I say, do they continue to live in sin till death, and thus bring themselves to perdition? “Their own malice blinded them.” (Wis. 2:21.) Sin blinds them, and thus they are lost.

3. Job says, that habitual sinners are full of iniquities. “His bones shall be filled with the vices of his youth.” (20:11.) Every sin produces darkness in the understanding. Hence, the more sins are multiplied by a bad habit, the greater the blindness they cause. The light of the sun cannot enter a vessel filled with clay; and a heart full of vices cannot admit the light of God, which would make visible to the soul the abyss into which she is running. Bereft of light, the habitual sinner goes on from sin to sin, without ever thinking of repentance. “The wicked walk round about.” (Ps. 11:9.) Fallen into the dark pit of evil habits, he thinks only of sinning, he speaks only of sins, and no longer sees the evil of sin. In fine, he becomes like a brute devoid of reason, and seeks and desires only what pleases the senses. “And man, when he was in honour, did not understand: he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them.” (Ps. 48:13.) Hence the words of the Wise Man are fulfilled with regard to habitual sinners. “The wicked

man when he comes into the depth of sin, contemneth." (Prov. 18:3.) This passage St. Chrysostom applies to habitual sinners, who, shut up in a pit of darkness, despise sermons, calls of God, admonitions, censures, hell, and God, and become like the vulture that waits to be killed by the fowler, rather than abandon the corrupt carcass on which it feeds.

4. Brethren, let us tremble, as David did when he said: "Let not the tempests of water drown me, nor the deep swallow me up; and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me." (Ps. 68:16.) Should a person fall into a pit, there is hope of deliverance as long as the mouth of the pit is not closed; but as soon as it is shut, he is lost. When a sinner falls into a bad habit, the mouth of the pit is gradually closed as his sins are multiplied; the moment the mouth of the pit is shut, he is abandoned by God. Dearly beloved sinners, if you have contracted a habit of any sin, endeavour instantly to go out of that pit of hell, before God shall deprive you entirely of his light, and abandon you; for, as soon as he abandons you by the total withdrawal of his light, all is over, and you are lost.

SECOND POINT. A BAD HABIT HARDENS THE HEART.

5.The habit of sin not only blinds the understanding, but also hardens the heart of the sinner. "His heart shall be as hard as a stone, and as firm as a smith's anvil." (Job 41:15.) By the habit of sin the heart becomes like a stone; and, as the anvil is hardened by repeated strokes of the hammer, so, instead of being softened by divine inspirations or by instructions, the soul of the habitual sinner is rendered more obdurate by sermons on the judgment of God, on the torments of the damned, and on the passion of Jesus Christ: "his heart shall be firm as a smith's anvil." "Their heart," says St. Augustine, "is hardened against the dew of grace, so as to produce no fruit." Divine calls, remorses of conscience, terrors of Divine justice, are showers of divine grace; but when, instead of drawing fruit from these divine blessings, the habitual sinner continues to commit sin, he hardens his heart, and thus, according to St. Thomas of Villanova, he gives a sign of his certain damnation—"Induratio damnationis indicium;"—for, from the loss of God's light, and the hardness of his heart, the sinner will, according to the terrible threat of the Holy Ghost, remain obstinate till death. "A hard heart shall fare evil at the end." (Eccl. 3:27.)

6. Of what use are confessions, when, in a short time after them, the sinner returns to the same vices? “He who strikes his breast,” says St. Augustine, “and does not amend, confirms, but does not take away sins.” When you strike your breast in the tribunal of penance, but do not amend and remove the occasions of sin, you then, according to the saint, do not take away your sins, but you make them more firm and permanent; that is, you render yourself more obstinate in sin. “The wicked walk round about.” (Ps. 11:9.) Such is the unhappy life of habitual sinners. They go round about from sin to sin; and if they abstain for a little, they immediately, at the first occasion of temptation, return to their former iniquities. St. Bernard regards as certain the damnation of such sinners: “Væ homini, qui sequitur hunc circuitum.” (Serm. xii. sup. Psalmos.)

7. But some young persons may say: I will hereafter amend, and sincerely give myself to God. But, if a habit of sin takes possession of you, when will you amend? The Holy Ghost declares, that a young man who contracts an evil habit will not relinquish it even in his old age. A young man, according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it. (Prov. 22:6.) Habitual sinners have been known to yield, even at the hour of death, to the sins which they have been in the habit of committing. Father Recupito relates, that a person condemned to death, even while he was going to the place of execution, raised his eyes, saw a young female, and consented to a bad thought. We read in a work of Father Gisolfo, that a certain blasphemer, who had been likewise condemned to death, when thrown off the scaffold, broke out into a blasphemy, and died in that miserable state.

8. “He hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth.” (Rom. 9:18.) God shows mercy for a certain time, and then he hardens the heart of the sinner. How does God harden the hearts of sinners? St. Augustine answers: “Obduratio Dei est non misereri.” The Lord does not directly harden the hearts of habitual sinners; but, in punishment of their ingratitude for his benefits, he withdraws from them his graces, and thus their hearts are hardened, and become like a stone. “God does not harden the heart by imparting malice, but by withholding mercy.” God does not render sinners obdurate by infusing the malice of obstinacy, but by not giving them the efficacious graces by which they would be converted. By the withdrawal of the sun’s heat from the earth, water is hardened into ice.

9. St. Bernard teaches, that hardness or obstinacy of heart does not take place suddenly; but, by degrees the soul becomes insensible to the divine threats, and more obstinate by divine chastisements. “Paulatim in cordis dulitiam itur; cor durum non minis cedit, flagellis duratur.” In habitual sinners are verified the words of David, “And thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, they have slumbered.” (Ps. 75:7.) Even earthquakes, thunders, and sudden deaths do not terrify an habitual sinner. Instead of awakening him to a sense of his miserable state, they rather bring on that deadly sleep in which he slumbers and is lost.

THIRD POINT. A BAD HABIT DIMINISHES OUR STRENGTH.

10. “He hath torn me with wound upon wound; he hath rushed in upon me like a giant.” (Job 16:15.) On this text St. Gregory reasons thus: A person assailed by an enemy, is rendered unable to defend himself by the first wound which he receives; but, should he receive a second and third, his strength will be so much exhausted, that death will be the consequence. It is so with sin: after the first and second wound which it inflicts on the soul, she shall still have some strength, but only through the divine grace. But, if she continue to indulge in vice, sin, becoming habitual, rushes upon her like a giant and leaves her without any power to resist it. St. Bernard compares the habitual sinner to a person who has fallen under a large stone, which he is unable to remove. A person in such a case will rise only with difficulty. “The man on whom the weight of a bad habit presses, rises with difficulty.” St. Gregory says: “Lapis superpesitus, cum consuetudine mens in peccato demoratur ut esti velit exsurgere, jam non possit quia moles desuper premit.” (Moral, lib. 26, c. xxiv.)

11. St. Thomas of Villanova teaches, that a soul which is deprived of the grace of God, cannot long abstain from new sins. “Anima a gratia destituta diu evadere ulteriora peccata non potest.” (Conc. 4 in Dom. 4 quadrages.) In expounding the words of David, “O my God, make them like a wheel, and as a stubble before the wind,” (Ps. 82:14.) St. Gregory says, that the man who struggled for a time before he fell into the habit of tin, as soon as he contracts the habit, yields and yields again to every temptation, with as much facility as a straw is moved by the slightest blast of wind. Habitual sinners, according to St. Chrysostom, become so weak in resisting the

attacks of the devil, that, dragged to sin by their evil habit, they are sometimes driven to sin against their inclination. “Dura res est consuetudo, quæ nonnunquam nolentes committere cogit illicita,” Yes; because, as St. Augustine says, a bad habit in the course of time brings on a certain necessity of falling into sin. “Dum consuetudini non resistitur, facta est necessitas.”

12. St. Bernardine of Sienna says, that evil habits are changed into one’s nature. “Usus veritur in natura.” Hence, as it is necessary for men to breathe, so it appears that it becomes necessary for habitual sinners to commit sins. They are thus made the slave of sin. I say, the *slaves*. In society there are servants, who serve for wages, and there are slaves, who serve by force, and without remuneration. Having sold themselves as slaves to the devil, habitual sinners are reduced to such a degree of slavery, that they sometimes sin without pleasure, and sometimes even without being in the occasion of sin. St. Bernardine compares them to the wings of a windmill, which continue to turn the mill even when there is no corn to be ground; that is, they continue to commit sin, at least by indulging bad thoughts, even when there is no occasion of sin presented to them. The unhappy beings, as St. Chrysostom says, having lost the divine aid, no longer do what they wish themselves, but what the devil wishes. “Homo perdito Dei auxilio, non quod vult agit, sed quod diabolus.”

13. Listen to what happened in a city in Italy. A certain young man, who had contracted a vicious habit, though frequently called by God, and admonished by friends to amend his life, continued to live in sin. One day he saw his sister suddenly struck dead. He was terrified for a short time; but she was scarcely buried, when he forgot her death and returned to the vomit. In two months after he was confined to bed by a slow fever. He then sent for a confessor, and made his confession. But after all this, on a certain day, he exclaimed: Alas! how late have I known the rigour of divine justice! And turning to his physician, he said: Do not torment me any longer by medicines; for my disease is incurable. I know for certain that it will bring me to the grave. And to his friends, who stood around, he said: As for the life of this body of mine there is no remedy, so for the life of my poor soul there is no hope. I expect eternal death. God has abandoned me; this I see in the hardness of my heart. Friends and religious came to encourage him to hope in the mercy of God; but his answer to all their exhortations was, God

has abandoned me. The writer who relates this fact says, that, being alone with the young man, he said to him: Have courage; unite yourself with God; receive the viaticum. Friend, replied the young man, speak to a stone. The confession which I have made has been null for want of sorrow. I do not wish for a confessor, nor for the sacraments. Do not bring me the viaticum; for, should you bring it, I will do that which must excite horror. He then went away quite disconsolate; and returning to see the young man, learned from his relatives that he expired during the night without the aid of a priest, and that near his room frightful howlings were heard.

14. Behold the end of habitual sinners! Brethren, if you have the misfortune of having contracted a habit of sin, make, as soon as possible, a general confession; for your past confessions can scarcely have been valid. Go forth instantly from the slavery of the devil. Attend to the advice of the Holy Ghost. “Give not thy ears to the cruel.” (Prov. 5:9.) Why will you serve the devil, your enemy, who is so cruel a master—who makes you lead a life of misery here, to bring you to a life of still greater misery in hell for all eternity? “Lazarus, come forth.” Go out of the pit of sin; give yourself immediately to God, who calls you, and is ready to receive you if you turn to him. Tremble! this may be for you the last call, to which if you do not correspond, you shall be lost.

Sermon XXI

EASTER SUNDAY

ON THE MISERABLE STATE OF RELAPSING SINNERS

> “Be not affrighted: you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen; he is not here.”—MARK 16:6.

I HOPE, my dear Christians, that, as Christ is risen, you have in this holy paschal time, gone to confession, and have risen from your sins. But, attend to what St. Jerome teaches—that many begin well, but few persevere. “Incipere multorem est, perseverare paucorum.” Now the Holy Ghost declares, that he who perseveres in holiness to death, and not they who begin a good life, shall be saved.” “But he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved.” (Matt. 26:13.) The crown of Paradise, says St. Bernard, is promised to those who commence, but it is given only to those who persevere. “Inchoantibus præmium promittitur, perseverantibus datur.” (Ser. vi. Demodo bene viv.) Since, then, brethren, you have resolved to give yourselves to God, listen to the admonition of the Holy Ghost: “Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear, and prepare thyself for temptation.” (Eccl. 2:1.) Do not imagine that you shall have no more temptations, but prepare yourself for the combat, and guard against a relapse into the sins you have confessed; for, if you lose the grace of God again, you shall find it difficult to recover it. I intend this day to show you the miserable state of relapsing sinners; that is, of those who, after confession, miserably fall back into the sins which they confessed.

1. Since, then, dearly beloved Christians, you have made a sincere confession of your sins, Jesus Christ says to you what he says to the paralytic: “Behold, thou art made whole. Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee.” (John 5:14.) By the confessions which you have made your souls are healed, but not as yet saved; for, if you return to sin, you shall be again condemned to hell, and the injury caused by the relapse

shall be far greater than that which you sustained from your former sins. “Audis,” says St. Bernard, “recidere quam incidere, esse deterius.” If a man recover from a mortal disease, and afterwards fall back into it, he shall have lost so much of his natural strength, that his recovery from the relapse will be impossible. This is precisely what will happen to relaxing sinners; returning to the vomit—that is, taking back into the soul the sins vomited forth in confession—they shall be so weak, that they will become objects of amusement to the devil. St. Anselm says, that the devil acquires a certain dominion over them, so that he makes them fall, and fall again as he wishes. Hence the miserable beings become like birds with which a child amuses himself. He allows them, from time to time, to fly to a certain height, and then draws them back again when he pleases, by means of a cord made fast to them. Such is the manner in which the devil treats relapsing sinners. “Sed quia ab hoste tenentur, volantes in eadem vitia dejiciuntur.”

2. St. Paul tells us, that we have to contend not with men like ourselves, made of flesh and blood, but with the princes of hell. “Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers.” (Ephes. 6:12.) By these words he wishes to admonish us that we have not strength to resist the powers of hell, and that, to resist them, the divine aid is absolutely necessary: without it, we shall be always defeated; but, with the assistance of God’s grace, we shall, according to the same apostle, be able to do all things and shall conquer all enemies. “I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.” (Phil. 4:13.) But this assistance God gives only to those who pray for it. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find.” (Matt. 7:7.) They who neglect to ask, do not receive. Let us, then, be careful not to trust in our resolutions: if we place our confidence in them, we shall be lost. When we are tempted to relapse into sin, we must put our whole trust in the assistance of God, who infallibly hears all who invoke his aid.

3. “He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall.” (1 Cor. 10:12.) They who are in the state of grace should, according to St. Paul, be careful not to fall into sin, particularly if they have been ever guilty of mortal sins; for a relapse into sin brings greater evil on the soul. “And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.” (Luke 11:26.)

4. We are told in the Holy Scriptures, that the enemy “will offer victims to his drag, and will sacrifice to his net; because through them his meat is

made dainty." (Habac. 1:16.) In explaining this passage St. Jerome says, that the devil seeks to catch in his nets all men, in order to sacrifice them to the divine justice by their damnation. Sinners, who are already in the net, he endeavours to bind with new chains; but the friends of God are his "dainty meats." To make them his slaves, and to rob them of all they have acquired, he prepares stronger snares. "The more fervently," says Denis the Carthusian, "a soul endeavours to serve God, the more fiercely does the adversary rage against her." The closer the union of a Christian with God, and the greater his efforts to serve God, the more the enemy is aimed with rage, and the more strenuously he labours to enter into the soul from which he has been expelled. "When," says the Redeemer, "the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, seeking rest, and not finding, he saith: I will return into my house, whence I came out." (Luke 11:24.) Should he succeed in re-entering, he will not enter alone, but will bring with him associates to fortify himself in the soul of which he has again got possession. Thus, the second destruction of that miserable soul shall be greater than the first. "And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first." (Luke 11:26.)

5. To God, the relapse of ungrateful Christians is very displeasing. Because, after he had called and pardoned them with so much love, he sees that, forgetful of his mercies to them, they again turn their back upon him and renounce his grace. "If my enemy had reviled me, I would verily have borne with it. But thou, a man of one mind, my guide and familiar, who didst take sweet meats together with me." (Ps. 54:13, etc.) Had my enemy, says the Lord, insulted me, I would have felt less pain; but to see you rebel against me, after I had restored my friendship to you, and after I had made you sit at my table, to eat my own flesh, grieves me to the heart, and impels me to take vengeance on you. Miserable the man who, after having received so many graces from God, becomes the enemy, from being the friend of God. He shall find the sword of divine vengeance prepared to chastise him. "And he that passes over from justice to sin, God hath prepared such an one for the sword." (Eccl. 26:27.)

6. Some of you may say: If I relapse, I will soon rise again; for I will immediately prepare myself for confession. To those who speak in this manner shall happen what befell Samson. He allowed himself to be deluded by Dalila: while he was asleep she cut off his hair, and his strength departed from him. Awaking from sleep, he said: "I will go out as I did before, and

shake myself, not knowing that the Lord was departed from him." (Judges 16:20.) He expected to deliver himself as on former occasions, from the hands of the Philistines. But, because his strength had departed from him, he was made their slave. They pulled out his eyes, and binding him in chains, shut him up in prison. After relapsing into sin, a Christian loses the strength necessary to resist temptations, because "the Lord departs from him." He abandons him by withholding the efficacious aid necessary to overcome temptations; and the miserable man remains blind and abandoned in his sin.

7. "No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62.) Behold a faithful picture of a relapsing sinner. Mark the words *no man:* no one, says Jesus Christ, who begins to serve me, and looks back, is fit to enter heaven. According to Origen, the addition of a new sin to one committed before, is like the addition of a new wound to a wound just inflicted. "Cum peccatum peccato adjicitur, sicut vulnus vulneri." (Hom. i. in Ps.) If a wound be inflicted on any member of the body, that member certainly loses its original vigour. But, if it receives a second wound, it shall lose all strength and motion, without hope of recovery. The great evil of a relapse into sin is, that it renders the soul so weak that she has but little strength to resist temptation. For St. Thomas says, "After a fault has been remitted, the dispositions produced by the preceding acts remain." (1 p., qu. 86, art. 5.) Every sin, though pardoned, always leaves a wound on the soul. When to this wound a new one is added, the soul becomes so weak that, without a special and extraordinary grace from God, it is impossible for her to conquer temptations.

8. Let us, then, brethren, tremble at the thought of relapsing into sin, and let us beware of availing ourselves of the mercy of God to continue to offend him. "He," says St. Augustine, "who has promised pardon to penitents, has promised repentance to no one." God has indeed promised pardon to all who repent of their sins, but he has not promised to any one the grace to repent of the faults which he has committed. Sorrow for sin is a pure gift of God; if he withholds it, how will you repent? And without repentance, how can you obtain pardon? Ah! the Lord will not allow himself to be mocked. "Be not deceived," says St. Paul, "God is not mocked." (Gal. 6:7.) St. Isidore tells us, that the man who repeats the sin which he before detested, is not a penitent, but a scoffer of God's majesty.

“Irrisor, et non pœnitens est, pui adhuc agit, quod pœnitet.” (De Sum. Bono.) And Tertullian teaches, that where there is no amendment, repentance is not sincere. “Ubi emendatio nulla, pœnitentia nulla.” (De Pænit.)

9. “Be penitent,” said St. Peter in a discourse to the Jews, “and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” (Acts 3:19.) Many repent, but are not converted. They feel a certain sorrow for the irregularities of their lives, but do not sincerely return to God. They go to confession, strike their breasts, and promise to amend; but they do not make a firm resolution to change their lives. They who resolve firmly on a change of life, persevere, or at least preserve themselves for a considerable time in the grace of God. But they who relapse into sin soon after confession, show, as St. Peter says, that they repent, but are not converted; and such persons shall in the end die an unhappy death. “Plerumque,” says St. Gregory, “mali sic compunguntur ad justitiam, sicut plerumque boni tentantur ad culpam.” (Pastor., p. 3, admon. 31.) As the just have frequent temptations to sin, but yield not to them, because their will abhors them, so sinners feel certain impulses to virtue; but these are not sufficient to produce a true conversion. The Wise Man tells us that mercy shall be shown to him who confesses his sins and abandons them, but not to those who merely confess their transgressions. “He that shall confess ‘his sins,’ and forsake them, shall obtain mercy.” (Prov 28:13.) He, then, who does not give up, but returns to sin after confession, shall not obtain mercy from God, but shall die a victim of divine justice. He may expect to die the death of a certain young Englishman, who, as is related in the history of England, was in the habit of relapsing into sins against purity. He always fell back into these sins after confession. At the hour of death he confessed his sins, and died in a manner which gave reason to hope for his salvation. But, while a holy priest was celebrating or preparing to celebrate Mass for his departed soul, the miserable young man appeared to him, and said that he was damned. He added that, at the point of death, being tempted to indulge a bad thought, he felt himself as it were forced to consent, and, as he was accustomed to do in the former part of his life, he yielded to the temptation, and thus was lost.

10. Is there then no means of salvation for relapsing sinners? I do not say this; but I adopt the maxim of physicians. “In magnis morbis a magnis initium. medendi sumere oportet.” In malignant diseases, powerful

remedies are necessary. To return to the way of salvation, the relapsing sinner must do great violence to himself. “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away.” (Matt. 11:12.) In the beginning of a new life, the relapsing sinner must do violence to himself in order to root out the bad habits which he has contracted, and to acquire habits of virtue; for when he has acquired habits of virtue, the observance of the divine commands shall become easy and even sweet. The Lord once said to St. Bridget, that, to those who bear with fortitude the first punctures of the thorns which they experience in the attacks of the senses, in avoiding occasions of sin, and in withdrawing from dangerous conversations, these thorns are by degrees changed into roses.

11. But, to use the necessary violence, and to lead a life of regularity, you must adopt the proper means; otherwise you shall do nothing. After rising in the morning, you must make acts of thanksgiving, of the love of God, and of oblation of the actions of the day. You must also renew your resolution never to offend God, and beg of Jesus Christ and his holy mother to preserve you from sin during the day. Afterwards make your meditation and hear Mass. During the day make a spiritual lecture and a visit to the most holy sacrament. In the evening, say the Rosary and make an examination of conscience. Receive the holy communion at least once a week, or more frequently if your directors advise you. Be careful to choose a confessor, to whom you will regularly go to confession. It is also very useful to make a spiritual retreat every year in some religious house. Honour the mother of God every day by some particular devotion, and by fasting on every Saturday. She is the mother of perseverance, and promises to obtain it for all who serve her. “They that work by me shall not sin.” (Eccl. 24:30.) Above all, it is necessary to ask of God every morning the gift of perseverance, and to beg of the Blessed Virgin to obtain it for you, and particularly in the time of temptation, by invoking the name of Jesus and Mary as long as the temptation lasts. Happy the man who will continue to act in this manner, and shall be found so doing when Jesus Christ shall come to judge him. “Blessed is that servant, whom, when his Lord shall come, he shall find so doing.” (Matt. 24:46.)

Sermon XXII

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

ON AVOIDING THE OCCASIONS OF SIN

> "When the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst."—JOHN 20:19.

WE find in this day's gospel that after his resurrection Jesus Christ entered, though the doors were closed, into the house in which the apostles were assembled, and stood in the midst of them. St. Thomas says, that the mystic meaning of this miracle is, that the Lord does not enter into our souls unless we keep the door of the senses shut. "Mistice per hoc datur intelligi, quod Christus nobit apparet quando fores, id est sensus sunt clausi." If, then, we wish Jesus Christ to dwell within us, we must keep the doors of our senses closed against dangerous occasions, otherwise the devil will make us his slaves. I will show to-day the great danger of perdition to which they who do not avoid the occasions of sin expose themselves.

1. We read in the Scriptures that Christ and Lazarus arose from the dead. Christ rose to die no more—"Christ rising from the dead, dieth no more" (Rom. 6:9); but Lazarus arose and died again. The Abbot Guerric remarks that Christ arose free and unbound; "but Lazarus came forth bound feet and hands." (John 11:44.) Miserable the man, adds this author, who rises from sin bound by any dangerous occasion: he will die again by losing the divine grace. He, then, who wishes to save his soul, must not only abandon sin, but also the occasions of sin: that is, he must renounce such an intimacy, such a house; he must renounce those wicked companions, and all similar occasions that incite him to sin.

2. In consequence of original sin, we all have an inclination to do what is forbidden. Hence St. Paul complained that he experienced in himself a law opposed to reason: "But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin." (Rom. 7:23.)

Now, when a dangerous occasion is present, it violently excites our corrupt desires, so that it is then very difficult to resist them: because God withholds efficacious helps from those who voluntarily expose themselves to the occasion of sin. “He that loveth danger shall perish in it.” (Eccl. 3:27.) “When,” says St. Thomas, in his comment on this passage, “we expose ourselves to danger, God abandons us in it.” St. Bernardine of Sienna teaches that the counsel of avoiding the occasions of sin is the best of all counsel, and as it were the foundation of religion. “Inter consilia Christi unum celeberrimum, et quasi religionis fundamentum est, fugere peccatorum occasiones.”

3. St. Peter says that “the devil goeth about seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Pet. 5:8.) He is constantly going about our souls, endeavouring to enter and take possession of them. Hence, he seeks to place before us the occasions of sin, by which he enters the soul. “Explorat,” says St. Cyprian, “an sit pars cujus aditu penetret.” When the soul yields to the suggestions of the devil, and exposes herself to the occasions of sin, he easily enters and devours her. The ruin of our first parents arose from their not flying from the occasions of sin. God had prohibited them not only to eat, but even to touch the forbidden apple. In answer to the serpent tempting her, Eve said: “God hath commanded us that we should not eat, and that we should not touch it.” (Gen. 3:3.) But “she saw, took, and eat” the forbidden fruit: she first looked at it, she then took it into her hands, and afterwards eat it. This is what ordinarily happens to all who expose themselves to the occasions of sin. Hence, being once compelled by exorcisms to tell the sermon which displeased him most, the devil confessed that it was the sermon on avoiding the occasions of sin. As long as we expose ourselves to the occasions of sin, the devil laughs at all our good purposes and promises made to God. The greatest care of the enemy is to induce us not to avoid evil occasions; for these occasions, like a veil placed before the eyes, prevent us from seeing either the lights received from God, or the eternal truths, or the resolutions we have made: in a word, they make us forget all, and as it were force us into sin.

4. “Know it to be a communication with death; for thou art going in the midst of snares.” (Eccl. 9:20.) Everyone born in this world enters into the midst of snares. Hence, the Wise Man advises those who wish to be secure to guard themselves against the snares of the world, and to withdraw from

them. “He that is aware of the snares shall be secure.” (Prov. 11:15.) But if, instead of withdrawing from them, a Christian approaches to them, how can he avoid being caught by them? Hence, after having with so much loss learned the danger of exposing himself to the danger of sin, David said that, to continue faithful to God, he kept at a distance from every occasion which could lead him to relapse. “I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep thy words.” (Ps. 118:101.) He does not say from every sin, but from every evil way which conducts to sin. The devil is careful to find pretexts to make us believe that certain occasions to which we expose ourselves are not voluntary, but necessary. When the occasion in which we are placed is really necessary, the Lord always helps us to avoid sin; but we sometimes imagine certain necessities which are not sufficient to excuse us. “A treasure is never safe,” says St. Cyprian, “as long as a robber is harboured within; nor is a lamb secure while it dwells in the same den with a wolf.” (Lib. de Sing. Cler.) The saint speaks against those who do not wish to remove the occasions of sin, and still say: “I am not afraid that I shall fall.” As no one can be secure of his treasure if he keeps a thief in his house, and as a lamb cannot be sure of its life if it remain in the den of a wolf, so likewise no one can be secure of the treasure of divine grace if he is resolved to continue in the occasion of sin. St. James teaches that every man has within himself a powerful enemy, that is, his own evil inclinations, which tempt him to sin. “Every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, drawn away, and allured.” (St. James 1:14.) If, then, we do not fly from the external occasions, how can we resist temptation and avoid sin? Let us, therefore, place before our eyes the general remedy which Jesus has prescribed for conquering temptations and saving our souls. “If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee.” (Matt. 5:29.) If you find that your right eye is to you a cause of damnation, you must pull it out and cast it far from you; that is, when there is danger of losing your soul, you must fly from all evil occasions. St. Francis of Assisium used to say, as I have stated in another sermon, that the devil does not seek, in the beginning, to bind timorous souls with the chain of mortal sin; because they would be alarmed at the thought of committing mortal sin, and would fly from it with horror: he endeavours to bind them by a single hair, which does not excite much fear; because by this means he will succeed more easily in strengthening their bonds, till he makes them his slaves. Hence he who wishes to be free from the danger of being the slave of hell must break all the hairs by which the enemy attempts to bind him; that is, he must avoid all occasions of sin, such as certain salutations, billets, little presents, and words of affection. With regard to those who have had a habit of impurity, it will not be sufficient to avoid proximate occasions; if they do not fly from remote occasions, they will very easily relapse into their former sins.

5. Impurity, says St. Augustine, is a vice which makes war on all, and which few conquer. "The fight is common, but the victory rare." How many miserable souls have entered the contest with this vice, and have been defeated! But to induce you to expose yourselves to occasions of this sin, the devil will tell you not to be afraid of being overcome by the temptation. "I do not wish," says St. Jerome, "to fight with the hope of victory, lest I should sometimes lose the victory." I will not expose myself to the combat with the hope of conquering; because, by voluntarily engaging in the fight, I shall lose my soul and my God. To escape defeat in this struggle, a great grace of God is necessary; and to render ourselves worthy of this grace, we must, on our part, avoid the occasions of sin. To practise the virtue of chastity, it is necessary to recommend ourselves continually to God: we have not strength to preserve it; that strength must be the gift of God. "And as I knew," says the Wise Man, "that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, . . . I went to the Lord, and besought him." (Wis. 8:21.) But if we expose ourselves to the occasions of sin, we ourselves shall provide our rebellious flesh with arms to make war against the soul. "Neither," says the Apostle, "yield ye your members as instruments of sin unto iniquity." (Rom. 6:13.) In explaining this passage, St. Cyril of Alexandria says: "You stimulate the flesh; you arm it, and make it powerful against the spirit." St. Philip Neri used to say, that in the war against the vice of impurity, the victory is gained by cowards—that is, by those who fly from the occasions of this sin. But the man who exposes himself to it, arms his flesh, and renders it so powerful, that it will be morally impossible for him to resist its attacks.

6. "Cry," says the Lord to Isaias, "all flesh is grass." (Isa. 40:6.) Now, says St. John Chrysostom, if all flesh is grass, it is as foolish for a man who exposes himself to the occasion of sin to hope to preserve the virtue of purity, as to expect that hay, into which a torch has been thrown, will not take fire. "Put a torch into hay, and then dare to deny that the hay will

burn.” No, says St. Cyprian; it is impossible to stand in the midst of flames, and not to burn. “Impossibile est flammis circumdari et non ardere.” (De Sing. Cler.) “Can a man,” says the Holy Ghost, “hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn? or can he walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?” (Prov. 6:27, 28.) Not to be burnt in such circumstances would be a miracle. St. Bernard teaches, that to preserve chastity, and, at the same time, to expose oneself to the proximate occasion of sin, “is a greater miracle than to raise a dead man to life.”

7. In explaining the fifth Psalm, St. Augustine says, that “he who is unwilling to fly from danger, wishes to perish in it.” Hence, in another place, he exhorts those who wish to conquer, and not to perish, to avoid dangerous occasions. “In the occasion of falling into sin, take flight, if you desire to gain the victory.” (Serm. ccl. de temp.) Some foolishly trust in their own strength, and do not see that their strength is like that of tow placed in the fire. “And your strength shall be as the ashes of tow.” (Isa. 1:31.) Others, trusting in the change which has taken place in their life, in their confessions, and in the promises they have made to God, say: Through the grace of the Lord, I have now no bad motive in seeking the company of such a person; her presence is not even an occasion of temptations: Listen, all you who speak in this manner. In Mauritania there are bears that go in quest of the apes, to feed upon them: as soon as a bear appears, the apes run up the trees, and thus save themselves. But what does the bear do? He stretches himself on the ground as if dead, and waits till the apes descend from the trees. The moment he sees that they have descended, he springs up, seizes on them, and devours them. It is thus the devil acts: he makes the temptation appear to be dead; but when a soul descends, and exposes herself to the occasion of sin, he stirs up temptation, and devours her. Oh! how many miserable souls, devoted to spiritual things, to mental prayer, to frequent communion, and to a life of holiness, have, by exposing themselves to the occasion of sin, become the slaves of the devil! We find in ecclesiastical history that a holy woman, who employed herself in the pious office of burying the martyrs, once found among them one who was not as yet dead. She brought him into her own house, and procured a physician and medicine for him, till he recovered. But, what happened? These two saints (as they might be called—one of them on the point of being a martyr, the other devoting her time to works of mercy with so much

risk of being persecuted by the tyrants) first fell into sin and lost the grace of God, and, becoming weaker by sin, afterwards denied the faith. St. Macarius relates a similar fact regarding an old man who suffered to be half-burned in defence of the faith; but, being brought back into prison, he, unfortunately for himself, formed an intimacy with a devout woman who served the martyrs, and fell into sin.

8. The Holy Ghost tells us, that we must fly from sin as from a serpent. "Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent." (Eccl. 21:2.) Hence, as we not only avoid the bite of a serpent, but are careful neither to touch nor approach it, so we must fly not only from sin, but also from the occasion of sin—that is, from the house, the conversation, the person that would lead us to sin. St. Isidore says, that he who wishes to remain near a serpent, will not remain long unhurt. "Juxta serpentem positus non erit diu illæsus." (Lib. 2, Solit.) Hence, if any person is likely to prove an occasion of your ruin, the admonition of the Wise Man is, "Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the doors of her house." (Prov. 5:8.) He not only tells you not to enter the house which has been to you a road to hell ("Her house is the way to hell." Prov. 7:27); but he also cautions you not to approach it, and even to keep at a distance from it. "Remove thy way far from her." But, you will say, if I abandon that house, my temporal affairs shall suffer. It is better that you should suffer a temporal loss, than that you should lose your soul and your God. You must be persuaded that, in whatever regards chastity, there cannot be too great caution. If we wish to save our souls from sin and hell, we must always fear and tremble. "With fear and trembling work out your salvation." (Phil. 2:12.) He who is not fearful, but exposes himself to occasions of sin, shall scarcely be saved. Hence, in our prayers we ought to say every day, and several times in the day, that petition of the OUR FATHER—"and lead us not into temptation." Lord, do not permit me to be attacked by those temptations which would deprive me of your grace. We cannot merit the grace of perseverance; but, according to St. Augustine, God grants it to every one that asks it, because he has promised to hear all who pray to him. Hence, the holy doctor says, that the Lord, "by his promises has made himself a debtor."

Sermon XXIII

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

ON SCANDAL

“The wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep.”—JOHN 10:12.

THE wolves that catch and scatter the sheep of Jesus Christ are the authors of scandal, who, not content with their own destruction, labour to destroy others. But the Lord says: “Woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh.” (Matt. 18:7.) Woe to him who gives scandal, and causes others to lose the grace of God. Origen says, that “a person who impels another to sin, sins more grievously than the other.” If, brethren, there be any among you who has given scandal, I will endeavour this day to convince him of the evil he has done, that he may bewail it and guard against it for the future. I will show, in the first point, the great displeasure which the sin of scandal gives to God; and, in the second, the great punishment which God threatens to inflict on the authors of scandal.

FIRST POINT. ON THE GREAT DISPLEASURE WHICH THE SIN OF SCANDAL GIVES TO GOD.

1. It is, in the first place, necessary to explain what is meant by scandal. Behold how St. Thomas defines it: “Scandal is a word or act which gives occasion to the ruin of one’s neighbour.”—(2 ii., q. 45, art. 1.) Scandal, then, is a word or act by which you are to your neighbour the cause or occasion of losing his soul. It may be direct or indirect. It is direct, when you directly tempt or induce another to commit sin. It is indirect, when, although you foresee that sinful words or actions will be the cause of sin to another, you do not abstain from them. But, scandal, whether it be direct or indirect, if it be in a matter of great moment, is always a mortal sin.

2. Let us now see the great displeasure which the destruction of a neighbour's soul gives to God. To understand it, we must consider how dear every soul is to God. He has created the souls of all men to his own image. "Let us make man to our image and likeness." (Gen. 1:26.) Other creatures God has made by a *fiat*—by an act of his will; but the soul of man he has created by his own breath. "And *the Lord* breathed into his face the breath of life." (Gen. 2:7.) The soul of your neighbour God has loved for eternity. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." (Jer. 31:3.) He has, moreover, created every soul to be a queen in Paradise, and to be a partner in his glory. "That by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4.) In heaven he will make the souls of the saints partakers of his own joy. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matt. 25:21.) To them he shall give himself as their reward. "I am thy reward exceeding great." (Gen. 15:1.)

3. But nothing can show the value which God sets on the souls of men more clearly than what the Incarnate Word has done for their redemption from sin and hell. "If," says St. Eucharius, "you do not believe your Creator, ask your Redeemer, how precious you are." Speaking of the care which we ought to have of our brethren, St. Ambrose says: "The great value of the salvation of a brother is known from the death of Christ." We judge of the value of everything by the price paid for it by an intelligent purchaser. Now, Jesus Christ has, according to the Apostle, purchased the souls of men with his own blood. "You are bought with a great price." (1 Cor. 6:20.) We can, then, say, that the soul is of as much value as the blood of a God. Such, indeed, is the language of St. Hilary. "Tam copioso munere redemptio agitur, ut homo Deum valere videatur." Hence, the Saviour tells us, that whatsoever good or evil we do to the least of his brethren, we do to himself. "So long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." (Matt. 25:40.)

4. From all this we may infer how great is the displeasure given to God by scandalizing a brother, and destroying his soul. It is enough to say, that they who give scandal rob God of a child, and murder a soul, for whose salvation he has spent his blood and his life. Hence, St. Leo calls the authors of scandals murderers. "Quisquis scandalizat, mortem infert animæ proximi." They are the most impious of murderers; because they kill not the body, but the soul of a brother, and rob Jesus Christ of all his tears, of his sorrows, and of all that he has done and suffered to gain that soul. Hence

the Apostle says: “Now, when you sin thus against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.” (1 Cor. 8:12.) They who scandalize a brother, sin against Christ; because, as St. Ambrose says, they deprive him of a soul for which he has spent so many years, and submitted to so many toils and labours. It is related, that B. Albertus Magnus spent thirty years in making a head, which resembled the human head, and uttered words: and that St. Thomas, fearing that it was done by the agency of the devil, took the head and broke it. B. Albertus complained of the act of St. Thomas, saying: “You have broken on me the work of thirty years.” I do not assert that this is true; but it is certain that, when Jesus Christ sees a soul destroyed by scandal, he can reprove the author of it, and say to him: Wicked wretch, what have you done? You have deprived me of this soul, for which I have laboured thirty-three years.

5. We read in the Scriptures, that the sons of Jacob, after having sold their brother Joseph to certain merchants, told his father that wild beasts had devoured him. “Fera pessima devoravit eum.” (Gen. 37:20.) To convince their father of the truth of what they said, they dipped the coat of Joseph in the blood of a goat, and presented it to him, saying: “See whether this be thy son’s coat or not” (v. 32). In reply, the afflicted father said with tears: “It is my son’s coat: an evil wild beast hath eaten him” (v. 33). Thus, we may imagine that, when a soul is brought into sin by scandal, the devils present to God the garment of that soul dipped in the blood of the Immaculate Lamb, Jesus Christ—that is, the grace lost by that scandalized soul, which Jesus Christ had purchased with his blood—and that they say to the Lord: “See whether this be thy son’s coat or not.” If God were capable of shedding tears, he would weep more bitterly than Jacob did, at the sight of that lost soul—his murdered child—and would say: “It is my son’s coat: an evil wild beast hath eaten him.” The Lord will go in search of this wild beast, saying: “Where is the beast? where is the beast that has devoured my child?” When he finds the wild beast, what shall he do with him?

6. “I will,” says the Lord by his prophet Osee, “meet them as a bear that is robbed of her whelps.” (Osee 13:8.) When the bear comes to her den, and finds not her whelps, she goes about the wood in search of the person who took them away. When she discovers the person, oh! with what fury does she rush upon him! It is thus the Lord shall rush upon the authors of scandal, who have robbed him of his children. Those who have given

scandal, will say: My neighbour is already damned; how can I repair the evil that has been done? The Lord shall answer: Since you have been the cause of his perdition, you must pay me for the loss of his soul. “I will require his blood at thy hands.” (Ezec. 3:20.) It is written in Deuteronomy, “Thou shalt not pity him, but shalt require life for life” (19:21). You have destroyed a soul; you must suffer the loss of your own. Let us pass to the second point.

SECOND POINT. THE GREAT PUNISHMENT WHICH GOD THREATENS TO THOSE WHO GIVE SCANDAL.

7. “Woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh.” (Matt. 18:7.) If the displeasure given to God by scandal be great, the chastisement which awaits the authors of it must be frightful. Behold how Jesus Christ speaks of this chastisement: “But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matt. 18:6.) If a malefactor dies on the scaffold, he excites the compassion of the spectators, who, at least, pray for him, if they cannot deliver him from death. But, were he cast into the depths of the sea, there should be no one present to pity his fate. A certain author says, that Jesus Christ threatens the person who scandalizes a brother with this sort of punishment, to signify that he is so hateful to the angels and saints, that they do not wish to recommend to God the man who has brought a soul to perdition. “He is declared unworthy not only to be assisted, but even to be seen.” (Mansi. cap. iii. num. 4.)

8. St. John Chrysostom says, that scandal is so abominable in the eyes of God, that though he overlooks very grievous sins, he cannot allow the sin of scandal to pass without condign punishment. “Tam Deo horribile est scandalum, ut peccata graviora dissimulet non autem peccata ubi frater scandalizatur.” God himself says the same by the prophet Ezechiel: “Every man of the house of Israel, if he . . . set up the stumbling block of his iniquity . . . I will make him an example and a proverb, and will cut him off from the midst of my people.” (Ezec. 14:7, 8.) And, in reality, scandal is one of the sins which we find in the sacred Scriptures punished by God with the greatest rigour. Of Heli, because he did not correct his sons, who gave

scandal by stealing the flesh offered in sacrifice (for parents give scandal, not only by giving bad example, but also by not correcting their children as they ought), the Lord said: “Behold, I do a thing in Israel: and whosoever shall hear it, both his ears shall tingle.” (1 Kings, 3:11.) And speaking of the scandal given by the sons of Heli, the inspired writer says: “Wherefore the sin of the young men was exceeding great before the Lord.” (*Ibid.* 2:17.) What was this sin exceeding great? It was, says St. Gregory, in explaining this passage, drawing others to sin. “Quia ad pecandum alios pertrahebant.” Why was Jeroboam chastised? Because he scandalized the people: he “hath sinned, and made Israel sin.” (3 Kings, 14:16.) In the family of Achab, all the members of which were the enemies of God, Jezabel was the most severely chastised. She was thrown down from a window, and devoured by dogs, so that nothing remained but her “skull, and the feet, and the extremities of her hands.” And why was she so severely punished? Because “she set Achab on to every evil.”

9. For the sin of scandal hell was created. “In the beginning God created heaven and earth.” (Gen. 1:1.) But, when did he create hell? It was then Lucifer began to seduce the angels into rebellion against God. Lest he should continue to pervert those who remained faithful to God, he was banished from heaven immediately after his sin. Hence Jesus Christ said to the Pharisees, who, by their bad example, scandalized the people, that they were children of the devil, who was from the beginning, a murderer of souls. “You are of your father, the devil: he was a murderer from the beginning.” (John 8:44.) And when St. Peter gave scandal to Jesus Christ, by suggesting to him not to allow his life to be taken away by the Jews, and thus endeavouring to prevent the accomplishment of redemption, the Redeemer called him a devil. “Go behind me, Satan; thou art a scandal to me.” (Matt. 16:23.) And, in reality, what other office do the authors of scandal perform, than that of a minister of the devil? If he were not assisted by such impious ministers, he certainly would not succeed in gaining so many souls. A scandalous companion does more injury than a hundred devils.

10. On the words of Ezechias, “Behold, in peace is my bitterness most bitter” (Isa. 38:17), St. Bernard, in the name of the Church, says: “Peace from pagans, peace from heretics, but no peace from children.” At present the Church is not persecuted by idolators, or by heretics, but she is

persecuted by scandalous Christians, who are her own children. In catching birds, we employ decoys, that is, certain birds that are blinded, and tied in such manner that they cannot fly away. It is thus the devil acts. “When,” says St. Ephrem, “a soul has been taken, she becomes a snare to deceive others.” After having made a young man fall into sin, the enemy first blinds him as his own slave, and then makes him his decoy to deceive others; and to draw them into the net of sin, he not only impels, but even forces him to deceive others. “The enemy,” says St. Leo, “has many whom he compels to deceive others.” (Serm. de Nativ.)

11. Miserable wretches! the authors of scandal must suffer in hell the punishment of all the sins they have made others commit. Cesarius relates (1. 2, c. vi.) that, after the death of a certain person who had given scandal, a holy man witnessed his judgment and condemnation, and saw that, at his arrival at the gate of hell, all the souls whom he had scandalized came to meet him, and said to him: Come, accursed wretch, and atone for all the sins which you have made us commit. They then rushed in upon him, and like so many wild beasts, began to tear him in pieces. St. Bernard says, that, in speaking of other sinners, the Scriptures hold out hopes of amendment and pardon; but they speak of those who give scandal as persons separated from God, of whose salvation there is very little hope. “Loquitur tanquam a Deo separati, unde hisce nulla spes vitæ esse poterit.”

12. Behold, then, the miserable state of those who give scandal by their bad example, who utter immodest words before their companions, in the presence of young females, and even of innocent children, who, in consequence of hearing those words, commit a thousand sins. Considering how the angel-guardians of those little ones weep at seeing them in the state of sin, and how they call for vengeance from God against the sacrilegious tongues that have scandalized them. A great chastisement awaits all who ridicule those who practise virtue. For many, through fear of the contempt and ridicule of others, abandon virtue, and give themselves up to a wicked life. What shall be the punishment of those who bring messages to induce others to sin? or of those who boast of their own wicked actions? O God! instead of weeping and repenting for having offended the Lord, they rejoice and glory in their iniquities! Some advise others to commit sin; others induce them to it; and some, worse than the devils, teach others how to sin. What shall we say of fathers and mothers, who, though it is in their power

to prevent the sins of their children, allow them to associate with bad companions, or to frequent certain dangerous houses, and permit their daughters to hold conversations with young men? Oh! with what scourges shall we see such persons chastised on the day of judgment!

13. Perhaps some father of a family among you will say: Then, I am lost because I have given scandal? Is there no hope of salvation for me? No: I will not say that you are past hope—the mercy of God is great. He has promised pardon to all who repent. But, if you wish to save your soul, you must repair the scandal you have given. "Let him," says Eusebius Emmissenus, "who has destroyed himself by the destruction of many, redeem himself by the edification of many." (Hom. x. ad Mon.) You have lost your soul, and have destroyed the souls of many by your scandals. You are now bound to repair the evil. As you have hitherto drawn others to sin, so you are bound to draw them to virtue by words of edification, by good example, by avoiding sinful occasions, by frequenting the sacraments, by going often to the church to pray, and by attending sermons. And from this day forward avoid, as you would death, every act and word which could scandalize others. "Let their own ruin," says St. Cyprian, "suffice for those who have fallen." (Lib. 1, epis. iii.) And St. Thomas of Villanova says: "Let your own sins be sufficient for you." What evil has Jesus Christ done to you that it is not enough for you to have offended him yourselves, but you wish to make others offend him? This is an excess of cruelty.

14. Be careful, then, never again to give the smallest scandal. And if you wish to save your soul, avoid as much as possible those who give scandal. These incarnate devils shall be damned; but, if you do not avoid them, you will bring yourself to perdition. "Woe to the world because of scandals," says the Lord (Matt. 18:7), that is, many are lost because they do not fly from occasions of scandal. But you may say: Such a person is my friend; I am under obligations to him; I expect many favours from him. But Jesus Christ says: "If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. It is better for thee, having one eye, to enter into life, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire." (Matt. 18:9.) Although a certain person was your right eye, you must withdraw for ever from her; it is better for you to lose an eye and save your soul, than to preserve it and be cast into hell.

Sermon XXIV

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

ON THE VALUE OF TIME

“A little while, and now you shall not see me.”—JOHN 16:16.

THERE is nothing shorter than time, but there is nothing more valuable. There is nothing shorter than time; because the past is no more, the future is uncertain, and the present is but a moment. This is what Jesus Christ meant when he said: “A little while, and now you shall not see me.” We may say the same of our life, which, according to St. James is but a vapour, which is soon scattered for ever. “For what is your life? It is a vapour which appeareth for a little while.” (James 4:14.) But the time of this life is as precious as it is short; for, in every moment, if we spend it well, we can acquire treasures of merits for heaven; but, if we employ time badly, we may in each moment commit sin, and merit hell. I mean this day to show you how precious is every moment of the time which God gives us, not to lose it, and much less to commit sin, but to perform good works and to save our souls.

1. “Thus saith the Lord: In an acceptable time I have heard thee, and in the day of salvation I have helped thee.” (Isa. 49:8.) St. Paul explains this passage, and says, that *the acceptable time* is the time in which God has determined to confer his favours upon us. He then adds: “Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor. 6:2.) The Apostle exhorts us not to spend unprofitably the present time, which he calls the day of salvation; because, perhaps, after this day of salvation, there shall be no salvation for us. “The time,” says the same Apostle, “is short; it remaineth that . . . they that weep *be* as though they wept not; that they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as if they used it not.” (1 Cor. 7:29, 30, 31.) Since, then, the time which we have to remain on this earth is short, the

Apostle tells those who weep, that they ought not to weep, because their sorrows shall soon pass away; and those who rejoice, not to fix their affections on their enjoyments, because they shall soon have an end. Hence he concludes, that we should use this world, not to enjoy its transitory goods, but to merit eternal life.

2. "Son," says the Holy Ghost, "observe the time." (Eccl. 4:23.) Son, learn to preserve time, which is the most precious and the greatest gift that God can bestow upon you. St. Bernardine of Sienna teaches that time is of as much value as God; because in every moment of time well spent the possession of God is merited. He adds that in every instant of this life a man may obtain the pardon of his sins, the grace of God, and the glory of Paradise. "Modico tempore potest homo lucrari gratiam et gloriam." Hence St. Bonaventure says that "no loss is of greater moment than the loss of time." (Ser. xxxvii. in Sept.)

3. But, in another place, St. Bernardine says that, though there is nothing more precious than time, there is nothing less valuable in the estimation of men. "Nil pretiosius tempore, nil vilius reputatur." (Ser. ii. ad Schol.) You will see some persons spending four or five hours in play. If you ask them why they lose so much time, they answer: To amuse ourselves. Others remain half the day standing in the street, or looking out from a window. If you ask them what they are doing, they shall say in reply, that they are passing the time. And why says the same saint, do you lose this time? Why should you lose even a single hour, which the mercy of God gives you to weep for your sins, and to acquire the divine grace? "Donec hora pertranseat, quam tibi ad agendam pœnitentiam, ad acquirendam gratiam, miseratio conditoris indulserit."

4. O time, despised by men during life, how much shall you be desired at the hour of death, and particularly in the other world! Time is a blessing which we enjoy only in this life; it is not enjoyed in the next; it is not found in heaven nor in hell. In hell, the damned exclaim with tears: "Oh! that an hour were given to us." They would pay any price for an hour or for a minute, in which they might repair their eternal ruin. But this hour or minute they never shall have. In heaven there is no weeping; but, were the saints capable of sorrow, all their wailing should arise from the thought of having lost in this life the time in which they could have acquired greater glory, and from the conviction that this time shall never more be given to

them. A deceased Benedictine nun appeared in glory to a certain person, and said that she was in heaven, and in the enjoyment of perfect happiness; but that, if she could desire anything, it would be to return to life, and to suffer affliction, in order to merit an increase of glory. And she added that, to acquire the glory which corresponded to a single *Ave Maria,* she would be content to suffer till the day of judgment the long and painful sickness which brought on her death. Hence, St. Francis Borgia was careful to employ every moment of his time for God. When others spoke of useless things, he conversed with God by holy affections; and so recollected was he that, when asked his opinion on the subject of conversation, he knew not what answer to make. Being corrected for this, he said: I am content to be considered stupid, rather than lose my time in vanities.

5. Some of you will say: "What evil am I doing?" Is it not, I ask, an evil to spend your time in plays, in conversations, and useless occupations, which are unprofitable to the soul? Does God give you this time to lose it? "Let not," says the Holy Ghost, "the part of a good gift overpass thee." (Eccl. 14:14.) The workmen of whom St. Matthew speaks did no evil; they only lost time by remaining idle in the streets. But they were rebuked by the father of the family, saying: "Why stand you here all the day idle?" (Matt. 20:6.) On the day of judgment Jesus Christ shall demand an account, not only of every month and day that has been lost, but even of every idle word. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it on the day of judgment." (Matt. 12:36.) He shall likewise demand an account of every moment of the time which you shall lose. According to St. Bernard, all time which is not spent for God is lost time. "Omne tempus quo de Deo non cogitasti, cogita te perdisse." (Coll. 1, cap. viii.) Hence the Holy Ghost says: "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly: for neither work nor reason . . . shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening." (Eccl. 9:10.) What you can do to-day defer not till to-morrow; for on to-morrow you may be dead, and may be gone into another world, where you shall have no more time to do good, and where you shall only enjoy the reward of your virtues, or suffer the punishment due to your sins. "To-day if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Ps. 94:8.) God calls you to confess your sins, to restore ill-gotten goods, to be reconciled with your enemies. Obey his call to-day; for it may happen that on to-morrow time may be no more for you, or that God will call you no more. All our

salvation depends on corresponding with the divine calls, and at the time that God calls us.

6. But some of you will perhaps say: I am young; after some time I will give myself to God. But, remember that the gospel tells us, that Jesus Christ cursed the fig tree which he found without fruit, although the season for figs had not yet arrived. “It was not the time for figs.” (Mark 11:13.) By this the Saviour wished to signify, that man at all times, even in youth, should produce fruits of good works; and that otherwise, like the fig tree, he shall be cursed, and shall produce no fruit for the future. “May no man hereafter eat any more fruit of thee for ever.” (Ibid., v. 14.) “Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day; for his wrath shall come on a sudden.” (Eccl. 5:8, 9.) If you find your soul in the state of sin, delay not your repentance nor your confession; do not put them off even till to-morrow; for, if you do not obey the voice of God calling you to-day to confess your sins, death may this day overtake you in sin, and to-morrow there may be no hope of salvation for you. The devil regards the whole of our life as very short, and therefore he loses not a moment of time, but tempts us day and night. “The devil is come down unto you having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.” (Apoc. 12:12.) The enemy, then, never loses time in seeking to bring us to hell: and shall we squander the time which God has given us to save our souls?

7. You say: “I will hereafter give myself to God.” But “why,” answers St. Bernard, “do you, a miserable, sinner, presume on the future, as if the Father placed time in your power?” (Serm. xxxviii., de Part., etc.) Why do you presume that you will hereafter give yourself to God, as if he had given to you the time and opportunity of returning to him whenever you wish: Job said with trembling, that he knew not whether another moment of his life remained: “For I know not how long I shall continue, and whether after a while my Maker may take me away.” (32:22.) And you say: I will not go to confession to-day; I will think of it to-morrow. “Diem tenes,” says St. Augustine, “qui horam non tenes.” How can you promise yourself another day, when you know not whether you shall live another hour? “If,” says St. Teresa, “ ‘you are not prepared to die to-day,’ tremble, lest you die an unhappy death.”

8. St. Bernardine weeps over the blindness of those negligent Christians who squander the days of salvation, and never consider that a day once lost

shall never return. “Transeunt dies, salutis et nemo recogitat sibi perire diem ut nunquam rediturum.” (Serm. ad Scholar.) At the hour of death they shall wish for another year, or for another day; but they shall not have it: they shall then be told that “time shall be no more.” What price would they not then give for another week, for a day, or even for an hour, to prepare the account which they must then render to God? St. Lawrence Justinian says, that for a single hour they would give all their property, all their honours, and all their delights. “Erogaret opes, honores delicias, pro una horula.” (Vit. Solit., cap. x.) But this hour shall not be granted to them. The priest who attends them shall say: Depart, depart immediately from this earth; for your time is no more. “Go forth, Christian soul, from this world.”

9. What will it profit the sinner who has led an irregular life, to exclaim at death: O! that I had led a life of sanctity! O! that I had spent my years in loving God! How great is the anguish of a traveller, who, when the night has fallen, perceives that he has missed the way, and that there is no more time to correct his mistake! Such shall be the anguish at death of those who have lived many years in the world, but have not spent them for God. “The night cometh when no man can work.” (John 9:4.) Hence the Redeemer says to all: “Walk whilst you have light, that the darkness overtake you not.” (John 12:35.) Walk in the way of salvation, now that you have the light, before you are surprised by the darkness of death, in which you can do nothing. You can then only weep over the time which you have lost.

10. He hath called against me the time.” (Thren. 1:15.) At the hour of death, conscience will remind us of all the time which we have had to become saints, and which we have employed in multiplying our debts to God. It will remind us of all the calls and of all the graces which he has given us to make us love him, and which we have abused. At that awful moment we shall also see that the way of salvation is closed for ever. In the midst of these remorses, and of the torturing darkness of death, the dying sinner shall say: O fool that I have been! O life misspent! O lost years, in which I could have gained treasures of merits, and have become a saint! but I have neglected both, and now the time of saving my soul is gone for ever. But of what use shall these wailings and lamentations be, when the scene of this world is about to close, the lamp is on the point of being extinguished, and when the dying Christian has arrived at that great moment on which eternity depends?

11. “Be you then also ready; for, at what hour you think not, the Son of Man will come.” (Luke 12:40.) The Lord says: “Be prepared.” He does not tell us to prepare ourselves when death approaches, but to be ready for his coming; because when we think least of death, the Son of Man shall come and demand an account of our whole life. In the confusion of death, it will be most difficult to adjust our accounts, so as to appear guiltless before the tribunal of Jesus Christ. Perhaps death may not come upon us for twenty or thirty years; but it may also come very soon, perhaps in a year or in a month. If any one had reason to fear that a trial should take place, on which his life depended, he certainly would not wait for the day of the trial, but would as soon as possible employ an advocate to plead his cause. And what do we do? We know for certain that we must one day be judged, and that on the result of that judgment our eternal, not our temporal, life depends. We also know that that day may be very near at hand; and still we lose our time, and, instead of adjusting our accounts, we go on daily multiplying the crimes which will merit for us the sentence of eternal death.

12. If, then, we have hitherto employed our time in offending God, let us henceforth endeavour to bewail our misfortune for the remainder of our life, and say continually with the penitent King Ezechias: “I will recount to thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul.” (Isa. 38:15.) The Lord gives us the remaining days of life, that we may compensate the time that has been badly spent. “Whilst we have time, let us work good.” (Gal. 6:10.) Let us not provoke the Lord to punish us by an unhappy death; and if, during the years that are passed, we have been foolish, and have offended him, let us now attend to the Apostle exhorting us to be wise for the future, and to redeem the time we have lost. “See, therefore, brethren, now you walk circumspectly, not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil, . . . understanding what is the will of God.” (Eph. 5:15, 16, 17.) “The days are evil.” According to St. Anselm, the meaning of these words is, that the days of this life are evil, because in them we are exposed to a thousand temptations and dangers of eternal misery; and therefore, to escape perdition, all possible care is necessary. “What,” says St. Augustine, “is meant by redeeming the time, unless, when necessary, to submit to temporal loss in order to gain eternal goods?” (de hom. 50, hom, i.) We should live only to fulfil with all diligence the divine will; and, should it be necessary, it is better to suffer in temporal things, than to neglect our eternal

interests. Oh! how well did St. Paul redeem the time which he had lost! St. Jerome says, that though the last of the apostles, he was, on account of his great labours, the first in merits. “Paul, the last in order, but the first in merits, because he laboured more than all.” Let us consider that, in each moment, we may lay up greater treasures of eternal goods. If the possession of all the land round which you could walk, or of all the money which you could count in a day, were promised you, would you lose time? or would you not instantly begin to walk over the ground, or to reckon the money? You now have it in your power to acquire, in each moment, eternal treasures; and will you, notwithstanding, misspend your time? Do not say, that what you can do to-day you can also do to-morrow; because this day shall be then lost to you, and shall never return. You have this day; but perhaps to-morrow will not be given you.

Sermon XXV

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

ON OBEDIENCE TO YOUR CONFESSOR

“Whither goest thou?”—JOHN 13:16.

TO gain heaven we must walk in the path that leads to Paradise. Many Christians, who have faith, but not works, live in sin, intent only on the pleasures and goods of this world. If you say to one of them: you are a Christian; you believe that there is an eternity, a heaven, and a hell: tell me, do you wish to save your soul? If you do, I will ask you, in the words of this day’s gospel, “whither goest thou?” He will answer: I do not know, but I hope to be saved. You know not whither you are going. How can you hope for salvation from God, if you live in a state of perdition? How can you expect heaven, if you walk in the way that leads to hell? It is necessary, then, to change the road; and for this purpose you must put yourself in the hands of a good confessor, who will point out to you the way to heaven, and you must obey him punctually. “My sheep,” said Jesus Christ, “hear my voice.” (John 10:27.) We have not Jesus Christ on earth to make us sensibly hear his voice; but, in his stead, he has left us his priests, and has told us, that he who hears them hears him, and he who despises them despises him. “He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me.” (Luke 10:16.) Happy they who are obedient to their spiritual father: unhappy they who do not obey him; for, by their disobedience, they give a proof that they are not among the sheep of Jesus Christ. I intend this day to show, in the first point, how secure of salvation are all who obey their confessor; and, in the second point, how great the danger of perdition to which they who do not obey him are exposed.

FIRST POINT. HOW SECURE OF SALVATION ARE THEY WHO OBEY THEIR CONFESSOR.

1. In leaving us spiritual fathers to guide us in the way of salvation Jesus Christ has bestowed upon us a great benefit. To obtain salvation we must follow the will of God in all things. What, I ask, is necessary in order to save our souls and to become saints? Some imagine that sanctity consists in performing many works of penance; but were a sick man to perform mortifications which would expose him to the proximate danger of death, he would, instead of becoming a saint, be guilty of a very grievous sin. Others think that perfection consists in long and frequent prayers; but should the father of a family neglect the education of his children and go into the desert to pray, he, too, would commit sin; because, although prayer is good, a parent is bound to take care of his children, and he can fulfil the precept of prayer and attention to their instruction without going into the desert. Others believe that holiness consists in frequent communion; but if, in spite of a just command of her husband, and to the injury of her family, a married woman wished to communicate every morning, she would act improperly, and would have to render an account of her conduct to God. In what, then, does sanctity consist? It consists in the perfect fulfilment of the will of God. All the sins which brings souls to hell proceed from self-will; let us, then, says St. Bernard, cease to do our own will; let us follow the will of God, and for us there shall be no hell. “Cesset propria voluntas, et infernus non erit.” (St. Bern. serm. iii., de Resur.)

2. But some of you will ask: How shall we know what God wills us to do? This is a matter which, according to David, is involved in great doubts and obscurity. “Of the business that walketh about in the dark.” (Ps. 90:6.) Many deceive themselves; for passion often makes them believe that they do the will of God, when, in reality, they do their own will. Let us thank without ceasing the goodness of Jesus Christ, who has taught us the secure means of ascertaining the will of God in our regard, by telling us that, if we obey our confessor, we obey himself. “He that heareth you, heareth me.” In the book of the foundations, chapter x., St. Teresa says: “Let a soul take a confessor with a determination to think no more of herself, but to trust in the words of our Lord: ‘He that heareth you, heareth me.’ ” She adds, that this is the secure way of finding the will of God. Hence the saint acknowledged that it was by obedience to the voice of her director that she attained to the knowledge and love of God. Hence, speaking of obedience to one’s confessor, St. Francis de Sales adopts the words of Father M. Avila.

How much soever you seek, you shall never find the will of God so securely, as by this way of humble obedience so much recommended and practised by the ancient saints. (Introd., etc., cap. iv.)

3. He that acts according to the advice of his confessor, always pleases God when, through obedience, he either practises or omits prayer, mortifications, or communions. He even merits a reward before God when, to obey his confessor, he takes recreation, when he eats or drinks, because he does the will of God. Hence the Scripture says that "much better is obedience than the victories of fools." (Eccl. 4:17.) Obedience is more pleasing to God than all the sacrifices of penitential works, or of alms-deeds, which we can offer to him. He that sacrifices to God his property by alms-deeds, his honour by bearing insults, or his body by mortifications, by fasts and penitential rigours, offers to him a part of himself and of what belongs to him; but he that sacrifices to God his will, by obedience, gives to him all that he has, and can say: Lord, having given you my will, I have nothing more to give you.

4. Thus, obedience to a confessor is the most acceptable offering which we can make to God, and the most secure way of doing the divine will. Blessed Henry Suson says, that God does not demand an account of what we do through obedience. Obey, says the Apostle, your spiritual fathers; and fear not anything which you do through obedience; for they, and not you, shall have to render an account of your conduct. "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them; for they watch, as being to render an account of your souls; that they may do this with joy and not with grief." (Heb. 13:17.) Mark the last words: they signify, that penitents should obey without reply, and without causing pain and sorrow to their confessor. Oh! what grief do confessors feel when penitents endeavour, by certain pretexts and unjust complaints, to excuse themselves from obedience! Let us, then, obey our spiritual father without reply, and let us fear not that we shall have to account for any act which we do through obedience. "They," says St. Philip Neri, "who desire to advance in the way of God, should place themselves under a learned confessor, whom they will obey in the place of God. They who do so may be assured that they shall not have to render to God an account of their actions." Hence, if you practice obedience, and if Jesus Christ should ask you on the day of judgment why you have chosen such a state of life? why you have communicated so frequently? why you have

omitted certain works of penance? you will answer: O Lord, I have done all in obedience to my confessor: and Jesus Christ cannot but approve of what you have done.

5. Father Marchese relates, that St. Dominic once felt a scruple in obeying his confessor, and that our Lord said to him: “Why do you hesitate to obey your director? All that he directs will be useful to you.” Hence St. Bernard says, that “whatever a man, holding the place of God commands, provided it be not certainly sinful, should be received as if the command came from God himself” (de Præcep. et Discep., cap. xi.). Gerson relates, that the same St. Bernard ordered one of his disciples, who, through scruples, was afraid to say Mass, to go, and trusting in his advice, to offer the holy sacrifices. The disciple obeyed, and was cured of scruples. Some, adds Gerson, will say: “Would to God that I had a St. Bernard for my director: my confessor is not a St. Bernard. “Whosoever you are that speak in this manner, you err; for you have not put yourself under the care of man because he is learned, but because he is placed over you. Obey him, then, not as a man, but as God.” (Tract. de Præp. ad Miss.) You have intrusted the care of your soul to a confessor, not because he is a man of learning, but because God has given him to you as a guide; and, therefore, you ought to obey him, not as a man, but as God.

6. “An obedient man shall speak of victory.” (Prov. 21:28.) Justly, says St. Gregory, has the Wise Man asserted, that they who are obedient shall overcome the temptations of hell: because, as by their obedience, they subject their own will to men, so they make themselves superior to the devils, who fell through disobedience. “The obedient are conquerors; because, whilst they subject their will to others, they rule over the angels that have fallen through disobedience” (in lib. Reg., cap. x.) Cassian teaches, that he who mortifies self-will beats down all vices; because all vices proceed from self-will. “By the mortification of the will all vices are dried up.” He who obeys his confessor, overcomes all the illusions of the devil, who sometimes makes us expose ourselves to dangerous occasions under pretext of doing good, and makes us engage in certain undertakings which appear holy, but which may prove very injurious to us. Thus, for example, the enemy induces certain devout persons to practise immoderate austerities, which impair their health; they then give up all mortifications, and return to their former irregularities. This happens to those who direct

themselves; but they who are guided by their confessor are not in danger of falling into such an illusion.

7. The devil labours to make scrupulous persons afraid that they will commit sin if they follow the advice of their confessor. We must be careful to overcome these vain fears. All theologians and spiritual writers commonly teach, that it is our duty to obey the directions of our confessors, and conquer our scruples. Natalis Alexander says, that we must act against scruples; and in support of this doctrine, he adduces the doctrine of St. Antonine, who, along with Gerson, censures scrupulous persons for refusing, through vain fears, to obey their confessor, and to overcome scruples. “Beware, lest, while you seek security, you rush into a pit.” Be careful not, through an excess of fear, to fall into the illusions of the devil, by disobeying your director. Hence all the spiritual masters exhort us to obey our confessors in everything which is not manifestly sinful. B. Hubert, of the order of St. Dominic, says that, “unless what is commanded is evidently bad, it ought to be received as if it were commanded by God” (lib. de Erud. Rel., cap. 1). Blessed Denis the Carthusian teaches, that “in doubtful matters we must obey the precept of a superior; because, though it may be against God, a subject is excused from sin on account of obedience” (in 2, dis. xxxix., qu. 3). According to Gerson (tr. de consc. et scrup.), to act against a conscience formed with deliberation, and to act against a fear of sinning in some doubtful matter, are very different things. He adds, that we should banish this fear, and obey our confessor. “Iste timor, quam fieri potest adjiciendus.” In a word, he who obeys his spiritual father is always secure. St. Francis de Sales used to say, that “a truly obedient soul has never been lost;” and that we should be satisfied to know from our confessor that we are going on well in the way of God, without seeking further certainty of it.

SECOND POINT. HOW GREAT IS THE DANGER OF PERDITION TO WHICH THEY WHO DO NOT OBEY THEIR CONFESSOR ARE EXPOSED.

8. Jesus Christ has said, that he who hears his priest, hears him; and that he who despises them, despises him. “Qui vos spernit, me spernit.” (Luc. 10:15.) When the Prophet Eliseus complained of the contempt which he had received from the people, after God had charged him with the direction of

them, the Lord said to him: “They have not rejected thee, but me, that I should not reign over them.” (1 Kings 8:7.) They, then, who despise the advice of their confessors, despise God himself, who has made confessors his own representatives.

9. “Obey your prelates,” says St. Paul, “and be subject to them; for they watch, as being to render an account of your souls: that they may do this with joy and not with grief; for, this is not expedient for you.” (Heb. 13:17.) Some penitents contend with their confessor, and endeavour to make him adopt their own opinion. This is the cause of grief to spiritual directors. But the apostle says, “this is not expedient for you;” because, when the confessor finds that you do not obey him, and that it is only with difficulty he can induce you to walk in the straight path, he will give up the direction of your soul. How deplorable the condition of a vessel which a pilot refuses to steer! How miserable the state of a sick man who is abandoned by his physician! When a patient refuses to obey, or to take the medicine which has been prescribed—when he eats and drinks what he pleases—the physician abandons him, and allows him to follow his own caprice. But, what hope can be entertained of the recovery of such a patient? “Woe to him that is alone, . . . he hath none to lift him up.” (Eccl. 4:10.) Woe to the penitent who wishes to direct himself: he shall have no one to enlighten or correct him, he will therefore rush into an abyss.

10. To every one that comes into this world the Holy Ghost says: “Thou art going in the midst of snares.” (Eccl. 9:20.) We all, on this earth, walk in the midst of a thousand snares; that is, in the midst of the temptations of the devil, dangerous occasions, bad companions, and our own passions, which frequently deceive us. Who shall be saved in the midst of so many dangers? The Wise Man says: “He that is aware of the snares shall be secure.” (Prov. 11:15.) They only who avoid these snares shall be saved. How shall we avoid them? If you had to pass by night through a wood full of precipices, without a guide to give you light, and to point out to you the dangerous passages, you would certainly run a great risk of losing your life. You wish to direct yourself: “Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness.” (Luke 11:45.) The light which you think you possess will be your ruin; it will lead you into a pit.

11. God wills that, in the way of salvation, we all submit to the guidance of our director. Such has been the practice of even the most learned among

the saints. In spiritual things the Lord wishes us to humble ourselves, and to put ourselves under a confessor, who will be our guide. Gerson teaches, that he who neglects the advice of his director, and directs himself, does not require a devil to tempt him: he becomes a devil to himself. “Qui spreto duce, sibi dux esse vult, non indiget dæmone tentante, quia factus est sibi ipse dæmon.” (Cons. de Lib. Reg.) And when God sees that he will not obey his minister, he allows him to follow his own caprice. “So I let them go according to the desires of their own hearts.” (Ps. 80:13.)

12. “It is like the sin of witchcraft to rebel: and like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey.” (1 Kings 15:23.) In explaining this text, St. Gregory says, that the sin of idolatry consists in abandoning God and adoring an idol. This a penitent does when he disobeys his confessor to do his own will: he refuses to do the will of God, who has spoken to him by means of his minister; he adores the idol of self-will, and does what he pleases. Hence St. John of the Cross says that, “not to follow the advice of our confessor is pride and a want of faith.” (Tratt. delle spine, tom. iii., col. 4, § 2, n. 8); for it appears to proceed from a want of faith in the Gospel, in which Jesus Christ has said: “He that heareth you, heareth me.”

13. If, then, you wish to save your souls, obey your confessor punctually. Be careful to have a fixed confessor, to whom you will ordinarily make your confession; and avoid going about from one confessor to another. Make choice of a learned priest; and, in the beginning, make to him a general confession, which, as we know by experience, is a great help to a true change of life. After having made choice of a confessor, you should not leave him without a just and manifest cause. “Every time,” says St. Teresa, “That I resolved to leave my confessor, I felt within me a reproof more painful than that which I received from him.”

Sermon XXVI

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

ON THE CONDITIONS OF PRAYER

“Ask, and ye shall receive.”—JOHN 16:24.

IN the thirty-ninth Sermon I shall show the strict necessity of prayer, and its infallible efficacy to obtain for us all the graces which can be conducive to our eternal salvation. “Prayer,” says St. Cyprian, “is omnipotent; it is one; it can do all things.” We read in Ecclesiasticus that God has never refused to hear any one who invoked his aid. “Who hath called upon him, and he hath despised him?” (Eccl. 2:12.) This he never can do; for he has promised to hear all who pray to him. “Ask, and ye shall receive.” But this promise extends only to prayer which has the necessary conditions. Many pray; but because they pray negligently, they do not obtain the graces they deserve. “You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss.” (St. James 4:3.) To pray as we ought, we must pray, first, with humility; secondly, with confidence; and thirdly, with perseverance.

FIRST POINT. WE MUST PRAY WITH HUMILITY.

1. St. James tells us, that God rejects the prayers of the proud: “God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (4:6). He cannot bear the proud; he rejects their petitions, and refuses to hear them. Let those proud Christians who trust in their own strength, and think themselves better than others, attend to this, and let them remember that their prayers shall be rejected by the Lord.

2. But he always hears the prayers of the humble: “The prayer of him that humbleth himself pierceth the clouds; and he will not depart till the Most High behold.” (Eccl. 35:21.) David says, that “The Lord hath had regard to the prayer of the humble.” (Ps. 101:18.) The cry of the humble man

penetrates the heavens, and he will not depart till God hears his prayer. “You humble yourself,” says St. Augustine, “and God comes to you; you exalt yourself, and he flies from you.” If you humble yourself, God himself comes, of his own accord, to embrace you; but, if you exalt yourself, and boast of your wisdom and of your actions, he withdraws from you, and abandons you to your own nothingness.

3. The Lord cannot despise even the most obdurate sinners, when they repent from their hearts, and humble themselves before him, acknowledging that they are unworthy to receive any favour from him. “A contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” (Ps. 50:19.) Let us pass to the other points, in which there is a great deal to be said.

SECOND POINT. WE MUST PRAY WITH CONFIDENCE.

4. “No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.” (Eccl. 2:11.) Oh! how encouraging to sinners are these words! Though they may have committed the most enormous crimes, they are told by the Holy Ghost, that “no man hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.” No man hath ever placed his trust in God, and has been abandoned. He that prays with confidence obtains whatever he asks. “All things whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.” (Mark 11:24.) When we pray for spiritual favours, let us have a secure confidence of receiving them, and we shall infallibly obtain them. Hence the Saviour has taught us to call God, in our petitions for his graces, by no other name than that of Father (*Our Father*), that we may have recourse to him with the confidence with which a child seeks assistance from an affectionate parent.

5. Who, says St. Augustine, can fear that Jesus Christ, who is truth itself, can violate his promise to all who pray to him? “Who shall fear deception when truth promises?” Is God like men, who promise, and do not afterwards fulfil their promise, either because in making it they intend to deceive, or because, after having made it, they change their intention? “God is not as a man, that he should lie, nor as the son of man, that he should be changed. Hath he told, then, and will he not do?” (Num. 23:19.) Our God cannot tell a lie; because he is truth itself: he is not liable to change; because all his arrangements are just and holy.

6. And because he ardently desires our welfare, he earnestly exhausts and commands us to ask the graces we stand in need of. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.” (Matt. 7:7.) Why, says St. Augustine, should the Lord exhort us so strongly to ask his graces, if he did not wish to give them to us? “Non nos hortaretur, ut peteremus, nisi dare vellet” (de Verb. Dom., ser. v.) He has even bound himself by his promise to hear our prayers, and to bestow upon us all the graces which we ask with a confidence of obtaining them. “By his promises he has made himself a debtor.” (S. Augus., ibid., ser. ii.)

7. But some will say: I have but little confidence in God, because I am a sinner. I have been too ungrateful to him, and therefore I see that I do not deserve to be heard. But St. Thomas tells us, that the efficacy of our prayers in obtaining graces from God, does not depend on our merits, but on the divine mercy. “Oratio in impetrando non innititur nostris meritis, sed soli divinæ misericordiæ” (2, 2, qu. 178, a. 2, ad. 1.) As often as we ask with confidence favours which are conducive to our eternal salvation, God hears our prayer. I have said, “favours conducive to our salvation;” for, if what we seek be injurious to the soul, God does not, and cannot hear us. For example: if a person asked help from God to be revenged of an enemy, or to accomplish what would be offensive to God, the Lord will not hear his prayers; because, says St. Chrysostom, such a person offends God in the very act of prayer; he does not pray, but, in a certain manner mocks God. “Qui orat et peccat, non rogat Deum, sed eludit.” (Hom. xi., in Matt. vi.)

8. Moreover, if you wish to receive from God the aid which you ask, you must remove every obstacle which may render you unworthy of being heard. For example: if you ask of God strength to preserve you from relapsing into a certain sin, but will not avoid the occasions of the sin, nor keep at a distance from the house, from the object, or the bad company, which led to your fall, God will not hear your prayer. And why? Because “thou hast set a cloud before thee, that prayer may not pass through.” (Thren. 3:44.) Should you relapse, do not complain of God, nor say: I have besought the Lord to preserve me from falling into sin, but he has not heard me. Do you not see that, by not taking away the occasions of sin, you have interposed a thick cloud, which has prevented your prayers from passing to the throne of divine mercy.

9. It is also necessary to remark that the promise of Jesus Christ to hear those who pray to him does not extend to all the temporal favours which we ask—such as a plentiful harvest, a victory in a law-suit, or a deliverance from sickness, or from certain persecutions. These favours God grants to those who pray for them; but only when they are conducive to their spiritual welfare. Otherwise he refuses them; and he refuses them because he loves us, and because he knows that they would be injurious to our souls. “A physician,” says St. Augustine, “knows better than his patient what is useful for him” (tom. 3, cap. ccxii). The saint adds that God refuses to some, through mercy, what he grants to others as a chastisement. “Deus negat propitius, quæ concedit iratus.” Hence St. John Damascene says that sometimes, when we do not obtain the graces which we ask, we receive, by not receiving them; because it is better for us not to receive than to receive them. “Etiam si non accipias, non accipendo accepisti, interdum enim non accipere quam accipendo satius est.” (Paral., lib. 3, cap. xv.) We often ask poison which would cause our death. How many are there who, had they died in the sickness or poverty with which they had been afflicted, should be saved? But because they recovered their health, or because they were raised to wealth and honours, they became proud and forgot God, and thus have been damned. Hence St. Chrysostom exhorts us to ask in our prayers what he knows to be expedient for us. “Orantes in ejus potestate ponamus, ut nos illud petentes exaudiat, quod ipse nobis expendire cognoscit.” (Hom. xv. in Matt.) We should, then, always ask from God temporal favours on the condition that they will be useful to the soul.

10. But spiritual favours, such as the pardon of our sins, perseverance in virtue, the gift of divine love, and resignation to the divine will, ought to be asked of God absolutely, and with a firm confidence of obtaining them. “If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from Heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13.) If you, says Jesus Christ, who are so much attached to earthly goods, cannot refuse your children the blessings which you have received from God, how much more will your Heavenly Father (who is in himself infinitely good, and who desires to give you his graces more ardently than you desire to receive them) give the good spirit—that is, a sincere contrition for their sins, the gift of divine love, and resignation to the will of God—to those who ask them? “Quando Deus negabit,” says St.

Bernard, “potentibus qui etiam non potentes hortatur ut petant?” (Ser. ii. de S. Andr.) How can God refuse graces conducive to salvation to those who seek them, when he exhorts even those who do not pray to ask them?

11. Nor does God inquire whether the person who prays to him is a just man or a sinner; for he has declared that “every one that asketh, receiveth.” (Luke 11:10.) “Every one,” says the author of the *Imperfect Work*, “whether he be a just man or a sinner.” (Hom. xviii.) And, to encourage us to pray and to ask with confidence for spiritual favours, he has said: “Amen, amen, I say to you: If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.” (John 16:23.) As if he said: Sinners, though you do not deserve to receive the divine graces, I have merited them for you from my Father: ask, then, in my name—that is, through my merits—and I promise that you shall obtain whatsoever you demand.

THIRD POINT. WE MUST PRAY WITH PERSEVERANCE.

12. It is, above all, necessary to persevere in prayer till death, and never to cease to pray. This is what is inculcated by the following passages of Scripture:—“We ought always to pray.” (Luke 18:1.) “Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times” (21:36). “Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thess. 5:17.) Hence the Holy Ghost says: “Let nothing hinder thee from praying always.” (Eccl. 18:22.) These words imply, not only that we should pray always, but also that we should endeavour to remove every occasion which may prevent us from praying; for, if we cease to pray, we shall be deprived of the divine aid, and shall be overcome by temptations. Perseverance in grace is a gratuitous gift, which, as the Council of Trent has declared, we cannot merit (Ses. 6, cap. xiii.); but St. Augustine says, that we may obtain it by prayer. “Hoe donum Dei suppliciter emereri, potest id est supplicando impetrari.” (de Dono. Per., cap. vi.) Hence Cardinal Bellarmine teaches that “we must ask it daily, in order to obtain it every day.” If we neglect to ask it on any day, we may fall into sin on that day.

13. If, then, we wish to persevere and to be saved—for no one can be saved without perseverance—we must pray continually. Our perseverance depends; not on one grace, but on a thousand helps which we hope to obtain from God during our whole lives, that we may be preserved in his grace. Now, to this chain of graces a chain of prayers on our part must correspond;

without these prayers, God ordinarily does not grant his graces. If we neglect to pray, and thus break the chain of prayers, the chain of graces shall also be broken, and we shall lose the grace of perseverance. If, says Jesus Christ to his disciples, one of you go during the night to a friend, and say to him: Lend me three loaves; an acquaintance has come to my house, and I have no refreshment for him. The friend will answer: I am in bed; the door is locked; I cannot get up. But, if the other continue to knock at the door, and will not depart, the friend will rise, and give him as many loaves as he wishes, not through friendship, but to be freed from his importunity. “Although he will not rise and give him because he is his friend; yet, because of his importunity, he will rise, and give him as many as he needeth.” (Luke 11:8.) Now, if a man will give his loaves to a friend because of his importunity, “how much more,” says St. Augustine, “will God give, who exhorts us to ask, and is displeased if we do not ask?” How much more will the Lord bestow on us his graces, if we persevere in praying for them, when he exhorts us to ask them, and is offended if we do not ask them?

14. Men feel annoyed at being frequently and importunately asked for a favour. But God exhorts us to pray frequently; and, instead of being dissatisfied, he is pleased with those who repeatedly ask his graces. Cornelius a Lapide says, that “God wishes us to persevere in prayer, even to importunity.” (in Luc., cap. xi.) St. Jerome says: “This importunity with the Lord is seasonable.” (in Luc. xi.) That God is pleased with frequent and persevering prayer, may be inferred from the words of Jesus Christ: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.” (Luke 11:9.) It was not enough to have said *ask*, but he added, *seek, knock;* in order to show, that, during our whole lives, we should be as importunate in supplicating the divine graces as beggars are in asking alms. Though they should be refused, they do not cease to cry out, or to knock at the door; they persist in asking relief till they obtain it.

15. If, then, we wish to obtain from God the gift of perseverance, we must ask it from him continually and with importunity. We must ask it when we rise in the morning, in our meditations, in hearing Mass, in our visits to the blessed sacrament, in going to bed at night, and particularly when we are tempted by the devil to commit any sin. Thus, we must always have our mouths open praying to God, and saying: Lord, assist me; give me light;

give me strength; keep thy hand upon me, and do not abandon me. We must do violence to the Lord. “Such violence,” says Tertullian, “is agreeable to God.” The violence which we offer to God by repeated prayers does not offend him: on the contrary, it is pleasing and acceptable in his sight. “Prayer,” according to St. John Climacus, “piously offers violence to God.” Our supplications compel him, but in a manner grateful to him. He takes great complacency in seeing his mother honoured, and therefore wishes, as St. Bernard says, that all the graces we receive should pass through her hands. Hence the holy doctor exhorts us “to seek grace, and to seek it through Mary, because she is a mother, and her prayer cannot be fruitless.” (de Aquæd.) When we ask her to obtain any grace for us, she graciously hears our petitions and prays for us: and the prayers of Mary are never rejected.

Sermon XXVII

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, OR THE SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION

ON HUMAN RESPECT

“Whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth a service to God.” JOHN 16:2.

IN exhorting his disciples to be faithful to him under the persecution which they were to endure, the Saviour said: “Yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth a service to God.” Thus, the enemies of the faith believed that in putting Christians to death they did a service to God. It is thus that many Christians of the present day act. They kill their own souls by losing the grace of God through human respect and to please worldly friends. Oh! how many souls has human respect—that great enemy of our salvation—sent to hell! I shall speak on this subject to-day, that, if you wish to serve God and save your souls, you may guard as much as possible against human respect. In the first point, I will show the importance of not being influenced by human respect; and in the second, I will point out the means by which this vice may be overcome.

FIRST POINT. ON THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT BEING INFLUENCED BY HUMAN RESPECT.

1. “Woe to the world because of scandals.” (Matt. 18:7.) Jesus Christ has said, that through the scandals of the wicked, many souls fall into hell. But how is it possible to live in the midst of the world, and not to take scandal? This is impossible. To avoid taking scandal, St. Paul says, we should leave this world. “Otherwise you must needs go out of this world.” (1 Cor. 5:10.) But it is in our power to avoid familiarity with scandalous sinners. Hence the Apostle adds: “But now I have written to you not to keep company . . . with such an one, not as much as to eat.” (Ibid. 5:11.) We should beware of contracting intimacy with such sinners; for, should we be united with them

in the bonds of friendship, we shall feel an unwillingness to oppose their bad practices and bad counsels. Thus, through human respect and the fear of contradicting them, we will imitate their example, and lose the friendship of God.

2. Such lovers of the world not only glory in their own iniquities ("They rejoice in most wicked things." Prov. 2:14); but, what is worse, they wish to have companions, and ridicule all who endeavour to live like true Christians and to avoid the dangers of offending God. This is a sin which is very displeasing to God, and which he forbids in a particular manner. "Despise not a man that turneth away from sin, nor reproach him therewith." (Eccl. 8:6.) Despise not those who keep at a distance from sin, and seek not to draw them to evil by your reproaches and irregularities. The Lord declares, that, for those who throw ridicule on the virtuous, chastisements are prepared in this and in the next life. "Judgments are prepared for scorners, and striking hammers for the bodies of fools." (Prov. 19:29.) They mock the servants of God, and he shall mock them for all eternity. "But the Lord shall laugh them to scorn. And they shall fall after this without honour, and be a reproach among the dead for ever." (Wis. 4:18.) They endeavour to make the saints contemptible in the eyes of the world, and God shall make them die without honour, and shall send them to hell to suffer eternal ignominy among the damned.

3. Not only to offend God, but also to endeavour to make others offend him, is truly an enormous excess of wickedness. This execrable intention arises from a conviction that there are many weak and pusillanimous souls, who, to escape derision and contempt, abandon the practice of virtue, and give themselves up to a life of sin. After his conversion to God, St. Augustine wept for having associated with those ministers of Lucifer, and confessed, that he felt ashamed not to be as wicked and as shameless as they were. "Pudebat me," says the saint, "esse pudentem." How many, to avoid the scoffs of wicked friends, have been induced to imitate their wickedness! "Behold the saint," these impious scoffers will say; "get me a piece of his garment; I will preserve it as a relic. Why does he not become a monk?" How many also when they receive an insult, resolve to take revenge, not so much through passion, as to escape the reputation of being cowards! How many are there who, after having inadvertently given expression to a scandalous maxim, neglect to retract it (as they are bound to

do), through fear of losing the esteem of others! How many, because they are afraid of forfeiting the favour of a friend, sell their souls to the devil! They imitate the conduct of Pilate, who, through the apprehension of losing the friendship of Cæsar, condemned Jesus Christ to death.

4. Be attentive. Brethren, if we wish to save our souls, we must overcome human respect, and bear the little confusion which may arise from the scoffs of the enemies of the cross of Jesus Christ. “For there is a shame that bringeth sin, and there is a shame that bringeth glory and grace.” (Eccl. 4:25.) If we do not suffer this confusion with patience, it will lead us into the pit of sin; but if we submit to it for God’s sake, it will obtain for us the divine grace here, and great glory hereafter. “As,” says St. Gregory, “bashfulness is laudable in evil, so it is reprehensible in good.” (Hom. x. in Ezech.)

5. But some of you will say: I attend to my own affairs; I wish to save my soul; why then should I be persecuted? But there is no remedy; it is impossible to serve God, and not be persecuted. “The wicked loathe them that are in the right way.” (Prov. 29:27.) Sinners cannot bear the sight of the man who lives according to the Gospel, because his life is a continual censure on their disorderly conduct; and therefore they say: “Let us lie in wait for the just; because he is not for our turn, and he is contrary to our doings, and upbraideth us with transgressions of the law.” (Wis. 2:12.) The proud man, who seeks revenge for every insult which he receives, would wish that all should avenge the offences that may be offered to him. The avaricious, who grow rich by injustice, wish that all should imitate their fraudulent practices. The drunkard wishes to see others indulge like himself in intoxication. The immoral, who boast of their impurities, and can scarcely utter a word which does not savour of obscenity, desire that all should act and speak as they do; and those who do not imitate their conduct, they regard as mean, clownish, and intractable—as men without honour and education. “They are of the world, therefore of the world they speak.” (1 John 4:5.) Worldlings can speak no other language than that of the world. Oh! how great is their poverty and blindness! She has blinded them, and therefore they speak so profanely. “These things they thought, and were deceived; for their own malice blinded them.” (Wis. 2:21.)

6. But I say again, that there is no remedy. All, as St. Paul says, who wish to live in union with Jesus Christ must be persecuted by the world. “And all

that will live godly in Christ, shall suffer persecution.” (2 Tim. 3:12.) All the saints have been persecuted. You say: I do not injure any one; why then am I not left in peace? What evil have the saints, and particularly the martyrs, done? They were full of charity; they loved all, and laboured to do good to all; and how have they been treated by the world? They have been flayed alive; they have been tortured with red-hot plates of iron; and have been put to death in the most cruel manner. And whom has Jesus Christ—the saint of saints—injured? He consoled all; he healed all. “Virtue went out from him, and healed all.” (Luke 6:19.) And how has the world treated him? It has persecuted him, so as to make him die through pain on the infamous gibbet of the cross.

7. This happens because the maxims of the world are diametrically opposed to the maxims of Jesus Christ. What the world esteems, Jesus Christ regards as folly. “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.” (1 Cor. 3:19.) And what is foolish in the eyes of the world—that is, crosses, sickness, contempt, and ignominies—Jesus Christ holds in great estimation. “For the word of the cross, to them indeed that perish, is foolishness.” (1 Cor. 1:18.) How, says St. Cyprian, can a man think himself to be a Christian, when he is afraid to be a Christian? “Christianum se putat si Christianum esse veretur?” (Ser. v. de Lapsis.) If we are Christians, let us show that we are Christians in name and in truth; for, if we are ashamed of Jesus Christ, he will be ashamed of us, and cannot give us a place on his right hand on the last day. “For he that shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him the Son of Man shall be ashamed when he shall come in his majesty.” (Luke 9:26.) On the day of judgment he shall say: You have been ashamed of me on earth: I am now ashamed to see you with me in Paradise. Begone, accursed souls; go into hell to meet your companions, who have been ashamed of me. But mark the words “he that shall be ashamed of me and of my words.” St. Augustine says, that some are ashamed to deny Jesus Christ, but do not blush to deny the maxims of Jesus Christ. “Erubeseunt negare Christum, et non erubescunt negare verba Christi.” (Serm. xlviii.) But you may tell me, that, if you say you cannot do such an act, because it is contrary to the Gospel, your friends will turn you into ridicule, and will call you a hypocrite. Then, says St. John Chrysostom, you will not suffer to be treated with derision by a companion, and you are content to be hated by

God! “Non vis a conservo derideri, sed odio haberi a Deo tuo?” (Hom. xci. in Act. xix.)

8. The Apostle, who gloried in being a follower of Christ, said: “The world is crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Gal. 6:14.) As I am a person crucified to the world—an object of its scoffs and injustice, so the world is to me an object of contempt and abomination. It is necessary to be convinced, that if we do not trample on the world, the world will trample on our souls. But what is the world and all its goods? “All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life.” (1 John 2:16.) To what are all the goods of this earth reduced? To riches, which are but dung; to honours, which are only smoke; and to carnal pleasures. But what shall all these profit us, if we lose our souls? “What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?” (Matt. 16:26.)

9. He that loves God and wishes to save his soul must despise the world and all human respect; and to do this, everyone must offer violence to himself. St. Mary Magdalene had to do great violence to herself, in order to overcome human respect and the murmurings and scoffs of the world, when, in the presence of so many persons, she cast herself at the feet of Jesus Christ, to wash them with her tears, and dry them with her hair. But she thus became a saint, and merited from Jesus Christ pardon of her sins, and praise for her great love. “Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much.” (Luke 7:47.) One day, as St. Francis Borgia carried to certain prisoners a vessel of broth under his cloak, he met his son mounted on a fine horse, and accompanied by certain noblemen. The saint felt ashamed to show what he carried under his cloak. But what did he do in order to conquer human respect? He took the vessel of broth, placed it on his head, and thus showed his contempt for the world. Jesus Christ, our Head and Master, when nailed to the cross, was mocked by the soldiers. “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” (Matt. 27:40.) He was mocked by the priests, saying: “He saved others; himself he cannot save.” (Ibid., *v.* 42.) But he remained firm on the cross; he cheerfully died upon it, and thus conquered the world.

10. “I give thanks to God,” says St. Jerome, “that I am worthy to be hated by the world.” (Epis. ad Asellam.) The saint returns thanks to God for having made him worthy of the hatred of the world. Jesus Christ

pronounced his disciples blessed when they should be hated by men. “Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you.” (Luke 6:22.) Christians, let us rejoice; for, if worldlings curse and upbraid us, God at the same time praises and blesses us. “They will curse, and thou wilt bless.” (Ps. 108:28.) Is it not enough for us to be praised by God, to be praised by the queen of heaven, by all the angels, by all the saints, and by all just men? Let worldlings say what they wish; but let us continue to please God, who will give us, in the next life, a reward proportioned to the violence we shall have done to ourselves in despising the contradictions of men. Each of you should figure to himself, that there is no one in the world but himself and God. When the wicked treat us with contempt, let us recommend to God these blind and miserable men, who run in the road to perdition; and let us thank the Lord for giving to us the light which he refuses to them. Let us continue in our own way: to obtain all, it is necessary to conquer all.

SECOND POINT. ON THE MEANS OF OVERCOMING HUMAN RESPECT.

11. To overcome human respect, it is necessary to fix in our hearts the holy resolution of preferring the grace of God to all the goods and favours of this world, and to say with St. Paul: “Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, . . . nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God.” (Rom. 8:38, 39.) Jesus Christ exhorts us not to be afraid of those who can take away the life of the body; but to fear him only who can condemn the soul and body to hell. “And fear you not them that kill the body; but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body into hell.” (Matt. 10:28.) We wish either to follow God or the world; if we wish to follow God we must give up the world. “How long do you halt between two sides?” said Elias to the people. “If the Lord be God, follow him.” (3 Kings 18:21.) You cannot serve God and the world. He that seeks to please men cannot please God. “If,” says the Apostle, “I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” (Gal. 1:10.)

12. The true servants of God rejoice to see themselves despised and maltreated for the sake of Jesus Christ. The holy apostles “went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.” (Acts 5:41.) Moses could have prevented the anger of Pharaoh by not contradicting the current report that he was the

son of Pharaoh’s daughter. But he denied that he was her son, preferring, as St. Paul says, the opprobrium of Christ to all the riches of the world. “Choosing rather to be afflicted with the people of God; . . . esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure of the Egyptians.” (Heb. 11:25, 26.)

13. Wicked friends come to you and say: What extravagances are those in which you indulge? Why do you not act like others? Say to them in answer: My conduct is not opposed to that of all men; there are others who lead a holy life. They are indeed few; but I will follow their example; for the Gospel says: “Many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matt. 20:16.) “If,” says St. John Climacus, “you wish to be saved with the few, live like the few.” But, they will add, do you not see that all murmur against you, and condemn your manner of living? Let your answer be: It is enough for me that God does not censure my conduct. Is it not better to obey God than to obey men? Such was the answer of St. Peter and St. John to the Jewish priests: “If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye.” (Acts 4:19.) If they ask you how can you bear an insult? or how, after submitting to it, can you appear among your equals? answer them by saying that you are a Christian, and that it is enough for you to appear well in the eyes of God. Such should be your answer to all those satellites of Satan: you must despise all their maxims and reproaches. And when it is necessary to reprove those who make little of God’s law, you must take courage and correct them publicly. “Them that sin, reprove before all.” (1 Tim. 5:20.) And when there is question of the divine honour, we should not be frightened by the dignity of the man who offends God; let us say to him openly: This is sinful; it cannot be done. Let us imitate the Baptist, who reproved King Herod for living with his brother’s wife, and said to him: “It is not lawful for thee to have her.” (Matt. 14:4.) Men indeed shall regard us as fools, and turn us into derision; but, on the day of judgment they shall acknowledge that they have been foolish, and we shall have the glory of being numbered among the saints. They shall say: “These are they whom we had sometime in derision. . . . We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints.” (Wis. 5:3, 4, 5.)

Sermon XXVIII

PENTECOST SUNDAY

ON CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

“As the Father hath given me commandment, so do I.”—JOHN 14:31.

JESUS CHRIST was given to us, by God, as a saviour and as a master. Hence he came on earth principally to teach us, not only by his words but also by his own example, how we are to love God—our supreme good: hence, as we read in this day’s Gospel, he said to his disciples: “That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I.” To show the world the love I bear to the Father, I will execute all his commands. In another place he said: “I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.” (John 6:38.) Devout souls, if you love God and desire to become saints, you must seek his will, and wish what he wishes. St. Paul tells us, that the divine love is poured into our souls by means of the Holy Ghost. “The charity of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.” (Rom. 5:5.) If, then, we wish for the gift of divine love, we must constantly beseech the Holy Ghost to make us know and do the will of God. Let us continually implore his light to know, and his strength to fulfil the divine will. Many wish to love God, but they, at the same time, wish to follow their own, and not his will. Hence I shall show to-day, in the first point, that our sanctification consists entirely in conformity to the will of God; and in the second, I shall show how, and in what, we should in practice conform ourselves to the divine will.

FIRST POINT. OUR SANCTIFICATION CONSISTS ENTIRELY IN CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD.

1. It is certain that our salvation consists in loving God. A soul that does not love God is not living, but dead. “He that loveth not, abideth in death.” (1 John 3:14.) The perfection of love consists in conforming our will to the will of God. “And life in his *good* will.” (Ps. 29:6.) “Have charity, which is the bond of perfection.” (Col. 3:14.) According to the Areopagite, the principal effect of love is to unite the wills of lovers, so that they may have but one heart and one will. Hence all our works, communions, prayers, penances, and alms, please God in proportion to their conformity to the divine will; and if they be contrary to the will of God, they are no longer acts of virtue, but defects deserving chastisement.

2. Whilst preaching one day, Jesus Christ was told that his mother and brethren were waiting for him; in answer he said: “Whosoever shall do the will of my Father that is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother.” (Matt. 12:50.) By these words he gave us to understand that he acknowledged as friends and relatives those only who fulfil the will of his Father.

3. The saints in heaven love God perfectly. In what, I ask, does the perfection of their love consist? It consists in an entire conformity to the divine will. Hence Jesus Christ has taught us to pray for grace to do the will of God on earth, as the saints do it in heaven. “Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matt. 6:10.) Hence St. Teresa says, that “they who practise prayer, should seek in all things to conform their will to the will of God.” In this, she adds, consists the highest perfection. He that practises it in the most perfect manner, shall receive from God the greatest gifts, and shall make the greatest progress in interior life. The accomplishment of the divine will has been the sole end of the saints in the practice of all virtues. Blessed Henry Suson used to say: “I would rather be the vilest man on earth with the will of God, than be a seraph with my own will.”

4. A perfect act of conformity is sufficient to make a person a saint. Behold, Jesus Christ appeared to St. Paul while he was persecuting the Church, and converted him. What did the saint do? He did nothing more than offer to God his will, that he might dispose of it as he pleased. “Lord,” he exclaimed, “what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6.) And instantly the Lord declared to Ananias, that Saul was a vessel of election, and apostle of the Gentiles. “This man is a vessel of election to carry my name before the Gentiles.” (Acts 9:15.) He that gives his will to God, gives him all he has.

He that mortifies himself by fasts and penitential austerities, or that gives alms to the poor for God's sake, gives to God a part of himself and of his goods; but he that gives his will to God, gives him all, and can say: Lord, having given thee my will, I have nothing more to give thee—I have given thee all. It is our heart—that is, our will—that God asks of us. "My son, give me thy heart." (Prov. 23:26.) Since, then, says the holy Abbot Nilus, our will is so acceptable to God, we ought, in our prayers, to ask of him the grace, not that we may do what he will, but that we may do all that he wishes us to do. Every one knows this truth, that our sanctification consists in doing the will of God; but there is some difficulty in reducing it to practice. Let us, then, come to the second point, in which I have to say many things of great practical utility.

SECOND POINT. HOW, AND IN WHAT, WE OUGHT TO PRACTISE CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD.

5. That we may feel a facility of doing on all occasions the divine will, we must beforehand offer ourselves continually to embrace in peace whatever God ordains or wills. Such was the practice of holy David. "My heart," he used to say, "is ready; O God! my heart is ready." (Ps. 107:2.) And he continually besought the Lord to teach him to do his divine will. "Teach me to do thy will." (Ps. 142:10.) He thus deserved to be called a man according to God's own heart. "I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man according to my own heart, who shall do all my wills." (Acts 13:22.) And why? Because the holy king was always ready to do whatever God wished him to do.

6. St. Teresa offered herself to God fifty times in the day, that he might dispose of her as he pleased, and declared her readiness to embrace either prosperity or adversity. The perfection of our oblation consists in our offering ourselves to God without reserve. All are prepared to unite themselves to the divine will in prosperity; but perfection consists in conforming to it, even in adversity. To thank God in all things that are agreeable to us, is acceptable to him; but to accept with cheerfulness what is repugnant to our inclinations, is still more pleasing to him. Father M. Avila used to say, that "a single *blessed be God*, in adversity, is better than six thousand thanksgivings in prosperity."

7. We should conform to the divine will, not only in misfortunes which come directly from God—such as sickness, loss of property, privation of friends and relatives—but also in crosses which come to us from men, but indirectly from God—such as acts of injustice, defamations, calumnies, injuries, and all other sorts of persecutions. But, you may ask, does God will that others commit sin, by injuring us in our property or in our reputation? No; God wills not their sin; but he wishes us to bear with such a loss and with such a humiliation; and he wishes us to conform, on all such occasions, to his divine will.

8. "Good things and evil . . . are from God." (Eccl. 11:14.) All blessings—such as riches and honours—and all misfortunes—such as sickness and persecutions—come from God. But mark that the Scripture calls them evils, only because we, through the want of conformity to the will of God, regard them as evils and misfortunes. But, in reality, if we accepted them from the hands of God with Christian resignation, they should be blessings and not evils. The jewels which give the greatest splendour to the crown of the saints in heaven, are the tribulations which they bore with patience, as coming from the hands of the Lord. On hearing that the Sabeans had taken away all his oxen and asses, holy Job said: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." (Job 1:21.) He did not say that the Lord gave, and that the Sabeans had taken away; but that the Lord gave, and that the Lord had taken away: and therefore he blessed the Lord, believing that all had happened through the divine will." As it has pleased the Lord, so it is done: blessed be the name of the Lord." (Ibid.) Being tormented with iron hooks and burning torches, the holy martyrs Epictetus and Atone said: "Lord, thy will be done in us." And their last words were: "Be blessed, O eternal God, for having given us the grace to accomplish thy will."

9. "Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad." (Prov. 12:21.) A soul that loves God is not disturbed by any misfortune that may happen to her. Cesarius relates (lib. x., c. vi.), that a certain monk who did not perform greater austerities than his companions, wrought many miracles. Being astonished at this, the abbot asked him one day what were the works of piety which he practised. He answered, that he was more imperfect than the other monks; but that his sole concern was to conform himself to the divine will. Were you displeased, said the abbot, with the person who injured us so grievously a few days ago? No, father, replied the

monk; I, on the contrary, thanked God for it; because I know that he does or permits all things for our good. From this answer the abbot perceived the sanctity of the good religious. We should act in a similar manner under all the crosses that come upon us. Let us always say: “Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in thy sight.” (Matt. 11:26.) Lord, this is pleasing to thee, let it be done.

10. He that acts in this manner enjoys that peace which the angels announced at the birth of Jesus Christ to men of good will—that is, to those whose wills are united to the will of God. These, as the Apostle says, enjoy that peace which exceeds all sensual delights. “The peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding.” (Phil. 4:7.) A great and solid peace, which is not liable to change. “A holy man continueth in wisdom like the sun; but a fool is changing like the moon.” (Eccl. 27:12.) Fools—that is, sinners—are changed like the moon, which increases to-day, and grows less on to-morrow; to-day they are seen to laugh through folly, and to-morrow, to weep through despair; to-day they are humble and meek, to-morrow, proud and furious. In a word, sinners change with prosperity and adversity; but the just are like the sun, always the same, always serene in whatever happens to them. In the inferior part of the soul they cannot but feel some pain at the misfortunes which befall them; but, as long as the will remains united to the will of God, nothing can deprive them of that spiritual joy which is not subject to the vicissitudes of this life. “Your joy no man shall take from you.” (John 16:22.)

11. He that reposes in the divine will, is like a man placed above the clouds: he sees the lightning, and hears the claps of thunder, and the raging of the tempest below, but he is not injured or disturbed by them. And how can he be ever disturbed, when whatever he desires always happens? He that desires only what pleases God, always obtains whatsoever he wishes, because all that happens to him, happens through the will of God. Salvian says, that Christians who are resigned, if they be in a low condition of life, wish to be in that state; if they be poor, they desire poverty; because they wish whatever God wills, and therefore they are always content. “Humiles sunt, hoc volunt, pauperes sunt, paupertate delectantur: itaque beati dicendi sunt.” If cold, or heat, or rain, or wind come on, he that is united to the will of God says: I wish for this cold, this heat, this rain, and this wind, because God wills them. If loss of property, persecution, sickness, or even death

come upon him, he says: I wish for this loss, this persecution, this sickness; I even wish for death, when it comes, because God wills it. And how can a person who seeks to please God, enjoy greater happiness than that which arises from cheerfully embracing the cross which God sends him, and from the conviction that, in embracing it, he pleases God in the highest degree? So great was the joy which St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to feel at the bare mention of *the will of God*, that she would fall into an ecstacy.

12. But, how great is the folly of those who resist the divine will, and, instead of receiving tribulations with patience, get into a rage, and accuse God of treating them with injustice and cruelty! Perhaps they expect that, in consequence of their opposition, what God wills shall not happen? “Who resisteth his will?” (Rom. 9:19.) Miserable men! instead of lightening the cross which God sends them, they make it more heavy and painful. “Who hath resisted him, and hath peace?” (Job 9:4.) Let us be resigned to the divine will, and we shall thus render our crosses light, and shall gain great treasures of merits for eternal life. In sending us tribulations, God intends to make us saints. “This is the will of God, your sanctification.” (1 Thess. 4:3.) He sends us crosses, not because he wishes evil to us, but because he desires our welfare, and because he knows that they are conducive to our salvation. “All things work together unto good.” (Rom. 8:28.) Even the chastisements which come from the Lord are not for our destruction, but for our good and for the correction of our faults. “Let us believe that these scourges of the Lord . . . have happened for our amendment, and not for our destruction.” (Jud. 8:27.) God loves us so tenderly, that he not only desires, but is solicitous about our welfare. “The Lord,” says David, “is careful for me.” (Ps. 39:18.)

13. Let us, then, always throw ourselves into the hands of God, who so ardently desires and so anxiously watches over our eternal salvation. “Casting all your care upon him; for he hath care of you.” (1 Peter 5:7.) He who, during life, casts himself into the hands of God, shall lead a happy life and shall die a holy death. He who dies resigned to the divine will, dies a saint; but they who shall not have been united to the divine will during life, shall not conform to it at death, and shall not be saved. The accomplishment of the divine will should be the sole object of all our thoughts during the remainder of our days. To this end we should direct all our devotions, our meditations, communions, visits to the blessed sacrament, and all our

prayers. We should constantly beg of God to teach and help us to do his will. “Teach me to do thy will.” (Ps. 142:10.) Let us, at the same time, offer ourselves to accept without reserve whatever he ordains, saying, with the Apostle: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6.) Lord, tell me what thou dost wish me to do; I desire to do thy will. And in all things, whether they be pleasing or painful, let us always have in our mouths that petition of the PATER NOSTER—“Thy will be done.” Let us frequently repeat it in the day, with all the affection of our hearts. Happy we, if we live and die saying: “Thy will be done! thy will be done!”

Sermon XXIX

TRINITY SUNDAY

ON THE LOVE OF THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS FOR MAN

> “Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”—MATT. 28:19.

ST. LEO has said, that the nature of God is, by its essence, goodness itself. “Deus cujus natura bonitas.” Now, goodness naturally diffuses itself. “Bonum est sui diffusivum.” And by experience we know that men of a good heart are full of love for all, and desire to share with all the goods which they enjoy. God being infinite goodness, is all love towards us his creatures. Hence St. John calls him pure love—pure charity. “God is charity.” (1 John 4:8.) And therefore he ardently desires to make us partakers of his own happiness. Faith teaches us how much the Three Divine Persons have done through love to man, and to enrich him with heavenly gifts. In saying to his apostles, “Teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” Jesus Christ wished that they should not only instruct the Gentiles in the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, but that they should also teach them the love which the adorable Trinity bears to man. I intend to propose this day for your consideration the love shown to us by the Father in our creation; secondly, the love of the Son, in our redemption; and thirdly, the love of the Holy Ghost, in our sanctification.

FIRST POINT. THE LOVE SHOWN TO US BY THE FATHER IN OUR CREATION.

1. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity *on thee.*” (Jer. 31:3.) My son, says the Lord, I have loved you for eternity, and, through love for you, I have shown mercy to you by drawing you out of nothing. Hence, beloved Christians, of all those who love you,

God has been your first lover. Your parents have been the first to love you on this earth; but they have loved you only after they had known you. But, before you had a being, God loved you. Before your father or mother was born, God loved you; yes, even before the creation of the world, he loved you. And how long before creation has God loved you? Perhaps for a thousand years, or for a thousand ages. It is needless to count years or ages; God loved you from eternity. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” As long as he has been God, he has loved you: as long as he has loved himself, he has loved you. The thought of this love made St. Agnes the Virgin exclaim: “I am prevented by another lover.” When creatures asked her heart, she answered: No: I cannot prefer you to my God. He has been the first to love me; it is then but just that he should hold the first place in my affections.

2. Thus, brethren, God has loved you from eternity, and through pure love, he has selected you from among so many men whom he could have created in place of you; but he has left them in their nothingness, and has brought you into existence, and placed you in the world. For the love of you he has made so many other beautiful creatures, that they might serve you, and that they might remind you of the love which he has borne to you, and of the gratitude which you owe to him. “Heaven and Earth,” says St. Augustine, “and all things tell me to love thee.” When the saint beheld the sun, the stars, the mountains, the sea, the rains, they all appeared to him to speak, and to say: Augustine, love God; for he has created us that you might love him. When the Abbé de Raneé, the founder of La Trappe, looked at the hills, the fountains, or flowers, he said that all these creatures reminded him of the love which God had borne him. St. Teresa used to say, that these creatures reproached her with her ingratitude to God. Whilst she held a flower or fruit in her hand, St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to feel her heart wounded with divine love, and would say within herself: Then, my God has thought from eternity of creating this flower and this fruit that I might love him.

3. Moreover, seeing us condemned to hell, in punishment of our sins, the Eternal Father, through love for us, has sent his Son on the earth to die on the cross, in order to redeem us from hell, and to bring us with himself into Paradise. “God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son” (John 3:16), love, which the apostle calls an excess of love. “For his exceeding

charity wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sin, has quickened us together in Christ.” (Eph. 2:4, 5.)

4. See also the special love which God has shown you in bringing you into life in a Christian country, and in the bosom of the Catholic or true Church. How many are born among the pagans, among the Jews, among the Mahometans and heretics, and all are lost. Consider that, compared with these, only a few—not even the tenth part of the human race—have the happiness of being born in a country where the true faith reigns; and, among that small number, he has chosen you. Oh! what an invaluable benefit is the gift of faith! How many millions of souls, among infidels and heretics, are deprived of the sacraments, of sermons, of good example, and of the other helps to salvation which we possess in the true Church. And the Lord resolved to bestow on us all these great graces, without any merit on our part, and even with the foreknowledge of our demerits. For when he thought of creating us and of conferring these favours upon us, he foresaw our sins, and the injuries we would commit against him.

SECOND POINT. THE LOVE WHICH THE SON OF GOD HAS SHOWN TO US IN OUR REDEMPTION.

5. Adam, our first father, sins by eating the forbidden apple, and is condemned to eternal death, along with all his posterity. Seeing the whole human race doomed to perdition, God resolved to send a redeemer to save mankind. Who shall come to accomplish their redemption? Perhaps an angel or a seraph. No; the Son of God, the supreme and true God, equal to the Father, offers himself to come on earth, and there to take human flesh, and to die for the salvation of men. O prodigy of Divine love! Man, says St. Fulgentius, despises God, and separates himself from God, and through love for him, God comes on earth to seek after rebellious man. “Homo Deum contemnens, a Deo discessit: Deus hominem diligens, ad homines venit.” (Serm. in Nativ. Christ.) Since, says St. Augustine, we could not go to the Redeemer, he has deigned to come to us. “Quia ad mediatorem venire non poteramus, ipse ad nos venire dignatus est.” And why has Jesus Christ resolved to come to us? According to the same holy doctor, it is to convince us of his great love for us. “Christ came, that man might know how much God loves him.”

6. Hence the Apostle writes: “The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared.” (Tit. 3:5.) In the Greek text, the words are: “Singularis Deierga homines apparuit amor:” “The singular love of God towards men appeared.” In explaining this passage, St. Bernard says, that before God appeared on earth in human flesh, men could not arrive at a knowledge of the divine goodness; therefore the Eternal Word took human nature, that, appearing in the form of man, men might know the goodness of God. “Priusquam apparet humanitas, latebat benignitas, sed undetanta agnosci poterat? Venit in carne ut, apparante humanitate, cognosceretur benignitas.” (Serm. i., in Eph.) And what greater love and goodness could the Son of God show to us, than to become man and to become a worm like us, in order to save us from perdition? What astonishment would we not feel, if we saw a prince become a worm to save the worms of his kingdom! And what shall we say at the sight of a God made man like us, to deliver us from eternal death? “The word was made flesh.” (John 1:14.) A God made flesh! if faith did not assure us of it, who could ever believe it? Behold then, as St. Paul says, a God as it were annihilated. “He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant . . . and in habit found as a man.” (Phil. 2:7.) By these words the Apostle gives us to understand, that the Son of God, who was filled with the divine majesty and power, humbled himself so as to assume the lowly and impotent condition of human nature, taking the form or nature of a servant, and becoming like men in his external appearance, although, as St. Chrysostom observes, he was not a mere man, but man and God. Hearing a deacon singing the words of St. John, “and the Word was made flesh,” St. Peter of Alcantara fell into ecstasy, and flew through the air to the altar of the most holy sacrament.

7. But this God of love, the Incarnate Word, was not content with becoming flesh for the love of man; but, according to Isaias, he wished to live among us, as the last and lowest, and most afflicted of men. “There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness: and we have seen him . . . despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows.” (Isa. 3:2, 3.) He was a man of sorrows. Yes; for the life of Jesus Christ was full of sorrows. *Virum dolorum.* He was a man made on purpose to be tormented with sorrows. From his birth till his death, the life of our Redeemer was all full of sorrows.

8. And because he came on earth to gain our love, as he declared when he said—"I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?" (Luke 12:49), he wished at the close of his life to give us the strongest marks and proofs of the love which he bears to us. "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end." (John 13:1.) Hence he not only humbled himself to death for us, but he also chose to die the most painful and opprobrious of all deaths. "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:8.) They who were crucified among the Jews, were objects of malediction and reproach to all. "He is accursed of God that hangeth on a tree." (Deut. 21:23.) Our Redeemer wished to die the shameful death of the cross, in the midst of a tempest of ignominies and sorrows. "I am come into the depths of the sea, and a tempest hath overwhelmed me." (Ps. 68:3.)

9. "In this," says St. John, "we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us." (1 John 3:16.) And how could God give us a greater proof of his love than by laying down his life for us? Or, how is it possible for us to behold a God dead on the cross for our sake, and not love him? "For the charity of Christ presseth us." (2 Cor. 5:14.) By these words St. Paul tells us, that it is not so much what Jesus Christ has done and suffered for our salvation, as the love which he has shown in suffering and dying for us, that obliges and compels us to love him. He has, as the same Apostle adds, died for all, that each of us may live no longer for himself, but only for that God who has given his life for the love of us. "Christ died for all, that they also who live, may not live to themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again." (2 Cor. 5:15.) And, to captivate our love, he has, after having given his life for us, left himself for the food of our souls. "Take ye and eat: this is my body." (Matt. 26:26.) Had not faith taught that he left himself for our food, who could ever believe it? But of the prodigy of divine love manifested in the holy sacrament, I shall speak on the second Sunday after Pentecost. Let us pass to a brief consideration of the third point.

THIRD POINT. ON THE LOVE SHOWN TO US BY THE HOLY GHOST IN OUR SANCTIFICATION.

10. The Eternal Father was not content with giving us his Son Jesus Christ, that he might save us by his death; he has also given us the Holy Ghost, that he may dwell in our souls, and that he may keep them always inflamed with holy love. In spite of all the injuries which he received on earth from men, Jesus Christ, forgetful of their ingratitude, after having ascended into heaven, sent us the Holy Ghost, that, by his holy flames, this divine spirit might kindle in our hearts the fire of divine charity, and sanctify our souls. Hence, when he descended on the apostles, he appeared in the form of tongues of fire. “And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were of fire.” (Acts 2:3.) Hence the Church prescribes the following prayer:—“We beseech thee, O Lord, that the Spirit may inflame us with that fire which the Lord Jesus Christ sent on the earth, and vehemently wished to be enkindled.” This is the holy fire which inflamed the saints with the desire of doing great things for God, which enabled them to love their most cruel enemies, to seek after contempt, to renounce all the riches and honours of the world, and even to embrace with joy torments and death.

11. The Holy Ghost is that divine bond which unites the Father with the Son; it is he that unites our souls, through love, with God. For, as St. Augustine says, an union with God is the effect of love. “Charity is a virtue which unites us with God.” The chains of the world are chains of death, but the bonds of the Holy Ghost are bonds of eternal life, because they bind us to God, who is our true and only life.

12. Let us also remember that all the lights, inspirations, divine calls, all the good acts which we have performed during our life, all our acts of contrition, of confidence in the divine mercy, of love, of resignation, have been the gifts of the Holy Ghost. “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings.” (Rom. 8:26.) Thus, it is the Holy Ghost that prays for us; for we know not what we ought to ask, but the Holy Spirit teaches us what we should pray for.

13. In a word, the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity have endeavoured to show the love which God has borne us, that we may love him through gratitude. “When,” says St. Bernard, “God loves, he wishes only to be loved.” It is, then, but just that we love that God who has been the first to love us, and to put us under so many obligations by so many proofs of tender love. “Let us, therefore, love God, because God first hath

loved us.” (1 John 4:19.) Oh! what a treasure is charity! it is an infinite treasure, because it makes us partakers of the friendship of God. “She is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.” (Wis. 7:14.) But, to acquire this treasure, it is necessary to detach the heart from earthly things. “Detach the heart from creatures,” says St. Teresa, “and you shall find God.” In a heart filled with earthly affections, there is no room for divine love. Let us therefore continually implore the Lord in our prayers, communions, and visits to the blessed sacrament, to give us his holy love; for this love will expel from our souls all affections for the things of this earth. “When,” says St. Francis de Sales, “a house is on fire, all that is within is thrown out through the windows.” By these words the saint meant, that when a soul is inflamed with divine love, she easily detaches herself from creatures: and Father Paul Segneri, the younger, used to say, that divine love is a thief that robs us of all earthly affections, and makes us exclaim: “What, O my Lord, but thee alone, do I desire?”

14. “Love is strong as death.” (Cant. 8:6.) As no creature can resist death when the hour of dissolution arrives, so there is no difficulty which love, in a soul that loves God, does not overcome. When there is question of pleasing her beloved, love conquers all things: it conquers pains, losses, ignominies. “Nihil tam durum quod non amoris igne vincatur.” This love made the martyrs, in the midst of torments, racks, and burning gridirons, rejoice, and thank God for enabling them to suffer for him: it made the other saints, when there was no tyrant to torment them, become, as it were, their own executioners, by fasts, disciplines, and penitential austerities. St. Augustine says, that in doing what one loves there is no labour, and if there be, the labour itself is loved. “In co quod amatur aut non laboratur, aut ipse labor amatur.”

Sermon XXX

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON CHARITY TO OUR NEIGHBOUR

> “For with the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.”—LUKE 6:38.

IN this day’s gospel we find that Jesus Christ once said to his disciples: “Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful.” (Luke 6:36.) As your heavenly Father is merciful towards you, so must you be merciful to others. He then proceeds to explain how, and in what, we should practise holy charity to our neighbour. “Judge not,” he adds, “and you shall not be judged” (*v.* 37). Here he speaks against those who do not abstain from judging rashly of their neighbours. “Forgive, and you shall be forgiven” (ibid). He tells us that we cannot obtain pardon of the offences we have offered to God, unless we pardon those who have offended us. “Give, and it shall be given to you” (*v.* 38). By these words he condemns those who wish that God should grant whatsoever they desire, and are at the same time niggardly and avaricious towards the poor. In conclusion he declares, that the measure of charity which we use to our neighbour shall be the same that God will use towards us. Let us, then, see how we should practise charity to our neighbour: we ought to practise it, first, in our thoughts; secondly, in words; thirdly, by works.

FIRST POINT. HOW WE SHOULD PRACTISE CHARITY TO OUR NEIGHBOUR IN OUR THOUGHTS.

1. “And this commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God, love also his brother.” (1 John 4:21.) The same precept, then, which obliges us to love God, commands us to love our neighbour. St. Catherine of Genoa said one day to the Lord: “My God, thou dost wish me to love my neighbour; but I can love no one but thee.” The Lord said to her in answer:

“My child, he that loves me loves whatsoever I love.” Hence St. John says: “If any man say: I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.” (1 John 4:20.) And Jesus Christ has declared that he will receive, as done to himself, the charity which we practise towards the least of his brethren.

2. Hence we must, in the first place, practise fraternal charity in our thoughts, by never judging evil of any one without certain foundation. “Judge not, and you shall not be judged.” He who judges without certain grounds that another has committed a mortal sin, is guilty of a grievous fault; if he only rashly suspects another of a mortal sin, he commits at least a venial offence. But, to judge or suspect evil of another is not sinful when we have certain grounds for the judgment or suspicion. However, he that has true charity thinks well of all, and banishes from his mind both judgments and suspicions. “Charity thinketh no evil.” (1 Cor. 13:5.) The heads of families are obliged to suspect the evil which may be done by those who are under their care. Certain fathers and foolish mothers knowingly allow their sons to frequent bad company and houses in which there are young females, and permit their daughters to be alone with men. They endeavour to justify the neglect of their children by saying: “I do not wish to entertain bad thoughts of others.” O folly of parents! They are in such cases bound to suspect the evil which may happen; and, in order to prevent it, they should correct their children. But they that are not entrusted with the care of others, ought to abstain carefully from inquiring after the defects and conduct of others.

3. When sickness, loss of property, or any misfortune happens to a neighbour, charity requires that we regret, at least with the superior part of the soul, the evil that has befallen him. I say, “with the superior part of the soul;” for, when we hear of the misfortunes of an enemy, our inferior appetite appears to feel delight; but, as long as we do not consent to that delight, we are not guilty of sin. However, it is sometimes lawful to desire, or to be pleased at, the temporal evil of another, when we expect that it will be productive of spiritual good to himself or to others. For example: it is lawful, according to St. Gregory, to rejoice at the sickness or misfortune of an obstinate and scandalous sinner, and even to desire that he may fall into sickness or poverty, in order that he may cease to lead a wicked life, or at least to scandalize others. Behold the words of St. Gregory: “Evenire plerumque potest, ut non amissa charitate, et inimici nostri ruina lætificet, et

ejus gloria sine invidiæ culpa contristet; cum et, ruente eo, quosdam bene erigi credimus, et proficiente illo plerosque injuste opprimi formidamus.” (Lib. xxii., Moral., cap. ii.) But, except in such cases, it is unlawful to rejoice at the loss of a neighbour. It is also contrary to charity to feel regret at a neighbour’s prosperity merely because it is useful to him. This is precisely the sin of envy. The envious are, according to the Wise Man, on the side of the devil, who, because he could not bear to see men in heaven, from which he had been banished, tempted Adam to rebel against God. “But by the envy of the devil death came into the world; and they follow him that are of his side.” (Wis. 2:25.) Let us pass to the next point.

SECOND POINT. ON THE CHARITY WHICH WE OUGHT TO PRACTISE TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR IN WORDS.

4. With regard to the practice of fraternal charity in words, we ought, in the first place, and above all, to abstain from all detraction. “The tale-bearer shall defile his own soul, and shall be hated by all.” (Eccl. 21:31.) As they who always speak well of others are loved by all, so he who detracts his neighbour is hateful to all—to God—and to men, who, although they take delight in listening to detraction, hate the detractor, and are on their guard against him. St. Bernard says that the tongue of a detractor is a three-edged sword. “Gladius equidem anceps, immo triplex est lingua detractoris” (in Ps. lvi). With one of these edges it destroys the reputation of a neighbour; with the second it wounds the souls of those who listen to the detraction; and with the third it kills the soul of the detractor by depriving him of the divine grace. You will say: “I have spoken of my neighbour only in secret to my friends, and have made them promise not to mention to others what I told them.” This excuse will not stand: no; you are, as the Lord says, the serpent that bites in silence. “If a serpent bite in silence, he is nothing better that backbiteth secretly.” (Eccl. 10:11.) Your secret defamation bites and destroys the character of a neighbour. They who indulge in the vice of detraction are chastised not only in the next, but also in. this life, because their uncharitable tongues are the cause of a thousand sins, by creating discord in whole families and entire villages. Thomas Cantaprensis (Apum, etc., cap. xxxvii.) relates, that he knew a certain detractor, who at the end of life became raging mad, and died lacerating his tongue with his teeth. The

tongue of another detractor, who was going to speak ill of St. Malachy, instantly swelled and was filled with worms. And, after seven days, the unhappy man died miserably.

5. Detraction is committed not only when we take away a neighbour’s character, by imputing to him a sin which he has not committed, or exaggerating his guilt, but also when we make known to others any of his secret sins. Some persons, when they know anything injurious to a neighbour, appear to suffer, as it were, the pains of childbirth, until they tell it to others. When the sin of a neighbour is secret and grievous, it is a mortal sin to mention it to others without a just cause. I say, “without a just cause;” for, to make known to a parent the fault of a child, that he may correct him and prevent a repetition of the fault, is not sinful, but is an act of virtue; for according to St. Thomas (2, 2, qu. 2, art. 73), to let others know the sins of a neighbour is unlawful, when it is done to destroy his reputation, but not when it is done for his good, or for the good of others.

6. They who listen to detraction, and afterwards go and tell what was said to the person whose character had been injured, have to render a great account to God. These are called *talebearers*. Oh! how great is the evil produced by these talebearing tongues that are thus employed in sowing discord. They are objects of God’s hatred. “The Lord hateth . . . him that soweth discord among brethren.” (Prov. 6:16, 19.) Should the person who has been defamed speak of his defamer, the injury which he has received may, perhaps, give him some claim to compassion. But why should you relate what you have heard? Is it to create ill-will and hatred that shall be the cause of a thousand sins? If, from this day forward, you ever hear anything injurious to a neighbour, follow the advice of the Holy Ghost. “Hast thou heard a word against thy neighbour? let it die with thee.” (Eccl. 19:10.) You should not only keep it shut up in your heart, but you must let it die within you. He that is only shut up may escape and be seen; but he that is dead cannot leave the grave. When, then, you know anything injurious to your neighbour, you ought to be careful not to give any intimation of it to others by words, by motions of the head, or by any other sign. Sometimes greater injury is done to others by certain singular signs and broken words than by a full statement of their guilt; because these hints make persons suspect that the evil is greater than it really is.

7. In your conversations be careful not to give pain to any companion, either present or absent, by turning him into ridicule. You may say: “I do it through jest;” but such jests are contrary to charity. “All things, therefore,” says Jesus Christ, “that you will that men should do to you, do you also unto them.” (Matt. 7:12.) Would you like to be treated with derision before others? Give up, then, the practice of ridiculing your neighbours. Abstain also from contending about useless trifles. Sometimes, certain contests about mere trifles grow so warm that they end in quarrels and injurious words. Some persons are so full of the spirit of contradiction, that they controvert what others say, without any necessity, and solely for the sake of contention, and thus violate charity. “Strive not,” says the Holy Ghost, “in matters which do not concern thee.” (Eccl. 11:9.) But they will say: “I only defend reason; I cannot bear these assertions which are contrary to reason.” In answer to these defenders of reason, Cardinal Bellar-mine says, that an ounce of charity is better than an hundred loads of reason. In conversation, particularly when the subject of it is unimportant, state your opinion, if you wish to take part in the discourse, and then keep yourself in peace, and be on your guard against obstinacy in defending your own opinion. In such contests it is always better to yield. B. Egidius used to say, that he who gives up conquers; because he is superior in virtue, and preserves peace, which is far more valuable than a victory in such contests. St. Joseph Calasanctius was accustomed to say, that “he who loves peace never contradicts any one.”

8. Thus, dearly beloved brethren, if you wish to be loved by God and by men, endeavour always to speak well of all. And, should you happen to hear a person speak ill of a neighbour, be careful not to encourage his uncharitableness, nor to show any curiosity to hear the faults of others. If you do, you will be guilty of the same sin which the detractor commits. “Hedge in thy ears with thorns,” says Ecclesiasticus, “and hear not a wicked tongue.” (Eccl. 28:28.) When you hear any one taking away the character of another, place around your ears a hedge of thorns, that detraction may not enter. For this purpose it is necessary, at least, to show that the discourse is not pleasing to you. This may be done by remaining silent, by putting on a sorrowful countenance, by casting down the eyes, or turning your face in another direction. In a word, act, says St. Jerome, in such a way that the detractor, seeing your unwillingness to listen to him, may learn to be more

guarded for the future against the sin of detraction. “Discat detractor, dum te videt non libenter audire, non facile detrahere.” (S. Hier. ep. ad Nepot.) And when it is in your power to do it, it will be a great act of charity to defend the character of the persons who have been defamed. The Divine Spouse wishes that the words of his beloved be a veil of scarlet. “Thy lips are as a scarlet lace.” (Cant. 4:3.) That is, as Theodoret explains this passage, her words should be dictated by charity (*a scarlet lace*), that they may cover, as much as possible, the defects of others, at least by excusing their intentions, when their acts cannot be excused. “If,” says St. Bernard, “you cannot excuse the act, excuse the intention.” (Serm. xl. in Cant.) It was a proverb among the nuns of the convent of St. Teresa, that, in the presence of their holy mother, their reputation was secure, because they knew she would take the part of those of whom any fault might be mentioned.

9. Charity also requires that we be meek to all, and particularly to those who are opposed to us. When a person is angry with you, and uses injurious language, remember that a “mild answer breaketh wrath.” (Prov. 15:1.) Reply to him with meekness, and you shall find that his anger will be instantly appeased. But, if you resent the injury, and use harsh language, you will increase the flame; the feeling of revenge will grow more violent, and you will expose yourself to the danger of losing your soul by yielding to an act of hatred, or by breaking out into expressions grievously injurious to your neighbour. Whenever you feel the soul agitated by passion, it is better to force yourself to remain silent, and to make no reply; for, as St. Bernard says, an eye clouded with anger cannot distinguish between right and wrong. “Turbatus præ ira oculus rectum non videt.” (Lib. 2 de Consid., cap. xi.) Should it happen that in a fit of passion you have insulted a neighbour, charity requires that you use every means to allay his wounded feelings, and to remove from his heart all sentiments of rancour towards you. The best means of making reparation for the violation of charity is to humble yourself to the person whom you have offended. With regard to the meekness which we should practise towards others, I shall speak on that subject in the thirty-fourth Sermon, or the Sermon for the fifth Sunday after Pentecost.

10. It is also an act of charity to correct sinners. Do not say that you are not a superior. Were you a superior, you should be obliged by your office to

correct all those who might be under your care; but, although you are not placed over others, you are, as a Christian, obliged to fulfil the duty of fraternal correction. “He gave to every one of them commandment concerning his neighbour.” (Eccl. 17:12.) Would it not be great cruelty to see a blind man walking on the brink of a precipice, and not admonish him of his danger, in order to preserve him from temporal death? It would be far greater cruelty to neglect, for the sake of avoiding a little trouble, to deliver a brother from eternal death.

THIRD POINT. ON THE CHARITY WE OUGHT TO PRACTISE TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR BY WORKS.

11. Some say that they love all, but will not put themselves to any inconvenience in order to relieve the wants of a neighbour. “My little children,” says St. John, “let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and truth.” (1 John 3:18) The Scripture tells us that alms deliver men from death, cleanse them from sin, and obtain for them the divine mercy and eternal life. “Alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting.” (Job 12:9.) God will relieve you in the same manner in which you give relief to your neighbour. “With what measure you shall mete, it shall be measured to you again.” (Matt. 7:2.) Hence St. Chrysostom says, that the exercise of charity to others is the means of acquiring great gain with God. “Alms is, of all acts, the most lucrative.” And St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say, that she felt more happy in relieving her neighbour than when she was wrapt up in contemplation. “Because,” she would add, “when I am in contemplation God assists me; but in giving relief to a neighbour I assist God;” for, every act of charity which we exercise towards our neighbour, God accepts as if it were done to himself. But, on the other hand, how, as St. John says, can he who does not assist a brother in want, be said to love God? “He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall shut up his bowels from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him?” (1 John 3:17.) By alms is understood, not only the distribution of money or other goods, but every succour that is given to a neighbour in order to relieve his wants.

12. If charity obliges us to assist all, it commands us still more strictly to relieve those who are in the greatest need; such as the souls in Purgatory. St. Thomas teaches, that charity extends not only to the living, but also to the dead. Hence, as we ought to assist our neighbours who are in this life, so we are bound to give relief to those holy prisoners who are so severely tormented by fire, and who are incapable of relieving themselves. A deceased monk of the Cistercian order appeared to the sacristan of his monastery, and said to him: "Brother, assist me by your prayers; for I can do nothing for myself." (Cron. Cist.) Let us, then, assist, to the utmost of our power, these beloved spouses of Jesus Christ, by recommending them every day to God, and by sometimes getting Mass offered for their repose. There is nothing which gives so much relief to those holy souls as the sacrifice of the altar. They certainly will not be ungrateful; they will in return pray for you, and will obtain for you still greater graces, when they shall have entered into the kingdom of God.

13. To exercise a special charity towards the sick, is also very pleasing to God. They are afflicted by pains, by melancholy, by the fear of death, and are sometimes abandoned by others. Be careful to relieve them by alms, or by little presents, and to serve them as well as you can, at least by endeavouring to console them by your words, and by exhortations to practise resignation to the will of God, and to offer to him all their sufferings.

14. Above all, be careful to practise charity to those who are opposed to you. Some say: I am grateful to all who treat me with kindness; but I cannot exercise charity towards those who persecute me. Jesus Christ says that even pagans know how to be grateful to those who do them a service. "Do not also the heathens this?" (Matt. 5:47.) Christian charity consists in wishing well, and in doing good to those who hate and injure us. "But I say to you: Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." (Matt. 5:44.) Some seek to injure you, but you must love them. Some have done evil to you, but you must return good for evil. Such the vengeance of the saints. This is the heavenly revenge which St. Paulinus exhorts us to inflict on our enemies. "To repay good for evil is heavenly revenge." (Epis. xvi.) St. Chrysostom teaches, that there is nothing which assimilates us so much to God as the granting of pardon to enemies. "Nothing makes men so like to God as to spare

enemies.” (Hom. xxvii. in Gen.) Such has been the practice of the saints. St. Catherine of Genoa continued for a long time to relieve a woman who had endeavoured to destroy the saint’s reputation. On an assassin, who had made an attempt on his life, St. Ambrose settled a sum for his support. Venustanus, governor of Tuscany, ordered the hands of St. Sabinus to be cut off, because the holy bishop confessed the true faith. The tyrant, feeling a violent pain in his eyes, entreated the saint to assist him. The saint prayed for him, and raised his arm, from which the blood still continued to flow, blessed him, and obtained for him the cure of his eyes and of his soul; for the tyrant became a convert to the faith. Father Segneri relates, that the son of a certain lady in Bologna was murdered by an assassin, who by accident took refuge in her house. (Christ. Instr., part 1, disc. 20, n. 20.) What did she do? She first concealed him from the ministers of justice, and afterwards said to him: Since I have lost my son, you shall henceforth be my son and my heir. Take, for the present, this sum of money, and provide for your safety elsewhere, for here you are not secure. It is thus the saints resent injuries. With what face, says St. Cyril of Jerusalem, can he that does not pardon the affronts which he receives from his enemies, say to God: Lord, pardon me the many insults which I have offered to thee? “Qua fronte dices Domino: remitte mihi multa peccata mea, si tu pauca conservo tuo non remiseris?” (Catech. ii.) But he that forgives his enemies is sure of the pardon of the Lord, who says: “Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.” (Luke 6:37.) And when you cannot serve them in any other way, recommend to God those who persecute and calumniate you. “Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.” This is the admonition of Jesus Christ, who is able to reward those who treat their enemies in this manner.

Sermon XXXI

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON HOLY COMMUNION

“A certain man made a great supper.”—LUKE 14:16.

IN the gospel of this day we read that a rich man prepared a great supper. He then ordered one of his servants to invite to it all those whom he should find in the highways, even though they were poor, blind, and lame, and to compel those who should refuse, to come to the supper. “Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled” (*v.* 23). And he added, that of all those who had been invited and had not come, not one should ever partake of his supper. “But I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper” (*v.* 24). This supper is the holy communion; it is a great supper, at which all the faithful are invited to eat the sacred flesh of Jesus Christ in the most holy sacrament of the altar. “Take ye and eat: this is my body.” (Matt. 24:26.) Let us then consider to-day, in the first point, the great love which Jesus Christ has shown us in giving us himself in this sacrament; and, in the second point, how we ought to receive him in order to draw great fruit from the holy communion.

FIRST POINT. ON THE GREAT LOVE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN US IN GIVING US HIMSELF IN THIS SACRAMENT.

1. “Jesus, knowing that his hour was come that he should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” (John 13:1.) Knowing that the hour of his death had arrived, Jesus Christ wished, before his departure from this world, to leave us the greatest proof which he could give of his love, by leaving us himself in the holy eucharist. “He loved them to the end.” That is, according to St.

Chrysostom, “with an extreme love.” St. Bernardine of Sienna says that the tokens of love which are given at death make a more lasting impression on the mind, and are more highly esteemed. “Quæ in fine in signum amicitiæ celebrantur, firmius memoriæ imprimuntur et cariora tenentur.” But, whilst others leave a ring, or a piece of money, as a mark of their affection, Jesus has left us himself entirely in this sacrament of love.

2. And when did Jesus Christ institute this sacrament? He instituted it, as the Apostle has remarked, on the night before his passion. “The Lord Jesus, the same night on which he was betrayed, took broad, and giving thanks, broke and said: “Take ye and eat: this is my body.” (1 Cor. 11:23, 24.) Thus, at the very time that men were preparing to put him to death, our loving Redeemer resolved to bestow upon us this gift. Jesus Christ, then, was not content with giving his life for us on a cross: he wished also, before his death, to pour out, as the Council of Trent says, all the riches of his love, by leaving himself for our food in the holy communion. “He, as it were, poured out the riches of his love towards man.” (Sess. 13, cap. ii.) If faith had not taught it, who could over imagine that a God would become man, and afterwards become the food of his own creatures? When Jesus Christ revealed to his followers this sacrament which he intended to leave us, St. John says, that they could not bring themselves to believe it, and departed from him saying: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat? . . . This saying is hard, and who can hear it?” (St. John 6:53, 61.) But what men could not imagine, the great love of Jesus Christ has invented and effected. “Take ye and cat: this is my body.” These words he addressed to his apostles on the night before he suffered, and he now, after his death, addresses them to us.

3. How highly honoured, says St. Francis de Sales, would that man feel to whom the king sent from his table a portion of what he had on his own plate? But how should he feel if that portion were a part of the king’s arm? In the holy communion Jesus gives us, not a part of his arm, but his entire body in the sacrament of the altar. “He gave you all,” says St. Chrysostom, reproving our ingratitude, “he left nothing for himself.” And St. Thomas teaches, that in the eucharist God has given us all that he is and all that he has. “Deus in eucharistia totum quod est et habet, deditnobis.” (Opusc. 63, c. ii.) Justly then has the same saint called the eucharist “a sacrament of love; a pledge of love.” “Sacramentum charitatis pignus charitatis.” It is a

sacrament of love, because it was pure love that induced Jesus Christ to give us this gift and pledge of love: for he wished that, should a doubt of his having loved us ever enter into our minds, we should have in this sacrament a pledge of his love. St. Bernard calls this sacrament “love of loves.” “Amor amorum.” By his incarnation, the Lord has given himself to all men in general; but, in this sacrament, he has given himself to each of us in particular, to make us understand the special love which he entertains for each of us.

4. Oh! how ardently does Jesus Christ desire to come to our souls in the holy communion! This vehement desire he expressed at the time of the institution of this sacrament, when he said to the apostles: “With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you.” (Luke 22:15.) St. Laurence Justinian says that these words proceeded from the enamoured heart of Jesus Christ, who, by such tender expressions, wished to show us the ardent love with which he loved us. “This is the voice of the most burning charity. “Flagrantissimæ charitatis est vox hæc.” And, to induce us to receive him frequently in the holy communion, he promises eternal life—that is, the kingdom of heaven—to those who eat his flesh. “He that eateth this bread shall live for ever.” (John 6:59.) On the other hand, it threatens to deprive us of his grace and of Paradise, if we neglect communion. “Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.” (John 6:54.) These promises and these threats all sprung from a burning desire to come to us in this sacrament.

5. And why does Jesus Christ so vehemently desire that we receive him in the holy communion? It is because he takes delight in being united with each of us. By the communion, Jesus is really united to our soul and to our body, and we are united to Jesus. “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him.” (John 6:57.) Thus, after communion, we are, says St. Chrysostom, one body and one flesh with Jesus Christ. “Huic nos unimur, et facti summus unum corpus ut una caro.” (Hom. lxviii. ad Pop. Ant.) Hence St. Laurence Justinian exclaims: “Oh! how wonderful is thy love, O Lord Jesus, who hast wished to incorporate us in such a manner with thy body, that we should have one heart and one soul inseparably united with thee.” Thus, to every soul that receives the eucharist, the Lord says what he once said to his beloved servant Margaret of Ipres—“Behold, my daughter, the close union made between me and thee; love me, then, and

let us remain for ever united in love: let us never more be separated.” This union between us and Jesus Christ is, according to St. Chrysostom, the effect of the love which Jesus Christ bears us. “Semetipsum nobis immiscuit, ut unum quid simus . . . ardentur enim amantium hoc est.” (Hom. lxi.) But, O Lord, such intimate union with man is not suited to thy divine majesty. But love seeks not reason; it goes not where it ought to go, but where it is drawn. “Amor ratione caret, et vadit quo dicitur, non quo debeat.” (Serm. cxliii.) St. Bernardine of Sienna says that, in giving himself for our food, Jesus Christ loved us to the last degree; because he united himself entirely to us, as food is united to those who eat it. “Ultimus gradus amoris est, cum se dedit nobis in cibum quia dedit se nobis ad omnimodam unionem, sicut cibus et cibans, invicem uniuntur.” (Tom. 2, Serm. liv.) The same doctrine has been beautifully expressed by St. Francis de Sales. “No action of the Saviour can be more loving or more tender than the institution of the holy eucharist, in which he, as it were, annihilates himself, and takes the form of food, to unite himself to the souls and bodies of his faithful servants.”

6. Hence, there is nothing from which we can draw so much fruit as from the holy communion. St. Denis teaches, that the most holy sacrament has greater efficacy to sanctify souls than all other spiritual means. “Eucharistia maximam vim habet perfieiendæ sanctitatis.” St. Vincent Ferrer says, that a soul derives more profit from one communion than from fasting a week on bread and wafer. The encharist is, according to the holy Council of Trent, a medicine which delivers us from venial, and preserves us from mortal sins. “Antidotum quo a culpis quotidianis liberemur, et a mortalibus præservemur.” Jesus himself has said, that they who eat him, who is the fountain of life, shall receive permanently the life of grace. “He that cateth me, the same shall also live by me.” (John 6:58.) Innocent the Third teaches, that by the passion Jesus Christ delivers us from the sins we have committed, and by the eucharist from the sins we may commit. According to St. Chrysostom, the holy communion inflames us with the fire of divine love, and makes us objects of terror to the devil. “The eucharist is a fire which inflames us, that, like lions breathing fire, we may retire from the altar, being made terrible to the devil.” (Hom. lxi. ad Pop. Ant.) In explaining the words of the Spouse of the Canticles, “He brought me into the cellar of wine; he set in order charity in me” (2:4.) St. Gregory says, that

the communion is this collar of wine, in which the soul is so inebriated with divine love, that she forgets and loses sight of all earthly things.

7. Some will say: “I do not communicate often; because I am cold in divine love.” In answer to them Gerson asks, Will you then, because you feel cold, remove from the fire? When you are tepid you should more frequently approach this sacrament. St. Bonaventure says: “Trusting in the mercy of God, though you feel tepid, approach: let him who thinks himself unworthy reflect, that the more infirm he feels himself the more he requires a physician” (de Prof. Rel., cap. lxxviii). And, in. “The Devout Life,” chapter 20, St. Francis de Sales writes: “Two sorts of persons ought to communicate often: the perfect, to preserve perfection; and the imperfect, to arrive at perfection.” It cannot be doubted, that he who wishes to communicate should prepare himself with great diligence, that he may communicate well. Let us pass to the second point.

SECOND POINT. ON THE PREPARATION WE OUGHT TO MAKE IN ORDER TO DERIVE GREAT FRUIT FROM THE HOLY COMMUNION.

8. Two things are necessary in order to draw great fruit from communion—preparation for, and thanksgiving after communion. As to the preparation, it is certain that the saints derived great profit from their communions, only because they were careful to prepare themselves well for receiving the holy eucharist. It is easy then to understand why so many souls remain subject to the same imperfections, after all their communions. Cardinal Bona says, that the defect is not in the food, but in the want of preparation for it. “Defectus non in bibo est, sed in edentis dispositione.” For frequent communion two principal dispositions are necessary. The first is detachment from creatures, and disengagement of the heart from everything that is not God. The more the heart is occupied with earthly concerns, the less room there is in it for divine love. Hence, to give full possession of the whole heart to God, it is necessary to purify it from worldly attachments. This is the preparation which Jesus himself recommends to St. Gertrude. “I ask nothing more of thee,” said he to her, “than that thou come to receive me with a heart divested of thyself.” Let us, then, withdraw our affections from creatures, and our hearts shall belong entirely to the Creator.

9. The second disposition necessary to draw great fruit from communion, is a desire of receiving Jesus Christ in order to advance in his love. “He,” says St. Francis de Sales, “who gives himself through pure love, ought to be received only through love.” Thus, the principal end of our communions must be to advance in the love of Jesus Christ. He once said to St. Matilda: “When you communicate, desire all the love that any soul has ever had for me, and I will accept your love in proportion to the fervour with which you wished for it.”

10. Thanksgiving after communion is also necessary. The prayer we make after communion is the most acceptable to God, and the most profitable to us. After communion the soul should be employed in affections and petitions. The affections ought to consist not only in acts of thanksgiving, but also in acts of humility, of love, and of oblation of ourselves to God. Let us then humble ourselves as much as possible at the sight of a God made our food after we had offended him. A learned author says that, for a soul after communion, the most appropriate sentiment is one of astonishment at the thought of receiving a God. She should exclaim: “What! a God to me! a God to me!” Let us also make many acts of the love of Jesus Christ. He has come into our souls in order to be loved. Hence, he is greatly pleased with those who, after communion, say to him: “My Jesus, I love thee; I desire nothing but thee.” Let us also offer ourselves and all that we have to Jesus Christ, that he may dispose of all as he pleases: and let us frequently say: “My Jesus, thou art all mine; thou hast given thyself entirely to me; I give myself entirely to thee.

11. After communion, we should not only make these affections, but we ought also to present to God with great confidence many petitions for his graces. The time after communion is a time in which we can gain treasures of divine graces. St. Teresa says, that at that time Jesus Christ remains in the soul as on a throne, saying to her what he said to the blind man: “What wilt thou that I should do to thee?” (Mark 10:51.) As if he said: “But me you have not always.” (John 12:8.) Now that you possess me within you, ask me for graces: I have come down from heaven on purpose to dispense them to you; ask whatever you wish, and you shall obtain it. Oh! what great graces are lost by those who spend but little time in prayer after communion. Let us also turn to the Eternal Father, and, bearing in mind the promise of Jesus Christ—“Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my

name, he will give it you” (John 16:23)—let us say to him: My God, for the love of this thy Son, whom I have within my heart, give me thy love; make me all thine. And if we offer this prayer with confidence, the Lord will certainly hear us. He who acts thus may become a saint by a single communion.

Sermon XXXII

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE MERCY OF GOD TOWARDS SINNERS

> “There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than ninety-nine just, who need not penance.”—LUKE 15:7.

In this day’s gospel it is related that the Pharisees murmured against Jesus Christ, because he received sinners and eat with them. “This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them” (v. 2). In answer to their murmurings our Lord said: If any of you had a hundred sheep, and lost one of them, would he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go in search of the lost sheep? would he not continue his search until he found it? and having found it, would he not carry it on his shoulders, and, rejoicing, say to his friends and neighbours: “Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost?” (v. 6.) In conclusion, the Son of God said: “I say to you, there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, that need not penance.” There is more joy in heaven upon one sinner who returns to God, than upon many just who preserve the grace of God. Let us, then, speak to-day on the mercy which God shows to sinners, first, in calling them to repentance; secondly, in receiving them when they return.

FIRST POINT. MERCY OF GOD IN CALLING SINNERS TO REPENTANCE.

1. After having sinned by eating the forbidden apple, Adam fled from the face of the Lord through shame of the sin he had committed. What must have been the astonishment of the angels when they saw God seeking after him, and calling him as it were with tears, saying: “Adam, where art thou?” (Gen. 3:9.) My beloved Adam, where art thou? These words, says Father Pereyra, in his commentary on this passage, “are the words of a father in

search of his lost son.” Towards you, brethren, the Lord acts in a similar manner. You fled from him and he has so often invited you to repentance by means of confessors and preachers. Who was it that spoke to you when they exhorted you to penance? It was the Lord. Preachers are, as St. Paul says, his ambassadors. “For Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors; God, as it were, exhorting by us.” (2 Cor. 5:20.) Hence he writes to the sinners of Corinth: “For Christ, we beseech you, be reconciled to God.” (Ibid.) In explaining these words St. Chrysostom says: “Ipse Christus vos obsecrat: quid autem obsecrat? Reconciliamini Deo.” Then, says the holy doctor, Jesus Christ himself entreats you, O sinners: and what does he entreat you to do? To make peace with God. The saint adds: “Non enim ipse inimicus gerit, sed vos.” It is not God that acts like an enemy, but you; that is, God does not refuse to make peace with sinners, but they are unwilling to be reconciled with him.”

2. But notwithstanding the refusal of sinners to return to God, he does not cease to continue to call them by so many interior inspirations, remorses of conscience, and terrors of chastisements. Thus, beloved Christians, God has spoken to you, and, seeing that you disregarded his words, he has had recourse to scourges; he has called you to repentance by such a persecution, by temporal losses, by the death of a relative, by sickness which has brought you to the brink of the grave. He has, according to holy David, placed before your eyes the bow of your damnation, not that you might be condemned to eternal misery, but that you might be delivered from hell, which you deserved. “Thou hast given a warning to them that fear thee, that they may flee from before the bow, that thy beloved maybe delivered.” (Ps. 59:6). You regarded certain afflictions as misfortunes; but they were mercies from God; they were the voices of God calling on you to renounce sin, that you might escape perdition. “My jaws are become hoarse.” (Ps. 68:4.) My son, says the Lord, I have almost lost my voice in calling you to repentance. “I am weary of entreating thee.” (Jer. 15:6.) I have become weary in imploring you to offend me no more.

3. By your ingratitude you deserved that he should call you no more; but he has continued to invite you to return to him. And who is it that has called you? It is a God of infinite majesty, who is to be one day your judge, and on whom your eternal happiness or misery depends. And what are you but miserable worms deserving hell? Why has he called you? To restore to you

the life of grace which you have lost. “Return ye and live.” (Ezec. 18:32) To acquire the grace of God, it would be but little to spend a hundred years in a desert in fasting and penitential austerities. But God offered it to you for a single act of sorrow; you refused that act, and after your refusal he has not abandoned you, but has sought after you, saying: “And why will you die, O house of Israel?” (Ez. 18:31.) Like a father weeping and following his son, who has voluntarily thrown himself into the sea, God has sought after you, saying, through compassion to each of you: My son, why dost thou bring thyself to eternal misery? “Why will you die, O house of Israel?”

4. As a pigeon that seeks to take shelter in a tower, seeing the entrance closed on every side, continues to fly round till she finds an opening through which she enters, so, says St. Augustine, did the divine mercy act towards me when I was in enmity with God. Circuibat super me fidelis a longe misericordia tua.” The Lord treated you, brethren, in a similar manner. As often as you sinned you banished him from your souls. The wicked have said to God: “Depart from us.” (Job 21:14.) And, instead of abandoning you, what has the Lord done? He has placed himself at the door of your ungrateful hearts, and, by his knocking, has made you feel that he was outside, and seeking for admission. “Behold I stand at the gate and knock.” (Apoc. 3:20.) He, as it were, entreated you to have compassion on him, and to allow him to enter. “Open to me, my sister.” (Cant. 5:2.) Open to me; I will deliver you from perdition; I will forget all the insults you have offered to me if you give up sin. Perhaps you are unwilling to open to me through fear of becoming poor by restoring ill-gotten goods, or by separating from a person who provided for you? Am not I, says the Lord, able to provide for you? Perhaps you think that, if you renounce a certain friendship which separates you from me, you shall lead a life of misery? Am I not able to content your soul and to make your life happy? Ask those who love me with their whole hearts, and they will tell you that my grace makes them content, and that they would not exchange their condition, though poor and humble, for all the delights and riches of the monarchs of the earth.

SECOND POINT. MERCY OF GOD IN WAITING FOR SINNERS TO RETURN TO HIM.

5. We have considered the divine mercy in calling sinners to repentance: let us now consider his patience in waiting for their return. That great servant of God, D. Sancia Carillo, a penitent of Father John Avila, used to say, that the consideration of God's patience with sinners made her desire to build a church, and entitle it "The Patience of God." Ah, sinners! who could ever bear with what God has borne from you? If the offences which you have committed against God had been offered to your best friends, or even to your parents, they surely would have sought revenge. When you insulted the Lord he was able to chastise you; you repeated the insult, and he did not punish your guilt, but preserved your life, and provided you with sustenance. He, as it were, pretended not to see the injuries you offered to him, that you might enter into yourselves, and cease to offend him. "Thou over-lookest the sins of men for the sake of repentance." (Wis. 11:24.) But how, O Lord, does it happen, that thou canst not behold a single sin, and that thou dost bear in silence with so many? "Thy eyes are too pure to behold evil, and thou canst not look on iniquity. Why lookest thou upon them that do unjust things, and holdest thy peace?" (Hab. 1:13.) Thou seest the vindictive prefer their own before thy honour; thou beholdest the unjust, instead of restoring what they have stolen, continuing to commit theft; the unchaste, instead of being ashamed of their impurities, boasting of them before others; the scandalous, not content with the sins which they themselves commit, but seeking to draw others into rebellion against thee; thou seest all this, and holdest thy peace, and dost not inflict vengeance.

6. "Omnis creatura," says St. Thomas, "tibi factori deserviens excandescit adversus injustos." All creatures—the earth, fire, air, water—because they all obey God, would, by a natural instinct, wish to punish the sinner, and to avenge the injuries which he does to the Creator; but God, through his mercy, restrains them. But, O Lord, thou waitest for the wicked that they may enter into themselves; and dost thou not see that they abuse thy mercy to offer new insults to thy majesty? "Thou hast been favourable to the nation, O Lord, thou hast been favourable to the nation: art thou glorified?" (Isa. 26:15.) Thou hast waited so long for sinners; thou hast abstained from inflicting punishment; but what glory have you reaped from thy forbearance? They have become more wicked. Why so much patience with such ungrateful souls? Why dost thou continue to wait for their repentance? Why dost thou not chastise their wickedness? The same Prophet answers:

“The Lord waiteth that he may have mercy on you.” (Isa. 30:18.) God waits for sinners that they may one day repent, and that after their repentance, he may pardon and save them. “As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” (Ezech. 33:11.) St. Augustine goes so far as to say that the Lord, if he were not God, should be unjust on account of his excessive patience towards sinners. “Deus, Deus meus, pace tua dicam, nisi quia Deus esses, injustus esses.” By waiting for those who abuse his patience to multiply their sins, God appears to do an injustice to the divine honour. “We,” continues the saint, “sin; we adhere to sin (some of us become familiar and intimate with sin, and sleep for months and years in this miserable state); we rejoice at sin (some of us go so far as to boast of our wickedness); and thou art appeased! We provoke thee to anger—thou dost invite us to mercy.” We and God appear to be, as it were, engaged in a contest, in which we labour to provoke him to chastise our guilt, and he invites us to pardon.

7. Lord, exclaimed holy Job, what is man, that thou dost entertain so great an esteem for him? Why dost thou love him so tenderly? “What is man that thou shouldst magnify him? or why dost thou set thy heart upon him?” (Job. 7:17.) St. Denis the Areopagite says, that God seeks after sinners like a despised lover, entreating them not to destroy themselves. “Deus etiam a se aversos amatorie sequitur, et deprecatur ne pereant.” Why, O ungrateful souls, do you fly from me? I love you and desire nothing but your welfare. Ah, sinners! says St. Teresa, remember that he who now calls and seeks after you, is that God who shall one day be your judge. If you are lost, the great mercies which he now shows you, shall be the greatest torments which you shall suffer in hell.

THIRD POINT. MERCY OF GOD IN RECEIVING PENITENT SINNERS.

8. Should a subject who has rebelled against an earthly monarch go into the presence of his sovereign to ask pardon, the prince instantly banishes the rebel from his sight, and does not condescend even to look at him. But God does not treat us in this manner, when we go with humility before him to implore mercy and forgiveness. “The Lord your God is merciful, and will not turn away his face from you if you return to him.” (2 Par. 30:9.) God cannot turn away his face from those who cast themselves at his feet with

an humble and contrite heart. Jesus himself has protested that he will not reject any one who returns to him. “And him that cometh to me, I will not cast out.” (John 6:37.) But how can he reject those whom he himself invites to return, and promises to embrace? “Return to me, saith the Lord, and I will receive thee.” (Jer. 3:1.) In another place he says: Sinners, I ought to turn my back on you, because you first turned your. back on me; but be converted to me, and I will be converted to you. “Turn to me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn to you, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Zach. 1:3.)

9. Oh! with what tenderness does God embrace a sinner that returns to him! This tenderness Jesus Christ wished to declare to us when he said that he is the good pastor, who, as soon as he finds the lost sheep, embraces it and places it on his own shoulders. “And when he hath found it, doth he not lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing?” (Luke 15:5.) This tenderness also appears in the parable of the prodigal son, in which Jesus Christ tells us that he is the good father, who, when his lost son returns, goes to meet him, embraces and kisses him, and, as it were, swoons away through joy in receiving him. “And running to him, he fell upon his neck and kissed him.” (Luke 15:20.)

10. God protests that when sinners repent of their iniquities, he will forget all their sins, as if they had never offended him. “But, if the wicked do penance for all the sins which he hath committed . . . living, he shall live, and shall not die. I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done.” (Ezech. 18:21, 22.) By the Prophet Isaias, the Lord goes so far as to say: “Come and accuse me, saith the Lord. If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow.” (Isa. 1:18.) Mark the words, *Come and accuse me.* As if the Lord said: Sinners, come to me, and if I do not pardon and embrace you, reprove me, upbraid me with violating my promise. But no! God cannot despise an humble and contrite heart. “A contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” (Ps. 50:19.)

11. To show mercy and grant pardon to sinners, God regards as redounding to his own glory. “And therefore shall he be exalted sparing you.” (Isa. 30:18.) The holy Church says, that God displays his omnipotence in granting pardon and mercy to sinners. “O God, who manifested thy omnipotence in sparing and showing mercy.” Do not imagine, dearly beloved sinners, that God requires of you to labour for a long time before he grants you pardon: as soon as you wish for forgiveness,

he is ready to give it. Behold what the Scripture says: “Weeping, thou shalt not weep, he will surely have pity on thee.” (Isa. 30:19.) You shall not have to weep for a long time: as soon as you shall have shed the first tear through sorrow for your sins, God will have mercy on you. “At the voice of thy cry, as soon as he shall hear, he will answer thee.” (Ibid.) The moment he shall hear you say: Forgive me, O my God, forgive me, he will instantly answer and grant your pardon.

Sermon XXXIII

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

DEATH IS CERTAIN AND UNCERTAIN

“Let down your nets for a draught.”—LUKE 5:4.

IN this day’s gospel we find that, having gone up into one of the ships, and having heard from St. Peter, that he and his companions had laboured all the night and had taken nothing, Jesus Christ said: “Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.” They obeyed; and having cast out their nets into the sea, they took such a multitude of fishes, that the nets were nearly broken, Brethren, God has placed us in the midst of the sea of this life, and has commanded us to cast out our nets, that we may catch fishes; that is, that we may perform good works, by which we can acquire merits for eternal life. Happy we, if we attain this end and save our souls! Unhappy we, if, instead of laying up treasures for heaven, we by our sins merit hell, and bring our souls to damnation! Our happiness or misery for eternity depends on the moment of our death, which is certain and uncertain. The Lord assures us that death is certain, that we may prepare for it; but, on the other hand, he leaves us uncertain as to the time of our death, that we may be always prepared for it—two points of the utmost importance.

First Point. It is certain that we shall die.

Second Point. It is uncertain when we shall die.

FIRST POINT. IT IS CERTAIN THAT WE SHALL DIE.

1. “It is appointed unto men once to die.” (Heb. 9:27.) The decree has been passed for each of us: we must all die. St. Cyprian says, that we are all born with the halter on the neck: hence, every step we make brings us nearer to the gibbet. For each of us the gibbet shall be the last sickness, which will

end in death. As then, brethren, your name has been inserted in the registry of baptism, so it shall be one day written in the record of the dead. As, in speaking of your ancestors, you say: God be merciful to my father, to my uncle, or to my brother; so others shall say the same of you when you shall be in the other world; and as you have often heard the death-bell toll for many, so others shall hoar it toll for you.

2. All things future, which regard men now living, are uncertain, but death is certain. "All other goods and evils," says St. Augustine, "are uncertain; death only is certain." It is uncertain whether such an infant shall be rich or poor, whether he shall enjoy good or ill health, whether he shall die at an early or at an advanced age. But it is certain that he shall die, though he be son of a peer or of a monarch. And, when the hour arrives, no one can resist the stroke of death. The same St. Augustine says: "Fires, waters, and the sword are resisted; kings are resisted: death comes; who resists it?" (in Ps. xii.) We may resist conflagrations, inundations, the sword of enemies, and the power of princes; but who can resist death? A certain king of France, as Belluacensis relates, said in his last moments: "Behold, with all my power, I cannot make death wait for a single hour." No; when the term of life has arrived, death does not wait even a moment—"Thou hast appointed his bounds, which cannot be passed." (Job. 14:5.)

3. We must all die. This truth we not only believe, but see with our eyes. In every age houses, streets, and cities are filled with new inhabitants: their former possessors are shut up in the grave. And, as for them the days of life are over, so a time shall come when not one of all who are now alive shall be among the living. "Days shall be formed, and no one in them." (Ps. 138:16.) "Who is the man that shall live, and shall not see death?" (Ps. 88:49) Should anyone flatter himself that he will not die, he would not only be a disbeliever—for it is of faith that we shall all die—but he would be regarded as a madman. We know that all men, even potentates and princes and emperors, have, after a certain time, fallen victims to death. And where are they now? "Tell me," says St. Bernard, "where are the lovers of the world? Nothing has remained of them but ashes and worms." Of so many great men of the world, though buried in marble mausoleums, nothing has remained but a little dust and a few withered bones. We know that our ancestors are no longer among the living: of their death we are constantly reminded by their pictures, their memorandum books, their beds, and by the

clothes which they have left us. And can we entertain a hope or a doubt that we shall not die? Of all who lived in this town a hundred years ago how many are now alive? They are all in eternity—in an eternal day of delights, or in an eternal night of torments. Either the one or the other shall be our lot also.

4. But, O God! we all know that we shall die: the misfortune is, that we imagine death as distant as if it were never to come, and therefore we lose sight of it. But, sooner or later, whether we think or think not of death, it is certain, and of faith that we shall die, and that we are drawing nearer to it every day. “For we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come.” (Heb. 13:14.) This is not our country: here we are pilgrims on a journey). “While we are in the body we are absent from the Lord.” (2 Cor. 5:6.) Our country is Paradise, if we know how to acquire it by the grace of God and by our own good works. Our house is not that in which we live; we dwell in it only in passing; our dwelling is in eternity. “Man shall go into the house of his eternity.” (Eccl. 12:5.) How great would be the folly of the man, who, in passing through a strange country, should lay out all his property in the purchase of houses and possessions in a foreign land, and reduce himself to the necessity of living miserably for the remainder of his days in his own country! And is not he, too, a fool, who seeks after happiness in this world, from which he must soon depart; and, by his sins, exposes himself to the danger of misery in the next, where he must live for eternity?

5. Tell me, beloved brethren, if, instead of preparing for his approaching death, a person condemned to die were, on his way to the place of execution, to employ the few remaining moments of his life in admiring the beauty of the houses as he passed along, in thinking of balls and comedies, in uttering immodest words, and detracting his neighbours, would you not say that the unhappy man had either lost his reason, or that he was abandoned by God? And are not you on the way to death? Why then do you seek only the gratification of the senses? Why do you not think of preparing the accounts which you shall one day, and perhaps very soon, have to render at the tribunal of Jesus Christ? Souls that have faith, leave to the fools of this world the care of realizing a fortune on this earth; seek you to make a fortune for the next life, which shall be eternal. The present life must end, and end very soon.

6. Go to the grave in which your relatives and friends are buried. Look at their dead bodies: each of them says to you: “Yesterday for me; to-day for thee.” (Eccl. 38:23.) What has happened to me must one day happen to thee. Thou shalt become dust and ashes, as I am. And where shall thy soul be found, if, before death, thou hast not settled thy accounts with God? Ah, brethren! if you wish to live well, and to to have you accounts ready for that great day, on which your doom to eternal life or to eternal death must be decided, endeavour, during the remaining days of life, to live with death before your eyes. “O death, thy sentence is welcome.” (Eccl. 41:3.) Oh! how correct are the judgments, how well directed the actions, of those who form their judgments, and perform their actions, with death before their view! The remembrance of death destroys all attachment to the goods of this earth. “Let the end of life be considered,” says St. Lawrence Justinian, “and there will be nothing in this world to be loved.” (de Ligno Vitæ, cap. v.) Yes; all the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world are easily despised by him who considers that he must soon leave them for ever, and that he shall be thrown into the grave to be the food of worms.

7. Some banish the thought of death, as if, by avoiding to think of death, they could escape it. But death cannot be avoided; and they who banish the thought of it, expose themselves to great danger of an unhappy death. By keeping death before their eyes, the saints have despised all the goods of this earth. Hence St. Charles Borromeo kept on his table a death’s head, that he might have it continually in view. Cardinal Baronius had the words, *Memento mori*—“Remember death”—inscribed on his ring. The venerable P. Juvenal Anzia, Bishop of Saluzzo, had before him a skull, on which was written, “As I am, so thou shalt be.” In retiring to deserts and caves the holy solitaries brought with them the head of a dead man; and for what purpose? To prepare themselves for death. Thus a certain hermit being asked at death, why he was so cheerful, answered: I have kept death always before my eyes; and therefore, now that it has arrived, I feel no terror. But, oh! how full of terror is death, when it comes to those who have thought of it but seldom.

SECOND POINT. IT IS UNCERTAIN WHEN WE SHALL DIE.

8. “Nothing,” says the Idiota, “is more certain than death, but nothing is more uncertain than the hour of death.” It is certain that we shall die. God has already determined the year, the month, the day, the hour, the moment, in which each of us shall leave this earth, and enter into eternity; but this moment he has resolved not to make known to us. And justly, says St. Augustine, has the Lord concealed it; for, had he manifested to all the day fixed for their death, many should be induced to continue in the habit of sin by the certainty of not dying before the appointed day. “Si statuisset viam omnibus, faceret abundare peccata de securitate” (in Ps. cxliv). Hence the holy doctor teaches that God has concealed from us the day of our death, that we may spend all our days well. “Latet ultimus dies, ut observentur omnes dies.” (Hom. xii. inter 50.) Hence Jesus Christ says: “Be you also ready; for at what hour you think not the Son of Man will come.” (Luke 12:40.) That we may be always prepared to die, he wishes us to be persuaded that death will come when we least expect it. “Of death,” says St. Gregory, “we are uncertain, that we may be found always prepared for death.” St. Paul likewise admonishes us that the day of the Lord—that is, the day on which the Lord shall judge us—shall come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night, “The day of the Lord shall so come as a thief in the night.” (1 Thess. 5:2.) Since, then, says St. Bernard, death may assail you and take away your life in every place and at every time, you should, if you wish to die well and to save your soul, be at all times and places in expectation of death: “Mors ubique te expectat tu ubique eam expectabis:” and St. Augustine says: “Latet ultimus dies, ut observentur omnes dies.” (Hom. xii.) The Lord conceals from us the last day of our life, that we may always have ready the account which we must render to God after death.

9. Many Christians are lost, because many, even among the old, who feel the approach of death, flatter themselves that it is at a distance, and that it will not come without giving them time to prepare for it. “Dura mente,” says St. Gregory, “abesse longe mors credituretiam cum sentitur.” (Moral. lib. 8.) Death, even when it is felt, is believed to be far off. O brethren, are these your sentiments? How do you know that your death is near or distant? What reason have you to suppose that death will give you time to prepare for it? How many do we know who have died suddenly? Some have died walking; some sitting; and some during sleep. Did any one of these ever imagine that he should die in such a manner? But they have died in this

way; and if they were in enmity with God, what has been the lot of their unhappy souls? Miserable the man who meets with an unprovided death! And I assert, that all who ordinarily neglect to unburthen their conscience, die without preparation, even though they should have seven or eight days to prepare for a good death; for as I shall show in the forty-fourth sermon, it is very difficult, during these days of confusion and terror, to settle accounts with God, and to return to him with sincerity. But I repeat that death may come upon you in such a manner, that you shall not have time even to receive the sacraments. And who knows whether, in another hour, you shall be among the living or the dead? The uncertainty of the time of his death made Job tremble. “For I know not how long I shall continue, or whether, after a while, my Maker may take me away.” (Job 32:22.) Hence St. Basil exhorts us in going to bed at night, not to trust that we shall see the next day. “Cum in lectulum ad quiescendum membra tua posueris, noli confidere de lucis adventu.” (Inst. ad fil. spirit.)

10. Whenever, then, the devil tempts you to sin, by holding out the hope that you will go to confession and repair the evil you have done, say to him in answer: How do I know that this shall not be the last day of my life? And should death overtake me in sin, and not give me time to make my confession, what shall become of me for all eternity? Alas! how many poor sinners have been struck dead in the very act of indulging in some sinful pleasure, and have been sent to hell! “As fishes are taken by the hook, and as birds are caught with the snare, so men are taken in the evil time.” (Eccl. 9:12.) Fishes are taken with the hook while they eat the bait that conceals the hook, which is the instrument of their death. *The evil time* is precisely that in which sinners are actually offending God. In the act of sin, they calm their conscience by a security of afterwards making a good confession, and reversing the sentence of their damnation. But death comes suddenly upon them, and does not leave them time for repentance. “For, when they shall say peace and security, then shall sudden destruction come upon them.” (1 Thess. 5:3.)

11. If a person lend a sum of money he is careful instantly to get a written acknowledgment, and to take all the other means necessary to secure the repayment of it. Who, he says, can know what shall happen? Death may come, and I may lose my money. And how does it happen that there are so many who neglect to use the same caution for the salvation of their souls,

which is of far greater importance than all temporal interests? Why do they not also say: Who knows what may happen? death may come, and I may lose my soul? If you lose a sum of money, all is not lost; if you lose it one way you may recover the loss in another; but he that dies and loses his soul, loses all, and has no hope of ever recovering it. If we could die twice, we might, if we lost our soul the first time, save it the second. But we cannot die twice. “It is appointed unto men once to die.” (Heb. 9:27.) Mark the word *once:* death happens to each of us but once: he who has erred the first time has erred for ever. Hence, to bring the soul to hell is an irreparable error. “Periisse semel æternum est.”

12. The venerable Father John Avila was a man of great sanctity, and apostle of Spain. What was the answer of this great servant of God, who had led a holy life from his childhood, when he was told that his death was at hand, and that he had but a short time to live? “Oh!” replied the holy man with trembling, “that I had a little more time to prepare for death!” St. Agatho, abbot, after spending so many years in penance, trembled at the hour of death, and said: “What shall become of me? who can know the judgments of God?” And, O brethren, what will you say when the approach of death shall be announced to you, and when, from the priest who attends you, you shall hear these words: “Go forth, Christian soul, from this world?” You will, perhaps, say: Wait a little; allow me to prepare better. No; depart immediately; death does not wait. You should therefore prepare yourselves now. “With fear and trembling work out your salvation.” (Phil. 2:12.) St. Paul admonishes us that, if we wish to save our souls, we must live in fear and trembling, lest death may find us in sin. Be attentive, brethren: there is question of eternity. “If a tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall there shall it be.” (Eccl. 11:3.) If, when the tree of your life is cut down, you fall to the south—that is, if you obtain eternal life—how great shall be your joy at being able to say: I shall be saved; I have secured all; I can never lose God; I shall be happy for ever. But, if you fall to the north—that is, into eternal damnation—how great shall be your despair! Alas! you shall say, I have erred, and my error is irremediable! Arise, then, from your tepidity, and, after this sermon, make a resolution to give yourselves sincerely to God. This resolution will insure you a good death, and will make you happy for eternity.

Sermon XXXIV

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE SIN OF ANGER

“Whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment.”—MATT. 5:22.

ANGER resembles fire; hence, as fire is vehement in its action, and, by the smoke which it produces, obstructs the view, so anger makes men rush into a thousand excesses, and prevents them from seeing the sinfulness of their conduct, and thus exposes them to the danger of the judgment of eternal death. “Whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment.” Anger is so pernicious to man that it even disfigures his countenance. No matter how comely and gentle he may be, he shall, as often as he yields to the passion of anger, appear to be a monster and a wild beast full of terror. “Iracundus,” says St. Basil, “humanam quasi figuram amittit, feræ specimen indutus.” Hom. xxi.) But, if anger disfigures us before men, how much more deformed will it render us in the eyes of God! In this discourse I will show, in the first point, the destruction which anger unrestrained brings on the soul; and, in the second, how we ought to restrain anger in all occasions of provocation which may occur to us.

FIRST POINT. THE RUIN WHICH ANGER UNRESTRAINED BRINGS ON THE SOUL.

1. St. Jerome says that anger is the door by which all vices enter the soul. “Omnium vitiorum janua est iracundia.” (Inc. xxix. Prov.) Anger precipitates men into resentments, blasphemies, acts of injustice, detractions, scandals, and other iniquities; for the passion of anger darkens the understanding, and makes a man act like a beast and a madman. “Caligavit ab indignatione oculus meus.” (Job 17:7.) My eye has lost its eight through indignation. David said: “My eye is troubled with wrath.” (Ps. 30:10.) Hence, according to St. Bonaventure, an angry man is incapable of

distinguishing between what is just and unjust. “Iratus non potest videre quod justum est vel injustum.” In a word, St. Jerome says that anger deprives a man of prudence, reason, and understanding. “Ab omni concilio deturpat, ut donec irascitur, insanire credatur.” Hence St. James says: “The anger of man worketh not the justice of God.” (St. James 1:20.) The acts of it man under the influence of anger cannot be conformable to the divine justice, and consequently cannot be faultless.

2. A man who does not restrain the impulse of anger, easily falls into hatred towards the person who has been the occasion of his passion. According to St. Augustine, hatred is nothing else than persevering anger. “Odium est ira diuturno tempore perseverans.” Hence St. Thomas says that “anger is sudden, but hatred is lasting.” Opusc. v.) It appears, then, that in him in whom anger perseveres hatred also reigns. But some will say: I am the head of the house; I must correct my children and servants, and, when necessary, I must raise my voice against the disorders which I witness. I say in answer: It is one thing to be angry against a brother, and another to be displeased at the sin of a brother. To be angry against sin is not anger, but zeal; and therefore it is not only lawful, but is sometimes a duty. But our anger must be accompanied with prudence, and must appear to be directed against sin, but not against the sinner; for, if the person whom we correct perceive that we speak through passion and hatred towards him, the correction will be unprofitable and even mischievous. To be angry, then, against a brother’s sin is certainly lawful. “He,” says St. Augustine, “is not angry with a brother who is angry against a brother’s sin.” It is thus, as David said, we may be angry without sin. “Be ye angry, and sin not.” (Ps. 4:5.) But, to be angry against a brother on account of the sin which he has committed is not lawful; because, according to St. Augustine, we are not allowed to hate others for their vices. “Nec propter vitia (licet) homines odisse” (in Ps. xcviii).

3. Hatred brings with it a desire of revenge; for, according to St. Thomas, anger, when fully voluntary, is accompanied with a desire of revenge. “Ira est appetitus vindictæ.” But you will perhaps say: If I resent such an injury, God will have pity on me, because I have just grounds of resentment Who, I ask, has told you that you have just grounds for seeking revenge? It is you, whose understanding is clouded by passions, that so. I have already said that anger obscures the mind, and takes away our reason and understanding.

As long as the passion of anger lasts, you will consider your neighbour’s conduct very unjust and intolerable; but, when your anger shall have passed away, you shall see that his act was not so bad as it appeared to you. But, though the injury be grievous, or even more grievous, God will not have compassion on you if you seek revenge. No, he says: vengeance for sins belongs not to you, but to me; and when the time shall come I will chastise them as they deserve. “Revenge is mine, and I will repay *them* in due time.” (Deut. 32:35.) If you resent an injury done to you by a neighbour, God will justly inflict vengeance on you for all the injuries you have offered to him, and particularly for taking revenge on a brother whom he commands you to pardon. “He that seeketh to revenge himself, shall find vengeance from the Lord . . . Man to man reserveth anger, and doth he seek remedy of God? . . . He that is but flesh nourisheth anger; and doth he ask forgiveness of God? Who shall obtain pardon for his sins?” (Eccl. 28:1, 3, 5.) Man, a worm of flesh, reserves anger, and takes revenge on a brother: does he afterwards dare to ask mercy of God? And who, adds the sacred writer, can obtain pardon for the iniquities of so daring a sinner? “Qua fronte,” says St. Augustine, “indulgentiam peccatorem obtinere poterit, qui præcipienti dare veniam non acquiescit.” How can he who will not obey the command of God to pardon his neighbour, expect to obtain from God the forgiveness of his own sins?

4. Let us implore the Lord to preserve us from yielding to any strong passion, and particularly to anger. “Give me not over to a shameful and foolish mind.” (Eccl. 23:6.) For, he that submits to such a passion is exposed to great danger of falling into a grievous sin against God or his neighbour. How many, in consequence of not restraining anger, break out into horrible blasphemies against God or his saints! But, at the very time we are in a flame of indignation, God is armed with scourges. The Lord said one day to the Prophet Jeremias: “What seest thou, Jeremias? And I said: I see a rod watching.” (Jer. 1:11.) Lord, I behold a rod watching to inflict punishment. “The Lord asked him again: “What seest thou? And I said: I see a boiling caldron.” (Ibid., 1:13). The boiling chaldron is the figure of a man inflamed with wrath, and threatened with a rod, that is, with the vengeance of God. Behold, then, the ruin which anger unrestrained brings on man. It deprives him, first, of the grace of God, and afterwards of corporal life. “Envy and anger shortens a man’s days.” (Eccl. 30:26.) Job

says: “Anger indeed killeth the foolish.” (Job 5:2.) All the days of their life, persons addicted to anger are unhappy, because they are always in a tempest. But let us pass to the second point, in which I have to say many things which will assist you to overcome this vice.

SECOND POINT. HOW WE OUGHT TO RESTRAIN ANGER IN THE OCCASIONS OF PROVOCATION WHICH OCCUR TO US.

5. In the first place it is necessary to know that it is not possible for human weakness, in the midst of so many occasions, to be altogether free from every motion of anger. No one, as Seneca says, can be entirely exempt from this passion. “Iracundia nullum genus hominum excipit” (1. 3, *c.* 12). All our efforts must be directed to the moderation of the feelings of anger which spring up in the soul. How are they to be moderated? By meekness. This is called the virtue of the lamb—that is, the beloved virtue of Jesus Christ. Because, like a lamb, without anger or even complaint, he bore the sorrows of his passion and crucifixion. “He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth.” (Isa. 53:7.) Hence he has taught us to learn of him meekness and humility of heart. “Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.” (Matt. 11:29.)

6. Oh! how pleasing in the sight of God are the meek, who submit in peace to all crosses, misfortunes, persecutions, and injuries! To the meek is promised the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.” (Matt. 5:4.) They are called the children of God. “Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.” (Ibid., 5:9.) Some boast of their meekness, but without any grounds; for they are meek only towards those who praise and confer favours upon them: but to those who injure or censure them they are all fury and vengeance. The virtue of meekness consists in being meek and peaceful towards those who hate and maltreat us. “With them that hated peace I was peaceful.” (Ps. 119:7.)

7. We must, as St. Paul says, put on the bowels of mercy towards all men, and bear one with another. “Put on ye the bowels of mercy, humility, modesty, patience, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another.” (Col. 3:12, 13.) You wish others to

bear with your defects, and to pardon your faults; you should act in the same manner towards them. Whenever, then, you receive an insult from a person enraged against you, remember that a "mild answer breaketh wrath." (Prov. 15:1.) A certain monk once passed through a cornfield: the owner of the field ran out, and spoke to him in very offensive and injurious language. The monk humbly replied: Brother, you are right; I have done wrong; pardon me. By this answer the husbandman was so much appeased that he instantly became calm, and even wished to follow the monk, and to enter into religion. The proud make use of the humiliations they receive to increase their pride; but the humble and the meek turn the contempt and insults offered to them into an occasion of advancing in humility. "He," says St. Bernard, "is humble who converts humiliation into humility." (Ser. xxiv. in Can.)

8. "A man of meekness," says St. Chrysostom, "is useful to himself and to others." The meek are useful to themselves, because, according to F. Alvares, the time of humiliation and contempt is for them the time of merit. Hence, Jesus Christ calls his disciples happy when they shall be reviled and persecuted. "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you and persecute you." (Matt. 5:11.) Hence, the saints have always desired to be despised as Jesus Christ has been despised. The meek are useful to others; because, as the same St. Chrysostom says, there is nothing better calculated to draw others to God, than to see a Christian meek and cheerful when he receives an injury or an insult. "Nihil ita conciliat Domino familiares ut quod illum vident mansuetudine jucundum." The reason is, because virtue is known by being tried; and, as gold is tried by fire, so the meekness of men is proved by humiliation. "Gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation. (Eccl. 2:5.) "My spikenard," says the spouse in the Canticles, "sent forth the odour thereof" (1:11.) The spikenard is an odoriferous plant, but diffuses its odours only when it is torn and bruised. In this passage the inspired writer gives us to understand, that a man cannot be said to be meek unless he is known to send forth the odour of his meekness by bearing injuries and insults in peace and without anger. God wishes us to be meek even towards ourselves. When a person commits a fault, God certainly wishes him to humble himself, to be sorry for his sin, and to purpose never to fall into it again; but he does not wish him to be indignant with himself, and give way to trouble and agitation of mind; for, while the

soul is agitated, a man is incapable of doing good. “My heart is troubled; my strength hath left me.” (Ps. 37:11.)

9. Thus, when we receive an insult, we must do violence to ourselves in order to restrain anger. Let us either answer with meekness, as recommended above, or let us remain silent; and thus, as St. Isidore says, we shall conquer. “Quamvis quis irritet, tu dissimula, quia tacendo vinces.” But, if you answer through passion, you shall do harm to yourselves and others. It would be still worse to give an angry answer to a person who corrects you. “Medicanti irascitur,” says St. Bernard, “qui non irascitur sagittanti.” (Ser. vi. de Nativ.) Some are not angry, though they ought to be indignant with those who wound their souls by flattery; and are filled with indignation against the person who censures them in order to heal their irregularities. Against the man who abhors correction, the sentence of perdition has, according to the Wise Man, been pronounced. “Because they have despised all my reproofs, . . . the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.” (Prov. 1:30, etc.) Fools regard as prosperity to be free from correction, or to despise the admonitions which they receive; but such prosperity is the cause of their ruin. When you meet with an occasion of anger, you must, in the first place, be on your guard not to allow anger to enter your heart. “Be not quickly angry.” (Eccles. 7:10.) Some persons change colour, and get into a passion, at every contradiction: and when anger has got admission, God knows to what it shall lead them. Hence, it is necessary to foresee these occasions in our meditations and prayers; for, unless we are prepared for them, it will be as difficult to restrain anger as to put a bridle on a horse while running away.

10. Whenever we have the misfortune to permit anger to enter the soul, let us be careful not to allow it to remain. Jesus Christ tells all who remember that a brother is offended with them, not to offer the gift which they bring to the altar without being first reconciled to their neighbour. “Go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift.” (Matt. 5:24.) And he who has received any offence, should endeavour to root out of his heart not only all anger, but also every feeling of bitterness towards the persons who have offended him. “Let all bitterness,” says St. Paul, “and anger and indignation . . . be put away from you.” (Eph. 4:31.) As long as anger continues, follow the advice of Seneca—“When you shall be angry do nothing, say nothing, which may be dictated by anger.” Like

David, be silent, and do not speak, when you feel that you are disturbed. “I was troubled, and I spoke not.” (Ps. 76:5.) How many when inflamed with anger, say and do what they afterwards, in their cooler moments, regret, and excuse themselves by saying that they were in a passion? As long, then, as anger lasts we must be silent, and abstain from doing or resolving to do anything; for, what is done in the heat of passion will, according to the maxim of St. James, be unjust. “The anger of man worketh not the justice of God.” (1:20.) It is also necessary to abstain altogether from consulting those who might foment our indignation. “Blessed,” says David, “is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly.” (Ps. 1:1.) To him who is asked for advice, Ecclesiasticus says: “If thou blow the spark, it shall burn as a fire; and if thou spit upon it, it shall be quenched.” (Eccl. 28:14.) When a person is indignant at some injury which he has received, you may, by exhorting him to patience, extinguish the fire; but, if you encourage revenge, you may kindle a great flame. Let him, then, who feels himself in any way inflamed with anger, be on his guard against false friends, who, by an imprudent word, may be the cause of his perdition.

11. Let us follow the advice of the apostle: “Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good.” (Rom. 12:21.) “Be not overcome by evil:” do not allow yourself to be conquered by sin. If, through anger, you seek revenge or utter blasphemies, you are overcome by sin. But you will say: “I am naturally of a warm temper.” By the grace of God, and by doing violence to yourself, you will be able to conquer your natural disposition. Do not consent to anger, and you shall subdue the warmth of your temper. But you say: “I cannot bear with unjust treatment.” In answer I tell you, first, to remember that anger obscures reason, and prevents us from seeing things as they are. “Fire hath fallen on them, and they shall not see the sun.” (Ps. 57:9.) Secondly, if you return evil for evil, your enemy shall gain a victory over you. “If,” said David, “I have rendered to them that repaid me evils, let me deservedly fall empty before my enemies.” (Ps. 7:5.) If I render evil for evil, I shall be defeated by my enemies. “Overcome evil by good.” Render every foe good for evil. “Do good,” says Jesus Christ, “to them that hate you.” (Matt. 5:44.) This is the revenge of the saints, and is called by St. Paulinus, *Heavenly revenge*. It is by such revenge that you shall gain the victory. And should any of those, of whom the Prophet says, “The venom of asps is under their lips” (Ps. 139:4.), ask how you can submit to such an

injury, let your answer be: “The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11.) And then turning to God you shall say: “I opened not my mouth, because thou hast done it” (Ps. 38:10), for it is certain that every cross which befalls you comes from the Lord. “Good things and evil are from God.” (Eccl. 11:14.) Should any one take away your property, recover it if you can; but if you cannot, say with Job: “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away” (1:21.) A certain philosopher, who lost some of his goods in a storm, said: “If I have lost my goods I will not lose my peace.” And, do you say: If I have lost my property, I will not lose my soul.

12. In fine, when we meet with crosses, persecutions, and injuries, let us turn to God, who commands us to bear them with patience; and thus we shall always avoid anger. “Remember the fear of God, and be not angry with thy neighbour.” (Eccl. 28:8.) Let us give a look at the will of God, which disposes things in this manner for our merit, and anger shall cease. Let us give a look at Jesus crucified, and we shall not have courage to complain. St. Eleazar being asked by his spouse how he bore so many injuries without yielding to anger, answered: I turn to Jesus Christ, and thus I preserve my peace. Finally, let us give a glance at our sins, for which we have deserved far greater contempt and chastisement, and we shall calmly submit to all evils. St. Augustine says, that though we are sometimes innocent of the crime for which we are persecuted, we are, nevertheless, guilty of other sins which merit greater punishment than that which we endure. “Esto non habemus peccatum, quod objicitur: habemus tamen, quod digne in nobis flagelletur.” (in Ps. lxviii.)

Sermon XXXV

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE VANITY OF THE WORLD

“And have nothing to eat.”—MARK 8:2.

1. SUCH were the attractions of our Divine Saviour, and such the sweetness with which he received all, that he drew after him thousands of the people. He one day saw himself surrounded by a great multitude of men, who followed him and remained with him three days, without eating anything. Touched with pity for them, Jesus Christ said to his disciples: “I have compassion on the multitude; for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat.” (Mark 8:2.) He, on this occasion, wrought the miracle of the multiplication of the seven loaves and a few fishes, so as to satisfy the whole multitude. This is the literal sense; but the mystic sense is, that in this world there is no food which can fill the desire of our souls. All the goods of this earth—riches, honours, and pleasures—delight the sense of the body, but cannot satiate the soul, which has been created for God, and which God alone can content. I will, therefore speak to-day on the vanity of the world, and will show how great is the illusion of the lovers of the world, who lead an unhappy life on this earth, and expose themselves to the imminent danger of a still more unhappy life in eternity.

2. “O ye sons of men,” exclaims the Royal Prophet, against worldlings, “how long will you be dull at heart? Why do you love vanity and seek after lying?” (Ps. 4:3.) O men, O fools, how long will you fix the affections of your hearts on this earth? why do you love the goods of this world, which are all vanity and lies? Do you imagine that you shall find peace by the acquisition of these goods? But how can you expect to find peace, while you walk in the ways of affliction and misery? Behold how David describes the condition of worldlings. “Destruction and unhappiness in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known.” (Ps. 13:3.) You hope to obtain

peace from the world; but how can the world give you that peace which you seek, when St. John says, “that the whole world is seated in wickedness?” (1 John 5:19.) The world is full of iniquities; hence worldlings live under the despotism of *the wicked one*—that is, the Devil. The Lord has declared that there is no peace for the wicked who live without his grace. “There is no peace to the wicked.” (Isa. 48:22.)

3. The goods of the world are but apparent goods, which cannot satisfy the heart of man. “You have eaten,” says the Prophet Aggeus, “and have not had enough.” (Ag. 1:6.) Instead of satisfying our hunger they increase it. “These,” says St. Bernard, “provoke rather than extinguish hunger.” If the goods of this world made men content, the rich and powerful should enjoy complete happiness; but experience shows the contrary. We see every day that they are the most unhappy of men; they appear always oppressed by fear, by jealousies and sadness. Listen to King Solomon, who abounded in these goods: “And behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” (Eccl. 1:14.) He tells us, that all things in this world are vanity, lies, and illusion. They are not only vanity, but also affliction of spirit. They torture the poor soul, which finds in them a continual source, not of happiness, but of affliction and bitterness. This is a just punishment on those who instead of serving their God with joy, wish to serve their enemy—the world—which makes them endure the want of every good. “Because thou didst not serve the Lord thy God with joy and gladness of heart . . . thou shalt serve thy enemy in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and in want of all things.” (Deut. 28:47, 48.) Man expects to content his heart with the goods of this earth; but, howsoever abundantly he may possess them, he is never satisfied. Hence, he always seeks after more of them, and is always unhappy. Oh! happy he who wishes for nothing but God; for God will satisfy all the desires of his heart. “Delight in the Lord, and he will give thee the requests of thy heart.” (Ps. 36:4.) Hence St. Augustine asks: “What, O miserable man, dost thou seek in seeking after goods? Seek one good, in which are all goods.” And, having dearly learned that the goods of this world do not content, but rather afflict the heart of man, the saint, turning to the Lord, said: “All things are hard, and thou alone repose.” Hence in saying, “My God and my all,” the seraphic St. Francis, though divested of all worldly goods, enjoyed greater riches and happiness than all the worldlings on this earth. Yes; for the peace which fills the soul that desires nothing but God, surpasses all the delights

which creatures can give. They can only delight the senses, but cannot content the heart of man. “The peace of God which surpasseth all understanding.” (Phil. 4:7.) According to St. Thomas, the difference between God, the sovereign good, and the goods of the earth, consists in this, that the more perfectly we possess God, the more ardently we love him, because the more perfectly we possess him, the better we comprehend his infinite greatness, and therefore the more we despise other things; but, when we possess temporal goods, we despise them, because we see their emptiness, and desire other things, which may make us content. “Summum bonum quanto perfectius possidetur, tanto magis amatur, et alia contemnuntur. Sed in appetitu temporalium bonorum, quando habentur, contemnentur, et alia appetuntur.” (S. Thom. i. 2, qu. 2, art. 1, ad. 3.)

4. The Prophet Osee tells us that the world holds in its hand a deceitful balance. “*He is like* Chanaan” (*that is the world*); “there is a deceitful balance in his hand.” (Osee 12:7.) We must, then, weigh things in the balance of God, and not in that of the world, which makes them appear different from what they are. What are the goods of this life? “My days,” said Job, “have been swifter than a post: they have passed by as ships carrying fruits.” (Job 9:25, 26.) The ships signify the lives of men, which soon pass away, and run speedily to death; and if men have laboured only to provide themselves with earthly goods, these fruits decay at the hour of death: we can bring none of them with us to the other world. We, says St. Ambrose, falsely call these things our property, which we cannot bring with us to eternity, where we must live for ever, and where virtue alone will accompany us. “Non nostra sunt, quæ non possumus auferre nobiscum: sola virtus nos comitatur.” You, says St. Augustine, attend only to what a rich man possessed; but tell me, which of his possessions shall he, now that he is on the point of death, be able to take with him? “Quid hic habebat attendis, quid secum fert, attendo?” (Serm. xiii. de Adv. Dom.) The rich bring with them a miserable garment, which shall rot with them in the grave. And should they, during life, have acquired a great name, they shall be soon forgotten. “Their memory hath perished with a noise.” (Ps. 9:7.)

5. Oh! that men would keep before their eyes that great maxim of Jesus Christ—“What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?” (Matt. 16:26.) If they did, they should certainly cease to love the world. What shall it profit them at the hour of death to

have acquired all the goods of this world, if their souls must go into hell to be in torments for all eternity? How many has this maxim sent into the cloister and into the desert? How many martyrs has it encouraged to embrace torments and death! In the history of England, we read of thirty kings and queens, who left the world and became religious, in order to secure a happy death. The consideration of the vanity of earthly goods made St. Francis Borgia retire from the world. At the sight of the Empress Isabella, who had died in the flower of youth, he came to the resolution of serving God alone. “Is such, then,” he said, “the end of all the grandeur and crowns of this world? Henceforth I will serve a master who can never die.” The day of death is called “the day of destruction” (“The day of destruction is at hand.” Deut. 32:35), because on that day we shall lose and give up all the goods of the world—all its riches, honours, and pleasures. The shade of death obscures all the treasures and grandeurs of this earth; it obscures even the purple and the crown. Sister Margaret of St. Anne, a Discalced Carmelite, and daughter of the Emperor Rodolph the Second, used to say: “What do kingdoms profit us at the hour of death?” “The affliction of an hour maketh one forget great delights.” (Eccl. 11:29.) The melancholy hour of death puts an end to all the delights and pomps of this life. St. Gregory says, that all goods which cannot remain with us, or which are incapable of taking away our miseries, are deceitful. “Fallaces sunt que nobiscum permanere non possunt: fallaces sunt que mentis nostræ inopiam non expellunt.” (Hom. xv., in Luc.) Behold a sinner whom the riches and honours which he had acquired made an object of envy to others. Death came upon him when he was at the summit of his glory, and he is no longer what he was. “I have seen the wicked highly exalted, and lifted up like the cedars of Libanus; and I passed by, and lo! he was not; and I sought him, and his place was not found.” (Ps. 36:35, 36.)

6. These truths the unhappy damned fruitlessly confess in hell, where they exclaim with tears: “What hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow.” (Wis. 5:8, 9.) What, they say, have our pomps and riches profited us, now that they are all passed away like a shadow, and for us nothing remains but eternal torments and despair? Dearly beloved Christians, let us open our eyes, and now that we have it in our power, let us attend to the salvation of our souls; for, if we lose them, we shall not be able

to save them in the next life. Aristippus, the philosopher, was once shipwrecked, and lost all his goods; but such was the esteem which the people entertained for him on account of his learning, that, as soon as he reached the shore, they presented him with an equivalent for all that he had lost. He then wrote to his friends, and exhorted them to attend to the acquisition of goods which cannot he lost by shipwreck. Our relatives and friends who have passed into eternity exhort us, from the other world, to labour in this life for the attainment of goods which are not lost at death. If at that awful moment we shall be found to have attended only to the accumulation of earthly goods, we shall be called fools, and shall receive the reproach addressed to the rich man in the gospel, who, after having reaped an abundant crop from his fields, said to himself: “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer. But God said to him: Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee: and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?” (Luke 12:19, 20.) He said, “they require thy soul of thee,” because to every man his soul is given, not with full power to dispose of it as he pleases, but it is given to him in trust, that he may preserve and return it to God in a state of innocence, when it shall be presented at the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge. The Redeemer concludes this parable by saying: “So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God” (v. 21). This is what happens to those who seek to enrich themselves with the goods of this life, and not with the love of God. Hence St. Augustine asks: “What has the rich man if he has not charity? If the poor man has charity, what is there that he has not?” He that possesses all the treasures of this world, and has not charity, is the poorest of men; but the poor who have God possess all things, though they should be bereft of all earthly goods.

7. “The children of this world,” says Jesus Christ, “are wiser in their generation than the children of light.” (Luke 16:8.) O how wise in earthly affairs are worldlings, who live in the midst of the darkness of the world! “Behold,” says St. Augustine, “how much men suffer for things for which they entertain a vicious love.” What fatigue do they endure for the acquisition of property, or of a situation of emolument! With what care do they endeavour to preserve their bodily health! They consult the best physician, and procure the best medicine. And Christians, who are the children of light, will take no pains, will suffer nothing, to secure the

salvation of their souls! O God! at the light of the candle which lights them to death, at that hour, at that time, which is called the time of truth, worldlings shall see and confess their folly. Then each of them shall exclaim: O that I had led the life of a saint! At the hour of death, Philip the Second, King of Spain, called in his son, and having shown him his breast devoured with worms, said to him: Son, behold how we die; behold the end of all worldly greatness. He then ordered a wooden cross to be fastened to his neck; and, having made arrangements for his death, he turned again to his son, and said: My son, I wished you to be present at this scene, that you might understand how the world in the end treats even monarchs. He died saying: Oh, that I had been a lay brother in some religious order, and that I had not been a king! Such is the language at the hour of death, even of the princes of the earth, whom worldlings regard as the most fortunate of men. But these desires and sights of regret serve only to increase the anguish and remorse of the lovers of the world at the hour of death, when the scene is about to close.

8. And what is the present life but a scene, which soon passes away for ever? It may end when we least expect it. Cassimir, King of Poland, while he sat at table with his grandees, died in the act of raising a cup to take a draught; thus the scene ended for him. The Emperor Celsus was put to death in seven days after his election; and the scene closed for him. Ladislaus, King of Bohemia, in his eighteenth year, while he was preparing for the reception of his spouse, the daughter of the King of France, was suddenly seized with a violent pain, which took away his life. Couriers were instantly despatched to announce to her that the scene was over for Ladislaus, that she might return to France. “The world,” says Cornelius a Lapide, in his comment upon this passage, “is like a stage. One generation passes away, and a new generation comes. The king does not take with him the purple. Tell me, O villa, O house, how many masters had you?” In every age the inhabitants of this earth are changed. Cities and kingdoms are filled with new people. The first generation passes to the other world, a second comes on, and this is followed by another. He who, in the scene of this world, has acted the part of a king is no longer a king. The master of such a villa or palace is no longer its master. Hence the Apostle gives us the following advice: “The time is short; it remaineth that . . . they that use this world be as if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away.”

(1 Cor. 7:29, 30.) Since the time of our dwelling on this earth is short, and since all must end with our death, let us make use of this world to despise it, as if it did not exist for us; and let us labour to acquire the eternal treasures of Paradise, where, as the Gospel says, there are no moths to consume, nor thieves to steal them. “But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” (Matt. 6:20.) St. Teresa used to say: “We should not set value on what ends with life; the true life consists in living in such a manner as not to be afraid of death.” Death shall have no terror for him who, during life, is detached from the vanities of this world, and is careful to provide himself only with goods which shall accompany him to eternity, and make him happy for ever.

Sermon XXXVI

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

> "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit."—MATT. 7:18.

THEN the gospel of this day tells us, that a good plant cannot produce bad fruit, and that a bad one cannot produce good fruit. Learn from this, brethren, that a good father brings up good children. But, if parents be wicked, how can the children be virtuous? Have you ever, says the Redeemer, in the same gospel, seen grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? "Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?" (v. 16.) And, in like manner, it is impossible, or rather very difficult, to find children virtuous, who are brought up by immoral parents. Fathers and mothers, be attentive to this sermon, which is of great importance to the eternal salvation of yourselves and of your children. Be attentive, young men and young women, who have not as yet chosen a state of life. If you wish to marry, learn this day the obligations which you can contract with regard to the education of your children; and learn also that, if you do not fulfil them, you shall bring yourselves and all your children to damnation. I shall divide this sermon into two points. In the first, I shall show how important it is to bring up children in habits of virtue; and in the second, I shall show with what care and diligence a parent ought to labour to bring them up well.

FIRST POINT. HOW VERY IMPORTANT IT IS TO BRING UP CHILDREN IN HABITS OF VIRTUE.

1. A father owes two obligations to his children; he is bound to provide for their corporal wants, and to educate them in habits of virtue. It is not necessary at present to say more on the first obligation, than that there are

some fathers more cruel than the most ferocious of wild beasts; for these do not forget to nourish their offspring; but certain parents squander away in eating and drinking, and gaming, all their property, or all the fruits of their industry, and allow their children to die of hunger. But let us come to the education, which is the subject of my discourse.

2. It is certain that a child's future good or ill conduct depends on his being brought up well or ill. Nature itself teaches every parent to attend to the education of his offspring. He who has given them being ought to endeavour to make life useful to them. God gives children to parents, not that they may assist the family, but that they may be brought up in the fear of God, and be directed in the way of eternal salvation. "We have," says St. Chrysostom, "a great deposit in children; let us attend to them with great care." (Hom. ix., in 1 ad Tit.) Children have not been given to parents as a present, which they may dispose of as they please, but as a trust, for which, if lost through their negligence, they must render an account to God. The Scripture tells us, that when a father observes the divine law, both he and his children shall prosper. "That it may be well with thee and thy children after thee, when thou shalt do that which is pleasing in the sight of God." (Deut. 12:25.) The good or ill conduct of a parent may be known, by those who have not witnessed it, from the life which his children lead. "For by the fruit the tree is known." (Matt. 12:33.) "A father," says Ecclesiasticus, "who leaves a family, when he departs this life, is as if he had not died; because his sons remain, and exhibit his habits and character. His father is dead, and he is as if he were not dead; for he hath left one behind him that is like himself." (Eccl. 30:4.) When we find a son addicted to blasphemies, to obscenities, and to theft, we have reason to suspect that such too was the character of the father. "For a man is known by his children." (Eccl. 11:30.)

3. Hence Origen says, that on the day of judgment parents shall have to render an account for all the sins of their children. "Omnia quæcumque delinquerint filii, a parentibus requiruntur." (Orig., Lib. 2, in Job.) Hence, he who teaches his son to live well, shall die a happy and tranquil death. "He that teacheth his son . . . when he died he was not sorrowful, neither was he confounded." (Eccl. 30:3, 5.) And he shall save his soul by means of his children; that is, by the virtuous education which he has given them. "She shall be saved through child-bearing." (1 Tim. 2:15.) But, on the other hand, a very uneasy and unhappy death shall be the lot of those who have

laboured only to increase the possessions, or to multiply the honours of their family; or who have sought only to lead a life of case and pleasure, but have not watched over the morals of their children. St. Paul says, that such parents are worse than infidels. “But if any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” (1 Tim. 5:8.) Were fathers or mothers to lead a life of piety and continual prayer, and to communicate every day, they should be damned if they neglected the care of their children. Would to God that certain parents paid as much attention to their children as they do to their horses! How careful are they to see that their horses are fed and well trained! And they take no pains to make their children attend at catechism, hear mass, or go to confession. “We take more care,” says St. Chrysostom, “of our asses and horses, than of the children.” (Hom. x., in Matt.)

4. If all fathers fulfilled their duty of watching over the education of their children, we should have but few crimes and few executions. By the bad education which parents give to their offspring, they cause their children, says St. Chrysostom, to rush into many grievous vices; and thus they deliver them up to the hands of the executioner. “Majoribus illos malis involvimus, et carnificum manibus damus.” (Serm. xx., de divers.) Hence, in Lacedemon, a parent, as being the cause of all the irregularities of his children, was justly punished for their crimes with greater severity than the children themselves. Great indeed is the misfortune of the child that has vicious parents, who are incapable of bringing up their children in the fear of God, and who, when they see their children engaged in dangerous friendships and in quarrels, instead of correcting and chastising them, rather take compassion on them, and say: “What can be done? They are young; they must take their course.” Oh! what wicked maxims! what a cruel education! Do you hope that when your children grow up they shall become saints? Listen to what Solomon says: “A young man, according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Prov. 22:6.) A young man who has contracted a habit of sin will not abandon it even in his old age. “His bones,” says Job, “shall be filled with the vices of his youth, and they shall sleep with him in the dust.” (Job 20:11.) When a young person has lived in evil habits, his bones shall be filled with the vices of his youth, so that he will carry them with him to death; and the impurities, blasphemies, and hatred to which he was accustomed in his youth, shall accompany him

to the grave, and shall sleep with him after his bones shall be reduced to dust and ashes. It is very easy, when they are small, to train up children to habits of virtue; but, when they have come to manhood, it is equally difficult to correct them, if they have learned habits of vice. But, let us come to the second point—that is, to the means of bringing up children in the practice of virtue. I entreat you, fathers and mothers, to remember what I now say to you; for on it depends the eternal salvation of your own souls, and of the souls of your children.

SECOND POINT. ON THE CARE AND DILIGENCE WITH WHICH PARENTS OUGHT TO ENDEAVOUR TO BRING UP THEIR CHILDREN IN HABITS OF VIRTUE.

5. St. Paul teaches sufficiently, in a few words, in what the proper education of children consists. He says that it consists in discipline and correction. “And you, fathers, provoke not your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord.” (Ephes. 6:4) *Discipline,* which is the same as the religious regulation of the morals of children, implies an obligation of educating them in habits of virtue by word and example. First, by words: a good father should often assemble his children, and instil into them the holy fear of God. It was in this manner that Tobias brought up his little son. The father taught him from his childhood to fear the Lord and to fly from sin. “And from his infancy he taught him to fear God and to abstain from sin.” (Tob. 1:10.) The Wise Man says that a well educated son is the support and consolation of his father. “Instruct thy son, and he shall refresh thee, and shall give delight to thy soul.” (Prov. 29:17.) But, as a well instructed son is the delight of his father’s soul, so an ignorant child is a source of sorrow to a father’s heart; for the ignorance of his obligations as a Christian is always accompanied with a bad life. Cantipratensis relates (lib. 1, cap. 20) that, in the year 1248, an ignorant priest was commanded, in a certain synod, to make a discourse. But while he was greatly agitated by the command, the devil appeared to him, and instructed him to say: “The rectors of infernal darkness salute the rectors of parishes, and thank them for their negligence in instructing the people; because from ignorance proceed the misconduct and the damnation of many.” The same is true of negligent parents. In the first place, a parent ought to instruct his children in the truths of faith, and particularly in the four principal mysteries. First, that

there is but one God, the Creator, and Lord of all things; secondly, that this God is a remunerator, who, in the next life, shall reward the good with the eternal glory of Paradise, and shall punish the wicked with the everlasting torments of hell; thirdly, the mystery of the holy Trinity—that is, that in God there are Three Persons, who are only one God, because they have but one essence; fourthly, the mystery of the incarnation of the Divine Word—the Son of God, and true God, who became man in the womb of Mary, and suffered and died for our salvation. Should a father or a mother say: I myself do not know these mysteries, can such an excuse be admitted?—that is, can one sin excuse another? If you are ignorant of these mysteries you are obliged to learn them, and afterwards teach them to your children. At least, send your children to the catechism. Oh! what a misery to see so many fathers and mothers who are unable to instruct their children in the most necessary truths of faith, and who, instead of sending their sons and daughters to the Christian doctrine on festivals, employ them in messages, or other occupations of little moment; and when grown up they know not what is meant by mortal sin, by hell, or eternity. They do not even know the *Creed*, the *Pater Noster,* or the *Hail Mary,* which every Christian is bound to learn under pain of mortal sin.

6. Religious parents not only instruct their children in these things, which are the most important, but they also teach them the acts which ought to be made every morning after rising. They teach them, first, to thank God for having preserved their life during the night; secondly, to offer to God all the good actions which they will perform, and all the pains which they shall suffer during the day; thirdly, to implore of Jesus Christ and most holy Mary to preserve them from all sin during the day. They teach them to make every evening an examen of conscience and an act of contrition. They also teach them to make every day the acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, to recite the Rosary, and to visit the blessed Sacrament. Some good fathers of families are careful to get a book of meditations read, and to have mental prayer in common for half an hour every day. This is what the Holy Ghost exhorts you to practise. “Hast thou children? Instruct them and bow down their neck from their childhood.” (Eccl. 7:25.) Endeavour to train them from their infancy to these religious habits, and when they grow up they shall persevere in them. Accustom them also to *go* to confession and communion every week. Be careful to make them go to confession when

they arrive at the age of seven, and to communion at the age of ten. This is the advice of St. Charles Borromeo. As soon as they attain the use of reason make them receive the sacrament of confirmation.

7. It is also very useful to infuse good maxims into the infant minds of children. Oh! what ruin is brought upon his children by the father who teaches them worldly maxims! "You must," some people say to their children, "seek the esteem and applause of the world. God is merciful; he takes compassion on certain sins." Miserable the young man who sins in obedience to suck maxims. Good parents teach very different maxims to their children. Queen Blanche, the mother of St. Louis, King of France, used to say to him: "My son, I would rather see you dead in my arms than in the state of sin." Oh! brethren, let it be your practice also to infuse into your children certain maxims of salvation, such as, "What will it profit us to gain the whole world, if we lose our own souls? Every thing on this earth has an end; but eternity never ends. Let all be lost, provided God is not lost." One of these maxims well impressed on the mind of a young person will preserve him always in the grace of God.

8. But parents are obliged to instruct their children in the practice of virtue, not only by words, but still more by example. If you give your children bad example, how can you expect that they will lead a good life? When a dissolute young man is corrected for a fault, he answers: Why do you censure me, when my father does worse. "The children will complain of an ungodly father, because for his sake they are in reproach." (Eccl. 41:10.) How is it possible for a son to be moral and religious, when he has had the example of a father who was accustomed to utter blasphemies and obscenities; who spent the entire day in the tavern, in gaming and drunkenness; who was in the habit of frequenting houses of bad fame, and of defrauding his neighbour? Do you expect that your son will go frequently to confession, when you yourself approach the tribunal of penance scarcely once a year? Children are like apes; they do what they see their parents do. It is related in the fables, that a crab-fish one day rebuked its young for walking crookedly. They replied: Father, let us see you walk. The father walked before them more crookedly than they did. This is what happens to the parent who gives bad example. Hence, he has not even courage to correct his children for the sins which he himself commits.

9. But though he should correct them by words, of what use is his correction when he sets them a bad example by his acts? It has been said in the council of Bishops, that “men believe the eyes rather than the ears.” And St. Ambrose says: “The eyes convince me of what they see more quickly than the ear can insinuate what is past.” (Serm. xxiii, de S. S.) According to St. Thomas, scandalous parents compel, in a certain manner, their children to lead a bad life. “Eos ad peccatum, quantum in eis fuit obligaverunt” (in Ps. 16.). They are not, says St. Bernard, fathers, but murderers; they kill, not the bodies, but the souls of their children. “Non parentes, sed peremptores.” It is useless for them to say: “My children have been born with bad dispositions.” This is not true; for, as Seneca says, “you err, if you think that vices are born with us; they have been engrafted.” (Ep. xciv.) Vices are not born with your children, but have been communicated to them by the bad example of the parents. If you had given good example to your sons, they should not be so vicious as they are. O brethren, frequent the sacraments, assist at sermons, recite the Rosary every day, abstain from all obscene language, from detraction, and from quarrels; and you shall see that your sons will go often to confession, will assist at sermons, will say the Rosary, will speak modestly, and will fly from detraction and disputes. It is particularly necessary to train up children to virtue in their infancy: “Bow down their neck from their childhood;” for when they have grown up and contracted bad habits, it will be very difficult for you to produce, by words, any amendment in their lives.

10. To bring up children in the discipline of the Lord, it is also necessary to take away from them the occasion of doing evil. Hence a father must, in the first place, forbid his children to go out at night, or to go to a house in which their virtue might be exposed to danger, or to keep bad company. “Cast out,” said Sarah to Abraham, “this bondwoman and her son.” (Gen. 21:10.) She wished to have Ishmael, the son of Agar the bondwoman, banished from her house, that her son Isaac might not learn his vicious habits. Bad companions are the ruin of young persons. A father should not only remove the evil which he witnesses, but he is also bound to inquire after the conduct of his children, and to seek information from domestics and from externs regarding the places which his sons frequent when they leave home, regarding their occupations and companions. Secondly, he should take from them every musical instrument which is to them an

occasion of going out at night, and all forbidden weapons which may lead them into quarrels or disputes. Thirdly, he should dismiss all immoral servants; and, if his sons be grown up, he should not keep in his house any young female servant. Some parents pay little attention to this; and when the evil happens they complain of their children, as if they expected that tow thrown into the fire should not burn. Fourthly, a father ought to forbid his children ever to bring into his house stolen goods—such as fowl, fruit, and the like. When Tobias heard the bleating of a goat in his house, he said: “Take heed, lest perhaps it be stolen; restore ye it to its owners.” (Tob. 2:21.) How often does it happen that, when a child steals something, the mother says to him: “Bring it to me, my son.” Parents should prohibit to their children all games which bring destruction on their families and on their own souls, and also masks, scandalous comedies, and certain dangerous conversations and parties of pleasure. Fifthly, a father should remove from his house romances, which pervert young persons, and all bad books which contain pernicious maxims, tales of obscenity, or of profane love. Sixthly, he ought not to allow his children to sleep in his own bed, nor the males and females to sleep together. Seventhly, he should not permit his daughters to be alone with men, whether young or old. But some will say: “Such a man teaches my daughters to read and write, etc.; he is a saint.” The saints are in heaven; but the saints that are on earth are flesh, and by proximate occasions they may become devils. Eighthly, if he has daughters, he should not permit young men to frequent his house. To get their daughters married, some mothers invite young men to their houses. They are anxious to see their daughters married; but they do not care to see them in sin. These are the mothers who, as David says, immolate their daughters to the devil. “They sacrifice their sons and their daughters to devils.” (Ps. 105:37.) And to excuse themselves they will say: “Father, there is no harm in what I do.” There is no harm! Oh! how many mothers shall we see condemned on the day of judgment on account of their daughters! The conduct of such mothers is at least a subject of conversation among their neighbours and equals; and, for all, the parents must render an account to God. O fathers and mothers! confess all the sins you have committed in this respect, before the day on which you shall be judged arrives.

11. Another obligation of parents is, to correct the faults of the family. “Bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord.” There are

fathers and mothers who witness faults in the family, and remain silent. A certain mother was in the habit of acting in this manner. Her husband one day took a stick and began to beat her severely. She cried out, and said: “I am doing nothing. Why do you beat me?” “I beat you,” replied the husband, “because you see, and do not correct, the faults of the children—because you do nothing.” Through fear of displeasing their children some fathers neglect to correct them; but, if you saw your son falling into a pool of water, and in danger of being drowned, would it not be savage cruelty not to catch him by the hair and save his life? “He that spareth the rod hateth his son.” (Prov. 13:24.) If you love your sons correct them, and, while they are growing up chastise them, even with the rod, as often as it may be necessary. I say, “with the rod,” but not with the stick; for you must correct them like a father, and not like a galley sergeant. You must be careful not to beat them when you are in a passion; for, you shall then be in danger of beating them with too much severity, and the correction will be without fruit; for they then believe that the chastisement is the effect of anger, and not of a desire on your part to see them amend their lives. I have also said that you should correct them “while they are growing up;” for, when they arrive at manhood, your correction will be of little use. You must then abstain from correcting them with the hand; otherwise, they shall become more perverse, and shall lose their respect for you. But of what use is it to correct children by so many injurious words and by so many imprecations? Deprive them of some part of their meals, of certain articles of dress, or shut them up in a room. But I have said enough. Dearly beloved brethren, draw from the discourse which you have heard the conclusion, that he who has brought up his children badly shall be severely punished; and that he who has trained them to habits of virtue shall receive a great reward.

Sermon XXXVII

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

“Give an account of thy stewardship.”—LUKE 16:2.

BELOVED Christians, of all the goods of nature, of fortune, and of grace, which we have received from God, we are not the masters, neither can we dispose of them as we please; we are but the administrators of them; and therefore we should employ them according to the will of God, who is our Lord. Hence, at the hour of death, we must render a strict account of them to Jesus Christ, our Judge. “For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body as he hath done, whether it be good or evil.” (2 Cor. 5:10.) This is the precise meaning of that “give an account of thy stewardship,” in the gospel of this day. “You are not,” says St. Bonaventure, in his comment on these words, “a master, but a steward over the things committed to you; and therefore you are to render an account of them.” I will place before your eyes to-day the rigour of this judgment, which shall be passed on each of us on the last day of our life. Let us consider the terror of the soul, first, when we shall be presented to the Judge; secondly, when she shall be examined; and thirdly, when she shall be condemned.

FIRST POINT. TERROR OF THE SOUL WHEN SHE SHALL BE PRESENTED TO THE JUDGE.

1. “It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.” (Heb. 9:27.) It is of faith that we shall die, and that after death a judgment shall be passed on all the actions of our life. Now, what shall be the terror of each of us when we shall be at the point of death, and shall have before our eyes the judgment which must take place the very moment the soul departs from the body? Then shall be decided our doom to eternal life, or to eternal death. At

the time of the passage of their souls from this life to eternity, the sight of their past sins, the rigour of God's judgment, and the uncertainty of their eternal salvation, have made the saints tremble. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzia trembled in her sickness, through the fear of judgment; and to her confessor, when he endeavoured to give her courage, she said: "Ah! father, it is a terrible thing to appear before Christ in judgment." After spending so many years in penance in the desert, St. Agatho trembled at the hour of death, and said: "What shall become of me when I shall be judged?" The venerable Father Louis da Ponte was seized with such a fit of trembling at the thought of the account which he should render to God, that he shook the room in which he lay. The thought of judgment inspired the venerable Juvenal Ancina, Priest of the Oratory, and afterwards Bishop of Saluzzo, with the determination to leave the world. Hearing the *Dies Iræ* sung, and considering the terror of the soul when presented before Jesus Christ, the Judge, he took, and afterwards executed, the resolution of giving himself entirely to God.

2. It is the common opinion of theologians, that at the very moment and in the very place in which the soul departs from the body, the divine tribunal is erected, the accusation is read, and the sentence is passed by Jesus Christ, the Judge. At this terrible tribunal each of us shall be presented to give an account of all our thoughts, of all our words, and of all our actions. "For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil." (2 Cor. 5:10.) When presented before an earthly judge criminals have been seen to fall into a cold sweat through fear. It is related of Piso, that so great and insufferable was the confusion which he felt at the thought of appearing as a criminal before the senate that he killed himself. How great is the pain of a vassal, or of a son, in appearing before an angry prince or an enraged father, to account for some crime which he has committed! Oh! how much greater shall be the pain and confusion of the soul in standing before Jesus Christ enraged against her for having despised him during her life! Speaking of judgment, St. Luke says: "Then you shall see the Son of Man." (Luke 21:27.) They shall see Jesus Christ as man, with the same wounds with which he ascended into heaven. "Great joy of the beholders!" says Robert the Abbot, "a great terror of those who are in expectation!" These wounds shall

console the just, and shall terrify the wicked. In them sinners shall see the Redeemer’s love for themselves, and their ingratitude to him.

3. “Who,” says the Prophet Nahum, “can stand before the face of his indignation?” (1:6.) How great, then, shall be the terror of a soul that finds herself in sin before this Judge, the first time she shall see him, and see him full of wrath! St. Basil says that she shall be tortured more by her shame and confusion than by the very fire of hell. “Horridior quam ignis, erit pudor.” Philip the Second rebuked one of his domestics for having told him a lie. “Is it thus.” said the king to him, “you deceive me?” The domestic, after having returned home, died of grief. The Scripture tells us, that when Joseph reproved his brethren, saying: “I am Joseph, whom you sold,” they were unable to answer through fear, and remained silent. “His brethren could not answer him, being struck with exceeding great fear.” (Gen. 45:3.) Now what answer shall sinners make to Jesus Christ when he shall say to them: I am your Redeemer and your Judge, whom you have so much despised. Where shall the miserable beings fly, says St. Augustine, when they shall see an angry Judge above, hell open below, on one side their own sins accusing them, and on the other the devils dragging them to punishment, and their conscience burning them within? “Above shall be an enraged Judge—below, a horrid chaos—on the right, sins accusing him—on the left, demons dragging him to punishment—within, a burning conscience! Whither shall a sinner, beset in this manner, fly?” Perhaps he will cry for mercy? But how, asks Eusebius Emissenus, can he dare to implore mercy, when he must first render an account of his contempt for the mercy which Jesus Christ has shown to him? “With what face will you, who are to be first judged for contempt of mercy, ask for mercy?” But let us come to the rendering of the accounts.

SECOND POINT. TERROR OF THE SOUL WHEN SHE SHALL BE EXAMINED.

4. As soon as the soul shall be presented before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, he will say to her: “Give an account of thy stewardship:” render instantly an account of thy entire life. The Apostle tells us, that to be worthy of eternal glory our lives must be found conformable to the life of Jesus Christ. “For whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his son; . . . them he also glorified.” (Rom. 8:29, 30.) Hence St.

Peter has said, that in the judgment of Jesus Christ, the just man who has observed the divine law, has pardoned enemies, has respected the saints, has practised chastity, meekness, and other virtues, shall scarcely be saved. “The just man shall scarcely be saved.” The Apostle adds: “Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (1 Pet. 4:18.) What shall become of the vindictive and the unchaste, of blasphemers and slanderers? What shall become of those whose entire life is opposed to the life of Jesus Christ?

5. In the first place, the Judge shall demand of sinners an account of all the blessings and graces which he bestowed on them in order to bring them to salvation, and which they have rendered fruitless. He will demand and account of the years granted to them that they might serve God, and which they have spent in offending him. “He hath called against me the time.” (Lam. 1:15.) He will then demand an account of their sins. Sinners commit sins, and afterwards forget them; but Jesus Christ does not forget them: he keeps, as Job says, all our iniquities numbered, as it were in a bag. “Thou hast sealed up my iniquities, as it were in a bag.” (Job 14:17.) And he tells us that, on the day of accounts, he will take a lamp to scrutinize all the actions of our life. “And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with lamps.” (Soph. 1:12.) The lamp, says Mendoza on this passage, penetrates all the corners of the house—that is, God will discover all the defects of our conscience, great and small. According to St. Anselm, an account shall be demanded of every glance of the eyes. “Exigitur usque ad ictum oculi.” And, according to St. Matthew, of every idle word. “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it on the day of judgment.” (Matt. 12:36.)

6. The Prophet Malachy says, that as gold is refined by taking away the dross, so on the day of judgment all our actions shall be examined, and every defect which may be discovered shall be punished. “He shall purify the sons of Levi, and shall refine them as gold.” (Mal. 3:3.) Even our justices—that is, our good works, confessions, communions, and prayers—shall be examined. “When I shall take a time, I will judge justices.” (Ps. 74:3.) But if every glance, every idle word, and even good works, shall be judged, with what rigour shall immodest expressions, blasphemies, grievous detractions, thefts, and sacrileges be judged? Alas! on that day every soul shall, as St. Jerome says, see, to her own confusion, all the evils which she has done. “Videbit unusquisque quod fecit.”

7. “Weight and balance are judgments of the Lord.” (Prov. 16:11.) In the balance of the Lord a holy life and good works make the scale descend; but nobility, wealth, and science have no weight. Hence, if found innocent, the peasant, the poor, and the ignorant shall be rewarded. But the man of rank, of wealth, or of learning, if found guilty, shall be condemned. “Thou art weighed in the balance,” said Daniel to Belthassar, “and art found wanting.” (Dan. 5:27.) “Neither his gold nor his wealth,” says Father Alvares, “but the king alone was weighed.”

8. At the divine tribunal the poor sinner shall see himself accused by the devil, who, according to St. Augustine, “will recite the words of our profession, and will charge us before our face with all that we have done, will state the day and hour in which we sinned.” (Con. Jud., tom. 6.) “He will recite the words of our profession”—that is, he will enumerate the promises which, we have made to God, and which we afterwards violated. “He will charge us before our face;” he will upbraid us with all our wicked deeds, pointing to the day and hour in which they were committed. And he will, as the same saint says, conclude his accusation by saying: “I have suffered neither stripes nor scourges for this man.” Lord, I have suffered nothing for this ungrateful sinner, and to make himself my slave he has turned his back on thee who has endured so much for his salvation. He, therefore, justly belongs to me. Even his angel-guardian will, according to Origen, come forward to accuse him, and will say: “I have laboured so many years for his salvation; but he has despised all my admonitions.” “Unusquisque angelorum perhibet testimonium, quot annis circa eum laboraverit, sed ille monita sprevit.” (Hom. lxvi.) Thus, even friends shall treat with contempt the guilty soul. “All her friends have despised her.” (Lamen. 1:2.) Her very sins shall, says St. Bernard, accuse her. “And they shall say: You have made us; we are your work; we shall not desert you.” (Lib. Medit, cap. ii.) We are your offspring; we shall not leave you: we shall be your companions in hell for all eternity.

9. Let us now examine the excuses which the sinner will be able to advance. He will say, that the evil inclinations of nature had drawn him into sin. But he shall be told that, if concupiscence impelled him to sins, it did not oblige him to commit them; and that, if he had recourse to God, he should have received from him grace to resist every temptation. For this purpose Jesus Christ has left us the sacraments: but when we do not make

use of them, we can complain only of ourselves. “But,” says the Redeemer, “now they have no excuse for their sin.” (John 15:22.) To excuse himself, the sinner shall also say that the devil tempted him to sin. But, as St. Augustine says, “The enemy is bound like a dog in chains, and can bite only him who has united himself to him with a deadly security.” The devil can bark, but cannot bite unless you adhere and listen to him. Hence the saint adds: “See how foolish, is the man whom a dog, loaded with, chains, bites.” Perhaps he will advance his bad habits as an excuse; but this shall not stand; for the same St. Augustine says, that though it is difficult to resist the force of an evil habit, “if any one does not desert himself, he will conquer it with the divine assistance.” If a man does not abandon himself to sin, and invokes God’s aid, he will overcome evil habits. The Apostle tells us, that the Lord does not permit us to be tempted above our strength. “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able.” (1 Cor. 10:13.)

10. “For what shall I do,” said Job, “when God shall rise to judge me? and when he shall examine, what shall I answer him?” (Job 31:14.) What answer shall the sinner give to Jesus Christ? How can he, who sees himself so clearly convicted, give an answer? He shall be covered with confusion, and shall remain silent, like the man found without the nuptial garment. “But he was silent.” (Matt. 22:12.) His very sins shall shut the sinner’s mouth. “And all iniquity shall stop her mouth.” (Ps. 106:42.) There, says St. Thomas of Villanova, there shall be no intercessor to whom the sinner can have recourse. “There, there is no opportunity of sinning; there, no intercessor, no friend, no father shall assist.” Who shall then save you? Is it God? But how, asks St. Basil, can you expect salvation from him whom you have despised? “Who shall deliver you? Is it God, whom you have insulted?” (S. Bas., Or. 4, de Fen.) Alas! the guilty soul that leaves this world in sin, is condemned by herself before the Judge pronounces sentence. Let us come to the sentence of the Judge.

THIRD POINT. TERROR OF THE SOUL WHEN SHE SHALL BE CONDEMNED.

11. How great shall be the joy of a soul when, at death, she hears from Jesus Christ these sweet words: “Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things.

Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” (Matt. 25:21.) Equally great shall be the anguish and despair of a guilty soul, that shall see herself driven away by the Judge with the following words: “Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire” (verse 41). Oh! what a terrible thunderclap shall that sentence be to her! “Oh! how frightfully,” says the Carthusian, “shall that thunder resound!” Eusebius writes, that the terror of sinners at hearing their condemnation shall be so great that, if they could, they would die again. “The wicked shall be seized with such terror at the sight of the Judge pronouncing sentence that, if they were not immortal, they should die a second time.” But, brethren, let us, before the termination of this sermon, make some reflections which will be profitable to us. St. Thomas of Villanova says, that some listen to discourses on the judgment and condemnation of the wicked with as little concern as if they they themselves were secure against these things, or as if the day of judgment were never to arive for them. “Heu quam securi hæc dicimus et audimus, quasi nos non tangeret hæc sententia, aut quasi dies hæc nunquam esset venturus!” (Conc. i., de Jud.) The saint then asks: Is it not great folly to entertain security in so perilous an affair? “Quæ est ista stulta securitas in discrimine tanto?” There are some, says St. Augustine, who, though they live in sin, cannot imagine that God will send them to hell. “Will God,” they say, “really condemn us?” Brethren, adds the saint, do not speak thus. So, many of the damned did not believe that they should be sent to hell; but the end came, and, according to the threat of Ezechiel, they have been cast into that place of darkness. “The end is come, the end is come . . . and I will send my wrath upon thee, and I will judge thee.” (Ezec. 7:2, 3.) Sinners, perhaps vengeance is at hand for you, and still you laugh and sleep in sin. Who will not tremble at the words of the Baptist: “For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire.” (Matt. 3:10.) He says, that every tree that does not bring forth good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire; and he promises that, with regard to the trees, which represent sinners, the axe is already laid to the roots—that is, chastisement is at hand. Dearly beloved brethren, let us follow the counsel of the Holy Ghost—“Before judgment, prepare thee justice.” (Eccl. 18:19.) Let us adjust our accounts before the day of accounts. Let us seek God, now that we can find him; for the time shall come when we will wish, but shall not be able to find him.

“You shall seek me, and shall not find me.” (John 7:36.) “Before judgment,” says St. Augustine, “the Judge can be appeased, but not in judgment.” By a change of life we can now appease the anger of Jesus Christ, and recover his grace; but when he shall judge, and find us in sin, he must execute justice, and we shall be lost.

Sermon XXXVIII

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE DEATH OF THE SINNER

“Thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee.”—LUKE 19:43.

SEEING from a distance the city of Jerusalem, in which the Jews were soon to put him to death, Jesus Christ wept over it. “Videns civitatem flevit super illam.” Our merciful Redeemer wept at the consideration of the chastisement which was soon to be inflicted on the city, and which he foretold to her inhabitants. “Thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee.” Unhappy city! thou shalt one day see thyself encompassed by enemies, who shall beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children in thee, and shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone. Most beloved brethren, this unhappy city is a figure of the soul of a sinner, who, at the hour of death, shall find himself surrounded by his enemies—first, by remorse of conscience; secondly, by the assaults of the devils; and thirdly, by the fears of eternal death.

FIRST POINT. THE SINNER AT DEATH SHALL BE TORTURED BY REMORSES OF CONSCIENCE.

1. “Their soul shall die in a storm.” (Job 36:14.) The unhappy sinners who remain in sin die in a tempest, with which God has beforehand threatened them. “A tempest shall break out and come upon the head of the wicked.” (Jer. 23:19.) At the commencement of his illness the sinner is not troubled by remorse or fear; because his relatives, friends, physicians, and all tell him that his sickness is not dangerous; thus he is deceived and hopes to recover. But when his illness increases, and malignant symptoms, the harbingers of approaching death, begin to appear, then the storm with which the Lord has threatened the wicked shall commence. “When sudden

calamity shall fall on you, and destruction as a tempest shall be at hand.” (Prov. 1:27.) This tempest shall be formed as well by the pains of sickness as by the fear of being obliged to depart from this earth, and to leave all things; but still more by the remorses of conscience, which shall place before his eyes all the irregularities of his past life. “They shall come with fear at the thought of their sins, and their iniquities shall stand against them to convict them.” (Wis. 4:20.) Then shall his sins rush upon his mind, and fill him with terror. His iniquities shall stand against him to convict him, and, without the aid of other testimony, shall assail him, and prove that he deserves hell.

2. The dying sinner will confess his sins; but, according to St. Augustine, “The repentance which is sought from a sick man is infirm.” (Serm. xxxvii., de Temp.) And St. Jerome says, that of a hundred thousand sinners who continue till death in the state of sin, scarcely one shall be saved. “Vix de centum milibus, quorum mala vita fuit, meretur in morte a Deo indulgentiam, unus.” (Epis. de Moil. Eus.) St. Vincent Ferrer writes, that it is a greater miracle to save such sinners, than to raise the dead to life. “Majus miraculum est, quod male viventes faciant bonum finem, quam suscitare mortuos.” (Serm. i., de Nativ. Virgin.) They shall feel convinced of the evil they have done; they will wish, but shall not be able, to detest it. Antiochus understood the malice of his sins when he said: “Now I remember the evils that I have done in Jerusalem.” (1 Mach. 6:12.) He remembered his sins, but did not detest them. He died in despair and oppressed with great sadness, saying: “Behold, I perish with great grief in a strange land” (v. 13). According to St. Fulgentius, the same happened to Saul at the hour of death: he remembered his sins; he dreaded the punishment which they deserved; but he did not detest them. “Non odit quid fecerat, sed timuit quod nolebat.”

3. Oh! how difficult is it for a sinner, who has slept many years in sin, to repent sincerely at the hour of death, when his mind is darkened, and his heart hardened! “His heart shall be as hard as a stone, and as firm as a smith’s anvil.” (Job 41:15.) During life, instead of yielding to the graces and calls of God, he became more obdurate, as the anvil is hardened by repeated strokes of the hammer. “A hard heart shall fare evil at the last.” (Eccl. 3:27.) By loving sin till death, he has loved the danger of his damnation, and

therefore God will justly permit him to perish in the danger in which he wished to live till death.

4. St. Augustine says, that he who is abandoned by sin before he abandons it, will scarcely detest it as he ought at the hour of death; for he will then detest it, not through a hatred of sin, but through necessity. “Qui prius a peccato relinquitur, quam ipse relinquat, non libere, sed quasi ex necessitate condemnat.” But how shall he be able to hate from his heart the sins which he has loved till death? He must love the enemy whom till then he has hated, and he must hate the person whom he has till that moment loved. Oh! what mountains must he pass! He shall probably meet with a fate similar to that of a certain person, who kept in confinement a great number of wild beasts in order to let them loose on the enemies who might assail him. But the wild beasts, as soon as he unchained them, instead of attacking his enemies, devoured himself. When the sinner will wish to drive away his iniquities, they shall cause his destruction, either by complacency in objects till then loved, or by despair of pardon at the sight of their numbers and enormity. “Evils shall catch the unjust man unto destruction.” (Ps. 139:12.) St. Bernard says, that at death the sinner shall see himself chained and bound by his sins. “We are your works; we will not desert you.” We will not leave you; we will accompany you to judgment, and will be your companions for all eternity in hell.

SECOND POINT. THE DYING SINNER SHALL BE TORTURED BY THE ASSAULTS OF THE DEVILS.

5. “The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.” (Apoc. 12:12.) At death the devil exerts all his powers to secure the soul that is about to leave this world; for he knows, from the symptoms of the disease, that he has but little time to gain her for eternity. The Council of Trent teaches that Jesus Christ has left us the sacrament of Extreme Unction as a most powerful defence against the temptations of the devil at the hour of death. “Extremæ Unctionis sacramento finem vitæ tanquam firmissimo quodam præsidio munivit.” And the holy council adds, that there is no time in which the enemy combats against us with so much violence in order to effect our damnation, and to make us despair of the divine mercy, as at the end of life. “Nullum

tempus est, quo vehementius ille omnes suæ versutiæ nervos intendat at perendos, nos penitus, et a fiducia, etiam, si possit, divinæ misericordiæ deturbandos, quam cum impendere nobis exitum vitæ perspicet.” (Sess. 14, cap. ix. Doctr. de Sacr. Extr. Unet.)

6. Oh! how terrible are the assaults and snares of the devil against the souls of dying persons, even though they have led a holy life! After his recovery from a most severe illness, the holy king Eleazar said, that the temptations by which the devil assails men at death, can be conceived only by him who has felt them. We read in the life of St. Andrew Avellino, that in his agony he had so fierce a combat with hell, that all the religious present were seized with trembling. They perceived that, in consequence of the agitation, his face swelled, and became black, all his members trembled, and a flood of tears gushed from his eyes. All began to weep through compassion, and were filled with terror at the sight of a saint dying in such a manner. But they were afterwards consoled, when they saw that as soon as an image of most holy Mary was held before him, he became perfectly calm, and breathed forth his blessed soul with great joy.

7. Now, if this happens to the saints, what shall become of poor sinners, who have lived in sin till death? At that awful moment the devil does not come alone to tempt them in a thousand ways, in order to bring them to eternal perdition, but he calls companions to his assistance. “Their house shall be filled with serpents.” (Isa. 13:21.) When a Christian is about to leave this world, his house is filled with devils, who unite together in order to effect his ruin. “All her persecutors have taken her in the midst of straits.” (Lamen. 1:3.) All his enemies will encompass him in the straits of death. One shall say: Be not afraid; you shall not die of this sickness! Another will say: You have been for so many years deaf to the calls of God, and can you now expect that he will save you? Another will ask: How can you repair the frauds of your past life, and the injuries you have done to your neighbour in his property and character? Another shall ask: What hope can there be for you? Do you not see that all your confessions have been null—that they have been made without true sorrow, and without a firm, purpose of amendment? How can you repair them with this heart, which you feel so hard? Do you not see that you are lost? And in the midst of these straits and attacks of despair, the dying sinner, full of agitation and

confusion, must pass into eternity. “The people shall be troubled—and they shall pass.” (Job 34:20.)

THIRD POINT. THE DYING SINNER SHALL BE TORTURED BY THE FEARS OF ETERNAL DEATH.

8. Miserable the sick man who takes to his bed in the state of mortal sin! He that lives in sin till death shall die in sin. “You shall die in your sin.” (John 8:21.) It is true that, in whatsoever hour the sinner is converted, God promises to pardon him; but to no sinner has God promised the grace of conversion at the hour of death. “Seek the Lord while he may be found.” (Isa. 55:6.) Then, there is for some sinners a time when they shall seek God and shall not find him. “You shall seek me, and shall not find me.” (John 7:34.) The unhappy beings will go to confession at the hour of death; they will promise and weep, and ask mercy of God, but without knowing what they do. A man who sees himself under the feet of a foe pointing a dagger to his throat, will shed tears, ask pardon, and promise to serve his enemy as a slave during the remainder of his life. But, will the enemy believe him? No; he will feel convinced that his words are not sincere—that his object is to escape from his hands, and that, should he be pardoned, he will become more hostile than ever. In like manner, how can God pardon the dying sinner, when he sees that all his acts of sorrow, and all his promises, proceed not from the heart, but from a dread of death and of approaching damnation.

9. In the recommendation of the departing soul, the assisting priest prays to the Lord, saying: “Recognize, O Lord, thy creature.” But God answers: I know that he is my creature; but, instead of regarding me as his Creator, he has treated me as an enemy. The priest continues his prayer, and says: “Remember not his past iniquities.” I would, replies the Lord, pardon all the past sins of his youth; but he has continued to despise me till this moment—the very hour of his death. “They have turned their back upon me, and not their face: and, in the time of affliction, they will say: Arise, and deliver us. Where are the gods which thou hast made thee? let them rise and deliver thee.” (Jer. 2:27, 28.) You, says the Lord, have turned your back upon me till death; and do you now want me to deliver you from vengeance? Invoke your own gods—the creatures, the riches, the friends you loved more than

you loved me. Call them now to come to your assistance, and to save you from hell, which is open to receive you. It now justly belongs to me to take vengeance on the insults you have offered me. You have despised my threats against obstinate sinners, and have paid no regard to them. “Revenge is mine, and I will repay them in *due* time, that their foot may slide.” (Deut. 32:35.) The time of my vengeance is now arrived; it is but just to execute it. This is precisely what happened to a certain person in Madrid, who led a wicked life, but, at the sight of the unhappy death of a companion, went to confession, and resolved to enter a strict religious order. But, in consequence of having neglected to put his resolution into immediate execution, he relapsed into his former irregularities. Being reduced to great want, he wandered about the world, and fell sick at Lima. From the hospital in which he took refuge he sent for a confessor, and promised again to change his life, and to enter religion. But, having recovered from his illness, he returned to his wickedness; and, behold! the vengeance of God fell upon him. One day, his confessor, who was a missionary, in passing over a mountain, heard a noise, which appeared to be the howling of a wild beast. He drew near the place from which the noise proceeded, and saw a dying man, half rotten, and howling through despair. He addressed to him some words of consolation. The sick man, opening his eyes, recognized the missionary, and said: Have you, too, come to be a witness of the justice of God? I am the man who made my confession in the hospital of Lima. I then promised to change my life, but have not done so; and now I die in despair. And thus the miserable man, amid these acts of despair, breathed forth his unhappy soul. These facts are related by Father Charles Bovio (part iii., example 9).

10. Let us conclude the discourse. Tell me, brethren, were a person in sin seized with apoplexy, and instantly deprived of his senses, what sentiments of pity would you feel at seeing him die in this state; without the sacraments, and without signs of repentance! Is not he a fool, who, when he has time to be reconciled with God, continues in sin, or returns to his sins, and thus exposes himself to the danger of dying suddenly, and of dying in sin? “At what hour you think not,” says Jesus Christ, “the Son of Man will come.” (Luke 13:40.) An unprovided death, which has happened to so many, may also happen to each of us. And it is necessary to understand, that all who lead a bad life, meet with an unprovided death, though their last

illness may allow them some time to prepare for eternity; for the days of that mortal illness are days of darkness—days of confusion, in which it is difficult, and even morally impossible, to adjust a conscience burdened with many sins. Tell me, brethren, if you were now at the point of death, given over by physicians, and in the last agony, how ardently would you desire another month, or another week, to settle the accounts you must render to God! And God gives you this time. He calls you, and warns you of the danger of damnation to which you are exposed. Give yourself, then, instantly to God. What do you wait for? Will you wait till he sends you to hell? "Walk whilst you have light." (John 12:35.) Avail yourselves of this time and this light, which God gives you at this moment, and now, while it is in your power, repent of all your past sins; for, a time shall come when you will be no longer able to avert the punishment which they deserve.

[I entreat my reader to read Sermon xliv., or the Sermon for the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost, on the practical death, or that which practically happens at the death of men of the world. I know by experience that though it does not contain Latin texts, whenever I preached that sermon, it produced a great impression, and left the audience full of terror. A greater impression is made by practical than by speculative truths.]

Sermon XXXIX

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE EFFICACY AND NECESSITY OF PRAYER

“O God, be merciful to me a sinner.”—LUKE 18:13.

IN this day’s gospel we read, that two men, one a Pharisee and the other a Publican, went to the temple. Instead of bowing down to beg of God to assist him by his graces, the Pharisee said: I thank thee, O Lord, that I am not as the rest of men, who are sinners. “Deus gratias ago tibi, quia non sum sicut cæteri homines.” But the Publican, filled with sentiments of humility, cried out: “O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” St. Luke tells us, that this Publican returned to his house justified; and that the Pharisee went home as guilty and as proud as when he entered the temple. From this, most beloved brethren, you may infer how pleasing to God, and how necessary for us, are our humble petitions to obtain from the Lord all the graces which are indispensable for salvation. In this sermon I will show, in the first point, the efficacy of prayer: and in the second, the necessity of prayer.

FIRST POINT. ON THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

1. To understand the efficacy and value of our prayers, we need only consider the great promises which God has made to every one who prays. “Call upon me, and I will deliver thee.” (Ps. 49:15.) Call upon me, and I will save you from every danger. “He shall cry to me, I will hear him.” (Ps. 90:15.) “Cry to me, and I will hear thee.” (Jer. 33:3.) “You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.” (John 15:7.) Ask whatsoever you wish and it shall be given to you. There are a thousand similar passages in the Old and New Testaments. By his nature God is, as St. Leo says, goodness itself. “Deus cujus natura bonitas.” Hence he desires, with a great desire, to make us partakers of his own good. St. Mary

Magdalene de Pazzi used to say, that when a soul prays to God for any grace, he feels in a certain manner under an obligation to her, and thanks her; because by prayer the soul opens to him a way of satisfying his desire to dispense his graces to us. Hence, in the holy Scriptures, the Lord appears to recommend and inculcate to us nothing more forcibly than to ask and pray. To show this, the words which we read in the seventh chapter of St. Matthew are sufficient. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you” (7:7). St. Augustine teaches, that by these promises God has bound himself to grant all that we ask in prayer. “By his promises he has made himself a debtor.” (De Verb. Dom. Serm. ii.) And, in the fifth sermon, the saint says, that if the Lord did not wish to bestow his graces upon us, he would not exhort us so strenuously to ask them. “He would not exhort us to ask, unless he wished to give.” Hence we see that the Psalms of David and the Books of Solomon and of the Prophets are full of prayers.

2. Theodoret has written, that prayer is so efficacious before God, that, “though it be one, it can do all things.” “Oratio cum sit una, omnia potest.” St. Bernard teaches, that when we pray, the Lord, if he does not give the grace we ask, will grant a more useful gift. “He will give either what we ask, or what he knows to be more profitable to us.” (Serm. v. in Fer. 4 cin.) And whom has God, when asked for aid, ever despised by not listening to his petition? “Who hath called upon him, and he despised him?” (Eccl. 2:12.) The Scripture says, that among the nations there is none that has gods so willing to hear our prayers, as our true God. “Neither is there any other nation so great, that hath gods so nigh to them, as our God is present to all our petitions.” (Deut. 4:7.) The princes of the earth, says St. Chrysostom, give audience only to a few; but God grants it to every one that wishes for it. “Aures principis paucis patent, Die vero omnibus volentibus.” (Lib. 2, de Orat.) David tells us that this goodness of God in hearing us at whatever time we pray to him, shows us that he is our true God, whose love for us surpasses the love of all others. “In what day soever I shall call upon thee, behold I know thou art my God.” (Ps. 55:10.) He wishes and ardently desires to confer favours upon us; but he requires us to pray for them. Jesus Christ said one day to his disciples: “Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name; ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.” (John 16:24.) As if he said: You complain of me for not making you perfectly

content; but you ought to complain of yourselves for not having asked of me all the gifts you stood in need of; ask, henceforth, whatsoever you want, and your prayer shall be heard. Many, says St. Bernard complain that the Lord is wanting to them. But he complains with more justice that they are wanting to him, by neglecting to ask him for his graces. “Omnes nobis causamur deesse gratiam, sed justius forsitan ista sibi queritur deesse nonnullos.” (S. Bern. de Tripl. Cust.)

3. The ancient fathers, after having consulted together about the exercise most conducive to salvation, came to the conclusion, that the best means of securing eternal life is, to pray continually, saying: Lord, assist me; Lord, hasten to my assistance. “Incline unto my aid, O God; O Lord, make haste to help me.” Hence the holy Church commands these two petitions to be often repeated in the canonical hours by all the clergy and by all religious, who pray not only for themselves, but also for the whole Christian world. St. John Climacus says, that our prayers as it were compel God by a holy violence to hear us. “Prayer piously does violence to God.” Hence, when we pray to the Lord, he instantly answers by bestowing upon us the grace we ask. “At the voice of thy cry, as soon as he shall hear, he will answer thee.” (Isa. 30:19.) Hence St. Ambrose says, that “he who asks of God, receives while he asks.” (Ep. lxxxiv., ad Demetr.) And he not only grants his grace instantly, but also abundantly, giving us more than we pray for. St. Paul tells us that God is rich—that is, liberal of his graces to every one that prays to him. “Rich unto all that call upon him.” (Rom. 10:12.) And St. James says: “If any of you want wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly and upbraideth not.” (St. James 1:5.) “He upbraideth not;” when we pray to him he does not reproach us with the insults we have offered to him, but he appears then to forget all the injuries we have done him, and to delight in enriching us with his graces.

SECOND POINT. ON THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

4. “God,” as St. Paul has written, “will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim. 2:4.) According to St. Peter, he does not wish any one to be lost. “The Lord dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any soul should perish, but that all should return to penance.” (1 Pet. 3:9.) Hence St. Leo teaches, that as God wishes us to

observe his commands, so he prevents us by his assistance, that we may fulfil them. “Juste instat præcepto qui præcurrit auxilio.” (Serm. xvi. de Pass.) And St. Thomas, in explaining the words of the Apostle, “God, who will have all men to be saved,” says: “Therefore, grace is wanting to no one; but he, on his part, communicates it to all.” (In Epist., ad Hebr., cap. xii., lect. 3.) And in another place the holy doctor writes: “To provide every man with the means necessary for his salvation, provided on his part he puts no obstacle to it, belongs to Divine Providence.” But, according to Gennadius, the assistance of his grace the Lord grants only to those who pray for it. “We believe . . . that no one works out his salvation but by God’s assistance; and that he only who prays merits aid from God.” (de Eccles. Dogm.) And St. Augustine teaches, that, except the first graces of vocation to the faith and to repentance, all other graces, and particularly the grace of perseverance, are granted to those only who ask them. “It is evident that God gives some graces, such as the beginning of faith, without prayer—and that he has prepared other graces, such as perseverance to the end—only for those who pray.” (De dono persev., c. xvi.) And in another place he writes, that “God wishes to bestow his favours; but he gives them only to those who ask.” (In Ps. c.)

5. Hence theologians commonly teach, after St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, Clement of Alexandria, and others, that, for adults prayer is necessary *as a means* of salvation; that is, that without prayer it is impossible for them to be saved. This doctrine may be inferred from the following passages of Scripture: “We ought always to pray.” (Luke 18:1.) “Ask, and you shall receive.” (John 16:24.) “Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thess. 5:17.) The words *we ought, ask, pray,* according to St. Thomas (3 part, qu. xxxix. art. 5) and the generality of theologians, imply a precept which obliges, under grievous sin, particularly in three cases: First, when a man is in the state of sin; secondly, when he is in great danger of falling into sin; and, thirdly, when he is in danger of death. Theologians teach, that he who, at other times, neglects prayer for a month, or at most for two months, cannot be excused from mortal sin; because, without prayer we cannot procure the helps necessary for the observance of the law of God. St. Chrysostom teaches that as water is necessary to prevent trees from withering, so prayer is necessary to save us from perdition. “Non ninus quam arbores aquis, precibus indigemus.” (Tom. 1, hom. lxxvii.)

6. Most groundless was the assertion of Jansenius, that there are some commands, the fulfilment of which is impossible to us, and that we have not even grace to render their observance possible. For, the Council of Trent teaches, in the words of St. Augustine, that, though man is not able, with the aid of the grace ordinarily given, to fulfil all the commandments, still he can, by prayer, obtain the additional helps necessary for their observance. “God does not command impossibilities; but, by his precepts, he admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask what you cannot do; and he assists you, that you may be able to do it.” (Sess. 6, cap. xi.) To this may be added another celebrated passage of St. Augustine: “By our faith, which teaches that God does not command impossibilities, we are admonished what to do in things that are easy, and what to ask in things that are difficult.” (Lib. de Nat. et Grat., cap. lxix., n. 83.)

7. But why does God, who knows our weakness, permit us to be assailed by enemies which we are not able to resist? The Lord, answers the holy doctor, seeing the great advantages which we derive from the necessity of prayer, permits us to be attacked by enemies more powerful than we are, that we may ask his assistance. Hence they who are conquered cannot excuse themselves by saying that they had not strength to resist the assault of the enemy; for had they asked aid from God, he should have given it; and had they prayed, they should have been victorious. Therefore, if they are defeated, God will punish them. St. Bonaventure says, that if a general lose a fortress in consequence of not having sought timely succour from his sovereign, he shall be branded as a traitor. “Reputaretur infidelis, nisi expectaret a rege auxilium.” (S. Bon. Diæt. tit., c. v.) Thus God regards as a traitor the Christian who, when he finds himself assailed by temptations, neglects to seek the divine aid. “Ask,” says Jesus Christ, “and you shall receive.” Then, concludes St. Teresa, he that does not ask does not receive. This is conformable to the doctrine of St. James: “You have not, because you do not ask.” (St. James 4:2.) St. Chrysostom says, that prayer is a powerful weapon of defence against all enemies. “Truly prayer is a great armour.” (Hom. xli., ad Pop.) St. Ephrem writes, that he who fortifies himself beforehand by prayer, prevents the entrance of sin into the soul. “If you pray before you work, the passage into the soul will not be open to sin.” (Serm. de Orat.) David said the same: “Praising I will call upon the Lord, and I shall be saved from my enemies.” (Ps. 17:4.)

8. If we wish to lead a good life, and to save our souls, we must learn to pray. “He,” says St. Augustine, “knows how to live well who knows how to pray well.” (Hom. xliii.) In order to obtain God’s graces by prayer, it is necessary, first, to take away sin; for God does not hear obstinate sinners. For example: if a person entertains hatred towards another, and wishes to take revenge, God does not hear his prayer. “When you multiply prayer, I will not hear; for your hands are full of blood.” (Isa. 1:15.) St. Chrysostom says, that he who prays while he cherishes a sinful affection, does not pray, but mocks God. “Qui orat et peccat, non rogat Deum sed illudit.” (Hom. xi., in Matt. vi.) But if he ask the Lord to take away hatred from his heart, the Lord will hear him. Secondly, it is necessary to pray with attention. Some imagine that they pray by repeating many *Our Fathers*, with such distraction that they do not know what they say. These speak, but do not pray. Of them the Lord says, by the Prophet Isaias: “With their lips they glorify me, but their hearts are far from me.” (Isa. 29:13.) Thirdly, it is necessary, as the Holy Ghost exhorts us, to take away the occasions which hinder us to pray. “Let nothing hinder thee from praying always.” (Eccl. 18:22.) He who is occupied in a thousand affairs unprofitable to the soul, places a cloud before his prayers, which prevents their passing to the throne of grace. “Thou hast set a cloud before thee, that *our* prayer may not pass through.” (Lamen. 3:44.) I will not omit here the exhortation of St. Bernard, to ask graces of God through the intercession of his divine mother. “Let us ask grace, and ask it through Mary; for she is a mother, and her prayer cannot be fruitless.” (Serm. de Aqæd.) St. Anselm says: “Many things are asked of God and are not obtained: what is asked of Mary is obtained, not because she is more powerful, but because God decreed thus to honour her, that men may know that she can obtain all things from God.”

Sermon XL

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE VICE OF SPEAKING IMMODESTLY

> “He touched his tongue, . . . and the string of his tongue was loosed.”—MARK 7:33, 35.

IN this day’s gospel St. Mark relates the miracle which our Saviour wrought in healing the man that was dumb by barely touching his tongue. “He touched his tongue . . . and the string of his tongue was loosed.” From the last words we may infer that the man was not entirely dumb, but that his tongue was not free, or that his articulation was not distinct. Hence St. Mark tells us, that after the miracle *he spoke right.* Let us make the application to ourselves. The dumb man stood in need of a miracle to loose his tongue, and to take away the impediment under which he laboured. But how many are there on whom God would confer a great grace, if he bound their tongues, that they might cease to speak immodestly! This vice does great injury to others. Secondly, it does great injury to themselves. These shall be the two points of this sermon.

FIRST POINT. THE MAN WHO SPEAKS IMMODESTLY DOES GREAT INJURY TO OTHERS WHO LISTEN TO HIM.

1. In explaining the 140th Psalm, St. Augustine calls those who speak obscenely “the mediators of Satan,” the ministers of Lucifer; because, by their obscene language, the demon of impurity gets access to souls, which by his own suggestions he could not enter. Of their accursed tongues St. James says: “And the tongue is a fire, . . . being set on fire by hell.” (James 3:6.) He says that the tongue is a fire kindled by hell, with which they who speak obscenely burn themselves and others. The obscene tongue may be said to be the tongue of the third person, of which Ecclesiasticus says: “The tongue of a third person hath disquieted many, and scattered them from

nation to nation.” (Eccl. 28:16.) The spiritual tongue speaks of God, the worldly tongue talks of worldly affairs; but the tongue of a third person is a tongue of hell, which speaks of the impurities of the flesh; and this is the tongue that perverts many, and brings them to perdition.

2. Speaking of the life of men on this earth, the Royal Prophet says: “Let their way become dark and slippery.” (Ps. 34:6.) In this life men walk in the midst of darkness and in a slippery way. Hence they are in danger of falling at every step, unless they cautiously examine the road on which they walk, and carefully avoid dangerous steps—that is, the occasions of sin. Now, if in treading this slippery way, frequent efforts were made to throw them down, would it not be a miracle if they did not fall? “The Mediators of Satan,” who speak obscenely, impel others to sin, who, as long as they live on this earth, walk in the midst of darkness, and as long as they remain in the flesh, are in danger of falling into the vice of impurity. Now, of those who indulge in obscene language, it has been well said: “Their throat is an open sepulchre.” (Ps. 5:11.) The mouths of those who can utter nothing but filthy obscenities are, according to St. Chrysostom, so many open sepulchres of putrified carcasses. “Talia sunt ora hominum qui turpia proferunt.” (Hom. 2, de Proph. Obs.) The exhalation which arises from the rottenness of a multitude of dead bodies thrown together into a pit, communicates infection and disease to all who feel the stench.

3. “The stroke of a whip,” says Ecclesiasticus, “maketh a blue mark; but the stroke of a tongue will break the bones.” (Eccl. 28:21.) The wounds of the lash are wounds of the flesh, but the wounds of the obscene tongue are wounds which infect the bones of those who listen to its language. St. Bernardine of Sienna relates, that a virgin who led a holy life, at hearing an obscene word from a young man, fell into a bad thought, and afterwards abandoned herself to the vice of impurity to such a degree that, the saint says, if the devil had taken human flesh, he could not have committed so many sins of that kind as she committed.

4.The misfortune is, that the mouths of hell that frequently utter immodest words, regard them as trifles, and are careless about confessing them: and when rebuked for them they answer: “I say these words in jest, and without malice.” In jest! Unhappy man, these jests make the devil laugh, and shall make you weep for eternity in hell. In the first place, it is useless to say that you utter such words without malice; for, when you use such expressions, it is very difficult for you to abstain from acts against purity. According to St. Jerome, “He that delights in words is not far from the act.” Besides, immodest words spoken before persons of a different sex, are always accompanied with sinful complacency. And is not the scandal you give to others criminal? Utter a single obscene word, and you shall bring into sin all who listen to you. Such is the doctrine of St. Bernard. “One speaks, and he utters only one word; but he kills the souls of a multitude of hearers.” (Serm. xxiv., in Cant.) A greater sin than if, by one discharge of a blunderbuss, you murdered many persons; because you would then only kill their bodies: but, by speaking obscenely, you have killed their souls.

5. In a word, obscene tongues are the ruin of the world. One of them does more mischief than a hundred devils; because it is the cause of the perdition of many souls. This is not my language; it is the language of the Holy Ghost. “A slippery mouth worketh ruin.” (Prov. 26:28.) And when is it that this havoc of souls is effected, and that such grievous insults are offered to God? It is in the summer, at the time when God bestows upon you the greatest temporal blessings. It is then that he supplies you for the entire year with corn, wine, oil, and other fruits of the earth. It is then that there are as many sins committed by obscene words, as there are grains of corn or bunches of grapes. O ingratitude! How does God bear with us? And who is the cause of these sins? They who speak immodestly are the cause of them. Hence they must render an account to God, and shall be punished for all the sins committed by those who hear them. “But I will require his blood at thy hand.” (Ezec. 3:11.) But let us pass to the second point.

SECOND POINT. HE WHO SPEAKS IMMODESTLY DOES GREAT INJURY TO HIMSELF.

6. Some young men say: “I speak without malice.” In answer to this excuse, I have already said, in the first point, that it is very difficult to use immodest language without taking delight in it; and that speaking obscenely before young females, married or unmarried, is always accompanied with a secret complacency in what is said. Besides, by using immodest language, you expose yourself to the proximate danger of falling into unchaste actions: for, according to St. Jerome, as we have already said, “he who delights in words is not far from the act.” All men are inclined to evil. “The

imagination and thought of man’s heart are prone to evil.” (Gen. 8:21.) But, above all, men are prone to the sin of impurity, to which nature itself inclines them. Hence St. Augustine has said, that in struggling against that vice “the victory is rare,” at least for those who do not use great caution. “Communis pugna et rara victoria.” Now, the impure objects of which they speak are always presented to the mind of those who freely utter obscene words. These objects excite pleasure, and bring them into sinful desires and morose delectations, and afterwards into criminal acts. Behold the consequence of the immodest words which young men say they speak without malice.

7. “Be not taken in thy tongue,” says the Holy Ghost. (Eccl. 5:16.) Beware lest by your tongue you forge a chain which will drag you to hell. “The tongue,” says St. James, “defileth the whole body, and inflameth the wheel of our nativity.” (St. James 3:6.) The tongue is one of the members of the body, but when it utters bad words it infects the whole body, and “inflames the wheels of our nativity;” it inflames and corrupts our entire life from our birth to old age. Hence we see that men who indulge in obscenity, cannot, even in old age, abstain from immodest language. In the life of St. Valerius, Surius relates that the saint, in travelling, went one day into a house to warm himself. He heard the master of the house and a judge of the district, though both were advanced in years, speaking on obscene subjects. The saint reproved them severely; but they paid no attention to his rebuke. However, God punished both of them: one became blind, and a sore broke out on the other, which produced deadly spasms. Henry Gragerman relates (in Magn. Spec., dist. 9, ex. 58), that one of those obscene talkers died suddenly and without repentance, and that he was afterwards seen in hell tearing his tongue in pieces; and when it was restored he began again to lacerate it.

8. But how can God have mercy on him who has no pity on the souls of his neighbours? “Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy.” (St. James 2:13.) Oh! what a pity to see one of those obscene wretches pouring out his filthy expressions before girls and young married females! The greater the number of such persons present, the more abominable is his language. It often happens that little boys and girls are present, and he has no horror of scandalizing these innocent souls! Cantipratano relates that the son of a certain nobleman in Burgundy was

sent to be educated by the monks of Cluni. He was an angel of purity; but the unhappy boy having one day entered into a carpenter's shop, heard some obscene words spoken by the carpenter's wife, fell into sin, and lost the divine grace. Father Sabitano, in his work entitled "Evangelical Light," relates that another boy, fifteen years old, having heard an immodest word, began to think of it the following night, consented to a bad thought, and died suddenly the same night. His confessor having heard of his death, intended to say Mass for him. But the soul of the unfortunate boy appeared to him, and told the confessor not to celebrate Mass for him—that, by means of the word he had heard, he was damned—and that the celebration of Mass would add to his pains. O God! how great, were it in their power to weep, would be the wailing of the angel-guardians of these poor children that are scandalized and brought to hell by the language of obscene tongues! With what earnestness shall the angels demand vengeance from God against the author of such scandals! That the angels shall cry for vengeance against them, appears from the words of Jesus Christ: "See that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say to you, that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father." (Matt. 18:10.)

9. Be attentive, then, my brethren, and guard yourselves against speaking immodestly, more than you would against death. Listen to the advice of the Holy Ghost: "Make a balance for thy words, and a just bridle for thy mouth; and take heed lest thou slip with thy tongue—and thy fall be incurable unto death." (Eccl. 28:29, 30.) "Make a balance"—you must weigh your words before you utter them—and "a bridle for thy mouth"—when immodest words come to the tongue, you must suppress them; otherwise, by uttering them, you shall inflict on your own soul, and on the souls of others, a mortal and incurable wound. God has given you the tongue, not to offend him, but to praise and bless him. "But," says St. Paul, "fornication and all uncleanness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints." (Ephes. 5:3.) Mark the words "all uncleanness." We must not only abstain from obscene language and from every word of double meaning spoken in jest, but also from every improper word unbecoming a saint—that is, a Christian. It is necessary to remark, that words of double meaning sometimes do greater evil than open obscenity, because the art with which they are spoken makes a deeper impression on the mind.

10. Reflect, says St. Augustine, that your mouths are the mouths of Christians, which Jesus Christ has so often entered in the holy communion. Hence, you ought to have a horror of uttering all unchaste words, which are a diabolical poison. “See, brethren, if it be just that, from the mouths of Christians, which the body of Christ enters, an immodest song, like diabolical poison, should proceed.” (Serm. 15, de Temp.) St. Paul says, that the language of a Christian should be always seasoned with salt. “Let your speech be always in grace, seasoned with salt.” (Col. 4:6.) Our conversation should be seasoned with words calculated to excite others not to offend, but to love God. “Happy the tongue,” says St. Bernard, “that knows only how to speak of holy things!” Happy the tongue that knows only how to speak of God! O brethren, be careful not only to abstain from all obscene language, but to avoid, as you would a plague, those who speak immodestly. When you hear any one begin to utter obscene words, follow the advice of the Holy Ghost: “Hedge in thy ears with thorns: hear not a wicked tongue.” (Eccl. 28:28.) “Hedge in thy ears with thorns”—that is, reprove with zeal the man who speaks obscenely; at least turn away your face, and show that you hate such language. Let us not be ashamed to appear to be followers of Jesus Christ, unless we wish Jesus Christ to be ashamed to bring us with him into Paradise.

Sermon XLI

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE ABUSE OF DIVINE MERCY

"Take care of him."—LUKE 10:35.

IN this day's gospel we read, that a certain man fell into the hands of robbers, who, after having taken his money, wounded him, and left him half dead. A Samaritan who passed by, saw him, and taking pity on him, bound up his wounds, brought him to an inn, and left him to the care of the host, saying: "Take care of him." These words I this day address to those, if there be any such among you, who, though their souls are wounded by sin, instead of attending to the care of them, continually aggravate the wounds by new sins, and thus abuse the mercy of God, who preserves their lives, that they may repent, and not be lost for ever. I say to you: Brethren, take care of your souls, which are in a very bad state; have compassion on them. "Have pity on thy own soul." (Eccl. 30:24.) Your souls are sick, and—what is worse—they are near the eternal death of hell; for he who abuses to excess the divine mercy, is on the point of being abandoned by the mercy of God. This shall be the subject of the present discourse.

1. St. Augustine says that the devil deludes Christians in two ways—"by despair and hope." After a person has committed sin, the enemy, by placing before his eyes the rigour of divine justice, tempts him to despair of the mercy of God. But, before he sins, the devil by representing to him the divine mercy, labours to make him fearless of the chastisement due to sin. Hence the saint gives the following advice: "After sin, hope for mercy; before sin, fear justice." If, after sin, you despair of God's pardon, you offend him by a new and more grievous sin. Have recourse to his mercy, and he will pardon you. But, before sin, fear God's justice, and trust not to his mercy; for, they who abuse the mercy of God to offend him, do not deserve to be treated with mercy. Abulensis says, that the man who offends

justice may have recourse to mercy; but to whom can they have recourse, who offend and provoke mercy against themselves?

2. When you intend to commit sin, who, I ask, promises you mercy from God? Certainly God does not promise it. It is the devil that promises it, that you may lose God and be damned. “Beware,” says St. John Chrysostom, “never to attend to that dog that promises thee mercy from God.” (Hom. 50, ad Pop.) If, beloved sinners, you have hitherto offended God, hope and tremble: if you desire to give up sin, and if you detest it, hope; because God promises pardon to all who repent of the evil they have done. But if you intend to continue in your sinful course, tremble lest God should wait no longer for you, but cast you into hell. Why does God wait for sinners? Is it that they may continue to insult him? No; he waits for them that they may renounce sin, and that thus he may have pity on them, and forgive them. “Therefore the Lord waiteth, that he may have mercy on you.” (Isa. 30:1, 8.) But when he sees that the time which he gave them to weep over their past iniquities is spent in multiplying their sins, he begins to inflict chastisement, and he cuts them off in the state of sin, that, by dying, they may cease to offend him. Then he calls against them the very time he had given them for repentance. “He hath called against me the time.” (Lam. 1:15.) “The very time,” says St. Gregory, “comes to judge.”

3. O common illusion of so many damned Christians! We seldom find a sinner so abandoned to despair as to say: *I will damn myself.* Christians sin, and endeavour to save their souls. They say: “God is merciful: I will commit this sin, and will afterwards confess it.” Behold the illusion, or rather the snare, by which Satan draws so many souls to hell. “Commit sin,” he says, “and confess it afterwards.” But listen to what the Lord says: “And say not, the mercy of the Lord is great; he will have mercy on the multitude of my sins.” (Eccl. 5:6.) Why does he tell you not to say, that the mercy of God is great? Attend to the words contained in the following verse: “For mercy and wrath come quickly from him, and his wrath looketh upon sinners.” (Ibid., *ver.* 7.) The mercy of God is different from the acts of his mercy; the former is infinite, the latter are finite. God is merciful, but he is also just. St. Basil says, that sinners only consider God as merciful and ready to pardon, but not as just and prepared to inflict punishment. Of this the Lord complained one day to St. Bridget: “I am just and merciful: sinners regard me only as merciful.” St. Basil’s words are: “Bonus est Dominus sed

etiam Justus, nolimus Deum ex dimidia parte cogitare.” God is just, and, being just, he must punish the ungrateful. Father John Avila used to say, that to bear with those who avail themselves of the mercy of God to offend him, would not be mercy, but a want of justice. Mercy, as the divine mother said, is promised to those who fear, and not to those who insult the Lord. “And his mercy to them that fear him.” (Luke 1:50.)

4. Some rash sinners will say: God has hitherto shown me so many mercies; why should he not hereafter treat me with the same mercy? I answer: he will show you mercy, if you wish to change your life; but if you intend to continue to offend him, he tells you that he will take vengeance on your sins by casting you into hell. “Revenge is mine, and I will repay them in *due* time, that their foot may slide.” (Deut. 32:35.) David says, that “except you be converted, he will brandish his sword.” (Ps. 7:13.) The Lord has bent his bow, and waits for your conversion; but if you resolve not to return to him, he will in the end cast the arrow against you, and you shall be damned. O God! there are some who will not believe that there is a hell until they fall into it. Can you, beloved Christians, complain of the mercies of God, after he has shown you so many mercies by waiting for you so long? You ought to remain always prostrate on the earth to thank him for his mercies, saying: “The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed.” (Lamen. 3:32.) Were the injuries which you offered to God committed against a brother, he would not have borne with you. God has had so much patience with you; and he now calls you again. If, after all this, he shall send you to hell, will he do you any wrong? “What is there,” he will say, “that I ought to do more for my vineyard, that I have not done to it?” (Isa. 5:4.) Impious wretch! what more ought I to do for you that I have not done?

5. St. Bernard says, that the confidence which sinners have in God’s goodness when they commit sin, procures for them, not a blessing, but a malediction from the Lord. “Est infidelis fiducia solius ubique maledictionis capax, cum videlicet in spe peccamus.” (Serm, 3, de Annunc.) O deceitful hope, which sends so many Christians to hell! St. Augustine says: “Sperant, ut peccent! Væ a perversa spe.” (In Ps. cxliv.) They do not hope for the pardon of the sins of which they repent; but they hope that, though they continue to commit sin, God will have mercy upon them; and thus they make the mercy of God serve as a motive for continuing to offend him. O accursed hope! hope which is an abomination to the Lord! “And

their hope the abomination." (Job 11:20.) This hope will make God hasten the execution of his vengeance; for surely a master will not defer the punishment of servants who offend him because he is good. Sinners, as St. Augustine observes, trusting in God's goodness, insult him, and say: "God is good; I will do what I please." (Tract. xxxiii. in Joan.) But, alas! how many, exclaims the same St. Augustine, has this vain hope deluded! "They who have been deceived by this shadow of vain hope cannot be numbered." St. Bernard writes, that Lucifer's chastisement was accelerated, because, in rebellion against God, he hoped that he should not be punished for his rebellion. Ammon, the son of king Manasses, seeing that God had pardoned the sins of his father, gave himself up to a wicked life with the hope of pardon; but, for Ammon there was no mercy. St. John Chrysostom says, that Judas was lost because, trusting in the goodness of Jesus Christ, he betrayed him. "Fidit in lenitate Magistri."

6. He that sins with the hope of pardon, saying: "I will afterwards repent, and God will pardon me:" is, according to St. Augustine, "not a penitent, but a scoffer." The Apostle tells us that "God is not mocked." (Gal. 6:7.) It would be a mockery of God to offend him as often and as long as you please, and always to receive the pardon of your offences. "For what things a man shall sow," says St. Paul, "those also shall he reap." (Ibid., *ver.* 8.) They who sow sins, can hope for nothing but the hatred of God and hell. "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and patience, and long-suffering." (Rom. 2:4.) Do you, O sinner, despise the riches of the goodness, of the patience, and long-suffering of God towards you? He uses the word *riches*, because the mercies which God shows us, in not punishing our sins, are riches more valuable to us than all treasures. "Knowest thou not," continues the Apostle, "that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance?" (Ibid.) Do you not know that the Lord waits for you, and treats you with so much benignity, not that you may continue to sin, but that you may weep over the offences you have offered to him? For, says St. Paul, if you persevere in sin and do not repent, your obstinacy and impenitence shall accumulate a treasure of wrath against the day of wrath, that is, the day on which God shall judge you. "According to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of God." (Ibid., *verse* 5.)

7. To the hardness of the sinner shall succeed his abandonment by God, who shall say of the soul that is obstinate in sin, what he said of Babylon: “We would have cured Babylon; but she is not healed; let us forsake her.” (Jer. 51:9.) And how does God abandon the sinner? He either sends him a sudden death, and cuts him off in sin, or he deprives him of the graces which would be necessary to bring him to true repentance; he leaves him with the sufficient graces with which he can, but will not, save his soul. The darkness of his understanding, the hardness of his heart, and the bad habits which he has contracted, will render his conversion morally impossible. Thus, he shall not be absolutely but morally abandoned. “I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be wasted.” (Isa. 5:5.) When the master of the vineyard destroys its hedges, does he not show that he abandons it? It is thus that God acts when he abandons a soul. He takes away the hedge of holy fear and remorse of conscience, and leaves the soul in darkness, and then vices crowd into the heart. “Thou hast appointed darkness, and it is night: in it shall all the beasts of the wood go about.” (Ps. 103:20.) And the sinner, abandoned in an abyss of sins, will despise admonitions, excommunications, divine grace, chastisement, and hell: he will make a jest of his own damnation. “The wicked man, when he is come into the depth of sin, contemneth.” (Prov. 18:3.)

8. “Why,” asks the Prophet Jeremias, “doth the way of the wicked prosper?” (Jer. 12:1.) He answers: “Gather them together as sheep for a sacrifice.” (v. 3.) Miserable the sinner who is prosperous in this life! The prosperity of sinners is a sign that God wishes to give them a temporal reward for some works which are morally good, but that he reserves them as victims of his justice for hell, where, like the accursed cockle, they shall be cast to burn for all eternity. “In the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers: Gather up the first cockle, and bind it in bundles to burn.” (Matt. 13:30.)

9. Thus, not to be punished in this life is the greatest of God’s chastisements on the wicked, and has been threatened against the obstinate sinner by the Prophet Isaias. “Let us have pity on the wicked, but he will not learn justice.” (Isa. 26:10.) On this passage St. Bernard says: This mercy I do not wish for: it is above all wrath. “Misericordiam hanc nolo; super omnem iram misericordia ista.” (Serm. xlii., in Cant.) And what greater chastisement than to be abandoned into the hands of sin, so that,

being permitted by God to fall from sin to sin, the sinner must in the end go to suffer as many hells as he has committed sins? “Add thou iniquity upon their iniquity . . . let them be blotted out of the book of the living.” (Ps. 68:28, 29.) On these words Bellarmine writes: “There is no punishment greater than when sin is the punishment of sin.” It would be better for such a sinner to die after the first sin; because by dying under the load of so many additional iniquities, he shall suffer as many hells as he has committed sins. This is what happened to a certain comedian in Palermo, whose name was Cæsar. He one day told a friend that Father La Nusa, a missionary, foretold him that God should give him twelve years to live, and that if within that time he did not change his life, he should die a bad death. Now, said he to his friend, I have travelled through so many parts of the world: I have had many attacks of sickness, one of which nearly brought me to the grave; but in this month the twelve years shall be completed, and I feel myself in better health than in any of the past years. He then invited his friend to listen to a new comedy which he had composed. But, what happened? On the 24th November, 1688, the day fixed for the comedy, as he was going on the stage, he was seized with apoplexy, and died suddenly. He expired in the arms of a female comedian. Thus the scene of this world ended miserably for him.

10. Let us make the application to ourselves, and conclude the discourse. Brethren, I entreat you to give a glance at all the bygone years of your life: look at the grievous offences you have committed against God, and at the great mercies which he has shown to you, the many lights he has bestowed upon you, and the many times he has called you to a change of life. By this sermon he has to-day given you a new call. He appears to me to say to you: “What is there that I ought to do to my vineyard, that I have not done to it?” (Isa. 5:4.) What more ought I to do for you that I have not done? What do you say? What answer have you to make? Will you give yourselves to God, or will you continue to offend him? Consider, says St. Augustine, that the punishment of your sins has been deferred, not remitted. “O unfruitful tree! the axe has been deferred. Be not secure: you shall be cut off.” If you abuse the divine mercy, *you shall be cut off;* vengeance shall soon fall upon you. What do you wait for? Do you wait till God sends you to hell? The Lord has been hitherto silent; but he is not silent for ever. When the time of vengeance shall arrive he will say: “These things hast thou done, and I was

silent. Thou thoughtest unjustly that I should be like to thee: but I will reprove thee, and set before thy face.” (Ps. 49:21.) He will set before your eyes the graces which he bestowed upon you, and which you have despised: these very graces shall judge and condemn you. O brethren, resist no longer the calls of God; tremble lest the call which he gives you to-day may be the last call for you. Go to confession as soon as possible, and make a firm resolution to change your lives. It is useless to confess your sins, if you afterwards return to your former vices. But you will perhaps say, that you have not strength to resist the temptations by which you are assailed. Listen to the words of the Apostle: “God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted above that which you are able.” (1 Cor. 10:13.) God is faithful: he will not permit you to be tempted above your strength. And if of yourself you have not strength to overcome the devil, ask it from God, and he will give it to you. “Ask, and you shall receive.” (John 16:24.) “Praising,” said David, “I will call on the Lord, and I shall be saved from my enemies.” (Ps. 17:4.) And St. Paul said: “I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.” (Phil. 4:13.) Of myself I can do nothing; but with the divine assistance I can do all things. Recommend yourselves to God in all temptations, and God will enable you to resist them, and you shall not fall.

Sermon LXII

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON AVOIDING BAD COMPANY

> "There met him ten men that were lepers . . . As they went, they were made clean."—LUKE 17:12, 14.

IN this day's gospel it is related, that ten lepers of a certain town met Jesus Christ, and entreated him to heal the leprosy under which they laboured. The Lord bid them go and present themselves to the priests of the temple; but before they reached the temple they were cured. Now it may be asked why our Saviour, who could heal them in an instant, wished them to go to the priests, and healed them on the way. A certain author (Anthony of Lisbon) says that Jesus Christ foresaw that, had he cured them on the spot, they, by remaining in the place and conversing with the other lepers, from whom they took the leprosy, should easily relapse into the same disease. Therefore, he first wished them to depart from the place and then healed them. Whatever may be thought of this reason, let us come to the moral sense which may be deduced from it. The leprosy resembles sin. As the leprosy is a contagious disease, so the bad habits of the wicked infect others who associate with them. Hence, the leper who wishes to be cured shall never be healed unless he separates from bad companions. He that keeps company with robbers soon becomes a thief. In this discourse I shall show, that, to lead a good life, it is necessary to avoid bad companions.

1. "A friend of fools," says the Holy Ghost, "shall become like them." (Prov. 13:20.) Christians who live in enmity with God are, Father M. Avila used to say, all fools, who deserve to be shut up in a mad-house. For, what greater madness can be conceived than to believe in hell and to live in sin? But the man who contracts an intimacy with these fools shall soon become like them. Although he should hear all the sermons of the sacred orators, he will continue in vice, according to the celebrated maxim: "Examples make

greater impressions than words.” Hence the Royal Prophet has said: “With the elect thou wilt be elect, and with the perverse thou wilt be perverted.” (Ps. 17:27.) St. Augustine says, that familiarity with sinners is as it were a hook which draws us to communicate in their vices. Let us, said the saint, avoid wicked friends, “lest by their company we may be drawn to a communion of vice.” St. Thomas teaches, that to know whom we should avoid is a great means of saving our souls. “Firma tutela salutis est, scire quem fugiamus.”

2. “Let their way become dark and slippery, and let the angel of the Lord pursue them.” (Ps. 34:6.) All men in this life walk in the midst of darkness and in a slippery way. If, then, a bad angel—that is, a wicked companion, who is worse than any devil—pursue them, and endeavour to drive them into an abyss, who shall be able to escape death? “Talis eris,” says Plato, “qualis conversatio quam sequeris?” And St. John Chrysostom said, that if we wish to know a man’s moral habits, we have only to observe the character of the friends with whom he associates; because friendship finds or makes him like his friends. “Vis nosse hominem, attende quorum familiaritate assuescat: amicitia aut pares invenit, aut pares fecit.” First, because, to please his friends, a man will endeavour to imitate them; secondly, because, as Seneca says, nature inclines men to do what they see others do. And the Scripture says: “They were mingled among the heathens, and learned their works.” (Ps. 105:35.) According to St. Basil, as air which comes from pestilential places causes infection, so, by conversation with bad companions, we almost imperceptibly contract their vices. “Quemadmodum in pestilentibus locis sensim attractus aër latentem corporibus morbum injicit sic itidem in prava conversatione maxima a nobis mala hauriuntur, etiamsi statim incommodum non sentiatur.” (St. Bas., hom. 9, ex var. quod Deus, etc.) And St. Bernard says that St. Peter, in consequence of associating with the enemies of Jesus Christ, denied his Master. “Existens cum passionis dominicæ ministris, Dominum negavit.”

3. But how, asks St. Ambrose, can bad companions give you the odour of chastity, when they exhale the stench of impurity? How can they infuse into you sentiments of devotion when they themselves fly from it? How can they impart to you a shame of offending God, when they cast it away? “Quid tibi demonstrant castitatem, quem non habent? Devotionem quam non sequuntur? Verecundiam quam projiciunt?” St. Augustine writes of

himself, that when he associated with bad companions, who boasted of their wickedness, he felt himself impelled to sin without shame; and to appear like them, he gloried in his evil actions. “Pudebat,” he says, “me esse pudentem.” (Lib. 2, de Conf., c. ix.) Hence Isaias admonishes you to “touch no unclean thing.” (Isa. 52:11.) Touch not what is unclean: if you do, you too shall be polluted. He that handles pitch, says Ecclesiasticus, shall certainly be defiled with it; and they who keep company with the proud shall be clothed with pride. The same holds for other vices: “He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled with it; and he that hath fellowship with the proud shall put on pride.” (Eccl. 13:1.)

4. What then must we do? The Wise Man tells us that we ought not only to avoid the vices of the wicked, but also to beware of treading in the ways in which they walk. “Restrain thy foot from their paths.” (Prov. 1:15.) That is, we should avoid their conversations, their discourses, their feasts, and all the allurements and presents with which they will seek to entice us into their net. “My son,” says Solomon, “if sinners shall entice thee, consent not to them.” (Prov. 1:10.) Without the decoy, birds are not enticed into the fowler’s net. “Will the bird fall into the snare upon the earth if there be no fowler?” (Amos 3:5.) The devil employs vicious friends as decoys, to draw so many souls into the snare of sin. “My enemies,” says Jeremias, “have chased me, and have caught me like a bird without cause.” (Lamen. 3:52.) He says, *without cause.* Ask the wicked why they have made a certain innocent young man fall into sin, and they will answer: We have done it *without cause;* we only wish to see him do what we ourselves do. This, says St. Ephrem, is one of the artifices of the devil: when he has caught a soul in his net, he makes him a snare, or a decoy, to deceive others. “Cum primum capta fuerit, anima, ad alias decipiendas fit quasi laqueus.”

5. Hence, it is necessary to avoid, as you would a plague, all familiarity with those scorpions of hell. I have said that you must avoid *familiarity* with them—that is, all fellowship in their banquets or conversation; for never to meet them is, as the Apostle says, impossible. “Otherwise you must needs go out of this world.” (1 Cor. 5:10.) But, it is in our power to abstain from familiar intercourse with them. “But now I have written to you not to keep company, etc.—with such a one, not so much as to eat.” (Ibid. v. 11.) I have called them *scorpions:* so they have been called by the Prophet Ezechiel. “Thou art among unbelievers and destroyers, and thou dwellest

among scorpions.” (Ezec. 2:6) Would you live in the midst of scorpions? You must, then, fly from scandalous friends, who, by their bad examples and words, poison your soul. “A man’s enemies shall be they of his own household.” (Matt. 10:36.) Wicked friends, that are very familiar and intimate with us, become the most pernicious enemies of our souls. “Who,” says Ecclesiasticus, “will pity an enchanter struck by a serpent, or any that come near wild beasts? So it is with him that keepeth company with a wicked man.” (Eccl. 12:13.) If the man that makes free with serpents, or with ferocious wild beasts, be bitten or devoured by them, who will take pity on him? And so it is with him who associates with scandalous companions; if, by their bad example he be contaminated and lost, neither God nor man will have compassion on him; because he was cautioned to fly from their society.

6. One scandalous companion is enough to corrupt all who treat him as a friend. “Know you not,” says St. Paul, “that a little leaven corrupts the whole lump?” (1 Cor. 5:7.) One of these scandalous sinners is able, by a perverse maxim, to infect all his companions. They are the false prophets whom Jesus Christ warns us to avoid. “Beware of false prophets.” (Matt. 7:15.) False prophets deceive, not only by false predictions, but also by false maxims or doctrines, which are productive of the greatest mischief. For, as Seneca says, they leave in the soul certain seeds of iniquity which lead to evil. “Semina in animo relinqueunt, quæ inducunt ad malum.” It is too true that scandalous language, as experience proves, corrupts the morals of those who hear it. “Evil communications,” says the Apostle, “corrupt good manners.” (1 Cor. 15:33.) A young man refuses, through the fear of God, to commit a certain sin: an incarnate devil, a bad companion, comes and says to him what the serpent said to Eve: “No; you shall not die the death.” (Gen. 3:4.) What are you afraid of? How many others commit this sin? You are young; God will have pity on your youth. They will, as is written in the book of Wisdom, say: “Come, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present—let us everywhere leave tokens of joy (2:6, 9). Come with us; let us spend our time in amusement and in joy. “O nimis iniqua amicitia,” says St. Augustine, “cum dicitur, eamus, facimus: pudet non esse impudentum.” O cruel friendship of those who say: let us go and do etc.: it is a shame not to be shameless. He who hears such language is ashamed not to yield to it, and not be as shameless as they who utter it.

7. When any passion is kindled within us, we must be particularly careful in selecting the persons whom we will consult. For, then the passion itself will incline us to seek counsel from those who will probably give the advice which is most agreeable to the passion. But from such evil counsellors, who do not speak according to God, we should fly with greater horror than from an enemy; for their evil counsel, along with the passion which is excited, may precipitate us into horrible excesses. As soon as the passion shall subside we shall see the error committed, and the delusion into which we have been led by false friends. But the good advice of a friend, who speaks according to Christian truth and meekness, preserves us from every disorder, and restores calm to the soul.

8. “Depart from the unjust,” says the Lord, “and evils shall depart from thee.” (Eccl. 7:2.) Fly, separate from wicked companions, and you shall cease to commit sin. “Neither let the way of evil men please thee. Flee from it: pass not by it: go aside and forsake it.” (Prov. 4:14, 15.) Avoid the ways in which these vicious friends walk, that you may not even meet them. “Forsake not an old friend; for the new will not be like to him.” (Eccl. 9:14.) Do not leave your first friend, who loved you before you came into the world. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” (Jer. 31:3.) Your new friends do not love you; they hate you more than your greatest enemy: they seek not your welfare, as God, does, but their own pleasures, and the satisfaction of having companions of their wickedness and perdition. You will, perhaps, say: I feel a repugnance to separate from such a friend, who has been solicitous for my welfare; to break off from him would appear to be an act of ingratitude. What welfare? What ingratitude? God alone wishes your welfare, because he desires your eternal salvation. Your friend wishes your eternal ruin; he wishes you to follow him, but cares not if you be damned. It is not ingratitude to abandon a friend who leads you to hell; but it is ingratitude to forsake God, who has created you, who has died for you on the cross, and who desires your salvation.

9. Fly then from the conversation of these wicked friends. “Hedge in thy ears with thorns, hear not a wicked tongue.” (Eccl. 28:28.) Beware of listening to the language of such friends; their words may bring you to perdition. And when you hear them speak improperly arm yourself with thorns, and reprove them, not only for the purpose of rebuking, but also of converting them. “Ut non solum,” says St. Augustine, “repellantur sed

etiam compungantur.” Listen to a frightful example, and learn the evil which a wicked friend does. Father Sabatino relates in his “Evangelical Light,” that two friends of that kind were one day together. One of them, to please the other, committed a sin; but after they had separated he died suddenly. The other, who knew nothing of his death, saw, in his sleep, his friend, and, according to his custom, ran to embrace him. But the deceased appeared to be surrounded with fire, and began to blaspheme the other, and to upbraid him for being the cause of his damnation. The other awoke and changed his life. But his unhappy friend was damned; and for his damnation there is not, and shall not be, any remedy for all eternity.

Sermon XLIII

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ALL ENDS, AND SOON ENDS

“The grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.”—MATT. 6:30.

BEHOLD! all the goods of the earth are like the grass of the field, which to-day is blooming and beautiful, but in the evening it withers and loses its flowers, and the next day is cast into the fire. This is what God commanded the Prophet Isaias to preach, when he said to him: “Cry. And I said: What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field.” (Isa. 40:6.) Hence St. James compares the rich of this world to the flower of grass: at the end of their journey through life they rot, along with all their riches and pomps. “The rich . . . because as the flower of the grass shall he pass away. For the sun rose with a burning heat, and parched the grass, and the flower thereof fell off, and the beauty of the shape thereof perished: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.” (St. James 1:10, 11.) They fade away and are cast into the fire, like the rich glutton, who made a splendid appearance in this life, but afterwards “was buried in hell.” (Luke 16:22.) Let us, then, dearly beloved Christians, attend to the salvation of our souls, and to the acquisition of riches for eternity, which never ends; for everything in this world ends, and ends very soon.

FIRST POINT. EVERYTHING ENDS.

1. When one of the great of this world is in the full enjoyment of the riches and honours which he has acquired, death shall come, and he shall be told: “Take order with thy house; for thou shalt die, and not live.” (Isa. 38:1.) Oh! what doleful tidings! The unhappy man must then say: Farewell, O world! farewell, O villa! farewell, O grotto! farewell, relatives! farewell, friends! farewell, sports! farewell, balls! farewell, comedies! farewell, banquets!

farewell, honours! all is over for me. There is no remedy: whether he will or not, he must leave all. “For when he shall die, he shall take nothing away; nor shall his glory descend with him.” (Ps. 48:18.) St. Bernard says, that death produces a horrible separation of the soul from the body, and from all the things of this earth. “Opus mortis horrendum divortium.” (Serm. 26, in Cant.) To the great of this world, whom worldlings regard as the most fortunate of mortals, the bare name of death is so full of bitterness, that they are unwilling even to hear it mentioned; for their entire concern is to find peace in their earthly goods. “O death!” says Ecclesiasticus, “how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions.” (Eccl. 41:1.) But how much greater bitterness shall death itself cause when it actually comes—miserable the man who is attached to the goods of this world! Every separation produces pain. Hence, when the soul shall be separated by the stroke of death from the goods on which she had fixed all her affections, the pain must be excruciating. It was this that made king Agag exclaim, when the news of approaching death was announced to him: “Doth bitter death separate me in this manner?” (1 Kings 15:32.) The great misfortune of worldlings is, that when they are on the point of being summoned to judgment, instead of endeavouring to adjust the accounts of their souls, they direct all their attention to earthly things. But, says St. John Chrysostom, the punishment which awaits sinners, on account of having forgotten God during life, is that they forget themselves at the hour of death. “Hac animadversione percutitur impius, ut moriens obliviscatur sui, qui vivens oblitus est Dei.”

2. But how great soever a man’s attachment to the things of this world may be, he must take leave of them at death. Naked he has entered into this world, and naked he shall depart from it. “Naked,” says Job, “I came out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither.” (Job 1:21.) In a word, they who have spent their whole life, have lost their sleep, their health, and their soul, in accumulating riches and possessions, shall take nothing with them at the hour of death: their eyes shall then be opened; and of all they had so dearly acquired, they shall find nothing in their hands. Hence, on that night of confusion, they shall be overwhelmed in a tempest of pains and sadness. “The rich man, when he shall sleep, shall take away nothing with him. He shall open his eyes and find nothing . . . a tempest shall oppress him in the night.” (Job 27:19, 20.) St. Antonine relates that Saladin,

king of the Saracens, gave orders at the hour of death, that the winding sheet in which he was to be buried should be carried before him to the grave, and that a person should cry out: “Of all his possessions, this only shall Saladin bring with him.” The saint also relates that a certain philosopher, speaking of Alexander the Great after his death, said: Behold the man that made the earth tremble. “The earth,” as the Scripture says, “was quiet before him.” (1 Mach. 1:3.) He is now under the earth. Behold the man whom the dominion of the whole world could not satisfy: now four palms of ground are sufficient for him. “Qui terram heri conculcubat, hodie ab ea conculcatur; et cui heri non sufficiebat mundus hodie sufficiunt quatuor ulnæ terræ.” St. Augustine, or some other ancient writer, says, that having gone to see the tomb of Cæsar, he exclaimed: “Princes feared thee; cities worshipped thee; all trembled before thee;—where is thy magnificence gone?” (Serm. 38. ad Fratr.) Listen to what David says: “I have seen the wicked highly exalted and lifted up like the cedars of Libanus. And I passed by, and lo! he was not.” (Ps. 36:35, 36.) Oh! how many such spectacles are seen every day in the world! A sinner who had been born in lowliness and poverty, afterwards acquires wealth and honours, so as to excite the envy of all. When he dies, every one says: He made a fortune in the world; but now he is dead, and with death all is over for him.

3. “Why is earth and ashes proud?” (Eccl. 10:9.) Such the language which the Lord addresses to the man who is puffed up by earthly honours and earthly riches. Miserable creature, he says, whence comes such pride? If you enjoy honours and riches, remember that you are dust. “For dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return.” (Gen. 3:19.) You must die, and after death what advantage shall you derive from the honours and possessions which now inflate you with pride? Go, says St. Ambrose, to a cemetery, in which are buried the rich and poor, and see if you can discern among them who has been rich and who has been poor; all are naked, and nothing remains of the richest among them but a few withered bones. “Respice sepulchra, die mihi, quis ibi dives, quis pauper sit” (lib. vi. exam., cap. viii). How profitable would the remembrance of death be to the man who lives in the world! “He shall be brought to the grave, and shall watch in the heap of the dead.” (Job 21:32.) At the sight of these dead bodies he would remember death, and that he shall one day be like them. Thus, he should be

awakened from the deadly sleep in which perhaps he lives in a state of perdition. But the misfortune is, that worldlings are unwilling to think of death until the hour comes when they must depart from this earth to go into eternity; and therefore they live as attached to the world, as if they were never to be separated from it. But our life is short, and shall soon end: thus all things must end, and must soon end.

SECOND POINT. ALL SOON ENDS.

4. Men know well, and believe firmly, that they shall die; but they imagine death is far off as if it were never to arrive. But Job tells us that the life of man is short. "Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries. Who cometh forth like a flower and is destroyed." (Job 14:2.) At present the health of men is so much impaired, that, as we see by experience, the greater number of them die before they attain the age of seventy. And what, says St. James, is our life but a vapour, which a blast of wind, a fever, a stroke of apoplexy, a puncture, an attack of the chest, causes to disappear, and which is seen no more? "For what is your life? It is a vapour which appeareth for a little while." (St. James 4:15.) "We all die," said the woman of Thecua to David, "and like waters that return no more, we fall down into the earth." (2 Kings 14:14.) She spoke the truth;—as all rivers and streams run to the sea, and as the gliding waters return no more, so our days pass away, and we approach to death.

5. They pass; they pass quickly. "My days," says Job, "have been swifter than a post." (Job 9:25.) Death comes to meet us, and runs more swiftly than a post; so that every step we make, every breath we draw, we approach to death. St. Jerome felt that even while he was writing he was drawing nearer to death. Hence he said: "What I write is taken away from my life." "Quad scribo de mea vita tollitur." Let us, then, say with Job: Years passed by, and with them pleasures, honours, pomps, and all things in this world pass away, "and only the grave remaineth for me." (Job 18:1.) In a word, all the glory of the labours we have undergone in this world, in order to acquire a large income, a high character for valour, for learning and genius, shall end in our being thrown into a pit to become the food of worms. The miserable worldling then shall say at death: My house, my garden, my

fashionable furniture, my pictures and rich apparel, shall, in a short time, belong no more to me; “and only the grave remaineth for me.”

6. But how much soever the worldling may be distracted by his worldly affairs and by his pleasures—how much soever he may be entangled in them, St. Chrysostom says, that when the fear of death, which sets fire to all things of the present life, begins to enter the soul, it will compel him to think and to be solicitous about his lot after death. “Cum pulsare animam incipit metus mortis (ignis instar præsentis vitæ omnia succendens) philosophari eam cogit, et futura solicita mente versari.” (Serm, in 2 Tim.) Alas! at the hour of death “the eyes of the blind shall be opened.” (Isa. 35:5.) Then indeed shall be opened the eyes of those blind worldlings who have employed their whole life in acquiring earthly goods, and have paid but little attention to the interests of the soul. In all these shall be verified what Jesus Christ has told them—that death shall come when they least expect it. “At what hour you think not the Son of Man will come.” (Luke 12:40.) Thus, on these unhappy men death comes unexpectedly. Hence, because the lovers of the world are not usually warned of their approaching dissolution till it is very near, they must, in the last few days of life, adjust the accounts of their soul for the fifty or sixty years which they lived on this earth. They will then desire another month, or another week, to settle their accounts or to tranquillize their conscience. But “they will seek for peace, and there shall be none.” (Ezec. 7:25.) The time which they desire is refused. The assistant priest reads the divine command to depart instantly from this world. “Proficiscere, anima Christiani de hoc mundo.” “Depart, Christian soul, from this world.” Oh! how dangerous the entrance of worldlings into eternity, dying, as they do, amid so much darkness and confusion, in consequence of the disorderly state of the accounts of their souls.

7. “Weight and balance are the judgments of the Lord.” (Prov. 16:11.) At the tribunal of God, nobility, dignities, and riches have no weight; two things only—our sins, and the graces bestowed on us by God—make the scales ascend or descend. They who shall be found faithful in corresponding with the lights and calls which they have received, shall be rewarded; and they who shall be found unfaithful, shall be condemned. We do not keep an account of God’s graces; but the Lord keeps an account of them; he measures them; and when he sees them despised to a certain

degree, he leaves the soul in her sins, and takes her out of life in that miserable state. “For what things a man shall sow those also shall he reap.” (Gal. 6:8.) From labours undertaken for the attainment of posts of honour and emolument, for the acquisition of property and of worldly applause, we reap nothing at the hour of death: all are then lost. We gather fruits of eternal life only from works performed, and tribulations suffered, for God.

8. Hence, St. Paul exhorts us to attend to our own business. “But we must entreat you, brethren . . . that you do your own business.” (1 Thess. 4:10, 11.) Of what business, I ask, does the Apostle speak? Is it of acquiring riches, or a great name in the world? No; he speaks of the business of the soul, of which Jesus Christ spoke, when he said: “Trade till I come.” (Luke 19:13.) The business for which the Lord has placed, and for which he keeps us on this earth, is to save our souls, and by good works to gain eternal life. This is the end for which we have been created. “And the end eternal life.” (Rom. 6:22.) The business of the soul is for us not only the most important, but also the principal and only affair; for, if the soul be saved, all is safe; but if the soul be lost, all is lost. Hence, we ought, as the Scripture says, to strive for the salvation of our souls, and to combat to death for justice—that is, for the observance of the divine law. “Strive for justice for thy soul, and even unto death fight for justice.” (Eccl. 4:33.) The business which our Saviour recommends to us, saying: *Trade till I come*, is, to have always before our eyes the day on which he shall come to demand an account of our whole life.

9. All things in this world—acquisitions, applause, grandeur—must, as we have said, all end, and end very soon. “The fashion of this world passeth away.” (1 Cor. 7:31.) The scene of this life passes away; happy they who, in this scene, act their part well, and save their souls, preferring the eternal interests of the soul to all the temporal interests of the body. “He that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal.” (John 12:26.) Worldlings say: Happy the man who hoards up money! happy they who acquire the esteem of the world, and enjoy the pleasures of this life! O folly! Happy he who loves God and saves his soul! The salvation of his soul was the only favour which king David asked of God. “One thing have I asked of the Lord, this will I seek after.” (Ps. 26:4.) And St. Paul said, that to acquire the grace of Jesus Christ which contains eternal life, he despised as dung all

worldly goods. “I count all things as loss—and I count them as dung, that I may gain Christ.” (Phil. 3:8.)

10. But certain fathers of families will say: I do not labour so much for myself as for my children, whom I wish to leave in comfortable circumstances. But I answer: If you dissipate the goods which you possess, and leave your children in poverty, you do wrong, and are guilty of sin. But will you lose your soul in order to leave your children comfortable? If you fall into hell, perhaps they will come and release you from it? O folly! Listen to what David said: “I have not seen the just man forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread.” (Ps. 36:25.) Attend to the service of God; act according to justice; the Lord will provide for the wants of your children; and you shall save your souls, and shall lay up that eternal treasure of happiness which can never be taken from you—a treasure not like earthly possessions, of which you may be deprived by robbers, and which you shall certainly lose at death. This is the advice which the Lord gives you: “But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” (Matt. 6:20.) In conclusion, attend to the beautiful admonition which St. Gregory gives to all who wish to live well and to gain eternal life. “Sit nobis in intentione æternitas, in usu temporalitas.” Let the end of all our actions in this life be, the acquisition of eternal goods; and let us use temporal things only to preserve life for the little time we have to remain on this earth. The saint continues: “Sicut nulla est proportio inter æternitatem et nostiæ vitæ tempus, ita nulla debet esse proportio inter æternitatis, et hujus, vitæ curas.” As there is an infinite distance between eternity and the time of our life, so there ought to be, according to our mode of understanding, an infinite distance between the attention which we should pay to the goods of eternity, which shall be enjoyed for ever, and the care we take of the goods of this life, which death shall soon take away from us.

Sermon XLIV

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE PRACTICAL DEATH, OR ON WHAT ORDINARILY HAPPENS AT THE DEATH OF MEN OF THE WORLD

“Behold, a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother.”—LUKE 7:12.

IT is related in this day’s gospel that, going to the city of Naim, Jesus Christ met a dead man, the only son of his mother, who was carried out to be buried. “Behold, a dead man was carried out.” Before we proceed further, let us stop at these words and remember death. The holy Church directs her ministers to say to Christians every year, on Ash Wednesday: “Memento homo quia pulvis es, et in pulverum reverteris.” Remember man, thou art but dust, and into dust thou shalt return. Oh! would to God that men had death always before their eyes; if they had, they certainly should not lead such bad lives. Now, beloved brethren, that the remembrance of death may be impressed upon you, I will this day place before your eyes the practical death, or a description of what ordinarily happens at the death of men of the world, and of all the circumstances attending it. Hence we shall consider, in the first point, what happens at the time of the last illness: in the second point, what happens when the last sacraments are received; and, in the third, what happens at the time of death.

FIRST POINT. WHAT HAPPENS AT THE TIME OF THE LAST ILLNESS.

1. I do not intend in this discourse to speak of a sinner who had always lived in habitual sin; but of a worldling, who is careless about his salvation, and always entangled in the affairs of the world, in contracts, enmities, courtships, and gaming. He has frequently fallen into mortal sins, and after a considerable time has confessed them. In a word, he has been a relapsing sinner, and has generally lived in enmity with God, or, at least, has been

generally perplexed with grievous doubts of conscience. Let us consider the death of such persons, and what ordinarily happens at their death.

2. Let us commence at the time at which his last illness appears. He rises in the morning, he goes out to look after his temporal affairs; but while he is engaged in business, he is assailed by a violent pain in the head, his legs totter, he feels a cold shivering, which runs through every member, a sickness of the stomach, and great debility over the whole body. He immediately returns home and throws himself on the bed. His relatives, his wife and sisters, run to him, and say: “Why have you retired so early? Are you unwell?” He answers: “I feel sick. I am scarcely able to stand; I have a great head-ache.” “Perhaps,” they say, “you have got a fever.” “It must be so,” he replies, “send for a physician.” The physician is immediately sent for. In the meantime the sick man is put to bed, and there he is seized with a cold fit, which makes him shiver from head to foot. He is loaded with covering, but the cold continues for an hour or two, and is succeeded by a burning heat. The physician arrives, asks the sick man how he feels; he examines the pulse, and find he has a severe attack of fever. But, not to alarm him, the physician says: You have fever: but it is trifling. Have you given any occasion to it? The sick man replies: I went out by night a few days ago, and caught cold; or, I dined with a friend, and indulged my appetite to excess. It is worth nothing, the physician says: it is a fulness of stomach, or more probably one of these attacks which occur at the change of season. Eat nothing to-day: take a cup of tea; be not uneasy; be cheerful; there is no danger. I will see you tomorrow. Oh! that there was an angel, who, on the part of God, would say to the physician: What do you say? Do you tell me that there is no danger in this disease? Ah! the trumpet of the divine justice has, by the first symptoms of his illness, given the signal of the death of this man: for him the time of God’s vengeance has already arrived.

3. The night comes, and the poor invalid gets no rest. The difficulty of breathing and headache increase. The night appears to him a thousand years. The light scarcely dawns when he calls for some of the family. His relatives come, and say to him: Have you rested well? Ah! I have not been able to close my eyes during the entire night. O God! how much do I feel oppressed! Oh! how violent are the spasms in my head! I feel my temples pierced by two nails. Send immediately for the physician; tell him to come

as soon as possible. The physician comes, and finds the fever increased; but still he continues to say: “Have courage; there is no danger. The disease must take its course. The fever which accompanies it will make it disappear.” He comes the third day, and finds the sick man worse. He comes on the fourth day, and symptoms of malignant fever appear. The taste on the mouth is disagreeable; the tongue is black; every part of the body is restless; and delirium has commenced. The physician, finding that the fever is acute, prescribes purging, bloodletting, and iced water. He says to the relatives: Ah! the sickness is most severe; I do not wish to be alone. Let other physicians be called in, that we may have a consultation. This he says in secret to the relatives, but not to the sick man—on the contrary, not to frighten him, he continues to say: “Be cheerful; there is no danger.”

4. Thus, they speak of remedies, of more physicians, and of a consultation; but not a word about confession or the last sacraments. I know not how such physicians can be saved. Where the Bull of Pope Pius the Fifth is in force, they expressly swear, when they receive the diploma, that, after the third day of his illness, they will pay no more visits to any sick man until he has made his confession. But some physicians do not observe this oath, and thus so many poor souls are damned. For, when a sick man has lost his reason, of what use is confession to him? He is lost. Brethren, when you fall sick, do not wait till the physician tells you to send for a confessor; send for him of your own accord; for physicians, through fear of displeasing a patient, do not warn him of his danger until they despair, or nearly despair of his recovery. Thus, brethren, send first for your confessor—call first for the physician of the soul, and afterwards for the physician of the body. Your soul is at stake, eternity is at stake; if you err then you have erred for ever; your mistake shall be for ever irreparable.

5. The physician, then, conceals from the sick man his danger; his relatives do what is still worse—they deceive him by lies. They tell him that he is better, and that the physicians give strong hopes of his recovery. O treacherous relatives! O barbarous relatives, who are the worst of enemies! Instead of warning the sick man of his danger (as is their duty, particularly if they are parents, children, or brothers), that he may settle the accounts of his soul, they flatter him, they deceive him, and cause him to die in the state of damnation. But, from the pains, oppression, and restlessness which he feels, from the studied silence of friends who visit him, and from the tears

which he sees in the eyes of his relatives, the poor invalid perceives that his disease is mortal. Alas! he says, the hour of death is come; but, through fear of giving me annoyance, they do not warn me of it.

6. No; his relatives do not let him know that he is in danger of death; but because they attend to their own interest, about which they are more solicitous than they are about anything else, they bring in a scrivener, in the hope that the dying man will leave them a large portion of his property. The scrivener arrives. Who is this? asks the sick man. The relatives answer: He is a scrivener. Perhaps, for your own satisfaction, you would like to make your will. Then is my sickness mortal? Am I near my end? No, father, or brother, they say: we know that there is no necessity for making a will; but you must one day make it, and it would be better to do it now, while you have the full use of all your faculties. Very well, he replies; since the scrivener is come, and since you wish me to do it, I will make my last will. The scrivener first asks the sick man in what church he wishes to be buried, in case he should die. Oh! what a painful question! After choosing the place of his interment, he begins to dispose of all his goods. I bequeath such an estate or farm to my children; such a house to my brother; such a sum of money to a friend; and such an article of furniture to an acquaintance. O miserable man, what have you done? You have submitted to so much fatigue, you have burthened your conscience with so many sins, in order to acquire these goods; and now you leave them for ever, and bequeath them to such and such persons. But there is no remedy; when death comes we must leave all things. This separation from all worldly possessions is very painful to the sick man, whose heart was attached to his property, his house, his garden, his money, and his amusements. Death comes, gives the stroke, and separates the heart from all the objects of its love. This stroke tortures the sick man with excruciating pain. Ah, brethren! let us detach our hearts from the things of this world before death separates us from them with so much pain, and with such great danger to our salvation.

SECOND POINT. WHAT HAPPENS AT THE TIME IN WHICH THE SACRAMENTS ARE RECEIVED.

7. Behold! the dying man has made his will. After the eighth or tenth day of his illness, seeing that he is daily growing worse, and that he is near his end,

one of his relatives asks: “When shall we send for his confessor? He has been a man of the world. We know that he has not been a saint.” They all agree that the confessor should be sent for; but all refuse to speak to the sick man on the subject. Hence they send for the parish priest, or for some other confessor, to make known to the dying man his danger, and the necessity of receiving the last sacraments. But this is done only when he has nearly lost the use of his faculties. The confessor comes; he inquires from the family about the state of the sick man, and the sort of life which he led. He finds that he has been careless about the duties of religion, and, from the circumstances which he hears, he trembles for the salvation of the poor soul. Understanding that the dying man has but a short time to live, the confessor, first of all, orders the relatives to leave the room, and to return to it no more. He then approaches and salutes the sick man. The latter asks: Who are you? I am, replies the confessor, the parish priest, Father Such-a-one. Do you wish me to do anything for you? Having heard that you had a severe attack of illness, I have come to reconcile you with your Creator. Father, I am obliged to you; but I beg of you for the present to let me take a little rest; for I have got no sleep for several nights, and I am scarcely able to speak. Recommend me to God.

8. Knowing the dangerous state of the soul and body of the sick man, the confessor says: We hope that the Lord and the most holy Virgin will deliver you from this illness; but, sooner or later, you must die. Your illness is very severe. You would do well to make your confession, and to adjust the affairs of your soul. Perhaps you have scruples of conscience. I have come on purpose to calm the troubles of your mind. Father, I should have to make a long confession; for my conscience is perplexed and burdened with sin. At present I am not able to do it. I feel a lightness in my head, and I can scarcely breathe. Father, we will see about it to-morrow, at present I am not able. But who knows what may happen? Some attack may come on, which will not leave you time to make your confession. Father, do not torment me any longer. I have said that I am not able; it is impossible for me to do it. But the confessor, who knows that there is no hope of recovery, feels himself obliged to speak more plainly, and says: I think it is my duty to inform you that your life is about to close. I entreat you to make your confession: for, perhaps, to-morrow you shall be dead. Why, father, do you say so? Because, replies the confessor, so the physicians have said. The

poor dying man then begins to rage against the physicians, and against his friends. Ah! the traitors have deceived me. They knew my danger, and have not informed me of it. Ah! unhappy me! The confessor rejoins, and says: Be not alarmed at the difficulties of making your confession: it is enough to mention the most grievous sins which you remember. I will assist you. Be not afraid. Begin at once to tell your sins. The dying man forces himself to commence his confession; but his mind is all confusion; he knows not where to begin; he tries to tell his sins, but is not able to explain himself. He feels but little, and understands still less, what the confessor says to him. O God! At such a time, and in such a state, worldlings are obliged to attend to the most important of all affairs—the affair of eternal salvation! The confessor hears, perhaps, many sins, bad habits, injuries done to the property and character of others, confessions made with little sorrow and with little purpose of amendment. He assists the dying man as well as he can, and, after a short exhortation, tells him to make an act of contrition. But, God grant that he may not be as insensible to sorrow as the sick man who was attended by Cardinal Bellarmine. When the Cardinal exhorted him to make an act of contrition, he said: Father, do not trouble yourself; these things are too high for me; I do not understand them. In the end, the confessor absolves the dying man; but who knows if God absolves him?

9. After giving him absolution, the confessor says: Prepare yourself, now, to receive Jesus Christ for your *viaticum*. It is now, replies the sick man, four or five hours after night; I will communicate in the morning. No: perhaps in the morning time shall be no more for you; you must at present receive the viaticum and extreme unction. Ah, unhappy me! the dying man says; am I then at the point of death? He has reason to say so; for the practice of some physicians is, to put off the viaticum till the patient is near his last, and till he has lost, or nearly lost, his senses. This is a common delusion. According to the common opinion of theologians, the viaticum ought always to be administered when there is danger of death. It would be useful here to observe, that Benedict the Fourteenth, in his fifty-third Bull (in Euchol. Græc., §. 46, ap. Bullar, tom. 4), says, that extreme unction may be given whenever the sick man "labours under a grievous illness." Hence, whenever the sick can receive the viaticum, they can also receive the sacrament of extreme unction. It is not necessary to wait, as some

physicians recommend, till they are near the agony, or till they lose their senses.

10. Behold! the viaticum arrives, the sick man hears the bell. Oh! how he trembles! The trembling and terror increase when he sees the priest coming into the room with the holy sacrament, and when he beholds around his bed the torches of those who assisted at the procession. The priest recites the words of the ritual: “Accipe frater viaticum corporis Domini nostri Jesu Christi qui te custodiat ab hoste maligno, et perducat in vitam æternum. Amen.” Brother, receive the viaticum of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he may preserve you from the wicked enemy, and that he may bring you to eternal life. He receives the consecrated host upon his tongue: the priest then gives him a little water to enable him to swallow it; for his throat is dry and parched.

11. The priest afterwards gives the extreme unction; and begins by anointing the eyes while he says the following words: “Per istam sanctam unctionem, et suam piissimam misericordiam, indulgeat tibi Deus, quidquid per visum deliquisti.” He then anoints the other senses—the ears, the nostrils, the mouth, the hands, the feet, and the loins, saying: “Quidquid per aditum deliquisti per odoratum, per gustum et locutionem, per tactum, per gressum, et lumborum delectationem.” And, during the administration of the extreme unction, the devil is employed in reminding the sick man of all the sins he committed by the senses—by the eyes, the ears, the tongue, the hands; and says to him: After so many sins can you expect to be saved? Oh! what terror is then caused by every one of those mortal sins, which are now called human frailties, and which, worldlings say, God will not punish! Now they are disregarded; but then every mortal sin shall be a sword that will pierce the soul with terror. But let us come to what happens at death.

THIRD POINT. WHAT HAPPENS AT THE TIME OF DEATH.

12. After having administered the sacraments the priest departs, and leaves the dying man alone. He feels more terror and alarm after the sacraments than before he received them; for he knows that his entire preparation for them was made in the midst of great confusion of mind and great uneasiness of conscience. But the signs of approaching death appear: the sick man falls into a cold sweat; the sight grows dim, and he no longer

knows the persons that attend him: he has lost his speech, and can scarcely breathe. In the midst of this darkness of death he continues to say: “Oh! that I had time, that I had another day, with the use of my faculties, to make a good confession!” For, the unhappy man has great doubts about the confession which he has made: he feels that he was not able to excite himself to make a true act of sorrow. But, what time? what day? “Time shall be no longer.” (Apoc. 10:6.) The confessor has the book open to announce to him his departure from this world. “Profiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo.” Depart, Christian soul, from this world. The dying man continues to say within himself: “O lost years of my life! O fool that I have been!” But when does he say this? When the scene is about to close for him; when the oil in the lamp is just consumed; and when the great moment has arrived on which his eternal happiness or misery depends.

13. But behold! his eyes are petrified; his body takes the posture of a corpse; the extremities, the hands and feet, have become cold. The agony commences; the priest begins to recite the prayers for the recommendation of a departing soul. After having read the *recommendation,* he feels the pulse of the dying man, and feels that it has ceased to beat. *Light,* he says, *immediately the blessed candle.* O candle! O candle! show us light, now that we have health; for, at the hour of death, thy light shall serve only to terrify us the more. But already the breathing of the sick man is not so frequent; it has begun to fail. This is a sign that death is very near. The assisting priest raises his voice, and says to the poor man in his agony: Say after me: O God, come to my aid; have mercy on me. My crucified Jesus, save me through thy passion. Mother of God, intercede for me. St. Joseph, St. Michael, the archangel, my holy angel-guardian, and all ye saints in Paradise, pray to God for me. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus and Mary, I give you my heart and my soul. But behold the last signs of death; the phlegm is confined in the throat; the dying man sends forth feeble moans; the tears rush from his eyes; finally he twists the mouth, he distorts the eyes, he makes a few pauses, and at the last opening of the mouth, he expires and dies.

14. The priest then brings a candle to the mouth of the dead man, to try if he be still alive: he sees that the flame is not moved, and thence infers that life is extinct. He says: Requiescat in pace. May he rest in peace. And turning to the bystanders, announces that he is dead. “I hope,” he adds, “he

is gone to heaven.” He is dead, and how has he died? No one knows whether he is saved or damned; but he has died in a great tempest. Such is the death of those unfortunate men who, during life, have cared little about God. “Their souls shall die in a storm.” (Job 36:14.) Of every one that dies it is usual to say that “he is gone to heaven.” He is gone to heaven if he deserved heaven; but, if he merited hell, he has gone to hell. Do all go to heaven? Oh! how few enter into that abode of bliss!

15. Before the body is cold he is covered with a worn out garment; because it must soon rot with him in the grave. Two lighted candles are placed in the chamber; the curtain of the bed on which the dead man lies is let down, and he is left alone. The parish priest is sent for, and requested to come in the morning and take away the corpse. The priest comes; the deceased is carried to the church; and this is his last journey on this earth. The priests begin to sing the “De profundis clamavi ad te Domine,” etc. The spectators, who look at the funeral as it passes, speak of the deceased. One says: “He was a proud man.” Another: “Oh! that he had died ten years ago!” A third: “He was fortunate in the world; he made a great deal of money! he had a fine house, but now he takes nothing with him.” And while they speak of him in this manner he is burning in hell. He arrives at the church, and is placed in the middle, surrounded by six candles. The bystanders look at him, but suddenly turn away their eyes, because his appearance excites horror. The Mass is sung for his repose, and after Mass, the “*Libera;*” and the function is concluded with these words: *Requiescat in pace*—May he rest in peace. May he rest in peace, if he died in peace with God; but, if he has died in enmity with God, what peace—what peace can he enjoy? He shall have no peace as long as God shall be God. The sepulchre is then opened, the corpse is thrown into it; the grave is covered with a tombstone; and he is left there to rot and to be the food of worms. It is thus that the scene of this world ends for each of us. His relatives put on mourning; but they first divide among themselves the property which he has left. They shed an occasional tear for two or three days, and afterwards forget him. And what shall become of him? If he be saved, he shall be happy for ever; if damned, he must be miserable for eternity.

Sermon XLV

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON IMPURITY

“And behold, there was a certain man before him, who had the dropsy.”—LUKE 14:2.

THE man who indulges in impurity is like a person labouring under the dropsy. The latter is so much tormented by thirst, that the more he drinks the more thirsty he becomes. Such, too, is the nature of the accursed vice of impurity; it is never satiated. “As,” says St. Thomas of Villanova, “the more the dropsical man abounds in moisture, the more he thirsts; so, too, is it with the waves of eternal pleasures.” I will speak to-day of the vice of impurity, and will show, in the first point, the delusion of those who say that this vice is but a small evil; and, in the second, the delusion of those who say, that God takes pity on this sin, and that he does not punish it.

FIRST POINT. DELUSION OF THOSE WHO SAY THAT SINS AGAINST PURITY ARE NOT A GREAT EVIL.

1. The unchaste, then, say that sins contrary to purity are but a small evil. Like “the sow wallowing in the mire” (“Sus lota in volutabro luti”—2 Pet. 2:22), they are immersed in their own filth, so that they do not see the malice of their actions; and therefore they neither feel nor abhor the stench of their impurities, which excite disgust and horror in all others. Can you, who say that the vice of impurity is but a small evil—can you, I ask, deny that it is a mortal sin? If you deny it, you are a heretic; for as St. Paul says: “Do not err. Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, etc., shall possess the kingdom of God.” (1 Cor. 6:9.) It is a mortal sin; it cannot be a small evil. It is more sinful than theft, or detraction, or the violation of the fast. How then can you say that it is not a great evil? Perhaps mortal sin appears to you to be a small evil? Is it a small evil to despise the grace of

God, to turn your back upon him, and to lose his friendship, for a transitory, beastly pleasure?

2. St. Thomas teaches, that mortal sin, because it is an insult offered to an infinite God, contains a certain infinitude of malice. “A sin committed against God has a certain infinitude, on account of the infinitude of the Divine Majesty.” (S. Thom., 3 p., q. 1, art. 2, ad. 2.) Is mortal sin a small evil? It is so great an evil, that if all the angels and all the saints, the apostles, martyrs, and even the Mother of God, offered all their merits to atone for a single mortal sin, the oblation would not be sufficient. No; for that atonement or satisfaction would be finite; but the debt contracted by mortal sin is infinite, on account of the infinite Majesty of God which has been offended. The hatred which God bears to sins against purity is great beyond measure. If a lady find her plate soiled she is disgusted, and cannot eat. Now, with what disgust and indignation must God, who is purity itself, behold the filthy impurities by which his law is violated? He loves purity with an infinite love; and consequently he has an infinite hatred for the sensuality which the lewd, voluptuous man calls a small evil. Even the devils who held a high rank in heaven before their fall disdain to tempt men to sins of the flesh.

3. St. Thomas says (lib. 5, de Erud. Princ., c. li.), that Lucifer, who is supposed to have been the devil that tempted Jesus Christ in the desert, tempted him to commit other sins, but scorned to tempt him to offend against chastity. Is this sin a small evil? Is it, then, a small evil to see a man endowed with a rational soul, and enriched with so many divine graces, bring himself by the sin of impurity to the level of a brute? “Fornication and pleasure,” says St. Jerome, “pervert the understanding, and change men into beasts.” (In Oseam., c. iv.) In the voluptuous and unchaste are literally verified the words of David: “And man, when he was in honour, did not understand: he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them.” (Ps. 48:13.) St. Jerome says, that there is nothing more vile or degrading than to allow oneself to be conquered by the flesh. “Nihil vilius quam vinci a carne.” Is it a small evil to forget God, and to banish him from the soul, for the sake of giving the body a vile satisfaction, of which, when it is over, you feel ashamed? Of this the Lord complains by the Prophet Ezechiel: “Thus saith the Lord God: Because thou hast forgotten me, and has cast me off behind thy back” (23:35.) St. Thomas says, that by every

vice, but particularly by the vice of impurity, men are removed far from God. “Per luxuriant maxime recedit a Deo.” (In Job cap. 31.)

4. Moreover, sins of impurity, on account of their great number, are an immense evil. A blasphemer does not always blaspheme, but only when he is drunk or provoked to anger. The assassin, whose trade is to murder others, does not, at the most, commit more than eight or ten homicides. But the unchaste are guilty of an unceasing torrent of sins, by thoughts, by words, by looks, by complacencies, and by touches; so that, when they go to confession they find it impossible to tell the number of the sins they have committed against purity. Even in their sleep the devil represents to them obscene objects, that, on awakening, they may take delight in them; and because they are made the slaves of the enemy, they obey and consent to his suggestions; for it is easy to contract a habit of this sin. To other sins, such as blasphemy, detraction, and murder, men are not prone; but to this vice nature inclines them. Hence St. Thomas says, that there is no sinner so ready to offend God as the votary of lust is, on every occasion that occurs to him. “Nullus ad Dei contemptum promptior.” The sin of impurity brings in its train the sins of defamation, of theft, hatred, and of boasting of its own filthy abominations. Besides, it ordinarily involves the malice of scandal. Other sins, such as blasphemy, perjury, and murder, excite horror in those who witness them; but this sin excites and draws others, who are flesh, to commit it, or, at least, to commit it with less horror.

5. “Totum hominem,” says St. Cyprian, “agit in triumphum libidinis.” (Lib. de bono pudic.) By lust the evil triumphs over the entire man, over his body and over his soul; over his memory, filling it with the remembrance of unchaste delights, in order to make him take complacency in them; over his intellect, to make him desire occasions of committing sin; over the will, by making it love its impurities as his last end, and as if there were no God. “I made,” said Job, a covenant with my eyes, that I would not so much as think upon a virgin. For what part should God from above have in me?” (31:1, 2.) Job was afraid to look at a virgin, because he knew that if he consented to a bad thought God should have no part in him. According to St. Gregory, from impurity arises blindness of understanding, destruction, hatred of God, and despair of eternal life. “De luxuria cœcitas mentis præcipitatio, odium Dei, desperatio futuri sæculi gencrantur.” (S. Greg., Mor., lib. 13.) St. Augustine says, though the unchaste may grow old, the

vice of impurity does not grow old in them. Hence St. Thomas says, that there is no sin in which the devil delights so much as in this sin; because there is no other sin to which nature clings with so much tenacity. To the vice of impurity it adheres so firmly, that the appetite for carnal pleasures becomes insatiable. “Diabolus dicitur gaudere maxime de peccato luxuriæ, quia est maximæ adhœrentiæ: et difficile ab eo homo eripi potest; insatiabilis est enim delectabilis appetitus.” (12, qu. 73, a. 5, ad. 2.) Go now, and say that the sin of impurity is but a small evil. At the hour of death you shall not say so; every sin of that kind shall then appear to you a monster of hell. Much less shall you say so before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, who will tell you what the Apostle has already told you: “No fornicator, or unclean, hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.” (Eph. 5:5.) The man who has lived like a brnte does not deserve to sit with the angels.

6. Most beloved brethren, let us continue to pray to God to deliver us from this vice: if we do not, we shall lose our souls. The sin of impurity brings with it blindness and obstinacy. Every vice produces darkness of understanding; but impurity produces it in a greater degree than all other sins. “Fornication, and wine, and drunkenness take away the understanding.” (Osee 4:11.) Wine deprives us of understanding and reason; so does impurity. Hence St. Thomas says, that the man who indulges in unchaste pleasures, does not live according to reason. “In nullo procedit secundum judicium rationis.” Now, if the unchaste are deprived of light, and no longer see the evil which they do, how can they abhor it and amend their lives? The Prophet Osee says, that being blinded by their own mire, they do not even think of returning to God; because their impurities take away from them all knowledge of God. “They will not set their thought to return to their God; for the spirit of fornication is in the midst of them, and they have not known the Lord.” (Osee 5:4.) Hence St. Lawrence Justinian writes, that this sin makes men forget God. “Delights of the flesh induced forgetfulness of God.” And St. John Damascene teaches that “the carnal man cannot look at the light of truth.” Thus, the lewd and voluptuous no longer understand what is meant by the grace of God, by judgment, hell, and eternity. “Fire hath fallen upon them, and they shall not see the sun.” (Ps. 57:9.) Some of these blind miscreants go so far as to say, that fornication is not in itself sinful. They say, that it was not forbidden in the Old Law; and in support of this execrable doctrine they adduce the words of

the Lord to Osee: “Go, take thee a wife of fornication, and have of her children of fornication.” (Osee 1:2.) In answer I say, that God did not permit Osee to commit fornication; but wished him to take for his wife a woman who had been guilty of fornication: and the children of this marriage were called children of fornication, because the mother had been guilty of that crime. This is, according to St. Jerome, the meaning of the words of the Lord to Osee. “Idcirco,” says the holy doctor, “Fornicationis appelandi sunt filii, quod sunt de meretrice generati.” But fornication was always forbidden, under pain of mortal sin, in the Old, as well as in the New Law. St. Paul says: “No fornicator or unclean, hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” (Eph. 5:5.) Behold the impiety to which the blindness of such sinners carry them! From this blindness it arises, that though they go to the sacraments, their confessions are null for want of true contrition; for how is it possible for them to have true sorrow, when they neither know nor abhor their sins?

7. The vice of impurity also brings with it obstinacy. To conquer temptations, particularly against chastity, continual prayer is necessary. “Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” (Mark 14:38.) But how will the unchaste, who are always seeking to be tempted, pray to God to deliver them from temptation? They sometimes, as St. Augustine confessed of himself, even abstain from prayer, through fear of being heard and cured of the disease, which they wish to continue. “I feared,” said the saint, “that you would soon hear and heal the disease of concupiscence, which I wished to be satiated, rather than extinguished.” (Conf., lib. 8, cap. vii.) St. Peter calls this vice an unceasing sin. “Having eyes full of adultery and sin that ceaseth not.” (2 Pet. 2:14.) Impurity is called an unceasing sin on account of the obstinacy which it induces. Some person addicted to this vice says: *I always confess the sin.* So much the worse; for since you always relapse into sin, these confessions serve to make you persevere in the sin. The fear of punishment is diminished by saying: *I always confess the sin.* If you felt that this sin certainly merits hell, you would scarcely say: I will not give it up; I do not care if I am damned. But the devil deceives you. Commit this sin, he says; for you afterwards confess it. But, to make a good confession of your sins, you must have true sorrow of the heart, and a firm purpose to sin no more. Where are this sorrow and this firm purpose of amendment, when you always return to the vomit? If you had had these

dispositions, and had received sanctifying grace at your confessions, you should not have relapsed, or at least you should have abstained for a considerable time from relapsing. You have always fallen back into sin in eight or ten days, and perhaps in a shorter time, after confession. What sign is this? It is a sign that you were always in enmity with God. If a sick man instantly vomits the medicine which he takes, it is a sign that his disease is incurable.

8. St. Jerome says, that the vice of impurity, when habitual, will cease when the unhappy man who indulges in it is cast into the fire of hell. “O infernal fire, lust, whose fuel is gluttony, whose sparks are brief conversations, whose end is hell.” The unchaste become like the vulture that waits to be killed by the fowler, rather than abandon the rottenness of the dead bodies on which it feeds. This is what happened to a young female, who, after having lived in the habit of sin with a young man, fell sick, and appeared to be converted. At the hour of death she asked leave of her confessor to send for the young man, in order to exhort him to change his life at the sight of her death. The confessor very imprudently gave the permission, and taught her what she should say to her accomplice in sin. But listen to what happened. As soon as she saw him, she forgot her promise to the confessor and the exhortation she was to give to the young man. And what did she do? She raised herself up, sat in bed, stretched her arms to him, and said: Friend, I have always loved you, and even now, at the end of my life, I love you: I see that, on your account, I shall go to hell: but I do not care: I am willing, for the love of you, to be damned. After these words she fell back on the bed and expired. These facts are related by Father Segneri (Christ. Istr. Rag., xxiv, n. 10.) Oh! how difficult is it for a person who has contracted a habit of this vice, to amend his life and return sincerely to God! how difficult is it for him not to terminate this habit in hell, like the unfortunate young woman of whom I have just spoken.

SECOND POINT. ILLUSION OF THOSE WHO SAY THAT GOD TAKES PITY ON THIS SIN.

9. The votaries of lust say that God takes pity on this sin; but such is not the language of St. Thomas of Villanova. He says, that in the sacred Scriptures we do not read of any sin so severely chastised as the sin of impurity. “Luxuriæ facinus præ aliis punitum legimus.” (Serm. iv., Dom. 1, Quadrag.)

We find in the Scriptures, that in punishment of this sin, a deluge of fire descended from heaven on four cities, and, in an instant, consumed not only the inhabitants, but even the very stones. “And the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he destroyed these cities, and all things that spring from the earth.” (Gen. 19:24.) St. Peter Damian relates, that a man and a woman who had sinned against impurity, were found burnt and black as a cinder.

10. Salvian writes, that it was in punishment of the sin of impurity that God sent on the earth the universal deluge, which was caused by continued rain for forty days and forty nights. In this deluge the waters rose fifteen cubits above the tops of the highest mountains; and only eight persons along with Noah were saved in the ark. The rest of the inhabitants of the earth, who were more numerous then than at present, were punished with death in chastisement of the vice of impurity. Mark the words of the Lord in speaking of this chastisement which he inflicted on that sin: “My spirit shall not remain in man for ever; because he is flesh.” (Gen. 6:3.) “That is,” says Liranus, “too deeply involved in carnal sins.” The Lord added: “For it repenteth me that I made man.” (Gen. 7:7.) The indignation of God is not like ours, which clouds the mind, and drives us into excesses: his wrath is a judgment perfectly just and tranquil, by which God punishes and repairs the disorders of sin. But to make us understand the intensity of his hatred for the sin of impurity, he represents himself as if sorry for having created man, who offended him so grievously by this vice. We, at the present day, see more severe temporal punishment inflicted on this than on any other sin. Go into the hospitals, and listen to the shrieks of so many young men, who, in punishment of their impurities, are obliged to submit to the severest treatment and to the most painful operations, and who, if they escape death, are, according to the divine threat, feeble, and subject to the most excruciating pain for the remainder of their lives. “Thou—hast cast me off behind thy back; bear thou also thy wickedness and thy fornications.” (Ezec. 23:35.)

11. St. Remigius writes that, if children be excepted, the number of adults that are saved is few, on account of the sins of the flesh. “Exceptis parvulis ex adultis propter vitiam carnis pauci salvantur.” (Apud S. Cypr. de bono pudic.) In conformity with this doctrine, it was revealed to a holy soul, that as pride has filled hell with devils, so impurity fills it with men. (Col., disp.

ix, ex. 192.) St. Isidore assigns the reason. He says that there is no vice which so much enslaves men to the devil as impurity. “Magis per luxuriam, humanum genus subditur diabolo, quam per aliquod aliud.” (S. Isid., lib. 2, c. xxxix.) Hence, St. Augustine says, that with regard to this sin, “the combat is common and the victory rare.” Hence it is, that on account of this sin hell is filled with souls.

12. All that I have said on this subject has been said, not that any one present, who has been addicted to the vice of impurity, may be driven to despair, but that such persons may be cured. Let us, then, come to the remedies. These are two great remedies—prayer, and the flight of dangerous occasions. Prayer, says St. Gregory of Nyssa, is the safeguard of chastity. “Oratio pudicitiæ præsidium et tutamen est.” (De Orat.) And before him, Solomon, speaking of himself, said the same. “And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it . . . I went to the Lord, and besought him.” (Wis. 8:21.) Thus, it is impossible for us to conquer this vice without God’s assistance. Hence, as soon as temptation against chastity presents itself, the remedy is, to turn instantly to God for help, and to repeat several times the most holy names of Jesus and Mary, which have a special virtue to banish bad thoughts of that kind. I have said immediately, without listening to, or beginning to argue with the temptation. When a bad thought occurs to the mind, it is necessary to shake it off instantly, as you would a spark that flies from the fire, and instantly to invoke aid from Jesus and Mary.

13. As to the flight of dangerous occasions, St. Philip Neri used to say that cowards—that is, they who fly from the occasions—gain the victory. Hence you must, in the first place, keep a restraint on the eyes, and must abstain from looking at young females. Otherwise, says St. Thomas, you can scarcely avoid the sin. “Luxuria vitari vix protest nisi vitatur aspectus mulieris pulchræ.” (S. Thom. 1, 2, qu. 167, a. 2.) Hence Job said: “I made a covenant with my eyes, that I would not so much as think upon a virgin” (31:1). He was afraid to look at a virgin; because from looks it is easy to pass to desires, and from desires to acts. St. Francis de Sales used to say, that to look at a woman does not do so much evil as to look at her a second time. If the devil has not gained a victory the first, he will gain the second time. And if it be necessary to abstain from looking at females, it is much more necessary to avoid conversation with them.” “Tarry not among

women.” (Eccl. 42:12.) We should be persuaded that, in avoiding occasions of this sin, no caution can be too great. Hence we must be always fearful, and fly from them. “A wise man feareth and declineth from evil; a fool is confident.” (Prov. 14:16.) A wise man is timid, and flies away; a fool is confident, and falls.

Sermon XLVI

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE LOVE OF GOD

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.”—MATT. 22:37.

“BUT one thing is necessary.” (Luke 10:42.) What is this one thing necessary? It is not necessary to acquire riches, nor to obtain dignities, nor to gain a great name. The only thing necessary is to love God. Whatever is not done for the love of God is lost. This is the greatest and the first commandment of the divine law. To the Pharisee who asked what is the greatest commandment of the law, Jesus Christ answered: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart. . . . This is the greatest and first commandment.” (Matt. 22:37, 38.) But this, which is the greatest of the commandments, is the most despised by men: there are few who fulfil it. The greater part of men love their relatives, their friends, and even brute animals, but do not love God. Of these St. John says that they have not life—that they are dead. “He that loveth not, abideth in death.” (1 John 3:14.) St. Bernard writes, that the reward of a soul is estimated by the measure of her love for God. “Quantitas animæ æstimatur de mensura charitatis quam habet.” (Serm. xxvii., in Cant.) Let us consider to-day, in the first point, how dear this command of loving God with our whole heart ought to be to us; and, in the second, what we ought to do in order to love God with our whole heart.

FIRST POINT. HOW DEAR THIS COMMAND OF LOVING GOD WITH OUR WHOLE HEART OUGHT TO BE TO US.

1. What object more noble, more magnificent, more powerful, more rich, more beautiful, more bountiful, more merciful, more grateful, more amiable, or more loving, than himself, could God give us to love? Who

more noble than God? Some boast of the nobility of their family for five hundred or a thousand years; but the nobility of God is eternal. He is the Lord of all. Before God all the angels in heaven or all the nobles on earth are but as a drop of water or a grain of dust. “Behold the Gentiles are as a drop of a bucket—behold the islands are as a little dust.” (Isa. 40:15.) Who more powerful than God? He can do whatsoever he wills. By an act of his will he has created this world, and by another act he can destroy it when he pleases. Who more wealthy? He possesses all the riches of heaven and earth. Who more beautiful? Before the beauty of God all the beauties of creatures disappear. Who more bountiful? St. Augustine says, that God has a greater desire to do good to us than we have to receive it. Who more merciful? If the most impious sinner on earth humble himself before God, and repent of his sins, God instantly pardons and embraces him. Who more grateful? He does not leave unrewarded the smallest act we perform for his sake. Who more amiable? God is so amiable that, by barely seeing and loving him in heaven, the saints feel a joy which makes them perfectly happy and content for all eternity. The greatest of the torments of the damned arise from knowing that this God is so amiable, and that they cannot love him.

2. Finally, who more loving than God? In the Old Law, men might doubt whether God loved them with a tender love; but, after seeing him die on a cross for us, how can we doubt of the tenderness and the ardent affection with which he loves us? Let us raise our eyes and look at Jesus, the true Son of God, fastened with nails to a gibbet, and let us consider the intensity of the love which he bears us. The cross, the wounds, says St. Bernard, cry out, and proclaim to us that he truly loves us. “Clamat crux, clamat vulnus, quod ipse vere dilexit.” And what more could he do to convince us of his great love than to lead a life of sorrow for thirty-three years, and afterwards die in torments on the infamous tree of the cross, in order to wash away our sins with his own blood? “Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself up for us.” (Eph. 5:2.) “Who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” (Apoc. 1:5.) “How,” says St. Philip Neri, “is it possible for him who believes in God to love anything but God?” Contemplating God’s love towards men, St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi began one day to ring the bell, saying that she wished to invite all the nations of the earth to love so loving a God. St. Francis de Sales used to say

with tears: “To love our God it would be necessary to have an infinite love; and we throw away our love on vain, contemptible things.”

3. O! inestimable value of divine love, which makes us rich before God! It is the treasure by which we gain his friendship. “She is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.” (Wis. 7:14.) The only thing we ought to fear, says St. Gregory of Nyssa (de Vita Moysis), is the loss of God’s friendship; and the only object of our desires should be its attainment. “Unum terribile, arbitror, ab amicitia Dei repelli: unum solum expectibile, amicitia Dei.” It is love that obtains the friendship of God. Hence, according to St. Lawrence Justinian, by love the poor become rich, and without love the rich are poor. “No greater riches than to have charity. In charity the poor man is rich, and without charity the rich man is poor.” (S. Laur. Just. in Matt. 13:44.) How great is the joy which a person feels in thinking that he is loved by a man of exalted rank! But how much greater must be the consolation which a soul derives from the conviction that God loves her! “I love them that love me.” (Prov. 8:17.) In a soul that loves God the Three Persons of the Adorable Trinity dwell. “If any one love me he will keep my word; and my Father will love him; and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him.” (John 14:23.) St. Bernard writes, that among all the virtues charity is the one that unites us to God. Charitas est virtus conjungens nos Deo.” St. Catherine of Bologna used to say, that love is the golden chain that binds the soul to God. St. Augustine says, that “love is a joint connecting the lover with the beloved.” Hence, were God not immense, where should he be found? Find a soul that loves God, and there God is certainly found. Of this St. John assures us. “He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him.” (1 John 4:16.) A poor man loves riches, but he does not therefore enjoy them; he may love a throne, but he does not therefore possess a kingdom. But the man that loves God possesses God. “He abideth in God, and God in him.”

4. Besides, St. Thomas says (Tr. de Virt., art. 3), that love draws in its train all other virtues, and directs them all to unite us more closely to God. Hence, because from charity all virtues are born, St. Lawrence Justinian called it *the mother of virtues*. Hence, St. Augustine used to say: “Love, and do what you wish.” He that loves God can only do what is good; if he does evil, he shows that he has ceased to love God. And when he ceases to love him, all things can profit him nothing. If, said the Apostle, I give all my

possessions to the poor, and my body to the flames, and have not charity, I am nothing. “And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Cor. 13:3.)

5. Love also prevents us from feeling the pains of this life. St. Bonaventure says, that the love of God is like honey; it sweetens things the most bitter. And what more sweet to a soul that loves God than to suffer for him? She knows that by cheerfully embracing sufferings she pleases God, and that her pains shall be the brightest jewels in her crown in Paradise. And who is there that will not willingly suffer and die in imitation of Jesus Christ, who has gone before us, carrying his cross, to offer himself in sacrifice for the love of us, and inviting us to follow his example? “If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me.” (Matt. 16:24.) For this purpose he has condescended to humble himself to death, and to the opprobrious death of the cross, for the love of us. “He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.” (Phil. 2:8.)

SECOND POINT. WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO IN ORDER TO LOVE GOD WITH OUR WHOLE HEART.

6. St. Teresa used to say, that in calling a soul to his love, God bestows upon her an exceedingly great favour. Since, then, most beloved brethren, God calls us all to his love, let us thank and love him with our whole heart. Because he loves us intensely, he wishes to be tenderly loved by us. “When,” says St. Bernard, “God loves, he desires nothing else than to be loved; for he loves only that he may be loved.” (Serm. 63, in Cant.) It was to inflame us with his divine love that the Eternal Word descended from heaven. So he himself has declared; adding, that he only desires to see this fire lighted up in our hearts. “I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?” (Luke 12:49.) Let us now see what means we ought to adopt in order to love God.

7. In the first place, we ought to guard against every sin, whether mortal or venial. “If,” says Jesus Christ, “any one love me, he will keep my word.” (John 14:23.) The first mark of love is to endeavour not to give the smallest displeasure to the beloved. How can he be said to love God with his whole

heart, who is not afraid to commit deliberate venial offences against God? St. Teresa used to say to her spiritual children: “From deliberate sin, however small, may God deliver you.” But some will say: Venial sin is a small evil. Is it a small evil to displease a God who is so good, and who loves us so tenderly?

8. In the second place, to love God with the whole heart, it is necessary to have a great desire to love him. Holy desires are the wings with which we fly to God; for, as St. Lawrence Justinian says, a good desire gives us strength to go forward, and lightens the labour of walking in the way of God. “Vires subministrat, pœnam exhibet leviorem.” According to the spiritual masters, he that does not advance in the way of the Lord goes back; but, on the other hand, God cheerfully gives himself to those who seek after him. “The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him.” (Lamen. 3:25.) He fills with his own good things all who desire him through love. “He hath filled the hungry with good things.” (Luke 1:53.)

9. In the third place, it is necessary to resolve courageously, to arrive at the perfect love of God. Some persons desire to belong entirely to God, but do not resolve to adopt the means. It is of them the Wise Man says, “Desires kill the soul.” (Prov. 21:25.) I would wish, they say, to become a saint; but still, with all their desires, they never advance a single step. St. Teresa used to say, that “of these irresolute souls the devil is never afraid.” Because, if they do not resolve sincerely to give themselves to God without reserve, they shall always continue in the same imperfections. But, on the other hand, the saint says, that God wishes only from us a true resolution to become saints; he himself will do the rest. If, then, we wish to love God with our whole heart, we must resolve to do without reserve what is most pleasing to him, and to begin at once to put our hands to the work. “Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly.” (Eccl. 9:10.) What you can do to-day do not put off till to-morrow; do it as soon as possible. A certain nun in the convent of Tori degli Speechi, in Rome, led a tepid life; but, being called by God, in a retreat, to his perfect love, she resolved to correspond immediately to the divine call, and said to her director, with a sincere resolution: “Father, I wish to become a saint, and to become one immediately.” And from that moment, with the aid of God’s grace, she lived and died a saint. We must, then, resolve to acquire the perfect love of God, and must immediately adopt the means of becoming saints.

10. The first means is, to detach the heart from all creatures, and to banish from the soul every affection which is not for God. The first question which the ancient fathers of the desert put to every one who sought admission into their society was: “Do you bring an empty heart, that the Holy Ghost may be able to fill it?” If the world be not expelled from the heart, God cannot enter it. St. Teresa used to say: “Detach the heart from creatures; seek God, and you shall find him.” St. Augustine writes, that the Romans worshipped thirty thousand gods; but, among these gods the Roman Senate refused to admit Jesus Christ. Because, said they, he is a proud God, who requires that he alone should be adored. This they had reason to say; for our God wishes to possess our whole souls. He is, as St. Jerome says, a jealous God. “Zelotypus est Jesus.” And therefore he will have no rival in the affections of our heart. Hence, the Spouse in the Canticles is called “an enclosed garden.” “My sister, my spouse is an enclosed garden.” (Cant. 4:12.) The soul, then, that wishes to belong entirely to God, must be shut against all love which is not for God.

11. Hence the Divine Spouse is said to be wounded by one of the eyes of his eyes. “Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy eyes.” (Cant. 4:9.) One of her eyes signifies, that in all her thoughts and actions the only end of the spouse is to please God; while, in their devout exercises, worldlings propose to themselves different objects—sometimes their own interest, sometimes to please their friends, and sometimes to please themselves. But the saints seek only to please God, to whom, they turn, and say: “What have I in heaven? and, besides thee, what do I desire upon earth? . . . Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever.” (Ps. 72:25, 26.) We should do the same if we wished to be saints. If, says St. Chrysostom, we do some things pleasing to God, what else but his pleasure do we seek? “Si dignus fueris agere aliquid, quod Deo placet, aliam præter id mercedem requiris?” (Lib. 2, de Compunct. Cord.) What greater reward can a creature obtain than to please its Creator? Hence, in all we desire or do, we should seek nothing but God. A certain solitary, called Zeno, walking through the desert, absorbed in thought, met the Emperor Macedonius going to hunt. The emperor asked him what he was doing. In answer, the solitary said: You go in quest of animals, and I seek God alone. St. Francis de Sales used to say, that the pure love of God consumes all that is not God.

12. Moreover, to love God with our whole heart, it is necessary to love him without reserve. Hence we must love him with a love of *preference.* We must prefer him before every other good, and must be resolved to lose a thousand lives, rather than forfeit his friendship. We must say with St. Paul: “Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God.” (Rom. 8:38, 39.) We must also love him with a love of *benevolence,* desiring to see him loved by all: and therefore, if we love God, we should seek as much as possible to kindle in others the fire of his love, or, at least, should pray for the conversion of all who do not love him. We must love him with a love of *sorrow,* regretting every offence offered to him more than every evil which we could suffer. We must love him with a love of *conformity to the divine will.* The principal office of love is to unite the will of lovers, and to make the soul say: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6.) Lord, tell me what thou dost wish from me; I desire to do it. I wish for nothing; I wish only what thou willest. Hence, we ought frequently to offer ourselves to God without reserve, that he may do with us, and with all we have, whatever he pleases. We must love God with a love of *patience.* This is that strong love by which true lovers are known. “Love is strong as death.” (Cant. 8:6.) “There is nothing too difficult,” says St. Augustine, “to be conquered by the fire of love.” (Lib. de Mor. Eccl., c. xxii.) For, adds the saint, in doing what we love, labour is not felt, or, if it be felt, the very labour is loved. “In eo quod amatur, aut non laboratur, aut labor amatur.”) St. Vincent of Paul used to say, that love is measured by the desire of the soul to suffer and be humbled, in order to please God. Let God be pleased, though it should cost us the loss of our life and of all things. To gain all, it is necessary to leave all. *All for all,* said Thomas a Kempis. The reason we do not become saints is, as St. Teresa says, because, as we do not give God all our affections, so he does not give us his perfect love. We must then say with the spouse in the Canticles: “My beloved to me, and I to him.” (Cant. 2:16.) My beloved has given himself entirely to me: it is but just that I give myself without reserve to him. St. John Chrysostom says, that when a soul has given herself entirely to God, she no longer cares for ignominies and sufferings; she loses the desire of all things; and not finding repose in any creature, she is always in search of her beloved; her sole concern is to find her beloved.

13. To obtain and to preserve divine love, three things are necessary: meditation, communion, and prayer. First, meditation is necessary. He who thinks but little on God, loves him but little. “In my meditation,” says David, “a fire shall flame out.” (Ps. 38:4.) Meditation, and particularly meditation on the passion of Jesus Christ, is the blessed furnace in which the love of God is kindled and fanned. “He brought me into the wine cellar; he set in order charity in me.” (Cant. 2:4.) The souls that are introduced into this heavenly cellar, by a single glance of Jesus Christ crucified and dying for the love of us, are wounded and inebriated with holy love. For St. Paul says, that Jesus Christ died for us all, that each of us may live only to love him. “And Christ died for all, that they also may not now live to themselves, but unto him who died for them.” (2 Cor. 5:15.) The communion is another holy furnace, in which we are inflamed with divine love. “The holy eucharist,” says St. Chrysostom, “is a fire which inflames us, that, like lions breathing fire, we may retire from the holy table, being made terrible to the devil.” (Hom. xli, ad Pop.) Above all, prayer (*the prayer of petition*) is necessary. It is by means of prayer that God dispenses all his favours, but particularly the great gift of divine love. To make us ask this love, meditation is a great help. Without meditation we shall ask little or nothing from God. We must, then, always, every day, and several times in the day, ask God to give us the grace to love him with our whole heart. St. Gregory says, that God wishes to be compelled and importuned by our petitions to bestow upon us his graces. “God wishes to be entreated—to be compelled: he wishes in a certain manner to be overcome by importunity.” Let us, then, continually ask of Jesus Christ his holy love; and let us ask his divine mother Mary, who is the treasurer of all his graces, to obtain it for us. *Thesauraria gratiarum* (*Idiota*). She is called by St. Bernardine, the dispensatrix of God’s graces. “All graces are dispensed through her hands.” It is through her intercession that we must obtain the great gift of divine love.

Sermon XLVII

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON BAD THOUGHTS

“And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts.”—MATT. 9:4.

IN the gospel of this day it is related that a paralytic was presented to Jesus Christ that he might heal him. The Lord healed not only his body, but also his soul, and said to him: “Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee” (*verse* 2). Some of the Scribes, as soon as they heard these words, said in their hearts: *He blasphemeth.* But our Saviour soon let them know that he saw their evil thoughts, saying: “Why do you think evil in your hearts.” Let us come to the subject of this discourse. God sees the most secret evil thoughts of our hearts; he sees and punishes them. Human judges forbid and chastise only external crimes; for men only see what appears externally. “Men seeth those things that appear; but the Lord beholdeth the heart.” (1 Kings 16:7.) God prohibits and punishes bad thoughts. We shall examine, in the first point, when bad thoughts are sinful; in the second, the great danger of bad thoughts when indulged; and in the third, the remedies against bad thoughts.

FIRST POINT. WHEN BAD THOUGHTS ARE SINFUL.

1. In two ways men err regarding bad thoughts. Some who have the fear of God, are scrupulous, and are afraid that every bad thought that presents itself to the mind is a sin. This is an error. It is not the bad thought, but the consent to it, that is sinful. All the malice of mortal sin consists in a bad will, in giving to a sin a perfect consent, with full advertence to the malice of the sin. Hence St. Augustine teaches, that where there is no consent there can be no sin. “Nullo modo sit peccatum, si non sit voluntarium.” (De Vera Rel., cap. xiv.) Though the temptation, the rebellion of the senses, or the

evil motion of the inferior parts, should be very violent, there is no sin, as long as there is no consent. “Non nocet sensus,” says St. Bernard, “ubi non est consensus.” (De Inter. Domo., cap. xix.)

2. Even the saints have been tormented by temptations. The devil labours harder to make the saints fall, than to make the wicked sin: he regards the saints as more valuable prey. The Prophet Habacuc says, that the saints are the dainty food of the enemy. “Through them his portion is made fat, and his meat dainty.” (Hab. 1:16.) And therefore, the prophet adds, that the evil one stretches out his net for all, to deprive them of the life of grace: and that he spares no one. “For this cause, therefore, he spreadeth out his net, and will not spare continually to slay the nations.” (Ibid., *v.* 17.) Even St. Paul, after he had been made a vessel of election, groaned under temptations against chastity. “There was,” said he, “given me a sting of the flesh, an angel of Satan to afflict me.” (2 Cor. 12:7.) He three times prayed to the Lord, to deliver him from these temptations; but in answer the Lord told him, that his grace was sufficient for him. “For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And he said: My grace is sufficient for thee.” (*ver.* 8, 9.) God permits even his servants to be tempted, as well to try their fidelity, as to purify them from their imperfections. And, for the consolation of timid and scrupulous souls, I will here state that, according to the common opinion of theologians, when a soul that fears God and hates sin is in doubt whether she gave consent to a bad thought, she is not bound, as long as she is not certain of having given consent, to confess it: for it is then morally certain that she has not consented to it. Had she really fallen into grevious sin she would have no doubt about it; for mortal sin is so horrible a monster, that it is impossible for him who fears God to admit it into the soul without his knowledge.

3. Others, who are not scrupulous, but are ignorant, and have lax consciences, think that evil thoughts, though wilfully indulged, are not mortal sins, unless the act is consummated. This is an error worse than the former. What we cannot lawfully do, we cannot lawfully desire. Hence it is, that a bad thought to which a person consents, has the same malice as the bad act. As sinful works separate us from God, so also do sinful thoughts. “Perverse thoughts separate us from God.” (Wis. 1:3.) And as all bad actions are known to God, so also he sees all evil thoughts, and will

condemn and punish them. “The Lord is a God of all knowledge, and to him are thoughts prepared.” (1 Kings 2:3.)

4. However, all bad thoughts are not equally sinful: nor have all those that are sinful equal malice. In a bad thought we may consider three things: the suggestion, the delectation, and the consent. The suggestion is the first bad thought that is presented to the mind: this is no sin, but, when rejected is an occasion of merit. “As often,” says St. Antonine, “as you resist, you are crowned.” The delectation takes place when the person stops, as it were, to look at the bad thought, which by its pleasing appearance, causes delight. Unless the will consents to it, this delectation is not a mortal sin; but it is a venial sin, and, if not resisted, the soul is in danger of consenting to it: but, when this danger is not proximate, the sin is only venial. But it is necessary to remark, that, when the thought which excites the delight is against chastity, we are, according to the common opinion of theologians, bound under pain of mortal sin to give a positive resistance to the delectation caused by the thought; because, if not resisted, the delight easily obtains the consent of the will. “Unless a person repel delectations,” says St. Anselm, “the delight passes to consent, and kills the soul.” (S. Ans. Simil., c. xl.) Hence, though a person should not consent to the sin, if he delight in the obscene object, and do not endeavour to resist the delectation, he is guilty of a mortal sin, by exposing himself to the proximate danger of consent. “How long shall hurtful thoughts abide in thee.” (Jer. 4:14.) Why, says the Prophet, do you allow hurtful thoughts to remain in the mind? Why do you not make an effort to banish them from the heart? God wishes us to watch over the heart with great care; because on the heart—that is, the will—our life depends. “With all watchfulness keep thy heart, because life issueth out from it.” (Prov. 4:23.) Finally, the consent, which is the cause of mortal sin, takes place when the person clearly knows that the object is mortally sinful, and embraces it perfectly with the will.

5. A person may sin grievously by thought in two ways; by desire, and by complacency. A person sins by desire when he wishes to do the bad act which he desires, or would wish to do it if he had the opportunity: the desire is a mortal or a venial sin, according as the act which he desires to do is mortally or venially sinful. However, in practice, the commission of the external act always increases the malice of the will, either because it ordinarily increases the complacency which the will indulges, or causes it to

continue for a longer time. Hence, if the act followed, it is necessary to mention it in confession. A person sins by complacency, when he does not desire to commit the sinful act, but delights in it as if he had committed it. This complacency is called *morose delectation.* It is called *morose,* not because the complacency in the thought of the unchaste acts lasts for a considerable time, but because the will dwells with delight on the thought. Hence, the sin of complacency may, as St. Thomas teaches, be committed in a moment. “Dicitur morosa,” says the holy doctor, “non ex mora temporis, sed ex eo quod ratio deliberans circa eam immoratur revolvens libenter quæ statim respui debuerent.” (1, 2, qu. 74, a 1 ad. 3.) He says “libenter” (wilfully) to remove scruples from persons of timorous conscience, who suffer against their will certain carnal motions and delights, although they do all in their power to banish them. Though the inferior part should feel a certain delight, as long as the will does not consent, there is no sin, at least no mortal sin. I repeat with St. Augustine, that what is not voluntary is by no means sinful. “Malum nullo modo sit peccatum, si non sit voluntarium.” (De Vera Rel., c. xiv.) In temptations against chastity, the spiritual masters advise us, not so much to contend with the bad thought, as to turn the mind to some spiritual, or, at least, indifferent object. It is useful to combat other bad thoughts face to face, but not thoughts of impurity.

SECOND POINT. THE GREAT DANGER OF BAD THOUGHTS.

6. It is necessary to guard with all possible caution against all bad thoughts, which are an abomination to God. “Evil thoughts are an abomination to the Lord.” (Prov. 15:26.) They are called “an abomination to the Lord,” because, as the holy Council of Trent says, bad thoughts, particularly thoughts against the ninth and tenth commandments, sometimes inflict on the soul a deeper wound, and are more dangerous than external acts. “Nonnunquam animam gravius sauciant, et periculosiora sunt iis quæ in manifesto admittuntur.” (Sess. 14, de Pæna, cap. v.) They are more dangerous on many accounts; first, because sins of thought are more easily committed than sins of action. The occasions of sinful acts are frequently wanting; but sins of thought are committed without the occasion. When a soul has turned her back on God, the heart is continually intent on evil,

which causes delight, and thus multiplies sins without number. “All the thought of their heart was bent upon evil at all times.” (Gen. 6:5.)

7. Secondly, at the hour of death sinful actions cannot be committed; but we may then be guilty of sins of thought; and he who has had a habit of consenting to bad thoughts during life, will be in danger of indulging them at death; for then the temptations of the devil are most violent, Knowing that he has but little time to gain the soul he makes great efforts to bring her into sin. “The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.” (Apoc. 12:12.) Being in danger of death, St. Eleazar, as Surius relates, was so severely tempted with bad thoughts, that, after his recovery, he said: “Oh! how great is the power of the devils at the hour of death!” The saint conquered the temptations, because he was accustomed to reject bad thoughts. But miserable the man that has contracted the habit of committing them. Father Segneri relates that a certain sinner indulged evil thoughts during life. At death he made a sincere confession of all his sins, and was truly sorry for them; but, after death, he appeared to a person and said he was damned. He stated, that his confession was valid, and that God had pardoned all his sins: that, before death, the devil represented to him, that should he recover from his illness, it would be an act of ingratitude to forsake a certain woman who had a great affection for him. He banished the first temptation: a second came, which he also rejected; but having continued to think on it for a little, he was tempted a third time, yielded to the temptation, and thus he was lost.

THIRD POINT. ON THE REMEDIES AGAINST BAD THOUGHTS.

8. The Prophet Isaias says, that to be freed from bad thoughts, we must take away the evil of our thoughts. “Take away the evil of our devices.” (Isa. 1:16.) What does he mean by taking away the evil of our devices? He means that we should take away the occasions of evil thoughts, avoid dangerous occasions, and keep at a distance from bad company. I knew a young man who was an angel; but, in consequence of a word which he heard from a bad companion he had an evil thought, and consented to it. He was of opinion that this was the only grievous sin which he committed in his whole life; for he afterwards became a religious, and, after some years, died a holy death. Thus, it is also necessary to abstain from reading books

that are obscene, or otherwise bad. You must, moreover, avoid dances with females and profane comedies: at least when the dances or comedies are immodest.

9. Some young men will ask: Father, is it sinful to make love? I say: I cannot assert that of itself it is a mortal sin; but persons who do so are often in the proximate occasion of mortal sin; and experience shows that few of them are found free from grievous faults. It is useless for them to say that they neither had a bad motive nor bad thoughts. This is an illusion of the devil; in the beginning he does not suggest bad thoughts; but when, by frequent conversations together, and by frequently speaking of love, the affection of these lovers has become strong, the devil will make them blind to the danger and sinfulness of their conduct, and they shall find that, without knowing how, they have lost their souls and God by many sins of impurity and scandal. Oh! how many young persons of both sexes does the devil gain in this way! And of all those sins of scandal God will demand an account of fathers and mothers, who are bound, but neglect, to prevent these dangerous conversations. Hence, they are the cause of all these evils, and shall be severely chastised by God for them.

10. Above all, in order to avoid bad thoughts, men must abstain from looking at women, and females must be careful not to look at men. I repeat the words of Job which I have frequently quoted: “I made a covenant with my eyes, that I should not so much as think upon a virgin.” (Job 31:1.) He says that he made a covenant with his eyes that he would not think. What have the eyes to do with thinking? The eyes do not think; the mind alone thinks. But he had just reason to say that he made a covenant with his eyes that he would not think on women; for St. Bernard says, that through the eyes the darts of impure love, which kills the soul, enter into the mind. “Per oculos intrat in mentem sagitta impuri amoris.” Hence the Holy Ghost says: “Turn away thy face from a woman dressed up.” (Eccl. 9:8.) It is always dangerous to look at young persons elegantly dressed; and to look at them purposely, and without a just cause, is, at least, a venial sin.

11. When thoughts against chastity, which often occur without any immediate occasion, present themselves, it is, as I have said, necessary to banish them at once, without beginning to argue with the temptation. The instant you perceive the thought reject it, without giving car to it, or examining what it says or represents to you. It is related in the book of the

sentences of the fathers, § 4, that St. Pachomius one day saw a devil boasting that he often made a certain monk fall into sin; because, when tempted, the monk, instead of turning to God, listened to his suggestions, and began to reason with the temptations. But the saint heard another devil complaining, that he could gain nothing from the monk whom he tempted; because the monk immediately had recourse to God for help, and thus he was always victorious. This is the advice of St. Jerome: As soon as lust shall suggest evil, let us exclaim: The Lord is my helper. “Statim ut libido titillaverit sensum, erumpamus in vocem: Domine auxiliator meus.” (Epist. 22, ad Eustoch.)

12. Should the temptation continue it will be very useful to make it known to your confessor. St Philip Neri used to say, that “a temptation disclosed is half conquered.” In assaults of impurity, some saints have had recourse to very severe mortifications. St. Benedict rolled his naked body among thorns. St. Peter of Alcantara threw himself into a frozen pool. But I consider the best means of overcoming these temptations to be, to have recourse to God, who will certainly give us the victory. “Praising, I will call on the Lord,” said David, “and I shall be saved from my enemies.” (Ps. 17:4.) And when, after asking aid from God, the temptation continues, we must not cease to pray, but must multiply prayers: we must sigh and groan before the most holy sacrament in the chapel, or before a crucifix in our own room, or before some image of most holy Mary, who is the mother of purity. It is true, all our efforts are useless unless God sustains us by his own hand; but he sometimes requires these efforts on our part, that he may supply our deficiency, and secure to us the victory. In such combats with hell, it is useful in the beginning to renew our purpose never to offend God, and to forfeit life rather than lose his grace; and then, we must make repeated petitions to him, saying: Lord give me strength to resist this temptation: do not permit me to be separated from thee: deprive me of life rather than allow me to lose thee.

Sermon XLVIII

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE PAIN OF LOSS WHICH THE DAMNED SUFFER IN HELL

> “Cast him into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”—MATT. 22:13.

ACCORDING to all laws, divine and human, the punishment of crime should be proportioned to its grievousness. “According to the measure of the sin shall the measure also of the stripes be.” (Deut. 25:2.) Now, the principal injury which sinners do to God by mortal sin, consists in turning their back upon their Creator and their sovereign good. St. Thomas defines mortal sin to be “a turning away from the immutable good” (p. 1, qu. 24, art. 4). Of this injury the Lord complains in the following words: “Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord; thou hast gone backward. (Jer. 15:6.) Since, then, the greatest guilt of the sinner consists in deliberately consenting to lose God, the loss of God shall constitute his greatest punishment in hell. “There shall be weeping.” In hell there is continual weeping; but what is the object of the bitterest tears of the unhappy damned? It is the thought af having lost God through their own fault. This shall be the subject of the present discourse. Be attentive, brethren.

1. No! dearly beloved Christians! the goods of the earth are not the end for which God has placed you in the world; the end for which he has created you is the attainment of eternal life. “And the end life eternal.” (Rom. 6:22.) Eternal life consists in loving God, and possessing him for eternity. Whosoever attains this end shall be for ever happy; but he who, through his own fault, does not attain it, loses God; he shall be miserable for eternity, and shall weep for ever, saying: “My end is perished.” (Lamen. 3:18.)

2. The pain produced by loss is proportioned to the value of what has been lost. If a person lose a jewel—a diamond worth a hundred crowns, he

feels great pain; if the diamond were worth two hundred crowns, the pain is double; if worth four hundred, the pain is still greater. Now, I ask, what is the good which a damned soul has lost? She has lost God; she has lost an infinite good. The pain, then, arising from the loss of God is an infinite pain. "The pain of the damned," says St. Thomas, "is infinite, because it is the loss of an infinite good." (1. 2, qu. 87, a. 4.) Such, too, is the doctrine of St. Bernard, who says, that the value of the loss of the damned is measured from the infinitude of God the supreme good. Hence, hell does not consist in its devouring fire, nor in its intolerable stench, nor in the unceasing shrieks and howlings of the damned, nor in the terrific sight of the devils, nor in the narrowness of that pit of torments, in which the damned are thrown one over the other: the pain which constitutes hell is the loss of God. In comparison of this pain, all the other torments of hell are trifling. The reward of God's faithful servants in heaven is, as he said to Abraham, God himself. "I am thy reward, exceeding great." (Gen. 15:1.) Hence, as God is the reward of the blessed in heaven, so the loss of God is the punishment of the damned in hell.

3. Hence, St. Bruno has truly said, that how great soever the torments which may be inflicted on the damned, they never can equal the great pain of being deprived of God. Add torments to torments, but do not deprive them of God. "Addantur tormenta tormentis, et Deo non priventur." (Serm. de Jud. Fin.) According to St. Chrysostom, a thousand hells are not equal to this pain. Speaking of the loss of God, he said: "Si mille dixeris gehennas, nihil par dices illius doloris." (Hom. xlix., ad Pop.) God is so lovely that he deserves infinite love. He is so amiable that the saints in heaven are so replenished with joy, and so absorbed in divine love, that they desire nothing but to love God, and think only of loving him with all their strength. At present, sinners, for the sake of their vile pleasures, shut their eyes, and neither know God nor the love which he deserves; but in hell they shall, in punishment of their sins, be made to know that God is an infinite good and infinitely amiable. "The Lord shall be known when he executeth judgment." (Ps. 9:17.) The sinner, drowned in sensual pleasures, scarcely knows God: he sees him only in the dark, and therefore he disregards the loss of God. But in hell he shall know God, and shall be tormented for ever by the thought of having voluntarily lost his infinite good. A certain Parisian doctor appeared after death to his bishop, and said that he was

damned. His bishop asked him if he remembered the sciences in which he was so well versed in this life. He answered, that in hell the damned think only of the pain of having lost God.

4. “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.” (Matt. 25:41.) “Depart from me.” This command constitutes the hell of the damned. Begone from me; you shall be no longer mine, and I shall be no longer yours. “You are not my people, and I will not be yours.” (Osee 1:9.) At present this punishment is, as St. Augustine says, dreaded only by the saints. “Hæe amantibus non contemnentibus pœna est.” It is a punishment which affrights the soul that loves God more than all the torments of hell; but it does not terrify sinners, who are immersed in the darkness of sin. But at death they shall, for their greater chastisement, understand the infinite good which they have lost through their own fault.

5. It is necessary to know that men have been created for God, and that nature draws them to love him. In this life, the darkness of sin, and the earthly affections which reign in their hearts, stifle their natural tendency and inclination to a union with God, their sovereign good; and therefore the thought of being separated from him does not produce much pain. But when the soul leaves the body, and is freed from the senses, which keeps her in darkness, she then clearly sees that she has been created for God, and that he is the only good which can make her happy. “But,” says St. Antonine, “the soul separated from the body understands that God is her sovereign good, and that she has been created for him.” Hence, as soon as she is loosed from the bondage of the body, she rushes forward to embrace her supreme good: but because she is in sin, and his enemy, God will cast her off. Though driven back and chased away, she retains her invincible tendency and inclination to a union with God; and her hell shall consist in seeing herself always drawn to God, and always banished from him.

6. If a dog see a hare, what effort does he not make to break his chain and seize his prey! Thus, at her separation from the body, the natural inclinations of the soul draw her to God, while at the same time sin separates her from him, and drags her with it into hell. Sin, says the prophet, like a wall of immense thickness, is placed between the soul and God, and separates her from him. “But your iniquities have divided between you and your God.” (Isa. 59:2.) Hence, the unhappy soul, confined in the prison of hell, at a distance from God, shall weep for ever, saying: Then, O

my God, I shall be no longer thine, and thou wilt be no longer mine. I shall love thee no more, and thou will never again love me. This separation from God terrified David, when he said: “Will God, then, cast off for ever? or will he never be more favourable again?” (Ps. 76:8.) How great, he says, would be my misery if God should cast me from him, and never again be merciful to me! But this misery every damned soul in hell suffers, and shall suffer for eternity. As long as he remained in sin, David felt his conscience roproaching him, and asking, “Where is thy God?” O David, where is thy God, who once loved thee? Thou hast lost him; he is no longer thine. David was so afflicted at the loss of his God that he wept night and day. “My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it has been said to me daily: Where is thy God?” (Ps. 41:4.) Thus, even the devils will say to the damned: Where is your God? By his tears David appeased and recovered his God; but the damned shall shed an immense sea of tears, and shall never appease nor recover their God.

7. St. Augustine says, that if the damned saw the beauty of God, “they should feel no pain, and hell itself would be converted into a Paradise.” (Lib. de Trip. Hab.) But the damned shall never see God. When David forbade his son Absalom to appear in his presence, the sorrow of Absalom was so great, that he entreated Joab to tell his father that he would rather be put to death than never more be permitted to see his face. “I beseech thee, therefore, that I may see the face of the king; and if he be mindful of my iniquity, let him kill me.” (2 Kings 14:32.) To a certain grandee, who acted irreverently in the church, Philip the Second said: “Do not dare ever to appear again in my presence.” So intense was the pain which the nobleman felt, that after having returned home, he died of grief. What then must be the feelings of the reprobate at the hour of death, when God shall say to them: Begone; let me never see you again: you shall never more see my face! “I will hide my face from them; all evils and afflictions shall find them.” (Deut. 31:17.) What sentiments of pity should we feel at seeing a son who was always united with his father, who always eat and slept with him, weeping over a parent whom he loved so tenderly, and saying: My father, I have lost you; I shall never see you more. Ah! if we saw a damned soul weeping bitterly, and asked her the cause of her wailing, she would answer: I weep because I have lost God, and shall never see him again.

8. The pain of the reprobate shall be increased by the knowledge of the glory which the saints enjoy in Paradise, and from which they see, and shall for ever see, themselves excluded. How great would be the pain which a person should feel if, after being invited by his sovereign to his own theatre, to be present at the singing, dancing, and other amusements, he should be excluded in punishment of some fault! How bitter should be his anger and disappointment when, from without, he should hear the shouts of joy and applause within! At present sinners despise heaven, and lose it for trifles, after Jesus Christ shed the last drop of his blood to make them worthy of entering into that happy kingdom. But when they shall be confined in hell, the knowledge of the glory of heaven shall be the greatest of all their torments. St. John Chrysostom says, that to see themselves banished from that land of joy, shall be to the damned a torment ten thousand times as great as the hell which they suffer. “Decem mille quis ponat gehennas, nihil tale dicet quale est a beata gloria excidere.” (S. Joan. Chry. ap. S. Thom. Suppl., qu. 98, art. 9.) Oh! that I had at least the hope, the damned will say, that after a thousand, or even a million of ages, I could recover the divine grace, and become worthy of entering into heaven, there to see God! But, no! he shall be told, “When the wicked man is dead, there shall be no hope any more.” (Prov. 11:7.) When he was in this life he could have saved his soul; but because he has died in sin his loss is irreparable. Hence, with tears of despair, he shall say: “I shall not see the Lord God in the land of the living.” (Isa. 38:11.)

9. The thought of having lost God and Paradise, solely through their own fault, shall increase the torture of the damned. Every damned soul shall say: It was in my power to have led a life of happiness on earth by loving God, and to have acquired boundless happiness for eternity; but, in consequence of having loved my vices, I must remain in this place of torments as long as God shall be God. She will then exclaim in the words of Job: “Who will grant me that I might be according to the months past, according to the days in which God kept me?” (Job 39:2.) Oh! that I were allowed to go back to the time I lived on earth, when God watched over me, that I might not fall into this fire! I did not live among the savages, the Indians, or the Chinese. I was not left without the sacraments, sermons, or masters to instruct me. I was born in the bosom of the true Church, and have been well instructed and frequently admonished by preachers and confessors. To this prison I

have not been dragged by the devils; I have come of my own accord. The chains by which I am bound and kept at a distance from God, I have forged with my own will. How often has God spoken to my heart, and said to me: Amend, and return to me. Beware, lest the time should come when thou shalt not be able to prevent thy destruction. Alas! this time has come; the sentence has been already passed; I am damned; and for my damnation there neither is, nor shall be, any remedy for all eternity. But if the damned soul has lost God, and shall never see him, perhaps she can at least love him? No; she has been abandoned by grace, and thus she is made the slave of her sins, and compelled to hate him. The damned see that God is their adversary on account of their contempt for him during life, and are therefore always in despair. “Why hast thou set me opposite to thee, and I am become burthensome to myself.” (Job 7:20.) Hence, because the damned see that they are enemies of God, whom they at the same time know to be worthy of infinite love, they are to themselves objects of the greatest horror. The greatest of all the punishments which God shall inflict on them, will consist in seeing that God is so amiable, and that they are so deformed, and the enemies of this God. “I will set before thy face.” (Ps. 49:21.)

10. The sight of all that God has done for the damned shall above all increase their torture. “The wicked shall see and shall be angry.” (Ps. 111:10.) They shall see all the benefits which God bestowed upon them—all the lights and calls which he gave them—and the patience with which he waited for them. They shall, above all, see how much Jesus Christ has loved them, and how much he has suffered for the love of them; and after all his love and all his sufferings, they shall see that they are now objects of his hatred, and shall be no longer objects of his love. According to St. Chrysostom, a thousand hells are nothing compared with the thought of being hateful to Christ. “Si mille quis ponat, gehennas, nihil tale dicturus est, quale est exosum esse Christo.” (Hom xiv. in Matt.) Then the damned shall say: My Redeemer, who, through compassion for me, sweated blood, suffered an agony in the garden, and died on the cross bereft of all consolation, has now no pity on me! I weep, I cry out; but he no longer hears or looks to me! He is utterly forgetful of me. He once loved me; but now he hates and justly hates me; for I have ungratefully refused to love him. David says, that the reprobate are thrown into the pit of death. “Thou

shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction.” (Ps. 54:24.) Hence St. Augustine has said: “The pit shall be closed on top, it shall be opened at the bottom, it shall be expanded downwards; and they who refuse to know God shall be no longer known by him.” “Puteus claudetur sursum, aperietur deorsum, dilatatibur in profundum: et ultra nescientur a Deo qui Deum scire noluerunt.” (Hom. xvi., cap 50.)

11. Thus the damned see that God deserves infinite love, and that they cannot love him. St. Catherine of Genoa being one day assailed by the devil, asked him who he was. He answered with tears: *I am that wicked one who is deprived of the love of God.* I am that miserable being that can never more love God. They not only cannot love God, but, abandoned in their sins, they are forced to hate him: their hell consists in hating God, whom they at the same time know to be infinitely amiable. They love him intensely as their sovereign good, and hate him as the avenger of their sins. “Res miserrima,” says a learned author, “amare vehementer, et amatum simul odisse.” (Magnotius Medit.) Their natural love draws them continually to God; but their hatred drags them away from him. These two contrary passions, like two ferocious wild beasts, incessantly tear in pieces the hearts of the damned, and cause, and shall for all eternity cause, them to live in a continual death. The reprobate then shall hate and curse all the benefits which God has bestowed upon them. They shall hate the benefits of creation, redemption, and the sacraments. But they shall hate in a particular manner the sacrament of baptism, by which they have, on account of their sins, been made more guilty in the sight of God; the sacrament of penance, by which, if they wished, they could have so easily saved their souls; and, above all, the most holy sacrament of the altar, in which God had given himself entirely to them. They shall consequently hate all the other means which have been helps to their salvation. Hence, they shall hate and curse all the angels and saints. But they shall curse particularly their guardian angels—their special advocates—and, above all, the divine mother Mary. They shall curse the three divine persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; but particularly Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, who suffered so much, and died for their salvation. They shall curse the wounds of Jesus Christ, the blood of Jesus Christ, and the death of Jesus Christ. Behold the end to which accursed sin leads the souls which Jesus Christ has dearly bought.

Sermon XLIX

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE PREDOMINANT PASSION

“For he was at the point of death. Lord, come down before that my son die.”—JOHN 4:47, 49.

OUR passions are not of themselves bad nor hurtful, when regulated according to the dictates of reason and prudence, they do us no injury, but are, on the contrary, profitable to the soul; but, when disorderly, they are productive of irreparable mischief to those who obey them; for, when any passion takes possession of the heart, it obscures the truth, and makes the soul incapable of distinguishing between good and evil. Ecclesiasticus implored the Lord to deliver him from a mind under the sway of passion. “Give me not over to a shameless and foolish mind.” (Eccl. 23:6.) Let us, then, be careful not to allow any bad passion to rule over us. In this day’s gospel it is related that a certain ruler, whose son was at the point of death (incipiebat enim mori), knowing that Jesus Christ had come into Galilee, went in search of him, and entreated him to come and cure his son. “Come down before that my son die.” The same may be said of him who begins to submit to the tyranny of any passion. “He is at the point of death” of the soul, which should be dreaded far more than the death of the body. Hence, if he wishes to preserve spiritual life, he ought to ask the Lord to deliver him as soon as possible from that passion—*Lord, come down before my soul die;* if he do not, he shall be miserably lost. I intend to-day to show the great danger of damnation to which all who submit to the domination of any bad passions are exposed.

1. “Only this,” said Solomon, “I found, that God made man right, and he hath entangled himself with an infinity of questions.” (Eccl. 7:30.) “God created man right”—that is, in the state of justice; but, by giving ear to the serpent, man exposed himself to temptations, and was conquered. He rebelled against God, and his passions rebelled against himself. These are

the passions which, according to St. Paul, cause a continual war between the flesh and the spirit. “For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.” (Gal. 5:17.) However, with the aid of divine grace, it is in man’s power to resist these passions, and not to allow them to rule over him. It is, as the Lord told Cain, even in the power of man to rule over them, and to bring them into subjection to reason. “But the lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it.” (Gen. 4:7.) Let the assaults of the flesh and of the devil, to make us abandon the way of God, be ever so violent, Jesus Christ has said: “Lo! the kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke 17:21.) Within us he has established a kingdom, in which the will is the queen that ought to rule over all the senses and passions. And what greater honour or glory can a man have, than to be the master of his passions?

2. The proper regulation of the motions of the mind constitutes the interior mortification so much recommended by spiritual masters, and secures the salvation of the soul. The health of the body depends on the regulation of the humours:—if one of them predominate to excess it causes death. But the health of the soul consists in the proper control of the passions by reason. But, when any passion rules over reason, it first enslaves, and then kills the soul.

3. Many pay great attention to their external conduct; they endeavour to appear modest and respectful; but, at the same time, they cherish in their hearts sinful affections against justice, charity, humility, and chastity. For them is prepared the chastisement with which the Saviour threatened the Scribes and Pharisees, who were careful to have their cups and dishes clean, but nourished within unjust and unclean thoughts. “Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites; because you make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish; but, within you are full of rapine and uncleanness.” (Matt. 23:25.) The Royal Prophet says, that all the beauty of a soul that is the true daughter of God consists in an interior good will. “All the glory of the king’s daughter is within.” (Ps. 44:14.) Of what use, then, says St. Jerome, is it to abstain from food, and at the same time to allow the mind to swell with pride? or to abstain from wine, and to indulge in the drunkenness of anger? “Quid prodest tenuari abstinentia, si animus superbia intumeseit? quid vinum non bibere, et odio inebriari?” Christians who act in this manner do not lay aside their vices; they only cover them with the mantle of

devotion. A man, then, must divest himself of all bad passions; otherwise he will not be the king, but the slave of his affections, and in opposition to the command of the Apostle sin shall reign in his heart. “Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof.” (Rom. 6:12.) Man, then, is, as St. Thomas says, the king of himself when he regulates his body and his carnal affections according to reason. “Rex est homo per rationem, quia per cam regit totum corpus et affectus ejus.” (In Joan. 4) But, according to St. Jerome, “when the soul serves vice she loses the honour of a kingdom.” (In Thren., 2:7.) She loses the honour of a queen, and becomes, as St. John teaches, the slave of sin. “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” (John 8:34.)

4. St. James exhorts us to treat the body and its lusts as we would treat a horse. We put a bridle in the mouth of a horse, and we bring him wherever we please. “We put bits in the mouths of horses, that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body.” (St. James 3:3.) Hence, as soon as we feel the cravings of any bad passion, we must restrain it with the bridle of reason; for, if we yield to its demands, it will bring us to the level of brute animals, that obey not the dictates of reason, but the impulse of their beastly appetites. “And man, when he was in honour, did not understand: he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them.” (Ps. 48:13.) “It is worse,” says St. John Chrysostom, “to become like, than to be born, a senseless beast; for, to be naturally without reason is tolerable.” The saint says, that to want reason by nature is not disgraceful; but, to be born with the gift of reason, and afterwards to live like a beast, obeying the lusts of the flesh, is degrading to man, and makes him worse than a senseless brute. What would you say if you saw a man who would, of his own accord, live in a stable with horses, feed with them on hay and oats, and sleep, as they do, on dung? The man who submits to the tyranny of any passion, does what is far worse in the eyes of God.

5. It was thus the Gentiles lived, who, because the darkness of their understanding prevented them from discerning between good and evil, went wherever their sensual appetite led them. “That you walk not,” says St. Paul, “as also the Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having their understanding darkened.” (Ephes. 4:17, 18.) Hence they were abandoned to their vices—to impurity and avarice, and blindly obeyed the commands of their passions. “Who, despairing, have given themselves up to

lasciviousness, unto the working of all uncleanness, unto covetousness.” (*verse* 19.) To this miserable state are reduced all Christians who, despising reason and God, follow the dictates of passion. In punishment of their sins God abandons them, as he abandoned the Gentiles, to their own wicked desires. “Wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their own heart.” (Rom. 1:24.) This is the greatest of all chastisements.

6. St. Augustine writes, that two cities may be built up in the heart of a Christian: one by the love of God, the other by self-love. “Cœlestem (*civitatem*) ædificat amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui; terrestrem ædificat amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei.” (Lib. 14, de Civ., cap. xxviii.) Thus, if the love of God reign within us, we will despise ourselves: if self-love reign, we will despise God. But, in conquering self-love consists the victory to which shall be given a crown of eternal glory. This was the great maxim which St. Francis Xavier always inculcated to his disciples: “Conquer yourself; conquer yourself.” All the thoughts and feelings of man, says the Scripture, are inclined to evil from his boyhood. “The imagination and thought of man’s heart are prone to evil from his youth.” (Gen. 8:21.) Hence we must, during our whole life, zealously combat and conquer the evil inclinations which continually rise within us, as noxious weeds spring up in our gardens. Some will ask how they can free themselves from bad passions, and how they can prevent them from starting up within them. St. Gregory gives the answer: “It is one thing to look at these beasts, and another to keep them within the den of the heart.” (Mor. lib. 6, cap. xvi.) It is one thing, says the saint, to look at these beasts, or bad passions, when they are outside, and another to harbour them in the heart. As long as they are outside they can do us no harm; but if we admit them into the soul they devour us.

7. All bad passions spring from self-love. This is, as Jesus Christ teaches all who wish to follow him, the principal enemy which we have to contend with; and this enemy we must conquer by self-denial. “If any one shall come after me let him deny himself.” (Matt. 16:24.) “Non intrat in te, amor Dei,” says Thomas a Kempis, “nisi exulet amor tui.” Unless we banish self-love from the heart the love of God cannot enter. Blessed Angela of Foligno used to say, that she was more afraid of self-love than of the devil, because self-love has greater power than the devil to draw us into sin. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say the same, as we read in her life: “Self-love

is the greatest traitor we have to guard against. Like Judas, it betrays us with a kiss. He who conquers it conquers all enemies; he who does not conquer it is lost.” The saint then adds: “If you cannot kill it with a single stroke give it poison.” She meant, that since we are not able to destroy this accursed enemy, which, according to St. Francis de Sales, dies only with our latest breath, we must at least labour to weaken it as much as possible; for when strong it kills us. Death, says St. Basil, is the reward which self-love gives its followers. The wages of self-love is death; it is the beginning of every evil. “Stipendium amoris proprii mors est, initium omnis mali.” (S. Bas. Apud Lyreum, lib. 2.) Self-love seeks not what is just and honourable, but what is agreeable to the senses. Hence Jesus Christ has said: “He that loveth his life”—that is, his sensual appetite or self-will—“shall lose it.” (John 12:25.) He who truly loves himself, and wishes to save his soul, should refuse to the senses whatever God has forbidden; otherwise he shall lose God and himself.

8. There are two passions which reign within us:—the concupiscible and irascible appetites—that is, love and hatred. I have said, *two principal passions;* for each of them, when vicious, draws in its train many other bad passions. The concupiscible appetite brings with it temerity, ambition, greediness, avarice, jealousy, scandal. The irascible brings with it revenge, injustice, slander, envy. St. Augustine advises us, in our combat with the passions, not to endeavour to beat them all down in a single conflict. “Calca jacentem, conflige cum resistente.” (In cap. viii. Rom.) We must trample on the passion which we have cast to the ground, so that it may be no longer able to contend with us, and then we must endeavour to subdue the other passions which resist our efforts.

9. But we must endeavour above all to find out our predominant passion. He who conquers this conquers all his passions; he who allows himself to be overcome by it is lost. God commanded Saul to destroy all the Amalecites, along with all their animals and all their property. He destroyed everything that was vile, but spared the life of King Agag, and preserved all that was valuable and beautiful. “And Saul and the people spared Agag and the rest of the flocks of sheep . . . and all that was beautiful, and would not destroy them; but everything that was vile and good for nothing, that they destroyed.” (1 Kings 15:9.) In this Saul was afterwards imitated by the Scribes and Pharisees, to whom our Lord said: “Woe to you, Scribes and

Pharisees, because you tithe mint, and anise, and cummin, and have left the weightier things of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith.” (Matt. 23:23.) They were careful to pay the tithe of things of least value, and neglected the more important things of the law: such as justice, charity to their neighbour, and faith in God. Some persons act in a similar manner; they abstain from certain defects of minor importance, and, at the same time, allow themselves to be ruled by their predominant passions; but if they do not destroy this passion, they never shall gain the victory of salvation. The King of Syria commanded the captains of his cavalry to kill the King of Israel only, and not to mind the others. “Fight ye not with small or great, but with the King of Israel only.” (2 Paral. 18:30.) They obeyed the order, slew King Achab, and gained the victory.

10. We must imitate the captains of Syria: unless we kill the king—that is, the predominant passion—we shall never be able to obtain salvation. The passion which brings man under its sway, first blinds him and prevents him from seeing his danger. Now, how can a blind man, led by a blind guide, such as passion, which follows not reason, but sensual pleasures, possibly avoid falling into some abyss? “If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit.” (Matt. 15:14.) St. Gregory says that it is a common artifice of the devil to inflame daily more and more our predominant passion, and thus he brings us into many horrible excesses. Through passion for a kingdom, Herod spilled the blood of so many innocent infants. Through love for a woman, Henry the Eighth was the cause of so many frightful spiritual evils, put to death several most worthy individuals, and, in the end, lost the faith. No wonder: for he who is under the domination of any passion no longer sees what he does. Therefore he disregards corrections, excommunications, and even his own damnation: he seeks only his own pleasures, and says: “Come what will, I must satisfy this passion.” And, as eminent virtue is accompanied by other virtues, so an enormous vice brings in its train other vices. “In catena iniquitatis,” says St. Lawrence Justinian, “fœderata sunt vitia.”

11. It is necessary, then, as soon as we perceive any passion beginning to reign within us, to beat it down instantly, before it acquires strength. “Let cupidity gain strength,” says St. Augustine, “strike it down while it is small.” (In Ps. cxxxvi.) St. Ephrem gives the same advice: “Unless you quickly destroy passions, they cause an ulcer.” (*De Perfect.*) A wound, if it

be not closed up, will soon become an incurable ulcer. To illustrate this by an example, a certain monk, as St. Dorotheus relates (Serm. xi.), commanded one of his disciples to pluck up a small cypress. The disciple obeyed, and drew it up with a slight effort. The monk then ordered him to pull up another tree, which was somewhat larger. He succeeded in the task; but not without a good deal of labour. The disciple was then told to pluck up a tree which had taken deep root; but all his efforts were ineffectual. The monk then said to him: Thus it is, my son, with our passions; when they have taken deep root in the heart, we shall not be able to extirpate them. Dearly beloved brethren, keep always before your eyes this maxim: that either the spirit must trample on the flesh, or the flesh shall trample on the spirit.

12. Cassian has laid down an excellent rule for conquering our passions. Let us endeavour, he says, to change the object of our passions; and thus from being vicious they shall become holy. Some are prone to anger against all who treat them with disrespect. Such persons ought to change the object of their passions, and turn their indignation into a hatred of sin, which is more injurious to them than all the devils in hell. Others are inclined to love every one who possesses amiable qualities: they should fix all their affections on God, who is infinitely amiable. But, to recommend ourselves to God, and to beg of him to deliver us from our passions, is the best remedy against them. And, when any passion becomes very violent, we must multiply prayers. Reasoning and reflections are then of little use; for passion obscures our faculties; and the more we reflect the more delightful the object of passion appears. Hence, there is no other remedy than to have recourse to Jesus and to most holy Mary, saying with tears and sighs: “Lord, save us, or we perish: do not permit us to be ever separated from thee. We fly to thy protection, O holy mother of God.” O souls created to love God, let us raise ourselves above the earth; let us cease to fix our thoughts and affections on the miserable things of this world; let us cease to love dross and smoke and dung; let us endeavour with all our strength to love the Supreme Infinite Good, our most amiable God, who has made us for himself, and expects us in heaven to make us happy, and to make us enjoy the very glory which he enjoys for eternity.

Sermon L

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE ETERNITY OF HELL

> "And his Lord, being angry, delivered him to the torture until he paid all the debt."—MATT. 18:34.

IN this day's gospel we find that a certain servant, having badly administered the affairs of his master, was found to owe him a debt of ten thousand talents. The master demanded payment; but the servant falling down said: "Have patience and I will pay thee all." The master took pity on him, and forgave the entire debt. One of his fellow-servants who owed him a hundred pence, besought him to have patience, and promised to pay him the last farthing; but the wicked servant cast him into prison. Hearing of this act of cruelty to his fellow-servant, the master sent for him, and said to him: "Wicked servant, I have forgiven thee ten thousand talents, and for a debt of a hundred pence thou hast refused to show compassion to thy fellow-servant. He then delivered him to the tortures till he paid all the debt. Behold, dearly beloved brethren, in these last words, a description of the sentence of the eternal death which is prepared for sinners. By dying in sin, they die debtors to God for all their iniquities; and being unable to make any satisfaction in the other life for their past sins, they remain for ever debtors to the divine justice, and must suffer for eternity in hell. Of this miserable eternity I will speak to-day: listen to me with attention.

1. The thought of eternity is a great thought: so it was called by St. Augustine: *Magna cogitatio.* According to the holy doctor, God has made us Christians, and instructed us in the maxims of faith, that we may think of eternity. "We are Christians that we may always think of the world to come." This thought has driven from the world so many of the nobles of the earth, has made them renounce all their riches, and shut themselves up in the cloister, there to live in poverty and penance. This thought has sent so

many young men into caves and deserts, and has animated so many martyrs to embrace torments and death, in order to save their souls for eternity. “For,” exclaims St. Paul, “we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come.” (Heb. 13:14.) This earth, dearly beloved Christians, is not our country; it is for us a place of passage, through which we must soon pass to the house of eternity. “Man shall go into the house of his eternity.” (Eccl. 12:5.) In this eternity the house of the just, which is a palace of delights, is very different from the house of sinners, which is a dungeon of torments. Into one of these two houses each of us must certainly go. “In hanc vel illam æternitatem,” says St. Ambrose, “cadam necesse est.” (S. Amb., in Ps. cxviii.) “Into this or that eternity I must fall.”

2. And where the soul shall first go, there she shall remain for ever. “If the tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall there shall it lie.” (Eccl. 11:3.) On what side does a tree fall when it is cut down? It falls on the side to which it inclines. On what side, brethren, will you fall, when death shall cut down the tree of your life? You will fall on the side to which you incline. If you shall be found inclining to the south—that is, in favour with God—you shall be for ever happy; but if you shall fall to the north, you must be for ever miserable. There is no middle place: you must be for ever happy in heaven, or overwhelmed with despair in hell. We must all die, says St. Bernard or some other author (de Quat. Noviss.), but we know not which of the two eternities shall be our lot after death. “Necessi morem, post hæc autem dubia æternitatis.”

3. This uncertainty about his lot for eternity was the constant subject of the thoughts of David: it deprived his eyes of sleep, and kept him always in terror. “My eyes prevented the watches: I was troubled, and I spoke not: I thought upon the days of old, and I had in my mind the eternal years.” (Ps. 76:5, 6.) What, says St. Cyprian, has encouraged the saints to lead a life, which, on account of their continual austerities, was an uninterrupted martyrdom? It was, he answers, the thought of eternity that inspired them with courage to submit to such unceasing rigours. A certain monk shut himself in a cave, and did nothing else than constantly exclaim: “O eternity! O eternity!” The famous sinner converted by the Abbot Paphnutius, kept eternity always before her eyes, and was accustomed to say: “Who can assure me of a happy eternity, and that I will not fall into a miserable eternity.” The same uncertainty kept St. Andrew Avellino in continual

terrors and tears till his last breath. Hence he used to ask every one he met, “What do you say? shall I be saved or damned for eternity?”

4. O! that we, too, had eternity always before our eyes! We certainly should not be so much attached to the world. “Quisquis in æternitatis disiderio figitur, nee prosperitate attollitur, nee adversitate quassatur: et dum nihil habet in mundo quod appetat, nihil est quod de mundo pertimescat.” He who fixes his thoughts on eternity, is not elated by prosperity nor dejected by adversity; because, having nothing to desire in this world, he has nothing to fear: he desires only a happy eternity, and fears only a miserable eternity. A certain lady, who was greatly attached to the world, went one day to confession to Father M. D’Avila. He bid her go home, and reflect on these two words—*always* and *never.* She obeyed, took away her affections from the world, and consecrated them to God. St. Augustine says that the man who thinks on eternity, and is not converted to God, either has no faith, or has lot his reason. “O æternitas! qui te cogitat, nec pœnitet, aut certo fidem non habet, aut si habet, cor non habet.” (In soliloq.) O eternity! he who thinks on thee, and does not repent, has certainly no faith, or has lost his heart. Hence St. Chrysostom relates, that the pagans upbraided the Christians with being liars or fools: liars, if they said they believed what they did not believe; fools, if they believed in eternity and committed sin. “Exprobabant gentiles aut mendaces, aut stultos esse Christianos; mendaces si non crederent quod credere dicebant; stultos si credebant et peccabant.”

5. Woe to sinners, says St. Cesarius of Arles; they enter into eternity without having known it; but their woes shall be doubled when they shall have entered into eternity, and shall never be able to leave. “Væ peccatoribus, incognitam ingrediuntur.” To those who enter hell, the door opens for their admission, but never opens for their departure. “I have the keys of death and of hell.” (Apoc. 1:18.) God himself keeps the keys of hell, to show us that whosoever enters has no hope of ever escaping from it. St. John Chrysostom writes, that the condemnation of the reprobate is engraved on the pillar of eternity, so that it never shall be revoked. In hell there is no calendar; there the years are not counted. St. Antonine says, that if a damned soul heard that she was to be released from hell after so many millions of years as there are drops of water in the sea, or grains of sand in the earth, she would feel a greater joy than a criminal condemned to death would experience at hearing that he was reprieved, and was to be made the

monarch of the whole world! But, no! as many millions of years shall pass away as there are drops of water in the ocean, or grains of dust in the earth, and the hell of the damned shall be at its commencement. All these millions of years shall be multiplied an infinite number of times, and hell will begin again. But of what use is it, says St. Hilary, to count years in eternity? Where you expect the end, there it commences. "Ubi putas finem invenire, ibi incipit." And St. Augustine says, "that things which have an end cannot be compared with eternity." (In Ps. xxxvi.) Each of the damned would be content to make this compact with God—Lord, increase my torments as much as thou pleasest; assign a term for them as distant as thou pleasest; provided thou fix a time at which they shall cease, I am satisfied. But, no! this time shall never arrive. "My end," the damned shall say, "is perished." (Lamen. 3:18.) Then, is there no end to the torments of the damned? No! the trumpet of divine justice sounds in the caverns of hell, and continually reminds the reprobate that their hell shall be eternal, and shall never have an end.

6. If hell were not eternal, it would not be so frightful a chastisement. Thomas a Kempis says, that "everything which passes with time is trifling and short." Any pain which has an end is not very appalling. The man who labours under an imposthume or a cancer, must submit to the knife or the cautery: the pain is severe; but because it is soon over it can be borne. But a tooth-ache which lasts for three months without interruption is insupportable. Were a person obliged to lie in the same posture for six months on a soft bed, or even to hear the same music, or the same comedy, night and day for one year, he would fall into melancholy and despondency. Poor blind sinners! When threatened with hell they say: "If I go there I must have patience." But they shall not say so when they will have entered that region of woes, where they must suffer, not by listening to the same music or the same comedy, nor by lying in the same posture, or by tooth-ache, but by enduring all torments and all evils. "I will heap evils upon them." (Deut. 33:23.) And all these torments shall never end.

7. They shall never end, and shall never be diminished in the smallest degree. The damned must for ever suffer the same fire, the same privation of God, the same sadness, the same despair. Yes, says St. Cyprian, in eternity there is no change, because the decree is immutable. This thought shall immensely increase their sufferings, by making them feel beforehand,

and at each moment, all that they shall have to suffer for eternity. In this description of the happiness of the saints, and the misery of the reprobate, the Prophet Daniel says: “They shall wake some unto life everlasting, and some unto reproach to see it always.” (Dan. 12:2.) They shall always see their unhappy eternity. *Ut videant semper.* Thus eternity tortures each of the damned not only by his present pains, but with all his future sufferings, which are eternal.

8. These are not opinions controverted among theologians; they are dogmas of faith clearly revealed in the sacred Scriptures. “Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire.” (Matt. 25:41.) Some will say: The fire, but not the punishment of the damned is everlasting. Such the language of the incredulous, but it is folly. For what other purpose would God make this fire eternal, than to chastise the reprobate, who are immortal? But, to take away every shadow of doubt, the Scriptures, in many other places, say, that not only the fire, but the punishment, of the damned is eternal. “And these,” says Jesus Christ, “shall go into everlasting punishment.” (Matt. 25:46.) Again we read in St. Mark, “Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished.” (9:43.) St. John says: “And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever.” (Apoc. 16:11.) “Who,” says St. Paul, “shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction.” (2 Thess. 1:9.)

9. Another infidel will ask: How can God justly punish with eternal torments a sin that lasts but a moment? I answer, that the grievousness of a crime is measured not by its duration, but by the enormity of its malice. The malice of mortal sin is, as St. Thomas says, infinite. (1, 2, q. 87, art. 4.) Hence, the damned deserve infinite punishment; and, because a creature is not capable of suffering pains infinite in point of intensity, God, as the holy doctor says, renders the punishment of the damned infinite in extension by making it eternal. Moreover, it is just, that as long as the sinner remains in his sin, the punishment which he deserves should continue. And, therefore, as the virtue of the saints is rewarded in Heaven, because it lasts for ever, so also the guilt of the damned in Hell, because it is everlasting, shall be chastised with everlasting torments. “Quia non recipit causæ remedium,” says Eusebius Emissenus, “carebit fine supplicium.” The cause of their perverse will continues: therefore, their chastisement will never have an end. The damned are so obstinate in their sins, that even if God offered pardon, their hatred for him would make them refuse it. The Prophet

Jeremias, speaking in the name of the reprobate, says: Why is my sorrow become perpetual and my wound desperate, so as to refuse to be healed?" (Jer. 15:18.) My wound, they say, is incurable, because I do not wish it to be healed. Now, how can God heal the wound of their perverse will, when they would refuse the remedy, were it offered to them? Hence, the punishment of the reprobate is called a sword, a vengeance which is irrevocable. "I, the Lord, have drawn my sword out of its sheath, not to be turned back." (Ezech. 21:5.)

10. Death, which is so terrible in this life, is desired in hell by the damned; but they never shall find it. "And in these days men shall seek death, and shall not find it: and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them." (Apoc. 11:6.) They would wish, as a remedy for their eternal ruin, to be exterminated and destroyed. But "there is no poison of destruction in them." (Wis. 1:14.) If a man, condemned to die, be not deprived of life by the first stroke of the axe, his torture moves the people to pity. Miserable damned souls! They live in continual death in the midst of the pains of hell: death excites in them all the agony of death, but does not give them a remedy by taking away life. "Prima mors," says St. Augustine, "animam nolentem pellit de corpore, secunda mors nolentem tenet in corpore." The first death expels from the body the soul of a sinner who is unwilling to die: but the second death—that is, eternal death—retains in the body a soul that wishes to die. "They are laid in hell like sheep; death shall feed upon them." (Ps. 48:15.) In feeding, sheep eat the blades of grass, but leave the root untouched; hence the grass dies not, but grows up again. It is thus that death treats the damned; it torments them with pain, but spares their life, which may be called the root of suffering.

11. But, if these miserable souls have no chance of release from hell, perhaps they can at least deceive or flatter themselves with the hope, that God may one day be moved to pity, and free them from their torments? No: in hell there is no delusion, no flattery, no perhaps; the damned are as certain as they are of God's existence that their hell shall have no end. "Thou thoughtest unjustly that I shall be like to thee; *but* I will reprove thee, and set before thy face." (Ps. 49:21.) They shall for ever see before their eyes their sins and the sentence of their eternal condemnation. "And I will set before thy face."

12. Let us conclude. Thus, most beloved brethren, the affair of our eternal salvation should be the sole object of all our concerns. “The business for which we struggle,” says St. Eucharius, “is eternity.” There is question of eternity: there is question whether we will be saved, and be for ever happy in a city of delights, or be damned, and confined for eternity in a pit of fire. This is not an affair of little importance; it is of the utmost and of eternal importance to us. When Thomas More was condemned to death by Henry the Eighth, his wife Louisa went to him for the purpose of tempting him to obey the royal command. Tell me, Lousia, replied the holy man, how many years can I, who am now so old, expect to live? You might, said she, live for twenty years. O foolish woman! he exclaimed, do you want me to condemn my soul to an eternity of torments for twenty years of life?

13. O God! Christians believe in the existence of hell, and commit sin! Dearly beloved brethren, let not us also be fools, like so many who are now weeping in hell. Miserable beings! What benefit do they now derive from all the pleasures which they enjoyed in this life? Speaking of the rich and of the poor, St. John Chrysostom said: “O unhappy felicity, which has drawn the rich into eternal infelicity! O happy infelicity, which has brought the poor to the felicity of eternity!” The saints have buried themselves alive in this life, that after death they may not find themselves buried in hell for all eternity. If eternity were a doubtful matter, we ought even then make every effort in our power to escape an eternity of torments; but no, it is not a matter of doubt; it is a truth of faith, that after this life each of us must go into eternity, to be for ever in glory or for ever in despair. St. Teresa says, that it is through a want of faith that so many Christians are lost. As often as we say the words of the Creed, *life everlasting*, let us enliven our faith, and remember that there is another life, which never ends; and let us adopt all the means necessary to secure a happy eternity. Let us do all, and give up all; if necessary, let us leave the world, in order to secure eternal happiness. When eternity is at stake no security can be too great. “Nulla nimia securitas,” says St. Bernard, “ubi periclitatur æternitas.”

Sermon LI

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

STRAITS AND ANGUISH OF DYING CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE BEEN NEGLIGENT DURING LIFE ABOUT THE DUTIES OF RELIGION

> “Render, therefore, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”—MATT. 22:21.

ONE day, the Pharisees, with the malignant intention of ensnaring him in his speech, that they might afterwards accuse him before the ministers of Cæsar, sent their disciples to ask Jesus Christ, if it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar. In answer, the Redeemer, after looking at the coin of the tribute, asked: “Whose image and inscription is this?” Being told it was Cæsar’s, he said: “Render then to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” By these words Jesus Christ wishes to teach us, that it is our duty to give to men what is due to them; and to reserve for him all the affections of our heart, since he created us to love him, and afterwards imposed upon us a precept of loving him. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.” Miserable the man who, at the hour of death, shall see that he has loved creatures, that he has loved his pleasures, and has not loved God. “When distress cometh upon them, they will seek peace, and there will be none.” (Ezech. 7:25.) He will then seek peace, but shall not find it; for many causes of distress and trouble shall assail him. What shall these causes be? Behold, the unhappy man shall then say, first: O God! I could have become a saint, but have not become one. Secondly, he shall say: Oh! that I now had time to repair the evil I have done! but time is at an end. Thirdly: Oh! that at least, in the short time which remains, I could remedy the past: but, alas! this time is not fit for repairing past evils.

FIRST POINT. O GOD! I COULD HAVE, BUT HAVE NOT, BECOME A SAINT.

1. Because, during their whole life, they thought only of pleasing God and sanctifying themselves, the saints go with great confidence to meet death, which delivers them from the miseries and dangers of the present life, and unites them perfectly with God. But the man who has thought only of his pleasures and of his own ease, and has neglected to recommend himself to God, or to reflect on the account which he must one day render, cannot meet death with confidence. Poor sinners! they banish the thought of death whenever it presents itself to them, and think only of living in pleasures and amusements, as if they never were to die. But for each of them the end must one day come. "The end is come; the end is come." (Ezech. 7:2.) And when this end is come every one must gather the fruit which he has sown during his life. "For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap." (Gal. 6:8.) If he has sown works of holiness, he shall receive rewards of eternal life; but if he has sown evil works, he shall reap chastisements and eternal death.

2. The scene of his past life is the first thing which shall rush on the mind of the dying man, when the news of death shall be announced to him. He shall then see things in a light far different from that in which he viewed them during life. The acts of revenge which appeared to him lawful—the scandals which he disregarded—the liberty of speaking obscenely and injurious to the character of his neighbour—the pleasures which were regarded as innocent—the acts of injustice which he held to be allowable—shall then appear what they really were: grevious sins and offences against God, each of which merited hell. Alas! those blind sinners, who voluntarily blind themselves during life, by shutting their eyes to the light shall, at death, involuntarily see all the evil they have done. "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened." (Is. 35:5.) At the light of the candle which lights him to death, "the wicked shall see and shall be angry," (Ps. 111:10.) He shall see all the irregularities of his past life—his frequent abuse of the sacraments, confessions made without sorrow or purpose of amendment, contracts completed with remorse of conscience, injury done to the property and reputation of others, immodest ests, rancours, and vindictive thoughts. He shall then see the bad examples which he gave to young persons who feared God, and whom he treated with contempt, and turned into derision by calling them hypocrites and other reproachful names. He shall see so many lights and calls received from God, so many admonitions of spiritual

fathers, and so many resolutions and promises made but afterwards neglected.

3. He shall see particularly the bad maxims by which he regulated his conduct during life. “It is necessary to seek the esteem of the world, and to preserve honour.” But is it necessary for a man to preserve his honour by trampling on the honour due to God? “We ought to indulge in amusements as often as we can.” But is it lawful to indulge in amusements by insulting God? “Of what use to the world is the man who lives in poverty and has no money? But, will you, for the sake of money, lose your soul? In answer to these questions the sinner says: *No matter. What can be done?* “If we do not make a fortune in the world we cannot appear among our equals.” Such the maxims of the worldling during life; but at death he shall change his language. He shall then see the truth of that maxim of Jesus Christ: “What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul.” (Matt. 16:26.) Unhappy me! the worldling shall exclaim on the bed of death, I have had so much time to tranquillize my conscience, and behold I am now at the point of death, and I find my soul burdened with so many sins? What would it have cost me to have broken off such a friendship, to have gone to confession every week, to have avoided certain occasions of sin? Ah! very little, but though it should have cost me a great deal of pain and labour, I ought to have submitted to every inconvenience in order to save my soul. Salvation is of greater importance to me than the dominion of the entire world. But, alas! the sentiments of negligent Christians at death are as fruitless as the sorrows of the damned, who mourn in hell over their sins as the cause of their perdition, but mourn in vain.

4. At that time they derive no consolation from their past amusements or pomps, from their exalted dignities, or from the humiliation of their rivals. On the contrary, at the hour of death, these things, like so many swords shall pierce their hearts. “Evil shall catch the unjust man unto destruction.” (Ps. 139:12.) At present the lovers of the world seek after banquets, dances, games, and scenes of laughter and joy; but, at the time of death this laughter and joy, as St. James says, shall be turned into mourning and affliction. “Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into sorrow.” (St. James 4:5.) Of this we see frequent examples. A young man who entertains his companions by sallies of wit and by immodest jests, is seized with a severe illness. His friends come to see him, and find him overwhelmed with

grief and melancholy. He indulges no more in jests, or laughter, or conversation. If he speaks at all, his words are words of terror or despair. His friends ask why he speaks so despondingly—why he is so melancholy. Have courage, they say: your illness is not dangerous. They endeavour to inspire hope and cheerfulness: but he is silent. And how can he be cheerful when he feels his conscience burdened with many sins, sees that he must soon appear before Jesus Christ to give an account of his entire life, and that he has much reason to fear that he shall receive the sentence of eternal death? He will then say: O fool that I have been! Oh! that I had loved God! Had I loved him, I should not now find myself in these straits, in this anguish. Oh! that I had time to tranquillize the troubles of my conscience? Let us pass to the second point.

SECOND POINT. OH! THAT I HAD TIME TO REPAIR THE EVIL I HAVE DONE! BUT NOW TIME IS AT AN END.

5. *Oh! that I had time,* he will say, *to repair the past!* But, when will he say this? When the oil in the lamp is consumed: when he is on the point of entering into eternity. One of the greatest causes of the distress and anguish of the careless Christian at the hour of death, is the remembrance of the bad use he has made of the time in which he ought to have acquired merits for heaven, and in which he has accumulated merits for hell. *Oh! that I had time!* Do you seek for time? You have lost so many nights in gaming, and so many years in indulging the senses, without ever thinking of your soul; and now you seek for time; but time is now no more. “Time shall be no longer.” (Apoc. 10:6.) Were you not already admonished by preachers to be prepared for death? were you not told that it would come upon you when you least expected it? “Be you ready,” says Jesus Christ; “for at what hour you think not the Son of Man will come.” (Luke 12:40.) You have despised my admonitions, and have voluntarily squandered the time which my goodness bestowed upon you in spite of your demerits; but now time is at an end. Listen to the words in which the priest that assists you shall tell you to depart from this world: Proficisere anima Christiana de hoc mundo. Go forth, Christian soul, from this world. And where shall you go? To eternity, to eternity. Death respects neither parents nor monarchs; when it comes, it

does not wait even for a moment. “Thou hast appointed his bounds, which cannot be passed.” (Job 14:5.)

6. Oh! what terror shall the dying man feel at hearing the assisting priest tell him to depart from this world! what dismay shall he experience in saying with himself: “This morning I am living, and this evening I shall be dead! “To-day I am in this house; to-morrow I shall be in the grave: and where shall my soul be found? His terror shall be increased when he sees the death-candle lighted, and when he hears the confessor order the relatives to withdraw from his chamber, and to return to it no more. It shall be still more increased when the confessor gives him the crucifix, and tells him to embrace it, saying: “Embrace Jesus Christ, and think no more of this world.” He takes the crucifix and kisses it; but, in kissing it, he trembles at the remembrance of the many injuries which he has offered to Jesus Christ. He would now wish to repent sincerely of all his injuries to his Saviour, but he sees that his repentance is forced by the necessity of his approaching death. “He,” says St. Augustine, “who is abandoned by sin before he abandons it, condemns it not freely, but through necessity.”

7. The common delusion of worldlings is, that earthly things appear great, and that the things of Heaven, as being distant and uncertain, appear to be of little value. They regard tribulations as insupportable, and grievous sins as unimportant. The miserable beings are as if they were shut up in a room filled with smoke, which hinders them from seeing objects before their eyes. But at the hour of death this darkness shall vanish, and the soul shall begin to see things in their real colours. At that hour all temporal things appear to be what they really are—vanity, lies, and deception; and the things of eternity assume their true value. Oh! how important shall judgment, hell, and eternity, which are so much disregarded during life, appear at the time of death. According as these shall begin to put on their true colours, the fears of the dying man shall increase. “In morte,” says St. Gregory, “tanto timor fit acrior, quanto retributio vicinior; et quanto vicinius judicium tangitur, tanto vehementius formidator.” (Mor. 25.) The nearer the sentence of the Judge approaches, the more sensible the fear of condemnation becomes. Hence the sick man will say: “Oh! in what anguish do I die! Unhappy me! Oh! that I knew that so unhappy a death awaited me!” You have not known; but you ought to have foreseen it; for you know that a good death could not be expected after a wicked life. But, since I

must soon die, oh! that I could at least, in the little time that remains, tranquillize my conscience! Let us pass to the third point.

THIRD POINT. OH! THAT I COULD, IN THE LITTLE TIME THAT REMAINS, REPAIR THE PAST! BUT, ALAS! THIS TIME IS NOT FIT FOR REPAIRING PAST EVILS.

8. The time allowed to careless Christians at the hour of death, is, for two reasons, unfit for tranquillizing the troubles of their conscience. First, because this time will be very short; for at the commencement, and for some days during the progress, of the disease, the sick man thinks only of physicians, of remedies, and of making his last will. During that time his relatives, friends, and even the physicians deceive him by holding out hopes of recovery. Hence, deluded by these hopes, he will not be able for some time to persuade himself that his death is at hand. When shall he begin to persuade himself that death is near? Only when he shall be at the very point of death. This is the second reason why that time is unfit for repairing the evils of the soul. At that time the dying man is sick in mind as well as in body. He shall be assailed by pains in the chest, spasms in the head, debility, and delirium. These shall render him unable to make any effort to excite a true detestation of his past sins, or to apply to the disorders of his past life a remedy which will calm the terrors of his conscience. The news of his approaching death will astound him to such a degree, that he shall be scarcely half alive.

9. A person labouring under a severe headache, which deprives him of sleep for two or three nights, will not even attempt to dictate a letter of ceremony. And at death when he feels but little, understands but little, and sees only a confusion of things which fills him with terror, the careless Christian adjusts a conscience burdened with the sins of thirty or forty years. Then are verified the words of the gospel: “The night cometh when no man worketh.” (John 9:4.) Then his conscience will say to him: “Now thou canst be steward no longer.” (Luke 16:2.) There is no more time for negotiation; what has been done, is done. “When distress cometh upon them, they will seek for peace, and there shall be none. Trouble shall come upon trouble.” (Ezech. 7:25, 26.)

10. It is often said of a person that he led a bad life, but afterwards died a good death; that by his sighs and tears he gave proofs of sincere repentance.

“Morientes non delieti pœnitentia,” says St. Augustine, “sed mortis urgentis admonitio compellit.” (Serm. xxxvi.) The wailing of such persons proceeds not from sorrow for their sins, but from the fear of imminent death. He was not afraid of sinning, says the holy doctor, but of burning. “Non meteuit peccare, sed adere.” (Epis. cxiv.) Till this moment the dying man has loved sinful objects: will he now detest them? Perhaps he will then love them with more tenderness; for the objects of our affections become more dear to us when we are afraid of losing them. The celebrated master of St. Bruno died with signs of repentance; but when laid in the coffin, he said that he was damned. If, at the hour of death, even the saints complain that on account of the state of the head, they can think but little of God, or make but little effort to excite good acts, how can the negligent Christian make these acts at death, when he was not in the habit of making them during life? It maybe said that he appeared to have a sincere sorrow for the wickedness of his past life. But, was his sorrow true sorrow? The devil persuades him that the wish to have sorrow is true sorrow; but he deceives him. The dying man will say: “I am sorry from the bottom of my heart,” etc.; but these words shall come from a heart of stone. “From the midst of the rocks they shall give forth their voices.” (Ps. 103:12.) But he has frequently been at confession, and has received all the sacraments; he has died in perfect resignation. Ah! the criminal who goes to be executed, appears to be perfectly resigned: but why? Because he cannot escape from the officers of justice, who bring him in chains to the place of execution.

11. O moment on which eternity depends! This moment made the saints tremble at the hour of death, and made them exclaim: “O God! where shall I be in a few hours?” “Sometimes,” says St. Gregory, “the soul even of the just man is disturbed by the terror of vengeance.” (Mor. xxiv.) What, then, shall the careless Christian, who has disregarded God, feel when he sees the scaffold prepared on which he must die? “His eyes shall see his own destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.” (Job 21:20.) He shall see with his own eyes death prepared for his soul, and shall from that moment begin to feel the anger of the Lord. The viaticum which he must receive, the extreme unction which will be administered to him, the crucifix which is placed in his hands, the recommendation of the soul which is read by the assisting priest, the lighting of the blessed candle—all these shall form the scaffold of divine justice. The poor sick man perceives that

he is already in a cold sweat, that he can no longer move or speak, that his respiration has begun to fail: in a word, he sees that the moment of death is at hand; he sees his soul defiled with sins; the Judge waiting for him; hell burning under his feet; and in this confusion of darkness and terror he shall enter into eternity.

12. “O that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last end.” (Deut. 32:29.) Behold, dearly beloved brethren, how the Holy Ghost exhorts us to provide now for the terrible straits and distress by which we shall be encompassed at death, and to adjust at present the accounts which we must render to God; for it will be then impossible to settle these accounts so as to save our souls. My crucified Jesus, I will not wait till death to embrace thee; I embrace thee at this moment. I love thee above all things; and because I love thee, I repent with my whole heart of all the offences and insults I have offered to thee, who art infinite goodness; and I purpose and hope, with thy grace, to love thee always, and never more to offend thee. Through the merits of thy passion I ask thee to assist me.

Sermon LII

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON IMPENITENCE

"Lord, my daughter is even now dead."—MATT. 9:18.

HOW great is God's goodness! how difficult it is to obtain pardon from a man whom we have offended! when sinners cast themselves at the feet of the Lord with humility and with sorrow for having offended him, he instantly pardons and embraces them. "Turn to me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn to you." (Zach. 1:3.) Sinners, says the Lord, I have turned my back on you, because you first turned your back on me: return to me, and I will return to you and will embrace you. When rebuked by the Prophet Nathan, David repented, and said: "I have sinned against the Lord; I have offended my God." David was instantly pardoned: for at the very moment that he confessed his guilt, Nathan said to him: "The Lord also hath taken away thy sin." (2 Kings 12:13.) But let us come to the gospel of the day, in which we find that a certain ruler, whose daughter was dead, went immediately to Jesus Christ, and asked him to restore her to life: "Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." In explaining this passage, St. Bonaventure turns to the sinner, and says: "Your daughter is your soul; she even now is dead by sin; hasten your conversion." Brother, your soul is your daughter, that has just died by committing sin. Return immediately to God. Hasten; if you delay, and defer your conversion from day to day, the wrath of God shall suddenly come upon you, and you shall be cast into hell. "Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day." (Eccl. 5:8, 9.) Behold the sermon for this day, in which I will show, first, the danger to which he who is in the state of sin, and defers his conversion, is exposed; and secondly, the remedy to be adopted by him who is in sin, and wishes to save his soul.

FIRST POINT. THE DANGER TO WHICH A PERSON IN SIN, WHO DEFERS HIS CONVERSION, IS EXPOSED.

1. St. Augustine considers three states of Christians. The first is the state of those who have always preserved their baptismal innocence; the second is the state of those who have fallen into sin, and have afterwards returned to God, and persevered in grace; the third is of those who have fallen and have always relapsed into sin, and are found in that unhappy state at death. Speaking of the first and second class, he pronounces them secure of salvation; but, speaking of the third he says: “Non dico, non præsumo, non promitto.” (Hom. xli. int. 50.) “I do not say; I do not presume; I do not promise.” He neither says, nor presumes, nor promises, that such sinners are saved. From these words it appears that, in his opinion, it is very improbable that they obtain eternal life. St. Thomas teaches (2, 2, qu. 109, a. 8) that he who is in the state of mortal sin cannot long abstain from the commission of some new sin. And St. Gregory says: “A sin which is not blotted out by repentance by its weight soon draws to another sin; hence it is not only a sin, but the cause of sin.” (1. 3, Mor. *c.* ix.) One sin is the cause of another, because, in the sinner reason is disordered, and inclines him to evil; and therefore he cannot long resist temptation. “Quando,” says St. Anselm, “quis manet in peccato, ratio jam est deordinata et ideo veniente tentatione faciet id quod est facilius agore.” Hence, according to the holy doctor, though they understand the great advantage of sanctifying grace, sinners, because they are deprived of grace, always relapse, in spite of all their efforts to avoid sin. “Per peccatum non potest prosequi bonum quod cogniscit, conatur et labitur.” But how can the branch that is cut off from the vine produce fruit? “As,” says Jesus Christ, “the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me.” (John 15:4.)

2. But some young persons may say: “I will hereafter give myself to God.” Behold the false hope of sinners, which leads them to remain in sin till death, and from death conducts them to hell! Who are you that say, you will hereafter give yourself to God? But who, I ask, promises you that you shall have time to give yourself to God, and that you shall not meet with a sudden death, which will take you out of this world before you give yourself to him? “He,” says St. Gregory, “who has promised pardon to

penitents has not promised to-morrow to sinners.” (Hom. xii. in Ev.) The Lord has promised pardon to all who repent of their sins; but to those who wish to continue in sin he has not promised time for repentance. Do you say, *hereafter?* But Jesus Christ tells you that time is in the hand of God, and not under your control. “It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father has put in his own power.” (Acts 1:7.) We read in the Gospel of St. Luke, that Jesus Christ, seeing a fig-tree which was fruitless for three years, ordered it to be cut down. “He said to the dresser of the vineyard: Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none. Cut it down therefore. Why cumbereth it the ground?” (Luke 13:7.) Tell me, you who say that you will hereafter give yourself to God, for what purpose does he preserve your life? Is it that you may continue to insult him by sin? No; he gives you life that you may renounce sin, and change your conduct. “Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance?” (Rom. 2:4.) But you are resolved not to amend; and if you wish, to give yourself to God only hereafter, he will say of your soul to the dresser of his vineyard: “Cut it down. Why cumbereth it the ground?” Why should such a sinner be allowed to remain on earth? Is it to continue to offend me? Cut down this fruitless tree, and cast it into the fire. “Every tree, therefore, that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire.” (Matt. 3:10.)

3. But, should God hereafter give you time for repentance, will you, if you do not now repent, return to him hereafter? Sins, like so many chains, keep the sinner in bondage. “He is first bound with the ropes of his own sins.” (Prov. 5:22.) My brother, if you cannot now break the cords by which you are at present bound, will you be able to break them hereafter, when they shall be doubled by the commission of new sins? To give him an idea of the degree of folly which impenitent sinners reach, our Lord showed one day to the Abbot Arsenius, an Ethiopian, who, not being able to raise a load of faggots, added to their weight, and thus became less liable to raise it. Sinners, said the Saviour to the holy abbot, act in a similar manner. They wish to get rid of their past sins, and, at the same time, commit new ones. These new sins shall lead them into others more numerous and more enormous. Cain sinned against his brother, first, by envy; then, by hatred; and afterwards, by murder; finally, he despaired of the divine mercy, saying: “My iniquity is greater than that I may obtain pardon.” (Gen. 4:13.) Judas

also was first guilty of the sin of avarice; he then betrayed Jesus Christ, and afterwards hanged himself. Sins chain the sinner, and make him their slave, so that he knowingly brings himself to destruction. “His own iniquities catch the wicked.” (Prov. 5:22.)

4. Moreover, his sins weigh down the sinner to such a degree, that he no longer regards heaven nor his own salvation. “My iniquities,” said David with tears, “are growing over my head, and, as a heavy burden, are become heavy upon me.” (Ps. 37:5.) Hence the miserable man loses reason, thinks only of earthly goods, and thus forgets the divine judgments. “And they perverted their own minds, and turned away their eyes, that they might not look unto heaven, nor remember just judgments.” (Dan. 13:9.) He even hates the light, because he fears that it will interrupt his criminal pleasures. “Every one that doth evil hateth the light.” (John 3:20.) Hence, he becomes miserably blind, and goes round about continually from sin to sin. “The wicked walk round about.” (Ps. 11:9.) He then despises admonitions, divine calls, hell, heaven, and God. “The wicked, when he is come into the depth of sins, comtemneth.” (Prov. 18:3.)

5. “He hath,” says Job, “torn me with wound upon wound, he hath rushed in upon me like a giant.” (Job 16:15.) By conquering one temptation, a man acquires not only additional strength to repel future assaults, but also diminishes the power of the devil. And, on the other hand, when we yield to any temptation, the devil becomes like a giant, and we become so weak, that we have scarcely strength to resist him any longer. If you receive a wound from an enemy you lose strength. If to this new wounds be added you shall be exhausted, and rendered unable to defend yourself. This is what happens to the fools who say: “I will hereafter give myself to God.” How can they resist the attacks of the devil, after they have lost their strength, and after their wounds have mortified? “My sores are putrefied and corrupted, because of my foolishness.” (Ps. 37:6.) At its commencement a wound is easily healed; but when it becomes gangrenous, the cure is most difficult. Recourse must be had to the cautery; but even this remedy is in many cases ineffectual.

6. But further, St. Paul teaches, that God “will have all men to be saved” (1 Tim. 2:4); and that Jesus Christ came on earth for the salvation of sinners: “Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners.” (1 Tim. 1:15.) God certainly wills the salvation of all who desire it: he wills the salvation

of those who wish to save their souls; but not of those who labour for their own damnation. Jesus Christ has come to save sinners. To save our souls, two things are necessary: first, the grace of God; and secondly, your own cooperation. “Behold, I stand at the gate and knock: if any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come unto him.” (Apoc. 3:20.) Then, in order that God may enter into us by his grace, we must, on our part, obey his calls, and open our hearts to him. Likewise, St. Paul says, “with fear and trembling work out your salvation.” (Phil. 2:12.) He says, *work out.* Then we, too, must co-operate to our salvation by good works; otherwise the Lord will only give us sufficient grace by which we shall be able to save our souls, but by which we certainly will not save them. Behold, the reason: he who is in the state of sin, and continues to commit sin, is daily more and more attached to the flesh, and more removed from God. Now, how can God, by his grace, approach to us, when we withdraw farther from him? He then retires from us, and becomes less liberal of his favours. “And I will make it desolate—and I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it.” (Isa. 5:6.) When the soul continues to offend God he abandons her, and withdraws his helps. Hence she shall cease to feel remorse of conscience; she shall be left without light; and the blindness of her understanding and the hardness of her heart shall be increased. She shall become utterly insensible to the calls of God, to the maxims of faith, and to the melancholy examples of other rebellious souls that have closed their career in hell.

“But who knows,” the obstinate sinner will say, “but God will show me the same mercy which he has shown to certain great sinners? In answer to this, St. Chrysostom says: “Fortasse dabit, inquis: cur dicis fortasse? Contigit aliquando; sed cogita quod de anima deliberas?” (Hom. xxii. in 2 Cor.) You say: “Perhaps God will give me the grace of salvation.” But why do you say *perhaps?* Is it because he has sometimes given to great sinners the grace of eternal life? But remember, says the holy doctor, that there is question of your soul, which, if once lost, is lost for ever. I, too, take you up, and admit that God has, by certain extraordinary graces, saved some enormous sinners. But these cases are very rare; they are prodigies and miracles of grace, by which God wished to show the boundlessness of his mercy. But, ordinarily, sinners who wish to continue in sin, are, in the end, cast into hell. On them are executed the threats of the Lord against obstinate sinners. “You have despised my counsels, and neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction. . . . Then they will call on me, and I will not hear.” (Prov. 1:25, 26, 28.) I, says the Lord, have called on them again and again, but they have refused to hear me. “But they did not hear nor incline their ears; but hardened their neck, that they might not hear me.” (Jer. 17:23.) Now they call upon me, it is but just that I refuse to listen to their cries. God bears, but he does not bear for ever; when the time of vengeance arrives he punishes past and present iniquities. “For the Most High is a patient rewarder.” (Eccl. 5:4.) And according to St. Augustine, the longer God has waited for negligent sinners the more severely he will chastise them. “Quanto diutius expectat Deus, ut emenderis; tanto gravius judicabit, si neglexeris.” (Lib. de util. ag. pæn.) He who promises to amend, and wilfully neglects to return to God, is unworthy of the grace of true repentance.

But God is full of mercy. He is full of mercy; but he is not so stupid as to act without reason: to show mercy to those who continue to insult him would be stupidity, and not goodness. “Is thy eye evil because I am good?” (Matt. 20:15.) Will you persevere in wickedness because I am bountiful? God is good, but he is also just, and exhorts us all to observe his law, if we wish to save our souls. “If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments.” (Matt. 19:17.) Were God to show mercy to the wicked as well as to the just, and to give to all the grace of conversion before death, he would hold out a strong temptation even to the saints to commit sin: but, no! when his mercies have reached their term he punishes, and pardons no more. “And my eye shall not spare thee, and I will show thee no pity.” (Ezec. 7:4.) Hence he says: Pray that your flight may not be in the winter or on the Sabbath.” (Matt. 24:20.) We are prevented from working in the winter by the cold, and on the Sabbath by the law. In this passage the Redeemer gives us to understand that, for impenitent sinners, a time shall come when they would wish to give themselves to God, but shall find themselves prevented by their bad habits from returning to him. Of this there are numberless melancholy examples. In his sermons on a happy death, Cataneus relates, that a dissolute young man, when admonished to give up his wickedness, said: I have a saint who is omnipotent, and this is the mercy of God. Death came; the unhappy man sent for a confessor; but while he was preparing for confession, the Devil wrote down before his eyes all his sins. He was seized with terror, and exclaimed: Alas! what a long catalogue of sins! And before he was able to make his confession he expired. In his sermons for Sundays Campadelli relates that a young nobleman addicted to sins of the flesh, was warned by God and by men to amend his life; but he despised all their admonitions. He afterwards fell into a severe illness, confessed his sins, and promised to change his life; but, after his recovery, he returned to the vomit. Behold the vengeance of God! Being one day in a field during the vintage, he took fever, went home, and feeling that the disease was far advanced, he sent in haste for a priest who lived near the house. The priest comes, enters the house, salutes the sick man, but sees a frightful spectacle, the eyes and mouth open, the face black as jet. He calls the sick man, but finds that he is dead. Dearly beloved brethren, take care that you, too, be not miserable examples of the justice of God. Give up sin; but give it up from this moment; for, if you continue to commit sin, the same vengeance which has fallen on so many others shall also fall on you. Let us come to the remedy.

SECOND POINT. THE REMEDY FOR THOSE WHO FIND THEMSELVES IN SIN, AND WISH TO SAVE THEIR SOULS.

9. Jesus Christ was one day asked, if the number of the elect is small. “Lord, are they few that are saved? But he said to them: Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and they shall not be able.” (Luke 13:23, 24.) He says that many seek to enter heaven, but do not enter; and why? Because they wish to obtain eternal life without inconvenience, and without making strong efforts to abstain from forbidden pleasures. Therefore, he said: “strive to enter at the narrow gate.” The gate of heaven is narrow: to enter it we must labour, and must do violence to ourselves. And we ought to be persuaded that what we can do to-day we shall not be always able to do hereafter. The delay of conversion sends many Christians to hell: the weakness, darkness, and obduracy of the soul are, as we have already said, daily increased, and the divine helps are diminished. Thus, the soul shall die in her sins. You say: *I will hereafter return to God.* Then you know that, to save your soul, you must renounce sin—why do you not give it up now that God calls you to repentance? *If at some time,* says St. Augustine, *why not now?* The time which you now have

to repair the past shall not be given to you hereafter; and the mercy which God shows you at present will not be extended to you at a future time. If, then, you wish to save your soul, do immediately what you must one day do. Go to confession as soon as possible, and tremble lest every delay may be the eternal ruin of your soul.

10. “Nullus,” says St. Fulgentius, “sub spe misericordiæ debet diutius in peccatis remanere, cum nolit in corpore sub spe diutius ægrotare.” (St. Fulg. ad Petr. Diac.) Were a physician, says the saint, to offer you a remedy for sickness, would you say: I do not wish to be cured at present, because I hope to recover hereafter? And when there is a question of the salvation of your soul, you say: I will remain in sin, because I hope that God will be merciful to me at a future time. But if, according to his just judgments, the Lord should not show you mercy hereafter, what shall become of you?—shall you not be damned? Let us, says the Apostle, do good while we have time to do it. “Therefore,” whilst we have time let us work good to all men.” (Gal. 6:10.) For time may not be given to us to do good hereafter. Hence the Lord exhorts us to guard our souls with great care; because we know not the hour when he will come to demand an account of our life. “Watch ye, therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour.” (Matt. 25:18.)

11. “My soul is continually in my hands.” (Ps. 118:109.) He who wears on his finger a ring containing a diamond of great value, looks frequently at the ring to see if the diamond be secure: it is thus we ought to watch over our souls. And should we see that it has been lost by sin, we ought instantly to adopt every means in our power to recover it. We ought to turn immediately to Jesus, our Saviour, like Magdalene, who, as soon as she knew that he sat at meat, ran to him, cast herself at his feet, and by her tears obtained pardon. (Luke 7:37.) “Now the axe is laid to the root of the tree.” (Luke 3:9.) For all who are found in sin, the axe of divine justice is at hand to take away their life as soon as the time of vengeance arrives. Arise, then Christian souls, and if you are bound by any bad habit, burst your chains, and remain no longer the slaves of Satan. “Loose the bonds from off thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.” (Isa. 52:2.) “Posuisti vestigium,” says St. Ambrose, “supra voraginem culpæ, cito aufer pedem.” You have placed your foot on the mouth of a vortex—that is, on sin, which is the mouth of

hell: take away your foot, and retire; otherwise you shall fall into an unfathomable abyss.

12. *I find myself subject to an evil habit.* But, if you wish to give up sin, who can force you to commit it? All bad habits and all the temptations of hell are overcome by the grace of God. Recommend yourself to the heart of Jesus Christ, and he will give you grace to conquer all enemies. But should you be in any proximate occasion of sin you must immediately take it away, otherwise you shall relapse. “Potius præscinde,” says St. Jerome, “quam solve.” Do not wait to loose your bonds gradually; cut them by a single stroke. The devil seeks to make you slow in shaking off your fetters. Look for a good confessor; he will tell you what to do. And should you have the misfortune of falling hereafter into any mortal sin, go immediately to confession, even on the same day or the same night, if you can. Finally, listen to what I now say to you: God is ready to assist you: if you wish, it is in your power to save your souls. Tremble, brethren, lest these words of mine, if you despise them, should be for you so many swords in hell for all eternity.

Sermon LIII

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON BLASPHEMY

“When, therefore, you shall see the abomination of desolation.”—MATT. 24:15.

ALL sins are hateful in the sight of God; but the sin of blasphemy ought more properly to be called an abomination to the Lord. Every mortal sin, as the Apostle says, dishonours God. “By transgression of the law, thou dishonourest God.” (Rom. 2:23.) Other sins dishonour God indirectly by the violation of his law; but blasphemy dishonours him directly by the profanation of his most holy name. Hence St. Chrysostom teaches, that no sin exasperates the Lord so much as the sin of blasphemy against his adorable name. “Nihil ita exacerbat Deum, sicut quando nomen ejus blasphematur.” Dearly beloved Christians, allow me, then, this day, to show you, first, the great enormity of the sin of blasphemy; and secondly, the great rigour with which God punishes it.

FIRST POINT. ON THE GREAT ENORMITY OF THE SIN OF BLASPHEMY.

1. What is blasphemy? It is the uttering of language injurious to God; it is, according to the definition of theologians, “contumeliosa in Deum locutio;” or, contumely against God. O God! whom does man assail when he blasphemes? He directly attacks the Lord. “He hath strengthened himself against the Almighty.” (Job. 15:25.) Are you not afraid, O blasphemer, says St. Ephrem, that fire will come down from heaven and devour you? or that the earth shall open and swallow you up? “Non metuis ne forte ignis de cœlo descendat et devoret te, qui sic os adversus omnipotentem aperis? Neque vereris, ne terra te absorbeat?” (Paren. 3.) The devil, says St. Gregory Nazianzen, trembles at the name of Jesus: and we are not afraid to profane it. “Domones ad Christi nomen exhorrescunt, nos vero nomen adeo

venerandum contumelia afficere non veremur.” (Orat. xx.) The vindictive assail a man who is their own equal; but, by their blasphemies blasphemers appear to seek revenge against God, who does or permits what is displeasing to them. There is a great difference between an act of contempt towards the portrait of a king, and an insult offered to his person. Man is the image of God; but the blasphemer offends God himself. “He who blasphemes,” says St. Athanasius, “acts against the very Deity itself.” The man who violates the law is guilty of a crime; but he who attacks the person of his sovereign commits an act of treason; therefore he receives no mercy, but is chastised with the utmost severity. What, then, shall we say of the man who blasphemes and insults the majesty of God? “If,” says the high-priest Heli, “one man shall sin against another, God may be appeased in his behalf; but if a man shall sin against the Lord, who shall pray for him?” (1 Kings 2:25.) The sin of blasphemy, then, is so enormous, that the saints themselves appear not to have courage to pray for a blasphemer.

2. Some sacrilegious tongues blaspheme the God who preserves their existence! “Tu Deo benefacienti tibi,” says St. Chrysostom, “et tui curam agenti maledicis.” O God! you stand with one foot at the gate of hell; and if God, in his marcy, did not preserve your life you should be damned for ever: and, instead of thanking him for his goodness, you, at the very time that he bestows his favours upon you, blaspheme his holy name. “If,” says the Lord, “my enemy hath reviled me, I would verily have borne with it. (Ps. 54:13.) Had you treated me with contumely and insult at the time that I chastised you, I would be more willing to bear with your impiety; but you revile me at the time that I confer my favours upon you. O diabolical tongue! exclaims St. Bernardine of Sienna, what could have induced you to blaspheme your God, who has created you, and redeemed you with his blood? “O lingua diabolica, quid, potest te inducere ad blasphemandum Deus tuum qui te plasmavit, qui te pretioso sanguine redemit?” (Serm. xxxiii.) Some expressly blaspheme the name of Jesus Christ—of that God who died on a cross for the love of them. O God! if we were not subject to death, we should be glad to die for Jesus Christ, in order to make some little return of gratitude to a God who gave his life for us. I say, *a little return of gratitude;* for there is no comparison between the death of a miserable creature, and the death of a God. But instead of loving and blessing this God, you, as St. Augustine says, revile and curse him. “Christ was scourged

by the lash of the Jews; but he is not less scourged by the blasphemies of false Christians." (S. Aug. in Joan.) Some have blasphemed and insulted the Virgin Mary, that good mother, who loves us so tenderly, and prays continually for us. Some of these blasphemers have received a horrible chastisement from God. Surius relates, in the 7th August, that a certain impious Christian blasphemed the blessed Virgin, and pierced her image with a dagger. As soon as he went out of the church to which the image belonged, he was struck by a thunderbolt, and reduced to ashes. The infamous Nestorious blasphemed, and induced others to blaspheme, most holy Mary, by asserting that she was not the mother of God. But, before death, his impious tongue was eaten away by worms, and he died in despair.

3. "Who is this who speaketh blasphemies?" (Luke 5:21.) He is a Christian who has received the holy sacrament of baptism, in which his tongue has been in a certain manner consecrated to God. A learned author says, that on the tongue of all who are baptized is placed blessed salt, "that the tongues of Christians may be made, as it were, sacred, and may be accustomed to bless God." (Clericat. tom. 1. Dec. Tract. 52.) And the blasphemer afterwards makes his tongue, as St. Bernardine says, a sword to pierce the heart of God. "Lingua blasphemantis efficitur quasi gladius cor Dei penetrans." (Tom. 4. serm. xxxiii.) Hence the saint adds that no sin contains in itself so much malice as the sin of blasphemy. "Nullum est peccatum quod habet in se tantem iniquitatem sicut blasphemia." St. Chrysostom says, that "there is no sin worse than blasphemy; for in it is the accumulation of all evils, and every punishment." St. Jerome teaches the same doctrine. "Nothing," says the holy doctor, "is more horrible than blasphemy; for every sin, compared with blasphemy, is small." (In Isa. 118.) And here it is necessary to observe, that blasphemies against the saints, against holy things or holidays—such as the sacraments, the Mass, Easter Sunday, Christmas Day, Holy Saturday—are of the same species as blasphemies against God; for St. Thomas teaches, that, as the honour paid to the saints, to holy things, and holidays, is referred to God, so an insult offered to the saints is injurious to God, who is the foundation of sanctity. "Sicut Deus, in Sanctis suis laudatur," as we read in the 150th Psalm, "laudate Dominum in Sanctis ejus, ita et blasphemia in sanctos in Deum redundat." (S. Thom. qu. 13, a 13, a 1, ad 2.) The saint adds, that blasphemy is one of the greatest of the sins against religion. (Ibid. a. 3.)

4. Thus, from the works of St. Jerome we may infer, that blasphemy is more grievous than theft, than adultery, or murder. All other sins, says St. Bernardine proceeds from frailty or ignorance; but the sin of blasphemy proceeds from malice. “Omnia alia peccata vindentur procedere partim ex fragilitate, partim ex ignorantia, sed peccatum blasphemiæ procedit ex propria malitia.” (Cic. serm. xxx.) For it proceeds from a bad will, and from a certain hatred conceived against God. Hence the blasphemer renders himself like the damned, who, as St. Thomas says, do not now blaspheme with the mouth—for they have no body,—but with the heart, cursing the divine justice which punishes them. “The detestation of the divine justice is in them an interior blasphemy of the heart.” (S. Thom. 2, 2, qu. 13, a. 4.) The saint adds, that we may believe that as the saints in heaven, after the resurrection shall praise God with the tongue, so the reprobates in hell shall also blaspheme him with the tongue. “Et credibile est quod post resurrectionem erit in eis etiam vocalis blasphemiæ sicut in sanctis vocalis laus Dei.” Justly, then, has a learned author called blasphemy the language of hell; because, as God speaks by the mouth of the saints so the devil speaks by the mouth of blasphemers. “Blasphemia est peccatum diabolicum, loquela infernalis: sicut enim Spiritus Sanctus loquitur per bonos ita et diabolus per blasphemos.” (Mansi. Discors, 7, num. 2.) When St. Peter denied Christ in the Palace of Pilate, and swore that he did not know him, the Jews said, that his language showed that he was a disciple of Jesus, because he spoke the language of his Master. “Surely,” they said, “thou also art one of them; for even thy speech doth discover thee.” (Matt. 26:73.) Thus we may say to every blasphemer: You are from hell; you are a true disciple of Lucifer; for you speak the language of the damned. St. Antonine writes, that the entire occupation of the damned in hell consists in blaspheming and cursing God. “Non aliud apus inferno exercent nisi blasphemare Deum et maledicere.” (Part 2, tit. 7, cap. iii.) In proof of this doctrine the saint adduces the following text of the Apocalypse: “And they gnawed their tongues for pain: and they blasphemed the God of heaven.” (Apoc. 16:10, 11.) The holy doctor afterwards adds, that he who indulges in the vice of blasphemy, already belongs to the number of the damned, because he practises their art. “Qui ergo hoc vitio detinetur ostendit se pertinere ad statum damnatorum, ex quo exercet artem corum.” (Ibid.)

5. To the malice of blasphemy is added the malice of scandal, which generally accompanies blasphemy; for this sin is ordinarily committed externally and in presence of others. St. Paul reproved the Jews, because by their sins they caused the Gentiles to blaspheme our God, and to laugh at his law. “For the name of God, through you, is blasphemed by the Gentiles.” (Rom. 2:24.) But how much more criminal are Christians, who, by their blasphemies, induce other Christians to imitate their example! How does it happen, that in certain provinces blasphemies are never, or at least very seldom, heard, and that in other places this horrible vice is so prevalent, that the Lord may say of them: “My name is continually blasphemed all the day long.” (Isa. 52:5.) In the squares, houses, cities, villas, nothing is heard but blasphemies. How does this happen? Some of the inhabitants learn to blaspheme from others: children from their parents, servants from their masters, the young from the old. In some families particularly the vice of blasphemy seems to be transmitted as an inheritance. The father is a blasphemer; hence, the sons and nephews blaspheme: to this inheritance their descendants succeed. O accursed father! Instead of instructing your children to bless the name of God, you teach them to blaspheme him and his saint. “But I reprove them when they blaspheme in my presence.” Of what use are these reproofs, when with your own mouth you give them bad example. For God’s sake, for God’s sake, O fathers of families, never blaspheme; but be particularly on your guard never to blaspheme in presence of your children. This is a crime which God can no longer bear in you. And whenever you hear any of your children utter a blasphemy, reprove them severely, and, in obedience to the advice of St. Chrysostom, strike him on the mouth, and you shall thus sanctify your hand. “Contere os ipsius, manum tuam percussione sanctificat.” (Hom. i ad pop.) Certain fathers unmercifully beat a child for the neglect of some temporal business; but if he blaspheme the saints, they either laugh at his blasphemies, or listen to them in silence. St. Gregory relates (Dial. 4, cap. xvii.), that a child of five years, the son of a Roman nobleman, was in the habit of profaning the name of God. The father neglected to correct him; but he one day saw his son pursued by certain black men. The child ran to embrace his father; but they, who were so many devils, killed him in the father’s arms, and carried him with them to hell.

SECOND POINT. ON THE GREAT RIGOUR WITH WHICH GOD PUNISHES THE SIN OF BLASPHEMY.

6. “Woe to the sinful nation . . . they have blasphemed the Holy One of Israel.” (Isa. 1:4.) Woe to blasphemers, eternal woe to them: for, according to Tobias, they shall be condemned. “They shall be condemned that blaspheme thee.” (Job 13:16.) The Lord has said by the mouth of Job, “Thou imitatest the tongue of blasphemers; thy own mouth shall condemn, and not I.” (Job 15:5, 6.) In pronouncing the sentence of their condemnation, God will say: It is not I that condemn you to hell; it is your own mouth, with which you have dared to revile me and my saints, that condemns you. Poor miserable blasphemers! They shall continue to blaspheme in hell for their greater torment: their very blasphemies in hell shall always remind them that they are damned for ever in punishment of their blasphemies on earth.

7. But blasphemers are punished not only in hell, but even on this earth. In the Old Law they were stoned by the people. “And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die; all the multitude shall stone him.” (Lev. 24:16.) In the New Law they were condemned to death by the Emperor Justinian. St. Louis, King of France, ordered them to be punished by perforating their tongue, and by branding their forehead with a red hot iron; and when they afterwards relapsed into blasphemy, he ordained that they should die on the scaffold. (Homo Bon. de cas. res. p. 2, c. i.) Another author says, that the law renders blasphemers (as being infamous) incapable of giving testimony. (Navarr. cons. 11, de offic. ord.) By the constitution of Gregory the Fourteenth, they were deprived of Christian burial. In the *Authentica ut non luxur hom.*, it is said that blasphemies bring on famine, earthquakes, and pestilence. “Propter blasphemias, et fames, et terræmotus et pestilentia fiunt.” You, O blasphemer, complain that though you labour and submit to fatigue, you are always in poverty. You say: “I know not why I am always in misery: some malediction must have fallen on my family.” No; the blasphemies which you utter are the cause of your wretchedness, and make you always an object of God’s malediction.

8. O! how many melancholy examples could I mention of blasphemers who have died a bad death. Father Segneri relates, (Tom. 1, Rag. 8,) that, in Gascony, two men who had blasphemed the blood of Jesus Christ, were

soon after killed in a quarrel, and torn to pieces by dogs. In Mexico, a blasphemer being once reproved, answered: "I will hereafter blaspheme more than I have hitherto done." During the night he found his tongue sowed under the palate, and died in that miserable state without giving the least sign of repentance. Dresselius relates, that a certain person was struck blind in the very act of blaspheming. Another, in uttering a blasphemy against St. Anthony, was seized by a flame which issued from the image of the saint, and was burnt alive. In his book against blasphemy, Sarnelli relates, that in Constantinople, a man called Simon Tornaco, who had blasphemed God, began like a mad dog to lacerate his own flesh, and died in his madness. Cantapratensis states (cap. xlviii.), that a person who had been guilty of blasphemy, had his eyes distorted, and that falling on the ground he bellowed like an ox, and continued to roar aloud until he expired. In the *Gallician Mercury* (lib. x.) we read that a man named Michael, who had been condemned to be hanged, when he felt the pain of the halter, burst out into blasphemies, and died instantly. After death his head fell from the body, and the tongue remained hanging out from the neck, as black as coal. I abstain from fatiguing you with other terrible examples: you can find a great many of them in the work of Father Sarnelli against blasphemy.

9. But to conclude. Tell me, O blasphemers, if there be any of you present, what benefit do you derive from your accursed blasphemies? You do not receive pleasure from them. Bellarmine says, that blasphemy is a sin which produces no pleasure. You derive no profit from them; for, as I have already said, your blasphemies are the cause of your poverty and wretchedness. You derive no honour from them; your fellow-blasphemers have a horror of your blasphemies, and call you *a mouth of hell.* Tell me, then, why you blaspheme. "Father, the habit which I have contracted is the cause of my blasphemies." But can this habit excuse you before God? If a son beat his father, and say to him: "My father, have compassion on me: for I have contracted a habit of beating you:" would the father take pity on him? You say that you blaspheme through the anger caused by your children, your wife, or your master. Your wife or your master put you into a passion, and you take revenge on the saints. What injury have the saints done to you? They intercede before God in your behalf, and you blaspheme them. But "the devil tempts me at that time." If the devil tempts you, follow the example of a certain young man, who, when tempted to blaspheme,

went for advice to the Abbot Pemene. The abbot told him, that as often as the devil tempted him to commit this sin, his answer should be: Why should I blaspheme that God who has created me, and bestowed so many benefits upon me? I will for ever praise and bless him. The young man followed the advice, and Satan ceased to tempt him. When you are excited to anger, can you speak nothing but blasphemies? Say on such occasions: “Accursed sin, I hate thee: Lord, assist me: Mary, obtain for me the gift of patience.” And if you have hitherto contracted the abominable habit of blaspheming, renew every morning, as soon as you rise, the resolution of doing violence to yourself to abstain from all blasphemies during the day: and then say three *Aves* to most holy Mary, that she may obtain for you the grace to resist every temptation by which you shall be assailed.

THE END.

MISCELLANY

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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The Centenary Edition

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

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THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION

RNDE PATER:

Memoriam gloriosi Congregationis SS. Redemptoris Fundatoris, centesimo, ab ejus obitu, adventante anno, pio et admodum opportuno consilio recolere aggressus es, dum omnia ipsius opera anglice vertenda, et typis edenda curasti. Summus itaque Pontifex, cui tum S. Doctoris exaltatio, tum fidelium utilitas summopere cordi est libentissime excepit 9 volumina huc usque edita, quæ Ei offerre voluisti. Ac dum meritas Tibi laudes de hac perutili tua cura præbet, et gratias de filiali oblatione agit, Benedictionem, quam tuis obsequentissimis litteris petiisti, Emi quoque archiepiscopi Baltimorensis commendationi obsecundans, ex intimo corde impertiit.

Hæc ad Te deferens fausta cuncta ac felicia a Domino Tibi adprecor.

Paternitatis Tuæ,

Addictissimus,

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.

Romae, die 4 Junii, 1888.

TRANSLATION.

Reverend Father:

As the centenary of the death of the illustrious Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer drew near, you conceived the pious and appropriate plan of shedding a new lustre on his memory by translating all his works into English and publishing them. The Holy Father, therefore, who has at heart the spiritual advancement of the faithful, as well as the exaltation of the holy Doctor, has most graciously accepted the nine volumes thus far published, which you wished to present to him. While bestowing upon you well-deserved praise for your useful labor, and thanking you for the gift inspired by your filial love, he gives you from his heart the blessing which you humbly asked for in your letter, complying also with the request of the Most Rev. Archbishop of Baltimore.

As the bearer of this, I wish you all happiness in the Lord.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.

Rome, June 4, 1888.

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APPROBATION.

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Nicholas Mauron, Superior-General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled “Miscellany,” which is Volume XVII. of the new and complete edition in English of the works of St. Alphonsus de Liguori, called “The Centenary Edition.”

ELIAS FRED. SCHAUER,

Sup. Prov. Baltimorensis.

Baltimore, MD., March 5, 1890.

CONTENTS

INDEX

MISCELLANY

- CONTENTS
- Miscellany
    - NOTICE
    - HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER
        - I. ST. ALPHONSUS BEFORE FOUNDING HIS INSTITUTE
        - II. THE SAINT ESTABLISHES HIS CONGREGATION
        - III. FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE INSTITUTE TILL THE APPROBATION OF THE RULES
        - IV. FROM THE APPROBATION OF THE RULES TILL THE SECOND GENERAL CHAPTER
        - V. FROM THE SECOND GENERAL CHAPTER TILL THE DEATH OF ST. ALPHONSUS
        - VI. FROM THE DEATH OF ST. ALPHONSUS TILL THE DEATH OF BLESSED FATHER CLEMENT MARIA HOFBAUER
        - VII. FROM THE DEATH OF BLESSED CLEMENT HOFBAUER TILL THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MOTHER-HOUSE OF THE INSTITUTE AT ROME
        - VIII. THE CONDITION OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER IN THE YEAR 1887, THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF ST. ALPHONSUS
- Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer
- PART I
  Missions and Other Exercises
    - *Chapter I*
      THE MISSIONS
    - *Chapter II*
      OTHER EXERCISES

PART II
The Particular Obligations of the Members of the Congregation

Chapter I
THE VOWS OF POVERTY, CHASTITY, OBEDIENCE, AND PERSEVERANCE

1. THE VOW OF POVERTY

2. THE VOW OF CHASTITY

3. THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE

4. THE VOW OF PERSEVERANCE

Chapter II
THE FREQUENTATION OF THE SACRAMENTS, PRAYER, AND CERTAIN EXERCISES OF HUMILITY

1. THE FREQUENTATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

2. PRAYER AND EXERCISES OF HUMILITY

Chapter III
SILENCE, RECOLLECTION, MORTIFICATION, AND CORPORAL PENANCES

1. SILENCE AND RECOLLECTION

2. MORTIFICATION AND CORPORAL PENANCES

Chapter IV
THE DOMESTIC MEETINGS

PART III
GOVERNMENT of the Congregation

Chapter I
THE RECTOR MAJOR AND OTHER OFFICIALS

I. THE RECTOR MAJOR AND HIS CONSULTORS

II. THE ADMONITOR OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

III. THE PROCURATOR-GENERAL

IV. THE VISITORS

V. THE LOCAL RECTOR AND OTHER OFFICIALS.

Chapter II
THE QUALITIES REQUISITE IN THOSE THAT ARE TO BE ADMITTED

Counsels Concerning a Religious Vocation

I. WE OUGHT TO CONFORM TO THE DESIGNS OF GOD IN THE CHOICE OF A STATE OF LIFE, WHATEVER IT MAY BE

II. THE VOCATION TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO FOLLOW IT PROMPTLY

III. MEANS TO BE EMPLOYED FOR PRESERVING A RELIGIOUS VOCATION IN THE WORLD

IV. DISPOSITION REQUIRED FOR ENTERING RELIGION

V. TRIALS THAT WE MUST EXPECT TO HAVE IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

CONCLUSION

Considerations for those who are Called to the Religious State

Consideration I
HOW THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL IS SECURED BY ENTERING THE RELIGIOUS STATE

PRAYER

Consideration II
THE HAPPY DEATH OF THE RELIGIOUS

PRAYER

Consideration III
THE ACCOUNT WHICH HE WILL HAVE TO RENDER TO JESUS CHRIST, ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, WHO DOES NOT FOLLOW HIS VOCATION

PRAYER

Consideration IV
THE TORMENT WHICH IN HELL WILL BE THE LOT OF HIM WHO IS DAMNED FOR HAVING LOST HIS VOCATION

PRAYER

Consideration V
THE IMMENSE GLORY WHICH RELIGIOUS ENJOY IN HEAVEN

PRAYER

Consideration VI
THE INTERIOR PEACE THAT GOD GIVES GOOD RELIGIOUS TO ENJOY

PRAYER

Consideration VII
THE DAMAGE DONE TO RELIGIOUS BY TEPIDITY

PRAYER

Consideration VIII
HOW DEAR TO GOD IS A SOUL THAT GIVES ITSELF ENTIRELY TO HIM

PRAYER

Consideration IX
HOW NECESSARY IT IS, IN ORDER TO BECOME A SAINT, TO HAVE A GREAT DESIRE FOR SUCH A THING

PRAYER

Consideration X
THE LOVE WE OWE TO JESUS CHRIST IN Consideration OF THE LOVE HE HAS SHOWN TO US

PRAYER

Consideration XI
THE GREAT HAPPINESS WHICH RELIGIOUS ENJOY IN DWELLING IN THE SAME HOUSE WITH JESUS CHRIST IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

PRAYER

Consideration XII
THE LIFE OF RELIGIOUS RESEMBLES MOSTLY THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

PRAYER

Consideration XIII
THE ZEAL WHICH RELIGIOUS OUGHT TO HAVE FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

PRAYER

Consideration XIV
HOW NECESSARY TO RELIGIOUS ARE THE VIRTUES OF MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY

PRAYER

Consideration XV
HOW MUCH RELIGIOUS OUGHT TO CONFIDE IN THE PATRONAGE OF MARY

PRAYER

Exhortation to Novices to Persevere in their Vocation.

  - I. TEMPTATIONS TO WHICH NOVICES ARE EXPOSED
  - II. THE MEANS TO PRESERVE ONE’S VOCATION
  - III. IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS TO THE NOVICE THAT HE MAY PRESERVE HIMSELF IN FERVOR
  - EXHORTATION TO RELIGIOUS TO ADVANCE IN THE PERFECTION OF THEIR STATE
  - PURITY OF INTENTION
  - RELIGIOUS POVERTY
- Notes on the Life of the Rev. Father Paul Cafaro, of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer
  - NOTES ON THE LIFE OF THE REV. FATHER PAUL CAFARO, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER
  - I. HIS BIRTH AND INFANCY
  - II. HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE SEMINARY AND HIS CONDUCT WHILE THERE
  - III. HIS CONDUCT AS PRIEST AND AS PASTOR
  - IV. HIS RESIGNATION OF THE OFFICE OF PARISH PRIEST AND HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE CONGREGATION
  - V. HIS ZEAL FOR THE MISSIONS
  - VI. HIS LOVE OF MENTAL PRAYER AND HIS INTERIOR TRIALS
  - VII. HIS LOVE OF OBEDIENCE
  - VIII. HIS HUMILITY
  - IX. HIS MORTIFICATION
  - X. HIS SPIRIT OF POVERTY
  - XI. HIS DETACHMENT IN REGARD TO HIS RELATIVES AND HIS CHARITY TOWARDS HIS NEIGHBOR
  - XII. HIS PURITY
  - XIII. HIS DEVOTION TO THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN
  - XIV. HIS CONSTANCY IN HIS RESOLUTIONS AND HIS CONFORMITY TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF GOD

- XV. HIS DEATH

Notes on the Life of Father Januarius Maria SARNELLI of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

- NOTES ON THE LIFE OF FATHER JANUARIUS MARIA SARNELLI, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER
- I. HIS BIRTH, INFANCY, AND YOUTH
- II. HE EMBRACES THE PROFESSION OF THE LAW, THEN THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATE
- III. HE ENTERS THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER
- IV. HE IS SENT TO NAPLES
- V. HIS LOVE OF MEDITATION
- VI. HIS PRINCIPAL DEVOTIONS
- VII. HIS INTERIOR TRIALS
- VIII. HIS SPIRIT OF MORTIFICATION AND OF HUMILITY
- IX. HIS CHARITY TOWARD HIS NEIGHBOR
- X. HIS ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS
- XI. HIS ENTERPRISE IN REGARD TO PROSTITUTES
- XII. HIS WRITINGS
- XIII. HIS LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH

Notes on the Life of VITUS Curzius, Lay-Brother of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

- I. HIS CONDUCT IN THE WORLD AND HIS VOCATION
- II. HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE CONGREGATION
- III. HIS LOVE OF MEDITATION
- IV. HIS MORTIFICATION AND HUMILITY
- V. HIS CHARITY TOWARD HIS NEIGHOR
- VI. HIS OBEDIENCE AND HIS DEATH

Various Smaller Works

Sermon on the Rosary

- ADDITION TO THE ABRIDGED SERMONS FOR SUNDAYS
- SERMON FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY OF OCTOBER, ON THE ROSARY
- 1. HOW THE ROSARY SHOULD BE RECITED IN ORDER THAT IT MAY BE MERITORIUS
- 2. WHAT WE MUST DO IN ORDER THAT THE ROSARY MAY BE PROFITABLE TO US

Sermon on the Passion of Jesus Christ.

- FIRST SCENE: THE GARDEN OF OLIVES
- SECOND SCENE: THE PRETORIUM
- THIRD SCENE: CALVARY
- ACT OF CONTRITION WHILE SHOWING THE CRUCIFIX.

Nine Discourses for Times of Calamities

FIRST DISCOURSE
GOD THREATENS TO CHASTISE US IN ORDER TO DELIVER US FROM CHASTISEMENT

SECOND DISCOURSE.
SINNERS WILL NOT BELIEVE IN THE DIVINE THREATS UNTIL THE CHASTISEMENT HAS COME UPON THEM

THIRD DISCOURSE.
GOD IS MERCIFUL FOR A SEASON, AND THEN CHASTISES

FOURTH DISCOURSE.
THE FOUR PRINCIPAL GATES OF HELL

- 1. HATRED
- 2. BLASPHEMY.
- 3. THEFT.
- 4. IMPURITY

FIFTH DISCOURSE.
EXTERNAL DEVOTIONS ARE USELESS IF WE DO NOT CLEANSE OUR SOULS FROM SIN

SIXTH DISCOURSE.
GOD CHASTISES US IN THIS LIFE FOR OUR GOOD, NOT FOR OUR DESTRUCTION

SEVENTH DISCOURSE.
GOD CHASTISES US IN THIS LIFE, ONLY THAT HE MAY SHOW US MERCY IN THE NEXT

EIGHTH DISCOURSE.
PRAYERS APPEASE GOD, AND AVERT FROM US THE CHASTISEMENT WE DESERVE, PROVIDED WE PURPOSE TO AMEND

- 1. WE MUST PRAY AND HOPE
- 2. WE MUST HOPE AND PRAY AS WE OUGHT

NINTH DISCOURSE.
MOST HOLY MARY IS THE MEDIATRIX OF SINNERS

Texts from Holy Scripture and from the Holy Fathers Referring to Some Particular Calamities

- 1. EARTHQUAKES
- 2. DROUGHT
- 3. SCARCITY AND STERILITY
- 4. HAIL AND LIGHTNING
- 5. HURTFUL ANIMALS
- 6. SICKNESS
- 7. CALAMITIES IN GENERAL

Reflections Useful for Bishops that they may Govern Well their Churches

Chapter I
THE PRINCIPAL CARES OF A BISHOP

- 1. THE SEMINARY
- 2. CANDIDATES FOR ORDINATION
- 3. PRIESTS
- 4. PARISH PRIESTS
- 5. VICARS AND SERVANTS
- 6. CONVENTS OF NUNS

Chapter II
THE MOST EFFICACIOUS MEANS THAT THE BISHOPS SHOULD EMPLOY TO DIRECT THEIR FLOCKS

  1. PRAYER

  2. GOOD EXAMPLE

  3. RESIDENCE

  4. VISITATIONS

  5. MISSIONS.

  6. THE SYNOD

  7. COUNSEL

  8. AUDIENCES

  9. CORRECTION

RULES FOR SEMINARIES.

  INTRODUCTION

  1. DUTIES OF THE BISHOP

  2. DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR

  3. DUTIES OF THE PREFECTS

  4. RULES THAT THE SEMINARIANS MUST OBSERVE

Fidelity of Subjects TO God Renders them faithful to the Prince, their Ruler

  FIDELITY OF SUBJECTS TO GOD MAKES THEM FAITHFUL TO THE PRINCE, THEIR RULER

Chapter I
IF KINGS WISH THEIR SUBJECTS TO BE OBEDIENT TO THEM, THEY MUST ENDEAVOR TO MAKE THEM OBEDIENT TO GOD.—PROOF OF THIS ASSERTION

Chapter II
MEANS TO INDUCE SUBJECTS TO BE OBEDIENT TO GOD

  A FEW MAXIMS CONCERNING THE GOOD GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM IN ORDER THAT ALL MAY CONDUCE TO THE GLORY OF GOD, OF THE KING, AND TO THE WELFARE OF THE SUBJECTS

Chapter III

EXAMPLES OF PRINCES WHO BY THEIR ZEAL CONTRIBUTED MUCH TOWARDS THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE

1. EMPEROR CONSTANTINE

2. ST. LOUIS, KING OF FRANCE

3. ST. STEPHEN, KING OF HUNGARY

4. ST. ETHELBERT, KING OF ENGLAND

5. LOUIS XIV., KING OF FRANCE

6. CHARLES EMMANUEL I., DUKE OF SAVOY

CONCLUSION

Miscellany

NOTICE

This volume is called *Miscellany,* containing *various little works* which, with the exception of the Letters to be published subsequently in five volumes, complete the collection of the ascetical works. Before giving these little works, we have thought it well to add briefly an historical sketch of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer as it now exists. This volume comprises all that which in the writings of St. Alphonsus has reference to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer which he founded, regarded principally as a religious Institute. It will be particularly useful to those in the world who feel themselves called to the religious state, and who are desirous to become fully acquainted with the Institute for the purpose of examining their vocation.

We at first give the CONSTITUTIONS AND RULES OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER. Then follow the COUNSELS CONCERNING A RELIGIOUS VOCATION AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR PERSONS CALLED TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE; which the holy Founder addresses to aspirants, and to all those that wish to know and to follow the road on which divine Providence invites them to walk in order to sanctify themselves and to save their souls.

This part is followed by the EXHORTATIONS TO NOVICES, to fortify them in their holy resolutions, and to warn them against the snares of the enemy of salvation.

Then follow biographical sketches of two Fathers and a lay-brother, whose portraits the holy Founder delineates with his own hand, and whom, it seems, he wishes to hold up as models to all the rest.

Then comes a SERMON ON THE ROSARY, followed by a SERMON ON THE PASSION; NINE DISCOURSES FOR THE TIMES OF CALAMITIES; REFLECTIONS USEFUL TO BISHOPS *TO* GOVERN *WELL* THEIR CHURCHES; AND RULES FOR SEMINARIES.

Ed.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

I. ST. ALPHONSUS BEFORE FOUNDING HIS INSTITUTE

A. D. 1696—1731

ALPHONSUS MARIA de LIGUORI was *born, September* 27, 1696, of noble and pious parents, Joseph de Liguori and Ann Catharine Cavalieri, at Marianella, the country-house of his family, near Naples. Soon great hopes were entertained in regard to him; for his parents having one day presented him to St. Francis Jerome, this man of God received him into his arms, affectionately blessed him, and then said: “This little one will not die before his ninetieth year; he will be a bishop, and do great things for Jesus Christ.” The prophet and the subject of the prophecy were canonized on the same day.

Early one could remark in him those rare qualities with which nature and grace in emulation of each other had favored him. Frivolous amusements were repugnant to him; but he had above all great horror of what might offend God. He delighted in the frequentation of the sacraments and in the other practices of piety to which his mother had trained him. At the age of eleven his method of prayer was more than ordinary. One day, when he was in a country-house with some young companions for the sake of recreation, he withdrew quite alone into a thicket, while the rest were giving themselves up to play. In the evening search had to be made for him, and he was found in a solitary place, on his knees, absorbed in prayer before a small picture of the Blessed Virgin that he had fastened to a laurel tree.

Endowed with an active and penetrating mind, with a prompt and faithful memory, uniting with a perfect docility an ardent desire to acquire knowledge, sustained by an always increasing piety, Alphonsus made in a short time immense progress in *belles-lettres,* in the sciences and in the arts, the study of which was suitable to his rank, and corresponded to the lofty designs that his father had in regard to him. At the age of sixteen he was declared by acclamation doctor of civil and canon law. The young advocate soon exercised his profession with wonderful success before the tribunals of Naples, without, however, relaxing in the practice of virtue. When he was eighteen years old he conceived an ardent desire to attain sanctity; he joined pious congregations, of which as a member he distinguished himself by his regularity, his fervor, and his zeal for good works. It was his delight to kneel for hours in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. In order to strengthen and increase his fervor still more, he went every year to some religious house to make the spiritual exercises.

His father, who was anxious to establish him in the world, proposed to him several most brilliant matrimonial alliances; but Alphonsus felt only aversion for marriage: and God, who had other designs in regard to him, did not delay to make him entirely disgusted with the world, from which he had already become so detached as to wish to renounce his birthright. In 1723 he undertook a very important suit. After having examined with the greatest care the minutest details of the case, he believed that he would surely succeed. God, however, permitted him to overlook an essential point, which secured the victory to the adverse party; for on the day on which the case was tried, after pleading in so brilliant a manner that it appeared as if the suit would be decided in his favor, he was obliged to acknowledge that he had made a mistake. Then, full of confusion, but at the same time enlightened by an interior light, he felt a lively sense of the vanity of the things of the world, as well as of the dangers of his profession as lawyer, and gave up the bar forever.

This was not enough. On August 28 of the same year, after having, according to his custom, exercised his charity to the sick poor in the hospital of the Incurables, he saw himself suddenly surrounded with resplendent light, and a heavenly voice repeated: “Forsake the world, and give thyself entirely to me.” Recognizing the voice of God, who called him to a higher perfection, and strengthened interiorly by grace Alphonsus replied with tears of tenderness: “O Lord! here I am: do with me what Thou pleasest.” He at once proceeded to the Church of our Lady of Mercy; there he prostrated himself before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and consecrated himself unreservedly to God’s service, promising to enter the Congregation of the Oratorians; then unbuckling his sword, he laid it at the feet of Mary as a pledge of his irrevocable resolution.

His father, who was greatly afflicted at this change, tried every means to prevent him from taking such a step; but as Alphonsus remained unshaken in his pious design, he finally permitted him to embrace the ecclesiastical state, provided, however, he did not leave the paternal mansion. October 23, 1723, the young lawyer, at the age of twenty-seven, joyfully laid aside the livery of the world in order to clothe himself in the livery of Jesus Christ; and three years later, December 21, 1726, after having diligently applied all his noble faculties and all the ardor of his soul to acquire the science and the virtues that make up apostolic men, he was promoted to the priesthood.

He at once devoted himself to the exercise of his holy ministry with wonderful success. In 1725, when scarcely ordained subdeacon, he had associated himself with the Congregation of the Apostolic Missions, or of the Propaganda, established at Naples; and in 1729, leaving the paternal house, he withdrew to the house of the Holy Family of the Chinese mission, in order to be more free to consecrate himself to his labors and to the practice of the austerities that he wished to impose upon himself. He did an immense deal of good, first, at Naples among all classes of society, but above all among the poor workmen, of whom he was especially fond. He then went through the villages and hamlets, making war upon vice by holy missions, and reanimating everywhere faith, piety, and good morals. More than once the Mother of God was pleased to second his zeal in a striking manner.

II. THE SAINT ESTABLISHES HIS CONGREGATION

A. D. 1731—1732

In the month of May, 1732, Alphonsus, exhausted by great fatigue, was induced by several ecclesiastics, his friends and usual companions, to retire with them for some time into the country, to take a little rest in solitude and prayer; and upon an invitation that was given to them, they went to Saint Mary's of the Mount, a hermitage situated in the neighborhood of Scala.[14126] When they had ornamented their chapel and placed therein the Blessed Sacrament in order to satisfy their piety, there came to them a crowd of shepherds from the surrounding country—poor people, who, deprived of all spiritual help, lived in such ignorance of the things of God, that they were not in a fit state to make their confession. Alphonsus felt his apostolic heart deeply moved when he saw this concourse of abandoned souls whom God was sending to him. With his companions he began to instruct and dispose them to receive the sacraments, so that the rest that he had come to seek in this place became a laborious mission, which produced marvellous fruits among all the people. He would then have wished to find some means to give assistance to so many lost sheep that were abandoned even in so Catholic a country!

The whole city of Scala was delighted to hear of the good that was done at St. Mary's. In order to respond to the desire that was expressed of hearing the holy missionary preach, the bishop invited Alphonsus to come at least once to preach a sermon in his cathedral; and the saint consented to do so. There was in this place a Community of fervent religious under the title of the Religious of the Holy Saviour; these manifested the same desire, and he gave them a conference. The people became so desirous of tasting the fruits of such apostolic preaching, that Alphonsus at his departure had to promise that he would return in the month of September to preach a novena in the cathedral, and afterwards to give a retreat to the nuns. This was done to the entire satisfaction of every one.

It is thus that the Lord was gradually conducting his servant to the end that his Providence had in view. Among the religious of the Holy Saviour there was one that was very far advanced in spirituality. Her name was Mary Celestine Crostarosa, whom God favored with extraordinary graces. On the 3d of October she saw in spirit a new Congregation of missionaries who were evangelizing a multitude of poor country people deprived of all spiritual help; Alphonsus was at their head, and she heard a voice saying to her: "It is this soul whom I have chosen to be the instrument of my glory in this great work." In an interview that she afterwards had with the saint, she communicated to him her vision by assuring him that God required this of him. Alphonsus, troubled and confused by hearing such a revelation, refused to take the matter seriously, and said that such a thing was impossible; but the religious, while humbling herself, did not cease to persist that such was the will of God.

After this conversation, Alphonsus, having become a prey to terrible agitation, shut himself up in his room, where he began to shed a torrent of tears. He saw himself plunged into extreme perplexity. On the one hand, lie considered that there was question of a good work; he had to admit that the vision of this humble religious could come from God; he recalled to mind the consolation that he felt at the hermitage of St. Mary's; he experienced more strongly than ever his interior attraction to a similar undertaking; and he feared to resist a divine vocation. On the other hand, lie saw insurmountable difficulties: he found himself alone, without resources, and the idea of being a founder frightened his humility. A young and worthy priest, John Mazzini, his intimate friend, who accompanied him, perceived his painful state of mind, and asked him the cause of it. When he learned about what there had been question, he saw therein a work that was to be most pleasing to Jesus Christ; then fully convinced that if it were God's will he would furnish the necessary means, he generously placed himself at the disposal of the saint, as his first companion in the enterprise. This afforded great consolation to Alphonsus, and restored his serenity.

There was then at Scala Mgr. Falcoia, Bishop of Castellammare, a prelate of well-tried sanctity and skilled in spirituality. The two friends judged it proper to consult him as well as the Bishop of Scala about this matter. After a close examination the two prelates agreed that the inspiration came from God, and they urged Alphonsus to hasten the execution of the project. The saint, however, did not wish yet to decide. He did not omit to pray, and to have as many prayers said as possible; to these prayers he united the most rigorous austerities, in order to obtain the light and the protection of heaven.

On his return to Naples lie rendered an account of all that had occurred to his spiritual director, Father Pagano of the Oratory. This prudent man, after having maturely considered the matter proposed, saw in it only the work of God; but not wishing to be the only judge in so grave an affair, he urged Alphonsus to ask the advice of Abbé Cutica, a Lazarist; of Father Manulio, a Jesuit; and above all of Father Fiorillo, a Dominican; for these were most competent authorities in such matters. All agreed that the finger of God was in this project, and that it should be encouraged. Fathers Fiorillo and Pagano then counselled the new founder to place himself entirely under the guidance of Mgr. Falcoia—a counsel that was supported by the Blessed Virgin herself. From this moment the saint had no longer any doubt, and his resolution was formed. He put himself unreservedly into the hands of the learned and pious Bishop of Castellammare by engaging himself by a formal vow to obey him in all things. It was thus that, full of confidence in Jesus Christ and in his divine Mother, he launched upon the boisterous waves in which his frail vessel was to be unceasingly agitated by storms.

As soon as our saint's determination became known at Naples, the news produced a revolution against him in most minds; as a general thing, he was spoken of only with contempt or indignation as a visionary who gave himself up to foolish under-takings. His relatives and his old friends, especially those of the Congregation of the Propaganda and of the Chinese College, became his enemies; he was abused in every possible manner. This was the beginning of his trials; but Heaven soon showed that he was not abandoned. This outcry against him spread, and penetrated even the convent of the Holy Saviour at Scala, in which one of the religious one day said, in the presence of Sister Mary

Celestine, that she had serious doubts in regard to the work about which so much was spoken. Sister Celestine, however, answered her in ecstatic transport: “It is the work of God; you will recognize it as such by its effects.” “Yes,” replied the incredulous religious, “I will believe it when our Sister Magdalene is cured.” Hardly were the words uttered when this poor Sister Magdalene, who had been deranged for many years, perfectly recovered her senses.

Very great was the regret felt at Naples on account of the intended departure of Alphonsus, on whom had been founded great hopes, and it was rightly feared that other most esteemed subjects would follow him; hence every means was tried to dissuade him from his purpose. His parents, on their part, were extremely afflicted; for his father one day seized him in his arms and held him close to his heart for three hours. But all was in vain; what should naturally have shaken his constancy, only confirmed him more and more in his resolution.

Finally, on November 8, 1732, freed from all obstacles, the holy founder modestly left the capital and set out for Scala, where the bishop, the clergy, and all the people received him with joy. Several of his companions, whom he expected, came to join him on the same day. The dwelling prepared for him was very simple, very small, and very poor, and was destitute even of what was most necessary. Jesus Christ, however, was with them, and filled them with consolation. The day after their arrival all assembled in the cathedral, and after a prolonged meditation, the Mass of the Holy Ghost was chanted in thanksgiving to God. Thus began the Congregation which they styled “CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY SAVIOUR,”[14127] placing it under the protection of the chief of all missionaries.

III. FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE INSTITUTE TILL THE APPROBATION OF THE RULES

A.D. 1732–1749

The rising Community labored with great ardor to establish itself. Some new subjects increased the number of members; but two of them, John Mazzini and Januarius Sarnelli, on whom the holy founder mostly depended to help him in beginning his work, were not able to join him at once. All were animated with a good spirit, but this spirit was not the same in all, for when there was question of establishing the groundwork of the Institute, there were manifested among them irreconcilable differences of opinion. Alphonsus, faithful to his divine vocation, wished to apply himself only to the exercise of the apostolic ministry; but most of his companions desired that the education of youth should also be connected therewith. All the efforts that Alphonsus made could not conquer their obstinacy, and the dispute ended in the withdrawal of all except two of them. This was the situation of affairs after four months’ stay at Scala.

When those that were opposed to the new Congregation heard of this unfortunate issue, they felt triumphant, being persuaded that it was all over with such an enterprise, which they had looked upon as foolish. The blow was indeed crushing; but Alphonsus, without allowing himself to be dejected, humbled himself profoundly before God, and fortified by grace, made a vow, binding under the penalty of grievous sin, to devote himself during his whole life, even though he might be left quite alone, to the salvation of the most abandoned souls. His director could not but admire his heroic act, and Heaven blessed it. This was another victory over hell; and it was a decisive victory. Little by little other subjects arrived who were truly stones chosen to constitute the foundations of the edifice; and Alphonsus could resume those so fertile apostolic labors, that needed but to be extended in order to produce everywhere more and more abundant fruits, in the midst of every kind of opposition that was constantly raised by the enemy of all good.

In 1734, in the month of March, the Bishop of Caiazzo established in his diocese a house of the Congregation, in a place called Villa,[14128] where there was a church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.

The following year, in April of 1735, saw the establishment of another foundation, which became more important and more solid than the first two. It was that of the Blessed Trinity at Ciorani,[14129] due to the generosity of a worthy priest, Andrew Sarnelli, brother of Januarius. In 1737 a violent persecution arose against the house at Villa, and the holy founder resolved to abandon it. This was done June 10. The same thing took place later on at Scala; the Fathers relinquished it August 24, 1738.

The whole Congregation became thus reunited at Ciorani, its only establishment during four years. It was yet, so to speak, in its infancy, only forming a reunion of pious and zealous missionaries, without any formal engagement, under the guidance of a beloved and venerated chief, their father, their master, and their model, who, little by little, disposed them to constitute the religious family that he had in view in accordance with their vocation. In 1742 the holy founder believed that the moment had arrived when the Rule of the Congregation should be definitely established, and on July 22, the feast of St. Mary Magdalene, all the members of the Institute formally accepted this Rule by pronouncing the simple religious vows with the vow and oath of perseverance till death. The Congregation assumed then greater stability and made further progress.

In the same year, October 13, was opened the celebrated house of Nocera,[14130] situated in the suburb, and called Pagani. The church that was afterwards built there in the midst of great opposition, was dedicated to the archangel St. Michael, who did not cease to protect it. The whole Congregation was not only persecuted without intermission, but each house had to submit to special trials, and at this time the attack was even carried as far as Rome; but it served only to make the holy founder and his work better known and esteemed.

In December, 1744, after a mission given at Iliceto,[14131] there was offered him an old church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, under the title of Our Lady of Consolation, with an old convent situated about a league and a half from the city, that he might establish there a house of his Institute. The offer was at accepted. At first the novices were sent to this new foundation; but the extreme poverty that reigned there was the reason why in February, 1747. they were withdrawn and sent back to Ciorani.

Another sanctuary of Mary, under the title of Mother of God, situated at Caposele, was also offered to St. Alphonsus for a foundation, which was accepted June 4, 1746.

The Congregation had at this time four houses, each of which had been established with the special sanction of the king; the Institute, however, had not yet been formally approved, and had no legal existence in the eyes of the government; and this was the reason of the incessant attacks made upon it by its enemies. Hence in the summer of 1747, and at the beginning of 1748, the holy founder set out for Naples in order to have his Congregation acknowledged and approved by sovereign authority. He did all in his power and spared no pains to attain his end; but the current of politics was at that time against Religious Orders: he was allowed the maintenance of what existed, with the promise of royal protection.

He was more successful at Rome, where he solicited with still greater interest the same favor from the Holy See; for it was above all important that his work should be invested with the solemn and authentic approbation of the Church. In November, 1748, Father Villani was sent to the Eternal City to urge on the successful issue of this most important matter. Everything having been maturely examined and discussed in the Congregation of the Council, the requisite decree was finally presented to Benedict XIV. The Sovereign Pontiff remarked that the title “of Holy Saviour” given to the new Institute was precisely that of the Chapter of Regulars existing at Venice, and he ordained that the name *Holy Saviour* be replaced by that of *Holy Redeemer.* Finally, by a brief dated February 25, 1749, he approved and confirmed by his apostolic authority the Constitutions and the Rules of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, raised by this act to the rank of the religious Institutes throughout the Church. One could not express how much this happy event rejoiced the heart of the holy founder and of his children, as well as of all those that were the friends of the good work.

IV. FROM THE APPROBATION OF THE RULES TILL THE SECOND GENERAL CHAPTER

A. D. 1749–1764

The high approbation given by the Holy See reflected new glory upon the Congregation. Those that had not known it or had but little appreciated it up to that time, were desirous of learning more about it. It was eulogized, and its good reputation extended very far. God sent to it many subjects, among whom were found priests of great merit; and it could thus enlarge the circle of its good deeds.

But before resuming their apostolic labors the Fathers had to constitute themselves canonically by virtue of the approved Rule. Hence in the month of October of 1749 all the Fathers of the four houses assembled in General Chapter at Ciorani. First, those that were in office handed in their resignation; St. Alphonsus gave the first example, although the Pope had confirmed him in the office of perpetual Rector Major. The Rules were then read, and each one renewed his vows. Then after a retreat of three days they proceeded to the elections. It is needless to say that the holy founder was re-elected Superior-General, and confirmed unanimously in this office; the other elections followed in accordance with what is prescribed. Finally the statutes and the most necessary rules were drawn up in order to assure the execution and faithful application of the Rule in its main details.

At this time, thanks to the generosity of the inhabitants of Nocera, it was also a source of happiness to the Fathers to be able to transfer to this house the students hitherto kept jointly with the novices at Ciorani, when both had become more and more numerous.

The temporal existence of the Congregation was, however continually threatened. The saint had still to proceed several times to Naples, in order to dissipate the new calumnies that had been raised against it. Not satisfied with having fully vindicated it and with making others appreciate the good that it was effecting, he again undertook by great and painful efforts to have it approved by the government; but all that he obtained was a half measure, namely, a royal decision, dated November 9, 1752, that maintained its four houses, but did not recognize them as religious Communities.

About this time the services of the missionaries of the Most Holy Redeemer were very much in demand in the State of Benevento, belonging to the Holy See. The Archbishop offered them a house at Sant’ Angelo, and they were installed there, April 6, 1755. This was the first establishment outside of the territory of the Neapolitan Government.

The same desire manifested itself in many dioceses of the kingdom; but the necessary permission could not be obtained. It was, however, obtained at last by the Bishop of Girgenti, in Sicily, where the Fathers arrived, December 10, 1761, to begin a new foundation.

Thus, in 1762, the Congregation, after thirty years of labor, of continual struggle, possessed six houses, each of which numbered twenty excellent missionaries. Moreover, a good number of young men, full of the happiest dispositions, were diligently applying themselves to their studies so as to prepare themselves for the priesthood. They were distributed among the different houses: in one house they devoted themselves to the study of the humanities, to which the holy founder attached great importance; in another, they were taught philosophy and history; in another, dogmatic theology; and finally, in another, moral theology. This course comprised all the other sciences that usually complete the training of evangelical laborers. In every house regular observance flourished in a most edifying manner. The Fathers could not satisfy all the demands that were continually addressed to them for missions, novenas, and other apostolic labors. Their services were required chiefly in poor country places, yet also in cities in which special retreats were often given to ecclesiastics, to seminarians, to the candidates or ordination, to nuns, to religious, to Congregations, to the nobility, to soldiers, etc. Heaven blessed all these works, which produced wonderful fruits.

The holy founder had reached old age, broken down much more by trials, by fatigue, and by infirmities than by his years He had no other thought than how he might perfect his cherished work by putting the finishing touch to it in another General Chapter that was to complete the interior organization of the Institute. Such was his intention, which he wished to carry out before his death, when on March 9, 1762, he was as it were struck by a thunderbolt on hearing that Clement XIII. had appointed him Bishop of St. Agatha of the Goths. He had before been chosen for the Archiepiscopal See of Palermo, and he was able to escape this dignity; but this time he was obliged to submit to the formal order of the Sovereign Pontiff, and he was consecrated June 20, at Rome. His children, however, succeeded in obtaining the permission for him to retain his title and office of Rector Major of the Congregation. This greatly consoled him; for in his humility he was convinced that God had removed him from his spiritual family on account of his sins. He named Father Andrew Villani his Vicar-General of the Institute, to take his place in regard to the supervision and dispatch of ordinary and pressing business; yet he did not himself cease to govern his dear family in Jesus Christ, as we may see in the collection of his letters.

In 1764, when the second General Chapter could be convened, the saint went to Nocera to begin it on September 3. He presided over this assembly, in which, under his inspiration and direction, there was canonically regulated, even to the smallest details, all that could be desired for the wise government of the Institute; and on October 15, the feast of St. Teresa, his venerated patroness, he closed the Chapter with thanksgiving to God. The important acts of this Chapter may in some way be regarded as the crowning of his work.

V. FROM THE SECOND GENERAL CHAPTER TILL THE DEATH OF ST. ALPHONSUS

A.D. 1764–1787

After the year 1764, it seemed that the Congregation, having reached the stage of a perfect body, needed but to extend and to multiply its fruits of salvation; and this it did in fact, but always in the midst of sufferings, in continual combats, and cruel and bitter sorrows. About this time two men of great influence, Francis Anthony Maffei at Iliceto, and Nicholas Sarnelli. Baron of Ciorani, the brother of Andrew and of Januarius Sarnelli, declared themselves the mortal enemies of the Congregation. Having conspired with each other, and sustained by impious and self-interested men in the kingdom, they did all in their power and used every means to put an end to the Congregation; through their machinations it was for twelve years kept between life and death.

In the month of July, 1767, the danger became so great that the holy bishop was himself obliged to proceed to Naples. He had no difficulty in dissipating the clouds of calumny that had gathered, and the enemies of the Institute were covered with confusion; but their discomfiture rendered them more furious, and they meditated new conspiracies.

In the month of February, 1769, the storm burst upon the house at Girgenti in Sicily, which had already been placed in a critical situation on account of the death of the bishop; for this event deprived them of the means of subsistence. The Congregation had, besides, to suffer from the cruel malady that afflicted the holy founder since the month of August, 1768. Towards the end of 1771 he decided to withdraw his missionaries from

Sicily, to the great sorrow of the clergy and of the people—not, however, without the hope of seeing them return.

This bitterness was sweetened by the esteem and sympathy that the Congregation enjoyed among all good people, as well as by the blessings that Heaven shed upon its labors. In 1773 its missionaries were called to the Campagna of Rome, where they were so well liked that the people were anxious to retain them. St. Alphonsus accepted a house at Scifelli,[14132] under the title of St. Cecilia, in the diocese of Veroli. The following year he accepted another at Frosinone, under the title of Our Lady of Grace, belonging to the same diocese; and there was question about several other new foundations, but for want of sufficient resources they could not be accepted. A house might have even been established at Rome, in accordance with the wish of Clement XIV., but the saint thought that the time marked by Providence had not yet arrived.

The houses established in the Pontifical States were a source of great consolation and encouragement to the Congregation; on them the holy founder rested his hopes for the Future, because regular observance, free from the difficulties that impeded it elsewhere, could flourish in them in all its fulness. In the kingdom of Naples even the existence of his Institute was always menaced. The king, however, recognizing the justice of its cause, and yielding to the solicitations of the inhabitants of Girgenti, authorized the return of the Fathers to Sicily, and they re-entered it in the month of April, 1775.

Three months afterwards, July 27, St. Alphonsus having obtained from Pius VI. permission to resign his episcopal office, returned to his dear house at Nocera, there to pass the rest of his days in the midst of the severest trials. He had predicted that he would die in his Congregation, and that he would then be no more Superior;—a prediction that he renewed six months after his return to Nocera, at the moment when he was thought to be dying. “Do not fear,” he said to those around him, “I shall not yet die; for God wishes me to die under obedience, and not in the capacity of Rector Major.”

He did not long enjoy repose. On October 3 the government ordered that the suit against the Congregation should begin in all its forms. It was now thought that all was over with the Congregation. Its enemies triumphed; but the holy founder put his trust in God by having recourse to prayer with all his subjects, without however neglecting the ordinary means of defence.

During this long war God did not leave him without consolation. The Redemptorists were asked for by the inhabitants of Benevento, although the Fathers had an establishment at Sant’ Angelo. The saint disliked to settle his Fathers in the centre of so large a city; but he had to yield to the entreaties of the Cardinal Archbishop, which were strengthened by the approval of the Sovereign Pontiff. The Fathers were solemnly installed, June 6, 1777, on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Towards the end of the same year Pius VI. granted to the missionaries of the whole Congregation the same privileges that the Passionists enjoyed in their missions.

The enemies of the Congregation profited, on their part, by the months and the years during which the suit lasted, in order to combine their plans, to win accomplices, and to draw up a list of base accusations for the purpose of defaming and destroying it; but divine Providence watched over it, powerful friends Intervened in its favor, and the saintly bishop remembered that he had been a lawyer. In 1779 he presented to the king in justification a memorial that he had written himself. On August 21, after an impartial examination of the cause, Ferdinand IV. rendered a decision that authorized again, and in a more explicit manner, the four houses of the kingdom with their Superiors, as well as the house of studies and the novitiate. Moreover, on October 22, having obtained from Pius VI the graces and the privileges of the jubilee, the king chose the children of St. Alphonsus to announce this favor to his people, with the promise to recompense them for their labors, "in consideration of their zeal to spread everywhere the principles of sound morality, that ought to regulate the life of the good Christian and the good citizen." This prince thereby gave them a striking proof of his esteem, of his confidence, and of his protection. This was not yet a formal approbation of the Institute; but it was enough to disconcert and discourage its enemies. It is needless to mention the joy and thankfulness with which the whole Congregation received this news.

The wise and saintly old man profited by the first moment of calm in order to reanimate the zeal for regular observance, asking only that his work might be left in a good state before he died; but this calm was soon followed by a new storm and a real disaster.

Circumstances were thought to be favorable to make a new attempt to obtain from the king the important favor that had been solicited for so many years, namely, the recognition of the Rule approved by Benedict XIV. Father Maione, Consultor—General, represented the Congregation at Naples, and all were satisfied with the manner in which everything had been hitherto done. He was charged with negotiating this delicate affair, by receiving all the necessary powers, being a man in whom all had full confidence. But through a motive of prudence which was thought to be well founded, he asked and obtained that all the Consultors, as well as the Rector Major, should bind themselves under oath to keep his enterprise a profound secret.

Unfortunately, yielding on this occasion to wrong-headedness Father Maione proved faithless. Having persuaded Father Cimino, also a Consultor General who accompanied him, to enter into his views, he had the fatal temerity to take upon himself the modification of the Rule by introducing into it grave and arbitrary changes, without doubt to accommodate it to his own ideas and to those who took the lead in the government.

When everything had been thus arranged in the month of September, 1779, Father Maione boldly presented his scheme to St. Alphonsus; but it was so badly written that the poor old man, full of sufferings, could not decipher it, and was obliged to send it to Father Villani, his Vicar and confessor, that he might report his opinion to him. The Father was amazed at seeing the Rule altered in this way; but perceiving that great inconveniences would arise on both sides, and blinded to the consequences of his act, he had not the courage to make the truth known. He therefore answered that all was well; and the saint, relying upon the word of his Vicar, who was at the same time his confessor, gave his consent. Thereupon Father Maione easily obtained the royal approbation of this pretended copy of the Rule.

The new Rule, approved since the month of January, 1780, was not forwarded to Nocera till the 27th of February. St. Alphonsus was informed of it on the following day, and was struck with consternation at seeing the changes that had been made; and when the news of this sad affair spread among the houses of the Institute, it caused general confusion: every one was indignant at the conduct of the two Consultors, and even at the holy founder himself. For these evils the saint found no other remedy than what might bring on a still greater evil, namely, the convening of a General Chapter.

There was then at Frosinone a restless and turbulent yet able spirit named Leggio, who nourished a secret ill-feeling against the saint, his Superior. He knew how to profit by the confusion which then existed in order to wound the bosom of his mother and the heart of his father. Assuming the mask of zeal, he succeeded in forming a dominant party in the houses of the Pontifical States, and persuaded them to ask of Rome the permission to hold a special Chapter, and to choose a Superior to be independent of the authority of the holy founder, whose character they did not fail to blacken as much as they could. They were, however, obliged to send their deputies to the General Chapter convoked at Nocera; and Leggio was of the number.

When this assembly was opened on May 12, one could see that trouble and discord would ensue. The six Consultors were deposed. St. Alphonsus was compelled to resign his office, and this he did with profound humility; but he was reelected Rector Major, and as his Vicar was nominated Father Bartholomew Corrado, who accepted this charge only at the command of the saint.

On his return to Frosinone, Leggio, who was dissatisfied with the result, pursued his project of separation. He went to Rome, where he carried on his intrigue so well that he succeeded in obtaining a favorable hearing from the Cardinals and even from the Pope himself, and in throwing discredit upon St. Alphonsus, who, owing to a singular concourse of circumstances, was placed in the position of not being able to defend himself. Thus deceived, God having permitted this, Pius VI. rendered a decision, dated September 22, by which he declared that Father Francis de Paul was named President of the houses situated in the Pontifical States, with all the powers of Rector Major, and that the other houses, not belonging any more to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, were deprived of the favors of the Holy See. The holy founder thus saw himself excluded from his own Institute. His affliction was extreme; but he humbly resigned himself to the will of God, and hastened to write to Father Francis de Paul, to express his submission to him as to his Superior.

It was remarkable that during all these troubles the missionaries of the Congregation did not fail to labor with wonderful success in the kingdom of the two Sicilies, as well as in the Pontifical States. What above all afflicted the heart of the saint was the privation of the spiritual faculties that the missionaries had before enjoyed; for the faculties having been reduced to the simple powers given by the Bishops, they were not able to do so much good. He adopted various means to recover the good graces of the Holy See; the

Cardinal Archbishop of Benevento and other prelates interceded in his favor; but so strong were the prejudices against him that all was useless. Father Leggio, who was always in high credit at Rome, paralyzed all his efforts.

But God permitted evil only in order that good might be drawn from it; and this alleviated the distress of mind into which the holy founder was plunged. The Congregation being divided in so unequal a manner, the favors that were enjoyed by the houses situated in the Pontifical States attracted thither many subjects from the kingdom of Naples, and this aided the extension of the Institute. Besides, in 1781, Pius VI., happy in being able to propagate it, bestowed upon it, even in Rome itself, the house and the church of St. Julian, near St. Mary Major; then he founded a house at Gubbio, another at Spello near Foligno; and there was also question of a foundation at Ravenna.

On the other hand, many Neapolitan Bishops seeing with regret what was going on, and reflecting on the injury that was being done to their dioceses, addressed to Rome respectful claims, in which they eulogized the missionaries and their venerated chief, and gave testimony of their perfect innocence. Moreover, the Nuncio of the Holy See at Naples, who had been charged to make an exact inquiry, at last sent in his report, which arrived October 17, 1782, and completely justified their conduct. Then the dark clouds were scattered; the Sovereign Pontiff acceded to the request made by St. Alphonsus in the month of March of the following year, and bestowed upon his missionaries the spiritual favors of which they had been deprived for two years and a half.

Peace was now established both on the part of Rome and on the part of Naples, where at this time the recent suit was brought to an end; but the Congregation remained still divided. During this same year, 1783, the Fathers of the kingdom of Naples elected for the Coadjutor of St. Alphonsus, with the right of succession, Father Villani. In 1785, on the 15th October, those of the Pontifical States assembled by the authority of the Pope, and elected for their Rector Major Father Francis de Paul; then those of Girgenti imitated them by choosing Father Blasucci to be the Superior in Sicily. The saint one day said: “I have been wishing to see things arranged during my life; this I have asked, and am still asking the Blessed Virgin every day; but it is not the will of God.

Things will be arranged, but only after my death.” He finished his glorious career August 1,1787, after blessing all his children.

He left twelve houses well established; namely, four in the kingdom of Naples, that is, at Ciorani, at Nocera, at Iliceto, and at Caposele; one at Girgenti in Sicily; and seven in the Pontifical States, that is, at Sant’ Angelo, at Benevento at Scifelli, at Frosinone, at Rome, at Gubbio, and at Spello. These houses were poor, and divided in regard to their government but were rich in good subjects, and were united by the same Rule, the same spirit, the same zeal as well as by the same love, and the same veneration for their glorious founder, who from heaven was going to watch over his Institute, and to direct it by his spirit till the end of the world, according to his prophecy and the promise that he made.

VI. FROM THE DEATH OF ST. ALPHONSUS TILL THE DEATH OF BLESSED FATHER CLEMENT MARIA HOFBAUER

A. D. 1787–1820

In order to establish itself outside of Italy the Congregation had still to pass through many vicissitudes. The life of Blessed Clement Hofbauer,[14133] who in 1784 was called in a marvellous way to be a member of the Institute, resembled very much the life of St. Alphonsus, whose great work he was to continue and to propagate. At the end of 1787, with his friend Father Thaddeus Hubl, he departed from Frosinone for Warsaw, where the Apostolic Nuncio received them with joy, and the king had the Church of St. Benno assigned to them; hence they were called Bennonites. They were at once able to begin their labors, owing to the Germans who frequented this church, and whose language they spoke. Their work was so successful, that it appeared to be a continual mission, to which people of all nations were constantly flocking.

During this time the happy change predicted by the holy founder was accomplished in Italy. Ferdinand IV., by a decree of October 29, 1790, permitted the houses in his kingdom to observe the Rule approved by Benedict XIV., and by another decree consented to their reunion with the Fathers of the Pontifical States. On his part, Pius VI., on August 5, 1791, authorized this reunion, and wished that in a General Chapter there should be elected by common consent the Rector Major; this was done, for Father Blasucci was chosen Rector Major of the whole Institute. But as he resided in the kingdom of Naples, it became too difficult for the Fathers of Warsaw to correspond directly with him; therefore in 1793 he appointed Blessed Clement Hofbauer his Vicar-General for the countries of the North, communicating to him with some exceptions all his powers.

At Warsaw there was very great suffering caused by extreme poverty; nevertheless the house became filled after a short time with excellent Polish, German, and French subjects. God blessed this work by manifest signs. About the year 1794, Blessed Clement Hofbauer was able to settle some of his missionaries at Mittau in Courland, where they had been in request for a long time. Soon after he formed two other establishments in Poland—at Lukow and Radomyn. But persecutions, as always, had to arise, and they had to be expected, especially at this time, when the governments were anything but disposed to favor religious Institutes. In 1798, the Russian Government, on which Courland depended, forbade all the religious to communicate with their confreres outside the empire.

On the other hand, the Prussian Government, which had become master of Warsaw, prohibited religious profession before the age of twenty-four; this compelled Blessed Clement Hofbauer to adopt measures to have a novitiate elsewhere. In 1803 Providence furnished him with a house at Iestetten in Switzerland, on the Rhine, in the neighborhood of Schaffhausen. To this place he sent as Superior Father Joseph Passerat. But during several years the Fathers did nothing but encamp, now in this place, now in that: for example, in 1805, at Triberg, a village of the Black Forest; then at Babenhausen, which soon after passed into the hands of Bavaria; in 1806, at the monastery of St. Lucius, near Coire; in 1807, at Viege, in the Valais. The wolves everywhere followed the flock that had been intrusted to Father Passerat, and gave it no rest.

While it was with difficulty that the Fathers could find in the Valais the means of subsistence, desolation reigned elsewhere At Warsaw, in 1808, the house was suppressed by violence all the members of the Community were sent away by force, then dispersed The other establishments also ceased to exist; that of Radomyn had already been abandoned; that of Lukow met with a fate like that of the mother-house; and that of Mittau was closed by the Russian Government. Blessed Clement retired to Vienna, where the Archbishop appointed him, in 1809, Rector of the Italian church.

This same year, 1809, the French having invaded the States of the Holy See, the houses that were there were soon suppressed, with the exception of the house of Scifelli, in which the Fathers by a special protection of God were able to live together and exercise their ministry. The Congregation saw itself almost at death’s door, while the Sovereign Pontiff, stripped of all his possessions, was an exile and a captive.

At Vienna Blessed Clement exercised with apostolic zeal and with much fruit the office that had been confided to him by the Archbishop, but he did not abandon his own work; the government being ignorant that he was a religious, allowed him to correspond with his confreres, who had been dispersed. Father Passerat with his students supported himself as well as he could at Viege; but in 1810, the French Empire having taken possession of the Valais, he saw himself forced to remove, and withdrew in 1811 to the canton of Friburg, where in the following year an asylum was, to a certain extent, procured for him at Farvagnies.

In 1813, Blessed Clement Hofbauer became Director of the Ursuline Sisters at Vienna, and continued his apostolic ministry in their little church. The following year, after so many trials, the Institute began finally to revive; Pius VII., delivered by the hand of Providence, entered his States, and the Redemptorists partly recovered what belonged to them. In 1815 the Holy Father gave them at Rome the house of Our Lady of the Assumption *in Monterone* to replace that of St. Julian. At this time Blessed Clement Hofbauer sent some of his missionaries to Wallachia, where for six years they accomplished much good.

The year 1816 was a glorious year for the Congregation, which attracted to itself the attention of the whole world. September 15 its illustrious founder was declared *Blessed*, and judged worthy of public veneration. This event reanimated the joy and the hopes of all its children. But during the same year the Congregation lost its chief, Father Blasucci, who had been Rector Major for twenty-five years. He was replaced the following year by Father Nicholas Mansione.

A little while afterwards the Congregation was able to make some progress. In 1818 the cantonal government of Friburg formally recognized the Institute, and permitted Father Passerat to reunite his companions in the old Trappist convent of Valsanta.

At Vienna, the following year, divine Providence arranged a still more important success, which was brought about in an unexpected manner. The police discovered that

Blessed Clement Hofbauer belonged to a religious Institute not recognized in the empire, and that he was a subject of a foreign Superior; this the laws of Joseph II. did not tolerate. Upon this accusation the order was given to him that he should either give up the Congregation or leave at once the empire. The Father did not hesitate to choose the latter; but when his friends, especially the old Archbishop, who loved him tenderly, heard of this, the sorrow became general. The worthy prelate went to the emperor, who, in ignorance of what had happened, suspended at first the order that had been given. After an examination of the facts he authorized Blessed Clement not only to remain at Vienna, but to found there a house of his Institute; and for this purpose he assigned to him for his use the beautiful church of Santa Maria della Scala.

But, like St. Alphonsus, Blessed Clement was not to see his work prospering entirely during his life; anti this he knew, for he had several times said to his companions and to his disciples: “Have patience, and remain steadfast; my eyes will scarcely have closed in death when you will have houses and foundations that will abundantly satisfy you.” The moment of death, which he had so ardently desired, at last arrived. March 15, 1820, laden with merits, he gave up his soul to God, at the age of sixty-five. At present the many Redemptorist convents in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Poland, Great Britain, Ireland, North and South America, the West Indies, all trace their descent from the House in Vienna founded in that city shortly after Blessed Clement’s death. With good reason, then, he may be called the St. Alphonsus of the north, or the second father and founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

VII. FROM THE DEATH OF BLESSED CLEMENT HOFBAUER TILL THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MOTHER-HOUSE OF THE INSTITUTE AT ROME

A. D. 1820–1855

The death of Blessed Clement seemed at first to interfere with the project of founding a house at Vienna, the authorization of which was due to his personal merit; but the contrary happened, which made every one admit his power in heaven and his growing influence on earth. April 30, 1820, the emperor approved of the establishment of not only a house, but of the Institute itself, in all his States.

Father Joseph Passerat was named Vicar-General in place of Father Hofbauer, and he set out for Vienna, July 26, after having obtained possession of an old convent situated on a mountain called Bischenberg, in the diocese of Strasburg Thither he sent some of his companions, who were installed August 2; this was the first establishment of the Redemptorists in France. In the month of November he himself conducted his Community from Vienna to Santa Maria della Scala, where he fixed his residence. His position was not, however, without its difficulties.

In 1824, the Congregation lost its Rector Major, Father Mansione, who was succeeded by Father Celestine Cocle.

In 1826, the King of Portugal called the Redemptorists into his kingdom, and gave them the house and church of St. John Nepomucene at Lisbon. The same year Pope Leo XII. established them at Spoleto, and intrusted to them the parochial church of St. Ansan.

The father of Vienna founded a house in 1827 at Mautern in Styria, and another in 1828 at Innsbruck, the capital of Tyrol.

In 1830, the house at Bischenberg, which could hardly support itself, was suppressed by order of King Louis Philippe, and France was again closed to the congregation; but at the same time Belgium was opened to it by the revolution that occurred in it. The first house offered was at Tournai, in 1831, where the Fathers established themselves on November 1.

In 1832, Father Camillus Ripoli succeeded Father Cocle in the office of Rector Major.

The same year, at the instance of the Apostolical Nuncio at Vienna, Father Passerat consented to send some of his subjects to Philippopoli in Bulgaria, where during eight years they had to suffer much without being able to gain a footing among a population that was addicted to the Greek schism. It was, however, just at this time that the Congregation really began to spread; its progress became so rapid, and at so many different points, that we can scarcely enumerate the details of it.

In 1833, two new houses were founded in Belgium, at Liege and at St. Trond, and one in Austria, at Eggenburg. The same year, Father Passerat sent some missionaries to the United States of America; but they had to struggle for three years against many obstacles before they could plant the Congregation in this new soil. The same year, Don Pedro in Portugal, after having dethroned his brother, banished the Redemptorists from the country.

In 1834, the Fathers were established at Leoben in Styria; they had now five houses in the Austrian Empire.

In 1835, the Duke of Modena called them to his States, where they settled at Finale. The same year, they left Valsanta, and established themselves in the city of Friburg itself.

In 1836, they took possession of an old convent at Wittem in Limburg belonging to Holland, and they founded their first house in America,—at Rochester, in the State of New York.

In 1838, France seemed to become more accessible, and the Community of Bischenberg could re-enter it.

May 26, 1839, was another day of triumph for the Congregation on account of the solemn canonization of its holy founder.—The same year, it formed a second establishment in America, namely, at Pittsburg in the State of Pennsylvania.

In 1841, called to Bavaria by the king himself, who offered them the celebrated pilgrimage of Alt-Œtting, the Fathers formed there a double establishment under the titles of St. Mary Magdalene and St. Alphonsus. Moreover, they founded a fourth house at Brussels in Belgium, also under the title of St. Mary Magdalene, and a third in Baltimore, in America, under the title of St. Alphonsus.

This development of the Institute necessitated some changes in its organization. Hence Gregory XVI. by a decree dated July 2, 1841, divided the Congregation into six

Provinces, namely the Roman, the Neapolitan, the Sicilian, the Swiss, the Austrian, and the Belgian province. The Sovereign Pontiff then wished to fix at Rome the residence of the Rector Major; but grave difficulties raised by the pretensions of the Neapolitan Government caused the project to be deferred.

In 1842, a second house was founded at Landser in Strasburg and a fourth in the United States, at New York, under the title of the Most Holy Redeemer.

In 1843. Father Passerat sent some missionaries to England, and the fifth house in America was established at Philadelphia.

In 1844, there arose at Liege, through the care of the Re—demptorists, a pious institution that deserves special mention. It was the Archconfraternity of the Holy Family, a work that has produced happy fruits wherever it was established and maintained.

In 1845, the third house was established in France, namely, at St. Nicolas du Port, in the diocese of Nancy, and another house at Buffalo in America.

In 1846, another foundation was made in Bavaria, the third, at Vilsbiburg in the diocese of Ratisbon, and another at Detroit, the seventh, in America.

In 1847, three new houses were established: one in France, the fourth, at Teterchen in the diocese of Metz one in Savoy, at Contamine-sur-Arve, in the diocese of Annecy; and one in America, the eighth, at New Orleans. But on November 15 of this same year the revolutionists entered Friburg and sacked the convent occupied by the Redemptorists, who had also to leave Switzerland. This was but a prelude of the ravages that were to follow.

In 1848, the revolution disturbed nearly the whole of Europe. On April 6, Father Passerat was expelled from Vienna with his whole Community; a decree was then issued for the suppression of the Institute in Austria and in the whole Germanic Confederation. The same kind of decree was issued in Sicily, where the Congregation had three establishments. Other houses in Italy had likewise to suffer from this storm. Father Passerat withdrew to Belgium, to the house at Tournai.

These trials, however, were not without their consolation. Several of the Fathers expelled from their country went to Norway, and succeeded in building at Christiania a beautiful Catholic Church, the first in this country since the so-called reformation. Moreover, the same year, 1848, three new houses were founded: one in England, the first in this kingdom, at Clapham, near London; one in Belgium, the fifth, at Mons; and one in Bavaria, the fourth, at Fuchsmuhl, in the diocese of Ratisbon.

May 14, 1849, Father Ripoli, the Rector Major, being in a state of health that rendered him incapable of fulfilling his duties, His Holiness Pius IX. associated with him Father Vincent Trapanese to be his Vicar-General for the whole Institute.

In the same year another house was added in Belgium, the sixth, that of St. Joseph at Brussels; one in Bavaria, the fifth, at Niederachdorf, also belonging to the diocese of Ratisbon one in the United States, the ninth, at Cumberland in the diocese of Baltimore.

Father Ripoli, the Rector Major, died March 14, 1850; on account of the revolution that agitated Europe, and the difficulties that were made by the Neapolitan Government, the Sovereign Pontiff himself appointed his successor, not for life, but only for the time it would please the Holy See; this was Father Vincent Trapanese. Moreover, Father Passerat, worn out by age and very many trials, having resigned the office of Vicar-General, was replaced by Father Rudolph Smetana. June 29 of the same year, Pius IX. erected the American house into a special Province.

In 1850 two more houses were added in Europe, that of Bornhofen, in Rhenish Prussia, diocese of Limburg, and that of Amsterdam.

The following year, 1851, four houses were established, one in England at Bishop-Eton near Liverpool, one at Treves, one at Luxemburg, and one at Puchheim in Austria, diocese of Lintz.

In 1852, a fifth house was founded at Douai in France.

January 10, 1853, the Holy Father erected a Province of the Institute in Germany, called *Germania Superior,* that is Bavaria. The same year a house was established at Limerick in Ireland, and one in America, the tenth, at Annapolis, in the diocese of Baltimore.

In 1854, a new house was founded in Holland, at Bois-le-Duc, and two in France, that of Dunkerque, and that of Chateauroux, which were the sixth and the seventh.

We have now arrived at one of the most remarkable periods in the history of the Congregation. In consequence of the obstacles that the Neapolitan Government did not cease to oppose to the proper organization of the Institute, the Sovereign Pontiff authorized the two Sicilies to choose for themselves a special Superior; then by a decree of October 8, 1853, he ordained that the Mother-house of the Congregation was to be established at Rome, and that a General Chapter should there elect a Rector Major, who was thenceforward to reside there. To carry out this order a suitable place was bought, known as *Villa Caserta,* in which the General Chapter was canonically opened, April 26, 1855. Father Nicholas Mauron was chosen Superior-General and Rector Major, and the Chapter only separated after providing for all that was necessary to secure exact and regular observance in all parts of the Institute, in accordance with the spirit of the holy founder. Villa Caserta, situated by the side of the old house of St. Julian, became the Mother-house of the Congregation, after having been dedicated to the Most Holy Redeemer and in honor of St. Alphonsus.

As the continuation of recital of the successive establishment of Redemptorist convents up to the present time 1890, would take too long and would prove monotonous, we would merely mention that in the year 1871 the children of St. Alphonsus had the happiness to see their holy founder raised to the summit of glory in the Church. By a decree of March 23, afterwards confirmed by an apostolic brief of July 7, the Sovereign Pontiff, yielding to the urgent prayers of a great number of illustrious prelates and of learned men, and following the unanimous advice of the Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, after a mature examination of the cause, decreed to St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, and Bishop of St. Agatha of the Goths, the title and the honors of Doctor of the universal Church. This decree, commended in the whole Catholic world, appeared as the crowning of the memorable acts of the Vatican Council, and as a monument of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the glorious pontificate of Pius IX.

VIII. THE CONDITION OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER IN THE YEAR 1887, THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF ST. ALPHONSUS

We quote from the "Catalogue of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer," published at the end of the year 1887:

I. PROVINCE OF ROME

Established, July 2, *1841*.
I. Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer and in honor of St.

Alphonsus, at Rome.

Residence of the Most Reverend Superior-General and Rector Major.

The house of the novitiate and of studies.

Founded, March 25, 1855.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of

"Graces," at Frosinone.

Diœcesis Verulanæ (Veroli) in Ditione Pontificia.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, June 20, 1776.

I. Convent of the Blessed Mary under the title of "Good

Counsel," at Scifelli.

Diœcesis Verulanæ (Veroli) in Ditione Pontificia.

The house of the preparatory college.

Founded, July 5, 1773.

I. Convent of St. Francis Seraphicus, at Buxilongi (Busso lengo).

Diœcesis et Provinciæ Veronensis.

Another house of the novitiate.

Founded, August 2, 1855.

V. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

“Assumption,” at Monterone de Urbe.

Founded, August 2, 1815.

VI. Convent of the Holy Family, Pesinæ (Pesina) apud Caprinum.

Diœcesis et Provincia Veronensis.

Another house of studies and preparatory college.

Founded, October i, 1883.

II. PROVINCE OF NAPLES

Established, July 2, 1841.
I. Convent of St. Michael, archangel, Nuceriæ Paganorum (Pagani).

Diœcesis Nucerinæ Paganorum in Prov. Salernitana.

Residence of the Father Provincial, and house of studies.

Founded, October 13, 1742.

II. Convent of the Most Blessed Trinity, in oppido Jurano

rum (Ciorani).

Archidiœcesis et Prov. Salernitanæ (Salerno).

Founded, September 12, 1735.

II. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of “Mother of God.”

Ad Caput Silari (Caposele).

Archidiœc. Campsanæ (Conza) in Prov. Abellinensi (Avellino).

Founded, November 2, 1746.

II. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

“Assumption.”

In S. Angelo a Cupolo.

Archidiœcesis et Prov. Beneventanæ.

Founded, April 6, 1755.

II. Convent of St. Joseph, Summæ (Somma Vesuviano).

Diœcesis Nolanæ in Prov. Neapolitana.

Founded, March 19, 1816.

II. Convent of St. Anthony of Padua.

Naples (S. Antonio a Tarsia).

Archidiœcesis Neapolitanæ.

Founded, 1816.

II. Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Angriæ (Angri).

Diœcesis Nucerinæ Pag. in Prov. Salernitana.

Founded, May 1, 1872.

VIII. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

In Marianella, near Naples.

Arehidiœcesis Neapolitanæ.

The house of the novitiate.

Founded, May 13, 1878.

IX. Convent of St. Antonine, abbot,

Licteris (Lettere).

Diœc. Castrimaris Stabiarum (Castellamare) in Prov. Neapolit.

Founded, December 15, 1878.

X. Convent of S. Reparatæ V. M.

Theani (Teano).

Diœcesis Theanensis in Prov. Casertana.

Founded, 1880.

XI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of the “ Seven Dolors.”

Abellini (Avellino).

Diœcesis et Provinciæ Abellinensis.

Another house of studies.

Founded, September 12, 1881.

III. PROVINCE OF SICILY

Established, July 2, *1841*.
Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of “Para—dise.”

Mazariæ (Mazzara del Vallo).

Diœc. Mazariensis in Prov. Drepanensi (Trapani).

Founded, October 13, 1881.

IV. PROVINCE GALLICO-HELVETICA

Established, July, 1841.
A-In France, Switzerland, and Holland.

I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

S. Nicolai a Portu (S. Nicolas-du-port).

Diœcesis Nanceiensis (Nancy) in France.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, May 23, 1845.

II. Convent of St. Joseph under the title of the “Patronage.”

Contaminæ ad Arvam (Contamine-sur-Arve).

Diœcesis Anneciensis (Annecy) in France.

Founded, April 21, 1847.

III. Convent of St. Joseph under the title of the “Patronage.”

Dunikercæ (Dunkerque).

Archidiœcesis Cameracensis (Cambrai) in France.

Founded, April 21, 1854.

IV. Convent of St. Joseph.

Castri-Rudolphi (Chateauroux). Archidiœcesis Bituricensis (Bourges) in France.

Founded, September 29, 1854.

IV. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Bononiæ ad Mare (Boulogne-sur-Mer).

Diœcesis Atrebatensis (Arras) in France.

Founded, April 15, 1856.

IV. Convent of St. Joseph.

Insulis (Lille).

Archidiœcesis Cameracensis (Cambrai) in France.

Founded, April 6, 1857.

IV. Convent of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Perpetual Help.

Argentomi (Argentan).

Diœcesis Sagiensis (Seez) in France.

Founded, December 8, 1867.

IV. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Perusii (Perouse).

Archidiœcesis Vesontionensis (Besancon) in France.

Founded, May 29, 1873.

IV. Convent of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In Houdemont.

Diœcesis Nanceiensis (Nancy) in France.

X. Convent of St. Joseph.

Valentiæ (Valence).

Diœcesis Valentinensis in France.

Founded, October, 1873.

XI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

Lutetiæ Parisiorum (Paris).

Archidiœcesis Parisiensis in France.

Founded, August 2, 1874.

XII. Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer.

In Gannat.

Diœcesis Molinensis (Moulins) in France.

Founded, May 10, 1875.

XIII. Convent of St. Joseph.

Antoniaci (Antony).

Archidiœceris Parisiensis in France.

Founded, January 21, 1886.

XIV. Convent of St. Joseph under the title of the “Patronage.”

Operariorum (Ouvrier).

Diœcesis Sedunensis (Sion) in Switzerland.

Founded, June 10, 1880.

XV. Domus Refugii ad S. Josephi under the title of the

“Patronage.”

In Dongen.

Diœcesis Bredanæ (Breda) in Holland.

The house of studies.

Founded, November 13, 1880.

XVI. Domus Refugii ad SS. Redemptoris.

Strati (Stratum).

Diœcesis Buscoducensis (Bois-le-Duc) in Holland.

The house of the novitiate.

Founded, December 28, 1881.

B.—In Spain and the Island of Porto Rico.

I. Convent of St. Teresa.

Navæ Regis (Nava Del Rey).

Archidiœcesis Vallisolitanæ (Valladolid). Residence of the Father Visitor.

Founded, May 15, 1879.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title “De Espino.”

In Espino.

Archdiœcesis Burgensis (Burgos).

The house of the preparatory college.

Founded, June 25, 1879.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

Asturicæ (Astorga).

Diœcesis Asturicensis.

The house of the novitiate and of studies. Founded, November I, 1883.

IV. Convent of St. John the Evangelist.

Granatæ (Granada).

Archidiœcesis Granatensis.

Founded, July, 1879.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of “The

Visitation.”

Matriti (Madrid).

Diœcesis Matritensis (Madrid).

Founded, December, 1879.

VI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

Sancti-Germani (San German).

Diœc. S. Joannis Portoricensis (San Juan de Puerto—Rico).

Island of Porto Rico.

Founded, November 28, 1886.

C.—In South America.

I. Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Limæ (Lima).

Archidiœcesis Limanæ in the Republic of Peru.

Residence of the Father Visitor.

Founded, January 23, 1884.

II. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

Conchæ (Cuenca).

Diœcesis Conchensis in the Republic of Ecuador.

The house of the novitiate.

Founded, July 22, 1870.

III. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Bolivari (Rio-Bamba).

Diœcesis Bolivarensis in the Republic of Ecuador.

Founded, November, 1870.

IV. Convent of St. Joseph.

S. Jacobi de Chile (Santiago).

Archidiœcesis S. Jacobi in the Republic of Chili.

Founded, March, 19 1876

V. Convent ad SS. Crucifixi.

Bugæ (Buga).

Diœcesis Popayanensis (Popayan) in the United States of Colombia.

Founded, June, 1884.

V. PROVINCE OF AUSTRIA

Established, July *2, 1841*.

I. Convent ad Scalas under the title of “Immaculate Conception.”

Vindobonæ (Vienna).

Archidiœc. Vindobonensis in Austria Inferiore.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, 1820.

I. Convent of St. Barbara.

In Mautern.

Diœc. Secoviensis in Styria Superiore.

The house of studies.

Founded, 1827.

I. Convent of St. John Nepomucene.

Oenipotente (Innsbruck).

Diœcesis Brixinensis in Tyrol.

Founded, 1828.

I. Convent of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed

Virgin.

Eggenburgi.

Diœc. S. Hippolyti in Austria Inferior.

The house of the novitiate.

Founded, 1833.

I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Leobii (Leoben).

Diœc. Secoviensis in Styria Superiore.

Founded, 1834.

I. Convent of St. George.

In Puchheim.

Diœcesis Linciensis in Austria Superiore.

Founded, 1851.

I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

In Ketzelsdorf.

Diœc. Regina-Gradicensis (Koeniggraetz) in Bohemia.

Founded, 1857.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help and of St. Cajetan.

Pragæ (Prag).

Archidiœcesis Pragensis in Bohemia.

Founded, 1857.

IX. Convent of St. Ann.

In Katzelsdorf.

Archdiœc. Vindobonensis in Austria Inferiore.

Another house of the preparatory college.

Founded, 1857.

X. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Littaviæ (Littau).

Archidiœcesis Olomucensis in Moravia.

Founded, 1860.

XI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

“Assumption.”

In Sacro Monte (Heiligenberg).

Archidiœcesis Pragensis in Bohemia.

Founded, 1861.

XII. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

“Assumption.”

In Monte Matris Dei (Muttergottesberg) near Grulich. Diœc. Regina-Gradicensis (Kœniggrætz) in Bohemia.

Founded, 1883.

XIII. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

“Visitation.”

In Dornbirn.

Diœcesis Brixinensis, Vicariatus Generalis Vorarlberg.

Founded, 1881.

XIV. Convent of St. Catharine, Virgin and Martyr.

In Mosciska. ,

Diœcesis Premisliensis in Galicia.

Founded, 1883. |

XV. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of “Help of Christians.”

In Philippsdorf.

Diœc. Litomericensis in Bohemia.

Founded, 1885.

XVI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

“Presentation.”

Budvicii (Budweis).

Diœc. Budvicensis in Bohemia.

Founded, 1885.

VI. PROVINCE OF BELGIUM

Established, July *2, 1841*.

A.—In Belgium.

I. Convent of St. Joseph.
Bruxellis (Bruxelles).

Archidiœcesis Mechliniensis (Malines).

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, June 24, 1849.

I. Convent of St. Joseph under the title of the “Patronage.”

Tornaci (Tournai).

Diœcesis Tornacensis.

Founded, November 1, 1831.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

“Immaculate Conception.”

Leodii (Liege).

Diœcesis Leodiensis.

Founded. March 24, 1833.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of “Help.”

Trudonopoli (St. Trond).

Diœcesis Leodiensis (Liege).

The house of the novitiate and of the study of the humanities.

Founded, May 24, 1833.

I. Convent of St. Mary Magdalen.

Bruxellis (Bruxelles).

Archiœdicesis Mechliniensis (Malines).

Founded, September 8, 1841.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

“Immaculate Conception.”

Montibus (Mons).

Diœcesis Tornacensis (Tournai).

Founded, September 20, 1848.

I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Antverpiæ (Anvers).

Archidiœcesis Mechliniensis (Malines).

Founded, June 16, 1857.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

Rollarii (Roulers).

Diœcesis Brugensis (Bruges).

Founded, October 30, 1868.

I. Convent of St. John the Evangelist.

In Pulchro Jugo (Beauplateau).

Diœcesis Namurcensis (Namur).

The house of studies of philosophy and theology.

Founded, August 2, 1882.

B.—In Canada and the West Indies.

I. Convent of St. Ann.
Pulchriprati (Ste. Anne De Beaupré).

Archidiœc. Quebecensis (Quebec) in Canada East. Founded by the American Province of Baltimore, December 1, 1878.

Ascribed to the Belgian Province, August 20, 1879.

I. Convent of St. Ann.

Marianopoli (Montréal).

Diœcesis Marionopolitanæ in Canada East.

Founded, September 4, 1884.

I. Convent of Saints Peter and Paul.

In the Island of St. Thomas.

Diœcesis Rosensis (Roseau) in the West Indies.

Founded, 1858.

VII. PROVINCE OF AMERICA—BALTIMORE

Established, June *29, 1850.*
I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Baltimoræ.

Archidiœcesis Baltimorensis in Statu Maryland. Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, 1841.

I. Convent of St. Philomena.

Pittsburgi.

Diœcesis Pittsburgensis in Statu Pennsylvaniæ. Founded, 1839.

I. Convent of St. Joseph under the title of the “Patronage.”

Roffæ (Rochester)

Diœcesis Roffensis in Statu New York

Founded, 1841.

I. Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Neo-Eboraci (New York).

Archidiœcesis Neo-Eboracensis in Statu New York.

Founded, 1842.

I. Convent of St. Peter, the Apostle.

Philadelphiæ.

Archidiœc. Philadelphiensis in Statu Pennsylvaniæ.

Founded, 1843.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

“Immaculate Conception.”

In Buffalo.

Diœcesis Buffalensis in Statu New York.

Founded, 1845.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

“Immaculate Conception.”

Annapoli.

Archidiœcesis Baltimorensis in Statu Maryland.

The house of the novitiate.

Founded, 1853.

I. Convent of St. Michael the Archangel.

Baltimoræ.

Archidiœcesis Baltimorensis in Statu Maryland.

Founded, 1859.

I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Neo-Eboraci (New York).

Archidiœc. Neo-Eboracensis in Statu New York.

Founded, November 9, 1866.

I. Convent of St. James the Less, Apostle.

Baltimoræ.

Archidiœcesis Baltimorensis in Statu Maryland.

Founded, 1867.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

In Ilchester.

Archidiœcesis Baltimorensis in Statu Maryland.

The house of studies.

Founded September 2, 1868.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

Bostoniæ (Boston).

Archidiœcesis Bostoniensis in Statu Massachusetts.

Founded, January 1, 1871.

I. Convent of St. Patrick.

Ouebeci (Quebec).

Archidiœcesis Quebecensis in Canada.

Founded, October 1, 1874.

I. Convent of St. Boniface.

Philadelphiæ.

Archidiœesis Philadelphiensis in Statu Pennsylvaniæ.

Founded, August 6, 1876.

I. Convent of St. Patrick.

In Toronto.

Archidiœcesis Torontinensis in Canada.

Founded, January 15, 1881.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

In North East.

Diœcesis Eriensis (Erie) in Statu Pennsylvaniæ.

The house of the preparatory college.

Founded, February 2, 1881.

I. Convent of the Sacred Heart.

Baltimoræ.

Archidiœc. Baltimorensis in Statu Maryland

Founded, October 1, 1878.

I. Convent of St. Wenceslaus.

Baltimoræ.

Archidiœc. Baltimorensis in Statu Maryland.

Founded, June 16, 1882.

XIX. Convent of St. Peter the Apostle.

In Portland.

Diœc. S. Joannis (St. John), Prov. Neo-Brunswicen. in Canada.

Founded July 31, 1884.

XX. Convent of St. Clement.

In Saratoga.

Diœc. Albanensis (Albany) in Statu New York.

Another house of the preparatory college.

Founded, February 22, 1886.

XX. Convent of the Blessed Virgin' under the title of the

"Immaculate Conception."

Archidiœc. Neo-Eboracensis in Statu New York

Founded, December 24, 1886.

XX. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

Neo-Eboraci (New York).

Archidiœcesis Neo-Eboracensis in Statu New York.

Founded, August 7, 1887.

VIII. PROVINCE OF UPPER GERMANY

Established, January *10, 1853*.
I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

"Assumption."

Garsii ad Oenum (Gars am Inn).

Archidiœcesis Monaco-Frisingensis in Bavaria Superiore.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, February 6, 1858.

I. Convent of Saints Andrew and Nicholas.

In Niederachdorf.

Diœc. Ratisbonensis in Bavaria (Palatin. Super, et Ratisb.).

Founded, July 15, 1849.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

“Immaculate Conception.”

In Heldenstein.

Archidiœcesis Monaco: Frisingensis in Bavaria Superiore.

Founded, August 29, 1855.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

“Nativity.”

In Kirchenthal.

Archidiœcesis Salisburgensis in Austria.

Founded, August 15, 1879.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of “Good

Counsel.”

In Durnberg.

Archidiœcesis Salisburgensis in Austria.

Founded, September 25, 1884.

I. Convent of St. Anthony of Padua.

In Hunsdorf.

Archidiœcesis Salisburgensis in Austria.

Founded, August 2, 1885.

I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

In Durnberg.

Archidiœcesis Salisburgensis in Austria.

The house of the preparatory college.

Founded, September 29, 1886.

IX. PROVINCE OF HOLLAND

Established, November *21, 1850.* ‘
I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the “Most

Pure Heart.’’

Amstelodami (Amsterdam.)

Diœc. Harlemensis (Harlem) in Prov. Hollandiæ Septentr.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, November 13, 1850.

I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Wittemii.

Diœcesis Ruremundensis in Prov. Limburgi holland.

The house of studies.

Founded, January 12, 1836.

I. Convent of St. Joseph.

Buscoduci (Bois-le-duc).

Diœcesis Buscoducensis in Prov. Brabantiæ Septentrion.

The house of the novitiate.

Founded, January 1, 1854.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the “As sumption.”

Ruremundæ (Roermond).

Diœcesis Ruremundensis in Prov. Limburgi holland.

Founded, June 14, 1863.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of the Perpetual Help.

Rosævalli (Rozendaal).

Diœc. Bredanæ (Breda) in Prov. Brabantiæ Septentr.

Founded, October 24, 1868.

I. Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Rotterodami (Rotterdam).

Diœcesis Harlemensis in Prov. Hollandiæ Meridion.

Founded, December 18, 1881.

Stations of the Surinam Mission.

I. Convent of Saints Peter and Paul.

In Paramaribo (Dutch Guiana, South America). Vicariatus Apost. Surinamensis in Indiis Occidentalibus.

Founded, March 26, 1866.

I. Station of St. Rose of Lima.

In Paramaribo.

Founded, April 30, 1883.

I. Station of the Blessed Virgin of the Immaculate Conception.

In Coronie.

Founded, September 4, 1867.

I. Station of St. Roch.

In Batavia.

Founded, September 4. 1867.

I. Station of St. Joseph.

In Livorno.

Founded, March 1, 1875.

X. PROVINCE OF LOWER GERMANY

Established, *March* 19, *1859.*
I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Luxembergi (Luxemburg).

Diœcesis et Magni Ducatus Luxemburgensis.

Residence of the Father Provincial, and house of studies.

Founded, December 7, 1851.

I. Convent of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Epternaci (Echternach).

Diœcesis et Magni Ducatus Luxemburgensis.

The house of the novitiate.

Founded, July 3, 1873.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

In Vaals.

Diœcesis Ruremondensis in Limburgo Hollandico.

The house of the preparatory college.

Founded, November 1, 1873.

I. Convent of St. Joseph.

In Glanerbrug.

Diœcesis Ultrajactensis (Utrecht) in Hollandia.

Founded, *November* 21, 1884.

In South America.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of “Victory.”

Bonis Auris (Buenos Ayres).

Diœcesis Bonearensis in Republica Argentina (Argentine Republic).

Founded, November 26, 1883.

XI. PROVINCE OF ENGLAND

Established, May *24, 1865.*
I. Convent of Marv Immaculate of the Victories.

In Clapham, London.

Diœcesis Suthwarcensis in Anglia.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, August 2, 1848.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

“Annunciation.”

In Bishop-Eton, Liverpool.

Diœcesis Liverpolitanæ in Anglia.

The house of the novitiate.

Founded, June 10, 1851.

I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Limerici (Limerick).

Diœcesis Limericensis in Hibernia (Ireland).

The house of the preparatory college.

Founded, November 13, 1853.

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

In Perth.

Diœcesis Dunkeldensis (Dunkeld) in Scotia (Scotland).

Founded, March 19, 1869.

I. Convent of St. Joseph.

Tavae (Teignmouth).

Diœcesis Plymutensis (Plymouth) in Anglia.

The house of studies.

Founded, November 3, 1870.

I. Convent of St. Joseph.

Dundalchi (Dundalk).

Archidiœcesis Armacanæ (Armagh) in Hibernia (Ireland).

Founded, September 8, 1876.

In Australia.

Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Novicastri (New Castle).

Diœcesis Maitlandiensis (Maitland) in New South Wales.

Founded, 1887.

Established, November *9, 1875.*
I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

S. Ludovici (St. Louis).

Archidiœcesis S. Ludovici in Statu Missouri.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, September 1, 1866.

II. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the

“Assumption.”

Novæ Aureliæ (New Orleans).

Archidiœcesis Novæ Aureliæ in Statu Louisianæ.

Founded, October 24, 1847.

II. Convent of St. Michael the Archangel.

Chicagiæ (Chicago).

Archidiœces. Chicagiensis in Statu Illinois.

Founded, May 25, 1861.

II. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

Kansanopoli (Kansas City).

Diœc. Kansanopolitanæ in Statu Missouri.

The house of the novitiate and of studies. Founded, December 3, 1878.

II. Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Detroiti (Detroit).

Diœces. Detroitensis in Statu Michigan.

Founded, September 1, 1880.

II. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Chicagiæ (Chicago).

Archidiœcesis in Statu Illinois.

Founded, September 3, 1882.

VII. Convent of St. Joseph.

Windsor Spring.

Archidiœcesis S. Ludovici in Statu Missouri.

The house of the preparatory college. Founded, July 25, 1888.

VII. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Diœcesis Grand Rapids in Statu Mich.

Founded, 1888.

General Table OF THE PROVINCES, HOUSES, AND MEMBERS OF THE *Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer*, AT THE END OF THE YEAR *1887*.

PROVINCES.	Houses.	Fathers.	Students.	Novices Cler.	Brothers Prof.	Brothers Nov.	Total Members.
I. Province of Rome	6	51	14	14	23	6	108
II. Province of Naples	11	126	11	8	38	16	199
III. Province of Sicily	1	21	1	—29	5	—55	27
IV. Province Gallico-Helvetica	27	220	91	13	112	28	507

V. Province of Austria	16	129	45	19	59	24	274
VI. Province of Belgium	12	144	63	23	62	30	312
VII. Prov. of America	22	135	53	—6	90	8	331
VIII. Prov. of Upper Germany	7	43	—29	—9	35	15	86
IX. Province of Holland	7	97	24	-	49	3	196
X. Prov. of Lower Germany	5	63	22		44	15	134
XI. Province of England	7	59	9		34	5	139
XII. Prov. of America, St. Louis	6	50			21		85
Total	127	1138	362	121	572	205	2398

DOMINUS NOS BENEDICAT ET AB OMNI MALO DEFENDAT ET A.D. VITAM PERDUCAT AETERNAM. AMEN.-ED.

Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

RULES AND CONSTITUTIONS

These constitutive Rules of the Congregation were written in Italian, and Benedict XIV. approved them by a Brief dated February 25, 1749. As Parts I. and II. of these Rules already exist in an authorized translation, we only reproduce them together with a translation of Part III., adding to them some useful notes that we think necessary for the better understanding of the text. —Ed.

RULES AND CONSTITUTIONS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.[14134]

THE END OF THE INSTITUTE

As the end of the Institute of the Most Holy Redeemer is to unite secular priests[14135] who are to live in Community and are earnestly to strive to imitate the virtues and examples of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, by consecrating themselves specially to the preaching of the Word of God to the poor, the members of this Congregation, with the permission of the Ordinaries, to whom they are always to be subject,[14136] shall make it their special aim, by means of missions, catechetical Instructions, and spiritual exercises, to assist the people who live scattered in the country and small villages, and who are for the most part abandoned, and destitute of the aids of religion. For this end shall their houses be founded as far as possible outside of the centres of population, and, moreover, at such distances from one another as shall seem fitting to the Ordinaries and to the Rector Major; so that the members of the Congregation, being less distracted and hindered, may endeavor to acquire the spirit that is so necessary to evangelical laborers, and may devote themselves to the spiritual relief of the most abandoned souls.[14137]

PART I

Missions and Other Exercises

Chapter I

THE MISSIONS

I. As the giving of missions is one of the principal ends of our Institute, all shall make them their special study. The missions shall be given at the expense of the Congregation, and it is forbidden ever to ask the payment of these expenses either from communities or from individuals; all that is permitted is to receive such support from individuals, so long as the houses of the Congregation have not sufficient revenues.

II. The local Rectors shall appoint the subjects for the missions, to be given by their houses, unless the Rector Major, whose duty it is to govern the whole Congregation, has otherwise decided. Several subjects, at least two, shall always go together on missions, and they shall always travel, where it is possible, on foot, or at most on horseback; the use of carriages is permitted only when necessary.

III. After four or five months at most, they shall return to the places where our Congregation has given missions, to preach another course of sermons. But these exercises shall not last so long as the missions, shall be conducted by fewer Fathers than were at the mission, and shall have for their aim to consolidate the fruits of the mission which was given before.

IV. The custom of giving these Renewals, which have proved so useful and profitable to the good of souls shall always be maintained in our Institute; and it is on this account especially that all our houses should be situated rather in the centre of dioceses, and not very far from the places to the spiritual welfare of which our subjects are in the habit of devoting themselves.

V. In order that this exercise of the missions may not be neglected, and that the subjects may never lose sight of their vocation, which is to devote themselves to the spiritual help of the most abandoned souls, they shall not occupy themselves with distracting duties, they shall not take part in processions or public ceremonies; they shall not undertake the direction of seminaries, nor the direction of nuns, whether of entire communities or of individuals, living in cloistered convents, or in conservatories; nor shall they give them retreats, as this is allowed only on occasion of missions or other exercises, which are given in the places in which, or near which, such monasteries are situated.[14138] For the same reason it is forbidden to the subjects to have curacies, or to preach courses of Lenten sermons.

VI. The members of this Institute shall especially take the greatest care not to give even the shadow of bad example; and they shall behave in such a manner as always to merit the esteem and the veneration of the people. They shall not allow themselves to be induced through a motive of charity to meddle with marriage affairs, contracts, or wills; nor shall they become sponsors, nor occupy themselves with those things from which arise contempt for evangelical laborers and party-strife. The Superiors have the special and grave obligation to watch over the observance of this rule, as it is of the utmost importance.

Chapter II

OTHER EXERCISES

IN order not to leave entirely abandoned the souls of the people among whom the houses of our Institute are established, the subjects should also assume the spiritual care bf those souls. Hence, in their churches they shall preach every Sunday, and on every Saturday there shall be a sermon on the Blessed Virgin. Moreover in their houses they shall give, especially at the time of ordinations, the spiritual exercises to the ecclesiastics and seculars who may come there, provided in the places of their foundations there is no house of the missionary priests of Saint Vincent de Paul, who devote themselves specially to this kind of work. If, however, the houses of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer have already been established, and are in possession of the right to give the spiritual exercises when new foundations of the above-mentioned Fathers are begun, they shall remain in the possession of their right.

PART II

The Particular Obligations of the Members of the Congregation

Chapter I

THE VOWS OF POVERTY, CHASTITY, OBEDIENCE, AND PERSEVERANCE

1. THE VOW OF POVERTY

I. THE members of the Congregation shall lead a perfect community life, and be uniform in all things. Hence every house shall provide them with all things necessary. As poor men they must be content with frugal fare, in regard to which no distinction shall be made on account of their qualities or offices; and while they are nourishing the body, they shall also nourish the mind by the reading of a spiritual book.

II. The clothing of the members of the Congregation shall likewise be poor, but suitable for respectable priests. Hence the use of silk, half-silk, as well as of everything that savors of vanity and levity, is forbidden. Except in the churches, the use of articles of gold or silver is also forbidden, either in common or in private. Their habit, cloak, and stockings shall be of ordinary wool; however, the use of under-stockings of linen or cotton is allowed; and the shoes shall be simple.

III. The rooms shall be small, and the furniture of the rooms shall be poor, but uniform in all things; namely, a small table with a drawer without a lock; three chairs; four paper pictures; a crucifix of simple wood; two or three spiritual books besides the Holy Scriptures. Other books which any one may need can be taken from the common library with the permission of the Superior; a similar permission is required for any other little convenience which may be necessary.

IV. Although every member of the Congregation must be promoted to Holy Orders under the title of his patrimony, yet the use of this patrimony is forbidden to all. This prohibition also extends to the life-annuities which the subjects may have, and to every other kind of property that they may possess. Hence, all the revenues that the subjects derive from whatever belongs to them, under whatever title, shall be administered and expended by the Superiors.

V. Of the little things that are allowed them for their convenience, they shall make only that use for which they were granted by the Superiors. Without the permission of the Superior it is even forbidden to give to others anything that they have, or to receive from others anything as a gift or as a loan for their own use.

VI. Conformably to this vow, they shall bind themselves not to aspire, either directly or indirectly, to any dignities, benefices, and offices outside of the Congregation; and even should these be offered them they must refuse and renounce them, unless the Sovereign Pontiff or the Rector Major obliges them by a formal command of obedience to accept them. All this must be observed with the most scrupulous exactness under the gravest penalties; those who transgress in this point can even be expelled from the Congregation. Any Superior, even the Rector Major himself, who should be clearly convicted of having through weakness allowed any innovation to the injury of poverty, can be deposed from office and be deprived of the right of voting and of being voted for.

VII. It shall never be allowed them to beg, no matter how great their distress may be; they must expect to receive help from divine Providence. Only in a case of grave necessity is it permitted to apply to one of their benefactors.

VIII. As every member of the Congregation always retains the ownership of his property, he can dispose of it in favor of his relatives. If he does not dispose of it in their favor, he is obliged to do so in favor of the Congregation. But the Congregation shall never accept legacies or gifts from subjects who have poor relatives; and in case of doubt as to the poverty of such relatives, the matter must be referred to the Ordinary of the member of the Congregation.

IX. The income of each house shall not exceed the sum of fifteen hundred ducats,[14139] as this income is sufficient for the maintenance of the Church, of the building, of twelve priests, and of seven lay-brothers: this is the largest number that shall live in one house. An exception, however, is made in favor of the houses of students, of the novitiates, and of the house in which the Rector Major lives, as these houses have a larger number of subjects, and may therefore have an income of two thousand ducats.

2. THE VOW OF CHASTITY

As this virtue is so very dear to the Son of God, and so necessary to the evangelical laborer, the subjects of this Congregation shall be very careful to preserve it inviolate. Hence they shall use the greatest caution while treating with persons of the other sex. They shall not go to the houses of their penitents or of other seculars without an urgent reason, without the express permission of the Superior, and without a companion who has to be assigned to them by the Superior.

3. THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE

I. To the Ordinaries of the place where they are, the subjects of this Congregation shall render entire obedience in everything that appertains to their apostolic labors, and is not forbidden by the Constitutions.

II. They shall, besides, render exact obedience, in the first place, to their Rules and Constitutions, of which they ought to be most faithful observers; then to all the orders and regulations of their Superiors, so that it may be said of them that they have no will of their own, but that their will is in the hands of those who govern them. They shall show all respect to their Superiors; they shall not excuse or defend themselves in their presence, and shall receive their admonitions with humility.

III. Without the express permission of the Superiors, it is not allowed them to write letters to any one except to the Rector Major or his Consultors; and, without the same permission, to receive letters from any one, except from those just mentioned. In like manner, they shall not eat or drink out of meal-time, nor go into the garden or to the porches *(logge),* nor enter the refectory, kitchen, or the room of another.

IV. It is, above all, forbidden to the members of the Congregation to bring strangers into the house, and much more, to their own rooms. When necessary, they must converse with strangers in those places that are set apart for this purpose.

4. THE VOW OF PERSEVERANCE

To the vows above-mentioned the members of the Congregation shall add the vow[14140] of perseverance, by which they oblige themselves to live in the Community till death, and not to ask for a dispensation from their vows except from the Sovereign Pontiff or from the Rector Major. But the Rector Major is always free to send away those subjects whose conduct is not edifying, although in this matter he should before God seriously weigh his motives, and proceed conscientiously and without passion.

Chapter II

THE FREQUENTATION OF THE SACRAMENTS, PRAYER, AND CERTAIN EXERCISES OF HUMILITY

1. THE FREQUENTATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

I. THE priests shall strive to give all possible edification, and to live in such a manner that they may be able daily to celebrate worthily the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. They ought, therefore, to go to confession at least once a week; and the Rector of the house with his Consultors shall appoint for this purpose two confessors.

II. Those who are not priests shall receive Holy Communion on all feasts of obligation, and on Wednesdays and Fridays of every week, and shall go to confession twice a week. For the greater progress of the Brothers, there shall also be appointed in every house a spiritual Prefect, who shall instruct them in the elements of the faith and in regular observance.

III. The Rector shall take very great care that the last Sacraments of Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction, be administered to the sick at the right time; and that, should any one be in danger of death, he be never left without a priest to console and assist him.

2. PRAYER AND EXERCISES OF HUMILITY

I. In every house, where it can be conveniently done, the Canonical Hours shall be recited together in choir with recollection of mind and without chant or modulation of voice.

II. They shall devote themselves to mental prayer three times a day, namely, in the morning and in the evening in common; in the afternoon every one shall make a meditation privately in his room; and every time the meditation is to last half an hour. These meditations shall be made chiefly on the theological virtues, on the life and the virtues of Jesus Christ, of which they should make themselves living images; and every month they shall direct particular attention to one of these virtues, in order that they may the better exercise themselves in it and practise it more in detail, by making their particular examination and giving spiritual conferences on it. In the afternoon, every one shall also make in private a half-hour's spiritual reading, and a visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin, for whom all should entertain a special devotion and a tender affection, and should, therefore, recite every day the third part of the Rosary. Twice a day they shall make in common the examination of conscience, namely, in the morning, before dinner, and in the evening before going to bed; and after the examination of conscience in the evening, they shall recite the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and ask the Superior's blessing.

III. Every year, every member of the Congregation shall make the spiritual exercises during ten days, in total retirement and in strict silence; and every month, every one shall make a similar day of recollection.

IV. Every member of the Institute should, above all deem it the highest honor to perform even the lowliest work of the house, in order to acquire the virtue of holy humility. Hence even the priests shall by turns serve at table and wash the dishes. To set an example to the rest, the Rector may serve at table on one day of the week, and on one day the Minister shall serve at table, and on another day shall wash the dishes. Moreover, among the members of the Congregation there should never be any contention as regards precedence, since every one should desire to occupy the lowest place.

Chapter III

SILENCE, RECOLLECTION, MORTIFICATION, AND CORPORAL PENANCES

1. SILENCE AND RECOLLECTION

THE life of the members of the Congregation should be a life of continual recollection; in order to acquire it, they shall bestow great care on the exercise of the presence of God by frequently exciting themselves to short but fervent ejaculatory prayers. They shall also be very fond of retirement; they shall not leave their rooms without necessity, and shall above all observe silence, which is so praiseworthy in all Institutes. In the evening after the ringing of the *Angelus*,[14141] till the following morning after meditation, it is positively forbidden, except during the hour of recreation after suppers, to speak or to send messages to one another without the express permission of the Superior. Moreover, they shall observe silence for three consecutive hours after the afternoon recreation. In the church, the choir, the sacristy, the kitchen, the refectory, and the dormitories, they shall speak only when necessary, in a few words, and in a low tone of voice. The Superiors shall rigidly exact from their subjects the observance of this rule.

2. MORTIFICATION AND CORPORAL PENANCES

The evangelical laborers should also have much at heart Christian mortification, in order that they may reap abundant fruit from their apostolic labors. Hence the members of this Institute shall especially devote themselves to interior mortification, to the conquering of their passions and to the abnegation of self-will, seeking like the Apostle to find pleasure in the sorrows, in the contempt, and in the humiliations of Jesus Christ.

II. With regard to corporal penances, they shall fast on all the vigils of the feasts of the Blessed Virgin; they shall abstain from flesh-meat during

Advent and the Novena of the Holy Ghost; but the refection in the evening shall be more abundant than on the fasting days of the Church. On two days of every week—on Wednesdays and Fridays—all shall take the discipline in common. They shall sleep on straw; woollen pillows and sheets of ordinary linen are, however, allowed, The beds, as a rule, shall be seven palms[14142] in length by three and a half in breadth.

III. In order that the evangelical laborers may not be too indiscreet in mortifying their bodies, they shall take part in all the prescribed recreations, which usually consist in an hour after dinner and an hour after supper, when all shall assemble in one and the same place. There shall also be one day’s recreation every week. Moreover, it is not allowed them, without the permission of the Superior and their spiritual directors, to perform any corporal penance or to burden themselves with too much labor.

IV. It is forbidden them to use any kind of vain perfume, to go hunting, to play at any game whatsoever, and especially to go to the house of their parents. This is only allowed, with the express permission of the Superiors, in the case of the serious illness of the father or the mother, or on account of some other urgent necessity. The Superiors shall most zealously watch that this rule be observed.

Chapter IV

THE DOMESTIC MEETINGS

I. ON the Ember Days of each year every Rector shall assemble his subjects, and after the reading in common of these Constitutions, he shall direct attention to the faults that have been committed against them, and shall give paternal advice in regard to what he thinks expedient for the observance of them. Furthermore, these Constitutions must be read every Saturday at supper, and every member of the Congregation must have a copy of them, must frequently meditate on them, and must render himself familiar with them.

II. Moreover, the Rector shall give every week a spiritual conference to all his subjects, and every one shall accuse himself of the faults which he has committed against the Rule. The Rector shall also call together every week the priests and the students of the house, in order to confer with them on the right manner of giving missions, about the faults to be avoided in giving them, and about the means successfully to attain this most holy end of our Institute. Lastly, in every house there shall be held every week a conference about cases of conscience or about dogmatic theology; to these conferences all the priests shall come well prepared to answer the questions proposed.

PART *III*

GOVERNMENT of the Congregation

Chapter I

THE RECTOR MAJOR AND OTHER OFFICIALS

I. THE RECTOR MAJOR AND HIS CONSULTORS

I. THE Congregation shall be governed by a Superior General, who shall be perpetual, and shall bear the title of RECTOR MAJOR. He shall be elected by the General Chapter, and must obtain for his election two thirds of the votes. To be elected Rector Major one must have lived ten years an edifying life in the Congregation, have completed one's thirty-fifth year, and, besides laboring in the mission, one must have filled the office of local Rector or Consultor.

II. The Rector Major may choose for his residence any house that may appear most suitable to him.[14143] He shall have absolute authority over all the houses and all the subjects of the Congregation in regard to the interior or domestic government, since in regard to the exterior they are to be always subject to the jurisdiction of the bishops; and if subjects are to be promoted to Holy Orders, they shall always be promoted by those bishops that would promote them if they did not live in the Congregation.

III. It shall be incumbent on the Rector Major to appoint all the Rectors of the houses, the Admonitors, the two Consultors of every local Rector, the Masters of Novices, the Prefects of the Students, the Visitors, and the Lectors.[14144] He may remove these at will, provided he has sufficient cause for doing so; ordinarily, however, he shall not change them before the expiration of three years.[14145]

IV. It shall also be his duty to accept new foundations and to determine their location. He shall also be charged with the office of admitting or dismissing subjects. If the subjects that ask to be admitted are subdeacons they may be received by the Rector Major without the vote of his Consultors; if they are not subdeacons, there will be necessary for their admission a majority of the votes of the Consultors, whose vote in this case shall be decisive. Never, however, shall be admitted young men that have not yet completed their eighteenth year.

V. The principal duty of the Rector Major shall be, to watch with the greatest care over the observance of the Rules and Constitutions of the Institute, and to give the example himself by being the first to observe them. He shall, therefore, severely punish transgressors, above all if they are Superiors, without any regard to persons; and for this purpose he shall make, either himself or through the Visitors whom he shall appoint, the visitation of all the houses.

VI. It shall not be permitted to the Rector Major to resign his office without a very grave reason, and without the acceptation of his resignation by the General Chapter.

VII. The Rector Major shall have six Consultors, who shall be given to him by the Chapter; he shall every month deliberate with them on the most important affairs of the Congregation, especially when there is question of appointing the local Rectors, the Visitors, the Masters of Novices, of founding new houses or of abandoning one already founded, of dismissing from the Institute subjects already received, and the like. He shall not be obliged to follow the advice of the Consultors, since their votes are only consultive; but it will be expedient that he should usually conform to the major or sounder part of them.

VIII. During life, the Rector Major shall secretly designate in writing and appoint his Vicar-General, who shall be charged with governing the Congregation after his death; but this must be done under an inviolable secret. The government of the Vicar shall last till the election of a new Rector Major, and the election shall be held by the General Chapter. If this designation is found not to have been made, the Consultors of the deceased Rector Major shall at once proceed to the election of a Vicar.

IX. Hence, after the death of the Rector Major the Vicar named by him, or elected by the Consultors, shall assemble the General Chapter within the space of six months at the farthest. At this chapter shall be present the Procurator-General, the Consultors of the deceased Rector Major, and the local Rectors, each one of the latter with a companion delegated for this purpose by the Chapter of each house, which shall be composed of all the professed priests of the Community.[14146] All the members of the Chapter shall have the right to vote, and each one may propose what he thinks to be useful for the maintenance of the observance and for the greater good of the Institute.

X. While the General Chapter lasts, six Consultors of the Rector Major shall be elected; they shall remain in office as long as the Rector Major holds his; among them should necessarily be the Admonitor of the Rector Major and the Secretary of the Chapter, who shall be elected by the same Chapter.

XI. If any one of the Consultors be wanting, in every case one shall be provided by the Rector Major and his other Consultors with a majority of votes, the Rector Major of himself not being allowed to provide for one.

XII. To obviate the abuses that usually arise in Communities and unceasingly to renew more and more the strict observance of these Rules, the General Chapter should assemble every nine years in the place that the Rector Major shall designate; and then shall also be examined the state of each house. The Chapter shall have the power to form new statutes concerning the common good of the Congregation, but always conformably, and by no means contrary, to the Constitutions and the Rules. It may, however, for reasonable motives annul and change the ordinances of the Rector Major and of other Chapters.

XIII. If the conduct of the Rector Major becomes such as to make him appear worthy of being deposed, his six Consultors shall have the right to assemble for this purpose the General Chapter, which may depose the Rector Major, provided two thirds of the votes are in favor of the deposition. If ever one of the Consultors summons the others for this purpose, all are obliged to come together; and if they unanimously decide that the Chapter should be assembled, they shall be free to assemble it.

II. THE ADMONITOR OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

The General Chapter shall assign to the Rector Major an Admonitor, who shall be *Consultor natus* of the same Rector, and shall watch over his conduct. If he finds that his conduct is not conformable to the Rules and Constitutions of the Institute in matters, however that are important, whence grave injury might result for the Congregation; especially if through his weakness relaxation should creep into any regular observance,—he shall admonish the Rector Major with great humility and charity. If the Rector Major, however, does not amend, and if the disorder is grave, the Admonitor shall be obliged to inform the other Consultors, so that they may proceed to the adoption of those remedies that they judge to be most suitable; and they may even proceed to the assembling of the Chapter.

III. THE PROCURATOR-GENERAL

In the Chapter in which the Rector Major is elected, there shall also be elected a Procurator-General for the whole Congregation; he as well as the Consultors shall remain in office as long as the Rector Major holds office. It shall be his duty to transact all the affairs of the Congregation that are intrusted to him by the Rector Major or by the Chapter. He shall take care of the income left to the entire body of the Congregation that he may use according to the intention of the benefactors, or if their intention was not specified, that he may use it in the manner that the Rector Major and his Consultors may judge to be expedient. Every six months he shall render to the Rector Major and his Consultors an account of his administration of the income. If the Procurator-General dies, he shall be replaced by an election similar to that of a Consultor who is wanting.

IV. THE VISITORS

I. As it is the duty of the Rector Major to make every year the visitation of all the houses of the Congregation, he may if he is prevented depute for this purpose other Visitors of the same Institute, but they must be men of mature age and of an exemplary life.

II. The Visitors shall have the powers that are given them by the Rector Major; they shall, therefore, leave in every house that they visit suitable ordinances for the good government of the Community and for the greater stability of regular observance; and then they shall render an account of all to the Rector Major.

V. THE LOCAL RECTOR AND OTHER OFFICIALS.[14147]

I. The local Rectors shall take care of their respective houses. The Rector Major shall assign to them an Admonitor, who is to watch over their conduct. If the Admonitor perceives that the Rector fails in his duty, that he cares very little about exacting regular observance, he shall at first admonish him fraternally and humbly, and if the latter does not amend, the Admonitor shall inform the Rector Major about the matter. The Rector Major shall also assign to the Rectors two Consultors with whom they shall deliberate once a month about the affairs of the house, and examine the accounts and the book of Masses.

II. The Rector shall not expend any money exceeding the sum of ten scudi[14148] without the consent of the Admonitor and Consultors; and if the sum exceeds a hundred scudi, they must have the permission of the Rector Major.

III. In regard to business transactions, agreements, acceptance of legacies, or the pledging in any way of the property of the house, especially the taking of money on which interest is to be paid, the Rectors or their Procurators, besides the consent of the Holy See or of the Ordinary, must have in writing the consent of the Rector Major.

IV. The local Rector shall choose an assistant, who shall bear the name Minister. The Minister shall assist the Rector in taking care of the house, and shall govern it in his absence, during which he shall conform in everything to the ordinances and the practice of the Rector.

V. In every house or Community, besides the Rector, there shall not be more than eleven Fathers and seven lay-brothers. There can, however, be a larger number in the houses of the novitiate and in the houses of studies, as well as in the house in which the Rector Major lives.

I. Every month the local Rector shall exact an account of conscience from all his subjects, and shall visit the rooms of each.

Chapter II

THE QUALITIES REQUISITE IN THOSE THAT ARE TO BE ADMITTED

I. THE admission of subjects, clerics, or others into the body of the Congregation shall rest with the Rector Major, as has been said. Hence he himself, or another named by him, shall gather exact information in regard to the capacity and the character of those that ask to be admitted, and especially as to the motive of their vocation; he shall inquire whether they have poor sisters or relatives; whether they have contracted debts or have committed any misdemeanors; whether they are of legitimate birth; for those should never be admitted that might bring any reproach or dishonor upon the sacred ministry. The Consultors shall seek the same information for the admission of young men that are not subdeacons, their vote, as has been said, being necessary in this case.

II. The Secretary of the Congregation shall distinctly note down in a book the day, the month, and the year of the admission of subjects.

III. Having been thus received, the young men shall be put on trial for some time while wearing their own secular dress; then, after having made a retreat of fifteen days, they shall be admitted into the novitiate, in which the clerics during an entire year, the lay-brothers during two years, and the priests of a mature age at least during six months, if the Rector thinks fit, shall devote themselves under the direction of a Master of Novices to the acquisition of the virtues proper to their vocation. If they have behaved well during this year of trial, they shall with the permission of the Rector Major again make a more rigorous retreat of fifteen days; then they shall be admitted to profession by making the simple vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience with the vow and the oath of perseverance in favor of the Congregation that accepts them. This vow and oath cannot be relaxed nor be dispensed from except by the Sovereign Pontiff or the Rector Major; and it is always on this condition that they are made.

IV. After the profession, the subjects shall apply themselves to study, but shall, nevertheless, be under the care of a spiritual Prefect till they are ordained. For the ordinations the permission of the Rector Major shall always be required. Usually, the subjects shall not go out to labor before their thirtieth year; but in the mean while the Rector of the house may employ them in case of necessity, with the consent of the Rector Major.

V. Although the transgression of these Rules and Constitutions superinduces no sin, yet the Superiors shall most zealously do all that they can to see that they be observed. They shall not easily grant dispensations: these shall be granted only in case of necessity, which should be inquired into by the local Superiors and their Consultors whenever this necessity has reference to any individual subject. As for the dispensations that regard the whole Congregation, recourse must be had to the Rector Major, who, after having advised with his Consultors, may grant them, but not in perpetuity, inasmuch as only the General Chapter has the power for very grave reasons to give general and perpetual dis—pensations.

Counsels Concerning a Religious Vocation

St. Alphonsus published in 1750 COUNSELS CONCERNING A RELIGIOUS VOCATION, followed by CONSIDERATIONS ON THE RELIGIOUS STATE. In the first edition he had in view only those young men that might present themselves to enter his Congregation; but afterwards in a new edition he modified the last two paragraphs (IV. and V.) of the Counsels, and adapted them to all religious Institutes in which regular observance is maintained.

Although this little work is found in Volume III. for the generality of readers, we thought it necessary to reproduce it in this volume, to which it chiefly belongs, but with some changes in the notes that we have added.—Ed.

I. WE OUGHT TO CONFORM TO THE DESIGNS OF GOD IN THE CHOICE OF A STATE OF LIFE, WHATEVER IT MAY BE

IT is evident that our eternal salvation depends principally upon the choice of our state of life. Father Granada calls this choice the chief wheel of our whole life. Hence, as when in a clock the chief wheel is deranged, the whole clock is also deranged, so in the order of our salvation, if we make a mistake as to the state to which we are called, our whole life, as St. Gregory Nazianzen says, will be an error.

If, then, in the choice of a state of life, we wish to secure our eternal salvation, we must embrace that to which God calls us, in which only God prepares for us the efficacious means necessary to our salvation. For, as St. Cyprian says: “The grace of the Holy Spirit is given according to the order of God, and not according to our own will;”[14149] and therefore St. Paul writes, *Every one hath his proper gift from God.*[14150] That is, as Cornelius a Lapide explains it, God gives to every one his vocation, and chooses the state in which he wills him to be saved. And this is the order of predestination described by the same apostle: *Whom He predestined, them*

He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified, . . . and them He also glorified.[14151][14152]

We must remark that in the world this doctrine of the vocation is not much studied by some persons. They think it to be all the same, whether they live in the state to which God calls them, or in that which they choose of their own inclination, and therefore so many live a bad life and damn themselves.

But it is certain that this is the principal point with regard to the acquisition of eternal life. He who disturbs this order and breaks this chain of salvation will not be saved. With all his labors and with all the good he may do, St. Augustine will tell him, “Thou runnest well, but out of the way,”[14153] that is, out of the way in which God has called you to walk for attaining to salvation. The Lord does not accept the sacrifices offered up to him from our own inclination, *But to Cain and his offerings he had no respect.*[14154] Rather he threatens with great chastisement those who, when he calls them, turn their backs on him in order to follow the whims of their own caprice. *Woe to you apostate children,* he says through Isaias, *that you would take counsel and not from Me, and would begin a web and not by My Spirit.*[14155]

II. THE VOCATION TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO FOLLOW IT PROMPTLY

1. MISERY TO WHICH ONE EXPOSES ONE’S SELF BY NOT CORRESPONDING TO IT

The divine call to a more perfect life is undoubtedly a special grace, and a very great one, which God does not give to all; hence he has much reason to be indignant against those who despise it. How greatly would not a prince think himself offended if he should call one of his vassals to serve him near his person, and this vassal should refuse to obey the call! And should God not resent such conduct? Oh, he resents it but too much, and threatens such persons by saying, *Woe to him that gainsayeth his Maker.*[14156] The word *Woe* in Scripture signifies eternal damnation. The chastisement of the disobedient will begin even in this life; in which he will always be unquiet, for, says Job, *Who hath resisted Him and hath had peace?*[14157] Therefore he will be deprived of those abundant and efficacious helps necessary to lead a good life. For which reason Habert, a divine, writes: “He will with great difficulty be able to work out his salvation.”[14158] He will with great difficulty save himself; for, being like a member out of his proper place, he will with great difficulty be able to live well. “In the body of the Church,” adds the learned author, “he will be like a limb of the human body out of its place, which may be able to perform its functions, but only with difficulty and in an awkward manner.” Whence he concludes: “And though, absolutely speaking, he may be saved, he will with difficulty enter upon and advance in the road, and use the means of salvation.”[14159] The same thing is taught by St. Bernard[14160] and St. Leo.[14161] St. Gregory,[14162] writing to the Emperor Maurice, who by an edict had forbidden soldiers to become religious, says that this was an unjust law, which shut the gates of paradise to many, because many would save themselves in religion who would otherwise perish in the world.

Remarkable is the case related by F. Lancicius. There was in the Roman college a youth of great talents. Whilst he was making the spiritual exercises, he asked his confessor whether it was a sin not to correspond with the vocation to the religious life. The confessor replied that in itself it was no grievous sin, because this is a thing of counsel and not of precept, but that one would expose one’s salvation to great danger, as it had happened to many, who for this reason were finally damned. He did not obey the call. He went to study in Macerata, where he soon began to omit prayer and Holy Communion, and finally gave himself up to a bad life. Soon after, coming one night from the house of a wicked woman, he was mortally wounded by a rival; certain priests ran to his assistance, but he expired before they arrived, and, moreover, in front of the college. By this circumstance God wished to show that this chastisement came upon him for having neglected his vocation.

Remarkable also is the vision had by a novice, who, as F. Pinamonti relates in his treatise of the victorious vocation, had resolved on leaving his Order. He saw Christ on a throne in wrath, ordering his name to be blotted out of the book of life; by this vision he was so terrified that he persevered in his vocation.

How many other similar examples are there, not to be found in books! And how many unhappy youths shall we not see damned on the day of judgment for not having followed their vocation! Such are rebels to the divine light, as the Holy Ghost says: *They have been rebellious to the light, they have not known His ways,*[14163] and they will be justly punished by losing the light; and because they would not walk in the way shown them by the Lord, they shall walk without light in that chosen by their own caprice, and perish. *Behold, I will utter My Spirit to you.*[14164] Behold the vocation, but because they fail to follow it, God adds: *Because I called and you refused; . . . you have despised all My counsel. . . . I also will laugh in your destruction, and I will mock when that shall come upon you which you feared.*[14165] *Then shall they call upon Me, and I will not hear: they shall rise in the morning, and shall not find Me. Because they have hated instruction and received not the fear of the Lord. Nor consented to My counsel, but despised all My reproof.*[14166].[14167] And this signifies that God will not hear the prayers of him who has neglected to obey his voice. St. Augustine says, “They who have despised the will of God which invited them, shall feel the will of God when it becomes its own avenger.”[14168]

2. WE MUST OBEY THE VOICE OF GOD WITHOUT DELAY

Whenever God calls to a more perfect state, he who does not wish to expose his eternal salvation to great danger must then obey, and obey promptly. Otherwise he will hear from Jesus Christ the reproach he made to that young man who, when invited to follow him, said, *I will follow Thee, Lord, but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house.*[14169] And Jesus replied to him that he was not fit for paradise: *No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.*[14170]

The lights which God gives are transient, not permanent, gifts. Whence St. Thomas says that the vocation of God to a more perfect life ought to be followed as promptly as possible.[14171] He proposes in his summary[14172] the question whether it be praiseworthy to enter religion without having asked the counsel of many, and without long deliberation? He answers in the affirmative, saying that counsel and deliberation are necessary in doubtful things, but not in this matter, which is certainly good; because Jesus Christ has counselled it in the Gospel, since the religious state comprehends most of the counsels of Jesus Christ. How singular a thing it is, when there is question of entering religion to lead a life more perfect and more free from the dangers of the world, the men of the world say that it is necessary to deliberate a long time before putting such resolutions in execution, in order to ascertain whether the vocation comes from God or from the devil! But they do not talk thus when one is to accept of a place in the magistracy, of a bishopric, etc., where there are so many dangers of losing the soul. Then they do not say that many proofs are required whether there be a true vocation from God.

The saints, however, do not talk thus. St. Thomas says that if the vocation to religion should even come from the devil, we should nevertheless follow it, as a good counsel, though coming from an enemy. St. John Chrysostom, as quoted by the same St. Thomas, says that God, when he gives such vocations, wills that we should not defer even a moment to follow them. Christ requires from us such an obedience that we should not delay an instant.[14173] And why this? Because as much as God is pleased to see in a soul promptitude in obeying him, so much he opens his hand and fills it with his blessings. On the contrary, tardiness in obeying him displeases him, and then he shuts his hand and withdraws his lights, so that in consequence a soul will follow its vocation with difficulty and abandon it again easily. Therefore, St. John Chrysostom says that when the devil cannot bring one to give up his resolution of consecrating himself to God, he at least seeks to make him defer the execution of it, and esteems it a great gain if he can obtain the delay of one day only, or even of an hour.[14174] Because, after that day or that hour, other occasions presenting themselves, it will be less difficult for him to obtain greater delay, until the individual who has been thus called, finding himself more feeble and less assisted by grace, gives way altogether and loses his vocation. Therefore St. Jerome gives to those who are called to quit the world this advice: “Make haste, I beseech you, and rather cut than loosen the cable by which your bark is bound fast to the land.”[14175] The saint wishes to say that as a man who should find himself in a boat on the point of sinking, would seek to cut the rope, rather than to loosen it, so he who finds himself in the midst of the world ought to seek to get out of it as promptly as possible, in order to free himself from the danger, which is so great in the world, of losing his own soul.[14176]

Let us also hear what St. Francis de Sales writes in his works, on religious vocation, because the whole of it will go to confirm what has already been said, and what will be said hereafter: “To have a sign of a true vocation, it is not necessary that our constancy be sensible, it suffices if it be in the superior part of our soul. And therefore we must not judge that a vocation is not a true one, if the individual thus called, before putting it in execution, does not feel any longer those sensible movements which he felt in the beginning,—even should he feel a repugnance and coldness, which sometimes bring him to waver, and make it appear to him that all is lost. It is enough that the will remains constant in not abandoning the divine call, and also that there remains some affection for this call. To know whether God will have one become a religious, one ought not to expect that God himself should speak or send to one an angel from heaven to signify his will. And as little necessary is it that ten or twelve Doctors should examine whether the vocation is to be followed or not. But it is necessary to correspond with the first movement of the inspiration, and to cultivate it, and then not to grow weary if disgust or coldness should come on; for if one acts thus, God will not fail to make all succeed to his glory. Nor ought we to care much from what quarter the first movement comes. The Lord has many means to call his servants. Sometimes he makes use of a sermon, at other times of the reading of good books. Some, as St. Anthony and St. Francis, have been called by hearing the words of the Gospel; others by means of afflictions and troubles that came upon them in the world, and which suggested to them the motive for leaving it. These persons, although they come to God only because they are disgusted with the world or out of favor with it, nevertheless, failing not to give themselves to him with their whole will, become sometimes greater saints than those who entered religion with a more apparent vocation. Father Platus relates that a nobleman, riding one day on a fine horse, and striving to make a great display in order to please some ladies whom he saw, was thrown from the horse into the mire, from which he rose besmeared and covered with mud. He was so full of confusion at this accident that at the same moment he resolved to become a religious, saying, ‘Treacherous world, thou hast mocked me, but I will mock thee. Thou hast played me a game, I will play thee another; for I will have no more peace with thee, and from this hour I resolve to forsake thee and to become a friar.’ And, in fact, he became a religious, and lived in religion a holy life.”[14177]

III. MEANS TO BE EMPLOYED FOR PRESERVING A RELIGIOUS VOCATION IN THE WORLD

He, then, who wishes to be faithful to the divine call ought not only to resolve to follow it, but to follow it promptly, if he does not wish to expose himself to the evident danger of losing his vocation; and in case he should by necessity be forced to wait, he ought to use all diligence to preserve it, as the most precious jewel he could have.

The means to preserve vocation are three in number: secrecy, prayer, and recollection.

1. SECRECY

First, generally speaking, he must keep his vocation secret from everybody except his spiritual Father, because commonly the men of the world scruple not to say to young men, who are called to the religious state, that one may serve God everywhere, and therefore in the world also. And it is wonderful that such propositions come sometimes out of the mouth of priests, and even of religious; but of such religious only as have either become so without vocation, or do not know what vocation is. Yes, without doubt, he who is not called to the religious state may serve God in every place, but not he who is called to it, and then from his own inclination wishes to remain in the world; such a one, as I have said above, can with difficulty serve God and lead a good life.

It is especially necessary to keep the vocation secret from parents.

It was, indeed, the opinion of Luther, as Bellarmine relates,[14178] that children entering religion without the consent of their parents commit a sin. For, said he, children are bound to obey their parents in all things. But this opinion has generally been rejected by Councils and the holy Fathers. The tenth Council of Toledo expressly says: “It is lawful for children to become religious without the consent of their parents, provided they have attained the age of puberty;” these are the words: “It shall not be lawful for parents to put their children in a religious order after they have attained their fourteenth year. After this age, it shall be lawful for children to take upon themselves the yoke of religious observance, whether it be with the consent of their parents, or only the wish of their own hearts."[14179] The same is prescribed in the Council of Tribur,[14180] and is taught by St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Thomas, and others, with St. John Chrysostom, who writes in general: "When parents stand in the way in spiritual things, they ought not even to be recognized."[14181]

Some Doctors then say that when a child called by God to the religious state could easily and securely obtain the consent of his parents, without any danger on their part of hindering him from following his vocation, it is becoming that he should seek to obtain their blessing. This doctrine could be held speculatively, but not so in practice, because in practice such a danger always exists. It will be well to discuss this point fully, in order to do away with certain pharisaical scruples which some entertain.

It is certain that in the choice of a state of life children are not bound to obey parents. Thus the Doctors, with common accord, teach with St. Thomas, who says: "Servants are not bound to obey their masters, nor children their parents, with regard to contracting matrimony, preserving virginity, and such like things.[14182] Nevertheless, with regard to the state of marriage, F. Pinamonti, in his treatise on religious vocation, is justly of the opinion of Sanchez, Comminchio, and others, who hold that a child is bound to take counsel of his parents, because in such matters they may have more experience than the young. But speaking then of religious vocation, the above-mentioned Pinamonti wisely adds that a child is not bound at all to take counsel of his parents, because in this matter they have not any experience, and through interest are commonly changed into enemies, as St. Thomas also remarks, when speaking of religious vocation. "Frequently," he says, "our friends according to the flesh are opposed to our spiritual good.[14183] For fathers often prefer that their children should be damned with themselves, rather than be saved away from them. Whence St. Bernard exclaims, "O hard father, O cruel mother, whose consolation is the death of their son, who wish rather that we perish with them than reign without them!"[14184]

God, says a grave author, Porrecta, when he calls one to a perfect life, wishes one to forget one's father, saying, *Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear; and forget thy people and thy father's house.*[14185] "By this, then," he adds, "the Lord certainly admonishes us that he who is called ought by no means to allow the counsel of parents to intervene." "If God will have a soul, who is called by him, forget its father and its father's house, without doubt he suggests by this, that he who is called to the religious state ought not, before he follows the call, to interpose the counsel of the carnal friends of his household."[14186]

St. Cyril, explaining what Jesus Christ said to the youth mentioned above, *No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God*,[14187] comments on it, and says that he who asks for time to confer with his parents in reference to his vocation is exactly the one who is declared by our Lord to be unfit for heaven. "In order to confer with his parents, he looks back who seeks for delay."[14188] Whence St. Thomas absolutely advises those who are called to religion, to abstain from deliberating on their vocation with their relatives: "From this deliberation, the relatives of the flesh are before all to be excluded; for it is said, *Treat thy cause with thy friend* (Prov. xxv. 9); but the relatives of the flesh are in this affair not our friends, but our enemies, according to the saying of our Lord: *A man's enemies are those of his household.*"[14189]

If, then, for following one's vocation it would be a great error to ask the counsel of parents, it would be a greater one still to ask their permission, and to wait for it, for such a demand cannot be made without an evident danger of losing the vocation, as often as there is a probable fear that parents would exert themselves to prevent it. And, in fact, the saints, when they were called to leave the world, left their homes without giving their parents so much as an intimation of it. Thus acted St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Francis Xavier, St. Philip Neri, St. Louis Bertrand. And we know that the Lord has even by miracles approved of these glorious flights.

St. Peter of Alcantara, when he went to the monastery to become a religious, and was fleeing from the house of his mother, under whose obedience he had lived since the death of his father, found himself prevented by a wide river from advancing any farther. He recommended himself to God, and at the same instant saw himself transported to the other side.

Likewise, when St. Stanislaus Kostka fled from home, without the permission of his father, his brother set out after him in great haste in a carriage, but having almost overtaken him, the horses, in spite of all the violence used against them, would not advance a step farther, till turning towards the city, they began to run at full speed.

In like manner the Blessed Oringa of Waldrano, in Tuscany, being promised in marriage to a young man, fled from the house of her parents in order to consecrate herself to God; but the river Arno opposing itself to her course, after a short prayer she saw it divide and form, as it were, two walls of crystal, to let her pass through with dry feet.

Therefore, my very beloved brother, if you are called by God to leave the world, be very careful not to make your resolution known to your parents, and, content to be thus blessed by God, seek to execute it as promptly as you can, and without their knowledge, if you would not expose yourself to the great danger of losing your vocation. For, generally speaking, relatives, as has been said above, especially fathers and mothers, oppose the execution of such resolutions; and although they may be endowed with piety, interest and passion nevertheless render them so blind that under various pretexts they scruple not to thwart with all their might the vocation of their children.

We read in the life of Father Paul Segneri the younger, that his mother, though a matron much given to prayer, left nevertheless no means untried to prevent her son from entering the religious state to which he was called. We also read in the life of Mgr. Cavalieri, Bishop of Troja, that his father, although a man of great piety, used every means to prevent his son from entering the Congregation of Pious Workmen (which, notwithstanding, he afterwards did), and even went so far as to bring against him a lawsuit in the ecclesiastical court. And how many other fathers, notwithstanding they were men of piety and prayer, have not in such cases been seen to change, and to become possessed, as it were, of the devil! For under no other circumstance does hell seem to employ more formidable arms than when there is question of preventing those who are called to the religious state from executing their resolution.

For this reason be also very careful not to communicate your design to your friends, who will not scruple to dissuade you from it, or at least to divulge the secret, so that the knowledge of it will easily come to the ears of your parents.

2. PRAYER

In the second place, it is necessary to know that these vocations are only preserved by prayer; he who gives up prayer will certainly give up his vocation. It is necessary to pray, and to pray much; and therefore let him who feels himself called, not omit to make every morning after rising an hour of mental prayer, or at least half an hour, in his own room, if he can do so there without molestation, and if not, in the church, and likewise half an hour in the evening.

Let him not neglect also to make every day, without fail, a visit to the Most Holy Sacrament, as also to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, in order to obtain the grace of perseverance in his vocation. Let him likewise not omit to receive Holy Communion thrice, or at least twice, a week.

His meditations ought almost always to be on this point of the vocation, considering how great a favor from God he has received in being thus called by him; how much more easily he will secure his eternal salvation, if he be faithful to God in following his vocation; and on the contrary, to how great a danger of being damned he exposes himself if he be unfaithful. Let him then especially place before his eyes the hour of death, and consider the contentment that he will then feel if he shall have obeyed God, and the pains and the remorse he would experience if he should die in the world. To this end I shall add at the end of this some considerations on which he may make his mental prayer.

It is, moreover, necessary that all his prayers to Jesus and Mary, and especially those after Communion and in the visits, be directed to obtain perseverance. In all his prayers and Communions let him always renew the offering of himself to God, by saying, “Behold, O Lord! I am no more mine, I am Thine. Already have I given myself to Thee, and now I renew this my offering of my whole self. Accept of me, and give me strength to be faithful to Thee and to retire as quickly as possible into Thy house.”

3. RECOLLECTION

In the third place, it is necessary that he be recollected, which will not be possible for him unless he withdraws from worldly conversations and amusements. What, in short, as long as we are in the world, is enough to cause the loss of vocation? A mere nothing. One day of amusement, a word from a friend, a passion we do not mortify, a little attachment, a thought of fear, a resentment we do not overcome, suffices to bring to nought all our resolutions of retiring from the world, or of giving ourselves entirely to God. Wherefore we ought to keep perfectly recollected, detaching ourselves from everything of this world. We ought during this time to think of nothing but prayer and frequenting the sacraments, and to be nowhere but at home and in church. Let him who will not do so, but distracts himself by pastimes, be persuaded that he will without doubt lose his vocation. He will remain with the remorse of not having followed it, but he certainly will not follow it. Oh, how many by neglecting these precautions have lost, first their vocation, and afterwards their souls!

IV. DISPOSITION REQUIRED FOR ENTERING RELIGION

He who feels himself to be called by God to a religious Institute in which reigns exact observance[14190] ought to know that the end of every regular observance is, to follow as exactly as possible the footsteps and examples of the most holy life of Jesus Christ, who led a life entirely detached and mortified, full of suffering and contempt. He, then, who resolves to enter such a holy state must at the same time resolve to enter it for the sake of suffering and denying himself in all things, as Jesus Christ himself has declared to those who wish perfectly to follow him: *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.*[14191] He, then, who wishes to enter religion must firmly establish within himself this resolution to go to suffer, and to suffer much, so that afterwards he may not give way to temptations, when, having entered, he feels depressed under the hardships and privations of the poor and mortified life which is there led.

Many, on entering Communities of exact observance, take not the proper means of finding peace therein, and of becoming saints, because they only place before their eyes the advantages of the Community life, such as the solitude, the quiet, the freedom from the troubles caused by relatives, from strife and other disagreeable matters, and from the cares consequent on being obliged to think of one’s lodging, food, and clothing.

There is no doubt that every religious is only too much indebted to his Order, which delivers him from so many troubles, and thus procures for him so great a facility to serve God perfectly in peace, continually furnishing him with so many means for the welfare of his soul, so many good examples from his companions, so much good advice from his Superiors who watch for his benefit, so many exercises conducive to eternal salvation. All this is true; but with all this he must also, in order not to be deprived of so blessed a lot, resolve to embrace all the sufferings he may, on the other hand, meet with in the Order; for if he does not embrace them with love, he will never obtain that full peace which God gives to those who overcome themselves: *To him that overcomes I will give the hidden manna.*[14192] For the peace which God gives his faithful servants to taste is hidden; nor is it known by the men of the world, who, seeing their mortified life, know not how to envy them, but pity them and call them the unhappy ones of this earth. But "they see the cross, the unction they do not see,"[14193] says St. Bernard; they see their mortification, but they do not see the contentment that God gives them to enjoy.

It is true that in the spiritual life one has to suffer but, says St. Teresa, when one resolves to suffer, the pain is gone. Nay, the pains themselves turn into joy. "My daughter," so the Lord said one day to St. Bridget, "the treasure of my graces seems to be surrounded with thorns; but for him who overcomes the first stings, all is changed into sweetness." And then those delights which God gives to his beloved souls to enjoy in their prayers, in their Communions, in their solitude, Those lights, those holy ardors and embraces, that quiet of conscience, that blessed hope of eternal life, who can ever understand them, if he does not experience them? "One drop of the consolations of God," said St. Teresa, "is worth more than all the consolations and the pleasures of the world." Our most gracious God knows well how to give to him who suffers something for his sake, even in this valley of tears, the experience of the foretaste of the glory of the blessed; for in this is properly verified that which David says: *Thou who framest labor in commandment.*[14194] In the spiritual life, God, announcing pains, tediousness, death seems to frame labor, but, in fact, afterwards it is not so; for spiritual life brings to them who entirely give themselves to God that peace which, as St. Paul says, *Surpasseth all understanding.*[14195] It surpasses all the pleasures of the world and of worldlings. Whence we see a religious more content in a poor cell than all the monarchs in their royal palaces. *O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet.*[14196]

But, on the other hand, he must be persuaded that he who does not resolve to suffer and to overcome himself in the things contrary to his inclinations, will never be able to enjoy this true peace, though lie should have already entered religion. *To him that overcomes, I will give the hidden manna.*[14197] It is, then, necessary that he who wishes to be admitted into an Order of exact observance should enter with a mind determined to overcome himself in everything, by expelling from his heart every inclination and desire that is not from God, nor for God, so that he must detach himself from all things, and especially from the four following: 1. From his comforts. 2. From his parents. 3. From self-esteem. 4. From his own will.

DETACHMENT FROM HIS COMFORTS

In religion, after the year of novitiate, one makes, besides the vows of chastity and obedience, also the vow of poverty, in consequence of which one can never possess anything as one's individual property, not even a pin, no income, no money or other things.[14198] The Community will provide him with all that he needs. But the vow of poverty does not suffice to make one a true follower of Jesus Christ if one does not afterwards embrace with joy of spirit all the inconveniences of poverty. "Not poverty, but the love of poverty, is a virtue,"[14199] says St. Bernard; and he means to say that for one to become a saint it is not enough to be poor only, if one does not love also the inconveniences of poverty. "Oh how many would wish to be poor and similar to Jesus Christ!" says Thomas a Kempis; "they wish to be poor, but without any want,"[14200] but so that they be in want of nothing. In a word, they would wish the honor and the reward of poverty, but not the inconveniences of poverty.

It is easy to understand that in religion no one will seek for things that are superfluous,—cloths of silk, costly food, furniture of value, and the like; but he may desire to have all things that are necessary, and these he may be unable to get. For then it is he gives proof that he truly loves poverty, when things that are needful—such as his necessary clothing, bed-covering or food—happen to be wanting, and yet he remains content and is not troubled. And what kind of poverty would that be to suffer if he were never in want of anything necessary? F. Balthasar Alvarez says that in order truly to love poverty we must also love the effects of poverty; that is, as he enumerates them, cold, hunger, thirst, and contempt.[14201]

In religion, every one ought not only to be content with that which is given to him, without ever asking for anything of which, through the neglect of the stewards, he should be in want, which would be a great defect, but he ought also to prepare himself sometimes to bear the want even of those simple things that the Rule allows. For it may happen that sometimes he is in want of clothes, coverings, linen, or such-like things, and then he has to be satisfied with that little which has been given him, without complaining or being disquieted at seeing himself in want even of what is necessary. He who has not this spirit, let him not think of entering religion, because this is a sign that he is not called thereto or that he has not the will to embrace the spirit of the Institute. He who goes to serve God in his house, says St. Teresa, ought to consider that he is going not to be well treated for God, but to suffer for God.

DETACHMENT FROM HIS PARENTS

He who wishes to enter religion must detach himself from his parents and forget them altogether. For, in religious houses of exact observance, detachment from parents is put in practice in the highest degree, in order perfectly to follow the doctrine of Jesus Christ, who said, *I came not to send peace, but the sword; I came to set a man at variance with his father,* etc.;[14202] and then added the reason: *A man's enemies shall be they of his own household.*[14203] And this is especially the case, as has been remarked above, in this point of religious vocation. When one's leaving the world is in question, there are no worse enemies than parents, who, either through interest or passion, prefer to become enemies of God, by turning their children away from their vocation, rather than to give their consent to it. Oh! how many parents shall we see in the valley of Josaphat damned for having made their children or nephews lose their vocation! and how many youths shall we see damned who, in order to please their parents, and by not detaching themselves from them, have lost their vocation and afterwards their souls! Whence Jesus declares to us, *If any man hate not his father, etc.*, *he cannot be My disciple.*[14204] Let him, then, who wishes to enter a religious Order of perfect observance, and to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ, resolve to forget his parents altogether.

When any one has already entered religion, let him remember that he must practise then the same detachment from parents. Let him know that he cannot go to visit his parents in their own house, except in the case of some dangerous illness of his father or mother, or of some other urgent necessity, though always with the permission of the Superior. Otherwise to go to the house of one's parents without the most express permission would be considered in religion as a most notable and scandalous fault. In religion it is also considered a great defect even to ask permission or to show a desire of seeing parents or of speaking with them.

St. Charles Borromeo said that when he visited the house of his parents he always, after his return, found himself less fervent in spirit. And thus, let him who goes to the house of his parents by his own will and not through a positive obedience to his Superiors, be persuaded that he will leave it either under temptation or be cold and lukewarm.

St. Vincent of Paul could only be induced once to visit his country and his parents, and this out of pure necessity; and he said that the love of home and country was a great impediment to his spiritual progress, he said also that many, on account of having visited their country, had become so tender towards their relatives that they were like flies, which being once entangled in a cobweb, cannot extricate themselves from it. He added, "For that one time that I went, though it was for a short time only, and though I took care to prevent in my relatives every hope of help from me, notwithstanding, I felt at leaving them such a pain that I ceased not to weep all along the road, and was for three months harassed by the thought of succoring them. Finally, God in his mercy took that temptation from me."

Let him know, moreover, that no one may write to his parents without permission, and without showing the letter to the Superior. Otherwise, he would be guilty of a most grievous fault that is not to be tolerated in religion, and should be punished with severity; for from this might come a thousand disorders tending to destroy the religious spirit. Let especially the new—comer know that during the novitiate this is observed with the greatest rigor; for novices during their year of novitiate do not easily obtain permission to talk to their parents, or to write to them.

Finally, let him know that in case a subject should become sick, it would be a notable defect to ask or to show an inclination to go to his own house for his restoration to health, under the plea of being better taken care of, or of enjoying the benefit of his native air. The air of his own country becomes almost always, or rather always, hurtful, and pestilential to the spirit of the subject. And if he should ever say that he wishes to be cured at home in order not to subject the Order to expenses for remedies, let him know that the Order has charity enough to take sufficient care of the sick. As to the change of air, the Superiors will think of that; and if that of one house is not beneficial to him, they will send him to another. And as for remedies, they will even sell the books, if need be, to provide for the sick. And so let him be sure that divine Providence will not fail him. And if the Lord should decree against his recovery, he ought to conform to the will of God, without even mentioning the word “home.” The greatest grace that he who enters an Order can desire is to die, when God wills it, in the house of God, assisted by the brethren of his Order, and not in a secular house in the midst of his relatives.

DETACHMENT FROM SELF-ESTEEM

He must also be altogether detached from all self-esteem. Many leave their country, their comforts, and parents, but carry with them a certain esteem for themselves; but this is the most hurtful attachment of all. The greatest sacrifice that we can make to God is to give to him not only goods, pleasures, and home but ourselves also, by leaving ourselves. This is that denying of one’s self which Jesus Christ recommends above all to his followers. And in order to deny one’s self, one must first place under foot all self-esteem, by desiring and embracing every imaginable contempt that he may meet with in religion; as, for instance, to see others, whom perhaps he thinks less deserving, preferred to himself, or to be considered unfit to be employed, or only employed in lower and more laborious occupations. He ought to know that in the house of God those charges are the highest and the most honorable that are imposed by obedience. God forbid that any one should seek for or aspire to any office or charge of pre-eminence. This would be a strange thing in religion and he would be noted as proud and ambitious, and as such should be put in penance, and should especially be “mortified in this point. Better would it be, perhaps, that a religious Order should be destroyed than that there should enter into it that accursed pest of ambition which, when it enters, disfigures the most exemplary Communities, and the most beautiful works of God.[14205]

But he ought to feel even consoled in spirit when he sees himself mocked and despised by his companions. I say consoled in spirit, for as to the flesh this will be impossible, nor need a subject be uneasy when he sees that he resents it; it is enough that the spirit embraces it, and that he rejoices at it in the superior part of the soul. Thus also seeing himself continually reprimanded and mortified by all, not only by Superiors, but also by equals and inferiors, he ought heartily, and with a tranquil mind, to thank those who thus reprimand him, and have the charity to admonish him, answering that he will be more attentive not to fall into that fault again.

One of the greatest desires of the saints in this world was to be contemned for the love of Jesus Christ. It was this that St. John of the Cross asked for, when Jesus Christ appeared to him with a cross on his shoulder, and said, “John, ask from me what thou wishest,” and St. John answered, “O Lord, to suffer and to be despised for Thee.”[14206] The Doctors teach, with St. Francis de Sales, that the highest degree of humility we can have is to be pleased with abjections and humiliations. And in this consists also one of the greatest merits we can have with God. One contempt suffered in peace for the love of God is of greater value in his sight than a thousand disciplines and a thousand fasts.

It is necessary to know that to suffer contempt either from Superiors or from companions is a thing unavoidable even in the most holy Communities. Read the lives of the saints, and you will see how many mortifications were encountered by St. Francis Regis, St. Francis of Jerome, Father Torres, and others. The Lord sometimes permits that even among saints there should exist, though without their fault, certain natural antipathies, or at least a certain diversity of character among subjects of the greatest piety, which will cause them to suffer many contradictions. At other times false reports will be spread and believed. God himself will permit this, in order that the subjects may have occasion to exercise themselves in patience and humility.

In short, he will gain little in religion and lose much who cannot quietly put up with contempt and contradiction; and, therefore, he who enters religion to give himself entirely to God ought to be ashamed not to know how to bear contempt when he appears before Jesus Christ, who was "filled with opprobriums"[14207] for love of us. Let every one be attentive to this, and resolve to be pleased in religion with all abjections, and to prepare himself to suffer many of them, for without the least doubt he will have many to bear. Otherwise, the disquiet caused by contradictions, and contempt badly borne with, might trouble him so much as to make him lose his vocation, and chase him out of religion. Oh, how many have lost their vocation on account of such impatience in humiliations! But of what service to the Order or to God can he be who does not know how to bear contempt for his sake? And how can one ever be said to be dead according to that promise which he made to Jesus Christ, on entering religion, to die to himself if he remained alive to resentment and disquiet, when he sees himself humbled? Out of the Order with such subjects, so attached to their own esteem! out with them! It is well for them to go as soon as possible, that they may not infect the rest also with their pride. In religion every one ought to be dead, and especially to his own self-esteem, otherwise it is better for him not to enter, or to depart again if he has already entered.

DETACHMENT FROM HIS OWN WILL

He who enters religion must altogether renounce his own will, consecrating it entirely to holy obedience. Of all things, this is the most necessary. What does it avail to leave comforts, parents, and honors, if we still carry into religion our own will? In this principally consists the denial of ourselves, the spiritual death, and the entire surrender of ourselves to Jesus Christ. The gift of the heart-that is, of the will—is what pleases him most, and what he wishes from the children of religion. Otherwise, if we do not entirely detach ourselves from our own will and renounce it in all, all mortifications, all meditations and prayers, and all other sacrifices, will be of little avail.

It is, then evident that this is the greatest merit we can have before God, and this is the only and sure way pleasing God in all things, so that then we can, each one of us, say what Jesus our Saviour said: *I do always the things that please Him.*[14208] Certainly, he who in religion lives without self-will may say and hope that in all that he does he pleases God, whether he studies or prays, or hears confessions, whether he goes to the refectory or to recreation, or to rest; for in religion not a step is made, not a breath drawn, but in obedience to the Rule, or to Superiors.

The world does not know, and even certain persons given to spirituality have little idea of, the great value of a Community life under obedience. It is true that outside of religious Communities there are to be found many persons who do much, and, may be, more than those who live under obedience; they preach, do penance, pray and fast, but in all this they consult more or less their own will. God grant that at the day of judgment they may not have to lament as those mentioned in Scripture: *Why have we fasted and Thou hast not regarded, have we humbled ourselves, and Thou hast not taken notice? Behold, in the day of your fast, your own will is found.*[14209] On which passage St. Bernard remarks: “Self-will is a great evil, for through it that which is good in itself may be for you no good at all.”[14210] This to be understood when in all these exercises we seek not God, but ourselves. On the contrary, he who does all by obedience is sure that in all he pleases God. The Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus said that she prized so much her vocation to religion principally for two reasons: the first was that in the monastery she enjoyed always the presence and company of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and the other was that there by obedience she entirely belonged to God, sacrificing to him her own will.

It is related by Father Rodriguez that after the death of Dositheus, the disciple of St. Dorotheus, the Lord revealed that in those five years he had lived under obedience, though by reason of his infirmities he could not practise the austerities of the other monks, yet by the virtue of obedience he had merited the reward of St. Paul the Hermit and of St. Anthony the Abbot.

He, then, who wishes to enter religion must resolve to renounce altogether his own will, and to will only what holy obedience wills. God preserve any religious from ever letting escape from his mouth the words, I will or I will not. But in all things, even when asked by Superiors what he desires, he should only answer, I wish that which holy obedience wills.

And, provided there is no evident sin, he ought in every command imposed on him to obey blindly and without examination, because the duty of examining and deciding the doubts belongs not to him, but to his Superiors. Otherwise, if in obeying he does not submit his own judgment to that of the Superior, his obedience is imperfect. St. Ignatius of Loyola said that prudence in things of obedience is not required in subjects, but in Superiors; and if there is prudence in obeying, it is to obey without prudence. St. Bernard says, “Perfect obedience is indiscreet,”[14211] and in another place he says, “For a prudent novice to remain in the Congregation is an impossible thing;” and, adding the reason for it, he says, “To judge belongs to the Superior; and to obey, to the subject.”[14212]

But to make progress in this virtue of obedience, on which all depends, he must always keep his mind ready to do all that for which he feels the greatest repugnance, and, on the contrary, he must be prepared to bear it quietly when he sees that all he seeks or desires is refused to him. It will happen that when he wishes to be in solitude, to apply himself to prayer or study, he will be the most employed in exterior occupations. For though it is true that in religion one leads as much as possible a solitary life when at home, and that for this end there are many hours of silence,—the retreat each year of ten days in perfect silence, and of one day each month, besides the fifteen days before the receiving of the habit, and one of fifteen before the profession when the vows are made,—nevertheless, if it is an Order of priests called to work and to be employed for the salvation of souls, the subject, if he is continually employed in this by obedience, ought to be content with the prayers and exercises of the Community. He must be prepared sometimes to go even without these when obedience will have it so, without either excusing himself or being disquieted, being well persuaded of that of which St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was so confident when she said that “all the things which are done through obedience are but so many prayers.”[14213]

V. TRIALS THAT WE MUST EXPECT TO HAVE IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

When, then, any one has thus entered religion, however truly he may be called, and though he may have conquered all his passions and his earthly affections, let him not imagine that he will be exempt from other temptations and trials, which God himself will send him, such as tediousness, darkness, various fears, in order to establish him more firmly in his vocation. We must remember that even the saints, who have loved their vocation the most, have sometimes suffered great darkness with regard to it, and that it seemed to them as if they were deceived, and would not be able to save themselves in that state. So it happened with St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, the Venerable Mother Frances de Chantal. But by recommending themselves to God, that darkness was dissipated, and they recovered their peace of mind. Thus the Lord tries his most beloved children, as it was said to Tobias: *Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee.*[14214] And in the book of Deuteronomy, *The Lord your God trieth you, that it may appear whether you love him or not.*[14215] Let each one therefore prepare himself to suffer in religion this obscurity. It will sometimes appear to him that he cannot bear the observance of the Order, that he will have no more peace of mind, or will not even be able to save himself. But, most of all, every one must be on his guard when the temptation presents specious scruples or pretexts of greater spiritual good, in order to make him abandon his vocation.

The principal remedies in such temptations are two in number.

FIRST REMEDY: TO HAVE RECOURSE TO GOD

The first is prayer: *Go ye to Him and be enlightened.*[14216] For as it will not be possible for temptation to overcome him who has recourse to prayer, so he who does not recommend himself to God will surely be overcome by it. And let it be remarked that sometimes it will not suffice to have recourse to God once, or for a few days, to become victorious. Perhaps the Lord will permit the temptation to continue, even after we have prayed for several weeks, months, and even years; but let us be assured that he who ceases not to recommend himself to God will certainly be enlightened and victorious; and thereafter he will have more peace and be more firm in his vocation.

Until we have gone through that storm, which for the most part comes over all, let none of us think himself secure. Let us be persuaded, however, that in this time of temptation we ought not to expect a fervor and a clearness of reason sufficient to tranquillize ourselves; for in the midst of this darkness we see nothing but confusion. We have nothing then to do but to say to the Lord, O Lord, help me! O Lord, help me! and also to have frequently recourse to Most Holy Mary, who is the mother of perseverance, confiding in that divine promise, *Ask and you shall receive.*[14217] And it is certain that he who, with the help of divine grace, is victorious in such a combat finds afterwards a double calm and peace in his vocation.

SECOND REMEDY: TO HAVE RECOURSE TO THE SUPERIORS

The second remedy, and a principal and necessary one in such temptations, is to communicate to the Superiors, or to the spiritual Father of the Community, the temptation which afflicts you, and this at once, before the temptation becomes strong. St. Philip Neri said that when a temptation is thus manifested it is half vanquished. On the contrary, there is in such a case no greater evil than to conceal the temptation from Superiors; for then, on the one hand, God withdraws his light because of the little fidelity shown by the subject in not disclosing it, and, on the other, whilst the mine is not sprung, the temptation gains strength. W hence it may be held for certain that he will surely lose his vocation who, when he is tempted against it, does not disclose his temptations.

And let it be understood that in religion the most dangerous temptations that hell can bring against a subject are those against vocation, in which, if it should succeed and conquer, by that one stroke it will have gained many victories; for when a subject has lost his vocation and left religi0n, what good he any more able to do in the service of God? Though the enemy may make him believe that out of religion he will have more peace and be able to do more good, nevertheless let him hold for certain that as soon as he is out of it he will feel such a remorse in his heart that he will never-more have peace. And God grant that such a remorse may not torment him afterwards through all eternity in hell, into which, as has already been said, he who through his own fault loses his vocation falls so very easily. He will be so lukewarm and discouraged in doing good that he will not even have the courage to raise his eyes to heaven. It will be an easy thing for him to give up prayer altogether, because as often as he begins it he will feel a hell of remorse, hearing his conscience reproach him, and saying, “What hast thou done? Thou hast abandoned God; thou hast lost thy vocation; and for what? To follow thine own caprice, to please thy parents.” Let him be certain that he will have to hear this reproach through his whole life, and still more shall he hear it made to him at the hour of his death, when, in sight of eternity, instead of dying in the house of God, and in the midst of good brethren in religion, he will have to die outside of the Community, perhaps in his own house, in the midst of his relatives, to please whom he has displeased God. Let religious always beseech God to let them die rather than to permit that greatest of disgraces, the greatness of which they will better understand at the point of death and to their greater torment, because then there will be no more any remedy for their error. For him, then, who is tempted against his vocation, this is the best meditation he can make in the time of the temptation, namely, to reflect what torment the remorse of having lost his vocation, and of having to die outside of religion, through his own caprice, through his own fault, will cause him at the hour of death.

CONCLUSION

Finally, let him who wishes to enter religion not forget to resolve to become a saint, and to suffer every exterior and interior pain, in order to be faithful to God, and not to lose his vocation. And if he be not resolved to this, I exhort him not to deceive the Superiors and himself, and not to enter at all, for this is a sign that he is not called, or, which is a still greater evil, that he wishes not to correspond, as he ought, with the grace of his vocation. Hence, with so bad a disposition it is better to remain without, in order to acquire a better disposition, to resolve to give himself entirely to God, and to suffer all for God. Otherwise he will do an injury both to himself and to the Order; for he will easily go back to the world, and then, being disgraced before the world as well as before God, he will be guilty of a still further infidelity to his vocation, and will lose the confidence in the power of taking another step in the way of God. God only knows into what other misfortunes and sins he may afterwards fall.

On the other hand, a beautiful sight it is to see in religion souls wholly given to God, who live in the world as if out of the world, without any other thought than that of pleasing God.

In religion each one has to live only for eternal life. What happiness for us, if we spend these few days of or life for God! And to this he is most especially obliged who has perhaps already spent much of his life in the service of the world. Let us set eternity before our eyes, and then we shall suffer all with peace and joyfulness.

Let us thank God, who gives us so much light and so many means to serve him Perfectly, since he has chosen us, from among so many, to serve him in religion having bestowed on us the gift of his holy love. Let us make haste to please him in the practice of virtue, reflecting that, as St. Teresa said to her daughters, we have already by his grace done the principal thing necessary to become saints, by turning our backs on the world and all its goods, the least yet remains to be done, and we shall be saints. I hold it for certain that for those who die in religion, Jesus Christ has prepared a prominent place in paradise. On this earth we shall be poor, despised, and treated as fools, as imprudent men, but in the other life our lot will be changed.

Let us always recommend ourselves to our Redeemer hidden in the Sacrament, and to Most Holy Mary, because in religion all subjects must profess a most special love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and for the Immaculate Virgin Mary; and let us have great confidence, Jesus Christ has chosen us to be princes of his court, as we may confidently conclude from the protection he extends to all religious Orders, and to each member of them. *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?*[14218]

O Lord! finish Thy work, and, for Thy glory, grant us to be all Thine, so that all the members of Thy Orders may until the day of judgment be pleasing to Thee, and gain over to Thee an immense number of souls. Amen. Amen.

Considerations for those who are Called to the Religious State

Consideration I

HOW THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL IS SECURED BY ENTERING THE RELIGIOUS STATE

To know how important is the eternal salvation of our soul, it suffices to have faith, and to consider that we have but one soul, and when that is lost, all is lost. *What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul.*[14219] This great maxim of the Gospel has induced many youths either to shut themselves up in cloisters or to live in deserts, or by martyrdom to give up their lives for Jesus Christ. For, said they, what does it profit us to possess the whole world, and all the goods of this world, in this present life, which must soon finish, and then be damned and be miserable in that life to come, which will never end? All those rich men, all those princes and emperors, who are now in hell, what have they now of all they enjoyed in this life, but a greater torment and a greater despair? Miserable beings, they lament now and say, *All those things are passed like shadows.*[14220] For them all is passed like a shadow, like a dream, and that lamentation which is their lot has lasted already many years and shall last throughout all eternity. *The fashion of this world passeth away.*[14221] This world is a scene which lasts but a short time; happy he who plays on tins scene that part which will afterwards make him happy in the life which will never end. When he shall then be contented, honored, and a prince in paradise, so long as God shall be God, little will he care for having been in this world poor, despised, and in tribulation. For this end alone has God placed us on this earth, and keeps us here in life, not to acquire transitory but eternal goods: *The end is life everlasting.*[14222]

This is the sole end, which all men who live in the world ought to have in view. But the misfortune is, that in the world one thinks little or nothing of everlasting life. In the midst of the darkness of this Egypt, the greatest number of men bestow all their care on acquiring honor and pleasures; and this is the reason why so many perish. *With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in his heart.*[14223] How few are they who reflect on death, by which for us the scene is closed; on the eternity which awaits us; on what God has done for our sake! And thence it comes that these miserable beings live in blindness and at random, far from God, having their eyes, like the beasts, intent only on earthly things, without remembering God, without desiring his love, and without a thought of eternity. Therefore they die afterwards an unhappy death, which will be the beginning of an eternal death and an endless misery. Having arrived there, they will open their eyes; but it will be only to lament for their own foolishness.

This is the great means of salvation which is found in religion, to wit: the continual meditation on eternal truths. *Remember thy last end, and thou shall never sin.*[14224] In all well-regulated religious houses this is done every day, and even several times a day. And therefore in this light of divine things, which there shines continually, it is morally impossible to live, at least for a long time, far from God, and without keeping one's account ready for eternity.

PRAYER

O my God! how have I ever deserved this great mercy, that, having left so many others to live in the midst of the world, Thou hast willed to call me, who have offended Thee more than others, and deserved, more than they, to be deprived of Thy divine light, to enjoy the honor of living as a friend in Thy own house! O Lord! grant that I may understand this exceeding grace which Thou hast bestowed on me, that I may always thank Thee for it, as I purpose and hope to do always during my life and throughout eternity, and do not permit me to be ungrateful for it. Since Thou hast been so liberal towards me, and hast in Thy love preferred me to others, it is but just that more than others I should serve and love Thee. O my Jesus! Thou wouldst have me to be wholly Thine, and to Thee I give myself wholly. Accept me, and henceforward keep me as Thy own, since I am no more mine. Finish Thou the work which Thou hast begun. Thou hast called me to Thy house, because Thou wilt have me become a saint. Make me then what Thou wilt have me. Do it, O eternal Father! for the love of Jesus Christ, in whom is all my confidence. I love Thee, my sovereign good, *1* love Thee. O infinite goodness! I love Thee alone, and will love Thee forever. O Mary, my hope, come to my assistance, and obtain for me to be always faithful and thankful to my Lord.

Consideration II

THE HAPPY DEATH OF THE RELIGIOUS

Happy are the dead who die in the Lord.[14225] And who are those blessed dead who die in the Lord, but the religious, who at the end of their lives are found already dead to the world, having already detached themselves by their holy vows from the world and all its goods?

Consider, my brother, how content you will feel if following your vocation, it will be your good fortune to die in the house of God. The devil will certainly represent to you that if you retire into the house of God, you may perhaps afterwards repent of having left your own house and your own country, and deprived your parents of that succor which they might have expected from you. But say to yourself: Shall I, at the point of death, repent of having put my resolution in execution, or shall I be content? I beseech you, therefore, to imagine yourself now already at the point of death, about to appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ. Reflect what then, reduced to that state, you would wish to have done. Perhaps to have contented your parents, to have worked for your own family and your country, and then to die surrounded by brothers, and nephews, and relatives, after having lived in your own house with the title of pastor, of canon, of bishop, of a member of the cabinet, and after having done your own will? or rather, to die in the house of God, assisted by your good brethren in religion, who encourage you on the great passage to eternity, after having lived many years in religion, humbled, mortified, poor, far from parents, deprived of your own will, and under obedience, and detached from everything in the world,—all these things render death sweet and agreeable? “He who has been accustomed to deprive himself of the delights of the world,” says St. Bernard, “will not regret having done so when he has to leave it.”[14226] Pope Honorius II., when dying, wished that he had remained in his monastery, occupied in washing the plates, and had not been Pope. Philip II. wished at his death that he had been a lay-brother in some religious Order, intent on serving God, and had not been a king. Philip III., also King of Spain, said when he was dying, “Oh that I had been in a desert, there to serve God, and that I had never been a monarch! for had such been the case, I should now appear with more confidence before the tribunal of Jesus Christ.”

When, then, hell tempts you about your vocation, think of the hour of death, and set before your eyes that all-important moment “upon which eternity depends.”[14227] Thus you will overcome all temptations; you will be faithful to God; and certainly you will not repent of it at the point of death, but will give thanks to the Lord, and die contented. Gerard, brother of St. Bernard, died singing, at the very thought of dying in the house of God.

Father Suarez, of the Company of Jesus, felt at his death so great consolation and sweetness at dying in religion that he said, “I never thought it was so sweet to die.”[14228]

Another good religious, of the same society, when at the point of death, laughed; and being asked why he laughed, answered: “And why should I not laugh? Has not Jesus Christ himself promised paradise to him who leaves everything for his sake? Was it not he who said, *Every one that has left house, or brethren, or father, etc., shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall possess life ever-lasting?*[14229] I have left all for God; God is faithful, he cannot fail to fulfil his promises; and so,” he said, “why should I not rejoice and laugh, seeing myself assured of paradise?

A certain lay-brother, who died some years ago, was asked, at his death in which house he would rather be. He answered, “I desire nothing but to die and to be united with God.

Father Januarius Sarnelli, a short time before his death, when conversing with God, uttered the following words: “O Lord, Thou knowest that all I have done, all I have thought, has been for Thy glory; now I wish to go to see Thee face to face, if it please Thee so;” then he said, “ Come, I will begin a sweet agony;” and began to converse affectionately with God, and shortly after placidly expired, preserving the smile on his lips, and the body began to give forth a sweet odor, which, as they attested, was perceived for several days in the room in which he had died.

St. Bernard, then, speaking of the happy state of religious, had good reason to exclaim: “O secure life, in which death is expected without fear,

—ay, sweetly desired and devoutly accepted!”[14230]

PRAYER

O my Lord Jesus Christ! who, in order to obtain a happy death for me, hast chosen so bitter a death for Thyself; since Thou hast loved me to such an extent as to have chosen me to follow more closely Thy holy life, to have me thus more intimately united with Thy loving heart, bind me, I beseech Thee, wholly to Thee with the sweet cords of Thy love, that I may no more separate myself from Thee. O my beloved Redeemer! I wish to be grateful to Thee, and to correspond with Thy grace, but I fear my weakness may render me unfaithful; O my Jesus! do not permit this. Let me die rather than abandon Thee, or forget the peculiar affection Thou hast shown me.

I love Thee, O my dear Saviour! Thou art and shalt always be the only Lord of my heart and of my soul. I leave all and choose Thee alone for my treasure, O most pure Lamb of God. O my most ardent lover! *My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.*[14231] Begone, ye creatures, my only good is my God, he is my love, my all. I love Thee, O my Jesus! and in loving Thee I will spend the remainder of my life, be it short, or be it long. I embrace Thee, I press Thee to my heart, and I wish to die united with Thee. I wish nothing else. Make me live always burning with Thy love, and when I shall have arrived at the end of my life, make me expire in an ardent act of love towards Thee.

Immaculate Virgin Mary, obtain thou this grace for me; I hope it from thee.

Consideration III

THE ACCOUNT WHICH HE WILL HAVE TO RENDER TO JESUS CHRIST, ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, WHO DOES NOT FOLLOW HIS VOCATION

The grace of vocation to the religious state is not an ordinary grace; it is a very rare one, which God grants only to a few. *He hath not done so to every nation.*[14232] Oh, how much greater is this grace, to be called to a perfect life and to become one of the household of God, than if one were called to be the king of any kingdom on this earth! for what comparison can there be between a temporal kingdom of this earth and the eternal kingdom of heaven?

But the greater the grace is, the greater will be the indignation of the Lord against him who has not corresponded with it, and the more rigorous will be his judgment at the day of account. If a king were to call a poor shepherd to his royal palace, to serve him among the noblemen of his court, what would not be the indignation of this king were he to refuse such a favor, through willingness to leave his miserable stable and his little flock? God knows well the value of his graces, and therefore he chastises with severity those who despise them. He is the lord; when he calls, he wishes to obey, and obeyed promptly. When, therefore, by his inspiration, he calls a soul to a perfect life, if it does not correspond, he deprives it of his light, and abandons it to its own darkness. Oh, how many poor souls shall we see among the reprobate on the day of judgment for this very reason, that they were called and would not correspond!

Give thanks, then, to the Lord, who has invited you to follow him; but if you do not correspond, fear. Since God calls you to serve him nearer to his person, it is a sign that he wishes to save you. But he will have you to be saved in that path only which he indicates to you and has chosen for you. If you wish to save yourself on a road of your own choosing, there is great danger that you will not be saved at all; for if you remain in the world, when God wishes you to be a religious, he will not give you those efficacious helps prepared for you had you lived in his house, and without these you will not save yourself. *My sheep hear My voice.*[14233] He who will not obey the voice of God shows that he is not, and will not be, one of his sheep, but in the valley of Josaphat he will be condemned with the goats.

PRAYER

O Lord, Thou hast shown me such an excess of bounty as to choose me from among so many others, to serve Thee in Thy own house with Thy most beloved servants. I know how great is that grace, and how unworthy of it I have been. Behold. I am willing to correspond to so great a love. I will obey Thee. Since Thou hast been towards me so liberal as to call me when I did not seek Thee, and when I was so ungrateful, permit it not that I should offer to Thee that greater excess of ingratitude, to embrace again my enemy, the world, in which heretofore I have so oftentimes forfeited Thy grace and my eternal salvation, and thus to forsake Thee, who hast shed Thy blood and given Thy life for my sake. Since Thou hast called me, give me also the strength to correspond to the call. Already have I promised to obey Thee. I promise it again, but without the grace of perseverance I cannot be faithful to Thee. This perseverance I ask from Thee, and through Thy own merits it is that I wish it and hope to obtain it. Give me the courage to vanquish the passions of the flesh, through which the devil seeks to induce me to betray Thee. I love Thee, O my Jesus! to Thee I consecrate myself entirely. I am already Thine, I will be always Thine. O Mary, my mother and my hope, thou art the mother of perseverance. This grace is only dispensed through thy hands; do thou obtain it for me. In thee do I confide.

Consideration IV

THE TORMENT WHICH IN HELL WILL BE THE LOT OF HIM WHO IS DAMNED FOR HAVING LOST HIS VOCATION

The pain of having through one’s own fault lost some great good, or of having brought upon one’s self voluntarily some great evil, is a pain so great that even in this life it causes an insupportable torment. But what torment will that youth, called by the singular favor of God to the religious state, feel in hell when he then perceives that if he had obeyed God he would have attained a high place in paradise, and sees himself nevertheless confined in that prison of torments, without hope of remedy for this his eternal ruin! *Their worm dieth not.*[14234]

This will be that worm, which, living always, will always gnaw his heart by a continual remorse. He will say then, What a fool I was! I might have become a great saint. And if I had obeyed, I would certainly have become so; and now I am damned without remedy.

Miserable being! Then for his greater torment, on the day of judgement he will see and recognize at the right hand, and crowned as saints, those who have followed their vocation, and, leaving the world, have retired to the house of God, to which he also had been once called. And then will he see himself separated from the company of the blessed, and placed in the midst of that innumerable and miserable crew of the damned, for his disobedience to the voice of God.

We know well, as we have considered above, that to this most unhappy lot he exposes himself who, in order to follow his own caprice, turns a deaf ear to the call of God. Therefore, my brother, you who have already been called to become a saint in the house of God, consider that you will expose yourself to a great danger should you lose your vocation through your own fault. Consider that this very vocation which God in his sovereign bounty has given you, in order, as it were, to take you out from among the populace and place you among the chosen princes of his paradise, will, through your own fault, should you be unfaithful to it, become an especial hell for you. Make your choice then, for God leaves it in your own hands, either to be a great king in paradise, or a reprobate in hell, more despairing than the rest.

PRAYER

No, my God, permit me not to disobey Thee and to be unfaithful. I see Thy goodness, and thank Thee for that instead of casting me away from Thy face, and banishing me into hell, as I have so often deserved, Thou callest me to become a saint, and preparest for me a high place in paradise. I see that I should deserve a double torment, should I not correspond with this grace, which is not given to all. I will obey Thee. Behold, I am Thine, and always will be Thine. I embrace with joy all the pains and discomforts of the religious life, to which Thou invitest me. And what are these pains in comparison with the eternal pains, which I have deserved? I was entirely lost through my sins; now I give myself entirely to Thee. Dispose of me and my life as Thou pleasest. Accept. O Lord! of one already condemned to hell, as I have been, to serve Thee and love Thee in this life and in the next. I will love Thee as much as I have deserved to be doomed to hate Thee in hell, O God, worthy of an infinite love! O my Jesus! Thou hast broken those chains by which the world held me bound; Thou hast delivered me from the servitude of my enemies. I will love Thee much, then, O my love! and for the love I bear Thee, I will always love Thee and obey Thee. Always will I thank Thee, O Mary, my advocate, who hast obtained this mercy for me. Help me, and suffer me not to be ungrateful to that God who has loved me so much. Obtain for me that I may die rather than be unfaithful to so great a grace. Thus I hope.

Consideration V

THE IMMENSE GLORY WHICH RELIGIOUS ENJOY IN HEAVEN

Consider, in the first place, that which St. Bernard says, that it is difficult for religious who die in the religious state to be damned. “From the cell to heaven the way is easy; one scarcely ever descends from his cell into hell.” And the reason which the saint adduces is, “because one scarcely ever perseveres in it until death, unless he be predestinated.”[14235] For a religious with difficulty perseveres until his death, if he be not of the number of the elect of paradise. Therefore, St. Laurence Justinian called the religious state the gate of paradise. “Of that heavenly city this is the gate.”[14236] And he said that “therefore the religious have a great sign of their predestination.”[14237]

Consider, moreover, that the reward of heaven, as the Apostle says, is “a crown of justice;”[14238] wherefore God, though he rewards us for our works more abundantly than we deserve, rewards us nevertheless in proportion to the works we have done, *He will render to every one according to his works.*[14239] From this consider how exceedingly great will be the reward which God will give in heaven to good religious, in consideration of the great merits they daily acquire.

The religious gives to God all his goods of this earth, and is content to be entirely poor, without possessing anything. The religious renounces all attachment to his parents, friends, and country, in order to unite himself more closely to God. The religious continually mortifies himself in many things which he would enjoy in the world. The religious, finally, gives to God his whole self, by giving him his will through the vow of obedience.

But the dearest thing that we have is our own will, and what God, of all other things, requires of us most is our heart; that is to say, our will. *My son, give Me thy heart.*[14240] He who serves God in the world will give him his possessions, but not himself; he will give him a part and not the whole, for he will give him indeed his goods by alms-deeds, his food by fasting, his blood by disciplines, etc.; but he will always reserve for himself his own will, fasting when he pleases, praying when he likes. But the religious, giving him his own will, gives himself and gives all, gives not only the fruits of the tree, but the whole tree itself. Whence he may then truly say to him, O Lord! having given Thee my will, I have nothing more to give to Thee.

And, therefore, in all that he does through obedience he is sure to do the will of God perfectly, and merits by all, not only when he prays, when he hears confessions, when he preaches, or fasts, or practises other mortifications, but also when he takes his food, when he sweeps his room, when he makes his bed, when he takes his rest, when he recreates himself; for, doing all this through obedience, in all he does the will of God. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi said that all that is done through obedience is a prayer. Hence, St. Anselm, speaking of those who love obedience, asserted that all that religious do is meritorious for them. St. Aloysius Gonzaga said that in religion one sails, as it were, in a vessel, in which he even advances who does not row.

Oh, how much more will a religious gain in one month by observing his Rule than a secular, with all his penance and prayers, in a year! Of that disciple of Dorotheus called Dositheus, it was revealed that for the five years he had lived under obedience there was given to him in heaven the glory of St. Paul the Hermit and of St. Anthony the Abbot, both of whom had for so many years lived in the desert. Religious, it is true, have to suffer the inconveniences of regular observance: *Going, they went and wept.* But when they are called to the other life, they will go to heaven, but, *coming, they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves.*[14241] Whence they shall then sing, *The lines are fallen unto me in goodly places, for my inheritance is goodly to me.*[14242] These bonds which have bound me to the Lord have become for me exceedingly precious, and the glory they have acquired for me is exceedingly great.

PRAYER

Is it possible, O my God and my true lover! that Thou desirest so much my good, and to be loved by me, and that I, miserable that I am, desire so little to love and to please Thee? For what end hast Thou favored me with so many graces, and taken me out of the world? O my Jesus! I understand Thee. Thou lovest me much, Thou wilt have me love Thee much also and be all Thine, in this life and in the next. Thou wishest that my love should not be divided with creatures, but wilt have it to be wholly for Thyself, the only good, the only lovely one, and worthy of infinite love. Ah! my Lord, my treasure, my love, my all, yet I pant and truly desire to love Thee, and to love no other but Thee. I thank Thee for this desire Thou hast given me; preserve it in me, always increase it in me, and grant that I may please Thee, and love Thee on this earth as Thou desirest, so that I may come hereafter to love Thee face to face, with all my strength in paradise. Behold, this is all that *1* ask from Thee. Thee will I love, O my God! I will love Thee, and for Thy love I offer myself to suffer every pain. I will become a saint, not that I may enjoy great delight in heaven, but to please Thee much, O my beloved Lord! and to love Thee much forever. Graciously hear me, O eternal Father! for the love of Jesus Christ.

My Mother Mary, for the love of this thy Son, help thou me. Thou art my hope; from thee I hope every good.

Consideration VI

THE INTERIOR PEACE THAT GOD GIVES GOOD RELIGIOUS TO ENJOY

The promises of God cannot fail. God has said, Every one that has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, . . . or lands for My name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting.[14243] That is, the hundredfold on this earth, and life everlasting in heaven.

The peace of the soul is a good which is of greater value than all the kingdoms of the world. And what avails it to have the dominions of the whole world without interior peace? Better is it to be the poorest villager, and to be content, than to be the lord of the whole world, and to live a discontented life. But who can give this peace? The unquiet world? Oh no, peace is a good that is obtained only from God. “O God!” prays the Church, “give to Thy servants that peace which the world cannot give.”[14244] Therefore he is called the God of all consolation. But if God be the sole giver of peace, to whom shall we suppose will he give that peace but to those who leave all, and detach themselves from all creatures, in order to give themselves entirely to their Creator? And therefore is it seen that good religious shut up in their cells, though mortified, despised, and poor, live a more contented life than the great ones of the world, with all the riches, the pomps, and diversions they enjoy.

St. Scholastica said that if men knew the peace that good religious enjoy, the whole world would become a monastery; and St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said that all, if they knew it, would scale the walls of the monasteries, in order to get into them. The human heart having been created for an infinite good, all creatures cannot content it, they being finite, imperfect, and few; God alone, who is an infinite good, can render it content. *Delight in the Lord and He will give thee the request of thy heart.*[14245] Oh no; a good religious united with God envies none of the princes of the world who possess kingdoms, riches, and honors. “Let the rich,” he will say with St. Paulinus, “have their riches, the kings have their kingdoms: to me Christ is my kingdom and my glory.”[14246] He will see those of the world foolishly glory in their displays and vanities; but he, seeking always to detach himself more from earthly things, always to unite himself more closely to his God, will live contented in this life, and will say, *Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will call upon the name of the Lord, our God.*[14247]

St. Teresa said that one drop of heavenly consolation is of greater value than all the pleasures of the world. Father Charles of Lorraine, having become a religious, said that God, by one moment of the happiness that he gave him to feel in religion, superabundantly paid him for all he had left for God. Hence his joyfulness was sometimes so great that, when alone in his cell, he could not help beginning to leap. The Blessed Seraphino of Ascoli, a Capuchin lay-brother, said that he would not exchange a foot length of his cord for all the kingdoms of the world.

Oh, what contentment does he find who, having left all for God, is able to say with St. Francis, “My God and my all!”[14248] and with that to see himself freed from the servitude of the world, from the thraldom of worldly fashion, and from all earthly affections. This is the liberty that is enjoyed by the children of God, such as good religious are. It is true that in the beginning, the deprivation of the conversations and pastimes of the world, the observances of the Community, and the rules, seem to be thorns; but these thorns, as our Lord said to St. Bridget, will all become flowers and delights to him who courageously bears their first sting, and he will taste on this earth that peace which, as St. Paul says, surpasseth all the gratifications of the senses, and all the enjoyments of feasts, of banquets, and of the pleasures of the world: *The peace of God which surpasseth all understanding.*[14249] And what greater peace can there be than to know that one pleases God?

PRAYER

O my Lord and my God, my all! I know that Thou alone canst make me contented in this and in the next life. But I will not love Thee for my own contentment, I will love Thee only to content Thy heart. I wish this to be my peace, my only satisfaction during my whole life, to unite my will to Thy holy will, even should I have to suffer every pain in order to do this. Thou art my God, I am Thy creature. And what can I hope for greater than to please Thee, my Lord, my God, who hast been so partial in Thy love towards me? Thou, O my Jesus! hast left heaven to live, for the love of me, a poor and mortified life. I leave all to live only for the love of Thee, my most blessed Redeemer. I love Thee with my whole heart; if only Thou wilt give me the grace to love Thee, treat me as Thou pleasest.

Mary, Mother of my God! protect me and render me like to thee, not in thy glory, which I do not deserve, as thou dost, but in pleasing God, and obeying his holy will, as thou didst.

Consideration VII

THE DAMAGE DONE TO RELIGIOUS BY TEPIDITY

Consider the misery of that religious who, after having left his home, his parents, and the world with all its pleasures, and alfter having given himself to Jesus Christ, consecrating to him his will and his liberty, exposes himself at last to the danger of being damned, by falling into a lukewarm and negligent life, and continuing in it. Oh, no, not far from perdition is a lukewarm religious, who has been called into the house of God to become a saint. God threatens to reject such, and to abandon them if they do not amend. *But because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth.*[14250]

St. Ignatius of Loyola, seeing a lay-brother of his become lukewarm in the service of God, called him one day and said to him, Tell me, my brother, what did you come in religion to do? He answered, To serve God. O my brother! replied the saint, what have you said? If you had answered that you came to serve a cardinal, or a prince of this earth, you would be more excusable; but you say that you came to serve God, and do you serve him thus?

Father Nieremberg says that some are called by God to be saved only as saints, so that if they should not take care to live as saints, thinking to be saved as imperfect Christians, they will not be saved at all. And St. Augustine says that such are in most cases abandoned by God: “Negligent souls God is accustomed to abandon.”[14251] And how does he abandon them? By permitting them from lighter faults, which they see and do not mind, to fall into grievous ones, and to lose divine grace and their vocation. St. Teresa of Jesus saw the place prepared for her in hell had she not detached herself from an earthly, though not a grievously culpable, affection. *He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little.*[14252]

Many wish to follow Jesus Christ, but from afar, as St. Peter did, who, when his Master was arrested in the garden, says St. Matthew, *followed Him afar off.*[14253] But by doing so that will easily happen to them which happened to St. Peter; namely, that, when the occasion came, he denied Jesus Christ. A lukewarm religious will be contented with what little he does for God; but God, who called him to a perfect life, will not be contented, and, in punishment for his ingratitude, will not only deprive him of his special favors, but will sometimes permit his fall. “When you said, It is enough, then you perished,”[14254] says St. Augustine. The fig-tree of the Gospel was cast into the fire, only because it brought forth no fruit.

Father Louis de Ponte said, “I have committed many faults, but I have never made peace with them. Miserable is that religious who, being called to perfection, makes peace with his defects. As long as we detest our imperfections, there is hope that we may still become saints; but when we commit faults and make little of them, then, says St. Bernard, the hope of becoming saints is lost. *He who soweth sparingly skull also reap sparingly.*[14255] Common graces do not suffice to make one a saint; extraordinary ones are necessary. But how shall God be liberal with his favors towards that one who acts sparingly and with reserve in his love towards him?

Moreover, to become a saint, one must have courage and strength to overcome all repugnances; and let no one ever believe, says St. Bernard, that he will be able to attain to perfection if he does not render himself singular among others in the practice of virtue. “What is perfect cannot but be singular.”[14256] Reflect, my brother, for what have you left the world and all? To become a saint. But that lukewarm and imperfect life which you lead, is that the way of becoming a saint? St. Teresa animated her daughters by saying to them, “My sisters, you have done the principal thing necessary to become saints; the least remains yet to be done.” The same I say to you; you have, perhaps, done the chief part already; you have left your country, your home, your parents, your goods, and your amusements; the least remains yet to be done to become a saint; do it.

PRAYER

O my God! reject me not, as I deserve, for I will amend. I know well that so negligent a life as mine cannot satisfy Thee. I know that I have myself, by my lukewarmness, shut the door against the graces which Thou didst desire to bestow upon me. O Lord! do not yet abandon me, continue to be merciful towards me; I will rise from this miserable state. I will for the future be more careful to overcome mv passions, to follow Thy inspirations, and never will I through slothfulness omit my duties, but I will fulfil them with greater diligence. In short. I will, from this time forward, do all I can to please Thee, and I will neglect nothing which I may know to be pleasing to Thee. Since thou, O my Jesus! hast been so liberal with Thy graces towards me, and hast deigned to give Thy blood and Thy life for me, there is 110 reason I should act with such reserve towards Thee. Thou art worthy of all honor, all love, and to please Thee one ought gladly to undergo every labor, every pain. But, O my Redeemer! Thou knowest my weakness, help me with Thy powerful grace; in Thee I confide. O immaculate Virgin Mary! thou who hast helped me to leave the world, help me to overcome myself and to become a saint.

Consideration VIII

HOW DEAR TO GOD IS A SOUL THAT GIVES ITSELF ENTIRELY TO HIM

God loves all those who love him: *I love them that love Me.*[14257] Many, however, gives themselves to God, but preserve still in their hearts some attachment to creatures, which prevents them from belonging entirely to God. How, then, shall God give himself entirely to that one who, besides his God, loves creatures still? It is just that he should act with reserve towards those who act with reserve towards him. On the contrary, he gives himself entirely to those souls, who, driving from their hearts everything that is not God, and does not lead them to his love, and giving themselves to him without reserve, truly say to him: *My God and my all.*[14258] St. Teresa, as long as she entertained an inordinate affection, though not an impure one, could not hear from Jesus Christ what afterwards she heard, when, freeing herself from every attachment, she gave herself entirely to the divine love; namely, the Lord saying to her, “Now, because thou art all mine, I am all thine.

Consider that the Son of God has already given himself entirely to us: *A child is born to us, and a son is given to us.*[14259] He has given himself to us through the love he bears tons. *He hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.*[14260] It is, then, just, says St. John Chrysostom, that when a God has given himself to you, without reserve—“he has given thee all, nothing has he left to himself,”[14261]—you also should give yourself to God, without reserve; and that always henceforth, burning with divine love, you should sing to him:

Thine wholly always will I be;
Thou hast bestowed Thyself on me,
Wholly I give myself to Thee.

St. Teresa revealed to one of her nuns, appearing to her after her death, that God loves a soul that, as a spouse, give itself entirely to him, more than a thousand tepid and imperfect ones. From these generous souls, given entirely to God, is the choir of Seraphim completed. The Lord himself says that he loves a soul that attends to its perfection, so much that he seems not to love any other. *One is My dove, My perfect one is but one.*[14262] Hence Blessed Giles exhorts us, “One for one,”[14263] by which he wishes to Say that this one soul we have we ought to give wholly, not divided, to that One who alone deserves all love, on whom depends all our good, and who loves us more than *all*. “Leave all and you shall find all,”[14264] says Thomas a Kempis. Leave all for God, and in God you will find all. “O soul!” concludes St. Bernard, “be alone, that you may keep yourself for him alone.”[14265] Keep yourself alone, give no part of your affections to creatures, that you may belong alone to Him who alone deserves an infinite love, and whom alone you ought to love.

PRAYER

My beloved to Me and I to him.[14266] As then, O my God! Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me, I should be too ungrateful if I should not give myself entirely to Thee; since Thou wouldst have me belong wholly to Thee, behold, O my Lord! I give myself entirely to Thee. Accept me through Thy mercy, disdain me not. Grant that this my heart, which once loved creatures, may turn now wholly to Thy infinite goodness. “Let me henceforth die,” said St. Teresa, “let another than myself live in me. Let God live in me, and give me life. Let him reign, and let me be his slave, for my soul wishes no other liberty.” This my heart is too small, O God most worthy of love, and it is too little able to love Thee, who art deserving of an infinite love. I should then commit against Thee too great an injustice, should I still divide it by loving anything besides Thee. I love Thee, my God, above everything. I love only Thee; I renounce all creatures, and give myself entirely to Thee, my Jesus, my Saviour, my love, my all. I say, and always will say, *What have I in heaven, and besides Thee, what do I desire on earth? . . . Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.*[14267] I desire nothing, either in this life or in the next, but to possess the treasure of Thy love. I am unwilling that creatures should have any more a place in my heart; Thou alone must be its master. To Thee only shall it belong for the future. Thou only shalt be my God, my repose, my desire, all my love. “Give me only Thy love and Thy grace, and I am rich enough.”[14268] O most holy Virgin Mary! obtain for me this, that I may be faithful to God, and never recall the donation which I have made of myself to him.

Consideration IX

HOW NECESSARY IT IS, IN ORDER TO BECOME A SAINT, TO HAVE A GREAT DESIRE FOR SUCH A THING

No saint has ever attained to sanctity without a great desire. As wings are necessary to birds in order to fly, holy desires are necessary to the soul in order to advance in the road of perfection. To become a saint, we must detach ourselves from creatures, conquer our passions, overcome ourselves, and love crosses. But to do all this, much strength is required, and we must suffer much. But what is the effect of holy desire? St. Laurence Justinian answers us: “It supplies strength, and makes the pain easier to be borne.”[14269] Hence the same saint adds, that he has already vanquished who has a great desire of vanquishing. “A great part of the victory is the desire of vanquishing.”[14270] He who wishes to reach the top of a high mountain will never reach it if he has not a great desire to do so. This will give him courage and strength to undergo the fatigue of ascending, otherwise he will stop at the foot, wearied and discouraged.

St. Bernard asserts that we acquire perfection in proportion to the desire for it which we preserve in our heart. St. Teresa said that God loves generous souls that have great desires; for which reason the saint exhorted all in this way, “Let our thoughts be high, . . . for thence will come our good. We must not have low and little desires, but have that confidence in God that, if we make the proper efforts, we shall by little and little attain to that perfection which, with his grace, the saints have reached.” In this way, the saints attained, in a short time, a great degree of perfection, and were able to do great things for God. *Being made perfect in a short time, he fulfilled a long time.*[14271] Thus St. Aloysius Gonzaga attained in a few years (he lived not over twenty-three years) such a degree of sanctity that St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, in an ecstasy seeing him in heaven, said it seemed to her, in a certain way, that there was no saint in heaven who enjoyed a greater glory than Aloysius. She understood at the same time that he had arrived at so high a degree by the great desire he had cherished of being able to love God as much as he deserved, and that, seeing this beyond his reach, the holy youth had suffered on earth a martyrdom of love.

St. Bernard, being in religion, in order to excite his fervor, used to say to himself, “Bernard, for what did you come here?”[14272] I say the same to you: What have you come to do in the house of God? To become a saint? And what are you doing? Why do you lose the time? Tell me, do you desire to become a saint? If you do not, it is sure that you will never become one. If, then, you have not this desire, ask Jesus Christ for it; ask Mary for it; and if you have it, take courage, says St. Bernard, for many do not become saints, because they do not take courage. And so I repeat, let us take courage, and great courage. What do we fear? What inspires this diffidence in us? That Lord, who has given us strength to leave the world, will also give us the grace to embrace the life of a saint. Everything comes to an end. Our life, be it a contented or a discontented one, will also come to an end, but eternity will never terminate. Only that little we have done for God will console us in death and throughout eternity. The fatigue will be short, eternal shall be the crown, which is already, so to speak, before our eyes. How satisfied are the saints now with all they have suffered for God! If a sorrow could enter paradise, the Blessed would be sorry only for this, that they have neglected to do for God what they might have done more, but which now they are unable to do. Take courage, then, and be prompt, for there is no time to lose; what can be done to-day we may not be able to do tomorrow. St. Bernardine of Sienna said that one moment of time is of as great a value as God himself, for at every moment we may gain God, his divine grace, and higher degrees of merits.

PRAYER

Behold, O my God! here I am. *My heart is ready, O my God! my heart is ready.*[14273] See, I am prepared to do all that Thou shalt require from me. *0 Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*[14274] Tell me, O Lord, what Thou desirest of me. I will obey Thee in all. I am sorry for having lost so much time in which I might have pleased Thee, and yet have not done so. I thank Thee that still Thou givest me time to do it. Oh, no, I will not lose any more time. I will and desire to become a saint, not to obtain from Thee a greater glory and more delights. I will become a saint, that I may love Thee more, and to please Thee in this life and in the next. Make me, O Lord! to love and please Thee as much as Thou desirest. Behold, This is all I ask from Thee, O my God! I will love Thee, I will love Thee; and, in order to love Thee, I offer myself to undergo every fatigue, and to suffer every pain. O my Lord! increase in me always this desire, and give me the grace to execute it. Of myself I can do nothing, but assisted by Thee I can do all. Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, graciously hear me. My Jesus, though the merits of Thy Passion, come to my succor. O Mary, my hope! for the love of Jesus Christ, protect me.

Consideration X

THE LOVE WE OWE TO JESUS CHRIST IN Consideration OF THE LOVE HE HAS SHOWN TO US

In order to understand the love which the Son of God has borne to us, it is enough to consider what St. Paul says of Jesus Christ: *He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. . . . He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even to the death of the cross.*[14275] “He emptied himself.” O God! what admiration has it caused, and will it, through all eternity cause, to the angels to see a God who became man for the love of man, and submitted himself to all the weaknesses and sufferings of man! *And the Word was made flesh.*[14276] What a cause of astonishment would it not be to see a king become a worm for the sake of worms! But an infinitely greater wonder it is to see a God made man, and after this to see him humbled unto the painful and infamous death of the cross, on which he finished his most holy life.

Moses and Elias, on Mount Thabor, speaking of his death, as it is related in the Gospel, called it an excess: *They spoke of His decease* (the Latin word is “excessus,” which also means “excess”) *that He should accomplish in Jerusalem.*[14277] Yea, says Bonaventure, it is with reason the death of Jesus Christ was called an excess, for it was an excess of suffering and of love, so much so that it would be impossible to believe it, if it had not already happened.[14278] It was truly an excess of love, adds St. Augustine, for to this end the Son of God wishes to come on earth, to live a life so laborious and to die a death so bitter, namely, that he might make known to man how much he loved him. “Therefore Christ came, that man should know how much God loved him.”[14279]

The Lord revealed to his servant Armella Nicolas that the love he bore to man was the cause of all his sufferings and of his death. If Jesus Christ had not been God, but only man and our friend, what greater love could he have shown us than to die for us? *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man* *lay down his life for his friends.*[14280] Ah, how, at the thought of the love shown us by Jesus Christ, the saints esteemed it little to give their life and their all for so loving a God! How many youths, how many noblemen, are there not, who have left their house, their country, their riches, their parents, and all, to retire into cloisters, to live only for the love of Jesus Christ! How many young virgins, renouncing their nuptials with princes and the great ones of the world, have gone with joyfulness to death, to render thus some compensation for the love of a God who had been executed on an infamous gibbet, and died for their sake!

This appeared to St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi to be foolishness; hence she called her Jesus a fool of love. In exactly the same manner the Gentiles, as St. Paul attests, hearing the death of Jesus Christ preached to them, thought it foolishness not possible to be believed. *We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness.*[14281] How is it possible, they said, that a God, most happy in himself, who is in want of nothing, should die for the sake of man, his servant? This would be as much as to believe that God became a fool for the love of men. Nevertheless, it is of faith that Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, did, for love of us, deliver himself up to death. *He hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for* us.[14282] The same Mary Magdalene had reason then to exclaim, lamenting the ingratitude of men towards so loving a God, "O love not known! O love not loved!" Indeed, Jesus Christ is not loved by men, because they live in forgetfulness of his love.

And, in fact, a soul that considers a God who died for its sake, cannot live without loving him. *The charity of Christ presseth us.*[14283] The soul will feel itself inflamed, and as if constrained to love a God who has loved it so much. Jesus Christ could have saved us, says F. Nieremberg, with only one drop of his blood; but it was his will to shed all his blood, and to give his divine life, that at the sight of so many sufferings and of his death we might not content ourselves with an ordinary love, but be sweetly constrained to love with all our strength a God so full of love towards us. *That they also who live may not live any more for themselves, but unto Him who died for them.*[14284]

PRAYER

Indeed, O my Jesus, my Lord, and my Redeemer! only too much hast Thou obliged me to love Thee; too much my love has cost Thee. I should be too ungrateful if I should content myself to love with reserve a God who has given me his blood, his life, and his entire self. Oh, Thou hast died for me, Thy poor servant; it is but just that I should die for Thee, my God, and my all. Yes, O my Jesus! I detach myself from all, to give myself to Thee. I put away from me the love of all creatures, in order to consecrate myself entirely to Thy love. *My beloved is chosen from among thousands.*[14285] I choose Thee alone out of all things for my good, my treasure, and my only love. I love Thee, O my love! I love Thee. Thou art not satisfied that I should love Thee a little only. Thou art not willing to have me love anything besides Thee. Thee I will please in all things. Thee will I love much; and Thou shalt be my only love. My God, my God, help me, that I may fully please Thee.

Mary, my queen, do thou also help me to love my God much. Amen. So I hope; so may it be.

Consideration XI

THE GREAT HAPPINESS WHICH RELIGIOUS ENJOY IN DWELLING IN THE SAME HOUSE WITH JESUS CHRIST IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

The Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus, foundress of a convent in Toulouse, said that she esteemed very much her lot as a religious, for two principal reasons. The first was, that religious, through the vow of obedience, belong entirely to God; and the second, that they have the privilege of dwelling always with Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. And in truth, if people of the world deem it so great a favor to be invited by kings to dwell in their palaces, how much more favoured should we esteem ourselves who are admitted to dwell continually with the King of Heaven in his own house?

In houses of the religious, Jesus Christ dwells for their sake in the church, so that they can find him at all hours. Persons of the world can scarcely go to visit him during the day, and in many places only in the morning. But the religious finds him in the tabernacle, as often as he wishes in the morning, in the afternoon, and during the night. There he may continually entertain himself with his Lord, and there Jesus Christ rejoices to converse familiarly with his beloved servants, whom, for this end, he has called out of Egypt, that he may be their companion during this life, hidden under the veil of the Most Holy Sacrament, and in the next unveiled in paradise. "O solitude," it may be said of every religious house, "in which God familiarly speaks and converses with his friends!"[14286] The souls that love Jesus Christ much do not know how to wish for any other paradise on this earth than to be in the presence of their Lord, who dwells in this sacrament for the love of those who seek and visit him.

His conversation hath no bitterness, nor His company any tediousness.[14287] He finds tediousness in the company of Jesus Christ, who does not love him. But those who on this earth have given all their love to

Jesus Christ find in the sacrament all their pleasure, their rest, their paradise; and therefore they keep their hearts always mindful to visit, as often as they can, their God in the sacrament, to pay their court to him, giving vent to their affections at the foot of the altar, offering him their afflictions, their desires of loving him, of seeing him face to face, and, in the mean time, of pleasing him in all things.

PRAYER

Behold me in Thy presence, O my Jesus! hidden in the sacrament : Thou art the self-same Jesus who for me didst sacrifice Thyself on the cross. Thou art he who lovest me so much, and who hast therefore confined Thyself in this prison of love. Amongst so many who have offended Thee less than I, and who have loved Thee better than I, Thou hast chosen me, in Thy goodness, to keep Thee company in this house, where, having drawn me from the midst of the world, Thou hast destined me always to live united with Thee, and afterwards to have me nigh Thee to praise and to love Thee in Thy eternal kingdom. O Lord! I thank Thee. How have I deserved this happy lot? *I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than dwell in the tabernacles of* sinners.[14288] *Happy* indeed am I, O my Jesus! to have left the world; and it is my great desire to perform the vilest office in Thy house rather than dwell in the proudest royal palaces of men. Receive me, then, O Lord! to stay with Thee all my life long; do not chase me away, as I deserve. Re pleased to allow that, among the many good brothers who serve Thee in this house, I, though I am a miserable sinner, may serve Thee also. Many years already have I lived far from Thee. But now that Thou hast enlightened me to know the vanity of the world, and my own foolishness, I will not depart any more from Thy feet, O my Jesus! Thy presence shall animate me to fight when I am tempted. The nearness of Thy abode shall remind me of the obligation I am under to love Thee, and always to have recourse to Thee in my combats against hell. I will always keep near to Thee, that I may unite myself to Thee, and attach myself closer to Thee. I love Thee, O my God! hidden in this sacrament. Thou, for the love of me, remainest always on this altar. I, for the love of Thee, will always remain in Thy presence as much as I shall be able. There enclosed Thou always lovest me, and here enclosed I will always love Thee. Always, then, O my Jesus, my love, my all! shall we remain together,—in time in this house, and during eternity in paradise. This is my hope; so may it be. Most holy Mary, obtain for me a greater love for the Most Holy Sacrament.

Consideration XII

THE LIFE OF RELIGIOUS RESEMBLES MOSTLY THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

The Apostle says that the eternal Father predestines to the kingdom of heaven those only who live conformably to the incarnate Word. *Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his son.*[14289] How happy, then, and secure of paradise should not religious be, seeing that God has called them to a state of life which of all other states is the most conformed to the life of Jesus Christ.

Jesus, on this earth, wished to live poor as the son and helpmate of a mechanic, in a poor dwelling, with poor clothing and poor food: *Being rich, He became poor for your sake, that through His poverty you might become rich.*[14290] Moreover, he chose a life the most entirely mortified, far from the delights of the world, and always full of pain and sorrow, from his birth to his death; hence by the prophet he was called *The man of sorrows.*[14291] By this he wished to give his servants to understand what ought to be the life of those who wish to follow him: *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.*[14292] According to this example and to this invitation of Jesus Christ, the saints have endeavored to dispossess themselves of all earthly goods, and to load themselves with pains and crosses, in order thus to follow Christ, their beloved Lord.

Thus acted St. Benedict, who, being the son of the lord of Norcia, and a relative of the Emperor Justinian, and born amidst the riches and the pleasures of the world, while yet a youth of only fourteen years went to live in a cavern on Mount Sublaco, where he received no other sustenance but a piece of bread brought him every day as an alms by the hermit Romanus.

So acted St. Francis of Assisi, who renounced in favor of his father the whole lawful portion of his inheritance, even to the shirt he had on his back, and thus, poor and mortified, consecrated himself to Jesus Christ. Thus St.

Francis Borgia, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, the one being Duke of Candia, the other of Castiglione, left all their riches, their estates, their vassals, their country, their house, their parents, and went to live a poor life in religion.

So have done so many other noblemen and princes, even of royal blood. Blessed Zedmerra, daughter of the King of Ethiopia, renounced the kingdom to become a Dominican nun. Blessed Johanna of Portugal renounced the kingdom of France and England, to become a nun. In the Benedictine Order alone, there are found twenty-five emperors, and seventy-five kings and queens, who left the world to live poor, mortified, and forgotten by the world, in a poor cloister. Ah! indeed, these and not the grandees of the world, are the truly fortunate ones.

At present, worldlings think these to be fools, but in the valley of Josaphat they shall know that they themselves have been the fools; and when they see the saints on their thrones crowned by God, they shall say, lamenting and in despair, *These are they whom we had sometime in derision; . . . we fools esteemed their life madness, but now they are numbered among the children of God, as their lot is among the saints.*[14293]

PRAYER

Ah! my Master, and my Redeemer, Jesus, I am then of the number of those fortunate ones whom Thou hast called to follow Thee. O my Lord! I thank Thee for this. I leave all; would that I had more to leave, that I might draw near to Thee, my King and my God, who for the love of me, and to give me courage by Thy example, hast chosen for Thyself a life so poor and so painful. Walk on. O Lord, I will follow Thee. Choose Thou for me what cross Thou wilt, and help me. I will always carry it with constancy and love. I regret that for the past I have abandoned Thee, to follow my lusts and the vanities of the world; but now I will leave Thee no more. Bind me to Thy cross, and if through weakness I sometimes resist, draw me by the sweet bonds of Thy love. Suffer it not that I should ever leave Thee again. Yes, my Jesus, I renounce all the satisfactions of the world; my only satisfaction shall be to continue to love Thee, and to suffer all that pleases Thee. I hope thus to come myself one day in Thy kingdom, to be united with Thee by that bond of eternal love, where, loving Thee in Thy revealed glory, I need no more fear to be loosed and separated from Thee. I love

Thee, O my God, my all! and will always love Thee. Behold my hope, O Most Holy Mary! thou who, because the most conformed to Jesus, art now the most powerful to obtain this grace. Be thou my protectress!

Consideration XIII

THE ZEAL WHICH RELIGIOUS OUGHT TO HAVE FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

He who is called to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer will never be a true follower of Jesus Christ, and will never become a saint, if he fulfils not the end of his vocation, and has not the spirit of the Institute, which is the salvation of souls, and of those souls that are the most destitute of spiritual succor, such as the poor people in the country.

This was truly the end for which our Redeemer came down from heaven, who protests, *The Spirit of the Lord . . . hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor.*[14294] He sought no other of Peter's love for him but this, that he should procure the salvation of souls: *Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? . . . Feed My sheep.*[14295] He did not impose upon him, says St. John Chrysostom, penance, prayers, or other things, but only that he should endeavor to save his sheep: "Christ said not to him, throw your money away, practise fasting, fatigue your body with hard work, but he said, Feed My sheep."[14296] And he declares that he would look upon every benefit conferred on the least of our neighbors as conferred on himself. *Amen, I say to you, since you have done it unto one of these My least brethren, you have done it unto Me.*[14297]

Every religious ought, therefore, with the utmost care, to entertain within himself this zeal, and this spirit of helping souls. To this end everyone ought to direct his studies, and when he shall afterwards have been assigned to his work by his Superiors, he ought to give to it all his thoughts, and his whole attention. He could not call himself a true brother of this Congregation, who, through the desire of attending only to himself and of leading a retired and solitary life, would not accept with all affection such an employment, when imposed on him by obedience.

What greater glory can a man have than to be, as St. Paul says, a co-operator with God in this great work of the salvation of souls? He who loves the Lord ardently is not content to be alone in loving him; he would draw all to his love, saying with David, *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us extol His name together.*[14298] Hence St. Augustine exhorts all those who love God, "If you love God, draw all men to his love."[14299]

A good ground to hope for his own salvation has he who with true zeal labors for the salvation of souls. "Have you saved a soul," says St. Augustine, "then you have predestinated your own."[14300] The Holy Ghost promises us, *When thou shalt have labored for the welfare of a poor man, and by thy labor shalt have filled him* (with divine grace)*, the Lord will fill thee with light and peace.*[14301] In this—namely, in procuring the salvation of others—St. Paul placed his hope of eternal salvation, when he said to his disciples of Thessalonica, *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glory? Are not you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*[14302]

PRAYER

O my Lord Jesus Christ! how can I thank Thee enough, since Thou hast called me to the same work that Thou didst Thyself on earth ; namely, to go with my poor exertions and help souls to their salvation? How have I deserved this honor and this reward, after having offended Thee so grievously, and been the cause to others also of offending Thee? Yes, O my Lord! Thou callest me to help Thee in this great undertaking. I will serve Thee with all my strength. Behold, I offer Thee all my labor, and even my blood, in order to obey Thee. Nor do I by this aspire to satisfy my own inclination, or to gain applause and esteem from men; I desire nothing but to see Thee loved by all as Thou deservest. I prize my happy lot, and call myself fortunate, that Thou hast chosen me for this great work, in which I protest that I will renounce all praises of men and all self-satisfaction, and will only seek Thy glory. To Thee be all the honor and satisfaction, and to me only the discomforts, the blame, and the reproaches. Accept, O Lord! this offering, which I, a miserable sinner, who wish to love Thee and to see Thee loved by others, make of myself to Thee, and give me strength to execute it.

Most Holy Mary, my advocate, who lovest souls so much, help me.

Consideration XIV

HOW NECESSARY TO RELIGIOUS ARE THE VIRTUES OF MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY

Our most lovely Redeemer Jesus willed to be called a lamb, for the very reason that he might show us how meek and humble he was himself. These were the virtues which he principally wished his followers should learn from him: *Learn from Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.*[14303] And these virtues he principally requires of religious who profess to imitate his most holy life.

He who lives as a solitary in a desert has not so much need of these virtues; but for him who lives in a Community, it is impossible not to meet, now and then, with a reprimand from his Superiors, or something disagreeable from his companions. In such cases, a religious who loves not meekness will commit a thousand faults every day, and live an unquiet life. He must be all sweetness with everybody,—with strangers, with companions, and also with inferiors if he should ever become Superior; and if he be an inferior, he must consider that one act of meekness in bearing contempt and reproach is of greater value to him than a thousand fasts and a thousand disciplines.

St. Francis said that many make their perfection consist in exterior mortifications, and, after all, are not able to bear one injurious word. "Not understanding," he added, how ninth greater gain is made by patiently bearing injuries."[14304] How many persons, as St. Bernard remarks, are all sweetness when nothing is said or done contrary to their inclination, but show their want of meekness when anything crosses them! And if any one should ever be Superior, let him believe that one reprimand made with meekness will profit his subjects more than a thousand made with severity. *The meek are useful to themselves a fid to others,*[14305] as St. John Chrysostom teaches. In short, as the same saint said, the Greatest sign of a virtuous soul is to see it meek on occasions of contradiction. A meek heart is the pleasure of the heart of God. *That which is agreeable to him is faith and meekness.*[14306] It would be well for a religious to represent to himself, in his meditations, all the contrarieties that may happen to him, and thus arm himself against them; and then, when the occasion happens, he ought to do violence to himself, that he may not be excited and break out in impatience. Therefore, he should refrain from speaking when his mind is disturbed, till he is certain that he has become calm again.

But to bear injuries quietly, it is above all necessary to have a great fund of humility. He who is truly humble is not only unmoved when he sees himself despised, but is even pleased, and rejoices at it in his spirit, however the flesh may resent it; for he sees himself treated as he deserves, and made conformable to Jesus Christ, who, worthy as he was of every honor, chose, for the love of us, to be satiated with contempt and injuries. Brother Juniper, a disciple of St. Francis, when an injury was done to him, held up his cowl, as if he expected to receive pearls falling from heaven. The saints have been more desirous of injuries than worldlings are covetous of applause and honor. And of what use is a religious who does not know how to bear contempt for God’s sake? He is always proud, and only humble in name and a hypocrite, whom divine grace will repulse, as the Holy Ghost says: *God resisteth the proud, but to the humble He giveth grace.*[14307]

PRAYER

O my most humble Jesus, who, for the love of me, didst humble Thyself, and become obedient unto the death of the cross, how have I the courage to appear before Thee, and call myself Thy follower? for I see myself to be such a sinner and so proud that I cannot bear a single injury without resenting it. Whence can come such pride in me, who for my sins have so many times deserved to be cast forever into hell with the devils? Ah, my despised Jesus, help me and make me conformable to Thee. I will change my life. Thou, for love of me, hast borne so much contempt; I, for love of Thee, will bear every injury. Thou, O my Redeemer! hast rendered contempt too honorable and desirable, since Thou hast embraced it with so much love, during Thy own life, *Far be it from me to glory but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*[14308] O my most humble mistress Mary, mother of

God! Thou who wast in all, and especially in suffering, the most conformed to thy Son, obtain for me the grace to bear in peace all injuries which henceforward shall be offered to me. Amen.

Consideration XV

HOW MUCH RELIGIOUS OUGHT TO CONFIDE IN THE PATRONAGE OF MARY

If it is true, and most true it is, that, according to the saying of St. Peter Damian, the divine mother, the most holy Mary, loves all men with such an affection that after God there is not, nor can there be, any one who surpasses or equals her in her love,—" She loves us with an invincible love,"[14309] how much must we think this great queen loves religious, who have consecrated their liberty, their life, and their all to the love of Jesus Christ. She sees well enough that the life of such as these is more conformable to her own life, and to that of her divine Son; she sees them often 0ccupied in praising her, and continually attentive to honor her by their novenas, visits, rosaries, fasts, etc. She beholds them often at her feet, intent on invoking her aid, asking graces of her, and graces all conformed to her holy desires; that is, the grace of perseverance in the divine service, of strength in their temptations, of detachment from this world, and of love towards God. Ah, how can we doubt that she employs all her power and her mercy for the benefit of religious, and especially of those who belong to this holy Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, in which, as it is well known, we make special profession of honoring the Virgin Mother by visits, by fasting on Saturdays, by special mortifications during her novenas, etc., and by everywhere promoting devotion to her by sermons and novenas in her honor!

She, the great mistress, is grateful. *I love those who love Me.*[14310] Yes, she is so grateful that, as St. Andrew of Crete says, "To him who does her the least service she is accustomed to return great favors."[14311] She promises liberally those who love her, and who promote her honor among others, to deliver them from sin: "Those that work by me shall not sin."[14312]

She also promises to them paradise: “Those that explain me shall have life everlasting.”[14313]

For which reason we especially ought to thank God for having called us to this Congregation, where, by the usages of the Community and the example of our companions, we are often reminded, and in some way constrained, to have recourse to Mary, and continually to honor this our most loving mother, who is called, and is, the joy, the hope, the life, and the salvation of those who invoke and honor her.

PRAYER

My most beloved, most lovely, and most loving queen, I always thank my Lord and thee, who hast not only drawn me out of the world, but also called me to live in this Congregation, where a special devotion is practised to thee. Accept of me then, my mother, to serve thee. Among so many of thy beloved sons, do not scorn to let me serve thee also, miserable though I am. Thou after God shalt always be my hope and my love. In all my wants, in all my tribulations and temptations, I will always have recourse to thee; thou shalt be my refuge, my consolation. I am unwilling that any one except God and thee should comfort me in my combats, in the sadness and the tediousness of this life. For thy service I renounce all the kingdoms of the whole world. My kingdom on this earth shall be to serve, bless, and love thee, O my most lovely mistress! “whom to serve is to reign,”[14314] as St. Anselm says. Thou art the mother of perseverance; obtain for me to be faithful to thee until death. By so doing I hope, and firmly hope, one day to come where thou reignest, to praise and bless thee forever, to depart no more from thy holy feet. Jesus and Mary, I protest, with your loving servant Alphonsus Rodriguez, “my most sweet loves, let me suffer for you, let me die for you, let me be all yours, and not at all my own.”[14315]

Exhortation to Novices to Persevere in their Vocation.[14316]

THE grace of vocation, and the grace of perseverance in the vocation, are two distinct graces. Many have received from God vocation, but through their own fault have rendered themselves unworthy to receive the grace of perseverance. *No one shall be crowned, except he strive lawfully.*[14317] No one, then, shall receive the grace of perseverance and the crown prepared by God for those that persevere, but he who on his own part does what he ought in order to combat and vanquish the enemy. *Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*[14318] My dear young friend, you who, by a special favor, have been called by the Lord to follow him, hear how he himself exhorts and encourages you; be attentive, my son, to preserve the grace thou hast received from me, and fear lest thou lose it, and another have the crown prepared for thee.

I. TEMPTATIONS TO WHICH NOVICES ARE EXPOSED

Whoever enters the novitiate, enters the service of the King of heaven, who is accustomed to try the fidelity of those he accepts as his servants, by crosses and temptations, with which he allows hell to assail them. Thus it was said to Tobias: *And because thou wast agreeable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee*.[14319] And the Holy Ghost says to each one who leaves the world to give himself to God: *Son, when thou comest to the service of God, prepare thy soul for temptation.*[14320] So then the novice, on entering the house of God, ought to prepare himself not for consolations, but for temptations and combats, with which hell assails those who give themselves to God. It is well to know that the devil is particularly on the watch to make a novice lose his vocation, and, to accomplish this one thing, tempts him more than he does a thousand seculars, especially if he has entered an Order of religious engaged in the work of salvation of souls. For such a novice, if he persevere and be faithful to God, will snatch from him thousands of sinners, who will be saved by his means. And therefore the enemy seeks by all means to gain him, and arrays against him all his arts and cunning in order to seduce him.

The temptations by which the devil is most accustomed to tempt novices to abandon their vocation are the following:

1. TENDERNESS FOR PARENTS

First, he tempts them through their tenderness for their parents. To resist this temptation, one ought to reflect that Jesus Christ has declared that he who loves his parents more than him, is not worthy of his friendship. *He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me.*[14321] He himself protests, that he came not to bring peace, but division between parents and children. *I came not to send peace, but the sword; for I came to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother.*[14322] And why so great a desire to separate relatives from one another? Because our Saviour knew the great damage one causes to the other, and that with regard to eternal salvation, as Jesus Christ himself adds after the words quoted above: *And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household.*[14323]

Oh, how many poor youths, through affection for their parents, have lost first their vocation, and then, as it easily happens, their souls also. Many such unhappy instances are on record. I will relate some of them.

Father Jerome Piatti relates that a certain novice was visited by one of his relatives, who spoke to him thus: “Listen to me: I speak to you because I love you. Reflect that you have not a constitution strong enough to bear the fatigues and hard studies of the Order; in the world you can please God more, especially by giving to the poor a great part of the riches the Lord has given you. If you persist in your design, you will repent of it; and when finally you are made porter or cook, because you have little talent and weak health, you will nevertheless be obliged to quit the Order, to your own shame. Whence it is better to go out to-day than tomorrow.” Being thus perverted, he left. Not many days passed, when the unhappy youth, who had already given himself up to every kind of vice, had a fight with some of his rivals, in which he and that self-same relative of his were wounded and shortly after died, both on the same day. What is worse, moreover,—the miserable novice died without confession, of which he stood in so great need.

Father Casalicchio relates further that a certain cavalier being one night on the point of going to the house of a bad woman, heard the bell of the Capuchins who were just going to chant the office. Then he said: “How shall I go to offend God, at the very time these servants of his are going to praise him?” Thus called by God he entered their Order. But his mother did and said so much, that she induced him to come home again. And what happened then? After a few months he was killed by his enemies, and brought to his mother on a board.

Dionysius the Carthusian relates, that two novices of his Order were perverted by their fathers; but a few days after, both sons and fathers died, and what is worse, as the author asserts, they died a bad death.

Father Mancinelli relates of a certain young nobleman, that, although he had with great fortitude entered religion, overcoming the insidious dissuasions of his mother, who did all she could to turn him away from his design, yet when afterwards she pressed and insisted very much, the miserable man finally went out. After this, in order to keep him cheerful in the world, his mother made him take lessons in fencing. But one day, while he was engaged in this exercise with one of his friends, he received a wound in the eye, which was so deadly that the unhappy youth expired on the spot, without being able to make his confession.

The same Father Casalicchio relates that, while giving the mission in a place near Cosenza, he learned there that a young man having retired among the Capuchins, his father went and raised a great disturbance in the monastery, to oblige the religious to give back his son, and afterwards sent his brother there, who with other armed men and among the rest a relative of the young man, took him out by force. But what happened? A month after, the father died miserably on a journey during a violent storm at sea. At the end of sixty days, the relative died also away from home, and the unhappy novice, who knew not how to be faithful to his vocation, was covered all over with ulcers, so that the matter oozed out from head to foot, and he died thus in the greatest pains, and God only knows the disposition of his soul.

It is moreover related in the life of St. Camillus of Lellis, that a youth, who had entered his Order at Naples, was persecuted by his father. At first he resisted with fortitude, but having come to Rome, and having had again a conversation with his father, he gave way to the temptation. When he took his leave, the saint predicted that he would come to a bad end, and die at the hands of public justice. And so it happened, for the young man having returned home, afterwards, through jealousy, killed his wife and two servants, and being apprehended for this crime, though the father expended all his fortune in order to save his life, he was beheaded in the public market-place of Naples, nine years after leaving the Order.

It is related in the same life, that another novice was desirous of returning to the world; St. Camillus predicted to him also the chastisements of God, and in fact, having returned to Messina, he died six months after, suddenly, and without the sacraments.

Be therefore on your guard, my brother, if the devil seeks in this way to make you lose your vocation. That Lord who by such a particular grace has called you to leave the world and to consecrate yourself to his love, wills that you should not only leave, but also forget, your home and your parents. *Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear, and forget thy people and thy father's house.*[14324] Hear, then, what God says to you, and understand, that if you abandon him for the sake of your parents, very great will be your pain and your remorse, when, about to die in the midst of your brothers and your nephews, you will remember the house of God which you left. Then, at the very time when you are in so much need of spiritual succor, they will stand around you to torment and trouble you about leaving them your possessions, and not one of them will so much as suggest to you one word about God; nay, even endeavoring to deceive you, in order not to increase your fear of death, they will flatter you with vain hopes, that you may die without preparation.

On the contrary, consider what contentment and peace you will feel at your death, if, having been faithful to God, it shall be your happy lot to end your life in the midst of the brethren of your Order. They will help you by their prayers, and with the hope of paradise, but without flattery, animate you to die with joy.

Consider, moreover, that if your parents have loved you for many years, and with some tenderness, God loved you long before, and with a much greater tenderness. Your parents have not loved you for more than twenty or thirty years, but God has loved you from eternity. *I have loved Thee with an everlasting love*.[14325] Your parents have also put themselves to some expense for you, and have suffered some inconveniences for your sake; but Jesus Christ has expended for you all his blood and his life. If, then, you feel some tenderness for your parents, and if it seems to you that gratitude obliges you not to displease them, reflect, that you ought to be more grateful towards God, who more than all has done you good, and loved you, and say within yourself: Parents, if I leave you, I leave you for God, who deserves my love more than you, and who has loved me more than you; and saying thus you will overcome that horrible temptation for parents, which has been the ruin of many in this life and the next.

2. FEAR RESPECTING HEALTH

Another temptation by which the devil is accustomed to assail the novice, is in reference to the care of his health, and this is the way he speaks: Do you not see that by this mode of life you will lose your health, and then you will neither be good for the world nor for God?

From this temptation the novice ought to disengage himself by the hope that the Lord, who has given him his vocation, will also give him health sufficient to fulfil its duties. If he has come, as must be supposed, to the house of God only to please him, he ought to reason thus within himself: I have not concealed, and do not conceal, the state of my health from my Superiors. They have accepted me—they do not dismiss me: it is then God’s good pleasure that I should continue to stay, and if it be the will of God, although I should suffer and die, what matters it? How many anchorites have gone to suffer in caverns and forests! How many martyrs have gone to give their life for Jesus Christ! If it be his will that I should lose health and life for the love of him, enough,—I am satisfied. I desire nothing else, nor could I desire anything better. Such should be the language of the fervent novice who wishes to become a saint. If one has no fervor during the lime of the novitiate, let him be persuaded that he will have none during his whole life.

3. THE INCONVENIENCES OF COMMUNITY LIFE

The next temptation is, that he will be unable to bear the hardships of the Community life, the scanty and ill-prepared food, the hard bed, the short sleep, not to be free to go out, the strict silence, and, above all, to be deprived of doing his own will.

When the novice sees himself assailed by this temptation, he ought to say to himself that which St. Bernard said: “Bernard, for what earnest thou here?”[14326] Let him remember that he did not come to the house of God to live a comfortable life, but to become a saint? And how is he to become a saint? By comforts and delights? No, but by suffering and dying to all the inclinations of sensuality. St. Teresa said: “To think that God admits to his intimacy persons loving their comforts, is foolishness.”[14327] And in another place: “Souls that truly love God, cannot seek for rest.”[14328] So then if one is not resolved to suffer everything for God, he will never become a saint, and will never have peace.

What peace of soul is to be found in enjoying the goods of the world, and in gratifying the senses? Perhaps the great of this world, who have goods and pleasures in such abundance, find peace? These are the most unhappy of all, for they feed on gall and poison. *Vanity of vanities and affliction of the spirit.*[14329] Thus earthly goods were styled by Solomon, who enjoyed them in abundance. The heart of man, when in the midst of these goods, however much it possesses, always seeks for more, and always remains unquiet. But when it places its joy in God, it finds in him all its peace: *Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart.*[14330] Father Charles of Lorraine, brother to the Duke of Lorraine, when, having entered a religious Order, he found himself in his poor cell, felt such an interior joy that he began to dance for delight. Blessed Seraphin, a Capuchin, said that he would not exchange a palm’s length of his cord for all the riches and honors of the earth; and St. Teresa encouraged all by saying, “When a soul is resolved to suffer, the pain is at an end.”

4. DISCOURAGEMENT IN ARIDITIES

But here comes another illusion with which hell tempts the novice, when he finds himself in desolation of spirit. Do you not see, it says to him, that here you find no peace? You have lost devotion, everything fills you with tediousness, mental prayer, reading, Communion, and even recreation. This is a sign that God does not wish you to be here.

Oh, what a terrible and dangerous temptation this is for a young novice, without experience! To overcome this temptation one ought, first of all, to consider well in what consists the peace of a soul on this earth, which is a place of merit, and therefore a place of pain. It does not consist, as we have seen, in enjoying the goods of this world, and moreover, not even in the enjoyment of spiritual delights, because these of themselves do not increase our merit, nor render us more dear to God. The true peace of the soul consists only in our conformity to the will of God. Hence the quiet we should desire most is that which makes us unite ourselves with the will of God, even when he is pleased to keep us in darkness and desolation. Oh, how dear to God is a faithful soul, which, when deprived of consolation, still prays, reads, receives Communion, and does all only to please God. Oh, of what great merit are holy works done without present reward. The Venerable Father Anthony Torres writes to a soul in desolation: “To carry the cross with Jesus, without consolation, makes the soul run, yea, even fly to perfection.” So, therefore, if the novice finds himself in darkness, he ought to say to God: Lord, since Thou wilt keep me thus desolate and deprived of every relief, thus I wish to remain, and as long as it shall please Thee. I will not leave Thee; behold I am ready to suffer this pain during my whole life, and during all eternity, if so it please Thee. Enough for me to know that such is Thy holy will.

Such should be the language of the novice who truly wishes to love God. But let him, on the other hand, be persuaded that it will not be so. The devil wishes to make him lose confidence by representing to him that this condition will last always, and thus at last make him despair at being unable to bear it any longer. These terrible tempests, in the midst of spiritual darkness, are raised by the devil in the mind of the desolate. But it will not be so. *To those who overcome I will give a hidden manna.*[14331] Those who shall have borne with patience the tempest of aridity, and shall have overcome the temptations which in the meanwhile hell has brought against them, to make them turn their backs upon him, these the Lord will certainly console by giving them to taste the hidden manna, that is, that interior peace which, as St. Paul says, surpasses all the pleasures of the senses. *The peace of God which passeth all understanding.*[14332] This one word, now I do the will of God, I please God, affords a satisfaction that surpasses all the contentment that the world can give, with all its pastimes, feasts, theatres, banquets, honors, and greatness. Indeed, that promise cannot fail which God has made to those who leave all for love of him. *And every one that has left house, or brethren, or father, etc., for My name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting.*[14333] To such, then, heaven is promised in the next world, and a hundred-fold in this. What is this hundred-fold? It is precisely that testimony of a good conscience which immensely surpasses all the delights of this earth.

5. DOUBT ABOUT VOCATION

But we have not done yet. We must speak of temptations still more dangerous. Those of which we have spoken hitherto are carnal and worldly temptations, which show of themselves that they come from the devil, and thus, by the help of God, they are more easily known and overcome. The most terrible temptations are those which wear the mask of a good spirit and of a greater good, for they are more hidden, and therefore lead more easily into error.

The first temptation of this kind is generally the doubt about vocation, which the devil puts into the mind of the novice, telling him: But who knows whether your vocation has been true or only a caprice? and if you are not truly called by God, you will not have the grace to persevere, and it may come to pass, that after having made the vows, you will be sorry, and become an apostate; so that, whilst you would have saved yourself in the world, here you will damn yourself.

In order to overcome this temptation, he ought to consider how and when one can be sure of his vocation. It is a true vocation whenever the following three conditions concur: First, a good intention, namely, to escape from the dangers of the world, the better to insure your eternal salvation, and to unite yourself more closely to God. Secondly: When there is no positive impediment for want of health, talents, or some necessity on the part of one's parents, in regard to which matters the subject ought to quiet himself by leaving all to the judgment of Superiors, after having exposed the truth with sincerity. Thirdly: That the Superiors admit him. Now, whenever these three things truly concur, the novice ought not to doubt that his vocation is a true one.

6. THE THOUGHT THAT ONE WOULD LIVE MORE DEVOUTLY IF ONE WERE FREE

The other temptation is that which the devil may bring against a young man who in the world has already led a spiritual life. In the world, he shall tell him, you made more mental prayer, practised more mortification, more silence, more retirement, and gave more alms, etc. Now you cannot do all these good works, and much less will you be able to do them afterwards when you leave the novitiate. For then the Superiors will make you apply to your studies, and employ you in the occupations of the Order and other distracting things.

Ah, what an illusion is this! He who gives ear to such suggestions shows that he knows not the merit of obedience without mentioning that St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said that all is prayer that is done in a Community. He that gives to God his prayers, his alms, his fasts, his penances, gives him a part only of what belongs to him, but not the whole, or to say better, he gives him what he has, but not himself. On the contrary, he who by the vow of obedience renounces his own will, gives himself to God, so that he can say to him: O Lord! having consecrated to Thee my whole will, I have nothing more to give Thee. That thing of which a man has the greatest difficulty to deprive himself is his own will. But it is the most agreeable gift that we can give to God, and that God demands of us most. *My son, give Me thy heart,*[14334] that is, thy will; whence the Lord says that he is more pleased by our obedience than by all other sacrifices that we can offer to him. *Obedience is better than sacrifice.*[14335] So then he who gives himself by obedience, obtains not one, but all possible victories over the senses, honors, riches, worldly amusements, and everything else. *An obedient man shall speak of victories.*[14336]

In the world one merits, no doubt, by fasting, taking the discipline, etc. But, doing all this by his own will, he has much less merit than a religious who does all through obedience. Hence the religious merits much more and merits always, for all that is done in a Community is done through obedience. In this way the religious merits, not only when he prays, when he fasts, when he takes the discipline, but also when he studies, when he goes out, when he is at table or in recreation, or when he goes to rest. St. Aloysius Gonzaga said, that in the vessel of religion even that one advances who does not ply the oar. And hence we know of so many spiritual persons, who, although they led a holy life, have yet sought to place themselves under obedience by entering some religious Community, knowing that the merit of good works done according to one's own will is not the same as of those done out of pure obedience.

7. THE IDEA THAT ONE COULD BE MORE USEFUL TO ONE'S NEIGHBOR

Against another the devil makes use of a similar and even stronger temptation by representing to him that he would be in the world of more service to his neighbor. You have entered this Order, he says, where there are so many others who labor and help souls, but you could do more good out of it by succoring your own country, which is so much in need and destitute of workmen. One tempted in this way ought to reflect first, that the greatest good we can do to our neighbor is that which God wills us to do. God is in need of no man; if it be his desire to give more succor to your country, can he not do so by means of others? So then, my brother, since the Lord has called you to his house, this is the good he will have from you, namely, that you should be attentive to obey all the rules and your Superiors; and if obedience wills you to be useless in a particular place, or even employed in sweeping the house and in washing the dishes, this is the greatest good you can do.

And then, what good can one do in his own country? Jesus Christ himself being exhorted to preach and do good in his birthplace, answered: *No prophet is accepted in his own country.*[14337] With regard to confessions, it is a common saying, that the confessors belonging to a place are confessors for venial sins, and this is the truth. For people feel repugnance to tell their grievous sins to a priest who is either a relative of theirs, or of the same place, so that they have him always before their eyes, and therefore they go to strangers to confess. With regard to sermons, it is also well known that the sermons of a priest of the place profit little, either because he is born in the place, or because people are accustomed to his voice. Were the preacher a St. Paul in the beginning, agreeable as you like, after he has been heard for six months, or at most for a year, he scarcely pleases, or profits any longer. The missionaries produce great fruit in the places to which they go, for this very reason, that they are strangers and their voices new. It is certain that a priest of an active Order, and especially of missionaries, will save more souls in one month, and in one single mission, than if he were to work for ten years in his own country. Besides, there he will help the souls of his countrymen only, but by giving missions he will save souls in a hundred and a thousand places. Moreover, he who is in the world, will often be in doubt and confused, not knowing whether God wishes of him this or that good work, but he who lives in religion, by obeying his Superiors, knows with certainty that all that he does is according to the will of God. For religious only are those happy ones, who can say: *We are happy, O Israel, because the things, that arc pleasing to God are made known to us.*[14338]

In fine, there is another temptation which the devil brings against some one who is perhaps favored by God with sensible spiritual consolations, tears, and transports of love. Do you not see, he says, that you are not called to an active life, but to a contemplative one, to solitude and union with God? You must go then to an Order of contemplatives, or at least to a hermitage. That is your vocation. If the devil should ever tempt me in this way, I would answer him thus: Since thou speakest of vocation, I ought then to follow my vocation, and not my caprice or thy suggestion. God having already called me to this Order of evangelical laborers, who can assure me that to leave them is an inspiration, and not a temptation?

And the same I say to you, my brother: there is no doubt that God calls some to an active and some to a contemplative life; but God having called you to an Order of evangelical laborers, you ought to believe that the other vocation comes not from God, but rather from hell, which seeks by this to make you lose your vocation. St. Philip Neri said, that one ought not to lose a good state of life for a better one, without being certain of the divine will. Thus, in order not to err, you should be more than morally certain that it is the will of God to have you pass to another state; but when does this certainty exist, above all, if your Superiors, and your spiritual Father tell you that it is a temptation? Besides, you ought to consider that, as St. Thomas teaches, although the contemplative life, taken in itself, is more perfect than the active, nevertheless, the mixed life, that is, that which is devoted alternately to prayer and to action, is the most perfect, because this was the life of Jesus Christ. And this is precisely the life of all well-regulated Communities of evangelical laborers, where each day there are several hours of prayer and several hours of silence. Wherefore such religious can say, that when out of their houses they are laborers; but when at home, they are hermits.

Do not, then, allow yourself, my brother, to be seduced by those specious pretexts of the enemy. Be certain that if you leave the Order you will repent of it, as it has happened in other like cases, and you will perceive the error when you are unable to remedy it, for he who has once left an Order will with difficulty be received into it again.

II. THE MEANS TO PRESERVE ONE’S VOCATION

I. The first means is, to avoid the faults that are committed with open eyes. And let every one know, that the devil tempts novices to commit faults, not so much to injure them by the faults themselves, as to make them lose their vocation thereby. For, by the commission of deliberate faults, they will begin to lose fervor in their prayers, Communions, and all their other exercises of devotion. The Lord, on the other hand, with regard to his graces, justly shuts his hand, according to the general rule of St. Paul, *He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly.*[14339] Especially if they are faults of pride, for God resists the proud, and against them the devil gains more strength, and thus on one side the novice increasing in tepidity, and on the other divine light failing, it will not be difficult for hell to gain its end, namely, to make him lose his vocation.

2. The second means is, to spring the mines, that is, to discover the temptation to his Superiors. St. Philip Neri said: A temptation when manifested is half overcome. On the contrary, as the abscess, when it is not opened, spreads like a cancer, so temptation, when concealed, brings on ruin. And in fact, experience has often shown that those that have already been shaken by temptation, and brought to that point where the road divides, that is, where one doubts, deliberates which way to go, whether to the left or to the right, and yet keeps it secret, almost all such have lost their vocation. One must, then, offer violence to one’s self and discover the temptation to the Superiors, for God will be so much pleased with this act

of humility and the violence that the novice does to himself, that by his divine light he will suddenly dispel all confusion and darkness.

3. The third means is prayer, that is, to have recourse to God, that he may give him holy perseverance, which, as St. Augustine says,[14340] is only obtained by praying for it. But the novice who has already received of God his vocation, and is tempted to abandon it, ought not to pray to God, saying, O Lord! give me light to know what I ought to do; because this light God has already given him, by calling him: for if he should ask only for this light, the devil may transform himself into an angel of light, and easily deceive him, making him believe that the thought of departing is a divine light. He ought rather to say, O Lord! since Thou hast given me the vocation, give me also the strength to persevere in it.

A certain young man had been called by God to the religious state, and his vocation had, after many trials, already been approved of by his director, and he retired into the Order to which he had been called. His parents made such effort as to force him to go to a third place, the better to examine his vocation. But instead of returning thence to the place from which he had come, he went to his own house, thus pleasing his parents and displeasing God. Being there asked how he had come to commit such an error, he said that he had prayed to God to give him light, by saying: *Speak, O Lord, because thy servant heareth;*[14341] and that having done this he resolved to go home. I then said to him: O my son! you have made a mistake in your prayer; your vocation was certain, even confirmed by so many signs; you should not have said, *Speak, O Lord*, because God had already spoken to you, but *Confirm, O God, what Thou hast worked in me;*[14342] O Lord, give me strength to accomplish Thy will, which Thou hast already made known to me. You have failed to make this prayer, and therefore you have lost your vocation. Let the misfortune of this one be a warning to others.

Let the novice, moreover, remark, that the time of temptation is a time of darkness and confusion; he must therefore not look then for clearness of reason to quiet himself. Let him then be careful only to offer himself to God anew, and to beseech him, saying, O my God! I have given myself to Thee, I will not abandon Thee, help me, permit me not to be unfaithful to Thee. And saving so, and repeating this the oftener as the temptation increases, and discovering it at the same time to the Superiors, as we have said, he will certainly triumph over it. Let him also recommend himself in a special manner to most holy Mary, who is the mother of perseverance. A certain novice, overcome by temptation, was already on the point of leaving his monastery, but he stopped first to kneel down and say an *Ave Maria* before an image of the divine mother, and suddenly felt himself, as it were, nailed to the floor, so that he could not rise any more; coming then to himself, he made a vow to persevere, after which he rose without difficulty, asked pardon of the Master of novices, and persevered.[14343]

4. To conclude, I beseech you, my brother, when you are tempted in any way regarding your vocation, I beseech you, I say, to reflect principally on two things:

The first is, that the grace of vocation, which God has given to you, he has not given to so many others of your companions, perhaps less unworthy than you. *He hath not done in like manner to every nation.*[14344] Be afraid, then, of showing ingratitude by turning your back on him, because by doing so you expose yourself to a great danger of being damned. And be certain you will have no more peace in this life, and will always be tormented until death, by remorse for your infidelity.

The second is, that when the temptation comes, and perhaps tells you, that, if you do not quit, you will lead a life of despair, that you will repent of it, that perhaps you will even have to account for it to God, and such similar suggestions as we have mentioned above; then set before your eyes the hour of your death, and reflect, that, if you were now about to die, you would not repent of having followed your vocation, but you would feel the greatest contentment and peace; and, on the contrary, you would feel great distress and pain to have abandoned it. Think of this, and you will not lose it, but will receive during this life, and at the hour of your death, the peace and the crown that God prepares for his faithful servants in this life and in the next.

OFFERING AND PRAYER THAT THE NOVICE SHOULD RECITE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE GRACE TO PERSEVERE IN HIS VOCATION

O my God! how shall I ever be able to thank Thee enough for having called me with so much love to Thine own household, and how have I deserved this favor after so many offences that I have committed against Thee! How many of my companions are in the world, in the midst of so many occasions and dangers of losing their souls! and I have been admitted to live in this Thy house, in the company of so many of Thy dear servants, and with so many helps to become a saint. I hope, O my Lord! to thank Thee for it better in heaven throughout eternity, and there forever to sing the mercy that Thou hast shown me. In the meanwhile, I am Thine, and always will be Thine. I have already given myself to Thee. I repeat the offering now. I will be faithful to Thee; I will not abandon Thee, even should I lose my life and a thousand lives. Behold, I offer myself entirely to accomplish Thy will without reserve. Do with me what Thou pleasest; make me live as Thou wilt, desolate, infirm, despised; treat me as is pleasing to Thee. Enough for me to obey Thee and please Thee. I ask nothing of Thee but the grace to love Thee with my whole heart, and to be faithful to Thee until death.

O most hoy Mary, my dear mother! thou hast already obtained for me the many graces that I have received from God, the pardon of my sins, my vocation, and the strength to follow it; thou must finish the work by obtaining for me perseverance until death. This, is my hope: thus may it be!

III. IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS TO THE NOVICE THAT HE MAY PRESERVE HIMSELF IN FERVOR

1. When he is reprimanded, or accused, let him not excuse himself, and let him love before God with an especial affection him who accuses or reprimands him.

2. Let him love to be despised in all things, with regard to occupations, clothing, room, food, etc.

3. Let him not be forward to utter his opinion, unless he is asked for it.

4. Let him mortify himself in all things according to the rules of prudence and obedience, in eating, sleeping, sight, smell, etc.

5. Let him observe the rules of modesty, when he is alone as well as with others.

6. Let him never touch others with his hands, or look fixedly at them, but let him always keep his eyes cast down, especially in church, at table, during recreation, and in the streets.

7. Let him keep silence, except when it is necessary to speak either for the glory of God, or for his own and his neighbor’s good. And in speaking, especially in recreation, let him never raise his voice too much. Let him

avoid every dispute or contention about birth, talents, or riches, and all vain discourse about eating, hunting, about play or battles, about the acquiring of honors, fortune, or the like things of the world. But let him seek always to introduce pious discourses on the vanity of the world, the love towards Jesus and Mary, happy lot of the saints, and the manner of advancing in perfection.

8. After each fault let him promptly humble himself, repent of it, and be quiet.

9. Let him desire nothing but that which God wills. Let him not ask for consolations. In the time of dryness of spirit let him humble and resign himself, saying: O Lord! I do not desire consolations; I am content to remain thus during my whole life.

10. Let him often raise his heart to God by ejaculatory prayers; he can make use of the following:

O my God! I desire nothing but Thee.

Tell me what Thou wilt have of me, and I will do all. Do with me what Thou wilt.

All that which Thou wiliest is my will also.

Make me love Thee, and send me where Thou wilt.

My Jesus, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee.

Make Thyself known to all, and loved by all.

I renounce all: Thou alone art sufficient for me.

My God and my all.

Live Jesus and Mary, our hope!

O good Jesus! be Thou always praised, my life was the cause of Thy death, and Thy death was my life.

EXHORTATION TO RELIGIOUS TO ADVANCE IN THE PERFECTION OF THEIR STATE

THE religious are the portion that God has particularly selected from among men upon earth to extend his glory, and to have himself loved by them with a love more special and more pure than that with which he is loved by men that live in the midst of the world who are absorbed in secular cares. To this end the Lord by a particular vocation has drawn them from the darkness of Egypt and has freed them from the love of this world, and they afterwards, aided by the grace of God, have consecrated themselves to him by the vows of religion, renouncing all the goods that the world promises and obtains for its followers. Hence every Community of religious on earth should consider itself as a reunion of persons who, disengaged from every earthly thought, apply themselves to nothing else than to a life devoted to God, so that the Lord may be glorified by them, and may say: These persons belong entirely to me; they are my delight.

But I ask, Can the Lord say at the present day of all religious that they are his delight? Alas! the Church grieves to see among the religious a general relaxation united with a coldness in the service of God. It is not denied that among them there are found good religious who live like true religious detached from worldly affections, and who endeavor to sanctify themselves and to gain souls for God. I say that these are the judges that will one day judge their companions in the valley of Josaphat. But how many of these good religious are there? Ah! there are very few, as we may now see; and this the Church deplores, with all those that love the glory of God.

It is improper from my "littleness" to speak here censoriously, and to note the faults into which religious commonly fall at the present time, and which are a subject of surprise and scandal to those that should be edified by their example. Some one may say: Tell us then, Mr. Reformer, which are these common faults, and teach us what we have to do in order to be good religious. Oh no! I do not pretend to reform the world; therefore I will not dare to point out in detail the particular faults that have become common at the present day. I only say to you who has put the foregoing question to me that you well know what one must do in order to be a good religious. In novitiate you have been carefully instructed on the virtues that you have to practise in religion, namely, obedience, detachment from earthly affections, the love of poverty, self-abnegation, desire for humiliations, and all that is necessary in order to live as a good religious. But at the present time, since lukewarmness arc relaxation have become a general evil, and since religious think but little of the obligations of the religious state, they scarcely think of correcting the faults that they commit.

Ah! Would to God that religious would preserve at least one half of the good life that they began in the novitiate! Ordinarily, novices that persevere as far as to make the vows, live with fervor and give edification; but the evil is, that after having made the vows, while applying themselves to their studies, they begin at once to grow cold, to neglect to preserve the fervor acquired and to practise the good resolutions formed in the novitiate. Hence instead of making progress in the exercise of virtue, they go on declining from day to day and become imperfect. After this, when they are appointed to teach others, relaxation increases; for then one thinks no more of working for the glory of God, but more for one’s own interests, striving to reach the higher offices, and thus to succeed in leading a life less under subjection and more comfortable.

There have been good reasons for establishing decrees through which religious should pass in order to render themselves more useful to the good of souls by instructing the ignorant and exciting the zeal of the lukewarm. But unfortunately in many religious the means become the end; for in the course of time it happens that one seeks less the good of religion and of souls than one’s own temporal advantages. I protest again that I do not pretend to be a reformer; but I consider that such distinctions in religious Communities forment every kind of ambition, and consequently every kind of relaxation. Thence I conclude that it would be much better for the teachers after having finished the course of teaching to remain in the humble state in which they were when they came forth from the novitiate; then each of them would apply himself to his duties, not in order to attain particular ends, but only in order to do the divine will and to obey his Superiors. As, on the contrary, teaching procures for them certain privileges, conveniences of lodging, liberties, preferments, it is for this reason that there are few that advance in the spiritual life and in the edification that they should give to others. Hence it happens that all good people grieve to see in religious Orders the general relaxation that they see on every side. Where is to-day among religious, generally speaking, the spirit of obedience, of poverty, of mortification, of interior abnegation? Where is the love for solitude, for the hidden life, the desire for contempt, such as animated the saints? These kinds of virtues have become strange things; it seems that all that remains of them is the name.

But what remedy should be applied to an evil so great and so general? What answer should be given to this question? The remedy should come from heaven; hence we should pray to the Lord to remedy it by his power and mercy, for just as the good spirit of the religious is communicated to seculars, so the seculars share in the relaxation of the religious.

In my opinion this spiritual coolness of the religious Orders arises for the most part from the neglect of prayer, and this neglect proceeds from the want of retirement and recollection. Experience abundantly proves that the more we entertain ourselves with creatures, the less we desire to entertain ourselves with God; and the greater our relations are to the world, the more will God withdraw himself. “There are many souls to which I should willingly speak,’’ said our Lord one day to St. Teresa, “but the world makes so much noise in their hearts that my voice cannot be heard by them.” Thus many religious, plunged into earthly affairs, think little of God. They would like to emerge from the mire of their lukewarmness, and to become disengaged from the earthly attachments that bind them; but the passions that they do not strive to overcome, always draw them downward, and cause them to lose the spirit of prayer.

The religious of ancient times gave themselves up much to prayer; they thus attained sanctity, and by their edifying life also sanctified others. But at the present time everything is wanting, because the spirit of prayer has been lost; this is the cause why humility is wanting, why we are not detached from the world why we have so little love for God. The love for God being wanting, all the virtues are wanting.

Let us, therefore, pray to Jesus Christ, who alone can remedy so great an evil. Let us pray to him to inspire the religious with his holy love and with the desire to sanctify themselves; for at the present time it seems that the religious have even lost the desire to sanctify themselves. Every one feels the necessity of a general reform among the religious, the priests, and the seculars, when he sees the corruption of morals extending everywhere. Hence we should every day repeat the prayer of David, which is very appropriate to the circumstances of the present time: *Turn again, O God of hosts, look down from heaven, and see, and visit this vineyard: and perfect the same which Thy right hand hath planted, and upon the Son of man, whom Thou hast confirmed for Thyself.*[14345] O Lord! Thy Church, this vineyard that Thy divine Son has planted and watered with his blood, is ravaged in all parts; come, visit and renew it, Thou who alone canst renew it.

PURITY OF INTENTION

INSTRUCTION ADDRESSED TO THE FATHERS OF THE CONGREGATION.[14346]

Every one knows that the work of what we do is in accordance with the end that we propose to ourselves. *If the root be holy, so are the branches,*[14347] says the Apostles.

My dear Fathers, a priest, in order to sanctify himself, should be above all attentive to have always a right and a pure intention in all his actions; for it is certain that a priest, and especially a missionary, has necessarily to perform every day many works of God; the main thing is to see whether he performs them only for God, only in order to please God.

Ah! how often do we lose all the merit of what we do, because we have not the right intention as when we listen to human respect, to our own taste, and especially to some vain desire of being praised or esteemed by men, and appropriating the glory of the good that is done,—the glory that belongs only to God.

Vainglory is so secret a robber, says a master of the spiritual life, that sometimes before allowing itself to be perceived it has already captured all. Thus it often succeeds in stripping us of the best part of the fruit of our labors.

It must not be believed that vainglory is a temptation of beginners, no, it is a temptation with which the devil assails those that are more advanced in spirituality. St. Gregory avows that while writing his books, although he wished to work only for God, he nevertheless perceived sometimes that a vain complacency was creeping into his mind. How often does it not happen that those that preach and hear confessions only for God, afterwards conceive the vain desire to be praised or to be seen!

St. Cyprian observes that the devil after having tried against Jesus Christ various temptations, concluded by tempting him to vainglory, because he had often succeeded in conquering by this temptation those that had resisted all other temptations.

Hence the ancient Fathers instructed the novices to perform penances, abstinences, mortifications, while to the more advanced they recommended them to guard against vainglory; for those that have performed many acts of virtue, and especially the missionaries that obtain applause and please the people, are very much exposed to conceive a high idea of themselves, and thus to suffer shipwreck in port. One of the chastisements, perhaps the most ordinary, that God sends to punish this kind of fault is to permit that we fall over some great precipice; this is what we have to fear. Oh, how many servants of God, much more perfect than we, have experienced this chastisement!

Let us then take care always to place before our eyes the sole pleasure of God; let it be the only mark of all our actions, of all our thoughts, of all our affections, as the Lord has ordained: *Put Me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm.*[14348] Then God will say that he has been wounded with love for us: *Thou hast wounded My heart, My sister, My spouse,*[14349] on account of the only end that we have proposed to ourselves to please him regardless of everything else: *Thou hast wounded My heart with one of thy eyes.*[14350]

In order always to keep before our minds the only end of pleasing God, we must act in the following manner:

I. At first we must take care not to concern ourselves about success, but only about the end for which the work is done; here are a few examples:

1. We labor, we preach, we hear confessions, and then we remain quiet if we see no concourse, no emotion, if we do not see any fruit in our penitents, if we do not hear ourselves praised by others; why? Because we have labored only for God; if we had only God in view we should not be disturbed, well knowing that we can plant, but that the production and the glory of the fruit belong only to God.

2. The two servants—one of them bringing back ten talents, the other only four—were received with equal love, says St. Jerome, because both had done their duty.

3. A true servant of God rejoices at the fruit that is produced, because it is the glory of God; and he rejoices as much when he sees the fruit produced by another as when it is produced by himself. It is thus that the Venerable John d’Avila was happy to see that St. Ignatius by instituting the Society of Jesus had done what he himself desired to do. On the other hand, a true servant of God is not disturbed when he does not derive the fruit that he expected; for having labored only for God, he has already attained his end, which is to please God.

II. Moreover, we should be careful to abstain from saying without necessity things that may be turned to our own praise. How many are there not that pass for spiritual persons, and that commit this fault! Ah! it is the *ego* (I), this cursed *ego,* that is always putting itself forward. We sometimes give a long discourse that demands all the attention of those that hear it, and the whole discourse may be reduced to a discourse in praise of ourselves. We may speak of ourselves when we do so through necessity, in order to be useful to our neighbor and to glorify God; but this is rarely done through necessity, it is oftenest done through vanity. An apostolic laborer returns from a mission or from preaching Lenten sermons; he will only speak of the great crowds that attended, of the fruit that his sermons produced, of the time that he spent in the confessional; he will do this for what purpose? In order to be praised. What can you derive from all that if not motives of vain complacency, that will make you lose all that you have gained?

When St. Hilarion saw himself esteemed or praised he began to weep, saying: “It seems to me that God is rewarding me in this life.” We should do the same when we are praised; we should then interrupt the conversation, and refer all the glory to God, to God alone.

II. Moreover, we should be ashamed, either in the Congregation or on the missions to lay claim to the most honorable employments: the employments that we should prefer are those that obedience imposes.

III. Finally, we should especially take care always to refer actually, as much as possible, all our actions to God. We should, not content ourselves with the general intention that we make in the morning: we should endeavor to direct actually every action with a view to please God, as was done by an ancient Father, who, before each of his actions, stopped a moment and said. “ I am aiming at a mark so as to send this action directly to God.”

Even in the middle of our actions, let us try as much as possible to renew our intention to perform them in order to please God; let us renew it at each confession that we make; while reciting the divine Office at each psalm. Let us do the same when preaching and in all other actions, especially in those that are more according to our taste.

If vainglory then presents itself to our mind, the best thing that we can do according to St. Bernard is to despise it. Let us say to it, as we are advised by the Venerable John d’Avila: You come too late, for I have already given this work to God.

Oh! how well do we work, my dear Fathers, when we work only for God! and who does not see that to act thus continually for God is to love God continually, and to love him with a true love, with a pure disinterested love, only to please him?

True love, says St. Bernard, asks for nothing but itself: “True love is content with itself; it is its own reward; besides itself, it needs no cause, no fruit. I love because I love; I love to be loved.”[14351] Love desires no other recompense than to be loved by God, says St. John Chrysostom; for the more disinterested we are in our love towards God, the more liberal he will be towards us.

RELIGIOUS POVERTY

WHETHER IT IS PERMITTED TO RELIGIOUS TO POSSESS THINGS IN COMMON, AND WHETHER IT THIS AN IMPERFECTION.[14352]

OUR Lord ordained for the apostles, when he sent them out to preach the Gospel, to possess nothing: Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses, nor scrip f or your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff.[14353]

In the first place, Ludolph of Saxony answers that Jesus Christ only wished thereby to deliver them from all solicitude and all inordinate affection for temporal things, teaching them to be content with what is necessary, which should be furnished them by those whom they would evangelize: “Jesus Christ frees them from all solicitude, saying: *Take nothing for your journey,* etc. And because he had sent them forth as it were stripped of everything, he tempered the severity of the precept, saying: *The workman is worthy of his meat,* that is, of the necessaries of life; as if he said: Receive as much as is necessary for food and clothing. Hence the Apostle also says: *But having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content.* Wherefore he commanded that they should carry nothing with them, since all was due them for their labor. It is according to natural law, those that serve the community in spiritual things should be provided by the community with the necessaries in temporal things. He therefore did not prohibit them to carry with them things necessary for sustaining this life, but he showed them that these things were due to them by those to whom they preached. He commanded these things rather for the purpose of recalling their affection from the inordinate love of temporal things, that they might not seek what was superfluous, and that what was necessary should be sufficient for them."[14354]

Secondly, it is answered that it is clear that this was a particular precept for this mission, which concerned only the Jews, whom the apostles were to persuade, by their contempt for earthly things, that they were the messengers of the true Messiah; this is seen in the same Gos*pel in which the divine Master tells them not to address themselves to others: Go ye not in the way of the Gentiles, and into the cities of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*[14355] *Hence before his death he recalled to their minds this precept in order to abrogate it: When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, did you want anything? But they said: Nothing. Then said He unto them: But now he that hath a purse, let hint take it, and likewise,*[14356] etc. Such is the explanation that is given by Cornelius a Lapide,[14357] in citing St. John Chrysostom, St. Anselm, and other authors, with St. Thomas,[14358] who expressly says that by these last words Jesus Christ abrogated the particular precepts that he had given to the apostles when he sent them to preach to the Jews. Cornelius adds that this had to be so; for the apostles would have to provide themselves with things necessary when going to preach to the Gentiles, who as enemies of the Gospel would have at first opposed them.

As to the possession of temporal goods, Cornelius says that although Jesus Christ possessed nothing in private, he yet possessed things in common with the college of the apostles. It is thus that we see in the Gospel of St. John that Judas carried the money received as alms: *And having the purse, carried the things that were put therein ;* and that the disciples had gone to buy the necessary food: *His disciples were gone into the city to buy meats.*[14359]

From this example of our divine Master, Cornelius concludes that it is by no means contrary to perfection to have goods in common, as is generally the case with religious Orders, and is thus defined by John XXII: "From this example of Christ it follows that it is not derogatory to Christian perfection to have goods in common, as is usually had by religious Orders according to what is defined by John XXII."[14360]

I have, moreover, found in another place that the same Pope declares him a heretic who would say that Jesus Christ and the apostles possessed nothing either in private or in common.[14361]

On the word *asserit* (asserts) in the note below—the gloss points out the passages of Scripture in which we see that Jesus Christ and the apostles possessed things. We there read that the Magi offered gold to the Saviour; that St. Peter had a house, and so had St. Matthew.[14362] Father Suarez, cited by Dom Calmet, assures us that it is a probable and a sound opinion, that St. Peter even after the vow of poverty was still in possession of his house when Jesus entered there and healed his mother-in-law.[14363] We also know, says Calmet, that the apostles, before and after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, made use of their boats although they had said that they had left all. *Behold, we have left all things*.[14364] The perfection of their poverty, says Calmet, consisted in that they had abandoned their goods by detaching their hearts.

However this may be, St. Thomas[14365] puts the question whether it is against religious perfection to possess anything in common,[14366] and he answers in the negative with St. Prosper, who says that perfection permits not private possession, but common possession: “It is shown sufficiently that private possessions should be contemned on account of perfection, and that common goods are possessed without detriment to perfection.”[14367] St. Thomas afterwards observes that perfection does not consist in poverty, but in the imitation of Jesus Christ. Poverty, he says, is only a means to arrive at perfection; it delivers man from the solicitude that is attached to riches. But when we possess only what is necessary to nourish ourselves, and should feel in regard to this some solicitude that disturbs us but little, this would not be against the perfection of the Christian life; for the Lord forbids not every kind of solicitude, but only excessive solicitude, which is injurious to the service of God.[14368]

Moreover, continues the Doctor, the solicitude that one has for particular goods is different from that which one has for common goods; for the first belongs to private love, while the second belongs to charity.[14369]

Hence we see, so he concludes, that the possession of superabundant riches in common is an obstacle to perfection, though it does not exclude it entirely; but the possession in common of what is necessary for simple subsistence does not hinder religious perfection.[14370]

St. Thomas speaks thus, in general, for all the religious; but afterwards considering the question in relation to the special ends of religious Orders, he says that an Order is so much the more perfect in respect to poverty, as it has a poverty proportioned to its end.[14371]

In speaking of an Order established for the good of souls, he says that this Order requires poverty to give it the least solicitude.[14372] Now he adds what gives the least solicitude is the preservation of necessary things after one has procured them at a suitable time.[14373] Note these last words, "After a suitable time."

Finally, citing the passage of St. John, *To buy meats,*[14374] the angelic Doctor concludes therefrom that it is evidently conformable to the perfection taught by the example of Jesus Christ, to keep money or all other common things, in order to support the religious.[14375] Note words, *All other things;* this refers to things movable or immovable, spoken of above; note also the words, *Perfection taught by Christ.*

Hence, says Cornelius a Lapide,[14376] after having cited the example of Jesus Christ and shown that it is not repugnant to perfection to possess things in common, the old founders (who certainly have had before their eyes only the example of Jesus Christ in order to attain a perfect life) have established that the religious should have goods in common, in order to give themselves up freely to prayer, to study, to preaching, as appears from the Constitutions of Sts. Basil, Augustine, Bernard, Dominic. Thus, Cornelius continues, with the exception of the Order of the Franciscans, the end of which is the greatest poverty, as to the other Orders that have the foregoing ends, it is more perfect to possess goods in common.[14377] By this means the solitaries can better guard their solitude, and those that devote themselves to preaching, compensate for austerity by charity.[14378]

I add, that St. Cajetan, who alone established as a rule self-abandonment to Providence, did not propose to himself simply the life of Jesus Christ; he had especially in view the glorification of the divine attribute of Providence, as is indicated by the Gospel[14379] that the Church makes us read on his feast.[14380] The saint also wished to confound thereby the impiety of Luther, who denied Providence; therefore, in the Church of Our Lady of Victories at Chiaia, above the little door, St. Cajetan is represented holding under him Luther, who says: *Non est providentia Dei* (There is no Providence of God).

Live Jesus and Mary!

Notes on the Life of the Rev. Father Paul Cafaro, of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

We do not precisely know when these Notes were written and published; we only know that in 1767 they were printed at the end of the volume entitled *Way of Salvation.* We think, however, that they must have appeared sooner, Father Cafaro having died in 1753. We here give some details that the author has omitted.

Father Cafaro was received as a novice by St. Alphonsus, at Barra, October 25, 1741; he was then thirty-four years of age, and he lived nearly twelve years in the Congregation. The saint soon gave a signal proof of the esteem and confidence that he reposed in his new subject. In 1743, he chose him for his spiritual director, and made a vow to obey him in all things. At the General Chapter of 1749, Father Cafaro was appointed one of the Consultors-General. St. Alphonsus regarded him as one of the principal supports of his Congregation, and never deviated from his counsels; in Cafaro’s last illness the saint did all he could to save his life; and in order to console himself for his loss, it was while adoring the decrees of Providence that he composed his beautiful hymn on the Conformity to the will of God. *(Villecourt,* 1. 2, ch. 12, 17, 31, and 39.)—ED.

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF THE REV. FATHER PAUL CAFARO, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

I. HIS BIRTH AND INFANCY

FATHER PAUL CAFARO was born on the 5th of July, 1707, in the diocese of Cava, and in a place called after the Cafari. His father was called John Nicholas Cafaro, and his mother Cecily also bore the name of Cafaro. Cecily was a woman of great piety, and her husband led a most exemplary life although only a secular. He belonged to a Congregation, the obligations of which he never neglected. He was much given to mental prayer, and he also taught his family how to practise it; his children daily received instruction in the Christian doctrine from him; and he was scrupulously obedient to his spiritual Father; in fact, when he died his director did not hesitate to say to his wife, “You have now a saint in Paradise.” These virtuous parents had six children, four girls and two boys, of whom Paul was the second.

His temper was so sweet and gentle even in his very cradle that his mother used to be obliged to awaken him when she wanted to suckle him. His childhood was quite different from that of other children, and quite free from those acts of levity that usually accompany it. He had a very serious illness when he was ten years of age, which he bore without a murmur, and with such patience that the doctor that attended him was quite delighted with him, and made his virtues generally known. When he began to study, he was always modest and attentive to his duties; he never deserved any reproof or punishment from his masters, but, on the contrary, he excited their admiration and that of his companions, as well as that of all that conversed with him.

As soon as he was old enough, he began to frequent the sacraments and to meditate chiefly before the Blessed Sacrament; and he did so with such devotion that it afforded matter of edification to all that beheld him. On account of his great piety and regularity his mother intrusted the care of his sisters to him; he watched over them most sedulously, and was very careful in seeing that they did not leave the house while she was out. If any one of them happened to transgress on this point, he punished her by shutting her up in a room, in which he obliged her to remain for some time, which varied according to the length of her stay and the distance to which she had gone.

II. HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE SEMINARY AND HIS CONDUCT WHILE THERE

He became a cleric at the age of thirteen, and led so edifying a life in the seminary that he entered, that the president, Don Dante della Monica, used to say, “The sight of this child leads me to God and makes me recollected. He therefore made him *zelator* over all the seminarians; and as he never failed to accuse those that transgressed the rules through the dictates of human respect, they revenged themselves on him by ill-treating him one day when they found him by himself. Paul, however, did not, therefore, in the least slacken in his zealous vigilance, and thus corresponded to the confidence reposed in him by his Superior, who had intrusted the superintendence of the whole seminary to him, notwithstanding his extreme youth. When the seminarians asked leave to go to any feast, or place of amusement, the president used to say, “I will consent if Paul goes with you.” One day the seminarians were invited to be present at the Office in the church of the convent of Preato, and as it was late, the nuns wished them to stay to dinner. They sent to ask permission for them to do so from the president, Don Simon Sambiase. He sent the following line in reply: “Let Paul decide; if he remains with them, I consent.” Such was the confidence that all the Superiors had in the wisdom and prudence of our Paul, although he was still but a mere boy.

At this early period, and although he was scarcely initiated into the office of cleric, he began to manifest his zeal for the spiritual advancement of his neighbor. He went from village to village on all feast days, teaching the Christian doctrine to the children and to the most ignorant and abandoned people; he even stirred up the other clerical students that were his companions, to imitate his example, and he was most solicitous in aiding them to become holy and learned priests, capable of leading souls in the way of salvation. For this purpose, he used to instruct them and teach them how to meditate. He was thus occupied for seven consecutive years, and we know that his labors were crowned with success, for these clerics became good priests and excellent laborers.

Paul was so mortified, and such a lover of the interior life from his earliest youth, that he used often to retire into a secluded chamber, in order to hide his mortifications and abstinences from observation, and take his meals alone there, that he might be able secretly to let them down out of the window to the poor that were stationed below ready to receive them. He used to reserve only a morsel of bread or some such nourishment for himself, and with it he was in the habit of mingling bitter herbs. He used to fast at least twice a week on bread and water. Sometimes he would confine himself to soup without bread, and throughout his youth he constantly abstained from meat and fruits, which was a great mortification for one so young. Besides this, he used to mortify his body by hair-cloth and the discipline in the privacy of his cell. When he was only thirteen he wore an iron chain with points so sharp that the very sight of it was enough to appal any one; and when his mother discovered it she took it from him by force. From that time he used to sleep on boards, or oftener still on the bare ground, with his head resting on a bench.

He then began to reflect that a good priest ought to be well informed; so he began to study Greek and Latin, under the direction of Don Ignatius della Calce, with the greatest ardor; after that he studied philosophy, and above all, theology. This science appeared of such importance to him, that he founded an academy at Cava, which he directed himself for several years, and of which he was both the head and the support. He was lecturer in dogmatic and in scholastic theology in our Congregation, and he treated on the different branches of both in some learned papers that we still preserve with veneration; we have attached still more value to them since it has become the custom in the Congregation for the young men only to study from books. Experience has taught us that they make much more progress by this method, that a great deal of time is thus saved; they are thereby freed from the inconveniences of writing, which is very prejudicial to the health.

III. HIS CONDUCT AS PRIEST AND AS PASTOR

After he had become a priest, in obedience to his director, Father Paul strove to unite himself still more closely to God than before, and to devote himself to the exercises of a holy life. According to the rule laid down for him by his spiritual Father, he daily meditated for four hours, two of which he passed before the Blessed Sacrament, and two others were subtracted from his sleep. Besides this, he used often to put in practice the counsel of St. Augustine: “Go, young men, go, ye grey-haired, and visit the sepulchres of your fathers.” For he used often to go to the parish cemetery and pass several hours among the bones, occupied in meditation on death; and sometimes he even spent the whole night and slept there. At times he would grasp the skeleton of his deceased father, who was interred in this place, and say, “O my father, how light death hath made thee!” At this same period he used also to retire for some days into a very solitary hermitage, where he spent all his time in prayer and macerations of the flesh.

He was appointed confessor and almoner of the ecclesiastical prison soon after his ordination. He had also at this time the consolation of converting by his gentleness and by his instructions, or rather by his prayers and penances, two Calvinists of noble birth, who came to Cava at this time.

After he had been in the priesthood for a year, his bishop insisted on his filling the post of parish priest in the church of St. Peter, and he accepted this office out of pure obedience, and after much resistance, in 1755, when he was in the twenty-eighth year of his age.

From the time he became a parish priest he devoted himself entirely to the service of the souls in his parish. I will here cite what was said of him by a priest who had witnessed his good works and his zeal. “Whilst Father Paul was parish priest,” said he, “he never shrunk from any fatigue that could procure the spiritual advantage of his parishioners. In order to be always ready to fly to the assistance of the sick, as soon as he was sent for, he used to go to bed quite dressed, so that if he were awakened in the middle of the night he could set out directly. More than once, to the great astonishment of those that came to fetch him, they met him at the door of his house, as if he had foreseen the message, for he would say directly he saw them, ‘Here I am. Let us go.’ ” During the month when he was on duty in the parish (for it was served by several priests) he spent the night in the church, as he promised that those that wished to apply to him should always find him there, and he remained seated in the confessional even during the short interval he allotted to repose. He was so full of zeal, and so anxious to attend to the parishioners that had recourse to him without delay, that when the sacristan came in the morning to open the church doors, he found that he had been kneeling there since two or three o’clock, and he never once arrived there before him.

He not only preached in the parish church as often as possible, but he went about from chapel to chapel, giving spiritual assistance to the poor who were unable to repair to the church, by preaching to them, by giving them instructions, or by hearing their confessions. He went through the neighboring villages, with his crucifix in his hand, after twelve o’clock on feast days, and he made a special point of visiting all places of the greatest resort and of a suspicious character, in order to prevent sin from being committed against God. He used to return thither again between eight and nine o’clock at night, even in the cold of winter, and give short instructions on the truths of eternity, setting the chastisement of heaven before sinners, and inspiring terror into those that were living at enmity with God. One evening when he was preaching before the house of a gentleman, who was probably in a state of alienation from God, he was accosted by him in the most offensive and insulting manner, he even treated him as if he were mad; to which Father Paul only replied, “No, sir, they who perform their duty are not madmen, and I am only doing my duty in taking care of the souls intrusted to my care.”

One amongst the good fruits of his labors was that of withdrawing several women from a life of sin by either placing them out of the reach of temptation, or by supplying their necessities out of his own pocket; and when his purse was empty, he went about begging for them from house to house. He took particular pains for one woman whom he extricated from a criminal connection by causing her to change her abode, and supporting her there by the alms he collected until she at last married the accomplice of her guilt. He often went about begging for bread for the poor, and when he obtained any, he used to distribute it amongst them himself. One day his brother found him engaged in this charitable work, and being ashamed to see him acting the part of a beggar he loaded him with invectives in the public street, and reproached him for thus dishonoring his family and himself. Reproaches such as these, however, produced no effect upon him, and did not therefore in the least slacken his zeal in the exercise of those labors of love, by which he led a great many women of bad character to live in the fear and love of God. He had much to suffer from his activity in putting a stop to scandals. He was several times even threatened with death in consequence.

He introduced the practice of monthly confession and general Communion for the children, as well as the frequentation of the sacraments by the adults not only of his parish, but of those of nearly the whole diocese. He also established the exercise of mental prayer in common in the church, and of visits to the Blessed Sacrament. He took infinite pains in preparing everything for the erection of a Community of twelve priests, who were to be specially intrusted with the care of destitute souls in the diocese, namely, those of prisoners, sailors, children, and the poor; for this reason it was to have been called the Congregation of the Destitute. The rules were drawn up under his direction, and approved by the bishop, and several priests offered to join it, but an obstacle was put to the completion of the undertaking, from the impossibility of finding a suitable place where the Congregation might assemble.

Another happy result of his zeal was that the priests of Cava were thereby led to give the spiritual exercises in all the numerous villages of this country, or at least in those in which they were mostly required. By his means these exercises were given every year in the chapel of St. Roch-au-Bourg, as they were much needed by the inhabitants of this place; they chiefly consisted of carters, tavern-keepers, butchers, and the like persons, who are generally very indifferent to all that regards the concerns of the soul. Whilst these exercises lasted, he went about every evening in all directions, collecting together all the persons he could, after which he used to conduct them to the chapel, and either instruct and preach to them himself, or assist others that were doing so. He spent the rest of the time in the church or in the sacristy, and generally without eating, saying that he did not require anything, owing to the robustness of his constitution. In fact, although but one individual, he took upon himself the care of every soul within his reach, so that Mgr. de Liguori,[14381] the bishop of Cava, called him the watchful guardian of all the churches."[14382] Hence it happened that when Father Paul retired into our Congregation, the inhabitants of Cava began to blame us, and said to us, "Oh, what have you done? You have deprived us of a saint and an apostle!" Paul was so highly thought of in his own country, which is far from being a common occurrence, that once after a report was spread that he had died in a place where he had been giving a mission, a multitude of people from Cava and Salerno came out to meet him on his return, to testify their joy at seeing him.

IV. HIS RESIGNATION OF THE OFFICE OF PARISH PRIEST AND HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE CONGREGATION

Although Paul performed his duties of priest in so holy a manner, he was tormented by scruples from the fear of not fulfilling his obligations properly; he was, therefore, continually urging his confessor to allow him to resign his post, but the confessor always refused, being convinced that his fears were quite unfounded, since in reality he did even more than his duty; so whenever he renewed his demand, he told him to banish such an idea from his mind. But Paul still continued to be a prey to the deepest sorrow. One day when he was at home, his parents heard him break forth into tears and sobs; they were quite alarmed, and inquired what misfortune could possibly have befallen him. Paul continued to weep, and replied, “For charity’s sake, assist me to obtain the favor of resigning my parish; my confessor refuses to give me leave to do so, and I am dying with terror in consequence.” Some days afterwards his parents found him shut up in a chapel in which he was giving vent to his sorrow by continuing in tears. Although they had opposed him at first, they were now touched with pity, and resolved themselves to strive to have his resignation accepted; this was carried into effect in the year 1740, to his own great satisfaction, but to the great regret of his parishioners. He, however, labored for the salvation of their souls with as much zeal as he had done before.

It was by a special disposition of Providence that he gave up this office; for God called him to another state of life, and wished to withdraw him entirely from the world. No sooner had he resigned it than he inspired him with the thought of quitting all earthly things, and of entering into our Congregation to lead a life of obedience by causing him to feel that the most agreeable sacrifice we can make to God is to strip ourselves of our own will. He wrote to me about this inspiration, for I was at that time his director. In order to be sure that this was truly his vocation, I told him to reject the thought as often as it arose in his mind, for I well knew that if it really came from God, he would himself strengthen it. He endeavored to obey me, but as God wished to draw him wholly to himself, the more he strove to banish the thought, the more ardent did his desire to retire into our Congregation become. At last, after much reflection and discussion, our Paul determined to go through the spiritual exercises alone (ere taking his final resolution), in the hermitage of the Cross, situated in Cava, on the summit of a mountain. When he was there he determined to abandon the world entirely in order to give himself wholly to God; although when in it he had never loved it or been of it. He thus expressed himself on the subject when writing to a nun just before he quitted it: “I do not wish to have anything more to do with earthly things,” said he, “I wish to belong wholly to God, and to forget myself, and for this reason I wish to place myself in the hands of others, so that I may have nothing to think of but eternity.”

He entered the Congregation and left home without telling any one of his resolution, and joined me at Barra, which is a suburb of Naples, where I was then living with several of my brethren, in a house provided for us by Cardinal Spinelli, the Archbishop of Naples, who had sent for some of the Fathers of our Congregation to give missions in his diocese. It was here then that Father Paul came to aid me. Soon afterwards his brother heard that he had resolved to abandon his family, and came to see him; he was transported with indignation, and did not cease to address him by the most offensive names for two whole hours; but Paul prudently remained silent, not offering a single word in reply. I say he did so through prudence, because the most logical reasoning and the most eloquent language are unable to convince a passionate man; indeed the more forcible and clear they are, the more they harden and embitter him. When his bishop, Mgr. de Liguori, heard of his retirement from the world, he too was filled with great displeasure, and made loud complaints against him. He met him one day during his journey to join us, when he stopped his carriage, and tried to persuade him to return to Cava; but on finding that Paul remained unshaken in his resolution, he ended by saying, “ Well, since this is your decision, do not let me see you again, and do not re-enter my diocese.”

After this, Paul began his novitiate, during which he gave the greatest edification, especially by his exercise of the virtue of obedience, which is a most painful and difficult thing for one that enters a Community after having reached a certain age, and after having been long accustomed to do his own will, even although he may have been always engaged in the most holy actions. Paul increased his penances, and especially his meditations, during this period, which latter he extended to seven or eight hours a day. During his novitiate and throughout the remainder of his life, including the last six years, when God tried him by excessive desolation of mind, as we shall relate hereafter, he never had the least temptation to abandon his vocation. When it was time for him to make an oblation to God, that is to say, when he had to pronounce the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and perseverance, according to the rules of our Institute, he did so with such love and compunction that tears choked his utterance, and prevented him from repeating the words of the formula that is usually pronounced at profession.

At the termination of the novitiate, his Superiors at once employed him in the work of the missions. Let us here pause a little and admire some of the virtues that this excellent priest practised during his holy life. First, let us speak of his zeal for the salvation of souls.

He was singularly devoted to the work of the missions. Indeed, he had been ardently attached to them from the time he became a priest. When he was a parish priest he used to go on missions with his companions, the missionaries of Cava, as often as he could do so without neglecting the duties of his charge; and they attest that he was indefatigable in these exercises, that he never spared himself for a single moment, and that he did not even shrink from what might endanger his life. While he was at Cava, it once happened that he had to go to a part of the country near the territory of Eboli, called Piesti, where the air was dangerously unhealthy at that time. All the rest declined to go there but Paul, who offered to go of his own accord. He cheerfully set out; notwithstanding the danger he was running, he remained alone there for a week, during which he was constantly employed in preaching and in hearing the confessions of the inhabitants, and by God’s mercy he left it full of joy and in perfect health.

His love for missions was so great, that when he had resigned his parish, and before he had decided to enter the Congregation, he made a plan to go about through the kingdom in disguise, begging his bread, and giving missions in those places that were the most destitute of spiritual assistance; he even wrote to this effect to a bishop of Calabria, who as he did not know anything about him, did not accept his offer. He also at the same time wrote to the bishop of Capaccio offering to exercise his ministry in his extensive diocese; but this proposition was equally unsuccessful.

When he was in our Congregation he made a private vow never to manifest any repugnance for any mission to which his Superiors might send him. He also made a vow to go as a missionary among the unbelievers, should such be the will of his Superiors. It will be well here to quote the letter that he wrote on this subject to Father Mazzini, his director:

“My Father, I know not whether it is through the Spirit of God or through that of pride that I feel impelled to write to your Reverence, to lay before you the desire that I have always had of offering myself to the Rector for the missions among the heathen. From the time of my novitiate I have vowed to obey the Superior *pro tempore* by undertaking any office, even that of a foreign missionary; and I made this vow with the strong desire and lively hope of realizing it some day or other. This desire is less fervent than it was, it is true; but I am still perfectly ready and willing to carry it into effect, and what is more, this desire has never left me since my novitiate. I know that I am full of faults, but yet I feel a holy envy for those that are more perfect. If I compare what I was with what I am, I find that I have changed for the worse, and this makes me long still more to go and labor among the heathen; for if I were once embarked in an enterprise like that, I should be, as it were, compelled wholly to renounce myself and my own ease and comfort. My favorite maxim is that of St. Augustine, who says, ‘O happy necessity that forces us to amend!’ Now as I know that if I were sent on a mission among the heathen I should be almost forced to do good, to suffer, nay, perhaps even to die for Jesus Christ; I feel the greatest desire for it. It is true that I suffer much from sea-sickness, and that I might perhaps die on the voyage; but I should not therefore hesitate to set out, let the consequences be what they may. My Father, I resign myself to you,” etc.

He succeeded in obtaining permission from his director to make this request, and he afterwards most earnestly besought me to grant his petition, imploring it as the greatest favor I could possibly grant him.

Father Paul was a truly indefatigable missionary, and spared no pains, especially in the laborious office of hearing confessions. Yet it must not be imagined that this was an easy duty to him; on the contrary, it caused him the greatest anxiety, as he was always afraid of having been guilty of some negligence regarding it. Hence it arose that this employment was a positive martyrdom to him, and the state of excessive weakness into which he sometimes fell during its administration was a plain proof of what he then endured. This, however, only enhances our admiration for the immense zeal and ardor of Father Paul. In the morning he was the first to enter the church, and in the evening he was the last to leave it, as he spent the whole day in hearing confessions, generally those of men, which are usually the most embarrassing and tedious. When he returned home in the evening after the sermon, he entered the confessional again without allowing himself a single interval of rest, and when he had attended to the penitents around him, he left his room to see whether there was any one else that would like to go to him, although every confession was a source of torture to him. Once when he went on a mission without an alarm-clock Paul used to keep awake for several hours every night in order to be able to awaken his companions at the appointed time; during which he would arise from time to time without shoes or stockings to go to see what o’clock it was. On another mission he preached and heard confessions, although suffering from an attack of fever.

In fact, his labors in the work of the missions during winter and spring were quite incessant. While he was at home, he spent the day in giving the spiritual exercises to the ecclesiastics and seculars that asked for them; indeed, he never shrunk from any fatigue or inconvenience that he met with in the service of souls. One day when he was at the house at Nocera, he heard that a man had just been mortally wounded; he immediately flew to his assistance, without waiting to put on his cloak, hat, or shoes; and in order that he might go still quicker, he even took off his slippers, and carried them in his hand till he reached the sick man.

When he was in the pulpit he preached with admirable zeal and energy. Every one owned that his sermons produced an extraordinary effect, quite different from that which followed those of other preachers. Even in the conferences that he delivered to us in Chapter, which takes place once a week among us, his words seemed like burning arrows that pierced our inmost souls, for he uttered them with an energy so penetrating, that we felt that they sprang from the depths of his own heart, and above all, when he spoke of eternity he caused all that heard him to tremble.

This burning zeal, as that of Paul may be aptly designated, caused him to write the ardent Letters that he sent to divers subjects whose skill in gaining souls for God was well known to him; in them he urged these persons to redouble their pains and labor in this holy work. One of the fruits of his zeal was manifested in the abundance of prayers that he addressed to God when a bishopric became vacant, and in the active measures that he took in order to cause the election to fall on a good prelate. It was only to his zealous efforts that the elevation of one worthy prelate to the episcopate must be attributed, who is still alive, and who governs his church with a solicitude that is most advantageous to the souls of his people.

VI. HIS LOVE OF MENTAL PRAYER AND HIS INTERIOR TRIALS

While Father Paul was thus laboring for the good of souls, he devoted as much time as possible to the exercise of mental prayer. The love of meditation indeed was his strongest passion, or rather it was his greatest delight.

From his earliest years, and especially after he had become a cleric, he set apart several hours a day for this purpose; in the afternoon, he always spent two hours in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament; sometimes he was kneeling, sometimes he was seated, but he always preserved an air of so great devotion, that the faithful used to say to one another, “Let us go and see the saint. He also made frequent visits to the cemetery, where he used to stay for a long time meditating on death and eternity.

Alter he entered our Congregation he used to make two meditations in church before the Blessed Sacrament, besides that of an hour and a half, which is prescribed by the rule, and he also made another one of half an hour in his own room before going to bed. He would have liked to prolong this exercise through the night but the Superiors would not permit him to do so. Besides this, we used often to find him kneeling in his room engaged in meditation through the day; and it was also noticed that when he went out to walk in the wood, as he sometimes did, he retreated behind a tree and knelt down in prayer. He spent every spare moment, when he was on missions, before the Blessed Sacrament, or else he used to recollect himself wherever he might be, saying, “God is everywhere.”

He made his preparation for his sermons on his knees; thus this time was also to him a time of prayer, and it was for this reason that his sermons made such an impression as they did, for they were the fruit of his own meditations. I also think that the reason why his discourses so often turned on death and eternity was because they were the ordinary topics on which he himself meditated. I have already mentioned how much he liked to visit the burying-ground. One day when he was speaking on this subject to a nun who admired his firmness in remaining in such a place, he said, “I should like to spend all the days of my life there.” When he was a parish priest, every evening after his studies were over he made an hour’s meditation on death, in concert with a worthy priest who lived with him, during which they used each to place themselves in a corner of the room in the attitude of corpses. “O death! O eternity!” were words which were continually on the lips of this servant of God, whether he were alone or with others. When he was engaged in conversation he would often say to one of his companions, “Tell me how you would feel were death at hand? He often spoke of death and eternity in his letters to his penitents and friends. In one he said, “Earthly things will soon be at an end, and will avail nothing for all eternity.” In another, “Let us think of eternity, for time is short.” In a third, “We must arm ourselves with the buckler of faith, which is the thought of eternity. Let us reflect that all here below will soon be at an end, but that eternity will never end. Let us remember that it is better for us to be one of God’s meanest servants, than to possess the most exalted worldly dignity. Think of what on your death-bed you would wish to have done during life.” His most powerful discourses were those in which he spoke of death and eternity, and they were his favorite topics. When he was a parish priest, he used to conduct the faithful to the cemetery from time to time, when he would take the bones of the dead in his hand whilst he was preaching, thus striving to impress them with the fear of death, that he might the better instil into them a contempt for the world and the thought of eternity. Indeed, almost every one of his public discourses contained some reflections on death and eternity.

But we must now return to the subject of his meditations. Except while he was very young, when Paul experienced nothing but sweetness in prayer, he exercised it without any sensible consolation, although he received great lights in it during his after years, especially with regard to the majesty of God, on which he once composed a sermon that filled all that heard it with astonishment. During meditation he spent nearly all the time in saying prayers that he counted on his rosary, repeating almost always these words, “ Lord, deliver me from sin, and make me holy,” or else, “My God, come to my assistance, come quickly: ‘*Deus in adjutorium meum intende,’* ” etc. He used also to recommend this method of praying to others: “Without prayer and humility,” he wrote to one of his penitents, “man cannot preserve either favor or grace. Humility! humility! Prayer, prayer without ceasing! let these be our watchwords, lie that prays obtains. We must therefore pray without ceasing. Ask continually for alms at the gate of divine mercy; let at least an hour a day be consecrated to asking spiritual favors from God.” On another occasion, when writing to the same individual, he said, “Meditation is necessary, and without it we shall never be where we desire to be, and where we should be with meditation. I entreat you to pray unceasingly. It is the first, the second, the third, and the last method of vanquishing our enemies."

He often felt such interior desolation, that He felt as if he were so sinful that God had abandoned him, and began to weep; and when he recalled to mind his former transports of love towards God, he would tearfully and sorrowfully exclaim, "Lord, there was once a time when I loved Thee, but now I love Thee not!" One of us once asked whether he had ever felt joy in contemplation. "I once enjoyed it," he replied, "but I have lost all pleasure in it now." Yet it often happened that when any one wished to speak to him while he was engaged in meditation, it was necessary to shake him several times in order to arouse him enough to make him hear what was said to him. But from the time of his youth, as we have already said, God treated him as a strong soul, and reduced him to a state of entire suffering, so that the whole course of his life from that period was an uninterrupted succession of aridities, temptations, and terrors.

However, he rejoiced in the superior part of his nature, and desired that God would always deal with him thus, as he well knew that the love of God does not consist in sweetnesses, but in the accomplishment of the divine will amidst tribulations, as St. Teresa said, and as he himself was constantly repeating to his penitents. To one of them, amongst others, he wrote as follows: "Only souls that are enlightened by special grace can comprehend the value of a cross that is borne for God, but in the next world all will clearly see that this grace is preferable to the possession of the whole world. Let us then pray God to give us strength to suffer, for otherwise our weak nature will sink by the way; meanwhile let us maintain a lively faith in eternal life." He wrote to the same person on another occasion: "Saints are formed by crosses, and not by meditations. We see a great many people that practise meditation without becoming saints, because they have nothing to suffer, whilst others that are in the midst of tribulations become so although they can meditate but little. The chief benefit of meditation is, that it gives us strength to suffer, and thus to please God. Patience then is the way to heaven, and we obtain it by meditation." He also said, in writing to a Father of our Congregation. "Your letter tells me of your pains as well as of your consolations; both of your trials and of your consolations. I wish your Reverence loved tribulation more than pleasure; crosses are indeed precious treasures, for they were sanctified by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross;

we should, therefore, desire that our crosses may be multiplied every day until we at last die nailed to the cross with our Blessed Redeemer."

Thus highly, then, did our Father Paul esteem and love the cross; and he wished others to do the same, but he could not be insensible to the thorns with which his path was thickly strewed, nor to the terrors that tormented him without cessation. In his latter years especially he had to endure the most cruel temptations that can be inflicted on the soul that knows and loves God. The secrecy by which I am bound forbids my disclosing its nature; were I able to reveal it, it would fill the hardest heart with tenderness. I have no hesitation in saying that his sufferings during these latter years were as intense as any that were ever endured by any martyr of Jesus Christ. He was in such a state of desolation and terror, that he was afraid that God had abandoned him, and he used to sigh and exclaim in the bitterness of his heart, "Alas! I have lost the right way, and I do not know what will become of me!" In writing to one of our Fathers, who was so ill as to be given over by the physicians, and who had asked him to pray to God to grant him a happy death, he said, "Would that I had as well-grounded hope as that of your Reverence! the great work of my salvation is in a most hazardous position, and for this reason I entreat you to intercede for me when you are in the presence of God." In writing to another Father, he said, "I entreat you to recommend me to Jesus Christ, for I labor in uncertainty (*laboro quasi in incertum*), and none but God can know the state of my conscience." In another letter to the same Father, he said, "If your Reverence had to endure my sorrows, it would assuredly banish all joy from your heart, but may you continue to possess happiness, and leave me to groan under my misery. Yet have pity on me, at least you who are my friends, for the hand of God has afflicted me,—*Miseremini mei, saltem vos amici mei, manus Domini tetigit me.* Now you will ask in what manner God has struck me, and I will tell you. He has afflicted me by withdrawing his mercy and support from me, as a punishment for my infidelities. You will say, Oh! what humility! but I reply that it is an incontestable truth; therefore, pray to God for me."

His love for meditation also caused him to love silence and solitude, which are its inseparable preservatives and companions. Even whilst he was a parish priest, and whilst he was really absorbed by the anxiety and pains that he endured for the salvation of souls, he used to retire into remote and lonely places from time to time, to hold converse with God in meditation and in penitential exercises. It was this that caused Father Paul to have such a predilection for our house at Iliceto, which is situated on one of the mountains of la Pouille. He used often to retire into a little grotto below the monastery, called the Grotto of the Blessed Felix, to meditate, or else he would plunge into an adjacent wood, where he felt as if he had met with a solitude like that of the first hermits. He thus expressed himself regarding it in a letter to a priest who was his great friend: “When I am in our new house of our Lady of Consolation at Iliceto,” said he, “I feel as if I were enjoying the solitude possessed by the solitaries of Egypt. We retire here after the missions that we give in winter and spring, and enjoy so great tranquillity and solitude, and are so removed from the tumult of the world, that we never hear anything about what takes place in it. We live apart from all converse with men in the midst of a wood, where the air is pure and the view agreeable, so that it may really rival the rocky cave of St. Peter of Alcantara. Blessed be God for having brought me hither! yet I have to mourn over my ingratitude in working out my sanctification so tardily. But I still hope by God’s grace to effect it some day.” This love of solitude caused him to take delight in studying the lives of the hermit saints. Later on he went with us to Nocera, and as we were only then building the monastery, our fathers were obliged to lodge in a private house. As it was very small, and a great many people came on business, it was difficult ever to be alone there, lo obviate this, after the exercises in common were at an end, he used to retire into a loft full of straw, where the heat was insupportable, for it was summer; yet this servant of God went there at noon, although that is the hottest part of the day, to seek for a little solitude amid this hot straw, to be able to converse without interruption with God.

VII. HIS LOVE OF OBEDIENCE

Father Paul was no less attached to the virtue of obedience, both with reference to the Rule and also in regard to the orders of the Superiors. He gave the most perfect example of implicit obedience even to the most unimportant rules, and during the whole period of his sojourn in the Congregation, no one ever detected him guilty of the slightest infringement of them. One day when he arrived at the monastery of the Blessed Trinity, in the territory of Ciorani, thoroughly wet, he was recommended to go to dry himself in the kitchen; he replied, “No, that would be contrary to the Rule, as it is now silence-time.” Our deceased Father Cæsar Sportelli, who was also a great observer of the Rule, said one day when speaking of Father Paul, “I always knew that Father Paul was a most mortified man; but I now perceive that he is also a rigid observer of the Rule.” He not only loved regularity himself, but he was equally desirous to see it loved by all our brethren. He could not bear to see any one break the Rule in any respect, and so the strict observance of every regulation was always to be found wherever he was the Superior.

Father Paul was equally attentive in obeying the least sign from his Superiors. He manifested perfect submission to his parents from his very infancy, and his mother asserted that he had never offended or distressed her in any respect. He made a vow of entire obedience to his confessor in his youth, and it was in order to be able to resign his own will to that of others that he entered our Congregation. He said to a nun, on taking leave of a convent of which he had been the confessor, “God calls me to live under obedience.” For this reason he used to say that the holiness practised in the Congregation was worth more than that in the world. He expressed this sentiment when writing to Father Francis Margotta the priest, who was then thinking of joining us; this he afterwards did: “I write to your Reverence on bended knees, on account of the respect with which your holy resolution of retiring into our Congregation has inspired me. I cannot tell you what pleasure it has afforded me. Blessed forever be Jesus Christ, who has given your Reverence the courage to bid a last adieu to the world to give yourself wholly to God. Until now Father Francis Margotta has appeared to me to be a saint, but he has been so in his own way. At present, however, I see that he wishes to become a true saint, according to the will of Jesus Christ. We are all expecting you: make haste and come to us.”

His esteem and love for obedience were so great, that when he received a letter from the Rector Major, he read it on his knees and answered it in the same manner. He also used to carry about with him the circulars that the Superior sent to the houses every year, and that contained several minute regulations for the good government of the Congregation, and he often read these letters over in order that he might punctually observe all that they enjoined. Thus when any question arose amongst his companions as to what should be done in certain cases, he cleared up their difficulties by reminding them of some decision given by the Superior under similar circumstances.

One year, one of the Superiors ordered him not to assist at the meditation that we make in common in the evening, and to employ the time in preparing the theological treatises that he was to explain to our students. Notwithstanding his love for meditation, Father Paul obeyed without objection or uneasiness. On another occasion the Superior ordered him to give all his instruments of penance to one of our lay-brothers; this obedience cost him much, but he instantly obeyed, and without a word of complaint.

I will now relate another instance of obedience, and one that was still more painful to him, on account of the wound it inflicted on his humility. When he was at Nocera, we had a large picture painted, which is now to be seen at the entrance of this house, representing our Father Mgr. Falcoia, who was the bishop of Castellamare, and the first director of our Congregation, in the act of giving our Fathers the rules that he had drawn up. The Rector of Nocera wished Father Paul to be included amongst the personages therein represented, and ordered the painter skilfully to portray his features whilst he was looking on; he then sent for him, and in order that his humility might not be pained, he merely told him to stand there for some time, whilst the painting was being done, that he might be able to suggest any requisite alterations. Father Paul assented; but he probably suspected the real object in view, for he kept changing from one position to another, and turning his head about, first on one side and then on another, so that the painter declared that he could do nothing. Upon this the Superior openly said to Feather Paul, “ Go and sit down and remain motionless, for we wish to have your picture taken, and do so without objecting.” As the poor Father was thus bound down by obedience he sat perfectly still on his chair, but his heated countenance plainly showed the torture that his modesty had to endure during the process. When the portrait was done, he exclaimed, addressing the Superior, “Ah! God has justly punished me! Some days ago I gave a sharp rebuke to a priest that had had his likeness taken, and now God has so ordered matters that I have been obliged to have it done myself.”

He was no less obedient to his spiritual Father, and he never did anything without his permission, as we shall see when we begin to speak of his interior mortification. One day while he was suffering great interior desolation, he went to his confessor and took out of his pocket a paper on which he had written down his sins preparatory to making a general confession; but no sooner did his confessor tell him to leave it alone, than he tore the memorandum and became tranquil.

VIII. HIS HUMILITY

We must now speak of the profound humility which Father Paul preserved throughout his life. This virtue was, as it were, the very apple of his eye; it was the ordinary subject of his meditations, and he constantly offered up this prayer to God, *Humilem fieri, igne flagrari, in sanctum cito converti pati, et contemni pro te* (O Lord, make me humble, give me grace to burn with the fire of divine love, to become soon a saint, to suffer and to be despised for Thee). And he used to repeat the words, *pati et contemni pro te* (to suffer and to be despised for Thee), over and over again with all possible fervor. He often conversed with his brethren on humility, and when he spoke on this subject his words were so full of ardor that he seemed to be carried out of himself.

See what he said about this virtue when writing to one of his disciples: “You may rest assurer! that you are in a state of grace. As to the consolations you experience, *nec laudo, nec vitupero* (I neither praise nor blame them), and as to the desire for martyrdom, it may be good if it does not proceed from the devil, who often seeks to make us entertain some secret complacency and vainglory by his suggestions. Your sensitiveness when neglected seems to me to proceed from self-love, which is not entirely dead within you.”

In a letter to another of his friends, he said, “Without humility, man cannot continue to preserve the grace of God in his soul; I therefore earnestly recommend you to cultivate this virtue. I wish you to picture to yourself your place in hell, if you feel that you have ever done anything to merit it, and the abyss of the misery of your sins, if you have committed any. Let us strive to become saints rather than philosophers; let us determine to conquer or die.”

He also wrote as follows to one of our Fathers: “The meditation of a soul under desolation should consist in patience, resignation, and prayer. If she cannot be recollected in God, let her at least be so in herself, that is to say, in her own misery, which is always an incentive to recollection of mind.”

As for himself, he believed that he was the most unworthy of all, and after his death a number of self-accusations were found among his spiritual memoranda. He used often to accuse himself of his faults in public when he was Superior, and he placed some of the other Fathers under obedience to accuse him of all the faults that they might see him commit, and to humble him without scruple. Once when he was minister in a house, he begged the *zelator* publicly to accuse him of his faults in the middle of the refectory, and after he had done so, he thanked him for it with much gratitude.

But while Father Paul spoke and acted thus, he did not resemble those that loudly proclaim that they deserve the contempt of the whole world, and yet shrink from the least offensive word, or the slightest instance of neglect. He not only did not complain when he was despised, but he rejoiced interiorly. I will now give a beautiful instance of his humility. We have already said that his discourses were generally sought after, for he spoke with so much zeal that he filled the hardest hearts with compunction. Once, however, when his Superior sent him to a place in the territory of la Pouille, his first sermon was so much disliked by the inhabitants that they sent him away again; yet he returned full of peace and even satisfaction at having received so palpable an affront. On another occasion (in my presence), a religious, who is now dead, was conversing with him upon some theological question. The religious not only differed with Father Paul in opinion, but treated him as one quite ignorant of what he was saying, so that when he came to himself, he went and asked his pardon; but Father Paul did nothing but admire the humility of this Father, and said, “What humility! the idea of coming to beg my pardon for a hasty word!”

His favorite book was the Hidden Life, and he said that he did not think it could be surpassed by any spiritual book. During one of his illnesses, although his strength was quite prostrated by fever, he read it over five times. His love for the hidden life made him say, “If I had ever been unjustly accused of the greatest crimes, and afterwards degraded and publicly punished with ignominy, I might then be able to do something for God.” Thus would Father Paul reveal the secret desires of his heart, although he did so unconsciously. Nothing pained him so much as to hear himself praised. One day some one said to him, “My Father, you are a saint.” But his face became glowing as a burning coal, and he replied with much agitation, “What sort of a saint, what sort of a saint!” He was always seeking to mortify himself at his meals, but when he was discovered he hastened to conceal his mortification. Once when he was preaching at Cava before Mgr. de Liguori, the bishop, who had been, and indeed still was, an excellent preacher himself, he received high eulogiums from him, but in another sermon that he delivered before the same prelate he spoke incoherently and confusedly, in order to lessen the reputation he had gained by the first; he even went so far as to pretend to be quite perplexed or to have lost his memory, and stopped short in the middle of the sermon, but every one saw that he had done it on purpose to efface the memory of the praises he had before received.

Before his death, that is to say, during his last sickness, which continued for thirteen days, this servant of God spoke so little that his words might have been counted, and we imagine that he acted thus through a humble fear that his last words might be treasured up as is usual in regard to great servants of God.

IX. HIS MORTIFICATION

He was also always most careful to practise interior and exterior mortification.

His efforts to overcome all his inclinations were incessant, and formed one of his chief resolutions during the spiritual exercises, as we find by reference to his notes, but as these acts were interior, we know little of their nature or extent. They are fully known only to God, and we trust that he is now enjoying their reward in heaven.

As for exterior mortification, we have already said that he began to practise it in the most rigorous manner from his very childhood; he even made a vow to abstain from meat. In order to mortify himself still further he confined himself to one meal a day, and it was so slight that he sometimes felt his strength quite prostrated in consequence; when he was with us he used to speak of such acts as instances of the indiscretion and folly of a thoughtless young man.

When he was a parish priest his meal often consisted only of a morsel of bread and a glass of water, which he used to take in a corner of the church.

His sleep never exceeded four or five hours at this period, and he went to rest in his clothes.

When he entered the Congregation, he used indeed to take two meals a day, in order not to offend against obedience and to avoid singularity; but he might be said even then to keep a continual fast, for he took only a few ounces of nourishment in the evening, and ate so little in the middle of the day, that he generally arose from the table half famished with hunger; so that his Superiors at last ordered him to take more at a time. He used also often to mingle bitter herbs, and sometimes even the peel of decayed oranges, with what he did take. In order to mortify his thirst during dinner, for he never drank anything at other times, he only took small quantities at once.

He always carefully abstained from all amusements while he was in the world, indeed he was never known to enter into the least earthly gratification. He never went to plays, games, public walks, or field sports. At Cava, his birth-place, his family possess the shooting ground for ring-doves, and this sport is carried on every year there, and is a great amusement for the children; but Father Paul never took part in it. One year when he was the Superior of our house of St. Mary of Consolation at Iliceto, which is an extremely cold place, he took care that all the Fathers should be provided with warm clothing in winter, but said nothing about himself, so that the tailor forgot to make any for him, and he went through all this rigorous season with nothing but his cassock and shirt without the least complaint. When he was travelling it often happened that night came on while he was at a distance from any of our houses, and as he was always careful to lose no opportunity of mortification, he used to avoid going to our friends on such occasions, for fear of the hospitable reception they would give him; he used therefore to go to inns instead, where he was often obliged to lie down either on straw or even on the bare ground.

He made a vow of obedience to his confessor while he was in the world, and as he was fond of exterior mortification, Father Paul readily induced him to consent to all that his fervor inspired him to ask; and all that his director permitted regarding mortification and meditation, he executed most punctually as a rigorous obligation to which he was bound by vow. Disciplines to blood were common with him, and for this purpose he used sometimes to use bunches of thorns, which he had gathered in the fields, but he generally scourged himself with a thick cane filled with lead and covered with large long iron spikes, which not only pierced the flesh but penetrated far deeper. He also afflicted his body by binding his arms and legs with large chains armed with points, and he used to wear them even while he was preaching and hearing confessions; but his Superior once perceived them during a mission, and took them away from him, and gave them into the charge of a lay-brother. It was also noticed that when he went to walk in the woods of Iliceto during recreation, he used to strike his hands on the thorns every now and then in order to mortify himself.

To sum up, Father Paul never had any amusement or relief whatsoever; his whole life and constant study were spent in crucifying his inclinations, in refusing himself every pleasure, and in afflicting himself by every possible penance. He was often heard to repeat, We must fight in order to become saints; we must be always fighting, always striving to mortify ourselves in everything, in eating and drinking, in sleep, in our method of sitting, and in short, we must be mortified in all things.” This is a beautiful, for it is a saintly maxim; but how rarely is it put in practice, unless indeed by those that have entirely consecrated themselves to God.

X. HIS SPIRIT OF POVERTY

Father Paul was also a great lover of poverty. Even while he was in the world he made a vow to his confessor, by which he bound himself never to have more than five carlins in his possession at once, and those he only kept that he might be able to bestow them on the poor, whose wants it was his duty to relieve, as he was a parish priest at the time. His clothes were so shabby, that once when his brother met him looking as ragged as any beggar, he treated him as a madman, and loaded him with reproaches in the public street.

After he had entered our Congregation, in which the vow of poverty is one of those we take, he always observed it most zealously. When he was Superior he was very rigorous on this subject, and never forgave any member of the Congregation that was guilty of the least offence against religious poverty. Me even carried its observance to excess, which was contrary to true economy, for he would not allow of any store of provisions, saying, “Poor people never lay in stores;” and he was the first to set an example of this rigorous poverty, by always putting it in practice himself. In his note-book he had written, “I should be much more afraid of being rich than of being poor; I wish to love poverty more than men of the world love riches.” And in order to carry this resolution into effect, he never even made use of scissors, needles, thread, ink, paper, or of any other such little necessaries, without the permission of the Superiors.

When he was Superior on the missions, he always chose the worst horse, the worst bed, and the most inconvenient confessional tor himself. It is the custom in our Congregation for even the priests to take it in turn to wash the dishes on certain days in the week, as an exercise of humility. The other Fathers used to make use of soap or bran afterwards, in order to clean their hands, but he only employed cinders, saying that it would be contrary to holy poverty to use anything else. Our Fathers are allowed to carry some book of piety about with them, such as the New Testament, the Imitation, the Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and others of the same kind, with the consent of the Superior; they also keep some devotional pictures in their breviary or on their table. But Father Paul would have nothing of the kind, and when our Fathers told him that there was no offence against poverty in so doing, he replied that his motto was, “Nothing, nothing, nothing.” During his last illness, and when he had lost his speech, he perceived that a silver watch was hanging in his room, and as he could not speak, he made a sign to have it taken away, as a thing contrary to poverty, but the Father Minister told him that it served to regulate the administration of his remedies, which set his mind at rest.

XI. HIS DETACHMENT IN REGARD TO HIS RELATIVES AND HIS CHARITY TOWARDS HIS NEIGHBOR

He was as detached from his relatives as he was from the goods of this world. When he was at our house of the Holy Trinity, in the territory of Ciorani, his mother asked him to obtain permission for her to go to see him, for she had not done so for many years; but he sent her a message by a priest, telling her to let the matter alone, for her wishes only proceeded from earthly affection. The mother renewed her entreaties, protesting that she wished to have the consolation of visiting him before she died, both for the sake of seeing him and also that she might be able to give him her last blessing. Father Paul again replied that it was unnecessary, and that she could give him her blessing where she was, as it would be as valuable at a distance as near at hand. On another occasion, when he heard that his sister was seriously ill and in great suffering, he positively refused to go to see her, and contented himself with replying, “I wish that her pains may become still greater, that she may thus be more conformed to the suffering life of Jesus Christ.”

Although Father Paul was so austere with regard to himself and to his relatives, he was as charitable and considerate as possible towards all others. He strove to comfort and relieve those that were oppressed by temptations or other trials; and although his natural disposition was severe, charity rendered him mild and affable to all, especially to those that came to confess their sins to him. He was in the habit of visiting the prisons at Cava and at Salerno before he entered the Congregation; he began by preaching to the poor prisoners; he then heard their confessions; after which he distributed a basket full of bread amongst them, and gave them each a carlin. There was a nun that experienced great distress of conscience, who applied to Father Paul while he was a parish priest. He attended to her with the most painstaking diligence for eight days consecutively; this happened during the octave of Corpus Christi, and as the nights are very short at this season, and as the servant of God wished to arrive at his church in time to attend to his parish and people, he went to this religious before daybreak. This fact has become known through the testimony of the religious herself.

When he was Superior amongst us he was always trying to relieve the wants of others, and specially of those that were ill; and not satisfied with recommending them to the care of the infirmarians, he often waited on them himself. One day when he saw that one of those that were sick had rather an uncomfortable bed, he immediately gave him his own. During the hours of rest he used to walk about the corridors of the monastery on his toes, to avoid disturbing those that were in their rooms.

XII. HIS PURITY

As for the virtue of purity, he preserved it with the utmost vigilance, and watched over all concerning it with the most scrupulous attention, and as far as we can tell, Father Paul never sullied his saintly soul by the foul stain of impurity throughout his life. He had a horror of this vice from his earliest youth, and could not even bear to hear it spoken of. Once when he was very young, he was going to school with another child that was related to him; but upon his uttering an indecent expression, Paul blushed, and ran off, leaving him behind. On another occasion when this same companion repeated the same word in his presence, he could not help giving him a blow, and from that time he resolved never to be in company with this relative again, nor with any other boy that might resemble him, and he carefully carried his purpose into effect.

With still greater reason was he always most reserved in his intercourse with women. He never looked at them, and he never spoke to the oldest woman without casting his eyes down; but as he was afraid that his eyes might some day betray him into evil, he prayed to God to weaken his sight, and God granted his petition. He was so careful on this point even with regard to his mother and sisters, that they complained that he had never even once looked at them.

When this servant of God was on missions, he generally began by hearing the confessions of men, and it was only when he had heard them all that he made up his mind to listen to those of women, in order not to remain idle. When he was obliged to converse with them on any indispensable business, he rigorously followed the advice of St. Augustine: *Cum feminis sermo brevis et rigidus* (With women let conversation be short and rigid), and he sent them away as quickly as he could, and with all possible gravity. If he had to give the spiritual exercises in a convent, he remained in the confessional in the morning and afternoon; but he never revisited them when the retreat was over, unless in cases of absolute necessity, however pressingly he might be asked to do so by the religious, for fear of contracting any attachment to them.

To purity of body he also united that of soul. He owned to the parish priest that succeeded him that he was not certain of ever having committed a mortal sin during his whole life, adding that he only feared that he might have done so; but fears such as these are the scruples of saints who are afraid even when there is no cause for apprehension. Father Balthasar Alvarez said that mortal sin is so horrible a monster, that it cannot enter a soul that loves God, without making itself clearly known; hence theologians are unanimous in concluding that when a timorous person is only in doubt, and is not sure of having lost the grace of God, it is certain that he has not done so. As for our Father Paul, although he affirmed that he had doubts on the subject, the priest who heard his last general confession on his death-bed affirmed without hesitation that the servant of God had passed into another life without having lost baptismal innocence.

XIII. HIS DEVOTION TO THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Father Paul had also great devotion towards the Passion of Jesus Christ. One day when he was preaching on that subject, his countenance became so inflamed and radiant, that it seemed as if a seraph were in the pulpit. Another time, in the territory of Oliveto, when he was preaching on the love of Jesus Christ, in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, he remained silent and motionless in an ecstasy for a long time in the sight of all his hearers; this affected them more than the finest discourse could have done.

He was no less devout towards the Blessed Virgin. He had cherished a tender affection for this divine Mother from his infancy, and this tenderness used to be plainly manifested in all his sermons, and to those that went to confession to him. His great delight when he was dying consisted in fixing his eyes on a picture of Blessed Mary that was placed beside him. His last illness took place during the Novena of the Assumption. While he was ill, Father Paul one day said, “If I do not die before the 15th of August, I shall not die now.” He spoke thus because he had a confident hope that if he were to die, our Blessed Lady would grant that his death might happen during this novena, and he was not disappointed of this expectation.

XIV. HIS CONSTANCY IN HIS RESOLUTIONS AND HIS CONFORMITY TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF GOD

But amongst all the admirable virtues of Father Paul, the most striking was his perseverance in goodness. He used also to strive to inculcate it on all with whom he held any intercourse. “Constancy in good resolutions,” said he. Constancy was indeed, as it were, his watchword, and the firm and unwearied energy with which he carried out his resolution of always aiming at the greatest perfection, and of doing what was most pleasing to God, was truly wonderful.

During the whole time this good Father lived with us no one ever perceived the least voluntary fault in him, or the slightest appearance of tepidity. What rendered this most remarkable was, that he preserved this constancy during the severe aridity of mind with which he was tried for the last six years of his life, when no spiritual relief, no ray of consolation, was afforded him to soften the pain of this grievous martyrdom. There are some men in the present day that boast of having very strong minds, because they despise the truths and maxims of the faith, which they call the prejudices of the feeble-minded. With far greater justice may we say that Father Paul was a man of a strong mind, for he courageously persevered in his good resolutions, and unceasingly did he advance in the love of God; he never slackened in his fervor, for he was always striving to attain the greatest sanctity that it is possible for a man to acquire.

One of our Fathers, who was a man of great virtue and discernment, said that if he had to depict Father Paul, he would represent him on a marble pillar with this inscription: *Semper idem* (Always the same). His fervor was always the same, he was always equally solicitous in seeking God and his greater glory; he was ever constant in advancing in the practice of virtue without ever making a retrograde step; and he was at all times careful to overcome and mortify himself without ever indulging in the least bodily relaxation whatsoever. For him there were no theatres, feasts, concerts, sports, games, parties, nor any other worldly amusement. In a word, he was always the same, and his actions were always uniform, full of fervor and heroism. For this reason his countenance was always serene, both in prosperity and adversity, because his only passion was that the good pleasure of God might be done. These words were therefore constantly on his lips, and he wrote on a paper that he kept before him on his table that it might always be in his sight, “The adorable will of God.” This was his favorite and accustomed topic in preaching, and that by which he most inflamed the hearts of his hearers.

He even declared that he did not wish to become more holy than God willed, but he did not therefore cease always to aim at the highest possible degree of holiness. One day when he was conversing with a religious, the latter said to him that he did not wish to do anything more than was necessary just to secure his salvation; at these words Father Paul stood up, and said with emotion, “O my Father, what do you say? We who are religious ought to be saved as saints and men of perfection.” He then brought forward a great many proofs in support of what he had advanced, so that at last the religious said, “Well, I admit that is true, my Father, and I will try to do better in future.

When the servant of God read the Lives of the saints that gave themselves up wholly to God, he shed tears of joy. Nor could Father Paul restrain his tears when a member of our Congregation made his oblation after the year’s novitiate by pronouncing the accustomed vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, of renouncement of every dignity or ecclesiastical benefice, and of perseverance in our mode of life. When he met with any one inclined to lead a pious life, he did all he could to induce him to give himself up wholly to God, and to lead him to entire conformity to the divine will. His letters contain admirable passages to this effect. To one of his sisters, who experienced many tribulations, he wrote, “Think of nothing but of offering yourself unreservedly to God; abandon yourself entirely to his divine will, beg him to dispose of you as he pleases, and be assured that the best devotion of all consists in doing the will of God.” In writing to one of his penitents, he said, “We must suffer much if we would please God. He asks us for courage, not for tenderness.” And when he was conversing with us, it seemed as if he could only speak of striving to please God, and of seeking in all things to do what is most agreeable to him.

XV. HIS DEATH

Such was the life of Father Paul, of which we have here given a slight sketch, and his holy death perfectly corresponded to so virtuous a life. He was Superior of the house of St. Mary Mater Domini, in the territory of Caposele, at the time it took place, and while he was there he often predicted his death even before he became ill. He spoke of nothing but of eternity and Paradise for some months before he died; and he often said to his brothers, “Tell me, what do they do in Paradise?” On one occasion he positively said, “I shall die this year.” And the event verified these words. On the 5th of August, 1753, when he was still in good health, he spoke still more definitely about his death, and said, “I shall die this month. The fever will come on today. And that very day, after dinner, fever attacked him, and the symptoms were so bad that the doctors despaired of his life on the third day. His illness lasted for eleven days, during which he filled all that approached him with admiration, so great was his calmness, patience, and obedience towards the infirmarian when he administered the prescribed remedies to him. He received all without complaint, and asked for nothing.

We cannot relate anything regarding his sentiments in this last illness; for he said very little during the whole time. We have no doubt that he acted thus through humility. He knew that the last words of those that are looked upon as great servants of God are carefully treasured up; he therefore remained in a state of constant and silent recollection, keeping his eyes constantly fixed on the image of Jesus crucified and of the Blessed Virgin. When his brethren begged him to say some words of edification to them, he did not answer, and he even manifested some displeasure at the request, fearing that even the last words that he had uttered during life might be treasured up after his death. One of our Fathers begged him to order the Community, as their Superior, to pray to God to restore his health, for the welfare of the Congregation. He then spoke, and said, “No, it is expedient for me to die.” When I heard that he was so dangerously ill, I sent him an obedience by virtue of my authority as his Rector-Major and Superior, to get well, should such be the good pleasure of God. But when he heard of this command, he raised his hand in silence, thus signifying that his recovery was not the will of God.

He was somewhat tormented by his habitual fears at the beginning of his illness; but after his director had ordered him to have confidence, he became quite calm, and with celestial peace, with eyes fixed on the crucifix, and amidst his weeping brethren, he gave up his pure soul to God at about one o’clock on the 13th of August, 1753, being only forty-seven years of age. We confidently trust that he is now united with his God, whom he strove so much to please, and whom only he sought through his whole life.

When the tolling of the bell announced his death, there was general lamentation among his brethren as well as amongst the strangers that were then in the house. One of his veins was opened before he was buried, and immediately the blood gushed forth. Since his death a great number of the faithful have obtained prodigious favors by means of his relics. These miracles have been carefully registered, and will be published in due time, should it ever please God to cause him to be honored on his altars.

Notes on the Life of Father Januarius Maria SARNELLI of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

ST. ALPHONSUS wrote this Life in 1752. There is every indication that it was destined to be placed at the head of the works of Father Sarnelli, where it is found in the editions with which we are acquainted. The saint was desirous of keeping it anonymous, but it can easily be recognized from what he omits to say, and from the notes that we append. We shall find more than one trait of resemblance between the life of Father Sarnelli and that of St. Alphonsus himself. Father Tannoia moreover informs us that they were united from their youth by a close friendship, and that before they had entirely left the world they gave themselves up together to pious exercises. It is astonishing how Father Sarnelli, who died at the age of forty-two, could have done so much in a life so short and so full of sufferings; but such is the life of the saints. Cardinal Villecourt also assures us, in 1862, that there was question of introducing the cause of his Beatification. (Vie de S. Alph. 1. 2, ch. 15.)—ED.

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF FATHER JANUARIUS MARIA SARNELLI, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

I. HIS BIRTH, INFANCY, AND YOUTH

FATHER JANUARIUS MARIA SARNELLI was born at Naples, on the 12th of September, 1702. His parents were D. Angelus Sarnelli, baron of Ciorani, and D. Catharine Scoppa. They had eight children, of whom six were boys and two were girls. D. Januarius was their fourth son. D. Andrew, who was the next to him in age, is the secular priest that set on foot at his own expense a house of missionaries[14383] in the territory of Ciorani, who were instituted that they might go about in the diocese of

Salerno, and in the neighborhood, laboring for the salvation of the destitute souls in the country.

Father Januarius manifested most pious dispositions from his very infancy; and he was even then remarkable for his angelic modesty, which caused him always to keep his eyes cast down in presence of women, even in that of his sisters and mother. His obedience and submission to his parents were equally exemplary, and when he perceived that he had at all annoyed them, he used instantly to beg for forgiveness, and would kiss their hand or even throw himself at their feet in order to appease them. He evinced the greatest love of mortification from his earliest youth, and even then always abstained from fresh fruit from a spirit of penance. When his parents gave any entertainment, he used at once to leave the house and go to the church of St. Francis Xavier, which was just opposite the house in which they lived. In a word, from all we know regarding his childhood and the whole course of his life, it is easy to infer that he never lost his baptismal innocence.

When he was fourteen, he earnestly begged his father to allow him to leave the world and to enter the Society of Jesus, but as he was so young he would not permit him to do so. From this time, however, Januarius redoubled his fervor in the service of God; he increased the number of his meditations, and led a still more retired life than before. He never conversed with those of his own age, but after he had gone through his studies, his love of solitude caused him to retire into the church, to pray to God before the Blessed Sacrament to enlighten him as to his vocation. After that he would return home, where his conduct towards his parents was a source of great edification to the whole household.

II. HE EMBRACES THE PROFESSION OF THE LAW, THEN THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATE

At an after period, he embraced the profession of the law in obedience to his father, and he succeeded in it in a wonderful manner. Although he was still very young, the management of the revenues and of the rents of the Duke of Cirifalco were soon intrusted to him. But amid these different occupations he never omitted to attend Mass every day, or to make his visit to the Blessed Sacrament and his daily meditation. He had such affection for this exercise, that when he was at liberty he used always to go to the church of St. Francis Xavier, where he would remain in prayer for so long a time, that when any one came to speak to him and he was not at home, the servants, who knew his custom, used generally to reply, “You will be sure to find him if you go to the church of St. Francis Xavier.” When he went to his father’s estate, the only recreation he took was that of shutting himself up in the parish church, where he would spend half the day in meditation. This was asserted by the priest of the place.

He used also to visit the sick in the hospital of the incurables several times a week, and he said that he received so great lights from God when he was there, that these visits gave him constant food for meditation, and he came away full of consolation, and replenished with the Spirit of God. It was also in this place that God made known to him that he was called by him to leave the world. After consulting with his director on the subject, he immediately resolved to do so, quitting the bar and becoming a priest. As soon as he was ordained he gave up all earthly possessions; he distributed all the money that he had laid by amongst the poor, as well as the clothes that he had worn in the world. He gave himself up unreservedly to God from this time, and spent all his time in prayer, study, and the assistance of his neighbor.

In order to live in still greater solitude, and to give up all connection with the world, he retired into the Congregation of the Holy Family,[14384] or, in other words, into the Chinese College, which is established at Naples. During all the time he stayed among these exemplary priests, his constant occupation was either meditation and study, or else going about the neighborhood teaching the Christian doctrine; he also went several times a week to the hospital, where he would spend as many as six hours consecutively, in teaching, consoling, and attending the poor patients.

About this time he became a member of the Congregation of apostolical Missions,[14385] which was set on foot in the archbishopric of Naples for missionary purposes, in which he labored in a most exemplary and efficacious manner from the moment he entered the priesthood.

III. HE ENTERS THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Some years afterwards he heard that a Congregation of missionary priests had been recently formed in the town of Scala, under the direction of Mgr.

Falcoia, the bishop of Castellamare,[14386] and that they were to devote their time to the service of the destitute country-poor, by means of missions and other spiritual exercises; and as he heard that regular observance of rule was strictly attended to among them, and that besides the simple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, a fourth vow and oath of perseverance was taken by its members, he felt a great desire to enter it.

In order, therefore, to satisfy his desire to lead a life of greater perfection, and one in which he would be entirely consecrated to God, and animated by the counsels of Father Manulius, of the Society of Jesus, who died some years ago with a high renown for sanctity, he resolved to enter the new Congregation, and quitted Naples for Scala. He did not, however, lose sight of the Congregation of Apostolical Missions, of which we have already spoken, but continued to support it as far as possible whenever it called upon him for help. He spent the rest of his days in the rising Congregation, in which he edified all his brethren by the constant practice of every virtue, above all, by his mortification, obedience, and charity towards others. It was specially noticed that he was so exact in obeying the sound of the bell, that if he were writing, he arose immediately, and would even leave a letter unfinished. Such was his mode of life while he lived in our house at Scala.

IV. HE IS SENT TO NAPLES

His Superiors afterwards sent him to Naples, both because the air of Scala did not suit his infirm health, and to enable him to continue the great undertakings he had already begun in the capital, especially that of delivering it from women of bad character, as we shall relate more at length hereafter, and it was here that his life terminated.

Although he labored with the most indefatigable zeal in the duties of his own Institute, he did not neglect to assist the brethren of the Congregation of missions from time to time. Although engaged in the laborious enterprise of expelling all abandoned women from Naples, he yet found time to devote himself to the salvation of souls, with such ardor that when Cardinal Spinelli, the present Archbishop of Naples (1752), sent for Father Alphonso de Liguori, the Rector-Major of the said Congregation, to come with his companions, and give missions in the villages of his diocese at his expense, he wished that Father Januarius might be one of the missionaries; and he gave them a permanent abode near the village of St. Iorio, to enable them to go about in the neighborhood more easily. When Father Alphonso was obliged to leave the city on business connected with the affairs of his Congregation, the Cardinal left the whole charge of the missions in the hands of Father Januarius, who thus continued the good work that had been begun by that excellent missionary, Don Matthew Testa, who is at present a most worthy Canon in the capital. Our Father continued to labor in these missions with the utmost success until his blessed death, which took place some years afterwards. This loss not only grieved the very zealous pastor of the town of Naples, but also his own faithful flock; indeed, Januarius was generally regretted, as a great laborer in God's vineyard, and it was everywhere said, and it is still declared, that he alone was worth ten other missionaries.

V. HIS LOVE OF MEDITATION

But before relating his precious death, it will be well to give some brief details regarding his virtues.

He was so fond of meditation, that even when he was a secular, he used to steal time from business to go to pray in some church, but from the time he became a priest, he gave himself up unreservedly to this holy exercise. He used daily to repair to the church of the Cross, for this purpose, where he would shut himself in a little cell behind the sacristy, and remain in prayer from dinner-time until the evening; until he entered the Chinese College, this was his daily practice, except when he went to the hospital.

He received so much celestial light, and felt so holy ardor in meditation, and had such a gift of tears, that he himself owned that he had nearly lost his sight in consequence. The Gospel was the book whence he derived all his light and consolation. “Scarcely had I read a few verses,” said he, “ere I was so enlightened by the divine goodness, that I melted into tears, and the world then appeared to me as nothing but smoke.”

He was several times seen going up and down the cloisters of the church of the Cross and that of the Holy Ghost, with his arms extended, his eyes raised to heaven, and giving vent to such passionate sighs that several persons that saw him thought he was beside himself. When once told that such actions caused him to be taken for a madman, he replied, “That is very true, for he that does not love God is mad, and I do not love him." On another occasion, when a priest asked him why he did such things, the color mounted to his cheeks, and he confessed to his friend that he did so unconsciously.

From this time he would only speak of God, and listen to conversation about him and the salvation of souls, as I can myself testify; and when he heard people talking on indifferent subjects, it pained him so much that he always strove to turn the conversation on spiritual things, or else tried to steal away if he could do so without giving offence.

VI. HIS PRINCIPAL DEVOTIONS

Our Father Januarius Maria had also a great devotion to the Blessed Trinity, in whose honor he celebrated Mass as often as he could, and tried to inspire every one with a devotion to this mystery. He also published a very pious book to propagate this devotion.

He was also specially devout towards the Passion of Jesus Christ. His room was full of crosses and pictures to remind him of the sufferings of the Incarnate God, and he caused a great many to be made, which he distributed, that they might be placed in the different houses and streets. His devotion was no less great towards the holy sacrifice of the Mass, as we can see by his works, and he never omitted to celebrate it for a single day to the end of his days, although he was several times on the point of fainting at the altar through his infirmities. Once he really did so, yet even then he persisted in finishing it as soon as he recovered, although it cost him a great effort, as he declared that all his hopes were centred in this august mystery. He had so deep a conviction of the love which we owe to our Blessed Saviour, that he said that we should be always preaching to souls in these words, "Love Jesus Christ! love Jesus Christ!"

He had also the greatest devotion towards the Blessed Virgin, and especially towards her Immaculate Conception. In order to spread this devotion, he gave away a great quantity of pictures of her as well as scapulars and rosaries, and his great delight during the recreation established in our Congregation after dinner and supper consisted in making rosaries, images, or scapulars. He had also a special love for the holy name of Mary. Once when he was present at a sermon on the Blessed Sacrament, which was delivered by a most zealous preacher, he was quite satisfied with the discourse, yet it grieved him to think that he had not once pronounced the sweet name of Mary. He therefore humbly entreated him never to omit the name of the Blessed Virgin in his sermons for the future, assuring him that it would add greatly to the benefit they already produced. He was really proud of being called by the names Januarius Maria, and could not help mildly showing some dissatisfaction when he was only addressed by the name of Januarius, without the addition of that of Maria. He begged his friends to unite with him in praising the divine Mother in the month of September, as he said she always granted him all the favors that he asked for during this month. Before he went to bed, he was in the habit of winding his rosary round his arm to remind him of his divine Mother during the night, and he told one of his confidential friends, that in his greatest trials and combats with the powers of darkness he was always quite fortified when he held his rosary in his hands. He preached on the glories of Mary wherever he went; he recommended devotion to her in all his sermons, and made every exertion to have novenas celebrated in her honor. He even composed a very devotional little book in honor of the Mother of God, entitled *The Grandeurs of Mary,* which is to be found amongst his spiritual treatises. He had but one cause of regret at the hour of death, namely, that he had been unable to finish his large work on the glories of Mary, of which he had already collected all the materials.

VII. HIS INTERIOR TRIALS

We will here mention that after the great consolations with which God favored him for so many years, he ordained that on a certain feast-day, for which he had prepared with much fervor, his soul should fall into a state of frightful aridity and profound desolation, which lasted throughout the remainder of his life. At his last moments indeed God restored the sense of his grace and presence to his soul, and gave him the favor of dying inflamed with an ardent desire of seeing God.

With the exception of these happy moments, his heart always remained dry and cold, both during meditation and also in his labors for the salvation of souls. It seemed to him as if God had abandoned him, and he left no consolation in any of his spiritual exercises. He also endured the most horrible temptations, especially to infidelity, gluttony, and despair, which caused him to say that he had become quite incapable of occupying himself in the service of God, and that it seemed to him as if these words of the Psalmist were constantly resounding in his ears: *Many say to my soul: There is no salvation for him in his God.*[14387] At times he could scarcely breathe, but even then he would sigh, and say these two words, “My God! my God!”

This Look place even during his apostolical labors for the salvation of his neighbor, by which he certainly shortened his life; for notwithstanding his great zeal for the glory of God, all that he did was performed by a great effort, being destitute of consolation and accompanied with extreme repugnance. He was indeed a man of great strength of mind, and full of ardor to spread the glory of God and to do his holy will. The words which were always on his lips, in his heart, and on his pen, were, “The glory of God and the will of God.” All that he did was done for God only, and if he sometimes felt tempted to vainglory on seeing the success of the works that he undertook for the glory of God, he used earnestly to pray, and get others to pray, that he might be delivered from this secret satisfaction.

During this bitter privation of all celestial consolation, he always maintained a firm confidence in God, and placed all his trust in the efficacy of prayer. He said that amid the torture that he suffered from temptation and desolation his only strength was in these words of Jesus Christ, *If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[14388] He declared that if God had given him no other grace than that of prayer, he should be abundantly satisfied, as there are so many great promises attached to that holy exercise. In fact, this confidence in meditation purchased for him all the favors with which God endowed him. By it he triumphed over the many difficulties that he had to contend with in his immense labors for the glory of God; for he had recourse to his own prayers and to those of others on all such occasions, and he was wont to say that he had a secret by which he could be certain of obtaining even more from God than he asked for.

VIII. HIS SPIRIT OF MORTIFICATION AND OF HUMILITY

To meditation he united mortification of the senses. When he was ordained priest he fasted three days in the week on bread and water; his failing health afterwards compelled him to give up this practice; but even then he always abstained from taking fruit except when his Superiors made him do so through obedience. His mother related to one of his confessors, that when there was any delicacy at dinner he never touched it even when a mere child, and he limited himself to such sparing quantities that what he took hardly sufficed for the support of nature.

Although his health was much impaired, he never omitted to use the discipline. Yet he could only have struck on bones, for his penances, sufferings, and labors had reduced him to a mere skeleton. When he could not do anything else, he bore the stings of insects without endeavoring to escape from them, and they often cause greater pain than hair-cloth and disciplines.

He also had so great a wish to be despised for the love of Jesus Christ, that he made a firm resolution never to justify himself before any one when he might be accused of a fault. He prayed for the love of humiliation in all his Masses; and for this end he said the Collect *ad petendam humilitatem* (for asking humility), as often as he could. He confided to a member of the Congregation that God answered this prayer soon after he began to say it, by sending him a great many opportunities of practising humility, and that he not only granted him grace to bear humiliation with patience, but also with interior gladness. Whenever he received any slight, he thanked God for it, and he confided to the same Father that he was so far from dreading reproach and shame, that he felt an ardent desire to be dragged through the mud in the streets of Naples.

In order to look contemptible, he always wore old and ragged clothes, such as are hawked through the streets by Jews, declaring that he wished to have nothing in common with the world; and when his parents reproached him for thus dishonoring his family by his shabby appearance, he told them not to distress themselves about this, for that if any one asked his name, he would never say that he was the son of the Baron of Sarnelli, but would call himself Father Januarius Maria, as if the former were his Christian name, and the latter his surname.

One day when he entered the church of our Lady of Good Help at Naples to say Mass, the cleric on duty on seeing his ragged attire sent him away most unceremoniously, and would not permit him to celebrate. The Father was afterwards revenged on him, but it was only with the revenge that saints are wont to take on those that injure them; for by his assistance the uncourteous cleric was afterwards enabled to become a priest.

In a word, he lived and died in such poverty, that the priest that assisted at his death procured new clothes in which to bury him, as all his own were worn-out and in rags.

IX. HIS CHARITY TOWARD HIS NEIGHBOR

Our Father Januarius Maria possessed charity towards his neighbor in a heroic degree.

When he was absent from our houses he lived as scantily as he could, ate little, and wore the most wretched clothes, not only to draw down contempt on himself, but also to enable him to have more at his disposal for the poor. He would sometimes even take off his clothes, go without shoes, and deprive himself of the food that was served up to him, that he might bestow them on the indigent. He would often go about Naples collecting the poor together, after which he would conduct them to his own house, where he washed their feet, waited on them, and supplied their wants. To enable him to do this he selected a room midway on the stairs, which was so very dark and out of repair, that one of his friends even saw the mice jumping up and down on his bed. Here, however, he received all the poor that came to him; for had he attempted to do so anywhere else the servants would have sent them away. He did not receive women there, but when any of them wished to speak to him, he went to some church to hear them.

After he entered the Congregation, his greatest happiness consisted in obtaining leave from his Superior to bestow alms on the poor.

He had an incredible affection for the sick in the hospital, and bore any amount of fatigue to assist them in spiritual or temporal necessities. When he was only a secular he went about begging for provisions from his relatives. He collected together as much as he could, after which he arranged it all in baskets with his own hands, and sent it to the hospital. Whenever he went to visit these poor sufferers after he became a priest, he would carry some little luxury in the shape of fruit or sweetmeats or such like, which he concealed under his cloak, and which he had either procured expressly for them, or of which he had deprived himself in order to bestow it on them. He even went the length of having loner earthenware vessels constructed to hold roast meat; and he carried them to the sick by hanging one on each side. He used also to make up and distribute a number of little packets of tobacco among them. He would make their beds for them, and wash their feet; in fact, he never omitted any office of charity that could contribute to their relief.

X. HIS ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

In all works of spiritual mercy and zeal for the salvation of souls, Father Januarius Maria Sarnelli attained to the most heroic degree of perfection. From the time he left the world to devote himself to God in the ecclesiastical state, he was always studying how he could be most usefully engaged for the salvation of souls; and all his thoughts and words were directed to this one point, even during his familiar conversations during recreation. While others were then seeking for relaxation, he looked preoccupied and sad; and if any one asked him what he was thinking about, he replied, “I am thinking what had better be done to assist the souls whom God died to save.” When he spoke of how much the poor require spiritual assistance and priestly instruction, his countenance glowed with zeal, and sometimes even tears of pity would flow from his eyes. He often said that he felt that he had a special call to assist the poor and destitute, and applied these words of the prophet Isaias to himself, *He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor.*[14389] He added, that he believed he should be damned if he did not devote all his energies to this purpose, and that it seemed to him as if these words of St. Paul were addressed to himself, *Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.*[14390]

While he was at Naples, before he entered the Congregation, he determined to join two other priests in giving missions in the provinces of Calabria and Abruzzi, as he thought these places the most destitute of spiritual aid. The patron saint who was most dear to him was St. John Francis Regis on account of his love for the poor. It was this same predilection that caused him to enter the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, for he knew that it was chiefly instituted for the assistance of the destitute country poor.

He was unceasingly engaged in preaching and hearing confessions whenever his health permitted. After he had been nearly worn out by laboring in church the whole morning during missions, he would take only a bit of bread or a few raisins, which he ate in the sacristy and spent the rest of the day in preaching and in the confessional. Once when he was in the territory of Bracigliano, he bore the fatigues of a mission for two months consecutively without having even a Father to aid him; yet he was in the confessional by daybreak. His only refreshment consisted in a cup of chocolate, which he took very late in the day, then he immediately began to preach and hear confessions, so that he alone heard the confessions of about two thousand people. On another mission, which was given at Villa, in the diocese of Cajazzo, where we had then a house, he labored for five weeks, during which he heard confessions until four o'clock in the afternoon, when he took a little refreshment; he then returned to the pulpit, and after he had done preaching he re-entered the confessional, where he remained until ten at night. His zeal carried him even farther than this: it was several times observed that he passed two days without tasting food when he was particularly occupied about the salvation of certain souls.

Yet he was almost always in bad health. When he was advised to try to become well before undergoing such fatigue, he replied, "If I were only to labor when I am well, I should have done little or nothing, for I see that it is God's will that I should always be in suffering;" and when some one rejoined that if this were the case his life would not last much longer, "Well," said he, "and can there be anything more glorious than to wear out one's life for God?" It was therefore by a sort of constant miracle that he was able to labor for the salvation of souls without taking any rest, notwithstanding his infirmities and weakness. When he was composing his admirable works on spiritual subjects, he often wrote until midnight, and only ceased writing when overcome by fatigue. Thus, a lay-brother who waited on him at this time used to reply to those that asked what he was doing, "If he is not writing, he must be ill." He said himself that when he had to go through any special undertaking for the good of souls, he almost always felt more suffering and weakness than usual beforehand; but that his strength increased when the time for action arrived. He often began to preach when he was much fitter for his bed; but he felt much better after the sermon than he had felt before.

He preached with so much zeal, and his sermons produced so much effect, that they often led sinners to give public signs of sorrow, and loudly to ask for a confessor. All that attended his missions said, “Let us go and hear the saint. It is a saint that preaches.” When he was at Naples, he often went to the church of St. Januarius, beyond the city walls, in spite of the great distance, that he might preach to the old men there; and he used afterwards to say to his brethren at Scala that he was quite distressed to have to abandon this work of charity.

He was also very fond of ministering to the wants of poor children, and used to say that nothing would please him more than to have to teach them the Christian doctrine on all the missions. When he was at Naples he sought out with holy diligence the little children suffering from the ring-worm in order to instruct them, to exhort them to go to confession, and to give them some little treat, and he used to do this with so much charity that they were in the habit of calling him their father, he also went about the public squares of Naples seeking for the little street porters, who are generally very ignorant of their faith. He would then conduct them to his own house, where he taught them the Christian doctrine, prepared them for the sacrament of penance, and gave them something to eat. In order to spare all trouble to the servants, he himself prepared their food, and after he had dismissed the poor little creatures, he went to the kitchen and washed what they had used with his own hands.

We may truly say that our Father Januarius Maria was really fond of the sick in the hospital, for he was almost always there. If he arrived in the morning he did not leave it until noon, or it he reached it after dinner he stayed there until it was nearly eight o clock, and then he only quitted it with regret and a wish to be able to remain longer. I cannot express the charity he exercised towards them, or how tenderly he exhorted them to bear their sufferings with patience, instructed them in the things appertaining to God, and in the proper manner of making a good confession, and before he was himself a priest, he procured good priests to hear their confessions. One day he formed a plan of living in the hospital of the incurables that he might be able to assist these poor creatures with more facility, especially at the hour of death; he even obtained a room for this purpose; but an unexpected difficulty arose that prevented him from carrying out his project. His zeal once nearly caused him to lose his life in the hospital of the galleys, where he used also to administer the comforts of religion to the poor criminals.

XI. HIS ENTERPRISE IN REGARD TO PROSTITUTES

It is well known what this same zeal caused him to undertake at Naples, in order to rescue prostitute women from sin. He went to preach in the parish church of St. Matthew on all feast days, in order to convert these unfortunate beings, and it was through his suggestions that the Congregation of the archdiocese undertook to give the spiritual exercises in this parish every year for the same purpose.

In order to relieve the wants of these poor creatures, he gave them all that he received from home, and even did without necessaries himself to have the more to distribute among them; and he gave a great many of them enough for their livelihood in the shape of a monthly allowance, in order to prevent them from selling their honor and their soul; and not satisfied with relieving those that asked for his aid, he sought for them throughout the town. He placed sixteen of them in asylums, and enabled a great many others to get married. We know that he provided for the subsistence of two of these women for two years, and that he afterwards furnished them with means to enable them to keep house.

As his own income was not sufficient for all this, for he spent from five to six hundred ducats a year in such ways, he went about Naples begging alms for these unfortunate people, and that not only in pious establishments, but in private houses; this he nevertheless did with so much repugnance, that he said he sometimes felt as if he would die of shame, for he had not only to bear the great annoyance of having to pay repeated visits, but he had also to endure reproaches and even insults. He confided to a friend that several persons that had formerly esteemed him highly, and welcomed him courteously, changed so completely when he came to them on this errand, that they then quite shunned him, and sent him away with roughness and incivility.

In striving to realize the plan he had formed of compelling all the women of bad character to leave the town, and take up their abode in some remote quarter, he had to endure inexpressible fatigue and persecution. As he saw that these unhappy creatures did immense harm by being scattered about in all parts of the town, he was convinced that the only method of remedying so great an evil would be to compel them to go to live together out of Naples. The whole town, and God above all, know what labors and expense this project occasioned him, for the furtherance of which he composed several books entitled *The Abuses of Prostitution.* This undertaking also drew down on him the opposition and reproaches of his friends; for as they looked upon the thing as impossible, they were always striving to make him abandon it, and ridiculing it with bitterness. But his confidence in God was strong and unshaken, although he was alone and devoid of the help of man, and he managed so well with the first ministers of the king, our protector, that he at last had the satisfaction of seeing his desires fulfilled. A decree of nine articles was sent to the Duke of Giovenazzo, the president of the first chamber of the ministry, on the 4th of May, 1758, by virtue of which sentence of banishment was pronounced against all prostitutes, who were thenceforward to live without the town, in places that were allotted to them. This royal mandate was executed with such rigor, that justice seized on the effects of those that would not quit their houses, and all their furniture was thrown out of the window. From thirty to forty prostitutes were thus expelled from Naples; some of them married, others retired into asylums, and the rest either went to the places assigned for them, or fled elsewhere.[14391]

As for our Father Januarius Maria, he several times ran the risk of being assassinated on account of the share he had in their expulsion, and for this reason his parents did all in their power to prevent him from going on with this good work, as they were afraid some fatal accident might be the result both to himself and to all his family; but he declared that he was ready to suffer all, and that he should even think it a great privilege to die in an undertaking that was so glorious to God.

XII. HIS WRITINGS

It was this same zeal for the salvation of souls that supported him in all the labors that he went through in preparing all his works, in which the choice of subjects and the manner in which he treated them clearly prove how much he would have liked to sanctify the whole world, had that been in his power.

Besides the book of which we have already spoken, on the special abuses that the prostitutes of Naples caused to that town, he published another for all the towns and villages of the kingdom, in which he proves that women of bad character are not tolerated in any one of them or in any of the smaller towns, and he sent a copy of this work to all the bishops in the kingdom.

After this he published a book called *The World Sanctified.* In some respects we may say that this work really has sanctified the world, for it has been the means of extensive good; it has been in almost every one's hands, and spread through several kingdoms as well as that of Naples.

He also put forth a whole work against blasphemy, as he was eager to extirpate this accursed vice from the kingdom, where it is so deeply rooted.

He published, in a work called *The World Reformed,* a treatise on the respect due to churches, in which the inhabitants of the kingdom are also most wanting.

I will now give a list of several other works which he published to the great profit of souls: a treatise on the obligation of parents to bring up their children properly; another to serve as a guide to souls in the paths of spirituality, entitled *Discernment of Spirits; The Ecclesiastic Sanctified,* which was written for priests; *An Easy Method for all the Exercises of the Missions*, which is most useful for missionaries.

The Enlightened Christian cost him the greatest labor, as he himself owned, for he composed it amid all the sufferings of the malady of which he died. To this must be added *The Desolate Soul,* for the comfort of souls in desolation of spirit; and *The Enlightened Soul,* which contains some most devotional meditations.

He also published several other little works which are not mentioned here. Death prevented him from finishing several others, which he had already begun to have printed, such as a treatise to excite compassion for the souls in purgatory; another on the methods of appeasing God's anger in public calamities; a selection of pious reflections for every day in the year; a collection of sermons on the Blessed Virgin for every Saturday throughout the year and for all novenas;[14392] and a book of instructions on faith and morals.

Thus all his works were destined to promote the salvation of souls, whom he desired, as he said, to assist even after his death. When he was on the point of death, he said to Canon Sersale, "Canon, I wish to go on preaching until the judgment-day."[14393]

XIII. HIS LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH

We must now give an account of his last illness and of his happy end. Januarius Maria labored for many years, as we have already seen, although he was always ill and oppressed with fever. His last mission was given at Posilipo, during which his sufferings were very great, as he was quite worn out by fatigue and pain. Thence he retired to St. Agnello, where his maladies increased so much that he was obliged to give up all his labors, and was no longer able even to say Mass; this was viewed by all as a sign that his death was at hand, for he had never before abstained from celebrating it. One day he made the most surprising efforts to say it, but he could not succeed, and fainted in the attempt. As the malady grew worse and worse, he went to his brother's house at Naples, where he was ill for a month.

Although his sufferings and weakness continued daily to increase, he never abandoned meditation, and as his interior trials were as great as ever, he tried to obtain consolation by conversing with the servants of God that came to visit him. The doctors advised him to try the air called the *saving* air, but he was too weak to be moved.

About a fortnight before his death he took to his bed, whence he never rose again. From this time, however, God freed him from the heavy cross of spiritual desolation, and he began to enjoy the greatest peace; every disquieting thought was banished from his mind, and he felt nothing but an ardent desire to be united to God in the mansions of the blessed. Once, when a servant of his father's said that he hoped God would restore his health, he replied, “Oh, if I could exclaim aloud now, my sole cry would be that my only consolation is to think that I am going to die, and you speak to me of recovery!”

He also showed now the extent of his patience and charity, for amid the almost insupportable pains he endured, which caused him to stand in need of constant attendance, he felt the greatest compassion for those that waited on him; and when he required anything he said to the brother whom the Superior of the Congregation had sent to assist him, “Brother, have patience with me for the love of Jesus Christ, for I shall not live much longer.”

At this time he made his last will, and as he wished all he had to be employed in alms and other good works, he disposed of all his possessions in favor of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. The sweetmeats that were given for his use he sent to the hospital, to be distributed among the sick. He had also a little tobacco left, and he wished that it should be put up in small packages, to be given to these poor people. Before dying he gave many alms. It was known that his brother had given a certain sum for his funeral and for the celebration of Masses after his death, and as the confessor of the conservatory at Castellamare called to see him, he gave him, to help his establishment, twenty ducats of the aforesaid sum, saying that the rest was sufficient to pay the expenses of his interment.

One day he said to his eldest brother, who did a great deal for him during his life and at his death, “Brother, the time is at hand when I hope I shall be able to make you a fitting return for all that you have done for me.”

At this same period the devil appeared to him under the form of an abbé, and tempted him to vainglory, saying, “Don Januarius, your illness has caused general lamentation throughout Naples, on account of the loss that would be sustained by the death of so great a man.” Upon this the dying man instantly pronounced the names of Jesus and Mary, and the evil spirit disappeared and returned no more.

One day when Canon Sersale came to visit him, he said that he hoped he might get well. “Dear Canon,” he replied, “I was tormented by scruples for a long time, but thanks be to God, I am now free from them I shall therefore die tranquilly and without any disquiet All that I have done has been done from a pure intention of pleasing God. The sacrifice is now complete; do not then speak to me any more of living, for I wish for no other life than the possession of my God.”

During his last days he was always repeating devout aspirations; sometimes they were addressed to the Blessed Trinity, when he would say, *Benedicta sit sancta Trinitas et individua unitas; confitebimur ei, quia fecit nobiscum misericordiam suam;* sometimes either to our Blessed Saviour or his adorable Mother, and he would kiss and embrace their images from time to time. Just before his death he addressed the following affecting words to God, which were carefully noted down by the lay-brother who attended him: “Father, behold the time has come for me to depart hence and to go to my Creator and my Father. O Lord, I sigh for the moment when I shall see Thee face to face, should such be Thy good pleasure; for I wish neither for death nor for life. I wish only for what Thou wiliest. Thou knowest that all my actions and all my thoughts have been only for Thy greater glory.” Words such as these in the mouth of a dying man, on the point of appearing before God, are sufficient to manifest what must have been the innocence of his life.

On the morning of the day he died, he said to the brother that waited on him, “Brother, go and get out my oldest clothes and bury me in them, for I do not wish anything to be wasted.”

The doctor came to see him at about eight o’clock in the morning of the same day; and when he was going away, he said that he would see him again in the course of the day. “I shall gently enter into my agony to-day,” he answered. He told the brother not to forget to make him say the rosary, “For,” said he, “‘I wish to die whilst I am reciting it.” And so it was, for when he had reached the third decade that same day he became very weak, and the damp perspiration of death began to flow. “I feel the chill of death,” said he to the brother; upon which he instantly called for a priest, who began to suggest pious affections to him; but the dying man interrupted him, and asked him to allow him to speak himself; and he then began to speak to God in the most tender manner; but it was almost impossible to hear what he said, for his speech was well-nigh gone. Just as he entered into his agony, the two brothers of the Congregation who assisted him at this last hour asked for his blessing; and he gently raised his hand and blessed them. His agony was peaceful, and lasted little more than half an hour; his rosary was around his arm all along, and he clasped the crucifix in his hands, kissing it from time to time. The priest gave him absolution during this interval, after which he calmly expired, at ten o’clock on Thursday morning, June 30th, 1744, aged forty-two. His happy death took place the day before the eve of the feast of the Visitation; thus the wish he had often expressed of dying during a novena to the Blessed Virgin was gratified.

As soon as he was dead his countenance suddenly became most pleasing and beautiful, and a smile overspread his lips; his body exhaled so sweet an odor, that it scented the room where he died for a long time, and it was not only perceived by those that assisted at his death, but also by the strangers that came to see his corpse. His brother, D. Dominic Sarnelli, said that he could not bear to leave the room, as he experienced the greatest spiritual consolation when in it. His body was conveyed to the Church of our Lady of Good Help, accompanied by the brothers of the Congregation of Apostolical Missions in the archdiocese of Naples, who all followed him to the church, being filled with the greatest sorrow for his death. When the body arrived there, a great number of people crowded round it, weeping, and exclaiming, “Alas, for the saint is dead!” and this cry was repeated throughout the neighborhood. They then began to tear up his clothes, and every one tried to carry away as much of them as possible; he would soon have been stripped of everything, had not some restraint been put upon this pious eagerness.

His body was exposed for forty-eight hours, after which a great many priests and other persons testify that it remained quite flexible, and did not emit the least unpleasant odor, and that bright blood flowed from incisions that were then made in his arm and head. His relics were sought for in all directions, and the renown of his sanctity spread far and wide. Persons came to visit the house where he died through devotion, and exclaimed with many tears, “O the well-beloved saint of Jesus Christ! he is not prized sufficiently!”

In consequence of this reputation for sanctity, several persons recommended themselves to God through the merits of Father Januarius Maria, and received signal graces thereby, which I must however pass over in silence, that I may not exceed the narrow limits allotted to me. I trust, however, that the time will come when these interesting facts may be collected by others, and that a more detailed Life of this great servant of God may one day be given to the world.

Notes on the Life of VITUS Curzius, Lay-Brother of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

I. HIS CONDUCT IN THE WORLD AND HIS VOCATION

WE add here to the life of Father Januarius Maria Sarnelli, a short biographical notice of Brother Vitus Curzius, who lived in the Congregation and was for a long time his companion.[14394] He was born at Aquaviva, in the diocese of Bari, of most respectable parents, in the year 1706. One of his brothers was a medical man, and the other was a Canon in the college of his native town.

In order to show the extent of God's goodness to this young man, we must mention that he was exceedingly passionate until he was twenty-six years of age. He was so alive to the least injury that he fought several duels, in which he nearly lost his life. On one occasion, amongst others, he felt so offended at a doctor that he shot him Another time he had the boldness to fire at a military officer; but God did not permit him to have the misfortune of hitting his mark.

After he left Procida, where he had been the treasurer of the Marquis of Vasto, he went to Naples and worked in the house of D. Cæsar Sportelli, who was the Marquis's agent and his own intimate friend. Don Cæsar had at this time resolved to leave the world; this he soon afterwards did by entering the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, where he died in the odor of sanctity in 1749.[14395] His tomb was opened four months after his death, when it was found that his body was quite flexible, and blood issued from an incision that was made in his foot.

Now one day when he was conversing with Vitus Curzius, he began to speak to him about the new Congregation, which had been begun at Scala under the title of that of the Most Holy Redeemer, through the pious exertions of Mgr. Falcoia,[14396] who was Father Cæsar's director. Vitus had scarcely heard the particulars of it before he entreated to be admitted into it as a lay-brother, as he felt sure that God called him thither. He had gained this certainty regarding his vocation to the new Institute in the following manner: “In a dream,” said he, “ I saw a number of priests ascending a high mountain; I tried to follow them, but all my efforts were in vain; I fell backwards after each step, or if I succeeded in getting over a little ground, I soon lost all that I had gained. Stupefied and discouraged at these repeated failures, I remained at the foot of the mountain in sorrow, when one of these priests came up to me, and held out his hand to me. By this assistance I was enabled to reach the summit as easily as the others had done.” One day when he was out walking with Father Sportelli, after this dream had occurred, he met one of the Fathers of the Congregation, and although he had never seen him before, he pointed him out to his companion, Father Sportelli, saying, “There is the priest who held out his hand to me.”[14397]

II. HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE CONGREGATION

He presented himself for approval and was accepted, but he was told to stay at Naples until the Superior at Scala should send for him. He had indeed some time to wait, and this delay as to his definite reception among us pained him greatly, and he longed and sighed for the hour of deliverance from this evil world. One day, however, he went to Father Sportelli in a transport of joy, for, said he, “I have heard a voice that said, ‘Get ready to go, for you must soon set out.’ ” Indeed, the Congregation had only been established eight days, when he was sent for to Scala.

The first day on which he arrived he was ordered to serve at dinner. As his greatest failing was a horror of humiliation, the devil represented to him that such an office was absurd and ignominious. “What,” whispered the evil one, “are you to serve at dinner just as if you were a mere servant?” This temptation beset him so much that he felt inclined to be revenged on him that had ventured to give him such an office. However, as he saw that a man of rank who also aspired to be received among us had the office of server, his good angel suggested to him, “Can you not do what he can do?” He thus conquered his repugnance, and began to serve quite calmly.

III. HIS LOVE OF MEDITATION

From this time he became a special child of grace, and celestial consolations abounded in his heart. He was so enlightened during meditation, especially on the mysteries of the birth and Passion of Christ, and his feelings were so sensibly affected that he could not help bursting into tears, and sobbing to such a degree that it seemed as if the violence of his love for God would really suffocate him. This took place in a special manner when he received holy Communion; and this he did almost every day. I often witnessed it myself, and had to wait some time before he could receive the sacred Host. His tears and sighs also lasted for a good while after he had communicated. This plenitude of divine grace lasted for nearly a year.

As he had then made great progress in virtue, God deprived him of this sensible fervor that he might attain a more perfect kind of meditation, and imperceptibly brought him to a state of contemplation. He however himself began to fear that God had abandoned him. “What has come over me?” said he; “I cannot meditate. It is very true that I wish to be united to God, but if I had to give an account of what I have been thinking about I could not do so, and I should not even be able to tell how the time had been spent.” Enlightened, however, by the graces conveyed in this the sublimest kind of prayer, he realized the vanity of laboring for any temporal possession, since all on earth is as smoke, which passeth away. He ceased to think of his home and of the friends of his youth, and only thought of how he might become closely united to his God. He always kept his eyes cast down to the ground, and his very appearance showed the recollectedness of his soul.

IV. HIS MORTIFICATION AND HUMILITY

He became indeed a model of humility and mortification, and he that had formerly been so susceptible and proud, and that had such an aversion to every menial office, did not now disdain publicly to carry the manure to the garden, or to draw water for the Community. This last office was by no means an easy one, for the well was at a distance from the house, and every time he went there he had to go up the steep mount of Scala with a heavy pitcher in his hand; yet when he arrived at our house he used to kneel down before the large crucifix at the entrance before he had deposited his burden that he might offer up the fatigue it cost him to God.

He always went thither with his head bare, in winter as well as in summer, through reverence for the presence of God, unless he was expressly forbidden to do so. He never went near a fire in winter. He was also for some time in the habit of taking off his shoes and stockings when he went to dig in the garden, and he used to stand working there with his feet buried in the clay; but when the Superiors heard of this they forbade him to do so again.

One day the bishop of Scala told him to empty out all the water in a large cistern near his palace. As there was a great quantity of water, his nature revolted at such a laborious undertaking, but he courageously pursued it to the end. He was heard repeating to himself. ‘‘You have made a great fuss, and you may be as tired as you please, but you must do it all the same, Brother Vitus.”

Another time he was ordered to help to saw some boards. As he had never done anything of the kind before, he was quite exhausted with this laborious office. After he had borne the greatest fatigue for two hours, the workman that was sawing with him said in a tone of extreme compassion, “Do rest a little, Brother Vitus.” “No, no,” he courageously replied; “we must finish what obedience has put before us.”

Another time, when he was cleaning out the dirtiest part of the house, a priest said in passing, “Bah! what an offensive smell there is here. Brother Vitus!” “O how much worse it smells in hell!” he replied.

It so happened that once for nearly a whole winter it was forgotten to give him any warm clothing, and he went about in his summer things without saying a word, although our house at Ciorani is so cold. All the time he was at Iliceto, where there is another of our houses, he slept on a board, with nothing but a trunk for a pillow. In order to mortify himself still more, he wanted to suck the sore of an old man, but he was forbidden to do so.

He wore a sharp-pointed iron girdle about two palms in length. He also took the discipline to blood with such frequency and violence, that he thereby wounded a nerve in his leg, from which he suffered for the rest of his life.

His dinner often consisted in nothing but a little soup and bread, for he divided the different portions, and that was all he set aside for himself. As he was at first very inexperienced in all culinary matters, he one day made some unleavened bread, which soon became as hard as lead, and which it was impossible to set before the Community. However, he had the patience to go on eating it day by day until it was all eaten. He fasted on bread and water on Saturdays, in honor of our Blessed Mother Mary, and he did this even during mission time, although our lay-brothers have then to go through immense fatigue.

He never made excuses when reproved. One day our Father Minister told him not to put so much fruit on the table, as he thought it superfluous. As Vitus had acted in obedience to the Rector, he went on putting the same quantity. The Minister was annoyed at this, and scolded him and gave him several mortifications for his disobedience; but he never said a word in extenuation of what he had done. At last the Father Minister heard of the Superior's wishes; and while he ceased to reprove him, he admired his patience in bearing reprimands that he had never merited.

Another time when the Superior could not find an important manuscript that one of our Fathers had accidentally burnt, he asked Brother Vitus if he knew what had become of it, and he vaguely replied that it must have been burnt. As this answer gave cause to suspect that he was guilty of its destruction, he received a severe reproof, which he bore in patient silence, to shelter the Father who really had destroyed it.

V. HIS CHARITY TOWARD HIS NEIGHOR

His love for his neighbor was truly admirable. As soon as he resolved to join us, he distributed all that he had among the poor.

His charity also towards the sick was inexpressibly great, and he not only exercised it towards the members of the Congregation, but even towards strangers. The attention that Brother Vitus paid to a secular priest who was taken ill in our house at Ciorani, proves the extent of his charity. This priest was suffering from a most offensive and troublesome malady, and it lasted for twenty days; yet Brother Vitus never left him night or day, and as he was too weak to move, Vitus had to lift him about and do everything he required. Holy Week occurred at this time, yet he cheerfully denied himself the gratification of being present at the devotions of Holy Thursday, that he might not leave his dear invalid.

When he was at Scala he sometimes had to go to Amalfi to buy provisions for the use of the Community. When he returned he was at liberty to get the porters to carry them up the mountain, for it is very steep; but if he saw that they were overcome by the weight of their burden and by the difficulty of the ascent, he would say, “Now you must rest, and I will help you.” And he would take their loads from them, and carry them up the mountain himself, although they often weighed more than two hundred pounds. One day when one of the Fathers of the Congregation went to Scala, he heard of this extraordinary act of charity from two porters whom he met, who began to inquire of him about Brother Vitus. When he told them that he was no more, they sorrowfully exclaimed, “Oh what a saint Brother Vitus was! When he gave us goods to carry, he paid us for doing it, and then carried them himself.”

When he was at Scala, he felt such compassion for the sufferings of Father Sarnelli, who was ill at the time, that he took his own mattress and added it to his, to try and make him more comfortable, although he was in consequence obliged to lie on the boards himself.

VI. HIS OBEDIENCE AND HIS DEATH

His favorite virtue was that of obedience, and in it consists the essence of religious life. He used to say that a lay-brother should resemble the bell that is fastened round the neck of a cow, which never rings unless it moves. “So a brother,” he would add, “ought never to stir to do anything unless prompted to do so by holy obedience.”

Indeed he was, as it were, a martyr to this virtue; for while he was at our house at Iliceto, the Superior sent him to a distant village to pass the night. The holy brother asked for admittance in a monastery in this neighborhood, but they refused to receive him. He was therefore obliged to sleep in the open air, and that is a most unhealthy place, and as the weather was also very unfavorable at the time, it brought on the illness of which he died. It came on so suddenly, and with such violence, that he was unable to return to St. Mary’s, and had to go to bed at the house of a charitable priest at the very entrance of Iliceto.

He bore the sufferings of a tedious illness with admirable patience, and never complained of anything. He never objected to any remedy, and punctually obeyed the doctor’s orders. When he was near death, his confessor asked him whether he would rather live or die. “I only wish what

God wishes," he replied; "but if I might make a choice, I should prefer to die, that I might be free from all danger of offending God, and that I might see him and be with him in heaven, if, as I trust, he in his mercy has vouchsafed me the grace of salvation." Before the holy Viaticum was administered to him he was asked if he would like to go to confession, but he answered that by God's grace he had nothing more to mention, and he died in a state of heavenly peace. After his death the inhabitants of the place said to one another, "A saint is dead," and they were eager to have relics of him. The crowd that followed his corpse to our church showed the veneration of the faithful towards him.

There are many more wonderful things that might be related of this holy brother, but I have not space to mention them.[14398]

Various Smaller Works

Sermon on the Rosary

ADDITION TO THE ABRIDGED SERMONS FOR SUNDAYS

THE pious custom of reciting the Rosary has long been introduced into all cities and country-places; the faithful love to gain the treasure of the innumerable indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiff to persons who are associated with the confraternity of the Rosary, and who recite it with devotion. Hence the parish priests have expressed the desire to have, besides the sermon proper to the Sunday of the year, a sermon on the holy Rosary for the first Sunday of October, the day on which the Church celebrates the feast. Wishing to acquiesce in so pious a desire, we have judged it advisable to add to the present work the following sermon.[14399]

SERMON FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY OF OCTOBER, ON THE ROSARY

IN the thirteenth century of our salvation, St. Dominic was greatly afflicted, seeing the deplorable state in which the Christian religion was on account of the vices and heresies which filled Germany and France, and which, passing through Italy, had penetrated as far as Rome itself. Desirous of opposing a barrier to such a flood of errors and sins, he had recourse to the august Mother of God, who approved of his zealous intentions, and suggested to him as a remedy for so great an evil the devotion of the Rosary. The saint at once began to preach this devotion, and he did so with so much fruit that large numbers of people, even entire cities, were seen thoroughly to reform. Conversions were so astonishing and so universal, that, as the Journal of the Dominicans attests, when the people heard of the members of any family leading bad lives, they usually said that they either did not recite the Rosary or they recited it badly.

Now in order that we may profit by this devotion and know how to recite the Rosary, the present sermon will be divided into two parts. In the first part, we shall see how the Rosary should be recited in order that it may be meritorious; in the second, what we must do in order that it may be profitable to us.

1. HOW THE ROSARY SHOULD BE RECITED IN ORDER THAT IT MAY BE MERITORIUS

The Rosary is a prayer. Prayer is defined by St. John Damascene: “An elevation of the mind to God.”[14400] A raising or elevation of the mind to God, without which there is no true prayer. It is divided into mental prayer and vocal prayer: mental prayer consists wholly in the interior exercise of the mind; vocal prayer consists in praising God and praying to him with the tongue and the mind. If one speaks to God only with the tongue, this would be a prayer without fruit and without merit, like that of a parrot which articulates words without knowing what it says, according to the explanation given by St. Bonaventure: “Whoever prays only with the voice, without any application of the mind, without knowing what he says, who does not see that he is like a parrot?”[14401]

The elevation of the mind required in the recitation of the Rosary should be a pious meditation on the joyous, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries; hence, while we are reciting with the voice the “Our Fathers” and the “Hail Marys” which compose the Rosary, we should consider with our thoughts the mystery that belongs to each decade.

It is true that a vocal prayer, like the Rosary, maybe meritorious without the application of the mind to the consideration of the designated mysteries; it is sufficient that one reflects either on the presence of God, his omnipotence, his mercy, or some of his other perfections; either on the temporal or eternal chastisements which one merits, or on other subjects that refer to God; but if one recites the Rosary with such thoughts, and not while considering its mysteries, one does not gain the indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiff, as Benedict XIII. has expressly declared.

We mistake, then, if we think that we have some merit when in reciting the Rosary we permit ourselves to listen to those that speak, to look at what is done, to interrupt ourselves often, in order to speak of what we see or to give answers to questions put to us. We should then deserve the reproach of the Lord: *This people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.*[14402] And would to God that we gave ourselves up merely to distractions without going so far as to meditate revenge, harbor feelings of hatred, or occupy ourselves with wicked thoughts; for then, very far from acquiring merit, we should make ourselves worthy of eternal chastisements!

If therefore we wish to find in the devotion of the Rosary a sure support in the hope that we have of saving our souls by the means of it, it should produce in us true amendment, a true reform of our lives, according to what the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, expects of us. But we shall never obtain this fruit, if in the recitation of the Rosary there is not united to our voice a pious meditation on these mysteries, which place before our eyes the loving inventions, the labors, the humiliations, and the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

There are some that deceive themselves still more: they are those that imagine that in carrying with them the Rosary they find themselves fortified with a formidable arm against the devil, and thus promise themselves a good death; they rely on the recital of antiquated examples of sinners, who, after a life full of crimes, because they recited and carried with them the Rosary, obtained through the intercession of Mary the grace of dying repentant. But these examples, if true, are miraculous; and I do not think that any one among you loves his soul so little that he wishes to save it only by a miracle. What is certain is that one often sees sinners die without the sacraments and without any sign of contrition, although they had carried about with them the Rosary and recited it as you do. Should not these examples, which are so frequent, fill you with terror? and as to the miraculous examples, which are very rare, do they take from you all fear of dying a bad death, and give you the assurance that you will die well? If I must say to you what I think, I should say: As for those Christians that live without the fear of God, and that rest their hope of salvation on the Rosary, which they recite through habit and without the least devotion, I very much fear that at their death the devil may frighten them with this very Rosary by representing to them the little devotion that they have had in the manner of reciting it, and the life that they have led,—a life altogether contrary to the mysteries that they should have honored and to the end for which the Rosary was established by the Blessed Virgin.

Ah! my dear brethren, if you wish to be saved through the protection of Mary, it is fitting that you should make a better use of the devotions instituted in her honor; for we know that by the devotions badly performed and undertaken in order to live without the fear of the justice of God, far from obtaining the protection of the Blessed Virgin, we only provoke her dislike.

2. WHAT WE MUST DO IN ORDER THAT THE ROSARY MAY BE PROFITABLE TO US

It is not sufficient for him who recites the Rosary to have a pure heart or a good intention: he must also have a pure tongue. The devotion of the Rosary flourished in all the houses; but which is the house in which it flourished with the good odor with which the holy king David desired his prayer to be embalmed so that it might be agreeable to God? Lord, he said, may my prayer rise as incense in Thy presence: *Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight.*[14403] I fear that your Rosaries are like the flowers of Egypt, of which Pliny says that they are without odor: as a flower without odor is hardly agreeable or even disagreeable, so also the roses—I mean the Rosaries that you offer to Mary—are hardly agreeable and even disagreeable to Mary, because they are odorless.

The sad cause of this misfortune may be traced to the unbecoming words that so often come forth from your mouth: they take away the good odor of your prayers, because they cannot please the Mother of God. Thus there are some that cannot speak ten words without interlarding them with some indecent expression; others when they become angry utter very gross language; many can hardly bring forward some pleasantry without saying an immodest word. This detestable habit, besides the evil that it inflicts directly upon souls, does great injury to the exercises of piety, and especially to the Rosary; for the Blessed Virgin could not accept these Rosaries which are presented to her with tongues that are in so bad a state.

It must not be understood that I here speak of those filthy words that spread a pestilential odor of lasciviousness, and that the devil makes us regard as permissible in order to enliven the company,—words that are a cause of scandal by exciting in the mind and heart bad thoughts and impure affections: I mean those that contain injurious reproaches, express rude, indecent, and shameful things. How many times do we not see people who, irritated on account of vain or unreasonable things, vomit forth a torrent of injuries and intemperate discourses! How many times, incensed against their children, their workmen, their servants, do they wish them a thousand evils, and threaten them in coarse and outrageous terms! It often happens that others who hear this begin to speak in the same way. How can one believe that the Rosary, when we recite it with a tongue thus sullied, can be agreeable to the Mother of purity? If one offered a lady flowers or fruits deposited in an unclean basket or vessel, instead of being pleased with such a present, she would be offended by it; how then can one imagine that the Blessed Virgin wishes to accept the prayers and the Rosaries that are offered to her on a tongue accustomed to utter unclean and shameful words?

Nicephorus, in his history of the Church, relates that there came forth from the body of St. Glyceria a liquid which, gathered in a vessel of bronze, produced marvellous effects, especially for the healing of the sick. The bishop then thought it fit, out of respect, to substitute a vessel of silver for the vessel of bronze; but at that very moment the precious liquid ceased to flow. After many penances and prayers it was learnt by revelation that this change was due to the fact that the vessel of silver had been before used for profane uses, that rendered it unfit; the vessel was then removed and the miracle continued its course.

St. Jerome says that lips employed in praising, praying, and blessing the Lord should never be sullied by any sin: “It is wrong that those lips with which you confess, ask, and bless the Lord should be polluted by the stain of any sin.”[14404] Now if it is such an indignity to sully one’s tongue for a bad purpose, what great evil will it not be to sully it at every moment by so many indecent, shameful, and immodest words! And could one still maintain that the Blessed Virgin would regard as agreeable the Rosary recited by such a tongue?

There are people who say that they make no scruple of using indecent words, that these words are after all not blasphemies, which deserve to be earnestly condemned, but that they are venial faults, which of themselves do not take away the merit of prayer. However, we answer that they are the flies which the Holy Ghost says spoil the perfume of delicious ointment: *Dying flies spoil the sweetness of the ointment.*[14405] Those venial sins are the cause why the fervor of charity and consequently devotion are lost: so that the Rosary has not the merit which renders it dear to Mary, nor so efficacious as to procure the graces which he always obtains who recites it devoutly. Although immodest words are not blasphemies, yet they are very grave venial faults that cause the soul very great injury. Hence St. John

Chrysostom exhorts all the faithful to refrain from them, and says that he cannot conceive how a defiled tongue can offer prayer to God: “Do not suffer the tongue to be defiled; for in what manner will it pray for thee?”

Venial sin diminishes the fervor of charity. Charity, says St. Paul, makes us do great things with promptness and perfection; it renders us patient, and makes us bear every pain; it makes us rejoice at the good, and that we never rejoice at the evil that befalls others; it prevents us from acting wrongly; it makes us detest pride and all ambition, that we do not cling to self-interest, that we do not judge ill of any one, that we love the truth, that we treat every one with meekness and humility: *Charity is patient, is kind: Charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up. Is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*[14406] All those that are in the state of grace possess charity; but venial sin is particularly that which is voluntary, frequent, habitual, as are immodest words which we utter every day; they are, therefore, the cause why prayers are recited without merit, because the want of fervor in charity always renders them poorer in virtue, more imperfect, colder, and consequently less agreeable in the sight of God and the Blessed Virgin. Hence St. James rightly says that he who does not wish to control his tongue has not true devotion, but a vain devotion, only the appearance of it: *And if any man think himself to be a religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.*[14407]

If then you wish that the recitation of the Rosary should be meritorious and profitable to your souls, besides the possession of purity of heart, it will be necessary for you to employ a pure tongue and always to consider the great evil which is caused by the contrary vice; for scandal, bad example, given to your children and to others by your immodest or unbecoming words, induce them to contract from their tender youth the habit of always using such words, according to what the Holy Ghost says: *Their children also and grandchildren, as their fathers did, so do they unto this day.*[14408] Consequently, you will have to render an account before the tribunal of God, and you will be justly punished.

We must, therefore, abstain from this vice in order to avoid scandal and to render the recitation of the Rosary meritorious. Consider, moreover, that the merit and profit will yet be greater if we recite the Rosary with devotion in the company of members of the family or of other persons, and this because of the good example that results therefrom, and because the Lord is pleased to find himself in the midst of those that unite to glorify his name, as he has himself declared: *For where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them.*[14409]

Let us add, that the Rosary may be profitable, not only to our souls, but also to the souls of the dead, to whom, says the Blessed Alanus, God sends his mercy through this means: “The Blessed Trinity sends to the dead mercy through the psalter of Mary, the Mother of mercy.”[14410] It is most pleasing to God if we procure relief to these suffering souls; it is a holy and salutary act: *It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead.*[14411] And the Queen of heaven has declared herself their affectionate Mother, as she has revealed to St. Bridgett: “I am the Mother of all that are in purgatory.”[14412] They are even under her authority, says St. Bernardine of Sienna: “The Blessed Virgin has dominion in the kingdom of purgatory.”[14413]

We should, therefore, not neglect so pious an exercise as is the recitation of the Rosary; we should try to recite it with a pure heart and a pure tongue in the company of the family and of other persons. If we thus recite it with a true devotion, it will be of very great profit for the salvation of our souls and for the solace of the souls of the dead.

Sermon on the Passion of Jesus Christ.[14414]

ALAS, what melancholy signs strike me in this temple! I see the dark appearance, I notice the despoiled altars; I hear the melancholy chant! Ah! I understand: these are signs of the grief that the Church feels, lamenting the death of Jesus her Spouse. It is therefore just that on this day we unite our tears to those of the Church, who is our Mother, and that we devote ourselves to the consideration of the death of our God, who after a life of pain wished to die for us on an infamous gibbet, in an abyss of shame and suffering.

Come, O holy cross! come and show thyself to this people; thou art the fortunate Ark in which one can find salvation in the midst of the shipwreck of this world; thou art the wonderful Rod that gives to men the strength to be able to become from monsters of iniquity flourishing rods of holy virtues; thou art the brazen Serpent at the sight of which sinners, poisoned by sin, may recover health; thou art the predestined and resplendent Tree chosen among thousands to sustain the members of the Redeemer; and thou art, finally, the sorrowful Altar on which the Saviour of the world wished to be immolated for our salvation. Give me the strength and all the help that I need to represent to these faithful souls the ignominies, the sufferings, and the anguish which Jesus Christ endured when upon thee he left this world.

The whole life of Jesus Christ was full of sufferings and ignominies; but there are especially three sad scenes of his pains in which he gave us the greatest marks of his love for us: the first is the GARDEN OF OLIVES; the second, the PRETORIUM; the third, CALVARY.

The first of these scenes in which the Passion of our Redeemer began was hidden from the eyes of men, but not from the eyes of God and of the angels.

FIRST SCENE: THE GARDEN OF OLIVES

Having on Thursday evening washed the feet of his disciples after giving himself to us in the sacrament of the altar as a pledge of his tender love for us, our amiable Saviour arrived at the garden about midnight, and prostrating himself on the ground, he began to pray Then he was assailed by great fear, great repugnance, and great sadness.

He began then to feel great fear of the death and of the pains which he was to suffer: *He began to fear.*[14415] But how? did he not offer himself voluntarily to undergo these torments? *He was offered because it was His own will.*[14416] Did he not ardently desire this time of his Passion according to what he had said to his disciples a little while before: *With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer.*[14417] How, after this, was he seized with so great a fear of death that he went so far as to ask his Father to be delivered from it: *My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me?*[14418] Ah! certainly our good Lord wished to die for us, and thus to show us the love that he bore us; but in order that the men might understand what cruel anguish and what deluge of evils he was going to undergo in his Passion, he allowed so horrible a fear to come over him: *He began to fear.*

And to be heavy: He also began to feel great repugnance at the sight of the pains that had been prepared for him. When one feels repugnance, even delightful things become painful. Hence with such a repugnance what punishment for the heart of Jesus, what horrible sight then presented itself to his mind of all the interior and exterior torments which were to deprive him of life by afflicting so cruelly his body and his blessed soul! He distinctly saw all the sufferings that awaited him, the mockeries, the outrages, the injuries, the buffets, the thorns, the cross, and above all that ignominious and desolate death which he was to suffer on an infamous gibbet, abandoned by every one, by men and by God, in an abyss of sorrows and opprobrium. This is what caused him so bitter a repugnance that he was obliged to ask his eternal Father for strength: *He began to fear and to be heavy.*

With this fear and repugnance Jesus felt at the same time great sadness and great affliction of mind: *he began to grow sorrowful and to be sad.*[14419] —But, O Lord! is it not Thou that hast given to Thy martyrs such a force in sufferings that they went so far as to despise torments and death and to submit to them with joy? How then does it happen that for Thyself, O Jesus! Thou hast reserved Thyself to suffer by dying in so great sadness?—Ah! I know the reason; for at this moment there were presented to his mind all the sins of the world, the blasphemies, the sacrileges, the impurities, and all the other sins that men were going to commit after his death. Each one of these sins came then as a cruel monster to tear his heart by its own malice. It seems that then in his agony our afflicted Saviour was obliged to say: O men! is it thus that you respond to the immense love that I have borne towards you? Alas! after so many sufferings endured for you, to see so many sins! after so many proofs of my love, to see so much ingratitude! It is that which afflicts me, makes me sad even unto death, and makes me sweat blood: *And his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground.*[14420]

O my tender Jesus! I do not notice in this garden scourges, thorns, nails, which wound Thee; yet I see Thee bathed in blood from head to foot. My sins therefore were the cruel pressure which, by the violence of the affliction and of sadness, forced so much blood from Thy heart. I have myself been one of Thy most cruel executioners.

But should we stop here in conversing with Jesus when he is already hurrying to meet his Passion which he so much desires? In fact, there is Judas, who is accompanied by a troop of Jews and soldiers, and who is coming to seize Jesus in the garden. Jesus sees him coming, and what does he do? Yet bathed in blood, with his heart all inflamed with love of us, he rises, and says to the three disciples who were with him: *Rise up, let us go. Behold, he that will betray me is at hand.*[14421] Come let us meet the enemies who are coming to arrest me.

When Jesus was in their presence, Judas advanced, extended his arms and gave him a kiss. This kiss was the sign of treason: on this account Jesus addressed this word of reproach to the traitor: *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*[14422] O Judas! is it by a kiss that thou betrayest the Son of man? He afterwards asked the Jews whom they were seeking: *Whom do you seek?*[14423] They answered: Jesus of Nazareth. After this they brutally seized him, and bound him like a criminal: *They took Jesus and bound him.*[14424] Alas! a God bound like a criminal! “O King of kings!” cries out St. Bernard, weeping, “what hast Thou to do with chains?”[14425] Chains are for malefactors, and not for Thee who are innocent, the Saint of saints. “Look, O man!” says St. Bonaventure, “at these dogs dragging him along.”[14426]

Jesus then bound, in the midst of this vile soldiery, is pushed out of the garden, and led to Jerusalem before the Prince of priests. And where are his disciples? do not at least they accompany their Master in order to defend him? No, all left him: *Then his disciples, leaving him, all fled away.*[14427]

He then enters Jerusalem during the night. At the noise that so many people make in their march, those that are in the houses awaken and, approaching the windows, ask what prisoner they are leading away. They answer that it is Jesus of Nazareth, who has been found out to be an impostor, a seducer.

He is presented to Caiphas, who was expecting him; this proud high-priest is sitting, and Jesus is standing before him, having his hands tied like a criminal, holding his eyes cast down, all humility and meekness. The high-priest interrogates him on the doctrine that he taught; Jesus answered that he had spoken publicly before every one, and that the witnesses present who had heard him knew what he had said: *I have spoken to the world; . . . Behold, they know what things I have said.*[14428] After an answer so just and so moderate, an executioner advances and gives him a severe blow on the cheek, saying in his fury: *Answerest thou the high-priest so?*[14429] How could an answer so humble merit so gross an insult in the presence of this assembly? The high-priest, however, instead of rebuking his insolent servant, remains silent, and by his silence approves of his conduct But then Jesus said to the servant: *If I have spoken nil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou me?*[14430]

Then Caiphas commanded Jesus in the name of God to say whether he was the Son of God: *I adjure Thee, by the living God, that thou tell us if Thou be the Christ the Son of God.*[14431] Our Lord then, asked in the name of God, confessed the truth, saying: *I am;*[14432] and one day you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the Father, and coming on the clouds of heaven to judge the world. At these words, Caiphas, instead of falling prostrate on his face to adore the Son of God, rends his garments and exclaims: *He hath blasphemed!*[14433] Then addressing the other priests, he asked their counsel and said: *Now YOU have heard the blasphemy. What* *think you?* And all answered: *He is guilty of death.*[14434] Yes, my Jesus, Thou deservest death, since Thou hast wished to make satisfaction for the sins of men.

Then the executioners seized him, and treating him as a man already condemned to death, they began to spit in his face and to buffet him: *Then did they spit in his face, and others struck his face with the palms of their hands.*[14435] Then having bandaged his eyes, and mocking him as a false prophet, they said: *Prophesy unto us, Christ, who is he that struck Thee.*[14436]

When the morning was come, they conducted Jesus to Pilate in order to have him condemned to death. Pilate, finding no reason to condemn him, declared him innocent: *I find no fault in him.*[14437] However, as the Jews insisted, he sent him to Herod to be judged by him. Herod was delighted to see Jesus in his court, because he hoped that our Lord would perform some miracles about which he had heard others speak. He then proposed many questions to him, but Jesus remained silent. Then this proud tyrant ordered him to be clothed with a white garment as if he were a fool, and he sent him back to Pilate after having exposed him to the mockery and contempt of his entire court: *And Herod, with his army, set Him at nought: and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate.*[14438] O Son of God! O Eternal Wisdom! Thou wouldst submit even to the ignominy of being treated as a fool!

Pilate, in order to avoid condemning an innocent man, seeing that he was not successful in sending Jesus to Herod, devised another means. As the people had a right of asking the Roman governor for the liberation of a prisoner at the Paschal solemnity, Pilate proposed to them to choose between Jesus Christ and Barabbas, who was a wicked man, a homicide; but the people, instigated by the hatred of the priests, who wished the death of Jesus Christ, began to cry out that they preferred Barabbas: *Not this man, but Barabbas.*[14439] This is what he does that commits a mortal sin: it is then proposed to him to choose between Jesus Christ and the sin that he wishes to commit, as the sin of revenge, of a certain pleasure, etc.: when he gives his consent, it is as if he said: *Not this man, but Barabbas;* I prefer Barabbas to Jesus Christ.

After having proposed Jesus Christ and Barabbas to the choice of the people, and seeing that this means was unsuccessful, Pilate thought of having him scourged and then set at liberty: *I will chastise Him, therefore, and release Him.*[14440] Here we are then at the second scene of the sufferings of Jesus Christ: *Then, therefore, Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*[14441] O how much less would he have suffered if Pilate had had less compassion for him, and if he had without delay condemned him to the death of the cross! All this served but to increase the sufferings and humiliations of our Saviour.

SECOND SCENE: THE PRETORIUM

Having arrived at the pretorium, our loving Jesus, obedient to the executioners, strips himself of his garments, embraces the column, and then lays on it his hands to have them bound.—My God, already is begun the cruel torture! O angels of heaven! come and look on this sorrowful spectacle, and if it be not permitted you to deliver your king from this barbarous slaughter which men have prepared for him, at least come and weep for compassion.—And ye, Christian souls, imagine yourselves to be present at this horrible tearing of the flesh of your beloved Redeemer; look on him how he stands,—your afflicted Jesus—with his head bowed, looking on the ground, blushing all over for shame, he awaits this great torture. Behold these barbarians, like so many ravenous dogs, are already with the scourges attacking this innocent Lamb. See how one beats him on the breast, another strikes his shoulders, another smites his loins and his legs; even his sacred head and beautiful countenance cannot escape the blows. Ah me! already flows that divine blood from every part; already with that blood are saturated the scourges, the hands of the executioners, the column and the ground. “He is wounded,” mourns St. Laurence Justinian, “over his whole body, torn with the scourges; now they twine round his shoulders, now round his legs—streaks upon streaks, wounds added to fresh wounds.”[14442]

Ah, cruel men, with whom are you dealing thus? Stay—stay: know that you are making a mistake. This man whom you are torturing is innocent and holy; it is we who are the culprits; to us, to us, who have sinned, are these stripes and torments due. O eternal Father! how canst Thou behold

Thy beloved Son suffering thus, and not interfere in his behalf? What is the crime that he has ever committed, to deserve so shameful and so severe a punishment*?—For the wickedness of My people have I struck Him.*[14443] I well know, says the eternal Father, that this my Son is innocent; but inasmuch as he has offered himself as a satisfaction to my justice for all the sins of mankind, it is fitting that I should abandon him to the rage of his most cruel enemies.

Ye barbarians, are you not yet satisfied? No; they are not yet satisfied. After having thus scourged him, these executioners wish to treat him as a mock king. What do they do? They make him sit upon a stone, put upon his shoulders a scarlet cloak in imitation of the purple, and into his hand a reed for a sceptre, and upon his head for a crown a bundle of thorns which covers it entirely from the forehead to the neck; and in order that the thorns might sufficiently enter the head, they took a reed and beat with all their might the cruel crown into the head of Jesus: *They took the reed and struck His head.*[14444]

It is not yet enough: bending the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: We salute thee, O king of the Jews! Then rising, they laugh at him, mock him, and buffet him: *And bowing the knee before Him, they derided Him, saying, Hail King of the Jews;*[14445] *and they gave Him blows.*[14446]

Approach, devout souls, and acknowledge him as your Saviour, while his enemies are maltreating and mocking him. Yes, he is a king; but at this moment he is the king of sorrows: he is, however, a king of love, since for the love of you he suffers all these pains.

After having thus scourged him and crowned him with thorns, they seized him as he was, all covered with wounds and blood, and led him to Pilate. The latter, seeing him reduced to a state so worthy of compassion, thought it would be sufficient, in order to pacify the Jews, to show them such as he was. He therefore led him forth before them, and exhibiting him to the people, said to them: Behold the man. *Pilate went forth again to them, . . . and saith unto them, Behold the man;*[14447] as though he would have said: Behold the man whom you feared wished to make himself your king; see him reduced to such a state that he cannot live any longer. Let him go and die in his own house; he has but a short time to live; see him reduced to such a state that he has scarcely the appearance of a man. Permit him, therefore, to be set at liberty, your anger against him being sufficiently appeased. If, notwithstanding, you ask that I should condemn him to death, I declare to you that I cannot do so, because I find no reason to condemn him: *I find no fault in Him.*[14448]

As Pilate from the balcony showed Jesus to the people, so at the time the same eternal Father from heaven showed us his well-beloved Son, by saying, *Behold the man:* Behold this man, who is my only begotten Son, whom I love with the same love wherewith I love myself! *This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.*[14449] Behold the Man, your Saviour, him whom I have promised, and for whom you were anxiously waiting. He has become a man of sorrows. Behold him, and see to what a pitiable condition he has reduced himself through the love that he has borne towards you. Oh, look at him, and love him! and if his divine qualities move you not, at least let these sorrows and ignominies which he suffers for you move you to love him.

But did the words of Pilate satisfy the cruelty of the enemies of Jesus Christ? On the contrary, the chief priests raised their voices, and cried out: *Away with Him! away with Him! crucify Him!*[14450] Pilate, however, still resisted, and refused to condemn Jesus. Then they threatened to accuse him as an enemy of Cæsar if he refused to pronounce sentence: *If thou lettest this Man go, thou art no friend of Cæsar's.*[14451] They thus succeeded in obtaining the desired condemnation; but before pronouncing it, Pilate washed his hands, declaring himself innocent of the death of this just man: *I am innocent of the blood of this just Man; look you to it.*[14452] O injustice unheard of in this world: the judge declares the accused to be innocent, and at the same time he condemns him to death!

Unhappy Jews, you then said: *His blood be upon us, and upon our children.*[14453] You have prayed for the chastisement; it has already come; your children bear to the end of the world the punishment due to the shedding of that innocent blood.

The unjust sentence is read: Jesus accepts it in expiation of our sins: *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*[14454]

After the publication of the sentence Jesus is again clothed in his garments that he might be recognized, disfigured as he is by such bad treatment. The cross is presented to him; Jesus embraces it, it is placed upon his shoulders, and he begins to walk towards Calvary: *And bearing His own cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary.*[14455] The condemned criminals now come forth from Pilate's residence, and in the midst of them there goes also our condemned Lord, carrying him—self the wood upon which he is to die. O heavens! this Messias, who a few days before, on Palm Sunday, was received with the acclamations and benedictions of the people: *Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord!*[14456] See him now in the same streets, bound, execrated by all, moving along to die the death of a criminal. What a spectacle to see a God led to execution! The appearance of Jesus in this journey was so pitiable that it made all those shed tears that saw him: *And there followed Him a great multitude of people, and of women who bewailed and lamented Him.*[14457] Ah! look at him also, you who love Jesus Christ; see his torn flesh, his dripping blood, the crown of thorns upon his head, the heavy cross upon his shoulders; and while one of the executioners drags him violently along by a rope, see how painful is his walk, see his body bent double, his trembling knees, so that it seems as if he would expire at every step.

O divine Lamb! hast Thou not yet Thy fill of sufferings? How dear did it cost Thee to make me comprehend the love which Thou hast for me! Oh, grant me those aids to love Thee which Thou hast merited for me by so many sufferings! Bestow upon me that sacred fire which Thou didst come to enkindle upon earth by dying for us. Be ever reminding me of Thy death that I may never forget to love Thee.

Isaias predicted that our Lord would carry the cross upon his shoulders as a mark of his reign: *His government was upon His shoulder.*[14458] The cross, says Tertullian, was precisely the noble instrument whereby Jesus Christ made acquisition of so many souls; since by dying thereon he paid the penalty due to our sins, and thus rescued us from hell, and made us his own: *Who His own Self bore our sins in His body upon the tree.*[14459]

Thus, O my Jesus! if the eternal Father burdened Thee with all the sins of men,—*The Lord laid upon Him the iniquities of us all,*[14460]—I with my own sins added to the weight of the cross that Thou didst bear to Calvary. O my sweetest Saviour, Thou didst even then foresee all the wrongs that I should do to Thee; yet, notwithstanding, Thou didst not cease to love me, or to prepare for me all the merits that Thou hast since employed towards me. If then to Thee I have been dear, most vile and ungrateful sinner as I am, who have so much offended Thee, good reason is there why Thou shouldst be dear to me. Ah, would that I had never displeased Thee! Now, my Jesus, do I know the wrong that I have done Thee.—O ye accursed sins of mine, what have you done? You have caused me to sadden the loving heart of my Redeemer, that heart which has loved me so much.—O my Jesus! forgive me, repenting, as I do, of having done despite unto Thee. Henceforth it is Thou who art to be the only object of my love. I love Thee, O infinite loveliness, with all my heart; and I resolve to love none else but Thee. O Lord! pardon me; I say unto Thee with St. Ignatius: "Give me Thy love only together with Thy grace, and I am rich enough."[14461]

THIRD SCENE: CALVARY

Here we are at the third and last scene of the tortures—that of Calvary, which brought death to Jesus Christ. They immediately tear off his garments, sticking to his wounded flesh, and throw him down upon the cross. The divine Lamb reaches forth to the executioners his hands and his feet to be nailed, and offers up to his eternal Father the great sacrifice of his life for the salvation of men. After the nailing of one of his hands, the nerves shrink so that they had need of main force and ropes to draw the other hand and feet up to the places where they were to be nailed; and this occasioned so great a tension of the nerves and veins, that they broke asunder with a violent convulsion, as was revealed to St. Bridget: "They drew my hands and feet with a rope to the places of the nails, so that the nerves and veins were stretched out to the full and broke asunder;"[14462] insomuch that all his bones might have been numbered, as David had already predicted: *They pierced My hands and My feet, they numbered all My bones.*[14463]

St. Augustine says that there is no death more bitter than that of the cross: "Among all the different kinds of death, there was none worse."[14464] Because, as St—Thomas[14465] observes, those who are crucified have their hands and their feet pierced through, parts which being entirely composed of nerves, muscles, and veins, are the most sensitive to pain, and the very weight of the body itself, which is suspended from them, causes the pain to be continuous and ever increasing in its intensity up to the moment of death.

But the pains of Jesus were far beyond all other pains; for, as the Angelic Doctor says, the body of Jesus Christ, being perfectly constituted, was more quick and sensitive to pain—that body which was fashioned for him by the Holy Spirit, expressly with a view to his suffering, as he had foretold, as the Apostle testifies: *A body Thou hast fitted to Me.*[14466] Moreover, St. Thomas says that Jesus Christ took upon himself an amount of suffering so great as to be sufficient to satisfy for the temporal punishment merited by the sins of all mankind.

O my soul, behold thy Lord, behold thy life hanging upon that tree: *And thy life shall be, as it were, hanging before thee.*[14467] Behold how on that gibbet of pain, fastened by those cruel nails, he finds no place of rest. Now he leans his weight upon his hands, now upon his feet; but on what part soever he leans, the anguish increases. He turns his afflicted head now on one side, now on the other; if he lets it fall towards his breast, the hands, by the additional weight, are rent the more; if he lowers it towards his shoulders, the shoulders are pierced with thorns; if he leans it back upon the cross, the thorns enter the more deeply into his head.

Ah, my Jesus, what a death of bitterness is this that Thou art enduring! O my crucified Redeemer, I adore Thee on this throne of ignominy and pain. Upon this cross I read it written that Thou art a King: *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.*[14468] But apart from this title of scorn, what is the evidence that Thou dost give of being a king? Ah, these hands transfixed with nails, this head pierced with thorns, this throne of sorrow, this lacerated flesh, make me well know that Thou art a king, but a king of love. With humility, then, and tenderness do I draw near to kiss Thy sacred feet, transfixed for love of me. I clasp in my arms this cross, on which Thou, being made a victim of love, wast willing to offer Thyself in sacrifice for me to the divine justice: *being made obedient unto death, the death of the cross.*[14469] O blessed obedience, that obtained for us the pardon of our sins! And what would have become of me, O my Saviour, hadst Thou not paid the penalty for me?

Contemplating one day the love of Jesus in dying for us, St. Francis of Paula, rapt in ecstasy and raised in the air, exclaimed three times in a loud voice. “O God, charity! O God, charity! O God, charity!” You also, devout souls, look on your divine Saviour on this painful cross; see how he remains fastened by those three nails, so that the pierced hands and feet had to sustain the weight of the entire body; on whichever side he wishes to rest his pains are increased. Alas! our afflicted Saviour finds no place of rest.

Behold the King of heaven, who, hanging on that gibbet, is now on the point of giving up the ghost. Let us, too, ask of him with the prophet: *What are those wounds in the middle of Thy hands?*[14470] Tell me, O my Jesus, what are these wounds in the middle of Thy hands? The Abbot Rupert makes answer for Jesus: “They are the memorials of charity, the price of redemption.”[14471] They are tokens, says the Redeemer, of the great love which I bear toward you; they are the payment by which I set you free from the hands of your enemies, and from eternal death.

Do you, then, O faithful souls, love your God, who has had such love for you; and if you do at any time feel doubtful of his love, turn your eyes, says St. Thomas of Villanova, to behold that cross, those pains, and that bitter death which he has suffered for you; for such proofs will assuredly make you know how much your Saviour loves you: “The cross testifies, the pains testify, the bitter death that he had endured for you testifies this.”[14472] And St. Bernard adds that the cross cries out, every wound of Jesus cries out, that he loves us with a true love: “The cross proclaims, the wounds proclaim, that he truly loves.”[14473]

While hanging on the cross Jesus looked in vain for some one to console him: *I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none.*[14474] On the contrary, he heard those around him uttering blasphemies: *If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.*[14475] *Vah! thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save thy own self.*[14476] *He saved others, himself he cannot save.*[14477] Why should they care to afflict by insults and derision one that is already expiring on the gibbet?

And Jesus, while these are outraging him, what is he doing upon the cross? Is he perhaps praying to the eternal Father to punish them? No, he is praying to him to pardon them: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what* *they do.*[14478] Yes, says St. Thomas; to show forth the immense love which he had for men, the Redeemer asked pardon of God for his crucifiers: "To show forth the abundance of his charity, he asked pardon for his persecutors."[14479] he asked it, and obtained it; for, when they had seen him die they repented of their sin: *They returned smiting their breasts.*[14480]

Ah, my dear Saviour, behold me at Thy feet; I have been one of the most ungrateful of Thy persecutors; do Thou pray likewise for me to Thy Father to pardon me. True it is that the Jews and the executioners knew not what they were doing when they crucified Thee; but I well knew that in sinning I was offending a God who had been crucified, and had died for me. But Thy blood and Thy death have merited even for me the divine mercy. I cannot feel doubtful of being pardoned after seeing Thee die to obtain pardon for me.

The sorrowful Mother stood at the foot of the cross with some pious women: *There stood by the cross of Jesus His mother. . . .* [14481] O God! who would not pity a mother standing beside the gibbet on which a son dies before her eyes? Consider Mary, standing beneath the cross, contemplating the pains in the midst of which her well—beloved Son was expiring. She desired to give him some alleviation, and she saw, on the other hand, that her presence increased the grief of this same Son, who was full of compassion for his tender Mother. This was a terrible affliction for Mary, a torture that made her the Queen of Martyrs.

Seeing himself, then, abandoned by every one, all men trying to make his death more painful, Jesus raised his eyes to his eternal Father to obtain some consolation. But seeing him laden with all our sins, for which he wished to satisfy the divine justice, his Father also abandoned him. Then it was that our Saviour, crying out with a loud voice, said: *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*[14482]

But our Saviour, so full of love, is on the point of expiring. Christians, look at the cross. Behold those dying eyes, that face so pale, the sacred body which is abandoned to death. Before expiring, Jesus uttered these words: *It is consummated.*[14483] It is as if he had said: O men, love me; I have done all that I can do in order to save your souls and gain your love. See the painful life that I have led during thirty-three years for love of you. I wished then on your account to be scourged, to be crowned with thorns, to be buffeted, to be covered with wounds from head to foot. What more was needed? Should I die for love of you? Well, then! I wish to die. Come, O death! I permit thee to come; take away my life, in order that my sheep may live. *And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.*[14484] My Father, he then said, I die for Thy glory and for the salvation of men; I commend my soul into Thy hands.—Behold, then, Jesus dies. O angels of heaven, come, come to be present at the death of your God. And thou, O sorrowful Mother! approach nearer to the cross; look at him more steadfastly, for he is about to expire.

And ye Christians, behold him in his agony; see him amid the last respirations of life. Behold his dying eyes, that face so pale, that feebly palpitating heart, that body already wrapped in the arms of death, and that beautiful soul now on the point of leaving that wounded body.

The sky shrouds itself in darkness; the earth quakes; the graves open. Alas, what portentous signs are these! They are signs that the Maker of the world is now dying.

Behold, in the last place, how our Lord, after having commended his blessed soul to his eternal Father, first breathing forth from his afflicted heart a deep sigh, and then bowing down his head in token of his obedience, and offering up his death for the salvation of men, at last through the violence of the pain expires, and delivers up his spirit into the hands of his beloved Father. *And crying out with a loud voice, He said Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit; and saying this He gave up the Ghost.*[14485]

All those that were present looking at him with attention see him expire, and observing that he is motionless, they exclaim, He is dead—he is dead!—Mary hears this from all the bystanders, and she also says, Ah, my Son, Thou art dead! He is dead!—Ah, who is dead? It is the King of heaven; the Creator of the world, a God, who wished to die for us poor sinners.

ACT OF CONTRITION WHILE SHOWING THE CRUCIFIX.[14486]

Come sinners; here is Jesus Christ who has stretched forth his arms to embrace you. Can you fear that he will not pardon you, when he gave himself up to death in order to pardon you?

Do you perhaps fear that you will not obtain pardon because you find yourselves unable to perform the penance that your sins deserve? Console yourselves; for you here see the penance that Jesus Christ has himself performed for you on the cross; it is sufficient if you sincerely repeat of having offended him.

Look at him; see where you can find any one that has loved you more than Jesus Christ has loved you. Love him then, since he died in order to be loved by you. Say to him: Ah, my sweet Saviour! whom should I love if I do not love a God who has died for me?

O sorrowful Mother! through the sorrow that thou didst experience in seeing thy divine Son expire, obtain for me holy perseverance and a true love of my divine Redeemer.

Nine Discourses for Times of Calamities.

IT should be remarked that these discourses are here not entirely developed; we find in them only those passages that are pertinent to the subjects the thoughts upon which are hardly expressed, in order that the preachers may extend and amplify them as they wish, by adding the moral application against vice wherever this may be found useful.[14487]

Nine Discourses for Times of Calamities

FIRST DISCOURSE

GOD THREATENS TO CHASTISE US IN ORDER TO DELIVER US FROM CHASTISEMENT

> "Heu! consolabor super hostibus meis, et vindicabor de inimicis meis."
>
> "Ah, I will comfort Myself over My adversaries: and I will be revenged of My enemies."—Isa. i. 24.

SUCH is the language of God, when speaking of punishment and vengeance: He says that he is constrained by his justice to take vengeance on his enemies. But, mark you, he begins with the word *Heu*, "Ah:" this word is an exclamation of grief by which he would give us to understand, that if he were capable of weeping when about to punish, he should weep bitterly at being compelled to afflict us his creatures, whom he has loved so dearly as to give up his life through love for us. " 'Alas!'" says Cornelius a Lapide, "is uttered by one who is lamenting and not insulting; God signifies by this word that he is grieving, and that he is unwilling to punish sinners."[14488] No, this God, who is the Father of mercies, and so much loves us, is not of a disposition to punish and afflict, but rather to pardon and console us. *For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of affliction.*[14489]

But some one will say, since such is his character, why does he now punish us? or, at least, appear as if he meant to punish us? Why so? Because he wishes to be merciful towards us: this anger which he now displays is all mercy and patience.

Let us then, my brethren, understand how the Lord at present appears in wrath, not with a view to our punishment, but in order that we may cleanse ourselves of our sins, and thus enable him to pardon us. Such is the subject of our discourse: GOD THREATENS TO CHASTISE IN ORDER TO DELIVER US FROM CHASTISEMENT.

The threats of men ordinarily proceed from their pride and impotence; whence, if they have it in their power to take vengeance on an object, they threaten nothing, lest they should thereby give their enemies an opportunity of escape. It is only when they want the power to wreak their vengeance that they betake themselves to threats, in order to gratify their passion, by awakening at least the fears of their enemies. Not so the threats of which God makes use; on the contrary, their nature is quite different. His threats do not arise from his inability to chastise, because he can be avenged when he wills; but he bears with us in order to see us penitent, and thus exempt from punishment. *Thou hast mercy upon all, because Thou canst do all things, and winkest at the sins of men for the sake of repentance.*[14490] Neither does he threaten from hatred, in order to torment us with fear; God threatens from love, in order that we may be converted to him, and thereby escape chastisement: he threatens, because he does not wish to see us lost: he threatens, in fine, because he loves our souls. *But Thou sparest all, because they are thine, O Lord, who lovest souls.*[14491] He threatens; but notwithstanding bears with us and delays the infliction, because he wishes to see us converted, not lost. *He dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.*[14492] Thus the threats of God are all acts of tenderness, and amorous calls of his goodness, by which he means to save us from the punishment which we deserve.

Yet forty days, exclaimed Jonas, *and Nineve shall be destroyed.*[14493] Wretched Ninevites, he cries, the day of your chastisement is come; I announce it to you on the part of God: Know that within forty days Nineve shall be destroyed, and cease to exist. But how comes it that Nineve did penance and was not destroyed? *And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way; and God had mercy.*[14494] Whereat Jonas was afflicted, and making lamentation before the Lord, said to him: *Therefore, I went before Thee into Tarsis, for I knew that Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil.*[14495] He then left Nineve, and was screened from the rays of the burning sun by an ivy which God caused to overshadow his head. But how did the Lord next act? He withered the ivy, whereat Jonas was so much afflicted that he wished for death. God then said to him, *Thou hast grieved for the ivy for which Thou hast not labored, nor made it to grow; . . . and* *shall not I spare Nineve?*[14496] Thou grievest for the ivy which thou hast not created, and shall not I pardon the men who are the work of my hands?

The destruction which the Lord caused to be held out against Nineve was, according to the explanation of St. Basil, not an actual prophecy, but a simple threat, by which he meant to bring about the conversion of that city. The saint says, that God often appears in wrath because he wishes to deal mercifully with us; and threatens, not with the intention of chastising but of delivering us from chastisement.[14497] St. Augustine adds, that when any one cries out to you "take care," it is a sign he does not mean to injure you.[14498] And thus exactly does God act in our regard: he threatens us with chastisement, says St. Jerome, not that he means to inflict it, but to spare us if we profit by the warning.[14499] Thou, O Lord, says St. Augustine, art severe, but then most so when Thou wishest to save us; Thou threatenst, but in so threatening Thou hast no other object than to bring us to repentance.[14500] The Lord could chastise sinners without warning by a sudden death, which should not leave them time for repentance; but no, he displays his wrath, he brandishes his scourge, in order that he may see them reformed, not punished.

The Lord said to Jeremias: thou shalt say to them—*If so be, they will hearken and be converted every one from his evil way: that I may repent Me of the evil which I think to do unto them.*[14501] Go, he says, and tell the sinners if they wish to hear you, that if they cease from their sins, shall spare them the chastisements which I intended to have inflicted on them. And now, my brethren, mark me. The Lord addresses you in a similar way out of my mouth. If you amend, he will revoke the sentence of punishment. St. Jerome says: "God is wroth, not with us, but with our sins;"[14502] and St. John Chrysostom adds, that if we remember our sins God will forget them.[14503] He desires that we being humbled should reform, and crave pardon of him. *Because they are humbled I will not destroy them.*[14504]

But, in order to amend, we must be led to it by fear of punishment, otherwise, we never should be brought to change our lives. True it is, God protects him who places hope in his mercy. *He is the protector of all who trust in Him.*[14505] But he who hopes in the mercy of the Lord is always the man who fears his justice. *They that fear the Lord have hoped in the lord : He is their protector and their helper.*[14506] The Lord often speaks of the rigor of his judgments, and of hell, and of the great number who go thither. *Be not afraid of them who kill the body: . . . fear ye Hint who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell.*[14507] *Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who enter thereat.*[14508] And why does the Lord so often speak thus? In order that fear may keep us from vice, and from the passions, and from occasions; and that thus we may reasonably hope for salvation, which is only for the innocent, or the penitent, who hope and fear.

Oh, what strength has not the fear of hell to rein us in from sin! To that end has God created hell. He has created us, and redeemed us by his death, that we might be happy with him; he has imposed upon us the obligation of hoping for eternal life, and on that account encourages us, by saying that all those who hope in him shall be saved. *For none of them that wait on Thee shall be confounded.*[14509] On the other hand, it is his wish and command that we should be in fear of eternal damnation. Some heretics hold, that all who are not in sin should consider themselves as assuredly just and predestined; but these have with reason been condemned by the Council of Trent,[14510] because such a presumption is as perilous to salvation as fear is conducive to it. *And let Him be your dread, and He shall be a sanctification unto you.*[14511] The holy fear of God makes man holy. Wherefore David begged of God the grace of fear, in order that fear might destroy in him the inclinations of the flesh. *Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear.*[14512]

We should then fear on account of our sins, but this fear ought not to deject us: it should rather excite us to confidence in the divine mercy, as was the case with the prophet himself. *For Thy name's sake, O Lord, Thou wilt pardon my sin, for it is great.*[14513] How is that? Pardon me because my sin is great? Yes, because the divine mercy is most conspicuous in the case of greatest misery; and he who has been the greatest sinner is he who glorifies most the divine mercy, by hoping in God, who has promised to save all those who hope in him. *He will save them, because they have hoped in him.*[14514] For this reason it is, Ecclesiasticus says, that the fear of the Lord bringeth not pain, but joy and gladness: *The fear of the Lord shall delight the heart, and shall give joy and gladness.*[14515] Thus this very fear leads to the acquisition of a firm hope in God, which makes the soul happy: *He that feareth the Lord shall tremble at nothing, and shall not be afraid,* *for He is his hope. The soul of him that feareth the Lord is blessed.*[14516] Yes, blessed, because fear draws man away from sin. *The fear of the Lord driveth out sin,*[14517] and at the same time infuses into him a great desire of observing the commandments: *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord: he shall delight exceedingly in His commandments.*[14518]

We must, then, persuade ourselves that chastisement is not what the nature of God inclines him to. God, because by his nature he is infinite goodness,[14519] says St. Leo, has no other desire than to bless us, and to see us happy. When he punishes, he is obliged to do so in order to satisfy his justice, not to gratify his inclination. Isaias says, that punishment is a work contrary to the heart of God. *The Lord shall be angry. . . . that He may do His work, His strange work;. . . . His work is strange to Him.*[14520] And therefore does the Lord say, that he sometimes almost feigns the intention of punishing us.[14521] But why does he do so? For this reason: *Let every man of you return from his evil way.*[14522] He does so in order to our reformation, and consequently our exemption from the chastisement deserved by us. The Apostle writes, that God *hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth.*[14523] With regard to which passage, St. Bernard says, that God of himself wishes to love us, but that we force him to condemn us.[14524] He calls himself the Father of mercies, not of vengeance. Whence it comes that his tenderness all springs from himself, and his severity from us.

And who has ever been able to comprehend the greatness of the divine mercies? David says, that God, even while yet angry, feels compassion for us: *Thou hast been angry, and hast had mercy on us.*[14525] “O merciful wrath, which art enkindled but to succor, and threatenest but to pardon,”[14526] exclaims the abbot Beroncosius. “Thou hast shown,” continues David, “thou *hast shown Thy people hard things, Thou hast made us drunk with the wine of sorrow.”*[14527] God discovers himself to us armed with a scourge, but he does so in order to see us penitent and contrite for the offences which we are committing against him: *Thou hast given a warning to them that fear Thee: that they may flee before the bow: that Thy beloved may be delivered.*[14528] He appears with the bow already bent, upon the point of sending off the arrow, but he does not send it off, because he wishes that our terror should bring about amendment, and that thus we should escape the chastisement. *That Thy beloved may be delivered.*[14529] I wish to terrify them, says God, in order that struck by fear they may rise from the bed of sin and return to me. *In their affliction they will rise early to Me.*[14530] Yes, the Lord, although he sees us so ungrateful and worthy of punishment, is eager to free us from it, because how ungrateful soever we be, he loves us and wishes us well. *Give us help from trouble.*[14531] Thus, in fine, prayed David; and thus ought we to pray. Grant, O Lord, that this scourge which now afflicts us, may open our eyes, so that we depart from sin; because if we do not here have done with it, sin will lead us to eternal damnation, which is a scourge enduring forever.

What shall we then do, my brethren? Do you not see that God is angered? He can no longer bear with us. *The Lord is angry.* Do you not behold the scourges of God increasing every day? Our sins increase, says St. John Chrysostom, and our scourges increase likewise.[14532] God, my brethren, is wroth: but with all his anger he has commanded me to say, what he formerly commanded to be said by the prophet Zachary; *And thou shall say to them, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Turn ye to Me saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn to you saith the Lord of Hosts.*[14533] Sinners, saith the Lord, you have turned your backs upon me, and therefore have constrained me to deprive you of my grace. Do not oblige me to drive you forever from my face, and punish you in hell without hope of pardon. Have done with it: abandon sin, be converted to me, and I promise to pardon you all your offences, and once more to embrace you as my children. *Turn ye to Me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn to you.*[14534] Why do you wish to perish? (mark how tenderly the Lord speaks.) *And why will you die, O house of Israel.*[14535] Why will you fling yourselves into that burning furnace? *Return ye and live.*[14536] Return to me, I await you with open arms, ready to receive and pardon you.

Doubt not of this, O sinner, continues the Lord. *Learn to do well . . . And then come and accuse Me, saith the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow.*[14537] Take courage, saith the Lord, change your life, come to me, and if I do not pardon you, *accuse me.* As if he were to say, Accuse me of lying and bad faith; but, no, I shall not be unfaithful: your conscience now so black, shall by my grace become as white as snow. No; I will not chastise you if you reform, says the Lord, because I am God, not man. *I will not execute the fierceness of My wrath, . . . because I am*

God, and not man.[14538] He says besides, that men never forget an injury, but that when he sees a sinner penitent, he forgets all his offences. *I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done.*[14539] Let us then at once return to God, but let it be at once. We have offended him enough already, let us not tempt his anger any further. Behold him, he calls us, and is ready to pardon us if we repent of our evil deeds, and promise him to change our lives.[14540]

Here, and at the close of each succeeding Sermon, may be introduced Acts of Faith, Hope, and Sorrow, etc., with a Petition to the Mother of God for her intercession.

SECOND DISCOURSE.

SINNERS WILL NOT BELIEVE IN THE DIVINE THREATS UNTIL THE CHASTISEMENT HAS COME UPON THEM

"Si pœnitentiam *non egeritis omnes similiter peribitis."*

"Except you do penance*, you shall all likewise perish."—Luke,* xiii. 5.

AFTER our Lord had commanded our first parents not to eat of the forbidden fruit, unhappy Eve approached the tree and was addressed from it by the serpent, who said to her: Why has God forbidden you to eat of this delightful fruit? *Why hath God commanded you?* Eve replies: *God hath commanded us that we should not eat, and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die.*[14541] Behold the weakness of Eve! The Lord had absolutely threatened them with death, and she now begins to speak of it as doubtful: *Lest perhaps we die.* If I eat of it, she said, I shall perhaps die. But the devil, seeing that Eve was little in fear of the divine threat, proceeded to encourage her by saying: *No, you shall not die the death;*[14542] and thus he deceived her, and caused her to prevaricate and eat the apple. Thus, even now, does the enemy continue to deceive so many poor sinners. God threatens: Stop, sinners, and do penance, because if not you shall damn yourselves, as so many others have done: "Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." The devil says to them: "No, you shall not die the death." Fear nothing, sin on, continue to enjoy yourselves, because God is merciful; he will pardon you by and by, and you shall be saved. "God," says St. Procopius, "inspires one with fear, the devil takes it away."[14543] God only desires to terrify them by his threats, in order that they may depart from sin, and thus be saved. The devil wishes to destroy that fear, in order that they may persevere in sin, and thus be lost. Many are the wretches who believe the devil in preference to God, and are thus miserably damned. At present, behold the Lord displays his anger and threatens us with chastisement. Who knows how many there may be in this country who have no thought of changing their lives, in the hope that God will be appeased, and that it will be nothing. Hence the subject of the present discourse: SINNERS WILL NOT BELIEVE IN THE DEVINE THREATS, UNTIL THE CHASTISEMENT SHALL HAVE COME UPON THEM. My brethren, if we do not amend, the chastisement will come; if we do not put an end to our crimes, God will.

When Lot was warned by the Lord that he was about to destroy Sodom, Lot at once informed his sons-in-law: *Arise! get you out of this place, because the Lord will destroy this city.*[14544] But they would not believe him: *And He seemed to them to speak as it were in jest.*[14545] They imagined that he wished to sport with their fears, by terrifying them with such a threat. But the punishment overtook them, and they remained to be the sport of the dames. My brethren, what do we expect? God warns us that chastisement hangs over us; let us put a period to our sins, or shall we wait for God to do it? Hear, O sinner! what St. Paul says to you: *See, then, the severity and goodness of God—towards them, indeed, that are fallen, the severity; but towards thee the goodness of God, if thou abide in goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*[14546] Consider, says the Apostle, the justice which the Lord has exercised towards so many whom he has punished, and condemned to hell: *towards them, indeed, that are fallen, the severity.* Consider the mercy with which he has treated you; *but towards thee the goodness of God.* You must abandon sin; it you change your ways, avoid the occasions of sin, frequent the sacraments, and continue to lead a Christian life, the Lord will remit your punishment, *if you abide in goodness;* if not, you shall perish, *otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.* God has already borne with you too long, he can bear with you no longer. God is merciful, but he is just withal; he deals mercifully with those who fear him; he cannot act thus towards the obstinate.

Such a person laments when he sees himself punished, and says, why has God deprived me of my health? why has he taken from me this child, or this parent? *Ah, sinner! what have you said,* exclaims Jeremias, *your sins have withholden good things from you.*[14547] It was not the desire of God to deprive you of any blessing, of any gain, of your son, or your parent; it would have been the wish of God to make you happy in all things, but your sins have not allowed him. In the book of Job we read these words: *Is it a* *great matter that God should comfort thee? but thy wicked words hinder this.*[14548] The Lord would fain console you, but your blasphemy, your murmuring, your obscene words, spoken to the scandal of so many have prevented him. It is not God, but accursed sin, that renders us miserable and unhappy. *Sin maketh nations miserable.*[14549] We are wrong, says Salvian, in complaining of God when he deals hardly with us. Oh! how much more hardly do we deal with him, repaying with ingratitude the favors which he has bestowed on us![14550]

Sinners imagine that sin procures them happiness; but it is sin which makes them miserable, and afflicted in every respect. *Because thou didst not serve the Lord thy God, saith the Lord, in joy and gladness of heart, . . . thou shalt serve thy enemy, whom the Lord will send upon thee, in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and in want of all things, . . . till He consume thee.*[14551] Because thou hast not wished to serve thy God in the peace which all those taste who serve him, thou shalt serve thy enemy in poverty and affliction, until he shall have finished by making thee lose both soul and body. David says that the sinner by his crimes digs himself the pit into which he falls. *He is fallen into the hole he made.*[14552] Recollect the prodigal son: he, in order to live without restraint, and banquet as he pleased, left his father; but then, for having left his father, he is reduced to tend swine; reduced to such a degree of misery, that of the vile food with which the swine are filled, he has not wherewithal to fill himself: *And he would fain have Jilted his belly with the husks the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him.*[14553] St. Bernardine of Sienna,[14554] relates that a certain impious son dragged his father along the ground. What happened to him afterwards? One day he was himself dragged by his own son in like manner, when, arriving at a certain place, he exclaimed, “No more—stop here, no more—thus far did I drag my own father—stop.” Baronins[14555] mentions a circumstance of a like nature, concerning the daughter of Herodias, who caused John the Baptist to be beheaded. He tells of her, that one day as she was crossing a frozen river, the ice broke under her, and she remained with her head only above the aperture. By dint of her struggles to save herself from death, she had her head severed from her body, and thus died. Oh, how just is not God, when the time of vengeance arrives! he causes the sinner to be caught, and strangled in the net which his own hands have made. *The Lord shall be known when He executeth judgments, the sinner hath been caught in the works of his own hands.*[14556]

Let us tremble, my brethren, when we see others punished, knowing as we do, that we ourselves have deserved the same punishments. When the tower of Siloe fell upon eighteen persons and killed them, the Lord said to many who were present: *Think you that they also were debtors above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem.*[14557] Do you think that these wretches alone were in debt to God's justice on account of their sins? You are yet debtors to it; and if you do not penance, you shall be punished as well as they: *Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.*[14558] O, how many unfortunate men damn themselves by false hope in the divine mercy? Yes, God is merciful, and therefore assists and protects them who hope in his mercy: *He is the protector of all that trust in Him.*[14559] But he assists and protects those only who hope in him, with the intention of changing their lives, not those whose hope is accompanied by a perverse intention of continuing to offend him. The hope of the latter is not acceptable to God, he abominates and punishes it: *Their hope the abomination of the soul.*[14560] Poor sinners, their greatest misery is, that they are lost, and do not know their state. They jest, and they laugh, and they despise the threats of God, as if God had assured them that he should not punish them. "Whence," exclaims St. Bernard, "this accursed security?"[14561] Whence, O blind that you are, whence this accursed security? accursed, because it is this security which brings you to hell. *I will come to them that are at rest, and dwell securely.*[14562] The Lord is patient, but when the hour of chastisement arrives, then will he justly condemn to hell those wretches who continue in sin, and live in peace, as if there were no hell for them.

Let sin be no more for us, my brethren; let us be converted if we wish to escape the scourge which hangs over us. If we do not cease from sin, God will be obliged to punish us: *For evil-doers shall be cut off.*[14563] The obstinate are not only finally shut out from Paradise, but hurried off the earth, lest their example should draw others into hell. And let us reflect that these temporal scourges are nothing in comparison with those eternal chastisements, hope of relief from which there is none. Give ear, O sinner! my brother, give ear! *For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees.*[14564] The author of the *Imperfect Work*, in his comment upon this passage, says:

"It is said that the axe is laid, not to the branches, but to the root, so that it will be irreparably exterminated."[14565] He says that when the branches are lopped, the tree continues still to live; but when the tree is felled from the root, it then dies, and is cast into the fire. The Lord stands with the scourge in his hand, and you still continue in disgrace with him. *The axe is laid to the root.* Tremble lest God should make you die in your sins, for if you die thus, you shall be cast into the fire of hell, where your ruin shall be hopeless for eternity.

But, you will say, I have committed many sins during the past, and the Lord has borne with me. I may, therefore, hope that he will deal mercifully with me for the future. God says, do not speak so: *Say not I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me? for the Most High is a patient rewarder.*[14566] Do not say so, for God bears with you now, but he will not always bear with you. He endures to a certain extent, and then pays off all. *Now, therefore, stand up, that I may plead in judgment against you concerning all the kindness of the Lord,*[14567] said Samuel to the Hebrews. Oh how powerfully does not the abuse of the divine mercies assist in procuring the damnation of the ungrateful! *Gather them together as sheep for a sacrifice, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.*[14568] In the end the herd of those who will not be converted shall be victims of divine justice, and the Lord will condemn them to eternal death, on *the day of slaughter,* when the day of his vengeance shall have arrived (and we have reason always to be in dread, as long as we are not resolved to abandon sin, lest that day should be already near). *God is not mocked; for what things a man shall sow, these also shall he reap.*[14569] Sinners expect to mock God by confessing at Easter, or two or three times a year, and then returning to their vomit, and hoping after that to obtain salvation. "He is a mocker, not a penitent," says St. Isidor, "who continues to do that for which he is penitent;" but *God is not mocked.*

What salvation?—what salvation do you expect? *For what things a man shall sow, them also shall he* reap.[14570] *What* things do you sow? blasphemy, revenge, theft, impurity: what then do you hope for? He who sows in sin can hope to reap nothing but chastisements and hell. *For he that soweth in his flesh,* continues the same apostle, *of his flesh also shall reap corruption.*[14571] Continue, impure wretch! continue to live sunk in the mire of your impurity, your impurities will be converted into pitch within your bowels. “A day shall come,” says St. Peter Damian, “a day shall come, or rather a night, when your lust shall be turned into pitch to feed an eternal flame within your bowels.”[14572]

St. John Chrysostom says that some pretend not to see;[14573] they see the chastisements, and pretend not to see them. And then others, St. Ambrose says, have no fear of punishment until they see it has overtaken them.[14574] To all these it will happen as it did to mankind at the time of the deluge. The patriarch Noah foretold and announced to them the punishments which God had prepared for their sins; but the sinners would not believe him, and notwithstanding that the ark was building before their eyes, they did not change their lives, but went on sinning until the punishment was upon them, until they were smothered in the deluge. *And they knew not till the flood came and took them all away.*[14575] The same happened to the great Babylon, in the Apocalypse, who said: *I sit a queen, and I shall not see grief.*[14576] She persevered in her impurity in the hope of not being punished, but the chastisement at length came as had been predicted! *Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning, and famine, and she shall be burnt with fire.*[14577]

Brother, who knows whether this is not the last call which God may give you? Our Lord says that a certain owner of a vineyard, finding a fig-tree for the third year without fruit, said: *Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none; cut it down therefore, why cumbereth it the ground?*[14578] Then the dresser of the vine replied: *Lord, let it alone this year also . . . and if happily it bear fruit—but if not, then, after that, thou shalt cut it down.*[14579] Let 11s enter into ourselves, my brethren; for years has God been visiting our souls, and has found no other fruit therein than thorns and thistles, that is to say, sins. Hear how the divine justice exclaims, *Cut it down therefore, why cumbereth it the earth?* but mercy pleads, *Let it alone this year also.* Have courage, let us give it one trial more; let us see whether it will not be converted at this other call. But tremble lest the same mercy may not have granted to justice that if you do not now amend, your life shall be cut off, and your soul condemned to hell. Tremble, brother, and take measures that the mouth of the pit do not close over you. Such was the prayer of David: *Let not the deep swallow me up;*

and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.[14580] It is that which sin effects, causing the mouth of the pit, that is, the state of damnation into which the sinner has fallen, to close over him by degrees. As long as that pit is not entirely closed, there is some hope of escape; but if it once shut, what further hope remains for you? By the closing of the pit, I mean the sinner's being shut out from every glimmer of grace, and stopping at nothing; that being the accomplishment of what the wise man has said: *The wicked man, when he is come into the depth of sins, contemneth.*[14581] He despises the laws of God, admonitions, sermons, excommunications, threats—he Jespises hell itself; so that persons have been known to say, numbers go to hell, and I amongst the rest. Can the man who speaks so be saved? He can be saved, but it is morally impossible he should. Brother, what do you say? Perhaps you have yourself come to the contempt of the chastisements of God. What do you say? Well, and if you had, what should you do? Should you despair? No; you know what you have to do. Have recourse to the Mother of God. Although you should be in despair, and abandoned by God, Blosius says, that Mary is the hope of the despairing, and the aid of the abandoned.[14582] St. Bernard says the same thing when he exclaims, The despairing man who hopes in thee ceases to be desperate.[14583] But if God wishes that I should be lost, what hope can there be for me? But, says God, no, my son, I do not wish to see you lost: *I desire not the death of the wicked.*[14584] And what then do you desire, O Lord? I wish him to be converted, and recover the life of my grace: *But that the wicked turn from his way and live.*[14585] Haste then, brother, fling yourself at the feet of Jesus Christ; behold him! see how he stands with his arms open to embrace you, etc. (Here an act of contrition is made.)

THIRD DISCOURSE.

GOD IS MERCIFUL FOR A SEASON, AND THEN CHASTISES

> *“Indulsisligenti,* Domine*, indulsisti genti; numquid glorificatus es?”*
>
> “Thou hast been favorable to the nation, O Lord, thou hast been favorable to the nation; hast thou been glorified?”—*Isa.* xxvi. 15.

LORD, Thou hast often pardoned this people; Thou hast threatened it with destruction by earthquake, by pestilence, in neighboring countries; by the infirmities and death of its own citizens; but Thou hast afterwards taken pity on them: Thou hast been favorable to the nation, O Lord, Thou hast been favorable to the nation; hast Thou been glorified?[14586] *Thou hast pardoned us, Thou hast dealt mercifully with us; what hast Thou received in return? Have Thy people abandoned their sins? have they changed their lives? No, they have gone on from bad to worse; that momentary fear passed, they have begun afresh to offend Thee and provoke Thy wrath.—But, my brethren, perhaps you imagine that God will always wait, always pardon, and never punish? No;* GOD IS MERCIFUL FOR A SEASON; THEN HE PUNISHES; this *is the subject of this day’s discourse.*

We must persuade ourselves that God cannot do otherwise than hate sin; he is holiness itself, and therefore cannot but hate that monster, his enemy, whose malice is altogether opposed to the perfection of God. And if God hate sin, he must necessarily hate the sinner who makes league with sin. But to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.[14587] O God, with what an expression of grief and with what reason do you not complain of those who despise yon, to take part with your enemy. *Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth for the Lord hath spoken; I have brought up children, and exalted them; but they have despised Me.*[14588] Hear, O ye heavens, he says, and give car, O earth, witness the ingratitude with which I am treated by men. I have brought them up, and exalted them as my children, and they have repaid me with contempt and outrage. *The ox knoweth his owner, and* *the ass his master's crib: but Israel hath not known Me, . . . they are gone away backwards.*[14589] The beast of the field, the ox and the ass, continues the Lord, know their master, and are grateful to him, but my children have not known me, and have turned their back upon me. But how is this? "Services are remembered even by beasts,"[14590] says Seneca. The very brutes are grateful to their benefactors; see that dog how he serves and obeys, and is faithful to his master, who feeds him; even the wild beasts, the tiger and the lion are grateful to those who feed them. And God, my brethren, who till now has provided us with everything, who has given us food and raiment: What more? who has kept us in existence up to the moment when we offended him,—how have we treated him?

How do we purpose to act in future? Do we not think to live on as we have been living? Do we not perhaps think that there is no punishment, no hell for us? But hearken and know that as the Lord cannot but hate sin, because he is holy, so he cannot but chastise it when the sinner is obstinate, because he is just.

When he does chastise, it is not to please himself, but because we drive him to it. The wise man says that God did not create hell, through a desire of condemning man thereto, and that he does not rejoice in their damnation, because he does not wish to see his creatures perish: *For God made not death, neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living; for He created all things that they might be.*[14591] No gardener plants a tree in order to cut it down and burn it. It was not God's desire to see us miserable and in torment; and therefore, says St. John Chrysostom, he waits so long before he takes vengeance of the sinner.[14592] He waits for our conversion, that he may then be able to use his mercy in our regard. *Therefore the Lord waiteth, that He may have mercy on you.*[14593] Our God, says the same St. John Chrysostom, is in haste to save, and slow to condemn.[14594] When there is question of pardon, no sooner has the sinner repented than he is forgiven by God. Scarcely had David said *Peccavi, Domino*, when he was informed by the prophet that his pardon was already granted: *The Lord also hath taken away thy sin.*[14595] Yes, because "we do not desire pardon so anxiously as he desires to pardon us," says the same holy Doctor.[14596] On the other hand, when there is question of punishment, he waits, he admonishes, he sends us warning of it beforehand: *For the Lord God doth nothing without revealing His secret to His servants, the prophets.*[14597]

But when, at length, God sees that we are willing to yield neither to benefits, nor threats, nor admonitions, and that we will not amend, then he is forced by our own selves to punish us, and while punishing us, he will place before our eyes the great mercies he before extended to us: *Thou thoughtest unjustly that I shall be like to thee; but I will reprove thee, and set before thy face.*[14598] He will then say to the sinner, think you, O sinner, that I had forgotten, as you had done, the outrages you put upon me, and the graces I dispensed to you? St. Augustine says that God does not hate but loves us, and that he only hates our sins.[14599] He is not wroth with men, says St. Jerome, but with their sins.[14600] The saint says, that by his nature God is inclined to benefit us, and that it is we ourselves who oblige him to chastise us, and assume the appearance of severity, which he has not of himself.[14601] It is this which David means to express, when he says that the Lord in chastising is like a drunken man who strikes in his sleep: *And the Lord was awaked as one out of sleep, and He smote His enemies.*[14602] Theodoret adds that, as drunkenness is not natural to man, so chastisement does not naturally belong to God; it is we who force him into that wrath which is not his by nature.[14603] St. Jerome, reflecting on those words which Jesus Christ on the day of general judgment will address to the reprobate, *Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels,*[14604] inquires, who has prepared this fire for sinners? God perhaps. No, because God never created souls for hell, as the impious Luther taught: this fire has been kindled for sinners by their own sins.[14605] He who sows in sin, shall reap chastisement. He that soweth iniquity, shall reap evil.[14606] When the soul commits sin, it voluntarily obliges itself to pay the penalty thereof, and thus condemns itself to the pains of hell. *For you have said, we have entered into a league with death, and we have made a covenant with hell.*[14607] Hence St. Ambrose well says, that God has not condemned any one, but that each one is the author of his own chastisement.[14608] And the Holy Ghost says, that the sinner shall be consumed by the hatred which he bears himself; *with the rod of his anger he shall be consumed.*[14609] He, says Salvian, who offends God has no more cruel enemy than himself, since he himself has caused the torments which he suffers.[14610] God, he continues, does not wish to see us in affliction, but it is we who draw down sufferings upon ourselves, and by our sins enkindle the flames in which we are to burn.[14611] God punishes us, because we oblige him to punish us.

But I know, you say, the mercies of God are great: no matter how manifold my sins, I have in view a change of life by and by, and God will have mercy upon me. But no, God desires you not to speak thus. *And say not the mercy of the Lord is great, He will have mercy on the multitude of my sins.*[14612] And why has the Lord forbidden you to say so? The reason is this, *for mercy and wrath quickly come from Him.*[14613] Yes, it is true, God has patience, God waits for some sinners; I say some, for there are some whom God does not wait for at all; how many has he not sent to hell immediately after the first transgression? Others he does wait for, but he will not always wait for them; he spares them for a certain time and then punishes. *The Lord patiently expecteth, that when the day of judgment shall come, He may punish them in the fulness of their sins.*[14614] Mark well, *when the day of judgment shall come:* when the day of vengeance shall arrive, *in the fulness of their sins.* When the measure of sins which God has determined to pardon is filled up, he will punish. Then the Lord will have no mercy, and will chastise unremittingly.

The city of Jericho did not fall during the first circuit made by the Ark, it did not fall at the fifth, or at the sixth, but it fell at last at the seventh.[14615] And thus it will happen with thee, says St. Augustine, “at the seventh circuit made by the Ark the city of vanity will fall.”[14616] God has pardoned you your first sin, your tenth, your seventieth, perhaps your thousandth; he has often called you, now calls you again; tremble lest this should be the last circuit taken by the ark, that is, the last call, after which, if you do not change your life, it will be over with you. *For the earth*, says the Apostle, *that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it . . . and bringeth forth thorns and briars is reprobate, and very near unto a curse, whose end is to be burned.*[14617] That soul, he says, which has often received the waters of divine light and grace, and instead of bearing fruit produces nought but the thorns of sin, is nigh unto a curse, and its end will be to burn eternally in hell fire. In a word, when the period comes, God punishes.

And let us know, that when God wishes to punish, he is able and knows how to do it. *The daughter of Sion shall be left . . . as a city that is laid waste.*[14618] How many cities do we not know to have been destroyed and levelled with the ground, by reason of the sins of the inhabitants, whom God could no longer bear with! One day, Jesus Christ being within sight of the city of Jerusalem, gazed upon it, and thinking of the ruin which her crimes were to draw down upon her, our Redeemer, who is so full of compassion for our miseries, began to weep: *Seeing the city, He wept over it,* saying: *They shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.*[14619] Poor city, there shall not be left in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not been willing to know the grace which I gave thee in visiting Thee with so many benefits, and bestowing upon thee so many tokens of my love; whilst thou hast ungratefully despised me, and driven me away. *Jerusalem Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children and thou wouldst not, behold your house shall be left to you desolate.*[14620] Sinful brother, who knows whether God does not at this moment look upon your soul and weep? Perhaps he sees that you will not turn to account this visit which he now pays you, this summons which he gives you to change your life. *How often would I . . . and thou wouldst not.* How often, says the Lord, have I wished to draw you to me by the lights which I have given you? How often have I called you and you would not hear me? You have been deaf to me and fled from me. *Behold your house shall be left to you desolate.* Behold I am already on the point of abandoning you, and it I abandon you, your ruin will be inevitable, irreparable.

We would have cured Babylon, but she is not humbled; let us forsake her.[14621] The physician when he sees that the patient will not adopt his remedies, which he himself carries to him with so much kindness, and which the other flings out of the window—what does he do at length? He turns his back upon him and abandons him. My brethren, by how many remedies, by how many inspirations, by how many calls, has not God endeavored to avert damnation from you? What more can he do? If you damn yourself, can you complain of God who has called you in so many different ways? God calls you by the voice of his minister, he calls you by the voice that is within you, he calls you by his favors, he calls you lastly by temporal punishments; in order that you may learn to dread those which are eternal. St. Bernardine of Sienna says that for certain sins, more especially those which are scandalous, there is no more effectual method of doing away with them than by temporal punishments.[14622] But when the Lord sees that his favors serve only to make the sinner more insolent in his evil life, when he sees that his threats are disregarded, when he perceives, in a word, that he speaks and is not heard; then he abandons the sinner, and chastises him with eternal death. Therefore does he say, *Because I called and you refused . . . and have neglected my reprehensions, I will also laugh in your destruction and will mock when that shall come which you feared.*[14623] You, says God, have laughed at my words, my threats, and my chastisements, your last chastisement shall come, and then I will laugh at ye. *And it* (the rod) *was turned into a serpent.*[14624] St. Bruno, in his commentary upon this passage, says, "the rod is turned into a serpent when they will not amend."[14625] The eternal will succeed the temporal punishment.

Oh how well does not God know how to chastise, and so to order it that from the instruments and motives of sin should be drawn the chastisement! *That they might know that by what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented.*[14626] The Jews put Jesus Christ to death for fear the Romans should seize on their possessions. *If we let Him alone*, said they, *all will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation.*[14627] But the same sin of putting Jesus Christ to death was the cause of their being shortly after despoiled of everything by the Romans. "They feared they should lose temporal possessions," says St. Augustine, "and thought not of eternal life, and so lost both.’’[14628] In trying to save their possessions, they lost their souls; the punishment came, and they lost both. Thus it falls out with many; they lose their souls for the things of earth; but God often condemns them to beggary in this world, and reprobation in the next.

My brethren, provoke no longer the anger of your God, know that in proportion to the multitude of his mercies towards you, in proportion to the length of time he has borne with you, your punishment will be greater if you do not amend. "The Lord makes up for the slow ness of his chastisement," says St. Gregory, "by its grievousness when it does come."[14629] *Woe to thee, Corozain*, thus does the Lord speak to a soul that has abused his favors, *Woe to thee Bethsaida, for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty things which have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.*[14630] Yes, my brethren, if the graces which have been given to you had been given to a Turk or an Indian, *if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works which have been wrought in you,* he would have now been a saint, or at least have done great penance for his sins; and have you become a saint? have you at least done penance for your many mortal sins, for your many evil thoughts, words, and scandals? see you not how God is angry with you? how he stands with his scourge in his hand ? Do you see not death hanging over you.

And what are we to do? you inquire: are we to despair? No, God does not wish us to despair. *Let us go with confidence to the throne of grace:* that is what we are to do, as St. Paul exhorts us, in order *that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.*[14631] Let us at once go to the throne of grace that we may receive the pardon of our sins, and the remission of the punishment which overhangs us. By *seasonable aid* the Apostle means to convey that the aid which God may be willing to lend us to-day he may deny to-morrow. At once, then, to the throne of grace.

But what is the throne of grace? Jesus Christ, my brethren, is the throne of grace. *And He is the propitiation for our sins.*[14632] Jesus it is who by the merit of his blood can obtain pardon for us, but we must apply immediately. The Redeemer, during his preaching in Juda, cured the sick, and dispensed other favors as he went along; whoever was on the spot to ask a favor of him, obtained it; but whoever was negligent, and allowed him to pass without a request, remained as he was. *Who went about doing good.*[14633] It was this caused St. Augustine to say: "I fear Jesus passing by;"[14634] by which he meant to express that when the Lord offers us his grace, we must immediately correspond, doing our utmost to obtain it, that otherwise he will pass on and leave us without it. *To-day, if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts.*[14635] To-day God calls you; give yourself to God to-day; if you wait for to-morrow, intending to give yourself to him then, perhaps he will have ceased to call, and you will remain deserted.

Mary, the Queen and the mother of mercies, is also a throne of grace, as St. Antoninus says. Hence, if you see that God is angry with you, St. Bonaventure exhorts you to have recourse to the hope of sinners.[14636] "Go, have recourse to the hope of sinners: Mary is the hope of sinners, Mary who is called *the mother of holy hope*.[14637] But we must take notice that holy hope is the hope of that sinner who repents him of his evil ways, and determines upon a change of life; but if any one pursues an evil course in the hope that Mary will succor and save him, such a hope is false, such a hope is bad and rash. Let us then repent of our sins, resolve to amend, and then have recourse to Mary with a confidence that she will assist and save us. (Act of contrition.)

FOURTH DISCOURSE.

THE FOUR PRINCIPAL GATES OF HELL

“Defixæ sunt *in terra portæ ejus.”*

“Her gates are sunk into the ground.”—Lam. ii. 9.

Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat.[14638] Hell has then different gates, but these gates stand on our earth. *Her gates are sunk into the ground.*[14639] These are the vices by which men offend God, and draw down upon themselves chastisements and eternal death. Amongst the other vices, there are four which send most souls to hell, and on this earth bring upon men the scourges of God; and these four are, HATRED, BLASPHEMY, THEFT, and IMPURITY. Behold, the four gates by which the greater number of souls enter hell; and it is of these four that I mean to speak to-day, in order that you may amend and cure yourselves of these four vices, otherwise God will cure you of them, but by your own destruction.

1. HATRED

The first gate of hell is hatred. As paradise is the kingdom of love, so hell is the kingdom of hatred. Father, says such a person, I am grateful to and love my friends, but I cannot endure him who does me an injury. Now, brother, you must know that the barbarians, the Turks and Indians say and do all this: *Do not also the heathens this?*[14640] says the Lord. To wish well to him who serves you is a natural thing; it is done not only by the infidel, but even by the brutes and wild beasts. *But I say to you.*[14641] Hear what I say to you says Jesus Christ; hear my law, which is a law of love: *Love your enemies.*[14642] I wish, that you, my disciples, should love even your enemies. *Do good to them that hate you;*[14643] you must do good to them that wish you ill, *and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you;*[14644] if you can do nothing else, you must pray for them who persecute you, and then you shall be the children of God your father: *that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven.*[14645] St. Augustine then is right in saying that it is by love alone a child of God is known from a child of the devil.[14646] Thus have the saints always done; they have loved their enemies. A certain woman had traduced the honor of St. Catharine of Sienna, and the saint attended this same woman in her sickness, and ministered to her as a servant. St. Acaius sold his garment to succor one who had taken away his character. St. Ambrose gave to an assassin, who had attempted his life, a daily allowance, in order that he might have wherewithal to live. Such may indeed be called the children of God. Is it a great matter, says St. Thomas of Villanova, that often when we have received an injury from any one we forgive it at the suit of a friend who pleads for him? And shall we not do the same when God commands it?

Oh, how well grounded a hope of pardon has not he who pardons the man who has offended him. He has the promise of God himself, who says, *Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.*[14647] “By forgiving others,” says St. John Chrysostom, “you earn pardon for yourself.”[14648] But he, on the contrary, who will have vengeance, how can he hope for pardon for his sins? Such a person, in saying the “Our Father,” condemns himself when he says: “forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.”[14649] Then, when such a person wishes to take vengeance, he says to God: Lord, do not pardon me, because I will not pardon my enemies. You give judgment in your own cause, says St. John Chrysostom.[14650] But, be assured, that you shall be judged without mercy if you show not mercy to your neighbor. *For judgment without mercy to him that hath not done judgment.*[14651] But how, says St. Augustine, how can he who will not forgive his enemy, according to the command of God, have the face to ask pardon from God for his offences.[14652]

If then, my brethren, you wish to have revenge, bid adieu to paradise: *Without are dogs.*[14653] Dogs, on account of their natural fury, are taken to represent the revengeful. These dogs are shut out from paradise; they have a hell in this life; and they shall have hell in the next. “He who is at enmity with any one,” says St. John Chrysostom, “never enjoys peace: he is in everlasting trouble.”[14654]

But, Father, such a one has taken away my good name, which I will renounce for no one.[14655] Such is, forsooth, the proverb, ever in the mouths of those hellhounds who seek for revenge. He has taken away my honor, I must take his life. And is the life of a man at your disposal? God alone is master of life. *For it is Thou, O Lord, that hast the power of life and death.*[14656] Do you wish to take vengeance of your enemy? God wishes to lake vengeance of thee. Vengeance belongs to God alone. *Revenge is Mine, and I will repay them in due time.*[14657]

But how else, you say, can my honor be repaired? Well, and in order to repair your honor, you must trample under foot the honor of God. Do you not know, says St. Paul, that when you transgress the law you dishonor God? *Thou by transgression of the law dishonorest God.*[14658] And what honor is this of yours that you wish to repair? It is the same as the honor of a Turk, of an idolater: a Christian's honor is to obey God, and observe his law.

But other men will look down upon me; and so, for fear you should be looked down upon, you must condemn yourself to hell. But if you forgive, the good will praise you; wherefore it is, that St. John Chrysostom says: If you wish to be revenged, do good to your enemy, because then others will condemn your enemy,[14659] and speak well of you. It is not true that he loses his honor, who, when he has been injured or insulted, says: I am a Christian, I neither can nor will be revenged. Such a person gains instead of losing honor, and, besides, saves his soul. On the contrary, he who takes revenge will be punished by God, not only in the other life, but in this also. He is obliged to flee from the justice of men, after having taken that vengeance which will render his life henceforward miserable. What an unhappiness to live a fugitive; to be always in dread of justice; always in dread of the kindred of his victim; tormented with remorse of conscience, and condemned to hell?

And let us further know, my brethren, that revenge and the desire of revenge are alike enormous, are the same sin. Should we at any time receive an offence, what are we to do? When our passion begins to rise, we must have recourse to God, and to the most holy Mary, who will help us, and obtain strength for us to forgive. We should then endeavor to say: Lord, for the love of Thee I forgive the injury that has been done me, and do Thou in Thy mercy forgive me all the injuries I have done Thee.

2. BLASPHEMY.[14660]

Let us pass on to the second gate of hell, which is blasphemy. Some, when things go wrong with them, do not attack man, but endeavor to wreak their vengeance upon God himself by blasphemy. Know, my brethren, what manner of sin blasphemy is. A certain author says: “Every sin, compared with blasphemy, is light;”[14661] and first of all, St. John Chrysostom says, there is nothing worse than blasphemy.[14662] Other sins, says St. Bernard, are committed through frailty, but this only through malice.[14663] With reason, then, does St. Bernardine of Sienna call blasphemy a diabolical sin, because the blasphemer, like a demon, attacks God himself. He is worse than those who crucified Jesus Christ, because they did not know him to be God; but he who blasphemes knows him to be God, and insults him face to face. He is worse than the dogs, because dogs do not bite their masters, who feed them, but the blasphemer outrages God, who is at that very moment bestowing favors on him. What punishment, says St. Augustine, will suffice to chastise so horrid a crime?[14664] We should not wonder, says Julius III., that the scourges of God do not cease while such a crime exists among us.[14665]

Lorino[14666] cites the following fact: We read in the preface to the Pragmatic Sanction in France, that King Robert, when praying for the peace of the kingdom, was answered by the crucifix that the kingdom never should have had peace if he had not eradicated blasphemy. The Lord threatens to destroy the kingdom in which this accursed vice reigns. *They have blasphemed the Holy One of Israel; . . your land is desolate, . . . it shall be desolate.*[14667]

Oh, if there were always found some one to do what St. John Chrysostom advises: “Strike his mouth, and sanctify thereby thy hand.”[14668] The mouth of the accursed blasphemer should be struck, and he should then be stoned, as the old law commanded: *And he that blasphemth the name of the Lord, dying let him die: all the multitude shall stone him.*[14669] But it would be better if that were done which St. Louis, King of France, put in force: he commanded by edict that every blasphemer should be branded on the mouth with an iron. A certain nobleman having blasphemed, many persons besought the king not to inflict that punishment upon him; but St. Louis insisted upon its infliction in every instance; and some taxing him with excessive cruelty on that account, he replied that he would suffer his own mouth to be burned sooner than allow such an outrage to be put upon God in his kingdom.

Tell me, blasphemer, of what country are you? Allow me to tell you, you belong to hell. St. Peter was known in the house of Caiphas for a Galilean by his speech. *Surely thou also art one of them,* it was said to him, *for even thy speech doth discover thee.*[14670] What is the language of the damned?—blasphemy. *And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and wounds.*[14671] What do you gain, my brethren, by these your blasphemies? you gain no honor by them. Blasphemers are abhorred even by their blasphemous companions. Do you gain any temporal advantage? Do you not see that this accursed vice keeps us forever in beggary? *Sin maketh nations miserable.*[14672] Do you derive pleasure from it? What pleasure do you derive from blaspheming God? The pleasure of the damned; and that moment of madness past, what pain and bitterness does it not leave in your hear? Resolve to rid yourself of this vice in any event. Take care, if you do not abandon it now, that you will not carry it with you to death, as has happened to so many who have died with blasphemy in their mouths. But, Father, what can I do when the madness comes upon me? Good God! and are there no other means of working it off than by blasphemy? Say, cursed be my sins. Mother of God, assist me, give me patience; your passion, your anger, will pass off quickly, and you will find yourself in the grace of God after the trial. If you do not act thus, you will find yourself more afflicted and more lost than before.

3. THEFT.[14673]

Let us now pass on to the consideration of the third great gate of hell by which so large a portion of the damned enter; I mean theft, borne, so to speak, adore money as their God, and look upon it as the object of all their desires. *The idols of the Gentiles are silver and gold.*[14674] But the sentence of condemnation has already been pronounced against such: *or thieves* . . .

nor extortioners shall possess the kingdom of God.[14675] It is true that theft is not the most enormous of sins, but St. Antoninus says that it very much endangers salvation. The reason is because for the remission of other sins true repentance only is required; but repentance is not enough for the remission of theft: there must be restitution, and this is made with difficulty. A certain hermit had once the following vision: he saw Lucifer seated on a throne, and inquiring of one of his demons why he had been so long about returning. The latter replied that he had been detained by his endeavors to tempt a thief not to restore what he had stolen. Let this fool be severely punished, said Lucifer. To what purpose have you spent this time? do you not know that he who has taken the property of another never restores it? And, in truth, so it is: the property of another becomes to him who takes it like his own blood; and the pain of suffering one's blood to be drawn for another is very difficult to endure. We learn it every day from experience: innumerable thefts take place; how much restitution do you see?

My brethren, see that you take not the property of your neighbor, and if during the past you have ever failed in this respect, make restitution as soon as possible. If you cannot at once make full restitution, do it by degrees. Know that the property of another in your possession will not only be the means of bringing you to hell, but will make you miserable even in this life. Thou hast despoiled others, says the prophet, and others shall despoil thee. *Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all that shall be left of the people shall spoil thee.*[14676] The property of another brings with it a curse which will fall upon the entire house of the thief. *This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the earth, . . . and it shall come to the house of the thief;*[14677] that is to say (as St. Gregory Nazianzen explains it), that the thief shall lose not only the stolen property, but his own[14678] The goods of another are as fire and smoke to consume everything that comes in their way.

Remember well, mothers and wives, when children or husbands bring home the property of their neighbor, remember well to chide and reprove them; not to applaud their action, or even consent to it by silence.

Tobias hearing a lamb bleat in his house, *Take heed,* said he, *lest perhaps it be stolen; restore ye it to its owners.*[14679] St Ausjustine says that Tobias, because he loved God, did not wish to hear the sound of theft in his house.[14680] Some persons take the property of their neighbor, and then are fain to quiet their consciences by alms-deeds. Christ, says St. John Chrysostom, will not be fed with the plunder of others.[14681] The sins of this kind, committed by the great, are acts of injustice, the injuries that they inflict upon others, the taking from the poor of what is their due. These are descriptions of theft which require perfect restitution, and a restitution most difficult of all to make, and most likely to be the cause of one's damnation.

4. IMPURITY

We have now, lastly, to speak of the fourth gate of hell, which is impurity, and it is by this gate that the greater number of the damned enter. Some will say that it is a trifling sin. Is it a trifling sin? It is a mortal sin. St. Antoninus writes, that such is the nauseousness of this sin; that the devils themselves cannot endure it. Moreover, the Doctors of the Church say that certain demons, who have been superior to the rest, remembering their ancient dignity, disdain tempting to so loathsome a sin. Consider then how disgusting he must be to God, who, like a dog, is ever returning to his vomit, or wallowing like a pig in the stinking mire of this accursed vice. *The dog is returned to his vomit; and the sow that was washed, to her rolling in the mire.*[14682]

The impure say, moreover, God has compassion on us who are subject to this vice, because he knows that we are flesh. What do you say? God has compassion on this vice. But you must know that the most horrible chastisements with which God has ever visited the earth have been drawn down by this vice. St. Jerome says that this is the only sin of which we read that it caused God to repent him of having made man. *It repented Him that had made man; . . . for all flesh had corrupted its way.*[14683] Wherefore it is, St. Jerome says,[14684] that there is no sin which God punishes so rigorously, even upon earth, as this. He once sent fire from heaven upon five cities, and consumed all their inhabitants for this sin. Principally on account of this sin did God destroy mankind, with the exception of eight persons, by the deluge. It is a sin which God punishes, not only in the other life, but in this also. In confirmation of this, you have only to enter the hospitals, and see there the many poor young men, who were once strong and robust, but are now weak, squalid, full of pains, tormented with lancets and caustic, and ulcers, all through this accursed vice. *Because thou hast forgotten Me and cast Me off behind thy back, bear thou also thy wickedness and thy fornications.*[14685] Because, says God, you have forgotten me and turned your back upon me, for a miserable pleasure of the flesh, I am resolved that even in this life you shall pay the forfeit of your wickedness.

You say, God has compassion upon men subject to this sin. But it is this sin that sends most men to hell. St. Remigius says, that the greater number of the damned are in hell through this vice. Father Segneri writes, that as this vice fills the world with sinners, so it fills hell with damned souls; and before him St. Bernardine of Sienna wrote: "This sin draws the whole world, as it were, into sin."[14686] And before him St. Bernard, St. Isidore, said, that "the human race is brought under the power of the devil more by lust than by all the other vices."[14687] The reason is, because this vice proceeds from the natural inclination of the flesh. Hence the angelic Doctor says, that the devil does not take such complacency in securing the commission of any other sin as of this, because the person who is plunged in this infernal mire remains fast therein, and almost wholly unable to free himself more. "No one is so obstinate in sin as the impure,"[14688] says St. Thomas of Villanova. Moreover, this vice deprives one of all light, for the impure man becomes so blind as almost wholly to forget God, says St. Laurence Justinian;[14689] which is in accordance with what is said by the prophet Osee: *They will not set their thoughts to return to their God; for the spirit of fornication is in the midst of them, and they have not known God.*[14690] The impure man knows not God; he obeys neither God nor reason, as St. Jerome says; he obeys only the sensual appetite which causes him to act the beast.[14691]

This sin, because it flatters, makes us fall at once into the habit of it, a habit which some carry with them even to death. You see husbands, and decrepit old men, indulge in the same thoughts and committing the same sins that they committed in their youth. And because sins of this kind are so easily committed, they become multiplied without number. Ask of the sinner how many impure thoughts he has consented to: he will tell you he cannot remember. But, brother, if you cannot tell the number, God can; and you know that a single immodest thought is enough to send you to hell. How many immodest words have you spoken, in which you took delight yourself, and by which you scandalized your neighbor? From thoughts and words you proceed to acts, and to those innumerable impurities which those wretches roll and wallow in like swine,[14692] without ever being satisfied, for this vice is never satisfied.

But, Father, you will say, how can I hold out against the innumerable temptations which assail me? I am weak, I am flesh. And since you are weak, why not recommend yourself to God, and to most holy Mary, who is the mother of purity? Since you are flesh, why do you throw yourself in the way of sin? Why do you not mortify your eyes? Why do you gaze upon those objects whence temptations flow? St. Aloysius never raised his eyes to look even upon his mother.

It is to be remarked, moreover, that this sin brings with it innumerable others: enmities, thefts, and, more especially, sacrilegious confessions and Communions, by reason of the shame which will not allow these impurities to be disclosed in confession. And let us remark herein passing, that it is sacrilege above all things, that brings upon us sickness and death; for, says the Apostle, *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself not discerning the body of the Lord;* and then he adds: *therefore arc many infirm and weak among you.*[14693] And St. John Chrysostom, in explanation of that passage, says that St. Paul speaks of persons who were chastised with bodily infirmities, because they received the sacrament with a guilty conscience.[14694]

My brethren, should you ever have been sunk in this vice, I do not bid you be disheartened, but arise at once from this foul and infernal pit; beg of God forthwith to give you light, and stretch out his hand to you. The first thing that you have to do is to break with the occasion of sin: without that, preaching and tears and resolutions and confessions, all are lost. Remove the occasions, and then constantly recommend yourself to God, and to Mary the mother of purity. No matter how grievously you may be tempted, do not be discouraged by the temptation; at once call to your aid Jesus and Mary, pronouncing their sacred names. These blessed names have the virtue of making the devil fly, and stifling that hellish flame within you. If the devil persist in tempting you, persevere in calling upon Jesus and Mary, and certainly you shall not fall. In order to rid yourself of your evil habits, undertake some special devotion to our Lady; begin to fast in her honor upon Saturdays; contrive to visit her image every day, and beg of her to obtain for you deliverance from that vice. Every morning immediately after rising, never omit saying three “Hail Marys” in honor of her purity and do the same when going to bed; and above all things, as I have said, when the temptation is most troublesome, call quickly upon Jesus and Mary. Beware, brother, if you do not be converted now, you may never be converted. (Act of contrition.)

FIFTH DISCOURSE.

EXTERNAL DEVOTIONS ARE USELESS IF WE DO NOT CLEANSE OUR SOULS FROM SIN

“Et nunc nolite illudere ut forte constringantur vincula tua.”

“And now do not mock, lest your bonds be tied strait.”—Isa. xxvii. 22.

GOD commands Jonas to go and preach to Ninive. Jonas, instead of obeying God, flies by sea towards Tharsis. But, behold! a great tempest threatens to sink the ship; and Jonas knowing that the tempest was raised in punishment of his disobedience, said to the crew of the vessel: *Take me up and cast me into the sea, and the sea shall be calm to you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.*[14695] And they actually did cast him into the sea, and the tempest ceased thereupon. *And the sea ceased from raging.*[14696] Then if Jonas had not been thrown into the sea the tempest should not have ceased. Consider well, my brethren, what we are to learn from this. It is, that if we do not cast sin out of our souls, the tempest, that is, the scourge of God, will not cease. The tempest is excited by our sins; the tempest which is hurrying us to destruction. *Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*[14697] Behold, we have penitential exercises, novenas, and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; but to what purpose are those if we be not converted, if we do not rid our souls of sin? The subject of our discourse is: EXTERNAL DEVOTIONS ARE USELESS, IF WE DO NOT ABANDON OUR SINS; because otherwise we cannot please God.

It is said that the pain is not removed before the thorn has been plucked out. St. Jerome writes that God is never angered, since anger is passion, and passion is incompatible with God. He is always tranquil; and even in the act of punishing, his tranquillity is not in the least disturbed. *But Thou being master of power, judgest with tranquillity.*[14698] But the malice of mortal sin is so great, that if God were capable of wrath and affliction, it would enrage and afflict him. It is this that sinners do as far as in them lies, according to that of Isaias: *But they provoked to wrath, and afflicted the spirit of His holy one.*[14699] Moses writes, that when God was about to send the deluge, he declared himself to be so much afflicted by the sins of men as to be obliged to exterminate them from the earth. *And being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, He said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth.*[14700]

St. John Chrysostom says that sin is the only cause of all our sufferings and chastisements.[14701] Commenting upon these words in Genesis which the Lord spoke after the deluge, *I will place My bow in the clouds,*[14702] St. Ambrose[14703] remarks that God does not say I will place my arrow, but my *bow*, in the clouds; giving us thereby to understand that it is always the sinner who fixes the arrow in the bow of God by provoking him to chastisement.

If we wish to be pleasing to the Lord, we must remove the cause of his anger, which is sin. The man sick of the palsy besought Jesus Christ to restore the health of his body; but, before granting his request, our Lord first restored his soul's health by giving him sorrow for his sins, and then saying to him: *Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee.*[14704] St. Thomas says that the Redeemer first removed the cause of his infirmity, namely, his sins, and then freed him from the infirmity itself. “He asked for the health of the body, and the Lord gave him the health of the soul; because, like a good physician, he wished to take away the root of the evil.”[14705] Sin is the root of every evil, as we find in St. Bernardine of Sienna.[14706] Hence the Lord after having healed him, warned him against sin in these words: *Go thy way, and sin no more, lest something worse befall thee.*[14707] Ecclesiasticus said the same before our Lord: *My son, in thy sickness* . . . *cleanse thy heart from sin, . . . and then give place to the physician.*[14708] You must first apply to the physician of the soul in order that he may free you from your sins, and then to the physician of the body that he may cure you of your disease.

In a word, the cause of all our chastisements is sin; and still more than sin, our obstinacy in it, as St. Basil says.[14709] We have offended God, and are, notwithstanding, unwilling to do penance. When God calls by the voice of his punishment, he desires that he should be heard; if he be not, he shall be compelled by ourselves to curse us: *But if thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God . . . all these curses shall come upon thee; . . . cursed shaft thou be in the city, cursed in the field.*[14710] . . . When we offend God, we provoke all creatures to punish us. St. Anselm says that in the same manner as a servant, when he offends his master, draws down upon him the wrath, not only of his master, but of the whole family; so we, when we offend God, excite against us the anger of all creatures.[14711] And St. Gregory says that we have more especially irritated against us those creatures which we have made use of against our Creator.[14712] God's mercy holds in those creatures that they may not afflict us, but when he sees that we make no account of his threats, and continue to live on in our former way, he will then make use of those creatures to take vengeance on us for the injuries we have done him: *He will arm the creature for the revenge of His enemies. And the whole world shall fight with Him against the unwise.*[14713] "There is no creature," says St. John Chrysostom, "which will not feel anger when it sees its Lord in anger."[14714]

If then, my brethren, we do not appease God by our conversion, we never shall be free from chastisement. What folly, says St. Gregory, could be more extreme than to imagine that God should cease to chastise before we should have ceased to offend?[14715] Many now come to the church, and hear the sermon, but go away without confession, or change of life. If we do not remove the cause of the scourge, how can we expect to be delivered from the scourge itself.[14716] Such is the reflection of St. Jerome. We continue to irritate God, and then wonder that God should continue to chastise us. "Impure as we are," says Salvian, "we wonder why we should be so miserable."[14717] Do we think that God is appeased by the mere circumstance of our appearing at church without repenting of our sins, without restoring the property or character of our neighbor, without avoiding those occasions of sin which keep us at a distance from God? Ah, let us not mock the Lord! *And now do not mock, lest your bonds be tied strait.*[14718] Do not mock God, says the prophet, lest those bonds which are securing you for hell be tied strait. Cornelius a Lapide, in commenting on the above passage of Isaias, says that when the fox is caught in the snare, its efforts to disengage itself only serve to entangle it the more. "So also will it happen to sinners who, while mocking at God's threats and punishments, become more and more involved in them.”[14719] My brethren, let us have done; let us no more irritate God, the chastisement is near at hand: *For I have heard of the Lord the God of Hosts,* continues the prophet, *a consumption, and a cutting short upon all the earth.*[14720] I am not the prophet Isaias but I can say that I see the scourge which is hanging over us if we do not be converted.

Hear how the Lord says to you: *Who requires these things at your hands?*[14721] Who required your perpetual exercises and your visits of devotion to the church? I will have nothing from you unless you abandon sin: *Offer sacrifice no more in vain.*[14722] Of what use are your devotions if you do not amend your lives. *My soul hateth your solemnities.*[14723] Know, says the Lord, that your homage and external devotions are hateful to my soul whilst you think by these to avert your chastisement without removing your offences: *With burnt offerings Thou wilt not be delighted; a sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit.*[14724] No devotions, or alms, or penitential works are accepted by God from a soul in the state of sin, and without repentance. God accepts the acts of him alone who is contrite for his sin, and resolved upon a change of life.

Oh, surely God is not to be mocked![14725] I never commanded you, he says, to perform those devotions and acts of penance: *For I spoke not to your fathers . . . concerning the matter of burnt offering and sacrifices, but this thing I commanded them, saying: Hearken to My voice, and I will be your God.*[14726] What I wish of you, says God, is, that you hear my voice and change your life, and make a good confession, with real sorrow, for you must know yourselves, that your other confessions, followed by so many relapses, have been worth nothing. *I* wish that you should do violence to yourselves in breaking with that connection, with that company. I wish that you should endeavor to restore that property, to make good to your neighbor such a loss. *Hearken to My voice, obey My command, and I will be your God.* I will then be to you the God of mercy, such as you would have me to be. Cardinal Hugo, in his comment upon these words of our Lord, in the Gospel according to St. Matthew: *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,*[14727] says: “Some have ears, but ears which do not serve them for hearing.”[14728] How many attend sermons and receive admonitions from the confessor, in which they are told all that they must do in order to please

God; but they leave the church only to live worse than before. How can God be appeased by such? or how can such be delivered from the divine chastisement? *Offer up the sacrifice of justice, and trust in the Lord,*[14729] says David. Honor God not in appearance, but by works. It is that which is meant by “the sacrifice of justice;” honor him by bewailing your sins, by the frequentation of the sacraments, by a change of life and then hope in the Lord; but to hope while you continue the state of sin, is not hope—it is rashness, it is a deceit of the enemy, and renders you more odious in the sight of God, and more deserving of punishment.

My brethren, you see that the Lord is in wrath, that he already has his hand lifted to strike with the scourge which threatens us; how do you think to escape? *Who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come?*[14730] *Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of penance,*[14731] says St. John the Baptist, preaching to the Jews of his day. You must do penance, but penance deserving of his pardon; that is it must be true and resolute. Your anger must be changed into meekness, by the forgiveness of those who offend you; your intemperance must become abstinence, by observing the fasts *commanded,* at least, by the Church; and by abstaining from the immoderate use of intoxicating drinks, which change man into a beast: therefore you must avoid the public house; impurity must give way in you to chastity, by not returning to that filthy vomit, by resisting evil thoughts, by not using bad words, by fleeing from bad companions and dangerous conversation. *You must bring forth fruit worthy of penance,* and the bringing forth of such fruit implies also that we attend to the service of God, and endeavor to serve him more than we offended him; *For, as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, . . . so now yield your members to love justice.*[14732] bus have done a St. Mary Magdalen, a St. Augustine, a St. Mary of Egypt, a St. Margaret of Cortona, who by their works of penance and sanctification rendered themselves more dear to God than others who had been less sinful, but more tepid. St. Gregory says: “For the most part, a fervent life after sin is the more pleasing to God than a life which, though innocent, is tepid.[14733] And thus does the saint explain the following passage of the Gospel: *There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance.*[14734] This is understood of the sinner who, after having arisen from sin, sets about serving God with more fervor than others who have long been just.

This is to bring forth fruit worthy of penance, not content one's self with hearing sermons and visiting the church, without abandoning sin, or avoiding the occasion of it. To act thus, is rather a mockery of God, and calculated to excite him to greater wrath. *And, think not,* pursues St. John the Baptist, *think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father.*[14735] It will not do to say, we have the Mother of God to assist us, we have our patron saint to procure us deliverance; because if we do not abandon our sins the saints cannot help us. The saints are the friends of God; hence they not only have no inclination, but they would even feel ashamed, to succor the obstinate. Let us tremble, because the Lord has already published the sentence: *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire.*[14736] Brother, how many years have you been in the world? Tell me what fruit of good works have you hitherto borne, what honor have you rendered to God by your life? Sin, outrage, contempt, such are the fruit you have borne, the honor you have rendered to God.—God now in his mercy gives you time for penance, in order that you may bewail the injuries you have done him, and love him the remainder of your days. What do you intend to do? What have you resolved upon? Resolve at once to give yourself to God. What do you expect? unless that if you do not at once turn to God, you shall be cut down and cast into the fire of hell.

But let us now bring our instruction to a conclusion; the Lord has sent me to preach here to-day, and has inspired you to come and listen to me, because he wishes to spare you the punishment which threatens you, if you do really turn to him: *Leave not out one word, if so be they will hearken and be converted, every one from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil which I think to do unto them.*[14737] The Lord has desired me to tell you on his part that he is willing to relent, and withdraw the scourge which he meant to inflict upon you: *That I may repent me of the evil which I think to do unto them ;* but on this condition, *if so be they will hearken and be converted every one from his evil way,* if they truly reform, otherwise he will put his threat in execution.—Tremble then if you be not yet resolved to change your life.

But, on the other hand, be joyful if you mean to turn in good earnest to God. *Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord,*[14738] because God is all tenderness and love to those that seek him. *The Lord is good* . . . *to the soul that seeketh Him.*[14739] Neither does the Lord know how to reject a heart humble and contrite for its offences. *A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*[14740] Let us be joyful, then, if we have the good intention of changing our lives, and if, on seeing ourselves guilty of so many sins before the Lord, we stand very much in fear of the divine judgments, let us have recourse to the Mother of mercies, the most holy Mary, who defends and secures from the divine vengeance all those who take refuge under her mantle.—“I am the citadel of all those who fly to me;”[14741] thus is she made to speak by St. John Damascene. (Act of contrition.)

SIXTH DISCOURSE.

GOD CHASTISES US IN THIS LIFE FOR OUR GOOD, NOT FOR OUR DESTRUCTION

“Mon enim delectaris in perditionibus nostris.”

“For thou art not delighted in our being lost.”—Job, iii. 22.

LET US feel persuaded, my brethren, that there is no one who loves us more than God. St. Teresa says that God loves us more than we love ourselves. He has loved us from eternity. *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*[14742] It is the love he has borne us which has drawn us from nothing, and given us being. *Therefore have I drawn Thee, taking pity on Thee.*[14743] Hence, when God chastises us upon the earth, it is not because he wishes to injure us, but because he wishes us well, and loves us. *But of this every one is sure that worshippeth Thee, that his life, if it be under trial, shall be crowned: and if it be under tribulation, shall be delivered.*[14744] So spoke Sara the wife of Tobias: Lord, he who serves thee is sure that after the trial shall have passed he shall be crowned, and that after tribulation he shall be spared the punishment which he deserved: *For Thou art not delighted in our being lost: because after a storm Thou makest a calm, and after tears and weeping Thou pourest in joyfullness.*[14745] After the tempest of chastisement he gives us peace, and after mourning, joy and gladness.

My brethren, let us convince ourselves of what I have undertaken to show you to-day, namely, that God does not afflict us in this life for our injury but for our good, in order that we may cease from sin, and by recovering his grace escape eternal punishment.

And I will give My fear in their heart, that they may not revolt from Me.[14746] The Lord says that he infuses his fear into our hearts, in order that he may enable us to triumph over our passion for earthly pleasures, for which, ungrateful that we are, we have left him. And when sinners have left him, how does he make them look into themselves, and recover his grace?

By putting on the appearance of anger, and chastising them in this life: *In Thy anger Thou shalt break the people in pieces.*[14747] Another version, according to St. Augustine, has: “In thy wrath thou shalt conduct the people.” The saint inquiring, What is the meaning of his conducting the people in his wrath? he then replies: “Thou, O Lord, fillest us with tribulations, in order that, being thus afflicted, we may abandon our sins and return to Thee.”[14748]

When the mother wishes to wean her infant how does she proceed? She puts gall upon her breast. Thus the Lord endeavors to draw our souls to himself, and wean them from the pleasures of this earth, which make them live in forgetfulness of their eternal salvation; he fills with bitterness all their pleasures, pomps, and possessions, in order that, not finding peace in those things, they may turn to God, who alone can satisfy them.

In their affliction they will rise early to Me.[14749] God says within himself, It I allow those sinners to enjoy their pleasures undisturbed, they will remain in the sleep of sin: they must be afflicted, in order that, recovering from their lethargy, they may return to me. When they shall be in tribulation they will say: *Come, let us return to the Lord, for He hath taken us, and He will heal us; He will strike and He will cure us.*[14750] What shall become of us, say those sinners, as they enter into themselves, if we do not turn from our evil courses? God will not be appeased, and will with justice continue to punish us: come on, let us retrace our steps; for he will cure us, and if he has afflicted us just now, he will upon our return think of consoling us with his mercy.

In the day of my trouble I sought God, . . . and I was not deceived,[14751] because he raised me up. For this reason does the prophet thank the Lord that he hath humbled him after his sin; because he was thus taught to observe the divine laws: *It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy justifications.*[14752] Tribulation is for the sinner at once a punishment and a grace, says St. Augustine.[14753] It is a punishment inasmuch as it has been drawn down upon him by his sins; but it is a grace, and an important grace, inasmuch as it may ward eternal destruction from him, and is an assurance that God means to deal mercifully with him if he look into himself, and receive with thankfulness that tribulation which has opened his eyes to his miserable condition, and invites him to return to God.

Let us then be converted, my brethren, and we shall escape from our several chastisements: “Why should he who accepts chastisement as a grace be afraid after receiving it?”[14754] says St. Augustine. He who turns to God, smarting from the scourge, has no longer anything to fear, because God scourges only in order that we may return to him; and this end once obtained, the Lord will scourge us no more.

St. Bernard says that it is impossible to pass from the pleasures of the earth to those of Paradise. “It is difficult, even impossible, for any one to enjoy present and future goods, to pass from delights to delights.”[14755] Therefore does the Lord say, *Envy not the man who prospereth in his way, the man who doth unjust things.*[14756] “Does he prosper?” says St. Augustine; “ay, but ‘in his own way.’ And do you suffer? You do, but it is in the way of God.”[14757] You who walk before God are in tribulation, but he, evil as is his way, prospers. Mark now—what the saint says in conclusion: “He has prosperity in this life, he shall be miserable in the next; you have tribulation in this life, you shall be happy in the next.”[14758] Be glad, therefore, O sinners! and thank God when he punishes you in this life, and takes vengeance of your sins; because you may know thereby that he means to treat you with mercy in the next. *Thou wast a merciful God to them, and taking vengeance on their inventions.*[14759] The Lord when he chastises us has not chastisement so much in view as our conversion. God said to Nabuchodonozor: *Thou shalt eat grass like an ox, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.*[14760] For seven years, Nabuchodonozor, shalt thou be compelled to feed upon grass like a beast in order that thou mayest know I am the Lord; that it is I who give kingdoms, and take them away; and that thou mayest thus be cured of thy pride. And in fact this judgment did cause the haughty king to enter into himself and change; so that, after having been restored to his former condition, he said: *Therefore I , Nabuchodo—nozor, do now praise and magnify the King of heaven.*[14761] And God gave him back his kingdom. “He willingly changed his sentence,” says St. Jerome, “because he saw his works changed.”[14762]

Unhappy we, says the same saint, when God does not punish us in this life! It is a sign that he means us for eternal chastisements.[14763] What do we conclude, he continues, when the surgeon sees the flesh about to mortify, and does not cut it away? we conclude that he abandons the patient to death? God spares the sinner in this life, says St. Gregory, only to chastise him in the next.[14764] Woe to those sinners to whom God has ceased to speak, and appears not to be in anger. *I will cease and be angry no more.*[14765] The Lord then goes on to say: *But thou hast provoked Me in all these things: . . . and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, . . . that thou mayest remember, and be confounded.*[14766] A clay will come, he says, ungrateful sinner, when you shall know what I am; then shall you remember the graces I have given you, and see with confusion your black ingratitude.

Woe to the sinner who goes on in his evil life, and whom God in his vengeance suffers to accomplish his perverse desires, according to what is said by the prophet: *Israel hearkened not to Me, so I let them go according to the desires of their heart.*[14767] It is a sign that the Lord wishes to reward them on this earth for whatever little good they may have done, and reserves the chastisement of their sins for eternity. Speaking of the sinner whom he treats thus in this life, the Lord says. *Let us have pity on the wicked, but he will not learn justice, . . . and he shall not see the glory of the Lord.*[14768] Thus does the poor sinner hasten on to his ruin, because seeing himself prosperous, he deceives himself into the expectation that as God is dealing mercifully with him now, he will continue to do the same; and by this delusion he will be led to live on in his sins. But will the Lord be always thus merciful to him? No, the day of punishment will come at length, when he shall be excluded from paradise, and flung into the dungeon of the rebels: *And he shall not see the glory of the Lord.* “Let us have pity on the wicked; far from me be this mercy,”[14769] says St. Jerome. Lord, he says, extend not to me this dreadful pity; if I have offended Thee, let me be chastised for it in this life; because if Thou dost not chastise me here in this life, I shall have to be chastised in the other world for all eternity. For this reason did St. Augustine say: “Lord, here cut, here burn, that you may spare during eternity.”[14770] Chastise me here, O God, and do not spare me now, in order that I may be spared the punishment of hell. When the surgeon cuts the imposthume of the patient, it is a sign that he means to have him healed. St. Augustine says: “It is most merciful of the Lord not to suffer iniquity to pass unpunished.”[14771] The Lord deals very mercifully with the sinner when by chastisement he makes him enter into himself in this life. Hence Job besought the Lord so earnestly to afflict him. *And that this may be my comfort, that afflicting me with sorrow He spare not.*[14772]

Jonas slept in the ship when he was flying from the Lord; but God seeing that the wretched man was on the brink of temporal and eternal death, caused him to be warned of the tempest: *Why art thou fast asleep; rise up, call upon thy God.*[14773] God my brethren, now warns ye in like manner. You have been in the state of sin, deprived of sanctifying grace, the chastisement has come, and hat chastisement is the voice of God, saying to you, “Why are you fast asleep? rise and call upon your God.” Awake, sinner! do not live on forgetful of your soul and of God. Open your eyes, and see how you stand upon the verge of hell, where so many wretches are now bewailing sins less grievous than yours, and are you asleep? have you no thought of confession? no thought of rescuing yourself from eternal death? *Rise, call upon your God.* Up from that infernal pit into which you have fallen; pray to God to pardon you, beg of him this at least, if you are not at once resolved to change your life, that he will give you light, and make you see the wretched state in which you stand. Learn how to profit by the warning which the Lord vouchsafes you. Jeremias first sees a rod. *I see a rod watching;* he next sees a boiling caldron: *I see a boiling caldron.*[14774] St. Ambrose, in speaking of this passage, explains it thus: He who is not corrected by the rod, shall be thrown into the caldron, there to burn.[14775] He whom the temporal chastisement fails to convert, shall be sent to burn eternally in hell-fire. Sinful brother, listen to God, who addresses himself to your heart, by this chastisement, and calls on you to do penance. Tell me what answer do you make him?

The prodigal son, after having left his father, thought no more upon him, whilst he continued to live amid delights; but when he saw himself reduced to that state of misery described in the Gospel, poor, deserted, obliged to tend swine, and not allowed to fill himself with the food wherewith the swine were filled, then he came to himself, and said: *How many hired servants in my father’s house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger.*[14776] *I will arise and go to my father.*[14777] And so he did, and was lovingly received by his father. Brother, you have to do in like manner. You see the unhappy life you have hitherto led, by living away from God; a life full of thorns and bitterness; a life which could not be otherwise, as being without God, who alone can give content. You see how many servants of God who love him lead a happy life, and enjoy continual peace, the peace of God, which, as the Apostle says, surpasses all the pleasures of the senses. *The peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding.*[14778] And what are you doing? Do you not feel that you suffer a hell in this life? do you not know that you shall suffer one in the next? Take courage, say with the prodigal: *I will arise and go to my father.* I will arise from this sleep of death—this state of damnation, and return to God. It is true that I have sufficiently outraged him by leaving him so much against his desire, but he is still my Father. *I will arise and go to my father.* And when you shall go to that Father, what shall you say to him? Say what the prodigal said to his father: *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee; I am not now worthy to be called thy son.*[14779] Father, I acknowledge my error, I have done ill to leave Thee, who have so much loved me; I see now' that I am no longer worthy to be called Thy son; receive me at least as Thy servant; restore me at least to Thy grace, and then chastise me as Thou pleasest.

Oh, happy you, if you say and do thus! the same will happen you which befel the prodigal son. The father, when he saw his son retracing his steps, and perceived that he had humbled himself for his fault, not only did not drive him off—not only received him into his house, but embraced and kissed him as his son. *And running to him, fell upon his neck and kissed him.*[14780] He then clothed him with a precious garment, which represents the robe of grace: *Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him.*[14781] And he, moreover, makes a great feast in the house, to commemorate the recovery of his son, whom he looked upon as lost and dead: *Let us eat and make merry, because this my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found.*[14782]

Let us then be joyful, my brethren; it is true that God appears to be in wrath, but he is still our Father; let us retrace our steps in penance, and he will be appeased and spare us. Behold Mary our Mother praying for us on the one hand, and on the other turned towards us, saying, *In me is all hope of life and of virtue; . . . come over to me all.*[14783] My children, that Mother of Mercy says to us, My poor afflicted children, have recourse to me, and in me you shall find all hope; my son denies me nothing.[14784] You were dead by sin; come to me, find me, and you shall find life—the life of divine grace, which I shall recover for you by my intercession (Act of contrition.)

SEVENTH DISCOURSE.

GOD CHASTISES US IN THIS LIFE, ONLY THAT HE MAY SHOW US MERCY IN THE NEXT

"Ego quos amo arguo et castigo."

"Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise."—Apoc. iii. 19.

WHEN the Lord had raised that great tempest which threatened to sink the ship in which Jonas was sailing, in punishment of his disobedience to the divine command, that he should preach to the Ninevites, every one in the vessel was watching and in great fear, praying each to his God, with the exception of Jonas, who was asleep within the vessel: *He fell into a deep sleep.*[14785] But, knowing that he was the cause of the tempest, he caused himself to be thrown into the sea, and was there swallowed by the whale. When Jonas found himself in the body of that fish, and in such extreme danger of death, he addressed himself to God in prayer, and God delivered him: *I cried out of my affliction to the Lord, and the Lord heard me.*[14786] "Behold," says St. Zeno, "how' Jonas, who slumbered in the ship, is awake in the whale."[14787] While in the ship, he slumbered in his sin; but when suffering chastisement, and upon the point of death, he opened his eyes and remembered God; hence he had recourse to the divine mercy which delivered him, causing the fish to leave him safe and sound upon the shore. Many persons, before seeing the divine chastisements, sleep in their sins, forgetful of God; but the Lord, because he does not desire their destruction, sends them afflictions, so that, roused from their lethargy, they return to him, and thus he is enabled to avoid punishing them during all eternity. The following is, then, the subject of this discourse: GOD PUNISHES US IN THIS LIFE, IN ORDER TO SPARE US IN THE NEXT.

We have not been created for this earth; we have been created for the blessed kingdom of Paradise. For this reason it is, says St. Augustine, that God mingles so much bitterness with the delights of the world in order that we may not forget him and eternal life.[14788] If, living as we do amid so many thorns in this life, we are strongly attached to it, and long so little after Paradise, how little should we not value Paradise if God were not to embitter continually the pleasures of this earth?

If we have offended God, we must needs be punished for it either in this world or in the next. St. Ambrose says that God is merciful as well when he punishes as when he does not.[14789] The chastisements of God are the effect of his love; they are, to be sure, punishments, but punishments which ward off from us eternal punishment, and bring us to everlasting happiness. *But whilst we are judged, we are chastised by the Lord, that we be not condemned with this world.*[14790] And Judith reminded the Hebrews of the same truth when they were under the scourge of the Lord: *Let us believe that these scourges of the Lord, with which like servants we are chastised, have happened for our amendment, and not for our destruction.*[14791] Sara, the wife of Tobias, says the same: *But of this every one is sure that worshippeth Thee: . . . if his life be under correction, it shall be allowed to come to Thy mercy, for Thou art not delighted in our being lost.*[14792] Lord, she said, Thou chastisest us here in order that Thou mayest spare us in the other life, for Thou dost not desire our destruction.

We have it from God himself that those whom he loves in this life he chastises in order that they may be converted: *Those whom I love I rebuke and chastise.*[14793] Where God loves, says St. Basil of Seleucia, severity is usually the pledge of his graces.[14794] Unhappy are the sinners who living in the state of sin prosper in this life; it is a sign that God reserves them for everlasting punishment. *The sinner hath provoked the Lord; according to the multitude of His wrath, He will not seek him.*[14795] Behold! says St. Augustine, speaking of the passage quoted, behold the most grievous chastisement! When he does not appear to take notice of the sinner, and leaves him unpunished, it is a sign that he is very wroth.[14796] I call you, says God to him whom he chastises, and will you be deaf to my voice? Son, be converted, otherwise you shall confirm my anger, since I shall cease to regard your salvation, and allow you to live on in your sins without punishment, but only that I may punish you in the life to come. *And My indignation shall rest in thee; and My jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will cease and be angry no more.*[14797] The Apostle warns you, my brethren, not to be deaf to the voice of God, for that on the day of judgment your obstinacy shall be rewarded with a dreadful chastisement, and that chastisement eternal. *But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of* God, *who will render to every man according to his works.*[14798]

So that, St. Jerome says, that there cannot be a greater punishment for a sinner than that he should not be punished in this life.[14799] And St. Isidore of Pelusium says that sinners who are punished in this life do not deserve pity, but those only who die without having been punished.[14800] It is not so bad, continues the saint, to be simply sick as to have no one to cure you.[14801] St. Augustine says, in another part, that when God does not chastise the sinner in this world, he chastises him most severely; whence he concludes that there is no greater misfortune than impunity for a sinner.[14802] After England had rebelled against the Church, God did not visit her with temporal scourges: her riches have been increasing from that time; but her chastisement is all the greater on that account, as she is left to perish in her sin. The absence of punishment is the greatest punishment, says the same holy Doctor. The not receiving chastisement in this life for sin is a great chastisement, and prosperity in sin a still greater.

Why then, Job inquires, do the wicked live, are they advanced and strengthened with riches?[14803] How comes it, O Lord, that sinners, instead of being taken out of this life in poverty and tribulation, enjoy health, and honors, and riches? The holy man answers, *They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell.*[14804] Wretched men! they enjoy their riches for a few days, and when the hour of chastisement comes, when they least expect it, they are condemned to burn forever in that place of torments. Jeremiah makes the self-same inquiry: *Why doth the way of the wicked prosper?*[14805] and then adds, *Gather them together as sheep for a sacrifice.*[14806] Animals destined for sacrifice are kept from all labor, and fattened up for slaughter. Thus does God act towards the obstinate: he abandons them, and suffers them to fatten on the pleasures of this life in order to sacrifice them in the other to his eternal justice; for these, says Minutius Felix, are fed like victims for the slaughter.[14807]

These wretched men, says David, shall not be punished in this life, they shall enjoy their fleeting pleasures; by and by their dream shall have ceased: *Neither shall they be scourged like other men; . . . they have suddenly ceased to be; as the dream of thou that awake, O Lord, so in Thy city Thou shalt bring their image to nothing.*[14808] How painful is not the case of a poor man, who dreams that he has grown rich or great, and upon awaking finds himself the miserable and sick creature he is? *And the enemies of the Lord shall . . . vanish like smoke.*[14809] The happiness of sinners is as suddenly dissipated as is smoke by a breath of air. “Smoke,” observes St. Gregory, in his comment upon this passage, “vanishes in its ascent”[14810] And the same is the case with sinners: *I have seen the wicked highly exalted, . . . and I passed by, and lo! he was not.*[14811] Minutius Felix says, in his comment upon the place cited, the unhappy men are exalted the higher, that their fall may be the greater.[14812] The Lord allows the sinner to be exalted for his greater punishment, in order that his fall may be the more grievous, as is said by David. *When they were lifted up Thou hast cast them down.*[14813] If the sick man, says St. John Chrysostom, suffer hunger or thirst by order of his physician, it is a sign that the physician has hopes of him; but if the doctor allow him to eat what he pleases, and drink as much as he likes, what are we to conclude from that? It is plain that the physician has given him over. And thus, says St. Gregory, it is a manifest sign that God abandons the sinner to perdition, when lie never thwarts his evil purposes:[14814] and in the Book of Proverbs we read that *the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.*[14815] As lightning precedes thunder, says St. Bernard, so is prosperity the forerunner of damnation for the sinner.[14816]

The greatest punishment inflicted by God is, when he allows the sinner to sleep on in sin, without rousing him from that sleep of death in which he is buried. *I will make them drunk, that they may sleep an everlasting sleep, and awake no more, saith the Lord.*[14817] Cain, after the crime of murdering his brother, was afraid that he should be killed by the first person he should meet: *Every one therefore that findeth me shall kill me.*[14818] But the Lord assured him that he should live, and that no one should kill him; which assurance of a long life, according to St. Ambrose, was Cain’s greatest punishment.[14819] The saint says, that God treats the obstinate sinner mercifully, when he gives him an early death, because he thus saves him from as many hells as he should have committed sins during a longer life. Let sinners, then, live according to the desires of their hearts, let them enjoy their pleasures in peace; there will at length come a time when they shall be caught as fish upon the hook. *As fishes are taken with the hook, . . . so men are taken in the evil time.*[14820] Whence St. Augustine says, "Do not rejoice like the fish who is delighted with the bait, for the fisherman has not yet pulled the hook."[14821] If you were to see a condemned man making merry at a banquet with the halter round his neck, and every moment awaiting the order for execution, would you envy or pity him? Neither should you envy the sinner who is happy in his vices. That wretched sinner is already on the hook, he is already in the infernal net; when the time of chastisement shall have arrived, then the wretch will know and deplore his damnation, but all to no purpose.

On the contrary, it is a good sign when a sinner is chastised and suffers tribulation in this life: it is a sign that God has still merciful views upon him, and that he wishes to substitute a temporal for an eternal punishment in his regard. God, says St. John Chrysostom, when he punishes us on this earth, does not do so out of hatred to us but that he may draw us to himself.[14822] He chastises for a little while, that he may have you with him for eternity.[14823] When the physician uses the knife, he does so to cure, says St. Augustine.[14824] And God, the saint continues, does the same in our regard. "God seems to be cruel; but do not fear; for he is a father who is never cruel, and does not wish to destroy us."[14825] But, does not God say the same himself? *Those, whom I love, I rebuke and chastise; be zealous therefore, and do penance.*[14826] Son, says God, I love you, and therefore I chastise you; "be zealous;" see how good I am to you; endeavor you to act in like manner towards me; do penance for your sins, if you wish that I should spare you the chastisement which you deserve: at least, accept with patience and turn to advantage the tribulation which I send you. In this cross which now afflicts you hear you my voice calling upon you to turn to me, and fly from hell, which is close upon you. *Behold! I stand at the gate antiknock;*[14827] I am knocking at the door of your heart; open then to me, and know that when the sinner who has driven me from his heart shall open the door again to me, I will enter, and keep him company forever. *If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him,* *and will sup with him, and he with Me.*[14828] I shall remain united to him forever on this earth; and if he remain faithful, I shall seat him beside me, on the throne of mv eternal kingdom. *To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in My throne.*[14829]

What! must we look upon God as a tyrant, who should take pleasure in our sufferings? He does take pleasure in punishing us, but exactly the same pleasure as a father takes in correcting his son: he does not take pleasure in the pain which he inflicts, but in the amendment it will work. *My son, reject not the correction of the Lord; and do not faint when thou art chastised by Him, for whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth, and as a father in the son, He pleaseth Himself.*[14830] He chastises you because he loves you; it is not that he wishes to see you afflicted, but converted; and if he takes pleasure in your suffering, he does so inasmuch as it is an instrument of conversion—just as a father who chastises his son derives pleasure, not from the affliction of his son, but from the amendment which he hopes to see in him, and which will prevent him from working his own ruin. Chastisement makes us return to God, says St. John Chrysostom;[14831] and it is to this end God inflicts it, in order that we may not stay away from him.

Why then, my brethren, do you complain of God when in tribulation? You ought to thank him prostrate on the earth; tell me now, if a man condemned to die were to have his sentence changed by the prince from death into one hour’s imprisonment, and if he were to complain of that one hour, would his complaint be justifiable? Oh, would he not rather deserve that the prince should reverse the last sentence, and condemn him a second time to death? You have long and often deserved hell by your sins. And do you know all that the word *hell* conveys? Know that it is more dreadful to suffer for one moment in hell than to suffer for a hundred years the most frightful torments which the martyrs have suffered on earth; and in this hell you should have had to suffer during all eternity. And yet you complain if God send you some tribulation, some infirmity, some loss. Thank God, and say: Lord, this chastisement is trifling compared with my sins. I ought to have been in hell burning, deserted by all, and in despair: I thank you for having called me to yourself by this tribulation which you have sent me. God, says Oleaster, often calls sinners to repentance by temporal chastisements.[14832] By earthly chastisements the Lord shows us the immense punishment which our sins deserve; and therefore afflicts us on this earth, that we may be converted and escape eternal flames.

Wretched, then, as we have been, wretched indeed is that sinner who is left unpunished in this life, bill still more wretched he who, admonished by affliction, does not amend, says St. Basil.[14833] It is not a grievous thing to be afflicted by God on this earth after one has sinned; but it is very grievous not to be converted by the affliction sent, and to be like those of whom David speaks, who, although visited by the divine chastisement, still sleep on in their sins. *At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, they have all slumbered.*[14834] As if the sound of the scourges and the thunders of God, instead of rousing them from their lethargy, served only to make them sleep more soundly. *I struck you, yet you returned not to Me.*[14835] I have scourged you, says God, in order that you might return to me: but ye, ungrateful that you are, have been deaf to my calls. Unhappy the sinner who acts like him of whom the Lord says. *He shall send lightnings against him; . . . his heart shall be as hard as a stone, and as firm as a smith's anvil.*[14836] God visits him with chastisement, and he, instead of being softened and returning to the Lord by penance, shall be *as firm as a smith's anvil;* he shall grow more hardened under the blows of God, as the anvil errors continually harder under the hammer of the smith; and shall become like the impious Achaz, of whom the scripture says. *In the time of his distress he increased contempt against the Lord.*[14837] Unhappy man, instead of humbling himself, he the more despised the Lord.

Do you know what more happens to these rash beings? They begin to suffer hell even in this life. *He shall rain snares upon the sinners; fire and brimstone and storms of wind shall be the portion of their cup.*[14838] The Lord shall rain upon them his chastisement, sickness, misery, and every bitterness; but this is not the entire, it is only a portion of their cup, that is, of their chastisement. "The Lord says, 'the portion' only of their cup." observes St. Gregory; because their suffering begins here indeed, but shall be continued throughout eternity."[14839] He deserves all this who, being afflicted by the Lord for his conversion, continues to earn chastisement, and provoke the Lord to greater wrath, says St. Augustine.[14840] What can I do, O sinner! to work your conversion? will the Lord then say. I have called you by sermons and inspirations, and you have despised them: I have called you by favors, and you have grown more insolent; I have called you by scourges, and you continue to offend me. *For what shall I strike you any more, you that increase transgression; . . . and the daughter of Sion shall be left as a city that is laid waste*.[14841] Do you not wish to hearken even to my chastisements? Do you wish that I should abandon you? I shall be obliged to do it if you do not amend.

My brethren, let us no longer abuse the mercy which God uses towards us. Let us not be like the nettle, which stings him who strikes it. God afflicts us, because he loves us, and wishes to see us reformed, says Oleaster.[14842] When we feel the chastisement, we should bethink us of our sins, and say with the brethren of Joseph, *We deserve to suffer these things, because we have sinned against our brother.*[14843] Lord, Thou punishest us justly, because we have offended Thee, our Father and God. *Thou art just, O God! and Thy judgment is right.*[14844] *Everything Thou hast done to us, Thou hast done in true judgment.*[14845] Lord, Thou art just, and dost with justice punish us; we accept this tribulation which Thou sendest us; give us strength to suffer it with patience.

Here we should do well to remember what God once said to a nun: “You have sinned, you must do penance, you must pray.” Some sinners are satisfied with recommending themselves to the servants of God, but they must moreover pray and do penance. Let us do so, because when the Lord shall see our resignation he will not only forgive our sins, but even remit the chastisement; and if God continues to afflict us, let us have recourse to that Lady, who is called the consolatrix of the afflicted. All the saints compassionate us in our sufferings, but there is not of them, as St. Antoninus says, who feels so much for us as this divine Mother Mary.[14846] And Richard of St. Victor adds, that this Mother of mercy cannot behold unhappy sufferers without succoring them.[14847] (Act of contrition.)

EIGHTH DISCOURSE.

PRAYERS APPEASE GOD, AND AVERT FROM US THE CHASTISEMENT WE DESERVE, PROVIDED WE PURPOSE TO AMEND

“Petite et accipietis, quœrite et invenietis.”

“Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find.”—John, xvi. 24

HE who has a good heart cannot but feel compassion for the afflicted, and wish to see all men happy. But who has a heart as good as the Lord’s? He by his nature is infinite goodness, whence it is that God by his nature has an extreme desire to deliver us from every evil, and render us happy in all things, nay, even partakers of his own happiness. He wishes, therefore, that for our greater good we beg of him the graces which we stand in need of, that we may be spared the chastisement which we deserve, and arrive at life everlasting. Hence he has promised to hear the prayers of him who prays to him with hope in his goodness. *Ask and you shall receive.*

But to come at once to the subject of our discourse: GOD IS APPEASED BY PRAYERS, AND LED TO WITHDRAW THE CHASTISEMENT WHICH WE DESERVE, PROVIDED WE PURPOSE TO AMEND.

Hence in order to be delivered from the present scourge, and still more from the eternal scourge, WE MUST PRAY AND HOPE. This is to be the first point.—But it is not sufficient to pray and to hope: WE MUST PRAY AND HOPE AS WE OUGHT. This is to be the second point.

1. WE MUST PRAY AND HOPE

God wishes that we should all be saved, as the Apostle assures us: God, *Who will have all men to be saved.*[14848] And although he sees so many sinners who deserve hell, he does not wish that any of them should be lost, but that they should be restored to his grace by penance, and be saved. *Not* *willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.*[14849] But before delivering us from the punishment we have deserved, and dispensing his graces, he wishes to be sought in prayer. “By prayer,” says St. Laurence Justinian, “the wrath of God is suspended, his vengeance is delayed, and pardon finally procured.”[14850] Oh how great are the promises which God makes to him who prays! *Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.*[14851] *Cry to Me, and I will hear thee.*[14852] *You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.*[14853] Theodoret says that prayer is one only instrument, but that it can effect all things.[14854] And let us bear in mind, my brethren, that when we pray and ask things conducive to salvation, not even our sins can prevent our receiving the graces which we beg.—*For every one that asketh receiveth.*[14855] Jesus Christ here says that whoever asks, be he just or in sin, shall receive. Wherefore did David say, *For Thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Thee.*[14856] Hence the Apostle St. James, in order to excite us to prayer, tells us: *Bui if any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not.*[14857] When God is solicited, he gives more than is asked of him, he *giveth to all men abundantly.* When one man asks a favor of another whom he may have formerly injured, the latter usually reproaches him with the injury that had been done him; but not so God—he never *upbraideth.* When we beg of him some grace for the good of our souls, he never reproaches us with the offences which we have committed against him; but he hears us, and consoles us as though we had always served him faithfully. *Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name,* said the Lord one day to his disciples, and to-day he says the same thing to us: *Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.*[14858] As if he were to say, Why do you complain of me? You have only yourselves to blame—you have not asked graces of me, and therefore you have not received them. Ask of me, henceforward, what you please, and it shall be granted you; and if you have not merit sufficient to obtain it, ask it of my Father in my name, that is, through my merits, and whatever it be, I promise you that you shall obtain it. *Amen, amen, I say to you; if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you.*[14859] The princes of the earth, says St. John Chrysostom, give audience only to a few, and that seldom; but access can always be had to God by every one, at all times, and with certainty of a favorable hearing.[14860]

Rely, then, upon these great promises, so often repeated by the Lord in the Scriptures; and let us ever be attentive to beg of him those graces which are necessary for salvation, namely, the pardon of our sins, perseverance in his grace, his holy love, resignation to his divine will, a happy death, and Paradise. By prayer we shall attain all; without prayer we shall have nothing. What the holy Fathers and theologians commonly say, namely, that prayer is necessary to adults, as a means of salvation, comes to this, that it is impossible for any one to be saved without prayer. Lessius wisely says, that it ought to be of faith; that without prayer salvation is impossible to adults.[14861] And this is clearly to be drawn from the Scriptures, which say: *Ask, and you shall receive:*[14862] for as he who seeks obtains says St. Theresa, he who does not seek does not obtain. *Pray that ye enter not into temptation.*[14863] *We ought always to pray.*[14864] The words "seek," and "pray," and "we ought," accordings to the opinions of most theologians, along with St. Thomas,[14865] imply a precept binding under pain of mortal sin.

Let us pray, then, and pray with great confidence. Confidence in what? In that divine promise by which says St. Augustine, God has made himself our debtor.[14866] He has promised; he cannot be wanting to his promise; let us seek and hope, and we must be saved. *No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.*[14867] There never has been and never will be found any one to hope in the Lord and be lost, as the prophet assures us: *He is the protector of all that trust in Him.*[14868]

But how comes it, then, that some persons ask graces and do not obtain them? St. James answers that it is because they ask ill. *You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss.*[14869] You must not only ask and hope, but ask and hope as you ought. This brings us to the second point.

2. WE MUST HOPE AND PRAY AS WE OUGHT

God has all the desire to deliver us from every evil and to share his blessings with us, as I said in the beginning, but he wishes to be sought in prayer, and prayed to as he should, in order that we should be heard. How can God think of hearing that sinner who prays to him that he may be freed from his afflictions, whilst he is unwilling to abandon sin, which is the cause of his afflictions? When the impious Jeroboam stretched out his hand against the prophet, who reproached him with his wretchedness, the Lord caused his hand to wither up, so that he could not draw it back. *And his hand which he stretched forth against him withered, and he was not able to draw it back again to him.*[14870] Then the king turned to the man of God, and besought him to beg of the Lord to restore his hand to him. Theodoret says, with regard to this circumstance: “Fool that he was to have asked the prophet’s prayers for the restoration of his hand, and not for pardon of his sins.”[14871] Thus do many act; they beg of God to deliver them from their afflictions; they beg of the servants of God to avert by their prayers the threatened chastisements, but they do not seek to obtain the grace of abandoning their sins and changing their lives. And how can such persons hope to be freed from the chastisement when they will not remove its cause? What arms the hand of the Lord with thunders to chastise and afflict us? Oh, it is accursed sin! “Punishment is the fine that is to be paid for sin,”[14872] says Tertullian. The afflictions we suffer are a fine which must be paid by him whom sin has subjected to the penalty. St. Basil in like manner says that sin is a note of hand which we give against ourselves.[14873] Since we sin, we voluntarily go in debt to God’s justice. It is not God, then, who makes us miserable; it is sin.[14874] Sin it is which obliges God to create chastisements: *Famine, and affliction, and scourges, all things are created for the wicked.*[14875]

Jeremias, addressing the divine vengeance, says, *O thou sword of the Lord, how long wilt thou not be quiet? Go into thy scabbard, rest and be still.*[14876] But then, he goes on to say, *How shall it be quiet when the Lord hath given it a charge against Ascalon?*[14877] How can the sword of the Lord ever be quiet if sinners do not choose to abandon their sin, notwithstanding that the Lord has given a charge to his sword to execute vengeance as long as sinners shall continue to deserve it? But some will say, we make novenas, we fast, we give alms, we pray to God: why are we not heard? To them the Lord replies, *When they fast, I will not hear their prayers, and when they offer holocausts and victims, I will not receive them; for I will consume them by the sword, and by famine, and by pestilence.*[14878] How, exclaims the Lord! how can I hear the prayers of those who beg to be freed from their afflictions, and not from their sins, because they do not wish to reform. What care I for their fasts, and their sacrifices, and their alms, when they will not change their lives. *I will consume them by the sword.* With all their prayers, and devotions, and penitential exercises, I shall be obliged by my justice to punish them.

Let us not, then, my brethren, trust to prayers or other devotions, unaccompanied by a resolution to amend. You pray, you smite your breast, and call for mercy; but that is not enough. The impious Antiochus prayed, but the Scriptures say that his prayers failed to obtain mercy from God. *Then this wicked man prayed to the Lord, of whom he was not to obtain mercy.*[14879] The unhappy man, finding himself devoured by worms, and near his end, prayed for life, but without having sorrow for his sins.

Nor let us trust in our holy protectors, if we do not purpose to amend. Some say we have our patron or some other saint who will defend us; we have our Mother Mary to procure our deliverance, *Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance. Who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come? . . . and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for our father.*[14880] How can we think to escape punishment if we do not abandon sin? How can the saints think of assisting us if we persist in exasperating the Lord? St. John Chrysostom says, of what use was Jeremias to the Jews?[14881] The Jews had Jeremias to pray for them, but, notwithstanding all the prayers of that holy prophet, they received the chastisement, because they did not wish to give up their sins. Beyond doubt, says the holy Doctor, the prayers of the saints contribute much to obtain the divine mercy for us, but when?—when we do penance.[14882] They are useful, but only when we do ourselves violence to abandon sin, to fly occasions, and return to God’s favor.

The emperor Phocas, in order to defend himself from his enemies, raised walls and multiplied fortifications, but he heard a voice saying to him from heaven: “You build walls, but when the enemy is within, the city is easily taken.”[14883] We must then expel this enemy, which is sin, from our souls, otherwise God cannot exempt us from chastisement, because he is just, and cannot leave sin unpunished. Another time the citizens of Antioch prayed to Marv to avert from them a scourge which overhung them; and whilst they were praying, St. Bertoldus heard the divine Mother replying from heaven, “Abandon your sins, and I shall be propitious to you.”[14884]

Let us then beg of the Lord to use mercy towards us, but let us pray as David prayed: *Lord, incline unto my* aid.[14885] God wishes to aid us, but he wishes that we should aid ourselves, by doing all that depends upon us. “He who desires to be assisted,” says Hilaretus,[14886] “must do all that he can to assist himself.” God wishes to save us, but we must not imagine that God will do all without our doing anything. St. Augustine says: “He who created you without your help, will not save you without your help.”[14887] What do you expect, sinful brother? That God will bring you to Paradise with all your sins upon you? Do you continue to draw down upon you the divine scourges, and yet hope to be delivered from them? Must God save you while you persist in damning yourself?

If we purpose truly to turn to God, then let us pray to him and rejoice; even though the sins of the entire world were ours, we should be heard, as I said to you in the beginning. Every one who prays with a purpose of amendment, obtains mercy.[14888] Let our prayers be in the name of Jesus Christ, who has promised that the eternal Father will grant us everything we ask in his name, that is, through his merits. *If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you.*[14889] Let us pray, and never cease from prayer; thus we shall obtain every grace, and save ourselves. It is to this we are exhorted by St. Bernard, who tells us to pray to God through the intercession of Mary: “Let us seek grace, and seek it through Mary; because he who seeks through her, obtains his request, and cannot be disappointed.”[14890] Mary, when we pray to her, certainly pleads for us with her Son; and when Mary prays for us, she obtains what she demands, and her prayer cannot be refused by a son who loves her so much. (Act of contrition.)

NINTH DISCOURSE.

MOST HOLY MARY IS THE MEDIATRIX OF SINNERS

> *“Ego murus et ubera mea sicut turris; ex quo factus sum coram eo quasi pacem reperiens.”*
>
> *“I am a wall, and my breasts are as a tower, since I am become in his presence as one finding peace.”—Cant. viii. 10.*

DIVINE grace is an infinite treasure, because it makes us friends of God. *For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.*[14891] Hence it follows, that if there cannot be a greater happiness than to enjoy the grace of God, there cannot be a greater misery than to incur his displeasure by sin, which makes us his enemies. *But to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.*[14892] But if, my brethren, any of you have had the misfortune to forfeit this divine grace by sin, do not despair, but console yourselves with the reflection, that you have in Jesus Christ himself a mediator, who can obtain pardon for you, and restore you the grace you have lost. *And He is the propitiation for our sins.*[14893]

What have you to fear, says St. Bernard, when you can have recourse to so great a mediator? He can do all things with his eternal Father.[14894] He has satisfied the divine justice for you, continues the holy abbot, and has nailed your sins to the cross, having taken them away from your soul.[14895] But if, notwithstanding all this, you fear to approach Jesus Christ on account of his divine majesty, God has given you another advocate with his Son, and that advocate is Mary.[14896]

Thus Mary has been given to the world as a mediatrix between God and sinners. Hear the words which the Holy Ghost makes her speak in the divine canticles: *I am a wall, and my breasts are as a tower, since I am become in His presence as one finding peace.*[14897] I am, she says, the refuge of those who fly to me; my breasts, that is, my mercy, are like a tower of defence to every one who has recourse to me; and he who is the enemy of

God, let him know that I am the mediatrix of peace between God and sinners. “She finds peace for enemies, salvation for the lost, mercy for those who are in despair,”[14898] says Cardinal Hugo. For this reason is Mary called *beautiful . . . as the curtains of Solomon.*[14899] In the tents of David naught was to be heard of but war; in the tents of Solomon naught is spoken of but peace. By this we are to understand that Mary has no other ministry in heaven than that of peace and pardon. Hence St. Andrew Avellino calls her the pleader of Paradise; but what are those occupations in which Mary is engaged? “Mary,” says Venerable Bede, “stands in the presence of her Son, praying unceasingly for sinners.”[14900] And Blessed Amadeus says that “Mary, all-powerful by her prayers, stands before the face of God, continually interceding for us.”[14901] Thus Mary never ceases to implore of God by her all-powerful prayers all graces for us, if we do not refuse them. And are there any found to refuse the graces solicited for them by this divine Mother? Yes, there are found such—yes, those who will not abandon sin, who will not give up this friendship, this occasion; who will not restore their neighbor’s property—those are they who will not receive the graces begged for them by Mary, because Mary wishes to obtain for them the grace of breaking off this connection, of flying this occasion of weakness, and they will not do it. And such as will not do it, positively refuse the grace sought for them by Mary. From heaven she sees well all our miseries and dangers; and oh, how deeply is she touched with compassion for us! With what motherly affection is she always endeavoring to assist us! “For she sees our dangers,” continues the Blessed Amadeus, “and as our merciful Sovereign compassionates us with maternal affection.”[14902]

One day St. Bridget heard Jesus Christ saying to Mary: “Mother, ask of me what you will.” And Mary answered him: “I ask mercy for the unfortunate.”[14903] As if she were to say to him, Son, since Thou hast made me the Mother of mercy, and Advocate of Sinners, can I ask aught else of Thee than mercy for the unhappy? In a word, St. Augustine says, that amongst all the saints, we have not one who is so solicitous for our salvation as Mary.[14904]

Isaias complains in his day as follows: *Behold, Thou art angry; . . . there is none who riseth up and taketh hold of Thee.*[14905] Lord, said the prophet, Thou art justly angry with us for our sins, and there is no one to appease

Thee, or draw Thee from chastising us. St. Bonaventure says that the prophet had reason to speak thus, since there was no Mary then.[14906] But at present, if Jesus Christ wishes to chastise a sinner, and the sinner recommends himself to Mary, she by her prayers for him restrains her Son, and averts the chastisement from him.[14907] There is no one, he says, so well able to hold back the sword of the Lord.[14908] Justly, then, did St. Andrew call Mary the peace of the Lord with men.[14909] And St. Justin called her the "Arbitress," saying, "The Word uses the Virgin as arbitress."[14910] *Sequestra* signifies an arbitress, to whose decision disputants binds themselves to yield. By which St. Justin means to say, that Jesus lays before Mary all his reasons for punishing such a sinner, that she may negotiate a peace; and the sinner, on the other side, places himself in her hands. Thus Mary on the one side obtains for the sinner the grace of amendment, and penance on the other; she obtains pardon for him of her Son, and thus it is concluded. Such is the ministry in the exercise of which Mary is continually occupied.

When Noe judged that the deluge ought to have ceased, he dismissed the dove from the ark. It returned with a branch of olive, significant of the peace which God had concluded with the world. This dove was a figure of Mary. "Thou art," says St. Bonaventure, "that most faithful dove of Noe which became the most faithful mediatrix between God and the world submerged by a spiritual deluge."[14911] Thou, O Mary! art the dove all faithful to him who invokes Thee—Thou art the dove that, interceding with God, hast obtained for us peace and salvation, says St. Epiphanius.[14912] Pelbart inquires how it happens that in the Old Law, the Lord was so vigorous in his chastisements, of universal deluge, of lire from heaven, of fiery serpents, and suchlike punishments; whereas he now deals so mercifully with us, who have sinned more grievously than those of old?[14913] And he answers, he does it all through love of Mary, who intercedes for us.[14914] "Oh how long since should heaven and earth have been destroyed," says St. Fulgentius, "if Mary had not interposed."[14915]

Wherefore the Church wishes that we should call this divine Mother our hope.[14916] The impious Luther could not endure that the Church should teach us to call Mary our hope. He said that our hope ought to rest only in God—not in the creature; and that God curses him who places his confidence in creatures: *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.*[14917] True;

but that is understood of those who trust in creatures, in contempt of God, or independently of him. But we hope in Mary, as our mediatrix with the Lord. In the same manner as Jesus is our mediator of right with his eternal Father, because by the merits of his Passion he obtains pardon for penitent sinners, so Mary is mediatrix by divine favor with her Son, and is such a mediatrix that her Son grants her every request; nay, that he wishes that every grace should pass through her hands. "The Lord," says St. Bernard, "has placed in Mary the plenitude of all good; so that if aught of hope or grace or salvation, is in us, we know that we derive it from Mary."[14918] The Lord has confided to Mary the treasure of mercies which he wishes to have dealt out to us, and therefore wishes that we should acknowledge every grace as coming through her. Whence the saint calls her his chief confidence, and the principal ground of his hope.[14919] For which reason he exhorts us to look for grace always through the intercession of Mary.[14920] And for the same reason the Church, in despite of Luther, calls Mary our hope.[14921]

Hence also do the saints call Mary the ladder, the moon, and the city of refuge. She is called by St. Bernard the ladder of sinners.[14922] It is sin which separates us from God. *But your iniquities have divided between you and your God.*[14923] A soul in the state of grace is in union with God, and God in union with it. *He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.*[14924] But when the soul turns its back upon God, then is it separated from him—plunged into an abyss of misery, and as far removed from him as sin itself. But when shall this wretched soul find a ladder by which to mount once more to God, and be again united to him? Mary is that ladder, to whom, if the sinner has recourse, no matter what his misery, or how great the filth of sins, he can come out of the pit of perdition. "Thou," says St Bernard, "dost not abhor the sinner, however loathsome he be; if he once sigh to thee, thou reachest him thy hand to draw him out of the gulf of despair."[14925] For the same reason is she called the moon: *Fair as the moon.*[14926] "As the moon," says St. Bernard, "is placed between the sun and earth, so is Mary stationed between God and us, to pour out his graces continually upon us."[14927] Hence, also, she is called the city of refuge, as she is made to call herself by St. John Damascene. "I am the city of all those that have recourse to me."[14928] In ancient law there were five cities of sanctuary; to which, if any one fled, he was secure of not being pursued by justice, no matter what his crime. At present we have not so many cities of sanctuary—we have only Mary to whom if any one shall have fled he may rest secure of not being pursued by the divine justice. In the cities of the old law every delinquent was in danger, could all his crimes escape unpunished; but Mary is a city of refuge which receives every criminal. “There is no one so much cast off by God,” said this blessed Mother to St. Bridget, “who, if he have recourse to me, shall not return to God, and receive pardon.”[14929]

Mary, so far from disdaining to assist sinners, prides herself upon the function of advocate of sinners, so that she is related to have said to the venerable sister Mary Villanin, “Next to my dignity of Mother of God, there is nothing which I so much value as my office of advocate of sinners.” “To this end,” says Idiota, who takes it from St. John Chrysostom, “hast thou been chosen from eternity to be the Mother of God, that those whose sins should exclude them from participation in the merits of thy Son might be made partakers of them by thy intercession.”[14930] This was the principal office for the fulfilment of which God created her, and placed her in the world: *Feed thy kids.*[14931] By kids he means sinners, and those kids are given in care to Mary, in order that they who on the day of judgment should by their sins have deserved to stand upon the left, may by her intercession stand upon the right. “Feed thy kids.” says William of Paris, “whom thou shalt convert into sheep, that they who should have been placed to the left may through thy intercession take their stand upon the right.”[14932] But we must not forget to notice what has been said upon this passage by William of England: “Feed thy kids.” Who are the kids of Mary? “These sinners,” he says, “who pay her no devotion, who do not beg of her to obtain their conversion, are not the kids of Mary, and shall be placed on the left.”[14933]

St. Bridget one day heard Jesus Christ saying to his mother, “Thou givest assistance to every one endeavoring to rise to God.”[14934] Mary assists every one who does himself violence to leave his evil life and turn to God, or at least prays to her that he may receive strength to do so; if he have not that desire, the divine mother herself cannot assist him. Mary then assists only those sinners who honor her by some special devotion, and who, if they yet remain in disgrace with God, have recourse to her that she may obtain pardon for them, and work their deliverance from their present infernal condition. The sinner who acts thus from his heart is secure, because Mary, as we have said before, has been therefore created that she might have charge of sinners, and lead them to God. The Lord revealed this to St. Catherine of Sienna: “She is chosen by me as a most delicious food, so as to capture men, especially sinners.”[14935] And the blessed Mother herself said to St. Bridget, that as the magnet attracts iron, so she draws the hard hearts of men to herself and to God.[14936] But we must always bear in mind that these hearts, notwithstanding their hardness, must desire liberation from their unhappy state.

Ah, if all had recourse to Mary with at least this desire, she would procure salvation for all. “What fear of damnation should that man feel,” says the Abbot Adam, “to whom Mary offers herself for a mother and an advocate?”[14937] He inquires again, “Could it be possible that you, the mother of mercy, should not intercede with the Redeemer for the soul he has redeemed?”[14938] He lastly makes answer: “Ah, Thou must intercede, because God, who has placed his Son mediator between man and heaven, has placed Thee mediatrix between his Son and guilty man.”[14939]

Then, sinner, says St. Bernard, give thanks to him who has provided you with such a mediatrix.[14940] Thank your God, who, in order to manifest his mercy towards you, has given you not only his Son for a mediator in his own right, but that you might have more confidence, has given you Mary as a mediatrix with that Son. Therefore it is St. Augustine calls her the only hope of sinners.[14941] And St. Bonaventure: “If by reason of your iniquities you see the Lord in anger, and fear to approach him, have recourse to the hope of sinners, who is Mary.”[14942] She will not reject you because you are too wretched; “it is her office to assist the wretched.”[14943] And William of Paris says exactly the same: “It is thy office to place thyself between God and man.”[14944] Hence, when we have recourse to Mary, let every one say to her with St. Thomas of Villanova: “Ah, therefore, thou our advocate fulfil thy office.”[14945] Since thou art Mother of God, and advocate of the wretched, assist me who am so wretched; if thou dost not assist me, I am lost; and let us proceed to address her in the words of St. Bernard: “Remember, O most pious virgin, that from the beginning, etc., etc.[14946] I do not wish to be the first unhappy man who shall have had recourse to thee, and yet be abandoned by thee. (Act of contrition.)

Texts from Holy Scripture and from the Holy Fathers Referring to Some Particular Calamities

1. EARTHQUAKES

“COMMOTA est et contremuit terra, fundamenta montium conturbata sunt et commota sunt, quoniam iratus est eis.—The earth shook and trembled: the foundations of the mountains were troubled and were moved, because He was angry with them.”—*Ps.* xvii. 8.

“Movebitur terra de loco suo, propter indignationem Domini.—The earth shall be moved out of her place for the indignation of the Lord.”—*Is.* xiii. 13.

“Agitatione agitabitur terra, sicut ebrius.—With shaking shall the earth be shaken as a drunken man.”—*Is.* xxiv. 20. On these words Cardinal Hugo makes the following comment: “Evomet enim terra peccatores.—The earth shall eject sinners.”

St. John Chrysostom says: “Causa enim terræmotus est ira Dei; porro causa divinæ iræ nostra sunt peccata; noli autem supplicium timere, sed supplicii parentem, peccatum.—The cause of the earthquake is God’s anger; but the cause of the divine anger is our sins. But do not fear the punishment, but fear sin, which is the cause of the punishment.”—*De Lazaro,* conc. 6. “Dominus terrarum orbem concutit, non ut evertat, sed ut eos, qui insolenter se gerunt, ad salutem convertat.—The Lord shook the earth not to overthrow it, but to convert unto salvation those that lead wicked lives.”—*Serm. de S. Basso Mart.* “Concutitur civitas, mens vero tua non conquatitur.—The city is shaken, but your mind remains unmoved.”—*De Laz.* conc. 6. “Præcessit tamquam præco terræmotus, iram Dei denuntians, ut supplicium inferendum repellamus.—The earthquake has preceded like a herald announcing God’s anger that we may escape by penance the punishment that we have merited.”—*Ibid.* “Ecce venit terræmotus; quid profuerunt opes? Periit una cum possessione possessor. Omnium commune sepulcrum facta est civitas, non ab artificum manibus, sed a calamitate fabricatum.—Behold, there came an earthquake; what have riches profited thee? The possessor has perished along with the possession. The city has become for all a common sepulchre, which has been built, not by the hand of the artificer, but by calamity."—*Ibid.* "Prius cord a hominum, et postea elementa turbantur.—The hearts of men are first disturbed, then the elements."—*Ibid.*

2. DROUGHT

"Si in præceptis meis ambulaveritis, . . . dabo vobis pluvias temporibus suis.—Quod si non audieritis me, . . . dabo vobis cœlum sicut ferrum, et terram æneam. Consumetur incassum, labor vester; non proferet terra germen, nec arbores poma præbebunt.—If you walk in My precepts, . . . I will give you rain in due seasons.—But if you will not hear Me, . . . I will make to you the heaven above as iron, and the earth as brass. Your labor shall be spent in vain, the ground shall not bring forth her increase, nor the trees yield their fruit."—Levit. xxvi. 3, 14, 19.

"Usquequo lugebit terra, et herba omnis regionis siccabitur, propter malitiam habitantium in ea? Consumptum est animal. . . . How long shall the land mourn, and the herb of every field wither for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? The beasts are consumed."—*Jer.* xii. 4.

"Sementem multam jacies in terram, et modicum congregabis.—Thou shalt cast much seed into the around, and gather little."—*Deut.* xxviii. 38. Commentaries: "Ob hoc campi steriles, quia charitas friguit.—Therefore the fields are sterile, because charity has grown cold."

"Polluisti terrain in fornicationibus tuis et in malitiis tuis; quamobrem prohibitæ sunt stillæ pluviarum.—Thou hast polluted the land with thy fornications and with thy wickedness. Therefore the showers were withholden."—*Jer.* iii. 2.

"Non estis reversi ad me, dicit Dominus; ego quoque prohibui a vobis imbrem, cum adhuc tres menses su—peressent usque ad messem.—You have not returned to Me, saith the Lord. I also have withholden the rain from you when there were yet three months to the harvest."—*Amos,* iv. 6. St. Basil: "Discamus quod ob aversionem nostram calamitates inflixit Deus.

—Let us learn that because we have turned our backs upon God He has inflicted upon us calamities.”—*Hom, in fame et siccit.*

“Radices ejus siccentur, . . . alteratur messis ejus.—Let his roots be dried up, . . . and his harvest destroyed.”—*Job,* xviii. 16.

œlomon, when dedicating the Temple to God, thus spoke to God in prayer: “Si clausum fuerit coelum, et non pluerit, propter peccata corum, et orantes in loco isto pœnitentiam egerint, . . . exaudi eos in cœlo.—If heaven shall be shut up, and there shall be no rain because of their sins, and they praying in this place shall do penance, . . . hear Thou them in heaven.”—3 *Kings,* viii. 35.

The Lord says: “Nubibus mandabo, ne pluant.—I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it.”—*Is.* v. 6. “Quia domus mea deserta est, . . . propter hoc super vos prohibiti sunt cœli, ne darent rorem, . . . et vocavi siccitatem super terram.—Because My house is desolate, . . . therefore the heavens over you were stayed from giving dew, . . . and I called for a drought upon the land.”—*Agg.* i. 9.

St. Augustine: “Perseverant flagella, quia perseverant et delicta.—Punishments continue, because sins continue”—*Serm.* 46, *E. B. app.*

St. Basil: “Cœlum vidimus solidum, serenitate sua nos contristans. Terra jam exsiccata est, horrida, et ob siccitatem scissa; fontes nos deseruerunt.—We see the heavens closed, and are saddened by their serenity. The earth is already dried up, is horrible, and on account of the dryness is full of fissures; the water fountains have left us”—*Hom. in fame et siccit.*

3. SCARCITY AND STERILITY

“Posuit . . . terram fructiferam in salsuginem, a malitia inhabitantium in ea. —He hath turned . . . a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.”—Ps. cvi. 33. Cardinal Hugo: “What does sin do? Ii turns fruitful land into sterile land.”

“Maledicta terra . . . spinas et tribulos germinabit—Cursed is the earth . . . thorns and thistles shall it bring forth.”—*Gen.* iii. 17.

“Maledictio vorabit terram, et peccabunt habitatores ejus.—A curse shall devour the earth, and the inhabitants thereof shall sin.”—*Is.* xxiv. 6.

“Revelabunt coœli iniquitatem ejus, et terra consurget adversus eum.—The heavens shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him.”—*Job,* xx. 27.

“Ego dedi ei frumentum et vinum, . . . quæ fecerunt Baal; idcirco convertar, et sumam frumentum meum.—I gave her corn and wine, . . , which they have used in the service of Baal; therefore I will return, and take away My corn”-*Osee,* ii. 8. There are some that abuse the goods that God has given to them; they make idols of them, that is, objects of sin. St. Augustine says: “Cur famem pateris? Cur inopiam sentis? Quia quotidie crescit et culpa. Ad Deum convertere, relinque idolum.”—Why are you suffering hunger? Why do you experience want? Because your guilt also increases daily. Be ye converted to God, and leave your idol.”—*Serm.* 46, *E. B. app.*

“Honora Dominum de tua substantia, . . . et implebuntur horrea tua.—Egestas a Domino in domo impii; habitacula autem justorum benedicentur.—Honor the Lord with thy substance, . . . and thy barn shall be filled.—Want is from the Lord in the house of the wicked; but the habitations of the just shall be blessed.”—*Prov.* iii. 9, 33.

4. HAIL AND LIGHTNING

“Ignis, grando, fames, et mors, omnia hæc ad vindictam creata sunt.—Fire, hail, famine, and death, all these were created for vengeance.”—*Ecclus.* xxxix. 35.

“Illuxerunt fulgura ejus orbi terræ; vidit, et commota est terra; . . . annuntiaverunt cœli justitiam ejus; . . . confundantur omnes, qui adorant sculptilia.—His lightnings have shone forth to the world; the earth saw and trembled; . . . the heavens declared His justice; . . . let them all be confounded that adore graven things.”—*Ps.* xcvi. 4. Alphonsus Tostatus says; “Cum tonitrua audierimus, sciamus Deum nos voce sua velle admonere, ut a malo recedamus.—When we hear the thunder, we should remember that God wishes to admonish us to cease committing sin.”

5. HURTFUL ANIMALS

“Immittam in vos famem et bestias pessimas usque ad internecionem.—And I will send in upon you famine and evil beasts unto utter destruction.”—*Ezech.* v. 17. On this point St. Jerome remarks: “Famem, et pestilentiam, et bestias pessimas, propter nostra venire peccata manifestum est.—It is manifest that hunger, pestilence, and wild beasts are sent on account of our sins.”

“Addam plagas vestras in septuplum propter peccata vestra, immittamque in vos bestias agri, quæ consumant vos et pecora vestra, et ad paucitatem cuncta redigant, desertæque fiant viæ vestræ.—I will bring seven times more plagues upon you for your sins; and I will send in upon you the beasts of the field to destroy you and your cattle, and make you few in number, and that your highways may be desolate.”—*Levit.* xxvi. 21.

“Sementem multam jacies in terrain, et modicum congregabis, quia locustæ devorabunt omnia.—Thou shalt cast much seed in the ground, and gather little: because the locusts shall consume all.”—*Dent,* xxviii. 38.

Dauraltius says: “Nullum adeo exiguum animal est, quod non possit contra peccantem esse potentissimus hostis.—There is no animal so small that it cannot be a most powerful enemy of the sinner.*”—Flores Exempl c.* 6, tit. 2, n. 9.

And St. John Chrysostom: “Quamdiu Adam purum servavit vultum, ei bestiæ parebant; quando autem fædavit inobedientia, odio habebant.—So long as Adam preserved his countenance pure, the animals obeyed him; but when he defiled it by disobedience, they hated him.*”—In Ps.* 3.

6. SICKNESS

“Extendens manum, percutiam te et populum tuum peste.—I will stretch out My hand to strike thee and thy people with pestilence.”—*Exod.* ix. 15. “Gui delinquit in conspectu ejus qui fecit eum, incidet in manus medici.—He that sinneth before his Maker, shall fall into the hands of the physician.”—*Ecclus.* xxxviii. 15.

7. CALAMITIES IN GENERAL

“Terra infecta est ab habitatoribus suis; . . . propter hoc maledictio vorabit terram, . . . et relinquentur homines pauci.—And the earth is infected by the inhabitants thereof, . . . and few men shall be left.”—*Is.* xxiv. 5.

“Qui malignantur, exterminabuntur.—Evil-doers shall be cut off.”—*Ps.* xxxvi. 9.

“Armabit creaturam ad ultionem inimicorum.—He will arm the creature for the revenge of his enemies.”—*Wisd.* v. 18.

“Vidi eos qui operantur iniquitatem, et seminant dolores et metunt eos.—I have seen them that work iniquity, and that sow sorrows, and reap them.”—*Job,* iv. 8. He that sows sins shall reap sorrows and pains.

“Quia oblita es mei, et projecisti me post corpus tuum, tu quoque porta scelus tuum et fornicationem tuam.—Because thou hast forgotten Me and hast cast Me off behind thy body, bear thou also thy wickedness and thy fornications.”—*Ezech.* xxiii. 35.

St. Cyprian says: “Miraris iram Dei crescere, cum crescat quotidie quod puniatur?—Why should you wonder that God’s anger is growing when what is punishable is every day growing?”—*Ad Demetrianum.*

St. Basil: “Nemo se torqueat in inquirendis causis, cur siccitas, fulmina, grandines; nostri causa hæc invehuntur, qui retinemus cor impœnitens.—No one troubles himself about inquiring why drought, lightning, hail, are sent down upon us; they are sent us on account of our sins, and because we preserve an impenitent heart.”—*In cap.* 9 *Isaia.*

St. John Chrysostom: “Peccatum, fontem malorum, reprimamus.—We must repress sin, the fountain of evils.”—*In Ps.* 3.

St. Gregory: “Jure nos omnia feriunt, quæ vitiis nostris serviebant.—Rightly is everything hostile to us that has gratified our passions.”—*In Evang. hom.* 35.

St. Anselm: “Ex offensione, non solum iram Dei promeruimus, sed totam creaturam adversum non ex—citavimus.—By offending God we not only excite his anger, but the anger of all creation.”—*De Simil.* c. 102.

Salvian: “Quid miraris, si castigamur? Miseriæ, infirmitates, testimonia sunt mali servi. Deum ad puniendos nos trahimus invitum.—Why wonder that we are chastised? Miseries, infirmities, are signs of evil. We force God to punish us.”—*De Gubern. Dei,* 1. 4.

Cardinal Hugo: “Omnis creatura conqueritur de ipsis qui abusi sunt ea.—Every creature complains of those that abuse it.”

Reflections Useful for Bishops that they may Govern Well their Churches

TAKEN FROM THE EXAMPLES OF ZEALOUS BISHOPS AND CONFIRMED BY EXPERIENCE

FATHER TANNOIA (Book II. ch. xxvi.) and Cardinal Villecourt (1. vi. ch. 3) inform us that these REFLECTIONS are among the first writings of St. Alphonsus. He published them in 1745, and sent them to all the Italian bishops, who expressed to him their heartfelt thanks. Mgr. Salerno, Bishop of Molfetta, wrote to him as follows: “I have read your REFLECTIONS USEFUL FOR BISHOPS, and I am much edified. I see that it is great zeal, aided by much wisdom and profound science, which has led you to write this little treatise. Your Reverence has rendered a great service to the Episcopate, but with such kindness on your part a feeling of compassion can hardly be suppressed, since your experience has made you see that practice is much more difficult than theory, especially in these unhappy times.”

The holy author having afterwards himself been made a bishop, knew how to join practice to theory, with zeal and admirable success, under the weight of his advanced age and his grave infirmities, and in the midst of multiplied difficulties. We may form an idea of this by reading the collection of the acts of his episcopate, which are published in a subsequent volume.

We think that these Reflections are useful, not only for bishops, but also for all the clergy, especially those that have charge of souls.—ED.

PRAISED BE FOREVER JESUS IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT, AND MARY A VIRGIN ALWAYS IMMACULATE!

“ATTENDITE vobis et universo gregi, in quo vos Spiritus Sancti posuit episcopos regere Ecclesiam Dei.—Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the Church of God."—*Acts,* xx. 28.

It is certain that God has intrusted to the bishops the government of his Church, and that on them depends the sanctification of the people. Hence it was with reason that St. Charles Borromeo said that the shepherds are the cause of the bad life of the sheep; and indeed we know by experience that holy bishops sanctify their dioceses. St. Charles, who in fact was a model of good bishops, and who consequently will often be proposed as such in this little work, reformed so well his subjects that their virtues having spread among the neighboring people, made better Christians.

There already exist many books treating at length of the duties of bishops in regard to the government of their churches. Nevertheless an experience of twenty years, spent in giving missions, has taught me that many things do not come to the knowledge of the bishops; for this reason, through the sole desire of promoting the glory of Jesus Christ, I have wished to write briefly in these few pages some reflections of greater importance which may be very useful to direct them in the exercise of their duties, either in regard to the principal cares with which they are charged, or in regard to the most efficacious means that they should employ in directing their flocks. This has been my only aim. These CARES and these MEANS will be treated in two short chapters. I hope with the divine goodness that this poor little treatise, which in view of its author hardly deserves to be looked at, may be read with some profit, at least for its brevity.

Chapter I

THE PRINCIPAL CARES OF A BISHOP

WE should be convinced of what St. Athanasius[14947] says, that the bishop before his consecration may live for himself, but that after his consecration he is obliged to live for his flock, of the salvation of whom he must certainly render an account, as the Lord has informed us through the mouth of Ezechiel: *Woe to the shepherds; of Israel, that feed themselves: . . . Behold I Myself come upon the shepherds, I will require My flock at their hand.*[14948] Hence St. Gregory[14949] says that at the tribunal of Jesus Christ, where every one will be obliged to render an account of his soul, the bishop will have to render an account of as many souls as he has subjects. The Bishop of Sardis led an innocent life; still, because he did not attend, as he should have attended, to the care of his flock, God addressed to him through St. John this terrible reproach: *Thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead.*[14950] Whence it follows that the bishop, however holy he may be by the works of his life, if he is negligent in regard to the salvation of his flock, will be reproved at the tribunal of Jesus Christ, to whom he will have to render a rigorous account, not only of his omissions, but also of all the evils that have resulted therefrom.

Hence to come to the practical part, we shall speak of the principal cares which a good bishop should keep before his mind in governing his church, and which are seven in number, namely: 1. The seminary; 2. The candidates for ordination; 3. The priests; 4. The parish priests; 5. The Vicar and ministers or servants; 6. The convents of nuns.

1. THE SEMINARY

There is no doubt that the seminaries are of the greatest benefit to the dioceses; it suffices to know how much they are approved and recommended to the bishops by the holy Council of Trent. Indeed, it is by the seminaries that good clergy are formed, and it is on the clergy that afterwards depends the common good of the people. But we should also consider that if the seminary is well directed, the diocese will be sanctified; otherwise it will be ruined. Young men when entering the seminary do not bring with them the spirit that they should have; they enter in order to acquire it, coming from their families either filled with vice or very much inclined at this age to become addicted to every vice. How many are there who enter the seminaries as angels, and who in a short time become demons! If then the seminaries have not sufficient revenues, either for the support of the pupils (without which the seminaries cannot be well governed), or for maintaining good servants and good masters, it would be better that no seminaries existed. We should be convinced that, ordinarily speaking, in seminaries there are more disorders and scandals than is known by the bishops, who are often least instructed about them.

In the first place, it is necessary that there should be a good Director who has a true zeal for God, and who has experience, with enough sagacity to be able to discover the malice that is in young men, for he should be distrustful of every one and of every action; otherwise if he conducts himself with simplicity he will easily be deceived. We therefore see that it is very difficult to find a Director who is really capable of governing seminaries.

Secondly, there should be a sufficient number of Prefects,[14951] and these should be priests advanced in years, pious, and of a character firm enough to correct and not to overlook faults. They should above all see that the pupils do not touch one another even in play; that there be no familiarity among them; that one does not remain alone with the other for the purpose of talking; and that they do not speak to those belonging to another division. When the Prefects cannot themselves remedy the evil, they should at least, in more important cases, inform the Director, and when necessary, also the bishop.

Besides the Prefects, it is good, and it is even a very useful measure, to choose in each section two or three pupils who are the most pious and faithful, and to charge them without the knowledge of their companions secretly to observe what is going on. Every week, and whenever it is convenient, the Director or the bishop receives from them notice of the faults that have been committed.

Thirdly, it is also necessary that the bishop should make, two or three times a year, a particular examination of the conduct of every seminarian by endeavoring to find out the truth by means of those who, he knows, are more pious. He should then dismiss with firmness those that are incorrigible and that give scandal, of whom one alone is sufficient to spoil all the rest. It is, moreover, very useful that the bishop should often visit the seminary to excite the zeal of the pupils in the practice of piety, and also in their studies even, by attending their theses and their literary exercises. This will conduce in a wonderful way to sustaining their application and emulation.

But in a special manner should the bishop be watchful over all that regards piety in the seminary:

1. He should ordain that there should be in common a meditation of half an hour in the morning, and of at least a quarter of an hour in the evening; and that for the most part the meditation should be made on the eternal maxims, which are very useful for young men to consider, in order that they may live far away from vice.

2. He should have them make every year the spiritual exercises during eight days; during this time they are not to speak to one another, nor apply themselves to study.

3. Moreover, he should have a familiar sermon preached to them every fifteen days, or at least every month, by a virtuous priest who does not live at the seminary; the subject of the sermon should also be the eternal truths, and nearly always should the enormity of sacrilege be touched upon, as it is this to which young men are easily subject through false shame.

4. He should see that they go to confession every week or every two weeks by giving them the best confessors of the place where the seminary is situated, or at least two confessors each time in order that the pupils may have more liberty in their confessions. He should, moreover, send them four times a year extraordinary confessors on account of the great danger of sacrilege to which young men are exposed if they always confess to priests that know them.

5. It is good to forbid them to take the discipline in common, in the dark; for this may easily be the cause of scandal.

6. He should positively forbid them to keep profane books, which are usually very injurious to young men.

7. He should ordain that silence should be kept, and that there should be reading at table of the Lives of the saints, or of books that treat of terrible examples, and that the Director should always be present when they take their meals.

As for study, it will before all be well to make the pupils apply to the study of the Latin language, the knowledge of which is so necessary for all other sciences. They should afterwards devote themselves to the regular and thorough study of philosophy and theology; and it will also be well to make them study Moral Theology at the seminary in order that they may become capable confessors, and may be of use to the bishop.

2. CANDIDATES FOR ORDINATION

Oh, what a severe account will every bishop have to render to God of the obligation he has to exclude from the altar unworthy subjects and to admit those that are worthy! St. Francis de Sales trembled when he thought of this terrible account. This is the reason why he admitted to holy Orders only those who he had reason to hope would turn out well. In this matter he disregarded recommendations, nobility, and even the talents of the subject if these were not joined to a good life; because knowledge united with a bad life does usually more harm by appearing to add a certain respectability to vice. Hence it followed that he ordained few subjects, as is usually done by all good bishops, because in reality there are few that embrace the ecclesiastical state in order to correspond to the true vocation which they have, and in order to sanctify themselves; the consequence is, that there are few who become virtuous priests, and make themselves useful for the benefit of souls. The same saint said that the Church needs not many priests, but good priests.

As to the candidates for ordination, as soon as the bishop has established a seminary complete according to the form described above, lie should make it a rule and let all know, that no one will be admitted to holy Orders unless he has spent at least three years at the seminary, and has the intention to remain there until he is raised to the priesthood.

Then, in order to admit the seminarians to Orders, the bishop should examine them in regard to their piety and their studies.

I. As regards their morals, we should understand that it is not sufficient if they bring with them certificates from their parish priests, who at times are too easily swayed by human respect. Nor should we be merely satisfied with the negative goodness of the candidates; we should have in regard to them such recommendations as give sufficient indications of a true ecclesiastical spirit. An excellent practice to advise is that of zealous bishops, namely, never to resolve upon the admission of a candidate for ordination without having made in regard to him secret inquiries of several of the faithful who live in the same place, and who know him. This should be regarded as a very efficacious and very necessary means to quiet the bishop’s conscience before ordination. As for these inquiries, we should try to find out not only whether the candidate does not give scandal by being addicted to gaming, insolent behavior, evil conversations, but also whether he really leads a spiritual life by visiting the churches, by meditating, and by receiving the sacraments; whether he leads a retired life, whether he associates only with good companions, whether he applies to study, whether he dresses modestly, and the like. If we have ever come to the knowledge of some positive scandal committed by a candidate for ordination, it will not suffice to require ordinary proof of his good behavior: he should be subjected to a trial of several years; for then we may have reason to suspect that all that he does is done through dissimulation, so as to be ordained priest.

For this purpose the bishop would do well to establish several Congregations in various places of the diocese expressly and solely for clerics. They should assemble once every week in order to be instructed by a good spiritual Father on the practice of virtues, as also on the manner of making mental prayer, of approaching the sacraments with profit, of making visits to the Blessed Sacrament and of the Blessed Virgin; in a word, on all that regards the spiritual life. Moreover, this Father should be charged with the duty of requiring each one of them to render to him an account of his life, of making inquiries about them of others, and then of going to confer with the bishop several times a year, especially before the ordinations. This would, moreover, serve the bishop as an occasion to reprove from time to time the negligent, and to animate the good to holy perseverance.

II. As regards studies, it is certain that ignorance in ecclesiastics causes much injury both to themselves and to others. The worst is, that this is an evil without a remedy, as St. Francis de Sales has said. The bishop should therefore see to it most conscientiously that his clerics always apply to study. Without this application they would not only be of no use to the Church, but they would necessarily be an injury to her, since idleness is the mother of all vices. Hence the bishop should not content himself with a single examination, which is usually made in regard to what is required to receive Orders, or in regard to other elementary questions that can be easily learnt out of a little book, leaving the candidates as ignorant as they were before. We must no longer hope that they will study after ordination; for it is a fact too well known by experience, that many secular priests, not to say all, after having received the priesthood never more open a book, and forget even the little that they knew. Hence it follows that if we do not make them complete their studies before ordination, there will be but little hope that they will do so afterwards.

For this purpose Cardinal Spinelli, Archbishop of Naples, who so well administers his church to the admiration of all, at the time of the ordinations has all the clerics examined at length on the treatises of dogmatic theology, and, besides, each one according to his capacity on other treatises,—of moral theology, of civil law, of philosophy, of canon law,-by obliging them to present themselves in his archiepiscopal palace before the professors appointed by him and remunerated *proprio are.*

As for small dioceses, I think it to be very useful to practise what was usually done in his own diocese by the very zealous Monsigneur Fabrizio di Capua of happy memory, who was Archbishop of Salerno. In his ordinations, especially for the priesthood, he had the candidates examined on the whole of moral theology, which is, in fact, the science that is most necessary for aiding people to save their souls.

However, I find that to be still more useful which another good bishop was accustomed to practise. He also had his clerics examined in moral theology, but he designated for each Order that they were going to receive such and such treatises of the *Summa* of Busembaum (we may use another author if the latter does not please us), and obliged the examiners to put the questions according to the matter and order of this book. In this way on reaching the priesthood every one finds himself sufficiently instructed in the whole of moral theology, and can render service to the diocese as soon as the bishop calls him. If besides moral theology we should wish to require an examination in the first volume of Abelly, who so well gives the rudiments of scholasticism, this would be better for small dioceses.

MAXIMS WHICH A BISHOP SHOULD HOLD IN REGARD TO THE ORDAINING OF HIS CLERICS

1. It is not and never has been the spirit of the Church to ordain ministers who are not capable and disposed to serve the Church and to co-operate in the salvation of souls. This is particularly expressed in the Council of Trent: “Whereas no one ought to be ordained who, in the judgment of his own bishop, is not useful or necessary for his churches. . . . The word *Utilis*—useful—can certainly not be understood of the Mass only; for we know that all priests say Mass: the judgment of the bishop required by the Council would not then have been any longer necessary. Hence when we can expect from a subject only the celebration of Mass, he should not be ordained except in a case of necessity, namely, when in a place there would not be a priest to celebrate Mass for the people. Moreover, we should admit only those that appear to have talent enough, with the intention of being useful to souls, and that give signs of a true ecclesiastical spirit.

2. To give these signs of an ecclesiastical spirit, it is not sufficient that the candidate for ordination shows no marks of positive vices; he must, besides, show true piety by giving indications of modesty, of love of retirement, and of other virtues proper to an ecclesiastic. It is especially necessary that he should practise mental prayer; for he who usually does not make meditation can with difficulty be a virtuous man. This is the reason why St. Charles Borromeo wished that all the candidates for ordination should be particularly examined upon mental prayer, to find out whether they knew how to make it and whether they really made it.

3. External faults, as vanity in dress, visiting seculars, the habit of going about, and the like, are marks of a worldly and dissipated mind, which does not trouble itself about acquiring true piety. When a candidate is addicted to these faults, it will be expedient to draw his attention to them, to defer at the same time his ordination, and to make more minute inquiries into his morals; for it has sometimes happened that such subjects in consequence of greater care bestowed upon an examination of their lives have been found positively wicked. Little application to study is also a reason for deferring

ordination and for making inquiries into the morals of the candidate, as it is a sign of a dissipated mind. The same thing may be said about those that give themselves up to the chase: for attachment to the pleasures of the chase draws one away from study and from devotion, and induces one to frequent the society of seculars. It is the same, and with stronger reason, in regard to those that are given to the playing of cards.

4. And when we discover in a candidate an inclination to the vice of impurity, or when we have a sufficient motive for suspecting it, if he has received only Minor Orders, it will be expedient to make him wait, even by showing him that we are little disposed to promote him, in order that of His own accord he may lay aside the clerical dress and may choose another state of life: for experience proves that there is here question of an evil, which it is too difficult to remedy, and if any one is tainted with this vice, it will be too difficult to assure one's self of his true amendment. In case such a cleric has had the misfortune to find himself already in higher Orders, it will be necessary to defer his ordination from year to year until he has given certain signs of a change of life. But an amendment of short duration will not suffice: for in order to destroy the bad habits contracted for a long time, a long continuation of contrary acts is required, in order that we may rely on the perseverance of the candidate, and this with the assurance required for conferring the higher Orders according to what we read in the Roman Pontifical: "Cum magno quippe timore ad tantum gradum ascendendum est, ac providendumad cœlestis sapientia, probi mores, ac diuturnæ justitiæ observatio ad id electos commendent."[14952] And St. Gregory says: "Ne unquam ii, qui ordinati sunt, pereant, prius aspiciatur si vita eorum continens ab annis plurimis fuit."[14953] See what has been written on this point in the work entitled: *Selva di materie predicabili,* or *Dignity and Duties of the Priest.*[14954] Moreover we should exact more signs of piety from candidates who have been addicted to vice than from those who have lived in innocence; for the guilty one should compensate for the disorders of his life by more fervor, in order to make himself worthy of receiving the higher Orders. As long as one has not obtained from them these signs of true piety, they should not be promoted; it is a less evil that they should be bad clerics than that they should be bad priests.

5. Relatively to those young men that ask for permission to wear the clerical dress, we should admit only those that are capable of discerning the state that they wish to embrace; they should then be at least fourteen or fifteen years of age; they should, moreover, be able to explain sufficiently well Latin books; and, finally, what is more important, should appear to have a notable inclination to piety.

6. The following are the rules that clerics should observe: (1) they should approach the sacraments at least twice a month; (2) teach children catechism every Sunday; (3) serve Mass on every festival; (4) pursue their studies; (5) attend the Congregation established for them, or that of the priests.

3. PRIESTS

Good priests are the arms of the bishop; without them he would never be able to see the vineyard of his Church well cultivated. For this reason it is of great importance that the bishop should exhibit the greatest kindness to good priests, especially to laborers, provided they are true workmen; he should, therefore, reward them according to their merit by bestowing upon them offices and benefices. The abuse of conferring parishes and other benefices through worldly considerations was called by St. Francis de Sales the abomination of desolation in the holy place, and the common origin of all the disorders in the Church of God. On this subject this maxim of the saint should be noted, that for the care of souls we should prefer priests sufficiently instructed to those that have more science and less virtue. But if the bishop is to encourage good priests, he should also show to the negligent his dissatisfaction, in order that they may amend themselves.

In order to keep the priests diligently employed, so that they may be of service in the work of saving souls, besides the Congregations of cases of conscience, which are usual in many dioceses, after the manner of that of Father Pavone at Naples held every week, the bishop would do well to establish conferences for cases of moral theology in every place that is sufficiently large by prescribing for priests, especially those that are young, that they should attend these conferences two or three times a week. We know by experience how useful these conferences are in order to acquire a knowledge of a science so vast and so necessary; for through these conferences the cases are better elucidated, and the various principles are more deeply impressed upon the mind. For this purpose the bishop should strongly recommend them to the Vicars Forane, and charge them to have one of the best instructed and most respected priests of the place to preside at them; he should be present, and afterwards transmit to him the solution of the cases that have been discussed. Moreover, no priest should be allowed to appear for examination for hearing confessions if he does not bring proof that he has frequented at least for two years the aforesaid conferences. It will also be very useful if the bishop were himself if possible to be present at these exercises several times a year, so as to see how things are going on, and to encourage the members of the conferences.

It is certain that the bishop should use the greatest care in the admission of confessors, on whom depends the good direction of the consciences of the people. Ignorant confessors, or those of bad morals, can cause the ruin of the whole flock; it is therefore preferable to have a few of them who are good.

Then, before a priest begins to assume the office of hearing confessions, it would be well for him to make the spiritual exercises by retiring to a house of a religious Community, in order that he may begin with more light and zeal this ministry which is so difficult and of so great importance.

It should also be made a rule that all ecclesiastics should wear the cassock at least in the morning, that they should not indulge in forbidden games, and that they should not wear long hair. Oh, what a spectacle to see certain priests at the altar with their ample garment forming a ring under the alb, and with a head of hair long and even frizzled, on which, as a preparation for Mass, they have labored the whole morning before a mirror, curling it with a hot iron;—priests who surpass in vanity the most worldly women, and who even have their heads covered with powder, which afterwards falls upon the corporal and mixes with the fragments of the consecrated Hosts! Oh, what a shame for our times! It belongs to the bishops to remedy these scandals, which are the cause of the loss of devotion, of the esteem of the priests, and of even the faith of poor seculars.

4. PARISH PRIESTS

In order that the parish priests, who have already been approved, may maintain themselves in the spirit of piety and of zeal, which is necessary for them in order to save souls, the bishop should take care that they make every year the spiritual exercises in some religious house (conformably to the order given by Benedict XIV. of happy memory), after the manner of the exercises that are usually given by the Fathers of the Mission.

As regards parish priests in particular, it must be remarked that there are few priests capable of fulfilling this so difficult and so important a ministry, since on their care depends the spiritual good or the ruin of the people. Hence, before appointing them, the bishop should use all possible diligence to assure himself of their merit by gathering information as to their conduct and their virtue, of which they stand in greater need than of science.

Then he should frequently recommend to the parish priests, who have been appointed, the fulfilment of their duties. Let them take special care to instruct the children in the little catechism of Cardinal Bellarmine (which has been generally approved), and let them do this with the assistance of clerics. Moreover, they should preach to the people on every festival or on all Sundays, their sermons should be familiar and instructive, well prepared, not delivered without preparation, and should have reference to the eternal truths. They should bestow their chief care on assisting the dying; and this duty they should not intrust to other priests, indifferently, for such a confidence has sometimes given rise to horrible scandals, which easily happen on like occasions. Let them be, besides, assiduous in hearing confessions, without ever refusing, or showing any repugnance before those who present themselves for confession or Communion.

The bishop should also remind the parish priests that it is their duty to reprove those that lead wicked lives, and to remedy the abuses and the scandals, telling them at the same time that for the cases that they cannot remedy themselves they should inform him of what is going on. And for this purpose it will be necessary that the bishop should always keep his door open to the parish priests, by showing themselves well pleased with their visits and with their vigilance; he should listen to them patiently and courteously, and give orders to his servants that as soon as a parish priest arrives, no matter at what hour, they should hasten to announce him, so that the parish priests, being always sure of obtaining an immediate audience, will easily come when they find it necessary, and not have an excuse to stay away.

Concerning the Paschal duty, the bishop should rigorously ordain that the parish priests must exact of all their parishoners, without exception and without human respect, the certificates of Communion, and to transmit an account of them, given under oath, one or two months after the term fixed for the fulfilment of the precept, and to denounce to him, on the other hand, the transgressors, in order that he may proceed to use the required remedies by exposing the placard of excommunication against the obstinate, etc.—Oh, how many unfortunate people fail against this precept without the knowledge of the bishop, because the parish priests neglect to exact the certificates, or through human respect they do not notify him! For this reason he should necessarily impose upon them the obligation of sending or bringing to him the list of their parishioners who are capable of receiving Communion, with the assurance given under oath that they have satisfied the precept, and of making those children receive holy Communion who are old enough to be admitted to the Holy Table. Generally speaking, the age of ten is sufficient for many among them when the parish priest takes the trouble of instructing them; so the theologians teach. O God! what compassion have we not felt in many missions at the sight of so many children, often capable, who were fifteen or sixteen years old, and had not yet communicated, because of the negligence of the parish priests!

It is, moreover, expedient that every bishop, in order to provide for all the wants of souls and for all that regards the government of his Church, should establish, after the example of St. Charles, a Congregation of which he himself and all the parish priests of the diocese and other sagacious priests should be members, and should assemble once a month, every one being obliged to expose the needs and the disorders of which he has knowledge in order that they may be remedied. In these assemblies one should treat of the discipline of the clergy, of the duties of the parish priests, of the observance in the monasteries of nuns, of the government of the seminary and of other pious establishments, of decorum and respect to be observed in the churches, of scandals, of abuses, of liberal doctrines, of the spiritual and temporal alleviation of the poor, of the care to instruct the people by means of sermons, novenas of the Blessed Virgin (for it is very useful to celebrate one of these novenas at least every year in every parish, with sermons and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament), by propagating the frequentation of the sacraments, as well as visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin, before some venerated picture of the place, and by establishing Congregations for seculars, with the secret Congregations when they can be introduced: these are works that produce the greatest good, etc. But in these assemblies the bishop should give each member full liberty to expose what he finds to be good for the glory of God, and also what the people say about his tribunal, about his council, his servants, or even about his house and his person. Moreover, in cases of special emergency let him call together extraordinary meetings. Ah! if all bishops acted thus, many things would be better observed, and many evils would be remedied which otherwise one would not even notice!

5. VICARS AND SERVANTS

In the choice of ministers, the first resolution of the bishop, to secure a good administration, should be, never to yield, for any reason whatsoever, to motives of relationship, friendship, or of any other worldly consideration.

As for the Vicar, we clearly see that on him depend in a great measure the quiet and the good condition of the diocese. The bishop should, therefore, use all possible diligence to secure a Vicar who is at the same time well instructed and virtuous, who has an affable and gentle character, who is unremitting in giving audience to every one, who expedites affairs, and is, above all, not attached to self-interest. St. Charles positively forbade his Vicars and ministers to receive gifts, of whatever kind they might be. One of them having on one occasion accepted a present, was dismissed without mercy. It is advisable that every day, or on several appointed days of the week, the bishop should cause an account to be given by his Vicar of the important affairs that are to be settled; otherwise, he may often find himself involved in a perhaps irremediable confusion.

The bishop should especially take care that piety reigns in his house; he should dismiss those that do not lead a life of piety, and much more so those that live in sin, far from God: if he does not do so, the people will justly complain. he should also strictly forbid, under penalty of dismissal, any of his ministers or servants to ask for or accept presents from any person or Community whatsoever, especially from candidates for the priesthood, from parish priests, confessors newly appointed, or from those that have been endowed with any benefice, He should also ordain, in a positive manner, that no one should interfere in any matter of justice for the purpose of recommending any one, as was ordained by St. Charles; for thence arise many disorders, and often even the reputation of the bishop suffers. It is his duty to be the first to give a good example by not receiving any presents from his subjects, especially from the candidates for ordination, from beneficiaries, from individual nuns, except those presents that rightly belong to him, or it is customary for him to receive. Presents that are received cause the loss of a good reputation, and of the liberty to administer corrections, or to refuse what is not just.

6. CONVENTS OF NUNS

Virgins consecrated to God are the finest portion of the flock of Jesus Christ, if they live like true religious. Hence the bishop should, above all, be watchful that young women may not receive the religious habit, if he does not recognize in them true virtue and a true vocation; for unfortunately, at the present time, most of them become religious to obey their relatives, or for other purposes, rather than to give themselves entirely to God. This is the reason why in so many convents one no longer sees a truly religious spirit, and laxness increases more and more. A remedy should, therefore, be applied to the root of the evil. The bishop should carefully examine the dispositions of the postulants before admitting them to the reception of the habit, by questioning them individually, not simply as a matter of form, as is so often done, but in order to assure himself of the truth in regard to the chief motive that induced them to enter religion; whether the impulse was given by the relatives, or by the nuns, etc. When he does not discover certain signs of a true vocation in a postulant, he should be firm enough not to grant her admission, by telling her to reflect a little while longer on the subject, so as to dispose herself better. Oh, if bishops would act in this manner what a different spirit and what a different perfection should one not see in the convents! And of what use is it to the Church of God to admit so many young women into convents without a vocation? It only serves to furnish dwelling places for cloistered women, who live, as we see, in a way not at all exemplary, and who during their whole lives disturb the convent and annoy the bishop.

Moreover, it would be well to fix the number of religious for each house; for it is certain that when they become too numerous it will be difficult to maintain regular observance. Then the bishop should try as much as possible to have common life observed, or to have it introduced where it does not exist; without it it is impossible to prevent continual disorders in the convents.

As for the permission to speak with the religious, it is expedient that the bishop should reserve it to himself, and that he should not easily grant it on account of the abuses that may result therefrom; for if permission is given to some without inconvenience, it cannot afterwards be refused to others, who will perhaps offer lawful pretexts, but who have no good intention. Besides, it sometimes happens that attachments spring up, not in the beginning, but, in the course of time, in consequence of frequent interviews, and a single attachment of this kind is sufficient to cause the ruin of the whole convent.

According to an ordinance of Pope Benedict XIV. of happy memory, it is positively forbidden to the religious holding office to expend out of their income any money for the celebration of the feasts of the Church, and for making presents to their confessors and others. What is expended should come from the Community. O God! what disorders arise in convents in which this cursed abuse exists! Through a desire to make a show, the religious hardly think of anything else during their whole lifetime than of procuring money, of tormenting their families, and of making friends; and for this reason they give up prayers, retreat, detachment, and lead a life of distraction, of disquietude, and keep no rule: these are evils that necessarily flow from such an abuse. There are other evils still more grave; this is well known by the experience of those who are acquainted with convent life.

The bishop should also take great care that those religious that have most virtue and prudence should be appointed Superiors; for it is on them and on the confessors that depend regular observance or a life of relaxation. It should be borne in mind that when an abuse has been introduced into the convent, it is nearly impossible to correct it; now the Superiors and the confessors are responsible for all the abuses. Hence there should be chosen confessors who are very virtuous, firm, and disinterested, and it should always be recommended to them, as well as to the Superiors, never to permit any abuse to creep in while they have charge of the convent.

It is also necessary to send to the religious several times a year extraordinary confessors, at least for the purpose of repairing the evil of bad confessions made to the ordinary confessor; and one should be convinced that these cases are not rare. Would to God that they were not frequent! The bishop should guard against reappointing the same confessors in the same convents after three years, and against sending them these, either as extraordinary confessors, or to hear the confession of any one of the religious if at least an interval of three years has not elapsed; otherwise such a pretext might give rise to the danger of allowing some attachment to continue, or at least the danger of holding the entire Community exposed to disorder would always exist.

Moreover, it will be expedient to have the spiritual exercises given to them every year by a priest, provided he is a man whose conduct has been notoriously exemplary, who is prudent, and is practically acquainted with religious Communities; otherwise it would be better for the religious to make the exercises by themselves without the preaching. Oh, how many convents have become relaxed, and perhaps ruined, because there were sent to them priests who had very little virtue, who were uninstructed, or imprudent!

Chapter II

THE MOST EFFICACIOUS MEANS THAT THE BISHOPS SHOULD EMPLOY TO DIRECT THEIR FLOCKS

It behooves . . . a bishop to be blameless.[14955] On these words St. Jerome says: “All virtues the Apostle comprises in one word.”[14956] Hence the schools commonly teach that the bishop (to use their own terms), *est in statu perfectionis exercendæ et communicandæ*—he is in a state of perfection in which he himself practises perfection and communicates it at the same time to others. That is, as Father Suarez explains, it is proper that the bishop should possess the perfection which religious strive to attain by their vows and their rules. It is true, says St. Thomas, that the bishop is not obliged to attain such a perfection under the pain of grievous sin; nevertheless, he adds, if the bishop is not a saint he can never sanctify his flock as he is in duty bound. A piece of wood that does not burn cannot set fire to other wood. No one can be a canal unless he has before been filled, according to what St. Bernard says: “Show yourself to be a reservoir, and not a canal Be at first filled, and then try to pour yourself out.”[14957] This is what St. Paul wrote to Timothy: *Take heed to thyself, and to doctrine: be earnest in them. For in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear them.*[14958]

To arrive at this perfection, there are nine chief means which the bishop should use, namely: 1. Prayer; 2. Good Example; 3. Residence; 4. Visitations; 5. Missions; 6. The Synod; 7. Counsel; 8. Audiences, 9. Correction.—It will therefore be necessary for him to love prayer before all things.

1. PRAYER

It is certain that mental prayer is one of the greatest means to sanctify one's self; of this we are assured by all the masters of spiritual life. St. Aloysius Gonzega said that no one can arrive at any notable degree of sanctity without devoting himself much to prayer. Light, strength, fervor, which are necessary in order to strive after perfection, are acquired by prayer. Hence all the saints have been men of prayer. St. Charles, as we see in his life, consecrated to study and to prayer the whole time that business and the little sleep that he took permitted him. Thus did he usually devote every day several hours to mental prayer, and when anything happened that had any important bearing on the public good, he passed the entire night in prayer.

The bishop, then, should not omit prayer on any account. It would also be expedient for every bishop to say prayers in common with those of his house who assemble in the chapel. This was also the practice of St. Charles and of the Cardinal of Arezzo, who went every day to the church to pray before the Blessed Sacrament.

2. GOOD EXAMPLE

It is not sufficient that the bishop should be *lucerna ardens*—a shining light as to his own interior; he should also be *lucens* exteriorly by his good example if he wishes to see his flock walking the road of virtues. In order that they may ascend the mountain, the shepherd must go before them within sight of them. The bishop is this light placed by God himself on the candlestick that it may shine *to all that are in the house*.[14959] In vain will he preach and recommend the practice of the evangelical maxims: if he does not before set the example, it will happen what is said by the Council of Vercelli, that the hearers would put but little faith in him, because "Men believe with their eyes more than their ears."[14960]

The bishop should then give a good example in all things, as St. Paul wrote to Titus: *In all things shew thyself an example*.[14961]

Example of *meekness*, by bearing with the rudeness of his diocesans, and by treating with all possible charity those that are insolent, those that are detractors and ungrateful. Every bishop should enter upon the government of his Church with the conviction that he will be repaid with ingratitude, and with the intention of rendering good for evil; such is the spirit of Jesus Christ and of his true servants. How many beautiful examples of this have been especially given by St. Charles and St. Francis de Sales! Their lives are full of them.

Example of *poverty.* The bishop should consider that the Church provides him with revenues, not that he may employ them as he pleases, but that he may help the poor as if he were administering their patrimony. St. Charles said that it is a shame for a bishop to allow money to accumulate, and that it is honorable if he is always in debt on account of the alms that he gives, which, says St. Gregory, is the first work of mercy that the shepherd should perform towards his flock. Oh, how many evils do not good bishops remedy by their alms, notably when there is question of preventing the sins of those that are engaged to be married, of children who sleep in the same bed with their parents, of poor women whom necessity tempts to sell their honor, and similar things!

It is true that the bishop may lawfully spend of his revenues what is necessary for his decent support; but in everything he should always allow holy poverty to shine forth. His household should be moderate, consisting only of as many servants as are needed. Father Hippolytus Durazzo, while a bishop, before he entered the Society of Jesus, used to appear accompanied by few servants; he would say: “I find that in the Gospel Jesus Christ commands humility, and not pomp.” Moderation should also be observed in regard to the garments and furniture of the bishop. Oh, what a subject of edification to every one to see that the house of the bishop is poor, stripped of those ornaments which seculars love to display! St. Charles absolutely banished from his house tapestries, draperies, and paintings. There should also be moderation in reference to food. We should be persuaded that usually that which gives the people a good or a bad idea of the spirit of an ecclesiastic is, when they hear of the frugality or sumptuousness of his table. Moreover, it will be well for the bishop always to season his meals with the reading of a spiritual book, as was practised by St. Charles.

He should also set an example of all the other Christian virtues: of mortification by depriving himself of certain diversions; of the love of retirement, by avoiding much conversation; of modesty, by taking care not to raise his eyes in the presence of women; of zeal, by introducing into every private conversation some pious thought, as St. Charles was accustomed to do with every person, etc.

3. RESIDENCE

At his consecration the bishop receives the ring in order that by wearing it he may always remember that he belongs not to himself, but to the Church, his Spouse, whom he is faithfully to serve till death, It is not my intention to explain here how far the bishop is obliged to reside in his diocese: I only repeat what the sacred Council of Trent says, that the presence of the pastor is necessary that he may govern well his flock—a presence which is certainly enjoined upon the bishops by a divine precept. We read in the Life of St. Charles that when he found himself absent from his diocese he felt himself as if bound by chains, so great was his desire to return home as soon as possible. Cardinal Bellarmine, although constrained by an order of the Pope to remain at Rome outside of his diocese of Capua for the good of the universal Church, he vet believed that he could not do so in conscience, and he therefore resigned the See.

4. VISITATIONS

Residence on the part of the bishop is particularly necessary so that he may be able to visit the different places of his diocese: and he should personally visit them. Oh, how many disorders does he not remedy in these journeys when he sees things with his own eyes! He that does not see, cannot provide. It is impossible to govern well by means of the reports that others furnish; the latter, actuated by private ends, either deceive us, or they are themselves easily deceived, or at least they know not the evils that really exist. This is a fact which I myself have seen and deplored in the courses of the missions that I have given. Although St. Charles had in his service so many ministers, we read in his Life how much he did and how much he corrected in his pastoral visitations.

According to the Council of Trent, the bishop should personally visit all the places in his diocese at least every two years. The inconvenience in travelling certainly does not dispense one from this obligation; for it is the indispensable duty of the pastor, in spite of inconveniences and fatigue, to examine into the condition of his flock so as to provide for their wants. How many times did not St. Charles continue his visits notwithstanding the fever from which he suffered! It was a maxim of his that a bishop should go to bed only after the third attack of fever. On one occasion, in order to make a visitation in a certain place, he crept on his hands and feet through the mud and snow. And St. Francis de Sales, as we also read in his Life, in order to visit certain places was also obliged to drag himself along roads that were so bad that his feet were badly bruised, and he could not stand erect for several days. At other times he had to pass the night sleeping on leaves of trees, and when his friends begged him not to expose his life in this manner, he said: “It is not necessary that I should live, but it is necessary that I should perform my duty.”

As for the occupations of the bishop in the visitations, the following rules should be observed:

First, he should nourish with the divine word the flocks that he visits, and do so with his own voice according to the counsel given by the Council of Trent: “Bishops are personally bound, if they be not lawfully hindered to preach.”[14962] The same council adds that among the functions of the bishop that of preaching is the principal one: “This is the principal duty of bishops.”[14963] Is it only a simple ceremony that the Church in consecrating a bishop should place upon his head and shoulders the book of the Gospels? Oh, how much greater is the impression made by the voice of one’s own pastor than by the voice of others! Besides the many sermons that St. Charles was accustomed to preach in the city of Milan, it was a usual thing with him to preach two or three times every day. It will be well for the bishop to speak in his sermons oftenest on the eternal truths, which are the most powerful means for gaining souls; then he should moralize against the commonest abuses of the place, and should generally always exhort the people to avoid the occasions, and not to conceal sins in confession through shame. Finally, let him always try to impress upon the hearts of his hearers the resolution to frequent the sacraments, and to recommend themselves continually to Jesus and to Mary by invoking them especially in temptations, and fortifying themselves with the sign of the cross.

Secondly, it will be well for the bishop to examine the children of every parish to see how they are instructed, and to distribute little presents to reward those that answer well; he can thus remedy the negligence of the parish priests by reprimanding them, and even if necessary by appointing some one to assume the duties of catechist in punishment and at the expense of the parish priest: this will at least serve as an example for the rest. It is of the greatest benefit that the bishop should examine the children himself, so as to make the parish priests attentive to their duty of instructing them well. This was done by St. Charles, and also by the most vigilant archbishop of Naples, Cardinal Spinelli; hence there is not seen in their dioceses that ignorance of divine things which one sometimes sees elsewhere, and which is the cause of many sins.

Thirdly, in the rural parishes the bishop should have the priests examined as to the manner in which they observe the ceremonies of the Mass.

Fourthly, he should not fail to personally examine all the priests and all the clerics of the place which he visits by interrogating each one of them in private, first on their employments and their mode of life so as to recommend to them, if necessary, assiduity in hearing confessions, in attending the dying, application to study, or prayer and detachment from dangerous societies, etc. Finally, he should make inquiries in regard to the defects of others, and especially of the parish priest (since the visitations aim particularly at reforming parish priests), to find out whether he attends to the duty of preaching, of hearing confessions, of assisting the dying, whether he visits dangerous places, takes care to remove scandals, sees that the church is always kept clean, etc.; he should put similar questions in regard to the other ecclesiastics. For this purpose it will be very useful, as is done by vigilant bishops, to keep a register in which, with the names of all the priests and all the clerics inscribed in alphabetical order, are noted their good or bad qualities according to the secret information that has been obtained. This register may prove very useful, particularly in order to select parish priests, rural deans, and other ministers, to give to every one the advice that he needs, and to watch more carefully over his conduct, etc. The bishop should also make general inquiries about the abuses, the scandals, and the dissensions which exist in the place. Let him rest assured that in these private and secret examinations he will succeed in learning many important things of which he would have been ignorant; he will thus be able to remedy many abuses which otherwise would not be remedied.

Fifthly, he should visit the nuns in their convents, and preach to them a sermon in order to make them more disposed to receive opportune commands. Then he should privately listen to each one, and encourage her to expose her wants, and to declare freely what she knows to be amiss in the convent or among the nuns. But in these examinations the bishop should be cautious not to show himself attached to any of the factions that are usually formed in the convents. After having heard all of them impartially, he should decide or counsel what he believes to be the best before God.

Sixthly, he should give opportune orders for keeping the churches in repair, either in reference to the building, or the altars and sacred vessels, and recommend cleanliness and silence in the holy place. Before his departure he should leave in writing the given orders, and rigorously exact their execution, so that everything may be done promptly.

Seventhly, it is also expedient that in his visitation the bishop should examine the confraternities of the seculars, and take care that they be frequented and that each should have its own spiritual Father, who preaches to the members and hears their confessions; and that these confraternities be established where they are not. It is too notorious that seculars who do not frequent the confraternities are but little inclined to frequent the sacraments, and only with difficulty persevere in God’s grace. But we would do well in these confraternities not to oblige the members to pay any contribution for funerals, for suffrages, or for any other thing; for one knows by experience that many in order not to be obliged to incur this expense, however small it may be, prefer to give up the confraternities, and they thus wander away from the path of virtue. At least let the bishop make a rule that one may be admitted into these confraternities even when one does not wish to pay anything, but on condition that the suffrages, etc., will be only for those that pay the contribution. For the rest the rule should be rigorously observed that those are to be effaced from the list of members who without a lawful excuse fail to be present at the confraternity three times in succession, or to communicate once a month.

Eighthly, it is necessary that the bishop in his visitations should administer the sacrament of Confirmation.

In reference to the administration of the sacrament of Penance, *unusquisque in sensu suo abundet,* St. Francis de Sales did not object to hear the confession of any one that asked him. There are some who say that if the bishop administers this sacrament there will arise danger of deceit, sacrileges, etc. Nevertheless it will at least be expedient in these visitations that he should go to the confessional, not to hear confessions, but to listen to any one that wishes to speak to him privately, and under the pretext of a special devotion to confess to the bishop, and thus avoid all criticism. This may especially be useful in order to hear the declarations of any woman who could not go to the bishop’s house.

5. MISSIONS.[14964]

He that has not given missions, nor heard confessions dining missions, cannot know how useful these exercises are. Owing to the extraordinary manner in which the bread of the divine Word is broken, when the eternal truths are methodically exposed to the hearers who have assembled in great numbers, it is nearly impossible for them not to be converted to God. It is, moreover, evident that God co-operates more efficaciously with this work. Father Contenson assures us that it is only by the missions that souls reach eternal salvation.[14965]

But, O God! there are some who say that by the missions disquietude is spread among consciences. Would it then be better, in order not to disquiet consciences, to leave poor sinners in their deplorable state, with this cursed peace which is the seal of their damnation? One disquiets consciences! , But it is the duty of a pastor to disquiet his sheep that sleep in sin in order that they may awaken, recognize the danger in which they live, and thus return to God. Now for this purpose there is no better means than the mission. We also manifestly see the efforts that hell makes to hinder missions, using sometimes for this end the parish priests themselves, but only those who, in order that their faults may not become known, seek under various pretexts to avoid having missions. But in such cases it is the bishop who is to provide by sending missionaries specially into the parishes in which he knows that the parish priest is negligent, without waiting for his request or that of the parishioners, and this above all when he sees that the parish priest does not desire a mission.

If the missions are very useful even for cities, we should be convinced that in small places they are not only useful but necessary, because as only a few priests are there who are even natives of the place, it easily happens that many souls commit sacrileges by making bad confessions on account of the repugnance that they feel in confessing to those who know them and whom they continually meet. Hence if these souls have not the convenience of a mission so as to be able to confess to priests who are strangers, it is morally certain that they will continue in their sins and thus lose their souls.

I am praying to Jesus Christ to make all bishops understand this truth in order that one may not have to exclaim with Contenson, already quoted: “So many little ones in the towns cry for bread, and there is no one to break it to them. Woe, woe to sleeping bishops!”[14966]

It is therefore advisable that the bishop should have a mission given every three years in every village, however small it may be. This I say, because there are missionaries who, in districts where small villages are close to one another, are accustomed to give a mission in a central place for all of them at the same time. I respect their zeal in wishing to sanctify all these souls at the same time; but I do not approve of their mode of action, and I would ask the bishops for the love that they have for the glory of Jesus Christ not to be satisfied with missions thus given in groups: they should take care that each place, however small it may be, may have its special mission, which is to last at least for eight days; for we know that if a mission is given in a place for several neighboring parishes, the faithful who go there are those that need it the least. Those, on the contrary, who are laden with sin the most, and are consequently less careful of their salvation, do not attend it at all, under the pretext that it is too far, or that the sermon is over too late, or that the weather is bad, etc. And so they remain at home and lead the same wicked lives, while if the mission had been given in their own church they would have been compelled to attend it at least out of human respect, fearing to be looked upon as reprobates. I speak from experience. We have seen many places where it was said a mission had been given; but because it had been given in some central church, or because it had been given in too short a time, we found there people really abandoned, as if no mission had been given there.

This is the reason why our humble Congregation, when it is called to give missions, takes care to give the exercises in every place, however small, at least during eight days; and in those places where this time does not suffice to hear the confessions of all the faithful, we prolong the mission as much as twenty and even thirty days. We should be convinced that the greatest fruit to be derived from the missions does not consist in that one hears sermons, but in that every one goes to confession to the missionaries. If in a mission one does not settle the accounts of one’s past life, and does not regulate one’s future conduct by means of confession, the hearing of sermons will be of little use. Hence our most esteemed Father of happy memory, Monsignor Falcoia, Bishop of Castellamare, whom we have had the happiness to have for our first and only director of our little Congregation, said with good reason that it is better not to give a mission than to give one that is too short, so that the hearers do not find the opportunity to make their confessions; since sermons create scruples, and if those that have scruples do not succeed in confessing to the missionaries, they will continue to have troubled consciences, and not have the courage to manifest their troubles to the confessors of the place. Hence, being now in bad faith they will, commit sacrileges and lose their souls. It will, therefore, always be better for the bishop to have complete missions given in a few places rather than permit them to be given in many places in an imperfect manner; then, at least, one will know that in certain parishes no mission has been given, and missionaries can be sent there afterwards.

6. THE SYNOD

The synod is an invention of the Holy Ghost in order that the bishops may by this means assure themselves of the good government of the Church. It is notorious that St. Charles by means of the synod reformed and sanctified his whole diocese. In the synodal conferences one examines the faults that are to be corrected, the rules to be established for proper maintenance of the churches, for the offices, the choir, holy Orders, suffrages, sermons, catechism, etc., so that the parish priests who must be present are better instructed in their obligations, and become more attentive in fulfilling them.

Relatively to reserved cases, which it is customary to determine in the synod, it will be expedient for the bishops to be cautious rather than easy in extending them. In the dioceses in which reigns the execrable vice of blasphemy against the saints, it would be useful to make it a reserved case. Monsignor Fabrizio, of happy memory, Archbishop of Salerno, a prelate of great zeal, by making a reserved case of blasphemy was successful in moderating this vice in his diocese. And in regard to the company-keeping of persons engaged to be married, which gives rise to innumerable sins, it would be advisable to ordain in all dioceses that the parish priests cannot accept the promises of such persons without being assured that they are ready to be married within a few days. Because if one receives these promises too long a time before the marriage, as is done in many places, it happens that the men engaged take the liberty of entering the house of those whom they intend to marry, and that they continue to live together in disgrace with God. Hence it would be at the same time expedient to reserve not only carnal union and cohabitation, or the remaining together at night of the betrothed, but also the sin of the parents or heads of families who permit these disorders.

7. COUNSEL

He that is wise hearkeneth unto counsels,[14967] says the Holy Ghost. On this subject Campano, Bishop of Terme, said that the bishop who believes that he does not need counsel in order to govern well, either must be a God, or will be a beast among men. Surius[14968] praises St. Hugh of Lincoln, saying that his first care on entering the episcopate was to choose learned and pious counsellors. It is desirable for the bishop in his consultations to refrain from expressing his own opinion, and to give to others all liberty to express their views.

The bishop should weigh well every order before giving it, and not be too quick in taking resolutions, especially in the heat of passion and in matters of importance. It would, generally speaking, even be expedient, when entering upon the government of his church, not to do anything else than note the defects that exist, and search after remedies that might be used. He may then begin the work, being more fixed in his resolutions after having taken the necessary information concerning men and things of his diocese.

During the progress of his government he should take counsel first of God in prayer, then of prudent men; after that let him act with firmness, not only in giving opportune orders, but in maintaining them and seeing that they be punctually carried out, otherwise it would be better not to give them. For if it is seen that the bishop bears without resentment the non-observance of any of his orders, it will happen that the rest of his orders will be disregarded. This is what St. Paul gave Titus to understand when he wrote to him that he should see that his commands be fulfilled: *Exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*[14969] This firmness, so necessary to the bishop, is represented by the holy unction which he receives at his consecration. He who in the interests of God fears to displease men will never be a good bishop. *If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ,*[14970] says the Apostle. And a pious bishop added, that bishops should resolve to be poisoned, to be prosecuted, or to be damned.

8. AUDIENCES

Except during the time of prayer, of Mass, of necessary rest, the bishop should be ready to give audience to every one and at every hour. He belongs not only to his church, but to his flock. For this purpose the bishop should specially recommend to his servants to announce to him those that have come; above all, if they are parish priests; because these, as has been said above, are the most occupied, and have charge of the most important affairs. If we once delay in giving them an audience, they will afterwards neglect to come by pleading in excuse that they could not obtain an audience; and thus the good of souls and the interests of the glory of God will have to suffer.

The bishop should avoid being familiar, and should not give too much confidence to any one of his subjects, so as not to be deceived by him nor criticised by others; but, on the other hand, he should hear and treat every one with the greatest kindness. He is a father, and he should treat his subjects as his children, and not as his servants. St. Jerome says that a bishop who treats his subjects with harshness is not a fit person to govern.

When treating with women he should take care, at least for the edification of others, to keep his eyes cast down, to be brief, and always to be in the presence of some one. St. Charles when he spoke with women wished that at least two persons should be present.

It is also necessary that the bishop should not easily believe what is secretly reported to him, and that he should take no steps before he has heard the other side, or has been well assured of the facts through the information given him by trustworthy persons.

9. CORRECTION

It is, besides, the special duty of the bishop to remove his flock from a wicked life by means of correction; he is obliged to do so even if it cost his life: *The g00d shepherd giveth His life for His sheep.*[14971] Otherwise he will have to render an account to Jesus Christ of all the evils that will happen, and that he could have prevented by correction. This is the great burden which makes holy bishops tremble. Monsignor Sanfelice, of happy memory, said to me one day in a trembling voice: “Don Alphonso, how can I sleep quietly when I know that one of my flock is living in disgrace with God?” St. Gregory condemns the bishops who corrects no one as guilty of the same crime that the malefactor commits.

But in order that the correction may be suitable the following rules should be observed:

1. The correction should be administered in *charity;* and if in extreme cases severity becomes necessary, we should always mix wine with oil, that is, severity with kindness; hence it is expedient not to administer correction when one is excited; for then one easily falls into excess.

2. We should correct others with *prudence:* the same remedy that is good for one may not be good for another, especially when the culprit is blinded by passion, which does not permit him to acknowledge his fault nor profit by the correction.

3. It is true that in order to administer a useful correction we should wait for the opportune moment; but when the moment has come, we should correct the guilty one with *promptness,* without delay. We should remedy the evil as soon as we can; for the fire is easily extinguished when it is only a spark, but not when it has become a flame.

4. We must administer correction in *secret,* especially when the fault is hidden. He that has lost his reputation easily gives himself up entirely to vice.

Finally, when the correction is disregarded by the culprit, we must punish him by acting with firmness even though we should expose our lives. St. Peter Damian says that the good pastor loves justice more than life.[14972] And St. Leo says: “Those whom correction has not profited, let them not be spared as to separation.”[14973] If chastisement does not serve to bring back the culprit, it will at least serve as an example to others.

However, while exercising justice we should make room for leniency, to which the bishop should always be inclined; for it is a less evil, says St. Augustine, to have to reproach one’s self with too great an indulgence than too great a severity. Especially should the bishop restrain himself in the infliction of censures; as they are an extreme remedy, if they are inflicted with excess, they are apt to remain unnoticed. And when a culprit under censure truly amends himself, he should be at once absolved unless prudence requires a longer trial, or we are in danger of being deceived.

In regard to ecclesiastical culprits, if after the correction we perceive some amendment in them, the best thing, as is done by a prudent bishop, is, instead of imprisoning them, to send them out of the diocese and to grant them permission to return only after we have been assured that they have entered upon the path of duty by a long trial. These are the sick that are healed with difficulty by ordinary remedies.

As I had proposed to myself to be short, I shall now conclude, and pass over in silence other things less important. But I cannot conclude this little work without saying that every bishop should be convinced that in receiving the mitre he loads his conscience with a great burden, so that if he wishes to save his soul he must necessarily resolve on entering upon the government of his See, to embrace a life, not of ease and of rest, but a life of crosses, of trials, and of labors; a life which St. John Chrysostom calls "a sea of labors, an abyss of troubles."[14974] Hence arises for bishops the extreme danger of losing their souls, and this has filled many holy men with so great a fear, that they found themselves as it were forced even to fail in obedience to their Superiors by refusing to take upon themselves such a burden. And one cannot regard as vain such a fear if the saying of St Augustine[14975] is true, namely, that it is very difficult for a bishop to be saved, because it is very difficult for him to comply with his grave responsibilities. Most terrible is, besides, what St. John Chrysostom says, and I do not think that he is wrong, namely: "I believe that among the bishops not many will be saved, but many more will be lost."[14976] And here the holy Doctor speaks of those that are truly called to the episcopate and are forced to accept it; he speaks quite differently of those that ambitiously seek after it, for he says: "I wonder whether any one of them will be saved."[14977] Whether in this matter there is any exaggeration, I know not; but I know that when Pius V. was elected Pope he was seen to tremble and to grow pale; and when asked the reason, he answered as follows: "When I was a religious I had great hopes of saving my soul; having become a bishop, I began to fear; now having been chosen Pope, I feel nearly desperate."

All these considerations should, however, not discourage good bishops, nor fill them with diffidence, but should excite in them great watchfulness in regard to their duties; should fill them with zeal, and at the same time with holy hopes; for they know that if the chastisement of negligent bishops is to be great, much greater will be the reward that an infinitely good and generous God will give to those that are zealous. St. John Chrysostom says that as much difference as there is on earth between an ordinary, private individual and a monarch, so much difference will there be in heaven between the glory of a solitary who lives a holy life in the desert and that of a pastor of souls. Let him who fears on account of his weakness take the resolution to do all that he can for God; let him afterwards have recourse to God with confidence, and he will be able to do all, by saying with St. Paul: *I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me*.[14978]

In conclusion, I beg every one that has deigned to read this poor little work, written, as may be seen, without art and in a simple manner, to have the charity to recommend me to Jesus Christ in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, either during my life, or after my death, in order that he may show me mercy. For when I find myself, although in another manner, burdened with the great duty of labouring for the salvation of souls, I very much fear for my own salvation, dreading lest I am not fulfilling as I should my obligations. On my part, as wretched as I am, I promise always to pray to our Saviour Jesus and to his most holy Mother Mary for all the pastors of the Christian flock, in order that they may all be holy, and inflame every one with the love of Jesus Christ.

MAY JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY EVER IMMACULATE BE ALWAYS PRAISED!

RULES FOR SEMINARIES.[14979]

INTRODUCTION

THE holy Council of Trent had a very useful and divine idea when it ordained that in the Church seminaries should be established, in which young men who are destined for the ecclesiastical state might be instructed in the sacred sciences, and especially in the exercise of virtues, in order to make themselves fit to labor for the sanctification of the people. Such was the intention of the Council; but would to God that so many seminaries by their bad direction did not become a source of ruin for young men! It is deplorable to see so many poor boys, who, at first innocent and pious become, after their entrance into the seminary, sinks of vice. A boy of seven years of age, having entered a certain seminary in the kingdom of Naples, left it two years afterward so filled with vice that he resembled a demon, and his own parents no longer wished to receive him into their house. Hence while a young man by remaining with his family would have preserved his innocence, and would perhaps have become a good priest, useful for the salvation of others, if he enters a seminary that is badly managed he will be a priest; but through the vices contracted in his youth, and not laid aside in old age, he will cause the ruin of many souls, and will be a scandal to the Church.

Therefore, some one will say, has not the establishment of seminaries been more hurtful than useful? Would it not be better to abolish them everywhere? I answer: If the seminaries are well managed, far from abolishing them, we should take all possible care to maintain them and make them prosper; for in such seminaries the bishop will find the means to provide all his churches with good parish priests, confessors, preachers, canons, and other priests, and he will thus see piety flourish in his whole diocese. If, on the other hand, the seminary is not well kept, there is no doubt that it would be better to give it up. It would certainly be better to have in the diocese priests that are less learned, but of good morals, than to have those that are a little more learned, but that are wicked and scandalous. I say “a little more learned,” because the wicked make but little progress in the sciences; nevertheless, by the reputation of learning which they have acquired ‘they will do more harm to souls, as they are thus better able to deceive them and to conduct them on the road to perdition. For myself, if I knew of a bishop who had a seminary that is badly managed or governed by a bad Director or bad Prefects, I would certainly beg him, if he wished to save his soul, and did not wish to see his diocese go to destruction, to suppress this establishment and to provide in another manner, as best he could, for the wants of his church. O God! how many bishops will be damned and will cause the damnation of a multitude of their flock on account of the little attention which they pay to the government of their seminaries! Would to God that it were not so!

But let us stop complaining, and let us speak of the remedies. In order to keep a seminary in good order let us see what should be the care of the bishop, that of the Director, that of the Prefects, and which are the rules that should be most carefully observed by the seminarians.

1. DUTIES OF THE BISHOP

I. The bishop must before all things take care that the seminary should have its rules well ordered, as well for piety as for the sciences. For this end it will be useful to indicate here the principal rules that are in use in well-organized seminaries, especially in those of Naples and Aversa, which have been and still are, we may well say the model for the rest.

As to the *exercises of piety,* the following shall be performed:

1. Mental prayer in the morning, the meditations being mostly on the eternal truths, the consideration of which is very salutary for young men.
2. Mass, with the Office of the Blessed Virgin.
3. Confession and Communion every eight days, or at least twice a month.
4. Spiritual reading during half an hour, or at least during a quarter of an hour. Here there is question of spiritual reading other than that which is made at table; it will be well to have the reading made out of the Lives of the Saints, and this should never be omitted.

5. The visit to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Mother of God in the afternoon, that is, after the hours recreation, and after the rest which is allowed in summer. It will be well to allow a half-hour’s rest even in winter, as is practised in the seminary at Naples.

6. The Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

7. The examination of conscience, with the Christian acts of faith, etc.

8. There should be added the short prayers that are usually recited at the beginning of class, study or of rest, and especially in the morning after rising. When rising, the following is the order that is to be followed: When the seminarians have been awakened by the ordinary signal, there shall at first be recited, in an undertone, after some pious formula, the acts of adoration and of thanksgiving to the Lord; and while every one shall dress modestly near his bed, there shall be read from the *Diario* of Father Marchese, or from another collection, a few pious facts. This reading shall continue during the time necessary for dressing, washing, combing, etc., and shall be finished at the signal given for meditation, which is to follow immediately.

In some seminaries I have found that the seminarians were made to take the discipline in common, in the dark; but prudence requires that such an exercise should be altogether disallowed, so as to avoid the danger of any impropriety occurring among the young men.

It will be most useful that the spiritual exercises should be given in the seminary every year during eight or ten days, with a sermon in the morning and in the evening, and with an instruction on the virtues and the rules that should be observed. Moreover, it will also be very useful, in order to preserve the spirit and the fruit of these exercises, to make every month a retreat of one day, during which there should be no class nor study, except in the evening, in winter. This day should be devoted to meditation, to spiritual reading (especially to that of the rules), to sermons, to instructions, as well as to confession and Communion.

As regards the *sciences,* the following should be observed:

For beginners there shall be instruction in grammar; then follows the study of humanities, in which we should strive to interest them well, for afterwards they will study them no more; and if they do not well understand the Latin language, they will always be weak in all the other sciences.

The more advanced shall at first study philosophy, in which they should carefully learn logic, which is the most necessary part of it. In the study of the sciences I think it to be much better to use books than writings: in doing so there will be considerable saving of time and of health. We might use Purcozio or Verneio, at least for logic, or the logic of the philosophy called *Burgundia*, which is excellent for seminarians.

They shall afterwards study scholastic and dogmatic theology, for which we might use the abridgment of Tournely, lately published at Venice, a work which has met with general approval. Especially should the bishops, notably those of our kingdom, take care to have the seminarians instructed in moral theology, in order that they may afterwards be able to choose among them subjects most capable to labor for the good of souls; otherwise the same young men after having left the seminary will study this science but little, and the bishops will then complain, as I have seen them do, that they have not priests to hear confessions and to take charge of souls. The greatest good that the bishop can derive from the seminary is to have confessors and parish priests, since among the seminarians he will choose for these functions the best instructed and the most exemplary, without, however, forgetting that, *cæteris paribus*, the most exemplary should always be preferred to the others. In this way he will always be able to keep his diocese in a good condition.

If it should be thought expedient not to make anyone apply to a complete study of philosophy and theology, either because he is too advanced in years, or for some other some reason, he should, however, study moral theology after the humanities and logic, which are always necessary. No one should be allowed to be ordained priest before having studied moral theology for two or three years.

The other things concerning silence, modesty, charity, etc., will be treated farther on, when we speak of the duties of the Prefects and of the seminarians. It will be well to have printed or written in a small volume all these rules, with the other precepts and observances of less importance, and have them read every week, or at least twice a month. This can be done on the day of retreat or on another feast or week day.

II. The bishop should try to have a good Director and good Prefects for the seminary; for if these officials fail in their duty, whatever the bishop may do, the seminary will certainly go to destruction. Besides good morals, they should have some skill and practice in taking care of seminaries. The bishop shall often inquire of the Director how the Prefects and the seminarians conduct themselves; but above all should he obtain information, by every means in his power, in regard to the manner of acting, the charity, the vigilance of the Director. Once or twice a year he shall make a general examination of the seminarians in order to hear and to find out the irregularities and faults of both the seminarians and officials.

III. The following are the *officials* whom the bishop shall employ for the government of the seminary:

First, the Director, who shall take care of the spiritual as well as of the temporal. The bishop should enjoin upon all the obligation of showing great respect and obedience to the Director; otherwise there will always be factions and troubles in the seminary.

Secondly, it is necessary that each section should have its own Prefect. Moreover, there shall be at least one general Prefect, if not two. He shall have charge of the seminarians when they go forth, either to go to the chapel, to the class, to the door, or to speak to the Director; he shall always watch over the corridors, which should never be without some one to keep an eye upon them. When the seminarians go out of the seminary he shall take care that no one remains behind. He shall visit all the sections to examine how they study, how they observe silence, how they make recreation, etc. He shall be present when the barbers, shoemakers, tailors, come, so as to prevent all disorder. He shall give the signal for the common exercises. When informed by the special Prefects, he shall call in the physicians for the sick. In a word, he shall have general superintendence of all the observances of the seminary, and shall notify the Director of all faults of omission.

In some seminaries there is also a Vice-Director, who has the superintendence that has been just described and who presides in the absence of the Director. He has also charge of the servants, of procuring provisions, and whatever is necessary; but where there is a house steward and a general Prefect, as has been said, these cares may be divided among them.

Thirdly, it will be well, and even very useful, to keep at the seminary a confessor who constantly remains there. He should not interfere with the external government, and much less with the punishments that are to be given, nor reprove any one in the presence of others. He should attend only to hear with charity all those of the seminary who come to confess to him or to be directed in the spiritual life. He shall have special charge of the servants of the house, that they may frequent the sacraments and learn Christian doctrine. On the arrival of a new seminarian he shall instruct him for a general confession, mental prayer, etc., and assist him in the spiritual exercises, which 011 entering are to be made during eight or at least three days. He will do well from time to time to address to all in the chapel some discourse or instruction on piety.

Besides this confessor established in the seminary, there should be made to come from without several prudent, exemplary, and well-informed confessors to hear the confessions of the seminarians. They should be firm in refusing absolution to backsliders, who, obliged by the Rule to confess and communicate in the seminary, are apt to come without being well disposed. It will be well to have two confessors to come together, in order that the seminarians may have more liberty in confessing. And three or four times a year the bishop should have extraordinary confessors to come, being persuaded that the seminarians are in great danger of making sacrileges by always confessing to those that know them.

Let all the confessors take care to recommend well to the Prefects, if they come to confession, to be faithful to report to the Director all the faults of the seminarians, and let them even go so far as to refuse them absolution if the importance of the case requires such a measure; for if the Prefects fail in this matter through human respect, there will thence arise many infractions of the Rule and many scandals, to the injury of the common good. They should therefore always inculcate this point. And if the case presents itself, let them also refuse absolution to those seminarians who, when able to remedy some grave scandal by informing the bishop or the Director, refuse to do so. It must be borne in mind that as there is here question of a common injury, they are often not excused because of a grave inconvenience or private injury.

IV. The bishop should, above all, be attentive not to admit into the seminary and to dismiss subjects who give little hope of becoming good ecclesiastics. On this point he should use a rigor which is not ordinary nor great, but which is supreme, as he must be convinced that to relax at times in this rigor is an act, not of charity, but is much against charity; for the indulgence that we use towards any one will be the cause of common evil to the seminary. Among the subjects that enter, however careful we may be, there will not fail to be some who will not be what we thought that they were, or who being in the seminary will become bad. If we do not use towards them extreme rigor, one of them will suffice to corrupt all the rest; and so the seminary will be ruined, and become a receptacle of scandals.

We should at first use diligence and extreme rigor in the admission of pupils by admitting oftenest only those who are young (as for those that are grown up and ignorant, what hope can we have that they will become good laborers in the Church?); who we know by experience are given to piety, and who also show an inclination for the ecclesiastical state. For this purpose we should procure secret information, not from their relatives nor from their parish priests, but from strangers who are trustworthy. It is certainly better to have a few seminarians who are good and who likely will become useful to the Church, than to have many who are found to be imperfect and who will afterwards spoil the good.

In the second place, the bishop should use rigor, and great rigor, by dismissing the incorrigible and the scandalous.

By the *incorrigible* I understand those who after several remonstrances and after punishment give little hope that they will correct their faults, when these faults are multiplied and habitual, though not scandalous nor grave. Although such a one may not be positively scandalous, yet by his conduct, which is so negligent and faulty, lie always gives scandal, at least by his bad example, and also makes others lukewarm; and so there can be very little hope that such a one will become a good ecclesiastic. If therefore such a young man, after various means have been employed, gives no hope of amendment, he becomes certainly hurtful.

By the *scandalous* I understand those that commit faults of positive scandal; for instance, when they induce their companions to transgress a rule, or not to submit to the orders of the bishop or the Director, or to commit some grave theft or insolence. The scandal would be more hurtful if a seminarian would give bad example against decency by some word or some immodest action. The one that gives scandal in this way could scarcely be tolerated the first time that he falls into such faults, after having inflicted upon him a chastisement which is exemplary and of long duration. I use the words “Scarcely . . . the first time;” for the surest way would be to dismiss him at once; for such a one, after having been detected and punished, will easily find means to keep acts of this kind hidden, and as long as these acts do not become again known, they will be the cause of common evil, which it will afterwards be difficult to repair entirely, so that such a one may be the cause of ruin to many. What prudence is, therefore, required, which, in hoping for the amendment of an individual, exposes many to the danger of being lost? The expulsion of such a subject is not a great evil, although he may correct himself in the course of time; the ruin of the Community is a much greater evil, which one should much more fear and try to prevent. If the dismissal is an injury to the young man, it is a private injury, which injures only an individual; but if he injures others, the injury is very grave, as it injures the Community. I repeat, and I repeat a thousand times, that to be indulgent in this matter is not charity, but is imprudence, is tyranny, since in order to use charity towards an individual one wishes to permit the ruin of many, or at least to expose them to the danger of ruin. As to this, it must be regarded as certain that in the seminary in which the pupils, being young, are easily drawn to good or evil, following the examples and the occasions that are before them, a single one giving scandal can infect ail the rest. When they are infected there will probably be no remedy. The only remedy will be to dismiss them all, and to admit new subjects, otherwise the evil once introduced will stay, passing from one to the other forever. Such a severity should not be called, as is done by some, excessive rigor, but rather a duty of charity and of justice, since the bishop is obliged by a grave obligation of charity and of justice to promote the good, and the greatest good, of his diocese; this certainly depends in great part on having a well-regulated seminary.—Let us pray to the Lord that he may make all the bishops who govern the Church understand this truth.

2. DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR

1. When there is question of receiving any subject, the Director shall endeavor carefully to inquire of trustworthy persons about his morals and inclinations.

2. When a seminarian has been received, he should have him make a retreat of eight or at least of three days; in these exercises, with the reading

of the rules, he shall be instructed in the observances by the confessor of the house, to whom he shall afterward make a general confession.

3. The Director shall often and strongly enjoin upon the Prefects to come to him to report the faults committed in their sections, at least every week and every time that it is necessary, and when they come he should leave everything in order to hear them, and not make them wait. He shall correct with some severity those that neglect to report to him the faults that they have noticed; sometimes even he shall publicly reprove them before the seminarians themselves, in order that the Prefect may be more easily excused by them if he afterwards accuses them to the Director. If on this point a Prefect, even after correction, neglects to amend, he should necessarily be dismissed.

4. He shall also tell the seminarians to call upon him when they have something to communicate to him, but always with the permission of the Prefect, who should not refuse it. Moreover, he shall appoint in each section one or two of the most virtuous and faithful seminarians as secret inspectors, to report to him from time to time the faults that they notice, or at least to make them known to him in a surer and less exposed way.

5. He shall keep a small register containing the names of all the seminarians, one on each page, under which he shall note the faults of each in order to be mindful of them,—at least when he has to render an account to the bishop previously to ordination.

6. He shall be specially watchful in regard to faults against purity; he shall recommend modesty in dressing and undressing. He shall order that the lamp at night should always be kept burning, and placed at such a height that no one can extinguish it. Moreover, during the night the dormitory should always be kept locked, and the Prefect should keep the key: this should always be done without exception; otherwise many sins will be the consequence, for which he will have to render an account to God. He shall ordain that, without his express permission, no seminarian should leave his section after the *Ave Maria,* or even during the day, nor go to the room of the teachers; and he should not easily give this permission; for this is a thing that is not practised in the seminaries where there is regular observance; and besides, it is dangerous for one to be quite alone in the room with a boy. In regard to the difficulties which the pupils meet with in their studies, they will do better to propose them in the class; this will serve

at the same time as an instruction for others. He shall assign to each the place of his bed, taking care that the beds be separated from each other at a distance of five or six palms; he shall also assign to each his place at class, at table, and for recreation, and keep separate the quarrelsome, the negligent, and those among whom there may be any danger of scandal.

7. He must employ the greatest rigor in punishing faults against purity committed either in actions or in words; so also if any one converses with a companion alone or in secret, or gives him a note or a present. He shall punish the servants that take letters from the seminarians, since all the letters should be given to the porter, and handed by the porter to the Director. It would be a grave fault to speak to a pupil of another section, and still a graver fault, worthy of expulsion, to approach any one when he is in bed.

8. In punishing, he must make others understand that he does not act out of revenge or out of passion; hence he should defer punishment as long as he is excited. He shall do the same when it is the seminarian who is excited; for prudence requires that we should wait till he is calm. His passion having then subsided, he should be punished; otherwise in his anger he might easily go to excess. Sometimes, when the fault is secret, a charitable remonstrance will have greater effect than any other punishment. I use the word *secret,* for if it is public, the punishment should be public; however, even then it will be well to make a gentle remonstrance before or after the chastisement.

9. He shall try to find out what kind of conversation is held during the recreations and the walks into the country. For these walks he should point out the places where seminarians should go.

10. He shall be vigilant that the prescribed silence be observed, especially at table, when silence is indispensable; if one wishes to avoid innumerable faults, acts of intemperance, disputes, improprieties; for when the seminarians are at table the Prefects cannot observe the seminarians, nor all that is done or said.

11. He shall often go through the sections to see what is done in the time of study or recreation, or in free time. Moreover, several times a year, or every three or four months, he shall examine the beds and cupboards, and unexpectedly ask for the keys in order to see whether he may not find arms, books, and other unsuitable things.

12. He shall have an understanding with the bishop to have a rule made that during the vacation it shall not be permitted to the seminarians to return home, as is done in some seminaries; this inflicts upon these poor young men immense harm, which is perhaps irreparable. During this time the seminarian will easily lose all that he has gained while at the seminary, especially if he remains away during the vintage. It will then be well to give vacation in the seminary by dispensing the young men from study, and allowing them some rational amusement.

13. If there is question of giving to a seminarian permission to return home on account of sickness, care should be taken to assure one's self beforehand, by the advice of the physician, whether the sickness is real, and whether it is necessary for the young man to leave the house; for often seminarians pretend to be sick in order to be able to be present at some festival, or through other capricious motives. If any one should go away for some other urgent cause, one should fix the time of his return; and after he has come back, in regard to the time that he has been absent, the Director shall take care to obtain information how he conducted himself, with whom he stayed, whether he frequented the sacraments, practised mental prayer, etc.

14. Often, as on the days preceding the principal feasts and those of the Blessed Virgin, he shall preach a sermon; and he shall never fail to make a day of retreat in the manner indicated above, page 477.

15. He should often ask a seminarian, in the presence of the others, how mental prayer is made, or whether he remembers what has been read in the refectory, or what he himself has read privately.

16. He shall speak at least once a week with the house steward about the necessities, the provisions, and the treatment of the seminarians.

17. He shall read over from time to time these instructions in order to refresh his memory as to the things to which he should pay attention; otherwise it will be difficult for him not to fail in many things, at least through forgetfulness.

18. When the seminarians are to go to the church, to be present at the offices, or to serve the bishop, they shall leave the seminary together, wearing the surplice, keeping silence, and with their Prefect, who must never lose sight of them. It shall never be permitted them, in the church, sacristy, or elsewhere, to speak to any one whatsoever, however

distinguished the person may be; for this is very important for the welfare of the seminarians and for the good order of the seminary, to which the most worthy ecclesiastics of the diocese must attend, and which they should even promote. The latter should therefore not be offended if one lets them know, in a respectful manner, the necessity of such reserve; and certainly the zeal that animates them will aid them to be edified and pleased.

3. DUTIES OF THE PREFECTS

1. The Prefect shall take care to keep and have others keep the rules and all the particular orders of the bishop and of the Director; he shall see that every one punctually obeys the common signal. He shall be the first to rise and the last to go to bed. He shall be ready to accompany the seminarians when they go to the chapel, to class, or to the table. During the time of study, he shall avoid distracting the seminarians by speaking to them or by going about. If he must leave the seminary to attend to some business, he shall not do so without the permission of the Director; then he shall choose for this the time during which the seminarians are in class, and he shall return before they leave it. When he is to go to some place in the seminary itself, he shall notify the general Prefect, who will watch over the section in his absence.

2. While the seminarians are sleeping at night, he shall take care to lock the dormitory with a key which he shall put under his pillow, and to keep the lamp always burning. He shall assure himself that the wick is in order, that there is enough oil, and shall have the tinder-box always near him in case the light should happen to go out. During the rest that is taken during the day the windows should not be entirely closed; they should remain half open, so that one can see what is going on.

3. In the morning and in the evening, at rising and going to bed, he shall watch that modesty be observed in dressing and in undressing. The rule of the seminary at Naples is, that every one after having put on his cassock should at once leave the bed, and dress with his face turned towards the clothes-press. If the dormitory happens to be too cold, this practice should be followed at least when the weather is mild, that is, from the month of April till October; during the other months one may dress in bed. And when in the morning the seminarians go to meditation, he shall take care that no

one remains in the room: if any one should remain, he should not be left alone; he shall notify the general Prefect of the fact: this would be better. Should any seminarian be called to the door, the general Prefect should have some one to accompany him, and not permit him to go alone.

4. If the Director has not assigned to some one his place in the dormitory, the class, the refectory, recreation, the Prefect himself shall do so conformably to prudence, as has been explained on page 482, until the matter has been attended to by the Director himself, who shall always have charge of it. He shall be watchful that the recreation be always in accordance with the rule, namely, that all should sit in a circle; in the evening he shall make them sit at some distance from one another.

5. During the recreations, at home or in the country, he shall take care that all remain under his eyes and near him, so that he can see and hear all that is done and said. In these recreations one should avoid all plays with the hands, sharp words, disputes on the score of talent, birth, and the like; in the same way all worldly discourses, such as on marriages, possessions, riches, comedies, and other amusements of the world.

6. He shall correct with firmness him who fails in regard to the Rule, the signals, or the orders of the Director. The Prefect cannot inflict punishments; he can only impose silence, and then refer all to the Director. If he happens to find arms or improper books, he shall take them away and carry them to the Director. He shall retain at least one of the seminarians to be an inspector, charging him with faithfully and secretly notifying him of certain faults which he himself has not noticed.

7. He shall be exact in watching that the seminarians never speak with the servants; if they have something to say to them, let them do so in the presence of the Prefect. Moreover, he shall never permit them to enter the refectory, the offices, under any pretext whatsoever.

8. He shall be most attentive and faithful to report to the Director the faults of everyone, especially if they are habitual, and more especially if they are contrary to modesty. For this end he shall keep a list of the faults which can be more easily committed in order to subscribe the names of those that commit them. For this reason we add here the following list prescribed for the Prefects by the great Cardinal Paleotto. It will at least serve to call to mind the faults that one has seen committed, and that one should report to the Director:

1. On such and such a day arose too late, and was not found at the beginning of meditation, N. . . . (We here leave a space, and should do so after the other faults that are indicated, in order to inscribe the names of the subjects, as is indicated above.)

2. Has not been modest in chapel, at table, or in walking, N. . . .

3. Has spoken to some one of another section, or to a companion alone or in secret, etc., N. . . .

4. Has said improper or offensive words, or has touched another, N. . . .

5. Has been at the door, or elsewhere, without permission, N. . . .

6. Did not go to confession this week, N. . . .

7. Shows but little devotion, does not observe silence, does not obey such an order, N. . . .

The Prefect should, finally, consider how great will be his reward if he is diligent and faithful in reporting all to the Director. I use the word *all,* for certain faults, although light, when they are habitual, or when they are united to other failings, will at least indicate that the subject has not the ecclesiastical spirit requisite to be admitted to holy Orders. And, on the other hand, how great will be the account that he will have to render to God if he fails in this point, either through negligence or through human respect! It is true that by performing the duties of his office as he should he will draw down upon him the aversion of many; but he must act in this manner, or resign, if he does not wish to make himself guilty before God of the ruin of his section, and perhaps of the whole seminary, because neither the Bishop nor the Director, who cannot always be present as the Prefect can, could remedy the disorders and the scandals if the Prefects neglect to report the faults that they see.

4. RULES THAT THE SEMINARIANS MUST OBSERVE

1. The seminarians should, above all, observe modesty and propriety. Hence no one should leave his bed or go to bed without throwing his cassock around him, and let him dress and undress seated before the clothespress; only in places where it is cold may he dress on the bed, but under the coverlet. When any one changes his linen, let him avoid remaining exposed. When in bed he should always wear shirt and drawers, and always be covered.

2. No one can speak alone or secretly to any one of his companions, nor give him notes or presents. It would be a great fault to speak to any one of another section, and a greater fault to approach any one who is in bed. The letters cannot be given to the servants; they must be handed to the porter, who before forwarding them shall take them to the Director. Every one is to bear in mind that every word or action against modesty, even in jest, will never be passed by without notable punishment.

3. No one can leave his section to go to the door without the permission of the Prefect. And if any one wishes to go to the room of the Professor, or leave the section after the *Ave Maria*, one cannot do so without the express permission of the Director.

4. Each one shall sit at the place assigned to him, either in class, in recreation, or in the refectory, where during the meals he shall keep his hands on the table; after having finished eating, he shall adopt a composed and modest posture. In the evening, at recreation, all shall be seated in a circle as during the day, but at some distance from one another. In their walks to the country, when they recreate themselves, they shall guard against causing any damage or showing themselves mischievous; they shall then take care to remain within sight of the Prefect, and near enough that he may see what they do and hear what they say. They shall always observe custody of the eyes, not only in the church and in the chapel, but also in the refectory and in the streets, by not looking at any object that may be a cause of temptation to them. In this matter the Prefects shall be careful to accuse those wanting in reserve, and the Director shall punish them.

5. Each one, under pain of grievous chastisement, shall guard against offending a companion by injurious words. For this purpose they shall avoid disputes, rival pretensions on the score of birth, talents, and fortune. They shall also abstain from discoursing on the acquisition of honor, and of riches, or on comedies, festivals, and other similar amusements, which are not suitable for those that aspire to the sacerdotal dignity.

6. No one shall play dice or cards, nor is it allowed to any one to engage in playing any game whatsoever for money.

7. The penances imposed by the Superiors for ant fault must be performed, even though one should be innocent of the charge. To on one is it permitted to make known to persons outside of the seminary the penances inflicted upon the pupils, nor other things that are done in the seminary.

8. Fraternal charity requires, moreover, that every one should acquaint the Prefect or the Director with the faults of his companions, in order that a remedy may be applied in time and when scandalous things occur, there is a grave obligation to reveal them, even though one had to do so at great inconvenience, since there is question of a scandal, which in seminaries causes common injury.

9. The seminarians shall confess and communicate every eight or fifteen days, according to the Rule of the seminary; they must at least confess at this time, even though they cannot go to Communion.

10. Outside of the two recreations, after dinner and after supper, which shall last one hour, and outside of the days on which they go out to recreate themselves, silence should be observed not only in the church, the chapel, but also in class, in the refectory, in the corridors, and also in the inhabited places when they go out. This holds good also for the section, especially during study time, and more rigorously in the evening at the signal for the examination of conscience, and in the morning till the end of meditation.

Here follows an *Appendix:* “Exhortation to young men who devote themselves to the study of the ecclesiastical sciences.” See Volume XII., page 449.

Fidelity of Subjects TO God Renders them faithful to the Prince, their Ruler

ST. ALPHONSUS published this last of his little works in 1777. At the age of eighty-one, after having given to the world so many excellent instructions, at first in general for persons of every condition, and then in particular for nuns and religious, priests and bishops, the holy Doctor seems to have remembered that he should also give specially some good advice to those to whom divine Providence has deigned to intrust the exercise of the temporal power, for the glory of God, for their own good, and for the good of their subjects. He sent copies of this little work to Cardinal Castelli, and through him and Canon Hennequin at Liège to all the Catholic princes and their chief ministers.—Ed.

FIDELITY OF SUBJECTS TO GOD MAKES THEM FAITHFUL TO THE PRINCE, THEIR RULER

Chapter I

IF KINGS WISH THEIR SUBJECTS TO BE OBEDIENT TO THEM, THEY MUST ENDEAVOR TO MAKE THEM OBEDIENT TO GOD.—PROOF OF THIS ASSERTION

BY promoting good morals we promote also peace among citizens, and consequently the good of the whole state. This is an evident truth, which is everywhere proved by experience: subjects that obey the commandments of God are necessarily obedient to the laws of princes. The fidelity that the subjects practise towards God renders them faithful to their sovereigns. The reason of this is clear: when subjects obey the divine precepts, we see a cessation of licentiousness, of thefts, of frauds, of adulteries, of homicides; then the state flourishes, order is maintained by submission to the sovereign, and peace is preserved in families. In a word, those that resolve to lead an orderly life resolve at the same time to fulfil their duties: they will take care to suppress their passions, and so live in peace with themselves and with others.

But, one will say, for this purpose the laws of princes and the punishments inflicted upon delinquents are sufficient. No, these things are not sufficient; human laws with their penalties cannot suffice to check the boldness and inordinate passions of bad subjects who seek only to serve their own interests and to gratify their wicked desires. If, when an occasion presents itself, they despise the laws and chastisements of God, they also will easily despise the laws of their sovereign and the punishments with which he threatens them.

Human laws can aid in preserving good morals in those subjects that are well disposed, but they cannot infuse them into those that are depraved; religion alone introduces into souls and forms in them holy morals, and thus causes the laws to be observed. If religion were not there, teaching that there is a God who sees everything and knows how to punish the wickedness of the impious, rarely would they make an effort to fulfil their duties; and without this fear of divine justice which restrains men, the number of the wicked would everywhere multiply enormously.

It is religion alone that renders subjects truly obedient to their princes, by teaching them that they are obliged to obey their sovereigns, not only to avoid the punishments inflicted upon transgressors, but also to obey God and to preserve peace of conscience, according to the teaching of St. Paul, who declares that the sovereigns are the ministers of God: *For they are the ministers of God, serving unto this purpose.*[14980] He moreover adds, that the laws of princes even bind the consciences of subjects: *Wherefore be subject of necessity, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.*[14981]

Neither the laws nor the punishments that they menace suffice, therefore, to repress the boldness of malefactors who trouble the public peace; for often misdeeds remain unpunished, either because the delinquents remain hidden, or because sufficient proofs are wanting to condemn them; and it is not rare that the guilty, although their misdeeds are well proved, escape punishment by flight. Le Clerc, although a heretic, said: "Most men are incapable of doing what is right solely in view of the public good; private interest is nearly always opposed to the common good; only the fear of divine chastisements keeps in check all disorders."

On the other hand, as it is true that the princes are the ministers of God and his representatives, since the subjects are obliged even in conscience to obey their princes, so the princes are obliged to watch over their subjects that they may obey God. For a private individual it is sufficient to observe the law of God in order to save his soul; but for a king that is not sufficient, he must do all that he can, that his subjects may observe the law of God by endeavoring to reform bad morals and extirpating scandals.

And when the honor of God is at stake, the princes should arm themselves with courage, and not fail in their duty through fear of any adversity or contradiction that may arise; for every king that fulfils his duty has God to assist him, as the Lord himself has declared to Josue when he intrusted to him the government of his people: *Take courage, and be strong. Fear not, and be not dismayed; because the Lord thy God is with thee.*[14982]

Consequently the principal end that princes should propose to themselves in the government is not their own glory, but the glory of God. Those that forget the glory of God to occupy themselves only with their own glory, shall lose both. Whoever governs should be persuaded that it is not possible for him in this world, filled with wicked and ignorant people, to acquire by his acts, however just and holy they may be, the praises and the applause of all his subjects. If he exercises liberality towards the good and the poor, they will call him a spendthrift; if he executes justice in regard to the wicked, he will be called a tyrant. Kings should, therefore, seek to please God rather than men; for then, if they are not praised by the wicked, they will be praised by the good, and above all by God, who will know how to reward them in this life and in the next.

Princes should in a special manner be watchful that their states be purged of people that profess false doctrine; hence many Catholic sovereigns admit to their service neither heretics nor schismatics. They should also strictly prohibit the introduction of books infected with pernicious doctrines; the want of precaution of certain princes against this sort of books has caused the ruin of several kingdoms.

One should also consider how many virtuous princesses have increased the glory of God and piety among the subjects by their devotion and the good example which they have given. This one may see in the Lives of St. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal; St. Hedwig, Duchess of Poland; St. Bridget, Princess of Sweden; and St. Catharine, her daughter.

Chapter II

MEANS TO INDUCE SUBJECTS TO BE OBEDIENT TO GOD

LET us now see which are the means used by good princes to induce their subjects to live like Christians.

1. In the distribution of offices and of honors, they give the preference to those that distinguish themselves by a more irreproachable life, excepting the case in which, in an affair of great importance to the State, another would be much more capable. Princes, however, should always consider that those persons who are more pleasing to God, receive from the Lord greater lights and much more strength to secure the execution of the orders that regard the public good.

2. They bestow with liberality graces and favors upon the good, and they are on the other hand reserved and strict in regard to those that lead wicked lives.

3. They take care to have always near them at court persons that are edifying in their conduct; for princes can always trust such persons, but not those that are free in their manners.

4. They profit by every occasion to praise the virtuous, and they show that they esteem but little those that care not for piety. If it is understood that the prince looks upon good people with an eye different from that with which he looks upon libertines, this would be sufficient to reform the greater part of the subjects of his kingdom. Hence it is advisable for princes to invite to their courts zealous preachers who can persuade each one of his duty to serve God.

5. They should choose functionaries who are not only exact in rendering justice, but who are also filled with the fear of God; for those that are not filled with the fear of God will hardly be exact in the administration of justice as they should be. Moreover, they should also take care that the functionaries are zealous for the laws, not only by observing them

themselves, but by having them observed by others, in order that the laws may be maintained in all their rigor.

6. As for the choice of functionaries, many Catholic princes are accustomed to employ for this purpose their counsel or the highest tribunal, to whom they propose three subjects among whom they choose him who seems to them the most worthy, so that in this way they may assure themselves of having the best.

7. Then, in order that the functionaries chosen may suitably acquit themselves of their charge, the prince should, as well as he can, reward those that behave themselves, and punish those that neglect their duty.

8. The ecclesiastical offices to which the prince has the right to make appointments should be conferred upon the most worthy subjects. It is also expedient that ecclesiastical pensions be granted to those that have labored most for the Church.

9. The prince should also see to it that the Superiors of religious Orders have the rules of their Institute observed; for when the religious fail in their duty and those in charge neglect to correct them, great injury to seculars and to the State itself will be the result.

A FEW MAXIMS CONCERNING THE GOOD GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM IN ORDER THAT ALL MAY CONDUCE TO THE GLORY OF GOD, OF THE KING, AND TO THE WELFARE OF THE SUBJECTS

1. The good prince, in order to govern well, always has God before his eyes, and he prefers the interests of God’s glory to every reason of State.

2. He shows himself an enemy to every kind of flattery; he loves the one that tells him the truth, and he wishes every one to know this. When Henry IV., King of France, was asked why he loved so much the Bishop of Geneva, who was St. Francis de Sales, he answered: “I love him because he does not flatter me.”

3. He exercises justice towards every one, without passion and without partiality.

4. Before resolving important affairs, he examines everything himself.

5. In all doubtful things, or where a doubt is possible, he must consult prudent men.

6. This is the reason why he does his best to choose counsellors who are wise and of an upright conscience.

7. After having taken counsel and the counsel has been judged good, he should carry it out with firmness, unless he meets with another good reason that is the very opposite. To change one’s opinion for a good reason is not weakness; it is praiseworthy prudence.

8. When he hears any one praised or blamed, let him be slow to believe what is said, and let him examine whether he that speaks does not speak with a view to personal interest.

9. Finally, the good prince, in order to urge his subjects to live well, relies more on good example than on force. The good example of the prince effects more in this respect than a thousand private individuals.

10. It is the duty not only of the bishops but also of the sovereign to induce the subjects to practise exercises of devotion, and to render to God the honor that is due to him. It is said that in the world one must have fortune; well, it is piety which is the foundation of the true fortune of all men, and especially of princes. It is certain that all prosperity or adversity depends on God, who disposes all things, no one, therefore, can hope for more happiness in the present life than he that renders himself most pleasing to God by his piety. The Lord takes to heart the prosperity of those princes that take especially to heart the glory of God. In a word, a sovereign who desires to govern well his temporal kingdom should live in such a manner as to make himself worthy of the eternal kingdom.

Chapter III

EXAMPLES OF PRINCES WHO BY THEIR ZEAL CONTRIBUTED MUCH TOWARDS THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE

1. EMPEROR CONSTANTINE

AMONG these princes, he who deserves to be mentioned in the first place is the great Emperor Constantine. Eusebius relates that this prince judged that only God whom his father had adored should be acknowledged and venerated, when he considered that the other emperors, who had put all confidence in a multitude of gods, after having immolated to them so many victims and offered so many gifts, found themselves disappointed in the hopes which the oracles had made them entertain, and that they all ended their lives by an unfortunate death, while his father Constantius alone, after having condemned the errors of his colleagues and recognized one only God as his Lord, died a happy death.

At this epoch, being at war with the tyrant Maxentius who reigned at Rome, Constantine began to supplicate the omnipotent God to enlighten and to help him in the state in which he was. God, who is full of mercy, did not fail to take the young emperor under his protection. Towards the end of the same day a luminous cross appeared to Constantine and to his whole army, it shone in the heavens above the sun, and bore this inscription: *In hoc vince.*

Then the emperor sent for some Christian priests to explain to him the meaning of this sign and of this inscription. Having received the desired explanation, (so Cardinal Orsi writes), and having been thoroughly instructed by the priests, he resolutely embraced the faith of Jesus Christ. At the same time he had a model of the *Labarum* made, representing the sign of the cross that had appeared to him. Afterwards, in the wars that he had to wage, the *Labarum* was carried before him in every battle, and he always gained the victory.

In regard to the war against Maxentius, after the apparition of the cross, Constantine was animated with great courage; he engaged in a battle under the walls of Rome, October 28, 312, and gained a brilliant victory which filled the whole empire with joy on account of the death of the tyrant, who was drowned in the Tiber. The victorious emperor, full of gratitude to God, would even have desired to abolish idolatry; but in the beginning he had to tolerate many things, because the Romans were too much attached to their gods. For the rest, he at once began to favor the Christian faith as much as he could, and he publicly made known even in Rome itself what was due to the Pope, who was at that time St. Melchiades, and to the priests by admitting them to his table.

Then he undertook to establish the worship of the true God in various parts of the empire, by the building of many magnificent churches, which he enriched with precious vessels and ornaments and endowed them with abundant revenues. He also published several edicts in favor of the Church and of the faithful, and for this he even obtained the sanction of the Senate.

The Lord also augmented the prosperity of Constantine by the death of his enemies Maximian and of Licinius, who did not cease to persecute the Church. In regard to the Church he continued, as he had proposed to himself, to labor so as to unite the empire in the belief in Jesus Christ, and he persecuted not only the idolaters but also the heretics, and especially the Arians. Hence in 325, in order to put an end to this heresy, he promoted the assembling of the Council of Nice at which he wished to be present himself. At the sight of this august assembly of bishops, of whom several bore the scars of the wounds suffered during the preceding persecutions, he was transported with joy, rendered thanks to God, and encouraged these holy prelates to defend with firmness the cause of God. The Council having finished by condemning Arius, before the bishops separated the emperor wished to receive all of them at table, and he made each one of them a noble present. But he was more particularly generous towards those bishops who still bore the marks of the persecution they had endured.

He afterwards began to found at Rome several churches, such as that of the Saviour in the Lateran, that of St. Peter in the Vatican, that of St. Paul in the Ostian Way. He also built many others at Rome and in many distant provinces, in Greece, in Africa, in Egypt, and in Syria.

Seeing afterwards that the Roman people persisted in defending idolatry to the injury of so many souls, he resolved to found in the city of Byzantium in the East a new Rome, which was to be peopled only by the disciples of Jesus Christ, and which he called after his own name Constantinople. Permitting only Catholics to live there, he excluded therefrom all infidels and heretics. From this place he also issued several edicts against the Novatians, the Marcionites, and other heretics, by forbidding their sects all private or public exercise of worship. Moreover, he ordained that all oratories where the heretics held their meetings should be handed over to the Catholics.

In a word, since Constantine, enlightened from on high, resolved to embrace the faith, he always lived as a true Catholic. A certain author taxed him with a leaning towards the doctrine of Arius; but in ecclesiastical history it is too plainly seen that he always venerated and defended the Council of Nice in which Arius was condemned.—But why did Constantine receive baptism at the hands of Eusebius of Nicomedia, who was an Arian?—The reason is because Eusebius and Arius deceived him by making him believe that their doctrine was the same as that of the Council. Men, even the wisest and the holiest, are liable to be deceived without any fault of theirs, as was the case with Constantine. For the rest, Natalis Alexander in a learned dissertation[14983] affirms and proves that all the ancient writers, such as St. Athanasius, St. Epiphanius, and St. Hilary, agree in saying that Constantine always remained firmly attached to the Catholic faith; for this the Lord rewarded him with a happy death.

There is a discussion among authors about his baptism and death. Cardinal Baronius, with several others, says that Constantine was baptized at Rome in 324 by Pope St. Sylvester; however, the learned of the present day more commonly believe, and with more probability, that he received baptism at the end of his life at Nicomedia, as we are informed by Fleury, Cardinal Orsi, and Natalis Alexander, with St. Ambrose, St. Isidore, and others. They say that Constantine, having fallen ill at Nicomedia, and growing worse, he called several bishops and begged them to confer baptism upon him. After he had received it he felt such consolation that he cried out: “Now I find myself truly happy!” Then as his officers were expressing the pain that they felt in seeing him in this state and the desire that they had for the preservation of his life, he answered them: “I have just received true life; I desire nothing more than to go to enjoy my God.” It was in these pious sentiments that he died, May 22 of the year 337. In the Greek Martyrology, according to what Natalis Alexander says, he is venerated as Blessed on May 21.

2. ST. LOUIS, KING OF FRANCE

In reference to the subject that occupies us,—the honor of God and the salvation of souls,—he who merits to be mentioned for the second place is a great king and a great saint; it is the King of France, St. Louis. I omit to praise here all the virtues of this illustrious prince; books containing the history of his glorious life are everywhere found. To give an idea of his great zeal for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls, it suffices to recall to mind the magnanimous courage with which he undertook the conquest of the Holy Land in order to deliver it from the hands of the Saracens.

History informs us that the first time that he set out for Egypt with his army in 1249, having arrived with his naval forces before the city of Damietta and seeing himself surrounded by the principal lords of his kingdom, he thus spoke to them: “Friends, if we are united in charity, victory is ours. Let us then attack the enemy with courage. Do not regard my person; I am like any one among you whose life the Lord may take if he pleases. Whatever will happen will always be advantageous to us: if we are conquered, we shall be martyrs; if we are victorious, this will be for the glory of God. It is for God that we are fighting; we desire only his glory and not ours.” Then, having ordered all to disembark, the king was the first to go ashore to engage in a hand-to-hand conflict with the hostile forces who were waiting for him; but, seized with astonishment at such courage, they took to flight, so that Damietta was captured on the sixth day.

It is true, it did not please the Lord to allow the enterprise to succeed; for a pestilence having broken out among the troops, St. Louis was obliged to return to France. Later, however, in 1270, he resumed the enterprise; but disease again attacked his soldiers, and, being himself seized with the malady, he laid down his life amidst the barbarians. Such a death, however, procured for him the greatest merit in heaven.

Let us now consider the zeal with which he was animated for the spiritual good of his subjects. He undertook for this purpose to visit his States, and in this visit he left everywhere marks of his great piety and of his justice. He specially published most severe edicts against blasphemers and perjurers, and ordered that their tongues should be pierced with a red-hot iron. He said: “I would consent to suffer myself this torture if I could by this means banish from my kingdom blasphemy and perjury.”

He never omitted to devote himself every day to the good government of his subjects, so that everything might be in order and all scandals might be avoided. At the same time he never failed to make every day his meditation and spiritual reading, and prayed for himself and for the people intrusted to his care. One of his intimate friends, seeing that he employed much time in the exercise of piety, said to him one day that this was too much; but the saint replied: “If I spent much more time in amusements, as is usual with those in my state, no one would say anything about the matter.” It is thus that he merited to die a happy death.

3. ST. STEPHEN, KING OF HUNGARY

The third place is occupied by St. Stephen, the first king of Hungary. He was born in 977, when the greater part of Hungary was yet pagan. Having succeeded his father in 997, and wishing to attract his idolatrous subjects to the worship of the true God, he began by often assembling a large number of them in his palace, where, having received them with kindness and affability, he himself instructed them in the divine law. But the obstinate pagans suspecting that the king wished to force them to change their religion, a great multitude of them revolted, so that the saint was obliged to oppose them by an army of Christians. It would have been easy for him to reign peaceably, had he wished to permit the unbelievers to live according to their false law; but the good prince preferred the advantages of religion to those of the State. Hence, full of confidence in God and in his dearly beloved Sovereign the Blessed Virgin, under whose protection he had placed his kingdom, he did not refuse to give battle, although the number of unbelievers was much superior to his own soldiers. The pagans were totally defeated.

When he saw these obstacles removed, he labored to rid his kingdom of all that remained of idolatry. For this purpose he invited from various parts religious priests to come to preach the Gospel to his people; and as he himself was always found at the head of the missionaries, the conversion of the country was general, he then divided the kingdom into eleven dioceses, and chose the city of Strigonia as the Metropolitan See. For this he obtained the approbation of Pope Sylvester II., who conferred upon him the title of king, and confirmed all the bishoprics that he had established and all the bishops that he had appointed.

Later on, when Emperor Conrad II. had sent a formidable army to take possession of Hungary, he resigned himself entirely to the hands of God, and the Lord, who loved this faithful servant, did not fail to protect him. At the moment when the attack was feared, the troops of Conrad withdrew, and no one ever heard why the Emperor ordered the retreat of his powerful army.

When the saint had restored peace to his kingdom, he devoted himself entirely to the work of making the religion of Jesus Christ prosper, and of removing abuses. To this end he published several very salutary laws in order to abolish the barbarous customs of his subjects. At the same time he charged himself with the care of the poor and of the administration of justice for all kinds of persons. He thus employed the greatest part of the day in the government of his subjects; as for the night, he devoted it to meditating on the eternal truths and to recommending himself and his subjects to God.

Entirely resigned to the divine will, lie suffered in peace the death of all his children, and especially that of Emeric, his eldest son, who was endowed with the greatest virtue, and whom he loved fondly. He also suffered with exemplary patience his numerous infirmities until God, in 1038, called him to heaven at the age of sixty-one. He died in profound peace on the day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, whom he had honored with singular devotion during his whole life and to whom he had raised a magnificent church in which he wished to be buried.

4. ST. ETHELBERT, KING OF ENGLAND

When St. Gregory the Great, in 596, had sent the monk St. Augustine, accompanied by other religious, to preach the faith in England, King Ethelbert, enlightened and converted, gained by the aid which he gave to these good missionaries several provinces to the religion of Jesus Christ. His successors, continuing to favor the mission, had the consolation of seeing this kingdom remain faithful till the time of the unfortunate King Henry VIII., who in 1533 separated from the Church. During this interval one may say that England was a seminary of saints, so that there was found no country that had not as its special protector one of its own canonized countrymen. But then came Henry VIII., who, forming a new heresy, declared himself the head of the Church; and from that time till the present the kingdom has become a sink of heresies in which all Protestant sects find room, while the Catholic religion is banished from the whole country. O England! who should not weep with compassion when considering what thou wert formerly, the Land of Angels, as thou wast called, and what thou art at the present day!

5. LOUIS XIV., KING OF FRANCE

It would take too long were I to relate here what has been done by many other monarchs who by their zeal have purged their kingdoms of infidels or heretics. But I cannot omit to mention with special praise what was accomplished by the great Louis XIV., a truly Christian king. In 1685 he revoked the Edict of Nantes of the year 1598, by which his predecessor, Henry IV., had permitted the Huguenots the free exercise of the impious sect of Calvin. Louis XIV., notwithstanding the clamors of the Calvinists, courageously prohibited all their religious exercises and all their assemblies, public and private, under the penalty of imprisonment and confiscation of property. He moreover, ordained that all those subjects that wished to profess their pretended reformed religion to depart from all the lands subject to his authority, together with their wives and children; he allowed them only to take with them their personal property.

There were at that time politicians who taxed with imprudence this measure by which the king banished from his kingdom so many thousand families, so many millions of gold, so many renowned artisans, who were obliged to go to live in a strange country on account of religion. But Louis

Muratori says: “The king wished to prefer the welfare of the Catholic religion and the peace of his kingdom to his own interest; for the State, on account of preceding events, never felt itself secure while harboring in its bosom people of a different religion, who never ceased to injure it and to hamper the exercise of its power. In a word,” concludes Muratori, “so pious and generous an action on the part of Louis XIV. will always suffice to render his name glorious and immortal.”

6. CHARLES EMMANUEL I., DUKE OF SAVOY

There are not wanting other similar examples that we may relate; but those given seem to suffice because I do not wish to weary the reader. I cannot, however, omit to relate here the manner in which Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, brought about with the divine help the conversion of Chablais, which was quite infected with Calvinism. The inhabitants of this whole country had entirely abandoned the Catholic religion, and lived without sacraments, without churches, and without priests, having only preachers who continued to pervert them. It was then that the Duke wrote to the Bishop of Geneva to persuade him to make choice of several fervent missionaries, and to send them to preach to his erring people in order to bring them back to their old religion. He promised to aid them with his protection. The bishop chose as the head of the mission St. Francis de Sales, who with his companions converted a large number of heretics, but many others remained obstinate.

The Duke had then recourse to several other means to secure the entire conversion of Chablais; especially did he wish to go there himself so as to give the mission the aid of his presence and of his authority. But seeing that the obstinate did not wish to yield, he one day ordered all the heretics to assemble the following day at his palace. He then went there himself, accompanied by his soldiers, who might prevent all disorder. When he saw them all gathered before him, he bade all to be silent and said that, although in the beginning he could have used authority and force to make them re-enter the Catholic Church which they had abandoned, yet he wished to employ only peaceable and gentle means by which the most of the erring ones had already been brought back to the bosom of the Church. Seeing the others blinded to such an extent as to wish to ruin themselves in this world and the next, he declared that he had decided not to suffer in his States those who by their obstinacy would show themselves enemies of God and of their prince. Consequently, he ordered the good to separate themselves from the obstinate, and those that wished to follow his religion should place themselves on his right, and the others should stand on his left.

When he had ceased speaking and had waited for some time, a small number remained on the left, and the greater part went over to his right. Then the Duke, turning to the latter, said that he would always consider them his faithful subjects who could rely on his favor; then turning towards those on his left, he spoke thus to them: “As to you who in my presence dare to declare yourselves the enemies of God and my enemies, you must leave my States without any hope of ever being able to come back. I deprive you of your offices and your dignities; for I prefer to have no subjects than to have such as you are, whom I should always have to mistrust.” Having said this, he turned his back upon them. But afterwards the Lord consoled this good prince; for St. Francis de Sales, after this event, had the happiness of inducing them all to repent and to be converted: whereupon he was able to obtain for the prince the favor of their return, so that they all lived in peace in their country.

CONCLUSION

These last two examples make us see especially how ill-founded is the opinion of some cavillers who say that even in Catholic kingdoms unbelievers should be tolerated in order that the peace of the State may be preserved. Peace is a gift of God; how can those that are the enemies of God preserve the peace? A heretic named John Leonard Froœreisen in a discourse which he published at Strasbourg, speaking of the churches of the communion of Augsburg, although a Lutheran, wrote this memorable sentence against himself: “Our communion is an army in which every one wishes to be the chief. It is a serpent, cut up into several parts, which lives but will soon die.” This means that among unbelievers every one wishes to act as he pleases, because, as has been said at the beginning, those that do not obey God will no longer obey their sovereign.

We know that sovereigns cannot always do what they wish for the good of religion. They must sometimes use prudence in order not to lose everything. I also know that it is not expedient to employ force to induce subjects to embrace the true faith. Force was formerly a means used by tyrants who wished to compel men to believe what they should not believe, such as idolatry. God forces no one to come to him: *Nullum ad se trahit invitum.* He wishes us to adore him with a free heart, without constraint. Moreover, zealous princes did not fail to use means more appropriate and more efficacious than force, in order to prevail upon their subjects to follow sound doctrine; and when every other means fails them, they call into their States good missionaries who by holy instruction dissipate error and make known true faith and the true way of salvation, as have done the before-mentioned princes and many others.

It is true, it is the duty of the bishops to found missions; but experience has proved that the zeal of a virtuous and prudent prince is worth more than a thousand bishops, a thousand missions, and a thousand missionaries. Hence when a Catholic prince has heretics in his States, he should try his best to have with him good priests to labor for the conversion of these unbelievers. In many non-Catholic countries it is forbidden to zealous preachers to enter; but a prince who loves the glory of God may remedy this evil by his power and his prudence.

I conclude, so as not to weary the reader; since it was for this reason that I have made this little work as brief as possible. I finish it while praying to God to give by his grace to all sovereigns, especially to those into whose hands this writing will fall, the courage to co-operate in the increase of his glory. I implore at the same time our Lord to grant them a happy reign in this life and perfect happiness in life eternal.

THE HISTORY OF HERESIES AND THEIR REFUTATION

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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THE HISTORY OF HERESIES, AND THEIR REFUTATION; OR, THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF ST. ALPHONSUS M. LIGUORI

BY THE REV. JOHN T. MULLOCK, OF THE ORDER OF ST, FRANCIS.

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CONTENTS

INDEX

THE HISTORY OF HERESIES AND THEIR REFUTATION

- CONTENTS
- The History of Heresies and their Refutation
  - TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE
  - AUTHOR'S PREFACE
  - *Chapter I*
HERESIES OF THE FIRST CENTURY
  - *Chapter II*
HERESIES OF THE SECOND CENTURY
  - *Chapter III*
HERESIES OF THE THIRD CENTURY
  - *Chapter IV*
HERESIES OF THE FOURTH CENTURY
    - ARTICLE I. SCHISM AND HERESY OF THE DONATISTS
    - ARTICLE II. THE ARIAN HERESY
    - ARTICLE III
  - *Chapter V*
HERESIES OF THE FIFTH CENTURY
    - ARTICLE I. THE HERESIES OF ELVIDIUS, JOVINIANUS, AND VIGILANTIUS
    - ARTICLE II. ON THE HERESY OF PELAGIUS
    - ARTICLE III. THE NESTORIAN HERESY
    - ARTICLE IV. THE HERESY OF EUTYCHES
  - *Chapter VI*
HERESIES OF THE SIXTH CENTURY
    - ARTICLE I. OF THE ACEPHALI, AND THE DIFFERENT SECTS THEY SPLIT INTO

ARTICLE II. THE THREE CHAPTERS

Chapter VII
THE HERESIES OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY

ARTICLE I. OF MAHOMETANISM

ARTICLE II. HERESY OF THE MONOTHELITES

Chapter VIII
HERESIES OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY

THE HERESY OF THE ICONOCLASTS

Chapter IX
HERESIES OF THE NINTH CENTURY

ARTICLE I. THE GREEK SCHISM COMMENCED BY PHOTIUS

ARTICLE II. THE ERRORS OF THE GREEKS CONDEMNED IN THREE GENERAL COUNCILS

Chapter X
THE HERESIES WHICH SPRUNG UP FROM THE ELEVENTH TO THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

ARTICLE I. HERESIES OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

ARTICLE II. HERESIES OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

ARTICLE III. HERESIES OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

ARTICLE IV. HERESIES OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

ARTICLE V. HERESIES OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY. THE HERESY OF JOHN HUSS, AND JEROME OF PRAGUE

Chapter XI
THE HERESIES OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

ARTICLE I. OF THE HERESIES OF LUTHER

ARTICLE II. THE SACRAMENTARIANS

ARTICLE III. THE HERESIES OF CALVIN

Chapter XII
THE HERESIES OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY-(CONTINUED)

ARTICLE I. THE SCHISM OF ENGLAND

ARTICLE II. THE ANTITRINITARIANS AND S0CINIANS. MICHAEL SRVETU5

Chapter XIII
HERESIES OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

ARTICLE I. ISAAC PERIERES, MARK ANTHONY DE DOMINIS, WILLIAM POSTELLUS, AND BENEDICT SPINOSA

ARTICLE II. THE ERRORS OF MICHAEL BAIUS

ARTICLE III. THE ERRORS OF CORNELIUS JANSENIUS

ARTICLE IV

ARTICLE V. THE ERRORS OF MICHAEL MOLINOS

Supplementary Chapter. Heresies of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Refutation OF HERESIES

Refutation I
THE HERESY OF SABELLIUS, WHO DENIED THE DISTINCTION OF PERSONS IN THE TRINITY

I. THE REAL DISTINCTION OF THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS IS PROVED

II. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Refutation II
THE HERESY OF ARIUS, WHO DENIED THE DIVINITY OF THE WORD. THE DIVINITY OF THE WORD PROVED FROM THE SCRIPTURES

I THE DIVINITY OF THE WORD PROVED BY THE AUTHORITY OF HOLY FATHERS AND COUNCILS

III. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Refutation III
OF THE HERESY OF MACEDONIUS, WHO DENIED THE DIVINITY OF THE HOLY GHOST

I. THE DIVINITY OF THE HOLY GHOST PROVED FROM SCRIPTURES, FROM THE TRADITIONS OF THE FATHERS, AND FROM GENERAL COUNCILS

II. ANSWER TO OBJECTIONS

Refutation IV
THE HERESY OF THE GREEKS, WHO ASSERT THAT THE HOLY GHOST PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER ALONE, AND NOT FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON

I. IT IS PROVED THAT THE HOLY GHOST PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON

II. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Refutation V
Refutation OF THE HERESY OF PELAGIUS

I. OF THE NECESSITY OF GRACE

II. OF THE GRATUITY OF GRACE

III. THE NECESSITY AND THE GRATUITY OF GRACE IS PROVED BY TRADITION; CONFIRMED BY THE DECREES OF COUNCILS AND POPES

IV. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Refutation VI
OF THE SEMIPELAGIAN HERESY

I. THE COMMENCEMENT OF FAITH AND EVERY GOOD DESIRE IS NOT FROM OURSELVES, BUT FROM GOD

II. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Refutation VII
Refutation OF THE HERESY OF NESTORIUS, WHO TAUGHT THAT IN CHRIST THERE ARE TWO PERSONS

I. IN JESUS CHRIST THERE IS BUT THE ONE PERSON OF THE WORD ALONE, WHICH TERMINATES THE TWO NATURES, DIVINE AND HUMAN, WHICH BOTH SUBSIST IN THE SAME PERSON OF THE WORD, AND, THEREFORE, THIS ONE PERSON IS, AT THE SAME TIME, TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN

II. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

III. MARY IS THE REAL AND TRUE MOTHER OF GOD

IV. THE OBJECTIONS OF THE NESTORIANS ANSWERED

Refutation VIII
Refutation OF THE HERESY OF EUTYCHES, WHO ASSERTED THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE NATURE IN CHRIST

I. IN CHRIST THERE ARE TWO NATURES THE DIVINE AND THE HUMAN NATURE DISTINCT, UNMIXED, UNCONFUSED, AND ENTIRE, SUBSISTING INSEPARABLY IN THE ONE HYPOSTASIS, OR PERSON OF THE WORD

II. OBJECTION5 ANSWERED

Refutation IX
OF THE MONOTHELITE HERESY, THAT THERE IS BUT ONE NATURE AND ONE OPERATION ONLY IN CHRIST

- I. IT IS PROVED THAT THERE ARE TWO DISTINCT WILLS IN CHRIST, DIVINE AND HUMAN, ACCORDING TO THE TWO NATURES, AND TWO OPERATIONS, ACCORDING TO THE TWO WILLS
- II. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Refutation X
THE HERESY OF BERENGARIUS, AND THE PRETENDED REFORMERS,

- I. OF THE REAL PRESENCE OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST
- II. OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE REAL PRESENCE ANSWERED
- III. OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION, THAT IS, THE CONVERSION OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE BREAD AND OF THE WINE INTO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST
- IV. OBJECTIONS AGAINST TRANSUBSTANTIATION ANSWERED
- V. OF THE MANNER IN WHICH JESUS CHRIST IS IN THE EUCHARIST. THE PHILOSOPHICAL OBJECTIONS OF THE SACRAMENTARIANS ANSWERED
- VI. THE MATTER AND FORM OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST

Refutation XI
ERRORS OF LUTHER AND CALVIN. SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPAL POINTS

- I. OF FREE WILL
- II. THAT IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO OBSERVE THE DIVINE LAW
- III. THAT GOOD WORKS ARE NECESSARY FOR SALVATION, AND THAT FAITH ALONE IS NOT SUFFICIENT
- IV. THE SINNER IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE
- V. FAITH ALONE CANNOT RENDER US SECURE OF JUSTICE, OR PERSEVERANCE, OR ETERNAL LIFE
- VI. GOD CANNOT BE THE AUTHOR OF SIN
- VII. GOD NEVER PREDESTINED ANY ONE TO ETERNAL DAMNATION WITHOUT REGARD TO HIS SINS
- VIII. THE AUTHORITY OF GENERAL COUNCILS

Refutation XII
THE ERRORS OF MICHAEL BAIUS

Refutation XIII
THE ERRORS OF GORNELIUS JANSENIUS

Refutation XIV
THE HERESY OF MICHAEL MOLINOS

Refutation XIV
BERRUYER'S ERRORS

SUMMARY OF THESE ERRORS

I. BERRUYER SAYS THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS MADE IN TIME, BY AN OPERATION A.D. EXTRA, THE NATURAL SON OF GOD, ONE SUBSISTING IN THREE PERSONS, WHO UNITED THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST WITH A DIVINE PERSON

II. BERRUYER SAYS THAT JESUS CHRIST, DURING THE THREE DAYS HE WAS IN THE SEPULCHRE, CEASED TO BE A LIVING MAN, AND, CONSEQUENTLY, WAS NO LONGER THE SON OF GOD. AND WHEN GOD AGAIN RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, HE ONCE MORE GENERATED HIM, AND AGAIN MADE HIM THE SON OF GOD

III. BERRUYER SAYS THAT IT WAS THE HUMANITY ALONE OF CHRIST THAT OBEYED, PRAYED, AND SUFFERED, AND THAT HIS OBLATIONS, PRAYERS, AND MEDITATIONS, WERE NOT OPERATIONS PROCEEDING FROM THE WORD, AS A PHYSICAL AND EFFICIENT PRINCIPLE, BUT THAT, IN THIS SENSE, THEY WERE ACTIONS MERELY OF HIS HUMANITY

IV. THE MIRACLES WROUGHT BY JESUS CHRIST WERE NOT PERFORMED BY HIS OWN POWERS, BUT OBTAINED FROM HIS FATHER, BY HIS PRAYERS

V. THE HOLY GHOST WAS NOT SENT TO THE APOSTLES BY JESUS CHRIST, BUT BY THE FATHER ALONE, AT THE PRAYER OF CHRIST

VI. OTHER ERRORS OF BERRUYER ON DIFFERENT SUBJECTS

END OF THE REFUTATION. EXHORTATION TO CATHOLICS

The History of Heresies and their Refutation

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE ardent wish manifested by "the Faithful for an acquaintance with the valuable writings of ST. LIGUORI induced me to undertake the Translation of his History of Heresies, one of his greatest works.

The Holy Author was induced to write this Work, to meet the numbers of infidel publications, with which Europe was deluged in the latter half of the last century. Men's minds were then totally unsettled; dazzled by the glare of a false philosophy, they turned away from the light of the Gospel. The heart of the Saint was filled with sorrow, and he laboured to avert the scourge he saw impending over the unfaithful people. He implored the Ministers of his Sovereign to put the laws in force, preventing the introduction of irreligious publications into the Kingdom of Naples, and he published this Work, among others, to prove, as he says, that the Holy Catholic Church is the only true one the Mistress of Truth the Church, founded by Jesus Christ himself, which would last to the end of time, notwithstanding the persecutions of the infidel, and the rebellion of her own heretical children. He dedicates the Book to the Marquis Tanucci, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom, whom he praises for his zeal for Religion, and his vigorous execution of the laws against the vendors of infidel publications. He brings down the History from the days of the Apostles to his own time, concluding—with the Refutation of the Heresies of Father Berruyer.

I have added a Supplementary Chapter, giving—a succinct account of the Heretics and Fanatics of the last eighty years. It was, at first, my intention to make it more diffuse; but, then, I considered that it would be out of proportion with the remainder of the Work. This Book may be safely consulted, as a work of reference: the Author constantly quotes his authorities; and the Student of Ecclesiastical History can at once compare his statements with the sources from which he draws. In the latter portion of the Work, and especially in that portion of it, the most interesting—to us, the History of the English Reformation, the Student may perceive some slight variations between the original text and my translation. I have collated the Work with the writings of modern Historians the English portion, especially with Hume and Lingard and wherever I have seen the statements of the Holy Author not borne out by the authority of our own Historians, I have considered it more prudent to state the facts, as they really took place; for our own writers must naturally be supposed to be better acquainted with our History, than the foreign authorities quoted by the Saint. The reader will also find the circumstances, and the names of the actors, when I considered it necessary, frequently given more in detail than in the original.

In the style, I have endeavoured, as closely as the genius of our language would allow, keeping to the original. St. Alphonsus never sought for ornament; a clear, lucid statement of facts is what he aimed at; there is nothing inflated in his writings; he wrote for the people, and that is the principal reason, I imagine, why not only his Devotional Works, but his Historical and Theological Writings, also, have been in such request: but, while he wrote for the people, we are not to imagine that he did not also please the learned. His mind was richly stored with various knowledge; he was one of the first Jurists of his day; his Theological science elicited the express approbation of the greatest Theologian of his age Benedict XIV.; he was not only a perfect master of his own beautiful language, but profoundly read in both Greek and Latin literature also, and a long life constantly employed in studies, chiefly ecclesiastical, qualified him, above any man of his time, to become an Ecclesiastical Historian, which no one should attempt unless he be a general I might almost say a universal, scholar : so much for the Historical portion of the Work.

In the Second Part, the Refutation of Heresies, the Holy Author comprises, in a small space, a vast amount of Theological information; in fact, there is no Heresy which cannot be refuted from it. Not alone are the usual Heresies, which we have daily to combat such as those opposed to the Real Presence, the Authority of the Church, the doctrine of Justification, clearly and diffusely refuted, but those abstruse heretical opinions concerning—Grace, Free Will, the Procession of the Holy Ghost, the Mystery of the Incarnation, and the two Natures of Christ, and so forth, are also clearly and copiously confuted; the intricacies of Pelagianism, Calvinism, and Jansenism, are unravelled, and the true Doctrine of the

Church triumphantly vindicated. The reader will find, in general, the quotations from the Fathers in the original, but those unacquainted with Latin will easily learn their sentiments from the text. The Scripture quotations are from the Douay Version.

Every Theologian will be aware of the difficulty of giving—scholastic terms in an English dress. In the language of the Schools, the most abstract ideas, which would require a sentence to explain them in our tongue, are most appropriately expressed by a single word; all the Romance languages, daughters of the Latin, have very nearly the same facility, but our Northern tongue has not, I imagine, flexibility enough for the purpose. I have, however, endeavoured, as far as I could, to preserve the very terms of the original, knowing how easy it is to give a heterodox sense to a passage, by even the most trivial deviation from the very expression of the writer. The Theological Student will thus, I hope, find the Work a compact Manual of Polemic Theology; the Catholic who, while he firmly believes all that the Church teaches, wishes to be able to give an account of the Faith that is in him, will here find it explained and defended; while those not of the " fold," but for whom we ardently pray, that they may hear the voice of the " one Shepherd," may see, by its attentive perusal, that they inhabit a house " built upon the sand," and not the house " on the rock."

They will behold the mighty tree of Faith sprung from the grain of mustard-seed planted by our Redeemer, always flourishing always extending, neither uprooted by the storms of persecution, nor withered by the sun of worldly prosperity. Nay more, the very persecution the Church of God has suffered, and is daily enduring, only extends it more and more; the Faithful, persecuted in " one city," fly elsewhere, bearing with them the treasure of Faith, and communicating it to those among—whom they settle, as the seeds of fertility are frequently borne on the wings of the tempest to the remote desert, which would otherwise be cursed with perpetual barrenness. The persecution of the Church in Ireland, for example, "has turned the desert into fruitfulness," in America, in Australia, in England itself, and the grey smouldering ruins of our fanes on the hill sides are compensated for by the Cathedral Churches across the ocean. The reader will see Heresy in every age, from the days of the Apostles themselves down to our own time, rising up, and vanishing after a while, but the Church of God is always the same, her Chief Pastors speaking with the same authority, and teaching the same doctrine to the trembling Neophytes' in the Catacombs, and to the Cæsars on the throne of the world. Empires are broken into fragments and perish nations die away, and are only known to the historian languages spoken by millions disappear everything that is man's work dies like man; heresies, like the rest, have their rise, their progress, their decay, but Faith alone is eternal and unchangeable, "yesterday, to-day, and the same forever."

AUTHOR’S PREFACE

1. My object in writing this work is to prove that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true one among so many other Churches, and to show how carefully the Almighty guarded her, and brought her victoriously through all the persecutions of her enemies. Hence, as St. Iræneus says (Lib. 3, cap. 3, n. 2), all should depend on the Roman Church as on their fountain and head. This is the Church founded by Jesus Christ, and propagated by the Apostles; and although in the commencement persecuted and contradicted by all, as the Jews said to St. Paul in Rome : “ For as concerning this sect (thus they called the Church), we know that it is gainsayed every where” (Acts, xxviii, 22); still she always remained firm, not like the other false Churches, which in the beginning numbered many followers, but perished in the end, as we shall see in the course of this history, when we speak of the Arians, Nestorians, Eutychians, and Pelagians; and if any sect still reckons many followers, as the Mahometans, Lutherans, or Calvinists, it is easy to see that they are upheld, not by the love of truth, but either by popular ignorance, or relaxation of morals. St. Augustine says that heresies are only embraced by those who had they persevered in the faith, would be lost by the irregularity of their lives (St. Aug. de Va. Rel. c. 8.)

2. Our Church, on the contrary, notwithstanding that she teaches her children a law opposed to the corrupt inclinations of human nature, not only never failed in the midst of persecutions, but even gained strength from them; as Tertullian (Apol. cap. ult.) says, the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians, and the more we are mown down the more numerous we become; and in the 20th chapter of the same work he says, the kingdom of Christ and his reign is believed and he is worshipped by all nations. Pliny the Younger confirms this in his celebrated Letter to Trajan, in which he says that in Asia the temples of the gods were deserted, because the Christian Religion had overrun not only the cities but even the villages.

3. This, certainly, never could have taken place without the power of the Almighty, who intended to establish in the midst of idolatry, a new religion, to destroy all the superstitions of the false religion, and the ancient belief in a multitude of false gods adored by the Gentiles, by their ancestors, by the magistrates, and by the emperors themselves, who made use of all their power to protect it, and still the Christian faith was embraced by many nations who forsook a relaxed law for a hard and difficult one, forbidding them to pamper their sensual appetites. What but the power of God could accomplish this?

4. Great as the persecutions were which the Church suffered from idolatry, still greater were those she had to endure from the heretics which sprang from her own bosom, by means of wicked men, who, either through pride or ambition, or the desire of sensual license, endeavoured to rend the bowels of their parent. Heresy has been called a canker : “ It spreadeth like a canker” (II. Tim. ii, 17); for as a canker infects the whole body, so heresy infects the whole soul, the mind, the heart, the intellect, and the will. It is also called a plague, for it not only infects the person contaminated with it, but those who associate with him, and the fact is, that the spread of this plague in the world has injured the Church more than idolatry, and this good mother has suffered more from her own children than from her enemies. Still she has never perished in any of the tempests which the heretics raised against her; she appeared about to perish at one time through the heresy of Arius, when the faith of the Council of Nice, through the intrigues of the wicked Bishops, Valens and Ursacius, was condemned, and, as St. Jerome says, the world groaned at finding itself Arian[14984]; and the Eastern Church appeared in the same danger during the time of the heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches. But it is wonderful, and at the same time consoling, to read the end of all those heresies, and behold the bark of the Church, which appeared completely wrecked and sunk through the force of those persecutions, in a little while floating more gloriously and triumphantly than before.

5. St. Paul says: “ There must be heresies, that they also who are reproved may be made manifest among you” (I. Cor. ii, 19). St. Augustine, explaining this text, says that as fire is necessary to purify silver, and separate it from the dross, so heresies are necessary to prove the good

Christians among the bad, and to separate the true from the false doctrine. The pride of the heretics makes them presume that they know the true faith, and that the Catholic Church is in error, but here is the mistake : our reason is not sufficient to tell us the true faith, since the truths of Divine Faith are above reason; we should, therefore, hold by that faith which God has revealed to his Church, and which the Church teaches, which is, as the Apostle says, “ the pillar and the ground of truth” (I. Tim. iii, 15).

Hence, as St. Iræneus says, “It is necessary that all should depend on the Roman Church as their head and fountain; all Churches should agree with this Church on account of her priority of principality, for there the traditions delivered by the Apostles have always been preserved” (St. Iran, lib. 3, c. 3); and by the tradition derived from the Apostles which the Church founded at Rome preserves, and the Faith preserved by the succession of the Bishops, we confound those who through blindness or an evil conscience draw false conclusions (Ibid). “ Do you wish to know,” says St. Augustine, “ which is the true Church of Christ? Count those priests who, in a regular succession have succeeded St. Peter, who is the Rock, against which the gates of hell will not prevail” (St. Aug. in Ps. contra part Donat.) : and the holy Doctor alleges as one of the reasons which detain him in the Catholic Church, the succession of Bishops to the present time in the See of St. Peter” (Epis. fund, c. 4, n. 5); for in truth the uninterrupted succession from the Apostles and disciples is characteristic of the Catholic Church, and of no other.

6. It was the will of the Almighty that the Church in which the true faith was preserved should be one that all the faithful might profess the one faith, but the devil, St. Cyprian says[14985], invented heresies to destroy faith, and divide unity. The enemy has caused mankind to establish many different churches, so that each, following the faith of his own particular one, in opposition to that of others, the true faith might be confused, and as many false faiths formed as there are different churches, or rather different individuals. This is especially the case in England, where we see as many religions as families, and even families themselves divided in faith, each individual following his own. St. Cyprian, then, justly says that God has disposed that the true faith should be preserved in the Roman Church alone, so that there being but one Church there should be but one faith and one

doctrine for all the faithful. St. Optatus Milevitanus, writing to Parmenianus, says, also : “ You cannot be ignorant that the Episcopal Chair of St. Peter was first placed in the city of Rome, in which one chair unity is observed by all” (St. Opt. I 2, cont. Parmen.)

7. The heretics, too, boast of the unity of their Churches, but St. Augustine says that it is unity against unity. “ What unity,” says the Saint, “ can all those churches have which are divided from the Catholic Church, which is the only true one; they are but as so many useless branches cut off from the Vine, the Catholic Church, which is always firmly rooted. This is the One Holy, True, and Catholic Church, opposing all heresies; it may be opposed, but cannot be conquered. All heresies come forth from it, like useless shoots cut off from the vine, but it still remains firmly rooted in charity, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (St. Aug. lib. 1, de Symbol ad Cath. c. 6). St. Jerome says that the very fact of the heretics forming a church apart from the Roman Church, is a proof, of itself, that they are followers of error, and disciples of the devil, described by the Apostle, as “ giving heed to spirits of error and doctrines of devils” (I. Tim. iv, 1).

8. The Lutherans and Calvinists say, just as the Donatists did before them, that the Catholic Church preserved the true faith down to a certain period some say to the third, some to the fourth, some to the fifth century but that after that the true doctrine was corrupted, and the spouse of Christ became an adulteress. This supposition, however, refutes itself; for, granting that the Roman Catholic Church was the Church first founded by Christ, it could never fail, for our Saviour himself promised that the gates of hell never should prevail against it : “I say unto you that you are Peter, and on this Rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt, xviii, 18). It being certain, then, that the Roman Catholic Church was the true one, as Gerard, one of the first ministers of Luther, admits (Gerard de Eccles. cap. 11, sec. 6) it to have been for the first five hundred years, and to have preserved the Apostolic doctrine during that period, it follows that it must always have remained so, for the spouse of Christ as St. Cyprian says, could never become an adulteress.

9. The heretics, however, who, instead of learning from the Church the dogmas they should believe, wish to teach her false and perverse dogmas of their own, say that they have the Scriptures on their side, which are the

fountain of truth, not considering, as a learned author[14986] justly remarks, that it is not by reading, but by understanding, them, that the truth can be found. Heretics of every sort avail themselves of the Scriptures to prove their errors, but we should not interpret the Scripture according to our own private opinions, which frequently lead us astray, but according to the teaching of the Holy Church which is appointed the Mistress of true doctrine, and to whom God has manifested the true sense of the Divine books. This is the Church, as the Apostle tells us, which has been appointed the pillar and the ground of truth: " that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth" (I. Tim. iii, 15.) Hence St. Leo says that the Catholic faith despises the errors of heretics barking against the Church, who deceived by the vanity of worldly wisdom, have departed from the truth of the Gospel (St. Leo, Ser. 8, de Nat Dim.)

10. I think the History of Heresies is a most useful study, for it shows the truth of our Faith more pure and resplendent, by showing how it has never changed; and if, at all times, this is useful, it must be particularly so at present, when the most holy maxims and the principal dogmas of Religion are put in doubt : it shows, besides, the care God always took to sustain the Church in the midst of the tempests which were unceasingly raised against it, and the admirable manner in which all the enemies who attacked it were confounded. The History of Heresies is also useful to preserve in us the spirit of humility and subjection to the Church, and to make us grateful to God for giving us the grace of being born in Christian countries; and it shows how the most learned men have fallen into the most grievous errors, by not subjecting themselves to the Church's teaching.

11. I will now state my reasons for writing this Work; some may think this labour of mine superfluous, especially as so many learned authors have written expressly and extensively the history of various heresies, as Tertullian, St. Iræneus, St. Epiphanius, St. Augustine, St. Vincent of Lerins, Socrates, Sozymen, St. Philastrius, Theodoret, Nicephorus, and many others, both in ancient and modern times. This, however, is the very reason which prompted me to write this Work; for as so many authors have written, and so extensively, and as it is impossible for many persons either to procure so many and such expensive works, or to find time to read them, if

they had them, I, therefore, judged it better to collect in a small compass the commencement and the progress of all heresies, so that in a little time, and at little expense, any one may have a sufficient knowledge of the heresies and schisms which infected the Church. I have said in a small compass, but still, not with such brevity as some others have done, who barely give an outline of the facts, and leave the reader dissatisfied, and ignorant of many of the most important circumstances. I, therefore, have studied brevity; but I wish, at the same time, that my readers may be fully informed of every notable fact connected with the rise and progress of, at all events, the principal heresies that disturbed the Church.

12. Another reason I had for publishing this Work was, that as modern authors, who have paid most attention to historical facts, have spoken of heresies only as a component part of Ecclesiastical History, as Baronius, Fleury, Noel Alexander, Tillemont, Orsi, Spondanus, Raynaldus, Graveson, and others, and so have spoken of each heresy chronologically, either in its beginning, progress, or decay, and, therefore, the reader must turn over to different parts of the works to find out the rise, progress, and disappearance of each heresy; I, on the contrary, give all at once the facts connected with each heresy in particular.

13. Besides, these writers have not given the Refutation of Heresies, and I give this in the second part of the Work; I do not mean the refutation of every heresy, but only of the principal ones, as those of Sabellius, Arius, Pelagius, Macedonius, Nestorius, Eutyches, the Monothelites, the Iconoclasts, the Greeks, and the like. I will merely speak of the authors of other heresies of less note, and their falsity will be apparent, either from their evident weakness, or from the proofs I bring forward against the more celebrated heresies I have mentioned.

14. We ought, then, dear reader, unceasingly to thank our Lord for giving us the grace of being born and brought up in the bosom of the Catholic Church. St. Francis de Sales exclaims: “O good God! many and great are the benefits thou hast heaped on me, and I thank thee for them; but how shall I be ever able to thank thee for enlightening me with thy holy Faith?” And writing to one of his friends, he says: “ God! the beauty of thy holy Faith appears to me so enchanting, that I am dying with love of it, and I imagine I ought to enshrine this precious gift in a heart all perfumed with devotion.” St. Teresa never ceased to thank God for having made her a

daughter of the Holy Church: her consolation at the hour of death was to cry out : “ I die a child of the Holy Church! I die a child of the Holy Church.” We, likewise, should never cease praising Jesus Christ for this grace bestowed on us one of the greatest conferred on us one distinguishing us from so many millions of mankind, who are born and die among infidels and heretics : “ He has not done in like manner to every nation” (Psalm cxlvii, 9). With our minds filled with gratitude for so great a favour, we shall now see the triumph the Church has obtained through so many ages, over so many heresies opposed to her. I wish to remark, however, before I begin, that I have written this Work amidst the cares of my Bishoprick, so that I could not give a critical examination, many times, to the facts I state, and, in such case, I give the various opinions of different authors, without deciding myself on one side or the other. I have endeavoured, however, to collect all that could be found in the most correct and notable writers on the subject; but it is not impossible that some learned persons may be better acquainted with some facts than I am.

Chapter I

HERESIES OF THE FIRST CENTURY

1.—Simon Magus. 2.—Menander. 3.—Cerinthus. 4. Ebion. 5.—Saturninus and Basilides. 6.—The Nicholites.

1. Simon Magus[14987], the first heretic who disturbed the Church, was born in a part of Samaria called Githon or Gitthis. He was called Magus, or the Magician, because he made use of spells to deceive the multitude; and hence he acquired among his countrymen the extraordinary name of “The Great Power of God” (Acts, viii, 10). “This man is the power of God which is called great.” Seeing that those on whom the Apostles Peter and John laid hands received the Holy Ghost, he offered them money to give to him the power of communicating the Holy Ghost in like manner; and on that account the detestable crime of selling holy things is called Simony. He went to Rome, and there was a statue erected to him in that city, a fact which St. Justin, in his first Apology, flings in the face of the Romans : “ In your royal city,” he says, “ he (Simon) was esteemed a God, and a statue was erected to him in the Island of the Tyber, between the two bridges, bearing this Latin inscription SIMONI, DEO SANCTO.”

Samuel Basnage, Petavius, Valesius, and many others, deny this fact; but Tillemont, Grotius, Fleury, and Cardinal Orsi defend it, and adduce in favour of it the authority of Tertullian, St. Irenaeus, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Augustine, Eusebius, and Theodoret, who even says the statue was a bronze one. Simon broached many errors, which Noel Alexander enumerates and refutes[14988]. The principal ones were that the world was created by angels; that when the soul leaves the body it enters into another body, which, if true, says St. Iraeneus[14989], it would recollect all that happened when it inhabited the former body, for memory, being a spiritual quality, it could not be separated from the soul. Another of his errors was one which has been brought to light by the heretics of our own days, that man had no free will, and, consequently, that good works are not necessary for salvation. Baronius and Fleury relate[14990], that, by force of magic spells, he one day caused the devil to elevate him in the air; but St. Peter and St. Paul being present, and invoking the name of Jesus Christ, he fell down and broke both his legs. He was carried away by his friends; but his corporeal and mental sufferings preyed so much on him, that, in despair, he cast himself out of a high window; and thus perished the first heretic who ever disturbed the Church of Christ[14991]. Basnage, who endeavours to prove that St. Peter never was in Rome, and never filled the pontifical chair of that city, says that this is all a fabrication; but we have the testimony of St. Ambrose, St. Isidore of Pelusium, St. Augustine, St. Maximus, St. Philastrius, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Severus Sulpicius, Theodoret, and many others, in our favour. We have, besides, a passage in Seutonius, which corroborates their testimony, for he says (lib. VI., cap. xii), that, while Nero assisted at the public sports, a man endeavoured to fly, but, after elevating himself for a while, he fell down, and the Emperors pavilion was sprinkled with his blood.

2. Menander was a Samaritan likewise, and a disciple of Simon Magus; he made his appearance in the year of our Lord 73. He announced himself a messenger from the “Unknown Power,” for the salvation of mankind. No one, according to him, could be saved, unless he was baptized in his name, and his baptism, he said, was the true resurrection, so that his disciples would enjoy immortality even in this life[14992]. Cardinal Orsi adds, that Menander was the first who invented the doctrine of “Eons,” and that he taught that Jesus Christ exercised human functions in appearance alone.

3. Cerinthus was the next after Menander, but he began to broach his doctrine in the same year.[14993] His errors can be reduced to four heads : he denied that God was the creator of the world; he asserted that the law of Moses was necessary for salvation; he also taught that after the resurrection Jesus Christ would establish a terrestrial kingdom in Jerusalem, where the just would spend a thousand years in the enjoyment of every sensual pleasure; and, finally, he denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. The account Bernini gives of his death is singular[14994]. The Apostle St. John, he says, met him going into a bath, when, turning to those along with him, he said, let us hasten out of this, lest we be buried alive, and they had scarcely gone

outside when the whole building fell with a sudden crash, and the unfortunate Cerinthus was overwhelmed in the ruins. One of the impious doctrines of this heretic was, that Jesus was a mere man, born as all other men are, and that, when he was baptized in the river Jordan, Christ descended on him, that is, a virtue or power, in form of a dove, or a spirit sent by God to fill him with knowledge, and communicate it to mankind; but after Jesus had fulfilled his mission, by instructing mankind and working miracles, he was deserted by Christ, who returned to heaven, and left him to darkness and death. Alas! What impiety men fall into when they desert the light of faith, and follow their own weak imaginations.

4. Ebion prided himself in being a disciple of St. Peter, and could even bear to hear St. Pauls name mentioned. He admitted the sacrament of baptism; but in the consecration of the Eucharist he used nothing but water in the chalice; he, however, consecrated the host in unleavened bread, and Eusebius says he performed this every Sunday. According to St. Jerome, the baptism of the Ebionites was admitted by the Catholics. He endeavoured to unite the Mosaic and Christian law, and admitted no part of the New Testament, unless the Gospel of St. Matthew, and even that mutilated, as he left out two chapters, and altered the others in many places. The ancient writers say that St. John wrote his Gospel to refute the errors of Ebion. The most impious of his blasphemies was, that Jesus Christ was the son of Joseph and Mary, born as the rest of men are; that he was but a mere man, but that, on account of his great virtue, the Almighty adopted him as his Son[14995].

5. Saturninus and Basilides were disciples of Menander, whose history we have already seen; and they made some additions to the heresy of their master. Saturninus, a native of Antioch, taught, with Menander, as Fleury tells us[14996], that there was one only Father, unknown to all, who created the angels, and that seven angels created the world and man. The God of the Jews, he said, was one of these rebellious angels, and it was to destroy him that Christ appeared in the form of man, though he never had a real body. He condemned matrimony and procreation as an invention of the devil. He attributed the Prophecies partly to the angels, partly to the devil, and partly to the God of the Jews. He also said, according to St. Augustine (Heres. iii), that the Supreme Virtue that is, the Sovereign Father having created the

angels, seven of them rebelled against him, created man, and for this reason : Seeing a celestial light, they wished to retain it, but it vanished from them; and they then created man to resemble it, saying, "Let us make man to the image and likeness." Man being thus created, was like a mere worm, incapable of doing anything, till the Sovereign Virtue, pitying his image, placed in him a spark of himself, and gave him life. This is the spark which, at the dissolution of the body, flies to heaven. Those of his sect alone, he said, had this spark; all the others were deprived of it, and, consequently, were reprobate.

6. Basilides, according to Fleury, was a native of Alexandria, and even exceeded Saturninus in fanaticism. He said that the Father, whom he called Abrasax, produced Nous, that is, Intelligence; who produced Logos, or the Word; the Word produced Phronesis, that is, Prudence; and Prudence, Sophia and Dunamis, that is, Wisdom and Power. These created the angels, who formed the first heaven and other angels; and these, in their turn, produced a second heaven, and so on, till there were three hundred and sixty-five heavens produced, according to the number of days in the year. The God of the Jews, he said, was the head of the second order of angels, and because he wished to rule all nations, the other princes rose up against him, and, on that account, God sent his first-born, Nous, to free mankind from the dominion of the angels who created the world. This Nous, who, according to him, was Jesus Christ, was an incorporeal virtue, who put on whatever form pleased him. Hence, when the Jews wished to crucify him, he took the form of Simon the Cyrenean, and gave his form to Simon, so that it was Simon, and not Jesus, who was crucified. Jesus, at the same time, was laughing at the folly of the Jews, and afterwards ascended invisibly to heaven. On that account, he said, we should not venerate the crucifix, otherwise we would incur the danger of being subject to the angels who created the world. He broached many other errors; but these are sufficient to show his fanaticism and impiety. Both Saturninus and Basilides fled from martyrdom, and always cloaked their faith with this maxim "Know others, but let no one know you." Cardinal Orsi says[14997] they practised magic, and were addicted to every species of incontinence, but that they were careful in avoiding observation. They promulgated their doctrines before Menander,

in the year 125; but, because they were disciples of his, we have mentioned them after him.

7. The Nicholites admitted promiscuous intercourse with married and single, and, also, the use of meats offered to idols. They also said that the Father of Jesus Christ was not the creator of the world. Among the other foolish doctrines they held, was one, that darkness, uniting with the Holy Ghost, produced a matrix or womb, which brought forth four Eons; that from these four Eons sprung the evil Eon, who created the Gods, the angels, men, and seven demoniacal spirits, This heresy was of short duration; but some new Nicholites sprung up afterwards in the Milanese territory, who were condemned by Pope Nicholas II. The Nicholites called themselves disciples of Nicholas the Deacon, who, according to Noel Alexander, was esteemed a heresiarch by St. Eusebius, St. Hilarian, and St. Jerome. However, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Theodoret, Baronius, St. Ignatius the Martyr, Orsi, St. Augustine, Fleury, and Berti, acquit him of this charge[14998].

Chapter II

HERESIES OF THE SECOND CENTURY

1.—Corpocrates. 2.—Valentine. 3.—Epiphanes. 4.—Prodicus. 5.—Tatian. 6.—Seeems. 7.—Cerdonius. 8.—Marcion. 9.—Ape11es. 10-M ontanus. 11.—Cataphrigians, Artotirites, Peputians, Ascodrogites, Patta10rinchites. 12.—Bardesanes, 13.—The odotus the Currier, Artemon, and The odotus Argentarius. 14.—Hermogenes.

1. Corpocrates was a native of Alexandria, or, as others say, of Samosata. His followers were called Gnostics that is, learned or enlightened. He said that Jesus Christ was the son of Joseph, born as other men are, and distinguished from them by his virtue alone, and that the world was created by angels. Another blasphemous doctrine of his was, that, to unite ourselves with God, we should practise all the unclean works of concupiscence; our evil propensities should be followed in everything, for this, he said, was the enemy spoken of in the Gospel[14999], to which we should yield, and, by this means, we show our contempt for the laws of the wicked angels, and acquire the summit of perfection; and the soul, he said, would pass from one body to another till it had committed all sorts of unclean actions. Another of his doctrines was, that everyone had two souls, for without the second, he said, the first would be subject to the rebellious angels. The followers of this hellish monster called themselves Christians, and, as a distinctive mark, they branded the lower part of the ear with a red iron. They paid the same veneration to the images of Pythagoras, Plato, and the other philosophers, as to that of Jesus Christ. Corpocrates lived in the year 160.

2. Valentine, who, it was supposed, was an Egyptian, separated himself from the Church, because he was disappointed in obtaining a bishopric. He came to Rome in 141, and abjured his errors, but soon again embraced them, and persevered in them till his death[15000]. He invented a fabulous genealogy of Eons or Gods; and another of his errors was, that Jesus Christ did not become incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary, but brought his

body from heaven. He admitted in man a continual exercise of spirit, which, uniting with the flesh, rendered lawful every sensual pleasure; and he divided mankind into three classes the carnal, the animal, and the spiritual. His followers, he said, were the spiritualists, and, on that account, were exempt from the necessity of good works, because, having arrived at the apex of perfection, and being certain of eternal felicity, it was useless for them to suffer, or observe the law. The carnal, he said, were excluded from eternal salvation and predestined to hell[15001].

Three sects take their origin from Valentine. The first were called Sethites :These paid such honour to Seth, that they said Jesus Christ was born of him, and some went so far as to say that Jesus Christ and Seth were one and the same person. The second sect were called Cainites :These venerated as saints all those who the Scripture tells us were damned as Cain, Core, the inhabitants of Sodom, and especially Judas Iscariot. The third were called Ophites :These said that Wisdom became a serpent, and; on that account, they adored Jesus Christ as a serpent; they trained one of these reptiles to come out of a cave when called, and creep up on the table where the bread for sacrifice was placed; they kissed him while he crept round the bread, and, considering it then sanctified by the reptile, whom they blasphemously called Christ, they broke it to the people, who received it as the Eucharist[15002].

Ptolemy and Saturninus were disciples of Valentine; but their master admitted thirty Eons, and they added eight more. He also had other disciples : Heraclion, whose followers invoked over the dead certain names of principalities, and anointed them with oil and water; Marcus and Colarbasus taught that all truth was shut up in the Greek alphabet, and, on that account, they called Christ Alpha and Omega[15003]; and Van Ranst adds to the list the Arconticites, who rejected the sacraments Florinus, who said that God was the author of sin and Blastus[15004], who insisted that Easter should be celebrated after the Jewish fashion. The disciples of Valentine made a new Gospel, and added various books to the Canon of the Scriptures, as “The Parables of the Lord,” “The Prophetic Sayings and the Sermons of the Apostles.” It is needless to add that all these were according to their own doctrines.

3. Epiphanes, the son of Carpocrates, besides defending the damnable opinions of his father, openly rejected the law of Moses, and especially the two last precepts of the becalogue. He also rejected the Gospel, though he pretended to follow it[15005].

4. Prodicus taught that it was lawful to deny the faith to avoid death; he rejected the worship of an invisible God, and adored the four elements and the sun and the moon; he condemned all prayers to God as superstitious, but he prayed to the elements and the planets to be propitious to mankind[15006]. This impious worship he always performed naked. Noel Alexander and Theodoret assign to this heretic the institution of the sect called Adamites; these always performed their religious exercises in their churches, or rather brothels, as St. Epiphanius calls them, naked, pretending by this to imitate the innocence of Adam, but, in reality, practising every abomination[15007].

5. Tatian was born in Assyria, and was a disciple of St. Justin Martyr. He was the founder of the sect called Encratics, or Continent; he taught, with Valentine, that matter was uncreated and eternal; he attributed the creation to God, but through the instrumentality of an inferior Eon, who said let there be light, not by way of command, but of supplication, and thus light was created. He denied, with Valentine, the resurrection of the dead, and human flesh, he said was too unworthy to be united with the divinity in the person of Christ. He deprived man of free will, saying he was good and spiritual, or bad and carnal, by necessity, according as the seed of divine grace was infused or not into him; and he rejected the law of Moses, as not instituted by God, but by the Eon who created the world. Finally, he condemned matrimony, prohibited the use of flesh-meat and wine, and, because he used nothing but water in the consecration of the chalice, his disciples were called Hydroparastati, or Aquarii[15008].

6. Severus was a disciple of Tatian; but differed from his master in some essential points, especially in admitting the law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Gospels. Julius Capianus, a disciple of Valentine, joined with Severus, and was the founder of the heresy of the Doceti, who said that Jesus had not a real, but an apparent, body. He wrote a book on continence, in which he quoted a passage of the spurious gospel used by the Egyptians, in which Jesus Christ is made to curse matrimony. In his commentaries on Genesis he says marriage was the forbidden fruit[15009].

7. Cerdonius followed the doctrines of Simon, Menander, and Saturninus; besides, he taught, with Maims, the existence of two first principles, or Gods, a good and a bad one, and admitted the resurrection of the soul, but not of the body. He rejected all the Gospels, except St. Luke's, and mutilated that in several places[15010].

8. Marcion was a native of the city of Sinope, in the province of Pontus, and the son of a Catholic bishop. In his early days he led a life of continence and retirement; but for an act of immorality he was cut off from the Church by his own father. He then went to Rome, and endeavoured to accomplish his restoration; but not being able to succeed, he, in a fit of rage, said " I will cause an eternal division in your Church." He then united himself to Cerdonius, admitting two principles, and founding his doctrine on the sixth chapter of St. Luke, where it is said a good tree cannot bring forth bad fruits. The good principle, he said, was the author of good, and the bad one of evil; and the good principle was the father of Jesus Christ, the giver of grace, and the bad one, the creator of matter and the founder of the law. He denied the incarnation of the Son of God, saying it was repugnant to a good God to unite himself with the filthiness of flesh, and that his soul should have for a companion a body infected and corrupt by nature. He also taught the existence of two Gods one, the good God; the other, an evil one, the God of the Jews, and the creator of the world. Each of these Gods promised to send a Christ. Our Christ appeared in the reign of Tiberius, and was the good Christ; the Jewish Christ did not yet come. The Old Testament he rejected, because it was given by the bad principle, or God of the Jews. Among other errors, he said, that when Jesus descended into hell, he did not save Abel, or Henoc, or Noah, or any other of the just of the old law, because they were friends of the God of the Jews; but that he saved Cain, the Sodomites, and the Egyptians, because they were the enemies of this God[15011].

9. Apelles, the most famous disciple of Marcion, was excommunicated by his master for committing a crime against chastity, and felt his disgrace so much that he fled to Alexandria. This heretic, among other errors, said that God created a number of angels and powers, and among the rest a power called the Lord, who created this world to resemble the world above, but not being able to bring it to perfection, he repented him of having

created it[15012]. Van Ranst says that he rejected the Prophecies, and said the Son of God took a body of air which, at his ascension, dissolved into air again.

10. Montanus, as Cardinal Orsi tells us[15013], was born in Ardraba, an obscure village of Mysia. He first led such a mortified life that he was esteemed a saint; but, possessed by the demon of ambition, his head was turned. He began to speak in an extraordinary manner, make use of unknown words, and utter prophecies in contradiction to the traditions of the Church. Some thought him possessed by a spirit of error; others looked on him as a saint and prophet. He soon acquired a number of followers, and carried his madness to the utmost excess; among others who joined him were two loose women of the names of Prisca or Priscilla and Maximilla, and, seemingly possessed by the same spirit as himself, they uttered the most extraordinary rhodomontades. Montanus said that he and his prophetesses received the plenitude of the Holy Ghost, which was only partially communicated to others, and he quoted in his favour that text of St. Paul (I. Corinthians, xiii, 9), “ By part we know, and by part we prophesy ;” and they had the madness to esteem themselves greater than the apostles, since they had received the Holy Ghost promised by Jesus Christ in perfection. They also said that God wished, at first, to save the world, by means of Moses and the prophets; when he saw that these were not able to accomplish it, he himself became incarnate; but even this not sufficing, he descended in the Holy Ghost into Montanus and his prophetesses. He established nine fasting-days and three Lents in the year. Among other errors he prohibited his disciples to fly from persecution, and refused to admit sinners to repentance, and prohibited second marriages[15014].

Eusebius tells us that he died miserably, having hanged himself[15015].

11. The heresy of Montanus shot forth different branches, as the Cataphrigians, Artotirites, Peputians, Ascodrogites, and Pattalorinchites. The Cataphrigians were called from the nation to which Montanus belonged. The Eucharistic bread they used was made of flour and blood taken from the body of an infant by puncturing it all over; if the infant died he was considered a martyr, but if he survived he was regarded as high priest. This we learn from Noel Alexander[15016]. The Artotirites were so called, because in the sacrifice of the Eucharist, they offered up bread and

cheese. The Peputians took their name from an obscure village of Phrigia, where they held their solemn meetings; they ordained women priests and bishops, saying there was no difference between them and men. The Ascodrogites were no better than the ancient bacchanalians; they used bottles which they filled with wine near the altars, saying that these were the new bottles Jesus Christ spoke of “They shall put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.” The Pattalorinchites were so called, because they wore a small stick in the mouth or nose, a sign of strict silence; they were so called, from pattalos, a stick, and rinchos, the nose[15017].

12. Bardesanes, a native of Edessa, in Syria, lived in this age also. He was celebrated in the time of Marcus Aurelius for his learning and constancy in defending the faith. He told the Philosopher Apollonius, the favourite of the Emperor, who endeavoured to pervert him, that he was ready to seal his belief with his blood. He opposed the errors of Valentine; but, being educated in his school, he was infected with some of them, especially disbelieving the resurrection of the dead. He wrote many works in refutation of the heresies of his day, especially an excellent treatise on fate, which St. Jerome, in his catalogue of ecclesiastical writers, praises highly. We may truly say, with Noel Alexander, that the fall of so great a man is to be lamented[15018].

13. Theodotus the Currier, so called on account of his trade, was a native of Byzantium, and he, along with Artemon, asserted like Ebion and Cerinthus, that Christ was mere man. Besides this there was another Theodotus, called Argentarius, or the Banker, who taught that Melchisadech was Christ, or even greater than Christ, on account of that verse of the Psalms “Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisadech;” and his followers were afterwards called Melchisadechites[15019].

14. Hermogenes said that matter was uncreated and eternal. Tertullian, Eusebius, and Lactanctius refuted this error. He also taught that the devils would hereafter be united with matter and that the body of Jesus Christ was in the sun[15020].

Chapter III

HERESIES OF THE THIRD CENTURY

1.—Praxeas. 2.—Sabellius. 3.—Paul of Samosata. 4.—Manes. 5.—Tertullian. 6.—Origen. 7.—Novatus and Novatian. 8.—Nipos. The Angelicals and the Apostolicals.

1. Praxeas, a native of Phrygia, was at first a Montanist, but afterwards becoming an enemy of Montanus, he caused him to be condemned by Pope Zepherinus, concealing his own heresy at the same time. Being soon discovered, he retracted his opinions, but soon afterwards openly proclaimed them. He denied the mystery of the Trinity, saying that in God there was but one person and one nature, which he called the Father. This sole person, he said, descended into the womb of the Virgin, and being born of her by means of the incarnation, was called Jesus Christ. According to this impious doctrine, then, it was the Father who suffered death, and on that account his followers were called Patripassionists. The most remarkable among his disciples were Berillus, Noetus, and Sabellius. Berillus was Bishop of Bostris in Arabia; he said that Christ, before his incarnation, had no divinity, and in his incarnation had no divinity of his own, but only that of the Father. Noel Alexander says that Origen refuted him, and brought him back to the Catholic faith[15021]. Noetus, more obstinate in error, said that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost were but one person and one God; he and his followers were cut off from the Church, and, as he died impenitent, he was refused Christian burial[15022]. The most celebrated promoter of this error was Sabellius.

2. Sabellius was born in the Ptolemais in Africa, and lived in the year 227. He shed a greater lustre, if we may say so, on the heresy of his master, and on that account this impious sect was called Sabellians. He denied the distinction of the three persons in the Trinity, and said they were but three names to distinguish the different operations of the Divinity. The Trinity, he said, was like the sun, in which we distinguish the light, the heat, and the

form, though the sun be but one and the same. The light represents the Son, the heat the Holy Ghost, and the figure or substance of the sun itself the Father, who, in one person alone, contained the Son and the Holy Ghost[15023]. This error we will refute in the last part of the work.

3. Paul of Samosata was Bishop of Antioch. Before his appointment to the see he was poor, but afterwards, by extortion and sacrilege, by selling justice, and making false promises, he amassed a great deal of wealth. He was so vain and proud that he never appeared in public without a crowd of courtiers; he was always preceded by one hundred servants, and followed by a like number, and his own praises were the only subjects of his sermons; he not only abused those who did not flatter him, but frequently also offered them personal violence; and at length his vanity arrived at such a pitch that he had a choir of courtesans to sing hymns in his praise in the church; he was so dissolute in his morals that he had always a number of ladies of lax morals in his train. In fine, this impious prelate crowned all his crimes with heresy. The first of his blasphemies was, that Jesus Christ never existed until he was born of the Virgin, and hence he said he was a mere man; he also said that in Jesus there were two persons and two sons of God, one by nature and the other by adoption; he also denied the Trinity of the Divine persons, and although he admitted the names of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, not, however, denying, as Orsi thinks, personal existence to the Son and the Holy Ghost, yet he did not recognize either one or the other as persons of the Trinity, attributing to the Father alone the incarnation and passion[15024]. His disciples inserted those errors in their profession of faith, and in the formula of Baptism, but N. Alexander says that it is uncertain whether Paul was the author of this heresy.

4. Manes was the founder of the Manicheans, and he adopted this name on account of taking to himself the title of the Paraclete, and to conceal the lowliness of his condition, since he was at first only a slave in Persia, but was liberated and adopted by an old lady of that country. She sent him to the public academy to be educated, but he made little progress in learning. Whatever he wanted in learning he made up in impudence, and on that account he endeavoured to institute a new sect; and, to enlist the peasantry under the banner of his heresy, he studied magic with particular attention. To acquire a name for himself he undertook to cure the King of Persia's

son, who was despaired of by the physicians. Unfortunately for him, however, the child died, notwithstanding all his endeavours to save him, and he was thrown into prison, and would have been put to death only he bribed the guards to let him escape. Misfortune, however, pursued him :after travelling through various countries, he fell again into the King's hands, who ordered him to be flayed alive with a sharp-pointed reed; his body was thrown to the beasts, and his skin hung up in the city gate, and thus the impious Manes closed his career. He left many followers after him, among whom was St. Augustine, in his youth, but, enlightened by the Almighty, he abandoned his errors, and became one of his most strenuous opponents[15025].

The errors of Manes can be classed under the following heads : 1st. He admitted the plurality of Gods, alleging that there were two principles, one of good and the other of evil. Another of his errors was, that man had two souls one bad, which the evil principle created, together with the body, and another, good, created by the good principle, which was co-eternal, and of the same nature with God. All the good actions which man performs he attributes to the good soul, and all the evil ones he commits to the bad soul. He deprived man of free-will, saying that he was always carried irresistibly forward by a force which his will could not resist. He denied the necessity of baptism, and entirely abolished that sacrament. Among many other errors, the Manicheans detested the flesh, as being created by the evil principle, and, therefore, denied that Jesus Christ ever took a body like ours, and they were addicted to every sort of impurity[15026]. They spread almost over the entire world, and though condemned by many Popes, and persecuted by many Emperors, as Dioclesian, Gratian, and Theodosius, but especially by Justin and Justinian, who caused many of them to be burned alive in Armenia, still they were not annihilated till the year 1052, when, as Baronius relates, Henry II., finding some of them lurking in France, caused them to be hanged. The refutation of this heresy we have written in the book called the Truth of the Faith[15027].

5. Tertullian was born, as Fleury[15028] relates, in Carthage, and his father was a centurion in the Pretorian Bands. He was at first a Pagan, but was converted about the year 197, and was a priest for forty years, and died at a very advanced age. He wrote many works of the highest utility to the

Church, on Baptism, Penance, Idolatry, on the Soul, on Proscriptions, and an Apology for the Christians, which has acquired great celebrity. Although in his book on Proscriptions he calls Montanus a heretic, still, according to the general opinion of authors, he fell into Montanism himself. Baronius says that he was cut off from the Church, and excommunicated by Pope Zepherinus[15029]. Tertullian was a man of the greatest austerity; he had the greatest veneration for continence; he practised extraordinary watching's, and on account of a dispute he had with the clergy of Rome, he attached himself to the Montanists, who, to the most rigid mortification, joined the belief that Montanus was the Holy Ghost. N. Alexander proves, on the authority of St. Jerome, St. Hilary, St. Pacianus, St. Optatus, and St. Augustine, that he asserted the Church could not absolve adulterers, that those who married a second time were adulterers, and that it was not lawful to fly from persecution. He called the Catholics, Psichici, or Animals. Fleury says[15030], that Tertullian taught that the soul was a body, of a palpable form, but transparent, because one of the Prophetesses heard so in a vision. Both Fleury and Noel Alexander say[15031], that he forsook the Montanists before his death, but a sect, who called themselves Tertullianists after him, remained in Carthage for two hundred years, until the time of St. Augustine, when they once more returned to the bosom of the Church.

6. Origen was an Egyptian, and his early days were spent in Alexandria. His father was St. Leonidas the Martyr, who had him educated in every branch of sacred and profane literature[15032]. It is said his own father held him in the highest veneration, and that often while he slept he used to kiss his bosom, as the temple where the Holy Ghost dwelt[15033]. At the age of eighteen he was made Catechist of the Church of Alexandria, and he discharged his duties so well that the very pagans flocked to hear him. Plutarch, who afterwards became an illustrious martyr of the faith of Christ, was one of his disciples. In the height of the persecution he never ceased to assist the confessors of Christ, despising both torments and death. He had the greatest horror of sensual pleasures, and it is related of him that for fear of offending against chastity, and to avoid temptation, he mutilated himself, interpreting the 12th verse of the 19th chapter of St. Matthew in a wrong sense[15034]. He refuted the Arabians, who denied the immortality of the soul, and converted Berrillus, as we have already seen, who denied the divinity

of Jesus Christ. He also converted Ambrose from the errors of the Nalentinians. He was so desirous of martyrdom, that his mother was obliged to take away his clothes, to prevent him from going to his father, who was in prison for the faith. All this, however, was to no purpose; he avoided her vigilance, flew to his father, and when he would not be allowed to speak to him, he exhorted him by letter to persevere in the faith. At the age of eighteen he was Prefect of the studies of Alexandria. When he was composing his Commentaries on the Scriptures, he dictated to seven or eight amanuenses at the same time. He edited different editions of the Scriptures, compiling the Tetrapla, the Hexapla, and the Octapla, The Tetrapla had four columns in each page; in the first was the version of the seventy, or Septuagint, in the second that of Aquila, in the third that of Simmachus, and in the fourth that of Theodotian. The Hexapla had six columns, and, besides the former, contained the Hebrew text and a Greek translation. Finally, the Octapla contained, besides the former, two other versions, compiled by some Hebrews. His name was so famous at that time that all the priests and doctors consulted him in any difficult matter. Presuming too much on his wisdom, he fell into different errors, by wishing to interpret many texts of Scripture in a mystical, rejecting the literal, sense. Those, he says, who adhere to the letter of the Scripture will never see the kingdom of God[15035], hence we should seek the spirit of the word, which is hidden and mysterious. He is defended by some; but the majority condemn him, although he endeavoured to clear himself by saying that he wrote his sentiments merely as opinions, and subjected them to the judgment of his readers[15036].

He was obliged to go into Achaia, a country at that time distracted by various heresies. In his journey he persuaded two bishops of Palestine whom he visited, that it would be of great service to the Church if he was ordained priest[15037]. Yielding to his suggestions they ordained him, and this so displeased Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, that in a council he deposed and excommunicated him. Several other bishops, however, received him in his misfortunes, and entertained him honourably. Orsi, on the authority of Eusebius, tells us[15038], that, in the persecution of Decius he was imprisoned a long time, loaded with irons, and a great iron ring on his neck; and that he was not only tortured in the legs in a horrible manner, but was likewise put on the rack. Dionisius, Eusebius says[15039], wrote him a letter, or rather a small treatise,, to animate and console him; and from that circumstance, Cardinal Orsi[15040] proves the fallacy of Du Pin's conjecture, that the sentence passed against him by Demetrius, was enforced under his successors Aracla and Dionisius. Origen did not long survive the torments he endured in that persecution. He died in Tyre, in the year 253, the sixty-ninth of his age[15041].

Bernini tells us, on the authority of St. Epiphanius[15042], (thinking, however, that this was foisted into St. Epiphanius's works by the enemies of Origen) that he denied the faith by offering incense to idols, to avoid the indignities and insults inflicted on him by an Ethiopian, and that he was then freed from prison, and his life spared. After that he went from Alexandria to Jerusalem, and at the request of the clergy and people went into the pulpit to preach. It happened, however, that opening the book of the Psalms, to explain them, the first words he read were those of the 49th Psalm : "God said to the sinner, why dost thou declare my justices and take my covenant into thy mouth ? "Struck dumb with sorrow, he began to weep bitterly, and left the pulpit without saying a word. Not only St. Epiphanius, but Eusebius[15043] before him, bear witness to Origen's fall. Although Bernini[15044] says this story is quite fabulous, yet Petavius, Daniel Uerius, Pagi, and especially Noel Alexander[15045], say it is a fact. Roncaglia[15046] is of opinion that Noel Alexander's arguments are groundless, and that Baronius's opinion carries more weight with it.

We can decide nothing as to the salvation of Origen, though Baronius says that St. Simeon Salus saw him in hell; still, all is a mystery known to God alone. We know, however, on the authority of Baronius, that his doctrine was condemned by Pope Anastasius and Pope Gelasius, and afterwards by the fifth general council[15047].

The substance of the errors of Origen, as well as I could collect from the works of Noel Alexander, Fleury, Hermant, Orsi, Van Ranst (who gives a great deal of information in a small space), and others, was all included in his Periarchon, or Treatise on Principles. This treatise, Fleury says, was translated by Rufinus, who endeavoured to correct it as much as possible. The intent of Origen in this work was to refute Valentine, Marcion, and Ebion, who taught that men are either essentially good or essentially wicked. He said that God alone was good and immutable, but that his creatures were capable of either good or evil, by making use of their free will or a good purpose, or perverting it for a wicked one. Another of his opinions was that the souls of men were of the same nature as the celestial spirits, that is, composed of spirit and matter; that they were all created before the beginning of the world, but that, as a punishment for some crimes committed, they were shut up in the sun, moon, and other planets, and even in human bodies, as it were in a prison, to punish them for a time; after which, being freed from their slavery by death, they went to heaven to receive the reward of their virtues, or to hell to suffer the punishment of their sins, but such rewards and punishments were not eternal. Hence, he said, the blessed in heaven could be banished from that abode of happiness for faults committed there, and that the punishment of the devils and the damned would not last for all eternity, because at the end of the world Jesus Christ would be again crucified, and they would participate in the general redemption. He also said that before the creation of this world there existed many others, and that after this had ceased to exist many more would be created, for, as God was never idle, so he never was without a world.

He taught many other erroneous opinions; in fact his doctrine is entirely infected with the maxims of Plato, Pythagoras, and the Manicheans. Cassiodorus, speaking of Origen, says, I wonder how the same man could contradict himself so much; for since the days of the Apostles he had no equal in that part of his doctrine which was approved of, and no one ever erred more grossly in the part which was condemned. Cabassutius[15048] says, that Pope Gelasius, following the example of Anastatius, gave this sentence relative to Origen in the Roman council : “We declare that those works of Origen which the blessed Jerome does not reject can be read, but we condemn all others with their author.”

After the death of Origen his followers disturbed the Church very much by maintaining and propagating his errors. Hermant[15049] relates that Pope Anastasius had a great deal of difficulty in putting down the troubles occasioned by the Origenists in Rome, who got footing there under the auspices of Melania, by means of the priest Rufinus. The author of the notes on Floury, says, that Anastasius wrote to John of Jerusalem to inform him of how matters were going on, and that he, on that account, cut off Rufinus from the Church. In the reign of the Emperor Justinian, some Origenist monks who lived in a laura founded by St. Saba, under the abbot Nonnus, began to disseminate their errors among this brethren, and in a short time infected the principal laura, but were expelled by the abbot Gelasius. Favoured, however, by Theodore of Cesarea, they got possession of the great laura again, and expelled the greater part of the monks who disagreed with them. In the meantime, Nonnus died, and his successor George being deposed for immorality by his own party, the Catholic monks again got possession of the laura, and elected Conon, one of this party, abbot[15050]. Finally, in the twelfth canon of the second council of Constantinople, both Origen and all those who would persist in defending his doctrine were condemned[15051].

7. Novatus and Novatian. Novatus was a priest of the Church of Carthage. St. Cyprian relates that he was a man of a turbulent disposition, seditious and avaricious, and that his faith was suspected by the bishops. He was accused of robbing the orphans and widows, and appropriating to his own use the money given him for the use of the Church. It is said he allowed his father to die of starvation, and afterwards refused to bury him; and that he caused the death of his wife by giving her a kick, and causing premature labour. He was also one of the principal agents in getting the deacon Felicissimus ordained priest without the leave or knowledge of St. Cyprian, his bishop, and was one of the principal leaders of the schism of Novatian, exciting as many as he could to oppose the lawful Pope, Cornelius[15052].

We now come to speak of the character and errors of Novatian. Being possessed by an evil spirit he was baptized in bed during a dangerous fit of sickness, and when he recovered he neglected getting the ceremonies of baptism supplied, and never received confirmation, which, according to the discipline of the Church in those days, he ought to have received after baptism, and his followers, for that reason, afterwards rejected this sacrament. He was afterwards ordained priest, the bishop dispensing in the irregularity he incurred by being baptized in bed. Hence his ordination gave great umbrage both to the clergy and people. While the persecution was raging the deacons begged of him to leave his place of concealment, and assist the faithful, who were dragged to the place of punishment; but he answered, that he did not henceforward intend to discharge the duties of a priest; that he had his mind made up for other objects. This was nothing less than the Popedom, which he had the ambition to pretend to, puffed up by the applause he received for his oratorical powers. At this time, Cornelius was elected Pope, and he, by intrigue, got himself consecrated privately by three ignorant bishops whom he made intoxicated. Thus he was the first anti-Pope who ever raised a schism in the Church of Rome. But what will not ambition do? While he administered the Eucharist to his partisans, he exacted an oath from each of them, saying, "Swear to me, by the blood of Jesus Christ, that you will never leave my party and join Cornelius"[15053].

The errors of Novatus and Novatian were the following: they denied that the Church could use any indulgence with those who became idolaters through fear of persecution, or that she could grant pardon for any mortal sin committed after baptism, and they denied the sacrament of confirmation. Like the Montanists, they condemned second marriages, and refused communion on the point of death to those who contracted them[15054].

8. These were not the only heretics who disturbed the Church during this century. Nipos, an Egyptian bishop, about the year 284, again raked up the errors of the Millenarians, taking the promise of the Apocalypse in a literal sense, that Jesus Christ would reign on earth for the space of a thousand years, and that the saints should enjoy all manner of sensual delights. The Angelicals offered the supreme adoration which should be given to God alone, to the angels; adored them as the creators of the world, and pretended to lead angelic lives themselves.

The Apostolicals said it was not lawful for anyone to possess property of any sort, and that the riches of this life were an insurmountable obstacle to salvation. These heretics received no married persons into this sect[15055].

Chapter IV

HERESIES OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

ARTICLE I. SCHISM AND HERESY OF THE DONATISTS

1, 2.—Schism. 3.—Heresy. 4, 5.—Confutation of St. Augustine. Circumcellionists. 6. Conference commanded by Honorius. 7.—Death of St. Marcellinus, and Council of Carthage.

1. In order properly to understand the history of the Donatists, we must separate the schism from the heresy, for they were at first schismatic's before they were heretics. Donatus the first was the author of the schism; a second Donatus was the father of the heresy, and he was called by his followers Donatus the Great. In the beginning of the fourth century, Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage, was cited before the tyrant Maxentius on the charge of concealing in his house a deacon of the name of Felix, the author of a libel on the Emperor. Mensurius went to Rome to defend himself, and died on his way home. Cecilianus was elected by the general voice of the people to fill the vacant see, and was consecrated by Felix, Bishop of Aphthongum and other prelates. His opponents immediately began to question the validity of his consecration, because it was performed by those bishops called traitors (traditores), who delivered up the Scriptures to the pagans. Another charge made against him was that he prohibited the faithful from supplying the confessors in the prisons with food. At the head of this conspiracy was a bishop of an African city, called “the Black Houses,” whose name was Donatus; and it was very much strengthened by the intrigues of Lucilla, a Spanish lady then residing in Carthage. Cecilianus happened to come into collision with her while he was yet a deacon, because he reprimanded her for paying the veneration due to a holy martyr to a certain dead man, whose sanctity was never recognized by the Church. To revenge herself on him for this, she became the soul of the conspiracy, and by the influence of her wealth brought over to her party many of the bishops of Africa, who, uniting together in council, under the presidency of

the secondary primate of Numidia, deposed Cecilianus in his absence, and elected a domestic of Cucilla's in his place, of the name of Majorinus, who was consecrated by Donatus[15056].

2. Notwithstanding all this persecution, Cecilianus remained stedfast in the faith which obliged the Donatists to have recourse to the Emperor Constantine. He referred the entire matter to St. Melchiades, the reigning Pope, who, in the year 315, or according to others, in 316, assembled a council of nineteen bishops, and declared both the innocence of Cecilianus and the validity of his consecration. The Donatists were discontented with this decision, and again appealed to the Emperor; he used every means to pacify them, but seeing them determined to keep up the schism, he ordered Elianus, pro-consul of Africa, to invest tigate the matter, and find out whether the crime laid to the charge of Felix who consecrated Cecilianus (that of delivering up the Scriptures to the idolators), was true. The conspirators, aware that this investigation was to take place, bribed a notary of the name of Ingentius, to prove a falsehood; but in his examination before the Pro-consul, he acquitted both Felix and Cecilianus. The Emperor being informed of this was satisfied as to their innocence; but in order to appease the Donatists, and give them no cause of complaint, he caused another council to be convoked at Aries, to which St. Silvester, who succeeded St. Melchiades in the year 314, sent his legate to preside in his name; and in that and the following year, Felix and Cecilianus were again acquitted by the council[15057].

3. Nothing, however, could satisfy the Donatists; they even, according to Fleury[15058], extended themselves as far as Rome. Heresy now was added to schism. The second Donatus, called by them Donatus the Great, put himself at their head; and although tinctured with the Arian heresy, as St. Augustine says[15059], intruded himself into the See of Carthage, as successor to Majorinus.

He was the first who began to disseminate the errors of the Donatists in Africa[15060]. Those consisted in the adoption of one false principle, which was the source of many others. This was that the Church was composed of the just alone, and that all the wicked were excluded from it; founding this belief on that text of St. Paul, where he says that the Church of Christ is free from all stain : "Christ loved his Church, and delivered himself up for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle “ (Ephesians, v. 27). They also professed to find this doctrine in the twenty-seventh verse of the twenty—first chapter of the Apocalypse: “There shalt not enter into it anything defiled.” The adoption of this erroneous principle led them into many heretical consequences :First, believing that the Church was composed of the good alone, they inferred that the Church of Rome was lost, because the Pope and bishops having admitted to their communion traitors, or those who delivered up the holy books into the hands of the Pagans, as they alleged Felix and Cecilianus to have done, and as the sour leaven corrupteth the entire mass, then the Church, being corrupted and stained by the admission of those, was lost, it only remained pure in that part of Africa where the Donatists dwelt; and to such a pitch did their infatuation arrive, that they quoted Scripture for this also, interpreting that expression of the Canticles, “ Shew me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou liest in the mid-day,” (the south,) as relating to Africa, which lies in the southern part of the world. Another heretical inference of theirs was, that the sacrament of baptism was null and void if administered out of their Church, because a Church that was lost had not the power of administering the sacrament, and on that account they re-baptized all proselytes.

4. These two heretical opinions fall to the ground at once, by proving the falsity of the first proposition, that the Church consists of the good alone. St. Augustine proves clearly that these texts of St. Paul and St. John, refer to the triumphant and not to the militant Church, for our Redeemer, speaking of the militant Church, says, in many places, it contains both good and bad; in one place he likens it to a threshing floor, which contains both straw and grain : “ He will thoroughly cleanse his floor, and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire” (Matt, iii, 12). In another place he compares it to a field sown with good seed, and cockle growing amongst it : “Let both grow” he says, “till the time of the harvest, and then I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the cockle and bind it into bundles to burn, but gather the wheat into my barn” (Matt, xiii, 3)[15061].

5. The Donatists were not content with the crime of heresy, but committed a thousand others, if possible of a deeper dye. They destroyed

the altars of the Catholics, broke the chalices, spilled the holy Chrism on the ground, and threw the holy Eucharist to the dogs. But St. Optatus Milevitanus[15062] informs us that God did not suffer the indignity to his sacred body and blood to go unpunished, for the dogs getting mad turned on their own masters, and tore them, as if in revenge for the insult offered to the body of Jesus Christ. Not satisfied with tormenting the living, they outraged the dead, whom they dragged out of their graves, and exposed to the most unheard-of indignities. About this time, also, the Circumcellionists sprung from the Donatists. Their chiefs were Faber and Maxidus, and they were called Circumcellionists from running about from town to town and house to house. They were called by Donatus the chiefs of the saints; they boasted that they were the redressors of all wrong and injustice through the world, though nothing could be more unjust than their own proceedings. They gave liberty to slaves, and commanded debtors not to pay their debts, telling them they were freed from all obligation. Their cruelty equalled their fanaticism, for they went about in armed bands, and put to death those who did not become proselytes to their doctrine; but what was more astonishing than all was to see this fury turned against themselves, for many of them committed suicide by throwing themselves over precipices, some cast themselves into the fire, others drowned themselves, or cut their throats, and endeavoured to induce others to follow their example, telling them that all who died so were martyrs; even women followed the example of their husbands in this madness, and St. Augustine tells us that even some, in a state of pregnancy, threw themselves down precipices.

It is true that even the Donatist bishops endeavoured by every means to put a stop to such frightful fanaticism, and even called in the authority of the secular power to aid them, but they could not deny that they were their own disciples, and that they became the victims of such perverse doctrines from following their own example[15063].

6. The Emperors Constantine and Constans, sons of Constantine the Great and Valentinian, issued several edicts against the Donatists, but all was of little avail. In the reign of Honorious an edict was published, giving liberty to all sects to profess publicly their doctrines, but about the year 410 the Donatists, taking advantage of this, broke out into several acts of violence, which so exasperated Honorious that, at the suggestion of the

Catholic bishops of Africa, he revoked the edict. He then published that law (L. 51, Codex Theodosianus), which punishes with confiscation of property the practice of any religion except the Catholic, and even with pain of death if the professors of any heretical doctrines should publicly assemble in their conventicles. In order, however, entirely to extinguish the heresy of Donatus, he sent the Imperial Tribune, Marcellinus, a man of the greatest learning and prudence, into Africa, with orders to assemble all the African bishops, both Catholics and Donatists, in Carthage, to proceed to a conference to see who was right and who was wrong, that peace should be established between them. The Donatists at first refused to come, but the edicts of Honorius were too strict to be avoided, and they consented, and the conference was held in the Baths of Gazilian. Two hundred and eighty-six Catholics and two hundred and seventy-nine Donatists assembled, but Marcellinus, to avoid confusion, would allow only thirty-six, eighteen on each side, to hold the conference, these eighteen to be chosen from among all the rest. The schismatic's refused to obey the regulations of Marcellinus, and used every stratagem to avoid coming to the point; especially they endeavoured to cushion the question concerning the true Church, but, with all their art, they were, one day, drawn into it, and, seeing themselves caught, they could not help lamenting, saying, see how insensibly we have got into the bottom of the case.

Then it was that St. Augustine, as we have already shown, proved clearer than the noon-day sun that the Church is not composed of the good alone, as the Donatists would have it, but of the good and the bad, as the threshing-floor contains both corn and chaff. Finally, after many disputations, Marcellinus gave his decision in favour of the Catholics.[15064]

7. Many were united to the Church, but many more persisted in their errors, and appealed to Honorius, who would not even admit them to an audience, but condemned to a heavy fine all those who would not join the Catholic Church, and threatened to banish all the Donatist bishops and priests who would persist in their opposition to his decree. Nothing could exceed their malice against the Catholics after that; they murdered the defender of the Church, Restitutus[15065], and plotted with the Count Marinus the destruction of Marcellinus. The means by which Marinus accomplished this were horrible. He caused St. Marcellinus to be imprisoned on a charge

of high treason, alleging that he was one of the chief promoters of the rebellion of Heraclian, which he was most innocent of, and although he swore to his friend Cecilianus that he would liberate both St. Marcellinus and his brother Aprinius from prison, he ordered him the next day to be taken out to a lonesome place, and beheaded. Cardinal Orsi proves this on the authority of Orosius, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine. Thus Marcellinus died a martyr, but Marinus was punished for his injustice, being shortly after recalled by Honorius, and stripped of all his honours. In the Council of Carthage, in 348, or, as Hermant[15066] has it, in 349, the Catholic bishops of Africa assembled in great numbers to thank the Almighty for putting an end to this sect, and the schismatical bishops then joined them. In this council it was prohibited to re-baptize those who were baptized in the faith of the Trinity, in opposition to the erroneous opinion of the Donatists, who declared the baptism administered out of their communion invalid. It was also forbidden to honour as martyrs those who killed themselves, and they were allowed the rites of burial through compassion alone.

Cardinal Baronius says that this sect lasted till the time of Gregory the Great, who endeavoured to put an end to it altogether, and he also says that those heretics were the cause of the ruin of the Church of Africa[15067].

ARTICLE II. THE ARIAN HERESY

I. PROGRESS OF ARIUS, AND HIS CONDEMATION BY THE COUNCIL OF NICE

8.—Origin of Arius. 9.—His Errors and Supporters. 10.—Synod of Bythynia. 11. Synod of Osius in Alexandria. 12.—General Council of Nice. 13.—Condemnation of Arius. 14—16. Profession of Faith. 17.—Exile of Eusebius of Nicomedia, and insidious Letter of Eusebius of Cesarea. 18.—Banishment of Arius. 19.—Decree for the Meletians. 20.—Decree for the Quartodecimans. 21. Canons. 22.—End of the Council.

8. Arius was an African, born in that part of it called Lybia Cirenaica, and he went to Alexandria in the expectation of obtaining some ecclesiastical dignity. He was, as Baronius tells us, a man of great learning and science of polished manners, but of a forbidding appearance ambitious of glory, and fond of novelty[15068]. At first he was a follower of Meletius, Bishop of Lycopolis, in Upper Egypt. This bishop, in the beginning of the fourth century, though he taught nothing contrary to faith, still was deposed by St. Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, on account of many grievous crimes, one of

which even was idolatry[15069]; and he then raised a great schism in Egypt against St. Peter, and went so far as to administer the ordination belonging by right to the Saint. Arius judged that he would have no great chance of advancing himself according to his wishes, by continuing a partizan of Meletius, so he made his submission to St. Peter, and was ordained deacon by him; but he, finding that he still continued to correspond with Meletius, turned him out of Alexandria.

St. Peter was soon after put in prison for the faith, and about to be martyred. Arius endeavoured again to be received by him; and it was then, as Baronius[15070] tells us, on the authority of the Acts of the martyrdom of St. Peter, that Christ appeared to the Saint with a torn garment, and said to him: “Arius has torn this; take heed lest you receive him into your communion.” Alexander has strong doubts of the truth of this vision[15071]; but his arguments are not convincing, and it has been admitted into the Roman Breviary on the 26th of November, the feast of St. Peter. Arius, for all that, was promoted to the priesthood by Achilla, who succeeded St. Peter, martyred in 311, and got the charge of a parochial church called Baucal[15072], in Alexandria. On the death of Achilla, Arius, who was now, as Fleury tells us, advanced in years, expected to succeed him; but St. Alexander was chosen, a man of great knowledge and most exemplary life. Arius began immediately to censure his conduct and condemn his doctrine, saying that he falsely taught that the Word, the Son of God, was equal to the Father, begotten by him from all eternity, and of the same nature and substance as the Father, which, he said, was the heresy of Sabellius. He then began to promulgate the following blasphemies : 1. That the Word was not from all eternity, but was brought forth out of nothing by the Father, and created, the same as one of ourselves; and, 2ndly, that Christ, according to his free will, was of a mutable nature, and that he might have followed vice, but that, as he embraced goodness, God, as a reward for his good works, made him a participator in the divine nature, and honoured him with the title of the Word, the Son, and of Wisdom[15073]. Noel Alexander says that these errors are taken from an impious work he wrote, called Thalia, and from an Epistle of his to St. Alexander, referred to by St. Athanasius, and from the Synodical Epistle of the Council of Nice, quoted by Socrates, St. Epiphanius, and Theodoret. Noel Alexander also says, on the authority of

St. Athanasius and Theodoret, that he taught that the Word in the Incarnation took a body without a soul, and that the soul was part of the divinity.

9. Arius began at first privately to teach his errors; but he soon became so bold that he publicly preached them in his parish. St. Alexander at first tried to bring him back by admonition, but, finding that of no avail, he had recourse to more rigorous measures; and as some bishops were even then tainted with his heresy especially Secundus of Ptolemais, and Theonas of Marmorica he convoked a synod in Alexandria, in 320, at which nearly one hundred bishops from Lybia and Egypt assembled, besides a great number of priests. Arius was called before them, and publicly professed his errors; so the assembled Fathers excommunicated him and his adherents, and St. Alexander wrote from the synod an encyclical letter, giving an account of it to all the bishops of the Church[15074]. Notwithstanding this, Arius only became more obstinate, and made many proselytes, both men and women; and Theodoret says[15075] he seduced several of his female followers. He then put himself under the protection of Eusebius of Nicomedia, a powerful and learned, but wicked, man, who left his own bishopric of Beyrout, and intruded himself into the see of Nicomedia, through the influence of Constantia, the sister of Constantine. He wrote to St. Alexander, requesting him to receive Arius again into his communion; but the Holy Patriarch not only refused his request, but obliged Arius and all his followers to quit Alexandria[15076].

10. Arius then went to Palestine, and succeeded in seducing several bishops of that and the neighbouring provinces, especially Eusebius of Cesarea, Aezius of Lidda or Hospolis, Paulinus of Tyre, Gregory of Beiroot, Athanasius of Anazarbus, and Theodotus of Laodicea. When St. Alexander heard of this, he complained very much of it, and wrote to several of the bishops of Palestine, who yielded to his advice, and forsook Arius. He then took refuge with his friend Eusebius of Nicomedia, and there he wrote his book called Thalia, interlarding it with low jests, to take the common people, and with all his blasphemies against the faith, to instil into the minds of every class the poison of his heresy[15077]. Eusebius called together a synod in Bythinia of bishops favourable to Arius, who wrote to several

other bishops to interfere with St. Alexander to receive him again to his communion, but the saint was inflexible[15078].

11. About this time Constantine gained the victory over Licinius, which gave him peaceable possession of the empire; but when he came to Mcomedia he was afflicted to hear of the dissensions between St. Alexander and Arius and the bishops of the East. Eusebius of Nicomedia, who had the first story for the Emperor, told him it was a matter of no great importance altogether, and did not touch on the integrity of the faith, and that all that was requisite was that both sides should be silent. So, to believe that Jesus Christ was either God or a simple creature was a matter of trifling importance; but this has always been the aim of heretics, to make it appear that the dogmas they impugned were of no great consequence. The Emperor being thus deceived, wrote to St. Alexander[15079], telling him it was unwise to disturb the Church after this manner, and that the wisest way would be to hold his tongue, and leave everyone to follow his own opinions. The disturbance in the East, however, only increased; so that, at length, Osius, Bishop of Cordova, in Spain for thirty years, a man of the greatest merit and earning, and who suffered a great deal in the persecution of Maximilian, was sent to put an end to it. Baronius and Van Ranst say he was sent by St. Sylvester; but the general opinion, which Fleury and Noel Alexander, on the authority of Socrates, Eusebius, Sozymen, and Theodoret adopt, is that he was sent by the Emperor[15080]. When Osius arrived in Alexandria, and saw that the evil was greater than he imagined, he summoned a synod of bishops in concert with St. Alexander, and Arius and his followers were again excommunicated, and his errors condemned[15081].

12. After this new condemnation, Arius wrote to the Emperor in his defence; but Constantine, now informed of his errors, answered him in a long letter, in which, after refuting his errors, he proved him to be a malicious fool, and he also ordered that this letter should be made public. The Arians were so annoyed at this that they pelted the Emperor’s statue, and disfigured the face of it; but he showed his good sense, and proved himself a man of great moderation, on the occasion, for when his ministers urged him to punish them, he, laughing, put his hand to his face, and said, “ I don’t perceive they have hurted me,” and took no more notice of the matter[15082]. The fire of discord was not, however, extinguished, but rather

burned more violently every day. The Emperor then judged it best to call together a general council, to put an end to it; and appointed Nice, in Bythinia, not Nice, in Thrace, as the place of meeting, and invited all bishops both those of the empire, and those beyond its borders to assemble there, and provided for all their expenses[15083]. The bishops of Asia, Africa, and Europe were rejoiced at this, and came to the council; so that, in the year 325, three hundred and eighteen bishops were assembled in Nice, as Noel Alexander asserts, on the authority of St. Ambrose, in contradiction to Eusebius, who reduces the number to two hundred and fifty.[15084] Oh, how glorious it was for the Church to see so many pastors assembled in this council !Among them were many prelates bearing on their persons the marks of persecution suffered for the faith, especially St. Paphnutius, bishop in the Thebaid, whose right eye was plucked out, and his left hand burned, in the persecution of Maximilian; St. Paul, Bishop of Neoceserea, who, by order of Cicinius, lost the use of both his hands, the sinews being burned with a red iron; St. Potamon, Bishop of Thrace, whose right eye also was torn out for the faith; and many other ecclesiastics, who were tortured by the idolaters[15085].

13. St. Sylvester seconded the pious intention of the Emperor, and assented to the council; and as his advanced age did not permit him to attend in person, he sent, as his legates, Vito and Vincentius, Roman priests, and Osius, Bishop of Cordova, to preside in his place, and regulate the sessions[15086]. Tillemont, in his history, at the year 325, doubts if Osius presided at this council; but not alone all the authors cited speak of him as president, but Maclaine, the English annotator of Mosheim, allows the fact. St. Athanasius calls Osius the chief and leader of the synod[15087]; and Gelasius Cizicenus, the historian of the fifth century, speaking of the Nicene Council, says Osius held the place of Sylvester, and, along with Vito and Vincentius, was present at that meeting. On the 19th of June, 325, the synod was opened in the great church of Nice, as Cardinal Orsi[15088], following the general opinion, relates. The session, he says, held in the palace, in presence of Constantino, was not, as Fleury believes, the first but the last one[15089]. The first examination that was made was of the errors of Arius, who, by Constantino's orders, was present in Nice; and being called on to give an account of his faith, he vomited forth, with the greatest audacity, those

blasphemies he before preached, saying, that the Son of God did not exist from all eternity, but was created from nothing, just like any other man, and was mutable, and capable of virtue or vice. The holy bishops hearing such blasphemies for all were against him with the exception of twenty-two, friends of his, which number was afterwards reduced to five, and finally to two stopped their ears with horror, and, full of holy zeal, exclaimed against him[15090]. Notwithstanding this, the council wished that his propositions should be separately examined; and it was then that St. Athanasius brought from Alexandria, by his bishop, St. Alexander showed forth his prowess against the enemies of the faith, who marked him from that out, and persecuted him for the rest of his life. A letter of Eusebius of Nicomedia was read in the council, from which it appeared that he coincided in his opinions with Arius. The letter was publicly torn in his presence, and he was covered with confusion. The Eusebian party, notwithstanding, ceased not to defend the doctrine of Arius; but they contradicted one another, and, by their very answers, showed the inconsistency of their opinions[15091].

14. The Arians were asked by the Catholics : If they admitted that the Son was in everything like the Father if he was his image if he always existed if he was unchangeable if he was subsistent in the Father if he was the power of God if he was true God. At first the Arian party were undecided, whether they should admit all or only part of these terms; but the Eusebians, having whispered a while among themselves, agreed to admit them all. They could grant he was like the Father, they argued, and his image, since it is written in St. Paul (I. Cor. ii, 7), “that man is the image and glory of God ;” they might say he was subsistent in the Father, since, in the Acts, xvii, 28, it is written, “ in him we live, and move, and be ;” that he always existed, since it is written of us (II. Cor. iv, 11), “For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake.” so that even we have always existed in the power and mind of God; that he was immutable, since it is written that nothing could separate us from the charity of God, “Nor life nor death shall be able to separate us from the love of God” the power of God, for even soothsayers are called the power of God the true God, for the Son of God, by his merits, he was made God, a name sometimes given unto men : “ I said you are Gods” (John, x, 34)[15092].

15. The Fathers of the Council, seeing how they thus distorted the Scriptures, and gave their own meaning to the texts, judged it necessary to avail themselves of a word which would remove all doubts, and could not be explained away by their adversaries, and this word was “consubstantial,” which they considered as necessary to be introduced into the profession of faith, using the Greek word “ omousion,” the meaning of which is that the Son is not only like but is the very thing, the very substance, with the Father, as our Saviour himself says “ I and the Father are one” (John, x, 30). The Arians stoutly refused to admit this expression, for that one word did away with all subterfuges, and knocked away the last prop on which this heresy rested; they made, therefore, many objections, but all were overruled. We shall treat more fully of this in the third part of the work, The Theological Refutation of Errors.

The Emperor, Cardinal Orsi says, was anxious to be present at the last session of this synod, and wished it to be held in his palace, and came from Nicomedia to Nice for that purpose. When he entered the assembly, some discontented bishops handed him memorials, accusing their colleagues, and appealing to his judgment; but he ordered them to be burnt, making use of those remarkable expressions quoted by Noel Alexander[15093], “God has made you priests, and has given you power even to judge ourselves, and we are properly judged by you, for you are given to us by God as Gods on this earth, and it is not meet that man should judge Gods.” He refused to sit down on the low seat he had prepared for himself in the council until the bishops desired him; he then sat down, and all the bishops with his permission also took their seats[15094]. One of the fathers of the council it is generally supposed Eustachius, Bishop of Antioch[15095] then arose and delivered an oration, in which he praised the Emperor’s zeal, and gave God thanks for his victories. Constantine then spoke[15096] : It afforded him, he said, the greatest consolation to see so many fathers thus united in the same sentiments; he recommended peace to them, and gave everyone liberty to speak his mind; he praised the defenders of the faith, and reproved the temerity of the Arians. The fathers then framed the decree in the following form, as Cabassutius gives it[15097] : “ We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Creator of all things visible and invisible; and in One Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten Son of the Father; God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, born, not made, consubstantial to the Father by whom all things were made in heaven and in earth; who for us died, for our salvation descended, became incarnate and was made man; he suffered and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven, and again shall come to judge the quick and the dead; and in the Holy Ghost." This symbol, St. Athanasius says[15098], was composed by Osius, and was recited in the synod.

The council then fulminated an anathema against anyone who should say there was a time when the Son of God did not exist, or that he did not exist before he was born, or that he was made of those things that exist not; or should assert that he was of any other substance or essence, or created, or mutable, or convertible. All who speak thus of the Son of God, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes. Baronius says[15099], that the council then added to the hymn, "Glory be to the Father, &c," the words, " As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forever, and ever, Amen.

17. The bishops of the opposite side were, as we have already seen, twenty-two at first, but they were reduced, as Sozymen[15100] says, to seventeen; and even these, terrified by the threats of Constantine, and fearing to lose their sees, and be banished, all gave in with the exception of five[15101]; these were Eusebius of Nicomedia; Thegonis of Nice; Maris of Chalcedon; Theonas of Marmorica; and Secundus of Ptolemais; and of these, three finally yielded, and the two first alone remained obstinate, and were deposed and banished[15102]. But while we condemn the temerity of those, we must acknowledge that they were more sincere than their colleagues, who subscribed the decrees, but were afterwards persecutors of the council and the Catholics. Eusebius of Cesarea especially merits reprobation on this score, for writing to his diocesans, as Socrates tells us[15103], and publishing the formula of faith promulgated by the council, he says that he subscribed it merely for peace sake, and states, among other falsehoods, that the council approved the formula handed in by Eusebius of Nicomedia, when the fact was that it was not only rejected, but torn in pieces; that the word "consubstantial" was inserted to please the Emperor, when it was inserted by the fathers after the most mature deliberation, as a touchstone to distinguish the Catholics from the Arians. The fathers, he adds, in adopting this word intended merely to signify that the Son was of

the Father, and not as a substantial part of him; and that the words, born and not made, merely meant that he was not made like other creatures, who were afterwards created by him, but of a more excellent nature.

He concludes by saying that the council anathematized anyone who would assert that the Son was made from nothing, and that he did not exist before he was born, in as far as such expressions are not found to be used in the Scriptures, and likewise because the Son, before he was generated, though he did not exist, was nevertheless existing potentialiter, as theologians say, in the Father, who was potentialiter from all eternity the creator of all things. Besides the proof afforded by this letter of his opinion, St. Jerome[15104] says, that everyone knows that Eusebius was an Arian. The fathers of the seventh synod, in the sixth Actio, declare " no one is ignorant that Eusebius Pamphilius, given over to a reprobate cause, holds the same opinions as those who follow the impiety of Arius." Valois remarks that this may have been said incidentally by the fathers, but Juenin[15105] on the contrary proves that the synod came to this decision, after a strict examination of the arguments taken from his works.

18. Though Arius was abandoned by all except the two obstinate bishops, he still continued to defend his errors, so he was excommunicated by the council, and banished to Illiria, together with his partisans, by Constantino. All his writings, and especially the infamous Thalia, were likewise condemned by the Emperor and the council, and the Emperor published a circular or decree through the entire empire, ordering the writings of Ariosto be everywhere burned, and denouncing the punishment of death against anyone who would controvert this order[15106].

19. The council having disposed of Arius, next suspended Meletius, Bishop of Lycopolis, from all his Episcopal functions, and especially from ordaining any one; but ordered, at the same time, that all his followers should be admitted to the communion of the Church on condition of renouncing his schism and doctrine[15107].

20. The council likewise arranged the question of the celebration of Easter, which then made a great noise in Asia, by ordering that in future it should be celebrated not in the Jewish style, on the fourteenth day of the moon but according to the Roman style, on the Sunday after the fourteenth day of the moon, which falls after the vernal equinox.

This the council declared was not a matter of faith, but discipline[15108]; for whenever it speaks of articles of faith as opposed to the errors of Arius, the words, “This the church believes,” are used, but in making this order, the words are, “ We have decreed, &c.” This decree met with no opposition, but as we learn from the circular of Constantine, was embraced by all the Churches[15109], and it is thought that the council then adopted the cycle of nineteen years invented by Meto, an Athenian astronomer, for fixing the lunation’s of each year, as every nineteenth year the new moon falls on the same day of the solar year as it did nineteen years before[15110].

21. The council next decreed twenty canons of discipline; we shall mention some of the principal ones. 1st. The council excludes from the clergy, and deposes, all those who have voluntarily made themselves eunuchs, in opposition to the heresy of the Valerians, who were all eunuchs; but more especially to condemn those who justified and followed the example of Origen, through love of chastity[15111]. By the third canon, the clergy are prohibited from keeping in their houses any woman unless a mother, a sister, an aunt, or some person from whom no suspicion can arise. It was the wish of the council to establish the celibacy of bishops, priests, and deacons, and sub-deacons even, according to Sozymen, but they were turned from this by St. Paphnutius, who forcibly contended that it was quite enough to decree that those already in holy orders should not be allowed to marry, but that it would be laying too heavy an obligation on those who were married before they were admitted to ordination, to oblige them to separate themselves from their wives. Cardinal Orsi, however, says[15112], that the authority of Socrates is not sufficient to establish this fact, since both St. Epiphanius, who lived in the time of the council, and St. Jerome[15113], who was born a few years after, attest that no one was admitted to orders unless unmarried, or if married, who separated himself from his wife. It was ordained in the fourth canon that bishops should be ordained by all the co-provincial bishops, or at least by three with consent of the rest, and that the right of confirmation appertaining to the Metropolitan, should be strictly preserved.

The sixth canon says that the rights of the Patriarchal Sees shall be preserved, especially those of the See of Alexandria, over the Churches of Egypt, of Lybia, and of Pantopolis, after the example of the Bishop of

Rome, who enjoys a similar authority over the Churches subject to his Patriarchate. Noel Alexander[15114] has written a special dissertation to prove that the primacy of the Roman See is not weakened by this canon, and among other proofs adduces the sixth canon of the great council of Chalcedon; "the Roman Church always had the primacy," and it is proved, he says, that after this canon was passed, the Bishop of Rome judged the persons of the other patriarchs, and took cognizance of the sentences passed by them, and no one ever complained that he usurped an authority which did not belong to him, or violated the sixth canon of the council of Nice.

22. Finally, the fathers wrote a circular letter addressed to all churches, giving them notice of the condemnation of Arius, and the regulation concerning the celebration of Easter. The council was then dissolved, but before the bishops separated, Constantino had them all to dine with him, and had those who suffered for the faith placed near himself, and frequently kissed the scars of their wounds; he then made presents to each of them, and again recommending them to live in peace, he affectionately took leave of them[15115]. The sentence of exile against Eusebius and Theognis was then carried into execution; they were banished to Gaul, and Amphion succeeded Eusebius in the Bishopric of Nicomedia, and Chrestus, Theogius, in the See of Nice. It was not long, however, till the bishops of their party shewed that they accepted the decrees of the council through fear alone[15116].

II. OCCURRENCES UP TO THE DEATH OF CONSTANTINE

23.—St. Athanasius is made Bishop of Alexandria; Eusebius is recalled; St. Eustasius exiled, and Arius again taken into favour. 24.—Council of Tyre. 25.—St. Athanasius accused and exiled. 26.—Arius banished from Alexandria. 27.—His Perjury and horrible Death. 28.—Constantine's Baptism and Death; Division of the Empire.

23. In the following year, 326, St. Alexander, Patriarch of Alexandria, died, and St. Athanasius was elected his successor, with the unanimous consent of the bishops of Egypt and the people; but when he heard of it he fled out of the way, but was discovered and obliged to yield to the wishes of the people and clergy. He was, therefore, placed on the Episcopal throne of Alexandria[15117], to the great joy of his fellow-citizens; but the Arians were highly discontented, and disseminated many calumnious reports regarding his elevation[15118]. About the same time Eusebius and Theognis pretended to be sorry for their errors, and having sent in writing a feigned retraction of

their opinions to the principal bishops of the East, they were recalled by Constantino, and re-established in their sees. This conversion was only feigned, and they left no stone unturned to promote the interests of Arius. Among the rest, Eusebius succeeded, in a caballing council, at Antioch[15119], in getting St. Eustatius, Arius's greatest opponent, deposed from that see, on a charge of adultery, got up against him by an infamous woman, the only witness in the case; but the calumny was soon after discovered, for the woman, falling sick, contradicted all she had previously charged him with[15120].

He, however, was banished and deposed, and Paulinus of Tyre, first, and, next, Eularius were intruded into his see. Eularius dying soon after his intrusion, Eusebius of Ceserea, who previously had intruded himself into that church, was elected to succeed him; but he, having ulterior objects now in view, refused to go to Antioch, so Euphronius, a native of Ceserea, was first appointed, and after him Flacillus, both Arians; but many of the Catholics of Antioch would never hold communion with those intruded bishops[15121]. Eusebius of Nicomedia next intrigued successfully to establish Arius in the good graces of Constantine, and obtain permission for him to return to Alexandria. This he accomplished by means of an Arian priest, who was a great friend of Constantia, the Emperor's sister; and he induced her, when she was on the point of death, to request this favour from the Emperor. She did so, and Constantine said that, if Arius subscribed the decrees of the Council of Nice, he would pardon him. In fact, Arius was recalled, and came to Constantinople, and presented to the Emperor a profession of faith, in which he professed to believe, according to the Scriptures, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, produced before all ages that he was the Word by which all things were made[15122]. Constantine, believing that Arius had in reality now embraced the decisions of the Council, was satisfied with this profession; but he never adverted to the fact, that in this document the word "consubstantial" was omitted, and that the introduction of these words, "according to the Scriptures," was only a pretext of Arius to distort to his own meaning the clearest expression of the Scriptures, proving the divinity of the Son of God. He would not receive him, nevertheless, to his communion on his own authority, but sent him to Tyre, where a council was sitting, of which we shall treat presently, to undergo the scrutiny of the bishops; he wrote to the assembled prelates to examine Arius's profession of faith, and to see whether his retraction was sincere. The partisans of Eusebius were in great force in the Council of Tyre, so Arius, on his arrival, was immediately again received into communion[15123].

24. We have now to speak of the cabal of Tyre, in which the Eusebians contrived to banish St. Athanasius from the see of Alexandria. Before, however, giving the history of this unjust expulsion, we should remark that previously the Arians had plotted the destruction of the holy bishop, and charged him before the Emperor with many crimes[15124]. They accused him of having violated a virgin of having killed Arsenius, the Bishop of Ipsele, in the Thebaid of casting down an altar, and breaking a consecrated chalice; and they now renewed the same charges in the Council of Tyre[15125], Constantino, at the request of his mother, St. Helen, had built the great Church of the Resurrection, in Jerusalem, and had invited a great number of bishops to consecrate it with all solemnity; it was on this occasion that Eusebius of Nicomedia suggested to him that it would be well to collect all the bishops, before the consecration, into a council, to establish a general peace. The Emperor was most anxious for peace above all things; so he at once agreed, and selected Tyre as the most convenient place for the bishop to meet on their way to Jerusalem. Eusebius, who had planned the scheme, now got together all the bishops of his party, so that there were sixty bishops in all; but many of these were Catholics, and this number was increased soon after by the arrival of St. Athanasius, accompanied by Paphuntius, Potamon, and several other Egyptian bishops. St. Athanasius, seeing the storm he had to encounter, refused to come at first, but was constrained by Constantino, who threatened him with banishment in case of refusal[15126]. Eusebius next contrived that the Count Flavius should be present, to preserve order, as he said, and keep down any disturbance; but, in reality, to crush St. Athanasius and his friends. Flavius, accordingly, came, accompanied by a large body of troops, ready to seize on any one who opposed Eusebius's party[15127].

25. The impious synod was now opened, and St. Athanasius, who, in right of his dignity, should preside, was obliged to stand as a criminal to be tried for crimes he never was guilty of. When St. Potamon saw him in this

position he was highly indignant with Eusebius of Cesarea, who was seated among the judges[15128]. “Tell me, Eusebius,” said he, “how did it happen that, when we were both prisoners, in the days of persecution for the faith, my right eye was plucked out, but you left the prison safe and sound, without any mark of constancy; how could that have happened, unless you yielded to the will of the tyrant ?”

Eusebius, enraged at the charge, instead of making any defence, got up, and left the council, and the synod was dissolved for that day[15129]. St. Athanasius protested that he did not wish to submit himself to the judgment of his enemies, but in vain. He was first accused by two bishops of Meletius’s party; and the principal charges they brought against him were the violation of the virgin, the murder of the bishop, and the desecration of the altar and chalice. This last charge they could not bring any proof of, so they confined themselves to the two former; and, to prove the crime of violation[15130], they introduced into the synod a prostitute, who declared that St. Athanasius had robbed her of her honour. The Saint, however, knowing the plot beforehand, made one of his priests, of the name of Timothy, stand forward; and he said to the woman : “ Do you mean to charge me with having violated you ?” “ Yes,” said the unfortunate wretch, thinking he was St. Athanasius, “you have violated me you have robbed me of my virginity, which I dedicated to God.” Thus this first calumny was most triumphantly refuted, and the other charge was equally proved to be unfounded. Among the other proofs they adduced of the murder of Arsenius, they exhibited a hand which was cut off from his dead body, they said, by St. Athanasius. But the fact was thus[15131] :When the Saint was first accused of the crime, Arsenius lent himself to the Arian party, and concealed himself, that his death might be proved. But he soon repented of such wickedness, and, to clear St. Athanasius, he came to Tyre, and confronted the Saint’s accusers in the council; for while the accusers were making the charge, and showing the dead hand as a proof, Athanasius asked them, did they know Arsenius ? They answered, that they did. He then called forth the man they said was dead, and told him to hold up his head, that all might recognize him. But even this would not stop their mouths, for they then said, that he did not kill him, but cut off his hand only; but Athanasius opened Arrhenius’s mantle, and showed that both his hands were perfect.

Beaten out of this last accusation, they then said that it was all accomplished by magic, and that the Saint was a magician. Finally, they said, that St. Athanasius[15132] forced persons to hold communion with him, by imprisoning some, flogging and tormenting others, and that he even deposed and flogged some bishops; and the winding up of the matter was, that he was condemned and deposed. When St. Athanasius saw that he was so unjustly deposed, he appealed to the Emperor in Constantinople, and acquainted him with all he suffered in the Council of Tyre; and Constantino wrote to the bishops who were yet remaining in Jerusalem, reproving them for tumultuously smothering the truth, and ordering them to come immediately to Constantinople, and account for their conduct[15133]. The Eusebians obeyed the imperial order, and, saying nothing more about the murder of Arsenius, or the broken chalice, they invented a new charge against Athanasius that he threatened to prevent the usual supply of grain from being sent from Alexandria to Constantinople. This was just the charge calculated to ruin him with the Emperor, who was so enraged, that he even threatened to put him to death; and, though the Saint refuted the accusation, he was condemned to banishment[15134].

26. In the year 336 there was another council held in Constantinople, and the bishop of that city, St. Alexander, seeing that the Eusebians would have it all their own way, did everything in his power to prevent it, but could not succeed. The Eusebians then tried Marcellus of Ancira, the defender of St. Athanasius in the Council of Tyre, for some heresies alleged to have been written by him in a book, published in opposition to Asterius the Sophist, who composed a treatise filled with Arian errors. They, therefore, excommunicated and deposed Marcellus, as he was not one of their party, and elected, in his place, Basil, a partisan of Arius. This was only a secondary consideration, however. The principal reason the Arians had in assembling this council was to re-establish Arius in his place again, and confirm his doctrine. After Arius was received in Jerusalem to the communion of the bishops, he returned to Alexandria, hoping, in the absence of St. Athanasius, banished by Constantine, to be there received by the Catholics. In this he was disappointed they would have nothing to do with him; but, as he had many partisans in the city, his residence there excited some commotion. When the Emperor was informed of this he

ordered him to come to Constantinople. It is said that the Eusebians induced the Emperor to give this order, hoping to have Arius received into the communion of the Church, in the imperial city; but in this they were most strenuously opposed by St. Alexander, and they, in consequence, threatened him, that, unless he received Arius into his communion on a certain day, that they would have himself deposed.

St. James, Bishop of Nisibis, then in Constantinople, said that prayers and penance alone could remedy these evils, and St. Alexander, taking his advice, gave up both preaching and disputing, and shut himself up alone in the Church of Peace, and remained there many nights, weeping and praying[15135].

27. The Eusebians persuaded the Emperor that Arius held the doctrine of the Church, and it was, therefore, regulated that he should, the next Sunday, be received to the communion. The Saturday previous, however, Constantine, that he might be quite certain of the faith of Arius, ordered him to be called into his presence, asked him did he profess the faith of Nice, and insisted that he should give him a written profession of faith, and swear to it. Arius gave him the written profession, but a fraudulent one, and swore that he neither then or at any other time believed differently; some say that he had another profession of faith under his arm, and that it was to that one he intended to swear. However, the affair was arranged; it is certain that the Emperor, trusting to his oath, told St. Alexander that it was a matter of duty to assist a man who wished for nothing but his salvation. St. Alexander endeavoured to undeceive him, but finding he only irritated him more and more, held his tongue, and retired; he soon after met Eusebius of Nicomedia, who said to him, if you don t wish to receive Arius to-morrow I will myself bring him along with me to the church. St. Alexander, grieved to the heart, went to the church accompanied by only two persons, and prostrating himself on the floor, with tears in his eyes, prayed to the Lord: O my God, either take me out of the world, or take Arius, that he may not ruin your Church.

Thus St. Alexander prayed, and on the same day, Saturday, at three o clock, the Eusebians were triumphantly conducting Arius through the city, and he went along, boasting of his re-establishment, but when he came to the great square the vengeance of God overtook him; he got a terrible spasm in the bowels, and was obliged to seek a place of retirement; a private place near the square was pointed out to him; he went in and left a servant at the door; he immediately burst open like Judas, his intestines, his spleen, and his liver all fell out, and thus his guilty soul took her flight to her Creator, deprived of the communion of the Church. When he delayed too long, his friends came to the door, and on opening it, they found him stretched on the floor in a pool of blood in that horrible state. This event took place in the year 336[15136].

28. In the following year, 337, Constantine died. He was then 64 years of age. He fell sick, and took baths in Constantinople at first, but receiving no benefit from them, he tried the baths of Helenopolis. He daily got worse, so went to Nicomedia, and finding himself near death, he was baptized in the Church of St. Lucian. Authors vary regarding the time and place of Constantino's baptism. Eusebius says that he was baptized in Nicomedia, a few hours before his death, but other writers assert that he was baptized in Rome by St. Sylvester, thirteen years before, in the year 324. Cardinal Baronius holds this opinion, and quotes many authorities in favour of it, and Schelestratus brings forward many Greek and Latin authorities to prove the same. The generality of authors, however, follow Eusebius, Socrates, Sozymen, Theodoret, and St. Jerome, Fleury, and Orsi, and especially Noel Alexander, who answers the arguments of Baronius, and cites for his own opinion St. Ambrose, St. Isidore, Papebrock and the fathers of St. Maur. These last say that Constantino, being near his end, in Nicomedia, wished to receive from the bishops, in the church of St. Lucian, the imposition of hands a ceremony then in use previous to baptism, and practised with every catechumen.

He was then carried to a castle, called Aquirion, a little distant from Nicomedia, and, having summoned the bishops, he received baptism with the greatest devotion. " Now," said he, " I feel myself truly happy." His officers then came to him, and, with tears in their eyes, expressed the wish they had for his restoration to health and long life; but he said, " I have now received the true life, and I have no other wish but to go and enjoy God." St. Jerome, in his Chronicle, says that he lapsed into Arian errors, but his festival is commemorated in the Greek Menalogy, according to Noel Alexander, on the 21st of May, and the same author wrote a dissertation to prove that he died a good Catholic, and all the ancients, he says, agree in that opinion with St. Athanasius, St. Hilary, St. Epiphanius, and St. Ambrose; and we have, likewise, the authority of the Council of Rimini, in the synodal epistle written to the Emperor Constantius, and quoted by Socrates, Theodoret, Sozymen, and St. Athanasius. Cardinal Orsi remarks that the baptism of Constantine, by Eusebius, ought not to render his faith suspected, and that this is no proof of a leaning to Arianism, as St. Jerome suspects, since we see how strenuously he defended the Council and doctrine of Nice, and especially since he recalled St. Athanasius from exile immediately after his baptism, notwithstanding the opposition of Eusebius of Nicomedia. Sozymen says that the Emperor left this order in his will, and that Constantine the Younger, when he sent back St. Athanasius to his see, declared that, in doing so, he was fulfilling the will of his father; and St. Athanasius attests that, at the same time, all the other Catholic bishops were reinstated in their sees[15137].

29. Constantine died on the feast of Pentecost, the 23rd of May, 337, and divided the empire among his children and nephews. To Constantius the Elder he left all that was possessed by his father, Constans, and Gaul, Spain, and Britain besides; to Constantius the Second, Asia, Assyria, and Egypt; and to Constantius the Youngest, Africa, Italy, and Illyria; and to his nephews, Dalmatius and Hannibalianus, some provinces of less note.

It was the will of the Almighty, however, that Constantino the Younger and Constans died, so the whole empire fell into the sway of Constantius, a great misfortune for the Church, for he was a violent persecutor, and Constantius and Constans were its friends.[15138]

III.THE EMPEROR CONSTANTIUS PERSECUTES THE CATHOLICS

30. Eusebius of Nicomedia is translated to the See of Constantinople; Synods in Alexandria and Antioch. 31.—Council of Sardis. 32 Council of Aries. 33.—Council of Milan, and Exile of Liberius. 34. ~Exile of Osius. 35.—Fall of Osius. 36. Pall of Liberius. 37.—First Formula of Sirmium. 38.—Second Formula of Sirmium. 39.—Third Formula of Sirmium. 40.—Liberius signs the Formula, 8u. 41, 42.—He signs the first Formula. 43.—Return of Liberius to Rome, and Death of Felix. 44.—Division among the Arians. 45–48,-Counoil of Rimini. 49.—Death of Constantius. 50.—The Empire descends to Julian. The Schism of Lucifer.

30. St. Alexander, Patriarch of Constantinople, died about the year 340, at the age of ninety-eight, and Paul of Thessalonica was chosen his successor;

but Constantius, who now publicly professed himself an Arian, being absent during the election, was highly indignant on his return to Constantinople, and, pretending that Paul was unworthy of the bishopric, joined with the Arian party, and had a council convoked, in which he procured the deposition of Paul and the appointment of Eusebius of Nicomedia, now, for the second time, translated to a new see, in opposition to the laws of the Church. About the same time another council was assembled in Alexandria, consisting of about a hundred bishops from Egypt, the Thebaid, Libia, and Pentapolis, in favour of St. Athanasius, in which he was declared innocent of the calumnies laid to his charge by the Eusebians; but again, the following year, 241, a council was assembled in Antioch on the occasion of the dedication of the church of that city commenced by Constantine and finished by Constantius, consisting of ninety bishops; this was planned by Eusebius of Nicomedia and his partizans, and St. Athanasius was again deposed, and Gregory of Cappadocia, infected with the Arian heresy, was intruded into his place[15139].

31. In the year 357, another council, consisting of many bishops, was assembled in Sardis, the metropolitan city of Dacia in Illiria, in which the Nicene Creed was confirmed, and St. Athanasius was again declared innocent, and restored to his see. There is no doubt but that this was a general council, as (in opposition to Peter of Marca) Baronius, Noel Alexander, Peter Annatus, Battaglini, and many others prove. St. Athanasius says that one hundred and seventy bishops were assembled, but among them were more than fifty orientals, and as these left Sardis to avoid the condemnation which they knew awaited them for their excesses, only about one hundred remained. It had, besides, all the requisites for a general councillor the convocation was general, as appears from the circular letters, and Archimides and Philosenus, priests, together with Osius, who was before president of the Council of Nice, presided as legates of Pope Julius. The Arians being aware that many well founded charges would be brought against them in the council, demanded that the bishops condemned in their synod should be expelled from the assembly of the prelates, otherwise they said they would go away themselves. This audacious proposal was universally rejected, so they fled to Philipopolis, and drew up a formula of

faith, adapted to their errors, and this was afterwards promulgated as the formula of the Council of Sardis. Eight bishops of the Eusebian party were convicted of the crimes they were charged with, by the true Council of Sardis, and were deposed and condemned, for it is but just, said the fathers, that those should be separated from the Church who wish to separate the Son from the Father[15140].

32. Constantius showed himself more favourable to the Catholic bishops after this council, and permitted them to return to their churches; he received St. Athanasius most graciously in Antioch, and gave an order in his favour, and allowed him to return to Alexandria, where he was received by the bishops of Egypt and by the people and clergy with the greatest demonstrations of joy. The Arians soon again, however, obtained the favour of Constantius, and St. Hilarion relates that Pope Liberius, who succeeded St. Julius in 342, wrote to him that the Eusebians wished to cheat him out of a condemnation of St. Athanasius, but that, he having received letters signed by eighty bishops, defending the saint, and, as he would not conscientiously act in opposition to the Council of Sardis, he had declared him innocent. In the meantime, he sent to Constantius, who held his court at Aries, two legates, Vincentius of Capua and Marcellus, bishop in the Campagna, to implore of him to summon a synod in Aquileia to settle finally the cause of St. Athanasius, finally determine the articles of faith, and establish the peace of the Church. Constantius, we know not why, was highly offended at this request, and convoked a synod in Aries, and when the legates arrived there, they found that St. Athanasius had been already condemned by the synod, and that Constantius had published a decree of banishment against the bishops who refused to sign the condemnation. He then insisted that the legates should sign it likewise. Vincentius of Capua refused at first to do so, but he was beaten and threatened, so he yielded, and his colleague followed his example, and both promised to hold no more communication with St. Athanasius[15141].

33. The Emperor now intended to crush the Catholic party for ever, and with this intention, assembled a council in Milan. Pope Liberius was anxious for the celebration of this council, as he thought it would unite the Church in the profession of the faith of Nice, but the Arians worked hard also to have it assembled, as they expected to obtain a general sentence of

condemnation on St. Athanasius, and to establish their heresy; so in the year 355, there were assembled over three hundred bishops in Milan. St. Eusebius of Vercelli, was also summoned, but endeavoured to absent himself, knowing the plans of the Eusebians; he was, however, constrained to attend, and the Pope's legates themselves, Lucifer, Pancratius, and the Deacon Hilary, solicited him to come to Milan. On his arrival, the Arians endeavoured to induce him to sign the condemnation of St. Athanasius, having again renewed the fable of the broken chalice, &c.

But St. Eusebius said, the first thing to be done was, that all should subscribe the formula of the Council of Nice, and then that other matters could be taken into consideration. St. Dionisius, Bishop of Milan, immediately prepared to subscribe to it, but Valens of Murcia snatched the pen and paper out of his hands, and said, that nothing ever would be concluded if that course was followed. When this came to the knowledge of the people, they murmured loudly, and complained that the bishops themselves were betraying the faith; so the Emperor, dreading a popular tumult, transferred the council to the church of his own palace, and told the assembled bishops that they should obey his edict in the affair, and sign a profession filled with all the errors of Arianism. He called especially on the Legate Lucifer, St. Eusebius, and St. Dionisius, and ordered them to subscribe the condemnation of St. Athanasius, and when they determinedly refused to do so, as being against the laws of the Church, he answered: "Whatever is my will is law, obey me or you shall be banished." The bishops then told him that he would have to answer to the Almighty if he used any violence towards them; but he became so indignant at being remonstrated with in this manner, that he actually drew his sword on them, and gave orders that they should be put to death, but when his passion cooled a little, he was satisfied with sending them into banishment, and they were sent off from the council, loaded with chains, under a guard of soldiers, to the place of their exile, where they had to endure a great deal of harsh treatment from the heretics. At the same time, Hilary, one of the legates, was stripped naked and cruelly flogged on the back, the Arians all the while crying out to him: "Why did not you oppose Liberius?" Constantius then appointed Ausentius in the place of St. Dionisius, and obliged Liberius to come to Milan. The Emperor, on Liberius's arrival, ordered him to condemn St. Athanasius, and, on his refusal to do so, gave him three days for consideration, and told him that if he refused he would also be sent into exile. Liberius persevered in his refusal, and was accordingly banished to Berea, in Thrace, of which Demophilus, a perfidious Arian, was bishop[15142].

34. The great Osius was, next to Liberius, the great prop of the Faith in the West, both on account of the holiness of his life, and his learning; he was at this time sixty years Bishop of Cordova, in Spain, and he showed his constancy in the persecution of Maximilian, by publicly confessing the faith. Constantius had him brought before him, and advised him to communicate with the Arians, and condemn St. Athanasius, but he resolutely refused to do either one or the other. Constantius allowed him to go away for that time; but soon after wrote to him, and threatened to punish him if he refused any longer to obey his will. Osius answered him with even greater firmness: If you are resolved to persecute me, said he, I am prepared to shed my blood sooner than betray the truth; you may then save yourself the trouble of writing to me on the subject again. Tremble at the last judgment, and do not intermeddle with the affairs of the Church; God has given you the Empire, the government of the Church he has committed to us. Constantius sent for him once more, to induce him to yield, but, finding him inflexible, he banished him to Sirmium; he was then nearly in the hundredth year of his age.

35. We now have to treat of, first, the fall of Osius, and next of Liberius. The principal author of Osius's fall was Potamius, Bishop of Lisbon; he was at first a defender of the Faith, but Constantius gained him over by giving him possession of an estate of the Chancery; he, therefore, joined the Eusebians, and Osius, burning with zeal, denounced his impiety through all Spain. Potamius, thirsting for revenge, first got him banished to Sirmium, and then finding the Emperor there, he induced him to use such violent measures with him, that he broke down his resolution, and caused him to fall. The poor old man was weakened with torments; he was beaten so violently that his flesh was all torn, and he endured a long and violent torture; his strength failed him, he could suffer no more, and he unfortunately signed the second formula of Sirmium, condemning St. Athanasius, and holding communion with the Arians. Sozymen particularly mentions that Eudosius saw the letter of Osius, in which he disproves of

both the word consubstantial, and the words like in substance. He now was permitted to return again to Spain, but Gregory, Bishop of Alvira, refused to communicate with him on account of his prevarication. Two authors, followers of Lucifer, Faustus and Marcellinus, write that Osius died an unhappy death; but St. Athanasius, who, as Cardinal Orsi justly remarks, deserves more credit, says that at his death he declared he was subdued by violence, and thus fell into error, and that he anathematized the heresy of the Arians, and besought all who heard him to hold it in horror[15143].

36. We now come to speak of the fall of Liberius. It is said by some that Osius subscribed the second formula of Sirmium; now, to understand the fall of Liberius, it is necessary to have knowledge of the three formulas of faith composed in Sirmium. Noel Alexander says that there was but one formula of Sirmium, and that the others were published elsewhere; but Baronius, and the generality of writers hold that the whole three formulas were promulgated in the councils, or rather cabals, of Sirmium. There is no probability of the truth of what Socrates says, that the whole three formulas were promulgated in one and the same council. The Arians, when they got Liberius to sign one of the formulas, boasted, as Orsi says, that there was a union of faith between them, and that Liberius professed their faith. On the other hand, Orsi persuades himself that Liberius was innocent altogether, and supposes that he was liberated and allowed to return to Rome, on account of a promise made by Constantius to the Roman ladies, or to put an end to the disturbances which at that time distracted the city. The most generally received opinion, however, is that Liberius committed a great error, but that he did not fall into heresy. To make the matter clear we must investigate the Sirmium formula which he subscribed[15144].

37. The first formula of Sirmium was adopted in the year 351, and in this, Photinus, Bishop of Sirmium, was again condemned, for he denied to Jesus Christ not only consubstantiality with the Father, but his Divinity, likewise; asserting, with Cerinthus, Ebion, and Paul of Samosata, that the Son of God had no existence before Mary. Photinus was previously condemned in the Council of Sardis; but he obtained from the Emperor the right of appeal to this Council of Sirmium, at which Constantius himself was present.

Here his doctrine was condemned a second time, even by the Arians themselves, and the first formula, relating to the Arian heresy, was drawn up in Greek, and two anathemas were attached to it, as Noel Alexander tells us, on the authority of St. Athanasius and St. Hilary. The first was to this effect: *“The Holy and Catholic Church does not recognize as belonging to her, those who say that the Son existed from any creation or substance, and not from God, or that there was a time when he did not exist.” The second was that “ if any one denied that Christ-God the Son of God was before all ages, and by whom all things were made, and that it was only from the time he was born of Mary that he was called Christ and the Son, and that it was only then his Deity commenced, let him be anathema.” Noel Alexander thus Latinises the original Greek. “Eos qui diciint: ex non ente, aut ex alio subsistente, et non ex Deo Filium extitisse, aut quod tempus, aut ætas fuit, quando ille non erat, alienos a se censet sancta, et Catholica Ecclesia. Si quis Christum Deum, Filium Dei ante secula, administrumque ad universitatis opificium fuisse neget; sed ex quo tempore e Maria genitus est, Christum, et Filium appellatum fuisse, et principium suæ Deitatis turn accepisse dicat, anathema esto.”* Thus in this formula, it is laid down that the Son is God to all eternity, and that his Divinity is from eternity. St. Athanasius looked on this formula as impious. St. Hilary considered it Catholic; the truth is that, if it be considered absolutely in itself, it is Catholic, but, taken in the sense of the Arians, it is Arian[15145].

38. The second formula was published also in Sirmium, but in the year 357, and it was written in Latin, and was subscribed by Potamius and Osius. This was totally Arian, for the words consubstantial, and like in substance, were rejected, as there was nothing about them in the Scriptures, and they were unintelligible to the human intellect. This was not the only blasphemous error introduced into this profession; for it was, besides, asserted, that the Father was, without any doubt, greater than the Son in honour, dignity, and Godship, and that the Son was subject to the Father, together with all things which the Father subjected to the Son. This formula St. Hilary calls blasphemous, and, in his Book of Synods, he thus describes it: “Exemplum blasphemiwe apud Sirmium, par Osium et Potamium, conscriptwe[15146].”

39. The third formula was likewise composed in Sirmium, but not for eight years after, that is in 359, and this was also in Latin, and St. Athanasius informs us, in his Book on Synods, that it was this one which

was presented to the Council of Rimini, by Valens and Ursacius. In this the word substance is rejected, but the Son is recognised as equal to the Father in all things : *“Vocabulum porro substantiæ, quiasimplicius a Patribus positum est, et a populis ignoratur, et scandalum affert, eo quod in Scripturis noncontineatur, placuit ut de niedio tolleretur. Filium autem Patri per omnia similem dicimus,quemadmodum sacræ Litteræ dicunt, et decent.”* In the first formula, then, the word consubstantial is omitted, but the word substantial is retained. In the second, no mention is made of either word, nor even of the words like unto; and, in the third, the words like unto is retained and explained.

40. We now come to the case of Liberius. Constantius had promised the ladies of Rome that he would restore him again to his see; but had also promised the Eusebians that he would not liberate him till he communicated with them. He, therefore, laid his commands on Demophilus, Bishop of Berea, where Liberius was exiled, and on Fortunatus, Bishop of Aquilea, another apostate, to leave no means untried to make Liberius sign the formula of Sirmium, and the condemnation of St. Athanasius. Liberius was now three years in exile, broken down by solitude and flogging, and, above all, deeply afflicted at seeing the see of Rome occupied by an anti-Pope, the Deacon Felix, and thus he had the weakness to yield, and subscribed the formula, condemning, at the same time, St. Athanasius, and communicating with the Arian bishops.

41. It is a question among authors, which of the three formulas was subscribed by Liberius. Valesius says it was the third; but this has no foundation, for the third was not drawn up till 359, and St. Athanasius tells us that Liberius was then after returning to Rome. Blondel and Petavius say it was the second he signed, and this is the general opinion followed by—heretics, who strive thus to prove that the Catholic Church may fail. The Protestant Danaeus numbers Liberius among the bishops who joined the Arians, and says that all historians are agreed that he signed this formula, and after that, he says, no one can deny that the Roman Church can err. But the general opinion held by Catholics, and which is, also, the most probable, and in which Baronius, N. Alexander, Graveson, Fleury, Juenin, Tournelly, Berninus, Orsi, Hermant, and Selvaggi, the learned annotator of Mosheim, join with Gotti, who gives it as the general opinion of Catholic authors, is, that it was the first formula he signed.

There are very weighty reasons to prove that this opinion is founded on fact :First The formula subscribed by Liberius was the one drawn up at the time Photinus was condemned, and this was, indubitably, the first and not the second. Secondly the formula he signed, and which was laid before him by Demophilus, was not drawn up by the Anomeans, or pure Arians, but by the Semi—Arians, to which sect Demophilus, Basil of Ancira, Valens, and Ursacius belonged. These did not admit that the Son was consubstantial with the Father, because they would not approve of the Nicene Creed, but said he was of the substance of the Father; and this was expressed in the first formula alone, but not in the second, in which both the words substance and like unto were omitted. These very bishops even who subscribed the first rejected the second in a synod purposely convoked in Ancira. Nor does it militate against this opinion, that the formula subscribed by Liberius was also subscribed by the Anomeans, for Constantino, who, as Socrates informs us, favoured the Semi-Arian party, obliged them to subscribe to it. Another proof is from Sozymen, who quotes a letter of Liberius, written to the Semi-Arians, in which he declares, that those who assert that the Son is not like unto the Father in all things, and of the same substance, do not belong to the Church. From all this it is proved that Liberius signed the formula, from which the word consubstantiality was omitted, but which approved of the words substantiality and like unto[15147].

42. Because St. Hilary calls the formula signed by Liberius a perfidy, the argument is not weakened, for Noel Alexander supposes, that these words, and the anathema hurled against Liberius, in St. Hilary’s fragments, were foisted in by some other hand, for these fragments were written after the return of Liberius to Rome, when he most strenuously refused to approve of the formula of the Council of Rimini; others again, as Juenin, imagined, that St. Hilary called the formula perfidious, taking it in the perverse sense as understood by the Arians, since speaking of it before (considered absolutely in itself), he called it a Catholic formula. Another argument is deduced from the Chronicle of St. Jerome, for he writes, that Liberius, conquered by a weary exile, subscribed to heretical pravity, and entered Rome almost like a conqueror. Noel Alexander says, that St. Jerome means by this, not that he signed a formula in itself heretical, but that he communicated with heretics, and although the communion with heretics was an error, it was not heresy

itself. Another answer is, that St. Jerome might have written this under the belief that it was true, since, as Sozymen informs us, the heretics spread everywhere abroad, that Liberius, in subscribing the formula, not only denied the consubstantiality, but even the likeness of the Son to the Father; but, withal, we do not justify Liberius for condemning St. Athanasius and communicating with heretics. He afterwards refused to sign the formula of Rimini, and was, in consequence, obliged to conceal himself in the catacombs, till the death of Constantius[15148].

43. When Liberius returned to Rome, in the year 358, or the following year, according to Baronius, he was received, Orsi says, with the liveliest demonstrations of joy by the clergy and people; but Baronius says, that there was a large section of the people opposed to him on account of his fall, and that they adhered to Felix II., who, in the commencement, was a schismatic, and unlawfully ordained by three Arian bishops, to whose sect he belonged at the time. Nevertheless, when he learned the lapse of Liberius, he joined the Catholics, and excommunicated the Emperor; and he was thenceforth looked on as the lawful Pope, and Liberius as fallen from his office. However, as Baronius tells us, it appears from the Book of the Pontiffs, that he was taken and conveyed by the Imperial Ministers to Ceri, seventeen miles from Rome, and beheaded.

The schismatic Marcellinus, quoted by Fleury, says, that Felix lived eight years after the return of Liberius; but Sozymen, on the contrary, tells us he died almost immediately after that event. Benedict XIV. says, that there is no doubt about the sanctity and martyrdom of Felix, but the learned are divided as to whether he died by the sword or by the sufferings he endured for Christ. Baronius says, that there was a doubt in the time of Gregory XIII. as to whether the name of Felix II. should be expunged or not from the Martyrology, in which he was enumerated among the saints, and he was himself, he confesses, of the opinion that it should be done, on account of his illegal intrusion into the Popedom; but soon after he says, a marble sarcophagus was casually discovered buried in the earth, with some relics of saints on one side, and the body of St. Felix on the other, with this inscription, “The body of St. Felix, Pope and Martyr, who condemned Constantius ;” and this discovery was made on the 19th of July, 1582, the day preceding the festival of St. Felix, and, on that account, his name was left undisturbed in the Martyrology. Baronius is opposed by N. Alexander, who denies that Felix II. ever was a true Pope; but Roncaglia, in his notes, and both the Pagi, contend for the contrary, and the Pagi prove, in opposition to Noel Alexander, that the Pope Felix commemorated in the Martyrology, must necessarily be Felix II., not Felix I.[15149].

44. We now come back once more to the Arians. When Osius and Liberius fell, they were already split up into a great many sects :some who followed the party of Acasius, Eudoxius, Eunomius, and 7Esius, were called Anomeans those were pure Arians, and they not alone rejected consubstantiality, but even the likeness of the Son to the Father; but the followers of Ursacius and Valens, though called Arians, did not follow the opinion of Arius in everything. Finally, those who followed the opinions of Basil, of Ancyra, and Eustatius of Sebaste, were called Semi—Arians; these condemned the blasphemies of Arius, but did not admit the consubstantiality of the divine persons[15150].

45. We have now to relate the events of the Council of Rimini, of sorrowful celebrity, in which, as St. Jerome says, the Nicene faith was condemned, and the whole world groaned, finding itself Arian. When the whole Church was in confusion about the articles of the faith, it was considered that the best way of arranging everything quietly, would be to hold two councils, one in Rimini in Italy, the other at Selucia in the East. The Council of Rimini was held in 359, and was attended by more than four hundred bishops from Illiria, Italy, Africa, Spain, Gaul, and Britain, and among those there were eighty Arians, but the rest were Catholic. When they came to treat of matters of faith, Ursacius, Valens, and other heads of the Arian party produced a writing, and proposed that all should be satisfied with signing that, in which was laid down the last formula of Sirmium of the same year, in which, it is true, the word substance was rejected, but it was allowed that the Son was like unto the Father in all things. But the Catholic Bishops unanimously answered that there was no necessity for any other formula, but that of the Council of Nice, and decreed that there should be no addition to or subtraction from that formula; that the word substance should be retained, and they again condemned the doctrine of Arius, and published ten anathemas against the errors of Arius, Sabellius, and Photinus. All the Catholics subscribed to this, but Ursacius. Valens and the

Arians refused, so they themselves were judged heretics, and Ursacius, Valens, Caius, and Germinius, were condemned and deposed by a formal act[15151].

46. Ten bishops were now sent as legates from the council to the Emperor, bearers of the letters of the council, giving him notice that the fathers had decided that there should be nothing added to or taken from the council of Nice, and that they regretted to find that Ursacius and Valens wished to establish another formula of faith, according to the document they presented to the council. The ten legates accordingly went, but the Arians sent ten likewise, along with Ursacius and Valens, and these arrived first and prejudiced the Emperor against the council, and presented him with the formula of Sirmium, which was rejected by the Council of Rimini. When the legates sent by the council arrived, they could not obtain an audience from the Emperor, and it was only after a long delay, that he sent an answer to the council, that he was about to proceed against the barbarians, and that he had given orders to the legates to wait for him in Adrianople, where he would see them on his return, and give them his final answer. The fathers of the council wrote again to Constantius, telling him that nothing would ever change them, and begging therefore that he would give an audience to the legates and let them depart. When the Emperor came to Adrianople, the legates followed him, and were taken to the small town of Nice, in the neighbourhood; and there they began to treat with the Arians, against the express orders of the council, which particularly restricted them on this point. Partly by deception, and partly by threats, they were induced to sign a formula, worse even than the third formula of Sirmium; for not only was the word substance omitted, but the Son was said to be like unto the Father, but leaving out in all things, which was admitted in the Sirmium formula. They were, likewise, induced to revoke the deposition of Ursacius, and his companions, condemned by the council; and they signed the formula with their own hands[15152].

47. The legates having put things in this state returned to Rimini, and Constantius then gave orders to his Prefect Taurus, not to permit the council to be dissolved, till the bishops had signed the last formula of Nice, and to send into banishment any bishops refusing their signature, if their number did not exceed fifteen. He likewise wrote a letter to the fathers of the

council, prohibiting them from using any more the words substantial and consubstantial. Ursacius and Valens now returned to Rimini, and as their party was now in the ascendant, they seized on the church, and wrote to the Emperor that he was obeyed, and that the expressions he objected to were not allowed to be used any more. The Catholics, at first, made a show of constancy, and refused to communicate with the legates, who excused their error by alleging all they suffered at the Court of the Emperor; but by degrees they were tired out, their constancy failed, and they subscribed the same formula as the legates[15153].

48. We cannot deny but that the bishops of Rimini committed a great error, but they are not so much to be blamed for bad faith, as for not being more guarded against the wiles of the Arians. This was the snare that was laid for them :They were wavering as to whether they should sign the formula or not, and when they were all assembled in the church, and the errors attributed to Valens, who drew up the formula, were read out, he protested that he was not an Arian. "Let him be excommunicated," he exclaimed, "who asserts that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. Let him be excommunicated who says that he is not like unto the Father, according to the Scriptures; or, he who says he is a creature, like all other creatures (how he conceals the poison, for he taught that Christ was a creature, but more perfect than all the others); or that he is from nothing, and not from the Father; or that there was a time when he was not; or that anything was before him; he who teaches any of those things let him be excommunicated." And all answered: "Let him be excommunicated." These denunciations of anathema, so fraudulently put forward, threw the Catholics off their guard. They persuaded themselves that Valens was not an Arian, and were induced to sign the formula; and thus the Council of Rimini, which opened so gloriously, was ignominiously terminated, and the bishops got leave to return to their homes. They were not long, St. Jerome tell us, till they discovered their error; for the Arians, immediately on the dissolution of the council, began to boast of their victory. The word substantial, said they, is now abolished, and along with it the Nicene faith; and when it was said, that the Son was not a creature, the meaning was, that he was not like the other created beings, but of a higher order, and then it was that the world, St. Jerome says, groaning, found itself

Arian. Noel Alexander proves, from St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, and others, and with very convincing arguments, too, that the bishops of Rimini, in subscribing that formula, did not violate the faith; for, taken in its obvious sense, it contained nothing heretical.

While the Council of Rimini was in progress, there was another council held in Seleucia, at which many Arian bishops were present; but it was soon dismissed, for the bishops were so divided, that they could not agree to any formula[15154].

49. After the Council of Rimini was dissolved, the Arians of Antioch, in the year 361, not satisfied with the formula adopted at the Council, drew up another in which they said, that the Son was in everything unlike the Father, not alone in substance, but also in will, and that he was formed out of nothing, as Arius had already taught. Fleury counts sixteen formulas published by the Arians. Liberius, however, after his first error in subscribing the formula of Sirmium, as we have already related (No. 41), constantly refused, after his liberation in 360, to sign the formula of Rimini, and, as Baronius relates in his Acts of Pope Liberius, he was obliged to leave Rome and hide himself in the catacombs, where Damasus and the rest of his clergy went to see him, and he remained there until the death of Constantius in 361. St. Gregory of Nazianzen says that Constantius, just before his death, repented, but in vain, of three things : Of the murder of his relatives; of having made Julian, Caesar; and of causing such confusion in the Church. He died, however, in the arms of the Arians, whom he protected with such zeal, and Euzoius, whom he had made Bishop of Antioch, administered him baptism just before his death. His death put an end to the synods, and for a time restored peace to the Church; as St. Jerome says, “The beast dies and the calm returns”[15155].

50. On the death of Constantius, the impious Julian the Apostate took the reins of empire, and, professing idolatry, commenced a most fierce persecution against the Church, not out of any liking for the Arians, but through hatred of Christianity itself. Before we speak of the other persecutions the Catholics had to endure from the Arians, we will relate the schism caused by the wretched Lucifer, Bishop of Cagliari, who after all his labours and fortitude in defence of the Catholic Church, vexed because St. Eusebius would not approve of his having consecrated Paulinus Bishop of

Antioch, separated himself from the communion, not only of St. Eusebius, but also of St. Athanasius and Pope Liberius; he was thus the founder of a new schism, and, in despite, retired to his see in Sardinia, where he died in 370, without giving any proof of returning once more to ecclesiastical unity.

He was followed in his secession by some people in Sardinia and other kingdoms, and these added errors to schism, by re-baptizing those who had been baptized by the Arians. It is worthy of remark that Calmet in his Sacred and Profane History (Book 65, No. 110), tells us that the Church of Cagliari celebrated the feast of Lucifer as a saint or holy personage, on the 20th of May. Benedict XIV., in his work de Sanctor Canon, tome 1, lib. 1, cap. 40, says, that two Archbishops of Sardinia having written for and against the sanctity of Lucifer, the Sacred Congregation of the Roman Inquisition, in the year 1641, imposed silence on both parties, under severe penalties, and decreed that the veneration of Lucifer should stand as it was. The Bollandists (die. 20 Maii, p. 207) strenuously defend this decree of the Sacred Congregation. Noel Alexander (sec. 4, cap. 3, art. 13) and D. Baillet (in vita Luciferi, 20 Maii) maintain, that the Lucifer whose feast is celebrated in the Church of Cagliari, is not the personage we speak of, but another of the same name, who suffered martyrdom in the persecution of the Vandals.

IV. PERSECUTION OF VALENS, OF GENNERIC, OF HUNNERIC, AND OTHER ARIAN KINGS

51.—Julian is made Emperor, and dies. 52.—Jovian Emperor; his Death. 53.—Valentinian and Valens Emperors. 54.—Death of Liberius. 55, 56.—Valens puts eighty Ecclesiastics to Death—his other Cruelties. 57.—Lucius persecutes the Solitaries. 58.—Dreadful Death of Valens. 59–61.—Persecution of Genseric. 62 64.—Persecution of Hunneric. 65.—Persecution of The odoric. 67, 68.—Persecution of Leovigild.

51. On the death of Constantius, the impious Julian the Apostate succeeded to the Empire. At first he restored the Catholic bishops to their sees, but he soon began to persecute not only the bishops but the faithful in general, not because they were Catholics, but because they were Christians, for he declared himself an idolater and an enemy of Christ. He perished in the Persian war in the year 363. He was engaged in the heat of battle, when, beholding the Persians flying before his troops, he raised his arm to cheer on his own soldiers to the pursuit, when just at the moment, as Fleury

relates, a Persian horseman let fly an arrow, which went through his arm, his ribs, and deep into the liver; he tried to pull it out, and even wounded his fingers in the attempt, but could not succeed, and fell over his horse. He was borne off the field and some remedies applied, and he felt himself so much better that he called for his horse and arms again to renew the fight, but his strength failed him, and he died on the same night, the 26th of June, being only thirty-one years and six months old, and having reigned but one year and eight months after the death of Constantius. Thodoret and Sozymen relate that when he felt himself wounded he filled his hand with blood and threw it up towards heaven, exclaiming, “Galilean, thou halt conquered !” Theodoret likewise relates that St. Julian Saba the Solitary, while lamenting the threats uttered by Julian against the Church, suddenly turned to his disciples, with a serene and smiling countenance, and said to them, The wild boar which wasted the vineyard of the Lord is dead !and when the news of Julian’s death afterwards reached them they found that he died at the very hour the holy sage announced the fact to them. Cardinal Orsi quotes the authority of the Chronicle of Alexandria, which says that the horseman who executed the Divine vengeance on Julian was the martyr St. Mercurius, who, a hundred years previously suffered in the persecution of Decius, and that this was revealed in a heavenly vision to St. Basil[15156].

52. On the very day of Julian’s death the soldiers assembled and elected Jovian, the first among the Imperial guards, though he was not general of the army; he was much beloved for his fine appearance and for his great valour, of which he gave frequent proofs during the war. When Jovian was elected Emperor, he said, As I am a Christian I cannot command idolaters, for the army cannot conquer without the assistance of God. Then all the soldiers cried out, Fear not, Emperor, you command Christians.

Jovian was delighted with this answer. He accepted the truce for thirty years offered by the Persians, and was most zealous in favouring the Catholics, opposing both the Arians and Semi-Arians. He restored peace to the Church, but it was of but short duration, for he died eight months after his elevation to the Empire, in the 33rd year of his age. The generality of authors, following St. Jerome attribute his death to want of caution in sleeping in a room in which a large quantity of charcoal was burned, to dry the walls which were newly plastered, and thus died one of the greatest champions of the Church[15157].

53. On the death of Jovian, Valentinian was elected by the army in 364. He was the son of Gratian, Prefect of the Pretorium, and he was banished by Julian, because, being a Christian, he had struck the minister of the idols, who sprinkled him with lustral water. He was solicited by the army to elect a colleague, as the empire was attacked in various points by the barbarians, so he chose his brother Valens, declared him emperor, and divided the empire with him. Valentinian governed the West, when the Church enjoyed a profound peace, and Valens governed the East, where he kept up and even increased the dissensions already too rife there, and treated the Catholics with the greatest cruelty, as we shall shortly see.

54. Pope Liberius died in the year 366, and before his death had the consolation of receiving a deputation in Rome of several Oriental bishops, who were anxious to return to the unity of the Church. Liberius sat for fourteen years, and notwithstanding the error he fell into by signing the formula of Sirmium, he is called a pontiff whose memory is in benediction by St. Basil, St. Epiphanius, and St. Ambrose. Orsi says that his name is found in some Greek Martyrologies, and that he was venerated by that Church as a saint, and Sandinus says that his name is still in the Martyrologies of Bede and of Wandelbert. St. Damasus, a man of great learning and sanctity, was elected Pope, at his death, but he was troubled for many years by the schism of Ursinus, commonly called Ursicinus, who sacrilegiously got himself elected Pope at the same time[15158].

55. We now come to the reign of Valens, who was even a greater persecutor of the Church than Constantius. Eudosius, an Arian bishop, hadagreat influence over him, and, from his extraordinary anxiety to protect this bishop, he became a persecutor of the Catholics. Before he set out to undertake the war against the Goths, he was baptized by Eudosius, and, just as he was receiving the Sacrament, the bishop made him swear that he would persecute and banish from the country all the defenders of the Catholic faith; and Valens fulfilled this impious oath with dreadful exactness. The Arians, now strong in the Emperor’s favour, began to maltreat the Catholics, and these, not being able to endure any longer the persecutions they were subjected to, deputed eighty ecclesiastics of great

piety to go to Nicomedia, and implore Valens to put a stop to the violent measures of their enemies. Valens was outrageous at this proceeding, and commanded Modestes, Prefect of the Pretorium, to put them all privately to death. This impious order was barbarously obeyed by Modestes. He gave out that he was only sending them into banishment, lest the people should be incited to break out; and he had them all put on board a ship, and the sailors were ordered, when they were a good distance from the land, so that no one could observe them, to set fire to the vessel, and leave them to perish. The order, cruel as it was, was obeyed the vessel was fired; but the Almighty deranged all their plans, for a strong wind immediately sprung up, and blew the vessel on shore while it was still burning, and it was then finally consumed[15159].

56. Valens next sent many ecclesiastics of the Church of Edessa into exile. It is well known how he strove to banish St. Basil; but the hand of the Lord miraculously prevented it, for when he was about to sign the sentence, the pen was broken in his hand, and his arm was paralyzed. He, likewise, persecuted the Catholic followers of St. Meletius, and banished them from the churches; but these faithful Christians used to assemble at the foot of a mountain, and there, exposed to the winter’s snow and rain, and the summer’s sun, they praised God; but even then he dispersed them, and few cities in the empire but had to deplore the tyranny of Valens, and the loss of their pastors. St. Gregory of Nyssa gives a sad description of the desolation caused by the tyrant in many provinces. When he came to Antioch he put a great many to the torture, and ordered a great many to be drowned, and sent off a very great multitude into exile, into Palestine, Arabia, Lybia, and many other provinces[15160].

57. The holy solitaries of Syria and Egypt, by their lives and miracles, were the great upholders of the faith of the people, and were, on that account, particularly odious to Valens. He, therefore, issued a decree, directed against those champions of the faith, obliging them to enrol themselves among his troops, intending to punish them severely in case of disobedience, and knowing well that they would not do as he ordained. Full scope was given by this to the Arians, to gratify their malignity, at the expense of these innocent men, and especially against the monks of St. Basil. Phontonius, who usurped the see of Nicomedia, exercised horrible

cruelties against the Catholics; but even he was surpassed by Lucius, the pretended Bishop of Alexandria, who obtained possession of that see by cruelty, and retained it by the same means. When the law of Valens that the monks should bear arms was promulgated, Lucius left Alexandria, and, accompanied by the commander of the troops in Egypt, placed himself at the head of three thousand soldiers, and went to the deserts of Nitria, where he found the monks, not, indeed, prepared to fight, but to die for the love of Jesus Christ, and he put whole companies of them to death, but five thousand of them escaped his fury, and fled to a place of safety, and concealed themselves. Wearied out with killing and torturing these holy men, Lucius now seized on their chiefs, Isidore, Heraclides, Macarius of Alexandria, and Macarius of Egypt, and banished them to a marshy island in Egypt, where all the inhabitants were idolaters; but when they arrived at the shore, a child possessed by the devil was thrown at their feet, and the devil cried out " O, servants of the true God, why do you come to drive us from this place, which we have possessed so long." They prayed over the child, cast forth the devil, and restored the infant to his parents, and were received with the greatest joy by the people, who threw down the old temple of the idols they previously adored, and began to build a church in honour of the true God.

When the news of this transaction was told in Alexandria, the people all cried out against their impious bishop, Lucius, who, they said, was warring, not against man, but against God, and he was so terrified with the popular excitement, that he gave the solitaries permission to return again to their deserts[15161].

58. Valens was overtaken by the Divine vengeance in 378. The Goths extended their ravages to the very gates of Constantinople, and he was so lost to shame, that he thought of nothing all the while but enjoying himself in his capital. The people began to murmur loudly at this state of inaction, and he, at last, roused himself, and marched against the enemy. Theodoret relates, that, as he was leaving the city, a holy monk, called Isaac, who lived in the neighbourhood, thus addressed him : "Where are you going to, Emperor, after having made war against God ?Cease to war with the Almighty, and he will put an end to the war raging against you; but should you not do so, mark my words, you will go to battle, but the vengeance of

God will pursue you, you will lose your army, and never return here again." "I will return," said Valens, in a rage, "and your life shall pay for your audacity;" and he immediately ordered that he should be sent to prison. The hermit's prophecy turned out too true. When Valens arrived in presence of the Goths, their king, Fritigern, sent him an embassy, asking for peace, and leave to establish himself and his people in Thrace. The Emperor rejected his offer; and, on the 9th of August, 378, both armies were drawn up in front of each other, and Fritigern again made proposals of peace. But while the Romans were deliberating on their answer, the division of Bacurius, Prince of the Iberians, was attacked, and the battle became general; and never, since the slaughter at Canne, did the Romans suffer such losses as on that day. When the night closed, Valens mixed himself up with some of his soldiers and fled, thinking thus to conceal himself; but he was wounded with an arrow, and fell from his horse, and was brought by his soldiers into the hut of a peasant by the way-side.

He was scarcely there when a troop of Goths, looking for plunder, arrived, and, without knowing who was inside, endeavoured to break open the door; but when they could not succeed at once in doing so, they set fire to the hut, and went away, and the unhappy Valens was burned alive in the fifteenth year of his reign and the fiftieth of his age. This was, as Orosius writes, a just judgment of God :the Goths asked Valens for some bishops, to instruct them in the Christian religion, and he sent them Arians, to infect the poor people with their impious heresy; and so they were justly appointed afterwards, as ministers of the Divine justice, to punish him. On the death of Valens, Gratian became master of the whole empire, and this good prince gave liberty to the Catholics of the East, and peace to the Church[15162].

59. We now have to treat of the persecution of the Catholics of Africa by Genseric, the Arian King of the Vandals. He commenced persecuting the Catholics in the year 437, with the intention of making Arianism the religion of all Africa, as St. Prosper writes. Immediately after conquering Carthage, he commenced a most cruel war against the Catholics, plundered the churches, and gave them as habitations to his vassals, after banishing the priests, and taking away the sacred vessels; and, intending to have no religion but Arianism, he drove the bishops, not alone out of their churches, but out of the cities, and put many to death. He would not permit the

Catholics, on the death of St. Deogratias, to elect another Bishop of Carthage, and he prohibited all ordinations in the province of Zeugitania, and in the Pro-consulate, where there were sixty-four bishoprics; the effect of this order was, that, at the end of thirty years, there were only three bishops in the province, and two of these were banished, and the third fled to Edessa. Cardinal Orsi, following the historian of the Vandalic persecution, says that the number of martyrs was very great.

The history of four brothers, in particular, slaves of one of Genseric's officers, is very interesting :These martyrs, finding it impossible to serve God according to their wishes in the house of their Vandal master, fled, and took refuge in a monastery near the city of Trabacca; but their master never ceased till he found them out, and brought them back to his house, where he loaded them with chains, put them in prison, and never ceased to torture them. When Genseric heard of it, instead of blaming the master for his cruelty, he only encouraged him to continue it, and the tyrant beat them with branches of the palm tree to that pitch, that their bones and entrails were laid bare; but, though this was done many days in succession, the following days they were always found miraculously healed. He next shut them up in a narrow prison, with their feet in stocks made of heavy timber; but the beams of the instrument were broken in pieces, like twigs, the next day. When this was told to Genseric, he banished them to the territories of a Pagan king, in the deserts of Africa. The inhabitants of their place of exile were all Pagans, but these holy brothers became apostles among them, and converted a great number; but, as they had no priest, some of them made their way to Rome, and the Pope yielded to their wishes, and sent a priest among them, who baptized a great number. When Genseric heard this, he ordered that each of the brothers should be tied to a car by the feet, and dragged through the woods till dead, and the barbarous sentence was executed. The very barbarians wept when they saw these innocent men thus torn to pieces, but they expired praying and praising God in the midst of their torments. They are commemorated in the Roman Martyrology, on the 14th of October[15163].

60. Genseric was daily becoming more inimical to the Church, and he sent a person called Proculus into the province of Zeugitania, to force the bishops to deliver up the holy Books and all the sacred vessels, with the

intention of more easily undermining their faith, when deprived, as it were, of their arms. The bishops refused to give them up, and so the Vandals took everything by force, and even stripped the cloths off the altars, and made shirts of them, but the Divine vengeance soon overtook Proculus, for he died raving mad, after eating away his own tongue.

The Arians even frequently trampled the Holy Sacrament under their feet in the Catholic Church. When the Catholics were deprived of their church they secretly opened another in a retired place, but the Arians soon heard of it, and collecting a body of armed men under the leadership of one of their priests, they attacked the faithful in their church; some rushed in at the door, sword in hand, others mounted up to the roof with arrows, and killed a great many before the altar; a great many took to flight, but they were afterwards put to death in various ways by order of Genseric.

61. Genseric next issued a decree, that no one should be admitted into his palace, or that of his son, unless he was an Arian, and then, as Victor Vitensis informs us, a person called Armogastes, who was in the court of Theodoric, one of the sons of Genseric, signalized himself for his constancy in the faith. Theodoric tried every means to make him apostatize, but in vain; he first made him promises of preferment; he next threatened him, and he then subjected him to the cruelest torments. He had his head and legs bound with cords twisted with the greatest possible force; he then was hung up in the air by one leg, with his head down, and when all this could not shake his constancy, he ordered him to be beheaded. He knew, however, that Armogastes would be venerated as a martyr by the Catholics, if this sentence were carried into execution, so he changed the sentence, and compelled him to dig the earth, and tend a herd of cows. While Armogastes was one day engaged in this humble employment under a tree, he begged a friend, a Christian of the name of Felix, to bury him after his death at the foot of that tree; he died in a few days after; and when his friend, in compliance with his request, set about digging his grave, he found in the spot a marble tomb, beautifully finished, and there he buried him. The name of St. Armogastes is marked in the Roman Martyrology on the 29th of March, and Archiminus and Saturus, who suffered likewise, are commemorated with him. Genseric used every artifice with Archiminus to cause him to apostatize, but when he could not shake his faith, he gave orders that he should be beheaded; but there was a private condition

annexed; that was, that if he showed any symptoms of fear, the sentence should be executed; but if no terror could be remarked on him at the moment, that his life should be spared, lest he should be venerated as a martyr by the Catholics. He awaited death with the greatest intrepidity, and he was, consequently, spared. Saturus was in the service of Hunneric, the king's eldest son, and he was threatened with confiscation of his entire property, if he did not become an Arian; he yielded neither to the threats of the tyrant, or to the tears of his wife, who came to see him one day with his four children, and threw herself weeping at his feet, and embracing his knees, besought him to have pity on her and her poor children; but Saturus, unmoved, said; *my dear wife, if you loved me you would not tempt me to send myself to hell; they may do with me as they please, but I will never forget the words of my Divine Master, that no one can be his disciple, unless he leaves all things to follow him.* He thus remained firm, and he was despoiled of everything. Genseric died at length, in the year 477, the fiftieth of his reign over the Vandals, 1; and forty-nine years after his landing in Africa. He made Hunneric heir to his kingdom, and settled the succession so that the oldest decendant of his, in the male line, should always be king.

62. Hunneric, in the beginning of his reign, reigned with clemency, but he soon showed the innate cruelty of his disposition, and he commenced with his own relatives. He put to death his brother Theodoric, and his young child, and he would likewise have put his other brother, Genton, out of the way, only he: had the good fortune to be forewarned, and saved himself. He now began to persecute the Catholics; he commanded the holy bishop Eugenius, that he should not preach any more, and that he should allow no one, either man or woman, into the church. The saint answered that the church was open for all, and that he had no power to prohibit any one from entering. Hunneric then placed executioners at the door of the church, with clubs stuck over with spikes, and these tore off not only the hair but even the scalp of the persons who went in, and such violence was used that some lost their sight, and even some lost their lives. He sent away noblemen into the fields to reap the corn; one of these had a withered hand, so that he could not work, but he was still obliged to go, and by the prayers of his companions, the Almighty restored him the use of it. He published a decree that no one should be allowed to serve in the palace, or hold any public employment, if he were not an Arian; and those who refused obedience to

this iniquitous order, were despoiled of their properties, and banished into Italy and Sardinia; he likewise ordered that all the property of the Catholic bishops should go to the Crown after their death, and that no successor could be consecrated to any deceased bishop, until he paid five hundred golden crowns. He had all the nuns collected together, and caused them to be tormented with burning plates of iron, and to be hung up with great weights to their feet, to force them to accuse the bishops and priests of having had criminal intercourse with them; many of them died in these torments, and those who survived, having their skin burned up, were crooked all their lives after.

63. He banished to the desert, between bishops, priests, deacons, and lay people, altogether four thousand nine hundred and seventy-six Catholics, and many among them were afflicted with gout, and many blind with age; Felix, of Abbitirus, a bishop, was for forty-four years paralyzed, and deprived of all power of moving, and even speechless. The Catholic bishops, not knowing how to bring him along with them, begged of the King to allow him to wear out the few days he had to live, in Carthage; but the barbarian answered : if he cannot go on horseback let him be tied with a rope, and dragged on by oxen; and they were obliged to carry him, thrown across a mule, like a log of wood. In the commencement of their journey they had some little liberty, but in a little while they were treated with the greatest cruelty; they were shut up together in a very narrow prison, no one allowed to visit them, crowded together one almost over the other, and no egress allowed for a moment, so that the state of the prison soon became horribly infectious; and, as Victor the historian relates, no torment could equal what they suffered up to their knees in the most horrible filth, and there alone could they sit down, sleep, and eat the little quantity of barley given to them for food, without any preparation, as if they were horses. At length they were taken out of that prison, or rather sink, and conveyed to their destination; the aged, and those who were too weak to walk, were driven on with blows of stones, and prodded with lances, and when nature failed them, and they could not move on any longer, the Moors tied them by the feet, and dragged them on through stones and briars, as if they were carcases of beasts, and thus an immense number of them died, leaving the road covered with their blood.[15164]

64. In the year 483, according to Fleury and N. Alexander, Hunneric, wishing to destroy Catholicity altogether in Africa, commanded that there should be a conference held in Carthage between the Catholics and the Arians. The bishops, not alone of Africa, but of the Islands subject to the Vandals, assembled there, but as Cyril, the Arian Patriarch, dreaded that his sect would be ruined by the conference, it did not take place. The King was now highly incensed against the Catholics, and he privately sent an edict to all the provinces, while he had the bishops in Carthage, and on one and the same day all the churches of Africa were closed, and all the property belonging both to the churches and the Catholic bishops was given over to the Arians, following in that the decree, laid down for the punishment of heretics in the laws of the Emperors. This barbarous decree was put into execution, and the bishops, despoiled of all they possessed, were driven out of Carthage, and all persons were ordered to give them neither food nor shelter, under pain of being burned themselves, and their houses along with them. Hunneric, at last, in the year 484, after committing so many acts of tyranny, and killing so many Catholics, closed his reign and his life by a most horrible death he died rotten, and eaten up alive by a swarm of worms; all his entrails fell out, and he tore his own flesh in a rage with his teeth, so that he was even buried in pieces. He was not altogether eight years on the throne when he died, and he had not even the satisfaction to leave the throne to his son Hilderic, for whom he had committed such slaughter in his family, because, according to the will of his father, Genseric, the crown descended to Guntamond, the son of his brother Genton; and he was succeeded, in 496, by Trasamond, who endeavoured to extirpate Catholicity totally in Africa, about the year 504. Among his other acts, he banished two hundred and twenty-four bishops, and among them was the glorious St. Fulgentius. On the death of Trasamond, in 523, he was succeeded by Hilderic, a prince, as Procopius writes, affable to his subjects, and of a mild disposition. This good King, Graveson tells us, was favourable to the Catholic Religion, and he recalled St. Fulgentius and the other exiled bishops, and granted the free exercise of their religion to all the Catholics of his kingdom; but in the year 530, he was driven out of his kingdom by Glimere, an Arian, and then it was that the Emperor Justinian, to revenge his intimate friend, Hilderic, declared war against Glimere; and his general, Belisarius, having conquered Carthage and the principal cities, and

subjected all Africa once more to the Roman Emperor, the Arians were banished, and the churches restored to the Catholics[15165].

65. There were other persecutions by the Arians, after the death of Hunneric. Theodoric, King of Italy, and son of Theodomire, King of the Ostrogoths, was also an Arian, and persecuted the Catholics till his death, in the year 526. He ought, however, to be lauded for always keeping in his employment honest and learned ministers. One of them was the great Boetius, a man of profound learning, and a true Christian; but through the envy of his calumniators, he was cast into prison by his sovereign, and after being kept there a long time, was, at last, without being given an opportunity of defending himself, put to death in horrible torments, his head being tied round with a cord, and that twisted till his eyes leaped out of their sockets. Thus died Boetius, the great prop of the faith in that age, in the year 524, and the fifty-fifth of his age. Theodoric likewise put to death Symmachus, a man of the highest character, in a most barbarous manner; and his crime was, that he was son-in-law to Boetius, and the tyrant dreaded that he would conspire against his kingdom. He also caused the death of the holy Pope John, in prison, by privations and starvation, and this holy man is venerated since in the Church as a martyr. Some inculpate this pontiff, for having induced the pious Emperor, Justin, to restore the churches to the Arians, but others deny his having done so. Cardinal Orsi says, that a great deal of obscurity hangs over the transactions of this age; but, taking the anonymous commentator on Valesius as a guide, he does not think that the Pope obtained the restitution to the Arians of all their churches, but only of such as they were already in possession of, or such as were deserted, and not consecrated; and that he did this only that Theodoric might rest satisfied with this arrangement, and leave the Catholics in possession of their churches, and not turn them out, and give them up to the Arians, as it was feared he would. But Noel Alexander, Baronius, and Orsi himself and with these Berti agrees say, with more likelihood, that St. John refused to solicit the Emperor, at all, for the restitution of the churches to the Arians, and that this is proved from his second epistle to the Italian Bishops, in which he tells them, that he consecrated, and caused to be restored to the Catholics in the East, all the churches in possession of the Arians; and, it was on that

account that he was put into prison by Theodoric, on his return to Italy, and died there on the 27th of May, 526, worn out with sufferings.

66. Theodoric, not satisfied with those acts of tyranny, as the above-mentioned anonymous writer informs us, published an edict on the 26th of August, giving to the Arians all the Catholic churches; but God, at length, had pity on the faithful, and he removed him by a sudden death. A dreadful flux brought him to death's door in three days; and on the very Sunday in which his decree was to be put into execution, he lost his power and his life. A cotemporaneous historian gives a curious account of the beginning of his sickness. He was going to supper, and the head of a big fish was placed before him; he immediately imagined that he saw the head of Symmachus, whom he had a little before put to death, and that it threatened him with eyes of fury. He was dreadfully alarmed; and, seized with sudden terror, he took to his bed, and told his physician, Elpidius, what he imagined; he then regretted sincerely his cruelty to Boetius and Symmachus, and between agitation of mind, and the racking of his bowels, he was soon dead. St. Gregory writes, that a certain hermit, in the island of Lipari, saw him in a vision after his death, bare footed, and stripped of all his ornaments, between St. John and Symmachus, and that they brought him to the neighbouring Volcano, and cast him into the burning crater.

67. Leovigild, king of the Visigoths, in Spain, was likewise an Arian; he had two sons by his first wife, Hermengild and Reccarede, and he married a second time, Goswind, the widow of another King of the Visigoths. He married his son Hermengild to Ingonda, who was a Catholic, and refused to allow herself to be baptized by the Arians, as her mother-in-law Goswind, herself an Arian, wished. Not being able to induce her, by fair means, to consent, Goswind seized her one day by the hair, threw her on the ground, kicked her, and covered her over with blood, and then stripped her violently, and threw her into a fountain of water, to re-baptize her by force; but nothing could induce her to change her faith, and she even converted her husband Hermengild. When Leovigild heard this, he commenced a persecution against the Catholics; many were exiled, and their properties confiscated; others were beaten, imprisoned, and stoned to death, or put out of the way by other cruelties. Seven bishops were also banished, and the churches were deprived of their possessions. Hermengild was cast into prison by his father, and, at the festival of Easter, an Arian bishop came to

give him communion, but he refused to receive it from his hand, and sent him off as a heretic; his father then sent the executioners to put him to death, and one of them split open his head with a hatchet. This took place in the year 586, and this holy prince has been since venerated as a martyr.

68. The impious Leovigild did not long survive his son; he deeply regretted having put him to death; and, as St. Gregory tells us, was convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion, but had not the grace to embrace it, as he dreaded the vengeance of his people. Fleury, nevertheless, quotes many authorities to prove that Leovigild spent a week before his death, deploring the crimes he committed, and that he died a Catholic in the year 587, the eighteenth of his reign. He left the kingdom to his son Reccarede, who became a Catholic, and received the sacrament of Confirmation in the Catholic church; and such was his zeal for the faith, that he induced the Arian bishops, and the whole nation of the Visigoths, to embrace it, and deposed from his employment, and cashiered from his army, all heretics. The beginning of his reign was thus the end of the Arian heresy in Spain, where it reigned from the conquest of that country by the barbarians, an hundred and eighty years before, in the beginning of the fifth century; and when the Emperor Justinian, by the victories of Belisarius, became master of Africa, about the year 535 (chap. 4, No. 64), the Catholic faith was also re-established. The Burgundians, in Gaul, forsook the Arian heresy under the reign of Sigismund, the son and successor of King Gontaband, who died in 516. Sigismund was converted to the faith in 515, by St. Avitus, Bishop of Vienne. The Lombards in Italy abandoned Arianism, and embraced the Catholic faith under their King, Bimbert, in 660, and have since remained faithful to the Church. Danaeus thus concludes his essay on the heresy of the Arians : “This dreadful hydra, the fruitful parent of so many evils, was then extinguished, but after the lapse of about nine hundred years, in about the year 1530, was again revived in Poland and Transylvania, by modern Arians and Antitrinitarians, who, falling from bad to worse, have become far worse than the ancient Arians, and are confounded with Deists and Socinians “[15166].

ARTICLE III

69–74.—Heresy of Macedonius. 75—77.—Of Apollinaris. 78.—Of Elvidius. 79.—Of Aetius. 80, 81.—The Messalians. 82.—The Priscillianists. 83.—jouinians. 84.—Other Heretics. 85.—Of Audeus, in particular.

69. As Arius uttered blasphemies against the Son, so Macedonius had the temerity to speak blasphemously of the Holy Ghost. He was, at first, an Arian, and was deputed to the Council or Cabal of Tyre, as legate of the Emperor Constantius. He was then intruded by the Arians into the see of Constantinople, as Socrates informs us, though Paul, the lawful bishop, was then alive, and he received ordination at the hands of the Arians. A horrible circumstance occurred at his induction into the Metropolitan see. He went to take possession in a splendid chariot, accompanied, not by his clergy, but with the imperial Prefect by his side, and surrounded by a powerful body of armed troops, to strike terror into the people. An immense multitude was assembled, out of curiosity to see the pageant, and the throng was so great, that the church, streets, and squares were all choked up, and the new bishop could not proceed.

The soldiers set about clearing the way; they first struck the people with the shafts of their spears, and whether it was by orders of the bishop, or through their own ferocity, they soon began to wound and kill the people, and trampled on the slain and fallen; the consequence was, that three thousand one hundred and fifty dead bodies lay stretched in gore in the street; the bishop passed through, and as his entrance to the Episcopal throne was marked by blood and slaughter, so his future government of the See was distinguished for vengeance and cruelty. In the first place, he began to persecute the friends of Paul, his competitor in the See; he caused some of them to be publicly flogged, confiscated the property of others, more he banished, and he marked his hatred of one in particular by causing him to be branded on the forehead, to stamp him through life with a mark of infamy. Several authors even say that, after he had banished Paul from the See, he caused him to be strangled at Cucusus, the place of his exile[15167].

70. His rage was not alone directed against the friends of Paul, but against all who professed the faith of the Council of Nice; the wretch made use of atrocious torments to oblige them to receive communion from him. He used, as Socrates informs us, to have their mouths forced open with a wooden tongs, and the consecrated particle forced on them, a punishment greater than death to the faithful. He used to take the children from their

mothers, and have them most cruelly flogged in their mothers presence; and the mothers themselves he used to torture by squeezing both their breasts under the lid of a heavy chest, and then caused them to be cut off with a sharp razor, or burned them with red coals, or with red-hot balls, and left them to die in prolonged tortures. As if it was not enough to torture and destroy the Catholics themselves in this manner, he vented his rage on their churches, which he destroyed to the very foundations, and their ruins he had scattered abroad.

71. One would think that these sacrilegious excesses were quite enough. But he was determined to do something more, and this was the last act he was permitted to perform as bishop. He had the audacity to disinter the body of Constantino, and transfer it from one tomb to another; but Constans could not stand this, so he ignominiously deposed him from the bishopric. While he was Bishop of Constantinople, he was only remarked for being a very bad man, and a Semi-Arian; but after his deposition, the diabolical ambition seized him, of becoming great in impiety, and the chief of a heresy; so, in the year 360, considering that preceding heresiarchs had directed their attacks against the Father and the Son, he determined to blaspheme the Third Person, the Holy Ghost. He, therefore, denied that the Holy Ghost was God, and taught that he was only a creature like the angels, but of a higher order.

72. Lambert Danaeus says that Macedonius was deposed in the year 360, and was exiled to a place called Pilae, where, in his old age, he paid the penalty of his crimes. But his heresy survived him : he had many followers, and the chief among them was Marantonius, Bishop of Nicomedia, and formerly his disciple, and, what was remarkable, he was distinguished for the regularity of his life, and was held in high esteem by the people. This heresy had many adherents in the monasteries of Monks, and among the people of Constantinople, but neither bishops nor churches till the reign of Arcadius, in the Arian domination. The Macedonians were principally scattered about Thrace, in Bithynia, along the Hellespont, and in all the cities of Cizica. They were, in general, people of moral lives, and observers of almost monastic regularity; they were usually called Pneumatomachi, from the Greek word signifying enemies of the Spirit[15168].

73. The Macedonian heresy was condemned in several particular Councils. In the year 362, after the return of St. Athanasius, it was condemned in the Council of Alexandria; in 367, in a Council in Illyria; and in 373, in a Council held in Rome, by St. Damasus, for the condemnation of Apollinaris, whose heresy will be discussed presently. In the year 381, Macedonius was again condemned, in the Council of Constantinople (the first Constantinopolitan), and though only an hundred and fifty bishops were present, and these were all Orientals, this Council was recognized as a general one, by the authority of St. Damasus, and another Council of Bishops assembled in Rome immediately after, in 382.

N. Alexander says: “ *This was a Council of the Oriental Church alone, and was only, ex post facto,Ecumenical, inasmuch as the Western Church, congregated in the Synod of Rome, under Pope Damasus, held the same doctrine, and condemned the same heresy, as the Oriental Church.”* And Graveson says: “ *This Council of Constantinople was afterwards reckoned a general one, for Pope Damasus, and the whole Church of the “West, gave it this dignity and authority.”*An anonymous author says the same thing (Auctor Lib. Apparat. brev. ad Theol. Jus Canon). This Council is considered a General one, because it followed in everything what was previously defined in the Roman Council, to which the Eastern bishops were convoked, by letters of St. Damasus, presented to the bishops assembled in Constantinople, and what was decreed in that Council was confirmed in the other Synod, held in Rome, in 382. The Fathers of the Council wrote to St. Damasus, that he had, by his fraternal charity, invited them, by letters of the Emperor, to assist as members of the Council, to be held in Rome. The reader will find in the third volume the refutation of the heresy of Macedonius.

74. In this Council of Constantinople, besides the condemnation of the heresy of Macedonius, the heresies of Apollinaris and Eunomius were also condemned; and Maximus Cinicus, who seized on the See of Constantinople, was deposed, and St. Gregory of Nazianzen was confirmed in possession of it, but he, through love of peace, afterwards resigned it, and Neptarius was chosen in his place by the Council. Several canons, regarding the discipline of the Church, were passed, and the Nicene Creed was confirmed by the Council, and some few words were added to it concerning the mystery of the Incarnation, on account of the Apollinarists and other

heretics, and a more ample explanation of the article regarding the Holy Ghost was added, on account of the heresies of the Macedonians, who denied his Divinity. The Nicene Creed says, of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, these words alone: *Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit, et incarnatus est, et homo factus. Passus est, et resurrexit tertia die; et ascendit in coelos; et iterum ventures est judicare vivos, et mortuous; et in Spiritum Sanctum, & c." But the Symbol of Constantinople goes on thus : " Descendit de coelis, et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus, et sepultus est; tertia die resurrexit a mortuis secundum Scripturas, & c. Et in Spiritum Sanctum Dominum et vivificantem, ex Patre procedentem, et cum Patre et Filio adorandum et conglorificandum qui locutus est per Prophetas, & c"*[15169]. Nicephorus[15170] relates, that St. Gregory of Nyssa laid down the declaration of the Council in these words : *" Et in Spiritum Sanctum Dominum et uivificantem, ex Patre procedentem, cum Patre et Filio coadorandum et conglorificandum, qui locutus est per Prophetas"* (Act. Conc. Const.) When this was read in the Council, all the bishops cried out : *"This is the faith of all; this is the orthodox faith; this we all believe"*[15171].

75. We have now to speak of Apollinaris, who was condemned in the same Council of Constantinople. He was Bishop of Laodicea, and St. Jerome's master in sacred literature; but he broached another heresy, concerning the person of Jesus Christ. His principal error, as Noel Alexander tells us, on the authority of St. Epiphanius, St. Leo, St. Augustine, and Socrates[15172], was, that he supposed the human nature of Jesus Christ only half human nature he supposed that Christ had no soul, but that, in place of one, the Word made flesh answered as a soul to his body. He softened down this doctrine a little after, for then he admitted that Christ was not without a soul altogether, for he possessed that part of the sensitive soul, with which we see and feel in common with all other sensitive beings; but that he had not the reasoning part, or the mind, and the Word, he said, supplied that in the Person of Christ. This error is founded on the false philosophy of Plato, who wished to establish in man three substances, to wit the body, the soul, and the mind.

76. The Apollinarists added three other errors : First, that the body of Christ, born of Mary, was consubstantial with the Divinity of the Word, and hence it followed that the Divinity of the Word was passible, and suffered, in reality, torments and death. Eranistes, an Apollinarist, contended that the Divine Nature suffered in the flesh, just as the soul suffers, conjoined with the body, in the sufferings of the body. But even in this illustration he was in error, because the body without the soul is not capable of suffering, and, when the body is hurt, it is the soul that suffers in reality, by the communication it has with the body; so that, according to their system, the Divine Nature would suffer, if the flesh, supposed to be consubstantial to the Divinity, was hurt. The second error was, that the Divine Word did not take flesh from the Virgin, but brought it down from heaven, and, on that account, they called the Catholics, who believed that the body of Christ was taken from Mary, Homicolists, and accused them of establishing, not a Trinity, but a Quaternity, of Persons, because, besides the three Divine Persons, they admitted a fourth substance, entirely distinct, Christ-God, and Man. Thirdly The last error was, that the Divine substance of the Word was converted into flesh; but these three errors, N. Alexander says, were not taught by Apollinaris, but by his disciples[15173]. Apollinaris erred also in the doctrine of the Trinity, by teaching that there were different degrees of dignity in the Trinity itself. He calls the Holy Ghost great, the Son greater, and the Father greatest. He, likewise, taught the errors of the Millenarians, and said that the Jewish rites ought to be resumed[15174]. Fleury and Orsi, likewise, give an account of his heresy[15175].

77. The heresy of Apollinaris, especially that part of it referring to the Mystery of the Incarnation, was already condemned, in the year 362, by St. Athanasius, in the Council of Alexandria; it was also condemned, in 373, by St. Damasus in the Roman Council, and the same year Bernini tells us that Apollinaris died, the laughing-stock of the people, even of the children[15176]. An author, quoted by St. Gregory of Nyssa[15177], relates, that Apollinaris, being in his dotage, gave the book containing his doctrines to a lady of Antioch, a disciple of his, to keep for him; this came to the knowledge of St. Ephraim the Syrian, who was then at Antioch, and he borrowed the book for a few days, from the lady : he took it home and pasted the leaves one to

the other, so that nothing could open them, folded up the book, and sent it back again to the lady.

Soon after this he had a Conference with Apollinaris, and they began to dispute about the doctrines of his book, in presence of a great many persons. Apollinaris, weakened in his intellect, on account of his great age, said that the answers to St. Ephraim's arguments would be all found in his book, and he sent to the lady for it; but when he tried to open the first page he found it pasted up, and the whole book just like a log of wood; he was so enraged that he dashed it violently to the ground and trampled on it, and ran out of the place as fast as ever he could, amid the laughter of the bystanders, who continued hooting after him as long as he was in sight. It is said that the, poor old man took it so much to heart, that he fell sick and died. Finally, this heresy was condemned in the Second General Council, (the first of Constantinople,) as appears in the Synodical letters : "Nos praeterea doctrinam Dominicus Incarnationis integram & perfectam tenemus, neque dispensationem carnis Christi vel animCe, vel mentis expertem, vel imperfectam esse asserimus; sed agnoscimus Verbum Dei ante secula omnino perfectum horninem in novissimis diebus pro nostra salute factum esse"[15178].

78. Among the followers of Apollinaris were the Anti-dicomarianites or adversaries of Mary. These said, following Elvidius, that she did not remain a virgin, but after the birth of Christ had other children by St. Joseph. St. Epiphanius[15179], hearing that this error was prevalent in Arabia, refuted it in a long letter directed to all the faithful of that region. At the same time, and in the same country, another error altogether opposed to this was broached, that the Blessed Virgin was a sort of Deity. The followers of this sect were called Collyridians[15180], because they worshipped the Virgin by offering her a certain sort of cakes called, in Greek, Collyrides. This superstition came from Thrace and Upper Sythica, and passed into Arabia. The women, especially, were almost all followers of this sect.

On certain fast days every year they ornamented a car, and placed on it a square bench covered with a cloth; on this a loaf was placed, and, being offered to the Virgin, was then divided among the worshippers. St. Epiphanius, in combating this superstition, showed that women can never take any part in the priesthood, and that the worship they offered to the

Virgin was idolatrous; for, although the most perfect of all creatures, she was still but a creature, and should not be honoured like God with that oblation.[15181]

79. Aerius was ambitious of becoming Bishop of Antioch, and when Eustasius was elected to that See, he was devoured with envy. Eustasius did all in his power to gratify him; he ordained him priest, gave him the government of his hospital, and when, with all this, he could not prevent him from talking badly of him, he admonished him, tried to gain him over by more kindness, then threatened him, but all in vain. Aerius threw up the government of the hospital, and began to teach his errors to a number of followers, and when these were turned out not only of the churches, but even out of the towns and villages, they assembled in the woods and caverns, and even in the open fields, though sometimes covered with snow. This heresy sprung up in 370, but was never very extensive. Aerius was an Arian all out; but he added other errors of his own to the pre-existing heresy. These can be easily reduced to three heads :First That there is no difference between priests and bishops; Second That prayers for the dead are useless; and, Third That the observance of fasts and festivals, even of Easter, is only a Jewish rite, and useless.[15182]

80. The fourth century was also infested by the Messalians; these were wandering monks, who professed to abandon the world, though they were not properly monks at all. They were called Messalinians, or Messalians, from a Syriac word signifying prayer, and the Greeks called them Euchitians, for the same reason; they said that the whole essence of religion consisted in prayer[15183]. They were of two classes; the most ancient were Pagans, and had no connexion with Christians or Jews; they believed in a plurality of Gods, though they adored but one alone, whom they called the Almighty. It is supposed, that these were the people called Hypsisteri, or adorers, of the Most High[15184]. Their oratories were large buildings, surrounded with porticos, but open to the sky; and they assembled there morning and evening, and, by the light of numerous lamps, sang hymns of praise to God, and, they were called by the Greeks, Eusemites, on that account[15185]. Those who called themselves Christians began to appear about the reign of Constans, but their origin is doubtful; they came from Mesopotamia, but they were established in Antioch, in 376, when St.

Epiphanius wrote his Treatise on Heresies. St. Epiphanius says, that they took in too literal a sense, the command of Jesus Christ, to leave everything and follow him, and they literally observed it; but they led an idle, vagabond life, begging and living in common, both men and women, so that in the summer time, they used even to sleep together in the streets. They refused to do work of any kind, as they considered it wicked; they never fasted, and used to eat at an early hour in the morning a practice totally opposed to the Oriental manner of fasting[15186]. 81. The following errors were taught and practised by them[15187]*);* they said that every man had, from his birth, a devil attached to him, who prompted him to all evil, and that the only remedy against him was prayer, which banished the devil, and destroyed the root of sin. They looked on the sacraments with indifference, and said the Eucharist did neither good nor harm, and that baptism takes away sin, just like a razor, which leaves the roots. They said the domestic devil is expelled by spitting and blowing the nose, and when they purified themselves in this manner, that they saw a sow and a number of little pigs come out of their mouths, and a fire that did not burn, enter into them[15188]. Their principal error consisted in taking the precept, to pray continually, in the literal sense; they did so to excess, and it was the parent of a thousand follies in this case; they slept the greater part of the day, and then began to say they had revelations, and prophesied things which never happened.

81. They boasted that they saw the Trinity with the eyes of the flesh, and that they visibly received the Holy Ghost; they did very extraordinary things while praying; they would frequently jump forward with violence, and then say that they were dancing on the devil, and this folly became so glaring, that they acquired the name of the Enthusiasts[15189]. They said that man's science and virtue could be made equal to that of God, so that those who once arrived at perfection, never could afterwards sin, even through ignorance. They never formed a separate community from the faithful, always denying their heresy, and condemning it as strongly as anyone else, when they were convicted of it. Their founder was Adelphius, a native of Mesopotamia, and from him they were called Adelphians. The Messalians were condemned in a Council, held in 387, by Flavian, Bishop of Antioch, and also in another Council, held about the same time by St. Anphilochius, Bishop of Iconium, the Metropolis of Pamphilia[15190]. They were finally

condemned in the first Council of Ephesus, especially in the seventh session, and they were proscribed by the Emperor Theodosius, in the year 428. It was a long time before this heresy was finally extinct in the East, and in 1018, during the reign of the Emperor Alexius Comnenus, another heresy sprung out of it, the followers of which were called Bongimilists, which signifies, in the Bulgarian language, the beloved of God. Their founder was Basil, a physician, or monk, who, after practising his errors for fifty-two years, and deluding a great number, was burned alive, with all his followers, by order of the Emperor. This unfortunate man promulgated many blasphemous opinions, principally taken from the Messalians and Manicheans; he said that we should use no prayer, except the "Our Father," and rejected every other prayer but that, which, he said, was the true Eucharist; that we ought to pray to the devil even, that he might not injure us, and that we should never pray in churches, for our Lord says : "When you pray, enter into your "chamber; " he denied the books of Moses, and the existence of the Trinity, and it was not, he said, the Son of God, who became incarnate, but the Archangel Michael. He published many other like opinions, so that there is little doubt but that he lost, not alone the faith, but his senses likewise[15191].

82. About the year 380, the heresy of the Priscillianists first appeared in the East. The founder of this sect was an Egyptian of Memphis, of the name of Mark; he went to Spain, and his first disciples were, a lady of the name of Agapa, and Elpidius, a rhetorician, invited to join him by the lady. These two next wheedled Priscillian to join them, and from him the sect took its name. Priscillian was both noble and rich; he had a great facility of speech, but was unsettled, vain, and proud of his knowledge of profane literature. By his affable manners he gained a great number of followers, both noble and plebeian, and had a great number of women, especially, adherents, and soon the heresy spread like a plague over great part of Spain, and even some bishops, as Instantius and Salvianus, were infected by it. The foundation of this doctrine was Manicheism, but mixed up with the Gnostic, and other heresies. The soul, they said, was of the substance of God himself, and of its own will came on earth, passing through the seven heavens, to combat the evil principle, which was sown in the body of the flesh. They taught that we depended altogether on the stars, which decided

our fate, and that our bodies depended on the signs of the zodiac, the ram presiding over the head, the bull over the neck, the twins over the back, and so on with the remainder of the Twelve Signs. They made merely a verbal profession of the doctrine of the Trinity, but they believed, with Sabellius, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, were one and the same thing, and that there was no real distinction of persons. They did not reject the Old Testament, like the Manicheans, but they explained everything in it allegorically, and they added many apocryphal books to the canonical ones.

83. They abstained from meat, as an unclean thing, and separated married people, notwithstanding the repugnance manifested by those who were not followers of their sect, and this they did through hatred of procreation; for the flesh, they said, was not the work of God, but of the devil; but they used to assemble by night for prayer, and the lights being extinguished, indulged in revolting and promiscuous licentiousness; however, they denied all this when caught, and they taught their followers to practise the doctrine contained in the Latin distich : “Jura perjura, secretum prodere noli” “Swear away, but never tell the secret.” They used to fast on every Sunday, and even on Easter Sunday and Christmas-day, and on these days they used to hide themselves, and not appear at Church; their reason for this conduct was their hatred of the flesh, as they believed that Christ was not really born or arose in the flesh, but only in appearance. They used to receive the Eucharist in the church, like other Christians, but they did not consume the species. They were condemned in the Council of Saragossa, by St. Damasus, and in several particular synods. Finally, Priscillian was condemned to death, at the instance of Ithacius, Bishop of Ossobona, in the year 383, by Evodius, appointed Prefect of the Pretorium by the tyrant Maximus[15192].

83. St. Augustine[15193] speaks of some heretics who lived about this time, and always went barefooted, and taught that all Christians were bound to do likewise[15194].

84. Audæus, chief of the Audæans, was born in Mesopotamia, and was at first a man of exemplary life, and a strict observer of ecclesiastical discipline, but afterwards separated from the Church, and became founder of a sect. He celebrated Easter after the Jewish rite, and said that man was like to God corporeally; interpreting, in the plainest literal sense, that

passage of Genesis, where the Lord says: “ Let us make man in our own image and likeness; “ and he and his followers were Antropomorphites. Noel Alexander says that the only error of the Audæans was in separating themselves from the Church, but as for the rest, they never deviated from the faith; but Petavius[15195], and others, attribute to them the errors of the Antropomorphites, since they attributed to God, literally, the corporeal members the Scripture mystically speaks of. He also taught some errors concerning the administration of the sacrament of penance, and died in the country of the Goths, in 370[15196].

Chapter V

HERESIES OF THE FIFTH CENTURY

ARTICLE I. THE HERESIES OF ELVIDIUS, JOVINIANUS, AND VIGILANTIUS

1.—Heresy of Elvidius. 2.—Errors of Jovinian. 3.—Adverse Opinions of Basnage refuted. 4.—Vigilantius and his Errors.

1. Elvidius was a disciple of the Arian Ausentius, who was intruded into the See of Milan by the Emperor Constans, when he banished St. Dionisius. St. Jerome says he was a turbulent character, both as priest and layman; but, notwithstanding this high authority, it is doubtful whether he ever was a priest, because, as Noel Alexander says, he was a poor peasant, who scarcely knew his letters. He began to disseminate his heretical doctrines in the year 382. He said that the Blessed Virgin had other children by St. Joseph, besides our Lord, and he relied on the authority of Tertullian for this blasphemy; but St. Jerome proves that Tertullian never held such doctrine. St. Ambrose, St. Epiphanius, and especially St. Jerome refuted the errors of Elvidius. He drew three arguments from the Scriptures in support of his heresy :First That text of St. Matthew : “Before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost” (Matt., i, 18). He, therefore, argued, as the text says “before they came together,” it is a proof that they after wards did so. Next he adduced the twenty-fifth verse of the same chapter : “And he knew her not until she brought forth her first-born son.” Therefore, he argues he knew her after. St. Jerome, in his answer, says : “ Should I grieve or smile at this folly.” He then asks, in derision : If anyone should say that Elvidius was seized on by death before he did penance, is that a proof that he did penance after death ? He then brings other texts of Scripture to refute him. Our Lord says to his apostles, “ Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world” (Matt, xxviii, 20); does that prove, says St. Jerome, that Jesus Christ will not be with his elect any more after the end of the world ? St. Paul says of Christ, “For he must reign until he hath put all

his enemies under his feet" (Cor. xv, 25); so, when our Lord has conquered his enemies, he will reign no longer. In the book of Genesis it is said of the crow that left the ark, "That it did not return till the waters were dried up" (Gen. viii, 7); does it then follow that it returned to the ark when the waters were dried up ?Away, then, with arguments of this sort, says St. Jerome[15197] the Scripture here tells, not what was done, but what was not done not what took place, but what did not. The second proof Elvidius adduces is taken from the text already mentioned (Matt, i, 25) : " She brought forth her first-born son ;" therefore, if he was her first-born, she must have had others after. St. Jerome answers this :The Lord commanded, that for every first-born a certain ransom should be paid a month after the birth (Numbers, xviii, 15, 16). Here, then, says St. Jerome, according to Elvidius, one might say : "How can I be obliged to pay a price for my first-born after a month; how can I tell whether I shall ever have a second ? I must wait till a second is born to me, and then I can pay for the first-born." But the Scripture says itself, that the first-born is that which first " openeth the womb."

The same is declared in Exodus, where it says : "The Lord slew every first-born in the land of Egypt" (Exod. xii, 29). Here there is no doubt, but that the text speaks of only-born as well as first-born. His third argument is from the text of St. Luke (viii, 19) : "His mother and brethren came to him." Therefore, he had brothers; but St. Jerome proves, from a great many passages in the Scriptures, that first-cousins are also called brothers, and the brothers referred to in that text are St. James and St. John, the children of the other Mary, the sister of the Mother of God.

2. Jovinian shall now occupy our attention. He was a monk in Milan; and after spending the early years of his life in the austere practices of monastic life fasting on bread and water, going barefooted, and labouring with his hands he forsook his monastery, and went to Rome, where, as St. Ambrose[15198]informs us, he began to disseminate his errors. After falling into this impiety he abandoned his mortified manner of living went shod, and clothed in silk and linen garments nourished and dressed his hair frequented taverns, and indulged in play, banquets, delicate dishes, and exquisite wines and still professed all along to be a monk, and led a life of celibacy, to avoid the responsibility of marriage. Preaching a doctrine pleasing to the senses, he soon had many followers of both sexes in Rome,

who, having previously led chaste and mortified lives, now abandoned themselves to luxury, and got married. Jovinian was first condemned by Pope Siricius, in a Council, held in Rome, in the year 390, and soon after, in another Council, held by St. Ambrose, in Milan. In the end he was exiled by the Emperor Theodosius, and afterwards by Honorius, to Boas, a maritime town of Dalmatia, and died there in misery, in the year 412[15199]. He taught many errors :First, that marriage and virginity were equally meritorius; secondly, that those once baptized can sin no more; thirdly, that those who fast and those who eat have equal merit, if they praise God; fourthly, that all have an equal reward in heaven; fifthly, that all sins are equal; sixthly, that the Blessed Virgin was not a virgin after giving birth to our Lord[15200]. This last error was followed by Hinckmar, Wickliife, Bucer, Peter Martyr, Molineus, and Basnage[15201], but has been ably refuted by St. Jerome, and condemned in a Synod by St. Ambrose. Petavius says, that all the Fathers unanimously profess the virginity of the Blessed Virgin, as fixed by a decree of the Catholic faith. St. Gregory says, that, as Jesus Christ entered into the house, where the apostles were assembled, with the doors shut, in the same manner, at his nativity, he left the inviolated cloister of Mary.

The letter of Theodotus, of Ancira, was approved of by the General Council of Ephesus, in which, speaking of the Blessed Virgin, he says :the birth of Jesus Christ makes her a mother without injury to her virginity. The third canon of the Lateran Council, celebrated in the year 649, under Martin I., says: that he should be condemned, who does not confess that the Mother of God was always a virgin. A similar declaration was made in the Council of Trullus, in 692, and in the eleventh Council of Toledo, in 675[15202]. He was also condemned by St. Gregory, of Nyssa, St. Isidore, Pelusiot, St. Proclus, St. John Chrysostom, St. John Damascenus, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Siricius, Pope, (who excommunicated him and his followers, in a synod held in Rome), St. Peter Chrysologus, St. Hilary, St. Prosper, St. Fulgentius, St. Eucherius, St. Paulinus, St. Anselm, St. Bernard, St. Peter Damian, and many others; and anyone who wishes to see the opinions expressed by the fathers, has only to look to Petavius's Theology[15203]. The text of Ezechiel : "This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened" (Ezechiel, xliv, 2), is generally understood to refer to the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God, and St. Leo[15204], Pope Hormisdas, Pelagius I., and the

Council of Chalcedon, in the discourse addressed to the Emperor Marcion, all understood it thus.

3. Let us now hear what Basnage, and the heretics who hold the contrary opinion, have to say. Their first argument is founded on that text of Isaias, " Behold a virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a son" (Isaias, vii, 14), which St. Matthew, speaking of the Incarnation of the Divine Word, quotes (Matthew, i, 13). Basnage then argues on this text :The prophet says, that Mary conceived as a virgin; but he does not say, that she brought forth her son as a virgin. But what sort of argument is this ?Because the text does not say that she was a virgin, in the birth of her son, therefore, it is a proof that she did not bring him forth a virgin; whereas, the universal tradition of the Church, as we have seen, explains the text in its true sense, that she conceived a virgin, and brought forth our Lord a virgin.

Basnage brings forth another argument, which he deems unanswerable. We read in St. Luke, he says : " After the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord : as it is written in the law of the Lord, every male opening the womb, shall be called holy to the Lord" (Luke, ii, 22). Now, says Basnage, (and it is worthy of remark, with what temerity he threw overboard the doctrine of the Fathers, as opposed to Scripture, and the opinion of the learned), the opinion of the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God is generally held, and still it is opposed, both to Scripture and the opinions of the ancients. The narrative of St. Luke is quite plain : "When the days of her purification, &c." Mary was then subjected to the usual law of women, after birth, not alone to avoid scandal, but as a matter of duty; and she was compelled, by the general discipline of the law, to offer a sacrifice for her purification. The days of her purification could not be accomplished if she had no necessity of purification. All his argument, then, is reduced to this, that Mary ought not to fulfil the days of her purification, if there was no necessity of purification; and, for all that, she was obliged (coacta sit) to fulfil the rite. This argument he took from Origen[15205]; but, as the Fathers of St. Maur say, truly, this was a blasphemy uttered by that Father[15206]; and, justly, for all the Fathers have said with St. Basil[15207], this virgin never was obliged to the law of purification; and this is clear, says the Saint, from the Scriptures; for in Leviticus, xii, 2, it is clearly proved, that this law applies to ordinary mothers, but not to one who conceived by the Holy Ghost. "Scriptum est enim," says the holy Father, "mulier qua' conceperit semen, et peperit masculum, immunda erit septem diebus; ha'c autem cum facta sit Emmanuelis Mater sine semine, pura, et intemerata est; imo postquam effecta est Matre, adhuc virgo permansit."

4. Even Melanchthon, Agricola, and the other Lutherans, as we read in Canisius[15208], all say that Mary had no necessity of purification. St. Cyril of Alexandria, the same author states teaches that to assert the contrary is rank heresy. With all that, Basnage is not convinced, and he quotes a passage of St. Fulgentius, where he says : " Vulvam Matris Omnipotentia Filii nascentis aperuit." But we have another passage, in St. Fulgentius himself, in which he declares that the mother of Christ was the only one who remained immaculate, after giving birth to a son[15209]. But how are we then to understand " he opened the womb ?" this is to be understood, as St. Gregory of Nyssa explains it[15210]; " Solus ille haud ante patefactam virginalem aperuit vulvam ;" that he preserved the virginity of his holy mother. This is what St. Ambrose likewise says : " Hic (Christus) solus aperuit sibi vulvam[15211]." And, treating of the Mysteries against Jovinian, he says: "Why do you seek the order of nature, in the body of Christ, when setting aside the order of nature, he was born of a virgin." Basnage lauds St. Jerome as being of his opinion; but the passage he adduces is not to be found in St. Jerome's writings; besides, St. Jerome[15212] says, in his Dialogues: "Christ alone opened the closed doors of the virginal womb, which, nevertheless, remained ever and always closed;" so that the very Fathers Basnage quotes in his favour, most expressly condemn the impious error he attempts to defend.

Vigilantius was a native of Comminges, near the foot of the Pyrenees, and of very low origin, having been a tavern-keeper for some time; somehow or other, he found leisure to study, and lead a pious life at the same time, so that he acquired the friendship of St. Paulinus, of Nola, who gave him a letter of recommendation to St. Jerome, and he undertook a journey to the Holy Land. This letter was so far useful to him, that St. Jerome, who knew him to be a man of relaxed morals, did not treat him as his hypocrisy deserved[15213].

He had the audacity to treat St. Jerome as a heretic, of the sect of Origen, because he saw him reading Origen’s work; but the Saint, in the year 397, wrote to him[15214], that he read these works, not to follow all their doctrine; but, to take whatever was good out of them, and he exhorts him either to learn or be silent. Some years after, about the year 404, Riparius, a priest, wrote to St. Jerome, that Vigilantius began to dogmatize, speaking against the Relics of Martyrs and Vigils in churches. St. Jerome gave summary answer, and promised to return again to the subject, and treat it more amply, when he would have read Vigilantius work[15215]; and having soon after seen the production, he gave it a short but strong answer, because the monk Sisinius, who brought it to him, was in a hurry to return to Egypt[15216]. The following are the errors of Vigilantius, refuted by St. Jerome. First. Like Jovinian, he condemned the practice of celibacy. Second He condemned the veneration of the relics of the martyrs; and called those who honoured them Cinerists and idolaters. Third He said it was a pagan superstition to light candles by day in their honour. Fourth He maintained that the faithful after death could no longer pray for one another, and he founded this opinion on the apocryphal book of Esdras. Fifth He condemned public Vigils in the churches. Sixth He reprobated the custom of sending alms to Jerusalem. Seventh He totally condemned monastic life, and said, that it was only making ourselves useless to our neighbours, if we embraced it. This sect was not condemned by any council, it had but few followers, and soon became extinct[15217].

ARTICLE II. ON THE HERESY OF PELAGIUS

5.—Origin of the Heresy of Pelagius. 6.—His Errors and Subterfuges. 7-Celestius and his Condemnation. 8.—Perversity of Pelagius. 9.—Council of Diospolis. 10 &11.-He is Condemned by St. Innocent Pope. 12.—Again Condemned by Sozymus. 13,-Julian, a follower of Pelagius. 14.—Semi-Pelagians. 15.—Predestination. 16 & 17.—Godesehaleus.

5. Pelagius was born in Great Britain, and his parents were so poor, that in his youth, he scarcely received any instruction in letters; he became a monk, but nothing more than a mere lay monk, and that was all the dignity he ever arrived at. He lived a long time in Rome, and was respected for his virtues, by very many persons; he was loved by St. Paulinus[15218]; and, esteemed by St. Augustine. He was also looked on as a learned man, as he composed

some useful works[15219], to wit, three books on the Trinity, and a collection of passages of the Scripture on Christian Morality. He, unhappily, however, fell into heresy, while he sojourned at Rome, in regard to grace; and he took his doctrines from a Syrian priest, called Rufinus, (not Rufinus of Aquilea, who disputed with St. Jerome). This error was already spread through the East[15220]; for Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia, had already taught the same errors as Pelagius; and deduced them from the same sources, the principles of Origen[15221]. This Rufinus, then coming to Rome, about the year 400, in the reign of Pope Anastasius, was the first introducer there of that heresy; but, as he was a cautious man, he did not publicly promulgate it himself, not to bring himself into trouble, but availed himself of Pelagius, who, about the year 405, began to dispute against the Grace of Jesus Christ. One day, in particular, a bishop having quoted the words of St. Augustine, in his Confessions: "Lord, grant us what thou orderest, and order what thou wishest:" Pelagius could not contain himself, and inveighed against the author.

He concealed his errors for a time, however, and only communicated them to his disciples, to see how they would be received, and to approve or reject them afterwards, as suited his convenience[15222]. He afterwards became himself the disseminator of his heresy. We shall now review his errors.

The errors of Pelagius were the following: First That Adam and Eve were created mortal, and that their sin only hurt themselves, and not their posterity. Second Infants are now born in the same state that Adam was before his fall. Third Children dying without baptism, do not indeed go to heaven, but they possess eternal life. Such, St. Augustine testifies, were the errors of Pelagius[15223]. The principal error of Pelagius and his followers, was, concerning Grace and Free-Will, for he asserted, that man, by the natural force of his free-will, could fulfil all the Divine precepts, conquer all temptations and passions, and arrive at perfection without the assistance of grace[15224]. When he first began to disseminate this pernicious error, which saps the whole system of our Faith, St. Augustine says, that the Catholics were horrified, and loudly exclaimed against him, so he and his disciples searched every way, for a loop-hole to escape from the consequences, and to mitigate the horror excited by so dreadful a blasphemy. The first subterfuge was this :Pelagius said, that he did not deny the necessity of Grace, but that Grace was Free-Will itself, granted gratuitously by God, to man, without any merit on their part. These are his words, quoted by St. Augustine[15225] : "Free-Will is sufficient that I may be just, I say not without Grace;" but the Catholics said, that it was necessary to distinguish between Grace and Free-Will. To this Pelagius answered (and here is the second subterfuge), that by the name of Grace is understood the law or doctrine by which the Lord gave us the Grace to teach us how we are to live. "They say," St. Augustine writes[15226], "God created man with Free-Will, and, giving him precepts, teaches him how he should live, and in that assists him, inasmuch, as by teaching him, he removes ignorance."

6. But the Catholics answered, that if Grace consisted in the Law alone given to man, the Passion of Jesus Christ would be useless. The Pelagians answered, that the Grace of Christ consisted in giving us the good example of his life, that we might imitate him; (and this was the third subterfuge,) and as Adam injured us by bad example, so our Saviour assisted us by his good example. Christ affords a help to us, not to sin, since he left us an example by living holily[15227]; but this example given by Christ, St. Augustine answers, was not distinct from his doctrine, for our Lord taught both by precept and example. The Pelagians seeing that their position regarding these three points was untenable, added a fourth subterfuge, that was, the fourth species of grace the grace of the remission of sins. They say, says St. Augustine[15228], that the Grace of God is only valuable for the remission of sins, and not for avoiding future ones :and they say, therefore, the coming of Jesus Christ is not without its utility, since the grace of pardon is of value for the remission of past sins, and the example of Christ for avoiding future ones. The fifth subterfuge of the Pelagians was this: They admitted, as St. Augustine[15229] tells us, the internal grace of illustration; but we should admit, with the holy doctor, that they admitted this illustration, solely ex parte objecti, that is, the internal grace to know the value of good and the deformity of bad works, but not ex parte intellectus, so that this grace would give a man strength to embrace the good and avoid the evil. We now come to the sixth and last shift : He finally admitted internal grace, not only on the part of the object, but on the part of human ability, strengthened by grace to do well; but he did not admit it as

necessary according to our belief, but only as useful to accomplish more easily what is good, as St. Augustine explains it[15230]. Pelagius asserts, that Grace is given to us, that what is commanded to us by God, should be more easily accomplished; but Faith teaches us that Grace is not only useful, but absolutely necessary to do good and avoid evil.

7. The Pelagian heresy was very widely extended in a little time. His chief disciple was Celestius, a man of noble family, and a eunuch from his birth. He practised as a lawyer for a time, and then went into a monastery; he then became a disciple of Pelagius, and began to deny Original Sin. Pelagius was reserved, but Celestius was free-spoken and ardent. They both left Home a little before it was taken by the Goths, in 409. They went together, it is belived, first to Sicily, and afterwards to Africa, where Celestius thought to get himself ordained priest, in Carthage; but when the heresy he was teaching was discovered, he was condemned, and excommunicated by the Bishop Aurelius, and a Council summoned by him, in Carthage; he appealed from the Council to the Apostolic See, but, instead of going to Rome, to prosecute his appeal, he went to Ephesus, where he was raised to the priesthood without sufficient caution; but when his heresy became manifest, he was banished from the city, with all his followers[15231]. Notwithstanding all this, after the lapse of five years, he went to Rome to prosecute the appeal, but he was then condemned again, as we shall now see.

8. Pelagius, instead of repenting after the condemnation of Celestius, only became more obstinate in his errors, and began to teach them more openly. About this time the noble virgin, Demetriades, of the ancient Roman family of the Anicii, put into execution a glorious resolution she had made. She had taken refuge in Africa when the Goths desolated Rome, and when her parents were about to marry her to a nobleman, she forsook the world, and, clothing herself in mean garments, as St. Jerome[15232] tells us, consecrated her virginity to Christ. St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and even the Pope, St. Innocent, congratulated this devout lady on the good choice she made. Pelagius also wrote a letter to her, in which, while he praises her, he endeavours to insinuate his poison. He used these words : In hic merito ceeteris preeferenda es, qua’ nisi ex te, et in te esse non possunt[15233]. St. Augustine at once recognised the poison disseminated in this letter, and,

explaining the words, Nisi ex te et in te, he says, as far as the second expression, Nisi in te[15234], it is very well said; but all the poison is in the first part, he says, Nisi ex te, for the error of Pelagius is, that all that man does of good he does altogether of himself, without the assistance of grace.

At the same time, when St. Jerome got cognizance of this letter of Pelagius, he also wrote to the lady[15235], cautioning her against his doctrine, and from that out began to combat his heresy in several books, and especially in that of “The Dialogue of Atticus and Oitobulus.” St. Augustine, likewise, never ceased for ten years to combat the errors of Pelagius; and his books, “ De Natura et Gratia,” “ De Gratia Christi,” “ De Peccato 0riginali.” &c., prove how successfully he refuted them.

9. When Pelagius saw that he was not cordially received in Africa, he went to Palestine, where John, Bishop of Jerusalem, received him; and, in a Council held with his clergy, instead of condemning him, as he ought, he only imposed silence on both parties[15236]. In the year 415, a council of fourteen bishops was held in Diospolis, a city of Palestine; and here Pelagius, as Cardinal Baronius[15237] tells us, induced the bishops to agree to the following propositions, all Catholic, indeed, and opposed to the errors promulgated by him and Celestius :First Adam would not have died had he not sinned. Second The sin of Adam is transfused into the whole human race. Third Infants, are not such as Adam was previous to his fault. Fourth As in Adam all die, according to the Apostle, so in Christ all will be vivified. Fifth Unbaptized infants cannot obtain eternal life. Sixth God gives us assistance to do good, according to St. Paul (I. Tim. vi, 17). Seventh It is God that gives us grace to do every good work, and this grace is not given to us according to our merits. Eighth Grace comes to us, given gratuitously by God, according to his mercy. Ninth The children of God are those who daily say, “forgive us our sins,” which we could not say if we were entirely without sin. Tenth Free-will exists, but it must be assisted by Divine help. Eleventh The victory over temptations does not come from our own will, but from the grace of God. Twelfth The pardon of sins is not given according to the merits of those who ask it, but according to the Divine Mercy.

Pelagius confessed all these truths, and the council of bishops, deceived by his hypocrisy, admitted him to the communion of the Church[15238]; but in this they acted imprudently, for, although his errors were condemned, he was personally justified, which gave him a far greater facility of disseminating his errors, afterwards, and, on this account, St. Jerome, speaking of this Synod, calls it a miserable one[15239], and St. Innocent the Pope refused to admit him to his communion, although he was informed of the retractation of his errors in that Synod, for he truly suspected that his confession was only feigned. The subsequent conduct of Pelagius proved the penetration of the holy Pontiff, for, as soon as he was freed from the obedience of those bishops, he returned to his vomit, and rejected the truths he had then professed, and especially on the point of grace, as St. Augustine remarks[15240] he said, that Divine grace was necessary to do what was right more easily, but the good depended directly on our free will, and this grace he called the grace of possibility. St. Augustine[15241], writing against this false novelty, indites this great sentence : " God, by co-operating in us, perfects that which he began by operating; for we are worth nothing for any pious work without him operating, that we may wish it, or co-operating, when we do wish it." Pelagius, hoping that the proceedings of the Council of Diospolis would be buried in darkness, wrote four books afterwards against the "Dialogue" of St. Jerome, and entitled his work "De Libero Arbitrio"[15242].

10. The affairs of Pelagius did not take such a favourable turn in Africa as they did in Palestine, for in the following year, 416, the Bishop Aurelius summoned another Council in Carthage, in which both he and Celestius were again condemned; and it was decided to send a Synodal letter to the Pope, St. Innocent, that he might confirm the decree of the Council by Pontifical authority[15243]; and, about the same time, another Council of sixty-one Numidian Bishops was held in Milevis, and a letter was likewise written to the Pope, calling on him to condemn the heresy[15244].

Pope Innocent answered both Synodal letters in 417; confirmed the Christian doctrine held by the councils concerning grace[15245]; and condemned Pelagius and Celestius, with all their adherents, and declared them separated from the communion of the Church. He answered, at the same time, and in the same strain, the letters of five other bishops, who had written to him on the same subject; and, among other remarks, says, that he found nothing in Pelagius's book which pleased him, and scarcely anything which did not displease him, and which was not deserving of universal reprobation[15246]. It was then that St. Augustine, as he himself mentions[15247], when Pope Innocent's answer arrived, said : "Two Councils have referred this matter to the Apostolic See. Rescripts have been sent in answer; the cause is decided."

11. We should remark that St. Prosper[15248] writes, that St. Innocent the Pope was the first to condemn the heresy of Pelagius :

Pestein subeuntem prima recidit
Sedes Roma Petri, quæ pastoralis honoris
Facta caput mundi, quidquid non possidet armis,
Religione tenet.

But how can St. Prosper say that St. Innocent was the first to condemn this heresy, when it was already condemned in 412 by the first Council of Carthage, and by the second, in 416, and by the Council of Milevis? Graveson[15249]answers, that these Councils considered it their duty to refer the condemnation of Celestius and Pelagius to the Apostolic See, and, on that account, St. Prosper writes, that the first condemnation proceeded from the Pope. Garner[15250] says that the Pelagian heresy was condemned by twenty-four Councils, and, finally, by the General Council of Ephesus, in 431[15251], for up to that time the Pelagians had not ceased to disturb the Church.

12. When Pelagius and Celestius heard of the sentence pronounced against them by St. Innocent, they wrote him a letter filled with lies and equivocations, appealing to his supreme tribunal from the sentence passed on them by the bishops of Africa; and, as St. Innocent had died, and St. Zozymus was elected in his place, Celestius went to Home himself, to endeavour to gain his favour. St. Zozymus was, at first, doubtful how he ought to act in the matter; but the African bishops suggested to him that he ought not to interfere with a sentence passed by his predecessor, and when the holy Pontiff was better informed of the deceits of Pelagius and Celestius, and especially of the flight of the latter from Rome, when he heard that the Pope was about to examine the cause more narrowly, he was convinced of their bad faith, and condemned their doctrine[15252].

13. The author of the Portable Dictionary[15253], writes that Pelagius, after his condemnation by Pope Zozymus, and the proclamation subsequent,

issued against him by the Emperor Honorious from Rome, went to his beloved Palestine, where he was before so well received; but as his impiety and hypocrisy were now well known, he was driven out of that province. We do not know afterwards what became of him, but it is probable that he returned to England to disseminate his doctrines, and that it was this which induced the bishops of Gaul to send St. Germain de Auxerre there to refute him. The Pelagian heresy was finally extinguished in a short time, and no one was bold enough openly to declare himself its protector, with the exception of Julian, son and successor to Memorius, in the See of Capua. He was a man of talent, but of no steadiness, and the great liveliness of his understanding served to ruin him, by inducing him to declare himself an avowed professor of the heresy of Pelagius. His name is celebrated on account of his famous disputes with St. Augustine, who at first was his friend, but afterwards, in defence of religion, was obliged to declare himself his adversary, and pursued him as a heretic. He was afterwards banished out of Italy, and went to the East, and after wandering in poverty for a long time through various regions, he at last was obliged to support himself by teaching school. It is said he died in Sicily in the reign of the Emperor Valentinian[15254]. The refutation of the Pelagian heresy will be found in the last volume of this work.

14. Several years had rolled by since St. Augustine had successfully combatted the Pelagian heresy, when, in the very bosom of the Church, a sort of conspiracy was formed against the Saint, including many persons remarkable for their learning and piety; this happened about the year 428, and they were called Semi-Pelagians. The chief of this party was John Cassianus, who was born, as Genadius informs us, in the Lesser Scythia, and spent part of his time in the monastery of Bethlehem. From that he came first to Rome, and then to Marseilles, where he founded two monasteries, one of men and one of women, and took the government of them according to the rules he had practised, or seen observed, in the monasteries of Palestine and Egpyt; these rules he wrote in the first four books of twelve he published under the title of Monastic Instructions. What is more to the purpose we treat of, he endeavoured to bring into notice and establish his erroneous sentiments on the necessity of Grace, in his thirteenth Collation or Conference; and to give more weight to his errors, he

puts them into the mouth of Cheremon, one of the solitaries of Panefisum, a place in Egypt, who, he said, was well instructed in all the disputes about Grace, but which, as Orsi says[15255], were never spoken of at all when Cassianus was in Egypt; nor could anyone, in any human probability, ever imagine that such a dispute would be raised in the Church. Nevertheless, he, as it were, constituted that holy monk as a sort of judge between Pelagius and St. Augustine, and puts into his mouth a condemnation, more or less of both, as if St. Augustine had erred in attributing too much to Grace, by attributing to it even the first movements of the will to do what is right, and that Pelagius erred in attributing too much to Free-Will, by denying the necessity of Grace to carry out good works. Cassianus thought, in the meanwhile, that he had found out a means of reconciling both parties, Catholics and heretics; but it was only by combating one error by another, and his erroneous doctrine was followed by many persons of the greatest piety in Gaul, and especially in Marseilles, who willingly imbibed the poison, because mixed with many Catholic truths in his works.

The Semi-Pelagians then admitted the necessity of Grace, but they were guilty of a most pernicious error, in saying, that the beginning of salvation often comes to us from ourselves without it. They added other errors to this, by saying that perseverance and election to glory could be acquired by our own natural strength and merits. They said, likewise, that some children die before baptism, and others after, on account of the foreknowledge God possesses of the good or evil they would do if they lived[15256].

15. Cassianus died in 433, and was considered a Saint[15257]; but the Semi-Pelagians were condemned in the year 432, at the request of St. Prosper, and St. Hilary, by Pope Celestine I., in a letter written by him to the Bishops of Italy. They were also condemned in 529, by Pope Felix IV., in the Synod of Oranges, and, immediately after, in the Synod of Valence; and both these Councils, as Noel Alexander testifies[15258], were confirmed by Pope Boniface II. At the end of the work will be found the refutation of this heresy.

16. In the year 417, according to Prosper of Tyre, or in the year 415, according to Sigisbert, arose the heresy of the Predestinations[15259]; these said that good works were of no use to those, for salvation, whom God foreknows will be lost; and that if the wicked are predestined to glory, their

sins are of no harm to them. Sigisbert’s words are[15260]: “Asserebunt nec pie viventfibus prodexse boHorum openim laboreco, si a 3eo ad damnationezn pr:sciti erseret 9 nec fimpiis oberse, etfiamsi fimprobe uiverent”“ Noel Alexander says that a certain priest of the name of Lucidus[15261], having fallen into the errors of the Predestinarians, and his opinions becoming notorious, he was obliged to retract them by Faustus de Hies, on the authority of a Council held at Aries, in 475; he obeyed, and signed a retractation of the following errors :First The labour of human obedience is not to be joined to Divine Grace. Second He should be condemned who says, that after the fall of the first man, the freedom of the will is entirely extinct. Third Or who says that Christ did not die for all men. Fourth Or who says that the foreknowledge of God violently drives men to death, or that those who perish, perish by the will of God. Fifth Or who says that whoever sins, dies in Adam, after lawfully receiving baptism. Sixth Or who says that some are deputed to death eternal, and others predestined to life.

This heresy, or these errors were condemned in the Council of Lyons, in the year 475. It is a question among the learned, whether the Predestinarians ever existed as a heretical body. Cardinal Orsi and Berti,[15262] with Contenson, Cabassutius and Jansenius deny it; but Tournelly[15263], with Baronius, Spondanus, and Sirmond, held the contrary opinion, and Graveson quotes Cardinal Norris[15264] in their favour, and Noel Alexander thinks his opinion probable[15265].

17. In the ninth century, Godeschalcus, a German Benedictine monk lived, who is generally considered a real Predestinarian. He was a man of a turbulent and troublesome disposition. He went to Rome through a motive of piety, without leave of his superiors, and usurping the office of a preacher without lawful mission, disseminated his maxims in several places, on which account he was condemned in a Synod, held on his account, in Mayence, in 848, by the Archbishop Rabanus, and sent to Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, his superior. Hincmar, in another, held in Quiercy, again condemned him, deprived him of the sacerdotal dignity, and after obliging him to throw his writings into the fire with his own hand, shut him up in close confinement in the monastery of Haut Villiers, in the diocese of Rheims. Two Councils were held in Quiercy on this affair, one in 849, in which Godeschalcus was condemned, and the other in the year 853,

in which four canons were established against his doctrine, and which we shall hereafter quote. Finally, Hincmar being at Haut Villiers, the monks of the monastery told him that Godeschalcus was near his end, and anxious for his eternal welfare, he sent him a formula of Faith to sign, that he might receive Absolution and the Viaticum, but he rejected it with disdain.

Hincmar could then do no more, but after his departure, he wrote to the monks, telling them, that in case of the conversion of Godeschalcus, they should treat him as he had given them verbal directions to do; but if he persevered in his errors, that they should not give him the Sacraments, or Ecclesiastical burial. He died unchanged, and without sacraments, and he was deprived of Christian burial[15266].

18. His errors, Van Ranst informs us, were these following: First as God has predestined some to eternal life, so he predestines others to everlasting death, and forces man to perish. Second God does not wish the salvation of all men, but only of those who are saved. Third Christ died for the salvation of the elect alone, and not for the redemption of all men.

19. These three propositions of Godeschaleus are also contained in a letter written by Hincmar to Nicholas I. " He says," writes Hincmar, "that the old Predestinarians said, that as God predestined some to eternal life, so he predestined others to everlasting death"[15267]; and Rabanus, in his Synodical letter to Hincmar, says: "He (Godeschalcus) taught that there are some in this world, who on account of the predestination of God, who forces them to go to death, cannot correct themselves from sin; as if God, from the beginning, made them incorrigible and deserving of punishment to go to destruction. Second He says that God does not wish all men to be saved, but only those who are saved. Third He says that our Lord Jesus Christ was not crucified and died for the salvation of all, but only for those who are saved"[15268]. The four canons established in the Council of Quiercy against Godeschalcus, as Cardinal Gotti[15269]writes, were these following: First There is only one predestination by God, which is to eternal life. Second The free will of man is healed by means of Grace. Third God wishes all men to be saved. Fourth Jesus Christ has suffered for all.

As to the judgment we should pass on the faith of Godeschalcus, some modern writers, as Christian Lupus, Berti, Contenson, and Roncaglia[15270], defend it, by thus explaining his three propositions : As to the first, the predestination to death; they say that it can be understood of the predestination to punishment, which God makes after the prevision of sin. As to the second, that God does not wish the salvation of all; it can be understood of his not wishing it efficaciously. And, as to the third, that Jesus Christ had not died for the salvation of all; it can, likewise, be understood, that he did not die efficaciously. But on the other hand, as Tournelly writes, all Catholic doctors previous to Jansenius (with the exception of some few, as Prudentius, Bishop of Troyes, in France; Pandal, Bishop of Lyons; and Loup, Abbot of Ferrieres), condemned them as heretical, and, with very good reason; many modern authors, of the greatest weight, as Sirmond, Cardinal de Norris, Mabillon, Tournelly, and Noel Alexander, are of the same opinion[15271].

As far as our judgment on the matter goes, we say, that if Godeschalcus intended to express himself, as his defenders have afterwards explained his words, he was not a heretic; but, at all events, he was culpable in not explaining himself more clearly; but, as Van Ranst very well remarks, his propositions, as they are laid before us, and taking them in their plain obvious sense, are marked with heresy. As he did not explain himself according as his friends do who defend him, and he showed so much obstinacy in refusing to accommodate himself to his superiors, and as he died so unhappily, as we have already related, we may reasonably doubt of his good faith, and have fears for his eternal salvation.

ARTICLE III. THE NESTORIAN HERESY

20.—Errors of Nestorius, and his elevation to the Episcopacy. 21.—He approves of the Errors preached by his Priest, Anastasius; his Cruelty. 22.—He is contradicted, and other acts of Cruelty. 23.—St. Cyril’s Letter to him, and his Answer. 24.—The Catholics separate from him. 25.—Letters to St. Celestine, and his Answer. 26.—He is admonished; Anathemas of St. Cyril. 27.—The Sentence of the Pope is intimated to him. 28.—He is cited to the Council. 29.—He is condemned. 30.—The Sentence of the Council is intimated to him. 31.—Cabal of John of Antioch. 32 Confirmation of the Council by the Legates, in the name of the Pope. 33.—The Pelagians are condemned. 34.—Disagreeable Affair with the Emperor Theodosius. 35.—Theodosius approves of the condemnation of Nestorius, and sends him into Banishment, where he dies. 36.—Laws against the Nestorians. 37.—Efforts of the Nestorians. 38The same subject continued. 39.—It is condemned as heretical to assert that Jesus Christ is the adopted Son of God. 40—43.—Answer to Basnage, who has unjustly undertaken the Defence of Nestorius.

20. The heresy of Pelagius was scarcely condemned by the African Councils, when the Church had to assemble again to oppose the heresy of

Nestorius, who had the temerity to impugn the maternity of the Mother of God, calling her the Mother, not of God, but of Christ, who, he blasphemously taught, was a mere man, as, with a similar impiety, Ebion, Paul of Samosata, and Photinus, had done before, by asserting that the Word was not hypostatically united with Christ, but only extrinsically, so that God dwelled in Christ, as in his temple. Nestorius was born in Germanicia, a small city of Syria, and, as Suidas, quoted by Baronius, informs us, was a nephew to Paul of Samosata, and was brought up in the monastery of St. Euprepius, in the suburbs of Antioch[15272]. He was ordained priest by Theodotus[15273], and appointed his catechist, to explain the faith to the catechumens, and defend it against heretics; and, in fact, he was most zealous in combating the heretics who then disturbed the Eastern Church the Arians, the Apollinarists, and the Origenists and professed himself a great admirer and imitator of St. John Chrysostom.

He was so distinguished for his eloquence, though it was only of a vain and popularity-hunting sort, and his apparent piety, for he was worn, pale, and always poorly clad, that he was placed in the See of Constantinople, in place of Sissinnius, in the year 427, according to Noel Alexander, or 428, according to Hermant and Cardinal Orsi. His elevation, however, was not only legitimate, but highly creditable to him, for after the death of the Patriarch Sisinnius, the Church of Constantinople was split into factions about who should succeed him, which induced the Emperor Theodosius the Younger to put an end to it all, by selecting a Bishop himself; and, that no one should complain of his choice, he summoned Nestorius from Antioch, and had him consecrated Bishop, and his choice was highly pleasing to the people[15274]. It is said, also, that, at the first sermon he preached[15275], he turned round to the Emperor, and thus addressed him : “Give me, my Lord, the earth purged from heretics, and I will give you heaven; exterminate the heretics with me, and I will exterminate the Persians with you.”

21. Theodosius hoped that his new Patriarch would in all things follow in the steps of his predecessor, Chrysostom; but he was deceived in his hopes. His virtue was altogether Pharasaical, for, under an exterior of mortification, he concealed a great fund of pride. In the beginning of his reign, it is true, he was a most ardent persecutor of the Arians, the Novatians, and the Quartodecimans; but, as St. Vincent of Lerins tells us,

his chief aim in this was only to prepare the way for teaching his own errors[15276]. “ He declared war against all heresies, to make way for his own.” He brought a priest from Antioch with him, of the name of Anastasius, and he, at the instigation of the Bishop; preached one day the blasphemous doctrine that no one should call Mary the Mother of God, because she was only a creature, and it was impossible that a human creature could be the Mother of God.

The people ran to Nestorius, to call on him to punish the temerity of the preacher; but he not only approved of what was said, but unblushingly went into the pulpit himself, and publicly defended the doctrine preached by Anastasius. In that sermon, called afterwards by St. Cyril[15277], the Compendium of all Blasphemy, he called those Catholics blind and ignorant, who were scandalized by Anastasius preaching, that the Holy Virgin should not be called the Mother of God. The people were most anxiously waiting to hear what the Bishop would say in the pulpit, when, to their astonishment, he cried out : “ How can God have a mother ?The Gentiles then ought to be excused, who bring forward on the stage the mothers of their Gods; and the Apostle is a liar, when, speaking of the Divinity of Christ, he says that he is without father, without mother, without generation : no, Mary has not brought forth a God. What is born of the flesh is nothing but flesh; what is born of the spirit is spiritual. The creature does not bring forth the Creator, but only a man, the instrument of the Divinity.”

22. It has always been the plan with heretics, to sustain this error, by accusing the Catholics of heresy. Arius called the Catholics Sabellians, because they professed that the Son was God, like unto the Father. Pelagius called them Manicheans, because they insisted on the necessity of Grace. Eutyches called them Nestorians, because they believed that there were two distinct natures in Christ the Divine and the human nature; and so, in like manner, Nestorius called them Arians and Apollinarists, because they confessed in Christ one Person, true God and true man. When Nestorius thus continued to preach, not alone once, but frequently, and when the whole burthen of his sermons was nothing but a blasphemous attack on the doctrine of the Church, the people of Constantinople became so excited, that, beholding their shepherd turned into a wolf, they threatened to tear him in pieces, and throw him into the sea. He was not, however, without

partisans, and although these were but very few, they had, for all that, the support of the Court and the Magistracy, and the contests even in the church became so violent, that there was frequently danger of blood being spilled there[15278].

Withal, there was one person who, while Nestorius was publicly preaching one day in the church[15279], and denying the two generations of the Word, the Eternal and the Temporal, boldly stood forward, and said to his face: “ It is so, nevertheless; it is the same Word, who, before all ages was born of the Father, and was afterwards born anew of a virgin, according to the flesh.” Nestorius was irritated at the interruption, and called the speaker a miserable ribald wretch; but as he could not take vengeance as he wished on him, for, though but then a layman (he was afterwards made Bishop of Dorileum, and was a most strenuous opponent of Eutyches, as we shall see in the next chapter), he was an advocate of great learning, and one of the agents for the affairs of his Sovereign, he discharged all the venom of his rage on some good Archimandrites of monks, who came to enquire of him whether what was said of his teaching was true that he preached that Mary brought forth only a man that nothing could be born of the flesh but flesh alone and suggested to him that such doctrine was opposed to Faith. Nestorius, without giving them any reply, had them confined in the ecclesiastical prison, and his myrmidons, after stripping them of their habits, and kicking and beating them, tied them to a post, and lacerated their backs with the greatest cruelty, and then, stretching them on the ground, beat them on the belly.

23. The sermons of Nestorius were scattered through all the provinces of the East and West, and through the monasteries of Egypt, likewise, where they excited great disputes. St. Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, hearing of this, and fearing lest the heresy should take root, wrote a letter to all the monks of Egypt[15280], in which he instructs them not to intermeddle in such questions at all, and, at the same time, gives them excellent instructions in the true Faith. This letter was taken to Constantinople, and St. Cyril was thanked by several of the magistrates; but Nestorius was highly indignant, and got a person named Photius to answer it, and sought every means to be revenged on St. Cyril.

When this came to the knowledge of the Saint, he wrote to Nestorius[15281] : “This disturbance,” he says, “ did not commence on account of my letter, but on account of writings scattered abroad (whether they are yours or not is another thing), and which have been the cause of so many disorders, that I was obliged to provide a remedy. You have, therefore, no reason to complain of me. You, rather, who have occasioned this disturbance, amend your discourses, and put an end to this universal scandal, and call the Holy Virgin the Mother of God. Be assured, in the meantime, that I am prepared to suffer everything, even imprisonment and death, for the Faith of Jesus Christ.” Nestorius answered, but his reply was only a threatening tirade[15282] : “Experience,” said he, “will shew what fruit this will produce; for my part, I am full of patience and charity, though you have not practised either towards me, not to speak more harshly to you.” This letter proved to St. Cyril, that nothing more was to be expected from Nestorius, and what followed proved the truth of his conjecture.

24. There was a Bishop of the name of Dorotheas in Constantinople, who was such a sycophant to Nestorius, that while the Patriarch was one day in full assembly, seated on his throne, he rose up and cried out : “ If any one says that Mary is the Mother of God, let him be excommunicated.” When the people heard this blasphemy so openly proclaimed, they set up a loud shout, and left the church[15283], determined to hold no more communion with the proclaimers of such an impious heresy[15284]; for, in fact, to excommunicate all those who said that Mary was the Mother of God, would be to excommunicate the whole Church all the Bishops, and all the departed Saints, who professed the Catholic doctrine. There is not the least doubt but that Nestorius approved of the excommunication announced by Dorotheus, for he not only held his peace on the occasion, but admitted him to the participation of the Sacred Mysteries. Some of his priests, on the contrary, after having publicly given him notice in the assembly, and seeing that he still persisted in not calling the Holy Virgin the Mother of God, and Jesus Christ, by his nature, true God[15285], now openly forsook his communion; but he prohibited not only those, but all who previously had preached against his opinion, from preaching; so that the people, deprived of their usual instructions, said : “ We have an Emperor, but we have not a Bishop.”

A monk, burning with zeal, stepped forward while Nestorius was going into the church, and thought to prevent him, calling him a heretic, but the poor man was immediately knocked down, and given into the hands of the Prefect, who first caused him publicly to be flogged, and then sent him into exile[15286].

25. St. Cyril wrote again to Nestorius, but seeing his obstinacy, and that the heresy was spreading in Constantinople, through favour of the Court, he wrote several letters, or, rather, treatises, to the Emperor Theodosius, and to the Princesses, his sisters, concerning the true Faith[15287]. He wrote, likewise, to Pope Celestine, giving him an account of all that took place, and explaining to him the necessity there was that he should oppose the errors of Nestorius[15288]. Nestorius himself, at the same time, had the boldness to write a letter to St. Celestine, likewise, in which he exaggerates his great labours against the heretics, and requires also to know why some Bishops of the Pelagian party were deprived of their Sees; he thus wrote, because he had kindly received those Bishops in Constantinople, and the Pelagians were not included in an edict he procured from Theodosius against the heretics; for, as Cardinal Orsi remarks, he adhered to the Pelagian opinion, that Grace is given to us by God, according to our own merits. He also wrote that some called the Blessed Virgin the Mother of God, when she should only be called the Mother of Christ, and on that account he sent him some of his books; this letter is quoted by Baronius[15289]. St. Celestine having read both letters, summoned a Council in Rome, in the month of August, 430, for the examination of the writings of Nestorius, and not only were his blasphemies condemned, but he was even deposed from his bishopric, if, ten days after the publication of his sentence, he did not retract his errors, and the Pope charged St. Cyril with the execution of the sentence[15290].

26. St. Cyril, in discharge of the commission to which he was appointed by the Pope, convoked a Council, in Alexandria, of all the Bishops of Egypt, and then, in the name of the Council, wrote a Synodical letter to Nestorius, as the third and last admonition; telling him that, if in the term of ten days after the receipt of that letter, he did not retract what he had preached, those Fathers would have no more communication with him, that they would no longer consider him as a Bishop, and that they would hold

communion with all clergymen and laymen deposed or excommunicated by him[15291]. The Synodical letter also contained the profession of Faith and the anathemas decreed against the Nestorian errors[15292]. These, in substance, are an anathema against those who deny that the Holy Virgin is Mother of the Incarnate Word, or deny that Jesus Christ is the only Son of God, true God and true Man, not alone according to his dignity, but through the hypostatic union of the Person of the Word with his most Holy Humanity. These anathemas are fully and distinctly expressed in the letter.

27. St. Cyril appointed four Egyptian Bishops to certify to Nestorius the authenticity of this letter, and two others one to the people of Constantinople, and another to the abbots of the monasteries, to give them notice likewise of the letter having been expedited. These Prelates arrived in Constantinople on the 7th of the following month of December, 430[15293], and intimated to Nestorius the sentence of deposition passed by the Pope, if he did not retract in ten days; but the Emperor Theodosius, previous to their arrival, had given orders for the convocation of a General Council, at the solicitation both of the Catholics, induced to ask for it by the monks, so cruelly treated by Nestorius, and of Nestorius himself, who hoped to carry his point by means of the Bishops of his party, and through favour of the Court. St. Cyril, therefore, wrote anew to St. Celestine, asking him[15294], whether, in case of the retractation of Nestorius, the Council should receive him, as Bishop, into communion, and pardon his past faults, or put into execution the sentence of deposition already published against him.

St. Celestine answered, that, notwithstanding the prescribed time had passed, he was satisfied that the sentence of deposition should be kept in abeyance, to give time to Nestorius to change his conduct. Nestorius thus remained in possession of his See till the decision of the Council. This condescension of St. Celestine was praised in the Council afterwards, by the Legates, and was contrasted with the irreligious obstinacy of Nestorius[15295].

28. As St. Celestine could not personally attend the Council, he sent Arcadius and Projectus, Bishops, and Philip, a priest, to preside in his place, with St. Cyril, appointed President in chief. He gave them positive orders that they should not allow his sentence against Nestorius to be debated in the Council[15296], but to endeavour to have it put into execution. He wrote to the Council to the same effect, and notified the directions he had given to

his Legates, and that he had no doubt but that the Fathers would adhere to the decision he had given, and not canvass what he already had decided, and, as we shall see, everything turned out most happily, according to his wishes. When the celebration of Easter was concluded, the Bishops all hastened to Ephesus, where the Council was convoked for the 7th of June. Nestorius, accompanied by a great train, was one of the first to arrive, and, soon after, St. Cyril, accompanied by fifty Egyptian Bishops, arrived, and in a little time two hundred Bishops, most of them Metropolitans and men of great learning, were assembled. There was no doubt about St. Cyril presiding as Vicar of Pope Celestine, in the Council of Ephesus; for, in several acts of the Synod itself, he is entitled President, even after the arrival of the Apostolic Legates, as is manifest from the fourth act of the Council, in which the Legates are mentioned by name after St. Cyril, and before all the other Bishops. It appears, even from the opening act of the Council, before the arrival of the Legates, that he presided in place of Celestine, as delegate of his Holiness the Archbishop of Rome. Graveson[15297], therefore, justly says : "That they are far from the truth, who deny that Cyril presided at the Council of Ephesus, as Vicar of Pope Celestine."

St. Cyril, therefore, as President[15298], gave notice that the first Session of the Synod would be held on the 22nd of June, in St. Mary's Church, the principal one of Ephesus, and, on the day before, four Bishops were appointed to wait on Nestorius, and cite him to appear next day at the Council. He answered, that if his presence was necessary, he would have no objection to present himself; but then, in the course of the same day, he forwarded a protest, signed by sixty-eight Bishops, against the opening of the Council, until the arrival of other Bishops who were expected[15299]. St. Cyril and his colleagues paid no attention to the remonstrance, but assembled the next day.

29. On the appointed day the Council was opened; the Count Candidianus, sent by Theodosius, endeavoured to put it off, but the Fathers having ascertained that he was sent by the Emperor, solely with authority to keep order and put down disturbance, determined at once to open the Session, and the Count, accordingly, made no further opposition. Before they began, however, they judged it better to cite Nestorius a second and

third time, according to the Canons, and sent other Bishops to him in the name of the Council, but they were insulted and maltreated by the soldiers he had with him as a body-guard. The Fathers, therefore, on the day appointed, the 22nd of June, held the first Session, in which, first of all, the second letter of St. Cyril to Nestorius was read, and the answer of Nestorius to St. Cyril, and they all called out immediately, with one accord[15300] : "Whoever does not anathematize Nestorius, let him be anathema. Whoever communicates with Nestorius let him be anathema. The true faith anathematizes him. We anathematize all the letters and dogmas of Nestorius." St. Celestine's letter was next read, in which he fulminates a sentence of deposition against Nestorius, unless he retracts in ten days[15301].

Finally, the sentence of the Council was pronounced against him : It begins, by quoting the examination, by the Fathers, of his impious doctrines, extracted from his own writings and sermons, and then proceeds : "Obliged by the Sacred Canons, and the Epistle of our Holy Father and Colleague, Celestine, Bishop of the Roman Church, we have been necessarily driven, not without tears, to pronounce this melancholy sentence against him. Therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he has insulted by his blasphemies, deprives him, through this Holy Council, of the Episcopal dignity, and declares him excluded from every Assembly and College of Priests[15302]." This sentence was subscribed by one hundred and eighty-eight Bishops. The Session lasted from the morning till dark night[15303], though the days were long at that season, the 22nd of June, and the sun did not set in the latitude of Ephesus, till seven o clock in the evening. The people of the city were waiting from morning till night, expecting the decision of the Council, and when they heard that Nestorius was condemned and deposed, and his doctrine prohibited, and that the Holy Virgin was declared to be the Mother of God in reality, they all, with one voice, began to bless the Council and praise God, who cast down the enemy of the Faith, and of his Holy Mother. When the Bishops left the church, they were accompanied to their lodgings by the people with lighted torches. Women went before them, bearing vases of burning perfume, and a general illumination of the whole city manifested the universal joy[15304].

30. The following day, the foregoing sentence was intimated to Nestorius, and a letter sent to him as follows: "The Holy Synod assembled in the

Metropolis of Ephesus, to Nestorius, the new Judas. Know that you, on account of your many discourses, and your obstinate contumacy against the Sacred Canons, have been deprived, on the 22nd of this month, of all Ecclesiastical dignity, according to the Ecclesiastical Decrees sanctioned by the Holy Synod"[15305]. The sentence was published the same day through the streets of Ephesus, by sound of trumpet, and was posted up in the public places; but Candidianus ordered it to be taken down, and published an edict, declaring the Session of the Council celebrated null and void. He also wrote to the Emperor, that the decision of the Council was obtained by sedition and violence; and the perfidious Nestorius wrote another letter to Theodosius to the same effect, complaining of the injustice done to him in the Council, and requiring that another General Council should be convened, and all the Bishops inimical to him excluded[15306].

31. Several Bishops of the Nestorian party, who had signed the protest, were even shocked at his impiety, and convinced of the justice of the sentence passed against him, joined the Council[15307]. But when everything appeared to be about to settle down peaceably, John, Bishop of Antioch, raised another storm[15308], in conjunction with other schismatical Bishops, to the number of forty; and, either to please Chrisaphius, Prime Minister of the Emperor, and a great friend of Nestorius, or because it went to his heart to see his friend and fellow-citizen (Nestorius was a native of Antioch) condemned, he had the hardihood to summon a Cabal in the very city of Ephesus, and then to depose St. Cyril, and St. Mennon, Bishop of Ephesus, and to excommunicate all the other Bishops of the Synod, because, as they said, they trampled on and despised the orders of the Emperor. St. Cyril and the other Bishops took no notice of such rash attempts, but, on the contrary, the Council put forth its authority, and deputed three Bishops to cite John, as chief of the Cabal, to account for his insolence, and after being twice more cited, and not appearing, the Council, in the fifth Session, declared John and his colleagues suspended from Ecclesiastical Communion, till such time as they would repent of their fault, and that, if they obstinately persevered, that they would be proceeded against, according to the Canons, to the last extremity[15309]. Finally, in the year 433, John, and the other Bishops of his party, subscribed the condemnation of Nestorius, and St.

Cyril received him to his communion, and thus peace was re-established between the Metropolitans of Alexandria and Antioch[15310].

32. We will, however, return to the Council, and see what was decided on in the subsequent Sessions, and, which we have postponed, to see the end of the Cabal of John of Antioch. Shortly after the first Session, the three Legates of St. Celestine arrived at Ephesus Philip, Arcadius, and Projectus and they came not alone in the Pope's name, but also of all the Bishops of the West. The second Session was then held in the palace of St. Mennon, Bishop of the See, and the Legates took the first place[15311]. First of all, they wished that the letter of St. Celestine, sent by them to the Council, should be read. And when the Fathers heard it, they all agreed to the sentiments expressed in it by the Pope. Philip then thanked the Council, and said : " You, by these acclamations, have united yourselves as holy members with your head, and have manifested that you well know that the Blessed Apostle, Peter, is the head of all the faithful, and chief of the Apostles." Projectus then moved that the Council would put into execution what was mentioned in the letter of the Pope. Fermus, Bishop of Cesarea, in Cappadocia, answered, that the holy Synod, guided by the antecedent letters of the Pope, to St. Cyril, and to the Churches of Constantinople and Antioch, had already put it into execution, and pronounced a Canonical judgment against the contumacious Nestorius. The next day, therefore, all the acts of the Council, and the sentence of the deposition of Nestorius were read, and then the Priest Philip thus spoke : "No one doubts that St. Peter is the chief of the Apostles, the column of the Faith, and the foundation of the Catholic Church, and that he received the keys of the kingdom from Jesus Christ, and He lives even to-day, and exercises, in his successor, this judgment. Therefore, his Holiness Pope Celestine, who holds the place of St. Peter, having sent us to this Council to supply his place, we, in his name, confirm the Decree pronounced by the Synod against the impious Nestorius; and we declare him deposed from the priesthood and the communion of the Catholic Church; and, as he has contemned correction, let his part be with him, of whom it is written, 'another shall receive his Bishopric. "The Bishops Arcadius and Projectus then did the same, and the Council expressing a wish that all the acts of the two Sessions should be joined with those of the first preceding one, that the assent of all the Fathers

might be shown to all the acts of the Council, it was done so, and the Legates subscribed the whole[15312].

33. This being done, the Fathers of the Council wrote a Synodical Epistle to the Emperor, giving him an account of the sentence fulminated against Nestorius and his adherents, as the Pope, St. Celestine, had already decided, and charged his Legates with the execution of it in their name. They then subjoined the confirmation of the sentence by the Papal Legates, both in their own name, and the name of the Council of the Western Bishops, held in Home[15313]. The Council, besides, wrote another letter to St. Celestine, giving him an account of all that had been done, both against Nestorius, and against John, Patriarch of Antioch. They also notified to him the condemnation of the Pelagians and Celestians, and explained to him how the Pelagians disturbed the East, looking for a General Council to examine their cause; but that, as the Fathers had read in the Synod the Commentaries of the Acts of the deposition of these Bishops, they considered that the Pontifical Decrees passed against them should retain all their force. Cardinal Orsi[15314] writes, that there is a great deal of confusion regarding the Synod of Ephesus, but there is no doubt but that the Pelagians were condemned in this Council as heretics, by the assembled Bishops of the world. The symbol composed by Theodore of Mopsuestia was also condemned in this Council, and every other formula, except that of the Council of Nice, was prohibited[15315]. Here, however, Cardinal Orsi justly remarks[15316], that that does not prohibit the Church, when she condemns any heresy not formally condemned by the Council of Nice, from making additions necessary for clearing up the truth, as the Council of Constantinople had done already, and other Councils did since that of Ephesus. The heresy of the Messalians (Art. 3, chap. 4, n. 80), was also condemned in this Council, and a book, entitled The Ascetic, was anathematized at the same time[15317].

34. When all was concluded, the Fathers wrote to Theodosius, requesting leave to return to their Churches; but the letter containing this request, as well as all the former ones they wrote to Constantinople, was intercepted by Count Candinianus, who placed guards on the roads for that purpose[15318]; while, at the same time, the letters of John of Antioch, and the schismatical Bishops of his party, stuffed with lies and calumnies regarding the

proceedings of the Council, had already arrived some time at Constantinople; and thus it happened, that the Emperor, poisoned, on the one side, by the false accounts furnished him, and vexed, on the other, with the Fathers of the Council, for, as he believed, not having written to him, and informed him of what they had done in the affair of Nestorius, wrote to them that all the acts of the Synod, as done against his orders, were to be considered invalid, and that everything should be examined anew; and therefore, Palladius, the bearer of the Emperor's letter to Ephesus, commanded, on his arrival, that none of the Fathers should be permitted to leave the city[15319]. The Fathers were confounded when they discovered how they were calumniated, and prevented from giving the Emperor a faithful account of all that had been done in the case of Nestorius, and the Patriarch of Antioch; they, therefore, devised a plan to send a trusty messenger[15320], disguised as a beggar, with copies of all the letters they had already written, but which were intercepted, enclosed in a hollow cane, such as poor pilgrims usually carried. They wrote, likewise to several other persons in Constantinople, so that when the good people of that city discovered the intrigues of the enemies of the Council, they went in a crowd along with the Monk St. Dalmatius, who, for forty-eight years previously, had never left his monastery[15321], and all the Archimandrites, singing hymns and psalms, to address the Emperor in favour of the Catholics. Theodosius gave them audience in the Church of St. Mocius, and St. Dalmatius, ascending the pulpit, said: "O Ca'sar, put an end, at length, to the miserable imposture of heresy; let the just cause of the Catholics prevail forever." He then proceeded to explain the rectitude of the acts of the Council, and the insolence of the schismatic's. Theodosius, moved by the reasons adduced, revoked his orders[15322], and, concerning the dispute between St. Cyril and the Patriarch of Antioch, he said he wished to try the cause himself, and commanded, therefore, that each of them should send some of his Bishops to Constantinople.

35. The Legates had now left the Council for Constantinople, but, when matters were just settling down, another storm arose, for the Count Ireneus, a great patron of the schismatic's, came to Ephesus, and informed the Emperor that Nestorius was no more a heretic than Cyril and Mennon, and that the only way to pacify the Church of the East, was to depose the whole

three of them together. At the same time, Acacius, Bishop of Berea, an honest and righteous man, but who, deceived by Paul, Bishop of Emisenum, joined the party of John of Antioch, wrote to the Emperor, likewise, against St. Cyril and St. Mennon; so Theodosius thought it better to send[15323] his almoner, the Count John, to Ephesus, to pacify both parties. When the Count came to Ephesus, he ordered that Nestorius, Cyril, and Mennon, should be put into prison; but the Catholic Bishops immediately wrote to the Emperor, praying him to liberate the Catholic Bishops, and protesting that nothing would induce them ever to communicate with the schismatics. In the meanwhile, the concerns of the Empire all went wrong; the Roman army was cut to pieces by the Goths, in Africa, and the few survivors were reduced to slavery. The clergy of Constantinople clamoured in favour of the Catholics, and they were assisted in their zealous exertions by St. Pulcheria, who opened the eyes of her brother to the impositions of the Nestorians[15324]. The Emperor, at length, assured of the wickedness of the schismatic's, and the virtue of the Catholics, ordered St. Cyril and St. Mennon to be liberated, and gave leave to the bishops to return home to their Sees; he confirmed the deposition of Nestorius, and ordered him to shut himself up once more in his old monastery of St. Euprepius, and there learn to repent; but as he, instead of exhibiting any symptoms of sorrow for his past conduct, only continued to infect the monks of the monastery with his heretical opinions, he was banished to the Oasis between Egypt and Lybia[15325], and soon after, as Fleury informs us, was transferred to Panapolis, and from Panopolis to Elephantina, and, from thence, back again to another place near Panopolis, where, at last, he died in misery, worn out by years and infirmities. Some say that, through desperation, he dashed his brains out; others, that the ground opened under him and swallowed him, and others, again, that he died of a cancer, which rotted his tongue, and that it was consumed by worms engendered by the disease a fit punishment for that tongue which had uttered so many blasphemies against Jesus Christ and his Holy Mother[15326].

36. Nestorius was succeeded in the See of Constantinople, by Maximinian, a monk untainted in the Faith, and Theodosius deprived Count Ireneus of his dignity[15327]. The Emperor next, in the year 435, made a most rigorous law against the Nestorians. He ordered that they should be called

Simonians, and prohibited them from having any conventicle, either within or without the city; that if any one gave them a place of meeting, all his property should be confiscated, and he prohibited all the books of Nestorius treating of Religion. Danaeus[15328] says, that the heresy of Nestorius did not end with his life; it was spread over various regions of the East, and, even in our own days, there are whole congregations of Nestorians on the Malabar Coast, in India.

37. When the Nestorians saw their chief rejected by all the world, and his works condemned by the Council of Ephesus and the Emperor, they set about disseminating the writings of the Bishops Theodore and Diodorus, who died in communion with the Church, and left a great character after them in the East[15329]. The Nestorians endeavoured to turn the writings of those prelates to their own advantage, and pretended to prove that Nestorius had taught nothing new, but only followed the teaching of the ancients, and they translated those works into various languages[15330]; but many zealous Catholic Bishops, as Theodosia of Ancyra, Acacius of Meretina, and Rabbola of Edessa, bestirred themselves against the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia.

When St. Cyril heard of the matter, he also wrote against those books, and purposely composed a declaration of the Symbol of Nice, in which, with great particularity and diffuseness, he explains the doctrine of the Incarnation[15331].

38. We should also remark, that Theodoret being soon after re-established in his See, by the Council of Chalcedon, after subscribing the condemnation of Nestorius and of his errors; and Ibas, being, likewise, reinstated, after retracting the errors imputed to him, and anathematized Nestorius, the Nestorians made a handle of that, to insinuate that their doctrines were approved of by the Council of Chalcedon, and thus they seduced a great many persons, and formed a numerous party. God sent them, however, a powerful opponent, in the person of Theodore, Bishop of Cesarea, who prevailed on the Emperor Justinian to cause the writings of Theodore against St. Cyril, and the letter of Ibas, on the same subject, to be condemned. Justinian, in fact, condemned the works of these Bishops, and of Theodore of Mopsuestia, and requested Pope Vigilius to condemn them also, which he did, after mature examination in his Constitution, and

approved of all that was decided in the fifth General Council, the second of Constantinople, held in the year 533[15332], as we shall see in the next chapter. The condemnation of these works, afterwards called The Three Chapters, put an effectual stop to the progress of Nestorianism;[15333] but still there were, ever since, many, both in the East and West, who endeavoured to uphold this impious heresy.

39. The most remarkable among the supporters of Nestorianism were two Spanish Bishops Felix, Bishop of Urgel, and Elipandus, Archbishop of Toledo; these maintained that Jesus Christ, according to his human nature, was not the natural, but only the adopted, Son of God, or, as they said, the nuncupative, or Son in name alone. This heresy had its origin about the year 780.

Elipandus preached this heresy in the Asturias and Galicia, and Felex in Septimania, a part of Narbonic Gaul, called, at a later period, Languedoc. Elipandus brought over to his side Ascarieus, Archbishop of Braga, and some persons from Cordova[15334]. This error had many opponents, the principal were Paulinus, Patriarch of Aquilea; Beatus, a priest and monk in the mountains of Asturias; Etherius, his disciple, and afterwards Bishop of Osma; but its chief impugner was Alcuinus, who wrote seven books against Felix, and four against Elipandus. Felix was first condemned in Narbonne, in the year 788, next in Ratisbon, in 792, and in 794, in a Synod held at Frankfort, by the Bishops of France, who, as Noel Alexander tells us, condemned him with this reservation[15335] : " Reservato per omnia juris privilegio Summi Pontificis Domini & Patris nostri Adriani Primae Ssedis Beatissimi Papae." This error was finally twice condemned in 799, in Rome, under Adrian and Leo III[15336]. Felix abjured his errors in the Council of Ratisbon, in 792; but it appears he was not sincere, as he taught the same doctrine afterwards. In the year 799, he was charged with relapsing by Alcuinus, in a Synod held at Aix-la-Chapelle, he confessed his error, and gave every sign of having truly returned to the Church, but some writings of his, discovered after his death, leave us in doubt of the sincerity of his conversion, and of his eternal happiness. This was not the case with Elipandus, for though he resisted the truth a long time, he at length bowed to the decision of the Roman Church, and died in her communion, as many authors, quoted by Noel Alexander, testify[15337].

40. Who would believe that after seeing Nestorius condemned by a General Council, celebrated by such a multitude of Bishops, conducted with such solemnity and accuracy, and afterwards accepted by the whole Catholic Church, that persons would be found to defend him, as innocent, and charge his condemnation as invalid and unjust. Those who do this are surely heretics, whose chief study has always been to reject the authority of Councils and the Pope, and thus sustain their own errors. The history of Nestorianism would be incomplete without knowledge of the modern defenders of the heresy, and the arguments made use of by them.

Calvin was the first to raise the standard, and he was followed by his disciples, Albertin, Giles Gaillard, John Croye, and David de Roden. This band was joined by another Calvinistic writer, in 1645, who printed a work, but did not put his name to it, in which he endeavours to show that Nestorius should not be ranked with the heretics, but with the doctors of the Church, and venerated as a martyr, and that the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus ought to be considered Eutychians, as well as St. Cyril, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, St. Dionisius of Alexandria, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Hilary, who give it such praise. This book was refuted by the learned Petavius, in the year 1646, in the sixth book of his work on Theological Dogmas. Finally, Samuel Basnage, in his Annals[15338], has joined with Calvin and the other authors above-named, and has taken up the defence of Nestorius; he has even the hardihood to declare, that the Council of Ephesus had filled the world with tears.

41. We shall let Basnage speak for himself. He says, first, the Council of Ephesus was not a General one, but only a particular Synod, as the bishops refused to wait either for the Pope’s Legates, or for the other Bishops of the East. As far as the Legates are concerned, we see (No. 28.) that St. Cyril assisted at the Council, from the beginning, and that he had been already nominated by the Pope as President; that a few days after, the other Legates arrived, and that they confirmed the Council. It is true all the Bishops of the East did not attend it, for eighty—nine Bishops seceded, and formed a Cabal apart, in the very city of Ephesus, in which they deposed St. Cyril; but a few days after, the eighty-nine were reduced to thirty-seven, among whom, were the Pelagian Bishops, and several others already deposed; and the rest, when their eyes were opened to the truth, united themselves to the

Fathers of the Council, so that Theodoret, who at first adhered to the party of John of Antioch, wrote to Andrew of Samosata: “Pars maxima Isra’lis consentit inimicis, pauci vero valde sunt salvi, ac sustinent pro pietate certamen :” but John himself, afterwards, together with Theodoret and the rest who repented, subscribed to the Council, which then was recognized as Ecumenical by the whole Church. With what face, then, can Basnage say that it was a particular, and not a General Council?

42. Basnage says next[15339], that it is a false supposition of Noel Alexander, that Nestorius taught that there were two Persons in Christ, or denied that Mary was the true Mother of God, and he was condemned, he says, only because he was not well understood; but how does he prove this as to the maternity of the Blessed Virgin ?

By saying that Nestorius, in a certain letter he wrote to John of Antioch, admits, that as far as the words of the Gospel go, he has no objection that the Virgin should be piously called the Mother of God, but these words he afterwards interpreted in his own way. But why should we lose time in trying to interpret these obscure and equivocal expressions of his, when he expressly declares more than once, that Mary was not the Mother of God, otherwise the Gentiles ought to be excused for adoring the mothers of their gods. “Has God,” he says, “ a Mother ?therefore Paganism is excusable. Mary brought not forth God, but she brought forth a man, the instrument of the Divinity.” These are his own words, quoted by Basnage himself, and he also relates that the monks of the Archimandrite, Basil, in their petition to the Emperor Theodosius, stated that Nestorius[15340] said, that Mary only brought forth a man, and that nothing but flesh could be born of the flesh, and, therefore they required, that in a General Council, the foundation of the Faith should be left intact, that is, that the Word with the flesh, taken from Mary, suffered and died for the Redemption of mankind. We have, besides, a letter written by Nestorius to the Pope St. Celestine[15341], in which he complains that the clergy, “aperte blasphemant, Deum Verbum tamquam originis initium de Christotocho Virgine sumsisse. Sed hanc Virginem Christotochon ausi sunt cum modo quodam Theotocon dicere, cum Ss. illi Patres per Nicaeam nihil amplius de S. Virgine dixissent, nisi quia Jesus Christus incarnatus est ex Spiritu Sancto de Maria Virgine;” and he adds, “Verbum Theotocon ferri potest propter inseparabile Templum Dei Verbi ex

ipsa, non quia ipsa Mater sit Verbi Dei, nemo enim antiquiorem se parit :" thus, he denies in the plainest terms, that the Blessed Virgin is Theotocon, the Mother of the Word of God, but only allows her to be Christotocon, the Mother of Christ; but St. Celestine answers him[15342]: "We have received your letters containing open blasphemy," and he adds that this truth, that the only Son of God was born of Mary, is the promise to us of life and salvation.

43. Let us now see what Nestorius says of Jesus Christ. No nature, he says, can subsist without its proper subsistence, and this is the origin of his error, for he therefore gives two Persons to Christ, Divine and human, as he had two natures, and he therefore said that the Divine Word was united to Christ after he was formed a perfect man with appropriate human subsistence and personality. He says : " Si Christus perfectus Deus, idemque perfectus homo intelligitur, ubi nature est perfectio, si hominis natura non subsistit"[15343] ? He also said that the union of the two natures was according to grace, or by the dignity or honour of Filiation given to the Person of Christ, and he, therefore, in general, did not call the union of the two natures a union at all, but propinquity, or inhabitation; he thus admits two united, or more properly speaking, conjoined natures, but not a true unity of person, and by two natures understands two personalities, and therefore could not bear to hear it said in speaking of Jesus Christ, that God was born, or suffered, or died. In his letter to St. Cyril, quoted by Basnage, he says : " My brother, to ascribe birth, or suffering, or death, to the Divine Word by reason of this appropriation, is to follow the Pagans or the insane Apollinares." These expressions prove that he did not believe that the two Natures were united in one Person. When his priest, Anastasius, preaching to the people, said : "Let no one call Mary the Mother of God, it is not possible that God should be born of man," and the people horrified with the blasphemy, called on Nestorius to remove the scandal given by Anastatius, he went up into the pulpit, and said : " I never would call him God, who has been formed only two or three months," and he never called Jesus Christ, God, but only the temple or habitation of God, as he wrote to St. Cyril. It is proper, he said, and conformable to Ecclesiastical Tradition, to confess that the body of Christ is the temple of the Divinity, and that it is joined by so sublime a connexion to his Divine self, that we may say his Divine nature

appropriates to itself something which otherwise would belong to the body alone.

Here then, are the very words of Nestorius himself, and nothing can be clearer than that he means to say that Christ is only the temple of God, but united to God in such a manner by Grace, that it might be said that the Divine nature appropriated the qualities proper to humanity. Now, Basnage does not deny that these are the letters and expressions of Nestorius, and how then can he say that he spoke in a pious and Catholic sense, and that the Council of Ephesus, by his condemnation, filled the world with tears, when Sixtus III., St. Leo the Great, and the fifth General Council, together with so many other doctors and learned writers received the Council of Ephesus as most certainly Ecumenical, and all have called and considered Nestorius a heretic. Basnage, however, prefers following Calvin and his adherents, instead of the Council of Ephesus, the fifth Council, the Pope, and all the Catholic doctors. Selvaggi, the annotator of Mosheim, is well worthy of being read on this question[15344], he has six very excellent reflections, and makes several useful remarks about Luther and the other modern heretics, who seek to discredit St. Cyril and the Council of Ephesus. It is the interest of all heretics to weaken the authority of Councils, that there may be no power to condemn them, and expose their errors to the world. But I remark that the devil has made it a particular study to ruin, by his partisans, the credit of the Council of Ephesus, to remove from our sight the immense love which our God has shown us, by becoming man and dying for our love. Men do not love God because they do not reflect that he has died for love of them, and the devil endeavours not only to remove this thought from our minds, but to prevent us from thinking it even possible.

ARTICLE IV. THE HERESY OF EUTYCHES

I. THE SYNOD OF ST. FLAVIAN. THE COUNCIL OR CABAL OF EPHESUS, CALLED THE ‘ LATROCINIUM,’ OR COUNCIL OF ROBBERS

44,-Beginning of Eutyches; he is accused by Eusebius of Dorileum. 45.—St. Flavian receives the charge. 46.—Synod of St. Flavian. 47.—Confession of Eutyches in the Synod. 48.—Sentence of the Synod against Eutyches. 49.—Complaints of Eutyches. 50.—Eutyches writes to St. Peter Chrysologus, and to St. Leo. 51 .—Character of Dioscorus. 52 & 53.—Cabal at Ephesus 54.—St. Flavian is deposed, and Eusebius of Dorileum. 55.—The Errors of Theodore of Mopsuestia. 56.—Death of St. Flavian. 57-Character of The odoret. 58 and 59. Writings of The odoret against St. Cyril. Defence of The odoret. 60-Diosorus excommunicates St. Leo. 61.—Theodosius approved the Council or Cabal and dies. 62.—Reign of St. Pulcheria and Martian.

44. The heresy of Eutyches sprung up[15345] in the year 448, eighteen years after the Council of Ephesus. Eutyches was a monk and priest; he was also the abbot of a monastery near Constantinople, containing three hundred monks; he was a violent opponent of his Archbishop, Nestorius, and accused him at the Council of Ephesus, where he went in person to testify to his prevarications, so that he was considered by the friends of St. Cyril, as one of the staunchest defenders of the Faith[15346]. St. Leo having received a letter from him, informing him that Nestorianism was again raising its head[15347], answered him, approving his zeal, and encouraged him to defend the Church; imagining, that he was writing at the time, against the real Nestorians, while he, in that letter, meant all the while the Catholics, whom, he looked upon as infected with Nestorian principles[15348]. Eusebius, Bishop of Dorileum, in Phrygia, was also one of the most zealous opponents of Nestorius, for, while yet only a layman, in the year 429, he had the courage to stand up and reprove him publicly for his error[15349]. (No. 20, supra.)

45. The conformity of their opinions, therefore, made him a friend of Eutyches, but, in the course of their intimacy, he, at length, perceived that he (Eutyches) went too far and fell into heretical propositions[15350]. He endeavoured then, for a long time, by reasoning with him, to bring him round; but, when he saw it was all in vain, he gave up his friendship and became his accuser. Even before that the Oriental[15351] had already denounced the errors of Eutyches to the Emperor Theodosius; but he so adroitly turned aside the charge, that, instead of being arraigned, he became the accuser. The Bishops of the East exclaimed, that Eutyches was infected with the errors of Apollinares, but as it was an old trick, to charge with the profession of this false doctrine, the adversaries of Nestorius, and especially all who defended the anathemas of St. Cyril; and, as those same bishops, had before defended Nestorius, and, even still upheld the doctrine of Theodore of Mopsuestia, no one took any notice of their accusation of

Eutyches on the present occasion. The unfortunate man, had then nothing to fear from the charges of those bishops, but when Eusebius of Dorileum, took up the matter, it wore a more serious aspect. Eusebius then, having frequently admonished him privately, and seeing that this had no effect on him, considered himself now bound by the Gospel, to denounce him to the Church, and, accordingly, laid the matter before St. Flavian, Archbishop of Constantinople[15352].

St. Flavian foresaw, that a judicial process and condemnation of Eutyches, would occasion a great deal of tumult, for he was venerated by the people, and respected by the Court, as a man, who, having dedicated himself to God from his infancy, had now grown grey in monastic solitude ,and never went outside of his cloister for a day, only, when he joined with St. Dalmatius, to defend the Council of Ephesus; the Archbishop, therefore, advised Eusebius to act with the greatest caution. Eutyches, was also protected by the Eunuch Chrisaphius, whose god-father he was, and joined with Dioscorus, Bishop of Alexandria, in opposing the Oriental Bishops, who were the first to accuse him of heresy; it would appear then, in intermeddling at all with the matter, that St. Flavian and Eusebius were joining the enemy, and opposing both the Court and Dioscorus, and thus occasioning a great disturbance in the Church; but neither this, nor any-other consideration, could restrain the zeal of Eusebius, so St. Flavian was obliged to receive the charge, and let justice take its course.

46. While this was going on, St. Flavian held a Synod for the adjustment of some disputes, between Florens of Sardis, the Metropolitan of Lydia, and two bishops of the same province. When this case was concluded[15353], the Bishop of Dorileum arose, and presented a document to the Council, requiring that it should be read and inserted in the Acts. The document was read, and in it Eusebius charged Eutyches with blaspheming Jesus Christ, with speaking with disrespect of the Holy Fathers, and with accusing himself, whose whole study it was to make war with heresy, with being a heretic; he demanded, therefore, that Eutyches should be cited to appear before the Council, to give an account of his expressions, and he promised that he would be prepared to convict him of heresy, and thus, those whom he had perverted, could see the evil of their ways and repent. When the paper was read through, St. Flavian besought Eusebius to see Eutyches once

more in private, and try to bring him to a better sense. Eusebius answered, that he had done so over and over already, and could bring many witnesses to prove it, but all in vain, and, he therefore, again begged of the Council, at any cost, to summon Eutyches, that he might not lead others astray, as he had already perverted a great number. Still, however, St. Flavian wished that Eusebius should try once more the effect of a private remonstrance, but he refused, as he had so often made the attempt already and could not succeed. The Synod, at length, received the charge against Eutyches, and deputed a priest and deacon to wait on him, and summon him to appear at the ensuing Session of the Council to clear himself. The second Session was then held, and in that, the two principal letters of St. Cyril, on the Incarnation of the Word, were read, that is, his second letter to Nestorius, approved by the Council of Ephesus, and the other to the Council of John, of Antioch, after the conclusion of the peace.

When these letters were read, St. Flavian said, that his Faith was, that Jesus Christ is perfect God and perfect man, composed of body and soul, consubstantial to his Father, according to his Divinity, and consubstantial to his Mother, according to his humanity, and that from the union of the two natures Divine and human, in one sole hypostasis or person, there results but one Jesus Christ, after the Incarnation of the Word, and all the other Bishops made the same profession. Other Sessions were held, and other citations were sent to Eutyches, calling on him to appear and justify himself, but he refused, and alleged as an excuse that he never left his convent, and, besides, that he was then sick[15354].

47. Towards the close of the seventh Session, Eutyches, presented himself before the Council, for he could no longer refuse the repeated citations he received, but the Fathers were surprised to see him enter, accompanied by a great troop of soldiers[15355], of monks, and of officers of the Prefect of the Pretorium, who would not allow him to enter the Council, till the Fathers promised to send him back safe again. He came into the Council hall, and he was followed by the "Great Silenciary," (an officer so called among the Romans, whose duty it was to preserve the peace of the Imperial Palace), who presented, and read an order from the Emperor, commanding that the Patrician Florentius, should attend the Council for the conservation of the Faith. Florentius came, and then Eusebius of Dorileum

the accuser, and Eutyches the accused, were placed both standing in the midst of the Council. The letter of St. Cyril to the Orientals, in which, the distinction of the two Natures is expressed was then read. Eusebius then said: Eutyches does not agree to this, but teaches the contrary. When the reading of the Acts was concluded, St. Flavian said to Eutyches: You have heard what your accuser has said; declare, then, if you confess the union of the two Natures in Christ? Eutyches answered that he did. But, replied Eusebius, do you confess the two natures, after the Incarnation; and do you believe that Jesus Christ is consubstantial to us, according to the flesh or not ?Eutyches turning to St. Flavian answered : I came not here to dispute, but to declare what my opinion is, I have written it in this paper, let it be read.

St. Flavian said, read it yourself. I cannot read it, said Eutyches. He then made this confession : " I adore the Father with the Son, and the Son with the Father, and the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son. I confess his coming in the flesh, taken from the flesh of the Holy Virgin, and, that he has been made perfect man for our salvation." Flavian again asked him : Do you now confess, here present, that Jesus Christ has two Natures ? "Hitherto, I have not said so, said he, now I confess it." Florentius asked him : If he professed that there are two Natures in Christ, and that Jesus Christ is consubstantial to us ?Eutyches answered : "I have read in Cyril and Athanasius, that Christ was of two Natures, and I, therefore, confess that our Lord was, before his Incarnation, of two Natures, but after these were united, they do not say any longer that he had two Natures, but only one; let St. Athanasius be read, and you will see that he does not say two Natures." Eutyches did not advert, that both his propositions were open heresy, as St. Leo well remarks in his letter :The second proposition, that is, that Christ, after the union of the two Natures, was of only one Nature. The human nature, as Eutyches said, being absorbed in and confounded with the Divine Nature, would prove, that the Divinity itself in Christ had suffered and died, and, that the sufferings and death of Christ were only a mere fable. The first proposition was no less heretical than the second, that Christ, previous to his Incarnation, had two natures for this could only be sustained by upholding the heresy of Origen, that the souls of men were all created before the beginning of the world, and then, from time to time, sent to inhabit the bodies of men.

48. When Eutyches spoke thus, Basil of Seleucia said to him : “ If you do not say that there were two Natures after the union, you admit a mixture or confusion.” Florentius replied: “He who does not admit two Natures in Christ, does not believe as he ought.” Then the Council exclaimed: “Faith ought not to be forced. He will not submit; what do you exhort him for?” St. Flavian then, with consent of the Bishops, pronounced the sentence in these terms : “Eutyches, Priest, and Archiman drite, and fully convicted, both by his past acts, and his present confessions, to hold the errors of Valentine and Apollinares, and more so, as he has had no regard to our admonitions :therefore, weeping and sighing for his total loss, we declare, on the part of Jesus Christ, whom he blasphemes, that he is deprived of every priestly grade, of our communion, and of the government of his monastery; and we make known this, that all those who hold any conversation or communication with him shall be excommunicated”[15356]. Here are the words of the decree, as quoted by Noel Alexander[15357]: “Per omnia Eutiches quondam Presbyter, et Archimandrita, Valentini, et Apollinaris perversitatibus compertus est aegrotare, et eorum blasphemias incommutabiliter sequi; qui nec nostram reveritus persuasionem, atque doctrinam, rectis noluit consentire dogmatibus. Unde illacrymati, et gementes perfectam ejus perditionem, decrevimus per Dominum N. Jesum Christum, quem blasphematus est, extraneum eum esse ab omni officio Sacerdotali, et a nostra communione, et primatu Monasterii; scientibus hoc omnibus, qui cum eo exinde colloquentur, aut eum convenerint, quoniam rei erunt et ipsi puene excommunationis.” This sentence was subscribed by thirty-two Bishops, and twenty-three Abbots, of whom eighteen were Priests, one a Deacon, and four laymen. When the Council was terminated, Eutyches said to the Patrician Florentius, in a low voice, that he appealed to the Council of the Most Holy Bishop of Rome, and of the Bishops of Alexandria, of Jerusalem, and of Thessalonica, and Florentius immediately communicated it to St. Flavian, as he was leaving the hall to go to his own apartment. This expression, thus privately dropped[15358], gave a handle to Eutyches afterwards to boast that he had appealed to the Pope, to whom he wrote, as we shall soon see.

49. This pretended appeal did not prevent St. Flavian from publishing the sentence of excommunication, but Eutyches made use of it, to publish a

great many false charges against the Synod, which he accused of trampling on all the rules of justice in his regard.

The sentence of the Council was published, by order of St. Flavian, in all the Monasteries, and subscribed by their Archimandrites; but the Monks of the Monastery Eutyches governed, instead of separating themselves from his communion, preferred to remain without Sacraments, and some of them even died without the Viaticum, sooner than forsake their impious master. Eutyches complained very much of St. Flavian, for calling on the heads of the other Monasteries to subscribe his sentence, as a novelty never before used in the Church, not even against heretics; but, on the other hand, it was a new thing to find an Abbot chief of a heretical Sect, and disseminating his pestilent errors in the Monasteries. He also complained that St. Flavian had removed his protests, posted up in Constantinople, against the Council, and which were a tissue of abuse and calumny, as if he had any right to stir up the people against a Council now closed, or to defend his pretended innocence by calumnious libels[15359].

50. He next wrote to St. Peter Chrysologus, Bishop of Ravenna, complaining of the judgment of St. Flavian, with the intention of gaining the favour of this holy Bishop, who had great influence with the Emperor Valentinian, and his mother, Placida, who, in general, resided at Ravenna. St. Peter answered him, that, as he had not received any letter from Flavian, nor heard what that Bishop had to say in the matter, he could give no opinion on the controversy, and he exhorts him to read and obey whatever the Pontiff, St. Leo, would write to him : “Above all things, we advise you, honourable brother, obediently to attend to whatever is written by his Holiness the Pope, since St. Peter, who lives and presides in his See, affords to those who seek it the truth of Faith.” This letter is found in Bernini and Peter Annatus[15360]. Both Eutyches and St. Flavian wrote afterwards to St. Leo Eutyches, to complain of the grievances he asserted were inflicted on him by the Council of Constantinople, and St. Flavian, to explain the just cause he had to depose and excommunicate Eutyches.

St. Leo having received the letter of Eutyches before that of St. Flavian, wrote to him[15361], wondering that he had not already written to him what he thought of the matter, for he could not make out, from the letter of Eutyches, the reason of his excommunication. He, therefore, ordered him to inform him immediately of the whole transaction, and especially of the erroneous doctrine for which he was condemned, that, as the Emperor wished, an end might be put to this discord, and peace restored, especially as Eutyches professed his willingness to be corrected, if it was proved he had erred. St. Flavian answered the Pope, giving him a full account of everything, and, among the rest, that Eutyches, in place of repenting, was only endeavouring to disturb the Church of Constantinople, by wicked libels and petitions to the Emperor, for a revision of the Acts of the Synod at which he was condemned, and making charges to the effect that the Acts were falsified. In fact, on the 8th of April, 449, another assembly was held in Constantinople, by order of the Emperor, and St. Flavian[15362] was obliged to present his profession of Faith, in which he declares, that he recognizes in Jesus Christ two Natures after the Incarnation, in one Person, and that he did not also refuse to say one nature of the Divine Word, if the words incarnate and humanized were also used, and he excommunicated Nestorius and all who divided Jesus Christ into two persons[15363]. No other matter of importance was decided in that meeting.

51. In the meantime, Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria, at the instigation of Eutyches, and urged on by Chrysaphius, his protector, wrote to the Emperor, that it was necessary to convoke a General Council, and he obtained an order for it, through the influence of Chrysaphius. Before we proceed, however, it will be necessary to give an insight into the character of Dioscorus, as we shall have to speak frequently of his wickedness hereafter. He concealed his vices under an exterior of virtue, to obtain the Bishopric of Alexandria[15364], in which, for his own misfortune, he was successful; he was avaricious, immoral, and furiously violent. When placed on the Episcopal throne of Alexandria, he threw aside all restraint; treated most cruelly those Ecclesiastics who were honoured by St. Cyril; some he reduced to beggary, and even burned their houses, and tortured them in prison; others he sent into banishment.

He kept improper women in his palace, and publicly bathed with them, to the insufferable scandal of the people. He so persecuted the nephews of St. Cyril, depriving them of all their property, that he drove them as wanderers through the world, while he made a show with their property, distributing it among the bakers and tavern-keepers of the city, that they might sell better bread and wine[15365]. He was charged with many homicides and with causing a famine in Egypt by his insatiable avarice. It is even told of him that, a lady having left her property to the hospitals and the monasteries, he ordered it to be distributed among the actors and prostitutes of Alexandria. Hermant asserts[15366] that he followed the errors of the Origenists and the Arians: such was the protector of Eutyches. Now to the subject.

52. Theodosius convoked the Council, in Ephesus, for the 1st of August, 449 (it was not held, however, till the 8th), and sent his diploma to Dioscorus, appointing him President, with power to assemble whatever bishops he pleased to try the case of Eutyches. Never, perhaps, before was the world disgraced by such acts of injustice as were committed by Dioscorus in that Synod, which has been justly called, by Ecclesiastical writers, the Latrocinium Epliesinium, or meeting of robbers at Ephesus; for he, abandoning himself to his innate ferocity, used horrible violence towards the Catholic Bishops, and even towards the two Legates, Hilary, Deacon of the Roman Church, and Julius, Bishop of Pozzuoli, sent by St. Leo, to represent him at the Council. When these saw the Holy See excluded from the presidency of the Council, in their persons, for Dioscorus, who usurped the first place, they judged it better to take the last place, and to appear no longer as Legates of the Pope, when they saw his authority slighted.

Lucretius, the Pope’s Legate in the Council of Chalcedon, charged Dioscorus with this after, and called him to answer for his audacity, in holding a Synod in Ephesus, without the authority of the Apostolic See, which never, he said, has been lawful, nor has ever been done; and he could not have made this charge, if Hilary and Julius had been received in the Council as Legates of the Pope[15367]. Nevertheless, they several times requested that the letter of Pope Leo should he read[15368]; but Dioscorus would never allow it, calling for other documents to be read, according to his own pleasure; neither would he allow any examination of Articles of Faith, fulminating anathemas against anyone who would allude to it. It was quite enough, he said, to hold by what was decided in the Councils of Nice and Ephesus, and, since they had decided that, no novelty should now be introduced to interfere with their decisions[15369].

53. Dioscorus now called on Eutyches to read his profession of Faith and the impious heresiarch anathematized Apollinares and Nestorius, or any one that would assert that the flesh of Jesus Christ came down from heaven. When he came to this passage, Basil of Seleucia interrupted him, and asked him to explain the manner in which he believed the Word had taken human flesh ?but he gave him no answer, nor did the heads of the Synod, as they ought to have done, oblige him to explain himself, for this was the principal point of the whole question; for, if the Divine Nature destroyed the human nature in the Incarnation, or the human nature was confounded with the Divine Nature, as the Eutychians asserted, how could it be said that the Word of God took human flesh ?However, without waiting for the answer to the question of Basil, the notary was ordered to proceed with the reading of the document of Eutyches, in which he complained of the sentence passed on him, and concluded by requiring that his persecutors should be punished[15370]. When this statement of Eutyches was read, St. Flavian said that it was but just that his accuser, Eusebius of Dorileum, should be heard likewise, but not only this was refused, but St. Flavian himself, was told that he was not allowed to speak, as the Emperor had given positive orders that none of those who had passed judgment on Eutyches before should be allowed to say a word without leave of the Synod[15371].

54. The Acts of the Synod, held by St. Flavian, were then read, and also the two letters of St. Cyril to Nestorius and John of Antioch, in which St. Cyril approved of the expression of the two Natures. Eustatius of Beyrooth, a partizan of Eutyches, then remarked to the Council that St. Cyril, in two other letters written to Acacius of Melitis and Valerian of Iconium, did not use the words, two Natures, but the one Nature of the Divine Word Incarnate, and thus this Eutychian bishop wished to make it appear that St. Cyril held the same faith as Eutyches, but this was all a calumny against St. Cyril, for the saint in a thousand passages of his writings had expressly spoken of the two Natures of Christ, and besides the expression, the one nature of the Incarnate Word only meant the union in Christ of two distinct Natures, the Divine and human. And this was most clearly expressed soon after, in the Council of Chalcedon, in which it was laid down that these words, used first by St. Cyril, and afterwards by St. Flavian, were only used in that sense, and an anathema was pronounced against anyone using the

expression, “the one nature,” with the intention of denying that the flesh of Christ was consubstantial with ours. The votes given in the Council held by St. Flavian were next read, and when the vote of Basil of Seleucia, that two Natures should be required in Christ, was read out, all the Egyptians and the monks, followers of Barsuma, cried out: “Let him be cut in two who speaks of two natures in Christ; he is a Nestorian heretic.” It was then read out that Eusebius of Dorileum had pressed Eutyches to confess two Natures in Christ, and when the same party heard this, they cried out with all their force : “ To the pile with Eusebius, let him be burned alive; as he has divided Jesus Christ, let him be cut in two halves himself”[15372]. Dioscorus being now assured of the suffrages of the bishops, for some adhered to him through liking, and more through terror, called on every one to give his sentence; and thus the faith of Eutyches was approved of, and he was re-established in his dignity, and the monks, his adherents, who were excommunicated by St. Flavian, were again received into communion[15373].

55. The great object which Dioscorus had in view, however, was the deposition of St. Flavian and of Eusebius of Dorileum, and he therefore ordered the decree of the Synod antecedent to that of Ephesus to be read, prohibiting, under pain of anathema and deposition, any other Symbol but that of Nice to be used. The intention of the Council in passing this law, was to reject the malignant Symbol of Theodore of Mopsuestia, in which, as Rabbula, Bishop of Edessa[15374], relates, the Nestorian blasphemy was introduced, and it was professed: First That the Holy Virgin was not the real Mother of God. Second That man was not united to the Word according to the substance, but through good will. Third That Jesus Christ ought to be adored but only as the image of God. Fourth That the flesh of Jesus Christ availeth nothing. Theodore, besides, denied Original Sin, and on that account, when Julian and his fellow Pelagians were banished out of Italy by the Pope St. Celestine, they went to Theodore, who, as Marius Mercator informs us, received them kindly. Cassianus[15375] also tells us that the Pelagians taught the same errors as Nestorius and Theodore, that is, that Christ was but a mere man, and they meant to prove by that proposition that it was possible for a man to be without Original Sin, as he was so, and hence they deduced as an inference, that other men might be without sin, likewise, if they wished to be so. But to the point; the intention of the

Council then was to reject the Symbol of the impious Theodore, as it was afterwards declared in the fifth Ecumenical Council, in which, as we shall see in the following chapter, the Three Chapters were condemned, as was also Theodore and his writings; but it was not the intention of the Council of Ephesus, nor did it ever prohibit the use of other words, besides those used in the Council of Nice, when these expressions are only used to express more clearly the sense of any Catholic dogma, impugned by some new heresy not taken into consideration of the Council of Nice.

Still, Dioscorus, intent on the condemnation of St. Flavian and Eusebius, ordered that the Decree of the Council of Ephesus should be read, and then immediately called on the notaries, and without any form of trial, or giving St. Flavian any time to defend himself, ordered one of the notaries to read the sentence of deposition against these two bishops, on the false charge that they had introduced novelties in Faith, and had not adhered to the words of the Symbol of Nice[15376]. St. Flavian instantly put into the hands of the Legates of the Pope, an appeal against the sentence[15377]. Several Bishops, horrified at such a glaring act of injustice, endeavoured to soothe Dioscorus; some of them even throwing themselves at his feet, and embracing his knees, besought him to revoke the sentence, but all to no avail, for he told them he would sooner cut out his own tongue than revoke it; and when they still, in the most pressing manner, continued to implore him to change his mind, he stood up on the steps of the throne and cried out : “Are you then determined to create a sedition; where then are the Counts ?” The Counts at once came into the church with a strong body of soldiers, and were joined by the partisans of Diodorus and the monks of Barsumas, so that the church became a scene of tumult and confusion. The Bishops all fled, some to one part of the edifice, some to another, but the doors were all bolted, and guarded, so that no one could escape. Dioscorus then, to give a finishing stroke to this villainy, presented a blank paper to the Bishops, that they might subscribe the sentence, and those who showed any disposition to refuse, were threatened with deposition, banishment, and even with death, as partisans of the Nestorian heresy. On all sides shouts arose: “Cut them in pieces if they say there are two Natures.” The soldiers obliged them to sign their names, and if they refused, beat them with clubs, threatened them with drawn swords, and even wounded some of them, so that the church was sprinkled with their blood. The Bishops thus constrained, finally all signed the sentence of deposition, but said when the Synod was dissolved, that it was not they, but the soldiers, who deposed St. Flavian; but this excuse went but a little way to justify them, for no Christian, let alone a Bishop, should through fear, condemn an innocent man, or betray the truth[15378].

56. The wretch Dioscorus was so enraged at the appeal of St. Flavian, that, not satisfied with having deposed and banished this holy Bishop, he laid violent hands on him, and became his executioner, or, at all events, the cause of his death, for he was so blinded with passion, that he struck him on the face, kicked him in the stomach, and throwing him on the ground, trampled on his belly. Timothy Eleurus, and Peter Mongus, who afterwards disgraced the Episcopal throne of Alexandria, and the impious Barsumas, who cried out in the Synod : “Kill him, kill him,” were also parties to his death, and it is on that account, that when Barsumas presented himself afterwards in the Council of Chalcedon, they cried out : “Turn out the murderer Barsumas; cast the murderer to the beasts.” St. Flavian did not die on the spot, but being dragged to prison, and given in the hands of the guards the next day to be conveyed to the place of his banishment, after three days weary travelling, he arrived at Epipa, a city of Lydia, and then gave up his holy soul into the hands of his Maker. This is the account Cardinal Orsi gives of his death[15379], and Fleury and Hermant agree with him in the particulars; and it is on this account the Fathers of the Council of Chalcedon did not scruple to give him the title of Martyr[15380]. Eusebius of Dorileum escaped, because he was not allowed admission into this impious meeting; he was deposed and condemned to exile, but escaped to Rome, where St. Leo received him into his communion, and retained him with himself, till his departure for the Council of Chalcedon. In the meanwhile, Dioscorus continued to publish anathemas and suspensions against these Bishops whom he any ways suspected were opposed to the doctrines of Eutyches; he condemned Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, as a heretic, in his absence, and proscribed his works, on account of his having written against the anathemas of St. Cyril[15381]. It is necessary, in order to explain the injustice of condemning Theodoret as a heretic, to give some account of this learned and remarkable man.

57. Cardinal Orsi[15382] very justly remarks, that if Theodoret never was so unfortunate as to oppose for some time St, Cyril, the great defender of the Faith, against Nestorius, his name, at the present day, would be venerated like the venerable names of St. Basil, St. Chrystostom, and St. Gregory, whose equal, perhaps, he was both in virtue and learning.

He was born in Antioch[15383], about the end of the fourth century. After the death of his parents, who were both rich and noble, he sold all his property, and gave it to the poor, reserving nothing for himself. He retired to the solitude of a monastery, and spent the greater part of the day in prayer, and the remainder in the study of literature, both sacred and profane. His master, unfortunately, was Theodore of Mopsuestia, of whose errors we have already spoken (n. 48), but he did not infect his disciple with them. He was forced from his solitude, and against his will made Bishop of Cyrus, a small, but very populous See, with eight hundred churches. The desire of assisting the many poor souls in his diocese, infected with heresy, overcame his attachment to his solitude, and his repugnance to accept of any dignity, so he gave up his whole soul to the discharge of his pastoral duties, nourishing the piety of his people, and combating the heresies which infected part of his diocese; and he succeeded in rescuing eight villages from the darkness of the heresy of Marcion.

58. On reading the Anathematisms of St. Cyril[15384], he wrote against them, and in no measured terms, and appeared rather to favour Nestorius than St. Cyril, who laboured to convince him of his mistake. Although he appeared to recognize only one Christ alone, and called the Holy Virgin the Mother of God, still, his arguments would lead us to believe, that he divided Christ into two persons, and gave Mary the title of Mother of God, in the sense of Nestorius, that is, mother of him who was the temple of God. St. Cyril, withal, justified him, and said, that though his mode of expressing himself was rash, that they agreed in Faith, and, he therefore writes[15385], that he did not wish to fall out with Theodoret, as long as he confessed that God was not separated from human nature, and that Christ was not separated from the Divinity, but was both God and man.

On the other hand, Theodoret[15386], being in Antioch when the letters of Pope St. Celestine and St. Cyril were received, joined with John, Patriarch of Antioch, and wrote to Nestorius, that he should not disturb the Church, by denying to Mary the title of the Mother of God, because, said he, that cannot be denied without corrupting the truth of the Incarnation of the Word. It cannot be doubted, but that Theodoret was somewhat reprehensible in his writings, against the Anathematisms of St. Cyril, and the Cabal of Ephesus, and in his defence of Theodore and Nestorius, and those productions were condemned in the second Council of Constantinople; but we should not forget, that he erred, not in holding the doctrines of Nestorius, but in believing that St. Cyril was an upholder of the doctrines of Apollinares, so that when he read[15387] St. Cyril's letter, to Acacius of Berea, in which the Saint clears himself from the imputation of being a favourer of the doctrines of Apollinares, and professes, that he firmly believes, that the body of Christ was animated by a reasoning soul, and expresses his detestation of the confusion of the two Natures, and declares that he holds the nature of the Word to be impassable, but that Christ suffered according to the flesh; he at once, thinking that St. Cyril had now forsaken the doctrine of Apollinares[15388], and no longer believed in the confusion of the two Natures, felt quite happy, and said, that St. Cyril now followed the pure doctrine of the Fathers, and wrote him a loving letter, because, as he said, he now recognized in the Incarnation of the Word, one Son alone, and one Christ alone, with the distinction of the two Natures; St. Cyril cordially answered him, and this was the commencement of a friendly correspondence between them[15389].

59. Theodoret next wrote his work Eranistes (the Beggar), against the Eutychians[15390], and, on that account, through the calumnies of Eutyches, he was first confined by the Emperor to his Diocese of Cyrus, and was afterwards deposed by Dioscorus, in the Cabal of Ephesus, but he appealed from this sentence to St. Leo, and subsequently retired to his old monastery, near Apamea[15391].

He was afterwards recalled from exile, by Marcian[15392], and St. Leo declared him innocent, and reinstated him in the See of Cyrus[15393]. Finally, in the Council of Chalcedon, after publicly anathematizing Nestorius, and all who did not call the Virgin Mary the Mother of God, and divided Jesus Christ into two Sons, he was received by all the Fathers, and declared worthy of being restored to his See[15394]. It is supposed that he lived to the year 458, and that, towards the end of his life, he composed the treatise on Heretical Fables[15395].

60. We now come back to the impious Synod of Ephesus. The majority of the Bishops having now subscribed the condemnation of St. Flavian, the few, who refused to lend themselves to this iniquity, were sent into banishment by Dioscorus. These few confessors alone, and Hilary, the Pope's Legate, were the only members who had the courage to protest, and declared that a Cabal like that would never be approved of by the Pope, or be received, as it undermined the Apostles Creed, and that they never would, through terror, give up the Faith they professed[15396]. Dioscorus, in the meanwhile, having now closed the meeting, returned in joy and triumph to Alexandria, and to suchapitch did his arrogance then arrive, that he solemnly published a sentence of excommunication against St. Leo, and partly by cajolery, and partly by terror, obliged about ten Bishops, who returned with him to Egypt, to subscribe to it, though they did it weeping, and lamenting the horrible impiety they were called on to perform[15397]. Orsi[15398] says, on the authority of the statement made to the Council of Chalcedon, by Theodore, a Deacon of Alexandria, that Dioscorus was guilty of this act of madness in Nice, beyond the bounds of Egypt[15399].

61. When St. Leo heard of these atrocious proceedings, he wrote to Theodosius, explaining to him the deplorable state to which Religion was reduced by Dioscorus, but all in vain, for the Emperor, gained over by his courtiers, in favour of Eutyches, and regardless of the prayer of the Pope, and the sage advices of the Princess Pulcheria, instead of punishing the efforts the Eutychians were making, re-established Eutyches himself in all his honours, condemned the memory of St. Flavian, and approved of all that was done in Ephesus[15400]. He, therefore, wrote to St. Leo, that as the Council of Ephesus had examined everything according to the rules of justice and of the Faith, and as those unworthy of the dignity of the priesthood were deprived of it, so those who were worthy were re-established in the grade they before held[15401]. Such was the answer of Theodosius; but God, who always watches over his flock, though he sometimes appears to sleep, soon after removed this Prince out of the world, in the year 450, the 59th of his age; previous to his death, however, as Orsi remarks[15402], he listened to the remonstrance's of his holy sister,

and gave several proofs of his sorrow for having favoured Eutyches. As he died without issue, he left the Empire to his sister, St. Pulcheria, whose piety and wisdom soon healed the disorders caused by the weakness of her brother, in allowing himself to be governed by his courtiers. Though no one could be found more worthy to govern the Empire alone than she was, still her subjects were anxious that she should marry, and give them a new Emperor. She was, however, now advanced in years, and besides, had made a vow of perpetual virginity; anxious, therefore, to please her subjects, and at the same time, remain faithful to her promises to God, she gave her hand to the Senator Marcian, of whose probity and regard for herself, personally, she was perfectly convinced, and who, she well knew, was better qualified than any other to govern the Empire; and his subsequent conduct proved, that her opinion of his goodness was not unfounded. In the beginning of his career, this great man was only a private soldier, but his wisdom and prudence elevated him to the senatorial rank[15403].

II. THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON

62.—A Council is assembled in Chalced on, under the Emperor Martian, and the Pope St. Leo. 63.—The cause of Dioscorus is tried in the first Session. 64.—He is Condemned. 65.—Articles of Faith defined in opposition to the Eutychian Heresy, according to the Letter of St. Leo. 66.—Privileges granted by the Council to the Patriarch of Constantinople. 67-Refused by St. Leo. 68.—Eutyches and Dioscorus die in their obstinacy. 69.—Theodosius, head of the Eutychians in Jerusalem. 70.—His Cruelty. 71.—Death of St. Pulcheria and of Martian. 72.—Timothy Eleurus intruded into the See of Alexandria. 73.—Martyrdom of St. Proterius, the true Bishop. 74.—Le o succeeds Marcian in the Empire. 70.-Eleurus is expelled from the See of Alexandria, and Timothy Salofacialus is elected. 76.—~en o is made Emperor; he puts Basiliscus to death. Eleurus commits suicide. 77.—St. Simon Stilites. 78.—His happy Death. 79.—Peter the Stammerer intruded into the See of Alexandria.

62. Marcian was proclaimed Emperor on the 24th of August, in the year 450, and on assuming the Imperial power, recognizing in his elevation the work of God, he, at once, began to advance His glory, and try every means to banish heresy from his dominions. With that intention, he wrote two letters to Pope Leo, praying him to convoke a Council, and preside at it in person, or, at all events, to send his Legates, and strive to give peace to the Church. St. Pulcheria wrote to St. Leo, likewise, and informed him of the translation of the body of St. Flavian to Constantinople, and, also, that Anatolius, the Patriarch of that city, had already subscribed the letter he, the

Pope, had sent to St. Flavian, against the heresy of Eutyches; that all who had been banished were now recalled; and she prayed him, to do what was in his power to have the Council celebrated[15404]. The Pope was highly delighted that what he sought for so anxiously, during the reign of Theodosius, was now in his power, but he requested that the Council should be put off for a time, for the Huns, under Attila, overran Italy, and the Bishops could not, with safety, proceed to the place of meeting.

The barbarians were soon after defeated by the Franks, and St. Leo now set about convening the Council, and, at once, sent as his Legates to Constantinople, Pascasinus, Bishop of Lilibeum, in Sicily, Julian of Cos, Lucentius of Ascoli, and Basil, and Boniface, Priests of the Roman Church[15405]. The Emperor, at first, was desirous that the Council should be held in Nice, but, for just reasons, he was satisfied afterwards that it should be transferred to Chalcedon. This Council was celebrated in the year 451, in the great Church of St. Euphemia, Virgin, and Martyr; and St. Leo[15406] says, it was attended by six hundred Bishops; but Liberatus and Marcellinus[15407] tell us, the number was six hundred and thirty; and Nicephorus[15408] raises it to six hundred and thirty-six.

63. The first matter the Council deliberated on in the first Session, held on the 8th of October, 451, was the examination of the conduct of the impious Dioscorus. He went to the Synod with the hope that his party would be still all-powerful through the Bishops who subscribed the acts of the Cabal of Ephesus, but Pascasinus standing up, said that Dioscorus should not take his seat in the Council, but should present himself as a criminal, to be judged; and seeing him then seated among the Bishops, he called on the Judges and the Senate to have him expelled, otherwise he and his colleagues would leave the Council. The Imperial ministers demanded from the Legate his reasons for calling for the expulsion of Dioscorus, and then Lucentius, another of the Legates, answered that he had dared to summon a Synod, without the authority of the Apostolic See, which never was lawful, nor ever before done[15409]. Dioscorus then took his seat in the middle of the church, and Eusebius of Dorileum, likewise, as his accuser, on account of the sentence pronounced against himself and against St. Flavian, and he demanded that the Acts of the Council of Ephesus should be read. The letter of the Emperor for the convocation of the Council was

first read, and Theodoret, on account of his writings against St. Cyril, was at first prevented from taking his place among the Fathers, but as St. Leo and the Emperor Marcian, had re-established him in his See, he was introduced as one of the members.

His enemies, however, immediately began tumultuously to oppose his admission, so the Imperial Officers ordered him to sit also in the middle as an accuser, but without prejudice to his rights, and he was afterwards re-established in his See by the Council itself, after anathematizing the errors of Nestorius, and subscribing the definition of Faith, and the Epistle of the Pope, St. Leo[15410]. The Acts of the Latrodnium of Ephesus were next read, and the Profession of Faith of St. Flavian, and the Imperial Judges asked the Council if it was Catholic. The Legates answered in the affirmative, as it coincided with the letter of St. Leo. Many of the Bishops then, who sat with Dioscorus's party, went over to the other side, but he, though left alone almost, as only a few Egyptian Bishops held on to him, still persevered in maintaining the Eutychian errors, and asserting that after the union of the Divinity with the humanity of Christ, we should not say those were two Natures, but only one in the Incarnate Word. When the reading of the Acts was finished, the Imperial Minister declared that the innocence of St. Flavian and Eusebius of Dorileurn, was fully established, and that those Bishops who had caused them to be deposed, should undergo the same sentence themselves, and thus the first Synod was concluded[15411].

64. The second Synod was held on the 10th of October, to decide on the Faith that should be held; the two creeds of Nice and Constantinople, the letter of St. Leo, and the two letters of St. Cyril, were read, and the Bishops then exclaimed: " We all believe the same. Peter has spoken by the mouth of Leo; anathema to him who does not believe likewise." A petition, presented by Eusebius, against the injustice practised by Dioscorus, was then read, but he had left the church. Three Bishops were sent to summon him before the Council, but on various false pretences he refused to appear, though cited three times. The Legates, then, in the name of the Pope, declared him excommunicated and deposed from his Bishopric, and all the Bishops, both verbally and in writing, confirmed the sentence, which was sanctioned, likewise, by Marcian and St. Pulcheria[15412].

Some monks of the Eutychian party now presented themselves before the Synod; the principal among them were Carosus, Dorotheus, and Maximus. When these and their party entered the church (and among them was Barsumas, at whose appearance the Bishops all cried out : "Out with the murderer of St. Flavian," they impudently demanded that Dioscorus and the other Bishops who came with him from Egypt, should be admitted as members of the assembly, and in case this demand was rejected, they would separate themselves, they said, from the communion of the Council. They received for answer, that in that case they would be deposed, and that if they persevered in disturbing the Church, they would be punished, as creators of sedition, by the secular power; but as they pertinaciously persevered, the Council gave them thirty days to consider themselves, at the expiration of which they would be punished as they deserved[15413].

65. After this, the Bishops subscribed the Dogmatical Epistle, of St. Leo, and set about definitively arranging the articles of Faith in opposition to the heresy of Eutyches; a formula composed by Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople, and some other Bishops, was read, but was not received by the Pope's Legates[15414], for it said that Christ was in two Natures, but it did not say that he was of two Natures. The Bishops, who pertinaciously declared that nothing should be added to the ancient Symbols, were thus reasoned with by the Judges; Dioscorus, said they, is satisfied that it should be declared that Christ is in two Natures, but will not allow that he is of two Natures; on the other hand, St. Leo says, that there are in Christ two Natures united, without confusion or divisibility; whom then will you follow, Leo or Dioscorus? Then all cried out : " We believe as Leo believes; he has properly expounded the Faith; whosoever contradicts it is an Eutychian." The judges then added: "So you agree to the definition, according to the judgment of our Holy Father, that there are in Christ two Natures, united without confusion or division."

Thus the clamours were finally stopped, and a formula adopted[15415] in which it was declared, that the Fathers took for the rule of their definition, the Symbols of the two Councils of Nice and Constantinople, which were also the rule for that adopted in the Council of Ephesus, in which Pope Celestine and St. Cyril presided; in continuation it was said, that although the fore mentioned Symbols were sufficient for the full knowledge of the

Faith, nevertheless, as the inventors of new heresies had adopted new expressions, and corrupting the doctrine of the Mystery of the Incarnation, some of them denied to the Virgin the title of the Mother of God, and others taught, that the nature of the Divinity and of the humanity were one and the same, and, that the Divine Nature was passible in Christ, therefore the holy Council confirmed both the Faith of the three hundred and eighteen Fathers of Nice, and of the one hundred and fifty Fathers of Constantinople; and, as the Council of Constantinople has added some words to the Creed of Nice, not because it was deficient in anything essential, but more clearly to explain the doctrine regarding the Holy Ghost, in opposition to those who denied the Divinity of the third Person of the Trinity, thus, with a similar intention, the Council of Chalcedon, in opposition to those who wish to corrupt the doctrine of the Incarnation, and say, that one Nature alone was born of the Virgin, or deny two Natures to Christ, besides the two forenamed Symbols admits the Synodical letter of the Blessed Cyril, and lastly, the letter of St. Flavian, against the errors of Eutyches, which corresponds with the letter of St. Leo, in which these are condemned, who divide the “ Only-begotten” into two Sons; and those who attribute the Passion to his Divine Nature; and those who, of the Divinity and the humanity, make one Nature alone; and those, who say the flesh of Christ is celestial, or of any other substance than flesh; and those, who blasphemously teach, that before the union there were two Natures in Christ, but only one after the union. The Council, therefore, teaches that there is only one Lord Jesus Christ, in two Natures, without division, without change, and without confusion; that the difference of the two Natures was never removed on account of the union, but that each remains properly the same, both one and the other concurring in one person alone, and in one substance, so that Jesus Christ is not divided into two persons, but is always the same, only Son, and only-begotten Word, God.

The Council finally prohibited the teaching or holding of any other Faith, or any other Symbol to be composed for the use of the Catechumens, renewing after this manner the order of the Council of Ephesus, notwithstanding the abuse Dioscorus made of it. When the definitive decree was read, it was uniformly received by all the Fathers, and first the Legates, and next all the Metropolitans, put their signatures to it[15416].

66. When all these matters had been defined, the Council made other regulations, and, especially in the sixteenth and last Session, by the twenty-eighth Canon, the privilege of ordaining the Metropolitans of Pontus, of Asia, and of Thrace, who were, before, subject to the Patriarch of Antioch, was confirmed to Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople. This privilege was already granted to the Bishop of Constantinople, by a Council of one hundred and fifty Bishops, held in that city, in the time of Theodosius the Great, on the plea, that as Constantinople had become the seat of Empire, and the second Rome in the East, it was only proper that it should be decorated with the Primacy of honour, second only to Rome itself, especially as it was already in possession of the honour for sixty or seventy years past. The Legate Pascasinus, Bishop of Lilibeum, opposed this Canon. It was, he said, contrary to the ancient Canons of the Church, and especially to the sixth Canon of the Council of Nice, in which it was recognized that the Church of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, took precedence of Constantinople, not to speak of the Church of Rome, which always enjoyed the Primacy; but notwithstanding the opposition, the Fathers remained firm to the arrangement they decreed[15417].

67. The Bishops then wrote to St. Leo, giving him a statement of all that was done in the Council, and asking for his confirmation of their proceedings. In the Synodical Epistle, they recognize the Pope as the faithful interpreter of St. Peter, and acknowledge that he presided at the Synod as the head over the members. They first praise his Epistle, and next inform him of the sentence fulminated against Dioscorus, on account of his obstinacy, and the re-union of the repentant Bishops, and all these things, they said, were effected with the assistance of the Pontifical Vicars.

They made some other regulations, they said, on the presumption that his Holiness would confirm them, and, especially, they confirmed the Primacy of honour to the Archbishop of Constantinople, for the reasons already stated[15418]. Besides this Synodical letter, the Emperor Marcian, St. Pulcheria, and Anatolius, wrote without the least delay to St. Leo, begging him, notwithstanding the opposition of the Legate, to confirm the twenty-eighth Canon of the Council, in favour of the See of Constantinople[15419]; but, although he was extremely desirous of obliging Marcian and St. Pulcheria, still, he never would agree to the violation of the Canons of the

Council of Nice, and he answered them, that the prerogatives of the See of Antioch should be preserved[15420].

68. Before we go any further, we shall relate the fate of Eutyches and Dioscorus. Eutyches was banished by order of the Emperor, in 450, but being confined in the vicinity of the city of Constantinople, St. Leo (Ep. 75, edit. Rom.) wrote to St. Pulcheria[15421], and afterwards to Marcian (Epis. 107), that he heard from Julian of Cos, that even in his exile, he continued to infect the people with his pestilent doctrines, and continued to disseminate his errors; he, therefore, be sought the Emperor to banish him to some deserted neighbourhood. The Emperor complied with this request of the Pope; Eutyches was banished to a distant place, and there died as he lived, in sinful obstinacy[15422]. Dioscorus was banished to Gangres, in Paphlagonia, and soon after died without repentance, on the 4th of September, 454, leaving some impious writings, composed by him, in favour of the Eutychian heresy, which were afterwards condemned to be burnt by the Emperor Marcian[15423].

69. The followers of Eutyches and Dioscorus continued for many ages to disturb the Church, and there were several among these leaders of perdition, who excited others, and caused a great deal of harm. The Council of Chalcedon was scarcely over; when some monks from Palestine, who refused submission to the decree of the Council, excited several other monks of that country to join them, proclaiming that the Council had taken the part of Nestorius, obliging the faithful to adore two Persons in Christ, as they had decided on two Natures.

The chief of these was a monk of the name of Theodosius[15424], who was expelled by his Bishop from his monastery, on account of his vices, but still retained the monastic habit. He succeeded in gaining over to his side a great many monks in Palestine, through favour of Eudoxia, the widow of the Emperor Theodosius, who after his death retired to that country, to spend the remainder of her days[15425]. I have said he gained over a great many monks, but not all of them, for, as Evagrius[15426] relates, there were very many among those solitaries, who led a most holy life, and we cannot, therefore, believe that all followed the impious Theodosius. When Juvenal returned from the Council, to his See of Jerusalem, he strove in vain to bring these blinded men to reason, but instead of succeeding, they not only did not repent, but had the audacity to attempt to force him to anathematize the Council and St. Leo, and on his refusal, collected a mob of the most depraved characters, and took possession of Jerusalem; they burned several houses, killed a number of persons, opened the prisons, and closed the gates of the city, to prevent the escape of Juvenal, and then proceeded to elect the wretch Theodosius Bishop of the See[15427].

70. When Theodosius was thus so iniquitously placed in the Episcopal throne of Jerusalem, he endeavoured to have Juvenal assassinated, and employed a wretch for that purpose, but this assassin, as he could not come at Juvenal, who escaped to Constantinople, joined some other wretches along with him, and killed St. Saverianus, Bishop of Schytopolis, (commemorated in the Roman Martyrology, on the 21st of February), and some of his adherents. He next set about establishing himself in his usurped See, by persecuting all who opposed his tyranny; some he caused to be cruelly tormented, he burned the houses of others, and, in particular, he put to death a Deacon of the name of Athanasius, and not satisfied with his murder, had his body dragged through the city, and cast to the dogs. Athanasius is commemorated in the Martyrology, on the 5th of July[15428]. He next set out on a visitation through the Dioceses of the Patriarchate, accompanied by the monks of his party, and many others of dissipated characters, who spread desolation and destruction wherever they went.

He drove several Bishops from their churches, and he even had some of them killed, and put his own partisans in their Sees; one of these, Theodotus, he ordained Bishop of Joppa, and another, Peter of Iberia, Bishop of Majuma, and, it was from one of these afterwards, that the impious Eleurus, the usurper of the See of Alexandria, received consecration[15429]. When Marcian was informed of the tyranny and insolence of Theodosius and his monks, he appeased the sedition, by proclaiming a pardon to all who would return to the obedience of the Church, and when he saw himself abandoned by his followers, he privately fled. After various wanderings, he came to the Convent of Sinai, and begged the monks to receive him, but they refused, so he fled on to Arabia, and concealed himself in the solitudes of that region. His usurpation lasted only a year and eight months, from the beginning of the year 452, till

August, 453, when Juvenal returned to Jerusalem, and again took possession of his See[15430].

71. About this time, that is, in the year 453, St. Pulcheria died; though the learned have agreed as to the year, they have not as to the day of her death; but the Greeks in their Menelogues, and the Latin's in their Martyrologies, celebrate her festival on the 10th of September. St. Leo, in one of his Epistles (Ep. 90), says in her praise, that she was possessed of the Royal power, and the Sacerdotal learning and spirit, with which she offered to God a perpetual sacrifice of praise; and to the zeal of this holy Empress he ascribed the stability of the Faith against the heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches. She preserved her virginity in marriage, and by her example, induced her sisters also to consecrate themselves to God. She built many hospitals, founded several monasteries, and erected a great number of churches, especially in honour of the Divine Mother, and the Church soon venerated her as a Saint[15431]. Four years after, in the year 457, the Emperor Marcian died. St. Leo calls him a Prince of blessed memory, and the Greeks celebrate his festival on the 17th of February.

We have already seen how great was his piety, and with what fervour he opposed every enemy of the Faith[15432].

72. We shall now speak of the principal followers of Etityches. The second hero of iniquity was Timothy Eleurus, a priest, but who, before his ordination, wore the monastic habit, though merely as a mask of piety. He was of a most ambitious character, so that scarcely had he heard of the deposition of Dioscorus when he considered he had pretensions to the Diocese of Alexandria, but when St. Proterius was elected in place of Dioscorus, he was filled with rage, and began to declaim against the Council of Chalcedon. He succeeded in gaining over to his side four or five Bishops and some monks, infected, like himself, with the errors of Apollinares, and thus had the boldness to separate himself from the communion of Proterius. When Marcian was informed of this schism he endeavoured to extinguish it, but could not succeed, so St. Proterius assembled a Synod of all Egypt, and condemned Eleurus, Peter Mongos his companion, and these few Bishops and Monks who adhered to him. With all that, St. Proterius was obliged to be constantly on his guard against him, although he was sent into banishment by the Emperor, and only with

difficulty saved his life during the reign of the Emperor Marcian[15433]. At the Emperor's death he renewed his pretensions, set at nought the decree of banishment he laboured under, returned to Egypt, and endeavoured to drive St. Proterius from the Church of Alexandria. He concealed himself in a Monastery of Alexandria, and to induce the Monks to join his party he used to go about their cells in the night time, telling them in a feigned voice that he was an angel sent from heaven to admonish them to separate themselves from Proterius, and elect Timothy Eleurus for their Bishop. Having by these schemes gained over many Monks to his side, he sent them into Alexandria to excite the people against St. Proterius and the Council of Chalcedon. When all was prepared, and the people sufficiently excited, he came forth into the city, accompanied by his schismatical Bishops, Peter Mongos, his Monks, and several other Monks, accomplices of his schism, and caused himself to be proclaimed Bishop in the church.

He immediately got himself consecrated by two Bishops of his party, and at once began to ordain Deacons, Priests, and Bishops for the Egyptian Churches, and gave orders that all those ordained by St. Proterius should be expelled, unless they attached themselves to his party[15434].

73. Count Dionisius, the military commander of the Province, on hearing this came to Alexandria, and finding that Timothy had left the city, took measures to prevent his return. His partisans were outrageous at hearing this, and sought St. Proterius, to take away his life; this was on Good Friday, the 29th of March, in the year 457. When Proterius saw the outbreak he took refuge in the Baptistery of the church, but the schismatic's, regardless both of the sanctity of the day and the age of this sainted pastor, broke into the Baptistery, and finding St. Proterius there in prayer, gave him several wounds, and killed him with a blow of a sword. They were not even satisfied with his death; they tied a rope to his body, and exposed it in the street before all the people, proclaiming that that was the body of Proterius. They next dragged the body through the whole city, and tore it in pieces, then tore out the entrails and devoured them, and the remainder of the body they burned and cast the ashes to the wind. Eleurus, who in all probability was the mover of this tragic occurrence, now more proud than ever, gave a public festival in rejoicing for the death of St. Proterius, and prohibited the Sacrifice of the Mass to be offered up for him; and even to manifest more

strongly the hatred he had for the holy Bishop, he caused all the Episcopal chairs in which he had sat to be broken and burned, and all the altars on which he had celebrated to be washed with seawater; he persecuted all his family and relations, and even seized on his paternal property; he took his name out of the Dyptichs of the Church, and substituted his own name and that of Dioscorus, but with all that he could not prevent the entire Church from venerating Proterius as a Saint and Martyr[15435]. The Greek Church has enrolled him among the Martyrs on the 28th of February. Eleurus now began to exercise all the Episcopal functions; he distributed the property of the Church just as his fancy led him, among his partisans, and he even had the temerity to anathematize the Sacred Council of Chalcedon, together with all those who received it, and especially the Pope St. Leo, Anatolius, and the other Catholic Bishops, declaring that this Council had favoured Nestorius. He also persecuted the Monasteries of monks and nuns who adhered to the Council.

In the commencement of his career he had but few Bishops partisans, but he quickly ordained others, and sent them abroad to drive the Catholic Bishops out of their churches[15436], but he made an unhappy end of it, as we shall see hereafter (n. 76), committing suicide.

74. Marcian was succeeded in the Empire by Leo, in the year 459, who followed his predecessor’s example in vigorous opposition to the heretics, especially the Eutychians : he therefore promulgated an edict through all the East, confirming all the laws passed by his predecessors, and especially the law of Marcian in defence of the Council of Chalcedon. As he found that the followers of Eutyches were the most troublesome to the Church, he considered, acting on the advice of some of his councillors, that it would be well to convoke anew Synod to put a final stop to all controversy. He therefore wrote to the Pope that he considered it would be advantageous to the Church and satisfactory to the recusants, if the Decrees of the Council of Chalcedon were re-examined[15437]. St. Leo, however, enlightened him on the point, and besought him in the name of the whole Church not to allow the authority of the Council to be called in doubt, or that to be re-examined which had already been decided with such exactitude; there never would be wanting persons, he said, to cavil at the decisions of any Synod, for it is always the practice of heretics to re-examine dogmas of Faith already

established, with the intention of obscuring the truth. The Emperor, convinced of the truth of the Pontiffs reasons, thought no more of a new Council. In the following year, 453, he wrote again to the Pope that a great many Eutychians were desirous of being instructed in the truth of the Faith, and were disposed to retract their errors as soon as they would be convinced of their falsehood, and they therefore prayed that at least a conference might be held between them and the Catholics, to which the Pope's own Legates might come.

St. Leo in his answer promised to send his Legates for the good of Religion, but he be sought the Emperor totally to set his face against the conference, for he again explained to him that the only intention the heretics had was to throw doubt on what was already definitively settled[15438].

75. Leo, in fact, sent Legates to urge on the Emperor to banish Elcurus from Alexandria, where he impiously persevered in persecuting the Church, and he succeeded at last, for the Emperor published an edict against Eleurus, and gave orders to Stila, commander of the troops in Egypt, to drive him out of the city and banish him to Gangres in Paphlagonia, where Dioscorus had been banished before, and ended his days. Eleurus remained there for some time, but as he continued to excite disturbances by holding schismatical meetings, the Emperor confined him in the Crimea, where he was kept till the year 476, when Basiliscus usurped the Empire. Before he was sent to exile he obtained permission, through some of his friends, to come to Constantinople, and feigning himself a Catholic, obtained pardon, and was restored to the See of Alexandria. When St. Leo was informed of this he wrote to the Emperor[15439] that although the profession of Faith made by Eleurus might be sincere, yet the horrible crimes he committed would render him eternally unworthy of the Bishopric[15440]. The Emperor then gave orders that no matter what took place, he should be banished out of Alexandria, and another Bishop elected in his place. This order was executed, and by common consent of the clergy and people, Timothy Salofacialus was chosen, a man of sound faith and virtuous life, and totally different from his predecessor.

76. The Emperor Leo died in 474, and was succeeded by his nephew Leo the Younger. He was crowned, but dying soon after, was succeeded by his

father Zeno; but during Zeno's reign Basiliscus, a relation of Leo Augustus, and a Roman General, seized on the Empire in the year 476.

He was a follower of the Arian heresy, and he therefore recalled Eleurus from exile, in which he had now spent eighteen years, and sent him back to Alexandria, to take possession of that See[15441]. Zeno, however, regained his throne by means of the Generals who before betrayed him, and banished Basiliscus, who held the Empire a year and a half, into Cappadocia, and there shut him up in a tower with his wife, Zenonida, and his child, and starved him to death, and sent orders, at the same time, that Eleurus should be again banished; but it was told him that the unfortunate man was now decrepit with years, so he allowed him to die in his native place, Alexandria. He gave orders, however, that he should be deprived of the government of the Church, and that Salofacialus should be re-instated[15442], but before these commands were received in Egypt, Eleurus had ceased to live, for he cut short his days by poison, under the dread of being again banished from Alexandria. His followers said that he had foretold the day of his death[15443], but there is nothing wonderful in that, when he died by his own hand[15444].

77. In this same year, 459, died that great Saint Simon Stilites, the wonder of the world. The Innovators deride the life of this great Saint, especially the Protestant Mosheim and his annotator, Archibald M Lain[15445]. They say that St. Simon Stilites, to get nearer to heaven, even in the flesh, built his column; and they assert, that the whole story of his life is nothing but a romance invented by certain ecclesiastical writers. But, in the erudite works of the learned priest, Julius Selvaggi, whom I before lauded, it is proved (Note 75), that the life of St. Simon is not nonsense, but a prodigy of holiness. There can be no doubt of the authenticity of his history, as Cardinal Orsi[15446] proves by many authorities, both ancient and modern, as Evagrius[15447], Theodoret[15448], the ancient writers of the lives of St. Theodosius, St. Ausentius, and of Eutinius, Fleury[15449], the erudite Canon, Mazzocchi,[15450] and several others; so that it would be mere rashness to doubt it. As St. Simon was a great defender of the Church against the errors of the Eutychians, it will not be irrelevant to give here a short account of his life.

He was born in the village of Sisan, on the frontiers of Syria, or, as Theodoret says, of Arabia. Up to the age of thirteen, he kept his father's sheep, but after that he gave himself entirely up to God, and lived in several monasteries; but even the austere lives of the monks did not satisfy him, so he accustomed himself to live alone on the top of a column he had built. Moved by a particular divine instinct, he several times changed from one pillar to another, but the last one was forty cubits high, and on that he lived for thirty years till his death, exposed to the sun of summer and the snows of winter. This pillar was so narrow at the top, that he had scarcely room on it. He only ate once a-week, and spent several Lents in the year without any food at all. His only employment was prayer. Besides other exercises of piety, he made a thousand inclinations every day, so performed that he touched his feet with his head, and this caused a great ulcer on his belly, and three of the vertebras of his spine were displaced, and he had painful ulcers in his thighs, which bled a great deal. The holy monks of Egypt, dreading lest a life of such penance might be dictated only by some extravagant notions, and wishing to test his obedience, and see by that whether it was pleasing to God, sent to him a command to come down from his pillar. When the Saint heard the word obedience, he immediately prepared himself to descend, but the messenger then said, as he had been instructed :Stop where you are, Simon, for we now know that it is the will of God that you should live on this pillar[15451].

I pass over many wonderful things in his holy and penitential life, but the most wonderful thing of all was to see the thousands of conversions this unlettered Saint wrought from this pillar, not alone of sinners and heretics, but even of the pagans themselves. People from the most remote regions came to. the foot of his column, for his fame had extended through the world. Some he brought out of the darkness of infidelity to the light of faith, others he led from the ruin of their sins to a holy life; many he saved from the pestilence of heresy especially of that of Eutyches, which then infested the Church to a great extent. He wrote a most powerful letter to the Emperor Theodosius[15452], praying him to labour with all his force for the defence of the Council of Chalcedon.

78. The death of St. Simon was just as stupendous as his life[15453]. He died in the year 449, and the time of his death was revealed to him forty

years previously. Just before his death, a dreadful earthquake took place at Antioch; so the people all crowded round the pillar of the servant of God to beg his prayers in that awful calamity, and it would appear as if God had purposely collected so many persons together, that they might be witnesses of his holy death, and honour his remains. His last sickness lasted five days; and, on the day of his death, the 2nd of September, he recommended to God all his disciples then present. He then made three genuflections, and raised his eyes in ecstasy three times to heaven. The immense multitude, who surrounded him and came to witness his happy transit, all cried out with a loud voice for his benediction. The Saint then looked round to the four parts of the world, raised up his hands, recommended them to God, and blessed them. He again raised his eyes to heaven, struck his breast three times, laid his head on the shoulder of one of his disciples, and calmly expired. His sacred body was brought to Antioch, which was four miles distant. The coffin was borne by Bishops and Priests, and innumerable torches blazed and censors burned around. Martirius, Bishop of Antioch, and several other Bishops, were in the procession. The General Ardaburius, at the head of 6,000 soldiers, twenty-one counts, and many tribunes, and the magistracy of the city, also attended. When the sacred remains were brought into the city, they were buried in the great church commenced by Constantine and finished by Constans, and his was the first body laid there. A magnificent church, described by Evagrius, was afterwards built near his pillar[15454]. St. Simon had a perfect imitator in St. Daniel, who also lived on a pillar, and was a powerful defender of the Church against the partisans of Eutyches[15455]. These are miracles which the Catholic faith alone produces, and which are never seen among heretics. Plants of this sort cannot grow in a soil cursed by God; they can only take root in that Church where the true Faith is professed.

79. We will now revert to the impious heroes of the Eutychian heresy. When Timothy Eleurus died, the heretical Bishops of the Province, by their own authority, chose in his place Peter Mongos, or Moggos, that is, the " Stammerer."[15456] He was before Archdeacon, and he was consecrated at night by one schismatical Bishop alone. The Emperor Zeno, when informed of this, determined not to let it pass unpunished; he therefore wrote to Antemius, Governor of Egypt, to punish the Bishop who ordained Mongos,

and to drive Mongos himself out of Alexandria, and to restore Timothy Salofacialus to his See. This was in 477, and the Emperor's orders were immediately executed[15457]. Salofacialus having died in the year 482, John Thalaia was elected in his place; but as he was not on terms with Acacius, Bishop of Constantinople, that Prelate worked on the Emperor to banish him, and place Mongos once more in the See of Alexandria. He succeeded in his plans, by representing to the Emperor that Mongos was a favourite with the people of Alexandria, and that by placing him in that See, it would not be difficult to unite in one Faith all the people of that Patriarchate. The Emperor was taken with the suggestion, and wrote to the Pope Simplicius to re-establish Mongos in the Alexandrian See; but the Pope told him he never would put his hand to such an arrangement. The Emperor was very angry at this refusal, and wrote to Pergamius, Duke of Egypt, and to Apollonius, the Governor, to drive John out of the See of Alexandria, which he held at the time, and to replace him by Peter Mongos[15458].

III THE HENOTICON OF THE EMPEROR ZENO

> 80.—The Emperor Zeno publishes his Henotic on. 81.—Mongos anathematizes Pope St. Leo and the Council of Chalcedon. 82.—Peter the Fuller intrusted with the See of Antioch. 83.—Adventures and Death of the Fuller. 84.—Acacius, Patriarch of Constantinople, dies excommunicated.

80. Acacius, with the assistance of the protectors of Mongos, induced the Emperor to publish his famous Henoticon, or Decree of Union, which Peter was to sign as agreed on in resuming possession of the See of Alexandria. This decree was afterwards sent to all the Bishops and people, not only of Alexandria, but of all Egypt, Lybia, and Pentapolis[15459]. This is the substance of the edict : "The Abbots, and many other venerable personages, have asked for the re-union of the Christians, to put an end to the sad effects of division, by which many have remained deprived of Baptism and the Holy Communion, and numberless other disorders have taken place. On this account we make known to you that we receive no other Creed but that of the three hundred and eighteen Fathers of Nice, confirmed by the one hundred and fifty Fathers of Constantinople, and followed by the Fathers of Ephesus, who condemned Nestorius and Eutyches. We likewise receive the Twelve Articles of Cyril, and we confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is God, the only Son of God, who has become incarnate in truth, is consubstantial to

the Father, according to his Divinity, and consubstantial to us according to his humanity; he descended and is incarnate from the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary (Noel Alexander thus transcribes it : ex Spiritu Sancto de Maria Virgine; but it would be better to have said, as in the first Council of Constantinople, de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine chap, iv, n. 74), Mother of God, and is one Son alone, and not two Sons. We say that it is the same Son of God who wrought miracles, and voluntarily suffered in the flesh; and we receive not those who divide or confound the two Natures, or who only admit a simple appearance of Incarnation.

We excommunicate whoever believes, or at any other time has believed differently, either in Chalcedon, or in any other Council, and especially Nestorius, Eutyches, and their followers. Unite yourself to the Church, our Spiritual Mother, for she holds the same sentiments." This is the copy Fleury[15460] gives, and the one adduced by N. Alexander corresponds with it in every respect[15461]. Cardinal Baronius rejects the Henoticon, as heretical[15462]; but N. Alexander justly remarks, that it does not deserve to be stamped as heretical, for it does not establish the Eutychian heresy, but, on the contrary, impugns and condemns it; but he wisely adds, that it injured the cause of the Faith, and favoured the Eutychian heresy, inasmuch as it said nothing about St. Leo's Epistle or the definition of the Council of Chalcedon on the words of two and in two Natures, which is the touchstone against the perfidy of the Eutychian heresy[15463].

81. Let us now return to Peter Mongos, who was placed on the throne of Alexandria, received the Henoticon, and caused it to be received not only by his own party, but by the friends of St. Proterius likewise, with whom he did not refuse to communicate, not to give cause to suspect his bad faith; and on the celebration of a festival in Alexandria, he spoke to the people in the church in favour of it, and caused it to be publicly read. While he was acting thus, however, he excommunicated the Council of Chalcedon and the Epistle of St. Leo, he removed from the Dyptichs the names of St. Proterius and of Timothy Salofacialus, and substituted those of Dioscorus and Eleurus[15464]. Finally, this faithful companion and imitator of Eleurus, after persecuting the Catholics in various ways, ended his days in the year 490[15465].

82. We have now to speak of another perfidious Eutychian Priest, who, in the same century, about the year 469, caused a great deal of harm to the Church of Antioch. This was Peter the Fuller. At first he was a Monk in the Monastery of Acemeti, in Bythinia, opposite Constantinople, and was by trade a fuller, from which he took his name. He then went to Constantinople, and, under the appearance of piety, gained the favour of the great, and, in particular, of Zeno, the son-in-law of the Emperor Leo, who began to look on him with a favourable eye. Zeno him with himself to Antioch, and he set his eye on that See, and induced Zeno to protect him.

He commenced by calumniating Martyrius, Bishop of Antioch, and accused him of being a Nestorian. Having thus, by means of a great number of friends of his, Appollinarists, got up a disturbance in the city, he persuaded Zeno that the only way to re-establish peace was, to drive Martyrius out of the city, and then he stepped into his place. The first way he showed himself was, by adding to the Trisagion of the Mass, Holy, Holy, Holy, the words, “who was crucified for us,” to show that he believed that the Divinity was crucified in the person of Christ[15466]. Martyrius went to Constantinople, and appealed to the Emperor, and Peter did the same, and brought with him a bill of calumnious charges against the Bishop; but Leo condemned the usurpation of the Fuller, and sent Martyrius back with honour to his See. On his arrival in Antioch, Martyrius found a large party opposed to him, and though he tried, he could not bring them to terms; he therefore resolved to withdraw, and said publicly in the church : I reserve to myself the dignity of the Priesthood, but I renounce a disobedient people and a rebellious Clergy. When the Fuller thus saw the See again vacated, he took possession of it once more, and was recognized as Patriarch of Antioch. When this was told to St. Gennadius, he[15467]informed the Emperor, and he at once gave orders that Peter should be sent in exile to the Oasis; but he had knowledge of the sentence beforehand, and saved himself by flight[15468].

83. On the death of the Emperor Leo, in the year 474, Zeno was declared his successor; but as Basiliscus had seized on the sovereign power in 476, as we have already seen (he was brother to the Empress Verina), the Fuller was reinstated by him in the See of Antioch. In the following year, 477,

Zeno recovered his dominions, and had him deposed in a Council of the East, and John, Bishop of Apamca, was elected in his place[15469].

John only held the See three months; he was driven out also, and Stephen, a pious man, was chosen in his place; but he had governed only a year when the heretics rose up against him, stabbed him to death in his own church with sharp-pointed reeds, and afterwards dragged his body through the streets, and threw it into the river[15470]. Another Bishop of the name of Stephen was now ordained, and Peter the Fuller was sent in banishment to Pitiontum, on the frontiers of the empire, in Pontus; but he deceived his guards, and fled to another place[15471], and in the year 484 was a third time re-established in the See of Antioch, with the consent of Acacius, who had himself so often condemned him[15472]. At length, after committing a great many acts of injustice against several churches, and stained with cruelty, he died in 488, having retained his See since his last usurpation little more than three years. Thus, in the end of the fifth century the Divine Justice overtook the chiefs and principal supporters of the Eutychian heresy, for the Fuller died in 488, Acacius in 489, Mongos in 490, and Zeno in 491.

84. Speaking of Acacius, it would be well if those who are ambitious for a Bishopric would reflect on the miserable end of this unhappy Prelate. He succeeded a Saint, St. Gennadius, on the throne of Constantinople, in 472; but he did an immensity of injury to the Church, for, although not infected with the heresy of the Eutychians, he was their great protector, and, by his bad practices, kept alive a great schism, which was not extinguished till thirty years or more after his death[15473]. He was accused to the Pontiff, St. Felix, of much negligence of duty, and especially of communicating with the impious Mongos, who had anathematized the Council of Chalcedon and the Epistle of St. Leo. The Pope admonished him to repent; but, taking no notice of his remonstrances, he deposed and excommunicated him, and in that state he lived for the remainder of his life, and died so[15474]. At his death, in fine, we are horrified at reading of the ruin of religion all over the East, for the churches were either in possession of heretics, or of those who communicated with heretics, or, at least, of those who, by communicating with heretics, were separated from the Communion of Rome; and almost all this evil originated in the protection given by Acacius to the enemies of the Church.

While I write this I tremble. A Bishop myself, and considering how many, on account of being exalted to that dignity, have prevaricated, and lost their souls many, I say, who if they had remained in a private condition, would be more easily saved. I abstract altogether from the question, whether he who looks for a mitre is in a state of mortal sin, but I cannot understand how any one, anxious to secure his salvation, can wish to be a Bishop, and thus voluntarily expose himself to the many dangers of losing their souls, to which Bishops are subject.

Chapter VI

HERESIES OF THE SIXTH CENTURY

ARTICLE I. OF THE ACEPHALI, AND THE DIFFERENT SECTS THEY SPLIT INTO

1.—Regulation made by the new Emperor, Anastasius, to the great detriment of the Church. 2.—Anastasius persecutes the Catholics; his awful Death. 3.—The Acephali, and their Chief, Severus. 4.—The Sect of the Jacobites. 5.—The Agnoites. 6.—The Tritheists. 7. The Corruptibilists. 8.—The Inc orruptibilists. 9.—Justinian falls into this error. 10.—Good and bad actions of the Emperor. 11, 12.—The Acemetic Monks; their obstinacy.

1. When Zeno died, the Catholics hoped for peace; but, in 491, Anastasius was elected Emperor, and he commenced a long and fierce persecution against the Church[15475]. In his private life he appeared a pious man; but when he was raised to the Empire, and saw all the Churches of the world split into different factions, so that the Western Bishops would not communicate with the Eastern, nor even the Easterns among themselves, and wishing to see no novelty introduced, as he said, he gave orders[15476] that all the Churches should remain in the same state he found them, and banished from their Sees any Bishops who introduced novelties. Nothing could be better than this, if all the Churches were united in the profession of the true Faith; but as there were several at that time which did not adhere to the Council of Chalcedon, to make a law, that no Church should change its ancient usage, was the best possible means of perpetuating discord, and this was precisely the effect it produced. Although Anastasius had shown some signs of piety, still Euphemius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who had narrowly watched his sentiments in regard of the Faith, considered him a heretic, and opposed his exaltation with all his might[15477]; he never even would consent to it, till he had from him a sworn promise, and signed, besides, with his own hand, binding him to defend the Council of Chalcedon. All this Anastasius did; but he not only broke his promise afterwards, but endeavoured[15478] to destroy all proof of it, by requiring the restoration of the paper he had signed and sworn to, which was kept in the

treasury of the Church; for the retention of such a document, he said, was an insult to the Empire, as if the word of a Prince was not worthy of faith by itself. He favoured the heretics, and persecuted the Catholics, especially the Patriarch Euphemius, whom he succeeded in deposing[15479]. He favoured, above all others, the Eutychians, who principally infested the Church at that time. He could not, however, be called an Eutychian himself; he was rather one of the sect of Existents or Tolerators, who permitted every religion except the Catholic[15480]. He died at last, in the year 518, on the 9th of July, and in the ninetieth, or, at all events, the eighty-eighth year of his age, having constantly persecuted the Church during the twenty-seven years he reigned. According to the account of Cyril, Bishop of Scythopolis, in the life of St. Saba, quoted by Orsi and Fleury[15481], he had an unhappy end.

2. St. Saba, he says, came to Aila, where St. Elias, Patriarch of Jerusalem, was banished. They used to take their meals together, at the hour of noon every day; but, on the 9th of June, the Patriarch did not make his appearance till midnight, and, when he entered, he said, do you eat, for I will not nor cannot eat any more. He then told St. Saba, that, at that very hour, the Emperor was dead, and that he should follow him before ten days, to meet him at the bar of Divine Justice, and, in fact, on the 20th of July, he slept in the Lord, in the eighty—eighth year of his age, having taken no food for eight days previously. St. Elias, and St. Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, who also died in exile, banished by Anastasius for defending the Council of Chalcedon, are commemorated in the Roman Martyrology, on the 4th of July[15482]. The circumstances of the Emperor’s death were remarkable : On the night of the 9th and 10th of July a dreadful thunder-storm raged over his palace. Terrified with the frequent flashes of lightning, but much more, on account of his sins, he imagined that God was now about to chastise him for his iniquities, and he fled wandering from chamber to chamber; he, at last, retired into a private cabinet, and was there found dead, whether from the effects of terror, or struck by lightning, authors are undecided. This was the end of this bad man, after twenty-seven years persecution of the Church of God. On the day of Anastasius’s death, Justin was invested with the Imperial dignity; he was a Prince[15483] always obsequious to the Apostolic See, and zealous in combating heresies, and establishing unity and peace in the Church. He reigned nine years, and was

succeeded by Justinian, of whom we shall speak by-and-by, and he was succeeded, in 565, by his nephew, Justin II., who began his reign well, but soon fell into dreadful excesses, though he never lost the Faith, and died, at last, with sentiments of Christian piety[15484].

3. The heresies which disturbed the Church in this century were almost all offshoots from the stock of Eutychianism. Those from whom the Catholics suffered most were the Acephali, who were also Eutychians. They were called Monophysites, as they believed only one Nature in Christ[15485]; but as they separated themselves from Mongos, the pretended Bishop of Alexandria, and refused to adhere, either to the Catholic party, or to their Bishop, Mongos, they were called Acephali, or Headless.

They were not without a chief, withal one Severus, from the city of Sozopolis, in Pisidia. He was a Pagan in the beginning of his days, and it is thought, he never sincerely renounced his errors; he went to Beyrooth to study law, and was convicted there of idolatry and magical practices, so, to escape the punishment his infamies deserved, he pretended to embrace Christianity. He was baptized in Tripoli, in Phenicia[15486], but he was not eight days a Christian, when he forsook the Catholic Communion, and threw himself into the arms of the party who had separated from Mongos, and he rejected from that out both the Council of Chalcedon and the Henoticon of Zeno. He was a man of corrupt morals, but, to gain credit with the Monks, he professed the monastic life in the Monastery of the Abbot Nefarius, in Egypt; but he was there discovered to be a heretic, and expelled, and he then went to Constantinople, where he, sometime after, found himself at the head of two hundred Monks, and of many other heretics[15487], and, with them, committed many excesses, without regard to either the laws or the judges. Anastasius, who then reigned, desirous of upsetting the Council of Chalcedon, winked at his crimes, and thus, under favour of that impious Sovereign, he succeeded in driving out of Constantinople the Bishop of the See, Macedonius, and substituting Timothy, treasurer of the city, in his place, who had the hardihood to cause the Trisagion, composed by Peter the Fuller, to favour the Eutychian doctrines, to be publicly sung in the Church[15488], Timothy, likewise, through favour of the Emperor, got Severus elected Bishop of Antioch, and

Flavian banished[15489]; and he, on the very day he took possession of his See, anathematized the Council of Chalcedon and the Epistle of St. Leo.

4. The Acephali were split into several sects. The Jacobites are among the most remarkable; these took their name from a Syrian Monk of the name of James, a disciple of Severus. He preached the Eutychian heresy in Armenia and Mesopotamia; and from that time the Syrian Catholics, who received the Council of Chalcedon, were called Melchites, or Royalists, from the Syrian word, Melk, a King, because they followed the religion of the Emperors, that is of the Emperors who received the Council of Chalcedon.

The Jacobites professed the error of Eutyches, that Christ suffered in the flesh, and they added other errors to this, especially in Armenia, for there they denied that the Word had taken flesh from the Virgin, but taught that the Word itself was changed into flesh and merely passed through the Virgin; they do not mix water with the wine in the celebration of Mass; celebrate Easter the same time as the Jews; do not venerate the cross until it is baptized the same as a human being; when they make the sign of the cross, they do it with one finger alone, to signify that they believe in one nature; they observe singular fasts, and during the lent they cannot eat eggs or cheese unless on holy Saturday.

5. The Agnoites or Ignorants were founded by Themistius, a Deacon of Alexandria. This Eutychian taught that Christ, being of one Nature alone, composed out of, or confounded, rather, between the Divinity and humanity, was, even according to the Divinity, ignorant of many things, as he, in particular, himself alludes to his ignorance of the day of judgment : “But of that day or hour no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father” (Mark, xiii, 32); and this ignorance, he said, was just as natural to him as the other inconveniences, hunger, thirst, and pain, which he suffered in this life[15490]. St. Gregory[15491], however, explains the text by saying that Christ did not know it as far his humanity was concerned, but that he knew it by the union of the humanity with the Divinity. God made man, he says, know the day and the hour by the power of his Divinity.

6. The chief of the Tritheists was John, a grammarian of Alexandria; he was known by the name of Philoponos the labourer. He objected to the Catholics, that if they recognized two Natures in Christ, they should admit

two Persons; but he was answered that Nature was one thing and Person another : for, if Nature and Personality were one and the same thing, we should admit three Natures in the Trinity as there are three Persons.

This reasoning was so convincing to Philoponos that he at once admitted its force, but it led him into a much greater error, for he recognized three distinct Natures in the Trinity, and therefore, admitted three distinct Gods, and hence his followers were called Tritheists[15492]. He wrote, likewise, against the resurrection of the flesh[15493]. With these exceptions, he believed in Christianity, and defended it against Proclus of Licia, a Platonic Philosopher who attacked it at the time.

7. From this hot-bed of error two other sects sprung up, the Corruptibilists and the Incorruptibilists. Theodosius, a Monk, founded the Corruptibilists, who believed that Christ had a corruptible body. These erred, not because they said that the Word had in Christ taken a corruptible body by its nature, and subject to hunger and thirst and sufferings, but because they asserted that Christ by necessity was subject to these sufferings, in the same manner as all of us were subject to them, so that he should undergo them whether he willed or not[15494]. The Catholic doctrine is that the Word in the body of Christ put on the common sufferings of mankind, hunger, weariness, pain and death, not through necessity, as they are of necessity with us the punishment of Original Sin, but of his own free will on account of his unbounded charity which induced him to come “ in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans, viii, 3), to condemn and punish sin in the flesh. And in the same manner, says St. Thomas[15495], our Saviour wished to assume the passions of the mind, sorrow, fear, weariness, not in the same way as they are in us, opposed to reason, for all the motions of the sensitive appetites in Christ were ordered according to reason, and were, on that account, called in him propassions; for passion in itself, says the Angelic Doctor, is so called when it rules over reason, but it is propassions when it remains in and does not extend beyond the sensitive appetite.

8. St. Julian of Halicarnassus was the head of the Phantasiasts or Incorruptibilists. These taught that the body of Christ was by its nature incorruptible and free from all passions, so that he suffered neither hunger nor thirst, nor weariness nor pain, but that is directly opposed to the words of the Gospel : “ When he had fasted he was hungry” (Matt, iv, 2);

"Fatigued from his journey, he sat down" (John, iv, 6). The Eutychians were favourable to this doctrine, for it corresponded with their own, that there was only one, an impassable, nature in Christ[15496]. Julian wrote in favour of the Incorruptibilists and Themistius of the Corruptibilists, and they both stirred up such a commotion among the people of Alexandria, that they burned each other's houses, and murdered each other on account of their difference of opinion[15497].

9. We should here remark that the Emperor Justinian fell into the error of the Incorruptibilists. Who could have imagined that this Prince, who showed himself so zealous against heretics, and above all, against the Eutychians, should have died, as many suppose he did, a heretic himself, and infected with the pestilential dogmas of Eutyches. Fleury and Orsi[15498] both attribute his fall to his overweening desire of meddling by his Edicts in matters of Faith which God has committed to the heads of his Church. He had the misfortune to have as a most intimate confident, Theodore, Bishop of Cesarea, a concealed enemy of the Council of Chalcedon, and a friend of the Acephali, and at his instigation he promulgated an Edict in the year 564, in which he declared that the body of Christ was incorruptible, so that after it was formed in the Virgin's womb, it was no longer capable of any change or natural passion, no matter how innocent, as hunger and thirst, so that although he ate before his death, he only did so in the same manner as after his Resurrection, without having any necessity of food. If the body of Christ, therefore, was not capable of any natural passion, he suffered nothing in the flesh, neither in life nor death, and his Passion was merely an appearance without any reality. Isaias therefore uttered a falsehood when he said, "Surely he hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows" (Isaias, liii, 4). So did St. Peter, where he says, "Who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree" (I. Peter, ii, 24).

Even Christ himself stated what was false when he said, " My soul is sorrowful unto death" (Matt, xxvi, 38); and then exclaiming on the cross, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (Matt, xxvii, 46). All this would be false if Christ was insensible to internal and external sufferings. ingratitude of mankind. Christ died of pain on a cross for the love of man, and men say that he suffered nothing in reality, only in appearance. Justinian required that this doctrine should be approved of by all the

Bishops, and he was particularly anxious to induce six learned African Bishops to give it their approbation, but they resisted, and were accordingly separated, and shut up in six different Churches in Constantinople[15499]. St. Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople, opposed it likewise, and laboured in vain to undeceive the Emperor. He was driven from his See and another put in his place, and all the Patriarchs and many other Bishops refused to sign their approbation[15500]. When the Oriental Bishops were required to subscribe, they said they would follow the example of Anastasius, Patriarch of Antioch, and Justinian therefore, used every effort to induce him to agree to it, but he sent the Emperor an answer in which he learnedly proved that the body of Christ, as to the natural and innocent passions was corruptible, and when informed that it was the Emperor's intention to banish him, he prepared a sermon to take leave of his people, but he never published it, as Justinian died at mid-night, the 13th of November, 566, the eighty-fourth year of his age, after a reign of thirty-nine years and eight months[15501].

10. Cardinal Baronius[15502] says that the Emperor's death was sudden and unexpected, but it was most serviceable to the empire, which was daily falling from bad to worse, God revenging the injuries inflicted on the Bishops of his Church, and preventing by his death, that fire from spreading, which he enkindled. Evagrius and Nicephorus[15503] remark, that he died just at the time he had decreed the exile of St. Anastasius and other Catholic priests, although the order had not been yet promulgated. This Evagrius, a contemporaneous author, as Orsi[15504]remarks, gave it as his deliberate opinion that Justinian, having filled the world and the Church with tumult and confusion, only received from God, in the end, that condign punishment his crimes deserved.

Baronius adds[15505], that although the name of Justinian was not removed from the Ecclesiastical Registers, like that of other heretics, and though the sixth Council and several Pontiffs had entitled him Pious and Catholic, we should not be surprised, if his falling off from the Faith was not published in any public decree. However, his other crimes, the banishment of so many Bishops, his cruelties to so many innocent persons, his acts of injustice in depriving so many of their properties, prove that he was, at all events, unjust and sacrilegious, if not a heretic.

11. Besides these sects of the Acephali, another sect of the Acemetic[15506]monks sprung up in this century. This was another sprout of Nestorianism, and it was thus discovered. During the reign of Pope Hormisdas, the Scythian monks took on themselves to sustain, as a necessary article of Faith, that one of the Trinity was made flesh, and they sent a deputation to Rome to get a decree from the Pope to that effect; he, however[15507], refused to accede to their wishes, dreading that some leaven of Eutychianism might be concealed in the proposition, and that they wished besides to throw discredit on the Council of Chalcedon and the Epistle of St. Leo, as deficient in the definition of the expressions necessary to condemn the Nestorian and Eutychian heresy. On the other hand, that proposition was embraced by all the Oriental Churches, as a touchstone against the Nestorian heresy, and was impugned by the Acemetic monks alone, who, it is true, in the time of Zeno and Anastasius, had fought strenuously against the heresy of Eutyches, but becoming too warm against the Eutychians, began to agree with the Nestorians, not alone denying that one of the Trinity was made flesh, but also that the Son of God suffered in his flesh, and that the Blessed Virgin was really and truly the Mother of God[15508].

12. The Emperor Justinian undertook the defence of the proposition upheld by the monks of Scythia, and wrote to Pope John, II., for his approbation, and gave his letter in charge to two Bishops, Ignatius, Archbishop of Ephesus, and Demetrius of Philippi. When the Acemetic monks got knowledge of this proceeding, they sent two of their body to Rome, Cyrus and Eulogius, to defend their cause[15509]; so Pope John had the matter most particularly examined. We know, for certain, that Anatolius, Deacon of the Roman Church, wrote to Ferrandus, a Deacon in Africa, man of most profound learning, and of great sanctity, who, having previously expressed a doubt as to whether this proposition was admissible or not, now, after a rigorous examination, answered that there should be no hesitation in admitting it. Among other proofs, he adduces the words of St. Paul : “Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you Bishops, to rule the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts, xx, 28). Now when the Apostle says that God hath shed his blood, everyone must understand that he shed the

blood of the flesh he had taken from the Virgin, and that it is not God the Father, nor God the Holy Ghost, but God the Son, who has done so, as the Scripture declares in several places : “For God so loved the world as to give his only—begotten Son” (John, iii, 16) : “ He hath spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all” (Rom. viii, 32) : if, therefore, we can say that God has shed his blood for us, we can also say that one of the Persons of the Trinity shed his blood, and suffered in the flesh. After a rigorous examination, therefore, Pope John answered the Emperor, and authentically gave his approbation to the proposition, that one of the Trinity suffered in the flesh. He then strove to get the Acemetic monks who had come to Rome, to accept his definition, but they obstinately refused, and he was obliged to separate them from the communion of the Church[15510]. We should remark that the letter of Pope John did not contradict the letter of Pope Hormisdas, for this Pope did not condemn the proposition, but only withheld his approbation for just causes, lest, as Roncaglia says, a hasty definition at the time, might divide some from the unity of the Church.[15511]

ARTICLE II. THE THREE CHAPTERS

13.—Condemnation of the Three Chapters of Theodore, Ibas, and Theodoret. 14, 15.—Defended by Vigilius. 16.—Answer to the objection of a Heretic, who asserts that one Council contradicts another.

13. It was during this sixth century that the controversy about the Three Chapters was carried on. These were :First The books of Theodore of Mopsuestia, in which it was clear he taught the heresy of Nestorius (supra, cap. v. n. 48); Second The Letter of Ibas to Maris of Persia, in which he condemned alike St. Cyril and Nestorius, and praised Theodore of Mopsuestia; and, Thirdly The writings of Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, against the twelve Anathematizms of St. Cyril. This controversy grievously disturbed the Church, but it was put at rest by the condemnation of these Three Chapters, in the year 553, in the fifth General Council, the second of Constantinople. The Emperor Justinian hurried on the condemnation of Theodore and his writings, the Letter of Ibas to Maris the Persian, and the writings of Theodoret against St. Cyril, and, finally, the sentence received the approbation of Pope Vigilius, in his famous Constitutum. Dangeus[15512] says that Vigilius was opposed to the celebration of this Council, but as he

had not the power to prevent it, and foresaw that a ruinous schism would spring from his objection, he gave his assent, and, confirmed by the assent of the Holy See, it now ranks among the Ecumenical Councils.

14. Pope Vigilius was blamed for his conduct in regard to this Council, and for so frequently changing his judgment regarding the condemnation of the Three Chapters, but Cardinal Norris[15513], after relating all his changes, defends him as does Peter of Marca and says, that his inconstancy was not weakness, but prudence.

“Vigilius,” he says, “ was a most tenacious upholder of Pontifical authority, even setting at defiance the Sovereign himself, as appears from his actions. He is reproached with inconstancy of mind, and too great a facility in changing his opinions, for in the case of the Three Chapters, he was often inconsistent, and more than once was opposed to his previous opinions. In the beginning, while he was yet in Sicily, he defended the Three Chapters; but, if we are to believe Victor, he had already promised to Theodora Augusta, that he would condemn them. When he came to Constantinople, he suspended Menna for condemning the Three Chapters; but he was soon after reconciled to him, and juridically condemned them himself. Three years after, he revoked his judgment, published a new Constitution, and denied that they could be condemned; but he held this opinion for only a few months, for he forwarded an Epistle to Eutyches, declaring the Constitution of no effect, and coming to the Synod, he proscribed the Three Chapters.” That most learned man, Peter of Marca (lib. iii, De Concordia Sacerdotii & Imperii, cap. 13), testifies that this inconstancy of Vigilius has been considered prudence by the learned; he calls it dispensation, for at one time he acted up to the rigour of Law and Canons, and then again dispensed with them for the sake of Faith and public tranquillity.

15. Peter of Marca, therefore, says, that the Popes, at all times, in questions relating to discipline, have acted according to the rules of prudence, sometimes, when necessary, using all the rigour of the Canon, at other times the Dispensing Power, called by the Greeks, Economy, by the Latins, Dispensation, to preserve the union of the faithful and the peace of the Church. Cardinal Orsi[15514]remarks, besides, that it was the last Constitution or Judgment alone that was proposed to the Church by

Vigilius, as a peremptory decree, and as Theologians say, pronounced ex Cathedra. He was unwilling at first to condemn the Three Chapters, because he feared to give a handle to the Nestorians to throw discredit on the Council of Chalcedon, which, it was said, approved of the Three Chapters; but when, on one hand he perceived that the Eutychians more vigorously attacked the Council of Chalcedon, which they said (though it was not the case) had approved of these Chapters; and on the other, the Nestorians laying hold of that, boasted that this Council was favourable to the doctrine of Nestorius, then indeed, he was convinced that it was necessary to condemn them absolutely, and he accordingly gave a decree to that effect, in unison with the Fathers of the Council of Constantinople, which is, therefore, as Tournelly says[15515], considered one of the Ecumenical Councils, as it was approved of by Vigilius, and also by some of his successors, as Pelagius II., Leo II., &c., and Photius, according to Orsi, mentions the same thing in his writings.

16. How does it happen though, says Maclain, the annotator of Mosheim[15516], that in the Council of Chalcedon the writings of Ibas and Theodoret were not condemned, and they themselves were praised for the purity of their Faith, and, for all that, the Council of Constantinople condemns their writings; the decision of the Council of Constantinople then is, he says, opposed to that of Chalcedon, and is a proof that both the Councils and the Doctors differ among themselves. Thus, he endeavours to prove the fallibility of General Councils of the Catholic Church, as these two Councils were opposed to each other. But as Selvaggi, in his sixteenth note, very fairly remarks, this is altogether false, for the Three Chapters were not approved of by the Council of Chalcedon; in fact, as Tournelly also remarks, they were neither approved nor rejected; they were altogether passed over in that Council, lest by condemning them, more disturbance would be raised in the Church, already distracted by the Nestorians. Peter of Marca explains the omission of the condemnation, on the authority of St. Cyril[15517]. Cyril, he says, prudently teaches that rigorous rules must sometimes be tempered by dispensation, as people at sea frequently throw some of their merchandise overboard to preserve the rest; and in his Epistle to Proclus of Constantinople, he tells him that the Council of Ephesus acted in this manner, for the Synod, indeed, condemned the heretical impiety, but

in this condemnation prudently abstained from mentioning the name of Theodorus, lest many, led away by their respect for his person, would forsake the Church itself.

17. Juenin[15518] tells us that the books of Origen were condemned in this Council, and the following errors of his especially were noted: First—That the souls of men are created before they are united to their bodies, and that they are joined to the body as a place of punishment. Second—That the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, and the waters above the heavens, are animated and reasoning powers. Third—That in the General Resurrection, our bodies will arise all in a round form, and that the pains of the damned and of the devils will have an end sometime or other. Fourth that in some future ages Jesus Christ will be again crucified for the devils, and that the wicked spirits who are in heaven will inflict this suffering on him. Juenin also remarks that the condemnation of these erroneous doctrines does not appear clearly, from the original Acts of the second Council of Constantinople, as in the edition of L'Abbe, but that Cardinal Norris clearly shows that they were condemned there, though Garner maintains that it was not in this Council they were condemned at all, but in the Constantinopolitan Council, celebrated under Menna.

Chapter VII

THE HERESIES OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY

ARTICLE I. OF MAHOMETANISM

1.—Birth of Mahomet, and Beginning of his False Religion. 2.—The Alcoran filled with Blasphemy and Nonsense.

1. The impious sect of Mahometanism sprung up in this century. I have already written the history of Mahomet in my work on the “Truth of the Faith”[15519], but I consider it necessary to give a short sketch of it here. Mahomet, the founder of this destroying sect, which has spread over the greater perhaps, the greatest part of the Christian world, was born in Arabia, in 568, according to Fleury[15520], and his family was among the most illustrious of that Peninsula. His uncle put him to trade on the death of his father, and when twenty-eight years of age, he became, at first, the factor of, and, soon after, married, a rich and noble widow, called Cadijah[15521]. He was brought up an idolater; but, as he grew old, he determined, not alone to change his own religion, but that of his countrymen, who, for the greater part, were idolaters also, and to teach them, as he said, the ancient religion of Adam, of Abraham, of Noah, and of the Prophets, among whom he reckoned Jesus Christ. He pretended to have long conversations with the Archangel Gabriel, in the cave of Hera, three miles from Mecca, where he frequently retired. In the year 608, being then forty years of age[15522], he began to give out that he was a Prophet inspired by God, and he persuaded his relatives and domestics of this first, and then began publicly to preach in Mecca, and attack idolatry. At first, the people did not very willingly listen to him, and asked him to prove his mission by a miracle; but he told them that God sent him to preach the truth, and not to work miracles.

The impostor, however, boasts of having wrought one, though ridiculous in the extreme :apiece, he says, fell off from the moon once into his sleeve, and he fixed it on again; and it is said, that this is the reason for the

Mahometans adopting the half-moon as the device of their Empire. He gave out, in the commencement of his career, that God commanded him not to force any one to embrace his religion, but the people of Mecca having risen up against him, and driven him from their city, he then declared that God commanded him to pursue the infidels with arms, and thus propagate the Faith; and from that till his death he was always at war. Now Lord of Mecca, he made it the Metropolis of the Faithful, and before his death he saw almost all the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula subject to his spiritual and temporal sway.

2. He composed the Koran (Al Koran the book), assisted, as some think, by Sergius, a Monk. It is a collection of precepts, taken from the Mosaic and Christian Law, together with many of his own, and interspersed with fables and ridiculous revelations. He recognizes the Divine Mission of Moses and Jesus Christ, and admits many parts of the Scriptures; but his law, he says, is the perfection of the Jewish and Christian law, and he is the reformer of these codes, though, in truth, it is totally different from both one and the other. He professes that there is but one God; but in his Alcoran he relates many trivialities unworthy of the Supreme Being, and the whole work is, in fact, filled with contradictions, as I have shown in my book on the "Truth of the Faith." Jews or Christians, he says, may be saved by the observance of their respective laws, and it is indifferent if they exchange one for the other; but hell will be forever the portion of the infidels; those who believe in one God alone will be sent there for a period not exceeding, at most, a thousand years, and then all will be received into the House of Peace, or Paradise. The Mahometan Paradise, however, is only fit for beasts; for filthy sensual pleasure is all the believer has to expect there. I pass over all the other extravagancies of the Koran, having already, in the "Truth of the Faith," treated the subject more fully.

3. The Mahometans shave the head, and leave only a lock of hair on the crown, by which they hope Mahomet will take them up to heaven, even out of hell itself. They are permitted to have four wives by their law, and they ought, at least, to have one; they may divorce each wife twice. It is prohibited to dispute on the Alcoran and the Scriptures; and the devil appears to have dictated this precept himself, for, by keeping those poor people in ignorance, he keeps them in darkness. Mahomet died in 631, in the sixty-third year of his age, and nine years after he was recognized as

Sovereign of Arabia. He saw almost the whole Peninsula subject to his sway, and for four hundred leagues to the North and South of Medina no other Sovereign was known. He was succeeded by Aboubeker, one of his earliest disciples, and a great conqueror likewise. A long line of Caliphs united in their own persons the Spiritual and Royal power of the Arabian Empire. They destroyed the Empire of Persia; and Egypt, and Syria, and the rich provinces and kingdoms of the East yielded to their arms[15523].

ARTICLE II. HERESY OF THE MONOTHELITES

4.—Commencement of the Monothelites; their Chiefs, Sergius and Cyrus. 5.—Opposed by Sophronius. 6.—Letter of Sergius to Pope Honorius, and his Answer. 7.—Defence of Honorius. 8.—Honorius erred, but did not fall into any Error against Faith. 9. The Ecthesis of Heraclius afterwards condemned by Pope John IV. 10.—The Type of the Emperor Constaris. 11.—Condemnation of Paul and Pyrrhus. 12.—Dispute of St. Maximus with Pyrrhus. 13.—Cruelty of Constans; his violent Death. 14.—Condemnation of the Monothelites in the Sixth Council. 15.—Honorius Condemned in that Council, not for Heresy, but for his negligence in repressing Heresy.

4. In the year 622, according to Noel Alexander[15524], or 630, according to Fleury[15525], the Monothelite Heresy sprung up; and this was its origin: Some Bishops who had received the Council of Chalcedon, recognizing two Natures in Christ, still asserted that as both Natures were but one Person, we should only recognize in him one operation[15526] N. Alexander (loco cit.) says that the founder of this error was Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople; he communicated his opinions to Theodore, Bishop of Pharan, in Arabia, and he answered him that his sentiments were the same. It happened also about this time that the Emperor Heraclius was in Gerapolis in Upper Syria, when he was visited by Athanasius, Patriarch of the Jacobites, a crafty and wicked man; he gained the Emperor’s confidence, who promised to make him Patriarch of Antioch, if he would receive the Council of Chalcedon. Athanasius pretended to receive it, and confessed the two Natures; he then asked the Emperor, if, having received the two Natures, it was necessary to recognize in the person of Christ two wills and two operations, or one alone. This question posed him, and he wrote to Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople, and asked also the opinion of Cyrus, Bishop of Phasis, and both persuaded him, that he should confess in Christ one will alone, and only one operation, as he was only one Person. The Eutychian Athanasius was quite satisfied with this false doctrine, because, if we recognize in

Christ only one operation, we should, according to the Eutychian system, only recognize one Nature also. Thus Sergius, Theodore, Bishop of Pharan, Athanasius, and Cyrus joined together, and as, on the death of George, Patriarch of Alexandria, Cyrus was raised to that dignity, and Athanasius was immediately appointed Patriarch of Antioch, three of the Eastern Patriarchs embraced the heretical doctrine, that there was but one will in Jesus Christ; and, on that account, this sect was called the Monothelites, from the two Greek terms composing the word, and signifying one will[15527]. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, remained faithful to the Church, and never could be induced to embrace the heresy.

5. Cyrus, being now Patriarch of Alexandria, formed a union there of all the Theodosians, a very numerous Eutychian sect. This Act of Union was concluded in 633, and contains nine Articles; but the seventh is the one that contains all the poison of heresy.

This asserts that Christ is the Son himself, who produces the Divine and human operations by means of one Theandric operation alone that is, we may say, a human-Divine operation, both Divine and human at the same time so that the distinction exists not in reality, but is only drawn by our understandings[15528]. Cyrus gave these articles to be examined by the Monk Sophronius; but when he read them, he threw himself at the Bishop's feet, and, with tears, implored of him not to promulgate them, as they were contrary to Faith, and conformable to the doctrine of Apollinares. Cyrus, however, would not listen to him, but published the Act of Union, and Sophronius, seeing he could make no impression in Alexandria, betook himself to Constantinople, to lay the affair before Sergius; but he being one of the firmest supporters of the error, refused to see him, and, under pretext of re-uniting all the heretics of Egypt, approved the doctrine of Cyrus[15529].

6. Sophronius returned again to the East, and was elected this same year, 633, Patriarch of Jerusalem, much to the displeasure of Sergius, who endeavoured to blacken him in the estimation of Pope Honorius, to whom he wrote a long letter, filled with deceit and lies. He pretends to have been ignorant altogether of the question of two wills, until Cyrus of Phasis wrote to him, and lays great stress on a pretended work of Menas, formerly Bishop of Constantinople, written to support Monothelism. Some of the Fathers, he says, teach one operation in Christ, but not one of them ever

speaks of two, and he then falsely reports that St. Sophronius, when he was made Patriarch of Jerusalem, entered into an agreement with him not to say anything about the controversy at all. The Pope, ignorant of the artifices of Sergius, answered him, and commended him for putting a stop to this novel doctrine (the two operations in Christ, maintained by Sophronius), as only calculated to scandalize the simple, and he then adds : " We confess one will alone in Jesus Christ, for the Divinity did not assume our sin, but our nature, as it was created before it was corrupted by sin. We do not see that either the Sacred Scriptures or the Councils teach one or two operations. That Jesus Christ is one alone, operating by the Divinity and humanity, the Scriptures prove in many places; but it is of no consequence to know whether by the operation of the Divinity or of the humanity we should admit one or two operations. We should leave this dispute to the grammarians.

We ought to reject these new expressions, lest the simple, hearing of two operations, might consider us Nestorians, or perhaps might count us Eutychians, if we recognize one operation alone in Christ"[15530].

7. Not alone the heretical, but even some Catholic writers, have judged, from these expressions of Pope Honorius, that he fell into the Monothelite heresy; but they are certainly deceived; because when he says that there is only one will in Christ, he intends to speak of Christ as man alone, and in that sense, as a Catholic, he properly denies that there are two wills in Christ opposed to each other, as in us the flesh is opposed to the spirit; and if we consider the very words of his letter, we will see that such is his meaning. " We confess one will alone in Jesus Christ, for the Divinity did not assume our sin, but our nature, as it was created before it was corrupted by sin." This is what Pope John IV., writes to the Emperor Constantino II., in his apology for Honorius : "Some," said he, "admitted two contrary wills in Jesus Christ, and Honorious answers that, by saying that Christ perfect God and perfect man having come to heal human nature, was conceived and born without sin, and, therefore, never had two opposite wills, nor in him the will of the flesh ever combated the will of the Spirit, as it does in us, on account of the sin contracted from Adam." He, therefore, concludes that those who imagine that Honorius taught that there was in Christ but one will alone of the Divinity and of the humanity, are at fault[15531]. St.

Maximus, in his dialogue with Pyrrhus[15532], and Anastasius Bibliothicarius[15533], make a similar defence for Honorius. Graveson, in confirmation of this[15534], very properly remarks, that as St. Cyril, in his dispute with Nestorius, said, in a Catholic sense, that the Nature of the Incarnate Word was one, and the Eutychians seized on the expression as favourable to them. In the same manner, Honorius saying that Christ had one will (that is, that he had not, like us, two opposite wills one defective, the will of the flesh and one correct, the will of the Spirit), the Monothelites availed themselves of it to defend their errors.

8. We do not, by any means, deny that Honorius was in error, when he imposed silence on those who discussed the question of one or two wills in Christ, because when the matter in dispute is erroneous, it is only favouring error to impose silence. Wherever there is error it ought to be exposed and combated, and it was here that Honorius was wrong; but it is a fact beyond contradiction, that Honorius never fell into the Monothelite heresy, notwithstanding what heretical writers assert, and especially William Cave[15535], who says it is labour in vain to try and defend him from this charge. The learned Noel Alexander clearly proves that it cannot be laid to his charge[15536], and, in answer to the great argument adduced by our adversaries, that in the Thirteenth Act of the Sixth Council it was declared that he was anathematized “ Anathematizari praevidimus, et Honorium eo quad invenimus per scripta, quae ab eo facto sunt ad Sergium, quia in omnibus ejus mentem secutus est, et impia dogmata confirmavit” replies that the Synod condemned Honorius, not because he formally embraced the heresy, but on account of the favour he showed the heretics, as Leo II. (Optimo Concilii Interprete, as N. Alex, calls him) writes to Constantino Pogonatus in his Epistle, requesting the confirmation of the Synod. In this letter Leo enumerates the heretics condemned, the fathers of the heresy, Theodore of Pharan, Cyrus of Alexandria, Sergius, Pyrrhus, Paul and Peter, successors in the See of Constantinople; he also anathematizes Honorius, not for embracing the error, but for permitting it to go on unmolested: “ Qui hanc Apostolicam Ecclesiam non Apostolicae Traditionis doctrina lustravit, sed profana proditione immaculatam maculari permisit.” He also writes to the Spanish Bishops, and tells them that Theodore, Cyrus, and the others are condemned, together with Honorius, who did not, as befitted his

Apostolical authority, extinguish the flame of heretical doctrine in the beginning, but cherished it by his negligence.

From these and several other sources, then, Noel Alexander proves that Honorius was not condemned by the Sixth Council as a heretic, but as a favourer of heretics, and for his negligence in putting them down, and that he was very properly condemned, for the favourers of heresy and the authors of it are both equally culpable. He adds that the common opinion of the Sorbonne was, that although Honorius, in his letters, may have written some erroneous opinions, still he only wrote them as a private Doctor, and in no wise stained the purity of the faith of the Apostolic See; and his letters to Sergius, which we quoted in the last paragraph, prove how different his opinions were from those of the Monothelites.

9. On the death of Honorius, in 638, the Monothelite heresy was very much extended by the publication of the Ecthesis of the Emperor Heraclius. This was an Edict drawn up by Sergius himself, and published in the name of Heraclius. It was called Ecthesis, the Greek word for exposition, as it contained an exposition of the Faith regarding the question of one or two operations in Jesus Christ. It commences by an exposition of the Faith regarding the Trinity, speaks of the Incarnation, and distinguishes two Natures in the single person of Christ, and it then proceeds : “ We attribute all the operations of Christ, Divine and human, to the Incarnate Word, and we do not permit it to be said or taught that there are one or two operations, but rather, according to the doctrines of the Ecumenical Councils, we declare that there is one Jesus Christ alone, who operates things Divine and human, and that both one and the other operations proceed from the same Incarnate Word, without division or confusion; for although the expression of one or two Natures has been made use of by some of the Fathers, still others look on it as strange, and dread lest some may avail themselves of it to destroy the doctrine of the two Natures in Christ. On the other hand, the expression of two operations scandalizes many, as it was never made use of by any of the principal Doctors of the Church, and because it appears to be the same thing to admit two contrary wills in Christ, as to admit two Persons. And if the impious Nestorius, although he admitted two Sons, did not dare to say that there were two wills nay, more, he declared that in the two Persons supposed by him, there was only one will how then can Catholics, who recognize one Jesus Christ alone, admit in him two wills,

and even one will contrary to the other ? We, therefore, following in all things, the Holy Fathers, confess in Christ one will alone, and we believe that his flesh, animated with a rational soul, never of itself made any movement contrary to the Spirit of the Word which was united in one Person.” Such was the famous Ecthesis of Heraclius, confirmed afterwards by its author, Sergius, in a Cabal or Council held by him in Constantinople; we perceive that in the commencement it prohibits the expression of one or two operations, to deceive the people, but afterwards the dogma of one will, the formal heresy of the Monothelites, is maintained[15537]. This Ecthesis was sent to Pope Severinus, but, either because it did not come to hand, or that he died before it reached Rome, we hear nothing of its condemnation then, but it was subsequently condemned by Pope John IV.[15538].

10. Notwithstanding the condemnation of the Ecthesis, the Monothelite heresy still continued to flourish, through the malice of Pyrrhus and Paul, the successors of Sergius in the See of Constantinople. Paul pretended, for a long time, to be a Catholic, but at length, he threw off the mask, and induced the Emperor Constans to publish, in 648, an edict called the “Type,” or formula, imposing silence on both parties. In this formula there is a summary review of the reasons on both sides, and it then proceeds ~ “Wherefore, for the future, we forbid all our Catholic subjects to dispute about one or two wills or operations, without prejudice, however, to what was decided by the approved Fathers, relative to the Incarnation of the Word. We wish, therefore, that they should hold by the Holy Scriptures, the five General Councils, and the simple expressions of the Fathers, which doctrine is the rule of the Church, without either adding to, or diminishing, anything, nor explaining anything by the private opinions of others, but let everything be in the same state as it was before this controversy sprung up at all, and as if it had never taken place. Those who will dare to contravene this decree, if they are Bishops or clergymen, they shall be deposed; if Monks, excommunicated and banished from their Monasteries; if in public employments, cashiered; if private individuals, their property shall be confiscated; and all others shall suffer corporal punishment, and be transported.” Such is the “Type” of Constans[15539].

11. We should here remark, that on the death of Sergius, he was succeeded by Pyrrhus, and he resigned the See, of his own free-will,

afterwards, on account of disputes he had with his people, and Paul, the Econome of the Cathedral Church, was elected in his place[15540], and he followed the heretical doctrines of both his predecessors. Pope Theodore laboured hard, both by writing to him and through his Legates, to bring him back to the Catholic Faith, but finding it all in vain, at length, by a formal sentence, deposed him[15541]. It is supposed that this took place in the same Council in which Theodore condemned Pyrrhus, for after he had made his retractation in Rome at the Pope's own feet, as he had promised St. Maximus he would do, when he disputed with him in Africa (as we shall see hereafter), he went to Ravenna, and again relapsed into Monothelitism. It is probable he was induced by the Exarch, who was a heretic himself, to take this step, hoping to regain his See of Constantinople, and in fact he again got possession of it in the year 655. When Pope Theodore heard of his relapse, he convoked a partial Synod of Bishops and the Roman clergy, and pronounced an anathema and sentence of deposition against him, and not only that, but he had the chalice with the Consecrated Blood of the Redeemer, brought to him, dipped the pen in it, and thus signed the awful sentence with the precious Blood of Christ[15542].

12. We have spoken of the dispute of Pyrrhus with St. Maximus the Abbot, in Africa. The controversy was about the one or two wills and operations, and it is worthy of remark how forcibly the learned St. Maximus refuted him. If Christ is one, said Pyrrhus, he should only will as one person, and, consequently, he has but one will. Tell me, Pyrrhus, said St. Maximus, Christ is certainly only one, but he is, at the same time, both God and man. If, then, he is true God and true man, he must will as God and as man in two different manners, though but one person all the time, for, as he is of two natures, he must certainly will and operate according to the two natures, for neither of these natures is devoid of will, nor devoid of operation.

Now, if Jesus Christ willed and operated according to the two Natures, he had, as they were, two, we must admit that he had two natural wills and two essential operations, and as the two Natures did not divide him, so the two wills and operations essentially attached to the two natures did not actually divide him, and being united in Christ did not prevent him from being one alone. But, Pyrrhus replied, it is not possible, for as there are several wills there should be several persons. Then you assert, said St. Maximus, that as there are many wills there must be many persons to wish; but if you go by this rule, you must also admit, reciprocally, that as many persons as there are, so many wills must there be; but if you admit this, you must grant that there is but one Person, as Sabellius teaches, for in God and in the Three Divine Persons there is but one will alone, or, you must grant that as there are in God Three Persons, so there are three wills, and consequently three Natures, as Arius taught, if according to the doctrine of the Fathers the number of wills must correspond to the number of Persons. It is, therefore (concludes St. Maximus), not true that wherever there are many wills, there are many persons, but the real truth is that when several Natures are united in the same Person, as in Jesus Christ, there are several wills and operations, though only one person. Pyrrhus raised more difficulties, but St. Maximus answered them all so clearly that he was at last convinced, and promised him that he would go to Rome, and retract his errors at the feet of the Pope, which he soon after did, and presented to his Holiness the instrument of his retractation[15543]; but again, as we have seen, relapsed.

13. But to return to the Type of Constans; that together with all the Monothelite doctrine, was condemned in Rome in a Synod held by Pope Martin; and in consequence, the holy Pontiff was bitterly persecuted by Constans, and ended his days in the Crimea, in 654, where he was banished[15544]. Constans himself, after practising so many cruelties against the Pope and the faithful, especially in Syracuse, was called away by God, in the year 668, the twenty-seventh year of his reign, and met an unhappy end. He went into the bath along with an attendant, who killed him with a blow on the head, inflicted with the vessel used for pouring out water, and instantly took to flight; his attendants, astonished at his long delay in the bath, at last went in to see what was the matter, and found him dead[15545].

Cardinal Gotti[15546] says, he also put St. Maximus to death; and among his other acts of cruelty related by, Noel Alexander[15547], on the authority of Theophanes, Cedrenus, Paul the Deacon, &c., is the murder of his brother Theodosius. He first got him ordained a Deacon through envy, by the Patriarch Paul, but he never after enjoyed peace of mind, for he frequently dreamed he saw his brother clad in the Diaconal robes, and holding a chalice filled with blood in his hand, and crying out to him, “Drink, brother, drink.”

14. The scene was changed. Constaritine Pogonatus, son to Constans, mounted the Imperial throne; he was a lover of Faith and Justice, and lost no time in procuring the assembly of the Sixth General Council in Constantinople, in 680[15548], which was presided over by the Legates of Pope Agatho. Noel Alexander informs us that authors are not agreed as to the number of Bishops who attended; Theophanes and Cedrenus reckoned two hundred and nineteen, while Photius only counts one hundred and seventy. This Council was happily brought to a conclusion in eighteen Sessions, and on the 18th of October, the definition of the Faith, in opposition to the heresy of the Monothelites was thus worded: “We proclaim that there are in Christ, two natural operations, invisibly, inconvertibly, inseparably, and unconfusedly, according to the doctrine of the Fathers.” This definition was subscribed by all the Fathers[15549]. Thus was concluded the Sixth General Council; the zeal of the Prelates was seconded by the approbation and authority of the Emperor, whose Faith was lauded by the assembled Fathers, and he was decorated with the title of the Pious Restorer of Religion.

The Pope, St. Leo II., the successor of Agatho, who died during the celebration of the Council, confirmed its decisions and decrees, and, as Graveson[15550] says, confirmed by his Apostolic authority, this Sixth Council, and ordained that it should be numbered among the other General Councils.

15. We should here remark, that Cardinal Baronius[15551], to wipe off the stain of heresy from Pope Honorius, says, that the Acts of this Council have not been handed down to us fairly, but were corrupted through the artifice of Theodore, the Bishop of Constantinople. But Graveson properly remarks, that this conjecture is not borne out by the learned men of our age, because (as he says,) Christian Lupus, Noel Alexander, Anthony Pagi, Combesis and Garner, clearly prove the authenticity of the Acts. Graveson[15552], besides, remarks that several follow Cardinal Bellarmine’s opinion, and endeavour to clear Honorius, by saying, that the Fathers of the Council were in error in the examination and judgment of Honorius; but, he adds, it is very hard to believe that all the Fathers, not alone of this Council, but

also of the Seventh and Eighth General Councils, who also condemned Honorius, were in error, when condemning his doctrine. I think it better, then, to keep on the highway, and conclude, that Honorius can, by every right, be cleared from the Monothelite heresy, but still was justly condemned by the Council, as a favourer of heretics, and for his negligence in repressing error. Danaeus[15553] says the same thing; there is no open heresy in the private letter of Honorius to Sergius, but he is worthy of condemnation for his pusillanimity in using ambiguous words to please and keep on terms with heretics, when it was his duty to oppose them strenuously in the beginning. Hermant says[15554], that Honorius was condemned, because he allowed himself to be imposed on by the artifices of Sergius, and did not maintain the interests of the Church with the constancy he should have done. It is dreadful to see the blindness and obstinacy of so many Prelates of the Church poisoned by this heresy. Among the rest, Noel Alexander tells us, was Macarias, Patriarch of Antioch, who was present at the Council[15555], who, when the Emperor and the Fathers asked him if he confessed two natural wills, and two natural operations in Christ, answered that he would sooner allow himself to be torn limb from limb, and thrown into the sea; he was very properly deposed, and excommunicated by the Synod.

The same author informs us[15556], that the heresy continued to flourish among the Chaldeans, even since the Council (but they abandoned it in the Pontificate of Paul V.), and among the Maronites, and Armenians, likewise; among these last another sect, called Paulicians, from one Paul of Samosata, took root in 653. They admitted the two Principles of the Manicheans, denied that Mary was the Mother of God, and taught several other extravagances enumerated by Noel Alexander[15557]. Before I conclude this chapter, I wish to make one reflection; we see how it displeases the powers of hell, that mankind should be grateful to our Redeemer, and return him love for love; for the devil is constantly labouring to sow amongst Christians, by means of wicked men, so many heresies, all tending to destroy the belief of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and, in consequence, to diminish our love for Jesus Christ, who, by the assumption of the flesh of Man, has constituted himself our Saviour. Such were the heresies of Sabellius, of Photinus, of Arius, of Nestorius, of Eutyches, and of the Monothelites; some of these have made of Christ an imaginary personage, some deprived him of the Divinity, others again of his humanity, but the Church has always been victorious against them.

Chapter VIII

HERESIES OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY

THE HERESY OF THE ICONOCLASTS

1.—Beginning of the Iconoclasts. 2, 3.—St. Germanus opposes the Emperor Leo. 4.—He resigns the See of Constantinople. 5.—Anastasius is put in his place; Resistance of the Women. 6.—Cruelty of Leo. 7 Leo endeavours to put the Pope to death; opposition of the Romans. 8.—Letter of the Pope. 9.—A Council is held in Rome in support of the Sacred Images, but Leo continues his Persecution. 10.—His hand is miraculously restored to St. John of Damascus. 11.—Leo dies, and is succeeded by Constantine Copronymus, a greater Persecutor; Death of the impious Patriarch Anastasius. 12.—Council held by Constantine. 13.—Martyrs in honour of the Images. 14.—0ther tyrannical Acts of Constantine, and his horrible Death. 15.—Le o IV. succeeds to the Empire, and is succeeded by his Son, Constantine. 16.—The Empress Irene, in her Son's name, demands a Council. 17.—Seditions against the Council. 18.—The Council is held, and the Veneration of Images established. 19—Erroneous opinion of the Council of Frankfort, regarding the Eighth General Council. 20.—Persecution again renewed by the Iconoclasts.

1. The first and fifth Acts of the Eighth General Council attest that the Gentiles, the Jews, the Marcionites, and the Manicheans, had previously declared war against Sacred Images, and it again hroke out, in the year 723, in the reign of Leo Isaurus. About this period, a Captain of the Jews, called Sarantapechis (or four cubits), induced the Caliph Jezzid to commence a destructive war against the Sacred Images in the Christian Churches, and promising him a long and happy reign as his reward. He, accordingly, published an edict, commanding the removal of all Images; but the Christians refused to obey him, and six months afterwards God removed him out of the way. Constantius, Bishop of Nacolia, in Phrygia, introduced this Jewish doctrine among Christians. He was expelled from his See, in punishment of his perfidy, by his own Diocesans, and ingratiated himself into the Emperor's favour, and induced him to declare war against Images[15558].

2. Leo had already reigned ten years, when, in the year 727, he declared publicly to the people, that it was not right to venerate Images. The people,

however, all cried out against him; and he then said, he did not mean[15559] to say that Images should be done away with altogether, but that they should be placed high up, out of the reach, that they should not be soiled by the people kissing them. It was manifest his intention was to do away with them altogether; but he met the most determined resistance from St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, who proclaimed his willingness to lay down his life for the Sacred Images, which were always venerated in the Church. The Holy Pontiff wrote many letters to those Bishops who held on to the Emperor's opinion, to turn them from their evil ways, and he also wrote to Pope Gregory II., who answered him in a long letter, approving of his zeal, and stating what was the doctrine of the Catholic Church in the veneration of the Sacred Images which he was contending for[15560].

3. The Emperor continued his rage against Images, and the displeasure of the people of Continental Greece and the Islands of the Cyclades at length broke out into open rebellion. Zeal for religion was the motive assigned for this outbreak, and one Cosimus was elected as their Emperor, and they marched to Constantinople to have him crowned. They fought a battle near Constantinople, under the leadership of Cosimus, Agallianus, and Stephanus, but were totally defeated; so Agallianus threw himself into the sea, and Stephanus and Cosimus were taken and beheaded. Leo was emboldened by this victory to persecute the Catholics with greater violence. He sent for the Patriarch, St. Germanus, and strove to bring him over to his way of thinking; but[15561] the Saint told him openly, that whoever would strive to abolish the veneration of Images was a precursor of Antichrist, and that such doctrine had a tendency to upset the Mystery of the Incarnation; and he reminded him of his coronation oath, not to make any change in the Traditions of the Church.

All this had no effect on the Emperor; he continued to press the Patriarch, and strove to entrap him into some unguarded expression, which he might consider seditious, and thus have a reason for deposing him. He was urged on to adopt this course by Anastasius, a disciple of the Patriarch, but who joined the Emperor's party, and was promised the See of Constantinople, on the deposition of St. Germanus. The Saint, knowing the evil designs of Anastasius, gave him many friendly admonitions. One day, in particular, he was going in to see the Emperor, and Anastasius followed him so closely that he trod on his robe : “Do not be in a hurry,” said the Saint; “ you will be soon enough in the Hippodrome” (the public circus), alluding to his disgrace fifteen years afterwards, when the Emperor Constantine, who placed him in the See of Constantinople, had his eyes plucked out, and conducted round the Hippodrome, riding on an ass, with his face to the tail; but, for all that, kept him in the See, because he was an enemy to the Sacred Images. The Emperor, in the meanwhile, continued a bitter enemy of the Patriarch St. Germanus, and persecuted, not alone the Catholics who venerated the Sacred Images, but those also who honoured the Relics of the Saints, and invoked their intercession, not knowing, or, perhaps, not wishing to learn, the difference between supreme worship, which we Catholics pay to God, and that veneration which we pay to Relics and Holy Images[15562].

4. The Emperor convoked a Council in the early part of the year 730[15563], in which he made a decree against Sacred Images, and wanted the Patriarch to subscribe it, but he firmly refused, and preferred resigning his dignity; he threw off his Pallium, and said : “It is impossible, my Lord, that I can sanction any novelty against the Faith; I can do nothing without a General Council ;” and he left the meeting. The Emperor was enraged, and he sent some armed officials to eject him from the Archiepiscopal Palace, which they did, with blows and outrages, not even respecting his venerable age of eighty years. He went to the house of his family, and lived there as a monk, and left the See of Constantinople, which he had governed for fourteen years, in a state of the greatest desolation. He then died a holy—death, and the Church venerates his memory on the 12th of May[15564].

5. A few days after the banishment of St. Germanus, Anastasius was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople, and, by force of arms, was put in possession of the See. The impious usurper, at once, gave up all power over the churches to the Emperor, and he having now no one to contradict him, began vigorously to enforce his decree against the Holy Images. In the vestibule of the imperial palace, at Constantinople, there was an image of our Redeemer crucified, held in extraordinary veneration by the people, as it was believed to have been erected by Constantine, in memory of the Cross that appeared to him in the heavens. Leo intended to begin with this most sacred image, and he ordered Jovinus, one of his guards, to throw it

down; a number of women who were present, endeavoured to dissuade him from the sacrilegious attempt, but he despised their supplications, mounted on a ladder, and gave three blows with an axe on the face of it. When the women saw this, they dragged back the ladder, threw him on the ground, killed him, and tore him in pieces. Withal, the holy image was cast to the earth and burned, and the Emperor put in its place a plain cross, with an inscription, telling that the image was removed, for the Iconoclasts venerated the cross, and only did away with images representing the human figure. The women, after killing Jovinus, ran off to the Bishop's palace, hurled stones against it, and poured out all sorts of abuse on Anastasius: Wretch that you are, said they, you have usurped the priesthood, only to destroy everything sacred. Anastasius, outrageous at the insult, went at once to the Emperor, and had the women all put to death; ten more suffered along with them, and the Greek Church honours them as martyrs on the 9th of August[15565].

6. The Emperor Leo, a man of no learning himself, was a bitter persecutor of learned men, and abolished the schools of sacred literature, which flourished from the time of Constantine. There was a library founded by the ancient Emperors, near the Imperial palace of Constantino, containing over three thousand volumes. The librarian, Lecumenicus, was a man of great merit, and he superintended the labours of twelve professors, who taught gratuitously both the sacred and the profane sciences. This learned corporation had so high a character, that even the Emperor himself could not make any unusual ordinance without consulting them.

Leo used every means in his power, both threats and promises, to induce these professors to give their sanction to his proceedings; but when he found it was all in vain, he surrounded the library with faggots and dry wood, and burned both the professors and the literary treasures together. Partly by threat, and partly by seduction, he got all the inhabitants of Constantinople to bring together into the middle of the city, all the images of the Redeemer, the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints, and burn them, and the paintings in the churches were all destroyed, and covered over with whitewash. Many refused obedience, and he beheaded some, and mutilated others, so that many clergy, monks, and even lay people suffered Martyrdom[15566].

7. When the news of this persecution reached Italy, the images of the Emperor were thrown down and trampled[15567], and when he sent his impious decree against holy images, to Rome, and threatened Pope Gregory II. to depose him, if he resisted its execution, the Pontiff rejected the impious command, and prepared to resist him as an enemy to the Church, and wrote to the faithful in all parts, to put them on their guard against this new error. The people of the Pentapolis, and the army quartered in the Venetian territory, refused obedience to the Imperial decree, and proclaimed that they would fight in defence of the Pope. Paul the Exarch of Ravenna, the Emperor, who sent him his orders, and all who would obey them were anathematized, and Chiefs were elected. All Italy, at last, in a general agreement, resolved to elect another Emperor, and conduct him to Constantinople; but the Pope having still some hopes of the conversion of Leo, used all his influence to prevent this plan being put into execution.

While things were in this state, Exilaratus, Duke of Naples, and his son Adrian, Lord of Campania, persuaded the people of that province to obey the Emperor, and kill the Pope, but both father and son were taken by the Romans, and killed by them, and as it was reported that Peter, the Duke of Rome, had written to the Emperor against the Pope, he was driven out of the city by the people. The people of Ravenna were divided into two factions, one party for the Pope, another for the Emperor; they broke out at last into open warfare, and the Patrician Paul, Exarch of Ravenna, was killed. While all this was going on, the Lombard’s conquered several strong places of Emilia and Auxumum, in the Pentapolis, and finally took Ravenna itself. Gregory II., therefore, wrote to Ursus, Duke of Venice, or rather of the Province of Ravenna, called Venice, to unite with the Exarch, then in Venice, and recover the city for the Emperor. But the Emperor was only more outrageous, and sent the Patrician Eutychius, a eunuch to Naples, who sent one of his creatures to Rome, to procure the Pope’s death, and the death of the chief people of the city likewise; when this was discovered, the people wanted to kill the Patrician, but the Pope saved his life. The whole people then, rich and poor, swore that they would die before they would allow the Pope, the defender of the Faith, to be injured. The ungrateful Patrician sent messengers to the Lombard Dukes, and offered them the most tempting bribes if they would desert the Pope, but they, already acquainted with his perfidy, joined with the Romans, and took the same oath as they did to defend the Pope[15568].

8. Anastasius, the newly-elected Patriarch of Constantinople, sent his Synodical letter to Pope Gregory II., but the Pope knowing him to be a supporter of the Iconoclasts, refused to recognise him as a brother, and gave him notice that if he did not return to the Catholic Faith, he would be degraded from the priesthood[15569].

Gregory did not long survive this; he died in the February of 731, and was succeeded by Gregory III., who, in the beginning of his reign, wrote to the Emperor an answer to a letter sent to his predecessor, rather than to him. In this able production he thus speaks : "You confess an holy Faith in your letters, in all its purity, and declare accursed all who dare to contradict the decisions of the Fathers. What, therefore, induces you to turn back, after having walked in the right road for ten years ?During all that time, you never spoke of the Holy Images, and, now, you say that they are the same as the idols, and that those who venerate them are idolaters. You are endeavouring to destroy them, and do not you dread the judgment of God; scandalizing, not alone the faithful, but the very infidels? Why have you not, as Emperor and chief of the Christian people, sought the advice of learned men ?they would have taught you why God prohibited the adoration of idols made by men. The Fathers, our masters, and the six Councils, have handed down as a tradition, the veneration of Holy Images, and you refuse to receive their testimony. We implore of you to lay aside this presumption." He then speaks of the doctrine of the Church regarding the veneration of Images, and thus concludes: "You think to terrify me by saying : I will send to Rome, and will break the statue of St. Peter, and I will drag away Pope Gregory in chains, as Constans did Martin. Know then that the Popes are the arbiters of peace between the East and the West, and as to your threats, we fear them not"[15570].

9. He wrote a second letter to Leo soon after, but neither the first or second reached him, for a priest of the name of George, to whom they were entrusted, was afraid to present them, so the Pope put him under penance for his negligence, and sent him again with the same letters, but the Emperor had the letters detained in Sicily, and banished the priest for a year, and would not allow him to come to Constantinople[15571]. The Pope was

highly indignant that his letters were despised, and his Legate, George, detained, so he felt himself called on to summon a Council in Rome, in 732[15572], which was attended by ninety-three Bishops, and by the Consuls, the nobility, the clergy, and people of Rome, and in this assembly it was ordained that all those who showed disrespect to Holy Images should be excluded from the communion of the Church, and this decree was solemnly subscribed by all who attended. The Pope again wrote to the Emperor, but his letters were detained a second time, and the messengers kept in prison for a year, at the termination of which, the letters were forcibly taken from him, and he was threatened and maltreated, and sent back to Rome.

All Italy joined in a petition to the Emperor to re-establish the veneration of the holy Images, but even this petition was taken from the messengers by the Patrician Sergius, Governor of Sicily, and they, after a detention of eight months, were sent back, after having received cruel treatment. The Pope, however, again wrote to the Emperor, and to the Patriarch, Anastasius, but all in vain, and Leo, enraged with the Pope and his rebellious subjects in Italy, sent a great fleet against them, but it was shipwrecked in the Adriatic. This increased his fury, so he raised to a third higher the capitation tax in Calabria and Sicily, and obliged a strict registry to be kept of all the male children that were born, and confiscated in all the countries where his power reached in the East, the estates belonging to the Patrimony of St. Peter. He continued to persecute all who still venerated the Holy Images; he no longer, indeed, put them to death, lest they should be honoured as Martyrs, but he imprisoned them, and tortured them first, and then banished them[15573].

10. About this time the cruel persecution of St. John of Damascus took place. This Saint defended, in Syria, the honour due to the sacred Images, so Leo endeavoured to ruin him by an infamous calumny; he had him accused as a traitor to the Saracen Caliph Hiokam, and the false charge proved by a forged letter; the Caliph called his Council together, and the Saint was condemned, and sentenced to have his hand cut off as a traitor. His innocence was, however, miraculously proved; animated with a lively faith, he went before an image of the Blessed Virgin, whose honour he constantly defended, placed his amputated hand in connexion with the stump of his arm, prayed to the Holy Mother that his hand might be again

united to his body, that he might be able to write again in her defence; his prayer was heard, and he was miraculously healed[15574]. Noel Alexander says[15575], that the wonderful things related of St. John of Damascus, are proved from the book of the life of St. John of Jerusalem.

11. The Almighty, in the end, took vengeance on the crimes of the Emperor, and evils from all sides fell thick upon him; pestilence and famine ravaged both the city and country, and the fairest provinces of Asia were laid waste by the Saracens. He became a prey to the most direful and tormenting maladies himself, and died miserably in 741, leaving the Empire to his son Constantine Copronimus. He surpassed his father in wickedness, his morals were most debased, and he had no principle of Religion; not alone satisfied with destroying the Images and relics of the Saints, he prohibited all from invoking their intercession. His subjects could no longer bear with his vices, so they rose up against him, and proclaimed his relative, Artavesdes, Pretor of Armenia, Emperor. This Prince, brought up in the Catholic Faith, re-established the veneration of Sacred Images; and Religion began to hope once more for happy days, but Constantine recovered the Empire, took Constantinople, and Artavesdes fell into his hands with his two sons, Nicephorus and Nicetus, and he deprived all three of sight. The justice of God now overtook the false Patriarch, Anastasius; he ordered him to be led through the city, as we have already remarked, mounted on an ass, with his face to the tail, and to be severely flogged; but as he could find no one wicked enough to carry out his designs, he continued him in the Patriarchate; he enjoyed the dignity but a short time after this disgrace; he was attacked by a horrible colic, in which the functions of nature were disgustingly reversed, and he left the world without any signs of repentance[15576].

12. Constantine, raging more furiously against Sacred Images every day, wished to have the sanction of Ecclesiastical authority for his impiety; he accordingly convoked a General Council, as Danaeus tells us, in 754, in Constantinople, and three hundred and thirty-eight Bishops assembled, but the Legates of the Apostolic See, or the Bishops of the other Patriarchates were not present. Theodore, Bishop of Ephesus, and Palla, or Pastilla, Bishop of Perga, at first presided, but the Emperor afterwards appointed Constantine, a Monk, President, a man whose only law was the Emperor’s

will, and who, having been a Bishop, was degraded and banished from his See, on account of his scandalous vices.

In the Cabal which they had the hardihood to call the Seventh General Council, all honour shown to the images and saints, was condemned as idolatry, and all who approved of recurring to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, were anathematized. We find no decision against relics, or against the Cross, which they held in great veneration, for they obliged everyone to swear on the Cross to receive the Decree of their Council, and to do away with the veneration of Images. Thus, we always remark, as a particular characteristic of heresy, the spirit of contradiction.

When this Council was brought to a close, the Emperor redoubled his persecutions against the Catholics. Several Bishops and several Solitaries, who forsook their cells to defend the Faith, received the crown of Martyrdom. Among these, three holy Abbots are particularly remembered; the first was St. Andrew Calabita; he had the courage to charge the Emperor to his face with impiety; he called him another Valens, a second Julian, and he was ordered to be flogged to death: he suffered in 761, and the Church honours his memory on the 17th of October[15577]. The second was the Abbot Paul; he was taken by Lardotirus, Governor of the Island of Theophanos. This wretch placed on the ground an image of Jesus Christ on one side, and the rack on the other. “Now, Paul,” said he, “choose whichever you like; trample on that image, or you shall be put on the rack.” “Jesus Christ, my Lord,” said the Saint, “may God never permit me to trample on your holy image,” and throwing himself on the ground, he most devoutly kissed it. The Governor was furious, and commanded that he should be stripped; he was stretched on the rack; the executioners squeezed him from head to heels, and bored all his limbs with iron nails; he was then suspended by his feet, his head down, and roasted alive, in that posture, with a great fire[15578]. The third was St. Stephen, Abbot of Mount Auxentium; he was first of all exiled to the Island of Proconesus, near the Hellespont, for two years; afterwards brought to Constantinople, and put into prison, with chains on his hands, and his feet in the stocks.

13. There he had the consolation to meet three hundred and forty-two Monks from different countries some had their noses cut off; some their eyes pulled out, or their hands or ears cut off; some were covered all over

with scars, from the floggings they had received; and many were afterwards put to death, and all this because they would not subscribe the Decree against Holy Images. After being detained forty days in prison, a number of the imperial satellites came there one day, furiously calling on the guards to bring out Stephen of Auxentium. The Saint came boldly forward, and said : “I am he whom you seek ;” they immediately threw him on the ground, tied a rope to the irons on his legs, and dragged him through the streets, kicking and trampling him on the head and body, and striking him with clubs and stones all the way. When they dragged him as far as the Oratory of St. Theodore the Martyr, just outside the first gate of the Pretorium, he raised up his head, and recommended himself to the intercession of the Martyr. “ See,” said Philomatus, one of his tormentors, “the scoundrel wishes to die a Martyr,” and he at once struck him on the head with a heavy club, and killed him. The murderer immediately fell to the ground, the devil entered into him, and took possession of him, and he died a death of torment. They still withal continued dragging along the body of St. Stephen; the ground was covered with his blood, and his limbs were torn from his body. If anyone refused to insult the sacred remains, he was looked on as an enemy to the Emperor. They came at last to a Convent of Nuns, and the Saint’s sister was one of the community; they thought to make her come out and throw a stone at the remains of her brother, with her own hand; but she concealed herself in a tomb, and they were foiled in this savage intent. Finally, they threw the body of the Saint into a pit at the Church of the Martyr St. Pelagia, where the Emperor commanded that the bodies of malefactors and Pagans should be buried. This Saint was martyred in the year 767[15579].

14. The churches themselves did not escape the fury of Constantine; numberless sacrileges were committed in them by his soldiers. When the Decree of the Council was promulgated in the provinces, the heretics at once commenced the destruction of all pictorial and sculptural ornaments; the images were burned or broken, the painted walls whitewashed, the frames of the paintings were burned[15580] in a word, more barbarity was exercised in the name of a Christian Emperor than under any of his Pagan predecessors. Michael, the Governor of Anatolia[15581], collected together, by order of the Emperor, in the year 770, all the religious men of the province

of Thrace in a plain near Ephesus, and then addressed them : “Whosoever wishes to obey the Emperor, let him dress himself in white, and take a wife immediately; but those who refuse it shall lose their eyes, and be banished to Cyprus. The order was immediately put into execution. Many underwent the punishment (though some apostatized), and were numbered among the Martyrs. The next year the Governor sold out all the Monasteries, both male and female, with all the sacred vessels, stock, and entire property, and sent the proceeds to the Emperor; he burned all their books and pictures, burned also whatever reliquaries he could lay hands on, and punished those who had them in their possession as guilty of idolatry. Some he put to death by the sword; more expired under the lash; he deprived an immense multitude of sight; he ordered the beards of others to be anointed with oil and melted wax, and then set on fire; and more he banished, after subjecting them to various tortures. Such was the furious persecution by Constantino of the venerators of Holy Images; but with all his cruelty, he could not destroy Religion, and in the end God destroyed him by an extraordinary sickness in the year 775. According to Danaeus, his death was like that of Antiochus, and his repentance of the same sort as that of his prototype[15582]. Fleury says[15583], that Constantino having cast his eye on a crown of gems presented to the Patriarchal Church by the Emperor Heraclius, seized it; but he had scarcely put it on his head, when he was covered with carbuncles, and tortured, besides, with a violent fever, and that he died in the most excruciating agony. Van Ranst adds[15584], that he died consumed by an internal fire, and crying out that he was burning alive as a penalty for the irreverence he showed to the Images of the Mother of God.

15. Constantino Copronimus was succeeded by his son, Leo IV.; he pretended to be a Catholic in the commencement of his reign, with the intention of cementing his authority, and more especially he expressed his wishes that the Mother of God should be treated with the greatest respect; he permitted the Religious scattered in the late persecution to inhabit their monasteries once more, and assisted them to do so, and he appointed Catholic Bishops to the Sees; but when he felt himself firmly established on the throne, he threw off the mask, and renewed the persecution with all his father’s fury : he even banished the Empress Irene, his wife, because he suspected that in private she venerated the Holy Images, and nothing would

induce him to see her again. His reign, however, was short; he was attacked by a strange disorder like his father's, and died, having only reigned about five years. He had associated his son Constantino in the empire with him, but as he was only ten years old at his father's death, his mother, the Empress Irene, took the reins of government, and under her pious care the Christian Religion flourished once more. Paul, then Patriarch of Constantinople, was attacked with a severe sickness, and took the sudden resolution of retiring into a Monastery, and declared to the Empress, that against his conscience he condemned the veneration of Images to please the Emperor Copronimus. Withal, he was a virtuous man, and the Empress endeavoured to force him to resume the government of his Church, but he was firm in his refusal, and said he would spend the remainder of his days weeping for his sins[15585].

16. Tarasius, as yet a layman, and who had been Secretary of State, was, with the good will of all, appointed to succeed Paul; but as the See was separated from the communion of the other Patriarchates, he accepted it solely on condition that as soon as possible a General Council should be convoked, to reunite all the Churches in one faith. This condition was agreed to by all, and he was consecrated Patriarch, and immediately sent his profession of faith to Pope Adrian, and at the same time the Empress also wrote to the Holy Father, both in her own and her son's name, imploring him to consent to the convocation of a General Council, and to assist at it himself in person to re-establish the ancient tradition in regard to the veneration of Holy Images, and if he could not attend himself, at least to send his Legates.

The Pope answered this letter of the Empress, and besought her to use all her influence to get the Greeks to pay the same veneration to Holy Images as did the Romans following the tradition of the Fathers; and should it be found impossible, he says, to re-establish this point without a General Council, the first thing of all to be done should be, to declare the nullity of the false Council, held in the reign of the Emperor Leo. He besides required that the Emperor should send a declaration sworn in his own name, and in the names of the Empress his mother, of the Patriarch, and of the whole Senate, that the Council should enjoy full and perfect liberty[15586].

17. The Pope then sent two Legates to Constantinople Peter, Archpriest of the Roman Church, and Peter, Abbot of the Monastery of St. Saba, and they arrived at their destination while the Emperor and Empress were in Thrace. The Iconoclast Bishops, who were more numerous, and supported by a great number of the laity, took courage from this, and insisted that it was necessary to maintain the condemnation of Images, and not allow a new Council. The Emperor and Empress returned to Constantinople, and the 1st of August of the year 786 was appointed for opening the Council in the Church of the Apostles. The evening before, however, the soldiers went to the Baptistery of the church, crying out that they would have no Council. The Patriarch notified this to the Empress; but, notwithstanding the disturbance, it was determined not to postpone the Council, and it was opened the following day. When the Bishops were assembled, and while the Synodical letters were being read, the soldiers, urged on by the schismatical Bishops, came round the church, and thundering at the doors, told the assembled Prelates that they would never allow what was decreed under the Emperor Constantine to be revoked, and they then burst into the church with drawn swords, and threatened the Patriarch and Bishops with death.

The Emperor sent his own body-guards to restrain them, but they could not succeed, and the schismatical Bishops sung the song of victory. The Patriarch and the Catholic Bishops went into the Sanctuary, in the meantime, and celebrated the Holy Mysteries, without showing any signs of fear; but the Empress sent him word to retire for that time, and avoid the extremity the schismatic’s might be led to. Everyone then went to his own lodging, and the disturbance was quelled. The Empress then, in the ensuing month, brought in a reinforcement of new troops from Thrace, and sent out of the city all those, together with their families, who had served under her father-in-law, Constantino, and were tainted with his errors[15587].

18. Being thus secured against the violence of the soldiery, and the intrigues of the chiefs of the sedition, on the May following, in the year 787, the Bishops were again called on to hold the Council in Nice, in Bythynia; and, on the 24th of September[15588], the same year, the first Session was held in the Church of St. Sophia, in that city. Three hundred and fifty Bishops, the Legates of the Apostolic See, and of the three Patriarchal Sees, and a great number of Monks and Archimandrites,

attended. The Legates of Pope Adrian presided in this Council, as we gather from the Acts, in which they are named before the Patriarch Tarasius, and before the Legates of the other Patriarchal Sees. Graveson remarks, that the statement of Photius, that Tarasius presided in the Seventh Council, is as false as what he asserts in another place, that the Patriarchs of Constantinople presided at all the former General Councils. Seven Sessions were held in this Council. In the first Session the petition of a great many Bishops was read, condemning the heresy of the Iconoclasts, and asking pardon, at the same time, for having subscribed the false Council of Copronimus. The Council having examined their case, admitted them to mercy, and re-established them in their dignity; but deferred the admission of those Bishops who had lived for a long period in heresy.

In the Second Session, the letter of Pope Adrian to the Emperor, and to Tarasius, was read, and several other Bishops were re-established in their Sees. In the Fourth Session, several proofs of the veneration of Holy Images were read from the Scriptures, and from the Holy Fathers. In the Fifth, it was proved that the Iconoclasts had drawn their erroneous doctrines from the Gentiles, the Jews, the Manicheans, and the Saracens. In the Sixth, chapter by chapter of everything that was defined in the late Cabal of Constantinople was refuted[15589]; and, in the Seventh Session, the veneration of Sacred Images was defined. Cardinal Gotti[15590] gives the Decree in full; this is the substance of it : “Following the tradition of the Catholic Church, we define that, in the same manner as the image of the precious Cross, so should be likewise venerated, and placed in churches, on walls in houses, and streets, the images of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Holy Mother of God, of the Angels, and of all the Saints. For those who frequently have before their eyes, and contemplate those Sacred Images, are more deeply impressed with the memory of those they represent, and give them an honorary adoration, but do not, indeed, offer them that real adoration which Faith teaches should be given to God alone; for the honour paid to the image is referred to the principal, and he who venerates an image venerates the person it represents.” It then anathematizes all those who profess or teach otherwise, and who reject the Images, Crosses, Pictures, or Relics, which the Church honours. This Decree was subscribed by all the Bishops.

19. When the Acts of this Council were brought to France, the Bishops of that nation[15591], assembled in Synod, in Frankfort, absolutely rejected them; and so did Charlemagne, in the " Four Books," either composed by him, or more properly published in his name, in the year 790, and called the Four Caroline Books. But as Selvaggi, in his notes on Mosheim, remarks[15592], all this was caused by an error of fact, as the Frankfort Fathers believed that the Fathers of Nice decided that images should be absolutely worshipped, and this he proves from the Second Canon of the Council of Frankfort itself. " A question has been submitted to us," it says, " concerning the new Synod the Greeks have Holden in Constantinople, relative to the worship of images, in which it is reported to have been decided, that those should be anathematized who would not worship them. This doctrine we totally reject :" "Allata est in medium quæstio de nova Græcorum Synodo, quam de adorandis Imaginibus Constantinopoli fecerunt, in qua scriptum habebatur, ut qui Imaginibus Sanctorum, ita ut Deifies Trinitatis servitium, aut adorationem non impenderent, anathema judicarentur. Qui supra sanctissimi Patres nostri omnimodis adorationem renuentes contempserunt atque consentientes condemnaverunt."

This mistake occurred, as Danaeus says, on account of the unfaithful version of the Acts of the Council of Nice received in France, and translated from the Greek; whereas the Council of Nice itself, as we have already seen, makes the distinction between honorary reverence and absolute adoration very clearly.

Besides, Graveson informs us, that the French Bishops did not consider this Council of Nice as a General one at all, but merely a Greek National Synod, since it was almost altogether composed of Eastern Bishops, and they did not see the customary letter of confirmation from the Pope to the Emperor, and to the whole Church : but, as Danasus says, as soon as the matter was cleared up, there was no longer any disagreement. Still, he says, in the ninth century, several Emperors, adherents of the Iconoclasts, renewed the persecution of the Catholics, and especially Nicephorus, Leo the Armenian, Michael the Stammerer, and, above all, Theophilus, who surpassed all the rest in cruelty. He died, however, in 842, and the Empress Theodora, his wife, a pious and Catholic lady, administered the Empire for her son, Michael, and restored peace to the Church, so that the Iconoclasts never after disturbed the peace of the Eastern Church. This erroneous doctrine began to spring up in the West, in the twelfth century the Petrobrussian first, and then the Henricians and Albigenses followed it. Two hundred years after, the same error was preached by the followers of Wickliffe; by the Hussites, in Bohemia; by Carlostad, in Wittemburg, though against Luther's will; and by the disciples of Zuinglius and Calvin, the faithful imitators of Leo and Copronimus; and those, as Danagius says, who boast of following the above-named masters, should add to their patrons both the Jews and the Saracens. I have explained the doctrine of the Veneration of Holy Images in my dogmatic work on the Council of Trent (sess. 25, sec. 4, n. 35), in which this matter is discussed, and the veneration due to the Holy Images of the Trinity, of the Cross of Jesus Christ, of his Divine Mother, and the Saints, is proved from tradition, and from the authority of Fathers, and ancient history; and the objections made by heretics are there answered likewise.

Chapter IX

HERESIES OF THE NINTH CENTURY

ARTICLE I. THE GREEK SCHISM COMMENCED BY PHOTIUS

1.-St. Ignatius, by means of Bardas, Uncle to the Emperor Michael, is expelled from the See of Constantinople. 2.—He is replaced by Photius. 3.—Photius is consecrated. 4. Wrongs inflicted on St. Ignatius, and on the Bishops who defended him. 5.—The Pope sends Legates to investigate the affair. 6.—St. Ignatius appeals from the Judgment of the Legates to the Pope himself. 7. He is deposed in a False Council. 8.—The Pope defends St. Ignatius. 9.—The Pope deposes the Legates and Photius, and confirms St. Ignatius in his See. 10.—Bardas is put to death by the Emperor, and he associates Basil in the Empire. 11.—Photius condemns and deposes Pope Nicholas II., and afterwards promulgates his Error concerning the Holy Ghost. 12.—The Emperor Michael is killed, and Basil is elected, and banishes Photius.

Godeschalcus, of whom we have already spoken (chap. 5, art. 2, n. 17), was charged with Predestinarianism in this century; but, as we have already heard his history, we now pass on to the great Greek Schism.

1. In the reign of the Emperor Michael, the Church of Constantinople was governed by the Patriarch, St. Ignatius. This great Prelate was son to the Emperor Michael Curopalates; and when his father was dethroned, he was banished to a monastery, and there brought up in all the penitential austerities of monastic life. His virtues were so great, that, on the death of Methodius, Bishop of Constantinople, he was placed in the vacant See, and his appointment gave universal satisfaction; but his fortitude in defence of the Faith, and of the rights of his Church, raised up for him many powerful enemies, and among them, three wretches who were unceasing in their persecution of him Bardas, uncle to the Emperor, Photius, and Gregory Asbestas, Bishop of Syracuse. Bardas wishing to be sole master in the Empire of his nephew, Michael, had either procured the death or banishment of all who stood in his way at Court. He even shut up in a Monastery his own sister, the Empress Theodora, because he could not bend her in all things to his wishes, and then began a persecution against St. Ignatius, because he refused to give her the veil[15593]. What irritated him,

above all, against the Saint was, he had repudiated his wife, and lived publicly with his step daughter, a widow. St. Ignatius admonished him of the scandal he was giving; but he took so little note of this, that he presented himself one day in the church to partake of the Holy Mysteries, and the Saint then excommunicated him. Bardas threatened to run him through with his sword, and from that out never ceased misrepresenting him to the Emperor, and at last, on the 23rd of November, in the year 858, got him banished out of the Patriarchal Palace, and exiled to the Island of Terebintum[15594], and sent after him several Bishops, Patricians, and some of the most esteemed judges, to induce him to renounce the Bishopric. Their journey was all in vain; and Bardas then promised to each of the Bishops the See of Constantinople, if they deposed St. Ignatius, and these unfortunate Prelates lent themselves to the nefarious scheme, though every one of them had previously taken an oath, that he would not vote for the Patriarch’s deposition, unless he was convicted of a Canonical fault; but they were all deceived in the end, for Bardas, after promising that the Emperor would give the Bishopric to each of them, persuaded them that it would be most grateful to the Emperor, if each one, when called, would at first, through humility, as it were, refuse it, and they took his advice. The Emperor sent for each of them, and preferred the Bishopric; every one declined at first, and was not asked a second time, so that their villainy was of no use to them[15595].

2. The Patriarch chosen by the Court, was the impious Photius, a Eunuch of illustrious birth, but of the most inordinate ambition. He was a man of great talent, cultivated by the most arduous study, in which he frequently spent the whole night long, and, as he was wealthy, he could procure whatever books he wanted; he thus became one of the most learned men of his own or of any former age. He was a perfect master of grammar, poetry, rhetoric, philosophy, medicine, and all the profane sciences; he had not paid much attention to ecclesiastical learning, but became a most profound theologian when he was made Patriarch. He was only a mere layman, and held some of the highest offices in the Court; he was Protospathaire and Protosecretes, or Captain of the Guards, and Chief Secretary. We cannot say much for his religious character, for he was already a schismatic, as he joined Gregory, Bishop of Syracuse, a man convicted of several crimes, and

whose character was so bad, that when St. Ignatius was elected Bishop of Constantinople, he would not permit him to attend at his consecration, and Gregory was so mortified at the insult, that he dashed to the ground the wax candle he held in his hand as an attendant at the consecration, and publicly abused Ignatius, telling him that he entered into the Church not as a shepherd but as a wolf. He got others to join with him, and formed a schism against the Patriarch, so that the Saint was in the end obliged, in the year 854, to pass sentence of deposition against him in a Council[15596]. Noel Alexander remarks, that St. Ignatius deposed Gregory from the See of Syracuse, because the churches of that province were subject to the Patriarch of Constantinople, as Sicily then formed part of the Empire of the East but in order to confirm the sentence, he appealed to Benedict III., who, having again examined the affair, confirmed what was decided, as Nicholas I. attests in his sixth epistle to Photius, and his tenth epistle to the clergy of Constantinople[15597].

3. Such was Gregory, with whom Photius was leagued, and as this Jast was elected Bishop of Constantinople, not according to the Canons, but solely by the authority of Bardas, he was at first rejected by all the Bishops, and another was elected by common consent. They adhered to their resolutions for many days, but Bardas by degrees gained them over. Five still held out, but at length went with the stream, and joined the rest, but only on condition that Photius would swear to, and sign a paper, promising to renounce the schism of Gregory, and to receive Ignatius into his communion, honouring him as a father, and to do nothing contrary to his opinion. Photius promised everything, and was accordingly consecrated, but by the very same Gregory, and took possession of the See[15598].

4. Six months had not yet passed over, since his consecration, and he had broken all his oaths and promises; he persecuted St. Ignatius, and all the Ecclesiastics who adhered to him; he even got some of them flogged, and by promises and threats, induced several to sign documents, intended for the ruin of his sainted predecessors. Not being able to accomplish his design, he laid a plot, with the assistance of Bardas, that the Emperor should send persons to take information, to prove that St. Ignatius was privately conspiring against the state. Magistrates and soldiers were immediately sent to the island of Terebintum, where St. Ignatius dwelt, and

endeavoured by every means, even resorting to torture, to prove the charge, but as nothing came out to inculpate him, they conveyed him to another island called Jerium, and put him in a place where goats were kept, and, in a little time after, brought him to Prometum, near Constantinople, where he underwent cruel sufferings, for they shut him up in a confined prison, and his feet were fastened to the stocks by two iron bars, and the captain of his guard struck him so brutally with his clenched fist, that he knocked two of his teeth out. He was treated in this brutal manner, to induce him to sign a renunciation of his See, to make it appear, that of his own free will he gave up the Patriarchate. When the Bishops of the province of Constantinople were informed of this barbarous proceeding, they held a meeting in the Church of Peace, in that city, declared Photius deposed, and anathematized him and all his adherents; but he, supported by Bardas, called together a Council in the Church of the Apostles, in which he deposed and anathematized St. Ignatius, and, as several Bishops complained loudly of this injustice, he deposed them likewise, and put them in prison along with Ignatius. Finally, in the month of August, of the year 859, St. Ignatius was banished to Mytilene, in the island of Lesbos, and all his adherents were banished from Constantinople, many of them severely beaten, and one, who complained against this act of injustice, had his tongue cut out[15599].

5. Photius could not but see that he was very much censured for all this, so he sent some of his partisans to Rome, to Pope Nicholas, to request that he would send his Legates to the East, under the pretext of extinguishing the remains of the Iconoclastic heresy, but in reality, to sanction the expulsion of St. Ignatius by their presence, and the Emperor wrote to the Pope on the same subject, at the same time[15600]. When the Imperial Ambassador and the Legates of Photius arrived in Rome, the Pope deputed two Legates, Rodaldus, Bishop of Porto, and Zacchary, Bishop of Anagna, to arrange the affairs of the Iconoclasts, by holding a Council, and deciding any supplementary matters necessary to carry out the provisions of the Seventh Council, and regarding the affair of Photius himself, as he received neither a letter or messenger from St. Ignatius (for his enemies deprived him of all intercourse with the Holy See), he directed his Legates to take juridical information on the spot, and forward them to him. On the arrival of the Legates in Constantinople[15601], they were kept three months by the

Emperor and Photius, and even not permitted to speak with any one, except those appointed to visit them, lest they might be informed of the true state of things regarding the deposition of St. Ignatius.

They were made to understand that if they did not bend, in all things, to the Emperor's will[15602], they would be banished to a place where nothing but a miserable death awaited them. At first they resisted, but finally, after spending there eight months, yielded, and soon after, Photius called together a Council in Constantinople, which was attended by them, and three hundred and eighteen Bishops, but, as Noel Alexander remarks[15603], they were merely the nominal Legates of the Pope, for that meeting did not even preserve the forms of a General Council, for it was the Emperor himself who presided, and everything was done according as he wished, at the instigation of Photius.

6. When the Council was assembled, a message was sent to St. Ignatius, to appear, and defend his cause; he at once put on his Pontifical ornaments, and went on foot, accompanied by Bishops and Priests, and a great number of the Monks and the laity, but on his way he was met by the Patrician, John, who, on the part of the Emperor, prohibited him, under pain of death, from appearing in the Pontifical robes, but merely in the habit of a simple Monk. He obeyed, and presented himself in this garb in the Church of the Apostles; he was there separated from the friends who accompanied him, and brought alone into the Emperor's presence, who loaded him with abuse. Ignatius asked leave to speak, and then asked the Pope's Legates what brought them to Constantinople. They answered, that they came to try his case. The Saint asked them if they brought letters for him from the Pope, and was told they had not, as he was no longer considered as Patriarch, having been deposed by a Council of his province, and that therefore they were there to judge him. “Then banish the adulterer Photius, first of all,” said St. Ignatius, “and if you cannot do that, you are no longer judges.” The Emperor said they, wishes us to be judges; but the Saint peremptorily refused to recognise them as such, and appealed to the Pope, on the authority of the fourth Canon of the Council of Sardis, which decrees, that, “ If a Bishop be deposed, and he declares that he has a defence to make, no one must be elected in his place till the Pontiff of the Roman Church decides his case.”

7. Notwithstanding this, seventy-two false and bribed witnesses were examined, and deposed that the Saint had been guilty of tyranny in the government of his Church, and that he was intruded into the See by the secular power, and that, therefore, he should, according to the Apostolical Canon, be deposed : “If any Bishop obtain his See by secular powers, let him be deposed.” On this testimony, the Bishops of the Council, if it could be called such (with the exception of Theodulus of Ancira, who hated the injustice), and the Legates, deposed St. Ignatius, all crying out, univortliy, unworthy[15604]. He was then handed over to the executioners, to be tormented till he would sign his own deposition; they first nearly starved him for a fortnight, and afterwards hung him up by the feet over a deep pit, which was the tomb of Copronimus, and dashed him from side to side, till the marble lining of the tomb was stained with his blood. When he was thus reduced to the last extremity, and scarcely breathing, one Theodore, a bravo employed by Photius, took hold of his hand, and forcibly made him sign a cross on a sheet of paper, which he brought to Photius, who then wrote on it himself: “ I, Ignatius, unworthy Bishop of Constantinople, confess that I have not been lawfully appointed, but have usurped the throne of the Church, which I have tyrannically governed.” But even after this act of villainy, Photius did not consider himself safe, so he laid a plot with Bardas, and sent soldiers to take St. Ignatius, who, after his liberation from prison, lived at home with his mother, but he escaped in the disguise of a poor man, carrying two baskets slung on a pole over his shoulder. Six light horsemen were sent after him, with directions to kill him wherever he was found, but God delivered him out of their hands. For forty days, Constantinople was shaken by earthquakes, and so Bardas and the Emperor gave him leave to retire to his monastery, and live in peace[15605], though he was again banished.

8. In the meantime the Legates returned to Rome loaded with presents by Photius, and merely told the Pope verbally that Ignatius was deposed by the Council, and Photius confirmed. Two days after, Leo, secretary to the Emperor, arrived in Rome, and presented a letter to the Pope from the Emperor, containing a long defence of the acts of the Council, and of Photius. Nicholas began then to suspect that his Legates had betrayed him, and so he immediately summoned together all the Bishops then present in

Rome, and publicly declared in presence of the secretary Leo himself, that he never had sent his Legates either to depose Ignatius or confirm Photius, and that he never had, nor ever would consent to either one or the other[15606]. He wrote both to the Emperor and to Photius to the same effect (Epis. 9), and wrote likewise another letter to all the faithful of the East (Epis. 4), in which, by his Apostolic authority, he particularly commands the other Patriarchs of the East to hold the like sentiments regarding Ignatius and Photius, and to give all possible publicity to this letter of his. Photius, in the meantime, without taking any notice of this letter of his Holiness, planned that a certain Monk of the name of Eustrates should present himself in Constantinople, pretending that he had been sent to the Pope by Ignatius as the bearer of a letter, complaining of all he had suffered; but he said the Pope did not even deign to receive him, but on the contrary, sent a letter by him to Photius, assuring him of his friendship. Photius immediately brought these two letters to the Emperor and to Bar das; but when the whole matter was sifted, it was discovered that it was all a scheme got up by Photius, and Bardas felt so indignant at the imposition, that he commanded that the Monk Eustrates should receive a severe flogging[15607].

9. The Pope convoked a Council of several provinces, which was held in the beginning of the year 863, first in St. Peter s, and then in the Lateran Church, to try the Legates for betraying the Roman Church. One alone of them, the Bishop Zacchary, made his appearance (Rodoaldus being in France), and he being convicted, on his own confession, of having signed the deposition of Ignatius, contrary to the orders of the Pope, was excommunicated and deposed by the Council, and the following year the same was decreed in regard to Rodoaldus, in another Council held in the Lateran, and he was threatened with anathema, if he ever communicated with Photius, or opposed St. Ignatius.

Besides, in this first Lateran Council, Photius was deprived of all sacerdotal offices and honours, on account of his many crimes, and especially for having got himself ordained, he being a lay man, by Gregory, the schismatical Bishop of Syracuse, and for having usurped the See of Ignatius, and daring to depose and anathematize him in a Council; besides, for having bribed the Legates of the Holy See to contravene the orders of the Pope, for having banished the Bishops who refused to communicate with him, and, finally, for having persecuted, and continuing to persecute, the Church. It was then decreed that if Photius should continue to hold possession of the See of Constantinople, or prevent Ignatius from governing it, or should exercise any sacerdotal function, that he should be anathematized, and deprived of all hope of communion, unless at the hour of death alone. Gregory, Bishop of Syracuse, was condemned in the same manner, for having dared to exercise Ecclesiastical functions after his deposition, and for consecrating Photius Bishop. It was finally decreed that Ignatius never was deposed from his See, and that for the future every cleric should be deposed, and every layman anathematized, who would show him any opposition[15608].

10. When the Emperor Michael heard of the decrees of the Roman Council, he wrote a most abusive letter to Pope Nicholas, threatening him with his displeasure if he did not revoke his judgment[15609]. The Pope answered him (Epis. 70), that the Pagan Emperors were Princes and Pontiffs, but that after the coming of Jesus Christ the two powers were divided, as temporal things were different from spiritual things, and Noel Alexander particularly calls attention to these expressions in the Pope’s letter : “ It is plain that as there is no higher authority than the Apostolic See, that no one can revoke its judgment; nor is it lawful for anyone to pass judgment on its judgments, since, according to the canons, appeals come to it from all parts of the world; but from it no one is permitted to appeal.”

He then says that the case of Ignatius and Photius can only be decided by appearing in person, or by deputy, in Rome, when both can state their causes of complaint, and defend themselves[15610]. Sometime after the Emperor took the field to conquer Crete, and was accompanied by his uncle, Bardas, who was so strongly suspected of being a traitor, that he resolved to put him to death. He was in the Emperor’s tent when he saw the soldiers come to take him, and he threw himself at his nephew’s feet, imploring mercy, but his prayer was in vain; he was dragged out, and cut in pieces, and a piece of his flesh was carried round the camp in mockery, fixed on a spear, and thus, in the year 886, the unfortunate Bardas closed his mortal career. The Emperor immediately returned to Constantinople, and appointed Basil the Macedonian, who was one of the chief instigators of the death of Bardas, Prime Minister, and as he was aware of his incapacity in governing by himself, he soon after associated him in the empire, and had him solemnly crowned[15611].

11. Although Photius lost his protector, he did not lose heart; he continued to retain the Emperor's friendship, and ingratiated himself with Basil. He was abandoned by many of his adherents after he incurred the censures of the Pope, and he then bitterly persecuted them whenever he could; some he deprived of their dignities; some he imprisoned, and he banished the hermits from Mount Olympus, and burned their cells[15612]. On the 13th of November, 866, the Pope sent three Legates to Constantinople, to appease the Emperor, and put an end to the discord caused by Photius; but they were arrested in Bulgaria by an Imperial officer, who treated them very disrespectfully, and told them that the Emperor would have nothing to say to them; so when they perceived the treatment they were likely to receive if they proceeded to Constantinople, they returned to Rome[15613]. It came to the knowledge of Photius at the same time that the Pope had sent other Legates to the Bulgarians, to protest against the new mode of Unction introduced by him (Photius) among them, in the administration of the sacrament of Confirmation, and he felt so indignant at this interference, that he summoned a Council, which he called an Ecumenical one, in which he got the two Emperors, Basil and Michael, to preside, and had it attended by the Legates of the other Patriarchal Sees, and by many Bishops of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, to revenge himself on the Pope.

Persons came forward there, and made several charges against Pope Nicholas. Photius received the accusations, and tried the cause, and finally condemned the Pope for many supposed crimes, and deposed and excommunicated him and all who would hold communion with him. Twenty-one Bishops were mad enough to approve of and subscribe this sacrilegious sentence, and Photius afterwards forged nearly a thousand other signatures to the same document[15614]. He had now lost all respect for the Pope, and his insolence arrived at such a pitch, that he sent a circular letter of his composition to the Patriarch of Alexandria, condemnatory of several practices and doctrines of the Roman Church, as the fast on Saturdays, the celibacy of the Clergy, but, above all, the doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Ghost, not from the Father alone, but from the

Father and Son[15615]. Baronius[15616] even says, that he taught that every man had two souls. He obtained the Emperor’s permission to summon a second Council in Constantinople, and having done so, he again excommunicated and deposed the Pope[15617].

12. In the year 867, the Emperor Michael was killed, while drunk, by his own guards, at the instigation of Basil, whose life he sought, on account of some disagreements they had. When Basil thus obtained the undivided sovereignty of the Empire, he banished Photius from the See of Constantinople, and exiled him to a distant Monastery[15618], and the next day he sent the Imperial galley to the island where the Patriarch St. Ignatius was confined, to convey him back to Constantinople, and received him with the highest honours on his arrival, and solemnly put him in possession of his See once more[15619].

He sent orders then to Photius to restore all the documents with the Emperor’s signature he had in his possession; but he sent back word, that as he left the palace, by the Emperor’s command, in a hurry, that he left all his papers behind him; but while he was making this excuse to the Prefect sent to him by Basil, his officers perceived the servants of Photius busy in hiding several bags filled with documents, with leaden seals appended to them; these were immediately seized on, and brought to the Emperor, and among other papers, two books, beautifully written, were found, one containing the acts of the imaginary Council condemning Ignatius, and the other the Synodical Letter against Pope Nicholas, filled with calumnies and abuse[15620]. Basil then wrote to Pope Nicholas, giving him an account of the expulsion of Photius and the re-establishment of Ignatius; but this letter was delivered into the hands of Adrian II., in 868, the successor of Nicholas, who died in 867. Adrian answered the Emperor, and said that he would put into execution, in regard to Photius and Ignatius, whatever was decided by his predecessor[15621], and the same year he condemned the Council of Photius in a Council held at Rome, and the book we mentioned was burned there, being first thrown on the ground, with this anathema : “Cursed at Constantinople; be again cursed at Rome”[15622].

ARTICLE II. THE ERRORS OF THE GREEKS CONDEMNED IN THREE GENERAL COUNCILS

13, 14, 15.—The Eighth General Council against Photius, under Pope Adrian, and the Emperor Basil. 16.—Photius gains over Basil, and in the mean time St. Ignatius dies. 17.—Photius again gets possession of the See. 18.—The Council held by Photius, rejected by the Pope; unhappy death of Photius. 19.—The Patriarch, Cerularius, revives and adds to the errors of Photius. 20.—Unhappy death of Cerularius. 21, 22.—Gregory X. convokes the Council of Lyons, at the instance of the Emperor Michael; it is assembled. 23.—Profession of Faith written by Michael, and approved of by the Council. 24.—The Greeks confess and swear to the Decisions of the Council. 25.—They separate again. 26.—Council of Florence, under Eugenius IV.; the errors are again discussed and rejected; definition of the Procession of the Holy Ghost. 27-.Of the consecration in leavened bread. 28.—Of the Pains of Purgatory. 29.—Of the Glory of the Blessed. 30.—Of the Primacy of the Pope. 31 .-Instructions given to the Armenians, Jacobites, and Ethiopians; the Greeks relapse into schism.

13. Pope Adrian[15623] made arrangements to celebrate a General Council in Constantinople, which was accomplished in the year 869, in the reign of the Emperor Basil; he sent three Legates to preside in his name : Donatus, Bishop of Ostia, Stephen of Nepi, and Marinus, one of the seven deacons of the Roman Church, who was afterwards Pope. The Legates proceeded to Constantinople, and were most honourably received by the Emperor; he sent all the officers of the palace to meet them at the gate of the city, and they were received there by the clergy in their robes, likewise. They were then presented to the Emperor in his palace, and he received them with all honour and reverence, kissed the Pope’s letters when presented to him, and told them that he, as well as all the Bishops of the East, were for two years waiting for the decision of the Roman Church, their mother, and he, therefore, most earnestly besought them to make every endeavour to re-establish union and peace. The day for the opening of the Council was then appointed.

14. The Legates presided in this Council in the name of the Pope; although in the eighth and tenth act, Basil and his two sons, Constantine and Leo, arc called Presidents, still, as Noel Alexander[15624] remarks, the Emperor is called the President, not because of any authority he held in the Synod, but because he was honoured as the protector of the Church, but not as the judge of Ecclesiastical affairs. The first Session was held on the 5th of October, in the year 869, and eight others were held, the last in the February of 870. The Bishops and priests who had joined the schism, presented themselves in the fifth Session, and were mercifully received again. Photius also came forward, but when he was asked by the Legates whether he received the exposition of Pope Nicholas, and of his successor

Pope Adrian, he refused to answer[15625]. He was pressed for a reply, but he only said : “God understands what I mean, though I do not speak.” “But,” said the Legates, “your silence will not preserve you from condemnation; Jesus Christ said he was silent, likewise, and was condemned.” They told him that if he wished to be reconciled to the Church, he should confess his crimes, and all the wrongs he had inflicted on Ignatius, and promise to recognise him as his pastor for the future, still he continued silent; then the Patrician Baanes, addressed him, and said : “ My Lord Photius, your mind is now confused, so the Council gives you time to think on your salvation; go, you shall be again recalled.” He made his appearance again in the seventh Session, with the crozier in his hand, but it was taken from him, for the Council said he was a wolf, and not a shepherd; he was again asked if he was willing to retract his errors, but he answered, that he did not recognize the Legates as his judges. Several other questions were put to him, but he answered them in a haughty manner, so he was anathematized in these words : “Anathema to Photius the invader, the schismatical tyrant, the new Judas, the inventor of perverse dogmas.” In these and such like terms was he condemned, and, together with him, Gregory of Syracuse, and all their followers, who persevered in their obstinacy[15626].

15. Twenty-seven Canons were promulgated in this the Eighth General Council. Among the rest it was decreed, that all the orders conferred by Photius were invalid, and that the churches and altars he consecrated should be consecrated again. All Bishops and Clerks who continued to hold by his party were deposed, and all who held with him that man had two souls were anathematized. It was prohibited, under pain of deposition, to consecrate Bishops, at the command of the Sovereign[15627]. All the works of Photius were burned in the midst of the Assembly; the definitions of the other seven General Councils were received, and the Council was closed. It was afterwards confirmed by Pope Adrian, at the request of the Fathers[15628], who besought him to confirm the Decrees of this General Synod as his own, that the words of truth and the decrees of justice should be received through the whole world confirmed by his authority. It is worthy of remembrance what Nicetas tells us of this Council[15629], that the Fathers signed the Decree with a pen dipped in the Sacred Blood of Jesus Christ. The Emperor Basil did not look sufficiently to the safety of the Legates on their return to

Rome; and the consequence was, that they were seized by the Sclavonians, and robbed of all they had, the Original Acts of the Council among the rest, with the autograph signatures of the Fathers. They were freed from captivity by the joint exertions of the Pope and the Emperor, and, on the 22nd of December, 870, arrived in Rome. The Pope received through another channel the authentic copy of the Synodical Acts, and confirmed the Council.[15630] The cause of the Emperor's displeasure with the Legates was, because they refused to accede to the wishes of the Ambassadors of the King of Bulgaria, in Constantinople, who wished to be subjected, not to the Roman Church, but to the See of Constantinople, and the Legates of the other Oriental Patriarchates seconded this request[15631].

16. Photius, in the meantime, never ceased to asperse the Council. He wrote several letters to that effect to his friends, and one, especially, to a Monk of the name of Theodosius[15632], in which he says : "Why do you wonder that those who have been themselves condemned presume to judge the innocent? Have you not examples? Caiphas and Pilate were judges; my God Jesus was the accused." He then alludes to the examples of St. Stephen, St. James, St. Paul, and so many Martyrs, who had to appear before judges worthy of being put to death a thousand times. " God," said the impious Photius, "disposes of everything for our advantage." Noel Alexander and Fleury tell us, that, during the whole ten years of his exile, he never ceased plotting and scheming to injure the holy Patriarch, St. Ignatius, and to get back to the See himself, and he left no means untried to accomplish his purpose.

He laid one plan, in particular, to ingratiate himself into the Emperor's favour : He wrote a genealogy and prophecy on a piece of old parchment, and in the antique Alexandrian character. This was called " Beclas," the name of Basil's father. In this he pretended that Basil, though his father was but a man of low birth, was descended from Tiridates, King of Armenia, and that his reign would be longer and happier than that of any of his predecessors. He got this bound up in an old cover, and privately conveyed into the Imperial library. He then got one of his friends, as great a schemer as himself, to suggest to the Emperor, that there was not a man in the Empire who could interpret that but Photius. The Emperor took the bait, and recalled him, and he soon ingratiated himself into his good graces, and endeavoured to obtain permission from St. Ignatius, through the Sovereign’s influence, to exercise Episcopal functions; but the Saint never would permit him, for, as he was excommunicated by a Council, he said he could not be re-habilited, unless by another Council;[15633] but, notwithstanding, he administered Orders, and exercised other Episcopal duties[15634]. The Holy Patriarch, Ignatius, died in the year 878, the eightieth year of his age, and there are strong suspicions, according to Noel Alexander, and Van Ranst, that Photius was the author of his death. Fleury says[15635] that Stilianus, the Metropolitan of Neocesarea, wrote to Pope Stephen, and openly charged Photius with employing some wretches to take away the Holy Patriarch’s life. Both the Greek and Latin Churches honour the memory of St. Ignatius, on the 23rd of October.

17. Three days had not elapsed since the death of St. Ignatius, and Photius managed to mount the Patriarchal throne once more, and at once began to banish, flog, and incarcerate the servants of his holy predecessor. He restored some of the deposed Bishops; and those who rejected his communion, and adhered to the Council, he delivered into the hands of his relative, Leo Catacalus, who gained over many of the weak by torments, and punished the constancy of many more with death[15636]. He was most desirous of having the sanction of Pontifical authority for his re-establishment, and tried number less schemes to accomplish it. Among the rest he sent a letter to the Pope then reigning, John VIII., telling him that he was forced to resume the See, and he surreptitiously obtained the signatures of the other Oriental Patriarchs to this, by pretending that it was a contract for a purchase to be secretly made. He sent another letter, forged in the name of St. Ignatius (then dead), and several other Bishops, begging of the Pope to receive Photius, and he sent along with those, letters from the Emperor, which he obtained in his favour[15637]. When the Pope received those letters, in Rome, in the year 879 desirous of not displeasing the Emperor, especially he answered, that, for the good of the Church, and for peace sake, he was willing to dispense with the Decrees of the Eighth Council, and of his predecessors, and receive Photius into his communion, but only on condition of giving public proofs of penance, in a Council, to be held in presence of his Legates, then in Constantinople, and he, accordingly, sent Peter, a Cardinal, as his Legate, to preside at a Council in his name.

Cardinal Baronius, Noel Alexander, Fleury[15638], and several others, severely censure this condescension of the Pope; but Peter de la Marca excuses him[15639], for, solicited as he was by the Emperor, and having the authority of his predecessors, Leo, Gelasius, and Felix, and of the Council of Africa, all which teach that the rigour of the law must be dispensed with in time of necessity, he naturally considered that the good of the Church required he should yield the point, and thus, with the consent of the other Patriarchs, he consented that Photius should retain possession of the See.

18. Photius put the finishing stroke to his plans on the arrival of the Legate in Constantinople; he deceived him, by asking for the Pope's letter that he might translate it into Greek, and when he got it into his hands, he curtailed it, and interpolated it to suit his own purpose, as Cardinal Baronius shows, and on the strength of this deception, a Council was held, called the Eighth General Council, by the schismatic Greeks, though it was nothing more than a Cabal, for though it was attended by four hundred and eighty Bishops, they were all adherents of Photius, and he presided himself and carried everything just as he liked, in opposition to the sentiments of the Legate and the Pope. This Council was closed after five Acts, and the impious Photius was re-established in the Pope's name, in the See of Constantinople. When Pope John learned what passed in Constantinople, as Noel Alexander[15640] relates, he had sent anew his Legate, Maximus, to Constantinople to annul by Apostolical authority all that had been done in that wicked Council; and the Legate proceeded with courage, and confirmed, in the Pope's name, the condemnation of Photius, decided by the General Council; this so displeased the Emperor, that he cast the Legate into prison, and kept him there for thirty days, but, withal, the Pope confirmed the decrees passed against Photius by his predecessors, Nicholas I. and Adrian II., and again solemnly excommunicated him. Cardinal Gotti[15641] adds, that this sentence of John VIII. was, after the death of Basil, which took place in 886, put into execution by his son and successor, Leo VI., the philosopher. Fleury tell us[15642] that the Emperor sent two of his principal officers to the church of Sancta Sophia, and they went into the gallery, and publicly read all the crimes of Photius, and then banished him from the Metropolitan See, and sent him to an Armenian Monastery, where he died, but we do not know how or when. Cedrenus[15643], in his annals, however,

says that the Emperor ordered his eyes to be put out, as suspected of rebellion; and Noel Alexander says he died obstinately in his schism, and separated from the communion of the Church.

19. Noel Alexander[15644] says that the schism was extinguished on the death of Photius, but that it broke out again; but Danaeus[15645] says, that, on the contrary, his death left it as it was, and that it broke out with more violence in the time of Nicholas Chrisobergus, Patriarch, in 981, of Sisinnius, his successor, in 995, and, more than all, in the reign of Sergius, also Patriarch, who sent, in his own name, to the Bishop of the East, the Encyclical letter written by Photius against the Pope. It gained new strength in the eleventh century, under the Patriarch Michael Cerularius. This Prelate was of noble birth, but proud and intriguing; and he was imprisoned in a monastery, by the Emperor Michael Pophlaganius, and was not released till the reign of the Emperor Constantine Monomachus, in the year 1043; he uncanonically seized on the See of Constantinople, but naturally fearing the censures of the Pope for this act of violence, he laboured to bring to maturity the seeds of division, previously sown between the two Churches. He commenced the attack, by writing a letter to John, Bishop of Trani, in Apulia, charging the Roman See with holding erroneous doctrines regarding the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son; that the soul after leaving Purgatory, went directly to enjoy beatitude before the General Resurrection; that the Pope usurped the authority of Universal Pastor, without having any authority to do so, and more, that the Latins, by consecrating the Eucharist in unleavened bread, followed the Jewish practice of celebrating the Pasch in unleavened bread.

In making a charge of this sort against the Roman Church, he was most surely astray, for our Lord celebrated the Pasch on the first day of the feast of the unleavened bread; and then, according to the precept of God himself, in Exodus, it was unlawful to have even in the house, leavened bread : “Seven days there shall not be found any leaven in your houses” (Exod. xii.); and, besides, there was a most ancient tradition handed down direct from St. Peter himself, as Christian Lupus[15646] says, that Christ offered up the Sacrifice in unleavened bread, and such was indubitably the universal practice, during the first centuries in the West, unless, for a short time, when the discipline was changed, lest the Christians should be scandalized, as if they were Judaizing. It is true, the Greeks have always made use of leavened bread; and by doing so, never offended against Faith, for one Church has never reprobated the custom of another; but Certilarius was altogether astray in accusing the Latin Church of heresy, for using unleavened bread.

20. Pope Leo, to extinguish the fire of schism which was every day spreading more widely, sent as his Legates to the East, Umbert, Bishop of Silva Candida, the Cardinal Archdeacon of Rome, and Peter, Archbishop of Amalphi; they brought letters from the Pope to the Emperor Constantine, threatening to excommunicate Cerularius, unless he desisted from censuring the Roman Church, on account of the custom of celebrating with unleavened bread. The question then was discussed in Constantinople itself, and the Latin practice was justified; but Cerularius refused all along to meet the Legates, and continued to give them every opposition in his power. The Legates, despairing of any change in him, after celebrating Mass one day in St. Sophia, publicly laid the letter of excommunication on the altar. This only exasperated him more, and he removed the Pope's name from the Diptychs, and following the Legates example, he excommunicated them, and sent letters through all Asia and Italy, filled with calumnies and abuse of the Roman Church. He lived and died obstinately in schism : he was banished to Proconesus by the Emperor, Isaac Comnemus, who deposed him from the Patriarchate, and he there ended his days[15647].

21. The schism was not extinguished at his death, but spread more widely; and though several Greek Churches in the eleventh and following centuries continued in communion with the Roman Church, still the breach was every day becoming wider, till Constantinople was conquered by the Latins. Union was again restored under the Frankish Monarchy, from the reign of Baldwin, the first Latin Emperor of Constantinople, in 1204, till 1261; but when Constantinople was re-taken by Michael Paleologus, the Greeks renewed the schism, which to all appearance they had eternally forsaken, and for the four subsequent centuries the Churches were disunited, till the chastisement of God bore heavily on the sinful Empire. Michael Paleologus[15648] sent a Franciscan Doctor to Gregory X., the bearer of letters requesting an union between the Greek and Roman Churches once more, and he wrote to St. Louis, King of France, also, to induce him to co-

operate to the same end. The Pope was most desirous to accede to his wishes, and he sent four Friars of the Order of St. Francis (or according to others, two of the Franciscan and two of the Dominican Order,) as his Legates, to conclude a peace. This happened in 1272, and he convoked a General Council at the same time to meet in two years after in Lyons, to concert with the Christian Sovereigns for the conquest of the Holy Land; to reform some matters of discipline; but principally to reunite the Greek and Latin Churches; and to facilitate this object, so dear to his heart, he sent a formula of Faith to the Emperor by the four religious delegates, which the Greek Bishops were called on to sanction. He prayed the Emperor to come to the Council himself, or, at all events, to send his Legates, and he also invited the Patriarch of Constantinople and the other Greek Bishops to the Council.

22. At the appointed time the Council assembled in Lyons, and besides the Latin Prelates, two of the Greek Patriarchs, Pantaleon, of Constantinople, and Opizio, of Antioch, and several other Greek Bishops, attended. Five hundred Bishops altogether, seventy Abbots, and about one thousand inferior Prelates, were assembled. St. Bonaventure was also present, and took the first place after the Pope, and to him was committed, by his Holiness, the whole arrangement of the Council. The Pope had summoned St. Thomas of Aquin, likewise, but he died on his way thither, in the Convent of Fossa Nova.

The Ambassadors of the Kings of France, England, and Sicily, were also in attendance. Several authors, among others Trithemius and Platina, assert, that the Emperor Michael was present; but Noel Alexander proves[15649] indubitably, that he was not, but only his Ambassadors, and, it is on that account, that his letter was read in the Council, and approved of, because the Ambassadors, in his name, took an oath assenting to the union, and, besides, Pope Gregory, immediately on the conclusion of the Council, wrote to him an account of all that had taken place there, which he assuredly would not have done, had he been present in person.

23. In the fourth Session, the letter of the Emperor Michael Paleologus, was read, professing the Faith taught by the Roman Church, as laid down in the formula, sent to him by the Pope. In this, he professes that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, the existence of Purgatory, the

validity of Consecration with unleavened bread, and finally, the primacy of the Pope. Noel Alexander[15650], and Raynaldus[15651], quote his words : “That the Holy Roman Church has full and plenary primacy, and principality over the whole Catholic Church, and that it received the plenitude of power in the Apostle St. Peter, whose successor, the Roman Pontiff is, through Christ himself; and, as it is bound, above all others, to defend the truth of the Faith, so its judgment should be definitive, in all controversies regarding Faith. That all persons having any Ecclesiastical business, can appeal to it, and that it can examine and judge all Ecclesiastical cases, and all other Churches owe it reverential obedience.” The plenitude of power consist in this, that it admits the other Church to a part of its solicitudes, and it honours others, but above all the Patriarchal Churches, with divers privileges, never, however, giving up its prerogatives, both in General Councils and elsewhere, but always keeping the purity of the Faith, as faithfully explained ;” and then he adds : “ We, of our own free will, confess and receive the Primacy of the Holy Roman Church.” He then begs of the Pope, to allow the Symbol or Creed to be sung in the Greek Church, as it was before the schism, and to permit the Greeks to observe the same rites as before, when not opposed to Faith, to the Divine Commandments, to the Old or New Testament, to the Doctrines laid down by General Councils or Holy Fathers, and received by the Councils, celebrated under the spiritual power of the Roman Church.

The letters of the several Greek Bishops were then read, submitting themselves to the power of the Roman Church, and professing in all things the same Episcopal obedience, to the Apostolic See as their fathers did before the schism.

24. When these letters were read, George Acropolita, the great Logothete, or High Chancellor, the Emperor’s Ambassador, renounced the schism in his name, professed the Faith of the Roman Church, and recognized the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff; he also took an oath, promising that the Emperor never would depart from his Faith and obedience. The Legates of the Greek Bishops did the same, and now the Council having approved and accepted the profession of Faith, the Synodical Constitution was promulgated: “We confess, said the Fathers, with a faithful and devout profession, that the Holy Ghost proceeds eternally from the Father and the

Son, not as from two principles, but, as from one principle, not from two spirations, but one spiration. The Holy Roman Church, the Father and Mistress of all Churches, has always professed, and firmly holds and teaches this Doctrine, and, this is also the true and unchangeable opinion of the orthodox Fathers and Doctors, both of the Latin and Greek Churches. But as some, on account of not knowing this undoubted truth, have fallen into various errors, we, wishing to prevent any from going the same false way in future, with the approbation of the Sacred Council, condemn and hand over to reprobation, all who presume to deny, that the Holy Ghost eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son, or who dare to assert that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son as from two principles, and not from one." The Council closed at last, and Gregory sent back the Greeks to their own country, loaded with presents, and wrote to the Emperor Michael, and to his son, Andronicus, congratulating them on the completion of the Synod. The Emperor was so highly pleased that all was so happily concluded, and, as Joseph, the Patriarch of Constantinople, who was always opposed to the union, would not now give his consent to it, he obliged him to renounce his dignity, and retire to a Monastery, and had John Veccus elected in his place, and he imprisoned, banished, and even put to death, some Ecclesiastics and Nobles, who refused to receive the decrees of the Council[15652].

25. Two Synods were held in Constantinople in the year 1276, under Pope John XXL, in which the Patriarch Veccus, and the other Greek Bishops, professed the Faith, according to the rule laid down by the Roman Church; and the Emperor Michael and his son Andronicus wrote to the Pope, that all that the Roman Church believes and teaches was confirmed by these Synods. The Emperor wrote another letter, in 1278, to Nicholas III., the successor of John, informing him that he used every means in his power to consolidate the union, but that so many outbreaks occurred, and so many plots were laid against him, that he feared he would be deposed if he tried any further, and he begged of his Holiness not to be angry if he appeared to yield a little in so delicate an affair. The end of the matter was, that the Greeks, with few exceptions, every day more and more separated themselves from the union they had sworn to, and at last Martin IV., the successor of Nicholas III., excommunicated the Emperor, Michael

Paleologus, in 1281, as a supporter of the Greek schism and heresy, and forbade all Princes, Lords, and Universities, and the authorities of all cities and towns, under pain of personal excommunication and local interdict, from having any connexion with him, as long as he was under ban of excommunication. Noel Alexander, on the authority of two authors, says that the Pope excommunicated the Emperor at the instigation of Charles, King of Sicily, who hoped that when Michael was by this measure deprived of assistance, that he could easily banish him from the throne, and place his son-in-law on it; but Roncaglia, in his notes on Alexander, shows that Martin having renewed the excommunication the following year, (as Raynaldus relates, Ann. 1281, N. 8), proves that the only reason he could have for doing it was, that the Emperor broke faith, and gave up the union he had sworn to maintain[15653].

26. This schism continued for about a hundred and twenty years longer, from the Council of Lyons, till the year 1439, when the Greeks were reduced almost to the last extremity, for the Almighty permitted the Turks to punish them, and, after conquering the greater part of their empire, now threatened their total destruction. In their distress, they now made overtures for a re-union with the Roman Church once more, and Pope Eugenius IV., who was extremely desirous of acceding to their wishes, convoked a Council, principally for this object, in Ferrara; and when the plague broke out in that city, afterwards in Florence, and invited the Emperor, the Patriarchs, and the other Greek Bishops to attend. The Emperor John Paleologus, accepted the invitation, and the Patriarch of Constantinople, the two chief Metropolitans, Basil Bessarion, Archbishop of Nice, and Mark, Archbishop of Ephesus, several other Greek Bishops, seven hundred other distinguished personages, and a hundred and sixty Latin Bishops, assembled in Florence. The points of disagreement, which were the same as those decided on in the Council of Lyons[15654], were again examined. The word, Filioque, “ and from the Son,” which was added to the Creed by the Latin Church, to explain that the Holy Ghost proceeds both from the Father and the Son, as from one principle, was again debated. Mark, the Greek Archbishop of Ephesus, was the most strenuous opposer of this addition; it was unlawful, he said, to add anything to the ancient Symbols of the Church, but our Theologians replied, that the promise made by Jesus Christ

to assist his Church, was not confined to any period, but lasts till the end of time : “ Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world” (Matt, xxviii, 20). The word, Consubstantial, was not, said they, in the Creed at first; and for all that the Council of Nice thought it necessary to add it, to put an end to the subterfuges of the Arians, and explain that the Word was of the same substance as, and in all things equal to, the Father. The Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, also, made an addition to the Nicene Creed, to explain the two Natures of Christ, Divine and human, against Nestorius, who taught that He was a mere man; and against Eutyches, who asserted that the human was absorbed by the Divine Nature. Hence they argued that the words, “ and from the Son,” were added to the Symbol; not to prove that the ancient Symbols were imperfect, but to declare more clearly the truth of the Faith, and that the declaration of the truth ought not to be called an addition, but rather an explanation.

The Council, therefore, defined : “ That this truth should be believed by all Christians; that the Holy Ghost is eternally from the Father and the Son, and that his essence and being is both from the Father and the Son, and that he proceeds eternally from both, as from one principle, and by one spiration; and that this is what the Holy Fathers mean by saying that he proceeds from the Father by the Son; and when the Greeks speak of the Son, as the cause, and the Latins the principle, together with the Father, of the subsistence of the Holy Ghost, they both mean the same thing.” Here are the words : “ Diffinimus, ut hæc fidei veritas ab omnibus Christianis credatur, quod Spiritus Sanctus ex Patre, et Filio æternaliter est; et essentiam suam, suumque esse subsistens habet ex Patre simul et Filio; et ex utroque æternaliter tanquam ab uno principio, et unica spiratione procedit, declarantes, quod id quod SS. Patres dicunt ex Patre per Filium procedente Spiritum Sanctum; ad hanc intelligentiam tendit, ut per hoc significetur, Filium quoque esse secunduni græcos quidem causam, secundum latinos vero principium subsistentiæ Spiritus Sancti, sicut et Patrem. Et quoniam omnia quad Patris sunt, Pater ipse unigenito Filio suo gignendo dedit, præter esse Patrem, hoc ipsum quod Spiritus Sanctus procedit ex Filio, ipse Filius a Patre æternaliter habet, a quo etiam æternalitur genitus est. Diffinimus insuper, explicationem verborum illorum Filioque, veritatis declarandæ gratia, et imminente tune necessitate, ac rationabiliter Symbolo fuisse appositam.”

27. The question of the validity of the consecration of the Eucharist in unleavened bread was then discussed, but the parties soon agreed on this, as there was no doubt that wheaten bread was the essential matter of the Sacrament, and it was but a matter of discipline whether it was leavened or unleavened; and it was then defined that each Priest should follow the custom of his own Church, whether of the East or the West.

28. Purgatory, and the state of beatitude the just enjoy, previous to the General Resurrection, was then discussed. Both parties soon agreed on these points, for as to Purgatory, the Greeks never denied its existence, but they taught that the stains of sin are there purged away by the penalty of sorrow, and not of fire; and they, accordingly, at once agreed to the definition of the Council, which decided that the souls are purged from the stain of sin, in the next life, by punishment, and that they are relieved by the suffrages of the faithful, and especially by the Sacrifice of the Mass, but does not specify either the penalty of sorrow or of fire; and the Council of Trent, in the Twenty-fifth Session, in the Decree on Purgatory, decided the same, though many of the Holy Fathers, as St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Gregory, Bede, and the Angelic Doctor St. Thomas, particularly mention the penalty of fire, as I have remarked in my Dogmatic Work on the Council of Trent, in opposition to the Innovators[15655]and they found their opinion on the text of St. Paul (I. Cor. iii, 12). The following is the Decree of the Council : “ Item (definimus) si vere poenitentes in Dei charitate decesserint, antequam dignis poenitentiæ fructibus de commissis satis fecerint, et omissis, eorum animas poems purgatoriis post mortem purgari, et ut a poenis hujusmodi releventur, prodesse eis Fidelium vivorum suffragia, missarum scil. Sacri-ficia, orationes, et eleemosynas, et alia pietatis officia, secundum Ecclæsia instituta.”

29. The Greeks also accepted the definition of the Council, that the just enjoy the beatific vision previous to the General Resurrection. This is the Decree : “ Illas (Animas) etiam, quæ post contractam peccati maculam, vel in suis corporibus, vel eisdem exutæ corporibus (prout superius dictum est), sunt purgatæ, in Cælum mox recipi, et intueri clare ipsum Deum trinum, et unum sicuti est, pro meritorum tamen diversitate, alium alio perfectius; illorum autem animas, qui in actuali mortali peccato, vel solo original! decedunt mox in infernum descendere, poenistamen disparibus puniendas.”

Theologians commonly teach that the blessed will not have the fullness of beatitude, till after the General Judgment, when their souls will be united with their bodies. This, St. Bernard[15656], speaking of the two stoles of the blessed, says : "The first stole is the happiness itself, and the rest of the soul; but the second is immortality and the glory of the body.

30. The greatest dispute was concerning the Primacy of the Pope, and Mark of Ephesus not only obstinately opposed this doctrine to the end of the Council, but after its conclusion, as we shall see, succeeded in again perverting the Greeks. The Greeks, indeed, admitted that the Pope was the head of the Church, but would not allow that he could receive appeals from sentences passed by the Four Patriarchal Sees of the East, or convoke a General Council without their assent. They were so firm on this point, especially, that there would be no hope of agreement, had not Basil Bassarion, the Archbishop of Nice, suggested a mode of reconciling both parties, by putting in the clause: "Saving the rights and privileges of the Greeks ;" and to this the Greeks at last consented, for they then maintained their privilege, and at the same time confessed their subjection to the Roman Church; for the very word privilege implies a concession from a superior power, and thus the power of the Pope over all Christian Churches is confirmed. "We define," says the Council, "that the Holy Apostolic See, and the Roman Pontiff, has the primacy over the whole world, and that the Pope is the successor of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, and our Father and Doctor; and that full power has been given him by our Lord Jesus Christ, in St. Peter, to feed, rule, and govern the Universal Church, as is contained in the Acts of the Universal Councils, and the Sacred Canons. We also renew the order laid down by the Sacred Canons, in regard to the other venerable Patriarchs, that the Patriarch of Constantinople should have the second place after the Holy Roman Pontiff; the Patriarch of Alexandria, the third; of Antioch, the fourth; and of Jerusalem, the fifth; saving all their rights and privileges."

31. When all this was concluded, and before the Council was dismissed, the Armenians arrived in Florence, on the invitation of the Pope, as their provinces were infected with errors. The Armenian Patriarch sent four delegates, who were most kindly received by the Pope, and as they were extremely ignorant, his Holiness judged it proper to cause a compendium of

the whole Christian doctrine to be drawn up, which they should swear to profess, and take with them as a rule for their countrymen. This Instruction or Decree was accepted and sworn to, by the Armenians, and is quoted at length by Cardinal Justinian and Berninus[15657]. The Jacobites, also, on the invitation of the Pope, were represented in the Council by the Abbot of St. Anthony, sent by the Armenian Patriarch. The Ambassadors of the Sovereign of Ethiopia, the Prester John, of that age, presented themselves at the Council, likewise, and promised obedience to the Roman Church, and a book of instructions were given them by the Pope, when he transferred the Council from Florence to Rome[15658]. This peace, however, was but of short duration, for the Greeks, on their return home, again fell back into their former errors, principally at the instigation of the wicked Mark of Ephesus. The chastisement of God soon overtook that fickle people; in 1453, Mahomet II. took Constantinople by assault, and gave it up to sack and slaughter; the infuriated soldiery slew all who came in their way, cast down the altars, profaned the monasteries, and despoiled the wretched inhabitants of all their property. Thus fell the empire of the East, after eleven centuries of a glorious existence. The Greeks continue, to the present day, obstinately attached to their errors; they are the slaves of the Turks in their ancient capital. That noble Church that gave to the world, Athanasius, Gregory, Basil, and so many other learned and holy Doctors, now lies trampled underfoot, vice usurping the place of virtue, and ignorance seated in the chair of learning. The Greek Church, in a word, the Mother of many Saints and Doctors of the Church, has, on account of its separation from the Roman See, fallen into a state of deplorable barbarity and wretched slavery[15659].

Chapter X

THE HERESIES WHICH SPRUNG UP FROM THE ELEVENTH TO THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

We pass over the Tenth Century, because in that age no new heresy sprung up in the Church; but Danaeus[15660] says, that there was both great ignorance and great disunion in the West, so that even the Apostolic See was not exempt from intrusions and expulsions. Graveson[15661] states the same, and says, that it was a great mark of Divine Protection, that, amid so many evils, a schism did not arise in the Church.

ARTICLE I. HERESIES OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

> 1.—Stephen and Lisosius burned for their Errors. 2.—The new Nicholites and the Incestuosists. 3.—Berengarius, and the principles of his Heresy. 4.—His Condemnation and Relapse. 5.—His Conversion and Death.

1. The first heresy of this century was an offshoot of Manichaeism, or, rather, a collection of errors, which may be called Atheism itself. It was first discovered in Orleans, in France, where it was introduced by an Italian lady, and was embraced by many persons, but especially by two Ecclesiastics, of the name of Stephen and Lisosius, who were considered both holy and learned men. They taught, that all that the Scriptures say about the Trinity and the Creation of the World is mere nonsense, as the heavens and the earth are from all eternity, and never had a beginning. They denied the Incarnation and the Passion of Christ, and, consequently, the value of Baptism.

They condemned Matrimony, and denied that good works were rewarded, or evil ones punished, in the next life. They used to burn an infant eight days old, and preserved his ashes for the Viaticum of the Sick. A Norman gentleman, called Arefastus informed Robert, King of France, of the practices and doctrines of those wretches, and he, at once, went to Orleans himself, accompanied by the Queen, and a number of Bishops. These Prelates finding Stephen and Lisosius obstinate in their errors, held a Synod, and deposed and degraded them, and they were then, by the King's orders, brought outside the city, shut up in a cabin with several of their followers and burned alive[15662].

2. The new Nieholites also made their appearance in this century. These were some clergymen in Holy Orders, who preached that it was lawful for them to marry. The sect called Incestuosists also then disturbed the Church. These taught that it was lawful to contract marriage within the four prohibited degrees of consanguinity[15663].

3. The remarkable heresy of Berengarius also sprung up in this century, and it is one of the prodigies of Divine Mercy, to see that this heretic, after so many relapses, in the end died a true penitent, and in communion with the Church. Berenger, or Berengarius, was born in the early part of this century, in Tours; he first studied in the school of St. Martin, and then went to prosecute his studies at Chartres, under Fulbert, the Bishop of that city. A certain author[15664], speaking of his haughtiness, says, that while only a scholar he cared but very little for his master's opinions, and despised altogether anything coming from his fellow-students; he was not, however, deeply grounded in the abstruse questions of philosophy, but took great pride in quibbles, and strange interpretations of plain words. His master, Fulbert, well aware of his petulant genius, and his desire of novelty, frequently advised him to follow in everything the doctrine of the Fathers, and to reject all new doctrines. He returned to Tours, and was received among the Chapter of the Church of St. Martin, and was appointed a dignitary, the Master of the School, as it was called.

He next became Treasurer of the Church, and then went to Angers, and was appointed Archdeacon by the Bishop Eusebius Bruno, one of his own scholars. It was in Angers, according to Noel Alexander and Graveson[15665], that he first began, about the year 1047, to disseminate his errors; and Baronius says, that the Bishop Eusebius connived at it, though Noel Alexander acquits him[15666] At first, he attacked the Sacrament of Matrimony, the Baptism of infants, and other dogmas of the Faith; but he soon gave up all other questions, and confined himself to one alone the denial of the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the

Eucharist. He attacked Paschasius Radbert, who, in 831, wrote a learned treatise on the Eucharist, and held up to admiration John Scotus Erigena, who flourished in the ninth century, and is believed to have been the first who attacked the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Cardinal Gotti, however, remarks that Berenger is looked on as the founder of this heresy, as the Church was obliged to summon several Councils to condemn it, as we shall see hereafter[15667].

4. Berengarius was first condemned in the year 1050, in a Roman Council, held under Pope St. Leo IX., but he took so little notice of this, that he called it the Council of Vanity. He was condemned, likewise, in the Council of Vercelli, held the same year, and that Council also condemned the book of John Scotus. He was again condemned in a Council held in Paris, under the reign of King Henry I.; and Victor II., the successor of St. Leo, condemned him in a Synod, held in Florence, in the year 1055. In this same year he abjured his errors convinced by Lanfranc that he was wrong in a Council held at Tours, and swore never again to separate himself from the Faith of the Catholic Church; but his subsequent conduct proved that he was not sincere in this recantation. In the year 1059, therefore, Pope Nicholas II. convoked a Council in Rome of 113 Bishops, and then Berengarius again made his profession of Faith, according to the form prescribed to him, and swore again never to deviate from it, and threw his own works, and those of John Scotus, into a great fire, which was lighted in the midst of the Council.

Still he was unchanged: on his return to France, he again relapsed, and even wrote a book in defence of his heresy, and in defiance of the Church of Rome. Alexander II., the successor of Nicholas, paternally admonished him by letter; but he not only obstinately held out, but even sent him a disrespectful answer. Maurilius, Archbishop of Rouen, therefore, considered himself obliged to adopt extreme measures, and in a Council, held in 1063, excommunicated him and all his followers, and the Decres of this Council were confirmed by another, held in Poietiers, in 1075. Finally, St. Gregory VII., to put an end to the scandal altogether, convoked a Council, in Rome, of one hundred and fifty Bishops, in 1079, in which the Catholic doctrine was confirmed, and Berengarius, confessing himself convinced, took an oath to the following effect : “ I confess that the bread and wine placed on the altar are substantially converted into the true Flesh and Blood of Jesus Christ, by the mystery of Sacred Prayer and the words of our Redeemer, not alone by the sign and virtue of a Sacrament, but by the truth of substance, &c."[15668].

5. Notwithstanding all this, when Berengarius returned to France, he again retracted his confession by another writing[15669]; but in the year following, 1080, he obtained from the Divine Mercy the grace of a true conversion, and in a Council, held at Bordeaux, retracted this last work of his, and confirmed the profession of faith he made at Rome; and he survived this last retractation for nearly eight years, and in the year 1088, at the age of nearly ninety years, he died a true penitent, in communion with the Church, after spending these eight years in retirement in the island of St. Cosmas, near Tours, doing penance for his sins[15670]. William of Malmesbury[15671] says, that when just about to die, Berengarius exclaimed, remembering all the perversions his heresy had caused : " To-day Jesus Christ shall appear to me either to show me mercy on account of my repentance, or, perhaps, to punish me, I fear, for having led others astray."

St. Antoninus, De Bellay, Mabillon, Anthony Pagi, Noel Alexander, Graveson, and several other authors, assert that his repentance was sincere, and that he never relapsed during the last years of his life a remarkable exception to so many other heresiarchs, who died in their sins.

ARTICLE II. HERESIES OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

6.—The Petrobrussian. 7.—Henry, and his Disciples. 8.—Their condemnation. 9.—Peter Abelard, and his Errors concerning the Trinity. 10.—His condemnation. 11.—His Conversion and Death. 12.—His particular Errors. 13.—Arnold of Brescia; his Errors and condemnation.14.—Causes a Sedition, and is burned alive. 15.—Gilbert de la Force; his Errors and Conversion. 16.—Folmar, Tanquelinus, and the Abbot Joachim; the Apostolicals and the Bogomiles. 17.—Peter Waldo and his Followers under different denominations Waldenses, Poor Men of Lyons, 8u. 18.—Their particular Errors, and condemnation.

6. The Petrobrussians made their appearance at this time; they were followers of a Monk, Peter of Bruis, who, tired of the restraint of the cloister, apostatized, and fled to the province of Aries, and, about the year 1118, began to preach his errors in that neighbourhood. These may be reduced to five heads, as Peter, Abbot of Cluny[15672], tells us :First—He rejected the baptism of infants till they came to the use of reason. Second—

He rejected altars and churches, and said they should be destroyed. Third—He prohibited the veneration of the Cross. Fourth—He rejected the sacrifice of the Mass, and the sacrament of the Eucharist. Fifth—He rejected prayers and suffrages for the dead. It is very likely, Graveson says[15673], that these errors were condemned in the Third Canon of the Council of Toulouse, in the year 1119, at which Pope Celestine II. presided, and that they were again condemned in the Second Council of Lateran, under Innocent II.

It is the opinion of some, that Peter of Bruis was a follower of the Manichean doctrine; but Noel Alexander and Cardinal Gotti[15674] are of the contrary opinion, because he baptized with water, made use of flesh-meat, and venerated both the Old and New Testaments, all which the Manicheans rejected. He had a horrible death. He collected together a great number of crosses on Good Friday, in the town of St. Giles, in the Diocese of Nismes, and making a great fire with them, he caused a great quantity of meat to be roasted at it, and distributed it to his followers, but the Archbishop of Arles got him into his power some time after, and sentenced him to be burned alive[15675].

7. After the death of this unfortunate man, another Monk, named Henry, some say an Italian, others a Provenceal[15676], took his place, and about the year 1142, increased the numbers of the sect, and added new errors to those of his master. He was highly esteemed for his learning and piety, and on that account disseminated his errors most extensively in several places, especially in the Diocese of Mans; but before he proceeded to that city himself, he sent two of his disciples, bearing, like himself, a cane with an iron cross on the top, and they obtained leave for him to preach in that city, from the Bishop Ildebert. When he began to preach, his eloquence soon drew crowds after him, and he so excited the fury of the populace against the priests, that they looked on them as excommunicated, and would have burned down their dwellings, robbed them of their property, and even stoned them to death, if the principal people of the city had not opposed these violent proceedings. The Bishop Ildebert himself, was not allowed to pass free by Henry’s followers, so he banished him from his Diocese, and received two of his disciples, whose eyes were opened to his errors, and abandoned him[15677]. After his banishment from Mans, he first went to Poietiers, and next to Toulouse, where he principally added to his followers.

St. Bernard describes (Epis. 241) the ruinous consequences that ensued from his preaching in that city; the Priests, the churches, the Festivals, the Sacraments, and all holy things, were treated with supreme contempt; people died without confession, and without the Viaticum, and Baptism was refused to children. He even adds, that Henry himself shamelessly spent what he got at his sermons at the gaming-table, and that so great was his depravity, that he frequently, after preaching in the day, spent the night in houses of ill fame. When the Pope, Eugene III., learned that the number of the heretics was daily increasing in Toulouse, he sent thither, as Legate, the Cardinal Bishop of Ostia, Alberic, and he took along with him, Godfrey, Bishop of Chartres, and St. Bernard, who, by his sermons, conferences, and miracles, converted many from their evil ways, and accordingly, in his Epistle to the people of Toulouse, in 1147 (Ep. 242), he says : " We thank God that our sojourn among you was not an idle one, and although we tarried but a short time with you, still our presence was not unprofitable."

8. The Legate, Alberic, published a sentence of excommunication against all holding any communication with the Henricians, or with their protectors. St. Bernard promised Henry himself that he would receive him as a Monk into Clairvaux, in case it was his wish to retire and do penance[15678]; but the unfortunate man always shunned him. The Saint still continued to follow his traces, and wherever he went and preached, went after him and preached likewise, and generally re-converted those who had fallen by him. He was taken at last, and put in chains into the hands of the Bishop, and he, as Noel Alexander, tells us, delivered him up to the Legate Apostolic, and it is supposed that he was by him, condemned to perpetual imprisonment, that he might not have any longer an opportunity of preaching his heresy[15679].

9. Peter Abelard was born in 1079, in the village of Palais, three leagues from Nantes. At first he taught philosophy and theology with great credit, but the disastrous consequences of an intrigue with Heloise, the niece of Fulbert, a Canon of Paris, drove him from the world, and he retired, to bury his shame and regret in the Abbey of St. Denis, and took the monastic habit at the age of forty years[15680]. He soon got tired of the life of the cloister, and went to the territories of the Count of Champagne, and opened a school which soon became celebrated, and it was there he published his book, filled with several errors concerning the Trinity.

His work was condemned by Conon, Bishop of Palestrina, the Pope's Legate, in a Council held in Soissons in 1121, and Abelard was summoned there, and obliged to cast the book into the fire with his own hands, and was then given into the keeping of the Abbot of St. Medard of Soissons, who received orders to keep him in close custody in a Monastery[15681].

10. Notwithstanding all this, Abelard continued for eighteen years teaching theology and works tainted with various errors. St. Bernard, when this came to his knowledge, endeavoured to get him to change his sentiments, without giving him any pain; but though Abelard promised amendment, there was no change, and knowing that there was soon to be a Council at Sens, he called on the Archbishop, and complained that St. Bernard was privately speaking against his works, and begged the Archbishop to summon the Saint to the Council, promising publicly to defend his writings. St. Bernard at first refused; but finally conquered his repugnance, and although not prepared for the dispute, attended on the appointed day, the 2nd of June, 1140. He produced Abelard's book in the assembly, and quoted the errors he marked in it; but Abelard, instead of answering, judging that the Council would be opposed to him, appealed to the Pope previous to the delivery of the sentence, and left the meeting. Though the Bishops did not consider his appeal canonical, still, out of respect for the Pope, they did not condemn Abelard in person; but St. Bernard having proved that many propositions in the book were false and heretical, they condemned these, and then forwarded an account of the whole proceedings to Innocent II., requesting him to confirm their condemnatory sentence by his authority, and to punish all who would presume to contravene it[15682]. St. Bernard wrote to the same effect to Innocent, and the Pope not only condemned the writings of Abelard, but his person likewise, imposing perpetual silence on him as a heretic, and excommunicating all who would attempt to defend him[15683].

11. Abelard was on his way to Rome to prosecute his appeal, but happening to pass by Clugni, he had a meeting with Peter the Venerable, the Abbot of that Monastery, and with the Abbot of Citeaux, who came on purpose to reconcile him with St. Bernard. The Abbot of Clugni joined his entreaties to those of his brother of Citeaux, and persuaded him to go and see St. Bernard, and retract the errors this holy Doctor charged him with.

Abelard yielded at last; he went to Citeaux, became reconciled to St. Bernard, and returned to Clugni, and being there informed that the condemnation of the Council was confirmed by the Pope, he resolved to abandon his appeal, and to remain in that Abbey for the remainder of his life. The Abbot offered to receive him with all his heart, if the Pope had no objection. Abelard wrote to the Pope, and obtained his consent, and then became an inmate of the Abbey of Clugni. He lived there for two years, wearing the habit of the Convent, and leading a life of edification, and even gave lessons to the Monks; but he was obliged, on account of a heavy fit of sickness, to go for change of air to the Priory of St. Marcellus, in Burgundy, and he died there on the 21st of April, in the year 1142, the 63rd of his age, and went to enjoy, we hope, eternal happiness[15684].

12. The following errors were attributed to Peter Abelard :First He said that the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are improperly attributed to God, and that they only describe the plenitude of the Supreme Good. Second That the Father has a plenary power, the Son a certain power, but that the Holy Ghost has not any power. Third That the Son is of the substance of the Father, but that the Holy Ghost is not of the substance of the Father and the Son. Fourth That we can do good without the assistance of grace. Fifth That Jesus Christ, as God and man, is not a third person of the Trinity. Sixth That mankind derives from Adam the penalty alone, but not the fault of original sin. Seventh That no sin is committed with desire or with delectation, or with ignorance[15685]. Graveson[15686] says that Abelard asserted in his Apology that these errors were falsely attributed to him by the ignorance or malice of others, and Berenger, Bishop of Poietiers, one of his disciples, also wrote an Apology in defence of his master.

But then the authority of St. Bernard, the Decrees of the Council, and the condemnation of Innocent II., should have more weight with us than these Apologies. Graveson and Alexander justly remark, that although Abelard may undoubtedly have been the author of those heretical propositions, still, that he cannot be called a heretic, as he repented and abjured them. Cardinal Gotti[15687] speaking of him, says : “ There is no doubt but that he rendered himself suspected in explaining the Articles of the Faith, so that at one time he seems an Arian, then a Sabellian, next a Macedonian, now a Pelagian, and frequently a founder of a new heresy altogether; but he finally wiped away all stains by his retractation."

13. Arnold, of the city of Brescia, in Italy, lived also in this century. He went to study in Paris under Abelard, and was infected with his master's errors. He then returned to Brescia, and to gain an opinion of sanctity, took the monastic habit, and, about the year 1138[15688], began to preach and dogmatize against the truth of the Faith. He was more flippant than profound, and always attached to new opinions. His sentiments regarding Baptism and the Eucharist were not Catholic, but his principal declamations were against Monks, Priests, Bishops, and the Pope. Those Monks, he said, would be damned who possessed estated property the Priests who held property also and the Bishops who were in possession of lordships or feudalities would share the same fate; the Clergy, he said, should live on the tithes and oblations of the people alone. The effect of his sermons of this nature was to cause the Clergy of Brescia and the neighbouring cities to be despised and contemned by the people, and he was, therefore, charged by his Bishop and others, before the Second Council of Lateran, held in 1139, by Pope Innocent II.; and the Council condemned and imposed perpetual silence on him[15689]. When Arnold heard of this sentence, he fled to Zurich, in the Diocese of Constance, and did a great deal of harm there, as the austerity of his life gave authority to his words, and he was, besides that, supported by the nobles of the country.

When St. Bernard heard this, he wrote to the Bishop of Zurich (Epis. 195), exhorting him to be on his guard against so dangerous a character, and to put him in prison, as the Pope had commanded, because if lie rested satisfied with only banishing him out of his own Diocese, he would be allowing the plague to infect some other place. He also wrote to Guido, the Pope's Legate, with whom it was said Arnold had taken refuge (Epis. 146), putting him on his guard in like manner.

14. In the first year of the Pontificate of Eugenius III., 1145, Arnold went to Rome, and blew up the coals of a sedition already enkindled. He went about saying that the dignity of the Senate and the Order of Knights should be re-established, and that the Pope had no right to the government of Rome, as his power was spiritual alone. The Romans, excited by these discourses, rose up against the authority of the Prefect of Rome, tore down

some of the houses of the nobility and Cardinals, and maltreated, and even wounded, some of them[15690]. While Arnold was stirring up this sedition, he was taken prisoner by Gerard, Cardinal of St. Nicholas, but was rescued by the Viscounts of the Campagna, and fell into the hands of Frederic Barbarossa, then King of the Romans, and when he went to Rome he was met by three Cardinals, sent to him by Adrian IV., and they, in the Pope's name, demanded that Arnold should be delivered up to them. Frederic gave him up at once, and he was brought back to Rome, and according to the sentence passed on him by his judges, he was burned to death in public, and his ashes cast into the Tiber. Such was the end of this disturber of Rome and of the world, as Van Ranst calls him, in 1155[15691].

15. Gilbert de la Poree, a native of Poietiers, was at first a Canon of that city, and afterwards its Bishop, in 1141. From the very first day he began to study philosophy, he was so taken with logical subtleties, that when he afterwards applied himself to scholastic theology, which was then just beginning to be developed, he wished to judge everything by the rules of philosophy, and to use them as a standard for the articles of the Faith; and hence the origin of his errors. He said that the Divine Essence was not God, and that the proprietors of the Persons are not the Persons themselves; that the Divine Nature did not become incarnate, but only the Person of the Son, and that Baptism is received alone by those predestined to glory.

He was charged with these errors in the year 1145, and Pope Eugenius III., to whom the complaint was made, ordered his accusers to have the whole affair investigated in a Council in Paris. The Synod was accordingly held, and St. Bernard attended, and strenuously combated his errors; but nothing was decided till the following year, in which a Council was held in Rheims, at which the Pope himself attended, and condemned Gilbert's doctrine. He at once bowed to the decision of the Pontiff, abjured his errors, was reconciled to his accusers, who were two of his own Archdeacons, and returned with honour to his Diocese[15692].

16. Other heretics disturbed the peace of the Church in this century. One of these was Folmar, Principal of the Church of Trieffenstein, in Franconia; he said that in the Eucharist, the blood alone of Jesus Christ was received under the appearance of wine, and the flesh alone, not the bones or the members, under the appearance of bread, and that it was not the Son of Man

that was received, but the flesh alone of the Son of Man. He, however, soon retracted, and abjured his errors in a letter he wrote to the Bishops of Bavaria and Austria[15693]. Tanquelinus taught that the reception of the Holy Eucharist was of no avail for salvation, and that the ministry of Priests and Bishops was of no value, and was not instituted by Christ. He infected the city of Antwerp, but it was afterwards purged from this heresy by St. Norbert, founder of the Premonstratensians and Archbishop of Magdeburg[15694]. Joachim, an Abbot in Calabria, lived also in this century; he fell into some errors regarding the Trinity, in a treatise he wrote against Peter Lombard; he denied that the three Divine Persons are one and the same as the Divine Nature, and he also said that in the mystery of the Trinity, essence generates essence, insinuating by that, that each Divine Person has a particular essence.

This was a renewal of the Tritheism of John Philiponus, infected with the Eutychian heresy, who taught that there are three Natures in the Trinity, confounding; the three Persons with the three Natures. This treatise was condemned in the Fourth Council of Lateran, celebrated by Innocent III., in 1215. Joachim, however, had previously died in 1201, and submitted all his writings to the judgment of the Church, so Honorius III., the successor of Innocent, would not have him considered as a heretic[15695]. The Apostolicals also infested the Church about this time; among other errors, they condemned marriage, and even bound themselves by a vow of chastity, though the licentiousness of their lives showed what little regard they had for that angelic virtue[15696]. We have already spoken of the Bogomiles (Chap, iv, N. 81), treating of the heresy of the Messalians. We have now to investigate the history of the Waldenses.

17. Peter Waldo, the founder of the sect of the Waldenses, began to preach his heresy in the year 1160, on the occasion of the sudden death of a great personage in Lyons, who dropped dead in the presence of a great many people. He was so terrified at the occurrence, that he immediately distributed a large sum of money to the poor, and a great many people joined him out of devotion, and became his followers. He was a man of some learning, and began to explain the New Testament to his followers, and taught several errors. The Clergy immediately took up arms against him, but he set them at defiance, telling his followers that they (the Clergy)

were both ignorant and corrupt, and that they were envious of his exemplary life and learning. Such is the origin of the Waldenses, according to Fleury, Alexander, and Gotti[15697]; but Graveson gives another account[15698] he says, that Peter Waldo, having either heard or read the 19th chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew, in which our Lord tells us that we should sell our goods, and give the price to the poor, persuaded himself that he was called on to renew the Apostolic life, and accordingly sold his property, gave all to the poor, and led a life of poverty himself. A person of the name of John, terrified at the sudden death already spoken of, sold his patrimony, likewise, and joined him; many others followed their example, and in a little time the sect became so numerous, that in the diocese of Poietiers alone, they had forty—one schools.

18. From these seats of iniquity sprung several sects, enumerated by Rainer[15699], who for seventeen years was a Waldensian, but his eyes at length being opened to their impiety, he forsook them, joined the Catholic Church, and became a distinguished member of the Order of St. Dominick. The different sects that sprouted out from the parent stock, took various names; they were called Waldenses, from Peter Waldo; Lionists, or Poor Men of Lyons, from the city whence they originated; Picards, Lombards, Bohemians, Bulgarians, from the provinces they overran; Arnaldists, Josepeists, and Lollards, from Doctors of the sect; Cathari, from the purity of heart they boasted of; Bons Hommes, or good men, from their apparent sanctity and regularity of life; Sabbatists, or Insabatists, either from the peculiar shoe or sandal, with a cross cut on the top, which they wore, or because they rejected the celebration of the Sabbath and other festivals[15700].

The Waldenses fell into very many errors, which Ranier, quoted by Noel Alexander, enumerates[15701]. We will only mention the principal ones here. The Roman Church, they said, failed in the time of Pope St. Sylvester, when it entered into the possession of temporal property, and that they alone were the true Church, as they followed the Apostles and the Gospel in holding no possessions. The Pope, they said, was the head of all errors, the Bishops, Scribes, and the Religious, Pharisees. Tithes ought not to be paid, as they were not paid in the primitive Church. They only believed in two Sacraments, Baptism and the Eucharist, and Baptism, they said, was of no use to infants. A priest falling into mortal sin, according to them, lost the power of absolving and consecrating, and, on the contrary, a good layman has the power of giving absolution.

They rejected Indulgences, and the dispensations of the Church, the fasts commanded to be observed, and all the ceremonies of the Roman Church. They abhorred Holy Images and the sign of the Cross even; denied the distinction between mortal and venial sin, and said it was unlawful to take an oath, even in judgment. These heretics were first condemned by Alexander III., in 1163; in the Synod of Tours, in 1175 or 1176; in the Synod of Lombes, in 1178; in one held in Toulouse by Peter, Cardinal and Legate of the Pope; in the Third General Council of Lateran, in 1179; in the Fourth General Council of Lateran, in 1215; and finally, in the Constitution of Gregory IX., " Cap. excommunicamus, 15 de Herat," in which all the heretics of all the above-named sects are anathematized[15702].

ARTICLE III. HERESIES OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

19.—The Albigenses and their Errors. 20.—The Corruption of their Morals. 21.—Conferences held with them, and their Obstinacy. 22.—They create an Anti-Pope. 23.—Glorious Labours of St. Dominick, and his stupendous Miracles. 24.—Crusade under the command of Count Montfort, in which he is victorious. 25.—Glorious death of the Count, and Destruction of the Albigenses. 26.—Sentence of the Fourth Council of Lateran, in which the Dogma is defined in opposition to their Tenets. 27—Amalric and his Heresy; the Errors added by his Disciples; they are condemned. 28.—William de St. Amour and his Errors. 29.—The Flagellants and their Errors. 30.—The Fratricelli and their Errors, condemned by John XXII.

19. The heretics called the Albigenses, sprung from the Waldenses, made their appearance in this century, and were so called, because they first spread themselves in the territory of the city of Albi, or that part of Narbonic Gaul called Albigensum, and subsequently in the province of Toulouse[15703]. Graveson[15704] says that the impurities of all other heresies were joined in this one sect. This sect was in existence previous to the reign of Innocent III., but it was so strong in the year 1198, that Cesarius[15705], a contemporaneous author, says, that almost all the pure grain of the Faith of the people was turned into tears.

20. Spondanus gives the following list of their errors:[15706]First—They received the New Testament alone, rejecting the Old, with the exception of the passages quoted by our Lord, and his Apostles; they, likewise, renounced all Catholic Doctors, and when asked for an account of their Faith, they said they were not bound to answer. Second—They taught that

there were two Gods, a good and a bad one; the good one, the author of the New Testament, and the Creator of all invisible things; the bad one, the author of the Old Testament, the creator of man, and of all visible things. Third—They said that Baptism was useless to infants. Fourth—That an unworthy Priest had not power to consecrate the Eucharist. Fifth—That matrimony was nothing more than concubinage, and that no one could be saved in that state, and still their morals were most corrupt. Sixth—That no one should obey either Bishops or Priests, unless they have the qualities required by the Apostles; and that they have no power in the Sacraments or in Divine things, and that no one, therefore, should pay tithes to them. Seventh—that churches should not be dedicated to God or the Saints and that the faithful are not bound to pray or to give alms, either to the poor or to churches, and that it was quite sufficient to confess to any one at all, and that Penance was of no use. Noel Alexander[15707], besides these errors, enumerates several others, as that the Fathers of the Old Testament were all damned; that St. John the Baptist was a demon; that the Roman Church is the harlot of the Apocalypse; that the resurrection of the body is all a lie; that the Sacraments are all false, and that the Eucharist, Confirmation, Orders, and the Mass are nothing more than superstitions; that the souls of men are no other than the rebellious spirits who fell from heaven; that there was no purgatory, and they blasphemously applied to the Virgin Mother of God, a term we dread to make use of.

They led most horribly immoral lives. Lucas Tudensis[15708] horrifies us by recounting what he heard from some of them who forsook the sect, and joined the Catholic Church. Murder, cheating, theft, and usury were quite common among them, but their impurities were, above all, of the most horrible description; the nearest relatives had no regard to the decencies of life, or the very laws of nature itself.

The old people, he says, are blasphemous and cruel; the young ripe for every wickedness; the children, from the universal depravity, belonging to no father in particular, are depraved from their childhood; and the infants imbibe the most pernicious errors with their mother’s milk; the women, without shame or modesty, go about among their neighbours, making others as bad as themselves. Among the other proofs of their impiety, Cesarius[15709] tells us, that when they were besieged by the Catholics in

Bessiers, they indecently defiled a book of the Gospels, and threw it from the walls into the ranks of the besiegers, amidst a shower of arrows, crying out: “Behold your law, wretches.”

21. The Albigenses laboured to gain proselytes not alone by persuasion, but by force of arms likewise; and the Catholics, therefore, found it necessary to have recourse not alone to preaching, but were obliged to summon the power of the Prince to their aid. Peter of Castlenau and Rodulph, Cistercian monks, together with their Abbot, Arnold, appointed Apostolic Legates by Innocent III., were the first to oppose them. The Holy Bishop of Osma joined them, and without attendance or money, like the Apostles, they proceeded on foot to preach to the heretics, and their first conference was held in Montreal, in the Diocese of Carcasonne. They disputed for fifteen days in presence of judges chosen for the purpose, and the heretics were convinced, but the judges being favourable to the heretical party, suppressed the sentence, and would not even give up the acts of the disputation. The preachers remained in the city to instruct the people, and supported themselves by begging from door to door. The Abbot of Citeax and twelve of his Monks, together with, the Bishop of Osma, spread themselves through the country, preaching and disputing with the heretics. The Bishop of Osma and some other Prelates held another conference with the Albigenses in Pamiers, and the heretics were so confounded that the judge of the conference, a nobleman of the city, abjured his errors, and more followed his example every day[15710].

The Cistercian, Peter of Castlenau, the Pope’s Legate, having found it necessary to excommunicate Raymond, Count of Toulouse, the chief favourer of the heretics, was summoned before him to clear himself from charges laid against him; he went accordingly, but nothing was decided on in the interview; the Count even uttered threats against him when he was about to take his departure, and sent two of his servants to accompany him. One of them, while the Legate was passing the Rhone, ran him through with a lance. Peter at once felt that the wound was mortal. “God pardon me,” said he, “ as I pardon you,” and died shortly after. Pope Innocent, when informed of his death, declared him a martyr, and excommunicated his murderers and all their accomplices, and gave orders to the Bishops of the

Provinces of Arles and Narbonne and the neighbouring territories again to excommunicate the Count of Toulouse[15711].

22. A few years after the Albigenses elected a person of the name of Bartholomew, an anti-Pope. He resided on the borders of Dalmatia and Bulgaria, and was the chief adviser of the heretics. He appointed another person of the same name as his Vicar, and he took up his residence in the territory of Toulouse, and sent round to all the neighbouring cities his Principal’s letters, headed, “Bartholomew, Servant of the Servants of the Holy Faith, to N. N., health.” This Vicar pretended to consecrate Bishops, and regulate the Church[15712], but the Almighty soon put a stop to all by the death of the anti-Pope[15713].

23. It is now time to speak of the glorious labours of St. Dominick, who may justly be called the exterminator of the Albigenses. He was engaged nine years, according to Graveson, or seven, according to Van Ranst, in battling with them, and, finally, he instituted the Order of Preachers, to bring back the strayed sheep to the fold of the Catholic Church. He attended the Bishop of Osma at the conference he held with the heretics, and was a most strenuous opponent of their errors, both by preaching and writing, and God confirmed his exertions by miracles. Peter de Valle Sernai, a Cistercian Monk[15714], relates the following miracle, and says he had it from the man himself in whose possession the paper was. After the conference of Montreal, St. Dominick wrote down the texts he cited on a sheet of paper, and gave it to one of the heretics to peruse them at his leisure. The next evening several Albigenses were seated round a fire considering it, when one of them proposed to throw the paper into the fire, and if it burn, said he, that is a proof that our faith is the true one, but should that not be the case, we must believe the Catholic Faith.

All agreed; the paper was cast into the flames, and, after lying there some time, it leaped out unscorched. All were surprised; but one of the most incredulous among them suggested that the experiment should be tried again; it was done so, and the result was the same. Try it a third, said the heretic; a third time it was tried, and with the same effect. But for all that they agreed to keep the whole affair a secret, and remained as obstinate as before. There was a soldier present, however, somewhat inclined to the Catholic Faith, and he told it to a great many persons[15715]. God wrought another more public miracle through his servant, in Fois, near Carcasonne; he challenged the heretics, in one of his sermons, to a formal disputation, and each party agreed to bring, in writing, to the Conference their profession of Faith, and the principal arguments in support of it. The Saint laid down his document the heretics did the same; they then proposed that each paper should be thrown into the fire, and leave the judgment to God. St. Dominick, inspired by the Almighty, immediately cast his paper into the flames; the heretics also threw in theirs, which was immediately burned to ashes, while the Saint's remained intact on the top of the burning coals. Three times it was cast into the fire, and always came forth untouched by the flames[15716].

24. Neither miracles nor missions had any effect on the Albigenses, however, who every day became more powerful, under the protection of several princes, and especially of Raymond, Count of Toulouse. Pope Innocent III., therefore, considered it necessary at last to call on the Catholic princes to free the Church from these enemies, and, therefore, wrote to Philip, King of France, and to the other princes of that kingdom, and likewise to the Bishops and faithful, calling on them to take up arms for the extermination of these heretics, and granting them the same indulgences as were granted to those who put on the cross for the liberation of the Holy Land. This bull was published in 1210, and immediately a great number of soldiers not only from France but elsewhere, enrolled themselves in this Crusade under the command of Count Simon of Montfort.

The Albigenses numbered a hundred thousand, the Crusaders only twelve hundred, and Count Montfort was advised not to risk an engagement; but he said : " We are numerous enough, for we fight for God, and God for us." He divided his small army into three bodies, and made a feint, as if about to march on Toulouse, but turned on the vanguard of the enemy, and attacked them with such fury, that at first they wavered, and finally took to flight. Montfort, encouraged by this success, gave orders to his three small divisions to unite, and without loss of time, attacked the main body of the enemy, among whom was the King of Arragon. The Count broke through the ranks, and singled out the King; he charged him with his lance, but Montfort, parrying the blow with one hand, seized the King with the other, and unhorsed him, and his Esquire immediately dispatched the fallen

Monarch. The enemy was panic-struck with the King's death, and fled in every direction, and the Crusaders cut them down almost without opposition. It is said that between the Albigenses and the Arragonese twenty thousand fell that day, with only a loss of six or seven persons to the Catholics[15717]. The letters written by the French Bishops to all the Churches of Christendom, on the occasion of this glorious and stupendous victory, are still extant[15718].

25. Count Montfort, after so many glorious actions in defence of the Faith, died gloriously, like Judas Maccabeus, at the second siege of Toulouse. He was told that the enemy were concealed in the trenches; but he armed, and went to the church to hear Mass, and recommend himself and his cause to God. While he was hearing Mass, he was informed that the people of Toulouse were attacking the troops who had charge of the besieging engines; but he refused to move until, as he said, he had heard Mass, and seen his God on the altar.

Another messenger came in haste to tell him that his troops were giving way, but he dismissed him, saying : " I want to see my Redeemer." After adoring the Sacred Host, he raised up his hands to heaven, and exclaimed : "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, Lord, according to thy word, in peace, because mine eyes have seen thy salvation. Now," said he, "let us proceed, and die, if necessary, for him who died for us." His soldiers rallied at once when he appeared among them; but he approached too near to the engines, and a stone from one of them struck him in the head, and he had barely time to recommend himself to God and the Blessed Virgin, when his spirit fled. This was on the 25th of June, 1218[15719]. After the death of this great champion of the Lord, and Martyr of Christ, as Peter de Valle Sernai[15720] calls him, Louis VIII., King of France, prosecuted the war, and in the year 1236 took Avignon from the enemy, after a siege of three months, and several other strong places besides. St. Louis IX., by the advice of Pope Gregory IX., prosecuted the war, and having taken the city of Toulouse, the young Count Raymond for his wicked father met with a sudden death signed a treaty of peace, on the conditions prescribed to him by the King and the Pope's Legate, the principal one of which was, that he would use all his power to extirpate the Albigensian heresy in his territory. The heretics, thus deprived of all assistance, dwindled away by degrees, and totally disappeared, as Graveson tells us[15721], though Noel Alexander and Cardinal Gotti say that they were not totally put down[15722].

26. These heretics having been previously condemned in particular Synods, at Montilly, Avignon, Montpelier, Paris, and Narbonne, were finally condemned in the Fourth General Council of Lateran, celebrated and presided over by Pope Innocent III., in 1215. In the first Chapter of this Council it was decreed, in opposition to these heretics, "that there was one universal principle, the Creator of all, visible and invisible, corporeal and spiritual things, who by his Almighty power in the beginning of time, created from nothing both spiritual and corporeal, angelic and earthly beings, and man likewise, as consisting of body and spirit.

The devil, and all other evil spirits, were created by God good, according to their nature, but became bad of themselves, and man sinned at the suggestion of the devil. The Holy Trinity, undivided, as to its common essence divided, as to its personal proprieties gave saving doctrine to mankind, by Moses and the Holy Prophets, and other servants, according to the properly-ordained disposition of time; and, at length, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, by the whole Trinity in common, incarnate of Mary, ever Virgin, conceived by the co operation of the Holy Ghost, and made true man, composed of a rational soul and a real body, one person in two Natures, more clearly pointed out to us the way of life; who, according to his Divinity, being impassable and immortal, was made passible and mortal, according to his humanity, and suffered and died on the wood of the Cross for the salvation of mankind, descended into hell, arose from the dead, and ascended into heaven; but he descended in the spirit, arose in the flesh, and in both ascended into heaven, and shall come in the end of the world to judge both the living and the dead, and shall render to each both the reprobate and the elect according to their works. For all shall arise in the same bodies they now have, to receive, according to their deserts, either rewards or punishment the wicked, eternal punishment with the devil the good, eternal glory with Christ. There is one universal Church of all the faithful, out of which there is no salvation, in which Jesus Christ is, at the same time, priest and sacrifice, and his body and blood is truly contained under the appearance of bread and wine, the bread being, by the Divine power, transubstantiated into the body, and the wine into the blood, that we might receive from him what he received from us to perfect the mystery of Unity; and no one but a Priest rightly ordained according to the keys of the Church, which Jesus Christ himself granted to the Apostles, and to their successors, can consecrate this Holy Sacrament. The Sacrament of Baptism, consecrated to the invocation of the undivided Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, properly administered in water, both to infants and adults, by any person, according to the form of the Church, is available to salvation. And should any one, after receiving Baptism, fall into sin, he can he always healed by true repentance. Not virgins alone, and those who observe continence, but married persons, likewise, pleasing God by true faith and good works, shall deservedly obtain eternal happiness[15723].

27. In this century also lived Amalric, or Amaury, a priest, a native of Bene, near Chartres. lie studied in Paris, and was a great logician, and taught this science with great applause. He then applied himself to the study of Sacred Scripture and Theology, and as he was fond of new-fangled opinions, he had the rashness to teach that every Christian ought to believe himself a natural member of Christ, and that no one could be saved unless he so believed. The University of Paris condemned this opinion in 1204, but Amalric refused to submit to the sentence, and appealed to Innocent III., and went to Rome, to prosecute his appeal in person; the Pope, however, confirmed the sentence, and obliged him to make a public abjuration in the presence of the University. He obeyed the Pope’s orders in 1207, but his heart belied what his lips uttered, and so great was his chagrin that he soon after died. His disciples added new errors to those taught by their master. The power of the Fathers, they said, lasted only during the period of the Mosaic Law; the New Law lasted from that till their own times that is, twelve hundred years; and then the Law of the Holy Ghost began, when all Sacraments and all other assistances to salvation ceased, and every one could be saved by the Grace of the Holy Ghost alone, without any act of his own. The virtue of Charity, they said, caused that that which before was sinful, if done through Charity was sinful no longer, and thus, under the pretext of Charity, they committed the most impure actions. They asserted that the body of Christ was only in the Consecrated Host as in any other bread, and that God spoke as much through Ovid as through St. Augustine, and they denied the Resurrection, heaven, and hell, for those who thought

about God as they did had heaven in themselves, and those who fell into mortal sin had hell in their own bosoms[15724].

Raul of Nemours, and another priest, laboured assiduously to discover these heretics in several dioceses, not only many of the laity, but also some priests, being infected with it, and, when they discovered them, had them conveyed to Paris, and put in the Bishop's prison. A Council of Bishops and Doctors was held in 1209, in which some of those unfortunate people retracted; but others obstinately refused, and were degraded, and handed over to the Royal power, and were, by orders of the King, burned outside the gates of Paris; and the bones of Amalric were exhumed at the same time, and burned, and thrown on the dunghill. It was also ordered, that Aristotle's Metaphysics, which was the fountain of this heresy, should be burned likewise, and all persons were prohibited, under pain of excommunication, from reading or keeping the work in their possession. In this Council were, likewise, condemned the books of David of Nantz, who asserted that God was the Materia Prima. St. Thomas wrote against him in 1215[15725]. The heresy of Amalric was condemned in express terms, in the Fourth General Council of Lateran, cap. ii[15726].

28. William de St. Amour, a Doctor of Sorbonne, and Canon of Beauvais, lived in this century also. He wrote a work, entitled, " De periculis adversus Mendicantes Ordines," in opposition to the Friars, who made a vow of poverty, in which he asserted that it was not a work of perfection to follow Christ in poverty and mendicancy, and that, in order to be perfect, it was necessary, after giving up all we had, either to live by manual labour, or to enter into a monastery, which would afford all the necessaries of life; that the Mendicant Friars, by begging, acted contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and that it was not lawful for them to teach the laity, to preach, to be enrolled as Masters in Colleges, or to hear the confessions of the laity. This work was condemned by Pope Alexander IV., in the year 1252, and publicly burned, and the following year the author was banished from all the dominions of France, and a few years after died a miserable exile[15727].

29. In the year 1274, the sect of the Flagellants sprung up, and first made its appearance in Perugia, and thence spread on, even to Rome itself. A torrent of vice had overspread the Italian Peninsula about that time, and a violent spirit of reaction commenced. All were seized on by a new sort of

devotion, and old and young, rich and poor, nobles and plebians not alone men, but even ladies terrified with the dread of Divine judgments, went about the streets in procession, nearly naked, or, at least, with bared shoulders, beating themselves with scourges, and imploring mercy. Even the darkness of the night, and the rigors of winter, could not subdue their enthusiasm. Numerous bodies of penitents sometimes even as many as twelve thousand marched in procession, preceded by priests, and crosses, and banners; and the towns, and villages, and plains resounded with their cries for mercy. A great change for the better in the morals of the people was the first fruit of this wonderful movement enemies were reconciled, thieves restored their ill-gotten wealth, and all were reconciled to God, by confession. They used to scourge themselves twice a day, it is said, for thirty-three days, in honour of the thirty-three years of our Lord's life, and sung, at the same time, some canticles in honour of his Sacred Passion. From Italy this practice spread into Germany, Poland, and other kingdoms; but, as neither the Pope nor the Bishops approved of this public form of penance, it speedily degenerated into superstition. They said that no one could be saved unless by adopting this practice for a month; they used to hear the confessions of each other, and give absolution, though only lay people; and they had the madness to pretend that even the damned were served by their penance. Pope Clement VI. formally condemned this heresy, and wrote to the Bishops of Germany, Poland, Switzerland, England, and France, on the subject, which proves how widely it was spread; he also wrote to all secular princes, calling on them to scatter these hypocrites, to disperse their conventicles, and, above all, to imprison their leaders[15728].

30. Another sect the offspring of an ill-judged piety, also sprung up in this century, that of the Fratricelli. This sect originated with Peter of Macerata and Peter of Fossombrone, two apostate Franciscan friars, who, playing on the simplicity of Pope Celestine V., got permission from him to lead an eremitical life, and observe the rule, of St. Francis to the very letter. Boniface VIIL, Celestine's successor, soon saw that this institute was a source of error, which was spreading every day more widely, and he, accordingly, in express terms, condemned it; but notwithstanding this sentence, the Fratricelli every day increased in numbers, and openly preached their tenets. John XXII., therefore, found it necessary to publish a

Bull against them in 1318, and, as Noel Alexander relates, condemned the following errors adopted by them: First—They taught that there were two Churches one carnal, abounding in delights, and stained with crime, governed by the Roman Pontiff, and his Prelates the other spiritual, adorned with virtue, clothed in poverty, to which they alone, and those who held with them, belonged, and of which they, on account of their spiritual lives, were justly the head. Second—That the venerable Churches, Priests, and other Ministers were so deprived both of the power of order and jurisdiction, that they could neither administer the Sacraments, nor instruct the people, as all who did not join their apostacy were deprived of all spiritual power, for (as they imagined), as with them alone holiness of life was found, so with them alone authority resided. Third—That in them alone was the Gospel of Christ fulfilled, which hitherto was either thrown aside or totally lost among men[15729].

ARTICLE IV. HERESIES OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

> 31.—The Beghards and Beguines; their errors condemned by Clement V. 32.—Marsilius of Padua, and John Jandunus; their writings condemned as heretical by John XXII. 33.—John Wickliffe, and the beginning of his heresy. 34.—Is assisted by John Ball; death of the Archbishop of Canterbury. 35.—The Council of Constance condemns forty-five Articles of Wickliffe. 36, 37.—Miraculous confirmation of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. 38.—Death of Wickliffe.

31. The Beghards and Beguines sprung up in Germany in this century. Van Ranst[15730] draws a distinction between the good Beghards, who, in Flanders, especially, professed the third rule of the Order of St. Francis, and the heretics; and also between the Beguines, ladies, who led a religious life, though not bound by vows, and the heretical Beguines, whose conduct was not remarkable for purity. The religious Beguines deduce their origin either from St. Begghe, Duchess of Brabant, and daughter of Pepin, Mayor of the Palace to the King of Austrasia, or from Lambert le Begue, a pious priest, who lived in 1170. The origin of the name adopted by the heretics is uncertain; but the followers of the Fratricelli were called by that name in Germany and the Low Countries, as were also the followers of Gerard Segarelli, and Dulcinus, who both were burned alive for their errors. The doctrines professed by the Beghards were as absurd as it was impious. Man, said they, might arrive at such a degree of perfection, even in this life, as to

become totally impeccable, and even incapable of advancing any more in grace, and when he arrives at this state, he should no longer fast or pray, for sensuality is then so entirely subjected to reason and the spirit, that anything the body desires may be freely granted to it. Those who have arrived at that pitch of perfection are no longer subject to human obedience, or bound by the precepts of the Church. Man can, even in the present life, being thus perfect, obtain final beatitude, as well as he shall obtain it hereafter in the realms of the blessed, for every intellectual nature is in itself blessed, and the soul does not require the light of glory to see God.

It is only imperfect men who practise acts of virtue, for the perfect soul throws off virtue altogether. “ Mulieris osculum (cum ad hoc natura non inclinet) est mortale peccatum, actus autem carnalis (cum ad hoc natura inclinet), peccatum non est maxime cum tentatur exercens.” When the body of Christ is elevated, a perfect man should not show any reverence, for it would be an imperfection to descend from the summit of his contemplation, to think on the Eucharist or on the humanity of Christ. It is remarkable, that many of their opinions were adopted by the Quietists in a subsequent century. Clement V. condemned these heretics in a General Council, held in Vienne, in Dauphiny, in 1311.

32. Marsilius Menandrinus, of Padua, and John Jandunus, of Peragia, also lived in this century. Marsilius published a book, called “Defensorum Pacis,” and Jandunus contributed some additions to it. The errors scattered through the work were condemned by Pope John XXII., as heretical, and refuted by several Theologians, especially by Noel Alexander, who gives the following account of them[15731]. When Christ paid tribute to Caesar, he did it as matter of obligation, and not of piety, and when he ascended into heaven, he appointed no visible head in the Church, left no Vicar, nor had St. Peter more authority than the rest of the Apostles. It is the Emperor’s right to appoint, remove, and punish Prelates, and when the Papal See is vacant, he has the right of governing the Church. All Priests, not even excepting Bishops and the Pope, have, by the institution of Christ, equal authority and jurisdiction, unless the Emperor wishes that one should have more power than another. The whole united Church has not the power to punish any man, and no Bishop or meeting of Bishops can inflict a sentence of excommunication or interdict, unless by authority of the Prince. Bishops

collectively or individually can no more excommunicate the Pope than he can them. The dispensation for marriages, prohibited by human law alone, and not by Divine law, belongs, of right, to the Prince. To the Prince, by right, it belongs to give a definitive judgment, in regard to persons about to be ordained, and Bishops should not ordain any one without his authority. We will now speak of Wickliffe, the leader of all the so-called Reformers.

33. John Wickliffe began to preach his heresy in 1374, some say because he was disappointed in the Bishopric of Winchester.[15732] He was learned in Scholastic Theology, which he taught at Oxford, and was a favourite preacher, always followed by the people. He led an austere life, was meanly clothed, and even went barefooted. Edward III. died, and was succeeded by his grandson, Richard, the son of Edward the Black Prince, who was then only eleven years of age; and his uncle, the Duke of Lancaster, was a man of very lax sentiments in regard to religion, and extended his protection to Wickliffe, who openly preached his heresy[15733]. Gregory IX., who then governed the Church, complained to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, that they were not active enough in putting a stop to this plague, and he wrote on the same subject to the King and the University of Oxford[15734]. A Synod of Bishops and Doctors was accordingly summoned, and Wickliffe was cited to appear and account for himself; he obeyed the summons, and excused himself by explaining away, as well as he could, the obnoxious sense of his doctrine, and putting another meaning on it. He was then only admonished to be more prudent for the future was absolved and commanded to be silent from thence forward[15735].

34. Wickliffe was assisted by a wicked priest of the name of John Ball, who escaped from the prison where his Bishop had confined him for his crimes, and joined the Reformers, who gladly received him. The subject of his discourses to the people was that all ranks should be levelled, and the nobility and magistracy done away with, and he was joined by over an hundred thousand levellers. They laid their demands before the Sovereign, but could not obtain what they desired; they considered that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Simon Sudbury, a good man in the main, but too weak a disposition to cope with the troubles of the times, influenced the Sovereign’s mind against them; they resolved on his death, therefore, and stormed the Tower, where he had taken refuge, and found him praying, and

recommending his soul to God. He addressed them mildly, and tried to calm their rage, but his executioner, John Sterling, stepped forward, and told him to prepare for death. The good Bishop then confessed that he deserved that punishment for not being more vigorous in the discharge of his duties, perhaps, and stretched forth his neck to receive the fatal stroke; but whether it was that the sword was blunt, or the executioner awkward, his head was not cut off till he received eight blows[15736]. Berninus, quoting Walsingham[15737], says that the executioner was immediately possessed by the devil, and that he ran through the streets with the sword hanging round his neck, boasting that he had killed the Archbishop, and entered the city of London to receive his reward; this was, however, different from what he expected, for he was condemned to death, and Ball was hanged and quartered, at the same time, together with his accomplices.

William of Courtenay being appointed Archbishop, in place of Sudbury, held a Synod in London, and condemned twenty-four propositions of Wickliffe ten of them, especially as heretical. These were afterwards condemned by the University of Paris, and by John XXIII., in a Council held at Rome, and, finally, in the eighth Session of the Council of Constance, in 1415, in which forty-five articles of Wickliffe were condemned the greater part as heretical, the rest as erroneous, rash, &c. and among these the twenty-four condemned previously were included. The following are the errors condemned by the Council, as Noel Alexander quotes them[15738] :The material substance of bread and wine remains in the Sacrament of the Altar, and the accidence of the bread is not without the substance in the Eucharist. Christ is not identically and really there in his proper presence.

If a Bishop or Priest be in mortal sin he cannot consecrate, nor ordain, nor baptize. There is nothing in Scripture to prove that Christ instituted the Mass. God ought to obey the devil. If one be truly contrite, all external confession is superfluous and useless. If the Pope is foreknown and wicked, and, consequently, a member of the devil, he has no power over the faithful. After Urban VI. no other Pope should be elected, but, like the Greeks, we should live under our own laws. It is opposed to the Holy Scriptures that Ecclesiastics should have possessions. No Prelate should excommunicate any one, unless he knows him to be already excommunicated by God, and he who excommunicates otherwise, is, by the act, a heretic, or excommunicated himself. A Prelate excommunicating a Clergyman who appeals to the King, or to the Supreme Council of the Realm, is, by the fact, a traitor to the King and the Realm. Those who cease to preach, or to listen to the Word of God, on account of the excommunication of man, are excommunicated, and in the judgment of God are traitors to Christ. Every Deacon and Priest has the power of preaching the Word of God, without any authority from the Holy See or a Catholic Bishop. No one is a Civil Lord no one a Prelate no one a Bishop, while he is in mortal sin. Temporal Lords can, whenever they please, take temporal goods from the Church. Possessionatis habitualiter delinquentibus id est ex habitu non solum actu delinquentibus. The people can, whenever they please, punish their delinquent Lords. Tithes are merely eleemosynary offerings, and the parishioners have the right, whenever they please, of keeping them from their Prelates on account of their sins. Special prayers applied by Prelates or Religious to any one individual, are of no more value to him than general ones ceteris paribus. Any one giving charity to Friars is excommunicated by the fact. Anyone entering a religious Order, either mendicant or endowed, becomes weaker, and less able to observe the commandments of God.

35. The Saints who founded religious orders sinned by doing so. Religious living in Orders do not belong to the Christian Religion. Friars are obliged to live by the labour of their hands, and not by receiving the oblations of the Faithful. Those who oblige themselves to pray for others, who provide them with the things of this life, are guilty of Simony. The prayer of the foreknown availeth nothing. All things happen through absolute necessity. The confirmation of youth, the ordination of Priests, and the consecration of places, are reserved to the Pope and Bishops, on account of the temporal gain and honour they bring. Universities and the studies, colleges, degrees and master ships in them, are only vain things introduced from paganism, and are of no more utility to the Church than the devil himself. The excommunication of the Pope, or of any other Prelate, is not to be feared, because it is the censure of the devil. Those who found Convents sin, and those who enter them are servants of the devil. It is against the law of Christ to endow a Clergyman. Pope Sylvester and the Emperor Constantino erred by endowing the Church. All members of the mendicant orders are heretics, and those who give them alms are excommunicated.

Those who become members of any religious order are by the fact incapable of observing the Divine commandments, and, consequently, can never enter the kingdom of heaven till they apostatize from their institute. The Pope, and all his Clergy having possessions, are heretics, by holding these possessions; and temporal Lords, and the rest of the laity who consent to their holding them, are heretics also. The Roman Church is the synagogue of Satan, and the Pope is not the proximate and immediate Vicar of Christ. The Decretal Epistles (canon law) are apochryphal, and seduce from the Faith of Christ, and the Clergymen are fools who study them. The Emperor and secular Lords have been seduced by the devil to endow the Church with temporalities. It is the devil who introduced the election of the Pope by the Cardinals. It is not necessary for salvation to believe that the Roman Church is supreme among all other Churches. It is folly to believe in the Indulgences of the Pope and Bishops. The oaths which are taken to corroborate contracts and civil affairs are unlawful. Augustine, Benedict, and Bernard, are damned, unless they repented of having possessions, and of instituting and entering into religious Orders; and so from the Pope to the lowest Religious they are all heretics. All religious orders altogether are invented by the devil.

36. Enumerating these errors, I cannot help remarking that Wickliffe, the Patriarch of all the modern heretics, attacks especially the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, as we see in his three first propositions, and in this he was followed by all the modern heresiarchs; but God, at the same time, confirmed the faith of his people by extraordinary miracles; and I will just mention three of them (among a great number), on the authority of authors of the first character. Nicholas Serrarius[15739] relates, that when the Wickliffites first began to attack this dogma of the Faith in 1408, the following miracle took place : A Priest, called Henry Otho, was one day saying Mass in Durn, in the Diocese of Wurtzburg, and, through his want of caution, upset the chalice, and the Sacred Blood was spilled all over the corporal. It appeared at once of the real colour of blood, and in the middle of the corporal was an image of the Crucifix, surrounded with several other images of the head of the Redeemer, crowned with thorns. The Priest was terrified, and although some other persons had already noticed the accident, he took up the corporal, and laid it under the altar-stone that it might decay

in some time and nothing more would be known about it. God, however, did not wish that such a miracle should be concealed. The Priest was at the point of death, and remorse of conscience troubled him even more than the agony he was suffering; he could bear it no longer, but confessed all, told where the corporal was concealed, and then died immediately. All was found to be as he stated, and God wrought other miracles to confirm its truth. The Magistrates investigated the whole affair with the greatest caution and deliberation, and sent an authentic account of it to the Pope, and he published a brief, dated the 31st of March, 1445, inviting all the devout faithful to ornament and enlarge the church honoured by so stupendous a miracle.

37. Thomas Treter[15740]relates the next miracle. Some Jews bribed an unfortunate Christian servant woman to procure a consecrated Host for them, and when they got it, they brought it into a cavern, and cut it in little bits on a table with their knives, in contempt of the Christian Faith. The fragments immediately began to bleed, but instead of being converted by the miracle, they buried them in a field near the city of Posen, and went home. A Christian child soon after, who was taking care of some oxen, came into the field, and saw the consecrated particles elevated in the air, and shining as if made of fire, and the oxen all on their knees, as if in adoration. He ran off at once, and told his father, and when he found the fact to be as the child stated, he gave notice to the Magistrates and the people.

Crowds immediately followed him to the place, and all saw the particles of the Sacred Host shining in the air, and the oxen kneeling in adoration. The Bishop and Clergy came at once in procession, and collecting the holy particles into the pixis, they brought them to the church. A little chapel was built on the spot soon after, which Wenceslaus, King of Poland, converted into a sumptuous church, where Stephen Damaleniski, Archbishop of Gnesen, attests that he saw the sacred fragments stained with blood.

Tilman Bredembach[15741] relates that there lived in England, in 1384, a nobleman of the name of Oswald Mulfer; he went to his village church one Easter, to receive his Paschal Communion, and insisted on being communicated with a large Host. The Priest, fearful of his power, if he denied him, placed the large Host on his tongue, but in the very act the ground opened under his feet, as if to swallow him, and he had already sunk down to his knees, when he seized the altar, but that yielded like wax to his hand. He now, seeing the vengeance of God overtaking him, repented of his pride, and prayed for mercy, and as he could not swallow the Host for God would not permit him the Priest removed it, and replaced it in the Tabernacle; but it was all of the colour of blood. Tilman went on purpose to visit the place where this miracle happened : he saw, he says, the Host tinged with blood, the altar with the marks of Oswald's hands, and the ground into which he was sinking still hollow, and covered with iron bars. Oswald himself, he says, now perfectly cured of his pride, fell sick soon after, and died with sentiments of true penance.

38. We now come back to Wickliffe, and see his unhappy end. On the feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury, in 1385, he prepared to preach a sermon, not in honour of, but reprobating the Saint; but God would no longer permit him to ravage his Church, for a few days after, on St. Sylvester's Day, he was struck down by a dreadful palsy, which convulsed him all over, and his mouth, with which he had preached so many blasphemies, was most frightfully distorted, so that he could not speak even a word, and as Walsingham[15742] informs us, he died in despair. King Richard prohibited all his works, and ordered them to be burned. He wrote a great deal, but his principal work was the Trialogue between Alithia, Pseudes, and Phronesis Folly, Falsehood, and Wisdom. Several authors wrote in refutation of this work, but its own contradictions are a sufficient refutation, for the general characteristics of heretical writers are to contradict themselves[15743]. The University of Oxford condemned two hundred and sixty propositions extracted from Wickliffe's works; but the Council of Constance included all his errors in the one hundred and forty-five articles of his it condemned.

ARTICLE V. HERESIES OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY. THE HERESY OF JOHN HUSS, AND JEROME OF PRAGUE

39.—John Huss's character, and the commencement of his Heresy. 40.—His Errors. 41.—He is condemned in a Synod. 42.—Council of Constance he is obliged to appear at it. 43.—He comes to Constance, and endeavours to escape. 44, 45.—He presents himself before the Council, and continues obstinate. 46.—He is condemned to death, and burned. 47.—Jerome of Prague is also burned alive for his obstinacy. 48.—Wars of the Hussites they are conquered and converted.

39. In the reign of Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia, and son of the Emperor Charles IV., about the beginning of the fifteenth century, the pestilence of the heresy of Wickliffe first made its appearance in Bohemia. The University of Prague was then in a most flourishing condition; but the Professors who had the management of it kept up a very lax system of discipline. They were of four nations, each of which enjoyed equal privileges in that seat of learning Bohemians, Saxons, Bavarians, and Poles; but mutual jealousies blinded them to the danger the Catholic faith was exposed to, for want of due vigilance. Such was the state of things when John Huss, one of the Bohemian professors, obtained a privilege from the King, that in all deliberations of the University, the vote of the Bohemian nation alone should count as much as the three others together. The German professors were so much offended at this ordinance, that they left Prague in a body, and settled in Leipsic, where they contributed to establish that famous University, and thus the government of the whole University of Prague, we may say, fell into the hands of John Huss[15744]. This remarkable man was born in a village of Bohemia, called Huss, and from which he took his name, and his parents were so poor, that at first the only means of learning he had, was by accompanying a gentleman's son to school as attendant; but being a man of powerful mind, he, by degrees, worked himself on, until he became the chief professor of the University of Prague, which he infected, unfortunately, with heresy. Having, as we have seen, ousted the German professors, and become almost supreme in his College, it unfortunately happened that one of Wickliffe's disciples, Peter Payne, who had to fly from England, arrived in Prague, and brought along with him the works of his master. These works fell into the hands of Huss, and though filled with blasphemy, pleased him by the bold novelty of their doctrines, and he imagined that they were well calculated to make an impression on the ardent minds of the youth of the University. He could not at once begin to teach them, for he was one of the Doctors who, a little while before, had subscribed the condemnation of Wickliffe's errors[15745], so he contented himself, for the present, with merely making them subjects of discussion with his pupils; but little by little he became more bold, and not alone among the students of the University, but even among the people in the churches, he disseminated the pestilence.

40. At length, he threw off the mask altogether, and preaching one day in the Church of SS. Matthias and Matthew, in Prague, he publicly lauded the works of Wickliffe, and said, if he were dying, all he would desire is to be assured of the same glory that Wickliffe was then enjoying in heaven.

He next translated some of Wickliffe’s works into Bohemian, especially the Trialogue, the worst of them all. He was joined at once by several Priests of relaxed morals, and also by several Doctors, discontented with the unjust distribution of church patronage, which was too often conferred on persons whose only qualification was nobility of birth, while humble virtue and learning was neglected. Among the Doctors who joined him was Jerome of Prague, who, in the year 1408, had, like Huss, condemned the errors of Wickliffe, but now turned round, and even accused the Council of Constance of injustice, for condemning them. Sbinko, Archbishop of Prague, summoned a Synod, which was attended by the most famous Doctors, and condemned the propositions broached by Huss, and he was so enraged at this, that he endeavoured to stir up the people to oppose it; the Archbishop, accordingly, excommunicated him, and sent a copy of the condemnation of his doctrine to Pope Alexander V., but Huss appealed to the Pope, who was badly informed, he said, of the matter, and in the meantime, the Archbishop died, and thus Bohemia became a prey to heresy. Huss was now joined by Jacobellus of Misnia, and Peter of Dresden, who went about preaching to the people against the error the Church was guilty of, as they said, in refusing the people communion under both kinds, and proclaimed that all who received under one kind were damned. John Huss and his followers took up this new doctrine, and so deeply was the error implanted in the minds of the Bohemian Hussites, that even all the power of the Irrfperial arms could scarcely eradicate it.

41. Noel Alexander enumerates the errors of Huss under thirty heads[15746]. We will only take a succinct view of the most important ones. The Church, he said, was composed of the predestined alone (Art. 1, 3, 5, 6); and the two Natures, the Divinity and the Humanity, are one Christ (Art. 4). Peter neither was nor is the head of the Catholic Church (Art. 7, 10, 11); and Civil and Ecclesiastical Lords, as Prelates and Bishops, are no longer so while in mortal sin (Art. 30); and he says the same of the Pope (Art. 20, 22, 24, 26). The Papal dignity is derived from the power of the Emperor (Art.

9); and Ecclesiastical obedience is an invention of the Priests (Art. 15). Everything the wicked man does is wicked, and everything the virtuous man does is virtuous (Art. 16). Good Priests ought to preach, though they be excommunicated (Art. 17, 18); and in Art. 19, he reprobates Ecclesiastical censures. It was an act of iniquity to condemn the forty-five Articles of Wickliffe (Art. 25). There is no necessity of a head to rule the Church, for the Apostles and other Priests governed it very well before the office of Pope was introduced (Art. 27, 28, 29). These are, in substance, the errors of John Huss. Van Ranst (p. 275) remarks, that it appears from his own works, that he always held the belief of the Real Presence, and when, in the Fifteenth Session of the Council, he was accused of teaching that, after the consecration, the substance of bread remained in the Eucharist, he denied that he ever either taught or believed so. He also admitted Sacramental Confession, with its three parts, as we do Extreme Unction, and all the other Sacraments prayers for the dead the invocation and intercession of Saints. How unjustly, then, says the same author, do the Lutherans and Calvinists condemn in the Church of Rome these dogmas held by Huss himself, whom they venerate as a witness of the truth, and through whom they boast that they have derived the original succession of their Churches.

42. We now come to speak of the sad end the obstinacy of Huss brought him to. The Pope condemned Wickliffe and his errors, in a Synod held in Rome, in 1413. When this came to the knowledge of Huss, he published several invectives against the Fathers composing the Synod, so the Pope found himself obliged to suspend him from all Ecclesiastical functions, the more especially as he had been cited to Rome, but refused to come. In the year 1414, a General Council was held in the city of Constance, at which twenty-nine Cardinals, four Patriarchs, and two hundred and seven Prelates assisted, and the Emperor Sigismund attended there in person also[15747]. John Huss was summoned by the Emperor to present himself before the Council and defend his doctrine, but he refused to leave Prague until he was furnished by him with a safe conduct. The Emperor gave him the protection he demanded, and he, accordingly, came to Constance, puffed up with the idea, that he would, by his reasoning, convince the Fathers of the Council that he was right. He was quite satisfied, also, that in case even the Council

should condemn him, he was quite safe, on account of the Imperial safe-conduct; but it is extraordinary that he never adverted to the clause inserted in it, granting him security as far as he was charged with crimes, but not in regard to errors against the Church[15748]; for it was stated that he would be exempt from all penalty in regard to his faith, if he would obey the decisions of the Council, after being heard in his defence, but not if he still obstinately remained attached to his errors. But, as we shall see, he refused to obey these conditions. The Lutherans, therefore, are unjust in charging us with upholding that maxim, that faith is not to be kept with heretics, and alleging that as their excuse for not coming to the Council of Trent. Our Church, on the contrary, teaches that faith must be observed with even infidels or Jews, and the Council of Basil faithfully observed the guarantee given to the Hussites, though they remained obstinately attached to their errors.

43. When Huss arrived in Constance, before he presented himself to the Council he fixed his safe conduct to the door of the Church; and while he remained at his lodging, never ceased to praise Wickliffe, and disseminate his doctrines; and, although he was excommunicated by his Bishop, in Prague, he used to say Mass in a chapel; but when the Archbishop heard of this, he prohibited him from celebrating, and his subjects from hearing his Mass[15749]. This frightened him, and when he saw the charges that would be made against him, and received an order from the Council not to quit the city, he trembled for his safety, and attempted to escape; he, accordingly, disguised himself as a peasant, and concealed himself in a cart—load of hay, but was discovered by a spy, who was privately placed to watch him, and notice being given to the magistrates of the city, he was taken. This took place on the third Sunday of Lent.

44. He was asked, why he disguised himself in this way, and hid himself in the hay ? He said it was because he was cold. He was put on a horse, and taken to prison, and he then appealed to the safe-conduct given him by the Emperor; but his attention was directed to the clause giving him security only as far as he was charged with certain crimes, but not for any erroneous doctrines concerning the Faith, and he was told, that it was decided that he should prove his cause not to be heretical, and if not able to do that, either retract or suffer death[15750]. He was now truly terrified; but seeing several

Bohemians around him, who accompanied him to the Council, he threw himself from the horse among them, and thus thought to escape, but was immediately seized again, and confined in the Dominican Convent, but attempting to escape from that, he was transferred to a more secure prison[15751].

45. He was summoned from his prison to appear before the Council, and defend himself, and as the Council had already condemned the forty—five articles of Wickliffe, he trembled for his own fate. Witnesses were formally examined to prove the errors he had both preached and written, and a form of abjuration was drawn up by the Council for him to sign, for it was decided by the Fathers, that he should not alone retract verbally, but also subscribe the abjuration of his heresy in the Bohemian language. This he refused to do; but he presented a paper himself, in which he declared that he could not conscientiously retract what he was asked to do, but the Council refused to receive it. The Cardinal of Cambray endeavoured to induce him to sign a general retractation, as everything charged against him had been proved; and he promised him, in that case, the Council would treat him most indulgently. Huss then made an humble answer : he came, he said, to be taught by the Council, and that he was willing to obey its decrees.

A pen was handed to him, accordingly, to sign his retractation in Bohemian, as was commanded in the beginning; but he said that the fear of signing a lie prevented him. The Emperor himself even tried to bend his obstinacy; but all in vain. The Council, accordingly, appointed the 6th of July to give the final decision; but before they came to extremities, the Fathers deputed four Bishops and four Bohemian gentlemen to strive and bring him round, but they never could get a direct retractation from him. The appointed day at last arrived. He was brought to the Church, in presence of the Council, and asked, if he would anathematize the errors of Wickliffe; he made a long speech, the upshot of which was that his conscience would not allow him to do so.

46. Sentence was now pronounced on him; he was declared obstinately guilty of heresy, and the Council degraded him from the priesthood, and handed him over to the secular power. He made no remark while the sentence was read, intending, after the reading was finished, to say what he intended, but he only commenced to speak, when he was ordered to be

silent. He was now clothed in the sacerdotal vestments, which were immediately after stripped off him, and a paper cap was put on his head, inscribed: “Behold the Heresiarch.” Louis, Duke of Bavaria, then took him, and handed him over to the ministers of justice, who cut off his hair in the very place where the pile was prepared to burn him. He was now tied to the stake, but before fire was put to the pile, the Duke of Bavaria again be sought him to retract, but he answered, that the Scriptures tell us we should obey God, and not man. The Duke then turned his back on him, and the executioner applied the torch; when the pile began to light, the hypocrite was heard to exclaim : “Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me ;” words inspired by the vain-glorious desire of being considered to have died a martyr’s death, but we should not forget that the devil has martyrs, and infuses into them a false constancy, and as St. Augustine says : “ It is not the punishment, but the cause, that makes a martyr ;” that is the confession of the true Faith. The flames burned so fiercely, that it is thought he was immediately suffocated, for he gave no other signs of life. His ashes were cast into the lake, and thus the scene closed on John Huss[15752].

47. We have now to speak of Jerome of Prague, who, having joined Huss in his errors, was his companion in a disgraceful death and perdition. He was a layman, and joined Huss in all his endeavours to disseminate his errors, led astray himself, first by Wickliffe’s works, and next by the preaching of his master. He came to Constance to try and be of some assistance to Huss, but was taken and obliged to appear before the Council, together with his patron, but he was not finally tried for a year after the death of Huss. A lengthened process was instituted against him, and it was proved, as Raynaldus tells us[15753], that he preached the same errors as Wickliffe and Huss, that he was guilty of several excesses, and had caused several seditious movements in divers kingdoms and cities. When first brought before the Council in 1414, he confessed that he was wrong, and said that he was satisfied to abjure his heresy, even according to the formula required by the Council. He, therefore, got permission to speak with whom he pleased, and he then was so imprudent as to tell his friends that his retractation was extorted from him, not by conscience, but because he was afraid of being condemned to be burned alive, but that now he would defend his doctrines to the death. When he was discovered, he was obliged

to appear again before the Council, in 1415, and when the Patriarch of Constantinople called on him to clear himself from the new charges laid against him, he spoke out plainly, and said that his former abjuration was extorted by the dread of being burned alive; that he now held as true all the articles of Wickliffe, and that he was anxious to expiate at the stake, the fault of his former retractation. The Fathers of the Council still charitably gave him time to repent, but, at last, in the Twenty-fifth Session, after the Bishop of Lodi endeavoured by every means in his power to induce him to retract, he was declared an obstinate heretic, and handed over to the civil magistrate, who had him led to the pile. Even then, several persons endeavoured to get him to retract, but he said that his conscience would not allow him; he took off his clothes without any assistance, was tied to the stake, and the pile was fired. His agony was much longer than that of John Huss, but, like him, he died without any signs of repentance[15754].

48. The unhappy end of John Huss and Jerome of Prague did not put a stop to the progress of their doctrines; on the contrary, as Varillas writes[15755], the Hussites, irritated at the punishment of their leader, united together in Bohemia, ruined the churches, seized on the properties of the monasteries, and attempted the life of their King, Wenceslaus; and though they desisted at the time, they were sorry they did not accomplish it after, and they would have done so even then had Wenceslaus not died in the meantime. They then elected Zisca as Commander—in-Chief, and declared war against the Emperor Sigismund, who succeeded his brother Wenceslaus on the throne of Bohemia, and, having gained four victories, they forced him to quit his kingdom. Although Zisca lost both his eyes in battle, he still commanded his countrymen, but was attacked by the plague and died, having previously ordered that his skin should be tanned, and converted into the covering of a drum, that even after his death he might terrify his enemies. After Zisca’s death the sect was divided into Orphans, Orebites, and Thaborites, who, though disagreeing among themselves, all united against the Catholics. When those heretics got a Catholic priest into their power, they used to burn him alive, or cut him in two halves. When the Council of Basil was assembled, they sent delegates there to make peace with the Church, having previously obtained a safe conduct, but all to no purpose, as on their return into Bohemia, the war raged with greater fury,

and, having collected a powerful army, they laid siege to the capital, but were encountered by Mainard, a noble Bohemian, and totally routed. Sigismund then again got possession of his kingdom, and made peace with the Hussites, who abjured their heresy, promised obedience to the Pope, and were absolved by him from all censures on the 5th of July, 1436[15756].

Chapter XI

THE HERESIES OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

ARTICLE I. OF THE HERESIES OF LUTHER

I. THE BEGINNING AND PROGRESS OF THE LUTHERAN HERESY

> 1.—Erasmus of Rotterdam, called by some the Precursor of Luther; his Literature. 2.—His Doctrine was not sound, nor could it be called heretical. 3.—Principles of Luther; his familiarity with the Devil, who persuades him to abolish Private Masses. 4.—He joins the Order of the Hermits of St. Augustine. 5.—Doctrines and Vices of Luther. 6.—Publication of Indulgences, and his Theses on that Subject. 7—He is called to Rome, and clears himself; the Pope sends Cardinal Cajetan as his Legate to Germany. 8.—Meeting between the Legate and Luther. 9.—Luther perseveres and appeals to the Pope. 10, 11 .-Conference of Ecchius with the Heretics. 12.—Bull of Leo X., condemning forty-one Errors of Luther, who burns the Bull and the Decretals.

1. We have now arrived at the sixteenth century, in which, as in a sink, all the former heresies meet. The great heresiarch of this age was Luther; but many writers assert that Erasmus was his predecessor, and there was a common saying in Germany that Erasmus[15757]laid the egg, and Luther hatched it[15758]. Erasmus was born in Holland; his birth was illegitimate, and he was baptized by the name of Gerard, which he afterwards changed to the Greek name Erasmus in Latin, Desiderius.[15759] At an early age he was received among the Regular Canons of St. Augustine, and made his religious profession; but weary of a religious life, and regretting having made his vows, he left the Cloister, and lived in the world, having, it is supposed, obtained a Papal dispensation.

He would certainly have conferred a benefit on the age he lived in, had he confined himself to literature alone; but he was not satisfied without writing on Theological matters, interpreting the Scriptures, and finding fault with the Fathers; hence, as Noel Alexander says of him, the more works he wrote, the more errors he published. He travelled to many Universities, and was always honourably received, on account of his learning; but a great many doubted of his faith, on account of the obscure way he wrote concerning the dogmas of religion; hence, some of the Innovators, friends of Erasmus, often availed themselves of his authority, though he frequently endeavoured to clear himself from the imputation of favouring them, especially in a letter he wrote to Cardinal Campeggio[15760].

2. A great contest at that time was going on in Germany, between the Rhetoricians and Theologians. The Rhetoricians upbraided the Theologians with their ignorance, and the barbarism of the terms they used. The Theologians, on the other hand, abused the Rhetoricians for the impropriety and profaneness of the language they used in the explanation of the Divine Mysteries. Erasmus, who took the lead among the Rhetoricians, began by deriding, first, the style, and, next, the arguments of the Theologians; he called their Theology Judaism, and said that the proper understanding of Ecclesiastical science depended altogether on erudition and the knowledge of languages. Many writers openly charge Erasmus with heresy: he explained everything just as it pleased himself, says Victorinus[15761], and vitiated everything he explained. Albert Pico, Prince of Carpi, a man of great learning[15762], and a strenuous opponent of the errors of Erasmus, assures us that he called the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints idolatry; condemned Monasteries, and ridiculed the Religious, calling them actors and cheats, and condemned their vows and rules; was opposed to the Celibacy of the Clergy, and turned into mockery Papal Indulgences, relics of Saints, feasts and fasts, auricular Confession; asserts that by Faith alone man is justified[15763], and even throws a doubt on the authority of the Scripture and Councils[15764].

3. In the preface to one of his works he says[15765], it is rash to call the Holy Ghost God. “ Audemus Spiritum Sanctum, appellare, Deum quod veteres ausi, non sunt.” Noel Alexander informs us[15766], that in 1527 the Faculty of Paris condemned several propositions taken from his works, and that at the Council of Trent the Cardinals appointed by Paul III. to report on the abuses which needed reformation, called on him to prohibit in the schools the reading of the Colloquies of Erasmus, in which are many things that lead the ignorant to impiety. He was, however, esteemed by several Popes, who invited him to Rome, to write against Luther, and it was even reported that Paul III. intended him for the Cardinalship. We may conclude

with Bernini, that he died with the character of an unsound Catholic, but not a heretic, as he submitted his writings to the judgment of the Church, and Varillas[15767]says he always remained firm in the Faith, notwithstanding all the endeavours of Luther and Zuinglius to draw him to their side. He died in Basle in 1536, at the age of 70.[15768]

While Germany was thus agitated with this dispute, the famous brief of Leo X. arrived there in 1613; and here we must introduce Luther. Martin Luther[15769]was born in Eisleben, in Saxony, in 1483. His parents were poor, and when he afterwards acquired such a sad notoriety, some were not satisfied without tracing his birth to the agency of the devil[15770], a report to which his own extraordinary assertions gave some colour at the time, since he said in one of his sermons to the people, that he had eaten a peck of[15771]with the devil, and in his work " De Missa Privata," or low Mass, he says he disputed with the devil on this subject, and was convinced by him that private Masses should be abolished[15772]. "Luther," said the devil, «it is now fifteen years that you are saying private Masses; what would the consequence be, if on the altar you were adoring bread and wine? Would you not be guilty of idolatry?" «I am a Priest," said Luther, "ordained by my Bishop, and I have done everything through obedience." " But," added the devil, "Turks and Gentiles also sacrifice through obedience, and what say you if your ordination be false ?"

Such are the powerful reasons which convinced Luther. Frederick Staphil[15773]relates a curious anecdote concerning this matter. Luther at one time, he says, endeavoured to exorcise a girl in Wittemberg, possessed by an evil spirit, but was so terrified that he tried to escape, both by the door and window, which, to his great consternation, were both made fast; finally, one of his companions broke open the door with a hatchet, and they escaped[15774].

4. If Luther was not the child of Satan, however, few laboured so strenuously in his service. His name originally was Luder; but as the vulgar meaning of that word was not the most elegant, he changed it to Luther. Applying himself at an early age to literature, he went to Erfurt, in Thuringia, and at the age of twenty years graduated as a Master of Philosophy. While pursuing his legal and philosophical studies in that University, he happened to take a walk in the country with a fellow-student,

who was struck dead by lightning at his side. Under the influence of terror, and not moved by devotion, he made a vow to enter into religion, and became an Augustineian Friar, in the Convent of Erfurt[15775]. “It was not,” he says, “ by my own free will I became a Monk, but terrified by a sudden death, I made a vow to that effect.” This took place in 1504, in the 22nd year of his age, and was a matter of great surprise to his father and friends, who previously never perceived in him any tendency to piety[15776].

5. After his profession and ordination he was commanded by his superiors, as an exercise of humility, to beg through the city, as was the custom of the Order at that period. He refused, and in the year 1508 left the Convent and Academy of Erfurt, in which he was employed, greatly to the satisfaction of his colleagues in that University, who could not bear his violent temper, and went to Wittemberg, where Duke Frederick, Elector of Saxony, had a little before founded a University, in which he obtained the chair of Philosophy. He was soon after sent to Rome, to settle some dispute rose in his Order, and having satisfactorily arranged everything, he returned to Wittemberg, and received from Andrew Carlostad, Dean of the University, the dignity of Doctor of Theology.

The entire expense of taking his degree was borne by the Elector, who conceived a very great liking for him[15777]. He was certainly a man of fine genius, a subtle reasoner, deeply read in the Schoolmen and Holy Fathers, but, even then, as Cochleus tells us, filled with vices proud, ambitious, petulant, seditious, evil-tongued and even his moral character was[15778]; he was a man of great eloquence, both in speaking and writing, but so rude and rugged, that in all his works we scarcely find a polished period; he was so vain of himself, that he despised the most learned writers of the Church, and he especially attacked the doctrines of St. Thomas, so much esteemed by the Council of Trent.

6. Leo X. wishing, as Hermant tells us[15779], to raise a fund for the recovery of the Holy Land, or, according to the more generally received opinion[15780], to finish the building of St. Peter’s Church, commenced by Julius II. committed to Cardinal Albert, Archbishop and Elector of Mayence, the promulgation of a Brief, granting many Indulgences to those who contributed alms for this purpose. The Archbishop committed the publication of these Indulgences to a Dominican Doctor, John Tetzel, who

had already discharged a similar commission in aid of the Teutonic Knights, when they were attacked by the Duke—of Muscovy, and who was reputed an eloquent preacher. This was highly displeasing to John Staupitz, Vicar-General of the Augustinians, and a great favourite of the Duke of Saxony; he, therefore, with the Duke's permission, charged Luther with the duty of preaching against the abuse of these Indulgences. He immediately began to attack these abuses, and truth compels us to admit that abuses had crept into the mode of collecting these alms, which scandalized the people. He, however, not only preached against the abuses which existed, but against the validity of Indulgences altogether, and immediately wrote a long letter to the Archbishop of Mayence, in which he gave an exaggerated account of the errors preached in their distribution, such as, that whoever took an Indulgence was certain of salvation, and was absolved from all punishment and penalties of sin, and to this letter he tacked ninety-five propositions, in which he asserted that the doctrine of Indulgences altogether was a very doubtful matter.

He did not rest satisfied with sending them to the Archbishop; he posted them on the doors of the Church of All Saints in Wittemburg, sent printed copies of them through all Germany, and had them publicly sustained by his scholars in the University. He was answered by Father Tetzel in Frankfort, who proved the doctrine of the Church, and as he was armed with Inquisitorial powers, condemned these propositions as heretical. When this came to Luther's ears, he retorted in the most insolent manner, and from these few sparks, that fire was kindled which not only ran through Germany, but through Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the most remote countries of the North[15781].

7. In the year 1518, Luther sent his conclusions to the Pope, in a pamphlet, entitled "Resolutiones Disputationum de Indulgentiarum virtute ;" and in the preface, he thus addresses him : "Holy Father, prostrate at your Holiness feet, I offer myself, with all I possess; vivify or destroy, call, revoke, reject, as you will, I recognise your voice as the voice of Christ, presiding and speaking in you; if I deserve death, I refuse not to die"[15782]. With such protestations of submission did he endeavour to deceive the Pope, but as Cardinal Gotti[15783] remarks, in this very letter, he protests that he adopts no other sentiments than those of the Scriptures, and intends

merely to oppose the Schoolmen. Leo X. having now received both Luther's and Tetzel's writings, clearly saw the poison which flowed from the pen of the former, and accordingly summoned him to Rome, to defend himself.

Luther excused himself on the plea of delicate health, and the want of means to undertake so long a journey, and added, that he had strong suspicions of the Roman judges; he also induced the Duke of Saxony, and the University of Wittemberg, to write to his Holiness to the same effect, and to request him to appoint judges in Germany to try the cause[15784]. The Pope dreaded to entrust the case to the decision of the Germans, as Luther already had a powerful party in his own country; he, therefore, sent as his Legate, a latere, Thomas Vio, called Cardinal Cajetan, commissioning him to call on the secular power to have Luther arrested, to absolve him from all censures, in case he retracted his errors; but should he obstinately persist in maintaining them to excommunicate him[15785].

8. On the Legate's arrival in Augsburg, he summoned Luther before him, and imposed three commandments on him: First—That he should retract the propositions asserted by him. Secondly—That he should cease from publishing them, and finally, that he should reject all doctrines censured by the Church. Luther answered that he never broached any doctrine in opposition to the Church, but Cajetan reminded him that he denied the treasure of the merits of Jesus Christ, and his Saints, in virtue of which, the Pope dispensed Indulgences, as Clement VI. declared in the Constitution Unigenitus; that he also asserted that to obtain the fruit of the Sacraments, it was only required to have the faith of obtaining them. Luther made some reply, but the Cardinal, smiling, said he did not come to argue with him, but to receive his submission, as he had been appointed[15786]. Luther was alarmed at finding himself in Augsburg, then totally Catholic, without a safe conduct (although Noel Alexander[15787] says, he obtained one from Maximilian; Hermant, Van Ranst, and Gotti, deny it[15788], and Varillas wonders at his boldness in presenting himself without it), and asked time for reflection, which was granted him, and on the following day he presented himself before the Legate, together with a Notary Public, and four Senators of Augsburg, and presented a writing signed with his own hand, saying that he followed and revered the Roman Church in all her acts and

sayings, past, present, and to come, and that if ever he said anything against her, he now revoked and unsaid it.

The Cardinal, well aware that he had written several things which were not in accordance with the Catholic Faith, wished to have a still more ample retraction, but still he flattered himself that the one obtained was so much gained. Luther, however, soon slipped through his fingers, for he then persisted that he had neither said nor written anything repugnant to the Scriptures, Fathers, Councils, Decretals, or reason; that his propositions were true, and that he was prepared to defend them, but, nevertheless, that he would submit them to the judgment of the three Imperial Academies of Basle, Fribourg, and Louvain, or of Paris[15789].

9. The Cardinal still insisted on the three primary conditions. Luther asked time to answer in writing, and the next day presented a document, in which he advanced many opinions, not only against the value of Indulgences, but also against the merits of the Saints, and good works, propping up his opinions by false reasoning, Cardinal Cajetan heard him out, and then told him not again to appear before him, unless he came prepared to retract his heresy. Luther then left Augsburg, and wrote to the Cardinal, saying that his opinions were founded on truth, and supported by reason and Scripture, but, notwithstanding, it was his wish still to subject himself to the Church, and to keep silence regarding Indulgences, if his adversaries were commanded to keep silent, likewise[15790]. The Cardinal gave him no answer, so Luther, fearing sentence would be passed against him, appealed from the Cardinal to the Pope, and had the appeal posted on the church doors[15791]. Van Ranst censures Cajetan for not imprisoning Luther, when he had him in Augsburg without a safe conduct, knowing him to be a man of such deceitful cunning, and so extinguishing, in its commencement, that great fire, which consumed so great a part of Europe, by introducing to the people a religion so much the more pernicious, as it was so favourable to sensual licence.

Luther himself, afterwards, deriding the whole transaction, says[15792] : “ I there heard that new Latin language, that teaching the truth was disturbing the Church, and that denying Christ was exalting the Church.” It is then he appealed, first to the Pope, and afterwards from the Pope to the Council[15793].

10. The Legate, seeing the obstinacy of Luther, wrote to the Elector Frederick, telling him that this friar was a heretic, unworthy of his protection, and that he should send him to Rome, or at all events banish him from his States. The Elector immediately transmitted the letter to Luther, who, on his escape from the power of the Legate, began to make the most rabid attacks on the Pope, calling him tyrant and Antichrist : “ He (the Pope) has refused peace,” said he, “then let it be war, and we shall see whether Luther or the Pope shall be first hurt.” Notwithstanding his boasting, the Legate’s letter to the Elector terrified him, and he indicted a most humble letter, declaring himself guiltless of any crime against Faith, and praying for a continuance of his protection[15794]. Hermant says the Elector protected Luther, not only on account of his affection for his newly founded University of Wittemberg, on which he shed so much lustre, but also through hatred to the Elector Albert, of Mayence, Luther’s most determined enemy[15795]. This protector of Luther, however, met with a dreadful death, as if to mark the judgment of God. While hunting, he was attacked with apoplexy, accompanied with dreadful convulsions; Luther and Melanchthon immediately posted off to assist, or rather to ruin him, in his last agony, but they could not obtain from him a single word; he had lost the use of all his senses, the most dreadful convulsions racked every one of his limbs, his cries were like the roar of a lion, and he died without Sacraments, or without any signs of repentance.

11. On the 9th of November, 1518, Leo X. published a Bull, on the validity of Indulgences, in which he declared that the Supreme Pontiff alone had the right of granting them without limitation, from the treasures of the merits of Jesus Christ; that this was an article of Faith, and that whoever refused to believe it, should be excluded from the communion of the Church.

Ecchius, a man of great learning, and Pro-Chancellor of Ingoldstad, began to write about this time, and subsequently, in 1519, he had a conference with Luther, through the instrumentality of Duke George, Uncle of the Elector Frederick, a good Catholic. This conference took place in Duke George’s city of Leipsic, and in his own palace. After debating on many questions there, they agreed to leave the whole matter to the decision of the Universities of Erfurt and Paris. The University of Paris, after an examination of the writings on each side, received the doctrine of Ecchius, and condemned that of Luther. One hundred and four of his propositions were censured, which excited his ire to a great pitch against that University. The following year there was another conference between Luther, accompanied by Carlostad and Ecchius, in which, in six discussions, the doctrines of free-will, of grace, and of good works, were argued by Carlostad. Luther followed, and disputed on Purgatory, the power of absolving sins, reserving cases, the primacy of the Pope, and Indulgences. In this conference, his doctrines were not so heretical as soon after the dispute, for then the force of truth obliged him to admit the Papal primacy, though he said it was of human, not divine right; he also acknowledged a Purgatory, and did not altogether reject Indulgences, solely condemning the abuse of them. The same year his doctrines were condemned by the Universities of Cologne and Louvain[15796].

12. In the year 1519, the Emperor Maximilian I. died, and there was an interregnum of six months, daring which Luther gained many adherents in Wittemberg, not only among the youth of the University, who afterwards scattered themselves through all Saxony, but some of the Professors, and even some of the clergy, secular and regular, became his disciples. Leo X. seeing his party every day gaining strength, and no hope of his retractation, then published in Rome his famous Bull, “ Exurge Domine,” in which he condemned forty-one of his principal errors as heretical (see third part of this history), and sent his Commissaries to publish it in Germany, ordering, at the same time, his books to be publicly burned in Rome. His Holiness, however, even then exhorts Luther and his followers to return to the fold, and promises to receive with clemency whoever returns before the expiration of two months, at the expiration of which, he orders his Commissaries to excommunicate the perverse, and hand them over to the secular power.

The two months being passed, he published another Bull, declaring Luther a heretic, and also that all who followed or favoured him, incurred all the penalties and censures fulminated against heretics[15797]. Luther, as soon as he heard of the publication of the first Bull of 1520, and the burning of his books in Rome, burned in the public square of Wittemberg, the Bull, and the Book of the Decretals of the Canon Law, saying : “ As you have opposed the Saints of the Lord, so may eternal fire destroy you ;” and then in a voice of fury, exclaimed : “Let us fight with all our strength against that son of perdition, the Pope, the Cardinals, and all the Roman sink of corruption; let us wash our hands in their blood[15798].” From that day to the day of his death, he never ceased writing against the Pope and the Catholic Church, and from the year 1521 to 1546, when he died, he brought to light again in his works, almost every heresy of former ages. Cochleus, speaking of Luther’s writings, says[15799] : “He thus defiled everything holy; he preaches Christ, and tramples on his servants; magnifies faith, and denies good works, and opens a licence to sin; elevates mercy, depresses justice, and throws upon God the cause of all evil; finally, destroys all law, takes the power out of the hands of the magistrate, stirs up the laity against the clergy, the impious against the Pope, the people against princes.”

II THE DIETS AND PRINCIPAL CONGRESSES HELD CONCERNING THE HERESY OF LUTHER.

> 13.—Diet of Worms, where Luther appeared before Charles V., and remains obstinate. 14.—Edict of the Emperor against Luther, who is concealed by the Elector in one of his Castles. 15.—Diet of Spire, where the Emperor publishes a Decree, against which the heretics protest. 16.—Conference with the Zuinglians; Marriage of Luther with an Abbess. 17.—Diet of Augsburg, and Melanchthon’s Profession of Faith; Melanchthon’s Treatise, in favour of the authority of the Pope, rejected by Luther. 18.—Another Edict of the Emperor in favour of Religion. 19.—League of Smalkald broken up by the Emperor. 20. Dispensation given by the Lutherans to the Landgrave to have two wives. 21.—Council of Trent, to which Luther refuses to come; he dies, cursing the Council. 22.—The Lutherans divided into fifty-six Sects. 23.—The Second Diet of Augsburg, in which Charles V. published the injurious Formula of the Interim. 24, 25.—The heresy of Luther takes possession of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and other Kingdoms.

13. The first Conference was in the Imperial Diet, assembled in Worms. Luther still continued augmenting his party, and pouring forth calumnies and vituperations against the Holy See. At the request of the Pope, Charles V. then wrote to the Elector of Saxony, to deliver up Luther, or, at all events, to banish him from his territories. The Elector, on receipt of the letter, said that as the Diet was now so near, it would be better to refer the whole matter to its decision. Luther was most anxious to appear in this illustrious assembly, hoping, by his harangue, to obtain a favourable reception for his doctrine, especially as at the request of his patron, the Elector, he obtained not only permission to attend, but also a safe conduct from the Emperor himself. The Diet assembled in 1521, and Luther arrived in Worms, on the

17th of April. Ecchius asked him, in the name of the Emperor, if he acknowledged himself the author of the books published in his name, and if it was his intention to defend them. He admitted the books were his; but as to defending them, he said, as that was an affair of importance to the Word of God, and the salvation of souls, he required time to give an answer. The Emperor gave him a day for consideration, and he next day said, that among his books some contained arguments on Religion, and these he could not conscientiously retract; others were written in his own defence, and he confessed that he was guilty of excess in his attacks on his adversaries, the slaves of the Pope, but that they first provoked him to it. Ecchius required a more lucid answer. He then turned to the Emperor, and said he could not absolutely retract anything he had taught in his lectures, his sermons, or his writings, until convinced by Scripture and reason, and that both Pope and Councils were fallible judges in this matter[15800].

14. The Emperor, perceiving his obstinacy, after some conversation with him, dismissed him. He might then have arrested him, as he was in his power, but he disdained violating the safe conduct he himself had given him. Notwithstanding, he published, on the 26th of May, an edict, with consent of the Princes of the Empire, and of its Orders and States, in which he declared Luther a notorious and obstinate heretic, and prohibited any one to receive or protect him, under the severest penalties. He moreover ordained, that, after the term of the safe conduct expired, which was twenty days, he should be proceeded against wherever found[15801]; and he would not have escaped, were it not for the Elector Frederick, who bribed the soldiers who escorted him, and had him conveyed to a place of security. A report was then spread abroad, that Luther was imprisoned before the expiration of the safe conduct, but the Elector had him conveyed to the Castle of Watzberg, near Alstad, in Thuringia, a place which Luther afterwards called his Patmos. He remained there nearly ten months, well concealed and guarded, and there he finished the plan of his heresy, and wrote many of his works. In the works written here, Luther principally attacked the scholastic Theologians, especially St. Thomas, whose works he said were filled with heresies. We should not wonder he called the works of St. Thomas heretical, who centuries before had confuted his own pestilential errors[15802].

15. In the year 1529, another Diet was held in the city of Spire, by the Emperor’s orders, in which it was decided, that in these places in which the edict of Worms was accepted, it should be observed; but that wherever the ancient religion was changed, and its restoration could not be effected without public disturbances, matters should remain as they were until the celebration of a General Council. It was, besides, decided that Mass should freely be celebrated in the places infected with Lutheranism, and that the Gospel should be explained, according to the interpretation of the Fathers approved by the Church. The Elector Frederick of Saxony, George of Branderburg, Ernest and Francis, Dukes of Luneburg, Wolfgang of Anhalt, and fourteen confederate cities (thirteen, according to Protestant historians), protested against this Decree, as contrary to the truth of the Gospel, and appealed to a future Council, or to some judge not suspected, and from this protest arose the famous designation of Protestant[15803].

The same year another Conference, composed of Lutherans and Zuinglians, or Sacramentarians, was held in Marpurg, under the patronage of the Landgrave of Hesse, to endeavour to establishaunion between their respective sects. Luther, Melanchthon, Jonas, Osiander, Brenzius, and Agricola appeared on one side, and Zuinglius, Ecolampadius, Bucer, and Hedio, on the other. They agreed on all points, with the exception of the Eucharist, as the Zuinglians totally denied the Real Presence of Christ. Several other Conferences were held to remove, if possible, the discussion of doctrine objected to then by the Catholics, but all ended without coming to any agreement. In this the Providence of God is apparent: the Roman Church could thus oppose to the innovators that unity of doctrine she always possessed, and the heretics were always confounded on this point[15804]. About this period Luther married an Abbess of a Convent. His fellow-heresiarch Zuinglius, also a priest, had already violated his vows, by a sacrilegious marriage, and Luther would have done the same long before, only he was restrained by the Elector of Saxony, who, though a heretic, shuddered at the marriage of a Religious, and protested he would oppose it by every means in his power.

16. On the other hand, Luther was now quite taken with Catherine Bora, a lady of noble family, but poor, and who, forced by poverty, embraced a religious life, without any vocation for that state, in a Convent at Misnia,

and finally became Abbess. Reading one of Luther’s works, she came across his treatise on the nullity of religious vows, and requested him to visit her. He called on her frequently, and finally induced her to leave her Convent, and come to Wittemberg with him, where, devoid of all shame, he married her with great solemnity, the Elector Frederic, who constantly opposed it, being now dead; and such was the force of his example and discourses, that he soon after induced the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order[15805] to celebrate his sacrilegious nuptials, likewise. Those marriages provoked that witticism of Erasmus, who said that the heresies of his day all ended, like a comedy, in marriage.

17. In the July of 1530, the famous Diet of Augsburg was held. The Emperor and all the Princes being assembled at the Diet, and the feast of Corpus Christi falling at the same time, an order was given to the Princes to attend the procession. The Protestants refused, on the plea that this was one of the Roman superstitions; the Elector of Saxony, nevertheless, whose duty it was to carry the sword of state before the Emperor[15806], consulted his Theologians, who gave it as their opinion, that in this case he might consider it a mere human ceremony, and that, like Naam, the Syrian, who bowed down before the idol, when the King leaned on his arm in the temple, he might attend. In this Diet the Catholic party was represented by John Ecchius, Conrad Wimpin, and John Cochleus, and the Lutheran by Melanchthon, Brenzius and Schnapsius. The Lutheran Princes presented to the Emperor the Profession of Faith drawn up by Philip Melanchthon, who endeavoured as much as possible to soften down the opinions opposed to Catholicity. This is the famous Confession of Augsburg, afterwards the Creed of the majority of Lutherans. In those Articles they admitted: First—That we are not justified by Faith alone, but by Faith and Grace. Second That in good works not only Grace alone concurs, but our co-operation like wise. Third—That the Church contains not only the elect, but also the reprobate. Fourth—That free-will exists in man, though without Divine Grace he cannot be justified. Fifth—That the Saints pray to God for us, and that it is a pious practice to venerate their memories on certain days, abstracting, however, from either approving or condemning their invocation.

18. In ten other chapters of less importance they agree with Catholics. They agreed, likewise, in saying that Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist, in each species, and did not condemn the laity who communicated in one kind only. They allowed the jurisdiction of Bishops, and that obedience was due to them by Pastors, Preachers, and Priests, in Spiritual matters, and that censures published by them, according to the rule of Scripture, are of avail. The Emperor, hoping it would render easier the establishment of peace, joined to the commissions two jurists, for each side, along with Ecchius and Melanchthon; but this Conference never was closed, because, as Sleidan tells us, Melanchthon was not permitted by Luther to sign the treaty, although he was most anxious for the establishment of peace, as he declares in his letter to the Legate Campeggio : " We have no dogma," he says, "different from the Roman Church; we are ready to yield her obedience, if, in her clemency, she will relax or wink at some little matters. We still profess obedience to the Roman Pontiff, if he does not cast us off"[15807]. Varillas[15808] mentions a curious fact relative to this. When Francis I., King of France, invited Melanchthon to Paris, to teach in the University (in which he did not succeed), he received from him a pamphlet, in which he laid it down as a principle, that it was necessary to preserve the pre-eminence and authority of the Roman Pontiff, to preserve the unity of doctrine. Nothing could exceed Luther's rage when he heard of this, and he told Melanchthon that he had a mind to break with him altogether, and that he was now about to ruin the Religion it cost him twenty years labour to establish, by destroying the authority of the Pope.

The Zuinglians presented their confession of Faith at the same Diet, in the name of the four cities of Strasburg, Constance, Meningen, and Lindau, which differed from the Lutheran one only in the doctrine of the Eucharist. At the breaking up of the Diet, the Emperor promulgated an edict, in which the Lutheran Princes and cities were allowed, until the 15th of April following, to wait for a General Council, and again become united with the Catholic Church, and the rest of the Empire. It was forbidden them to allow any innovations in Religious matters, or any works contrary to Religion to be published in their respective territories, and that all should unite in opposition to the Anabaptists and Zuinglians. The Lutherans refused to accept these articles, and all hopes of peace being at an end, asked leave to depart. Before they left, however, the Emperor published an edict, subscribed by the remaining Princes and Orders of the Empire, that all should persevere in the ancient Religion, condemning the sects of the Anabaptists, Zuinglians, and Lutherans, and commanding all to hold themselves in readiness to attend at the Council, which he promised he would induce the Pope to summon in six months[15809].

19. The Protestants refused obedience to this Decree, and met in Smalcald, a city of Franconia, and there, in 1531, formed the famous League of Smalcald, to defend with force of arms the doctrines they professed; but they refused the admission of the Zuinglians into this League, on account of their errors regarding the Holy Sacrament. This was the cause of the famous battle of Mulberg, on the Elbe, in 1547, in which Charles V. was victorious, and John, Elector of Saxony, and Philip, the Landgrave, the two chiefs of the heretical party in Germany, were made prisoners[15810]. The whole power of Protestantism would have been broken by this defeat, had not Maurice of Saxony, the nephew of the imprisoned Elector, taken up arms against Charles[15811]. The Landgrave obtained his liberty, but was obliged to beg pardon of the Emperor prostrate at his feet, and surrender his States into his hands[15812].

20. This Philip is the same, who obtained, in 1539, from Luther and other faithful Ministers of the Gospel, as they called themselves, that remarkable dispensation to marry two wives at the same time. Yarillas says[15813], that the Landgrave, though previous to his marriage he always led a moral life, could not, after the loss of his faith, content himself with one wife, and persuaded himself that Luther and the Theologians of his sect would grant him a dispensation to marry another. He well knew whom he had to deal with: he assembled them in Wittemberg, and though they well knew the difficult position in which they were placed, and the scandal they would give by yielding to his wishes, still his influence had greater weight with them than the laws of Christ or the dictates of their consciences. Varillas (P. 531) gives the rescript in full by which they dispense with him. They say they could not introduce into the New Testament the provisions of the Old Law, which permitted a plurality of wives, as Christ says they shall be two in one flesh, but they likewise say that there are certain cases in which the New Law can be dispensed with; that the case of the Prince was one of

these; but that, in order to avoid scandal it would be necessary that the second marriage should be celebrated privately, in the presence of few witnesses; and this document is subscribed by Luther, Melanchthon, Bucer, and five other Lutheran Doctors. The marriage was soon after privately celebrated in presence of Luther, Melanchthon, and six other persons. The Landgrave died, according to De Thou, in 1567.

21. The Council of Trent was opened on the 13th of December, 1545, under Paul III., was continued under Julius III., and being many times suspended for various causes, was formally concluded under Pius IV., in December, 1563. Luther frequently called on the Pope to summon a General Council, but now that it was assembled he would not attend it, knowing full well his doctrines would be there condemned. First, he appealed from the Legate to the Pope then from the Pope not sufficiently informed to the Pope better informed then from the Pope to a Council and now from the Council to himself. Such has been the invariable practice of heresiarchs: to refute the decisions of the Pope they appeal to a Council; condemned by a Council, they reject the decisions of both. Thus Luther refused to attend the Council, and after his death his example was followed by the other Protestants, who refused even to avail themselves of the safe conduct given to them for that effect.

While the Fathers were making preparations for the Fourth Session, news of Luther's death was brought to Trent; he went to Eisleben towards the end of January, at the invitation of some of his friends, to arrange some differences, when he was then told he was invited to the Council. He exclaimed in a rage : " I will go, and may I lose my head if I do not defend my opinions against all the world; that which comes forth from my mouth is not my anger but the anger of God"[15814]. A longer journey, however, was before him; he died in the sixty-third year of his age, on the 17th of February, 1546. After eating a hearty supper and enjoying himself, jesting as usual, he was a few hours after attacked with dreadful pains, and thus he died. Raging against the Council a little before his death, he said to Justus Jonas, one of his followers : " Pray for our Lord God and his Gospel, that it may turn out well, for the Council of Trent and the abominable Pope are grievously opposed to him." Saying this he died, and went to receive the reward of all his blasphemies against the Faith, and of the thousands of souls he led to perdition. His body was placed in a tin coffin, and borne on a triumphal car to Wittemberg, followed by his concubine, Catherine, and his three sons, John, Martin, and Paul, in a coach, and a great multitude, both on foot and horseback. Philip Melanchthon preached his funeral oration in Latin, and Pomeranius in German. Pomeranius also composed that inscription for his tomb, worthy alike of the master and the disciple : " Pestiseram vivus, moriens ero inors tua, Papa" " I was the plague of the Pope while living, dying I will be his death"[15815].

22. The Lutherans were invited to the Council by various briefs of the Popes, but always refused to attend[15816]. They were afterwards summoned by the Emperor Ferdinand, on the re-opening of the Council; but they required conditions which could not be granted[15817]. They at first split into two sects, Rigorous and Relaxed Lutherans[15818], and these two, as Lindan afterwards informs us, were divided into fifty-six sects[15819].

23. In another Diet, celebrated in Augsburg, in 1547, the Emperor Charles V. restored the Catholic religion in that city; but in the following year, as Noel Alexander[15820] tells us, he tarnished his glory by publishing the famous Interim, thus usurping the authority to decide on questions of Faith and ecclesiastical discipline. We should, says Noel Alexander, hold this Interim in the same detestation as the Enoticon of Zeno, the Ecthesis of Heraclius, and the Tiphos of Constans. In the year 1552 he again tarnished his honour,, for after routing Maurice of Saxony, he made peace with him, and granted freedom of worship in his states to the professors of the Confession of Augsburg. In the year 1556 he gave up the government of the Empire to his brother Ferdinand, King of the Romans, and retired to the Jeromite Monastery of St. Justus, in Estremadura, in Spain, giving himself up to God alone, and preparing for death, which overtook him on the 21st of September, 1558, in the fifty-eighth year of his age[15821].

24. Luther's heresy, through the instrumentality of his disciples, soon spread from Germany into the neighbouring kingdoms, and first of all it infected Sweden. This kingdom, at first idolatrous, received the Catholic Faith in 1155, which was finally established in 1416, and continued the Faith of the nation till the reign of Gustavus Erickson. Lutheranism was introduced into this country in 1523, by Olaus Petri, who imbibed it in the University of Wittemberg; along with many others, he gained over King

Gustavus, who gave leave to the preachers to propound, and to all leave to follow, their doctrines, and also permitted the Religious to marry. It was his wish that the old ceremonies should be kept up, to deceive the people; but he caused all the ancient books to be burned, and introduced new ones, written by heretics; thus in four years Lutheranism was established in Sweden. Gustavus, at his death, left the crown to his son, Eric XIV.; but his reign was but short, for his younger brother, John, declared war against him, and dethroned him in 1569.

Before John came to the crown, he was a good Catholic, and desired to re-unite Sweden to the Church, especially as the Pope sent him an excellent missioner to strengthen him in the Faith. He commenced the good work by publishing a liturgy opposed to the Lutheran, and intending gradually to abolish the heresy. He then wrote to the Pope, saying, he hoped to gain Sweden altogether to the Faith, if his Holiness would grant four conditions: First—That the nobility should not be disturbed in the possession of the ecclesiastical property they held. Second—That the married Bishops and Priests should have liberty to retain their wives. Third—That Communion should be given in both kinds. Fourth—That the Church service should be celebrated in the vulgar tongue. The Pope consulted the Cardinals, but refused his request, as he could not well grant him what he refused to so many other Princes. When this answer arrived, the King was already wavering in his determination to support the true Faith, fearful of causing a revolt with which he was threatened; this unfavourable answer decided him, and he gave up all hopes, and followed the religion of his States. His Queen, a zealous Catholic, a sister of Sigismund Augustus, King of Poland, was so much affected by the change in her husband’s dispositions, which she survived but a short time. In twelve months after the King followed her, and left the throne to his son Sigismund, then King of Poland. Charles of Sudermania, who governed the kingdom in the Sovereign’s absence, usurped the crown, and his crime was sanctioned by the States, who declared Sigismund’s right to the throne null and void, on account of his religion. Charles, therefore, being settled on the throne, established Lutheranism in Sweden. He was succeeded by his son, Gustavus Adolphus, one of the greatest enemies Catholicity had either in Sweden or Germany; but his daughter Christina renounced the throne, sooner than give up the faith she embraced, and lived and died in the Catholic Church. She left the kingdom to Charles Gustavus, her cousin, who reigned for six years, and transmitted it to his son, Charles V., and to the present day no other religion but Lutheranism is publicly professed in Sweden[15822].

25. Denmark and Norway underwent a similar misfortune with Sweden. Idolatry was predominant in Denmark till the year 826, when the Catholic religion was established by Regnor I., and continued to be the only religion of the kingdom, till in 1523 Lutheranism was introduced by Christian II. The judgment of God, however, soon fell on him, as he was dethroned by his subjects, and banished, with all his family. His uncle, Frederick, was chosen to succeed him. He gave liberty to the Protestants to preach their doctrine, and to his subjects to follow it. Not, however, content with this, he soon began a cruel persecution against the Bishops, and against every Catholic who defended his religion, and many sealed their religion with their blood. This impious Monarch met an awfully sudden death while he was banqueting on Good Friday, and was succeeded by Christian III., who completed the final separation of Denmark from the Catholic Church. Thus in a short time Lutheranism became dominant in these kingdoms, and continues to hold its sway there. There are many Calvinistic congregations in Denmark, as Christian permitted the Scotch Presbyterians to found churches there. There are also some Catholics, but they were obliged to assemble privately for the Holy Sacrifice, and even now, though the spirit of the age is opposed to persecution, they labour under many restraints and disabilities. Norway, till lately, and Iceland at the present day, belongs to Denmark, and Lutheranism is likewise the religion of these countries, though the people, especially in the country parts, preserve many Catholic traditions, but they were till lately destitute of Priests and sacrifice.[15823] In Lapland, some Pagans remain as yet, who adore the spirits of the woods, and fire, and water; they have no Catholic Missioner to instruct them. There are, indeed, but few Catholics altogether in the Northern kingdoms. Formerly, the Dominicans, Franciscans, Carthusians, Cistercians, and Brigittines, had Convents there, but now all have disappeared[15824].

III. ERRORS OF LUTHER

26.—Forty-one Errors of Luther condemned by Leo X. 27.—Other Errors taken from his Books. 28.—Luther’s Remorse of Conscience. 29.—His Abuse of Henry VIII.; his erroneous translation of the New Testament; the Books he rejected. 30.—His method of celebrating Mass. 31.—His Book against the Eacramentarians, who denied the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

26. First in order, come the forty-one propositions of Luther, condemned by Leo X. in his Bull Exurge Domine, published in 1520, which is found in the Bullarium of Leo X. (Constit. 40), in Cochleus's account of Luther's proceedings, and also in Bernini's[15825] works. They are as follows: First—It is a usual, but a heretical opinion, that the Sacraments of the New Law give justifying grace to those who place no hindrance in the way. Second—To deny that sin remains in a child after baptism is, through the mouth of Paul, to trample both on Christ and Paul. Third—The tendency to sin (Fomes peccati), although there is no actual sin, delays the soul, after leaving the body, from entering into heaven. Fourth—The imperfect charity of one about to die necessarily induces a great fear, which of itself is enough to make the pains of Purgatory, and excludes from the kingdom. Fifth—That the parts of Penance are three Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction; is founded neither in Scripture, nor in the ancient Holy Christian Doctors. Sixth—Contrition, which is obtained by examination, recollection, and detestation of sins, by which a person recollects his years in the bitterness of his soul, pondering on the grievousness, the multitude, and the foulness of his sins, the loss of eternal beatitude, and the incurring eternal damnation this contrition only makes a man a hypocrite, and a greater sinner. Seventh—That proverb is most true, and better than all the doctrine about conditions given as yet: the highest Penance is not to act so again, and the best Penance is a new life. Eighth—Presume not by any means to confess venial sins, and not even every wicked sin; for it is impossible that you should know all your mortal sins; and hence, in the primitive Church only these manifestly mortal were confessed. Ninth—When we wish clearly to confess everything, we act as if we wished to leave nothing to the mercy of God to pardon. Tenth—Sins are not remitted to any one, unless (the Priest remitting them) he believes they are remitted yea, the sin remains, unless he believes it remitted; for the remission of sin and the donation of grace is not enough, but we must also believe it is remitted.

26. Eleventh—You should on no account trust you are absolved on account of your contrition, but because of the words of Christ: "Whatsoever thou shalt loose." Hence, I say, trust, if you obtain the Priest's absolution, and believe strongly you are absolved, and you will be truly absolved, no

matter about contrition. Twelfth—If by impossibility you should confess without contrition, or the Priest should absolve you only in joke, and you, nevertheless, believe you are absolved, you are most certainly absolved. Thirteenth—In the Sacraments of Penance and the Remission of Sins, the Pope or Bishop does no more than the lowest Priest nay, if a Priest cannot be had, any Christian, even a woman or child, has the same power. Fourteenth—No one ought to answer a Priest that he is contrite, nor ought a Priest to ask such a question. Fifteenth—They are in great error who approach the Sacrament of the Eucharist with trust, because they have confessed, are not conscious to themselves of any mortal sins, have said the prayers and preparations for Communion all these eat and drink unto themselves judgment; but if they believe and trust, they will then obtain grace: this faith alone makes them pure and worthy. Sixteenth—It seems advisable that the Church, in a General Council, should declare that the laity should communicate under both kinds, and the Bohemians who do so are not heretics, but schematics. Seventeenth—The treasures of the Church, from which the Pope grants Indulgences, are not the merits of Christ or his Saints. Eighteenth—Indulgences are pious frauds of the faithful, and remission of good works, and are of the number of those things that are lawful, but not expedient, nineteenth—Indulgences are of no value to those who truly obtain them for the remission of the punishment due to the Divine justice for their actual sins.

Twentieth—They are seduced who believe Indulgences are salutary and useful for the fruit of the spirit. Twenty-first—Indulgences are necessary only for public crimes, and should be granted only to the hardened and impatient. Twenty-second—For six classes of persons Indulgences are neither useful nor necessary to wit, the dead, those on the point of death, the sick, those who are lawfully impeded, those who have not committed crimes, those who have committed crimes, but not public ones, and those who mend their lives. Twenty-third—Excommunications are merely external penalties, and do not deprive a man of the common spiritual prayers of the Church. Twenty-fourth—Christians should be taught rather to love excommunication than to fear it. Twenty-fifth—The Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter, is not the Vicar of Christ instituted by Christ himself in St. Peter, Vicar over all the Churches of the world. Twenty-sixth—The word of Christ to St. Peter, “Whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth,” &c.,

extended but to what St. Peter himself alone had bound. Twenty-seventh—it is not certainly in the power of the Pope or the Church by any means to lay down articles of faith or laws of morals, nor good works. Twenty-eighth—If the Pope, with a great part of the Church, should think so and so, although not in error, it is, nevertheless, neither sin nor heresy to think the contrary, especially in a matter not necessary to salvation, until by a General Council one thing is rejected and the other approved. Twenty-ninth—We have a way open to us for weakening the authority of Councils, and freely contradicting their acts, and judging their decrees, by freely confessing whatever appears true, no matter whether approved or condemned by any Council. Thirtieth—Some of the articles of John Huss, condemned in the Council of Constance, are most Christian, most true, and most Evangelical, such as not even the universal Church could condemn.

Thirty-first—The just man sins in every good work. Thirty-second—A good work, be it never so well performed, is a venial sin. Thirty-third—It is against the will of the spirit to burn heretics. Thirty-fourth To fight against the Turks is to oppose the will of God, who punishes our iniquities through them. Thirty-fifth—No man can be certain that he is not in a constant state of mortal sin on account of the most hidden vice of pride. Thirty-sixth—Free will after sin is a matter of name alone, and while one does what is in him, he sins mortally. Thirty-seventh—Purgatory cannot be proved from the Holy Scriptures contained in the Canon of Scripture. Thirty-eighth—The souls in Purgatory are not sure of their salvation at least all of them; nor is it proved by reason or Scripture that they are beyond the state of merit or of increasing charity. Thirty-ninth—The souls in Purgatory continually sin, as long as they seek relief and dread their punishment. Fortieth—Souls freed from Purgatory by the suffrages of the living, enjoy a less share of beatitude than if they satisfied the Divine justice themselves. Forty-first—Ecclesiastical Prelates and secular Princes would do no wrong if they abolished the mendicant Orders.

27. Besides the errors here enumerated and condemned by the Bull, there are many others mentioned and enumerated by Noel Alexander, and Cardinal Gotti[15826], extracted from various works of Luther, as from the treatise " De Indulgentiis," " De Reformatione," " Respon. ad lib. Catharini," " De Captivitate Babilonica," "Contra Latomum," " De Missa

privata," "Contra Episc. Ordinem," "Contra Henricum VIII. Regem," "Novi Testamenti Translatio," " De Formula Missae et Communionis," " Ad Waldenses, &c.," " Contra Carlostadium," " De Servo arbitro," "Contra Anabaptistas," and other works, printed in Wittemberg, in several volumes. Here are some of his most remarkable errors: First—A Priest, though he does it in mockery or in jest, still both validly baptizes and absolves. Second—It is a foul error for anyone to imagine he can make satisfaction for his sins, which God gratuitously pardons. Three—Baptism does not take away all sin. Fourth—Led astray by wicked Doctors, we think we are free from sin, by Baptism and contrition; also that good works are available for increasing merit, and satisfying for sin. Fifth—Those who have made it a precept, obliging under mortal sin to communicate at Easter, have sinned grievously themselves. Sixth—It is not God, but the Pope, who commands auricular confession to a Priest. Whoever wishes to receive the Holy Sacrament, should receive it entire (that is under both kinds), or abstain from it altogether.

Seventh—The right of interpreting Scriptures is equal in the laity as in the learned. Eighth—The Roman Church in the time of St. Gregory was not above other Churches. Ninth—God commands impossibilities to man. Tenth—God requires supreme perfection from every Christian. Eleventh—There are no such things as Evangelical Counsels; they are all Precepts. Twelfth—We should give greater faith to a layman, having the authority of Scripture, than to a Pope, a Council, or even to the Church. Thirteenth—Peter was not the Prince of the Apostles. Fourteenth—The Pope is the Vicar of Christ by human right alone. Fifteenth—A sin is venial, not by its own nature, but by the mercy of God. Sixteenth—I believe a Council and the Church never errs in matters of Faith, but as to the rest, it is not necessary they should be infallible. . Seventeenth—The primacy of the Roman Pontiff is not of Divine right. Eighteenth—There are not Seven Sacraments, and for the present there should only be established Baptism, Penance, and the Bread. Nineteenth—We can believe, without heresy, that real bread is present on the altar. Twentieth—The Gospel does not permit the Mass to be a sacrifice. Twenty—first—The Mass is nothing else but the words of Christ: "Take and eat, &c.," the promise of Christ. Twenty-second—It is a dangerous error to call Penance, and believe it to be, the plank after shipwreck. Twenty-third—It impious to assert that the Sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, unless we should say that when there is undoubted faith, they confer grace. Twenty—four—All vows, both of Religious Orders and of good works, should be abolished. Twenty-fifth—It is sufficient for a brother to confess to a brother, for to all Christians that were, has been addressed: “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth.” Twenty—sixth—Bishops have not the right of reserving cases. Twenty—seventh—A change of life is true satisfaction. Twenty-eighth—There is no reason why Confirmation should be reckoned among the Sacraments. Twenty-ninth—Matrimony is not a Sacrament. Thirtieth—Impediments of Spiritual affinity, of crime, and of order, are but human comments. Thirty-first—The Sacrament of Orders was invented by the Pope’s Church. Thirty-second—The Council of Constance erred, and many things were rashly determined on, such as, that the Divine essence neither generates nor is generated, that the soul is the substantial form of the human body.

Thirty-third—All Christians are Priests, and have the same power in the words and Sacraments. Thirty—fourth—Extreme Unction is not a Sacrament; there are only two Sacraments, Baptism and the Bread. Thirty-fifth—The Sacrament of Penance is nothing also, but a way and return to Baptism. Thirty-sixth Antecedent grace is that movement which is made in us without us, not without our active and vital concurrence (as a stone which is merely passive to physical acts), but without our free and indifferent action. It was thus Luther explained efficacious grace, and on this he founded his system, that the will of a man, both for good and evil, is operated upon by necessity; saying, that by grace a necessity is induced into the will, not by coaction, for the will acts spontaneously, but by necessity; and in another place, he says, that by sin the will has lost its liberty, not that liberty which Theologians call a coactione, but, a necessitate, it has lost its indifference.

28. In his book on the Sacrifice of the Mass, we may perceive how remorse torments him. “How often,” he says, “has my heart beat, reprehending me Are you always wise? Do all others err? Have so many centuries passed in ignorance? How will it be if you are in error, and you lead so many along with you to damnation? But at length Christ (the devil he should have said) confirmed me.”

29. In the year 1522, Henry VIII. wrote a book in defence of the Seven Sacraments. Luther, answering him, calls him a fool, says he will trample

on the crowned blasphemer, and that his own doctrines are from heaven. In the same year, he published his German translation of the New Testament, in which learned Catholics discover a thousand errors; he rejects altogether the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, the Epistles of St. James and St. Jude, and the Apocalypse; he made many changes after the first edition, no less than thirty-three, in the Gospel of St. Matthew alone. In the words of St. Paul, chap, iii, v. 3, “For we account a man to be justified by Faith without the works of the law,” he adds the word alone, “ by Faith alone.” In the Diet of Augsburg, someone said to him, that the Catholics spoke very loudly of this interpretation, when he made that arrogant answer : “ If your Papist prattles any more about this word *alone,* tell him that Doctor Martin Luther wishes it to be so; sic volo, sic jubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas I wish so, I order so, let my will be sufficient reason for it.”

30. In the year 1523, he composed his book, “ De Formula Missae et Communionis ;” he abolished the Introits of the Sundays, all the Festivals of Saints, with the exception of the Purification and Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin; he retained the Kyrie, the Gloria, and one Collect, the Epistle, the Gospel, and the Nicene Creed, but all in the vulgar tongue; he then passed on to the Preface, omitting all the rest; he then says : “Who, the day before he suffered,” &c., as in the Catholic Sacrifice of the Mass, but the words of the Consecration are chaunted as loud as the Pater Noster, that they may be heard by the people. After the Consecration, the Sanctus is sung, and the Benedictus qui venit, said; the bread and the chalice is elevated, immediately after the Pater Noster is said, without any other prayer; then the Pax Domini, &c. The communion follows, and while that is going on, the Agnus Dei is sung; he approves of the Orationes Domine Jesu, &c., and Corpus D. N. J. C., custodiat, &c. He allows the Communion to be sung, but in place of the last Collect, chaunts the prayer, Quod ore sumpsimus, &c., and instead of the Ite Missa est, says Benedicamus Domine. He gives the chalice to all, permits the use of vestments, but without any blessing, and prohibits private Masses. To prepare for Communion, he says, Confession may be permitted as useful, but it is not necessary. He allows Matins to be said, with three lessons, the Hours, Vespers, and Complin.

31. In the year 1525, Carlostad attacked the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Sacrament, saying that the word this did not refer to

the bread, but to the body of Christ crucified. Luther opposed him in his book, “Contra Prophetas sen Fanaticos ;” in this he first speaks of Images, and says that in the law of Moses it was Images of the Deity alone which were prohibited; he before admitted the Images of the Saints and the Cross. Speaking of the Sacrament he says, by the word hoc, this, the bread is pointed out, and that Christ is truly and carnally in the supper. The bread and the body are united in the bread, and (speaking of the Incarnation) as man is God, so the bread is called his body and the body bread. Thus Luther falsely constitutes a second hypostatic union between the bread and the body of Christ. Hospinian quotes a sermon Luther preached against the Sacramentarians, where, speaking of the peace they wished to have established, if the Lutherans would grant them the liberty to deny the Real Presence, he says: “ Cursed be such concord, which tears asunder and despises the Church.”

He then derides their false interpretation of the words, “This is my body.” He commences with Zuinglius, who says the word is the same as signifies. «We have the Scripture,” says Luther, “which says, This is my body; but is there any place in the Scriptures where it is written, This signifies my body.” He then ridicules the interpretation of the others. “ Carlostad,” he says, “distorts the word this; Ecolampadius tortures the word body; others transpose the word this, and say, my body which shall be delivered for you is this; others say, that which is given for you, this is my body; others maintain the text, this is my body, for my commemoration; and others again say, this is not an article of Faith.” Returning, then, on Ecolampadius, who said it was blasphemous to assert that God was kneaded, baked, and made of bread, he retorts : “ It would also, I suppose, be blasphemous to say God was made man that it was most insulting to the Divine Majesty to be crucified by wicked men and concludes, by “saying : “The Sacramentarians prepare the way for denial of all the articles of Faith, and they already begin to believe nothing.” Speaking of Transubstantiation, he says : “ It makes but little difference for anyone to believe the bread to remain or not to remain in the Eucharist, if he believes in Transubstantiation.” In an agreement made with Bucer, at Wittemberg, in 1526, he granted that the body and blood of Christ remained in the Sacrament only while it was received.

32.—Melanchthon and his Character. 33.—His Faith, and the Augsburg Confession composed by him. 34.—Matthias Flaccus, Author of the Centuries, 35.—John Agricola, Chief of the Antinomians; Atheists. 30.—Andrew Osiander, Francis Stancar, and Andrew Musculus. 37.—John Brenzius, Chief of the Ubiquists. 38.—Gaspar Sneckenfield abhorred even by Luther for his impiety. 39.—Martin Chemnitz, the Prince of Protestant Theologians, and opponent of the Council of Trent.

32. Philip Melanchthon, Luther's chief and best beloved disciple, was a German, born in Brettan, in the Palatinate, of a very poor family, in the year 1497. He was a man of profound learning, and, at the age of twenty-four, was appointed one of the professors of Wittemberg by the Duke of Saxony. There he became imbued with Lutheran opinions, but as he was a man of the greatest mildness of manner, and so opposed to strife that he never spoke a harsh word against any one, he was anxious to bring about a union between all the Religions of Germany; and on that account in many points smoothened down the harsh doctrines of Luther, and frequently, in writing to his friends, as Bossuet, in his History of the Variations, tells us, he complained that Luther was going too far. He was a man of great genius, but undecided in his opinions, and so fond of indifference that his disciples formed themselves into a sect called Indifferentists, or Adiaphorists. The famous Confession of Augsburg was drawn up by him at the Diet, and his followers were on that account sometimes called Confessionists[15827].

33. He divided his Confession into twenty-one articles, and stated his opinions with such moderation, that Luther afterwards complained that Philip, in endeavouring to smoothen down his doctrine, destroyed it[15828]. He admitted the liberty of human will, rejected the opinion of Luther, that God is the author of sin, and approved of the Mass. All these points were opposed to Luther's system.

He was at length so tired with the way matters went on among the Reformers that he intended to leave them altogether, and retire into Poland, there to wait the decision of the Council, whatever it should be[15829]. His opinions were very unsteady regarding matters of Faith: thus, he says, man can be justified by Faith alone; and his rival, Osiander, says he changed his mind fourteen times on this one subject. He was selected to arrange a treaty of peace with the Sacramentarians, but notwithstanding all his endeavours he never could succeed[15830]. Gotti, quoting Cochleus[15831], says, that with all his anxiety to smoothen down any harsh points in the system, he only threw oil and not water on the flames. He died in Wittemberg in 1556, according to Van Ranst, or in 1560, according to Gotti, at the age of sixty-one. Many authors relate that, being at the point of death, his mother said to him : " My son, I was a Catholic; you have caused me to forsake that Faith :you are now about to appear before God, and tell me truly, I charge you, which is the better Faith, the Catholic or the Lutheran ?" He answered : "The Lutheran is an easier religion, but the Catholic is more secure for salvation"[15832]. Berti relates[15833] that he himself composed his own epitaph, as follows : " Iste brevis tumulus miseri tenit ossa Philippi, Qui quails fuerit nescio, tails erat." These are not the words of Faith, and would imply that he much doubted of his eternal salvation.

34. Matthias Flaccus Illiricus, born in Albona, in Istria, had the misfortune to study in Wittemberg, under Luther, and became afterwards the Chief of the Rigid Lutherans. He was the principal of the compilers of the Centuries of Magdeburg, an Ecclesiastical History, published in 1560, and to refute which Cardinal Baronius published his celebrated Annals. Flaccus died in Frankfort, in 1575, at the age of fifty-five. He disagreed in many things with Luther. Striger[15834] sustained an erroneous opinion, bordering on Pelagianism, that Original Sin was but a slight accident, which did not substantially corrupt the whole human race; and Flaccus, on the contrary, renewing the blasphemous errors of the Manicheans, said that Original Sin was the substance itself of man, which deprived him of free will, and of every good movement, and drove him necessarily on to evil, from which Faith in Jesus Christ alone could save him. On that account, he denied the necessity of good works for salvation, and his followers were called Substantialists[15835].

35. John Agricola was a townsman of Luther, and was for a time his disciple, but became afterwards the founder of a sect, called Antinomians, or Law Opposers, for he rejected all authority of law, and taught that you may become a sensualist, a thief, a robber, but if you believe you will be saved[15836]. Varillas says that Luther brought the errors of Agricola before the University of Wittemberg, as subversive of all the value of good works, and, on their condemnation, he retracted them; but after Luther's death he went to Berlin, and again commenced teaching his blasphemies, where he died without any sign of repentance, at the age of seventy-four[15837].

Florinundus calls the Antinomians Atheists, who believe in neither God nor the devil.

36. Andrew Osiander was the son of a smith in the Mark of Branderburg. He taught that Christ was the justifier of mankind, not according to the human, but according to the Divine Nature[15838]; and opposed to him was Francis Stancaro, of Mantua, who taught that Christ saved man by the human nature, not by the Divine Nature[15839]. Thus Osiander taught the errors of Eutyches, and Stancaro those of Nestorius[15840]. In answer to the first, we have to remark that, although it is God that justifies, still he wishes to avail himself of the humanity of Christ (which was alone capable of suffering, and making atonement), as of an instrument for the salvation of mankind.

The Passion of Christ, says St. Thomas[15841], is the cause of our justification, not, indeed, as a principal agent, but as an instrument, inasmuch as the humanity is the instrument of his Divinity, and hence the Council of Trent has declared (Sess. 6, Cap. 7) the efficient cause of this justification is God the meritorious cause is Jesus Christ, who, on the wood of the Cross, merited for us justification[15842], and satisfied for us to God the Father. In answer to Stancaro, who teaches that Christ saved mankind, as man alone, but not as God, we have but to consider what is already said, because if Christ, according to the flesh, deserved for man the grace of salvation, nevertheless it was the Divinity, and not the humanity, which granted this grace to man. Andrew Musculus of Lorraine opposed both Osiander and Stancaro, but with just as great a heresy, for he taught that the Divine Nature of Christ, as well as the human nature, died on the Cross. This was nothing else but the blasphemy of Eutyches that the Divinity suffered for the salvation of mankind[15843]. Remond[15844] tells us, that at that period new churches were every day forming in every corner of Germany, and changing as quickly as the moon, and that two hundred sects existed at one time among the Reformers. No wonder that Duke George of Saxony said that the people of Wittemberg could not tell to-day what their faith would be tomorrow.

37. John Brenzius, a Suabian, and Canon of Wittemberg, was already a priest, when he became the disciple of Luther, and imitated his master in taking a wife. He taught that the concupiscence which remains in the soul

after Baptism is a sin, contrary to the Council of Trent, which declares that the Catholic Church never understood that concupiscence should be called a sin, but that it is from sin, and inclines to sin. He also said that the body of Christ, by the personal union with the Word, is everywhere, and, consequently, that Jesus Christ is in the Host before consecration; and, explaining the words, “This is my body,” he says, that denotes that the body of Christ is already present. Hence the sect who acknowledged him as their chief was called Ubiquists[15845], and even Luther was one of his adherents[15846].

38. Gaspar Schwenkfeldt, a noble Silesian, and a man of learning, while Luther was attacking the Church, took up arms also against her, and attacked the Lutherans as well. We should not mind the Scriptures, he says, as they are not the word of God, only a dead letter, and, therefore, should only obey the private inspirations of the Holy Ghost; he condemns sermons and spiritual lectures, for, in the Gospel of St. Matthew, we are told that we have but one Master, and he is in heaven. He taught, at the same time, the errors of the Manicheans, of Sabellius, of Photius, and also of Zuinglius, denying the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Osius says the devil’s gospel commenced with Luther, but was brought to perfection by this monster of hell, who had more followers in many parts of Germany and Switzerland than the arch-heretic himself[15847]. Gotti informs us, that he sent a messenger to Luther, with his writings, begging of him to correct them; but he, seeing them filled with abominable heresies, returned him the following answer : “May your spirit, and all those who participate with Sacramentarians and Eutychians, fall into perdition.” After Luther’s death, this sect increased somewhat; but in a Synod, held at Naumburg, in 1554, by Bucer, Melanchthon, and some others, all the author’s works were condemned[15848].

39. Martin Chemnitz was a poor wool comber’s son, in the Mark of Branderburg. He was born in 1522, and followed his father’s business until the age of fourteen, when he commenced his studies in Wittemberg. His Theological Professor was Melanchthon, who was so well satisfied with the progress he made, that he called him the Prince of Protestant Theologians. He taught Theology in Brunswick, for thirty years, and died in 1586, the sixty-fourth year of his age. Chemnitz laboured strenuously, along with

Bucer, to bring about an agreement between the Lutherans and Sacramentarians, but without effect. He published many works, but his principal one is the "Examen Con. Tridentini," in which he endeavours to upset the decisions of the Council. He does not admit, as Canonical, any books of Scripture, only those approved of by all the Churches, not those approved of by Councils alone; he praises the Greek and Hebrew text, and rejects the Vulgate wherever it disagrees with them; he rejects tradition, but believes in free will, and thinks that, with the assistance of grace, it can accomplish something good.

He says that man is justified by Faith alone, through medium of which the merits of Christ are applied to him, and that good works are necessary to salvation, but still have no merit. Baptism and the Eucharist, he says, are properly the only Sacraments the rest are but pious rites; and in the Eucharist he rejects both the Transubstantiation of the Catholics, and the Impanation of the Lutherans, but does not decide whether the body of Christ is really present in the bread and wine; he merely says it is not a carnal presence, that Christ is there alone in the actual use of the Communion, and that it must always be taken under both kinds. He admits that the Mass may be called a sacrifice, but not a true sacrifice, only under the general denomination of a good work. It is not necessary, he says, speaking of the sacrament of Penance, to confess all our sins, but he allows the absolution of the Minister, though not as coming from the Minister himself, but from Christ, through his promise. Purgatory, according to him, cannot be proved from Scripture. We should honour the Saints, their images, and relics, but not have recourse to their intercession, and we should observe the Sundays, but no other festival[15849].

V. THE ANABAPTISTS

40.—The Anabaptists; they refuse Baptism to Children. 41.—Their Leaders Seditions and Defeat. 42.—Are again defeated under their Chief, Munzer, who is converted at his death. 43.—They rebel again under John of Leyden, who causes himself to be crowned King, is condemned to a cruel death, and dies penitent. 44.—Errors of the Anabaptists. 45.—They are split into various sects.

40. The Anabaptists were likewise the spawn of Lutheranism. The chief doctrine of those heretics was, that children should not be baptized in infancy, as, not having come to the use of reason, they were incapable of

real belief and salvation, according to the words of the Gospel: “ He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned” (Mark, xvi, 16); hence they were called Anabaptists, as they taught that those who were baptized in infancy should be rebaptized. Now this error sprung from Luther himself, who asserted it was better to leave infants without Baptism, than to baptize them when they had no Faith of their own[15850]. These unfortunate persons, however, should remember, that in the text of the Gospel quoted it is adults are meant, who are capable of actual Faith, for infants, who are incapable of it, receive the grace of the Sacrament through the Faith of the Church in which they are baptized, and as, without any actual fault of theirs, they contract original sin, it is but just that they should receive the grace of Jesus Christ without actual Faith, for, as St. Augustine writes[15851], as they are sick with the weight of another sin, they are healed by another’s confession, and are saved. Our Lord says, in St. Matthew, xix, 14 : “Suffer little children to come to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” As, therefore, little children can acquire the kingdom of heaven, so can they receive Baptism, without which no one can enter into heaven. The Church has received it as a tradition from the 41. Apostles so says Origen[15852] to give Baptism to infants, and St. Irenseus, Tertullian, St. Gregory of Nazianzen, St. Ambrose, St. Cyprian, and St. Augustine, all bear witness to the same practice. Hence, the Council of Trent, anathematizing those who asserted that persons baptized before they came to the use of reason should be re-baptized, uses the following words: “If anyone should say that children having received Baptism should not be numbered among the faithful, because they have not actual faith, and, therefore, when they come to the years of discretion, that they should be re-baptized, or that it is better to omit Baptism, than to baptize in the faith of the Church alone those who have not actual faith, let him be anathema.” This Canon condemns most clearly both the Anabaptist and Lutheran heresies.

42. The chief of the Anabaptists was Nicholas Stork, or Storchius, sometimes also called Pelargus. He was at first a disciple of Luther, but soon the head of a new heresy, which he preached in 1522, saying it was revealed to him from heaven. Being banished from Wittemberg, he went to Thuringia, where, together with his first error, he preached many others,

such as that all men enjoy universal freedom from restraint, that all property is common, and should be equally divided, and that all Bishops, Magistrates, and Princes, who opposed his true Church should be put to death[15853]. Here he was joined by Thomas Munzer, a Priest, a follower of Luther, also, who pretended to lead a most mortified life, and boasted of having frequent ecstasies and extraordinary communications from the Deity. He abused the Pope for teaching too severe a doctrine, and Luther for promulgating too lax a one. He everywhere censured Luther's morals and conduct, accused him of debauchery and lasciviousness, and said it was impossible to believe God would make use of so wicked a man to reform his Church. Through Luther's influence, he and all his followers were banished from Saxony[15854]. He then went to Thuringia, and preached the same errors as Storchius, especially in Munster, teaching the country people that they should not obey either Prelates or Princes.

43. In a short time he rallied round him the great body of the Anabaptists, and led forth three hundred thousand ignorant peasants[15855], causing them to forsake their spades for the sword, and promising them the assistance of God in their battles. These poor deluded creatures at first did a great deal of harm, but when regular troops were brought against them, they were soon, notwithstanding their immense numbers, completely routed, not being trained to the use of arms. Those who escaped the slaughter marched towards Lorrain, with the intention of devastating that province; but the Count Claude of Guise, brother to the Duke of Lorrain, slaughtered twenty thousand of them in three victories which he gained[15856]. Sleidan[15857] says that these poor peasants, when they were attacked by the troops, appeared quite demented, and neither defended themselves nor fled, but began to sing a popular hymn, imploring the assistance of the Holy Ghost, whose protection, according to Munzer's promises, they expected.

44. In the meantime, while Munzer, with his Anabaptist followers, were ravaging Thuringia, they were encountered by an army commanded by Duke George of Saxony, who promised them peace if they laid down their arms; but Munzer, thinking himself lost if the conditions were accepted, encouraged them, to refuse all accommodation, and to kill the officer who bore a flag of truce to them. This treachery infuriated the soldiers, who immediately attacked them; they made a stout resistance at first, encouraged

by Munzer, who told them he would catch the balls of the enemy in his sleeve, and such was the effect this promise had on them that many of them stood firm before the cannon of the enemy. This did not, however, last long; the greater part fled, and the rest were taken prisoners. Munzer fled with the rest, and, without being recognized, hid himself in Franchausen, pretending to be sick; he was there discovered, taken and condemned, along with Pfeiffer, an apostate Premonstratensian Canon, to have his head cut off in Mulhausen. This war lasted five months, and it is said cost the lives of a hundred and thirty-five thousand peasants[15858]. Pfeiffer died an obstinate heretic. Munzer's death is related in different ways some say he died with the greatest boldness, and challenged the Judges and Princes, telling them to read the Bible, the word of God; and these were his last words.

But the more general opinion is, and Noel Alexander says it can be relied on as fact, that previous to his death he retracted his errors, confessed to a Priest, received the Viaticum, and after offering up some devout prayers, bared his neck to the executioner's sword[15859].

45. Munzer's death, and the slaughter of so many of the peasantry, did not put an end to this sect. In the year 1534, nearly nine years after his death, a number of people in West phalia rebelled against their Princes, and seized the city of Munster, when they elected, as their chief, John of Leyden, the son of a Dutch tailor. His first act was to banish the Bishop and all the Catholics of the city, and then pretending to have a revelation from heaven, he caused his followers to crown him King, saying he was elected to that dignity by God himself, and he called himself Rex Justitiae hujus Mundi; he preached polygamy, and put it in practice by marrying sixteen wives, at the same time; he rejected the Eucharist, but, sitting at a table, distributed bits of bread to his followers, saying : "Take, and eat, and ye shall announce the death of the Lord ;" and at the same time the Queen, that is, one of his wives, dispensed the chalice, saying : "Drink, and you shall announce the death of the Lord." He next selected twenty disciples, and sent them as Apostles of God, to preach his doctrine, but all these unfortunates were taken and condemned to death, along with himself, in the year 1535[15860]. The mercy of the Lord be praised for ever, since he extended it to John of Leyden; he shewed himself a sincere penitent, and bore, with the most admirable patience, the cruel death and torments

inflicted on him; he was three times tortured with pincers by two executioners for two hours, and he bore it all without a murmur, saying he deserved it for his sins, and imploring the Divine Mercy; his companions died in their obstinacy[15861], and Hermant says, that his sect has spread its roots into many Christian kingdoms[15862].

46. The errors of the Anabaptists were: First That children should not be baptized, but only adults capable of reason. Second That no Christian could be a civil magistrate. Third It is in no case lawful for Christians to swear. Fourth War is unlawful to Christians.

47. The Anabaptists soon split into several sects some say fourteen, some, even seventy. Some were called Munzerites, after Thomas Munzer; some who preferred voluntary poverty, Huttites, from John Hut; others, Augustines, from Augustine Boehem, who taught that heaven would not be opened till after the Day of Judgment; others, Buholdians. from John (Buhold) of Ley den, whose history we have just given these preached polygamy, and wished to destroy all the wicked; some Melchiorists, from Melchior Hoffman, who taught that Christ had but one Nature, that he was not born of Mary, and various other errors; some were called Mennonites, from Mennon these held heretical opinions regarding the Trinity; some Davidians, the followers of one George, who called himself the Third David, the true Messiah, the beloved Son of God, born of the Spirit, not of the flesh, the pardoner of sins; he died in 1556, and promised to rise again in three years. This vain prophecy had some truth in it, for three years afterwards, the Senate of Basle caused him to be disinterred, and his remains burned along with his writings. The Clancularists, when asked if they were Anabaptists, denied it; they had no churches, but preached in private houses and gardens. The Demonists, following the errors of Origen, said the devils would be saved in the end of the world. The Adamites appeared naked in public, having, as they asserted, recovered the pristine innocence of Adam. The Servetians, followers of Michael Servetus, joined to the errors of the Anabaptists, blasphemies against the Trinity and Jesus Christ. The Condormientes slept together without distinction of sex, and called this indecency the new Christian Charity. The Ejulants, or Weepers, said there was no devotion so pleasing to God as weeping and wailing. Noel

Alexander and Van Ranst enumerate many other classes of these fanatics[15863].

ARTICLE II. THE SACRAMENTARIANS

I. CARLOSTAD

> 48.—Carlostad, father of the Sacramentarians. 49.—He is reduced to live by his labour in the field; he gets married, and composed a Mass on that subject. 50.—He dies suddenly.

48. The father of the Sacramentarians was, as Van Ranst informs us, Andrew Carlostad; he was born in the village from which he took his name, in Franconia, and was Archdeacon of the church of Wittemberg. He was, it is said, the most learned man in Saxony, and was, on that account, a great favourite with the Elector Frederick; he it was who admitted Luther to the Doctor ship, and afterwards became his follower in heresy. His pride, however, would not allow him to remain a disciple of Luther, and thus he became chief of the Sacramentarians, teaching, in opposition to Luther, that Christ was not really present in the Eucharist, and, therefore, that the word this (this is my body) did not refer to the bread, but to Christ himself, who was about to sacrifice his body for us, as if he were to say : “This is my body which I am about to deliver up for you.” Another error he taught in opposition to Luther was the doctrine of the Iconoclasts, that all crucifixes and images of the Saints should be destroyed, and he carried his infidelity to such a pitch in Wittemberg that he abolished the Mass, trampled on the Consecrated Host, and broke the Altars and Images[15864]. When this came to Luther’s ears, who was then concealed in his Patmos of Watzburg, he could restrain himself no longer, and even against the will of the Elector, went to Wittemberg, and caused the Altars and Images to be restored; and not being able to convince Carlostad of his errors, he deprived him of his benefice and dignities by authority of the Elector, who had him seized, and banished from his territories along with the woman he married.

Carlostad went to Orlemond in Thuringia, and there wrote that wicked treatise, De Coena Domini[15865], which contains in full his heretical opinions. It happened one day, as Berti tells us[15866], that Luther came to this town, and Carlostad, in revenge for the treatment he received from him caused him to be pelted with stones, and to fly from the place. It may be as well here to give Bossuet’s account of the war between Luther and Carlostad : In the year 1524 Luther preached in Jena, in presence of Carlostad, who went to visit him after the sermon, and blamed him for the opinion he held regarding the Real Presence. Luther, in a tone of mockery, told him he would give him a gold florin if he would write against him, and took out a florin and handed it to Carlostad, who pocketed it, and they then drank together, to cement the bargain; thus the war commenced. Carlostad’s parting benediction to Luther was: “ May I see you broken on the wheel !” “And may you break your neck before you quit the town !” re-joined Luther. Behold, says Bossuet, the acts of the new apostles of the Gospel[15867].

49. Notwithstanding all that had passed, Carlostad’s friends interfered, and finally induced Luther to permit him to return to Wittemberg, but he agreed to this only on condition that he would not oppose his doctrine for the future. Carlostad, however, ashamed to appear in Wittemberg in the poor state he was reduced to, chose rather to live in another town, where he was reduced to such poverty, that he was obliged to become a porter, and afterwards to turn to field labour along with his wife for subsistence[15868]. We may here remark that Carlostad was the first of all the priests of the new Gospel who married. In the year 1525, he married a young lady of good family, and he composed a sacrilegious service of Mass, on the occasion of his abominable nuptials. Octavius Lavert and Raynaldus have preserved some parts of it[15869].

50. The just chastisement of God, however, always pursues the impious, and thus we see him and his wife, who, being a lady, was ashamed to beg, obliged to earn a scanty subsistence, which they could not always obtain, by working as common field labourers[15870]. Sometime afterwards he went to Switzerland, hoping to get a kind reception from the heretics of that country, whose doctrine regarding the Sacrament of the Altar coincided with his own. But Zuinglius, or Zuingle, wishing to have no competitor, gave him a very cool reception; he then went to Basle, where he was appointed preacher, and where a sudden death overtook him in the midst of his sins[15871]. Yarillas says, that he was seized with apoplexy, coming down from the pulpit, after declaiming against the Real Presence, and dropped dead[15872]. It was also told at the time, that whilst he was preaching a man of

fearful mien appeared to him, and that immediately one of his children ran to him telling him that he had seen the same vision, and that it said to him: "Tell your father that in three days I will deprive him of life, breaking his head." All that is known for certain is that he died suddenly, and died, as he had lived, without any signs of repentance.

II. ZUINGLIUS

51.—Zuinglius, and the beginning of his heresy. 52.—His errors. 53.—Congress held before the Senate of Zurich; the decree of the Senate rejected by the other Cantons. 54.—Zuinglius sells his Canonry, and gets married; Victory of the Catholics; and his death.

51. Ulric Zuinglius was born of an obscure family in a poor village of Switzerland, called Mildenhausen, some say in Maggi; he was at first Parish Priest of two rural parishes, and was after wards promoted to a parish in Zurich[15873]. In his early days he was a soldier, but hoping to better his condition, he changed the sword for the gown, and being a man of talent, became a most eloquent preacher. Hearing, in 1519, that Indulgences were to be published in Switzerland, as had been done in Germany, he hoped that would be a favourable occasion for him to acquire notoriety, and advance himself in the estimation of the Court of Rome. But in this he was disappointed; a Franciscan, Father Sampson, was sent by the Pope, to publish the Swiss Indulgences, and with power to prohibit any one else from doing so, unless with his permission. Zuinglius, seeing his hopes frustrated, imitated the example of Luther in Saxony, and began to preach, first, against Indulgences then against the power of the Pope and from that passed on to other errors against the Faith[15874].

52. The following were his principal tenets: First The Mass is not a Sacrifice, but only a commemoration of the Sacrifice once offered on the Cross. Second We have no necessity of any intercessor but Christ. Third Christ is our justificator; and here he deduced, that our works are no good as ours, but only as the works of Christ. Fourth Marriage is fitted for all. Fifth Those who make a vow of chastity are held by presumption. Sixth The power which the Pope and Bishops arrogate to themselves, has no foundation in Holy Writ. Seventh The confession made to a Priest is not for remission of sin, but should be made solely to obtain advice. Eighth The Holy Scripture recognizes no Purgatory. Ninth The Scripture knows no

other Priests but those who announce the Word of God. He preached other errors regarding free will.

Luther attributed everything to grace, for salvation; Zuinglius, on the contrary, following the Pelagians, to free will and the force of nature. He broached many other errors regarding the Sacraments, Original Sin, and other points, but his chief blasphemies were against the Holy Eucharist, which turned even Luther against him, who at first called him the strong champion of Christendom, but ended by calling him a heretic. He first said that the Eucharist was a remembrance of the Passion of Christ, but, as Varillas remarks, then came the difficulty, that the Apostle says the Eucharist is to be eaten, but not the remembrance, and he five times changed his mode of explaining the communion; he rejected the Transubstantiation of the Catholics, the Impanation of the Lutherans, and the explanation given by Carlostad (N. 48). He then began to teach, that in the words, “This is my body,” the word is has the same meaning as signifies, that is, this bread signifies the body of Christ; but still the difficulty was not solved, for he could nowhere find that the word est was used for significat[15875], when one morning, at break of day, a spirit, whether a black or white one, he does not remember, spoke to him, and said : “Ignorant man, read the twelfth chapter of Exodus, where it is said, For it is the phase, that is the passage, of the Lord.” Behold, said he, here the word is stands for the word signifies; and thus he began to teach, that as the Pasch of the Jews was but a mere figure of the passing of the Lord, so the Eucharist was the figure of Christ sacrificed on the Cross. To authenticate this discovery of his, he got the translation of the New Testament printed, and where the text says, “This is my body,” he inserted, this “signifies my body”[15876]. Nothing, however, can be more foolish than this argument, for in Exodus, the explanation is annexed This is the Phase, that is the passage, of the Lord; but surely the text of the Gospel does not give any explanation, that the words “this is my body,” refers not to the body, but to the figure of Jesus Christ[15877]. This error we refute at length in the Confutation X., No. 11.

53. Zuinglius printed sixty-seven propositions, by way of doubt, and placarded them in all the towns of the Diocese of Constance. The Dominicans preached against them as heretical, and offered to convince

Zuinglius of his errors in a public disputation. Zuinglius accepted the challenge, but the Dominicans understood that it was to take place in the presence of the judges appointed by the Bishop of Constance, while he, on the other hand, insisted it should be held in presence of the Senate of Zurich, composed of two hundred laymen, the majority of whom knew not how to read or write; in this move he was successful, for the Senate thought themselves competent judges in religious matters, and would not yield their pretended right to any one; in effect, the Congress took place in their presence, and the Bishop not being able to prevent it, sent his Vicar-General to try and bring matters to some rational arrangement. This took place, according to Varillas, in 1524, and the Senate commanded all the Ecclesiastics of Zurich to attend. Zuinglius first read his Theses, and explained them without meeting with any interruption; he then asked if anyone had any reply to make; the Vicar-General answered, that a great deal of what he set forth was an absurdity. Zuinglius replied in his defence. The Vicar-General answered, that he was sent by his Bishop, neither to dispute nor give decisions, that it was a Council alone should decide, and then was silent; the other Ecclesiastics were asked if they had anything to say; they followed the Vicar-General's example, and were silent also; the Senate, therefore, gave the palm of victory to Zuinglius, and made a Decree, that thence forward the pure Gospel (according to Zuinglius) should be preached in all Zurich, that no more notice should be taken of traditions, and that the Mass and the adoration of the Eucharist should be abolished[15878].

This decree was opposed by the other Cantons, and in the year 1526, another public disputation was held in Swiss Baden[15879], between Zuinglius and Ecolampadius, on the one side, and Ecchius and some others, on the Catholic side, in which the arguments of Ecchius were so convincing, that by a formal Decree, the Swiss recognized the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the Invocation of Saints, and veneration of Sacred Images, and Purgatory, and condemned the doctrine of Luther and Zuingluis.

54. In the year 1528, Zuinglius sold his Prebend, and married, shamelessly asserting that he had not sufficient confidence in himself, to resist the vice of incontinence[15880], and in the same year, the Canton of Berne united with Zurich in embracing his doctrine. Basle, Schafhausen, St.

Gall, and three others, soon followed this example; Lucerne, Switz, Zug, Uri, and Under Walden, remained Catholic, and were soon after obliged to go to war with the heretical Cantons, for the following reason[15881]. The Catholic party deposed two officers who embraced the Zuinglian doctrines; they were received by the Zuinglians, who provided them with places, and through revenge, prevented the merchants who supplied the Catholic Cantons with corn, as they do not produce enough for their own consumption, from passing through their territories. The Catholics complained of this, as an infraction of the Confederation League, but were told, they were only treated as they deserved, for insulting the new religion. Eight thousand Catholics took the field in October, 1532; fifteen hundred of the Zurich troops were entrenched outside the city; the Catholics assaulted them in that position and put them to flight. Twenty thousand of the Zurich troops then marched out to attack the Catholics, and Zuinglius, against the advice of his friends, insisted on marching at their head. The Catholics with their small number, would have no chance against this army in the open field, so they posted themselves in a narrow pass; they were here assaulted by the Zuinglians, and victory was for some time doubtful, till Zuinglius, while valiantly leading on his troops, was struck to the earth; his followers, thinking he was killed, immediately took to flight, and were pursued by the Catholics with great slaughter, who are said to have killed five thousand Zuinglians, with only the loss of fifteen on their own side[15882].

Zuinglius was found by two Catholics, who did not know him, among a heap of the slain, prostrate on his face, but still breathing; they asked him if he wished for a Confessor, but got no answer; another now came up, who immediately killed him, and told their commanders; by their orders he was quartered and burned, and some of his followers collected his ashes, and kept it as a relic[15883]. He was killed on the 11th of October, 1532, in the forty-fourth year of his age, according to Hermant, but Natalis, Gotti, and Van Ranst, say he was forty years old. The war was not yet ended; five other battles were fought, and the Catholics were always victorious; peace was at length concluded, on condition that each Canton should freely profess its own Religion, and thus, with few interruptions, it has continued to the present day[15884]. Before I dismiss this subject, I will mention a few words of a sermon, or letter, of his, to Francis I. of France, in which he speaks of the glory that Kings are to expect in heaven : “There,” he says, “you will see the Redeemer and the redeemed; there you will behold Abel, Noe, Abraham, Isaac; there you will see Hercules, Theseus, Numa, the Catos, the Scipios, &c.” This was the language of this new Church Reformer after his apostacy; he places, along with Christ and the Holy Patriarchs, in heaven, the idolaters, and the Pagan gods. Bossuet, in his History of the Variations[15885], gives a large extract from this letter.

III. ECOLAMPADIUS; BUCER; PETER MARTYR

55.—Ecolampadius. 56.—Bucer. 57.—Peter Martyr.

55. John Ecolampadius, a faithful follower of Zuinglius, was a Greek linguist, and held the situation of tutor to the Prince Palatine’s children; his friends injudiciously importuned him to become a Monk, so he entered into the Order of St. Brigit, and made his profession[15886]; but we may judge of his intentions, when we are told that he said: “If I make six hundred vows I will not observe one of them, unless I like it.” “ Why,” says Florimund[15887], “should we wonder at his leaving the cloister, when such were his sentiments on entering it. In a few years he laid aside the cowl, and married, as he said, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and became a follower of Zuinglius, who appointed him Superintendent of Basle[15888]. He followed Zuinglius’s doctrine, regarding the Real Presence, but not his explanation of est by significant (see N. 48), as he explained the text, “this is my body,” by “this is the figure of my body”[15889]. How strange that not one of the new Apostles of the Gospel could agree with another. He died in the year 1532, at the age of forty-nine, only a month after Zuinglius’s death, to him a source of the most poignant grief. Luther said he was found dead in his bed, strangled by the devil, a generally received opinion at that time, according to Noel Alexander; others say he died of an ulcer in the os sacrum; the general opinion, however, is, that he was found dead in his bed. Many writers, Varillas says[15890], tell us that he several times attempted to take away his own life, and that he poisoned himself. Cardinal Gotti quotes others[15891], who assert, that a short time previous to his death, he was heard to exclaim : “ Alas, I shall soon be in hell ;” and also that, just before his death, he said : “ I, uncertain and fluctuating in the Faith, have to give an

account before the Tribunal of God, and see whether my doctrine is true or false"[15892].

Foolish man, he had the Church, the pillar and the ground of truth, which condemned his doctrine, and he wished to have it tried at that Tribunal, where, if he found it false (as it was), there would be no remedy to ward off eternal perdition.

56. Martin Bucer was the son of a poor Jew in Strasbourg, who left him at his death on the world, without any one to look to him, and only seven years of age. He was taken in by the Dominicans to serve Mass and assist the servants of the Convent; but finding him endowed with great talents, they gave him the habit of the Order, and put him to study[15893]. He soon became a great proficient in sacred and profane literature, and received Holy Orders, Cardinal Gotti says[15894], without being baptized. He was so taken with Luther's doctrine on Celibacy that he apostatized, and not only married once, but three times successively, saying, that as a divorce was allowed to the Jews, on account of the hardness of their hearts, it was also permitted to Christians of an extraordinary temperament[15895]. To the errors of Luther he added others: First That Baptism is necessary as a positive precept, but that it is not necessary for salvation. Second That there is no Church which does not err in morals and faith. Third That before we are justified by God we sin in every good work we do, but that after our justification the good we perform we do through necessity. Fourth That some are so formed by God for the marriage state, that they cannot be forbidden to marry. Fifth That usury is not contrary to the Divine command. Sixth He admitted the Presence of Christ in the Holy Sacrament, but said it was not real, but took place solely by faith. On this account he passed over to the sect of the Sacramentarians, and quarrelled with Luther, and it was in defence of that sect he wrote his Dialogue, " Arbogastus"[15896]. He was selected by the Landgrave as the most likely person to unite the Zuinglians and Lutherans; but though he held many conferences, he never could succeed, for Luther never would give up the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament. He left Strasbourg, where he lived and taught a long time, and in 1549, in the reign of Edward VI., he went to England to join Peter Vermigli, commonly called Peter Martyr, who two years previously was appointed Professor of Theology in Oxford.

He had not been three years in England when he died, at the age of sixty-one, in Cambridge, in 1551; and Cardinal Gotti says[15897], he was tormented with remorse of conscience in his last moments. His bones were exhumed and burned, by order of Queen Mary, in 1556.

57. The other celebrated disciple of Zuinglius who, especially in England, endeavoured to disseminate his errors, was Peter Vermigli, a Florentine, commonly called Peter Martyr. He was born in Florence, in 1500, of a noble, but reduced family. His mother, who was acquainted with the Latin language, taught him till he was eighteen years of age, when, according to some authors, he took the Carthusian habit, but the general opinion is, that he became a Canon Regular[15898] of St Augustine, in the Monastery of Fiesole. In his noviciate he gave indications of great talent, and was, after his profession, sent to Padua, where he was taught Greek, Hebrew, and Philosophy. He thence went to Bologna to study Theology, and returned with a great stock of learning[15899]. He next turned his attention to the pulpit, and preached several Lents in the principal cities of Italy. While preaching in the Cathedral of Naples, he had the misfortune to become acquainted with a Spanish lawyer of the name of Valdes, who, by reading Luther’s and Calvin’s works, became infected with their heresies, and fearing to be discovered in Spain, where the stake awaited him, went to Germany, but the climate not agreeing with him, he came to Naples, and contracted a friendship with Peter Martyr, and then made him a Sacramentarian. As soon as he tasted the poison himself, he began to communicate it to others who used to meet him in a church. This had not gone on long when he was charged with his errors before the Nuncio, and immediately called to Rome. His brethren in religion, with whom he always lived on the best terms, and who certainly believed him innocent, took up his defence most warmly, and he was most fully acquitted and dismissed.

From Home he went to Lucca, where he thought he could establish a Zuinglian congregation, with less risk to himself than in Naples, and he succeeded so far, that among others he made four proselytes among the Professors of the University. They were in a little while discovered, and obliged to fly to the Protestant Cantons of Switzerland, where they soon became Ministers. Peter being discovered also, and not knowing where to fly, turned his steps likewise to Switzerland, hoping that his disciples there would procure a Professorship for him. He went first to Zurich, and afterwards to Basle; but as he wished to make himself the master of all, he met butacool reception in either place. He then went to Bucer, in Strasbourg, who received every heretic, and procured him immediately a Professorship of Theology. He remained there till called to England, where he went with a nun he married, and was received with great honour in London, and was appointed to a Chair in Oxford, with double the salary that was promised to him. He returned to Strasbourg, in 1553, and finally went to teach his blasphemies in Zurich, where he died in 1562, loaded with fruits of perdition, for besides the many years he taught his errors in all these places, he composed and left after him also a number of works to sustain them[15900].

ARTICLE III. THE HERESIES OF CALVIN

I THE BEGINNING AND PROGRESS OF THE HERESY OF CALVIN

> 58.—Birth and Studies of Calvin. 59.—He begins to broach his heresy; they seek to imprison him, and he makes his escape through a window. 60.—He commences to disseminate his impieties in Angouleme. 61.—He goes to Germany to see Bucer, and meets Erasmus. 62.—He returns to France, makes some followers, and introduces the "Supper;" he afterwards goes to Basle, and finishes his "Instructions." 63.—He goes to Italy, but is obliged to fly; arrives in Geneva, and is made Master of Theology. 64.—He is embarrassed there. 65.—He flies from Geneva, and returns to Germany, where he marries a widow. 66.—He returns to Geneva, and is put at the head of the Republic; the impious Works he publishes there; his dispute with Bolsec. 67.—He causes Michael Servetus to be burned alive. 68. Unhappy end of the Calvinistic Mission to Brazil. 69.—Seditions and disturbances in France on Calvin's account; Conference of Poissy. 70.—Melancholy death of Calvin. 71-His personal qualities and depraved manners.

58. John Calvin was born on the 10th of July, 1509, in Noyon, in the ancient province of Picardy some say he was born in Bourg de Pont; but the almost universal opinion is, that he was born in the city itself, and Varillas[15901] says, that the house in which he first saw the light was afterwards razed to the ground by the people, and that a person who subsequently rebuilt it was hanged at the door. He was the third son of Gerard Caudin (he afterwards changed his name to Calvin), the son of a Flemish saddler, and Fiscal Procurator to the Bishop of Noyon, and Receiver to the Chapter. He obtained a Chaplaincy for his son when he was twelve years old, and afterwards a country Curacy in the village of Martville, which he sometime after exchanged for the living of Pont l'Elveque[15902]. Endowed with those

benefices, he at an early age applied himself with the greatest diligence to study, and was soon distinguished for talents, which God gave him for his service, but which he perverted to his own ruin, and to the ruin of many nations infected with his heresy, when he had gone through his preliminary studies, his father sent him to Bourges to study law under Andrew Alciati; but wishing to learn Greek, he commenced the study of that language under Melchior Walmar, a concealed Lutheran, and a native of Germany, who, perceiving the acute genius of his scholar, by degrees instilled the poison of heresy into his mind, and induced him to give up the study of law, and apply himself to Theology[15903]; but Beza confesses that he never studied Theology deeply, and that he could not be called a Theologian.

59. In the meantime, Calvin’s father died, and he returned home, and without scruple sold his benefices, and went to Paris, where, at the age of twenty-eight, he first began to disseminate his heresy[15904]. He then published a little treatise on “Constancy,” in which he advised all to suffer for the truth, as he called his errors. This little work was highly lauded by his friends; but it is only worthy of contempt, as it contains nothing but scraps of learning badly digested, injurious invectives against the Catholic Church, great praises of those heretics condemned by the Church, whom he calls Martyrs of the truth, and numberless errors besides, The publication of this work, and the many indications Calvin had given of using his talents against the Church, aroused the attention of the Criminal Lieutenant, John Morin, who gave orders to arrest him in the College of Cardinal de Moyne, where he then lodged. Calvin, however, suspected what was intended, and while the officers of justice were knocking at the door, he let himself down from the window[15905], by the bed-clothes, and took refuge in the house of a vine-dresser, as Varillas informs us[15906], with whom he changed clothes, and left his house with a spade on his shoulder.

In this disguise he was met by a Canon of Noyon, who recognized him, and inquired the meaning of this masquerade. Calvin told him everything, and when his friend advised him to return, and retract his errors, and not cast himself away, he, it is said, answered: “ If I had to begin again, I would not forsake the Faith of my fathers; but now I am pledged to my doctrines, and I will defend them till death ;” and an awful and terrible death awaited him, as we shall see hereafter. Varillas adds, that while he resided afterwards in Geneva, a nephew of his asked him if salvation could be obtained in the Catholic Church, and that Calvin could not find it in his heart to deny it, but told him he might be saved in that Church.

60. He escaped into Angouleme, and for three years taught Greek, as well as he could from the little he learned from Waimar, and his friends procured him lodgings in the house of the Parish Priest of Claix, Louis de Tillet, a very studious person, and possessor of a library of 4,000 volumes, mostly manuscripts. It was here he composed almost the entire of the Four Books of his pestilent Instructions, the greater part of which he took from the works of Melanchthon, Ecolampadius, and other sectaries, but he adopted a more lucid arrangement, and a more elegant style of Latinity[15907]. As he finished each chapter he used to read it for Tillet, who at first refused his assent to such wicked doctrine; but by degrees his faith was undermined, and he became a disciple of Calvin, who offered to accompany him to Germany, where a Conference with the Reforming doctors, he assured him, would confirm him in the course he was adopting. They, accordingly, left for Germany, but had not gone further than Geneva when Tillet's brother, a good Catholic, and Chief Registrar of the Parliament of Paris, joined them, and prevailed on his brother to retrace his steps and renounce his Calvinistic errors. In this he happily succeeded; the Priest returned, and was afterwards the first in his district to raise his voice publicly against Calvinism[15908].

61. Calvin continued his rout to Germany, and arrived at Strasbourg, where Bucer was labouring to unite the Lutherans and Zuinglians in doctrine, but never could succeed, as neither would consent to give up their peculiar tenets on the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Calvin, seeing the difficulties he was in, suggested to him a middle way to reconcile both parties that is, to propose as a doctrine that in the reception of the Eucharist it is not the flesh, but the substance or power, of Jesus Christ that is received; this, he imagined, would reconcile both parties. Bucer, however, either because he thought Luther never would give up his own particular views, or, perhaps, jealous that the idea did not originate with himself, refused to adopt it. Calvin next visited Erasmus with a letter of recommendation from Bucer, in which he told Erasmus to pay particular attention to what would drop from him; he did so, and after some

conversation with him, told his friends that he saw in that young man one who would be a great plague to the Church[15909].

62. Calvin, finding it difficult to make many proselytes to his Sacramentarian doctrines—in Germany, returned to France in 1535, and went to Poietiers, where at first, in the privacy of a garden, he began to expound his tenets to a few, but his followers increasing, he transferred his Chair to a hall of the University, called Ministerium, and here the Calvanistic teachers took the name of ministers, as the Lutherans called themselves preachers. Calvin sent out from this several ministers to the neighbouring towns and villages, and, by this means, made a great many proselytes[15910]. It was there he first published the forty articles of his heresy, and it was there also he introduced the Supper, or Manducation, as he called it, which was privately celebrated in the following manner :First, some part of the Testament relative to the Last Supper was read, then the minister made a few observations on it, but in general the burthen of these discourses was the abuse of the Pope and of the Mass, Calvin always saying that in the New Testament no mention is made of any other sacrifice than that of the Cross. Bread and wine were then set on the table, and the minister, instead of the words of consecration, said : “ My brethren, let us eat of the bread and drink of the wine of the Lord, in memory of his passion and death.”

The congregation were seated round a table, and the minister, breaking off a small portion of bread, gave it to each, and they eat it in silence; the wine was dispensed in like manner. The Supper was finished by a prayer, thanking God for enlightening them, and freeing them from Papistical errors; the Our Father and the Creed was said, and they swore not to betray anything that was there done. It was, however, impossible to conceal the existence of this new Church of Poietiers, and as the Royal Ordinances were very rigorous against innovators, and Calvin felt that he could not be safe in Pictou, he went to Nerac in Aquitaine, the residence of Margaret, Queen of Navarre, a patroness of the new doctrine. Even here he was not in safety, as Royal edicts were every day published against heretics, so he went to Basle, where he employed himself in preparing his four books of the Institutes for the press. He was twenty-six years of age when he published this work, with the motto, “ I came not to send peace, but a sword

;" showing, like a true prophet, the great evils this work would bring on France, and every other country where its pestilential doctrines would be embraced[15911].

63. While Calvin was at Basle he felt a great desire to propagate his doctrine in Italy, where Luther could make no way; and understanding that Renee, daughter of Louis XII. of France, and wife of Hercules of Este, Duke of Ferrara, was a woman fond of novelties, and a proficient not only in Philosophy and Mathematics, but also fond of dabbling in Theology, he went to visit her, and, after some time, succeeded in making her one of his followers, so that he held privately in her chamber several conferences with her and others of the party. When this came to the Duke's ears, he was very angry, and bitterly reproved the Duchess, obliging her to give up the practice of the new religion, and all the favour Calvin could obtain was leave to quit his States. He then at once fled from Ferrara to France, for fear of the Inquisition, which was very active just then, on account of the disturbed state of Religious opinions in Europe[15912].

In the year 1536 he went to Geneva, which the year before rebelled against the Duke of Turin, and cast off, along with its allegiance, the Catholic Religion, at the instigation of William Farrell; and the Genevese, to commence their infamy, placed a public inscription on a bronze tablet, as follows : " Quum anno Domini MDXXXV. profligata Romani Antichristi tyrannide, abrogatisque ejus superstitionibus, sacrosancta Christi Religio hie in suam puritatem, Ecclesia in meliorem ordinem singulari beneficio reposita, et simul pulsis fugatisque hostibus, Urbs ipsa in suam libertatem non sine insigni miraculo restituta fuerit; S. P. Q. G. Monumentum hoc perpetuae memoriae causa fieri, atque hoc loco erigi curavit, quo suam erga Deum gratitudinem testatem faceret." Farrell, perceiving that Calvin would be of great assistance to him in maintaining the new doctrines he had introduced into Geneva, used every means in his power to induce him to stay, and got the magistrates to appoint him Preacher and Professor of Theology[15913]. One of his first acts after his appointment was to burn the Images of the Saints which adorned the Cathedral, and to break the Altars. The table of the high Altar was formed of a slab of very precious marble, which a wretch called Perrin caused to be fitted up in the place of public execution, to serve as a table for cutting off the heads of the criminals; but by the just judgment of God, and at Calvin's instigation, though the cause is not known, it so happened that in a short time he was beheaded on the same stone himself[15914].

64. Calvin fixed his residence in Geneva, but he and Farrell were accused, in 1537, of holding erroneous opinions concerning the Trinity and the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Their accuser was Peter de Charles, a Doctor of Sorbonne, who had been a Sacramentarian, and Minister of Geneva; he charged Calvin, who said the word Trinity was a barbarism, with denying the Unity of God in three Persons; besides, he had stated in his Catechism, that the Saviour on the cross was abandoned by his Father, and driven into despair, and that he was condemned to suffer the pains of hell, but his detention, unlike that of the reprobate, which endures for eternity, only lasted for a short time; from this Charles argued that Calvin denied the Divinity of Christ.[15915]

Calvin cleared himself and Farrell from these charges, and his accuser was banished from Geneva, most fortunate circumstance for him, as it opened his eyes to Divine grace. He went to Rome, and obtained absolution for his errors, and died in the Catholic Church. This affair concluded, Calvin had a serious dispute with his confrere Farrell, who, following the custom of Berne, used unleavened bread for the Supper, while Calvin insisted on using leavened bread, saying it was an abuse introduced by the Scholastic Papists, to use the other. The magistrates, however, were in favour of the use of unleavened bread. Calvin, anxious to differ as much as possible from Zuinglius[15916], preached to the people, and got them to declare in his favour, so much so that Easter being now nigh they said they would not communicate unless with leavened bread[15917]. The magistrates, jealous of their authority, appointed a minister called Mare to administer the Sacrament, with unleavened bread, in St. Peter's Church; but Calvin frightened him so much that he hid himself, and the magistrates then commanded that there should be no communion that day, and banished both Calvin and Farrell from the city[15918].

65. Calvin went to Berne to plead his cause, but met with another adventure there. A Flemish Catholic, of the name of Zachary, was at that time before the Council of Berne; he held a disputation about matters of Faith with Calvin; in the midst of it he took out a letter, and asked him if he

knew the writing. Calvin acknowledged it was written with his own hand; the letter was then read, and found to contain a great deal of abuse of Zuinglius[15919]. The meeting immediately broke up, and he, seeing Berne was no longer a place for him, went to Strasbourg, where he was again received by his friend, Bucer, and appointed Professor of Theology, and minister of a new church, in which he collected together all the French and Flemings who embraced his doctrine; here also, in the year 1538, he married one Ideletta, the widow of an Anabaptist, with whom he lived fourteen years, but had no children, though Varillas says he had one, but it only lived two days[15920].

66. Calvin sighed to return to Geneva, and in 1541 was recalled. He was received with every demonstration of joy and respect, and was appointed Chief of the Republic. He then established the discipline of his sect, and the Senate decreed that thenceforward the ministers or citizens could never change the statutes promulgated by him. He then also published his great French Catechism, which his followers afterwards translated into various languages, German, English, Flemish, Erse, Spanish, and even Hebrew. He then also published his pestilent books, entitled Defensio Sacrae Doctrinae, De Disciplina, De Necessi tate Reformandae, Ecclesiae, one against the Interim of Charles V., and another against the Council of Trent, called Antidotum adversus Conc. Tridentinum[15921]. In the year 1542, the Faculty of Sorbonne, by way of checking the errors then published almost daily, put forth twenty-five Chapters on the Dogmas of Faith we are bound to believe; and Calvin seeing all his impious novelties condemned by these Chapters, attacked the venerable University in the grossest manner, so as to call the Professors a herd of swine[15922]. In the year 1453, he procured a union between his sect and the Zuinglians, and being thus safe in Geneva, which he was cautious not to leave, he encouraged his followers in France to lay down their lives for the Faith, as he called his doctrines; and these deluded creatures, while Francis I. and Henry II. were lighting fires to burn heretics, deceived by Calvin and his ministers, set at nought all punishments, even death itself nay, some of them cast themselves into the flames, and Calvin called their ashes the ashes of Martyrs[15923]. In the year 1551, he had a great dispute in Geneva with Jerome Bolsec, who, though an apostate Carmelite nevertheless could not tolerate the opinions of Luther and Calvin

concerning free will, who denied it altogether, and said, that as God predestined some to grace and Paradise, so he predestined others to sin and hell. He could not agree with Calvin in this, and he accordingly induced the magistrates to banish Bolsec from Geneva and its territories as a Pelagian, and with a threat of having him flogged, if he made his appearance there again.

Happily for Bolsec, this sentence was put in execution : he then began to reflect on the evil step he had taken, again returned to the Catholic Church, and wrote a great deal against Calvin's doctrine, who answered him in his impious work De 7Eterna Dei Praodestinatione[15924].

67. About the year 1553, Calvin caused Michael Servetus to be burned, and thus he who, in the dedication of his work to Francis I., called the magistrates who burned heretics, Diocletians, became, in the case of Servetus, a Diocletian himself. These are the facts of the case[15925] :Calvin procured from the Fair of Frankfort the Dialogues of Servetus, in which he denied the Trinity, and published several other errors we shall see here after. When he read this, he immediately marked his prey, as he had an old grudge against him, since once he proved him in a disputation to have made a false quotation. Servetus was passing through Geneva, on his way to Italy, and as it was Sunday, Calvin was to preach that evening after dinner. Servetus was curious to hear him, and expected to escape observation. He was betrayed, however, to Calvin, who was just going into the pulpit, and he immediately ran to the house of one of the Consuls to get an order for his arrest, on a charge of heresy. By the laws of Geneva it was ordered, that no one should be imprisoned unless his accuser would consent to go to prison also. Calvin, accordingly, got a servant of his to make the charge, and go to prison, and in the servant's name forty charges were brought against Servetus. Undergoing an examination, he asserted that the Divine Word was not a person subsisting, and hence it followed, that Jesus Christ was but a mere man. Calvin was then summoned, and seeing that Servetus was condemned by that avowal of his opinions, he proposed that his condemnation should be sanctioned, not by the Church of Geneva alone, but by the Churches of Zurich, Basle, and Berne, likewise. They all agreed in condemning him to be burned to death by a slow fire, and the sentence was carried into execution on the 17th of October, 1553[15926].

Varillas quotes a writer who asserts, that when Servetus was led to punishment he cried out : “0 God, save my soul; Jesus, Son of the Eternal God, have pity on me.” It is worthy of remark, that he did not say Eternal Son of God, and hence it appears that he died obstinately in his errors, by a most horrible death, for being fastened to the stake by an iron chain, when the pile was lighted, a violent wind blew the flames on one side, so that the unhappy wretch was burning for two or three hours before death put an end to his torment, and he was heard to cry out : “Woe is me, I can neither live nor die.” Thus he perished at the age of thirty-six[15927]. In the following year Calvin, to defend himself from the charge of being called a Diocletian, published a treatise to prove that by Scripture and Tradition, and the custom of the first ages, it was lawful to put obstinate heretics to death. This was answered by Martin Bellius; but Theodore Beza wrote a long rejoinder in defence of Calvin, and thus we see how inconsistently heretics act in blaming the Catholic Church at that time, for making use of the secular arm to punish heresy, when in theory and practice they did the same themselves.

68. In the year 1555, the Calvinists had the vanity to send a mission to America, to endeavour to introduce their poisonous doctrines among these simple people. For this purpose, Nicholas Durant, a zealous French Calvinist, equipped three vessels, with consent of the King, in which he and many other Calvinists, some of them noblemen, embarked for Brazil, under the pretext of a commercial speculation; but their primary object was to introduce Calvinism. When Calvin heard of this, he sent two Ministers to accompany them one of the name of Peter Richer, an apostate Carmelite; the other a young aspirant of the name of William Carter. In the month of November this impious Mission arrived in Brazil, but turned out a total failure, as the two ministers could not agree on the doctrine of the Eucharist, for Richer said that the Word made flesh should not be adored. According to the words of St. John, “the spirit quickeneth, the flesh availeth nothing,” and hence he deduced, that the Eucharist was of no use to those who received it. This dispute put an end to the Mission, and Durant himself, in the year 1558, publicly abjured Calvinism, and returned to the Church, which he afterwards defended by his writings[15928].

69. In the year 1557, a number of Calvinists were discovered in Paris clandestinely celebrating the Supper by night in a private house, contrary to

the Royal Ordinances. One hundred and twenty were taken and imprisoned, and a rumour was abroad, that many enormities were committed in these nocturnal meetings. They were all punished, and even some of them were burned alive[15929]. In the year 1560, the Calvinistic heresy having now become strong in France, the conspiracy of Amboise was discovered. This was principally directed against the Princes of the House of Guise, and Francis II., King of France, and Louis, Prince of Conde, and brother of the King of Navarre, was at the head of it. Calvin mentioned this conspiracy in a letter to his friends, Bullinger and Blauret, in which he admits that he was acquainted with it, but says he endeavoured to prevent it. It is easy to see, however, his disappointment at its failure. It is said by some authors that this was the time when the French Calvinists first adopted the name of Huguenots[15930]. The Conference of Poissy was also held at this time. Calvin expected that his party would have the victory; in this he was disappointed; but the heretics, thus beaten, remained as obstinate as ever, and began to put on such a bold face that they preached publicly in the streets of Paris. A scandalous transaction took place on this account: A Minister named Malois was preaching near the church of St. Medard; when the bell rang for Vespers, the heretics sent to have it stopped, as it prevented them from hearing the preacher. The people in the church continued to ring on, when the Calvinists, leaving the sermon, rushed furiously into the church, broke the images, cast down the altars, trampled on the Most Holy Sacrament, wounded several Ecclesiastics, and then dragged thirty-six of them, tied with ropes, and covered with blood, through the streets of the city to prison. Beza wrote a flaming account of this victory of the Faith, as he called it, to Calvin.

70. At length the day of Divine vengeance for the wretched Calvin drew nigh; he died in Geneva, in 1564, on the 26th day of May, in the 54th year of his age. Beza says he died calmly; but William Bolsec, the writer of his life, and others, quoted by Noel Alexander and Gotti[15931], assert that he died calling on the devil, and cursing his life, his studies, his writings, and, at the same time, exhaling a horrible stench from his ulcers, and thus he appeared before Christ, the Judge, to answer for all the souls lost, or to be lost, through his means.

Varillas, in his account of Calvin’s character and personal qualities, says[15932], he was endowed by God with a prodigious memory, so that he never forgot what he once read, and that his intellect was so acute, especially in logical and theological subtleties, that he at once discovered the point on which everything hinged in the doubts proposed to him. He was indefatigable in studying, in preaching, in writing, and in teaching, and it is wonderful how any man could write so many works during the time he lived, and besides, he preached almost every day, gave a theological lecture every week, on every Friday held a long conference with his followers on doubts of faith, and almost all his remaining time was taken up in clearing up and answering the knotty questions of his friends. He was very temperate both in eating and drinking, not so much through any love of the virtue of abstinence, as from a weakness of stomach, so that he was sometimes two days without eating. He suffered also from hypochondria, and frequent headaches, and hence his delicate health made him melancholy. He was very emaciated, and his colour was so bad, that he appeared as if bronzed all over. He was fond of solitude and spoke but little. He was graceless in his delivery, and frequently, in his sermons, used to break out in invectives against the Catholic Church and people. He was prompt in giving advice or answers, but proud and rash, and so rude and intractable, that he easily fell out with all who were obliged to have any communication with him[15933]. He was very vain of himself, and on that account affected extreme gravity. He was the slave of almost every vice, but especially hatred, anger, and vindictiveness, and on that accounts Bucer, though his friend, in a letter of admonition to him, says he is a mad dog, and as a writer inclined to speak badly of every one.

71. He was addicted to immorality, at all events, in his youth, and Spondanus says[15934], he was charged even with an unnameable offence, and Bolsec even says in his life of him, that he was condemned to death for it in Noyon, but that, through the intercession of the Bishop, the punishment was changed to branding with a red-hot iron. Varillas says[15935], that in the registry of Noyon a leaf is marked with this condemnation, but without mentioning the offence; but Noel Alexander says[15936] positively, that both the certificate of the condemnation and the offence was preserved in Noyon, and that it was shown to, and read by, Berteler, Secretary of the Republic of

Geneva, sent on purpose to verify the fact. Cardinal Gotti says[15937], that when he taught Greek in Angouleme the same charge was brought against him by his scholars and that he was condemned there likewise. Such are the virtues attributed to the pretended Reformers of the Church[15938].

II THEODORE BEZA, THE HUGUENOTS, AND OTHER CALVINISTS, 4VHO DISTURBED FRANCE, SCOTLAND, AND ENGLAND

> 72.—Theodore Beza; his character and vices. 73.—His learning, employments, and death. 74.—Conference of St. Francis de Sales with Beza. 75.—Continuation of the same subject. 76, 77—Disorders of the Huguenots in France. 78.—Horrors committed by them; they are proscribed in France. 79.—Their disorders in Flanders. 80.—And in Scotland. 81 .-Mary Stuart is married to Francis II. 82.—She returns to Scotland, and marries Darnley; next Bothwell; is driven by violence to make a fatal renunciation of her Crown in favour of her son. 83.—She takes refuge in England, and is imprisoned by Elizabeth, and afterwards condemned to death by her. 84.—Edifying death of Mary Stuart. 85.—James I., the son of Mary, succeeds Elizabeth; he is succeeded by his son, Charles I., who was beheaded. 86.—He is succeeded by his son, Charles II., who is succeeded by his brother, James II., a Catholic, who died in France.

72. At Calvin’s death, he left the direction of the unfortunate city of Geneva to Theodore Beza, a worthy successor of his, both in life and doctrines. He was born on the 24th of June. 1519, in Vezelais, in Burgundy, of a noble family, and was educated his uncle, who sent him to Paris, to study his Humanity, and afterwards to Orleans, to learn Greek, under Melchior Wolmar, Calvin’s master, first in Greek, and next in heresy. His appearance was agreeable, his manners polished, and he was a great favourite with all his acquaintance. He led, when young, an immoral life, and wrote several amatory poems; he had an intrigue with a tailor’s wife in Paris, of the name of Claudia, and he has been charged with even more abominable crimes. His uncle resigned a Priorate, which he held, in his favour, and, likewise, made him his heir; but he spent not only that and his paternal property, but even stole the chalices and ornaments of a church belonging to the natives of Burgundy, in Orleans, of which he was Procurator. For this he was imprisoned, but soon liberated; and soon after he published in Paris a shocking epigram, regarding a person named Audabcrt, which induced the Court of Paris to order his imprisonment. This terrified him, for, if convicted of the crime he was charged with, the penalty was burning alive. He was reduced to the greatest poverty, for he not only ran through his property, but also sold his Priorate for twelve hundred crowns; and even in

this transaction, he was guilty of dishonesty, for he prevailed on the agents of his benefice to pay him the revenue of it before it came due. Covered with infamy, he changed his name to Theobald May, and fled to Geneva, taking Claudia with him, whom he then married, though her husband was still living. He presented himself to Calvin, who, finding he studied under Wolmar, received him, and procured him a Professorship of Greek, and from that he was promoted to a Professorship of Theology in Lausanne. The Ministers of that city, though apostates, yet having a knowledge of the crimes already committed by Beza, and seeing the debauched life he led, refused to admit him to the Ministry; but he was sustained by Calvin, whom he venerated almost to adoration, so that he was called Calvinolator, the adorer of Calvin[15939].

In his teaching he surpassed even Calvin in impiety, for the one admitted, though obscurely, the body of Christ in the Eucharist, but the other said, in the Conference of Poissy, that the body of Christ was as far from the Eucharist as heaven is from the earth; and although he was obliged to retract, nevertheless, in a letter of his, he again repeats the same sentiment[15940]; and one of his companions, as Spondanus tells us, said, what wonder is it, that Beza does not believe that, when he scarcely believes in the existence of God[15941]. On the occasion of the outbreak of the Calvinists against the Priests of the Church of St. Medard (N. 69), he boasted not only of the insult to the Church and the Priests, but especially of the horrible profanation of the Holy Eucharist. He wrote a letter of congratulation to the Queen of England, praising her for assisting to plant the Faith in France by blood and slaughter; and when he went to the Congress of Worms, where Calvin sent him, to try and gain friends for his sect, and Melanchthon asked him, “Why the French caused so many disasters in France?” He said, “They only did what the Apostles had done before them.” “ Why, then,” said Melanchthon, do you not suffer stripes, as the Apostles did.” Beza made him no answer, but turned his back on him.

73. Although nearly seventy years old when his wife Claudia died, he married a very young widow, of whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. Florimund[15942] says, that a nobleman of Guienne returning from Home, in the year 1600, called on Beza,. and found him a venerable old man, with a long white beard, and in his hand a beautifully bound little

volume. When the gentle man asked him what it contained, he showed him that it was a book of sonnets, and said : "Sic tempus fallo" " I thus cheat time." " Oh," said the gentleman to a friend of his, " is it thus this holy man, with one foot already in Charon's bark, passes his time." Beza continued for forty-one years after Calvin's death to govern the Church of Geneva, or, rather, to poison it by his bad example and doctrine; he was, however, called to account for all before God, in the year 1605, the eighty-fifth of his age[15943]. Let not the reader wonder that I have said so much about the vices of Luther, Calvin, and Beza. 1 have done so on purpose, that every one may understand that God did not send such men to reform his Church, but, rather, the devil, to destroy it. In this, however, no heresiarch ever can or ever has succeeded, for our Lord has promised to protect it to the end of the world, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

74. I will here relate a Conference St. Francis de Sales had with Beza, about the year 1597, as we find it in the Saint's life[15944]. Clement VIII. desired St. Francis to see Beza, and try could he convert him.

The Saint made his way into Geneva, at the risk of his life, and called on Beza, whom he found alone. He commenced, by begging Beza not to believe all he heard of him from his enemies. Beza answered, that he always considered St. Francis a man of learning and merit, but that he regretted seeing him devote his energies to prop up anything so weak as the Catholic religion. St. Francis then asked him, if it was his opinion, that a man could be saved in the Catholic Church? Beza demanded a little time, before he would give his answer; he went into his study, remained walking about for a quarter of an hour, and then coming out said : " Yes; I believe that a man may be saved in the Catholic Church." " Why, then," said St. Francis, "have you established your Reformation with so much bloodshed and destruction, since, without any danger a man may be saved, and never leave the Catholic Church." "You have put obstacles in the way of salvation," said Beza, "in the Catholic Church, by inculcating the necessity of good works; but we, by teaching salvation by Faith alone, have smoothened the way to heaven." "But you," said St. Francis, " by denying the necessity of good works, destroy all human and divine laws, which threaten punishment to the wicked, and promise rewards to the good; and Christ says, in the Gospel, that not only those who do evil, but, likewise, those who omit to do the good commanded to be done, shall suffer eternal punishment. It is necessary, also," said he, " in order to know the true Faith, that there should be some judge from whom there is no appeal, and to whose judgment all should submit; for otherwise disputes never would have an end, and the truth never could be found." Beza then began talking about the Council of Trent, and said that the only rule of Faith was the Scriptures, and that the Council did not follow them. St. Francis answered, that the Scriptures had different meanings, and that it was necessary that their true sense should be decided by the Church. " But," said Beza, "the Scriptures are clear, and the Holy Ghost gives to everyone the internal understanding of their true sense." " How, then, does it happen," said St. Francis, " if the Scripture be clear, and the Holy Ghost inspires the true sense of it to everyone, that Luther and Calvin, both, in the opinion of the Reformers, inspired by God, held the most opposite opinions in the most important questions of Religion. Luther says, that the real body of Christ is in the Eucharist; Calvin, on the other hand, that it is only the virtue of Christ. How, then, can we know, when so great a difference exists, to which of the two, Luther or Calvin, the Holy Ghost has revealed the truth ?Besides, Luther denies the Canonicity of the Epistle of St. James, and of some other books of the Holy Scriptures; Calvin admits it. Whom are we to believe?" They had now been disputing for three hours, and when Beza saw himself thus hemmed up in a corner, he lost his temper, and only answered the Saint's arguments by abuse. St. Francis, then, with his accustomed meekness, said he did not come to give him any annoyance, and took his leave.

75. Sometime after, again at the request of the Pope, St. Francis paid him a second visit, and, among many things then discussed, they argued especially concerning Free Will, for Calvin blasphemously asserted, that whatever man does, he does through necessity that if he is predestined he does what is good if he is not, he does what is evil. The Saint proved the doctrine of Free Will so clearly, both from the Old and the New Testament, that Beza was convinced of its truth, and, cordially taking St. Francis by the hand, said that he daily prayed to God, that if he was not in the right way, he might lead him to it. This shows the doubts he entertained of his new faith; for those who are certain that they profess the true faith, never pray to God, to enlighten them to adopt another, but to confirm and preserve them

in the Faith they profess. Finally, St. Francis thinking him now better disposed after this acknowledgment, spoke to him plainly, and told him, that now his years should lead him to reflect whether he was not letting the time of mercy pass by, and preparing himself for the day of justice that, as he was now near the close of life, he should defer his conversion no longer, but return immediately to the Church he had forsaken that if he feared the persecution he would suffer from the Calvinists, he should remember he ought to suffer everything for his eternal salvation; but as Luther himself remarked, it is hard to expect that the head of any sect will forsake the doctrines he has taught others, and become a convert. Beza said that he did not despair of salvation in his own Church. The Saint then seeing that his heart was made of stone, left him under a promise of returning soon again to visit him; but this was not in his power, for the Genevese put guards to watch their Minister, and determined to put St. Francis to death if he ever came again. Some say that Beza was anxious to see him again, and that he retracted his errors, and that on that account his friends gave out that the violence of his sickness deranged his mind; but we know nothing of this for certain, and it is most probable that he died as he lived. The writer of St. Francis’s life says, also, that Des Hayes, Governor of Montargis, being in Geneva., and conversing familiarly one day with Beza, asked him, why he remained in his new sect? He pointed out to him a young woman in his house, and said, this is what retains me; and it is supposed that this was his second wife, whom he married when he was seventy years old.

76. We have now to speak of the French Calvinists, or Huguenots, as they are generally called, as is supposed, from the castle of Hugon, near Toulouse, close by which they had their first conventicle, and of the desolation they caused in France. Volumes would not suffice to relate all the destruction caused by Calvin and his followers, not only in France, but in many other countries. I will only then give a sketch of them, to show how much harm one perverse heresiarch may occasion. During the reigns of Francis I. and his son, Henry II., though both zealous Catholics, and ever prosecuting the Calvinists with the utmost rigour, even condemning many of them to the stake, still this heresy was so spread through every province of the kingdom, that there was not a city or town but had its temple and ministers of the new sect. In the year 1559, however, when Henry was succeeded by his son, Francis II., only sixteen years of age, it broke forth

like a torrent, and overwhelmed the whole kingdom with errors, sacrileges, sedition, and bloodshed[15945]. Jeane, Queen of Navarre, was the chief promoter of all this; she used all her endeavours to extinguish the Faith; she encouraged the heretics to take up arms, and when they were worsted, she was always ready to assist them. She encouraged Louis Bourbon, Prince of Conde, too, at his first presentation to her, to take up arms in the cause of the Reformation, and she was the head of the conspiracy of Amboise, which, however, did not succeed according to her wishes[15946]. The Huguenots, however, are blamed for the death of the young King, Francis II., who, it is said, was poisoned by a Huguenot surgeon, at the age of seventeen, by putting poison into his ear while treating him for an abscess[15947].

77. A royal decree was published in the reign of Charles IX., granting leave to the Calvinists to hold meetings, and preach outside the cities, and on this occasion, nothing could equal the disturbances they caused. The first outbreak took place in Vassay, in Champagne, where seventy Calvinists were killed; the Prince of Conde immediately put himself at the head of the Calvinistic party, and they declared war against their King and country. They took several cities, and destroyed the churches, broke open the tombs of Saints, and burned their relics. Many battles were subsequently fought, in which the rebels were beaten, though not conquered.

The first was fought in Dreux, in the Vennassain, in which Conde was taken prisoner by Francis of Guise, who commanded the Catholics, and Anthony, King of Navarre, who commanded the royal army, was so severely wounded, that he died shortly after, leaving an only son Henry, who was afterward the famous Henry IV., King of France. In the following year, 1563, while the Duke of Guise, commander of the royal troops, was besieging Orleans, he was treacherously wounded by one John Poltroze, employed by Beza; the wound proved mortal, and the Queen-Mother made a treaty of peace with the heretics, most hurtful to the Catholic interests, but which was subsequently modified by another edict[15948].

78. The Calvinists went to war again in 1567, and were again beaten, and in the year 1569, the Catholics gained the battle of Jarnac, in which the Prince of Conde, leader of the Calvinists, was killed[15949]. In the year 1572, a great number of Calvinists were killed on St. Bartholomew’s day, and it is

thought that not less than a hundred thousand Calvinists perished in this war; such were the hellish fruits of the doctrines Calvin taught. It is terrifying to read the details of the excesses committed by the Calvinists against the Churches, the Priests, the Sacred Images, and especially the Holy Eucharist. It is related in the Annals of France, in the year 1563[15950], that a Huguenot went into the church of St. Genevieve, and possessed by a diabolical spirit, snatched the Sacred Host out of the hands of the officiating Priest; he paid dearly, however, for the sacrilege, as he was immediately taken, his hand was cut off, he was then hanged, and his body burned. As an atonement for this irreverence, the same month, the King, his mother, the Princes of the blood, and the Parliament, went in procession from the chapel royal to the church of St. Genievieve, bearing lighted torches in their hands.

About this time, also, the Huguenots burned the body of St. Francis a Paula, which was preserved incorrupt for fifty years, in the church of St. Gregory of Tours, in the suburbs of Tours. Louis XIV. used every means, by sending preachers among these sectaries, to convert them, and finally adopted such rigorous measures against them, that a great many returned to the Faith, and those who refused compliance, left the kingdom. Innocent XI., in the year 1685, wrote him a letter, praising his zeal[15951].

79. Would to God, however, that the plague never spread further than France, and never tainted any other kingdom. The Low Countries were likewise infected by it, and the chief reason of its spreading there, was on account of the Lutheran and Calvinistic troops, maintained by the house of Austria to oppose France; both sects rivalled each other in making proselytes there, but Calvin sent many of his disciples to Flanders, and the Calvinists, therefore, remained the most numerous. The Flemings, also, felt themselves aggrieved by the Spanish Governors, and succeeded with Philip II., in obtaining the recall of Cardinal Granville, who had been sent as Counsellor of Mary, Queen of Hungary, and sister of Charles V., Regent of the Low Countries. This was a most fatal blow to the Catholic cause, for this great prelate, by his vigorous measures, and his zealous administration of his Inquisitorial powers, kept the heretics in check, but after his departure, in 1556, they broke out into open insurrection, wrecked the churches of Antwerp, broke the altars and images, and left the monasteries

heaps of ruins, and this sedition spread through Brabant and other provinces, already infected with heresy, so that the Regent felt herself obliged to grant them a provisional licence for the exercise of their false Religion. King Philip refused to ratify this concession, and the heretics again took up arms; the King then sent the Duke of Alva with a powerful army to chastise them, but the Prince of Orange, though under many obligations to the King of Spain, proclaimed himself chief of the rebels and Calvinists, and led an army of thirty thousand Germans into the Low Countries[15952].

The scale of victory inclined sometimes to one side, sometimes to another, but the whole province was in rebellion against the King of Spain and the authority of the Catholic Church. The best authority to consult regarding this war of the Netherlands is Cardinal Bentivoglio. Although the Calvinists were most numerous in Holland, it is now divided between a thousand sects Calvinists, Lutherans, Anabaptists, Socinians, Arians, and the like. There are, likewise, a great number of Catholics; and, although they do not enjoy the free exercise of their Religion, still they are tolerated, and allowed to have private chapels in the cities, and in the country towns and villages they enjoy greater freedom[15953].

80. Calvinism spread itself also into Scotland, and totally infected that kingdom. Varillas[15954] gives the whole history of its introduction there; we will give a sketch of it. The perversion of this kingdom commenced with John Knox, an apostate Priest, of dissolute morals, who was at first a Lutheran, but after wards residing some time in Geneva, and being intimate with Calvin, became one of his followers, and so ardent was he in his new Religion, that he promised Calvin that he would risk everything to plant it in Scotland; soon after, he quitted Geneva, and came to Scotland, to put his design into execution. The opportunity was not long wanting. Henry VIII., King of England, strove to induce his nephew, James V., King of Scotland, to follow his example, and establish a schism, and separate himself from the Roman Church, and invited him to meet him in some place where they could hold a conference, and discuss the matter. King James excused himself under various pretexts, and the upshot of the matter was, that Henry went to war with him. James gave the command of his army to a favourite of his, Oliver Sinclair, whom the nobility obeyed with the greatest

reluctance, as he was not of noble birth, and the consequence was, that the Scots were beaten, and James died of grief[15955], leaving an infant only eight days old, to inherit his throne, Mary Stuart. Now this was exactly what Knox wanted; a long regency was just the thing to give him an opportunity to establish his opinions, and he unfortunately succeeded so well, that he substituted Calvinism for Catholicity.

The infant Mary, being now Queen of Scotland, Henry VIII, asked her in marriage for his son Edward, afterwards the sixth of that name, and then only five years old. This demand raised two parties in the kingdom. James Hamilton, Earl of Arran, then all-powerful in Scotland, and Governor of the kingdom, favoured Henry’s wishes, gained over by Knox, who had already instilled heretical opinions into his mind; and one great reason he alleged was, that it would establish a perpetual peace between the two kingdoms. On the contrary, the Archbishop of St. Andrews, David Beatoun[15956], afterwards Cardinal, and the Catholics, gave it all the opposition in their power, as tending to make Scotland a province of England; but the chief cause of their opposition to it, was the injury to Religion, for this marriage would draw Scotland into schism.

81. Meanwhile, the Regent, who was a friend of the heretics, permitted the Calvinists to disseminate their doctrines, and gave liberty to everyone in private or in public to pray as he liked, or, in other words, to choose whatever religion he pleased. The Archbishop opposed this concession, but the Calvinists rose in arms against him, and imprisoned him, and made him promise to favour the English alliance. In this, however, they did not succeed, for previous to her departure for England, the Cardinal, with consent of the Queen-Mother, Mary of Lorrain, sister to the Prince of Guise, proposed to Francis I., King of France, to marry Mary to the Dauphin, son of Henry II. The King of France was very well pleased with the proposal, and sent a large body of troops into Scotland, which kept the Calvinists in check,, and enabled the Queen Regent to send her daughter to France, and so Mary was sent, before she completed her seventh year, to be brought up in the family of Henry II., and in time to be married to his son, Francis II. On the death of Francis I. and Henry II., Mary was married to Francis II., but was soon left a widow, and the marriage was not blessed with children. Queen Mary then returned to Scotland, where she found religious affairs in

the greatest confusion. The Calvinists assassinated the Archbishop in his very chamber, and afterwards hanged his body out of the window[15957].

82. The rebels, likewise, in this sedition, destroyed the churches, and obliged the Queen-Mother to grant them the free exercise of Calvinism. Such was the miserable state of the kingdom when the Queen returned to it from France; and she immediately set about remedying these religious disorders. About the year 1568 she married Henry Darnley[15958], who was afterwards assassinated in the King's house by Earl Bothwell, leaving one son, afterwards James VI[15959]. Bothwell, blinded with love of the Queen, engaged a body of conspirators, seized her as she was returning from visiting her son at Stirling, brought her to a castle, and obliged her to marry him. On hearing this the Calvinists immediately broke out into rebellion against her, and accused her of being privy to the murder of her former husband, since she married his murderer, but the principal cause of their hatred to her was her religion. Bothwell himself, however, who had to fly to Denmark from this outbreak, declared before his death that the Queen was perfectly innocent of Henry Darnley's murder. The Calvinists, however, glad of a pretext to persecute the Queen, became so bold at last that they took her prisoner and confined her in a castle, and the perfidious Knox advised that she should be put to death. The rebels did not go so far as that, but they told her that she should consent to be banished either into France or England, and should renounce the crown in favour of her son, and on her refusal they threatened to throw her into the lake, and one of them had the cowardice to hold a dagger to her breast. Under fear of death she then took the pen and signed the deed making over the kingdom to her son, then thirteen months old[15960].

83. The poor Queen was still detained in prison, notwithstanding her renunciation, so some of her friends planned and accomplished her liberation, but not knowing where to seek a place of security, she unfortunately sought it in England from Queen Elizabeth, who promised to aid and assist her as a sister Sovereign. Thus she threw herself into the power of the very woman of all others most anxious to deprive her of life and kingdom, for Mary was her only rival, and the greatest difficulty the Pope had in recognizing Elizabeth was, that while Mary lived she was the lawful inheritor of the English throne.

When Mary arrived in England, Elizabeth pretended to receive[15961] her; but she imprisoned her first, at Carlisle, and afterwards in Bolton under pretence that her enemies wished to make away with her. The national pride of the Scotch was raised when they learned their Queen was a prisoner, and they invaded England with six thousand men. Elizabeth, then unprepared for war, had recourse to craft to avert the blow, and she therefore promised Mary that if she used her authority to make the Scotch retire from England, she would assist her to recover her kingdom, but otherwise that there would be no chance of her liberation till the war was at an end. Mary yielded, and ordered the Scotch to disband themselves, under pain of high treason; the chiefs of the party were thus constrained to obey, but she was still kept in prison, and Elizabeth, to have another pretext for detaining her, induced Murray, a natural brother of Mary, and the Countess of Lennox, mother of the murdered Darnley, to accuse her of procuring her husband's murder. Elizabeth appointed a commission to try her, and though many persons of the greatest weight took up her defence, still after being imprisoned nineteen years, and having changed from prison to prison, sixteen times in England alone, she was condemned to be beheaded. She received the news of her sentence with the greatest courage, and an entire resignation to the divine will. She asked for a pen, and wrote three requests to Elizabeth: First That after her death her servants might be at liberty to go where they pleased. Second To allow her to be buried in consecrated ground; and, Third Not to prosecute anyone who wished to follow the Catholic faith.

84. The execution of the sentence was deferred for two months, but on the day appointed, the 18th of February, 1587, at the dawn of day the officers of justice came to conduct her to the place of execution. The Queen asked for a confessor to prepare her for death, but was refused, and a minister was sent to her whom she refused to receive. It is said that she received the Holy Communion herself, having, by permission of the Pope, St. Pius V., retained a consecrated particle for that purpose[15962].

She then dressed herself with all the elegance of a bride, prayed for a short time in her oratory, and went to the scaffold which was prepared in the hall of Fotheringay Castle, the last prison she inhabited. Everything was covered with black, the hall, the scaffold, and the pulpit from which the sentence was read. Mary entered, covered with a long veil, which reached to her feet, a golden cross on her breast, a Rosary pendant at her girdle, and a crucifix in one hand, the Office of the Blessed Virgin in the other. She went forward with a majestic gait, and calling Melvin, her Major-domo, she saluted him with a serene countenance, and said : “ My dear Melvin, when I am dead go to my son, and tell him that I die in the Catholic Religion, and tell him if he loves me or himself to follow no other; let him put his trust in God, and He will help him, and tell him to pardon Elizabeth for my death, which I voluntarily embrace for the Faith. “ She then requested the Governor to allow the persons composing her suite to be present at her death that they might certify that she died in the Catholic Faith. She knelt down on a cushion covered with black, and heard the sentence signed by Elizabeth’s own hand read, she then laid her head on the block, and the executioner cut it off at the second stroke. Her body was buried near Queen Catherine, the wife of Henry VIII., and it is said this inscription was put on her tomb, but immediately after removed by order of Elizabeth: “Maria Scotorum Regina virtutibus Regiis et animo Regio ornata, tyrannica crudelitate ornamentum nostri seculi extinguiter.” Mary’s death filled all Europe with horror and compassion for her fate, and even Elizabeth, when she heard it, could not conceal the effect it had on her, and said it was too precipitate, but for all that she continued to persecute the Catholics more and more, and added many martyrs to the Church[15963].

85. James VI., King of Scotland, and the son of Queen Mary, took little heed of his mother’s advice or example, for, after Elizabeth’s death, being then King of Scotland, he succeeded her, and took the title of James I., King of Great Britain, and the year after his coronation, which took place in 1603, he ordered, under pain of death, that all Catholic Priests should quit the kingdom. In the year 1606 he brought out that famous declaration that the King of England was independent of the Roman Church, called the Oath of Supremacy. He died in 1625, the fifty-ninth year of his age, and the twenty-second of his English reign. He was the first King who governed the three kingdoms of England, Ireland and Scotland, but he lived and died a heretic, while his mother lived forty-two years in almost continual sorrow and persecution, but died the death of the just. This unhappy Monarch was succeeded by his son, Charles I, born in the year 1600, and like his father, the Sovereign of three kingdoms; he followed his father’s errors in religion,

and sent succours to the Calvinists in France, to enable them to retain Rochelle, then in their possession. He was unfortunate; for both the Scotch and English Parliamentarians took up arms against him, and after several battles he lost the kingdom. He took refuge with the Scotch, but they delivered him up to the English, and they, at Cromwell's instigation, who was then aiming at sovereign power, condemned him to be beheaded, and he died on the scaffold on the 30th of July, 1648, the twenty—fifth of his reign and forty-eighth of his age.

86. He was succeeded by his son, Charles II., born in 1630; at his father's death he went to Scotland, and was proclaimed King of that country and of England and Ireland likewise. Cromwell, who then governed the kingdom, under title of Protector of England, took the field against him, and put his forces to flight, so that Charles had to make his escape in disguise, first to France and afterwards to Cologne and Holland. He was recalled after Cromwell's death, which took place in 1658, and was crowned King of England in 1661, and died in 1685, at the age of sixty-five. He was succeeded by his second brother, James II., born in 1633. James was proclaimed King on the day of his brother's death, the 16th of February, 1685, and was soon after proclaimed King of Scotland, though he openly declared himself a Roman Catholic, and forsook the communion of the English Church. Ardently attached to the Faith, he promulgated, in 1687, an Edict of Toleration, granting to the Catholics the free exercise of Religion, but this lost him his crown, for the English called in William, Prince of Orange, who, though James's son-in-law took possession of the kingdom, and, in 1689, James had to fly to France. He soon after went over to Ireland, to keep possession of that kingdom at all events, but being again beaten he fled back again to France, and died in St. Germains, in 1701, the sixty-eighth year of his age. As this sovereign did not hesitate to sacrifice his temporal kingdom for the Faith, we have every reason to believe that he received an eternal crown from the Almighty. James II. left one son, James III., who died in the Catholic Faith in Rome.

III. THE ERRORS OF CALVIN

87.—Calvin adopts the errors of Luther, 88.—Calvin's errors regarding the Scriptures. 89.—The Trinity. 90.—Jesus Christ. 91.—The Divine Law 92.—Justification, 93.—Good Works and Free Will. 94.—That God predestines man to sin and to hell, and Faith alone in Jesus Christ is sufficient for salvation. 95.—The Sacraments, and especially Baptism. 96.—Penance. 97-The Eucharist and the Mass. 98.—He denies Purgatory and Indulgences; other errors.

87. Calvin adopted almost all the principal errors of Luther, who adopted almost all the errors of the ancient heretics, as we shall here afterwards show in the refutation of Luther and Calvin. Prateolus[15964] reckons two hundred and seven heretical doctrines, promulgated by Calvin, and another author[15965] makes the number amount to fourteen hundred. At present I will only speak of the principal errors of Calvin, and will give in the last part of the work a particular treatise to refute them.

88. As regards the Holy Scriptures, Calvin, in his book against the Council of Trent[15966], says the Church has no right to interpret and judge of the true sense of the Scriptures. Second He refuses to receive the Canon of the Scriptures as settled by the Council. Third He denies the authority of the Vulgate. Fourth He denies the Canonicity of the books of Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom, Tobias, Judith, and the Maccabees, and totally rejects Apostolical Traditions[15967].

89. Regarding the Persons of the Trinity, he does not like the words Consubstantial, Hypostasis, or even Trinity. “ I wish,” he says, “all these words were buried in oblivion, and we had this Faith alone, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are one God”[15968]. The Church, however, has inserted in the Office of the Breviary the Athanasian Creed, in which it is positively laid down that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are not only one God, but also three distinct Persons; for otherwise one might fall into the errors of Sabellius, who said that these were but simple words, and that in the Trinity there is but one Divine Nature, and one Person, and on that account the Holy Fathers made use of the words Hypostatic and Consubstantial to explain both the distinction and the equality of the Divine Persons. Second It is a foolish thing, he says, to believe in the continual actual generation of the Son from the Eternal Fathe[15969]; but this doctrine is not only the general one among Theologians[15970], but is proved by the Scriptures : “ Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee” (Ps. ii, 7). St. Augustine, explaining this text, says : “This day, that is, from all eternity, and in every continuous instant, he begets me according to my Divine Nature, as his Word and his Natural Son.”

90. Speaking of Jesus Christ, he says that he was the mediator of mankind with his Eternal Father before he became man, and before Adam sinned[15971]. “Not alone,” he says in one of his letters, “did Christ discharge the office of a mediator after the fall of Adam, but as the Eternal Word of God.” This is a manifest error, for it was when Christ took flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary that he became the mediator of reconciliation between God and man; as the Apostle says, “for there is one God, and one mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus” (I. Timothy, ii. 5). He also blasphemously taught, that when Christ descended into hell (and he understands it as the hell of the damned), that he suffered the pains of the damned, and this was the great price he offered to his Eternal Father for our redemption. Cardinal Gotti says[15972], that, like Nestorius, he recognized two Persons in Christ[15973].

91. Concerning the Divine law, and the sins of mankind[15974], he says it is impossible for us to observe the law imposed on us by God, and that original concupiscence, or that vicious leaning to sin which exists in us, though we do not consent to it, is still sinful, since such desires arise from the wickedness which reigns in us; that there are no venial sins, but that all are mortal; that every work which even the just man performs is sinful; that good works have no merit with God, and that to say the contrary is pride, and proceeds from a wish to depreciate grace[15975].

92. Concerning justification, he says that it does not consist in the infusion of sanctifying grace, but in the imposition of the justice of Christ, which reconciles the sinner with God. The sinner, he says in another place, puts on the justice of Christ by Faith, and clothed in that, appears before God not as a sinner, but as one of the just, so that the sinner, though continuing a sinner still, is justified by being clothed with masked as it were the justice of Christ, and appears just by that means[15976]. He also says, that man, in a state of sin, is not justified by contrition, but by Faith alone, believing in the promises and in the merits of Jesus Christ[15977]. This was the doctrine of the French Calvinists in their celebrated profession of faith : “ We believe that we are made participators of this justification by Faith alone, and this so happens because the promises of life offered to us in Christ are applied to our use.” He likewise said, that those who are justified should believe with a certainty of Faith that they are in a state of grace, and

that this certainty should be understood not only of perseverance, but even of eternal salvation; so that one should consider himself as one of the elect, as St. Paul was by the special revelation he received from God[15978].

He likewise said, that Faith and justification belong to the elect alone, and that once in possession of them, they cannot be lost, and if anyone thinks he lost them, he never had them. The Synod of Dort, however[15979], opposed this doctrine, when it decided that in particular instances one may lose the Divine grace. We should not at all be surprised at this disagreement in the same sect, for as the heresiarchs separate from the Church, they cannot blame their disciples for separating from them; as Tertullian says, when each follows his own will, the Valentinians have the same right to their own opinion as Valentine himself[15980].

93. He uttered horrible blasphemies when speaking of human actions as meritorious to salvation, or otherwise. The first is,—that man has no free will, and that this word, free will, is but a name without the substance[15981]. The first man alone, he said, had free will, but he and all his posterity lost it through sin; hence, anything that man does, he does through necessity, for God has so willed it, and it is God himself moves him to do it, which movement man cannot resist. But then, it may be said, when man acts without free will, and through necessity, both when he does what is good, as well as when he does what is evil, how can he have merit or demerit? Calvin again blasphemously answers this, and says, that to acquire merit, or deserve punishment, it is enough that man should act spontaneously, without being driven to it by others, though all the while he acts without liberty and through necessity. But if God moves the will of man even to commit sin, then God is the author of sin? “ No,” says Calvin, “because the author of sin is he alone who commits it, not he who commands or moves the sinner to commit it.” He does not blush, then, to give utterance to a third blasphemy, that every sin is committed by the Divine authority and will; and those, he says, who assert that God merely permits sins, but does not wish them, or instigate them, oppose the Scriptures.

“They feign that he permits those things, which the Scripture pronounces are done not only by his permission, but of which he is the author”[15982]. He bases this falsehood on that text of David[15983] : “ Whatsoever the Lord pleased he both done in heaven and on the earth” (Psalms, cxxxiv, 6); but he appears to forget what the Psalmist says in another place : “Thou art not a God that wiliest iniquity” (Psalms, v, 5). If God, I ask, moves man to commit sin, how can he avoid it ?Calvin not being able to get out of this difficulty, says, that carnal men, as we are, we cannot understand it[15984].

94. It is a necessary consequence of this doctrine, that the sinner who is lost, is lost by Divine ordinance, and even this horrible blasphemy did not affright Calvin; monstrous as it is, he agrees to it, and concludes that God, knowing beforehand the salvation or reprobation of each person, as he has decreed it, that some men are predestined to eternal torment by the Almighty, solely by his will, and not by their evil actions[15985]. Such, reader, is the fine theology of these new Reformers of the Church, Luther and Calvin, who make the Almighty a tyrant, a deceiver, unjust and wicked a tyrant, because he creates men for the purpose of tormenting them for all eternity; a deceiver, because he imposes on them a law which they never can, by any means in their power, observe; unjust, since he condemns men to eternal punishment, while, at the same time, they are not at liberty to avoid sin, but constrained to commit it; and wicked, for he himself first causes a man to sin, and then punishes him for it. Finally, they make God distribute his rewards unjustly, since he gives his grace and heaven to the wicked, merely because they have Faith; that they are justified, though they should not even be sorry for their sins. Calvin says that this is the benefit of the death of Christ; but I answer him thus : If, according to his system, a man may be saved, then good works are no longer necessary, and Christ died to destroy every precept both of the old and new law, and to give freedom and confidence to Christians to do whatever they like, and to commit even the most enormous sins, since it is enough to secure their salvation without any cooperation on their part; that they should merely believe firmly that God does not impute to them their sins, but wishes to save them through the merits of Christ, though they do everything in their power to gain hell. This certain faith in our salvation, which he calls confidence, God, he says, gives to the elect alone.

95. Speaking of the Sacraments, he says, that they have effect on the elect alone, so that those who are not predestined to eternal happiness, though they may be in a state of grace, receive not the effect of the Sacrament. He also says that the words of the ministers of the Sacraments are not

consecrating, but only declaratory, intended alone to make us understand the Divine promises[15986], and hence he infers, that the Sacraments have not the power of conferring grace, but only of exciting our faith, like the preaching of the Divine Word[15987], and he ridicules our Theological term, ex opere operate, for explaining the power of the Sacraments, as an invention of ignorant Monks; but in this, he only shows his own ignorance, as he understands by opus operatum, the good work of the ministers of the Sacraments[15988]. We, Catholics, understand, by opus operatum, not the act of the minister himself, so much as the power which the Almighty gives to the Sacraments (if not hindered by sin), of operating in the soul; that which the Sacrament signifies as Baptism, to wash; Penance, to forgive; the Eucharist, to nourish. He denies that there is any difference between the Sacraments of the Old and the New Law[15989]; but St. Paul says that the former were but weak and needy elements (Gal. iv, 9), and a shadow of things to come (Collos. ii, 17). He ridicules the Sacramental character, which is impressed by Baptism, Confirmation, and Orders[15990], and Christ, he says, only instituted three Sacraments Baptism, the Supper, and Ordination; the first two he positively asserts to be Sacraments, and the third he admits. “The imposition of hands,” he says, “ which is performed in true and lawful Ordinations, I grant to be a Sacrament ;” but he totally rejects the Sacraments of Confirmation, Penance, Extreme Unction, and Matrimony[15991].

Though he admits Baptism as a Sacrament, he denies that it is necessary for salvation[15992], because children, he says, snatched off by death, though they are not baptized, are saved, for they are members of the Church when they are born, for all children of Christians, he says, being born in the alliance of the New Law[15993], are all born in grace[15994], and he teaches that laymen and women cannot baptize a child even in danger of death (an error most dangerous to the salvation of these poor innocents), because, though they die without baptism, they are saved[15995]. Finally, he teaches that the Baptism of John the Baptist was of the same efficacy as the Baptism instituted by Jesus Christ[15996].

96. He not alone denies that Penance is a Sacrament, but he teaches many errors concerning it; for the sins committed after Baptism, he says, are remitted by the remembrance of Baptism, and do not require the Sacrament

of Penance[15997]; that the absolution of the Confessor has no power to remit sins, but is merely an abstraction of the remission God grants us, by the promise made to Christians; that the confession of sins is not of Divine right, but only ordained by Innocent III., in the Council of Lateran; and that it is not necessary to make satisfaction for our sins, because God is not to be pleased with our works, and such satisfaction would be to derogate from that atonement made by Christ for our sins.

97. Regarding the Sacrament of the Eucharist, against which all his malice is directed, as we see in his book, "De Caena Domini," he says, that Transubstantion, as believed by Catholics, is nothing but a mere invention, and that the Eucharist ought not to be preserved or adored, because it is a Sacrament only while it is used, and that the essence of this Sacrament is eating by Faith[15998]. He denies (and this is the error he most furiously defends) the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

The words of consecration : "This is my body, and this is my blood," are to be taken, he says, not in reality, as we believe them, but figuratively, and that they do not mean the conversion of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, but that the bread and wine in the Sacrament are merely figures of the body and blood of our Lord[15999], and that in the communion, we receive the life and substance of Jesus Christ, but not his proper flesh and blood; then he says, " we do and do not receive Jesus Christ," proving that he did not believe in, or admit, the Real Presence in the Eucharist[16000]. Nothing, he says, can be more reprehensible than dividing the Supper in other words, giving communion under one kind. When such is their doctrine, we ought surely be surprised to see the Calvinists in their famous Synod of Charenton, in 1631, deciding that the Lutherans, who they knew believed in the Real Presence, should be admitted to their communion, because, as they asserted, both believed in the fundamental articles[16001]. Daille denies[16002] that there is anything in this Decree contrary to piety or to the honour of God; but we may ask the Calvinists : Is not idolatry contrary to the honour of God ?and are not the Lutherans idolaters, when they adore as God, mere bread ?Calvin denies, also, that the Mass is a Sacrifice instituted by Jesus Christ for the living and the dead[16003], and it is, he says, injurious to the Sacrifice of the Cross to say so, and that private Masses are in direct opposition to the institution of Christ.

98. Calvin, likewise, denies Purgatory[16004], the value of Indulgences[16005], the Intercession of Saints, and the Veneration of Images[16006]; and St. Peter, he says, enjoyed among the Apostles merely a supremacy of honour, but not of jurisdiction[16007], and then he rejects the primacy of St. Peter and the Pope[16008]. The Church and General Councils, he says, are not infallible in the definition of articles of Faith, or the interpretation of the Scriptures. He entirely renounces Ecclesiastical Laws, and the rites appertaining to discipline[16009], such rites, as he alleges, being pernicious and impious, and he rejects the Fast of Lent[16010], and the Celibacy of the Clergy[16011]; vows to fast or to go on a pilgrimage, and the religious vows, he says, are superstitious[16012].

Usury, he says, may be permitted, for there is no text of Scripture prohibiting it. Noel Alexander and Cardinal Gotti[16013] enumerate many other errors of his, and in a word, he preached and wrote so many blasphemies, that it was not without reason, at his death, that he cursed his life, his studies, and his writings, and called on the devil to take him, as we read above (N. 70)[16014].

IV. THE DIFFERENT SECTS OF CALVINISTS

99.—The Sects into which Calvinism was divided. 100.—The Puritans. 101.—The Independents and Presbyterians. 102.—The difference between these Sects. 103.—The Quakers and Tremblers. 104.—The Anglo-Calvinists. 105.—The Piscatorians. 106.—The Arminians and Gomarists.

99. The sect of Calvin was soon divided into numerous other sects in fact, we may say that from every sect a thousand others sprung, and that is the case, especially in England, where you can scarcely find the members of the same family believing the same thing. We shall speak of the principal sects described by Noel Alexander and Cardinal Gotti[16015]. These are the Reformed, who are found in France, in the Palatinate, in Switzerland, and Flanders, and these, in general, follow the doctrine of Calvin to the letter. In England and Scotland they are called Puritans, and, besides, we find among his followers, others called Independents, Presbyterians, Anglo-Calvinists, Piscatorians, Arminians, and Gomorists.

100. The most rigid of all the Calvinists are the Puritans, who hate all who do not follow their own way of thinking, but abhor the Catholics especially, and do not even like to pray in the churches consecrated by them. They rejected Episcopacy the rites, and ceremonies, and Liturgy, both of the Catholic and Anglican Churches, not even keeping the Lord's Prayer. They are as exact in the observance of the Sunday as the Jews are of the Sabbath. They are no friends to royalty, and it was through their means that Charles I. was brought to the block (as we have seen above, N. 85), in 1649.

101. The Independents and Presbyterians believe much the same as the Puritans, but their system of church government is different. When Oliver Cromwell became Protector of England (N. 86), he was an Independent. They believe just what they like, and recognize no superior as invested with the power of teaching them. According to them, that supreme power resides in each sect which they would not allow to the Councils of the Universal Church. They allow no one to preach who does not follow .their doctrine. They celebrated the "Supper" on Sundays; but they do not admit to the "Supper," nor to Baptism, only those of their own sect. They celebrated the Supper, with their hats on, without Catechism, sermon, or singing; and they were the progenitors of all the other sects that overran England, as the Anabaptists, the Antinomians (who rejected all law, N. 35), disciples of John Agricola, and the Anti-Scripturists, who totally rejected the Scriptures, boasting that they had the spirit of the Prophets and Apostles.

102. The Presbyterians are a powerful body in the British islands. They separated themselves from the Independents. Their Churches are formed into classes; the classes are subject to Provincial Synods; and these to a National Synod, whose decisions must be obeyed, as if almost of Divine authority. They are called Presbyterians, because they adopt a form of Church government by lay elders, and they say that Bishops have no more authority than Presbyters. Their Elders are generally men of years, unless in the case of some specially gifted young person; the name is derived from the Greek word, Presbuteroi, which means our Elders.

103. There are also Quakers, or, as they were sometimes called, Tremblers, who considered themselves perfect in this life. They imagined they were frequently moved by the Spirit to such a pitch, that they trembled all over, not being able to endure the abundance of the Divine light they enjoyed. They reject not only all Ecclesiastical, but even civil ceremonies,

for they never uncover for any one. They say no prayers in their meeting-houses; they even look on prayer as useless, for they are justified by their own justice itself. They did believe, though it is supposed they hold those opinions no longer, that Jesus Christ despaired on the cross, and that he had other human defects. They held erroneous opinions even on the first dogmas of Faith, not believing in the Trinity, or the second coming of Christ, or in hell or heaven after this life; many of these opinions, which were held by the first Quakers, are now changed or modified, and it is difficult at present to know exactly what their creed is. Their founder was an Englishman, John Fox, a tailor. There is another sect, called Ranters, who believe that nothing is vile or unlawful which nature desires. Another sect was called Levellers, enemies of all political order; they wished that all men should dress exactly alike, and that no one should be honoured more than another, and they frequently had to be punished for seditious conduct by the magistrates.

104. The Anglo-Calvinists are different from the Puritans, Independents, and Presbyterians, both in Church discipline and doctrine. Unlike all these sects, they have preserved the Episcopal Order, not alone as distinct from other offices, but as superior by Divine right; they retain a sort of form of consecration for Bishops; they ordain Priests, and confirm those who have received Baptism, and show some honour to the Sign of the Cross, which their cognate sects reject totally. Besides Bishops, there are Chancellors, Archdeacons, Deans, and Rectors of Parishes; they have preserved the Cathedrals, and have Canons and Prebends, who say morning and evening prayers, and the surplice is used as a vestment. They recognize both the orders of Priesthood and Deaconship. The King, according to the laws of Henry and Elizabeth, is head of the Church, and the fountain of all ecclesiastical authority. The Sovereign, they say, has the power of making new laws, and establishing new rites, with consent of the Metropolitan and Convocation; and his royal tribunal decides all judgments brought before it. He can, with his Council, decide on matters of Faith, publish ordinances and censures. Such are the powers granted to the Sovereign, in the work entitled, “The Policy of the Church of England,” published in London, in the year 1683.

105. The Piscatorians were so called, from John Piscator, a Professor of Theology, and Pastor, at Herborne, a proud and vain man. He differed in

several points with the Calvinists. He divided the justification of Christ into active and passive; the active he acquired by the holiness of his life the passive, by his sufferings; the active justification was profitable to himself alone the passive to us, and it is by this we are justified. It is, on the contrary, our doctrine, that Christ, by his labours and sufferings, gained merit both for himself and us; as the Apostle says: “ He humbled himself, being made obedient unto death . . . For which God exalted him, &c.” (Philip, ii, 8, 9). Hence God exalted him, both for the sanctity of his life, and for his passion. He, likewise, taught that the breaking of the bread in the “Supper” was essential; and the academy of Marpurg embraced this opinion, but the other Calvinists did not. The Mosaic Law, he said, should be observed, as far as the judicial precepts go. He differed almost entirely with Calvin, regarding Predestination, the Atonement, Penance, and other points, and composed a new Catechism. He likewise published a new version of the Bible, filled with a thousand errors. Both himself and his doctrines were unanimously condemned by the Reformers.

106. Two other Calvinistic sects had their origin in Holland, the Arminians and Gomarists. Arminius or Harmensen, and Gomar, were Professors of Theology in the University of Leyden. In 1619, Arminius published a Remonstrance, and, on that account, his followers were called Remonstrants. In this writing, or Catechism, which in several articles comes near to the Catholic doctrine, he rejects eight errors of Calvin. The first error he attacks is, that God gives to the predestined alone, faith, justification, and glory; God, he says, wishes the salvation of all men, and gives all sufficient means of salvation, if they wish to avail themselves of them. He rejects the second error, that God, by an absolute decree, has destined many to hell before he created them; he says, that such reprobation is because of the sins they commit, and die without repenting of. Of the third error, that Christ has redeemed the elect alone, he says that no one is excluded from the fruit of Redemption, if he is disposed to receive it as he ought. The fourth error he reproves is that no one can resist grace; this, he says, is false, for man by malice can, if he likes, reject it. The fifth error is, that he who has once received grace cannot again lose it; but he teaches that in this life we may both lose the grace received, and recovers it again by repentance. Gomar[16016], on the other hand, though a Professor in the same

University, adopted all the dogmas of Calvin, and opposed Arminius and his Remonstrants with the greatest violence, and his disciples were called Anti—Remonstrants, and they accused the Arminians of Pelagianism. The dispute, at length, became so violent, that the States-General convoked a Synod, at Dort, to terminate it, and invited deputies from England, Scotland, Geneva, and other kingdoms. The Synod was held; but as almost all the deputies who attended were Calvinists, or differed but slightly from the Calvinistic doctrines, the Arminians were condemned, and the Gomarists got the upper hand. The States Chancellor, Barneveldt, and Hugo Grotius, took the part of Arminius, for which Barneveldt perished on the scaffold, and Grotius was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, but was saved by a stratagem of his wife, who obtained leave to send him a chest of books, to amuse him in his solitude; after a time, the chest was sent back, and, instead of the books, Grotius was concealed in it, and he thus escaped[16017].

Chapter XII

THE HERESIES OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY-(CONTINUED)

ARTICLE I. THE SCHISM OF ENGLAND

I. THE REIGN OF HENRY VIII

> 1.—Religion of England previous to the Reformation. 2.—Henry VIII. marries Catherine of Arragon, but becomes enamoured of Anna Boleyn. 3. ~The wicked Wolsey suggests the invalidity of the marriage Incontinence of Anna Boleyn; suspicion that she was the daughter of Henry. 4.—Calvin refuses to have his cause tried by English Judges; “Wolsey is made prisoner, and dies at Leicester. 5.—Henry seizes on the property of the Church, and marries Anna Boleyn. 6.—He obliges the Clergy to swear obedience to him, and Cranmer declares the marriage of Catherine invalid. 7.—The Pope declares Anna Boleyn’s marriage invalid, and excommunicates Henry, who declares himself Head of the Church. 8.—He persecutes Pole, and puts More and Fisher to death. 9.—The Pope declares Henry unworthy of the kingdom; the King puts Anna Boleyn to death, and marries Jane Seymour. 10.—The Parliament decides on six Articles of Faith; the bones of St. Thomas of Canterbury are burned; Jane Seymour dies in giving birth to Edward VI. 11. The Pope endeavours to bring Henry to a sense of his duty, but does not succeed. 12.—He marries Anne of Cleves; Cromwell is put to death. 13.—Henry marries Catherine Howard, whom he afterwards put to death, and then marries Catherine Parr. 14.—His remorse in his last sickness. 15.—He makes his will, and dies.

1. The history of England cannot be read without tears, when we see that nation, formerly the most zealous in Europe for Catholicity, now become its persecuting enemy. Who will not be touched with sorrow to see a kingdom, so attached to the Faith, that it was called the Land of Saints, now buried in heresy? Fifteen English Kings, and eleven Queens, renounced the world and became religious in different Convents. Twelve Kings were Martyrs, and ten have been placed in the catalogue of the Saints. It is said that previous to the schism there was not a village in England which had not a Patron Saint born on the spot. How dreadful it is to behold this land the abode of schism and heresy[16018]. England, it is said, received the Faith of Christ in the time of Tiberius Caesar. Joseph of Arimethea[16019], Sanders

says, with twelve of his disciples, were the first to introduce Christianity into the country which, in the time of Pope Eleutherius had spread so much, that at the request of King Lucius he sent them Fugacius and Damian, who baptized the King and many of his subjects, and, having cast down the idols, consecrated many churches, and established several Bishoprics. England remained firm in the Faith in the time of Diocletian, and there were many martyrs there during his reign. Christianity increased very much during the reign of Constantine, and though many fell away into the errors of Arius and Pelagius, they were converted again to the true Faith by the preaching of St. Germain and St. Lupus, who came from France for that purpose. About the year 596, Religion was almost lost by the Saxon conquest, but St. Gregory sent over St. Austin and forty Benedictine Monks, who converted the whole Anglo-Saxon nation, and they were remarkable, for nearly a thousand years after, for their zeal for the Faith and their veneration for the Holy See. During all this long period there were no Sovereigns in Christendom more obedient to the See of Eome than those of England. In the year 1212, King John and the Barons of the kingdom made England feudatory to the Holy See, holding the kingdoms of England and Ireland as fiefs from the Pope, and paying a thousand marks every year on the feast of St. Michael, and Peter’s Pence, according to the number of hearths in these kingdoms, which was first promised by King Ina, in the year 740, augmented by King Etholf, and paid up to the twenty-fifth year of Henry’s reign, when he separated himself from the obedience of the Holy See.

Many Provincial Councils were held in England during these centuries likewise, for the establishment of Ecclesiastical discipline, which was always observed till Henry’s reign, when, to satisfy a debasing passion for a wicked woman, he plunged himself into a whirlpool of crimes, and involved the nation in his ruin, and thus this unfortunate country, the glory of the Church, became a sink of wickedness and impiety.

2. You shall now hear the cause of England’s ruin. In the year 1501, Henry VII. married his eldest son, Arthur, to Catherine of Arragon[16020], daughter of his Catholic Majesty Ferdinand, but the Prince died before the consummation of the matrimony; she was then married to his second son, Henry VIII., by a dispensation of Julius II., with the intention of preserving

the peace with Spain, and had five children by him. Before we proceed, however, it will be right to learn that Henry was so much attached to the Catholic Religion that when it was attacked by Luther he persecuted his followers to death, and caused all his books to be burned one day in his presence by the public executioner, and had a sermon preached on the occasion by John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. He then published a work defending the doctrines of Faith in the seven Sacraments, in opposition to Luther, though some say the book was composed by Fisher of Rochester, and dedicated it to Leo X., who honoured him on the occasion with the title of Defender of the Faith[16021]. Blind to everything, however, but his love for Anna Boleyn, he began to hold his wife, Queen Catherine, in the greatest aversion, though she was twenty-five years married to him[16022]. She was five or six years older than Henry, but Anna Boleyn was considered the most beautiful woman in England, and when she saw the impression she made on the King's heart, she refused to see him any more unless he married her. Henry was of that disposition that the more he was thwarted in any wish the more obstinate he became in gratifying it, though having once obtained his object despised it; and seeing that he never could enjoy Anna Boleyn's favour unless by marrying her, he resolved on the step, let it cost what it may. It was this determination that involved England in ruin.

3. It was England's misfortune at that period to be almost governed by Thomas Wolsey, a man of low birth, but whose intriguing disposition made him such a favourite with Henry that he was elevated not only to the Archbishopric of York, but was made Lord Chancellor of the kingdom, and Cardinal[16023]. This unprincipled flatterer, seeing the King disgusted with Catherine, his Queen, advised him to apply for a divorce, and encouraged his scruples (if he had any), telling him his marriage never could be legalised, as Catherine was his brother's wife. This objection, however, never could stand, for Henry had the Pope's dispensation to marry Catherine[16024]; the case was maturely examined at Rome, and the impediment that existed was not imposed by the Divine Law, but was merely a Canonical one. That is proved by the Scripture, for we learn from Genesis, xxxviii, that the Patriarch Juda made his second son, Onan, marry Thamar, the wife of his elder brother, who died without children; and in the Mosaic Law there was a precept obliging the younger brother to take his

elder brother’s widow to wife if he had died without leaving children : “When brethren dwell together, and one of them died without children, the wife of the deceased shall not marry to another, but his brother shall take her, and raise up seed for his brother” (Deut. xxv, 5). What, therefore, was not only permitted but commanded by the Old Law, never could be contrary to the Law of nature. Neither is the prohibition of Leviticus, xviii, 16, to be taken into account, for that applies only to the case that the deceased brother has left children, and not, as in the former case, where he died childless, for then the brother is commanded to marry the widow, that his dead brother’s name should not be lost in Israel. There is, then, not the least doubt but the dispensation of the Pope and the marriage of Henry were both valid. Bossuet, in his History of the Variations[16025], tells, us that Henry having asked the opinion of the Sorbonne as to the validity of his marriage, forty-five doctors gave their opinion that it was valid, and fifty-three were of the contrary opinion, but Molineaux says that all these votes were purchased on the occasion. Henry even wrote to the Lutheran Doctors in Germany, but Melanchthon, having consulted others, answered him that the law prohibiting a man to marry his brother’s wife could be dispensed with, and that his marriage with Catherine was, therefore, valid.

This answer was far from being agreeable to Henry, so he held on to Wolsey’s opinion, and determined to marry Anna Boleyn. It has been said that this lady was even Henry’s own daughter, and it is said that her father, who was ambassador in France at the time, came post to England[16026] when he heard of the affair, and told Henry that his wife confessed to him that Anna was Henry’s daughter, but Henry made him, it is said, a rude answer, told him to go back to his place, and hold his tongue, and that he was determined to marry her. It is also said, that, from the age of fifteen, Anna was of bad character, and that, during her residence in France her conduct was so depraved that she was called usually by an improper name[16027].

4. Henry was fully determined to marry this unfortunate woman[16028], so he sent to Rome to demand of the Pope to appoint Cardinal Campeggio and Cardinal Wolsey to try the case of the divorce. The Pope consented, but the Queen appealed against these Prelates as judges, one of them being the King’s subject, and the other under obligations to him. Notwithstanding the appeal, the cause was tried in England, and Henry was in the greatest hurry

to have it decided, being certain of a favourable issue for himself, as one of the judges was Wolsey, the prime mover of the case. Wolsey, however, was now afraid of the tempest he raised, which portended the ruin of religion, so he and Campeggio tried every means to avoid coming to a decision, seeing the dreadful scandal it would cause if they gave a decision in the King's favour, and dreading his displeasure if they decided against him. The Pope admitted the justice of the Queen's appeal[16029], and prohibited the Cardinal Legates from proceeding with the cause, which he transferred to his own tribunal. Henry then sent Cranmer to Rome to look after his interests.

This man was a Priest, but of immoral life, and had privately embraced the Lutheran doctrines, and he was indebted to Anna Boleyn for the King's favour. Henry likewise endeavoured to draw to his party Reginald Pole and Thomas More; but these were men of too much religion to yield to him. To frighten the Pope into compliance with his wishes, he prohibited, under the severest penalties, any of his subjects from applying for any favour or grace to Rome, without first obtaining his consent. God made use of Henry as an instrument to punish Wolsey now for his crimes. The King was furious with him, because he did not expedite the sentence in his favours so he deprived him of the Bishopric of Winchester (though this is doubtful), and the Chancellorship, and banished him to his Sec of York. He lived some time at Cawood, in Yorkshire, and made himself very popular in the neighbourhood by his splendid hospitality. Henry gave an order for his arrest, and commanded that he should be brought to London, but he suffered so much on the journey, both in mind and body, that, before he could arrive, he died at Leicester, in the month of December, 1530. A report was sent abroad that he poisoned himself, but the fact is, that, when he found he was accused of high treason, his heart broke. " Had I served God, said he, " as faithfully as I served the King, he would not have given me over in my grey hairs"[16030].

5. In the meantime, Cranmer wrote from Rome that he found it impossible to get the Pope to consent to the divorce, so he was recalled by Henry[16031], and went to Germany, where he married Osiander's sister or niece[16032]; and on the death of William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, was appointed to that See, but with the express condition of doing what the Pope refused pronouncing a sentence of divorce between Henry and Catherine[16033]. When Henry found that the Ecclesiastics of the kingdom

took up Catherine’s side, he determined to punish some of them, and prosecuted them on a praemunire, for preferring the Legatine to the Royal authority. The Clergy, terrified at this proceeding, and having now no one to recur to, offered the king 400,000 crowns to compromise the matter, and admitted his sovereign power in the realm, both over the Clergy and laity.

6. Thomas More[16034], seeing the ruin of England at hand, resigned the Chancellorship to the King, who accepted his resignation, and appointed Thomas Audley, a man of little means, in his place. Pope Clement VII. ,seeing what imminent danger the kingdom ran, from the blind admiration the King professed for Anna Boleyn, endeavoured to save it, by prohibiting him, under pain of excommunication, from contracting a new marriage till the question of divorce was settled[16035]. This prohibition only exasperated Henry the more, so, despising both the admonitions and censures of the Pope, he was privately married to Anna Boleyn, before the break of day, in the month of December, 1532, having previously created her Countess of Pembroke[16036]. Roland Lee was the officiating Priest, and it is believed by some that Henry deceived him, telling him he had the Pope’s leave for marrying again. 6. Thomas Cromwell[16037], under favour of Queen Anna, was now advanced to the highest honours. He was a man of the greatest cunning, and the most unbounded ambition, and a follower of the Lutheran doctrine. Henry made him Knight of the Garter, Grand Chamberlain of the Kingdom, Keeper of the Privy Seal, and made him also his Vicar—General for Ecclesiastical affairs[16038], which he entirely managed as he pleased, in conjunction with Archbishop Cranmer and the Chancellor Audley. He obliged Ecclesiastics to take an oath of obedience in spirituals to the King, paying him the same obedience as they previously did the Pope. Every means was used to induce John Fisher, the Bishop of Rochester, to take this oath, which he at first refused to do, but at last consented, adding, as a condition, “inasmuch as it was not opposed to the Divine Word.” When this pillar of the Church fell, it was not difficult to induce the rest of the Clergy to take the oath. Cranmer was now ready to fulfil his part of the agreement made with Henry; he accordingly pronounced his marriage with Catherine opposed to the Divine law, and declared him at liberty to marry any other woman, and, on the strength of this declaration, Henry was solemnly married to Anne on the 13th of April, 1533[16039].

7. Pope Clement VII. now saw that there was no longer any use in mild measures, and was determined to act with extreme severity. He, accordingly, declared the marriage with Anna invalid; the issue, either present or future, illegitimate; and restored Queen Catherine to her conjugal and royal rights[16040]. He likewise declared Henry excommunicated for his disobedience to the Holy See, but this sentence was not to be enforced for a month, to give him time for repentance. So far from showing any signs of change, Henry prohibited, under the severest penalties, any one from giving the title of Queen to Catherine, or styling Mary heiress to the kingdom, though she had been already proclaimed as such by the estates of the Realm. He declared her illegitimate, and sent her to live with her mother Catherine, appointing a certain fixed place for their residence, and employing about them a set of spies, or guards, rather than servants[16041]. In the meantime, Anna Boleyn had a daughter, Elizabeth, born on the 7th of September, five months after her solemn marriage, and Henry continued his persecution of the Catholics, by sending to prison Bishop Fisher, Sir Thomas More, and two hundred Observantine Friars of the Order of St. Francis; and in the parliament convoked on the 3rd of November, 1534, a bill was passed in both houses, declaring Mary, the daughter of Catherine, excluded from the succession, and recognizing Elizabeth, Anna's daughter, as heiress to the throne. The power of the Pope in England and Ireland was rejected at the same time, and whoever professed to believe in the primacy of the Holy See was declared a rebel. He assumed an authority over the Bishops of the kingdom greater than the Pope ever possessed, for he granted them their powers as if they were secular magistrates, only till he wished to revoke them, and it was only by his authority they were allowed to ordain Priests or publish censures. Finally, it was decreed that the King was the supreme head of the Church of England; that to him alone it belonged to extirpate heresies and correct abuses, and that to him, by right, belonged all tithes and first-fruits.

The name of the Pope was expunged from the Liturgy, and among the petitions of the Litany the following was sacrilegiously inserted: "From the tyranny and detestable enormities of the Bishop of Rome deliver us, O Lord"[16042].

8. Henry knew that his assumption of the primacy was condemned, not alone by Catholics, but even by Luther and Calvin, so he gave orders that it should be defended by theologians in their writings, and many complied with this command, some willingly, and others were forced to it. He was desirous that his relative, Reginald Pole, should publish something in favour of it, but he not alone most firmly refused to prostitute his pen to such a purpose, but wrote four books, “ De Unione Ecclesiastica,” in opposition to the pretended right, which so provoked the tyrant, that he declared him guilty of high treason, and a traitor to his country, and tried to get him into his power, to put him to death, and when he could not accomplish his wish, he had his mother, his brother, and his uncle executed, and this noble family was almost destroyed and brought to ruin. He, for the same reason, commenced a most dreadful persecution of the Friars, especially the Franciscans, Carthusians, and Brigittines, many of whom he put to death[16043], besides Bishop Fisher and Thomas More, whom he sent to execution in the year 153[16044]. While Bishop Fisher was in prison, he was appointed Cardinal by Paul III., which, when Henry heard, he at once had him condemned to death. It is related of this holy Bishop, that when he was about to be brought to the place of execution, he dressed himself in the best clothes he could procure, as that was, he said, the day of his marriage, and as, on account of his age and his sufferings in prison, he was so weak, that he was obliged to lean on a staff, when he came insight of the scaffold he cast it away, and cried out : “ Now, my feet, do your duty, you have now but a little way to carry me.” When he mounted the scaffold he entoned the Te Deum, and thanked the Almighty for permitting him to die for the Faith; he then laid his head on the block.

His head was exposed on London Bridge, and it is said appeared quite florid, and more like the head of a living than a dead person, so that it was ordered to be taken down again[16045]. Sir Thomas More also died a glorious death. When he heard that the Bishop of Rochester was condemned to death, he exclaimed : “ Lord, I am unworthy of such glory, but I hope thou wilt render me worthy.” His wife came to the prison to induce him to yield to the King’s wishes, but he refused, and after fourteen months confinement he was brought to trial, but never swerved, and was condemned to lose his head. When about to mount the scaffold, he called to a man near him to assist him to climb the steps; “But when I am to come down, my friend,” said he, “ I will want no one to assist me.” On the scaffold he protested before the people that he died for the Catholic Faith. He then most devotedly recited the Miserere, and laid his head on the block. His execution spread general grief all over England[16046].

9. When Paul III., the successor of Clement, was informed of the turn affairs had taken, he summoned Henry and all his accomplices to his tribunal, and in case of contumacy, fulminated the sentence of excommunication against him, but this was not published at the time, as there appeared still some hope that he would change his conduct; but all was in vain, he only every day involved himself more and more in crime. He now, as head of the Church, issued a commission to Cromwell, a layman, to visit the Convents, both male and female, in his dominions, to dismiss all Religious who were not twenty-four years of age, and to leave the others at liberty to go or stay, as they wished; this, it is said, though I believe not on sufficient foundation, threw ten thousand Religious back again into the world[16047]. About this time Queen Catherine died; she always bore her affliction with the greatest patience, and just before her death, wrote to the King—in terms which would melt the hardest heart[16048]. The vengeance of the Almighty was now impending over Anna Boleyn, the first cause of so much misery and woe. Henry’s affection was now very much cooled towards her, especially as he became enamoured of one of her maids of honour, Jane Seymour. Anna still had some hopes of regaining his affection, by presenting him with a male heir, but in this she was disappointed, the child was still-born; then her misfortunes commenced; she was accused of incest with her brother, George Boleyn, and of criminal conversation with four other gentlemen of the Court.

Henry refused at first to believe the charge, but his jealousy was raised, and his love for Jane Seymour contributing, likewise, to her ruins, she was committed to the Tower at once. Bossuet informs, us that Henry called on Cranmer to declare now, that his marriage with Anna was invalid from the beginning, and Elizabeth, his daughter, illegitimate, since Anna was married to him during the lifetime of Lord Percy, then Earl of Northumberland, between whom and Anna, it was asserted there was a contract of marriage. But this charge was unfounded; there was not even a promise between them; the only foundation for the assertion was, that Percy was at one time anxious to marry her; for all, she was condemned to death for adultery, and the sentence was, that she should be burned or beheaded, at the King's pleasure. She begged to be allowed to speak to the King, but was refused; all the favour she could obtain was, that she should be beheaded; this sentence was carried into execution, and her brother, likewise, and the four gentlemen accused of being her paramours, underwent the same fate. On the day of her execution, the lieutenant of the Tower remarked to her, by way of consolation, that she would not suffer much, as the executioner was very expert; she smilingly answered : " My neck is very slender." The day after, Henry married Jane Seymour[16049].

10. He again convoked Parliament on the 7th of June, 1536, and had the law passed in favour of Elizabeth, to the exclusion of Mary, daughter of Queen Catherine, repealed, and the six Articles were passed for the regulation of religious affairs in the kingdom. The First was, that the Transubstantiation of the bread into the body of Christ in the Eucharist, was an article of Faith. Second That communion should be given under one kind. Third That the Celibacy of the Clergy should be observed. Fourth That the vow of chastity was binding. Fifth That the celebration of the Mass was in conformity with the Divine Law, and that private Masses were not only useful, but necessary. Sixth That auricular confession should be strictly practised.

All these articles were confirmed by the ing, and both houses, and the penalties imposed on heretics applied to all who would either believe or teach doctrines in opposition to them[16050]. The primacy of the King, however, was left intact, so Henry, using his new power, appointed Cromwell, though a mere layman, his Vicar-General in Spirituals for the entire kingdom, and ordained that he should preside at all the Synods of the Bishops[16051]. When Paul III. was informed of all these sacrilegious attempts on the integrity of Faith, and especially of the affair of St. Thomas of Canterbury, who was tried and condemned as a traitor to his country[16052], and his sacred body disinterred, burned, and the ashes thrown into the Thames, he published a brief on the 1st of January,1538, ordering that the sentence before passed against Henry should be published[16053]. It was, however, delayed on account of the melancholy death of Queen Jane, who died in childbirth, leaving Henry an heir, afterwards Edward VI., under whom the ruin of England was completed, as in his time, heresy was firmly rooted in the country. It is said (but the report does not rest, I believe, on a good foundation), that when Henry found that there was danger of the child being lost, he ordered an operation to be performed on the mother, saying he could get wives enough, but not heirs[16054].

11. On the death of Jane Seymour, Henry immediately began to look about for his fourth wife, and Paul III., hoping to bring him to a sense of his duty, wrote him a letter in which he told him of the sentence of excommunication hanging over him, which he did not promulgate, having still hopes that he would be reconciled with the Church; at the same time, he created Reginald Pole a Cardinal, and sent him to France as his Legate, that he might endeavour to arrange a marriage between Henry and Margaret, the daughter of Francis I. of France. Cardinal Pole accordingly went to France, and arranged the matter with Francis, but Henry would not agree to it, and he wrote to Francis, telling him that Pole was a rebel, and requiring Francis to deliver him up to him.

This Francis refused to do, but he told the Cardinal the danger he was in, and by his advice he quitted France. Henry, disappointed in his vengeance, laid a price of fifty thousand crowns on his head[16055].

Cromwell (not Oliver the President) now thought it a good opportunity to induce the King to take a wife on his recommendation, and bring him over to his own Religion, which was Lutheran[16056]. He then proposed as a wife to him Anne, daughter of the Duke of Cleves, head of one of the noblest families in Germany, sister of the Electress of Saxony. Anne had a great many good qualities which would fit her for a crown, but she was, unfortunately, a Lutheran, and her relations were the chiefs of the League of Smalcald. Of this League Henry was anxious to be admitted a member, but the Lutherans had not confidence in him, and he then imagined that by marrying a Lutheran Princess he would remove any difficulties which previously existed to his admission. The marriage was celebrated, to Henry’s great joy, on the 3rd of January, 1540, and Cromwell was made High Chancellor on the occasion, and Earl of Essex. Henry was only seven months married when, as usual, he publicly declared himself discontented with his Queen, especially as she was a heretic, as if he could be called a

Catholic. He now became enamoured of Catherine Howard, niece of the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal of England, and one of the maids of honour to Queen Anne, and seeing no hopes of obtaining her favour unless he married her, he called on Cromwell to assist him now again to get divorced from Anne of Cleves. Cromwell had embarked his fortunes in the same boat with the Queen; he dreaded that her divorce would be the cause of his fall, and he refused most determinedly to have any hand in it. Henry, displeased with his obstinacy, eagerly sought an occasion to ruin him, and was not long in finding it. The chiefs of the Protestant League sent their agents to London to conclude with Henry the alliance he was before so desirous of, but as he was now determined to repudiate Anne, he had no longer any wish to league himself with the Lutherans, so he refused to treat with the agents; but Cromwell, confiding in his favour, took on himself to sign the treaty.

12. Some say that Henry was privy to this act, but this is denied by others; however it was, the upshot of the affair was the disgrace of Cromwell, for when the Emperor loudly complained of the alliance, Henry swore that he had no cognizance of it. He sent for Cromwell one day, and in presence of many of the nobility, charged him publicly with signing a treaty for which, he had no authority, and ordered him immediately to be conducted to the Tower. Cromwell begged hard for a public trial, to give him an opportunity of justifying his conduct in the affair, but as, independently of that charge, he was convicted of other crimes heresy, peculation, and illegal impositions he, who was the cause of so many Catholics being condemned without a hearing, was, by the just judgment of the Almighty, condemned himself, and was decapitated, quartered, and his property confiscated[16057]. Henry now had the Queen informed that unless she consented to a divorce he would have the laws against heretics put in force against her, she being a Lutheran. Dreading the fate that awaited her, from his known cruelty, and wishing to avoid also the shame of a public repudiation, she confessed, it is said, that previous to her marriage with the King she was promised to .another; so Thomas Cranmer, who gave the sentence of divorce in the cases of Catherine and of Anna Boleyn, now for the third time pronounced a similar sentence. The decision was based on the greatest injustice, for the contract of marriage between Anne and the Duke of Lorraine, on which it was founded, took place while they were both

children, and was never ratified. How, then, could Henry's solemn marriage be affected by this ?But Cranmer, whom Burnet compares to St. Athanasius and St. Cyril, decided that it was null and void, merely to please Henry, who immediately married another. Queen Anne accepted a pension of 3,000 a-year, but never returned to Germany again[16058].

13. Within a week Henry was married to Catherine Howard, who soon met the same fate as Anna Boleyn. She was charged before Parliament with dissolute conduct with two individuals, before her marriage, and with adultery since, and was condemned to be beheaded[16059]. Henry then got a law passed, the like of which was never before heard of, enacting it high treason for any lady to marry the King, if previously she had ever offended against chastity[16060]. He then married Catherine Parr, sister to the Earl of Essex[16061]; she survived him, but having married the brother of the Regent Somerset, Thomas Seymour, Lord High Admiral of England, who suffered death by the sentence of his own brother, she died of a broken heart.

14. Death, at last, was about to put an end to Henry's crimes; he was now fifty-seven years of age, and had grown to such an enormous size that he could not almost pass through the doorway of his palace, and was obliged to be carried by servants up and down stairs[16062]. A deep-rooted sadness and remorse now seized him; all his crimes, sacrileges, and scandals stared him in the face. To establish the sacrilegious doctrine of his primacy over the English Church he had put to death two Cardinals, three Archbishops, eighteen Bishops and Archdeacons, five hundred priests, sixty Superiors of religious houses, fifty Canons, twenty-nine peers, three hundred and sixty-six knights, and an immense number both of the gentry and people. Ulcers in one of his legs, together with fever, now plainly told him that his end was nigh, and some writers assert that he then spoke to some of the Bishops of his intention of being again reconciled to the Church, but not one among them had the courage to tell him plainly the course he should take. All dreaded his anger; and none were willing to brave the danger of death, by plainly telling him that his only chance of salvation was to repent of his evil deeds to repair the scandal he had given and humbly return to the Church he had abandoned. No one was courageous enough to tell him this; one alone suggested to him that he ought to convoke parliament, as he had done when about to make the changes, to set things again to rights. He ordered, it is

said, the Secretaries of State to convoke it, but they feared they should be obliged to disgorge the plunder of the Church, and put off the convocation, and thus he left the Church in the greatest confusion; and soon, as we shall see, irreparable ruin overtook it[16063].

15. Just before Henry's death he opened a church belonging to the Franciscans, and had Mass again said in it (now Christ Church Hospital), but this was but little reparation for so much mischief. He then made his will, leaving his only son, Edward, heir to the throne, then only nine years of age, appointing sixteen guardians to him, ordering that he should be brought up in the Catholic Faith, but never resign the primacy of the English Church, so that he was unchanged even in death. In case that Edward died without issue, he left the crown to Mary, daughter of Queen Catherine, and should she likewise die without issue, to Elizabeth, daughter of Anna Boleyn[16064]. He caused Mass to be celebrated several times in his chamber, and wished that the Viaticum should be administered to him in the one kind alone. When the Viaticum was brought in he received it kneeling, and when it was told him, that, considering the state he was in, that was unnecessary, he said : " If I could bury myself under the earth, I could not show sufficient respect to the God I am about to receive"[16065]. How could he, however, expect to please the Almighty by such acts of reverence, after trampling on his Church, and dying out of her communion ? He endeavoured, by these external acts, to quiet that remorse of conscience he felt, but, withal, he could not recover the Divine grace, nor the peace he sought. He called for some Religious to attend him at his last moments, after banishing them out of the kingdom[16066]; he next called for something to drink, and having tasted it he said to those around him, in a loud tone, " So this is the end of it, and all is lost for me," and immediately expired. He died on the 1st of February, 1547, at the age of fifty-six, according to Noel Alexander, or in his fifty-seventh year, according to others, and in the thirty-eighth year of his reign[16067].

II. REIGN OF EDWARD VI

16.—The Duke of Somerset, as Guardian of Edward VI., governs the kingdom. 17.—He declares himself a heretic, and gives leave to the heretics to preach; invites Bucer, Vermigli, and Ochino to England, and abolishes the Roman Catholic Religion. 18.—He beheads his brother, the Lord High Admiral. 19.—He is beheaded himself. 20.—Death of Edward; the Earl of Warwick makes an attempt to get possession of the kingdom, and is beheaded, but is converted, and dies an edifying death.

16. Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, was one of the guardians appointed by Henry to his son; he was maternal uncle to the young King, being brother to Jane Seymour, his mother. Although he passed all along as a Catholic, he was a Zuinglian, and as the majority of Edward’s guardians were Catholics, he intrigued with some of the principal nobility of the kingdom, and pointed out how dangerous it would be to their interests that the young King should be left in the hands of those gentlemen; that the consequence would be that they should have, sooner or later, to surrender again the Ecclesiastic property given them by Henry; that the suppressed and ruined churches should be again repaired and rebuilt, to the great impoverishing of the Royal treasury; and that the only way to avoid such evils was that he should be made Governor of the kingdom. He craftily suppressed Henry’s will, and substituted another, in which Edward was declared head of the Church of England, and he was appointed Regent; he then got himself created Duke of Somerset, and took the title of Protector of the Kingdom[16068].

17. No sooner had he got the supreme power into his hands, as Protector, than he at once took off the mask, proclaimed himself a Protestant, and appointed preachers to disseminate the heresy. He prohibited the Bishops from preaching, or ordaining, without the King’s permission, and he then refused permission to anyone to preach, unless to the Zuinglian Ministers.

Among the rest the impious Cranmer, pseudo Archbishop of Canterbury, now began publicly to preach against the Catholic Church, and published a Catechism filled with the wicked doctrines against the Faith, and was not ashamed to marry publicly, with the approbation of the Regent, a woman who lived with him as concubine before he was made Bishop[16069]. Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Winchester but deposed from his See for preaching, in London, against the Real Presence was now appointed, by Somerset, principal preacher of the Zuinglian errors. He invited, at the same time, from Strasbourg, three famous ministers of Satan, apostate Religious, well known through all Europe Martin Bucer, now seventy years of age, and three times married; Peter Martyr, and Bernard Ochin and appointed them to Professors Chairs in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, to poison the minds of the poor youths studying there, and he banished every Catholic

Professor out of these Colleges. To complete the work of iniquity, he appointed, as tutors to the young King, Richard Crock, a priest, who violated his vows, by marrying, and John Check, a layman of debauched life fit instructors for a young Prince in vice and heresy[16070]. He tried, by sending Bucer, Peter Martyr, and Ochino, to Mary, to induce her to forsake the Church, like wise[16071]; but she showed such determined opposition, that he never tried it again. His next step was to abolish the six Articles of Henry VIII., and on the 5th of November, 1547, he obtained the sanction of Parliament, for abolishing the Roman Catholic Religion, the Mass, the veneration of Sacred Images, and for the confiscation of the sacred vessels and ornaments of the altar[16072]; and thus, under him, the whole plan of Religion established by Henry and the Parliament (N. 10), six Articles, and all, were done away with. Here we naturally wonder how so many Bishops and Theologians could establish, in Henry's reign, a form of worship of such little value, as to be abolished almost immediately on his death. Burnet says, that these Theologians were ignorant of the truth. Behold, then, the reformed Faith, called by him "The Work of Light." They sanctioned articles of Faith without having knowledge of the truth.

The Reformation may, indeed, be called a work of darkness, since it upset Faith, Religion, and all Divine and human laws, in England[16073]. Somerset next ordained, that Communion should be administered under both kinds that the Scriptures should be generally read in the vulgar tongue and that all Bishops, or other Ecclesiastics, refusing obedience to this order, should be sent to prison, and deprived of their benefices, and Reformers installed in their places[16074]. In this he followed the advice of Calvin, who wrote him a long letter from Geneva on the subject, advising him to abolish the Catholic Religion by persecution; and the prisons of London were, accordingly, filled with suspected Catholics. At this period, three-fourths of the clergy had shaken off the law of celibacy[16075].

18. Such were the crimes of the Duke of Somerset against the Church; but the Divine vengeance soon overtook him, in a most unexpected manner[16076]. He had raised his brother, Thomas Seymour, to the dignity of Lord High Admiral of the Kingdom, and this nobleman had gained the affection of Henry's last Queen, Catherine Parr, and had his consent to the marriage. This was highly displeasing, however, to the Duchess of

Somerset, as, in case of his marriage with Catherine, she should resign to her the precedence which she enjoyed, as wife of the Protector, and, though she yielded to the Queen Dowager, she was unwilling to take rank beneath her sister-in-law; and thus a quarrel was commenced between the ladies, in which their husbands were soon engaged. John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, was an enemy to both parties, and bent on their destruction; and, to accomplish it with greater certainly, he pretended to be a mediator, while he dexterously encouraged the strife between them, and succeeded so well, that Somerset engaged Sharington to accuse his brother of high treason. He appeared to be highly displeased when the accusation was first made; but then he alleged that the King's life and honour were dearer to him than his brother's life, and he gave orders to proceed with his trial. The Admiral was condemned, and executed on the 20th of March, 1549. His lady, Queen Catherine, according to some, died of a broken heart; but we believe that she had previously died in childbirth.[16077]

19. On the death of the Admiral, Earl Warwick was entire master of Somerset's mind; he wound him round as he pleased, and had sufficient interest to appoint friends of his own to several important places, by which he laid the foundation of the Duke's ruin. He strengthened his party, besides, by the adhesion of the Catholic lords very numerous still who were persuaded by him, that there was no hope of re-establishing the Catholic Religion while Somerset was in power. About the same time, the English lost Boulogne, in the ancient province of Picardy, and the Regent was severely censured, for not having sent reinforcements in time, to save it from the French. Several of the barons and nobility, likewise, had enclosed commonages, in different parts of the kingdom, to the great grievance of the people, who looked to the Regent for redress, and not obtaining it, broke out into rebellion, and Warwick got the Parliament convoked. He had a very strong party in both houses, so the Regent was attainted, and sent to the Tower, and was executed on the 22nd of January, 1552, and both Catholics and Protestants rejoiced at his death[16078].

20. The Earl of Warwick having now disposed of all his rivals, took the administration of affairs even during Edward's lifetime into his own hands, and got another step in the Peerage, being created Duke of Northumberland; and not satisfied with all this, prevailed on the King to leave his crown, by

will, to his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, daughter of the Duke of Norfolk, excluding Mary, daughter of Queen Catherine, as she was declared illegitimate in the reign of Henry VIII., and Elizabeth, as daughter of the adulteress, Anna Boleyn.

Edward died soon after, in the sixteenth year of his age, on the 7th of July, 1553, and Northumberland, it is said, immediately gave orders that Mary should be secured; but his secretary, a Catholic, thought it too bad that the heiress of the crown should be thus deprived of her right, and he escaped from his master, and arrived in Mary's presence two hours sooner than the person the Duke sent to arrest her[16079]. Mary immediately fled to Norfolk, where the people showed their attachment to her cause, by taking up arms in her defence. She collected an army of fifteen thousand men, and though Northumberland marched against her with thirty thousand, he was deserted by most of them (some say he never had more than six thousand in the beginning), and returned to London; but the citizens would not now admit him, and the fleet, likewise, declared for Mary. When Queen Mary was settled in the government, Northumberland was indicted for high treason, and, as there was no doubt of his guilt, he was condemned and executed. His sons suffered, likewise, and his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, Henry's niece, who wore the crown for ten days against her will, paid the penalty of her treason on the scaffold. Elizabeth was, likewise, kept in custody on suspicion. Northumberland had embraced Protestantism merely from political motives, but now he returned again to the Faith, confessed to a Priest, and declared on the scaffold, that it was merely the ambition of obtaining the crown for his family that caused him to dissemble his Faith, and that he looked on his punishment now a grace of God to procure his salvation. His sons and others, executed for the same crime, made a similar declaration. It is melancholy to see in this history so many persons condemned to death for trying to elevate themselves above their sphere, and England become immediately on her loss of the Faith a field of slaughter for her children[16080].

III MARY'S REIGN

21.—Mary refuses the title of Head of the Church; repeals her Father's and Brother's Laws; Cranmer is condemned to be burned, and dies a heretic; Mary sends off all heretics from her

Court. 22,-Cardinal Pole reconciles England with the Church; her marriage with Philip II., and death.

21. The good Queen Mary, on her accession to the throne. refused to take the impious title of Head of the Church, and immediately sent ambassadors to Rome, to pay obedience to the Pope. She repealed all the decrees of her father and brother, and re-established the public exercise of the Catholic Religion[16081]. She imprisoned Elizabeth, who twice conspired against her, and, it is said, she owed her life to the intercession of King Philip. She opened the prisons, and gave liberty to the Bishops and other Catholics who were confined; and on the 5th of October, 1553, the Parliament rescinded the iniquitous sentence of Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, by which he declared the marriage of Catherine and Henry null and void, and he was condemned to be burned as a heretic. When the unfortunate man found that he was condemned to death, he twice retracted his errors; but when all this would not save him from being burned, he cancelled his retractation, and died a Calvinist[16082]. By the Queen's orders, the remains of Bucer and Fagius, who died heretics, were caused to be exhumed and burned; and thirty thousand heretics were banished the kingdom, comprising Lutherans, Calvinists, Zuinglians, Anabaptists, Socinians, Seekers, and such like. The Seekers are those who are seeking the true religion, but have not yet found it, nor ever will out of the Catholic Church alone; because in every other religion, if they trace it up to the author, they will find some impostor, whose imagination furnished a mass of sophisms and errors.[16083]

22. Mary, likewise, proclaimed the innocence of Cardinal Pole, and requested Julius III. to send him to England as his Legate, a latere. He arrived soon after, and, at the request of the Queen, reconciled the kingdom again to the Church, and absolved it from schism, on the Vigil of St. Andrew, 1554. He next restored Ecclesiastical discipline, reformed the Universities, and re-established the practices of Religion. He absolved all the laymen from the censures they incurred by laying hands on the property of the Church during the time of the schism; remitted the tithes and first fruits due to the Clergy; confirmed in their Sees the Catholic Bishops, though installed in the time of the schism, and recognized the new Sees established by Henry. All this was subsequently confirmed by Paul IV.; but, unfortunately for England, Mary died on the 15th of November, 1558, in the forty-fourth year of her age, and fifth of her reign. She was married to

Philip II., King of Spain, and at first mistook her sickness, which was dropsy, for pregnancy. The Faithful all over the world mourned for her death[16084].

IV. THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH

> 23.—Elizabeth proclaimed Queen; the Pope is dissatisfied, and she declares herself a Protestant. 24.—She gains over the Parliament, through the influence of three of the Nobility, and is proclaimed head of the Church. 25.—She establishes the form of Church Government, and, though her belief is Calvinistic, she retains Episcopacy, & c. 26.—Appropriates Church Property, abolishes the Mass; the Oath of Allegiance; persecution of the Catholics. 27.—Death of Edmund Campion for the Faith. 28.—The Pope's Bull against Elizabeth. 29.—She dies out of Communion with the Church. 30.—Her successors on the Throne of England; deplorable state of the English Church. 31.—The English Reformation refutes itself.

23. Mary died on the 13th of January, 1559, and Elizabeth, daughter of Anna Boleyn, was proclaimed Queen, according to the iniquitous will of Henry VIII. I call it iniquitous, for the crown, by right, appertained to Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, for Elizabeth's birth was spurious, as she was born during the lifetime of Henry's first Queen and lawful wife, Catherine, and when Clement VIII. and Paul III. had already declared his marriage with Anna Boleyn null and void[16085]. Elizabeth was then twenty-five years of age, and highly accomplished, and learned both in science and languages. She spoke French, Italian, and Latin. She had, besides, all the natural qualities requisite for a great Queen, but obscured by the Lutheran heresy, of which she was a follower in private. During the lifetime of Mary, she pretended to be a Catholic, and, perhaps, would have continued to do so when she came to the throne, or have become a Catholic in reality, if the Pope would recognize her as Queen, for in the beginning she allowed freedom of religion to all, and even took the old Coronation Oath to defend the Catholic Faith, and preserve the liberties of the Church[16086]. She commanded Sir Edward Cairne, the Ambassador in Rome from her sister Mary, to notify her accession and coronation to Paul IV., and present her duty, and ask his benediction.

The Pope, however, answered, that it was not lawful—for her to have assumed the government of the kingdom, a fief of the Holy See, without the consent of Rome, that it would be necessary to examine the rights which Queen Mary of Scotland had to the throne also, and therefore that she should place herself altogether in his hands, and that she would experience from him paternal kindness. Elizabeth then saw that it would be difficult to keep herself on the throne, unless by separating from the Roman Church; she therefore tore off the mask, recalled her Ambassador, Cairne, from Rome, and publicly professed the heresy she had previously embraced in private[16087].

24. All now she had to do was to get the Parliament to establish the Reformed Religion, and this was easily accomplished. The House of Commons being already gained over, the only difficulty was to get the Peers to agree to it. The Upper House was almost entirely led by the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Dudley, and the Earl of Arundel. On each of these Elizabeth exercised her influence, and through them gained over the majority of the Peers, especially as the lay Peers were more numerous than the Bishops, to declare her Head of the Church. All the regulations made in religious affairs during the reign of Edward VI. were re-established, and those of Mary repealed[16088]. Each of these noblemen expected that Elizabeth, who was a most consummate intriguer, would make him the partner of her crown[16089]. There were sixteen thousand Ecclesiastics in England. Three-fourths, as Burnet writes, immediately joined the Reformers. The greater parts of the Clergy were married at that period, and this was the reason, as Burnet himself allows, that they changed so easily.

25. Elizabeth, now fortified with parliamentary authority, prohibited most rigorously any of her subjects from obeying the Pope, and commanded all to recognize her as Head of the Church, both in Spirituals and Temporalities. It was also ordained, at the same, time that to the Crown alone belonged the appointment of Bishops, the convocation of Synods, the power of taking cognizance of heresy and abuses, and the punishment of spiritual delinquencies. A system of Church government and discipline was also established, and though the doctrine of the Anglican Church is Calvinism, which rejects Bishops, together with all the sacred ceremonies of the Roman Church, as well as altars and images, still she wished that the Bishops should be continued, but without any other power than what they held from herself.

“ Nisi ad bene placitum Regine nec aliter nisi per ipsam a Regali Magistate derivatum auctoritatem”[16090]. Then was seen in the Church what before was unheard of a woman arrogating to herself the supremacy of the

Church. How totally opposed this was to the Scriptures, St. Paul tells us plainly, for he says (I. Cor. xiv, 34) : "Let women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted to them to speak, but to be subject." She wished that the Priesthood, altars, and sacred ceremonies, should be in some wise retained, for the people, she said, required such things[16091]. Thus it would appear that she looked on the ceremonies of the Church as mere theatrical representations, fit to amuse the vulgar. A new Hierarchy and new ceremonies were, accordingly, instituted, and, we may say, a new Martyrology, with Wickliffe, Huss, and Cranmer, as its Martyrs; and Luther, Peter Martyr, Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Erasmus, its Saints.

26. The benefices and the Monastic property were now all seized on, and part applied to government purposes, and the rest granted to the nobility. Vicars-General in spirituals were also appointed. All sacred images were removed from the churches, but she kept a Crucifix in her own chamber, placed on an altar, with two candles, but these were never lighted. The Mass was prohibited, together with all the ancient ceremonies used in preaching and administering the Sacraments, and new ceremonies were instituted, and a form of prayers commanded to be read in English, savouring strongly of Calvinism, which she wished should be the leading doctrine of the Anglican Church, but the government and discipline after a plan of her own[16092]. She then got the sanction of Parliament for all these regulations, and it was ordered that all Bishops and Ecclesiastics should take the oath of supremacy, under pain of deprivation and imprisonment for the first refusal, and of death for the second.

The oath was this : " I, A. B., declare in my conscience that the Queen is the sole and supreme ruler in this kingdom of England, both in spirituals and temporals, and that no foreign Prelate or Prince has any authority Ecclesiastical in this kingdom, and I, therefore, in the plain sense of the words, reject all foreign authority." Elizabeth hoped that an order enforced under such severe penalties would be at once obeyed by all; but all the Bishops (with the exception of the Bishop of Llandaff), refused, and were degraded and banished, or imprisoned, and their glorious example was followed by the better part of the Clergy, by numbers of the Religious, of various Orders, and by many doctors, and several of the nobility, whose constancy in adhering to the Faith was punished by exile and imprisonment.

Soon, however, these punishments were looked on as too mild many Priests, Friars, and Preachers were put to death for the Faith, and crowned with Martyrdom[16093]. Sanders gives a Diary of all the occurrences that took place during this period in England, beginning in 1580.

27. I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without relating the death of Edmund Campion, one of the many martyrs put to death by Elizabeth for the Faith. While in Home he heard of the dreadful persecution the Catholics, and, above all, the Missionaries who came to their assistance, were suffering from Elizabeth. He was a young Englishman, a scholar, and a linguist, and, burning with zeal for the salvation of his countrymen, he determined to go to their assistance. This was a matter of great difficulty, for several spies were on the look-out for him, to take him on his landing, and not only was his person described, but even his likeness was taken; still, disguised as a servant, he escaped all the snares laid for him, and arrived safely in the kingdom. Night and day he laboured, preaching, hearing confessions, and animating the Faithful to perseverance; he was continually moving about from one place to another, under different names, and in various disguises, and so escaped, for a long time, the emissaries who were in search of him. He was at last betrayed by an apostate Priest, while he was saying Mass, and preaching, in the house of a Catholic.

28. He had not time to escape, the house was surrounded, and the master shut him up in a hiding hole, which was so well contrived, that after a most rigorous search, he could not be discovered. The bailiffs were going away in despair, when, at the bottom of the staircase they accidentally broke through a wall, and discovered him on his knees, offering up his life to God. They put him in prison, and he was then so violently racked, that when brought to trial and told to raise up his arm to attest his confession, he had not the power of doing so, and it was raised up by an assistant. He was arraigned as a traitor, for thus they indicted the Catholic Priests in those days, to do away with the honour of martyrdom. They put them to death, they said, not for preaching their Faith, but for conspiring against the Queen. When Campion was charged with treason, he confounded his accusers by replying: “How can you charge us with treason, and condemn us for that alone, when all that is requisite to save ourselves is, that we go to your preaching’s (thus changing their Religion); it is, then, because we are

Catholics that we are condemned, and not because we are, as you say, rebels." He was condemned to be drawn on a hurdle to the place of execution, and hanged. He then declared that he never rebelled against the Queen that it was for the Faith alone he was put to death. He was disembowelled, his heart torn out and cast into the fire, and his body quartered. Several other Priests underwent a like punishment for the Faith during this reign[16094].

28. When St. Pius V. learned the cruelties practised by Elizabeth on the Catholics, he published a Bull against her, on the 24th of February, 1570; but this was only adding fuel to the fire, and the persecution became more furious[16095]. It was then, as we have already related, that she, under false pretences, beheaded Mary, Queen of Scots (Chap, xi, art. iii, sec. ii, n. 78).

She was desirous, if possible, even to destroy Catholicity in all Christian kingdoms, and entered into a league with the Reformers of the Netherlands, and the Calvinists of France, and this league never was interrupted during her lifetime[16096], and in the wars waged by these rebels against their Sovereigns, she sent them powerful assistance[16097], and she left no stone unturned, cither, to advance the Calvinistic Reformation in Scotland[16098].

29. The end of her reign and life was now at hand; a Protestant author has said that she died a happy death. It is worthwhile to see what sort of a death it was. I find that after the death of the Earl of Essex, whom she beheaded though very much attached to him for the crime of insurrection, she never more enjoyed a day's happiness. As old age came on her, also, she was tormented by fear and jealousy, and doubted the affectionate fidelity of her subjects. She went to Richmond, where the pleasing scenery had no effect in calming her mind; she conceived that all her friends abandoned her, that everything went against her, and complained that she had no sincere attached friend. The death-sickness at last came on her, and she refused all medical aid, and could not, her impatience was so great, bear even the sight of a physician. When she saw death approaching, she declared King James of Scotland her successor, and on the 24th of March, 1603, two hours before midnight, she breathed her last, in the seventieth year of her age, and forty-fourth of her reign. Thus she closed her days in sorrow and anguish, not so much through pain of body, as of mind. She sunk into the grave without any sign of repentance, without Sacraments, without the assistance

of a Priest; she was attended by some Protestant Ecclesiastics, but they only exhorted her to persevere in the heresy she embraced[16099]. Such was the happy death of Queen Elizabeth. It is said that she used to say : “ If God gives me forty years to reign, I will give up even heaven itself “[16100]. Unhappy woman !not alone forty, but nearly forty-five years did she possess the throne. She became head of the Church; she separated the Church of England from the Roman See; she prohibited the exercise of the Catholic Religion; how many innocent persons did she doom to all the horrors of exile, of imprisonment, of cruel death !She is now in eternity, and I would like to know, is she satisfied with all the crimes and cruelties she committed during her life. 0, happy would it be for her had she never sat upon a throne.

30. Elizabeth, before she died, nominated James VI., the son of Mary Stuart, her successor. When he became King of England (Chap, xi, art. iii, sec. ii, n. 85), he neglected to comply with the wishes of his good mother, never to follow any other than the Catholic Religion; he leant, therefore, to Lutheranism was anything but a friend to the Calvinists and was anxious that Scotland, which kingdom he retained, should follow the Lutheran doctrine also; but in this he was disappointed. His son and successor, Charles I, endeavoured to carry out his father’s intentions, and lost his head on the scaffold. He was succeeded by his son, Charles II., who died without issue, and the crown then devolved on his brother, James II. This good Prince declared himself a Catholic, and the consequence was, that he was obliged to fly to France, where he died a holy death in 1701, leaving one son, James III., who lived and died in Rome, in the Catholic Faith. In fine, unhappy England was, and is, separated from the Catholic Church, and groans under the weight of various heresies. Every Religion, with the exception of the Catholic, is tolerated, but the Faithful are exposed to all the frightful severities of the penal laws, and there are among the sectarians, almost as many Religions as individuals. In fact, we may say, that in that unhappy country there is no Religion at all, for, as St. Augustine says[16101] : “The true Religion was always one, from the beginning, and will always be the same.”[16102]

31. I have placed at the end of the historical portion of the Work, the Refutation of the principal Heresies which infected the Church, but it is

impossible to take any particular hold of the English schism, for it is not a Religion in itself, so much as a mixture composed of every heresy, excluding Catholicity, the only true Religion. This is, then, according to Burnet, “The Work of Light,” which smoothes the way to heaven. What blindness, or, rather, what impiety! The Reformation smoothes the way to heaven, by allowing everyone to live as he pleases, without law or Sacraments, and with no restraint. A foreign Protestant author even ridicules Burnet’s boast : “The English, by the Reformation,” he says, “have become so totally independent, that everyone takes whatever road to heaven that pleases himself.” Thus the English Reformation refutes itself.

ARTICLE II. THE ANTITRINITARIANS AND S0CINIANS. MICHAEL SRVETU5

32.—Character of Servetus; his studies, travels, and false doctrine. 33.—He goes to Geneva; disputes with Calvin, who has him burned to death.

32. Michael Servetus, the chief of the Antitrinitarians, was a Spaniard, a native of Saragossa, in Catalonia. He was a man of genius[16103], but light-headed, and held such a presumptions opinion of himself, that, even before he was twenty-five years old, he thought himself the most learned man in the world. He went to Paris to study medicine, and there met some German Lutheran professors, employed by Francis I. to teach in that University, as he wished to have, at all risks, the best professors in Europe. He learned from these doctors, not only Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, but at the same time imbibed their errors. He went to Dauphiny, and, as he commenced disseminating the errors he had learned[16104], he was accused of Lutheranism, but cleared himself, and denounced all Lutheran doctrine. He next went to Lyons, then to Germany, and from that to Africa to learn the Alcoran of Mahomet.

He next went to Poland, and fixed himself there; and, puffed up with an extraordinary idea of his own learning, he disdained attaching himself to any sect, and formed a religion of his own, composed of the errors of all sects, and then, as Varillas tells us, he changed his name to Revez. With Luther, he condemned all which that Reformer condemned in the Catholic Church; he rejected the Baptism of infants, with the Anabaptists; with the Sacramentarians, he said that the Eucharist was only a figure of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. But his most awful errors were those against the

Most Holy Trinity, and especially against the Divinity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost. With Sabellius, he denied the distinction of the three Divine Persons; with Arius, that the Word was God; with Macedonius, that the Holy Ghost was God, for he said that in God there was but One Nature and One Person, and that the Son and the Holy Ghost were only two emanations from the Divine Essence, and had a beginning only from the creation of the world. Thus, as Jovet[16105] says, Arianism, which was extinct for eight hundred years, was resuscitated by Servetus in 1530. Europe, and the northern nations of it especially, being then all in confusion, overrun by so many heresies, he soon found followers. Besides the errors enumerated, the books of Servetus were filled with the errors of Apollinares, of Nestorius, and of Eutyches, as the reader can see, by consulting Noel Alexander and Gotti. Another of his opinions was, that man did not commit mortal sin till he passed the age of twenty; that by sin the soul became mortal like the body; that polygamy might be permitted; and to these he added many other blasphemies.

33. Servetus left Germany and Poland, and was coming to Italy to disseminate his doctrine. He arrived in Geneva, where Calvin resided at the time. Calvin was at one time accused of Arianism, and to prove the contrary, wrote some treatises against Servetus. Having him now in his power, he thought it a good opportunity to give a cruel proof of his sincere abhorrence of this heresy, so he had him denounced by one of his servants to the magistrates, and imprisoned (Chap, xi, art. iii, sec. i, n. 67).

They then had a long disputation. Servetus asserted that the Scriptures alone were sufficient to decide Articles of Faith, without reference either to Fathers or Councils, and, in fact, that was Calvin’s own doctrine also, especially in his disputes with the Catholics. He was, therefore, very hard pressed by Servetus, who explained the texts adduced to prove the Trinity and the Divinity of Jesus Christ, after his own fashion, especially as he himself rejecting Fathers and Councils in the explanation of that text of St. John (x, 30), “The Father and I am one” said that all were wrong in proving by this, the unity of essence between the Father and Son, as it only proved the perfect uniformity of the will of Christ with that of his Father. When he found, therefore, that Servetus obstinately held his Antitrinitarian doctrines, he laid another plan to destroy him. He sent his propositions to the

University of the Zuinglian Cantons, and, on their condemnation, he caused him to be burned alive on the 27th of October, 1553, as we have already narrated (Chap, xi, art. iii, sec. i, n. 67)[16106]. This cursed sect, however, did not expire with Servetus, for his writings and disciples carried it into Russia, Wallachia, Moravia, and Silesia; it was afterwards split into thirty-two divisions, and in these provinces the Antitrinitarians are more numerous than the Lutherans or Calvinists.

I. VALENTINE GENTILIS, GEORGE BLANDRATA, AND BERNARD OCHINO

> 34.—Valentine Gentilis; his impious doctrine. 35.—He is punished in Geneva, and retracts. 36.—Relapses, and is beheaded. 37.—George Blandrata perverts the Prince of Transylvania; disputes with the Reformers; is murdered. 38.—Bernard Ochino; his life while a Friar; his perversion, and flight to Geneva. 39.—He goes to Strasbourg, and afterwards to England, with Bucer; his unfortunate death in Poland.

34. Valentine Gentilis was a native of Cosenza, in Calabria, and a disciple of Servetus. He was astonished, he said[16107], that the Reformers would trouble themselves so much in disputing with the Catholics about Sacraments, Purgatory, Fasting, &c., matters of such little importance, and still agree with them in the principal mystery of their Faith, the Trinity. Although he agreed in doctrine with Servetus, he explained it differently[16108]. Three things, he said, concur in the Trinity the essence, which was the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father is the one only true God, the Essenciator; the Son and the Holy Ghost are the Essensiati. He did not call the Father a Person, because, according to his opinion, the essence was in itself true God, and therefore he said, if we admit the Father to be a Person, we have no longer a Trinity, but a Quaternity. He thus denied that there were three Persons in the same essence, as we believe. He recognized in God three external Spirits[16109]; but of these, two were inferior to the Father, for he had given them a Divinity indeed, but inferior to his own. In the book which he presented to Sigismund Augustus, King of Poland[16110], he complains that many monstrous terms have been introduced into the Church, as Persons, Essence, and Trinity, which are, he says, a perversion of the Divine Mysteries. He admitted that there were three holy and eternal essences, as the Athanasian Creed teaches, but in all the rest he says it is “ a Satanical symbol.”

35. Valentine, and some Antitrinitarian friends of his, being in Geneva[16111], in 1558, and the magistracy, having a suspicion of his opinions, obliged them to sign a profession of Faith in the Trinity. Valentine subscribed it, and swore to it, but not sincerely, for he immediately after began to teach his errors, so he was taken up and imprisoned for perjury. He presented another confession of Faith while in prison, but as his heresy appeared through it, Calvin strenuously opposed his release. Fear then drove him to a more ample retractation, and from his prison he presented the following one to the magistrates : " Confiteor Patrem, Filium et Spiritum Sanctum esse unum Deum, idest tres Personas distinctas in una Essentia, Pater non est Filius, nec Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus, sed unaquaeque illarum Personarum est integra ilia Essentia. Item Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus quantum ad Divinam Naturam sunt unus Deus cum Patre, cui sunt coaequales et coaeterni. Hoc sentio, et corde ac ore profiteer. Haereses autem contrarias damno, et nominatim blasphemias quas descripsi," &c. It would have been well for him had he never changed again this profession; he would not then have made the miserable end he did.

36. Notwithstanding his retractation, the Senate of Geneva, in 1558, condemned him to be brought forth, stripped to his shirt, to kneel with a candle in his hand, and pray to God and the state for pardon for his blasphemies, and then to cast his writings into the fire with his own hands. He was led through the principal streets of the city, and the sentence executed[16112]. He was prohibited, likewise, from leaving the city; indeed, at first he was kept in prison, but afterwards was allowed out, promising on oath that he would not make his escape. He fled, however, at the first opportunity, and took refuge in the house of a lawyer of Padua, who lived in Savoy, and held the same opinions as himself, and began writing again in opposition to the Trinity. He was again put into prison, and escaped to Lyons, where he published a Treatise against the Athanasian Creed. From Lyons he went to Poland, and when Sigismund banished him from that kingdom, he took up his residence in Beam. He was here accused by Musculus, in the year 1556, and imprisoned.

He refused to retract, and was sentenced to death. Just before laying his head on the block, he said: "Others died Martyrs for the Son; I die a Martyr for the Father.” Unfortunate man! dying an enemy of the Son, he died an enemy of the Father, likewise[16113].

37. George Blandrata was another of the disciples of Servetus. He was born in Piedmont, and was a physician, and the writings of Servetus having fallen in his way, he embraced his errors. The Inquisition was very strict at that period in Piedmont, so he consulted his safety by flying, first, into Poland, and, afterwards, in 1553, into Transylvania[16114]. He here succeeded in getting himself appointed physician to the Sovereign, John Sigismund, and to his Prime Minister, Petrowitz, a Lutheran, and by that means endeavoured to make them Arians. There were a great many Lutherans and Calvinists in the country, and they all joined in opposing Blandrata’s doctrines, so the Sovereign, to put an end to the dispute, commanded that a public conference[16115] should be held in his presence, and acted himself the part of judge. The conference took place in his presence, in Waradin, between the Reformers and Blandrata, and several other Arian friends of his. They began by quoting the various passages of the Scripture used by Arius to impugn the Divinity of Christ. The Reformers answered, by quoting the interpretation of these texts by the Council of Nice, and by the Holy Fathers, who explained them in their proper sense. This doctrine, they said, we should hold, otherwise every one might explain away the Scriptures just as he pleased. One of the Arians then stepped forward and cried out : “How is this ?When you argue with the Papists, and quote your texts of Scripture to defend your doctrine, and they say that the true meaning of these texts is only to be found in the Decrees of Councils and the works of the Fathers, you at once say that the Holy Fathers and the Bishops composing the Councils were men subject to be deceived, like anyone else that the Word of God alone is sufficient for understanding the Articles of Faith that it is clear enough in itself, and requires no explanation; and now you want to make use of the same arms against us which you blame the Catholics for having recourse to.”

This answer was applauded by the Prince and the majority of the meeting, and the preachers were confounded, and knew not what reply to make. Arianism then became the most numerous sect in Transylvania, and the impious doctrine of Arius was resuscitated after a lapse of nine hundred years. It is worthy of remark, as Jovet[16116] tells us, that the first who embraced it were all Lutherans or Calvinists, and that all their Chiefs came to an unhappy end. Paul Alciatus, their companion, at last became a Mahometan, as Gotti informs us. Francis David, as Noel Alexander tells us, was killed by a house falling on him; another of them, called Lismaninus, drowned himself in a well, and Blandrata[16117] was killed by a relative of his, to rob him.

38. Bernard Ochino was also an Antitrinitarian. He was a Capuchin Friar, and the heretics even make him founder of that Institute; but the Capuchin Chronicle, and the majority of writers, deny this, and say he was only General of the Capuchins for a while[16118]. Their real founder was Matthew de Basso, in 1525, and Ochino did not enter the order until 1534, nine years after, when the Order already had three hundred professed members. He lived as a Religious for eight years, and threw off the habit in 1542. At first, while a Religious, he led a most exemplary life[16119], wore a very poor habit, went always barefooted, had a long beard, and appeared to suffer from sickness and the mortified life he led. "Whenever he had occasion, in his journeys, to stop in the houses of the great, he eat most sparingly, and only of one dish, and that the plainest scarcely drank any wine and never went to bed, but, extending his mantle on the ground, took a short repose. With all this, he was puffed up with vanity, especially as he was a most eloquent preacher, though his discourses were more remarked for ornament of diction than soundness of doctrine, and the Churches were always crowded when he preached. The Sacramentarian Valdez, who perverted Peter Martyr (Chap, xi, art. ii, sec. iii, n. 57), was also the cause of his fall. He perceived his weakness; he saw he was vain of his preaching, and[16120] he used frequently go to hear him, and visit him afterwards, and under the praises he administered to him for his eloquence, conveyed the poison of his sentiments.

Ochino had a great opinion of his own merits, and hoped, when he was made General of his Order, that the Pope would raise him to some higher dignity; but when he saw that neither a Cardinal's Hat, nor even a Mitre, fell to his lot, he entertained the most rancorous feeling against the Roman Court, and Valdez made him an easy prey. Being now infected with the poisonous sentiments of Zuinglius and Calvin, he began in the pulpit to speak derogatory of the Pope and the Roman See, and preaching in the

Archbishopric of Naples, after Peter Martyr, he began to deride the doctrines of Purgatory and Indulgences, and sowed the first seeds of that great revolution, which afterwards, in 1656, convulsed the city. When the Pope received information of this, he commanded him to come to Rome, and account for his doctrine. His friends advised him to go; but, as he felt himself hurt by the order, he was unwilling to obey. While he was thus wavering, he went to Bologna, and called on the Cardinal Legate, Contarini, to solicit his protection and interest. The Cardinal was then suffering from sickness, of which, in fact, he died soon after; so he received him coldly, hardly spoke to him, and dismissed him. He now suspected that the Cardinal knew all, and would have him put in prison; so he threw off the habit, and went to Florence, where he met Peter Martyr, and concerted with him a flight to Geneva, then the general refuge of apostates. In fact, he arrived there even before Peter Martyr himself, and, though sixty years old, he brought a young girl of sixteen along with him, and married her there, thus giving a pledge of his perpetual separation from the Catholic Church. He then wrote an Apology of his Flight, and abused, in the most violent terms, the Order of St. Francis, and the Pope, Paul III. The Pope for a while entertained the notion of dissolving the Capuchin Order altogether, but relinquished it on finding that Ochino had made no perverts among that body.

39. Calvin received Ochino most kindly on his arrival in Geneva, but he soon perceived that the Capuchin had no great opinion of him, and leaned more to the doctrines of Luther, and he, therefore, began to treat him with coolness; so, having no great affection for the doctrines of either one or the other, he determined to establish his fame by founding a new sect. He then took up the opinions of Arius, and published some tracts in Italian, in which he confounded the personality and properties of the Three Divine Persons, so Calvin procured a sentence of banishment to be passed on him by the Senate of Geneva. He then went to Basil, but as he was not safe even there, he went to Strasbourg, to Bucer, who protected heretics of every shade, and he received him kindly, appointed him Professor of Theology, and took him, along with himself and Peter Martyr, to England afterwards. They were both banished from that kingdom, by Queen Mary, on her accession, together with thirty thousand others, so he went first to Germany and then to Poland. Even there he had no rest, for all heretics were banished from

that country by the King, Sigismund; and so, broken down by old age, and abandoned by everyone, he concealed himself in the house of a friend, and died of the plague, in 1564, leaving two sons and a daughter, their mother having died before. Cardinal Gotti, Moreri, and others, say that he died an apostate and impenitent; but Zachary Boverius, in the Annals of the Capuchins, proves on the authority of other writers, and especially of the Dominican, Paul Grisaldus, and of Theodore Beza himself, that he abjured all his errors, and received the Sacraments before his death. Menochius and James Simidei follow the opinion of Boverius, I do not give an opinion either on one side or the other, but, with Spondanus and Graveson, leave the matter between them[16121].

II. THE SOGINIANS

40.—Perverse doctrine of Lelius Socinus. 41.—Faustus Socinus; his travels, writings, and death. 42.—Errors of the Socinians.

40. Lelius and Faustus Socinus, from whom the Socinians take their name, were born in Sienna. Lelius was the son of Marianus Socinus, a celebrated lawyer, and was born in 1525. His talents were of the first order, and he surpassed all his contemporaries at the schools; but he, unfortunately, became acquainted with some Protestants, and they perverted him, so, dreading to come under the notice of the Inquisition, then extremely strict in Italy, he left it at the age of twenty-one, and spent four years in travelling through France, England, Flanders, Germany, and Poland, and finally came to Switzerland, and took up his abode in Zurich. He was intimate with Calvin, Beza, Melanchthon, and several others of the same sort, as appears from their letters to him; but he attached himself chiefly to the Antitrinitarian doctrines of Servetus. When he learned that Servetus was burned in Geneva, he hid himself, and fled to Poland first, and afterwards to Bohemia, but after a time returned to Zurich, where he died, in the year 1562, at the early age of thirty-seven[16122].

41. Faustus Socinus was a nephew of the former; he was born in 1539, and was infected with his uncle’s heresy. He was twenty-three years of age when his uncle died. He at once went to Zurich, and took possession of all his manuscripts, which he afterwards published, to the great injury of the Church. Next pretending that he was a true Catholic[16123], he returned to

Italy, and lived for nine years attached to the service of the Duke of Tuscany, who treated him with honour and respect. Finding it impossible to spread his heresy in Italy as he wished, he went to Basil, and lived there three years, and published his impious work on Theology, in two volumes, and spread his doctrines not only there, but in Poland and Transylvania, both by word and writing.

His writings were very voluminous, for not only did he publish his Theology, but several Treatises, besides, especially Commentaries on the fifth and sixth chapters of St. Matthew, on the first chapter of St. John, on the seventh chapter of St. Paul to the Romans, on the first Epistle of St. John, and many more enumerated by Noel Alexander, all of a heretical tendency[16124]. He was obliged to fly from Cracow[16125], in 1598, and went to a village, where he continued to write works of the same tendency, and where, at last, he died in 1604, the sixty-fifth year of his age, leaving one daughter after him.

42. The Socinian errors are very numerous, and Noel Alexander and Cardinal Gotti[16126] give them all without curtailment. I will only state the principal ones :They say, first, that the knowledge of God and of Religion could not come from Nature. Second That there is no necessity for Christians reading the Old Testament, since they have everything in the New. Third They deny Tradition. Fourth They assert that in the Divine Essence there is but one Person. Fifth That the Son of God is improperly called God. Sixth That the Holy Ghost is not a Divine Person, but merely a Divine power. Seventh That Jesus Christ is true man, but not a mere man, for he was honoured by the filiation of God, inasmuch as he was formed without the assistance of man; and they also blasphemously assert that he did not exist before the Blessed Virgin. Eighth They deny that God assumed human nature in unity of person. Ninth That Christ is our Saviour, only because he showed us the way of salvation. Tenth Man was not immortal, nor had he original justification before he committed original sin. Eleventh Christ did not consummate his sacrifice on the Cross, but only when he went into heaven. Twelfth Christ did not rise from the dead by his own power; the body of Christ was annihilated after his Ascension, and it is only a spiritual body that he has in heaven. Thirteenth Baptism is not necessary for salvation, nor is grace acquired by it.

Fourteenth We receive mere bread and wine in the Eucharist, and these symbols are only of use to remind us of the death of Christ. Fifteenth The Socinians follow the Pelagians in the matter of Grace, and say that our natural strength alone is sufficient to observe the Law. Sixteenth God has not an infallible knowledge of future things which depend on the free will of man. Seventeenth The soul does not survive after death; the wicked are annihilated, with the exception of those who will be alive on the day of judgment, and these will be condemned to everlasting fire; but the damned will not suffer forever. Eighteenth They teach, with Luther, that the Church failed, and did not continually exist. Nineteenth That Antichrist began to exist when the Primacy of the Bishop of Rome was established. (It is remarkable that heretics of every class attack the Primacy of the Pope.) Twentieth That the words, “Thou art Peter, and on this rock,” &c., were addressed equally to the other Apostles as to Peter. Twenty-first That the words, “ The gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” do not mean that the Church can never fail. Twenty-second That the keys given to St. Peter have no other meaning but this :That he had the power of declaring who did or did not belong to the state of those who enjoy the Divine Grace. Twenty-third They deny that we should have faith in General Councils. Twenty-fourth They deny that it is lawful for Christians to defend their lives by force against unjust aggressors, for it is impossible, they say, that God would permit a pious and religious man to be placed in these circumstances, so that there would be no way of saving himself unless by shedding the blood of another. Besides, they say, that it is even worse to kill an aggressor than an enemy, for he who kills an enemy kills one who has already done him an injury; but he who kills an aggressor kills one who has as yet done him no injury, and only desires to injure him and kill him; and even he cannot be sure that the aggressor intends to kill him at all, as, perhaps, he only intends to terrify him, and rob him then with more ease to himself. Here are the original words of the Proposition, as quoted by Noel Alexander, error. 39: “Non licere Christianis vitam suam, suorumque contra latrones, et invasores vi opposita defendere, si possint; quia fieri non potest, ut Deus hoininem vere pium, ipsique ex animo confidentem, tali involvi patiatur periculo, in quo ipsum servatum velit, sed non aliter, quam sanguinis humani effusione. Homicidium aggressoris pro graviori delicto habendum esse, quam ipsam vindictam. Vindicando enim retribuo injuriam

jam acceptam : at hie occido hominem, qui me forsan nonduin laeserat, nedum occiderat, sed qui voluntatem tantum habuit me laedendi, aut occidendi; imo de quo certo scire non possum, an me animo occidendi, et non potius terrendi tantum, quo tutius me spoliari possit, aggrediatur. Twenty-fifth That it is not necessary for Preceptors to have a Mission from the Superiors of the Church, and that the words of St. Paul, “How shall they preach if they be not sent ?” are to be understood when they preach doctrines unheard till then, such as the doctrine preached by the Apostles to the Gentiles, and, therefore, a Mission was necessary for them. I omit many other errors of less importance, and refer the reader to Noel Alexander, who treats the subject diffusely. The worst is, that this sect still exists in Holland and Great Britain. Modern Deists may be called followers of Socinus, as appears from the works they are every day publishing.[16127] The Socinians say of their founder, Faustus : Tota licet Babylon destruxit tecta Lutherus, Muros Calvinus, sed fundamenta Socinus[16128]. Well may this be said, for the Socinians deny the most fundamental articles of the Faith.

Chapter XIII

HERESIES OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

ARTICLE I. ISAAC PERIERES, MARK ANTHONY DE DOMINIS, WILLIAM POSTELLUS, AND BENEDICT SPINOSA

> 1.—Isaac Perieres, chief of the Pre—Adamites; abjures his heresy. 2.—Mark Anthony de Dominis; his errors and death. 3.—William Postellus; his errors and conversion. 4.—Benedict Spinosa, author of a new sort of Atheism. 5.—Plan of his impious system; his unhappy death.

1. Isaac Perieres, a native of Aquitaine, lived in this century. He was at first a follower of Calvin, but afterwards founded the sect of the Pre-Adamites, teaching that, previous to the creation of Adam, God had made other men. The Old Testament, he says, speaks only of Adam and Eve, hut says nothing of the other men who existed before them, and these, therefore, were not injured by Original Sin, nor did they suffer from the flood. He fell into this error because he rejected Tradition, and, therefore his opinion appeared consonant to reason, and not opposed to the Scripture. He published a Treatise in Holland on the Pre-Adamites, in 1655. He was convinced of the fallacy of his opinions, both by Catholics and Calvinists, and his life even was in danger from both one and the other, so he at last recognised the authority of constant and universal Tradition, and in the Pontificate of Alexander VII. renounced all his heresies, and returned to the Church[16129].

Mark Anthony de Dominis was another of the remarkable heretics of this century. He joined the Jesuits at first in Verona, but left them, either because he did not like the restraint of discipline, or was dismissed for some fault. He was after wards elevated, we know not how, to the Bishopric of Segni, by Clement VIII., and was subsequently translated to the Archbishopric of Spalatro by Paul V. He did not hold this diocese long, for he was sued and condemned to pay a pension, charged on the Diocese by the Pope with his consent before he was appointed. He was so chagrined with the issue of the case that he resolved to be revenged on the Apostolic See, and went to England in 1616, and there published a pestilent work, “ De Republica Christina.”

2. In this book he has the temerity to assert that out of the Roman Catholic Religion, Calvinism, Lutheranism, and the Anabaptist doctrines, a sound and orthodox Religion could be formed, and his mode of doing this of uniting truth and error in this impossible union is even more foolish than the thing itself. After residing six years in England, agitated by remorse, he was desirous of changing his life, and returning once more to the Catholic Church, but he was dreadfully agitated, between the desire of repentance and the despair of pardon; he feared he would be lost altogether. In this perplexity he consulted the Spanish ambassador, then resident in England, and he offered his influence with the Holy See, and succeeded so well that Mark Anthony went to Rome, threw himself at the Pope’s feet, and the Sovereign Pontiff was so satisfied that his repentance was sincere, that he once more received him into favour. Soon after he published a document in which he solemnly and clearly retracts all that he had ever written against the doctrine of the Church, so that to all appearance he was a sincere penitent and a true Catholic. Still he continued to correspond privately with the Protestants, till God removed him from the world by a sudden death. His writings and papers were then examined, and his heresy was proved. A process was instituted; it was proved that he meditated a new act of apostacy, and so his body and painted effigy were publicly burned by the common hangman in the most public place in Rome the Campo de Fiori, to show the revenge that God will take on the enemies of the Faith.[16130]

3. William Postellus, or Postell, was born in Barenton, in Lower Normandy; he was a learned philosopher, and Oriental traveller, and was remarkable as a linguist, but fell into errors of Faith. Some even go so far as to say, that in his work, called Virgo Veneta, he endeavours to prove that an old maid of Venice, called Mother Johanna of Venice, was the Saviour of the feminine sex. Florimund, however, defends him from this charge, and says he wrote this curious work merely to praise this lady, who was a great friend of his, and frequently afforded him pecuniary assistance. He lived some time also in Rome, and joined the Jesuits, but they soon dismissed

him, on account of the extraordinary opinions he professed. He was charged with heresy, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment, by the Inquisition; but he escaped to France, and his fame as a linguist procured him a favourable reception from King Charles IX., and the learned of that country. He then wrote several works, filled with the most extravagant errors, as “De Trinitate” “De Matrice Mundi,” “De Omnibus Sectis salvandis,” “ De futura nativitate Mediatoris” and several others of the same stamp. He was reprimanded by the Faculty of Theology, and the magistracy of Paris, for these writings, but as he refused to retract them, he was confined in the Monastery of St. Martin des Champes, and there he got the grace of repentance, for he retracted everything he had written, and subjected all to the judgment of the Church. He then led a most religious life in the Monastery, and died on the 7th of September, 1581, being nearly an hundred years old. Some time previously he published a very useful book, entitled “ De Orbis Concordia,” in which he defends the Catholic Religion against Jews, Gentiles, Mahometans, and heretics of every shade[16131].

4. Benedict Spinosa was born in Amsterdam, in 1632. His parents were Jewish Merchants, who were expelled from Portugal, and, with numbers of their co-religionists, took refuge in Holland. He preferred the Jewish religion at first; he next became a Christian, at least nominally, for it is said he never was baptized; and he ended by becoming an Atheist. He studied Latin and German under a physician, called Francis Van Dendedit, who was afterwards invited to France, and entering into a conspiracy against the King, ended his life on the scaffold; and it is thought that from this man he imbibed the first seeds of Atheism. In his youth he studied the Rabbinical Theology, but, disgusted with the puerilities and nonsense which form the greater part of it, he gave it up, and applied himself to philosophy, so he was excommunicated by the Jews, and was even in danger of his life from them. He, therefore, separated himself altogether from the Synagogue, and laid the foundation of his Atheistical system. He was a follower of the opinions of Des Cartes, and took his principles as a base on which to establish his own by geometrical dissertations, and he published a treatise to this effect, in 1664.

In the following year he published another work, “ De Juribus Ecclesiasticorum” in which, following the opinion of Hobbes, he endeavours to prove that priests should teach no other religion but that of the state. Not to be interrupted in his studies, he went into retirement altogether, and published a most pestilent work, “ Tractatus Theologica Politicus,” which was printed in Amsterdam or Hamburg, and in which he lays down the principles of his Atheistical doctrine.

5. In this work he speaks of God as the Infinite, the Eternal, the Creator of all things, while, in fact, he denies his existence, and does away with the Divinity altogether, for he says that the world is a mere work of Nature, which necessarily produced all creatures from all eternity. That which we call God, he says, is nothing else but the power of Nature diffused in external objects, which, he says, are all material. The nature of all things, he says, is one substance alone, endowed with extension and mind, and it is Active and Passive; passive, as to itself active, inasmuch as it thinks. Hence he supposes that all creatures are nothing but modifications of this substance; the material ones modifications of the passive substance, and the spiritual ones that is, what we call spiritual, for he insists that all are material being modifications of the active substance. Thus, according to his opinion, God is, at the same time, Creator and Creation, active and passive, cause and effect. Several authors, as Thomasius, Moseus, Morus, Buet, Bayle, and several others, Protestants even, combated this impious system by their writings. Even Bayle, though an Atheist himself, like Spinosa, refuted it in his Dictionary. I, also, in my work on the Truth of the Faith[16132], have endeavoured to show the incoherence of the principles on which he founds his doctrines, and, therefore, I do not give it a particular refutation in this work. Notwithstanding the monstrosity of his system, Spinosa had followers; and it is even said that there are some at present in Holland, though they do not publicly profess it, only among themselves.

The work itself was translated into several languages, but its sale was prohibited by the States of Holland. Spinosa died, at the Hague, on the 23rd of February, 1677, in the 59th year of his age. Some say that his servants being all at church on a Sunday, found him dead on their return, but others tell that he was dying of consumption, and feeling death approaching, and knowing that it is natural for everyone to call on God, or some superhuman power, to assist him, at that awful moment, he, dreading to call on God for assistance, or to let it be seen that he repented of his doctrine, ordered that no one should be allowed into his chamber, and there at last he was found dead[16133].

ARTICLE II. THE ERRORS OF MICHAEL BAIUS

> 6.—Michael Baius disseminates his unsound doctrine, and is opposed. 7.—St. Pius V. condemns seventy-nine Propositions of Baius, and he abjures them. 8.—Retractation written by Baius, and confirmed by Pope Urban VIII.

6. Michael Baius was born in Malines, in Flanders, in 1513, was made a Doctor of the University of Louvain, in 1550, and subsequently Dean of the same University. He was a man of learning, and of an exemplary life, but fond of new opinions, which he maintained in his works, published about 1560[16134], and thus he sowed the first seeds of that discord which disturbed the Church in the following century. Some Franciscan Friars thought his doctrines not sound, and submitted them, in eighteen Chapters, to the Faculty of Sorbonne, and that learned body judged them worthy of censure. This only added fuel to the fire, and the party of Baius published an Apology, in opposition to the censures of the Parisian University. Cardinal Commendon, who was then in the Low Countries, sent by the Pope for some other affairs, thought himself called on to interfere, as Apostolic Legate, and imposed silence on both parties, but in vain, for one of the Superiors of the Franciscans punished some of his subjects for defending the doctrines of Baius, and this proceeding caused a great uproar. At last, the Governor of the Low Countries was obliged to interfere, to prevent the dispute from going any further[16135].

7. Sometime after this Baius was sent by Philip II., as his Theologian, to the Council of Trent, together with John Hessel, and Cornelius, Bishop of Ghent (not Cornelius Jansenius, Bishop of Ipres), all Doctors of Louvain. His opinions were not examined in the Council of Trent, though he had already printed his works on Free Will, Justification, and Sacrifice. When he returned from the Council, he printed his Treatises on the Merit of Works, the Power of the Wicked, on Sacraments in general, on the Form of Baptism; and hence his opinions were spread more extensively, and disputes grew more violent, so that at last the Holy See was obliged to interfere. St. Pius V. then, in a particular Bull, which begins, “ Ex omnibus affectionibus,” afterarigorous examination, condemned seventy-nine

propositions of Baius (in globo) as heretical, erroneous, suspect, rash, scandalous, and offensive to pious ears, but without specifying them in particular, and with this clause, “that some of them might, in rigour, be sustained, and in the proper sense which the authors had,” or as others explain it, “that although some of them might be in some way sustained, still the Pope condemns them in the proper and rigorous sense of the authors.” Here are the words of the Bull : “ Quas quidem sententias stricto coram nobis examine ponderatas, quamquam nonnullas aliquo pacto sustineri possent, in rigore et proprio verborum sensu ab assertoribus intento, heareticas, erroneas, suspectas, temerarias, scandalosas, et in pias aures offensionem immittentes damnamus.” The name of Baius was not inserted in the Bull in 1567, nor did Pius command that it should be affixed in the public places, as is customary, but, wishing to act with mildness, consigned it to Cardinal Granveil, Archbishop of Mechlin, then in Rome, telling him to notify it to Baius, and to the University of Louvain, and to punish, by censures or other penalties, all who refused to receive it. The Cardinal discharged his commission by his Vicar, Maximilian Mabillon. The Bull was notified to the University, and accepted by the Faculty, who promised not to defend any more the Articles condemned in it, and Baius promised the same, though he complained that opinions were condemned as his which were not his at all, nor could he be pacified, but wrote to the Pope, in 1569, in his defence. The Pope answered him in a Brief, that his cause had already undergone sufficient examination, and exhorted him to submit to the judgment already passed. This Brief was presented to him by Mabillon, who reprimanded him harshly for daring to write to the Pope, after the sentence had been once given, and intimated to him, that he incurred an Irregularity by the proceeding. Baius then humbled himself, and prayed to be dispensed from the Irregularity. Mabillon answered, that he could not do so till Baius would abjure his errors. He asked to see the Bull, to know what errors he was to abjure. Mabillon said he had not the Bull by him, and prevailed on him there and then to abjure in his hands all his errors. He was then absolved from all censures, without giving any written document, and the matter was private between them[16136].

8. After all that, there were not wanting others who defended the opinions of Baius, so after the death of St. Pius V., his successor, Gregory XIII., in

his Bull Provisionis Nostrce, expedited in 1579, confirmed the Bull of St. Pius, and published it first in Rome, and then had it presented to the Faculty of Louvain, and to Baius himself, by Father Francis Toledo, afterwards raised to the purple by Clement VIII., who prevailed on Baius to submit quietly, and send a written retractation to the Pope, as follows : “Ego Michael de Bajo agnosco, et profiteer, me ex variis colloquiis cum Rev. P. Francisco Toledo ita motum, et perauctum esse, ut plane mihi habeam persuasum, earum sententiarum damnationem jure factum esse. Fateor insuper ex iisdem sententiis in nonnullis libellis a me in lucem editis contineri in eo sensu, in quo rcprobantur. Denique declare ab illis omnibus me recedere, neque posthac illas defendere velle : Lovanii 24, Mart. 1580. “

The Faculty of Louvain then passed a law, that no one should be matriculated to the University, unless he first promised to observe the foregoing Bulls. Urban VIII., in the year 1641, in another Bull, which begins, “ In eminenti,” confirmed the condemnation of Baius, in conformity with the two preceding Bulls, and this Bull was received by the Sorbonne[16137]. Baius died about the year 1590, and, as he was born in 1513, he must have been seventy-seven years of age. The system of Baius and his errors will be seen in the Refutation XII. of this Volume.

ARTICLE III. THE ERRORS OF CORNELIUS JANSENIUS

9.—Cornelius, Bishop of Ghent, and Cornelius, Bishop of Ipres; his studies and degrees. 10.—Notice of the condemned work of Jansenius. 11.—Urban VIII. condemns the book of Jansenius in the Bull ‘In eminenti;’ the Bishops of France present the five propositions to Innocent X. 12.—Innocent condemns them in the Bull ‘ Cum occasi one;’ notice of the Propositions. 13.—Opposition of the Jansenists; but Alexander VIII. declares that the five propositions are extracted from the book, and condemned in the sense of Jansenius; two propositions of Arnauld condemned. 14.—Form of subscription commanded by the Pope to be made. 15.—The religious silence. 16.—The Case of Conscience condemned by Clement XI. in the Bull Vineam Domini. 16.—The opinion, that the Pontificate of St. Paul was equal to that of St. Peter, condemned.

9. I should remark, first of all, that there were in Flanders, almost at the same time, two of the name of Cornelius Jansenius, both Doctors and Professors of the renowned University of Louvain. The first was born in Hulst, in the year 1510, and taught theology to the Premonstratentian Monks for twelve years, and during that time composed his celebrated book Concordia Evangelica, and added his valuable Commentaries to it.

He then returned to Louvain, and was made Doctor. He was next sent to the Council of Trent, by King Philip II., together with Baius, and, on his return, the King appointed him to the Bishopric of Ghent, where, after a holy life, he died in 1576, the sixty-sixth year of his age, leaving, besides his great work, De Concordia, several valuable Treatises on the Old Testament[16138]. The other Jansenius was born in the village of Ackoy, near Leerdam, in Holland, in 1585. He completed his philosophical studies in Utrecht, and his theological in Louvain, and then travelled in France, where he became united in the closest friendship with Jean du Verger de Hauranne, Abbot of St. Cyran. On his return to Louvain he was appointed, at first Professor of Theology, and afterwards of Scripture. His Commentaries on the Pentateuch and Gospels were afterwards printed, and no fault has ever been found with them. He wrote some works of controversy also, in defence of the Catholic Church, against the Ministers of Bois-le-Duc. Twice he went to Spain to arrange some affairs for his University, and at last was appointed Bishop of Ipres, in 1635[16139].

10. Jansenius never printed his work August inns, the fruit of twenty years labour, during his lifetime, but charged his executors to put it to press. In this work, at the end of the book De Gratia Christi, in the Epilogue, he says that he does not mean to assert that all that he wrote concerning the Grace of Christ should be held as Catholic doctrine, but that it was all taken from the works of St. Augustine; he, however, declares that he himself is a fallible man, subject to err, and that if the obscurity of some passages in the Saint’s works deceived him, that he would be happy to be convinced of his error, and, therefore, he submitted it all to the judgment of the Apostolic See “ Ut ilium teneam (he says) si tenendum, damnem si damnandum esse judicaverit”[16140]. He died on the 6th of May, 1638, and left his book to his chaplain, Reginald Lamee, to be printed, repeating in his will that he did not think there was anything in his book to be corrected, but as it was his intention to die a faithful child of the Roman Church, that he submitted it in everything to the judgment of the Holy See “ Si sedes Romana aliquid mutari velit, sum obediens films, et illius Ecclesiae, in qua semper vixi, usque ad hunc lectum mortis obediens sum. Ita mea suprema voluntas”[16141]. Would to God that the disciples imitated their master in obedience to the

Holy See, then the disputes and heartburnings which this book caused would never have had existence.

11. Authors are very much divided regarding the facts which occurred after the death of Jansenius. I will then succinctly state what I can glean from the majority of writers on the subject. It is true he protested, both in the work itself and in his will, that he submitted his book Augustmus in everything to the judgment of the Apostolic See; still his executors at once put it into the hands of a printer, and notwithstanding the protest of the author, and the prohibition of the Internuncio and the University of Louvain, it was published in Flanders, in 1640, and in Rouen, in 1643. It was denounced to the Roman Inquisition, and several Theologians composed Theses and Conclusions against it, and publicly sustained them in the University of Louvain. An Apology in favour of the work appeared in the name of the publisher, and soon the press groaned with Treatises in favour of, or opposed to, Jansenius, so that all the Netherlands were disturbed by the dispute. The Congregation of the Inquisition then published a Decree forbidding the reading of Jansenius's work, and also the Conclusions and Theses of his adversaries, and all publications cither in favour of or opposed to him. Still peace was not restored; so Urban VIII., to quiet the matter, published a Bull renewing the Constitution of Pius V. and Gregory XIII. In this he prohibited the book of Jansenius, as containing propositions already condemned by his predecessors, Pius V. and Gregory XIII. The Jansenists exclaimed against this Bull; it was, they said, apochryphal, or, at all events, vitiated. Several propositions extracted from the book were presented to the Faculty of Sorbonne, in 1649, to have judgment passed on them, but the Sorbonne refused to interfere, and referred the matter to the judgment of the Bishops, and these, assembled in the name of the Gallican Clergy, in 1653, declined passing any sentence, but referred it altogether to the judgment of the Pope.[16142]

12. Innocent committed the examination[16143] of these propositions to a Congregation of five Cardinals and thirteen Theologians, and they considered them for more than two years, and held thirty-six Conferences during that time, and the Pope himself assisted at the last ten. Louis de Saint Amour and the other deputies of the Jansenist party, were frequently heard,

and finally, on the 31st of May, 1653, the Pope, in the Bull Cum occasione, declared the five propositions which follow heretical:

“ First Some commandments of God are impossible to just men, even when they wish and strive to accomplish them according to their present strength, and grace is wanting to them by which they may be possible to them. This we condemn as rash, impious, blasphemous, branded with anathema, and heretical, and as such we condemn it.

“ Second We never resist interior grace in the state of corrupt nature. This we declare heretical, and as such condemn it.

“ Third To render us deserving or otherwise in the state of corrupt nature, liberty, which excludes constraint, is sufficient. This we declare heretical, and as such condemn it.

“ Fourth The Semipelagians admitted the necessity of interior preventing grace for every act in particular, even for the commencement of the Faith, and in this they were heretics, inasmuch as they wished that this grace was such, that the human will could neither resist it or obey it. We declare this false and heretical, and as such condemn it.

“ Fifth It is Semipelagianism to say that Jesus Christ died or shed his blood for all men in general. This we declare false, rash, scandalous, and, understood in the sense that Christ died for the salvation of the predestined alone, impious, blasphemous, contumelious, derogatory to the Divine goodness, and heretical, and as such we condemn it.”

13. The Bull also prohibits all the Faithful to teach or maintain the propositions, otherwise they will incur the penalties of heretics. Here are the original propositions : “Primam prædictarum Propositionum Aliqua Dei præcepta hominibus justis volentibus, et conantibus, secundum præsentes quas habent vires, sunt impossibilia; deest quoque illis gratia, qua possibilia fiant : temerariam, impiam, blasphemam, anathemate damnatam, et hæreticam declaramus, et uti talem damnamus. “ Secundam Interiori gratiæ in statu naturæ lapsæ nunquam resistitur : hæreticam declaramus, et uti talem damnamus. “ Tertiam Ad merendum, et demerendum in statu naturæ lapsæ non requiritur in homine libertas a necessitate, sed sufficit libertas a coactione : hæreticam declaramas, et uti talem damnamus. “ Quartam Semipelagiani admittebant prævenientis gratiæ interioris neccssitatem ad singulos actus, etiam ad initium Fidei; et in hoc erant hæretici, quod vellent earn gratiam talem essc, cui posset humana voluntas rcsistere, vel

obtemperare : falsam et hæreticam declaramas, et uti talem damnamus. " Quintam Semipelagianum est dicere, Christum pro omnibus omnino hominibus mortuum esse, aut Sanguinem fudisse : falsam, temerarium, scandalosam, et intellectam eo sensu, ut Christus pro salute dumtaxat Prædestinatorum mortuus sit, impiam, blasphemam, contumeliosam, Divinæ pietati derogantem, hæeticam de claramus, et uti talem damnamus[16144]."

The whole Church accepted the Decree of Innocent, so the partizans of Jansenius made two objections : First That the five propositions were not those of Jansenius, and secondly, that they were not condemned in the sense of Jansenius, and hence sprung up the famous distinction of Law and Fact Juris and Facti. This sprung entirely from the just condemnation of the five propositions. Clement XI., in his Bull of 1705, " Vineam Domini Sabaoth" particularly on that account renews the condemnation of the five propositions. Here are his words : " Inquieti homines docere non sunt veriti : Ad obedientiam præfatis Apostolicis Constitutionibus debitam non requiri, ut quis prædicti Janseniani libri sensum in antedictis quinque propositionibus, sicut præmittitur, damnatum interius, ut hæreticum damnet, sed satis esse, ut ea de re obsequiosum (ut ipsi vocant) silentium teneatur. Quæ quidem assertio quam absurda sit, et animabus fidelium perniciosa, satis apparct, dum fallacis hujus doctrinæ pallio non deponitur error, sed absconditur, vulnus tegitur, non curatur, Ecclesiæ illuditur, non paretur, et data demum filiis inobedientiæ via sternitur ad fovendam silentio hæresim, dum ipsam Jansenii doctrinam, quam ab Apostolica Sede damnatam Ecclesia Universalis exhorruit, adhuc interius abjicere, et corde improbare detrectent," &c.

Hence, also, the French Bishops assembled in 1654, by a general vote decided that the five propositions were really and truly in the Book of Jansenius, and that they were condemned in the true and natural sense of Jansenius, and the same was decided in six other assemblies; afterwards Alexander VII., in the Bull expedited on the 16th of October, 1650, definitively and expressly declared: "Quinque propositiones ex libro Cornelii Jansenii excerptas ac in sensu ab eodem Cornelio intento damnatus fuisse." About the same time the Faculty of Paris censured a proposition of Arnauld, who asserted[16145], " Duas propositiones nec esse in Jansenio nec ejus sensu damnatus fuisse, adeoque circa partem illam Apostolicæ constitutionis sufficere silentium Religionem.”

14. The Gallican Clergy, from 1655 used a Formula as follows: Quinque Propositiones ex libro Janseni extractas tanquam hærcticas damnatas fuisse in eo ipso seusa quo illas docuit,” and prescribed that everyone taking Orders should sign it. Several, however, refused obedience, on the plea that unless the Pope commanded them, they could not be obliged to subscribe. A petition was, therefore, sent to Alexander VII., begging him to order it to be done; he consented to the prayer, and issued a Bull on the 15th of February, 1665, sanctioning the formula of an oath to which all should subscribe. Here it is : “Ego N. Constitutioni Alexandri VII., datae die 16. Octobr. an. 1656, me subjicio, et quinque Propositiones ex Jansenni libro, Augustineus, excerptas, et in sensu ab eodem Auctore intento, prout illas sancta Sedes Apostolica damnavit, sincere auimo damno, ac rejicio, et ita juro, sic me Deus adjuvet, et haec sancta Evangelia.” The King sanctioned it also by Royal authority, and severe penalties were imposed on the disobedient[16146].

15. This put the Jansenists into a quandary; some of them said that the oath could not be taken without perjury, but others, of a more hardened conscience, said that it might, for it was enough that the person subscribing should have the intention of following the doctrine of St. Augustine, which, they said, was that of Jansenius, and as to the fact externally, it was quite enough to keep a reverent silence, and the Bishops of Alet, Pamiers, Angers, and Beauvais were of this opinion; but under Clement XI., the successor of Alexander VII., they gave in, and consented to subscribe themselves, and oblige their subjects to subscribe the condemnation of the five propositions, without any restriction or limitation, and thus peace was re-established[16147]. The Jansenists, however, would not still yield; the limitation of the religious silence was, they said, inserted in the Verbal Acts of the Diocesan Synods, and they, therefore, demanded that the silence should be approved by the Pope. In this they acted unreasonably, for the four above-mentioned Bishops were admitted to peaceable communion, on condition of signing purely, sincerely, and without any limitation whatever[16148]. In 1692 some other disputes arose concerning the subscription of the Formula, and the Bishops of Flanders added some other

words to it, to remove every means of deception. The Louvanians complained to Innocent XII. of this addition, and he expedited two Briefs, in 1694 and 1696, removing every means of subterfuge[16149].

16. About the year 1702 the Jansenists again raised the point of the religious silence, by the publication of a pamphlet, in which it was said that Sacramental Absolution was denied to a Clergyman, because he asserted that he condemned the five propositions, as far as the law was concerned (jus.,) but as to the fact that they were to be found in Jansenius's book, that he considered it was quite enough to preserve a religious silence on that point. This was the famous Case of Conscience, on which forty Doctors of Paris decided that Absolution could not be refused to the Clergyman.

The Pope, however, condemned this pretended silence, by a formal decree, " Ad perpetuam rei memoriam," on the 12th of January, 1703. Many of the French Bishops, also, condemned it, and more especially Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, who likewise obliged the forty Doctors to retract their decision, with the exception of one alone, who refused, and was, on that account, dismissed from the Sorbonne, and that famous Faculty also branded their decision as rash and scandalous, and calculated to renew the doctrines of Jansenius, condemned by the Church. Clement XI. expedited another Bull, Vineam Domini, &c., on the 16th of July, 1705, condemning the "Case of Conscience," with various notes. All this was because the distinction of Law and Fact (Juris et Facti) was put forth to elude the just and legitimate condemnation of the five propositions of Jansenius. This is the very reason Clement himself gives for renewing the condemnation. His Bull was accepted by the whole Church, and, first of all, by the assembly of the Gallican Church; thus the Jansenists could no longer cavil at the condemnation of the Book of their Patron[16150]. In the Refutation of the errors of Jansenism, we will respond to their subterfuges in particular.

17. We may as well remark here, that about this time an anonymous work appeared, entitled, "De SS. Petri et Pauli Pontificatu," in which the writer endeavoured to prove that St. Paul was, equally with St. Peter, the Head of the Church. The author's intention was not to exalt the dignity of St. Paul, but to depress the primacy of St. Peter, and, consequently, of the Pope. The Book was referred to the Congregation of the Index, by Innocent XI., and its doctrine condemned as heretical by a public Decree[16151]. The author lays

great stress on the ancient practice used in Pontifical Decrees, that of painting St. Paul on the right, and St. Peter on the left. That, however, is no proof that St. Paul was equally the Head of the Church, and exercised equal authority with St. Peter, for not to him, but St. Peter, did Christ say, “ Feed my sheep.” Hence, St. Thomas says[16152], “ Apostolus fuit par Petro in execution, authoritatis, non iivauctoritate regiminis.” Again, if the argument be allowed, that, because St. Paul was painted to the right of St. Peter, he was equal to him, would it not prove even that he was superior ?Some say that he was painted so, because, according to the Roman custom, as is the case in the East, the left hand place was more honourable than the right.

Others, as St. Thomas[16153], give a different explanation. Bellarmine may be consulted on this point[16154]. The author also quotes, in favour of his opinion, the lofty praises given by the holy Fathers to St. Paul; but that is easily answered. He was praised, as St. Thomas says, more than the other Apostles, on account of his special election, and his greater labours and sufferings in preaching the Faith through the whole world[16155]. Not one of the Fathers, however, makes him superior or equal to St. Peter, for the Church of Home was not founded by him but by St. Peter.

ARTICLE IV

18,-Quesnel is dismissed from the Congregation of the Oratory. 19.—He publishes several unsound works in Brussels. 20.—Is imprisoned, escapes to Amsterdam, and dies excommunicated. 21.—The Book he wrote. 22.—The Bull ‘Unigenitus,’ condemning the Book. 23.—The Bull is accepted by the King, the Clergy, and the Sorbonne; the followers of Quesnel appeal to a future Council. 24.—Several Bishops also, and Cardinal de Noailles, appeal to a future Council likewise, but the Council of Embrun declares that the appeal should not be entertained. 25.—The Consultation of the Advocates rejected by the assembly of the Bishops; Cardinal de Noailles retracts, and accepts the Bull; the Bull is declared dogmatical by the S orb onne and the Bishops. 26.—Three principles of the system of Quesnel.

18. While Clement XI. still sat on the Chair of St. Peter, Quesnel published his book, entitled, “The New Testament, with Moral Reflections,” &c., which the Pope soon after prohibited by the Bull Unigenitus. Quesnel was born in Paris, on the 14th of July, 1634, and in 1657, was received by Cardinal de Berulle into his Congregation of the Oratory. In a General Assembly of the Oratory of France, held in 1678, it was ordained that each member of the Congregation should sign a Formula, condemnatory of the doctrine of Baius and Jansenius, but Quesnel refused obedience, and was

consequently obliged to quit the Congregation, and left Paris; he then retired to Orleans[16156].

19. As he was not in safety in France, he went to Brussels, in 1685, and joined Arnauld, who had fled previously, and was concealed there, and they conjointly published several works, filled with Jansenistic opinions. They were both banished from Brussels, in 1690, and went to Delft, in Holland, first after wards, to the Pais de Liege and then again returned to Brussels. Quesnel, after having administered the last Sacraments to Arnauld, changed his dress, adopted a feigned name, and lived concealed in that city, where he was elected by the Jansenists as their chief, and was called by them the “Father Prior.” From his hiding place, he unceasingly sent forth various pamphlets, defending and justifying his conduct, in opposing the Decrees of the Popes, and the Ordinances of the Sovereigns, condemning the Appellants. This appears from the sentence passed on his conduct, by the Archbishop of Mechlin[16157].

20. The Archbishop of Mechlin, in 1703, determined to extirpate the tares sown by the works of Quesnel, and, empowered by the authority of the King of Spain, his Sovereign, caused a strict search to be made for the author and his faithful friend, Gerberonius, and on the 30th of May, they were both confined in the Archiepiscopal prison. Gerberonius remained there until 1710, when Cardinal de Noailles induced him to retract and sign the Formula, and he was liberated, but Quesnel was detained only about three months, having escaped through a small hole made in the wall by his friend (he was a very small man), and taken refuge in Holland, where he continued to write in favour of Jansenism. He was called a second Paul, after his escape, by his disciples, and he himself, writing to the Vicar of Mechlin, says, that he was liberated from his prison by an angel like St. Peter. The difference was great, however; St. Peter did not concert the means of escape with his friends outside, by writing with a nail on a plate of lead, and telling them to break a hole at night through a certain part of the wall of his prison, as Quesnel did[16158].

A process was instituted against him in Brussels, and on the 10th of November, 1704, the Archbishop declared him excommunicated, guilty of Jansenism and Baiism, and condemned him to inclusion in a Monastery till the Pope would absolve him[16159]. Quesnel took no other notice of the sentence than by writing several pamphlets against the Archbishop, and even attacked the Pope himself, for the condemnation of his works. The unfortunate man, obstinate to the last, died under Papal censure, in Amsterdam, on the 2nd of December,1719, in the eighty-fifth year of his age[16160].

21. We should remark concerning the book of Quesnel, “The New Testament with Moral Reflections,” &c. (it was published in French), that in 1671, while he still lived in France, he only published, at first, a small work in duodecimo, containing the French translation of the Four Gospels, and some very short reflections, extracted principally from a collection of the words of Christ, by Father Jourdan, Superior of the Oratory. By degrees, he added to it, so that sixteen years after the printing of the first edition, in 1687, he published another, in three small volumes, adding other reflections on the whole of the New Testament. In 1693, he published another larger edition in eight volumes, and another again in 1695, with the approbation of Cardinal de Noailles, then Bishop of Chalons, first making some slight corrections on the edition of 1693. He published the last edition of all in 1699, but this had not the approbation of the Cardinal. In a word, for twenty-two years, that is from 1671 to 1693, he laboured to perfect this work, but not correcting, but rather adding to the errors that deformed it; for in the first edition five errors alone were condemned the twelfth, thirteenth, thirtieth, sixty-second, and sixty-fifth; in the second, more than forty-five were published; and they amounted up to the number of one hundred and one in the later editions, when they were condemned by the Bull Unigenitus. We should observe, that it was only the first edition of 1671, that had the approbation of the Bishop of Chalons, and the subsequent editions, containing more than double the matter of the first, were printed with only the approbation given in 1671[16161].

The followers of Quesnel boast, that the work was generally approved of by all; but Tournelly[16162] shows that the greater part of the Doctors and Bishops of France condemned it. They also boast that Bossuet gave it his approval, but there are several proofs, on the contrary, to show that he condemned it[16163].

22. When the complete work appeared in 1693, it was at once censured by Theologians, and prohibited by several Bishops, and it was condemned

by a particular Brief of Pope Clement XI., in 1708. Three French Bishops prohibited it by a formal condemnation in 1711, and Cardinal de Noailles felt so mortified at seeing these Edicts published in Paris, condemning a work marked with his approbation, as heretical, that he condemned the three Edicts. This excited a great tempest in France, so the King, with the consent of several Bishops, and of Cardinal de Noailles himself, requested Pope Clement XL to cause a new examination of the work to be made, and, by a solemn Bull, to censure any errors it might contain. The Pope, then, after, two years examination by Cardinals and Theologians, published in 1713, on the 8th of September, the Bull Unigenitus Dei Films, &c., in which he condemned a hundred and ten propositions, extracted from the work, as false, captious, rash, erroneous, approximating to heresy, and in fine, respectively heretical, and recalling the propositions of Jansenius, in the sense in which they were condemned. The Bull, besides, declared that it was not the intention of his Holiness to approve of all else contained in the work, because while marking these hundred and ten propositions, it declares that it contains others of a like nature, and that even the very text of the New Testament itself, was vitiated in many parts[16164].

23. His Most Christian Majesty, on the reception of the Bull of Clement from the Nuncio, ordered an assembly of the Bishops, to receive and promulgate it solemnly, and, in fact, after several private Conferences, the Assembly was held on the 23rd of January, 1714, and the Bull was received, together with the condemnation of the hundred and one propositions, in the same manner as the Pope had condemned them, and a form of acceptation was drawn up for all the Bishops of the kingdom, that the Bull might be everywhere promulgated, and also a Formula by which the Clergy should declare their acceptance of it.

The followers of Quesnel said, that the form of Acceptation was restricted and conditional, but if we take the trouble of reading the Declaration of the Assembly, given word for word by Tournelly (P. 431), we will clearly see that there is neither restriction nor condition in it. This Declaration was subscribed by forty Bishops; eight alone refused, and the principal among them was Cardinal de Noailles; they had some difficulty, they said, about some of the condemned propositions, and considered it would be wise to ask an explanation from the Pope on the subject. When the acceptation of the Bull, by the Assembly, was notified to Louis XIV., he ordered, on the 14th of the following month of February, that it should be promulgated and put into execution through the whole kingdom. The Bishops wrote to the Pope in the name of the Assembly, that they had received the Bull with joy, and would use all their endeavours that it should be faith fully observed; and the Pope, in his reply, congratulated them on their vigilance, and complained of those few Bishops who refused to conform to the Assembly. The Faculty of Paris, also, accepted the Bull on the 5th of March,1714, imposing a penalty, to be incurred, ipso facto, by all members of the University refusing its acceptance. It was received in the same way by the other Universities, native and foreign, as Douay, Ghent, Nantz, Louvain, Alcala, and Salamanca[16165]. Notwithstanding all, the partizans of Quesnel scattered pamphlets on every side against the Bull. Two of them, especially, made the most noise, the " Hexaplis," and the "Testimony of the Truth of the Church ;" these were both condemned by the Bishops congregated in 1715, and those who still continued pertinaciously attached to their erroneous opinions, had only then recourse to an appeal from the Bull of the Pope to a General Council.

24. Four Bishops, to wit, those of Montpelier, Mirepoix, Sens, and Boulogne, appealed on the 1st of March, 1717, from the Bull Unigenitus, to a future General Council. These four were soon after joined by twelve others, and soon after that by eighteen dissentients. This was the first time in the Catholic Church, that it was ever known that the Bishops of the very Sees where a Dogmatical Bull was accepted, appealed against it.

25. The appeal was, therefore, justly rejected by both the secular and Ecclesiastical authorities. In the year 1718, Cardinal de Noailles subscribed to the appeal of the Bishops, but still it was annulled by the Pope, and towards the end of the year 1718, about fifty of the Bishops of France published commandments to their Diocesans, ordering them to yield unreserved obedience to the Bull: " Quippe quae universalis est Ecclesia judicium Dogmaticum, a quo omnis appellatio est nulla"[16166]. The defenders of Quesnel only became more violent in their opposition to the Bishops after this, and the press groaned with their pamphlets; so in the year 1727, a Provincial Council was held at Embrun, in which the Bishop of Sens was suspended for refusing to subscribe to the Bull which was

declared to be the dogmatical and unchangeable judgment of the Church, and it decided that the appeal was, ipso jure, schismatical, and of no avail. The whole proceeding there received the sanction of the Pope, Benedict XIII., and the King[16167]. The Appellants then had recourse to the lawyers of Paris, and they published a " Consultum," in which they undertook to invalidate the judgment of the Council, on account of several irregularities. They were then joined by twelve Bishops, who signed a letter to the King, against the Council, but he strongly censured the production, and ordered that all the Bishops should be assembled in Paris in an extraordinary Assembly, and record their opinion on the Consultum of the lawyers. On the 5th of May, 1728, the Prelates assembled, and made a representation to the King that the Consultum was not only not to the point, but that it smelt of heresy, and was in fact heretical. The King, therefore, published a particular Edict, ordering the Consultum to be set aside. Soon after this, in the same year, Cardinal de Noailles, now very far advanced in years, yielded to the admonition of Benedict XIII., and revoked his appeal, and sincerely accepted the Bull, prohibiting all his Diocesans from reading Quesnel's works. lie sent his retractation to the Pope, who was delighted to receive it. In about six months after, he died[16168].

In the year 1729, the Faculty of the Sorbonno again solemnly accepted the Bull, and revoked as far as was necessary (quantum opus est), the appeal which appeared under the name of the Faculty. The Decree was signed by more than six hundred Masters, and was confirmed by the other Universities of the kingdom, and by the Assembly of the Clergy, in 1730. Finally, the whole proceeding was approved by Clement XII. in the same year, and the King ordered, by a solemn Edict, that the Bull should be observed as the perpetual law of the Church, and of the Kingdom. On the death of Benedict XIII., in 1730, his successors, Clement XII. and Benedict XIV., confirmed the Bull[16169].

26. Before we conclude Quesnel's history, we may as well see what his system was. It comprised, properly speaking, three condemned systems those of Baius, of Jansenius, and of Richer. The first condemned propositions of Quesnel agree with Jansenius's system of the two delectations, without deliberation, the celestial and the terrestrial, one of which necessarily, by a relative necessity, conquers the other. From this

false principle several dreadful consequences follow, such as that it is impossible for those persons to observe the Divine law who have not efficacious grace; that we never can resist efficacious grace; that the delectatio victrix, or conquering delectation, drives man of necessity to consent; and several other maxims condemned in the five propositions of Jansenius. Some also, I recollect, savour of the doctrine condemned in the second, ninth, and tenth Propositions of Quesnel. In his second Proposition he says: “ Jesu Christi gratia, principium efficax boni cujuscunque generis, necessaria est ad omne opus bonum; absque ilia (here is the error) non solum nihil fit, sed nec fieri potest.” Hence he re-establishes the first Proposition of Jansenius, that some of the Commandments of God are impossible to those who have not efficacious grace. Arnold, as Tournelly tells us, asserted the same thing, when he says[16170] that Peter sinned in denying Jesus Christ, because he wanted grace, and for this he was condemned by the Sorbonne and his name expunged from the list of Doctors. Quesnel says just the same in his ninth proposition: “ Gratia Christi est gratia suprema, sine qua confiteri Christum (mark this) nunquam possumus, et cum qua nunquam ilium abnegamus ;” and in the tenth proposition : “ Gratia est operatic inanus Omnipotentis Dei, quam nihil impedire potest aut retardare.” Here another of the heretical dogmas of Jansenius is renewed : “ Interiori gratiæ nunquam resistitur.” In fine, if we investigate the doctrines of both, we will find Jansenius and Quesnel perfectly in accordance.

27. Quesnel’s propositions also agree with the doctrine of Baius, who says, that between vicious concupiscence and supernatural charity, by which we love God above all things, there is no middle love. Thus the forty—fourth Proposition of Quesnel says : “Non sunt nisi duo amores, undo volitiones et actiones omnes nostrae nascuntur: amor Dei, qui omne agit propter Deum, quemque Deus remuneratur, et amor quo nos ipsos, ac mundum diligimus, qui, quod ad Deum referendum est, non refert, et propter hoc ipsum sit malus.” The impious deductions from this system of Baius the reader will find in the Refutation of his heresy (Conf. xii).

28. The last Propositions of Quesnel agree with the doctrine of Richer, condemned in the Councils of Sens and Bagneres. See his ninetieth Proposition: “ Ecclesia auctoritatem excommunicandi habet, ut earn

exerceat per primos Pastores, do consensusaltem praesumpto totius Corporis.” As the Bishops said in the Assembly, in 1714, this was a most convenient doctrine for the Appellants, for as they considered themselves the purest portion of the Church, they never would give their consent to the censures fulminated against them, and, consequently, despised them.

ARTICLE V. THE ERRORS OF MICHAEL MOLINOS

29.—The unsound Book of Molinos called the “Spiritual Guide.” 30.—His impious Doctrine, and the consequences deduced from it. 31.—His affected sanctity; he is found out and imprisoned, with two of his disciples. 32.—He is condemned himself, as well as his Works; he publicly abjures his errors, and dies penitent. 33.—Condemnation of the Book entitled “The Maxims of the Saints.”

29. The heresy of the Beghards, of which we have already treated (Chap, x, art. iv, n. 31), was the source of the errors of Molinos. He was born in the Diocese of Saragossa, in Arragon, and published his book, with the specious title of “The Spiritual Guide, which leads the Soul by an interior way to the acquisition of perfect contemplation, and the rich treasure of internal Grace.” It was first printed in Rome, next in Madrid, then in Saragossa, and finally in Seville, so that in a little time the poison infected Spain, Rome, and almost all Italy. These maxims were so artfully laid down, that they were calculated to deceive not alone persons of lax morality, who are easily led astray, but even the purest souls, given totally to prayer. We ought to remark, also, that the unfortunate man did not, in this book, teach manifest errors, though he opened a door by it for the introduction of the most shocking principles[16171].

30. Hence, the consequence was, that those who studied this work were oppressed, as it were, by a mortal lethargy of con templation and false quietism. Men and women used to meet together in conventicles, professing this new sort of contemplation; they used to go to Communion satisfied with their own spirit, without confession or preparation; they frequented the churches like idiots, gazing on vacancy, neither looking to the altar where the Holy Sacrament was kept, nor exciting their devotion by contemplating the Sacred Images, and neither saying a prayer, nor performing any other act of devotion.

It would be all very well if they were satisfied with this idle contemplation and imaginary quietude of spirit, but they constantly fell into gross acts of licentiousness, for they believed that, while the soul was united with God, it was no harm to allow the body unbridled license in sensuality, all which, they said, proceeded solely from the violence of the devil, or the animal passions; and they justified this by that text of Job (xvi, 18) : “These things have I suffered without the iniquity of my hand, when I offered pure prayers to God.” Molinos, in his forty-ninth Proposition, gives an impious explanation to this text; “Job ex violentia Daeemonis se propriis mani bus polluebat,” &c.[16172].

31. This hypocrite lived in Rome unfortunately for twenty—two years, from the year 1665 till 1687, and was courted by all, especially by the nobility, for he was universally esteemed as a holy man, and an excellent guide in the way of spiritual life. His serious countenance, his dress neglected, but always clerical, his long and bushy beard, his venerably old appearance, and his slow gait all were calculated to inspire devotion; and his holy conversation caused him to be venerated by all who knew him. The Almighty at length took compassion on his Church, and exposed the author of such iniquity. Don Inigo Carracciolo, Cardinal of St. Clement, discovered that the Diocese of Naples was infected with the poisonous error, and immediately wrote to the Pope, imploring him to arrest the progress of the heresy by his supreme authority, and several other Bishops, not only in Italy, but even in France, wrote to the same effect. When his Holiness was informed of this, he published a circular letter through Italy, pointing out, not so much the remedy as the danger of the doctrine, which was extending itself privately. The Roman Inquisitors then, after taking information on the subject, drew up a secret process against Molinos, and ordered his arrest. He was, accordingly, taken up, with two of his associates, one a Priest of the name of Simon Leone, and the other a layman, called Anthony Maria, both natives of the village of Combieglio, near Como, and all three were imprisoned in the Holy Office.[16173]

32. The Inquisition, on the 24th of November, 1685, prohibited the “Spiritual Guide” of Molinos, and on the 28th of August, 1687, condemned all his works, and especially sixty—eight Propositions extracted from his perfidious book “The Guide,” and of which he acknowledged himself the author, as we read in Bernino[16174]. He was condemned himself, together with his doctrine, and after twenty-two months imprisonment, and the

conviction of his errors and crimes, he professed himself prepared to make the act of abjuration. On the 3rd of September, then, in 1687, he was brought to the Church of "the Minerva," before an immense concourse of people, and was placed by the officials in a pulpit, and commenced his abjuration. While the process was read, at the mention of every heretical proposition and every indecent action proved against him, the people cried out with a loud voice, "fuoco, fuoco" "burn him." When the reading of the process was concluded, he was conducted to the feet of the Commissary of the Holy Office, and there solemnly abjured the errors proved against him, received absolution, was clothed with the habit of a penitent, and received the usual strokes of a rod on the shoulders; he was then again conducted back to the prison of the Holy Office by the guards, a small apartment was assigned to him, and he lived for ten years with all the marks of a true penitent, and died with these happy dispositions. Immediately after his abjuration, Pope Innocent XI. published a Bull on the 4th of September,1687, again condemning the same Propositions already condemned by the Holy Inquisition; and on the same day the two brothers, the disciples of Molinos, Anthony Maria and Simon Leone, already mentioned, made their abjuration, and gave signs of sincere repentance[16175].

33. About the end of the 17th century there was a certain lady in France, Madame Guion, who, filled with false notions of spiritual life, published several manuscripts, against which Bossuet, the famous Bishop of Meaux, wrote his excellent work, entitled " De Stati bus Orationis," to crush the evil in the bud. Many, however, deceived by this lady's writings, took up her defence, and among these was Fenelon, the Archbishop of Cambray, who published another work, with the title of "Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints on Interior Life." This book was at once condemned by Innocent XII., who declared that the doctrine of the work was like that of Molinos.

When Fenelon heard that his book was condemned, he at once not only obeyed the decision of the Pope, but even published a public Edict, commanding all his Diocesans to yield obedience to the Pontifical Decree[16176]. The Propositions condemned by the Pope in this book were twenty-three in number; they were condemned on the 12th of March, 1G99, and Cardinal Gotti gives them without curtailment.

Supplementary Chapter. Heresies of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

1.—Introductory matter. 2.—Rationalists. 3-Hernlmtters, or Moravians. 4—.Sweden borgians, or New Jerusalemites. 5—Methodism; Wesley. 6, 7.—Doctrines and practices of the Methodists. 8.—Johanna Southcott. 9.—Mormonism. 10.—German Catholics.

1. The holy author, as the reader may perceive, concludes his History of Heresies with the account of the famous Bull Unigenitus, which gave the death-blow to Jansenism. He brings down the history of this most dangerous of sects and its ramifications to the Pontificate of Benedict XIV. A little more than a century has elapsed since, and though heresy has produced nothing new for every heresiarch only reproduces the errors of his predecessors still it will not, I hope, be ungrateful to the reader to have before him a succinct account of the sectaries who have since appeared, especially the Methodists, the most numerous, and, on many accounts, the most remarkable body of the present day. It is a fact which every close observer must be aware of, that heresy naturally tends to infidelity.

2. When once we lose hold of the anchor of Faith, and set up our own fallible judgments in opposition to the authority of the Church, we are led on from one false consequence to another, till in the end we are inclined to reject Revelation altogether. Such is the case, especially in Germany at the present day, where Rationalism has usurped the place of Religion, and infidelity is promulgated from the Theological Chair. It is true that in Catholic countries infidelity has also not alone appeared, but subverted both the throne and altar, and shaken society to its very foundations; but there it is the daughter of indifferentism. Lax morality produces unbelief, and those whose lives are totally opposed to the austere rule of the Gospel, are naturally anxious to persuade themselves that Religion is altogether a human invention. This madness, however, passes away after a time. Religion is too deeply rooted in the hearts of a truly Catholic people to be destroyed by it. The storm strips the goodly tree of a great deal of its fruit

and foliage, the rotten branches are snapped off, and the dead and withered leaves are borne away, but the vital principle of the trunk remains untouched, and in due season produces again fruit a hundred-fold.

That free spirit of inquiry, the boast of Protestantism, which, rejecting all authority, professes to be guided by reason alone, produced Rationalism. Luther and Calvin rejected several of the most important Articles of the Christian Faith. Why should not their followers do the same? They appealed to reason so did their disciples; one mystery after another was swept away, till Revelation, we may say, totally disappeared, and nothing but the name of Religion remained. The philosopher Kant laid down a system, by which True and Ecclesiastical Religion were distinguished. True Religion is the Religion of Reason; Ecclesiastical, the Religion of Revelation, and this is only a vehicle for conveying the truths of natural Religion. By this rule, then, the Scriptures were interpreted. Nothing but what reason could measure was admitted; every mystery became a Myth :miracles were all the effects of natural causes, working on an unenlightened and wonder-loving people. Hetzel, Eichhorn, the Rosenmullers, promulgated these blasphemies. Strauss, in his "Life of Christ," upsets all Revelation; and Becker teaches that St. John the Baptist and our Lord, with the determination of upsetting the Jewish Hierarchy, whose pride and tyranny they could not bear, plotted together, and agreed that one should play the part of the precursor, and the other of the Messiah. Such is the woful state of Continental Protestantism, and the worst of it is, that it is a necessary consequence of the fundamental principle of the Reformation, "unrestricted liberty of opinion"[16177].

3. In contra-distinction to the Rationalists, we have the Pietists in Germany, who cannot so much be called a sect as a party. They date their origin from Spener, who flourished in Frankfort in the sixteenth century, and caused a great deal of disturbance in the Lutheran Church in that and the following age. They are entitled to our notice here, as from some of their doctrines originated some extraordinary sects. Among these may be ranked the Hernhutters, otherwise called Moravians, and by themselves, "United Brethren." They assert that they are the descendants of the Bohemian and Moravian Hussites of the fifteenth century; but it is only in the last century they appeared as a distinct and organized sect, and now they

are not only numerous and wealthy, but have formed establishments partly of a Missionary and partly of a trading character in many parts of the world, from Labrador to Southern Africa. Their founder was Count Zinzendorf, who, in 1721, on attaining his majority, purchased an estate called Bertholsdorf, in Lusatia, and collected round him a number of followers, enthusiasts in religion, like himself. A carpenter of the name of Christian David, came to join him from Moravia, and was followed by many of his countrymen, and they built a new town on the estate, which was at first, from the name of a neighbouring village, called Huthberg, but they changed it to Herren Huth, the Residence of the Lord, and from that the sect took its name. They profess to follow the Confession of Augsburg, but their government is totally different from that of Lutheranism. They have both Bishops and Elders, but the former have no governing power; they are merely appointed to ordain, and, individually, are but members of the general governing consistory. Zinzendorf himself travelled all over Europe, to disseminate his doctrines, and twice visited America.

He died in 1760[16178]. The doctrines preached by this enthusiast were of the most revolting and horrible nature. All we read of the abominations of the early Gnostics is nothing, compared to the revolting and blasphemous obscenity to be found in his works. An attempt has been made by some of his followers to defend him, but in vain, and it is truly a melancholy feeling to behold the sacred name of Religion prostituted to such vile abominations[16179].

4. Emmanuel Swedenborg, the founder of the New Jerusalemites, was another extraordinary fanatic, and his case is most remarkable, since he was a man of profound learning, a civil and military engineer, and the whole tenor of his studies was calculated to banish any tendency to mystic fanaticism which might have been interwoven in his nature. He was born in Stockholm, in 1689, and was the son of the Lutheran Bishop of West Gotha. From his earliest days he applied himself to the study of science, under the best masters, and made such progress, that he published some works at the age of twenty. His merit recommended him to his Sovereign, Charles XII., the warrior King of Sweden, and he received an appointment as Assessor of the College of Mines. At the siege of Frederickshall, in 1713, he accomplished an extraordinary work, by the transmission of the siege

artillery over the ridge of mountains which separates Sweden from Norway. It was considered one of the boldest attempts of military engineering ever accomplished. His application to study was continual, and from time to time he published works which gave him a European scientific reputation. It would have been well for himself had he never meddled in theological speculations; but his extravagances prove that the strongest minds, when destitute of faith, fall into the grossest errors. His system was, that there is a spiritual world around us corresponding in every thing to the material world we inhabit. He used himself, he assures us, converse with people in the most distant climes, and was in daily communication with those who were dead for ages. When a man dies, he says, he exchanges his material body, of which there is no resurrection, for a substantial one, and can immediately enjoy all the pleasures of this life, oven the most gross, just as if he were still in the flesh.

In fact, a man frequently does not well know whether he is living or dead. Jesus Christ is God himself, in human form, who existed from all eternity, but became incarnate in time to bring the hells, or evil spirits, into subjection. he admitted a Trinity of his own, consisting of the Divinity, the Humanity, and the Operation. This Trinity commenced only at the Incarnation. He travelled through a great part of Europe, disseminating his doctrines, and finally died in London, in 1772, and was buried in the Swedish Church, Ratcliffe Highway. His followers have increased since his death, but they still only form small and obscure congregations. They style themselves “the Church of the New Jerusalem.”

5. The Patriarch of Methodism was John Wesley, who was born in 1703, at Epworth, in Lincolnshire, of which place his father was rector. At the ago of seventeen he was sent to the University of Oxford, and being more seriously inclined than the generality of young men there, applied himself diligently to his studies. One of his favourite books at that period was the famous work of Thomas a Kempis, “The Imitation of Christ.” During his long and varied life this golden work was his manual, and he published even an edition of it himself in 1735, but, as should be expected, corrupted and mutilated. His brother Charles, a student like himself, at Oxford, and a few other young men, formed themselves into a Society for Scripture reading and practices of piety, and, as the state of morals was peculiarly lax in that seat of learning, they were jeered by their fellow-students, called the

Godly Club, and, on account of their methodical manner of living, were nicknamed “Methodists,” which afterwards became the general designation of the whole sect or society in all its numerous subdivisions. Wesley was ordained in the Anglican Church, and assisted his father for a while as curate, till an appointment was offered him in Georgia. He sailed, accordingly, for America, in company with his brother and two others. He led quite an ascetic life at this period, slept frequently on the bare boards, and continually practised mortification. He remained in America till 1738, and then returned to England. He was disappointed in a matrimonial speculation while there, and had a law-suit also on hands.

Like all Protestant Apostles, a comfortable settlement in life appeared to him the first consideration. This is one of the principal causes of the sterility of all their missions; if, however, they do not seek first the kingdom of God, they take care that all other things that the world can afford shall he added to them, as the investigations into the land tenures of New Zealand and the islands of the Pacific bear witness. While in America he associated a great deal with the Moravians, and became imbued, to a great extent, with their peculiar doctrines of grace, the new birth, and justification, and on his return paid a visit to Herronhutt, to commune with Zinzendorf. He was not at all popular in America; he appears to have been a proud, self-opinionated man, filled up with an extraordinary idea of his own perfections. Indeed, it only requires a glance at his Diary, which, it would appear, he compiled, not so much for his own self-examination as for making a display before others, to be convinced that he was a vain, proud man. He was always a determined enemy of Catholicity, and for his bigoted attacks on Popery, he received a just castigation from the witty and eloquent Father O’Leary. He dates the origin of Methodism himself from a meeting held in Fetter-lane, London, on the 1st of May, 1738. “The first rise of Methodism,” he says, “was in November, 1729, when four of us met together at Oxford; the second was in Savannah, in April, 1736, when twenty or thirty persons met at my house; the last in London, when forty or fifty of us agreed to meet together every Wednesday evening, in order to free conversation, begun and ended with singing and prayer.” Whitfield, a fellow-student of Wesley, began to preach at this time to numerous congregations in the open air. He was a man of fervid eloquence, and the people, deserted, in a great measure, by the parsons of the Anglican church, flocked in crowds to hear him, and as he could not obtain leave to preach in the churches, he .adopted the system of field-preaching.

His doctrine was thoroughly Calvinistic, and this was, ultimately, the cause of a separation between him and Wesley. Indeed it would appear Wesley could bear no competitor, he ruled his society most absolutely; appointed preachers, and removed them, according to his own will changed them from one station to another, or dismissed them altogether, just as he pleased. One of the most extraordinary proceedings of his life, however, was his ordaining a Bishop for the States of America. Both he and Whitfield planted Methodism in our Colonies in North America, and the people, always desirous of religion, ardently took up with it, since no better was provided for them. When the revolutionary war commenced, Wesley wrote a bitter tract against “the Rebels,” and were it not suppressed in time, his name would be branded with infamy by the patriotic party. The fate of war, however, favoured the “ Rebels,” and our consistent preacher immediately veered round. He was now the apologist of insurrection, and besought them to stand fast by the liberty God gave them. What opinion can we hold of the principles of a man who acts thus? But to return to the Ordination. Wesley always professed himself not only a member of the Anglican church but a faithful observer of its doctrines, articles, and homilies. His followers in America, however, called loudly for ministers or preachers, and then he became convinced that there was no distinction in fact between Presbyters and Bishops, and thus with the 23rd and 36th articles of his church staring him in the face, he not alone ordained priests, as he called them, but actually consecrated Coke a Bishop for the North American congregations.

“ God,” says Coke, “raised up Wesley as a light and guide in his Church; he appointed to all offices, and, consequently, had the right of appointing Bishops.” We would wish, however, to have some proof of the Divine mission of Wesley, such as the Apostles gave, when “they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the Word with the signs that followed” (Mark, xvi, 20). He travelled through England, Scotland, and Ireland, preaching in towns, hamlets, and villages, and, as usual, giving “Popery” a blow, whenever he had an opportunity. He married, when advanced in years, but soon separated from his wife, by whom he had no children. He appears, on the whole, to be a man of most unamiable character, and though God was constantly on his lips, self was always predominant. He died in London in 1781, in the eighty-eighth year of his age.

6. It is rather difficult to give a precise account of the doctrines of Methodism. Wesley always professed himself a member of the Church of England, and maintained that his doctrine was that of the Anglican Church, but we see how far he deviated from it in the Ordination affair. Whitfield was a Calvinist, and some of the first Methodists were Moravians. Salvation by Faith alone, and sudden justification, appear to be the distinguishing marks of the sect. Their doctrines open a wide door for the most dangerous enthusiasm; the poor people imagine, from the ardour of their feelings, that they are justified, though every Christian should be aware that he knows not whether he is worthy of love or hatred, and this has been productive of the most serious consequences. If only the thousandth part of all we hear of the scenes which take place at a "Revival" in America be true, it should fill us with compassion to see rational beings committing such extravagances in the holy name of Religion. I will not sully the page with a description of the "Penitents pen," the groanings in spirit, the sighs, contortions, howlings, and faintings which accompany the "new birth" at these re-unions. It has been partially attempted in these countries to get up a similar demonstration, but we hope the sense of propriety and decorum is too strongly fixed in the minds of our people ever to permit themselves to be thus fooled.

7. The curse of all heresies, the want of cohesion, has fallen also on the Methodist society. They are now divided into several branches, Primitive Wesleyans, &c. They are governed by Conferences, and there are districts, and other minor divisions, down to classes. The form of worship consists generally of extemporaneous prayer and preaching. Wesley established bands, or little companies for self-examination and confession, and it is rather strange that sectaries who reject Sacramental confession, where the penitent pours into the ear of the Priest his sins and his sorrows, under the most inviolable secrecy, should encourage promiscuous confession of sins, which can be productive of no good, but must necessarily cause a great deal of harm. Hear Wesley's own words on the subject : "Bands" he says, "are instituted, in order to confess our faults to one another, and pray for one another; we intend to meet once a week at least; to come punctually at the

hour appointed; to begin with singing or prayer; to speak to each of us, in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our soul, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting, and to desire some person among us (thence called a leader) to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest, in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations.” Such a shocking practice is only calculated to make men hypocrites and liars, for we know it is not in human nature to confess freely and plainly all the turpitude of their hearts, before five or six, or more, fellow-mortals; and did such a thing happen, society would be shaken to its foundations, the peace of families destroyed, and mortal hatred usurp the place of brotherly love. The Methodists have another peculiar custom of holding a love feast, every quarter. Cake and water is given to each person, and partaken of by all, and each is at liberty to speak of his religious experience. There certainly could not be a better nurse of spiritual pride than a practice of this sort. Every year they have a watch-night, that is, they continue in prayer and psalm-singing, till after midnight, on the last night of the year; the New Year is then ushered in with a suitable hymn and appropriate service. It is melancholy to see so many people, of really religious dispositions, most of them irreproachably moral, honest, and honourable, led astray by error, buffeted about by every wind of doctrine. Those who are members of the Holy Catholic Church, are bound to praise God daily for the inestimable blessing conferred on them; and, seeing how little in general they correspond to the extraordinary graces they receive by the Sacraments, and the Holy Sacrifice, should be humbled at their own unworthiness, and unceasingly pray to God, that the strayed sheep may be brought into the fold, under the guidance of the one Shepherd. Had Wesley, their founder, been born and disciplined, from his youth, in the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Faith his self-love and spiritual pride corrected by the holy practice of the confessional he might have been one of the lights of his age, and, perhaps, have carried the Gospel with effect to the nations still sitting in darkness. But the judgments of God are inscrutable[16180].

8. Johanna Southcott. This extraordinary woman was born in Devonshire, in 1750, and is no less remarkable for the extravagance of her tenets, than as a melancholy example of the credulity of her numerous followers. She

was, in the early part of her life, only a domestic servant, and scarcely received any education. She joined a Methodist society, and being of an excitable temperament, persuaded herself at first, it is supposed, that she was endowed with extraordinary gifts. She soon found followers, and then commenced as a prophetess, and proclaimed herself the “woman” spoken of in the Book of Revelations. She resided all this time in Exeter, and it is wonderful to find that an ignorant woman could make so many dupes. She had seals manufactured, and sold them as passes to immortal happiness. It was impossible that any one possessed of one of these talismen, could be lost. Exeter soon became too confined a sphere for her operations, and, at the expense of an engraver of the name of Sharp, she came to London, where the number of her disciples was considerably increased, and many persons joined her, whom we would be the last to suspect of fanaticism. She frequently denounced unbelievers, and threatened the unfaithful nations with chastisement. She was now sixty years of age, and put the finishing stroke to her delusions. She proclaimed that she was with-child of the Holy Spirit, and that she was about to bring into the world the Shiloh promised to Jacob. This event was to take place on the 19th of October, 1814. This we would imagine would be enough to shake the whole fabric of imposture she had raised, but, on the contrary, her dupes not only believed it, but actually prepared a gorgeous cradle for the Shiloh, and crowded round her residence at the appointed time, in expectation of the joyful event. Midnight passed, and they were told she fell into a trance. She died on the 27th of the following December, declaring that if she was deceived, it must be by some spirit, good or bad, and was buried in Paddington churchyard. A post mortem examination showed that she died of dropsy. Among other reveries, she taught the doctrine of the Millennium. The strangest thing of all is that the delusion did not cease at her death; her followers still exist as a sect, though not numerous. They are distinguished by wearing brown coats and long beards, and by other peculiarities. It is supposed they expect the reappearance of their prophetess.

A new sect sprung up in the United States of America, only a few years since. They were called Mormons, or Latter—Day Saints. It is very generally believed along the sea-board of the States, that the buccaneers of the seventeenth century, and the loyalists in the late revolution, buried large sums of money, and that all traces of the place of concealment were lost by their death. Several idle persons have taken up the trade of exploring for this concealed treasure, and are known by the name of “Money Diggers,” calculating, like the alchymists of old, on the avaricious credulity of their dupes. The prophet and founder of Mormonism, Joe Smith, followed this profession. Not he alone, but his whole family, were remarkable for a total absence of every quality which constitutes honest men. Smith was well aware, from his former profession, of the credulity of many of his countrymen; so he gave out that he had a revelation from above that he was received up into the midst of a blaze of light, and saw two heavenly personages, who told him his sins were forgiven that the world was all in error in religious matters and that, in due season, the truth would be revealed, through him. It was next revealed to him, that the aborigines, the “ red men,” of America were a remnant of the tribes of Israel, whose colour was miraculously changed, as a punishment for their sins, and whose prophets deposited a book of Divine records, engraved on plates of gold, and buried in a stone chest, in a part of the State of New York. Smith searched for the treasure, and found it, but was not allowed to remove it, until he had learned the Egyptian language, in which it was written. In 1827, he was, at last, allowed to take possession of it, and published an English version, in 1830. His father and others were partners in the scheme. The rhapsody made a deep impression on the uncultivated minds of many especially among the lower orders in the States, and a congregation was formed, usually called Mormonites, from the Book of Mormon, as Smith called it, or, according to the name by which they designated themselves, “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.”

9. The book, such as it is, is supposed to have been written by a person of the name of Spaulding, as a sort of novel, and offered to a publisher, who declined having anything to do with it, and it eventually fell into the hands of one Rigdon, a friend of Smith; and, as it was written something in the style of the Old Testament, and purported to be an account of the adventures of a portion of the Tribe of Joseph, who sailed for America, under the guidance of a Prophet, called Nephi, and became the fathers of the Red Indians, they determined to pass it off as a new Revelation. It is evidently the production of a very ignorant person, whose whole knowledge of antiquity was acquired from the English Bible. The sect became so numerous in a little time, that a settlement was made in the State of

Missouri; but the sturdy people of the West rose up against them, and banished them. They next settled down in Illinois, and founded a city, which they called Nauvoo, near the Mississipi. A temple on a magnificent scale was commenced, and a residence for the Prophet, who took especial care that his revelations should all turn to his own profit. He established two Orders of Priesthood the Order of Melchizedec, consisting of High Priests and Elders, and the Order of Aaron, containing Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; but " my servant, Joseph Smith," was, of course, the autocrat of the whole system, and the others were but his tools. Not alone from the States, but even from the manufacturing districts of England, did multitudes flock to the land of promise. Disputes, however, arose. The Prophet, Joe Smith, was killed by a mob last year, at Carthage, in Illinois, and most of his fanatical followers are dispersed. Numbers have emigrated to California, and intend forming establishments in that country, and time alone will tell whether the delusion will have any duration. The temple remains unfinished, like the Tower of Babel, a standing monument of human folly.

10. The German Catholic Church. Such was the designation adopted by a party raised up within the two last years in Germany; but the reader will perceive what little right it has to such a title, when, at the last meeting, held at Schneidemuhl, they not only rejected the Dogmas and Sacraments, which peculiarly distinguish the Catholic Church from the various Protestant sects, but openly renounced even the Apostles Creed, denied the Divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, and, in fact, their whole Creed now consists, we may say, of one article to believe in the existence of God. The origin of this party was thus ~ In the Cathedral of Treves, it is piously believed, the seamless garment worn by our Lord is preserved; it is usually called the Holy Robe of Treves. From time to time this is exhibited to the veneration of the people. The Bishop of Treves, Monseigneur Arnoldi, published to the Faithful of Germany and the world, that the robe would be exhibited for a few weeks. Hundreds of thousands responded to the pious invitation. From the snowy summits of the Swiss mountains, to the lowlands of Holland, the people came in multitudes, to venerate the sacred relic. Ronge, an unquiet immoral Priest, who had been previously suspended by his Bishop, imagined that it would be just the time to imitate Luther in his attack on Indulgences, and, accordingly, wrote a letter to the Prelate Arnoldi, which was published, not alone in the German papers, but in several other parts of

Europe besides. He then declared that he renounced the Roman Catholic Church altogether, and established what he called the German Catholic Church. He was soon joined by another priest of the same stamp, Czerski; and numbers of the Rationalists of Germany having no fixed religious principles of any sort, ranked themselves under the banners of the new Apostles, not through any love for the new form of faith, but hoping to destroy Catholicity. We have seen, however, at their last Conference, that they have abolished Christianity itself, and the sect, as it is, is already nearly extinct.

END OF THE HISTORY

Refutation OF HERESIES

Refutation I

THE HERESY OF SABELLIUS, WHO DENIED THE DISTINCTION OF PERSONS IN THE TRINITY

1. The Catholic Church teaches that there are in God one Nature and three distinct Persons. Arius, of whose heresy we shall have to speak in the next chapter, admits the distinction of Persons in the Trinity, but said that the three Persons had three different Natures among themselves, or, as the latter Arians said, that the three Persons were of three distinct Natures. Sabellius, on the other hand, confessed, that in God there was but one Nature; but he denied the distinction of Persons, for God, he said, was distinguished with the name of the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Ghost, by denomination alone, to signify the different effects of the Divinity, but that in himself, as there is but one Nature, so there is but one Person. The Sabellian heresy was first taught by Praxeas, who was refuted by Tertullian in a special work. In the year 257, the same heresy was taken up by Sabellius[16181], who gave it great extension, especially in Lybia, and he was followed by Paul of Samosata. These denied the distinction of the Persons, and, consequently, the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and, therefore, the Sabellians were called Patripassionists, as St. Augustine[16182] tells us, for,—as they admitted in God only the Person of the Father alone, they should, consequently, admit that it was the Father who became incarnate, and suffered for the redemption of mankind. The Sabellian heresy, after being a long time defunct, was resuscitated by Socinus, whose arguments we shall also enumerate in this dissertation.

I. THE REAL DISTINCTION OF THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS IS PROVED

2. In the first place, the plurality and the real distinction of the three Persons in the Divine Nature is proved from the words of Genesis : “Let us make

man to our own image and likeness” (Gen. i, 26); and in chap, iii, v. 22, it is said: “Behold, Adam is become one of us ;” and again, in chap, xi, ver. 7 : “Come ye, therefore, let us go down, and there confound their tongues.” Now these words, “let us do,” “let us go down,” “let us confound,” show the plurality of Persons, and can in no wise be understood of the plurality of Natures, for the Scripture itself declares that there is but one God, and if there were several Divine Natures, there would be several Gods; the words quoted, therefore, must mean the plurality of Persons. Theodoret[16183], with Tertullian, makes a reflection on this, that God spoke in the plural number, “let us make,” to denote the plurality of Persons, and then uses the singular, “to our image,” not images, to signify the unity of the Divine Nature.

3. To this the Socinians object :First That God spoke in the plural number, for the honour of his Person, as kings say “We” when they give any order. But we answer, by saying, that sovereigns speak thus, “we ordain,” “we command,” in their ordinances, for then they represent the whole republic, but never when they speak of their private and personal acts; they never say, for example, “ we are going to sleep,” or “ we are going to walk,” nor did God speak in the way of commanding, when he said, “Behold Adam is become as one of us.” Secondly They object, that God did not thus speak with the other Divine Persons, but with the Angels; but Tertullian, St. Basil, Theodoret, and St. Iraeneus, laugh at this foolish objection[16184], for the very words, “ to our image and likeness,” dispose of it, for man is not created to the image of the Angels, but of God himself. Thirdly They object, that God spoke with himself then, as if exciting himself to create man, as a sculptor might say, “come, let us make a statue. St. Basil[16185], opposing the Jews, disposes of this argument. “ Do we ever see a smith,” he says, “when sitting down among his tools, say to himself Come, let us make a sword ?” The Saint intends by this to prove, that, when God said, “let us make,” he could not speak so to himself alone, but to the other Persons; for no one, speaking to himself, says, “let us make.” It is clear, therefore, that he spoke with the other Divine Persons.

4. It is proved, also, from the Psalms (ii, 7) : “The Lord hath said to me, thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” Here mention is made of the Father begetting the Son, and of the Son begotten; and in the same Psalm the promise is made : “ I will give thee the Gentiles for thy

inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Here a clear distinction is drawn between the Person of the Son and the Person of the Father, for we cannot say it is the same Person who begets and is begotten. And St. Paul declares that these words refer to Christ the Son of God : “ So Christ also did not glorify himself, that he might be made a high priest, but he that said unto him: Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee” (Heb. v, 5).

5. It is also—proved by the 109th Psalm : “The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou at my right hand ;” and it was this very passage that our Saviour made use of to convince the Jews, and make them believe that he was the Son of God. “What think you of Christ, said he ?hose Son is he ?They say to him :David’s. He saith to them : How, then, doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, &c. If David then call him Lord, how is he his Son” (Mat. xxii, 42 45). Christ wished by this to prove that, although the Son of David, he was still His Lord, and God, likewise, as his Eternal Father, was Lord.

6. The distinction of the Divine Persons was not expressed more clearly in the Old Law, lest the Jews, like the Egyptians, who adored plurality of Gods, might imagine that in the three Divine Persons there were three Essential Gods. In the New Testament, however, through which the Gentiles were called to the Faith, the distinction of the three Persons in the Divine Essence is clearly laid down, as is proved, first, from St. John, i, 1 : “ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Now, by the expression, “the Word was with God,” it is proved that the Word was distinct from the Father, for we cannot say of the same thing, that it is with itself and nigh itself at the same time. Neither can we say that the Word was distinct by Nature, for the text says, “the Word was God;” therefore, the distinction of Persons is clearly proved, as St. Athanasius and Tertullian agree[16186]. In the same chapter these words occur : “ We saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father.” Here no one can say, that the Son is begotten from himself; the Son, therefore, is really distinct from the Father.

7. It is proved, also, from the command given to the Apostles : “ Go, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt, xxviii, 19). Hence the words, in the name, denote the unity of Nature, and signify that Baptism is one sole

operation of all the three named Persons; and the distinct appellation afterwards given to each Person, clearly proves that they are distinct. And, again, if these three Persons were not God, but only creatures, it would be absurd to imagine that Christ, under the same name, would liken creatures to God.

8. It is proved, also, by that text of St. John : “Philip, he that seeth me seeth the Father also I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete” (John, xiv, 9, 16). By the words, “ he that seeth me seeth the Father,” he proves the unity of the Divine Nature; and by the other expression, “ I will ask,” &c., the distinction of the Persons, for the same Person cannot be at once the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This is even more fully explained by the words of St. John, xv, 26 : “But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father shall send in my name.”

9. It is also proved by that text of St. John : “There are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one” (John, I. Epis. v. 7). Nor is the assertion of the adversaries of the Faith, that the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, are merely different in name, but not in reality, of any avail, for then it would not be three testimonies that are given, but only one alone, which is repugnant to the text. The Socinians labour hard to oppose this text especially, which so clearly expresses the distinction of the three Divine Persons, and they object that this verse is wanting altogether in many manuscripts, or, at all events is found only in part; but Estius, in his commentaries on this text of St. John, says, that Robert Stephens, in his elegant edition of the New Testament, remarks that, having consulted sixteen ancient copies collected in France, Spain, and Italy, he found that, in seven of them, the words “ in heaven” alone were omitted, but that the remainder of the text existed in full. The Doctors of Louvain collected a great number of manuscripts for the Edition of the Vulgate brought out in 1580, and they attest, that it was in five alone that the whole text was not found[16187]. It is easy to explain how a copyist might make a mistake in writing this verse, for the seventh and eighth verses are so much alike, that a careless copyist might easily mix up one with the other. It is most certain that in many ancient Greek copies, and in all the Latin ones, the seventh verse is either put down entire, or, at least, noted in the margin : and, besides, we find it cited by many of the Fathers,

as St. Cyprian, St. Athanasius, St. Epiphanius, St. Fulgentius, Tertullian, St. Jerome, and Victor Vitensis[16188]. The Council of Trent, above all, in its Decree of the Canonical Scriptures, Sess. IV., obliges us to receive every book of the Vulgate edition, with all its parts, as usually read in the Church : "If anyone should not receive as holy and canonical the entire books, with all their parts, as they are accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church, and contained in the old Vulgate edition let him be anathema." The seventh verse quoted is frequently read in the Church, and especially on Low Sunday.

10. The Socinians, however, say that it cannot be proved from that text of St. John, that there are in God three distinct Persons, and one sole essence, because, say they, the words "these three are one" signify no other union but the union of testimony, as the words of the eighth verse signify,[16189] "There are three that give testimony on earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three are one." These words prove, according to us, that Christ is truly the Son of God, which is what St. John is speaking about; and this, he says, is testified by the water of Baptism, by the bloodshed by Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, who teaches it by his illuminations, and in this sense St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and Liranus explain it, and especially Tirinus, who rejects the explanation of an anonymous author, who interprets the water as that which flowed from our Lord's side; the blood, that which flowed from his heart when it was pierced with a spear, and the spirit, the soul of Jesus Christ. To return to the point, however; I cannot conceive any objection more futile than this. So from the words of St. John, "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," the distinction of the Divine Persons cannot be proved, because these Persons "are one," that is, make one testimony alone, and denote by that, that they are but one Essence. But we answer, that we are not here labouring to prove that God is one, that is, one Essence, and not three Essences; for our adversaries themselves do not call this in doubt, and, besides, it is proved from a thousand other texts of Scripture adduced by themselves, as we shall soon see; so that granting even that the words "are one" denote nothing else but the unity of testimony, what do they gain by that? The point is this not whether the unity of the Divine Essence is proved by the text of St. John, but whether the real distinction of the Divine Persons is proved by it, and no

one, I think, can deny that it is, when St. John says, “There are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.” If three give testimony, it is not one Person, but three distinct Persons, who do so, and that is what we mean to prove. I have found several other answers to this objection in various authors, but this, I think, is the clearest and the most convincing against the Socinians.[16190]

11. The real distinction of the Divine Persons is also proved from the traditions of the Fathers, and from their unanimous consent in teaching this truth. To avoid doubtful meanings, however, it is right to premise that in the fourth century, about the year 380, there were great contests in the Church, even among the Holy Fathers themselves, regarding the word Hypostasis, and they were split into two parties. Those who adhered to Miletius taught that there are in God three Hypostases; and those who followed Paulinus, that there was only one, and so the followers of Miletius called the followers of Paulinus Sabellians, and these retorted by calling the others Arians. The whole dispute, however, arose from the doubtful meaning of the word Hypostasis, as some of the Fathers, the Paulinians, understood by it the Essence or the Divine Nature, and the others, the Miletians, the Person; and the word Ousia was also of doubtful meaning, being taken for Essence or for Person. When the words were, therefore, explained in the Synod of Alexandria, both parties came to an agreement, and from that to this, by the word Ousia we understand the Essence, and by the word Hypostasis, the Person. The doctrine, therefore, of one Essence and three Persons, really distinct in God, is not taught alone by St. Cyprian, St. Athanasius, St. Epiphanius, St. Basil, St. Jerom, and St. Fulgentius, already cited[16191], but also by St. Hilary, St. Gregory Nazianzan, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. John of Damascus, &c[16192]. Among the Fathers of the three first centuries we have St. Clement, St. Polycarp, Athenagoras, St. Justin, Tertullian, St. Irenaeus, St. Dionisius Alexandrinus, and St. Gregory Thaumaturgus[16193].

Many general Councils declare and confirm the same truth. It is taught by the Nicene (in Symb. Fidei); by the first of Constantinople (in Symb.); by that of Ephesus (act 6), which confirms the Nicene Symbol; of Chalcedon (in Symb.); of the second of Constantinople (act 6); third of Constantinople (act 17); fourth of Constantinople (act 10); fourth of Lateran (cap. 1);

second of Lyons (can. 1); of Florence, in the Decree of Union, and finally, by the Council of Trent, which approved the first of Constantinople, with the addition of the word Filioque. It was so well known that the Christians believed this dogma, that the very Gentiles charged them with believing in three Gods, as is proved from the writings of Origen against Celsus, and from the Apology of St. Justin. If the Christians did not firmly believe in the Divinity of the three Divine Persons, they would have answered the Pagans, by saying that they only considered the Father as God, and not the other two Persons; but they, on the contrary, always confessed, without fearing that by doing so they would admit a plurality of Gods, that the Son and the Holy Ghost were God equally with the Father; for although with the Father they were three distinct Persons, they had but one Essence and Nature. This proves clearly that this was the faith of the first ages.

II. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

12. The Sabellians bring forward several texts of Scripture, to prove that God is one alone, as " I am the Lord that make all things, that alone stretch out the heavens, that establish the earth, and there is none with me" (Isaias, xliv, 24); but to this we answer, that the words " I am the Lord" refer not alone to the Father, but to all the three Persons, who are but one God and one Lord. Again, " I am God, and there is no other" (Isaias, xlv, 22). Hence, we assert that the word I, does not denote the person of the Father alone, but also the Persons of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, because they are all but one God; and the words "there is no other" signify the exclusion of all other Persons who are not God. But, say they, here is one text, in which it is clearly laid down that the Father alone is God, "yet to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (I. Cor. viii. 6). To this we answer, that here the Apostle teaches the faithful to believe one God in three Persons, in opposition to the Gentiles, who, in many Persons, adored many Gods. For as we believe that Christ, called by St. Paul "one Lord," is not Lord alone, to the exclusion of the Father, so, when the Father is called "one Lord," we are not to believe that he is God alone, to the exclusion of Christ and of the Holy Ghost; and when the Apostle speaks of

“one God the Father,” we are to understand that he speaks of the unity of Nature, and not of Person.

13. Again, they object that our natural reason alone is sufficient to prove to us, that as among men three persons constitute three individual humanities, so in God the three Persons, if they were really distinct, would constitute three distinct Deities. To this we reply, that Divine mysteries are not to be judged according to our stunted human reason; they are infinitely beyond the reach of our intellect. “ If,” says St. Cyril of Alexandria, “there was no difference between us and God, we might measure Divine things by our own standard; but if there be an incomprehensible distance between us, why should the deficiency of our nature mark out a rule for God”[16194]? If, therefore, we cannot arrive at the comprehension of Divine mysteries, we should adore and believe them; and it is enough to know that what we are obliged to believe is not evidently opposed to reason. We cannot comprehend the greatness of God, and so we cannot comprehend the mode of his existence. But, say they, how can we believe that three Persons really distinct are only one God, and not three Gods ?The reason assigned by the Holy Fathers is this because the principle of the Divinity is one, that is, the Father, who proceeds from nothing, while the two other Persons proceed from him, but in such a manner that they cease not to exist in him, as Jesus Christ says : “ The Father is in me, and I in the Father” (John, x. 38).

14. And this is the difference between the Divine Persons and human persons with us three persona constitute three distinct substances, because, though they are of the same species, they are still three individual substances, and they are also three distinct natures, for each person has his own particular nature. In God, however, the Nature or the substance, is not divisible, but is in fact one Divinity alone, and, therefore, the Persons, although really distinct, still having the same Nature and the same Divine substance, constitute one Divinity alone, only one God.

15. They next object that rule received by all philosophers : “Things equal to a third are equal to each other.” Therefore, say they, if the Divine Persons are the same thing as the Divine Nature, they are also the same among themselves, and cannot be really distinct. We might answer this by saying, as before, that a philosophical axiom like this applies very well to created, but not to Divine things. But we can even give a more distinct

answer to it. This axiom answers very well in regard to things which correspond to a third, and correspond also among themselves. But although the Divine Persons correspond in everything to the Divine Essence, and are, therefore, the same among themselves as to the substance, still, because in the personality they do not correspond, on account of their relative opposition, for the Father communicates his Essence to the two other persons, and they receive it from the Father, therefore, the Person of the Father is really distinct from that of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. They object, Fourthly that as the Divine Presence is infinite, therefore it must be but one, for what is infinite in all perfections, cannot have a second like itself, and that is the great proof of the Unity of God; for if there were many Gods, one could not possess the perfections of the other, and would not, therefore, be infinite, nor be God. To this we answer, that although on account of the infinity of God, there can be no more Gods than one, still from the infinity of the Divine Persons in God, it does not follow that there can be only one Divine Person; for although in God there are three distinct Persons, still each, through the unity of essence, contains all the perfections of the other two. But, say they, the Son has not the perfection of the Father to generate, and the Holy Ghost has not the perfection of the Father and the Son to spirate, therefore the Son is not infinite as is the Father, nor has the Holy Ghost the perfections of the Father and the Son. We reply, that the perfection of anything is that which properly belongs to its nature, and hence it is that the perfection of the Father is to generate, of the Son, to be generated, and of the Holy Ghost to be spirated. Now, as these perfections are relative, they cannot be the same in each Person, for otherwise, the distinction of Persons would exist no longer, neither would the perfection of the Divine Nature exist any longer, for that requires that the Persons should be really distinct among themselves, and that the Divine Essence should be common to each. But then, say they, those four expressions, the Essence, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are not synonymous; they, therefore, mean four distinct things, and that would prove not alone a Trinity, but a Quarternity in God. The answer to this frivolous objection is very simple. We freely admit that these four words are not synonymous, but for all that, the Essence is not distinct from the Persons; the Divine Essence is an absolute thing, but common to all the three Persons, but the three Persons, though distinct among themselves, are not distinct from the Essence, for that is in each of the three Persons, as the Fourth Council of Lateran (can. 2) declares : “In Deo Trinitas est non quaternitas quia qualibet trium personarum, est ilia res videlicet essentia, sive natura Divina quae sola est universorum principium praeter quod aliud inveniri non potest.”

16. The Socinians object, Fifthly The Father generated the Son, either existing or not existing; if he generated him already existing, he cannot be said to be generated at all, and if the Son was not existing, then there was a time when the Son was not; therefore they conclude that there are not in God Three Persons of the same Essence. To this we reply, that the Father has always generated the Son, and that the Son is always existing, for he was generated from all eternity, and will be generated forever, and, therefore, we read in the Psalms: “ To-day I have begotten thee” (Psalms, ii, 7); because in eternity there is no succession of time, and all is equally present to God. Neither is there any use in saying that the Father has generated the Son in vain, as the Son already existed always, for the Divine generation is eternal, and as the Father generating is eternal, so the Son is eternally generated; both are eternal, but the Father has been always the principium in the Divine Nature.

17. Finally, they object that the primitive Christians did not believe the mystery of the Trinity, for if they did, the Gentiles would have attacked them, on the great difficulties with which this mystery, humanly speaking, was encompassed; at all events, they would have tried to prove from that, that they believed in a plurality of Gods, but we find no such charge made against the Christians by the Gentiles, nor do we find a word about it in the Apologies written by the early Fathers in defence of the Faith. To this we answer :First That even in these early days the Pastors of the Church taught the Catechumens the Apostles Creed, which contains the mystery of the Trinity, but they did not speak openly of it to the Gentiles, who, when their understanding could not comprehend Divine things, only mocked them. Secondly Many of the writings of the Gentiles have been lost in the lapse of centuries, and through the prohibitory decrees of the Christian Emperors, and many of the Apologies were lost in like manner. Praxeas, however, who denied the Trinity, uses this very argument against the Catholics : “ If you admit three Persons in God,” says he, “you admit a plurality of Gods like the Gentiles.” Besides, in the first Apology of St. Justin, we read that the

Idolaters objected to the Christians, that they adored Christ as the Son of God. The pagan Celsus, as we find in Origcn[16195], argued that the Christians, by their belief in the Trinity, should admit a plurality of Gods, but Origen answers him, that the Trinity does not constitute three Gods, but only one, for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, though three Persons, are still only one and the same essence. The acts of the martyrs prove in a thousand places, that the Christians believed that Jesus Christ was the true Son of God, and they could not believe this, unless they believed, at the same time, that there were three Persons in God.

Refutation II

THE HERESY OF ARIUS, WHO DENIED THE DIVINITY OF THE WORD. THE DIVINITY OF THE WORD PROVED FROM THE SCRIPTURES

1. The Dogma of the Catholic Church is, that the Divine Word, that is, the Person of the Son of God, is, by his nature, God, as the Father is God, and in all things is equal to the Father, is perfect and eternal, like the Father, and is consubstantial with the Father. Arius, on the contrary, blasphemously asserted that the “Word was neither God, not eternal, nor consubstantial, nor like unto the Father; but a mere creature, created in time, but of higher excellence than all other creatures; so that even by him, as by an instrument, God created all other things. Several of the followers of Arius softened down his doctrine; some said that the Word was like the Father, others that he was created from eternity, but none of them would ever admit that he was consubstantial with the Father. When we prove the Catholic doctrine, however, expressed in the proposition at the beginning of this chapter, we shall have refuted, not alone the Arians, Anomeans, Eunomians, and Aerians, who followed in everything the doctrine of Arius, but also the Basilians, who were Semi—Arians. Those in the Council of Antioch, in 341, and in the Council of Ancyra in 358, admitted that the Word was Omoiousion Patri, that is, like unto the Father, in substance, but would not agree to the term, Omousion, or of the same substance as the Father. The Acacians, who held a middle place between the Arians and Semi—Arians, and admitted that the Son was Omoion Patri, like to the Father, but not of the same substance, will all be refuted. All these will be proved to be in error, when we show that the Word is in all things, not only like unto the Father, but consubstantial to the Father, that is of the very same substance as the Father, as likewise the Simonians, Corinthians, Ebionites, Paulinists, and Photinians, who laid the foundations of this heresy, by teaching that

Christ was only a mere man, born like all others, from Joseph and Mary, and having no existence before his birth. By proving the Catholic truth that the Word is true God, like the Father, all these heretics will be put down, for as the Word in Christ assumed human nature in one Person, as St. John says : “The Word was made flesh;” if we prove that the Word is true God, it is manifest that Christ is not a mere man, but man and God.

2. There are many texts of Scripture to prove this, which may be divided into three classes. In the first class are included all those texts in which the Word is called God, not by grace or predestination, as the Socinians say, but true God in Nature and substance. In the Gospel of St. John we read : “ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made” (John i.) St. Hilary looked on this passage as proving so clearly the Divinity of the Word, that he says[16196] “When I hear the Word was God, I hear it not only said but proved that the Word is God. Here the thing signified is a substance where it is said was God. For to be, to exist, is not accidental, but substantial.” The holy doctor had previously met the objection of those who said that even Moses was called God by Pharoe (Exod. viii), and that judges were called Gods in the 81st Psalm, by saying : It is one thing to be, as it were, appointed a God, another to be God himself; in Pharoe’s case a God was appointed as it were (that is Moses), but neither in name or Nature was he a God, as the Just are also called God : “ I said you are gods.” Now the expression “ I said,” refers more to the person speaking than to the name of the thing itself; it is, then, the person who speaks who imposes the name, but it is not naturally the name of the thing itself. But here he says the Word is God, the thing itself exists in the Word, the substance of the Word is announced in the very name : “ Verbi enim appellatio in Dei Filio de Sacramento nativitatis est.” Thus, says the Saint, the name of God given to Pharoe and the Judges mentioned by David in the 81st Psalm was only given them by the Lord as a mark of their authority, but was not their proper name; but when St. John speaks of the Word, he does not say that he was called God, but that he was in reality God: “ The Word was God.”

3. The Socinians next object that the text of St. John should not be read with the same punctuation as we read it, but thus : “ In the beginning was

the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was. God the same was in the beginning," &c., but this travesty of the text is totally opposed to all the copies of the Scriptures we know, to the sense of all the Councils, and to all antiquity. We never find the text cut up in this way; it always was written "The Word was God." Besides, if we allowed this Socinian reading of the text, the whole sense would be lost, it would be, in fact, ridiculous, as if St. John wanted to assert that God existed, after saying already that the Word was with God. There are, however, many other texts in which the Word is called God, and the learned Socinians themselves are so convinced of the weakness of this argument, as calculated only to make their cause ridiculous, that they tried other means of invalidating it, but, as we shall presently see, without succeeding.

4. It is astonishing to see how numerous are the cavils of the Arians. The Word, they say, is called God, not the God the fountain of all nature, whose name is always written in Greek with the article (o Theos), such, however, is not the case in the text; but we may remark that in this very chapter, St. John, speaking of the supreme God, "there was a man sent from God, whose name was John," does not use the article, neither is it used in the 12th, 13th, or 18th verses. In many other parts of the Scriptures, where the name of God is mentioned, the article is omitted, as in St. Matthew xiv, 33, and xxvii, 43; in St. Paul's I. Epistle to the Corinthians, viii, 4, 6; to the Romans, i, 7; to the Ephesians, iv, 6; and on the other hand we see that in the Acts of the Apostles, vii, 43; in the II. Epistle to the Corinthians, iv, 4, and in that to the Galatians, iv, 8, they speak of an Idol as God, and use the article, and it is most certain that neither St. Luke nor St. Paul ever intended to speak of an Idol as the supreme God. Besides, as St. John Chrysostom teaches[16197], from whom this whole answer, we may say, is taken, the Word is called God, sometimes even with the addition of that article, on whose omission in St. John they lay such stress, as is the case in the original of that text of St. Paul, Romans ix, 5 : "Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed forever."

St. Thomas remarks, that in the first cited passage the article is omitted in the name of God, as the name there stands in the position not of a subject, but a predicate : "Ratio autem quare Evangelista non apposuit articulum hinc nomini Deus est quod Deus ponitur hie in prcedicato et tenetur formaliter, consuetum erat autem quod nominibus in praedicato positis non ponitur articulus cum discretionem importet"[16198].

5. They object, fourthly, that in the text of St. John the Word is called God, not because he is so by Nature and Substance, but only by Dignity and Authority, just as they say the name of God is given in the Scriptures to the angels and to judges. We have already answered this objection by St. Hilary (N. 2) that it is one thing to give to an object the name of God; another to say that he is God. But there is, besides, another answer. It is not true that the name of God is an appellative name, so that it can be positively and absolutely applied to one who is not God by Nature; for although some creatures are called Gods, it never happened that any one of them was called " God," absolutely, or was called true God, or the highest God, or singularly God, as Jesus Christ is called by St. John : "And we know that the Son of God is come, and he hath given us understanding, that we may know the true God,smd may be in his true Son" (John I. Epis. v, 20). And St. Paul says "Looking for the blessed hope and the coming of the glory of the great God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Epis. to Titus, ii, 13), and to the Romans, ix, 5 : " Of whom is Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all things God, blessed forever." We likewise read in St. Luke, that Zachary, prophesying regarding his Son, says "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways" (Luke i, 76), and again, ver. 78 : " Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high has visited us."

6. Another most convincing proof of the Divinity of the Word is deduced from the 1st chapter of St. John, already quoted. In it these words occur : "All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made." Now any one denying the Divinity of the Word must admit from these words that either the Word was eternal, or that the Word was made by himself. It is evidently repugnant to reason to say the Word made himself, nemo dat quod non habet. Therefore we must admit that the Word was not made, otherwise St. John would be stating a falsehood when he says, "Without him was made nothing that was made." This is the argument of St. Augustine[16199], and from these words he clearly proves that the Word is of the same substance as the Father : "Neque enim dicit omnia, nisi quaa facta sunt, idest omnem creaturam; unde liquido apparet, si facta substantia est,

ipsum factum non esse, per quem facta sunt omnia. Et si factum non est, creatura non est; si autem creatura non est, ejusdem cum Patre substantiae cujus Pater, ergo facta substantia, quae Deus non est, creatura est; et quae creatura non est, Deus est. Et si non est Filius ejusdem substantiae cujus Pater, ergo facta substantiae est :non omnia per ipsum facta sunt; et omnia per ipsum facta sunt. Ut unius igitur ejusdemque cum Patre substantiae est, et ideo non tantum Deus, sed et verus Deus.” Such are the words of the Holy Father; the passage is rather long, but most convincing. We shall now investigate the passages of the second class, in which the Divine Nature and the very substance of the Father is attributed to the Word. First, the Incarnate Word, himself, says : “ I and the Father are one” (John x, 30). The Arians say that Christ here does not speak of the unity of Nature but of Will, and Calvin, though he professes not to be an Arian, explains it in the same manner. “The ancients,” he says, “abused this passage, in order to prove that Christ is, Omousion, consubstantial with the Father, for here Christ does not dispute of the unity of substance, but of the consent he had with the Father.” The Holy Fathers, however, more deserving of credit than Calvin and the Arians, always understood it of the unity of substance. Here are the words of St. Athanasius[16200] : “ If the two are one they must be so according to the Divinity, inasmuch as the Son is consubstantial to the Father they are, therefore, two, as Father and Son, but only one as God is one.”

7. Hear also, St. Cyprian[16201] : “The Lord says, I and the Father are one, and again it is written of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.” St. Ambrose takes it in the same sense, as do St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom, as we shall see presently; why the very Jews took it in this sense, for they took up stones to stone him, as St. John relates, (x, 32): “Many good works I have shown you from my Father; for which of those works do you stone me? The Jews answered him : For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because thou, being a man, makest thyself God.” “ See,” says St. Augustine[16202] “how the Jews understood what the Arians will not understand, for they are vexed to find that these words I and the Father are one, cannot be understood, unless the equality of the Son with the Father be admitted.” St. John Chrysostom here remarks that if the Jews erred in believing that our Saviour wished to

announce himself as equal in power to the Father, he could immediately have explained the mistake, but he did not do so[16203], but, quite the contrary, he confirms what he before said the more he is pressed; he does not excuse himself, but reprehends them; he again says he is equal to the Father : “ If I do not the works of my Father” he says, “believe me not; but if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father” (John x, 37, 38). We have seen that Christ expressly declared in the Council of Caiphas, that he was the true Son of God : “ Again the High Priest asked him and said to him :Art thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed God ?and Jesus said to him, I am” (Mark xiv, 61, 62). Who shall then dare to say that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, when he himself has said so ?

8. Again, say the Arians, when our Saviour prayed to his Father for all his disciples, he said: “And the glory thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one, as we also are one” (John, xvii, 22). Now in this passage, say they, Christ certainly speaks of the unity of will, and not of the unity of substance. But we reply : It is one thing to say that “ I and the Father are one,” quite another thing, “that they may be one, as we are also one,” just as it is one thing to say, “your heavenly Father is perfect,” and another to say, “Be ye therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew v, 48).

9. For the particle as (sicut) denotes, as St. Athanasius[16204] says, likeness or imitation, but not equality of conjunction. So as our Lord here exhorts us to imitate the Divine perfection as far as we can, he prays that his disciples may be united with God as far as they can, which surely cannot be understood except as a union of the will. When he says, however : “ I and the Father are one,” there is no allusion to imitation; he there speaks of a union of substance; he there positively and absolutely asserts that he is one and the same with the Father : “ We are one.”

10. There are, besides, many other texts which most clearly corroborate this. Our Lord says, in St. John, xvi, 15, and xvii, 10; “All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine.” “And all my things are thine, and thine are mine.” Now, as these expressions are used by him without any limitation, they evidently prove his consubstantiality with the Father, for when he asserts that he has everything the Father has, who will dare to say

that the Father has something more than the Son ?And if we denied to the Son the same substance as the Father, we would deny him everything, for then he would be infinitely less than the Father; but Jesus says that he has all the Father has, without exception, consequently he is in everything equal to the Father : " He has nothing less than the Father," says St. Augustine, "when he says that All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine, he is, therefore, his equal"[16205]. St. Paul proves the same when he says, " Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil, ii, 6). Now here the Apostle says Christ humbled himself, "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant," and that can only be understood of the two Natures, in which Christ was, for he humbled himself to take the nature of a servant, being already in the Divine Nature, as is proved from the antecedent expressions, " who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God." If Christ usurped nothing by declaring himself equal to God, it cannot be denied that he is of the same substance with God, for otherwise it would be a "robbery" to say that he was equal to God.

St. Augustine, also, explaining that passage of St. John, xiv, 28, "The Father is greater than I," says that he is less than the Father, according to the form of a servant, which he took by becoming man, but that, according to the form of God, which he had by Nature, and which he did not lose by becoming man, he was not less than the Father, but his co-equal. " To be equal to God in the form of God," says the Saint, " was , not a robbery, but Nature. He, therefore," says the Father, " is greater, because he humbled himself, taking the form of a servant, but not losing the form of God"[16206].

11. Another proof is what our Saviour himself says : "For what things soever he (the Father) doth, these the Son also doth in like manner" (John, v. 19). Hence, St. Hilary concludes that the Son of God is true God, like the Father " Filius est, quia abs se nihil potest; Deus est, quia quaecunque Pater facit, et ipse eadem facit; unum sunt, quia eadem facit, non alia"[16207]. He could not have the same individual operation with the Father, unless he was consubstantial with the Father, for in God there is no distinction between operation and substance.

12. The third class of texts are those in which attributes are attributed to the Word, which cannot apply unless to God by Nature, of the same

substance as the Father. First The Word is eternal according to the 1st verse of the Gospel of St. John : “ In the beginning was the Word.” The verb was denotes that the Word has always been, and even, as St. Ambrose remarks[16208], the Evangelist mentions the word “ was” four times “ Ecce quater erat ubi impius invenit quod non erat.” Besides the word “ was,” the other words, “ in the beginning,” confirm the truth of the eternity of the Word : “In the beginning was the Word,” that is to say, the Word existed before all other things. It is on this very text that the First Council of Nice founded the condemnation of that proposition of the Arians, “There was a time once when the Word had no existence.”

13. The Arians, however, say that St. Augustine[16209] interpreted the expression “ in the beginning,” by saying it meant the Father himself, and according to this interpretation, they say that the Word might exist in God previous to all created things, but not be eternal at the same time. To this we reply, that although we might admit this interpretation, and that “ in the beginning” meant in the Father; still, if we admit that the Word was before all created things, it follows that the Word was eternal, and never made, because as “ by him all things were made,” if the Word was not eternal, but created, he should have created himself, an impossibility, based on the general maxim admitted by all, and quoted before : “ Nemo dat quod non habet” No one can give what he has not.

14. They assert, secondly, that the words “ in the beginning” must be understood in the same way as in the passage in the 1st chapter of Genesis; “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth ;” and as these were created in the beginning, so also the Word was created. The answer to this is, that Moses says : “ In the beginning God created ;” but St. John does not say in the beginning the Word was created, but the Word was, and that by him all things were made.

15. They object, in the third place, that by the expression, “the Word,” is not understood a person distinct from the Father, but the internal wisdom of the Father distinct from him, and by which all things were made. This explanation, however, cannot stand, for St. John, speaking of the Word, says : “ By him all things were made,” and towards the end of the chapter : “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us ;” now we cannot understand these expressions as referring to the internal wisdom of the Father, but

indubitably to the Word, by whom all things were made, and who, being the Son of God, became flesh, as is declared in the same place : “And we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father.” This is confirmed by the Apostle, when he says, that by the Son (called by St. John the Word) the world was created. “ In these days hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also, he made the world” (Heb. i, 2). Besides, the eternity of the Word is proved by the text of the Apocalypse (i, 8) : “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, who is, and who was, and who is to come ;” and by the Epistle to the Hebrews (xiii, 8): “Jesus Christ, yesterday, and to-day, and the same forever.”

16. Arius always denied that the Word was eternal, but some of his latter followers, convinced by the Scriptures, admitted that he was eternal, but an eternal creature, and not a Divine Person. The answer given by many Theologians to this newly invented error is, that the very existence of an eternal creature is impossibility. That a creature, they say, should be said to be created, it is necessary that it should be produced out of nothing, so that from a state of non-existence, it passes to a state of existence, so that we must suppose a time in which this creature did not exist. But this reply is not sufficient to prove the fallacy of the argument, for St. Thomas[16210] teaches, and the doctrine is most probable, that in order to assert that a thing is created, it is not necessary to suppose a time in which it was not, so that its nonexistence preceded its existence; but it is quite enough to suppose a creature, as nothing by its own nature, or by itself, but as having its existence altogether from God. “ It is enough,” says the Saint, “ to say that a thing has come from nothing, that its non-existence should precede its existence, not in duration, but nature, inasmuch, as if left to itself, it never would have been anything, and it altogether derives its existence from another.” Supposing then, that it is unnecessary to look for a time in which the thing did not exist, to call it a creature, God, who is eternal, might give to a creature existence from all eternity, which by its own nature it never could have had. It appears to me then, that the fit and proper reply to this argument is, that the Word being (as has been already proved) eternal, never could be called a creature, for it is an article of Faith, as all the Holy Fathers teach[16211], that there never existed, in fact, an eternal creature, since all

creatures were created in time, in the beginning, when, as Moses says, God created the world : “ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” The creation of heaven and earth, according to the doctrine of all Fathers and Theologians, comprises the creation of all beings, both material and spiritual.

The Word, on the contrary, had existence before there was any creature, as we see in the book of Proverbs, where Wisdom, that is the Word, thus speaks : “The Lord possessed me in the beginning, of his ways, before he made anything, from the beginning “ (Prov. viii, 22). The Word, therefore, is not a created being, since he existed before God had made anything.

17. The materialists of modern times, however, cannot infer from this, that matter is eternal of itself, for although we admit that matter might exist from eternity, inasmuch as God could, from all eternity, give to it existence, which it had not of itself, (though he did not do so in fact); still, as we have proved in our book on the “Truth of the Faith,” it could not exist from itself, it should have existence from God, for, according to the axiom so frequently repeated Nemo dat quod non habet, it could not give to itself that (existence) which it had not to give. From St. John’s expression regarding the Word, “ by him all things were made,” not alone his eternity is proved, but the power of creating likewise, which can belong to none but God; for, in order to create, an infinite power is necessary, which, as all theologians say, God could not communicate to a creature. Returning, however, to the subject of the eternity of the Word, we say, that if the Father should, by the necessity of the Divine Nature (necessitate naturae), generate the Son, the Father being eternal, the Son should also be eternal, keeping always in mind, the Father the Generator, the Son as the Generated. Thus, the error of the modern materialists, the basis of whose system is, that matter is eternal, falls to the ground.

18. Now, it being admitted, that by the Word all things were made, it is a necessary consequence, that the Word was not made by Himself, for otherwise, there would exist a being made, but not made by the Word, and this is opposed to the text of St. John, who says, that “ by him all things were made.” This is the great argument of St. Augustine, against the Arians, when they assert that the Word was made : “ How,” says the Saint[16212], “can it be possible, that the Word is made, when God by the Word made all

things ? If the Wordof God himself was made, by what other Word was he made ? If you say it was by the Word of the Word, that, I say, is the only Son of God; but, if you say it is not by the Word of the Word, then, you must admit, that that Word, by whom all things were made, was not made himself, for he could not, who made all things, be made by himself."

19. The Arians, too much pressed by this argument to answer it, endeavour to do so by a quibble St. John, say they, does not tell us that all things were made by Him (ab ipso), but rather through Him (per ipsum), and hence, they infer that the Word was not the principal cause of the creation of the World, but only an instrument the Father made use of in creating it, and therefore, they agree that the Word is not God. But we answer that the creation of the World, as described by David and St. Paul, is attributed to the Son of God. " In the beginning, O Lord," says David, "thou foundedst the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands" (Psalm ci, 26); and St. Paul, writing to the Hebrews, dictates almost a whole chapter to prove the same thing; see these passages : "But to the Son, thy throne, God, is for ever and ever" (i, 8), and again, verse 13, "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, till I make thy enemies thy footstool." Here St. Paul declares, that that Son of God called by St. John "the Word" has created the heavens and the earth, and is really God, and, as God, was not a simple instrument, but the Creator-in-Chief of the world. Neither will the quibble of the Arians on the words per ipsum and ab ipso, avail, for in many places of the Scriptures we find the word per conjoined with the principal cause : Possedi hominem per Deum (Gen. iv); Per me Reges regnant (Prov. viii); Paulus vocatus Apostolus Jem Christi per voluntatem Dei (I. Cor. i).

20. There is another proof of the Divinity of the Word in the 5th chapter of St. John, where the Father wills that all honour should be given to the Son, the same as to himself : "But he hath given all judgment to the Son, that all may honour the Son, as they honour the Father" (John v, 22, 23). The Divinity of the Word and of the Holy Ghost is also proved by the precept given to the Apostles : "Go ye, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt, xxviii, 19). The Holy Fathers, St. Athanasius, St. Hilary, St. Fulgentius, and several others, made use of this text to convince the Arians; for, Baptism being ordained in the name of the three Divine Persons, it is

clear that they have equal power and authority, and are God; for if the Son and the Holy Ghost were creatures we would be baptized in the name of the Father, who is God, and of two creatures; but St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, states that this is opposed to our Faith, “Lest any should say that you are baptized in my name” (I. Cor. i, 15).

21. Finally, there are two powerful arguments, to prove the Divinity of the Word. The first is taken from the power manifested by the Word in the fact related in the fifth chapter of St. Luke, where Christ, in healing the man sick of the palsy, pardoned him his sins, saying : “ Man, thy sins are forgiven thee” (Luke v, 20). Now, God alone has the power of forgiving sins, and the very Pharisees knew this, for they said : “ Who is this who speaketh blasphemies ?who can forgive sins but God alone ?” (Luke, v, 21).

22. The second proof is taken from the very words of Christ himself, in which he declares himself to be the Son of God. He several times spoke in this manner, but most especially when he asked his disciples what they thought of him : “Jesus saith to them, Whom do you thinkIam ?Simon Peter answered and said :Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering, said to him :Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven” (Matt, xvi, 15, 17.) He also declared it as we have seen above, when Caiphas asked him, “Art thou Christ, the Son of the Blessed God ? And Jesus said to him, I am” (Mark xiv, 61). . See now the argument. The Arians say that Christ is not the true Son of God, but they never said he was a liar; on the contrary, they praise him, as the most excellent of all men, and enriched, above all others, with virtues and divine gifts. Now, if this man (according to them), called himself the Son of God, when he was but a mere creature, or if he even permitted that others should consider him the Son of God, and that so many should be scandalized in hearing him called the Son of God, when he was not so in reality, he ought at least declare the truth, otherwise he was the most impious of men. But no; he never said a word, though the Jews were under the impression that he was guilty of blasphemy, and allowed himself to be condemned and crucified on that charge, for this was the great crime he was accused of before Pilate, “according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God” (John, xix, 7). In fine, we reply to all opponents, after Jesus Christ expressly declared himself the Son of God, as we remarked in St. Mark’s Gospel, chap, xiv, 62, “ I am’

though this declaration was what cost him his life, who will dare to deny, after it, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ?

I THE DIVINITY OF THE WORD PROVED BY THE AUTHORITY OF HOLY FATHERS AND COUNCILS

23. The unceasing opposition of the Arians to the Council of Nice was on account of the Consubstantiality attributed to the Word. This term, consubstantiality, was never used, they said, by the ancient Fathers of the Church; but St. Athanasius, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Hilary, and St. Augustine, attest that the Nicene Fathers took this word from the constant tradition of the first Doctors of the Church. Besides, the learned remark, that many works of the Fathers cited by St. Athanasius, St. Basil, and even by Eusebius, were lost, through the lapse of ages. We should also remember that the ancient Fathers who wrote previous to the existence of heresy, did not always write with the same caution as the Fathers who succeeded them, when the truths of the Faith were confirmed by the decrees of Councils. The doubts stirred up by our enemies, says St. Augustine, have caused us to investigate more closely, and to establish the dogmas which we are bound to believe. " Ab adversario mota quasstio discendi existit occasio"[16213] The Socinians do not deny that all the Fathers posterior to the Council of Nice, held the sentence of that Council, in admitting the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, but they say that those who wrote previous to the Council, held quite another opinion.

In order, therefore, to prove that the Socinians in this are totally astray, we will confine our quotations to the works of the Fathers who preceded the Council, who, if they have not made use of the very word consubstantial, or of the same substance as the Father, have still clearly expressed the same thing in equivalent terms.

24. The Martyr St. Ignatius, the successor of St. Peter in the See of Antioch, who died in the year 108, attests, in several places, the Divinity of Christ. In his Epistle ad Trallianos, he writes : "Who was truly born of God and the Virgin, but not in the same manner ;" and afterwards : "The true God, the Word born of the Virgin, he who in himself contains all mankind, was truly begotten in the womb." Again, in his Epistle to the Ephesians : "There is one carnal and spiritual physician, made and not made, God in

man, true life in death, and both from Mary and from God ;" and again, in his Epistle to the Magnesians : " Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before all ages, at length appeared," and, immediately after, he says : "There is but one God, who made himself manifest by Jesus Christ, his Son, who is his eternal Word."

25. St. Polycarp was a disciple of St. John, and Bishop of Smyrna; he lived in the year 167. Eusebius[16214] quotes a celebrated Epistle written by the Church of Smyrna to that of Pontus, giving an account of his martyrdom, and in it we read, that just before his death he thus expressed himself; "Wherefore in all things I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, by the eternal Pontiff, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, through whom, to Thee, with him, in the Holy Ghost, be glory, now and forever more. Amen." First, therefore, St. Polycarp calls Christ the eternal Pontiff, but nothing but God alone is eternal. Second He glorifies the Son, together with the Father, giving him equal glory, which he would not have done unless he believed that the Son was God equal to the Father. In his letter to the Philippians he ascribes equally to the Son and to the Father the power of giving grace and salvation. "May God the Father," he says, "and Jesus Christ, sanctify you in faith and truth and give you lot and part among his Saints."

26. St. Justin, the Philosopher and Martyr, who died about the year 161, clearly speaks of the Divinity of Christ. He says in his first Apology : "Christ, the Son of God the Father, who alone is properly called his Son and his Word, because with Him before all creatures he existed and is begotten." Mark how the Saint calls Christ properly the Son and the Word, existing with the Father before all creatures, and generated by him; the Word, therefore, is the proper Son of God, existing with the Father before all creatures, and is not, therefore, a creature himself. In his second Apology he says : "When the Word is the first-born of God, he is also God." In his Dialogue with Triphon, he proves that Christ in the Old Testament was called the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, and he then concludes by addressing the Jews : " If," says he, "you understood the prophets, you would not deny that he is God, the Son of the only and self-existing God." I omit many other passages of the same tenor, and I pass on to answer the objections of the Socinians. St. Justin, they say, in his Dialogue with Triphon, and in his Apology, asserts that the Father is the cause of the

Word, and existed before the Word. To this we answer :the Father is called the cause of the Son, not as creator, but as generator, and the Father is said to be before the Son, not in time, but in origin, and, therefore, some Fathers have called the Father the cause of the Son, as being the principle of the Son. They also object that St. Justin calls the Son the Minister of God" Administrum esse Deo." We reply he is God's Minister as man, that is, according to human nature. They make many other captious objections of this sort, which are refuted in Juenin's Theology[16215], but the few words of the Saint already quoted : "Cum verbuni Deus etiam est" when the Word is also God, are quite enough to answer them all.

27 St. Iraeneus, a disciple of St. Polycarp, and Bishop of Lyons, who died in the beginning of the second century, says[16216] that the Son is true God, like the Father. "Neither," he says, "the Lord (the Father) nor the Holy Ghost would have absolutely called him God, if he was not true God." And again[16217], he says, " the Father is the measure, and he is infinite, and the Son containing him must be infinite likewise."

They object that St. Iraeneus has said that the day of judgment is known to the Father alone, and that the Father is greater than the Son; but this has been already answered (vide n. 10); and again, in another place, where the Saint says, "Christ, with the Father, is the God of the living"[16218].

28. Athenagoras, a Christian Philosopher of Athens, in his Apology for the Christians, writes to the Emperors Antoninus and Commodus, that the reason why we say that all things were made by the Son is this: "Whereas," he says, "the Father and the Son are one and the same, and the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son, by the unity and power of the Spirit, the Mind and Word is the Son of God." In these words : "Whereas the Father and the Son are one," he explains the unity of Nature of the Son with the Father; and in the other, "the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son," that peculiarity of the Trinity called by theologians Circuminaession, by which one Person is in the others. He immediately adds : " We assert that the Son the Word is God, as is also the Holy Ghost united in power."

29. Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, says[16219] : " We ought to know that our Lord Christ is true God and true man God from God the Father man from Mary, his human Mother." Clement of Alexandria[16220] writes : "Now the Word himself has appeared

to man, who alone is both at the same time God and man.” And again he says[16221] : “God hates nothing, nor neither does the Word, for both are one, to wit, God, for he has said, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Origen[16222] wrote against Celsus, who objected to the Christians, that they adored Jesus Christ as God, though he was dead, and he thus expresses himself : “ Be it known to our accusers that we believe this Jesus to be God and the Son of God.” And again he says[16223], that although Christ suffered as man, the Word who was God did not suffer.

“ We distinguish,’ he says, “between the Nature of the Divine Word, which is God, and the soul of Jesus.” I do not quote the passage which follows, as it is on that theologians found their doubts of the faith of Origen, as the reader may see by consulting Nat. Alexander[16224], but there can be no doubt, from the passage already quoted, that Origen confessed that Jesus was God and the Son of God.

30. Dionisius Alexandrinus, towards the end of the third century, was accused[16225] of denying the consubstantiality of the Word with the Father, but he says : “ I have shown that they falsely charge me with saying that Christ is not consubstantial with God.” St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, one of Origen’s scholars, Bishop of Pontus, and one of the accusers of Paul of Samosata in the Synod of Antioch, says, in his Confession of Faith[16226] : “There is one God, the Father of the living Word, the perfect Father of the perfect, the Father of the only-begotten Son (solus ex solo), God of God. And there is one Holy Ghost from God having existence.” St. Methodius, as St. Jerom informs us[16227], Bishop of Tyre, who suffered martyrdom under Diocletian, thus speaks of the Word in his book entitled De Martyribus, quoted by Theodoret[16228] : “The Lord and the Son of God, who thought it no robbery to be equal to God.”

We now come to the Latin Fathers of the Western Church. St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage[16229], proves the Divinity of the Word with the very texts we have already quoted. “The Lord says : I and the Father are one.” And again, it is written of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, “and these three are one.” In another place he says[16230], “God is mingled with man; this is our God this is Christ.” I omit the authority of St. Dionisius Romanus, of St. Athanasius, of Arnobius, of Lactantius, of Minutius Felix, of Zeno, and of other eminent writers, who forcibly defend the Divinity of the Word.

31. I will merely here quote a few passages from Tertullian, whose authority the Socinians abuse. In one part he says, speaking of the Word[16231], “Him have we learned as produced from God (prolatum), and so generated, and therefore he is said to be God, and the Son of God, from the Unity of substance He is, therefore, Spirit from Spirit, God from God, and light from light.” Again he says[16232] : “ I and the Father are one, in the unity of substance, and not in the singularity of number.” From these passages it clearly appears that Tertullian held that the Word was God, like the Father, and consubstantial with the Father. Our adversaries adduce some obscure passages from the most obscure part of his works, which they imagine favour their opinion; but our authors have demolished all their quibbles, and the reader can consult them[16233].

32. It is, however, certain, on the authority of the Fathers of the three first centuries, that the Faith of the Church in the Divinity and consubstantiality of the Word with the Father has been unchangeable, and even Socinus himself is obliged to confess this[16234]. Guided by this tradition, the three hundred and eighteen Fathers of the General Council of Nice, held in the year 325, thus defined the Faith: “We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten Son from the Father, that is, from the substance of the Father; God of God, light of lights, true God of true God, consubstantial to the Father, by whom all things were made.” This self-same profession of Faith has been from that always preserved in the subsequent General Councils, and in the whole Church.

III. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

33. Before commencing, it would be well to remember, as St. Ambrose[16235] remarks, that the texts of Scripture adduced by our adversaries, are not always to be taken in the same sense, as some of them refer to Christ as God, and more as man; but the heretics confuse one with the other, applying those which refer to him as man, as if they referred to him as God. “The pious mind,” the Saint says, “will distinguish between those which apply to him, according to the flesh, and according to the Divinity; but the sacrilegious mind will confound them, and distort, as injurious to the

Divinity, whatever is written according to the humility of the flesh." Now, this is exactly how the Arians proceed, in impugning the Divinity of the Word; they always fasten on those texts, in which Christ is said to be less than the Father. To upset most of their arguments, therefore, it will always be sufficient to explain, that Jesus, as man, is less than the Father, but as God, by the Word, to which his humanity is united, he is equal to the Father. When we speak, therefore, of Jesus Christ, as man, we can lawfully say that he is created, that he was made, that he obeys the Father, is subject to the Father, and so forth.

34. We shall now review the captious objections of our opponents: First They object to us that text of St. John (xiv, 28) : "The Father is greater than I am." But, before quoting this passage, they ought to reflect that Christ, before speaking thus, said : " If you loved me, you would, indeed, be glad, because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I." Here, then, Jesus calls the Father greater than himself, inasmuch as he, as man, was going to the Father in heaven; but mark how, afterwards, speaking of himself, according to the Divine Nature, he says, "The Father and I are one;" and all the other texts already quoted (Sec. I.), are of the same tenor, and clearly prove the Divinity of the Word, and of Christ.

Second They object that Christ says : " I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John, vi, 38); and also that passage of St. Paul : "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then the Son also himself shall be subject unto him, that put all things under him" (I. Corinth, xv, 28). The Son, therefore, obeys, and is subject to the Father, and, therefore, is not God. In regard to the first text, we answer that Jesus Christ then explained the two Wills, according to the two Natures he had to wit, the human will, by which he was to obey the Father, and the Divine Will, which was common both to him and the Father. As far as the second text goes, St. Paul only says, that the Son, as man, will be always subject to the Father; and that we do not deny. How, then, can it interfere with our belief in his Divinity ?Third They object that passage of the Acts of the Apostles (iii, 13) : "The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom you, indeed, delivered up," &c. See here, they say, how a distinction is made between the Son and between the Father, who is called God. We answer, that this refers to Christ as man, and not as God; for the words, " he glorified his Son,” are to be understood, as referring to Christ in his human nature. St. Ambrose, besides, gives another answer, when he says, “that if the Father is understood by the name of God alone, it is because from him is all authority.”

35. The following objections are just of the same character as the preceding. They object, fourthly, that text of the Proverbs : “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before he made anything from the beginning” (Prov. viii, 22). This is the text, according to the Vulgate, and the Hebrew original is just the same; but in the Greek Septuagint it is thus read : “The Lord created me in the beginning of his ways.” Therefore, the Arians say, the Divine Wisdom which is here spoken of was created, and they strengthen their argument, by quoting from Ecclesiasticus (xxiv,14) : “From the beginning, and before all ages, I was created.” We answer, first of all, the true reading is that of the Vulgate, and that alone, according to the Decree of the Council of Trent, we are bound to obey; but though we even take the Greek, it is of no consequence, as the word created (here used in the text of Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus), as St. Jerome and St. Augustine[16236] teach us, does not exactly mean creation, for the Greeks promiscuously used the words created and begotten, to signify sometimes creation, sometimes generation, as appears from Deuteronomy (xxxii, 16) : “Thou hast forsaken the God that begot thee, and hast forgotten the Lord that created thee.” Hence generation is taken for creation. There is a passage also in the Book of Proverbs, which, if we consider the text, can only be understood of the generation of the Divine Wisdom : “ I was set up from eternity, and of old, before the earth was made Before the hills I was brought forth” (Proverbs, viii, 23). We should remark here the expression, “ I was set up from eternity.” That shows how we ought to understand the word created is to be understood in the former quotation. We might also answer, with St. Hilary, that the word created refers to the human nature the Word assumed, and the words, brought forth, to the eternal generation of the Word[16237]. Wisdom here is spoken of as created, and, immediately after, as begotten; but creation is to be referred, not to the immutable nature of God, but to the human generation. “ Sapientia itaque qua’ se dixit creatam, eadem in consequenti se dixit genitam 9 creationem referens ad Parentis inde mutabilem naturam, qua’ extra humani partus speciem, et

consuetudinem, sine imminutione aliqua, ac diminutione sui creavit ex seipsa quod genuit.” In the text of Ecclesiasticus, cited immediately after, it is clear that the Incarnate Wisdom is spoken of: “He that made me rested in my tabernacle ;” for this by the Incarnation was verified. God, who “created” Jesus Christ according to his humanity, “rested in his tabernacle” that is, reposed in that created humanity. The following passage is even, if possible, clearer : “Let thy dwelling be in Jacob, and thy inheritance in Israel, and take root in my elect.” All this surely refers to the Incarnate Wisdom, who came from the stock of Israel and Jacob, and was then the root of all the elect. Read on this subject St. Augustine, St. Fulgentius; and, above all, St. Athanasius[16238].

36. They object, fifthly, that St. Paul says of Christ, in his Epistle to the Colossians (i, 15) : “Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. “Hence, they infer that Christ is the most excellent of creatures, but still only a creature. We may here reply, that the Apostle speaks of Christ in this text, according to his human nature, as St. Cyril explains it[16239]. But it is generally interpreted of the Divine Nature, and he is called the first-born of all creatures, because by him all creatures were made, as St. Basil explains it[16240] : “Since in him were made all things in heaven and on earth.” In the same manner, he is called, in the Apocalypse, “the first born of the dead” (Apoc. i, 5); because, as St. Basil again explains it, he was the cause of the resurrection of the dead. Or he may be called the first-born, because he was generated before all things, as Tertullian[16241] explains it : “The first-born, because he was born before all things; the only-begotten, as the only-begotten of God.” St. Ambrose[16242] says the same thing. We read the first-born we read the only-begotten; the first born, because there was none before him the only-begotten, because there was none after him. They object, sixthly, that expression of St. John the Baptist (John, i, 15): “ He that shall come after me is preferred before me” (ante me factus est); therefore, say they, the Word was created. St. Ambrose[16243] answers, that all that St. John meant by the expression, “was made before me” (ante me factus est), was, that he was preferred or placed before him, for he immediately assigns the reason : “Because he was before me,” that is, because he preceded him for all eternity, and he was, therefore, not even worthy to “ unloose the latchet of his shoe.” The same answer meets the

passage of St. Paul: “Being made so much better than the angels” (Heb. i, 4), that is, he was honoured so much more than the angels.

37. They object, seventhly, that text of St. John (17, 3) : “Now this is eternal life, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Hence it is declared, say they, that the Father only is true God; but we answer, that the word “only” does not exclude from the Divinity, unless creatures alone, as St. Matthew says : “ No one knoweth the Son but the Father, nor the Father but the Son” (Matt, xi, 27).

38. Now, it would be a false conclusion to deduce from this that the Father does not know himself; and, therefore, the word “only” in the former text is to be taken, as in the twelfth verse of the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy : “The Lord alone was his leader, and there was no strange God with him.” Another proof is that text of St. John (xvi, 32) : “And shall leave me alone.” Here the word alone (solum) does not mean that he is excluded from the Father, for he immediately adds : “And yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.” And thus, likewise, must we understand that text of St. Paul : “ We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no God but one; for although there be that are called gods, either in heaven or on earth, yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (I. Cor. viii, 5, 6). Here the expression, “One God, the Father,” is meant to exclude the false gods, but not the Divinity of Jesus Christ, no more than saying “Our Lord Jesus Christ,” excludes the Father from being still our Lord.

39. They also adduce the sixth verse of the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians : “One God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.” We answer that the words : “One God, and Father of all,” do not exclude the Divinity of the other two Persons; for the word, Father, is not here taken in its strict sense, as denoting the Person of the Father alone, but in that essential sense, by which the word, Father, is applied to the whole Trinity, which we invoke when we say :—Our Father, who art in heaven.” We thus, also, answer the other text adduced from St. Paul to Timothy : “For there is one God and one Mediator of God and man, the man, Christ Jesus (I. Tim. ii, 5). The expression, “one God,” does not exclude the Divinity of Jesus Christ; but, as St. Augustine remarks, the words which immediately follow “one Mediator of God and man,” prove

that Jesus Christ is both God and man. “God alone,” the Saint says, “could not feel death, nor man alone could not subdue it.”

40. They object, eighthly, the text : “But of that day or time, no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father” (Mark, xiii, 32). So, say they, the Son is not omniscient. Some have answered this, by saying, that the Son did not know the day of judgment as man, but only as God; but this does not meet the objection, since we know from the Scriptures, that to Christ, even as man, the fullness of knowledge was given : “And we saw the glory, the glory as it were, of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John, i, 14); and again : “ In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Collos. ii, 3). And St. Ambrose[16244], treating of this point, says : “How could he be ignorant of the day of judgment, who told the hour, and the place, and the signs, and the causes of judgment.” The African Church, therefore, obliged Leporius to retract, when he said, that Christ, as man, did not know the day of judgment, and he at once obeyed. “We, therefore, answer, that it is said the Son did not know the day of judgment, as it would be of no use, nor fit that men should know it. This is the way in which St. Augustine explains it. We are, therefore, to conclude that the Father did not wish that the Son should make known the day, and the Son, as his Father’s Legate, said in his name, he did not know it, not having received a commission from his Father to make it known.

41. They object, ninthly, that the Father alone is called good, to the exclusion of the Son : “And Jesus said to him :Why callest thou me good? None is good but one, that is God” (Mark, x, 18). Christ, therefore, they say, confesses that he is not God. St. Ambrose[16245] answers this. Christ, he says, wished to reprove the young man, who called him good, and still would not believe he was God, whereas, God alone is essentially good; it is, says the Saint, as if our Lord should say : “Either do not call me good, or believe me to be God.”

42. They object, tenthly, that Christ has not full power over all creatures, since he said to the mother of St. James and St. John : “ To sit on my right or left hand, is not mine to give you” (Matt, xx, 23). We answer, it cannot be denied according to the Scriptures, that Christ received all power from his Father : “Knowing that the Father had given him all things into his

hands" (John, xiii, 3); "All things are delivered to me by my Father" (Matt, xi, 27); "All power is given to me in heaven, and on earth" (Matt, xxviii, 18). How, then, are we to understand his inability to give places to the sons of Zebedee? We have the answer from our Lord himself: " It is not mine," he says, " to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by my Father." See, then, the answer : " It is not mine to give you ;" not because he had not the power of giving it, but I cannot give it to you, who think you have a right to heaven, because you are related to me; for heaven is the portion of those only for whom it has been prepared by my Father; to them, Christ, as being equal to the Father, can give it. " As all things," says St. Augustine[16246], "which the Father has, are mine, this is also mine, and I have prepared it with the Father."

43. They object, eleventh, that text : "The Son cannot do anything from himself, but what he sees the Father doing" (John, v, 19). St. Thomas[16247] answers this. "When it said that the Son cannot do anything for himself, no power is taken from the Son, which the Father has, for it is immediately added : "For what things soever he doth, these the Son also doth, in like manner ;" but it is there that the Son has the power, from his Father, from whom he also has his Nature." Hence, Hilary[16248] says : "This is the Unity of the Divine Nature; ut ita per se agat Filius quod non agat a se" The same reply will meet all the other texts they adduce, as : " My doctrine is not mine" (John, vii, 16); "The Father loves the Son, and shows him all things" (John, v, 20); "All things are delivered to me by my Father" (Matt, xi, 27). All these texts prove, they say, that the Son cannot be God by Nature and Substance. But we answer, that the Son, being generated by the Father, receives everything from him by communication, and the Father, generating, communicates to him all he has, except the Paternity; and this is the distinction between Him and the Son, for the power, the wisdom, and the will, are all the same in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Arians adduce several other texts, but the reader will find no especial difficulty in answering them, by merely referring to what he has already read.

Refutation III

OF THE HERESY OF MACEDONIUS, WHO DENIED THE DIVINITY OF THE HOLY GHOST

1. Though Arius did not deny the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, still it was a necessary consequence of his principles, for, denying the Son to be God, the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, could not be God. However, Aezius, Eunomius, Eudoxius, and all those followers of his, who blasphemously taught that the Son was not like unto the Father, attacked also the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, and the chief defender and propagator of this heresy was Macedonius. In the refutation of the heresy of Sabellius, we will prove, in opposition to the Socinians that the Holy Ghost is the Third Person of the Trinity, subsisting and really distinct from the Father and the Son; here we will prove that the Holy Ghost is true God, equal and consubstantial to the Father and the Son.

I. THE DIVINITY OF THE HOLY GHOST PROVED FROM SCRIPTURES, FROM THE TRADITIONS OF THE FATHERS, AND FROM GENERAL COUNCILS

2. We begin with the Scriptures. To prove that this is an article of Faith, I do not myself think any more is necessary than to quote the text of St. Matthew, in which is related the commission given by Christ to his Apostles : " Go, ye, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt, xxviii, 19). It is in this belief we profess the Christian religion, which is founded on the mystery of the Trinity, the principal one of our Faith; it is by these words the character of a Christian is impressed on every one entering into the Church by Baptism; this is the formula approved by all the Holy Fathers, and used from the earliest ages of the Church : " I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." As the three Persons are named consecutively, and without any difference, the equality of the

authority and power belonging to them is declared, and as we say, " in the name," and not " in the names," we profess the unity of essence in them. By using the article " and in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," we proclaim the real distinction that exists between them; for if we said, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the latter expression, Holy Ghost, might be understood, not as a substantive, as the proper name of one of the Divine Persons, but as an epithet and adjective applied to the Father and the Son. It is for this reason, Tertullian says[16249], that our Lord has commanded to make an ablution, in the administration of Baptism, at the name of each of the Divine Persons, that we may firmly believe that there are three distinct Persons in the Trinity. "Mandavit ut tingerent in Patrem et Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum; non in unum nec semel sed ter ad singula nomina in personas singulas tingimur."

3. St. Athanasius, in his celebrated Epistle to Serapion, says, that we join the name of the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son in Baptism, because, if we omitted it, the Sacrament would be invalid : " He who curtails the Trinity, and baptizes in the name of the Father alone, or in the name of the Son alone, or omitting the Holy Ghost, with the Father and Son, performs nothing, for initiation consists in the whole Trinity being named." The Saint says that if we omit the name of the Holy Ghost the Baptism is invalid, because Baptism is the Sacrament in which we profess the Faith, and this Faith requires a belief in all the three Divine Persons united in one essence, so that he who denies one of the Persons denies God altogether.

"And so," follows on St. Athanasius, "Baptism would be invalid, when administered in the belief that the Son or the Holy Ghost were mere creatures." He who divides the Son from the Father, or lowers the Spirit to the condition of a mere creature, has neither the Son nor the Father, and justly, for as it is one Baptism which is conferred in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and it is one Faith in Him, as the Apostle says, so the Holy Trinity, existing in itself, and united in itself, has, in itself, nothing of created things. Thus, as the Trinity is one and undivided, so is the Faith of three Persons united in it, one and undivided. We, therefore, are bound to believe that the name of the Holy Ghost, that is, the name of the Third Person expressed by these two words, so frequently used in the Scriptures, is not an imaginary name, or casually invented, but the name of the Third Person, God, like the Father and the Son. We should remember, likewise, that the expression, Holy Ghost, is, properly speaking, but one word, for either of its component parts might be applied to the Father or the Son, for both are Holy, both are Spirit, but this word is the proper name of the Third Person of the Trinity. "Why would Jesus Christ," adds St. Athanasius, "join the name of the Holy Ghost with those of the Father and the Son, if he were a mere creature ? is it to render the three Divine Persons unlike each other? was there anything wanting to God that he should assume a different substance, to render it glorious like unto himself?"

4. Besides this text of St. Matthew, already quoted, in which our Lord not only orders his disciples to baptize in the name of the three Persons, but to teach the Faith : "Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father," &c., we have that text of St. John:" There are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one" (John, I. Epis. v, 7). These words (as we have already explained in the Refutation of Sabellianism, n. 9), evidently prove the unity of Nature, and the distinction of the three Divine Persons[16250]. The text says, "These three are one;" if the three testimonies are one and the same, then each one of them has the same Divinity, the same substance, for otherwise, how, as St. Isidore[16251] says, could the text of St. John be verified ? "Nam cum tria sunt unum sunt." St. Paul says the same, in sending his blessing to his disciples in Corinth : "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all" (II. Cor. xiii, 13).

5. We find the same expressions used in those passages of the Scriptures which speak of the sending of the Holy Ghost to the Church, as in St. John (xiv, 16) : "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you forever." Remark how our Lord uses the words, "another Paraclete," to mark the equality existing between himself and the Holy Ghost. Again, he says, in the same Gospel (xv, 26) : "When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me." Here Jesus says, " he will send" the Spirit of Truth; now this Spirit which he will send is not his own Spirit, for his own Spirit he could communicate or give, but

not “send,” for sending means the transmission of something distinct from the person who sends. He adds, “Who proceeds from the Father ;” and “procession,” in respect of the Divine Persons, implies equality, and it is this very argument the Fathers availed themselves of against the Arians, to prove the Divinity of the Word, as we may see in the writings of St. Ambrose[16252] The reason is this :the procession from another is to receive the same existence from the principle from which the procession is made, and, therefore, if the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, he receives the Divinity from the Father in the same manner as the Father himself has it.

6. Another great proof is, that we see the Holy Ghost called God in the Scriptures, like the Father, without any addition, restriction, or inequality. Thus Isaias, in the beginning of his 6th chapter, thus speaks of the Supreme God : “ I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated; upon it stood the seraphim, and they cried to one another, Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God of Hosts, all the earth is full of his glory; and I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Go, and thou shalt say to this people, hearing, hear and understand not. Blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy.”

Now, St. Paul informs us that this Supreme God, of whom the Prophet speaks, is the Holy Ghost. Here are his words : “Well did the Holy Ghost speak to our fathers by Isaias the Prophet, saying : “ Go to this people, and say to them, with the ear you shall hear” &c. (Acts, xxviii, 25, 26). So we here see that the Holy Ghost is that same God called by Isaias the Lord God of Hosts. St. Basil[16253] makes a beautiful reflection regarding this expression, the Lord God of Hosts. Isaias, in the prayer quoted, refers it to the Father. St. John (cap. 12), applies it to the Son, as is manifest from the 37th and the following verse, where this text is referred to, and St. Paul applies it to the Holy Ghost : “The Prophet,” says the Saint, “mentions the Person of the Father, in whom the Jews believed, the Evangelist the Son, Paul the Holy Spirit” “ Propheta inducit Patris in quem Judei credebant personam Evangelista Filii, Paulus Spiritus, ilium ipsum qui visus fuerat unum Dominum Sabaoth communiter nominantes. Sermonem quem de hypostasi instituerunt distruxere indistincta manente in eis de uno Deo sententia.” How beautifully the Holy Doctor shows that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are three distinct Persons, but still the one and the same God, speaking by the mouth of his Prophets. St. Paul, also, speaking of that passage in the Psalms (xciv, 9), “Your fathers tempted me,” says, that the God the Hebrews then tempted was the Holy Ghost; “therefore,” says the Apostle, “ as the Holy Ghost saith your fathers tempted me” (Heb. iii, 7, 9).

7. St. Peter confirms this doctrine (Acts, i, 16), when he says that the God who spoke by the mouth of the Prophets is the Holy Ghost himself : “The Scripture must be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David.” And in the second Epistle (i, 21), he says : “For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time, but the holy men of God spoke, in spired by the Holy Ghost.” St. Peter, likewise, calls the Holy Ghost God, in contradistinction to creatures. When charging Ananias with a lie, he says : “Why hath Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost thou hast not lied to man, but to God” (Acts, v, 4).

It is most certain that St. Peter, in this passage, intended to say that the Third Person of the Trinity was God, and thus St. Basil, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory Nazianzen[16254], and several other Fathers, together with St. Augustine[16255], understood it so. St. Augustine says : “Showing that the Holy Ghost is God, you have not lied,” he says, “ to man, but to God.

8. Another strong proof of the Divinity of the Holy Ghost is, that the Scriptures attribute to him qualities which belong alone by nature to God :First Immensity, which fills the world : “ Do not I fill the heaven and the earth, saith the Lord ?” (Jer. xxiii, 24). And the Scripture then says that the Holy Ghost fills the world : “For the Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world” (Wisdom, i, 7). Therefore the Holy Ghost is God. St. Ambrose says[16256] : “ Of what creature can it be said what is written of the Holy Ghost, that he filled all things ? I will pour forth my Spirit over all flesh, &c., for it is the Lord alone can fill all things, who says, I fill the heaven and the earth.” Besides, we read in the Acts (ii, 4), “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” “ Do we ever hear,” says Didimus, “the Scriptures say, filled by a creature ?The Scriptures never speak in this way.” They were, therefore, filled with God, and this God was the Holy Spirit.

9. Secondly God alone knows the Divine secrets. As St. Ambrose says, the inferior knows not the secrets of his superior. Now, St. Paul says, “The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God, for what man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him ? So the things also that are of God no man knoweth but the Spirit of God” (I. Cor.

ii, 10, 11). The Holy Ghost is, therefore, God; for, as Paschasius remarks, if none but God can know the heart of man, “the searcher of hearts and reins is God” (Ps. vii, 10). Much more so must it be God alone who knows the secrets of God. This, then, he says, is a proof of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. St. Athanasius proves the consubstantiality of the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son from this same passage, for as the spirit of man, which knows the secrets of man, is nothing foreign from him, but is of the very substance of man, so the Holy Ghost, who knows the secrets of God, is not different from God, but must be one and the same substance with God.

“ Would it not be the height of impiety to say that the Spirit who is in God, and who searches the hidden things of God, is a creature? He who holds that opinion will be obliged to admit that the spirit of man is something different from man himself”[16257].

10. Thirdly God alone is omnipotent, and this attribute belongs to the Holy Ghost. “ By the word of the Lord the heavens were established, and all the power of them by the Spirit of his mouth” (Psalms, xxxii, 7). And St. Luke is even clearer on this point, for when the Blessed Virgin asked the Archangel how she could become the mother of our Saviour, having consecrated her virginity to God, the Archangel answered : “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee because no word shall be impossible with God.” Hence we see the Holy Ghost is all-powerful, that to him there is nothing impossible. To the Holy Ghost, likewise, is attributed the creation of the universe : “ Send forth thy Spirit, and they shall be created” (Psalms, ciii, 30). And in Job we read : “His Spirit has adorned the heavens” (Job, xxvi, 13). The power of creation belongs to the Divine Omnipotence alone. Hence, concludes St. Athanasius[16258], when we find this written, it is certain that the Spirit is not a created, but a creator. The Father creates all things by the Word in the Spirit, inasmuch as when the Word is there, the Spirit is, and all things created by the Word have, from the Spirit, by the Son, the power of existing. For it is thus written in the 32nd Psalm : “ By the Word of the Lord the heavens were established, and all the power of them by the Spirit of his mouth.” There can, therefore, be no doubt but that the Spirit is undivided from the Son.

11. Fourthly It is certain that the grace of God is not given unless by God himself : “The Lord will give grace and glory” (Psalms. Ixxxiii, 12). Thus, also, it is God alone who can grant justification. It is God “ that justifieth the wicked” (Prov. xvii, 15). Now both these attributes appertain to the Holy Ghost. “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us” (Romans, v, 5).

Didimus[16259] makes a reflection on this :The very expression, he says, “poured out,” proves the uncreated substance of the Holy Ghost; for whenever God sends forth an angel, he does not say, I will “ pour out” my angel. As to justification, we hear Jesus says to his disciples: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven” (John, xx. 22, 23). If the power of forgiving sins comes from the Holy Ghost, he must be God. The Apostle also says that it is God who operates in us the good we do; “the same God who worketh all in all” (I. Cor. xii, 6). And then in the 11th verse of the same chapter he says that this God is the Holy Ghost : “But all those things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to everyone according as he will.” Here then, says St. Athanasius, the Scripture proves that the operation of God is the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Fifthly St. Paul tells us that we are the temples of God. “Know you not that you are the temple of God” (I. Cor. iii, 16). And then further on in the same Epistle he says that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost : “ Or know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you” (vi, 19). If, therefore, we are the temples of God and of the Holy Ghost, we must confess that the Holy Ghost is God, for if the Holy Ghost were a creature, we would be forced to admit that the very temple of God was the temple of a creature. Here are St. Augustine’s[16260] words on the subject : “ If the Holy Ghost be not God, he would not have us as his temple for if we would build a temple to some Saint or Angel, we would be cut off from the truth of Christ and the Church of God, since we would be exhibiting to a creature that service which we owe to God alone. If, therefore, we would be guilty of sacrilege, by erecting a temple to any creature, surely he must be true God to whom we not only erect a temple, but even are ourselves his temple.”

12. Hence, also, St. Fulgentius[16261], in his remarks on the same subject, justly reproves those who deny the Divinity of the Holy Ghost : “ Do you

mean to tell me," says the Saint, "that he who is not God could establish the power of the heavens that he who is not God could sanctify us by the regeneration of Baptism that he who is not God could give us charity that he who is not God could give us grace that he could have as his temples the members of Christ, and still be not God? You must agree to all this, if you deny that the Holy Ghost is true God. If any creature could do all these things attributed to the Holy Ghost, then he may justly be called a creature; but if all these things are impossible to a creature, and are attributed to the Holy Ghost, things which belong to God alone, we should not say that he is naturally different from the Father and the Son, when we can find no difference in his power of operating." We must then conclude, with St. Fulgentius, that, where there is a unity of power, there is a unity of nature, and the Divinity of the Holy Ghost follows as a necessary consequence.

13. In addition to these Scripture proofs, we have the constant tradition of the Church, in which the Faith of the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, and his consubstantiality with the Father and the Son, has been always preserved, both in the formula of administering Baptism, and in the prayers in which he is conjointly invoked with the Father and the Son, especially in that prayer said at the conclusion of all the Psalms and Hymns : "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," or, "Glory to the Father, by the Son, in the Holy Ghost," or, "Glory to the Father, with the Son and the Holy Ghost," all three formulae having been practised by the Church. St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Ambrose, St. Hilary, Didimus, Theodoret, St. Augustine, and the other Fathers, laid great stress on this argument when opposing the Macedonians. St. Basil[16262], remarks that the formula, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," was rarely used in his time in the Church, but generally "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, with the Holy Ghost." However, it all amounts to the same thing, for it is a general rule, in speaking of the Trinity, to use the words "from whom," " by whom," " in whom," (as when we say of the Father, " from whom are all things ;" of the Son, " by whom are all things ;" of the Holy Ghost, " in whom are all things,") in the same sense.

There is no inequality of Persons marked by these expressions, since St. Paul, speaking of God himself, says : "For of him, and by him, and in him, are all things; to him be glory forever. Amen" (Rom. xi, 36).

14. This constant faith of the Church has been preserved by the Holy Fathers in their writings from the earliest ages. St. Basil, one of the most strenuous defenders of the Divinity of the Holy Ghost[16263], cites a passage of St. Clement of Rome, Pope : “The ancient Clement,” he says, “thus spoke :The Father lives; he says, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. “Thus, St. Clement attributes the same life to the three Divine Persons equally, and therefore believed them all three to be truly and substantially God. What makes this stronger is, that St. Clement is contrasting the three Divine Persons with the Gods of the Gentiles, who had no life, while God in the Scriptures is called “the living God.” It is of no importance either, that the words quoted are not found in the two Epistles of St. Clement, for we have only some fragments of the second Epistle, and we may, therefore, believe for certain, that St. Basil had the whole Epistle before him, of which we have only a part.

St. Justin, in his second Apology, says : “ We adore and venerate, with truth and reason, himself (the Father), and he who comes from him the Son and the Holy Ghost,” Thus St. Justin pays the same adoration to the Son and the Holy Ghost as to the Father. Athenagoras, in his Apology, says : “We believe in God, and his Son, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, united in power For the Son is the mind, the word, and the wisdom of the Father, and the Spirit is as the light flowing from fire.” St. Iraeneus[16264] teaches that God, the Father, has created and now governs all things, both by the Word and by the Holy Ghost. “For nothing,” he says, “ is wanting to God, who makes, and disposes, and governs all things, by the Word and by the Holy Ghost.” We here see, according to St. Iragineus, that God h as no need of anything; and he afterwards says, that he does all things by the Word and by the Holy Ghost.

15. The Holy Ghost is, therefore, God the same as the Father. He tells us, in another part of his works[16265], that the Holy Ghost is a creator, and eternal, unlike a created spirit. “For that which is made is,” he says, “ different from the maker; what is made is made in time, but the Spirit is eternal.” St. Lucian, who lived about the year 160, says, in a Dialogue, entitled Philopatris, attributed to him, addressing a Gentile, who interrogates him : “What, then, shall I swear for you?” Triphon, the Defender of the Faith, answers: “God reigning on high the Son of the

Father, the Spirit proceeding from the Father, one from three, and three from one.” This passage is so clear that it requires no explanation. Clement of Alexandria says[16266] : “The Father of all is one; the Word of all is also one; and the Holy Ghost is one, who is also everywhere.” In another passage he clearly explains the Divinity and Consubstantiality of the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son[16267] : “ We return thanks to the Father alone, and to the Son, together with the Holy Ghost, in all things one, in whom are all things, by whom all things are in one, by whom that is which always is.” See here how he explains that the three Persons are equal in fact, and that they are but one in essence. Tertullian[16268] professes his belief in the “Trinity of one Divinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ;” and, in another place[16269], he says : “ We define, indeed, two, the Father and the Son, nay, three, with the Holy Ghost; but we never profess to believe in two Gods, although the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, and each one is God,” &c. St. Cyprian[16270], speaking of the Trinity, says : “When the three are one, how could the Holy Ghost be agreeable to him, if he were the enemy of the Father or the Son ?” And, in the same Epistle, he proves that Baptism administered in the name of Christ alone is of no avail, for “Christ,” he says, “orders that the Gentiles should be baptized in the full and united Trinity.”

St. Dionisius Romanus, in his Epistle against Sabellius, says : “The admirable and Divine unity is not, therefore, to be divided into three Deities; but we are bound to believe in God, the Father Almighty, and in Christ Jesus, his Son, and in the Holy Ghost.” I omit the innumerable testimonies of the Fathers of the following centuries; but I here merely note some of those who have purposely attacked the heresy of Macedonius, and these are St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Epiphanius, Didimus, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and St. Hilary[16271]. These Fathers, immediately on the appearance of the Macedonian heresy, all joined in condemning it a clear proof that it was contrary to the Faith of the Universal Church.

16. This heresy was condemned, besides, by several Councils, both General and Particular. First It was condemned (two years after Macedonius had broached it) by the Council of Alexandria, celebrated by St. Athanasius, in the year 372, in which it was decided that the Holy Ghost

was Consubstantial in the Trinity. In the year 377, it was condemned by the Holy See, in the Synod of Illiricum; and about the same time, as Theodoret[16272] informs us, it was condemned in two other Roman Synods, by the Pope, St. Damasus. Finally, in the year 381, it was condemned in the First Council of Constantinople, under St. Damasus; and this Article was annexed to the symbol of the Faith : " We believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, proceeding from the Father, and with the Father and the Son to be adored and glorified, who spoke by the Prophets." He to whom the same worship is to be given as to the Father and the Son, is surely God. Besides, this Council has been always held as Ecumenical by the whole Church, for though composed of only one hundred and fifty Oriental Bishops, still, as the Western Bishops, about the same time, defined the same Article of the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, under St. Damasus, this decision has been always considered as the decision of the Universal Church; and the subsequent General Councils that is, the Council of Chalcedon, the Second and Third of Constantinople, and the Second of Nice confirmed the same symbol. Nay more, the Fourth Council of Constantinople pronounced an anathema against Macedonius, and defined that the Holy Ghost is consubstantial to the Father and to the Son. Finally, the Fourth Council of Lateran thus concludes : " We define that there is but one true God alone, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three Persons, indeed, but only one Essence, Substance, or simple Nature And that all these Persons are consubstantial, omnipotent, and co-eternal, the one beginning of all things."

II. ANSWER TO OBJECTIONS

17. First, the Socinians, who have revived the ancient heresies, adduce a negative argument. They say that the Holy Ghost is never called God in the Scriptures, nor is ever proposed to us to be adored and invoked. But St. Augustine[16273] thus answers this argument, addressing the Macedonian Maximinus : " When have you read that the Father was not born, but self-existing ?and still it is no less true," &c. The Saint means to say that many things in the Scriptures are stated, not in express terms, but in equivalent ones, which prove the truth of what is stated, just as forcibly; and, for a

proof of that, the reader can refer to N. 4 and 6, where the Divinity of the Holy Ghost is incontestably proved, if not in express, in equivalent, terms.

18. Secondly, they object that St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, speaking of the benefits conferred by God on mankind, mentions the Father and the Son, but not the Holy Ghost. We answer, that it is not necessary, in speaking of God, that we should always expressly name the three Divine Persons, for, when we speak of one, we speak of the three, especially in speaking of the operations, ad extra, to which the three Divine Persons concur in the same manner.

“ Whosoever is blessed in Christ,” says St. Ambrose[16274], “ is blessed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, because there is one name and one power; thus, likewise, when the operation of the Holy Ghost is pointed out, it is referred, not only to the Holy Ghost, but also to the Father and the Son.”

19. They object, thirdly, that the primitive Christians knew nothing of the Holy Ghost, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, when St. Paul asked some newly-baptized, if they had received the Holy Ghost, they answered : “ We have not so much as heard if there be a Holy Ghost” (Acts, xix, 2). We reply that the answer to this is furnished by the very passage itself, for, St. Paul hearing that they knew nothing of the Holy Ghost, asked them : “ In what, then, were you baptized ;” and they answered, “ in John’s Baptism.” No wonder, then, that they knew nothing of the Holy Ghost, when they were not even as yet baptized with the Baptism instituted by Christ.

20. They object, fourthly, that the Council of Constantinople, speaking of the Holy Ghost, does not call him God. We answer that the Council does call him God, when it says he is the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, and who, with the Father and the Son, should be adored and glorified. And the same answer will apply, when they object that St. Basil (or any other Father) has not called the Holy Ghost God, for they have defended his Divinity, and condemned those who called him a creature. Besides, if St. Basil, in his sermons, does not speak of the Holy Ghost as God, it was only an act of prudence in those calamitous times, when the heretics sought every occasion to chase the Catholic Bishops from their Sees, and intrude wolves into their places. St. Basil, on the other hand, defends the Divinity of the Holy Ghost in a thousand passages. Just take

one for all, where he says, in his Fifth Book against Eunomius, tit. 1 : "What is common to the Father and the Son is likewise so to the Holy Ghost, for wherever we find the Father and the Son designated as God in the Scripture, the Holy Ghost is designated as God likewise.

21. Fifthly, they found objections on some passages of the Scripture, but they are either equivocal or rather confirmatory of the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. They lay great stress especially on that text of St. John : "But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who proceedeth from the Father" (John, xv, 26). Now, they say, when the Holy Spirit is sent, it is a sign that he is inferior, and in a state of subjection, or dependence; therefore, he is not God. To this we answer, that the Holy Ghost is not sent by a command, but sent solely by a procession from the Father, and the Son, for from these he proceeds. Mission, or being sent, means nothing more in Divinis, than this, the presence of the Divine Person, manifested by any sensible effect, which is specially ascribed to the Person sent. This, for example, was the mission of the Holy Ghost, when he descended into the Cenaculum on the Apostles, to make them worthy to found the Church, just as the eternal Word was sent by the Father to take flesh for the salvation of mankind. In the same way we explain that text of St. John : " He shall not speak of himself, but what things so ever he shall hear, he shall speak he shall glorify me, because he shall receive of mine" (John, xvi, 14, 15). The Holy Ghost takes from the Father and the Son, the knowledge of all things, not by learning them, but proceeding from them without any dependence, as a necessary requirement of his Divine Nature. And this is the very meaning of the words : " He shall receive of mine;" since through the Son, the Father communicates to the Holy Ghost, together with the Divine Essence, wisdom, and all the attributes of the Son. " He will hear from him," says St. Augustine[16275], "from whom he proceeds. To him, to hear, is to know, to know, is to exist. Because, therefore, he is not from himself, but from him from whom he proceeds, from whom he has his essence, from him he has his knowledge. Ab illo igitur audientia, quod nihil est aliud, quam scientia." St. Ambrose expresses the same sentiments[16276].

22. They object, sixthly, that St. Paul says : "The Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings" (Rom. viii, 26). Therefore, the Holy Ghost groans and prays, as an inferior. But St. Augustine thus explains the text :

“He asketh with groanings that we should understand that he causes us to ask with groanings”[16277]. Thus St. Paul wishes to instruct us, that by the grace we receive, we become compunctious and groaning, making us pray with “unspeakable groanings,” just as God makes us triumph, when he says that Jesus Christ triumphs in us : “Thanks be to God, who always makes us triumph in Christ Jesus” (II. Cor. ii, 14).

23. They object, seventhly, another passage of St. Paul : “The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (I. Cor. ii, 10); and they then say that the word, “ searcheth,” shows that the Holy Ghost is ignorant of the Divine secrets; but we answer, that this expression does not mean seeking or inquiring, but the simple comprehension which the Holy Ghost has of the whole of the Divine Essence, and of all things, as it is said of God : “That he searcheth the heart and the reins” (Psalms, vii, 10); which means that God comprehends all the thoughts and affections of mankind. Hence, St. Ambrose[16278] concludes: “The Holy Ghost is a searcher like the Father, he is a searcher like the Son, and this expression is used to show that there is nothing which he does not know.”

24. They object, eighthly, that passage of St. John: “All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made” (John, i, 3); therefore, the Holy Ghost was made by him, and is consequently a creature. We answer, that in this sense, it cannot be said that all things were made by the Word, for in that case, even the Father would be made by him. The Holy Ghost is not made, but proceeds from the Father and the Son, as from one principle, by the absolute necessity of the Divine Nature, and without any dependence.

Refutation IV

THE HERESY OF THE GREEKS, WHO ASSERT THAT THE HOLY GHOST PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER ALONE, AND NOT FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON

1. It is necessary to remark here, in order not to confuse the matter, that the heresy of the schismatical Greeks consists in denying the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son; they contend that he proceeds from the Father alone, and this is the difference between the Greek and Latin Churches. The learned have not yet agreed on the author of this heresy. Some say it was Theodoret, in his refutation of the ninth anathematism of St. Cyril, against Nestorius, but others again defend him (as well as several others quoted by the schismatic's), and explain that passage of his works which gave rise to this opinion, by saying that he only meant to prove that the Holy Ghost was not a creature, as the Arians and Macedonians asserted. There can be no doubt but that passages from the works both of Theodoret and the other Fathers, which the writers intended as refutations of the errors of the Arians and Macedonians, taken in a wrong sense by the schismatic's, have confirmed them in holding on to this error. This heresy, up to the time of Photius, was only held by a few persons, but on his intrusion into the See of Constantinople, in 858, and especially in 863, when he was condemned by Pope Nicholas I., he constituted himself, not alone the chief of the schism, which for so many years has separated the Greek and Latin Churches, but induced the whole Greek Church to embrace this heresy that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father alone, and not from the Son. Fourteen times, Osius writes[16279], up to the time of the Council of Florence, held in 1439, the Greeks renounced this error, and united themselves to the Latin Church, but always relapsed again. In the Council of Florence, they themselves agreed in defining that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, and it was thought that the

union would be everlasting, but such was not the case, for after they left the Council, they again (ch. ix, n. 31) returned to their vomit, at the instigation of Mark of Ephesus. I now speak of these Greeks who were under the obedience of the Eastern Patriarchs, for the others who were not subject to them, remained united in Faith to the Roman Church.

I. IT IS PROVED THAT THE HOLY GHOST PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON

2. It is proved by the words of St. John : “When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who proceedeth from the Father” (John, xv, 16). This text not only proves the dogma decided by the Council of Constantinople against the Arians and Macedonians, that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father (“ And in the Holy Ghost the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father”); but also that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son, as is shown by the words : “Whom 1 will send you;” and the same expression is repeated in St. John in other places : “For if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you” (John, xvi, 7). “But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name” (John, xiv, 26). In the Divinity, a Person is not spoken of assent, unless by another Person from whom he proceeds. The Father, as he is the origin of the Divinity, is never spoken of in the Scriptures as being sent. The Son, as he proceeds from the Father alone, is said to be sent, but it is never thus said of the Holy Ghost : “ As the Father living, sent me, &c., God sent his Son, made from a woman, &c.” When, therefore, the Holy Ghost, is said to be sent from the Father and the Son, he proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father; especially as this mission of one Divine Person from another, cannot be understood cither in the way of command or instruction, or any other way, for in the Divine Persons both authority and wisdom are equal. We, therefore, understand one Person as sent by another, according to the origin, and according to the procession of one Person from the other, this procession implying neither inequality nor dependence. If, therefore, the Holy Ghost is said to be sent by the Son, he proceeds from the Son. “He is sent by him,” says St. Augustine[16280], “from whence he emanates,” and he adds, “the Father is not said to be sent, for he has not from whom to be, or from whom to proceed.

3. The Greeks say that the Son does not send the Person of the Holy Ghost, but only his gifts of grace, which are attributed to the Holy Spirit. But we answer that this interpretation is wrong, for in the passage of St. John, just quoted, it is said that this Spirit of Truth, sent by the Son, proceeds from the Father; therefore, the Son does not send the gifts of the Holy Ghost, but the Spirit of Truth himself, who proceeds from the Father.

4. This dogma is proved from all those texts, in which the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of the Son "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts" (Gal. iv, 6)—just as, in another place, the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of the Father : "For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you" (Mat. x, 20). If, therefore, the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of the Father, merely because he proceeds from the Father, he also proceeds from the Son, when he is called the Spirit of the Son. This is what St. Augustine says[16281] : "Why should we not believe that the Holy Ghost proceeds also from the Son, when he is the Spirit of the Son ?" And the reason is evident, since he could not be called the Holy Ghost of the Son, because the Person of the Holy Ghost is consubstantial to the Son, as the Greeks said; for otherwise the Son might be called the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, as he is also consubstantial to the Holy Ghost. Neither can he be called the Spirit of the Son, because he is the instrument of the Son, or because he is the extrinsic holiness of the Son, for we cannot speak thus of the Divine Persons; therefore, he is called the Spirit of the Son, because he proceeds from him. Jesus Christ explained this himself, when, after his Resurrection, he appeared to his disciples, and "breathed on them, and said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost," &c. (John, xx, 22). Remark the words, " he breathed on them, and said," to show that, as the breath proceeds from the mouth, so the Holy Ghost proceeds from him.

Hear how beautifully St. Augustine[16282] explains this passage : " We cannot say that the Holy Ghost does not proceed from the Son also, for it is not without a reason that he is called the Spirit both of the Father and of the Son. I cannot see what other meaning he had when he breathed in the face of his disciples, and said, Receive the Holy Ghost. For that corporeal breathing was not, indeed the substance of the Holy Ghost, but a demonstration, by a congruous signification, that the Holy Ghost did not proceed from the Father alone, but from the Son, likewise."

5. It is proved, thirdly, from all those passages of the Holy Scripture, in which it is said that the Son has all that the Father has, and that the Holy Ghost receives from the Son. Hear what St. John says : "But when he, the Spirit of Truth is come, he will teach you all truth. For he shall not speak of himself; but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak, and the things that are to come he shall show you. He shall glorify me; because he shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine. Therefore, I said, that he shall receive of mine, and show it to you" (John, xvi, 13, &c.) It is expressly laid down in this passage, that the Holy Ghost receives of the Son, "shall receive of mine ;" and when we speak of the Divine Persons, we can never say that one receives from the other in any other sense but this, that the Person proceeds from the Person he receives from. To receive and to proceed is just the same thing, for it would be repugnant to sense, to say that the Holy Ghost, who is God equal to the Son, and of the same Nature as the Son, receives from him either knowledge or doctrine. It is said, therefore, that he receives from the Son, because he proceeds from him, and from him receives, by communication, the Nature and all the attributes of the Son.

6. The Greeks make a feeble reply to this. Christ, in this passage, they say, does not say that the Holy Ghost receives from me, but " of mine," that is, of my Father. This reply carries no weight with it, for Christ himself explains the text in the next passage : "All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine; therefore, I said, that he shall receive of mine." Now, these words prove that the Holy Ghost receives from the Father and the Son, because he proceeds from the Father and the Son. The reason is plain; for if the Son has all that the Father hath (except Paternity relatively opposed to Filiation), and the Father is the principium esse of the Holy Ghost, the Son must be so likewise, for otherwise he would not have all that the Father has. This is exactly what Eugenius IV. says, in his Epistle of the Union : "Since all things, which belong to the Father, he gave to his only-begotten Son, in begetting him, with the exception that he did not make him the Father for this the Son, from all eternity, is in possession of that the Holy Ghost proceeds from him, from whom he was eternally begotten." Before Eugenius's time, St. Augustine said just the same thing[16283] : "Therefore, he is the Son of the Father, from whom he is begotten, and the Spirit is the

Spirit of both, since he proceeds from both. But when the Son speaks of him, he says, therefore, he proceeds from the Father, since the Father is the author of his procession, who begot suchaSon, and, begetting him, gave unto him that the Spirit should also proceed from him.” The holy Father, in this passage, forestalls the objection of Mark of Ephesus, who said that the Scriptures teach that the Holy Ghost “proceeds from the Father,” but do not mention the Son, “ for,” says St. Augustine, “although in the Scripture it said only that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, still the Father, by generating the Son, communicated to him also to be the principium of the Holy Ghost, “gignendo ei dedit, ut etiam de ipso procederet Spiritus Sanctus,”

7. St. Anselm[16284] confirms this by that principle embraced by all theologians, that all things are one in the Divinity : “ In Divinis omnia sunt unum, et omnia unum, et idem, ubi non obviat relationis oppositio.” Thus in God these things alone are really distinguished, among which there is a relative opposition of the producing and the produced. The first producing cannot produce himself, for otherwise he would be at the same time existent and non-existent existent, because he produces himself nonexistent, because he had no existence till after he was produced. This is a manifest absurdity. That axiom, that no one can give what he has not “ Nemo dat, quod non habet,” proves the same thing; for if the producer gave existence to himself before he was produced, he would give that which he had not.

But is not God self-existing ?Most certainly; but that does not mean that he gave existence to himself. God exists of necessity; he is a necessary Being that always did and always will exist; he gives existence to all other creatures; if he ceased to exist, all other things, likewise, would cease to exist. Let us return to the point. The Father is the principle (principium of the Divinity, and is distinguished from the Son by the opposition that exists between the producer and produced. On the other hand, those things in God, which have no relative opposition among themselves, are in nowise distinguished, but are one and the same thing. The Father, therefore, is the same with the Son, in all that in which he is not opposed relatively to the Son. And as the Father is not relatively opposed to the Son, nor the Son to the Father, by both one and the other being the principle in the spiration of the Holy Ghost, therefore, the Holy Ghost is spirated, and proceeds from the Father and the Son; and it is an Article of Faith, defined both by the Second General Council of Lyons, and by that of Florence, that the Holy Ghost proceeds from one principle and from one spiration, and not from two principles nor from two spirations. “ We condemn and reprobate all,” say the Fathers of Lyons, “who rashly dare to assert that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, as from two principles, and that he does not proceed from them as from one principle.” The Fathers of the Council of Florence “define that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son eternally, as from one principle, and by one spiration.” The reason is this[16285] :Because the power of spirating the Holy Ghost is found in the Son as well as in the Father, without any relative opposition. Hence, as the world was created by the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, still, because the power of creating appertains equally to the three Persons, we say, God the Creator; so, because the power of spirating the Holy Ghost is equally in the Father and in the Son, therefore, we say that the principle is one, and that the spiration of the Holy Ghost is one. We now pass on to other proofs of the principal point, that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

8. The procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son is proved, fourthly, by the following argument used by the Latins against the Greeks in the Council of Florence. If the Holy Ghost did not proceed from the Son also, there would be no distinction; the reason is, because, as we have already said, there is no real distinction in God between those things between which there is not a relative opposition of the producer and the produced. If the Holy Ghost did not proceed also from the Son, there would be no relative opposition between him and the Son, and, consequently, there would be no real distinction; one person would not be distinct from the other. To this convincing argument the Greeks replied that even in this case there would be a distinction, because the Son would proceed from the Father by the intellect, and the Holy Ghost by the will. But the Latins answered, justly, that this would not be enough to form a real distinction between the Son and the Holy Ghost, because, at the most, it would be only a virtual distinction such as that which exists in God between the understanding and the will, but the Catholic Faith teaches us that the three Divine Persons, though they are of the same Nature and Substance, are still

really distinct among themselves. It is true that some of the Fathers, as St. Augustine and St. Anselm, have said that the Son and the Holy Ghost are also distinct, because they have a different mode of procession, one from the will and the other from the understanding; but when they speak thus they only mean the remote cause of this distinction, for they themselves have most clearly expressed, on the other hand, that the proximate and formal cause of the real distinction of the Son and the Holy Ghost is the relative opposition in the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son. Hear what St. Gregory of Nyssa[16286] says : “The Spirit is distinguished from the Son, because it is by him he is.” And St. Augustine himself, whom the Greeks consider as favouring their party[16287], says : “Hoc solo numerum insinuant, quod ad invicem sunt.” And St. John of Damascus[16288] also says, that it is merely in the properties of Paternity, Filiation, and Procession, that we see the difference, according to the cause and the effect : “In solis autem proprietatibus, nimirum Paternitatis, Filiationis, et Processionis secundum causam, et causatum discrimen advertimus.” The Eleventh Council of Toledo (Cap. I.) says : “In relatione Per sonar urn numerus cernitur; hoc solo numerum insinuat, quod ad invicem sunt.”

9. Finally, it is proved by the tradition of all ages, as is manifest from the text of those Greek Fathers whom the Greeks themselves consider an authority, and of some Latin Fathers who wrote before the Greek schism. St. Epiphanius, in the Anchoratum, thus speaks : “Christ is believed from the Father, God of God, and the Spirit from Christ, or from both ;” and in the Heresia he says : “But the Holy Ghost is from both, a Spirit from a Spirit.” St. Cyril[16289] writes : “The Son, according to Nature, is indeed from God (for he is begotten of God and of the Father), but the Spirit is properly his, and in him, and from him ;” and again[16290] : “The Spirit is of the essence of the Father and the Son, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.” St. Athanasius explains[16291] the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son in equivalent expressions. “The Spirit,” he says, “does not unite the Word with the Father, but the Spirit receives from the Word. . . . . . whatsoever the Spirit has he has from the Word.” St. Basil[16292], replying to a heretic, who asks him why the Holy Ghost is not called the Son of the Son, says, he is not called so, “not because he is not from God through the Son, but lest it might be imagined that the Trinity consists of an infinite

multitude of Persons, if Sons would follow from Sons, as in mankind." Among the Latin Fathers, Tertullian[16293] writes : "The Son is deduced from the Father, the Spirit from the Father by the Son." St. Hilary[16294] says : "There is no necessity to speak of Him who is to be confessed as coming from the Father and the Son." St. Ambrose says[16295], that "the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son," and in another place[16296], "the Holy Ghost, truly a Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, not the Son himself."

10. I omit the authorities of the other Fathers, both Greek and Latin, collected by the Theologian John, in his disputation with Mark of Ephesus, in the Council of Florence, where he clearly refuted all the cavils of that prelate. It is of more importance to cite the decisions of the General Councils, which have finally decided on this dogma, as the Council of Ephesus, the Council of Chalcedon, the Second and Third Councils of Constantinople, by approving the Synodical Epistle of St. Cyril of Alexandria, in which this doctrine of the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son is expressed in these terms : " The Spirit is called the Spirit of Truth, and Christ is the Truth, so that he proceeds from him as he does from the Father." In the Fourth Council of Lateran, celebrated in the year 1215, under Innocent III., both Greeks and Latin's united in defining (cap. 153), "that the Father was from none, the Son from the Father alone, and the Holy Ghost equally from both, always without beginning and without end." In the Second Council of Lyons, held in 1274, under Gregory X., when the Greeks again became united with the Latin's, it was again agreed on by both that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son : "With a faithful and devout confession we declare that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, not as from two principles, but as from one principle not by two spirations, but by one spiration.

11. Finally, in the Council of Florence, held under Eugenius IV., in the year 1438, in which both Greeks and Latin's were again united, it was decided unanimously, "that this truth of Faith should be believed and held by all Christians, and that all should then profess that the Holy Ghost eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son, as from one principle, and by one spiration; we also define, explaining the word " filioque" (and from the Son), that it has been lawfully and rationally introduced into the Creed,

for the sake of declaring the truth, and because there was a necessity for doing so at the time.” Now, all those Councils in which the Greeks joined with the Latin’s in defining the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, supply an invincible argument to prove that the schismatic’s uphold a heresy, for otherwise we should admit that the whole united Church, both Latin and Greek, has defined an error in three General Councils.

12. As to theological reasons, we have already given the two principal ones :the first is, that the Son has all that the Father has, with the exception of the Paternity alone, which is impossible, on account of the Filiation. “All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine” (John, xvi, 15); therefore, if the Father has the power of spirating the Holy Ghost, the same power belongs also to the Son, since there is no relative opposition between the Filiation and the active spiration. The second reason is, that if the Holy Ghost did not proceed from the Son, he would not be really distinct from the Son, for then there would be no relative opposition or real distinction between them, and, consequently, the mystery of the Trinity would be destroyed. The other arguments adduced by theologians can either be reduced to these, or are arguments a congruentia, and, therefore, we omit them.

II. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

13. They object, first, that the Scripture speaks of the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father alone, and not from the Son, but we have already answered this (N. 6), and we remind the reader that though the Scripture does not express it in formal, it does in equivalent terms, as has been already proved. But, besides, remember that the Greeks recognized, equally with the Latin’s, the authority of tradition, and that teaches that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. They object, secondly, that in the First Council of Constantinople, in which the Divinity of the Holy Ghost was defined, it was not defined that he proceeded from the Father and the Son, but from the Father alone; but to this we reply, that this Council did not declare it, because this was not the point that the Macedonians controverted. The Council, therefore, defined the procession from the Father alone, because the Macedonians and Eunomians denied the procession from the Father, and, consequently, the Divinity of the Holy

Ghost. The Church does not draw up definitions of Faith until errors spring up, and, on that account we see, that in several General Councils afterwards, the Church defined the procession of the Holy Ghost as well from the Son as from the Father.

14. They object, thirdly, that when, in the Council of Ephesus, the Priest Carisius publicly read a Symbol, composed by Nestorius, in which it was asserted that the Holy Ghost was not from the Son, nor that he had not his substance through the Son, that the Fathers did not reject the doctrine. We reply, First that this can be easily explained, by supposing that Nestorius properly denied, in a Catholic sense, that the Holy Ghost was from the Son, in opposition to the Macedonians, who said that he was a creature of the Son, and had received existence from the Son, just like any other creature. Secondly We should not forget that in the Council of Ephesus it was not of the procession of the Holy Ghost that they were treating at all, and, therefore, they left it undecided, as it is always the practice of Councils, as we have stated already, not to turn aside to decide on incidental questions, but merely to apply themselves to the condemnation of those errors alone on which they are then deciding.

15. They object, fourthly, some passages of the Holy Fathers which appear to deny the procession from the Son. St. Dionisius[16297] says, that the Father alone is the consubstantial fountain of the Divinity : “ Solum Patrem esse Divinitatis fontem consubstantialem.” St. Athanasius[16298] says, that he is the cause of both Persons : “ Solum Patrem esse causam duorum.” St. Maximus says[16299], that the Fathers never allowed the Son to be the cause, that is, the principle of the Holy Ghost : “ Patres non concedere Filiura esse causam, id est principium Spiritus Sancti.”

16.St. John of Damascus says[16300] we believe the Holy Ghost to be from the Father, and we call him the Spirit of the Father : “ Spiritum Sanctum et ex Patre esse statuimus, et Patris Spiritum appellamus.” They also quote certain passages of Theodoret, and, finally, they adduce that fact which we read of in the life of Pope Leo III., who commanded that the word “ filioque” (and from the Son), added by the Latins to the Symbol of Constantinople should be expunged, and that the Symbol, with that word omitted, should be engraved on a table of silver, for perpetual remembrance of the fact. We answer that the preceding authorities quoted from the Holy

Fathers prove nothing for the Greeks. St. Dionisius calls the Father alone the fountain of the Divinity, because the Father alone is the first fountain, or the first principle, without a beginning, or without derivation from any other Person of the Trinity. To St. Dionisius we can add St. Gregory of Nazianzen[16301], who says, " Quidquid habet Pater, idem Filii est, excepta causa." But all that the Saint means to say is, that the Father is the first principle, and for this special reason he is called the cause of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and this reason of the first principle cannot be applied to the Son in this way, for he has his origin from the Father; but by this the Son is not excluded from being, together with the Father, the principle of the Holy Ghost, as St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, and several others, with St. Athanasius (quoted in N. 9), attest. The same answer will apply to the quotation of St. Maximus, especially as the learned Petavius remarks[16302], as the word principle, or " principium," among the Greeks means the first fountain, or first origin, which applies to the Father alone.

17. We can reply to the argument adduced from the quotation from St. John of Damascus, by remarking that the Saint here speaks guardedly, to oppose the Macedonians, who taught that the Holy Ghost was a creature of the Son, as he uses the same caution in not allowing that the Blessed Virgin should be called the Mother of Christ Christiparam Virginem Sanctum non dicimas to avoid the error of Nestorius, who called her the Mother of Christ, to argue that there were two persons in Christ.

Cardinal Bessarion, however, in the Council of Florence,[16303] answered this objection most clearly. The Saint, he says, used the preposition Ex to denote the principle without a beginning, as is the Father alone. St. John of Damascus himself, however, teaches the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, both in the place quoted, where he calls him the Spirit of the Son, as also in the subsequent part of the same chapter, in which he compares the Father to the sun, the Son to the rays, and the Holy Ghost to the light, thus showing that as the light or splendour proceeds from the sun and the rays, so the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son: " Quemadmodum videli cet ex sole est radius, et splendor; ipse enim (Pater), et radii, et splendoris fons est; per radium autem splendor nobis communicatur, atque ipse est, qui nos collustrat. et a nobis percipitur."

18. To the objection from Theodoret we answer, that the authority of Theodoret on this point is of no weight, because here he is opposed to St. Cyril, or we may suppose also that he was opposing the Macedonians, who taught that the Holy Ghost was a creature of the Son. Finally, as to the fact related of Leo III., we answer, that the Holy Father did not disapprove of the Catholic dogma of the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, since he agreed on this point with the Legates of the Gallican Church, and of Charlemagne, as we see by the acts of the Legation (Vol. II.); but he disapproved of the addition of the word Filioque to the Symbol, without absolute necessity, and without the authority of the whole Church, and this addition was afterwards made by subsequent General Councils, when it was found necessary to do so, on account of the Greeks, who so frequently relapsed, and it was thus confirmed by the authority of the universal Church.

19. The last objection made by the Greeks is founded on these reasons : If the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father and the Son, he would proceed not from one, but from two principles, for he would be produced by two Persons. We have already answered this in proving the dogma (N. 6), but we will explain it more clearly. Although the Father and the Son are two Persons, really distinct, still they neither are, nor can be, called two principles of the Holy Ghost, but only one principle, for the power by which the Holy Ghost is produced is but one alone, and is the same in the Father as in the Son. Neither is the Father the principle of the Holy Ghost by Paternity, nor the Son by Filiation, so that they might be two principles; but the Father and the Son are the principle of the Holy Ghost by active spiration, which, as it is one alone, and is common to both, and undivided in the Father and the Son, therefore the Father and the Son cannot be called two principles, or two spirators, because they are but one spirator of the Holy Ghost, and although both Persons spirate, still the spiration is but one. All this has been expressly laid down in the Definition of the Council of Florence.[16304] Bessar. Orat. pro Unit,

Refutation V

Refutation OF THE HERESY OF PELAGIUS

1. It is not my intention here to refute all the errors of Pelagius concerning Original Sin and Free Will, but only those concerning Grace. In the historical part of the work (Chap, v, art. ii, n. 5), I have said that the principal heresy of Pelagius was, that he denied the necessity of Grace to avoid evil, or to do good, and I there mentioned the various subterfuges he had recourse to, to avoid the brand of heresy, at one time saying that Grace and Free Will itself was given us by God; again, that it is the law teaching us how to live; now, that it is the good example of Jesus Christ; now, that it is the pardon of sins; again, that it is an internal illustration, but on the part of the intellect alone, in knowing good and evil, though Julian, his disciple, admitted Grace of the Will also; but neither Pelagius nor his followers ever admitted the necessity of Grace, and have even scarcely allowed that Grace was necessary to do what is right more easily, and they always denied that this Grace was gratuitous, but said it was given us according to our natural merits. We have, therefore, two points to establish: first, the necessity, and next, the gratuity of Grace.

I. OF THE NECESSITY OF GRACE

2. It is first proved from that saying of Jesus Christ : “No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him” (John, vi, 44). From these words alone it is clear that no one can perform any good action in order to eternal life without internal Grace. That is confirmed by another text : “ I am the vine, you the branches : he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing” (John, xv, 5). Therefore, Jesus Christ teaches that of ourselves we can do nothing available to salvation, and, therefore, Grace is absolutely necessary for every good work, for otherwise, as St. Augustine says, we can acquire no

merit for eternal life: “ Ne quisquam putaret parvum aliquem fructum posse a semetipso palmitem ferre, cum dixisset hic, fert fructum multum, non ait, sine me parum, potestis facere; sed, nihil potestis facere : sive ergo parum, sive multum, sive illo fieri non potest, sine quo nihil fieri potest.” It is proved, secondly, from St. Paul (called by the Fathers the Preacher of Grace), who says, writing to the Philippians : “With fear and trembling work out your salvation, for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish according to his good-will” (Phil, ii, 12, 13). In the previous part of the same chapter he exhorts them to humility : “In humility let each esteem others better than themselves,” as Christ, who, he says, “humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death;” and then he tells them that it is God who works all good in them. He confirms in that what St. Peter says : “God resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace” (I. Peter, v, 5). In fine, St. Paul wishes to show us the necessity of Grace to desire or to put in practice every good action, and shows that for that we should be humble, otherwise we render ourselves unworthy of it. And lest the Pelagians may reply, that here the Apostle does not speak of the absolute necessity of Grace, but of the necessity of having it to do good more easily, which is all the necessity they would admit, see what he says in another text : “ No man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost” (I. Cor. xii, 3). If, therefore, we cannot even mention the name of Jesus with profit to our souls, without the grace of the Holy Ghost, much less can we hope to work out our salvation without Grace.

3. Secondly St. Paul teaches us that the grace alone of the law given to us is not, as Pelagius said, sufficient, for actual Grace is absolutely necessary to observe the law effectually : “For if justice be by the law, then Christ died in vain” (Gal. ii, 21). By justice is understood the observance of the Commandments, as St. John tells us : “ He that doth justice is just” (I. John, iii, 7). The meaning of the Apostle, therefore, is this : If man, by the aid of the law alone, could observe the law, then Jesus Christ died in vain; but such is not the case. We stand in need of Grace, which Christ procured for us by his death. Nay, so far is the law alone sufficient for the observance of the Commandments, that, as the Apostle says, the very law itself is the cause of our transgressing the law, because it is by sin that concupiscence enters into us : “But sin taking occasion by the Commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. And

lived some time without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived" (Rom. vii, 8, 9). St. Augustine, explaining how it is that the knowledge of the law sooner renders us guilty than innocent, says that this happens[16305], because such is the condition of our corrupt will, that, loving liberty, it is carried on with more vehemence to what is prohibited than to what is permitted. Grace is, therefore, that which causes us to love and to do what we know we ought to do, as the Second Council of Carthage declares: " Ut quod faciendum cognovimus, per Gratiam praestatur, etiam facere dirigamus, atque valeamus." Who, without Grace, could fulfil the first and most important of all precepts, to love God ?

" Charity is from God" (I. John, iv, 7). "The charity of God is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us" (Rom. v, 5). Holy charity is a pure gift of God, and we cannot obtain it by our own strength. " Amor Dei, quo pervenitur ad Deum, non est nisi a Deo," as St. Augustine says[16306]. Without Grace how could we conquer temptations, especially grievous ones ?Hear what David says : " Being pushed, I was overturned, that I might fall, but the Lord supported me" (Psalms, cxvii, 13). And Solomon says : " No one can be continent (that is, resist temptations to concupiscence), except God gave it" (Wisdom, viii, 21). Hence, the Apostle, speaking of the temptations which assault us, says : "But in all these things we overcome, because of him that hath loved us" (Rom. viii, 37). And again, "Thanks be to God, who always maketh us to triumph in Christ" (II. Cor. ii, 14). St. Paul, therefore, thanks God for the victory over temptations, acknowledging that he conquers them by the power of Grace. St. Augustine[16307] says, that this gratitude would be in vain if the victory was not a gift of God : " Irrisoria est enim ilia actio gratiarum, si ob hoc gratiae aguntur Deo, quod non donavit ipse, nec fecit." All this proves how necessary Grace is to us, either to do good or avoid evil.

4. Let us consider the theological reason for the necessity of Grace. The means should always be proportioned to the end. Now, our eternal salvation consists in enjoying God face to face, which is, without doubt, a supernatural end; therefore, the means which conduce to this end should be of a supernatural order, likewise. Now, everything which conduces to salvation is a means of salvation; and, consequently, our natural strength is not sufficient to make us do anything, in order to eternal salvation, unless it

is elevated by Grace, for nature cannot do what is beyond its strength, and an action of a supernatural order is so. Besides our weak natural powers, which are not able to accomplish supernatural acts, we have the corruption of our nature, occasioned by sin, which even is a stronger proof to us of the necessity of Grace.

II. OF THE GRATUITY OF GRACE

5. The Apostle shows in several places that the Divine Grace is, in everything, gratuitous, and comes from the mercy of God alone, independent of our natural merits. In one place he says : "For unto you it is given for Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him" (Phil, i, 29). Therefore, as St. Augustine reflects[16308], it is a gift of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, not alone to suffer for love of him, but even to believe in him, and, if it is a gift of God, it cannot be given us through our merits. " Utrumque ostendit Dei donum, quia utrumque dixit esse donatum; nec ait, ut plenius, et perfectius credatis, sed ut credatis in eum." The Apostle writes similarly to the Corinthians, that " he had obtained mercy of the Lord, to be faithful" (I. Cor. vii, 25). It is not through any merit of ours, therefore, that we are faithful to the Mercy of God. "Non ait," says St. Augustine, in the same place already quoted, "quia fidelis eram; fideli ergo datur quidem, sed datum est etiam, ut esset fidelis."

6. St. Paul next shows most clearly, that, whenever we receive light from God, or strength to act, it is not by our own merits, but a gratuitous gift from God. "For who distinguisheth thee," says the Apostle, " or what hast thou, that thou hast not received; and if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it" (I. Cor. iv, 7). If Grace was given according to our natural merits, derived solely from the strength of our free will, then there would be something to distinguish a man who works out his salvation from one who does not do so.

St. Augustine even says, that if God would give us only free will that is, a will, free and indifferent either to good or evil, according as we use it in case the good will would come from ourselves, and not from God, then what came from ourselves would be better than what comes from God : "Nam si nobis libera quædam voluntas ex Deo, quæ adhuc potest esse vel bona, vel mala; bono vero voluntas ex nobis est, melius est id quod a nobis, quam quod ab illo est"[16309]. But it is not so; for the Apostle tells us, that whatever we have from God is all gratuitously given to us, and, therefore, we should not pride ourselves on it.

7. Finally, the gratuity of Grace is strongly confirmed by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans (xi, 5, 6) : " Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant saved according to the election of grace. (The Apostle means, by "the remnant," those few Jews who were faithful among the multitude of unbelievers.) And if by Grace, it is not now by works: otherwise Grace is no more Grace." Now, the Apostle could not express in stronger terms the Catholic truth, that Grace is a gratuitous gift of God, and depends not on the merits of our free will, but on the mere liberality of the Lord.

III. THE NECESSITY AND THE GRATUITY OF GRACE IS PROVED BY TRADITION; CONFIRMED BY THE DECREES OF COUNCILS AND POPES

8. St. Cyprian[16310] lays it down as a fundamental maxim in this matter, that we should not glorify ourselves, as we have nothing of ourselves : " In nullo gloriandum, quando nostrum nihil est." St. Ambrose says[16311] just the same thing: " Ubique Domini virtus studiis cooperatur humanis, ut nemo possit ædificaro sine Domino, nemo custodire sine Domino, nemo quicquam incipere sino Domino." And St. John Chrysostom expresses the same sentiments in several parts of his works, and in one passage, in particular, says[16312] : " Gratia Dei semper in beneficiis priores sibi partes vindicat." And again[16313] : " Quia in nostra voluntate totum post Gratiam Dei relictum est, ideo et peccantibus supplicia proposita sunt, et bene operantibus retributiones."

He is even clearer in another passage[16314], saying, that all we have is not from ourselves, but merely a gift gratuitously given us : "Igitur quod accepisti, habes, ncque hoc tantum, aut illud, sed quidquid habes; non enim merita tua haec sunt, sod Dei Gratia; quamvis fidem adducas, quamvis dona, quamvis doctrinae sermonem, quamvis virtutem, omnia tibi inde provenerunt. Quid igitur habes quaeso, quod acceptum non habeas ? Num ipse perte recte operatus es? Non sane, sed accepisti. . . . .Propterea cohibearis oportet, non enim tuum ad munus est, sed largieutis." St. Jerome[16315] says, that God assists and sustains us in all our works, and that, without the assistance of God, we can do nothing : “ Dominum gratia sua nos in singulis operi bus juvare, atque substentare.” And again[16316] : “ Velle, et nolle nostrum est; ipsumque quod nostrum est, sine Dei miseratione nostrum non est.” And in another place[16317]: “ Velle, et currere meum est, sed ipsum meum, sine Dei semper auxilio non erit meum. “ I omit innumerable other quotations from the Fathers, which prove the same thing, and pass on to the Synodical Decrees.

9. I will not here quote all the Decrees of particular Synods against Pelagius, but only those of some particular Councils, approved of by the Apostolic See, and received by the whole Church. Among these is the Synod of Carthage, of all Africa, approved of by St. Prosper[16318], which says, that the Grace of God, through Jesus Christ, is not only necessary to know what is right, and to practise it, but that, without it, we can neither think, say, or do anything conducive to salvation : “Cum 214. Sacerdotibus, quorum constitutionem contra inimicos gratiae Dei totus Mundus amplexus est, veraci professionc, quemadmodum ipsorum habet sermo, dicainus Gratiam Dei per Jesum Christum Dominum, non solum ad cognoscendam, verum ad faciendam justitiam, nos per actus singulos adjuvari; ita sine ilia nihil verse sanctaeque pietatis habere, cogitare, dicere, agere valeamus.”

10. The Second Synod of Orange (cap. vii) teaches, that it is heretical to say that, by the power of nature, we can do anything for eternal life : “ Si quis per naturae vigorem bonum aliquod, quod ad salutem pertinet vitae aeternae, cogitare, aut eligere posse confirmet, absque illuminatione, et inspiratione Spiritus Sancti haeretico falliter spiritu.” And again it defines: “ Si quis sicut augmentum, ita etiam initium Fidei, ipsumque credulitatis affectum, quo in eum credimus, qui judicat impium, et ad generationem sacri Baptismatis pervenimus, non per gratiae donum, idest per inspirationem Spiritus Sancti corrigentem voluntatem nostram ab infidelitate ad Fidem, ab impietate ad pietatem, sed naturaliter nobis inesse dicit, Apostolicis documentis adversarius approbatur.”

11. Besides the Councils we have the authority of the Popes who approved of several particular Synods celebrated to oppose the Pelagian errors. Innocent I., in his Epistle to the Council of Milevis, approving the Faith they professed, in opposition to Pelagius and Celestius, says that the whole Scriptures prove the necessity of Grace: “Cum in omnibus Divinis

paginis voluntati li berae, non nisi adjutorium Dei legimus esse nectendum, eamque nihil posse Caelestibus praesidiis destitutam, quonam modo huic soli possibilitatem hanc, pertinaciter defendentes, sibimet, imo plurimis Pelagius Celcstiusque persuadent.” Besides, Pope Zosimus, in his Encyclical Letter to all the Bishops of the world, quoted by Celestine I., in his Epistle to the Bishops of Gaul, says much the same: “ In omnibus causis, cogitationibus, motibus adjutor et protector orandus est. Supcrbum est enim ut quisquam sibi hum ana natura praesumat.” In the end of the Epistle we have quoted of Celestine I., there are several chapters, taken from the definitions of other Popes, and from the Councils of Africa, concerning Grace, all proving the same thing. The fifth chapter says : “Quod omnia studia, et omnia opera; ac merita sanctorum ad Dei gloriam, landemque referenda sunt; quia non aliunde ei placet, nisi ex eo quod Ipse donaverit.” And in the sixth chapter it says : “Quod ita Deus in cordibus hominum, atque in ipso libero operatur, arbitrio ut sancta cogitatio, pium consilium, omnis que motus bona voluntatio ex Deo sit, quia per ilium aliquid boni possumus, sine quo nihil possumus.”

12. The Pelagians were formally condemned in the General Council of Ephesus, as Cardinal Orsi tells us[16319]. Nestorius received the Pelagian Bishops, who came to Constantinople, most graciously, for he agreed with Pelagius in this, that Grace is given to us by God, not gratuitously, but according to our merits. This erroneous doctrine was agreeable to Nestorius, as it favoured his system, that the Word had chosen the Person of Christ as the temple of his habitation, on account of his virtues, and therefore the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus, knowing the obstinacy of those Pelagian Bishops, condemned them as heretics.

Finally, The Council of Trent (Sess. vi, de Justif.) defines the same doctrine in two Canons. The second Canon says : “ Si quis dixerit Divinam gratiam ad hoc solum dari, ut facilius homo juste vivere, ac ad vitam aeternam promoveri possit, quasi per liberum arbitrium sine gratia utrumque, sed aegre tamen et difficulter possit; anathema sit.” And in the third Canon the Council says : “ Si quis dixerit, sine praevenienta Spiritus Sanctus inspiratione, atque ejus adjutoris hominem credere, sperare, diligero, aut poanitere posse sicut oportet, ut ei justifications gratia confiratur; anathema sit.”

13. The Pelagians object, firstly, if you admit that Grace is absolutely necessary to perform any act conducive to salvation, you must confess that man has no liberty, and free will is destroyed altogether. We answer, with St. Augustine, that man, after the fall, is undoubtedly no longer free without Grace, either to begin or bring to perfection any act conducive to eternal life, but by the Grace of God he recovers this liberty, for the strength which he is in need of to do what is good is subministered to him by Grace, through the merits of Jesus Christ; this Grace restores his liberty to him, and gives him strength to work out his eternal salvation, without, however, compelling him to do so : " Peccato Adae arbitrium liberum de hominum natura perisse, non dicimus, sed ad peccandum valere in homine subdito diabolo. Ad bene autem, pieque vivendum non valere, nisi ipsa voluntas hominis Dei gratia fuerit liberata, et ad omne bonum actionis, sermonis, cogitationis adjuta." Such are St. Augustine's sentiments[16320].

14. They object, secondly, that God said to Cyrus : "Who say to Cyrus, thou art my shepherd, and thou shalt perform all my pleasure" (Isaias, xliv, 28); and, in chap, xlvi, v. 11, he calls him, " a man of his will." Now, say the Pelagians, Cyrus was an idolater, and, therefore, deprived of the Grace which is given by Jesus Christ, and still, according to the text of the Prophet, he observed all the natural precepts; therefore without Grace a man may observe all the precepts of the law of nature. We answer, that in order to understand this, we should distinguish, with theologians, between the will of Beneplacitum and the will called of Signum. The Beneplacitum is that established by God by an absolute decree, and which God wills should be infallibly followed by us. This is always fulfilled by the wicked. But the other will (voluntas signi), is that which regards the Divine commandments signified to us, but for the fulfilment of this Divine will our co-operation is required, and this we cannot apply of ourselves, but require the assistance of the Divine Grace to do so; this will the wicked do not always fulfil. Now the Lord in Isaias does not speak of this will (Signum}, in respect of Cyrus, but of the other will (Beneplacitum), that is, that Cyrus should free the Jews from captivity, and permit them to rebuild the city and temple; that was all that was required then from him, but, on the other hand, he was an idolater,

and a sanguinary invader of the neighbouring kingdoms, and, therefore, he did not fulfil the precepts of the natural law.

15. They object, thirdly, that fact related by St. Mark, of the man who was exhorted by our Redeemer to observe the commandments, and he answered : “Master, all these things I have observed from my youth,” and the Evangelist proves that he spoke the truth, for “Jesus, looking on him, loved him” (Mark, x, 20, 21). See here, say the Pelagians, is a man who, without Grace, and who had not even as yet believed in Christ, observed all the natural precepts. We answer, first, this man was a Jew, and, as such, believed in God, and also implicitly in Christ, and there was, therefore, nothing to prevent him from having Grace to observe the commandments of the Decalogue. Secondly We answer, that when he said, “All these things I have observed from my youth,” we are not to understand that he observed all the Commandments, but only those which Christ mentioned to him : “ Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, & c.

Even the Gospel itself proves that he was not ardent in the observance of the precept to love God above all things, for when Christ told him to leave his wealth and follow him, he refused to obey, and, therefore, our Lord tacitly reproved him, when he said : “How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of God” (ver. 23).

16. They object, fourthly, that St. Paul, while still under the law, and not having yet received Grace, observed all the law, as he himself attests : “According to the justice that is in the law, conversing without blame” (Phil, iii, 6). We answer, that the Apostle, at that time, observed the law externally, but not internally, by loving God above all things, as he himself says : “For we ourselves, also, were some time unwise, incredulous, erring, slaves to divers desires and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hating one another” (Tit. iii, 3).

17. They object, fifthly, all the precepts of the Decalogue are either possible or impossible; if they are possible, we can observe them by the strength of our free will alone, but if they are impossible, no one is bound to observe them, for no one is obliged to do impossibilities. We answer, that all these precepts are impossible to us without Grace, but are quite possible with the assistance of Grace. This is the answer of St. Thomas[16321] : “ Illud quod possumus cum auxili Divino, non est nobis omnino impossibile. . . . . .

. .Unde Hieronymus confitetur, sic nostrum esse liberum arbitrium, ut dicamus nos semper indigere Dei auxilio.” Therefore, as the observance of the Commandments is quite possible to us with the assistance of the Divine Grace, we are bound to observe them. We will answer the other objections of the Pelagians in the next chapter, the Refutation of the Semi-Pelagian heresy.

Refutation VI

OF THE SEMIPELAGIAN HERESY

1. The Semipelagians admit that the strength of the will of man has been weakened by Original Sin, and, therefore, allow that Grace is requisite to do what is right; but they deny that it is necessary for the beginning of Faith, or for the desire of eternal salvation; for they say that as the belief of sick people in the utility of medicine, and the wish to recover their health, are not works for which medicine is necessary, so the commencement of belief or call it an affection for the Faith and the desire of eternal salvation, are not works for which Grace is necessary. But we are bound to believe with the Catholic Church, that every beginning of Faith, and every good desire we entertain, is a working of Grace in us.

I. THE COMMENCEMENT OF FAITH AND EVERY GOOD DESIRE IS NOT FROM OURSELVES, BUT FROM GOD

2. First, that is clearly proved from St. Paul : “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God” (II. Cor. iii, 5). Thus the beginning of believing that is, not that beginning of Faith arising from the intellect, which naturally sees the truth of the Faith, but that pious desire of Faith, which is not yet formal faith, for it is no more than a thought, of wishing to believe, and which, as St. Augustine says, precedes belief this good thought, according to St. Paul, comes from God alone. Such is the explanation St. Augustine gives of the text : “Attendant hie, et verba ista perpendant, qui putant ex nobis esse Fidei coaptum, et ex Deo esse Fidei supplementum. Quis enim non videt, prius esse cogitare quam credere ? Nullus quippe credit aliquid, nisi prius crediderit esse credendum. Quamvis enim rapte, quamvis celerrime credendi voluntatem quaadam cogitationes antevolent, moxque ilia ita sequatur, ut quasi conjunctissima comitetur; necesse est tamen, ut omnia

quae credentur, praaveniente cogitatione credantur. . . . . . . Quod ergo pertinet ad religionem et pietatem (de qua loquebatur Apostolus), si non sumus idonei cogitare aliquid quasi ex nobis—metipsis, sed sufficientia nostra ex Deo est; profecto non sumus idonei credere aliquid quasi ex nobismetipsis, quod sine cogitatione non possumus, sed sufficientia nostra, qua credere incipiamus, ex Deo est"[16322]

3. It is proved, secondly, by another text of St. Paul, in which he shows the reason of our proposition. He says : "For who distinguished thee ? or what hast thou that thou hast not received" (I. Cor. iv, 7). If the beginning of that good will, which disposes us to receive the Faith from God, or any other gift of Grace, came from ourselves, that would distinguish us from others who had not this commencement of a wish for eternal life. But St. Paul says, that all that we have, in which is comprised every first desire of Faith or salvation, is received from God: "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" St. Augustine was of opinion, for a time, that Faith in God was not from God, but from ourselves, and that by that we obtain afterwards from God the Grace to lead a good life; but this text of the Apostle chiefly induced him to retract this sentiment afterwards, as he himself confesses[16323] : "Quo praecipue testimonio etiam ipse convictus sum, cum similiter errarem : putans Fidem, qua in Deum credimus, non esse donum Dei, sed a nobis esse in nobis, et per illam nos impetrare Dei dona, quibus temperanter et juste, et pie vivamus in hoc saeculo."

4. That is confirmed by what the Apostle says in another place :For by Grace you are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God. Not of works that no man may glory" (Ephes. ii, 8, 9). St. Augustine[16324] says that Pelagius himself, to escape condemnation from the Synod of Palestine, condemned (though only apparently) the proposition, that "Grace is given to us according to our merits." Hence, the Saint says : "Quis, autem, dicat euro, qui jam coepit credere, ab illo inquara credidit, nihil mereri ? Unde sit, ut jam merenti cetera dicantur addi retributione Divina : ac per hoc gratiam Dei secundum merita nostra dari :quod objectum sibi Pelagius, ne damnaretur, ipse damnavit."

5. Our proposition is proved, thirdly, from the words of the Incarnate Wisdom himself: "No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him" (John, vi, 44). And in another place he says : " Without

me you can do nothing" (John, xv, 5). From this it is manifest that we cannot, with our own strength, even dispose ourselves to receive from God the actual graces which conduce to life everlasting, for actual grace is of a supernatural order, and, therefore, a disposition morally natural cannot dispose us to receive a supernatural grace. " If by grace it is not now by works," says St. Paul, "otherwise grace is no more grace" (Rom. xi, 6). It is certain, therefore, that Grace is given to us by God, not according to our natural merits, but according to his Divine liberality. God who makes perfect in us every good work, He also commenced it : " He who began a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil, i, 6). And in another place the Apostle says that every good wish has its beginning from God, and is brought to a conclusion by Him : "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to his good will" (Phil, ii, 13). And here we are called on to advert to another error of the Semipelagians, who asserted that Grace was necessary to do what was good, but not necessary for perseverance in goodness. But this error was condemned by the Council of Trent (Sess. vi, cap. 13), which teaches that the gift of perseverance can only be obtained from God, who alone gives it : " Similiter de perseverantiae munere. . . . . . quod quidem aliunde haberi non potest nisi ab eo, qui potens est eum qui stat statuere, ut perseveranter stet."

II. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

6. The Semipelagians object, first, some passages of the Scripture, from which it would appear that a good will and the beginning of good works are attributed to us, and the perfection of them only to God. In the first book of Kings (vii, 3), we read: "Prepare your hearts for the Lord;" and in St. Luke (iii, 4) : "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." We also see in Zacchary : " Be converted to me andIwill be converted to you ;" and St. Paul speaks even plainer to the Romans (vii, 18), for he says : "For to will is present with me; but to accomplish that which is good I find not." It would appear also, from the Acts of the Apostles (xvii, 7), that the Faith which Cornelius received was to be attributed to his prayers. To these and to similar texts we answer, that the prevening (preveniens) internal Grace of the Holy Ghost is not excluded by them, but they suppose it, and we are

exhorted to correspond to this Grace, to remove the impediments to the greater graces, which God has prepared for those who correspond to him. Thus when the Scripture says, “Prepare your hearts,” “Be converted to me,” &c., it does not attribute to our free will the beginning of Faith or of conversion, without preventing or prevening Grace (gratia preveniens), but admonishes us to correspond to it, and teaches us that this preventing Grace leaves us at liberty either to choose or reject what is good for us. Thus, on the other hand, when the Scripture says, “The will is prepared by the Lord,” and when we say, “Convert us, God our Saviour” (Psalms, Ixxxiv, 5), we are admonished that Grace prepares us to do what is good, but does not deprive us of liberty, if we refuse to do so. This is precisely what the Council of Trent says : “Cum dicitur: Convertimini ad me, et ego convertar advos, libertatis nostrae admonemur. Cum respondemus: Converte nos Domine, et convertemur, Dei nos gratia praeveniri confitemur.” The same answer applies to that text of St. Paul : “For to will is present with me, but to accomplish that which is good I find not” (Romans, vii, 18). The meaning of the Apostle is this, that he, being then justified, had the Grace to desire what was good, but to perfect it was not his work, but the work of God; but he does not say that he had from himself the desire of doing good. The same answer applies to what is said of Cornelius, because, although he obtained his conversion to the Faith by his prayers, still these prayers were accompanied by preventing grace.

7. They object, secondly, what Christ says in St. Mark (xvi, 16) : “ He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Here they say one thing is required, that is Faith; another is promised, salvation. Therefore, what is required is in the power of man; what is promised is in the power of God. We answer, with St. Augustine[16325]. “ St. Paul,” says the Holy Doctor, “writes : If by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you are saved. “ (Rom. viii, 13). Here one thing is required, the mortification of the flesh; another tiling is promised, that is eternal life. Now, if the argument of the Semipelagians was worth anything, that what is required is in our power, without the assistance of Grace, it would follow, that without Grace we have it in our power to conquer our passions; but this, the Saint says, “ is the damnable error of the Pelagians.” He then gives a direct answer to the Semipelagians, and tells them that it is not in our power to give what is

required of us, without Grace, but with Grace it is, and he then concludes : Sicut ergo, quamvis donum Dei sit facta carnis mortificare, exigitur tamen a nobis proposito praemio vitae; ita donum Dei est Fides, quamvis et ipsa, dum dicitur, si credideris, salvus eris, proposito praemio salutis exigatur a nobis. Ideo enim haec et nobis praecipiuntur, et dona Dei esse monstrantur, ut intelligatur, quod et nos ea faciamus, et Deus facit ut ilia faciamus."

8. They object, thirdly, that God, in a thousand passages in the Scriptures, exhorts us to pray and seek, if we wish to receive Grace; therefore, they say it is in our power to pray at all events, and if the working out of our salvation and faith is not in our own hands, still the desire of believing and being saved is in our power.

St. Augustine[16326] also answers this argument. It is not the fact, he says, that prayer (such as it ought to be) is in our own unaided power. The gift of prayer comes from Grace, as the Apostle says : "Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself asketh for us" (Rom. viii, 26). Hence, St. Augustine says[16327] : "Quid est, ipse Spiritus interpellat, nisi interpellare facit ;" and he adds : "Attendant quomodo falluntur, qui putant esse a nobis, non dari nobis, ut petamus, quaeramus, pulsemus, et hoc esse dicunt, quod gratia praeceditur merito nostro. . . . . Nec volunt intelligere, etiam hoc Divini muneris esse, ut oremus, hoc est petamus, quaeramus, atque pulsemus; accepimus enim Spiritum adoptionis, in quo clamamus Abba Pater." The same Holy Doctor teaches us that God gives to all the Grace to pray, and through prayer the means of obtaining Grace to fulfil the Commandments; for otherwise, if one had not the efficacious Grace to fulfil the Commandments, and had not the Grace to obtain this efficacious Grace, through means of prayer either, he would be bound to observe a law which to him was impossible. But such, St. Augustine says, is not the case. Our Lord admonishes us to pray with the Grace of prayer, which he gives to all, so that by praying we may obtain efficacious Grace to observe the Commandments. He says : " Eo ipso quo firmissime creditur, Deum impossibilia non praecipere, hinc admonemur et in facilibus (that is in prayer) quid agamus, et in difficilibus (that is observing the Commandments) quid petamus." This is what the Council of Trent afterwards decreed on the same subject (Sess. vi, c. xi), following the remarkable expressions of the great Doctor : “Deus impossibilia non jubet, sed jubendo monet, et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis, et adjuvat ut possis”[16328], Thus by prayer we obtain strength to do what we cannot do of ourselves; but we cannot even boast of praying, for our very prayer is a gift from God.

9. That God gives generally to all the Grace of praying, St. Augustine (independently of the passages already quoted) teaches in almost every page of his works. In one place he says: “Nulli enim homini ablatum est scire utilitur quaerere”[16329]. And again : “Quid ergo aliud ostenditur nobis, nisi quia et petere et quaerere. Ille concedit, qui ut haec faciamus, jubet.”[16330] In another place, speaking of those who do not know what to do to obtain salvation, he says they should make use of what they have received, that is, of the Grace of prayer, and that thus they will obtain salvation[16331] : “ Sed hoc quoque accipiet, si hoc quod accipit bene usus fuerit; accepit autem, ut pie et diligenter quaerat, si volet.” Besides, in another passage[16332], he explains all this more diffusely, for he says it is for this reason that God commands us to pray, that by prayer we may obtain his gifts, and that he would invite us in vain to pray, unless he first gave us Grace to be able to pray, and by prayer to obtain Grace to fulfil what we are commanded : “ precepto admonitum est liberum arbitrium, ut quaereret Dei donum; at quidem sine suo fructu admoneretur, nisi prius acciperet aliquid dilectionis, ut addi sibi quaereret, unde quod jubebatur, impleret.” Mark how the words, “ aliquid dilectionis,” that is, the grace by which man prays, if he wishes, and by prayer obtains the actual Grace to observe the Commandments. And thus, on the day of judgment, no one can complain that he is lost for want of Grace to cooperate to his salvation, because if he had not actual Grace to work out his salvation, at all events he had Grace to pray, which is denied to no one, and if he prayed, he would obtain salvation according to the promises of our Lord : “ Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and you shall find” (Matt, vii, 7).

10. They object, fourthly, and say : If even for the beginning of Faith preventing Grace is necessary, then the infidels, who do not believe, are excusable, because the Gospel was never preached to them, and they, therefore, never refused to hear it. Jansenius[16333]says that these are not excused, but are condemned, without having had any sufficient Grace,

either proximate or remote, to become converted to the Faith, and that is, he says, in punishment of Original Sin, which has deprived them of all help. And those theologians, he says, who in general teach that these infidels have sufficient Grace for salvation, some way or other have adopted this opinion from the Semipelagians. This sentiment of Jansenius, however, is not in accordance with the Scripture, which says that God "will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth" (I. Tim. ii, 4); " He was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world" (John, i, 9); "Who is the Saviour of all men, especially the faithful" (I. Tim. iv, 10); " And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (I. John, ii, 2); "Who gave himself a redemption for all" (I. Tim. ii, 6). From these texts Bellarmin[16334] remarks that St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and St. Prosper, conclude that God never fails to give to all men sufficient assistance to work out their salvation, if they desire it. And St. Augustine[16335], especially, and St. Prosper[16336], express this doctrine in several parts of their works.

Besides, this sentiment of Jansenius is in direct opposition to the condemnation pronounced by Alexander VIII., in 1690, on that proposition, that Pagans, Jews, &c., have no sufficient Grace : " Pagani, Judaei, Haeritici, aliique hujus generis nullum omnino accipiunt a Jesu Christo influxum : adeoque hinc recte inferes, in illis esse voluntatem nudam et inermem sine omni gratia sufficiente." Neither does it argue with the condemnation pronounced by Clement XI., on two Propositions of Quesnel (26, 29): "That there are no graces unless by Faith," and that " no Grace is granted outside the Church."

11. Still we answer the Semipelagians, and say, that infidels who arrive at the use of reason, and are not converted to the Faith, cannot be excused, because though they do not receive sufficient proximate Grace, still they are not deprived of remote Grace, as a means of becoming converted. But what is this remote Grace ? St. Thomas[16337] explains it, when he says, that if any one was brought up in the wilds, or even among brute beasts, and if he followed the law of natural reason, to desire what is good, and to avoid what is wicked, we should certainly believe either that God, by an internal inspiration, would reveal to him what he should believe, or would send someone to preach the Faith to him, as he sent Peter to Cornelius. Thus,

then, according to the Angelic Doctor, God, at least remotely, gives to the infidels, who have the use of reason, sufficient Grace to obtain salvation, and this Grace consists in a certain instruction of the mind, and in a movement of the will, to observe the natural law; and if the infidel co-operates with this movement, observing the precepts of the law of nature, and abstaining from grievous sins, he will certainly receive, through the merits of Jesus Christ, the Grace proximately sufficient to embrace the Faith, and save his soul.

Refutation VII

Refutation OF THE HERESY OF NESTORIUS, WHO TAUGHT THAT IN CHRIST THERE ARE TWO PERSONS

1. Nestorius is not charged with any errors regarding the mystery of the Trinity. Among the other heresies which he combated in his Sermons, and to punish which he implored the Emperor Theodosius, was that of the Arians, who denied that the Word was consubstantial to the Father. We, therefore, have no reason to doubt that he acknowledged the Divinity of the Word, and his consubstantiality with the Father. His heresy particularly attacked the mystery of the Incarnation of the Divine Word, for he denied the hypostatic or Personal Union of the Word with the humanity. He maintained that the Word was only united with the humanity of Jesus Christ, just in the same way as with the Saints, only in a more perfect manner, and from the first moment of his conception. In his writings he explains this point over and over in different ways, but always only as a simple moral and accidental union between the Person of the Word and the humanity of Jesus Christ, but he never admits a hypostatic or personal union. At one time he said it was an union of habitation, that is, that the Word inhabited the humanity of Christ, as his temple; next it was, he said, an union of affection, such as exists between two friends. He then said it was an union of operation, inasmuch as the Word availed himself of the humanity of Christ as an instrument to work miracles, and other supernatural operations. Then that it was an union of Grace, because the Word, by means of sanctifying Grace and other Divine gifts, is united with Christ. Finally, he teaches that this union consists in a moral communication, by which the Word communicates his dignity and excellence to the humanity, and on this account the humanity of Christ should, he said, be adored and honoured, as we honour the purple of the Sovereign, or the throne on which he sits. He always denied with the most

determined obstinacy, that the Son of God was made man, was born, suffered, or died for the redemption of man. Finally, he denied the communication of the Idioms, which follows from the Incarnation of the Word, and, consequently, he denied that the Blessed Virgin was truly and properly the Mother of God, blasphemously teaching that she only conceived and brought forth a mere man.

2. This heresy saps the very foundation of the Christian Religion, by denying the mystery of the Incarnation, and we will attack it on its two principal points, the first of which consists in denying the hypostatic union, that is, the union of the Person of the Word with human nature, and, consequently, admits that there are two Persons in Christ the Person of the Word, which dwells in the humanity as in a temple, and the person of man, purely human, and which does not ascend to a higher degree than mere humanity. The second point consists in denying that the Blessed Virgin is truly and properly the Mother of God. These two points we will refute in the two following paragraphs.

I. IN JESUS CHRIST THERE IS BUT THE ONE PERSON OF THE WORD ALONE, WHICH TERMINATES THE TWO NATURES, DIVINE AND HUMAN, WHICH BOTH SUBSIST IN THE SAME PERSON OF THE WORD, AND, THEREFORE, THIS ONE PERSON IS, AT THE SAME TIME, TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN

3. Our first proof is taken from all those passages in the Scripture, in which it is said that God was made flesh, that God was born of a Virgin, that God emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, that God has redeemed us with his blood, that God died for us on the Cross. Everyone knows that God could not be conceived, nor born, nor suffer, nor die. in his Divine Nature, which is eternal, impassable, and immortal; therefore, if the Scripture teaches us that God was born, and suffered, and died, we should understand it according to his human nature, which had a beginning, and was passible and mortal. And, therefore, if the Person in which the human nature subsists was not the Divine Word, St. Matthew would state what is false when he says that God was conceived and born of a Virgin : “Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the Prophet, saying : Behold a Virgin shall be with child and bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is God with us” (Matt, i, 22, 23). St. John expressly says the same thing : “The Word was made flesh and

dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John, i, 14.) The Apostle also would have stated a falsehood in saying that God humbled himself, taking the form of a servant : "For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men and in habit found as a man" (Phil, ii, 5 7.) St. John would also state what is not the fact, when he says that God died for us : "In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us" (I. John, iii, 6); and St. Paul says : "The Holy Ghost placed you Bishops to rule the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood" (Acts, xx, 18); and speaking of the death of our Redeemer, he says : "For if they had known it, they never would have crucified the Lord of glory" (I Cor. ii, 8.)

4. Now it would be false to speak of God in that manner, if God only inhabited the humanity of Jesus Christ accidentally, as a temple, or morally, through affection, or was not united hypostatically or personally, just as it would be false to say that God was born of St. Elizabeth, when she brought forth the Baptist, in whom God inhabited before his birth, by sanctifying grace, and it would be false to say that God died stoned when St. Stephen was stoned to death, or that he died beheaded when St. Paul was beheaded, because he was united to these Saints through the medium of love, and of the many heavenly gifts he bestowed on them, so that between them and God there existed a true moral union. When, therefore, it is said that God was born and died, the reason is because the Person sustaining and terminating the assumed humanity is truly God, that is the eternal Word. There is, therefore, in Christ but one Person, in which two Natures subsist, and in the unity of the Person of the Word, which terminates the two natures, consists the hypostatic union.

This truth is also proved, secondly, from those passages of the Scriptures in which Christ-Man is called God, the Son of God, the only begotten Son, the proper Son of God, for a man cannot be called God or Son of God, unless the person who terminates the human nature is truly God. Now Christ-Man is called the supreme God by St. Paul : "And of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all things God blessed for ever" (Rom. xix, 5).

5. We read in St. Matthew that Christ himself, after calling himself the Son of Man asked his disciples whom do they believe him to be, and St. Peter answers that he is the Son of the living God : “Jesus saith to them, but whom do you say that I am ?Simon Peter answered and said :Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering, said to him :Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven” (Matt, xvi, 1517). Then Jesus himself, at the very time that he calls himself man, approves of Peter’s answer, who calls him the Son of God, and says that this answer was revealed to him by his eternal Father. Besides, we read in St. Matthew (iii, 17), St. Luke (ix, 13), and St. Mark (i, 11), that Christ, while he was actually receiving Baptism as man from St. John, was called by God his beloved Son : “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” St. Peter tells us that in Mount Thabor the Eternal Father spoke the same words : “ For, he received from God the Father, honour and glory; this voice coming down to him from the excellent glory :This is my beloved Son, in whom I have pleased myself, hear ye him” (II. Pet. i, 17). Christ, as man, is called the only begotten Son of the Eternal Father, by St. John : “The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John, i, 18). As man alone, he is called God’s own Son : “ He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all” (Rom. viii, 32). After so many proofs from the Holy Scriptures, who will be rash enough to deny that the man Christ is truly God ?

6. The Divinity of Jesus Christ is proved from all these passages of the Scriptures, in which that which can only be attributed to God is attributed to the Person of Christ-Man, and from thence we conclude that this Person, in which the two Natures subsist, is true God. Jesus, speaking of himself, says : “ I and the Father are one” (John, x, 30); and in the same place he says: “The Father is in me, and I in the Father” (ver. 38). In another passage we read that St. Philip, one day speaking with Jesus Christ, said : “Lord, show us the Father,” and our Lord answered:So long a time have I been with thee, and have you not known me ? Philip, he that seeth me seeth the Father also. Believe you not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?” (John, xiv, 8 11). By these words Christ showed he was the same God as the Father. Christ himself said to the Jews that he was eternal : “Amen, amen, I say unto you, before Abraham was I am” (John, vii, 58); and he says, also, that

he works the same as the Father: “My Father worketh until now, and I work for what things soever he doth, these the Son also doth in like manner” (John, v, 17). He also says : “All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine” (John, xvi, 15). Now, if Christ was not true God all these sayings would be blasphemous, attributing to himself what belongs to God alone.

7. The Divinity of Christ-Man is proved from those other passages of the Scriptures, in which it is said that the Word, or the Son of God, became incarnate : “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John, i, 14); “For God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son” (John, iii, 16); “ He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for all of us” (Rom. viii, 32). Now, if the Person of the Word was not hypostatically united that is, in one Person with the humanity of Christ it could not be said that the Word was incarnate, and was sent by the Father to redeem the world, because if this personal union did not exist between the Word and the humanity of Christ, there would be only a moral union of habitation, or affection, or Grace, or gifts, or operation, and in this sense we might say that the Father and the Holy Ghost became incarnate also, for all these sorts of unions are not peculiar to the Person of the Word alone, but to the Father and the Holy Ghost, likewise, for God is united in this manner with the Angels and Saints. God has frequently sent Angels as his ambassadors; but, as St. Paul says, our Lord has never taken the nature of angels : “For nowhere doth he take hold of the angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold” (Heb. ii, 16).

Thus, if Nestorius means to assert that unions of this sort are sufficient to enable us to say that the Word was incarnate, we should also say that the Father was incarnate, for the Father, by his Graces and his heavenly gifts, was united with, and morally dwelt in, Jesus Christ, according to what our Lord himself says : “The Father is in me the Father remaining in me” (John, xiv, 10). We should also admit that the Holy Ghost became incarnate, for Isaias, speaking of the Messiah, says : “The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding” (Isaias, xi, 2). And in St. Luke it is said, that “Jesus was full of the Holy Ghost” (Luke, iv, 1). In fine, according to this explanation, every Saint or holy person who loves God could be called the Incarnate Word, for our Saviour says : “ If any one love me my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him” (John, xiv, 23). Thus Nestorius should admit, either that the Word is not incarnate, or that the Father and the Holy Ghost are incarnate. This was the unanswerable argument of St. Cyril[16338] : “ Quod unus sit Christus, ejusmodi in habitatione Verbum non fieret caro, sed potius hominis incola; et conveniens fuerit ilium non hominem, sed humanum vocare, quemadmodum et qui Nazareth inhabitavit, Nazarenus dictus est, non Nazareth. Quinimo nihil prorsus obstiterit hominem vocari una cum Filio etiam Patrem, et Spiritum Sanctum, habitavit enim in nobis.”

8. I might here add all those texts of Scripture in which Christ is spoken of as only one Person subsisting in two Natures, as in St. Paul : “One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things,” &c. (I. Cor. viii, 6), and several other texts of like import. If Nestorius insisted that there were two Persons in Christ, he makes out not one, but two Lords one, the Person of the Word which dwells in Christ, and the other the human Person. I will not detain the reader, however, by quoting more Scriptural authorities, for every proof of the Incarnation upsets the whole structure of Nestorianism.

9. We now come to Tradition, which has always taught the Faith of the unity of the Person of Jesus Christ in the Incarnation of the Word. In the Apostles Creed, taught by the Apostles themselves, we say, we believe “ in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.” Now, the same Jesus Christ who was conceived, born, and died, is the only Son of God, our Lord; but that would not be the case, if in Christ, as Nestorius taught, there was not only a Divine, but a human Person, because he who was born and died would not have been the only Son of God, but a mere man.

10. This profession of Faith is laid down more amply in the Nicene Creed, in which the Fathers defined the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and his consubstantiality with the Father, and thus condemned the heresy of Nestorius, even before it sprung up : “ We believe,” say the Fathers, “ in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten Son of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, born, not made, consubstantial to the Father, by whom all things were made, both those in heaven and those on the earth, who for us men, and for our salvation, descended and was incarnate, and was made man; he suffered and arose the third day,” &c. Behold, therefore, how Jesus Christ alone, who is called God, the only begotten of the Father, and

consubstantial to the Father, is called man, who was born, died, and rose again. This same Symbol was approved of by the Second General Council, that is, the first of Constantinople, which was also held before Nestorius promulgated his blasphemies; and according to the same Symbol of Nice, he was condemned in the Third General Council, that of Ephesus, which was held against his errors. In the Symbol attributed to St. Athanasius, the dogma is thus established in opposition to Nestorianism : "Our Lord Jesus Christ is God and man equal to the Father, according to his Divinity; less than the Father, according to his humanity; who, although he is God and man, these are not two, but one Christ one altogether not by the confusion of substance, but by Unity of the Person.

11. Besides those Symbols, we have the authority of the Holy Fathers who wrote before the rise of this heresy. St. Ignatius the Martyr[16339] says : " Singuli communiter omnes ex gratia nominatim convenientes in una Fide, et uno Jesu Christo, secundum camera ex genere Davidis, Filio hominis, et Filio Dei." See here how he mentions one Jesus Christ, the Son of man and the Son of God. St. Irueneus says[16340] : " Unum et eundem esse Verbum Dei, et hunc esse unigenitum, et hunc incarnatum pro salute nostra Jesum Christum." St. Dionisius of Alexandria, in a Synodical Epistle, refutes Paul of Samosata, who said that in Christ there were two Persons and two Sons; the one the Son of God, born before all ages; the other the Son of David, called Christ. St. Athanasius[16341] says: "Homo una Persona, et unum animal est ex spiritu et carne compositum, ad cujus similitudinem intelligendum est, Christum unam esse Personam, et non duas" that, as soul and body make but one person in man, so the Divine and human nature constitute but one Person in Christ. St. Gregory of Nazianzen[16342] says : " Id quod non erat assumpsit, non quo factus, sed unum ex duobus fieri substinens; Deus enim ambo sunt id quod assumpsit, et quod est assumtum, naturue duue in unum concurrentes, non duo Filii." St. John Chrysostom[16343] thus writes : " Etsi enim (in Christo) duplex natura; verumta men indivisibilis unio in una filiationis Persona, et substantial.

St. Ambrose[16344] tersely explains : "Non alter ex Patre, alter ex Virgine, sed item aliter ex Patre, aliter ex Virgine." St. Jerome, opposing Elvidius, says, that " we believe that God was born of a virgin ;" and in another place he says[16345] : “Anima et caro Christo cum Verbo Dei una Persona est, unus Christus.”

12. It would extend the work too much to quote more from the Holy Fathers, so I will pass on to the Decrees of Councils. The Council of Ephesus[16346], after a mature examination of the Catholic dogma, by Scripture and Tradition, condemned Nestorius, and deposed him from the See of Constantinople. Here are the words of the Decree : “Dominus noster Jesu Christus quem suis ille blasphemis vocibus impetivit per Ss. hunc Synodum eundem Nestorium Episcopali dignitate privatum, et ab universo Sacerdotum consortio, et caetu alienum esse definit.” The Fourth General Council, that of Chalcedon, defined the same thing (Act. 5) : “Sequentes igitur Ss. Patres, unum, eum demque confiteri Filium, et Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum consonanter omnes docemus, eundem perfectum in Deitate, et eundem perfectum in humanitate, Deum verum, et hominem verum non in duas personas partitum, aut divisum, sed unum eundemque Filium, et unigenitum Deum Verbum, Dominum Jesum Christum.” The Third Council of Constantinople that is, the Sixth General Council defined the same doctrine in the last Action; and the Seventh General Council, that is, the Second of Nice, did the same in the Seventh Action.

II. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

13. They object, first, certain passages of the Scripture, in which the humanity of Christ is called the temple and habitation of God : “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up But he spoke of the temple of his body” (John, ii, 19 21). In another place it is said : “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporeally” (Col. ii, 9). We answer, that in these texts the personal union of the Word with the human nature is not denied, but is even more strongly confirmed. Why should we be surprised that the body of Christ, hypostatically united with his soul to the Divine Word, should be called a temple ? Why, even our body united to the soul is called a house and tabernacle : “For we know if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved” (II. Cor. v, 1). And again (ver. 4) : “For we also who are in this tabernacle do groan, being burthened.” As, therefore, it is no argument against the personal union of the body and soul, to call the body a house and tabernacle, so calling the body of Christ a temple does not prove

anything against the hypostatic union of the Word with the humanity of Christ; on the contrary, our Saviour even expresses this union himself in the words which follow : “ In three days I will raise it up ;” for by that he shows that he was not only man, but God.

The Divinity of Christ is also clearly proved by the other text, in which St. Paul says that the followers of the Divinity dwelt bodily in him, thus declaring him to be at the same time true God and true man, according to the words of St. John : “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”

14. They object, secondly, that text of the Epistle: “Being made in the likeness of man, and inhabit formed as a man” (Phil, ii, 7). According to that, they say that Christ was a man like unto all other men. We answer that in the previous part of the text the Apostle already answers this, for he shows that Christ was God and equal to God : “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” Therefore the words quoted only prove that the Divine Word being God was made man like unto other men, but that he was not a mere man like all other men.

15. They object, thirdly, that everything in nature ought to have its own peculiar subsistentia, but the subsistentia of human nature is a human person, therefore if in Christ there was not a human person he was not true man. We reply that this is not necessary, if there be a higher or more noble subsistentia, as was the case in Christ, where the Word sustained both Natures, and, therefore, though in Christ there was only the Divine Person of the Word, still he was true man, because the human nature subsisted in the Word itself.

16. They object, fourthly, if the humanity of Christ consisted of both soul and body, it was complete and perfect; there was, therefore, in him a human person, besides the Divine Person. We answer, that the humanity of Christ was complete by reason of nature, for it wanted nothing, but not by reason of the Person, because the Person in which the Nature subsisted and was comprised was not a human but a Divine Person, and, therefore, we cannot say that there were two Persons in Christ, for one Person alone, that of the Word, sustains and comprises both the Divine and human Nature.

17. They object, fifthly, that St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Athanasius have sometimes called the humanity of Christ the house, the domicile, and the temple of God the Word. Besides that, St. Athanasius, Eusebius of Ceserea, and St. Cyril himself, have spoken of it as the instrument of the

Divinity. St. Basil calls Christ " Deiferous," the bearer of God. St. Epiphanius and St. Augustine, " Hominem Dominicum," and St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, in the " Te Deum," say that the Word assumed man. We answer, that the Fathers, as we have already seen, have clearly expressed that Christ is true God and true man, so that if there be any obscure passage in these words it is easily cleared up by many others. St. Basil calls Christ the God-bearing man, not because he admits a human person in Christ, but to quash the error of Apollinares, who denied that Christ had a rational soul, and the Holy Father only intended, therefore, to show by this expression that the Word assumed both a body and soul; when St. Ambrose and St. Augustine say that the Word assumed man, " assumpsit hominem," they only use the word " hominem" for human nature.

18. We may as well also here refute the errors of the Bishops Felix and Elipandus, who taught (ch. v, n. 39), that Jesus Christ as man was not the natural, but only the adopted Son of God. This opinion was condemned by several Councils, and also by the Popes Adrian and Leo X. The learned Petavius[16347] says that it is not actually heretical, but at all events it is rash, and approaching to error, for it is more or less opposed to the unity of the Person of Christ, who, even as man, should be called the natural, and not the adopted Son of God, lest we might be drawn in to admit that in Christ there were two Sons, one natural, and the other adopted.

19. There are, however, two reasons to prove that Christ as man should be called the natural Son of God; the more simple one is found in that passage of the Scriptures, in which the Father speaks of the eternal and continual generation of the Son : "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Psalms, ii, 7). Hence, as the Divine Son was generated previous to his Incarnation, without being personally united to human nature by the flesh, so when he took flesh he was generated, and is always generated, with human nature, hypostatically united to the Divine Person; and hence the Apostle, speaking of Christ as man, applies to him the text of David now quoted : " So Christ also did not glorify himself, that he might be made a high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Heb. v, 5). Jesus Christ, therefore, even according to his humanity, is the true Natural Son of God[16348].

III. MARY IS THE REAL AND TRUE MOTHER OF GOD

20. The truth of this dogma is a necessary consequence of what we have already said on the subject of the two Natures; for if Christ as man is true God, and if Mary be truly the Mother of Christ as man, it necessarily follows that she must be also truly the Mother of God. We will explain it even more clearly by Scripture and tradition. In the first place the Scripture assures us that a Virgin (that is the Virgin Mary) has conceived and brought forth God, as we see in Isaias (vii, 14) : “ Behold a Virgin shall conceive and shall bring forth a Son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel, which is interpreted (says St. Matthew), God with us.” St. Luke, relating what the angel said to Mary, proves the same truth : “Behold thou shalt conceive in the womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke, i, 31 35.) Mark the words : “shall be called the Son of the Most High,” “shall be called the Son of God,” that is, shall be celebrated and recognized by the whole world as the Son of God.

21. 20. St. Paul proves the same truth when he says : “Which he had promised before by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures. Concerning the Son who was made to him in the seed of David, according to the flesh” (Rom. i, 2, 3); and, writing to the Galatians, he says : “ When the fullness of time was come God sent his Son made of a woman made under the law” (Gal. iv, 4). This Son, promised by God through the Prophets, and sent in the fullness of time, is God equal to the Father, as has been already proved, and this same God, sprang from the seed of David, according to the flesh, was born of Mary; she is, therefore, the true Mother of this God. Besides, St. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Ghost, called Mary the Mother of her Lord : “And whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me ?” (Luke, i, 43). Who was the Lord of St. Elizabeth, unless God ?Jesus Christ himself, also, as often as he called Mary his Mother, called himself the Son of Man, and still the Scriptures attest that without the operation of man he was born of a Virgin. He once asked his disciples : “Whence do men say that the Son of Man is ?” (Matt, xvi, 13), and St. Peter answered : “Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God ;” and our Saviour answered : “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven.” Therefore, the Son of Man is the true Son of God, and, consequently, Mary is the Mother of God.

22. In the second place this truth is proved from tradition. The Symbols or Creeds already quoted against Nestorius, proving that Jesus Christ is true God, also prove that Mary is the true Mother of God, since they teach, “That he was conceived of the Holy Ghost from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.” The decree of the Second Council of Nice (Act. VII.) even declares, if possible, more clearly, that Mary is the true Mother of God : “ Confitemur autem et Dominam nostram sanctam Mariam proprio et veraciter (properly and truly) Dei Genitricem, quoniam peperit carne unum ex S. Trinitate Christum Deum nostrum; secundum quod et Ephesinum prius dogmatizavit Concilium, quod impium Nestorium cum Collegis suis tanquam personalem dualitatem introducentes ab Ecclesia pepulit.”

23. Mary has been called the Mother of God by all the Fathers. I will merely quote from a few who wrote in the early ages previous to Nestorius. St. Ignatius the Martyr[16349] says : “Deus noster Jesus Christus ex Maria genitus est.” St. Justin[16350] : “ Verbum formatum est, et homo factus est ex Virgine ;” and again : “ Ex Virginali utero Primogenitum omnium rerum conditarum carne factum vere puerum nasci, id praeoecupans per Spiritum Sanctum.” St. Iraeneus[16351] says : “ Verbum existens ex Maria, quae adhuc erat virgo, recte accipiebat generationem Adae recapitulationis.” St. Dionisius of Alexandria writes[16352] : “ Quomodo ais tu, hominem esse eximium Christum, et non revera Deum, et ab omni creatura cum Patre, et Spiritu Sancto adorandum, incarnatum ex Virgine Deipara Maria?” And he adds : “Una sola Virgo filia vitae genuit Verbum vivens, et per se subsistens increatum, et Creatorem.” St. Athanasius[16353] says : “ Hunc scopum, et characterem sanctae Scripturae esse, nempe ut duo de Salvatore demonstret :ilium scilicet Deum semper fuisse, et Filium esse ipsumque postea propter nos, carne ex Virgine Deipara Maria assumpta, hominem factum esse.” St. Gregory of Nazianzen[16354] says : “ Si quis sanctam Mariam Deiparam non credit, extra Divinitatem est.” St. John Chrysostom says[16355]: “ Admodum stupendum est audire Deum ineffabilem, inenarrabilem, incomprehensibilem, Patri aequalem per Virgineam venisse vulvam, et ex muliere nasci dignatum esse.” Among the Latin Fathers we will quote a few. Tertullian says[16356] : “Ante omnia commendanda erit ratio quae praefuit, ut Dei Filius de Virgine nasceretur.” St. Ambrose says[16357]:

“Filium coaeternum Patri suscepisse carnem, natum de Spiritu Sancto ex Virgine Maria.”

St. Jerome says[16358] : “ Natum Deum ex Virgine credimus, quia legimus.” St. Augustine[16359] says : “ Invenisse apud Deum gratiam dicitur (Mariae ut Domini sui, imo omnium Domini Mater esset.”

24. I omit other authorities, and will confine myself to only one, that of John, Bishop of Antioch, who wrote to Nestorius in the name of Theodoret, and several other friends of his, on the name of the Mother of God : “ Nomen quod a multis saepe Patribus usurpatum, ac pronunciatum est, adjungere ne graveris; neque vocabulum, quod piam rectamque notionem animi exprimit, refutare pergas; etenim nomen hoc Theotocos nullus unquam Ecclesiasticorum Doctorum repudiavit. Qui enim illo usi sunt, et multi reperiuntur, et apprime celebres; qui vero illud non usurparunt, nunquam erroris alicujus eos insimularunt, qui illo usi sunt Etenim si id quod nominis significatione offertur, non recipimus, restat ut in gravissimum errorem prolabamur, iino vero ut inexplicabilem illam unigeniti Filii Dei deconomiam abnegemus. Quandoquidem nomine hoc sublato vel hujus potius nominis notione repudiata, sequitur mox ilium non esse Deum, qui admirabilem illam dispensationem nostrae salutis causa suscepit, turn Dei Verbum neque sese exinanivisse,” &c. We may as well mention that St. Cyril wrote to Pope St. Celestine, informing him, that so deeply implanted was this belief in the hearts of the people of Constantinople, that when they heard Dorotheus, by order of Nestorius, pronounce an anathema against those who asserted that she was the Mother of God, they all rose up as one man, refused to hold any more communication with Nestorius, and from that out would not go to the church, a clear proof of what the universal belief of the Church was in those days.

25. The Fathers adduced several reasons to convince Nestorius. I will only state two :First It cannot be denied that she is the Mother of God, who conceived and brought forth a Son, who, at the time of his conception, was God. But both Scripture and Tradition prove that our Blessed Lady brought forth this Son of God; she is, therefore, truly the Mother of God. “ Si Deus est,” says St. Cyril, “Dominus noster Jesus Christus, quomodo Dei Genetrix non est, quaa ilium genuit, Sancta Virgo”[16360]?

Here is the second reason : If Mary be not the Mother of God, then the son whom she brought forth is not God, and, consequently, the Son of God and the son of Mary are not the same. Now Jesus Christ, as we have already seen, has proclaimed himself the Son of God, and he is the son of Mary; therefore, the Nestorians must admit, either that Jesus Christ is not the son of Mary, or that Mary, being the Mother of Jesus Christ, is truly the Mother of God.

IV. THE OBJECTIONS OF THE NESTORIANS ANSWERED

26. First, they object that the word Deipara, or Mother of God, is not used either in the Scriptures or in the Symbols of the Councils; but we answer, that neither in Scripture or Symbols do we find the word Christotocos, Mother of Christ; therefore, according to that argument, she should not be called the Mother of Christ, as Nestorius himself calls her. But we will give even a more direct answer. It is just the same thing to say that Mary is the Mother of God, as to say that she conceived and brought forth God; but both Scripture and Councils say that she brought forth a God, they, therefore, proclaim her, in equivalent terms, the Mother of God. Besides, the Fathers of the first centuries, as we have quoted, constantly called her the Mother of God, and the Scripture itself calls her Mother of our Lord, as Elizabeth, when filled with the Holy Ghost, said : "Whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me ?"

27. They object, secondly, that Mary did not generate the Divinity, and, consequently, she cannot be called the Mother of God. We answer, that she should be called the Mother of God, because she was the mother of a man, who was at the same time true God and true man, just as we say that a woman is the mother of a man composed both of soul and body, though she only produces the body, and not the soul, which is created by God alone. Therefore, as Mary, though she has not generated the Divinity, still, as she brought forth a man, according to the flesh, who was, at the same time, God and man, she should be called the Mother of God.

28. They object, thirdly, that the Mother ought to be consubstantial to the Son; but the Virgin is not consubstantial to God, therefore, she ought not to be called the Mother of God. We answer, that Mary is not consubstantial to Christ as to the Divinity, but merely in humanity alone, and because her son

is both man and God, she is called the Mother of God. They say, besides, that if we persist in calling her the Mother of God, we may induce the simple to believe that she is a Goddess herself; but we answer, that the simple are taught by us that she is only a mere creature, but that she brought forth Christ, God and man. Besides, if Nestorius was so scrupulous about calling her the Mother of God, lest the simple might be led to believe that she was a Goddess, he ought to have a greater scruple in denying her that title, lest the simple might be led to believe, that as she was not the Mother of God, consequently Christ was not God.

Refutation VIII

Refutation OF THE HERESY OF EUTYCHES, WHO ASSERTED THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE NATURE IN CHRIST

1. The Eutychian heresy is totally opposed to the Nestorian. Nestorius taught that there were two Persons and two Natures in Christ. Eutyches, on the contrary, admitted that there was but one Person, but he asserted that there was but one Nature, likewise, for the Divine Nature, he said, absorbed the human nature. Hence, Nestorius denied the Divinity of Christ, Eutyches his humanity; so both one and the other destroyed the mystery of the Incarnation and of the Redemption of man. We do not exactly know how Eutyches explained his doctrine of only one Nature in Christ. In the Council held by St. Flavian he merely explained it in these terms : “That our Lord was of two Natures before the union, but after the union only of one Nature.” And when the Fathers pressed him to explain more clearly, he only answered, that he came not to dispute, but only to suggest to his Holiness what his opinion was[16361]. Now, in these few words Eutyches uttered two blasphemies :First That after the Incarnation there was only one Nature in Christ, that is, the Divine Nature, as he understood it; and, secondly That before the Incarnation of the Word there were two Natures, the Divine and the human nature. As St. Leo says, writing to St. Flavian : “ Cum tam impie duarum Naturarum ante Incarnationem Unigenitus Dei Filius fuisse dicatur, quam nefarie postquam Verbum caro factum est, Natura in eo singular is asseritur.”

2. Returning, however, to the principal error, that the two Natures became one after the Incarnation, that might be asserted to have happened in four ways :First That one of the Natures was changed into the other. Second That both Natures were mixed up and confused, and so only formed one. Third That without this mixing up, the two Natures in their union formed a

third. And, fourth That the human was absorbed by the Divine Nature, and this is, most probably, the opinion of the Eutychians. Now, the Catholic dogma is totally opposed to this unity of the Natures in Christ, no matter in what sense the Eutychians understood it. This is what we are going to prove.

I. IN CHRIST THERE ARE TWO NATURES THE DIVINE AND THE HUMAN NATURE DISTINCT, UNMIXED, UNCONFUSED, AND ENTIRE, SUBSISTING INSEPARABLY IN THE ONE HYPOSTASIS, OR PERSON OF THE WORD

3. This dogma is proved from the passages of Scripture already quoted against Arius and Nestorius, in which Christ is proved to be both God and man; for, as he could not be called God, if he had not perfect Divine Nature, so he could not be called man, if he had not perfect human nature. We will, however, set the matter in a clearer light. In the Gospel of St. John (Chap, i), after saying that the Word is God " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" it is stated in the 14th verse, that human nature was assumed by the Word : "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

Hence, St. Leo, in his celebrated Epistle to St. Flavian, says : " Unus idemque (quod saepe dicendum est) vere Dei Filius, et vere hominis Filius. Deus per id quod in principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum :Homo per id quod Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis. Deus per id quod omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil :Homo per id quod factus est ex muliere, factus sub lege."

4. The two Natures in Christ are also most clearly proved by that celebrated text of St. Paul (Philip, ii, 6), which we have so frequently quoted : " For let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man. and in habit formed as a man." Here the Apostle allows in Christ the form of God, according to which he is equal to God, and the form of a servant, according to which he emptied himself, and was made like unto men. Now, the form of God and the form of a servant cannot be the same form, nor the same Nature; because, if it was the same human nature, we could not say that Christ is equal to God; and, on the contrary, if it was the same Divine Nature, Christ could not be said to have emptied himself, and

made himself like unto man. We must, therefore, admit that there are two Natures in Christ, the Divine Nature, by which he is equal to God, and the human nature, by which he is made like unto man.

5. Besides, this text proves that the two natures in Christ are unmingled and unconfused, each retaining its own properties, because, if the Divine Nature was changed in him, he would no longer be God when he became man; but that would contradict what St. Paul says (Rom. ix, 5) : " Of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all things God blessed forever." Thus Christ is, at the same time, God and man, according to the flesh.

If the human was absorbed by the Divine Nature, or even changed into a Divine substance, as the Eutychians say, as we learn from Theodoret in his Dialogue Inconfusus, where Eranistes, an Eutychian, says : "Ego dico mansisse Divinitatem, ab hac vero absorptam esse humanitatem. . . . . . . ut mare mellis guttam si accipiat, statim enim guttailla evanescit maris aquae permixta. . . . . . Non dicimus delatam esse naturam, quae assumpta est, sed mutatam esse in substantiam Divinitatis." Thus the human nature, according to them, was absorbed in the Divine Nature, like a drop of honey in the ocean. But supposing that to be the fact, Christ could no longer be called man as he is in the Gospels, and all the New Testament, and as St. Paul calls him in the text already quoted, and again, in his I. Epistle to Timothy (ii, 6) : "The man Christ Jesus, who gave himself in redemption for all." Neither could we say that he emptied himself in human nature, if it was changed into the Divinity. If the human nature, therefore, was thus mixed up with the Divine Nature, Christ would no longer be either true God or true man, but some third sort of Person, which is contrary to the whole teaching of the Scriptures. We are bound, therefore, to conclude that the two Natures in Christ are unmingled and unconfused, and that each Nature retains its own properties.

6. All those other passages of the Scriptures which affirm that Christ had a true body and a true soul united to that body, confirm the truth of this dogma, for from this it is manifest that the human nature remained entire and unmixed in Christ, and was not confused with the Divine Nature, which remained entire also. That Christ had a real body is proved by St. John, against Simon Magus, Menander, Saturninus, and others, who asserted that his body was not a true, but only an apparent one. Hear the words of St. John : "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is

of God, and every spirit that dissolveth Jesus Christ (in the Greek version who does not confess that Jesus is come in the flesh) is not of God, and this is Antichrist" (I. Epis. iv, 2, 3.) St. Peter (I. Epis. ii, 24), says : "Who of his ownself bore our sins in his body on the tree ;" and St. Paul, writing to the Collossians (i, 22), says : " He hath reconciled in the body of his flesh through death ;" and again, writing to the Hebrews (x, 5), he puts into the mouth of Jesus these words of the thirty-ninth Psalm : "Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast fitted to me." I omit many other passages in which the body of Christ is mentioned. Our Lord himself speaks of his soul in St. John (x, 15), when he says: " I lay down my life (animam) for my sheep ;" and again (ver. 17) : " I lay down my life (animam), that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself." In St. Matthew he says (xxvi, 38) : " My soul is sorrowful unto death." It was his blessed soul that was separated from his body at his death, when St. John says (xix, 30), that, "bowing his head, he gave up the ghost." Christ, therefore, had a true body and a true soul united to each other, and he was, therefore, a true man, and that this body and this soul existed whole and entire after the hypostatic union, is clear from the passages quoted, all of which refer to Christ, after this union had taken place. There is no foundation, therefore, for asserting that his human nature was absorbed into the Divinity, or changed into it.

7. A confirmatory proof is given by those texts in which matters are attributed to Christ which belong to the human nature alone, and not to the Divine Nature, and others, which properly belong to the Divine Nature alone, and not to the human nature. As regards the human nature it is certain that the Divine Nature could not be conceived, could not be born, or grow up to manhood, or suffer hunger or thirst, or weakness, or sorrow, or torments, or death, for it is independent, impassible, and immortal; these feelings belong to human nature alone. Now Jesus Christ was conceived and born of the Virgin Mary (Matt. i). He grew up to manhood : "he advanced in wisdom and in age, and grace with God and man" (Luke, ii, 52); he fasted and was hungry : "When he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry" (Matt, iv, 2); he was wearied : "Jesus therefore being weary with his journey, sat thus on the well" (John, iv, 6); he wept : "Seeing the city he wept over it" (Luke, xix, 41); he suffered death : " He was made obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross"

(Phil, ii, 8); and "saying this, he gave up the ghost" (Luke, xxiii, 45); "And crying out with a loud voice he gave up the ghost" (Matt, xxvii, 50). It does not belong, either, to the Divine Nature to pray, to obey, to offer sacrifice, to humble himself, and such like actions, all of which the Scriptures attribute to Jesus Christ. All these actions, therefore, belong to Jesus as man, and, consequently, after the Incarnation he was true man.

8. As to the second part, it is certain that human nature cannot be consubstantial to the Father, nor have all that the Father has, nor operate all that the Father operates; it cannot be eternal, nor omnipotent, nor omniscient, nor immutable, and still all these attributes are properly applied to Jesus Christ, as we have proved against Arius and Nestorius; therefore in Jesus Christ there is not alone the human, but also the Divine Nature. St. Leo in his Epistle to St. Flavian states this so forcibly that I cannot omit quoting the original : " Nativitas carnis manifestatio est humanae naturae : partus Virginis Divinae est virtutis indicium : infantia Parvuli ostenditur humilitato eunaram : magni tude Altissimi declaratur vocibus Angelorum. Similis est redimentis homines, quem Herodes impius molitur occidere; sed Dominus est omnium, quem Magi gaudentes veniunt suppliciter adorare. Cum ad Praecursoris sui baptismum venit, ne lateret, quod carnis velamine Divinitas operiatur, vox Patris de Coelo intonans dixit : "Hic est Filius mcus dilcctus, in quo mihi bene complacui. Sicut hominem Diabolica tentat astutia, sic Deo Angelica famulantur officia. Esurire, sitire, lassescere, atque dormire, evidentur humanum est :quinque panibus quinque millia hominum satiare, targiri Samaritanae aquam vivam, &c., sine ambiguitate dicendum est. Non ejusdem naturae est fiere miserationis affectu, amicum mortuum, et eundem quatriduanao aggere sepulturae ad vocis impcrium excitare redivivum : aut in ligno pendere, et innoctem luce conversa omnia clementa tremefacere : aut clavis transfixuin esse, et Paradisi portas fidei Eatroni aperire. Non ejusdem naturae est dicere :Ego et Pater unum sumus, et dicere: Pater major me est."

9. Besides the Scripture, tradition has constantly preserved the faith of the two Natures in Christ. In the Apostles Creed we see this marked down most clearly : " I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord" here is the Divine Nature "Who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried" here is the human nature. In the Creeds of Nice and Constantinople the Divine

Nature is thus explained : “And in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God true God of true God, born, not made, consubstantial to the Father, by whom all things were made.” Then the human nature is explained: “Who for us man, and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost by the Virgin Mary, and was made man : he suffered, was crucified, died, and arose the third day.”

10. Even before the Eutychian heresy sprung up at all, it was condemned by the First Council of Constantinople, in which the Fathers, in their Synodical Epistle to Pope St. Damasus thus write : “ Se agnoscere Verbum Dei ante secula omnino perfectum et perfectum hominem in novissimis diebus pro nostra salute factum esse.” And St. Damasus, in the Roman Synod[16362], had already defined against Apollinares that in Christ there was both a body and an intelligent and rational soul, and that he had not suffered in the Divinity, only in the humanity. In the Council of Ephesus the Second Epistle of St. Cyril to Nestorius in which the dogma of two Natures distinct and unmixed in Christ is expressed, was approved. Here are the words : “Neque enim dicimus Verbi naturam per sui mutationem carnem esse factam, sed neque in totum hominem transformatam ex anima, et corpore constitutam. Asserimus autem Verbum, unita sibi secundum hypostasim carne animata, rationali anima, inexplicabili, incomprehensibilique modo hominem factum, et hominis Filium extitisse. . . . . Et quamvis naturae sint diversae, veram tamen unionem cocuntes, unum nobis Christum, et Filium effecerunt. Non quod naturarum differentia propter unionem sublata sit, verum quorum Divinitas, et humanitas secreta quadam ineffabilique conjunctione in una persona unum nobis Jesum Christum, et Fili um constituerint.”

11. Besides the Councils we have the authority of the Holy Fathers, likewise, who wrote previous to the Eutychian heresy. These were quoted in the Actio. II. of the Council of Chalcedon, and Petavius[16363] collected a great number, but I will only call the attention of the reader to a few. St. Ignatius the Martyr[16364] thus expresses the doctrine of the two Natures : “ Medicus unus est et carnalis, et spiritualis, genitus et ingenitus, seu factus et non factus, in homine cxistens Deus, in morte vita vera, et ex Maria et ex Deo, primum passibilis, et tune impassibilis, Jesus Christus Dominus noster.”

St. Athanasius wrote two books against Apollinares, the predecessor of Eutyches. St. Hilary says[16365] : “ Nescit plane vitam suam, nescit qui Christum Jesum ut verum Deum, ita et verum hominem ignorat.” St. Gregory of Nazianzen says[16366]: “ Missus est quidem, sed ut homo; duplex enim erat in eo natura.” St. Amphilochius, quoted by Theodoret in the Dialogue Inconfusus, writes thus : “Discerne naturas, unam Dei, alteram hominis; neque enim ex Deo excidens homo factus est, neque proficiscens ex homine Deus.” St. Ambrose says[16367] : “ Servemus distinctioncm Divinitatis, et carnis, unus in utraque loquitur Dei Filius, qui in eodem utraque natura est.” St. John Chrysostom says[16368] : “Neque enim (Prophetae carnen dividit a Divinitate, neque Divinitatem a carne; non substantial confundens, absit, sed unionem ostendens Quando dico cum fuisse humiliatum, non dico mutationem, sed humanaesusceptae nature demissionem.” St. Augustine writes[16369]: “Neque enim ilia susceptione alterum eorum in alterum conversum, atque mutatum est; nec Divinitas quippe in creatnram mutata est, ut desisteret esse Divinitas; nec creatura in Divinitatem, ut desisteret esse creatura.”

12. I omit a great number of authorities of other Holy Fathers taken into account by the Council of Chalcedon, consisting of nearly six hundred Fathers, in which Eutyches was condemned, and which thus defined the doctrine of the Church (Act. V.) : “ Sequentes igitur Ss. Patres unum eundem confiteri Filium et Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum consonanter omnes docemur, eundem perfectum in Deitate, et eundem perfectum in humanitate, Deum verum, et hominem verum; eundem ex Anima rationali, et corpore; consubstantialem Patri secundem Deitatem, consubstantialem nobiscum secundum humanitatcm; ante secula quidem de Patre genitum secundum Deitatem, in novissimis autem diebus eundem propter nos, et propter nostram salutem ex Maria Virgine Dei Genitrice secundum humanitatem, unum eundum Christum, Filium, Dominum, unigenitum in duabus naturis inconfuse, immutabiliter, indivise, inseparabiliter agnoscendum: nusquam sublata differentia naturarum propter unitionem, magisque salva proprietate utriusque naturae, et in unam Personam, atque substantiam concurrentes.”

13. It is related that the Fathers, after hearing the Dogmatical Epistle of St. Leo to St. Flavian, read in the Council, all cried out as with one voice :

“This is the faith of the Fathers and of the Apostles; we and all orthodox believers hold this faith; anathema to him who believes otherwise. Peter has spoken through Leo.” The following Councils confirmed the same doctrine, especially the Second Council of Constantinople, which, in the eighth Canon thus decreed : “ Si quis ex duabus naturis Deitatis, et humanitatis confitens unitatem factam esse, vel unam naturam Dei Verbi incarnatam dicens, non sic eam excipit, sicut Patres docuerunt, quod ex Divina natura et humana, unione secundum substantiam facta, unus Christus effectus est, sed ex talibus vocibus unam naturam, sive substantiam Deitatis, et carnis Christi introducere conatur : talis anathema sit.” The Third Council of Constantinople, in the definition of Faith, repeats the words of the Council of Chalcedon and of the Second Council of Nice : “ Duas naturas confitemur ejus, qui incarnatus est propter nos ex intemerata Dei geni trice semper Virgine Maria, perfectum eum Deum, et perfectum hominem cognoscentes.”

14. We may as well give two theological reasons for the dogma. The first is this : if the human nature Christ assumed was, after the Incarnation, absorbed into the Divinity, as the Eutychians believe, there would be an end to the mystery of Redemption, for in that case we should either deny the Passion and death of Jesus Christ altogether, or admit that the Divinity suffered and died, a supposition from which our very nature shrinks with horror.

15. This is the second reason : if, after the Incarnation but one Nature alone remained in Christ, this must have come to pass, either because one of the two Natures was changed into the other, or because both were so mixed up and confused that they formed but one alone, or at least because, being united together without confusion of any sort they formed a third Nature, just as the union of soul and body in man forms human nature. But so it is that not one of those things could take place in the Incarnation, consequently both Natures, the Divine and the human, remained entire in Jesus Christ, with all the properties of each.

16. It is impossible that one of the two Natures could be changed into the other, for in that case the Divine would be changed into the human nature, and that is totally repugnant not only to Faith but to reason itself, for we cannot imagine it even possible that the Divinity should be subject to the slightest change. Then if the human nature was absorbed and changed into

the Divine Nature, we should admit that the Divinity was born in Christ, suffered, died, and rose again, which is equally repugnant to Faith and reason, as the Divinity is eternal, impassable, immortal, and unchangeable. Besides, if the Divinity suffered and died, then the Father and the Holy Ghost suffered and died also, for the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are together one Divinity. Again, if the Divinity was conceived and was born, then the Blessed Virgin did not conceive and bring forth Christ according to the one nature consubstantial to herself, and therefore she is not the Mother of God. Finally, if the humanity was absorbed into the Divinity in Christ, then he could not be our Redeemer, Mediator, and Pontiff of the New Testament, as faith teaches us he is, for these offices required prayers, sacrifice, and humiliations which the Divinity could not fulfil.

17. Therefore it cannot be asserted, first That human nature in Christ was changed into the Divine Nature, and much less that the Divine was changed into human nature. Second It never could happen that the two Natures were mixed up with each other and confused, and so formed one Nature alone in Christ, for in that case the Divinity would be changed, and would become something else; in Christ there would exist neither Divinity nor humanity, but a Nature neither Divine nor human, so that he would be neither true God nor true man. Third It never could have happened that the two Natures which existed without confusion, and totally distinct from each other, could, by uniting together, form a third nature, common to both, because this common nature must, in that case, have been produced by the two parts, which, uniting together, must be reciprocally perfect, for otherwise, if one part receives nothing from the other, but loses some of its own properties in the union, it will certainly not be as perfect as it was before. Now in Christ the Divine Nature has received no perfection from the human nature, and it could not lose anything itself, therefore it must have remained as it was before, and consequently could never form with the humanity a third nature, common to both. Besides, a common nature only springs out of several parts, which naturally require a reciprocal union, as is the case in the union of the soul with the body; but that is not the case in Christ, in whom it is not naturally requisite that human nature should be united with the Word, nor is it necessary that the Word should be united with human nature.

II. OBJECTION5 ANSWERED

18. First, the Eutychians quote certain texts of Scripture, by which it would appear that one Nature is changed into the other, as that of St. John (i, 14) : “The Word was made flesh ;” therefore the Word was changed into flesh. Also that passage of St. Paul, in which it is said, that “Christ emptied himself, taking the form of a servant” (Phil, ii, 7); therefore, the Divine Nature is changed. We reply to the first objection, that the Word was not changed into flesh, but was made flesh by assuming humanity in the unity of the Person, without suffering any change in the union. Thus it is said also of Jesus Christ (Gal. iii, 13), that “ he was made a curse for us,” inasmuch as he took on himself the malediction which we deserved, to free us from it. St. John Chrysostom says, that the very words which follow the text they lay so much stress on explain the difference of the two Natures : “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father.” Now, here the Word is said to have dwelt among us, which is a proof that he is different from us, for that which dwells is different from that which is dwelt in. Here are his words[16370] : “Quid enim subjicit ? “Et habitavit in nobis.” Non enim mutationem illam incommutabilis illius naturae significavit, sed habitationem, et commemorationem : porro id quod habitat, non est idem cum eo quod habitatur, sed diversum.” And here we may remark, that these expressions of St. John give a death blow, at the same time, to the Eutychian and Nestorian heresies, for when Nestorius says that the Word dwells in the humanity of Christ alone, because the Evangelist says, “ he dwelt among us,” he is refuted by the antecedent part of the sentence, “the Word was made flesh,” which proves not alone a mere inhabitation, but a union with human nature in one Person; and, on the other hand, when Eutyches says that the Word is said to be turned into flesh, he is refuted by the subsequent expression, “and dwelt among us,” which proves that the Word is not changed into flesh (even after the union of the flesh), but remains God the same as before, without confounding the Divine Nature with the human nature he assumed.

19. We should not be startled, either, at the expression, “made flesh,” for this is but a manner of expressing a thing, and does not at all times mean the conversion of one thing into another, but frequently that one thing was

superadded to another, as in Genesis we read that Adam “became (was made into, fact us est) a living soul” (ii, 7). Now, the obvious meaning of this is, not that the body of Adam, which was already created, was converted into a soul, but that the soul was created and joined to the body. St. Cyril makes a very pertinent remark on this in his Dialogue, “ De Incarnatione Unigeniti.” He says : “ At si Verbum inquiunt, factum est caro, jam non amplius mansit Verbum, sed potius desiit esse quod erat. Atqui hoc merum delirium, et dementia est, nihilque aliud quam mentis errata? ludibrium. Consent enim, ut videtur, per hoc factum est, necessaria quadam ratione mutationem, alterationemque ignificari. Ergo cum psallunt quidam, etfactus est nihilominus in refugium; et rursus, Domine refugium factus est nobis, quid respondebunt ?Anne deus, qui hie decantatur, definens esse Deus, mutatus est in refugium, et translatus est naturaliter in aliud, quod ab initio non erat ?Cum itaque Dei mentio fit, si ab alio dicatur illud factus est, quo pacto non absurdum, atque adeo vehementer absurdum existimare mutationem aliquam per id significari, et non potius conari id aliqua ratione intelligere, pudcnterque ad id quod Deo maxime convenit accommodari ? “ St. Augustine also explains how the Word was made flesh without any change[16371]: “ Neque enim, quia dictum est, Dem erat Verbum, et Verbum caro factum, sic Verbum caro factum est, ut esse desineret Deus, quando in ipsa carne, quod Verbum caro factum est, Emmanuel natum est no biscum Deus. Sicut Verbum, quod corde gestamus, sit vox, cum id ore proferimus, non tamen illud in hanc commutatur, sed illo integro, ista in qua procedat, assumitur, ut et intus maneat, quod intelligatur, et soris sonet, quod audiatur. Hoc idem tamen profertur in sono, quod ante sonuerat in silentio. Atque ita in Verbum, cum sit vox, non mutatur in vocem, sed maneus in mentis luce, et assumpta carnis voce procedit ad audientem, ut non deferat cogitantem.”

20. As to the second objection, taken from the words, “ He emptied himself,” the answer is very clear, from what we have said already; for the Word “emptied himself,” not by losing what he was, but by assuming what he was not, for he, being God, equal to the Father in his Divine Nature, “took the form of a servant,” thereby making himself less than the Father in his assumed nature, and humbling himself in it even to the death of the Cross : “He humbled himself, being made obedient unto death, even to the

death of the Cross ;" but, notwithstanding, he retained his Divinity, and was, therefore, equal to the Father.

21. It was not, however, the Eutychians, properly speaking, who made use of these objections, for they did not assert that the Divine was changed into the human nature, but that the human was changed into the Divine Nature, and they quoted some passages of the Holy Fathers, which they did not understand in their true sense, in their favour. First They say that St. Justin, in his Second Apology, writes, that in the Eucharist the bread is converted into the body of Christ, as the Word was into flesh. But Catholics answer, that the Saint only wished, by this expression, to say that the real and true body of Christ is in the Eucharist, just as the Word in reality assumed and retained human flesh; and the context, if read, shows that this is the true meaning of the passage. The argument is this :that as, in the Incarnation, the Word was made flesh, so, in the Eucharist, the bread is made the body of Christ; but if he intended to teach, as the Eutychians assert, that in the Incarnation of the Word the humanity was absorbed into the Divinity, he never could have said that in the Eucharist the true body of our Lord exists.

22. Secondly They found an objection on that passage of the Athanasian Creed : " As a rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ." Hence, they argue the two Natures are but one. To this we reply, that these words denote an unity of Person, and not of Nature, in Christ, and that is manifest from the words, "one Christ," for by Christ is properly understood the Person, and not the Nature.

23. They object, thirdly, that St. Iraeneus, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Augustine, and St. Leo[16372], call the union of the two Natures a mixture or fusion, and compare it to the mixture of two fluids one with the other. We answer with St. Augustine (as quoted), that these Fathers did not make use of these expressions, because they believed that the two Natures were confounded, but to explain how close the union was, and that the Divine was united to the human nature as closely and intimately as the colouring poured into a liquid unites with every portion of it. This is St. Augustine's explanation : " Sicut in unitate Personae Anima unitur corpori, ut homo sit : ita in unitate Personae Deus unitur homini, ut Christus sit. In ilia ergo persona mixtura est Animaa et corporis; in hac Persona mixtura est

Dei et hominis : si tamen recedat auditor a consuetudine corporum, qua solent duo liquores ita commisceri, ut neuter servet integritatem suam, quamquam et in ipsis corpori bus aeri lux incorrupta misceatur.” Tertullian previously gave the same explanation.

24. They object, fourthly, the authority of Pope Julius in his Epistle to Dionisius, Bishop of Corinth, in which he blames those who believed that there were two Natures in Christ, and also one expression of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, quoted by Photius, who says that there are not two Persons, nor two Natures, for then we should be adoring four. But we answer, with Leontius[16373] that these Epistles are falsely attributed to these Holy Fathers, for the Epistle attributed to Julius is supposed to have been the production of Apollinares, since St. Gregory of Nyssa quotes several passages from it, as written by Apollinares, and refutes them. We have the same reply to make to the quotation from St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, for it is universally supposed to have been written by the Apollinarists, or Eutychians.

They object, fifthly, that St. Gregory of Nyssa says, in his Fourth Oration against Eunomius, that human nature was united with the Divine Word; but we answer, that notwithstanding this union, each Nature retained its own properties, as St. Gregory himself says : “ Nihilominus in utraque, quod cuique proprium est, intuetur.” Finally, they say, if there were two Natures in Christ, there would be also two Persons; but we have already disposed of that objection in our Refutation of Nestorianism (Ref. vii, n. 16), in which we have shown that there is nothing repugnant in the existence of two Natures, distinct and unmixed, in the sole Person of Christ.

Refutation IX

OF THE MONOTHELITE HERESY, THAT THERE IS BUT ONE NATURE AND ONE OPERATION ONLY IN CHRIST

1. Those heretics who believe that there is only one will in Christ are called Monothelites, and the name is derived from two Greek words, Monos, one, and Thelema, will, and on that account many of the Arians, who asserted that Christ had no soul, but that the Word took the place of it, can be called Monothelites, as may, in like manner, many Apollinarists, who admitted that Christ had a soul, but without mind, and, consequently, without will. The true Monothelites, however, formed themselves into a sect, in the reign of the Emperor Heraclius, about the year 626. The chief author of this sect was Athanasius, Patriarch of the Jacobites, as we remarked in the History (Chap, vii, . 4), and his first followers were the Patriarchs who succeeded him, Sergius, Cirus, Macarius, Pirrus, and Paul. These admitted two Natures in Christ, the Divine and the human, but denied the two wills, and the two operations belonging to each Nature, asserting that he had but one will, that is, the Divine will, and one operation, the Divine one also; this they called Theandric, or belonging to the Man-God, but not in the Catholic sense, in which the operations of Christ in his humanity are called Theandric, as being the operation of the Man-God, and are attributed to the Person of the Word, which sustains and is the term of this humanity, but in a heretical sense, for they believed that the Divine will alone moved the faculties of his human nature, and used them as a mere passive and inanimate instrument. Some of the Monothelites called this operation Deodecibilem, or fitted to God, and this expression gives more clearly the peculiar meaning of their heretical tenets. It was a debated question among the ancients, whether the Moriothelites, by the word “ will,” meant the faculty of wishing, or the act of volition itself. Petavius thinks it most probable[16374] that they understood by it, not the act of volition itself, but the power of wishing at all, which

they say the humanity of Christ did not possess. The Catholic dogma, however, rejects it in both senses, and teaches that as in Christ there were two Natures, so there were Divine will and volition with the Divine operation, and human will and volition with the human operation.

I. IT IS PROVED THAT THERE ARE TWO DISTINCT WILLS IN CHRIST, DIVINE AND HUMAN, ACCORDING TO THE TWO NATURES, AND TWO OPERATIONS, ACCORDING TO THE TWO WILLS

2. It is proved, in the first place, by the Scriptures, that Christ has a Divine will, for every text that proves his Divinity, proves that, as the will cannot be separated from the Divinity. We have already quoted all these texts against the Nestorians and Eutychians, so there is no necessity of repeating them here, especially as the Monothelites do not deny the Divine, but only the human will, in Christ. There are, however, numberless texts to prove that our Redeemer had a human will likewise. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews (x, 5), applies to Christ the words of the 39th Psalm (ver. 8, 9) : “Wherefore, when he cometh into the world he said Behold, I come; in the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do the will of God.” In the 39th Psalm, also, we find : “ In the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will, my God; I have desired it, and thy law in the midst of my heart” (ver. 9). Now, here both wills are distinctly marked the Divine, “ that I may do thy will, God ;” and the human will, subject to the Divine will, “ my God, I have desired it.” Christ himself draws the same distinction in many places; thus in John (v, 30), he says : “ I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me.” And again : “ I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me” (vi, 38). St. Leo explains this in his Epistle to the Emperor, for he says, that according to the form of a servant, “secundum formam servi,” that is, as man, he came not to do his own will, but the will of him who sent him.

3. Christ, who says in St. Matthew (xxvi, 39) : “ My Father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” And in St. Mark (xiv, 36) : “Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee, remove this chalice from me, but not what I will, but what thou wilt.” Now, the two texts clearly show the Divine will which Christ had, in common with the Father, and the human will which he subjected to the will of his Father. Hence, St. Athanasius, writing against Apollinares, says : “

Duas voluntates hic ostendit, humanam quidem quae est carnis, alteram vero Divinam. Humana enim propter carnis imbecillitatem recusat passionem, Divina autem ejus voluntas est promta.” And St. Augustine says[16375] : “ In eo quod ait, non quod ego volo, aliud se ostendit voluisse, quam Pater, quod nisi humano corde non potest; nunquam enim posset immutabilis ilia natura quidquam aliud vellc, quam Pater.”

4. The Catholic dogma is proved also by all those texts in which Christ is said to have obeyed his Father. In St. John, (xii, 49), we read : “ For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak.” And again : “As the Father giveth me commandment, so do il” (xiv, 31). And St. Paul, writing to the Philippians, says, “that he was made obedient unto death, even unto the death of the Cross.” Many other texts are of the same tenor. All this proves that there must be a human will, for he who has no will can neither obey nor be commanded. It is most certain that the Divine will cannot be commanded, as it recognizes no will superior to itself. The obedience of Christ, therefore, to his Father, proves that he must have had a human will : “ Qua,” says Pope Agatho, “ a lumine veritatis se adeo separavit, ut audeat dicere, Dominum nostrum Jesum Cristum voluntate suae Divinitatis Patri obedisse, cui est aequalis in omnibus, et vult ipse quoque in omnibus, quod Pater ?”

5. We pass over other Scripture arguments, and come to Tradition; and, first of all, we shall see what the Fathers who lived before the rise of the heresy said on the subject. St. Ambrose says[16376] : “ Quod autem ait : Non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat, suam, ad hominem retulit; Patris, ad Divinitatem :voluntas enim hominis, temporalis; voluntas Divinitatis, aeterna.” St. Leo, in his Epistle 24 (a. 10, c. 4), to St. Flavian, against Eutyches, thus writes : “ Qui verus est Deus, idem verus est homo; et nullam est in hac unitate mendacium, dum invicem sunt, et humilitas hominis, et altitude Deitatis Agit enim utraque forma cum alterius communione, quod proprium est; Verbo scilicet operante, quod Verbi est, et carne exequente, quod carnis est.” I omit many other authorities from St. Chrysostom, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Jerome, and others referred to by Petavius[16377]. Sophronius compiled two whole books of them against Sergius, as we find from the petition of Stephen Duresius to the Council of Lateran, under Martin I., in

649. It is proved also by the Creeds, in which it is professed that Christ is at the same time true God and true man, perfect in both Natures. If Christ had not human will, one of the natural faculties of the soul, he would not be a perfect man, no more than he would be perfect God, if he had not Divine will.

The Councils whose Decrees we have already quoted against Nestorius, have defined that there are two Natures in Christ, distinct and perfect in all their properties, and that could not be the fact, unless each of the two Natures had its proper natural will and natural operation. A Portuguese writer, Hippolitus, in his Fragments against Vero, from the distinction of the different operations in Christ, argued that there was a distinction of the two Natures, because if there was but one will and one operation in Christ, there would be but one Nature : " Quae sunt inter se ejusdem operationis, et cognitionis, et omnino idem patiuntur, nullam naturae differ entiam recipiunt."

6. All these things being taken into consideration, in the Third General Council of Constantinople, under Pope Agatho, it was thought proper to condemn, in one Decree, (Act. 18), all the heresies against the Incarnation condemned in the five preceding General Councils. Here is the Decree, in the very words : " Assequti quoque sancta quinque universalia Concilia, et sanctos atque probabiles Patres, consonanterque confiteri definientes, D.N. Jesum Christum verum Deum nostrum, unum de sancta, et consubstantiali, et vitas originem praebente Trinitate, perfectum in Deitate, et perfectum eundem in humanitate, Deum vere, et hominem vere, eundem ex Anima rationali et corpore, consubstantialem Patri secundum Deitatem, et consubstantialem nobis secunduin humanitatem, per omnia similem nobis absque peccato; ante secula quidem ex Patre genitum secundum Deitatem, in ultimis diebus autem eundem propter nos et propter nostram salutem de Spiritu Sancto, et Maria Virgine proprie, et veraciter Dei Genitrice secundum humanitatem, unum eundemque Christum Filium Dei unigenitum in duabus naturis inconfuse, inconvertibiliter, inseparabiliter, indivise cognoscendum, nusquam extincta harum naturarum differentia propter unitatem, salvataque magis proprietate utriusque naturae, et in unam Personam, et in unam subsistentiam concurrente, non in duas Personas partitam, vel divisam, sed unum eundemque unigenitum Filium Dei, Verbum D. N. Jesum Christum; et duas naturales voluntates in eo, et duas

naturales operationes indivise, inconverti biliter, inseparabiliter, inconfuse secundum Ss. Patrum doctrinam, adcoque praedicamus; et duas naturales voluntates, non contrarias, absit, juxta quod impii asserucrunt Haeretici, sod sequentem ejus humanam voluntatem, et non resistentcin, vel reluctantem, sed potius, et subjectam Divinae ejus, atque omnipotenti voluntati. . . . .

His igitur cum omni undique cautela, atque diligentia a no bis formatis, definimus aliam Fidem nulli licere profcrre, aut conscribere, compenere, aut fovere, vel etiam aliter docere."

7. The principal proofs from reason alone against this heresy have been already previously given. First Because Christ having a perfect human nature, he must have, besides, a human will, without which his humanity would be imperfect, being deprived of one of its natural powers. Secondly Because Christ obeyed, prayed, merited, and satisfied for us, and all this could not be done without a created human will, for it would be absurd to attribute it to the Divine will. Thirdly We prove it from that principle of St. Gregory of Nazianzen, adopted by the other Fathers, that what the Word assumed he healed, and hence St. John of Damascus[16378] concludes that as he healed human will he must have had it : " Si non assumsit humanam voluntatem, remedium ei non attulit, quod primum sauciatum erat; quod enim assumtum non est, nec est curatum, ut ait Gregorius Theologus. Ecquid enim offenderat, nisi voluntas ?"

II. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

8. The Monothelites object, first, that prayer of St. Dionisius in his Epistle to Caius : "Deo viro facto unam quandum Theandricam, seu Deivirilem operationem expressit in vita ;" that is, that in the God made man there is one Theandric or human-divine operation. We answer, with Sophronius, that this passage was corrupted by the Monothelites, by changing the word, " novam quamdam" into " unam quandam," or a new sort of Theandric operation, into some one Theandric operation. This was noticed in the Third Council of Lateran, in which St. Martin commanded the Notary Paschasias to read the Greek copy that was preserved, and the words were found to be novam quandam, &c., and not unam, &c., and this was in no wise opposed to the Catholic doctrine, and can be explained two ways in an orthodox sense. First As St. John of Damascus says, every operation[16379] performed

by Christ by the Divine and human nature is Theandric, or human-divine, because it is the operation of a Man-God, and is attributed to the Person of Christ, the term, at the same time, of both the Divine and human nature. The second sense, as Sophronius and St. Maximus lay down is this, that the new Theandric operation St. Dionisius speaks of should be restricted to those operations of Christ alone, in which the Divine and human natures concur, and, therefore, there are three distinct operations to be noted in him :first, those which peculiarly belong to human nature alone, as walking, eating, sitting, and so forth; secondly, those which belong purely to the Divine Nature, as remitting sins, working miracles, and the like; and, thirdly, those which proceed from both Natures, as healing the sick by touching them, raising the dead by calling them, &c.; and it is of operations of this sort that the passage of St. Dionisius is to be explained.

9. Secondly They object that St. Athanasius[16380]admits the Divine Will only, “ voluntatem Deitatis tantum;” but we answer that this does not exclude human will, but only that opposing will which springs from sin, as the context proves. Thirdly They object that St. Gregory of Nazianzen[16381] says that the will of Christ was not opposed to God, as it was totally Deified : “Christi velle non fuisse Deo contrarium, utpote Deificatem totum.” We answer, with St. Maximus and St. Agatho, that there is not the least doubt but that St. Gregory admitted two wills, and the whole meaning of this expression is that the human will of Christ was never opposed to the Divine will. They object, fourthly, that St. Gregory of Nyssa, writing against Eunomius says, that the Deity worked out the salvation of man; the suffering, he says, was of the flesh, but the operation was of God : “ Operatur vere Deitas per corpus, quod circa ipsam est omnium salutem, ut sit carnis quidem passio, Dei autem operatio.”

This objection was answered in the Sixth Council, for the Saint having said that the humanity of Christ suffered, admitted by that that Christ operated by the humanity. All that St. Gregory in fact wanted to prove against Eunomius was, that the sufferings and the operations of Christ received a supreme value from the Person of the Word who sustains his humanity, and therefore he attributed these operations to the Word. They object, fifthly, that St. Cyril of Alexandria[16382] says that Christ showed some cognate operation, “quandum cognatam operationem.” We reply, that from the context it is manifest that the Saint speaks of the miracles of Christ in which his Divine Nature operated by his omnipotence, and his human nature by the contact, commanded by his human will; and thus this operation is called by the Saint an associated one. Sixthly, they object that many of the Fathers called the human nature of Christ the instrument of the Divinity. We answer, that these Fathers never understood the humanity to have been an inanimate instrument, which operated nothing of itself, as the Monothelites say, but their meaning was that the Word being united with the humanity, governed it as its own, and operated through its powers and faculties. Finally, they oppose to us some passages of Pope Julius, of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, and some writings of Menna to Vigilius, and of Vigilius to Menna; but our reply to this is that these passages are not authentic, but were foisted into the works of the Fathers by the Apollinarists and Eutychians. It was proved in the Sixth Council (Act. XIV.), that the writings attributed to Menna and Vigilius were forged by the Monothelites.

10. The Monothelites endeavour to prop up their opinions by several other reasons. If you admit two wills in Christ, they say, you must also admit an opposition between them. But we, Catholics, say that this supposition is totally false; the human will of Christ never could oppose the Divine will, for he took our nature, and was made in all things like us but with the exception of sin; as St. Paul says (Heb. iv, 15), he was "one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin." He never, therefore, had those movements we have to violate the Divine law, but his will was always conformable to the Divine will.

The Fathers make a distinction between the natural and arbitrary will; the natural will is the power itself of wishing, the arbitrary will is the power of wishing anything, either good or bad. Christ had the natural human will, but not the arbitrary human will, for he always wished, and could only wish what was most conformable to the Divine will, and hence he says; " I do always the things that please him" (John, viii, 29). It is because the Monothelites have not made this distinction of the will that they deny altogether to Christ human will " Sicut origo erroris Nestorianorum et Eutychianorum fuit, quod non satis distinguerent personam, et naturam; sic et Monothelitis, et quod nescirent quia inter voluntatem Naturalem, et

Personalem, sive Arbitrarium discriminis interesset, hoc in causa fuisse, ut unam in Christo dicerent voluntatem”[16383].

11. They say, secondly, that there being only one Person there must be only one will, because, the Mover being but one, the faculty by which he moves the inferior powers must be but one likewise. We answer, that where there is but one Person and one Nature there can—be only one will and one operation, but where there is one Person and two Natures, as the Divine and human nature in Christ, we must admit two wills and two distinct operations, corresponding to the two Natures. They say, very properly, that the will and the operations are not multiplied according as the Persons are multipled, for in the case where one Nature is the term of several Persons, as is the case in the Most Holy Trinity, then in this Nature there is only one will and one operation alone, common to all the Persons included in the term of the Nature. Here the Monothelites have reason on their side, for the Mover is but one. But it is quite otherwise when the Person is one of the two Natures, for then the Mover, although but one, has to move two Natures, by which he operates, and, consequently, he must have two wills and two operations.

12. They make a third objection. The operations, they say, belong to two Persons, and, consequently, when the Person is but one, the operation must be but one likewise. We answer, that it is not always the case that when there is but one Person that there is but one operating faculty, but when there are more Persons than one, then there must be more than one operating faculty. There are three Persons in God, but only one operation common to all three, because the Divine Nature is one and in divisible in God. But as in Jesus Christ there are two distinct Natures, there are, therefore, two wills, by which he operates, and two operations corresponding to each Nature; and, although all the operations, both of the Divine and human Nature are attributed to the Word, which terminates and sustains the two Natures, still the will and operations of the Divine Nature should not be confounded with those of the human nature; neither are the two Natures confused because the Person is one.

Refutation X

THE HERESY OF BERENGARIUS, AND THE PRETENDED REFORMERS,

1. CONCERNING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST. Mosheim, the Protestant Ecclesiastical Historian, asserts[16384] that in the 9th century, the exact nature of the faith of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist was not established, and that, therefore, Pascasius Radbertus laid down in a book he wrote two principal points concerning it; first, that after the consecration nothing remained of the substance of the bread and wine, and, secondly, that in the consecrated Host is the very body of Jesus Christ, which was born of Mary, died on the cross, and arose from the sepulchue, and this, he said, is "what the whole world believes and professes." This work was opposed by Retramn, and perhaps others, and hence Mosheim concludes that the dogma was not then established. In this, however, he is astray, for, as Selvaggi writes (note 79, vol. iii), there was no controversy at all about the dogma, in which Retramn was agreed with Radbert; he only attacked some expressions in his work.

The truth of the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the altar has been always established and universally embraced by the whole Church, as Vincent of Lerins says, in 434 : " Mos iste semper in Ecclesia viguit, ut quo quisque forte religiosior, eo promtius novellis adinventionibus contrairet." Up to the ninth century the Sacrament of the Eucharist never was impugned, till John Scotus Erigena, an Irishman, first published to the world the unheard-of heresy that the body and blood of Christ were not in reality in the Holy Eucharist, which, he said, was only a figure of Jesus Christ.

2. Berengarius, or Berenger, taught the same heresy in the year 1050, taking his opinions from the works of Scotus Erigena, and in the twelfth century we find the Petrobrussians and Henricians, who said that the

Eucharist was only a mere sign of the body and blood of our Lord. The Albigenses held the same error in the thirteenth century, and finally, in the sixteenth century the modern Reformers all joined in attacking this Holy Sacrament. Zuingle and Carlostad said that the Eucharist was a signification of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and Ecolampadius joined them afterwards, and Bucer, also, partially. Luther admitted the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but said that the substance of the bread remained there also. Calvin several times changed his opinion on the matter; he said, in order to deceive the Catholics, that the Eucharist was not a mere sign, or naked figure of Christ, but was filled with his Divine Virtue, and sometimes he even admitted that the very substance of the body of Christ was there, but his general opinion was that the presence of Christ was not real but figurative, by the power placed there by our Lord. Hence Bossuet says in his "Variations," he never wished to admit that the sinner, in communicating receives the body of Christ, for then he should admit the Real Presence. The Council of Trent (Sess. xiii, c. 1), teaches, "that Jesus Christ, God and man, is really, truly, and substantially contained under the appearance of those sensible things in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine."

3. Before we prove the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, we must know that it is a true Sacrament, as the Council of Florence declares in its Decree or Instruction for the Armenians; and the Council of Trent (Sess. vii. c. 1), in opposition to the Socinians, who say that it is not a Sacrament, but merely a remembrance of the death of our Saviour. It is, however, an article of Faith that the Eucharist is a true Sacrament; for, First, we have the sensible sign, the appearance of bread and wine. Secondly, there is the institution of Christ : " Do this in commemoration of me" (Luke, xxii). Thirdly, there is the promise of Grace : "Who eats my flesh hath eternal life." We now have to inquire what in the Eucharist constitutes a Sacrament. The Lutherans say that it is in the use, with all the actions that Christ did, at the last Supper, that the Sacrament consists, as St. Matthew tells us : "Jesus took bread, blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to his disciples" (Matt. xxvi). The Calvinists, on the other hand, say that it is in the actual eating that the Sacrament consists. We Catholics believe that the consecration is not the Sacrament, because that is a transitory action, and the Eucharist is a permanent Sacrament, as we shall show hereafter (sec. 3), nor the use or

communion, for this regards the effect of the Sacrament, which is a Sacrament before it is received at all, nor in the species alone, for these do not confer Grace, nor the body of Jesus Christ alone, because it is not there in a sensible manner; but the sacramental species, together with the body of Christ, form the Sacrament, inasmuch as they contain the body of our Lord.

I. OF THE REAL PRESENCE OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST

4. We have already said that the Council of Trent (Sess. xiii, c. 3) teaches that Jesus Christ is contained in the sacramental species, truly, really, and substantially truly, rejecting the figurative presence, for the figure is opposed to truth; really, rejecting the imaginary presence which Faith makes us aware of, as the Sacramentarians assert; and substantially, rejecting the doctrine of Calvin, who said that in the Eucharist it was not the body of Christ, but his virtue or power, that was present, by which he communicates himself to us; but in this he erred, for the whole substance of Jesus Christ is in the Eucharist. Hence, the Council of Trent (Can. 1), condemns those who assert that Christ is in the Sacrament as a sign, or figure, signo, vel figura, aut virtute.

5. The Real Presence is proved, first, by the words of Christ himself: “Take and eat, this is my body,” words which are quoted by St. Matthew (xxvi, 26); St. Mark (xiv, 22); St. Luke (xxii, 19); and St. Paul (I. Cor. xi, 24). It is a certain rule, says St. Augustine[16385], and is commonly followed by the Holy Fathers, to take the words of Scripture in their proper literal sense, unless some absurdity would result from doing so; for if it were allowed to explain everything in a mystic sense, it would be impossible to prove any article of Faith from the Scripture, and it would only become the source of a thousand errors, as everyone would give it whatever sense he pleased. Therefore, says the Council (Cap. 1), it is an enormous wickedness to distort the words of Christ by feigned figurative explanations, when three of the Evangelists and St. Paul give them just as he expressed them : “ Quae verba a sanctis Evangelistis commemorata, et a D. Paulo repetita cum propriam illam significationem prae se ferant indignissimum flagitium est ea ad fictitios tropos contra universum Ecclesiae sensum detorqueri.” Who will dare to doubt that it is his body and blood, says St. Cyril of Jerusalem,

when Christ has said so[16386] ? “Cum ipse de pane pronunciaverit. Hoc est corpus meum, quis audebit deinceps ambigere ? Et cum idem Ipse dixerit. Hie est sanguis meus, quis dicet non esse ejus sanguinem?” We put this question to the heretics :Could Jesus Christ turn the bread into his body or not ? We believe not one of them will deny that he could, for every Christian knows that God is all-powerful, “because no word shall be impossible with God” (Luke i, 37). But they will answer, perhaps : We do not deny that he could, but perhaps he did not wish to do it. Did not wish to do it, perhaps ?But tell me, if he did wish to do so, could he have possibly declared more clearly what his will was, than by saying : “This is my body?” When he was asked by Caiphas: “Art thou the Christ the Son of the blessed God? And Jesus said to him : I am” (Mark, xiv, 61, 62), we should say, according to their mode of explanation, that he spoke figuratively also.

Besides, if you allow, with the Sacramentarians, that the words of Christ : “This is my body,” are to be taken figuratively, why, then, do you object to the Socinians, who say that the words of Christ, quoted by St. John (x, 30) : “ I and the Father are one,” ought to be taken not literally, but merely showing that between Christ and the Father there existed a moral union of the will, but not a union of substance, and, consequently denied his Divinity. We now pass on to the other proofs.

6. The Real Presence is proved, secondly, by that text of St. John where Christ says : “The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world” (John, vi, 52). Our adversaries explain away this text, by saying, that here our Redeemer does not in this chapter speak of the Eucharist, but of the Incarnation of the Word. We do not say that in the beginning of the chapter it is the Incarnation that is spoken of; but there cannot be the least doubt but that from the 52nd verse out it is the Eucharist, as even Calvin admits[16387]; and it was thus the Fathers and Councils always understood it, as the Council of Trent, which (Cap. 2, Sess. xiii, and Cap. 1, Sess. xxii) quotes several passages from that chapter to confirm the Real Presence; and the Second Council of Nice (Act. 6) quotes the 54th verse of the same chapter : “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man,” &c., to prove that the true body of Christ is offered up in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

It is in this chapter, also, that our Saviour promises to give to the Faithful, at a future time, his own flesh as food: “The bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world" (ver. 52), and here he sets totally aside the false explanation of the sectarians, who say that he only speaks of the spiritual manducation by means of Faith, in believing the Incarnation of the Word; for if that was our Lord's meaning, he would not say : "The bread which I will give," but "the bread which I have given," for the Word was already incarnate, and his disciples might then spiritually feed on Jesus Christ; therefore he said : " I will give," for he had not as yet instituted the Sacrament, but only promised to do so, and as St. Thomas[16388] remarks, he says, "the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world ;" he did not say, it means my flesh (as the Zuinglians afterwards explained it), but it is my flesh, because it is truly the body of Christ which is received. Our Lord next says : " My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed" (John, vi, 56); and, therefore, St. Hilary[16389] says he leaves us no room to doubt of the truth of his body and blood. In fact, if the real body and blood of Christ were not in the Eucharist, this passage would be a downright falsehood. We should not forget, also, that the distinction between meat and drink can only be understood as referring to the eating of the true body, and drinking the true blood of Christ, and not of spiritual eating by faith, as the Reformers assert; for, as that is totally internal, the meat and the drink would be only one and the same thing, and not two distinct things.

7. We have another strong proof in the same chapter of St. John (chap, vi); for the people of Caphernaum, hearing Christ speak thus, said : "How can this man give us his flesh to eat ?" (ver. 53); and they even thought it so unreasonable, that "after this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (ver, 67). Now, if the flesh of Christ was not really in the Eucharist, he could remove the scandal from them at once, by saying that it was only spiritually they were called on to eat his flesh by faith; but, instead of that, he only confirmed more strongly what he said before, for he said : "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you" (ver. 54). And he then turned to the twelve disciples, who remained with him, and said : "Will you also go away ?And Peter answered him :Lord, to whom shall we go ?thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have known that thou art the Christ the Son of God" (ver. 69, 70).

8. The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is proved also from the words of St. Paul : “For let a man prove himself for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord” (I. Cor. xi, 28, 29). Now, mark these words, “the body of the Lord.” Does not that prove how erroneously the sectarians act, in saying that in the Eucharist we venerate, by faith, the figure alone of the body of Christ; for if that was the case, the Apostle would not say that they who received in sin were deserving of eternal condemnation; but he clearly states that one who communicates unworthily is so, for he does not distinguish the body of the Lord from the common earthly food.

9. Fourthly, it is proved again from St. Paul, for speaking of the use of this Holy Sacrament, he says : “The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ?and the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?” (I. Cor. x, 16). Mark the words, “the bread which we break ;” that which is first offered to God on the altar, and afterwards distributed to the people, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord ? Do not, in a word, those who receive it partake of the true body of Christ?

10. Fifthly, it is proved by the Decrees of Councils. We find it first mentioned in the Council of Alexandria, which was afterwards approved of by the first Council of Constantinople. Next, the Council of Ephesus sanctioned the twelve anathematisms of St. Cyril against Nestorius, and in this the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is taught. The Second Council of Nice (Act. 6) condemns, as an error against Faith, the assertion that the figure alone, and not the true body of Christ, is in the Eucharist; for, says the Council, Christ said, take and eat, this is my body, but he did not say, take and eat, this is the image of my body. In the Roman Council, under Gregory VII., in 1079, Berengarius, in the Profession of Faith which he made, confesses that the bread and wine are, by the consecration, substantially converted into the body and blood of Christ. The Fourth Council of Lateran, under Innocent III., in the year 1215 (chap. 1), says : “ We believe that the body and blood of Christ are contained under the species of bread and wine, the bread being transubstantiated into the body, and the wine into the blood.” In the Council of Constance the Propositions of Wickliffe and Huss were condemned, which said that (in the Eucharist)

the bread was present in reality, and the body figuratively, and that the expression “this is my body” is a figure of speech, just like the expression, “John is Elias” The Council of Florence, in the Decree of Union for the Greeks, decrees, “ that the body of Christ is truly consecrated (veracitur confici) in bread of wheat, either leavened or unleavened.”

11. It is proved, sixthly, by the perpetual and uniform Tradition of the Holy Fathers. St. Ignatius the Martyr says: “ Eucharistiam non admittunt, quod non confiteantur Eucharistiam esse carnem Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi.” St. Iraeneus[16390] : “ Panis percipiens invocationem Dei jam non communis panis est sed Eucharistia.” And in another place he says[16391] : “ Eum, panem in quo gratis sunt actae, corpus esse Christi, et calicem sanguinis ejus.” St. Justin, Martyr, writes[16392] : “Non hunc ut communem panem suminus, sed quemadmodum per verbum Dei caro factum est J. C. carnem habuit,” &c. He, therefore, says, that the same flesh which the Word assumed is in the Eucharist. Tertullian[16393] says : “Caro corpore et sanguine Christi vescitur, ut et anima de Deo saginctur.” Origen writes[16394] : “ Quando vitse pane et poculo frueris, manducas et bibis, corpus et sanguinem Domini.” Hear St. Ambrose[16395] : “ Panis iste panis est ante verba Sacramentorum; ubi accessor it consecratio, de pane fit caro Christi.” St Chrysostom says[16396] : “ Quot nunc dicunt vellem ipsius formam aspicere Ecce cum vides, Ipsum tangis, Ipsum manducas.” St. Athanasius, St. Basil, and St. Gregory of Nazianzen, express the same sentiments[16397]. St. Augustine says[16398] : “ Sicut mediatorem Dei et hominum, hominem Christum Jesum, carnem suam nobis manducandam, bibendumque sanguinem dantem ficlei corde suspicimus.” St. Remigius[16399] says : “Licet panis videatur, in veritate corpus Christi est.” St. Gregory the Great writes[16400] : “Quid sit sanguis agni non jam audiendo sed libcndo didicistis qui sanguis super utrumque postern ponitur quando non solum ore corporis, sed etiam ore cordis hauritur.”[16401]

St. John of Damascus[16402] writes : “ Panis, ac vinum, et aqua qua per Spiritus Sancti invocationem et adventum mirabili modo in Christi corpus et sanguinem vertuntur.” Thus we see an uninterrupted series of Fathers for the first seven centuries proclaiming, in the clearest and most forcible language, the doctrine of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

12. By this we see how false is the interpretation which Zuinglius put on that text, “This is my body,” when he said that the word is means signifies, founding his heresy on a verse of Exodus (xii, 11) : “For it is the Phase (that is the passage) of the Lord.” Now, said he, the eating of the paschal lamb was not itself the passage of the Lord; it only meant it, or signified it. The Zuinglians alone follow this interpretation, for we never can take the sense of the word is for the word means or signifies, unless in cases, where reason itself shows that the word is has a figurative meaning; but in this case the Zuinglian explanation is contrary to the proper literal sense, in which we should always understand the Scriptures, when that sense is not repugnant to reason. The Zuinglian explanation is also opposed to St. Paul, relating to us the very words of Christ : “This is my body, which shall be delivered up for you” (I. Cor. xi, 24). Our Lord, we see, did not deliver up, in his Passion, the sign or signification of his body, but his real and true body. The Zuinglians say, be sides, that in the Syro-Chaldaic or Hebrew, in which our Redeemer spoke, when instituting the Eucharist, that there is no word corresponding in meaning to our word signify, and hence, in the Old Testament, we always find the word is used instead of it, and, therefore, the words of Christ, “ This is my body,” should be understood, as if he said, “This signifies my body.” We answer :First It is not the fact that the word signifies is never found in the Old Testament, for we find in Exodus : “Man-hue! Which signifieth: What is this” (Exod. xvi, 15); and in Judges (xiv, 15) : “Persuade him to tell thee what the riddle meaneth;” and in Ezechiel (xvii, 12) : “Know you not what these things mean.” Secondly Although the words mean or signify are not found in the Hebrew or Syro-Chaldaic, still the word is must not always be taken for it, only in case that the context should show that such is the intention of the speaker; but in this case the word has surely its own signification, a we learn, especially from the Greek version; this language has both words, and still the Greek text says, “This is my body,” and not “This means my body.”

13. The opinion of those sectarians, who say that in the Eucharist only a figure exists, and not the body of Christ in reality, is also refuted by these words of our Lord, already quoted : “This is my body, which shall be delivered up for you” (I. Cor. xi, 24); for Jesus Christ delivered up his body to death, and not the figure of his body. And, speaking of his sacred blood, he says (St. Matt, xxvi, 28) : “For this is my blood of the New Testament,

which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins.” Christ, then, shed his real blood, and not the figure of his blood; for the figure is expressed by speech, or writing, or painting, but the figure is not shed. Piceninus[16403]objects that St. Augustine, speaking of that passage of St. John, “ Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man.” says that the flesh of our Lord is a figure, bringing to our mind the memory of his passion : “Figura est praecipiens Passione Dominica esse communicandum.” We answer, that we do not deny that our Redeemer instituted the Holy Eucharist, in memory of his death, as we learn from St. Paul (I. Cor. xi, 26) : “For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink this chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until he come ;” but still we assert, that in the Eucharist there is the true body of Christ, and there is, at the same time, a figure, commemorative of his death; and this is St. Augustine’s meaning, for he never doubted that the body and blood of Christ were in the Eucharist really and truly, as he elsewhere expresses it[16404] : “ Panis quem videtis in Altari, sanctificatus per verbum Dei, Corpus est Christi.”

14. There is, I should say, no necessity of refuting Calvin’s opinions on the Real Presence, for he constantly refutes himself, changing his opinion a thousand times, and always cloaking it in ambiguous terms. Bossuet and Du Hamel[16405] may be consulted on this point.

They treat the subject extensively, and quote Calvin’s opinion, who says, at one time, that the true substance of the body of Christ is in the Eucharist, and then again[16406], that Christ is united to us by Faith; so that, by the presence of Christ, he understands a presence of power or virtue in the Sacrament; and this is confirmed by him in another part of his works, where he says that Christ is just as much present to us in the Eucharist as he is in Baptism. At one time, he says the Sacrament of the Altar is a miracle, and then again[16407], the whole miracle, he says, consists in this, that the Faithful are vivified by the flesh of Christ, since a virtue so powerful descends from heaven on earth. Again, he says that even the unworthy receive in the Supper the body of Christ, and then, in another place[16408], he says that he is received by the elect alone. In fine, we see Calvin struggling, in the explanation of this dogma, not to appear a heretic with the Zuinglians, nor a Catholic with the Roman Catholics. Here is the Profession of Faith which the Calvinist Ministers presented to the Prelates, at the Conference of

Poissy, as Bossuet gives it[16409]: “ We believe that the body and blood are really united to the bread and wine, but in a sacramental manner that is, not according to the natural position of bodies, but inasmuch as they signify that God gives his body and blood to those who truly receive him by Faith.” It was remarkable in that Conference, that Theodore Beza, the first disciple of Calvin, and who had hardly time to have imbibed all his errors, said publicly, as De Thou[16410] relates, “that Jesus Christ was as far from the Supper as the heavens were from the earth.” The French Prelates then drew up a true Confession of Faith, totally opposed to the Calvinists : “ We believe,” said they, “that in the Sacrament of the Altar there is really and transubstantially the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine, by the power of the Divine Word pronounced by the Priest,” &c.

II. OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE REAL PRESENCE ANSWERED

15. They object, first, the words of Christ : “ It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. These words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life” (John, vi, 64). See there, they say, the words which you make use of to prove the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist are figurative expressions, which signify the celestial food of life, which we receive by Faith. We answer, with St. John Chrysostom[16411], that when Christ says the flesh profiteth nothing, he spoke not of his own flesh, God forbid !but of those who carnally receive it, as the Apostle says : “The sensual man perceiveth not those things that are of the Spirit of God” (I. Cor. ii, 14), and those who carnally speak of the Divine Mysteries, and to this St. John refers when he says : “The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life” (John, vi, 64), meaning that these words refer not to carnal and perishable things, but to spiritual things and to eternal life. But even supposing these words to refer to the flesh of Christ itself, they only mean, as St. Athanasius and St. Augustine explain them, that the flesh of Christ, given to us as food, sanctifies us by the Spirit, or the Divinity united to it, but that the flesh alone would be of no avail. These are St. Augustine’s words[16412]: “ Non prodest quidquam (Caro), sed quomodo; illi intellexerunt, carnem quippe sic intellexerunt, quomodo in cadavere dilaniatur, aut in macello venditur,

non quomodo spiritu vegetatur. Caro non prodest quidquam, sed sola caro; accedat spiritus ad carnem, et prodest plurimum.”

16. They object, secondly, that when Jesus Christ said : “This is my body,” the word this in the sentence has reference to the bread alone, which he then held in his hand, but bread is only a figure of the body of Christ, but not the body itself. We answer that if we do not consider the proposition “This is my body” as complete in itself, that might be the case if he said, for example, this is, and did not say any more, then the word this would have reference to the bread alone, which he held in his hand; but taking the whole sentence together, there can be no doubt but that the word this refers to the body of Christ. When our Lord changed water into wine, if he had said, this is wine, everyone would understand that the word this referred not to the water but to the wine, and in the same way in the Eucharist the word this, in the complete sense of the sentence, refers to the body, because the change is made when the whole sentence is completed. In fact the word this in the sentence has no meaning at all, till the latter part is pronounced, is my body then alone the sense is complete.

17. They object, thirdly, that the sentence, “This is my body” is just as figurative as other passages in the Scriptures, as for example, when Christ says : “ I am the true vine,” “ I am the gate,” or when it is said that he is the Rock. We reply that it is a matter of course that these propositions should be taken figuratively, for that Christ should be literally a vine, a door, or a rock is repugnant to common sense, and the words “ I am,” therefore, are figurative. In the words of consecration, however, there is nothing repugnant to reason in joining the predicate with the subject, because, as we have remarked already, Christ did not say this bread is my body, but “This is my body ;” this, that is what is contained under the appearance of this bread is my body; here there is nothing repugnant to reason.

18. They object, fourthly, that the Real Presence is opposed to the words of Christ himself, for he said (John xii, 8) : “The poor you have always with you, but me you have not always.” Our Saviour, therefore, after his ascension, is no longer on earth. Our Lord, we reply, then spoke of his visible presence as man receiving honour from Magdalen. When Judas, therefore, murmured against the waste of the ointment, our Lord reproves him, saying, you have not me always with you, that is, in the visible and natural form of man, but there is here nothing to prove that after his

ascension into heaven he does not remain on earth in the Eucharist, under the appearance of bread and wine, invisibly, and in a supernatural manner. In this sense we must understand also, all similar passages, as, “ I leave the world and go to my Father” (John, xvi, 18) : “He was taken up into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God” (Mark, xvi, 19).

19. They object, fifthly, these words of the Apostle : “Our fathers were all under the cloud and did all eat the same spiritual food” (I. Cor. x, 1 3); therefore, they say, we only receive Christ in the Eucharist by Faith, just as the Hebrews received him. We answer, that the sense of the words is, that the Hebrews received spiritual food, the Manna, of which St. Paul speaks, the figure of the Eucharist, but did not receive the body of Christ in reality, as we receive it. The Hebrews received the figure, but we receive the real body, already prefigured.

20. Sixthly, they object that Christ said : “ I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it with you new, in the kingdom of my Father” (Matt, xxvi, 29), and these words he expressed, after having previously said, “This is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins” (ver. 28). Now, say they, take notice of the words, fruit of the vine, that is a proof that the wine remains after the consecration. We answer, first, that Christ might have called it wine, even after the consecration, not because the substance, but because the form of wine was retained, just as St. Paul calls the Eucharist bread after the consecration : “Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord” (ver. 29). Secondly, we reply, with St. Fulgentius[16413], who supposes that Christ took two chalices, one the Paschal chalice, according to the Jewish Rite, the other according to the Sacramental Rite. Our Lord then, he says, when using the words they found the objection on, spoke of the first chalice, and not of the second, and that he did so is clear from the words of another of the Evangelists, St. Luke (xxii, 17), who says that “having taken the chalice, he gave thanks, and said :Take and divide it among you. For I say to you that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, till the kingdom of God come.” Now, if we read on to the 20th verse of the same chapter, we find that Jesus took the chalice of wine and consecrated it : “ In like manner the chalice also, after he had supped,

saying :This is the chalice, the New Testament, in my blood which shall be shed for you.” Hence it is manifest that the words, “ I will not drink of the fruit of the vine,” were expressed by our Redeemer previous to the consecration of the chalice.

21. They object, seventhly, that the doctrine of the Real Presence cannot be true, for it is opposed to all our senses. But to this we reply, with the Apostle, that matters of faith are not manifest to the senses, for “Faith is the evidence of things that appear not” (Heb. xi, 1). And we have another text, also, which disposes of this feeble argument : “The sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God, for it is foolishness to him” (I. Cor. ii, 14). All this will be answered more extensively farther on (sec. 3).

III. OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION, THAT IS, THE CONVERSION OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE BREAD AND OF THE WINE INTO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST

22. Luther at first left it as a matter of choice to each person, either to believe in Transubstantiation or not, but he changed his opinion afterwards, and in 1522, in the book which he wrote against Henry VIII. , he says : “ I now wish to transubstantiate my own opinion. I thought it better before to say nothing about the belief in Transubstantiation, but now I declare, that if any one holds this doctrine, he is an impious blasphemer”[16414], and he concludes by saying, that in the Eucharist, along with the body and blood of Christ, remains the substance of the bread and wine : “that the body of Christ is in the bread, with the bread, and under the bread, just as fire is in a red-hot iron.” He, therefore, called the Real Presence “ Impanation,” or “Consubstantiation,” that is, the association of the substance of bread and wine with the substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

23. The Council of Trent, however, teaches, that the whole substance of the bread and wine is changed into the body and blood of Christ. It issued a Decree to that effect (Cap. 4, Sess. xiii), and says, that the Church most aptly calls this change Transubstantiation.

Here are the words of the Second Can.: “ Si quis dixerit in sacrosancto Eucaristiao Sacramento remanere substantiam panis et vini una cum corpore et sanguine D. N. J. C., negaveritque mirabilem illam, et singularem conversionem totius substantiao panis in corpus, et totius substantiao vini in sanguinem, manentibus dumtaxat speciebus panis et vini, quam quidem conversionem Catholica Ecclesia aptissime Transubstantiationem appellat, anathema sit.” Remark the words, mirabi lem ilium, et singularem conversionem totius substantiao, the won derful and singular conversion of the whole substance. It is called wonderful, for it is a mystery hidden from us, and which we never can comprehend. It is singular, because in all nature there is not another case of a similar change; and it is called a conversion, because it is not a simple union with the body of Christ, such as was the hypostatic union by which the Divine and human Natures were united in the sole person of Christ. Such is not the case, then, in the Eucharist, for the substance of the bread and wine is not united with, but is totally changed and converted into, the body and blood of Jesus Christ. We say a conversion of the whole substance, to distinguish it from other conversions or changes, such as the change of food into the body of the person who partakes of it, or the change of water into wine by our Redeemer at Cana, and the change of the rod of Moses into a serpent, for in all these changes the substance remained, and it was the form alone that was changed; but in the Eucharist the matter and form of the bread and wine is changed, and the species alone remain, that is, the appearance alone, as the council explains it, “ remanentibus dumtaxat speciebus panis et vini.”

24. The general opinion is, that this conversion is not performed by the creation of the body of Christ, for creation is the production of a thing out of nothing; but this is the conversion of the substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ. It does not take place either by the annihilation of the matter of the bread and wine, because annihilation means the total destruction of a thing, and the body of Christ, then, would be changed, we may say, from nothing; but in the Eucharist the substance of the bread passes into the substance of Christ, so that it is not from nothing. Neither does it take place by the transmutation of the form alone (as a certain author endeavours to prove), the same matter still remaining, as happened when the water was changed into wine, and the rod into a serpent. Scotus says that Transubstantiation is an act adducing the body of Christ into the Eucharist (actio adductiva); but this opinion is not followed by others, for adduction does not mean conversion by the passage of one substance into the other. It cannot be called, either, a unitivc action, for that supposes two extremes in the point of union. Hence, we say, with St.

Thomas, that the consecration operates in such a manner, that if the body of Christ was not in heaven, it would commence to exist in the Eucharist. The consecration really, and in instanti, as the same Doctor says[16415], reproduces the body of Christ under the present species of bread, for as this is a sacramental action, it is requisite that there should be an external sign, in which the rationale of a Sacrament consists.

25. The Council of Trent has declared (Sess. xiii, cap. 3), that vi verborum the body of Christ alone is under the appearance of bread, and the blood alone under the appearance of wine; that by natural and proximate concomitance the soul of our Saviour is under both species, with his body and his blood; by supernatural and remote concomitance the Divinity of the Word is present, by the hypostatic union of the Word with the body and soul of Christ; and that the Father and the Holy Ghost are present, by the identity of the essence of the Father and the Holy Ghost with the Word. Here are the words of the Council : “ Semper haec fides in Ecclesia Dei fuit, statim post consecrationom verum Domini nostri corpus, vetumque ejus sanguinem sub panis, et vini specie, una cum ipsius anima, et Divinitate existere; sed corpus quidem sub specie panis, et sanguinem sub vini specie ex vi verborum; ipsum autem corpus sub specie vini, et sanguinem sub specie panis, animamque sub utraque vi naturalis illius connexionis, et concemitantiae, qua partes Christi Domini, qui jam ex mortuis resurrexit, non araplius moriturus, inter se copulantur : Divinitatem porro propter admirabilem illam ejus cum corpore, et anima hypostaticam unionem.”

26. Transubstantiation is proved by the very words of Christ himself : “ This is my body.” The word this, according to the Lutherans themselves, proves that Christ’s body was really present. If the body of Christ was there, therefore the substance of the bread was not there; for if the bread was there, and if by the word this our Lord meant the bread, the proposition would be false, taking it in this sense, This is my body, that is, this bread is my body, for it is not true that the bread was the body of Christ. But perhaps they will then say, before our Lord expressed the word body, what did the word this refer to ? We answer, as we have done already, that it does not refer either o the bread or to the body, but has its own natural meaning, which is this :This which is contained under the appearance of bread is not bread, but is my body. St. Cyril of Jerusalem says[16416]: “ Aquam aliquando

(Christus) mutavit in vinum in Cana Galilaeae sola voluntate, et non erit dignus cui credamus, quod vinum in sanguinem transmutasset.” St. Gregory of Nyssa[16417] says : “ Panis statim per verbum transmutatur, sicut dictum est a Verbo :Hoc est corpus meum.” St. Ambrose writes thus[16418] : “Quantis utimur exemplis, ut probemus non hoc esse quod natura formavit, sed quod benedictio consecravit; majoremque vim esse benedictionis, quam naturae, quia benedictione etiam natura ipsa mutatur.” St. John of Damascus[16419]: “ Panis, ac vinum et aqua per Sancti Spiritus invocationem, et adventum mirabili modo in Christi corpus et sanguinem vertuntur.” Tertullian, St. Chrysostom, and St. Hilary use the same language[16420].

27. Transubstantiation is also proved by the authority of Councils, and especially, first, by the Roman Council, under Gregory VII., in which Berengarius made his profession of Faith, and said : “ Panem et vinum, quae ponuntur in Altari, in veram et propriam ac vivificatricem carnem et sanguinem Jesu Christi substantialiter convert! per verba consecratoria.”

Secondly By the Fourth Council of Lateran (cap. 1), which says : “ Idem ipse Sacerdos et Sacrificium Jesus Christus, cumcorpus et sanguis in Sacramento Altar is sub speciebus panis et vini veraciter continetur, transubstantiatis pane in corpus, et vino in sanguinem potestate Divina,” &c. Thirdly By the Council of Trent (Sess. xiii, can. 2), which condemns all who deny this doctrine : “Mirabilem illam conversionem totius substantive panis in corpus, et vini in sanguinem quam conversionem Catholica Ecclesia aptissime Transubstantionem appellat.”

IV. OBJECTIONS AGAINST TRANSUBSTANTIATION ANSWERED

28. The Lutherans say, first, that the body of Christ is locally in the bread as in a vessel, and, as we say, showing a bottle in which wine is contained, “This is the wine,” so, say they, Christ, showing the bread, said : “This is my body ;” and hence, both the body of Christ and the bread are, at the same time, present in the Eucharist. We answer, that, according to the common mode of speech, a bottle is a fit and proper thing to show that wine is there, because wine is usually kept in bottles, but it is not the case with bread, which is not a fit and proper thing to designate or point out a human body, for it is only by a miracle that a human body could be contained in bread.

29. Just to confound one heresy by another, we will quote the argument of the Zuinglians[16421] against the Impanation or Consubstantiation of the bread and the body of Christ, invented by the Lutherans. If, say they, the words "This is my body" are to be taken in a literal sense, as Luther says they are, then the Transubstantiation of the Catholics is true. And this is certainly the case. Christ did not say, this bread is my body, or here is my body, but this thing is my body. Hence, say they, when Luther rejects the figurative meaning, that it is only the signification of the body of Christ, as they hold, and wishes to explain the words "this is my body" after his own fashion, that is, this bread is really my body, and not the frame of my body, this doctrine falls to the ground of itself, for if our Saviour intended to teach us that the bread was his body, and that the bread was there still, it would be a contradiction in itself.

The true sense of the words "This is my body," however, is that the word this is to be thus understood : this, which I hold in my hands is my body. Hence the Zuinglians concluded that the conversion of the substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ should be taken either totally figuratively or totally in substance, and this was Beza's opinion in the Conference of Monbeliard, held with the Lutherans. Here, then, is, according to the true dogma, the conclusion we should come to in opposition to Luther. When our Lord says, "This is my body," he intended that of that bread should be formed either the substance, or the figure of his body; if the substance of the bread, therefore, be not the mere simple figure of Christ's body, as Luther says, then it must become the whole substance of the body of Jesus Christ.

30. They object, secondly, that in the Scripture the Eucharist is called bread, even after the consecration : " One body. . . . who all partake of one bread" (I. Cor. x, 17); "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the Chalice of the Lord unworthily" c. (1. Cor. xi, 27); the bread, therefore, remains. Such, however, is not the case; it is called bread, not because it retains the substance of bread, but because the body of Christ is made from the bread. In the Scriptures we find that those things which are miraculously changed into other things are still called by the name of the thing from which they were changed, as the water which was changed into wine, by St. John, at the marriage of Cana in Galilee was still called water, even after the change

: “When the Chief Steward had tasted the water made wine” (John, ii, y); and in Exodus also we read that the rod of Moses changed into a serpent was still called a rod : “Aaron’s rod devoured their rods” (Exod. vii, 12). In like manner, then, the Eucharist is called bread after the consecration, because it was bread before, and still retains the appearance of bread. Besides, as the Eucharist is the food of the soul, it may be justly called bread, as the Manna made by the angels is called bread, that is, spiritual bread: “Man eat the bread of angels” (Psalms, Ixxvii, 25). The sectarians, however, say, the body of Christ cannot be broken, it is the bread alone that is broken, and still St. Paul says : “And the bread which we break is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?” (I. Cor. x, 16). We answer, that the breaking is understood to refer to the species of the bread which remain, but not to the body of the Lord, which, being present in a sacramental manner, cannot be either broken or injured.

31. They object, thirdly, that Christ says, in St. John : “ I am the bread of life” (John, vi, 48); still he was not changed into bread. The very text, however, answers the objection itself. Our Lord says : “ I am the bread of life :” now the word “life” shows that the expression must be taken not in a natural but a metaphorical sense. The words “This is my body” must, however, be taken in quite another way; in order that this proposition should be true, it was necessary that the bread should be changed into the body of Christ, and this is Transubstantiation, which is an article of our Faith, and which consists in the conversion of the substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ, so that in the very instant in which the words of consecration are concluded, the bread has no longer the substance of bread, but under its species exists the body of the Lord. The conversion, then, has two terms, in one of which it ceases to be, and in the other commences to be, for otherwise, if the bread was first annihilated, and the body then produced, it would not be a true conversion or Transubstantiation. It is of no consequence to say that the word Transubstantiation is new, and not found in the Scriptures, when the thing signified, that is, the Eucharist, really exists. The Church has always adopted new expressions, to explain more clearly the truths of the Faith when attacked by heretics, as she adopted the word Consubstantial to combat the heresy of Arius.

V. OF THE MANNER IN WHICH JESUS CHRIST IS IN THE EUCHARIST. THE PHILOSOPHICAL OBJECTIONS OF THE SACRAMENTARIANS ANSWERED

32. Before we reply in detail to the philosophical objections of the Sacramentarians relative to the manner in which the body of Jesus Christ is in the Sacrament, we should reflect that the Holy Fathers in matters of faith do not depend on philosophical principles, but on the authority of the Scriptures and the Church, knowing well that God can do many things which our weak reason cannot comprehend. We never will be able to understand the secrets of nature in created things; how, then, can we comprehend how far the power of the Almighty, the Creator of nature, itself, extends ? We now come to their objections. First, they say that, although God is omnipotent, he cannot do anything which is repugnant in itself, but it is repugnant, they say, that Christ should be in heaven and on earth, at the same time, really and truly, as he is according to our belief, and not alone in one, but in many places, at the same time. Hear what the Council of Trent says on this subject (Sess. xiii, c. 1) : " Nec enim hcrec inter se pugnant, ut ipse Salvator noster semper ad dexteram Patris in caelis assideat, juxta modum existendi naturalem; et ut multis nihilominus aliis in locis sacramentaliter prcresens sua substantia nobis adsit, ex existendi ratione; quam etsi verbis exprimere vix possumus, possibilem tamen esse Deo, cogitatione per fidem illustrata, assequi possumus, et constantissime credere debemus." The Council, therefore, teaches, that the body of Jesus Christ is in heaven in a natural manner, but that it is on earth in a sacramental or supernatural manner, which our limited understanding cannot comprehend, no more than we can understand how the three Divine Persons in the Trinity are the same essence, or how, in the Incarnation of the Word in Jesus Christ there is but one Divine Person and two Natures, the Divine and human.

33. It is impossible, they say also, for a human body to be in several places at once. We believe, however, that the body of Christ is not multiplied in the Eucharist, for our Lord is not there present definitively, or circumscribed to that place and to no other, but sacramentally, under the appearance of bread and wine, so that wherever the species of the consecrated bread and wine are, there Jesus Christ is present. The multiplicity of the presence of Christ, therefore, does not proceed from the

multiplication of his body in many places, but from the multiplicity of the consecrations of the bread and wine, performed by the priests in different places. But how is it possible, say they, that the body of Christ can be in several places at once, unless it is multiplied ? We answer, that before our adversaries can prove this to be impossible, they should have a perfect knowledge of place and of glorified bodies; they should know distinctly what place is, and what existence glorified bodies have. When such knowledge, however, surpasses our weak understandings, who shall have the hardihood to deny, that the body of our Lord can be in several places at once, since God has revealed in the Holy Scriptures that Jesus Christ really exists in every consecrated Host ? But, they reply, we cannot understand this. We answer again, that the Eucharist is a mystery of Faith, since our understanding cannot comprehend it, and as we never can do so, it is rashness to say that it cannot be, when God has revealed it, and when we know we cannot decide by reason what is beyond the power of reason.

34. They assert, besides, that it is repugnant to reason to say that the body of Jesus Christ exists under the species, without extension or quantity, for both extension and quantity are essential qualities of bodies, and God himself cannot deprive things of their essences, therefore, say they, the body of Christ cannot exist without filling a space corresponding to its quantity, and, therefore, it cannot be in a small Host, and in every particle of the Host, as Catholics believe. We reply to this, that although God cannot deprive things of their essence, still he can deprive them of the property of their essence; he cannot take away from fire the essence of fire, but he can deprive fire of the essential quality of burning, as he did in the case of Daniel and his companions, who were unharmed in the furnace. Thus, in like manner, though God cannot make a body to exist without extension and quantity, still he can make it, so that it will not occupy space, and that it will be entire in every part of the sensible species which contain it as a substance; the body of Christ, therefore, into which the substance of the bread is changed, does not occupy place, and is whole and entire in every part of the species. Here is how St. Thomas explains it[16422] : “ Tota substantia corporis Christi continetur in hoc Sacramento post consecrationem, sicut ante consecrationem continebatur ibi tota substantia panis. Propria autem totalitas substantial continetur indifferenter in pauca

vel magna quantitate, unde et tota substantia corporis et sanguinis Christi continetur in hoc Sacramento."

35. That being the case, it is not the fact that the body of Christ in the Eucharist exists without quantity; the whole quantity is there, but in a supernatural, not a natural manner. It does not exist, then, drcumscriptive, that is, according to the measure of the proper quantity corresponding to the quantity of space; but it exists sacramentaliter sacramentally, after the manner of a substance. Hence it is that Jesus Christ, in the Sacrament, does not exercise any action dependent on the senses; and although he exercises the acts of the intellect and of the will, he does not exercise the corporal acts of the sensitive life, which require a certain sensible and external extension in the organs of the body.

36. Neither is it true that Jesus Christ exists in the Sacrament without extension. His body is there, and it has extension; but this extension is not external, or sensible and local, but internal, in ordine ad se, so that although all the parts are in the same place, still one part is not confused with the other. Thus Jesus Christ exists in the Sacrament with internal extension; but as to external and local extension, he is inextended, and indivisible, and whole, and entire, in each particle of the Host, as a substance, as has been already said, without occupying space. Hence it is, that as the body of our Lord does not occupy space, it cannot be moved from one place to another, but is moved only per accidens, when the species are moved under which it is contained, just as happens to ourselves, that when our bodies are moved from one place to another, our souls are also moved, per accidetis, though the soul is incapable of occupying any space. In fine, the Eucharist is a Sacrament of Faith, misterium Fidei, and as we cannot comprehend all the matters of faith, so we should not pretend to understand all that faith, through the Church, teaches us concerning this Sacrament.

37. But how, say they, can the accidents of bread and wine exist without their substance, or subject, as it is called? We answer the question whether accidents are distinct from matter has been already mooted; the most general opinion is in the affirmative; the Councils of Lateran, Florence, and Trent, how ever, keeping clear of the controversy altogether, call the accidents species. In the ordinary course of things these accidents, or species, cannot exist without the subject, but they can in a supernatural and extraordinary manner. In the ordinary course of things, humanity cannot

exist without its proper subsistence (subsistentia); but, notwithstanding, faith teaches us that the humanity of Christ had not human, but Divine subsistence, that is, the Person of the Word. As the humanity of Christ, therefore, united to the Word hypostatically, subsists without the human person, so, in the Eucharist, the species can exist without the subject, that is, without the substance of bread, because their substance is changed into the body of Christ. These species, therefore, have nothing of reality, but by Divine power they represent their former subject, and appear still to retain the substance of bread and wine, and may even become corrupted, and worms may be generated in them, but, then, it is from a new matter, created by the Almighty, that these worms spring, and Jesus Christ is no longer present, as St. Thomas teaches[16423]. As far as the sensations of our organs go, the body of Christ in the Eucharist is neither seen or touched by us immediately in itself, but only through the medium of those species under which it is contained, and it is thus we should understand the words of St. John Chrysostom[16424] : " Ecce eum vides, Ipsum tangis, Ipsum manducas."

38. It is, then, an article of faith, that Jesus Christ is permanently in the Eucharist, and not alone in the use of the communion, as the Lutherans say, and this is the doctrine of the Council of Trent, which also assigns the reason : "In Eucharistia ipse auctor ante usum est, nondum enim Eucharistiam de manu Domini Apostoli susceperant, cum vere tamen ipse affirmavet corpus suum esse, quod prebebat" (Sees, xiii, cap. 3).

And as Jesus Christ is present before the use of the Sacrament, so he is also present after it, as the Fourth Canon expresses it : " Si quis dixerit. . . . . . in Hostiis, seu particulis consecratis, quae es communionem reservantur, vel supersunt, non remanere verum corpus Domini; anathema sit."

39. This is proved, not alone by reason and authority, but by the ancient practice of the Church, likewise; for in the early ages, on account of the persecution, the Holy Communion was given in private houses and in caverns, as Tertullian testifies[16425]: "Non sciet Maritus, quid secreto ante omnem cibum gustes : et si sciverit panem, non ilium esse credat, qui dicitur." St. Cyprian[16426] tells us, that in his time the faithful used to bring home the Eucharist to their houses, to communicate at the proper time. St. Basil[16427], writing to the Patrician Cesaria, exhorts her, that as she could not, on account of the persecution, attend the public communion, she should

carry it along with her, to communicate in case of danger. St. Justin, Martyr[16428], mentions that the Deacons used to carry the communion to the absent. St. Iraeneus[16429] laments to Pope Victor, that having omitted to celebrate the Pasch, he deprived several Priests of the communion on that account, who could not come to the public meetings, and he therefore sent the Eucharist in sign of peace to those who were prevented from attending : “Cum tamen qui te praecesse-runt, Presbyteris, quamvis id minime observarent, Eucharistiam transmiserunt.” St. Gregory of Nazianzan[16430] relates that her sister Orgonia, standing with great faith nigh to the Sacrament, which was concealed, was freed from a disease under which she was labouring; and St. Ambrose[16431] tells us that St. Satirus, having the Eucharist suspended round his neck, escaped shipwreck.

40. Father Agnus Cirillo, in his work entitled “ Ragguagli Teologici” (p. 353), adduces several other examples to the same effect, and proves that an anonymous author, who lately taught that it was not lawful to give communion with particles previously consecrated, and preserved in the tabernacle, is totally wrong. The learned Mabillon[16432] shows that the practice of giving communion when Mass was not celebrated had its origin in the Church of Jerusalem, and existed in the days of St. Cyril, as it was not possible to say Mass each time that the numerous pilgrims frequenting the Holy City required communion. From the Eastern this custom was introduced into the Western Church, and Gregory XIII., in 1584, laid down in his Ritual the mode to be observed by the Priest in the administration of the holy communion, when Mass was not said. This Ritual was confirmed, subsequently, by Paul V., in 1614, and in the chapter de Sac. Eucharis., it is ordered that, “Sacerdos curare debet, ut perpetuo aliquot particulae consecratao eo numero, quae usui infirmorum, et aliorum (mark this) Fidelium communioni satis esse possint, conserventur in pixide.” Benedict XIV., in his Encyclical Letter of the 12th November, 1742, approves of giving communion when Mass is not celebrated : “ De eodem Sacrificio participant, praeter eos quibus a Sacerdote celebrante tribuitur in ipsa Missa portio Victimae a se oblatae, ii etiam quibus Sacerdos Eucharistiam praeservari solitam ministrat.”

41. We may as well remark here, that a certain Decree of the Congregation of Rites, dated 2nd September, 1741, was circulated, by

which it was prohibited to give communion to the people at the Masses for the dead, with pre-consecrated particles, and taking the pixis from the tabernacle, because the usual benediction cannot be given in black vestments to those who communicate; but Father Cirillo (p. 368) says that this Decree is not obligatory, as it was not sanctioned by the reigning Pope, Benedict XIV. There is, certainly, one very strong argument in his favour, and it is this, that Benedict, while Archbishop of Bologna, in his work on the Sacrifice of the Mass, approved of the opinion of the learned Merati, that communion might be given, at the Masses for the dead, with pre-consecrated particles, and when he was afterwards Pope, and re-composed the same treatise on the Sacrifice of the Mass, he never thought of retracting his opinion, which he would have done had he considered the Decree we mentioned valid, and he would have given it his approbation, as published during his Pontificate. Father Cirillo adds, that one of the Consultors of the Congregation told him that, although the Decree was drawn up, yet several of the Consultors refused to sign it, and thus it was held in abeyance, and never published.

42. To come back to the sectaries who deny the Real Presence of Jesus Christ, unless in the use alone, I know not how they can answer the First Council of Nice, which ordains (Can. 13), that communion should be administered to the dying at all times, and it would be impossible to do that if the Eucharist was not preserved. The Fourth Council of Lateran expressly ordains the same thing (Can. 20) : “ Statuimus quod in singulis Ecclesiis Chrisma, et Eucharistia sub fideli custodia conserventur ;” and this was confirmed by the Council of Trent (Sess. xiii, c. 6). From the earliest ages the Greeks preserved the Eucharist in silver ciboriums, made in the form of a dove, or of a little tower, and suspended over the altar, as is proved from the life of St. Basil, and the Testament of Perpetuus, Bishop of Durs[16433].

43. Our adversaries object that Nicephorus[16434] relates, that in the Greek Church it was the custom to give the children the fragments that remained after communion; therefore, they say, the Eucharist was not preserved. We answer, that this was not done every day, only on Wednesdays and Fridays, when the pixis was purified; and it was, therefore, preserved on the other days, and, besides, particles were always preserved for the sick. They object, besides, that the words, “This is my body,” were not pronounced by

Christ before the manducation, but after it, as appears from St. Matthew (xxvi, 26) : “Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke; and gave to his disciples, and said :Take ye, and eat :This is my body.” We answer, with Bellarmin, that in this text the order of the words is not to be regarded, for the order is different with each of the Evangelists. St. Mark, speaking of the consecration of the chalice, says (xiv, 23, 24) : “Having taken the chalice they all drank of it. And he said to them :This is my blood.” Now, it would appear from this, also, that the words, “This is my blood,” were said after the sumption of the chalice; but the context of all the Evangelists show that both “This is my body,” and “This is my blood,” was said by our Lord before he gave them the species of bread and wine.

VI. THE MATTER AND FORM OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST

44. As to the matter of the Eucharist, there is no doubt but that we should use that alone which was used by Jesus Christ that is, bread of wheat, and wine of the vine, as we learn from St. Matthew (xxv, 26), St. Mark (xiv, 12), St. Luke (xxii, 19), and St. Paul (1. Cor. xi, 27). This is what the Catholic Church has always done, and condemned those who dared to make use of any other matter, as is proved in the Third Council of Carthage (c. 27), which was held in the year 397. Estius[16435] says that consecration can be performed with any sort of bread wheaten, barley, oaten, or millet; but St. Thomas[16436] writes, that it is with bread of wheat alone it can be done, but still that bread made of a sort of rye, which grows from wheat sown in poor soil, is also matter for the consecration : “ Et ideo si qua frumenta sunt, quas ex semine tritici generari possunt, sicut ex grano tritici seminato malis terris nascitur siligo, ex tali frumento panis confectus potest esse materia hujus Sacramenti.” He, therefore, rejected all other bread, and this is the only opinion we can follow in practice. Doctors have disputed, as we may see in the works of Mabillon, Sirmond, Cardinal Bona, and others, whether unleavened bread, such as the Latin’s use, or leavened bread, as used by the Greeks, is the proper matter for the Sacrament. There is not the least doubt but that the consecration is valid in either one or the other; but, at present, the Latin’s are prohibited from consecrating in leavened, and the Greeks in unleavened, bread, according to a Decree of the Council of Florence, in 1429 : “Definimus in azimo, sive in fermentato pane triticeo Corpus Christi

veraciter confici, Sacerdotesque in alterutro ipsum Domini Corpus conficere debent, unum quenque scilicet juxta suae Eeclesise Occidentalis, sive Orientalis consuetudinem.” The matter of the consecration of the blood should be common wine, pressed from ripe grapes; and, therefore, the liquor expressed from unripe grapes, boiled wine, or that which has become vinegar, cannot be used. Must, however, or the unfermented juice of the grape, will answer; but it should not be used without necessity.

45. As to the quantity of bread and wine to be consecrated, it is quite sufficient that it be apparent to the senses, be it ever so little; it must, however, be certain, and of a known quantity, and morally present. According to the intention of the Church, and as St. Thomas teaches[16437], a greater number of particles should not be consecrated than is sufficient to give communion to that number of people who are expected to receive within the time that the species would keep without corrupting. From this Peter de Marca concludes[16438] that it is not in the power ofaPriest to consecrate all the bread in a shop, for example; the consecration in this case, he says, would be invalid, though others assert it would only be illicit. Theologians also dispute of the validity of consecration, when performed for the purposes of witchcraft, or to expose the Host to the insult of unbelievers.

46. We now have to treat of the form of the Eucharist. Luther[16439] says, that the words of Christ alone, “ This is my body,” are not sufficient to consecrate, but that the whole liturgy must be recited. Calvin[16440] said, that the words were not necessary at all for consecration, but only to excite faith. Some Greek schismatic’s, Arcudius[16441] informs us, said that the words, “This is,” &c., being once expressed by Christ, were sufficient in themselves to consecrate all the Hosts offered up ever after.

Some Catholics taught that Christ consecrated the Eucharist by his occult benediction, without any words at all, by the excellence of his power; but ordained the form, at the same time, for man to use in consecration.

47. This opinion was held by Durandus[16442], Innocent III.[16443], and especially by Catherinus[16444], but as Cardinal Gotti[16445] informs us, it is now not held by any one, and some even say it was branded as rashness to hold it. The true and general doctrine is, as St. Thomas teaches[16446], that Jesus Christ consecrated, when he expressed the words, “This is my body,

this is my blood," and that the priest, at the present day, consecrates in the same manner, expressing the same words, in the person of Christ, and this not historically narrative, but significantly significative that is, by applying this meaning to the matter before him, as the generality of Doctors teach with St. Thomas[16447].

48. Catherinus says, also, that besides the words of our Lord, it is necessary, in order to consecrate, to add the prayers which, in the Latin Church, precede, and in the Greek, follow, the act; and the learned Oratorian, Father Le Brun[16448], follows this opinion, likewise. The general opinion of theologians agreeing with St. Thomas[16449], is, that Christ consecrated with the very same words as Priests do at present, and that the prayers of the Canon of the Mass are obligatory, but not necessary for consecration, so that it would be valid without them. The Council of Trent (Sess. xiii, c. 1) declares that our Saviour, " Post panis vinique benedictionem se suum ipsius corpus illis praebere, ac suum sanguinem disertis ac perspicuis verbis testatus est : quae verba a sanctis Evangelistis commemorata, et a D. Paulo postea repetita, cum propriam illam et apertissimam significationem prae se ferant, secundum quam a Patribus intellecta sunt," &c. Were not the words, "Take and eat; this is my body," as the Evangelists inform us, clearly demonstrative that Christ gave his disciples his body to eat ? It was by these words, then, and no other, that he converted the bread into his body, as St. Ambrose writes[16450]: " Consecratio igitur quibus verbis est, et cujus sermonibus ? Domini Jesu. Nam reliqua omnia, quae dicuntur, laudem Deo deferunt; oratio praemittitur pro Popolo, pro Regibus, pro ceteris; ubi venitur ut conficiatur venerabile Sacramentum, jam non suis sermonibus Sacerdos, sed utitur sermonibus Christi."

St. John Chrysostom[16451], speaking of the same words, says : "Hoc verbum Christi transformat ea, quae oposita sunt." And St. John of Damascus says : " Dixit pariter Deus, Hoc est corpus meum, ideoque omnipotenti ejus praeepto, donee veniat, efficitur."

49. The same Council (Cap. 3) says : " Et semper haec fides in Ecclesia Dei fuit, statim post consecrationem verum Domini nostri Corpus, ver unique ejus sanguinem sub panis et vini specie existere ex vi verborum." Therefore, by the power of the words that is, the words mentioned by the Evangelists instantly after the consecration, the bread is converted into the

body, and the wine into the blood, of Jesus Christ. There is a great difference between the two sentences, “This is my body,” and “ We beseech thee that the body of Jesus Christ may be made for us,” or, as the Greeks say, “Make this bread the body of Christ ;” for the first shows that the body of Christ is present at the very moment in which the sentence is expressed, but the second is only a simple prayer, beseeching that the oblation may be made the body, not in a determinative, but a suspended and expectative sense. The Council says that the conversion of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ takes place vi verborum, not vi orationum, by the power of the words, and not by the power of the prayers. St. Justin says[16452]: “ Eucharistiam confici per preces ab ipso Verbo Dei profectas ;” and he afterwards explains that these prayers are : “This is my body ;” but the prayer in the Canon was not pronounced by the Word of God himself. St. Iraeneus[16453] says, also : “ Quando mixtus calix, et factus panis percipit verbum Dei, fit Eucharistia corporis Christi.” We do not find that Christ, in consecrating, used any other words but those : “This is my body, and this is my blood.” Taking all this into consideration, we must decide that the opinion of Le Brun has not a sound foundation of probability.

50. Several Fathers (say the supporters of this opinion) teach that the Eucharist is consecrated both by prayer and by the words of Christ. We answer, that by the word prayer they mean the very expression “ This is my body,” used by Christ, as St. Justin[16454] expressly states, that the prayer by which the Eucharist is consecrated is the words, “This is my body,” &c. St. Iraeneus had previously said the same[16455], that the Divine invocation by which the Eucharist is made is the Divine word. St. Augustine[16456] says that the mystic prayer[16457] by which the—Eucharist is made consists in the words of Christ, “This is my body,” &c., as the forms of the other Sacraments are called prayers, because they are holy words which have the power of obtaining from God the effect of the Sacraments. They object to us, also, some Liturgies, as those of St. James, St. Mark, St. Clement, St. Basil, and St. John Chrysostom, which would make it appear that besides the words of Christ other prayers are requisite for consecration, as we have in the Canon: “Quaesumus ut nobis corpus, et sanguis fiat delectissimi Filii tui,” &c. The same prayer is also used in the Greek Mass, but, as Bellarmin writes[16458], when the Greeks were asked by Eugenius IV. what was the

reason that they used the prayer “that this may become the body,” &c., after having already expressed the words of consecration, “This is my body,” &c., they answered that they added this prayer, not to confirm the consecration, but that the Sacrament might assist the salvation of the souls of those who received it.

51. Theologians[16459] say, notwithstanding, that it is not an article of Faith that Christ did consecrate with these words, and ordained that with these words alone priests should consecrate, for although this is the general opinion, and most consonant with the sentiments of the Council of Trent, still it is not anywhere declared to be an article of faith by the Canon of the Church; and although the Holy Fathers have given it the weight of their authority, they have never laid it down as a matter of faith. Salmeron mentions (loc. cit.) that the Council of Trent being entreated to explain the form with which Christ consecrated this Sacrament, the Fathers judged it better not to define anything on the subject.

Tournelly[16460] replies to all the objections made by those who wish to make it a matter of faith. If it is not a matter of faith, however, still, as St. Thomas teaches, it is morally certain[16461], and we cannot even say that the contrary opinion is probable. The priest, then, would commit a most grievous sin, if he omitted the preceding prayers, but still his consecration would be valid. It is debated among authors, whether any other words unless these, “This is the Chalice of my blood,” though the remainder is laid down in the Missal, are essentially necessary for the consecration of the blood. In our Moral Theology[16462] the reader will find the point discussed. Several hold the affirmative opinion, and quote St. Thomas in their favour, who says[16463] : “Et ideo ilia quae sequuntur sunt essentialia sanguini, prout in hoc Sacramento consecratur, et ideo oportet, quod sint de substantia Formae;” the opposite opinion, however, is more generally followed, and those who hold it deny that it is opposed to the doctrine of St. Thomas, for he says that the subsequent words appertain to the substance but not to the essence of the form, and hence they conclude that these words do not belong to the essence, but only to the integrity of the form, so that the priest who would omit them would commit a grievous sin undoubtedly, but still would validly consecrate.

52. We should remark here that the Council of Trent (Sess. xxii), condemned in nine Canons nine errors of the Reformers concerning the Sacrifice of the Mass, as follows :First that the Mass is not a true Sacrifice, and that it is only offered up to administer the Eucharist to the Faithful. Second That by these words, “Do this in commemoration of me,” Christ did not institute the Apostles Priests, or ordain that the Priests should offer up his body and blood. Third That the Mass is only a thanksgiving or remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Cross, but not a propitiatory Sacrifice, or that it is useful only to those who communicate at it. Fourth That this Sacrifice is derogatory to the Sacrifice of the Cross. Fifth That it is an imposture to celebrate Mass in honour of the Saints, and to obtain their intercession. Sixth That there are errors in the Canon. Seventh That the ceremonies, vestments, and signs used in the Catholic Church are incentives to impiety. Eighth That private Masses, in which the Priest alone communicates, are unlawful. Ninth That the practice of saying part of the Canon in a low voice should be condemned; that it all ought to be said in the vulgar tongue, and that the mixture of water with the wine in the Chalice should also be condemned. All these errors I have refuted in my work against the Reformers.

Refutation XI

ERRORS OF LUTHER AND CALVIN. SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPAL POINTS

1.-Free will exists. 2.—The Divine Law is not impossible. 3.—Works are necessary. 4.—Faith alone does not justify us. 5.—Of the uncertainty of Justification, Perseverance, and eternal Salvation. 6.—God is not the Author of Sin. 7.—God predestines n o one to hell. 8.—Infallibility of General Councils.

I. OF FREE WILL

1. I have already stated in this work[16464] that the errors of Luther, Calvin, and their disciples, who have added error to error, are almost innumerable; and in particular, as Prateolus remarks, in the Calvinistic heresy alone two hundred and seven errors against Faith are enumerated, and another author brings them up even to fourteen hundred. I, however, refute only the principal errors of Luther, Calvin, and the other Reformers, for the refutation of their other erroneous opinions will be found in Bellarmin, Gotti, and several other authors. One of Calvin's chief heresies was, that Adam alone had free will, but that by his sin not alone he, but all his posterity lost it, so that free will is only titulus sine re. This error was specially condemned by the Council of Trent (Sess. vi, c. 5) : " Si quis hominis arbitrium post Adas peccatum amissum et extinctum esse dixerit, aut rem esse de solo titulo, imo titulum sine re, figmentum denique a Satana invectum in Ecclesiam, anathema sit."

2. Free will consists of two sorts of liberty, Contradictionis, by which we can either do anything or let it alone, and Contrarietatis, by which we have the power of doing anything, and also doing the opposite, as of doing what is good and doing what is bad. Man has retained both species of free will, as the Scriptures prove. First As to the liberty of Contradiction, to do or not to do what is right, we have several texts to prove it. For example, in

Ecclesiasticus (xv, 14 16) : “God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel. He added his commandments and precepts. If thou wilt keep the commandments forever, they shall preserve thee ;” “It shall depend on the will of her husband whether she shall do it or do it not” (Numb, xxx, 14); “ He could have transgressed, and hath not transgressed, and could do evil things and hath not done them” (Eccles. xxxi, 10); “Whilst it remained did it not remain to thee and after it was sold was it not in thy power ?” (Acts, v, 4); “The lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it” (Gen. iv, 7). Many texts, likewise, prove the liberty of contrariety : “ I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing” (Deut. xxx, 19); “Before man is life and death, good and evil; that which he shall choose shall be given unto him” (Eccl. xv, 18). And lest our adversaries should say that those texts apply to man only in a state of innocence, we will quote others, which speak of him without doubt after the fall : “But if it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, you have your choice; choose this day whom you would rather serve, whether the Gods,” &c. (Jos. xxiv, 15); “ If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Luke, ix, 23); “For he hath determined, being stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but having power of his own will” (I. Cor. vii, 37); “ And I gave her a time, that she might do penance, and she will not repent” (Apoc. ii, 21); “ If any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come in to him” (Apoc. iii, 20). There are many other texts of a like nature, but these are sufficient to prove that man has preserved his free will after the fall. Luther objects that text of Isaias, (xli, 23) : “ Do also good or evil, if you can,” but he ought to remember that in the text the Prophet is speaking not of man, but of idols, which, as David said, could do nothing : “They have mouths and speak not, they have eyes and see not” (Psalms, cxiii, 5).

3. That being the case, it is not enough, as Luther, Calvin, and the Jansenists say, to have the liberty coactionis, that is, freedom from restraint, that our actions may be meritorious or otherwise. This is exactly the third Proposition of Jansenius, condemned as heretical : “ Ad merendum, et demerendum in statu naturae lapsas non requitur in homine liber tasanecessitate, sed sufficit li bertas a coactione.” In this manner we might say that even the beasts have free will, since, without any violence, they are carried on spontaneously (after their way) to seek the pleasures of sense. It

is necessary, however, for the true liberty of man, that he should have the liberty necessitate, so that he may choose whatever he pleases, as St. Paul (I. Cor. vii, 37) says, “having no necessity, but having the power of his own will,” and it is this will that is required both for merit and demerit. St. Augustine, speaking of sin[16465], says : “ Peccatum usque adeo voluntarium (that is free, as he afterwards explains it) malum est, ut nullo modo sit peccatum si non sit voluntarium.” And the reason is, says the Saint, that God judged that his servants would be better if they served him freely : “Servos suos meliores esse Deus judicavit, si ei servirent liberaliter, quod nullo modo fieri posset, si non voluntate, sed necessitate servirent.”

4. They say that it is God who operates in us all the good which we perform, as the Scriptures teach (I. Cor. xii, 6) : “The same God who worketh all in all ;” “Thou hast wrought all our works for us” (Isaias, xxvi, 12); “ And I will cause you to walk in my commandments” (Ezechiel, xxxvi, 27). We answer, that there is no doubt but that free will after the fall was not, indeed, extinguished, but still was weakened, and inclined to evil, as the Council of Trent teaches : “ Tametsi in eis liberum arbitrium minime extinctum esset, viribus licet attenuatum, et inclinatum” (Sess. vi, cap. 1). There is no doubt that God operates everything good in us; but, at the same time, he does along with us, as St. Paul (I. Cor. xv, 10) says : “ By the grace of God I am what I am but the grace of God with me.” Mark this “the grace of God with me.” God excites us to do what is good by his preventing grace, and helps us to bring it to perfection by his assisting grace; but he wishes that we should unite our endeavours to his grace, and, therefore, exhorts us to cooperate as much as we can : “ Be converted to me” (Zach. i, 3); “Make unto yourselves a new heart” (Ezech. xviii, 31); “Mortify, therefore, your members stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new” (Col. iii, 5, &c.) He also reproves those who refuse to obey his call : “ I called, and you refused” (Prov. i, 24); “How often would I have gathered together thy children and thou wouldst not (Matt. xxiii, 37); “You always resist the Holy Ghost” (Acts, vii, 51). All these Divine calls and reprovals would be vain and unjust if God did everything regarding our eternal salvation, without any cooperation on our part; but such is not the case. God does all, and whatever good we do, the greater part belongs to him; but still it is his will that we labour a little ourselves, as

far as we can, and hence, St. Paul says : “ I have laboured more abundantly than all they, yet not I, but the grace of God with me” (I. Cor. xv, 10). By this Divine Grace, therefore, we are not to understand that habitual grace which sanctifies the soul, but the actual preventing and helping grace which enables us to perform what is right, and when this grace is efficacious, it not only gives us strength to do so, in the same manner as sufficient grace does, but more it makes us actually do what is right. From this first error, then, that free will is extinguished in man by sin, the Innovators deduce other erroneous doctrines that it is impossible for us to observe the laws of the Decalogue; that works are not necessary for salvation, but only faith alone; that our cooperation is not required for the justification of the sinner, for that is done by the merits of Christ alone, although man should still continue in sin. We shall treat of those errors immediately.

II. THAT IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO OBSERVE THE DIVINE LAW

5. Man having lost his free will, the sectarians say that it is impossible for him to observe the precepts of the Decalogue, and especially the first and tenth commandments. Speaking of the tenth commandment, “ Thou shalt not covet,” &c., won concupisces, they say it is quite impossible to observe it, and they found the impossibility on a fallacy. Concupiscence, they say, is itself a sin, and hence, they assert that not alone motions of concupiscence, in actu secundo, which precede consent, are sinful, but also movements, in actu primo, which precede reason, or advertence itself. Catholics, however, teach, that movements of concupiscence, in actu primo, which precede advertence, are neither mortal nor venial sins, but only natural defects proceeding from our corrupt nature, and for which God will not blame us. The movements which precede consent are at most only venial sins, when we are careless about banishing them from our minds after we perceive them, as Gerson and the Salmanticenses, following St. Thomas, teach, for in that case the danger of consenting to the evil desired, by not positively resisting and banishing that motion of concupiscence, is only remote, and not proximate. Doctors, however, usually except movements of carnal delectation, for then it is not enough to remain passive, negative se habere, as Theologians say, but we should make a positive resistance, for, otherwise, if they are any way violent, there is great danger of consenting to

them. Speaking of other matters, however, the consenting alone (as we have said) to the desire of a grievous evil is a mortal sin. Now, taking the commandment in this sense, no one can deny that with the assistance of Divine Grace, which never fails us, it is impossible to observe it. If one advertently consents to a wicked desire, or takes morose delectation in thinking on it, he is then guilty of a grievous, or, at all events, of a light fault, for our Lord himself says[16466] : “Follow not in thy strength the desires of thy heart” (Fccl, v, 2); “ Go not after thy lusts” (Fccl. xviii, 30); “Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof” (Rom. vi, 12). I have used the expression a light fault, because the delectation of a bad object is one thing; the thought of a bad object another :this delectation of thought is not mortally sinful in itself, but only venially so; and even if there be a just cause, it is no sin at all. This, however, must be understood to be the case only when we abominate the evil object, and besides, that the consideration of it should be of some utility to us, and that the consideration of it should not lead us to take pleasure in the evil object, because if there was a proximate danger of this, the delectation would, in that case, be grievously sinful. When, then, on the other hand, concupiscence assaults us against our will, then there is no sin, for God only obliges us to do what is in our power. Man is composed of the flesh and the spirit, which are always naturally at war with each other; and hence, it is not in our power not to feel many times movements opposed to reason. Would not that master be a tyrant who would command his servant not to feel thirst or cold ? In the law of Moses punishment was imposed only on actual external crimes, and hence the Scribes and Pharisees drew a false conclusion, that internal sins were not prohibited; but in the New Law our Redeemer has explained that even wicked desires are forbidden : “You have heard that it was said to them of old :Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say to you, that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt, v, 27, 28). This stands to reason, for if we do not reject evil desires, it would be very difficult to avoid actual external sins; but when these desires are rejected, they are a matter of merit to us, instead of deserving of punishment. St. Paul deplored that he was tormented with carnal temptations, and prayed to God to free him from them, but was answered that his grace alone was sufficient

: “There was given to me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me, which thing thrice I be sought the Lord that it might depart from me, and he said to me : My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity” (II. Cor. xii, 7, &c). Mark here, “ power is made perfect,” which proves that when evil desires are rejected, they increase, instead of weakening our virtue. Here we should also take occasion to remark, that the Apostle says that God does not permit that we should be tempted beyond our strength : “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able” (I. Cor. x, 12).

6. They also assert that it is impossible to observe the first commandment : “Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart.” How is it possible, says Calvin, for us, living in a state of corruption, to keep our hearts continually occupied with the Divine love ?Calvin understands the commandment in this way, but St. Augustine(1) does not, for he counsels us that we cannot observe it as to the words, but we can as to the obligation. We fulfil this commandment by loving God above all things, that is, by preferring the Divine Grace to everything created. The angelic Doctor, St. Thomas[16467] teaches the same. We observe, he says, the precept of loving God with all our hearts, when we love him above everything else : “Cum mandatur, quod Deum ex toto corde diligamus, datur intelligi, quod Deum super omnia debemus diligere.” The substance of the first commandment, then, consists in the obligation of preferring God above all things else, and, therefore, Jesus says that “ he who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt, x, 37).

7. And St. Paul, confiding in the Divine Grace, says that he is certain that nothing created could separate him from the love of God : “For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God” (Rom. viii, 38, 39). Calvin[16468] not alone taught the impossibility of observing the first and and tenth commandments, but even that the observance of any of the others was impossible.

8. They object, first, that St. Peter said, in the Council of Jerusalem : “ Now, therefore, why tempt you God to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear” (Acts, xv, 10). Here the Apostle himself declares that the observance of the law is

impossible. We answer, that St. Peter here does not speak of the moral, but of the ceremonial law, which should not be imposed on Christians, since the Hebrews themselves found it so difficult, that very few of them observed it, though several, however, did so, as St. Luke tells us that St. Zachary and St. Elizabeth did : "They were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord, without blame" (Luke, i, 6).

9. They object, secondly, that text of the Apostle : " For I know that there dwelleth not in me, that is to say, in my flesh, that which is good. For to will, is present with me; but to accomplish that which is good, I find not" (Romans, vii, 18). Now, when he says "that there dwelleth not in me that which is good," he tells us that the law cannot be observed; but we should not separate that passage from what follows : "that is to say, in my flesh." What St. Paul means to say is, that the flesh is opposed to the spirit, and no matter how good our will may be, we never can be exempt from every movement of concupiscence; but these movements, as we have already said, do not prevent us from observing the law. They object, thirdly, that St. John says : " If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I. John, i, 8). We answer that the Apostle does not mean by that, that it is impossible for us to observe the commandments, so that no one can escape falling into mortal sin, but that on account of the present weakness of corrupt nature, no one is exempt from venial sins, as the Council of Trent declared (Sess. vi, cap. 11) : " Licet enim in hac mortali vita quantum vis sancti, et justi in levia saltern, et quotidiana, quae etiam venialia dicuntur peccata, quandoque cadant, non propterea desinunt esse justi."

10. They object, fourthly, that St. Paul says : "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii, 13). Therefore, say our adversaries, Christ, by the merits of his death, has exempted us from the obligation of observing the law. We answer : It is quite a different thing to say that Christ has freed us from the malediction of the law, since his grace gives us strength to observe, and thus avoid the malediction fulminated by the law against its transgressors, and to assert that he has freed us from the observance of the law, which is totally false.

11. They object, fifthly, that the Apostle says, in another place : "Knowing this, that the law is not made for the just man, but for the unjust and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners" (1. Tim. i, 9). Joining this

passage with the other just quoted, they say that our Redeemer has freed us from the obligation of observing the Commandments, and that when he told the young man (Matt, xix, 17), “ If you wish to enter into eternal life, keep the Commandments,” he only spoke ironically, as much as to say, “Keep them if you can,” knowing that it was quite impossible for a child of Adam to observe them. We answer, with St. Thomas[16469], that the law, as to the directive power, is given both to the just and to the unjust, to direct all men as to what they ought to do; but as to the co-active power, the law is not imposed on those who voluntarily observe it without being constrained to observe it, but on the wicked who wish to withdraw themselves from it, for it is these alone should be constrained to observe it. The explanation of the text, “ Keep the Commandments,” given by the Reformers, that Christ spoke ironically, is not only heretical, but totally opposed to commonsense and Scripture, and is not worth an answer. The true doctrine in this matter is that of the Council of Trent[16470] : “Deus impossibilia non jubet, sed jubendo monet, et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis, et adjuvat ut possis” (Sess. vi, c. 13). He, therefore, gives to everyone the ordinary Grace to observe the Commandments, and whenever a more abundant Grace is required, if we pray to him for it, we are sure of obtaining it.

12. This was the answer of St. Augustine to the Adrometines, who objected to him, that if God does not give us sufficient Grace to observe the law, he should not chastise us for violating it : “Cur me corripis ? et non potius Ipsum rogas, ut in me operetur et velle”[16471] And the Saint answers : “ Qui corrigi non vult, et dicit, Ora potius pro me; ideo corripiendus est, ut faciat (id est oret) etiam ipse pro se.” Therefore, says St. Augustine, although man does not receive efficacious Grace from God to fulfil the law, still he should be punished, and commits a sin by violating it, because, having it in his power to pray, and by prayer obtain more abundant assistance to enable him to observe it, he neglects to pray, and thus does not observe the law.

It would be quite otherwise, if it were not granted to all to pray, and, by prayer, obtain strength to do what is right. But another efficacious Grace is necessary to pray, and, in my opinion, St. Augustine would not have answered the Adrometines rationally, that man should be punished if he did not pray for himself, for they might in that case answer him, how can he pray, if he have not efficacious Grace to pray ?

III. THAT GOOD WORKS ARE NECESSARY FOR SALVATION, AND THAT FAITH ALONE IS NOT SUFFICIENT

13. Luther said that, not alone the works of infidels and sinners were of no use, but that even works performed by the just are mere sins, or, at all events, vitiated by sin. Here are his words : " In omni opere bono Justus peccat[16472]. Opus bonum, optime factum, est mortale peccatum secunduni judicium Dei[16473]. Justus in bono opere peccat mortaliter"[16474] Becanus[16475] says that Calvin taught the same, that the works of the just are nothing but iniquity. 0, my God, how blind is the human understanding, when it loses the light of Faith. This blasphemy of Luther and Calvin was properly condemned by the Council of Trent (Sess. vi, can. 22) : " Si quis in quodlibet bono opere justum saltem venialiter peccare dixerit, aut quod intolerabilius est, mortaliter, atque ideo poenas aeternis mereri; tantumque o b id non damnari, quia Deus ea opera non imputet ad damnationem; anathema sit." They quote Isaias, however, who says (Ixiv, 6) : " And we have all become as one unclean, and all our justices," &c. But, as St. Cyril explains this text, the Prophet here is not speaking of the works of the just, but of the iniquity of the Jews of that day. How could good works possibly be sinful, when Christ exhorts us to perform them : "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works" (Matt, v, 16). They are not sins; but, on the contrary, God delights in them, and without them we cannot obtain salvation. Nothing can be clearer than the Scripture on this point : "Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father" (Matt, vii, 21). To do the will of God is to do good works: " If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments" (Matt, xix, 17). When God shall condemn the wicked, he will say to them: " Go from me, ye accursed." And why ? " For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink" (Matt, xxv, 42). "Patience is necessary for you: that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise" (Heb. x, 36). "What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works ?Shall Faith be able to save him" (James, ii, 14). Here it is proved that works are necessary for

salvation, and that Faith is not alone sufficient. We will treat this subject more extensively by and by.

14. Our adversaries object, that St. Paul, writing to Titus (iii. 5–7), says : “Not by the works of justice, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost. Whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour :That being justified by his grace, we may be heirs, according to hope of life everlasting.” Therefore, they say that no work of ours, though a work of justice, is available to salvation; but that we should rest all our hopes of Grace and salvation in Jesus Christ, who, by his merits, has obtained both Grace and salvation for us. To answer this argument clearly, we must make several distinctions. We can deserve Grace and eternal salvation in two ways de condigno and de congruo. To deserve it de condigno, it is necessary that the Remunerator should be obliged to reward us, as a debt of justice; but to deserve it, de congruo, the Remunerator has no obligation to reward us it is fit that he should do so, but it is totally an act of liberality on his part. Now, as far as human merit is with God as a matter of justice, several conditions are requisite. The act itself must be good; it is requisite that he who performs it be in a state of Grace, and, on the part of the Almighty, it is necessary that he should have promised to reward us, for he, as man’s supreme Lord, might require all service from him, without any reward at all. To make it a debt of justice, therefore, it is necessary that a gratuitous Divine promise should have been already given, by which God himself gratuitously makes himself a debtor for the reward promised. It is after this manner that St. Paul could say that he expected, injustice, eternal life, as the reward of his good works : “ I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the Faith. As to the next, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just judge, will render to me in that day” (II. Tim. iv, 7, 8). And here St. Augustine[16476] says : “ Debitorem Dominus ipse se fecit, non accipiendo, sed promittendo. Non ei dicimus : Redde quod accepisti, sed redde quod promisisti.”

15. Here, then, is what the Catholic Church teaches. No man can merit actual justifying Grace de condigno, but only de congruo, and Melanchthon stated a falsehood in his Apology of the Confession of Augsburg (p. 137), when he asserted that we believe we can merit justification by our works.

The Council of Trent has declared, and this is our faith, and no other, that sinners are justified gratuitously by God, and that no work of theirs preceding their justification can deserve it. But the Council has also said that man justified, although he cannot de condigno, merit final perseverance (Sess. vi, c. 13), still can merit de condigno, by the good works he does, assisted by Divine Grace, and the merits of Christ, the augmentation of Grace and eternal life. The Council fulminates its anathema against all who deny this doctrine, in the Sixth Session (Can. 33) : " Si quis dixerit hominis justificati bona opera ita esse dona Dei, ut non sint etiam bona ipsius justificati merita; aut ipsum justificatum bonis operibus, quae ab eo per Dei gratiam, et per Jesu Christi meritum, cujus vivum membrum est, fiunt, non vere mereri augmentum gratiae, vitam aeternam, et ipsius vitae aeternae (si tamen in gratia decesserit) consecutionem, atque etiam glorias augmentum :anathema sit."

All, therefore, that we receive from God, we get through his mercy, and through the merits of Jesus Christ : but, through his goodness, he has so disposed that, with the good works we perform, by the power of his Grace, we can deserve eternal life, on account of the gratuitous promise made by him to those who do what is right. Hear again the words of the Council : " Justificatis, sive acceptam gratiam conservaverint sive amissam recuperaverint, proponenda est vita aeterna, et tamquam gratia filiis Dei per Christum Jesum promissa et tanquam merces ex ipsius Dei promissione ipsorum meritis reddenda" (Sess. vi, cap. 16). Therefore, say the heretics, he who is saved can glorify himself that he is saved through his own works. No; for the Council says : " Licet bonis operibus merces tribuatur absit tamen, ut Christianus in se ipso vel confidat, vel glorietur, et non in Domino : cujus tanta est erga homines bonitas, ut eorum velit esse merita, quae sunt ipsius dona."

16. Our adversaries may thus see how unjustly the Calvinists charge us with insulting the mercy of God and the merits of Jesus Christ by attributing to our own merits the acquisition of eternal salvation. We assert that we can do nothing good, unless in virtue of the Grace communicated to us by God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and hence all our merits are the gift of God, and if he gives us glory as a reward of our merits, he does not do so because he is obliged to give it, but because (to encourage us in his service, and make us more certain of eternal salvation if we are faithful), it is his

wish merely through his own goodness gratuitously to bind himself by a promise to give eternal life to those who serve them. That being the case, what have we to glorify ourselves in, since all that is given to us we receive through the mercy of God, and by the merits of Jesus Christ communicated to us?

17. The Scriptures most clearly prove that eternal glory in the next life is given as a reward for good works, and this glory is called a reward, a debt, a crown of justice, and a payment: "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour" (I. Cor. iii, 8); Now to him that worketh the reward is not reckoned according to grace, but according to debt" (Rom. iv, 4). Mark the words "according to debt." " As to the rest there is laid up for me a crown of justice" (II. Tim. iv, 8); "And having agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard" (Matt, xx, 2); "That you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you suffer" (II. Thess. i, 5); Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt, xxv, 21); " Blessed is the man that endureth temptations, for when he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him" (James, i, 12). All these texts prove that the merit of the just man is a merit of justice, de condigno.

18. The Holy Fathers prove the same doctrines. St. Cyprian says[16477]: " Justitiae opus ut accipiant merita nostra mercedem." St. John Chrysostom, in a long passage which I abridge, says[16478]: " Nunquam profecto, cum Justus sit Deus, bonos hic cruciatibus affici sineret, si non in futuro seculo mercedem promeritis parasset." St. Augustine says[16479] : "Non est injustus Deus, qui justos fraudet mercede justitiae." And again[16480] : " Nullane sunt merita justorum? sunt plane, sed ut justi fierent; merita non fuerunt;" as they are not just by their own merits, but by the Divine Grace. Again, the same Saint says : "Deus cum coronat nostra merita, quid aliud coronat quam sua dona ?" The Fathers of the Second Council of Oranges decided that, " Debetur merces bonis operibus, si fiant; sed gratiae Dei, quae non debetur, praecedit ut fiant." In conclusion, therefore, all our merits depend on the assistance of Grace, without which we cannot have any, and the reward of salvation due to our good works is founded in the promise gratuitously made to us by God through the merits of Jesus Christ."

19. They object that text of St. Paul (Rom. vi, 23) : “The grace of God life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Eternal life, therefore, say they, is a grace of the Divine Mercy, and not a reward due to our good works. We reply, that eternal life is justly to be attributed to the mercy of God, for he, by his mercy, has promised it to our good works. The Apostle, therefore, with good reason, calls eternal life a grace, since it is by the grace of God alone that he has constituted himself a debtor of eternal life to all who perform good works.

20. They object, secondly, that eternal life is called an inheritance, “Knowing that you shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance” (Col. iii, 24). Inheritance, they say, then, is not the right of Christians, as being children of God by merit, but solely on account of his gratuitous adoption. We answer, that to infants glory is given, solely on the title of inheritance; but adults obtain it as an inheritance, as they are the adopted children of God, and also as a reward for their good works, since God has promised them the inheritance if they observe the law; so that this inheritance is, at the same time, a gift and a retribution due to them for their merits, and this is what the Apostle means when he says : “You shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance.”

21. They object, thirdly, that our Lord wishes that no matter how carefully we fulfil the commandments, we should call ourselves unprofitable servants : “ So you also, when you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which we ought to do” (Luke, xvii, 10). If then, say they, we are unprofitable servants, how can we merit eternal life by our works ? We answer, that our works of themselves, without grace, have no merit, but being performed with grace, they, with justice, merit eternal life, in regard of the promise made by God to those who perform them.

22. They object, fourthly, that our works are due to God by obedience, as our supreme Lord, and, hence, they cannot merit eternal life, as justly due to them. We answer, however, that God, through his goodness, laying on one side every other title by which he might justly require all the services we can pay him, has bound himself by a promise to give us eternal glory, as the reward of our good works. But they still say, when every good work is from God, what reward can we expect ? We answer, every good work is all from God, but not totally from God, in the same manner as every good work is

all our own, but not totally our own, because God works with us, and we with him, and it is to this co-operation of ours that it has pleased God to promise, gratuitously, the reward of eternal life.

23. They object, fifthly, that although the good work might be deserving of glory, still there should be some proportion between the labour and the reward; but what proportion, say they, can be found between our works and eternal glory ? “The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us” (Rom. viii, 18). We answer, that our works in themselves, and unconnected with Divine Grace, are, without doubt, unworthy of eternal glory, but rendered valuable by Grace, they are worthy of it, and a proportion then exists between them, as the same Apostle says : “For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory” (II. Cor. iv, 17).

24. They object, sixthly, that St. Paul says : “For by grace you are saved through faith, and not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God, not of works, that no man may glory” (Ephes. ii, 8, 9). Here, then, say they, it is clear that it is Grace that saves us, by means of faith in Jesus Christ. The Apostle, however, is not here speaking of eternal life, but of Grace itself, which, undoubtedly, we never can merit by our works; but, as we have already proved, God wishes that those who fulfil his precepts should, on account of the promise made by him, acquire eternal glory. Then, they reply, if our works are necessary for salvation, the merits of Christ alone are not sufficient to save us. No, in truth they are not enough, but our works are also requisite, for the benefit of Jesus Christ is, that he obtained for us the power of applying his merits with our own works. Neither is there anything in that out of which we can pride ourselves, because whatever power we have to merit heaven, we have solely through the merits of Christ; and, therefore, all the glory is his, as when the vine branches produce fruit, the whole is due to the vine, which sends sap to the branches. When the just man, then, obtains eternal life, he does not glory in his own works, but in the Divine Grace which, by the merits of Christ, gave him the power of meriting it. According to the doctrine of our adversaries, however, almost every means of salvation is taken from us, for if our works are of no avail to us for salvation, and God does everything, then it is no matter whether our morals are good or bad, we need no preparation to receive the Sacraments;

and prayer, inculcated in so many passages of the Scripture, is totally useless to us. What worse doctrine than this could the devil himself invent to lead souls to perdition?

25. This leads us on to another point, following from the former one that Faith alone is sufficient to save us, as Luther and Calvin said, who, on this anchor alone, trusted their eternal salvation, and therefore, despised all law and judgment, cared nothing for righteousness, prayers, or sacraments, and considered all things, no matter how wicked, lawful. They asserted that the Faith by which we firmly believe that God will save us by the merits of Jesus Christ, and the promises made by him, is alone sufficient without works, to obtain salvation for us from God and this Faith they called Fiducia, confidence, it being a hope founded on the promise of Jesus Christ. They quote Scripture, too, in favour of this opinion : "Who believes in the Son, hath eternal life" (John, iii, 36); "That he himself may be just, and the justifier of him who is of the Faith of Jesus Christ" (Romans, iii, 26); " In him, every one that believeth is justified" (Acts, xiii, 39); "Whoever believeth in him shall not be confounded" (Rom. x, 11); "The just man liveth by Faith" (Gal. iii, 11); "The justice of God, by Faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe in him" (Rom. iii, 22).

26. If Faith alone, however, justifies us, how is it, that the very same Scriptures declare, that it is of no use without works ? "What shall it profit my brethren, if a man say he hath faith but hath not works ?Shall faith be able to save him ?" (James ii, 14); and immediately after he says (ver. 17) : " So Faith also, if it have not works is dead in itself." Luther, to be sure, says, that this Epistle is not canonical, but we believe rather the authority of the Church, which includes it in her Canon. But there are numberless other passages to prove that Faith alone is not sufficient to save us, but that it is necessary also, that we fulfil the commandments. St. Paul says : " If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing" (I. Cor. xiii. 2). Jesus Christ commanded his disciples: " Go teach all nations to observe all things whatever I commanded you" (Mark, xxviii, 19, 20). And he said to the young man : " If thou wilt enter into eternal life, observe the commandments" (Matt, xix, 17), and there are many other texts of a like nature. The texts, therefore, adduced by our adversaries, must be understood to refer to that Faith, which, as St. Paul teaches, operates by charity : "For in Christ Jesus, neither

circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, that worketh by charity" (Gal. v, 6); and hence St. Augustine[16481] says, that Faith may exist without charity, but it availeth nothing. Hence, when we find it said in the Scriptures, that Faith saves us, we are to understand that living Faith, that is, the Faith which saves us by good works, which are the vital operations of Faith, for if these are wanting it is a sign that the Faith is dead, and that which is dead cannot give life. Hence it is that the Lutherans themselves, as Lomer, Gerard, the Doctors of Strasbourg, and the greater part of the sect, as a certain author states[16482], forsaking the doctrine of their master, insist on the necessity of good works for salvation. Bossuet[16483] tells us that the Lutherans of the University of Wittemberg in the Confession they presented to the Council of Trent, said "that good works ought of necessity be practised, and that they deserve, by the gratuitous goodness of God, recompense both corporal and spiritual."

27. The Council of Trent (Sess. vi, can. 19), says : " Si quis dixerit, nihil praeceptum esse in Evangelic praeter fidem, cetera esse indifferentia, neque prohibita, sed libera; aut decem praecepta nihil pertinere ad Christianos :anathema sit ;" and in Can. 20 : " Si quis hominem justificatum, et quantumlibet perfectum, dixerit non teneri ad observantiam mandatorum Dei, et Ecclesiae, sed tantum ad credendum; quasi vero Evangelium sit nuda, et absoluta promissio vitae aeternae, sine conditione observationis mandatorum : anathema sit."

IV. THE SINNER IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE

28. The sectarians say, that the sinner, by means of Faith, or confidence in the promises of Jesus Christ, and believing with an infallible certainty, that he is justified, becomes so, for the justice of Jesus Christ is extrinsically imputed to him, by which his sins are not indeed concealed, but covered, and are thus not imputed to him, and they found this dogma on the words of David: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Psalm xxxi, 1, 2).

29. The Catholic Church, however, condemns and anathematizes the doctrine, that as man is absolved from his sins, by Faith alone, that he is justified. Hear the Council of Trent on this subject (Sess. vi, can. 14) : " Si

quis dixerit, hominem a peccatis absolvi, ac justificari ex eo quod se absolvi ac justificari certo credat; aut neminem vere esse justificatum, nisi qui credat se esse justificatum, et hac sola fide absolutionem, et justificationem perfici; anathema sit.” The Church, besides, teaches, that in order that the sinner should become justified, it is necessary that he be disposed to receive Grace. Faith is necessary for this disposition, but Faith alone is not sufficient. The Council of Trent (Sess. vi, cap. 6), says, that acts of hope, of love, of sorrow, and a purpose of amendment are also necessary, and God then finding the sinner thus disposed, gives him gratuitously his Grace, or intrinsic justice (ibid. cap. 7), which remits to him his sins, and sanctifies him. We shall now examine the points on which the supposition of our adversaries rests. In the first place, they say, that by means of faith in the merits and promises of Jesus Christ, our sins are not taken away, but are covered. This supposition is, however, totally opposed to the Scriptures, which teach that the sins are not alone covered, but are taken away and cancelled in a justified soul : “Behold the lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sins of the world” (John, i, 29); “ Be penitent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts, iii, 19); “ He will cast all our sins into the bottom of the sea” (Micheas, vii, 19); “So also Christ was offered once, to exhaust the sins of many” (Heb. ix, 28). Now that which is taken away, which is blotted out, which is annihilated, we cannot say exists any longer. We are also taught that the justified soul is cleansed and delivered from its sins : “Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed, thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Psalm 1, 9); “You shall be cleansed from all your filthiness” (Ezech. xxxvi, 25); “And such some of you were, but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified” (I. Cor. vi, 11); “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification” (Rom. vi, 22). It is on this account that Baptism, by which sin is remitted, is called regeneration and renovation : “ He saved us by the laws of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost” (Tit. iii, 5); “ Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John, iii, 3). The sinner, therefore, when he is justified, is generated again, and re-born to Grace, so that he is changed in all, and renovated from what he was before.

30. How is it, then, that David says our sins are covered? “Blessed are they whose sins are covered.” St. Augustine, explaining this Psalm says, that wounds may be covered both by the sufferer and the physician; the sufferer himself only covers them, but the physician both covers them with a plaister and heals them : “Si tu tegere volueris erabescens (says the Saint) Medicus non sanabit; Medicus tegat, et curet.” Our sins, by the infusion of Grace, are covered at the same time and healed, but the heretical opinion is, that they are covered, but not healed; they are covered only inasmuch as God does not impute them to the sinner. If sins remained in the soul as far as the fault was concerned should not God impute them to us ?God judges according to truth : “For we know the judgment of God is according to truth” (Rom. ii, 2); but how could God judge according to the truth, judging that man not to be culpable, who is in reality culpable ?These are truly some of Calvin’s mysteries which surpass our comprehension. The Scripture says, “ To God the wicked and his wickedness are equal alike” (Wisdom, xiv, 9). If God hates the sinner on account of the sin that reigns in him, how can he love him as a child, because he is covered with the justice of Christ, while he is still a sinner all the while ? Sin, by its very nature, is contrary to God, so it is impossible that God should not hate it as long as it is not taken away, and he must also hate the sinner as long as he retains it. David says : “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin.” We understand by this not that God does not impute sin by leaving sin in the soul, and not pretending to see it, but that he does not impute it because he cancels and remits it, and hence David says, in the very same passage, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven.” The sins that are forgiven to us are not imputed to us.

31. They say, in the second place, that in the justification of a sinner intrinsic justice is not infused into him, but the justice of Christ alone is imputed to him, so that the wicked man does not become just, but remains wicked still, and is reputed just alone by the extrinsic justice of Christ which is imputed to him. This is, however, an evident error, for the sinner cannot become a friend of God if he does not receive justice of his own, which will renovate him internally, and change him from being a sinner to become one of the just, and as he was previously hateful in the eyes of God, now having acquired this justice, he is agreeable to him. Hence St. Paul exhorts the Ephesians to become renewed in spirit, “And be renewed in the

spirit of your mind" (Eph. iv, 23). And hence the Council of Trent says that by the merits of Christ internal justice is communicated to us : "Qua renovamur spiritus mentis nostrae, et non modo reputamur, sed vere etiam justi nominanur, et sumus" (Sess. vi, cap. 7). The Apostle says in another place, that the sinner, by justification, " is renewed unto knowledge according to the image of him who created him" (Col. iii, 10); so that the sinner, by the merits of Christ, returns back to that state from which he fell by sin, and becomes sanctified as a temple in which God dwells, and hence the Apostle, admonishing his disciples, says: "Fly fornication know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost" (I. Cor. vi, 18, 19). What is more surprising than all is, that Calvin himself knew that man never can be reconciled with God unless internal and inherent justice is given to him : " Nunquam reconciliamur Deo, quin simul donemur inhserente justitia"[16484]. These are his own words, and how can he afterwards say that through Faith alone we are justified with the imputative justice of Christ, which is not ours, nor is in us, neither does it belong to us, and is totally extern to us, and is merely extrinsically imputed to us, so that it does not make us just, only to be reputed just? This has been justly condemned by the Council of Trent (Sess. v, can. 10): " Si quis dixerit, homines sine Christi justitia, per quam nobis meruit, justificari; aut per eam ipsam formaliter justos esse; anathema sit." (Can. 11): "Si quis dixerit homines justificari vel sola imputatione justitiae Christi, vel sola peccatorum remissione, exclusa gratia, et caritate, quae in illis inhaereat anathema sit."

32. They object, first, the text (Rom. iv, 5) : "But to him that worketh not, yet belie veth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reputed to justice." We answer, briefly, that here the Apostle says that faith should be imputed to justice, to teach us that the sinner is justified, not by his own works, but by his faith in the merits of Christ; but he does not say, that in virtue of this faith the justice of Christ is extrinsically imputed to the sinner who, without being just, is reputed so.

33. They object, secondly, that St. Paul says to Titus: "Not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us by the labour of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Tit. iii,

5, 6). Therefore, they say, God justifies us by his mercy, and not by the works, which we allege are necessary for justification. We reply, that our works, as hope, charity, and repentance, with a purpose of amendment, are necessary to render us disposed to receive grace from God; but when the Almighty gives it to us, he does so not for our works, but through his mercy alone, and the merits of Jesus Christ. Let them particularly remark the words "renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom he hath poured forth abundantly upon us, through Jesus Christ our Saviour ;" so that when God justifies us, he infuses upon us, not away from us, the Holy Ghost, who renews us, changing us from sinners unto Saints.

34. They object, thirdly, another text of St. Paul: "But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption" (I. Cor. i, 30). Behold, they exclaim, how Jesus Christ is made our justice. We do not deny that the justice of Jesus Christ is the cause of our justice; but we deny that the justice of Christ is our justice itself, no more than we can say that our wisdom is the wisdom of Christ; and as we do not become wise because of the wisdom of Christ imputed to us, neither do we become just because his justice is imputed to us, as the sectarians teach : " He is made unto us wisdom, and justice, and sanctification." All this is to be understood not imputatively, but effectively, that is, that Jesus Christ, by his wisdom, and justice, and sanctity, has made us become effectively wise, and just, and holy. It is in the same sense we say to God : " I will love thee, Lord, my strength" (Psalm xvii, 1); " For thou art my patience, O Lord" (Psalm lxx, 5); "The Lord is my light and my salvation" (Psalm xxvi, 1). How is God our strength, our patience, our light ? is it imputatively alone ? By no means; he is effectively so, for it is he who strengthens, enlightens, and renders us patient; and who saves us.

35. They object, fourthly, that the Apostle says : "Put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth" (Ephes. iv, 24). Here, say they, it is plain that we, in the justification by faith, clothe ourselves with the justice of Christ as with a garment, which is extrinsic to us. Behold how all heretics boast of not following anything but the pure Scriptures, and will not listen to Tradition, nor the definitions of Councils, nor the authority of the Church. The Scripture, they cry, is our only rule of faith; and why so ?Because they distort it, and explain it each after his own fashion, and thus render the Book of Truth a fountain of error and

falsehood. In answer to the objection, however, we reply, St. Paul in that passage, does not speak of extrinsic, but intrinsic justice, and he, therefore, says : " Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man," &c, . (Ephes. iv, 23). He means that clothing ourselves with Jesus Christ, we should renew ourselves internally in spirit with intrinsic and inherent justice, as Calvin himself admitted; for, otherwise, remaining sinners, we could not renew ourselves. He says : "Put on the new man," because, as a garment is not properly a thing belonging to the body itself, or part of it, so grace or justice does not properly belong to the sinner, but is gratuitously given to him by the mercy of God alone.

36. The Apostle says in another place : "Put on bowels of mercy" (Col. iii, 13). Now, as in this passage he does not speak of extrinsic and apparent mercy, but of that which is real and intrinsic, so when he says : "Put on the new man," he means that we should strip ourselves of the old vicious and graceless man, and put on the new man enriched not with the imputative justice of Jesus Christ, but with intrinsic justice belonging to ourselves, though given us through the merits of Jesus Christ.

V. FAITH ALONE CANNOT RENDER US SECURE OF JUSTICE, OR PERSEVERANCE, OR ETERNAL LIFE

37. It was one of Luther's doctrines, in which he was closely followed by Calvin, that man, after being once justified by Faith, should no longer have either fear or doubt, but that all his sins were forgiven him, and hence he says[16485]: "Believe firmly that you are absolved, and you will be so, no matter what contrition you may have ;" and he props up this opinion by a text of St. Paul : "Try your own selves if you be in the faith :prove ye yourselves. Know you not your own selves, that Christ Jesus is in you, unless perhaps you be reprobated ?" (II. Cor. xiii, 6). From this text Luther deduces that a man may be certain of his Faith, and hence he concludes, that being certain of his Faith, he is also certain of the remission of sins. But what sort of conclusion is this ? A man is certain of his Faith; but when he knows, at the same time, that he is a sinner, how can he be certain of pardon, unless he is also certain of contrition ?Luther himself had previously said[16486]: " No one can be sure of the truth of his contrition, and much less of pardon." This is the way with all heretics; they are continually

contradicting themselves. Besides, in this passage the Apostle is not speaking of justification, but of the miracles which the Corinthians should believe were wrought by God.

38. The Council of Trent (Sess. vi, cap. 9), teaches, that although every one ought to be certain of the Divine Mercy, of the merits of Christ, and of the power of the Sacraments, still no one can be certain of the remission of his sins as a matter of Faith, and in the 13th Canon condemns all who assert the contrary : " Si quis dixerit, omni homini ad remissionem peccatorum assequendam necessarium esse, ut credat certo, et absque ulla haisitatione propriae intirmitatis, et indispositionis peccata sibi esse remissa : anathema sit." And this is proved by the Scriptures likewise : "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred, but all things are kept uncertain for the time to come" (Eccles. ix, 1, 2). Calvin[16487] objects that this text does not allude to the state of a soul in grace or anger with God, but to the prosperous or adverse circumstances which happen in this life, as by those temporal accidents we cannot know whether God loves or hates us, since prosperity and adversity are the portions of good and bad alike; but, on the other hand, he says man can very well know whether he is just or unjust, if he knows that he has or has not Faith. But we answer, that this text does not speak of temporal things, but of the love or hatred with which God looks on the state of the soul, and, therefore, it says, "all things are kept uncertain for the time to come." If, therefore, in this life all things are "kept uncertain," then what our adversaries say cannot be the fact, that man, by the knowledge of his Faith, can be certain that he is in a state of Grace.

39. God, besides, admonishes us that we should be afraid even of the sin forgiven already : "Bo not without fear about sin forgiven" (Eccles. v, 5). The Innovators quote the Greek text here, which says not forgiven, but forgiveness, and that, they say, means that we should not presume that the sins not yet committed will be forgiven. This interpretation, however, is false, because the Greek expression comprehends both past and future sins, and the Greek text is explained in the Latin translation by past sins. St. Paul surely had a knowledge of his Faith, and although he did not feel his conscience laden with any sin, and saw himself favoured by God with revelations and extraordinary gifts, still he did not consider himself with certainty justified. God alone, he says, knew in truth whether he was or not :

“ I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet I am not hereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord” (I. Cor, iv, 4).

40. Our adversaries object, that the Apostle says : “The Spirit himself giveth testimony of our Spirit, that we are the sons of God” (Rom. viii, 16). Hence Calvin concludes that it is Faith which assures us of being the children of God. We answer that, although the testimony of the Holy Ghost is infallible in itself, still as we are concerned, and know anything about it, we can only have a conjectural certainty of being in a state of Grace, but never can be infallibly certain of it, unless by a special revelation from God. And, moreover, as far as our knowledge goes, we cannot know if that Spirit be surely from God, for many times the angel of darkness transforms himself into an angel of light, to deceive us.

41. Luther said, that a faithful man, by means of justifying Faith, though he may be in sin at the time, ought to believe with an infallible certainty, that he is justified by reason of the justice of Christ, imputed to him; but he afterwards said that this justice might be lost by any new sin. Calvin[16488], on the contrary, made an addition to this heresy, for he insisted on the inadmissibility of this imputative justice. If we could suppose Luther’s false principle of justifying Faith to be true, we should admit that Calvin had more reason at his side than he. He said, if any one of the Faithful is sure of his justification, when he prays for it, and believes with confidence that God, by the merits of Christ, justifies him, this petition then, and this certainty of Faith, regard no less the remission of sins committed, than the future perseverance in Grace, and, consequently, eternal salvation. Calvin adds[16489], that when the faithful man relapses into sin, though his justifying Faith is oppressed by it, it is not, however, lost, for the soul always would have retained possession of it.

Such were the specious doctrines of Calvin, and this was the doctrine professed by the Elector Count Palatine, in his Confession of Faith : “I believe,” said he, “ that I am a living member of the Catholic Church for evermore, since God, appeased by the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, will not remember either the past or future sins of my life”[16490].

42. The whole gist of the matter is this, that the principle of Luther, as we have already seen, is false, in the first place, for, in order to obtain justification, it is not enough to have Faith alone that we are justified by the

merits of Christ; but it is necessary, also, that the sinner should have contrition for his faults, so as to dispose himself to receive the remission which God grants him, according to the promise he has made, to pardon those who repent, through the merits of Jesus Christ. Hence, if the justified man relapses into sin, he again loses Grace.

43. If the doctrine of Luther, regarding the certainty of justification, is false, the doctrine of Calvin, regarding the certainty of perseverance and eternal salvation, is equally so. St. Paul tells us : "Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall" (I. Cor. x, 12). And, again, he tells us : " With fear and trembling, work out your salvation" (Phil. ii, 12). How, then, can Calvin say that it is a temptation of the devil, to have any fear about our perseverance ?When St. Paul, then, tells us to live in fear, does he mean that we should second the temptations of the devil ? But, say they, what is the use of this fear ? If what Calvin asserts was true, that having once received justice and the Holy Ghost, we can never lose them, because, according to him, justifying Faith is never lost, and to him who has Faith, God does not impute his sins if all this, I say, were true, then, indeed, it would be useless to dread the loss of Divine Grace. But can any one imagine that God will give his friendship and eternal glory to one who tramples on the Divine Law, and commits all sorts of wickedness; and all this because he believes, forsooth, that through the merits of Jesus Christ, the crimes he commits will not be imputed to him ?

Such, then, is the gratitude these Reformers show to Jesus Christ. They avail themselves for the death he suffered for love of us, to involve themselves more and more in crime, trusting that, through his merits, God will not impute their sins to them. So Jesus Christ, then, has died, that men may have leave to do whatever they please, without fear of punishment. If such, however, was the fact, why did God promulgate his laws make so many promises to those who observe them and threaten those who violate them ? God, however, never deceives us when he speaks to us; he wishes that the commandments he imposes on us should be exactly observed "Thou hast commanded thy commandments to be kept most diligently" (Psalm cxviii, 4) and condemns those who offend against his laws "Thou hast despised all those that fall off from thy judgments (Psalm cxviii, 118). It is thus that fear is useful: the fear of losing the Divine Grace, which makes us cautiously avoid the occasions of sin, and adopt the means of perseverance in a good life, such as frequenting the Sacraments, and praying continually.

Calvin says that, according to St. Paul, the gifts of God are irrevocable, and given to us without penance :

44. “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Romans, xi, 29). Whosoever, therefore, he says, has received the Faith, and, with the Faith, Grace, to which eternal salvation is united, as these are perpetual gifts, they never can be lost; and thus the faithful man, though he may fall into sin, will always be in possession of that justice, which is given him by Faith. Here, however, we ask a question. David, surely, had Faith he fell into the sins of murder and adultery; now, I ask, when David was in sin, before his repentance, was he a sinner or a just man? if he died in that state would he be damned or not ? No one, I believe, will be bold enough to assert, that he could be saved in that state. In that state, then, he was no longer just, as he himself, after his conversion, confessed “ I know my iniquity ;” and, therefore, he prayed to God, to cancel his sins “Blot out my iniquity” (Psalm 1, 2). It will not do to say that he who is predestined may consider himself just in the meantime, since he will do penance for his sins before he dies; that will not do, I assert, because future penance cannot make the sinner just, when he is in a state of sin at the time. Bossuet[16491] says that the difficulty of accounting for this, according to Calvin’s doctrine, caused many of his followers to return to the bosom of the Church.

45. Before we conclude this subject, we may as well review the Scripture texts on which Calvin founds his doctrine. The Apostle St. James, he says, tells us that we should pray to God for Graces and that of perseverance is the principal of all others without having any doubt of obtaining them : “Let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering” (James, i, 6); and our Lord himself says: “All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive; and they shall come unto you” (Mark, xi, 24). Therefore, says Calvin, whosoever seeks perseverance from God, and believes that he obtains it, never can want it, as we have the Divine promise for it. We answer that, although the promise of God, to hear him who prays to him, can never fail, still that is to be understood, when we pray for Grace, with all the requisite conditions, and one of the conditions of beseeching prayer

is perseverance; but if we cannot be certain that in future we will persevere in prayer, how can we be sure at the present time that we will persevere in Grace? Calvin, besides, objects that St. Paul says : “ I am sure that neither death nor life, &c., shall be able to separate us from the love of God” (Rom. viii, 38, 39). But we reply to this, that the Apostle does not here speak of an infallible certainty of Faith, but only of a simple moral certainty, founded on the Divine Mercy, and on that goodwill which God gave him, to suffer everything, sooner than be separated from his love.

46. Leave Calvin aside, and hear what the Council of Trent teaches, concerning perseverance and predestination. Speaking of perseverance, it says : “Si quis magnum illud usque in finem perseverantiae donum se certo habiturum, absoluta et infallibili certitudine dixerit, nisi hoc ex speciali revelatione didicerit :anathema sit” (Sess. vi, can. 16). And, regarding predestination : “ Si quis dixerit, hominem renatum, et justificatum teneri ex fide ad credendum, se certo esse in numero praedestinatorum : anathema sit” (Sees, vi, can. 15). Behold, then, how clearly and distinctly the Council defines all the dogmas of Faith, opposed to the errors of modern innovators. I make this remark for the instruction of those who assert that the Council gave only ambiguous decisions in their controversies, and that it only increased disputes, instead of putting an end to them. The Fathers of the Council said over and over, that it was never their intention to give any decision regarding the questions debated in Catholic schools, but solely to define matters of Faith, and condemn the errors of the pretended Reformers, who were endeavouring, not to reform morals, but to subvert the ancient and true doctrines of the Catholic Church. The Council, therefore, speaks ambiguously of scholastic questions, and gives no decision on them; but in matters of Faith, contested by Protestants, it always speaks with the greatest clearness, and without any ambiguity. Those alone find the definitions of the Council doubtful who refuse to yield obedience to them. To come back to the subject. The Council teaches that no one can be sure that he is predestined; and, in fact, how can anyone be sure of predestination, when he is not sure that he will persevere in goodness. But, says Calvin, St. John teaches that “You have eternal life, you who believe in the name of the Son of God” (I. John, v, 13). Therefore, says he, whoever has faith in Jesus Christ has eternal life. We answer, he who believes in Jesus Christ with true Faith, enlivened by Charity, has eternal life, not in possession, but in hope,

as St. Paul says : “For we are saved by hope” (Rom. viii, 24). Perseverance is necessary to obtain eternal life “ He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved” (Matt, x, 22) but as long as we are uncertain of perseverance, we are never sure of eternal life.

47. The sectarians object that the uncertainty of eternal salvation makes us doubt of the Divine promises, to be saved by the merits of Jesus Christ. We answer that the Divine promises never can fail, so, on God’s part, we never can doubt that he will be wanting, by denying what he promised us. The doubt and fear is on our side, for we may be found wanting, by transgressing his Divine commandments, and thus losing his Grace. God in that case is not obliged to fulfil the promises made to us, but rather punish our infidelity; and, therefore, St, Paul exhorts us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil, ii, 12). We are, therefore, certain of salvation, if we remain faithful to God; but, on the other hand, should dread our perdition, if we are unfaithful. But, they add, this fear and uncertainty destroys peace of conscience. We answer, that peace of conscience in this life does not consist in a certain belief that we will be saved, for this is not what God promises us, but it consists in the hope that he will save us, through the merits of Jesus Christ, if we strive to live well, and endeavour, by prayer, to obtain the Divine assistance to persevere in a holy life. This it is which is so hurtful to these heretics; for, trusting to this Faith alone for salvation, they pay little attention to the observance of the Divine commandments, and much less to prayer, and, not praying, they are deprived of the Divine assistance necessary for a good life, and thus they are lost. Surrounded as we are by dangers and temptations, we have need of a continual assistance from Grace, which, without prayer, we cannot obtain; and, for that reason, God tells us we should pray continually: “ We ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke, xviii, 1). He, however, who believes that he is sure of salvation, and believes that prayer is not necessary for this object, scarcely prays at all, and then is lost. He, on the contrary, who is not sure of his salvation, and fears to fall into sin, and be lost, will surely pray continually to God to succour him, and thus hopes to obtain perseverance and salvation, and this is the only peace of conscience we can have in the present life. No matter how the Calvinists may strive to obtain perfect peace, by believing their salvation certain, they never can accomplish it in this way; and we even see the Synod of Dort, the great exponent of their

doctrine (Art. 12), declare that the gift of Faith (which, according to them, includes past and future justification) is not granted by God unless to his elect alone. How, then, can a Calvinist be sure that he is among the number of the elect, when he knows nothing about his election ?This alone would, we think, be sufficient to show them that they cannot be certain of their salvation.

VI. GOD CANNOT BE THE AUTHOR OF SIN

48. Dear Reader, you will be horrified to hear the blasphemies which those sectarians, and especially Calvin, vomited forth, concerning sin. They are not afraid to say that God ordains all the sins committed on this earth. Here are Calvin's own words[16492] : "Nec absurdum videri debet, quod dico, Deum non modo primi hominis casum, et in eo posteriorum ruinam praevidisse, sed arbitrio quoque suo dispensasse." And again he says[16493] : " Ex Dei ordinatione reprobis injicitur peccandi necessitas." He says, in the second place[16494], that God pushes on the devil to tempt man to sin : " Dicitur et Deus suo modo agere, quod Satan ipse (instruuientum cum sit irso ejus) pro ejus nutu, atque imperio se inflectit ad exequenda ejus justa justitia." And again (Sec. 5), he says : " Porro Satanae ministerium intercedere ad reprobos, instigandos, quoties hue atque illuc Dominus providentia sua eos destinat." He says, thirdly[16495], that God instigates man to sin : "Homo justo Dei impulsu agit, quod si bi non licet." In the fourth place[16496] he says, that God himself operates sin in us and with us, and makes use of men as instruments for the execution of his judgments : " Concede lures, homicidas, &c., Divinae esse providentiae instrumenta, qui bus Dominis ad exe quenda sua judicia utitur." In this respect, Calvin's doctrine approaches Luther's and Zuinglius's. Luther says : " Mala opera in impiis Deus operatur." And Zuinglius[16497] writes : " Quando facimus adulterium, homicidium, Dei opus est auctoris." In fine, Calvin[16498] is not ashamed to say that God is the author of all sin : " Et jam satis aperte ostendi, Deum vocari omnium eorum (peccatorum) auctorem, quae isti Censores volunt tantum ejus permissu contingere." Soothed by such doctrines, the sectarians flatter themselves that their vices are excusable; for, if they sin, they do it through necessity, and if they are damned, it is by

necessity also, for all the damned are destined to be so by God, even before their creation. This monstrous doctrine will be refuted in the next Section.

49. Calvin maintains this horrible opinion by the following reasons :God never, he says, could have had the foreknowledge of the eternal happiness or misery of any of us, if he had not ordained by his decree the good or bad works we perform during our lives : "Decretum quidem horribile fateor, inficiari tamen nemo poterit, quin praisciverit Deus, quem exitum esset habiturus homo; et ideo praesciverit, quia decreto suo sic ordinaverat." We answer, that there is a great difference between foreseeing and predestining the sins of mankind. There is not the least doubt but that God, by his infinite intelligence, knows and comprehends everything that will come to pass, and, among the rest, all the sins which each one will commit; but some things he foresees according to his positive decree; others according to his permission; but neither the Divine decree nor the permission are opposed to man's free will, for when God foresees our good or evil works, he foresees them all performed freely. The sectaries argue thus : If God has foreseen Peter's sin, for example, he cannot be mistaken as to his knowledge of what will happen when the time foreseen arrives; therefore Peter must necessarily sin. Here they are in error, however, when they say necessarily; he will infallibly sin, because God has foreseen it, and cannot err in his foresight; but he will not necessarily sin, because, if he wishes to sin, he will do so of his own free will, by his own malice, and God will permit him to do so, solely not to deprive him of that free will which he gave him.

50. We shall now see how many absurd consequences proceed from this sectarian doctrine. First absurdity They say that God, for his own just ends, ordains and wills the sins committed by mankind. But nothing can be clearer than the Scriptures on this point, which tell us that God not only does not wish sins, but looks on them with horror, and wishes nothing so much as our sanctification: "Thou art not a God that wiliest iniquity"(Psalm v, 5). "To God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike" (Wisdom, xiv, 9); "Thy eyes are too pure to behold evil, and thou canst not look on iniquity" (Habak. i, 13). Now, when God protests that he does not wish sin, but hates and prohibits it, how can the sectarians say, that, contradicting himself, he wishes it and predestines it? Calvin himself[16499] takes notice of this difficulty : " Objiciunt" he says, " Si nihil eveniat, nisi volente Deo,

duas esse in eo contr arias voluntates, quia occulto consilio decernat, quae lege sua palam vetuit, facile diluitur.” How does he get out of the difficulty? merely by saying, “ We cannot understand it.” The true answer, however, is, that his supposition is totally false, for God can never wish that which he hates and forbids. Melanchthon, even in the Augsburg Confession, says; “ Causa peccati est voluntas impiorum, quae avertit se a Deo.” The will of the wicked turned away from God is the cause of sin.

51. The second absurdity is this God, they say, incites the devil to tempt us, and he himself even tempts man, and drives him on to sin. How can that be, however, when God prohibits us from following our evil inclinations: “ Go not after thy lusts” (Eccles. xviii, 30); and to fly from sin as from a serpent : “ Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent” (Eccles. xxi, 2). St. Paul tells us to clothe ourselves with the armour of God, that is, prayer, against temptations: “Put on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil” (Ephes. vi, 11). St. Stephen reproaches the Jews, that they resisted the Holy Ghost; but if it were true that God moved them to sin, they might answer, we do not resist the Holy Ghost, by any means, but do what he inspires us, and on that account we stone you. Jesus Christ teaches us to pray to God not to permit us to be tempted by those dangerous occasions, which may lead to our fall : “Lead us not into temptation.” Now, if God urges on the devil to tempt us, and even tempts us himself, and moves us to sin, and decrees that we sin, how can he command us to fly from sin and resist it, and to pray that we may be free from temptations. If God has decreed that Peter, for example, should have a certain temptation, and succumb to it, how can he command this same Peter to pray that he may free him from this temptation, and change his own decree? God never urges the devil to tempt us, but merely permits him to do so to prove us. When the devil tempts us, he commits a wickedness, and God cannot command him to do this : “ He hath commanded no man to do wickedly, and he hath given no man license to sin” (Eccles. xv, 21). Our Lord himself promises, even, that whenever we are tempted he will assist us, and give us sufficient grace to resist, and declares that he will never allow us to be tempted beyond our strength : “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able” (I. Cor. x, 13).

52. But they still insist God, as we read in the Scriptures, several times tempted man : “God hath tried them” (Wisdom, iii, 5). “After these things God tempted Abraham” (Gen. xxii, 1). We must here draw a distinction :the devil tempts men to make them fall into sin, but God tempts them, solely to prove their fidelity, as he did in Abraham’s case, and does continually, with his faithful servants : “God hath tried them, and found them worthy of himself” (Wisdom, iii, 5); but he never tempts man to fall into sin, as the devil does : “For God is not a tempter of evils, and he tempteth no man” (James, i, 13).

53. The third absurdity is this God says: “Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God” (I. John, iv, 1). Hence, we Catholics are bound to examine the resolutions we take, as well as the counsels we receive from others, even when at first they appear good and holy, because frequently what we believe to be an inspiration from God is nothing but a snare of the devil. According to Calvin’s doctrine, however, we are not obliged to make this examination, and see whether the spirit is good or bad, because whether it be one or the other, it is all from God, who wills that we should put in practice whatever he inspires to do, whether it be good or bad. According to this, then, the reformer’s own maxim of understanding the Scriptures, according to our private judgment falls to the ground, for no matter what we do, or what erroneous or heretical interpretation we may give to Holy Writ, it is all an inspiration from God. The fourth absurdity The whole Scriptures teach us that God leans much more to mercy and pardon than to justice and punishment : “All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth” (Psalm xxiv, 10); “The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord. His tender mercies are above all his works” (Psalm cxliv, 9); “Mercy exalteth itself above judgment” (James, ii, 13). The Almighty, therefore, superabounds in mercy, not alone to the just, but to sinners. The great desire He has to make us live well, and work out our salvation, is manifest from that passage so frequently repeated in the Gospel : “Ask and ye shall receive” (John, xvi, 24); “ Ask and it shall be given to you” (Matt, vii, 7) : “Every one that asketh receiveth” (Luke, xi, 1 0). To all he offers the treasures of enlightenment, of Divine love, of efficacious Grace, of final perseverance, and of eternal salvation, if we only pray for them. He is faithful, and cannot fail in his promises, and so, whoever is lost, is solely through his own fault. Calvin says the elect are few; these are Beza and his own disciples, and all

others are reprobates, on whom God exercises his justice alone since he has predestined them to hell, and therefore deprives them of all grace, and incites them to sin. According to Calvin's doctrine, then, we should imagine the Almighty not as a God of mercy, but the most unjust and cruel of tyrants, since he wishes us to sin that he may torment us for all eternity. God, says Calvin, only acts thus to exercise his justice, but this is what all cruel tyrants do; they wish others to commit crimes, that by punishing them they may gratify their own cruel dispositions.

54. The fifth absurdity As man is obliged to sin, for God wishes that he should, and pushes him on, it is unjust to punish him, for as he is forced to sin he has no freedom, and therefore commits no sin; nay more, as he does the will of God, who wishes him to sin, he ought to be rewarded for conforming to the Divine will; how, then, can God punish him injustice? Beza says, the Apostle tells us that God " worketh all things according to the counsel of his will" (Ephes. i, 11). If everything is done, then, by the will of God, sins, also, he says, are committed by his will. Beza, here, however, is in error; everything except sin is done by the will of God. God does not wish sin, nor that any one should be lost through sin : " Is it my will that a sinner should die, saith the Lord ?" (Ezech. xviii, 23); "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should rather do penance" (II. Peter, iii, 5). The Almighty wishes that we should all become Saints : "For it is the will of God your sanctiri cation" (I.Thess. iv, 3.)

55. The sixth absurdity These sectarians say that God himself operates sins with us, and uses us as instruments for the accomplishment of sin, and hence Calvin, as we have already remarked, calls God the author of sin. This is condemned by the Council of Trent (Sess. vi, can. 6) : " Si quis dixerit, non esse in potestate hominis vias suas malas facere, sed mala opera, ita ut bona, Deum opcrari; non permissive solum, sed etiam proprie, et per se, adeo ut sit proprium ejus opus, non minus proditio Judae quam vocatio Pauli; anathema sit." If God, then, be the author of sin, since he wishes it, and urges us on to commit it, and operates it with us, how is it that man sins, and God does not sin? When this difficulty was put to Zuinglius, he only answered : "Ask God himself; I am not one of his counsellors." When Calvin himself was asked: How is it that God condemns men for executing sin, when he himself operates it through their means; in every wicked work it is not the instrument but the operator who is

culpable? and hence, if man sins alone as the instrument of God, it is not he but God who is culpable ? he answered that " our carnal minds could not understand it"[16500]. Some sectaries answer this by saying that God does not sin by operating the sin, but man alone, for man does it for an evil end, but God for a good end, to wit, exercising his justice by punishing the sinner for his crime. But this answer will not excuse God, because, according to Calvin, the Almighty decrees and predestines man not alone to do the work of sin, but to do it with an evil end, for otherwise he could not punish him. Hence God is the true author of sin, and truly sins. Zuinglius gives another answer[16501]: Man, he says, sins because he acts against the law, but God does not sin, because he has no law; but this ridiculous answer is rejected by Calvin himself[16502], who says, " we cannot suppose God without a law." And it stands to reason, for though no one can give a law to God, still his own goodness and justice are a law to him. Hence as sin is contrary to the law of nature, it is also opposed to the goodness of God, and he, therefore, never can will sin. Now, as Calvinists assert, that whatever a man does, good or bad, he does through necessity, for it is all the work of God, I would like to see if one broke another's head, and he asked him, Why do you strike me ?and the other would answer, It is not I who strike you, but God who makes me, and forces me to do so, would his co-religionist be satisfied with the excuse ?What God are you talking about ? he would say; away with such nonsense, it is you have done it, and I will punish you for it. Poor people ! We hope they are not wilfully blind, for really it would appear that those who entertain such extravagant opinions must be so.

56. The sectarians adduce several portions of Scripture to prove that God wishes, commands, and operates sins. He says, in Isaias, "I make peace, and create evil" (Isaias, xlv, 7); but Tertullian answers that there are two sorts of evil crimes and punishments. God performs punishments, but not crimes, for the crimes of the wicked, he says, belong to the devil, the punishments to God. When Absalom rebelled against his father, David, God wished the chastisement of David, but not the sin of Absalom. But, say they, we read in II. Kings, xvi, 10, that the Lord bid Semei "curse David," and in Ezech. xiv, 9, " I, the Lord, have deceived that Prophet"; in the 104th Psalm, ver. 25 : " He turned their heart to hate his people ;" and in St. Paul (II. Thess. ii, 10) : "God shall send them the operation of error to believe lying." Behold then,

say they, how God commands and operates sins. They do not, however, in these texts distinguish between the will of God and his permission. God, for his own just ends, permits that man jnay deceive or sin, either for the punishment of the wicked or for the advantage of the just, but he neither wishes nor operates sin. Tertullian[16503] says, God is not the author nor the actor of sin, though he undoubtedly permits it. St. Ambrose[16504] says he does what is good, but not what is evil, and St. Augustine[16505] writes : He (God) knows how to condemn iniquity, but not to do it.

VII. GOD NEVER PREDESTINED ANY ONE TO ETERNAL DAMNATION WITHOUT REGARD TO HIS SINS

57. Calvin teaches that God has predestined many to eternal damnation, not because of their sins, but merely for his own pleasure. Here are his words[16506]: “ Aliis vita aeterna, aliis damnatio aeterna praoordinatur; itaquc prout in alterutrum finem quisque conditus est, ita vel ad vitam, vel ad mortem praedestinatum dicimus,” and the only reason he assigns for this predestination is the will of God[16507]: “ Nequc in aliis reprobandis aliud habebiinus, quam ejus voluntatem.” I can understand very well how the heretics embrace this doctrine, for they argue thus : I may commit whatever sins I please, without fear or remorse; for, if I am predestined to heaven, I will, notwithstanding, be infallibly saved, no matter what wickedness I commit; if I am among the reprobate I will be damned, no matter how virtuously I live. Cesarius tells a story of a certain physician who gave a very good answer to this argument, if it can be called one. A man of the name of Louis Landgrave got a mortal fit of sickness, and sent for this physician, who called on him, and asked him what he wanted with him. “ I hope” said the sick man, “you will be able to restore me to health.” “Oh,” said the physician, “what can I do for you ? If your hour is come you will die, no matter what remedies may give you, but if not, you will recover, without any assistance from me.” Remember this was the same answer the sick man had previously given to a person who reprimanded him in presence of the physician, for his wicked life. “ If I am to be saved,” said he, “ I will be so, no matter how wicked I may be; and if I am to be damned, it will happen, no matter how good I am.” “ Oh,” said the sick man, “ do what you can for me, perhaps your skill will restore me, but if

you do nothing for me I will surely die.” The physician, then, who was both a pious and prudent man, said to him : “If, then, you think that you can recover your bodily health with the assistance of medicine, why do not you try and restore your soul to health by a good confession ?” The argument hit hard, the man sent immediately for a Confessor, and became a true penitent.

58. We shall, however, give Calvin a direct answer. If you are predestined to eternal life, it is because you will be saved by the good works you perform, at least that your predestination may be carried out, but if you are destined to hell it is on account of your sins, and not through the mere will of God, as you blasphemously assert. Forsake, then, your evil ways; do what is just, and you will be saved. Nothing can be more false than the supposition of Calvin, that God created many men for hell alone. Numberless passages in the Scriptures prove most clearly that it is his will that all should be saved. St. Paul most ex pressly says (I. Tim. ii, 4), that he will “have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth ;” and, as St. Prosper says, speaking of this passage, nothing can be clearer than that it is the will of God that all should be saved : “ Sacrificium credendum atque profitendum est Dominum velle omnes hominus salvos fieri, siquidem Apostolus (cujus haec sententia est) sollicite praecipit ut Deo pro omnibus supplicetur”[16508] This is clear from the context, for the Apostle says : “ I desire first of all that supplications be made for all men for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved,” &c. So we see the Apostle tells us to pray for all, since God wishes to save all. St. John Chrysostom argues in the same manner on the same text[16509] : “ Si omnes Ille vult salvos fieri, merito pro omnibus oportet orare. Si omnes ipse salvos fieri cupit, Illius et tu concorda voluntate.” St. Paul, speaking of our Saviour, also says : “Christ Jesus, who gave himself a redemption for all” (I. Tim. ii, 6). If, then, Jesus Christ wished to redeem all men, then he wills that all men should be saved.

59. But, says Calvin, God certainly foresees the good and bad actions of every man; he has, therefore, decreed to send some to hell on account of their sins, and how, then, can it be said that he wills that all should be saved ? We answer, with St. John of Damascus, St. Thomas of Aquin, and the great body of Catholic Doctors, that with regard to the reprobation of sinners, it is necessary to distinguish between the priority of time and the

priority of order, or, if we may say, of reason. In priority of time, the Divine Decree is anterior to man's sin; but in priority of order, sin is anterior to the Divine Decree; for God has decreed many sinners to hell, inasmuch as he has foreseen their sins. Hence we may see that God, with that antecedent will which regards his goodness, truly wills that all should be saved, but by that consequent will which regards the sins of the reprobate, he wishes their damnation.

Hear the words of St. John of Damascus on the subject[16510]: "Deus precedentur vult omnes salvari, ut efficiat nos bonitatis suae particepes ut bonus; peccantes autem puniri vult ut Justus;" and St. Thomas says: "Voluntas antecedens est, qua (Deus) omnes homines salvos fieri vult Consideratis autem omnibus circumstantiis personae, sic non invcnitur de omnibus bonum esse quod salventur; bonum enim est eum qui se praeparat, et consentit, salvari; non vero nolentem, et resistentem Et haec dicitur voluntas consequens, eo quod praesupponit praescientiam operum, non tanquam causam voluntatis, sed quasi rationem voliti"[16511].

60. There are many other texts to prove that God wills the salvation of all. I will quote at least a few. Christ says : "Come to me, all you that labour and are burthened, and I will refresh you" (Matt, xi, 28). Come, he says, all you burthened with your sins, and I will repair the ruin you yourselves have occasioned. When, therefore, he invites all to accept a remedy, he wishes that all should be saved. In another place St. Peter says, the Lord " dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance" (II. Peter, iii, 9). Mark this, "that all should return to penance." God does not wish that any one should be damned, even sinners, while in this life, but that all should repent of their sins, and be saved. Again, in another place, David says : "For wrath is in his indignation, and life in his good will" (Psalm xxix, 6). St. Basil, explaining this passage, says, that it proves that God wishes all men to be saved : " Et vita in voluntate ejus, quid ergo dicit ? nimirum quod vult Deus omnes vitae fieri participes."Although we offend God by our sins, he does not wish our death, but that we should live. In the book of Wisdom (xi, 25), we read : "Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things thou hast made thou sparest all, because they are thine, O Lord, who lovest souls."

If, therefore, God loves all his creatures, and especially the souls he created, and is always ready to pardon those who repent of their sins, how can we imagine, for a moment, that he creates souls solely for the purpose of tormenting them eternally in hell ? No; God does not wish to see them lost, but saved, and when he sees that we are hurrying to eternal torments, by our sins, he almost implores us to retrace our steps, and avoid destruction : “Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, and why will you die, house of Israel” (Ezech. xxxiii, 11). Poor sinners, he says, why will you persevere in damning yourselves; return to me, and you will find again the life which you lost. Hence it was, that our Saviour, viewing Jerusalem, and considering the destruction the Jews were bringing on it, by the crime of putting him to death, “wept over it” (Luke, xix, 41). In another place he declares that he does not wish the death of the sinner, and even swears so : “ As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his evil way, and live” (Ezech. xxxiii, 11).

61. Now, taking into account so many Scripture proofs, by which God tells us that he wishes to save all mankind, it is, as the learned Petavius says, an insult to the Divine Mercy, and a mockery of the Faith, to say that God does not wish that it should be so : “ Quod si ista Scripturae loca, qui bus hanc suam voluntatem tam illustribus, ac saepe repetitis sententiis, imo lacrymis, ac jurejurando testatus est Deus, calumniari licet, et in contrarium detorquere sensum, ut praetor paucos Genus humanum omne perdere statuerit, nec eorum servandorum voluntatem habuerit, quid est adeo disertum in Fidei decretis, quod simili ab injuria, et cavillatione tutum esse possit”[16512].

Cardinal Sfrondati adds, that to assert the contrary, that God wishes only some few to be saved, and has absolutely decreed that all the restshould be damned, when he has so often manifested that he wishes all to be saved, is only making him an actor, who says one thing, and wishes and performs another : “Plane qui aliter sentiunt, nescio an ex Deo vero Deum scenicum faciant”[16513] All the Fathers, both Greek and Latin, are agreed in this, that God sincerely wishes that all should be saved. Petavius cites St. Justin, St. Basil, St. Gregory, St. Cyril, St. Chrysostom, and St. Methodius, on the subject. Hear what the Latin Fathers say. St. Jerome : “ Vult (Deus) salvare omnes, sed quia nullus absque propria voluntate salvatur, vult nos bonum velle, ut cum voluerimus, velit in nobis et Ipse suum implere consilium[16514]. St. Hilary says[16515]: “Omnes homines Deus salvos fierit vult, et non eos tantum qui ad Sanctorum numerum pertinebunt, sed omnes omnino, ut nullus habeat exceptionem.” St. Paulinus[16516] thus writes: “Omnibus dicit Christus, venite ad me & c., omnem enim quantum in Ipso est, hominem salvum fieri vult, qui fecit omnes.” St. Ambrose says[16517] : “ Etiam circa impios suam ostendere debuit voluntatem, et ideo nec proditorem debuit praeterire, ut adverterent omnes, quod in electione etiam proditoris sui salvandorum omnium praetendit et quod in Deo fuit,. . . . . . . .ostendit omnibus, quod omnes voluit liberare.” I omit all other proofs from the Fathers, as they are too numerous, but as Petrocoresius well remarks, the Divine precept of hope assures us that God truly, on his part, wishes all to be saved; for if we were not certain that God wishes all to be saved, our hope would not be secure and firm, as St. Paul tells us, “ an anchor of the soul sure and firm” (Heb. vi, 18, 19), but weak and doubtful : “Qua fiducia,” he says, “Divinam misericordiam sperare poterunt homines, si certum non sit quod Deus salutem omnium eorum velit”[16518] I have expounded this argument in my Work on Prayer[16519].

62. Calvin, however, says that, by the sin of Adam, the whole human race became a “condemned mass ;” and hence God does no injury to mankind, if he only saves a few, and allows the rest to be damned, if not for their own sins, at all events, for the sin of Adam. But we answer, that it is this very “condemned mass” itself, that Jesus Christ came to save by his death : “For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost” (Matt, xviii, 11). He offered up his death, not alone for those who were to be saved, but for all, without exception : “ He gave himself a redemption for all” (I. Tim. ii, 6); “Christ died for all” (I. Cor. v, 15); “ We hope in the 1Nodus Praed. Par. Living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of the faithful” (I. Tim. iv, 10). And even St. Paul, to show that we were all dead by sin, says that Christ died for all : “The charity of Christ presseth us if one died for all, then all were dead” (II. Cor. v, 14).

Hence, St. Thomas says, Christ is the mediator, not of some, but of all : “ Christus Jesus est mediator Dei, et hominum, non quorundam, sed inter Deum et omnes homines; et hoc non esset, nisi vellet omnes salvare”[16520].

63. If, God, however, wishes that all should be saved, and Christ died for all, how then is it, St. Chrysostom asks, that all are not saved ? He answers the question himself :Because all will not act in conformity with the will of God, who wishes that all should be saved, but, at the same time, will not force any one's will : "Cur igitur non omnes salvi fiunt, si vult (Deus) omnes salvos esse ? quoniam non omnium voluntas Illius voluntatem sequitur, porro Ipse neminem cogit[16521]. And St. Angustine[16522] says: "Bonus est Deus, Justus est Deus; potest aliquos sine bonis meritis liberare, quia bonus est, non potest quenquam sine malis meritis damnare, quia Justus est." Even the Lutheran Centuriators of Magdeburg, speaking of the reprobate, confess that the Holy Fathers have taught that God does not predestine sinners to hell, but condemns them, on account of the foreknowledge he has of their sins : "Patres nec praedestinationem in eo Dei, sed praescientiam soluin admiserunt"[16523]. But, says Calvin, God, although he predestines many to eternal death, still does not insist on the punishment until after they have sinned; and, therefore, he first predestines the reprobates to sin, that he may, in justice, condemn them afterwards. But if it would be an act of injustice to send the innocent to hell, would it not be much more so to predestine them first to sin, that they may be subsequently damned. "Major vero injustitia," says St. Fulgentius, " si lapso Deus retribuit pxenam, quam stantem praedestinasse dicitur ad ruinam"[16524].

64.The truth is, that those who are lost are so through their own negligence, since, as St. Thomas writes, our Lord gives to all the necessary Grace for salvation : "Hoc ad Divinam providentiam pertinet, ut cuili bet provideat de necessariis ad salutem"[16525]. And in another place, explaining the text of St. Paul, that God wishes all men to be saved, he says : " Et ideo gratia nulli deest, sed omnibus (quantam in se est) se communicat"[16526]. God himself has said the self-same thing, by the mouth of the Prophet Osee, that, if we are lost, it is altogether through our own fault, for he gives us sufficient assistance to work out our salvation : "Destruction is thine own, Israel; thy help is only in me" (Osee, xiii, 9); and, therefore, it is that the Apostle says, that God will not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength : "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able" (I. Cor. x, 13). It would, indeed, be both wicked and cruel of God, as St. Thomas and St. Augustine say, if he, as Calvin teaches, obliged men to observe commandments which he knew they could not : “ Peccati reum,” says St. Augustine, “ tenere qucnquam, quia non fecit quod facere non potuit, summa iniquitas est”[16527]. And St. Thomas says : “ Homini imputatur ad crudelitatem, si obliget aliquem per praeceptum ad id quod implere non possit; ergo de Deo nullatenus est aestimandum”[16528]. It is quite otherwise, however, the Saint says, when the sinner, on account of his own negligence, has not Grace to observe the commandments[16529]. This negligence is carelessness in availing ourselves of, at least, the remote Grace of Prayer, by which we may obtain proximate Grace to observe the commandments, as the Council of Trent teaches: “Deus impossibilia non jubet, sed jubendo monet, et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis et adjuvat ut possis” (Sess vi, c. 13).

65. Hence, we conclude, with St. Ambrose, our Saviour has manifested to us most clearly that, although all men are infirm and guilty, still he has provided a sufficient remedy for their salvation: “Omnibus opem sanitatis detulit ut Christi manifesta in omnes praedicetur misericordia qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri”[16530]. What greater felicity can a sick man have, says St. Augustine, than to have his life in his own hands, having always a remedy to heal himself whenever he pleases ? “Quid enim te beatius quam ut tanquam in manu tua vitam, sic in voluntate tua sanitatem habeas”[16531] ? Hence, St. Ambrose again says, that he who is lost is guilty of his own death, since he will not make use of the remedy prepared for him : “ Quicumque perierit mortis suae causam sibi adscribat qui curari noluit cum remedium haberet.” For, as St. Augustine says, our Lord heals all, and heals them perfectly, as far as he is concerned, but will not heal him who refuses to be healed : “Quantum in medico est sanare venit aegrotum Sanat omnino, Ille sed non sanat invitum”[16532]. Finally, says St. Isidore of Pelusium, God wishes, by every means, to assist sinners to save themselves, and, therefore, in the day of judgment, they will find no excuse for their condemnation: “ Etenim serio et modis omnibus (Deus) vult eos adjuvare qui in vitio volutantur ut omnem eis excusationem eripiat”[16533].

66. Calvin, however, objects to all this, first, several texts of Scripture, in which it is said that God himself hardens the hearts of sinners, and blinds them, so that they cannot see the way of salvation : “ I shall harden his heart” (Exod. iv, 21); “Blind the heart of this people” (Isaias, vi, 10). But St.

Augustine explains these and similar texts, by saying that God hardens the hearts of the obstinate, by not dispensing to them that Grace, of which they have rendered themselves unworthy, but not by infusing wickedness into them, as Calvin teaches : " Indurat subtrahendo gratiam non impendendo malitiam"[16534]; and it is thus, also, he blinds them : " Excecat Deus deserendo non adjuvando"[16535] It is one thing to harden and blind men, but quite another thing to permit them, as God does, for just reasons, to become blind and obstinate. We give the same answer to that saying of St. Peter to the Jews, when he reproached them for putting Christ to death : "This same being, delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you, by the hands of wicked men, have crucified and slain" (Acts, ii, 23). When they say, therefore, that it was by the counsel of God that the Jews put our Saviour to death, we answer, that God, indeed, decreed the death of Christ, for the salvation of the world, but he merely permitted the sin of the Jews.

67. Calvin objects, in the second place, these expressions of the Apostle (Rom. ix, 11, &c.) : "For when the children were not yet born, nor had done any good or evil (that the purpose of God according to election might stand), not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said to her :The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written : Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." And then he quotes, further on in the same chapter : " So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." And again : "Therefore, he hath mercy on whom he will; and whom he will he hardeneth." And, finally : " Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour ?" I cannot, understand, however, how these passages favour Calvin's doctrines. The text of St. Paul says, " Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated," after having first said that they had not yet done any good or evil. How, then, could God hate Esau before he had done anything wicked? St. Augustine[16536] answers : "God did not hate Esau as a man, but as a sinner. No one can deny that it does not depend on our will, but on the goodness of God, to obtain the Divine Mercy, and that God leaves some sinners hardened in their sins, and makes them vessels of dishonour, and uses mercy towards others, and makes them vessels of honour. No sinner can glorify himself, if God uses mercy towards him, nor

complain of the Almighty, if he does not give him the same Grace as he gives to others.

“ Auxilium,” says St. Augustine, “ quibuscumque datur, misericordia datur; qui bus autem non datur, ex justitia non datur”[16537]. In all that, we must only adore the Divine Judgments, and say, with the Apostle : “ 0, the depth of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God. How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways” (Rom. xi, 33). But all that does not, in the least, strengthen Calvin’s position, for he says that God predestines man to hell, and that he first predestines him to sin; but this is not the case, as St. Fulgentius[16538] says : “ Potuit Deus praedestinare quosdam ad gloriam, quosdam ad puenam, sed quos praedestinavit ad gloriam, praedestinavit ad justitiam; quos praedestinavit ad puenum, non praedestinavit ad culpam.” Some charged St. Augustine with the same error, and, therefore, Calvin says : “Non dubitabo cum Augustineo fateri, voluntatem Dei esse rerum necessitatem” that is, the necessity a man has to perform what is either good or bad[16539]. St. Prosper, however, clears his venerable master from this charge : “ Praedestinationem Dei sive ad bonum, sive ad malum in hormnibus operari, ineptissime dicitur”[16540]. The Fathers of the Council of Oranges also defended St. Augustine : “ Aliquos ad malum Divina potestate praedestinatos esse, non solum non credimus, sed etiam si sint qui tantum malum credere velint, cum omni detestatione illis anathema dicimus.”

68. Calvin objects, in the third place Do not you Catholics teach that God, by the supreme dominion he has over all creatures, can exclude, by a positive act, some from eternal life : is not this the “Negative Reprobation” defended by your theologians ? We answer, that it is quite one thing to exclude some from eternal life, and another to condemn them to everlasting death, as it is one thing for a Sovereign to exclude some of his subjects from his table, and another to condemn them to prison; and, besides all, our theologians do not teach this opinion the greater part reject it. Indeed, for my own part, I cannot understand how this positive exclusion from everlasting life can be in conformity with the Scripture, which says : “Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things which thou hast made” (Wisdom, xi, 25); “ Destruction is thy own, Israel; thy help is only in me” (Osee, xiii, 9); “ Is it my will that a sinner should die, saith the Lord

God, and not that he should be converted from his ways, and live” (Ezcch. xviii, 23). And in another place our Lord even swears that he does not wish the death, but the life of the sinner : “ As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live” (Ezech. xxxiii, 11); “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost” (Matt, xviii, 11); “Who wishes all men to be saved” (I. Tim. ii, 4); “Who gave himself a redemption for all” (ver. 6).

69. Now, when our Lord declares in so many places that he wishes the salvation of all, and even of the wicked, how can it be said, that by a positive decree he excludes many from glory, not because of their crimes, but merely for his own pleasure, when this positive exclusion necessarily involves, at least necessitate coJisequentice, positive damnation; for, according to the order established by God, there is no medium between exclusion from eternal life and condemnation to everlasting death. Neither will it serve to say, that all men, by original sin, have become a condemned mass; and God, therefore, determines that some should remain in their perdition, and others be saved; for although we know that all are born children of wrath, still we are also aware that God, by an antecedent will, really wishes that all should, through means of Jesus Christ, be saved. Those who are baptized, and in a state of grace, have even a greater claim, for in them, as St. Paul says, there is found nothing worthy of damnation : “There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. viii, 1). And the Council of Trent teaches, that in such God finds nothing to hate : “ In renatis enim nihil odit Deus” (Sess. V., Decret. de Pec. Orig. n. 5). Those who die, then, after Baptism, free from actual sin, go at once to the joys of heaven : “ Nihil prorsus eos ab ingressu cceli removetur” (Ibid). Now, if God entirely remits original sin to those who are baptized, how can it be asserted, that on account of it he afterwards excludes some of them from eternal life ?That God, however, may wish to free from eternal and deserved damnation some of those who voluntarily have lost their baptismal Grace by mortal sin, and leave others to their fate, is a matter which entirely depends on his own will, and his just judgments. But even of these, St. Peter says God does not wish, as long as they are in this life, that one should perish, but should repent of his wickedness, and be saved : “ He dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance” (II. Peter, iii, 9). Finally, St. Prosper says, that

those who die in sin are not necessarily lost, because they are not predestined; but they were not predestined, inasmuch as God foresaw that they wished to die obstinately in sin : “ Quod hujusmodi in hatic prolapsi mala, sine correctione pcenitentiaa defecerunt, non ex eo necessitatem habuerunt, guia pratidestinati non sunt, sed ideo pratidestinati non sunt; guia tales futuri ex voluntaria prativaricatione pratisciti sunt”[16541].

70. From all we have already written on this subject, we see how confused are all heretics, but especially the pretended Reformers, with the dogmas of Faith. They are all united in opposing the dogmas taught by the Catholic Church, but they afterwards contradict each other in a thousand points of belief among themselves, and it is difficult to find one who believes the same as another. They say that they are only seeking for and following the truth; but how can they find the truth, if they cast away the rule of truth? The truths of the Faith were not manifested of themselves to all men, so that if every one was bound to believe that which pleased his own judgment best, there would be no end to disputes. Hence, our Lord, to remove all confusion regarding the dogmas of Faith, has given us an infallible judge to put an end to all disputes, and as there is but one God, so there is but one Faith : “One faith, one baptism, one God” (Ephes. iv, 5).

71. Who, then, is this judge who puts an end to all controversies regarding Faith, and tells us what we are to believe? It is the Church established by God, as the pillar and the ground of truth: “That thou mayest know how thou ought to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of the truth.” The voice of the Church, then, it is which teaches the truth, and distinguishes the Catholic from the heretic, as our Lord says, speaking of him who contemns the correction of his pastor: “ If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican” (Matt, xviii, 17). Perhaps, however, some will say: Among the many Churches in the world, which is the true one which is it we are to believe? I briefly answer having treated the subject at length in my Work on the Truth of the Faith, and also in the Dogmatic part of this Work that the only true Church is the Roman Catholic, for this is the first founded by Jesus Christ. It is certain that our Redeemer founded the Church in which the faithful may find salvation; he it was who taught us what we should believe and practise to obtain eternal life. After his death,

he committed to the Apostles, and their successors, the government of his Church, promising to assist them, and to be with them all time, “even to the consummation of the world” (Matt, xxviii, 20). He also promised that the gates of hell should never prevail against it : “Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt, xvi, 18). Now, every heresiarch, in founding his Church, separated himself from this first Church founded by Jesus Christ; and if this was the true Church of our Saviour, all the others are, necessarily, false and heretical.

72. It will not do to say, as the Donatists did of old, and the Protestants in later times, that they have separated themselves from the Church, because although in the beginning it was the true one, still, through the fault of those who governed it, the doctrine preached by Jesus Christ became corrupted, for he, as we have seen, has promised that the gates of hell should never prevail against the Church he founded. Neither will it avail them to say that it was only the visible, and not the invisible Church that failed, on account of the wickedness of the shepherds, for it is necessary that there should always be a visible and infallible judge in the Church, to decide all doubts, that disputes may be quashed, and the dogmas of Faith be secure and certain. I wish every Protestant would consider this, and see how he can be certain, then, of his salvation outside the Holy Catholic Church.

VIII. THE AUTHORITY OF GENERAL COUNCILS

73. There can be only one Faith, for as Faith and truth are indivisibly united, and as truth is one, so Faith must be one likewise. Hence, we conclude, as we have already shown, that in all controversies regarding the dogmas of Faith it has always been, and is always necessary to have, an infallible judge, whose decisions all should obey. The reason of this is manifest, for if the judgment of every one of the faithful was to be taken on this matter, as the sectaries expect, it would not be alone opposed to the Scriptures, as we shall see, but to reason itself, for it would be quite impossible to unite the opinions of all the faithful, and give from them a distinct and definitive judgment in dogmas of Faith, and there would be endless disputes, and, instead of unity of Faith, there would be as many creeds as persons. Neither is the Scripture alone sufficient to assure us of

the truth of what we should believe, for several passages of it can be interpreted in different senses, both true and false, so that the Bible will be, for those who take it in a perverse sense, not a rule of Faith, but a fountain of errors; the Gospel, as St. Jerome says, will become, not the Gospel of Christ, but the Gospel of man, or of the devil : “Non putemus in verbis Scripturarum esse Evangelium sed in sensu, interpretatione enim perversa de Evangelic Christi fit hominis Evangelium aut diaboli.” Where, in fact, can we look for the true sense of the Scriptures, only in the judgment of the Church, the pillar and the ground of truth, as the Apostle calls it ?

74. That the Roman Catholic Church is the only true one, and that the others who have separated from it are false, is manifest from what we have already seen; for, as the sectaries themselves admit, the Roman Catholic Church has been certainly first founded by Jesus Christ. He promised to assist it to the end of time, and the gates of hell, that is, as St. Epiphanius explains it, heretics and founders of heresies, will never prevail against it, as was promised to St. Peter. Hence, in all doubts of Faith, we should bow to the decisions of this Church, subjecting our judgment to her judgment, in obedience to Christ, who, as St. Paul tells us, commands us to obey the Church : “Bring into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ” (II. Cor. x, 5).

75. The Church, then, teaches us through General Councils, and hence, the perpetual tradition of all the faithful has always held as infallible the Definitions of General Councils, and considered as heretics those who refused obedience to them. Such have been the Lutherans and Calvinists, who have denied the infallibility of General Councils. Here are Luther’s own words, taken from the thirtieth article of the forty-one condemned by Leo X.[16542] : “Via nobis facta est enervandi auctoritatem Conciliorum, et judicandi eorum Deere ta, et confidenter confitendi quid quid verum videtur, sive prolatum fuerit, sive reprobatum a quocunque Concilio.” Calvin said the same thing, and the followers of both heresiarchs have adopted their opinion. We know, especially, that Calvin and Beza both said, that no matter how holy a Council might be, still it may err in matters appertaining to Faith[16543]. The Faculty of Paris, however, censuring the thirtieth article of Luther, declared the contrary: “ Certum est, Concilium Generale legitime congregatum in Fidei et morum determinationibus errare

non posse.” How, in fact, can we deny infallibility to General Councils, when we know that they represent the whole Church? for, if they could err in matters of Faith, the whole Church could err, and the infidels might say, then, that God had not provided sufficiently for the unity of Faith, as he was bound to do, when he wished that all should profess the same Faith.

76. Hence, we are bound to believe, that in matters relating to the dogmas of Faith, and to moral precepts, General Councils cannot err, and this is proved, in the first place, from Scripture. Christ says : “Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt, xviii, 20). But then, says Calvin, according to that a Council of two persons assembled in the name of God cannot err. The Council of Chalcedon, however (Act. 3, in fine), in the Epistle to Pope St. Leo, and the Sixth Synod (Act. 17), had previously disposed of this objection, by explaining that the words, “ in my name,” show that this cannot be applied to a meeting of private persons assembled to discuss matters regarding their own private interests, but a meeting of persons congregated to decide on points regarding the whole society of Christendom. It is proved, secondly, by the words of St. John : “When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will teach you all truth” (John, xvi, 13). And previously, in the 14th chap. 16th verse, he says : “ I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever :the Spirit of Truth.” Now the expression, “that he may abide with you for ever,” clearly shows that the Holy Ghost continually abides in the Church, to teach the truths of the Faith, not alone to the Apostles, who, being mortal, could not remain always with us, but to the Bishops, their successors. Unless, then, in this congregation of Bishops, we do not know where the Holy Ghost teaches these truths.

77. It is proved, also, from the promises made by our Saviour always to assist his Church, that it may not err : “ Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world” (Matt, xxviii, 20); “And I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt, xvi, 18). A General Council, as has been said already, and as the Eighth Synod (Act. 5) declared, represents the universal Church; and, hence, this interrogatory was put to all suspected of heresy in the Council of Constance : “ An non credunt Concilium Generale universam Ecclesiam repraesentare ?” And St.

Athanasius, St. Epiphanius, St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory, teach the same thing[16544]. If, there fore, the Church, as it has been proved, cannot err, neither can the Council which represents the Church fall into error. It is proved, besides, from those texts in which the faithful are commanded to obey the Prelates of the Church : "Obey your Prelates, and be subject to them" (Heb. xiii, 17); "Who hears you, hears me" (Luke, x, 16); "Go, therefore, teach all nations" (Matt, xxviii, 19). These prelates, separately, may fall into error, and frequently disagree with each other on controverted points, and, therefore, we should receive what they tell us as infallible, and as coming from Christ himself, when they are united in Council.

On this account the Holy Fathers have always considered as heretics those who contradicted the dogmas defined by General Councils, as the reader may see, by consulting St. Gregory of Nazianzen, St. Basil, St. Cyril, St. Ambrose, St. Athanasius, St. Augustine, and St. Leo[16545].

78. Besides all these proofs, there is another, that if General Councils could err, there would be no established tribunal in the Church, to terminate disputes about points of dogma, and to preserve the unity of the Faith, and if they were not infallible in their judgments, no heresy could be condemned, nor could we say it was a heresy at all. We could not be certain either of the canonicity of several books of the Scripture, as the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, the Second Epistle of St. Peter, the Third Epistle of St. John, the Epistles of St. James and St. Jude, and the Apocalypse of St. John; for, although the Calvinists receive all these, still they are considered doubtful by others, because they were not declared canonical by the Fourth Council. Finally, we may add, that if Councils could err, they committed an intolerable error in proposing, as Articles of Faith, matters, which they could not assert were true, or false; and thus the Creeds of Nice, of Constantinople, of Ephesus, and of Chalcedon, would fall to the ground, in which several dogmas were declared, which before were not held as such, and still these four General Councils are received as Rules of Faith by the Innovators themselves. We have now to consider their numerous and importunate objections.

79. First, Calvin objects[16546] several passages of the Scriptures, in which the Prophets, Priests, and Pastors, are called ignorant and liars : "From the

Prophet to the Priest, all deal deceitfully" (Jer. viii, 10); "His watchmen are all blind the shepherds themselves know no understanding" (Isaias, Ivi, 10, 11). We answer, that frequently in the Scriptures, because some are wicked, all are reprimanded, as St. Augustine[16547] says, explaining that passage (Phil, ii, 21) : "All seek the things that are their own, and not the things that are Jesus Christ s." But the Apostles surely did not seek the things which were their own; they sought solely the glory of God, and, therefore, St. Paul calls on the Philippians, and tells them : " Be followers of me, brethren, and observe them who walk, so as you have our model" (Phil, iii, 17).

80. We should, besides, remember that the texts quoted, speak of Priests and Prophets divided among themselves, and deceiving the people, and not of those of who speak to us, assembled in the name of God. Besides, the Church of the New Testament has received surer promises than did the Synagogue of old, which was never called "The Church of the living God, the pillar and the firmament of truth" (I. Tim. iii, 15). Calvin, however, says[16548], that even in the New Law there are many false prophets and deceivers, as St. Matthew (xxiv, 11) tells us : "Many false prophets shall arise, and seduce many." This is also true; but he ought to apply this text to himself, and Luther, and Zuinglius, and not to the Ecumenical Councils of Bishops, to whom the assistance of the Holy Ghost is promised, and who can say : " It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (Acts, xv, 28). Calvin objects, secondly, the iniquity of the Council of Caiphas, which, withal, was a general one, composed of the Princes and Priests, and still condemned Jesus Christ as guilty of death (Matt, xxvi, 66). Therefore, he says, even General Councils are fallible. We reply, that we call infallible those legitimate General Councils alone, at which the Holy Ghost assists; but how can we call that Council either legitimate, or assisted by the Holy Ghost, in which Christ was condemned as a blasphemer, for attesting that he was the Son of God, after so many proofs given by him that he was really so whose proceedings were all based on false testimony, suborned for the purpose, and which was governed by envy alone, as even Pilate knew : "For he knew that for envy they had delivered him" (Matt, xxvii, 18).

81. Luther objects, thirdly (in art. 29), that, in the Council of Jerusalem, St. James changed the sentence given by St. Peter, who decided that the Gentiles were not bound to the observance of the precepts of the Law; but

St. James said that they should abstain from meats offered to idols, from things suffocated, and from blood, and this was forcing them to a Jewish observance. We answer, with St. Augustine and St. Jerome[16549] that this prohibition does not subvert the decision of St. Peter; nor, properly speaking, was it an imposition of the precepts of the Old Law, but a mere temporary precept of discipline, to satisfy the Jews, who could not bear just then, at the beginning of Christianity, to see the Gentiles eating blood and meats abhorred by them. It was, however, only a simple command, which fell into disuse, when the time passed away it was intended for, as St. Augustine remarks[16550].

82. They object, fourthly, that in the Council of Neoceserea, received by the First Council of Nice, as the Council of Florence attests, second marriages were condemned: "Presbyter urn convivio secundarum Nuptiarum interesse non debere." But how, say they, could such a prohibition be given, when St. Paul says : " If her husband should die, she is at liberty; let her marry to whom she will, only in the Lord" (I. Cor. vii, 39). We answer that, in the Council of Neocesarea, second marriages are not forbidden, but only the solemn celebration of them, and the banquets which were usual at first marriages alone; and, therefore, it was forbidden to the Priests to attend, not at the marriage, but at the banquets, which were a part of the solemnity. Fifthly, Luther objects that the Council of Nice prohibited the profession of arms, although St. John the Baptist (Luke, iii, 14) held it as lawful. We answer, that the Council did not prohibit the profession of arms, but forbid the soldiers to sacrifice to idols, to obtain the belt, or military distinction, which, as Ruffinus[16551] tells us, was only given to those who offered sacrifice; and it is these alone the Council condemned in the Second Canon. Sixthly, Luther objects that this same Council ordained that the Paulinians should be re-baptized, while another Council, which St. Augustine calls Plenary, and which is believed to have been the Council celebrated by the whole French Church in Arles, prohibited the re-baptism of heretics, as the Pope St. Stephen commanded, in opposition to St. Cyprian. We answer, that the Council commanded that the Paulinians should be re-baptized, for those heretics, believing Christ to be but a mere man, corrupted the form of Baptism, and did not baptize in the name of the three Persons, and, therefore, their Baptism was null and void. But this was

not the case with other heretics, who baptized in the name of the Trinity, though they did not believe that the three Persons were equally God.

83. The innovators object, eighthly, that in the Third Council of Carthage (Can. 47), the books of Tobias, Judith, Baruch, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and the Maccabees, were received as Canonical, and the Council of Laodicea (cap. ult.) rejected them. We reply, first, that neither of these Councils were Ecumenical. One wasaProvincial Council, composed of twenty-two Bishops; and that of Carthage was a national one, of forty-four Prelates, and this was confirmed by Pope Leo IV. (as may be seen, Can. de libellis, Dist. 20), and was later than that of Laodicea, which, therefore, may be said, to have amended the preceding one. Secondly, we answer, that the Council of Laodicea did not reject these books, but only omitted their insertion in the Canon of the Scriptures, as their authority was, at that time, doubtful; but the matter being made clearer, in the Council of Carthage, afterwards, they were, at once, admitted as authentic. They object, ninthly, that several errors were decided in the Sixth Council, such as that heretics should be re-baptized, and that the marriages between Catholics and heretics were invalid. We answer, with Bellarmin[16552], that these Canons were foisted in by the heretics; and, in the Seventh Council (Act. 4), it was declared, that these Canons did not belong to the Sixth Council, but were promulgated by an illegitimate Council, many years after, in the time of Julian II., and, as Venerable Bede tells us[16553], this Council was rejected by the Pope. They object, tenthly, that the Seventh Council the Second of Nice was opposed to the Council of Constantinople, celebrated under the Emperor Copronimus, regarding the Veneration of Images, which the Constantinopolitan Council prohibited. We answer that this Council was neither a lawful nor a General one; it was held by only a few Bishops, without the intervention of the Pope’s Legates, or of the three Patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, who should, according to the discipline of those times, be present.

84. They object, eleventhly, that the Second Council of Nice was rejected by the Council of Frankfort. But we reply, with Bellarmin, that this was all by mistake, for the Frankfort Council supposed that it was decided in the Nicene Council, that Images should receive supreme worship (Cultus Latrice), and that it was held without the Pope’s consent; but both these

suppositions were incorrect, as appears from the Acts of the Nicene Council itself. They object, twelfthly, that, in the Fourth Council of Lateran, the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ was defined as an Article of Faith, while an anathema was fulminated by the Council of Ephesus against all who would promulgate any other Symbol besides that established by the First Council of Nice. We answer, first, that the Lateran Council did not compose any new Symbol, but merely defined the question then debated. Secondly, that the Council of Ephesus anathematized any one publishing a Symbol opposed to the Nicene one, but not a new Symbol, declaratory of some point not previously defined. They object, thirteenthly, that as in Councils the points of Faith are defined by the majority of votes, it might so happen that one vote might incline the scale to the side of error, and thus the better part be put down by the major part of the Synod. We answer that, in purely secular affairs, such might be the case, that the majority might, in a worldly meeting, put down the more worthy; but, as the Holy Ghost presides in General Councils, and as Jesus Christ has promised, and does not fail to assist his Church, such can never be the case.

85. They object, fourteenthly, that it is the business of the Council merely to seek the truth; but the Scripture must decide it, and hence, then, the decision does not depend on the majority of votes, but on that judgment which is most in conformity with the Scripture, and hence, say they, every one has a right to examine and see for himself, whether the Decrees of Councils are in conformity with the Scriptures. This is the doctrine of Luther, Calvin[16554], and all Protestants. We answer, that in Canonical Councils it is the Bishops who give an infallible decision on dogmas, and this all should obey without examination. This is proved from Deuteronomy (vii, 12), in which our Lord commands that all should obey the Priest, who decides doubts, presiding at the Council, and those who refuse should be punished with death : " He who will be proud, and refuse to obey the commandment of the Priest, who ministereth at the time to the Lord thy God, and the decree of the judge, that man shall die, and them that take away the evil from Israel." It is also proved most clearly from the Gospel, which says : " If he will not hear the Church, let him be unto you as a heathen and a publican" (Matt, xviii, 17). A General Council represents the Church, as understood by all, and, therefore, should be obeyed. Recollect,

also, that in the Council of Jerusalem (Act. 15, 16), the question of legal observances was decided, not by the Scriptures, but by the votes of the Apostles, and all were obliged to obey their decision. Therefore, reply the sectarians, the authority of Councils is superior to that of the Scriptures. What a blasphemy, exclaims Calvin[16555]! We answer, that the Word of God, both written and unwritten, or Scripture and Tradition, is certainly to be preferred to any Council; but Councils do not make the Word of God, but merely declare what true Scripture is, and true Tradition is, and what is their true sense; they do not, therefore, give themselves the authority of infallibility, but merely declare that which they already possess, deducing it from the Scripture itself, and thus they define the dogmas the faithful should believe. It was thus the Council of Nice declared that the Word was God, and not a creature, and the Council of Trent that the real body of Christ, and not the figure, was in the Eucharist.

But then, the heretics say, the Church is not composed of Bishops alone, but of all the faithful, both Clergy and laity, and why, then, are Councils held by the Bishops alone? Therefore, says Luther, all Christians, no matter of what degree, should be judges in the Councils. The Protestants maintained this doctrine in the time of the Council of Trent, and sought to have a decisive voice in decreeing the dogmas of the Faith. This they required, when they were invited to attend the Council, to explain themselves on all controverted points, and when a safe conduct was given them, promising them security while in Trent, perfect liberty of conferring, as often as they pleased, with the Fathers, and no hindrance to leave whenever they wished to go. Their ambassadors came, and at first said that they did not consider the safeguard sufficient, since the Council of Constance said that no faith was to be kept with public heretics. The Fathers of Trent, however, replied that the safe conduct from the Council of Constance to Huss was not given by the Council itself, but by the Emperor Sigismund, so that the Council had then full jurisdiction over him.

86. Besides, as we have already explained in Chap. X., art. v, n. 43, of this History, the safe conduct given to Huss was for other crimes with which he was charged, but not for errors against Faith, and, when Huss was charged with this, he knew not what defence to make. The Tridentine Fathers, at all events, explained to those delegates that the safe conduct

given by them was as secure as the Council could make it, and different from that given by the Council of Constance to Huss. The delegates then made three requisitions, in case the Lutheran Doctors came to Trent, none of which could be agreed to[16556] :First That questions of Faith should be decided by the Scriptures alone. This could not be granted, since the Council had already decreed in the Fourth Session, that the same veneration was to be paid to Traditions preserved in the Catholic Church as to the Scriptures. Secondly They required that all Articles already decided on by the Council should be debated over again; but this could not be granted, because it would be just the same thing as to declare that the Council was not infallible when it had made the Decrees, and that would be to give a triumph to the Protestants, even before the battle commenced. Thirdly They demanded that their Doctors should have a seat in the Council as judges, for the decision of dogmatical points, just as the Bishops had.

87. “We answer, that the Church is a body, as St. Paul writes, in which our Lord has assigned the duties and obligations of each individual : “Now you are the body of Christ, and members of member. And God indeed hath set some in the Church: first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, doctors” (I. Cor. xii, 27, 28). And in another place he says : “And other same pastors and doctors” (Ephes. iv, 11). And he adds, afterwards : “Are all doctors” (I. Cor. xii, 29). God, therefore, has appointed some pastors in his Church to govern the flock; others, doctors, to teach the true doctrine, and he charges others, again, not to allow themselves to be led astray by new doctrines : “ Be not led away with various and strange doctrines” (Heb. xiii, 9); but to be obedient and submissive to the masters appointed to them : “Obey your prelates, and be subject to them, for they watch, as being to render an account of your souls” (Heb. xiii, 17). Who, then, are these masters whom our Lord has promised to assist to the end of time. They were, in the first place, the Apostles, to whom he said : “ Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world” (Matt, xxviii, 20). He promised them the Holy Ghost, who would remain always with them, to teach them all truth : “ I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever” (John, xiv, 6). Arid when he, the “Spirit of Truth, is come, he will teach you all truth” (John, xvi, 13). The Apostles, however, being mortal, should soon leave this world, and how,

then, could we understand the promise that the Holy Ghost would perpetually remain with them, to instruct them in all truth, that they might afterwards communicate it to others ? It must be understood, therefore, that they would have successors, who, with the Divine assistance, would teach the faithful people, and the Bishops are exactly these successors, appointed by God to govern the flock of Christ, as the Apostle says : " Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts, xx, 28). Estius[16557], commenting on this passage, says : " Illud, in quo vos Spiritus Sanctus posuit &c de iis qui proprii Episcopi sunt, intellexit." And, hence, the Council of Trent (Sess. xxiii, Cap. 4) declared : " Declarat praetor ceteros Ecclesiasticos gradus, Episcopos, qui in Apostolorum locum successerunt positos a Spiritu Sancto regere Ecclesiam Dei, eosque Presbyteris superiorcs esse." Hence, the Bishops in Council are the witnesses and judges of the Faith, and say, as the Apostles did in the Council of Jerusalem : " It hath seemed well to the Holy Ghost and to us" (Acts, xv, 18).

88. St. Cyprian, therefore, says[16558] : " Ecclesia est in Episcopo ;" and St. Ignatius the Martyr[16559] had previously said : "Episcopus omnem principatum et potestatem ultra omnes obtinet." The Council of Chalcedon[16560] decided " Synodus Episcoporum est, non Clericorum, superfluos foras mittite ;" and although in the Council of Constance, the Theologians, Canonists, and Ambassadors of the Sovereigns were allowed to vote, still it was declared that this was permitted merely in the affair of the schism, to put an end to it, but was not allowed when dogmas of Faith were concerned. In the Assembly of the Clergy of France, in 1656, the Parish Clergy of Paris signed a public protest against any other judges in matters of Faith but the Bishops alone. The Archbishop of Spalatro, Mark Anthony de Dominis, whose Faith was justly suspected, said that the consent of the whole Church to any article required not alone that of the Prelates, but of the laity, likewise : "Consensus totius Ecclesiae in aliquo articulo non minus intelligitur in Laicis, quam etiam in Praelatis; sunt enim etiam Laici in Ecclesia, imo majorem partem constituunt." But the Sorbonne condemned his doctrine as heretical : " Haec propositio est

haeretica, quatenus ad Fidei propositiones statucndas consensum Laicorum requirit."

89. It is usual to allow the Generals of Religious Orders and Abbots to give a decisive vote in Ecumenical Councils; but this is only by privilege and custom, for, by the ordinary law, the Bishops alone are judges, according to the Tradition of the Fathers, as St. Cyprian, St. Hilary, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, Osius, St. Augustine, St. Leo the Great, and others testify[16561].

But they say that, in the Council of Jerusalem, not alone the Apostles, but the Elders had a place : "The Apostles and Ancients assembled" (Acts, xv, 6), and gave their opinion; "then it pleased the Apostles and Ancients" (ver. 22). We answer, that some consider the "Ancients" to have been Bishops, already consecrated by the Apostles; but others think that they were convoked, not as judges, but as advisers, to give their opinions, and thus more easily quiet the people. It will not avail our adversaries either, to say that many of the Bishops are men of prejudiced minds, or lax morality, who cannot expect, consequently, the Divine assistance, or that they are ignorant, and not sufficiently instructed in religious knowledge; for as God promised infallibility to his Church, and, consequently, to the Council which represents it, he so disposes every thing, that, in the definition of the dogmas of the Faith, all the means requisite are supplied. Hence, whenever there is not a manifest defect in any decision, by the omission of some requisite absolutely necessary, every one of the Faithful should bow down with submission to the Decrees of the Council.

90. With regard to the other errors promulgated by these sectarians against Tradition, the Sacraments, the Mass, Communion under one kind, the Invocation of Saints, Feast Days, Relics, Images, Purgatory, Indulgences, and the Celibacy of the Clergy, I omit their refutation here, for I have done so already in my Dogmatic Work against the Reformers, on the Council of Trent (Sess. xxiii., sec. 1, & 2). But that the reader may form an opinion of the spirit of these new matters of the Faith, I will just quote one of Luther's sentiments, from one of his public sermons to the people[16562]. He was highly indignant with some who rebelled against his authority, and, to terrify them into compliance with his sentiments, he said : "I will revoke all I have written and taught, and make my recantation." Behold the Faith

this new Church Reformer teaches a Faith, which he threatens to revoke, when he is not respected as he considers he should be. The Faith of all other sectaries is just the same; they never can be stable in their belief, when once they leave the true Church, the only Ark of Salvation.

Refutation XII

THE ERRORS OF MICHAEL BAIUS

In order to refute the false system of Michael Baius, it is necessary to transcribe his seventy-nine condemned Propositions, for it is out of them we must find out his system. Here, then, are the Propositions, condemned by Pope St. Pius V., in the year 1564, in his Bull, which commences, “ Ex omnibus aiflictionibus,” &c.:

“ 1. Nec Angeli, nec primi hominis adhuc integri merita recto vocantur gratia.

2. Sicut opus malum ex natura sua est mortis aiternse meritorium, sic bonum opus ex natura sua est vital aeternae meritorium.

3. Et bonis Angelis, et primo homini, si in statu illo permansissent usque ad ultimum vitae, felicitas esset merces, et non gratia.

4. Vita aeterna homini integro, et Angelo promissa fuit intuitu honor um operum : et bona opera ex lego natural ad illam consequendam per se sufficiunt.

5. In promissione facta Angelo, et primo homini continetur naturalis justitiao constitutio, quao pro bonis operibus sine alio respectu, vita aiterna justis promittitur.

6. Naturali lege constitutum fuit homini, ut si obedientia perseveraret, ad earn vitam pertransiret, in qua mori non posset.

7. Primi hominis integri merita fuerunt primae creationis munera : sed juxta modum loquendi Scripturae Sacrae, non recte vocantur gratiai; quo fit ut tantum merita, non etiam gratiæ debeant nuncupari.

8. In redemptis per gratiam Christi nullum inveniri potest bonum meritum, quod non sit gratis indigno collatum.

9. Dona concessa homini integro, et Angelo, forsitan, non improbanda ratione, possunt dici gratia : sed quia secundum usum Scripturæ nomine gratiæ tantum ea munera intelliguntur, quai per Jesum male merentibus et

indignis conferuntur, ideo neque merita, nec merces quæ illis redditur, gratia dici debot.

10. Solutionem poenæ temporalis, quæ peccato dimisso saipe manet, et corporis resurrectionem, proprie nonnisi ineritis Christi adscribendam esse.

11. Quod pie et juste in hac vita mortali usque in finem conversati vitam consequimur æternam, id non proprie gratiæ Dei, sed ordinationi naturali statim initio creationis constitute, justo Dei judicio deputandum est.

12. Nec in hac retributione honor um ad Christi meritum respicitur, sed tantum ad primam constitutionem generis humani, in qua lege naturali institutum est, ut justo Dei judicio obedientiæ mandatorum vita æterna reddatur.

13. Pelagii sententia est, opus bonum citra gratiam adoptionis factura non esse Regni Coaletis meritorium.

14. Opera bona a filiis adoptionis facta non accipiunt rationem meriti ex eo quod fiunt per spiritum adoptionis inhabitantem corda filiorum Dei, sed tantum ex eo quod sunt conformia Legi, quodque per ea præstatur obedientia Legi.

15. Opera bona justorum non accipient in die Judicii extremi ampliorem mercedem, quam justo Dei judicio merentur accipere.

16. Ratio meriti non consistit in eo quod qui bene operatur, habeat gratiam et inhabitantem Spiritum Sanctum, sed in eo solum quod obedit divinæ Legi.

17. Non est vera Legis obedientia, quæ fit sine caritate.

18. Sentiunt cum Pelagio, qui dicunt esse necesarium ad rationem meriti, ut homo per gratiam adoptionis sublimctur ad statum Deificum.

19. Opera Catechumenorum, ut Fides, et Poenitentia, ante remissionem peccatorum facta sunt vitæ æternæ merita; quam ii non consequentur, nisi prius præcedentium delictorum impedimenta tollantur.

20. Opera justitiæ, et temperantiæ, quæ Christus fecit, ex dignitate Personæ operantis non traxerunt major em valorem.

21. Nullum est peccatum ex natura sua veniale, sed omne peccatum meretur poenam æternam.

22. Humanæ naturæ sublimatio et exaltatio in consortium Divinæ naturæ debita fuit integritati primæ conditionis; ac proinde naturalis dicenda est, non supernaturalis.

23. Cum Pelagio sentiunt, qui textum Apostoli ad Romanos secundo : Gentes quæ legem non habent, naturaliter quæ leais sunt faciunt; intelligunt de Gentilibus fidem non habentibus.

24. Absurda est eorum sententia, qui dicunt, hominem ab initio dono quodam supernaturali, et gratuito supra conditioned naturæ fuisse exaltatum, ut fide, spe, caritate Deum supernaturaliter coleret.

25. A vanis, et otiosis hominibus secundum insipientiam Philosophorum excogitata est sententia hominem ab initio sic constitutum, ut per dona naturæ super addita fuerit largitate Conditoris sublimatus, et in Dei filium adoptatus, et ad Pelagianismum rejicienda est ilia sententia.

26. Omnia opera Infidolium sunt peccata, et Philosophorum virtutes sunt vitia.

27. Integritas prima crcationis non fuit indebita humanæ naturæ exaltatio, scd naturalis ejus conditio.

28. Liberum arbitrium sine gratiæ Dei adjutorio nonnisi ad peccandum valet.

29. Pelagianus est error dicerc, quod liberum arbitrium valet ad ullum peccatum vitandum.

30. Non solum fures ii sunt et latrones, qui Christum viam, et ostium veritatis et vitæ negant; sed ctiam quicunquc aliundc quam per Christum in viam justitiæ, hoc est, ad aliquam justitiam conscendi posse dicunt; aut tentationi ulli sine gratiæ ipsius adjutorio resistero hominem posse, sic ut in cam non inducatur, aut ab ca superetur.

31. Caritas perfecta et sincera, quæ est ex corde puro et conscientia bona, et fide non ficta, tarn in Catechumcnis, quam in Poenitentibus potest esso sine remissione peccatorum.

32. Caritas ilia quæ est plcnitudo Lcgis, non est semper conjuncta cum remissione peccatorum.

33. Catechumenus juste, recte, et sancte vivit, et mandata Dei observat, ac Legem implet per caritatem, ante obtentam remissioncm peccatorum, quæ in Baptismi lavacre demum percipitur.

34. Distinctio ilia duplicis amoris, naturalis videlicet, quo Dcus amatur ut auctor naturæ, et gratuiti, quo Deus amatur ut beatificator, vana est et commentitia, et ad illudendum Sacris Litteris, et plurimis Veterum testimoniis excogitata.

35. Omne quod agit peccator, vel servus peccati peccatum est.

36. Amor naturalis, qui ex viribus naturæ exoritur, et sola Philosophia per elationcm præsumptionis humanæ, cum injuria Crucis Christi defcnditur a nonnullis Doctoribus.

37. Cum Pelagio sentit, qui boni aliquid naturalis, hoc est, quod ex naturæ solis viribus ortum ducit, agnoscit.

38. Omnis amor creaturæ naturalis, aut vitiosa est cupiditas, qua mundus diligitur, quæ a Joanne prohibetur : aut laudabilis ilia caritas, qua per Spiritum Sanctum in corde diffusa Deus amatur.

39. Quod voluntarie fit, etiamsi in necessitate fiat, libere tamen fit.

40. In omnibus suis actibus peccator servit dommanti cupiditati.

41. Is liber tatis modus, qui est a necessitate, sub libertatis nomine non reperitur in script uris, sed solum libertatis a peccato.

42. Justitia, qua justificatur per fidem impius, consistit formaliter in obedientia mandatorum, quae est operum justitia, non autcm in gratia aliqua animae infusa, qua adoptatur homo in filium Dei, et secundum intoriorem hominem rcnovatur, et Divinae naturae consors efficitur, ut sic per SpiritumSanctum renovatus, deinceps bene vivere, et Dei mandatis obedire possit.

43. In hominibus poenitentibus, ante Sacramentum absolutions, et in Catechumenis ante Baptisraum est vera justificatio, et separata tamen a remissione peccatorum.

44. Operibus plerisque, qua? a fideli bus fiunt, solum ut Dei mandatis pareant, cujusmodi sunt obedire parentibus, depositum reddere, ab hornicidio, a furto, a fornicatione abstinere, justificantur quidem homines, quia sunt legis obedientia, et vera legis justitia; non tamen iis obtinent incrementa virtutum.

45. Sacrificium Missae non alia ratione est Sacrificium, quam generali ilia, qua omne opus quod fit, ut sancta socictate Deo homo inhaereat.

46. Ad rationem, et definitionem peccati non pertinet voluntarium nec definitions quaestio est, sed eaussae, et originis, utrum omne peccatum debeat esse voluntarium.

47. Unde peccatum originis vere habet rationem peccati, sine ulla relatione, ac respectu ad voluntatem, a qua originem habuit.

48. Peccatum originis est habituali parvuli voluntate voluntarium, et habitualiter dominatur parvulos, eo quod non gerit contrarium voluntatis arbitrium.

49. Et ex habituali voluntate dominante fit ut parvulus decedens sine regenerationis Sacramento, quando usuin rationis consequens erit, actualiter Dcum odio habeat, Deum blasphemet, et Legi Dei repugnet.

50. Prava desideria, quibus ratio non consentit, et quae homo invitus patitur, sunt proliibita praecepto : Non concupisces.

51. Concupiscentia, sive lex membrorum, et prava ejus desideria, quae inviti sentiunt homines, sunt vera legis inobedientia.

52. Omne scelus est ejus conditionis, ut suum auctorem, et omnes posteros eo modo inficere possit, quo infecit prima transgressio.

53. Quantum est ex vi transgressionis, tantum meritorum malorum a generante contrahunt, qui cum minoribus nascuntur vitiis, quam qui cum majoribus.

54. Definitiva haec sententia, Deum homini nihil impossibile praecepisse, falso tribuitur Augustineo, cum Pelagii sit.

55. Deus non potuisset ab initio talem creare hominem, qualis nunc nascitur.

56. In peccato duo sunt, actus, et renatus : transeunte autem actu nihil manet, nisi rcatus, sive o bligatio ad Poenam.

57. Unde in Sacramento Baptismi, aut Sacerdotis absolutione proprie reatus peccati dumtaxat tollitur; et ministerium Sacerdotum solum liberat a reatu.

58. Peccator poenitens non vivificatur ministerio Sacerdotis absolvcntis, scd a solo Deo, qui poenitentiam suggerens, et inspirans vivificat cum, ot resuscitat; ministerio autem Sacerdotis solum reatus tollitur.

59. Quando per eleemosynas aliaque poenitentiae opera Deo satisfacimus pro pconis temporalibus, non dignura pretium Deo pro peccatis nostris offerimus, sicut quidem errantes autumant (nam alioqui essemus saltern aliqua ex parte redemptores), sed aliquid facimus, cujus intuitu Christi satisfactio nobis applicatur, et communicatur.

60. Per passiones Sanctorum in indulgentiis communicatas non proprie redimuntur nostra delicta, sed per communionem caritatis nobis eorum passiones impartiuntur, ot ut digni simus, qui pretio Sanguinis Christi a poenis pro peccatis debitis liberemur.

61. Celebris ilia Doctorum distinctio, divinao legis mandata bifariani impleri, altero modo quantum ad praeceptorum operum substantiam tantum, altero quantum ad certum quendam modum, videlicet, secundum quem

valeant operantem perducero ad regnum (hoc est ad modum meritorum) commentitia est, et explodenda.

62. Ilia quoque opus dicitur bifariam bonum, vel quia ex objecto, et omnibus circumstantiis rectum est, et bonum (quod moraliter bonum appellare consueverunt), vel quia est meritorium Regni aeterni, eo quod sit a vivo Christi membro per spiritum caritatis, rejicienda est.

63. Sed et ilia distinctio duplicis justitiae alterius, quae fit per spiritum caritatis inhabitantem, altcrius, quao fit ex inspiratione quidem Spiritus Sancti cor ad penitiam excitantis, sed nondum cor habitantis, et in eo caritatem diffundentis, qua Divinao legis justificatio impleatur, similiter rejicicitur.

64. Item et ilia distinctio duplicis vificationis, alterius, qua vivificatur peccator, duni ei poenitentiao, et vitae novae propositum, et inchoatio per Dei gratiam inspiratur; alterius, qua vivificatur, qui vere justificatur, et palmes vivus in vite Christo efficitur; pariter commentitia est, et Scripturis minimo congruens.

65. Nonnisi Pelagiano errore admitti potest usus aliquis liberi arbitrii bonus, sive non malus, et gratiae Christi injuriam facit, qui ita sentit, et docet.

66. Sola violentia repugnat libertati hominis naturali.

67. Homo peccat, etiam damnabiliter; in eo quod necessario facit.

68. Infidelitas pure negativa in his, in quibus Christus non est praBdicatus, peccatum est.

69. Justificatio impii fit formaliter per obedientiam Legis, non autem per occultam communicationem, et inspirationem gratiae, quas per eam justificatos faciat implere legem.

70. Homo existens in peccato mortali, sive in reatu aeternaedamnationis, potest habere verara caritatem; et caritas, etiam perfecta, potest consistere cum reatu aeternae damnationis.

71. Per contritionem, etiam cum caritate perfecta, et cum voto suscipendi Sacramentum conjunctam, non remittitur crimen, extra causani necessitatis, aut Martyrii, sine actuali susceptione Sacramenti.

72. Omnes omnino justorum afflictiones sunt ultiones peccatorum ipsorum; unde et Job, et Martyres, quae passi sunt, propter peccata sua passi sunt.

73. Nemo, praeter Ghristum est absque peccato originali, hinc Virgo mortua est propter peccatum ex Adam contractum, omnesque ejus afflictiones in hoc vita, sicut et aliorum justorum, fuerunt ultiones peccati actualis, vel originalis.

74. Concupiscentia in renatis relapsis in peccatum mortale, in qui bus jam dominatur, peccatum est, sicut et alii habitus pravi.

75. Motus pravi concupiscentiaa sunt pro statu hominis vitiati prohibiti praecepto, Non concupisces; Unde homo eos sentiens, et non consentiens, transgreditur praoceptum, Non concupisces; quamvis transgressio in peccatum non deputetur.

76. Quandiu aliquid concupiscentias carnalis in diligente est, non facit praeceptum, Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.

77. Satisfactiones laboriosoe justificatorum non valent expiare de condigno poenam temporalem restantem post culpain conditionatam.

78. Immortalitas primi Hominis non erat gratiae beneficium, sed naturalis conditio.

79. Falsa est Doctorum sententia, primum Hominem potuisse a Deo creari, et instituti sine Justitia naturali “

1. I should remark here that several of these Propositions are taken word for word from the writings of Baius others only according to their meaning and others again belong to his companion, Esselius, or other supporters of his; but as they were almost all taught by him, they are all generally attributed to him, and from them his system can be clearly deduced. He distinguishes three states of human nature Innocent, Fallen, and Restored or Redeemed.

2. Regarding Nature in a state of innocence, he says :First That God, as a matter of justice, and by that right which the creature has, ought to create both angels and men for eternal beatitude. This opinion is deduced from eight articles, condemned in the Bull the twenty-first, twenty-third, twenty—fourth, twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, fifty-fifth, seventy-second, and seventy—ninth. Secondly That Sanctifying Grace was due as a matter of right to Nature, in a state of innocence. This proposition follows, as a necessary consequence, from the former one. Thirdly That the gifts granted to the Angels and to Adam were not gratuitous and supernatural, but were natural, and due to them by right, as the twenty—first and twenty-seventh articles assert. Fourthly That the Grace granted to Adam and to the Angels

did not produce supernatural and Divine merits, but merely natural and human ones, according to the first, seventh, and ninth articles. And, in fact, if merits follow from Grace, and the benefits of Grace were due by right, and naturally belonged to Nature, in a state of innocence, the same should be said of merits, which are the fruit of this Grace. Fifthly That Beatitude would be not a Grace, but a mere natural reward, if we had persevered in a state of innocence, as the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth articles say; and this is also a consequence of the antecedent propositions, for if it were true that merits, in a state of innocence, were merely human and natural, then Beatitude would be no longer a Grace, but a reward due to us.

3. Secondly, Baius taught, regarding fallen nature, that when Adam sinned he lost all gifts of Grace, so that he was incapable of doing anything good, even in a natural sense, and could only do evil. Hence, he deduces, first, that in those who are not baptized, or have fallen into sin after Baptism, concupiscence, or the fames of sensitive pleasure, which is contrary to reason, though without any consent of the will, is truly and properly a sin which is imputed to them by reason of the will of mankind included in the will of Adam, as is explained in the seventy—fourth proposition. Nay, more, he says, in the seventy-fifth proposition, that the evil movements of our senses, though not consented to, are transgressions even in the just, though God does not impute it to them. Secondly, he deduces, that all that the sinner does is intrinsically a sin (sec the thirty-fifth proposition). He deduces, thirdly, that for merit or demerit violence alone is repugnant to the liberty of man; so that when he does any voluntary bad action, though he does it of necessity, he sins, as the thirty-ninth and sixty-seventh propositions teach. In the third place, with regard to Redeemed Nature, Baius supposes that every good work, by its very nature, and of itself, merits eternal life, independently, altogether, of the Divine arrangement, the merits of Jesus Christ, and the knowledge of the person who performs it. The second, eleventh, and fifteenth propositions show this.

From this false supposition he draws four false consequences: First That man’s justification does not consist in the infusion of Grace, but in obedience to the Commandments (see propositions forty-two and sixty-nine). Second That perfect charity is not always conjoined with the remission of sins. Third That in the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance the penalty of the punishment alone is remitted, and not the fault, for God alone can take away that (see the fifty-seventh and fifty—eighth propositions). Fourth That every sin deserves eternal punishment, and that there are no venial sins (proposition twenty-one). We see, then, that Baius taught, by his system, the errors of Pelagius, when he treats of Innocent Nature man's nature before the fall; for, with that heresiarch, he teaches that Grace is not gratuitous, or supernatural, but is natural, and belongs to nature, of right. With regard to Fallen Nature, he teaches the errors of Luther and Calvin, for he asserts that man is, of necessity, obliged to do good or evil according to the movements of the two delectations which he may receive, heavenly or worldly. With regard to the state of Redeemed Nature, the errors which he teaches concerning justification, the efficacy of the Sacraments, and merit, are so clearly condemned by the Council of Trent, that if we did not read them in his works, we never could believe that he published them, after having personally attended that Council.

4. He says, in the forty-second and sixty-ninth propositions, that the justification of the sinner does not consist in the infusion of Grace, but in obedience to the Commandments; but the Council teaches (Sess. vi, cap. 7), that no one can become just, unless the merits of Jesus Christ are communicated to him; for it is by these the Grace which justifies is infused into him : " Nemo potest esse Justus, nisi cui merita passionis D. N. Jesu Christi communicantur." And this is what St. Paul says : "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii, 24). He says that perfect Charity is not conjoined with the remission of sins (propositions thirty-one and thirty-two); but the Council, speaking specially of the Sacrament of Penance, declares (Sess. xiv, c. 4), that Contrition, united with perfect Charity, justifies the sinner before he receives the Sacrament. He says that by the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance the penalty of punishment, but not of the fault, is remitted (propositions fifty-seven and fifty-eight). But the Council, speaking of Baptism (Sess. v, Can. 5), teaches that by Baptism the penalty of original sin, and everything else which has the rationale of sin, is remitted : "Per Jesu Christi gratiam, quae in Baptismate confertur, reatum originalis peccati remitti, et tolli totum id quod veram, et propriam peccati rationein habet, illudque non tantum radi, aut non imputari." Speaking of the Sacrament of Penance, the Council diffusely explains (Sess. xiv, c. 1), that it is a truth of Faith, that our Lord has left to Priests the power to remit sins in this

Sacrament, and condemns anew the error of the Novatians, who denied it. Baius says that concupiscence, or every evil motion of concupiscence, in those who are not baptized, or who, after Baptism, have fallen, is a real sin, because they then transgress the Commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," &c. (propositions seventy-four and seventy—five); but the Council teaches that concupiscence is not a sin, and that it does no harm to those who do not give consent to it : " Concupiscentia, cum ad agonem relicta sit, nocere non consentientibus non valet Hanc concupiscentiam Ecclesiam nunquam intellexisse peccatum appellari, quod verc poccatum sit, sed quia ex peccato est, et ad peccatum inclinas (Sess. v, cap. 5).

5. In fine, all that Baius taught regarding the three states of nature is a necessary consequence of one sole principle of his, that is, that there are but two authors, either Theological Charity, by which we love God above all things, as the last end; or concupiscence, by which we love the creature as the last end, and that between these two loves there is no medium. he says, then, God being just, could not, in opposition to the right which an intelligent creature has, create man subject to concupiscence alone; and, therefore, as leaving concupiscence out of the question, there is no other proper love but supernatural love alone, when he created Adam he must have given him, in the first instance of his creation, this supernatural love, the essential end of which is the beatific vision of God. Charity, therefore, was not a supernatural and gratuitous gift, but a natural one, which was the right of human nature, and, therefore, the merits of this charity were natural, and beatitude was our due, and not a grace. From this, then, he drew another consequence, which was, that free will being, after the fall, deprived of Grace, which was, as it were, a supplement of nature, was of no use, only to cause us to sin. We answer, however, that this principle is evidently false, and, therefore, every consequence deduced from it is false, likewise. There is evidence to prove, in opposition to the principle of Baius, that the intelligent creature has no positive right to existence, and, consequently, has no innate right to exist in one way more than another. Besides, several learned Theologians, whose opinions I follow, teach, with very good reason, that God could, if it pleased him, create man in a state of pure nature, so that he would be born without any supernatural gift, and without sin, but with all the perfections and imperfections which belong to this state of nature; so that the object of pure nature might be natural, and

all the miseries of human life, as concupiscence, ignorance, death, and all other calamities, might belong of right to mere human nature itself, just as now in the state of fallen nature they are the effects and punishments of sin; and, therefore, in our present state, concupiscence inclines us much more to sin than it would do in a state of pure nature, since by sin the understanding of man is more obscured, and his will wounded.

6. It was undoubtedly one of the errors of Pelagius, that God had in fact created man in a state of pure nature. On the other hand, it was one of Luther's errors to assert that the state of pure nature is repugnant to the right which man has to Grace; but this error was already taken up by Baius, because surely it was not necessary by right of nature that man should be created in a state of original justice; but God might create him without sin, and without original justice, taking into account the right of human nature. This is proved, first, from the Bulls already quoted, of St. Pius V., Gregory XIIL, and Urban VIII. ,which confirm the Bull of St. Pius, in which the assertion, that the consortium of the Divine Nature was due to, and even natural to, the nature of man, as Baius said " Humanae naturae sublimatio, et exaltatio in consortium Divinae naturao debita fuit integritati primae conditionis, et proinde naturalis dicenda est, et non supernaturalis" was condemned (proposition twenty-two). He says the same in the fifty-fifth proposition : "Deus non potuisset ab initio talem creare homincm, qualis nunc nascitur ;" that is, exclusive of sin we understand. In the seventy-ninth proposition, again he says : " Falsa est Doctorum sententia, primum hominem et potuisse a Deo creari, et institui sine justitia naturali." Jansenius, though a strong partisan of the doctrine of Baius, confesses that those Decrees of the Pope made him very uneasy : " Haereo, fateor"[16563].

7. The disciples of Baius and Jansenius, however, say they have a doubt whether the Bull of Urban VIII., " In eminenti," should be obeyed; but Tournelly[16564] answers them, and shows that the Bull being a dogmatic law of the Apostolic See, whose authority Jansenius himself says, all Catholics, as children of obedience, should venerate, and being accepted in the places where the controversy was agitated, and by the most celebrated Churches in the world, and tacitly admitted by all others, should bo held as an infallible judgment of the Church, which all should hold by; and even Quesnel himself admits that.

8. Our adversaries also speak of the way the Bull of St. Pius should be understood, and say, first, that we cannot believe that the Apostolic See ever intended to condemn in Baius the doctrine of St. Augustine, who, as they suppose, taught that the state of pure nature was an impossibility. This supposition of theirs, however, is totally unfounded, for the majority of Theologians assert, that the Holy Doctor in many places teaches the contrary, especially in his writings against the Manicheans[16565], and distinguishes four modes in which God might create the souls of men blameless, and, among them, the second mode would be, if, previously to any sin being committed, these created souls were infused into their bodies subject to ignorance, concupiscence, and all the miseries of this life; by this mode, the possibility of pure nature is certainly established. Consult Tournelly[16566] on this point, where he answers all objections, and you will see also how Jansenius treats it.

9. They say, likewise, that the propositions of Baius were not condemned in the Bull of St. Pius in the sense the author understood them. The words of the Bull are : “ Quas quidem sententias stricto coram no bis examine ponderatas, quanquam nonnullae aliquo pacto sustineri possent, in rigore, et proprio verborum sensu ab assertoribus intento haereticas, erroneas, temerarias, &c., respective damnamus,” &c. They then say that between the word, possent, and the following ones, in rigore, et proprio verborum sensu, there was no comma, but that it was placed after the words ab assertoribus intento; so that the sentence being read thus : “quanquam nonnullae aliquo pacto sustineri possent in rigore et proprio verborum sensu ab assertoribus intento,” the proposition could be sustained in this proper and intended sense, as the Bull declares. According to this interpretation, however, the Bull would contradict itself, condemning opinions which, in their proper sense, and that intended by the author, could be sustained. If they could be sustained in the proper sense, why were they condemned, and why was Baius expressly called on to retract them ? It would be a grievous injustice to condemn these propositions, and oblige the author to retract them, if in the proper and plain sense they could be defended. Besides, though in the Bull of St. Pius, the comma may be wanted after the word possent, still no one has ever denied or doubted but that it was inserted in the subsequent Bulls of Gregory XIII. and Urban VIII. There cannot be the least doubt that

the opinions of Baius were condemned by these Pontifical Bulls. They say, thirdly, that the propositions were condemned, having regard to the Divine Omnipotence, according to which the state of pure nature was possible, but not in regard to the wisdom and goodness of God. The Theologians already quoted answer, that in that case the Apostolic See has condemned not a real, but only an apparent, error, since, in reality, the doctrine of Baius, in regard to the wisdom and goodness of God, is not condemnable. It is false, however, to suppose that the state of pure nature is only possible according to the Omnipotence of God, and not according to his other attributes. That which is repugnant or not agreeable to any of the attributes of God is, in fact, impossible, for " He cannot deny himself" (II. Tim. ii, 13). St. Anselm says[16567]: " In Deo quantumlibet parvum inconveniens sequitur impossibilitas." Besides, if that principle of our adversaries themselves were true, that there is no middle love between vicious cupidity and laudable charity, then the state of pure nature, even in regard to the Divine Omnipotence, as they suppose, would be an impossibility, since it would, in fact, be repugnant to God to produce a creature contrary to himself, with the necessity of sinning, as, according to their supposition of possibility, this creature would be.

10. In fact, I think no truth can be more evident, than that the state of pure nature is not an impossibility, a state in which man would be created without Grace and without sin, and subject to all the miseries of this life. I say this with all reverence for the Augustinian school, which holds the contrary opinion. There are two very evident reasons for this doctrine :First Man could very well have been created without any supernatural gift, but merely with those qualities which are adapted to human nature. Therefore, that Grace which was supernatural, and was given to Adam, was not his due, for then, as St. Paul says (Rom. xi, 6): "Grace is no more grace." Now, as man might be created without Grace, God might also create him without sin in fact, he could not create him with sin, for then he would be the author of sin. Then he might likewise create him subject to concupiscence, to disease, and to death, for these defects, as St. Augustine explains, belong to man's very nature, and are a part of his constitution. Concupiscence proceeds from the union of the soul with the body, and, therefore, the soul is desirous of that sensitive pleasure which the body likes. Diseases, and all

the other miseries of human life, proceed from the influence of natural causes, which, in a state of pure nature, would be just as powerful as at present, and death naturally follows from the continual disagreement of the elements of which the body is composed.[16568]St. Anselm, L 1, Cum Deus homo, c. 1.

11. The second reason is, that it is not repugnant to any of the Divine attributes to create man without Grace and without sin. Jansenius himself admits that it is not opposed to his Omnipotence; neither is it to any other attribute, for in that state, as St. Augustine[16569] teaches, all that is due by right to man’s natural condition, as reason, liberty, and the other faculties necessary for his preservation, and the accomplishment of the object for which he was created, would be given to him by God. Besides, all Theologians, as Jansenius himself confesses in those works in which he speaks of pure nature, are agreed in admitting the possibility of this state, that is considering the right of the creature alone, and this is precisely the doctrine of the Prince of Schoolmen, St. Thomas. He teaches[16570], that man might be created without consideration to the Beatific Vision. He says : “ Carentia Divino visionis competeret ei qui in solis naturalibus esset etiam absque peccato.” He likewise, in another passage[16571], teaches that man might be created with that concupiscence which rebels against reason : “ Ilia subjectio inferiorum virium ad rationem non erat naturalis.” Several Theologians, therefore, admit the possibility of the state of pure nature, as Estius, Ferrarensis, the Salmanticenses, Vega, and several others. Bellarmin[16572], especially, says he does not know how anyone can doubt of this opinion.

12. We have now to answer the objections of our adversaries. The first objection is on the score of “ Beatitude.” St. Augustine, according to Jansenius, teaches in several places that God could not, without injustice, deny eternal glory to man in a state of innocence : “Qua justitia quaeso a Regno Dei alienatur imago Dei in nullo transgressu legem Dei.” These are St. Augustine’s words[16573]. We answer that the Holy Father in this passage was opposing the Pelagians, according to man’s present state, that is, supposing the gratuitous ordination of man to a supernatural end :according to that supposition, he said that it would be unjust to deprive man of the kingdom of God if he had not sinned. Neither is it of any consequence that

St. Thomas[16574] says that man's desires can find no rest except in the vision of God : " Non quiescit naturale desiderium in ipsis, nisi etiam ipsius Dei substantiam videant ;" and as this appetite is naturally implanted in man, he could not have been created unless in order to this end.

13. We answer, that St. Thomas[16575], in several places, and especially in his book of Disputed Questions, teaches that by nature we are not inclined in particular to the vision of God, but only to beatitude in general : " Homini inditus est appetitus ultimi sui finis in communi, ut scilicit appetat se esse completum in bonitate; sed in quo ista completio consistat non est determi natum a natura." Therefore, according to the Holy Doctor, there is not in man an innate tendency to the beatific vision, but only to beatitude in general. He confirms this in another place[16576]: " Quamvis ex naturali inclinatione voluntas habeat, ut in beatitudinem feratur, tamcn quod fcratur in beatitudinem talem, vel talem, hoc non est ex inclinatione naturae." But they will still say that it is only in the vision of God that man can have perfect happiness, as David says (Psalm xvi, 15) : "I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear." To this we reply, that this refers to man in his present state, since he has been created in order to eternal life, but never would be the case in another state, that of pure nature, for example.

14. The second objection is on the score of "Concupiscence." God, they say, could never be the author of concupiscence, since we read in St. John (I. Epis. ii, 16), that "it is not of the Father, but is of the world ;" and St. Paul says : " Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin (that is concupiscence), that dwellcth in me" (Rom. vii, 17). "We answer the text of St. John, by saying that the concupiscence of the flesh is not from the Father, in our present state of existence, for in that it springs from sin, and inclines to sin, as the Council of Trent (Sess. v, can. 5) declares : " Quia est a peccato, et ad peccatum inclinat." In our present state even, it influences us more powerfully than it would in a state of pure nature; but even in this state it would not proceed formally from the Father, considered as an imperfection, but would come from him as one of the conditions of human nature. We answer the text of St. Paul in like manner, that concupiscence is called sin, because, in our present state, it springs from sin, since man was created in grace; but in a state of pure nature it would not come from sin,

but from the very condition itself, in which human nature would have been created.

15. They say, secondly, that God could not create a rational being with anything which would incline him to sin, as concupiscence would. We answer, that God could not create man with anything which, in itself, in se, would incline him to sin, as with a vicious habit, for example, which of itself inclines and induces one to sin; but he might create man with that which accidentally, per accidens, inclines him to sin, for in this is the condition of his nature only accomplished, for otherwise God should create man impeccable, for it is a defect to be peccable. Concupiscence, of itself, does not incline man to sin, but solely to that happiness adapted to human nature, and for the preservation of nature itself, which is composed of soul and body; so that it is not of itself, but only accidentally, and through the deficiency of the condition of human nature itself, that it sometimes inclines us to sin. God, surely, was not obliged, when he produced his creatures, to give them greater perfections than those adapted to their natures. Because he has not given sensation to plants, or reason to brutes, we cannot say that the defect is his; it belongs to the nature itself of these creatures, and so if, in the state of pure nature, God did not exempt man from concupiscence, which might accidentally incline him to evil, it would not be a defect of God himself, but of the condition itself of human nature.

16. The third objection is on the score of the “Miseries” of human nature. St. Augustine, they say, when opposing the Pelagians, frequently deduced the existence of original sin from the miseries of this life. We briefly answer, that the Holy Doctor speaks of the misery of man in his present state, remembering the original holiness in which he was created, and knowing, from the Scriptures, that Adam was created free from death and from all the penalties of this life. On this principle, God could not, with justice, deprive him of the gifts granted to him, without some positive fault on his side; and, hence, the Saint inferred that Adam sinned, from the calamities which we endure in this life. He would say quite the contrary, however, if he were speaking of the state of pure nature, in which the miseries of life would spring from the condition itself of human nature, and especially as in the state of lapsed nature our miseries are, by many degrees, greater than they would be in a state of pure nature. From the grievous miseries, then, of our present state, original sin can be proved; but it could

not be so from the lesser miseries which man would suffer in a state of pure nature.

Refutation XIII

THE ERRORS OF GORNELIUS JANSENIUS

1. In order to refute the errors of Jansenius, it is quite sufficient to refute his system, which, in substance, consists in supposing that our will is forced by necessity to do either what is good or bad, according to the impulse it receives from the greater or less degree of celestial or terrestrial delectation, which predominates in us, and which we cannot resist, since this delectation, as he says, precedes our consent, and even forces us to yield consent to it. This error he founded on that well—known expression of St. Augustine : "Quod amplius delectat, id nos operemur, necessum est." Here are his words : "Gratia est deletatio et suavitas, qua Anima in bonum appetendum delectabiliter trahitur; ac pariter delectationem concupiscentia? esse desideium illicitum, quo animus etiam repugnans in peccatum inhiat"[16577]. And again, in the same book (Cap. 9), he says: " Utraque delectatio invicem pugnat, earumque conflictus sopiri non potest, nisi alteram altera delectando superaverit, et eo totum animae pondus vergat, ita ut vigente delectatione carnali impossibile sit, quod virtutis, et honestatis consideratio praevaleat."

2. Jansenius says that in that state of justice, in which man was created "God made man right" (Eccles. vii, 30) being then inclined to rectitude, he could with his own will easily perform what was right, with the Divine assistance alone, called sine quo that is, Sufficient Grace (which gives him the power, but not the will); so that, with that ordinary assistance alone, he could then agree to, and follow grace, but when his will was weakened by sin, and inclined to forbidden pleasures, it then could not, with sufficient Grace alone, do what is right, but required that assistance called, theologically, Quo that is, Efficacious Grace (which is his conquering delectation, in relation to the superiority of degrees), which pushes him on, and determines him to perform what is good, otherwise he never could

resist the opposing carnal delectation : “ Gratia sanae voluntatis in ejus libero relinquebatur arbitrio, ut earn si vellet desereret; aut si vellet uteretur; gratia vero lapsso aegrotaeque voluntatis nullo modo in ejus relinquitur arbitrio, ut eam deserat, et arripiat si voluerit”[16578]. During the period that the carnal delectation predominates, then, says Jansenius, it is impossible that virtue should prevail : “ Vigente delectatione carnali, impossibile est, ut virtutis et honestatis consideratio praevaleat”[16579]. He says, besides, that this superior delectation has such power over the will, that it obliges it necessarily either to wish or reject, according as it moves it : “ Delectatio, seu delectabilis objecti complacentia, est id quod tantam in li berum arbitrium potestatem habet, ut eum faciat velle vel nolle, seu ut ea praesente actus volendi sit reipsa in ejus potestate, absente non sit”[16580].

3. In another passage he says that, if the celestial delectation is less than the terrestrial one, it will only give rise to some inefficacious and impotent desires in the soul, but will never lead us on to embrace what is good : “ Delectatio victrix, quae Augustino est efficax adjutorium, relativa est; tune enim est victrix, quando alteram superat. Quod si contingat alteram ardentiorem esse, in solis inefficacibus desideriis hrerebit animus, nec efficaciter unquam volet, quod volendum est”[16581]. Again, he says that as the faculty of vision not only causes us to see, but gives us the power of seeing, so the predominant delectation not only causes us to act, but gives us the power of acting : “ Tantae necessitatis est, ut sine ilia effectus fieri non possit dat enim simul et posse, et operari”[16582]. He says, besides, that it is just as impossible to resist this superior delectation, as for a blind man to see, a deaf one to hear, or a bird deprived of its wings to fly[16583].

Finally, he concludes that this delectation, “delectatio victrix,” be it heavenly or earthly, so binds down our free will, that it loses all power when opposed to it : “ Justitiae velpeccati delectatio est illud vinculum, quo libcrum arbitrium ita firmiter ligatur, ut quamdiu isto stabiliter constringitur, actus oppositus sit extra ejus potestatem”[16584]. These passages alone, I think, are quite sufficient to show how false is Jansenius’s system of relative conquering delectation, to which the will is always obliged, of necessity, to yield obedience.

4. From this system, then, spring his five propositions, condemned by Innocent X., as we have seen in the Historical Part of the Work[16585]. It is

necessary to repeat them here again. The first proposition is : “Some commandments of God are impossible to just men, even when they wish and strive to accomplish them, according to their present strength, and Grace is wanting to them, by which they may be possible to them. “The censure passed on this was It was rash, impious, blasphemous, branded with anathema, and heretical; and, as such, condemned. The Jansenists made many objections to the condemnation of this proposition, as well as of the other four. Their two principal objections, however, were the following : First, that the propositions quoted in the Bull of Innocent were not in the Book of Jansenius at all; and, secondly, that these propositions were not condemned in the sense intended by Jansenius. These two objections, however, were quashed by Alexander VII., in his Bull, promulgated in 1656, in which he expressly declares that the five propositions were taken from the book of Jansenius, and in the sense intended by him : “ Quinque propositiones ex li bro Cornelii Jansenii excerptas, ac in sensu ab eodem Cornelio intento damnatas fuisse.” This was, in reality, the fact, and so to refute, first of all, these most dangerous and most general objections (for by and by we will have occasion to attack others), I will quote the passages transcribed from the book of Jansenius himself, in which the reader will see that, though the words are not the same, the substance is, and, taken in their natural and obvious sense, prove that this was the meaning intended by the author.

5. To begin with the first proposition, it is expressed in Jansenius’s book almost in the same words: Hæc igitur omnia plenissime planissimeque demonstrant, nihil esse in St. Augustini doctrina certius ac fundatius, quam esse præcepta quædam, quæ hominibus non tantum infidelibus, excæcatis, obscuratis, sed fidelibus quoque, et justis volentibus, et conantibus secundum præsentes quas habent vires, sunt impossibilia, deesse quoque gratiam, qua possibilia fiant”[16586] He then immediately, as an example, quotes the fall of St. Peter, and says: “Hoc enim St. Petri exemplo, aliisque multis quotidie manifestum esse, qui tentantur ultra quam possint substinere.” Listen to this. St. Paul says, that God will not permit us to be tempted beyond our strength : “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which your are able” (I. Cor. x, 13); and Jansenius says that many are tempted beyond their strength. Towards the end of the

same Chapter, he labours to prove that the grace of prayer sometimes fails the just, or at least that they have not that grace of prayer, which is sufficient to obtain efficacious assistance to observe the commandments, and, consequently, that they have not power to fulfil them. In fine, the sense of this first proposition of his is, that some precepts are impossible even to the just, on account of the strength of earthly delectations, for then they want that Grace by which these commandments could be observed. He says : " Secundum praesentes quas habent vires ;" by which he understands that these precepts, as to observance, are not absolutely impossible, but only relatively so, according to that stronger Grace, which would be necessary for them, and which they then want to enable them to observe them.[16587] Jasen.1. 3, de Grat. Christi. c. 13.

This proposition, then, as we have already remarked, was condemned, first, as "Rash," since it is opposed to Scripture: "This commandment is not above thee" (Deut. xxx, 11); " My yoke is easy and my burthen light" (Matt, xi, 30). The Council of Trent had already branded this same proposition as rash (Sess. vi, c. 11), when it was previously taught by Luther and Calvin : " Nemo temeraria ilia, et a Patribus sub anathemate prohibita voce uti, Dei praecepta homini justificato ad observandum esse impossibilia." It was also condemned in the fifty-fourth proposition of Baius : " Definitiva haec sententia : Deum homini nihil impossibile praecepisse, falso tribuitur Augustineo, cum Pelagii sit." Secondly, it was condemned as " Impious ;" for it makes of God an unjust tyrant, who obliges men to impossibilities and then condemns them for not performing them. Jansenius prides himself in having adopted all the doctrines of St. Augustine, and did not blush to entitle his book " Augustinus," though Anti-Augustinus would have been a more appropriate name, since the Saint, in his works, expressly opposes his impious opinions. St. Augustine taught[16588] that God does not desert those once justified by his Grace, unless previously deserted by them; and Jansenius held up the Almighty void of all pity, since he says : " He deprives the just of grace without which they cannot escape sin, and so abandons them before they abandon him." Besides, St. Augustine writes, in opposition to this sentiment of Jansenius : " Quis non clamet stultum esse praecepta dare ei, cui liber urn non est quod praecipitur facere ? et iniquam esse cum damnare, cui non fuit potestas jussa complere”[16589]; and, above all, we have that celebrated Decree of the Council of Trent (Sess. vi, c. 11) : “Deus impossibilia non jubet, sed jubendo monet et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis, et adjuvat ut possis”[16590].

6. Thirdly, it was condemned as “Blasphemous ;” for it makes out God to be without either faith or truth, since he has promised that he will not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength “God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able” (I. Cor. x, 13) and afterwards commands us to do what is not in our power. St. Augustine himself, from whom Jansenius falsely asserted he had learned this doctrine, calls it a blasphemy : “ Execramur blasphemiam eorum, qui dicunt, impossi bile aliquid a Deo esse praeceptum”[16591]. Finally, it was condemned as heretical, being as we have seen opposed to the Holy Scriptures and to the definitions of the Church.

7. The Jansenists still, however, made objections. First That passage of St. Augustine, they say “ Deus sua gratia non deserit, nisi prius deseratur” which is adopted by the Council of Trent (Sess. vi, cap. 11), is thus to be understood :That God does not deprive those who are justified of his habitual Grace before they fall into actual sin, but often deprives them of actual Grace before they sin. We reply, however, with St. Augustine himself, that our Lord, in justifying the sinner, not only gives him the Grace of remission, but also assistance to avoid sin in future; and this, says the Saint, is the virtue of the Grace of Jesus Christ : “ Sanat Deus, non solum ut deleat quod peccavimus, sed ut praestet etiam ne peccemus”[16592]. If God, previous to sin, denied to man sufficient assistance not to fall into sin, he would not heal him, but rather abandon him, before he sinned. Secondly They say that the text of St. Paul, already quoted “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able” does not apply to all the faithful, but only to the predestined. But the text itself already shows that here all the faithful are spoken of, and it says : “But will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it” (I. Cor. x, 13). That is, that God permits his faithful servants to be tempted, that the temptation may be an occasion of merit and profit to them. We should not forget either, that St. Paul was writing to all the faithful of Corinth, and we are not aware that all the faithful of that city were predestined. St. Thomas,

therefore, properly understands it as referring to all in general, and God, he says, would not be faithful if he did not grant them (as far as he himself was concerned) the necessary graces to work out their salvation : “Non autem videretur esse fidelis, si nobis denegaret (in quantum in ipso est) ea per quae pervenire ad Eum possemus”[16593].

8. The second condemned proposition originates from the same principle of Jansenius, the “ delectatio victrix” which necessitates the consent of his will : “Interior Grace in the state of corrupt nature is never resisted.” This, says the sentence, we declare heretical, and as such condemn it. Hear what Jansenius says in one place : “ Dominante suavitate spiritus, voluntas Deum diligit, ut peccare non possit”[16594]. And again : “ Gratiam Dei Augustinus ita victricem statuit supra voluntatis arbitrium, ut non raro dicat hominem operanti Deo per gratiam non posse resistere”[16595]. St. Augustine, however, in many passages, declares the contrary, and especially in one[16596], in which, reproving the sinner, he says : “Cum per Dei adjutorium in potestate tua sit, utrum consentias Diabolo; quare non magis Deo, quam ipsi obtemperare deliberas.” And, hence, the proposition was justly condemned as heretical, being, in fact, opposed to the Scripture : “You always resist the Holy Ghost” (Acts, vii, 51). It is also opposed to Councils to that of Sens, celebrated in Paris, against the Lutherans, in 1528 (p. 1, c. 15), and to the Council of Trent (Sess. vi, can. 4), which fulminates an anathema against those who assert that we cannot go contrary to Grace : “ Si quis dixerit, liberum hominis arbitrium a Deo motum et excitatum neque posse dissentire, si velit.”

9. The third proposition is : “ To render us deserving or otherwise, in a state of corrupt nature, liberty, which excludes constraint, is sufficient.” This has been declared heretical, and as such condemned. Jansenius, in several places, expresses this proposition. In one passage he says : “Duplex necessitas Augustino, coactionis, et simplex, sou voluntaria; ilia, non haec, repugnat libertati”[16597]. And again : “ Necessitatem simplicem voluntatis non repugnare libertati”[16598]. And, in another place, he says, that our Theologians teach a paradox, when they say, “quod actus voluntatis propterea liber sit, quia ab illo desistere voluntas, et non agere potest ;” that it is the liberty of indifference which is required for us to have merit or otherwise. His third proposition springs also from the supposed

predominant delectation invented by him, which, according to him, forces the will to consent, and deprives it of the power of resistance. This, he asserts, is the doctrine of St. Augustine; but the Saint[16599] denies that there can be sin where there is no liberty : "Unde non est li berum abstinere ;" and, on the contrary, in another place he says[16600] that it is false that man, in this life, cannot resist Grace. Therefore, according to St. Augustine, man can at all times resist Grace, and always resist concupiscence, likewise, and it is only thus he can acquire merit or otherwise.

10. The fourth proposition says : "That the Pelagians admitted the necessity of interior preventing Grace for every act in particular, even for the commencement of the Faith, and in this they were heretics, inasmuch as they wished that the human will could either resist it or obey it." This proposition consists of two parts the first false, the second heretical. In the first part, Jansenius says that the Semipelagians admitted the necessity of internal and actual Grace for the beginning of Faith. Here are his words : " Massiliensium opinionibus, et Augustini doctrina quam diligentissime ponderata, certum esse debere sentio, quod Massilienses praeter praedicationcm, atque naturam, veram etiam, et internam, et actualem gratiam ad ipsain etiam Fidem, quam humanae voluntatis ac libertatis adscri bunt viribus, necesseriam esse fateantur"[16601]. This is false, then, for St. Augustine always taught as a dogma, that Grace was necessary for the commencement of Faith; but the Semipelagians, for the most part, denied it, as the Holy Doctor himself attests[16602]. In the second place, Jansenius says that the Semipelagians were heretics, in teaching that Grace was of such a nature that man could either use or reject it; hence, he called them, " Gratiae medicinalis destructores, et liberi arbitrii praesumtores." In this, however, not the Massilians, but Jansenius himself, was heretical, in saying that free will had not the power of agreeing to or dissenting from Grace, contrary to the definition of the Council of Trent (Sess. vi, can. 4), which says : " Si quis dixerit li berum hominis arbitrium a Deo motum et excitatum non posse dissentire si velit anathema sit." With good reason, then, the proposition was branded as heretical.

11. The fifth proposition says : "That it is Semipelagianism to say that Jesus Christ died or shed his blood for all men in general ;"and this has been condemned as false, rash, and scandalous, and, understood in the sense

that Christ died for the predestined alone, impious, blasphemous, contumelious, derogatory to the Divine goodness, and heretical. Therefore, if we are to understand the proposition in the sense that Jesus Christ died for the predestined alone, it is impious and heretical; and yet in this sense it is published in several places by Jansenius.

In one passage he says : "Omnibus illis pro quibus Christus Sanguinem fudit, etiam sufficiens auxilium donari, quo non solum possint, sed etiam velint, et faciant id quod ab iis volendum, et faciendum esse decrevit"[16603]. Therefore, according to Jansenius, Jesus Christ offered up his blood solely for those whom he selected both to will and to perform good works, understanding by the sufficiens auxilium the assistance, Quo (as explained already), that is, efficacious Grace, which, according to him, necessarily obliges them to perform what is good. Immediately after he explains it even more clearly; for, speaking of St. Augustine, he says : " Nullo modo principiis cjus consentaneum est, ut Christus vel pro Infidelium, vel pro Justorum non perseverantium aiterna salute mortuus esse sentiatur." See, then, how Jansenius explains how it is that our Saviour did not die for the just not predestined. "When his proposition was, then, understood in this sense, it was justly censured as heretical, as opposed both to Scripture and Councils as to the first Council of Nice, for example, in which, in the Symbol, or Profession of Faith[16604], then promulgated, and afterwards confirmed by several other General Councils, it was decreed as follows : " Credimus in unum Deum Patrem. . . . .et in unum Dom. Jesum Christum Filium Dei Qui propter nos homines; et propter nostram salutem descendit, et incarnatus est, et homo factus; passus est, et resurrexit," &c.

12. Let us consider the proposition in general, that Christ did not die for all. Jansenius said it was an error against Faith to assert that he did : " Nec enim juxta doctrinam Antiquorum pro omnibus omnino Christus mortuus est, cum hoc potius tanquam errorem a Fide Catholica abhorrentem doceant esse respuendum"[16605] And this opinion, he adds, was an invention of the Semipelagians. Understanding it in this sense, it was fake and rash, as not in accordance with the Scripture, or the sentiments of the Holy Fathers. As Jesus Christ died for every individual in particular of the human race, some Theologians teach that he prepared the price for the redemption of all; and, therefore, say he is the Redeemer of all, solely sufficientia pretii. But the

opinion more generally followed is, that he is the Redeemer sufficientia voluntatis, also that is, that he desired, with a sincere will, to offer up his death to his Father, in order to obtain for all mankind the helps necessary for salvation.

13. We do not agree in opinion with those who say that Jesus Christ died with equal affection for all, distributing to each individual the same Grace; for there can be no doubt that he died with special affection for the Faithful, and more especially for the elect, as he himself declared, previous to his Ascension : “ I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me” (John, xvii, 9). And St. Paul says he is “the Saviour of all men, especially of the faithful” (I. Tim. iv, 10). Neither can we agree with others, who say that, for a great number, Christ has done nothing more than prepare the price sufficient to redeem them, but without offering it up for their salvation. This opinion, I think, is not in conformity with the Scripture, which says : “ If one died for all, then all were dead; and Christ died for all,” &c. (II. Cor. v, 14, 15). Therefore, as all were dead, through original sin, so Christ died for all. By his death he cancelled the general (decree of death, which descended from Adam to all his posterity : “Blotting out the hand-writing of the decree which was against us, which was contrary to us; and he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross” (Coll. ii, 14). Osea, speaking in the person of Christ, before his coming, says that he will, by his death, destroy that death which was produced by the sin of Adam : “I will be thy death, death” (Osea, xiii, 14). And the Apostle St. Paul afterwards speaks to the same effect: “0 death, where is thy victory” (I. Cor. xv, 15); meaning by that, that our Saviour, by his death, killed and destroyed the death brought among men by sin. Again, St. Paul says : “Jesus Christ, who gave himself a redemption for all” (I. Tim. ii, 5, 6); “Who is the Saviour of all men, especially of the faithful” (iv, 10); and St. John says that he “is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world” (I. John, ii, 2). When I see the Scripture speaks thus so plainly, I do not know how anyone can say that Jesus Christ, by his death, has only prepared a sufficient price for the redemption of all, but has not offered it to the Father for the redemption of all. Taken in that sense, we might say that Christ shed his blood even for the devils themselves, for there is no doubt but that this sacred blood would have been a price sufficient even to save them.

14. This opinion is most clearly opposed, likewise, by many of the Holy Fathers, who say that Christ has not alone prepared the ransom, but, likewise, offered it to his Father for the salvation of all. St. Ambrose says : " Si quis autem non credit in Christum, generali beneficio ipso se fraudat; ut si quis clausis fenestris solis radios excludat, non idco sol non est ortus omnibus"[16606]. The sun not alone prepares light for all, but offers its light, likewise to all, if they wish to avail themselves of it, and do not close their windows against it; and, in another place, the same Saint says, in the clearest manner : "Ipse pro omnibus mortem suam obtulit"[16607]. St. Jerome says just the same : " Christus pro nobis mortuus est, solus inventus est, qui pro omnibus, qui erant in peccatis mortui, offerretur"[16608]. St. Prosper says: " Salvator noster dedit pro Mundo Sanguinem suum (remark dedit, he gave, not paravit), et Mundus redimi noluit, quia lucem tenebrae non receperunt"[16609]. St. Anselm says: "Dedit redemptionem semetipsura pro omnibus, nullum excipiens, qui vellet redimi ad salvandum et ideo qui non salvantur, non de Deo, vel Mediatore possent conqueri, sed de seipsis, qui redemptionem quam Mediator dedit, noluerunt accipere"[16610]. And St. Augustine, explaining these words of St. John, "God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved by him" (John, iii, 17), says : "Ergo, quantum in Medico est, sanare venit aegrotum. Ipse so interimit, qui prrccepta Medici servare non vult. Sanat omnino Ille, sed non sanat invitum"[16611]. Remark the words, "quantum in Medico est, sanare venit aegrotum ;" this shows that he did not alone come to prepare the price as the remedy of our evils, but that he offers it to everyone sick, and willing to be healed.

15. Then (perhaps those who hold the contrary opinion will say) God gives to the infidels who do not believe in him at all, the same sufficient Grace which he gives to the Faithful. I do not mean to say that he gives them the same Grace; but I hold, with St. Prosper, that he gives them, at all events, a lesser Grace call it a remote Grace; and if they correspond to this, they will be exalted by the reception of a more abundant Grace, which will save them. Here are the Saint's words : " Adhi bita semper est universis hominibus quaedam supernae mensura doctrinae, quae et si parcioris gratiae fuit, suificit tamen quibusdam ad remedium, omnibus ad testimonium"[16612]. A remedy to those who correspond to it, a testimony to those who do not.

Hence it is, that among the thirty-one propositions, condemned by Alexander VIII., on the 7th of December, 1690, the fifth was that “Pagans, Jews, Heretics, and such like, receive no influx from Jesus Christ, and had nothing but a naked and powerless will, without any sufficient Grace :” “ Pagani, Judaei, Haeretici, aliique hujus generis nullum omnino accipiunt a Jesu Christo influxum; adeoque hinc recto inferes, in illis esse voluntatem nudam et inermem, sine omni gratia sufficienti.” Finally, God does not blame us for ignorance alone, but only for culpable ignorance, which, in some sort, must be wilful; he does not punish the sick, but only those who refuse to be healed : “Non tibi deputatur ad culpam, quod invitus ignoras, sed quod negligis quaerere quod ignoras. Nec quod vulnerata membra non colligis, sed quod volentem sanare contemnis”[16613]. There can be no doubt, then, but that Jesus Christ died for all, though, as the Council of Trent teaches, the benefit of his death does not avail all : “ Verum, et si ille pro omnibus mortuus est, non omnes tamen mortis ejus beneficium recipiunt, sed ii dumtaxat quibus meritum passionis ejus communicatur” (Sess. vi, c. 3). This must be understood, as applying solely to infidels, who, being deprived of the Faith, do not, in effect, participate in the merits of the Redeemer, as the Faithful do, by means of the Faith and Sacraments, though, through their own fault, all the Faithful even do not participate in the complete benefit of eternal salvation. The renowned Bossuet says that every one of the Faithful is bound to believe, with a firm Faith, that Jesus Christ died for his salvation; and this, he says, is the ancient tradition of the Catholic Church.

And, in truth, every one of the Faithful is bound to believe that Jesus Christ died for us and for our salvation, according to the Symbol drawn up in the First General Council. [See the Historical Part of the Work[16614], which says : “ We believe in one God Almighty and one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God who, for us man, and for our salvation, descended, and was made flesh, and suffered,” &c.] Now, when Jesus Christ died for us all who profess the Christian Faith, how can one say that he has not died for those who are not predestined, and that he does not wish them to be saved.

16. We should, therefore, with a firm faith, believe that Jesus Christ died for the salvation of all the faithful. Everyone of the faithful, says Bossuet, should believe with a firm faith that God wishes to save him, and that Jesus

Christ has shed every drop of his blood for his salvation[16615]. The Council of Valence (Can. 4) had previously published the same doctrine: “ Fideliter tenendum juxta Evangelicam, et Apostolicam veritatem, quod pro illis hoc datum pretium (sanguinis Cristi) teneamus, de quibus Dominus noster dicit . . .. Ita exaltari oportet Filium hominis, ut omnis, qui credit in ipsum, non pereat, sed habeat vitam aeternam”[16616]. The Church of Lyons, also, in its Book of the Truth of the Scripture, says : “Fides Catholica tenet, et Scripture sanctae veritas docet, quod pro omnibus credentibus, et regeneratis vere Salvator noster sit passus”[16617]. Antoine, in his Scholastic and Dogmatic Theology[16618], says : “Est Fidei Dogma Christum mortuum esse pro salute aeterna omnium omnino Fidelium.” Tournelly[16619] teaches the same, and quotes the Body of Doctrine, published by Cardinal de Noailles, in 1720, and signed by ninety Bishops, which says, “that every one of the faithful is bound by firm Faith to believe that Jesus Christ shed his whole blood for his salvation.” And the Assembly of the Galilean Clergy, in 1714, declared that all the faithful, both just and sinners, are bound to believe that Jesus Christ has died for their salvation.

17. Now, when the Jansenists held that our Redeemer did not die for all the faithful, but only for the elect, they say, then, he had no love for us. One of the principal motives which induces us to love our Saviour and his Eternal Father, who has given him to us, is the great work of Redemption, by which we know that for love of us the Son of God sacrificed himself on the Cross : “ He loved us, and delivered himself up for us” (Ephes. v, 2). It was this same love that inclined the Eternal Father to give up his only begotten Son : “ God so loved the world as to give up his only begotten Son” (John iii, 16). This was the chief incentive St. Augustine made use of to inflame Christians with the love of Jesus : “ Ipsum dilige; qui ad hoc descendit, ut pro tua salute sufferret”[16620]. When the Jansenists, then, believe that Christ died solely for the elect, how can they have for him an ardent affection, as having died for love of them, when they cannot be sure that they are among the number of the predestined? They must, consequently, be in doubt that Christ died for love of them.

18. This belief of theirs that Christ did not die for all the faithful is also totally destructive of Christian hope. Christian hope, as St. Thomas defines it, is an expected certainty of eternal life : “ Spes est expectatio certa

beatitudinis"[16621]. We are, therefore, bound to hope that God will surely save us, trusting to the promises of salvation, through the merits of Jesus Christ, who died to save us, if we correspond to his grace. This is what Bossuet states, also, in the Catechism which he composed for his Diocese of Meaux : Q. Why do you say that you hope for the eternal life which God has promised ? A. Because the promise of God is the foundation of our hope[16622].

19. A modern writer, in a work entitled "Christian Confidence," says that we should not found the certainty of our hope on the general promise made by God to all believers, that he will give them eternal life, if they faithfully correspond to his Grace, although our Lord in several places makes this promise : " If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death forever" (John, viii, 52); " If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt, xix, 17). This general promise, says this writer, made to all Christians who observe the Divine Commandments, is not enough to give a certain hope of salvation; for, as it is subject to a condition which may not be fulfilled, that is, that we should correspond to it, it only gives us an uncertain hope. Hence, he says, we ought to found our hope on that particular promise of salvation given to the elect; for, as this promise is absolute, it is the foundation of a certain hope. Hence, he concludes, that our hope consists in appropriating to ourselves the promise made to the elect, by considering ourselves enrolled among the number of the predestined.

20. The opinion, however, I imagine, does not square with the doctrine of the Council of Trent (Sess. vi, cap. 16), which says : " In Dei auxilio firmissimam spcm collocare onmes debent, Deus enim, nisi ipsi illius gratiae defuerint, sicut caepit opus bonum, ita perficiet." And, therefore, though we should fear on our part that we may lose our salvation, by abusing Grace, still we should have a most firm hope, on the part of God; that he will save us by his Divine assistance : " In Deo auxilio (says the Council) firmissimum spem collocare omnes debent." All should hope, the Council says; for even those who are buried in sin frequently receive from God the gift of Christian hope, expecting that our Lord, through the merits of Jesus Christ, will show them his mercy; and hence the same Council says, speaking of sinners : " Ad considerandam Dei misericordiam so

convertendo, in spem eriguntur, fidentes Deum sibi proptcr Christum propitium fore.” St. Thomas says to those who are in a state of Grace, that the dread of falling away from it should not weaken the certainty of this hope, which is founded on the Divine power and mercy, which cannot fail : “ Dicendum quod hoc quod aliqui habcntes Spem deficiant a consecutione beatitudinis, contigit ex defectu liberi arbitrii ponentis obstaculum peccati, non autem ex defectu potential, vel misericordiae, cui Spes innititur; unde hoc non praejudicat certitudini Spei”[16623]. Our hope is, therefore, made certain, not by regarding ourselves as written among the number of the elect, but by being based on the power and mercy of God; nor should the uncertainty of our correspondence with Grace prevent us from having this certain hope of salvation, founded on the power, and mercy, and faithfulness of God, who has promised it to us through the merits of Jesus Christ, since this promise never can fail, if we fail not to correspond to it.

Besides, if our hope, as this writer says, was to be founded on the promise alone made to the elect, it would be uncertain not only as far as concerned ourselves, but with regard to God, likewise; for as we are not sure that we are enrolled among the number of the predestined, neither could we be sure of the Divine assistance promised to us to work out our salvation; and as the number of the reprobate is much greater than that of the elect, we would have greater reason to despair of, than to hope for, salvation. The writer has taken notice of this difficulty, and admits it to be a most important one. The number of the elect, he says, is, without comparison, much smaller than the reprobate, even among those called. One will, then, ask himself, in this difficulty :Why should I imagine myself to belong to the lesser, instead of the greater number ? And, on the other hand, I am commanded to hope; but how can I think that I am separated from the number of the reprobate in the decrees of the Almighty, when he commands the reprobates to hope as well as me ?Let us see how he extricates himself out of this difficulty. It is, he says, a mystery which we cannot understand; and, as we are bound to believe the articles of Faith, though we cannot comprehend them, because God commands to do so; so, in like manner, and for the same reason, we should hope, though our reason cannot explain the difficulty we encounter. The true answer, however, is, that the writer, to uphold his system, imagines a mystery in the

Commandment to hope which does not exist in reality. In Faith there are mysteries which we are bound to believe, without being able to comprehend, as the Trinity, Incarnation, &c.; these are beyond our reason; but in the Commandment to hope there is no mystery, for this precept merely regards eternal life, and the motive we have in hoping for it, the promise of God to save us through the merits of Christ, if we correspond to his Grace, and all this is clear to us, and no mystery. On the other hand, when it is most true that all the faithful should have a most firm hope of salvation, by the assistance of God, as the Council, St. Thomas, and all Theologians teach, how can we most firmly and most surely hope for this salvation, by hoping that we are among the number of the elect, when we do not know for certain, nor have we any certain argument in Scripture, to prove that we are comprised in that number ?

21. There are, to be sure, powerful arguments in the Scriptures to induce us to hope for eternal life, Confidence, and Prayer; for God tells us that " No one hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded" (Eccles. ii, 11); and our Redeemer says : " Amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name he will give it to you" (John, xvi, 23). But if, as this writer said, the certainty of our hope consisted in considering ourselves among the number of the elect, where would we find a foundation in Scripture for believing that we belong to that number? We would rather find proofs to the contrary, as that the elect were but few in comparison with the reprobate : "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt, xx, 16); " Fear not, little flock," &c. (Luke, xii, 32). To conclude the subject, however, I will quote the words of the Council of Trent : " In Dei auxilio firmissimam spem collocare omnes debent," &c. Now God having commanded all to repose in his assistance a certain hope of salvation, he ought to give a sure foundation for this hope. The promise made to the elect is a sure foundation for them, but not for us individually, since we do not know that we are of the elect. The certain foundation, then, that each of us has to hope for salvation, is not the particular promise made to the elect, but the general promise of assistance made to all the faithful to save them if they correspond to grace. To make the matter more brief: If all the faithful are obliged to hope with certainty for salvation in the Divine assistance, and this assistance being promised not to the elect alone but to all the faithful, it is on this, then, that every one of the faithful should base his hope.

22. To return to Jansenius. He wants us to believe that Christ did not die for all men, not even for all the faithful, but only for the predestined. If that were the case Christian hope would exist no longer, for, as St. Thomas says, hope is a sure foundation on the part of God, and this foundation is in fact the promise made by God to give, through the merits of Christ, eternal life to all who observe his law. Hence St. Augustine said that the certainty of his hope was in the blood of Christ, shed for our salvation : " Omnis spes, et totius fiducia} certitudo mihi est in pretioso Sanguine ejus, qui effusus est propter nos, et propter nostram salutem"[16624]. The death of Christ, then, as the Apostle tells us, is the sure and firm anchor of our hope : " We may have the strongest comfort who have fled for refuge to hold fast the hope set before us, which we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm" (Heb. vi, 18, 19). St. Paul had previously, in the same chapter, explained what this hope was which was "proposed to us the promise made to Abraham to send Jesus Christ to redeem mankind If Jesus Christ had not died, then, at least for all the faithful, the anchor St. Paul speaks of would not be secure or firm, but weak and doubtful, not having that sure foundation, the blood of Jesus Christ shed for our salvation. See, then, how the doctrine of Jansenius destroys Christian hope. Let us, then, leave their opinions to the Jansenists, and warmly excite in our hearts a confidence of salvation, through the death of Jesus Christ, but still let us never cease to fear and tremble, as the Apostle says : "With fear and trembling work out your salvation" (Phil, ii, 12). Notwithstanding the death of Christ, we may be lost through our own fault. Thus, during our whole lives, we should fear and hope, but hope should predominate, for we have stronger reasons to hope in God that to fear him.

23. Some people give themselves a great deal of trouble by seeking to penetrate the order of God's Divine judgments, and the great mystery of Predestination. These mysterious secrets of the Most High our weak intellects never can arrive at. Let us then leave these secrets which God keeps to himself, since we have so many things to learn which he has revealed for our instruction. First, he wishes us to know that he ardently desires that all should be saved, and that none should perish : "Who will have all men to be saved" (I. Tim. ii, 4); "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance" (II. Pet. iii, 9). Secondly, he

wishes us to know that Jesus Christ died for all : “Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live to themselves but unto him who died for them, and rose again” (II. Cor. v, 15). Thirdly, he wishes us to know that he who is lost is so through his own fault, since he provides all the requisite means for his salvation : “Destruction is thy own, Israel, thy help is only in me” (Osee, xiii, 9). It will not avail sinners in the day of judgment to excuse themselves by saying that they could not resist temptation, for the Apostle teaches that God is faithful, and will suffer no one to be tempted beyond his strength : “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what you are able” (I. Cor. x, 13). If we require more strength to resist we have only to ask the Almighty, and he will give it to us, for with his assistance we can subdue all carnal and infernal temptations : “Ask and it shall be given unto you” (Matt, vii, 7); “Every one that asketh receiveth” (Luke, ii, 10). St. Paul shows that he is most bountiful to those who invoke him : “Rich unto all that call upon him, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. x, 12, 13).

24. Behold, then, the sure means of obtaining salvation. We should pray to God for light and strength to accomplish his will, but we should also pray with humility, confidence, and perseverance, which are the three requisites for prayer to be heard. We should labour to co-operate to our salvation as much as we can, without waiting for God to do everything while we do nothing. Let the order of predestination be as it will, and let heretics say what they like, one thing is certain, that if we are to be saved, it is our good works that will save us, and if we are to be damned it is our own sins that will damn us. Let us place, however, all our hopes of salvation, not in our own works, but in the Divine mercy, and in the merits of Jesus Christ, and we shall be surely saved. If we are saved, then, it will be solely by the grace of God, for even our good works are but gifts of his grace, and if we are lost it is solely through our own sins. It is this truth that preachers should frequently hold up to the people, and not go into the pulpit to make subtle theological disquisitions, uttering opinions not taught by the Fathers, and Doctors, and Martyrs of the Church, and explaining things in a way only calculated to make their hearers uneasy.

Refutation XIV

THE HERESY OF MICHAEL MOLINOS

1. This heresiarch preached two impious maxims; one did away with everything good, the other admitted everything “evil. His first maxim was that the contemplative soul should fly from and banish all sensible acts of the will and understanding, which, according to him, impede contemplation, and thus deprive man of all those means which God has given him to acquire salvation. When the soul, he said, had given itself entirely up to God, and annihilated its will, resigning itself entirely into his hands, it becomes perfectly united with God, it should then have no further care for its salvation, no longer occupy itself with meditations, thanksgivings, prayers, devotion to Holy Images, or even to the Most Holy Humanity of Jesus Christ; it should avoid all devout affections of hope, of self sacrifice, of love for God, and in fine, drive away all good thoughts and avoid all good actions, for all these are opposed to contemplation, and to the perfection of the soul.

2. That we may perceive how poisoning this maxim is, we should know what Meditation is and what Contemplation. In meditation we labour to seek God by reasoning and by good acts, but in contemplation we behold him without labour, already found. In meditation the mind labours operating with its powers, but in contemplation it is God himself who operates, and the soul merely receives the infused gifts of his grace, anima potitur. Hence, when the soul is by passive contemplation absorbed in God, it should not strain itself to make acts and reflections, because then God supports it in an union of love with himself. “Then,” says St. Theresa, “God occupies with his light the understanding, and prevents it from thinking of anything else.” “When God,” says the Saint, “wishes that our understanding should cease to reason, he occupies it, and gives us a knowledge superior to that which we can arrive at, and keeps the intellect suspended.” But then she also remarks

that the gift of contemplation and suspension of the intellectual powers, when it comes from God, produces good effects, but when it is procured by ourselves only makes the soul more dry than before. Sometimes in prayer, she says, we have a beginning of devotion which comes from God, and we wish to pass of ourselves into this quietude of will, but if it is procured by ourselves it is of no effect, it is soon over, and leaves nothing but dryness behind. This is the defect which St. Bernard noticed in those who wish to pass from the foot to the mouth, alluding to that passage in the Canticle of Canticles, which refers to holy contemplation : “Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth” (Cant, i, 1). “ Longus saltus,” says the Saint, “ et arduus de pede ad os.”

3. It may be objected to us, however, that our Lord says by David : “ Be still, and see that I am God” (Psalm xlv, 11). The word “ be still,” however, does not mean that the soul should remain in a total state of quiescence in prayer, without meditating, offering up affections, or imploring grace. “ Be still” means that in order to know God, and the immensity of his goodness, it is sufficient to abstain from vices, to remove ourselves from the cares of the world, to suppress the desires of self-love, and to detach ourselves from the goods of this life. That great mistress of prayer, St. Theresa, says : “It is necessary on our part to prepare ourselves for prayer; when God elevates us higher, to Him alone be the glory. When, therefore, in prayer, God elevates us to contemplation, and makes us feel that he wishes to speak to us, and does not wish that we should address him, we should not try to do anything then ourselves, lest we impede the Divine operation in us; we should only apply our loving attention to the voice of God, and say :Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. When God, however, does not speak to us, then we should address him in prayer, making acts of contrition, acts of love, purposes of advancement in perfection, and not lose our time doing nothing.” St. Thomas says: “Contemplatio diu durare non potest, licet quantum ad alios contemplationis actus, possint diu durare”[16625] True contemplation, in which the soul is absorbed in God, can operate nothing, and does not last long; the effects of it, however, last, and so, when the soul returns to the active state, it ought to return also to labour, to preserve the fruit received in contemplation, by reading, reflecting, offering up pious affections, and performing similar acts of devotion, because, as St. Augustine confesses, he

always felt himself, after being exalted to some unusual union with God, drawn back again as it were by a weight, to the miseries of this life, so that he felt obliged again to assist himself by acts of the will and the understanding, to an union with God. He says : “ Aliquando, intromittis me in affectum inusitatum sed recido in haec aerumnosis ponderi bus, et resorbeor solitis”[16626].

4. We have now to examine the pernicious propositions of Molinos, of which I will merely quote the principal ones, which will clearly show the impiety of his system. In his first proposition he says : “ Oportet hominem suas potentias annihilare, et haec est via interna ;” in the second : “ Velle operari active, est Deum offendere, qui vult esse Ipse solus agens; et ideo opus est seipsum in Deo totum, et totaliter delinquere, et postea permanere velut corpus exanime.” Thus he wished, that, abandoning all to God, man should do nothing, but remain like a dead body, and that the wish to perform any good act of the intellect or the will was an offence against God, who wishes to do everything by himself; this, he said, was the annihilation of the powers of the soul, which renders it divine, and transfuses it in God, as he said in his fifth proposition : “ Nihil operando Anima se annihilat, et ad suum principium redit, et ad suam originem, quae est essentia Dei, in quem trasformata remanet, ac divinizata et tune non sunt amplius duae res unitse, sed una tantum.” See what a number of errors in few words.

5. Hence, also, he prohibited his disciples from having any care about, or even taking any heed of, their salvation, for the perfect soul, said he, should think neither of hell or paradise : “Qui suum liberum arbitrium Deo Donavit, de nulla re debet curam habere, nec de Inferno, nec de Paradiso; nec desiderium propriae perfectionis, nec proprise salutis, cujus spem purgare debet.” Remark the words “ spem purgare.” To hope for our salvation, then, or make acts of hope, is a defect; to meditate on death and judgment, hell and heaven, showsawant of perfection, although our Lord says that the meditation on them is the greatest safeguard against sin : “In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin” (Ecclcs. vii, 40). lie also taught that we should make no acts of love towards the Saints, the Divine Majesty, or even Jesus Christ himself, for we should banish all sensible objects from our soul. See his thirty-fifth proposition : “ Nec debent elicere actus amoris erga B. Nirginern, Sanctos, aut humanitatem

Christi; quia, cum ista objecta sensi bilia sint, talis est amor erga ilia." Good God ! to prohibit acts of love towards Jesus Christ, because he is a sensible object, and prohibits our union with God ! But, as St. Augustine says, when we approach Jesus Christ, is it not God himself we approach, for he is both God and man ?How even can we approach God, unless through Jesus Christ ? "Quo imus nisi ad Jesum, et qua imus, nisi per Ipsum?"

6. This is exactly what St. Paul says : "For by him we have access both in one spirit to the Father" (Ephes. ii, 18). And our Saviour himself says in St. John : " I am the door. By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and he shall go in and go out, and shall find pastures" (John, x, 9). " he shall go in and go out," that is, as an author quoted by Cornelius Lapido explains it : " Ingredietur ad Divinitatem meam, et egredietur ad humanitatem, et in utriusque contemplatione mira pascua inveniet." Thus, whether the soul contemplates Jesus either as God or man, it will always find pastures. St. Theresa having once read in one of these condemned mystical books, that stopping in the contemplation of Christ prevented the soul from passing on to God, began to adopt this evil practice, but she constantly afterwards grieved for having done so. " Is it possible, my Lord," she says, "that you could be an impediment to me for greater good. Whence does all good come to me, if not from you alone?" She afterwards says : " I have seen that in order to please God, and that we may obtain great graces from him, he wishes that everything should pass through the hands of this Most Holy Humanity, in which he has declared that he is well pleased."

7. Molinos, in prohibiting us from thinking of Jesus Christ, consequently prevented us from meditating on his passion, though all the Saints have done nothing else during their lives than meditate on the ignominy and sufferings of our loving Saviour. St. Augustine says : " Nihil tam salutiferum quam quotidie cogitare, quanta pro nobis pertulit Deus homo ;" and St. Bonaventure: "Nihil enim in Anima ita operatur universalem sanctificationem, sicut meditatio Passionis Christi." St. Paul said he wished to know nothing but Christ crucified : " For I judged not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (Cor. ii, 2). And withal, Molinos says we ought not to think on the humanity of Jesus Christ.

8. He also had the impiety to teach, that we should ask nothing from God, for petitioning is a defect of our own will. Here is his fourteenth proposition : " Qui Divine voluntati resignatus est, non convenit ut a Deo rem aliquam

petat; quia petere est imperfectio, cum sit actus propriaa voluntatis. Illud autem Petite et accipietis, non est dictum a Christo pro Animabus internis," &c. He thus deprives the soul of the most efficacious means of obtaining perseverance in a good life, and arriving at the Grace of perfection. Jesus Christ himself, in the Gospel, tells us to pray unceasingly : " We ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke, xviii, 1); "Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times" (Luke, xxi, 36); and St. Paul says : "Pray without ceasing" (I. Thes. v,17); and "Be instant in prayer" (Col. iv, 2). And still Molinos will tell us not to pray, and that prayer is an imperfection. St. Thomas[16627] says that continual prayer is necessary for us till our salvation is secured; for though our sins may have been remitted, still the world and the devil will never cease to attack us till the last hour of our lives : " Licet remittantur peccata, remanet tamen fomes peccati nos impugnant interius, et mundus et Daemones, qui impugnant exterius." In this battle we cannot conquer without the Divine assistance, and this is only to be acquired by prayer, as St. Augustine teaches us, that except the first Grace, that is, the vocation to Grace or Penance, every other Grace, especially that of perseverance, is only given to those who pray for it : "Deus nobis dat aliqua non orantibus, ut initium Fidei, alia nonnisi orantibus praeparavit, sicut perseverantiam."

9. We have now to examine his second maxim, which, as we said in the commencement, allows evil to be innocent. When the soul, he says, is given up to God, whatever happens in the body is of no harm, even though we perceive that it is something unlawful; for the will, as he said, being then given to God, whatever happens in the flesh is to be attributed to the violence of the devil and of passion; so that, in that case, we should only make a negative resistance, and permit our nature to be disturbed, and the devil to operate.

Here is his seventeenth proposition : " Tradito Deo libero arbitrio, non est amplius habenda ratio tentationum, nec eis alia resistentia fieri debet nisi negativa, nulla adhibita industria; et si natura commovetur, oportet sinere ut commoveatur, quia est natura." And in the forty-seventh proposition, also, he says : "Cum hujusmodi violentiae occurrunt, sinere oportet, ut Satanas operetur etiamsi sequantur pollutiones, et pejora et non opus est haec confiteri."

10. Thus this deceiver led people astray, though our Lord tells us, through St. James : “Resist the devil, and he will fly from you” (James, iv, 7). It is not sufficient, then, to take no active part, negative se habere, we are not to allow the devil to operate in us, and our concupiscence to be gratified, for God commands us to resist him with all our strength. Nothing can be more false than what he says in his forty-first proposition : “Deus permittit, et vult ad nos humiliandos quod Daemon violentiam inferat corporibus, et actus carnales committere faciat & c. Nay, it is most false, for St. Paul teaches us that God will not allow us to be tempted above our strength : “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it” (I. Cor. x, 13). The meaning of the Apostle is this: that God will not fail to give us sufficient assistance in time of temptation to resist with our will, and by this resistance our temptations will be advantageous to us. He allows the devil to tempt us to sin; “ but, as St. Jerom says, he will not permit him to force us : “ Persuadere potest, praecipitare non potest.” And St. Augustine[16628] says that he is like a chained dog, who can bark at us, but not bite us, unless we put ourselves in his power. No matter how violent the temptation may be, if we call on God we will never fail : “Call on me in the day of trouble I will deliver you” (Psalm xlix, 15); “ Praising I will call upon the Lord, and I will be saved from my enemies” (Psalm xvii, 4). It is on this account that St. Bernard says[16629] that prayer prevails over the devil, and St. Chrysostom, that nothing is more powerful than the prayer of a man.

11. In his forty-fifth proposition Molinos says that St. Paul suffered violence in his hody from the devil, for the Saint says : “The good I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do.” But we reply, that by the words “ that I do,” the Apostle only intends to say that he could not avoid involuntary motions of concupiscence; and, therefore, he says again : “Now that is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me” (Rom. viii, 17). In his forty-ninth proposition, also, he adduces the example of Job : “Job ex violentia Daemonis se propriis manibus polluebat eodem tempore, quo mundas habebat ad Deum praeces.” What a shocking perversion of the Scripture. Job says (chap, xvi) : “These things I have suffered without the iniquity of my hand, when I offered pure prayers to God.” Now, is there any allusion to indecency in this text ? In the Hebrew, and the version of the

Septuagint, as Du Hamel informs us, the text is : “ I have not neglected God, nor injured any one.” Therefore, by the words “these things I have suffered without the iniquity of my hand.”Job meant to say that he never injured his neighbour; as Menochius explains it : “I raised up my hands to God unstained by plunder or by any other crime.” In his fifty-first proposition, also, he quotes in his defence the example of Sampson : “In sacra Scriptura multa sunt exempla violentiarum ad actus externos peccaminosos, ut illud Sampsonis, qui per violentiam seipsum occidit, cum Philistaei” &c. We reply, however, with St. Augustine, that this self-destruction of Sampson was accomplished by the pure inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and that is proved by the restoration to him, at the time, of his miraculous strength by the Almighty, who employed him as an instrument for the chastisement of the Philistines; for he having repented of his sins before he grasped the pillar which supported the building, prayed to the Lord to restore him his original strength : “But he called upon the Lord, saying :Lord God, remember me, and restore me now to my former strength.” And hence, St. Paul places him among the Saints : “Sampson, Jeptha, David, Samuel, and the Prophets, who, by Faith, conquered kingdoms, wrought justice,” &c. (Heb. xi, 32, 33). Behold, then, the impiety of the system of this filthy impostor. He had good reason to thank the Almighty for his mercies, in giving him Grace to die repentant, after his imprisonment of several years (Hist. c. 13, ar. 5, n. 32).

Refutation XIV

BERRUYER'S ERRORS

The abstruse matters treated of in this Chapter will not, perhaps, be interesting to the general reader; but several will be desirous to study profoundly the mysteries of the Faith, and to them this will be highly interesting and instructive.

SUMMARY OF THESE ERRORS

I. Jesus Christ was created in time, by an operation ad extra, natural Son of God, of one God, subsisting in three Persons, who united the Humanity of Christ with a Divine Person.

II. Jesus Christ, during the three days he was in the sepulchre, as he ceased to be a living man, consequently ceased to be the Son of God, and when God raised him again from the dead, he again begot him, and caused him to be again the Son of God.

III. It was the Humanity alone of Christ which obeyed, prayed, and suffered; and his oblations, prayers, and meditations were not operations, produced from the Word, as from a physical and efficient principle, but, in this sense, were mere actions of his Humanity.

IV. The miracles performed by Jesus Christ were not done by his own power, but only obtained by him from the Father by his prayers.

V. The Holy Ghost was not sent to the Apostles by Jesus Christ, but by the Father alone, through the prayers of Jesus Christ.

VI. Several other errors of his on various subjects.

1. Reading in the Bullarium of Benedict XIV. a Brief, which begins "Cum ad Congregationem" &c., published on the 17th of April, 1758, I see their prohibited and condemned the second part of a work (the first having been condemned in 1734), entitled the "History of the People of God, according to the New Testament," written by Father Isaac Berruyer; and all

translations of the work into any language whatever are also condemned and prohibited. The whole of Berruyer's work, then, and the Latin Dissertations annexed, and the Defence, printed along with the Italian edition, are all condemned, as containing propositions false, rash, scandalous, favouring and approaching to heresy, and foreign to the common sense of the Fathers and the Church in the interpretation of Scripture. This condemnation was renewed by Pope Clement XIII., on the 2nd of December, 1758, and the literal Paraphrase of the Epistles of the Apostles, after the Commentaries of Hardouin, was included in it : " Quod quidem Opus ob doctrine fallaciam, et contortas Sacrarum Litterarum interpretationes scandali mensuram implevit." With difficulty, I procured a copy of the work, and I took care also to read the various essays and pamphlets in which it was opposed. It went, however, through several editions, though the author himself gave it up, and submitted to the sentence of the Archbishop of Paris, who, with the other Bishops of France, condemned it. Besides the Pontifical and Episcopal condemnation, it was prohibited, likewise, by the Inquisition, and burned by the common hangman, by order of the Parliament of Paris. Father Zacchary, in his Literary History, says that he rejects the Work, likewise, and that the General of the Jesuits, whose subject F. Berruyer was, declared that the Society did not recognize it.

2. I find in the treatises written to oppose Berruyer's work, that the writers always quote the errors of the author in his own words, and these errors are both numerous and pernicious, especially those regarding the Mysteries of the Trinity, and the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, against which especially the devil has always worked, through so many heresies; for these Mysteries are the foundation of our Faith and salvation, as Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God made man, the fountain of all Graces, and of all hope for us; and hence, St. Peter says that, unless in Jesus, there is no salvation : "Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts, iv, 12).

3. I was just concluding this Work, when I heard of Berruyer's work, and the writings opposing it; and, to tell the truth, I was anxious to conclude this work of mine, and rest myself a little after the many years of labour it cost me; but the magnitude and danger of his errors induced me to refute his book as briefly as I could. Remember that, though the work itself was condemned by Benedict XIV. and Clement XIII., the author was not, since

he at once bowed to the decision of the Church, following the advice of St. Augustine, who says that no one can be branded as a heretic, who is not pertinaciously attached to, and defends his errors : “ Qui sententiam suam, quamvis falsam, atque perversam, nulla pertinaci animositate defendunt corrigi parati cum invenerint, nequaquam sunt inter Hrereticos deputandi.”

4. Before we commence the examination of Berruyer’s errors, I will give a sketch of his system, that the reader may clearly understand it. His system is founded principally on two Capital Propositions, both as false as can be. I say Capital ones, for all the other errors he published depend on them. The first and chief proposition is this, that Jesus Christ is the natural Son of one God, but of God subsisting in three Persons; that is to say, that Jesus Christ is Son, but not Son of the Father, as Principal, and first Person of the Trinity, but Son of the Father subsisting in three Persons, and, therefore, he is, properly speaking, the Son of the Trinity. The second proposition, which comes from the first, and is also what I call a Capital one, is this, that all the operations of Jesus Christ, both corporal and spiritual, are not the operations of the Word, but only of his humanity, and from this, then, he deduced many false and damnable consequences. Although, as we have already seen, Berruyer himself was not condemned, still his book is a sink of extravagancies, follies, novelties, confusion, and pernicious errors, which, as Clement XIII. says, in his Brief, obscure the principal Articles of our Faith, so that Arians, Nestorians, Sabellians, Socinians, and Pelagians, will all find, some more, some less, something to please them in this work. There are mixed up with all this many truly Catholic sentiments, but these rather confuse than enlighten the mind of the reader. We shall now examine his false doctrine, and especially the first proposition, the parent, we may say, of all the rest.

I. BERRUYER SAYS THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS MADE IN TIME, BY AN OPERATION A.D. EXTRA, THE NATURAL SON OF GOD, ONE SUBSISTING IN THREE PERSONS, WHO UNITED THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST WITH A DIVINE PERSON

5. He says, first : “Jesus Christus D. N. vere dici potest et debet naturalis Dei Filius; Dei, inquam, ut vox ilia Deus supponit pro Deo uno et vero subsistente in tri bus personis, agente ad extra, et per actionem transeuntem et liberam uniente humanitatem Christi cum Persona Divina in unitatem

Persons"[16630]. And he briefly repeats the same afterwards: "Filius factus in tempore Deo in tribus Personis subsistenti"[16631]. And again: "Non repugnat Deo in tribus Personis subsistenti, fieri in tempore, et esse Patrem Filii naturalis, et veri." Jesus Christ, then, he says, should be called the Natural Son of God, not because (as Councils, Fathers, and all Theologians say) the Word assumed the humanity of Christ in unity of Person; and thus our Saviour was true God and true man true man, because he had a human soul and body, and true God, because the Eternal Word, the true Son of God, true God generated from the Father, from all eternity, sustained and terminated the two Natures of Christ, Divine and human, but because, according to Berruyer, God, subsisting in three Persons, united the Word to the humanity of Christ, and thus Jesus Christ is the natural Son of God, not because he is the Word, born of the Father, but because he was made the Son of God in time, by God subsisting in three Persons, " uniente humanitatem Christi cum Persona Divina."

Again, he repeats the same thing, in another place : "Rigorose loquendo per ipsam formaliter actionem unientem Jesus Christus constituitur tan turn Filius Dei naturalis." The natural Son, according to Hardouin's and Berruyer's idea; because the real natural Son of God, was the only begotten Son, begotten from the substance of the Father; and hence, the Son that Berruyer speaks of, produced from the three Persons, is Son in name only. It is not repugnant, he says, to God to become a Father in time, and to be the Father of a true and natural Son, and he always explains this of God, subsisting in three Divine Persons.

6. Berruyer adopted this error from his master, John Hardouin, whose Commentary on the New Testament was condemned by Benedict XIV., on the 28th of July, 1743. He it was who first promulgated the proposition, that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God as the Word, but only as man, united to the Person of the Word. Commenting on that passage of St. John, " In the beginning was the Word, " he says : " Aliud esse Verbum, aliud esse Filium Dei, intelligi voluit Evangelista Joannes. Verbum est secunda Ss. Trinitatis Persona; Filius Dei, ipsa per so quidem, sed tamen ut eidem Verbo hypostatice unita Christi humanitas." Ilardouin, therefore, says that the Person of the Word was united to the humanity of Christ, but that Jesus Christ then became the Son of God, when the humanity was hypostatically

united to the Word; and, on this account, he says, he is called the Word, in the Gospel of St. John, up to the time of the Incarnation, but, after that, he is no longer called the Word, only the Only-begotten, and the Son of God : “Quamobrem in hoc Joannis Evangelic Verbum appellatur usque ad Incarnationem. Postquam autem caro factum est, non tam Verbum, sed Unigenitus, et Filius Dei est.”

7. Nothing can be more false than this, however, since all the Fathers, Councils, and even the Scriptures, as we shall presently see, clearly declare that the Word himself was the only-begotten Son of God, who became incarnate. Hear what St. Paul says : “For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant” (Phil, ii, 5, &c.) So that the Apostle says, that Christ, being equal to God, emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. The Divine Person, which was united with Christ, and was equal to God, could not be the only-begotten Son of God, according to Hardouin, but must be understood to be the Word himself, for, otherwise, it would not be the fact that He who was equal to God emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. St. John, besides, in his First Epistle (v, 20), says : “ We know that the Son of God is come.” He says, “ is come ;” it is not, therefore, true, that this Son of God became the Son, only when he came, for we see he was the Son of God before he came. The Council of Chalcedon (Act. v) says, speaking of Jesus Christ : “Ante saecula quidem de Patre genitum secundum Deitatem, et in novissimis autem diebus propter nos et propter nostram salutem ex Maria Virgine Dei Genitrice secundum Humanitatem. . . . . non in duas personas parti turn, sed unum eundemque Filium, et unigenitum Deum Verbum.” Thus we see it there declared, that Jesus Christ, according to the Divinity, was generated by the Father, before all ages, and afterwards became incarnate in the fulness of time, and that he is one and the same, the Son of God and of the Word. In the Third Canon of the Fifth General Council it is declared : “ Si quis dixerit imam naturam Dei Verbi incarnatam dicens, non sic ea excipit, sicut Patres docuerunt, quod ex Divina natura et humana, unione secundum subsistentiam facta, unus Christus effectus talis. . . . . anathema sit.” We see here there is no doubt expressed that the Word was incarnate, and became Christ, but it was prohibited to say absolutely that the Incarnate Nature of the Word was one. We say, in the

Symbol at Mass, that we believe in one God, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, born of the Father, before all ages. Jesus Christ is not, therefore, the Son of God, merely because he was made the Son in time, or because his humanity was united to the Word, as Hardouin says, but because his humanity was assumed by the Word, who was already the Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.

8. All the Fathers teach that the Son of God who was made man is the very Person of the Word. St. Irameus[16632] says : "Unus et idem, et ipse Deus Christus Verbum est Dei." St. Athanasius[16633] reproves those who say : " Alium Christum, alium rursum esse Dei Verbum, quod ante Mariam, et saecula erat Filius Patris." St. Cyril says[16634] : " Licet (Nestorius) duas naturas esse dicat carnis et Verbi Dei, differentiam significans attamen unionem non confitetur; nos enim illas adunantes unum Christum; unum eundem Filium dicimus." St. John Chrysostom[16635], reproving Nestorius for his blasphemy, in teaching that in Jesus Christ there were two Sons, says: "Non alterum et alterum, absit, sed unum et eundem Dom. Jesum Deum Verbum carne nostra amictum," &c. St. Basil writes[16636]: "Verbum hoc quod erat in principio, nec humanum erat, nec Angelorum, sed ipse Unigenitus qui dicitur Verbum; quia impassibiliter natus, et Generantis imago est." St. Gregory Thaumaturgus[16637] says : "Unus est Deus Pater Verbi viventis perfectus pcrfecti Genitor, Pater Filii unigcniti." St. Augustine says[16638]: " Et Verbum Dei, forma qurcdam non formata, sed forma omnium formarum existens in omnibus. Quaerunt vero, quomodo nasci potuerit Filius coaevus Patri : nonne si ignis aeternus esset, coaevus esset splendor ?" And in another passage he says[16639]: " Christus Jesus Dei Filius est, et Deus, et Homo; Deus ante omnia secula, Homo in nostro seculo. Deus, quia Dei Verbum :Homo autem, quia in unitatcm personae acccssit Vcrbo anima rationalis, et caro." Eusebius of Ccscrca says[16640], not like Hardouin : "Non cum apparuit, tune et Filius :non cum nobiscum, tune et apud Deum :sed qucmadmodum in principio erat Verbum, in principio erat in principio erat Verbum, de Filio dicit." We would imagine that Eusebius intended to answer Hardouin, by saying that the Word, not alone when he became incarnate and dwelt amongst us, was then the Son of God, and with God, but as in the beginning he was the Word, so, in like manner, he was the Son; and hence, when St. John says : " In the beginning was the

Word," he meant to apply it to the Son. It is in this sense all the Fathers and schoolmen take it, likewise, as even Hardouin himself admits, and still he is not ashamed to sustain, that we should not understand that it is the Word, the Son of God, who became incarnate, though both Doctors and schoolmen thus understand it. Here are his words : " Non Filius stilo quidem Scripturarum sacrarum, quamquam in scriptis Patrum, et in Schola etiam Filius."

9. This doctrine has been taken up, defended, and diffusely explained, by Berruyer; and to strengthen his position, even that Jesus Christ is not the Son of the Father, as the first Person of the Trinity, but of one God, as subsisting in the three Divine Persons, he lays down a general rule, by which he says all texts of the New Testament in which God is called the Father of Christ, and the Son is called the Son of God, should be understood of the Father subsisting in three Persons, and the Son of God subsisting in three Persons. Here are his words : " Omnes Novi Testamenti textus, in quibus aut Deus dicitur Pater Christi, aut Filius dicitur Filius Dei, vel inducitur Deus Christum sub nomine Filii, aut Christus Deum sub nomine Patris interpretans : vel aliquid de Deo ut Christi Patre, aut de Christo ut Dei Filio narratur, intelligendi sunt de Filio facto in tempore secundum carnem Deo uni et vero in tribus Personis subsistenti." And this rule, he says, is necessary for the proper and literal understanding of the New Testament : " Haec notio prorsus necessaria est ad litteralum et germanam intelligentiam Librorum Novi Testamenti"[16641]. He previously said that all the writers of the Old Testament who prophesied the coming of the Messiah should be understood in the same sense : "Cum et idem omnino censendum est de omnibus Vet. Testamenti Scriptoribus, quoties de future Messia Jesu Christo prophetant"[16642]. Whenever God the Father, or the first Person, he says, is called the Father of Jesus Christ, it must be understood that he is not called so in reality, but by appropriation, on account of the omnipotence attributed to the Person of the Father : " Recte quidem, sed per appropriationem Deus Pater, sive Persona prima, dicitur Pater Jesu Christi, quia actio uniens, sicut et actio creans, actio cst omni-potcntiao, cujus attributi actiones Patri, sive prima Personae, per appropriationem tri buuntur"[16643].

10. This false notion of the Filiation of Jesus Christ Berruyer founds on that text of St. Paul (Rom. i, 3, 4) : " Concerning his Son, who was made to

him of the seed of David, according to the flesh, who was predestined the Son of God in power," &c. Now, these words, "his Son, who was made to him according to the flesh," he says, prove that Jesus Christ was the Son of God made in time according to the flesh. We reply, however, to this, that St. Paul, in this passage, speaks of Jesus Christ not as Son of God, but as Son of man; he does not say that Jesus Christ was made his Son according to the flesh, but "concerning his Son, who was made to him of the seed of David, according to the flesh;" that is, the Word, his Son, was made according to the flesh, or, in other words, was made flesh was made man, as St. John says : "The Word was made flesh." We are not, then, to understand with Berruyer, that Christ, as man, was made the Son of God; for as we cannot say that Christ, being man, was made God, neither can we say that he was made the Son of God; but we are to understand that the Word being the only Son of God, was made man from the stock of David. When we hear it said, then, that the humanity of Jesus Christ was raised to the dignity of Son of God, that is, understood to have taken place by the communication of the idioms founded on the unity of Person; for the Word having united human nature to his Person, and as it is one Person which sustains the two Natures, Divine and human, the propriety of the Divine Nature is then justly affirmed of man, and the propriety of God, of the human nature he assumed. How, then, is this expression, "who was predestined the Son of God in power," to be taken ?

Berruyer endeavours to explain it by a most false supposition, which we will presently notice. It is, he says, to be understood of the new filiation which God made in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, for when our Lord died, as his soul was separated from his body, he ceased to be a living man, and was then no longer, he said, the Son of God; but when he rose again from the dead, God again made him his Son, and it is of this new filiation St. Paul, he says, speaks in these words : "Who was predestinated the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of sanctification, by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead (Rom i. 4). Commentators and Holy Fathers give different interpretations to this text, but the most generally received is that of St. Augustine, St. Anselm, Estius, and some others, who say that Christ was from all eternity destined to be united in time, according to the flesh, to the Son of God, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, who united this man to the Word, who afterwards wrought miracles, and raised him from the dead.

11. To return to Berruyer. In his system he lays it down for a certainty, that Jesus Christ is the natural Son of one God, subsisting in three Persons. Is Christ, then, the Son of the Trinity ? an opinion which shocked St. Fulgentius[16644], who says that our Saviour, according to the flesh, might be called the work of the Trinity; but, according to his birth, both eternal and in time, is the Son of God the Father alone : “ Quis unquam tantagi reperiri possit insania?, qui auderet Jesum Christum totius Trinitatis Filium pragidicare ? Jesus Christus secundum carnem quidem opus est totius Trinitatis; secundum vero utramque Nativitatem solius Dei Patris est Filius.” But Berruyer’s partizans may say that he does not teach that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Trinity; but granting that he allows two filiations one eternal, the filiation of the Word, and the other in time, when Christ was made the Son of God, subsisting in three Persons he must then, of necessity, admit that this Son made in time was the Son of the Trinity. He will not have Jesus Christ to be the Word, that is, the Son generated from the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, from all eternity. If he is not the Son of the Father, whose Son is he, if not the Son of the Trinity ?Had he any Father at all ? There is no use in wasting words on the matter, for everyone knows that in substance it is just the same to say the Son of one God subsisting in three Persons, as to say the Son of the Trinity. This, however, is what never can be admitted; for if we said Christ was the Son of the three Persons, it would be the same, as we shall prove, as to say that he was a mere creature; but when we say he is the Son, we mean that he was produced from the substance of the Father, or that he was of the same substance as the Father, as St. Athanasius teaches[16645]: “ Omnis films ejusdem essentiagi est proprii parentis, alioquin impossibile est, ipsum verum esse filium.” St. Augustine says that Christ cannot be called the Son of the Holy Ghost, though it was by the operation of the Holy Spirit the Incarnation took place.

How, then, can he be the Son of the three Persons ? St. Thomas[16646] teaches that Christ cannot be called the Son of God, unless by the eternal generation, as he has been generated by the Father alone; but Berruyer wants us to believe that he is not the Son, generated by the Father, but made by one God, subsisting in three Persons.

12 To carry out this proposition, if he understands that Jesus Christ is the Son, consubstantial to the Father, who subsists in three Persons, he must admit four Persons in God, that is, three in which God subsists, and the fourth Jesus Christ, made the Son of the Most Holy Trinity; or, in other words, of God subsisting in three Persons. If, on the other hand, he considers the Father of Jesus Christ as one person alone, then he falls into Sabellianism, recognizing in God not three distinct Persons, but one alone, under three different names. He is accused of Arianism by others, and, in my opinion, his error leads to Nestorianism. He lays down as a principle, that there are two generations in God one eternal, the other in time one of necessity, ad intra the other voluntary, ad extra. In all this he is quite correct; but then, speaking of the generation in time, he says that Jesus Christ was not the natural Son of God the Father, as the first Person of the Trinity, but the Son of God, as subsisting in three Persons.

13. Admitting this, then, to be the case, it follows that Jesus Christ had two Fathers, and that in Jesus Christ there are two Sons one the Son of God, as the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, who generated him from all eternity the other, the Son made in time by God, but by God subsisting in three Persons, who, unking the humanity of Jesus Christ (or, as Berruyer says, uniting that man, hominem ilium,) to the Divine Word, made him his natural Son. If we admit this, however, then we must say that Jesus Christ is not true God, but only a creature, and that for two reasons, first because Faith teaches us that there are only two internal operations (ad intra) in God, the generation of the Word, and the spiration of the Holy Ghost; every other operation in God is external (ad extra), and external operations produce only creatures, and not a Divine Person.

The second reason is because if Jesus Christ were the natural Son of God, subsisting in three Persons, he would be the Son of the Trinity, as we have already stated, and that would lead us to admit two grievous absurdities first, the Trinity, that is, the three Divine Persons would produce a Son of God; but as we have already shown, the Trinity, with the exception of the production of the Word and the Holy Ghost, ad intra, only produces creatures, and not Sons of God. The second absurdity is, that if Jesus Christ was made the natural Son of God by the Trinity, he would generate or produce himself (unless we exclude the Son from the Trinity altogether), and this would be a most irrational error, such as Tertullian, charged

Praxeas with : “ Ipse se Filium sibi fecit”[16647]. Therefore, we see, according to Berruyer’s system, that Jesus Christ, for all these reasons, would not be true God, but a mere creature, and the Blessed Virgin would be, as Nestorius asserted, only the Mother of Christ, and not, as the Council decided, and Faith teaches, the Mother of God; for Jesus Christ is true God, seeing that his humanity had only the Person of the Word alone to terminate it, for it was the Word alone which sustained the two natures, human and Divine.

14. Berruyer’s friend, however, says that he does not admit the existence of two natural Sons one from eternity, the other in time. But then, I say, if he does not admit it, where is the use of torturing his mind, by trying to make out this second filiation of Jesus Christ, made in time the natural Son of God, subsisting in three Persons. He ought to say, as the Church teaches, and all Catholics believe, that it is the same Word who was from all eternity the natural Son of God, generated from the substance of the Father, who assumed human nature, and has redeemed mankind. But Berruyer wished to enlighten the Church with the knowledge of this new natural Son of God, about whom we knew nothing before, telling us that this Son was made in time, not from the Father, but by all the three Divine Persons, because he was united to, or, as he expressed it, had the honor of the Consortium of the Word, who was the Son of God from all eternity. We knew nothing of all this till Berruyer and his master, Hardouin, came to enlighten us.

15. Berruyer, however, was grievously astray in asserting that Jesus Christ was the natural Son of one God, subsisting in three Persons. In this he has all Theologians, Catechisms, Fathers, Councils, and Scripture, opposed to him. We do not deny that the Incarnation of the Word was the work of the three Divine Persons; but neither can it be denied that the Person who became incarnate was the only Son, the second Person of the Trinity, who was, without doubt, the Word himself, generated from all eternity by the Father, who, assuming human nature, and uniting it to himself in unity of Person, wished by this means to redeem the human race. Hear what the Catechisms and the Symbols of the Church say; they teach that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God made in time by the Trinity, as Berruyer imagines, but the eternal Word, born of the Father, the principal and first Person of the Most Holy Trinity. This is what the Roman

Catechism teaches: “Filium Dei esso (Jesum) et verum Deum, sicut Pater est, qui eum ab aeterno genuit”[16648] And again (N. 9), Berruyer’s opinion is directly impugned : “ Et quamquam duplicem ejus nativitatem agnoscamus, unum tamen Filium esse credimus; una enim Persona est, in quam Divina et humana natura convenit.” The Athanasian Creed says that the Son is from the Father alone, not made nor created, but begotten; and speaking of Jesus Christ, it says that he is God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before all ages; and man, of the substance of his mother, born in time, who, though he is God and man, still is not two, but one Christ one, not by the conversion of the Divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity into God. As Jesus Christ, therefore, received his humanity from the substance of his mother alone, so he had his Divinity from the substance of his Father alone.

16. In the Apostles Creed we say : “ I believe in God, the Father Almighty. . . . .and in Jesus Christ, his only Son. . . . . born of the Virgin Mary,. . . . .suffered,” &c. Remark, Jesus Christ, his Son, of the Father, the first Person, who is first named, not of the three Persons; and his only Son, that is one Son, not two. In the Symbol of the Council of Florence, which is said at Mass, and which comprises all the other Symbols previously promulgated by the other General Councils, we perceive several remarkable expressions. It says : “I believe in one God, the Father Almighty and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and born of the Father before all ages (see, then, this only begotten Son is the same who was born of the Father before all ages), consubstantial to the Father, by whom all things were made, who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and became incarnate,” &c. The Son of God, then, who wrought the redemption of mankind, is not he whom Berruyer supposes made in time on this earth, but the eternal Son of God, by whom all things were made, who came down from heaven, and was born and suffered for our salvation. Berruyer, then, is totally wrong in recognizing two natural Sons of God, one born in time of God, subsisting in three Persons, and the other generated by God from all eternity.

17. But, says Berruyer, then Jesus Christ, inasmuch as he was made a man in time, is not the real, natural Son of God, but merely his adopted Son, as Felix and Elipandus taught, and for which they were condemned ?But

this we deny, and we hold for certain that Jesus Christ, even as man is the true Son of God (See Refutation vii, n. 18), but that does not prove that there are two natural Sons of God, one eternal and the other made in time, because, as we have proved in this work, as quoted above, Jesus Christ, even as man, is called the natural Son of God, inasmuch as God the Father continually generates the Word from all eternity, as David writes : “The Lord hath said to me, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee” (Psalm ii, 7). Hence it is that as the Son, previous to the Incarnation, was generated from all eternity, without flesh, so from the time he assumed humanity he was generated by the Father, and will forever be generated, hypostatically united to his humanity. But it is necessary to understand that this man, the natural Son of God created in time, is the very Person of the Son, generated from all eternity, that is the Word, who assumed the humanity of Jesus Christ, and united it to itself. It cannot be said, then, that there are two natural Sons of God, one, man, made in time, the other, God, produced from all eternity, for there is only one natural Son of God, that is the Word, who, uniting human nature to himself in time is both God and man, and is, as the Athanasian Creed declares, one Christ : “For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ. And as every man, though consisting of soul and body, is still only one man, one person, so in Jesus Christ, though there is the Word and the humanity, there is but one Person and natural Son of God.”

18. Berruyer’s opinion also is opposed to the First Chapter of the Gospel of St. John, for there we read : “ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ;” and then it is said that it was this same Word which was made flesh : “And the Word was made flesh.” Being made flesh does not mean that the Word was united to the human person of Jesus Christ, already existing, but it shows that the Word assumed humanity in the very instant in which it was created, so that from that very instant the soul of Jesus Christ and his human flesh became his own proper soul and his own proper flesh, sustained and governed by one sole Divine Person alone, which is the Word, which terminates and sustains the two Natures, Divine and human, and it is thus the Word was made man. Just pause for a moment ! St. John affirms that the Word, the Son, generated from the Father from all eternity, is made man, and Berruyer says that this man is not the Word, the Son of the eternal God, but another Son of God,

made in time by all the three Divine Persons. When, however, the Evangelist has said : “The Word was made flesh,” if you say and understand that the Word is not made flesh, are you not doing just what the Sacramentarians did, explaining the Eucharistic words, “This is my body,” that the body of Jesus Christ was not his body, but only the figure, sign, or virtue of his body ?This is what the Council of Trent reprobates so much in the heretics, distorting the words of Scripture to their own meaning. To return, however, to the Gospel of St. John. The Evangelist says, he dwelt among us. It was the eternal Word, then, which was made man, and worked out man’s redemption, and, therefore, the Gospel again says: “The Word was made flesh and we saw his glory, as it were the glory of the only-begotten of the Father.” This Word, then, who was made man in time, is the only-begotten, and, consequently, the only natural Son of God, generated by the Father from all eternity. St. John (I. Epis. iv, 9), again repeats it : “ By this has the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live by him.” In this text we must remark that the Apostle uses the word “ hath sent.” Berruyer then asserts what is false, in saying that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, made in time, for St. John says that he existed Before he “was sent,” for in fact it was the eternal Son of the Father that was sent by God, who came down from heaven, and brought salvation to the world. We should also recollect that St. Thomas says[16649], that speaking of God, whenever one Person is said to be sent by another, he is said to be sent, inasmuch as he proceeds from the other, and therefore the Son is said to be sent by the Father to take human flesh, inasmuch as he proceeds from the Person of the Father alone. Christ himself declared this in the resurrection of Lazarus, for though he could have raised him himself, still he prayed to his Father that they might know he was his true Son, “That they may believe that thou hast sent me” (John, xi, 42), and hence St. Hilary says[16650]: “Non prece eguit, pro nobis oravit, ne Filius ignoraretur.”

19. Along with all this we have the Tradition of the Fathers generally opposed to Berruyer’s system. St. Gregory of Nazianzen[16651] says : “ Id quod non erat assumpsit, non duo factus, sed unum ex duobus fieri subsistens; Deus enim ambo sunt, id quod assumpsit, et quod est assumptum, naturae duae in unum concurrentes, non duo Filii.” St. John

Chrysostom[16652] writes : “Unum Filium unigenitum, non dividens dum in Filiorum dualitatem, portantem tamen in semetipso indivisarum duarum naturarum inconvertibiliter proprietates ;” and again, “ Etsi enim duplex natura, verumtamen indivisibilis unio in una filiationis confitenda Persona, et una subsistentia.”

St. Jerom says[16653]: “Anima et caro Christi cum Verbo Dei una Persona est, unus Christus” St. Dionisius of Alexandria wrote a Synodical Epistle to refute Paul of Samosata, who taught a doctrine like Berruyer; “ Duas esse Personas unius, et solius Christi; et duos Filios, unum natura Filium Dei, qui fuit ante saecula, et unum homonyma Christum filium David.” St. Augustine says:[16654]: “Christus Jesus Dei Filius est Deus et Homo :Deus quia Dei Verbum :Homo autem, quia in unitatem Personae necessit Verbo Anima rationalis et caro.” I omit the quotations from many other Fathers, but those who are curious in the matter will find them in the Clypeum of Gonet and in the writings of Petavius, Gotti, and others.

20. Another reflection occurs to my mind. Besides the other errors published by Berruyer, and which follow from his opinions, which we will immediately refute, if the reader goes back to N. 9, he will perceive that the faith of Baptism, as taught by all Christians and Councils is jeopardized. According to his system, all passages in the New Testament in which God is called the Father of Christ, or the Son is called the Son of God, or where anything is mentioned about God, as Father of Christ, the Son of God, must be understood to apply to the Son of God made in time, according to the flesh, and made by that God, subsisting in three Persons. On the other hand, it is certain that Baptism is administered in the Church in the name of the three Persons, expressly and individually named, as Jesus Christ commanded his Apostle to do : “ Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt, xxviii, 19). But if the general rule laid down by Berruyer, as we have explained it, should be observed, then the Baptism administered in the Church would be no longer Baptism in the sense we take it, because the Father who is named would not be the first Person of the Trinity, as is generally understood, but the Father Berruyer imagined, a Father subsisting in three Divine Persons in a word, the whole Trinity. The Son would not be the Word, generated by the Father, the Principle of the Trinity, from all

eternity, but the Son, made in time by all the three Persons, who, being an external work of God, ad extra, would be a mere creature, as we have seen already.

The Holy Ghost would not be the third Person, such as we believe him, that is, proceeding from the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, and from the Son, the second Person, that is, the Word, generated from all eternity by the Father. Finally, according to Berruyer, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost would not be what they are in reality, and what the whole Church believes them to be, the real Father, the real Son, and the real Holy Ghost, in opposition to what that great theologian, St. Gregory of Nazianzan teaches : " Quis Catholicorum ignorat Patrem vere esse Patrem, Filium vere esse Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum, vere esse Spiritum Sanctum, sicut ipse Dominus ad Apostolos dicit : Euntes docete, &c. Haec est perfecta Trinitas," &c.[16655]. Read, however, further on the Refutation of the third error, and you will find this fiction more diffusely and clearly refuted. We now pass on to the other errors of this writer, which flow from this first one.[16656] St. Greg. Nazian. in Orat. de Fide, post. init.

II. BERRUYER SAYS THAT JESUS CHRIST, DURING THE THREE DAYS HE WAS IN THE SEPULCHRE, CEASED TO BE A LIVING MAN, AND, CONSEQUENTLY, WAS NO LONGER THE SON OF GOD. AND WHEN GOD AGAIN RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, HE ONCE MORE GENERATED HIM, AND AGAIN MADE HIM THE SON OF GOD

21. One must have a great deal of patience to wade through all these extravagant falsehoods. Christ, he says, during the three days he was in the sepulchre, ceased to be the natural Son of God: "Factum est morte Christi, ut homo Christus Jesus, cum jam non esset homo vivens, atque adeo pro triduo quo corpus ab Anima separatum jacuit in sepulchro, fieret Christus incapax illius appellationis, Filius Dei[16657]; and he repeats the same thing in another part of his work, in different words : " Actione Dei unius, Filium suum Jesum suscitantis, factum est, ut Jesus qui desierat essc homo vivens, et consequenter Filius Dei, iterum viveret deinceps non moriturus." This error springs from that false supposition we have already examined, for supposing that Jesus Christ was the Son of God subsisting in three Persons, that is the Son of the Trinity by an operation ad extra, he was then a mere man, and as by death he ceased to be a living man, he also ceased to be the Son of God subsisting in three Persons; because if Jesus Christ were the

Son of God, as first Person of the Trinity, then in him was the Word, which, being hypostatically united to his soul and body, could never be separated from him, even when his soul was by death separated from his body.

22. Supposing, then, that Jesus Christ, dying, ceased to be the Son of God, Bcrruycr must admit that in those three days in which our Lord’s body was separated from his soul, the Divinity was separated from his body and soul. Let us narrow the proposition. Christ, he says, was made the Son of God, not because the Word assumed his humanity, but because the Word was united to his humanity, and hence, he says, as in the sepulchre he ceased to be a living man, his soul being separated from his body, he was no longer the Son of God, and, therefore, the Word ceased to be united with his humanity. Nothing, however, can be more false than this, for the Word assumed and hypostatically and inseparably united to himself in unity of Person the soul and body of Jesus Christ, and hence when our Lord died, and his most holy body was laid in the tomb, the Divinity of the Word could not be separated either from the body or the soul. This truth has been taught by St. Athanasius[16658]: “Cum Deitas neque Corpus in sepulchro dcsereret, neqno ab Anima in inferno separarctur.” St. Gregory of Nyssa writes[16659]: “Deus qui totum homincm per suam cum illo conjunctionem in naturam Divinam mutaverat, mortis sempore a neutra illius, quam semel assumpserat, parte recessit ;” and St. Augustine says[16660]: “Cum credimus Dei Filium, qui sepultus est, profecto Filium Dei dicimus et Carnem, quae sola sepulta est.”

23. St. John of Damascus tells us the reason the soul of Christ had not a different subsistence from his body, as it was the one Person alone which sustained both : “ Neque enim unquam aut Anima, aut Corpus peculiarem atque a Verbi subsistentia diversam subsistentiam habuit”[16661]. On that account, he says, as it was one Person which sustained the soul and body of Christ, although the soul was separated from the body, still the Person of the Word could not be separated from them : “Corpus, et Anima simul ab initio in Verbi Persona existentiam habuerant, ac licet in morte divulsa fuerint, utrumque tamen eorum unam Verbi Personam, qua subsisteret, semper habuit.” As, therefore, when Jesus descended into hell, the Word descended, likewise, with his soul, so, while his body was in the sepulchre, the Word was present, likewise; and, therefore, the body of Christ was free from

corruption, as David foretold : “Nor wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption” (Psalm, xv, 10). And St. Peter, as we read in the Acts (ii, 27), shows that this text was applied to our Lord lying in his tomb. It is true, St. Hilary[16662] says, that, when Christ died, the Divinity left his body; but St. Ambrose[16663] explains this, and says, that all the Holy Doctor meant to say was, that, in the Passion, the Divinity abandoned the humanity of Christ to that great desolation, which caused him to cry out: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me” (Matt, xxvii, 46). In his death, therefore, the Word abandoned his body, inasmuch as the Word did not preserve his life, but never ceased to be hypostatically united with him. Christ never, then, could cease to be the Son of God in the sepulchre, as Berruyer teaches; for it is one of the axioms of all Catholic schools[16664]: “ Quod semel Verbum assumpsit, nunquam misit” The Word, having once assumed human nature, never gives it up again. But when Berruyer admits, then, that the Word was united in the beginning in unity of Person with the body and soul of Jesus Christ, how can he afterwards say that, when the soul was separated from the body, the Word was no longer united with the body? This is a doctrine which surely neither he nor anyone else can understand.

24. When Berruyer says that Jesus Christ, at his death, ceased to be the natural Son of God, because he was no longer a living man, he must, consequently, hold that the humanity, previous to his death, was not sustained by the Person of the Word, but by its own proper human subsistence, and was a Person distinct from the Person of the Word. But, then, how can he escape being considered a Nestorian, admitting two distinct Persons in Jesus Christ. Both Nestorius and Berruyer are expressly condemned by the Symbol promulgated in the Council of Constantinople, which says that we are bound to believe in one God, the Father Almighty, and in one only-begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, and consubstantial to the Father, who, for our salvation, came down from heaven, and became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, suffered, was buried, and rose again the third day. It is, therefore, the only-begotten Son of God the Father, generated by the Father from all eternity, and who came down from heaven, that was made man, died, and was buried. But, how could God die and be buried ?you will say. By assuming human flesh, as the Council teaches. As another General Council, the Fourth of Lateran, says[16665], as

God could not die nor suffer, by becoming man he became mortal and passible : “ Qui cum secundum Divinitatem sit immortalis et impassibilis, idem ipse secundum humanitatem factus est mortalis et passibilis.”

25. As one error is always the parent of another, so Berruyer having said that Jesus Christ in the sepulchre ceased to be the natural son of God, said, likewise, that when God raised Christ-man again from the dead, he again generated him, and made him Man-God, because, by raising him again, he caused him to be his Son, who, dying, ceased to be his Son. We have already (N. 18) alluded to this falsehood. He says : “ Actione Dei unius, Filium suum Jesum suscitantis, factum est, ut Jesus, qui desierat esse homo vivens, et consequenter Filius Dei, iterum viveret deinceps non moriturus.” He says the same thing, in other words, in another place : “Deus Christum hominem resuscitans, hominem Deum iterate generat, dum facit resuscitando, ut Filius sit, qui moriendo Filius esse desierat”[16666].

26. We should, indeed, be rejoiced to hear of this new dogma, never before heard of, that the Son of God twice became incarnate, and was made man first, when he was conceived in the holy womb of the Virgin, and, again, when he arose from the tomb. We should, indeed, feel obliged to Berruyer, for enlightening us on a point never before heard of in the Church. Another consequence of this doctrine is, that the Blessed Virgin must have been twice made the Mother of God; for, as Jesus ceased to be the Son of God while in the tomb, so she ceased also to be the Mother of God at the same time, and then, after his resurrection, her Divine Maternity was again restored to her. In the next paragraph we will examine even a more brainless error than this. I use the expression, “brainless,” for I think the man’s head was more in fault than his conscience. A writer, who attacked Berruyer’s errors, said that he fell into all these extravagancies, because he would not follow the Tradition of the Fathers, and the method they employed in the interpretation of the Scriptures, and the announcement of the unwritten Word of God, preserved in the Works of these Doctors and Pastors. It is on this account, as the Prelate, the Author of “The Essay,” remarks, that Berruyer, in his entire work, does not cite one authority either from Fathers or Theologians, although the Council of Trent (Sess. iv, Dec. de Scrip. S.) expressly prohibits the interpretation of the Sacred Writings, in

a sense contrary to the generality of the Fathers. We now pass on to the examination of the next error a most pernicious and enormous one.

III. BERRUYER SAYS THAT IT WAS THE HUMANITY ALONE OF CHRIST THAT OBEYED, PRAYED, AND SUFFERED, AND THAT HIS OBLATIONS, PRAYERS, AND MEDITATIONS, WERE NOT OPERATIONS PROCEEDING FROM THE WORD, AS A PHYSICAL AND EFFICIENT PRINCIPLE, BUT THAT, IN THIS SENSE, THEY WERE ACTIONS MERELY OF HIS HUMANITY

Berruyer says that the operations of Jesus Christ were not produced by the Word, but merely by his humanity, and that the hypostatic union in no wise tended to render the human nature of Christ a complete principle of the actions physically and super naturally performed by him. Here are his words : “Non sunt operationes a Verbo elicitae. . . . . sunt operationes totius humanitatis”[16667]. He had already written[16668] : “ Ad complementum autem naturae Christi humanae, in rationo principii agentis, et actiones suas physice sive supernaturaliter producentis, unio hypostatica nihil omnino contulit.” In another passage he says that all the propositions regarding Christ, in the Scriptures, and especially in the New Testament, are directly and primarily verified in the Man-God, or, in other words, in the Humanity of Christ, united to the Divinity, and completed by the Word in the unity of Person, and this, he says, is the natural interpretation of Scripture : “ Dico insuper, omnes et singulas ejusdam propositiones, quae sunt de Christo Jesu in Scripturis sanctis, praesertim Novi Testamenti, semper et ubique verificari directe et primo in homine Deo, sive in humanitate Christi, Divinitati unita et Verbo, completa in imitate personae. . . . . Atque haec est simplex obvia, et naturalis Scripturas interpretandi methodus,” &c.[16669].

27. In fine, he deduces from this, that it was the Humanity alone of Christ that obeyed, and prayed, and suffered that alone was endowed with all the gifts necessary for operating freely and meritoriously, by the Divine natural and supernatural cohesion (concursus) : “ Humanitas sola obedivit Patri, sola oravit, sola passa est, sola ornata fuit donis et dotibus omnibus necessariis ad agendum libere et meritorie[16670]. Jesu Christi oblatio, oratio, et mediatio non sunt operationes a Verbo elicitae tamquam a principio physico et efficiente, sed in eo sensu sunt operationes solius humanitatis Christi in agendo, et merendo per concursum Dei naturalem et

supernaturalem completae"[16671]. By this Berruyer deprives God of the infinite honour he received from Jesus Christ, who, being God, equal to the Father, became a servant, and sacrificed himself. He also deprives the merits of Jesus Christ of their infinite value, as they were the operations of his humanity alone, according to him, and not performed by the Person of the Word, and, consequently, he destroys that hope which we have in those infinite merits. Besides, he does away with the strongest motive we have to love our Redeemer, which is the consideration that he, being God, and it being impossible that he could suffer as God, took human flesh, that he might die and suffer for us, and thus satisfy the Divine justice for our faults, and obtain for us Grace and life everlasting. But what is more important even, as the Roman Censor says, if it was the Humanity of Christ alone which obeyed, prayed, and suffered, and if the oblations, prayers, and mediation of Christ were not the operations of the Word, but of his Humanity alone, it follows that the Humanity of Christ had subsistence of its own, and, consequently, the human Person of Christ was distinct from the Word, and that would make two Persons.

28. Berruyer concludes the passage last quoted, " Humanitas sola obedivit," &c., by these words : " Ille (inquam) homo, qui haec omnia egit, et passus est libere et sancte, et cujus humanitas in Verbo subsistebat, objectum est in recto immediatum omnium, quae de Christo sunt, narrationum"[16672] It was the man, then, in Christ, and not the Word, that operated : " Ille homo qui haec omnia egit." Nor is that cleared up by what he says immediately after : " Cujus humanitas in Verbo subsistebat ;" for he never gives up his system, but constantly repeats it in his Dissertations, and clothes it in so many curious and involved expressions, that it would be sufficient to turn a person's brain to study it. His system, as we have previously explained it, is, that Christ is not the Eternal Word, the Son, born of God the Father, but the Son, made in time by one God, subsisting in three Persons, who made him his Son by uniting him to the Divine Person; so that, rigorously speaking, he says he was formally constituted the Son of God, merely by that action which united him with the Divine Person: "Rigorose loquendo, per ipsam formaliter actionem unientem cum Persona Divina." He, therefore, says that God, by the action of uniting the Humanity of Christ with the Word, formed the second filiation, and caused Christ-

Man to become the Son of God, so that, according to his opinion, the union of the Word with the Humanity of Christ was, as it were, a means to make Christ become the Son of God. All this, however, is false, for when we speak of Jesus Christ, we cannot say that that man, on account of being united with a Divine Person, was made by the Trinity the Son of God in time; but we are bound to profess that God, the Eternal Word, is the Son, born of the Father from all eternity, born of the substance of the Father, as the Athanasian Creed says, " God, of the substance of the Father, born before all ages," for, otherwise, he never could be called the natural Son of God. He it is who, uniting to himself Humanity in unity of Person, has always sustained it, and he it is who performed all operations, who, notwithstanding that he was equal to God, emptied himself, and humbled himself to die on a cross in that flesh which he assumed.

29. Berruyer's whole error consists in supposing the humanity of Christ to be a subject subsisting in itself, to which the Word was subsequently united. Faith and reason, however, would both teach him that the Humanity of Christ was accessary to the Word which assumed it, as St. Augustine[16673] explains : "Homo autem, quia in unitatem personae accessit Verbo Anima et Caro." Berruyer, however, on the contrary, says that the Divinity of the Word was accessary to the Humanity; but he should have known, as Councils and Fathers teach, that the Humanity of Jesus Christ did not exist until the Word came to take flesh. The Sixth Council (Act. 11) reproved Paul of Samosata, for teaching, with Nestorius, that the humanity of Christ existed previous to the Incarnation. Hence, the Council declared : " Simul enim caro, simul Dei Verbi caro fuit; simul animata rationabiliter, simul Dei Verbi caro animata rationabiliter." St. Cyril[16674], in his Epistle to Nestorius, which was approved of by the Council of Ephesus, writes : "Non enim primum vulgaris quispiam homo ex Virgine ortus est, in quem Dei Verbum deinde Se dimiserit; sed in ipso Utero carni unitum secundum carnem progcnitum dicitur, utpote sure carnis generationem sibi ut propriam vindicans." St. Leo the Great[16675], reprobating the doctrine of Eutyches, that Jesus Christ alone, previous to the Incarnation, was in two natures, says : " Sed hoc Catholicae mentes auresque non tolerant natura quippe nostra non sic assumpta est, ut prius creata postea sumeretur, sed ut ipsa assumption crearetur." St. Augustine, speaking of the glorious union of the

Humanity of Christ with the Divinity, says : “Ex quo esse Homo coepit, non aliud coepit esse Homo&gt; quam Dei Filius”[16676]. And St. John of Damascus[16677] says : “Non quemadmodum quidam falso praedicant, mens ante carnem ex Virgine assumptam Deo Verbo copulata est, et turn Christi nomen accepit.”

30. Berruyer, however, does not agree with Councils or Fathers, for all the passages of Scripture, he says, which speak of Jesus Christ are directly verified in his humanity united to the Divinity : “ Dico insupere omnes propositiones quae sunt de Christo in Scripturis verificari directe et primo in homine Deo, sive in humanitate Christi Divinitati unita,” &c.[16678]. So that the primary object of all that is said regarding Christ, is according to him, Man-God, and not God-Man : “Homo-Deus, non similiter Deus-homo objectum primarium,” &c.; and again, as we have already seen, that Jesus Christ was formally constituted the natural Son of God, solely by that act which united him to the Word : “Per ipsam formatter actionem unientem Jesus Christus constituitur tantum Filius Dei naturalis.” This, however, is totally false, for Jesus Christ is the natural Son of God, not on account of the act which united him to the Word, but because the Word, who is the natural Son of God, as generated by the Father from all eternity, assumed the humanity of Christ, and united it to himself in the unity of Person. Berruyer then imagines that the humanity was the primary object in recto, and self—subsisting, to when the Word was united, and that by this union Christ-Man was subsequently made the Son of God in time. Hence, he says, that the humanity alone obeyed, prayed, and suffered :and it was that man (Christ), he says, who did all those things : “ Ille (inquam) homo qui haec omnia egit objectum est in recto immediatum eorum, quae de Christo sunt,” &c. In this, however, he is wrong. Faith tells us that we ought to regard as the primary object, the Eternal Word, who assumed the humanity of Christ, and united it to himself hypostatically in one Person, and thus the soul and body of Jesus Christ became the proper soul and body of the Word.

When the Word, St. Cyril says, assumed a human body, that body was no longer strange to the Word, but was made his own : “Non est alienum a Verbo corpus suum”[16679]. This is what is meant by the words of the Creed; “ He came down from heaven, and was incarnate, and was made man.” Hence we, following the Creed, say God was made man, and not, as

Berruyer says, man was made God; for this mode of expression would lead us to think that man, already subsisting, was united with God, and we should then, as Nestorius did, suppose two Persons in Christ; but faith teaches us that God was made man by taking human flesh, and thus there is but one Person in Christ, who is both God and man. Neither is it lawful to say (as St. Thomas instructs us)[16680], with Nestorius, that Christ was assumed by God as an instrument to work out man's salvation, since, as St. Cyril, quoted by St. Thomas, teaches, the Scripture will have us to believe that Jesus Christ is not an instrument of God, but God in reality, made man : " Christum non tanquam instrumenti officio assumptum dicit Scriptura, sed tanquam Deum vere humanatum."

31. We are bound to believe that there are in Christ two distinct Natures, each of which has its own will and its own proper operations, in opposition to the Monothelites, who held that there was but one will and one operation in Christ. But, on the other hand, it is certain that the operations of the human nature of Jesus Christ were not mere human operations, but, in the language of the schools, Theandric, that is, Divine-human, and chiefly Divine, for although, in every operation of Christ, human nature concurred, still all was subordinate to the Person of the Word, which was the chief and director of all the operations of the humanity. The Word, says Bossuet, presides in all; the Word governs all; and the Man, subject to the direction of the Word, has no other movements but Divine ones; whatever he wishes and does is guided by the Word[16681]. St. Augustine says that as in us the soul governs the body, so in Jesus Christ the Word governed his humanity : "Quid est homo," says the saint, "anima habens corpus. Quid est Christus ? Verbum Dei habens hominem." St. Thomas says : " Ubicunque sunt plura agentia ordinata, inferius movetur a superiori. . . . . Sicut autem in homine puro corpus movetur ab animo. . . . . ita in Domino Jesu Christo humana natura movebatur et regebatur a Divina"[16682].

32. All, then, that Berruyer states on the subject is totally false : " Humanitas sola o bedivit Patri, sola passa est, Jesu Christi oblatio, oratio, et mediatio non sunt operationes a Verbo elicitae tanquam a principio physico et efficiente. Ad complementum naturae Christi humanae in ratione principii producentis, et actiones suas sive physice sive supernaturaliter agentis, nihil onmino contulit unio hypostatica." If, as the Roman Censor

says, it was the humanity alone of Christ that obeyed, prayed, and suffered; and if the oblations, prayers, and mediation of Jesus Christ were not operations elicited by the Word but by his humanity alone, so that the hypostatic union had, in fact, added nothing to the humanity, for the completion of the principle of his operations, it follows that the humanity of our Redeemer operated by itself, and doing so must have had subsistence proper to itself, and a proper personality distinct from the Person of the Word, and thus we have, as Nestorius taught, two Persons in Christ.

33. Such, however, is not the fact. All that Jesus Christ did the Word did, which sustained both Natures, and as God could not suffer and die for the salvation of mankind, he, as the Council of Lateran said, took human flesh, and thus became passible and mortal : "Qui cum secundum Divinitatem sit immortalis et impassibilis, idem ipse secundum humanitatem factus est mortalis et passibilis." It was thus that the Eternal Word, in the flesh he assumed, sacrificed to God his blood and his life itself, and being equal to God became a mediator with God, as St. Paul says, speaking of Jesus Christ : " In whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins; who is the image of the invisible God for in him were all things created in heaven and on earth Because in him it has well pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell" &c. (Col. i, 13). According to St. Paul, then, it is Jesus Christ who created the world, and in whom the plenitude of the Divinity dwells.

34. One of Berruyer's apologists says, however, that when his master states, that the humanity alone of Christ obeyed, prayed, and suffered, that he then speaks of this humanity as the physical principle Quo, that is, the medium by which he operates, and this physical principle belonged to the humanity alone, and not to the Word, for it is through his humanity that he suffered and died. But we answer, that the Humanity, as the principle, Quo, could not act of itself in Christ, unless put in motion by the principle, Quod that is, the Word, which was the one only Person, which sustained the two Natures. He it was who principally performed every action in the assumed Humanity, although it was by means of that he suffered, prayed, and died. That being the case, how can Berruyer be defended, when he says that it was the Humanity alone which prayed and suffered ?How could he say that the oblations, prayers, and mediation of Christ were operations elicited by the Word? And, what is even of greater consequence, how could he say that

the hypostatic union had no influence on the actions of Christ Nihil omnino contulit unio hypostatica ? I said already that the Word was the principal agent in all operations. But, say those of the other side :Then, the Humanity of Christ performed no operations ? We answer that the Word did all; for, though the Humanity might also act, still, as the Word was the sole Person sustaining and completing this Humanity, he (the Word) performed every operation both of the soul and body, for both body and soul, by the unity of Person, became his own. Everything, then, which Jesus Christ did his wishes, actions, and sufferings all belonged to the Word, for it was he who determined everything, and his obedient Humanity consented and executed it. Hence it is that every action of Christ was holy and of infinite value, and capable of procuring every grace, and we are, therefore, bound to praise him for all. The reader, then, should totally banish from his mind the false idea which Berruyer (as the author of the "Essay" writes) wished to give us of Christ, that the Humanity was a being, existing of itself, to whom God united one of his Sons by nature; for, as will be seen, by referring back to N. 11, there must have been, according to him, two natural Sons one, generated by the Father from all eternity; the other, in time, by the whole Trinity; but, then, Jesus Christ, as he teaches, was not, properly speaking, the Word made incarnate, according to St. John "The Word was made flesh" but was the other Son of God, made in time. This, however, is not the doctrine of the Holy Fathers; they unanimously teach that it was the Word[16683]. St. Jerome writes : "Anima et Caro Christi cum Verbo Dei una Persona est, unus Christus"[16684]. St. Ambrose[16685], showing that Jesus Christ spoke sometimes according to his Divine, and, at other times, according to his human nature, says : "Quasi Deus sequitur Divina, quia Verbum est, quasi homo dicit humana." Pope Leo says : " Idem est qui mortem subiit, et sempiternus esse non desiit." St. Augustine says : "Jesus Christus Dei Filius est, et Deus, et homo. Deus ante omnia secula, homo in nostro seculo. Deus quia Dei Verbum, Deus enim erat Verbum :homo autem, quia in unitatem personae accessit Verbo Anima, et Caro. . . . . Non duo Filii, Deus, et homo, sed unus Dei Filius"[16686]. And, in another place (Cap. 36) : " Ex quo homo esse coepit, non aliud ccepit esse homo, quam Dei Filius, et hoc unicus, et propter Deum Verbum, quod illo suscepto caro factum est, utique Deus ut sit Christus una persona, Verbum et homo." The rest of the Fathers speak the same sentiments; but it would render the Work too diffuse to quote any more.

35. The Holy See, then, had very good reasons for so rigorously and so frequently condemning Berruyer's Book; for it not alone contains many errors, in opposition to the doctrines of the Church, but is, besides, most pernicious, because it makes us lose that proper idea we should have of Jesus Christ. The Church teaches that the Eternal Word that is, the only natural Son of God (for he had but one natural Son, who is, therefore, called the only-begotten, born of the substance of God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity), was made man, and died for our salvation. Berruyer, on the contrary, would have us to believe that Jesus Christ is not the Word, the Son, born of the Father from all eternity, but another Son, which only he and Hardouin knew anything about, or, rather, dreamed of, who, if their ideas were founded in fact, would have the name alone, and the honour of being called the Son of God; for, in order that Jesus Christ should be the true natural Son of God, it was requisite that he should be born of the substance of the Father, but the Christ, according to Berruyer, was made in time by the whole Trinity. The whole idea, then, we had hitherto formed of our Redeemer is totally changed.

We considered him to be God, who, for our salvation, humbled himself to take human flesh, in order to suffer and die for us; whereas Berruyer represents him to us, not as a God made man, but as a man made the Son of God, on account of the union established between the Word and his Humanity. Jesus Christ crucified is the greatest proof of God's love to us, and the strongest motive we have to induce, nay, as St. Paul says, to force us, to love him "For the charity of Christ presseth us" (II. Cor. v, 14) is to know that the Eternal Word, equal to the Father, and born of the Father, emptied himself, and humbled himself to take human flesh, and die on a cross for us; but, according to Berruyer's system, this proof of Divine love to us, and this most powerful motive for us to love him, falls to the ground. And, in fine, to show how different is Berruyer's errors from the truth taught by the Church :The Church tells us to believe that Jesus Christ is God, made man, who, for us, suffered and died, in the flesh he assumed, and who assumed it solely to enable him to die for our love. Berruyer tells us, on the contrary, that Jesus Christ is only a man, who, because he was united by God to one of the Divine Persons, was made by the Trinity the natural Son of God, and died for the salvation of mankind; but, according to Berruyer, he did not die as God, but as man, and could not be the Son of God at all, according to his ideas; for, in order to be the natural Son of God, he should have been born of the substance of the Father, but, according to Berruyer, he was a being ad extra, produced by the whole Trinity, and if he was thus an external product, he could not have been anything but a mere creature; consequently, he must admit two distinct Persons in Christ one Divine, and one human. In fine, if we held this man's doctrine, we could not say that God "loved us, and delivered himself up for us" (Ephcs. v, 2); for, according to him, it was not the Word "who delivered himself up for us," but the Humanity of Christ, honored, indeed, by the union with the Word, that alone it was which suffered, and was subjected to death. Let him keep these opinions to himself, however, for every faithful Catholic will say, with Saint Paul : "I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered himself for me" (Gal. ii, 20). And we will praise and love with all our hearts that God who, being God, made himself man, to suffer and die for every one of us.

36. It is painful to witness the distortion of Scripture which Berruyer has recourse to in every part of his work, but more especially in his Dissertations, to accommodate it to his false system, that Jesus Christ was the Son of one God, subsisting in three Persons. We have already (N. 7) quoted that text of St. Paul (Phil, ii, 5, &c.) : "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant," &c. Here is conclusive evidence to prove that the Word, equal to the Father, emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, in becoming man. Berruyer says, on the contrary, that it was not the Word, not the Divine Nature, which humbled itself, but the human, conjoined with the Divine Nature : " Humiliat sese natura humana naturtie Divintie physice conjuncta." To consider the Word humbled to become incar nate, and die on the cross, would, he says, be degrading the Divinity; it should, therefore, he says, be only understood according to the communication of the idioms, and, consequently, as referring to the actions of Christ after the hypostatic union, and, therefore, he says it was his Humanity that was humbled. But in that case we may well remark, what is there wonderful in the humiliation of humanity before God ?That prodigy of love and mercy which God

exhibited in his Incarnation, and which astonished both heaven and earth, was when the Word, the only-begotten Son of God, equal to the Father, emptied himself (exinanivit), in becoming man, and, from God, became the servant of God, according to the flesh. It is thus all Fathers and Catholic Doctors understand it, with the exception of Berruyer and Hardouin; and it is thus the Council of Chalcedon, also (Act. V.), declared that the Son of God, born of the Father, before all ages, became incarnate in these latter days (novissimis diebus), and suffered for our salvation.

37. We will take a review of some other texts. St. Paul (Heb. i, 2) says, that God “ in these days hath spoken to us by his Son by whom he also made the world.” All the Fathers understand this, as referring to the Word, by whom all things were created, and who was afterwards made man; but Berruyer explains the passage, “ By whom he also made the world,” thus : In consideration of whom God made the world. He explains the text of St. John, “ By him all things were made,” in like manner, that in regard of him all things were made, so that he does not even admit the Word to be the Creator. But hear St. Paul, on the contrary. God, speaking to his Son, says : “Thy throne, God, is forever and ever In the beginning, O Lord, didst thou found the earth, and the works of thy hands are the heavens” (Ileb. i, 8, 10). Here God does not say that he created the heavens and the earth in consideration or in regard of his Son, but that the Son himself created them; and hence St. Chrysostom remarks : “ Nunquam profecto id asserturus, nisi conditorem Filium, non ministrum arbitraretur, ac Patri et Filio pares esse intelligent dignitates.”

38. David says : “The Lord hath said to me, thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee” (Psalm ii, 7). Berruyer says that the expression, “This day have I begotten thee,” has no reference to the eternal generation, as all understand it, but to the generation in time, of which he is the inventor, when Jesus Christ was made in time the Son of one God, subsisting in three Persons. He thus explains the text, “This day have I begotten thee” : I will be your Father, and you will be my Son that is, according to the second filiation, made by the one God in three Persons, as he imagines.

39. St. Luke says : “ And, therefore, also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke, i, 35). Berruyer says that these words do not refer to Jesus Christ, as the Word, but as man; for the expression “Holy” is not adapted to the Word, but rather to Humanity. All

Doctors, however, understand by the Holy One, the Word, the Son of God, born before all ages. Bossuet sagaciously remarks, that the expression, “Holy,” when it is only an adjective, properly speaking, is adapted to the creature; but when, as in the present case, it is a substantive, it means Holiness essentially, which belongs to God alone.

40. St. Matthew (xxviii, 19) tells us, that Christ said to his disciples : “Going, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Berruyer says, then, that, by the name of Father, the first Person of the Trinity is not meant, but the God of the Jews that is, one God, subsisting in three Persons; by the name of the Son, the Word is not understood, but Christ, as man, made the Son of God, by the act by which God united him to the Word. He says nothing at all about the Holy Ghost. Now, by this doctrine the Sacrament of Baptism is not alone deranged, but totally abolished, I may say; because, according to him, we would not be baptized, at first, in the name of the Father, but in the name of the Trinity, and Baptism, administered after this form, as all theologians hold, with St. Thomas, would be null and void[16687]. In the second place, we would not be baptized in the name of the real Son of God that is, the Word, who became incarnate, but in the name of that Son, invented by Berruyer, made in time by the Trinity a Son which never did nor ever can exist, because there never was nor will be any other natural Son of God, unless that only-begotten one, generated from all eternity from the substance of the Father, the Principle, and first Person of the Trinity. The second generation, made in time, or, to speak more exactly, the Incarnation of the Word, did not make Christ the Son of God, but united him in one Person with the true Son of God; that did not give him a Father, but merely a Mother, who begot him from her own substance. Rigorously speaking, this cannot be called generation, for the generation of the Son of God is that alone which was from eternity. The Humanity of Christ was not generated by God, but was created, and was begotten solely by the Virgin Mary. Berruyer says, that the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God by two titles first, by begetting the Word; and, secondly, by giving Christ his humanity, since, as he says, the union established between this humanity and the Word has caused Jesus Christ to be made the Son of God. Both reasons, however, are false, for, first, we cannot say that the Blessed Virgin

begot the Word, for the Word had no Mother, but only a Father, that is God. Mary merely begot the Man, who was united in one Person with the Word, and it is on that account that she, the Mother of the Man, is justly called the true Mother of God. His second reason is equally false, that the Blessed Virgin has contributed, with her substance, to make Jesus Christ become the Son of God, one subsisting in three Persons, for, as we have proved, this supposition is totally false, so that, by attributing thus two Maternities to the Blessed Virgin, he does away with it altogether, for one destroys the other. Berruyer mangles several other texts; but I omit them, not to weary the reader with such folly any longer.

IV. THE MIRACLES WROUGHT BY JESUS CHRIST WERE NOT PERFORMED BY HIS OWN POWERS, BUT OBTAINED FROM HIS FATHER, BY HIS PRAYERS

41. Berruyer says that Jesus Christ wrought his miracles in this sense alone, that he operated, with a beseeching power, by means of his prayers : " Miracula Christus efficit, non precatio. . . . . prece tamen et postulatione. . . . . eo unice sensudicitur Christus miraculorum effector." In another place, he says that Christ, as the Son of God (but the Son in his sense that is, of one God, subsisting in three Persons) had a right, by his Divinity, that his prayers should be heard. Remark the expression, "his prayers." Therefore, according to Berruyer, our Saviour did not work miracles by his own power, but obtained them from God by his prayers, like any other holy man. This doctrine, however, once admitted, we should hold, with Nestorius, that Christ was a mere human person, distinct from the Person of the Word, who, being God, equal to the Father, had no necessity of begging the Father to grant him power to work miracles, since he had all power himself. This error springs from the former capital ones we have refuted that is, that Christ is not the Word, but is that Son of God existing only in his imagination, his Son merely in name, made in time by God, subsisting in three Persons, and, also, that in Christ it was not the Word that operated, but his Humanity alone : " Sola humanitas obedivit, sola passa est," &c.

42. He was just as much astray in this proposition, that Christ wrought miracles merely by prayer and supplication, as he was in his previous statements. St. Thomas, the prince of theologians, teaches, "that Christ

wrought miracles by his own power, and not by prayer, as others did"[16688]. And St. Cyril says, that he proved, by the very miracles he wrought, that he was the true Son of God, since he performed them not by the power of another, but by his own : "Non accipiebat alienam virtutem." Only once, says St. Thomas[16689], did he show that he obtained from his Father the power to work miracles; that was in the resurrection of Lazarus, when imploring the power of his Father, he said : " I know that thou nearest me always, but because of the people who stand about have I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me" (John, xi, 42). But, as the holy Doctor remarks, he did this for our instruction, to show us that in our necessities we should have recourse to God, as he had. St. Ambrose, then, tells us not to imagine, from this fact of Lazarus, that our Saviour prayed to his Father for power to perform the miracle, as if he had not power to work it himself; that prayer, he says, was intended for our instruction : " Noli insidiatrices aperire aures, ut putcs Filium Dei quasi infirmum rogare, ut impetret quod implere non posit. . . . . . ad praecepta virtutis suae nos informat exemplo"[16690]. St. Hilary says just the same; but he also assigns another reason :Christ, he says, did not require to pray, but he did so to make us believe that he was in reality the Son of God : "Non prece eguit, pro nobis oravit, ne Filius ignoraretur"[16691]. St. Ambrose[16692] remarks, that when Jesus Christ wished, he did not pray, but commanded, and all creatures obeyed the sea, the winds, and diseases. He commanded the sea to be at rest, and it obeyed : " Peace, be still" (Mark, iv, 39). He commanded that disease should leave the sick, and they were made whole : "Virtue went out from him, and healed all" (Luke, vi, 19). He himself tells us that he could do, and did, everything equal to his Divine Father : "For whatsoever things he (the Father) doth, these the Son also doth in like manner For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and giveth life, so the Son also giveth life to whom he will" (John, v, 19, 21).

43. St. Thomas says[16693] that the miracles alone which Christ wrought were sufficient to make manifest the Divine power which he possessed : " Ex hoc ostendebatur, quod haberet virtutem coaequalem Deo Patri." This was what our Lord said to the Jews when they were about to stone him : "Many good works have I showed from my Father; for which of those works do you stone me ?The Jews answered him : For a good work we

stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, maketh thyself God. Jesus answered them :You say :Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God ? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works," &c. (John, x, 32, &c.) We have said enough on this subject.

V. THE HOLY GHOST WAS NOT SENT TO THE APOSTLES BY JESUS CHRIST, BUT BY THE FATHER ALONE, AT THE PRAYER OF CHRIST

44. Berruyer says that the Holy Ghost was not sent to the Apostles by Jesus Christ, but by the Father, at his prayer : " Ad orationem Jcsu Christi, quae voluntatis ejus efficacis signum erit, mittet Pater Spiritum Sanctum. Quae quasi raptim delibavimus de Jesu Christo missuro Spiritum Sanctum, quatenus homo Deus est Patrem rogaturus."

45. This error is also a necessary consequence of the former ones; that is, Jesus Christ, the Word, did not operate, but the Humanity alone, or the Man made the Son of one God subsisting in three Persons, by reason of the union of the Person of the Word with the Humanity; and from this false supposition he deduces this present falsehood, that the Holy Ghost was not sent by Jesus Christ, but by the Father, at the prayer of Jesus Christ. If he said that the Holy Ghost does not proceed from the Word, but from the Father alone, he would fall into the Greek heresy already refuted (Ref. iv); but he rather leans to the heresy of Nestorius, who, admitting two Persons in Christ, a Divine and a human Person, said, consequently, that the Divine Person dwelling in Jesus Christ, together with the Father, sent the Holy Ghost; and the human Person in Christ obtained from the Father, by his prayers, that the Holy Spirit should be sent. Berruyer does not expressly say this; but when he asserts that the Holy Ghost was not sent by Jesus Christ, only by his prayer alone, he appears to believe, either that there is no Divine Person in Christ at all, or that there are two Persons one Divine, which sends, of himself, the Holy Ghost; the other human, which obtains, by his prayers, that he may be sent. He shows that that is his opinion, when he says that in Jesus Christ it was the Humanity alone that acted and suffered, that is, the Man alone made in time the Son of God by the whole three Persons. This was not, certainly, the Word who was born of the Father alone before all ages.

But the Word, he says, was already united to the Humanity of Christ in unity of Person; but then we should remember, that according to his opinion the Word had nothing to do, for it was only the Humanity that acted in Christ. That being the case, of what service was the union of the Word in unity of Person with the Humanity ?Merely, as he said, that by means of the hypostatic union Christ might be made the Son of God, of the three Divine Persons; and hence, he says, the operations of Christ were not elicited by the Word, but merely by his humanity, and the hypostatic union gave no value to his actions: “in ratione principii agentis unio hypostatica nihil omnino contulit.”

46. With what face could Berruyer assert that the Holy Ghost was not sent by Jesus Christ, when he himself several times said he was, and promised his Apostles that he would send them the Paraclete : “ But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father” (John, xv, 26); “For if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (John, xvi, 7). Listen to this !Christ says that he sent the Holy Ghost; and Berruyer says that the Holy Ghost was not sent by him, but only at his prayer. Perhaps he will argue that Christ himself said : “ I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete” (John, xiv, 16). But we answer with St. Augustine, that Christ then spoke as man; but when he spoke as God, he said not once, but several times, “ whom I will send to you.” And again he says : “The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things” (John, xiv, 26). St. Cyril, explaining this text, says, “ in my name,” that is, by me, because he proceeds from me. It is certain the Holy Ghost could not be sent unless by the Divine Persons alone, who were his Principle, the Father and the Son. If, then, he was sent by Jesus Christ, there can be no doubt that he was sent by the Word, who operated in Jesus Christ, and the Word being equal to the Father, and with the Father, co-principle of the Holy Ghost, had no necessity to pray to the Father (as Berruyer says) that he might be sent; for as the Father sent him, so did he likewise.

VI. OTHER ERRORS OF BERRUYER ON DIFFERENT SUBJECTS

47. Those writers who have refuted Berruyer’s work remark several other errors which, though they may not be clearly opposed to Faith, still, in my opinion, are most extravagant, and totally opposed to the general opinion of Fathers and Theologians. I will here refute some of the most strange and reprehensible.

48. In one place he says : “ Revelatione deficiente, cum nempe Deus ob latentes causas eam nobis denegare vult, non est cur non teneamur saltem o bjecta credere, quibus religio naturalis fundatur.” Speaking here of the revelation of the mysteries of the Faith, he says, that should no such revelation be made to us, we are, at all events, obliged to believe those objects on which natural religion is based. And then he assigns the reasons subsequently : “ Religio pure naturalis, si Deus ea sola contentus esse voluisset, propriam fidem, ac revelationem suo habuisset modo, quibus Deus ipse in fidelium cordibus, et animo inalienabilia jura sua exercuisset.” Now the extravagance of this doctrine is only equalled by the confused manner in which it is stated. It would appear that he admits that true believers can be found professing mere natural religion alone, which, according to him, has, in a certain way, its own faith, and its own revelation. Then in mere natural religion there must be a faith and revelation with which God is satisfied. But, says Berruyer’s friend, he intends this a mere hypothesis; but this does not render it less objectionable, for it would lead us to believe that God would be satisfied with a religion purely natural, without faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, and sufficient to save its professors. St. Paul answers this, however, for he says : “Then Christ died in vain” (Gal. ii, 21.) If natural religion be sufficient to save those who neither believe nor hope in Jesus Christ, then he died in vain, for man’s salvation. St. Peter, on the contrary, says that salvation can only be obtained in Christ: “Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved” (Acts, iv, 12). If any infidels, either under the New or Old Law have been saved, it has only been because they knew the Grace of the Redeemer, and hence St. Augustine says that it was granted to no person to live according to God, and save his soul, to whom Jesus Christ has not been revealed, either as promised or already come : “ Divinitas autem provisum fuisse non dubito, ut ex hoc uno sciremus etiam per alias Gentes esse potuisse, qui secundum Deum vixerunt, eique placuerunt, pertinentes ad spiritualem Jerusalem :

quod nemini concessum fuisse credendum est, nisi cui divinitus revelatus est unus Mediatur Dei, et hominum homo Christus Jesus, qui venturus in carne sic antiquis Sanctis praenunciabatur, quemadmodum nobis venisse nuntiatus est”[16694].

49. This is the faith required for the just man to live always united with God : “The just man liveth by faith,” says the Apostle : “But that in the law no man is justified with God it is manifest, because the just man liveth by faith” (Gal. iii, 11). No one, says St. Paul, can render himself just in the sight of God, by the law alone, which imposes commandments, but gives no strength to fulfil them. Neither can we, since the fall of Adam, fulfil them merely by the strength of our free will; the assistance of Grace is requisite, which we should implore from God, and hope for through the mediation of our Redeemer.

“ Ea quippe fides,” says St. Augustine[16695], “justos sanavit antiques, quae sanat, et nos, idest Jesu-Christi, fides mortis ejus.” In another passage he tells us the reason of this[16696]: “ Quia sicut credimus nos Christum venisse, sic illi venturum; sicut nos mortuum, ita ilia moriturum.” Where the Jews went astray was in presuming, without prayer, or faith in a Mediator to come, to be able to observe the law imposed on them. When God commanded Moses to ask them if they wished to perform all that he would reveal to them, they answered : “All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do” (Exod. xix, 8). But after this promise our Lord said to them : “Who shall give them to have such a mind to fear me, and to keep all my commandments at all times ?” (Deut. vi, 29). They say that they desire to fulfil the commandments, but who will give them power to do so ? By this God means that if they had the presumption to hope to fulfil them, without praying for Divine assistance, they could never accomplish it. Hence it was that immediately after they forsook the Lord, and adored the golden calf.

50. The Gentiles, who, by power of their own wills alone expected to make themselves just, were even more blind than the Jews. What more has Jupiter, says Seneca, than other good men, only a longer life : “ Jupiter quo antecedit virum bonum ? diutius bonus est. Sapiens nihilo so minoris aestimat, quod virtute ejus spatio breviore clauduntur”[16697] And again he says Jupiter despises worldly things, because he can make no use of them, but the wise man despises them, because it is his will to do so : “Jupiter uti

illis non potest, Sapiens non vult”[16698]. A wise man, he says, is like a God in everything, only that he is mortal : “ Sapiens, excepta mortalitate, similis Deo”[16699]. Cicero said we could not glory in virtue, if it was given to us by God : “ Do virtute rete gloriamur, quod non contingeret, si id donum a Deo, non a nobis, haberemus”[16700].

And again he says : “ Jovem optimum maximum appellant, non quod nos justos, sapientes efficiat, sed quod incolumes, opulentos,” &c. See here the pride of those wise men of the world, who said that virtue and wisdom belonged to themselves, and did not come from God.

51. It was this presumption which blinded them more and more every day. The most learned among their sages, their philosophers, as they had a greater share of pride, were the most blind, and although the light of nature taught them to know that there was but one God, the Lord and Creator of all things, still, as the Apostle says, they did not avail themselves of it to thank and praise God as they ought : “Because that, when they knew God they have not glorified him as God, or given thanks :but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. For professing themselves to be wise they became fools” (Rom. i, 21). The presumption of their own wisdom increased their folly. Nay, so great was their blindness that they venerated as Gods not only their fellow-mortals, but the beasts of the field : “And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds and of four-footed beasts and of creeping things” (ver. 22.) Hence it was that God deservedly abandoned them to their own wicked desires, and they slavishly obeyed their most brutal and detestable passions : “Wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their heart, unto uncleanness,” &c. (ver. 24). The most celebrated among the ancient sages is Socrates, who, it is said, was persecuted by the Idolaters, for teaching that there was but one supreme God, and still he called them who accused him of not adoring the gods of his country calumniators, and ordered his disciple Zenophon before his death to sacrifice a cock he had in his house in honour of Esculapius. St. Augustine tells us[16701] that Plato thought sacrifices ought to be offered to a multiplicity of gods. The most enlightened among the Gentiles, the great Cicero, though he knew there was only one supreme God, still wished that all the gods recognised in Rome should be adored. Such is the wisdom of

the sages of Paganism, and such is the faith and natural religion of the Gentiles which Berruyer exalts so much that he says that it could, without the knowledge of Jesus Christ, make people good and innocent, and adopted children of God.

52. We now proceed to examine the other foolish opinions of this work. He says : "Relate ad cognitiones explicitas, aut media necessaria, quae deficere possent, ut eveherentur ad adoptionem filiorum, dignique fierent cralorum remuneratione, praesumere debemus, quod viarum ordinariarum defectu in animabus rectis ac innocentibus bonus Dominus cui deservimus, attenta Filii sui mcdiatione, opus suum perficeret qui busdam omnipotentiae rationibus, quas liber um ipsi est nobis haud dctegere"[16702]. He says, then, that when the means necessary for salvation are wanting, we ought to presume that God will save the souls of the upright and innocent, by certain measures of his omnipotence, which he has not revealed to us. What an immensity of folly in few words. He calls those souls upright and innocent who have no knowledge of the means necessary for salvation, and, consequently, know nothing of the mediation of the Redeemer a knowledge of which, as we have seen, has been, at all times, necessary for the children of Adam. Perhaps, these upright and innocent souls were created before Adam himself, for, if they were born after his fall, they are undoubtedly children of wrath. How, then, can they be exalted up to the adoption of the children of God, and, without faith in Jesus Christ (out of whom there is no salvation), and without Baptism, enter into heaven, and enjoy the beatific vision of God? We have always believed, and do still, that there is no other way of obtaining salvation, but by the mediation of Christ. He himself says : "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John, xiv, 6). And again : " I am the door; by me, if any man go in, he shall be saved" (John, x, 9). St. Paul says : "For by him we have access to the Father" (Ephes. ii, 18). Berruyer, however, tells us that there is another way a hidden one, by which God saves those upright souls who live in the religion of nature a way, of which neither Scripture, Fathers, nor Ecclesiastical Writers tell us anything. All Grace and hope of salvation is promised to mankind, through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

If you read Selvaggi, the Annotator of Moshoim[16703], you will see that all the Prophecies of the Old Testament, and even the historical facts narrated, all speak of this in a prophetic sense, as St. Paul says : “ These things were done in a figure” (I. Cor. x, 6).Our Saviour himself proved to the disciples, in the journey to Emmaus, that all the Scriptures of the Old Law spoke of him : “Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning him” (Luke, xxiv, 27). And still Berruyer says, that souls, under the Law of Nature, were adopted as Children of God, without any knowledge of the mediation of Jesus Christ.

53. How could those persons obtain the adoption of the children of God without Jesus Christ, when it is he who has given to the Faithful the power “to become the children of God.” Berruyer says : “ Quod adoptio prima, eaque gratuito, cujus virtute ab Adamo usque ad Christum, intuitu Christi venturi fideles omnes sive ex Israel, sive ex Gentibus facti sunt filii Dei, non dederit Deo nisi filios minores semper et parvulos usque ad tempus praefinitum a Patre. Vetus haec itaque adoptio praeparabat aliam, et novam quasi parturiebat adoptionem superioris ordinis.” He then admits two adoptions the first and the second. The latter is that which exists in the New Law; the former, that by which all those who have received the Faith among the Jews or Gentiles, in regard to the promised Messiah, and these were only, as it were, younger children of God, minors. This ancient adoption, he said, prepared, and, we may say, brought forth, another one of a superior order; but those who were adopted under this ancient one, scarcely deserved to be named among the faithful “ Vix filiorum nomen obtinerent.” It would take volumes to examine all the extravagant opinions and extraordinary crotchets of this writer, which were never heard of by Theologians before. The adoption of children of God, as St. Thomas says[16704], gives them a right to a share in his birthright that is, Eternal Beatitude. Now, supposing Berruyer’s system to be true, as the ancient adoption was of an inferior order, we ask, would it give a right to entire beatitude, or only to an inferior or partial sort, corresponding to the adoption ? It is quite enough to state such paradoxical opinions, and the reader will perceive that they refute themselves. The truth of the matter is, that there never was but one true Religion, which never had any other object but God, nor no way of approaching to God unless through Jesus Christ.

It is the blood of Jesus Christ which has taken away all the sins of the world, and saved all those who are saved, and it is the Grace of Jesus Christ that has given children to God. Bcrruycr says, that the Natural Law inspired Faith, Hope, and Charity. What folly !These Divine virtues are gifts infused by God; and how, then, could they be inspired by the Law of Nature. Why, Felagius himself never went so far as that.

54. In another place, he says : "Per annos quatuor millo quotquot fucrunt primogeniti, et sibi successerunt in heriditate nominis illius, Filius Hominis, debitum nascendo contraxerunt." And again : "Per Adami hominum Parentis, et Primogeniti lapsum oneratum est nomen illud, sancto quidem, sed poenali debito satisfaciendi Deo in rigore justitise, et peccata hominum expiandi." Berruyer then says that, for four thousand years, the first-born were obliged to make satisfaction for the sins of mankind. This opinion would bear rather heavy on me, as I have the misfortune to be the first-born of my family, and it would be too hard that I should make atonement, not only for my own manifold sins, but also for the crimes of others. But can he tell us where this obligation is laid down. He appears to think that the law of nature imposed it : " Erat praeceptum illud quantum ad substantiam naturale." But no one with a grain of sense will admit this to be a precept of the law of nature, when neither the Scriptures nor the Canons of the Church make any allusion to it. It is not, then, imposed by the law of nature, nor by any positive command of God, for all children of Adam, as well as the first-born, are born with the guilt of original sin (with the exception of our Lord and his Immaculate Mother), and all are equally bound to have themselves cleaned from this stain.

55. Berruyer leaves the first-born alone, then, and applies this new doctrine of his to our Lord. All those, he says, from whom Jesus Christ sprung were first-born down to Joseph, and hence, in the person of Christ, by the succession inherited from St. Joseph, all the rights and all the debts of his first-born ancestors was united; but as none of these could satisfy the Divine justice, the Saviour, who alone could do so, was bound to make satisfaction for all, for he was the chief among the first-born, and on that account, he says, he was called the Son of Man. This title, however, St. Augustine says, was applied to our Lord as a title of humility, and not of majority or obligation. As the Son of Man, then, he says, he was the first-born among men; and as the Son of God, he was bound, according to the

rigour of justice, to sacrifice himself to God for his glory, and the salvation of mankind : “ Dobitum contraxerat in rigore justitiae fundatum, qui natus erat Filius hominis, homo Primogenitus simul Dei Unigenitus, ut so Pontifex idem, et hostia ad gloriam Dei restituendam, salutemque hominum rcdimendam Deo Patri suo exhiberet.” Hence, he says that Christ, by a natural precept, was bound, ex condigno, to satisfy the Divine Justice by his Passion : “ Offere Se tamen ad satisfaciendum Deo ex condigno, et ad expiandum hominis peccatum, quo satis erat passione sua, Jesus Christus Filius hominis, et Filius Dei praecepto naturali obligabatur.” Christ, therefore, he says, as the Son of Man, and the first-born of man, contracted a debt, obliging him, in rigorous justice, to atone to God, by his Passion, for the sins of mankind. We answer, that our Saviour could not, either as Son of Man, or first-born of man, contract this strict obligation to make satisfaction for mankind. He could not be obliged, as the Son of Man, for it would be blasphemous to assert that he incurred original sin : “ Accepit enim hominem, says St. Thomas[16705], absque peccato.” Neither could he be obliged to it, as the first-born among men. It is true, St. Paul calls him the first-born among many brethren; but we must understand in what sense the Apostle applies this term. The text says : “For whom he foreknew he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren” (Rom. viii, 29). The Apostle here instructs us, that those whom God has foreseen will be saved, he has predestined to be made like unto Jesus Christ, in holiness and patience, poor, despised, and persecuted, like him on earth.

56. Berruyer, however, asserts, that according to strict justice Christ could not be the mediator of all mankind, if he was not at the same time Man-God, and the Son of God, and thus make full satisfaction for the sins of man. But St. Thomas says[16706] that God could be satisfied in two ways in regard to man’s sin, perfectly and imperfectly perfectly, by the satisfaction given him by a Divine Person, such as was given him by Jesus Christ; imperfectly, by accepting the satisfaction which man himself could make, and which would be sufficient, if God wished to accept it. St. Augustine says those are fools who teach that God could save mankind in no other manner, unless by becoming man himself, and suffering all he did. He could do so if he wished, says the Saint; but then their folly would not be satisfied

: “ Sunt stulti qui dicunt: Non poterat aliter sapientia Dei homines liberare, nisi susciperet hominem, et a peccatoribus omnia ilia pateretur. Quibus dicimus, poterat omnino; sed si aliter faceret, similiter vestra? stultitiae displiceret “[16707].

57. Such being the case, it is insufferable to hear Berruyer assert that Christ, as the Son of Man, and firstborn of man, had contracted, in rigorous justice, the obligation of sacrificing himself to God, by dying for the satisfaction of man’s sins, and obtaining salvation for them. It is true in another place he says that the Incarnation of the Son of God was not a matter of necessity, but merely proceeded from God’s goodness alone; but then he contradicts himself (see n. 55). No matter what his meaning was, one thing is certain that Christ suffered for us, not because he was obliged to do so by necessity, but of his own free will, because he voluntarily offered himself up to suffer and die for the salvation of mankind : “ He was offered because it was his own will” (Isaias, liii, 7). He says himself: “I lay down my life no man taketh it away from me, I lay it down of myself” (John, x, 17, 18). In that, says St. John, he shows the extraordinary love he bore to mankind, when he sacrificed even his life for them : “In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us. This sacrifice of love was called his decease by Moses and Elias on the Mount of Thabor : “They spoke of his decease, which he should accomplish in Jerusalem.”

58. I think I have said enough about Berruyer’s errors; the chief and most pernicious of all, the first and third, I have rather diffusely refuted. In these the fanatical author labours to throw into confusion all that the Scriptures and Councils teach regarding the great mystery of the Incarnation, the foundation of Christianity itself, and of our salvation. In conclusion, I protest that all that I have written in this Work, and especially in the Refutation of Heresies, I submit to the judgment of the Church. My only glory is, that I am her obedient child, and as such I hope to live and die.

END OF THE REFUTATION. EXHORTATION TO CATHOLICS

DEAR READER Leave heretics in their wilful blindness I mean wilful when they wish to live deceived and pay no attention to the fallacies by which they would deceive you. Hold on by the sure and firm anchor of the

Catholic Church, through which God has promised to teach us the true faith. We should place all our hope of eternal salvation in the mercy of God and the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour, but still we should co-operate, our selves, by the observance of the Divine Commandments, and the practice of virtue, and not follow the opinion of the Innovators, who say that faith alone in the merits of Jesus Christ will save us, without works; that God is the author both of all the good and all the evil we do; that salvation or damnation has been decreed for us from all eternity, and, consequently, we can do nothing to obtain the one or avoid the other. God tells us that he wishes all to be saved, and gives to all grace to obtain eternal salvation; he has promised to listen to those who pray to him, so that if we are lost, it is solely through our own fault. He also tells us that if we are saved it must be by those means of salvation which he has given us, the fulfilment of his holy law, the Sacraments by which the merits of Christ are communicated to us, prayer, by which we obtain the grace we stand in need of; and this is the order of the decree of God's predestination or reprobation, to give eternal life to those who correspond to his grace, and to punish those who despise it.

The devil always strives to deceive heretics, by suggesting to them that they can be saved in their belief. This was what Theodore Beza said to St. Francis de Sales, when hard pressed by him on the importance of salvation : " I hope to be saved in my own religion." Unhappy hope !which only keeps them in error here, and exposes them to eternal perdition hereafter, when the error cannot be remedied, I think the danger of eternal perdition, by dying separated from the Church, should be a sufficient motive to overt every heretic. It was this that made Henry IV. forsake Calvinism, and become a Catholic. He assembled a conference of Catholics and Calvinists, and after listening for a time to their arguments, he asked the Calvinistic Doctors if it was possible a person could be saved in the Catholic faith; they answered that it was; "then, said the king, if the faith of the Roman Church secures salvation, and the Reformed faith is at least doubtful, I will take the safe side, and become a Catholic."

All the misfortunes of unbelievers spring from too great an attachment to the things of this life. This sickness of heart weakens and darkens the understanding, and leads many to eternal ruin. If they would try to heal their hearts by purging them of their vices, they would soon receive light, which would show them the necessity of joining the Catholic Church, where alone is salvation. My dear Catholics, let us thank the Divine goodness, who, among so many infidels and heretics has given us the grace to be born and live in the bosom of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, and let us take heed and not be ungrateful for so great a benefit. Let us take care and correspond to the Divine Grace, for if we should be lost (which God forbid), this very benefit of Grace conferred on us would be one of our greatest torments in hell.

THE END

UNIFORMITY WITH GOD’S WILL

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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Uniformity with God’s Will

CONTENTS

INDEX

UNIFORMITY WITH GOD’S WILL

- CONTENTS
- Uniformity with God’s Will
    - PREFACE
    - UNIFORMITY WITH GOD’S WILL
    - *1* EXCELLENCE OF THIS VIRTUE
    - *2* UNIFORMITY IN ALL THINGS
    - *3* HAPPINESS DERIVING FROM PERFECT UNIFORMITY
    - *4* GOD WILLS OUR GOOD
    - *5* SPECIAL PRACTICES OF UNIFORMITY
    - *6* SPIRITUAL DESOLATION
    - *7* CONCLUSION

Uniformity with God’s Will

PREFACE

In Volume 1, Opere Ascetiche di S. Alfonso M. de Liguori, Roma, 1933, “Uniformity with God’s Will” is included as one of three works under the heading, “Lesser Works on Divine Love.” There is no preface in the Italian original. However, it has been thought well to provide one here.

Prof. Candido M. Romano[16708] says this brochure was written probably in 1755, as appears from a letter by the Saint, under date of Nov. 2, 1755, to Sister Giannastasio, at Cava. Romano goes on to say:

> “This (i.e. God’s will) was for Alphonsus a theme of predilection, a theme dearest to his heart. Just as St. Ignatius stressed ‘the greater glory of God,’ St. Alphonsus in all his works, gave prominence to ‘the greater good pleasure of God.’ Most likely the occasion that brought forth this treatise was the death, in 1753, of Father Paul Cafaro, C.SS.R., St. Alphonsus’ confessor and director. The death of this worthy priest deeply affected the Saint and he expressed his sentiments in a poem on God’s will. The wide acclaim it received may have suggested to him the thought that a tract on the same subject would be helpful to the souls of others. If this be true, his surmise proved correct, for the appearance of his subsequent pamphlet was greeted with instant favor.”

Cardinal Villecourt, in his Life of St. Alphonsus, quotes long passages from this pamphlet and ends by saying: “Our Saint frequently read it himself and when his sight had failed he arranged to have it read to him by others.”

This brochure bears the stamp of Alphonsian simplicity of style and solidity of doctrine. Moreover the instances he cites from the lives of the saints have a gentle graciousness and contain a fragrance that is redolent of the Fioretti of St. Francis of Assisi.

Through God’s grace and our Lady’s prayers may a diligent reading of the book bring us far along the way of perfection by the cultivation of uniformity with God’s holy will!

Thomas W. Tobin, C.SS.R.

Oct. 16, 1951. Feast of St. Gerard Majella, C.SS.R.

UNIFORMITY WITH GOD’S WILL

1

EXCELLENCE OF THIS VIRTUE

Perfection is founded entirely on the love of God: “Charity is the bond of perfection;” (Col. 3:14) and perfect love of God means the complete union of our will with God’s: “The principal effect of love is so to unite the wills of those who love each other as to make them will the same things.”[16709] It follows then, that the more one unites his will with the divine will, the greater will be his love of God. Mortification, meditation, receiving Holy Communion, acts of fraternal charity are all certainly pleasing to God—but only when they are in accordance with his will. When they do not accord with God’s will, he not only finds no pleasure in them, but he even rejects them utterly and punishes them.

To illustrate:—A man has two servants. One works unremittingly all day long—but according to his own devices; the other, conceivably, works less, but he does do what he is told. This latter of course is going to find favor in the eyes of his master; the other will not. Now, in applying this example, we may ask: Why should we perform actions for God’s glory if they are not going to be acceptable to him? God does not want sacrifices, the prophet Samuel told King Saul, but he does want obedience to his will: “Doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? For obedience is better than sacrifices; and to hearken, rather than to offer the fat of rams. Because it is like the sin of witchcraft to rebel; and like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey.” (1 Kgs. 15:22, 23). The man who follows his own will independently of God’s, is guilty of a kind of idolatry. Instead of adoring God’s will, he, in a certain sense, adores his own.

The greatest glory we can give to God is to do his will in everything. Our Redeemer came on earth to glorify his heavenly Father and to teach us by his example how to do the same. St. Paul represents him saying to his eternal Father: “Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not: But a body thou hast fitted to me . . . Then said I: Behold I come to do thy will, O God.” (Hab. 10:5–7). Thou hast refused the victims offered thee by man; thou dost will that I sacrifice my body to thee. Behold me ready to do thy will.

Our Lord frequently declared that he had come on earth not to do his own will, but solely that of his Father: “I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.” (John 6:38). He spoke in the same strain in the garden when he went forth to meet his enemies who had come to seize him and to lead him to death: “But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I; arise and let us go hence.” (John 14:31). Furthermore, he said he would recognize as his brother, him who would do his will: “Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother. (Matt. 12:50).

To do God’s will—this was the goal upon which the saints constantly fixed their gaze. They were fully persuaded that in this consists the entire perfection of the soul. Blessed Henry Suso used to say: “It is not God’s will that we should abound in spiritual delights, but that in all things we should submit to his holy will.”[16710] “Those who give themselves to prayer,” says St. Teresa, “should concentrate solely on this: the conformity of their wills with the divine will. They should be convinced that this constitutes their highest perfection. The more fully they practice this, the greater the gifts they will receive from God, and the greater the progress they will make in the interior life.”[16711] A certain Dominican nun was vouchsafed a vision of Heaven one day. She recognized there some persons she had known during their mortal life on earth. It was told her these souls were raised to the sublime heights of the seraphs on account of the uniformity of their wills with that of God’s during their lifetime here on earth. Blessed Henry Suso, mentioned above, said of himself: “I would rather be the vilest worm on earth by God’s will, than be a seraph by my own.”[16712]

During our sojourn in this world, we should learn from the saints now in Heaven, how to love God. The pure and perfect love of God they enjoy there, consists in uniting themselves perfectly to his will. It would be the greatest delight of the seraphs to pile up sand on the seashore or to pull weeds in a garden for all eternity, if they found out such was God’s will. Our Lord himself teaches us to ask to do the will of God on earth as the saints do it in Heaven: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matt. 6:10).

Because David fulfilled all his wishes, God called him a man after his own heart: “I have found David . . . a man according to my own heart, who shall do all my wills.” (Acts 13:22). David was always ready to embrace the divine will, as he frequently protested: “My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready.” (Ps. 56:8). He asked God for one thing alone—to teach him to do his will: “Teach me to do thy will.” (Ps. 142:10).

A single act of uniformity with the divine will suffices to make a saint. Behold while Saul was persecuting the Church, God enlightened him and converted him. What does Saul do? What does he say? Nothing else but to offer himself to do God’s will: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 13:22). In return the Lord calls him a vessel of election and an apostle of the gentiles: “This man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my name before the gentiles.”[16713] Absolutely ‘true—because he who gives his will to God, gives him everything. He who gives his goods in alms, his blood in scourgings, his food in fasting, gives God what he has. But he who gives God his will, gives himself, gives everything he is. Such a one can say: “Though I am poor, Lord, I give thee all I possess; but when I say I give thee my will, I have nothing left to give thee.” This is just what God does require of us: “My son, give me thy heart.” (Prov. 23:26). St. Augustine’s comment is: “There is nothing more pleasing we can offer God than to say to him: ‘Possess thyself of us.’”[16714] We cannot offer God anything more pleasing than to say: Take us, Lord, we give thee our entire will. Only let us know thy will and we will carry it out.

If we would completely rejoice the heart of God, let us strive in all things to conform ourselves to his divine will. Let us not only strive to conform ourselves, but also to unite ourselves to whatever dispositions God makes of us. Conformity signifies that we join our wills to the will of God. Uniformity means more—it means that we make one will of God’s will and ours, so that we will only what God wills; that God’s will alone, is our will. This is the summit of perfection and to it we should always aspire; this should be the goal of all our works, desires, meditations and prayers. To this end we should always invoke the aid of our holy patrons, our guardian angels, and above all, of our mother Mary, the most perfect of all the saints because she most perfectly embraced the divine will.

2

UNIFORMITY IN ALL THINGS

The essence of perfection is to embrace the will of God in all things, prosperous or adverse. In prosperity, even sinners find it easy to unite themselves to the divine will; but it takes saints to unite themselves to God's will when things go wrong and are painful to self-love. Our conduct in such instances is the measure of our love of God. St. John of Avila used to say: "One 'Blessed be God' in times of adversity, is worth more than a thousand acts of gratitude in times of prosperity."[16715]

Furthermore, we must unite ourselves to God's will not only in things that come to us directly from his hands, such as sickness, desolation, poverty, death of relatives, but likewise in those we suffer from man—for example, contempt, injustice, loss of reputation, loss of temporal goods and all kinds of persecution. On these occasions we must remember that whilst God does not will the sin, he does will our humiliation, our poverty, or our mortification, as the case may be. It is certain and of faith, that whatever happens, happens by the will of God: "I am the Lord forming the light and creating the darkness, making peace and creating evil." (Is. 45:6, 7). From God come all things, good as well as evil. We call adversities evil; actually they are good and meritorious, when we receive them as coming from God's hands: "Shall there be evil in a city which the Lord hath not done?" (Amos 3:6). "Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches are from God." (Eccli: 11:14).

It is true, when one offends us unjustly, God does not will his sin, nor does he concur in the sinner's bad will; but God does, in a general way, concur in the material action by which such a one strikes us, robs us or does us an injury, so that God certainly wills the offense we suffer and it comes to us from his hands. Thus the Lord told David he would be the author of those things he would suffer at the hands of Absalom: "I will raise up evils against thee out of thy own house, and I will take thy wives before thy face and give them to thy neighbor." (2 Kgs. 12:11). Hence too God told the Jews that in punishment for their sins, he would send the Assyrians to plunder them and spread destruction among them: "The Assyrian is the rod and staff of my anger . . . I will send him to take away the spoils." (Is. 10:5, 6). "Assyrian wickedness served as God's scourge for the Hebrews."[16716] is St. Augustine's comment on this text. And our Lord himself told St. Peter that his sacred passion came not so much from man as from his Father: "The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11).

When the messenger came to announce to Job that the Sabeans had plundered his goods and slain his children, he said: "The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away." (Job 1:21). He did not say: "The Lord hath given me my children and my possessions, and the Sabeans have taken them away." He realized that adversity had come upon him by the will of God. Therefore he added: "As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done. Blessed be the name of the Lord."[16717] We must not therefore consider the afflictions that come upon us as happening by chance or solely from the malice of men; we should be convinced that what happens, happens by the will of God. Apropos of this it is related that two martyrs, Epictetus and Atho, being put to the torture by having their bodies raked with iron hooks and burnt with flaming torches, kept repeating: "Work thy will upon us, O Lord." Arrived at the place of execution, they exclaimed: "Eternal God, be thou blessed in that thy will has been entirely accomplished in us."[16718]

Cesarius points up what we have been saying by offering this incident in the life of a certain monk: Externally his religious observance was the same as that of the other monks, but he had attained such sanctity that the mere touch of his garments healed the sick. Marveling at these deeds, since his life was no more exemplary than the lives of the other monks, the superior asked him one day what was the cause of these miracles.

He replied that he too was mystified and was at a loss how to account for such happenings. "What devotions do you practice?" asked the abbot. He answered that there was little or nothing special that he did beyond making a great deal of willing only what God willed, and that God had given him the grace of abandoning his will totally to the will of God.

“Prosperity does not lift me up, nor adversity cast me down,” added the monk. “I direct all my prayers to the end that God’s will may be done fully in me and by me.” “That raid that our enemies made against the monastery the other day, in which our stores were plundered, our granaries put to the torch and our cattle driven off—did not this misfortune cause you any resentment?” queried the abbot.

“No, Father,” came the reply. “On the contrary, I returned thanks to God—as is my custom in such circumstances—fully persuaded that God does all things, or permits all that happens, for his glory and for our greater good; thus I am always at peace, no matter what happens.” Seeing such uniformity with the will of God, the abbot no longer wondered why the monk worked so many miracles.[16719]

3

HAPPINESS DERIVING FROM PERFECT UNIFORMITY

Acting according to this pattern, one not only becomes holy but also enjoys perpetual serenity in this life. Alphonsus the Great, King of Aragon, being asked one day whom he considered the happiest person in the world, answered: “He who abandons himself to the will of God and accepts all things, prosperous and adverse, as coming from his hands.”[16720] “To those that love God, all things work together unto good.” (Rom. 8:28). Those who love God are always happy, because their whole happiness is to fulfill, even in adversity, the will of God. Afflictions do not mar their serenity, because by accepting misfortune, they know they give pleasure to their beloved Lord: “Whatever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad.” (Prov. 12:21). Indeed, what can be more satisfactory to a person than to experience the fulfillment of all his desires? This is the happy lot of the man who wills only what God wills, because everything that happens, save sin, happens through the will of God.

There is a story to this effect in the “Lives of the Fathers” about a farmer whose crops were more plentiful than those of his neighbors. On being asked how this happened with such unvarying regularity, he said he was not surprised because he always had the kind of weather he wanted. He was asked to explain. He said: “It is so because I want whatever kind of weather God wants, and because I do, he gives me the harvests I want.”[13] If souls resigned to God’s will are humiliated, says Salvian,[16721] they want to be humiliated; if they are poor, they want to be poor; in short, whatever happens is acceptable to them, hence they are truly at peace in this life. In cold and heat, in rain and wind, the soul united to God says: “I want it to be warm, to be cold, windy, to rain, because God wills it.”

This is the beautiful freedom of the sons of God, and it is worth vastly more than all the rank and distinction of blood and birth, more than all the kingdoms in the world. This is the abiding peace which, in the experience of the saints, “surpasseth all understanding.” (Phil. 4:7). It surpasses all pleasures rising from gratification of the senses, from social gatherings, banquets and other worldly amusements; vain and deceiving as they are, they captivate the senses for the time being, but bring no lasting contentment; rather they afflict man in the depth of his soul where alone true peace can reside.

Solomon, who tasted to satiety all the pleasures of the world and found them bitter, voiced his disillusionment thus: “But this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.” (Eccles. 4:16). “A fool,” says the Holy Spirit, “is changed as the moon; but a holy man continueth in wisdom as the sun.” (Eccus. 27:12). The fool, that is, the sinner, is as changeable as the moon, which today waxes and tomorrow wanes; today he laughs, tomorrow he cries; today he is meek as a lamb, tomorrow cross as a bear. Why? Because his peace of mind depends on the prosperity or the adversity he meets; he changes with the changes in the things that happen to him. The just man is like the sun, constant in his serenity, no matter what betides him. His calmness of soul is founded on his union with the will of God; hence he enjoys unruffled peace. This is the peace promised by the angel of the Nativity: “And on earth, peace to men of good will.” (Luke 2:14). Who are these “men of good will” if not those whose wills are united to the infinitely good and perfect will of God? “The good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God.” (Rom. 12:2).

By uniting themselves to the divine will, the saints have enjoyed paradise by anticipation in this life. Accustoming themselves to receive all things from the hands of God, says St. Dorotheus,[16722] the men of old maintained continual serenity of soul. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi derived such consolation at hearing the words “will of God,” that she usually fell into an ecstasy of love.[16723] The instances of jangling irritation that are bound to arise will not fail to make surface impact on the senses. This however will be experienced only in the inferior part of the soul; in the superior part will reign peace and tranquillity as long as our will remains united with God’s. Our Lord assured his apostles: “Your joy no man shall take from you . . . Your joy shall be full.” (John 16:22, 24). He who unites his will to God’s experiences a full and lasting joy: full, because he has what he wants, as was explained above; lasting, because no one can take his joy from him, since no one can prevent what God wills from happening.

The devout Father John Tauler[16724] relates this personal experience: For years he had prayed God to send him someone who would teach him the real spiritual life. One day, at prayer, he heard a voice saying: “Go to such and such a church and you will have the answer to your prayers.” He went and at the door of the church he found a beggar, barefooted and in rags. He greeted the mendicant saying: “Good day, my friend.”

“Thank you, sir, for your kind wishes, but I do not recall ever having had a ‘bad’ day.”

“Then God has certainly given you a very happy life.”

“That is very true, sir. I have never been unhappy. In saying this I am not making any rash statement either. This is the reason: When I have nothing to eat, I give thanks to God; when it rains or snows, I bless God’s providence; when someone insults me, drives me away, or otherwise mistreats me, I give glory to God. I said I’ve never had an unhappy day, and it’s the truth, because I am accustomed to will unreservedly what God wills. Whatever happens to me, sweet or bitter, I gladly receive from his hands as what is best for me. Hence my unvarying happiness.”

> “Where did you find God?”
>
> “I found him where I left creatures.”
>
> “Who are you anyway?”
>
> “I am a king.”
>
> “And where is your kingdom?”
>
> “In my soul, where everything is in good order; where the passions obey reason, and reason obeys God.”
>
> “How have you come to such a state of perfection?”
>
> “By silence. I practice silence towards men, while I cultivate the habit of speaking with God. Conversing with God is the way I found and maintain my peace of soul.”

Union with God brought this poor beggar to the very heights of perfection. In his poverty he was richer than the mightiest monarch; in his sufferings, he was vastly happier than worldlings amid their worldly delights.

4

GOD WILLS OUR GOOD

O the supreme folly of those who resist the divine will! In God’s providence, no one can escape hardship: “Who resisteth his will?” (Rom. 9:19). A person who rails at God in adversity, suffers without merit; moreover by his lack of resignation he adds to his punishment in the next life and experiences greater disquietude of mind in this life: “Who resisteth him and hath had peace?” (Job 9:4). The screaming rage of the sick man in his pain, the whining complaints of the poor man in his destitution—what will they avail these people, except increase their unhappiness and bring them no relief? “Little man,” says St. Augustine, “grow up. What are you seeking in your search for happiness? Seek the one good that embraces all others.”[16725] Whom do you seek, friend, if you seek not God? Seek him, find him, cleave to him; bind your will to his with bands of steel and you will live always at peace in this life and in the next.

God wills only our good; God loves us more than anybody else can or does love us. His will is that no one should lose his soul, that everyone should save and sanctify his soul: “Not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.” (2 Ptr. 3:9). “This is the will of God, your sanctification. (1 Thess. 4:3). God has made the attainment of our happiness, his glory. Since he is by his nature infinite goodness, and since as St. Leo[16726] says goodness is diffusive of itself, God has a supreme desire to make us sharers of his goods and of his happiness. If then he sends us suffering in this life, it is for our own good: “All things work together unto goods.” (Rom. 8:28). Even chastisements come to us, not to crush us, but to make us mend our ways and save our souls: “Let us believe that these scourges of the Lord have happened for our amendment and not for our destruction.” (Judith 8:27).

God surrounds us with his loving care lest we suffer eternal damnation: "O Lord, thou hast crowned us as with a shield of thy good will." (Ps. 5:13). He is most solicitous for our welfare: "The Lord is solicitous for me." (Ps. 39:18). What can God deny us when he has given us his own son? "He that spared not even his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also, with him, given us all things?" (Rom. 8:32). Therefore we should most confidently abandon ourselves to all the dispositions of divine providence, since they are for our own good. In all that happens to us, let us say: "In peace, in the self same I will sleep, and I will rest: Because thou, O Lord, hast singularly settled me in hope." (Ps. 4:9, 10).

Let us place ourselves unreservedly in his hands because he will not fail to have care of us: "Casting all your care upon him, for he hath care of you." (1 Ptr. 5:7). Let us keep God in our thoughts and carry out his will, and he will think of us and of our welfare. Our Lord said to St. Catherine of Siena, "Daughter, think of me, and I will always think of you." Let us often repeat with the Spouse in the Canticle: "My beloved to me, and I to him." (Cant. 2:6).

St. Niles, abbot, used to say that our petitions should be, not that our wishes be done, but that God's holy will should be fulfilled in us and by us. When, therefore, something adverse happens to us, let us accept it from his hands, not only patiently, but even with gladness, as did the apostles "who went from the presence of the council rejoicing, that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus." (Acts 5:41). What greater consolation can come to a soul than to know that by patiently bearing some tribulation, it gives God the greatest pleasure in its power? Spiritual writers tell us that though the desire of certain souls to please God by their sufferings is acceptable to him, still more pleasing to him is the union of certain others with his will, so that their will is neither to rejoice nor to suffer, but to hold themselves completely amenable to his will, and they desire only that his holy will be fulfilled.

If, devout soul, it is your will to please God and live a life of serenity in this world, unite yourself always and in all things to the divine will. Reflect that all the sins of your past wicked life happened because you wandered from the path of God's will. For the future, embrace God's good pleasure and say to him in every happening: "Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight." (Matt. 27:46). When anything disagreeable happens, remember it comes from God and say at once, “This comes from God” and be at peace: “I was dumb and opened not my mouth, because thou hast done it.” (Ref. ??). Lord, since thou hast done this, I will be silent and accept it. Direct all your thoughts and prayers to this end, to beg God constantly in meditation, Communion, and visits to the Blessed Sacrament that he help you accomplish his holy will. Form the habit of offering yourself frequently to God by saying, “My God, behold me in thy presence; do with me and all that I have as thou pleasest.” This was the constant practice of St. Teresa. At least fifty times a day she offered herself to God, placing herself at his entire disposition and good pleasure.

How fortunate you, kind reader, if you too act thus! You will surely become a saint. Your life will be calm and peaceful; your death will be happy. At death all our hope of salvation will come from the testimony of our conscience as to whether or not we are dying resigned to God’s will. If during life we have embraced everything as coming from God’s hands, and if at death we embrace death in fulfillment of God’s holy will, we shall certainly save our souls and die the death of saints. Let us then abandon everything to God’s good pleasure, because being infinitely wise, he knows what is best for us; and being all-good and all-loving—having given his life for us—he wills what is best for us. Let us, as St. Basil counsels us, rest secure in the conviction that beyond the possibility of a doubt, God works to effect our welfare, infinitely better than we could ever hope to accomplish or desire it ourselves.

5

SPECIAL PRACTICES OF UNIFORMITY

Let us now take up in a practical way the consideration of those matters in which we should unite ourselves to God’s will.

1. In external matters. In times of great heat, cold or rain; in times of famine, epidemics and similar occasions we should refrain from expressions like these: “What unbearable heat!” “What piercing cold!” “What a tragedy!” In these instances we should avoid expressions indicating opposition to God’s will. We should want things to be just as they are, because it is God who thus disposes them. An incident in point would be this one: Late one night St. Francis Borgia arrived unexpectedly at a Jesuit house, in a snowstorm. He knocked and knocked on the door, but all to no purpose because the community being asleep, no one heard him. When morning came all were embarrassed for the discomfort he had experienced by having had to spend the night in the open. The saint, however, said he had enjoyed the greatest consolation during those long hours of the night by imagining that he saw our Lord up in the sky dropping the snowflakes down upon him.

2. In personal matters. In matters that affect us personally, let us acquiesce in God’s will. For example, in hunger, thirst, poverty, desolation, loss of reputation, let us always say: “Do thou build up or tear down, O Lord, as seems good in thy sight. I am content. I wish only what thou dost wish.” Thus too, says Rodriguez, should we act when the devil proposes certain hypothetical cases to us in order to wrest a sinful consent from us, or at least to cause us to be interiorly disturbed. For example: “What would you say or what would you do if some one were to say or do such and such a thing to you?” Let us dismiss the temptation by saying: “By God’s grace, I would say or do what God would want me to say or do.” Thus we shall free ourselves from imperfection and harassment.

3. Let us not lament if we suffer from some natural defect of body or mind; from poor memory, slowness of understanding, little ability, lameness or general bad health. What claim have we, or what obligation is God under, to give us a more brilliant mind or a more robust body? Who is ever offered a gift and then lays down the conditions upon which he will accept it? Let us thank God for what, in his pure goodness, he has given us and let us be content too with the manner in which he has given it to us.

Who knows? Perhaps if God had given us greater talent, better health, a more personable appearance, we might have lost our souls! Great talent and knowledge have caused many to be puffed up with the idea of their own importance and, in their pride, they have despised others. How easily those who have these gifts fall into grave danger to their salvation! How many on account of physical beauty or robust health have plunged headlong into a life of debauchery! How many, on the contrary, who, by reason of poverty, infirmity or physical deformity, have become saints and have saved their souls, who, given health, wealth or physical attractiveness had else lost their souls! Let us then be content with what God has given us. “But one thing is necessary,” (Luke 10:42), and it is not beauty, not health, not talent. It is the salvation of our immortal souls.

4. It is especially necessary that we be resigned in corporal infirmities. We should willingly embrace them in the manner and for the length of time that God wills. We ought to make use of the ordinary remedies in time of sickness—such is God’s will; but if they are not effective, let us unite ourselves to God’s will and this will be better for us than would be our restoration to health. Let us say: “Lord, I wish neither to be well nor to remain sick; I want only what thou wilt.” Certainly, it is more virtuous not to repine in times of painful illness; still and all, when our sufferings are excessive, it is not wrong to let our friends know what we are enduring, and also to ask God to free us from our sufferings. Let it be understood, however, that the sufferings here referred to are actually excessive. It often happens that some, on the occasion of a slight illness, or even a slight indisposition, want the whole world to stand still and sympathize with them in their illnesses.

But where it is a case of real suffering, we have the example of our Lord, who, at the approach of his bitter passion, made known his state of soul to his disciples, saying: “My soul is sorrowful even unto death” (Matt. 26:38) and besought his eternal Father to deliver him from it: “Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me.” (Matt. 26:39). But our Lord likewise taught us what we should do when we have made such a petition, when he added: “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.”[16727]

How childish the pretense of those who protest they wish for health not to escape suffering, but to serve our Lord better by being able to observe their Rule, to serve the community, go to church, receive Communion, do penance, study, work for souls in the confessional and pulpit! Devout soul, tell me, why do you desire to do these things? To please God? Why then search any further to please God when you are sure God does not wish these prayers, Communions, penances or studies, but he does wish that you suffer patiently this sickness he sends you? Unite then your sufferings to those of our Lord.

“But,” you say, “I do not want to be sick for then I am useless, a burden to my Order, to my monastery.” But if you are united to and resigned to God’s will, you will realize that your superiors are likewise resigned to the dispositions of divine providence, and that they recognize the fact that you are a burden, not through indolence, but by the will of God. Ah, how often these desires and these laments are born, not of the love of God, but of the love of self! How many of them are so many pretexts for fleeing the will of God! Do we want to please God? When we find ourselves confined to our sickbed, let us utter this one prayer: “Thy will be done.” Let us repeat it time and time again and it will please God more than all our mortifications and devotions. There is no better way to serve God than cheerfully to embrace his holy will.

St. John of Avila once wrote to a sick priest: “My dear friend—Do not weary yourself planning what you would do if you were well, but be content to be sick for as long as God wishes. If you are seeking to carry out God’s will, what difference should it make to you whether you are sick or well?”[16728] The saint was perfectly right, for God is glorified not by our works, but by our resignation to, and by our union with, his holy will. In this respect St. Francis de Sales used to say we serve God better by our sufferings than by our actions.

Many times it will happen that proper medical attention or effective remedies will be lacking, or even that the doctor will not rightly diagnose our case. In such instances we must unite ourselves to the divine will which thus disposes of our physical health. The story is told of a client of St. Thomas of Canterbury, who being sick, went to the saint's tomb to obtain a cure. He returned home cured. But then he thought to himself: "Suppose it would be better for my soul's salvation if I remained sick, what point then is there in being well?" In this frame of mind he went back and asked the saint to intercede with God that he grant what would be best for his eternal salvation. His illness returned and he was perfectly content with the turn things had taken, being fully persuaded that God had thus disposed of him for his own good.

There is a similar account by Surio to the effect that a certain blind man obtained the restoration of his sight by praying to St. Bedasto, bishop. Thinking the matter over, he prayed again to his heavenly patron, but this time with the purpose that if the possession of his sight were not expedient for his soul, that his blindness should return. And that is exactly what happened—he was blind again. Therefore, in sickness it is better that we seek neither sickness nor health, but that we abandon ourselves to the will of God so that he may dispose of us as he wishes. However, if we decide to ask for health, let us do so at least always resigned and with the proviso that our bodily health may be conducive to the health of our soul. Otherwise our prayer will be defective and will remain unheard because our Lord does not answer prayers made without resignation to his holy will.

Sickness is the acid test of spirituality, because it discloses whether our virtue is real or sham. If the soul is not agitated, does not break out in lamentations, is not feverishly restless in seeking a cure, but instead is submissive to the doctors and to superiors, is serene and tranquil, completely resigned to God's will, it is a sign that that soul is well-grounded in virtue.

What of the whiner who complains of lack of attention? That his sufferings are beyond endurance? That the doctor does not know his business? What of the fainthearted soul who laments that the hand of God is too heavy upon him?

This story by St. Bonaventure in his "Life of St. Francis" is in point: On a certain occasion when the saint was suffering extraordinary physical pain, one of his religious meaning to sympathize with him, said in his simplicity: "My Father, pray God that he treat you a little more gently, for his hand seems heavy upon you just now.” Hearing this, St. Francis strongly resented the unhappy remark of his well-meaning brother, saying: “My good brother, did I not know that what you have just said was spoken in all simplicity, without realizing the implication of your words, I should never see you again because of your rashness in passing judgment on the dispositions of divine providence.” Whereupon, weak and wasted as he was by his illness, he got out of bed, knelt down, kissed the floor and prayed thus: “Lord, I thank thee for the sufferings thou art sending me. Send me more, if it be thy good pleasure. My pleasure is that you afflict me and spare me not, for the fulfillment of thy holy will is the greatest consolation of my life.”

6

SPIRITUAL DESOLATION

We ought to view in the light of God’s holy will, the loss of persons who are helpful to us in a spiritual or material way. Pious souls often fail in this respect by not being resigned to the dispositions of God’s holy will. Our sanctification comes fundamentally and essentially from God, not from spiritual directors. When God sends us a spiritual director, he wishes us to use him for our spiritual profit; but if he takes him away, he wants us to remain calm and unperturbed and to increase our confidence in his goodness by saying to him: “Lord, thou hast given me this help and now thou dost take it away. Blessed be thy holy will! I beg thee, teach me what I must do to serve thee.”

In this manner too, we should receive whatever other crosses God sends us. “But,” you reply, “these sufferings are really punishments.” The answer to that remark is: Are not the punishments God sends us in this life also graces and benefits? Our offenses against God must be atoned for somehow, either in this life or in the next. Hence we should all make St. Augustine’s prayer our own: “Lord, here cut, here burn and spare me not, but spare me in eternity!” Let us say with Job: “Let this be my comfort, that afflicting me with sorrow, he spare not.” (Job 6:10). Having merited hell for our sins, we should be consoled that God chastises us in this life, and animate ourselves to look upon such treatment as a pledge that God wishes to spare us in the next. When God sends us punishments let us say with the high-priest Heli: “It is the Lord, let him do what is good in his sight.” (1 Kgs. 3:18).

The time of spiritual desolation is also a time for being resigned. When a soul begins to cultivate the spiritual life, God usually showers his consolations upon her to wean her away from the world; but when he sees her making solid progress, he withdraws his hand to test her and to see if she will love and serve him without the reward of sensible consolations. “In this life," as St. Teresa used to say, "our lot is not to enjoy God, but to do his holy will." And again, "Love of God does not consist in experiencing his tendernesses, but in serving him with resolution and humility." And in yet another place, "God's true lovers are discovered in times of aridity and temptation."

Let the soul thank God when she experiences his loving endearments, but let her not repine when she finds herself left in desolation. It is important to lay great stress on this point, because some souls, beginners in the spiritual life, finding themselves in spiritual aridity, think God has abandoned them, or that the spiritual life is not for them; thus they give up the practice of prayer and lose what they have previously gained. The time of aridity is the best time to practice resignation to God's holy will. I do not say you will feel no pain in seeing yourself deprived of the sensible presence of God; it is impossible for the soul not to feel it and lament over it, when even our Lord cried out on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). In her sufferings, however, the soul should always be resigned to God's will.

The saints have all experienced desolations and abandonment of soul. "How impervious to things spiritual, my heart!" cries a St. Bernard. "No savor in pious reading, no pleasure in meditation nor in prayer!" For the most part it has been the common lot of the saints to encounter aridities; sensible consolations were the exceptions. Such things are rare occurrences granted to untried souls so that they may not halt on the road to sanctity; the real delights and happiness that will constitute their reward are reserved for Heaven. This earth is a place of merit which is acquired by suffering; Heaven is a place of reward and happiness. Hence, in this life the saints neither desired nor sought the joys of sensible fervor, but rather the fervor of the spirit toughened in the crucible of suffering. "O how much better it is," says St. John of Avila, "to endure aridity and temptation by God's will than to be raised to the heights of contemplation without God's will!"

But you say you would gladly endure desolation if you were certain that it comes from God, but you are tortured by the anxiety that your desolation comes by your own fault and is a punishment for your tepidity. Very well, let us suppose you are right; then get rid of your tepidity and exercise more diligence in the affairs of your soul. But because you are possibly experiencing spiritual darkness, are you going to get all wrought up, give up prayer, and thus make things twice as bad as they are?

Let us assume that this aridity is a punishment for your tepidity. Was it not God who sent it? Accept your desolation, as your just desserts and unite yourself to God's holy will. Did you not say that you merited hell? And now you are complaining? Perhaps you think God should send you consolations! Away with such ideas and be patient under God's hand. Take up your prayers again and continue to walk in the way you have entered upon; for the future, fear lest such laments come from too little humility and too little resignation to the will of God. Therefore be resigned and say: "Lord, I accept this punishment from thy hands, and I accept it for as long as it pleases thee; if it be thy will that I should be thus afflicted for all eternity, I am satisfied." Such a prayer, though hard to make, will be far more advantageous to you than the sweetest sensible consolations.

It is well to remember, however, that aridity is not always a chastisement; at times it is a disposition of divine providence for our greater spiritual profit and to keep us humble. Lest St. Paul become vain on account of the spiritual gifts he had received, the Lord permitted him to be tempted to impurity: "And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me." (2 Cor. 12:7).

Prayer made amid sensible devotion is not much of an achievement: "There is a friend, a companion at the table, and he will not abide in the day of distress." (Eccli 6:10). You would not consider the casual guest at your table a friend, but only him who assists you in your need without thought of benefit to himself. When God sends spiritual darkness and desolation, his true friends are known.

Palladius, the author of the "Lives of the Fathers of the Desert," experiencing great disgust in prayer, went seeking advice from the abbot Macarius. The saintly abbot gave him this counsel: "When you are tempted in times of dryness to give up praying because you seem to be wasting your time, say: 'Since I cannot pray, I will be satisfied just to remain on watch here in my cell for the love of Jesus Christ!' " Devout soul, you do the same when you are tempted to give up prayer just because you seem to be getting nowhere. Say: "I am going to stay here just to please God." St. Francis de Sales used to say that if we do nothing else but banish distractions and temptations in our prayers, the prayer is well made. Tauler states that persevering prayer in time of dryness will receive greater grace than prayer made amid great sensible devotion.

Rodriguez cites the case of a person who persevered forty years in prayer despite aridity, and experienced great spiritual strength as a result of it; on occasion, when through aridity he would omit meditation he felt spiritually weak and incapable of good deeds. St. Bonaventure and Gerson both say that persons who do not experience the recollection they would like to have in their meditations, often serve God better than they would do if they did have it; the reason is that lack of recollection keeps them more diligent and humble; otherwise they would become puffed up with spiritual pride and grow tepid, vainly believing they had reached the summit of sanctity.

What has been said of dryness holds true of temptations also. Certainly we should strive to avoid temptations; but if God wishes that we be tempted against faith, purity, or any other virtue, we should not give in to discouraging lamentations, but submit ourselves with resignation to God’s holy will. St. Paul asked to be freed from temptations to impurity and our Lord answered him, saying: “My grace is sufficient for thee.” (2 Cor. 12:9).

So should we act when we find ourselves victims of unrelenting temptations and God seemingly deaf to our prayers. Let us then say: “Lord, do with me, let happen to me what thou wilt; thy grace is sufficient for me. Only never let me lose this grace.” Consent to temptation, not temptation of itself, can make us lose the grace of God. Temptation resisted keeps us humble, brings us greater merit, makes us have frequent recourse to God, thus preserving us from offending him and unites us more closely to him in the bonds of his holy love.

Finally, we should be united to God’s will in regard to the time and manner of our death. One day St. Gertrude, while climbing up a small hill, lost her footing and fell into a ravine below. After her companions had come to her assistance, they asked her if while falling she had any fear of dying without the sacraments. “I earnestly hope and desire to have the benefit of the sacraments when death is at hand; still, to my way of thinking, the will of God is more important. I believe that the best disposition I could have to die a happy death would be to submit myself to whatever God would wish in my regard. For this reason I desire whatever kind of death God will be pleased to send me.”

In his “Dialogues,” St. Gregory tells of a certain priest, Santolo by name, who was captured by the Vandals and condemned to death. The barbarians told him to choose the manner of his death. He refused, saying: “I am in God’s hands and I gladly accept whatever kind of death he wishes me to suffer at your hands; I wish no other.” This reply was so pleasing to God that he miraculously stayed the hand of the executioner ready to behead him. The barbarians were so impressed by the miracle that they freed their prisoner. As regards the manner of our death, therefore, we should esteem that the best kind of death for us which God has designed for us. When therefore we think of our death, let our prayer be: “O Lord, only let me save my soul and I leave the manner of my death to thee!”

We should likewise unite ourselves to God’s will when the moment of death is near. What else is this earth but a prison where we suffer and where we are in constant danger of losing God? Hence David prayed: “Bring my soul out of prison.” (Ps. 141:8). St. Teresa too feared to lose God and when she would hear the striking of the clock, she would find consolation in the thought that the passing of the hour was an hour less of the danger of losing God.

St. John of Avila was convinced that every right-minded person should desire death on account of living in peril of losing divine grace. What can be more pleasant or desirable than by dying a good death, to have the assurance of no longer being able to lose the grace of God? Perhaps you will answer that you have as yet done nothing to deserve this reward. If it were God’s will that your life should end now, what would you be doing, living on here against his will? Who knows, you might fall into sin and be lost! Even if you escaped mortal sin, you could not live free from all sin. “Why are we so tenacious of life,” exclaims St. Bernard, “when the longer we live, the more we sin?”[16729] A single venial sin is more displeasing to God than all the good works we can perform.

Moreover, the person who has little desire for Heaven shows he has little love for God. The true lover desires to be with his beloved. We cannot see God while we remain here on earth; hence the saints have yearned for death so that they might go and behold their beloved Lord, face to face. “Oh, that I might die and behold thy beautiful face!” sighed St. Augustine. And St. Paul: “Having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.” (Phil. 1:23)

“When shall I come and appear before the face of God?” (Ps. 41:3) exclaimed the psalmist.

A hunter one day heard the voice of a man singing most sweetly in the forest. Following the sound, he came upon a leper horribly disfigured by the ravages of his disease. Addressing him he said: “How can you sing when you are so terribly afflicted and your death is so near at hand?” And the leper: “Friend, my poor body is a crumbling wall and it is the only thing that separates me from my God. When it falls I shall go forth to God. Time for me is indeed fast running out, so every day I show my happiness by lifting my voice in song.”

Lastly, we should unite ourselves to the will of God as regards our degree of grace and glory. True, we should esteem the things that make for the glory of God, but we should show the greatest esteem for those that concern the will of God. We should desire to love God more than the seraphs, but not to a degree higher than God has destined for us. St. John of Avila[16730] says: “I believe every saint has had the desire to be higher in grace than he actually was. However, despite this, their serenity of soul always remained unruffled. Their desire for a greater degree of grace sprang not from a consideration of their own good, but of God’s. They were content with the degree of grace God had meted out for them, though actually God had given them less. They considered it a greater sign of true love of God to be content with what God had given them, than to desire to have received more.”

This means, as Rodriguez explains it, we should be diligent in striving to become perfect, so that tepidity and laziness may not serve as excuses for some to say: “God must help me; I can do only so much for myself.” Nevertheless, when we do fall into some fault, we should not lose our peace of soul and union with the will of God, which permits our fall; nor should we lose our courage. Let us rise at once from this fall, penitently humbling ourselves and by seeking greater help from God, let us continue to march resolutely on the highway of the spiritual life. Likewise, we may well desire to be among the seraphs in Heaven, not for our own glory, but for God’s, and to love him more; still we should be resigned to his will and be content with that degree of glory which in his mercy he has set for us.

It would be a serious defect to desire the gifts of supernatural prayer—specifically, ecstasies, visions and revelations. The masters of the spiritual life say that souls thus favored by God, should ask him to take them away so that they may love him out of pure faith—a way of greater security. Many have come to perfection without these supernatural gifts; the only virtues worth-while are those that draw the soul to holiness of life, namely, the virtue of uniformity with God’s holy will. If God does not wish to raise us to the heights of perfection and glory, let us unite ourselves in all things to his holy will, asking him in his mercy, to grant us our soul’s salvation. If we act in this manner, the reward will not be slight which we shall receive from the hands of God who loves above all others, souls resigned to his holy will.

7

CONCLUSION

Finally we should consider the events which are happening to us now and which will happen to us in the future, as coming from the hands of God. Everything we do should be directed to this one end: to do the will of God and to do it solely for the reason that God wills it. To walk more securely on this road we must depend on the guidance of our superiors in external matters, and on our directors in internal matters, to learn from them God's will in our regard, having great faith in the words of our Lord: "He that heareth you, heareth me." (Luke 10:16).

Above all, let us bend all our energies to serve God in the way he wishes. This remark is made so that we may avoid the mistake of him who wastes his time in idle daydreaming. Such a one says, "If I were to become a hermit, I would become a saint" or "If I were to enter a monastery, I would practice penance" or "If I were to go away from here, leaving friends and companions, I would devote long hours to prayer." If, If, If—all these if's! In the meantime such a person goes from bad to worse. These idle fancies are often temptations of the devil, because they are not in accord with God's will. Hence we should dismiss them summarily and rouse ourselves to serve God only in that way which he has marked out for us. Doing his holy will, we shall certainly become holy in those surroundings in which he has placed us.

Let us will always and ever only what God wills; for so doing, he will press us to his heart. To this end let us familiarize ourselves with certain texts of sacred scripture that invite us to unite ourselves constantly with the divine will: "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" (Acts 9:16). Tell me, my God, what thou wilt have me do, that I may will it also, with all my heart. "I am thine, save thou me." (Ps. 118:94). I am no longer my own, I am thine, O Lord, do with me as thou wilt.

If some particularly crushing misfortune comes upon us, for example, the death of a relative, loss of goods, let us say: “Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight.” (Matt. 11:26). Yes, my God and my Father, so be it, for such is thy good pleasure. Above all, let us cherish that prayer of our Lord, which he himself taught us: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matt. 6:10). Our Lord bade St. Catherine of Genoa to make a notable pause at these words whenever she said the Our Father, praying that God’s holy will be fulfilled on earth with the same perfection with which the saints do it in Heaven. Let this be our practice also, and we shall certainly become saints.

May the divine will be loved and praised! May the Immaculate Virgin be also praised!

THE SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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CONTENTS

INDEX

THE SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

- CONTENTS
- The School of Christian Perfection
  - SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI
  - PREFACE
  - *Chapter 1*
    FAITH
    - OUR SHIELD AND PROTECTION
    - AN OFFERING OF THE INTELLECT
    - FAITH NOT OPPOSED TO REASON
    - PROOFS OF FAITH
    - A LIVING FAITH
  - *Chapter 2*
    HOPE
    - THE PARDON OF OUR SINS
    - VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION
    - A HAPPY DEATH
    - MOTIVES FOR OUR HOPE
    - CHRIST’S INTERCESSION
    - THE INTERCESSION OF THE BLESSED MOTHER
    - QUALITIES OF HOPE
  - *Chapter 3*
    THE LOVE OF GOD
    - NATURE BIDS US LOVE GOD

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST A PROOF OF LOVE

MEANS OF ADVANCING IN GOD’S LOVE

SELF-DENIAL

THE PASSION OF CHRIST

Chapter 4
LOVE FOR OUR NEIGHBOR

RASH JUDGMENTS

CALUMNY AND SLANDER

ALMSGIVING

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

Chapter 5
POVERTY AND DETACHMENT

THE POOR IN SPIRIT

TRUE DETACHMENT

THE POVERTY OF CHRIST

A HIDDEN LIFE

TRUE DETACHMENT

RESIGNATION TO GOD’S WILL

Chapter 6
CHASTITY

GREAT VIGILANCE NECESSARY

MEANS TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION

A MEANS OF EDIFICATION

VIRGINITY

A PRECIOUS TREASURE

ACCEPTABLE TO GOD

Chapter 7
OBEDIENCE

- A GREAT REWARD
- A SOURCE OF MERIT
- QUALITIES OF OBEDIENCE
- OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS
- OBEDIENCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR
- THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE
- OBSERVANCE OF THE RULE

Chapter 8
MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY

- PRIDE AN ABOMINATION TO THE LORD
- A SOURCE OF BLESSINGS
- HUMILITY OF INTELLECT
- HUMILITY OF WILL
- MEEKNESS
- MEEK CORRECTION
- OUR SAVIOUR’S MEEKNESS
- MEEKNESS TOWARDS ONESELF

Chapter 9
MORTIFICATION

- WE OURSELVES OUR WORST ENEMY
- SELF-DENIAL
- ADVANTAGES OF MORTIFICATION
- IT ELEVATES THE SOUL
- INTERIOR MORTIFICATION
- SELF-CONQUEST
- SELF-WILL

Chapter 10
RECOLLECTION

THE THOUGHT OF GOD

SOLITUDE OF THE SPIRIT

HOW TO FIND GOD

SILENCE

THE VALUE OF SILENCE

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

A GREAT INCENTIVE

HOW TO WALK IN GOD’S PRESENCE

Chapter 11
PRAYER

QUALITIES OF VOCAL PRAYER

DISTRACTIONS

EJACULATIONS

THE HOLY NAMES

MENTAL PRAYER OR MEDITATION

NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER

THE METHOD OF ST. ALPHONSUS

Chapter 12
SELF-DENIAL AND LOVE OF THE CROSS

PEACE OF HEART

VALUE OF SUFFERING

A PROOF OF LOVE

TO SUFFER IS TO PRAY

A SOURCE OF MERIT

SPIRITUAL ARIDITY

THE HOUR OF DEATH

The School of Christian Perfection

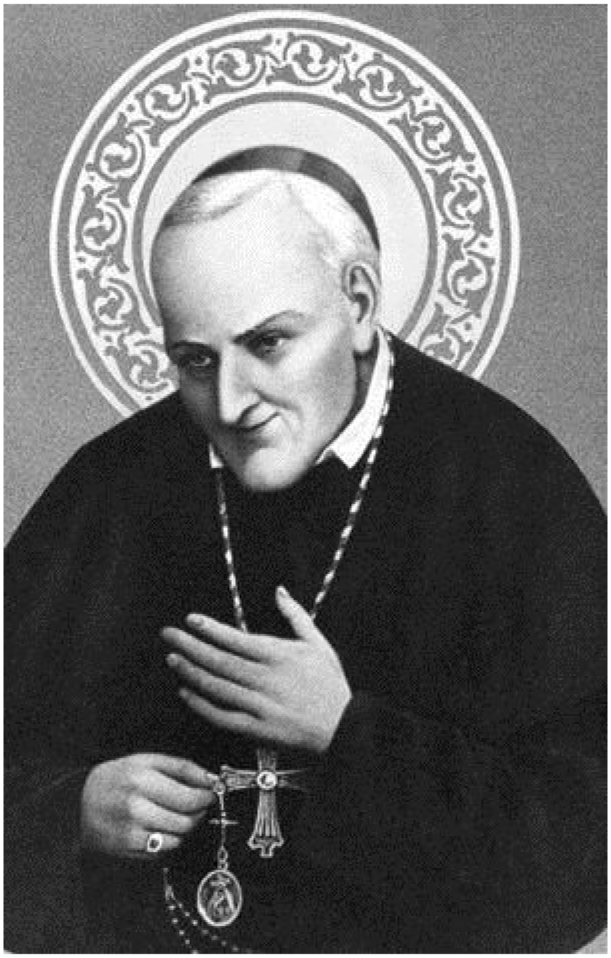

Saint Alphonsus Liguori
1696–1787
Bishop, Founder of the Redemptorists, and Doctor of the Church

SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

Saint Alphonsus Mary de Liguori was born in 1696 near Naples, Italy, to a noble Neopolitan family. He was the son of a captain of the royal galleys. St. Alphonsus received a doctorate in both canon and civil law at the age of sixteen, and practiced law very successfully for eight years. But he abandoned the practice of law to become a priest, being ordained in 1726.

In 1732 St. Alphonsus founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, the Redemptorists. This order was established in the face of huge difficulties; it was even divided by a schism at the time of St. Alphonsus' death. The Redemptorists have become famous for giving "missions" to enkindle and rejuvenate souls with true religious fervor.

In 1762 St. Alphonsus was obliged to become Bishop of St. Agatha. As bishop he reformed his small but slack diocese, but chronic ill health forced him to retire and he devoted himself anew to ascetical and moral theology. His experience in a lay profession, combined with natural common sense and sweetness of disposition, helped much to make him the best known of all moral theologians.

St. Alphonsus wrote numerous books, including his *Moral Theology;* of his many excellent devotional works, the masterpiece entitled *The Glories of Mary* is the most famous. He also spent much time combating anticlericalism and the heresy of Jansenism, and he was involved in several controversies regarding probabilism.

During the last years of his life St. Alphonsus suffered from ill health, especially from rheumatism which left him partially paralyzed. He experienced the dark night of the soul for several years toward the end of his life, but this period of suffering was followed by a period of peace and light during which he experienced visions and ecstasies, performed miracles, and made prophecies that later came true.

St. Alphonsus died in 1787, within two months of his 91st birthday. He was canonized in 1839, and in 1871 Pope Pius IX declared him a Doctor of the Church. His body rests in the church of his fathers at Pagani di Nocera.

PREFACE

In the ascetical writings of the holy Bishop and Doctor of the Church, St. Alphonsus de Ligouri, there is a characteristic charm and an irresistible attraction. Whoever reads them with the proper dispositions will discover in them an indefinable something that appeals to the heart and stirs it to its very depths. We imagine we see the loving personality of the holy Bishop before us, and hear the words of eternal life from his very lips. According to a beautiful legend, the visitor at the shrine of St. John at Ephesus can hear the pulsations of the Saint's heart enclosed in the tomb. The heart of Alphonsus still throbs in his ascetical writings, where the whole being of the Saint seems enshrined. Little wonder therefore that the reverence and love entertained towards him in life should have passed to his edifying works, the reflex of his very self. There are few ascetical writers more widely known and more sincerely loved than St. Alphonsus.

The present volume is made up of choice selections from the various ascetical writings of the Saint. The order of virtues considered is that followed by the spiritual sons of St. Alphonsus in the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. For each month of the year is assigned a particular virtue to which they are to devote their especial attention. This is a practice highly recommended by the masters of the spiritual life, and is fraught with the happiest results. It is hoped that the faithful will derive spiritual profit and pleasure from this course in “The School of Christian Perfection.”

C. J. W.

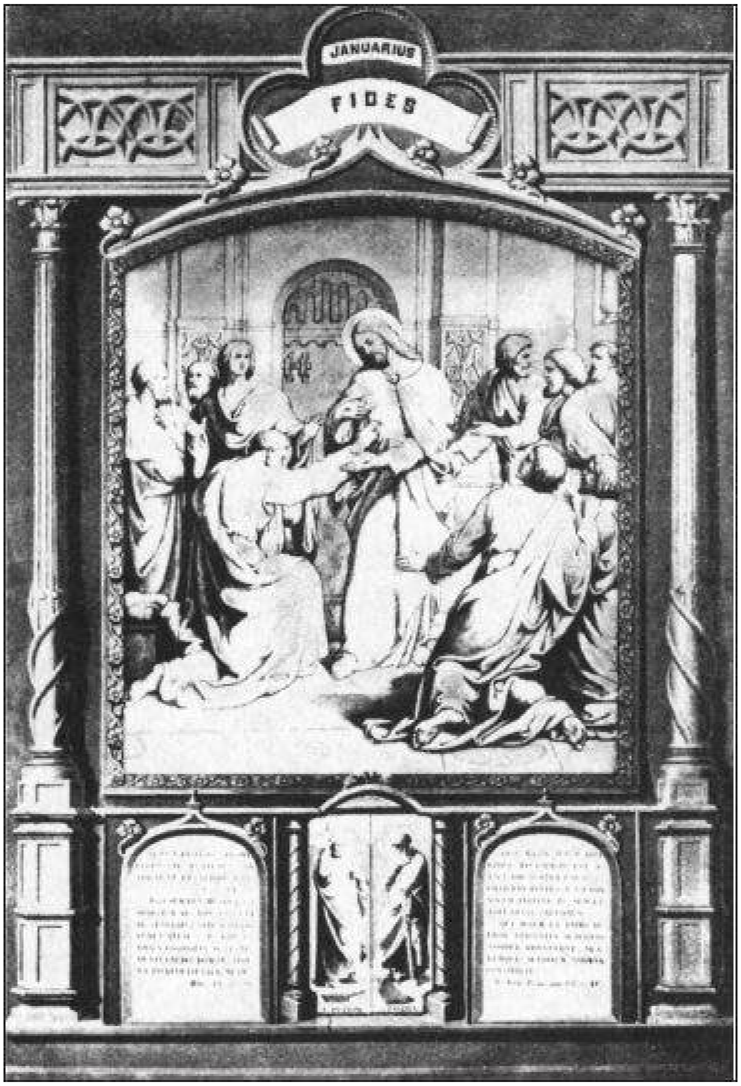
JANUARIUS
FIDES

“I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”—*John 8:12*

Chapter 1

FAITH

> "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life."—*John 8:12*

Faith is a divinely infused virtue by which man believes, on God's authority, what God has revealed and teaches through His Holy Church. St. Paul calls faith "the substance of things to be hoped for, and the evidence of things that appear not." (*Heb.* 11:1). Faith is indeed "the substance of things to be hoped for," that is to say, the foundation of our hope, for without faith, hope could not exist. Faith is likewise an evidence of the unseen, "the evidence of things that appear not."

It is quite true that there is a bright and a dark side to the practice of holy faith. Its bright side is the marks of credibility that assure us beyond shadow of doubt that our faith is the true and only faith. Its dark side is the truths themselves which are veiled from our eyes. The proofs for the truth of our holy faith are so clear that, as Pico of Mirandola says, a man must be wholly bereft of reason to refuse them credence. "Thy testimonies, O Lord, are exceedingly credible," says the Psalmist. (*Ps.* 92:5). Consequently, unbelievers have no excuse for refusing to submit their reason to the teachings of our holy faith. "He who believes not, is already condemned," says our Divine Saviour. On the other hand, God has willed that the objects of our belief should remain obscure in order that, by faith, we may merit a reward. From what has been said, it follows that faith gives us knowledge which surpasses in dignity all scientific truths. "Behold," exclaims Job, "how great is our God; he exceedeth all our knowledge." (*Job* 36:26).

Our holy faith is a treasure of unspeakable value, for in it we possess first of all a divine light which serves to guide us safely on the way to Heaven. That which we perceive with our senses or comprehend with our reason may and often does lead us astray. The truths of faith, on the contrary, are revealed by God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. In the second place, faith furnishes us with an excellent means of showing our reverence and respect for God.

It is no more than right that we subject to God our will by the observance of His holy law, and our reason by believing His infallible word. Were man to believe only that which he sees and understands, would he be giving honor to God thereby? Assuredly not. But we undoubtedly give honor to God when we accept as certain what God has revealed, though we may neither see nor comprehend it, and believe not because we understand but simply because God has revealed it. In the third place, faith supplies us with an abundant source of merit. If the truths proposed for our acceptance were so clear and comprehensible that we could not reasonably refuse our assent, their acceptance would in no way be meritorious, for the merit of faith consists in this, that we accept and believe the truths proposed, freely and without constraint. St. Gregory expresses this truth in the following words: “Faith loses its merit when human reason furnishes a proof.” (*Hom.* 26). Our Blessed Saviour commends those who accept the truths of faith without being able to perceive or comprehend them: “Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.” (*John* 20:29).

OUR SHIELD AND PROTECTION

Faith is, moreover, a shield of protection against the enemies of our salvation. St. John says: “This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith.” (*1 John* 5:4). God has created us simply to labor at our souls’ salvation and to become holy. “This is the will of God, your sanctification,” says the Apostle. (*1 Thess.* 4:3). To this end all our efforts must be directed, and faith puts us in a position to overcome all the obstacles which the world opposes to the realization of our object, obstacles such as human respect, the inordinate desires of the flesh, in a word, all the temptations of Hell. The devil is very powerful, no doubt, and his temptations are calculated to inspire us with fear and dread. But the man of faith triumphs over all his attacks. “The devil,” says St. Peter (*1 Peter* 5:8–9), “as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith.” St. Paul writes in a similar strain: “In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one.” (*Eph.* 6:16). As a shield protects the body from the arrows of an enemy, so faith defends the soul against the assaults of Hell.

“My just man liveth by faith,” says Holy Scripture (*Heb.* 10:38); that is to say, by means of faith, he sustains himself in the life of grace. When faith grows weak, virtue is in danger; when faith is lost, virtue departs with it. Accordingly, when we are assailed by a temptation to pride or sensuality or any other vice, for self-defense we must instantly arm ourselves with the principles of holy faith. We must direct the eye of our soul to the presence of God or reflect on the sad consequences that follow in the wake of sin, or again on the account we shall have to render on judgment day, and the punishment that awaits the sinner in eternity. Above all we must recall to mind that teaching of holy faith which says that whoever has recourse to God in temptation will be victorious. “I will call upon the Lord,” says David, “and I shall be saved from my enemies.” (*Ps.* 17:4).

In fine, faith preserves our peace of heart amid the trials and tribulations that beset us, for in all the crosses of life, faith gives us the assurance that patience and resignation will merit eternal joy. St. Peter the Apostle has said: “If you believe, you shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorified, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” (*1 Peter* 1:8–9).

Let us therefore thank God from the bottom of our hearts for having bestowed upon us the inestimable gift of faith. St. Francis de Sales once said: “O God, exceeding great and numerous are the benefits which Thou hast given me! But how shall I ever be able to thank Thee for having bestowed on me the light of holy faith?” And again: “The dignity of our holy faith is so great that I would gladly lay down my life for it.” St. Teresa found such consolation in the thought that she belonged to the Holy Catholic Church that at the hour of her death she continued to exclaim: “I am a child of Holy Church, a child of Holy Church.” Let us thank God unceasingly for this wonderful grace and be ever mindful of the words of the Psalmist: “He hath not done in like manner to every nation.” (*Ps.* 147:20).

AN OFFERING OF THE INTELLECT

God desires us to use our intellect to know with certainty that it is He who has spoken, not to comprehend all that He asks us to believe.

Reason takes us, as it were, by the hand and leads us into the sanctuary of faith, but itself remains standing at the threshold. Once we are convinced that the truths we are asked to believe really come from God, we are obliged to submit our reason and, on the strength of God’s word, to accept as certain the truths proposed, though we may not or cannot understand them. This is that humble simplicity so characteristic of the child, and of which St. Peter speaks when he says: “As newborn babes, desire the rational milk without guile, that thereby you may grow unto salvation.” (*1 Peter* 2:2).

FAITH NOT OPPOSED TO REASON

The mysteries of holy faith are not in opposition to reason, but they transcend its power of comprehension; therefore the futility of trying to fathom them. “Faith,” says St. Augustine, “is characteristic not of the proud but of the humble.” He who is truly humble never finds it hard to believe. St. Teresa said: “The devil has never succeeded in tempting me against faith. It even seems to me that the less I can comprehend the truths of faith, the more readily I give them my assent.”

If you are tempted by the evil spirit against some truth of our holy faith do not stop to consider the difficulties suggested by the devil, but make an act of faith without delay and protest before God your willingness to lay down your very life for the truths of your holy faith. St. Louis, King of France, relates that a learned theologian was once assailed with violent temptations regarding the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. He had recourse to the Bishop of Paris, and made known to him his dreadful anxiety; at the same time he begged him with tears to assist him. The Bishop simply asked him if there was anything on earth that could induce him to deny his faith. The theologian protested that nothing could ever cause him to commit so great a crime; whereupon the Bishop quieted him with the assurance that great good would result from the patient endurance of his temptations.

On one occasion when St. Francis de Sales was very ill, he was grievously tormented with doubts in regard to the Blessed Eucharist. Never for a moment did he stop to argue with the devil, but he fought and overcame him with the holy Name of Jesus. When similarly tempted, in all humility, surrender your reason a willing captive; subject yourself to the teachings of Holy Church and strike the tempter with his own weapons, by protesting with zeal and fervor that you are ready to die a thousand times for your holy faith. By acting in this way, you render what Satan intended for your harm an abundant source of merit. Often turn to our Divine Redeemer and address Him in the words of the Apostles: “Lord, increase our faith.” (*Luke* 17:5).

From what we have already seen it is evident that with regard to those truths that surpass our power of comprehension we must subject our reason, and in the words of St. Paul, “bring into captivity our understanding unto the obedience of Christ.” (2 *Cor.* 10:5).

This does not, of course, prevent us from considering the motives that make for the credibility of our holy religion. On the contrary, God wishes us to use our natural powers of intellect to be convinced of the reasonableness of our faith. With this conviction and the assistance of God’s grace we shall be more firm in our adherence to all that Holy Church proposes to our belief. As we have said above, the credibility of our holy religion is so clearly established by solid and trust-worthy evidences that any man in his sound senses must needs acknowledge them worthy of credence. We shall briefly consider some of these proofs.

PROOFS OF FAITH

In the first place, the truth of our holy faith is loudly proclaimed by the prophecies of Holy Scripture. These prophecies were uttered hundreds of years ago, and in later years fulfilled to the letter. Thus, for example, the death of our Saviour was foretold by several prophets and the time and circumstances accompanying it minutely described. It was prophesied that the Jews, in punishment for the deicide, would be driven from the temple and the holy land, and hardened and obstinate in sin would be dispersed throughout the world; this prophecy, we know, was literally fulfilled. It was prophesied that after the death of Christ the veneration of heathen deities would give way to the worship of the true God. The event has verified the prediction, for the Apostles of Our Lord, in spite of the innumerable obstacles thrown in their way and armed with no weapons save the cross of

Christ, have conquered the world and brought it a captive to faith in the living God.

In the second place, the truth of our holy faith is evident from the miracles which were wrought by our Lord, by His Apostles and the Saints of the Catholic Church as a sanction of her holy teaching. Miracles are beyond the powers of nature. They can happen only by the power of God, to whom all creation is subject. Accordingly, if a religion has real miracles to show in confirmation of her doctrine, that religion must be divine, for it is impossible for God to sanction and promote a false religion by the performance of genuine miracles.

Can the Jews, the heathens, the Mohammedans or the heretics point to a single miracle wrought in favor of their religious tenets? They have no doubt made efforts in the past to deceive the people by trickery and the seemingly miraculous; the deception was soon discovered. But the miracles which God has worked through His servants in every age of the Catholic Church are simply innumerable. In the Catholic Church alone have the words of our Blessed Lord been fulfilled: “Amen, amen I say to you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do he also shall do; and greater than these shall he do.” (*John* 14:12).

Without doubt, in the early days of the Church miracles were more numerous than they are today, since they were necessary for the spread of the Faith. But still they have never been wanting in any age, and they have constantly aided in the conversion of heathen and infidel nations. Numberless miracles were performed, for example, by a St. Francis Xavier, a St. Louis Bertrand, and other holy missionaries in India. Were one to call into question the extraordinary facts recorded in the annals of Church history and in the lives of the Saints, I would simply ask him: By what right do you refuse to believe such men as St. Basil, St. Jerome, St. Gregory and others when you willingly accept what a Tacitus, a Suetonius, or a Pliny has said?

Moreover, God has been pleased to allow certain miracles to go on uninterruptedly in the Church as a continual reproach to the unbelief of the wicked. Recall to mind the famous miracle of the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius at Naples. This blood, which usually is found in a hardened, coagulated condition, liquifies several times a year when brought near the head of the Saint. This has been attested by thousands of eyewitnesses.

Infidels have tried in vain to find natural explanations for the phenomenon; but the miracle continues to baffle their efforts and to humble their pride.

A third proof for the truth of our holy faith is furnished by the courage and constancy of the martyrs, and this proof is more convincing even than that of miracles. Fifteen Roman emperors in succession used every means in their power to destroy the Christian faith from the face of the earth. Under the reign of Diocletian, who inaugurated the ninth persecution, 17,000 Christians were executed within a single month, not to speak of the thousands who were banished from the country.

According to the account of Genebrard, 11,000,000 martyrs were put to death during the ten great persecutions. If these were gathered within the space of one year, there would be 30,000 martyrs for each day. Now in spite of the fact that these confessors of Christ were subjected to every imaginable torture, such as the tearing of the flesh with iron hooks, roasting their bodies on a gridiron, and burning them with lighted torches, the number of those who were willing and anxious to die for their holy faith was never diminished but seemed always on the increase.

Tiberius, the governor of Palestine, wrote to the Emperor Trajan that there were so many Christians who desired to die as martyrs that it was impossible to execute them all. Hereupon Trajan published an edict in which he commanded the Christians to be left in peace for the future. Now I ask: If the Faith of these valiant martyrs, which is the same that our Holy Church professes today, were not the True Faith of Christ, and had not God assisted them to witness to that Faith with their very blood, would they ever have been able to endure those frightful torments and to deliver themselves up freely and joyfully to a cruel death? Have there been any martyrs in the sects that fell away from the Catholic Church? Have they perhaps a St. Lawrence who offered his roasted limbs to the cruel tyrant for a banquet? Have they perhaps a St. Marcellus or Marcellinus whose feet were pierced with nails; when urged to free themselves from torture by renouncing their holy faith, they replied: “You speak of torments, but we have never experienced a greater joy than at present when we suffer for the love of Jesus Christ.” Have they perhaps a St. Processus or a St. Martinian whose bodies were burned with red-hot plates and torn with iron hooks? In the midst of their sufferings they sang hymns of praise to God and yearned to die for Christ.

Add to these martyrs of the first ages the numberless men and women of later days who suffered the most excruciating torments that human cruelty could devise and gave their life for their holy faith. How many died during the 16th century in Japan alone? We select the following facts from the list of cruelties perpetrated during the savage persecution that raged in Japan. A woman named Monica ardently desired to die as a martyr for Christ. To render herself proof against weakness when suffering from the executioners, she practiced beforehand what she thought she might have to endure. One day she grasped a red-hot iron in her hand. Her sister cried out: "O Monica, what are you doing?" "I am preparing myself," she replied, "for a martyr's death. I have already resisted the cravings of hunger and I have overcome that danger. Now I am trying fire so as to be able to endure it when subjected to its torture."

Another woman said to her companions: "I am firmly resolved to give my life for my holy faith. But if at the approach of death you see me tremble, I beg you to drag me by main force to the executioners in order that I may share your crown." A boy named Anthony replied to his parents, who begged him with tears to renounce his faith: "Cease torturing me with your words and complaints; I am resolved once and for all to die for the love of Jesus Christ." And when, like his Divine Master, he hung on the cross, he intoned the words of the 112th Psalm: "Praise the Lord, ye children." He sang it as far as the "Glory be to the Father," when he expired and went to complete the hymn of praise in Heaven. Another boy said to his father: "I will rather suffer death at the hands of the executioners or at your own hands than refuse obedience to God; I will not cast myself into Hell for the sake of pleasing any man." A servant spoke thus to his master: "I know what Heaven is worth; and since a martyr's death is the shortest road that leads me thither I choose it with joy, and I esteem my earthly life as little as the dust beneath my feet."

A woman by the name of Ursula had seen her husband and her two children put to death for their faith; with tears in her eyes she exclaimed: "I thank Thee, my God, that Thou hast deemed me worthy to make this offering; grant me also the crown which now adorns my loved ones. All I have left is the little child I carry in my arms. I gladly offer it with myself; graciously accept this last offering which I make to Thee." She then pressed the child to her heart, and one stroke of the sword beheaded the mother and the daughter.

Another mother called out continually to her son who, like herself, was fastened to a cross: “Courage, my son, courage! We are on the way to Heaven. Continue to call on Jesus and Mary.” A nobleman named Simon said: “What a happiness for me to be permitted to die for my Redeemer! How have I ever deserved so great a favor?” A little blind girl of eight years clung closely to her mother so as to be able to die with her on the funeral pyre. A boy of five years of age was roused out of sleep to be led off to a cruel death. Without betraying the least alarm he put on his best clothes and was then carried off to the place of execution. On their arrival the little lad himself offered his neck to the executioner. The latter was so moved at the sight of this tender child that he was unable to perform his duty. Another had to take his place, and it was only after several strokes of the sword that an end was put to the child’s life. All these facts were attested by declared enemies of our Holy Church.

Once more the proof of our holy faith becomes evident when we consider that from the time of the Apostles down to our own days our Faith has continued unaltered. The Apostles and their successors were careful to preserve the doctrine of our Divine Redeemer in its primitive purity and integrity. Christ Himself imposed upon them this sacred duty when He said: “Going therefore, teach ye all nations; teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” (*Matt.* 28:19–20). Therefore St. John exhorts the faithful: “Let that which you have heard from the beginning abide in you.” (*1 John* 2:24).

The Apostle Jude writes: “I beseech you, dearly beloved, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.” (*Jude* 3).

Similar are the exhortations of the Apostle St. Paul when writing to the Ephesians: “I beseech you, brethren, that you be careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (*Eph.* 4:3), and to the Corinthians: “Let there be no schisms among you; but be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (*1 Cor.* 1:10).

These admonitions of the Apostle have always been strictly adhered to by the pastors of the Church, for, in the words of St. Augustine, “What they found in the Church they have preserved, and what their fathers handed down to them they in turn left as a precious legacy to their sons.”

Accordingly, the Catholic Church has remained the same in all ages and in all climes. The doctrines she teaches today are the same that were taught and believed in the first ages of the Church. The sects, on the contrary, that have separated from the Catholic Church, have not remained unchanged in the doctrines which they propound. If you desire an illustration of this, read the *History of the Variations* by the famous Bishop Bossuet. There you will find an authentic record of the everchanging tenets of the Protestant denominations. The pride that caused the founders of these sects to refuse obedience to the true Church of Christ has led their followers in turn to refuse obedience to them, and thus countless new doctrines and new religions have sprung into existence. It is of immense advantage for us who are faithful adherents of the true Church of God to read and ponder the accounts that are found in the history of heresies. Such a reflection is calculated to bring into a most favorable light our own True Faith that, like our Saviour Himself, is “yesterday, and today, and the same forever.” (*Heb.* 13:8). It will foster in us a spirit of loyal submission to our Holy Church, and a deep sense of gratitude to God for the inestimable gift of the True Faith.

A LIVING FAITH

To be pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God, it is not enough merely to believe all that our holy faith teaches us; we must, moreover, regulate our life in accordance with our belief. Pico of Mirandola says: “It is certainly great folly not to wish to believe the Gospel of Christ; but it would be greater folly still to believe it and to live as if you did not believe it.” The unbelieving act very irrationally when they close their eyes so as not to see the abyss towards which they are hastening. But what of the folly of those among the faithful who see the abyss, and with open eyes actually hurl themselves into it? “O my brethren,” exclaims St. James, “what shall it profit if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works? Shall faith be able to save him?” (*James* 2:14).

Many Christians believe without doubt that there is a just God who will judge them; that endless happiness or eternal misery awaits them; and yet they live as though there were no God, no judgment, no Heaven and no Hell. There are many who believe that our Divine Redeemer was born in the stable at Bethlehem, lived for 30 years in the humble abode at Nazareth, supported Himself by the labor of His hands, and at last, consumed with suffering and sorrow, ended His life on an infamous gibbet; and yet they do not love Him; indeed, they offend Him by innumerable sins. It is to these that St. Bernard addresses his words of warning: “Show by your deeds that you believe; by a virtuous life a Christian must prove that he has faith.”

The sinful man who knows the truths of faith, and does not live in accordance with them, has a very weak faith, to say the least. For it stands to reason that if a man firmly believed that the grace of God is the highest and best good he could possess, and that sin robs us of grace and is the greatest evil in this world, he must of necessity change his life. When, therefore, the sinner prefers the miserable goods of this world to his Lord and God, he gives evident proof that he has a very weak faith, if any at all. St. Bernard says: “He who acknowledges God with his tongue but denies Him in deed, dedicates his tongue to the Lord and his soul to the devil.” According to the Apostle St. James, that faith which does not manifest itself by works, is dead. (*James* 2:17).

If we see a man who betrays no sign of life, and who neither moves, nor speaks, nor breathes, we say he is no longer alive but dead. In like manner, that faith which gives no evidence of vitality by the performance of works of eternal life, we rightly regard as dead. There are Christians who willingly accept those teachings of our holy faith that are confined to the sphere of the intellect, but who give no proof whatever that they believe the truths which affect the will. And yet the latter are as certain and undoubted as the former, for they are all made known to us by one and the same Gospel of Christ. If we believe the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation of the Divine Word, we must also accept the principles that Christ our Lord has laid down for the regulation of our conduct. It was with this end in view that St. Paul wrote thus to his disciples: “Try your own selves if you be in the faith; prove ye yourselves.” (*2 Cor.* 13:5). Our Blessed Redeemer has said: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (*Matt* 5:3).

Now if a man complains of the dispositions of Divine Providence because he happens to be poor, such a man cannot be called truly faithful, for the man who believes from his heart the words of our Blessed Lord, will seek his riches and his happiness not in the perishable goods of this earth but in the grace of God and eternal life. When gold and silver and precious stones were offered to St. Clement on condition that he would renounce Christ, the Saint heaved a deep sigh and complained bitterly that with such a miserable and contemptible exchange they should try to rob him of his God. Our Divine Redeemer has said: “Blessed are the peacemakers! Blessed are they that mourn! Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake!” (*Matt.* 5:9). By this He meant to say: Blessed are they that suffer sickness, and temporal loss or some other misfortune with patience and resignation. Blessed are they that suffer persecution because they flee from sin or endeavor to promote the glory of God! He who thinks that he disgraces himself when he forgives; he whose only concern is to live an easy and agreeable life and to shun the very shadow of self-denial; he who pities those who renounce the joys and pleasures of earth and crucify their flesh; he who from human respect neglects the practices of piety and the reception of the Sacraments and is wholly absorbed with the attractions of the theater and ballroom can have no valid claim to the title of a faithful Catholic.

This seems to be the place to correct a false impression that is very prevalent. There are many who imagine that a life in harmony with the precepts of our holy faith must necessarily be a sad and joyless life. The devil pictures our holy religion to them as a tyrant who imposes only burdens and cares upon her children, forces them to constant self-renunciation and interdicts the gratification of every desire. There is no doubt that for those whose only desire is to satisfy their sensual cravings, a life in accordance with holy faith has little that is attractive. “They that are Christ’s,” says the Apostle, “have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences.” (*Gal.* 5:24).

The law of Jesus Christ commands us to battle against our inordinate inclinations, to love our enemies, to mortify our body, to be patient in adversities and to place all our hope in the life to come. But all this does not make the life of the truly faithful a sad and sorrowful one. The religion of Jesus Christ says to us, as it were: Come and unite yourselves to Me; I will lead you along a path which to the bodily eyes seems rough and hard to climb, but to those of good will is easy and agreeable. You seek peace and pleasure? Well and good! Which peace is to be preferred? That which, when scarcely tasted, disappears and leaves the heart replete with bitterness, or that which will rejoice and satiate you for all eternity? You strive for honors? Very well! Which do you prefer, that empty honor that disappears like a puff of smoke, or that true and genuine honor which will one day glorify you before the whole world? Ask those who lead a life of faith if the renunciation of this world's goods makes them sad! Visit the holy Anchorite Paul in his grotto, St. Francis of Assisi on Mount Alverno, St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi in her convent and ask them if they miss the joys and pleasures of this earth! They will answer without hesitation: No, no; we desire but God alone and nothing else.

Should anyone object that a life according to faith is opposed to nature, I answer: It is, no doubt, opposed to nature—but to a depraved and fallen nature. It is burdensome, yes, but only for those who rely on their own strength and resources. But for one who trusts in God and begs for His assistance, the observance of the law of Jesus Christ is sweet and easy. "Taste and see," says the Psalmist, "how sweet is the Lord." (*Ps.* 33:9). "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you and learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden light." (*Matt.* 11:28–30).

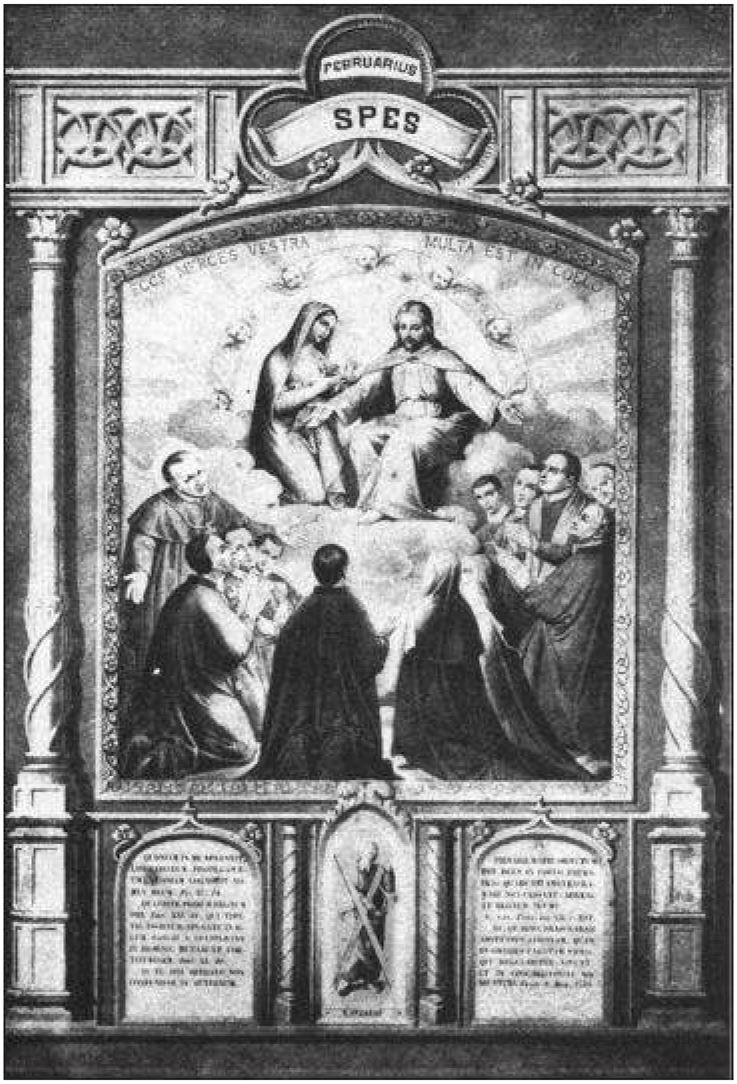
FEBRUARIUS
SPES
ECCE MERCES VESTRA
MULTA EST IN COELO

“Because he hath hoped in Me, I will deliver him: I will protect him.” *Psalms 90:14*.

Chapter 2

HOPE

“In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded.”—*Psalms 30:2*

Hope is a supernatural virtue by which we confidently expect, in virtue of God’s promise, the endless happiness of Heaven and the means necessary for its attainment. To be convinced of the inestimable value of this virtue, and to have a constant incentive for its practice, it will be profitable to consider the objects of our hope, its motives, its qualities, and its effects.

The first and foremost object of our hope, the object by excellence, is the possession of God in Heaven. We are not to suppose that the hope of possessing God in Heaven in any way interferes with the virtue of love. They are not opposed; in fact, the hope of eternal happiness is inseparably united with love, for only in Heaven will the completion and perfection of love be found. According to St. Thomas, with the idea of friendship is intimately united the mutual sharing of goods, for as friendship is nothing else but a mutual attraction it follows that friends must do as much good to one another as is in their power. Without this mutual sharing of goods, says the Angelic Doctor, there can be no genuine friendship. (Ia IIae, Q. 65, a. 5). Our Lord called His disciples His friends because He communicated His mysteries to them: “I have called you friends because all things whatsoever I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you.” (*John* 15:15). According to the teaching of St. Thomas, love does not exclude the hope of the reward which God has prepared for us in Heaven; that very reward is the principal object of our love, for it is nothing but God Himself, the vision of whom is the eternal happiness of the elect. “Friendship,” says the Angelic Doctor, “requires that a friend be in possession of his friend.” This is that mutual communication or surrender of which the spouse in the Canticle speaks when she says: “My beloved is mine and I am his.” (*Cant.*

2:16). In Heaven the soul gives itself entirely to God and God gives Himself entirely to the soul, as far as its capacity and merits will allow.

Love, says Dionysius the Areopagite, strives, in accordance with its nature, after union with the object loved; or rather, as St. Augustine remarks, love is a golden chain which binds together the hearts of the lover and the loved one. But since this union cannot be effected between those that are separated, the lover continually yearns for the presence of his beloved. When the spouse in the Canticle saw herself separated from her Beloved she was consumed with longing and begged her companions to make known to Him her anguish, to induce Him to afford her some consolation by His presence: “I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him that I languish with love.” (*Cant.* 5:8). A soul that tenderly loves Jesus Christ cannot live here below without the most ardent longing to be united with Him in Heaven, where He will be her reward exceeding great.

As long, therefore, as our soul is not perfectly united with God in Heaven, it will never enjoy true peace. Those who love Our Lord sincerely find peace of heart, it is true, in conformity to the will of God; but perfect peace and perfect rest they shall never have here below. This we shall acquire only with the attainment of our last end, the vision of God face to face and His ineffable love. As long as the soul is separated from her last end she shall continue to sigh with the prophet: “Behold in peace is my bitterness most bitter.” (*Is.* 38:17). Yes, my God, I live in peace in this valley of tears, for such is Thy holy will; but I cannot but remember, with unspeakable pain, that I am not as yet perfectly united with Thee, the Source of all peace and rest, the Goal of my heart’s desire. It was for this reason that the Saints yearned for their heavenly home, consumed as they were with an ardent love for God. Holy David complained about his long and weary exile: “Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged.” (*Ps.* 119:5). Only the hope of eternal happiness could console him: “I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear.” (*Ps.* 16:15). St. Paul desired nothing more ardently than to leave this world and to be with Christ: “I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.” (*Phil.* 1:23).

“The good that I hope for,” says St. Francis of Assisi, “is so great that every suffering becomes for me a pleasure.” All these expressions of ardent longing are so many acts of perfect love. St. Thomas teaches that the highest degree of love that a soul on earth can attain is an ardent desire for Heaven, to be there united to God and to possess Him forever. The greatest suffering that the souls in Purgatory endure proceeds from this longing for the possession of God, and this pain is felt especially by those who in life had but a feeble desire for Heaven. Cardinal Bellarmine thinks that in Purgatory there is a place where souls endure no pains of sense, but are tortured solely by the loss of the presence of God. (*De Purg.*, 1. 2, c. 7). St. Gregory, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Bridget and St. Bede the Venerable cite a number of such instances where souls are tormented not on account of sins committed, but because of the absence of a desire for Heaven. There are souls that strive after perfection, but without any special desire to leave this earth and to be united to God. But since eternal life is a priceless treasure that Jesus Christ has purchased for us by His death, those souls that have but a feeble desire to possess it will have to suffer later on this account. There are three things necessary for the attainment of eternal life: the pardon of our sins, the victory over temptations, and the crown of all graces, a holy death. These three things are accordingly the objects of our hope.

THE PARDON OF OUR SINS

“Thou hast sinned, O Christian,” says St. John Chrysostom, “but dost thou desire forgiveness? Fear not, for God’s desire to grant it is greater than your desire to receive it.” If God sees an unfortunate wretch in sin, He waits for a favorable opportunity to show him mercy. At times He reveals to him the punishment he has deserved, to urge him to enter into himself. “Thou hast given a warning to them that fear thee: that they may flee from before the bow.” (*Ps.* 59:6). At times He knocks on the door of the sinner’s heart, hoping that He may open it: “Behold I stand before the gate and knock.” (*Apoc.* 3:20). Sometimes He goes after the sinner and calls to him like a compassionate father: Why will you be lost? “Why will you die, O house of Israel?” (*Ezech.* 18:31). Dionysius says that God even begs us not to hurl ourselves into perdition. This is confirmed by the Apostle when he beseeches the sinner in the name of Jesus Christ to be reconciled with his God: “For Christ, we beseech you, be reconciled to God.” (*2 Cor.* 5:20). St. Chrysostom remarks: Christ Himself requests you, and what is His request?

"Be reconciled to God." (*2 Cor.)*. If, in spite of all this, there are hard and obstinate hearts that refuse to yield, what more is there that the Lord can do for them? Yet even such has He promised not to repel if they return truly repentant: "Him that cometh to me I will not cast out." (*John* 6:37). He declares that He is ready and willing to receive everyone who comes to Him: "Turn ye to me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn to you." (*Zach.* 1:3).

To every sinner who desires to repent, He promises pardon: "But if the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed, and keep all my commandments and do judgment and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die. I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done." (*Ezech.* 18:21–22). Yes, He even goes so far as to say: "Come and accuse me: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow: and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool." (*Is.* 1:18). The royal Psalmist says: "A contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." (*Ps.* 50:19). In the Gospel of St. Luke we have a beautiful picture of the joy with which the shepherd receives the lost sheep, and the love that the father manifests on the return of the prodigal son. And these are God's own words: "I say to you that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance." (*Luke* 15:7). The reason for this, according to St. Gregory, is that the repentant sinner generally loves God more ardently than the just man, who is apt to grow lukewarm in His service.

It is doubtless true that we shall have a strict account to render of all the sins we have committed, but who will be our judge? St. John tells us: "Neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath given all judgment to the Son." (*John* 5:22). It is to our Redeemer, then, that the judgment has been entrusted, and St. Paul encourages us with the words: "Who is he that shall condemn? Christ Jesus that died, yea that is risen also again, who also maketh intercession for us." (*Rom.* 8:34). We shall be judged by a loving Redeemer who, to save us from eternal death, delivered Himself to death, and not content with that, now acts as our advocate with the Father in Heaven. "Why should you fear, O sinner," says St. Thomas of Villanova, "as long as you detest your sins? How could He condemn who died that He might not have to condemn? How could He reject the repentant sinner, since He came down from Heaven to seek that sinner?"

St. Chrysostom says that every single wound of Jesus Christ is a mouth that eloquently pleads with God for the forgiveness of our sins. In the revelations of St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi we read that one day God spoke to her in the following words: “Through the revenge I took on the body of My Son, My justice has been changed into clemency. His blood cries not for vengeance, as did the blood of Abel; it asks for mercy, and My justice cannot resist its pleading. The blood of Jesus binds the hands of Justice so that they cannot be raised, as once they were, to punish.” The holy Fathers teach that he who detests the evil he has committed, can be certain of the forgiveness of his sins. Now, according to the words of St. Teresa, everyone who is ready to die rather than offend God anew can say that he truly hates his sins. If you, therefore, dear Christian, entertain sentiments such as these, why are you tortured with fear and distrust? Reanimate your courage at the sight of so many saints who lived for a long time at enmity with God, but returned to Him repentant and sorry, conscious that they dreaded a new offense against God more than death itself, and full of hope for the pardon of their sins.

St. Afra of Ratisbon was formerly a heathen and so immoral that her very home was a house of assignation. Afterward, with her mother and her whole family, she was converted to Christianity. From Ruinart’s *Acts of the Martyrs* we learn that the abomination of her sins was continually before her eyes and caused her intense grief. On becoming Christian, she distributed her ill-gotten gains to the poor. If there happened to be any who refused to accept what she had acquired by her offenses against God, she begged them with tears to recommend her to God that she might be pardoned her sins. Just at this time the persecution of Diocletian was raging. The saint was taken captive and brought before a judge named Cajus. “Sacrifice to the gods,” he said to her; “that will be better for you than to be tortured to death.” The saint replied: “To my grief, I sinned before I knew the true God; therefore it is impossible for me to do what you require. To sacrifice to the gods would be a fresh offense against my Divine Master, and that I will never commit.” The judge ordered her to be led to the temple to sacrifice; she replied with great firmness: “My temple is Jesus Christ who is always present to me and before whom I daily confess my sins. As I am unable to offer Him any other sacrifice, I yearn to offer Him the sacrifice of myself, that this body which has offended Him may be purified by the sufferings which I shall gladly bear."

"But what can you expect from the God of the Christians," said Cajus, "after the shameful life you have led? You had better sacrifice to our gods." The saint replied: "My Saviour Jesus Christ declared that He came down from Heaven to save the sinner. In the Gospel we read that a sinful woman washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and obtained the pardon of all her sins. Moreover, the Saviour never spurned the sinner unmercifully, but we are told He received sinners and even ate with them."

When he found that his efforts proved unavailing, Cajus said: "If you refuse to sacrifice I will have you tortured and burned alive." The saint courageously replied: "Gladly will I submit my body to any torment, for it has been the instrument of many sins, but I will never defile my soul by sacrificing to the devil." Thereupon the judge pronounced the sentence of death. Afra raised her eyes to Heaven and uttered the following prayer: "My Lord Jesus Christ, Thou who hast come to call not the just but sinners to repentance and hast given the sinner the assurance of pardon when he returns repentant to Thee, receive me, a poor sinner; I gladly submit to this torture for love of Thee; grant that this fire which consumes my body, may preserve my soul from Hell." When the flames had mounted and closed above her head she was still heard to say: "I thank Thee, my Lord, that Thou who wast Innocence itself didst offer Thyself for poor sinners. O Blessed of the Father, who didst die for our wretched and sin-stained souls, I thank Thee once more and I offer myself to Thee who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen." As she ended her prayer, her soul took its flight to God.

VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION

Besides the pardon of our sins, we must confidently hope for the victory over our temptations. In order to persevere in well-doing, our confidence must not rest on our good resolutions. When we build on the foundation of our own strength our edifice is sure to fall. To maintain ourselves in the grace of God it is necessary, therefore, to place our hope in the merits of Jesus Christ. With His assistance we shall persevere till death, even though we be assailed by all the powers of earth and Hell. There may be times when temptations are so violent that sin seems unavoidable. We must be on our guard at such times not to lose courage and give up the struggle. Our only resource is to hasten to Jesus Crucified. He and He alone can sustain us. The Lord permits that from time to time even the Saints have such storms to endure. St. Paul says of himself: “We were pressed out of measure above our strength, so that we were weary even of life.” (*2 Cor.* 1:8).

The Apostle here shows what he was when left to his own strength; and he wishes, doubtless, to teach us how God permits us at times to experience our own weakness in order that we may acknowledge our misery and “trust not in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead” (*2 Cor.* 1:9), humbly asking His help that we may not succumb. In another place the Apostle teaches the same truth more distinctly still: “In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed; we are straitened, but are not destitute . . . we are cast down, but we perish not.” (*2 Cor.* 4:8–9). We are bowed down by sorrow and harassed by passion, but yet we do not despair. We are tossed about on a stormy sea, but we do not suffer shipwreck, because the Lord by His grace gives us strength to resist our enemies.

At the same time the Apostle bids us not to forget that we are weak and frail creatures who may easily lose the treasure of divine grace, and we can preserve it only by the power of God: “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of the power of God, and not of us.” (*2 Cor.* 4:7).

Although, as we have already seen, the power to avoid sin is not from ourselves but from the grace of God, we must at the same time be careful not to render ourselves weaker than we already are. There are certain faults that we consider of no account, and yet they may be the reason why God withdraws His supernatural light, and thus the power of the devil is increased. Such faults are the desire to be regarded as learned and distinguished by the world; vanity in dress; the seeking for superfluous comforts and luxuries; the habit of showing oneself offended by every unkind word or want of attention; the inordinate desire to please others; the omission of exercises of piety from human respect; disobedience in little things; little aversions that are fostered in the heart; little lies and jokes at the expense of charity; loss of time through idle conversations or a greediness for news; in a word, every attachment for earthly things, and every gratification of self-love may give the enemy an opportunity of accomplishing our destruction. At all events, faults of this kind committed with deliberation deprive us of that assistance of Our Lord which would protect us from falling into sin.

A HAPPY DEATH

We hope, in fine, for the grace of a happy death. The hour of death is for us the time of greatest anxiety. Jesus Christ alone can give us the strength to suffer, with patience and profit, the trials of this last decisive moment. At the approach of death we have more than ever to fear from the assaults of Hell. The nearer we approach our goal, the more will Hell strive to prevent our reaching it. St. Eleazar, who had lived a life of great purity, was violently tempted in the hour of death, but he did not lose courage for a moment. To those standing around him he said: “The efforts of Hell at this moment are very great, but by the merits of His suffering our Saviour takes from them all their power.” St. Francis desired that at the hour of his death the Passion of Christ be read to him, and St. Charles Borromeo had pictures representing the suffering Saviour placed on his bed; while gazing at these he gave up his soul to God. Our Lord Jesus wished to suffer death, as St. Paul says, “that through death he might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil; and might deliver them, who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to servitude.” (*Heb.* 2:14–15).

Therefore, says the same Apostle, “It behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become merciful.” (*Heb.* 2:17). The Lord wished to assume human nature and its miseries, sin and ignorance and concupiscence excepted, and why? In order that He might Himself experience our misery, the better to have compassion on us, for misery is better learned by suffering it than by seeing it in others. In this way Our Lord became more inclined to assist us in all the temptations of life, and especially at the hour of death. Should the devil therefore assail us in life or at death, bringing before us the sins of our youth, we must say to him with St. Bernard: “What I need to enter Heaven, I appropriate from the merits of Jesus Christ who suffered and died in order to procure for me that glory of which I was unworthy.” (*In Cant.* 61).

MOTIVES FOR OUR HOPE

As to the motives on which our hope should rest, the first we find in the promises made by God. On nearly every page of Holy Scripture we find reasons for hoping in the Lord. We read there that God promises eternal salvation and the means to attain it to those who believe and pray: “All things, whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive; and they shall come unto you.” (*Mark* 11:24). “Every one that asketh receiveth.” (*Matt.* 7:8). “The Lord is the protection of all that trust in him.” (*Ps.* 17:31). “My children behold the generations of men; and know ye that no one hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded.” (*Ecclus.* 2:11). “None of them that wait on thee shall be confounded.” (*Ps.* 24:3). “In thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.” (*Ps.* 70:1). “Because he trusteth in me I will deliver him, and I will glorify him.” (*Ps.* 90:14–15). “Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it to you.” (*John* 16:23).

These and countless other promises are made to all men without exception. Heaven and earth shall pass away, as Scripture says, but the words and promises of God shall not pass away. “Let us therefore,” in the words of the Apostle, “hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he is faithful that hath promised.” (*Heb.* 10:23).

The second motive of our hope is the sincere desire of Our Lord to make us happy. God loves all His creatures. “Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things which thou hast made.” (*Wis.* 11:25). But every love, says St. Augustine, possesses an active force and cannot remain idle. Consequently, love contains in its very essence the idea of benevolence, and one who loves cannot but do good to the object of his love if it is at all possible for him. “Love,” says Aristotle, “endeavors to accomplish what it considers good for the object loved.” If, therefore, God loves all men, He must also desire that all men attain eternal happiness, for this is the highest and only good of man since it is the end for which man was created. “You have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting.” (*Rom.* 6:22).

Calvin was guilty of a horrible blasphemy when he said that God had created some men only to cast them into Hell. He even dared to assert that God forces men to sin in order that they may be damned. “God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (*1 Tim.* 2:4). He declares that He wishes for the conversion and salvation even of the ungodly who have deserved eternal death. “As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” (*Ezech.* 33:11). Tertullian calls attention to the fact that in using the words: “As I live,” the Lord pronounces an oath in order that we might believe Him without hesitation. It is therefore a matter of great surprise to the learned Petavius that anyone could call this truth into question. “If an attempt is made,” says he, “to misconstrue so clear a text of Sacred Scripture which God even confirms with an oath, what is there left in matters of faith that is safe from the falsifiers?” But why does God so ardently desire the salvation of all men? Simply because He has created them from love and He has loved them from all eternity.

“Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee.” (*Jer.* 31:3). We read in the Epistle of St. Peter that the Lord, knowing the weakness of man, has patience with the sinner and does not wish him to be lost, but to do penance and be saved. “The Lord dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish but that all should return to penance.” (*2 Peter* 3:9). In short, God desires to save all men and if there are some unhappy creatures who force Him, by their sins, to condemn them, He speaks to them, as it were, in tears of compassion, and says: “Why will you die, O house of Israel? Convert and live.” (*Ezech.* 18:31–32). Why will you be lost, my children, and condemn yourselves to eternal perdition? If you have been so unhappy as to leave Me, return to Me now repentant and I will restore to you the life you have lost.

Judge for yourself then, Christian soul, if it be not true that God desires your eternal salvation. For the future, therefore, never give expression to such sentiments as: Who knows; perhaps God does not wish me to be saved! Perhaps on account of my offenses He desires me to be lost forever! Such thoughts you must banish from your mind, as it must now be evident to you that God assists you with His grace and urgently invites you to His love.

As a third and powerful motive for hope in God, we have the merits of Jesus Christ. Long before our Saviour had appeared on earth, the royal Psalmist David placed all his hope in Him: “Into thy hands I commend my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.” (*Ps.* 30:6). How much more, therefore, ought we to place our confidence in Jesus now that He has come and accomplished the work of our redemption. Full of trust and assurance, we ought to repeat with the royal Psalmist: “Into Thy hands O Lord, I commend my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.” Thou art faithful to Thy promises.

If on account of our sins we have good reason to fear eternal death, we have still stronger motives for hope of eternal life in the merits of Jesus Christ, which are incomparably more powerful to save than our sins are to destroy us. By our sins we have deserved eternal death, but our Redeemer has come to our assistance, says the prophet Isaias, and taken upon Himself our debts in order to make satisfaction for them by His sufferings: “He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows.” (*Is.* 53:4). At that unhappy moment when we committed sin, God wrote the sentence of our eternal doom. But what has Jesus Christ accomplished? He has taken this sentence of condemnation, as the Apostle says, fastened it to the Cross and blotted it out with His Precious Blood. We can never look upon that sentence without seeing the Cross on which it was destroyed, and thus our hope of forgiveness and of eternal salvation is revived: “Blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us. . . . And he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross.” (*Col.* 2:14). “Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace; that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.” (*Heb.* 4:16).

The throne of grace is the Cross on which Our Lord was exalted in order to dispense mercy and grace to all who have recourse to Him. But we must go to Him at once, while we have an opportunity of finding assistance; otherwise, we may come too late, and seek in vain. Let us hasten, therefore, to the Cross of Christ and embrace it with unwavering confidence. We need not be frightened at the sight of our misery; in Christ we shall find riches and treasures of grace: “I give thanks to my God,” says the Apostle, “that in all things you are made rich in him. . . . so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace.” (*1 Cor.* 1:4, 5, 7). The merits of Jesus Christ have opened to us the treasury of God by acquiring for us a right to all the graces that we can possibly desire.

St. Leo says that the advantages which accrue to us through the death of Jesus Christ are far greater than the losses the devil has occasioned us by sin. St. Paul tells us the same: “Not as the offense, so also the gift . . . for where sin abounded, grace did more abound.” (*Rom.* 5:15, 20).

Therefore, our Saviour exhorts us to hope for all graces through His infinite merits. He Himself teaches us how to present our petitions to His heavenly Father: “Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it you.” (*John* 16:23). “He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also, with him, given us all things?” (*Rom.* 8:32). According to the Apostles, therefore, God has excepted nothing, neither the forgiveness of sins, nor final perseverance, nor divine love and perfection, nor Heaven itself; “with him he hath given us all things.” The only thing for us to do is to ask Him for His graces, for “the Lord is rich unto all that call upon him.” (*Rom.* 10:12).

CHRIST’S INTERCESSION

Do not forget, says the Venerable John of Avila, that between the Eternal Father and ourselves there is a Mediator, Jesus Christ, to whom we are united by bonds of love so strong that nothing can ever break them unless we ourselves break them by mortal sin. The blood of Jesus Christ cries for mercy in our behalf, and that cry is so loud that the clamor of our sins cannot be heard. No one is lost, therefore, because satisfaction has not been made for him, but because by the neglect of the Sacraments he fails to share in the satisfaction which Jesus Christ has made. Christ Our Lord has taken it upon Himself to remedy our ills as if they were His own. He who was without sin, took upon Himself our sins and prayed for forgiveness for them. And He prayed to His heavenly Father with as much fervor as if He were praying for Himself. What He desired, He obtained. God willed that we should be so inseparably united to Jesus Christ that He cannot be loved except we be loved with Him; nor can we be hated except He be hated with us. But now Jesus cannot be hated; therefore, we shall be loved as long as we remain united to Him by love.

Jesus is loved by His heavenly Father; therefore we are loved with Him. He is far more powerful to win God’s love for us than we are to draw His hatred on ourselves, for God loves His Divine Son more than He hates the sinner. Our Lord spoke thus to His heavenly Father: “Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me, may be with me.” (*John* 17:24). As love is stronger than hatred, love carries off the victory. Our sins are forgiven and the love of God bestowed on us and the strength of the bond of love gives us the assurance that God will never forsake us. “Can a woman forget her infant . . . ?” says the prophet Isaias; “and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in my hands.” (*Is.* 49:15–16).

The Lord has written us in His hands with His own blood. Therefore we should allow nothing to disquiet us, for He arranges and disposes everything with these very hands which were nailed to the Cross as a proof of His love for us.

THE INTERCESSION OF THE BLESSED MOTHER

A fourth motive for unbounded confidence is the powerful intercession of Mary our Mother. St. Bernard says that we have access to the Eternal Father through His Divine Son, who is a mediator of justice. But we have access to the Son through His holy Mother, who is the mediatrix of grace and who, by her intercession, has obtained for us what Jesus Christ has merited by His death. “Through thee who hast found grace, may we have access to the Son, O Mother of our Salvation, in order that through thee He may receive us who through thee was given to us.” All goods and graces, therefore, that we receive from God come to us through the intercession of Mary. And why is this? St. Bernard replies: “Because God has wished it so.”

A further reason of this privilege of Mary, St. Augustine gives us when he says: “Mary can rightly be called our Mother because by her love she contributed towards giving us the life of grace and making us members of the mystic body of Christ.” As Mary, therefore, by her love contributed towards the spiritual regeneration of the faithful, God has willed that through her intercession all men shall obtain the life of grace here and the life of glory hereafter. On this account the Church desires us to invoke her as “our life, our sweetness and our hope.” Accordingly, St. Bernard exhorts us to have constant recourse to this divine Mother because her petitions are certainly answered. “Hasten to Mary,” he writes, “for I say it without hesitation, the Son will certainly hear the Mother. She is the ladder of safety for poor sinners. She is my greatest assurance; she is the only ground of my hope.” He calls Mary a ladder for sinners, for as you cannot mount to the third round before putting the foot on the second, nor to the second before reaching the first, so you can reach God only through Jesus Christ, and

Jesus Christ only through Mary. The Saint calls Mary his greatest assurance and the only ground of his hope, for it is his firm conviction that God desires all graces that He bestows on us to come through the hands of Mary.

Be of good heart then, ye children of Mary! You know that she regards as her children all who desire to be so. Courage, therefore, and confidence! How can you fear that you will ever perish when such a Mother defends and protects you? He who loves this good Mother and places himself under her protection can say with St. Bonaventure: “I rejoice and am glad, for my sentence on judgment day depends on Jesus my Brother and on Mary my Mother.” This very thought filled St. Anselm with consolation and joy: “O blessed confidence! O safe refuge!” he cried, “The Mother of God is also my Mother; with what security I can hope for eternal happiness, for that happiness depends on the decision of a good Brother and on a compassionate Mother.”

QUALITIES OF HOPE

We shall now devote our attention to the qualities that should characterize our hope. First of all, our hope must be firm and unwavering. “Hope of eternal happiness,” according to St. Thomas, “is the confident expectation of this happiness.” With this doctrine the Council of Trent agrees when it says: “We must all confidently hope for the assistance of God; for as God has begun the good work in us, He wills to complete it, provided we make use of His grace; both the desire and its realization are from Him.” (*Sess.* 6, *ch.* 18). This is what the Apostle St. Paul taught in his letter to Timothy: “I know whom I have believed, and I am certain that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day.” (*2 Tim.* 1:12). In this we see the distinction between Christian hope and that which is purely human. With human hope there is always connected the fear that the person who has made a promise has changed or will change his mind. Christian hope, on the contrary, which looks to eternal salvation, has no doubt or fear whatever regarding God. The Lord is able and willing to grant us eternal happiness, and what is more He has promised it to all who keep His commandments; for this end He pledges Himself to grant to all who seek them the graces necessary to fulfill His commands. It is nevertheless true that even Christian hope is not altogether free from a certain fear; but as St.

Thomas says: “We have nothing to fear on the part of God, but only from ourselves.” It is quite possible that we may fail to cooperate with God’s grace and even place obstacles in its way.

The Council of Trent was right, therefore, in condemning the innovators for saying that man has no freedom of will, and that each one must have an infallible certainty with regard to his perseverance in grace and eternal happiness. This doctrine the Council condemned because, as we have just seen, our cooperation is necessary for the attainment of eternal happiness—and this cooperation is uncertain. God desires, therefore, that on the one hand we foster a certain anxiety in order that we may not, by trusting to our own strength, be put to confusion; but on the other hand He wishes us to be absolutely certain that it is His Will to make us eternally happy and that He will give us all the graces we need if we but ask Him. We should therefore trust with unwavering confidence in His goodness. St. Thomas says: “We must confidently expect eternal happiness from the power and mercy of God, believing firmly that God can make us happy and that He wishes to do so.”

It sometimes happens that, owing to spiritual aridity or the disquiet resulting from a fault we have committed, we feel an absence of that sensible confidence in prayer which we would gladly experience. We must not on that account cease to pray, because God will very likely hear us sooner then than at other times, since we are apt to pray with greater distrust in ourselves and more hope in the goodness and fidelity of God. Oh how pleasing and acceptable it is to God when in fear and dread and every temptation we hope against hope; that is to say, when in spite of a feeling of mistrust arising from our own misery, we nevertheless trust in Him, as did the Patriarch Abraham, whom the Apostle praises because “against hope he believed in hope.” (*Rom.* 4:18).

Secondly, our hope must be founded on God alone. The Lord forbids us to place our trust in creatures: “Put not your trust in princes.” (*Ps.* 145:2). “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.” (*Jer.* 17:5). God desires us not to build on creatures because He does not want us to be attached to them with inordinate love. St. Vincent de Paul advises us not to count much on the protection of men, for if we do the Lord will withdraw from us; on the other hand, the more we grow in the love of God the more we will trust in Him.

“I have run the way of thy commandments when thou didst enlarge my heart” (*Ps.* 118:32), by confidence.

But someone may say: If God alone is our hope, how can the Church address Mary as “Our hope”? Let us listen to what St. Thomas says on this point. We can place our hope in anyone, says the Saint, in a twofold manner; we can regard one as the principal and ultimate cause of our hope, or as the secondary and mediate cause. For example, one may hope for a favor from a king and from his minister or favorite. The king would be the principal or ultimate cause from which he hopes, the minister or favorite the mediate or intercessory. If the latter grants the favor, it comes nevertheless from the former, but through the intercession of the latter.

Now as the King of Heaven is Infinite Goodness itself, He desires to enrich us with His graces; but as great confidence on our part is necessary to obtain them, He has, in order to increase our confidence, given us His own Mother as our Mother and mediatrix to assist us. Therefore He wishes us to place our hope of salvation and of all goods and graces in her. According to the words of the prophet, they who put their trust in creatures are cursed. This passage refers to those who disregard their God and place their hope in the friendship and favor of man. But those who hope in Mary, the Mother of God, who has the power to obtain for them grace and eternal life, will be blessed by God. They give great joy to His loving heart, for He desires to see honored and loved that exalted creature who on earth loved and honored Him more than all men and angels together. We are right therefore in calling the Blessed Virgin our hope, for by means of her intercession we hope to obtain what we never could obtain by our feeble prayers alone. We beg her for her intercession, says Suarez, in order that the dignity of the intercessor may supply what is wanting in us. By invoking Mary with confidence, we manifest no distrust in the mercy of God, but simply fear on account of our own unworthiness. Holy Church is justified therefore in calling Mary “The Mother of holy hope,” and by this she wishes to say that Mary awakens in us the hope of the inestimable goods of eternity.

Thirdly, our hope must be an active hope. In order that our hope may not be in vain it must labor; that is to say, to unbounded confidence in God we must unite the use of the means of salvation and sanctification which the Divine Majesty has given us; otherwise we should belong to those idle souls who tempt the Lord. We must act as if the obtaining of our salvation depended entirely on ourselves, and yet we must place all our confidence in God and be thoroughly convinced that of ourselves we are utterly unable to attain what we desire. God accomplishes everything by means of His grace, but He nevertheless desires our cooperation. If this cooperation, insignificant though it is, be wanting, God withdraws from us and treats us as indolent servants deserving of naught but to be cast out into exterior darkness. “Wherefore, brethren, labor the more, that by good works, you may make sure your calling and election.” (*2 Peter* 1:10).

But what have we to do? Above all things we must pray. And how long must we pray? Until, says St. John Chrysostom, we hear the favorable sentence that assures us of eternal salvation. And he adds: He who says: “I will not stop praying until I am eternally happy,” will certainly be eternally happy. “Know you not,” says the Apostle, “that they that run in the race all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain.” (*1 Cor.* 9:24). In order to be eternally happy it is not enough, therefore, merely to pray; we must continue to pray until we are in possession of the crown that God has promised us.

If we desire to be happy for all eternity we must imitate David the prophet, who kept his eyes always directed to the Lord in order to implore His help and not be overcome by his enemies: “My eyes are ever towards the Lord, for he shall pluck my feet out of the snare.” (*Ps.* 24:15). The devil is never tired of laying snares for our destruction: “Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour.” (*1 Peter* 5:8). Therefore we must keep our weapons ever in our hands to defend ourselves against such an enemy. We must say with the royal Psalmist: “I will pursue my enemies . . . until they are consumed.” (*Ps.* 17:38). But how shall we win so important and difficult a victory? Only by prayer, says St. Augustine, and persevering prayer. But how long must it last? As long as the struggle goes on. Just as the contest never ceases, says St. Bonaventure, so we must never cease calling on God for His assistance, which is necessary for us so as not to succumb. “Woe to them that have lost patience,” says the Wise Man (*Ecclus.* 2:16), and have given up prayer. Blessed shall we be “if we hold fast the confidence and glory of hope unto the end.” (*Heb.* 3:6).

By means of the assistance we receive through prayer we must endeavor to keep the Commandments of God and do violence to ourselves so as not to yield to the temptations of Hell: “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent bear it away.” (*Matt.* 11:12). We must do violence to ourselves in temptations by conquering ourselves and mortifying our senses so as not to be overcome by the enemy of our souls. And when we have been guilty of a fault, says St. Ambrose, let us do violence to the Lord by prayers and tears in order to obtain His forgiveness. To inspire us with courage the Saint continues: “O blessed violence that God does not punish with His wrath but receives with mercy and reward! The greater this violence the more pleasing it is to Jesus Christ.” He concludes with the following words: “We must rule over ourselves by subduing our evil passions in order to win Heaven which Jesus Christ has merited for us.”

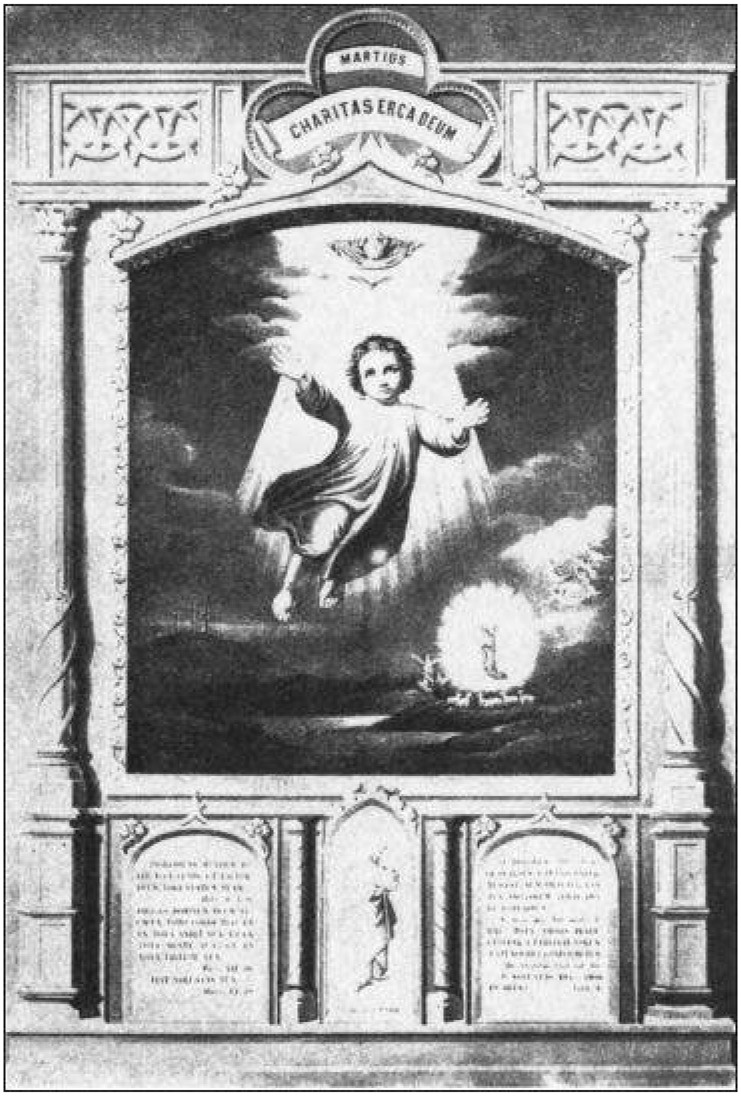
MARTIUS
CHARITAS ERGA DEUM

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind."—*Matt. 22:37*.

Chapter 3

THE LOVE OF GOD

> “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.”—*Matt. 22:37*

Love of God is a divinely infused virtue which leads us to love the Lord Our God as the sovereign good, and purely for His own sake. The motive which prompts us to love God is His own boundless perfection, on account of which alone He deserves to be loved, even though we had no reward to hope for or no punishment to dread. He who loves God because he finds in Him his own happiness has an interested, a selfish love, which really belongs to the virtue of hope and not to love. But he who loves God because for His own sake He deserves to be loved, has the true and genuine love of friendship. The companions of King Louis of France met a woman one day who carried in one hand a burning torch and in the other a vessel of water. On being asked what these things signified, she replied: “With this torch I would gladly burn Heaven, and with this water extinguish the fire of Hell, in order that men might love God not because of the reward of Heaven or the punishment of Hell, but simply and solely because He deserves to be loved.”

The perfect love of God, however, does not exclude the hope of Heaven. We love God because He deserves to be loved, and we would love Him even though we had no reward to expect for doing so. But knowing as we do that He will give us a reward and that He even desires us to hope for it, we must confidently expect it and strive to attain it. To long for Heaven in order to possess God and love Him more perfectly is a true and perfect love of God, for eternal glory is the perfection of this love.

All perfection consists in the love of God; for love is the virtue which unites us most intimately with God. All the other virtues are of no account unless they are accompanied by love. On the other hand, love has all the other virtues in her train, according to the teaching of St. Paul: “Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” (*1 Cor.* 13:4–7). “Love,” concludes the Apostle, “is the fulfillment of the law.” (*Rom.* 13:10). This induced St. Augustine to say: “Love and then do what you wish.” He who loves another is very careful to cause him no offense; on the contrary, he is eager to do what will afford him pleasure. In like manner, he who loves God above all things abhors an offense against Him more than death itself, and strives as much as in him lies to please God. The first and greatest commandment which the Lord has given us, bids us love Him with our whole heart. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.” (*Deut.* 6:5). As God has loved us with an infinite love, He desires that we should love Him sincerely, and He longs to possess our whole heart: “Son, give me thy heart.” (*Prov.* 23:26). “What doth the Lord, thy God, require of thee, but that thou fear the Lord, thy God, and walk in his ways and love him, and serve the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” (*Deut.* 10:12).

In the Old Law God commanded that fire be kept constantly burning on the altar. This altar, says St. Gregory, is a type of our heart in which the fire of divine love must ever burn. Therefore, to the command to love Him with the whole heart, God added this injunction: “And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising. And thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand, and they shall be and shall move between thy eyes. And thou shalt write them in the entry and on the doors of thy house” (*Deut.* 6:6–9), in order to be continually mindful of them and make thy life conformable to them. As a reward for this love, God promises to give us Himself: “I am thy protector and thy reward exceeding great.” (*Gen.* 15:1). The princes of this world reward their faithful subjects with possessions, honors and privileges. The Lord God gives them who love Him nothing less than Himself.

We should certainly be amply rewarded by the knowledge that God loves those who love Him, as He says in so many passages of Holy Writ: “I love them that love me.” (*Prov.* 8:17). “He that abideth in charity, abideth in God and God in him.” (*1 John* 4:16). “He that loveth me shall be loved by my Father; and I will love him.” (*John* 14:21). If we knew that in some distant country there lived a handsome, holy, learned and compassionate prince, we could not refrain from loving him even though he had done us no good whatever. But what are all the excellent qualities of such a prince compared to those of our God! God possesses every perfection in an infinite degree. He possesses everything that makes Him worthy of our love. Could He have offered a greater, better, nobler, richer or more amiable object for our love than Himself?

Who is of higher nobility than God? Illustrious people are proud of the fact that their nobility goes back five hundred or a thousand years; the nobility of God is from all eternity. Who is greater than God? He is the Lord of all. The angels of Heaven and the powerful on earth are to Him as a drop in the mighty ocean or as a miserable grain of dust. A single word from Him brought the world into being; a single word could consign everything to oblivion. Who is richer than God? He possesses the treasures of Heaven and earth. Who is more beautiful than God? The beauty of all creatures vanishes before the glory of God. Who is more beneficent than God? St. Augustine says that the efforts of God to bestow favors on us are greater even than our desire to receive them. Who is more merciful than God? As soon as a sinner, though it be the most abandoned wretch on earth, humbles himself before God and repents of his sins, God pardons him and receives him back. Who is more grateful than God? He never permits anything we do for love of Him to go unrewarded. In fine, who is more amiable and deserving of love than God? His very face fills the Saints of Heaven with a delight that constitutes their perfect happiness for all eternity. On the contrary, the greatest suffering of the reprobate consists in their knowing and seeing the lovable nature of God without being able to love Him.

We must therefore love God from our heart because He is worthy of all love. On account of the love God bears us, He is deserving of our sincerest gratitude. If we could unite the love of all men and angels and saints in one heart, this united love could not compare with the least degree of the love God bears each single soul. St. John Chrysostom says that God loves us more than we can love ourselves. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love” (*Jer.* 31:3), says God to each one of us. Those who loved us first on earth were our parents; but they began to love us only when they began to know us; God, on the contrary, loved us before we had an existence. Even before our parents lived, God loved us; yes, even before the creation of the world. In a word, He has loved us as long as He is God, and that is from all eternity. That heroic virgin St. Agnes was right when she said to those who sought to win her affections: “Another lover has come before you.” O world and creatures of the world, I cannot love you; for as God has loved me first it is no more than right that I should give and consecrate to Him my heart.

NATURE BIDS US LOVE GOD

Heaven and earth cry out, says St. Augustine, everything I see speaks to me and urges me to love Thee my Lord; all creatures tell me Thou hast created them for love of me. When the Abbot de Rance, founder of the Trappists, would gaze through the window of his cell and see the stars and the heaven, the birds and the flowers, and consider that God had created all these to show him His love, he felt his heart inflamed with love for God. The very sight of a flower enkindled love in the heart of St. Mary Magdalen; “The loving God,” she would exclaim, “has created this little flower to win my love.”

When St. Teresa looked at the trees or flowers or the meadows and brooks, she said they accused her of ingratitude and chided her with her little love for a Creator who had called all these things into being just to be loved by her. “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” *(John* 15:13). Do you believe, O Christian soul, that Jesus Christ died for love of you? And if you believe this, can you love anything but Him? Before the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, says a celebrated author, man might doubt whether God loved him tenderly or not; but now that Jesus Christ has become man and died for us, such a doubt is impossible.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST A PROOF OF LOVE

How could Our Lord have better proved His love for us than by suffering so many pains and such contempt and by ending His life in bitter agony on the Cross? But alas, we have grown so accustomed to hear of the Incarnation and the Redemption, of a God born in a stable, a God that was scourged and crowned and crucified, that it makes but little impression on us. O holy faith, enlighten us that we may see what boundless love God has shown us in becoming man and dying on a cross. If Jesus Christ is not loved by mankind, it is because so few think of the love He has shown them; for would it be possible to think of this, and live without loving Him? St. Paul says: “The charity of Christ presseth us” (*2 Cor.* 5:14); that is to say, a soul that considers the love of Jesus for mankind is forced, as it were, to love in return.

When the Saints reflected on the Passion of our Blessed Redeemer they were so inflamed with love that they frequently gave vent to their astonishment and devotion. One day, in an ecstasy of devotion, St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi caught hold of an image of the Crucified and exclaimed: “O Jesus, Thou hast become foolish with love. I say it and I shall never grow weary repeating it, love has made Thee foolish, my Jesus.” If faith had not assured us of the truth of the great mystery of our Redemption, who could believe it possible that the Creator of the universe willed to suffer and die for His creatures. If Jesus had not died for us, who would ever have dared to ask God to become man and suffer and die to redeem mankind? Who would not have considered such a thought the height of folly? Indeed, when the heathens were told of the death of Jesus Christ they regarded it as a fable and called it an incredible folly, as St. Paul tells us: “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness.” (*1 Cor.* 1:23).

Yes, says St. Gregory, it seemed foolishness to them that the Author of life should die for men. How can we believe, they said, that a God who depends on no one and who in Himself is perfectly happy, should come down upon earth, assume human nature and die for His wretched creatures? That would be saying that for love of man God has become a fool. Yet it is a truth of our holy faith that for love of us poor ungrateful creatures, Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, gave Himself up to an ignominious death: “He hath loved us and delivered Himself for us.” And why has Jesus done all this? He has done it, says St. Augustine, in order that man might recognize the inexpressible love which God bears him. Our Divine Redeemer Himself expressed the same idea in these words: “I have come to cast fire on the earth and what will I but that it be kindled!” (*Luke* 12:49). The fire of divine love I will kindle on earth and I desire nothing else but that the hearts of men be consumed with these holy flames.

With wonder and astonishment St. Bernard contemplates Our Lord bound like a criminal by the wicked soldiers. “O my Jesus,” he exclaims, “how is it I see ropes and chains on Thy sacred body; art Thou not the King of Heaven and Holiness itself? It is we ungrateful servants who have deserved these ropes and chains.” What has reduced Thee to such a pitiable condition, appearing like a wretched criminal? Ah, it is love. Love seems to forget its dignity when it seeks to win love in return. God, therefore, whom no man can vanquish, has been vanquished by love. His love for us induced Him to become man and to lose His life in a very ocean of suffering and sorrow.

As St. Bernard contemplates our Divine Redeemer before Pilate, he addresses Him in the following words: “Tell me, my beloved Jesus, Thou who art Innocence itself, what hast Thou done to deserve so cruel a sentence of death? Ah, I see now the cause of Thy death; I know what crime Thou hast committed, my Jesus! It is Thy love for us; yes, it is not Pilate, but Thy love that pronounces the sentence of death, and delivers the fatal blow.” At the sight of a crucifix, St. Francis of Paul exclaimed: “O love, O love, O love!” And this is what we all must say at the sight of our crucified Lord: O love, O love, O love! Oh, that all men who look at the Cross of Christ would think of the love that God has borne each one of us! “With what love would we be inflamed,” says St. Francis de Sales, “did we but see the flames of love that burn in the heart of Christ! What a happiness for us did we glow with the fire that consumes our Lord and God! What joy, to be bound with the bonds of love for God!” As St. Bonaventure has said, the wounds of our Saviour must move the most unfeeling hearts and warm the coldest souls with love.

How many are the darts of love that issue from these sacred wounds and pierce the hardest hearts! “What is man,” says Job, “that thou shouldst magnify him? or why dost thou set thy heart upon him?” (*Job* 7:17). O my God, what is wretched man that Thou shouldst honor him so much? What good hast Thou ever received from him, that Thou shouldst be wholly intent, as it seems, upon bestowing benefits on him and showing him Thy love? St. Thomas says that the love which consumes the heart of God makes it appear as though in man He saw His God, and that He could not be happy unless man were happy too.

Truly, Christian soul, if you had been God could Jesus Christ have done more for you than He has done by His life of suffering and His ignominious death? And if there had been a question of our Redeemer saving the life of His own Eternal Father, could He have done more than He has done for you? But, O God, where is our gratitude? If an insignificant servant had suffered for us what our heavenly Spouse has endured, could we ever forget it? Could we live without loving him? In very truth, we ought to be fairly beside ourselves with love when reflecting on the death of Jesus Christ, and say with St. Paschal: “My Love is nailed to the Cross for me; my Love has died for me.”

But what we have neglected to do in the past we can at least try to do in the future, as God still gives us time. Jesus died for us, says St. Paul, in order that His love might win a perfect mastery over our hearts: “For to this end Christ died and rose again; that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.” (*Rom.* 14:9). “And Christ died for all,” says the same Apostle, “that they also who live, may not now live to themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again.” (*2 Cor.* 5:15). With this intention of the Divine Redeemer the Saints have corresponded most perfectly. When considering the love that induced their Lord to suffer and die for them, they deemed it but little, for love of Him, to offer Him all they had, yes, even their very lives.

How many potentates, kings, queens and empresses have renounced their riches and relatives and given up their throne and country to enter a cloister and devote their lives to the love of Jesus Christ! How many martyrs have considered it a source of joy and happiness to surrender their lives in the midst of cruel torments for the love of their Lord and God! How many young men and women have rejected the most brilliant alliances and have gladly offered their lives as a token of their love for a God who died for love of them!

And you, Christian soul, what have you done for your Divine Redeemer! What proof of your love have you given Him? It is certain that Jesus died for you as well as for a St. Lucy, a St. Agatha, a St. Agnes. Think of the special graces He has given you and which He has denied to so many others. Think of the many He has permitted to be born in countries where infidelity and unbelief hold sway! How many of these unhappy creatures deprived of the Sacraments and means of eternal salvation are consigned to eternal perdition! And you have received the grace to be born in the bosom of the Church of God! Think of the great mercy that God has shown you, forgiving the many offenses you have committed against Him. To move Him to forgive you, all that was necessary was to repent and to ask for forgiveness; but, alas, you have treated Him with ingratitude and offended Him anew. And yet He was willing to pardon you again and with the same love. Instead of punishing you as you deserved, He showered upon you His graces and inspirations. At this very moment, while you are reading these words, He continues to invite you to His love. Well then! What do you propose to do? Is it possible you can resist any longer? Why do you still hesitate? Do you wish to wait until God ceases to call, and abandons you?

MEANS OF ADVANCING IN GOD’S LOVE

We shall now consider the means of advancing in the love of God. St. Teresa says that it is an extraordinary grace for a soul to be called to the perfect love of God. To these happy souls, you, dear reader, belong. In order, however, to dedicate yourself entirely to the love of your Divine Spouse, as He desires you to do, you must courageously make use of the means conducive to that end. The first means is an ardent desire for this perfect love. With such a desire you have already taken a considerable step. God distributes His graces in abundance to those only who hunger and thirst for them, as the Blessed Virgin says in her wonderful hymn of praise, the Magnificat: “He hath filled the hungry with good things.” (*Luke* 1:53). But this desire is absolutely necessary for us, for otherwise we should never persevere in our efforts to obtain the treasure of the love of God. We take little or no pains in striving to obtain that for which we have little or no desire. On the other hand, all trouble is light and sweet when our efforts are prompted by an ardent desire. Hence it is that Our Lord calls those blessed who have not merely a desire, but a hunger—that is to say, a great desire—for holiness: “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice.” (*Matt.* 5:6).

The second means of obtaining the perfect love of God consists in renouncing all love that does not refer to God. God desires to possess our hearts alone and will tolerate no rival. St. Augustine relates that the Roman Senate willingly acknowledged the 30,000 gods of the pagans, while they refused to worship the God of the Christians, because He was a jealous God who wished to be adored alone. Our God was right in claiming exclusive adoration, because He alone is the only true God. Accordingly, if we wish to arrive at the perfect love of God, we must banish from our heart every attachment that has not God for its object. The ardent St. Francis de Sales said: "If I knew that in my heart there was a single fiber that was not from God, in God, and for God, I would immediately tear it out." As long as the heart is not free from earthly inclinations, the love of God can find no entrance there; but as soon as it is detached from creatures the fire of divine love is enkindled and grows continually stronger. Therefore St. Teresa used to say: "Separate your heart from creatures and seek God; you will surely find Him then." Father Segneri the Younger wrote one day to a pious friend: "Divine love is a beneficent robber who takes from us all earthly inclinations, so that the soul can say to her beloved Spouse: What do I wish but Thee alone." St. Francis de Sales expresses himself in a similar manner: "The pure love of God consumes in the heart all that is not God, to turn everything into love, for all that man does for God is love."

"I count all things but as dung," says St. Paul, "that I may gain Christ." (*Phil.* 3:8). When the love of God has entered our hearts, we place no longer any value on what the world esteems: "If a man shall give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing." (*Cant.* 8:7). "If a house is on fire," says St. Francis de Sales, "they throw everything out the window." As soon as a heart is inflamed with the love of God it seeks to divest itself of everything earthly so as to love nothing but God. Does God ask too much when He desires the soul to love nothing but Him? "No," says St. Bonaventure, "God is infinitely amiable and supremely good, deserving of our undivided love; He is perfectly right when He desires that a heart which He has created, should belong to Him alone; and since He has given Himself in sacrifice for us, He has acquired a still greater claim to our undivided love."

SELF-DENIAL

In order to attain to the perfect love of God it is necessary, moreover, to deny oneself by gladly embracing what is opposed to self-love, and refusing oneself what self-love demands. One day when St. Teresa was sick, they brought her a very palatable dish; the Saint would not touch it. The attendant urged her to eat, saying that the dish was well-prepared. “That’s just the reason I abstain from eating it,” replied the Saint. And so with us; what pleases us most, in that we must deny ourselves, and just because it pleases us. For example, we must turn our eyes away from this or that object because it is beautiful; deny ourselves this or that pleasure because it is most agreeable to us; do a service to an ungrateful person just because he is ungrateful; take a bitter medicine just because it is bitter. According to St. Francis de Sales, our self-love wants to have a share in everything, even in things the most holy. For this very reason, says the Saint, we must love even virtue without attachment. For example, it is necessary to love prayer and solitude; but when obedience or charity prevent us from devoting ourselves to prayer and solitude we should not be disquieted, but accept resignedly everything that happens by the will of God to thwart our inclinations.

THE PASSION OF CHRIST

The fourth means of acquiring the perfect love of God consists in frequent meditation on the sufferings of Jesus Christ. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi says that he who has given himself entirely to the love of his Crucified Lord needs but to look at the cross to be buried in the contemplation of the boundless love that Jesus Christ has borne him. It would seem as though our Redeemer endured so many different torments and insults, such as His betrayal, His agony, His scourging, His crowning and His Crucifixion in order to afford subjects for meditation to those souls that love Him. And yet we must not reflect on the sufferings of Jesus Christ for the sake of the consolation and sweetness it affords, but only to inflame our hearts with love for our suffering Saviour and to learn from Him what He desires us to do.

At the same time, we must declare ourselves ready to bear everything patiently for love of Him who suffered so much for love of us. The Lord once revealed to a pious hermit that no devotion was better calculated to enkindle the love of God in the heart than meditation on the sufferings of

Christ. It has always been a favorite devotion with the Saints. St. Francis of Assisi became a seraph of love by meditating on the Passion of Christ. He was found one day bathed in tears and uttering loud sighs. When asked what was the cause of his grief he replied: “I am weeping over the pains and insults of my Divine Master. But what grieves me most is that men for whom He suffered so much never think of the torments He endured.” If the Saint heard the bleating of a lamb, or saw anything that reminded him of the sufferings of Christ, he was forced to shed tears. Once when he was sick and someone advised him to read an edifying book, he replied: “My book is Jesus Crucified.” He constantly exhorted his brethren to think of the Passion of Christ.

The fifth means of acquiring the treasure of God’s love is prayer. The constant prayer of a Christian soul must be: “Jesus, give me Thy holy love; Mary my Mother, obtain for me the love of God; my Guardian Angel and all my holy patrons, intercede for me that I may love my God with my whole heart and soul.” The Lord is generous in the bestowal of His gifts; but He is especially bountiful in giving His love to those who seek it.

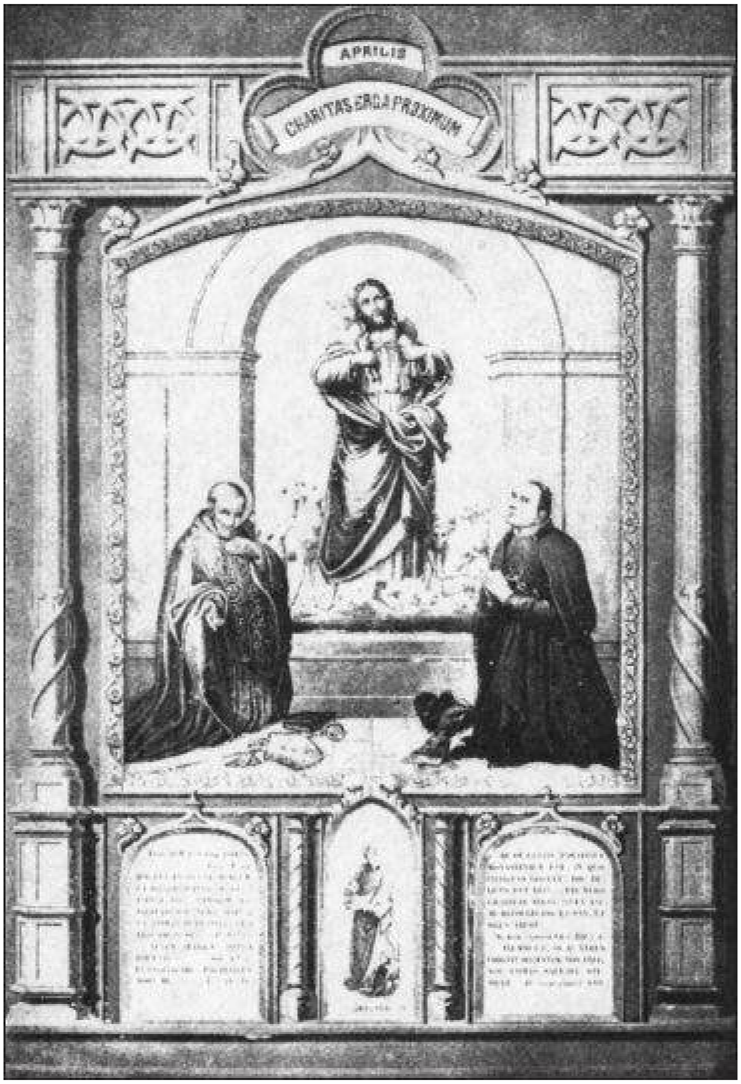
APRILIS
CHARITAS ERGA PROXIMUM

“This is My Commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you.”—*John 15:12*.

Chapter 4

LOVE FOR OUR NEIGHBOR

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."—*John 15:12*

It is impossible to love the Lord our God without at the same time loving our neighbor. The commandment that obliges us to love our God, obliges us also to love our neighbor. "And this commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God, love also his brother." (*1 John* 4:21). From these words of the Apostle, St. Thomas Aquinas concludes that the one virtue of love embraces the love of God and the love of our neighbor. St. Jerome tells us that when the disciples of St. John the Evangelist asked him why he spoke so often of brotherly love, he replied: "Because it is the commandment of the Lord, and the fulfillment of this alone is sufficient for eternal salvation."

St. Catherine of Genoa once said to Our Lord: "O my God, Thou commandest me to love my neighbor, and I can love no one but Thee." Our Saviour replied: "My daughter, whoever loves Me loves everything that is loved by Me." Why, therefore, must we love our neighbor? Because he is loved by God. St. John was therefore right when he called him a liar who says that he loves God but hates his neighbor. Our Lord has promised that He will regard as done to Himself what we do for the least of our brethren: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it to me." (*Matt.* 25:40). From this St. Catherine of Genoa concludes: "If you wish to know how much a person loves his God, see how much he loves his neighbor."

Christian charity is one of the principal fruits of the Redemption. The prophet Isaias had foretold this truth in the following words: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: the calf and the lion and the sheep shall abide together, and a little child shall lead them." (*Is.* 11:6). By these words he wished to say that the followers of Jesus Christ, though from different nations and different climes and of unlike characters and inclinations, would nevertheless live peacefully together, for brotherly love would induce them to practice mutual forbearance. And St. Luke, when speaking of the first Christians, says: “The multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul.” (*Acts* 4:32).

This was the effect of the prayer which our Redeemer addressed to His heavenly Father on the eve of His Sacred Passion: “Holy Father, keep them in thy name whom thou hast given me; that they may be one, as we also are.” (*John* 17:11).

RASH JUDGMENTS

Dear Christian reader, if you are desirous of practicing the beautiful virtue of charity, strive in the first place to reject every rash judgment, every distrust, and unfounded suspicion of your neighbor. It is a grave fault, without sufficient reason, to doubt the innocence of another. It is graver still to entertain a real suspicion, and far more so when without adequate reason we hold for certain that another has done wrong. He who judges in this manner will himself be judged: “Judge not,” says our Divine Redeemer, “that you may not be judged; for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.” (*Malt.* 7:1–2). I say, “without sufficient reason,” for when there are good grounds for suspecting or even believing evil of another, no sin is committed by such thoughts. However, it is, according to the teaching of the Apostle, always safer and more in harmony with charity to think well of others and to refrain from all unfavorable judgments and suspicions: “Charity thinketh no evil.” (*1 Cor.* 13:5).

This advice is not intended, of course, for those who are entrusted with the guidance of others, for it is advisable and even at times necessary for such to entertain a certain distrust; otherwise great evils may arise as the result of an overweening confidence. But if you are not charged with the duty of watching over others, try always to think well of your fellow men. St. Jane de Chantal says: “In our neighbor we must direct our attention to the good and not to the evil. And if it should happen that we deceive ourselves by regarding as good what in reality is bad, we need not be disturbed, for St. Augustine says, charity is not grieved when by mistake it attributes something good to one who is evil.”

Beware of trying to find out the faults of your neighbor. Do not imitate those who go about inquiring what is said of them and thereby fill their heart with suspicion, bitterness and aversion. Things are often represented to be different from what they really are. If you hear, therefore, that an unfavorable comment has been passed on you, do not attach much importance to the assertion and do not seek to know its origin or source. Act in such a manner that everyone must speak well of you, and then let others talk as they will. You might possibly say to yourself when your faults are spoken of: “That is the least they can say about me; what if they knew all!”

CALUMNY AND SLANDER

To practice charity in speech you must, above all things, avoid calumny and slander. He who has contracted this deplorable habit disfigures his own soul and is hated everywhere, as the Holy Ghost says: “He shall defile his own soul and shall be hated by all.” (*Ecclus.* 21:31). If there are some who agree with him at times and encourage him in speaking ill of his neighbor, these very persons will later avoid him and be on their guard against his venomous tongue. They reason, and justly so, that if he speaks ill of others to them, he will speak ill of them to others. St. Jerome remarks that many who have renounced the other vices seem not to be able to keep from uncharitable talk. Even among those who have vowed to strive after perfection there are many who cannot move their tongue without wounding someone. God grant they may not end their life as did one unhappy slanderer; when on his deathbed, he bit his tongue in a fit of rage, and in this condition he died. St. Bernard speaks of another who was about to speak ill of St. Malachy when suddenly his tongue became swollen and was devoured by worms; after seven days of terrible agony he died a wretched death.

But, on the other hand, how dear to God and man is he who speaks well of everyone! “If in the course of his life, a man never spoke ill of his fellowman, I would consider him a saint,” says St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi. Carefully guard against the habit of speaking unkindly of others, and especially of superiors. We render ourselves guilty of detraction not only when we reveal the hidden faults of our neighbor, but also when we interpret his good works amiss or assign to them an evil intention. It is a common fault with some people when speaking of their neighbor to begin with praise and end with blame. For example, “So and So is very capable; isn’t it too bad he’s so proud?” Or, “He is very generous, but he spoils it all by being revengeful.”

Dear reader, try always to say only what is good of your neighbor. Speak of others as you would wish others to speak of you. And in regard to the absent, follow the beautiful advice of St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi: “Say nothing of an absent brother that you would not wish to say in his presence.” When you hear others speaking unkindly, be careful not to encourage them by manifesting an interest or pleasure in what they say; you might otherwise be a partner in their guilt.

“Six things there are,” says the Wise Man, “which the Lord hateth and the seventh his soul detesteth.” (*Prov.* 6:16). This seventh thing is the person who “soweth discord among brethren.” The talebearer goes about telling people what he has heard others say of them. He scatters the seeds of discord, enmity, quarrels and revenge. How severe the account such tongues will have to give before the judgment seat of God. If in the heat of passion one person speaks ill of another, we can have patience with him; most likely he will repent of what he has said. But how can the Lord be patient with those who deliberately sow seeds of discord and strife and destroy the peace and happiness of their fellow men? “Hast thou heard a word against thy neighbor?” says the Holy Ghost; “let it die within thee, trusting that it will not burst thee.” (*Ecclus.* 19:10). You must not be satisfied merely to enclose it in your heart; you must let it die there.

There are people who, on hearing a secret, seem to suffer the agonies of death until they can make it known in some way. Their secret is like a thorn that is piercing the heart and it must be torn out as soon as possible. Do not act in this way. If you know that your neighbor has committed a fault, be silent about it. Only then, when the good of others or of the guilty one demands it, may you reveal what you know.

In conversation, as far as possible avoid disputes. There are some people who have such a spirit of contradiction that they seem to take pleasure in always questioning what others say, even though it be of little or no importance. Thus little trifles sometimes give rise to a war of words; charity is wounded and the bonds of friendship are broken beyond repair. “Strive not in a matter which doth not concern thee," says the Wise Man. (*Ecclus.* 11:9).

But, you will say: "I am right; I cannot bear to hear such absurd talk." Listen to what Cardinal Bellarmine says: "An ounce of charity is better than tons of right." To yield in a war of words is to win a victory, for you grow in virtue and preserve peace, which is better far than obstinately maintaining your right.

When you are offended or spoken to in an angry way, try to reply with meekness. If you are too agitated to do so it is better to say nothing at all, for in the heat of passion you may think what you say is right and proper, but afterwards, when the excitement has passed away, you will regret what you have said. An eye that is disturbed by anger, says St. Bernard, cannot see what is right or wrong. Passion is like a black veil that is drawn before the eyes; while it is there we cannot see things in their proper light. When he who offends you asks pardon, be generous enough to grant it in a gracious manner. If you have offended another be quick to repair the harm you have done. St. Bernard says, the best way to heal the wound you have inflicted by uncharitableness is to humble yourself. The longer you delay, the harder it becomes, and eventually you may neglect it altogether. Our Blessed Saviour once said: "If thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother: and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift." (*Matt.* 5:23). But if it should happen that such self-humiliation would only anger the offended person the more, endeavor by some other means to quiet him.

ALMSGIVING

A very important duty of charity towards our neighbor consists in giving him alms when he is poor and needy and we ourselves are in a position to do so: "Of that which remaineth, give alms," says our Blessed Redeemer. (*Luke* 11:41). But we must distinguish: If our neighbor is in extreme want we are bound to assist him with what is not absolutely necessary for our own sustenance. If his necessity is not extreme, but very great, we must help him with what we ourselves do not need. "Alms delivereth from death," said the Archangel Raphael to Tobias, "and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting.” (*Tob.* 12:9).

“He that hath mercy on the poor,” says the Holy Ghost, “lendeth to the Lord; and he will repay him.” (*Prov.* 19:17). If we can do nothing else let us at least recommend him to God, for prayer is also an alms. “He that shall see his brother in need,” says St. John, “and shall shut up his heart against him, how doth the charity of God abide in him?” (*1 John* 3:17). “With what measure you mete it shall be measured to you again,” says our Blessed Redeemer. (*Matt.* 7:2). St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi said she would feel happier by assisting her neighbor than if she were raised to heavenly contemplation: “If I am in contemplation,” said she, “God is helping me; if I assist my neighbor I am helping God.” This is very true, for Our Lord Himself said: “Whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren you do to me.” (*Matt.* 25:40).

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

Above all things I would recommend to you charity towards your enemies. “Love your enemies,” says Our Lord, “do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven.” (*Matt.* 5:44). How sad it is to see Christians who go to church and even to Holy Communion and still retain enmity in their hearts! If anyone has injured you, and you wish to be revenged, try to act as the Saints have done. St. Paulinus tells us that to love one’s enemy is a heavenly revenge. St. Catherine of Siena took revenge on a woman who had attacked her honor, and this was her revenge: During a long and severe illness which the woman suffered, St. Catherine waited on her as a servant. St. Acacius sold his possessions in order to assist a man who had robbed him of his good name. St. Ambrose supported a man who had made an attempt on his life. Venustian, the Governor of Umbria, a persecutor of the Church, had the hands of St. Sabinus, Bishop of Spoleto, cut off because the Saint, instead of adoring an idol, broke it to pieces. Hereupon, the Governor was seized with such violent pains in the eyes that he called on the Saint to help him. Sabinus prayed for him and not only cured his body but also his soul; the Governor embraced the True Faith.

St. Chrysostom relates the following example. When St. Meletius, Patriarch of Antioch, saw the people about to stone the officer who was leading him into exile, the Saint stretched out his arms and embraced him, thus saving his life. But someone will say: “These were saints; I have no such strength and grace.” St. Ambrose replies: “If strength is wanting, pray to God and He will give it you.” If we forgive others, we are certain of forgiveness ourselves: “Forgive and you will be forgiven,” says Our Lord. (*Luke* 6:37). “If I called a dead person to life,” says St. Baptist Verani, “I would be less certain of being loved by God than when I am prepared to do good to him who has done evil to me.” Our Lord Himself said one day to St. Angela de Foligno: “The surest sign of mutual love between Me and My servants consists in their loving someone who has offended them.”

If you can do nothing else, dear reader, pray for those who have offended or injured you. Hersisters in religion used to say of St. Joanna of the Cross: “If you want Mother Joanna to pray for you, all that is necessary is to offend her.” One day when St. Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, was praying for a person who had injured her, she heard Our Lord say: “You have never uttered a prayer that was more agreeable to Me than this; in consequence I forgive you all your sins.”

The love that is directed to the spiritual welfare of your neighbor is doubtless the best. In the eyes of God, says St. Bernard, a soul is worth more than the whole world. Could there be anything, therefore, more noble and sublime than to labor with Jesus Christ for the salvation of souls? But you may say: “I am not called to the service of the sanctuary; this is the work of the priests.” St. Augustine replies: “If you truly love God, you will do all in your power to make others love Him.” We may likewise say: If you truly love yourself, you will make every possible effort to win souls to God, for he who converts a sinner saves not only the sinner, but himself. When Jonathan with great danger to himself had delivered the Jews from the hands of the Philistines, he was condemned to death by his father because, in spite of a prohibition, he had eaten a little honey. But the people said to Saul: “Should Jonathan, who has delivered us all from death, himself die?” In this way they obtained his pardon and deliverance from death.

In a similar manner the souls that we help to save will plead beseechingly in our behalf before the judgment seat of God. And God will answer their pleading: “From henceforth they may rest from their labors, for their works follow them.” (*Apoc.* 14:13). St. Gregory says we shall gain as many crowns as we win souls to God. “So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (*Matt.* 5:16). Our Lord said one day to St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi: “See how many Christians are in the hands of the devil; if My elect do not free them by prayer, these unfortunates will be eternally lost.”

If you have an opportunity to assist the dying, remember that you are performing an act of charity very acceptable to God. St. Philip Neri often saw the angels putting words of consolation on the tongues of those who assisted the dying. See that the priest is called in time to administer the last Sacraments while the patient is still conscious. Suggest little acts of faith, hope, love and contrition. Assist the sufferer to pronounce the holy Names very often and to make acts of resignation to the Will of God. When the soul is departing, say the prayers for the dying and recommend the departed soul when it appears before the judgment seat of God. An evergreen wreath of prayers should be laid on the grave and frequent mementoes made during Holy Mass for a speedy entrance of the departed soul into the everlasting joys of our heavenly home.

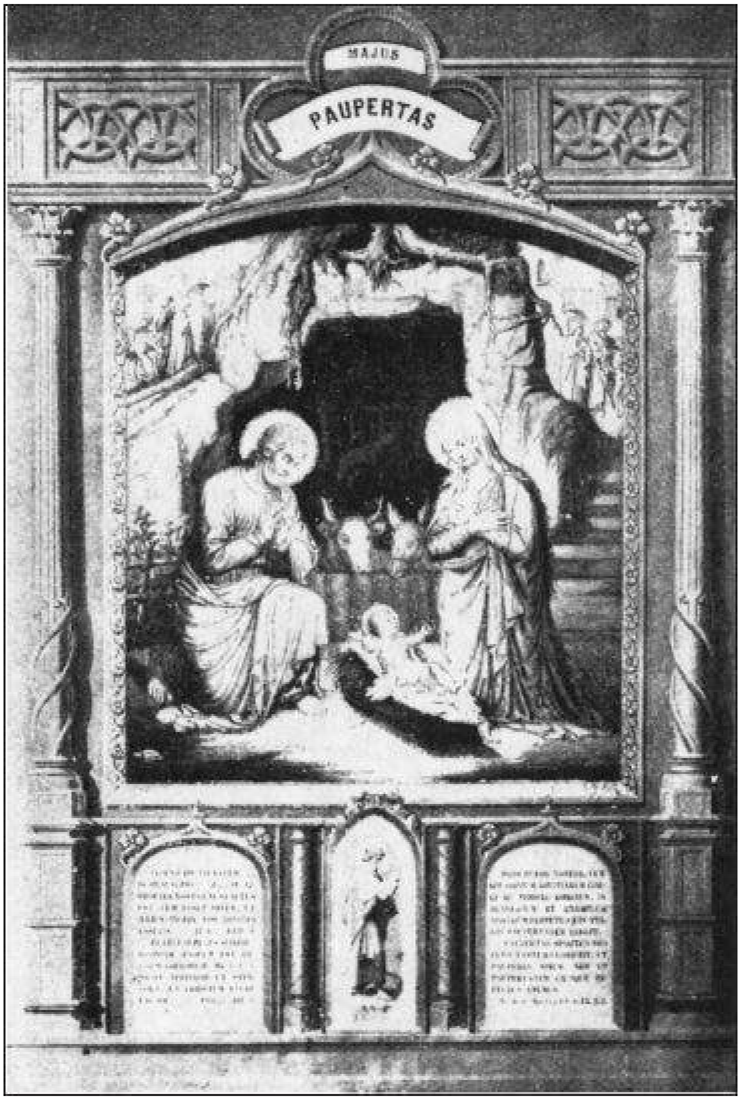
MAJUS
PAUPERTAS

“Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—*Matt. 5:3*.

Chapter 5

POVERTY AND DETACHMENT

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”—*Matt. 5:3*

When the masters of the spiritual life speak of poverty in spirit, they generally understand it in a twofold sense. In the restricted sense it means a detachment of the heart from earthly possessions. In the broad sense, by poverty in spirit they mean detachment from everything earthly, no matter what it may be. In this sense, poverty in spirit is necessary for all who are striving after perfection.

Our heart cannot exist without love; it will either love God or creatures. If it does not love creatures, it certainly will love God. In order to become holy we must therefore banish from our heart all that is not for God. When anyone came to the Fathers of the desert and desired to be received by them he was asked: “Do you bring an empty heart that it may be filled by the Holy Ghost?” And they were right, for a heart that is filled with the things of earth has no room for the love of God. He who brings a vessel filled with earth to the spring will never be able to fill it with water until he empties it of the earth with which it is filled. How does it happen that so many pray and go frequently to Holy Communion, and still make no considerable progress in the love of God? The reason is doubtless because the heart is full of self-esteem, of vanity, self-will and attachment to creatures. He, therefore, who wishes to arrive at the perfect love of God must practice poverty in spirit. He must be detached from worldly possessions, from temporal honors, from his fellow creatures and from himself.

Our Divine Redeemer has said: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (*Matt.* 5:3). And again: “Woe to you rich.” (*Luke* 6:24). What does He mean by these words? Does He mean that all the poor are happy and all the rich unhappy? Certainly not; He wishes rather to exhort all, both rich and poor, to the practice of the virtue of poverty and detachment. For there are many who are poor in the goods of this world, but their hearts cling tenaciously to the things of earth; while on the other hand, there are wealthy people whose hearts are entirely detached from their earthly possessions.

THE POOR IN SPIRIT

The poor of this world do not possess poverty of spirit from the mere fact that they suffer the want of the goods of this life. Poverty of spirit consists in the desire to possess nothing but God. “I meet a poor man,” says St. Augustine, “and yet I find he is not poor”; that is to say: Many are poor in reality, few in spirit and desire. St. Teresa says that they who appear externally poor without being so in spirit deceive both the world and themselves. What will their poverty in possession avail them? He who is externally poor, but in his heart has an insatiable desire for wealth has only the burdens, but not the virtue of poverty. The truly virtuous poor desire nothing but God, and for that very reason they are immensely rich. Of them St. Paul speaks when he says: “Having nothing, they possess all things.” (*2 Cor.* 6:10).

But how can they who are rich in the goods of this earth still possess poverty in spirit? They can do so by having no inordinate attachment to their riches. What are the goods of this earth? They are really goods only in appearance that can never satisfy the heart of man. “You have eaten,” says the prophet Aggeus, “but you have not had enough.” (*Agg.* 1:6). Instead of satisfying the hunger, says St. Bernard, they only increase it. If worldly goods could satisfy the heart of man, the rich and the mighty would be perfectly happy; but experience teaches the contrary. As a rule they are the most unhappy of men, for they are tortured by fears, jealousies and sadness. “Vanity of vanities and all is vanity.” I have had all these things, said Solomon, “and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” (*Eccles.* 1:14).

Add to this the fact that those who are always intent upon increasing their earthly possessions are in great danger of being eternally lost. The Apostle warns us against this in his epistle to Timothy: “They that will become rich, fall into temptation and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the desire of money is the root of all evils; which some coveting have erred from the faith, and have entangled themselves in many sorrows." (*1 Tim.* 6:9–10).

If we desire to belong to God, we must renounce all attachment to the goods of earth. He who strives for earthly goods, says St. Philip Neri, will never become a saint. The riches we must strive to gain, says St. Prosper, are not temporal goods but virtues, humility, meekness, chastity, piety, for these will constitute our greatness and glory in Heaven. "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal." (*Matt.* 6:19). The wealthy can practice poverty in spirit by giving alms and performing good works. "O happy exchange," says St. Peter Damian, "we give earth and receive gold"; that is to say, we give our earthly possessions and receive in return graces from God and an eternal reward in Heaven. In all ages of the Christian era there have been people of distinguished rank who lived in great simplicity in order to be able to perform good works. Violanta Palombara, a lady of the nobility, clothed herself in ordinary linen. Her rosary was made of cheap wood. Just before her death she was heard to exclaim: "Oh, what do I see! My dress is become brilliant and my beads are sparkling like diamonds."

TRUE DETACHMENT

Our detachment from the things of this earth is proved by our resignation to the Will of God in temporal disasters, such as financial loss by accident or theft. Faith teaches us that nothing happens without the permission of God. If, therefore, we suffer the loss of our good name or our temporal possessions, God does not of course will the sin that is thereby committed, but He wills or permits the suffering that falls to our lot and He wills it for our good. When a messenger came to the pious Job and announced that the Sabeans had stolen all his belongings and murdered his children, the holy man replied: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." He did not say: "The Lord gave and the Sabeans have taken away," but: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord." (*Job* 1:21). Finally, we prove to evidence that we possess the spirit of detachment when we are ready to sacrifice everything we have—riches, honors, dignities, position—in short, every temporal advantage, rather than offend God.

Such were the sentiments of the holy martyrs. Dacian, the Governor of the Province of Tanigma, addressed the young deacon Vincent in the following words: “My boy, you are still young; the smiles and favors of fortune await you. To possess them, all you need do is to renounce your religion; obey the Emperor and escape an ignominious death.” Vincent turned to Bishop Valerius, who with him stood before the Governor, and said: “My Father, if you wish, I shall answer for you too.” The holy Bishop, who stood prepared to suffer everything for the love of Jesus Christ, replied: “Yes, my son; as I have already commissioned you to preach the word of God, now I commission you to confess our faith.” Hereupon Vincent declared to the Governor that both Valerius and himself adored but one God and that they could not and would not adore devils, for such were the gods of the Roman empire. “Moreover,” he said, “do not imagine you will influence us by threats or promises. There is nothing in this world to compare with the honor and the happiness of dying for Jesus Christ.” Enraged at this fearlessness of the holy deacon, the Governor cried out: “Either sacrifice to the gods or your contempt will cost you your lives.” The holy deacon replied with a loud voice: “I have already told you that you could do us no greater favor than to put us to death for Jesus Christ, and you may rest assured that you will grow weary torturing us before we are tired of being tormented.”

Let us now consider some of the means that are necessary for acquiring this detachment from the things of earth. In the first place, to remove all inordinate attachment from the heart it is necessary to dwell on the thought of death. The day of death is called “the day of loss” because on this day the riches and honors and pleasures of earth are lost. On this account, says St. Ambrose, we should not really call these things our own because we cannot bring them with us into the next world, where only virtue can accompany us. That man was right therefore who, when realizing the vanity of the world, wrote on a skull the following words: “To one who thinks, everything here below seems deserving of contempt.” But why are there so many unhappy lovers of this earth? Because there are so few who think of death.

Poor children of Adam, says the Holy Ghost, why do you not banish from your hearts all earthly attachment? “Why do you love vanity and seek after lying?” (*Ps.* 4:3). What happened to your forefathers will happen to you.

They too loved the dwelling that is now yours; now they are no more; they have gone into eternity, and you shall follow them.

THE POVERTY OF CHRIST

The second means consists in frequent meditation on the poverty of Jesus Christ and the esteem which He had for this holy virtue. For our good, and in order to give us an example, our Divine Redeemer wished to lead so poor a life on earth that St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi called poverty the spouse of Jesus Christ. St. Bernard says: “Poverty was not to be found in Heaven, but it reigned on earth. Mankind, however, did not recognize its worth, and therefore the Son of God came down to choose poverty for His inseparable companion and to teach us to esteem it.”

This thought is in keeping with what the Apostle writes to his disciples: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich he became poor for your sakes; that through his poverty you might be rich.” (*2 Cor.* 8:9). Although our Divine Redeemer was the Lord and Master of all the riches of Heaven and earth, He willed nevertheless to become poor in this world that through His example we might become rich. He wished to induce us to love poverty as He did, for poverty, by detaching us from earthly riches, enables us to share in the treasures of Heaven. The third means consists in frequently dwelling upon the teaching of our Blessed Lord that the poor in spirit shall have a great and certain reward. Their reward is certain, for when our Saviour enumerated the Beatitudes in the Gospel, He referred in most instances to the future, as “Blessed are the meek for they *shall* possess the land! Blessed are the pure of heart for they *shall* see God!” But to the poor in spirit He promises happiness even in this life: “Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven.” (*Matt.* 5:3). While here on earth, they receive special graces.

The reward of the poor in spirit is, secondly, very great. “The less we have here,” says St. Teresa, “the greater will be our joy in Heaven, where our dwelling shall correspond to the love with which we imitated the life of poverty of our Divine Master here on earth.” The truly poor in spirit enjoy a heavenly peace even here in this world. “Oh what happiness voluntary poverty bestows,” says St. Lawrence Justinian; “the poor man possesses nothing and therefore has nothing to fear; he is always cheerful, for he always has an abundance, since he knows how to draw spiritual gain out of everything that is burdensome.” According to the words of St. Bernard, a miser craves for riches like a beggar, because he can never satisfy his insatiable desire. He, on the other hand, who is poor from choice despises the possessions of this earth and is at the same time the master of all.

The fourth means consists in loving God without reserve. A soul that is thoroughly penetrated with divine love is inclined of itself, of course not without the aid of grace, to divest itself of all earthly things which might prevent it from belonging entirely to God. For the love of Jesus Christ, a certain rich man had renounced all his possessions. When one of his friends asked him how he had fallen into such poverty, he drew forth a copy of the Gospel and said: “This is what has robbed me of all I possessed.” The Holy Ghost tells us that all the treasures of earth are as nothing in the eyes of one who loves God. If a soul directs all its love to God, that soul despises riches, pleasures, honors, kingdoms and everything else this world can give. It loves only God, and says without intermission: “O my God, Thee alone do I desire!” He who loves God is not anxious to gain the esteem and love of men; all his efforts are directed to one end, to please God, the only object of his love.

St. Hilary says: “All earthly honors are things of the devil.” Indeed, the devil is working in the interest of Hell when he inspires a soul with a desire for the esteem of the world. For when a soul loses humility it runs the risk of being hurled into the abyss. A great servant of God once said: “When we hear that a Solomon, or a Tertullian, these cedars of Lebanon have fallen, we have a proof that they did not give themselves entirely to God, but nourished pride in their heart, and on that account strayed from the path of righteousness. We should tremble when we experience within ourselves the desire to shine before others and to be honored by them. Such promptings may be the beginning of our eternal misery.” Many who have pretensions to piety are adorers of their own honor. They have a certain appearance of virtue, and at the same time a desire to be praised for all they do. If no one praises them, they praise themselves. They wish to appear better than others, and if they hear that their good name has been assailed, they lose all control of themselves, neglect Holy Communion and all their exercises of piety. They can find no rest until they have made good the supposed injury done to them.

Such is not the conduct of those who love God sincerely. Far from praising themselves or taking pleasure in hearing themselves praised, they are disturbed on account of the recognition they receive, and they rejoice when they are called upon to suffer contempt. “I am only that which I am before God,” said St. Francis of Assisi. Of what use is it to be esteemed by men if we are contemptible in the sight of God? And what does it matter if we are despised by the world, provided we are acceptable before God? “He who praises us,” says St. Augustine, “does not free us from the punishment we have deserved for our sins, and he who blames us is not able to rob us of the merit of our good works.”

“O my God,” exclaims St. Teresa, “what matters it whether we are loved or hated by creatures, provided we are without blame before Thee!” The only desire of the Saints was to live in obscurity and contempt. “What harm do they do us who have a bad opinion of us?” asks St. Francis de Sales. “Should not we have just such an opinion of ourselves? Is it right to wish others to think well of us, when we know very well that we are wicked?”

A HIDDEN LIFE

A hidden and obscure life affords great security to those who sincerely desire to love God. Our Divine Master Himself deigned to teach us this by His own example, for He spent 30 years in the obscurity of Nazareth and the workshop of a humble carpenter. In imitation of their Divine Model, many saints withdrew into the desert and lived in remote caves to escape the esteem of men. The desire to put ourselves forward and merit the plaudits of men, to be regarded as very successful in our undertakings, is, according to St. Vincent de Paul, an evil which causes us to forget our God; it vitiates our holiest actions and more than anything else impedes our progress in the spiritual life.

To be pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God, we must therefore banish from our hearts the desire to appear before men to win their approval and applause, and especially the desire to rule over others. “Inordinate ambition,” writes Peter of Blois, “imitates charity but in a perverse manner. Charity endureth all things, but only for the sake of eternal goods; ambition endureth all things, but only for the wretched honors of this world. Charity is full of gentleness, especially towards the poor and despised; ambition is full of gentleness, but only towards the influential of this world who are in a position to satisfy its cravings. Charity believeth and hopeth all that pertains to eternal glory; ambition believes and hopes in everything that leads to the vain honor and glory of this world.”

And granted that we attain the supposed honor for which we strive, what have we gained? What else but a little smoke that usually, instead of raising us, lowers us in the eyes of others. Honor vanishes, says St. Teresa, in consequence of the desire we have had to attain it. The greater the honor we receive, the greater the disgrace for having striven for it. St. Jane Chantal says: “The more worthy we think ourselves of some office or employment, the less worthy we are to have it, for we show that we are lacking in humility, which would be our best qualification.” When St. Vincent Carafa of the Society of Jesus visited a sick friend who had just been appointed to a very important but dangerous office, the sick man begged him to pray for his recovery. St. Vincent replied: “No, my friend, I will not be unfaithful to my love for you. Now that you are in the state of grace, God calls you into the next world because He desires your salvation. Did He permit you to live, I know not whether you would save your soul in your new office.” Hereupon the sick man quietly accepted death from the hand of God and died with perfect resignation.

TRUE DETACHMENT

Detachment from human beings does not mean that we are to love no one on this earth, but it means that our inclinations are to be in accordance with the Will of God and pleasing to Him. Both nature and religion impose upon us the obligation of loving our parents, relatives and benefactors. But this love becomes inordinate and bad when it leads us to offend God, and impedes our progress in a virtuous life. Many Christians would make great progress on the road to perfection were they freed from all earthly attachments. But because they foster some inordinate attachment in their hearts and are unwilling to renounce it, they continue in their lamentable condition, without advancing a single step on the way of virtue. St. John of the Cross says: “A soul that is attached to any creature will never attain perfect union with God, even though that soul possess many other virtues.” It matters very little whether a bird is bound with a strong or a weak cord, for the bird remains a captive and unable to fly as long as the cord is not broken. It is sad to see so many souls who are otherwise rich in virtues and graces, but who never reach a perfect union with God because they have not courage to renounce some little attachment. All that is necessary is one generous effort to break the cord that binds them and constitutes the only obstacle to their happiness.

To arrive at a perfect union with God, it is necessary, therefore, to be entirely detached from creatures. In particular we must renounce every inordinate attachment for our relatives. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ tells us that he who is too much attached to relatives cannot be His disciple. And why? Because it often happens that we have no greater enemies of our soul than our own relatives. “A man’s enemies are those of his household.” (*Matt.* 10:36). St. Charles Borromeo said that as often as he visited his relatives, he returned with less zeal for the glory of God. When Father Antony Mendoza was asked why he never visited his parental home he replied: “Because I am aware that there is no place where religious so easily lose the spirit of piety as among their relatives.”

He who has truly renounced inordinate attachment for his relatives will not be immoderately cast down when death claims someone who is near and dear to him. There are many who are inconsolable at the death of a relative or friend. They weep and moan and deliver themselves up to such unrestrained sadness and impatience that no one dares to approach them. I wonder whom they think they are pleasing by such unreasonable sadness and such a flood of tears! Is it God? Surely not; for God desires us to be resigned to His holy Will. Is it the soul of the deceased? Again, no; for if that soul is in Hell it spurns those tears and the one who sheds them. If it is saved and already in Heaven, then its greatest desire is that relatives and friends unite with it in thanking God. If the soul is still in Purgatory, it ardently longs for the prayers of its friends, and perfect resignation to God’s Will so that all may be reunited one day in Heaven. To what purpose, therefore, such excessive weeping and lamentation? One day when the Venerable Theatine, Joseph Caracciolo, was visiting his relatives who constantly bemoaned the death of his brother, he said to them: “All, let us spare our tears for a more worthy object; let us shed them for the death of Jesus Christ, who is our Father, our Brother and our Spouse, and who suffered death for love of us.” On such occasions we ought to imitate the pious Job, who on the death of his children said with beautiful resignation: “The Lord gave; the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord.” (*Job* 1:21).

In the year 1624, the son of a pious Japanese was condemned to death. When the young man took leave of his mother, he spoke to her in the following words: “Dear mother, at last the hour is come for which I have yearned so long, and for which I have so often prayed to God. I am now going to die. Pardon me all the trouble and sorrow I have caused you, and give me a mother’s blessing.” He then knelt to receive her blessing. His mother embraced him tenderly and said: “My dear boy, may God bless you and grant you the grace to die a holy death. It pains my heart to lose you; but I am consoled with the thought that you die for Jesus Christ. May He be forever blessed for this great grace He bestows on you.” Hereupon the young man betook himself to the executioner to receive the stroke of death. What a magnificent example of detachment from relatives!

RESIGNATION TO GOD’S WILL

Detachment, moreover, requires us to be resigned to God’s Will in the loss of those who are useful to us in our temporal or spiritual concerns. In this regard pious souls often commit serious faults by a want of resignation to the disposition of Divine Providence regarding their confessor. It is not confessors, but God, who makes us holy. When He gives them to us He desires us to profit by their sacred ministry in the affairs of our conscience; if He takes them from us, He wishes us to redouble our confidence in His goodness and to speak to Him in this manner: “Lord, Thou hast given me this assistance; now Thou takest it from me again; Thy holy will be done! Come Thou Thyself to my aid and teach me what I must do to be faithful to Thee!” Jesus Christ is our true Consolation, our true Leader, our true Love, yes, the only Love of our soul. He does not wish us to seek consolation outside Him. To be sure, God wills that we should not leave our spiritual director as long as we can have him; but when He Himself takes him away, He will give us another or supply his assistance in some other way.

Above all things, we must be detached from ourselves, that is, from our own will. He who knows how to overcome himself will easily conquer all other difficulties. It was this self-conquest that St. Francis Xavier so earnestly recommended to all who are striving after perfection. “If anyone will come after me,” says our Blessed Lord, “let him deny himself.” (*Matt.* 16:24). The epitome of all we must do to become holy is found in the single word, self-denial. We must therefore love God as God wishes and not as we desire. But God desires our soul to be empty of everything earthly in order to unite it to Himself and to fill it with His love. There are many who desire to attain to perfect union with God; but they are unwilling to bear the contradictions that God sends them. As long as they are not perfectly resigned to the Will of God, there is no thought of perfect union. “The way to union with God,” says St. Catherine of Siena, “leads through afflictions and sorrows.” These are the means God uses to purify us from all evil inclinations. Sickness, poverty, contempt, temptation and contradiction are permitted by God to give us an opportunity to battle against our inclinations and obtain the victory over our passions.

According to St. John of the Cross, “We must mortify our senses and desires.” With regard to the senses we must, from love of Jesus Christ, reject every gratification that does not refer to the honor of God. For example, should a desire arise within us to see or hear things that are not calculated to bring us nearer to God, we must suppress such a desire. Moreover, our preference must be for the uncomfortable, the disagreeable and the bitter things that nature tries so hard to avoid. In one word, he who sincerely loves Jesus Christ will banish from his heart all attachment to earthly goods, and divest himself of everything in order to be perfectly united to his Blessed Redeemer. All his desires are centered in Jesus Christ. He is ever thinking of Him, ever yearning for Him. In every place and on all occasions he wishes to please Him alone. But to arrive at this sincere love it is necessary to banish from the heart all inclinations and attachments that are not for God.

What, therefore, must a soul do to give herself entirely to God? She must avoid whatever displeases God and do whatever is pleasing to Him. Secondly, she must accept whatever is sent her from the hand of God, however hard or disagreeable it may be. And thirdly, in all things she must prefer the Will of God to her own. In this manner we make a complete and worthy offering of the heart to God.

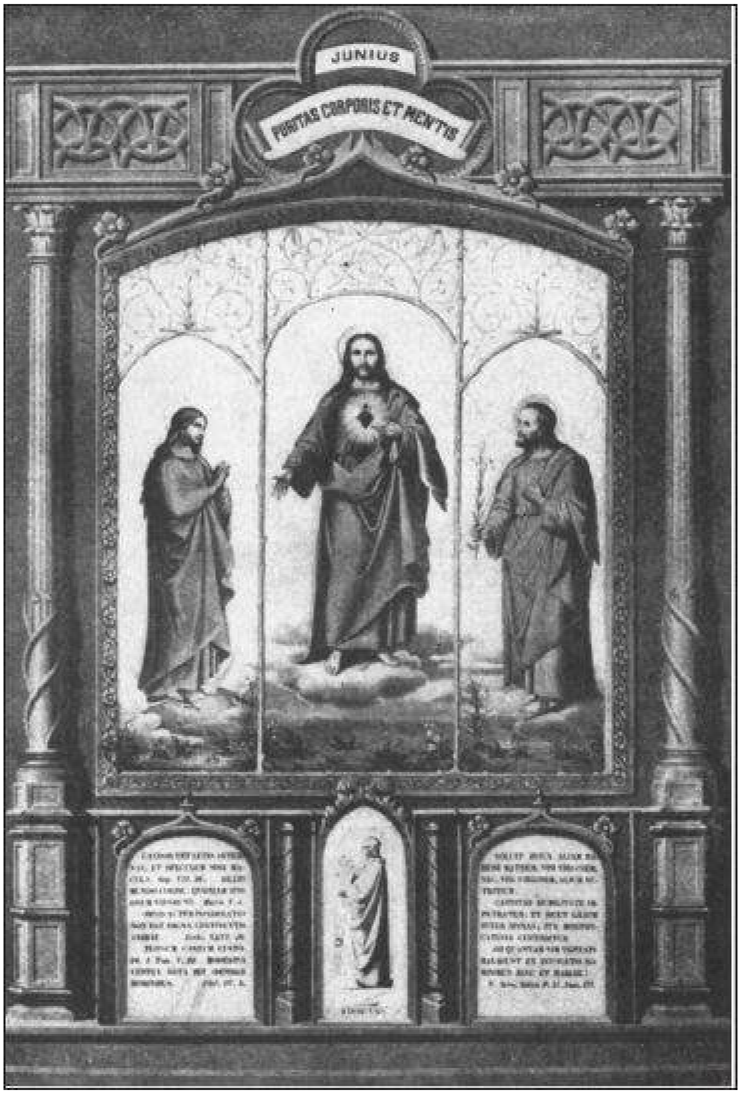
JUNIUS
PURITAS CORPORIS ET MENTIS

“Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.”—*Matt. 5:8.*

Chapter 6

CHASTITY

“Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.”—*Matt. 5:8*

No one knows the value of chastity better than God Himself. Now God says: “No price is worthy of a continent soul.” (*Ecclus.* 26:20). All that man prizes and esteems, riches, pleasures, honors, bear no comparison to a continent soul. St. Ephrem calls chastity “the life of the spirit.” St. Peter Damian styles it “the queen of virtues,” and St. Cyprian says by means of chastity we celebrate the most glorious triumphs. He who conquers the vice opposed to this virtue will easily triumph over the rest. On the contrary, he who permits himself to be ruled by incontinency falls an easy prey to the other vices such as hatred, injustice, etc. Chastity, says St. Ephrem, renders us in a certain sense like angels. This comparison is altogether justified, for the life of angels is far from being a life of carnal gratifications. Angels are pure by nature; chaste souls are pure by reason of virtue. “On account of the merit of this virtue,” says Cassian, “human beings are placed on a level with the angels.” “Of course there is a difference,” says St. Bernard, “between the chaste man and the angel, but it is not a difference of virtue; it is only one of happiness. If the chastity of the angels is more blessed, the chastity of man is more courageous.”

St. Basil tells us that “chastity makes man very similar to God Himself, who is a pure spirit.” On this account Our Lord chose a virgin for His Mother, a virgin for His foster father, St. Joseph, a virgin for His precursor, St. John the Baptist. St. Jerome says that Our Lord loved St. John the Apostle more than the rest on account of this virtue. To the virgin disciple He entrusted His Immaculate Mother, just as He now confides His Holy Church and His Sacred Presence in the Holy Eucharist to the care of the celibate priest. “O holy purity,” says St. Athanasius, “thou art the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, the life of angels and the crown of saints.” How great, therefore, is the value of chastity! But how frightful the war that the flesh wages to rob us of this precious pearl!

Our body is the most powerful weapon the devil possesses to make us his slaves. On this account it is seldom that a man comes forth victorious from this conflict. “The struggle for chastity,” says St. Augustine, “is the most violent of all; the battle is renewed every day, and victory is rare.” “How many unfortunate persons there are,” says St. Lawrence Justinian, “who having spent long years in solitude amid prayer, fasting and mortification, yielded at last to sensuality, gave up their holy life, and with the loss of chastity suffered the loss of God.”

GREAT VIGILANCE NECESSARY

He, therefore, who would preserve the virtue of chastity must use the greatest precaution. “It is impossible for you to remain chaste,” says St. Charles Borromeo, “unless you constantly watch over yourself. Negligence in this regard leads almost invariably to the loss of virtue.” With regard to evil thoughts, there may be a twofold delusion. God-fearing souls who have little or no gift of discernment, and are inclined to scruples, think that every wicked thought that enters their mind is a sin. This is a mistake, for it is not the wicked thoughts in themselves that are sins, but the yielding or consenting to them. The wickedness of mortal sin consists in the perverse will which deliberately yields to sin with a complete knowledge of its wickedness and with full consent. And therefore St. Augustine teaches that when the consent of the will is absent, there is no sin. However much we may be tormented by temptations, the rebellion of the senses, or the inordinate motions of the inferior part of the soul, as long as there is no consent, there is no sin.

For the comfort of such anxious souls, let me suggest a good rule of conduct that is taught by all masters in the spiritual life. If a person who fears God and hates sin doubts whether he has consented to an evil thought or not, he is not bound to confess it, because it is morally certain that he has not given consent. For had he actually committed a mortal sin he would have no doubt about it, as mortal sin is such a monster in the eyes of one who fears God that its entrance into the heart could not take place without its being known.

Others, on the contrary, whose conscience is lax and not well-informed, think that evil thoughts and desires, though consented to, are not sins provided they are not followed by sinful actions. This error is worse than the one mentioned above. What we may not do, we may not desire. Therefore an evil thought or desire to which we consent comprises in itself all the wickedness of an evil deed. As sinful actions separate us from God, so wicked thoughts rob us of His grace. “Perverse thoughts separate us from God,” says the Book of Wisdom (1:3).

From what has been said, it follows that not all evil thoughts are sinful and not all sinful thoughts are equal in malice. We must therefore distinguish between an evil thought that is a mortal sin, one that is venial, and one that is no sin at all. With regard to sins of thought, three things are to be taken into consideration: enticement, pleasure and consent. By enticement, or allurement, is meant the first thought that prompts us to commit the sin suggested to our senses. This enticement or suggestion is no sin; indeed, if it is rejected at once by the will it becomes a source of merit. “As often as you resist temptation,” says St. Antoninus, “so often do you merit a crown.” Even the Saints were tormented by such thoughts. To overcome a temptation of impurity St. Benedict rolled himself in a bed of thorns, and St. Peter of Alcantara plunged into the ice-cold water of a pond. St. Paul tells us he was tempted against holy purity! “And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And he said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee: for power is made perfect in infirmity.” (*2 Cor.* 12:7–9).

“When a thief is trying to break in a door,” says St. Francis de Sales, “it is a sign he is not yet in the house. So, too, when the devil continues to tempt a soul it is a sign that soul is still in the grace of God.” St. Catherine of Siena was once violently assaulted by the devil for the space of three days with temptations against holy purity. When Our Lord appeared to her to comfort her she cried out: “Ah my Saviour, where hast Thou been these three days?” Jesus answered: “I was in your heart, and it was I who gave you strength to resist those temptations.” Our Lord then gave her to understand that her heart was purer after the assault than before.

Next to the enticement comes the pleasure. If the temptation is not rejected at once, a certain pleasure is experienced, and this it is that hurries one on to consent. As long as the will does not fully acquiesce, there is no mortal sin; at most it is venial. But if instant recourse is not had to God and every effort made to resist the temptation, the will is very apt to yield full consent and fall into grievous sin. A certain woman who was regarded as a saint was tempted one day by an evil thought. Failing to reject it at once, she became guilty of grievous sin. From false shame she neglected to confess the sinful thought she had yielded to, and shortly after, died. Now the Bishop of the place had considered her a saint, and accordingly he had her buried in his own chapel. On the following day the unfortunate soul appeared to him and declared that, owing to a sinful thought to which she had consented, she was eternally lost.

MEANS TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION

When assailed by such temptations, therefore, we must have instant recourse to the means necessary to overcome them. The first means consists in humbling oneself continually before God. David acknowledged that he had fallen into sin because he had not been humble and had trusted too much in himself. “Before I was humbled, I offended.” (*Ps.* 118:67). Distrustful of self, therefore, we must place all our confidence in God. The second means is to have immediate recourse to God without stopping to consider the temptation. The best thing to do is to pronounce the holy names of Jesus and Mary and continue to pronounce them until the temptation is overcome. If it is a violent temptation it may be well to repeat the following resolution: “Oh my God, I will rather die than offend Thee! Oh my Jesus, help me! Mary, my Mother, assist me!” The names of Jesus and Mary have particular efficacy against the temptations of the devil.

The third means consists in often receiving the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. It is of the greatest importance to reveal our temptations to our confessor. “A temptation revealed,” says St. Philip Neri, “is half overcome.” If one has the misfortune to yield to such temptations, no time should be lost in confessing it. As for Holy Communion, it is well to remember that this heavenly Food affords us great strength to resist temptations. The precious Blood of Jesus Christ which we receive in Holy Communion is called a “wine springing forth virgins.” (*Zach.* 9:17). Earthly wine is a snare for chastity. This heavenly wine is its preservative.

A fourth means is devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God, the Virgin of virgins. Oh, how many have kept themselves pure as angels by devotion to this Blessed Queen of angels! Other means will suggest themselves to each individual, such as the avoidance of idleness, for “Idleness is the devil’s workshop”; modesty of the eyes, and diligence in avoiding dangerous or proximate occasions. Nearly all the passions that assail us have their origin in the unrestrained liberty of the eyes, for as a rule it is our unguarded looks that awaken in us inordinate inclinations and passions. “I made a covenant with my eyes, that I would not so much as think upon a virgin,” said Job (31:1). Why does he say: “so much as to think upon?” Should he not have said: “I have made a covenant not to look upon”? No, he was right in expressing himself as he did, for the thought and the look are so closely united as to be inseparable. In order, therefore, to have no evil thought, the holy man had resolved not to look at a virgin.

St. Augustine says: “From the look proceeds the thought and from the thought the desire.” Had Eve not looked at the forbidden fruit, she would not have fallen into sin. But she took pleasure in looking at it, and the fruit seemed beautiful and good. She took it and ate and was guilty of disobedience. We see here how the devil tempts man first to look, then to desire, and at last to consent. Therefore, as St. Jerome says, the devil needs on our part only a beginning. It is enough if we only half open the door for him; he will then force it open all the way. A voluntary glance at a person of the opposite sex may be an infernal spark that will cause the ruin of the soul. “The first arrows that strike chaste souls,” says St. Bernard, “and frequently cause deadly wounds, pierce through the eyes.” It was the eyes that occasioned the fall of David, a man according to God’s own heart. And so too with Solomon, who before had been the chosen instrument of the Holy Spirit. And many others have gone to destruction through their eyes. Seneca says that blindness is very useful for the preservation of innocence. In accordance with this principle, as Tertullian relates, a heathen philosopher deliberately deprived himself of sight in order to preserve chastity.

A Christian would not be permitted to do such a thing; but if we wish to preserve chastity, we must be blind insofar that we look at nothing which would awaken unclean thoughts within us. To this end we are exhorted by the Holy Ghost: “Gaze not upon another’s beauty, for hereby lust is enkindled as a fire.” (*Ecclus*. 9:8–9). The deliberate gaze is followed by sinful imaginations which enkindle the unholy fire. Therefore, St. Francis de Sales says: “He who does not wish the enemy to force his way into the fortress must keep the gates closed.”

For this very reason the Saints have been exceedingly cautious about their eyes. For fear lest they should accidentally fall on some dangerous object they kept them nearly always cast down, and denied themselves the satisfaction of looking even at innocent objects. After St. Bernard had been a whole year in the novitiate, he did not know whether the ceiling of his cell was flat or arched. In the church of the monastery there were three windows; but St. Bernard did not know how many there were, for during that whole year he had not raised his eyes to gaze about. The holy Bishop Hugo never looked into the face of a woman with whom he happened to be speaking. St. Clare resolved never to look at the face of a man. One day when she raised her eyes to look at the Sacred Host she chanced to see the countenance of the priest, and she was very much disturbed.

When we consider these great precautions of the saints of God, how very imprudent and rash seems the conduct of those who, without the virtue of a St. Bernard or a St. Clare, gaze unconcernedly at persons of the opposite sex, and yet expect to remain free from temptations and the danger of sin. St. Jerome had retired into the grotto of Bethlehem, where he constantly prayed and mortified his body; and yet he was frightfully tormented by the recollection of those women whom he had seen long before at Rome. “What is injurious to us,” says St. Francis de Sales, “is not so much the casual glance, but rather the intentional gaze.” When Brother Roger, a Franciscan who was noted for his exceptional purity, was asked why he was so guarded in his looks, especially concerning women, he replied: “If man shuns the occasion, God protects him; if he deliberately puts himself in danger, the Lord abandons him and he easily falls into grievous sin.”

If we suffer no other harm from the liberty we accord our eyes, we are at least deprived of recollection during prayer, because what we have seen will present itself again before the eyes of our soul and cause us endless distractions. Now, it is certain that a Christian who lives without interior recollection cannot practice the virtues, such as humility, patience, and mortification, in a proper manner. We must be careful, therefore, to direct our gaze to objects that will lead us to God and not from Him. “Downcast eyes," says St. Bernard, "direct the heart to Heaven." And St. Gregory Nazianzen writes: "'Where Christ dwells with His love, there recollection reigns."

A MEANS OF EDIFICATION

It is well to remember that the custody of the eyes is useful not only for our own sanctification, but also for the edification of others. God alone sees our heart; man sees only our external actions, and is either edified or scandalized by them. "A man is known by his look," says Holy Scripture (*Ecclus.* 19:26); that is to say, from the exterior we judge of the interior. Every Christian should therefore be what our Redeemer called St. John the Baptist: "a burning and a shining light." (*John* 5:35). Our interior should glow with divine love; our exterior should shine by Christian modesty. What St. Paul said to his disciples should apply also to us: "We are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels and to men." (*1 Cor.* 4:9). "Let your modesty be known to all men." (*Phil.* 4:5). It is related in the life of St. Francis of Assisi that one day he invited a religious brother to accompany him on a walk, saying he wished to preach. While going along he kept his eyes modestly cast down. After walking for a while he returned home. "When are you going to preach your sermon?" inquired his companion. "It is already preached," replied the Saint; "our sermon today consisted in mortifying our eyes, by which we edified all whom we met."

St. Ambrose says that the recollection of virtuous people is for the worldly-minded an excellent admonition. "What a beautiful thing it is," says the Saint, "that their mere appearance does good to others!" In this regard it is related of St. Bernardine of Siena that while still a young man in the world, his appearance was sufficient to restrain the unguarded remarks of his young companions. As soon as they saw him coming they would say to one another: "Be quiet; here comes Bernardine"; and they would either remain silent or begin some other topic of conversation. According to St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Ephrem was so recollected that the very sight of him moved one to devotion, and one could not come in contact with him without feeling better for it.

More wonderful still is what Surius relates of the holy priest and martyr Lucian: "By his modesty and recollection alone he converted many heathens to the True Faith. The Emperor Maximian hearing this, and fearing that he too might be converted to Christianity, did not wish to look at him. When, therefore, he was summoned before the tribunal, the Emperor ordered him to stand behind a curtain so that he might talk to him without fear."

Our most perfect model in the practice of mortification of the eyes was our Divine Redeemer Himself. As a learned author remarks, the Evangelist expressly mentions that on certain occasions Jesus raised His eyes, indicating thereby that ordinarily He kept them cast down. Therefore the Apostle, when writing to his disciples, praises the modesty of his Divine Master: "I beseech you by the mildness and modesty of Christ." (*2 Cor.* 10:1).

Let us conclude these remarks with the words of St. Basil to his monks: "My dear sons, if we desire our soul to direct its gaze to Heaven, we must keep our eyes fixed on the earth. In the early morning as soon as we awake let us say with the royal Psalmist: 'Turn away my eyes that they may not behold vanity.'" (*Ps.* 118:37).

VIRGINITY

"They are the noblest portion of the Church of Christ," says St. Cyprian, when speaking of virgins who consecrate themselves to the love of their heavenly Spouse. Some of the holy Fathers, as St. Ephrem, St. Ambrose, and St. Chrysostom, have written whole books in praise of virginity. It is not my intention here to dwell at length on this beautiful subject, but merely to give a few ideas from which the devout reader may judge of its surpassing excellence.

In the first place, virginal souls are particularly dear in the sight of God. "They shall be as the angels of God in heaven," said our Blessed Redeemer. (*Matt.* 22:30). Baronius relates that at the death of a virgin named Georgia, doves were seen flying about, and when her corpse was brought into the church they hovered over the spot where her remains were placed, nor did they leave until the virgin was buried. It was thought that these doves were angels who desired in this manner to show a last honor to her virginal body.

Virginal souls who consecrate themselves to the love of Jesus Christ become His chosen spouses. Wherefore St. Paul, when writing to his disciples, does not hesitate to say: “I have espoused you to Jesus Christ.” In the parable of the virgins, Our Lord appears as the Bridegroom. By the faithful in general our Saviour is called Master, Shepherd, Father or Lord; by virginal souls He desires to be called Spouse. This espousal with the Divine Redeemer takes place through faith: “I will espouse thee to me in faith.” (*Osee* 2:20). The virtue of virginity is, in an especial manner, the fruit of the merits of Jesus Christ; therefore we read in the Apocalypse that they “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: These were purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb.” (*Apoc.* 14:4).

The Divine Mother once revealed to a pious soul that those consecrated to Jesus Christ must, above all virtues, love holy purity, for it is this in particular that makes them similar to their heavenly Spouse. Prudent people of the world who desire to enter the state of matrimony are careful to inquire and find out who would most likely be the worthiest and most desirable partner for life. Those who enter the religious life are espoused to Christ by their holy vows. Let us turn, therefore, to the spouse in the Canticles to see what she has to say of the Divine Bridegroom. “My beloved is white and ruddy,” she says (*Cant.* 5:10), white by reason of His purity, and ruddy on account of the glow of love with which He is inflamed towards His spouse. In a word, He is so beautiful, so perfect in every virtue, so kind and friendly that there is not and cannot be a nobler or more amiable spouse than He. St. Eucherius says: “There is nothing to compare with His majesty, His beauty, or His generosity.”

A PRECIOUS TREASURE

St. Clare of Montefalco said that she prized her virginity so highly that she would rather suffer the torments of Hell during her whole lifetime than lose this precious treasure. Virtuous young women have even refused the proposal of marriage with kings in order to remain the spouses of Jesus Christ. Blessed Joanna, Infanta of Portugal, rejected the hand of Louis XI, King of France. St. Agnes of Prague renounced a matrimonial alliance with the Emperor Frederick II; Elizabeth, the daughter of the King of Hungary and heiress to the throne, refused to be wedded to the Archduke of Austria. When Domitilla, the niece of the Emperor Domitian, was urged to marry the Count Aurelian, she replied: “If a person had the choice between a great monarch and a poor peasant, which would she choose as her bridegroom? Were I to marry Aurelian I would have to give up the King of Heaven; that would be the greatest folly, and I shall never be guilty of it." To her crown of virginity was added the crown of martyrdom, for her rejected lover had her burned to death.

A virgin who gives herself to the Lord, says Theodora, is freed from useless cares. She has nothing else to do but to deal confidently with the Lord. "Had she no other reward to expect," says St. Ambrose, "she would be happy indeed in being freed from worldly cares and anxieties and in occupying herself solely with God." But the peace and happiness she enjoys here on earth is but a foretaste of the great happiness and glory that await her in Heaven.

ACCEPTABLE TO GOD

Virgins who consecrate to God the lily of their chastity are as pleasing to Him as the holy angels. St. John was called the favorite Apostle of Our Lord, the Apostle whom Jesus loved, because he had preserved his virginity intact. For this very reason he was loved more than all the rest, and when our Saviour was dying on the Cross He committed His Immaculate Mother to the care of His virgin disciple, St. John. The great value of virginity is enhanced in our eyes by the extraordinary praise which the Holy Ghost bestows upon it: "No price is worthy of a continent soul." (*Ecclus.* 26:20). The Blessed Virgin Mary taught us this when the Archangel Gabriel brought her the message from on high: that God wished to become man and to choose her for His Mother. To the angel's words Mary humbly replied: "How can this be, for I know not man?" (*Luke* 1:34). By these words our Blessed Lady showed that she preferred to renounce the dignity of the Mother of God than to lose the treasure of her virginity. According to St. Cyprian, virginal purity is the queen of all virtues and the perfection of all goods. They who preserve their purity for the love of Jesus Christ, says St. Ephrem, are particularly favored by Him. St. Bernardine adds that virginity disposes the soul in an especial manner to see God by faith in this life and by the light of eternal glory in the next. One day God showed His great servant, Lucretia Orsini, the throne of glory prepared for those who serve

Jesus Christ in virginal purity. Ravished in ecstasy, the Saint exclaimed: "Oh how dear to God and His holy Mother are virginal souls!"

"My son, when thou comest to the service of the Lord prepare thy soul for temptation." (*Ecclus.* 2:1). Be prepared therefore to suffer with humility and patience, for "silver and gold are tried by fire." No man can serve two masters, God and the world. He, therefore, who desires to consecrate himself to God, must renounce the world and say with all sincerity: God alone is my treasure and my only good. A heart that truly loves God despises the world and all that the world can offer; in a word, it despises all that is not God.

The venerable Francisca Farnese knew no more effectual means of exhorting her religious Sisters to the practice of perfection than to remind them that they were the spouses of Jesus Christ. "It is certain," she would say, "that each one of you is chosen by God to become a saint, since He has given you the great honor of being His spouse." And in very truth this is an inestimable grace which deserves our most generous cooperation. St. Augustine, when writing to a virgin consecrated to God, made use of these words: "You must know that you have a Spouse who is more beautiful than anything that earth or Heaven contains, and in choosing you to be His bride He has given you a most certain pledge of His love. From this you will recognize your obligation to love Him in return."

Should the world attempt to win your love, O spouse of Jesus Christ, answer in the words of the noble St. Agnes: "Away, away; you seek my love, but I can love none other than my God who has loved me first." "As you are the spouse of a God," says St. Jerome, "you should be proud of such a distinction." People of the world feel highly honored and make much ado about matrimonial alliances with the noble and wealthy. You have something more than this to be proud of, since you are affianced to the King of Heaven Himself. You can well say with a holy pride and joy: "I have found Him whom my soul loveth; I will embrace Him with my love, and I will never leave Him."

Love is the bond which unites the soul to God. Say often in the words of the Apostle St. Paul: "Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress or famine, or nakedness, or danger or persecution or the sword? . . . I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord.” (*Rom.* 8:38–39).

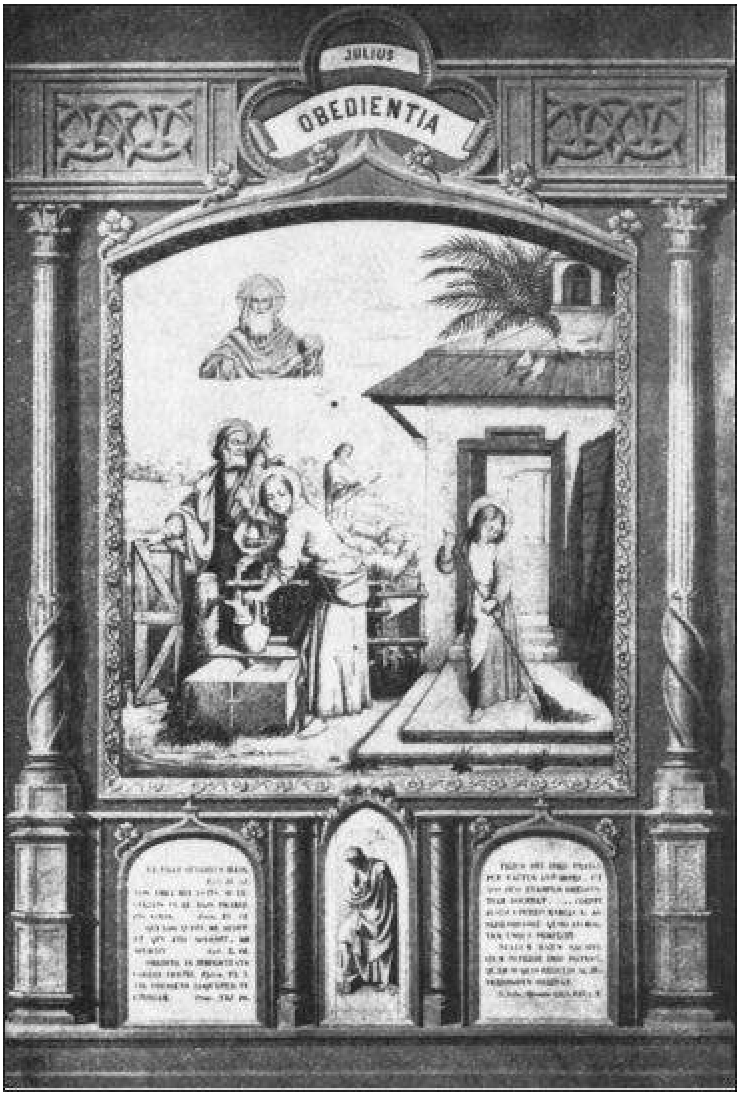
JULIUS
OBEDIENTIA

“You are My friends, if you do the things that I command you.”—*John 15:14.*

Chapter 7

OBEDIENCE

“You are my friends, if you do the things that I command you.”—*John 15:14*

Perfection consists in the conformity of our will to the Will of God. Now what is the surest means of knowing God’s Will, and of regulating our lives according to it? It is obedience towards our lawful superiors. “Never is the Will of God more perfectly fulfilled,” says St. Vincent de Paul, “than when we obey our superiors.”

The greatest sacrifice that a soul can make to God consists in obedience to lawfully constituted superiors; for as, in the opinion of St. Thomas, “nothing is dearer to us than the liberty of our will,” we can offer to God no more acceptable gift than this very liberty. “Obedience is better than sacrifices,” says the Holy Ghost (*1 Kings* 15:22); that is to say, God prefers obedience to all other sacrifices. He who gives his property to God, by distributing it among the poor; his honor, by patiently bearing contempt; his body, by fasts and penitential works, gives Him a part of himself. But he who offers God his will, by subjecting it to obedience, gives Him all he has, and can truly say: “My Lord, after I have given Thee my will, I have nothing more to give.” As St. Gregory says: “By the other virtues we give to God what belongs to us; by obedience we give Him ourselves.” The same Saint teaches that all the other virtues follow in the train of obedience and by its influence are preserved in the soul.

A GREAT REWARD

According to the Venerable Sertorius Caputo, the reward of obedience is similar to that of martyrdom. In martyrdom we offer to God the head of our body; by obedience we offer Him our will, which is the head of the soul. Therefore the Wise Man assures us that “an obedient man shall speak of victory.” (*Prov.* 21:28). It is easy, says St. Gregory, for those who obey, to overcome all the attacks of Hell; for, since by obedience they subject their will to men, they rise superior to the demons who fell on account of their disobedience. Cassian adds that if we mortify our self-will, we can easily root out all vices, because the latter spring from the former.

St. Augustine says that while Adam through disobedience brought destruction upon himself and all his posterity, the Son of God became man to redeem us and to teach us true wisdom by His life of obedience. For this reason He began as a child to practice obedience when He was subject to Mary and Joseph: “He was subject to them,” says St. Luke (2:51). What our Saviour began as a child He continued His whole life, so that St. Paul could say: “He was obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.” (*Phil.* 2:8). The Mother of God revealed to one of her servants that Our Lord when dying for us entertained a very special love for obedient souls. To increase our merit, Our Lord desires us to be guided by faith. Therefore, instead of speaking to us Himself, He makes His Will known to us by means of our superiors.

When Jesus appeared to St. Paul and converted him on the road to Damascus, the future Apostle said: “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” The Lord could easily have instructed him then and there, but He did not; He merely said: “Arise and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do.” (*Acts* 9:7). Accordingly, St. Giles maintains that we gain more merit by obeying man for the love of God than by obeying God Himself. When we obey lawful superiors we are more sure of doing the Will of God than if Jesus Christ Himself would appear and speak to us. Such an apparition might afford us no certainty that it really was our Saviour who appeared and spoke; the evil spirit can appear as an angel of light in order to deceive us. But when we receive a command from our superiors, we are certain that in obeying them we are obeying Jesus Christ Himself. “He that heareth you, heareth me.” (*Luke* 10:16).

A SOURCE OF MERIT

It is a delusion, therefore, to imagine that we can do anything better than that which is prescribed by obedience. To leave the occupation we are in duty bound to perform, in order to be united with God in meditation or spiritual reading is rather, according to St. Francis de Sales, to leave God in order to follow more closely the dictates of our self-love. From a soul that is resolved to serve God, says St. Teresa, God desires but one thing, and that one thing is obedience. “What we do from obedience,” says Rodriguez, “is of more value than any other work we can perform.”

It is more meritorious to pick up a straw from the ground, out of obedience, than from self-will to make a long meditation or scourge ourselves to blood. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi preferred an exercise prescribed by obedience even to prayer. “When I am acting out of obedience,” she said, “I am certain that I am doing the Will of God, but at other times this is not the case.” All the masters of the spiritual life are unanimous in asserting that it is better to omit a pious exercise from obedience than to perform it against obedience. The Blessed Virgin revealed to St. Bridget that he who from obedience omits an act of mortification gains a double merit: that of the mortification he would like to perform, and that of obedience for the sake of which he omits it. St. Teresa was therefore right in saying that obedience is the shortest way to perfection. Christian soul, if you desire to walk securely, be guided in all your actions by obedience. Merchants and business men have their property insured in order not to suffer loss from its destruction. In order to render safe your eternal reward, make sure to get the security of obedience for all your actions.

QUALITIES OF OBEDIENCE

Obedience, however, to have this high value must be supernatural. To obey the Church, our parents, our confessor, in a word, our spiritual and temporal superiors in a meritorious way, we must be persuaded that obedience towards our superiors is obedience shown to God, and contempt for their commands is contempt shown to our Divine Master Himself, for He has said to our superiors: “He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me.” (*Luke* 10:16). The Apostle St. Paul, writing to his disciples, says: “Obey, not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.” (*Eph.* 6:6).

If, then, an order is given you by your parents, your confessor or your superiors, you must execute it not merely to please them, but principally to please God, whose will is made known to you by your superiors. By so doing you are more certain of fulfilling the Will of God than if an angel came down from Heaven and revealed it to you. St. Paul, when writing to the Galatians, says: “If an angel from Heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.” (*Gal.* 1:8). Keep this truth constantly before your eyes: when you obey your superiors you are obeying God. If Our Lord came in person and charged you with some office or some particular work, would you hesitate a moment to obey? Would you begin to excuse yourself and oppose obstacles to the fulfillment of His command? But, says St. Bernard, whether it is God Himself or one who takes His place that gives the command, you must render the same prompt and cheerful obedience.

OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS

With regard to the obedience due to parents, St. Paul says: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just.” (*Eph.* 6:1). It must here be observed that the Apostle says, “obey your parents in the Lord,” that is to say, in those things that are pleasing to the Lord, but not in those that displease Him. If, for example, a mother were to command her son to steal, or to injure another, would he be obliged to obey? Certainly not; were he to obey in such a case he would be guilty of sin. Again, St. Thomas teaches that children are not obliged to obey their parents when there is question of the choice of a state of life. With reference to the married state, Pinamonti with Sanchez, Konink and others, maintains that young people are obliged to consult their parents, since they are more experienced, and may often prevent serious mistakes. Moreover, to ignore them in a matter which they have so much at heart is most certain to wound them keenly. But with regard to vocation to the religious life, a child is not in the least bound to ask his parents’ advice, because in this matter they have no experience and their prejudices generally make them hostile. Parents who unreasonably prevent their children from following a vocation to the priesthood or the religious life are guilty of unspeakable cruelty towards their own offspring. “A man’s enemies shall be they of his own household.” (*Matt.* 10:36).

The condition of servants is lowly and contemptible in the eyes of the world, but not so to the eyes of faith. This we learn from the example of our Blessed Redeemer Himself, who, though Lord of Heaven and earth, “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man.” (*Phil.* 2:7). He humbly obeyed His Blessed Mother and St. Joseph, eminently holy creatures it is true, but infinitely below Him in dignity: “He was subject to them.” (*Luke* 2:51). When instructing His Apostles He said: “He that will be first among you let him be your servant. Even as the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister.” (*Matt.* 20:28).

It is hardly necessary to say that servants are not bound to obey when they are commanded to do what God forbids. When the tyrant Antiochus wished to force the old man Eleazar to disregard the law which interdicted the use of pork to the Hebrews, the friends of the aged Eleazar took pity on him and suggested that he might escape death by pretending to eat of the forbidden food. But Eleazar replied: “It doth not become our age to dissemble: whereby many young persons might think that Eleazar, at the age of fourscore and ten years, was gone over to the life of the heathens; and so they, through my dissimulation, and for a little time of a corruptible life, should be deceived, and hereby I should bring a stain and a curse upon my old age. For though at the present time I should be delivered from the punishments of men, yet should I not escape the hand of the Almighty neither alive nor dead. Wherefore by departing manfully out of this life I shall show myself worthy of my old age, and I shall leave an example of fortitude to young men, if with a ready mind and constancy I suffer an honorable death, for the most venerable and most holy laws.” (*2 Mach.* 6:24–28).

OBEDIENCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Obedience to our spiritual director is of the greatest importance if we desire to please God and make progress in perfection. “It is true,” says St. Gregory, “that some saints have been guided directly by God”; “but,” he continues, “such examples are rather to be admired than imitated, for, thinking ourselves above the guidance of men, we might easily be led into error.” Virtue is found in the golden mean; as idleness in the spiritual life is a fault, so too is intemperate zeal. It is the duty of the spiritual director to war against the former and to moderate the latter. Almighty God could direct us very well without the aid of another, but to keep us humble He desires us to submit to the authority and guidance of His servants.

Our Lord has indeed bestowed a great benefit on us in giving us spiritual guides to prevent us from going astray. Many people think that sanctity consists in performing works of penance. But if a person of weak constitution were to perform works of penance, and thereby seriously endanger his life, would he be laboring at his sanctification? Assuredly not; he would rather be guilty of sin. Others imagine that sanctity consists in much praying. But if the father of a family neglected the care of his children in order to go into solitude and pray, he would be guilty of sin. Still others imagine that sanctity consists in the frequent reception of Holy Communion. But suppose that the mother of a family would neglect her household duties and inconvenience her husband and her children for the sake of going to Holy Communion every day—she would have to give an account of her conduct to God.

In what, then, does sanctity consist? It consists in the perfect fulfillment of God’s Will. But how shall we know what God desires of us? Thank God that He has given us a means of knowing. He tells us that by obeying our spiritual director we are obeying Him: “He that heareth you, heareth me.” St. Teresa says: “We must make our confessor our judge and then be at rest with regard to the affairs of our soul, placing all our confidence in the words of Our Lord: ‘He that heareth you, heareth me.’” This is the surest way, she says, of fulfilling the Will of God. The Saint tells us that she herself, by obedience to her confessor, learned to know and love God.

Speaking on this subject, St. Francis de Sales said: “We find the most important of all admonitions in the words of the devout Avila: ‘You may seek where you will, nowhere will you so surely find the Will of God as on the road of this humble obedience which all the Saints have recommended and practiced.’”

Obedience to our spiritual director is very pleasing to God, whether it is exercised in praying, in receiving Holy Communion, in mortifying ourselves or in omitting these holy exercises. We are always gaining merit, whether we eat or drink or recreate ourselves; for while we are obeying our confessor we are doing the Will of God. Holy Scripture says that obedience is more pleasing to God than all the other sacrifices we could make. Obey your spiritual Father, says St. Paul (*Heb.* 13:17), and be without fear regarding what you do out of obedience, for it is not you but he that will have to render an account of your actions. St. Philip Neri says: Those who desire to make progress in the way to perfection must choose a well-informed confessor and obey him as they would God Himself. Whoever does this is sure to have no account to give before God of what he has done or left undone. If, therefore, on judgment day Jesus Christ were to ask you: Why have you chosen this state of life? Why have you omitted this or that act of mortification? You can, provided you have practiced obedience, reply in these words: Lord, my confessor ordered me to do so—and then the Divine Judge must needs sanction what you have done.

On the other hand, if we refuse to obey the voice of our spiritual director we run the risk of being eternally lost. “He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.” (*Luke* 10:16). God said the same thing to Samuel when he complained that the people whom the Lord had entrusted to his care, had despised him: “They have not rejected thee, but me.” (*1 Kings* 8:7). As a ship that is abandoned by its pilot, or a patient that is forsaken by his physician, so is the soul that is deprived of the guidance of a spiritual director.

We must be convinced, however, that no spiritual director can lead us to sanctity unless we are determined to renounce our own will. And as for peace of heart, remember well it is to be looked for not from the confessor, but from God Himself.

THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE

St. Thomas teaches that it is the vow of obedience that makes the religious. On this account St. Teresa used to say that a religious who is not obedient is not deserving of the name of religious. On the other hand, a religious who practices obedience is on the shortest road to perfection. “O virtue of obedience,” she cries out, “thou dost accomplish everything!” St. Catherine of Bologna said that obedience alone is more pleasing to God than all other good works. When the Venerable Leonardi, Founder of the Clerics Regular of the Mother of God, was asked by his disciples to give them a Rule, he wrote on a sheet of paper just this one word: “Obedience.” By this he wished to show, as Sertorious Caputo remarks, that in religious life obedience and sanctity are one and the same thing. Thoroughly convinced of this truth, St. Anselm on becoming Archbishop of Canterbury and finding no one above him, induced the Holy Father to make his chaplain his superior, whom he obeyed in everything. According to the opinion of St. Bonaventure, all the perfection of the religious life consists in the renunciation of self-will. Obedience to the rules and the commands of superiors is the greatest sacrifice a soul can make to God. It is certain that a religious who obeys exactly acquires rich treasures of merit.

St. Aloysius Gonzaga compared the religious life to a sailboat on which a person can make progress without the use of oars. And it is very true, for in religious life not only when we fast, or pray, or meditate, but also when we take our meals, our rest or recreation, we are acquiring merit; for as all this is done out of obedience, the Will of God is accomplished and merit is thereby gained. In the life of the ancient Fathers it is related that one of them saw two choirs of the blessed in Heaven; one of the choirs consisted of those who had left the world and had lived in solitude, devoted to a life of prayer and penance; the other choir was made up of those who had subjected themselves to a life of obedience for the love of Jesus Christ and had lived entirely according to the will of their superiors. These latter enjoyed a greater degree of glory than the former; for though the hermits had pleased God by their spiritual exercises, they nevertheless had done their own will, whereas the others, by means of the vow of obedience had given their will to God, the best offering they could make Him.

St. Dorotheus relates something similar in reference to his disciple St. Dositheus. The latter had very poor health, and in consequence was unable to perform the customary exercises with the rest of the community; in order not to lose any merit thereby, he made a perfect renunciation of his will and devoted himself entirely to the practice of obedience. After five years he departed this life. Now, God revealed to the Abbot Dorotheus that this holy youth had obtained in Heaven a reward equal to that of the holy hermits, St. Paul and St. Antony. The monks were surprised that Dositheus should have attained such great glory, as he had not even done as much as the others; but God made known to them that it was due to his obedience that Dositheus had been so richly rewarded.

If you ask me what is the best and most effectual means of obeying in a meritorious manner, I answer: “Be thoroughly persuaded that when you are obeying your superior, you are obeying God, and when you despise the command of your superior you are despising the Divine Redeemer Himself.” St. John Climacus relates that the superior of a cloister once called an old monk, and, to give the others an example, he bade him remain standing for a long time. When later they asked the old monk what were his sentiments during this mortification, he replied: “I imagined that I stood before Jesus Christ, and that He Himself had imposed upon me this humiliation, and therefore I had not the slightest thought against obedience.”

OBSERVANCE OF THE RULE

To St. Francis de Sales are attributed these very significant words: “The predestination of religious is bound up with the observance of their rule.” St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi was accustomed to say that obedience to the rule is the shortest and surest way to sanctity and eternal happiness. Indeed for religious, the observance of the rule is the only means of becoming holy; no other way leads to this coveted goal. A religious who would habitually violate the rules of the institute would not advance a single step in the love of Jesus Christ, even though he performed works of penance and were devoted to spiritual exercises. The efforts of such religious are all in vain and in them are fulfilled the words of the Holy Ghost: “He that rejecteth wisdom and discipline is unhappy; and their hope is vain, and their labors without fruit and their works unprofitable.” (*Wis.* 3:11).

The rules of a religious are, no doubt, a burden, but a burden like that of wings, by means of which we are borne aloft to God. “The burden of Jesus Christ,” says St. Augustine, “has wings that enable us to rise above the earth.” The rules of a religious are bonds, but bonds of love that unite us to the highest and greatest good. If it seems hard to us that the rule forbids what self-love demands, let us say joyfully with the Apostle: “I am a prisoner of the Lord” (*Eph.* 4:1), but I rejoice in my bonds because they unite me more closely to my God and secure for me an eternal crown.

It may be that you can do nothing great for the Lord; you are unable to perform severe penances or to spend much time at prayer. You can at least be exact in the observance of the rule, and this alone is sufficient in a short time to further your progress in perfection. St. Bonaventure says: “The best way to strive after perfection is to observe everything that is prescribed.”

The measure of our generosity in this regard will be the measure of God’s bounty toward us. St. Augustine called the rules the mirror of religious because from our zeal in observing them we can know what we look like in the eyes of God. “It is better,” says a learned author, “to be a finger united to the body than an eye separated from it.” An apparently good work, but one not in accordance with the rule, is not acceptable to God, and is only an obstacle to our striving after perfection. In the eyes of the world many of the rules of religious life are insignificant trifles, but they are not so when considered in the light of faith. When Michael Angelo was asked why he paid so much attention to trifles, he said: “Trifles go to make up perfection, and perfection is no trifle.” St. Giles once said: “By a little negligence we may lose a great grace.”

In order to observe the rules perfectly, says St. Ignatius, love must be our motive, not fear; in other words, we must observe our rules not merely to avoid the reproofs of our superiors or to be praised by others, but simply and solely for the love of Jesus Christ. To be perfect, says Father Pavone of the Society of Jesus, obedience must walk on both feet. By this he meant that perfect obedience includes both the will and the intellect. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi expressed a similar sentiment when she said: “Perfect obedience requires a soul without a will, and a will without a judgment.” One day St. Ignatius remarked that if the Pope were to command him to make a voyage on the high sea in a little boat without rudder or sail, he would blindly obey. When someone objected that it would be very imprudent to put himself in such danger of death, the Saint replied: “Prudence is required of superiors; the prudence of subjects must consist in obeying without prudence.”

The great St. Bernard said: “If, instead of obeying blindly, we wish to know why the superior has ordered this or that, we show that our obedience is very imperfect.” It was in this way that the devil tempted Eve and brought about her fall. “Why,” said he, “has God forbidden you to eat of all the trees in the garden?” Eve would not have fallen into sin had she answered: “It is not for us to inquire into the reason of this prohibition; we have only to obey.” But unfortunately, she began to wonder why it was that such a command had been given, and replied: “Lest perhaps we should die.” From that one word “perhaps” the devil perceived that she had begun to waver, and at once he said: “Do not fear; you will not die.” And Eve fell, and misfortune came upon the whole human race.

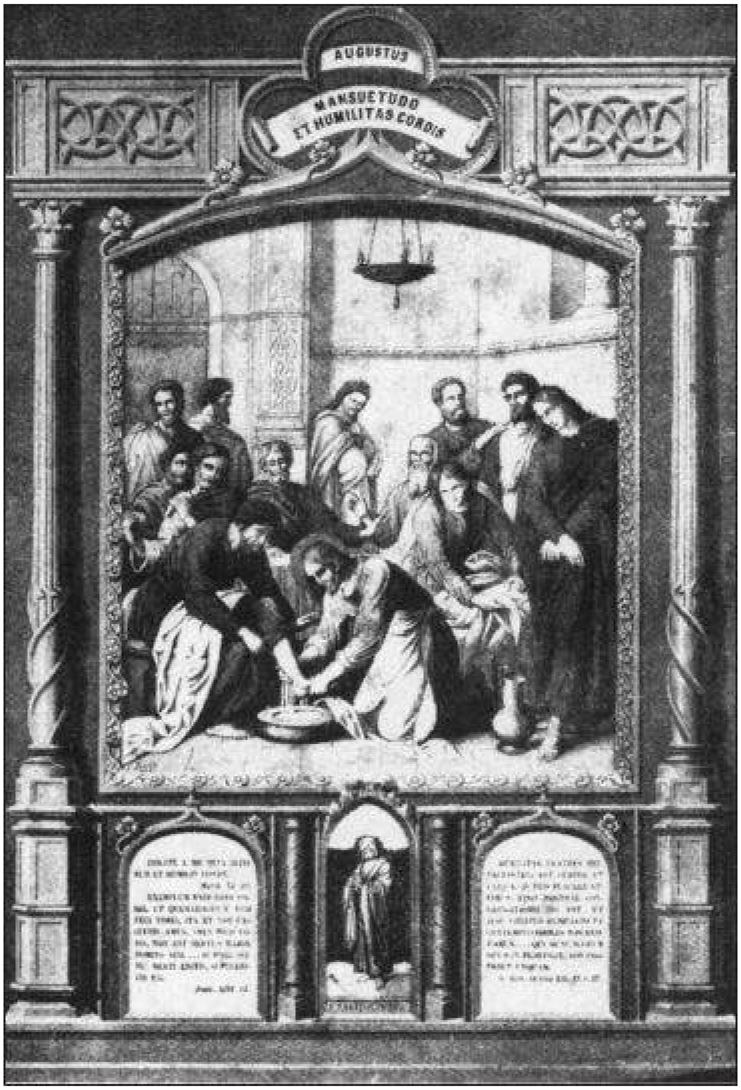
AUGUSTUS
MANSUETUDO ET HUMILITAS CORDIS

“Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.”—*Matt. 11:29*.

Chapter 8

MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY

“Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.”—*Matt. 11:29*

Humility is called by the saints the foundation and safeguard of all the virtues. If it is not the most prominent among the virtues, it occupies, according to St. Thomas, the first place as the foundation of the rest. In the erection of a building, the basement comes before the walls and pillars, even though the latter be of gold. And so in the spiritual life humility must precede everything else in order to banish pride, to which God is so opposed. He, therefore, who endeavors to acquire the other virtues without humility, says St. Gregory, is scattering dust before the wind.

The virtue of humility was little known and less loved on earth; indeed, it was thoroughly despised. Pride reigned everywhere, for it was an unfortunate inheritance of the human race bequeathed to his posterity by Adam. The Son of God descended from Heaven to teach man by word and example the value of humility, and with this end in view He went so far as to “empty himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled himself . . . even to the death of the cross.” (*Phil.* 2:7). His first appearance on earth was in the humble stable of Bethlehem; the greater portion of His mortal life was spent in humble retirement at Nazareth. He departed this life, humbled and despised, on the summit of Mt. Calvary; and He calls out to each one of us: “I have given you an example that as I have done, so you do also.” (*John* 13:15). By this He means to say: “My dear children, I have endured all this humiliation and contempt that you might follow My example.” With regard to the humility of Jesus Christ, St. Augustine says: “If this medicine does not cure us of pride, I know not what other remedy can do so.”

PRIDE AN ABOMINATION TO THE LORD

“Every proud man is an abomination to the Lord,” says the Holy Ghost. (*Prov.* 16:5). The proud man is a thief because he appropriates what belongs to God from whom, as St. Paul says, he has received everything.

If a horse were decked with gorgeous trappings would it—supposing it were able to do so—pride itself on having such fine adornments, knowing that at a moment’s notice its master could take them away? The proud man is guilty of falsehood, for all the goods that he possesses both in the order of nature and grace are the gifts of God. “By the grace of God I am what I am,” says the Apostle (*1 Cor.* 15:10), for “we are not sufficient to think any thing of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.” (*2 Cor.* 3:5).

“Humble yourself,” says St. Augustine, “and God will descend to unite Himself with you; but if you are proud He will depart from you.” The Royal Prophet had said the same thing long before: God looks upon the humble with loving eyes, but the proud He sees from afar. When the rebel angels grew proud, God drove them from His sight and cast them into the abyss, for God’s Word must be fulfilled: “Whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be humbled.” (*Matt.* 23:12). St. Peter Damian relates that a certain proud man once heard these words of Our Lord read in the Gospel at Holy Mass. “That is not true,” he said, “for if I humbled myself I would lose my possessions and the respect of my fellowmen.” Now what happened? He fought a duel in defense of his property, and his antagonist, striking him in the mouth with his weapon, pierced his blasphemous tongue and stretched him dead on the ground.

The Lord has promised to hear all who call upon Him: “Everyone that asketh, receiveth.” (*Matt.* 7:8). But to the proud man God will not listen. “God resisteth the proud,” says St. James, “and giveth grace to the humble.” (*Jas.* 4:6). Yes, God hastens to open His hand and bestow upon the humble what they desire. “Lord, give me the treasure of humility,” prayed St. Augustine. Humility is called a treasure because the Lord sees to it that the humble abound in good things. When man’s heart is full of himself, there is no room for God’s gifts. Man must therefore, as it were, be emptied of himself by the knowledge of his own nothingness. “He that is mighty hath done great things to me” said the Blessed Virgin Mary, “because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid” (*Luke* 1:48); that is to say, He hath considered the knowledge I have of my own nothingness.

St. Teresa tells us that she received the greatest graces from God when she humbled herself most profoundly in His presence. “The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds; and he will not depart till the most High behold.” (*Ecclus.* 35:21). St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say: “If you desire to be holy, be humble; if you desire to be very holy, be very humble.” This advice was given by a devout man to St. Francis Borgia before he had entered the religious life: “If you want to become a saint, think of your own misery and wretchedness.” Following this advice, the Saint spent two hours every day trying to obtain a knowledge and contempt of himself. “As pride,” says St. Gregory, “is the most evident characteristic of the reprobate, humility is the clearest sign of the elect.” When St. Anthony, the hermit, saw the world full of the snares of the devil, he cried out: “Who can ever escape so many dangers?” He heard a voice say: “Anthony, humility alone walks securely; he who goes with head bowed down, need not fear to fall into these snares.” In a word, if we do not become children—not of course in age, but in humility—we cannot, as our Saviour said, enter the Kingdom of Heaven. “Learn of me, for I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls.” (*Matt.* 11:29).

The proud man has no peace or rest, for he is seldom, if ever, treated in a manner corresponding to the exalted opinion he has of himself. If he is honored, he is dissatisfied that others are honored more than he. There is always a little more honor that he might have had, the absence of which annoys him more than what he has affords him pleasure. What great honor, for example, did not Aman enjoy at the court of Assuerus? It was his privilege to eat at the king’s table, and yet he was unhappy because Mardochai would not salute him. “And whereas I have all these things, I think I have nothing, so long as I see Mardochai sitting before the King’s gate.” (*Esther* 5:13). St. Jerome says that true honor avoids him who seeks it and seeks him who avoids it; it is like a shadow that follows the one who flees from it and flees from the one who follows it.

The humble man, on the contrary, is always content. If honor is shown to him, he regards it as above his deserts; if he is offended, he considers himself as deserving of worse treatment than he has received, and he says with Job: “I have sinned and indeed I have offended, and I have not received what I have deserved.” (*Job* 33:27).

On one occasion when St. Francis Borgia was travelling, he was advised to send someone ahead to secure a lodging and prevent the inconveniences attending an unexpected arrival. The Saint replied: “As far as that is concerned, I always send a quartermaster ahead. My quartermaster is the thought of the Hell that I have deserved. As a result, every lodging is like a king’s palace for me compared to the place where I deserve to be.”

HUMILITY OF INTELLECT

The virtue of humility is twofold, namely, humility of the intellect and humility of the will. According to St. Bernard, humility of the intellect consists in having an humble opinion of ourselves and in regarding ourselves as deserving of contempt. Humility is truth, writes St. Teresa, and therefore the Lord loves the humble so much because He loves the truth. It is certainly true that of ourselves we are nothing; we are ignorant and blind and incapable of accomplishing any good. On the one hand, we have nothing of our own but sin, which makes us still more contemptible. On the other hand, of ourselves we can do nothing but commit sin. Everything good that we may have or can do, comes from God and belongs to God. Now the humble man has this truth ever before his eyes, and consequently he ascribes nothing to himself but sin, which makes him deserving of contempt. He cannot bear to have merit ascribed to him that he does not deserve, but he rejoices in his soul when he is called upon to suffer contempt.

We must therefore say with the great St. Augustine: “Grant, O Lord, that I may know who I am and who Thou art.” Thou art the source of all good and I am nothing but misery and wretchedness. “Only by the humble,” says the Wise Man, “is God truly honored.” (*Ecclus.* 3:21). If you wish therefore to honor God, humbly acknowledge your own wretchedness and protest your willingness to receive whatever treatment God’s providence has in store for you. Never boast of your good works. Read the lives of the Saints to see what they have done, and then feel ashamed of yourself for having accomplished so little. The Venerable John of Avila relates that a celebrated man who had married a peasant girl insisted that she should not destroy her poor clothes, but keep them so that she might not grow proud when she saw herself surrounded by servants and clad in costly attire. We must act in a similar manner. When we perceive anything good in ourselves, we must look at our old clothes. In other words we must recall to mind what we once were, and draw the conclusion that everything good that we possess is an alms bestowed by God. Whenever St. Teresa performed a good work or saw one performed, she hastened to thank God for it.

In the next place, we must try to realize that without God's assistance we can do nothing, absolutely nothing. This will lead us to distrust ourselves and place implicit confidence in God. St. Peter trusted in his own strength when he said: "Even though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee." (*Matt.* 26:35). But we know how soon after he not only denied, but protested under oath that he did not know Our Lord. Put your confidence in God and say with St. Paul: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." (*Phil.* 4:13). When St. Catherine of Siena was tempted she humbled herself and put all her confidence in God. One day the devil cried out in a rage: "Cursed be thou, and cursed be he who taught thee this means of overcoming me."

HUMILITY OF WILL

Humility of the intellect, as we have seen, consists in acknowledging that we are nothing and deserving only of contempt. Humility of the will consists in the desire to be despised by others and in the pleasure such contempt affords us. Humility of the will Our Lord had especially in view when He said: "Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart." (*Matt. 11:29).* Many are humble with their lips but not in their heart. They acknowledge that they are wicked and deserving of punishment, but when they are reproved they deny that they are at fault. "To humble oneself for the sake of being praised," says St. Bernard, "is not humility at all; in fact it is destructive of humility, for by such conduct humility itself becomes an object of pride." "He," says St. Joseph Calasanctius, "who loves God, does not wish to appear holy, but desires to be so." The saints have not become saints in the midst of approval and applause; it was rather amid insults and contempt. The holy martyr Ignatius, when Bishop, enjoyed universal esteem and reverence; he was afterwards dragged to Rome, as a criminal, to be cast to the wild beasts. On the journey thither the guards loaded him with insults and outrages of all kinds. The Saint cried out with joy: “Now I begin to be a disciple of Christ.”

He who knows not how to bear an insult shows plainly that he has lost sight of Jesus Crucified. The Venerable Mary of the Incarnation said to her sister religious one day at the sight of the crucifix: “Is it possible, dear Sisters, that we can refuse to suffer contempt when we see Jesus Christ so despised?” Our Saviour once appeared to St. John with a cross on His shoulder and a crown of thorns encircling His head. “John,” said He, “ask of me what you wish.” The Saint replied: “Lord, I desire to suffer and to be despised for Thee.”

A very devout person had the beautiful custom of going before the Blessed Sacrament whenever she was insulted or offended. Kneeling before the tabernacle, she would say: “O my God, I am too poor to offer Thee anything precious or costly; therefore I offer Thee this little gift that I have just received.” If, therefore, Christian soul, you desire to attain great sanctity, you must be prepared to suffer humiliation and contempt. Does this seem hard for poor human nature? Then remember the promise of our Saviour Jesus Christ: “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake: Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.” (*Matt.* 5:11).

MEEKNESS

Humility and meekness were the favorite virtues of Jesus Christ, and He recommended them in a particular manner to His disciples when He said: “Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.” (*Matt.* 11:29). Our Divine Redeemer was called the “Lamb of God,” not only on account of the Sacrifice He was to make of Himself on the Cross in expiation for sin, but also on account of the meekness that characterized His whole life and particularly during His bitter Passion. When He was rudely buffeted by the servant of Caiphas and charged with a want of respect for the high priest, He meekly replied: “If I have spoken ill, give testimony thereof; but if well, why strikest thou me?” (*John* 18:23). When He hung upon the Cross and His enemies loaded Him with insults and ignominy, He turned to His heavenly Father and said: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (*Luke* 23:34).

How dear to God are those meek souls who bear with all manner of offenses and indignities without giving way to anger! Their prayer is acceptable to God, says Holy Scripture (*Jdth.* 9:16); that is, it will always be heard. “Heaven,” says Father Alvarez, “is, in a particular manner, the home and country of those who on earth are despised and trampled under foot.” Indeed it is to these, and not to the proud who are honored and esteemed by the world, that the possession of the Kingdom of Heaven is promised. The Royal Psalmist assures us that the meek will not only possess happiness in the life to come, but even in this life: “They shall delight in abundance of peace.” (*Ps.* 36:11).

St. Teresa says that she seemed to experience a more than ordinary love for those who spoke ill of her. In the acts of Canonization we read that by injuries one could obtain her love in an especial degree. To such meekness we can never attain without deep humility, a humble opinion of ourselves, and a desire to be treated with contempt. Pride is angry and vindictive because of the high opinion we have of ourselves and the craving for honors that we think we deserve.

The spirit of God is a spirit of meekness. “My spirit is sweet as honey.” (*Ecclus.* 24:27). St. Francis de Sales, a master and model of holy meekness, says: “Humble meekness is the virtue of virtues, which our Divine Redeemer has most urgently recommended to us; therefore we must practice it everywhere and at all times.” Meekness must be exercised especially towards the poor and the sick; towards the poor because, on account of their poverty, they are often harshly treated; towards the sick because they suffer so much and are often left without assistance. Superiors should act with meekness towards their subjects, and when giving an order, they should ask rather than command. St. Vincent de Paul says that superiors have no better means of winning the affection and obedience of their subjects than by meekness.

This was also the opinion of St. Jane Chantal. “I have tried all kinds of treatment,” she says; “the mild and patient is the best.” “Nothing is so edifying,” says St. Francis de Sales, “as amiable meekness.” On the lips of this servant of God there hovered a continual smile. His countenance, his conversation, his whole being breathed meekness. St. Vincent de Paul declared that he had never known a meeker man than the Bishop of Geneva. He saw in him a living copy of the goodness and kindness of Jesus Christ. Even when, not to burden his conscience, he had to refuse a request, he couched his refusal in such gentleness and love as to win the cheerful assent of the petitioner; and in spite of a refusal, the latter went away contented. He was meek towards everyone, his superiors, his equals and his inferiors; towards the members of his household and towards strangers. He never complained about his servants; seldom did he reprove them, and then always with gentleness. What a contrast between this saint and those who, according to St. Francis' own words, "seem to be angels abroad and devils at home."

MEEK CORRECTION

If you, Christian reader, are called upon to administer a reproof, do so as St. Francis did, with meekness. To correct emphatically is one thing; to reprove harshly is another. To reprehend in a very positive manner is sometimes necessary, when the fault committed is a serious one or when repeated warnings have been in vain. But we must guard against using an angry tone which betrays an absence of self-control; this often does more harm than good. It is this bitter zeal that St. James deprecates so much. Many imagine that the best and only way to treat subordinates is by harsh deportment, to fill them with reverential awe and dread. But St. James, the Apostle, is of quite a different opinion. He says: "If you have bitter zeal, glory not. This is not wisdom descending from above, but earthly, sensual, devilish. But the wisdom that is from above is . . . peaceable, modest, full of mercy and good fruits." (*James* 3:14, 15, 17). If you are obliged to speak in a stern manner to impress the culprit with the gravity of his fault, at least conclude your remarks with some kind words to take the sting out of the reproof. Like the good Samaritan, you must heal the wound with oil and wine.

When oil is mixed with other liquids it always comes to the top; so you too, says St. Francis de Sales, in all that you do, let meekness and gentleness predominate. If the person you wish to reprove is very much agitated, it is better to wait until he has grown calm; otherwise you only aggravate him the more. If a house is on fire, it is not the proper thing to throw wood on it.

“You know not of what spirit you are.” (*Luke* 9:55). So spoke the Blessed Redeemer to St. John and his brother St. James when they wished Him to chastise the Samaritans. Ah, what sort of a spirit is that! Our Redeemer wished to say: It is not My spirit; My spirit is meekness and gentleness. “The Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save” (*Luke* 9:56), and you wish Me to bring about their destruction.

OUR SAVIOUR’S MEEKNESS

With what meekness and gentleness did not Our Lord speak to the woman taken in sin! “Woman,” said He, “hath no man condemned thee? Who said: No man, Lord. And Jesus said: Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more.” (*John* 8:10–11). With similar meekness He spoke to and converted the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. At first He merely asked for a drink of water; and then He said: “O didst thou but know who it is that saith to thee: ‘Give me to drink!’” (*John* 4:10). Finally He revealed to her that He was the promised Messias. What touching tenderness our Saviour displayed towards the treacherous Apostle Judas. He permitted him to eat from the same dish with Himself; He knelt and washed his feet; at the very moment when he was consummating his crime our Saviour warned him with these touching words: “Judas, dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?” (*Luke* 22:48). How did He win back St. Peter after the Apostle had denied Him? He did not reproach him. When passing from the house of the high priest, He turned and looked tenderly upon Peter, and that tender look wrought such a conversion in the heart of the Apostle that during the remainder of his life he wept bitterly over the offense he had given his Divine Master.

Meekness accomplishes far more than anger and bitterness. St. Francis de Sales says there is nothing so bitter as a green walnut; put it in preserve, and it becomes sweet and agreeable. In like manner reproofs, however unpleasant they may be in themselves, become acceptable and productive of good results when administered with meekness and love. By reason of his wonderful meekness, St. Francis de Sales could do whatever he wished; he even succeeded in leading the most obstinate sinners back to God. St. Vincent de Paul was animated with a like spirit and he wished it to be the characteristic of his disciples. “Gentleness, love and humility,” he was wont to say, “have a wonderful effect in winning the hearts of men and in causing them to do willingly what is opposed to human nature.”

You must endeavor to be mild and amiable to everyone, under all circumstances and at all times. “There are many,” says St. Bernard, “who are full of sweetness as long as things go their way; but when they meet with contradiction they break forth in fire and flames, and fume like a veritable Vesuvius. They are like the coals that glow beneath the ashes.” He who desires to become a saint must live like a lily among thorns; it is always a lily no matter how much the thorns may prick it. In other words he must always be meek and amiable. The exterior of a soul that loves God will reflect the peace that reigns within alike in prosperity and adversity. If we must answer one who offends us, let us do so with meekness. “A mild answer breaketh wrath,” says Holy Scripture. (*Prov.* 15:1). If we are too excited, it is better to remain silent. In the heat of passion it seems right to say everything that comes to the tongue; but when anger has subsided we find we have committed as many faults as we have spoken words.

MEEKNESS TOWARDS ONESELF

Should we have the misfortune to commit a fault, we must exercise meekness even towards ourselves. To be angry with oneself after committing a fault is not a sign of humility, but of secret pride; it shows that we do not regard ourselves as the weak and wretched creatures that we really are. St. Aloysius said: “The devil likes to fish in troubled waters, where we can distinguish nothing.” If a soul is distracted and disturbed it is very hard for it to recognize God and its duties. When, therefore, we have committed a fault, we must turn to the Lord with humility and confidence, beg Him for pardon and say with St. Catherine of Genoa: “Lord, see, here is fruit from my own garden! But pardon me, I beg Thee! I repent from my heart of having offended Thee; I will do so no more; give me the aid of Thy holy grace.” “Never,” says St. Francis de Sales, “permit anger to enter the soul under any pretext whatever; for once the violent passion has found lodgment in the heart, it is not in our power to banish it.”

Seek to control the emotions of anger at once by remaining silent, or by thinking of something else. Do as the Apostles did when they were tossed about by the stormy sea; they had instant recourse to their Divine Master;

He alone can still the storms of the human heart. If in consequence of weakness, anger has entered your heart, do all in your power to regain your composure and act humbly and meekly towards him who was the occasion of your angry feelings. St. Francis tells us that it cost him much labor to overcome his two predominant passions, anger and love. To conquer his angry passion he struggled for twelve long years. With regard to love, he changed its object, detaching himself entirely from creatures and giving his whole love to God.

It was a practice with the Saints during prayer and meditation to bring to mind all the annoyance and obstacles they were apt to encounter in the course of the day, and to prepare themselves in advance to endure them with meekness and humility. Thus they were enabled to put into practice the counsel of their gentle Saviour: “Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls.” (*Matt.* 11:29).

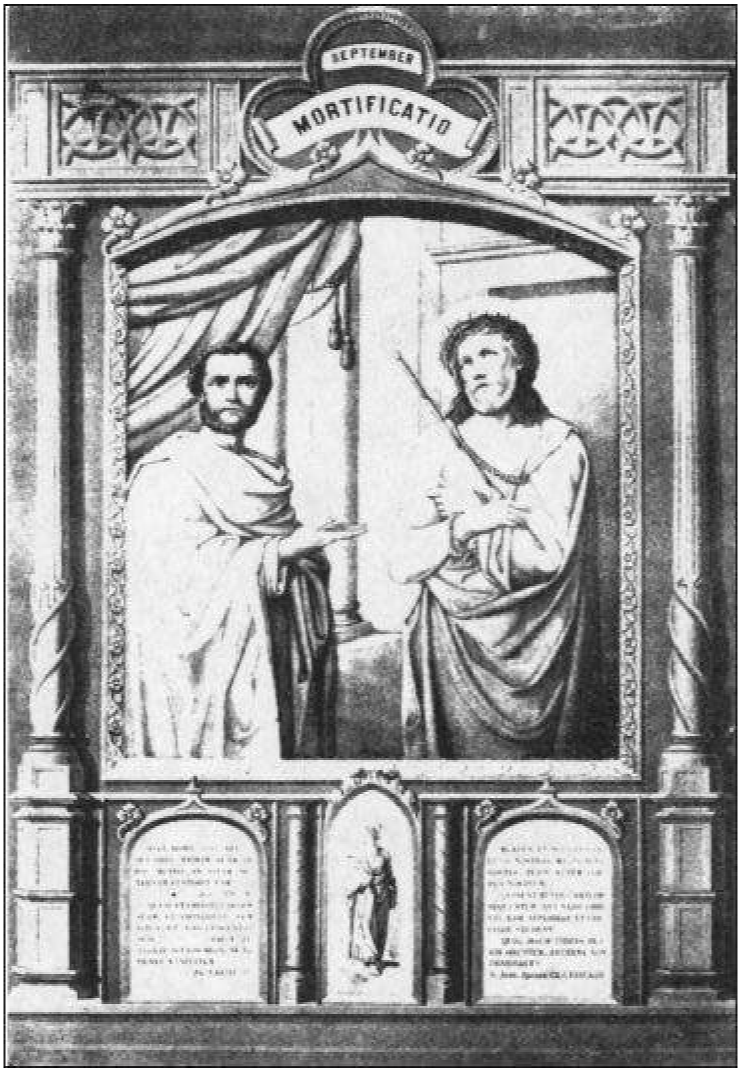
SEPTEMBER
MORTIFICATIO

“He that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal.”—*John 12:25*.

Chapter 9

MORTIFICATION

“He that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal.”—*John 12:25*

The virtue of mortification is twofold, exterior and interior. Exterior mortification consists in doing and suffering what is opposed to the exterior senses, and in depriving oneself of what is agreeable to them. In as far as it is necessary to avoid sin, every Christian is bound to practice mortification. With regard to those things which we may lawfully enjoy, mortification is not obligatory, but it is very useful and meritorious. For those, however, who are striving after perfection, mortification, even in things that are lawful, is absolutely necessary. As poor children of Adam, we must fight till our dying day; “For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary, one to another: so that you do not the things that you would.” (*Gal.* 5:17).

It is proper to animals to gratify their senses; it is characteristic of angels to do the Will of God. From this a learned author concludes that we become angels when we strive to do God’s Will, but we become like animals when we seek to gratify our senses. Either the soul must subject the body or the body will make the soul its slave. Accordingly, we must treat our body as a rider treats a wild horse; he draws the reins tight, lest he should be thrown off. A physician at times prescribes medicines that are very distasteful to the patient, and he strictly forbids injurious foods and drinks, though the patient may desire them. He would be a cruel physician indeed who could be dissuaded from administering medicines because his patient objected on account of their being bitter, and who would allow the sick man to eat and drink what he pleased. How much greater is the cruelty of the sensual man who strives to avoid everything that is disagreeable or painful to his body in this life, and thereby puts both body and soul in the greatest danger of suffering incomparably greater pains for all eternity. “This false love,” says St. Bernard, “destroys the true love we should have for our body.”

Such misplaced sympathy is in reality only cruelty; for while we spare the body we kill the soul. The same Saint, addressing those worldly-minded people who ridicule the servants of God for mortifying themselves, makes use of the following words: “Yes, we are cruel, if you will, towards our bodies when we afflict them with penance; but you are far more cruel towards yourselves when you gratify your sensual cravings, for by so doing you condemn both body and soul to an eternity of frightful torments.” Our Lord once said to St. Francis of Assisi: “If you desire Me, take the bitter things of life as sweet and the sweet as bitter.” It is useless to assert, as some do, that perfection does not consist in chastising the body, but in mortifying the will. To this Pinamonti replies: “If the vineyard does not bear fruit because it is surrounded by a hedge of thorns, at least the hedge helps to preserve the fruit, for Holy Scripture says: ‘Where there is no hedge, the possession shall be spoiled.’” (*Ecclus.* 36:27).

St. Aloysius Gonzaga had very poor health. Nevertheless, he was so intent on crucifying his body that he sought for nothing but mortification and works of penance. One day someone said to him that sanctity did not consist in these things, but in the renunciation of self-will. He meekly replied in the words of the Gospel: “These things you ought to have done, and not to leave those undone.” (*Matt.* 23:23). By this he meant to say: Although it is necessary to mortify the will, we must also mortify the body to keep it in check and subject to reason. On this account the Apostle said: “I chastise my body and bring it into subjection.” (*1 Cor.* 9:27). If the body is not mortified, it is very difficult to make it obedient to the law of God.

WE OURSELVES OUR WORST ENEMY

It is certainly true that the world and the devil are great enemies to our salvation; but the greatest enemy of all is our own body because it is always with us. “The enemy that dwells with us in the same house,” says St. Bernard, “injures us most.” A fort has no more dangerous enemies than those within, for it is harder to protect oneself from these than from the enemy without. While worldly-minded people are intent solely on gratifying their bodies by the pleasures of sense, souls that love God think only of mortifying themselves as much as they can. St. Peter of Alcantara thus addressed his body: “Be assured of the fact that in this life I will give you no rest; afflictions are your lot; when we are in Heaven we shall enjoy a rest without end.” In the same spirit St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi acted, and shortly before her death she could say she did not remember ever having found pleasure in anything except God.

SELF-DENIAL

But, you will say, I have a weak constitution and poor health, and my confessor forbids me to practice works of penance. Very well, obey him; but at least bear patiently with the discomforts and fatigue resulting from your bodily condition; try not to complain of the inclemency of the weather and the excessive heat and cold. If you are unable to practice works of penance, at least abstain occasionally from some lawful pleasure. When St. Francis Borgia was out hunting, at the moment the falcon would seize its prey he used to cast down his eyes, to deprive himself of the pleasure such a sight would afford him. If you deny your body lawful pleasures, it is not apt to seek unlawful ones; but if you indulge in all the lawful enjoyments you will soon cross the line into forbidden territory. A great servant of God, Vincent Carafa, S.J., says that the Lord has given us the joys and pleasures of this world not only that we may enjoy them, but also that we might have an opportunity of making a sacrifice, by depriving ourselves of them for love of Him. Poisons properly compounded, and taken in very small quantity, are sometimes beneficial to the health of the body, but they are and always will be poisons. And so it is with pleasures; they must be indulged in with great precaution and moderation and solely with the view of serving God more faithfully.

Moreover, we must be on our guard lest anxiety and solicitude for our bodily welfare endanger the health of the soul. “The sickness of the body,” says St. Bernard, “excites my compassion, but the sickness of the soul causes me greater affliction because it is much more dangerous.” We are very apt to make our bodily ailments a pretext for exemption from our spiritual duties. “We omit prayer today,” says St. Teresa, “because we have a headache; tomorrow because we had a headache, and the next day because we fear we might get one.”

ADVANTAGES OF MORTIFICATION

It may be profitable to dwell for a moment on the advantages of mortification, for such a consideration is calculated to inspire us with more courage and generosity. By mortification we may expiate the temporal punishment due to our sins. We are aware of the fact that though the guilt of sin is remitted by a contrite Confession, there still remains a temporal punishment to be endured. If in the present life we neglect to make atonement, we shall have to suffer in the fire of Purgatory. “Except they do penance for their deeds,” says Holy Scripture, “they shall be in very great tribulation.” (*Apoc.* 2:22). St. Antonine relates that the choice was offered to a sick man (by his guardian angel) either to suffer three days in Purgatory or to remain two years longer on his sickbed. The patient chose the three days in Purgatory. He had hardly been there an hour when he complained to the angel that instead of a few days he had already spent several years in terrible torments. “What is it you say,” replied the angel; “your body is still warm on the deathbed, and you speak of years?” If therefore, Christian soul, you have anything to suffer, say to yourself: This must be my Purgatory; I shall bear this suffering patiently to atone for my sins, and to gain merit for eternal life.

IT ELEVATES THE SOUL

Mortification raises the soul to God. St. Francis de Sales says: “The soul can never ascend to God unless the body is brought into subjection by penance.” “Souls that truly love God,” says St. Teresa, “have no desire for bodily rest and indulgence.” But by mortification we may attain great glory in Heaven. “If contestants,” says St. Paul, “abstain from everything that might weaken the body and prevent them from winning a perishable crown, with what greater zeal ought not we to mortify ourselves in order to obtain a priceless and eternal crown!” St. John saw the blessed in Heaven with palm branches in their hands. From this it is evident that to be numbered among the elect we must all be martyrs, either by the sword of the tyrant or by mortification. But “The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us” (*Rom.* 8:18), and our present tribulations are momentary and light, but they “work for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.” (*2 Cor.* 4:17). Let us therefore reanimate our faith. We have but a short time to live on this earth; our true home and eternal rest is beyond the grave. St. Peter says that the blessed are the living stones with which the heavenly Jerusalem is built. But as Holy Church sings in the Divine Office, these stones must be cut and shaped by the chisel of mortification.

INTERIOR MORTIFICATION

Interior mortification consists in restraining our inordinate self-love and self-will. There is a twofold love of self, the one good and the other bad. The former spurs us on to strive for eternal life, for which God has created us; the latter prompts us to seek for the good things of this earth, to the great detriment of our immortal soul. Christ Our Lord has said: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.” (*Matt.* 16:24). Now, all the perfection of a soul consists in this very self-denial, for St. Augustine says, “The less one seeks to gratify the passions, the more one truly loves God, and when one desires nothing but God, one’s love of God is perfect.” In the present condition of our sinful nature, it is impossible to be entirely free from the promptings of self-love. Jesus Christ alone among men and the Blessed Virgin Mary among women were entirely exempt. As for all the other Saints, they have had to battle with their inordinate inclinations. Interior mortification, therefore, consists principally in restraining and keeping in check these inordinate inclinations of self-love. The soul has other enemies, it is true, but the worst enemy of all is self-love.

According to St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, “Self-love is like the worm that gnaws at the root and destroys not only the fruit, but even the very life of the plant.” The same Saint adds: “The traitor that we have to fear most is self-love, for self-love betrays us as Judas betrayed Our Lord with a kiss. He who conquers self-love has conquered all.” Pray, therefore, without ceasing, to the Lord: O God, do not let me fall a prey to my passions, which rob me of Thy holy fear and of reason itself. “Man’s life on earth is a warfare.” (*Job* 7:1). He who encounters an enemy in battle must have his weapons in hand to defend himself; if he neglects to fight, he is lost. No matter how many victories we may have won, we cannot afford to lay down our arms; for our passions, in spite of repeated defeats, are never entirely destroyed.

They are like weeds, says St. Bernard, that crop out again as often as they are cut off; even when you think you have rooted them out entirely, they soon appear again. In the struggle with our passions, the most we can hope to attain is that their attacks become less frequent and less violent, and we ourselves better able to overcome them. One day a monk complained to the Abbot Theodore that he had fought for eight long years against his passions and had not as yet succeeded in subduing them. The Abbot replied: “My brother, you complain of a war of eight years; I have spent sixty years in solitude and there was not a single day of that time but I was disquieted by some passion or other.” The passions, therefore, will always molest us; but, as St. Gregory says, “It is a different thing to see these wild beasts prowling around us and to hear their ferocious howl than to have them in our very heart and to suffer them to strangle us.”

SELF-CONQUEST

Our heart is a garden in which wild and noxious weeds continue to grow. We must therefore have the hoe of mortification always in hand to remove this noxious growth, otherwise the garden will soon be choked with thorns and thistles. “Overcome yourself,” was a favorite saying with St. Ignatius of Loyola. It was always on his lips; again and again he returned to it when addressing his religious brethren. “Overcome your self-love; break your self-will,” he would say. The reason why so few of those who practice mental prayer become saints is because so few are intent upon over-coming themselves. Of a hundred persons who practice mental prayer, more than ninety follow their own head. Therefore, the Saint placed greater value on a single act of self-denial than on a whole hour’s prayer filled with spiritual consolation. “Of what benefit is it to a fortress,” says the Abbot Gilbert, “that the gates are closed if hunger, the enemy within, lays low the occupants?” He wished to say: Of what use is it to mortify the exterior senses and perform many exercises of piety if we harbor some passion in our heart and refuse to give up our own will?

St. Francis Borgia said that prayer introduces the love of God into the heart, but mortification prepares the way by removing everything that might prove an obstacle or hindrance to it. If you wish to fill a vase with water you must first empty out the earth that is in it, otherwise there will be a disagreeable mixture. Regarding the relation of interior mortification to prayer, Father Balthasar Alvarez says: “Prayer without mortification is either a delusion, or will soon come to an end.” St. Ignatius tells us that a mortified soul is more intimately united to God in one quarter of an hour than an unmortified person in many hours of prayer. And if the Saint heard it said of anyone that he prayed much, he would add: “That is a sign that he is very mortified.”

Many Christians perform acts of devotion, go frequently to Holy Communion, fast and spend much time at prayer, but they neglect to mortify their passions, and harbor feelings of revenge and aversion, and entertain dangerous attachments. They make no effort to bear with contradictions, to give up certain associations and to be subject to obedience and the Will of God. What progress can such hope to make on the way to perfection? They always have the same faults, and according to St. Augustine they are outside the right way. “They run well,” says the Saint, “but outside the path.” “Watch over thyself,” says Thomas à Kempis, “stir up thyself, admonish thyself; and whatsoever becometh of others, neglect not thyself. The greater violence thou offerest to thyself the greater progress thou wilt make.” (*Im.* Bk. 1, 24).

I have not the slightest intention to underestimate the value of vocal prayer, works of penance and other spiritual exercises; but they must be performed with this end in view, to obtain the victory over your passions. All exercises of piety are nothing else but means to arrive at virtue. Consequently at Holy Communion, during meditation, while visiting the Blessed Sacrament and performing other acts of devotion we must always ask God for the grace to be humble, mortified, obedient and conformed to His holy will. To act only from self-love is a fault in every Christian; but it is a greater fault in him who has received a greater measure of grace and is on that account bound to strive more earnestly after perfection. “By means of self-denial,” says Lactantius, “God calls men to eternal life; by the gratification of self-love Satan calls them to eternal death.”

St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say: “The day spent without mortification is a day lost.” In order to teach us the value and necessity of mortification, our Blessed Lord chose to live a mortified life, a life without sensible consolation, a life of sorrow and shame. “Having joy set before him,” says the Apostle, “he endured the cross, despising the shame.” (*Heb.* 12:2). “Go through the whole life of Jesus Christ" says St. Bernard, "you will always find Him suffering on the cross." St. Catherine of Siena remarks: "As a mother takes bitter medicine to cure her sick child, so during His life on earth Our Lord drank the chalice of sufferings to cure our poor sick souls."

SELF-WILL

There is no obstacle more harmful in striving after perfection than the gratification of self-will. "If," says St. Bernard, "you can induce men to give up their self-will, there is no Hell for them to fear." According to St. Peter Damian, self-will destroys all the virtues. "As the will of God is the source of all good," says St. Anselm, "the will of man is the origin of all evil." "He," says St. Bernard, "who constitutes himself a master and follows the suggestions of self-will subjects himself to a veritable fool."

The devil, as St. Augustine remarks, became what he is by self-will. Therefore, in his war against pious souls, his most effective and deadly weapon is their self-will. Cassian relates that the Abbot Achilles, when asked by a disciple what weapons the devil employed in attacking the souls that are consecrated to God, replied: Against the great ones of this world, he uses pride; against men of business, avarice; against the young, incontinence; but against those who are given to piety, his principal weapon is self-will. The Abbot Pastor expresses the same idea in different words: "When we follow our own will, the devil has no need of assailing us, for our self-will then takes the place of the devil, and indeed of the worst that there is." The Holy Ghost admonishes us: "Turn away from thy own will. If thou give to thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy to thy enemies." (*Ecclus.* 18:30–31). An action has its greatest value from the obedience through which it is performed. The worst feature of any action is when it is prompted by self-will.

Consequently, says Trithemius, the devil hates nothing more than obedience, for, in the words of St. Teresa, "The devil well knows that on obedience the salvation of our souls depends. This is why he tries so hard to prevent it." It was the custom of St. Philip Neri to exhort all his penitents to practice renunciation of their own will, for in this, he used to say, true sanctity consists. "The more you take away from your self-will, the more you add to virtue," says St. Jerome. "In the sight of God," says St. Coletta, “the renunciation of self-will is more meritorious than the sacrifice of all the riches of the world.”

“I wish for very little,” says St. Francis de Sales, “and for this little I have but feeble desire.” He meant to say that in his desires his own will was never considered, but simply the Will of God; so that he was prepared to give up everything as soon as he saw that it was not in conformity with the divine Will. “O what sweetness,” says St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, “there is in the words ‘The Will of God.’”

If you, Christian soul, desire to become holy and enjoy uninterrupted peace, strive as often as you can to mortify your will. Do nothing for your own satisfaction, but everything to please God. To this end renounce all vain desires and inordinate inclinations. Worldly-minded people are intent upon following their own will as much as they possibly can; it is the constant aim of the Saints to mortify their will, and they seek opportunities for doing so. St. Andrew Avellino made a vow always to oppose his own will. Make it a practice at least every day to perform a few acts of self-denial.

Let us conclude with the words which Father Torres wrote to a devout person to encourage her in the practice of self-denial: “As God has given you an opportunity to suffer and endure abandonment, endeavor to increase His love in your heart, a love that is as strong as death. May this love detach you from all creatures and from your very self in order that nothing may hinder you in clinging to your Lord with all your thoughts, desires and inclinations. Do all for Him and in union with Him. Before your crucified Saviour make a daily renunciation of all the inclinations and attachments you find within your soul. Protest that you desire no other honor but the shame of Jesus Christ; no other treasure but His love; no other comforts but His Cross; no other object but Himself, your Lord and God.”

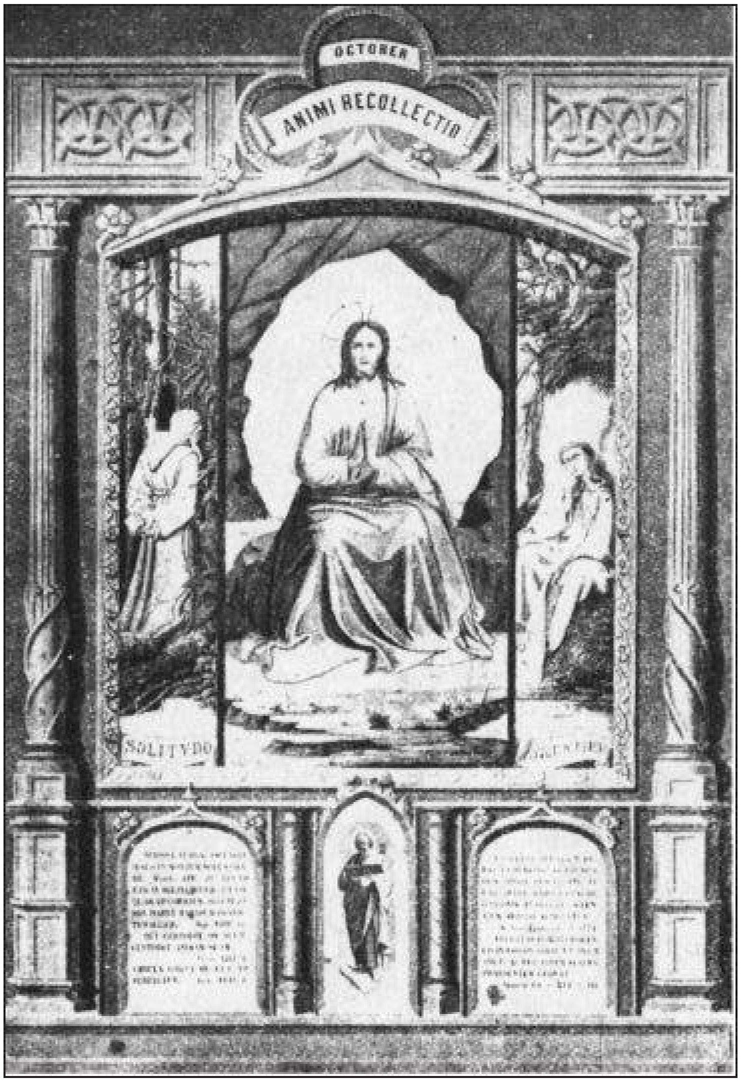
OCTOBER
ANIMI RECOLLECTIO
SOLITUDO

“Having dismissed the multitude, he went into a mountain alone to pray.”—*Matt. 14:23*.

Chapter 10

RECOLLECTION

“Having dismissed the multitude, he went into a mountain alone to pray.”—*Matt. 14:23*

To preserve recollection of spirit or the constant union of the soul with God, three things are necessary: solitude, silence, and the recollection of the presence of God. It was these three things which the angel of God referred to when, addressing St. Arsenius, he said: “Flee, be silent and rest.” In other words: seek solitude, practice silence, and rest in God by keeping the thought of His presence ever before you.

Souls that love God feel a strong attraction for solitude, for they know that God converses familiarly with those who shun the noise and distractions of the world. “O blessed solitude,” exclaims St. Jerome, “in which God with loving condescension deals familiarly with chosen souls!” God does not speak in those places where time is squandered in loud laughter and idle talk. “The Lord is not in the earthquake” (*3 Kgs.* 19:11), but He says, on the contrary, in the words of the prophet Osee: “I will lead her into the wilderness and I will speak to her heart.” (*Osee* 2:14). God speaks to the soul in solitude, and by His words the heart is inflamed with divine love. “My soul melted when my beloved spoke,” said the spouse in the Canticle (5:6).

St. Eucherius relates that a person who desired to be perfect once asked a spiritual director what he had to do, and this was the answer he received: “Solitude is the place where man finds God. In solitude, virtue is easily preserved; in intercourse with the world it is easily lost.” St. Bernard tells us that he learned more about God and divine things in solitude under the oaks and beeches than from the books and schools of the learned. For this reason the Saints felt an irresistible yearning to leave the noise and bustle of the world and retire into solitude; for this reason the mountains and forests and caves were inexpressibly dear to them. In the prophecy of Isaias we read:

“The land that was desolate and impassable shall be glad, and the wilderness shall rejoice, and shall flourish like the lily. It shall bud forth and blossom, and shall rejoice with joy and praise: the glory of Libanus is given to it; the beauty of Carmel, and Saron, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the beauty of our God.” (*Is.* 35:1). In other words, for interior souls, solitude is the source of abundant delights, for it is there they look upon and contemplate the majesty and beauty of God.

THE THOUGHT OF GOD

In order to remain united to God, we must endeavor to keep alive within us a vivid recollection of Him and of the immeasurable goods He bestows on them that love Him. By constant intercourse with the world, these spiritual truths are apt to become obscured in the maze of earthly thoughts and considerations, and piety vanishes from the heart. Worldly-minded people shun solitude, and it is quite natural for them to do so; for it is in retirement that they are troubled with qualms of conscience. They seek the society and excitement of the world so that the voice of conscience may be drowned in the noise that reigns there. Those, on the contrary, whose conscience is at rest, love solitude and retirement; and when at times they are obliged by circumstances to appear in the noisy world, they are ill at ease and feel altogether out of their element.

It is true, man naturally loves the society of his fellow man; but what can be found more beautiful than the society of God? “His conversation hath no bitterness,” says Holy Scripture, “and his company no tediousness, but joy and gladness.” (*Wis.* 8:16). A life of solitude is not a life of sadness; it is rather a foretaste of Heaven; it is the beginning of the life of the blessed whose sole happiness is found in the love and praise of God. This is what St. Jerome said when he fled from the society of Rome and hid himself in the grotto of Bethlehem: “Solitude is my Heaven,” he wrote. In solitude the Saints seem to be entirely alone, but this is not so. St. Bernard said: “Never am I less alone than when alone”; for when I am alone I am with God, who gives me greater joy than the society of all creatures could afford. If the Saints seem to be sad, in reality they are not so. Because the world sees them deprived of all earthly joys and pleasures, it regards them as most unhappy; and yet the very opposite is the case.

According to the words of the Apostle, they enjoy a constant and immeasurable peace. (*2 Thess.* 3:16). Now, in order to find this delightful solitude it is not necessary to withdraw into a desert and live in a cave; you can find it in your home and in the midst of your family. Busy yourself with the outside world only in as far as the duties of your state, obedience, or charity require, and you will be living in that solitude that best accords with your circumstances and that God requires of you. In the midst of the weightiest affairs of state, King David knew how to find a solitude: “Behold I fled away and dwelt in solitude.” (*Ps.* 54:8). St. Philip Neri for some time entertained the desire to retire into a desert, but the Lord commanded him not to leave the city of Rome, and to live there as if he were in a hermitage.

SOLITUDE OF THE SPIRIT

Hitherto we have spoken of the solitude and retirement of the body; there is also a solitude of the soul, and the latter is more necessary than the former, for St. Gregory says: “Of what use is the solitude of the body without the solitude of the spirit?” Of what benefit is it, the Saint wishes to say, to live in a desert if the soul clings to the things of this earth? “A soul that is free from earthly attachments,” says St. Peter Chrysologus, “finds solitude even on the streets and in public places.” Of what advantage is it to remain quiet at home or in church if our heart is centered on the things of earth, and the noise of these earthly things prevents us from hearing the voice of God? One day the Lord said to St. Teresa: “Oh, how gladly would I speak to many souls! But the world makes so much noise in their hearts that they cannot hear My voice. Would that they might retire a little from the world!” In what does solitude of the heart consist? It consists in banishing from the heart all desires and inclinations that are not for God, and in performing our actions simply with God’s good pleasure in view. The Psalmist expresses this truth in the following words: “What have I in heaven, and besides thee what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart and the God that is my portion forever.” (*Ps.* 72:25–26). In one word, the solitude of the heart consists in being able to say: “My God, Thee alone do I desire and nothing else.”

HOW TO FIND GOD

Many complain that they are unable to find God, but to such St. Teresa replies: “Tear your heart away from everything else; then seek God and you will surely find Him.” If a crystal vase is filled with earth, the rays of the sun cannot penetrate it. The light of God cannot illumine a heart that is full of attachments for the joys, the pleasures and the honors of this world. “When thou shalt pray,” says Our Lord, “enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret.” (*Matt.* 6:6). In other words, to be united to God in prayer, man must enter into his own heart—which St. Augustine says is the chamber mentioned by Our Lord—and shut out all earthly attachments and inclinations. It is not to be supposed that solitude and retirement are synonymous with idleness. Many live in retirement, but it is an inactive and useless retirement of which they shall have to render an account. Devout souls, on the contrary, are like bees that are never tired preparing honey for their cells. No time must be lost, but every moment employed in praying, in reading or in performing the duties of your state of life.

“Idleness is the mother of vice,” says the proverb, and the foundation of this proverb is the words of Holy Scripture: “Idleness hath taught much evil.” (*Ecclus.* 33:29). According to St. Bonaventure, the idle man is tortured by a thousand temptations, while the man that is busily occupied has comparatively few. We cannot pray all the time; therefore, we must devote ourselves to work. In the life of St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi it is said that she did more work than four lay sisters together.

It would be an error to suppose that work is injurious to health; on the contrary, it is very conducive to our bodily welfare. Work is moreover an effective remedy against temptations. One day St. Anthony the hermit was assailed by numerous temptations and with a sudden aversion for his solitude; he scarcely knew which way to turn. An angel appeared and led him into the garden; thereupon he picked up a hoe and began to cultivate the ground. Afterwards he prayed for a while, and then returned to work. From this the Saint learned how he was to act, and the subsequent interchange of prayer and labor made his solitude very agreeable, while at the same time it protected him from many temptations.

But even labor need not prevent us from prayer. One day St. Bernard saw a monk praying while doing his work. “Continue in this way, my brother,” said he, “and after death you will have no Purgatory.” While our hands are occupied with external occupations, our heart can be fixed on God. The good intention we make in performing our labors sanctifies them in the sight of God and even makes of labor a prayer, for prayer has been called “the raising of the mind and heart to God.”

SILENCE

Silence is one of the principal means to attain the spirit of prayer and to fit oneself for uninterrupted intercourse with God. It is hard to find a truly pious person who talks much. But they who have the spirit of prayer love silence, which has deservedly been called a protectress of innocence, a shield against temptations and a fruitful source of prayer. Silence promotes recollection and awakens good thoughts in the heart. According to St. Bernard, it forces the soul, as it were, to think of God and heavenly things. For this reason the Saints of God were great lovers of silence.

In the prophecy of Isaias we read: “The work of justice shall be peace, and the service of justice quietness, and security forever.” (*Is.* 32:17). On the one hand, silence preserves us from many sins by removing the occasion of uncharitable talk, rancor and curiosity; on the other it aids us in the attainment of many virtues. For example: What an excellent opportunity we have for the practice of humility by modestly keeping silence while others speak! How well we may practice mortification by refraining from relating something we very much desire to tell! What a splendid chance to exercise meekness by not replying to unjust accusations and insults!

Unrestrained and immoderate talking, on the other hand, has many disastrous consequences. If devotion is preserved by silence, it is certainly lost by much talking. A person may be ever so recollected at meditation; if afterwards he does not restrain his tongue, he will be as distracted as if he had made no meditation at all.

If you open the doors of a furnace, the heat will escape. “Guard against much talking,” says St. Dorotheus, “for it puts to flight devout thoughts and recollection in God.” It is certain that a person who talks much with creatures, will converse little with God, and on His part God will speak little to such a one, for He says: “I will lead her into the wilderness and will speak to her heart.” (*Osee* 2:14). “In the multitude of words,” says the Holy Ghost, “there shall not want sin, but he that refraineth his lips is most wise.”

(*Prov.* 10:19). St. James says that “the tongue is a world of iniquity” (*James* 3:6), for as a learned author remarks, very many sins are occasioned by talking or listening to the talk of others.

Ah, how many souls will be lost on judgment day because they have not watched over their tongue! “The man full of tongue,” says the Psalmist, “shall wander about without a guide” (*Ps.* 139), and go into a thousand and one byways with no hope of returning. “He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his soul,” says the Wise Man, “but he that hath no guard on his speech shall meet with evils.” (*Prov.* 13:3). And St. James writes: “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.” (*James* 3:2). For he who for the love of God keeps silence will likewise be given to meditation, spiritual reading and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. It is impossible, says St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, for one who does not love silence to take pleasure in divine things; before long he will throw himself into the very midst of the pleasures of the world.

THE VALUE OF SILENCE

The virtue of silence does not consist in never speaking, but in keeping silent when there is no good reason to speak. Solomon says: “There is a time to keep silence and a time to speak.” (*Eccles.* 3:7). In reference to these words, St. Gregory of Nyssa remarks: “The time to keep silence is mentioned first, because by silence we learn the art of speaking well.” When therefore should a Christian, who desires to become holy, be silent, and when should he speak? He should be silent when it is not necessary to speak and he should speak when necessity or charity requires it. St. Chrysostom gives the following rule: “Speak only when it is more useful to speak than to be silent.”

St. Arsenius acknowledges that he often regretted having spoken, but never, having kept silence. St. Ephrem says: “Speak much with God but little with men.” If in your presence unbecoming and sinful language is used, leave the company if it is possible to do so. At least cast down your eyes and remain silent, or lead the conversation to some other topic, thus making a silent protest against such unsavory talk. Be not over eager to hear the news; curiosity leads to many faults. The Abbot John used to say: “He who would hold his tongue in check, must close his ears by suppressing the desire to hear the news.” And when you do speak, weigh well what you intend to say. “Put your words in the balance,” says the Holy Ghost. (*Ecclus.* 28:29). St. Francis de Sales quaintly remarked: “To avoid faults in speech we must have the lips buttoned together, so that while unbuttoning them we may think of what we are going to say.”

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

A powerful aid in preserving recollection is the remembrance of the presence of God. Not only does it conduce to recollection of spirit, but it is also one of the most effective means of advancing in the spiritual life; it helps us to avoid sin; it spurs us on in the practice of virtue, and it brings about an intimate union of the soul with God.

There is no more excellent means of quieting the passions and of resisting the temptation to sin than the thought of the presence of God. St. Thomas says: “If we thought of the presence of God at all times we would never, or very seldom, do anything to displease Him.” According to St. Jerome, the recollection of God’s presence closes the door on all sins. For, if in the presence of our rulers, our parents or superiors, we do not care to transgress their commands, how could we violate the commandments of God if we remembered that His eyes were upon us?

St. Ambrose tells us that during a sacrifice which Alexander the Great was offering in the temple, a certain page who held a lighted torch allowed it to burn his hand rather than be guilty of irreverence by letting it fall. And the holy Doctor adds: If respect for the presence of the king could overcome the impulse of nature itself in this boy, how much more ought not the thought of the presence of God to prevail with a faithful soul in overcoming temptations and in suffering every imaginable torture rather than offend God before His very eyes.

Men fall into sin because they lose sight of the presence of God. “The cause of all evil,” says St. Teresa, “lies in the fact that we do not think of the presence of God, but imagine Him far away from us.” A man who loses sight of the presence of God will easily become a prey to sinful and sensual desires and have no strength to resist them.

On the other hand, by the thought of God’s ever vigilant eye upon them, the Saints have had strength to resist and overcome all the attacks of the evil one. It was this thought that gave the chaste Susanna courage to spurn the wicked advances of the men who tried to seduce her and even threatened her with death. “It is better for me,” she said, “to fall into your hands without doing evil, than to sin in the sight of the Lord.” (*Dan.*13:23). The same thought converted a wicked woman who dared to tempt St. Ephrem to sin. The Saint replied that if she wished to sin, she would have to go with him into the public square. “But,” she inquired, “how is it possible to commit sin in the presence of so many people?” “And how is it possible,” rejoined the Saint, “to commit sin in the presence of God, who sees us everywhere?” At these words the poor sinner broke out into tears, threw herself at his feet and begged the Saint’s pardon, beseeching him to lead her into the way of salvation. The Saint secured her admission into a convent, where she led an edifying life and bewailed her sins to her dying day.

Something similar is narrated in the life of the Abbot Paphnutius. A certain sinful woman named Thais thought she might induce him to do wrong by saying that no one but God would be a witness to the deed. The Saint replied in a very earnest tone: “You believe, then, that God really sees you, and nevertheless you wish to sin?” These words made such an impression on her that she began to conceive a horror of her wicked life. She brought all the jewels and clothing she had secured by a life of sin, heaped them together in the public marketplace, and set them on fire. Then she entered a convent and fasted for three years on bread and water, constantly repeating the following words: “Thou who hast created me, have mercy on me.” At the end of three years she died a holy death. It was shortly after revealed to a disciple of the Abbot Anthony that the happy penitent had merited a crown of glory among the Saints. Therefore St. Chrysostom says: “If we keep ourselves in the presence of God we shall neither think nor say nor do what is wrong, convinced as we are that God is the witness of all our thoughts and words and actions.”

A GREAT INCENTIVE

As far as the practice of the Christian virtues is concerned, the recollection of God’s presence affords us a powerful stimulus. How bravely will not soldiers fight in the presence of their general! The thought that his eyes are upon them, and that he will either reward or punish them, animates their courage and strength in a high degree. If we, too, would bear in mind that in all we do God's eyes are upon us, would we not try to do everything well and from the purest of intentions? St. Basil once said: "If you happened to be in the presence of a prince and a peasant, would you not naturally try to make your conduct agreeable to the prince, regardless of what the peasant might like you to do; in a similar manner, he who walks in the presence of God is little concerned about what creatures may think or say; his whole concern is to please God, who sees his every action."

Union of the soul with God is the third happy result of walking constantly in His presence. Love is always strengthened by the presence of the object loved. If this is the case with human beings, in spite of the many defects their presence must needs reveal, how much more so will it be between the soul and God. The more we walk in the presence of God, the better we recognize those beautiful qualities that are calculated to increase and strengthen His love in our hearts.

But in order to remain intimately united to God it is not sufficient to make a morning and evening meditation. St. Chrysostom says: If you remove boiling water from the stove, it will soon cool off. So it is with the human soul; to keep the fire of God's love aglow, the thought of His presence must be constantly before us. Blessed Henry Suso devoted himself to this holy exercise with the greatest zeal and eventually reached a most intimate union with God. Of St. Gertrude, Our Lord once said to St. Mechtildis: "This holy soul that I love so much, walks continually in My presence and is solely intent upon doing My will and performing her actions for My greater glory." David was filled with joy and consolation whenever he thought of God: "I remembered God and was delighted." (*Ps.* 76:4).

HOW TO WALK IN GOD'S PRESENCE

Now a good means of walking in God's presence is to picture Our Lord as present with us wherever we may happen to be. We may think of Him at times as a little babe in the crib of Bethlehem; as a poor exile on His way to Egypt; as an apprentice in the workshop of Nazareth; a man of sorrows who was condemned a criminal to suffer and die; as scourged and crowned and crucified. St. Teresa praised this practice very much. It is necessary to observe, however, that in this pious exercise we must avoid all straining of the imagination, which is apt to be very fatiguing and might possibly be injurious.

Another and better means of walking in the presence of God is based on the truths of holy faith. It consists in seeing God with the eyes of faith and being thoroughly persuaded that He is present and a witness of our actions. It matters not that we are unable to see Him with our bodily eyes; we cannot see the air around us, and we never doubt for a moment that it exists and that without it we could not possibly live. We do not see God, but faith tells us He is everywhere present. The Apostle St. Paul says: “In him we live and move and are.” (*Acts* 17:28). This is an easy practice and is not tiring to the mind. It is sufficient to make little acts of faith such as the following: My God, I firmly believe that Thou art here present. With this may be joined acts of love, of conformity and of good intention.

Still another beautiful practice is that of seeing God in His creatures. The beauties of nature such as the rising and setting of the sun, a magnificent landscape, a majestic river, a garden of beautiful flowers are so many reflexes of the beauty of the Creator. The thought of a learned or handsome or holy man can lead us to admire the wisdom and beauty and sanctity of God and return Him thanks for permitting His creatures to share in His holy attributes.

The most perfect method, however, of keeping alive the thought of God’s presence consists in beholding God within our very selves. It is not necessary to ascend to Heaven to find the Lord God; we need only to recollect ourselves, and we shall find Him within us. He who, at prayer, pictures the Lord at a great distance from him is preparing for himself a source of abundant distractions. St. Teresa says: “I never really knew what it meant to pray well until the Lord Himself taught me the proper way to converse with Him. I entered within my very self and found this practice exceedingly profitable for my soul.”

God is within us in a different manner from what He is in other creatures; in us He dwells as the Lord in His temple and in His house. “Know you not,” says St. Paul, “that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (*1 Cor.* 3:16). And our Divine Saviour Himself has said: “If anyone love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him.” (*John* 14:23). Endeavor, therefore, to reanimate your faith in this consoling truth. Humble yourself profoundly before so exalted a Majesty who deigns to dwell within you. Excite yourself to frequent acts of confidence, of oblation and of love towards the boundless goodness of God. St. Catherine of Siena tells us that she built a little cell in the innermost part of her soul; there she entertained herself in loving converse with her God. Once, when speaking of this presence of God in our heart, St. Teresa said: “Those who withdraw into the little heaven of their soul, where He who created them is enthroned, can be certain that in a brief space of time they will have advanced far on the road to perfection.”

The happiness of the elect in Heaven consists in seeing and loving God. Our happiness here on earth must likewise consist in loving and seeing Our Lord, not indeed face to face as the Saints and angels do, but by means of the light of faith. Thus we begin in this valley of tears, this earthly exile, the life of the blessed in Heaven, a life of endless joy in the fruition of the vision of God.

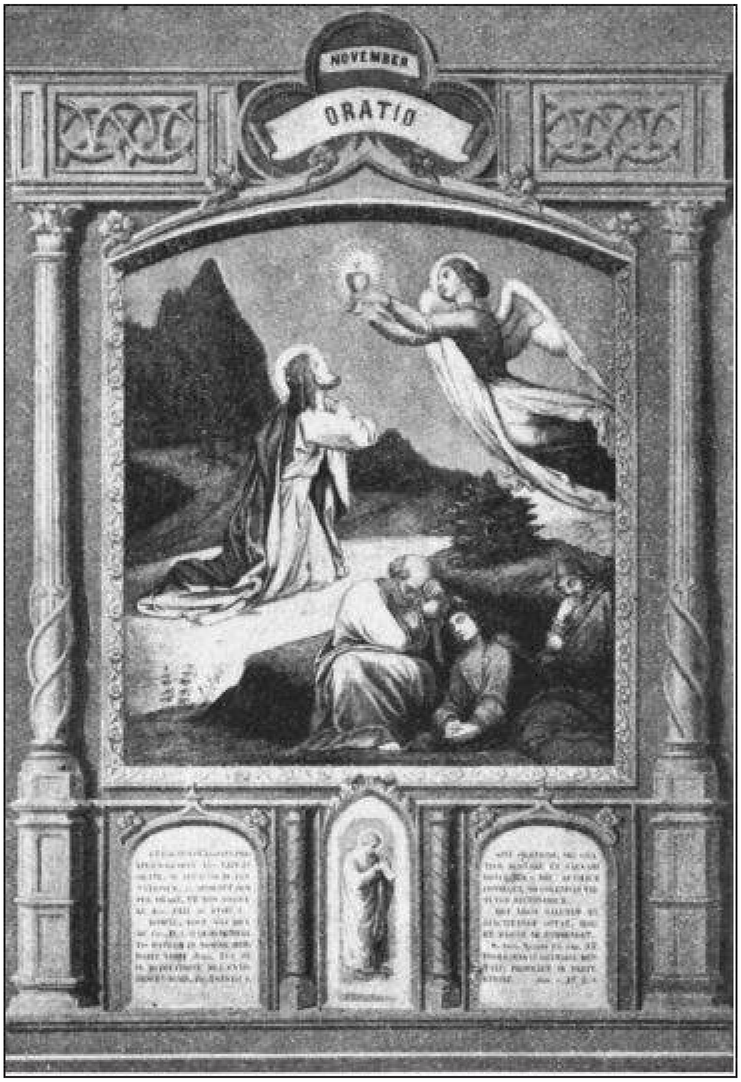
NOVEMBER
ORATIO

“We ought always to pray, and not to faint.”—*Luke 18:1*

Chapter 11

PRAYER

“We ought always to pray and not to faint.”—*Luke 18:1*

According to the teaching of the angelic St. Thomas, the worship of God takes the first place in the order of moral virtues; it is occupied more with God and leads us nearer to Him than the others. For every Christian, therefore, who is striving after perfection it must be a matter of no little concern to make this virtue his own in the highest degree. Now the easiest means of doing so, a means that we can employ at all times and in all places, is found in prayer. Whether it be the prayer of praise or thanksgiving or impenetration or propitiation, we are worshipping God, for every prayer is a humble acknowledgment of the greatness or goodness or fidelity or mercy of God.

Vocal prayer, or prayer pronounced by the lips, is very pleasing to God because by it the endless Majesty of God is acknowledged and glorified. “The sacrifice of praise shall glorify me,” says the Lord by the mouth of the prophet David, “and there is the way by which I will show him the salvation of God.” (*Ps.* 49:23). St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi was almost beside herself with joy when she heard the sound of the bell that called the community to prayer. She left everything at once to devote herself to this holy exercise, for she felt that she was performing the function of an angel in proclaiming the praises of God.

QUALITIES OF VOCAL PRAYER

In order, however, that vocal prayer may tend to God’s glory and our own salvation, it must be accompanied by attention and devotion. Not only the pronouncing of the words, says St. Gregory, but also the devotion of the heart is required for true prayer; for in the eyes of God, our sentiments are of greater worth than the sound of our voice. If we wish, therefore, to please

God we must pray not only with the lips, but also with the heart. How could the Lord, continues the same Saint, hear the prayers of him who knows not what he wants, and does not even wish to be heard? How can you expect the Lord to hear you when you cannot hear yourself? says St. Cyprian. Prayer made with attention and devotion is like sweet-smelling incense that is agreeable to God and wins for us treasures of graces. On the other hand, prayer without recollection is insulting and offensive to God and calls down His wrath on the offender.

If a subject came into the presence of his sovereign, and while petitioning some favor, gazed about and occupied himself with irrelevant matters in such wise that he scarcely knew what he was saying, would not that sovereign be justly offended? For this reason St. Thomas teaches that he who permits his mind to wander about during prayer cannot be excused from sin, because by such conduct he seems to be guilty of contempt of God. The Lord might well say of many Christians what He once said of the Jews: “They honor me with their lips but their heart is far from me.” (*Matt.* 15:8).

It is easy to understand why the devil is so intent upon turning our thoughts towards worldly affairs during prayer. On the one hand, he desires to rob us of the benefit we derive from fervent prayer; and on the other he wishes to make us guilty of disrespect towards God, and therefore, deserving of punishment. But just on this account we ought to strive most earnestly to pray with the greatest attention and devotion. Before entering the church, let us follow the advice of St. John Chrysostom and dismiss all worldly thoughts. The Holy Ghost exhorts us in the following words: “Before prayer prepare thy soul; and be not as a man that tempteth God.” (*Ecclus.* 18:23). Try to bring yourself to realize that you are going to praise God and to beg for His mercy, both for yourself and for others. Remember that the angels are looking upon you and are standing, as Blessed Herman saw them one day, with golden censers, prepared to offer your prayers and holy affections to God as sweet-smelling incense. The angels that St. John the Evangelist saw held golden vials of incense and odors which were the prayers of the Saints. (*Apoc.* 5:8). In a word, think before prayer that you are going to converse with God and to treat with Him about some very important affairs. Then the Lord will look upon you with a gracious eye and turn an attentive ear to your petitions.

Offer Him beforehand the prayers you intend to say, and beg Him to preserve you from distractions. During prayer, avoid haste. Many people, when praying, seem to be intent only on reaching the end of their prayers, as if it were a torture that must be endured, but during the shortest possible time. Such irreverent haste can hardly be pleasing to God or profitable to ourselves. "Zeal and fervor," says St. Augustine, "gradually cool off and, like a fire, become extinct unless they are kept alive." Endeavor from time to time to renew your attention while at your prayers and devotions.

Attention during prayer must be both interior and exterior. Exterior attention requires that you abstain from everything that is incompatible with interior recollection. For example, it would hardly be proper during prayer to speak with others or to listen to a conversation that is going on, or to gaze about at every distracting object. Interior attention is threefold: it may be directed to the words you utter, or to their sense, or, finally, to God. Attention is directed to the words when you are careful to pronounce them well; it is directed to the sense of the words when you try to understand their meaning in order to unite suitable affections of the heart with the verbal utterance. You direct your attention to God, and this is the best kind of attention, when during prayer your mind is fixed on God with a view to adore Him, to thank Him, to love Him or to ask Him for His graces.

DISTRACTIONS

As long as you strive to preserve the proper attention at prayer, you need not be disturbed by involuntary distractions; provided you do not consent to them, they can do you no harm. The Lord has compassion on our weakness. Distracting thoughts often enter the mind when we have given no occasion for them whatever. Such thoughts cannot spoil the effects of our prayer. According to the illustrious St. Thomas, even favored souls cannot always remain in the heights of contemplation. The weight of human infirmities bows them down and occasions some involuntary distractions. On the other hand, says the same holy Doctor, he cannot be excused from sin nor expect a reward for his prayer who entertains distractions that are voluntary.

As a good will makes our thoughts worthy of spiritual fruit, says St. Bernard, an indolent will makes them unworthy of the Lord; and therefore, instead of a reward, they receive only punishment. The annals of Citeaux contain the following vision which St. Bernard had one day when at prayer with his religious brethren. At the side of each of the brethren, he saw an angel who stood and wrote. Some of the angels wrote with gold, others with silver, still others with ink, and some with water—while a number held the pen in their hand without writing at all. At the same time God enlightened the Saint to know what this meant: the gold denoted that the prayers of these particular brethren were said with the greatest fervor; the silver indicated that the devotion of others left something to be desired; the writing in ink meant that the words were carefully spoken, but that no devotion accompanied them; the water was intended to show that the words were carelessly pronounced, and little or no attention paid to what was said; finally, the angels who wrote nothing at all were standing beside the brethren who knowingly entertained voluntary distractions.

“The devout words which the lips pronounce awaken devotion in the heart,” says the Angelic Doctor. For this very reason the Lord has taught us to use vocal prayer in order that the heart within may desire what the lips externally express. In regard to the words of David: “I have cried to the Lord with my voice” (*Ps.* 141:2), St. Augustine writes: “Many call upon the Lord, but not with their voice; that is to say, they call on the Lord not with the voice of the soul, but with the voice of the body. Call with your thoughts, call with your heart, and then the Lord will certainly hear you.”

EJACULATIONS

The easiest means of practicing vocal prayer consists in uttering fervent ejaculations. These pious outpourings of the heart need not be restricted to any particular place or time. They are in order at all times and in all places, at work, at meals, at recreation, at home or away from home. They may take the form of acts of desire, conformity, love, oblation, or self-denial; they may be acts of petition, thanksgiving, humility, confidence and the like. The Saints of God placed greater value on these little prayers than on long devotions because the former are more calculated to keep us in the presence of God.

St. John Chrysostom says that he who frequently utters ejaculations closes the door against Satan and prevents his constant annoyance with wicked thoughts. It is by acts of love, conformity and self-oblation, together with the invocation of the holy names of Jesus and Mary, that we give the greatest pleasure to God. One who loves, thinks constantly of the object of his love. A soul that loves God will therefore always think of Him and seek occasions, by fervent sighs and ejaculations, to manifest her love. Be careful on all occasions, alone as well as in company, to say frequently to your heavenly Bridegroom: “O my God, I desire only Thee and nothing else”; or, “I give myself wholly to Thee; I desire what Thou desirest; do with me according to Thy good pleasure.” These few words alone are enough: “My God, I love Thee”; or “My Love, my All!” You may also, without uttering a word, raise your eyes to Heaven or cast a loving glance at the tabernacle or the crucifix. These silent acts are especially to be recommended because they require no effort, they can more frequently be made, and are often attended with greater fervor than other ejaculations. The best acts of love, of course, are those that well up from the depth of the heart at the impulse of the Holy Ghost.

The perfection of divine love consists in the union of our will with the Will of God. Therefore, we may not desire anything but that which God desires. If we do His holy will, no matter to what station in life the Lord may call us, we shall surely arrive at sanctity. It will be profitable, then, to select choice passages from Holy Scripture and to repeat them often in order to foster a union of our will with the Divine. For example, say often with the Apostle: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (*Acts* 9:6). In contradictions and afflictions of body and soul, say with our Blessed Redeemer: “My God and my Father, be it done to me as thou wilt.” (*Matt.* 11:26). “Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” The Lord recommended to St. Catherine of Genoa, every time she said the Our Father, to pay particular attention to these words: “Thy will be done,” and to beg for the grace to fulfill the Will of God as perfectly as the Saints in Heaven.

THE HOLY NAMES

Among all ejaculations and prayers, the invocation of the holy names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph should have the first place. All that we love and desire and hope to possess is summed up in these beautiful names. The holy name of Jesus fills us with consolation, for when we invoke Him who bears it we find comfort in all our troubles. The name of Jesus is called by the Holy Ghost “oil poured out.” (*Cant.* 1:2). And rightly so; for as oil serves as light, as food and as medicine, the holy name, according to St. Bernard, is a light; by this most sacred name we are happy children of the true light, i.e., faith in the true Church of God. The holy name is food for the nourishment of our souls, for it strengthens the faithful and affords them peace and consolation in the midst of the misery and persecutions of this world. Finally, the holy name is medicine for him who invokes it. “When the light of this name appears,” says St. Bernard, “the clouds are dispersed and the heavens remain serene. When the soul is tossed about by the storms of trouble and sorrow, she needs but to call on the name of Jesus, and the storm will subside and calm will be restored. Should you have the misfortune to fall into sin and grow diffident of pardon, invoke the sacred names, and hope of forgiveness will revive in your soul.”

St. Peter tells us that “there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved.” (*Acts* 4:12). Jesus Christ has not saved us only once; He is continually saving us by His merits, when in accordance with His promise, He frees us from the danger of sin as often as we invoke His holy name. “Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do.” (*John* 14:13). Therefore St. Paul exhorts us not to neglect this great means of salvation, assuring us that “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.” (*Rom.* 10:13).

With the holy name of Jesus we must unite the beautiful name of Mary. The name of Mary, like that of Jesus, is a name from Heaven above, and it is so powerful that all Hell trembles when it is pronounced. At the same time, it is a name of exceeding sweetness because it denotes that exalted Queen who is at once the Mother of God and our mother, a mother of mercy, a mother of beautiful love.

As breath is a sign of life, says St. Germanus, the frequent invocation of the name of Mary is a sign that the grace of God is within us or will very soon be there. The holy name of Mary has particular efficacy in overcoming temptations against holy purity. “Happy is he,” says St. Bonaventure, “who loves thy holy name, O Mary! Thy name is a glorious and wonderful name; they who invoke thy powerful name at the hour of death have nothing to fear from the assaults of Hell.”

Finally, it has always been the laudable practice of devout Christians to unite with the names of Our Lord and His holy Mother the beautiful name of St. Joseph. If the King of Heaven and earth conferred on him the honor of being the foster father of His Beloved Son and the protector of the holy and Immaculate Mother, surely it behooves us to honor him and invoke his powerful intercession. St. Teresa says that she never remembers to have sought his aid in vain. “Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul; Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist me in my last agony; Jesus, Mary and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with you.”

MENTAL PRAYER OR MEDITATION

Our Divine Redeemer had no need, as St. Ambrose says, to retire to a lonely place to pray; for as His blessed soul was constantly in the presence of His heavenly Father, in every place and in all circumstances He thought of Him and continually interceded for us. Nevertheless, as St. Matthew relates, “Having dismissed the multitude he went into a mountain alone to pray. And when it was evening he was there alone.” (*Matt.* 14:23). He did this to teach us the necessity of interior prayer or meditation.

The eternal truths are spiritual things; they cannot be seen with the bodily eyes, but only with the eyes of the soul, that is to say, by reflection and meditation. It is for want of reflection that, as the Holy Ghost says, “all the land is made desolate because there is none that considereth in the heart.” (*Jer.* 12:11). Hence the exhortation of Our Lord: “Let your loins be girt and lamps burning in your hands.” (*Luke* 12:35). These lamps, says St. Bonaventure, are devout meditations, for during interior prayer the Lord speaks to us and enlightens us. “Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my paths.” (*Ps.* 118:105).

St. Bernard compares mental prayer to a mirror, and the comparison is very apt; for if you happen to have a speck of dirt on the face and you come before a looking glass, you see the dirt at once and remove it. Had you not looked in the mirror, you would not have thought of the dirt nor washed it away. So it is with mental prayer: While at meditation we are standing, as it were, before a mirror of the soul. It is then we recognize our faults and the danger we are in, and accordingly we take measures to rid ourselves of the faults and to escape from the danger that threatens us. St. Teresa once wrote to the Bishop of Osma: “Although we appear to have no imperfections, we discover that we have very many when God opens the eyes of the soul, as He does in meditation.” “He,” says St. Bernard, “who does not meditate will scarcely ever perceive his faults, and as a result will have no horror of them.”

Without meditation or mental prayer we are lacking in strength to resist the assaults of the enemies of our soul and to practice the Christian virtues. Meditation affects the soul as fire does iron. If iron is cold, it is very hard and cannot be worked without great difficulty. But put it in the fire, and at once it softens and easily yields to the efforts of the blacksmith. In order to observe the commandments and counsels of God, we have need of a pliable, that is to say, a docile heart, a heart that will easily receive the impressions of heavenly inspirations and as readily respond. It was for such a heart that Solomon prayed: “Give to thy servant, O Lord, an understanding heart, to discern between good and evil. And the word was pleasing to the Lord that Solomon had asked such a thing.” (*3 Kgs.* 3:9–10).

In consequence of sin our heart is by nature a hard and obstinate heart, given to pleasures of sense and opposed to the law of the spirit. Therefore the Apostle complains: “I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members.” (*Rom.* 7:23). But under the influence of grace which we receive in meditation, the heart soon grows docile; the sight of God’s goodness and mercy and the wondrous proofs of His love serve to inflame our hearts, and we listen with joy to the voice of our Lord and Master. St. Bernard, when writing to Pope Eugene III, begs him never to omit meditation, though many and weighty affairs may claim his time and attention.

NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER

Without mental prayer we shall never practice the prayer of petition as we ought, and this prayer of petition is absolutely necessary for eternal salvation. “Pray without ceasing,” says the Apostle. (*1 Thess.* 5:17). We are all poor beggars, as David once said of himself: “I am a beggar and poor.” (*Ps.* 39:18). Now, the only hope of the poor is to ask alms from the rich. In our spiritual poverty our only recourse is to beg God, by prayer, for the graces of which we stand in need. St. John Chrysostom says: “Without prayer it is absolutely impossible to lead a virtuous life.” Whence the universal depravity of morals, asks the learned Bishop Abelly, if not from the neglect of prayer? As we have seen before, the absence of meditation makes us blind to our own condition and needs; hence we are led to neglect the prayer of petition. A great servant of God once said: “Meditation and sin cannot exist together”; and experience teaches that those who are zealous in the practice of meditation rarely, if ever, fall into God’s displeasure. A soul that loves meditation, says the Royal Psalmist, is like a tree that is planted by the running waters; it bringeth forth fruit in due season, and all its actions are meritorious before God. (*Ps.* 1:2–3).

THE METHOD OF ST. ALPHONSUS

For the exercise of mental prayer it is well to follow some approved method. The method of St. Alphonsus is a very commendable one because it is both simple and practical. He divides the meditation into three parts: the preparation, the consideration and the conclusion. With regard to the preparation he says: Endeavor to dispose both soul and body for this important exercise. Dismiss all distracting thoughts and say what St. Bernard said on entering a church: “Remain here, all you earthly and distracting thoughts. I may have leisure for you after meditation.” Recite briefly an act of faith in the presence of God, together with profound adoration of His infinite Majesty. Humbly ask pardon for your past offenses, and beg for light and grace to make your meditation well. Recommend yourself to the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, your Guardian Angel and your holy patrons. These acts must be very fervent but brief, so as to proceed at once with the consideration. For the meditation proper it is good to use a book, at least in the beginning, so as to hold the attention on the subject for consideration. Pause from time to time when you are particularly impressed in order that, like the bee, you may extract the honey from the flower, or like the dove, take a drink and then look up to Heaven before taking another.

The importance of mental prayer, however, consists not so much in the consideration as in the affections, petitions, and resolutions which must accompany it. The consideration may be likened to a needle, and the affections, petitions and resolutions are the thread of gold that follows it.

The affections will consist of short and fervent acts of humility, confidence and gratitude; frequently repeat aspirations of love and contrition, for these are the links of the golden chain that unites the soul to God. One act of perfect love is sufficient to obtain the pardon of all your sins. “Charity covereth a multitude of sins,” says St. Peter (*1 Ptr.* 4:8). St. Thomas teaches that every act of love merits a new degree of glory. Perhaps the most important part of the meditation is the petitions which you address to God. The Lord loves to be importuned; and, therefore, never weary asking Him for light and grace, for conformity to His holy Will and perseverance in good; above all things, beg Him earnestly to grant you His holy love. With love, says St. Francis de Sales, we receive all other graces.

Before the Venerable Father Segneri studied theology, he contented himself while at meditation with considerations and affections; but finally, says he himself, “God opened my eyes and from that time on I devoted myself to petitions, and if there is aught of good in me now I owe it to this beautiful custom.” Follow the example of this holy man and ask in the name of Jesus Christ for all the graces you need, for God has promised to hear and answer your prayers: “Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in my name he will give it you.” (*John* 16:23). At the end of meditation proper it is very useful to make a special resolution to avoid some particular fault, or to be more zealous in the practice of a particular virtue. This resolution must be repeated until the desired end is attained. Outside the time of meditation we must endeavor to profit by the opportunities afforded to carry out our resolutions.

The conclusion of the meditation consists in the following acts: First, thank God for the enlightenment you have received; secondly, express your determination to carry out the resolutions you have made; thirdly, ask the heavenly Father, for the love of Jesus and Mary, to grant you the grace to be faithful to your resolutions.

It is a beautiful custom, at the end of meditation, to recommend to God the souls in Purgatory and all poor sinners. “Nothing,” says St. John Chrysostom, “proves our love for Jesus Christ better than the zeal we have to pray for our brethren.” St. Francis de Sales counsels us to gather a little spiritual nosegay from the meditation and to enjoy its perfume through the day. He wishes to say that we should select one or two thoughts that have impressed us in the morning meditation, and recall them frequently during the day to reanimate our fervor and to preserve the fruit of the morning meditation.

If you are annoyed by distractions during mental prayer, recall to mind the words of St. Francis de Sales: “If you are occupied during the whole meditation in fighting distractions and temptations you will have made a good meditation. The Lord looks to the good intention we have and the effort we make, and these He rewards.” In another place he says: “In prayer we must not seek the delights of God, but the God of delights.” “Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you.” (*Matt.* 7:7). “Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.” (*1 Kgs*. 3:9).

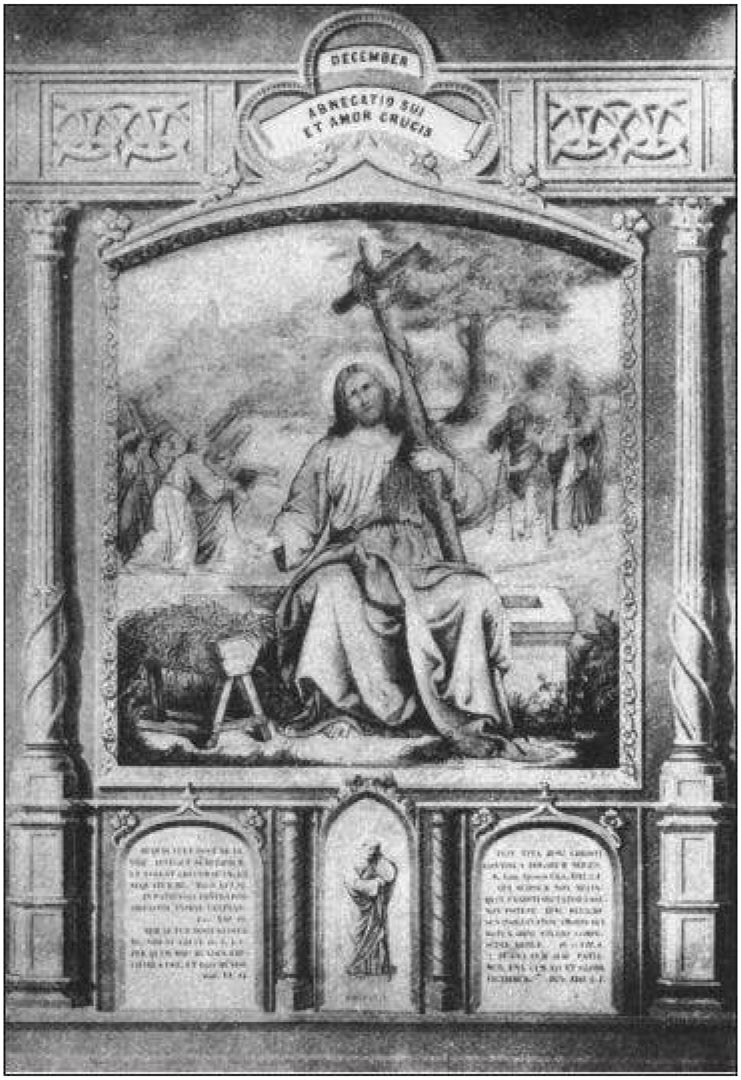
DECEMBER
ABNEGATIO SUI ET AMOR CRUCIS

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."—*Matt. 16:24*.

Chapter 12

SELF-DENIAL AND LOVE OF THE CROSS

> "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."—*Matt. 16:24*

The love which our Divine Master Jesus entertained for the cross was so great that He embraced it from the first moment of His Incarnation. The will of His heavenly Father had decreed that His life on earth should be the way of the cross; accordingly, He began His sorrowful journey to Calvary's Mount the very moment that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us." If we desire to be made conformable to the image of the Word Incarnate, we must needs love God's will and carry our cross with patience and resignation. The cross is the nuptial couch to which our Saviour invites us. "He that taketh not up his cross and followeth me is not worthy of me." (*Matt.* 10:38). Hand in hand with the love of the cross is the virtue of self-denial, for he who is attached to the comforts of life or to himself lacks courage to walk in the bloodstained footsteps of the suffering Saviour.

"Patience hath a perfect work," says the Apostle (*James* 1:4), for by patience in bearing the crosses of life we make a perfect sacrifice to God. With resignation to His holy will we embrace the cross which He sends us and esteem it more highly even than one of our own choosing.

Patience, says the Wise Man, is to be preferred to the courage of the hero: "The patient man is better than the valiant: and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh cities." (*Prov.* 16:32). Many a man will display great courage in undertaking and bringing to completion some pious work; but he may not have patience enough to bear with the little annoyances and contradictions he encounters. For such a one it were better to be steadfast in patient suffering than courageous in great undertakings. We are in this world to gain merit; therefore this earth is not a place of rest, but of work and suffering. Merits are not gained by repose and rest, but by labor and constant effort. All men must suffer, the just as well as the sinner. One is lacking in this, another is deprived of that. This man is noble but not wealthy; that man is rich but has no claim to nobility, while still another is both noble and rich, but he has lost his health. In a word we all have something to endure, be we high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, sinners or saints.

PEACE OF HEART

Accordingly, we can enjoy true peace of heart only when we carry our cross with patience and resignation. The Holy Ghost warns us not to act as irrational animals which become enraged when they cannot gratify their desires: “Do not become like the horse and the mule who have no understanding.” (*Ps.* 31:9). Of what use is it to be impatient in trouble and contradictions? We only increase our burden thereby. The two thieves who were crucified with our Blessed Redeemer were suffering similar torments; but the good thief was saved because he bore them with patience, while the bad thief was eternally lost because he suffered impatiently and rebelled. The same trial, says St. Augustine, leads the good to glory because they suffer with patience and resignation, but the wicked to eternal destruction from a want of patience and conformity to God’s will.

When we try to avoid a cross that the Lord has sent us, we often meet with another, and a much heavier one. “They that fear the hoary frost,” says Job, “the snow shall fall upon them.” (6:16). Only take this cross from me, you say; any other I am willing to bear. Ah yes, but that other cross may be heavier still and you have little or no merit for carrying it. Therefore embrace the cross that God sends you, no matter what it may be; it is lighter and more meritorious than any other, for you are doing God’s will and not your own.

St. Augustine says the whole life of a Christian must be one perpetual cross. This is especially true of those who are striving after perfection. St. Gregory Nazianzen says that “with great and generous souls riches consist in poverty, honor in contempt, and joy in the absence of all earthly pleasures.” When asked who it is that really strives after perfection, St. John Climacus replied: “He who constantly does violence to himself.” And when will the necessity of doing violence to oneself cease? Only when life is at an end, for St. Prosper says: “The struggle will be over only when we are certain of the victory, that is, when we have entered the Kingdom of Heaven.”

VALUE OF SUFFERING

If you are forced to acknowledge, dear Christian reader, that you have offended your God, and you wish at the same time to sanctify your immortal soul, you should rejoice when God sends you suffering. “Sin,” says St. John Chrysostom, “is an ulcer of the soul; if suffering does not come to remove the corrupted matter the soul will be lost.” When God gives you something to suffer, says St. Augustine, He acts as a physician, and the suffering He sends is not a punishment but a remedy. “Whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth, and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” (*Heb.* 12:6). “If everything goes well,” says St. Augustine, “acknowledge the Father who caresses you; if you have suffering to endure, acknowledge the Father who chastises you.” “Hasten, O Lord,” cries St. Bonaventure, “hasten and wound Thy servants with the wounds of love and salvation, that we may not succumb to the wounds of anger and eternal death.” “God is never more angry,” says St. Bernard, “than when He is not angry with the sinner and fails to punish him.”

But suffering is not only an excellent means of atoning for past sins, it is also an abundant source of merit. “When there is question of winning Heaven,” says St. Joseph Calasanctius, “all pains must be regarded as trifling and insignificant.” The Apostle had said long before: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us.” (*Rom.* 8:18). It would be little if we had to endure all the sufferings of this world for one moment of the joys of Heaven. How much more, therefore, ought we to bear patiently every cross that God sends us when we know that the brief suffering of this life will be followed by the eternal happiness of the next. “For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.” (*2 Cor.* 4:17). The greater our merits here, the greater our glory hereafter. Hence St. James says: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life which God hath promised to them that love him." (*James* 1:12).

Animated with this thought St. Agapitus, a youth of fifteen years, displayed most admirable heroism while suffering martyrdom. When the tyrant had burning coals placed on his head, the youthful martyr cried out: "It matters very little indeed that this head is burned with coals on earth, as long as it will be crowned with glory in Heaven." It was this same thought that prompted holy Job to say: "If we have received good things at the hand of the Lord, why should we not receive evil?" (*Job* 2:10). The good that I expect, says St. Francis de Sales, is so exceeding great that every pain becomes for me a pleasure: "In view of all I hope to gain, my labors here have naught of pain."

A PROOF OF LOVE

Suffering is the touchstone of love. There are many, says the Wise Man, who are friends in the time of prosperity—but with the advent of adversity they disappear. "For there is a friend for his own occasion, and he will not abide in the day of thy trouble." (*Ecclus.* 6:8). But the surest proof of genuine love is shown by the man who voluntarily suffers for his friend. Consequently, we offer a most agreeable sacrifice to God when we willingly embrace the cross that He sends. "Love is patient," says St. Paul, "it beareth all things." (*1 Cor.* 13:4, 7). It patiently carries the external as well as the internal cross: for example, the loss of health, of fortune, of honor, of relatives and friends; anguish, temptations, pains and spiritual aridity. By patience virtue is tried. On this account such stress is laid, in the lives of the Saints, on their patience in contradictions. The devil tempts us to try our patience. "Gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation." (*Ecclus.* 2:5). "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee." (*Tob.* 12:13). When the Lord gives one an occasion of suffering much, says St. John Chrysostom, He shows a greater love for such a one than if He gave him the power to raise the dead to life; for when we work miracles we are debtors to God, but when we suffer patiently, God becomes so to say a debtor to us.

How is it possible to look at a crucifix and see a God who died in an ocean of sufferings and contempt, without bearing patiently for love of Him all the sufferings that God may choose to send us? St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi once said: “Every pain, howsoever great, becomes sweet when we contemplate Jesus on the Cross.” When the learned Justus Lipsius was enduring great suffering, one of the bystanders encouraged him to be patient by recalling the example of some pagan philosophers. The sufferer raised his eyes to the crucifix and said: “Here is true patience.” He wished to say: the example of a God who suffered so much for love of us is sufficient incentive for us to suffer all pains for love of Him. “He who loves the Crucified,” says St. Bernard, “loves suffering and contempt.” When St. Eleazar was asked by his saintly spouse Delphina how he could bear so many insults from boorish men, without resentment, he replied: “You must not imagine that I am not sensitive to these insults; I feel them very keenly; but I turn to Jesus Crucified and continue to gaze upon Him until my mind is quiet, and a balm is laid upon my wounded feelings.”

Whether we will it or no, we must all bear the sufferings that God’s Providence has allotted to us. It is to our advantage, therefore, to suffer with merit, and that means to suffer with patience. Pray God earnestly for this precious gift, the grace to suffer the trials and tribulations of life with patience and conformity to His holy will. “To him who overcometh I will give a hidden manna.” (*Apoc.* 2:17). Patience is to be exercised above all during sickness. Character and disposition are revealed by this infallible touchstone and shown to be genuine gold or sham.

Many people are cheerful, patient and devout as long as they enjoy good health; but as soon as they are visited by sickness, they commit innumerable faults; they grow impatient toward everyone around them and find fault with the care or want of care that is shown them; they complain of every little pain they suffer and allow their imagination to increase their troubles. “If we only knew what a treasure we possess in hidden sufferings,” said St. Vincent de Paul, “we would accept them as gladly as the greatest benefits.” St. Vincent himself suffered without complaint the most violent pains, which often left him without rest both day and night; and yet he was cheerful, as though he had nothing whatever to endure. Oh, how edifying it is at the time of suffering to preserve a cheerful peace and resignation!

Whenever St. Francis de Sales was ill, he simply stated the matter to the physician and then obeyed him exactly, taking the medicines prescribed, however repugnant they might be. After this he remained perfectly quiet and never complained of what he had to suffer. “Learn to suffer for the love of God,” says St. Teresa, “and don’t be anxious for everyone to find it out.” By a special grace of God the saintly Father Louis de Ponte was permitted one Good Friday to suffer a special pain in every part of his body. This he told to one of his friends, but he had scarcely done so when he regretted it to such an extent that he made a vow never after to tell others what he had to suffer. I say it was “by a special grace” that he suffered, for the Saints accept sufferings and tribulations as manifestations of God’s favor.

A very devout woman lay grievously sick and was tortured with violent pains; they placed a crucifix in her hands and told her to pray to the Lord to free her from suffering. “How can you counsel me,” she said, “to come down from the cross of suffering while I hold my Crucified Saviour in my hands? I will gladly suffer for love of Him who endured greater torments for love of me.”

This is what Our Lord said one day to St. Teresa when she was sick and suffered great pain. He appeared to her covered with wounds and spoke to her as follows: “Look at these wounds, My daughter; your pains will never be as great as Mine.” This led the Saint ever afterward to say: “When I think of Our Lord, who was so innocent and yet suffered so much, I cannot see how I can complain of my ailments.” “Many,” says Salvian, “would never have reached sanctity had they enjoyed good health.” And it seems very true, for if you read the lives of the Saints you will be astonished at the sufferings so many of them had to endure. These sufferings were stepping-stones to great holiness and intimate union with God.

I complain, not because I am sick, you will say, but because I cannot go to church, and receive Holy Communion and pray; moreover I am a burden to others. But tell me, why do you wish to go to church and to receive Holy Communion? Is it not to please God? Very well, but now if it is more pleasing to God that you remain away from church and Holy Communion, and suffer instead on a bed of pain, what reason have you to be disturbed? Listen to what Venerable John of Avila wrote one day to a priest who was very ill: “My friend, do not think now of what you would do if you were well, but be content to remain sick as long as it pleases God. If you are seeking the will of God, what matters it whether you are sick or well?” St. Francis de Sales maintained that we can serve God better by suffering than by laboring.

You say you cannot pray? Why not? I will grant that you cannot meditate for any length of time, but what prevents you from turning your eyes to Jesus Crucified and offering Him the sufferings you must endure. The best prayer you can say is to resign yourself to the will of God in the midst of your sufferings, uniting your pains to the pains of Jesus Christ and offering them as a sacrifice to God. It was thus St. Vincent de Paul acted when he was mortally ill. He placed himself in the presence of God, and from time to time made an act of love, of confidence, of gratitude or of resignation, especially when his pains became very violent. St. Francis de Sales said: “Sufferings in themselves are very abhorrent to our inclinations; but when considered with reference to the will of God they cause us joy and pleasure.” And finally you say you are a burden to others. It must be evident to all that your helpless condition is not of your own choosing, but is simply in accordance with the will of God. Therefore the complaints you make cannot proceed from the love of God, but are the expressions of self-love; we would like to serve the Lord, but in our own way, and not as He desires.

Father Balthasar Alvarez was one day permitted to see the glory that God had prepared for a religious as the reward of her patient endurance of suffering, and he asserted that this holy person had gained more merit in eight months of suffering than other zealous religious had gained in several years. While St. Ludwina was suffering great pain she entertained the desire to die a martyr’s death. One day when she experienced a particular yearning for this grace, she saw a brilliant but unfinished crown and she was given to understand that this crown was intended for her. Desiring the crown to be perfectly finished, she prayed God to increase her sufferings. The Lord heard her prayer. Some brutal soldiers entered and, after insulting her with the vilest epithets, cruelly beat her. An angel at once appeared with the beautiful crown completed and said that her last sufferings added to the crown the jewels which had been wanting. When the angel had finished speaking, the virgin expired.

Another opportunity is afforded us for the practice of patience by the persecutions to which we are sometimes exposed. “I have done nothing to deserve these insults and this persecution,” you may say; “why should I have to endure them?” But do you remember what Our Lord said to St. Peter the Martyr when the Saint complained that he was imprisoned unjustly? “O Lord, what evil have I done that I should suffer this persecution?” Our Saviour made answer: “And what evil have I done that I should be nailed to this Cross?”

A SOURCE OF MERIT

In the writings of St. Teresa we find these remarkable words: “He who strives after perfection must be careful never to say: someone has done me a wrong. If you are willing to carry no other cross but that which you deserve, you have no claim to perfection.” When St. Philip Neri lived near the church of St. Jerome in Rome, he suffered continually from the insults and annoyances of the evil-minded men of the neighborhood, and this for a period of 30 years. When finally he was urged by his spiritual sons to leave his old abode and live in a new monastery recently founded, he refused to do so, and could be prevailed upon only by an express command of the Holy Father.

The Saints have all had to suffer persecution of some kind. St. Basil was accused of heresy before Pope Damasus. St. Cyril of Alexandria was condemned by a council of 40 bishops and deprived of this episcopal see. St. Athanasius was accused of witchcraft, and St. Chrysostom of immorality. When more than 100 years old, St. Romuald was charged with a heinous crime, and they said he deserved to be burnt alive. And so on, from the first to the last in the calendar of the Saints of God. Indeed it could not be otherwise, for as the Apostle says: “All they that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (*2 Tim.* 3:12).

If therefore, says St. Augustine, you do not care to suffer persecution, there is reason to fear that you have not begun to follow Jesus Christ. Who was holier than Our Lord and God? And yet He was persecuted to such an extent that He died on a cruel cross, the victim of calumny and injustice. How can we complain when we see our Master and Model before us! “If you do not believe my words, believe my works.” (*John* 10:38). “They have dug my hands and feet; they have numbered all my bones.” (*Ps.* 21:17–18).

SPIRITUAL ARIDITY

There is a great need of patience in bearing the cross of spiritual abandonment, for it is one of the hardest trials that a soul who loves God can endure. When a devout person is enjoying spiritual consolations, all manner of external trials are unable to disturb him. On the contrary, they only seem to increase the joy of his heart as they afford him an opportunity to offer his sufferings to the Lord and thus become more closely united to Him. But to experience no devotion, no zeal, no holy desires, but on the contrary only coldness and dryness at prayer and at Holy Communion is the most bitter pain that a soul that loves God can endure. St. Teresa says that such a soul gives the surest proof of her love when, without any apparent incentive, and even in spite of interior repugnance and agony of soul, she continues patiently on her way. “By aridity of spirit and temptations,” says the Saint, “the Lord proves those whom He loves.” When St. Angela of Foligno was once suffering from this spiritual dryness, she complained to the Lord that He had abandoned her. “No, My daughter,” replied the Lord, “I love you now more than before, and regard you as more closely united to Me than ever.”

It is a delusion, says St. Francis de Sales, to judge piety according to the measure of consolations that we experience in the service of God. True piety, he continues, consists in the determined will to do all that is pleasing to God. By means of spiritual aridity, God unites Himself intimately with the souls He loves in an especial manner. What hinders us from being truly united to God is attachment to our inordinate inclinations. When God, therefore, desires to lead a soul to His perfect love, He endeavors first to free her from all attachment to created things. To this end He deprives her little by little of earthly goods such as riches, honors, relatives, bodily health and so forth. Then follow contradictions and humiliations of every sort. These are so many means that the Lord makes use of to divest the soul of all attachments to creatures and to self.

In the beginning of the soul’s conversion, God often gives her a flood of consolations. In consequence of this, the soul is gradually weaned from attachment to creatures and gives herself to God; but not as yet in a perfect manner, for she acts more for the sake of the consolations of God than for the God of consolations, as St. Francis de Sales so beautifully says. It is a common fault of our fallen nature that in everything we do, we seek our own gratification. The love of God and Christian perfection do not consist in sweet feelings and sensible consolations, but in overcoming our self-love and in fulfilling the Will of God. In the lives of God’s greatest servants and saints we see the milk of consolations give place to the more substantial food of afflictions; and this it is that enables them to bear the burden of the cross on their journey to Calvary’s Mount. To a very holy person who suffered from spiritual aridity St. John of the Cross wrote as follows: “Never were you in a better condition than now, because you were never so humbled and so detached from the world, and never did you recognize your misery so well, as at this very moment. Never were you so indifferent about yourself and never did you seek yourself less.”

Oh, how dear to the heart of God are acts of confidence and resignation in the midst of the darkness of spiritual aridity. Let us, therefore, place our unbounded trust in God, who, as St. Teresa says, loves us more than we love ourselves.

THE HOUR OF DEATH

When the hour of death is at hand it is above all necessary to be resigned to the Will of God. Our life on earth is a continued storm in which we are in constant danger of perishing. St. Aloysius Gonzaga, who died in the bloom of youth, accepted death with joy, saying: “I am now, I hope, in the grace of God; I do not know what may happen to me later; therefore I gladly accept death at this moment, if it pleases God to call me out of this life.”

But then you will say: Aloysius was a saint, and I am a sinner. Listen to what the Venerable John of Avila says: “If our soul is only in a moderately good condition, we should desire death, in order to escape the danger of losing the grace of God.” But you may say: I have not yet gained any merit for my soul; I would like to live a little longer and do some good before I die. Who gives you the assurance that if your life is prolonged you will not be even worse than before, and perhaps be eternally lost? “Why do you desire to live,” says St. Bernard, “when the longer we live, the more we sin?” If we truly love God we must have a desire to see Him face to face in Heaven and love Him with an endless, unchangeable love. But death must open the gates to eternal life, and therefore St. Augustine, aglow with love for his God, cried out: “O Lord, permit me to die that I may come to see Thee face to face and enjoy Thee forever ‘where eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love him.’” (*1 Cor.* 2:9).

THE RELIGIOUS STATE

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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CONTENTS

INDEX

THE RELIGIOUS STATE

- CONTENTS
- The Religious State
  - *Chapter 1* WE OUGHT TO CONFORM TO THE DESIGNS OF GOD
  - *Chapter 2* THE VOCATION TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE
    - SECTION 1 MISERY BY NOT CORRESPONDING TO IT
    - SECTION 2 WE MUST OBEY THE VOICE OF GOD WITHOUT DELAY
  - *Chapter 3* PRESERVING A RELIGIOUS VOCATION
    - SECTION 1 SECRECY
    - SECTION 2 PRAYER
    - SECTION 3 RECOLLECTION
  - *Chapter 4* DISPOSITIONS REQUIRED FOR ENTERING RELIGION
    - SECTION 1 DETACHMENT FROM COMFORTS
    - SECTION 2 DETACHMENT FROM PARENTS
    - SECTION 3 DETACHMENT FROM SELF ESTEEM

SECTION 4
DETACHMENT FROM ONE’S OWN WILL

Chapter 5
TRIALS WHICH WE MUST EXPECT

FIRST REMEDY
TO HAVE RECOURSE TO GOD

SECOND REMEDY
TO HAVE RECOURSE TO THE SUPERIORS

CONCLUSION

Chapter 6
THOSE CALLED TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE

CONSIDERATION 1
THE SOUL IS SECURED BY ENTERING THE RELIGIOUS STATE

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION 2
THE HAPPINESS OF THE RELIGIOUS AT DEATH

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION 3
THE ACCOUNT OF ONE WHO DOES NOT FOLLOW HIS VOCATION

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION 4
THE DAMNED FOR HAVING LOST HIS VOCATION

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION 5
THE IMMENSE GLORY THAT RELIGIOUS ENJOY IN HEAVEN

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION 6
THE PEACE GOD GIVES GOOD RELIGIOUS TO ENJOY

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION 7
THE DAMAGE DONE TO RELIGIOUS BY TEPIDITY

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION 8
HOW DEAR TO GOD IS A SOUL THAT GIVES ITSELF ENTIRELY TO HIM

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION 9
ONE MUST HAVE A GREAT DESIRE FOR BECOMING A SAINT

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION 10
THE LOVE WE OWE TO JESUS CHRIST

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION 11
THE GREAT HAPPINESS WHICH RELIGIOUS ENJOY

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION 12
THE LIFE OF RELIGIOUS RESEMBLES THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION 13
THE ZEAL WHICH RELIGIOUS SHOULD HAVE FOR SOULS

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION 14
THE NECESSITY OF HAVING MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION 15
HOW MUCH RELIGIOUS SHOULD CONFIDE IN THE PATRONAGE OF MARY

PRAYER

Chapter 7
EXHORTATION TO RELIGIOUS

Chapter 8
ANSWER TO A YOUNG MAN

Chapter 9
ADVICE TO A YOUNG PERSON IN DOUBT

Chapter 10
Discourse TO PIOUS MAIDENS

SECTION 1
EXCELLENCE OF VIRGINITY

SECTION 2
MEANS TO PRESERVE VIRGINAL PURITY

CONCLUSION

Chapter 11
A Letter TO A YOUNG STUDENT

SECTION 1

Chapter 12
THE VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

SECTION 1
NECESSITY OF A DIVINE VOCATION TO TAKE HOLY ORDERS

SECTION 2
MARKS OF A DIVINE VOCATION TO THE SACERDOTAL STATE

MARK 1
PURITY OF INTENTION

MARK 2
SCIENCE AND TALENTS

MARK 3
POSITIVE GOODNESS OF CHARACTER

SECTION 3
DANGERS BY TAKING HOLY ORDERS WITHOUT A VOCATION

The Religious State

Chapter 1

WE OUGHT TO CONFORM TO THE DESIGNS OF GOD

It is evident that our eternal salvation depends principally upon the choice of our state of life. Father Granada calls this choice the chief wheel of our whole life. Hence, as when in a clock the chief wheel is deranged the whole clock is also deranged, so, in the order of our salvation, if we make a mistake as to the state to which we are called, our whole life, as St. Gregory says, will be an error.

If, then, in the choice of a state of life we wish to secure our eternal salvation, we must embrace that to which God calls us, in which alone God prepares for us the efficacious means necessary to our salvation. For, as St. Cyprian says: "The grace of the Holy Ghost is according to the order of God, and not according to our own will"; and therefore St. Paul writes: "Every one hath his proper gift from God" (1 Corinthians 7:7). That is, as Cornelius à Lapide explains it, God gives to every one his vocation, and chooses the state in which He wishes him to be saved. This is the order of predestination described by the same apostle: "Whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified, . . . and them he also glorified" (Romans 8:30).

We must remark that in the world this doctrine of vocation is not much studied by some persons. They think it to be all the same, whether they live in the state to which God calls them, or in that which they choose of their own inclination, and therefore so many live a bad life and damn themselves.

But it is certain that this is the principal point with regard to the acquisition of eternal life. He who disturbs this order and breaks this chain of salvation will not be saved. With all his labors and with all the good he may do, St. Augustine will tell him: "Thou runnest well, but out of the way;" that is, out of the way in which God has called you to walk for attaining to salvation. The Lord does not accept the sacrifices offered up to him from our own inclination: “But to Cain and his offerings he had no respect” (Genesis 4:5). He even threatens with great chastisements those who, when he calls them, turn their backs on him in order to follow the whims of their own caprice. “Woe to you, apostate children,” he says through Isaias, “that you would take counsel and not of me, and would begin a web and not by my spirit” (Isaias 30:1).

Chapter 2

THE VOCATION TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE

SECTION 1

MISERY BY NOT CORRESPONDING TO IT

The divine call to a more perfect life is undoubtedly a special grace and a very great one, which God does not give to all; hence He has much reason to be indignant against those who despise it. How greatly would not a prince think himself offended, if he should call one of his vassals to serve him near his person, and this vassal should refuse to obey the call! And should God not resent such conduct? Oh, He resents it but too much, and threatens such persons by saying, “Woe to him that gainsayeth his maker” (Isaias 45:9). The word woe in Scripture signifies eternal damnation. The chastisement of the disobedient will begin even in this life, in which he will always be unquiet; for says Job: “Who bath resisted him and hath had peace?” (Job 9:4.) He will, therefore, be deprived of those abundant and efficacious helps necessary to lead a good life. For which reason Habert, a divine, writes: “He will with great difficulty be able to work out his salvation.” He will with great difficulty save himself, for, being like a member out of its proper place, he will with great difficulty be able to live well.

“He will be,” adds the learned author, “in the body of the Church like a limb of the human body out of its place, which may be able to perform its functions, but only with difficulty and in an awkward manner.” Whence he concludes: “And though, absolutely speaking, he may be saved, he will with difficulty enter upon and advance in the road, and use the means of salvation.” The same thing is said by St. Bernard and St. Leo, St. Gregory, writing to the emperor Maurice, who by an edict had forbidden soldiers to become religious, says that this was an unjust law, which shut the gates of paradise to many, because many would save themselves in religion who would otherwise perish in the world.

Remarkable is the case related by Father Lancicius. There was in the Roman college a youth of great talents. Whilst he was making the spiritual exercises, he asked his confessor whether it was a sin not to correspond with the vocation to the religious life. The confessor answered that in itself it was no grievous sin, because this is a thing of counsel and not of precept, but that one would expose one's salvation to great danger, as it had happened to many who for this reason were finally damned. He did not obey the call. He went to study at Macerata, where he soon began to omit prayer and holy Communion, and finally gave himself up to a bad life. Soon after, coming one night from the house of a wicked woman, he was mortally wounded by a rival; certain priests ran to his assistance, but he expired before they arrived, and, moreover, in front of the college. By this circumstance God wished to show that this chastisement came upon him for having neglected his vocation.

Remarkable also is the vision had by a novice, who, as Father Pinamonti relates in his treatise of the victorious vocation, had resolved on leaving his Order. He saw Christ, on a throne, in wrath ordering his name to be blotted out of the book of life, by which vision he was so terrified that he persevered in his vocation.

How many other similar examples are there not to be found in books! And how many unhappy youths shall we not see damned on the day of judgment for not having followed their vocation! These are rebels to the divine light, as the Holy Ghost says: “They have been rebellious to the light, they have not known his ways” (Job 24:13); and they will be justly punished by losing the light; and because they would not walk in the way shown them by the Lord, they shall walk without light in that chosen by their own caprice, and perish. In Proverbs the Lord expresses himself with still greater force; each word should be well weighed: “Behold, I will utter my spirit to you” (Proverbs 1:23). Behold the vocation; but because they fail to follow it, God adds: “Because I called and you refused . . . you have despised all my counsel. . . . I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock, when that shall come to you, which you feared.” And this signifies that God will not hear the prayers of him who has neglected to obey his voice. St. Augustine says: “They who have despised the will of God which invited them, shall feel the will of God, when it becomes its own avenger.”

SECTION 2

WE MUST OBEY THE VOICE OF GOD WITHOUT DELAY

Whenever God calls any one to a more perfect state, he who does not wish to expose his eternal salvation to great danger must then obey, and obey promptly. Otherwise he will hear from Jesus Christ the reproach which he made to that young man who, when invited to follow him, said: “I will follow thee, Lord, but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house” (Luke 9:61). And Jesus replied to him that he was not fit for paradise: “No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

The lights that God gives are transient, not permanent gifts. Hence St. Thomas of Aquinas says that the vocation of God to a more perfect life ought to be followed as promptly as possible. The Angelic Doctor proposes in his Summa the question whether it be praiseworthy to enter religion without having asked the counsel of many and without long deliberation. He answers in the affirmative, saying that counsel and deliberation are necessary in doubtful things, but not in this matter, which is certainly good, because Jesus Christ has counseled it in the Gospel, since the religious state comprehends most of the counsels of Jesus Christ.

How singular a thing it is, when there is question of entering religion to lead a life more perfect and more free from the dangers of the world, for men of the world to say that it is necessary to deliberate a long time before putting such resolutions in execution, in order to ascertain whether the vocation comes from God or from the devil! But they do not talk thus when any one is to accept of a place in the magistracy, of a bishopric, etc., where there are so many dangers of losing the soul. Then they do not say that many proofs are required whether there be a true vocation from God.

The saints, however, do not talk thus, St. Thomas says that if the vocation to religion should even come from the devil, we should nevertheless follow it as a good counsel, though coming from an enemy. St. John Chrysostom, as quoted by the same the same St. Thomas, says, that God, when he gives such vocations, wills that we should not defer even a moment to follow them. Christ requires from us such an obedience that we should not delay an instant. And why this? Because as much as God is pleased to see in a soul promptitude in obeying him, so much he opens his hand and fills it with his blessings. On the contrary, tardiness in obeying him displeases him, and then he shuts his hand and withdraws his lights, so that in consequence a soul will follow its vocation with difficulty and abandon it again easily. Therefore St. John Chrysostom says that when the devil cannot bring any one to give up his resolution of consecrating himself to God, he at least seeks to make him defer the execution of it, and esteems it a great gain if he can obtain the delay of one day only, or even of an hour. Because after that day or that hour, other occasions presenting themselves, it will be less difficult for him to obtain greater delay, until the individual who has been thus called, finding himself more feeble and less assisted by grace, gives way altogether and loses his vocation. Therefore St. Jerome gives to those who are called to quit the world this advice: “Make haste, I beseech you, and rather cut than loosen the cable by which your bark is bound fast to the land.” The saint wishes to say that as a man who should find himself in a boat on the point of sinking would seek to cut the rope, rather than to loosen it, so he who finds himself in the midst of the world ought to seek to get out of it as promptly as possible, in order to free himself from the danger which is so great, in the world, of losing his soul.

Let us also hear what St. Francis de Sales writes in his works on religious vocation, because the whole of it will go to confirm what has already been said and what will hereafter be said: “To have a sign of a true vocation, it is not necessary that our constancy be sensible, it suffices if it be in the superior part of our soul. And therefore we must not judge a vocation not to be a true one if the individual thus called, before putting it in execution, does not feel any longer those sensible movements that he felt in the beginning, even should he feel a repugnance and coldness which sometimes cause him to waver, and make it appear to him that all is lost. It is enough that the will remains constant in not abandoning the divine call, and also that there remains some affection for this call. To know whether God will have him become a religious, one ought not to expect that God himself should speak or send to him an angel from heaven to signify his will. And as little necessary is it that ten or twelve Doctors should examine whether the vocation is to he followed or not. But it is necessary to correspond to the first movement of the inspiration, to cultivate it, and then not to grow weary if disgust or coldness should come on; for if one act thus. God will not fail to make all succeed to His glory. Nor ought we to care much from what quarter the first movement comes. The Lord has many means to call his servants. Sometimes he makes use of a sermon, at other times of the reading of good books. Some, as St. Antony and St. Francis, have been called by hearing the words of the Gospel; others by means of afflictions and troubles that came upon them in the world, and that suggested to them the motive for leaving it. These persons, although they come to God only because they are disgusted with the world or are out of favor with it, nevertheless, failing not to give themselves to him with their whole will become sometimes greater saints than those who entered religion with a more apparent vocation. Father Platus relates that a nobleman, riding one day on a fine horse and striving to make a great display in order to please some ladies whom he saw, was thrown from the horse into the mire, from which he rose besmeared and covered with mud. He was so full of confusion at this accident that at the same moment he resolved to become a religious, saying: “Treacherous world, thou hast mocked me; but I will mock thee. Thou hast played me a game; I will play thee another, for I will have no more peace with thee, and from this hour I resolve to forsake thee and to become a friar.” And in fact he became a religious and lived in religion a holy life.

Chapter 3

PRESERVING A RELIGIOUS VOCATION

He, then, who wishes to be faithful to the divine call ought not only to resolve to follow it, but to follow it promptly, if he does not wish to expose himself to the evident danger of losing his vocation; and in case he should by necessity be forced to wait, he ought to use all diligence to preserve it, as the most precious jewel he could have. The means to preserve vocation are three in number: secrecy, prayer, and recollection.

SECTION 1

SECRECY

First, generally speaking he must keep his vocation secret from everybody except his spiritual Father, because commonly the men of the world scruple not to say to young men who are called to the religious state that one may serve God everywhere, and therefore in the world also. And it is wonderful that such propositions come some times out of the mouth of priests, and even of religious; but of such religious only as have either become so without vocation, or to not know what vocation is. Yes, without doubt, he who is not called to the religious state may serve God in every place, but not he who is called to it and then from his own inclination wishes to remain in the world: such a one, as I have said above, can with difficulty serve God and lead a good life. It is especially necessary to keep the vocation secret from parents.

It was, indeed, the opinion of Luther, as Bellarmine relates, that children entering religion without the consent of their parents commit a sin. For, said he, children are bound to obey their parents in all things. But this opinion has generally been rejected by Councils and the holy Fathers. The tenth Council of Toledo expressly says: “It is lawful for children to become religious without the consent of their parents, provided they have attained the age of puberty.” These are the words: “It shall not be lawful for parents to put their children in a religious Order after they shall have attained their fourteenth year. After this age, it shall be lawful for children to take upon themselves the yoke of religious observance, whether it be with the consent of their parents, or only the wish of their own hearts.” The same is prescribed in the Council of Tribur, and is taught by St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine. St. Bernard, St. Thomas, and others, with St. John Chrysostom, who writes in general: “When parents stand in the way in spiritual things, they ought not even to be recognized.”

Some Doctors say that when a child called by God to the religious state could easily and securely obtain the consent of his parents, without any danger on their part of hindering him from following his vocation, it is becoming that he should seek to obtain their blessing. This doctrine could be held speculatively, but not so in practice, because in practice such a danger always exists. It will be well to discuss this point fully, in order to do away with certain pharisaical scruples which some entertain.

It is certain that in the choice of a state of life children are not bound to obey parents. Thus the Doctors with common accord teach with St. Thomas, who says: “Servants are not bound to obey their masters, nor children their parents, with regard to contracting matrimony, preserving virginity, and such like things.”

Nevertheless, with regard to the state of marriage, Father Pinamonte, in his treatise on religious vocation, is justly of the opinion of Sanchez, Koning, and others, who hold that a child is bound to take counsel of his parents, because in such matters they may have more experience than the young. But speaking then of religious vocation, the above mentioned Pinamonte wisely adds that a child is not bound at all to take counsel of his parents, because in this matter they have no experience, and through interest are commonly changed into enemies, as St. Thomas also remarks, when speaking of religious vocation. “Frequently,” he says, “our friends according to the flesh are opposed to our spiritual good.” For fathers often prefer that their children should be damned with themselves rather than be saved away. Hence St. Bernard exclaims: “O hard father, O cruel mother, whose consolation is the death of their son, who wish rather that we perish with them than reign without them!” God, says a grave author quoted by St.

Thomas, when he calls one to a perfect life, wishes him to forget his father, saying: “Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear, and forget thy people and thy father’s house.” (Psalms 44:11). “By this, then,” he adds. “the Lord certainly admonishes us that he who is called ought by no means to allow the counsel of parents to intervene.” If God will have a soul who is called by Him forget its father and its father’s house, without doubt he suggests by this that he who is called to the religious state ought not, before he follows the call, to interpose the counsel of the carnal friends of his household.”

St. Cyril, explaining what Jesus Christ said to the youth mentioned above, “No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62), comments on it, and says that he who asks for time to confer with his parents in reference to his vocation is exactly the one who is declared by Our Lord to be unfit for heaven. “In order to confer with his parents, he looks back who seeks for delay.” Hence St. Thomas absolutely advises those who are called to religion to abstain from deliberating on their vocation with their relatives: “From this deliberation the relatives of the flesh are before all to be excluded; for it is said, Treat thy cause with thy friend (Proverbs 25:9) but the relatives of the flesh are in this affair not our friends, but our enemies, according to the saying of Our Lord: A man’s enemies shall be they of his household” (Matthew 10:36).

If, then, for following one’s vocation it would be a great error to ask the counsel of parents, it would be a greater one still to ask their permission, and to wait for it; for such a demand cannot be made without an evident danger of losing the vocation, as often as there is a probable fear that parents would exert themselves to prevent it. And, in fact, the saints, when they were called to leave the world, left their homes without giving their parents so much as an intimation of it. Thus acted a St. Thomas Aquinas, a St. Francis Xavier, a St. Philip Neri, a St. Louis Bertrand. And we know that the Lord has even by miracles approved of such glorious flights.

St. Peter of Alcantara, when he went to the monastery to become a religious, and was fleeing from the house of his mother under whose obedience he had lived since the death of his father, found himself prevented by a wide river from advancing any farther. He recommended himself to God, and at the same instant saw himself transported to the other side. Likewise, when St Stanislaus Kostka fled from home, without the permission of his father, his brother set out after him in great haste in a carriage, but having almost overtaken him, the horses, in spite of all the violence used against them, would not advance a step farther, till turning towards the city, they began to run at full speed.

In like manner, the Blessed Oringa of Waldrano, in Tuscany, being promised in marriage to a young man, fled from the house of her parents in order to consecrate herself to God, but the river Arno opposing itself to her course, after a short prayer she saw it divide and form as it were two walls of crystal, to let her pass through with dry feet.

Therefore, my very beloved brother, if you are called by God to leave the world, be very careful not to make your resolution known to your parents, and, content to be thus blessed by God, seek to execute it as promptly as you can, and without their knowledge, if you would not expose yourself to a great danger of losing your vocation. For, generally speaking, relatives, as was said above, especially fathers and mothers, oppose the execution of such resolutions; and although they may be endowed with piety, interest and passion, nevertheless, render them so blind, that under various pretexts they scruple not to thwart with all their might the vocation of their children.

We read in the life of Father Paul Segneri the younger that his mother, though a matron much given to prayer, left, nevertheless, no means untried to prevent her son from entering the religious state to which he was called. We also read in the life of Mgr. Cavalieri, Bishop of Troja, that his father, although a man of great piety, used every means to prevent his son from entering the Congregation of Pious Workmen (which, notwithstanding, he afterwards did), and even went so far as to bring against him a lawsuit in the ecclesiastical court. And how many other fathers although they are men of piety and prayer, have not in such cases been seen to change, and to become possessed, as it were, of the devil! For hell, it seems, arms itself so much for no other thing than to prevent those who are called to the religious state from executing their resolution.

For this reason, be also very careful not to communicate your design to your friends, who will not scruple to dissuade you from it, or at least divulge the secret, so that the knowledge of it will easily come to the ears of your parents.

SECTION 2

PRAYER

In the second place, it is necessary to know that these vocations are only preserved by prayer: he who gives up prayer will certainly give up his vocation. It is necessary to pray, and to pray much, and therefore let him who feels himself called not omit to make every morning after rising mental prayer of an hour, or at least of half an hour, in his own room, if he can do so there without molestation, and if not, in the church, and likewise of half an hour in the evening.

Let him not neglect also to make every day without fail a visit to the Most Holy Sacrament, as also to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, in order to obtain the grace of perseverance in his vocation. Let him likewise not omit to receive holy Communion thrice, or at least twice, a week.

His meditations should almost always be on this point of the vocation, considering how great a favor from God he has received in being thus called by him; how much more easily he will secure his eternal salvation if he be faithful to God in following his vocation; and, on the contrary, to how great a danger of being damned he exposes himself if he be unfaithful. Let him then especially place before his eyes the hour of death, and consider the contentment he will then feel if he shall have obeyed God, and the pains and the remorse he would experience if he should die in the world. To this end, I shall add at the end of this little work some considerations on which he may make his mental prayer.

It is moreover necessary that all his prayers to Jesus and Mary, and especially those after Communion and in the visits, have for their object to obtain perseverance.

In all his prayers and Communions let him always renew the offering of himself to God, by saying: “Behold, O Lord, I am no more mine, I am Thine. Already have I given myself to Thee, and now I renew this my offering of my whole self. Accept of me and give me strength to be faithful to Thee, and to retire as quickly as possible into Thy holy house.”

SECTION 3

RECOLLECTION

In the third place, it is necessary that he be recollected; this will not be possible for him unless he withdraws from worldly conversations and amusements. What, in short, as long as, we are in the world, is sufficient to cause the loss of vocation? A mere nothing. One day of amusement, a word from a friend, a passion that we do not mortify, a little attachment, a thought of fear, or a resentment we do not overcome, suffices to bring to naught all our resolutions of retiring from the world, or of giving ourselves entirely to God. Wherefore we ought to keep perfectly recollected, detaching ourselves from everything of this world. We should during this time think of nothing but prayer and frequenting the sacraments, and to be nowhere but at home, and in the church. Let him who will not do so, but distracts himself by pastimes, be persuaded that he will without doubt lose his vocation. He will remain with the remorse of not having followed it, but he certainly will not follow it. Oh, how many by neglecting these precautions have lost, first, their vocation, and afterwards their souls!

Chapter 4

DISPOSITIONS REQUIRED FOR ENTERING RELIGION

He who feels himself to be called by God to an Order of exact observance (I say of exact observance, for it would be better for him to remain in the world than to enter an Order which is relaxed), should know that the end of every Order of exact observance is to follow as exactly as possible the footsteps and examples of the most holy life of Jesus Christ, who led a life entirely detached and mortified, full of suffering and contempt. He, then, who resolves to enter such an Order must at the same time resolve to enter it for the sake of suffering and denying himself in all things, as Jesus Christ himself has declared to those who wish perfectly to follow him: “If any man will come after me. Let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24). He, then, who wishes to enter such an Order must firmly establish within himself this resolution to suffer, and to suffer much, so that afterwards he may not give way to temptations, when, having entered, he shall feel depressed under the hardships and privations of the poor and mortified life which is there led.

Many, on entering Communities of exact observance, take not the proper means of finding peace therein, and of becoming saints, because they place before their eyes only the advantages of the Community life, such as the solitude, the quiet, the freedom from the troubles caused by relatives, from strife and other disagreeable matters, and from the cares consequent on being obliged to think of one’s lodgings, food, and clothing.

There is no doubt that every religious is only too much indebted to his Order, which delivers him from so many troubles, and thus procures for him so great a facility to serve God perfectly in peace, continually furnishing him with so many means for the welfare of his soul, so many good examples from his companions, so much good advice from his Superiors, who watch for his benefit, so many exercises conducive to eternal salvation.

All this is true; but with all this he must also, in order not to be deprived of so blessed a lot, resolve to embrace all the sufferings that he may, on the other hand, meet with in the Order; for if he does not embrace them with love, he will never obtain that full peace which God gives to those who, overcome themselves: “To him that overcomes I will give the hidden manna” (Apocalypse 2:17). For the peace which God gives his faithful servants to taste is hidden, nor is it known by the men of the world, who, seeing their mortified life, know not how to envy them, but pity them and call them the unhappy ones of this earth. But “they see the cross, the unction they do not see,” says St. Bernard. They see their mortification, but they do not see the contentment God gives them to enjoy.

It is true that in the spiritual life one has to suffer, but, says St. Teresa, when one resolves to suffer, the pain is gone. Nay, the pains themselves turn into joy. “My daughter,” so the Lord said one day to St. Bridget, “the treasure of my graces seems to be surrounded with thorns, but for him who overcomes the first stings, all changes itself into sweetness.” And then those delights which God gives to his beloved souls to enjoy in their prayers, in their Communions, in their solitude; those lights, those holy ardors and embraces, that quiet of conscience, that blessed hope of eternal life, who can ever understand them if he does not experience them? “One drop of the consolations of God,” said St. Teresa, “is worth more than all the consolations and the pleasures of the world.” Our most gracious God knows well how to give to him who suffers something for His sake, even in this valley of tears, the experience of the foretaste of the glory of the blessed; for in this is properly verified that which David says: “Thou who framest labor in commandment” (Psalm 63:20). In the spiritual life, God, announcing pains, tediousness, death, seems to frame labor, but, in fact, afterwards it is not so; for the spiritual life brings to them who entirely give themselves to God that peace which, as St. Paul says, “surpasseth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). It surpasses all the pleasures of the world and of worldlings. Hence we see a religious more content in a poor cell than all the monarchs in their royal palaces. “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is sweet” (Psalms 33:9).

But, on the other hand, he must be persuaded that he who does not resolve to suffer and to overcome himself in the things contrary to his inclinations will never be able to enjoy this true peace, though he should have already entered religion. “To him that overcometh I will give the hidden manna” (Apocalypse 2:17). It is, then, necessary that he who wishes to be admitted into an Order of exact observance should enter with a mind determined to overcome himself in everything, by expelling from his heart all inclinations and desires that are not from God, nor for God, so that he must detach himself from all things, and especially from the four following: 1. From his comforts; 2. From his parents; 3. From his self esteem; 4. From his own will.

SECTION 1

DETACHMENT FROM COMFORTS

In religion, after the year of novitiate, one makes, besides the vows of chastity and obedience, also the vow of poverty, in consequence of which one can never possess anything as one’s individual property, not even a pin, no rents, no money, nor other things. The Order will provide him with all that he needs.

But the vow of poverty does not suffice to make one a true follower of Jesus Christ, if one does not afterwards embrace with joy of spirit all the inconveniences of poverty. “Not poverty, but the love of poverty is a virtue,” says St. Bernard; and he means to say that for one to become a saint, it is not enough to be poor only, if one does not love also the inconveniences of poverty. “Oh, how many would wish to be poor and similar to Jesus Christ!” says Thomas a Kempis; “they wish to be poor, but without any want,” but so that they be in want of nothing. In a word, they would wish the honor and the reward of poverty, but not the inconveniences of poverty. It is easy to understand that in religion no one will seek for things that are superfluous, clothes of silk, costly food, furniture of value, and the like; but he may desire to have all things that are necessary, and these he may be unable to procure. For then it is that he gives proof that he truly loves poverty, when things that are needful, such as his necessary clothing, bedcovering, or food, happen to be wanting and yet he remains content and is not troubled. And what kind of poverty would that be to suffer, if he were never in want of anything necessary? Father Balthasar Alvarez says that in order truly to love poverty, we must also love the effects of poverty; that is, as he enumerates them, cold, hunger, thirst, and contempt.

In religion, every one should not only be content with that which is given to him, without ever asking for anything of which, through the neglect of the officials, he should be in want, this would be a great defect. but he should also prepare himself sometimes to bear the want even of those simple things that the Rule allows. For it may happen that sometimes he is in want of clothes, coverings, linen, or such like things, and then he has to be satisfied with the little that has been given him, without complaining or being disquieted at seeing himself in want even of what is necessary. He who has not this spirit, let him not think of entering religion, because this is a sign that he is not called thereto, or that he has not the will to embrace the spirit of the Institute. He who goes to serve God in his house should consider that he is going not to be well treated for God, but to suffer for God.

SECTION 2

DETACHMENT FROM PARENTS

He who wishes to enter religion must detach himself from his parents and forget them altogether. For, in religious houses of exact observance, detachment from parents is put in practice in the highest degree, in order perfectly to follow the doctrine of Jesus Christ, who said: “I came not to send peace, but the sword; I came to set a man at variance with his father. and the daughter against her mother” (Matthew 10:34), and then added the reason: “A man’s enemies shall be they of his own household.” This is especially the case, as has been remarked above, in this point of religious vocation: when there is question of any one leaving the world, there are no worse enemies than parents who, either through interest or passion, prefer to become enemies of God by turning their children away from their vocation rather than to give their consent to it. Oh, how many parents shall we see in the valley of Josaphat damned for having made their children or nephews lose their vocation: and how many youths shall we see damned who, in order to please their parents and by not detaching themselves from them, have lost their vocation and afterwards their souls! Hence Jesus declares to us: “If any man hate not his father, etc., he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26). Let him, then, who wishes to enter a religious Order of perfect observance, and to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ, resolve to forget his parents altogether.

When any one has already entered religion, let him remember that he must practice then the same detachment from parents. Let him know that he cannot go to visit his parents in their own house, except in the case of some dangerous illness of his father or mother, or of some other urgent necessity, though always with the permission of the Superior. Otherwise, to go to the house of one’s parents without the most express permission, would be considered in religion as a most notable and scandalous fault. In religion it is also considered as a great defect even to ask permission or to show a desire of seeing parents or of speaking with them.

St. Charles Borromeo said that when he visited the house of his parents he always, after his return, found himself less fervent in spirit. And thus let him who goes to the house of his parents by his own will and not through a positive obedience to his Superiors, be persuaded that he will leave it either under temptation or will be less fervent.

St. Vincent of Paul could only be induced once to visit his country and his parents, and this out of pure necessity; and he said that the love of home and country was a great impediment to his spiritual progress. He said also that many on account of having visited their country, had become so tender towards their relatives that they were like flies which, being once entangled in a cobweb, cannot extricate themselves from it. He added: “For that one time that I went, although it was for a short time only, and though I took care to prevent in my relatives every hope of help from me, yet I felt at leaving them such a pain that I ceased not to weep all along the road, and was for three months harassed by the thought of coming to their aid. At last, God in his mercy took that temptation from me.”

Let him know, moreover, that no one may write to his parents without permission, and without showing the letter to the Superior. Otherwise, he would be guilty of a most grievous fault which is not to be tolerated in religion, and should be punished with severity; since from this might come a thousand disorders tending to destroy the religious spirit. Let especially the new comer know that during the novitiate this is observed with the greatest rigor; for novices during their year of novitiate do not easily obtain permission to talk to their parents, or to write to them.

Finally, let him know that, in case a subject should become sick, it would be a notable defect to ask or to show an inclination to go to his own house for his restoration to health, under the plea of being better taken care of, or of enjoying the benefit of his native air. The air of his own country becomes almost always, or even always, hurtful and pestilential to the spirit of the subject. And if he should ever say that he wishes to be cured at home in order not to subject the Order to expenses for remedies, let him know that the Order has charity enough to take sufficient care of the sick. As to the change of air, the Superiors will think of that; and if the air of one house is not beneficial to him, they will send him to another. And as for remedies, they will even sell the books, if need be, to provide for the sick. And so let him be sure that divine Providence will not fail him. And if the Lord should decree against his recovery, he should conform himself to the will of God, without even mentioning the word "home." The greatest grace that he who enters an Order can desire is to die, when God wills it, in the house of God, assisted by the brethren of his Order, and not in a secular house in the midst of his relatives.

SECTION 3

DETACHMENT FROM SELF ESTEEM

He must also be altogether detached from all self esteem. Many leave their country, their comforts and parents, but carry with them a certain esteem for themselves; but this is the most hurtful attachment of all. The greatest sacrifice that we can make to God is to give to him not only goods, pleasures, and home, but ourselves also by leaving ourselves. This is that denying of self which Jesus Christ recommends above all to his followers. And for this self denial it is necessary that every one should first place under foot all self esteem, by desiring and embracing every imaginable contempt which he may meet with in religion, as, for instance, to see others whom perhaps he thinks less deserving preferred to himself, or to be considered unfit to be employed, or only employed in lower and more laborious occupations. He should know that in the house of God those charges are the highest and the most honorable which are imposed by obedience. God forbid that any one should seek for or aspire to any office or charge of preeminence! This would be a strange thing in religion, and he would be noted as proud and ambitious, and as such be put in penance, and especially mortified in this point. Better would it be, perhaps, that a religious Order should be destroyed than that there should enter into it that accursed pest of ambition which, when it enters, disfigures the most exemplary Communities and the most beautiful works of God.

But he should feel even consoled in spirit when he sees himself mocked and despised by his companions. I say consoled in spirit, for as to the flesh this will be impossible; nor need a subject be uneasy when he sees that he resents it: it is enough that the spirit embraces it, and that he rejoices at it in the superior part of the soul.

Thus also seeing himself continually reprimanded and mortified by all, not only by Superiors, but also by equals and inferiors, he should heartily and with a tranquil mind thank those who thus reprimand him and have the charity to admonish him, answering that he will be more attentive not to fall into that fault again. One of the greatest desires of the saints in this world was to be contemned for the love of Jesus Christ. This it is that St. John of the Cross asked for, when Jesus Christ appeared to him with a cross on his shoulder and said, “John, ask from me what thou wishest,” and St. John answered, “O Lord, to suffer and to be despised for Thee.” The Doctors teach, with St. Francis de Sales, that the highest degree of humility we can have is to be pleased with abjections and humiliations. And in this consists also one of the greatest merits that we can have with God. Some contempt or affront suffered in peace for the love of God is of greater value in his sight than a thousand disciplines and a thousand fasts.

It is necessary to know that to suffer contempt either from Superiors or from companions is a thing unavoidable even in the most holy Communities. Read the lives of the saints, and you will see how many mortifications were encountered by St. Francis Regis, St. Francis of Jerome, Father Torres, and others. The Lord sometimes permits that, even between saints there should exist, though without their fault, certain natural antipathies, or at least a certain diversity of character between subjects of the greatest piety, which will cause them to suffer many contradictions. At other times false reports will be spread and believed; God himself will permit this, in order that the subjects may have occasion to exercise themselves in patience and humility.

In a word, he will gain little in religion and lose much who cannot quietly put up with contempt and contradiction; and, therefore, he who enters religion to give himself entirely to God should be ashamed not to know how to bear contempt when he appears before Jesus Christ, who was “filled with opprobriums” for love of us. Let every one be attentive to this, and resolve to be pleased in religion with all abjections, and to prepare himself to suffer many of them, for without the least doubt he will have many to bear. Otherwise, the disquiet caused by contradictions and contempt badly endured might trouble him so much as to make him lose his vocation, and drive him out of religion. Oh, how many have lost their vocation on account of such impatience in humiliations! But of what service to the Order or to God can he be who does not know how to bear contempt for His sake! And how can any one ever be said to be dead according to that promise which he made to Jesus Christ, on entering religion, to die to himself, if he remain alive to resentment and disquiet when he sees himself humbled? Out of the Order with such subjects, so attached to their own esteem out with them! It is well for them to go as soon as possible, that they may not also infect the rest with their pride. In religion every one should be dead, and especially to his own self esteem; otherwise it is better for them not to enter, or to depart again if they have already entered.

SECTION 4

DETACHMENT FROM ONE’S OWN WILL

He who enters into religion must altogether renounce his own will, consecrating it entirely to holy obedience. Of all things, this is the most necessary. What does it avail to leave comforts, parents, and honors, if still one carries into religion one’s own will? In this principally consists the denial of ourselves, the spiritual death, and the entire surrender of ourselves to Jesus Christ. The gift of the heart, that is, of the will, is what pleases Him most, and what He wishes from the children of religion. Otherwise, if we do not entirely detach ourselves from our own will and renounce it in all, all mortifications, all meditations and prayers, and all other sacrifices will be of little avail.

It is, then, evident that this is the greatest merit that we can have before God, and this is the sure and only way of pleasing God in all things, so that then we can each one of us say what Jesus our Saviour said. “I do always the things that please him” (John 8:29). Certainly he who in religion lives without self will may say and hope that in all that he does he pleases God, whether he studies or prays or hears confession, whether he goes to the refectory or to recreation or to rest; for in religion not a step is made, not a breath drawn, but in obedience to the Rule, or to Superiors.

The world does not know, and even certain persons given to spirituality have little idea of, the great value of a Community life under obedience. It is true that outside of religious Communities there are to be found many persons who do much, and, may be, more than those that live under obedience; they preach, do penance, pray, and fast: but in all this they consult more or less their own will. God grant that at the day of judgment they may not have to lament as those mentioned in Scripture: “Why have we fasted, and Thou hast not regarded: why have we humbled our souls, and Thou hast not taken notice? Behold, in the day of your fast your own will is found!” (Isaias 58:3) On which passage St. Bernard remarks: “Self will is a great evil, for it is the cause that what is good in itself may be for you no good at all.”

This is to be understood, when in all these exercises one seeks not God, but one’s self. On the contrary, he who does all by obedience is sure that in all he pleases God. The Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus said that she prized so much her vocation to religion principally for two reasons: the first was that in the monastery she enjoyed always the presence and company of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament; and the other was that there by obedience she entirely belonged to God, sacrificing to Him her own will.

It is related by Father Rodriguez that after the death of Dositheus, the disciple of St. Dorotheus, the Lord revealed that in those five years he had lived under obedience, though by reason of his infirmities he could not practice the austerities of the other monks, yet by the virtue of obedience he had merited the reward of St. Paul the Hermit, and of St. Antony, Abbot.

He, then, who wishes to enter religion must resolve to renounce altogether his own will, and to will only what holy obedience wills. God preserve any religious from ever letting fall from his mouth the words I will or I will not! But in all things, even when asked by Superiors, what he desires, he should only answer, I wish that which holy obedience wills. And, provided there is no evident sin, he should in every command imposed on him obey blindly and without examination; because the duty of examining and deciding the doubts belongs not to him, but to his Superiors. Otherwise, if in obeying he does not submit his own judgment to that of the Superior, his obedience will be imperfect. St. Ignatius of Loyola said that prudence in things of obedience is not required in subjects, but in Superiors; and if there is prudence in obeying, it is to obey without prudence. St. Bernard says, “Perfect obedience is indiscreet”; and in another place he said, “For a prudent novice to remain in the congregation is an impossible thing;” and adding the reason for it, he said: “To judge belongs to the Superior, and to obey to the subject.”

But to make progress in this virtue of obedience, on which all depends, he must always keep his mind ready to do all that to which he feels the greatest repugnance, and on the contrary he must be prepared to bear it quietly when he sees that all that he seeks or desires is refused to him. It will happen that when he wishes to be in solitude, to apply himself to prayer or study, he will be the most employed in exterior occupations. For, though it is true that in religion one leads as much as possible a solitary life when at home, and that for this end there are many hours of silence, the retreat each year of ten days in perfect silence, and of one day each month, besides the fifteen days before the receiving of the habit, and one of fifteen before the profession, when the vows are made, nevertheless, if it is an Order of priests called to work and to be employed for the salvation of souls, the subject, if he is continually employed in this by obedience, should be content with the prayers and exercises of the Community. He must be prepared sometimes to go even without these, when obedience will have him do so, without either excusing himself or being disquieted, being well persuaded of that of which St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was so confident when she said that: “All the things which are done through obedience are but so many prayers.”

Chapter 5

TRIALS WHICH WE MUST EXPECT

When, then, any one has thus entered religion, however truly he may be called, and though he may have conquered all his passions and his earthly affections, let him not imagine that he will be exempt from other temptations and trials, which God himself will send him, such as tediousness, darkness, various fears, in order to establish him more firmly in his vocation. We must remember that even the saints, who have loved their vocation the most, have sometimes suffered great darkness with regard to it, and that it seemed to them as if they were deceived and would not be able to save themselves in that state. So it happened with St. Teresa. St. John of the Cross, St. Frances de Chantal. But by recommending themselves to God, that darkness was dissipated, and they recovered their peace of mind. Thus the Lord tries his most beloved children, as it was said to Tobias: “Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptations should prove thee” (Tobias 12:13). And in the book of Deuteronomy: “The Lord your God trieth you, that it may appear whether you love him or not” (Deuteronomy 13:3). Let each one therefore prepare himself to suffer in religion this obscurity. It will sometimes appear to him that he cannot bear the observances of the Order: that he will have no more peace of mind, or will not even be able to save himself. But most of all, every one must be on his guard when the temptation presents specious scruples or pretexts of greater spiritual good, in order to make him abandon his vocation. The principal remedies in such temptations are two in number.

FIRST REMEDY

TO HAVE RECOURSE TO GOD

The first is to have recourse to prayer: “Go ye to him and be enlightened” (Psalms 33:6). For as it will not be possible for temptation to overcome him who has recourse to prayer, so he who does not recommend himself to God will surely be overcome by it. And let it be remarked, that sometimes it will not suffice to have recourse to God once, or for a few days, to become victorious. Perhaps the Lord will permit the temptation to continue, even after we have prayed for several weeks, months, and even years; but let us be assured that he who ceases not to recommend himself to God will certainly be enlightened and victorious, and thereafter he will have more peace and be more firm in his vocation.

Until we have gone through that storm, which for the most part comes over all, let none of us think himself secure. Let it be remarked, however, that in this time of temptation we should not expect to have fervor, and a clearness of reason sufficient to tranquillize ourselves; for in the midst of this darkness we see nothing but confusion. We have nothing then to do but to say to the Lord: O Lord, help me! O Lord, help me! And also to have frequently recourse to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is the Mother of perseverance, confiding in that divine promise: “Ask, and you shall receive” (John 16:24). And it is certain that he who with the help of divine grace is victorious in such a combat finds afterwards a double calm and peace in his vocation.

SECOND REMEDY

TO HAVE RECOURSE TO THE SUPERIORS

The second remedy, and a principal and necessary one in such temptations, is to communicate to the Superiors, or to the spiritual Father of the Community, the temptation that afflicts you, and this at once, before the temptation becomes strong. St. Philip Neri said that when a temptation is thus manifested it is half vanquished. On the contrary, there is in such a case no greater evil than to conceal the temptation from Superiors; for then, on the one hand, God withdraws his light because of the little fidelity shown by the subject in not disclosing it, and on the other, whilst the mine is not sprung, the temptation gains strength. Hence it may be held for certain, that he will surely lose his vocation who, when he is tempted against it, does not disclose his temptations.

Let it be understood that in religion the most dangerous temptations that hell can bring against a subject are those against vocation, in which, if it should succeed and conquer, by that one stroke it will have gained many victories; for when a subject has lost his vocation and left religion, what good will he further be able to do in the service of God? Though the enemy may make him believe that out of religion he will have more peace and be able to do more good, nevertheless let him hold for certain, that as soon as he is out of it he will feel such a remorse in his heart that he will never more have peace. And God grant that such a remorse may not torment him afterwards through all eternity in hell, in which, as has already been said, he who through his own fault loses his vocation falls so very easily. He will be so lukewarm and discouraged in doing good, that he will not even have the courage to raise his eyes to heaven. It will be an easy thing for him to give up prayer altogether, because as often as he begins it he will feel a hell of remorse, hearing his conscience reproach him, and saying: What hast thou don’t thou hast abandoned God; thou hast lost thy vocation, and for what? To follow thine own caprice, to please thy parents. Let him be certain that he will have to hear this reproach through his whole life, and still more shall he hear it made to him in the hour of his death, when, in sight of eternity, instead of dying in the house of God and in the midst of good brethren in religion, he will have to die outside of the Community, perhaps in his own house, in the midst of his relatives, to please whom he has displeased God. Let religious always beseech God to let them die rather than to permit that greatest of disgraces, the greatness of which they will better understand at the hour of death and to their greater torment, because then there will be no more any remedy for their error. For him, then, who is tempted against his vocation this is the best meditation that he can make at the time of the temptation, that is, namely, to reflect what torment the remorse of having lost his vocation, and of having to die out of religion, through his own caprice, through his own fault, will cause him at the hour of death.

CONCLUSION

Finally, let him who wishes to enter religion not forget to resolve to become a saint, and to suffer every exterior and interior pain, in order to be faithful to God, and not to lose his vocation. And if he be not resolved to do this, I exhort him not to deceive the Superiors and himself, and not to enter at all, for this is a sign that he is not called, or, which is a still greater evil, that he wishes not to correspond, as he should, with the grace of his vocation. Hence, with so bad a disposition it is better to remain without, in order to acquire a better disposition, and to resolve to give himself entirely to God, and to suffer all for God. Otherwise he will do an injury both to himself and to the Order; for he will easily go back to the world, and then, being disgraced before the world, as well as before God, he will be guilty of a still further infidelity to his vocation, and will lose the confidence in the power of taking another step in the way of God. God only knows into what other misfortunes and sins he may afterwards fall.

On the other hand, a beautiful sight it is to see in religion souls wholly given to God, who live in the world as if out of the world, without any other thought than that of pleasing God. In religion each one has to live only for eternal life. What happiness for us, if we spend these few days of our life for God! And to this he is most especially obliged who has perhaps already spent much of his life in the service of the world. Let us set eternity before our eyes, and then we shall suffer all with peace and joyfulness.

Let us thank God, who gives us so much light and so many means to serve Him perfectly, since He has chosen us, from among so many, to serve Him in religion, having bestowed on us the gift of His holy love. Let us make haste to please Him in the practice of virtue, reflecting, as St. Teresa said to her daughters, that we have already by His grace done the principal thing necessary to become saints, by turning our backs on the world and all its goods; the least yet remains to be done, in order that we may be saints. I hold it for certain, that for those who die in religion, Jesus Christ has prepared a prominent place in paradise. On this earth we shall be poor, despised, and treated as fools, as imprudent men, but in the other life our lot will be changed.

Let us always recommend ourselves to our Redeemer hidden in the Sacrament, and to Most Holy Mary, because in religion all subjects must profess a most special love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and for the Immaculate Virgin Mary, and let us have great confidence. Jesus Christ has chosen us to be princes of his court, as we may confidently conclude from the protection that He extends to all religious Orders, and to each member of them. “The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?”

(Psalms 26:1) O Lord! Finish Thy work, and for Thy glory grant us to be all Thine, so that all the members of Thy Orders may until the day of judgment be pleasing to Thee, and gain over to Thee an immense number of souls. Amen. Amen.

Chapter 6

THOSE CALLED TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE

CONSIDERATION 1

THE SOUL IS SECURED BY ENTERING THE RELIGIOUS STATE

To know how important is the eternal salvation of our soul, it suffices to have faith, and to consider that we have but one soul, and when that is lost, all is lost. “What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26) This great maxim of the Gospel has induced many youths either to shut themselves up in cloisters, or to live in deserts, or by martyrdom to give up their lives for Jesus Christ. For, said they, what does it profit us to possess the whole world, and all the goods of this world, in this present life, which must soon finish, and then be damned and be miserable in that life to come, which will never end? All those rich men, all those princes and emperors, who are now in hell, what have they now of all that they enjoyed in this life, but a greater torment and a greater despair? Miserable beings, they lament now and say: “All those things are passed away like a shadow” (Wisdom 5:9). For them all is passed like a shadow, like a dream, and that lamentation which is their lot has lasted already many years, and shall last throughout eternity. “The fashion of this world passeth away.” (1 Corinthians 7:31). This world is a scene that lasts but a short time; happy he that plays on this scene the part that will afterwards make him happy in the life that shall never end! When he shall then be contented, honored, and a prince in paradise, so long as God shall be God, little will he care for having been in this world poor, despised, and in tribulation. For this end only has God placed us on this earth, and keeps us here in life, not to acquire transitory but eternal goods: “The end is life everlasting” (Romans 6:22).

This is the sole end which all men that live in the world should have in view. But the misfortune is, that in the world one thinks little or nothing of everlasting life. In the midst of the darkness of this Egypt the greatest number of men bestow all their care on acquiring honor and pleasures; and this is the reason why so many perish. “With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart” (Jeremias 12:11). How few are they who reflect on death, by which for us the scene is closed, on the eternity which awaits us, on what God has done for our sake! And thence it comes that these miserable beings live in blindness and at random, far from God, having their eyes, like the beasts, intent only on earthly things, without remembering God, without desiring His love, and without a thought of eternity. Therefore they die afterwards an unhappy death, which will be the beginning of an eternal death and an endless misery. Having at last arrived there, they will finally open their eyes, but it will be only to lament for their own foolishness.

This is the great means of salvation, which is found in religion, to wit, the continual meditation on the eternal truths. “Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin” (Ecclesiasticus 7:40). In all well regulated religious houses this is done every day, and even several times a day. And therefore in this light of divine things, which there shines continually, it is morally impossible to live, at least for a long time, far from God, and without keeping one’s account ready for eternity.

PRAYER

O my God! How have I ever deserved this great mercy, that, having left so many others to live in the midst of the world, Thou hast willed to call me, who have offended Thee more than others, and deserved, more than they, to be deprived of Thy divine light, to enjoy the honor of living as a friend in Thy own house! O Lord! Grant that I may understand this exceeding grace which Thou hast bestowed on me, that I may always thank Thee for it, as I purpose and hope to do always during my life and throughout eternity, and do not permit me to be ungrateful for it. Since Thou hast been so liberal towards me, and hast in Thy love preferred me to others, it is but just that more than others I should serve and love Thee. O my Jesus! Thou wouldst have me to be wholly Thine, and to Thee I give myself wholly. Accept me, and henceforward keep me as Thy own, since I am no more mine. Finish Thou the work which Thou hast begun. Thou hast called me to Thy house, because Thou wilt have me become a saint. Make me, then, what Thou wilt have me. Do this, O eternal Father! For the love of Jesus Christ, in whom is all my confidence. I love Thee, my sovereign good, I love Thee. O infinite goodness. I love Thee only, and will love Thee forever. O Mary. my hope, come to my assistance, and obtain for me to be always faithful and thankful to my Lord.

CONSIDERATION 2

THE HAPPINESS OF THE RELIGIOUS AT DEATH

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord” (Apocalypse 14:13). And who are those blessed dead who die in the Lord, but the religious, who at the end of their lives are found already dead to the world, having already detached themselves by their holy vows from the world and all its goods?

Consider, my brother, how content you will feel if, following your vocation, it will be your good fortune to die in the house of God. The devil will certainly represent to you that if you retire into the house of God you may perhaps afterwards repent of having left your own house and your own country, and deprived your parents of the help that they might have expected from you. But say to yourself: Shall I at the point of death repent of having put my resolution into execution, or shall I be content? I beseech you therefore to imagine yourself now already at the point of death, about to appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ. Reflect what then, reduced to that state, you would wish to have done. Perhaps to have contented your parents, to have worked for your own family and your country, and then to die surrounded by brothers and nephews and relatives, after having lived in your own house, with the title of a pastor, of a canon, of a bishop, of a member of the cabinet, and after having done your own will? Or rather, to die in the house of God, assisted by your good brethren in religion, who encourage you on the great passage to eternity, after having lived many years in religion, humbled, mortified, poor, far from parents, deprived of your own will, and under obedience, and detached from everything of the world, all these things render death sweet and agreeable? “He who has been accustomed to deprive himself of the delights of the world will not regret doing so when he has to leave it," says St. Bernard. Pope Honorius II, when dying, wished that he had remained in his monastery, occupied in washing the plates, and had not been Pope. Philip II wished at his death that he had been a lay brother in some religious Order, intent on serving God, and had he not been a king. Philip III, also king of Spain, said when he was dying: "Oh, that I had been in a desert, there to serve God, and that I had never been a monarch, for had such been the case, I should now appear with more confidence before the tribunal of Jesus Christ."

When, then, hell tempts you about your vocation, think of the hour of death, and set before your eyes that all important moment "upon which eternity depends." Thus you will overcome all temptations, you will be faithful to God, and certainly you will not repent of it at the point of death, but will give thanks to the Lord, and die contented. Gerard, brother of St. Bernard, died singing, at the very thought of dying in the house of God.

Father Suarez, of the Society of Jesus, felt at his death so great consolation and sweetness at dying in religion, that he said: "I never thought it was so sweet to die." Another good religious, of the same Society, when at the point of death, laughed; and being asked why he laughed, answered: "And why should I not laugh? Has not Jesus Christ himself promised paradise to him who leaves everything for His sake? Was it not He who said: "Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or father, etc. shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting"? (Matthew 19:29) I have left all for God; God is faithful; He cannot fail to fulfill His promises; and so he said: Why should I not rejoice and laugh, seeing myself assured of paradise?"

A certain lay brother who died some years ago was asked at his death in which house he would rather be. He answered: "I desire nothing but to die and to be united with God."

Father Januarius Sarnelli, a short time before his death, when conversing with God, uttered the following words: "O Lord, Thou knowest that all I have done, all I have thought, has been for Thy glory; now I wish to go to see Thee face to face, if it please Thee so;" then he said: "Come, I will begin a sweet agony," and began to converse affectionately with God; and shortly after placidly expired, preserving the smile on his lips, and the body began to give forth a sweet odor, which, as they attested, was perceived for several days in the room in which he had died.

St. Bernard, speaking of the happy state of religious, had then good reason to exclaim: “O secure life, in which death is expected without fear, aye, sweetly desired and devoutly accepted!”

PRAYER

O my Lord Jesus Christ, who, in order to obtain a happy death for me, hast chosen so bitter a death for Thyself; since Thou hast loved me to such an extent as to have chosen me to follow more closely Thy holy life, to have me thus more intimately united with Thy loving heart, bind me, I beseech Thee, wholly to Thee with the sweet cords of Thy love, that I may no more separate myself from Thee. O my beloved Redeemer, I wish to be grateful to Thee, and to correspond with Thy grace, but I fear my weakness may render me unfaithful; O my Jesus, do not permit this. Let me die rather than abandon Thee, or forget the peculiar affection that Thou hast shown me. I love Thee, O my dear Saviour Thou art and shalt always be the only Lord of my heart and of my soul. I leave all and choose Thee alone for my treasure, O most pure Lamb of God! O my most ardent lover. “My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands” (Canticles 5:10). Begone, ye creatures! My only good is my God: He is my love, my all. I love Thee, O my Jesus, and in loving Thee I will spend the remainder of my life, be it short or be it long. I embrace Thee, I press Thee to my heart, and I wish to die united with Thee. I wish nothing else. Make me to live always burning with Thy love, and when I shall have arrived at the end of my life, make me to expire in an ardent act of love towards Thee. Immaculate Virgin Mary, obtain thou this grace for me; I hope it from thee.

CONSIDERATION 3

THE ACCOUNT OF ONE WHO DOES NOT FOLLOW HIS VOCATION

The grace of vocation to the religious state is not an ordinary grace: it is a very rare one, which God grants only to a few. “He hath not done in like manner to every nation” (Psalms 147:20). Oh, how much greater is this grace of vocation to a perfect life and to become one of the household of God, than if one were called to be the king of any kingdom on this earth!

For what comparison can there be between a temporal kingdom of this earth and the eternal kingdom of heaven?

But the greater the grace is, the greater will be the indignation of the Lord against him who has not corresponded with it, and the more rigorous will be his judgment at the day of account. If a king were to call a poor shepherd to his royal palace, to serve him among the noblemen of his court, what would not be the indignation of this king were he to refuse such a favor through unwillingness to leave his miserable stable and his little flock? God knows well the value of His graces, and therefore he chastises with severity those who despise them. He is the Lord; when He calls He wishes to be obeyed, and obeyed promptly. When, therefore, by his inspiration he calls a soul to a perfect life, if it does not correspond he deprives it of his light, and abandons it to its own darkness. Oh, how many poor souls shall we see among the reprobate on the day of judgment for this very reason, that they were called and would not correspond!

Give thanks, then, to the Lord, who has invited you to follow Him; but fear if you do not correspond. Since God calls you to serve him nearer to His person, it is a sign that He wishes to save you. But He will have you to be saved in that path only which He indicates to you and has chosen for you. If you wish to save yourself on a road of your own choosing, there is great danger that you will not be saved at all; for if you remain in the world, when God wishes you to be a religious, He will not give you those efficacious helps prepared for you had you lived in His house, and without these you will not save yourself. “My sheep hear my voice” (John 10:27). He who will not obey the voice of God shows that he is not and will not be one of His sheep, but in the valley of Josaphat will be condemned with the goats.

PRAYER

O Lord, Thou hast shown me such an excess of bounty as to choose me from among so many others, to serve Thee in Thy own house with Thy most beloved servants. I know how great is that grace and how unworthy of it I have been. Behold, I am willing to correspond to a love so great. I will obey Thee. Since Thou hast been towards me so liberal as to call me when I did not seek Thee, and when I was so ungrateful, permit not that I should offer to Thee that greater excess of ingratitude to embrace again my enemy, the world, in which heretofore I have often forfeited Thy grace and my eternal salvation, and thus to forsake Thee, who hast shed Thy blood and given Thy life for my sake. Since Thou hast called me, give me also the strength to correspond to the call. Already have I promised to obey Thee. I promise this again, but without the grace of perseverance I cannot be faithful to Thee. This perseverance I ask of Thee, and through Thy own merits it is that I wish it and hope to obtain it. Give me the courage to vanquish the passions of the flesh, through which the devil seeks to bring me to betray Thee. I love Thee, O my Jesus; to Thee I consecrate myself entirely. I am already Thine, I will be always Thine. O Mary, my mother and my hope, thou art the mother of perseverance: this grace is only dispensed through thy hands; do thou obtain it for me: in thee do I confide.

CONSIDERATION 4

THE DAMNED FOR HAVING LOST HIS VOCATION

The pain of having through one’s own fault lost some great good, or of having brought upon one’s self voluntarily some great evil, is a pain so great that even in this life it causes an insupportable torment. But what torment will that youth, called by the singular favor of God to the religious state, feel in hell, when he then perceives that, if he had obeyed God, he would have attained a high place in paradise, and sees himself nevertheless confined in that prison of torments, without hope of remedy for this his eternal ruin? “Their worm dieth not” (Mark 9:43).

This will be that worm which, living always, shall always gnaw his heart by a continual remorse. He will say then: What a fool I was! I might have become a great saint. And if I had obeyed, I would certainly have become so; and now I am damned without remedy.

Miserable being! Then, for his greater torment, on the day of judgment he will see and recognize at the right hand, and crowned as saints, those who have followed their vocation, and, leaving the world, have retired to the house of God, to which he also had been once called. And then shall he see himself separated from the company of the blessed, and placed in the midst of that innumerable and miserable crew of the damned for his disobedience to the voice of God.

We know well, as we have considered above, that to this most unhappy lot he exposes himself who, in order to follow his own caprice, turns a deaf ear to the call of God. Therefore, my brother, you who have already been called to become a saint in the house of God, consider that you will expose yourself to a great danger should you lose your vocation through your own fault. And this very vocation which God in his sovereign bounty has given you, in order, as it were, to take you out from among the mass and place you among the chosen princes of His paradise, will, through your own fault, should you be unfaithful to it, become an especial hell for you. Make your choice, then; for God leaves it in your own hands either to be a great king in paradise or a reprobate in hell, more despairing than the rest.

PRAYER

No, my God, permit me not to disobey Thee and to be unfaithful. I see Thy goodness, and thank Thee because, instead of casting me away from Thy face and banishing me into hell, as I have so often deserved, Thou callest me to become a saint, and preparest for me a high place in paradise. I see that I should deserve a double torment should I not correspond with this grace which is not given to all. I will obey Thee. Behold, I am Thine, and always will be Thine. I embrace with joy all the pains and discomforts of the religious life to which Thou invitest me. And what are these pains in comparison with the eternal pains that I have deserved? I was entirely lost through my sins; now I give myself entirely to Thee. Dispose of me and my life as Thou pleasest. Accept, O Lord, of one already condemned to hell, as I have been, to serve Thee and love Thee in this life and in the next. I will love Thee as much as I have deserved to be doomed to hate Thee in hell, O God, worthy of an infinite love! O my Jesus. Thou hast broken those chains by which the world held me bound; Thou hast delivered me from the servitude of my enemies. I will love Thee much, then, O my Love; and for the love I bear Thee, I will always love Thee and obey Thee. Always will I thank thee, O Mary, my advocate, who hast obtained this mercy for me. Help me, and suffer me not to be ungrateful to that God who has loved me so much. Obtain for me that I may die rather than be unfaithful to so great a grace. Thus I hope.

CONSIDERATION 5

THE IMMENSE GLORY THAT RELIGIOUS ENJOY IN HEAVEN

Consider, in the first place, that which St. Bernard says that it is difficult for religious, who die in the religious state, to be damned. “From the cell to heaven the way is easy; one scarcely ever descends from his cell into hell.” And the reason which the saint adduces is, “because one scarcely ever perseveres in it until death, unless he be predestinated.” For a religious with difficulty perseveres until his death, if he is not of the number of the elect of paradise. Therefore, St. Laurence Justinian called the religious state the gate of paradise. “Of that heavenly city this is the gate” And he said that “therefore the religious have a great sign of their predestination.”

Consider, moreover, that the reward of heaven, as the Apostle says, is “a crown of justice” (2 Timothy 4:8); wherefore God, though he rewards us for our works more abundantly than we deserve, rewards us, nevertheless, in proportion to the works we have done. “He will render to every man according to his works” (Matthew 16:27). From this consider how exceedingly great will be the reward which God will give in heaven to good religious, in consideration of the great merits which they daily acquire.

The religious gives to God all His goods of this earth, and is content to be entirely poor, without possessing anything. The religious renounces all attachment to his parents, friends, and country, in order to unite himself more closely with God. The religious continually mortifies himself in many things which he world enjoy in the world. The religious, finally, gives to God his whole self by giving Him his will through the vow of obedience.

But the dearest thing that we have is our own will; and what God, of all other things, requires of us most, is our heart, that is, our will. “My son, give me thy heart” (Proverbs 23:26). He who serves God in the world will give him his possessions, but not himself; he will give him a part, and not the whole; for he will give him indeed his goods by almsdeeds, his food by fasting, his blood by disciplines, etc: but he will always reserve for himself his own will, fasting when he pleases, praying when he likes. But the religious, giving him his own will, gives himself and gives all; gives not only the fruits of the tree, but the whole tree itself. Hence, he may then truly say to him: O Lord! Having given Thee my will, I have nothing more to give Thee.

Therefore, in all that he does through obedience he is sure to do the will of God perfectly, and merits in all things, not only when he prays, when he hears confessions, when he preaches, or fasts, or practices other mortifications, but also when he takes his food, when he sweeps his room, when he makes his bed, when he takes his rest, when he recreates himself; for doing all this through obedience, he does in all the will of God. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said that all that is done through obedience is a prayer. Hence St. Anselm, speaking of those who love obedience, asserted that all that religious do is meritorious for them. St. Aloysius Gonzaga said that in religion one sails as it were in a vessel, in which he even advances who does not row.

Oh, how much more will a religious gain in one month by observing his Rule, than a secular, with all his penance and prayers, in a year! Of that disciple of Dorothcus, called Dositheus, it was revealed that for the five years he had lived under obedience there was given to him in heaven the glory of St. Paul, Hermit, and of St. Antony, Abbot, both of whom had for so many years lived in the desert. Religious, it is true, have to suffer the inconveniences of regular observance: “Going, they went and wept.” But when they shall be called to the other life, they will go to heaven, but “coming, they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves” (Psalms 125:7). Hence they shall then sing: “The lines are fallen unto me in goodly places, for my inheritance is goodly to me” (Psalms 15:6). These bonds which have bound me to the Lord have become for me exceedingly precious, and the glory they have acquired for me is exceedingly great.

PRAYER

Is it possible, O my God and my true lover, that Thou desirest so much my good, and to be loved by me, and that I, miserable that I am, desire so little to love and to please Thee? For what end hast Thou favored me with so many graces, and taken me out of the world? O my Jesus, I understand Thee: Thou lovest me much, Thou wilt have me love Thee much also, and be all Thine, in this life and in the next. Thou wishest that my love should not be divided with creatures, but wilt have it be wholly for Thyself, the only good, the only lovely one, and worthy of infinite love. Ah! My Lord, my treasure, my love, my all, yet I pant and truly desire to love Thee, and to love no other but Thee. I thank Thee for this desire which Thou hast given me; preserve it in me, always increase it in me, and grant that I may please Thee, and love Thee on this earth, as Thou desirest, so that I may come hereafter to love Thee face to face, with all my strength, in paradise. Behold, this is all I ask from Thee; Thee will I love, O my God! I will love Thee, and for Thy love I offer myself to suffer every pain. I will become a saint, not that I may enjoy great delight in heaven, but to please Thee much, O my beloved Lord, and to love Thee much forever. Graciously hear me, O eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ. My Mother Mary, for the love of this thy Son, help thou me. Thou art my hope; from thee I hope every good.

CONSIDERATION 6

THE PEACE GOD GIVES GOOD RELIGIOUS TO ENJOY

The promises of God cannot fail; God has said: “Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting” (Matthew 19:29). That is, the hundredfold on this earth, and life everlasting in heaven.

The peace of the soul is a good which is of greater value than all the kingdoms of the world. And what avails it to have the dominions of the whole world without interior peace? Better is it to be the poorest villager, and to be content, than to be the lord of the whole world, and to live a discontented life. But who can give this peace? The unquiet world? Oh, no; peace is a good that is obtained only from God. “O God!” prays the Church, “give to Thy servants that peace which the world cannot give.” Therefore he is called the God of all consolation. But if God is the sole giver of peace, to whom shall we suppose will He give that peace but to those who leave all, and detach themselves from all creatures, in order to give themselves entirely to their Creator? And therefore is it seen, that good religious, shut up in their cells, though mortified, despised, and poor, live a more contented life than the great ones of the world, with all the riches, the pomps and diversions that they enjoy.

St. Scholastica said that if men knew the peace which good religious enjoy, the whole world would become a monastery; and St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, that all, if they knew it, would scale the walls of the monasteries in order to enter them. The human heart having been created for an infinite good, all creatures cannot content it, they being finite, imperfect, and few; only God, who is an infinite good, can render it content. "Delight in the Lord, and he will give thee the requests of thy heart" (Psalms 36:4). Oh, no; a good religious united with God envies none of the princes of the world who possess kingdoms, riches, and honors. "Let the rich," he will say with St. Paulinus, "have their riches, the kings have their kingdoms: to me, Christ is my kingdom and my glory." He will see those of the world foolishly glory in their displays and vanities; but he, seeking always to detach himself more from earthly things, always to unite himself more closely to his God, will live contented in this life, and will say: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will call upon the name of the Lord, our God" (Psalms 19:8).

St. Teresa said that one drop of heavenly consolation is of greater value than all the pleasures of the world. Father Charles of Lorraine, having become a religious, said that God by one moment of the happiness which he gave him to feel in religion, superabundantly paid him for all he had left for God. Hence his joyfulness was sometimes so great that, when alone in his cell, he could not help beginning to leap. The Blessed Seraphino of Ascoli, a Capuchin lay brother, said that he would not exchange a foot length of his cord for all the kingdoms of the world.

Oh, what content does he find who, having left all for God, is able to say with St. Francis, "My God and my all!" and with that to see himself freed from the servitude of the world, from the thraldom of worldly fashion, and from all earthly affections. This is the liberty enjoyed by the children of God, which good religious are. It is true that in the beginning the deprivation of the conversations and pastimes of the world,. the observances of the Community, and the rules seem to be thorns; but these thorns, as our Lord said to St. Bridget, will all become flowers and delights to him who courageously bears their first stings, and he will taste on this earth that peace which, as St. Paul says, surpasses all the gratifications of the senses, and all the enjoyments of feasts, of banquets, and of the pleasures of the world: "The peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). And what greater peace can there be, than to know, that one pleases God?

PRAYER

O my Lord and my God, my all, I know that Thou alone canst make me contented, in this life and in the next. But I will not love Thee for my own contentment; I will love Thee only to content Thy heart. I wish this to be my peace, my only satisfaction during my whole life, to unite my will to Thy holy will, even should I have to suffer every pain in order to do this. Thou art my God, I am Thy creature. And what can I hope for greater than to please Thee, my Lord, my God, who hast been so partial in Thy love towards me? Thou, my Jesus, hast left heaven to live for the love of me a poor and mortified life. I leave all to live only for the love of Thee, my most blessed Redeemer. I love Thee with my whole heart; if only Thou wilt give me the grace to love Thee, treat me as Thou pleasest. O Mary, Mother of my God, protect me and render me like to thee, not in thy glory, which I do not deserve, as thou dost, but in pleasing God, and obeying his holy will, as thou didst.

CONSIDERATION 7

THE DAMAGE DONE TO RELIGIOUS BY TEPIDITY

Consider the misery of that religious who, after having left his home, his parents, and the world with all its pleasures, and after having given himself to Jesus Christ consecrating to him his will and his liberty, exposes himself at last to the danger of being damned, by falling into a lukewarm and negligent life, and continuing therein. Oh, no, not far from perdition is a lukewarm religious who has been called into the house of God to become a saint. God threatens to reject such, and to abandon them, if they do not amend. “But because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth” (Apocalypse 3:16).

St. Ignatius of Loyola, seeing a lay brother of his Order become lukewarm in the service of God, called him one day and said to him: Tell me, my brother, why did you come to religion? He answered: To serve God. O my brother! Replied the saint, what have you said? If you had answered that you came to serve a cardinal, or a prince of this earth, you would be more excusable; but you say that you came to serve God, and do you serve him thus?

Father Nieremberg says that some are called by God to be saved only as saints, so that, if they should not take care to live as saints, thinking to be saved as imperfect Christians, they will not be saved at all. And St. Augustine says that such are in most cases abandoned by God: “Negligent souls God is accustomed to abandon.” And how does he abandon them? By permitting them from lighter faults, which they see, and do not mind, to fall into grievous ones, and lose divine grace and their vocation. St. Teresa of Jesus saw the place prepared for her in hell, had she not detached herself from an earthly, though not a grievously culpable affection. “He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little” (Ecclesiasticus 19:1).

Many wish to follow Jesus Christ, but from afar as St. Peter did, who, when his Master was arrested in the garden, says St. Matthew, “followed him afar off” (Matthew 26:58). But by doing so, that will easily happen to them which happened to St. Peter, namely, that when the occasion came he denied Jesus Christ. A lukewarm religious will be contented with what little he does for God; but God, who called him to a perfect life, will not be contented, and in punishment for his ingratitude will not only deprive him of his special favors, but will sometimes permit his fall. “When you said, It is enough, then you perished.” The fig tree of the Gospel was cast into the fire, only because it brought forth no fruit.

Father Louis de Ponte said: “I have committed many faults, but I have never made peace with them.” Miserable is that religious who, being called to perfection, makes peace with his defects. As long as we detest our imperfections, there is hope that we may still become saints; but when we commit faults and make little of them, then says St. Bernard, the hope of becoming saints is lost. “He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly” (2 Corinthians 9:6) Common graces do not suffice to make one a saint, extraordinary ones are necessary; but how will God be liberal with his favors towards the one that acts sparingly and with reserve in his love towards Him?

Moreover, to become a saint one must have courage and strength to overcome all repugnances; and let no one ever believe, says St. Bernard, that he will be able to attain to perfection if he does not render himself singular among others in the practice of virtue. “What is perfect cannot but be singular.” Reflect, my brother, for what you left the world and all. To become a saint. But that lukewarm and imperfect life which you lead, is that the way of becoming a saint? St. Teresa animated her daughters by saying to them: My sisters, you have done the principal thing necessary to become saints; the least remains yet to be done. The same I say to you; you have, perhaps, done the chief part already; you have left your country, your home, your parents, your goods, and your amusements; the least remains yet to be done, to become a saint; do it.

PRAYER

O my God, reject me not, as I deserve, for I will amend. I know well that so negligent a life as mine cannot satisfy Thee. I know that I have myself, by my lukewarmness, shut the door against the graces which Thou dost desire to bestow upon me. O Lord! Do not yet abandon me; continue to be merciful towards me; I will rise from this miserable state. I will for the future be more careful to overcome my passions, to follow Thy inspirations, and never will I through slothfulness omit my duties, but I will fulfill them with greater diligence. In a word, I will from this time forward do all that I can to please Thee, and I will neglect nothing that I may know to he pleasing to Thee. Since Thou, O my Jesus! Hast been so liberal with Thy graces towards me, and hast deigned to give Thy blood and Thy life for me. there is no reason I should act with such reserve towards Thee. Thou art worthy of all honor, all love, and to please Thee one should gladly undergo every labor, every pain. But, O my Redeemer! Thou knowest my weakness; help me with Thy powerful grace; in Thee I confide. O Immaculate Virgin Mary! Thou who hast helped me to leave the world, help me to overcome myself and to become a saint.

CONSIDERATION 8

HOW DEAR TO GOD IS A SOUL THAT GIVES ITSELF ENTIRELY TO HIM

God loves all those who love Him: “I love them that love me.” (Proverbs 8:17). Many, however, give themselves to God, but preserve still in their hearts some attachment to creatures, which prevents them from belonging entirely to God. How then shall God give Himself entirely to him who, besides his God, loves creatures still? It is just that He should act with reserve towards those who act with reserve towards him. On the contrary, He gives Himself entirely to those souls who, driving from their hearts every thing that is not, God, and does not lead them to His love, and giving themselves to Him without reserve, truly say to Him “My God and my all.” St. Teresa, as long as she entertained an inordinate affection, though not an impure one, could not hear from Jesus Christ what afterwards she heard, when, freeing herself from every attachment, she gave herself entirely to the divine love, namely, the Lord saying to her: “Now, because thou art all mine, I am all thine.”

Consider that the Son of God has already given Himself entirely to us: “A Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us” (Isaias 9:6). He has given Himself to us through the love He bears to us. “He hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us” (Ephesians 5:2). It is then just, says St. John Chrysostom, that when a God has given Himself to you without reserve, “He has given thee all nothing has He left to Himself,” you also should give yourself to God without reserve, and that always henceforth, burning with divine love, you should sing to Him:

Thine wholly always will I be:
Thou hast bestowed Thyself on me;
Wholly I give myself to Thee.

St. Teresa revealed to one of her nuns appearing to her after her death, that God loves one soul who, as a spouse, gives herself entirely to Him, more than a thousand tepid and imperfect ones. From these generous souls, given entirely to God, is the choir of Seraphim completed. The Lord himself says, that He loves a soul, who attends to her perfection, so much, that He seems not to love any other. “One is my dove; my perfect one is but one” (Canticles 6:8). Hence Blessed Giles exhorted us: “One for one;” by which he wished to say, that this one soul we have we should give wholly, not divided, to that one who alone deserves all love, on whom depends all our good, and who loves us more than all. “Leave all, and you shall find all,” says Thomas a Kempis. Leave all for God, and in God you shall find all. “O soul,” concludes St. Bernard, “be alone, that you may keep yourself for Him alone.” Keep yourself alone, give no part of your affections to creatures, that you may belong only to Him who alone deserves an infinite love, and whom alone you should love.

PRAYER

“My Beloved to me, and I to him” (Canticles 2:16). As then, O my God! Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me, I should be too ungrateful if I should not give myself entirely to Thee; since Thou wouldst have me belong wholly to Thee, behold, O my Lord! I give myself entirely to Thee. Accept me through Thy mercy; disdain me not. Grant that this my heart, which once loved creatures, may turn now wholly to Thy infinite goodness. “Let me hence forth die,” said St. Teresa; “let another than myself live in me. Let God live in me, and give me life. Let Him reign, and let me be His slave, for my soul wishes no other liberty.” This my heart is too small, O God most worthy of love, and it is too little able to love Thee, who art deserving of an infinite love. I should then commit against Thee too great an injustice, should I still divide it by loving anything besides Thee. I love Thee, my God, above every thing. I love only Thee, I renounce all creatures, and give myself entirely to Thee, my Jesus, my Saviour, my love, my all. I say, and always will say: “What have I in heaven, and besides thee. what do I desire on earth?. . Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever” (Psalms 72:26). I desire nothing, either in this life or in the next, but to possess the treasure of Thy love. God of my heart, I am unwilling that creatures should have any more a place in my heart; Thou alone must be its master. To Thee alone shall it belong for the future. Thou alone shalt be my God, my repose, my desire, all my love. I say with St. Ignatius: “Give me only Thy love and Thy grace, and I am rich enough.” O most holy Virgin Mary, obtain for me this, that I may be faithful to God, and never recall the donation that I have made of myself to him.

CONSIDERATION 9

ONE MUST HAVE A GREAT DESIRE FOR BECOMING A SAINT

No saint has ever attained to sanctity without a great desire. As wings are necessary to birds in order to fly, so holy desires are necessary to the soul in order to advance in the road to perfection. To become saints, we must detach ourselves from creatures, conquer our passions, overcome ourselves, and love crosses. But to do all this, much strength is required, and we must suffer much. But what is the effect of holy desire? St. Laurence Justinian answers us: “It supplies strength, and makes the pain easier to be borne.” Hence the same saint adds, that he has already vanquished who has a great desire of vanquishing: “A great part of the victory is the desire of vanquishing.” He who wishes to reach the top of a high mountain will never reach it if he has not a great desire to do so. This will give him courage and strength to undergo the fatigue of ascending, otherwise he will stop at the foot wearied and discouraged.

St. Bernard asserts that we acquire perfection in proportion to the, desire for it which we preserve in our heart, and St. Teresa said that God loves, generous souls that have great desires, for which reason the saint exhorted all in this way: “Let our thoughts be high, . . . for thence will come our good. We must not have low and little desires, but have that confidence in God, that, if we make the proper efforts, we shall by little and little attain to that perfection which, with His grace, the saints have reached.” In this way the saints attained, in a short time, to a great degree of perfection, and were able to do great things for God. “Being made perfect in a short time, he fulfilled a long time” (Wisdom. 4:13).

Thus St. Aloysius Gonzaga attained in a few years (he lived not over twenty three years) to such a degree of sanctity, that St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, in an ecstasy, seeing him in heaven, said, it seemed to her in a certain way that there was no saint in heaven who enjoyed a greater glory than Aloysius; and she understood at the same time that he had arrived at so high a degree by the great desire he had cherished of being able to love God as much as He deserved, and that seeing this beyond his reach, the holy youth had suffered on earth a martyrdom of love.

St. Bernard, being in religion, in order to excite his fervor used to say to himself: “Bernard, for what did you come here?” I say the same to you: What have you come to do in the house of God? To become a saint? And what are you doing? Why do you lose the time? Tell me, do you desire to become a saint? If you do not, it is certain you will never become one. If, then, you have not this desire, ask Jesus Christ for it, ask Mary for it. And if you have it, take courage, says St. Bernard, for many do not become saints, because they do not take courage. And so I repeat it, let us take courage, and great courage.

What do we fear? What inspires this diffidence in us? That Lord who has given us strength to leave the world will give us also the grace to embrace the life of a saint. Everything comes to an end. Our life, be it a contented or a discontented one, will also come to an end, but eternity will never terminate. Only that little we have done for God will console us in death and throughout eternity. The fatigue will be short, eternal shall be the crown, which is already, so to speak, before our eyes. How satisfied are the saints now with all that they have suffered for God! If a sorrow could enter paradise, the blessed would be sorry for this alone, that they have neglected to do for God what they might have done more, but which now they are unable to do. Take courage then, and be prompt, for there is no time to lose; What can be done today, we may not be able to do tomorrow. St. Bernardine of Siena said that one moment of time is of as great a value as God himself, for at every moment we may gain God, his divine grace, and higher degrees of merits.

PRAYER

Behold, O my God, here I am. “My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready” (Psalms 56:8). See, I am prepared to do all Thou shalt require of me. “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” (Acts Of Apostles 9:6) Tell me, O Lord, what Thou desirest of me. I will obey Thee in all. I am sorry for having lost so much time in which I might have pleased Thee, and yet have not done so. I thank Thee, that still Thou givest me time to do so. Oh, no, I will not lose any more time. I will and desire to become a saint, not to obtain from Thee a greater glory and more delights. I will become a saint, that I may love Thee more, and to please Thee in this life and in the next. Make me, O Lord! To love and please Thee as much as Thou desirest. Behold, this is all that I ask of Thee, O my God! I will love Thee, I will love Thee, and in order to love Thee I offer myself to undergo every fatigue and to suffer every pain. O my Lord! Increase in me always this desire, and give me the grace to execute it. Of myself I can do nothing, but assisted by Thee I can do all. Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, graciously hear Inc. My Jesus, through the merits of Thy Passion, come to my succor. O Mary, my hope, for the love of Jesus Christ, protect me.

CONSIDERATION 10

THE LOVE WE OWE TO JESUS CHRIST

In order to understand the love that the Son of God has borne to us, it is enough to consider what St. Paul says of Jesus Christ: “He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. . . . He humbled himself, becoming obedient even to the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:7,8). “He emptied himself.” O God, what admiration has it caused, and will it cause throughout eternity,. to the angels, to see a God who became man for the love of man, and submitted himself to all the weaknesses and sufferings of man! “And the Word was made flesh” (John 1:14). What a cause of astonishment would it not be to see a king become a worm for the sake of worms! But an infinitely greater wonder it is, to see a God made man, and after this to see him humbled unto the painful and infamous death of the cross on which he finished his most holy life. Moses and Elias, on Mount Thabor, speaking of his death, as it is related in the Gospel, called it an excess: “They spoke of his decease [the Latin word is excesses, which also means excess], that he should accomplish in Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31). Yea, says St. Bonaventure, it is with reason the death of Jesus Christ was called an excess, for it was an excess of suffering and of love, such that it would be impossible to believe it if it had not already happened. An excess of love, adds St. Augustine; for to this end the Son of God would come on earth, to live a life so laborious and to die a death so bitter, namely, that he might make known to man how much He loved him. “Therefore Christ came, that man should know how much God loved him.”

The Lord revealed to his servant Armella Nicolas that the love that he bore to man was the cause of all His sufferings and His death. If Jesus Christ had not been God, but only a man, and our friend, what greater love could he have shown us, than to die for us? “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Ah, how at the thought of the love shown us by Jesus Christ the saints esteemed it little to give their life and their all for so loving a God! How many youths, how many noblemen, are there not, who have left their house, their country, their riches, their parents and all, to retire into cloisters, to live only for the love of Jesus Christ! How many young virgins, renouncing their nuptials with princes, and the great ones of the world, have gone with joyfulness to death, to render thus some compensation for the love of a God who had been executed on an infamous gibbet, and died for their sake!

This appeared to St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi to be foolishness: hence she called her Jesus a fool of love. In exactly the same manner the Gentiles, as St. Paul attests, hearing the death of Jesus Christ preached to them, thought it foolishness not possible to be believed. “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness” (1 Corinthians 1:23). How is it possible, they said, that a God most happy in Himself, who is in want of nothing, should die for the sake of man, His servant? This would be as much as to believe that God became a fool for the love of men. Nevertheless it is of faith, that Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, did, for love of us, deliver Himself up to death. “He hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us” (Ephesians 5:2). The same Mary Magdalene had reason then to exclaim, lamenting the ingratitude of men towards so loving a God: “O love not known! O love not loved!” Indeed, Jesus Christ is not loved by men, because they live in forgetfulness of His love.

And, in fact, a soul that considers a God. who died for its sake, cannot live without loving him. “The charity of Christ presseth us” (2 Corinthians 5:14). The soul will feel itself inflamed, and as if constrained to love a God who has loved it so much. Jesus Christ could have saved us, says Father Nieremberg, with only one drop of His blood; but it was His will to shed all His blood, and to give His divine life, that at the sight of so many sufferings and of His death we might not content ourselves with an ordinary love, but be sweetly constrained to love with all our strength a God so full of love towards us. “That they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them”

PRAYER

Indeed, O my Jesus, my Lord, and my Redeemer! Only too much hast Thou obliged me to love Thee, too much my love has cost Thee. I should be too ungrateful if I should content myself to love with reserve a God who has given me His blood, His life, and His entire self. Oh, Thou hast died for me, Thy poor servant: it is but just that I should die for Thee, my God and my all. Yes, O my Jesus! I detach myself from all, to give myself to Thee. I put away from me the love of all creatures, in order to consecrate myself entirely to Thy love. “My beloved is chosen from among thousands”

(Canticles 5:10). I choose Thee alone out of all things for my good, my treasure, and my only love. I love Thee O my love! I love Thee. Thou art not satisfied that I should love Thee a little only. Thou art not willing to have me love anything besides Thee. Thee I will please in all things, Thee will I love much, and Thou shalt be my only love. My God, my God, help me, that I may fully please Thee. Mary, my queen, do thou also help me to love my God much. Amen. So I hope so may it be.

CONSIDERATION 11

THE GREAT HAPPINESS WHICH RELIGIOUS ENJOY

The Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus, foundress of a convent in Toulouse, said that she esteemed very much her lot as a religious, for two principal reasons. The first was, that religious, through the vow of obedience, belong entirely to God; and the second, that they have the privilege of dwelling always with Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. And in truth, if people of the world deem it so great a favor to he invited by kings to dwell in their palaces, how much more favored should we esteem ourselves, who are admitted to dwell continually with the King of heaven in His own house?

In houses of religious Jesus Christ dwells for their sake in the church, so that they can find Him at all hours. Persons of the world can scarcely go to visit Him during the day, and in many places only in the morning. But the religious find Him in the tabernacle as often as they wish in the morning, in the afternoon, and during the night. There they may continually converse with their Lord, and there Jesus Christ rejoices to converse familiarly with His beloved servants, whom, for this end, He has called out of Egypt, that He may be their companion during this life, hidden under the veil of the Most Holy Sacrament, and in the next unveiled in paradise. “O solitude!” It may be said of every religious house, “in which God familiarly speaks and converses with his friends.” The souls that love Jesus Christ much, do not know how to wish for any other paradise on this earth than to be in the presence of their Lord, who dwells in this sacrament for the love of those that seek and visit Him.

“His conversation hath no bitterness, nor his company any tediousness” (Wisdom 8:16). He finds tediousness in the company of Jesus Christ, who does not love Him. But those who on this earth have given all their love to

Jesus Christ, find in the sacrament all their pleasure, their rest, their paradise; and therefore they keep their hearts always mindful to visit, as often as they can, their God in the sacrament, to pay their court to him, giving vent to their affections at the foot of the altar, offering Him their afflictions, their desires of loving Him, of seeing Him face to face, and in the mean time of pleasing Him in all things.

PRAYER

Behold me in Thy presence, O my Jesus, hidden in the sacrament! Thou art the self same Jesus who for me didst sacrifice Thyself on the cross. Thou art He who lovest me so much, and who hast therefore confined Thyself in this prison of love. Amongst so many, who have offended Thee less than I, and who have loved Thee better than I, Thou hast chosen me in Thy goodness to keep Thee company in this house, where, having drawn me from the midst of the world, Thou hast destined me always to live united with Thee, and afterwards to have me nigh Thee to praise and to love Thee in Thy eternal kingdom. O Lord! I thank Thee. How have I deserved this happy lot? “I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners” (Psalms 83:11). Happy indeed am I, O my Jesus! To have left the world; and it is my great desire to perform the vilest office in Thy house, rather than dwell in the proudest royal palaces of men. Receive me then, O Lord, to stay with Thee all my life long; do not chase me away, as I deserve. Be pleased to allow, that among the many good brothers who serve Thee in this house, I, though I am a miserable sinner, may serve Thee also. Many years already have I lived far from Thee. But now that Thou hast enlightened me to know the vanity of the world, and my own foolishness, I will not depart any more from Thy feet, O my Jesus! Thy presence shall animate me to fight when I am tempted. The nearness of Thy abode shall remind me of the obligation I am under to love Thee, and always to have recourse to Thee in my combats against hell. I will always keep near to Thee, that I may unite myself to Thee, and attach myself closer to Thee. I love Thee, O my God! Hidden in this sacrament. Thou for the love of me remainest always on this altar. I, for the love of Thee, will always remain in Thy presence as much as I shall be able. There enclosed Thou always lovest me and here enclosed I will always love Thee. Always then, O my Jesus, my love, my all! Shall we remain together, in time in this house and during eternity in paradise. This is my hope; so may it be. Most holy Mary, obtain for me a greater love for the Most Holy Sacrament.

CONSIDERATION 12

THE LIFE OF RELIGIOUS RESEMBLES THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

The Apostle says that the eternal Father predestinates to the kingdom of heaven those only who live conformably to the life of the incarnate Word: “Whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son” (Romans 8:29). How happy, then, and secure of paradise should not religious be, seeing that God has called them to a state of life which of all states is the most conformed to the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus on this earth wished to live poor as the son and helpmate of a mechanic, in a poor dwelling, with poor clothing and poor food: “Being rich, he became poor for your sake, that through his poverty you might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9). Moreover, He chose a life the most entirely mortified, far from the delights of the world, and always full of pain and sorrow, from His birth to His death: hence by the prophet he was called “The Man of sorrows” (Isaias 53:3). By this he wished to give his servants to understand what should be the life of those who wished to follow him: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). According to this example, and to this invitation of Jesus Christ, the saints have endeavored to dispossess themselves of all earthly goods, and to load themselves with pains and crosses, in order thus to follow Christ, their beloved Lord. Thus acted St. Benedict, who, being the son of the lord of Noricia, and a relative of the Emperor Justinian, and born amidst the riches and the pleasures of the world, while yet a youth of only fourteen years went to live in a cavern on Mount Subiaco, where he received no other sustenance but a piece of bread brought him every day as an alms by the hermit Romanus.

So acted St. Francis of Assisi, who renounced in favor of his father the whole lawful portion of his inheritance, even to the shirt he had on his back, and thus, poor and mortified, consecrated himself to Jesus Christ. Thus St. Francis Borgia, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, the one being duke of Candia, the other of Castiglione, left all their riches, their estates, their vassals, their country, their house, their parents, and went to live a poor life in religion.

So have acted many other noblemen and princes, even of royal blood. Blessed Zedmerra, daughter of the king of Ethiopia, renounced the kingdom to become a Dominican nun. Blessed Johanna of Portugal renounced the kingdom of France and England to become a nun. In the Benedictine Order alone there are found twenty five emperors, and seventy five kings and queens, who left the world to live poor, mortified, and forgotten by the world in a poor cloister. Ah! Indeed, these and not the grandees of the world are the truly fortunate ones.

At present, worldlings think these to be fools, but in the valley of Josaphat they shall know that they themselves have been the fools; and when they see the saints on their thrones crowned by God, they shall say, lamenting and in despair: “These are they whom we had sometime in derision. . . . We fools esteemed their life madness. . . . Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints” (Wisdom 5:3, and seq.).

PRAYER

Ah! My Master and my Redeemer, Jesus, I am then of the number of those fortunate ones whom Thou hast called to follow Thee. O my Lord! I thank Thee for this. I leave all; I would I had more to leave, that I might draw near to Thee, my King and my God, who for the love of me, and to give me courage by Thy example, hast chosen for Thyself a life so poor and so painful. Walk on, O Lord! I will follow Thee. Choose Thou for me what cross Thou wilt, and help me. I will always carry it with constancy and love. I regret that for the past I have abandoned Thee, to follow my lusts and the vanities of the world, but now I will leave Thee no more. Bind me to Thy cross, and if through weakness I sometimes resist, draw me by the sweet bonds of Thy love. Suffer it not that I should ever leave Thee again. Yes, my Jesus, I renounce all the satisfactions of the world: my only satisfaction shall be to continue to love Thee, and to suffer all that pleases Thee. I hope thus to come myself one day in Thy kingdom, to be united to Thee by that bond of eternal love, where, loving Thee in Thy revealed glory, I need no more fear to be loosed and separated from Thee. I love

Thee, O my God, my all! And will always love Thee. Behold my hope, O most holy Mary, thou who, because the most conformed to Jesus, art now the most powerful to obtain this grace. Be thou my protectress!

CONSIDERATION 13

THE ZEAL WHICH RELIGIOUS SHOULD HAVE FOR SOULS

He who is called to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer will never be a true follower of Jesus Christ, and will never become a saint, if he fulfills not the end of his vocation, and has not the spirit of the Institute, which is the salvation of souls, and of those souls who are the most destitute of spiritual succor, such as the poor people in the country.

This was truly the end for which our Redeemer came down from heaven, who protests "The Spirit of the Lord . . . hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor" (Luke 4:18). He sought no other proof of Peter's love for him but this, that he should procure the salvation of souls: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? . . . feed my lambs" (John 21:17). He did not impose upon him, says St. John Chrysostom, penance, prayers, or other things, but only that he should endeavor to save his lambs: "Christ said not to him, Throw your money away, practice fasting, fatigue your body with hard work; but he said: Feed my lambs." And he declares that he would look upon every benefit conferred on the least of our neighbors as conferred on himself: "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).

Every religious should, therefore, with the utmost care entertain within himself this zeal, and this spirit of helping souls. To this end every one should direct his studies, and when he shall afterwards have been assigned to his work by his Superiors, he should give to it all his thoughts, and his whole attention. He could not call himself a true member of this Congregation who, through the desire of attending only to himself and of leading a retired and solitary life, would not accept with all affection such an employment when imposed on him by obedience.

What greater glory can a man have, than to be, as St. Paul says, a cooperator with God in this great work of the salvation of souls? He who loves the Lord ardently, is not content to be alone in loving him: he would draw all to his love, saying with David: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us extol his name together” (Psalms 33:4). Hence St. Augustine exhorts all those who love God, “If you love God, draw all men to His love.”

A good ground to hope for his own salvation has he who with true zeal labors for the salvation of souls. “Have you saved a soul,” says St. Augustine: “then you have predestinated your own.”

The Holy Ghost promises us: “When thou shalt pour out thy soul to the hungry: “When thou shalt have labored for the welfare of a poor man; “and shalt satisfy the afflicted soul: “And by thy labor shalt have filled him (with divine grace); “the Lord will give thee rest continually, and will fill thy soul with brightness:” The Lord will fill thee with light and peace (Isaias 58:10,11). In this, namely, in procuring the salvation of others, St. Paul placed his hope of eternal salvation, when he said to his disciples of Thessalonica: “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glory? Are not you, in the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19)

PRAYER

O my Lord Jesus Christ! How can I thank Thee enough, since Thou hast called me to the same work that Thou didst Thyself on earth, namely, to go with my poor exertions and help souls to their salvation. How have I deserved this honor and this reward, after having offended Thee so grievously, and been the cause to others also of offending Thee? Yes, O my Lord! Thou callest me to help Thee in this great undertaking. I will serve Thee with all my strength. Behold, I offer Thee all my labor, and even my blood, in order to obey Thee. Nor do I by this aspire to satisfy my own inclination, or to gain applause and esteem from men: I desire nothing but to see Thee loved by all, as Thou deservest. I prize my happy lot, and call myself fortunate, that Thou hast chosen me for this great work, in,which I protest that I will renounce all praises of men, and all self satisfaction, and will only seek Thy glory. To Thee be all the honor and satisfaction, and to me only the discomforts, the blame, and the reproaches. Accept, O Lord! This offering, which I, a miserable sinner, who wishes to love “Thee and to see Thee loved by others, make of myself to Thee, and give me strength to execute it. Most holy Mary, my advocate, who lovest souls so much, help me.

CONSIDERATION 14

THE NECESSITY OF HAVING MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY

Our most lovely Redeemer Jesus willed to be called a lamb for this very reason that He might show us how meek and humble He was Himself. These were the virtues which He principally wished His followers should learn from Him: “Learn from me, because I am meek and humble of heart” (Matthew 11:29).

And these virtues He principally requires from religious, who profess to imitate His most holy life. He who lives as a solitary in a desert has not so much need of these virtues; but for him who lives in a Community, it is impossible not to meet now and then with a reprimand from his Superiors, or something disagreeable from his companions. In such cases a religious who loves not meekness will commit a thousand faults every day, and live an unquiet life. He must be all sweetness with everybody, with strangers, with companions, and also with inferiors, if he should ever become Superior; and if he is an inferior, he must consider that one act of meekness in bearing contempt and reproach is of greater value to him than a thousand fasts and a thousand disciplines.

St. Francis said that many make their perfection consist in exterior mortifications, and after all are not able to bear one injurious word. “Not understanding,” he added, “how much greater gain is made by patiently bearing injuries.” How many persons, as St. Bernard remarks, are all sweetness when nothing is said or done contrary to their inclination, but show their want of meekness, when anything crosses them! And if one should ever be Superior, let him, believe that one reprimand made with meekness will profit his subjects more than a thousand made with severity. “The meek are useful to themselves and to others,” as St. John Chrysostom teaches. In a word, as the same saint said, the greatest sign of a virtuous soul is, to see it meek on occasions of contradiction. A meek heart is the pleasure of the heart of God. “That which is agreeable to him is faith and meekness” (Ecclesiasticus 1:34). It would be well for a religious to represent to himself in his meditations all the contrarieties that may happen to him, and thus arm himself against them; and then when the occasion happens, he should do violence to himself, that he may not be excited, and break out in impatience. Therefore he should refrain from speaking, when his mind is disturbed, till he is certain that he has become calm again. But to bear injuries quietly, it is above all necessary to have a great fund of humility. He who is truly humble is not only unmoved when he sees himself despised, but is even pleased and rejoices at it in spirit, however the flesh may resent it; for he sees himself treated as he deserves, and made conformable to Jesus Christ, who, worthy as He was of every honor, chose for the love of us to He satiated with contempt and injuries. Brother Juniper, a disciple of St. Francis, when an injury was done to him, held up his cowl, as if he expected to receive pearls falling from heaven. The saints have been more desirous of injuries than worldlings are covetous of applause and honor. And of what use is a religious who does not know how to bear contempt for God's sake? He is always proud, and only humble in name and a hypocrite, whom divine grace will repulse, as the Holy Ghost says: "God resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace" (1 Peter 5:5).

PRAYER

O my most humble Jesus, who for the love of me, didst humble Thyself, and become obedient unto the death of the cross: how have I the courage to appear before Thee, and call myself Thy follower? For I see myself to be such a sinner and so proud, that I cannot bear a single injury without resenting it. Whence can come such pride in me, who for my sins have so many times deserved to be cast forever into hell with the devils? Ah, my despised Jesus, help me and make me conformable to Thee. I will change my life. Thou for love of me hast borne so much contempt; I for love of Thee will hear every injury. Thou, O my Redeemer! Hast rendered contempt too honorable and desirable. Since Thou hast embraced it with so much love during Thy own life. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14). O my most humble mistress Mary, mother of God! Thou who wast in all, and especially in suffering, the most conformed to thy Son, obtain for me the grace to hear in peace all injuries which henceforward shall be offered to me. Amen.

CONSIDERATION 15

HOW MUCH RELIGIOUS SHOULD CONFIDE IN THE PATRONAGE OF MARY

If it is true and most true it is that, according to the saying of St. Peter Damian, the divine mother, the most holy Mary, loves all men with such an affection, that after God there is not, nor can there be, any one who surpasses or equals her in her love: “She loves us with an invincible love,” how much must we think this great queen loves religious who have consecrated their liberty, their life, and their all to the love of Jesus Christ. She sees well enough that the life of such as these is more conformable to her own life, and to that of her divine Son; she sees them often occupied in praising her, and continually attentive to honor her by their novenas, visits, rosaries, fasts, etc. She beholds them often at her feet, intent on invoking her aid, asking graces of her, and graces all conformed to her holy desires, i.e., the grace of perseverance in the divine service, of strength in their temptations, of detachment from this world, and of love towards God. Ah, how can we doubt that she employs all her power and her mercy for the benefit of religious, and especially of those who belong to this holy Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, in which, as it is well known, we make special profession of honoring the Virgin Mother by visits, by fasting on Saturdays, by special mortifications during her novenas, etc., and by everywhere promoting devotion to her by sermons and novenas in her honor.

She, the great mistress, is grateful. “I love those who love me” (Proverbs 8:17). Yes, she is so grateful, that, as St. Andrew of Crete says: “To him who does her the least service she is accustomed to return great favors.” She promises liberally those who love her and who promote her honor among others, to deliver them from sin. “Those that work by me shall not sin.” She also promises to them paradise. “Those that explain me, shall have life everlasting.” For which reason we especially should thank God for having called us to this Congregation, in which by the usages of the Community and the example of our companions we are often reminded, and in some way constrained, to have recourse to Mary, and continually to honor this our most loving mother, who is called, and is, the joy, the hope, the life, and the salvation of those who invoke and honor her.

PRAYER

My most beloved, most lovely, and most loving Queen, I always thank my Lord and thee, who hast not only drawn me out of the world, but also called me to live in this Congregation, where a special devotion to thee is practiced. Accept of me, then, my mother, to serve thee. Among so many of thy beloved sons do not scorn to let me serve thee also, miserable though I am. Thou after God shalt be always my hope and my love. In all my wants, in all my tribulations and temptations, I will always have recourse to thee; thou shalt be my refuge, my consolation. I am unwilling that any but God and thou shouldst comfort me in my combats, in the sadness and the tediousness of this life. For thy service I renounce all the kingdoms of the whole world. My kingdom on this earth shall be to serve, bless, and love thee, O my most lovely mistress, “whom to serve is to reign.” Thou art the mother of perseverance; obtain for me to be faithful to thee until death. By so doing I hope, and firmly hope, one day to come where thou reignest, to praise and bless thee forever, to depart no more from thy holy feet. Jesus and Mary I protest with your loving servant Alphonsus Rodriguez, “my most sweet loves, let me suffer for you, let me die for you, let me be all yours, and not all my own.”

Chapter 7

EXHORTATION TO RELIGIOUS

God has especially chosen religious from among the men of the world, that they may spread His glory and love Him with a love more particular and pure than that which they bear to Him, who live in the world, occupied in its affairs. To this end has the Lord, by a special vocation, drawn them out of the darkness of Egypt, and freed them from the love of the world; and so moved by divine grace, they have consecrated themselves to God by their holy vows, renouncing all the goods that this world promises and gives to its followers. And therefore it is, that each monastery of religious, which is found on earth, should be considered as a company of men, who, detached from every earthly thought, are mindful of nothing but to live only for God, so that God may glory in them and say: These are all mine, they are my delight.

But, I ask, can the Lord nowadays say of all the religious now living, they are my delight? Alas! The Church laments, because she sees in her religious a general relaxation of spirit, united with a great coldness in the service of God. It cannot be denied, that, amongst so many, there are some who live as good religious, free from worldly attachments, intent on becoming saints and bringing souls to God. There are such, whom I call judges, who shall, one day, in the Valley of Josaphat, judge their brethren; but these good religious, these judges, how many are they? O God! They are too few, it is evident enough, and therefore the Church laments with all those that love the glory of God.

It is not becoming to my littleness to talk here as a censor, and to note down the defects into which nowadays religious commonly fall, whereby, instead of giving edification by their example, they are the objects of talk, and give scandal to others. But some one will say: You, who set up for a reformer, tell us what those common defects are. Tell us what we have to do to be good religious. I answer, I pretend not to reform the world, and therefore will not undertake to declare in particular the faults that have nowadays become common. To you who ask me thus, I say only that you know full well what you have to do in order to be a good religious; in your novitiate you were fully instructed by good masters in the practice of the virtues which you had afterwards to practice in religion, that is, obedience, detachment from earthly affections, the love of poverty the abnegation of yourself, the desire of being humbled, and those other virtues that are necessary to live as a good religious. But since in these times lukewarmness and relaxation have become general, and since religious pay little attention to the obligations of their state, as a consequence they care little about mending these defects. Oh, would to God that all religious might preserve at least the half of that good life they began to lead in their novitiate! For the most part, the novices who persevere to make their profession, live in fervor of spirit and give edification; but the evil is, that, after having made the vows, and applied themselves to their studies, they at once begin to grow lukewarm, and neglect to preserve the spirit they acquired and to put in execution the good resolutions which they made in the novitiate, so that, as time goes on, they fall more and more from it every day, and multiply their faults.

When afterwards they are appointed to teach others, this relaxation increases; thenceforward they are little solicitous to do anything for the glory of God, but think only of advancing their own interest by pressing on to higher stations, so as then to be able to live a life of less subjection, and greater comfort.

It was with the best intention that religious Orders have established these degrees, through which the religious must advance, in order by instructing the ignorant and arousing the lukewarm to fervor, to promote the good of souls. But the misfortune is, that with many religious the means have become the end, for by the lapse of time they think less of the good of religion and of souls than of their own temporal advantage. I protest again that I do not pretend to play the reformer, but I see that from this spring up in the religious Orders all kinds of ambition, and in consequence every species of spiritual decay. Hence I conclude, that it would be much better were the masters, after having finished their course, to remain in the same humble degree in which they were when they came out of the novitiate. For then each one would think of fulfilling the duties of his office, not for private ends, but only to accomplish the will of God, and to obey his Superiors. But on becoming teachers they get a better room, other comforts and preeminences, and this is the reason why so few religious make progress in spirit, and give to others the edification that they should; and thence it comes that all good persons lament, when they see that general relaxation in the Orders, which is now but too evident to all. Where shall we, generally speaking, nowadays find in religious the spirit of obedience, of poverty, of mortification, of interior abnegation? Where the love for solitude, for a hidden life, the desire of being despised, which we find in the saints? These kinds of virtue have become strange things, and even the name of them seems to be lost!

But what would be the remedy for so great and universal an evil? What shall I say? The remedy has to come from heaven, and therefore we should pray to the Lord that He may in His mercy remedy it by His own power; because, as the good spirit of religious communicates itself to seculars, so do they also participate in their relaxation. I, for my part, believe that this decay in the religious Orders comes for the most part from the want and neglect of mental prayer, and this comes from the want of retirement and recollection. Experience shows too well that the more certain persons treat with men, the less they desire to treat with God; and the more they become familiar with the world, the more God retires from them. “Willingly would I,” said our Lord one day to St. Teresa, “speak to many souls, but the world makes so much noise in their hearts, that my voice cannot he heard.” Immersed. as many religious are, in the affairs of the world, they think little of uniting themselves more closely to God. They would like to get out of the mire of their tepidity, and free themselves from the earthly attachments in which they find themselves entangled; but their passions, which they make no effort to overcome, always draw them downwards, and thus they lose the love of mental prayer.

The old monks gave much time to mental prayer, and in this way they became saints; and, by the edification that they gave, they also sanctified others. But nowadays all fails, because the spirit of prayer is wanting, and therefore religious are without humility, without detachment from the world, and without love of God; and the love of God being wanting, as a consequence other virtues are wanting too. Let us, then, beseech Jesus

Christ, who alone, is able to remedy so great an evil; let us beseech him to infuse into religious his holy love, and the desire of becoming saints. For it seems that religious at present have even lost the desire of becoming saints. Every one sees the need there is of a general reform in the religious Orders, in the priests, and in the seculars. As the corruption of manners has everywhere become so general, we should repeat every day the prayer of David, which in these times is much to the purpose: “O Lord, the vineyard, Thy Church, planted by Thy Son, at the cost of his Blood, is in ruin on all sides: visit and restore it; Thou, who alone canst restore it” (Psalms 79:15).

Chapter 8

ANSWER TO A YOUNG MAN

I read in your letter that some time ago you felt inspired by God to become a religious, and that afterwards many doubts arose in your mind, and especially this one, that, without becoming a religious, you might sanctify yourself also in the world.

I will answer your letter briefly, for, should you wish to read something more complete, you can read a little work of mine, which has already been printed, under the title "Counsels concerning Religious Vocation," in which I have treated this matter more fully. Here I will only say, briefly, that this point of the choice of a state of life is of the greatest importance, as upon it depends our eternal salvation. He who chooses the state to which God calls him will save himself with facility: and for him who does not obey the divine call it will be difficult yes, morally impossible to save himself. The greatest number of those who are damned, are damned for not having corresponded to the call of God.

In order, therefore, that you may be able to choose that state which will be the surest for attaining eternal salvation, consider that your soul is immortal, and that the only end for which God has placed you in this world was, not certainly that you may acquire money and honors on this earth, and thus live a comfortable and delightful life, but that by holy virtues you may merit eternal life. "and the end life everlasting" (Romans 5:22). In the day of judgment it will avail you nothing to have advanced your family, and to have made a figure in the world; it will only avail you to have served and loved Jesus Christ, who is to be your judge.

You have a thought which tells you that you will also be able to sanctify yourself by remaining in the world. Yes, my dear sir, you will be able; but it is difficult, and if you are truly called by God to the religious state, and yet remain in the world, it is, as I have said above, morally impossible, because those helps will be denied you which God has prepared for you in religion, and without them you will not save yourself. To sanctify yourself it is necessary for you to employ the means, such as, to avoid evil occasions, to remain detached from earthly goods, to live a life recollected in God; and to maintain this, it is necessary to receive the sacraments frequently, to make your meditation, your spiritual reading, and to perform other devout exercises every day, otherwise it is impossible to preserve the spirit of fervor. Now, it is difficult, not to say impossible, to practice all this in the midst of the noise and the disturbances of the world; for family affairs, the necessities of the house, the complaints of parents, the quarrels and persecutions with which the world is so full, will keep your mind so occupied by cares and fears that you will barely be able in the evening to recommend yourself to God, and even this will be done with many distractions. You would wish to make your meditation, to read spiritual books, to receive Holy Communion often, to visit every day the Sacrament of the altar; but from all this you will be prevented by the affairs of the world, and the little you do will be imperfect, because it is done in the midst of a thousand distractions, and with coldness of heart. Your life will then be always unquiet, and your death more unquiet still. On one side, worldly friends will not fail to inspire you with a fear of embracing the religious life, as being a hard life and full of troubles. On the other, the world offers you amusements, money, and a contented life. Reflect well, and do not allow yourself to be led into error. Be persuaded that the world is a traitor that makes promises and does not care about the fulfillment of them. It offers you indeed all these earthly things, but suppose it should give them to you, could it also give you peace of soul? No, God only can give true peace. The soul is created only for God, to love Him in this life and to enjoy Him in the next, and therefore God only can content it. All the pleasures and riches of the earth cannot give true peace; nay, those who in this life abound the most with such goods are the most troubled and afflicted, as Solomon confesses, who had them in abundance. “All,” says he, “is vanity, and affliction of spirit” (Ecclesiastes 1:14). If the world, with its goods, could make us happy, the rich, the great, the monarchs, who are in no want of wealth, honors, and amusements, would be fully contented. But experience shows how it is with these mighty ones of the earth: the greater they are, the greater are the vexations, fears, and afflictions they have to suffer. A poor

Capuchin lay brother, who goes about girded with a cord over a sackcloth, who lives on beans, and sleeps in a small cell on a little straw, is more contented than a prince with all his gilded trappings and riches, who has every day a sumptuous table, and who goes half sick to bed under a rich canopy, unable to sleep on account of the anguish which drives sleep away. He is a fool who loves the world and not God, said St. Philip Neri; and if these worldlings live such an unquiet life, much more unquiet still will be their death, when the priest, at their side, will intimate to them that they are about to be chased away from this world, saying: "Depart hence, Christian soul, from this world. Embrace the crucifix, for this world is at an end for you." The misery is, that in the world they think little of God, and just as little of the next life, where they must remain forever. All, or almost all, their thoughts are given to the things of this earth, and this is the cause that their life is so unhappy, and their death still more.

Nevertheless, that you may ascertain what state you ought to embrace, imagine yourself at the point of death, and choose that one which you would then wish to have chosen. Should you have erred, by neglecting the divine call, in order to follow your own inclinations, and to live with more liberty, there will then he no longer time to remedy the error. Consider that everything here below will come to an end. "The fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Corinthians 7:31). The scenes of this world must finish for each one of us. Everything passes, and death draws near; and at every step we take, we approach nearer to it, and, through death, nearer to eternity. For this we are born. "Man shall go into the house of his eternity" (Ecclesiastes 12:5). Death will be upon us when we least think of it. Alas! When death draws near, what will then appear all the goods of this world, but the unreal pageantry of a theater, vanities, lies, and foolishness? And what profit will it then be, as Jesus Christ warns us, "if we should have gained the whole world and lost our souls"? (Matthew 16:26) It will help us only to die an unhappy death.

On the contrary, a young man who has left the world to give himself entirely to Jesus Christ, how contented will he feel, as he passes his days in the solitude of his cell far from the tumult of the world and the dangers of losing God, which are in the world! In the monastery he will not have the entertainments of music, theaters, and balls, but he will have God to console him and to make him enjoy peace. I mean all that peace, which is possible in this valley of tears, into which every one is sent to suffer, and to merit by his patience that full peace which is prepared for him in heaven. But in this life even, far from the pastimes of the world, one loving look cast from time to time on the crucifix, one “Deus meus, et omnia,” pronounced with affection, one “my God” said with a sigh of love, will console him more than all the pastimes and feasts of the world, which leave only bitterness behind them.

And if he lives content in such a life, more content will he be still at his death at having chosen the religious state. How much will it then console him to have spent his life in prayer, in spiritual reading, in mortification, and in other exercises of devotion, especially if he has been in an Order employed in saving souls by preaching and hearing confessions, things which at his death will all increase his confidence in Jesus Christ, who is truly grateful and liberal in rewarding those who have labored for His glory!

But let us come to a conclusion with regard to your vocation. Since the Lord has called you to leave the world, and to be entirely His in religion, I tell you: Rejoice and tremble at the same time. Rejoice, on the one hand, and always thank the Lord, because to be called by God to a perfect life is a grace which he does not give to all: “He hath not done in like manner to every nation” (Psalms 147:20). On the other hand, tremble, because if you do not follow the divine call, you will put your eternal salvation in great danger. It is not my intention here to relate to you the many examples of young men who, because they made no account of their vocation, have lived a miserable life and died a horrible death. Hold for certain that, as God has called you, you will never have peace, if you remain in the world, and at your death you will be very unquiet, on account of the remorse that then will torment you, for having neglected to obey God, who had called you to the religious state.

At the end of your letter you express a wish to learn from me whether, in case you should not have the courage to enter religion, it would be better to marry, as your parents wish, or to become a secular priest.

I answer: The married state I cannot recommend to you, because St. Paul does not counsel it to any one, except there be a necessity for it, arising out of habitual incontinence, which necessity, I hold for certain, does not exist in your case.

With regard, then, to the state of a secular priest, take notice that a secular priest has on him all the obligations of a priest, and all the distractions and dangers of a layman; for, living in the midst of the world, he cannot avoid the troubles which arise from his own household and from his parents, and cannot he free from the dangers to which his soul is exposed. He will have temptations in his own house, being unable to exclude women from it, whether relatives or servants, nor prevent other strangers from coming to see them. You should then stay there altogether retired in a separate room, and attend only to divine things. Now, this it is very difficult to practice; and therefore small, and very small, is the number of those priests who attend to their perfection in their own houses.

On the contrary, entering a monastery of strict observance, you will be freed from the disagreeable duty of thinking about your food and clothing, because there the Order provides you with all, there you will not have your parents to come and continually trouble you with all the disturbances that happen in their house; there no women enter to disturb your mind; and thus, far from the tumult of the world, you will have no one to hinder you in your prayers and your recollection.

I have said a monastery of strict observance; because if you want to enter another, where they live more freely, it is better for you to stay at home and attend there to the salvation of your soul as well as you can; for entering an Order where the spirit is relaxed, you expose yourself to the danger of being lost. Though you should enter with the resolution to attend to prayer and to the things of God only, yet, carried along by the bad example of your companions, and seeing yourself derided and even persecuted, if you do not live as they do, you will leave off all your devotions, and do as the others do, as experience shows it to be commonly the case. But should God give you the grace of vocation, be careful to preserve it, by recommending yourself often to Jesus and Mary in holy prayer. I know that if you resolve to give yourself entirely to God, the devil from that moment will increase his efforts to tempt you to fall into sin, and especially to make you entirely His, and to remain His.

I conclude by offering you the assurance of my respectful consideration; I pray the Lord to make you belong entirely to Himself, and remain, etc.

Chapter 9

ADVICE TO A YOUNG PERSON IN DOUBT

My Dear Sister In Jesus Christ: You are deliberating about the choice of a state of life. I see that you are agitated because the world wishes you to belong to itself, and to enter the married state; and, on the other hand, Jesus Christ wishes you to give yourself to Him by becoming a nun in some convent of exact observance.

Remember that on the choice which you make your eternal salvation will depend. Hence I recommend you, as soon as you read this advice, to implore the Lord, every day, to give you light and strength to embrace that state which will be most conducive to your salvation; that thus you may not afterwards, when your error is irreparable, have to repent of the choice you have made for your whole life, and for all eternity.

Examine whether you will be more happy in having for your spouse a man of the world, or Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the King of heaven; see which of them appears to you the better spouse, and then make your choice. At the age of thirteen, the holy virgin St. Agnes was, on account of her extraordinary beauty, sought after by many. Among the rest, the son of the Roman Prefect asked her for his spouse; but looking at Jesus Christ, who wished her to belong to Him, she said. I have found a spouse better than you and all the monarchs of this world; therefore I cannot exchange Him for any other. And rather than exchange him she was content to lose her life, and cheerfully suffered martyrdom for Jesus Christ. The holy virgin Domitilla gave a similar answer to the Count Aurelian; she, too, died a martyr, and was burned alive, because she would not forsake Jesus Christ. Oh, how happy do these holy virgins now feel in heaven, how happy will they feel for all eternity, at having made so good a choice! The same happy lot awaits you, and wilt await all young persons who renounce the world in order to give themselves to Jesus Christ.

In the next place, examine the consequences of the state of the person who chooses the world, and of the person who makes choice of Jesus Christ. The world offers earthly goods, riches, honors, amusements, and pleasures. On the other hand, Jesus Christ presents to you scourges, thorns, opprobrium, and crosses; for these were the goods, which He chose for Himself all the days of His mortal life. But then He offers you two immense advantages, which the world cannot give peace of soul in this life, and paradise in the next.

Moreover, before you decide on embracing any state, you must reflect that your soul is immortal; that is, that after the present life, which will soon end, you must pass into eternity, in which you will receive that place of punishment or of reward which you will have merited by your works during life. Thus you must remain for all eternity in the house either of eternal life or of eternal death, in which, after your departure from this world, it will be your lot first to dwell: you will be either forever saved and happy amid the joys of paradise, or forever lost and in despair in the torments of hell. In the mean time, consider that everything in this world must soon end. Happy all that are saved; miserable the soul that is damned. Keep always in mind that great maxim of Jesus Christ: “What doth it profit a man if lie gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?” This maxim has sent so many from the world to shut themselves up in the cloister, or to live in the deserts; it has inspired so many young persons with courage to forsake the world in order to give themselves to God and to die a holy death.

On the other hand, consider the unhappy lot of so many ladies of fortune, so many princesses and queens, who in the world have been attended, praised, honored, and almost adored; but if they are damned, what do they now find in hell of so much riches, of so many pleasures, of so many honors enjoyed in this life, but pains and remorse of conscience, which will torment them forever, as long as God shall be God, without any hope of remedy for their eternal ruin.

But let us now cast a glance at the goods which the world gives in this life to its followers, and to the goods which God gives to her who loves Him and forsakes the world for His sake. The world makes great promises; but do we not all see that the world is a traitor that promises what it never performs? But though it should fulfill all its promises what does it give? It gives earthly goods, but does it give the peace and the life of happiness which it promises? All its goods delight the senses and the flesh, but do not content the heart and the soul. Our souls have been created by God for the sole purpose of loving Him in this life, and of enjoying him in the next. Hence all the goods of the earth, all its delights, and all its grandeurs are outside the heart; they enter not into the soul, which God only can content. Solomon has even called all worldly goods vanities and lies, which do not content but rather afflict the soul. "Vanity of vanities and affliction of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 1:14). This we know also from experience, for we see that the more a person abounds in these goods, the greater her anguish and misery of mind. If by its goods the world gave content to the soul, great indeed should be the happiness of princesses and queens, who want neither amusements, nor comedies, nor festivities, nor banquets, nor splendid palaces, nor beautiful carriages, nor costly dresses, nor precious jewels, nor servants, nor ladies of honor to attend and pay homage to them. But no; they who imagine them to be happy are deceived. Ask them whether they enjoy perfect peace, if they are perfectly content, and they will answer: What peace? What content? They will tell you that they lead a life of misery, and that they know not what peace is. The maltreatment which they receive from their husbands, the displeasure caused by their children, the wants of the house, the jealousies and fears to which they are subject. make them live in the midst of continual anguish and bitterness. Married women may be called martyrs of patience if they bear all with resignation; but unless they are patient and resigned, they will suffer a martyrdom in this world, and a more painful martyrdom in the next.

The remorse of conscience, though they had nothing else to suffer, keeps married persons in continual torment. Being attached to earthly goods, they reflect but little on spiritual things; they seldom approach the sacraments, and seldom recommend themselves to God; and, being deprived of these helps to a good life, they will scarcely be able to live without sin, and without continual remorse of conscience. Behold, then, how all the joys promised by the world become to married persons sources of bitterness, of fears, and of damnation. How many of them will say, unhappy me, what will become of me after so many sins, after the life which I led, at a distance from God, always going from bad to worse? I would wish for retirement in order to spend a little time in mental prayer, but the affairs of the family and of the house, which is always in confusion, do not permit this. I would wish to hear sermons, to go to confession, to communicate often; I would wish to go often to the church, but my husband does not wish it. My unceasing occupations, the care of children, the frequent visits of friends, keep me confined to the house; and thus it is not without some difficulty that I can hear Mass at a late hour on festivals. How great was my folly in entering the married state, when I could become a saint in a convent! But all these lamentations only serve to increase their pain; because they see that it is no longer in their power to change the unhappy choice they have made of living in the world. And if their life is unhappy, their death will be much more miserable. At that awful hour they will be surrounded by servants, by their husbands, and children, bathed in tears; but instead of giving them relief, all these will be to them an occasion of greater affliction. And thus afflicted, poor in merits, and full of fears for their eternal salvation, they must go to present themselves to Jesus Christ to be judged by Him. But, on the other hand, how great will be the happiness which a nun who has left the world for Jesus Christ will enjoy, living among so many spouses of God, and in a solitary cell, at a distance from the turmoils of the world, and from the continual and proximate danger of losing God, to which seculars are exposed. How much greater will be her consolation at death, after having spent her years in meditations, mortification. and in so many spiritual exercises; in visits to the Holy Sacrament, in confessions, Communions, acts of humility, of hope, and love of Jesus Christ! And though the devil should endeavor to terrify her by the faults committed in her younger days, her Spouse, for whom she has left the world, will console her; and thus, full of confidence, she will die in the embraces of her crucified Redeemer, who will conduct her to heaven, that there she may enjoy eternal happiness.

Thus, my dear sister, since you must make choice of a state of life, make the choice now which you shall wish at death to have made. At death, every one who sees that for her the world is about to end says, Oh that I had led the life of a saint! Oh that I had left the world and given myself to God! But what is then done, is done, and nothing remains for her but to breathe forth her soul, and to go to hear from Jesus Christ the words, Come, blessed soul, and rejoice with me for eternity; or, Begone forever to hell, at a distance from me. You, then, must choose the world or Jesus Christ. If you choose the world, you will probably sooner or later repent of the choice; hence you ought to reflect well upon it. In the world the number of persons who are lost is very great; in religion, the number of those who are damned is very small. Recommend yourself to Jesus crucified, and to most holy Mary, that they may make you choose the state which is most conducive to your eternal salvation. If you wish to become a nun, resolve to become a saint; if you intend to lead a loose and imperfect life, like some religious, it is useless for you to enter a convent; you should then only lead an unhappy life and die an unhappy death. But if you resolve not to become a religious. I cannot advise you to enter the married state, for St. Paul does not counsel that state to any one, except in case of necessity, which I hope does not exist for you. At least remain in your own house and endeavor to become a saint. I entreat you to say the following prayer for nine days: My Lord Jesus Christ, who hast died for my salvation, I implore Thee, through the merits of Thy Passion, to give me light and strength to choose that state which is best for my salvation. And do thou. O my Mother Mary! Obtain this grace for me by thy powerful intercession.

Chapter 10

Discourse TO PIOUS MAIDENS

My Dear Sisters In Jesus Christ: I do not intend to explain the privileges and blessings acquired by those maidens who consecrate their virginity to Jesus Christ; I shall only glance at them.

SECTION 1

EXCELLENCE OF VIRGINITY

First, they become in the eyes of God as beautiful as the angels of heaven: “They shall he as the angels of God in heaven” (Matthew 22:30). Baronius relates that upon the death of a holy virgin named Georgia an immense multitude of doves was seen flying around her; and when the body was carried to the church, they ranged themselves along that part of the roof which corresponded to the situation of the corpse, and did not leave until she was buried. Those doves were thought to be angels who accompanied that virginal body.

Moreover, a maiden who leaves the world, and dedicates herself to Jesus Christ, becomes His spouse. In the Gospel our Redeemer is called Father, or Master, or Shepherd of our souls; but with regard to those virgins He calls Himself their Spouse: they “went out to meet the Bridegroom” (Matthew 25:1).

When a young woman wishes to establish herself in the world, she will examine, if she be prudent, which of all her suitors is the most noble and the richest. Let us then learn from the Spouse in the sacred Canticles, who well knows let us learn from her what manner of spouse is He whom consecrated virgins aspire to. Tell me, O sacred Spouse, what manner of spouse is He who makes you the most fortunate of women? “My Beloved is white, she says, and ruddy, chosen among thousands” (Canticles 5:10). He is all white by reason of His purity; and ruddy, by reason of the love with which He burns. He is, in fine, so noble and so kind as to be the most amiable of spouses.

With reason, then, did the glorious virgin St. Agnes, as we learn from St. Ambrose, when it was proposed to her to marry the son of the Prefect of Rome, reply that she had a much more advantageous match in view. When some ladies were endeavoring to persuade St. Domitilla to marry Count Aurelian, nephew of the Emperor Domitian, saying there was no obstacle, as he was willing that she should remain a Christian, the saint replied, Tell me, if a monarch and a clown both pretended to a maiden, which would she choose? Now, should I marry Aurelian, I would have to leave the King of heaven; it would be folly I will not do so. And thus, in order to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, to whom she had already consecrated her virginity, she was willing to be burned alive a death which her barbarous suitor caused her to suffer.

Those spouses of Jesus Christ who leave the world for His sake become His beloved; they are called the first fruits of the Lamb: “The first fruits to God and to the Lamb” (Apocalypse 14:4). Why the first fruits? Because, says Cardinal Hugo, as the first fruits are more grateful than any other to man, so virgins are dearer to God than any others. The divine Spouse feeds amongst the lilies: “Who feeds amongst the lilies” (Canticles 2:16). And what is meant by lilies, if not those devout maidens who consecrate their virginity to Jesus Christ? The venerable Bede writes that the song of the virgins that is, the glory which they give to God by preserving untouched the lily of their purity is far more pleasing to Him than the song of all the other saints.

Wherefore the Holy Ghost says that there is nothing comparable to virginity (Ecclesiasticus 26:20). And hence Cardinal Hugo remarks that dispensations are often granted from other vows, but never from the vow of chastity; and the reason is, because no other treasure can compensate for the loss of that. And it is for the same reason that theologians say the Blessed Mother would have consented to forego the dignity of Mother of God could it have been had only at the expense of her virginity.

Who on this earth can conceive the glory which God has prepared for His virgin spouses in paradise? Theologians say that virgins have in heaven their own “aureola,” or special crown of glory, which is refused to the other saints who are not virgins. But let us come at once to the most important point in our discourse.

This young woman will say, Cannot I become holy in the married state? I do not wish to give you the reply in my own words; hear those of St. Paul, and you will. see the difference between the married woman and the virgin: “And the unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and in spirit; but she that is married, thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband” (1 Corinthians 7:34). And the Apostle adds: “And this I speak for your profit, not to cast a snare upon you, but for that which is decent, and which may give you power to attend upon the Lord without impediment.”

In the first place. I say that married persons can be holy in the spirit, but not in the flesh; on the contrary, virgins who have consecrated their virginity to Jesus Christ are holy both in soul and body. Holy both in body and in spirit; and mark those other words, to attend upon the Lord without impediment. Oh. how many obstacles have not married women to encounter in serving the Lord! And the more noble they are the greater the obstacles. A woman to become holy must adopt the necessary means, which are, much mental prayer, constant use of the sacraments, and continual thought of God. But what time has a married woman for thinking upon God? “She that is married thinketh on the things of the world,” says St. Paul. The married woman has to think of providing her family with food and raiment. She has to think of rearing her children, of pleasing her husband and her husband’s relatives; whence, as the Apostle says, her heart is divided between God, her husband, and her children. Her husband must be attended to; the children cry and scream, and are continually asking for a thousand things. What time can she have to attend to mental prayer, who can scarce attend to all the business of the house? How can she pray amid so many distracting thoughts and disturbances? Scarcely can she go to church, to recollect herself, and communicate upon the Sunday. She may have the good desire, but it will be difficult for her to attend to the things of God as she ought. It is true that in this want of opportunities she may gain merit, by resignation to the will of God. who requires of her, in that state, chiefly patience and resignation; but in the midst of so many distractions and annoyances, without prayer, without meditation, without frequenting the sacraments, it will be morally impossible for her to have that holy patience and resignation.

But would to God that married women had no other evil to contend with besides that of not always being able to attend to their sanctification as much as they should! The greater evil is the danger to which they are continually exposed of losing the grace of God, by reason of the intercourse which they must continually have with the relatives and friends of their husband, as well in their own houses as in the houses of others. Unmarried women do not understand this, but married women and those who have to hear their confessions know it well. Let us, however, now have done with the unhappy life which is led by married women, the ill treatment that they receive from their husbands, the disobedience of children, the wants of a family, the annoyance of mothers in law and relatives, the throes of childbirth, always accompanied by danger of death, not to mention the afflictions of jealousy, and scruples of conscience with regard to the rearing up of their children, all of this breeds a tempest under which poor married women have continually to groan; and God grant that in this tempest they may not lose themselves, so as to meet with hell in the other world, after having suffered a hell in this!

Such is the unenviable lot of those maidens who choose the world!

But what! Such a maiden replies, are there no married women holy? Yes, I answer, there are; but who are they? Such only as become holy through their sufferings, by suffering all for God without finding fault, and with continual patience. And how many married women are to he found in such a state of perfection? They are very rare; and if you find any, they are always in sorrow that when they could have done so they did not consecrate themselves to Jesus Christ. Amongst all the devout married women I have known, I never knew one to be satisfied with her condition.

The greatest happiness, then, falls to the lot of those maidens who consecrate themselves to Jesus Christ. Those have to encounter none of the dangers which married women must necessarily be placed in. They are not bound to earth by love of children, or men, or dress, or gallantry, whilst married women are obliged to dress with pomp and ornaments, in order to appear with their equals and please their husbands. A maiden who has given herself to Jesus Christ requires only what dress will cover her; nay, she should give scandal if she were to wear any other, or make use of any ornaments. Moreover, virgins have no anxiety about house or children or relatives; their whole care is centered in pleasing Jesus Christ, to whom they have consecrated their soul, their body, and all their love; whence it is that they have more time, and a mind more disengaged, for frequent prayer and Communion.

But let us now come to the excuses sometimes brought forward by those who are cold in the love of Jesus Christ.

Such a one will say: I should leave the world if I had some convent to go to, or, at least, if I could always spend my time in devotion at the church when I should please; but I could not remain at home, where I have bad brothers who ill treat me; and, on the other hand, my parents are unwilling to have me frequent the church. But, I ask you, is it in order to save yourself, or lead an easy life, you leave the world? Is it to do your own will or the will of Jesus Christ? If you wish to become holy and serve Jesus Christ, I ask you another question: In what does holiness consist? Holiness does not consist in living in a convent, or spending the entire day in a church, but in being at confession and Communion as often as you can, in obedience, in doing everything assigned you at home, in being retired, in bearing labor and contempt. And if you were to be in a convent, how should you be employed? Do you imagine you should always be either in church or in your cell, or in the refectory, or at recreation? In the convent, although the Sisters have a time marked out for prayer, for Mass, and for Communion, they have also their hours appointed for the business of the house, and more especially the lay sisters, who, as they do not attend in the choir, have nearly all the labor of the house, and consequently least time for prayer. All exclaim, Let us be in a convent, let us have a convent! How much more easy is it for devout girls to become holy in their own houses than in a convent! How many such have I known to regret having entered a convent, especially when the Community was large, the poor lay sister in certain offices having scarcely time to say the rosary!

But, Father, such a girl will answer, I have at home a peevish father and mother; I have bad brothers: all of them use me ill; I cannot stand this. Well, I say, and if you marry, will you not have to deal with mothers and sisters in law, and perhaps undutiful children, and perhaps a harsh husband? Oh, how many cruel husbands are there not, who when first married promised great things, but shortly afterward: ceased to be husbands, and became the tyrants of their wives, treating them not as companions, but as slaves? Inquire of many married women whether this be not the fact. But, without going beyond your own home, you all know how your mothers fared. One thing, at least, is certain, that all you should have to suffer at home, after having given yourself to God, you should suffer for the love of Jesus Christ, and He knows how to make your cross sweet and light to you. But how dreadful is it not to suffer for the world's sake! To suffer without merit! Courage, then! If Jesus Christ has called you to His love, and wishes to have you for His spouse, go on joyfully; it will be His care to afford you consolation even in the midst of sufferings. This, of course, will he only in case you truly love Him, and live as his spouse.

SECTION 2

MEANS TO PRESERVE VIRGINAL PURITY

Hear, then, for the last time, the means that you are to adopt in order to become holy, and live a true spouse of Jesus Christ; and these are, to practice the virtues becoming His spouse. We read in the Gospel that the kingdom of heaven is likened unto virgins. But to what virgins? Not to the foolish, but to the wise. The wise were admitted to the nuptials, but the door was shut in the face of the foolish; to whom the Spouse said, I know you not (Matthew 25:1) you are indeed virgins, but I do not acknowledge you for my spouses. The true spouses of Jesus Christ follow the Spouse whithersoever he goeth. "These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (Apocalypse 24:4). What is the meaning of following the Lamb? St. Augustine says that it means the imitation of the Lamb both in body and mind. After you have consecrated your body to Him, you must consecrate to Him your whole heart, so that your heart may be entirely devoted to his love; and, therefore, you must adopt all the means that are necessary for making you belong entirely to Jesus Christ.

1. The first of those means is mental prayer, to which you must be most attentive. But do not imagine that, in order to pray thus, it is necessary for you to be in a convent, or remain all day in the church. It is true that at home there is much disturbance created by the persons there; nevertheless, those who wish can find time and place for prayer: this is in the morning before the others rise, and at night after the others have gone to bed. In

order to pray, it is not necessary to be always on bended knees; you can pray whilst laboring, and even when walking out on business (should you have no other opportunity), by raising your soul to God, and thinking on the Passion of Jesus Christ, or any other pious subject.

2. The second means is, the frequentation of the sacraments of confession and Communion. With regard to confession, each one has to make choice of a confessor, whom she is to obey in everything, otherwise she will never walk steadily in the way of perfection. As to Communion, she must not depend solely upon obedience; she must desire it, and ask for it. This divine food must be hungered after; Jesus Christ must be desired. It is frequent Communion that renders His spouses faithful to Jesus Christ, especially in the preservation of holy purity. The Most Holy Sacrament preserves the soul in every virtue; and it appears that its most special effect is to preserve untouched the chastity of virgins, according to the saying of the prophet, who calls this sacrament the corn of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins (Zacharias 9:17).

3. The third means is, retirement and caution: “As the lily amongst the thorns so is my beloved amongst the daughters” (Canticles 2:2). For a virgin to think of remaining faithful to Jesus Christ amid the conversations, the jests, and other amusements of the world, is useless; it is necessary that she preserve herself amid the thorns of abstinence and mortification, by using not only the greatest modesty and reserve in speaking with men, but even all austerity and penitential exercises when necessary. Such are the thorns which preserve the lilies; I mean young maidens, who otherwise should soon be lost. The Lord calls the cheeks of his spouse as beautiful; as those of the turtle: “Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle dove’s” (Canticles 1:9). And why so? Because the turtle, by instinct, avoids the company of other birds, and always remains alone. That virgin, then, appears beautiful in the eyes of Jesus Christ who does all that she can to hide herself from the eyes of others. St. Jerome says that Jesus is a jealous spouse. Hence He is much displeased when He sees a virgin dedicated to Him endeavoring to appear before men to please them. Pious maidens endeavor to appear repulsive, that they may not attract men. The venerable Sister Catharine of Jesus, afterwards a Teresian nun, washed her face with the filthy water of tar, and then designedly exposed her face to the sun, that she might lose her complexion. St. Andregesina having, as we are told by Bollandus, been

promised in marriage, prayed the Lord to deform her, and was heard, for she was immediately covered with a leprosy which caused every one to avoid her; and as soon as her suitor had ceased his offers, her former beauty was restored. It is related by James di Viatrico that there was a certain virgin in a convent whose eyes had inflamed a prince. The latter threatened to set fire to the monastery if she would not yield to him; but she plucked out her eyes and sent them to him in a basin, the bearer of which was instructed to say. “Here are the darts which have wounded your heart take them, and leave me my soul untouched.” The same author tells of St. Euphemia, that, having been promised by her father to a certain count, who left no means untried to obtain her, she, in order to free herself from his addresses, cut off her nose and lips saying to herself, “Vain beauty, you shall never be to me an occasion of sin!” St. Antoninus tells something similar (and his account is confirmed by Baronius) of the Abbess Ebbs, who, fearing an invasion of the barbarians, cut off her nose and upper lip to the teeth; and that all the other nuns, to the number of thirty, following her example, did the same. The barbarians came, and seeing them so deformed, set fire to the monastery through rage and burned them alive; and hence the Church, as Baronius tells us, has enrolled them among her martyrs. This is not allowable for others to do; those saints did so by the especial impulse of the Holy Ghost. But it sufficiently well answers the purpose of showing you what virgins who loved Jesus Christ have done to prevent men from seeking them. Devout virgins at present should at least move as modestly, and be seen as little as possible, by men. Should it happen that a virgin should, by chance, and without any fault of hers, receive by violence any insult from men, be it known to you that after it she will remain as pure as before. St. Lucia made an answer of this kind to the tyrant who threatened to dishonor her. “If you do,” she said, “and I be so treated against my will, my crown shall be double.” It is the consent only that is hurtful; and know, moreover, that if a virgin be modest and reserved, men will have no inclination to interfere with her.

4. The fourth means of preserving purity is the mortification of the senses. St. Basil says, “A virgin should not be immodest in any respect, in tongue, ears, eyes, touch, and still less in mind.” A virgin, in order to keep herself pure, must be modest in her speech, conversing seldom with men, and that only through necessity, and in few words. Her ears must be pure,

by not listening to worldly conversations. Her eyes must be pure, by being either closed, or fixed upon the earth in the presence of men. She must be pure in touch, using therein all possible caution, both as regards herself and others. She must be pure in spirit, by resisting all immodest thoughts, through the help of Jesus and Mary. And to this end she must mortify herself with fasting, abstinence, and other penitential exercises; which things she must not practice without the consent of the confessor, otherwise they should injure her soul by making her proud. Those acts of penance must not be made without the confessor's permission, but they must be desired and sought for; for the confessor, it he does not see the penitent wishing for them, will not give them. Jesus is a spouse of blood, who espoused our souls upon the cross, whereon he shed all his blood for us, "A bloody spouse art thou to me" (Exodus 4:25). Therefore those spouses who love Him, love tribulation, infirmity, sorrows, ill treatment, and injuries; and receive them not only with patience, but with joy. Thus may we understand that passage which says that "virgins follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (Apocalypse 14:2). They follow their spouse Jesus with joy and gladness whithersoever he goeth, even through sorrow and disgrace, as has been done by so many holy virgins, who have followed Him to torments and to death, smiling and rejoicing.

5. Finally, Sisters, in order that you may obtain perseverance in this holy life, you must recommend yourselves often and much to Most Holy Mary, the Queen of Virgins. She is the mediatrix who negotiates those espousals, and brings virgins to espouse her Son. "After her shall virgins be brought to the King" (Psalms 44:15). It is she, in fine, who obtains fidelity for those chosen spouses; for, without her assistance, they should be all unfaithful.

CONCLUSION

Come on, then, you who intend to live no longer for the world, but for Jesus Christ alone. (I address myself to those who feel themselves called by that divine Spouse to consecrate themselves to His love.) I do not wish that you should make any vow this morning, or oblige yourselves at once to perpetual chastity. You should do that when God inspires you, and your confessor is willing. I only desire you by a simple act, and without any obligation, to thank Jesus Christ for having called you to His love; and to offer yourselves to Him henceforward for your entire lives. Say then to Him: O my Jesus, my God, and my Redeemer! Who Hast died for me, compassionate me who burn to call myself Thy spouse. I burn, because I see that Thou hast called me to that honor; nor do I know how to thank Thee for that grace. I should now have been in hell; and Thou instead of chastising me, hast called me to be Thy spouse. Yes, my Spouse, I leave the world, I leave all through love of Thee, and give myself entirely to Thee. What world? What world do I speak of? My Jesus, henceforward Thou art to be my only good my only love. I see that Thou wishest to have my entire heart, and I wish to resign it entirely to Thee. Receive me in Thy mercy, and do not reject me as I have deserved that Thou shouldst. Forget all the offenses that I have given Thee, of which I repent with my whole soul; would that I had died before offending Thee! Pardon me: inflame me with Thy holy love, and give me Thy aid, in order that I may be faithful to Thee, and never leave Thee more. Thou, my Spouse, hast given Thyself all to me. Behold! I give myself entirely to Thee. Mary, my Queen and my Mother, chain my heart to that of Jesus Christ; and fasten both hearts so that they be never sundered more.

I leave you now my blessing, in order that you may be so bound to Jesus Christ as never again to depart from Him. Give your hearts now to Jesus Christ: Say, Jesus my Spouse, henceforward I wish to love only Thee, and nothing else.

Chapter 11

A Letter TO A YOUNG STUDENT

I have received your last favor, in which you tell me that you are still undecided as to the state of life you should choose, and that having communicated to your pastor the counsel I gave you, namely, to go for that purpose to perform the spiritual exercises in that house which your father has in the country, the said pastor answered you, that it was not necessary for you to go to that house to torture your brains during eight days in solitude, but that it was enough for you to attend the exercises he would soon give to the people in his own church. Since, then, on this last point of the exercises, you again ask my advice, it is necessary that I should answer you more at length, and show you, first, how much greater the fruit of the spiritual exercises is when they are performed in silence, in some retired place, than when performed whilst they are given in public, when one is obliged during them to go to one's own house, and continues to converse with one's parents and friends; and the more so in your case, as you write to me you have in your house no room to which you may retire. On the other hand, I am very much in favor of those exercises performed in solitude, as I know it is to such I owe my own conversion and my resolution to leave the world. I will then secondly suggest to you the means and precautions to be taken during the exercises, in order to obtain from them the fruit you desire. I beg you, when you have read this letter yourself, to give it to your Reverend pastor to read it also.

SECTION 1

Let us, then, speak first of the great benefit of the exercises, when they are performed in solitude, where one treats with no person but God; and first of all let us see the reason for it. The truths of eternal life, such as the great affair of our salvation, the value of the time God gives us that we may amass merits for a happy eternity, the obligations we are under to love God for his infinite goodness and the immense love that he bears towards us these and similar things are not seen with the eyes of the flesh, but with those of the mind. It is, on the contrary, certain that, unless our intellect represents the value of a good or the greatness of an evil to the will, we shall never embrace that good nor reject that evil. And this is the ruin of those who are attached to the world; they live in darkness: whence it happens that, not knowing the greatness of eternal good and evil, and allured by the senses, they give themselves up to forbidden pleasure, and miserably perish.

Therefore the Holy Ghost admonishes us that in order to avoid sin we must keep before our eyes the last things that are to come upon us, that is, death, with which all the goods of this earth will come to an, end for us, and the divine judgment, in which we shall have to give an account, of our whole life. “Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin” (Ecclesiasticus 7:40). And in another place he says “O that they would be wise and would understand, and would provide for their last end” (Deuteronomy 32:29). By which words He wishes to give us to understand that, if men would consider the things of the other life, they would all certainly take care to sanctify themselves, and would not expose themselves to the danger of an unhappy life through all eternity. They shut their eyes to the light, and thus remaining blind, precipitate themselves into so great evils. For this reason the saints always prayed the Lord to give them light. “Enlighten my eyes, that I never sleep in death” (Psalms 12:4). “May God cause the light of his countenance to shine upon us” (Psalms 66:2). “Make the way known to me wherein I should walk” (Psalms 142:8). “Give me understanding, and I will learn thy commandments” (Psalms 118:73).

But to obtain this divine light we must go near to God. “Come ye to him and be enlightened” (Psalms 33:6). “For,” says St. Augustine, “as we cannot see the sun without the light of the sun itself, so we cannot see the light of God but by the light of God Himself.” This light is obtained in the spiritual exercises: by them we approach to God, and God enlightens us with His light. The spiritual exercises mean nothing else than that we retire for that time from intercourse with the world, and go to converse with God alone, where God speaks to us by His inspirations, and we speak to God in our meditations, by acts of love, by repenting of our sins by which we have displeased Him, by offering ourselves to serve Him for the future with all our heart, and by beseeching Him to make known to us His will, and to give us strength to accomplish it.

Holy Job said, “Now I should have rest in my sleep with kings and consuls of the earth, who build themselves solitudes” (Job 3:13). Who are those kings that build themselves solitudes? They are, as St. Gregory says, those despisers of the world, who go from its tumults to render themselves fit to talk alone with God: “They build solitudes. that is, they separate themselves as far as possible from the tumult of the world, in order to be alone and to become fit to speak with God.”

When Arsenius was reflecting on the means he should take to become a saint, God caused him to hear these words: “Fly, be silent, and rest.” Fly from the world, be silent, cease to talk with men, and talk only with me, and thus rest in peace and solitude. In conformity with this, St. Anselm wrote to one worried by many worldly occupations, who complained that he had no moment of peace, the following advice: “Leave a little your occupations, hide yourself for a while from your tumultuous thoughts, apply yourself a little to contemplate God and rest in Him; say to God: Now teach my heart where and how I shall seek Thee, where and how I shall find Thee.” Words that are applicable each and all to yourself. Fly, says he, for a short time from those earthly occupations, which render you so unquiet, and rest in retirement with God; say to him: O Lord, show me where and how I may find Thee, that I may speak alone to Thee, and at the same time hear Thy words.

God speaks indeed to those who seek Him, but He does not speak in the midst of the tumult of the world. “The Lord is not in the earthquake” (3 Kings 19:11), as it was said to Elias, when God called him to solitude. The voice of God, as it is said in the same place, is as “the whistling of a gentle air,” which is scarcely heard, not however by the ear of the body, but by that of the heart without noise and in a sweet rest. This is exactly what the Lord says through Osee: “I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart” (Osee 2:14). When the Lord wishes to draw a soul to himself, he leads it into solitude, far from the embarrassment of the world and intercourse with men, and there speaks to it with words of fire (Psalms 118:140). The words of God are said to be of fire, because they melt a soul, as the sacred spouse said: “My soul melted, when he [my beloved] spoke”

(Canticles 5:6). In fact, they prepare the soul to submit readily to the direction of God, and to take that form of life which God wishes it to take; they are words exceedingly efficacious, and so efficient, that at the very time they are heard they operate in the soul that which God requires of it.

One day the Lord said to St. Teresa, "Oh! How willingly would I speak to many souls, but the world makes so great a noise in their hearts that my voice cannot be heard. Oh! If they would but separate themselves a little from the world." Thus, then, my very dear friend, the Lord wishes to speak to you, but alone and in solitude; since if he should speak to you in your own house, your parents, your friends, and your domestic occupations would continue to make a noise in your heart, and you would be unable to hear his voice. The saints have for this reason left their homes and their country, and gone to hide themselves in caverns or deserts, or at least in a cell of a religious house, there to find God and hear his words. St. Eucherius relates that a certain person, seeking a place in which she could find God, went for this purpose to ask counsel from a master of the spiritual life. The man of God led her to a solitary place, and then said: "Behold, here God may be found," without saying anything more. By this he wished to give her to understand that God is not to be found in the midst of the noise of the world, but in solitude. St. Bernard says that he learned to know God among the beech trees and oaks better than in all the learned books he had read.

The inclination of worldlings is to be in company with friends, to talk and divert themselves; but the desire of the saints is to be in solitary places, in the midst of forests, or in caverns, there to converse alone with God, who in solitude familiarly converses with souls, as a friend with his friend. "O solitude," exclaims St. Jerome, "in which God familiarly converses with His servants!" The Venerable Vincent Caraffa said that if it had been free to him to wish for anything in this world, he would have asked for nothing but a little grotto with a piece of bread and a spiritual book, there always to live far from men and conversing alone with God. The Spouse of the Canticles praising the beauty of a soul living in solitude, compares it to the beauty of the turtle dove: "Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtledove's" (Canticles 1:9). Precisely because the turtledove avoids the company of other birds, and always lives in the most solitary places. Thence it is that the holy angels admire with joy the beauty and splendor which embellish on its flight to heaven a soul that in this life has lived hidden and solitary as in a desert.

“Who is this that cometh up from the desert flowing with delights?” (Canticles 8:5)

I have wished to write all these things to you in order to inspire you with a love for holy solitude, for I hope that in the exercises that you will perform you will not have to torture your brains, as your pastor said, but that the Lord will make you taste so great a spiritual delight, that you will come out of your retreat with such an affection for them, that you will not fail hereafter to go through them every year a thing which will be of immense advantage to your soul, whatever state of life you may choose, because in the midst of the world the various occupations, disturbances, and distractions always produce dryness of spirit, so that it is necessary from time to time to irrigate, as it were, and renew it, as St. Paul exhorts, “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Ephesians 4:23).

King David, troubled by earthly cares, wished to have wings and fly away from the bustle of the world in order to find rest: “Who will give me wings, and I will fly, and be at rest” (Psalm 54:7). But being unable to leave the world with his body, he at least sought from time to time to disengage himself from the affairs of the realm he governed, and dwell in solitude conversing with God, and thus his spirit found peace. “I have gone far off flying away, and I abode in the wilderness.”

Jesus Christ also, who had no need of solitude to be recollected and united with God, but wished to set us an example, often retired from intercourse with man and went away to mountains or into deserts to pray: “Having dismissed the multitude, he went up into a mountain alone to pray” (Matthew 14:23): and “He retired into a desert and prayed” (Luke 5:16). And He desired that his disciples, after the fatigue of their missions, should retire to some solitary place to rest in spirit: “Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little” (Mark 6:30): desisting by this that the spirit, even amidst spiritual occupations, being obliged to treat with men, becomes somewhat relaxed, whence it becomes necessary to renew it in solitude.

Worldlings, who are accustomed to divert themselves in conversations, at banquets and plays, believe that in solitude; where no such things are found, one must suffer an insupportable tediousness; and this is really the case with those who have a conscience defiled by sin; for when they are occupied in the affairs of this world, they do not think of the things of the soul, but when they are disengaged and in solitude, as they do not seek God, they feel at once the remorse of their conscience, and thus find not peace, but tediousness and pain. But give me one who seeks God: and he shall find in solitude not tediousness, but contentment and joy. This the wise man assures us of: “For her [wisdom’s] conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness, but joy and gladness” (Wisdom 8:16). Oh, no; to converse with God causes no bitterness, nor tediousness but joy and peace.

Cardinal Bellarmine used during the season, when other cardinals went to divert themselves in country seats and villas, to go to some solitary house to make the exercises during a month, and these he called his country diversions; and certainly his heart found more delight in them than all the others did in their amusements.

St. Charles Borromeo made the exercises every year, and found in them his paradise on earth, and it was whilst he was one year engaged in these exercises on Mount Varalla, that his last illness came upon him and brought him to his blessed end. For this reason St. Jerome said, that solitude was a paradise which he had discovered on earth: “Solitude is a paradise to me.”

But perhaps some one will say, what contentment can a person find being alone and having no one to converse with? St. Bernard answers, “He who seeks God is by no means alone in solitude, for God Himself is there with him, and renders him more content than if he had the company of the first princes of the world.” “I was never less alone,” writes the holy abbot, “than when I was alone.” The prophet Isaias describing the sweetness which God gives those to taste who go to seek Him in solitude, says: “The Lord therefore will comfort Sion, and will comfort all the ruins thereof; and he will make her desert as a place of pleasure, and her wilderness as the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of praise” (Isaias 51:3). The Lord well knows how to comfort a soul that retires from the world; he recompenses a thousand fold all the pleasures of the world it foregoes, and makes solitude become for it a garden of delight, where, all the tumult of the world being excluded and there being only thanksgiving and praise to that God who treats it so lovingly, it finds a peace that satiates it. If there were no other contentment in solitude than that of knowing the eternal truths, this alone should he sufficient to induce us to desire it. Divine truth, when known, truly satiates the soul, and not the vanities of the world, which are but lying and deceitful things, and this is precisely that great delight which is found in the exercises made in solitude and silence. In them we see in their purest light the Christian maxims, the importance of eternal salvation, the ugliness of sin, the value of grace the love of God towards us, the vanity of the goods of this world, and the foolishness of those who, in order to acquire them, lose eternal goods and prepare for themselves an eternity of pains.

Whence it happens that the soul at the sight of these truths takes the most efficacious means to secure its eternal salvation, and rises above itself, as Jeremias says: “He shall sit solitary and hold his peace because he hath taken it up upon himself” (Lamentations 3:28). There man disengages himself from earthly affections, and unites himself to God in prayer, by the desire of belonging to Him altogether, by offering himself to Him, and by other repeated acts of sorrow, love, and resignation, and thus finds himself raised so high above all created things, that he laughs at those who so much prize the goods of this world which he despises, knowing them to be too little and too unworthy of the love of a heart created to love the infinite good, which is God.

It is certain that he who comes out of the exercises comes out of them much changed and better than he was when he began them. It was the opinion of St. John Chrysostom that retirement is a great help towards the acquisition of perfection. Therefore a world in consequence of the impression made on him by that sentence of the Gospel: “What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26) A certain student, in consequence of one single sentiment on death, suggested to him by a good religious, changed his bad life and became virtuous. St. Clement of Ancyra was encouraged by another consideration on eternity suggested to him by his mother, namely, “The thing that we contend for is life eternal,” and joyously suffered for Jesus Christ many torments inflicted on him by the tyrant.

To conceive, then, a just idea of the fruit which the exercises produce when performed in solitude, read a book on this subject, if you have one, and see there the stupendous conversions occasioned by them. I will here mention a few.

Father Maffei relates that there was in Siena a priest who gave public scandal. This priest having made the exercises with a missionary who passed by accident through Siena, was not only converted and made a good confession, but on a certain day, whilst a great number of people were present in the church, he went into the pulpit weeping, and having a cord round his neck, and asked pardon for all the scandals that he had given; and after this he went away to become a Capuchin and died as a saint. On his deathbed he confessed that for all the graces he had received he was indebted to those spiritual exercises.

Moreover, Father Bartoli relates of a certain German knight, who had given himself up to all kinds of vice, so far as to give his soul to the devil by a written contract signed with his own blood, that having afterwards performed the exercises, he conceived so great a sorrow for his sins that he fainted several times, and thenceforth he continued to lead a penitential life as long as he lived.

Father Rossignoli relates that in Sicily a son of a certain baron became so debauched, that his father, after having tried without effect many means to correct him, was obliged to put him in chains in a galley with the slaves. But a certain good religious, moved by compassion, went to see him, and by his winning manners and good advice induced him to meditate on certain eternal truths in the galley where he was confined. The young man having done so, wished to make a general confession, and the showed such a change in his conduct, that his father with much joy received him again into his house, and never afterwards had any reason to be displeased with him.

Another youth of Flanders, having made the exercises and being converted by them from a most wicked life he had been leading, said afterwards to his companions, who were wondering at this: “You wonder at me; but I tell you that the devil himself, if he could make the exercises, would be brought to penance.”

Another, a religious, but of such bad conduct that he had rendered himself insupportable to all, was by his superiors sent to make the exercises. Being about to leave, he jestingly said to his friends: “Keep your beds ready to touch my body when I come back.” But after the exercises he was so much changed that he became an example to all the other religious, who seeing this change, wished to make them also.

Certain young men seeing other young men, their friends, going to make the exercises, wished to accompany them, not to profit, but to jest afterwards in their conversations about their devotions. But exactly the contrary happened. for during the exercises they were filled with such compunction that they all began to sigh and weep, confessed their sins, and changed their lives.

I could adduce such facts by thousands, but I shall relate only one more that of a nun in the monastery of Torre di Specchi in Rome, who pretended to learning, but led a very imperfect life. This nun began, though with a bad will, to assist at the exercises that were given in the monastery; but the first meditation she made on the end of man made such an impression on her, that she began to weep, went to her spiritual Father, and said to him: “Father, I wish to become a saint, and this promptly.” She wanted to say more, but the tears prevented her from speaking. Having then retired to her cell, she made a writing by which she gave herself entirely to Jesus Christ, and began to lead a penitent and retired life, in which she persevered until death.

But when we see the esteem in which the exercises have been held by so many holy men, this, if we had no other reason, should be enough to make us prize them highly. St. Charles Borromeo, from the first time that he made the spiritual exercises in Rome, began to lead a perfect life. St. Francis de Sales confessed that it was to the exercises he owed the beginning of his holy life. Father Louis of Granada, a holy man, said that his whole life would not suffice to explain the knowledge of heavenly things he had received in making the spiritual exercises. Father Avila called the exercises a school of heavenly wisdom, and wished that all his spiritual children should go to make them. Father Louis Blosius, a Benedictine, said that we should give to God special thanks for having in these latter times made known to his Church this treasure of the exercises.

But if the exercises are of a great help to persons in every state or condition, they are of an especial help to him who wishes to make the choice of the state of life he should embrace. For I find it stated that the first end for which the exercises were instituted was that of making the choice of a state of life, because upon this choice depends the eternal salvation of each one. We cannot expect that an angel from heaven should come to assure us of the state which according to the will of God we should choose. It is sufficient to place before our eyes the state we think of choosing, and then we should consider the end we have in view in that choice, and weigh all the circumstances of the case.

This is the principal reason for which I wish you to make the exercises in silence, namely, for making the choice of the state of life. When, then, you have entered upon the exercises, as I hope you will, I beg of you to follow the advice I am going to subjoin.

1. The only intention that you should have in making these exercises is that you may know what God will have you to do: and therefore in going to that solitary house, say within yourself: “I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me” (Psalms 84:9). I go to know what the Lord shall tell me and what he wishes from me.

2. Besides, it is necessary that you have a determined will to obey God, and to follow without reserve the vocation he shall make known to you.

3. It is moreover necessary that you pray earnestly to the Lord, that he may make known to you his will, namely, in what state of life He wishes you to live. But remember that in order to obtain this light you should pray with indifference of mind. He who prays to God to enlighten him on his state of life, but does so without this indifference, and, instead of wishing to conform to the will of God, wishes rather that God should conform to his own will, is like a pilot who feigns to will but indeed wills not that his vessel advance, since he casts the anchor and then hoists the sail. God does net enlighten or speak to such a person. But if you will supplicate him with this indifference and the resolution to accomplish his will, he will make you see clearly the state that is best for you. And if you should then feel any repugnance to it, you should place before your eyes the hour of your death, and reflect which state you would in that hour wish to have embraced, and then embrace that.

4. Take with you to your house of retreat a book containing the meditations which are commonly made during the exercises; read these meditations, and let them be instead of sermons, reflecting on them for half an hour as well in the morning as in the evening, Take also with you the lives of some of the saints or some other spiritual book out of which to make your reading; and these should be your only companions in solitude during the eight days.

5. It is also necessary, in order to obtain that light and to hear what the Lord will speak to you, to avoid every distraction. “Be still, and see that I am God” (Psalms 45:11). To hear the divine voice we must cease all intercourse with the world. To a sick man no remedies will be of any use if

he does not take them with the proper precaution, as avoiding exposure to the cold air, unwholesome food, or too much application of mind. In the same manner, in order that the exercises may be useful for the health of your soul, you must remove hurtful distractions, such as receiving visits from friends, messages from without, or letters which are sent to you. St. Francis de Sales, when he was engaged in the exercises, laid aside all the letters he received, and did not read them until after the exercises. It is also necessary to read no books of amusement and not even of study; for then we ought to study only the crucifix. Therefore have in your room none but spiritual books, and, reading in them, read not for curiosity's sake, but only for this one end, namely. to decide on the state of life which God will make known to you as the one He wishes you to embrace.

6. Moreover, it is not enough to avoid distractions from without; you must also avoid those from within: for if you should there deliberately allow your mind to think on the things of the world, or of study, or the like, the exercises and the solitude will be of little use to you. St. Gregory says, "What avails the solitude of the body if the solitude of the heart is wanting?" Peter Ortiz, an envoy of Charles V, wished to go to the monastery of Monte Casino to make the exercises. Having arrived at the door of the monastery he said to his thoughts what our Lord said to his disciples, "Sit ye here till I go yonder and pray" (Matthew 26:36). Thoughts of the world, wait here outside. Having finished the exercises, I shall again see you and we will again talk together. Whilst one is engaged in the exercises he ought to make use of the time only for the good of his soul, without losing any moment of it. Finally, I beg of you to recite during the exercises the following short prayer:

My God, I am that miserable one, who in the past have despised Thee, but now I esteem and love Thee above everything, nor will I love any other but Thee. Thou wouldst have me belong entirely to Thee; to Thee I will belong entirely. "Speak, O Lord, for Thy servant heareth" (1 Kings 3:10). Let me know what Thou wishest from me, and I will do all; and let me especially know in what state Thou wishest me to serve Thee. "Make the way known to me wherein I should walk" (Psalms 142:8). During the exercises recommend yourself also in an especial manner to the divine mother Mary, praying her to obtain for you the grace perfectly to accomplish the will of her Son.

And do not forget, when you make the exercises, to recommend me to Jesus Christ, as I will not omit to do in a particular manner for you, that He may make you a saint, as I heartily wish. In which sentiment I protest myself to be your most devoted and obliged servant, etc.

Chapter 12

THE VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

SECTION 1

NECESSITY OF A DIVINE VOCATION TO TAKE HOLY ORDERS

To enter any state of life a divine vocation is necessary; for without such a vocation it is, if not impossible, at least most difficult, to fulfill the obligations of our state, and obtain salvation. But if for all states a vocation is necessary, it is necessary in a particular manner for the ecclesiastical state. “He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber” (John 10:1). Hence he who takes holy Orders without a call from God is convicted of theft, in taking by force a dignity which God does not wish to bestow upon him. “Robbers and thieves,” says St. Cyril of Alexandria, “such are the names of those that dare to adjudge to themselves a grace that heaven does not offer them.” And before him St. Paul said the same thing: “Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was. So Christ also did not glorify Himself that He might be made a high priest; but He that said unto Him: Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee” (Hebrews 5:4–5)

No one, then, however learned, prudent, and holy he may be, can thrust himself into the sanctuary unless he is first called and introduced by God. Jesus Christ himself, who among all men was certainly the most learned and the most holy, “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14), “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3), Jesus Christ, I say, required a divine call in order to assume the dignity of the priesthood.

In entering the sanctuary, even after God Himself had called them to it, the saints trembled. When his bishop ordered St. Augustine to receive ordination, the saint through humility regarded the command as a chastisement of his sins. “They have forced me, in punishment of my sins.” To escape the priesthood St. Ephrem of Syria feigned madness; and St. Ambrose pretended to be a man of a cruel disposition.

To avoid the priesthood, St. Ammonius the Monk cut off his ears and threatened to pluck out his tongue if the persons who pressed him to take holy Orders should continue to molest him. In a word, St. Cyril of Alexandria says, “The saints have dreaded the dignity of the priesthood, as a burden of enormous weight.” Can any one, then, says St. Cyprian, be so daring as to attempt of himself, and without a divine call, to assume the priesthood?

As a vassal who would of himself take the office of minister should violate the authority of his sovereign, so he who intrudes himself into the sanctuary without a vocation violates the authority of God. How great should be the temerity of the subject who, without the appointment, and even in opposition to the will of the monarch, should attempt to administer the royal patrimony, to decide lawsuits, to command the army, and to assume the viceregal authority! “Among you,” asks St. Bernard in speaking to clerics, “is there any one so insolent as, without orders and contrary to the will of the pettiest monarch, to assume the direction of his affairs?” And are not priests, as St. Prosper says, the administrators of the royal house? Are they not, according to St. Ambrose, the “leaders and rectors of the flock of Christ,” according to St. John Chrysostom, the “interpreters of the divine judgments,” and according to St. Denis, the “vicars of Christ”? Will any one who knows all this dare to become the minister of God without a divine call?

To think of exercising royal authority is, according to St. Peter Chrysologus, criminal in a subject. To intrude into the house of a private individual, in order to dispose of his goods and to manage his business, would be considered temerity; for even a private individual has the right of appointing the administrators of his affairs. And will you, says St. Bernard, without being called or introduced by God, intrude into his house to take charge of His interests and to dispose of His goods?

The Council of Trent has declared that the Church regards not as her minister, but as a robber, the man who audaciously assumes the priesthood without a vocation. Such priests may labor and toil, but their labors shall profit them little before God. On the contrary, the works that are meritorious in others shall deserve chastisement for them. Should a servant who is commanded by his master to take care of the house, through his own caprice labor in cultivating the vineyard, he may toil and sweat, but instead of being rewarded he shall be chastised by his master. Thus, in the first place, because they are not conformable to the divine will, the Lord shall not accept the toils of the man who, without a vocation, intrudes himself into the priesthood. “I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will not receive a gift of your hand” (Malachias 1:10). In the end God will not reward, but will punish, the works of the priest who has entered the sanctuary without a vocation. “What stranger soever cometh to it [the tabernacle] shall he slain.” (Numbers 1:51).

Whosoever, then, aspires to holy Orders must, in the first place, carefully examine whether his vocation is from God. “For,” says St. John Chrysostom, “since this dignity is great, it must be approved by a divine sentence, so that only the one that is worthy may he admitted thereto.” Now, to know whether his call is from God, he should examine the marks of a divine vocation. He, says St. Luke, who wishes to build a tower first computes the necessary expenses, in order to know if he has the means of completing the edifice (Luke 14:28).

SECTION 2

MARKS OF A DIVINE VOCATION TO THE SACERDOTAL STATE

Let us now see what are the marks of a divine vocation to the sacerdotal state. Nobility is not a mark of a divine vocation. To know, says St. Jerome, whether a person should become the guide of the people in what regards their eternal salvation. we must consider not nobility of blood, but sanctity of life. St. Gregory says the same: “By one’s conduct, not by one’s high birth, is one’s vocation to be proved.”

Nor is the will of parents a mark of a divine vocation. In inducing a child to take priesthood they seek not his spiritual welfare, but their own interest, and the advancement of the family, “How many mothers,” says St. John Chrysostom, or the author of the Imperfect Work, “have eyes only for the bodies of their children and disdain their souls! To see them happy here below is all that they desire; as for the punishments that perhaps their children are to endure in the next life, they do not even think of them.” We must be persuaded, as Jesus Christ has said, that with regard to the choice of a state of life we have no enemies more dangerous than our own relatives. “And a man’s enemies shalt be they of his own household” (Matthew 10:36). Hence the Redeemer adds: “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:37). Oh! How many priests shall we see condemned on the day of judgment for having taken holy Orders to please their relatives.

When a young man, in obedience to the call of God, wishes to become a religious, what efforts do not his parents make, either through passion or for the interest of the family, to dissuade him from following his vocation! It is necessary to know that, according to the common opinion of theologians, this cannot be excused from mortal sin. See what I have written on this subject in my Moral Theology. Parents who act in this manner are guilty of a double sin. They sin first against charity, because they are the cause of a grievous evil to the child whom God has called to religion. A person who dissuades even a stranger from following a religious vocation is guilty of a grievous sin. They sin, secondly, against piety; for by their obligation to educate a child they are bound to promote his greatest spiritual welfare. Some ignorant confessors tell their penitents who wish to become religious, that in this they should obey their parents, and abandon their vocation if their parents object to their entering religion. These confessors adopt the opinion of Luther, who taught that a person sins by entering religion without the consent of his parents. But the doctrine of Luther was rejected by the holy Fathers, and by the Tenth Council of Toledo, in which it was decreed that children who had attained their fourteenth year may lawfully enter religion even against the will of their parents. A child is bound to obey his parents in what regards his education and the government of the house; but with regard to the choice of a state of life, he should obey God by embracing the state to which God calls him. When parents seek to be obeyed in this matter we must answer them in the words of the apostles to the princes of the Jews: “If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than judge ye” (Acts Of The Apostles 4:19).

St. Thomas expressly teaches that in the choice of a state of life children are not obliged to obey their parents. And the saint says that when there is question of a vocation to religion, a person is not bound even to consult his relatives; for on such occasions self interest changes relatives into enemies.

Parents are, as St. Bernard says, content to see their children damned with them, rather than see them saved by entering religion and separating from the family. But when a person wishes to enter the sacerdotal state, in which he may be able to serve the family, what efforts do not his parents make to procure his ordination, either by lawful or unlawful means, whether he is called or not called to the priesthood! And with what severity do they not treat him if, through remorse of conscience, he refuse to take holy Orders! Barbarous fathers! Let us, with St. Bernard, call them not parents, but murderers! Unhappy fathers! Miserable children! I say again. How many shall we see condemned in the valley of Josaphat for having interfered with the vocation of others, or for not having attended to their own! For, as we shall hereafter demonstrate, the salvation of each individual depends on following the divine call.

But let us return to our subject. Neither nobility of birth nor the will of parents is a mark of a vocation to the priesthood; nor is talent or fitness for the offices of a priest a sign of vocation, for along with talent a holy life and a divine call are necessary. What, then, are the marks of a divine vocation to the ecclesiastical state? There are three principal marks:

MARK 1

PURITY OF INTENTION

The first is a good intention. It is necessary to enter the sanctuary by the door, but there is no other door than Jesus Christ: “I am the door of the sheep. . . . If any man enter in, he shall be saved” (John 10:7,9). To enter, then, by the door is to become a priest not to please relatives, nor to advance the family, nor for the sake of self interest or self esteem, but to serve God, to propagate His glory, and to save souls. “If any one,” says a wise theologian, the learned continuator of Tournely, presents himself for holy Orders without any vicious affection, and with the sole desire to be employed in the service of God and in the salvation of his neighbor, he, we may believe, is called by God.” Another author asserts that he who is impelled by ambition, interest, or a motive of his own glory, is called not by God, but by the devil. “But,” adds St. Anselm, “he who enters the priesthood through so unworthy motives shall receive not a blessing, but a malediction from God.”

MARK 2

SCIENCE AND TALENTS

The second mark is the talent and learning necessary for the fulfillment of the duties of a priest. Priests must be masters to teach the people the law of God. “For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth” (Malachias 2:7). Sidonius Apollinarius used to say: “Ignorant physicians are the cause of many deaths.” And ignorant priests, particularly a confessor who teaches false doctrines and gives bad counsels, will be the ruin of many souls; because, in consequence of being a priest, his errors are easily believed. Hence Ivone Carnotensis has written: “No one should be admitted to holy Orders unless he has given sufficient proofs of good conduct and learning.”

A priest must not only have a competent knowledge of all the rubrics necessary for the celebration of Mass, but must be also acquainted with the principal things that regard the sacrament of penance. It is true, that every priest is not obliged to hear confessions, unless there is great necessity for his assistance in the district in which he lives; however, every priest is bound to be acquainted with what a priest must ordinarily know in order to be able to hear the confessions of dying persons; that is, he is bound to know when he has faculties to absolve, when and how he ought to give absolution to the sick, whether conditionally or absolutely; what obligation he ought to impose on them, if they are under any censure. He should also know at least the general principles of Moral Theology.

MARK 3

POSITIVE GOODNESS OF CHARACTER

The third mark of an ecclesiastical vocation is positive virtue. Hence, in the first place, the person who is to be ordained should be a man of innocent life, and should not be contaminated by sins. The apostle requires that they who are to be ordained priests should be free from every crime. In ancient times a person who had committed a single mortal sin could never be ordained, as we learn from the First Council of Nice. And St. Jerome says that it was not enough for a person to be free from sin, at the time of his ordination, but that it was, moreover, necessary that he should not have fallen into mortal sin since the time of his baptism. It is true that this rigorous discipline has ceased in the Church, but it has been always at least required that he who had fallen into grievous sins should purify his conscience for a considerable time before his ordination. This we may infer from a letter to the Archbishop of Rheims, in which Alexander III commanded that a deacon who had wounded another deacon, if he sincerely repented of his sin, might, after being absolved, and after performing the penance enjoined, be permitted again to exercise his Order; and that if he afterwards led a perfect life, he might be promoted to priesthood. He, then, who finds himself bound by a habit of any vice cannot take any holy Order without incurring the guilt of mortal sin. "I am horrified," says St. Bernard, "when I think whence thou comest, whither thou goest, and what a short penance thou hast put between thy sins and thy ordination. However, it is indispensable that thou do not undertake to purify the conscience of others before thou purifiest thy own." Of those daring sinners who, though full of bad habits, take priesthood, an ancient author, Gildas, says, "It is not to the priesthood that they should be admitted, but they should be dragged to the pillory." They, then, says St. Isidore, who are still subject to the habit of any sin should not be promoted to holy Orders.

But he who intends to ascend the altar must not only be free from sin, but must have also begun to walk in the path of perfection, and have acquired a habit of virtue. In our Moral Theology we have shown in a distinct dissertation (and this is the common opinion) that if a person in the habit of any vice wish to be ordained it is not enough for him to have the dispositions necessary for the sacrament of penance, but that he must also have the dispositions required for receiving the sacrament of order; otherwise he is unfit for both: and should he receive absolution with the intention of taking Orders without the necessary dispositions, he and the confessor who absolves him shall be guilty of a grievous sin. For it is not enough for those who wish to take holy Orders to have left the state of sin: they must also, according to the words of Alexander III, cited in the preceding paragraph, have the positive virtue necessary for the ecclesiastical state. From the words of the Pontiff we learn that a person who has done penance may exercise an order already received, but he who has only done penance cannot take a higher order. The angelic Doctor teaches the same doctrine: "Sanctity is required for the reception of holy

Orders, and we must place the sublime burden of the priesthood only upon walls already dried by sanctity; that is, freed from the malignant humor of sin.” This is conformable to what St. Denis wrote long before: “Let no one be so bold as to propose himself to others as their guide in the things of God, if he has not first, with all his power, transformed himself into God to the point of perfect resemblance to Him.” For this St. Thomas adduces two reasons: the first is, that as he who takes Orders is raised above seculars in dignity, so he should be superior to them in sanctity. The second reason is, that by his ordination a priest is appointed to exercise the most sublime ministry on the altar, for which greater sanctity is required than for the religious state.

Hence the Apostle forbade Timothy to ordain neophytes; that is, according to St. Thomas, neophytes in perfection as well as neophytes in age. Hence the Council of Trent, in reference to the words of Scripture, “And a spotless life in old age” (Wisdom 4:9), prescribes to the bishops to admit to ordination only those who show themselves worthy by a conduct full of wise maturity. And of this positive virtue it is necessary, according to St. Thomas, to have not a doubtful but a certain knowledge. This, according to St. Gregory, is particularly necessary with regard to the virtue of chastity: “No one should be admitted to the ministry of the altar unless an assurance has been given of his perfect chastity.” With regard to chastity, the holy Pontiff required a proof of many years.

From this we may infer that God will demand a terrible account of the parish priest who gives to persons aspiring to the priesthood a testimony of their having frequented the sacraments and led exemplary lives, though they had neglected the frequentation of the sacraments, and had given scandal rather than good example. Such parish priests by these false attestations, given not through charity, as they pretend, but against the charity due to God and the Church, render themselves guilty of all the sins that shall be afterwards committed by the bad priests who were ordained in consequence of these testimonials. For in this matter bishops trust to the testimony of parish priests, and are deceived. Nor should a parish priest in giving such attestations trust the testimony of others: he cannot give them unless he is certain that what he attests is true, namely, that the ecclesiastic has really led an exemplary life, and has frequented the sacraments. And as a bishop cannot ordain any person unless he be a man of approved chastity, so a confessor cannot permit an incontinent penitent to receive ordination without having a moral certainty that he is free from the bad habit which he had contracted, and that he had acquired a habit of the virtue of chastity.

SECTION 3

DANGERS BY TAKING HOLY ORDERS WITHOUT A VOCATION

From what has been said, it follows that he who takes holy Orders without the marks of a vocation cannot be excused from the guilt of grievous sin. This is the doctrine of many theologians, of Habert, of Natalis Alexander, of Juenin, and of the continuator of Tournely. And before them St. Augustine taught the same. Speaking of the chastisement inflicted on Core, Dathan, and Abiron, who, without being called, attempted to exercise the sacerdotal functions, the holy Doctor said: “God struck them that they might serve as an example, and thus to warn off him who would dare to assume a sacred charge. Indeed, this is the chastisement reserved for those who would thrust themselves into the office of bishop, priest, or deacon.” And the reason is, first, because he who thrusts himself into the sanctuary without a divine call cannot be excused from grievous presumption; secondly, because he shall be deprived of the congruous and abundant helps, without which, as Habert writes, he shall be absolutely unable to comply with the obligations of his state, but shall fulfill them only with great difficulty. He will be like a dislocated member, which can be used only with difficulty, and which causes deformity.

Hence Bishop Ahelly writes: “He who of himself, without inquiring whether he has a vocation or not, thrusts himself into the priesthood will no doubt expose himself to the great danger of losing his soul; for he commits against the Holy Ghost that sin for which, as the Gospel says, there is hardly or very rarely any pardon.”

The Lord has declared that His wrath is provoked against those who wish to rule in his Church without being called by Him. On this passage St. Gregory says, “It is by themselves and not by the will of the Supreme Head that they reign” (Osee 8:4).

Divine vocation is entirely wanting to them, and they have followed only the ardor of vile cupidity, not certainly to accept, but to usurp this sublime dignity. How many intrigues, adulations, entreaties, and other means do certain persons employ in order to procure ordination, not in obedience to the call of God, but through earthly motives! But, woe to such men, says the Lord by the prophet Isaias: “Woe to you, apostate children, . . . that you would take counsel, and not of me” (Isaias 30:1). On the day of judgment they shall claim a reward, but Jesus Christ shall cast them off. “Many will say to me in that day, Have we not prophesied in thy name [by preaching and teaching], and cast out devils in thy name [by absolving penitent sinners], and done many miracles in thy name [by correcting the wicked, by settling disputes, by converting sinners]? And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you; depart from me, you that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:22–23). Priests who have not been called are indeed workmen and ministers of God, because they have received the sacerdotal character; but they are ministers of iniquity and rapine, because they have of their own will, and without vocation, intruded themselves into the sheepfold. They have not, as St. Bernard says, received the keys, but have taken them by force. They toil, but God will not accept; He will, on the contrary punish their works and labors because they have not entered the sanctuary, by the straight path. “The labor of fools shall afflict them that know not how to go to the city” (Ecclesiastes 10:15). The Church, says St. Leo, receives only those whom the Lord chooses, and by his election makes fit to be His ministers. But, on the other hand, the Church rejects those whom, as St. Peter Damian has written, God has not called; for instead of promoting her welfare, they commit havoc among her members; and instead of edifying, they contaminate and destroy her children.

“Whom he [the Lord] shall choose, they shall approach to him” (Numbers 16:5). God will gladly admit into His presence all whom He has called to the priesthood, and will cast off the priest whom He has not chosen. St. Ephrem regards as lost the man who is so daring as to take the order of priesthood without a vocation. “I am astonished,” he says, “at that which those fools dare to do, who, without the grace of vocation through Christ, full of boldness, seek to insinuate themselves into the office of the priesthood. Miserable beings, that know not that they are preparing for themselves an eternal fire.” And Peter de Blois has written: “What ruin does not the bold man prepare for himself who of the sacrifice makes a sacrilege, and of life an instrument of death!” He who errs in his vocation exposes himself to greater danger than if he transgressed particular precepts; for if he violates a particular command, he may rise from his fall, and begin again to walk in the right path, but he who errs in his vocation mistakes the way itself. Hence the longer he travels in it, the more distant he is from his home. To him we may justly apply the words of St. Augustine: “You run well, but on the wrong road.”

It is necessary to be persuaded of the truth of what St. Gregory says, that our eternal salvation depends principally on embracing the state to which God has called us. The reason is evident: for it is God that destines, according to the order of His Providence, his state of life for each individual, and according to the state to which He calls him, prepares for Him abundant graces and suitable helps. “In the distribution of graces,” says St. Cyprian, “the Holy Ghost takes into consideration His own plan, and not our caprices.” And according to the Apostle: “And whom he predestinated, them he also called. And whom he called, them he also justified” (Romans 8:30). Thus to vocation succeeds justification, and to justification glory; that is, the attainment of eternal life. He then, who does not obey the call of God shall neither he justified nor glorified. Father Granada justly said that vocation is the main wheel of our entire life. As in a clock, if the main wheel be spoiled, the entire clock is injured, so, says St. Gregory Nazianzen, if a person err in his vocation his whole life will be full of errors; for in the state to which God has not called him he will be deprived of the helps by which he can with facility lead a good life.

“Every one,” says St. Paul, “has his proper gift from God; one after this manner, and another after that” (1 Corinthians 7:7). The meaning of this passage, according to St. Thomas and other commentators, is, that the Lord gives to each one graces to fulfill with ease the obligations of the state to which He calls him. “God,” says the angelic Doctor, “gives to every man not only certain aptitudes, but also all that is necessary to exercise them.” And in another place he writes: “God does not destine men to such or such a vocation without favoring them with gifts at the same time, and preparing them in such a way as to render them capable of fulfilling the duties of their vocation; for, says St. Paul: “Our sufficiency is from God, who also hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament.” As each person, then, will be able to discharge with facility the office to which God elects him, so he will be unfit for the fulfillment of the office to which God does not call him. The foot, which is given to enable us to walk, cannot see; the eye, which is given to see, is incapable of hearing; and how shall he who is not chosen by God to the priesthood be able to discharge its obligations?

It belongs to the Lord to choose the workmen who are to cultivate his vineyard: “I have chosen you . . . and have appointed you that you should go, and should bring forth fruit” (John 15:16). Hence the Redeemer did not say, Beg of men to go and gather the harvest; but He tells us to ask the master of the crop to send workmen to collect it (Luke 10:2). Hence he also said: “As the Father hath sent me, I also send you” (John 20:21). When God calls, He Himself, says St. Leo, gives the necessary helps. This is what Jesus Christ has said: “I am the door. By me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and he shall go in, and go out, and shall find pastures” (John 10:9). “He shall go in:” what the priest called by God undertakes, he shall easily accomplish without sin, and with merit. “And shall go out:” he shall be in the midst of perils and occasions of sin, but with the divine aid he shall readily escape injury. “And shall find pastures:” finally, in consequence of being in the state in, which God has placed him, he will be assisted in all the duties of his ministry by special graces, which will make him advance in perfection. Hence he will be able to say with confidence “The Lord ruleth me and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture” (Psalms 22:2).

But priests whom God has not sent to work in his Church he shall abandon to eternal ignominy and destruction. “I have not sent these prophets.” says the Lord by the prophet Jeremias, “yet they ran.” He afterwards adds: “Therefore I will take you and carry you away, and will forsake you . . . and I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame which shall never be forgotten” (Jeremias. 23:21, 39–40).

In order to be raised to the sublimity of the priesthood it is necessary, as St. Thomas says, for a man “to be exalted and elevated by divine power above the natural order of things,” because he is appointed the sanctifier of the people, and the vicar of Jesus Christ. But in him who raises himself to so great a dignity shall be verified the words of the Wise Man: “There is that hath appeared a fool after he was lifted up on high” (Proverbs 30:32). Had he remained in the world, he should perhaps have been a virtuous layman; but having become a priest without a vocation, he will be a bad priest, and instead of promoting the interest of religion, he will do great injury to the Church. Of such priests the Roman Catechism says: “Such ministers are for the Church of God the gravest embarrassment and the most terrible scourge.” And what good can be expected from the priest who has entered the sanctuary without a vocation? “It is impossible,” says St. Leo, “that a work so badly begun should finish well.” St. Laurence Justinian has written: “What fruit, I ask, can come from a corrupted root?” Our Saviour has said, “Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up” (Matthew 15:13). Hence Peter de Blois writes that when God permits a person to be ordained without a vocation, the permission is not a grace, but a chastisement. For a tree which has not taken deep root, when exposed to the tempest shall soon fall and be cast into the fire. And St. Bernard says that he who has not lawfully entered the sanctuary shall continue to be unfaithful; and instead of procuring the salvation of souls, he shall be the cause of their death and perdition. This is conformable to the doctrine of Jesus Christ: “He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold. . . . the same is a thief and a robber” (John 10:1).

Some may say, if they only were admitted to orders who have the marks of vocation which have been laid down as indispensable, there should be but few priests in the Church, and the people should be left without the necessary helps. But to this the Fourth Council of Lateran has answered: “It is much better to confer the priesthood on a small number of virtuous clerics than to have a large number of bad priests.” And St. Thomas says that God never abandons his Church so as to leave her in want of fit ministers to provide for the necessity of the people. St. Leo justly says that to provide for the wants of the people by bad priests would be not to save but to destroy them.

If, then, a priest has been ordained without a vocation, what must he do? Must he look on himself as lost? Must he abandon himself to despair? No. St. Gregory has asked the same question. He answers: “He must lament.” Behold what such a priest must do if he wish to save his soul: “He must lament;” he must weep, and seek to appease the anger of God by tears and by repentance, and to move Him to pardon the great sin that he committed in thrusting himself into the sanctuary without a divine call. He must, as St. Bernard exhorts, endeavor to attain after his ordination the sanctity of life which ought to precede it. He must change his conduct, his conversation and pursuits. “Let all be holy your life and your works,” continues the saint. If he is ignorant, he must study; if he has spent his time in worldly conversations and amusements, he must change them into meditations, spiritual reading, and visits to the churches. But to do this he must use violence to himself; for, as has been already said, since he has entered the sanctuary without a vocation, he is but a dislocated member, and therefore he must work out his salvation with great difficulty and great labor. But if in consequence of having become a priest without a divine call, he is, as has been shown, bereft of the helps necessary to enable him to discharge with facility the obligations of the priesthood, how shall he without these helps fulfill the sacerdotal duties? Habert and the continuator of Tournely say, let him pray, and by his prayers he shall obtain that assistance which he does not deserve. This is conformable to the doctrine of the Council of Trent: “God commands not impossibilities, but, by commanding, both admonishes thee to do what thou art able, and to pray for what thou art not able [to do], and aids thee that thou mayest be able.”

SERMONS UPON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF SAINT TALPHONSUS M. LIGUORI.

BISHOP OF SANT'AGATA DE' GOTI AND FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.

ACCOMPANIED BY A NEW LIFE OF THE SAINT, COMPILED FROM THE MOSTAUTHENTIC MATERIALS.

EDITED BY JANICE DEMANO DUBLIN.

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CONTENTS

INDEX

SERMONS UPON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

- CONTENTS
- Sermons Upon Various Subjects
  - PREACE
  - LIFE OF SAINTALPHONSUS LIGUORI
  - *SERMONS OF SAINTALPHONSUS LIGUORI*
  - *SERMON THE FIRST* THE LORD APPEARS ANGRY, NOT THAT HE MEANS TO PUNISH US, BUT IN ORDER THAT WE MAY CLEANSE OURSELVES OF OUR SINS AND THUS ENABLE HIM TO PARDON US
  - *SERMON THE SECOND* SINNERS WILL NOT PROFIT BY THE DIVINE THREATS UNTIL THE CHASTISEMENT HAS COME UPON THEM
  - *SERMON THE THIRD* GOD IS MERCIFUL FOR A SEASON AND THEN CHASTISES
  - *SERMON THE FOURTH* UPON THE FOUR PRINCIPAL GATES OF HELL
  - *SERMON THE FIFTH* EXTERNAL DEVOTIONS ARE OF LITTLE USE IF WE DO NOT CLEANSE OUR SOULS FROM SIN
  - *SERMON THE SIXTH* GOD CHASTISES US IN THIS LIFE FOR OUR GOOD, NOT FOR OUR DESTRUCTION
  - *SERMON THE SEVENTH* GOD CHASTISES US IN THIS LIFE, ONLY THAT HE MAY SHOW US MERCY IN THE NEXT
  - *SERMON THE EIGHTH* PRAYERS APPEASE GOD AND AVERT FROM US THE CHASTISEMENT WE DESERVE, PROVIDED WE PURPOSE TO AMEND

SERMON THE NINTH
MOST HOLY MARY IS THE MEDIATRIX OF SINNERS

SERMON THE TENTH
FOR THE FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH

- FIRST POINT
- SECOND POINT

SERMON THE ELEVENTH
FOR THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

- FIRST POINT
- SECOND POINT

SERMON THE TWELFTH
UPON THE SORROWS OF MARY

- FIRST POINT
- SECOND POINT

FAMILIAR DISCOURSE
AT THE RECEPTION OF A NUN

DISCOURSE
TO THE BRETHREN OF A CONFRATERNITY

DISCOURSE
TO PIOUS MAIDENS

Sermons Upon Various Subjects

PREACE

THE volume which is now presented to the devout public, although destined by St. Liguori for the especial use of those engaged in the ministry of the Divine Word, possesses this advantage, in common with many works of a similar description by the same blessed Author, that it may be read with great spiritual advantage by Christian people indiscriminately. The pastor of souls it furnishes (to use a somewhat homely illustration) with a frame whereon to weave his sermons—a frame constructed with consummate skill out of materials supplied by Holy Writ and the Fathers of the Church. The simple faithful it supplies with the greatest possible amount of instruction, in the smallest compass—possessing them of every truth connected with the subject and every proof of each; yet so as to leave room for their expansion under the action of the reader's understanding—a plan recommended by the high sanction of St. Ignatius. "It is sufficient," says St. Ignatius, "briefly to trace the points of meditation, accompanying them with some few explanatory words, so as to leave room for the exercitant to reason after his own fashion upon the truths subjected to his consideration. Should he thus be led to anything enlightening him upon the subject, whether guided by reason or inspiration, he will feel more relish for it and turn it to better account than if the subject had been explained to him in all its details." Now, although St. Ignatius in this passage speaks solely with reference to meditation, his remarks, I think, may apply to sermons in the hands of the laity; for, after all, religious reading is a kind of meditation—imperceptible, perhaps—but still meditation.

There are many things in the Sermons of St. Liguori to distinguish them from the French Sermons, which occupy a place so deservedly high in the libraries of pastors. Unlike the Sermons of Massillon, Bourdaloue, Bossuet, Fenelon and M'Carthy, they are wholly destitute of that human and courtly eloquence, which I am far from insinuating that those great men did not wield with the utmost advantage to souls, and honour to the Almighty, but which, on the whole, appears to me a less fitting model for the eloquence of the Irish Clergy, taken as a body, than the simple and apostolic phrase of Liguori. Although with those great and holy preachers, (confessedly the greatest whom any church can boast) St. Liguori never—endingly draws upon that exhaustless treasury of Divine Wisdom, the sacred Scriptures; yet we fail to discover in the use he makes of the inspired writers, that ingenuity which amongst the French preachers often appears to run down the text and force upon it constructions better calculated to amuse the fancy than to convince the reason. This use of the sacred text, although I am glad it has not the sanction of our Saint and although Dr. Blair expressly disapproves of it and although I cannot say that in this particular my taste is at variance with his, this use of the sacred text, I am far from condemning; as it is a portion of that grand system of condescension by which the Church makes herself " all to all, that she may gain all to Christ," her spouse. Verily this Bread of Life which she breaks to the people may be said, like the manna in the wilderness, to possess the " sweetness of all tastes so that whoso eats thereof will find in it the flavour that he loves. Christian eloquence may indeed be said to have a garb for every eye and modulate her tones for every ear. During the first centuries of the Church, she arrays herself in the majestic and unadorned simplicity of the gospel; during the decline of taste, she assumes the tinsel of Rome, the stole of the Athenian rhetorician, the soft and gaudy chaplet of Asiatic Greece, and the Barbaric splendour of Asia itself, according as she must yield to the requirements of souls; in the middle ages she does not disdain to play upon words, to balance an antithesis or point an epigram; upon the revival of literature, she again conforms to the reigning taste and makes the ancient classics tributary to the gospel; and now in France she combats with its own weapons, the false philosophy of the age; in England she adopts that quaintness and those old forms which the literature of the present day affects; in Ireland she is impassioned, popular and presses straightway to the heart; and in the regions of the Far West, beyond the encroachments of civilization, the Jesuit, to whom the chaste and beautiful productions of Greece and Rome are familiar as household words, preaches the gospel in the exuberant, and to us, laughable metaphor of the savage tribes. In sooth, the gift of tongues has not departed from the Church, and announcing the same great truths to every generation and every people, she is understood by each in its own tongue, and the strain to which itself inclines.

There is another feature in the Sermons of our Saint, to which I would direct the attention of the pious reader. I allude to the simple, yet striking, illustrations in which St. Liguori deals so largely; and as a specimen of which, I may be permitted to instance a sermon in which our blessed Author for the more forcible illustration of the value of redemption, supposes the case of a monarch who should suffer himself to be slain, that by immersion in a bath of his blood a worm (which could not otherwise be restored to life,) might be revived. Perhaps there is not an engine of sacred oratory which can be used with more powerful effect than this. The blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez, of the Society of Jesus, in his book on Christian Perfection, makes frequent use of it; and Father Segneri, of the same society, in his admirable sermons employs it still more frequently than St. Liguori, simply because his sermons are longer and more numerous than those of the Saint. Who is there, unless he be devoid of faith, who can read without being startled the comparison used by Father Segneri to illustrate the relative severity of Purgatory pains and earthly fire? “A soul,” he says, “transferred from the fire of Purgatory to an earthly furnace, should feel as much relief as a man removed from such a furnace to a bath of gentle warmth.” In another place, “the fire of Purgatory,” he says,” acts not upon matter, but on spirit; and we must bear in mind, that amongst beings capable of suffering, the most perfect suffer most acutely. A sturdy clown ill clad, ill fed, ill housed, is proof against all the extremities of heat and cold; whereas a delicate lady in her luxurious apartment is painfully alive to all the changes of the weather.” There is no one to whom the beauty and the appropriateness of these illustrations will not be apparent, or who can fail to remark the new and somewhat startling light in which they place the subject. And now that the book of nature is so closely conned—now that the veil of mystery which for ages hung upon her secrets is fast falling off, that the obscurity in which she so long reposed, is every day invaded by some new light of science and wonders are achieved, at the possibility of which our fathers should have smiled—now, in fine, that the conversation even of after—dinner parties turns upon those subjects, of what a magazine of beautiful and forceful illustrations may not the preacher possess himself if he will?—illustrations telling far more powerfully than any other species of argument upon those who understand them, a class which, although it is at present composed of persons chiefly from the higher walks, is being every day recruited from the National Schools and far more useful as well as far more National Establishments of the Christian Brothers. I could multiply examples of these latter illustrations, but besides that it might savour of pedantry, I must make amends to the reader for having omitted to solicit his indulgence for the two or three illustrations of another description which I have cited. Perhaps I view the scientific illustrations with an undue and distempered affection—perhaps they deserve less indulgence than I might feel disposed to challenge for them—perhaps they have all that they deserve in having mine; the reader may take them at what they are worth,—I think them valuable.

The next and last feature of the work to which I pray the attention of the reader, is the scriptural character of St. Liguori's sermons. There is not a single page in which you will not meet with several appeals to Holy Writ, not only falsifying the imputations of scriptural ignorance so unsparingly cast upon our clergy, but making it difficult, if not impossible, to find in any other author or preacher so much scriptural learning. Indeed, others have not been wanting practically to disprove this oft—repeated slander. The continual recurrence to the authority of Scripture to be met with in French sermons, from the courtly, but not on that account less apostolic eloquence of the Petit Careme to the simple, and on that account, almost more apostolic eloquence of the unpretending prone—the beautiful paraphrase of psalm, canticle, epistle, sermon on the Mount, or other words of our Lord, with which Massillon and Mac Carthy beyond the others, so frequently conclude their sermons—the scriptural train of thought in fine and turn of expression, which prevail throughout, proudly avouch that the ancient dispensatrix of the treasures of Scripture, still scatters them with undiminished liberality. And here we may observe in passing, that these scriptural allusions to be relished must be understood and that they were understood we may fearlessly assume, from the bare circumstance of their having been used by the great men of whom we have been speaking. Hence, the mighty virtue of the word of Massillon, when in his sermon upon the last day, he summoned the “remnant of Israel” to” pass to the right,” and the multitude in its terror was fain to flee out of the Church.

The homily which is little else than a running commentary upon the text, is doubtless the most apostolic, if not at all times the most convenient form of sermon, so much so, that in point of fact, none other was made use of during the first ages of the Church and St. Liguori's sermons, though not of this description, are certainly as perfect a substitute as may be.

The sublime morality of the gospel announced by one who speaks as "having authority," will ever find favour with the faithful people of Ireland; but it is not possible that it should be as efficacious, enforced by human eloquence, as by the words of inspiration. It irks me I confess, to hear a sermon of other than a scriptural character, for assuredly no beauty of language can compensate for the absence of that divine beauty which even a mere critic can discover in the Holy Scriptures. Profane writers esteem themselves fortunate to discover in some poet or other author, a suitable sentiment to back their own opinions. Is it not then a strange omission in a sacred orator, if he suffer any principle of morality to go unrecommended to his hearers by something from the Holy Ghost, who is ever ready to supply him with stronger and more eloquent arguments than his own sterile intellect can produce. So thought the amiable and great Archbishop Fenelon; so thought St. Liguori.

I shall not pause to notice the frequent use made by St. Liguori of the holy Fathers and pious anecdotes, for which latter authority however he challenges no more belief than the faithful can afford to give. For my own part, I shall resign all faith in history before I can be induced to disbelieve, such miracles as have been juridically proved in the process of a Saints' canonization. But I fear I have been betrayed into an essay and have wandered from the descriptive which I set out with, into the didactic, which was not my province. It is too late for me now to ask the reader in the words of the apostle to bear with me a little. He who shall have gone thus far must needs have borne with me,—I thank him for it—should any remark of mine meet his views, or contribute to his improvement he may consider me rewarded.

LIFE OF SAINTALPHONSUS LIGUORI

AYOUTH of noble lineage who courageously bows him to the yoke of the Lord; a lawyer whose rare talents and vast acquirements as well as his extreme virtue, command the admiration of the entire bar of his country; a minister of the sanctuary, who renouncing the vain pomp of the world and all the honourable posts to which he is entitled to aspire, takes the Lord for the portion of his inheritance; an indefatigable gospel labourer, who, burning with the love of God and his neighbour, spares no pains to promote the glory of the one and the salvation of the other; the founder of a new congregation of missionary priests, who governs his order with unexampled wisdom; a zealous bishop who entirely forgetful of himself, thinks only of the flock committed to his care; finally, a venerable old man, who, laying down the burthen of the episcopacy, retires amongst his brethren, leads amid the sharp and protracted sufferings of disease, as well as the infirmities of old age, a hidden life, in Jesus Christ and closes blessedly in the same his mortal career; all this we see in St. Alphonsus Liguori.

He was born in Marinella, in the suburbs of Naples, on the 27th of September, 1696, the feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian and baptised two days after, on the feast of St. Michael the Archangel. Amongst the names given him, Alphonsus, Maria, were the leading ones and by these to the exclusion of the others, he is usually known. His father Joseph, of the noble house of Liguori, was alike distinguished for talent, (especially military,) and for virtue: and his mother Catherine, (also of a noble house,) was sister to the celebrated servant of God, Emilio Jacomo Cavalieri, Bishop of Troy in partibus, who died in the odour of sanctity. Indeed she was worthy such a brother, being scarcely, if at all, inferior to him in sanctity of life; whilst her virtues, more especially those which she exercised in the education of her children, were so numerous and striking, that they might well be chronicled distinctly from those of her blessed son.

Alphonsus, in early youth, nay, we might almost say, in infancy, had arrived at a degree of perfection which those might consider themselves happy, the labours of whose entire lives had been crowned by the attainment of. The odour of his sanctity, even then, edified all with whom he conversed; and those who have written his life in detail, mention numerous instances of virtue, more than one or two of which we cannot afford to specify and these we must be content with barely naming. He had a remarkable disinclination for the amusements of children and never took part in them, unless when charity, or the fear of singularity, ruled it otherwise. His perfect recollection and tender devotion to mysteries, which most children of his age can scarce be brought to understand, were perfectly heroic and even amongst the youths with whom he obliged to associate in the college of nobles, under the conduct of the priests of the oratory, his conduct never varied; his devotion to the sacrament of the altar and the Mother of God, continually gaining strength. His progress in human learning, kept pace so well with his progress in the science of the saints, that when he had completed his legal studies, he required a dispensation of three years for admission to the degree of doctor in canon and civil law.

He practiced for some time at the bar and was fast growing into repute, when an incident occurred, to which, in the dispensations of Providence, we are indebted for the apostolic labours and inspired writings of our Saint. My meaning will not be mistaken when I say, that the writings of Liguori are inspired,—for, although we have no canonical assurance of the fact, yet surely we may believe that his writings, if not actually the dictation, were at least composed under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Alphonsus having been retained as counsel for the defence, in a case of great interest and importance, his pleading was so ingenious and so eloquent, that the president Signor Caravita, felt disposed to give judgment in favour of his client, when the counsel on the other side, instead of replying, simply begged of Alphonsus to reconsider his argument and see whither it was not unsound. Alphonsus to his great confusion and surprise, perceived it to be flawed by reason of his having overlooked one negative particle in the process. The court and audience complimented him upon his able defence and acquitted him of any blame upon the score of negligence; attributing his oversight to the warmth so natural to a young lawyer in his situation. Alphonsus, however, did not so readily acquit himself; but, having bowed to the court, was heard to say, as he withdrew, “false world, I know you, and have done with you;”—he had given up the bar.

Almighty God was pleased to enlighten his mind, during a retreat of three days, which he made under the direction of his confessor; at the end of which period he was confirmed in his resolution, to attend solely to the care of his salvation. Even at this stage of his departure from the world, he experienced the opposition which he had so long to encounter from his father, but his determination was all the more steady for it and he at once repaired to the hospitals of the city, where his vocation took a more specific form and he heard himself invited by mysterious voices to the ecclesiastical state. It was now that his father began to be sturdy in his opposition: he engaged such of his relations as he thought likely to be influential with Alphonsus, to dissuade him from his project,—the congregation of St. Philip Neri, which Alphonsus sought to enter, was obliged to decline receiving him through fear of his father’s resentment; and when, at length, a tardy consent was extracted from him, it was only on condition that his son should remain for a year at home. Alphonsus having now nothing to divide his attention with the pursuit of virtue and sacred science, devoted himself unreservedly to the attainment of both,—and applied his powerful intellects so vigorously to the study of theology, as rapidly to fit himself for the office of a teacher in Israel. Instruction is peculiarly the duty of a christian priest; the priest of idols offers sacrifice, but neither sacrifice nor the administration of the sacraments, are even the chief duty of a priest of the New Law, for St. Paul says, that he was sent to preach, rather than to baptize. The rapid and steady progress of Alphonsus in piety and learning, induced Cardinal Pignatelli, the then Archbishop of Naples, to hasten his promotion to tonsure and minor orders; unwilling that the church should longer remain without numbering such a youth as he amongst her ministers. Immediately that Alphonsus was advanced to minor orders, he entered upon the discharge of his functions and kept it with faith and assiduity. Anxious, not only to preserve that purity of life to which he was exhorted by the ordaining bishop, but, moreover, continually to amass new treasures of grace, he regularly attended the religious exercises of the fathers of the mission; a practice which he persevered in up to the time of his ordination to the priesthood. No sooner Alphonsus had received deaconship, than the Cardinal Archbishop, not content with permitting, exhorted him to preach;

and the obedient levite, in compliance with the desire of his pastor, preached his first sermon in the parish church of St. John, in Porta, upon the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. His zeal and unction soon brought upon themselves demands innumerable and his labours were such, that he was seized with a fit of illness, which brought him to the verge of death. Having received the viaticum with that fervent piety which he always manifested towards the Blessed Sacrament, he expressed an anxious wish to have beside his bed the statue of the most holy Mary della Mercede, by whose altar he had hung his sword when about to leave the world. The clergy of the church complied with his request, although the night was far advanced; and no sooner had he beheld and saluted the statue of his blessed mother, than all the mortal symptoms of his disorder vanished and after a short time he was restored to health.

On the 27th of December, 1726, Alphonsus, being in the thirty—first year of his age, was ordained priest. We shall not dilate upon the raptures of Alphonsus, when he found himself on the summit of the holy mountain. We pass over the sentiments of faith, love and gratitude, with which he immolated, for the first time, the sacred victim of the altar. We speak not of the redoubled fervour with which he applied himself to all his usual practices of piety and more especially to the loving adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, we press onward to his apostolical labours and taking a hasty survey of all he did and taught and weighing his title to greatness in the balance of the sanctuary, over which is inscribed, “qui fecerit et docuerit sic homines, hie magnus vocabitur in regno coelorum.” We shall see whether his title be such, that in the kingdom of Heaven he is called great.

As a matter of course, the pulpit labours of Alphonsus increased on his advancement to the priesthood; and to these were added the toilsome and revolting duties of the confessional. So great, in fact, was the esteem in which Alphonsus was held by his Archbishop, that he had no sooner been ordained priest, than he was appointed to conduct the retreat of the clergy, although there were amongst them many apostolic and eloquent men of older standing than he. He was peculiarly fitted for the confessional, not by the qualities which he possessed, (all of which are indispensable to every good confessor,) but by the degree in which he possessed them. His tenderness in receiving, his patience in hearing, his sweetness in admonition, were such as few or none had ever met with. The unction with which he represented to the sinner his ingratitude and the moving words by which he sought to excite him to repentance, were irresistible.

Inspired by his zeal for the salvation of souls, he bethought him of a means whereby to confirm his penitents in their holy resolutions and instruct them more at large in the science of perfection. On festival days assembling them around him, in some remote and silent quarter of the city, he there addressed them on spiritual subjects. There encircled by persons of the meanest condition, he was all the better pleased on that account, as they afforded him an opportunity of enlightening them upon many portions of the christian doctrine, of which they had, till then, been ignorant. After a time several priests and some laymen of a spiritual life, joined him in his conferences, when the assembly having been represented to the governor, as of a suspicious character, was dissolved, though not without the innocence of its object having been recognised. The priests upon this, retired to a house in the city and spent their time in exercises of penance and devotion and those of no ordinary character, but, to Alphonsus scarce any extremity of vigour, scarce any pitch of fervour was unknown. Alphonsus took care that the dispersion of his hearers should not be prejudicial to the poor people who shared most of his attention, for he caused the more enlightened and zealous of his penitents, to assemble their less favoured brethren and speak to them on spiritual subjects, with the consent of the Archbishop, in private houses and hired rooms and at length, even in public oratories and chapels.

Matteo Ripa, a truly apostolic priest, having returned from China, with some youths of that nation, destined for the sacred ministry, succeeded in 1729, in establishing a college for the Chinese mission. To this college Alphonsus withdrew, as well to escape the distractions of his father’s house, as to perfect himself in the ministry of the divine word, under such a master as Matteo Ripa. Alphonsus lived in the college on no other footing than that of a guest, although for a time he had some thoughts of China, which he relinquished in obedience to his confessor, Father Pagano. Our Saint meanwhile continued to preach in all the churches of Naples to immense congregations and with abundant fruit. At stated periods of the year, he conducted missions in various quarters of the kingdom and while labouring for the sanctification of others, took such measures for his own, as are taken only by saints such as he.

Alphonsus, together with preaching in the Cathedral of Scala, during the novena of Jesus crucified, according to a promise given the bishop Monsignor Santoro, was also engaged in conducting the spiritual exercises, for the nuns of a certain convent and hearing their confessions. One of the sisters by name Maria Celeste Costarossa, a religious of holy life and many supernatural gifts, speaking one day in the confessional, upon spiritual matters, said to him: “Father Alphonsus, it is not the will of God that you should remain in Naples, He calls you to be the founder of a new congregation of Missionary Priests, for the spiritual aid of those souls who are most destitute.” Alphonsus astonished and confused, endeavoured to convince her that this was delusion; but she would not be persuaded. In great trouble of mind and not knowing whether he should treat the intimation he had received, as the offspring of an over heated imagination, (though he felt disposed to do so, by reason of its apparent impossibility,) he addressed himself to God in prayer and took counsel of several learned and pious men, all of whom, including the Bishops of Castelmare de Sabia and Scala, assured him that the nun had conveyed to him the will of God and the Bishop of Scala engaged him to establish the first house of the future Order in his diocese. This was enough for Alphonsus—he at once dismissed from his mind all trouble and anxiety and leaving himself in the hands of God, immediately set about performing his holy will. No sooner did the news of his design get wind in Naples, than an almost universal outcry was raised against it. The Archbishop, the clergy and laity were alike averse to it; but it was from the saint’s father that it had to encounter the most vigorous opposition. Not content with arraying all his friends in hostility to the design of Alphonsus, he employed against it all the power of a father’s tears and that with such effect, that Alphonsus declared it to be the most formidable temptation he ever had to struggle with; having at length, however, won over the Archbishop and propitiated even his father, he set off for Scala and on the ninth of November, 1732, after having celebrated a Mass of the Holy Ghost and sung the “Te Deum,” in thanksgiving for all the protection vouchsafed him in this matter, he laid the foundation of his new society. His first companions numbered twelve, consisting of ten priests and two candidates for orders, together with a serving lay—brother, Vito Curzio by name, a rich gentleman of Acquaviva di Bari, who, admonished by a vision at Naples, had chosen that humble post amongst the brethren of the new congregation.

The life which Alphonsus and his companions led in Scala, resembled nothing so exactly as the life of those penitents whom St. John Chrysostom speaks of in his “Mystic Ladder.” Their lodging was small and incommodious; their beds a little straw shaken on the floor; their bread black, hard and coarse; their other food disgusting from its insipidity and taken kneeling, their religious exercises never ending, what, with frequent disciplines and continual watchings, are enough to make the most fervent tremble for their comparative tepidity; and here, the question naturally suggests itself, when such were the austerities of all the brethren, how great must not have been the rigour of the holy founder? From time to time they dispersed themselves over the country to conduct the missions and gathered in such harvests of souls (Alphonsus always foremost in labour and success,) as caused the bishop to thank God with all the fervour of his heart, for having provided his diocese with these apostles and above all, with Alphonsus, who was the great instrument in the hands of the Almighty and next to God best entitled to its gratitude.

Whilst Alphonsus and his brethren, labouring thus for their neighbour’s salvation and their own, seemed like the primitive christians to have one only heart and one only soul, the enemy contrived to sow his tares amongst them and scatter the infant congregation. Our Saint thinking it high time to have a code of rules framed for the government of his congregation, wished to collect the views of his brethren upon the subject. Some would fain combine the care of poor schools with their missionary labours; some were advocates for more absolute and some for mitigated poverty; some insisted upon increased austerity and some advised relaxation; nearly all condemned the plan of Alphonsus. The Saint at other times so deferential to his brethren, defended his plan and adhered to it in every particular, notwithstanding the opposition of his companions, who, at length deserted him, with the exception of Caesar Sportelli, as yet a secular and the lay—brother Vito Curzio.

As soon as it reached Naples that Alphonsus was abandoned by his brethren, those who had originally been hostile to his design, renewed their condemnation of it in no very temperate strain. They taxed the saint with presumption, and held him up to ridicule, not allowing, even the

Archbishop, to escape uncensured for the favour which he shewed Alphonsus; but the venerable Archbishop uninfluenced by these malicious speeches, in his opinion of Alphonsus or his design, sent for the holy man and encouraged him to prosecute his good work, an encouragement which, though well meant, was little needed, as Alphonsus, nothing daunted, went the mission by himself in the confidence that God in his own time would provide him with fellow—labourers. The man of God was not disappointed in his expectations; after a while he was joined by father John Mazzini and as others began to flow in apace, Alphonsus submitted to the holy see the rules he had drawn up for the government of the congregation and which met with the entire approval of the Pope.

The congregation being now distributed into different houses, the brethren set about the election of a superior—general and were unanimous in their choice of Alphonsus, whom they appointed general for life. The manifest protection extended by Divine Providence to the society, conciliated the prejudices of the most hostile and they were now as zealous in reparation as they had before been violent in disapproval. Our saint’s father, who had so unremittingly opposed his movements, seeing that the congregation every day acquired stability and strength, visited his son in Ciorani and deeply affected by the sanctity of Alphonsus and his companions, with many tears begged admission as a lay—brother, but was constantly refused. We shall not go into many details upon the government of the holy superior—general; suffice it to say, that he united the greatest humility with the highest dignity—the greatest meekness with the most unlimited command—and all the virtues of the subject with all the qualities of the superior. Bound to enforce the observance of the rule, he was himself the most perfect model of regularity; his poverty was absolute and his obedience subjected him not only to his directors, but to the lay—brothers. These, however, are alike the virtues of the superior and the subject; but in the qualifications, which are peculiarly those of the superior, Alphonsus was equally pre—eminent. He made a yearly visitation of all the houses of his order; and as soon as he had completed the visitation, addressed to each house a circular replete with tender piety and spiritual learning, breathing the most ardent charity towards God and his neighbour and expressive of the tenderest love for the congregation. He was wont to embody in short and pithy sentences, the whole duty of a missionary of the congregation, or place the observance of the rule in a new and striking light. Thus he has been heard to say, that a missionary of the congregation should be a hermit within doors and an apostle abroad; and that he who disrespected the rule, disrespected Jesus Christ—as the rule being the way to perfection and consequently to Heaven, was Jesus himself, who is “the way, the truth, and the life.” If there were need of reproof, he never resorted to public admonition until after the second offence; being of opinion that public correction, though beneficial to the community, is seldom useful to the offender. To the novices he was peculiarly affectionate and fatherly; and not only to those immediately under his jurisdiction, but to the novices of all the other houses, whose superiors he instructed to be all openness and love to them. When, as sometimes happened, the number of applicants for admission to the congregation exceeded the means of support which its poverty supplied, Alphonsus never refused admission to those of whose vocation he had hopes, saying that the poverty of the society should not be an obstacle in the way of their vocation and that God never suffered his levites to remain unprovided for.

In training the students for their missionary labours, every other study was of course subordinate to the great object of the congregation—the ministry of the divine word—and it was the anxious care of Alphonsus to impress them with correct notions upon this all important matter. He instructed them to avoid defacing the simplicity of the gospel with the frippery of rhetoric, or even the genuine beauties of purely human eloquence. If their sermons, he said, were not perfectly intelligible to all, they were not as they ought to be; if the dullest old woman were unable to understand them, they were not as they ought to be; if they were in the persuasive words of human wisdom and not in the simplicity of the gospel, they were not as they ought to be; if they were not, in fine, the fruit of piety and meditation, they could not, he said, be what they ought to be. He took especial care that they should fit themselves for the confessional by the study of moral theology; which, he said, should finish only with the life of the student, and without the knowledge of which, a confessor, he said, would damn himself and bring ruin on his penitents. He instructed them, moreover, in the proper treatment of different classes of penitents, impressing upon them the necessity of sweetness and charity, the danger of severity and harshness and the importance of using to advantage their discretion in giving or withholding absolution in those cases where the church has left either course open to them.

When Alphonsus, or any of his companions, travelled to the place where they were to preach the mission, it was on foot, or if the distance were great, on horseback, it being meet, he said, that those who had taken upon them the apostleship, should preserve to it all its simplicity. Having arrived at his destination, he went straight to the principal church; and after a short time spent in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, mounted the pulpit and exhorted the people to profit by the present grace, which might never be vouchsafed them again if they were to abuse the divine mercy by not taking advantage of the time afforded them for penance. The following days were taken up by a morning and evening sermon; separate catechetical instructions for the young and the adults; the recitation of the rosary and the hearing of confessions. After nightfall some of the fathers went through the most populous parts of the city, or country, as the case might be, holding up a crucifix, reminding the people in a loud voice of their last things and inviting them to listen to the sermons.

Alphonsus, who always preached the evening sermons, was accustomed to discipline himself three times during the course of the mission; once during the sermon upon sin; once during that upon hell; and once during that on scandal; during which last he caused all his companions to discipline themselves likewise, in order to fill the people with a sovereign horror of that dreadful evil. After the general evening sermon, the women left the church and Alphonsus addressed a discourse to the men, exciting them to compunction and to discipline themselves. After he had closed the sermons di terrore, or operating by fear, he entered upon another exercise of three or four days, called by him the exercise of a devout life, consisting of instructions upon prayer and its necessity and of meditations upon the passion of Jesus Christ, which Alphonsus proposed with so much unction and tenderness, as to draw torrents of tears from his entire audience.

Next came the general communions and these he distributed through four days, according to the several conditions of the communicants. On each of the four days he endeavoured to excite sentiments of compunction and the love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. First came the communion of the boys and girls under the age of fourteen; next, that of the maidens and widows, which lasted for some days, during which he addressed them on the value of chastity; then came the communion of married women; before which they were enlightened upon the duties of their state; and lastly, on some festival day the communion of the men took place;—the entire mission closing with a sermon upon perseverance and solemn benediction. Nor must we omit to mention, that during all this time, the fathers of the mission were obliged to spend seven hours every morning in the confessional, which they could not leave without permission from himself, or from the president of the mission, whoever he might be.

It would be impossible to enumerate all the wonders wrought by Alphonsus in the places which he visited during his missionary career. The conversions which followed his preaching and his prayers, are, in point of fact, as well as in the eye of faith, the most stupendous of these wonders; but, as the suspension of the laws of nature, as those sensible miracles with which the Almighty was pleased to glorify his servant, are most likely to make an impression upon us, carnal generation that we are, we shall select one of the most remarkable of these and give it to our readers.

Towards the close of a mission concluded by Alphonsus, the town of Amalfi was like another Ninive, so plenteous were the tears and so exemplary was the penance of its inhabitants. Alphonsus addressing them one day upon devotion to the Blessed Virgin, exclaimed, “Ah! you do not pray to her as you ought—I shall address her for you.” He then turned towards a statue of the Blessed Virgin and proceeding in a strain of enraptured eloquence, was observed by the congregation to rise some feet above the ground; while, at the same time, the statue of the Blessed Virgin all radiant, beamed upon the extatic Alphonsus and the entire multitude exclaimed, a miracle! a miracle! This lasted for some time, when Alphonsus returning to himself, assured the congregation that it had found favour with the Blessed Virgin.

The sanctity of Alphonsus and the wonders by which his preaching was attended, began to attract the notice of the entire kingdom and amongst others, of Cardinal Spinelli, who immediately fixed his eye upon him for promotion to the episcopacy. Shortly after, the Archbishopric of Palermo becoming vacant, the king determined upon appointing Alphonsus to that dignity, saying, “If the Pope appoint good bishops, I shall appoint still better.” Alphonsus, who upon the mere suspicion of Cardinal Spinelli’s designs, had left his unfinished mission in Naples, was dreadfully alarmed when he heard of the king’s intention and bestirred himself so vigorously to counteract it, that he did at length succeed and was consoled by witnessing the appointment of another. But his joy was of short duration and his escape from the burthen of the episcopacy proved to be nothing more than a reprief; for the see of Sant’Agata de’ Goti becoming vacant, he was nominated by the Pope himself to the care of that church. Alphonsus having recovered from the desolation into which he was thrown by the announcement of this intelligence, addressed a letter to the Pope, setting forth his unfitness for that high office, as well by reason of his infirm health, and advanced age, as of his spiritual unworthiness. The Holy Father upon receiving the letter of Alphonsus was deeply moved by the pathetic remonstrances of the saint; and, on the evening of the 14th of March, communicated to his Pro—auditor, Cardinal Negroni, his intention of allowing Alphonsus to decline the dignity; but, on the following morning, informed Cardinal Negroni, that God had inspired him during the night to have Alphonsus consecrated. The Pro—auditor then, by command of the Pope, wrote to Alphonsus, acquainting him with the determination of His Holiness and put him upon his obedience.

The immediate superior of the house having received and read this letter, as he had been commissioned to do by Alphonsus, proceeded, along with some other fathers, to communicate to him the will of His Holiness. Immediately upon entering his apartment, they desired him to say an Ave Maria, which he did accordingly upon his knees, whilst his entire frame bore testimony to the painful workings of his mind. They then proceeded to read to him the letter of the Pope, which when they had finished, he exclaimed, “Obmutui quoniam tu fecisti Domine, gloria Patri, etc.” Then turning to his companions with tearful eyes, “God, “he said, “takes me from the congregation for my sins; ah and we must part, after thirty years of love?” But immediately afterwards expressing the most entire resignation to the divine will, he placed the Pope’s letter upon his head and several times repeated, “God will have me a bishop, and a bishop will I be.”Somae advised him to remonstrate with the Pope again. “No,” said Alphonsus, “the Pope has put me on my obedience and I have nothing else for it;” having said which, he was seized with convulsions so violent as to deprive him of the use of speech for more than five hours. A fever of an aggravated nature then set in, caused by his lively dread of the responsibility he was about to incur and the account which he should have to render. The fever was at its height after nine days and his recovery was almost despaired of. “If he die,” said the Pope,” “he shall have our apostolic benediction—if he recover, let him repair to Rome.” It was the will of God that Alphonsus should recover; and immediately upon his restoration to health, he prepared to set out for Rome, in compliance with the orders of His Holiness.

Meanwhile the companions of our Saint, in sore affliction at their approaching bereavement and unwilling to lose his sweet and fatherly government, having assembled in chapter, confirmed him in the perpetual superior—generalship, empowering him at the same time to govern through one of his vicars, when he should find it necessary: and this decree, in order to its greater stability, they submitted to the sacred congregation of bishops and superiors of orders, by whom it was confirmed on the 25th of May, 1762.

Alphonsus having accepted the episcopal office, through pure obedience, as we have seen, set out for Rome accompanied by Father Andrea Villani, a man of approved virtue. It was his original intention to proceed to Rome in the miserable dress which he usually wore, but he was induced by the urgent solicitations of his companions to wear a somewhat more seemly garb, although of sufficiently coarse texture. In passing through Velletri, he was received with demonstrations of the greatest respect, by Cardinal Spinelli, who insisted on his passing an entire day with him. Having arrived in Rome on the 11th of April, he declined occupying the apartment which the Prince of Piombine had prepared for him in his own palace and accepted only the carriage as being absolutely necessary. He took up his residence at the house of the fathers called, “Pii Operarii,” but hearing that the Pope was then at Castel Gandolfo, Alphonsus thought he could not better employ the intermediate time, than by visiting the holy house at Loretto. During a fortnight of his residence at Loretto, he contrived to remain unknown, visiting our Lord in the holy chapel early in the morning and late in the evening; but at the end of the fortnight, he was recognized by a Father Penitentiary of the Society of Jesus and thus received the demonstrations of esteem and veneration which he so much dreaded.

Alphonsus, having received intelligence of the return of the Pope to Rome, set out for the city with all possible despatch; and, immediately upon his arrival, had an audience of the Holy Father. His Holiness received him with the greatest cordiality, conversing with him during three hours upon matters of the greatest importance to the church; and amongst other things, upon the practice of frequent communion, which Alphonsus had recommended in a book published at Rome and which the Pope knew to have been opposed in print. His Holiness, who had personal experience of the conduciveness of this practice to the good of souls, desired Alphonsus to support his work against its adversaries; and the saint complied in such a stile as to leave the Pope equally astonished at his learning and his humility. Alphonsus, previous to his consecration, had several other audiences of the Holy Father, who, upon one occasion after having dismissed the bishop elect, said to Monsignor Pasquale Mastrilli, Archbishop of Nazareth, "After the death of Monsignor Liguori we shall have another saint in the church of God."

During his residence in Rome, notwithstanding his retired habits and the scantiness of his retinue, (a single servant,) he was paid the most distinguished respect by generals of religious orders, bishops, princes and cardinals. Almost every moment of his sojourn in the Eternal City he spent in austere watchings, disciplines to blood, constant adoration of the most holy Sacrament and the exercise of acts of mercy. Having been at length formally declared bishop of Sant'Agata de' Goti, by the Sovereign Pontiff, in the secret consistory held on the 14th of June, 1762, Alphonsus was consecrated on the 20th of the same month, the third Sunday after Pentecost, in the sixty—sixth year of his age, in the Church of St. Mary Sopra Minerva, by Cardinal de Rossi, assisted by Monsignor Gorgoni, Archbishop of Emessa and Monsignor Giordani, Archbishop of Nicomedia, governor of Rome. As soon as he had been consecrated, Alphonsus took leave of the Sovereign Pontiff, unwilling that he should be absent from his church a moment longer than was necessary.

The holy bishop having arrived in Naples amid the congratulations of the entire city, withdrew to San Michele de' Pagani, to arrange matters connected with his congregation and appointed Father Andrea Villani his vicar—general, to administer the affairs of the congregation in his room. Upon his return to Naples, many persons of the highest distinction, as well as many of his former colleagues, endeavoured to detain him there and dissuade him from his precipitate journey to Sant' Agata, which seemed to portend so constant a residence in that unwholesome town as would prove ruinous to his health. Their remonstrances, however, were ineffectual, and he set out on the 11th of July, accompanied by his brother Hercules and Father Francis Margotto. His journey through the country was like the triumphal procession of a conqueror. He was met at every stage by reverential multitudes and welcomed into Sant'Agata by the citizens and the chapter of the diocese. Having proceeded to the Church, he spent some time in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and then addressing the people in a moving strain, gave them his benediction and the indulgence usual upon such occasions. The very next morning he began the mission to the people, which he continued during eight days, giving each morning spiritual exercises to the clergy, secular and regular, as well as to the gentry; so that shortly after his arrival, the entire aspect of the city and diocese had undergone a most surprising and consoling change.

Alphonsus in the government of his diocese, simply carried out the principles which he had laid down in a book, entitled "Reflections useful to bishops in the government of their Churches," and published before his elevation to the episcopacy. Though removed in body from his congregation, it ceased not to be directed by his spirit, as he was in constant communication with Father Villani and the superiors of houses, continually exhorting and instructing them by letters full of unction and wisdom alike divine. His elevation to the episcopal dignity no wise prejudiced that eminent spirit of poverty by which he had been distinguished while residing with the congregation. His dress (invariably the habit of the congregation) was of the coarsest texture and the clergy of his household, or others interested, were obliged to resort to an order from his confessor, or some such expedient, to induce him to exchange his single suit, no matter how old or tattered, for a new one; whilst the pectoral cross was the only ornament worn by him significant of his pastoral dignity. The spirit of poverty, jointly with his compassion for the poor, led him to consult economy in the most trifling details of his household affairs. The chapter was obliged to interfere to prevent the total dismantlement of the palace; an event which they succeeded in retarding only, not in finally preventing, for, upon being obliged to leave Sant'Agata by reason of his health, he ordered the principal furniture of the palace to be sold and the proceeds applied to the adornment of the Cathedral. He retained, after his promotion, a practice which he had while yet a simple missioner, of using the blank leaves and backs of letters, for his correspondence with familiar friends, or for draughts of the works he was about to publish. His secretary, indeed, remonstrated with him, but Alphonsus was firm. What shame is it? he enquired; holy poverty is the characteristic of a bishop. He left the best apartments to his household clergy, occupying himself, a couple of the most unpretending, and furnished in the meanest style, possessing, in fact, only some straw chairs, a table with an inkstand and a few books, a small wooden bedstead with a straw bed, and coarse sheets, some pictures of saints and one of our blessed Lady of good counsel, together with a little altar for the celebration of Mass, when his health should not permit him to go to the Cathedral. His table was originally very simple and every day experienced new retrenchments, until it reached the standard of insipidity, which Alphonsus had laid out for it. The cook, with whom nothing could induce him to part, spoiled the little that he dressed, having it either badly seasoned, or too salt, or raw, or burned. To endure this might have seemed to others mortification sufficient; but Alphonsus was insatiable of mortification and took measures of his own to increase the insipidity and nauseousness of what he eat. His household resembled nothing so closely as a religious community, so regular were the hours of prayer and silence and meals and religious converse. The extent (we shall not presume to say excess,) to which he carried his bodily austerities and disciplines, was absolutely frightful. His secretary upon one occasion, alarmed by the violence with which, from the sound of the discipline he knew the saint was scourging himself, was strongly tempted to burst open the door and wrest the discipline out of his hands; but we shall, perhaps, give a still more striking instance of the terrible rigour of Alphonsus towards his innocent flesh, when we relate that a Dominican father, one of the Saint’s synodal examiners, was obliged to leave the episcopal palace and return to his convent in the middle of the night, so terrified was he by the vehemence, with which the noise led him to believe Alphonsus scourged himself.

If Alphonsus, by reason of his pastoral cares, was unable to pray as much as he could have desired during the day time, he abridged to a mere nothing, the hours of repose, spending the greater part of the night in meditation, or those appalling acts of penance which we have mentioned. The little time which he contrived to steal from his pastoral cares, or his devotions, he spent not in recreation, but in writing, or dictating letters, or composing works for the good of souls, or reading spiritual or theological books. An application unintermitting as was his, could not, unless by miracle, fail to prejudice his health and in addition to his other infirmities, he began to be afflicted with grievous head—aches. But it mattered not, for even when obliged to go out in his carriage, he had his secretary to read a book to him, so that he contrived not to allow a single moment to pass unoccupied. And lest by possibility, a single imperfection should escape his notice, he appointed a discreet and pious priest to make him acquainted with anything he should observe in him, which might require correction.

Alphonsus, who was in every respect so perfect a model of pastoral perfection, was in nothing more admirable than in his strict observance of the duty of residence. Not only did he hasten, at the peril of life, to take possession of his episcopal residence in the unwholesome town of Sant’Agata; but, during the thirteen years of his abode in the diocese, never availed himself of the privileges granted by the Council of Trent and only absented himself upon three occasions of the most pressing nature: First, to attend a general chapter of the congregation; a second time, in obedience to the physicians; and for the last time, before his final removal, he spent a month in Naples, to conduct a most just and interesting suit upon the part of his Congregation.

Alphonsus having fallen sick in Arienzo during one of his yearly visitations, had no sooner recovered his health sufficiently to travel, than he began to think of returning to Sant’Agata and the representations of his vicar—general regarding the unsafe condition of a portion of the palace, should have been ineffectual had not the doctors insisted upon his remaining where he was; the damp and insalubrious air of Sant’Agata being peculiarly hurtful to one afflicted as he was with asthma. But neither his infirmities, nor his withdrawal from the usual seat of episcopal government, caused him to suspend for a day the instructions, private, as well as public, which he was in the habit of giving his flock. He preached as usual on Sundays and holidays; and on Saturdays, in honour of the blessed Virgin; he continued to give missions, conduct retreats and attend at conferences; in a word, he never permitted his health to interfere with the discharge of any of those duties which, even holy bishops deem themselves justified in devolving upon others. He catechised in person, the infants of both sexes, holding out and awarding with his own hand, little prizes for their encouragement. He gave audience to persons of either sex, or any degree, who wished to consult him upon their wants and occasions, spiritual or temporal, but summarily dispatched all visits of mere compliment; and once a year made a visitation of half the diocese, so that he saw every portion of it once in two years. In travelling he rode upon an ass, or hired mule, (his equipage he had early disposed of,) and made use of no other conveyance, no matter how great his infirmities, or what the badness of the road. During the course of the visitation, he everywhere addressed the people, confirmed the children and inspected the churches, even in the poorest and remotest districts; his household, his table and his devotions, wherever he resided being the same as in Sant'Agata. To the sick of his entire diocese he was attentive and not satisfied with relieving their wants when they thrust themselves upon him, took measures to discover such wants as might not have attracted his notice. In the administration of justice in his episcopal court, he was so assiduous and vigilant and weighed so well both sides of the question, that there never was an appeal from his decision to that of the Archiepiscopal Court of Benevento: and with regard to ecclesiastical privileges and immunities, though not so tried, he was full as unflinching an asserter of the church's rights, as was St. Thomas of Canterbury. A criminal having once fled for sanctuary to a church, was taken thence by the officers of justice and an application to the local magistrate for his release, not having been granted, Alphonsus, after warning, proceeded to excommunicate the magistrate and did not desist until the prisoner had been discharged, saying, that were it to cost him his mitre, the immunities of the church should be protected.

If the clergy of a diocese do not correspond with the solicitude of their chief pastor, his exertions for the good of souls are very little worth; and it was for this reason that Alphonsus laboured, by word and work, to render his clergy conformable to the model which he exhibited to them in himself, saying to them by implication, in every good advice he gave them, "imitatores mei estote sicut et Ego Christi."

There were many things in the clergy requiring reformation, when our saint came to the government of the diocese; and he affected a total change, at once so rapidly and noiselessly, that the people perceived it to be finished almost before they had perceived it to be in progress. To the canonries and other benefices in his gift, he collated none whose moral and intellectual fitness he had not ascertained; the moral, by personal experience, or strict investigation and the intellectual, by what is technically termed, a “concursus,” or an examination, properly speaking, of two or more candidates, but sometimes of one only. The superior of his diocesan seminary, a man of approved virtue and learning, being candidate for a deanery, the examiners who had formerly been students under him declined to exercise their functions in his regard. He was not, however, on this account, exempted from the examination, for Alphonsus procured other examiners and after a proper scrutiny, advanced him to the deanery, with which the office of penitentiary also was connected. When the nomination rested with the King or Pope, Alphonsus never recommended any one whom he did not think entirely fit, or than whom he believed he could find one better qualified. He has been known to deny the suit of the Prince of Riccia, the Duke and Duchess of Maddaloni, patrons of Sant’Agata and the Archbishop of Bari severally; deeming unfit the persons whom they begged him to recommend. Nor was this strictness confined to his choice of dignitaries only, he was equally exact in the appointment of every priest who was to have the cure of souls and sit in the tribunal of penance. The rules which he drew up for the conduct of his seminary, were equally admirable with every other portion of his government; providing not only for the maintenance of discipline and piety within doors, but for the practice of piety by the students in their own homes during the vacation, at the close of which, if they meant to be readmitted, they should bring with them a certificate of their religious conduct, signed on oath by the parish priest. Need we add, that his care in ascertaining the fitness of those who were sufficiently advanced for promotion to orders, corresponded with those early precautions; or, that he endeavoured to keep green in the memory of his priests, the principles of sacred science and piety by frequent conferences, which they were obliged to attend under pain of suspension, unless able to adduce some valid reason? It was with a view to the improvement of his clergy and in order to supply them with new facilities for preaching the divine word, that he composed the digest, called “Sermons for all the Sundays of the Year,” lately translated into English and the present volume, both of which however, may with advantage be used by the faithful indiscriminately. As a book for those engaged in the conduct of spiritual retreats and for the clergy in general, but for them exclusively he composed the admirable “Selva,” in which, says the eminent French translator, the Holy Ghost and all the fathers of the church are made to address the clergy, upon their numerous and awful duties.

The regular clergy and conventuals of his diocese, men and women, claimed his most paternal attention. He did his utmost, and with the most perfect success, to improve the character of those peculiarly catholic institutions, especially such as were under the invocation of the Mother of God. His beautiful work entitled the “True Spouse of Jesus Christ, or the Nun Sanctified,” will be read with peculiar spiritual advantage by nuns, and with vast profit by any religious whosoever.

If Alphonsus was attentive to the sanctification of the clergy and sacred virgins of his diocese, Oh! how zealously and unremittingly did he not labour for the simple faithful? Not satisfied with his continual preaching by word and example, or his yearly visitations, or the missions he gave in person, or those which he procured by inviting missionaries from other diocese, or providing the people with virtuous and learned clergy; not satisfied with all this, he traced vice and scandals to their strongholds. Verily he was an angel of peace, and went about doing good, reconciling those at variance and even inducing those who had been really and grievously injured to forgive the wronger. A youth having at one time been mortally wounded, Alphonsus hastened to his dwelling and prevailed upon himself and his mother to forgive the murderer. We could wish to cite another instance at least, but this one must suffice out of the many which we have on record.

He exerted himself with the most astonishing activity to put down the absurd and atrocious practice of duelling, often personally interfering to prevent hostile meetings; and at length memorialing the king to put in force those laws which had been directed against duelling in the kingdom of Naples. But there was no vice or scandal which he pursued and extirpated with so much zeal as that of immorality, in the more received and restricted sense. It would be impossible to enumerate all the licentious men and abandoned women whom he reclaimed, in very many cases by personal exertion and often by judicious advice to the civil authorities, who always received it with respect by reason of the esteem in which they held the Saint. Knowing well however that poverty is often the most fatal incentive to vice, he procured honest employment for such young women as he had fears of, and respectable matches for others, giving them portions out of his own revenue. Some whom he reclaimed he sent to asylums of penance; and against those whom he could not reclaim, he called in the arm of the law.

Having been obliged to remove for a while to Nocera de' Pagani for the benefit of the air, a woman of improper character whom he had expelled the diocese, took advantage of his absence to return. So grievously did this intelligence distress him, that Monsignor Valpe, bishop of that city, enquired the cause of his alarm with much concern. "I am a bishop," was the reply given by Alphonsus; and neither the remonstrances of Monsignor Valpe, nor of his friends, could restrain Alphonsus from returning forthwith to his diocese and having the abandoned woman brought before him, to whom he spoke in such a moving strain, that she was really converted by his words, and died in a Naples asylum a true penitent. He was anxious not only to prevent public scandals, but to do away with anything that could lessen the salutary influence of his government upon the people; and for this reason, compensating a company of players who had settled in his diocese, induced them to depart without exhibiting.

Carefully as Alphonsus provided for the spiritual wants of his flock, he was not less assiduous in ministering to their temporal necessities. He knew well that the man who has not bowels of compassion for his neighbour, cannot love God, and that the funds of the church are the patrimony of the poor. We have already seen how rigid was the economy of Alphonsus in his household concerns, and that this was produced partly by charity; but to whatever it was owing, the poor had all the benefit of it. So chary was he of the patrimony of the poor, as he called the revenues of his church, that he would not entertain his brother Hercules and his two children for more than three days, saying, that to entertain them longer than that, would be to defraud the poor. His brother imagining that the revenues of the diocese were more than sufficient for the maintenance of Alphonsus, as a bishop, thought he would relinquish to him the pension which he enjoyed from the estate; but this Alphonsus declined, saying, that the proceeds of his diocese belonged to the poor, and that he required the income for his support. At another time, one of the houses of the congregation being in a state of utter destitution, the superior applied to Alphonsus for some assistance; but the Saint informed him, that all his money belonged to the poor of the dioceses, and that he should look to God for aid elsewhere.

He had an alms for everyone who asked it and summoned his vicar—general and others to the aid of his own zeal in discovering such as shame (so ill—consorted with penury,) prevented from putting in their petitions with the others. Superannuated priests, old people of every description, widows with families, and more especially young maidens whose poverty might be the occasion of their fall, were the objects of his tenderest care. We have already mentioned his care of the sick; and it was at least equalled by his care of those in prison, both as concerned their spiritual and temporal wants. But all his other acts of love were outdone by one act of stupendous charity, in the year 1765, during which Italy was afflicted in a great and prevailing famine. As if in preparation for the disastrous season, Alphonsus, contray to custom, had laid up a large store of corn, and as soon as the scarcity began to be felt, distributed it to the poor. After having expended his entire store, he wrote to every one of wealth and distinction and more especially to his brother Hercules, to contribute to the relief of the starving population. He afterwards gave orders for the secret sale of the carriage and mules which his brother had presented to him, as well as of his pectoral cross, and the ring given him by Monsignor Gianini, substituting for them gilded things of trifling value. But, notwithstanding all his efforts, thousands remained unsupplied and in the madness of their hunger attacked the corporate officers; for whose safety Alphonsus has been known to expose his own life to the fury of the mob.

Alphonsus had for some time been very weakly, and in bad health, but even while labouring under a disorder, or rather a complication of disorders, which the physicians looked upon as most dangerous and in fact mortal, he preserved the utmost serenity and joyousness. In 1769 the people of Arienzo, where Alphonsus then resided, called for a procession and novena to propitiate the Almighty, and draw down rain upon the languishing country; and Alphonsus, although from the nature of his disorder he could scarce move an inch, insisted upon preaching in the church himself, attracting thither immense crowds and edifying those even who could barely hear his voice, without distinguishing a word. And now in addition to his former sufferings, he became afflicted with a rheumatic fever of the most malignant nature. To be moved or shifted was a most intolerable suffering and compliance with the wants of nature a perfect agony. His secretary and the canons exerted themselves in vain to induce him to send to Naples for physicians; he replied, that he should be content with those whom God had provided for him in his diocese, but he was at length obliged by Father Villani to receive the visits of doctors from Naples, who amongst other remedies, prescribed the use of warm baths, a thing most repugnant to his virginal modesty and which put him upon several expedients to prevent its being offended in his person.

But the rheumatism was not the only, nor indeed the most grievous disorder by which Alphonsus was affected. A gangrenous sore upon his breast, caused by the friction of his chin, which continually lay upon it, had not only eaten into the flesh, but was now beginning to affect the bone; everything threatened mortification and death its inevitable result. The alarming progress of the sore was in a great measure, if not entirely, owing to the circumstance before mentioned of the Saint's beard being merely clipped, not shorn; but whatever the cause, it now looked so threatening that it was deemed prudent to administer to him the sacrament of Extreme Unction. His secretary, however, who still had hopes of his recovery—hopes which the event soon justified—summoned another eminent physician from Naples, who prevented the mortification from setting in and in a short time caused the sore itself to disappear.

All this while our saint not only never murmured, but preserved the utmost composure. Every morning he heard mass and communicated in his chamber, never allowing any of his mortifications to suffer interruption, or diminution beyond what obedience to his medical and spiritual superior rendered imperative. Nor did he anywise relax in his attention to the affairs of the diocese: the examination of clerics, the mission amongst the people, the conferences in theology and every thing else went on as usual under his active superintendence and though he was unable to make the visitation of the diocese as usual, (which duty he now devolved upon his vicar—general,) yet he failed not to preach on all occasions and the bare sight of his poor suffering limbs and bent neck, sufficed to fill the multitudes who flocked to hear him, not only with compassion for himself, but with the tenderest love of God. In a word, he left no duty unfulfilled, for while his vicar—general made the visitation, Monsignor Puoti, Archbishop of Amalfi, administered the sacrament of confirmation, in various places at his request.

To his utter affliction, he had for some time been obliged by the position of his head (leaning as it did upon his breast,) to give up saying mass, as he could not without infinite danger receive the sacred species of blood. Indeed it was with great difficulty he could at any time contrive to swallow a drop of water, until the expedient of a tube, suggested to him by a religious of the Society of Jesus, having proved successful, enabled him to drink with the greatest ease imaginable. Charmed with this discovery, his friends exhorted him to apply to the Pope for a dispensation, enabling him to receive the divine blood through such a tube; but as this is a privilege usually in the exclusive enjoyment of the Sovereign Pontiff, Alphonsus was too humble to think of becoming a sharer in it and therefore declined applying to the Pope. God, however, “had regard to the humility of his servant;” for shortly afterwards, an Augustinian father proposed to Alphonsus that he should receive the adorable blood seated and assisted by a priest in surplice and stole, who should take care to prevent the occurrence of any accident; and the Saint infinitely delighted with this expedient and fortified by the opinions on several divines upon this subject, renewed with unspeakable joy of spirit, the celebration of our awful mysteries.

Alphonsus had accepted the bishopric through pure obedience and ever held it with fear and trembling; but after a time his advanced years and complicated infirmities, raised grievous scruples in his mind upon the score of incapacity, inducing him to think of resigning his office into the hands of the Pope and retiring with his permission to one of the houses of the congregation. Lest however, as he said: “The cell to which he should retire, might be to him a hell in consequence of his having withdrawn from an office in which God wished him to remain;” he took counsel of learned and pious men and finding them favourable to his resignation, applied to Clement XIII. Who had appointed him, for his removal; and received for answer, that his name alone was sufficient, for the well—ordering the diocese. He received this answer with perfect submission to the will of God, as intimated to him by His Holiness; but after a time, his increasing infirmities awakening new scruples in his breast and supplying him with new reasons for requesting the acceptance of his resignation, he applied to Clement XIV and received for answer, that one prayer from his bed of pain, would be more worth than a thousand visitations and disciplines to blood;

for the Saint had put forward his inability to make the visitation of his diocese as a ground for his removal.

Alphonsus again bowed in submission to the will of God and it was to no purpose that his own scruples, or the representations of bishops his advisers and others, solicited him to renew his application to that Pope. “If I apply,” he said, “my application will not be granted; we shall see what his successor will do for me,” an answer which almost tempted those who heard him to smile, Alphonsus being brought to the grave’s edge by infirmity and years, while the Pope was yet hale and vigorous. For five weary years after this did Alphonsus continue to govern his diocese and break to his flock the bread of the divine word. Ascending the pulpit, his feeble step propped upon several supporters, his worn frame and drooping head moved everyone to tears, but no sooner had he begun to speak, than he was renewed in youth and vigour; his nerves and sinews relaxed from their habitual rigidity and he preached with all his natural vehemence and fervour. Upon leaving the pulpit, he relapsed into his former state. By order of the physicians, he was now obliged to procure a carriage and take an airing every day, together with eating meat in lent and sundry other indulgences which mortified Alphonsus infinitely more than could have done the most grievous austerity.

For thirteen years had Alphonsus borne the burthen of the episcopacy, when, on the 21st of September, 1774, being seated in his arm chair, he fell into a tranquil slumber, which lasted not only that night, but during a portion of the next day, the servant having orders from the vicar—general not to disturb him. On the 22nd, about one o’clock in the afternoon, he awoke and pulled the bell. Seeing the attendants in tears, he enquired of them, what was the matter? and on being told that he had not eaten nor spoken for two days, “True,” he replied, “I have been to attend the Pope, who has just expired,” and as shortly afterwards came to be known, the Pope had actually just expired at that very moment.

Upon the earliest opportunity Alphonsus made application to Pius the VI for permission to retire from his office and that Pontiff, although at first disposed to act as his predecessor had done, knowing that the bare presence of Alphonsus was enough to sanctify the diocese, was at length induced by the representations of many distinguished persons to accede, though (as he said) with great sorrow, to the request of Alphonsus and accept his resignation.

Immediately that Alphonsus had received the welcome intelligence, “blessed be God,” he exclaimed, “who has removed a mountain from my breast?” and in a few days after, having arranged all matters for his departure, left the diocese amid the lamentations of the entire flock and directed his course towards San Michele de’ Pagni where there was a house of his order. Having reached his destination, he humbly besought the fathers to receive him once more amongst them. As he ascended the stairs, leading to the choir, he repeated the “Gloria Patri,” and exclaimed, “how light is not now this cross upon my breast, which was so heavy when first I mounted the steps of the palace of Sant’Agata?” Here he lived completely after the manner of the other fathers of the congregation, attending all the exercises where and when it was done by the rest of the community and enjoying every distinction and indulgence, the carriage drives, the two apartments, the silver service and the invalid fare by mere compulsion and solely through obedience. For the rest, the Pope had given him permission to retain the portable altar in his chamber for his own use, and that of others, and had assigned him a pension of eight hundred ducats upon the diocese of Sant’Agata, which occasioned him so many scruples, that he wrote concerning it to the Grand Penitentiary, who left the affair in the hands of the Saint’s confessor and thus set him at ease. Of this pension, however, the Saint appropriated barely what was necessary and distributed the rest amongst public mendicants, or private pensioners of his. For many years he continued to preach in several of the neighbouring churches, and especially in the parish church of Saint Michael, where his congregation was engaged in giving the mission. Upon one occasion during a season of terrible drought, wretchedly infirm as he was, he dragged himself along an entire street in a procession, with a halter about his neck, a crown of thorns upon his head, and his garments covered with ashes. He foretold to the people the happy result of the procession; and, it is useless to say, that the prediction was soon verified. During all this time he ceased not to compose works for the sanctification of souls.—Amongst other works composed and published by him after his return to San Michele de’ Pagni, he gave to the world the book entitled, “Admirable Dispositions of Divine Providence, for the Salvation of the World, through means of Jesus Christ;” and dedicated to

Pius VI, who was pleased to acknowledge it as an especial favour and compliment the blessed author in the loftiest and at the same time, most affectionate strain. But the health of Alphonsus, which had been all along declining, began rapidly to grow worse. From the 29th of November, 1779, he was unable to say Mass and continued thence forward to communicate in one kind; his manner of life, being, in other respects as before described. Indeed, we should rather say, that in proportion to the increase of his decrepitude and weakness his abstemiousness and general spirit of mortification increased and he certainly would have persevered in the use of that dreadful implement of penance the discipline, to his last breath, had he not been forbidden by his confessor and when obliged to part with it and its fellows, he ordered his lay—brother in attendance to throw into some sewer the box in which he used to keep them.

Although the Saint in detaching his affections from all things in this world, had weaned his heart from all mere earthly affection to his relations, he still watched unceasingly over their salvation. At the end of every interview he counselled them to attend to it; and prevailed upon his niece, Donna Teresina, to become a Benedictine nun, in the convent of St. Marcellinus, in Naples.

Alphonsus, who had now for some years, as we have mentioned, been unable to say Mass, still took his airing in the carriage and was helped into the church; but, from the 25th of September, 1784, he was obliged to give up the drive; and from the 30th of October following, was confined to his room. His sight now began to fail him and he grew deaf, so as to render it necessary for him to be addressed through a speaking trumpet. But his resignation to the will of God was perfect. “I am deaf, O Lord,” he exclaimed; “let me be more deaf, if it so please you;” and some person happening to speak of the loss of reason during one’s last moments. “Preserve me from that, my God,” he said, “because then I could not make an act of your love when dying—but yet—do with me what you please.” Alphonsus distinctly foretold the year of his death, on the 13th of September, 1786, saying to a Carmelite priest: “Father Joseph, I shall die next year, pray to God and the Queen of Sorrows for me;” and here we must not omit to mention, that he had a peculiar devotion to the dolours of the Mother of God, as may be seen from one of the sermons in this volume. A few days before his death, he said to the lay—brother, Francis Anthony

Romito: “Yet a few days, and I shall be in the performance of another function,” meaning the new position he was to occupy m the church upon his bier.

On the 18th of July, 1787, in addition to his old complaints, he was attacked by a sharp fever, together with a terrible dysentery and retention of urine. These were symptoms so little to be mistaken, that, although he had been absolved three days before by Father Vincenzo Magaldi of the congregation, he confessed again to Father Lorenzo Negri of the congregation also and after having received absolution, was released from all his usual anxiety and broke forth into expressions of the liveliest joy and hope, the Lord being doubtless willing to console his servant by a foretaste of Paradise, for all that he had made him suffer during this life and especially for the grievous temptations against faith, by which he had been assailed sometime after his retirement from his diocese. His sufferings lasted for fourteen days, during which he was constantly engaged in acts of piety, keeping his eyes lovingly fixed upon the crucifix and image of the blessed Mother; confessing frequently and communicating every day.

The news of his mortal illness having been spread abroad, priests, secular as well as regular and persons of the highest distinction, came from all parts to kiss his hand, bringing kerchiefs and other such things, to sanctify by contact with him and preserve as relics. At length it become necessary for him to receive the sacrament of Extreme Unction, which he did with the most fervent acts of faith, hope, charity, resignation and joy. On the 25th of the same month, he received the Blessed Sacrament as a viaticum; and when the time for communicating approached, every moment appeared intolerably long and unable to contain himself, he incessantly exclaimed, give me the body of my Jesus—when will Jesus come to me?—when shall I possess him? His longings having been at length satisfied, he sunk into a long and deep meditation upon the love of Jesus in the most Holy Sacrament.

Sometime after, the lay—brothers in attendance approached his bed and begged to have his blessing in reward of their long and faithful service. Alphonsus immediately lifting his hand, blessed them in the words of the Church: “Benedictio Dei omnipotentis, Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, descendat super vos et maneat semper.” Having been reminded by Father Lorenzo Negri, that he had still to bestow his blessing on all the houses and fathers of the congregation, as well as upon the chapter and diocese of Sant’Agata, which then widowed by the death of Monsignor Rossi, the successor of St. Alphonsus, he complied; and then, without a suggestion from any one, said with much solemnity and emphasis, “I bless the fathers of the kingdom; I bless the King, his ministers, generals and judges, who shall invoke the intercession of the saints, and do justice.” His nephew, Joseph, having come to visit him, threw himself upon his knees by the bedside of his dying uncle. The Saint tenderly stretching out his hand to him, said frequently, I thank you; and then being asked for something by way of a memorial, gave him much wholesome advice, and finished by telling him to save his soul.

Four days before his death he was seized with convulsions so violent as to deprive him of the use of speech. On the thirtieth day of the month, Father Villani not thinking it safe to give him the Viaticum, as he was afraid he should not be able to swallow, one of the fathers desired him to make a spiritual communion, which he did, shewing by his eyes and various signs, that he joined in the devout sentiments suggested by that father. On the day before his death, Monsignor Tafuri came to visit him and seeing him so near his dissolution, reverentially kissed his hand and placed it on his head. On the day of his death, just before the commencement of his agony, upon hearing the names of Jesus and Mary, he opened his eyes and appeared somewhat to revive. What is even more surprising, on the night before his death, the image of the blessed Mother having been brought near his bed, he not only opened his eyes, but fixing them upon it, smiled sweetly, his countenance all radiant with delight. Whence we may all conclude, that the divine Mother blessed her holy client with one of those visits which it was his daily prayer to have at the hour of death, and which he so often held out to all who should be devout to Mary.

Alphonsus straining the crucifix and image of most holy Mary to his breast, the brethren in tears and prayer around him, calmly and without struggle or contortion, breathed forth his blessed soul, on Tuesday, the 1st of August, 1787.

It would be useless to add anything even to these meagre details in praise of a saint, decidedly the greatest of modern times and excelled by very few in any age. It will, I suppose, be in the recollection of the reader in what manner we promised to test the pretensions of Alphonsus to the title of great amongst the sons of God. “Qui fecerit, “says the gospel, “ET docuerit sic homines, hie magnus vocabitur in regno Caelorum.” That he was a model of all virtue, few will be found bold enough to dispute; and if some of our separated brethren have envied us St. Bernard, I think they should feel proud to be able to call St. Liguori theirs. No one, I think, will be disposed to deny that he has made out his claim to the first ingredient of heavenly greatness, that of having “done;” and for the second, rich in the accumulated treasures of the Holy Scriptures, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church,—rich in the treasures revealed to him by the Spirit of God in meditation—rich in the treasures of experience; he poured all these treasures into the bosom of the faithful by apostolic words and writings—establishing thus his title to the second ingredient of heavenly greatness, that of having “so taught men.”

This being so, it became the duty of the Church, after the juridical proof of the miracles which must always, according to her wise ordinances, precede the enrolment of any of her children amongst the saints—it became her duty to make him great in the veneration of the faithful on earth, whom God had made great in the kingdom of his glory.

On the 21st day of December, 1809, the venerable Pontiff Pius VII. issued the decree for the beatification of Alphonsus and on the 26th of May, 1836, our Most Holy Father, Gregory, after having gone through the glorious proofs of his sanctity, vouchsafed to the Church by the Almighty, after the beatification of his servant, proceeded with the solemn ceremony of canonization, or enrolment amongst the saints.

NOTE—St. Francis Girolamo, of the Society of Jesus, when the infant Alphonsus was presented to him for his blessing, not only blessed him, but said to his mother, “This child shall live to the age of Ninety, shall be a Bishop, and perform great things for Jesus Christ.” This remarkable prophecy was inadvertently omitted in the text.

DECLARATION OF ST. LIGUORI.

CONFORMABLY to the decrees of Urban VIII., I declare, that for the miracles and miraculous gifts attributed, in this book, to divers servants of God and which have not yet received the sanction of the Holy See, I expect no belief beyond what is usually given to history supported by human authority—and I further declare, that in styling any one Saint, or Blessed, who has not yet been canonized or beatified, I do so merely in compliance with the familiar custom of men.

SERMONS OF SAINTALPHONSUS LIGUORI

SERMON THE FIRST

THE LORD APPEARS ANGRY, NOT THAT HE MEANS TO PUNISH US, BUT IN ORDER THAT WE MAY CLEANSE OURSELVES OF OUR SINS AND THUS ENABLE HIM TO PARDON US

“Heu consolabor super hostibus meis et vindicabor de inimicia meis.”—Isa. 1:24.

“Ah, I will comfort myself oyer my adversaries: and I will be revenged of my enemies.’’

SUCH is the language of God, when speaking of punishment and vengeance: He says that he is constrained by his justice, to take vengeance on his enemies. But, mark you, he begins with the word.—“Heu,” “ah:” this word is an exclamation of grief, by which he would give us to understand, that if he were capable of weeping when about to punish, he should weep bitterly at being compelled to afflict us his creatures, whom he has loved so dearly as to give up his life through love for us. “Heu,” says Cornelius a Lapide, “dolentis est vox non insultantis: significant se dolentem et invitum punire peccatores.” No, this God who is the father of mercies and so much loves us, is not of a disposition to punish and afflict but rather to pardon and console us. “Ego enim scio cogitationes quas ego cogito super vos ait Dominus, cogitationes pacis et non afflictionis.”—Jer. 29:11. “For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of affliction.” But some one will say, since such is his character, why does he now punish us? or, at least, appear as if he meant to punish us? Why so? Because he wishes to be merciful towards us: this anger which he now displays, is all mercy and patience. Let us then, my brethren, understand how the Lord at present appears in wrath, not with a view to our punishment, but in order that we may cleanse ourselves of our sins and thus enable him to pardon us. Such is the subject of our discourse. God threatens to chastise in order to deliver us from chastisement.

The threats of men ordinarily proceed from their pride and impotence; whence, if they have it in their power to take vengeance on an object they threaten nothing, lest they should thereby give their enemies an opportunity of escape. It is only when they want the power to wreak their vengeance, that they betake themselves to threats, in order to gratify their passion, by awakening at least the fears of their enemies. Not so the threats of which God makes use, on the contrary, their nature is quite different. His threats do not arise from his inability to chastise, because he can be avenged when he wills; but he bears with us in order to see us penitent and thus exempt from punishment. “Thou overlookest the sins of men for the sake of repentance.”—Wisd. 11:24. Neither does he threaten from hatred, in order to torment us with fear; God threatens from love, in order that we may be converted to him and thereby escape chastisement: he threatens, because he does not wish to see us lost: he threatens, in fine, because he loves our souls. “Parcis autem omnibus quoniam tua sunt Domine, qui amas animas. But thou sparest all, because they are thine, O Lord, who lovest souls.”—Wis. 11:27. He threatens; but notwithstanding bears with us and delays the infliction, because he wishes to see us converted not lost. “Patienter agit, propter vos nolens aliquem perire, sed omnes ad poenitentiam reverti.” “He dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.”—2 Peter 3:9, thus the threats of God are all acts of tenderness and amorous calls of his goodness, by which he means to save us from the punishment which we deserve.

“Yet forty days,” exclaimed Jonas, “and Nineve shall be destroyed.”—Jonas 3:4. Wretched Ninevites, he cries, the day of your chastisement is come; I announce it to you on the part of God: Know, that within forty days Nineve shall be destroyed and cease to exist. But how comes it that Nineve did penance and was not destroyed? “And God had mercy.”—Ibid. 10. Whereat Jonas was afflicted and making lamentation before the Lord, said to him—“Therefore, I went before thee into Tarsis, for I knew that thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion and easy to forgive evil.”—Jonas 4:2. He then left Nineve and was screened from the rays of the burning sun, by an ivy which God caused to overshadow his head. But how did the Lord next act? He withered the ivy, whereat Jonas was so much afflicted that he wished for death. God then said to him, “Thou hast grieved for the ivy for which thou hast not laboured, nor made it to grow and shall not I spare Nineve?"—Jonas 4:10. Thou grievest for the ivy which thou hast not created and shall not I pardon the men who are the work of my hands? The destruction which the Lord caused to be held out against Nineve, was, according to the explanation of St. Basil, not an actual prophecy, but a simple threat, by which he meant to bring about the conversion of that city. The saint says, that God often appears in wrath because he wishes to deal mercifully with us; and threatens, not with the intention of chastising but of delivering us from chastisement: "Indignans miseretur et minitans salvare desiderat." St. Austin adds, that when any one cries out to you "take care," it is a sign he does not mean to injure you: "Qui clamat tibi, observa: non vult ferire." And thus exactly does God act in our regard, he threatens us with chastisement, says St. Jerome, not that he means to inflict it, but to spare us if we profit by the warning. "In hoc dementia Dei ostenditur: qui enim praedicit poenam non vult punire peccatores." You, O Lord, says St. Gregory, are severe, but then most so when you wish to save us; you threaten, but in so threatening you have no other object than to bring us to repentance: "Saevis et salvas; terris et vocas." The Lord could chastise sinners without warning by a sudden death, which should not leave them time for repentance; but no, he displays his wrath, he brandishes his scourge; in order that he may see them reformed, not punished.

The Lord said to Jeremiah: thou shalt say to them—"If so be, they will hearken and be converted everyone from his evil way: that I may repent me of the evil which I think to do unto them."—Jer. 26:3. Go, he says and tell the sinners if they wish to hear you, that if they cease from their sins, I shall spare them the chastisements which I intended to have inflicted on them. And now, my brethren, mark me. The Lord addresses you in a similar way out of my mouth. If you amend, he will revoke the sentence of punishment. St. Jerome says, "Neque Deus hominibus sed vitiis irascitur." God is wroth, not with us, but with our sins; and St. Chrysostom adds, that if we remember our sins God will forget them. "Si nos peccatorum meminerimus Deus obliviscetur." He desires that we being humbled should reform and crave pardon of him. "Because they are humbled I will not destroy them."—2 Paral. 12:7.

But, in order to amend, we must be led to it by fear of punishment, otherwise, we never should be brought to change our lives. True it is, God protects him who places hope in his mercy. “He is the protector of all who trust in him.”—Ps. 17:31. But he who hopes in the mercy of the Lord is always the man who fears his justice. “They that fear the Lord have hoped in the Lord: he is their protector and their helper.”—Ps. 113:11.

The Lord often speaks of the rigour of his judgments, and of hell and of the great number who go thither.” Be not afraid of them who kill the body fear ye him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell.”—Luke 12:4, 5. “Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there are who enter thereat.”—Matt. 7:13. And why does the Lord so often speak thus? In order that fear may keep us from vice and from the passions and from occasions; and that thus we may reasonably hope for salvation, which is only for the innocent, or the penitent who hope and fear. O what strength has not the fear of hell to rein us in from sin! To that end has God created hell. He has created us and redeemed us by his death, that we might be happy with him, he has imposed upon us the obligation of hoping for eternal life and on that account encourages us, by saying that all those who hope in him shall be saved. “For, none of them that wait on thee shall be confounded.”—Ps. 24:2. On the other hand, it is his wish and command that we should be in fear of eternal damnation. Some heretics hold, that all who are not in sin should consider themselves as assuredly just and predestined; but these have with reason been condemned by the Council of Trent,—(Sess. 6, can. 14 & 15,) because, such a presumption is as perilous to salvation as fear is conducive to it. “And let him be your dread and he shall be a sanctification unto you.”—Isa. 8:13, 14. The holy fear of God makes man holy. Wherefore, David begged of God the grace of fear, in order that fear might destroy in him the inclinations of the flesh. “Pierce thou my flesh with thy fear.”—Ps. 118:120.

We should then fear on account of our sins, but this fear ought not to deject us; it should rather excite us to confidence in the divine mercy, as was the case with the Prophet himself. “For thy namesake, O Lord, thou wilt pardon my sin for it is great.—Ps. 24:11. How is that? Pardon me because my sin is great? Yes, because the divine mercy is most conspicuous in the case of greatest misery; and he who has been the greatest sinner, is he who glorifies most the divine mercy, by hoping in God, who has promised to save all those who hope in him. “He will save them, because they have hoped in him.”—Ps. 36:40. For this reason it is, Ecclesiasticus says, that the fear of the Lord bringeth not pain but joy and gladness: “The fear of the Lord shall delight the heart and shall give joy and gladness.”—Eccles. 1: 21. Thus this very fear leads to the acquisition of a firm hope in God, which makes the soul happy: “He that feareth the Lord shall tremble at nothing and shall not be afraid, for he is his hope: The soul of him that feareth the Lord is blessed.”—Eccles. 34:16, 17. Yes, blessed, because fear draws man away from sin. “The fear of the Lord driveth out sin,” (Eccles. 1:27,) and at the same time infuses into him a great desire of observing the commandments: “Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord: he shall delight exceedingly in his commandments.”—Ps. 111:1.

We must, then, persuade ourselves that chastisement is not what the nature of God inclines him to. God, because by his nature he is infinite goodness, (“Deus cujus natura bonitas,”) says St. Leo, has no other desire than to bless us and to see us happy. When he punishes he is obliged to do so, in order to satisfy his justice, not to gratify his inclination. Isaiah says, that punishment is a work contrary to the heart of God. “The Lord shall be angry that he may do his work, his strange work his work is strange to him.”—Isa. 28:21. And therefore, does the Lord say, that he sometimes almost feigns the intention of punishing us: “Ego fingo contra vos malum.” But why does he do so? For this reason: “Let every man of you return from his evil way.”—Jer. 28:16. He does so in order to our reformation and consequently our exemption from the chastisement deserved by us. The apostle writes, that God “hath mercy on whom he will and whom he will he hardeneth.” Rom. 9:18. With regard to which passage, St. Bernard says, that God of himself wishes to love us, but that we force him to condemn us: “Sed quod misereatur proprium illi est: nam quod condemnat, nos eum cogimus.” He calls himself the father of mercies, not of vengeance. Whence it comes that his tenderness all springs from himself and his severity from us. And who has ever been able to comprehend the greatness of the divine mercies? David says, that God, even while yet angry, feels compassion for us: “Thou hast been angry and hast had mercy on us.”—Ps. 59:1. “O ira misericors,” exclaims the abbot Beroncosio, “quce irascitur ut subveniat minatur ut parcat.” O merciful wrath, which art enkindled but to succour and threatenest but to pardon. “Thou hast shewn,” continues David, “thou hast shewn thy people hard things, thou hast made us drunk with the wine of sorrow.” God discovers himself to us armed with a scourge, but he does so in order to see us penitent and contrite for the offences which we are committing against him: “ Thou hast given a warning to them that fear thee: that they may flee before the bow: that thy beloved may be delivered.” He appears with the bow already bent, upon the point of sending off the arrow, but he does not send it off, because he wishes that our terror should bring about amendment and that thus we should escape the chastisement. “That thy beloved may be delivered.” I wish to terrify them, says God, in order that struck by fear they may rise from the bed of sin and return to me. “In their affliction they will rise early to me.”—Osee. 6:1. Yes, the Lord although he sees us so ungrateful and worthy of punishment, is eager to free us from it, because how ungrateful soever we be, he loves us and wishes us well. “Give us help from trouble.” Thus, in fine, prayed David: and thus ought we to pray. Grant, O Lord, that this scourge which now afflicts us, may open our eyes, so that we depart from sin; because, if we do not here have done with it, sin will lead us to eternal damnation, which is a scourge enduring forever. What shall we then do my brethren? Do you not see that God is angered? He can no longer bear with us. “The Lord is angry.” Do you not behold the scourges of God increasing every day? “Crescit malitia crescit inopia rerum.” Our sins increase, says St. Chrysostom, and our scourges increase likewise: God, my brethren, is wroth: but with all his anger he has commanded me to say, what he formerly commanded to be said by the prophet Zachary: “And thou shalt say to them, thus saith the Lord of Hosts: turn ye to me saith the Lord of Hosts and I will turn to you saith the Lord of Hosts.”—Zach. 1:3. Sinners, saith the Lord, you have turned your backs upon me and therefore have constrained me to deprive you of my grace. Do not oblige me to drive you forever from my face and punish you in hell without hope of pardon. Have done with it: abandon sin, be converted to me and I promise to pardon you all your offences and once more to embrace you as my children. “Turn ye to me, saith the Lord of Hosts and I will turn to you.” Why do you wish to perish? (mark how tenderly the Lord speaks). “And why will you die, O house of Israel.”—Ezech. 28:31. Why will you fling yourselves into that burning furnace? “Return ye and live.” Ibid. 32. Return to me, I await you with open arms, ready to receive and pardon you.

Doubt not of this, O sinner, continues the Lord. “Learn to do well and then come and accuse me, saith the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow.”—Isa. 1:17, 18. Take courage, saith the Lord, change your life, come to me and if I do not pardon you, “accuse me:” As if he were to say, accuse me of lying and bad faith; but, no, I shall not be unfaithful, your conscience now so black shall by my grace become as white as snow. No; I will not chastise you if you reform, says the Lord because I am God not man. “I will not execute the fierceness of my wrath because I am God and not man.”—0see. 11:9. He says besides, that men never forget an injury, but that when he sees a sinner penitent, he forgets all his offences. “I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done.—Ezech. 18:22. Let us then at once return to God, but let it be at once. We have offended him enough already, let us not tempt his anger any further. Behold him, he calls us and is ready to pardon us if we repent of our evil deeds, and promise him to change our lives.*****

Here and at the close of each succeeding Sermon, may be introduced Acts of Faith, Hope and Sorrow, &c, with a Petition to the Mother of God for her intercession.

SERMON THE SECOND

SINNERS WILL NOT PROFIT BY THE DIVINE THREATS UNTIL THE CHASTISEMENT HAS COME UPON THEM

“Si Poenitentiam non egeritis omnes similiter peribitis.”

“Except you do penance you shall all likewise perish.” Luke 13:5.

AFTER our Lord had commanded our first parents not to eat of the forbidden fruit, unhappy Eve approached the tree and was addressed from it by the serpent, who said to her: Why has God forbidden you to eat of this delightful fruit? “Why hath God commanded you?” Eve replies: “God hath commanded us that we should not eat and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die.”—Gen. 3:3. Behold the weakness of Eve! The Lord had absolutely threatened them with death and she now begins to speak of it as doubtful: “Lest perhaps we die.” If I eat of it, she said, I shall perhaps die. But [the devil seeing that Eve was little in fear of the divine threat, proceeded to encourage her by saying: “No, you shall not die the death;” and thus he deceived her and caused her to prevaricate and eat the apple. Thus, even now, does the enemy continue to deceive so many poor sinners. God threatens: stop, sinners and do penance, because if not you shall damn yourselves, as so many others have done: “Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.” The devil says to them: “No, you shall not die the death.” Fear nothing, sin on, continue to enjoy yourselves, because God is merciful; he will pardon you by and by and you shall be saved. “Deus timorem incutit,” says St. Procopius, “Diabolus adimit.”

God only desires to terrify them by his threats, in order that they may depart from sin and thus be saved. The devil wishes to destroy that fear, in order that they may persevere in sin and thus be lost. Many are the wretches who believe the devil in preference to God and are thus miserably damned. At present, behold the Lord displays his anger and threatens us with chastisement. Who knows how many there may be in this country who have no thought of changing their lives, in the hope that God will be appeased, and that it will be nothing. Hence the subject of the present discourse. Sinners will not profit by the divine threats, until the chastisement shall have come upon them. My brethren, if we do not amend, the chastisement will come; if we do not put an end to our crimes, God will.

When Lot was warned by the Lord that he was about to destroy Sodom, Lot at once informed his sons-inlaw: “Arise! get you out of this place, because the Lord will destroy this city.”—Gen. 19:14. But they would not believe him: “And he seemed to them to speak as it were in jest.” They imagined that he wished to sport with their fears, by terrifying them with such a threat. But the punishment overtook them and they remained to be the sport of the flames. My brethren, what do we expect? God warns us that chastisement hangs over us; let us put a period to our sins, or shall we wait for God to do it? Hear, O sinner! what St. Paul says to you: “See, then, the severity and goodness of God—towards them, indeed, that are fallen, the severity—but towards thee the goodness of God, if thou abide in goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”—Rom. 11:22. Consider, says the apostle, the justice which the Lord has exercised towards so many whom he has punished, and condemned to hell; “towards them, indeed that are fallen, the severity.” Consider the mercy with which he has treated you; but towards thee the goodness of God.” You must abandon sin; if you change your ways, avoid the occasions of sin, frequent the sacraments and continue to lead a christian life, the Lord will remit your punishment, “if you abide in goodness;” if not you shall perish, “ otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.” God has already borne with you too long, he can bear with you no longer. God is merciful, but he is just withal; he deals mercifully with those who fear him; he cannot act thus towards the obstinate.

Such a person laments when he sees himself punished and says, why has God deprived me of my health? why has he taken from me this child, or this parent? “Ah, sinner! What have you said,” exclaims Jeremiah, “your sins have withholden good things from you.” It was not the desire of God to deprive you of any blessing, of any gain, of your son, or your parent; it would have been the wish of God to make you happy in all things, but your sins have not allowed him. In the book of Job, we read these words: “Is it a great matter that God should comfort thee? But thy wicked words hinder this.”—Job. 15:11. The Lord would fain console you, but your blasphemy, your murmuring, your obscene words spoken to the scandal of so many, have prevented him. It is not God, but accursed sin, that renders us miserable and unhappy. “Sin maketh nations miserable.”—Prov. 14:34. We are wrong in complaining of God when he deals hardly with us. Oh! How much more hardly do we deal with him, repaying with ingratitude the favours which he has bestowed on us! “Quid quserimur, dum dure agit nobiscum Deus? multo durius cum Deo nos agimus.”

Sinners imagine that sin procures them happiness; but it is sin which makes them miserable and afflicted in every respect. “Because thou didst not serve the Lord thy God,” saith the Lord, “in joy and gladness of heart thou shalt serve thy enemy, whom the Lord will send upon thee, in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness and in want of all things till he consume thee.”—Deut. 28:47, 48. Because thou hast not wished to serve thy God in the peace which all those taste who serve him, thou shalt serve thy enemy in poverty and affliction, until he shall have finished by making thee lose both soul and body. David says, that the sinner by his crimes, digs himself the pit into which he falls: “He is fallen into the hole he made.”—Ps. 7:16. Recollect the prodigal son: he, in order to live without restraint and banquet as he pleased, left his father; but then, for having left his father, he is reduced to tend swine; reduced to such a degree of misery, that of the vile food with which the swine are filled, he has not wherewithal to fill himself: “And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat and no man gave unto him.”—Luke 15:16. St. Bernardine of Sienna, (dom. 2. Quadrag.) relates that a certain impious son, dragged his father along the ground. What happened to him afterwards? One day he was himself dragged by his own son in like manner, when arriving at a certain place, he exclaimed, “No more—stop here, no more—thus far did I drag my own father—stop.” St. Baronius mentions a circumstance of a like nature, (all anno 33. num. 6.) concerning the daughter of Herodias, who caused John the Baptist to be beheaded. He tells of her, that one day as she was crossing a frozen river, the ice broke under her and she remained with her head only above the aperture. By dint of her struggles to save herself from death, she had her head severed from her body and thus died. Oh, how just is not God, when the time of vengeance arrives! he causes the sinner to be caught and strangled in the net which his own hands have made. “The Lord shall be known when he executeth judgments, the sinner hath been caught in the works of his own hands.”—Ps. 9:17.

Let us tremble, my brethren, when we see others punished, knowing, as we do, that we ourselves have deserved the same punishments. When the tower of Siloe fell upon eighteen persons and killed them, the Lord said to many who were present: “Think you that they also were debtors above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem.”—Luke 13:4. Do you think that these wretches alone were in debt to God’s justice on account of their sins? You are yet debtors to it; and if you do not penance, you shall be punished as well as they: “Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.” O, how many unfortunate men damn themselves by false hope in the divine mercy? Yes, God is merciful and therefore assists and protects them who hope in his mercy: “He is the protector of all that trust in him.”—Ps. 17:31. But he assists and protects those only who hope in him, with the intention of changing their lives, not those whose hope is accompanied by a perverse intention of continuing to offend him. The hope of the latter is not acceptable to God, he abominates and punishes it: “Their hope the abomination of the soul.” Job 11:20. Poor sinners, their greatest misery is, that they are lost, and do not know it. They jest, and they laugh, and they despise the threats of God, as if God had assured them that he should not punish them. “Et unde,” exclaims St. Bernard, “unde haec maledicta securitas?” Whence, O blind that you are, whence this accursed security? accursed, because it is this security which brings you to hell. “I will come to them that are at rest, and dwell securely.”—Ezech. 38:11. The Lord is patient, but when the hour of chastisement arrives, then will he justly condemn to hell those wretches who continue in sin and live in peace, as if there were no hell for them.

Let sin be no more for us, my brethren; let us be converted if we wish to escape the scourge which hangs over us. If we do not cease from sin, God will be obliged to punish us: “For evil doers shall be cut off.”—Ps. 36:9. The obstinate are not only finally shut out from Paradise, but hurried off the earth, lest their example should draw others into hell. And let us reflect that these temporal scourges are nothing in comparison with those eternal chastisements, hope of relief from which there is none. Give ear, O sinner! my brother, give ear! “For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees.”—Luke 3:9. The author of the “Imperfect Work,” in his comment upon this passage (hom. 5,) says: “Non ad ramos posita dicitur, sed ad radicem, ut irreparabiliter exterminetur.” He says, that when the branches are lopped, the tree continues still to live; but when the tree is felled from the root, it then dies and is cast into the fire. The Lord stands with the scourge in his hand and you still continue in disgrace with him. “The axe is laid to the root.” Tremble lest God should make you die in your sins, for if you die thus, you shall be cast into the fire of hell, where your ruin shall be hopeless for eternity.

But, you will say, I have committed many sins during the past, and the Lord has borne with me. I may, therefore, hope that he will deal mercifully with me for the future. God says, do not speak so: “Say not I have sinned and what harm hath befallen me? for the Most High is a patient rewarder.”—Eccl. 5:4. Do not say so, for God bears with you now, but he will not always bear with you. He endures, to a certain extent and then pays off all. “Now, therefore, stand up, that I may plead in judgment against you concerning all the kindness of the Lord,” (1 Kings 12:7.) said Samuel to the Hebrews. O how powerfully does not the abuse of the divine mercies assist in procuring the damnation of the ungrateful! “Gather them together as sheep for a sacrifice and prepare them for the day of slaughter.”—Jer. 12:3. In the end the herd of those who will not be converted shall be victims of divine justice and the Lord will condemn them to eternal death, on “the day of slaughter,” when the day of his just vengeance shall have arrived, (and we have reason always to be in dread, as long as we are not resolved to abandon sin,) lest that day should be already near. “God is not mocked; for what things a man shall sow, these also shall he reap.”—Gal. 6:7:8. Sinners expect to mock God by confessing at Easter, or two or three times a year and then returning to their vomit and hoping after that to obtain salvation. “He is a mocker, not a penitent,” says St. Isidore, “who continues to do that for which he is penitent;” but “God is not mocked.”

What salvation?—what salvation do you expect? “for what things a man shall sow, them also shall he reap.” What things do you sow? blasphemy, revenge, theft, impurity: what then do you hope for? He who sows in sin, can hope to reap nothing but chastisements and hell. “For he that soweth in his flesh,” continues the same apostle, “of his flesh also shall reap corruption.” Continue, impure wretch! continue to live sunk in the mire of your impurity, be converted into pitch within his bowels, ye his impurities.

“A day shall come,” says St. Peter Damian, “a day shall come, or rather a night, when your lust shall be turned into pitch, to feed an eternal flame within your bowels.”—Epist. 6. St. John Chrysostom says, that some pretend not to see: “fingunt non videre;” they see the chastisements and pretend not to see them. And then others, St. Ambrose says, have no fear of punishment, until they see it has overtaken them: “Nihil timent quia nihil vident.” To all these it will happen as it did to mankind at the time of the deluge. The patriarch Noah foretold and announced to them, the punishments which God had prepared for their sins; but the sinners would not believe him and notwithstanding that the ark was building before their eyes, they did not change their lives, but went on sinning until the punishment was upon them, until they were smothered in the deluge “And they knew not till the flood came and took them all away.”—Matt. 24:39. The same happened to the great Babylon, in the Apocalypse, who said: “I sit a queen and I shall not see grief.” She persevered in her impurity, in the hope of not being punished, but the chastisement at length came as had been predicted: “Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine and she shall be burnt with fire.”—Apoc. 18:7, 8.

Brother, who knows whether this is not the last call which God may give you? Our Lord says, that a certain owner of a vineyard, finding a fig-tree for the third year without fruit, said, “Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and I find none; cut it down therefore, why cumbereth it the ground?”—Luke 13:7. Then the dresser of the vine replied: “Lord, let it alone this year also and if happily it bear fruit—but if not, then, after that, thou shalt cut it down.” Let us enter into ourselves, my brethren, for years has God been visiting our souls and has found no other fruit therein than thorns and thistles, that is to say sins. Hear how the divine justice exclaims, “cut it down therefore, why cumbereth it the earth?” but mercy pleads, “let it alone this year also.” Have courage, let us give it one trial more; let us see whether it will not be converted at this other call. But tremble lest the same mercy may not have granted to justice that if you do not now amend, your life shall be cut off and your soul condemned to hell. Tremble, brother and take measures that the mouth of the pit do not close over you. Such was the prayer of David: “let not the deep swallow me up; and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.”—Ps. 68:16. It is that which sin effects, causing the mouth of the pit, that is, the state of damnation into which the sinner has fallen, to close over him by degrees. As long as that pit is not entirely closed, there is some hope of escape; but if it once shut, what further hope remains for you? By the closing of the pit, I mean the sinner's being shut out from every glimmer of grace and stopping at nothing; that being the accomplishment of what the wise man has said: "The wicked man, when he is come into the depth of sins, contemneth."—Prov. 18:3. He despises the laws of God, admonitions, sermons, excommunication, threats—he despises hell itself; so that persons have been known to say, numbers go to hell and I amongst the rest. Can the man who speaks so be saved? He can be saved, but it is morally impossible he should. Brother, what do you say? Perhaps you have yourself come to the contempt of the chastisements of God. What do you say? Well, and if you had, what should you do? Should you despair? No; you know what you have to do. Have recourse to the Mother of God. Although you should be in despair and abandoned by God, Blosius says, that Mary is the hope of the despairing, and the aid of the abandoned: "Spes desperantium, adjutrix destitutorum." St. Bernard says the same thing when he exclaims, the despairing man who hopes in thee ceases to be desperate: "In te sperat qui desperat." But if God wishes that I should be lost, what hope can there be for me? But, says God, no, my son, I do not wish to see you lost: "I desire not the death of the wicked." And what then do you desire, O Lord? I wish him to be converted and recover the life of my grace: "But that the wicked turn from his way and live."—Ezech. 33:11. Haste then, brother, fling yourself at the feet of Jesus Christ; behold him! see how he stands with his arms open to embrace you! &c.

SERMON THE THIRD

GOD IS MERCIFUL FOR A SEASON AND THEN CHASTISES

> “lndulsistigenti Domine indulsistigenti; nunquid glorificatuses?”
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> “Thou hast been favourable to the nation, O Lord, thou hast been favourable to the nation; hast thou been glorified?”—Isa. 26:15.

LORD, thou hast often pardoned this people; thou hast threatened it with destruction by earthquake, by pestilence, in neighbouring countries; by the infirmities and death of its own citizens; but you have afterwards taken pity on them : “Thou hast been favourable to the nation, O Lord, thou hast been favourable to the nation; hast thou been glorified?” You have pardoned us, you have dealt mercifully with us; what have you received in return? Have thy people abandoned their sins? have they changed their lives? No, they have gone on from bad to worse; that momentary fear passed, they have begun afresh to offend thee and provoke thy wrath. But my brethren, perhaps you imagine that God will always wait, always pardon and never punish? No; God is merciful for a season, (such is the subject of the day’s discourse,) God is merciful for a season, then executes judgment, and punishes.

We must persuade ourselves that God cannot do otherwise than hate sin, he is holiness itself and therefore cannot but hate that monster, his enemy, whose malice is altogether opposed to the perfection of God. And if God hate sin, he must necessarily hate the sinner who makes league with sin, “But to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.”—Wisd. 14:9. O God, with what an expression of grief and with what reason do you not complain of those who despise you, to take part with your enemy. “Hear, O ye Heavens and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken; I have brought up children and exalted them; but they have despised me.”—Isa. 1:2. Hear, O ye Heavens, he says, and give ear, O earth, witness the ingratitude with which I am treated by men. I have brought them up and exalted them as my children and they have repaid me with contempt and outrage. “The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel hath not known me, they are gone away backwards.”—Isa. 1:3, 4.

The beast of the field, the ox and the ass, continues the Lord, know their master and are grateful to him, but my children have not known me and have turned their back upon me. But how is this? “Beneficia etiam ferse sentiunt,” says Seneca; the very brutes are grateful to their, benefactors; see that dog how he serves and obeys and is faithful to his master, who feeds him; even the wild beasts, the tiger and the lion are grateful to those who feed them. And God, my brethren, who, till now has provided us with everything, who has given us food and raiment: What more? who has kept us in existence up to the moment when we offended him: how have we treated him? how do we purpose to act in future? Do we not think to live on as we have been living? Do we not perhaps think that there is no punishment, no hell for us? But harken and know that as the Lord cannot but hate sin, because he is holy, so he cannot but chastise it when the sinner is obstinate, because he is just.

When he does chastise, it is not to please himself, but because we drive him to it. The wise man says, that God did not create hell, through a desire of condemning man thereto and that he does not rejoice in their damnation, because he does not wish to see his creatures perish: “For God made not death, neither hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living; for he created all things that they might be.”—Wisd. 1:13, 14. No gardener plants a tree in order to cut it down and burn it. It was not God’s desire to see us miserable and in torment; and therefore, says St. Chrysostom, he waits so long before he takes vengeance of the sinner: “Ad reposcendum de peccantibus ultionem consuevit Deus moras nectere.” He waits for our conversion, that he may then be able to use his mercy in our regard. “Therefore the Lord waiteth, that he may have mercy on you.”—Isa. 30:18. Our God, says the same St. Chrysostom, is in haste to save and slow to condemn. “Ad salutem velox, tardans ad demolitonem.” When there is question of pardon, no sooner has the sinner repented than he is forgiven by God. Scarcely had David said “peccavi,” when he was informed by the prophet that his pardon was already granted: “The Lord also hath taken away thy sin.”—2 Kings 12:13. Yes, because we do not desire pardon so anxiously as he desires to pardon us.” “Non ita tua condari peccata cupis,” says the same holy doctor, “quam tibi remissa esse expetit.” On the other hand, when there is question of punishment, he waits, he admonishes, he sends us warning of it beforehand: “For the Lord God doth nothing without revealing his secret to his servants, the prophets.”—Amos, 3:7.

But when, at length, God sees that we are willing to yield neither to benefits, nor threats, nor admonitions and that we will not amend, then he is forced by our own selves to punish us and while punishing us, he will place before our eyes the great mercies he before extended to us: “Thouthoughtest unjustly that 1shall be like to thee; but I will reprove thee and set before thy face.” He will then say to the sinner, think you, O sinner, that I had forgotten, as you had done, the outrages you put upon me and the graces I dispensed to you? St. Austin says, that God does not hate but loves us and that he only hates our sins: “Odit Deus et amat; odit tua, amat te.” He is not wroth with men, says St. Jerome, but with their sins: “Neque Deus hominibus sed vitiis irascitur.” The saint says, that by his nature God is inclined to benefit us and that it is we ourselves who oblige him to chastise us and assume the appearance of severity, which he has not of himself: “Deus qui natura benignus est; vestris peccatis cogitur personam, quam non habet crudelitatis assumere.” It is this which David means to express, when he says that the Lord in chastising is like a drunken man who strikes in his sleep: “And the Lord was awaked as one out of sleep and he smote his enemies.”—Ps. 77:65. Theodoret adds that, as drunkenness is not natural to man, so chastisement does not naturally belong to God; it is we who force him into that wrath which is not his by nature. “Thesaurizans sibi iram, quam Deus naturaliter non habet.” St. Jerome, reflecting on those words which Jesus Christ on the day of general judgment will address to the reprobate: “Depart from me you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels enquires, who has prepared this fire for sinners? God perhaps. No, because God never created souls for hell as the impious Luther taught: this fire has been kindled for sinners by their own sins: “Comparaverunt delictis suis.” He who sows in sin, shall reap chastisement. “He that soweth iniquity, shall reap evil.”—Prov. 22:8. When the soul commits sin, she voluntarily obliges herself to pay the penalty thereof and thus condemns herself to the pains of hell. “For you have said, we have entered into a league with death and we have made a covenant with hell.”—Isa. 28:15. Hence St. Ambrose well says, that God has not condemned any one, but that each one is the author of his own chastisement. “Nullum prius Dominus condemnat, sed unusquisque sibi est auctor poenae.” And, the Holy Ghost says, that the sinner shall be consumed by the hatred which he bears himself, “with the rod of his anger he shall be consumed.” He, says Salvian, who offends God, has no more cruel enemy than himself, since he himself has caused the torments which he suffers. “Ipse sibi parat peccator quod patitur; nihil itaque est in nos crudelius nobis.” God does not wish to see us in affliction, but it is we who draw down sufferings upon ourselves, and by our sins enkindle the flames in which we are to burn. “Nos etiam nolente Deo, nos cruciamus; nam ccelestis irae accendimus incendia quibus ardescimus.” God punishes us, because we oblige him to punish us.

But, I know, you say, the mercies of God are great: no matter how manifold my sins, I have in view a change of life by and by and God will have mercy upon me. But no, God desires you not to speak thus. “And say not the mercy of the Lord is great, he will have mercy on the multitude of my sins.”—Eccl. 5:6. And why has the Lord forbidden you to say so? The reason is this, “for mercy and wrath quickly come from him.”—Ibid. 7. Yes, it is true, God has patience, God waits for some sinners; I say some, for there are some whom God does not wait for at all: how many has he not sent to hell immediately after the first transgression? Others he does wait for, but he will not always wait for them; he spares them for a certain time and then punishes. “The Lord patiently expecteth, that when the day of judgment shall come, he may punish them in the fulness of their sins.”—2 Mach; 6:14. Mark well, “ when the day of judgment shall come:” when the day of vengeance shall arrive, “in the fullness of their sins.” When the measure of sins which God has determined to pardon is filled up, he will punish. Then the Lord will have no mercy and will chastise unremittingly. The city of Jericho did not fall during the first circuit made by the ark, it did not fall at the fifth, or at the sixth, but it fell at last at the seventh.—Jos. 9:20. And thus it will happen with thee, says St. Austin, “veniet septimus arcse circuitus, et civitas vanitatis corruet.” God has pardoned you your first sin, your tenth, your seventieth, perhaps your thousandth; he has often called you, he now calls you again; tremble lest this should be the last circuit taken by the ark, that is, the last call, after which, if you do not change your life, it will be over with you. “For the earth,” says the apostle,” that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it and bringeth forth thorns and briars is reprobate and very near unto a curse, whose end is to be burned."—Heb. 6:7:8. That soul, he says, which has often received the waters of divine light and grace and instead of bearing fruit produces nought but the thorns of sin, is nigh unto a curse and her end will be to burn eternally in hell fire. In a word, when the period comes, God punishes.

And let us know, that when God wishes to punish, he is able and knows how to do it. "The daughter of Sion shall be left as a city that is laid waste."—Isa. 1:8. How many cities do we not know to have been destroyed and levelled with the ground, by reason of the sins of the inhabitants, whom God could no longer bear with. One day, Jesus Christ being within sight of the city of Jerusalem, gazed upon it and thinking of the ruin which her crimes were to draw down upon her, our Kedeemer, who is so full of compassion for our miseries, began to weep: "seeing the city, he wept over it,"—Luke 19:41, saying: "They shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation."—Ibid. 44. Poor city, there shall not be left in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not been willing to know the grace which I gave thee in visiting thee with so many benefits, and bestowing upon thee so many tokens of my love; whilst thou hast ungratefully despised me and driven me away. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children and thou wouldst not, behold your house shall be left to you desolate."—Ibid. 13:34:35. Sinful brother, who knows whether God does not at this moment look upon your soul and weep? Perhaps he sees, that you will not turn to account this visit which he now pays you, this summons which he gives you to change your life. "How often would I and thou wouldst not." How often, says the Lord, have I wished to draw you to me by the lights which I have given you? How often have I called you and you would not hear me? You have been deaf to me and fled from me. "Behold your house shall be left to you desolate." Behold I am already on the point of abandoning you, and if I abandon you, your ruin will be inevitable, irreparable.

"We would have cured Babylon but she is not humbled, let us forsake her."—Jerem. 41:9. The physician when he sees that the patient will not adopt his remedies, which he himself carries to him with so much kindness and which the other flings out of the window; what does he do at length? He turns his back upon him and abandons him. My brethren, by how many remedies, by how many inspirations, by how many calls has not God endeavoured to avert damnation from you? What more can he do? If you damn yourself, can you complain of God who has called you in so many different ways? God calls you by the voice of his minister, he calls you by the voice that is within you, he calls you by his favours, he calls you lastly by temporal punishments; in order that you may learn to dread those which are eternal. St. Bernardine of Sienna says, that for certain sins, more especially those which are scandalous, there is no more effectual method of doing away with them, than by temporal punishments .—"Pro talibus admonendis, nullum reperitur remedium nisi Dei flagellum." But, when the Lord sees that his favours serve only to make the sinner more insolent in his evil life, when he sees that his threats are disregarded, when he perceives, in a word, that he speaks and is not heard; then he abandons the sinner and chastises him with eternal death. Therefore does he say, "Because I called and you refused and have neglected my reprehensions, I will also laugh in your destruction and will mock when that shall come which you feared."—Prov. 1:24–26. You, says God, have laughed at my words, my threats and my chastisements, your last chastisement shall come and then I will laugh at ye. "And it, (the rod,) was turned into a serpent."—Exod. 4:3. St. Bruno, in his commentary upon this passage, says, "the rod is turned into a serpent, when they will not amend." The eternal will succeed the temporal punishment.

O how well does not God know how to chastise and so to order it, that from the instruments and motives of sin should be drawn the chastisement! "Per quae quis peccat per hax et torquetur."—Sap. 10. The Jews put Jesus Christ to death, for fear the Romans should seize on their possessions. "If we let him alone," said they," all will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation."—11:48. But the same sin of putting Jesus Christ to death,—was the cause of their being shortly after despoiled of everything by the Romans. "They feared they should lose temporal possessions," says St. Austin," and thought not of eternal life, and so lost both."—Hom. in fer. 5. Pass. In trying to save their possessions, they lost their souls, the punishment came and they lost both. Thus it falls out with many; they lose their souls for the things of earth; but God often condemns them to beggary in this world and reprobation in the next.

My brethren, provoke no longer the anger of your God, know that in proportion to the multitude of his mercies towards you; in proportion to the length of time he has borne with you, your punishment will be greater, if you do not amend. “The Lord makes up for the slowness of his chastisement,” says St. Gregory, “by its grievousness when it does come.” “Woe to thee Corozain,” thus does the Lord speak to a soul who has abused his favours, “Woe to thee Bethsaida, for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty things which have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.”—Luke 10:13. Yes, my brethren, if the graces which have been given to you, had been given to a Turk or an Indian, “if in Tyre and Sidon, had been wrought the mighty works which have been wrought in you,” he would have now been a saint, or at least, have done great penance for his sins; and have you become a saint? have you at least done penance for your many mortal sins, for your many evil thoughts, words, and scandals? see you not how God is angry with you? how he stands with his scourge in his hand? Do you see not death hanging over you?

And, what are we to do? you enquire: are we to despair? No, God does not wish us to despair. “Let us go with confidence to the throne of grace:” that is what we are to do, as St. Paul exhorts us, in order “that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.”—Heb. 4:16. Let us at once go to the throne of grace, that we may receive the pardon of our sins and the remission of the punishment which overhangs us. By “seasonable aid” the apostle means to convey, that the aid which God may be willing to lend us to-day, he may deny to-morrow. At once, then, to the throne of grace. But, what is the throne of grace? Jesus Christ, my brethren, is the throne of grace: “And he is the propitiation for our sins.” Jesus it is, who by the merit of his blood can obtain pardon for us, but we must apply immediately. The Redeemer, during his preaching in Juda, cured the sick and dispensed other favours as he went along, whoever was on the spot to ask a favour of him, obtained it; but whoever was negligent and allowed him to pass without a request, remained as he was: “Who went about doing good.”—Acts 10:38. It was this caused St. Austin to say: “timeo Jesura transeuntem,” by which he meant to express, that when the Lord offers us his grace, we must immediately correspond, doing our utmost to obtain it, that otherwise he will pass on and leave us without it. “To-day, if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”—Ps. 94:8. Today God calls you, give yourself to God today, if you wait for tomorrow, intending to give yourself to him then, perhaps he will have ceased to call and you will remain deserted. Mary, the Queen and the mother of mercies, is also a throne of grace, as St. Antoninus says. Hence, if you see that God is angry with you, St. Bonaventure exhorts you to have recourse to the hope of sinners. “Si videris Dominum indignatum ad spem peccatorum confugias.” Go, have recourse to the hope of sinners: Mary is the hope of sinners, Mary who is called “the mother of holy hope.”—Eccl. 24:24. But we must take notice, that holy hope is the hope of that sinner who repents him of his evil ways and determines upon a change of life; but if any one pursues an evil course in the hope that Mary will succour and save him, such a hope is false, such a hope is bad and rash. Let us then repent of our sins, resolve to amend, and then have recourse to Mary, with a confidence that she will assist and save us.

SERMON THE FOURTH

UPON THE FOUR PRINCIPAL GATES OF HELL

> “Defixse sunt in terra portse ejus.’’
>
> “Her gates are sunk into the ground.”—Lam. 2:9.

“BROAD is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there are who go in thereat.”—Matt. 7:13. Hell has then different gates, but these gates stand on our earth. “Her gates are sunk into the ground.” These are the vices by which men offend God and draw down upon themselves, chastisements and eternal death. Amongst the other vices, there are four, which send most souls to hell and on this earth bring upon men the scourges of God; and these four are, hatred, blasphemy, theft and impurity. Behold the four gates, by which the greater number of souls enter hell; and it is of these four, that I mean to speak today; in order that you may amend and cure yourselves of these four vices, otherwise God will cure you of them, but by your own destruction.

The first gate of hell is hatred. As paradise is the kingdom of love, so hell is the kingdom of hatred. Father, says such a person, I am grateful to, and love my friends; but I cannot endure him who does me an injury. Now brother, you must know, that the barbarians, the Turks and Indians say and do, all this: “Do not also the Heathens this?”—Matt. 5:47; says the Lord. To wish well to him, who serves you is a natural thing, it is done not only by the infidel, but even by the brutes and wild beasts. “But, I say to you.” Hear what I say to you, says Jesus Christ; hear my law, which is a law of love: “Love your enemies.” I wish, that you, my disciples, should love even your enemies. “Do good to them that hate you;” you must do good to them that wish you ill, “and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you if you can do nothing else, you must pray for them who persecute you and then you shall be the children of God your father: “that you may be the children of your father who is in heaven.”—Matt. 5:44, 45. St. Austin then is right, in saying, that it is by love alone, a child of God is known from a child of the devil. “Sola dilectio decernit inter filios Dei, et filios diaboli.” Thus have the saints always done; they have loved their enemies. A certain woman had traduced the honour of St. Catherine of Sienna and the saint attended this same woman in her sickness and ministered to her as a servant. St. Acaius sold his garment, to succour one who had taken away his character. St. Ambrose gave to an assassin, who had attempted his life, a daily allowance, in order that he might have wherewithal to live. Such may indeed be called the children of God. Is it a great matter, says St. Thomas of Villanova, that often when we have received an injury from any one, we forgive it at the suit of a friend who pleads for him? And shall we not do the same when God commands it?

Oh, how well grounded a hope of pardon has not he, who pardons the man who has offended him. He has the promise of God himself, who says, “Forgive and you shall be forgiven.”—Luke 6:37. “By forgiving others,” says St. Chrysostom,” you earn pardon for yourself.” But he, on the contrary, who will have vengeance, how can he hope for pardon for his sins? Such a person, in saying the “Our Father,” condemns himself when he says: “forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.” Then, when such a person wishes to take vengeance, he says to God: Lord, do not pardon me, because I will not pardon my enemies. You give judgment in your own cause, says St. John Chrysostom: “Tu in tui causa fers sententiam.”—Hom. 18. in Joan. But, be assured, that you shall be judged without mercy, if you show not mercy to your neighbour. “For judgment without mercy to him that hath not done judgment.”—James 2:13. But how, says St. Austin, how can he who will not forgive his enemy, according to the command of God, have the face to ask pardon from God for his offences. “Qua fronte indulgentiam peccatorem obtinere poterit, qui prascipienti dare veniam non acquiescit?” If then, my brethren, you wish to have revenge, bid adieu to paradise: “Without are dogs.”—Apoc. 22:15. Dogs, on account of their natural fury, are taken to represent the revengeful. These dogs are shut out from paradise; they have a hell in this life; and they shall have hell in the next. “He who is at enmity with any one, (says St. John Chrysostom,) never enjoys peace, he is in everlasting trouble:” “Qui inimicum habet nunquam fruitur pace, perpetuo sestuat.”—Hom. 22.

But father, such a one has taken away my good name: “Honorem meum nemini dabo.” Such is forsooth the proverb, ever in the mouths of those hell-hounds who seek for revenge. He has taken away my honour, I must take his life. And is the life of a man at your disposal? God alone is master of life. “For it is thou, O Lord, that hast the power of life and death.”—Wisd. 16:13. Do you wish to take vengeance of your enemy? God wishes to take vengeance of thee. Vengeance belongs to God alone. “Revenge is mine and I will repay them in due time.”—Deut. 33:35. But how else you say, can my honour be repaired? Well and in order to repair your honour, you must trample under foot the honour of God. Do you not know, says St. Paul, that when you transgress the law, you dishonour God? “Thou, by transgression of the law dishonourest God.”—Rom. 2:23. And what honour is this of yours’ that you wish to repair? It is the same as the honour of a Turk, of an Idolator: a Christian’s honour is to obey God and observe his law. But other men will look down upon me; and so, for fear you should be looked down upon, you must condemn yourself to hell. But if you forgive, the good will praise you; wherefore it is, that Chrysostom says: if you wish to be revenged, do good to your enemy. “Beneficiis eum affice et ultus es.”—Hom. 20:10, 6. because then, others will condemn your enemy and speak well of you. It is not true, that he, loses his honour, who, when he has been injured or insulted, says: I am a Christian, I neither can nor will be revenged. Such a person gains, instead of losing honour and saves his soul besides. On the contrary, he who takes revenge will be punished by God, not only in the other life, but in this also. He is obliged to fly the justice of men, after having taken that vengeance, which will render his life henceforward miserable. What an unhappiness to live a fugitive; to be always in dread of justice; always in dread of the kindred of his victim; tormented with remorse of conscience and condemned to hell? And let us further know, my brethren, that revenge and the desire of revenge are alike enormous, are the same sin. Should we at any time receive an offence, what are we to do? When our passion begins to rise, we must have recourse to God and to the most holy Mary; who will help us and get strength for us to forgive. We should then endeavour to say: Lord, for the love of you, I forgive the injury that has been done me and do you in your mercy, forgive me all the injuries I have done you.

Let us pass on to the second gate of hell, which is blasphemy. Some, when things go wrong with them, do not attack man, but endeavour to wreak their vengeance upon God himself by blasphemy. Know, my brethren, what manner of sin blasphemy is. A certain author says: "every sin, compared with blasphemy, is light;" and first of all, St. John Chrysostom says, there is nothing worse than blasphemy: "Blasphemia pejus nihil."—Hom. 1. ad pop. Antioch. Other sins, says St. Bernard, are committed through frailty, but this only through malice: "Alia peccata videntur procedere ex fragilitate et ignorantia, sed blasphemia procedit ex propria malitia."—Serm. 33. With reason, then, does St. Bernardine of Sienna call blasphemy a diabolical sin, because the blasphemer, like a demon, attacks God himself. He is worse than those who crucified Jesus Christ, because they did not know him to be God; but he who blasphemes, knows him to be God and insults him face to face. He is worse than the dogs, because dogs do not bite their masters, who feed them, but the blasphemer outrages God, who is at that very moment bestowing favours on him. What punishment, says St. Austin, will suffice to chastise so horrid a crime? "Quae supplicia sufficiunt cum Deo fit ista tam nefaria injuria?"—De civit. Dei, cap. 9. We should not wonder, says Julius III. in his twentythird bull, that the scourges of God do not cease while such a crime exists amongst us: "Minime mirandum si flagella non amoveantur."

We read in the preface to the pragmatic sanction in France, that King Robert when praying for the peace of the kingdom, was answered by the crucifix, that the kingdom never should have had peace if he had not eradicated blasphemy. The Lord threatens to destroy the kingdom in which this accursed vice reigns. "They have blasphemed the Holy One of Israel your land is desolate it shall be desolate."—Isa. 1:4, 7.

Oh, if there were always found someone to do what St. John Chrysostom advises: "Contera os ejus, percussione manum tuam sanctifica." The mouth of the accursed blasphemer should he struck and he should then be stoned, as the old law commanded: "And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die: all the multitude shall stone him."—24:26. But it would be better if that were done which St. Louis, king of France, put in force; he commanded by edict, that every blasphemer should be branded on the mouth with an iron. A certain nobleman having blasphemed, many persons besought the king not to inflict that punishment upon him; but St. Louis insisted upon its infliction in every instance; and some taxing him with excessive cruelty on that account, he replied that he would suffer his own mouth to be burned, sooner than allow such an outrage to be put upon God in his kingdom.

Tell me, blasphemer, of what country are you? Allow me to tell you, you belong to hell. St. Peter was known in the house of Caiphas for a Galilean by his speech. “Surely thou also art one of them,” it was said to him,” for even thy speech doth discover thee.”—Matt. 26:73. What is the language of the damned? blasphemy, “And they blasphemed the God of Heaven, because of their pains and wounds.”—Apoc. 16:11. What do you gain, my brethren, by these your blasphemies? you gain no honour by them. Blasphemers are abhorred even by their blasphemous companions. Do you gain any temporal advantage? Do you not see that this accursed vice keep us forever in beggary? “Sin maketh nations miserable.”—Prov. 14:34. Do you derive pleasure from it? What pleasure do you derive from baspheming God? The pleasure of the damned; and that moment of madness past, what pain and bitterness does it not leave in. your heart? Resolve to rid yourself of this vice, in any event. Take care if you do not abandon it now, that you will not carry it with you to death, as has happened to so many who have died with blasphemy in their mouths. But, Father, what can I do when the madness comes upon me? Good God! and are there no other means of working it off than by blasphemy? Say, cursed be my sins. Mother of God assist me, give me patience; your passion, your anger will pass off quickly and you will find yourself in the grace of God after the trial. If you do not act thus, you will find yourself more afflicted and more lost than before.

Let us now pass on to the consideration of the third great gate of hell, by which so large a portion of the damned enter; I mean theft. Some, so to speak, adore money as their God and look upon it as the object of all their desires. “The idols of the Gentiles are silver and gold.”—Ps. 113:4. But the sentence of condemnation has already been pronounced against such; “nor covetous nor extortioners shall possess the kingdom of God.”—1 Cor. 6:10. It is true that theft is not the most enormous of sins, but St. Antoninus says that it very much endangers salvation: “Nullum peccatum periculosius furto.” The reason is because for the remission of other sins, true repentance only is required; but repentance is not enough for the remission of theft, there must be restitution and this is made with difficulty. A certain hermit had once the following vision: he saw Lucifer seated on a throne and enquiring of one of his demons, why he had been so long about returning. The latter replied that he had been detained by his endeavours to tempt a thief, not to restore what he had stolen. Let this fool be severely punished, said Lucifer. To what purpose have you spent this time? Do you not know that he who has taken the property of another, never restores it? And in truth, so it is; the property of another becomes to him who takes it, like his own blood; and the pain of suffering one's blood to be drawn for another is very difficult to endure. We learn it every day from experience; innumerable thefts take place, how much restitution do you see?

My brethren, see that you take not the property of your neighbour and if during the past you have ever failed in this respect, make restitution as soon as possible. If you cannot at once make full restitution, do it by degrees. Know that the property of another in your possession will not only be the means of bringing you to hell, but will make you miserable even in this life. Thou hast despoiled others, says the prophet, and others shall despoil thee. "Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all that shall be left of the people shall spoil thee."—Habac. 2:8. The property of another brings with it a curse which will fall upon the entire house of the thief. "This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the earth and it shall come to the house of the thief."—Zachar. 5:3, 4; that is to say, (as St. Gregory Nazianzen explains it,) that the thief shall lose not only the stolen property, but his own. "Qui opes inique possidet, etiam suas amittit." The goods of another are as fire and smoke to consume everything that comes in their way.

Remember well, mothers and wives, when children or husbands bring home the property of their neighbour, remember well, to chide and reprove them; not to applaud their action, or even consent to it by silence. Tobias hearing a lamb bleat in his house, "take heed," said he, lest perhaps it be stolen; restore ye it to its owners."—Tob. 2:21. St. Austin says that Tobias, because he loved God, did not wish to hear the sound of theft in his house: "Nolebat sonum furti audire in domo." Some persons take the property of their neighbour and then are fain to quiet their consciences by alms-deeds. Christ, says St. John Chrysostom, will not be fed with the plunder of others: "Non vult Christus rapina nutriri." The sins of this kind, committed by the great, are their acts of injustice, their putting-others to loss, their depriving the poor of what is their due. These are descriptions of theft which require perfect restitution, and a restitution most difficult of all to make, and most likely to be the cause of one’s damnation.

We have now, lastly, to speak of the fourth gate of hell, which is impurity, and it is by this gate that the greater number of the damned enter. Some will say that it is a trifling sin. Is it a trifling sin? It is a mortal sin. St. Antoninus writes, that such is the nauseousness of this sin; that the devils themselves cannot endure it. Moreover, the doctors of the church say that certain demons, who have been superior to the rest, remembering their ancient dignity, disdain; tempting to so loathsome a sin. Consider then, how disgusting he must be to God, who, like a dog, is ever returning to his vomit, or wallowing like a pig in the stinking mire of this accursed vice. “The dog is returned to his vomit; and the sow that was washed, to her rolling in the mire.—2 Ps. 2:22. The impure say, moreover, God has compassion on us who are subject to this vice, because he knows that we are flesh. What do you say? God has compassion on this vice. But you must know that the most horrible chastisements with which God has ever visited the earth, have been drawn down by this vice. St. Jerome says that this is the only sin of which we read, that it caused God to repent him of having made man. “It repented him that he had made man for all flesh had corrupted its way.”—Gen. 6:6, 12. Wherefore it is, Eusebius says, that there is no sin which God punishes so rigorously, even upon earth, as this: “Pro nullo peccato, tarn manifestum judicium exercuit Deus, quam pro isto. Euseb. epist. ad Damas. He once sent fire from Heaven upon five cities, and consumed all their inhabitants for this sin. Principally on account of this sin did God destroy mankind, with the exception of eight persons, by the deluge. It is a sin which God punishes, not only in the other life, but in this also. In confirmation of this, you have only to enter the hospitals, and see there the many poor young men, who were once strong and robust, but are now weak, squalid, full of pains, tormented with lancets and caustic, and ulcers, all through this accursed vice. “Because thou hast forgotten me and cast me off behind thy back, bear thou also thy wickedness and thy fornications.”—Ezech. 23:35. Because, says God, you have forgotten me and turned your back upon me, for a miserable pleasure of the flesh, I am resolved that even in this life you shall pay the forfeit of your wickedness.

God has compassion upon men subject to this sin. It is this sin which sends most men to hell. St. Remigius says, that the greater number of the damned are in hell through this vice. Father Segnier writes, that as this vice fills the world with sinners, so it fills hell with damned souls; and before him St. Bernard wrote, “this sin draws the whole world, as it were, into sin.”—Yol. 4. Serm. 21. And before St. Bernard, St. Isidore said, that “the human race is brought under the power of the devil, more by lust, than by all the other vices.”—Book 2. Sent. cap. 39. The reason is, because this vice proceeds from the natural inclination of the flesh. Hence the angelic doctor says, that the devil does not take such complacency in securing the commission of any other sin as of this, because the person who is plunged in this infernal mire, remains fast therein, and almost wholly unable to free himself more. “Nullus in peccato tenacior quam luxuriosus,” says St. Thomas of Villanova.—Cap. 1. de St. Idelph. Moreover, this vice deprives one of all light, for the impure man becomes so blind, as almost wholly to forget God, “Voluptates impudicae,” says St. Laurence Justinian, “oblivionem Dei inducunt,” de lib. vitse, which is in accordance with what is said by the prophet Osee: “They will not set their thoughts to return to their God; for the spirit of fornication is in the midst of them, and they have not known God.”—Osee 5:4. The impure man knows not God; he obeys neither God nor reason, as St. Jerome says; he obeys only the sensual appetite which causes him to act the beast: “Nec paret rationi qui impetu ducitur.”—St. Hier. in epist.

This sin, because it flatters, makes us fall at once into the habit of it, a habit which some carry with them even to death. You see husbands and decrepid old men, indulge in the same thoughts, and committing the same sins, as they committed in their youth. And because sins of this kind are so easily committed, they become multiplied without number. Ask of the sinner how many impure thoughts he has consented to; he will tell you he cannot remember. But brother, if you cannot tell the number, God can; and you know that a single immodest thought is enough to send you to hell. How many immodest words have you spoken, in which you took delight yourself, and by which you scandalized your neighbour? From thoughts and words you proceed to acts and to those innumerable impurities which those wretches roll and wallow in like swine, “sus in volutacro luti,” without ever being satisfied, for this vice is never satisfied. But father, you will say, how can I hold out against the innumerable temptations which assail me? I am weak, I am flesh. And since you are weak, why not recommend yourself to

God, and to most holy Mary, who is the mother of purity? Since you are flesh, why do you throw yourself in the way of sin? Why do you not mortify your eyes? Why do you gaze upon those objects whence temptations flow. St. Aloysius never raised his eyes to look even upon his mother. It is to be remarked moreover, that this sin brings with it innumerable others; enmities, thefts and more especially, sacrilegious confessions and communions, by reason of the shame which will not allow of these impurities being disclosed in confession. And let us remark here in passing, that it is sacrilege above all things, that brings upon us sickness and death; for, says the apostle, "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord and then he adds: "therefore are many infirm and weak among you.''—1 Cor. 9:29, 30. And St. Chrysostom in explanation of that passage says, that St. Paul speaks of persons who were chastised with bodily infirmities, because they received the sacrament with a guilty conscience. "Quandoquidem peccabant, quod participes fierent mysteriorum, non expurgata conscienta."—Chrysot. in cap. 3. Isaisae.

My brethren, should you ever have been sunk in this vice, I do not bid you be disheartened, but arise at once from this foul and infernal pit; beg of God forthwith to give you light, and stretch out his hand to you. The first thing that you have to do is to break with the occasion of sin, without that, preaching and tears, and resolutions, and confessions, all are lost. Remove the occasions, and then constantly recommend yourself to God, and to Mary the mother of purity. No matter how grievously you may be tempted, do not be discouraged by the temptation; at once call to your aid Jesus and Mary, pronouncing their sacred names. These blessed names have the virtue of making the devil fly, and stifling that hellish flame within you. If the devil persist in tempting you, persevere you in calling upon Jesus and Mary, and certainly you shall not fall. In order to rid yourself of your evil habits, undertake some special devotion to our Lady; begin to fast in her honour upon Saturdays; contrive to visit her image every day and beg of her to obtain for you deliverance from that vice: each morning immediately that you rise, never omit saying three "Hail Mary's" to her purity, and do the same when going to bed: and above all things, as I have said, when the temptation is most troublesome, call quickly upon Jesus and Mary. Beware brother, if you do not be converted now, you may never be converted.

SERMON THE FIFTH

EXTERNAL DEVOTIONS ARE OF LITTLE USE IF WE DO NOT CLEANSE OUR SOULS FROM SIN

“Et nunc nolite illudere ut forte constringantur vinculatua.”

“And now do not mock, lest your bonds be tied strait.” Isai. 27:22.

GOD commands Jonas to go and preach to Ninive. Jonas, instead of obeying God, flies by sea towards Tharsis. But, behold! a great tempest threatens to sink the ship; and Jonas knowing that the tempest was raised in punishment of his disobedience, said to the crew of the vessel: “take me up and cast me into the sea and the sea shall be calm to you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.”—Jon. 1:12. And they actually did cast him into the sea and the tempest ceased thereupon. “And the sea ceased from raging.”—Ibid. 15. Then if Jonas had not been thrown into the sea, the tempest should not have ceased. Consider well, my brethren, what we are to learn from this. It is, that if we do not cast sin out of our souls, the tempest, that is, the scourge of God, will not cease. The tempest is excited by our sins; the tempest which is hurrying us to destruction. “Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”—Isa. 64:6. Behold, we have penitential exercises, novenas, and exposition of the blessed sacrament; but to what purpose are those, if we be not converted; if we do not rid our souls of sin? Such is the subject of our discourse. External devotions are of little use, if we do not abandon our sins; because otherwise we cannot please God.

It is said that the pain is not removed before the thorn has been plucked out. St. Jerome writes, God is never angered, since anger is passion, and passion is incompatible with God. He is always tranquil; and even in the act of punishing, his tranquillity is not in the least disturbed. “But thou being master of power, judgest with tranquility.”—Wisd. 12:18. But the malice of mortal sin is so great, that if God were capable of wrath and affliction, it would enrage and afflict him. It is this that sinners do as far as in them lies, according to that of Isaiah: “But they provoked to wrath and afflicted the spirit of his Holy One.”—Isa. 63:10. Moses writes, that when God was about to send the deluge, he declared himself to be so much. afflicted by the sins of men as to be obliged to exterminate them from the earth. “And being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, he said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth.”—Gen. 6:6.

Chrysostom says, that sin is the only cause of all our sufferings and chastisements: “Ubi est fons peccati, illic est plaga supplicii.”—In Psal. 3. Commenting upon these words in Genesis, which the Lord spoke after the deluge: “I will place my bow in the clouds.”—Gen. 9:13. St. Ambrose remarks that God does not say, I will place my arrow, but my bow, in the clouds; giving us thereby to understand that it is always the sinner who fixes the arrow in the bow of God, by provoking him to chastisement.

If we wish to be pleasing to the Lord, we must remove the cause of his anger, which is sin. The man sick of the palsy besought Jesus Christ to restore the health of his body; but, before granting his request, our Lord first restored his soul’s health, by giving him sorrow for his sins, and then saying to him: “ Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee.”—Matt. 9:2. St. Thomas says, that the Redeemer first removed the cause of his infirmity, namely, his sins and then freed him from the infirmity itself: “Iste petebat sanitatem corporis, et Dominus dat animae, quia tanquam bonus medicus auferre voluit mali radicem.”—& Thom. in Matt. loc. cit. Sin is the root of every evil, as we find in St. Bernardine of Sienna; “ Causa infirmitatis saepius sunt peccata.” Hence the Lord after having healed him, warned him against sin in these words: “Go thy way and sin no more, lest something worse befall thee.”—Ecclesiasticus said the same before our Lord; “My son, in thy sickness cleanse thy heart from sin and then give place to the physician.”—Eccl. 33:9. You must first apply to the physician of the soul, in order that he may free you from your sins and then to the physician of the body, that he may cure you of your disease. In a word, the cause of all our chastisements is sin; and still more than sin, our obstinacy in it, as St. Basil says, “Nostri causa hoec invehuntur qui retinemus cor impoenitans.”—In Isa. 9. We have offended God, and are, notwithstanding, unwilling to do penance. When God calls by the voice of his punishment, he desires that he should be heard; if he be not, he shall be compelled by ourselves to curse us: “But if thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord, thy God all these curses shall come upon thee, cursed shalt thou be in the city, cursed in the field, &c."—Deut. 28:15, 16. When we offend God, we provoke all creatures to punish us. St. Anselm says that in the same manner as a servant, when he offends his master, draws down upon him the wrath not only of his master, but of the whole family; so we, when we offend God, excite against us the anger of all creatures, "Non solum iram Dei promeruimus, sed totam creationem contra nos excitavimus."—De similit. cap. 101. And St. Gregory says, that we have more especially irritated against us those creatures which we have made use of against our Creator: "Cuncta quae ad usum pravitatis infleximus, ad usum nobis vertuntur ultionis."—Hom. 35, in Evang. God's mercy holds in those creatures, that they may not afflict us, but when he sees that we make no account of his threats, and continue to live on in our former way, he will then make use of those creatures to take vengeance on us for the injuries we have done him : " He will arm the creature for the revenge of his enemies."—Wisd. 5:18. "And the whole world shall fight with him against the unwise."—lb. 21. "There is no creature," says St. John Chrysostom, which will not feel anger when it sees its Lord in anger."—Hom. in absol.

If then, my brethren, we do not appease God by our conversion we never shall be free from chastisement. What folly, says St. Gregory, could be more extreme, than to imagine that God should cease from chastising before we should have ceased to offend? "Est primum dementiae genus, nolle a malis quiescere, et Deum velle a sua ultione cessare"—Mor. lib. 8 Ep. 41. Many now come to the church and hear the sermon, but go away without confession, or change of life. If we do not remove the cause of the scourge, how can we expect to he delivered from the scourge itself: "Nee amputamus causas morbi ut morbus auferatur."—St Jerome. We continue to irritate God, and then wonder that God should continue to chastise us. "Impure as we are," says Salvian, "we wonder why we should be so miserable." Do we think that God is appeased by the mere circumstance of our appearing at church, without repenting of our sins, without restoring the property, or character, of our neighbour, without flying those occasions of sin which keep us at a distance from God. Ah, let us not mock the Lord! "And now do not mock, lest your bonds be tied strait."—Isa. 28:22. Do not mock God, says the prophet, lest those bonds which are securing you for hell, be tied strait. Cornelius a Lapide, in commenting on the above passage of Isaiah says, that when the fox is caught in the snare, its efforts to disengage itself only serve to entangle it the more: “Impii illusores, irridendo Dei minas et poenes, magis iisdem se adstringunt.” My brethren, let us have done; let us no more irritate God, the chastisement is near at hand: “For I have heard of the Lord the God of Hosts,” continues the prophet, “ a consumption, and a cutting short upon all the earth.”—Isa. 28:22. I am not the prophet Isaiah, but I can say that I see the scourge which is hanging over us, if we do not be converted.

Hear how the Lord says to you: “Who requires these things at your hands?”—Isa. 1:12. Who required your perpetual exercises and your visits of devotion to the church? I will have nothing from you, unless you abandon sin; “offer sacrifice no more in vain.”—lb. 13. Of what use are your devotions, if you do not amend your lives. “My soul hateth your solemnities.”—Ib. 14. Know, says the Lord, that your homage and external devotions are hateful to my soul, whilst you think by these to avert your chastisement, without removing your offences; “with burnt offerings thou wilt not be delighted; a sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit.”—Ps. 50:18, 19. No devotions, or alms, or penitential works, are accepted by God from a soul in the state of sin and without repentance. God accepts the acts of him alone who is contrite for his sin and resolved upon a change of life.

O, how God is not to be mocked! I never commanded you, he says, to perform those devotions and acts of penance: “For I spoke not to your Fathers concerning the matter of burnt offering and sacrifices, but this thing I commanded them, saying: hearken to my voice and I will be your God.”—Jer. 7:22. “What I wish of you, says God, is, that you hear my voice and change your life and make a good confession, with real sorrow, for you must know yourselves, that your other confessions, followed by so many relapses, have been worth nothing. I wish that you should do violence to yourselves in breaking with that connection, with that company. I wish that you should endeavour to restore that property, to make good to your neighbour such a loss.—“Hearken to my voice,” obey my command, “and I will be your God.” I will then be to you the God of mercy, such as you would have me to be. Cardinal Ugon, in his comment upon these words of our Lord, in the gospel according to St. Matthew: “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”—Matt. 11:15. says, “alii habent aures sed non aures audiendi.” Some have ears, but ears which do not serve them for hearing.

How many attend sermons and receive admonitions from the confessor, in which they are told all that they must do in order to please God; but they leave the church only to live worse than before. How can God be appeased by such? or how can such be delivered from the divine chastisement? “Offer up the sacrifice of justice and trust in the Lord,” Ps. 4:6. says David. Honour God not in appearance, but by works. It is that which is meant by “the sacrifice of justice,” honour him by bewailing your sins, by the frequentation of the sacraments, by a change of life and then hope in the Lord; but to hope while you continue the state of sin, is not hope, it is rashness, it is a deceit of the enemy and renders you more odious in the sight of God and more deserving of punishment.

My brethren, you see that the Lord is in wrath, that he already has his hand lifted to strike with the scourge which threatens us; how do you think to escape? “Who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come?”—Matt. 3:7. “Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of penance,” Ibid. 8. says the Baptist, preaching to the Jews of his day. You must do penance, but penance deserving of his pardon, that is, it must be true and resolute. Your anger must be changed into meekness, by the forgiveness of those who offend you; your intemperance must become abstinence, by observing the fasts commanded, at least, by the Church and by abstaining from the immoderate use of intoxicating drinks which change man into a beast, therefore you must avoid the public house; impurity must give way in you to chastity, by your not returning to that filthy vomit, by resisting evil thoughts, by not using bad words, by flying bad companions, and dangerous conversation. “You must bring forth fruit worthy of penance,” and the bringing forth of such fruit, implies also that we attend to the service of God, and endeavour to serve him more than we offended him; “for, as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity so now yield your members to love justice.’’—Kom. 6:19. Thus have done a St. Mary Magdalen, a St. Austin, a St. Mary of Egypt, a St. Margaret of Crotona, who by their works of penance and sanctification, rendered themselves more dear to God than others who had been less sinful, but more tepid. St. Gregory says, that “for the most part, a fervent life after sin is the more pleasing to God, than a life which, though innocent, is tepid.” And thus does the Saint explain the following passage of the gospel: “There shall be joy in Heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance."—Luke 15:7. This is understood of the sinner who after having arisen from sin, sets about serving God with more fervour than others who have long been just.

This is to bring forth fruit worthy of penance, not content one's self with hearing sermons and visiting the church, without abandoning sin, or flying the occasion of it. To act thus, is rather a mockery of God and calculated to excite him to greater wrath. "And, think not," pursues the Baptist, "think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for our father."—Matt. 3:9. It will not do to say, we have the mother of God to assist us, we have our patron saint to procure us deliverance; because, if we do not abandon our sins, the saints cannot help us. The saints are the friends of God, whence they not only have no inclination, but they should even feel ashamed to succour the obstinate. Let us tremble, because the Lord has already published the sentence, "that every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire."—Matt. 7:19. Brother, how many years have you been in the world? Tell me what fruit of good works have you hitherto borne, what honour have you rendered to God by your life? Sin, outrage, contempt, such are the fruit you have borne, the honour you have rendered to God.—God now in his mercy gives you time for penace, in order that you may bewail the injuries you have done him and love him, the remainder of your days. What do you intend to do? What have you resolved upon? Resolve at once to give yourself to God. What do you expect? unless that if you do not at once turn to God, you shall be cut down and cast into the fire of hell. But let us now bring our instruction to a conclusion; the Lord has sent me to preach here today and has inspired you to come and listen to me, because he wishes to spare you the punishment which threatens you, if you do really turn to him; "leave not out one word, if so be, they will hearken and be converted, everyone from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil which I think to do unto them."—Jer. 26:2, 3. The Lord has desired me to tell you on his part, that he is willing to relent and withdraw the scourge which he meant to inflict upon you: "That I may repent me of the evil which I think to do unto them but on this condition, "if so be, they will hearken and be converted everyone from his evil way," if they truly reform, otherwise he will put his threat in execution.—Tremble then if you be not yet resolved to change your life. But on the other hand, be joyful if you mean to turn in good earnest to God. "Let the heard of them rejoice that seek the Lord,” Ps, 104:3. because God is all tenderness and love to those that seek him. “The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him.”—Lam. 3:25. Neither does the Lord know how to reject a heart humble and contrite for its offences. “A contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”—Ps. 1:19. Let us be joyful then, if we have the good intention of changing our lives and if on seeing ourselves guilty of so many sins before the Lord, we stand very much in fear of the divine judgments, let us have recourse to the mother of mercies, the most holy Mary, who defends and secures from the divine vengeance all those who take refuge under her mantle.—“I am the citadel of all those who fly to me,” thus is she made to speak by St. John Damascene.

SERMON THE SIXTH

GOD CHASTISES US IN THIS LIFE FOR OUR GOOD, NOT FOR OUR DESTRUCTION

> "Non enim delectaris in perditionibus nostris."
>
> "For thou art not delighted in our being lost."—Job. 3:22.

LET US feel persuaded, my brethren, that there is no one who loves us more than God. St. Theresa says, that God loves us more than we love ourselves. He has loved us from eternity. "Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love."—Jer. 31:3. It is the love he has borne us which has drawn us from nothing and given us being. "Therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee."—Ibid. Hence, when God chastises us upon the earth, it is not because he wishes to injure us, but because he wishes us well and loves us. "But, of this every one is sure that worshippeth thee, that his life, if it be under trial shall be crowned: and if it be under tribulation shall be delivered."—Job. 3:21. So spoke Sara the wife of Tobias; Lord, he who serves thee is sure that after the trial shall have passed he shall be crowned and that after tribulation he shall be spared the punishment which he deserved; "for thou art not delighted in our being lost: because after a storm thou makest a calm, and after tears and weeping, thou pourest in joyfulness."—Ibid. 21, 22. After the tempest of chastisement he gives us peace and after mourning, joy and gladness. My brethren, let us convince ourselves of what I have undertaken to show you today, namely, that God does not afflict us in this life for our injury but for our good, in order that we may cease from sin, and by recovering his grace escape eternal punishment. "And I will give my fear in their heart, that they may not revolt from me."—Jer. 32:40. The Lord says, that he infuses his fear into our hearts, in order that he may enable us to triumph over our passion for earthly pleasures, for which ungrateful that we are, we have left him. And when sinners have left him, how does he make them look into themselves, and recover his grace? By putting on the appearance of anger and chastising them in this life: “In thy anger thou shalt break the people in pieces.” Another version according to St. Austin has: “In thy wrath thou shalt conduct the people.” The saint enquiring, what is the meaning of his conducting the people in his wrath! he then replies: “You, O Lord! fill us with tribulations, in order that being thus afflicted, we may abandon our sins and return to you.” When the mother wishes to wean her infant how does she proceed? She puts bitters upon her breast. Thus the Lord endeavours to draw our souls to himself, and wean them from the pleasures of this earth, which make them live in forgetfulness of their eternal salvation; he fills with bitterness all their pleasures, pomps and possessions, in order, that not finding peace in those things they may turn to God, who alone can satisfy them. “In their affliction they will rise early to me.”—Osee. 6:1. God says within himself, if I allow those sinners to enjoy their pleasures undisturbed, they will remain in the sleep of sin: they must be afflicted, in order that recovering from their lethargy they may return to me. When they shall be in tribulation they will say: “Come, let us return to the Lord, for he hath taken us, and he will heal us: he will strike and he will cure us.”—Osee. 6:1, 2. What shall become of us, say those sinners, as they enter into themselves, if we do not turn from our evil courses? God will not be appeased and will with justice continue to punish us, come on, let us retrace our steps; for he will cure us and if he has afflicted us just now, he will upon our return think of consoling us with his mercy.

“In the day of my trouble I sought God and I was not deceived:”—Ps. 74:3, because he raised me up. For this reason does the prophet thank the Lord, that he hath humbled him after his sin; because he was thus taught to observe the divine laws: “It is good for me, that thou hast humbled me, that I may learn thy justifications.”—Ps. 118:71. Tribulation is for the sinner, at once a punishment and a grace, says St. Austin: “Poena est, et gratia est.” It is a punishment in as much as it has been drawn down upon him by his sins; but it is a grace and an important grace, in as much as it may ward eternal destruction from him and is an assurance that God means to deal mercifully with him, if he look into himself and receive with thankfulness that tribulation which has opened his eyes to his miserable condition and invites him to return to God. Let us then be converted, my brethren and we shall escape from our several chastisements: “Quid servat post poenam,” says St.

Austin, “qui per gratiam exhibet poenam.” He who turns to God, smarting from the scourge has no longer anything to fear; because God scourges only in order that we may return to him and this end once obtained, the Lord will scourge no more.

St. Bernard says, that is impossible to pass from the pleasures of the earth to those of Paradise: “Difficile est, imo impossibile, ut prassentibus quis fruatur bonis et futuris: ut de deliciis transeat ad delicias:”—De inter. Dom. chap. 45. Therefore does the Lord say, “Envy not the man who prospereth in his way, the man who doth unjust things.”—Ps. 36:7. “Does he prosper?” says St. Austin, “ay but’ in his own way,’ and do you suffer? You do, but it is in the way of God.” You who walk before God are in tribulation, but he, evil as is his way, prospers. Mark now, what the saint says in conclusion: “He has prosperity in this life, he shall be miserable in the next; you have tribulation in this life, you shall be happy in the next.” Be glad, therefore, O sinners! and thank God when he punishes you in this life, and takes vengeance of your sins; because you may know thereby, that he means to treat you with mercy in the next. “Thou wast a merciful God to them and taking vengeance on their inventions.”—Ps. 98:8. The Lord when he chastises us, has not chastisement so much in view as our conversion. God said to Nabuchodonozor: “Thou shalt eat grass like an ox and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.”—Dan. 4:29. For seven years, Nabuchodonozor, shalt thou be compelled to feed upon grass like a beast, in order that you may know I am the Lord; that it is I, who give kingdoms, and take them away; and that you may thus be cured of your pride. And in fact, this judgment, did cause the haughty king to enter into himself and change; so that, after having been restored to his former condition, he said: “Therefore I, Nabuchodonosor, do now, praise and magnify the King of Heaven.”—Ibid. 34. And God gave him back his kingdom. “Libenter commutavit sententiam,” says St. Jerome: “quia vidit opera commutata.”

Unhappy we, says the same saint, when God does not punish us in this life! It is a sign, that he means us for eternal chastisements. “Magua est ira Dei quando non nobis irascitur; reservat nos sicut vitulum in occisione.”—Hier. in cit. Psal. 36. What do we conclude, he continues, when the surgeon sees the flesh about to mortify and does not cut it away? we conclude, that he abandons the patient to death? God spares the sinner in this life, says St.

Gregory, only to chastise us in the next: “Parcit ut in perpetuum feriat.”—Mor. lib. 8. cap. 9. Woe to those sinners, to whom God has ceased to speak and appears not to be in anger. “I will cease and be angry no more.”—Ezeck. 16: 42. The Lord then, goes on to say: “But, thou hast provoked me in all these things: and thou shalt know, that I am the Lord, that thou mayest remember and be confounded.”—Ibid. 43, 62, 63. A day will come, he says, ungrateful sinner, when you shall know what I am, then shall you remember the graces I have given you; and see with confusion, your black ingratitude. Woe to the sinner, who goes on in his evil life and whom God in his vengeance suffers to accomplish his perverse desires, according to what is said by the prophet: “Israel hearkened not to me, so I let them go according to the desires of their heart.”—Ps. 80:12, 13. It is a sign, that the Lord wishes to reward them on this earth, for whatever little good they may have done, and reserves the chastisement of their sins for eternity: speaking of the sinner whom he treats thus in this life, the Lord says: “Let us have pity on the wicked, but he will not learn justice and he shall not see the glory of the Lord.”—Isa. 26:10. Thus, does the poor sinner hasten on to his ruin, because seeing himself prosperous, he deceives himself into the expectation, that as God is dealing mercifully with him now, he will continue to do the same; and by this delusion, he will be led to live on in his sins. But, will the Lord, be always thus merciful to him? No, the day of punishment will come at length, when he shall be excluded from paradise and flung into the dungeon of the rebels; “and he shall not see the glory of the Lord.” “Let us have pity on the wicked,” far from me, says St. Jerome, be this mercy: “Longe a me misericordia tam rigorosa,” Lord, he says, extend not to me this dreadful pity; if I have offended you, let me be chastised for it in this life; because, if you do not chastise me here in this life, I shall have to be chastised in the other world, for all eternity. For this reason, did St. Austin say: “Lord, here cut, here burn, that you may spare during eternity:” chastise me here, O God and do not spare me now, in order, that I may be spared the punishment of hell. “Domine hie seca, hie non parcas, ut in asternum parcas.” When the surgeon cuts the imposthume of the patient, it is a sign that he means to have him healed. St. Austin says: “it is most merciful of the Lord, not to suffer iniquity to pass unpunished.” The Lord deals very mercifully with the sinner, when by chastisement he makes him enter into himself in this life. Hence Job, besought the Lord so earnestly to afflict him. “And, that this may be my comfort, that afflicting me with sorrow he spare not.”—Job. 6:10.

Jonas slept in the ship when he was flying from the Lord; but God seeing that the wretched man was on the brink of temporal and eternal death, caused him to be warned of the tempest: “Why art thou fast asleep, rise up, call upon thy God.”—Jon. 1:6. God, my brethren, now warns ye in like manner. You have been in the state of sin, deprived of sanctifying grace, the chastisement has come and that chastisement is the voice of God, saying to you, “why are you fast asleep? rise and call upon your God.” Awake, sinner! do not live on forgetful of your soul and of God. Open your eyes and see how you stand upon the verge of hell, where so many wretches are now bewailing sins less grievous than yours and are you asleep? have you no thought of confession? no thought of rescuing yourself from eternal death? “Rise, call upon your God.” Up from that infernal pit into which you have fallen; pray to God to pardon you, beg of him this at least, if you are not at once resolved to change your life, that he will give you light and make you see the wretched state in which you stand. Learn how to profit by the warning which the Lord vouchsafes you. Jeremias first sees a rod. “I see a rod watching;” he next sees a boiling caldron: “I see a boiling caldron.”—Jer. 1:12, 13. Saint Ambrose, in speaking of this passage, explains it thus: he who is not corrected by the rod, shall be thrown into the caldron, there to burn: “Qui virga, non corrigitur in olla mittitur ut ardeat.”—In psal. 38. He whom the temporal chastisement fails to convert, shall be sent to burn eternally in hell-fire. Sinful brother, listen to God who addresses himself to your heart, by this chastisement and calls on you to do penance. Tell me what answer do you make him? The prodigal son, after having left his father, thought no more upon him, whilst he continued to live amid delights; but when he saw himself reduced to that state of misery described in the gospel, poor, deserted, obliged to tend swine and not allowed to fill himself with the food wherewith the swine were filled, then, he came to himself and said: “How many hired servants in my father’s house abound with bread and I here perish with hunger?”—Luke 15:17. “I will arise and go to my father.”—Ibid. 18. And so he did and was lovingly received by his father. Brother, you have to do in like manner. You see the unhappy life you have hitherto led, by living away from God; a life full of thorns and bitterness; a life which could not be otherwise, as being, without God, who alone can give content. You see how many servants of God who love him, lead a happy life and enjoy continual peace, the peace of God, which, as the apostle says, surpasses all the pleasures of the senses. “The peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding.”—Phil. 4:7. And what are you doing? Do you not feel that you suffer a hell in this life? Do you not know that you shall suffer one in the next? Take courage, say with the prodigal: “I will arise and go to my father.” I will arise from this sleep of death—this state of damnation and return to God. It is true, that I have sufficiently outraged him, by leaving him so much against his desire, but he is still my father. “I will arise and go to my father.” And when you shall go to that Father, what shall you say to him? Say what the prodigal said to his father: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, I am not now worthy to be called thy son.”—Ibid. 18, 19. Father, I acknowledge my error, I have done ill to leave you who have so much loved me; I see now, that I am no longer worthy to be called your son; receive me at least, as your servant; restore me at least, to your grace and then chastise me as you please.

O happy you, if you say and do thus! the same will happen you which befel the prodigal son. The father, when he saw his son retracing his steps and perceived that he had humbled himself for his fault, not only did not drive him off—not only received him into his house, but embraced and kissed him as his son; “and running to him, fell upon his neck and kissed him.”—Ibid. 20. He then clothed him with a precious garment, which represents the robe of grace; “Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him.”—Ibid. 22. And he, moreover, makes a great feast in the house, to commemorate the recovery of his son, whom he looked upon as lost and dead; “let us eat and make merry, because this my son was dead and is come to life again—was lost and is found.”—Ibid. 23, 24. Let us then be joyful, my brethren; it is true, that God appears to be in wrath, but he is still our Father ; let us retrace our steps in penance and he will be appeased and spare us. Behold Mary our Mother praying for us on the one hand and on the other turned towards us, saying, “In me is all hope of life and of virtue come over to me all.”—Eccl. 24:25, 26. My children, does that Mother of Mercy say to us, my poor afflicted children, have recourse to me, and in me you shall find all hope ; my Son denies me nothing. “Qui invenerit me inveniet vitam.” You were dead by sin; come to me, find me and you shall find life—the life of divine grace, which I shall recover for you by my intercession.

SERMON THE SEVENTH

GOD CHASTISES US IN THIS LIFE, ONLY THAT HE MAY SHOW US MERCY IN THE NEXT

“Ego quos amo arguo et castigo.”

“Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise.”—Apoc. 3:19.

WHEN the Lord had raised that great tempest which threatened to sink the ship in which Jonas was sailing, in punishment of his disobedience to the divine command, that he should preach to the Ninevites, everyone in the vessel was watching and in great fear, praying each to his own God, with the exception of Jonas, who was asleep within the vessel; “He fell into a deep sleep.”—Jon. 1:5. But, knowing that he was the cause of the tempest, he caused himself to be thrown into the sea and was there swallowed by the whale. When Jonas found himself in the belly of that fish and in such extreme danger of death, he addressed himself to God in prayer and God delivered him; “I cried out of my affliction to the Lord, and the Lord heard me.”—Jon. 2:3. “Behold,” says St. Zeno, “how Jonas, who slumbered in the ship, is awake in the whale.” While in the ship, he slumbered in his sin; but when suffering chastisement and upon the point of death, he opened his eyes and remembered God; hence he had recourse to the divine mercy which delivered him, causing the fish to leave him safe and sound upon the shore. Many persons, before seeing the divine chastisements, sleep in their sins, forgetful of God; but the Lord, because he does not desire their destruction, sends them afflictions, roused by which from their lethargy, they return to him and thus he is enabled to avoid punishing them during all eternity. Such, then, is the subject of this discourse. God punishes us in this life, in order to spare us in the next.

We have not been created for this earth; we have been created for the blessed kingdom of Paradise. For this reason it is, says St. Austin, that God mingles so much bitterness with the delights of the world, in order that we may not forget him and eternal life. “Si cessaret Deus et non misceret amaritudines felicitatibus soeculi, obliivisceremur ejus.” If, living as we do amid so many thorns in this life, we are strongly attached to it and long so little after Paradise; how little should we not value Paradise, if God were not to embitter continually the pleasures of this earth? And if we have offended God, we must needs be punished for it, either in this world or in the next. St. Ambrose says that God is merciful as well when he punishes, as when he does not; “Quam pius quam clemens in utroque Dens cum miseretur aut vindicat.”—Lib. 6. in Luc. The chastisements of God are the effect of his love; they are, to be sure, punishments, but punishments which ward off from us eternal punishment and bring us to everlasting happiness. “But whilst we are judged, we are chastised by the Lord, that we be not condemned with this world.”—1 Cor. 11:32. And Judith reminded the Hebrews of the same truth, when they were under the scourge of the Lord; “Let us believe that these scourges of the Lord, with which like servants we are chastised, have happened for our amendment and not for our destruction.”—Judith 8:27. Sarah, the wife of Tobias, says the same: “But of this every one is sure that worshippeth thee if his life be under correction, it shall be allowed to come to thy mercy, for thou art not delighted in our being lost.”—Tob. 3:21, 22. Lord, she said, you chastise us here, in order that you may spare us ‘ in the other life, for thou dost not desire our destruction.

“We have it from God himself, that those whom he

loves in this life he chastises, in order that they may be converted: “Those whom I love, I rebuke and chastise.”—Apoc. 3:19. Where God loves, says St. Basil of Selucia, severity is usually the pledge of his graces: “Ubi amor est, severitas solet esse pignus gratiarum.” Unhappy are the sinners who living in the state of sin, prosper in this life; it is a sign that God reserves them for everlasting punishment. “The sinner hath provoked the Lord, according to the multitude of his wrath, he will not seek him.”—Ps. 10:4. Behold! says St. Austin, speaking of the passage quoted, behold the most grievous chastisement! “Non quaeret, multum irascitur dum non requiret.” When he does not appear to take notice of the sinner and leaves him unpunished, it is a sign that he is very wroth. I call you, says God to him whom he chastises and will you be deaf to my voice? Son, be converted, otherwise you shall confirm my anger, since I shall cease to regard your salvation and allow you to live on in your sins without punishment, but only that I may punish you in the life to come. “And my indignation shall rest in thee; and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will cease and be angry no more.”—Ezech. 16:42. The apostle warns you, my brethren, not to be deaf to the voice of God, for that on the day of judgment your obstinacy shall be rewarded with a dreadful chastisement and that chastisement eternal. “But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the just judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his works.”—Rom. 2:5, 6.

So that, St. Jerome says, that there cannot be a greater punishment for a sinner, than that he should not be punished in this life: “Magna ira quando peccantibus non irascitur Deus.” And Saint Isodore Pelusiota says, that sinners who are punished in this life, do not deserve pity, but those only who die without having been punished: “Delinquentes et in hac vita castigati non deplorandi sunt, sed qui impuniti abeunt.”—Lib. 5. epist. 269. It is not so bad, continues the Saint, to be simply sick, as to have no one to cure you: “Non tam molestum aegrotare, quam morbo medelam non afferri.” St. Austin says, in another part, that when God does not chastise the sinner in this world, he chastises him most severely; whence, he concludes, that there is no greater misfortune than impunity for a sinner: “Si impunita dimittit Deus tunc punit infestius; quoniam nihil est infelicius felicitate peccatorum.”—Epist. 5. ad Marcell. After England had rebelled against the church, God did not visit her with temporal scourges, her riches have been increasing from that time; but her chastisement is all the greater on that account; as she is left to perish in her sin. “Nihil infelicius felicitate peccantium.” The absence of punishment, is the greatest punishment, says the same holy doctor, “Nulla poena magna poena.”—Serm. 37. De verb. Dom. The not receiving chastisement in this life for sin, is a great chastisement and prosperity in sin a still greater.

“Why then,” Job enquires, “do the wicked live, are they advanced and strengthened with riches?”—Job 21:7. How comes it, O Lord, that sinners, instead of being taken out of this life in poverty and tribulation, enjoy health and honours, and riches? The holy man answers, “They spend their days in wealth and in a moment they go down to hell.”—Ibid. 13. Wretched men! they enjoy their riches for a few days and when the hour of chastisement comes, when they least expect it, they are condemned to burn forever in that place of torments. Jeremiah makes the self same enquiry: “Why doth the way of the wicked prosper?”—Jer. 12:1 and then adds, “gather them together, as sheep for a sacrifice.”—Ibid. 3. Animals destined for sacrifice, are kept from all labour and fattened up for slaughter. Thus does God act towards the obstinate, he abandons them and suffers them to fatten on the pleasures of this life, in order to sacrifice them in the other to his eternal justice; for these, says Minutius Felix, are fed like victims for the slaughter. “Hi enim ut victimae ad supplicium saginantur.” These wretched men, says David, shall not be punished in this life, they shall enjoy their fleeting pleasures; by and by their dream shall have ceased : “ neither shall they be scourged like other men, they have suddenly ceased to be; as the dream of them that awake, O Lord, so in thy city thou shalt bring their image to nothing.”—Ps. 72:5, 19, 20. How painful is not the case of a poor man, who dreams that he has grown rich or great and upon awaking finds himself the miserable and sick creature he is? “And the enemies of the Lord shall vanish like smoke.”—Ps. 36:20. The happiness of sinners is as suddenly dissipated, as is smoke by a breath of air. “Smoke,” observes St. Gregory, in his comment upon this passage, “vanishes in its ascent.” And the same is the case with sinners: “I have seen the wicked highly exalted and I passed by and lo! he was not.”—Ps. 36:35, 36. Minutius Felix says, in his comment upon the place cited, the unhappy men are exalted the higher, that their fall may be the greater: “Miseri Altius extolluntur ut profundius decidant.” The Lord allows the sinner to be exalted for his greater punishment, in order that his fall may be the more grievous, as is said by David, “When they were lifted up thou hast cast them down.”—Ps.72:18. If the sick man, says St. Chrysostom, suffer hunger or thirst by order of his physician, it is a sign that the physician has hopes of him; but if the doctor allow him to eat what he pleases and drink as much as he likes, what are we to conclude from that? It is plain that the physician has given him over. And thus, says St. Gregory, it is a manifest sign that God abandons the sinner to perdition, when he never thwarts his evil purposes: “Manifestum perditionis indicium quando nulla contrarietas impedit quod mens perversa concepit:” and in the book of proverbs we read, that “the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.” As lightning precedes thunder, says St. Bernard, so is prosperity the forerunner of damnation for the sinner: “Sicut fulgur tonitrum portat ita prosperitas supplicia sempiterna."—Serm. in fer. 5. Dom. ii. Quadrag. The greatest punishment inflicted by God is, when he allows the sinner to sleep on in sin, without rousing him from that sleep of death in which he is buried: "I will make them drunk, that they may sleep an everlasting sleep and awake no more, saith the Lord."—Jerem. 51:39. Cain, after the crime of murdering his brother, was afraid that he should be killed by the first person he should meet: "Omnis qui invenerit me, occidet me."—Gen. 4:14; but the Lord assured him that he should live and that no one should kill him, which assurance of a long life, according to St. Ambrose, was Cain's greatest punishment: "Longaeva vita vindicta est; favor enim impiorum est si subito moriantur."—Lib. 2. de Abil. cap. 9. The saint says, that God treats the obstinate sinner mercifully, when he gives him an early death, because he thus saves him from as many hells, as he should have committed sins, during a longer life. Let sinners then, live according to the desires of their hearts, let them enjoy their pleasures in peace, there will at length come a time when they shall be caught as fish upon the hook. "As fishes are taken with the hook so men are taken in the evil time."—Ecclesiastes 9:12. Whence, St. Austin says, "Do not rejoice like the fish who is delighted with the bait, for the fisherman has not yet pulled the hook." If you were to see a condemned man, making merry at a banquet, with the halter round his neck and every moment awaiting the order for execution, which would you envy or pity him? Neither should you envy the sinner who is happy in his vices. "Nondum traxit hamum piscator." That wretched sinner is already on the hook, he is already in the infernal net; when the time of chastisement shall have arrived, then the wretch will know and deplore his damnation, but all to no purpose.

On the contrary, it is a good sign when a sinner is chastised and suffers tribulation in this life, it is a sign that God has still merciful views upon him; and that he wishes to substitute a temporal for an eternal punishment in his regard. God, says St. Chrysostom, when he punishes us on this earth, does not do so out of hatred to us, but that he may draw us to himself. "Cum irascitur non odio hoc facit, sed ut ad se attrahat quos non vult perire."—In Matt. 4. hom. 14. He chastises for a little while, that he may have you with him for eternity. "Aversatur ad tempus ut te secum habet in aeternum." When the physician uses the knife, he does so to cure, says St. Austin: "Medici percutiunt et sanant." And God, the saint continues, does the same in our regard. “Soevire videtur Deus, ne metuas; Pater est, nunquam enim scevit ut perdat.” But, does not God say the same himself? “Those whom I love, I rebuke and chastise, be zealous therefore, and do penance.”—Apoc. 3:19. Son, says God, I love you, and therefore I chastise you; “be zealous,” see how good I am to you, endeavour you to act in like manner towards me; do penance for your sins, if you wish that I should spare you the chastisement which you deserve: at least, accept with patience and turn, to advantage the tribulation which I send you. In this cross, which now afflicts you, hear you my voice calling upon you to turn to me, and fly from hell which is close upon you. “Behold! I stand at the gate and knock;” I am knocking at the door of your heart; open then to me and know that when the sinner who has driven me from his heart, shall open the door again to me, I will enter and keep him company forever.” If any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”—Apoc. 3:20. I shall remain united to him forever on this earth; and if he remain faithful, I shall seat him beside me, on the throne of my eternal kingdom. “To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with me in my throne.”—Apoc. 3:21.

What, must we look upon God as a tyrant, who should take pleasure in our sufferings? He does take pleasure in punishing us, hut exactly the same pleasure as a father takes in correcting his son, he does not take pleasure in the pain which he inflicts, but in the amendment it will work. “My son, reject not the correction of the Lord; and do not faint when thou art chastised by him, for whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth and as a father in the son, he pleaseth himself.”—Prov. 3:11, 12. He chastises you, because he loves you, it is not that he wishes to see you afflicted but converted; and if he takes pleasure in your suffering, he does so in as much, as it is an instrument of conversion, just as a father who chastises his son, derives pleasure, not from the affliction of his son, but from the amendment which he hopes to see in him, and which will prevent him from working his own ruin. Chastisement, makes us return to God, says St. Chrysostom: “Poenae nos ad Deum perducunt;” and it is to this end God inflicts it, in order that we may not stay away from him.

Why then, my brethren, do you complain of God when in tribulation? You ought to thank him prostrate on the earth; tell me now, if a man condemned to die, were to have his sentence changed by the prince from death into one hour’s imprisonment and if he were to complain of that one hour, would his complaint be justifiable? Oh, would he not rather deserve, that the prince should reverse the last sentence and condemn him a second time to death? You have long and often deserved hell by your sins. And do you know all that the word hell conveys? Know, that it is more dreadful to suffer for one moment in hell, than to suffer for an hundred years the most frightful torments which the martyrs have suffered on earth; and in this hell, you should have had to suffer during all eternity. And yet, you complain if God send you some tribulation, some infirmity, some loss. Thank God, and say: Lord, this chastisement is trifling compared with my sins. I ought to have been in hell burning, deserted by all and in despair: I thank you for having called me to yourself by this tribulation which you have sent me. God, says Oleastro, often calls sinners to repentance by temporal chastisements: “Paena est modus loquendi Dei quo culpam ostendit.” By earthly chastisements the Lord shows us the immense punishment which our sins deserve; and therefore, afflicts us on this earth, that we may be converted and escape eternal flames. Wretched then, as we have been, wretched indeed is that sinner, who is left unpunished in this life, but still more wretched he, who admonished by affliction, does not amend. “Non est grave,” says St. Basil, “plaga affici sed plaga. meliorum non affici.” It is not a grievous thing to be afflicted by God, on this earth, after one has sinned; but it is very grievous not to be converted by the affliction sent, and to be like those of whom David speaks, who although visited by the divine chastisement, still sleep on in their sins. “At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, they have all slumbered.”—Ps. 75:7. As if the sound of the scourges, and the thunders of God, instead of rousing them from their lethargy, served only to make them sleep more soundly. “I struck you, yet you returned not to me.”—Amos. 4:9. I have scourged you says God, in order that you might return to me; but ye, ungrateful that you are, have been deaf to my calls. Unhappy the sinner, who acts like him, of whom the Lord says, “he shall send lightnings against him his heart shall be as hard as a stone and as firm as a smith’s anvil.”—Job. 41:14, 15. God visits him with chastisement and he, instead of being softened; and returning to the Lord by penance, shall be “as firm as a smith’s anvil,” he shall grow more hardened under the blows of God, as the anvil grows continually harder under the hammer of the smith; and shall become like the impious Achaz, of whom the scripture says, “ in the time of his distress, he increased contempt against the Lord.”—Parall. 28:22. Unhappy man, instead of humbling himself, he the more despised the Lord.

Do you know what more happens to these rash beings? They begin to suffer hell, even in this life. “He shall rain snares upon the sinners; fire and brimstone and storms of wind shall be the portion of their cup.”—Ps. 10:7. The Lord shall rain upon them his chastisement, sickness, misery and every bitterness; but this is not the entire, it is only a portion of their cup, that is, of their chastisement. “The Lord says, ‘the portion’ only of their cup;” observes St. Gregory, because their suffering begins here indeed; but shall be continued throughout eternity.” He deserves all this, who being afflicted by the Lord for his conversion, continues to earn chastisement and provoke the Lord to greater wrath. “In flagellis positum,” says St. Austin: “flagellis digna committere, est sevientem acrius ad iracundum concitare.” What can I do, O sinner! to work your conversion? will the Lord then say. I have called you by sermons and inspirations and you have despised them, I have called you by favours and you have grown more insolent, I have called you by scourges and you continue to offend me. “For what shall I strike you any more, you that increase transgression and the daughter of Sion shall be left as a city that is laid waste.”—Isa. 1:5, 8. Do you not wish to hearken even to my chastisements? Do you wish that I should abandon you? I shall be obliged to do it if you do not amend.

My brethren, let us no longer abuse the mercy which God uses towards us. Let not be like the nettle, which stings him who strikes it. God afflicts us, because he loves us, and wishes to see us reformed: “Optima consideratio,” says Oleastro, “cum senseris poenam, culpae memenisse.” When we feel the chastisement, we should bethink us of our sins and say with the brethren of Joseph, “we deserve to suffer these things, because we have sinned against our brother”—Gen. 47:21. Lord, you punish us justly, because we have offended you, our father and God. “Thou art just, O God! and thy judgment is right.”—Ps. 118:137, “everything thou hast done to us, thou hast done in true judgment.”—Dan. 3:31. Lord, thou art just and dost with justice punish us, we accept this tribulation which you send us, give us strength to suffer it with patience. And here we should do well to remember, what God once said to a nun: “You have sinned, you must do penance, you must pray.”—Disingan. de Teres. Parola. 3. sec. 6. Some sinners are satisfied, with recommending themselves to the servants of God, but they must moreover pray and do penance. Let us do so, because when the Lord shall see our resignation, he will not only forgive our sins, but even remit the chastisement; and if God continues to afflict us, let us have recourse to that Lady, who is called the consolatrix of the afflicted. All the saints compassionate us in our sufferings, but there is not of them, as St. Antoninus says, who feels so much for us as this divine mother Mary: “Non reperitur aliquis sanctorum ita nobis compati in infirmatatibus sicut mulier haec B. Virgo Maria.” And Eichard of St. Lorenzo adds, that this mother of mercy cannot behold unhappy sufferers, without succouring them. “Non potest miserias scire et non subvenire.”

SERMON THE EIGHTH

PRAYERS APPEASE GOD AND AVERT FROM US THE CHASTISEMENT WE DESERVE, PROVIDED WE PURPOSE TO AMEND

“Petite et accepietis, quaerite et invenietis.”

“ Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find.” John 16:24.

HE who has a good heart, cannot but feel compassion for the afflicted, and wish to see all men happy. But, who has a heart as good as the Lord’s? He by his nature is infinite goodness, whence it is, that God by his nature has an extreme desire to deliver us from every evil and render us happy in all things, nay, even partakers of his own happiness. He wishes, therefore, that for our greater good, we beg of him the graces which we stand in need of, that we may be spared the chastisement which we deserve and arrive at life everlasting. Hence, he has promised to hear the prayers of him who prays to him, with hope in his goodness. “Petite et accipietis.” But, to come at once to the subject of our discourse: God is appeased by prayers and led to withdraw the chastisement which we deserve, provided we purpose to amend.

God wishes that we should all be saved, as the apostle assures us, God, “who will have all men to be saved.”—1 Tim. 2:4. And although he sees so many sinners who deserve hell, he does not wish that any of them should be lost, but that they should be restored to his grace by penance, and be saved. “Not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.”—2 Peter 3:9. But before delivering us from the punishment we have deserved and dispensing his graces, he wishes to be sought in prayer. “By prayer,” says St. Laurence Justinian, “the wrath of God is suspended, his vengeance is delayed and pardon finally procured.” O how great are not the promises which God makes to him who prays. “Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee,” 49:15. “cry to me and I will hear thee."—Jer. 33:3. "You shall ask whatever you will and it shall be done unto you."—John 15:7. Theodoret says, that prayer is one only instrument, but that it can effect all things: "Oratio cum sit una, omnia potest." And let us bear mind, my brethren, that when we pray and ask things conducive to salvation, not even our sins can prevent our receiving the graces which we beg.—"For, every one that asketh receiveth."—Matt. 7:8. Jesus Christ here says, that whoever asks, be he just or in sin, shall receive. Wherefore, did David say, "For thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon thee."—Ps. 85:5. Hence, the Apostle St. James, in order to excite us to prayer, tells us: "But if any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not."—James 1:5. When God is solicited, he gives more than is asked of him, he "giveth to all men abundantly. When one man asks a favour of another whom he may have formerly injured, the latter usually reproaches him with the injury that had been done him; but not so God, he never "upbraideth." When we beg of him some grace for the good of our souls, he never reproaches us with the offences which we have committed against him; but he hears us, and consoles us as though we had always served him faithfully. "Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name," said the Lord one day to his disciples, and to-day he says the same thing to us: "Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full."—John 16:24. As if he were to say, why do you complain of me? You have only yourselves to blame—you have not asked graces of me, and therefore you have not received them. Ask of me, henceforward, what you please and it shall be granted you; and if you have not merit sufficient to obtain it, ask it of my Father in my name; that is, through my merits, and whatever it be, I promise you that you shall obtain it. "Amen, amen, I say to you; if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you."—John 16:23. The princes of the earth, says St. John Chrysostom, give audience only to a few, and that seldom; but access can always be had to God by everyone, at all times and with certainty of a favourable hearing. "Aures principis paucis patent, Dei vero omnibus volentibus." Rely, then, upon these great promises, so often repeated by the Lord in the Scriptures; and let us ever be attentive to beg of him those graces which are necessary for salvation, namely, the pardon of our sins, perseverance in his grace, his holy love, resignation to his divine will, a happy death, and Paradise. By prayer, we shall attain all; without prayer, we shall have nothing. What the Holy Fathers and theologians commonly say, namely, that prayer is necessary to adults, as a means of salvation, comes to this, that it is impossible for anyone to be saved without prayer. Lessius wisely says, that it ought to be of faith, that without prayer salvation is impossible. “Fide tenendum est orationem adultis ad salutem necessariam esse.” And this is clearly to be drawn from the Scriptures, which say: “Ask and you shall receive: for, as he who seeks, obtains, says St. Theresa, he who does not seek, does not obtain. “Pray, that ye enter not into temptation.”—Matt. 26:41. “We ought always to pray.”—Luke 18. The words “seek” and “pray” and “we ought,” according to the opinions of most theologians, along with St. Thomas, imply a precept binding under pain of mortal sin. Let us pray, then and pray with great confidence—confidence in what? In that divine promise by which God has made himself our debtor. “Promittendo debitorem se facit.” He has promised; he cannot be wanting to his promise; let us seek and hope and we must be saved. “No one hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded.”—Eccl. 2:11. There never has been and never will be found any one to hope in the Lord and be lost, as the prophet assures us: “he is the protector of all that trust in him.” But how comes it then, that some persons ask graces and do not obtain them? St. James answers that it is because they ask ill. “You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss.”—James 4:3. You must not only ask and hope, but ask and hope as you ought, which brings us to the second point.

God has all the desire to deliver us from every evil and to share his blessings with us, as I said in the beginning, but he wishes to be sought in prayer and prayed to as he should, in order that we should be heard. How can God think of hearing that sinner who prays to him that he may be freed from his afflictions, whilst he is unwilling to abandon sin, which is the cause of his afflictions. When the impious Jeroboam stretched out his hand against the prophet, who reproached him with his wretchedness, the Lord caused his hand to wither up, so that he could not draw it back. “And his hand which he stretched forth against him withered and he was not able to draw it back again to him.”—3 Kings 13:4. Then the king turned to the man of God and besought him to beg of the Lord to restore his hand to him. Theodoret says, with regard to this circumstance, “fool that he was to have asked the prophet’s prayers for the restoration of his hand and not for pardon of his sins.” Thus do many act; they beg of God to deliver them from their afflictions, they beg of the servants of God to avert by their prayers the threatened chastisements, but they do not seek to obtain the grace of abandoning their sins and changing their lives. And, how can such persons hope to be freed from the chastisement, when they will not remove its cause. What is it arms the hand of the Lord with thunders to chastise and afflict us? Oh, it is accursed sin! “census peccati poena,” says Tertullian. The afflictions we suffer, are a fine which must be paid by him whom sin has subjected to the penalty. St. Basil, in like manner says, that sin is a note of hand which we give against ourselves: “Est chirographum quoddam contra nos.” Since we sin, we voluntarily go in debt to God’s justice. It is not God then, who makes us miserable, it is sin. Sin it is which obliges God to create chastisements, “famine and affliction, and scourges, all things are created for the wicked.”—Eccl. 40:9, 10.

Jeremiah, addressing the divine vengeance, says, “O thou sword of the Lord, how long will thou not be quiet? Go into thy scabbard, rest and be still.”—Jerem. 47:6. But then, he goes on to say, “How shall it be quiet when the Lord hath given it a charge against Ascalon? How can the sword of the Lord ever be quiet, if sinners do not choose to abandon their sin, notwithstanding that the Lord has given a charge to his sword, to execute vengeance as long as sinners shall continue to deserve it. But some will say, we make novenas, we fast, we give alms, we pray to God, why are we not heard? To them the Lord replies, “When they fast, I will not hear their prayers, and when they offer holocausts and victims, I will not receive them, for I will consume them by the sword, and by famine, and by pestilence.”—Jer. 14:12. How, exclaims the Lord! how can I hear the prayers of those who beg to be freed from their afflictions and not from their sins, because they do not wish to reform. What care I for their fasts and their sacrifices and their alms, when they will not change their lives. “I will consume them by the sword.” With all their prayers, and devotions, and penitential exercises, I shall be obliged, by my justice, to punish them.

Let us not then, my brethren, trust to prayers or other devotions, unaccompanied by a resolution to amend. You pray, you smite your breast and call for mercy, but that is not enough. The impious Antiochus prayed, but the scriptures say, that his prayers failed to obtain mercy from God. “Then this wicked man prayed to the Lord, of whom he was not to obtain mercy.”—2 Mach. 9:13. The unhappy man, finding himself devoured by worms and near his end, prayed for life, but without having sorrow for his sins. Neither let us trust in our holy protectors, if we do not purpose to amend. Some say we have our patron, or some other saint who will defend us; we have our mother, Mary, to procure our deliverance. “Who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come? and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for our Father.”—Matt. 3:7, 9. How can we think to escape punishment, if we do not abandon sin? How can the saints think of assisting us, if we persist in exasperating the Lord? St. Chrysostom says, of what use was Jeremiah to the Jews? “Quid profuit Jeremiah Judaeis.” The Jews had Jeremiah to pray for them, but, notwithstanding all the prayers of that holy prophet, they received the chastisement, because they did not wish to give up their sins. Beyond doubt, says the holy doctor, the prayers of the saints contribute much to obtain the divine mercy for us, but when? when we do penance: “Prosunt plurimum, sed quando aliquid agimus.” They are useful, but only when we do ourselves violence to abandon sin, to fly occasions and return to God’s favour. The emperor Foca, in order to defend himself from his enemies, raised walls and multiplied fortifications, but he heard a voice saying to him from heaven, “you build walls, but when the enemy is within, the city is .easily taken.” We must then expel this enemy, which is sin, from our souls, otherwise God cannot exempt us from chastisement because he is just and cannot leave sin unpunished. Another time the citizens of Antioch prayed to Mary, to avert from them a scourge which overhung them; and whilst they were praying, St. Bertoldus heard the divine mother replying from heaven, “Abandon your sins and I shall be propitious to you.” Let us then beg of the Lord to use mercy towards us, but let us pray as David prayed: “Lord incline unto my aid.” God wishes to aid us, but he wishes that we should aid ourselves, by doing all that depends upon us. “He who desires to be assisted,” says Ilatero, “must do all that he can to assist himself.” God wishes to save us, but we must not imagine that God will do all without our doing anything. St. Austin says, “he who created you without your help, will not save you without your help.” What do you expect sinful brother? That God will bring you to Paradise with all your sins upon you? Do you continue to draw down upon you the divine scourges and yet hope to be delivered from them? Must God save you while you persist in damning yourself?

If we purpose truly to turn to God, then let us pray to him and rejoice; even though the sins of the entire world were ours, we should be heard as I said to you in the beginning. Everyone who prays with a purpose of amendment, obtains mercy; “Omnis qui petit accipit.” Let our prayers be in the name of Jesus Christ, who has promised that the Eternal Father will grant us everything we ask in his name; that is, through his merits. “If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you.” Let us pray and never cease from prayer; thus we shall obtain every grace and save ourselves. It is to this we are exhorted by St. Bernard, who tells us to pray to God through the intercession of Mary: “Let us seek grace and seek it through Mary; because he who seeks through her, obtains his request and cannot be disappointed.—De. Aquaed. Mary, when she is prayed to by us, certainly pleads for us with her Son; and when Mary prays for us, she obtains what she demands and her prayer cannot be refused by a son who loves her so much.

SERMON THE NINTH

MOST HOLY MARY IS THE MEDIATRIX OF SINNERS

> “Ego murus et ubera mea sicut turris; ex quo factus sum corameo quasi pacem reperiens.”
>
> “I am a wall and my breasts are as a tower, since I am become in his presence as one finding peace.”—Cant. 8:10.

DIVINE grace is an infinite treasure, because it makes us friends of God. “For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.”—Wisd. 7:14. Hence it follows, that if there cannot be a greater happiness than to enjoy the grace of God, there cannot be a greater misery than to incur his displeasure by sin, which makes us his enemies. “But to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.”—Wisd. 14:9. But if, my brethren, any of you have had the misfortune to forfeit this divine grace by sin, do not despair, but console yourselves with the reflection, that you have in Jesus Christ himself a mediator, who can obtain pardon for you and restore you the grace you have lost. “And he is the propitiation for our sins.”—1 John 2:2. What have you to fear, says St. Bernard, when you can have recourse to so great a mediator? He can do all things with his Eternal Father. “Jesum tibi dedit mediatorem; quid apud Patrem talis Alius non obtineat?”—Serm. de aquaed. He has satisfied the divine justice for you, continues the holy abbot and has nailed your sins to the cross, having taken them away from your soul. “Quid timetis modicae fidei? peccata affixit cruce suis manibus.” But if, notwithstanding all this, you fear to approach Jesus Christ on account of his divine majesty, God has given you another advocate with his Son and that advocate is Mary. “Sed forsitan et in ipsam majestatem vereare divinam; advocatum habere vis apud ipsum? Recurre ad Mariam.”

Thus Mary has been given to the world as a mediatrix between God and sinners. Hear the words which the Holy Ghost makes her speak in the divine canticles: “I am a wall and my breasts are as a tower, since I am become in his presence as one finding peace.” I am, she says, the refuge of those who fly to me; my breasts, that is my mercy, are like a tower of defence to everyone who has recourse to me; and he who is the enemy of God, let him know that I am the mediatrix of peace between God and sinners. “Ipsa reperit pacem inimicis, vitam perditis salutem desperatis,” says Cardinal Ugon. For this reason is Mary called, “beautiful as the curtains of Solomon.”—Cant. 1:4. In the tents of David naught was to be heard of but war; in the tents of Solomon naught is spoken of but peace. By this we are to understand, that Mary has no other ministry in heaven than that of peace and pardon. Hence St Andrew Avillino calls her the pleader of Paradise, but what are those occupations in which Mary is engaged? “Mary,” says the venerable Bede, “stands in the presence of her son, praying unceasingly for sinners.” And the blessed Amadeo says, that” Mary, all-powerful by her prayers, stands before the face of God, continually interceding for us “ Thus Mary never ceases to implore of God by her all-powerful prayers all graces for us, if we do not refuse them. And are there any found to refuse the graces solicited for them by this divine Mother? Yes, there are found such—yes, those who will not abandon sin, who will not give up this friendship, this occasion; who will not restore their neighbour’s property—those are they who will not receive the graces begged for them by Mary, because Mary wishes to obtain for them the grace of breaking off this connexion, of flying this occasion of weakness and they will not do it. And such as will not do it, positively refuses the grace sought for them by Mary. She from heaven sees well all our miseries and clangers; and oh, how deeply is she not touched with compassion for us! With what motherly affection is she not always endeavouring to assist us! “Videt enim, nostra discrimina,” continues the blessed Amadeo, “nostrique clemens Domina materno affectu miseretur.”

One day St. Bridget heard Jesus Christ saying to Mary: “Mother, ask of me what you will.” And Mary replying to him: “I ask mercy for the unfortunate.”—Rev. lib. 1:100, 46. As if she were to say to him, Son, since you have made me the Mother of Mercy and Advocate of Sinners, can I ask aught else of you than mercy for the unhappy? In a word, St. Austin says, that amongst all the saints, we have not one who is so solicitous for our salvation as Mary: “Unam ac te solam pro nobis in coelo fatemur esse sollicitam.”—Ap. S. Bon. in Spech. lec. 6.

Isaiah complains in his day as follows: “Behold, thou art angry there is none who riseth up and taketh hold of thee.”—Isai. 64:5, 7. Lord, said the prophet, you are justly angry with us for our sins and there is no one to appease you, or draw you from chastising us. St. Bonaventure says, that the prophet had reason to speak thus, since there was no Mary then: “Ante Mariam non fuit qui sic Deum retinere auderet.”—In spec cap. 12. But at present, if Jesus Christ wishes to chastise a sinner and the sinner recommend himself to Mary, she by her prayers for him restrains her son, and averts the chastisement from him. “Detinet filium ne percutiat,” there is no one he says, so well able to hold back the sword of the Lord, “nemo tam idoneus qui Domini gladio manus objiciat.” Justly, then, did St. Andrew call Mary the peace of the Lord with men: “Salve divina cum hominibus reconciliatio.”—Orat. 2, de Ass. And St. Justin called her the “Arbitress,” saying, “Verbum usum est virgine sequestra.” “Sequestra” signifies an arbitress, to whose decision disputants bind themselves to yield. By which St. Justin means to say, that Jesus lays before Mary all his reasons for punishing such a sinner, that she may negotiate a peace; and the sinner, on the other side, places himself in her hands. Thus Mary, on the one side, obtains for the sinner the grace of amendment and penance on the other; he obtains pardon for him of her son and thus it is concluded. Such is the ministry in the exercise of which Mary is continually occupied.

When Noah judged that the deluge ought to have ceased, he dismissed the dove from the ark. She returned with a branch of olive, significant of the peace which God had concluded with the world. This dove was a figure of Mary. “Tu es ilia,” says St. Bonaventure, “fidelissima columba Noe, quae inter Deum et mundum spirituali diluvio submersum mediatrix fidelissima extitisti.” You, O Mary! are the dove all-faithful to him who invokes you—you are the dove who interceding with God, have obtained for us peace and salvation. “Per te pax coelestis donata est,” says St. Epiphanius. The author of the Poemerium enquires how it happens that in the Old Law, the Lord was so vigorous in his chastisements, of universal deluge, of fire from heaven, of fiery serpents and such like punishments; whereas, he now deals so mercifully with us, who have sinned more grievously than those of old? “Quare parcit nunc mundo ipse Deus qui olim multo his minora peccata gravius punivit?” And he answers, he does it all through love of Mary, who intercedes for us. “Totum hoc facit propter beatam Virginem.”—Ap. P.

Pepe. Grand. etc. “O how long since should the earth have been destroyed!” says St. Fulgentus, “if Mary had not interposed.” Wherefore the church wishes that we should call this divine Mother our hope. “Spes nostra salve.” The impious Luther could not endure that the church should teach us to call Mary our hope. He said that our hope ought to rest in God alone—not in the creature; and that God curses him who places his confidence in creatures: “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.”—Jer. 17:5. True; but that is understood of those who trust in creatures, in contempt of God, or independently of him. But we hope in Mary, as our mediatrix with the Lord. In the same manner as Jesus is our mediator of right with his Eternal Father, because by the merits of his passion he obtains pardon for penitent sinners, so Mary is mediatrix by divine favour with her son and is such a mediatrix that her son grants her every request; nay that he wishes that every grace should pass through her hands. “The Lord,” says St. Bernard, “has placed in Mary the plentitude of all good; so that if aught of hope, or grace, or salvation, is in us, we know that we derive it from Mary.”—Serm. de aquaed. The Lord has confided to Mary the treasure of mercies which he wishes to have dealt out to us and therefore wishes that we should acknowledge every grace as coming through her. Whence the saint calls her his chief confidence and the principal ground of his hope. “Hose maxima mea fiducia hoec tota ratio spei meae.” For which reason he exhorts us to look for grace always through the intercession of Mary. “Quoeremus gratiam et per Mariam quoeremus.” And for the same reason the church, in despite of Luther, calls Mary our hope, “Spes nostra salve.”

Hence also do the saints call Mary the ladder, the moon and the city of refuge. She is called by St. Bernard the ladder of sinners: “Hoec scala peccatorum.” It is sin which separates us from God. “But your iniquities have divided between you and your God.”—Isa. 59:2. A soul in the state of grace is in union with God and God in union with it. “He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.”—1 John 4:16. But when the soul turns her back upon God, then is she separated from him—plunged into an abyss of misery and as far removed from him, as sin itself. But when shall this wretched soul find a ladder by which to mount once more to God and be again united to him? Mary is that ladder, to whom, if the sinner have recourse, no matter what his misery, or how great the filth of sins, he can come out of the pit of perdition. “You,” says St. Bernard, “do not abhor the sinner, however loathsome he be; if he once sigh to you, you reach him your hand to draw him out of the gulph of despair."—Orat. paneg. ad B. V. For the same reason is she called the moon; "Fair as the moon."—Cant. 6:9. "As the moon," says St. Bernard, "is placed between the sun and earth, so is Mary stationed between God and us, to pour out his graces continually upon us."—Serm. 14. de Nat. Dom. Hence, also, she is called the city of refuge, as she is made to call herself by St. John Damascene: "Ego civitas omnium ad me confugientium." In the ancient law there were five cities of sanctuary; to which, if any one fled, he was secure of not being pursued by justice, no matter what his crime. At present we have not so many cities of sanctuary—we have only Mary, to whom if any one shall have fled, he may rest secure of not being pursued by the divine justice. In the cities of the old law, every delinquent was not secure, nor could all his crimes escape unpunished; but Mary is a city of refuge, which receives every criminal. "There is no one so much cast off by God," said this blessed Mother to St. Bridget, "who, if he have recourse to me, shall not return to God, and receive pardon."—Rev. lib. 1. cap. 6.

Mary, so far from disdaining to assist sinners, prides herself upon the function of advocate of sinners, so that she is related to have said to the venerable sister, Mary Villain, "next to my dignity of mother of God, there is nothing which I so much value as my office of advocate of sinners." "To this end," says Idiota, who takes it from St. John Chrysostom, "have you been chosen from eternity mother of God, that those whose sins should exclude them from participation in the merits of your Son, might be made partakers of them by your intercession." This was the principal office for the fulfilment of which God created her, and placed her in the world: "feed thy kids."—Cant. 1,7. By kids he means sinners and those kids are given in care to Mary, in order that they, who, on the day of judgment, should, by their sins have deserved to stand upon the left, may, by her intercession, stand upon the right. "Feed thy kids," says William of Paris, "whom thou shalt convert into sheep, that they who should have been placed to the left, may, through thy intercession, take their stand upon the right." But we must not forget to notice what has been said upon this passage by William of England: "feed thy kids." Who are the kids of Mary? "these sinners," he says, "who pay her no devotion, who do not beg of her to obtain their conversion, are not the kids of Mary and shall be placed on the left.'' St.

Bridget one day heard Jesus Christ saying to his mother, “you give assistance to everyone endeavouring to rise to God.” Mary assists everyone who does himself violence to leave his evil life and turn to God, or at least, prays to her that he may receive strength to do so; if he have not that desire, the divine mother herself cannot assist him. Mary then assists only those sinners who honour her by some special devotion and who, if they yet remain in disgrace with God, have recourse to her, that she may obtain pardon for them and work their deliverance from their present infernal condition. The sinner who acts thus from his heart is secure, because Mary, as we have said before, has been, therefore, created that she might have charge of sinners and lead them to God. The Lord revealed this to St. Catherine of Sienna: “Haec est a me electa tanquam esca dulcissima ad capiendos hominos, potissimum peccatores.”—Ap. Bios. mon. spir. And the blessed mother herself said to Saint Bridget, that as the magnet attracts iron, so she draws the hard hearts of men to herself and to God. “Sicut magnes attrahit ferrum sic ego attraho dura corda.”—Rev. lib. 3. cap. 32. But we must always bear in mind that these hearts, notwithstanding their hardness, must desire liberation from their unhappy state. Ah, if all had recourse to Mary with, at least this desire, she would procure salvation for all. “What fear of damnation should that man feel,” says the Abbot Adam, “to whom Mary offers herself for a mother and an advocate?” He enquires again, “could it be possible that you, the mother of mercy, should not intercede with the Redeemer for the soul he has redeemed?” He lastly makes answer: “Ah, you must intercede, because God who placed his Son mediator between man and heaven, has placed you mediator between his Son and guilty man.”

Then sinner, says St. Bernard, give thanks to him who has provided you with such a mediatrix: “Age gratias ei, qui talem tibi mediatricem providit.”—Serm. in sign. mag. Thank your God, who, in order to manifest his mercy towards you, has given you not only his Son for a mediator in his own right, but that you might have more confidence; has given you Mary as a mediatrix with that Son. Therefore it is, St. Austin calls her the only hope of sinners. “Spes unica peccatorum.” And St. Bonaventure: “If by reason of your iniquities you see the Lord in anger and fear to approach him, have recourse to the hope of sinners, who is Mary. She will not reject you because you are too wretched; “it is her office to assist the wretched.” And

William of Paris says exactly the same: “It is thy office to place thyself between God and man.”—Cap. 18. de Reth. lib. Hence, when we have recourse to Mary, let everyone say to her with Saint Thomas of Villanova: “Ah, therefore, thou our advocate fulfil thy office.” Since you are mother of God and advocate of the wretched, assist me who am so wretched, if you do not assist me, I am lost; and let us proceed to address her in the words of St. Bernard: “ Remember, O most pious virgin, that from the beginning, etc. etc.” I do not wish to be the first unhappy man who shall have had recourse to you and yet be abandoned by you.

SERMON THE TENTH

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH

GOD, through the great love which he bears us and the great desire which he has for our salvation, has added to the other means of salvation which he has offered us, that of devotion to the saints, whom, as being his friends, he wishes to intercede for us, and procure for us by their prayers those graces which we do not deserve ourselves. And this is not because the merits of Jesus Christ are not superabundantly sufficient to obtain every grace for us, but because he wishes to honour his faithful servants, by making them co-operators in the work of our salvation and on the other hand to give us a greater assurance of obtaining graces by means of his saints. But who does not know that amongst all the saints, Joseph is the most dear to God after the divine mother and most powerful to obtain graces from God for those who implore his intercession.—Hence, our discourse divides itself into two points. We shall consider in the first, how strongly the dignity of St. Joseph should engage us to revere him; and in the second, how greatly we should confide in the protection of St. Joseph, by reason of his sanctity.

FIRST POINT

Most assuredly we ought to honour St Joseph, since Jesus Christ himself has honoured him by calling him his Father. "Christ," says Origen, "paid to Joseph the honour due to a father."—Orig. hom. 17. in Luc. cap. 2. And he bore the name of father in the gospel. "And his father and mother were wondering at these things which were spoken concerning him."—Luke 2:23. He is so styled by the divine mother also: "Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."—Ibid. 2:48. If then, the King of Kings has raised him to such an honour, it is meet and just that we should honour him as much as in us lies. "Ab hominibus valde honorandus quern Rex Regum sic voluit extollere."—Card. Camer. tract. de S. Joseph. What angel, or what other saint has been thought worthy to be called the father of the Son of God? “Nomine patris neque angelus neque sanctus meruit appellari: hoc unus Joseph potuit nuncupari.” Hence, we may well apply to St. Joseph the words of St. Paul: “being made so much better than the angels, as he has inherited a more excellent name than they.”—Heb. 1:4. By this name of Father, God has conferred more honour upon Joseph than upon all the patriarchs and prophets and apostles and bishops; these he calls his servants, Joseph only did he style his father.

And now behold him as father, constituted head of that little family, small in point of numbers, but great, by the reason of the two great persons it contained, namely, the mother of God and the only Son of God, made man: “ He made him master of his house.”—Ps. 104, 21. In the house of that blessed family he was Lord and the Son of God was obedient to him; “and he was subject to him.”—Luke 2:25. “This subjection,” says Jerson, “denotes at once the great humility of Christ, and the great dignity of Joseph.”—Serm. de nat. virg. “And what greater dignity can there be,” pursues the same person, “than to command him who has it written upon his thigh, that he is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords?”

Josue astonished the world when he commanded the sun to stop, that he might have time to defeat his enemies and was obeyed by him. “The Lord obeying the voice of a man.”—Jos. 10:14. But, what comparison can there be between the obedience of the sun (which is an inanimate creature,) to Josue and the obedience of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God to Joseph? Jesus Christ, as long as Joseph lived, respected and obeyed him as a father; his obedience lasted for thirty years.

“He was subject to them:” so that during so many years the Saviour was occupied solely in obeying Joseph. To Joseph, during all that time, fell the office of ordering all things as head of the family; and the part of Jesus was to obey, as being subject to Joseph, whom God placed over him with the authority of father. Hence, Jesus did nothing, never moved a step, or tasted food, or went to rest, but according to the directions of Joseph; and was, on the other hand, all attention and obedience to my commands. The Lord revealed this to St. Bridget in the following words: “My Son was so obedient, that when Joseph said, do this, or that, he at once did it.”—Lib. 6. Revel. cap. 58. Hence, Jerson writes, “he often prepares their meals, cleanses the vessels, or draws water at the fountain.”—In Joseph dest. 3. St.

Bernard, speaking of Joseph, calls him “The faithful and prudent servant whom the Lord appointed the comfort of his mother, the foster-father of his humanity and his chief earthly coadjutor in his great design.”—Hom. 2. sup. miss. Not only then was Joseph destined to be the consolation of the mother of God in her many tribulations and the nursing father of Jesus, but in a certain sense to co-operate with him in the redemption of the world, which was the design occupying the councils of the three divine persons. God having given him the place of father over his Son, entrusted to him the care of his support and defence: “Take the child,” as if he were to say to him in the words of the psalmist, “to thee is the poor man left.”—Ps. 10:14. Joseph I have committed to your charge my Son upon this earth; I have given him to you poor, humble, without riches, without splendour, or apparent greatness, he is called the Son of a carpenter (“Is not this the carpenter’s Son?”—Matt. 13:55.) from your humble calling; because I have wished you to be poor as holding the place of father towards my Son, who is poor and who has come into the world, not to rule there, but to suffer and to die for man’s salvation. You then shall be his guardian and his father in my place; “to thee is the poor man left.” I resign him into your hands; he shall be persecuted and you shall share his persecution; take care of him, be faithful to me. “And therefore,” says St. John Damascene, “did he give to Joseph the love, the vigilance and the authority of a father.” He gave to him the affection of a father, in order that he might guard him with the tenderest love and the vigilance of a father, that he might guard him with all watchfulness, and the authority of a father to secure him obedience in all the arrangements he should make for our Lord.

Having, as St. Bernard says, made him a co-operator in the work of our redemption, he wishes him to be present at the birth of our Lord, in order that he might be the faithful witness of the glory which the angels gave to God at the birth of his Son, as had been revealed to the shepherds, who disclosed it to Mary and Joseph when they came to visit the Saviour who had been announced to them; he was moreover witness of the visit of the Magi, who, led by the star, came from the east to adore the heavenly infant, as they themselves declared; “for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to adore him.”—Matt. 2:2. God wished that Joseph should, jointly with Mary, present to him the child; “they carried him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord.”—Luke 2:22. Yielding him up to death for the salvation of the world, according to the scriptures, the predictions contained in which, relative to the passion of Jesus Christ, were always , known to Joseph and Mary.

Next, the Lord seeing that Herod, through fear of losing his kingdom, sought to take the life of the divine infant, commanded Joseph by an angel, to take the child and his mother and fly into Egypt. “Arise and take the child and his mother and fly into Egypt and be there until I shall tell you, for it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy him.”—Matt. 2:13. Behold, Joseph in obedience to the voice of God, on that very night (for so the commentators will have it,) takes the child and his Mother and sets off for Egypt. Joseph, without loss of time, gathers up what implements of trade he can bring along with him, on which his poor family depends for support; Mary, on the other hand, takes her infant, with his scanty. clothes and both set off without servant or companion, unprovided pilgrims, to cross the many dreary—deserts which lay between them and Egypt, where they had neither friend nor relative, and had to meet a barbarous and unknown race of people. Joseph upon his arrival, laboured night and day, as St. Bernard says, for the support of his holy spouse and the divine infant. After a time he leaves Egypt in obedience to the new command received from the angel, who says to him, “arise and take the child and his mother and go unto the land of Israel.”—Matt. 2:20. Upon leaving Egypt, he directs his steps towards Judea, but being again warned by the angel not to live there, as Archelaus the son of Herod reigned then in his father’s room, he withdrew to Nazareth in Galilee, where he dwelt till his death, in the company of his beloved Jesus, continuing to earn a poor subsistence by his humble trade.

It happened after some time, that going with Mary and Jesus then twelve years old, to visit the temple, he found upon his return when he met Mary, that Jesus whom he believed to be with her had been missing for three days, he did nothing else than weep, not having near him Jesus who was the love of his heart; but what afflicted him most, was the fear that Jesus had left him on account of some offence which he had received from him, and which he thought had rendered him unworthy of being any longer the guardian of such a treasure, as Laspergio writes. But he was consoled by hearing from Jesus himself, that he remained in the temple about his father’s business. Joseph continued thenceforward, to govern our Lord until his death, which he had the happiness of meeting between Jesus and Mary, who assisted him at that moment; whence St. Francis of Sales says, we may hold for certain that Joseph died of love, as did Mary his spouse.

SECOND POINT

We ought to confide greatly in the protection of Joseph, for his sanctity makes him very dear to God. In order to conceive the sanctity of Joseph, we have only to remember that he was chosen by God to fill the place of father towards Jesus Christ. St. Paul has those words, “who hath also made us fit ministers of the new testament.”—Cor. 3:6. Which implies, as St. Thomas explains it, that when God chooses any person for an office, he gives all the graces necessary for the discharge of his duty therein. “Quando Deus quosdam ad aliquid eligit ita disponit ut ad id inveniantur idonei.”—3 Prop. quse 27. art 4. God then having intended Joseph to fill the place of father over the incarnate word, was most assuredly bound to endow him with all the wisdom and holiness necessary for such an office. Nor should we doubt of his having enriched him with all the graces and privileges granted to the other saints; Gerson and Suarez say, that St. Joseph had three special privileges, first, that of having been sanctified in his mother’s womb, like Jeremias and John the Baptist; secondly, of having been confirmed in grace and thirdly, of never having felt the motions of concupiscence, a privilege which St. Joseph, by the merits of his purity, is entitled to share with his clients, by freeing them from these same motions.

St. Joseph in the gospel is called just, “Joseph her husband being a just man.”—Matt. 1:19. What is the meaning of a just man? It means, says St. Peter Chrysologus, a perfect man, a man who possesses every virtue. Joseph was holy before his marriage, but still more so after his union with the divine mother; the bare example of his holy spouse would have been sufficient to sanctify him. But if Mary, as St. Bernardine of Sienna says, is the dispensatrix of all the graces which God bestows on man, how profusely must she not have enriched her spouse with them, whom she so much loved and who loved her so well. How immensely must not the sanctity of Joseph have been increased by the conversation and familiarity of Jesus during the many years they lived together. If the two disciples who were going to Emmaus, found themselves influenced with love, in the few moments during which the Saviour walked and conversed with them, so as to say, "was not our heart burning within us whilst he spoke in the way?"—Luke 24:32. What a fire of holy charity must we not believe to have been enkindled in the heart of Joseph by thirty years conversation with Jesus Christ, by hearing constantly from him the word of life, by observing his perfect humility, patience and obedience, by seeing him so ready to assist him in his labours in everything which required to be done about the house? What a conflagration of divine love must not those torches of charity have spread in the breast of Joseph, a breast which was free from every earthly affection. It is true that he had a great love for his spouse Mary; but his was not a divided love, although, as the apostle says, the heart of the husband is usually divided. "But he that has a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife and he is divided."—1 Cor. 7:33. No, the love which he felt for his spouse, filled him still more with divine love and therefore, we cannot doubt that Joseph whilst he lived with Jesus Christ, increased so much in sanctity and merits, that we may say he excels all the other saints.

The apostle writes that Jesus Christ, in the other world, "will render to every man according to his works."—Rom. 2:6. With what glory, think you, must he not have adorned Joseph, who so faithfully loved and served him on this earth? On the last day, the Saviour will say to his elect, "For I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked and you covered me."—Matt. 25:35. Those have fed and lodged and clothed Jesus Christ, in the person of the poor; but St. Joseph procured food and raiment and lodging, for Jesus Christ in person. Moreover, the Lord has promised a reward to whosoever gives a poor man a drop of cold water in his name. "For whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in my name amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."—Mark 9:40. Who can tell what ought to be the reward of Joseph—of him, who can say to Jesus Christ, Lord, I have not only furnished you with food and raiment and lodging, but have even saved you from death, by rescuing you from the sword of Herod. All this should serve to increase our confidence in Joseph, by bringing us to the conclusion, that on account of all these merits, God cannot deny him any favour which he solicits for his clients.

St. Bernardine of Sienna says, “We may be assured that the same filial reverence and respectful familiarity with which Jesus Christ treated Joseph while on this earth, he not only does not deny him in heaven, but has rather increased towards him.”—Serm. de S. Jos. Recollect, “reverence,” and “familiarity.” That Lord who on the earth reverenced St. Joseph as father, certainly denies him nothing in heaven. Besides this, although St. Joseph had no authority over the humanity of Jesus Christ, as natural father, yet he had it in a certain degree, as husband of Mary; who, as natural mother of the Saviour, had true authority over him, for he who has a right to the tree, has a right also to the fruit. On this account Jesus Christ respected Joseph on the earth and looked upon him as his superior. And on the very same account, his prayers are looked upon by Jesus as commands. “Dum Pater orat natum, velut imperium reputatur.”—Serm. de S. Jos.

Let us hear what St. Bernard says of the power which Joseph has of his dispensing graces to his clients: “To some saints,” he says, “it is given to protect us upon certain occasions, but to Joseph it is allowed to help us in every necessity and to defend all who fly to him.” And what St. Bernard writes as his belief, St. Theresa confirms by her experience. “It appears,” she says, “that to the other saints it is given to succour us in some one necessity; but we know from experience, that Joseph can succour us in every need.” Let us rest assured of this, that as Jesus Christ on earth was subject to Joseph upon the earth, he is subject to him still in heaven, in this sense, that he grants his every request. Let us then imagine we hear the Lord addressing to each of us the words which Pharaoh spoke to the people during the time of the famine in Egypt: “Go to Joseph.”—Gen. 41:55. Go to Joseph, if you desire to be consoled. By the mercy of the Lord, there are few Christians at present, who are not, to some extent, devout to St. Joseph; but those do assuredly receive most graces who have recourse to him most frequently and with greatest confidence. Wherefore let us not fail to recommend ourselves every day and night to St. Joseph, who, next to divine Mary, is most powerful with God. Let us not fail to address to him, each day, some special prayer; and let us increase our prayers during his novena, and let us fast upon his eve and beg favours of him; all of which he will obtain for us, provided they be useful to our souls. I exhort you to apply to him more especially for the three following graces, namely, pardon of your sins, love of Jesus Christ, and a good death. With regard to the pardon of your sins, look at the matter thus : if, while Jesus lived on earth with Joseph, a sinner wanted to obtain pardon of his sins, could he do better to insure a pardon than apply to Joseph ? If, then, we wish to obtain pardon, let us apply to Joseph, who is now more beloved of Jesus Christ than he was on earth. Let us, moreover, beg of St. Joseph to procure for us the love of Jesus Christ; and I, for my part, hold, that tender love for the Word Incarnate is a grace, the obtaining of which for us, belongs most specially to Joseph, by reason of the tender love which the saint bore towards him in this world. Lastly, let us beg of him to procure us the grace of a happy death; it is known to all that Joseph is the protector of the death-bed, because he had the happiness of dying between Jesus and Mary. Whence his clients ought to hope that at their death they shall see Jesus and Joseph coming to assist them. Of this there are many examples.

Moverio tells that in the year 1541, brother Alessio of Vigevand, a Capuchin lay brother being about to die, begged of the brethren to light some candles. They asked him why? he said, that he expected a visit from Joseph and most holy Mary in a few moments; scarcely had he so spoken when he exclaimed, behold Joseph and the queen of heaven; kneel brethren, to receive them, and having said this he tranquilly expired, on the nineteenth of March, the very day consecrated to St. Joseph. It is related by Father Patrignam (and he takes the account from St. Vincent Ferrer and other authors,) that a certain merchant in the city of Valenza, was in the habit of inviting every year upon his birth day, an old man and a woman with a child at her breast to his table, in honour of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. This devout man appeared after his death, to a person who was praying for him, and told him that he had been met in his passage by Jesus, Mary and Joseph, who said to him, you were in the habit of receiving us every year into your house, in the person of those poor people whom you brought to your table, we are now come to receive you into our house, and having so spoken they led him to paradise. It is related also in the “Leggendario Francescano,” that the venerable sister Prudentsiana, who was very devout to St. Joseph, had the happiness of seeing the saint approach her death bed with Jesus in his arms, she would now speak to St. Joseph, now to Jesus and in this heavenly company she breathed out her soul.” In the history of the discalced Carmelites, it is related of sister Anna di Sant Agostino, that when she was dying, some of the religious saw her assisted by St. Joseph and St.

Theresa, and transported with joy; another religious, belonging to another convent saw her ascending to heaven between St. Theresa and St. Joseph. A religious of the order of St. Austin, as we learn from Father John de Allora, in his book upon St. Joseph, appeared to a companion of his and told him that he had been saved from hell by means of a particular devotion to St. Joseph and then mentioned that the saint, as reputed father of our Lord, was all powerful with him.

SERMON THE ELEVENTH

FOR THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

“Et verbum caro factum est.”

“And the word was made flesh.”—John 1:14.

THE angelic doctor St. Thomas, calls the mystery of the incarnation of the eternal word, the miracle of miracles, “miraculum miraculorum.” And what greater miracle could be exhibited to the world, than that of a woman becoming mother of God and a God clothed with human flesh. Let us, to-day, consider the following great prodigies.

First, Mary by her humility made mother of God; secondly, the Creator transformed by his goodness, into a son of the creature.

FIRST POINT

God having resolved to manifest to the world his immense goodness, by humbling himself so far as to become man, in order to redeem lost man; and being to choose a virgin for his mother, looked out for the most humble. He found that the Virgin Mary excelled all others as much in humility, as in sanctity and her he made choice of for his mother. “Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid.”—Luke 1:48. “He does not say,” writes St. Laurence Justinian, “that he regarded the virginity, or the innocence, but the humility of his handmaid; and before him St. Jerome said: “Maluit Deus de virgine incarnari propter humilitatem quem propter aliam virtutem.” God preferred the virgin for his mother, on account of her humility more than any other virtue.

Let us now consider how Mary was prefigured in the Canticles, by the spikenard there spoken of. The spikenard is a small and lowly plant, but of sweet odour and thus did the odour of Mary’s humility draw the King of Heaven from the bosom of his eternal Father, where he was reposing and bring him down to her womb, there to put—on human flesh. “While the

King was at his repose, my spikenard sent forth the odour thereof."—Cant. 1:77. Hear how St. Austin explains the passage: "The spikenard is a lowly but fragrant herb and signifies the blessed Virgin, who exhaled the odour of humility." And before him, St. Bernard: "Truly worthy was she of the divine regard; truly worthy to attract the King of Heaven by her beauty and by her sweet odour to draw him from his repose in the bosom of the Father."—Serm. 4. de Ass. Thus God induced by the humility of the holy Virgin, chose her for his mother when about to become man for the redemption of the world. Nevertheless, he did not wish to become her Son without first having obtained her consent and he acted thus for the greater glory and merit of that mother: "Noluit carnem sumere ex ipsa nolente ipsa," says William the Abbot.—In cant. 3. And behold, whilst the humble Virgin in her poor dwelling, sighs and prays for the coming of the Lord, (as was revealed to St. Elizabeth, a Benedictine virgin,) the Archangel Gabriel, entrusted with the great embassy of God, approaches and salutes her : "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women."—Luke 1:28. Hail Mary, full of grace, since thou art rich with grace, exceeding that of men and angels; the Lord is with you and shall ever remain with you by his grace; thou art blessed amongst all women, since all others have been born under the curse of original sin; but you have been kept free from every stain and have always been, and ever shall be blessed.

This salutation so full of praise, how is it met by the humility of Mary? She makes no reply, but astonished at so much praise, remains disturbed and confused; "Who, having heard, was troubled at his saying and thought within herself what manner of salutation this should be."—Luke 1:29. What should disturb her? perhaps the fear of illusion? That cannot be, she knows full well that her visitant is a heavenly messenger; perhaps through modesty, seeing that the angel had the form of man. No, for the text, says she, "was troubled at his saying or, as Eusebius Emissenus, expresses it: "non in vultu sed in sermone." This trouble then, all arose from her humility, which was confounded by those great praises which were so far from her thought. Hence, the more she is exalted by the angel, the more she humbles herself and sinks into her own nothingness. St. Bernardino of Sienna writes, that if the angel had told her she was the most guilty mortal in the world, she should not have been so much astonished; by that she was astonished and troubled at hearing so many encomiums, of which she

deemed herself unworthy: “Si dixisset, O Maria tu es major ribalda quae est in mundo non ita mirata fuissit; unde turbata fuit de tantis laudibus.”—Serm. 35. de An. inc. part 3.

But the holy Virgin who was already well versed in the sacred scriptures, knew that the time of the coming of the Messiah was at hand; she knew that the weeks of Daniel had been completed and that the sceptre of Juda, according to the prophecy of Jacob, had passed into the hands of a foreign king; she knew also that the mother of the Messiah was to be a virgin. Knowing all this, she heard herself saluted by the angel in a strain of praise, which could only be addressed to her who was to be the mother of God and then, perhaps the thought, or at least the suspicion, first struck her, that she was that chosen mother. No, her humility never could have suggested such a thought. No, these praises threw her into a state of fear, from which the angel was obliged to draw her by encouraging her not to fear, as St. Peter Chrysologus writes. “Christ was ministered to by an angel and so it was befitting that the Virgin should be encouraged by an angel likewise.” The angel Gabriel encouraged her by saying, “fear not Mary, for thou hast found grace with God.” As if he had said, why should you fear Mary? do you not know, that God exalts the humble? You look upon yourself as something low and base and therefore, God in his goodness, means to exalt you to the dignity of his mother. “Behold! thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and shalt call his name Jesus.”

The angel now pauses to receive her answer and know from her whether she be willing to become mother of God. Here St. Bernard appeals to her in these words: “The angel awaits his answer and we also, O Lady, on whom the sentence of damnation weighs so grievously; we also await the word of pity.”—Hom. 4. sup. missus. “Behold! the price of our salvation is offered to you, we shall be delivered at once if you consent.” O holy Virgin, to thee is offered the price of our salvation, that is, the blood which the Son made man in thy womb will shed, to pay the forfeit of our sins and free us from death; if you consent we shall be delivered.” The same who has desired to have you for his mother, desires equally to have your consent, by which he has resolved to save us.” And, “why,” says St. Austin, “why, O sacred Virgin, do you retard the salvation of the world?”—Serm. 21. de temp.

Mary gives answer to the angel: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord! be it done to me according to thy word.”—Luke 1:38. O admirable answer, which rejoicest Heaven and pourest upon the earth a treasure of blessings! Answer, which hast drawn from the bosom of the father, his eternal Son, that he may become man! Scarcely had the Virgin spoken, when “the Word was made flesh!” and the Son of God became the Son of Mary. “O powerful fiat, exclaims St. Thomas of Villanova! O efficacious fiat! O most venerable fiat!” by that fiat heaven was lowered to earth and earth exalted to heaven.

But, let us look more narrowly into the reply of Mary: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord!” By this answer, the humble virgin meant to say, I am prepared to do all the Lord requires of me; if he see my nothingness and if all I have be his, who can say that he has chosen me by reason of my merit? “Behold the handmaid of the Lord!” How can a servant deserve to be the mother of her Lord? Let not then, the handmaid receive praise, but only the goodness of God who has deigned to look upon a creature so lowly and exalt her so much. “O humility!” says the Abbot Guerico, “angusta sibi, ampla divinitati, insufficiens sibi, sufficiens ei quem non capit orbis.” O the humility of Mary, which makes her little in her own eyes, but great in the eyes of God; unworthy in her own opinion, but in the esteem of God, worthy to bear in her womb, him whom the whole world cannot contain. Let us hear the expressions of admiration with which St. Bernard speaks of the humility of the blessed Virgin. “What exceeding humility, in union with such purity, such innocence, such fulness of grace.” He then addresses himself to the divine Virgin and says: “Whence hast thou received this humility, O thou blessed one and such humility?” Lucifer, seeing himself endowed by God with great glory, would fain place his throne above the stars and make himself equal to God, saying: “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will be like the Most High.”—Isa. 14:13, 14. But, what would the proud angel have said, had his privileges been equal to those of Mary? He, when exalted by God, became proud and was cast into hell; but the humble Mary, the more she saw herself enriched with the gifts, of God, shrunk back the more into her own nothingness and God exalted her to such dignity, that except God, there is no being comparable to her; as has been said by St. Andrew Cretense: “Excepto Deo, omnibus est altior.”—Orat. de dormit. Deip. Hence St. Anselm says, “ nothing O Lady is equal to thee, for whatever is, must either be above or below thee, God alone is above thee, and all else below thee.”—Pelbart. stellar. 2. par. 3. art. 2.

And to what greater dignity can a creature be exalted, than to that of mother of God? “To be mother of God,” says St. Bonaventure, “is the most exalted dignity that can be conferred upon a pure creature; God might have made a greater earth, a greater heaven; but a greater creature than the mother of God he could not make.”—Spec. B. 5. sec. 10. And this the Virgin herself meant to convey when she said, “he that is mighty hath done great things to me.”—Luke 1. 49. Here the Abbot Cellense addresses her. “God,” he says, made thee not for himself alone; “but for men, that through thee the ruin brought upon, them by sin might be repaired.” Let us now come to the second point.

SECOND POINT

Adam our first father sinned and ungrateful to God for all the favours conferred upon him, rebelled by eating the forbidden fruit. God was therefore obliged to drive him out from his face and condemn him with all his posterity to eternal death. But having compassion upon him and the bowels of his mercy being moved, he resolved to come on earth and satisfy the divine justice, by paying with his own suffering person, the forfeit of our sins. “He came down from Heaven,” as the holy church teaches us, “and was made man.” O prodigy! O excess of the love of a God! A God to become man! If a prince of the earth seeing a worm die in its hole, wished to restore it to life and was told he could do so, on condition that he should humbly become a worm and enter that hole in which the worm lay dead and there giving up his life, make a bath of his blood, being immersed in which alone, the worm could be restored to life; what could the prince reply? would he not say, what should I care whether the worm live or die, that I should shed my blood to restore life to a worm?

How should it concern God if men be lost as they had deserved to be by their sins? He perhaps should have lost some of his happiness without man.

No, it was by reason of his excessive love for me that he came upon the earth and dwindled into the form of man, which he took in the womb of a virgin. He became man, that is to say, a worm like one of us: he “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men and in habit found as a man.”—Phil. 2:7. He, like the Father, is God, immense, sovereign, omnipotent and in all things equal to the Father, but having been made man in the womb of Mary, he became a creature, a servant, weak and less than the Father. Behold him humbled in the womb of Mary, taking upon him the duty of obedience to his Father, who would have him die as a criminal upon a cross, after thirty-three years of sufferings. “He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross.” Let us with astonishment contemplate him in the womb of his mother; his will united to that of the Father and his heart inflamed with love for us: let us behold him offering himself voluntarily for us. “He was offered because it was his own will.”—Isa. 43:8. He offers himself to suffer everything for our salvation. He foresees the scourge and offers his flesh, he foresees the thorns and offers his head, he foresees the nails and offers his hands and feet, he foresees the cross and offers his life. Why has he wished to suffer so much for us ungrateful and sinners as we are? Why has he so much loved us? he “hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”—Apoc. 1:5. He beholds us in the filth of sin and prepares for us a bath of his own blood, in which to cleanse ourselves and make ourselves dear to God.—“Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us.”—Ephes. 5:2. He saw us condemned to death and he prepares to die that we may live; and seeing us accursed of God by reason of our sins, he loaded himself with all our iniquity that he might remove the curse from us. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”—Gal. 3:13. St. Francis of Paul, contemplating a God made man and dying for our salvation had reason to exclaim often: O charity! O charity! O charity! If faith did not assure us of all that the Son of God had done and suffered for us, who could believe it? Ah, my brethren, the love which Jesus Christ had for us, constrains us to love him. “For the charity of Christ presseth us.” How tender is not the sentiment of St Francis of Sales, with regard to the above mentioned words of St. Paul when he says: “Knowing as we do that Jesus the true God, loved us even unto death, the death of the cross, is not this knowledge a torch as it were, applied to our hearts? do we not find them, bound and strained and love pressed into them, by a violence which is as powerful as it is amiable?”

But here come the complaints of St. John: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”—John 1:2. And why should the Only Begotten of God ever have come upon the earth to suffer and to die for us, if not in order that we should love him? “Deus factus est homo,” writes Hugh of St.

Victor, “ut familiarius ab homine diligeretur.”—In lib. sent. “To this end, chiefly,” says St. Austin, “has Jesus Christ come into the world, that he might make known to men how much he loved them.”—C. 4. de Catech. And if God has so much loved us, he claims with justice a portion of love from us. “Notam facit dilectionem suam,” says St. Bernard, “ut experiatur et tuam.”—Serm. 43. in Cant. To this end has he manifested his great love for us, that he might experience ours for him, who has come from heaven to become man and die for men, that they might love him; how comes it then that so few amongst men love him? Infinite beauty!—infinite loveliness! worthy of all love, behold I am one of those ungrateful beings whom thou hast so much loved, without meeting a return; who, instead of loving, have offended you. But, O Lord, you have become man and died in order to obtain pardon for such sinners as should do penance, and detest their sins. Behold! I am a sinner, it is true, but I repent me of my sins and wish to love you; have pity on me. And you, O holy Virgin, whom your humility has rendered worthy of being the Mother of God, and who, as such, are the mother, the refuge, and the advocate of sinners! pray to Jesus for me; recommend me to that Son, who so much loves you, and denies you nothing. Tell him to pardon me; tell him to give me his holy love; tell him to save me, that face to face I may one day love him in Paradise. Amen.

SERMON THE TWELFTH

UPON THE SORROWS OF MARY

> “Stabat autem juxta Crucem Jesu Mater ejus.”
>
> “Now, there stood by the Cross of Jesus, his Mother.”—John 19:25.

WE are here, beloved brethren, to contemplate a new kind of martyrdom in the case of a mother, who must look on at the death of her innocent Son, executed like a felon upon an infamous gibbet. Mary is that mother, whom the holy church with too much reason calls the “Queen of Martyrs.” Yes, because Mary in standing beside the cross of Jesus, suffered a more grievous martyrdom than did all the martyrs in their torments.

She was, in the first instance, a martyr without parallel; and in the second, a martyr without consolation.

FIRST POINT

The words of the prophet Jeremias suit me here: “To what shall I compare thee, or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem for great as the sea is thy destruction: who shall heal thee?” -—Lam. 2:13. No, the torments of all the martyrs can bear no comparison with the sufferings of Mary. “The martyrdom of Mary,” says St. Bernard, “took place not by the sword of the torturer, but by grief of heart,” according to the prophecy of Simeon, who said: “And thy own soul a sword shall pierce.”—Luke 2:35.

Arnoldo Carnotense writes, that whoever was present upon Calvary when the Immaculate Lamb was yielding up his life for the salvation of the world, beheld there two altars of sacrifice; one in the body of Jesus Christ and the other in the heart of Mary; in which latter, Mary sacrificed her soul in compassion for her Son, when Jesus sacrificed his body in death.—Tract. de sept. verb. Dom. in cruc. St. Antoninus says, that the other martyrs sacrificed each his own life, but that Mary consummated her martyrdom by sacrificing the life of her Son, which she loved far more than her own ; and thus it was that her grief surpassed any other suffering which has been felt upon this earth.

It is well known that sufferings of children become the sufferings of the mothers who see them suffer. St. Austin, speaking of the mother of the Machabees, who was present during the martyrdom of her sons, says that love caused her to suffer all the sufferings of each one of her children: “Ilia videndo, in omnibus passa est, quia omnes amabat, ferebat in oculis quod in carne omnes.”—Serm. 109. de div. cap. 6. Erasmus adds, that mothers feel greater pain on seeing their children suffer, than if they were sufferers themselves.—Libell. de Mach. With regard to ordinary mothers, that does not always happen; but with regard to Mary, it certainly did happen that she suffered more by seeing her Son upon the cross, than if she were to have suffered in her own person all the torments she saw inflicted upon him. “All the wounds which covered the entire body of Jesus,” says St. Bonaventure, “were found together in the heart of Mary.”—De plenet. Virg. in stim. amor. to afflict her during the passion of her Son; so that, as St. Laurence Justinian writes, her heart was, by affliction, converted into a mirror, in which were reflected all the outrages and insults suffered by Jesus Christ. “Passionis Christi speculum effectum erat cor Virginis; in illo agnoscebantur sputa, convicia, verbera, vulnera.”—De agon. Christi, cap. 11. Thus, during the passion of her Son. Mary suffered in her heart, by reason of the love she bore him, the buffets, the scourges, the crowning with thorns and was actually nailed in spirit with him to the cross.

The same St. Laurence, contemplating Jesus carrying his cross to Calvary and seeing his afflicted mother following him, makes him turn to her and say: “Alas! mother, whither do you follow me? you shall be tortured in my torture and I in yours. But his loving mother desists not from following him, although she knows that being present during his passion, will cost her a torture more severe than any death. She sees her Son carrying the cross on which he is to be nailed and she takes up the cross of her grief and follows him—to be crucified along with him: “Tollebat et mater crucem suam et sequebatur eum, crucifigendaeum ipso.”—Grulielm. in cantic. 7. Hence, St. Bonaventure contemplating Mary, as she stood near her dying Son, exclaims: “tell me, O sacred mother, where were you when Jesus was dying? were you near the cross? No, you were on the cross itself.”—Loc. cit. de plane. virg. Upon these words foretold for the Redeemer, by the prophet Isaiah: “I have trodden the vine-press alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with me.”—Isa. 63:3. Richard writes as follows: “Lord, it is true that you have not a man to accompany you, but there is a woman and that woman your mother, to follow you and receive all the wounds which are inflicted on your body, in her heart”—Richard. de laud. virg.

Other martyrs are painted with the instruments of their death in their hands, to signify by what death they suffered; thus St. Paul is represented with a sword in his hand, St. Andrew embracing a cross, St. Laurence having a gridiron; but Mary is represented with her dead Son in her arms, because the instrument of her martyrdom was no other than her Son and the compassion which she felt for her Son, has made her the Queen of Martyrs. Pinamonti has a noble and singular sentiment with reference to this compassion felt by the blessed mother. He says, that the compassion of Mary for Jesus was so great, that she alone could worthily compassionate the death of a God made man, through love of men. The blessed Amadeus writes, that Mary, when beholding the passion of her Son, experienced more grievous tortures than had she been suffering in person, because she loved her Son incomparably more than herself. Hence, St. Idelphonsus does not hesitate to assert, that you say little when you speak of Mary, as having suffered more than all the martyrs taken together.—Ap. Sinise. martirio di Maria cant. 36. And St. Anselm, addressing the blessed Virgin, says: “Whatever cruelty has been exercised upon the bodies of the martyrs was trivial, or rather nothing compared with all that you suffered during the passion of your Son.”—St. Anselm de excell. virg. cap. 5. The same saint adds, “No, Lady, I could not believe that you should have been able to survive such sufferings, did not the spirit of thy Son support thee.”—Loc. cit. And St. Bernardine of Sienna, went so far as to say: “The grief of the blessed Virgin was so great, that if it were to be divided amongst all creatures capable of grief, they should expire under it.” Who then can doubt for a moment, that the martyrdom of Mary was without parallel, since it exceeded the sufferings of all the martyrs taken together; and since, as St. Antoninus says, other martyrs in dying, sacrifice only their own lives, but she sacrificed the life of her Son, which was infinitely dearer to her than her own.

SECOND POINT

The martyrs suffered torments inflicted on them by tyrants, but the Lord, who never abandons his servants, failed not to console them under their torments. The love of God which burned in their hearts, rendered all tortures sweet to them. AVincent was torn while stretched on the rack, with iron hooks, and burned with heated plates; but St. Austin says, that the saint spoke so slightly of his torments, that the person who suffered appeared to be different from the person who spoke. A Boniface had his body torn with irons, and his nails and flesh pierced with thorns, and melted lead poured into his mouth, and all the while he ceased not to thank Jesus Christ, who thought him worthy to suffer for his love. Laurence suffered on his gridiron; but the love with which he was inflamed prevented him from feeling the fire which was under him, or death itself. "In ilia longa morte, illis tormentis, tormenta non sensit."—S. Aug. tract. 27. As the holy martyrs felt their pain diminished in proportion to their torments, so the bare thought of the passion of Jesus Christ was sufficient to console them. Exactly the reverse took place in Mary, since the passion of Jesus was her martyrdom and her love for him her only executioner. Here may the words of Jeremiah be applied: "for great as the sea is thy destruction; who shall heal thee?" As the sea is entirely salt, without one drop of fresh water, so the heart of Mary was all bitterness, without one drop of consolation. "Who shall heal thee?" Her Son was the only person who might console her; but, how should he, hanging upon the cross, console her, when the love she bore him was her sole tormentor?

In order, then, to understand the greatness of Mary's sorrow, we should know, according to Cornelius a Lapide, the greatness of the love which she bore to Jesus. But who can measure that love? The blessed Amadeo is of opinion, that in Mary's heart were found together the natural love which she bore to Jesus, as her Son, and the supernatural love which she bore to him as her God: "Duse dilectiones in unam connexerunt et ex duobus amoribus factus est unus."—Hom 5, de Laud. Virg. These two descriptions of love, were blent into one and that, the greatest a pure creature was capable of. "As, then, there never has been found in a creature love to equal that which Mary had for Jesus, so neither has sorrow ever been found to equal hers."—Rich. a St. Lauren.

"Now, there stood by the cross of Jesus, his Mother." Let us pause awhile to consider these words, before we finish and, having glanced at these, we shall have done; but let us here renew our attention. “There stood.” When Jesus hung upon the cross, he was abandoned by his disciples; they had all left him from the moment he was taken in the garden. “Then the disciples all leaving him, fled.”—Matt. 26:56. The disciples abandoned him, but his loving Mother did not abandon him; she wished to stay by him and see him expire—she “stood by the cross.” Mothers, when they see their children suffer and that they cannot give them assistance, have not strength to endure it, and therefore fly the sight. But Mary contemplated her Son as he hung agonizing upon the cross; she saw that his sufferings were fast depriving him of life—she could have wished to succour him in that extremity—but it is not permitted her; still she does not avoid the sight, she does not fly, but stands near the cross where her Son is expiring. The cross was the hard bed which Jesus was stretched upon in death. Mary, who stood beside it, never withdrew her eyes from him, but gazed upon him torn with the scourges and the thorns and the nails. She sees that her dear Son can find no rest hanging from three nails; she could have wished, as I have said, to minister to him, or, at least, to expire in his arms; but all is denied her. Ah, cross! she said, give me back my Son—thou art the gibbet of malefactors, but my Son is innocent. Peace, sorrowing Mother! the cross shall not restore you your Son, until he shall have breathed his last.

St. Bonaventure, contemplating the grief which Mary felt in the death of her Son, says himself that no grief could equal hers, because no Son ever was so dear to a mother: “De compass. Virg.” “If, then, there never was Son so amiable as Jesus, or Mother so loving as Mary, what grief can be compared to hers.”—Richard. lib. 3. de Laud. Virg. Mary saw that her Son was about to die, when, looking piteously upon him, she appeared to say, Ah, my Son! you are about to leave me, and do you not say a word at parting? leave me some memorial of you. The memorial he left her was, “Woman, behold thy Son,” meaning St. John who stood near and these were the words with which he took leave of his mother. He calls her woman, that he may not increase her sorrow by styling her mother. Woman, behold thy Son, he shall tend thee after my death.

“There stood by the cross his mother.” Let us contemplate Mary for the last time standing at the foot of the cross and beholding her Son as he expires. But, O God, what a Son dies there! a Son who had chosen her from eternity for his mother, preferring her before all womankind: A Son so beautiful, so holy, so lovely; a Son who had ever been obedient, a Son who was her. only love, her Son and her God; and Mary has to see him die of pure pain before her eyes. But the last hour of Jesus now approaches, and the afflicted mother, has to see her Son yielding to the last assault of death; his body now relaxes, his head falls upon his breast, he opens his mouth and expires. The people around exclaim he is dead and Mary too says, thou art indeed dead, my Jesus.

After Jesus had hung dead upon the cross for some time, his body was taken down. Mary goes to receive it and having strained it to her bosom, gazes now upon that head wounded with thorns, those hands pierced with nails, that body torn with scourges; ah, my Son, she says, to what has the love thou didst bear to man reduced thee? But the disciples fearing lest she die while embracing her Son, approach and with reverential violence take him from her arms and rolling him in his shroud, carry him away to bury him. They are accompanied by the other mourning women and with them still goes the sorrowful mother, following her Son to the tomb. St. Bernard says, that her grief was such as to cause all who met her to weep: “Omnes plorabant qui obviabant ei;” and he adds, that those who accompanied her were in tears for her, rather than for the Lord.

My brethren, let us be devout to the sorrowful Mary. Albertus Magnus writes, that “as we are indebted to Jesus Christ for his death, so we are indebted to Mary for the sorrow which she felt at the death of that Son, for the salvation of the world.”—Sup. miss. cap. 20. This an angel revealed to St. Bridget: the holy virgin, he said, sacrificed to God for our salvation, the life of her Son; a sacrifice which, as we have said, cost her more pain than all the sufferings of the martyrs cost them. But the divine mother complained to St. Bridget, that very few compassionate her in her sufferings, whilst the greater number of men live forgetful of them; whence, she said, to the saint, “if others forget me, you at least, daughter, must not forget me.” To such an end the blessed Virgin appeared in the year 1229, to the founder of the order of servants of Mary, that he might establish a devotion in memory of her dolours, which was afterwards done ; and Jesus himself one day, said to the blessed Veronica da Benasco: “Daughter, the tears which one sheds in contemplating my passion, are dear to me, but loving with immense love, as I do my mother Mary, I greatly value meditation upon the sorrow which she experienced during my passion.” It may be well to mention also, what is said by Pelliarto, (stellar. 3. par. 3. art. 3.) to have been revealed to St. Elizabeth, a Benedictine virgin, which was, that the Lord has four graces for those who are devout to the sorrows of Mary. First, that, whoever invokes her by her dolours, shall have the grace of doing penance for his sins before death; secondly, that she shall console such in all their tribulations and especially at the hour of death; thirdly, that the Lord shall imprint on their minds the recollection of his passion and inspire them with a devotion to it; fourthly, that he has empowered Mary to obtain what graces she pleases for those who are devout to her dolours.

FAMILIAR DISCOURSE

AT THE RECEPTION OF A NUN

DEVOUT sister, you should have constantly in mind this day on which you have the happiness of being espoused to Jesus Christ, that you may continually thank him for so great a favour. Do not imagine that you place Jesus Christ under an obligation to you by leaving the world for his sake; you ought on the contrary to feel yourself under an everlasting obligation to him for the grace which he has given you, in calling you to leave the world.

Today you leave the world; you think perhaps you make a great sacrifice. What is this world? A land of thorns, of tears, of sorrow. The world promises great things to its votaries, pleasure, peace, contentment; but all turn into deceit, bitterness and vanity. Even when the world bestows its riches, honours and pleasures, they end in suffering and grief: “Extrema gaudii luctus occupat.” And God grant that for the many blind creatures who love the world, this grief may not become eternal, since in the world the dangers are many and great, and end, all but inevitably, in the ruin of the soul, in the loss of Paradise and God.

Those poor maidens, who, deceived by the false promises of the world, leave Jesus Christ for the secular life, hope to find therein pleasure and contentment, but what the poor creatures experience shews that they find in it nought but thorns and gall. Their subordination to their husbands, the care of children and servants, the wants of the family and the other duties to which a woman living in the world is subjected, render her life so full of straits, and fear, and disgust, that it is if one may so speak, a continual martyrdom.

Enquire of married women whether they enjoy contentment. For my own part I know that as many as I have asked, I have found to be discontented and full of trouble. On the other hand, ask those nuns who have left everything for God, whether they are satisfied with their condition and they will answer you that they shall ever have to thank the Lord for having called them from the world. It is but too true what Cardinal Petrucio says, of the delights of those who love the world: “they have the semblance of joy and are actually torments.” But of the troubles of those who love God, he says, that “they have the semblance of torments, while they are actually joys.” And, if that be the case in this life, how shall those maidens fare who have left the world and how those who have remained in it? Those who love the world will say, we shall be able to be holy in the world. To be holy? Hear me, daughter, lest the devil should think to disturb you afterwards upon this point: in order to be holy, it is not sufficient to desire holiness, you must employ the means conducive to it. You must every day spend some time in mental prayer, because salvation is very difficult for the soul that does not often think of God. You must frequent the sacraments by which God communicates himself to the soul; you must be totally detached from all earthly affections and vanities. But, speaking practically, how much time can be devoted to mental prayer by the mother of a family, who has her head filled with anxiety for children, servants, and all the occasions of the house? She shall scarce have time to say the rosary. How can she frequent the sacraments, if she can scarce afford to hear Mass upon a festival? How can she live detached from the world, while she lives in the midst of it? How then? some persons will say, is it impossible for a married person to be saved? We read of many married persons who became holy. Yes, even in the world a married person can become holy, provided she take care to practise as much as she possibly can, the devout exercises before mentioned and above all to fortify herself with great patience, because she cannot become holy without great labour and fatigue; I say that all holy married women, even princesses and queens, are martyrs of patience.

On the other hand, a religious who has abandoned the world to give herself wholly to God, how many helps and opportunities has she not of leading a wellregulated life and becoming holy? If she do nothing more than the little which the rule prescribes and the community practices; if she meditate every morning, communicate often in the week, hear mass every day, hear frequently the word of God, together with going through the spiritual exercises which are annually made during eight days and the various other devotions which are practised in the convent ; this alone would suffice to make her a saint. Remember, daughter, when the devil shall tempt you with regard to your vocation to the religious state, that in the world few are saved, and that in religion, few, very few, are lost.

In a word, if you were to leave the convent, what spouse could you hope for beyond a gentleman, a nobleman, or a monarch; but now you are espoused to the King of Heaven, and of all the kingdoms of the earth. How many holy virgins have renounced the most exalted earthly nuptials for Jesus Christ? St. Agnes was sought by many noble Romans, but she was content to have her head cut off rather than have any other spouse than Jesus Christ. The blessed Agnes refused the hand of the Emperor Frederick the Second, and shut herself up in a convent. St. Domatilla refused to marry a great lord the Count Aurelian and therefore died a martyr, having been burned alive. St. Susanna was offered the hand of the Emperor Maximin; but she, in order to retain Jesus Christ, chose rather to lose her head by the axe of the executioner, and died a martyr.

Leave, O daughter, leave to those maidens who love the world, all these pleasures and vanities, their dresses, their balls and their plays; enjoy you your Jesus. He, in your cell, will give you more content than all the pleasures, pomp and riches, which are at the command of the princes of the earth. Here, in your lonely cell, you shall enjoy a Paradise and a continual peace. If you love Jesus Christ, you will love the solitude which you will find in your cell. In it your crucified spouse will speak familiarly to your heart; from that cross he will send rays of light into your soul and darts of love into your bosom. Alone with him in your cell, you shall manifest to him the love you bear him and continually make to him the offering of yourself and all that you have; you shall seek from him the graces which you stand in need of; you shall make him acquainted with the difficulties and fears which afflict you and he will console you. Do not doubt that the divine spouse will console you during life and more especially at the hour of your death. Then it will not be matter of regret to you, that you do not die in the world, surrounded by children, relations and servants, not one of whom will say a word to you for your soul’s good; but you will have the happiness of dying in the house of God, surrounded by your holy sisters in religion, who will all comfort you by pious conversation and animate you to appear full of confidence before your loving spouse, who shall come to meet you with a crown in his hand to make you queen of his blessed kingdom, in recompense for the love which you have borne him.

I have said that the religious who are given entirely to God enjoy continual peace. I mean thereby, such peace as can be tasted in this vale of tears. God has prepared for us in Heaven, a full and perfect peace, free from every labour. This earth, on the contrary, is a place of merit and therefore of suffering, where by crosses we become entitled to the joys of Paradise.

The spouse whom you have chosen this morning, my daughter, although the most noble, the greatest and the richest whom you could choose, is called, and is, a bloody spouse: "A bloody spouse art thou to me." A bloody spouse, whose blood has been drained by dint of scourges, thorns and nails, for the salvation of your soul and of all mankind. Behold him then advancing, not crowned with flowers but with thorns, not adorned with gold and gems, but with blood and with wounds; mark well his royal throne and see if it be not a hard cross, on which he agonizes and dies, in a sea of ignominies and grief, through love of you. Hear how he invites you to follow him and what you have to do if you follow him. "If any one wish to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." The first thing he asks of you is, that you deny yourself. He wishes that you detach your heart from all creatures. He, your spouse, will never be satisfied with you, unless he see you all his own; and you, in order to be all his, must divest yourself of every earthly affection, for parents, friends, vanity, dress, self-esteem, and self-will. Above all, you must guard your heart from any personal affection. When any creature wishes to deprive Jesus Christ of any portion of your love, all which he claims from you, answer it in the words of St. Agnes: "Depart from me, food of worms! I belong to another lover." Depart from me, food of death! Jesus Christ is my spouse; he has been the first to love me—he has gained my entire heart; go away, because there is no room for you in that heart. And, beyond all things, my daughter, remember my warning when taking the sacred veil that shall be given you, which signifies that you are to hide yourself from the eyes of the world, and love no other lover on this earth than Jesus Christ and when you shall say, "posuit signum in faciem meam ut nullum praeter eum amatorem admittam."

For the following reason, do you on this morning change your dress and name: first, you change your dress, you put off the dress of the world and take that of religion, in order that you may totally forget the world and all its vanities; and secondly, you change your name, that the world may forget you and that you being dead to the world, may be so wholly separated from it, that every person may look upon you as if you had ceased to live.

The second thing which Jesus requires of you, is, that you carry with resignation the cross which has been assigned you. Your cross shall be the observance of the rules of the convent and obedience to the will of your superioress; it is impossible for a nun who does not perfectly obey the rule of the community and the commands of her superiors, to be a good religious. Your cross shall be to suffer patiently, all the contradictions and mortifications and humiliations which you shall meet with. Whoever cannot endure humiliations, shews that she is not humble and whoever is not humble cannot become holy and is in great danger of being lost. In a word, there is no other way to Paradise than the way of the cross, which must be borne with patience. And God finds in every place for those souls whom he loves, a cross to afflict them and render them his real spouses.

I next conjure you, after you shall have taken the holy habit, to renew every day the promise which you shall have made to Jesus Christ, of being ever faithful to him. Love and fidelity are the chief qualities of a spouse. It is to this end that the ring shall afterwards be given you, in token of the fidelity with which you are to preserve the love which you have promised to Jesus Christ, But in order to be faithful to him, you must not rely solely on your promise, you must pray to Jesus Christ and to his holy mother, for the gift of perseverance; and you must endeavour to acquire a great confidence in Mary, who is the mother of perseverance. And should you feel the divine love growing cold within you and your heart drawn to earthly objects, bethink you of this my other advice and in order that you may not abandon yourself to tepidity, enquire of yourself, wherefore have I left the world, my home and my kinsfolk? is it to damn myself? This thought was wont to renew St. Bernard in fervour and cause him to tread more steadily the path of perfection: “Bernarde ad quid venisti?” Bernard, said he to himself, why have you left the world, and entered the monastery? to become a saint. Why, then, do you not set about sanctifying yourself? And thus he succeeded in dying a saint. You, my daughter, by acting thus, may hope to become a saint and see yourself amongst the many other virgins who reign in heaven a queen in that blessed kingdom. But I must have done speaking, since I am so commanded by him, who is eager to see you enter at once into his house. Behold him from this spot; see with what joy he expects you, with what affection he calls you to enter at once his royal palace, which is no other than this convent. Come on, then, and enter joyfully; for the reception which your spouse shall give you this morning in his house, is a foretaste of the reception which you shall meet from him after death in his heavenly kingdom.

DISCOURSE

TO THE BRETHREN OF A CONFRATERNITY

IN the great deluge, in the days of Noah, nearly all mankind perished, eight persons only being saved in the ark. In our days a deluge, not of water, but of sins, continually inundates the earth and from this deluge very few escape; speaking more especially of lay persons, amongst whom scarcely any one is saved, with the exception of those who take refuge in some ark of salvation, in some confraternity of our Lady. You see innumerable laymen in a country amongst them how many are to be found in the state of grace? Scarcely shall you find any unless belonging to a confraternity. My brethren, you have already been at the exercises of the mission, and I hope that while there God has enlightened your minds, so as that you know there is no other fortune or advantage to be sought for in this * The word made use of by the Saint, is secular; but as the word secular in this country is understood, almost universally, to apply to the Parochial Clergy, I have ventured to substitute a word conveying the meaning of the Saint. I could not, however, take it upon me to make anything like an alteration, without admonishing the reader of the circumstance. [TRANSLATOR.] life, except the salvation of one’s soul. The world calls him happy who is rich and honoured and him unhappy who is poor and despised; but the truth is, that he only who lives in the grace of God and is attaining to salvation, is happy and that he who lives at a distance from God, and damns himself, is miserable and unhappy. In a few days death shall come upon him, and all will be over with him. And what will it avail a man in death to have gained the whole world, if he lose his own soul and has to deplore its loss for ever in hell. Now, my brethren, I wish to show you how much hope of salvation there is for him who belongs to the confraternity of our blessed Lady.

When a lay person enquires of me, what he has to do in order to be saved, I do not recommend to him any more efficient or safer means than to join the confraternity. The confraternity is a means which embraces all that is most conducive to salvation; whence a member of the confraternity may, with reason, say, “Now all good things come to me together with her.” First, the frequent hearing of the word of God contributes most powerfully to the salvation of a lay person. On the other hand, the holy fathers look upon him as already lost, who despises the word of God, because the sheep of Jesus Christ willingly hear his word announced to them by his priests: “My sheep hear ray word.”—John 10:27. The reason is, because those lay persons who are entirely occupied about earthly concerns and do not hear the word of God, easily forget the good and evil things of the world to come and thus abandon themselves to the pleasures of this life and live and die in sin. But he who attends to the exercises of the confraternity, hearing frequently of death, judgment, hell and eternity, easily resists the temptations by which he may be assailed, for which reason the Holy Ghost says, “remember thy last things, and thou shalt never sin.”—Eccl. 7:40.

Secondly, in order that a lay person should preserve himself in the grace of God, it is necessary for him to frequent the sacraments. These are the food of the soul, keeping it alive, more especially the holy communion, which is called bread; because, as the earthly bread sustains our bodily life, so this heavenly bread preserves the life of the soul. This the holy Council of Trent teaches, when it says that the Blessed Eucharist frees us from venial, and preserves us from mortal sin.

Thirdly, he who frequents the sodality is enriched with graces by Mary, through whom her Son wishes every grace to flow. “With me are riches,” she says, “that I may enrich those who love me.” St. Bonaventure writes, that he who has acquired favour with Mary, is acknowledged by the citizens of Heaven and that whoever bear her badges, will be written in the book of life. That is to be understood more particularly of the brethren of her confraternity, whose name, when written in the book of the confraternity, they may look upon as written in the book of life, provided they persevere in attending the exercises of the confraternity and observing all its rules, for of what use is it to a man to have his name enrolled amongst the brethren, if he do not attend the confraternity, or if he attend it without frequenting the sacraments, the performance of which latter duty is the most important of all its rules? Some attend the confraternity not with a view to the honour of Mary, or the salvation of their own souls, but through a desire to rule there and control all things; for which reason, they often dispute and brawl at the meetings of the confraternity, as if they were in some place of amusement. He who does this, had better stay away.

Beyond all things, I recommend everyone to attend the confraternity and not to leave it on trifling occasions, as some do, who in order to amuse themselves, for some pleasure, or some little business, drop off and when asked why? Father, they will say, business obliged me to leave the confraternity. But, my child, would I say to them, you know you have no business on this earth so important as that of saving your soul. Tell me, would you forfeit the sum of a thousand pounds for sake of a few pence? When Sunday comes, my brethren, leave everything else and attend the confraternity. Know that our Lady will not suffer you to be at a loss by it: “for all her domestics are clothed with double garments.”—Prov. 31:21. It is said that the servants of Mary are clothed with double garments, because they are enriched with both spiritual and temporal blessings. I once again recommend to you, when attending the devotions of the confraternity, not to abstain from confession and communion, which the rule prescribes; for if you attend the devotions in sin and go out from them in sin, of what use shall the confraternity be to you? In the last place, I recommend to you to attend the meetings of the confraternity, solely with a view to the performance of the devotions it prescribes. Each one will take his own place, be obedient, perform whatever duty is assigned him and have no other view in attending the exercises than the salvation of his own soul. Act thus and you shall see how the Mother of God will protect you in matters both spiritual and temporal. And she will be a mother to you, more especially at the hour of death. O what a consolation on the death-bed, to have served Mary! Father Binetti relates.

(Perfez. di N. 5, cap. 31.) that being present at the death of a client of Mary, he, before dying, addressed to him these words, “O father, if you but knew how delighted I am at having served Mary—I could not make you conceive the joy which I feel upon this point:” and thus he died in a heavenly peace. And I think that those brethren who belong to the confraternity of Mary, shall die a consoling death. The Duke of Papuli, who said that he attributed whatever graces he had received, to the circumstance of his having attended the meetings of the confraternity of Mary, when on the point of death, called his son to him and said: “My son, attend the devotions of the confraternity of our Lady; that is the greatest inheritance I can bequeath to you; I leave it to you.

Let us all, my brethren, throw ourselves at the feet of our Lady and promise her never to leave her congregation more. Let everyone say with me, Ah, my Queen and my Mother! I should be now in hell if you had not preserved me from it. I thank you this morning, and ask pardon of you for having so often left your confraternity without cause. How many sins should I not have avoided by going thither? Pardon me, O Mother! and pray your Son to pardon all the offences which I have committed against him. Yes, my Jesus, by the blood which you have shed for me and by the love you bear to Mary, pardon me my sins, because I repent of them. But let us now make promise and say, O Mother of God, I promise you never more to leave your confraternity without particular necessity; I make this promise, punish me if I fail in it. And you, O Queen! assist me in all my occasions, but especially when I am in danger of offending God. Call upon her then, my brethren, and she will most assuredly assist you. And at the hour of my death, O Mother, do not abandon me; assist me then and make me die under your mantle. Courage, my brethren, let us be faithful to the promises which we have made to Mary this morning. You come to honour her in this chapel, but she shall one day bring you to reign with her forever in the kingdom of Paradise. And I shall now bless you on her part, that you may be able to keep the promises you have made her.

DISCOURSE

TO PIOUS MAIDENS

MY sisters, I do not intend to explain the privileges and blessings acquired by those maidens who consecrate their virginity to Jesus Christ; I shall only glance at them. First, they become in the eyes of God as beautiful as the angels of heaven. Baronius relates, (Ann. 480, num. 23, in Compend.) that upon the death of a holy virgin, named Georgia, an immense multitude of doves was seen to fly around her; and when the body was carried to the church, they ranged themselves along that part of the roof which corresponded to the situation of the corpse and did not leave until she was buried. Those doves were thought to be angels who accompanied that virginal body.

Moreover, a maiden who leaves the world and dedicates herself to Jesus Christ, becomes his spouse. In the gospel our Redeemer is called Father, or Master, or Shepherd of our souls; but, with regard to those virgins, he calls himself their spouse; they "went out to meet the bridegroom." When a young woman wishes to establish herself in the world, she will examine (if she be prudent,) which of all her suiters is the most noble and the richest. Let us then learn from the spouse in the sacred canticles, who well knows—let us learn from her what manner of spouse is he whom consecrated virgins aspire to. Tell me, O sacred spouse, what manner of spouse is he who makes you the most fortunate of women. "My beloved is white," she says, "and ruddy, chosen among thousands."—Cant. 5:10. He is all white, by reason of his purity; and ruddy, by reason of the love with which he burns. He is in fine, so noble and so kind as to be the most amiable of spouses.—With reason, then, did the glorious virgin, St. Agnes, (as we learn from St. Ambrose,) when it was proposed to her to marry the son of the Prefect of Rome, reply, that she had a much more advantageous match in view: "Sponsum offertis meliorem reperi." Some ladies endeavouring to persuade

St. Domitilla to marry Count Aurelian, nephew of the Emperor Domitian, saying there was no obstacle, as he was willing that she should remain a Christian, tell me, replied the saint, if a monarch and a clown both pretended to a maiden, which would she choose? Now I, should I marry with Aurelian, would have to leave the King of Heaven; it would be a folly —I will not do it. And thus, in order to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, to whom she had already consecrated her virginity, she was willing to be burned alive, a death which her barbarous suitor caused her to suffer.—Ap. Croiset. exerc. del. ai. 12. di. maggio.

Those spouses of Jesus Christ who leave the world for his sake, become his beloved; they are called the first fruits of the lamb: “The first fruits to God and to the lamb.”—Apoc. 4:4. Why the first fruits? Because, says Cardinal Ugone, as the first fruits are more grateful than any other to man, so virgins are dearer to God than any others. The divine spouse feeds amongst the lilies: “Who feeds amongst the lilies?”—Cant. 2:16. And what is meant by lilies, if not those devout maidens who consecrate their virginity to Jesus Christ? The venerable Bede writes, that the song of the virgins, that is, the glory which they give to God by preserving untouched the lily of their purity, is far more pleasing to him than the song of all the other saints. Wherefore the Holy Ghost says, that there is nothing comparable to virginity: “Non est digna ponderatio continentis animae.” And hence, Cardinal Ugone remarks, that dispensation are often granted from other vows, but never from the vow of chastity; and the reason is, because no other treasure can compensate for the loss of that. And it is, for the same reason, that Theologians say, the Blessed Mother would have consented to forego the dignity of Mother of God, could it have been had only at the expense of her virginity.

Who on this earth can conceive the glory which God has prepared for his virgin spouses in Paradise? Theologians says, that virgins have in Heaven their own “aureola,” or special crown of glory, which the other saints, who are not virgins, are refused. But let us come at once to the most important point in our discourse. This young woman will say, cannot I become holy in the married state? I do not wish to give you the reply in my own words; hear those of St. Paul, and you shall see the difference between the married woman and the virgin: “And the unmarried woman and the virgin, thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and in spirit;

but she that is married, thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband."—1 Cor. 7:34. And the Apostle adds: "And I speak this for your profit, not for a snare, but for that which is decent and which may give you power to attend upon the Lord without impediment."—Ibid. 35. In the first place, I say that married persons can be holy in the spirit, but not in the flesh; on the contrary, virgins who have consecrated their virginity to Jesus Christ, are holy both in soul and body. "Sancto corpore et spiritu;" and mark those other words, "to attend upon the Lord without impediment." Oh, how many obstacles have not married women to encounter in serving the Lord? and the more noble they are, the greater the obstacles. A woman to become holy, must adopt the necessary means, which are, much mental prayer, constant use of the sacraments and continual thought of God. But what time has a married woman for thinking upon God? "She that is married thinketh on the things of the world," says St. Paul. The married woman has to think of providing her family with food and raiment. She has to think of rearing her children, of pleasing her husband and her husband's relatives; whence, as the apostle says, her heart is divided between God and her husband and children. Her husband must be attended to; the children cry and scream and are continually asking for a thousand things. What time can she have to attend to mental prayer, who can scarce attend to all the business of the house? how can she pray amid so many distracting thoughts and disturbances? Scarcely can she go to church, to recollect herself and communicate upon the Sunday. She may have the good desire, but it will be difficult for her to attend to the things of God as she ought. It is true, that in this want of opportunities, she may gain merit, by resignation to the will of God, who requires of her in that state, chiefly patience and resignation; but in the midst of so many distractions and annoyances, without prayer, without meditation, without frequenting the sacraments, it will be morally impossible for her to have that holy patience and resignation. But, would to God, that married women had no other evil to contend with besides that of not always being able to attend to their sanctification as much as they should; the greater evil is the danger to which they are continually exposed of losing the grace of God, by reason of the intercourse which they must continually have with the relations and friends of their husband, as well in their own houses, as in the houses of others. Unmarried women do not understand this, but married women and those who have to hear their confessions know it well. Let us, however, now have done with the unhappy life which is led by married women, the ill treatment they receive from their husband, the disobedience of children, the wants of the family, the annoyance of mothers-in-law and relatives, the throes of childbirth, always accompanied by danger of death, not to mention the afflictions of jealousy and scruples of conscience, with regard to the rearing up of their children, all which breed a tempest under which poor married women have continually to groan and God grant that in this tempest they may not lose themselves, so as to meet with hell in the other world, after having suffered a hell in this. Such is the enviable lot of those maidens who chose the world! But what! such a maiden replies, are there no married women holy? Yes, I answer there are; but who are they? Such only as become holy through their sufferings, by suffering all from God without finding fault and with continual patience. And how many married women are to be found in such a state of perfection. They are very rare; and if you find any, they are always in sorrow, that when they could have done so they did not consecrate themselves to Jesus Christ. Amongst all the devout married women I have known, I never knew one to be satisfied with her condition.

The greatest happiness then falls to the lot of those maidens, who consecrate themselves to Jesus Christ. Those have to encounter none of the dangers which married women must necessarily be placed in. They are not bound to earth, by love of children, or men, or dress, or gallantry, whilst married women are obliged to dress with pomp and ornaments, in order to appear with their equals, and please their husbands. A maiden who has given herself to Jesus Christ, requires only what dress will cover her; nay, she should give scandal if she were to wear any other, or make use of any ornaments. Moreover, virgins have no anxiety about house or children or relatives; their whole care is centred in pleasing Jesus Christ, to whom they have consecrated their soul, their body and all their love; whence it is that they have more time and a mind more disengaged, for frequent prayer and communion.

But let us now come to the excuses sometimes brought forward, by those who are cold in the love of Jesus Christ. Such an one will say, I should leave the world if I had some convent to go to, or at least, if I could always spend my time in devotion at the church when I should please; but I could not remain at home, where I have bad brothers who ill treat me and on the other hand, my parents are unwilling to have me frequent the church. But, I ask you, is it in order to save yourself, or lead an easy life you leave the world? Is it to do your own will, or the will of Jesus Christ? If you wish to become holy and serve Jesus Christ, I ask you another question; in what does holiness consist? Holiness does not consist in living in a convent, or spending the entire day in the church, but in being at confession and communion as often as you can, in obedience, in doing anything assigned you at home, in being retired, in bearing labour and contempt. And if you were to be in a convent how should you be employed? Do you imagine you should always be either in church or in your cell, or in the refectory, or at recreation? In the convent, although the sisters have a time marked out for prayer, for mass and for communion, they have also their hours appointed for the business of the house, and more especially the lay sisters, who as they do not attend in the choir, have nearly all the labour of the house, and consequently least time for prayer. All exclaim, let us be in a convent, let us have a convent. How much more easy is it not for devout girls to become holy in their own houses than in a convent? How many such have I known to regret their having entered the convent, especially when the community was large? the poor lay sister in certain offices, having scarce time to say the rosary. But father, such a girl will answer, I have at home a peevish father and mother, I have bad brothers, all of them use me ill, I cannot stand it. Well I say, and if you marry, shall you not have to deal with mothers and sisters-in-law, and perhaps undutiful children, and perhaps a harsh husband? O how many cruel husbands are there not, who when first married promised great things, but shortly afterwards cease to be husbands, and became the tyrants of their wives, treating them not as companions but as slaves? Enquire of many married women whether this be not the fact. But, without going beyond your own home, you all know how your mothers fared. One thing, at least, is certain, that all you should have to suffer at home, after having given yourself to God, you should suffer for the love of Jesus Christ, and he should make your cross sweet and light to you. But how dreadful is it not to suffer for the world’s sake? to suffer without merit? Courage then! if Jesus Christ has called you to his love, and wishes to have you for his spouse, go on joyfully, it will be his care to afford you consolation even in the midst of sufferings.

This, of course, will be only in case you truly love him and live as his spouse. Hear, then, for the last time, the means you are to adopt, in order to become holy, and live a true spouse of Jesus Christ; and these are, to practise the virtues becoming his spouse. It is read in the gospel that the kingdom of Heaven is likened unto virgins. But to what virgins? Not to the foolish, but to the wise. The wise were admitted to the nuptials, but the door was shut in the face of the foolish; to whom the spouse said, I know you not—you are indeed virgins, but I do not acknowledge you for my spouses. The true spouses of Jesus Christ follow the spouse whithersoever he goeth. "These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." What is the meaning of following the Lamb? St. Austin explains it, of imitating him, both in body and mind. After you shall have consecrated your body to him, you must consecrate to him your whole heart, so that your heart may be entirely devoted to his love; and, therefore, you must adopt all the means which are necessary for making you belong entirely to Jesus Christ.

The first of those means is mental prayer, to which you must be most attentive. But do not imagine that in order to pray thus, it is necessary for you to be in a convent, or remain all day in the church. It is true, that at home there is much disturbance created by the persons there ; nevertheless, those who wish can find time and place for prayer, this is in the morning before the others rise, and at night after the others shall have gone to bed. Neither, to pray, is it necessary to be always on bended knees; you can pray whilst labouring, and even when walking upon business (should you have no other opportunity,) by raising your soul to God, and thinking on the passion of Jesus Christ, or any other pious subject.

The second means is, the frequentation of the sacraments of confession and communion. With regard to confession, each one has to make choice of a confessor, whom she is to obey in everything, otherwise she will never walk steadily in the way of perfection. As to communion, she must not depend solely upon obedience; she must desire it and ask for it. This divine food must be hungered after; Jesus Christ must be desired. It is frequent communion that renders his spouses faithful to Jesus Christ, especially in the preservation of holy purity. The most holy sacrament preserves the soul in every virtue; and it appears that its most special effect is to preserve untouched the chastity of virgins, according to that of the prophet, who calls this sacrament, “the corn of the elect and wine springing forth virgins.”—Zach. 9:17.

The third means is, retirement and caution: “As the lily amongst the thorns, so is my beloved amongst the daughters.”—Cant. 2:2. For a virgin to think of remaining faithful to Jesus Christ amid the conversations, the jests and other amusements of the world, is useless; it is necessary that she preserve herself amid the thorns of abstinence and mortification, by using not only the greatest modesty and reserve in speaking with men, but even all austerity and penitential exercises, when necessary. Such are the thorns which preserve the lilies, I mean young maidens, who otherwise should soon be lost. The Lord calls the cheeks of his spouse as beautiful as those of the turtle: “Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle dove’s.”—Cant. 1:9. And why so? Because the turtle, by instinct, avoids the company of other birds and always remains alone. That virgin, then, shall appear beautiful in the eyes of Jesus Christ, who shall do all that she can to hide herself from the eyes of others. St. Jerome says, that Jesus is a jealous spouse: “Zelotypus est Jesus.” Hence he is much displeased when he sees a virgin dedicated to him, endeavouring to appear before and please men. Pious maidens endeavour to appear repulsive, that they may not attract men. The venerable sister Catherine of Jesus, afterwards a Teresian nun, washed her face with the filthy water of tar, and then designedly exposed her face to the sun, that she might lose her complexion. St. Andregesina, having, as we are told by Bollandus, been promised in marriage, prayed the Lord to deform her, and was heard, for she immediately was covered with a leprosy, which caused everyone to fly her; and as soon as her suitor had ceased his offers, her former beauty was restored. It is related by James di Viatrico, (In spec. exemp. 20. v. Virg.) that there was a certain virgin in a convent, whose eyes had inflamed a prince, who threatened to set fire to the monastery if she would not yield to him; but she plucked out her eyes and sent them to him in a basin, the bearer of which was instructed to say, “here are the darts which have wounded your heart—take them and leave me my soul untouched.” The same author (Exemp. 19.) tells of St. Euphemia, that having been promised by her father to a certain count, who left no means untried to obtain her; she, in order to free herself from his addresses, cut off her nose and lips, saying to herself, “vain beauty, you shall never be to me an occasion of sin!” St. Antoninus tells something similar (and his account is confirmed by Baronius,) of the Abbess Ebba, who fearing an invasion of the barbarians, cut off her nose and upper lip to the teeth; and that all the other nuns, to the number of thirty, following her example, did the same. The barbarians came and seeing them so deformed, set fire to the monastery through rage and burned them alive; and hence the Church, as Baronius tells us, has enrolled them amongst her martyrs. This is not allowable for others to do; those saints did it by the especial impulse of the Holy Ghost. But it sufficiently well answers the purpose of shewing you what virgins who loved Jesus Christ have done, to prevent their being sought by men. Devout virgins at present should at least move as modestly and be seen as little as possible by men. Should it happen that a virgin should, by chance, and without any fault of hers, receive by violence any insult from men, be it known to you, that after it she will remain as pure as before. St. Lueia made an answer of this kind to the tyrant who threatened to dishonour her: “If you do,” she said, “and I be so treated against my will, my crown shall be double.” It is the consent only that is hurtful; and know, moreover, that if a virgin be modest and reserved, men will have no inclination to interfere with her.

The fourth means of preserving purity, is the mortification of the senses. St. Basil says, “a virgin should not be immodest in any respect, in tongue, ears, eyes, touch and still less in mind.”—S. Bas. de vir. Virg. A virgin, in order to keep herself pure, must be modest in her speech, conversing seldom with men and that only through necessity, and in few words. Her ears must be pure, by not listening to worldly conversations. Her eyes must be pure, by being either closed, or fixed upon the earth in the presence of men. She must be pure in touch, using therein all possible caution, both as regards herself and others. She must be pure in spirit, by resisting all immodest thoughts, through the help of Jesus and Mary. And to this end, she must mortify herself with fasting, abstinence and other penitential exercises; which things she must not practice without the consent of her confessor, otherwise they should injure her soul by making her proud. Those acts of penance must not be made without the confessor’s permission, but they must be desired and sought for; for the confessor, if he do not see the penitent wishing for them, will not give them. Jesus is a spouse of blood, who espoused our souls upon the cross, whereon he shed all his blood for us. “A bloody spouse art thou to me.”—Exod. 4:25.

Therefore those spouses who love him, love tribulation, infirmity, sorrows, ill-treatment and injuries; and receive them not only with patience, but with joy. Thus may we understand that passage which says that, “Virgins follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” They follow their spouse Jesus, with joy and gladness whithersoever he goeth, even through sorrow and disgrace, as has been done by so many holy virgins, who have followed him to torments and to death, smiling and rejoicing.

Finally, sisters, in order that you may obtain perseverance in this holy life, you must recommend yourselves often and much to most holy Mary, the Queen of Virgins. She is the mediatrix who negotiates those espousals and brings virgins to espouse her Son. “After her shall virgins be brought to the King.”—Ps. 44:15. It is she, in fine, who obtains fidelity for those chosen spouses; for, without her assistance, they should be all unfaithful.

Come on, then, you who intend to live no longer for the world, but for Jesus Christ alone. (I address myself to those who feel themselves called by that divine spouse to consecrate themselves to his love.) I do not wish that you should make any vow this morning, or oblige yourselves at once to perpetual chastity. You shall do that when God shall inspire you and your confessor shall be willing. I only desire you by a simple act, and without any obligation, to thank Jesus Christ for having called you to his love; and to offer yourselves to him henceforward for your entire lives. Say then to him, ah, my Jesus! my God, and my Redeemer ! who have died for me, compassionate me who burn to call myself your spouse. I burn, because I see that you have called me to that honour; nor do I know how to thank you for that grace. I should now have been in hell; and you, instead of chastising me, have called me to be your spouse. Yes, my spouse, I leave the world, I leave all through love of you, and give myself entirely to you. What world?—what world do I speak of? My Jesus, henceforward you are to be my only good—my only love. I see that you wish to have my entire heart and I wish to resign it entirely to you. Receive me in your mercy, and do not reject me as I have deserved you should. Forget all the offences that I have given you, of which I repent with my whole soul; would that I had died before offending you. Pardon me—inflame me with your holy love—and give me your aid, in order that I may be faithful to you and never leave you more. You, my spouse, have given yourself all to me. Behold! I give myself entirely to you. Mary, my Queen and my Mother, chain my heart to that of Jesus Christ; and fasten both hearts so that they be never sundered more.

I leave you now my blessing, in order that you may be so bound to Jesus Christ, as never again to depart from him. Give your hearts now to Jesus Christ; say, Jesus, my spouse, henceforward I wish to love you alone, and nothing else.

THE END.

DEVOUT REFLECTIONS ON VARIOUS SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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CONTENTS

INDEX

DEVOUT REFLECTIONS ON VARIOUS SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS

- CONTENTS
- Devout Reflections on Various Spiritual Subjects
  - PREFACE
  - *DEVOUT REFLECTIONS ON VARIOUS SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS*
  - *Reflection 1*
    ON THE THOUGHT OF ETERNITY
  - *Reflection 2*
    WE ARE PILGRIMS ON EARTH
  - *Reflection 3*
    GOD DESERVES TO BE LOVED ABOVE EVERYTHING
  - *Reflection 4*
    TO BECOME HOLY, A SOUL MUST GIVE ITSELF TO GOD WITHOUT RESERVE
  - *Reflection 5*
    THE TWO GREAT MEANS FOR BECOMING HOLY: DESIRE AND RESOLUTION
  - *Reflection 6*
    ON THE SCIENCE OF THE SAINTS
  - *Reflection 7*
    OUR ETERNAL SALVATION IS IN PRAYER
  - *Reflection 8*
    I MUST ONE DAY DIE
  - *Reflection 9*
    PREPARATION FOR DEATH
  - *Reflection 10*
    HE THAT LOVES GOD MUST LOVE AND NOT ABHOR DEATH
  - *Reflection 11*
    OUR SALVATION IS IN THE CROSS

Reflection 12
HOW MUCH IT PLEASES JESUS CHRIST THAT WE SUFFER FOR THE LOVE OF HIM

Reflection 13
DIVINE LOVE CONQUERS ALL

Reflection 14
ON THE NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER

Reflection 15
THE ENDS OF MENTAL PRAYER

Reflection 16
ON THE MERCY OF GOD

Reflection 17
ON CONFIDENCE IN JESUS CHRIST

Reflection 18
SALVATION ALONE IS NECESSARY

Reflection 19
ON PERFECT RESIGNATION TO THE DIVINE WILL

Reflection 20
BLESSED IS HE WHO IS FAITHFUL TO GOD IN ADVERSITY

Reflection 21
HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST OUGHT TO HATE THE WORLD

Reflection 22
THE WORDS OF A DYING MAN TO JESUS CRUCIFIED

Reflection 23
ACTS TO BE MADE AT DEATH

Reflection 24
ON THE HOUSE OF ETERNITY

Reflection 25
SOULS THAT GREATLY LOVE GOD LONG TO GO AND BEHOLD HIM IN HEAVEN

Reflection 26
JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Reflection 27
ON THE BUSINESS OF ETERNAL SALVATION

Reflection 28
WHAT WILL BE THE HAPPINESS OF THE BLESSED

Reflection 29
THE PAIN OF HAVING LOST GOD IS THAT WHICH CONSTITUTES HELL

Reflection 30
ON CONTEMPT OF THE WORLD

Reflection 31
ON THE LOVE OF SOLITUDE

Reflection 32
ON SOLITUDE OF HEART

Reflection 33
TO SEE AND LOVE GOD IN THE NEXT LIFE IS THE JOY OF THE BLESSED IN PARADISE

Reflection 34
ON PRAYER BEFORE THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

Reflection 35
IN GOD ALONE TRUE PEACE IS FOUND

Reflection 36
WE OUGHT TO HAVE GOD ALONE IN VIEW

Reflection 37
EVERYTHING SHOULD BE ENDURED TO PLEASE GOD

Reflection 38
BLESSED IS HE WHO DESIRES NOTHING BUT GOD

Reflection 39
ON DRYNESS OF SPIRIT

Reflection 40
ON A LIFE OF RETIREMENT

Reflection 41
ON DETACHMENT FROM CREATURES

Reflection 42
PRECIOUS IS THE DEATH OF THE SAINTS

Reflection 43
ON LUKEWARMNESS

Reflection 44
ON PURITY OF INTENTION

Reflection 45

SIGHS FOR OUR HEAVENLY HOME

Devout Reflections on Various Spiritual Subjects

PREFACE

THIS little work of St. Alphonsus was translated and published, together with a series entitled Reflections on the Passion of our Lord, in 1849. The edition is now exhausted, and the work out of print. The Devout Reflections on Spiritual Subjects have been re-translated and are here published separately in a convenient form. The Reflections on the Passion will also be brought out in the same style.

Both works both composed and published together by the Saint when he was in the seventy-eighth year of his age. He was still governing the Episcopal See of St. Agatha, in the Kingdom of Naples, but he was so broken down in health and so crippled by most painful infirmities that it seemed a miracle that he should still be able not only to watch over the affairs of his diocese but even to apply himself to the composition of several important and learned works.

Referring to these labors, the Saint's learned and pious biographer, Cardinal Villecourt, remarks: "In the midst of all his sufferings of body and mind, St. Alphonsus profited by every moment of leisure to contribute by his writings to the glory of God. Thus in 1773 he published Reflections on the Passion of Jesus Christ, and in the same volume a number of Devout Reflections on Spiritual Subjects. Everyone saw in this little work a loadstone, as it were, to attract the hearts of men and unite them to that of Jesus Christ."

On the occasion of its first publication in Naples, Canon Simioli was charged by Cardinal Sersale, the Archbishop, with the examination of the work. He gave his opinion of it in these terms: "I cannot express how great is my esteem for this little book, which is so well calculated to stir up piety and banish tepidity and negligence, especially in these unhappy times, in which charity has grown cold and scandals are multiplied. It is to this pious author that we shall owe the consolation of seeing the fire of divine love enkindled in hearts that are cold, and burning with greater ardor in souls that are fervent.” St. Alphonsus himself, in a letter written in the same year, 1773, to one of his penitents, says: “I send you two little works, the first of which may assist you in meditating on the Passion of Jesus Christ; I myself make use of it every day. I read likewise, every day, something from the second book, entitled Devout Reflections. I should wish you to do the same, for I have composed it especially for those who desire to give themselves entirely to God.”

To such recommendations nothing could be added. And we can only hope and pray that this little work, one of the last written by St. Alphonsus, may be as fruitful of grace now, and in this our country, as it was in his native land, when first it came forth from the pen of the holy Doctor.

E. V.

St. Mary’s, Clapham

Palm Sunday, 1901

DEVOUT REFLECTIONS ON VARIOUS SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS

Reflection 1

ON THE THOUGHT OF ETERNITY

SAINT AUGUSTINE used to call the thought of eternity “The Great Thought.” This thought made the Saints count all the treasures and grandeurs of this life as nothing more than straw, mire, smoke and dung. This thought has driven so many anchorites [hermits] to hide themselves in deserts and caves, and so many noble youths, and even kings and emperors, to shut themselves up in cloisters. This thought has given courage to so many martyrs to endure racks and iron nails and red-hot gridirons and even being burned alive.

No, we are not created for this earth. The end for which God has placed us in the world is this, that by our good works we may merit eternal life. “The end [is] life everlasting.” (Romans 6:22). And therefore St. Eucherius used to say that the only affair that we should attend to in this life is eternity, that is, to gain for ourselves a happy eternity and escape a miserable one. “The business for which we work is eternity.” If we make sure of success in this business, we shall be happy forever; if we fail in it, we shall be forever miserable.

Happy is he who lives with eternity always in view, with a lively faith that he must shortly die and enter into eternity. “The just man liveth by faith,” says the Apostle. (Galatians 3:11). It is faith that makes the just live in the grace of God and that gives life to their souls by detaching them from earthly affections and reminding them of the eternal goods which God holds out to those who love Him.

St. Teresa used to say that all sins had their origin in an absence of faith. Therefore, in order to overcome our passions and temptations, we must frequently revive our faith by saying: “I believe in the life everlasting.” I believe that after this life, which for me will quickly finish, there is an eternal life, either full of delights or full of torments, which will be my lot according to my merits or demerits.

St. Augustine also was accustomed to say that a man who believes in eternity and yet is not converted to God has lost either his reason or his faith. “O eternity!” these are his words, “he that meditates upon thee and repents not, either has no faith, or if he has faith, he has no heart.” In reference to this, St. John Chrysostom relates that the Gentiles, when they saw Christians committing sin, called them either liars or fools. If you believe not (they said) what you say you believe, you are liars; if you believe in eternity and sin, you are fools. “Woe to sinners who enter into an eternity which is to them unknown because they would not reflect upon it,” exclaims St. Cæsarius; and then he adds: “But alas, O double woe, they enter it and they never come forth!” Wretched beings! For them the gates of Hell open only to admit them, not to release them.

St. Teresa used to repeat to her spiritual daughters: “My children, one soul, one eternity!” She meant to say: My children, we have but one soul, and if that is lost, all is lost; and once lost, it is lost forever. In a word, upon that last breath which we draw in dying depends our being either happy forever, or forever in despair. If the eternity of the next life—if Paradise, if Hell–were mere opinions of literary men and things of doubtful reality, even then we ought to take every care to live well and not run the risk of losing our soul forever. But no, for these things are not doubtful; they are certainties; they are truths of faith, much more certain than the things which we see with the eyes of the body.

Let us, then, pray to Our Lord to give us more faith, saying with the Apostles: “Lord, increase our faith!” For, if we are not strong in faith, we may become worse than Luther or Calvin. On the contrary, one thought of lively faith in the eternity that awaits us may make us saints.

St. Gregory says that they who meditate on eternity are neither puffed up by prosperity, nor cast down by adversity because, as they desire nothing in the world, so they fear nothing from the world.

When it happens to us to suffer any infirmities or persecutions, let us remember the Hell which we have deserved by our sins. When we do this, every cross will seem to us light, and we shall thank the Lord and say: It is “the mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed.” (Lamentations 3:22). Let us say with David, “Unless the Lord had been my helper, my soul had almost dwelt in hell.” (Psalms 93:17). If God had not shown me mercy, I should already have been in Hell, even from the time in which I first offended Him by a grievous sin. Through my own fault I was already lost; it is Thou, O God of mercy, that hast stretched out Thy hand and hast drawn me forth from Hell, “Thou hast delivered my soul, that it should not perish.” (Isaias 38:17).

O my God, Thou knowest well how often I have deserved Hell; but notwithstanding this, Thou dost command me to hope, and I will hope. My sins terrify me, but Thy death and Thy promise of pardon to him that repents encourage me. “A contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.” (Psalms 50:19). I have despised Thee in times past, but now I love Thee above all things, and I grieve more than for any other evil that I have offended Thee. O my Jesus, have pity on me.

Mary, Mother of God, intercede for me.

Reflection 2

WE ARE PILGRIMS ON EARTH

AS LONG as we are in this life, we are so many pilgrims wandering upon the earth, far from our true country, which is Heaven, where God awaits us, that we may rejoice forever in beholding His beautiful countenance. “While we are in the body,” writes the Apostle, “we are absent from the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:6). If then we love God, we ought to have a continual desire to leave this place of exile by being separated from the body, that we may go and behold Him. It was for this that St. Paul ever sighed, as he goes on to say: “We are confident, and have a good will to be absent rather from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:8).

Before the Redemption, the way to God was closed for us miserable sons of Adam; but Jesus Christ, by His death, has obtained for us the grace of having it in our power to become the sons of God. [“But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God.” (John 1:12)]. And thus He has opened to us the gates by which we can have access, as children, to God our Father.

On this account St. Paul says: “Now, therefore, you are no more strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow-citizens with the Saints and the domestics of God,” (Ephesians 2:19), so that, while we are in the grace of God, we enjoy the citizenship of Paradise and belong to the household of God. St. Augustine says: “Nature corrupted by sin produces citizens of an earthly city and vessels of wrath; but grace, which frees our nature from sin, makes us citizens of a heavenly country and vessels of mercy.”

This made David say: “I am a sojourner on the earth; hide not Thy commandments from me.” (Psalms 118:19). O Lord, I am a pilgrim upon this earth; teach me to keep Thy precepts, which are the road by which I may reach my country in Heaven. It is not surprising that the wicked should wish to live forever in this world, for they justly fear that they will pass from the pains of this life to the eternal and far more terrible pains of Hell; but how can he who loves God, and has a moral certainty that he is in the state of grace, desire to go on living in this vale of tears—in continual bitterness, in anxieties of conscience, in peril of being condemned? How can he help sighing to depart speedily to unite himself to God in a blessed eternity, where there is no longer any danger of losing Him? Oh how the souls who love God continually, as long as they live, groan and cry out with David: “Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged!” (Psalms 119:5). Unhappy is he who must continue to live a long time in this world, in the midst of so many perils to his salvation! Therefore it is that the Saints have continually had this prayer upon their lips: “Thy kingdom come”; quickly, O Lord, quickly take us to Thy kingdom. Let us make speed, then, as the Apostle exhorts us, to enter that country where we shall find perfect peace and contentment: “Let us hasten therefore to enter into that rest.” (Hebrews 4:11). Let us hasten, I say, with desire, and not cease to press onwards, till we are safe in that blessed harbor of rest which God prepares for them that love Him.

He that runs in a race, says St. John Chrysostom, pays no heed to the spectators, but only to the crown of victory; he stops not, but the nearer he approaches the goal, the quicker he runs. Therefore, the Saint concludes that the longer we have lived, the more we should hasten by good works to secure the prize, so that our only prayer for relief in the troubles and trials which we endure in this life ought to be this: “Thy kingdom come.” Lord, may Thy kingdom speedily come, where, united eternally to Thee and loving Thee face to face with all our powers, we shall no longer have fear or danger of losing Thee.

And when we find ourselves afflicted by trials or despised by the world, let us comfort ourselves with the great reward which God prepares for those who suffer for the love of Him: “Be glad in that day and rejoice, for behold, your reward is great in heaven.” (Luke 6:23). St. Cyprian says that with good reason our Lord wills that we should rejoice in labors and persecutions, because then the true soldiers of God are tried and crowns are distributed to those who are faithful.

Behold, O my God, my heart is ready; behold me prepared for every cross which Thou shalt send me. No, I desire not delights or pleasures in this life; he who has offended Thee and deserves Hell merits not pleasures. I am ready to suffer all the infirmities and adversities which Thou dost send me; I am ready to embrace all the contempt of men. I am content, if so it please Thee, to be deprived of all bodily and spiritual consolations; it is enough if Thou dost not deprive me of Thyself and of loving Thee forever. I deserve not this, but I hope for it, through the blood that Thou hast shed for me. I love Thee, O my God, my Love, my All. I shall live forever, and I hope I shall love Thee forever; and my paradise will ever be to rejoice in Thine infinite bliss, for Thou dost truly merit it because of Thine infinite goodness.

Reflection 3

GOD DESERVES TO BE LOVED ABOVE EVERYTHING

SAINT TERESA says that it is a great favor that God bestows upon a soul when He calls it to love Him. Let us then love Him, since we are called to this love, and let us love Him as He desires to be loved. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.” (Matthew 22:37). The Venerable Luis de Puente felt ashamed at saying to God: “O Lord, I love Thee above everything; I love Thee more than all creatures, more than all riches, than all honors, than all earthly pleasures,” for it seemed to him that it was like saying: “My God, I love Thee more than straw and smoke and mire.”

But God is satisfied when we love Him above all things. Therefore, at least let us say to Him: “Yes, O Lord, I love Thee more than all the honors of the world, more than all its riches, more than all my relations and friends; I love Thee more than health, more than my good name, more than knowledge, more than all my comforts; in a word, I love Thee more than everything I possess—more than myself.”

And let us still further say: “O Lord, I value Thy graces and Thy gifts; but more than all Thy gifts, I love Thyself, who alone art Infinite Goodness and a Good infinitely amiable and surpassing every other good. And, therefore, O my God, whatever Thou mayest give me besides Thyself, which is not Thyself, is not sufficient for me; if Thou givest me Thyself, Thou alone art sufficient for me. Let others seek what they will, I will seek nothing but Thee alone, my love, my all. In Thee alone I find all that I can seek or desire.”

The sacred Spouse said that among all things, she had chosen to love her beloved: “My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.” (Canticle of Canticles 5:10). And whom, then, shall we choose to love? Among all our friends of this world, where can we find a friend more worthy of love and more faithful than God; and who has loved us more than

God? Let us pray, then, and let us pray constantly: “O Lord, draw me after Thee,” for if Thou dost not draw me after Thee, I cannot come to Thee.

O Jesus, my Saviour, when will it be that, stripped of every other affection, I shall desire and seek for nothing but Thee! I would gladly detach myself from everything, but certain importunate affections often enter my heart and draw me away from Thee. Do Thou then, by Thy powerful hand, detach me from them and make Thyself the only object of all my affections and all my thoughts.

St. Augustine says that he who has God has everything, and he who has not God has nothing. What does it profit a rich man to possess many treasures of gold and jewels, if he has not God? What does it profit a monarch to have many kingdoms, if he has not the grace of God? What does it profit a man of letters to understand many sciences and languages, if he knows not how to love his God? What does it profit a general to command an entire army, if he lives the slave of the devil and far from God? When David was already king, but in a state of sin, he walked in his gardens, he went to his sports and to other pleasures, but all creatures seemed to say to him: “Where is thy God? Wouldst thou seek in us thy happiness? Go, find God, whom thou hast left, for He alone can give thee contentment.” And therefore David confessed that in the midst of all his pleasures he found no peace and wept night and day, with the thought that he was without God. “My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily: Where is thy God?” (Psalms 41:4).

In the midst of the miseries and troubles of this world, who can console us better than Jesus Christ? Therefore He says to us: “Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.” (Matthew 11:28). Oh the folly of worldlings! One single tear shed through sorrow for our sins gives more consolation, one aspiration, “My God!” uttered with love by a soul in the state of grace, is worth more than a thousand festivals, a thousand plays, a thousand banquets, in giving contentment to a heart that loves the world. I say again, Oh, folly—and a folly which will be past remedy—when there comes that death in which it is night, as the Gospel says: “The night cometh, when no man can work.” (John 9:4). Wherefore, Our Lord warns us to walk while the light favors us; for if the night overtakes us, we shall not be able to do anything. Therefore, let God alone be all our treasure, all our love; and let all our desire be to please God, who will not suffer us to conquer Him in love. He rewards a hundredfold everything that is done to give Him pleasure.

Then silence, wicked world! depart;
Seek not esteem or love of mine;
Another Lover owns my heart;
His charms are greater far than thine.

O my God, and my only Good, be Thou the ruling power in my soul; and as in love I prefer Thee before all things, so do Thou make me in all things prefer Thy pleasure to any satisfaction of my own. O my Jesus, I trust in Thy blood, that during the rest of my life I shall love nothing but Thee upon this earth, so that I may come one day to possess Thee forever in the kingdom of the Blessed.

O holy Virgin, succor me with thy powerful prayers, and take me to kiss thy feet in Paradise.

Reflection 4

TO BECOME HOLY, A SOUL MUST GIVE ITSELF TO GOD WITHOUT RESERVE

SAINT PHILIP NERI used to say that so much of our love as we fix upon creatures we take away from God, and therefore our Saviour, as St. Jerome writes, is jealous of our hearts. As He Himself loves us exceedingly, He desires to reign alone in our hearts and to have no companions there to rob Him of a portion of that love which He wills to have entirely for Himself; hence, it displeases Him to see us attached to any affection which is not for Him. And does our Saviour then demand too much, after having given us all His blood and His life, dying upon a cross? Does He not deserve to be loved by us with all our hearts and without reserve?

St. John of the Cross says that every attachment to creatures hinders us from belonging wholly to God. “Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?” said the Psalmist. (Psalms 54:7). There are some souls called by God to become saints, but because they come to Him with reserve and do not give Him their whole love, but retain some affection for earthly things, they do not become, and never will become, saints. They gladly would fly to God, but being held down by some attachment, they do not fly, but remain always on earth. We must, therefore, detach ourselves from everything. Every thread, says the same St. John, whether thick or slender, hinders the soul from flying to God.

St. Gertrude one day asked Our Lord to make known to her what He desired of her. Jesus answered: “I desire nothing from thee but a heart that is empty.” And it was this which David sought from God: “Create a clean heart in me, O God.” (Psalms 50:12). O my God, give me a pure heart that is emptied and stripped of every earthly affection.

“All for all,” wrote Thomas à Kempis. To gain all, we must give all. To possess God, we must leave all that is not God. Then indeed the soul can say to Him: “My Jesus, I have left all for Thee; now give Thyself all to me.” To attain to this state, we must not cease to beg of God that He would fill us with His holy love. Love is that mighty fire which consumes every affection in our hearts that is not for God. St. Francis de Sales used to say that, when a house is in flames, we throw all the furniture out of the windows, by which he meant that when a soul is inflamed and divine love takes possession of it, it has no need of sermons or spiritual directors to detach it from the world; the love of God itself will burn and strip the heart of every impure affection.

Divine love is represented in the Sacred Canticles under the symbol of a wine-cellar: “He brought me into the cellar of wine; he set in order charity in me.” (Canticle of Canticles 2:4). In this blessed cell, souls which are the spouses of Christ, inebriated with the wine of holy love, lose all relish for the things of the world, see God alone, seek God alone in all things, speak only of God and desire not to hear anything but of God alone; and when they hear others speak of riches, dignities and pleasures, they turn to God and say to Him with a burning sigh: “My God, and my all! My God, what is the world to me? What are pleasures, what are honors to me? Thou art all my treasure, all my contentment.” St. Teresa, speaking of the prayer of union, says that this union consists in dying to all worldly objects in order to possess nothing but God.

That a soul may give itself wholly to God, three principal means are to be employed: The first is to flee from all defects, even the least, and also to repress every little inordinate desire, such as curiosity in seeing or hearing, and to refrain from certain little pleasures of sense, from certain witty but useless remarks, and such like; secondly, among things which are good, always to choose that which is the best and the most pleasing to God; and thirdly, to receive from the hands of God, with peace of mind and thanksgiving, the things which are displeasing to our self-love.

O my Jesus, my Love, my All, how can I see Thee dying upon a shameful gibbet, despised by all and consumed with anguish, and yet seek for myself earthly pleasures and glory? I will be wholly Thine. Forget the offenses I have committed against Thee, and receive me. Teach me to know from what things I ought to detach myself and what I must do to please Thee, for I resolve to do all. Give me strength to keep my resolution and to be faithful to Thee. O my beloved Redeemer, Thou dost desire that I should give myself all to Thee without reserve in order to unite myself wholly to Thy heart. Behold, this day I give myself all to Thee, all without reserve, all—all! From Thee I hope for grace to be faithful to Thee till death.

O Mother of God, and my own Mother Mary, obtain for me holy perseverance.

Reflection 5

THE TWO GREAT MEANS FOR BECOMING HOLY: DESIRE AND RESOLUTION

ALL holiness consists in loving God. Divine love, says Holy Scripture, “is an infinite treasure to men! which they that use, become the friends of God.” (Wisdom 7:14). God is ready to give us this treasure of His holy love, but He requires that we should greatly desire it. He that little desires any good thing, takes little trouble to obtain it. On the other hand, St. Lawrence Justinian says that a great desire lightens the labor and gives strength.

And thus, he who has little ambition to advance in divine love, instead of becoming more ardent in the pursuit of perfection, will go on becoming always more lukewarm; and continuing thus tepid, he will be in great peril of falling at last down some precipice [i.e., into some mortal sin]. On the other hand, whoever aspires with fervent desires after perfection, and makes efforts daily to advance, will little by little in time attain it. St. Teresa says: “God does not bestow many favors, except on those who earnestly desire His love.” And again: “God leaves no good desire without its reward.” Therefore, the Saint exhorted everyone not to suffer his desires to slacken, because, “trusting in God and striving our best, little by little, we shall reach that point which the Saints reached.”

It is a deceit of the devil (according to the opinion of the same Saint) which makes some think that it is pride to desire to become saints. It would be pride and presumption if we trusted in our own efforts or resolutions, but not if we hope for all from God. For if we do so, He will give us that strength which we have not. Let us, then, desire with a very great desire to attain to a sublime degree of divine love, and let us say with courage: “I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.” (Philippians 4:13). And if we do not find that we possess this great desire, at least let us seek it urgently from Jesus Christ, for He will give it to us.

We will now pass on to the second means—resolution. Good desires must be accompanied by a determined will to make great efforts for the attainment of the good desired. Many desire perfection, but never take the means to gain it; they wish to go and live in a desert, to do great penances and practice great prayer and endure martyrdom; but all such desires are nothing better than mere fancies, which, instead of benefitting them, do them great harm. These are the desires which “kill the slothful,” as the Scripture says. (Proverbs 21:25). For, such a person, feeding himself upon these fruitless desires, pays no heed meantime to the correction of his defects, the mortification of his appetites, and patience in suffering contempt and contradictions. He wishes to do great things, but such as are incompatible with his present condition; and thus his imperfections increase. In every adversity he is disturbed, every infirmity makes him impatient; and thus he lives always imperfect, and imperfect he dies.

If then we truly desire to become saints, let us resolve first to avoid every venial sin, however slight; secondly, to detach ourselves from every affection to earthly things; thirdly, let us never omit our accustomed exercises of prayer and mortification, however great may be the weariness and disgust we feel in them; fourthly, let us meditate daily on the Passion of Jesus Christ, which inflames with divine love every heart that meditates upon it; fifthly, let us resign ourselves in peace to the will of God in all things that annoy us. Father Balthasar Alvarez used to say: “He that in troubles resigns himself to the Divine Will runs to God posthaste.” And, sixthly, let us continually beg of God the gift of His holy love.

Resolution, resolution! St. Teresa often said: “The devil has no dread of irresolute souls.” On the contrary, he who really resolves to give himself to God will overcome even what seemed to him insuperable. A resolute will conquers everything. Let us endeavor to repair lost time. The time that remains, let us give it all to God. All time that is not spent for God is lost. Why do we delay? Is it that God should abandon us in our luke-warmness, which may lead us at last to utter ruin? No, let us take courage, and from this day forth act upon this holy maxim: “We have only to please God and die.” Souls thus resolute are made by God to fly in the way of perfection.

He that would belong wholly to God must therefore put into practice these resolutions: first, never to commit even the least venial sin; secondly, to give himself to God without reserve, and therefore to neglect nothing which is pleasing to God, provided he has the approval of his director; thirdly, among all good works, to choose what is most pleasing to God; fourthly, not to wait for the morrow, but whatever can be done today, to do it; fifthly, to pray daily to God for an increase in His love. With love, everything will be done; without love, nothing will be done. To gain all, we must give all. Jesus has given Himself entirely to us, that we may be entirely His.

Oh, miserable being that I am! O God of my soul, so many years have I lived upon earth, and what progress have I made in Thy love? My progress has been in my defects, in my self-love, in my sins. And must I live this kind of life even until death? No! Jesus, my Saviour, help me; I will no longer be so ungrateful to Thee as I have been till now. I am resolved truly to love Thee, and I will leave all to please Thee. Stretch out to me Thy hand, O Jesus, Thou who hast shed all Thy blood that Thou might make me Thine. Yes, such I will be, by Thy grace. Death is near; aid me to free myself from everything which hinders me from belonging wholly to Thee, who hast loved me so much. Do this, by Thy merits; from Thee I hope for it.

And I hope it also from thee, O my Mother Mary. By thy prayers, which are all-powerful with God, obtain for me the grace to belong wholly to Him.

Reflection 6

ON THE SCIENCE OF THE SAINTS

THERE are two kinds of knowledge upon earth, one heavenly, the other worldly. The heavenly is that which teaches us to please God and to become great in Heaven. The worldly is that which moves us to please ourselves and to become great in this world. But this worldly knowledge is folly and real madness in the sight of God. “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.” (1 Corinthians 3:19). It is folly, for such wisdom makes fools of those who cultivate it. It makes them fools and like the brutes, for it teaches them to gratify their sensual appetites like the brute beasts.

St. John Chrysostom writes: “We call him a man who preserves unimpaired the likeness of man,” namely, that which distinguishes him from a brute. “What is that likeness? The gift of reason.” From this it follows that as we should say of a brute which always acted according to reason, that it behaved like a man, so on the contrary, we ought to say of a man who acts according to his sensual appetites and in opposition to reason, that he behaves like a brute beast.

But even speaking of human and natural knowledge of earthly things, what do men know of them, however much they have studied? What are we but so many blind moles, who besides the truths which we know by faith, know all the rest only by means of our senses, or by conjecture, so that everything is for us uncertain and liable to error? What writer on such subjects, however applauded by many, has escaped the criticism of others? But the evil is that, as St. Paul says, “Knowledge” (that is to say, worldly science) “puffs up,” and makes men proud and prone to despise others. (Cf. 1 Corinthians 8:1). And this is a defect most injurious to the soul, for as St. James says, “God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.” (James 4:6).

“Oh that they would be wise and would understand and would provide for their last end!” (Deuteronomy 32:29). Oh if men would act by reason and the Divine Law—and thus would learn to provide, not so much for a temporal life, which speedily ends, as for eternity—they would certainly not occupy themselves in the attainment of any other knowledge, except such as aids them in obtaining eternal happiness and avoiding eternal torments!

St. John Chrysostom advises us to go to the tombs of the dead in order to learn the science of salvation. Oh what admirable schools of truth are the sepulchers to make us know the vanity of the world! “Let us go to the tombs; there,” said the Saint, “there I see nothing but corruption, bones and worms.” Among all these skeletons which I see, I cannot tell which belong to the ignorant and which to the learned; I only see that, with death, all the glories of the world were ended for them. What has remained of a Cicero, a Demosthenes, an Ulpian? “They have slept their sleep, and . . . have found nothing in their hands.” (Psalms 75:6).

Blessed is he who has received from God the science of the Saints. The science of the Saints is to know how to love God. How many in the world are well-versed in literature, in mathematics, in foreign and ancient languages! But what will all this profit them if they know not how to love God? “Blessed is he,” said St. Augustine, “who knows God, even if he knows nothing else.” He that knows God and loves Him, though he be ignorant of what others know, is more learned than all the learned who know not how to love God.

“The unlearned arise and seize upon Heaven!” cried out the same Saint. How learned were a St. Francis of Assisi, a St. Pascal, a St. John of God! Ignorant in worldly science, but well-skilled in that which is divine. “Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.” (Matthew 11:25). By the wise, we are here to understand the worldly-wise, who labor for the possessions and glories of the world and make little account of eternal goods. And by little ones, we are to understand simple souls (like children), who know little of worldly wisdom, but devote all their care to pleasing God.

Oh, let us not then envy those who know many things; let us only envy those who know how to love Jesus Christ; and let us imitate St. Paul, who desired to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified; for he says: “I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” (1 Corinthians 2:2). Happy are we if we attain to the knowledge of the love which Jesus crucified has borne us and from this book of divine love learn to love Him!

O my True and Perfect Lover, where shall I find one who has loved me as much as Thou hast loved me? In the past I have lost my time in learning many things which have profited my soul nothing; and I have thought little of knowing how to love Thee. I see that my life has been lost. I hear Thee calling me to Thy love; behold me here; I leave all; from this day forth, my one, only thought shall be to please Thee, my Supreme Good. I give myself wholly to Thee; do Thou accept me; give me help to be faithful to Thee; I resolve to be no longer my own, but all, all Thine.

O Mother of God, do thou also succor me by thy prayers.

Reflection 7

OUR ETERNAL SALVATION IS IN PRAYER

PRAYER is not only useful to us, but necessary for salvation. Hence it is that God, because He desires that we should all be saved, has enjoined it on us by a precept. “Ask, and it shall be given you.” (Matthew 7:7). It was an error of Wickliff, condemned by the Council of Constance, to say that prayer was a matter of counsel to us, and not of precept. Jesus Christ says, that men “ought always to pray.” (Luke 18:1). He does not say it is useful or benefitting, but that men “ought always to pray.” Wherefore, the Doctors of the Church justly say that a man cannot be excused from grievous [i.e., mortal] sin who neglects to recommend himself to God at least once in a month and whenever he finds himself assaulted by any strong temptation.

The reason for this necessity of recommending ourselves often to God arises from our inability to do any good work or to have any good thoughts of ourselves. “Without Me you can do nothing,” says Jesus Christ. (John 15:5). And St. Paul teaches the same: “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves.” (2 Corinthians 3:5). Therefore, St. Philip Neri used to say that he despaired of himself. On the other hand, St. Augustine writes that God desires to give us His graces, but does not bestow them, except on those who ask for them. And especially, says the Saint, He only gives the grace of perseverance to those who seek it.

And as the devil never ceases to go about in order to devour us, we ought necessarily to defend ourselves unceasingly by prayer. “Continual prayer is necessary for man,” says St. Thomas. And Jesus Christ Himself was the first to teach us: “We ought always to pray and not to faint.” (Luke 18:1). Otherwise, how shall we be able to resist the incessant temptations of the world and the devil? It was an error of Jansenius, condemned by the Church, to say that the observance of certain precepts was impossible to us and that sometimes the grace which would render it possible is wanting to us. But “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able,” as St. Paul assures us. (1 Corinthians 10:13). Yet He requires that when we are tempted, we should have recourse to Him for help to resist. St. Augustine writes: “The law is given that grace may be sought; grace is given that the law may be fulfilled.” Seeing that the law cannot be obeyed by us without grace, God has yet given us the law in order that we may seek the grace to fulfill it. And this was well expressed by the Council of Trent in these words: “God does not command impossibilities, but in commanding, He admonishes thee both to do what thou canst, and seek aid for what thou canst not do, and He helps thee, that thou mayest be able to do it.” (Council of Trent, Session 6, Chapter 11).

Thus, God is very ready to give us His help in order that we may not be overcome by temptation, but this help He gives to those only who have recourse to Him in the time of temptation, and especially in temptations against chastity. For as the Wise Man wrote: “As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent except God gave it . . . I went to the Lord and besought Him.” (Wisdom 8:21). Let us rest assured that we would not have strength to overcome our carnal appetites if God did not give us help to do so, and this help we shall not have without prayer; but if we pray, we shall assuredly have it in order to resist all the devils of Hell by the power of God, who strengthens us. As St. Paul says: “I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.” (Philippians 4:13).

It also helps us very much to obtain divine grace if we have recourse to the intercession of the Saints, for they have great power with God, especially for the benefit of those who are their special clients. And this is not a mere optional devotion, but is a duty, as St. Thomas writes. For he says that the order established by God requires, that we mortals should receive the helps which are necessary for our salvation through the prayers of the Saints.

With greater force must this apply to the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, whose prayers are of greater efficacy than those of all the Saints, the more so because, as St. Bernard says, it is through Mary that we have access to Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Saviour. “Through thee,” says the holy Doctor, “we have access to the Son, O thou finder of grace, mother of salvation, that through thee He may receive us, who through thee was given to us.”*

Let us then pray, and pray with confidence, says the Apostle. “Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid.” (Hebrews 4:16). Jesus Christ now sits on the throne of grace, to console all who have recourse to Him, and says: “Ask, and it shall be given to you.” (Matthew 7:7). On the day of Judgment also, He will be seated on a throne, but it will be a throne of Justice. What madness, then, will not be theirs who, having it in their power to be relieved of their miseries by going to Jesus now that He sits on a throne of grace, yet wait till He will be their Judge and will no more show mercy. Now He says to us that whatever we ask of Him, if we have confidence, shall all be given to us. “All things whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come to you.” (Mark 11:24).

And what more can one friend do to another to show his love than to say, “Ask me for what you wish, and I will give it to you?” St. James, moreover, says: “If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given [to] him.” (James 1:5). By “wisdom” is here meant the knowledge how to save one’s soul; to have this wisdom, we must therefore seek of God the graces necessary to obtain salvation. And will God give them? Assuredly He will give them, and He will give them superabundantly, and more than we ask for. Let us observe also the words, He “upbraideth not.” (James 1:5). If the sinner repents of his sins and asks salvation from God, God will not act as men do, who reproach the ungrateful with their ingratitude and refuse them what they ask; but He gives to them willingly, as much as and even more than He is asked for. If then we would be saved, we must, even till death, have our lips ever opened to pray and say: “My God, help me; my God, have mercy; Mary, have mercy.” If we cease to pray, we shall be lost. Let us pray for ourselves and let us pray for sinners, for this is so pleasing to God. Let us pray also every day for the Holy Souls in Purgatory; those holy prisoners are most grateful to all who pray for them. Moreover, whenever we pray, let us seek graces from God through the merits of Jesus Christ, for He Himself assures us that whatever we ask in His Name, He will give it all to us.

O my God, this is the grace which, above all others, this day I ask of Thee, through the merits of Jesus Christ: grant that throughout my life, and especially in time of temptation, I may recommend myself to Thee and hope for Thy help, for the love of Jesus and Mary.

O holy Virgin, obtain for me this grace, on which depends my salvation.

[* St. Alphonsus adds here: I think I have sufficiently proved, both in my book called The Glories of Mary (Ch. V. § 1, 2) and also in my work On Prayer (Ch. 1) the opinion held by many Saints, especially St. Bernard—and by many theologians, as for example, F. Natalis Alexander and F. Contensonius—that all the graces which we receive from God are received by means of Mary. Hence also, St. Bernard says: “Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary; for he that seeks, finds, and cannot be disappointed.” The same was said by St. Peter Damian, St. Bonaventure, St. Bernardine, St. Antoninus and others.]

Reflection 8

I MUST ONE DAY DIE

IT IS a practice very profitable for our eternal salvation to say often to ourselves: “I must one day die.” The Church every year, on Ash Wednesday, gives this reminder to the faithful: “Remember, Man, that thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return.” (Cf. Genesis 3:19). And this certainty of death is brought to our recollection very often during the year, sometimes by the burial-grounds which we pass upon the road, sometimes by the tombs which we see in churches, sometimes by the dead who are carried to burial.

The most precious furniture which was carried by the anchorites to their caves was a cross and a skull to remind them of the day of their own death. And thus they persevered in penitential works till the end of their days, and dying in poverty in the deserts, they died more happy than kings who die in their palaces.

“The end is come, the end is come!” cries the Prophet Ezechiel. (Ezechiel 7:2). In this world, one man lives a longer, another a shorter time; but for everyone, sooner or later, the end must come; and when that end has come, nothing else will comfort us at the point of death but to have loved Jesus Christ and to have endured with patience the trials of this life for the love of Him. No, at that moment, neither the riches we have acquired, nor the honors we have gained, nor the pleasures we have enjoyed will console us. All the greatness of this world cannot comfort a dying man; it only afflicts him; and the more he has gained of it, the more does he suffer. Sister Margaret of St. Anne, a barefooted Carmelite and daughter of the Emperor Rudolph II, used to say: “What benefit are kingdoms at the hour of death?”

Alas, to how many men of the world does it not happen that, at the very time when they are most engrossed in securing riches, land and honors, they receive the summons of death and have to hear the warning: “Take order with thy house, for thou shalt die, and not live!” (Isaias 38:1). “Friend, it is time you should think of making your will, for you are very sick.” O God! how great will be the anguish of a man who is about to gain some lawsuit, or come into possession of a mansion or an estate when he hears the priest who has come to recommend his soul to God address to him the words: “Go forth, Christian soul, from this world. Depart from this world, and go to render thy account to Jesus Christ.” “But now,” he cries, “I am not well prepared.” “What matter? Thou must now depart.”

O my God, give me light, give me strength, to spend the rest of my life in serving and loving Thee. If now I should have to die, I should not die happy, I should die disturbed. What then do I wait for? Do I wait for death to seize me unprepared, with great danger to my eternal salvation? O Lord, if I have been foolish in the past, I will not be foolish any longer. Now I give myself wholly to Thee; do Thou receive me and help me with Thy grace.

In a word, to everyone that end must come, and with the end will come that moment decisive of a happy or a wretched eternity. O moment on which eternity depends! Oh, that all would think upon that great moment and on the account of their whole life which they must give at that moment to their Judge! “Oh that they would be wise and would understand and would provide for their last end!” (Deuteronomy 32:29). They certainly would not then devote themselves to amassing riches, or labor to become great in this life, which must end; but they would think how to become Saints and to be great in that life which never ends.

If then we have faith, let us believe that there is a death, a Judgment, an eternity and endeavor, during the days that yet remain for us, to live only for God. And therefore let us take care to live as pilgrims on this earth, remembering that we must speedily leave it. Let us live with death ever before our eyes, and in all the affairs of this present life, let us take care to act as we should act at the point of death. All things upon earth either leave us, or we have to leave them. Let us listen to Jesus Christ, who says: “Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor moth doth consume.” (Matthew 6:20). Let us despise the treasures of earth, which cannot satisfy us and which speedily end; and let us gain for ourselves the treasures of Heaven, which will make us happy and will never end.

Miserable am I, O Lord, in that I have so often, for the sake of the goods of earth, turned my back upon Thee, who art the Infinite Good! I see my folly in having in the past sought to acquire a great name and make my fortune in the world. From this day forward, my only ambition shall be to love Thee and in everything to fulfill Thy will. O my Jesus, do Thou take from me the desire to be seen; make me love contempt and a hidden life. Give me strength to deny myself in everything which displeases Thee. Make me embrace with peace, infirmities, persecutions, desolation and all the crosses Thou shalt send me. Oh, that I could die for the love of Thee, abandoned by all, as Thou didst die for me!

Holy Virgin, thy prayers can enable me to find my true happiness, which is to love earnestly thy Son. Oh, pray to Him for me; in thee I trust.

Reflection 9

PREPARATION FOR DEATH

DEATH is certain: “It is appointed unto men once to die.” (Hebrews 9:27). On the contrary, the time and manner of our death is uncertain. Therefore, Jesus Christ exhorts us: “Be you then also ready, for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come.” (Luke 12:40). He says: “Be you ready.” Therefore, to save our souls, it is not sufficient to prepare ourselves to die when death comes, but we must then be already prepared to embrace it in whatever manner and with whatever circumstances it may come to us. It is accordingly useful for everyone to repeat, at least once a month, the following acts.

Behold me, O my God, ready to embrace that death which Thou dost destine for me. From this moment I accept it, and I sacrifice to Thee my life in honor of Thy Divine Majesty, and also in penance for my sins, rejoicing that this my flesh, to please which I have offended Thee so much, should be devoured by worms and be reduced to dust. O my Jesus I unite the pains and the agony which I must then suffer to the pains and agony which Thou, my Saviour, didst suffer in Thy death. I accept death with all the circumstances Thou mayest appoint; I accept the time, whether it be after many years, or in a short time; I accept the manner, whether in bed or out of it, whether with warning or suddenly, and from that sickness, more or less painful, as it may please Thee. In everything I resign myself to Thy holy Will. Give me strength to suffer all with patience.

“What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me?” (Psalms 115:12). I thank Thee, O my God, first, for the gift of faith, protesting that I intend to die a child of the Holy Catholic Church. I thank Thee for not having caused me to die when I was in sin, and for having so often pardoned me, with so much mercy. I thank Thee for so many lights and graces with which Thou hast sought to draw me to Thy love. I pray

Thee to let me die after receiving Thee in the holy Viaticum, so that, united to Thee, I may go to present myself at Thy tribunal. I do not deserve to hear from Thy mouth the words: “Well done, good and faithful servant: because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” (Matthew 25:21). I do not deserve it, for in nothing have I been perfectly faithful to Thee; but Thy death gives me hope that I shall be admitted to Heaven, to love Thee there eternally and with all my powers.

O my crucified Love, have mercy upon me! Look upon me with that love with which Thou didst look upon me from the Cross when dying for me. “The sins of my youth and my ignorances do not remember.” (Psalms 24:7) My sins terrify me, but I am comforted by that Cross on which I see Thee dead for the love of me. “Behold the wood of the cross, on which hung the salvation of the world.” (From the Good Friday traditional liturgy). I desire to end my life, that I may cease from offending Thee. Oh, by the blood that was shed for me, do Thou pardon me all my sins before death comes upon me. O blood of the Innocent One, wash away the stains of the guilty!

My Jesus, I embrace Thy Cross and kiss the wounds of Thy sacred feet, before which I desire to breathe out my soul. Ah, do not abandon me at the last moment. “We beseech Thee therefore, save Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.” I love Thee with all my heart, I love Thee more than myself, and I repent with all my soul that I have despised Thee in the past. O Lord, I was lost, but Thou in Thy goodness hast delivered me from the world; receive then my soul from this moment, for the hour when it shall leave the earth. Therefore, I pray to Thee with St. Agatha: “O Lord, Thou who hast taken from me the love of this world, receive my soul.” “In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever. . . . Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of Truth.” (Psalms 30:1, 6).*

O holy Virgin, succor me at the moment of my death. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me, a sinner, now and at the hour of my death. In thee, O Lady, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever. St. Joseph, my protector, obtain for me a holy death. My Guardian Angel, St. Michael the Archangel, defend me in that last conflict with Hell. My holy patrons and all ye Saints of Paradise, succor me in that last moment.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, be with me at the hour of my death. Amen.

[* Psalms 30:1 has two versions in the Latin Vulgate.]

Reflection 10

HE THAT LOVES GOD MUST LOVE AND NOT ABHOR DEATH

HOW can he ever abhor death who is in the grace of God? “He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him.” (1 John 4:16). He, therefore, that loves God is secure of His grace, and dying thus, he is sure of going to enjoy Him forever in the kingdom of the Blessed. And shall such a one fear death? David well said: “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight no man living shall be justified.” (Psalms 142:2). This means that no man may presume to be saved by his own merits, for no one but Jesus and Mary can say that he has been without sin throughout his whole life. But he ought not to fear death if, with true repentance for his sins, he trusts in the merits of Jesus Christ, who came on earth to save sinners. “The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.” (Matthew 18:11). And in fact He died and poured forth all His blood to save sinners. The blood of Jesus Christ, says the Apostle, speaks more in favor of sinners than the blood of Abel spoke against Cain, who murdered him.

It is true that, without a divine revelation, no man can possess an infallible certainty of his own salvation; but he that has given himself with a sincere heart to God and is ready to lose everything, even life itself, rather than lose the divine grace, has a moral certainty that he will be saved. The certainty is founded on the divine promises. “No one,” says the Scripture, “hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded.” (Ecclesiasticus 2:11). Almighty God declares in so many passages, that He does not desire the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and saved. “Is it My Will that a sinner should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should be converted from his ways and live?” (Ezechiel 18:23). In another place, He makes the same declaration, and adds an oath: “As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.”

(Ezechiel 33:11). And in the same chapter, God laments over those obstinate sinners who choose to perish because they will not leave their sins, and says: “Why will you die, O House of Israel?” (Ezechiel 33:11). And to those who repent of the evil done, He promises to forget all their transgressions. “If the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed . . . living, he shall live and shall not die. I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done.” (Ezechiel 18:21–22).

Moreover, when a sinner hates the sin he has committed, it is a certain sign that he has been already pardoned. A holy Father says that whoever can truly say with David, “I have hated and abhorred iniquity,” (Psalms 118:163), may be certain of having been forgiven. Another certain sign of having recovered grace is to have persevered in a good life for a long time after having sinned. It is also a great sign of being in the state of grace to have a firm resolution to lose one’s life rather than lose the friendship of God; as also to have an earnest desire to love Him and to see Him loved by others, and to feel distress at seeing Him offended.

How is it, then, that certain great Saints, after having given themselves wholly to God, and after a life of mortification and detachment from all earthly goods, have felt at the hour of death great terrors at the thought of appearing before Christ their Judge? I reply that those Saints who have suffered these fears at the moment of death have been very few and that it was the Will of God that they should thus purge away some remains of their sins before entering into a blessed eternity, but that, ordinarily speaking, all the Saints have died in great peace and with an ardent desire to die in order to go and see God. And for the rest, there is this difference between sinners and Saints at the hour of death: that sinners from fear pass to despair, and Saints from fear pass to confidence, and thus die in peace.

Therefore, everyone who has signs that he is in the grace of God ought to desire death, repeating the prayer which Jesus Christ has taught us, “Thy kingdom come,” and he ought to embrace death with joy when it comes, both in order that he may be freed from sin by leaving this world, where no one lives without imperfections, and that he may go to behold God face to face and love Him with all his strength in the Kingdom of Love.

O my beloved Jesus and my Judge, when Thou shalt judge me, for Thy mercy’s sake, condemn me not to Hell. In Hell I could not love Thee, but should have to hate Thee forever; and how could I hate Thee who art so worthy of love and who hast so loved me? If Thou wilt send me to Hell, at least grant me grace to be able to love Thee there with all my heart. On account of my sins, I do not deserve this grace, but if I do not deserve it, Thou hast merited it for me with the blood which Thou didst shed in such agony for me upon the Cross. O my Judge, inflict on me every pain, but deprive me not of the power of loving Thee.

O Mother of God, behold the peril in which I stand of being condemned to be unable to love thy Son, who deserves an infinite love; help me; have pity on me!

Reflection 11

OUR SALVATION IS IN THE CROSS

“BEHOLD the wood of the Cross, on which hung the Salvation of the world!” So sings Holy Church on Good Friday [in her Sacred Liturgy]. In the Cross is our salvation, our strength against temptations, our detachment from earthly pleasures; in the Cross is found true love of God. We must, therefore, resolve to bear with patience that cross which Jesus Christ sends us, and to die upon it for the love of Him, as He died upon His Cross for the love of us. There is no other way to enter Heaven but by resigning ourselves to tribulations until death. And this is the means to find peace, even in suffering. When the cross comes, what means is there, I ask, for not losing peace, except uniting ourselves to the divine will? If we do not take this means, go where we will, do what we may, we shall never escape from the weight of the cross. On the contrary, if we carry it with good will, it will bear us to Heaven and give us peace on earth.

What does he do who refuses the Cross? He increases its weight. But he who embraces it and bears it with patience, lightens its weight, and the weight itself becomes a consolation; for God abounds with graces for all those who carry the cross with a good will in order to please Him. Naturally, there is no pleasure in suffering; but divine love, when it reigns in a heart, makes it take delight in sufferings.

Oh, if only we would consider the state of happiness which we shall enjoy in Paradise if we are faithful to God in enduring trials without complaining! We should not murmur against God, who commands us to suffer, but we should say with Job: “And that this may be my comfort, that afflicting me with sorrow, He spare not, nor I contradict the words of the Holy One.” (Job 6:10). And if we are sinners and have deserved Hell, this should be our comfort in the tribulations which befall us, to see that we are chastised in this life, because this is the sure sign that God wishes to deliver us from eternal chastisement. Unfortunate is that sinner who prospers in this world! Whoever suffers any grievous trial, let him cast a glance at the Hell which he has deserved, and thus every pain he endures will seem light. If, then, we have committed sins, this ought to be our continual prayer to God: O Lord, spare not pains, but give me, I pray Thee, strength to endure them with patience, that I may not oppose myself to Thy holy Will, "nor I contradict the words of the Holy One," (Job 6:10), but in everything conform myself with whatever Thou shalt appoint for me, saying always with Jesus Christ, "Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight." (Matthew 11:26).

The soul which is governed by divine love seeks only God. "If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing," says Holy Scripture. (Canticle of Canticles 8:7). He that loves God despises everything and renounces everything which does not help him to love God; and in all the good works which he does, in his penitential acts and his labors for the glory of God, he does not go seeking his consolations and spiritual sweetness; it is enough for him to know that he pleases God. In a word, he is attentive, ever and in all things, to deny himself, renouncing every pleasure of his own; and having done so, he boasts of nothing and is puffed up with nothing, but calls himself an unprofitable servant, and setting himself in the lowest place, he abandons himself to the divine will and mercy.

We must change our tastes in order to become saints. If we do not arrive at a state in which bitter appears sweet and sweet bitter, we shall never attain to a perfect union with God. In this consists all our security and perfection, in enduring with resignation all things that are contrary to our inclinations, as they happen to us, day by day, whether they are small or great. And we must suffer them for those wise ends for which the Lord desires that we should endure them: first, to purify ourselves from the sins we have committed; secondly, to merit eternal life; thirdly, to give pleasure to God, which is the chief and most noble end which we can aim at in all our actions.

Let us then always offer ourselves to God, to suffer every cross which He may send us; and let us take care to be ever ready to endure every hardship for the love of Him, in order that, when it comes, we may be ready to embrace it, saying, as Jesus Christ said to St. Peter when He was taken in the garden by the Jews to be led to death: “The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11). God has given me this cross for my good, and shall I say to Him that I will not accept it?

And whenever the weight of any cross seems very great, let us immediately have recourse to prayer, and God will give us strength to carry it meritoriously. And let us then recollect what St. Paul says, that: “The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:18). Let us, therefore, reanimate our faith whenever tribulations afflict us. Let us first cast a glance upon our crucified Lord, who suffered agonies upon the Cross for our love; and let us then cast a glance up to Paradise, and on the good things which God prepares for those who suffer for His love. And thus we shall not complain, but thank Him for the pains He gives us to endure and ask Him to give us more to suffer. Oh, how the Saints rejoice in Heaven, not that they have possessed honors and pleasures upon earth, but that they have suffered for Jesus Christ! Everything that passes away is trifling; that only is great which is eternal and never passes away.

O my Jesus, how consoling is that which Thou sayest to me: “Turn ye to Me . . . and I will turn to you.” (Zacharias 1:3). For the sake of creatures and of my own miserable pleasures, I have left Thee; now I leave all and return to Thee; and I am confident that Thou wilt not reject me, if I desire to love Thee, for Thou hast told me that Thou art ready to embrace me, saying: “I will turn to you.” Receive me, then, into Thy grace; make me know the great Good which Thou art and the love which Thou hast borne to me, so that I may no more leave Thee. O my Jesus, pardon me; my Beloved, pardon me; my Love, pardon me all the displeasures I have caused Thee. Give me the love of Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt. Chastise me as much as Thou wilt; deprive me of everything, but deprive me not of Thyself. Let the whole world come and offer me all its goods; I protest that I desire Thee alone and nothing more.

O my Mother, recommend me to thy Son; He gives thee whatever thou askest; in thee I trust.

Reflection 12

HOW MUCH IT PLEASES JESUS CHRIST THAT WE SUFFER FOR THE LOVE OF HIM

IF ANY MAN will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” (Luke 9:23). It will be useful here to make some reflections on these words of Jesus Christ. He says: “If any man will come after me.” He does not say: “to me,” but “after me.” Our Lord desires that we should come after Him; we must therefore walk on the same road of thorns and sufferings in which He walked. He goes before, and does not stop until He reaches Calvary, where He dies. Therefore, if we love Him, we must follow Him, even till death. And thus it is necessary that every one of us should deny himself; that is, that he should deprive himself of everything which self-love demands, but is not pleasing to Jesus Christ.

Our Lord says further: “Let him . . . take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” (Luke 9:23). Let us consider these last words, one by one. “Let him take up;” it avails little to carry the cross by compulsion; all sinners bear it, but without merit; to bear it with merit, we must embrace it willingly. “His cross”—under this word is implied every kind of tribulation, which is called a “cross” by Jesus Christ, in order that this name may render it sweet, from the thought that He died on a cross for love of us.

He says, moreover, “his cross.” Some persons, when they receive some spiritual consolation, offer themselves to suffer as much as was endured by the martyrs—racks, nails and red-hot iron plates; but then they cannot endure a headache, the neglect of a friend, the ill temper of a relation. My brother, my sister, God does not ask you to endure racks, nor hot irons, nor piercing nails; but He desires that you should suffer patiently this pain, this contempt, this annoyance. A certain nun would willingly go to suffer in a desert; she would perform great acts of penance; but yet she cannot endure such a one for her superior, or such a one for her companion in her office;

but God desires that she should bear that cross which He gives her to suffer, and not that which she would herself choose.

He says “daily.” Some persons embrace the cross at first when it comes; but when it lasts long, they say, “Now I can bear it no more.” Yet God wills that you should go on enduring it with patience, even if you should have to bear it continually till death. Behold, then, wherein salvation and perfection consist. It is in these few words: “Deny thyself.” We must deny our self-love in whatever is wrong. “Take up thy cross,” that is, we must embrace the cross which God sends us. “And follow Me”: we must follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ, even till death.

We must be persuaded that for this end God keeps us in the world, that we may bear the crosses He sends us, and in this consists the merit of our life. Therefore, our Saviour, because He loves us, came into this world, not for enjoyment, but to suffer, in order that we might follow in His steps. “For unto this are you called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow His steps.” (1 Peter 2:21). Let us look at Him, as He goes before with His cross, to trace for us the road by which we must follow Him if we would be saved. Oh what a remedy it is for every trouble that befalls us to say to Jesus Christ: “Lord, is it Thy will that I should endure this cross? I accept it, and will endure it as long as it pleases Thee!”

Many persons are delighted to hear others speak of prayer, of peace, of love for Jesus Christ; but they find little pleasure in hearing anyone speak of crosses and of sufferings. Such persons love Him only so long as they enjoy spiritual sweetness, but if this ceases and there comes some adversity or desolation, in which God hides Himself in order to try them, and deprives them of their accustomed consolations, they leave off prayer, Communions and mortifications and abandon themselves to sadness and lukewarmness and seek comfort in worldly amusements. But these souls love themselves more than Jesus Christ; on the contrary, they who do not love Him with an interested love for the sake of consolations, but with a pure love, and solely because He is worthy of love, do not leave their usual devout exercises for any dryness or weariness which they experience, being content with pleasing God; and they offer themselves to suffer any desolation, even till death and through all eternity, if God should so will it. Jesus Christ, says St. Francis de Sales, is as worthy of love in desolation as in consolation. Souls enamored of God can find their comfort and sweetness in suffering, in recollecting that they suffer for His love, and they say: “How sweet it is, O my Lord, to those who love Thee to suffer for Thee! Oh, that I might die for the love of Thee, my Jesus, who hast died for me!” All this and still more is deserved from us by Jesus Christ, who chose a life of sufferings and a death of pain—without the slightest relief—for love of us, in order to teach us that, if we want to love Him, we must love Him as He loved us. Oh how dear to Jesus Christ is a soul which suffers and loves Him! O divine gift, gift above every other gift, to love in suffering, and to suffer in loving!

O my Jesus, Thou alone hast been able to teach us these maxims of salvation, all contrary to the maxims of the world; and Thou alone canst give us strength to suffer crosses with patience. I do not pray Thee to exempt me from suffering; I only ask Thee to give me strength to suffer with patience and resignation. O Eternal Father, Thy Son has promised that whatever we ask Thee in His name, Thou wilt give it to us. Behold, we ask this of Thee: give us grace to endure with patience the pains of this life; hear us for the love of Jesus Christ. And Thou, O my Jesus, pardon me all the offenses I have committed against Thee by not being willing to have patience in the trials Thou hast sent me. Give me Thy love, for that will give me strength to suffer all for love of Thee. Deprive me of everything, of every earthly good, of relations, friends, health of body, of every consolation; deprive me even of life, but not of Thy love. Give me Thyself, and I ask Thee no more.

O most holy Virgin, obtain for me love for Jesus Christ, constant, even till death.

Reflection 13

DIVINE LOVE CONQUERS ALL

LOVE is strong as death,” says the Holy Scripture. (Canticle of Canticles 8:6). As death separates us from all the goods of earth, from riches, from honors, from relations, from friends and from all worldly pleasures, so the love of God, when it reigns in a heart, strips it of all affection for these perishable goods. Therefore, the Saints have been seen to strip themselves of everything the world offered them, renounce their possessions, the highest dignities and all they had and fly into deserts or cloisters, to think only on loving God.

The soul cannot exist without loving either the Creator or creatures. Find a soul detached from every earthly love, and you will find it all filled with divine love. Would we know whether we have given ourselves wholly to God? Let us examine ourselves, whether we are weaned from every earthly thing.

Some persons lament that in all their devotions, prayers, Communions, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, they do not find God. To such, St. Teresa says: “Detach your heart from creatures, then seek God, and you will find Him.” You will not always find spiritual sweetness, which God does not give without interruption in this life to those who love Him, but only from time to time, to excite in them a longing for those boundless delights which He prepares for them in Paradise; but yet He lets them taste that inward peace which excels all sensual delights, that “peace of God, which,” says the Apostle, “surpasseth all understanding.” (Philippians 4:7). And what greater delight can be enjoyed by a soul which ardently loves God than to be able to say with true affection: “My God and my all”? St. Francis of Assisi continued a whole night in an ecstasy of Paradise, continually repeating these words: “My God and my all.”

“Love is as strong as death.” (Canticle of Canticles 8:6). If a dying man were seen moving towards anything, he would give a sign that he was not dead. Death deprives us of everything. He that would give himself altogether to God must leave everything. If he reserves anything, he gives a sign that his love for God is not perfect, but weak.

Divine love strips us of everything. Father Segneri, an eminent servant of God, used to say: “Love for God is a beloved thief, who robs us of every earthly thing.” Another servant of God, when he had given to the poor all his possessions and was asked what had reduced him to such poverty, took the book of the Gospels out of his pocket and said: “See, this is what has robbed me of everything.” In a word, Jesus Christ will possess our whole heart, and He will have no companion there. St. Augustine writes, that the Roman Senate refused to allow adoration to be paid to Jesus Christ because He was a proud God, who claimed to be honored alone. And so it is, for as He alone is Our Lord, He has every right to be adored and loved by us with an individual love.

St. Francis de Sales says that the pure love of God consumes everything which is not of God. When, therefore, there arises in our heart any affection for something which is not of God, or not loved for the sake of God, we must instantly banish it, saying: “Depart, there is no room here for thee.” In this consists that complete renunciation which Our Lord so much recommends, if we would be wholly His; it must be total, that is, of everything, and especially of our relations and friends. How many, by trying to please men, have failed to become saints! David has said: “They . . . that please men . . . have been confounded, because God hath despised them.” (Psalm 52:6).

But above all, we must renounce ourselves, by conquering self-love—cursed self-love, which wants to introduce itself into everything, even our holiest actions, by placing before us our own glory or our own pleasure! How many preachers, how many writers, thus lose all their labors! Frequently, even in prayer, in spiritual reading, or in Holy Communion, there enters some motive which is not pure, either the desire of being noticed, or of enjoying spiritual consolations. We must, therefore, be attentive to beat down this enemy who makes us lose our best actions. Hence, we must deprive ourselves, as far as possible, of whatever most pleases us, deprive ourselves of this diversion, for the very reason that it is agreeable; do a service to this disagreeable person, because he is disagreeable; take this bitter medicine, just because it is bitter. Self-love makes it appear to us that nothing is good in which we do not find our own satisfaction; but he that would wholly belong to God must do violence to himself whenever it is a question of anything pleasing to him and say always: “Let me lose everything, provided that I please God.”

For the rest, no one is more contented in the world than he who despises all the goods of the world. Whoever strips himself the most of such goods becomes richest in divine graces. Thus does God know how to reward those who love Him faithfully.

But, O my Jesus, Thou knowest my weakness; Thou hast promised to help him who trusts in Thee. O Lord, I love Thee; in Thee I trust; give me strength, and make me entirely Thine own.

In Thee also I trust, O my sweet advocate, Mary.

Reflection 14

ON THE NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER

MENTAL prayer is necessary, in the first place, in order that we may have light on the journey we are making to eternity. The eternal truths are spiritual things, which are not seen with the eyes of the body, but only in the mind, by consideration. He that does not meditate, does not see them; therefore, he walks with difficulty on the way of salvation. And further, he who does not meditate, does not know his defects, and therefore, says St. Bernard, he does not detest them. So also, he does not see the dangers to salvation in which he is, and therefore does not think of avoiding them. But when anyone meditates, his defects and the dangers of losing his soul at once come before him; and seeing them, he will seek to remedy them. St. Bernard says that meditation regulates our affections, directs our actions and corrects our defects.

In the second place, without mental prayer we have not strength to resist temptations and practice virtues. St. Teresa used to say that when a man leaves off mental prayer, the devil has no need of carrying him to Hell, for he throws himself into it of his own accord. And the reason is that, without meditation, there is no prayer. God is most willing to give us His graces, but St. Gregory says that, before giving them, He desires to be asked, and as it were, compelled to give them through our prayers. “God wants to be asked; He wants to be urged; He wants to be overcome by a certain importunity.” But without prayer we shall not have strength to resist our enemies, and so we shall not obtain perseverance in virtue. Bishop Palafox, in his note upon the tenth letter of St. Teresa, writes thus: “How will God give us perseverance if we do not ask for it? And how shall we ask it without practicing mental prayer?” But he who practices meditation is “like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season.” (Psalms 1:3).

And further, meditation is the blessed furnace in which souls are inflamed with divine love: “In my meditation,” says the Psalmist, “a fire shall flame out.” (Psalms 38:4). St. Catherine of Bologna said: “Meditation is that bond which binds the soul to God.” In the Sacred Canticles it is written: The King “brought me into the cellar of wine; he set in order charity in me.” (Canticle of Canticles 2:4). This wine cellar is meditation, in which the soul becomes so inebriated with divine love that it loses, as it were, its feeling for the things of the world; it sees only that which pleases its Beloved; it speaks only of its Beloved; it would hear others speak only of its Beloved; every other discourse wearies and troubles it. In meditation, the soul retiring to converse alone with God is raised above itself. “He shall sit solitary and hold his peace,” says the prophet. (Lamentations 3:28). When the soul sits solitary, that is, remains alone in meditation to consider how worthy God is of love and how great is the love He bears to it, it will there relish the sweetness of God and fill its mind with holy thoughts. There it will detach itself from earthly affections; there it will conceive great desires to become holy and finally resolve to give itself wholly to God.

And where have the Saints made those generous resolutions which have lifted them up to a sublime degree of perfection, if not in mental prayer?

Let us hear what St. John of the Cross said, speaking of mental prayer:

He made me there upon His breast recline;

There science sweet He did to me impart;

There too I gave without reserve my heart,

And pledged myself the spouse of Love Divine.

And St. Aloysius Gonzaga used to say that no one will ever attain a high degree of perfection who is not given to much mental prayer. Let us, then, attach ourselves to it and not leave it on account of any weariness that we may experience: this weariness which we endure for God will be abundantly recompensed by Him.

Pardon me, O my God, my slothfulness. What treasures of grace have I not lost by so often having given up mental prayer! For the future give me grace to be faithful in continuing to converse here on earth with Thee, with whom I hope to converse forever in Heaven. I do not ask Thee to favor me with Thy consolations in prayer; I do not deserve them; it is enough that Thou dost suffer me to remain at Thy feet to recommend to Thee my poor soul, which is poor indeed because it has wandered away from Thee. Here, O my crucified Jesus, the sole memory of Thy Passion shall keep me detached from earth and united with Thee.

O holy Virgin Mary, do thou assist me in prayer.

Reflection 15

THE ENDS OF MENTAL PRAYER

TO MAKE mental prayer well and derive from it great profit to the soul, we must determine the ends for which we intend to make it. First, we must meditate in order to unite ourselves more with God. It is not so much good thoughts in the mind as good acts of the will, or holy affections, which unite us with God; and such are the acts which we make in meditation—of humility, of confidence, of detachment, of resignation, and above all, of love and of repentance for our sins. The acts of love, says St. Teresa, are those which keep the heart inflamed with holy love.

Secondly, we must make mental prayer in order to obtain from God, by petitions, the graces which are necessary in order to enable us to advance in the way of salvation, and especially to obtain the divine light, in order to avoid sin and take the means which will lead us to perfection. The best fruit, therefore, of meditation is the exercise of the prayer of petition. Almighty God, ordinarily speaking, does not give graces to any but to those who pray. St. Gregory writes: "God desires to be entreated, He desires to be constrained, He desires to be conquered by a certain importunity." Observe His words, "to be conquered by importunity." At times, in order to obtain certain graces of special value, it will not suffice simply to pray, but it will be necessary to insist and, as it were, compel God by our prayers to give them to us. It is true that at all times He is ready to hear us, but at the time of meditation, when we are more recollected with God, He is more liberal in giving us His aid.

Above all, during meditation we must be careful to ask Him for perseverance and His holy love. Final perseverance is not one single grace, but a chain of graces, to which must correspond the chain of our prayers; if we cease to pray, God will cease to give us His help, and so we shall be lost. He who does not practice mental prayer will with difficulty persevere in God’s grace till death. Bishop Palafox, in his note on St. Teresa’s letters, writes thus: “How will the Lord give us perseverance if we do not ask Him for it? And how shall we ask for it without meditation? Without mental prayer, there is no communion with God.”

Thus, likewise, must we be urgent with petitions to obtain from God His holy love. St. Francis de Sales used to say that with holy love all virtues come united. “All good things came to me together with her.” (Wisdom 7:11). Let our prayer for perseverance and love, therefore, be continual; and in order to make it with greater confidence, let us ever bear in mind the promise made to us by Jesus Christ, that whatever we seek from God through the merits of His Son, He will give it to us. “Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it [to] you.” (John 16:23). Let us then pray, and pray always, if we desire that God should make us abound in every blessing. Let us pray for ourselves; and if we have zeal for the glory of God, let us pray also for others. It is a thing most pleasing to God that we should pray to Him for unbelievers and heretics and all sinners. “Let people confess to Thee, O God; let all people give praise to Thee.” (Psalms 66:4). Let us say: “O Lord, make them know Thee, make them love Thee.” We read in the lives of St. Teresa and St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi how much God re commended these Saints to pray for sinners. And to our prayers for sinners, let us also add prayers for the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

Thirdly, we must go to meditation, not for the sake of spiritual consolations, but chiefly in order to learn in it what God requires of us. “Speak, Lord,” let us say with Samuel, “for Thy servant heareth.” (1 Kings 3:10). Lord, make me know what Thou wilt of me, and I will do it. Some persons continue meditation as long as consolations last, but when these cease, they leave off mental prayer. It is true that God is accustomed to console His beloved souls at the time of meditation and to give them some foretaste of the delights He prepares in Heaven for those who love Him. These are things which the lovers of the world do not comprehend; they who are accustomed to have no relish except for earthly delights despise those which are heavenly. Oh, if they had but experienced them, how surely would they leave all their pleasures to shut themselves in a cell to converse alone with God! Mental prayer is nothing else but a conversation between the soul and God: the soul pours forth to Him its affections, its desires, its fears, its petitions; and God speaks to the heart, causing it to know His goodness and the love which He bears it and what it has to do to please Him. “I . . . will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart.” (Osee 2:14).

But these delights are not always experienced; for the most part, holy souls suffer dryness in meditation. “By dryness and temptations,” says St. Teresa, “the Lord makes trial of those who love Him.” And she adds: “Even if this dryness lasts through life, let not the soul leave off mental prayer; the time will come when it will be very well paid for all.” The time of dryness is the time of greatest pain. “Let us humble ourselves then and be resigned, seeing ourselves without fervor, without good desires, and as it were, unable to make a good act; let us humble ourselves, I say, and resign ourselves, for this very meditation will be more fruitful than others. It is enough then to say, if we can say nothing more, “O Lord, help me, have pity on me, abandon me not!” Let us also have recourse to our com-fortress, the most holy Virgin Mary. Happy is he who does not leave off meditation when in desolation. God will make him abound in graces. Then let him say, “O my God, how can I expect to be consoled by Thee, I who at this hour should deserve to be in Hell, forever separated from Thee and deprived of all hope of being able to love Thee anymore!

I do not therefore complain, O my Lord, that Thou dost deprive me of Thy consolations; I do not deserve them, nor claim them. It is enough for me to know that Thou canst never reject a soul that loves Thee. Deprive me not of the power of loving Thee, and then treat me as Thou wilt. If it is Thy Will that I continue thus afflicted and desolate even till death, and through all eternity, I am content; it is enough if I can say with truth, “My God, I love Thee, I love Thee!”

Mary, Mother of God, have pity on me!

Reflection 16

ON THE MERCY OF GOD

SO GREAT is the desire which God has to dispense to us His graces that, as St. Augustine says, He is more anxious to give them to us than we are desirous to receive them from Him. And the reason is that goodness, as philosophers say, is of its own nature diffusive; it is moved by its nature to diffuse itself in benefits to others. God, therefore, being infinite goodness, has an infinite desire to communicate Himself to us His creatures and make us share His goods.

Hence arises the great compassion which He has for our miseries. David says that the earth is full of the Divine Mercy. It is not full of the Divine Justice because God does not exercise His Justice in punishing evildoers, except when necessary and when He is, as it were, constrained to do so. On the contrary, He is bountiful and liberal in exercising His Mercy upon all, and at all times; whence St. James says: “Mercy exalteth itself above judgment.” (James 2:13). Mercy frequently snatches from the Hand of Justice the scourges which are prepared for sinners and obtains their pardon. Therefore the prophet calls God by the very name of Mercy: “My God, my Mercy.” (Psalms 58:18). And for the same reason he says, “For Thy name’s sake, O Lord, Thou wilt pardon my sin.” (Psalms 24:11). Lord, pardon me for Thy name’s sake, for Thou art mercy itself.

Isaias said that chastisement is a work which is not according to the heart of God, but alien and foreign to it, as if he would say that it was far from His inclination. “The Lord . . . shall be angry . . . that He may do His work, His strange work; that He may perform His work, His work is strange to Him.” (Isaias 28:21). In a word, His mercy it was that induced Him to send His own Son on earth to be made man and to die upon a cross to deliver us from eternal death. Therefore, Zachary exclaimed: “Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high hath visited us.”

(Luke 1:78). The expression, “the bowels of the mercy of God,” implies a mercy which proceeds from the depth of the heart of God, since He was content that His own Son-made-man should die, rather than that we should perish.

In order to see how great is the compassion of God for us and the desire He has to do us good, it is enough to read these few words which He says to us in the Gospel: “Ask, and it shall be given you.” (Luke 11:9). What more could one friend say to another to show his affection? Ask me what you will, and I will give it to you. This is what God says to everyone of us. Seeing our misery, He invites us to come to Him and promises to relieve us: “Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.” (Matthew 11:28). The Jews on one occasion complained of God and said they would no longer go to ask favors of Him; wherefore, He said to Jeremias: “Am I become a wilderness to Israel, or a lateward springing land? Why then have My people said: ‘We are revolted; we will come to Thee no more?’” (Jeremias 2:31). At the same time, God was willing to prove the wrong which the Jews did to Him, since He always and immediately consoles everyone who has recourse to Him, as He said by Isaias: “As soon as He shall hear, He will answer Thee.” (Isaias 30:19).

Art thou a sinner, and wilt thou have pardon? “Doubt not,” says St. John Chrysostom, “for God has more desire to pardon thee than thou hast to be pardoned.” If then God sees anyone obstinate in his sin, He waits in order to show him mercy, as Isaias says: “Therefore the Lord waiteth, that He may have mercy on you.” (Isaias 30:18). And meantime He points out the chastisement that awaits him, in order that he may repent. “Thou hast given a warning to them that fear Thee, that they may flee from before the bow; that thy beloved may be delivered.” (Psalms 59:6). At one time He stands and knocks at the door of our hearts, that we may open to Him: “Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock.” (Apocalypse 3:20). At another, He entreats His people, saying, “Why will you die, O house of Israel?” (Ezechiel 18:31). As if He were saying, in compassion, “O my son, why wilt thou perish?” St. Dionysius the Areopagite writes, “God follows like a lover, even those who turn from Him, and entreats them not to perish.” And this same thing was written before by the Apostle, when he implored sinners, on the part of Jesus Christ, to be reconciled with God, on which Chrysostom remarks: “Christ Himself is beseeching you, and what does He beseech you? That you would be reconciled to God.”

If then some determine to continue obstinate, what more can God do? He makes all understand that whosoever comes to Him penitent, He will not drive him away: “Him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out.” (John 6:37). He says that He is ready to embrace everyone who turns to Him: “Turn ye to Me . . . and I will turn to you.” (Zacharias 1:3). He promises every wicked man that if he repents, He will pardon him and forget his sins. “If the wicked do penance, he shall live; I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done.” He even says: “Come, and accuse Me; . . . if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow” (Isaias 1:18)—as though He would say: “Come unto Me, repentant sinners, and if I embrace you not, reproach Me as one who had broken his word.”

But no, the Lord knoweth not how to despise a contrite heart. “A contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.” (Psalms 50:19). We read in St. Luke with what joy He embraced the lost sheep and with what love He welcomed the Prodigal Son when he returned to His feet. And Our Lord Himself adds: “I say to you that even so, there shall be joy in Heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance.” (Luke 15:7). St. Gregory explains the reason for this by saying that, for the most part, penitent sinners are more fervent in loving God than those who, being innocent, have grown lukewarm in their security.

O my Jesus, since Thou hast had so great patience with me in waiting for me and so great love in pardoning me, as I trust, I resolve to love Thee very much; but it is Thou who must give me this love. Give it to me, O my Lord; little honor were it to Thee that I, a sinner so favored by Thee, should love Thee but little. O my Jesus, when shall I begin to be as grateful to Thee as Thou hast been gracious to me? In the past, instead of being grateful to Thee, I have offended and despised Thee. Shall I then hereafter always behave thus towards Thee, who hast spared nothing to gain my love? No, my Saviour, I will love Thee with all my heart, I resolve never to displease Thee. Thou dost command me to love Thee, and I desire nothing else but to love Thee. Thou dost seek me, and I seek nothing but Thee. Give me Thy help, without which I can do nothing.

O Mary, O Mother of mercy, draw me entirely to God.

Reflection 17

ON CONFIDENCE IN JESUS CHRIST

WONDERFULLY great, as has been said, is the mercy of Jesus Christ to us; but for our greater good, He desires that we should hope in His mercy with a lively confidence, trusting in His merits and His promises. Therefore, St. Paul recommends to us this confidence, saying, “Do not therefore lose your confidence, which hath a great reward.” (Hebrews 10:35). And therefore, when a fear of the Divine judgments seems to diminish this confidence in us, we ought to drive it away, and say to ourselves with the Psalmist: “Why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me? Hope in God, for I will still give praise to Him, the salvation of my countenance and my God.” (Psalms 41:6–7).

Our Lord revealed to St. Gertrude that our confidence offers such violence to Him that He cannot possibly refuse to hear us in everything we ask of Him. The same thing was said by St. John Climacus: “Prayer exercises a holy violence upon God.” Every prayer offered with confidence, as it were, forces God, but this force is acceptable and pleasing to Him. Therefore, St. Bernard writes that the Divine Mercy is like an inexhaustible fountain, from which whosoever brings the larger vessel of confidence, carries away the greater abundance of graces. And this is according to what the Psalmist wrote: “Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have hoped in Thee.” (Psalms 32:22).

God has declared that He protects and saves all who trust in Him. Let all, then, rejoice, says David, who hope in Thee, my God; they shall be blessed forever, and Thou wilt ever dwell in them. (Cf. Psalms 5:12). The same prophet said: “Mercy shall encompass him that hopeth in the Lord.” (Psalms 31:10). He that trusts in God shall be ever so encircled and guarded around that he will be safe from danger of perishing. Oh, what great promises the Holy Scriptures make to those who trust in God! Do we seem to be lost through the sins we have committed? Behold, the remedy at hand! “Let us go therefore with confidence,” says the Apostle, “to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid.” (Hebrews 4:16). Let us not defer going to Jesus Christ until He is seated as Judge on His throne of Judgment; let us hasten at once, while He sits on His throne of grace. St. John Chrysostom says that our Saviour has a greater desire to pardon us than we have to be pardoned.

But, says some sinner, I do not deserve to be heard if I beg for pardon. I reply that though he has not deserved it, his confidence in the Divine Mercy will obtain grace for him, because this pardon is not dependent upon his merits, but upon the Divine promise to pardon those who repent; and this is what Jesus Christ says: “Everyone that asketh, receiveth.” (Matthew 7:8). A learned author, commenting on the word “everyone,” says that it means “everyone,” whether just or sinner; it is sufficient that he pray with confidence. Let us, then, hear from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself what great things are done by confidence: “All things whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.” (Mark 11:24).

Whosoever, then, fears that through weakness he will fall again into his old sins, let him trust in God, and he shall not fall, as the Psalmist assures us: “None of them that trust in Him shall offend.” (Psalms 33:23). Isaias says that they who hope in the Lord renew their strength (Isaias 40:31); he means that they acquire a new strength. Let us, then, be firm in not wavering in our confidence, because God has promised, as St. Paul says, to protect all who hope in Him; and therefore, when anything seems especially difficult to overcome, let us say: “I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.” (Philippians 4:13). And who that ever trusted in God was lost? “Know ye,” says the Wise Man, “that no one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.” (Ecclesiasticus 2:11). Yet, let us not go about seeking always that sensible confidence we should wish to feel; it is enough if we have the will to trust. This is true confidence, the will to trust in God because He is good and desires to help us, and is powerful and can help us, and is faithful and has promised to help us. Above all, let us avail ourselves of the promise made by Jesus Christ: “Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it [to] you.” (John

16:23). Thus, let us seek graces from God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and we shall obtain whatever we will.

O Eternal God, I well know that I am poor in all things; I can do nothing, I have nothing, save what has come to me from Thy hands; therefore, all I say to Thee is, “Lord, have mercy upon me.” The worst of it is that to my poverty I have added the sin of having abused Thy graces by the offenses I have committed against Thee. But notwithstanding all this, I will hope from Thy goodness this twofold mercy: first, that Thou wouldst give me holy perseverance, together with Thy love and with the grace to pray to Thee always to help me, even till death. All this I ask of Thee, and I hope for it, through the merits of Thy Son Jesus and of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

O my Great Advocate, succor me with thy prayers.

Reflection 18

SALVATION ALONE IS NECESSARY

“ONE THING is necessary.” It is not necessary that in this world we should be honored with dignities, that we should be provided with riches, with good health and with earthly pleasures; but it is necessary that we should be saved; for there is no middle course; if we are not saved, we must be damned. After this short life, we shall be either always happy in Heaven, or always miserable in Hell.

O my God, what will be my lot? Shall I be saved or lost? One lord or the other must necessarily be mine. I hope to be saved, but who assures me of it? I know that I have so many times deserved Hell. Jesus, my Saviour, Thy death is my hope.

How many persons are there in the world who were once upon a time loaded with riches and honors and lifted up to high positions, and even to thrones, and now find themselves in Hell, where all the fortune they enjoyed in this world serves only to increase their torments and despair! Behold the warning which Our Lord gives us: “Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth . . . but lay up to yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither the rust nor moth doth consume.” (Matthew 6:19–20). Every gain of earthly goods is lost at death, but the gain of spiritual goods is an incomparable treasure and is eternal.

God has taught us that He “will have all men to be saved.” (1 Timothy 2:4). And to all He gives the help needed for salvation. Miserable is he who is lost; it is entirely his own fault: “Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in me.” (Osee 13:9). And this will be the greatest torment of the poor reprobate, the thought that they are lost through their own fault. “The vengeance on the flesh of the ungodly,” says the Scriptures, “is fire and worms.” (Ecclesiasticus 7:19). Fire and worms, that is, the remorse of conscience, will be the torturers of the damned in punishment for their sins;

but the worm will forever torment them, more terribly than the fire. How much regret we suffer in this world from the loss of any object of value—a diamond, a watch, a purse of money—when it happens through our own carelessness. We cannot eat or sleep for thinking of our loss, even though there is a hope of our repairing it in some other way. What then will be the torment of one who is lost, in thinking that, through his own fault he has lost God and Paradise, without a hope of ever being able to recover them!

"Therefore we have erred from the way of truth." (Wisdom 5:6). This will be the eternal lamentation of the miserable damned ones. "Therefore we have erred," losing our souls of our own accord, and there is no longer a remedy for our error! In all the misfortunes which occur to many in this life, a remedy is found in time either from a change of circumstances, or at least through a holy resignation to the will of God. But none of these remedies will be for us when we have reached eternity, if we have wandered from the way to Heaven.

Therefore, the Apostle St. Paul exhorts us to labor for eternal salvation with a continual fear of losing it: "With fear and trembling, work out your salvation." (Philippians 2:12). This fear will cause us always to walk with caution and fly from dangerous occasions; it will make us continually recommend ourselves to God, and thus we shall be saved. Let us pray to Him, that he would make us fix firmly in our minds the thought that upon our last gasp of breath before death depends the question whether we shall be eternally happy or eternally miserable without hope of remedy.

My God, many times have I despised Thy grace; I should deserve no mercy; but Thy prophet tells me that "The Lord is good to . . . the soul that seeketh Him." (Lamentations 3:25). In the past I have fled from Thee; but now I seek nothing, I ask nothing, I love nothing but Thee. In pity, despise me not; remember the blood Thou hast shed for me.

This blood and thy intercession, O Mary, Mother of God, are all my hope.

Reflection 19

ON PERFECT RESIGNATION TO THE DIVINE WILL

"MY MEAT is to do the will of Him that sent Me." (John 4:34). So said Jesus Christ, speaking of Himself. In this mortal life, meat is that which preserves our life, and therefore Our Lord said that it was His meat to do the will of the Father. This also ought to be the meat of our souls: "Life is in His good will." (Psalms 29:6). Our life consists in doing the Divine Will; he that does not fulfill it is dead.

The Wise Man says: "They that are faithful in love shall rest in Him," (Wisdom 3:9), that is to say, "shall acquiesce and submit to His will." They who are little faithful in loving God will desire that He should acquiesce with them, that He should conform Himself to their pleasure and do whatever they desire; but they who love God unite themselves with His Will and acquiesce in everything that God does with them and with all that concerns them. In every adversity which afflicts them, whether sickness, dishonor, annoyances, loss of property or of relations, they have ever on their lips and in their hearts: "Thy will be done," which is the usual aspiration of the Saints.

God desires only that which is best for us, namely, our sanctification. "This is the will of God," says the Apostle, "your sanctification." (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Let us take care, therefore, to subdue our own wills, uniting them always to the will of God; and thus also let us endeavor to control our minds, reflecting that everything that God does is best for us. Whoever does not act thus will never find true peace. All the perfection which can be attained in this world, which is a place of purifications and consequently a place of troubles and afflictions, consists in suffering patiently those things which are opposed to our self-love; and in order to suffer them with patience, there is no means more efficacious than a willingness to suffer them in order to do the will of God. "Submit thyself then to Him, and be at peace.” (Job 22:21). He that acquiesces to the Divine Will in everything is always at peace, and nothing of all that happens to him can make him unhappy. “Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad.” (Proverbs 12:21). But why is the just man never miserable in any circumstances? Because he knows well that whatever happens in the world happens through the will of God.

The Divine Will (so to say) blunts the point of the thorns and takes away the bitterness of the tribulations which come upon us in this world.

In the hymn on the Will of God, we say:

Thou makest crosses soft and light,
And death itself seem sweet and bright;
No cross nor fear that soul dismays
Whose will to Thee united stays.
O Will of God! O Will Divine!
All, all our love be ever Thine!

Behold the excellent counsel which St. Peter gives, that we may find perfect peace in the midst of the many trials of this present life: “Casting all your care upon Him, for He has care of you.” (1 Peter 5:7). But if it is God who thus takes on Himself all thought for our welfare, why should we fret ourselves with so many anxieties, as if our welfare depended on our own efforts, and not rather abandon ourselves into the hands of God, upon whom all depends? “Cast thy care upon the Lord,” says David, “and He shall sustain thee.” (Psalms 54:23). Let us be attentive to obey God in everything He commands and counsels us, and then let us leave to Him the care of our salvation, and He will remember to give us all the means which are necessary, in order that we may be saved. Whosoever places his whole confidence in God is sure of eternal salvation.

In a word, whoever does the Will of God enters into Paradise; and he that does it not, enters not. Some people trust their eternal salvation to certain devotions, or to certain outward works of piety, and yet will not do the Will of God. But Jesus Christ says: “Not everyone that saith to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of My father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 7:21).

Thus, if we desire to be saved and to acquire a perfect union with God, we should endeavor always to address to Him the prayer of David: “Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God.” (Psalms 142:10). And meanwhile, let us strip ourselves of our own will and give it wholly to God without reserve. When we give to God our goods by alms, our food by fasting, our blood by scourging, we give Him what we possess; but when we give Him our will, we give Him ourselves altogether. Wherefore he that gives to God his entire will is able to say: “Lord, having given Thee all my will, I have nothing more to give Thee.” The sacrifice of our own will is the most acceptable sacrifice we can make to God; and God pours His graces abundantly upon him who makes it.

This sacrifice, however, in order to be perfect, must have two conditions: it must be without reserve, and it must be constant. Some persons give to God their will, but with a certain reserve; and this gift pleases God but little. Others give Him their will, but they afterwards take it back again; and such persons place themselves in great peril of being abandoned by God. Therefore, it is necessary that all our efforts and desires and prayers should be directed to obtain from God perseverance in not willing anything but what He wills. Let us then, day by day, renew the total renunciation of our own will to God and constantly take care to seek and wish for nothing which is not according to the Will of God. And thus will cease within us our passions, desires and fears, and all our disordered affections. Sister Margaret of the Cross, a daughter of the Emperor Maximilian and a barefooted Poor Clare, when she became quite blind, was accustomed to say: “How can I desire to see, when God wills it not?”

Receive, O God of my soul, receive the sacrifice of my entire will and of all my liberty. I see that I deserve that Thou shouldst turn Thy back upon me and refuse this gift of mine, so often have I been unfaithful to Thee; but I hear Thee once more command me to love Thee with all my heart, and therefore I am sure that Thou dost accept it. I resign myself, then, wholly to Thy will; make me know what Thou dost will of me, for I resolve to accomplish it all. Make me love Thee, and then dispose of me and all that is mine as it pleases Thee. I am in Thy hands; do what Thou knowest to be most expedient for my eternal salvation; meanwhile, I declare that I desire Thee alone and nothing more.

O Mother of God, do thou obtain for me holy perseverance.

O Jesus, my beloved Lord,
I seek for nought but Thee!
My God, to Thee I give myself,
Do what Thou wilt with me.

Reflection 20

BLESSED IS HE WHO IS FAITHFUL TO GOD IN ADVERSITY

THE fidelity of soldiers is proved, not indeed in repose, but in action. This earth is for us a battlefield where everyone has to fight and conquer in order to be saved; if he does not conquer, he is lost forever. Therefore said holy Job: “All the days in which I am now in warfare, I expect until my change come.” (Job 14:14). Job suffered in struggling with ever so many enemies, but he comforted himself with the hope that, conquering and rising again after death, he would change his state. Of this change St. Paul spoke and rejoiced, saying: “The dead shall rise again incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” (1 Corinthians 15:52). Our state is changed in Heaven, which is a place of no more toil, but of rest; not of fear, but of security; not of sadness or weariness, but of gladness and joy eternal. With the hope then of such great joy, let us animate ourselves to fight until death and never give ourselves up conquered to our enemies, “until our change come,” until our struggle is ended and we possess a blessed eternity.

“The patient man shall bear for a time, and afterwards joy shall be restored to him.” (Ecclesiasticus 1:29). Blessed is he who suffers for God in this life; he suffers “for a time,” but his joy will be eternal in the country of the Blessed. Thus will end the persecutions; the temptations will end; the infirmities, the annoyances and all the miseries of this life will end; and God will give us a life of complete happiness, which shall never end. Now is the time for pruning the vine and for cutting off everything which hinders us on our way towards the promised land of Heaven. “The time of pruning is come.” (Canticle of Canticles 2:12). But cutting off causes pain, so that we have need of patience; and then “afterwards joy shall be restored,” when the more we have suffered, the more shall we be filled with consolations. God is faithful! And to him who suffers with resignation on earth for His love’s sake, He promises that He Himself will be his reward, a reward infinitely greater than all our suffering: “I am thy protector and thy reward exceeding great.” (Genesis 15:1)

Meanwhile, before we receive the crown of eternal life, the Lord wills that we should be tried by temptations. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him.” (James 1:12). Blessed then is he who is faithful to God when suffering adversity. Some people think they are beloved of God when all their temporal affairs go prosperously and they have no troubles; but they are mistaken, because God does not try the patience and faithfulness of His servants by prosperity, but by adversity, in order to give them that crown which fades not away, as all the crowns of this earth do fade away. This shall be a crown of eternal glory, as St. Peter writes: “You shall receive a never-fading crown of glory.” (1 Peter 5:4). To whom, then, is this crown promised? St. James says: “God has promised it to them that love Him.” (James 1:12). God has promised it again and again to those who love Him, because divine love will make us fight with courage and win the victory.

To love of God we must also join humility. The Word of God says, “Gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation. (Ecclesiasticus 2:5). It is in humiliations that Saints are discovered, for there is made known whether they are gold or lead. Such a one is considered a saint; but when he receives an injury from another, he is entirely disturbed; he complains of it to everyone; he says he will make him repent of it. What does this show? It is a sign that he is not gold, but lead. The Lord says, “In thy humiliation keep patience.” (Ecclesiasticus 2:4). The proud man, whatever humiliation he receives, considers it a great injustice, and therefore cannot endure it; the humble man, on the contrary, accounting himself deserving of every evil treatment, suffers all with patience. Let him who has committed one mortal sin cast a glance upon the Hell which he has deserved, and thus will he suffer with patience every contempt and every pain.

Let us then love God; let us be humble; and whatever we do, let us do it, not to please ourselves, but only to please God. O accursed self-love, which intrudes itself into all our works! Even in our spiritual exercises, in meditation, in works of penance, and in all our pious works, it goes seeking its own interests. Few are the devout souls who do not fall into this defect:

“Who shall find a valiant woman? Far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her.” (Proverbs 31:10). Where shall we find a soul so valiant that, despoiled of every passion and of all self-interest, it continues to love Jesus Christ in the midst of slights, pains, desolations of spirit and the annoyances of life? Solomon says that such souls are gems of great price; they come from the farthest ends of the world and therefore are most rare. (Proverbs 31:10 ff.).

O my crucified Jesus, I am one of those who, even in my devotions, have been seeking my own pleasure and my own satisfaction; entirely unlike to Thee, who through love of me, hast led a life of tribulations, deprived of every alleviation. Give me Thy help, since from this day forward I will seek only Thy pleasure and Thy glory. I wish to love Thee without any interested motive; but I am weak, Thou must give me the strength to accomplish it. Behold me, I am Thine; dispose of me as it pleases Thee; make me love Thee, and I ask for nothing more.

O Mary, my Mother, obtain for me faithfulness to God through thy intercession.

Reflection 21

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST OUGHT TO HATE THE WORLD

WHOSOEVER loves Jesus with a true love rejoices sincerely when he sees himself treated by the world as Jesus Christ was treated, who was hated, reviled and persecuted by the world, even to make Him die of anguish upon a gibbet of infamy.

The world is completely against Jesus Christ, and therefore, hating Jesus Christ, it hates all His servants. Therefore, Our Lord encouraged His disciples to suffer in peace the persecutions of the world, saying to them that, having given up the world, they could not but be hated by the world. “You are not of the world . . . therefore the world hateth you.” (John 15:19).

Now, as the lovers of God are hateful to the world, so the world ought to be hateful to him who loves God. St. Paul says, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me.” (Galatians 6:14). The Apostle was an object of horror to the world, as is a man condemned and dead upon a cross; and thus in return, the world was an object of horror to St. Paul: “the world is crucified to me.” (Galatians 6:14).

Jesus Christ chose to die crucified for our sins for this end, that He might deliver us from the love of this wicked world. Our Saviour, having called us to His love, desires that we should become superior to all the promises and threats of the world. He desires that we should no longer take account of its censures or of its praises. We must beg of God to make us utterly forget the world and to make us rejoice when we see the world reject us.

However, it is not enough, in order to belong wholly to God, that we should abandon the world; we must desire that the world should abandon us and utterly forget us. Some people leave the world, but they do not cease to wish to be praised by it, at least for having abandoned it; in such persons the desire of the esteem of the world is yet living and causes the world still to live in them.

So then, as the world hates the servants of God and therefore hates their good example and holy maxim, so also it is necessary that we should hate all the maxims of the world. “The wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be.” (Romans 8:7). The Apostle says, “Neither can it be.” Yes, because the world has no other object but its own interest or pleasure, and thus it cannot agree with those who seek only to please God.

Yes, my Jesus, crucified and dead for me! Thee alone I desire to please. What is the world to me? What are riches, what are honors? Thou, my Redeemer, Thou shalt be all my treasure; to love Thee is my riches. If Thou wilt have me poor, I desire to be poor; if Thou wilt have me humbled and despised by all, I embrace everything and receive it from Thy hands; Thy will shall ever be my consolation. This is the grace that I seek of Thee, that in every event I may not depart in the least thing from Thy holy Will.

Reflection 22

THE WORDS OF A DYING MAN TO JESUS CRUCIFIED

O JESUS, my Redeemer, who in a few moments wilt be my Judge, have mercy upon me before the moment comes when Thou wilt judge me. No, my sins do not terrify me, nor the rigors of Thy judgment, while I see Thee dead upon this cross to save me.

Yet, cease not to comfort me in the agony to which I am come: my enemies would terrify me by saying that there is no salvation for me; “Many say to my soul, there is no salvation for him in his God.” (Psalms 3:3). But I will never cease to trust in Thy goodness and say, “Thou, O Lord, art . . . the lifter up of my head.” (Psalms 3:3). Do Thou comfort me; do Thou make me feel that Thou art my salvation; “Say to my soul, I am thy salvation.” (Psalms 34:3). Oh, let not so many pains, so many insults endured, so much blood shed by Thee, be lost to me; “Thou hast redeemed me, dying upon the cross; let not so great labor be in vain.” Especially, I pray Thee—through that bitterness Thou didst feel when Thy blessed soul was separated from Thy most holy body—to have mercy upon my soul when it shall depart from my body.

It is true that by my sins I have so often despised Thee, but now I love Thee above everything; I love Thee more than myself, and I grieve with all my heart for all the outrages I have offered Thee; I detest them, I hate them above all evil. I see that by the offenses I have committed, I have deserved a thousand Hells; but the bitter death which Thou hast been willing to endure for me and the great mercies Thou hast already shown me make me confidently hope that, when I appear before Thee, Thou wilt give me the holy kiss of peace.

Trusting entirely in Thy goodness, O my God, I abandon myself into Thy loving arms. “In Thee, O Lord, I have hoped: I shall not be confounded forever.” (Psalms 30:1). By the sins I have committed I have again and again deserved Hell but I hope in Thy blood that Thou hast already pardoned me; and I hope that I shall come to Heaven to praise Thy mercies forever; “The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever.”

I willingly accept all the pains Thou dost destine for me in Purgatory; it is just that the fire should punish in me all the injuries I have done to Thee. O holy prison, when shall I find myself shut up in thee, secure from being able ever to lose my God! O holy fire, when wilt thou purge away my many filthy stains and make me worthy to enter the country of the blessed!

O Eternal Father, through the merits of the death of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, make me die in Thy grace and in Thy love, that I may come to love Thee eternally. I thank Thee for all the graces Thou hast given me throughout my life and especially for the great favor of having bestowed on me the Holy Faith and for having caused me to receive, in these my last days, all the holy Sacraments. Thou willest that I should die, and I desire to die to please Thee. It is little, O Jesus, my Saviour, that I should die for Thee, who hast died for me. Joyfully I say to Thee with St. Francis: “May I die for love of Thy love, who hast vouchsafed to die for love of my love.”

I receive death with peace, as also the pains which I shall have to endure as long as I breathe; give me strength to suffer with a perfect uniformity to Thy Will. I offer them all for Thy glory, uniting them to the pains which Thou didst suffer in Thy Passion. O Eternal Father, I sacrifice to Thee my life and my entire being; and I pray Thee to accept this my sacrifice, through the merits of that great sacrifice which Jesus, Thy Son, offered of Himself to Thee upon the Cross.

O Mother of God and my mother, Mary, thou hast obtained so many graces from God for me during my life; I thank thee for them with all my heart. Oh, abandon me not in this hour of my death, in which I have yet greater need of thy prayers! Pray to Jesus for me; increase thy prayers and obtain for me more sorrow for my sins and more love for God, that I may come to love Him forever in thy company and with all my powers in Heaven.

“In thee, O Lady, I have hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.” Mary, my hope, I trust in thee.

Reflection 23

ACTS TO BE MADE AT DEATH

IT WAS revealed to St. Lydwina [of Schiedam, 1380–1433] by an angel that the crown of merits and glory which awaited her in Heaven would not be completed without the sufferings which she was to endure in the days immediately preceding her death. The same thing happens to all devout souls when they depart from this world. It is certain that all good acts, and especially those of resignation in accepting death, performed with the view of pleasing God, are of great merit to everyone who dies in the grace of God. Here are the acts of devotion which may be very acceptable to Almighty God at the time of death.

O my God, I offer Thee my life, and I am prepared to die at any hour which may be pleasing to Thy holy will. “Thy will be done.” Always, always, “Thy will be done!”

O Lord, if Thou willest to leave me in life for some time longer, be Thou blessed; but I desire not life, unless I have to spend it all in loving Thee and in giving Thee pleasure. If Thou willest that I should die of this sickness, mayest Thou still be blessed. I embrace death that I may do Thy will, and I repeat: “Thy will be done, Thy will be done.” I only beg of Thee to help me all through this time. “Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy.” If, then, Thou willest that I should leave this earth, I protest that I desire to die, because such is Thy will.

And I desire to die, in order that, by the anguish and bitterness of my death, I may satisfy Thy Divine Justice for so many sins by which I have offended Thee and deserved Hell.

I also desire to die that I may never more offend Thee, or cause Thee displeasure in this life.

Moreover, I desire to die in acknowledgment of the gratitude which I owe Thee for so many benefits and kindnesses that Thou hast bestowed on me, contrary to my deserts.

I desire to die that I may prove that I love Thy will more than my life.

I desire, if it pleases Thee, to die now, when I trust I am in Thy grace, in order to be assured that I shall praise and bless Thee forever.

I desire above all to die in order that I may come to love Thee eternally and with all my powers in Heaven, where through Thy blood, O my Redeemer, I hope to come and to be safe from ever ceasing to love Thee through all eternity. O my Jesus, Thou didst accept the death of the cross through love of me; I accept death and all the pains which await me through love of Thee. Meanwhile, I say with St. Francis: “May I die, O Lord, for the love of Thy love, who didst deign to die for the love of my love.”

I pray Thee, O my Saviour, my Love, and my only Good, by Thy holy wounds and Thy bitter death, make me die in Thy grace and in Thy love. Thou hast purchased me with Thy blood; suffer me not to perish. O sweetest Jesus, suffer me not to be separated from Thee; suffer me not to be separated from Thee!

O Lord, cast me not away from Thy face. I confess that by my sins I have deserved Hell, but I grieve for them more than for any other evil; and I hope to come to Heaven to praise forever these great mercies Thou hast shown me. “The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever.”

I adore Thee, O my God, who hast created me. I believe in Thee, O Eternal Truth. I hope in Thee, O Infinite Mercy. I love Thee, O Supreme Goodness; I love Thee above everything; I love Thee more than myself, for Thou art worthy of being loved. And because I love Thee, I repent with all my heart for having despised Thy grace. I promise Thee to suffer every kind of death, and a thousand deaths, rather than displease Thee again.

O Jesus, Son of God, who didst die for me, have pity upon me! My Saviour, save me; and let it be my salvation to love Thee eternally.

O Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me; now is the time in which thou hast most to help me. Mary, Mother of grace, Mother of mercy, defend us from the enemy and receive us in the hour of death. “We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God! Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners!”

St. Joseph, my patron and my father, help me at this time. St. Michael the Archangel, deliver me from the devils who lie in wait for my soul. O my holy advocates, and all ye Saints of Paradise, pray to God for me.

And Thou, my Crucified Jesus, at the moment when I must breathe my last, receive my soul into Thy arms; to Thee I recommend it; remember that Thou hast redeemed me with Thy blood. “We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.” O my Crucified Jesus, my love, and my hope, whether I live or die, I protest that I desire Thee alone and nothing more. Thou art my God and my all, and what else can I desire but Thee! “What have I in Heaven? And besides Thee, what do I desire upon earth? . . . Thou art the God of my heart and the God that is my portion forever!” (Psalms 72:25–26). Thou art the Love of my heart; Thou art all my riches!

To Thee, then, I recommend my soul—to Thee, who hast redeemed it by Thy death. “Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit: Thou hast re deemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.” (Psalms 30:6). Trusting in Thy mercy, I therefore say, “In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.” (Psalms 30:1). O Mary, thou art my hope; “Hail, our hope!” To thee, therefore, I say again, “In thee, O Lady, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.”

Reflection 24

ON THE HOUSE OF ETERNITY

"MAN SHALL go into the house of his eternity." (Ecclesiastes 12:5). We err in calling this habitation in which we now dwell our home. The home of our body in a little while will be a grave, in which it must rest until the Day of Judgment; and the home of the soul will be either Paradise or Hell, according as it has deserved, and there will it remain through all eternity.

At our burial, our corpses will not go to the grave of themselves; they will be carried there by others; but the soul will go of itself to the place which awaits it, either of eternal joy or eternal woe. "Man shall go into the house of his eternity." According as a man lives well or ill, so he goes of himself to his home in Paradise or in Hell, which habitation he shall never change.

Those who live on this earth often change their dwelling, either to please themselves or because they are compelled. In eternity the dwelling is never changed; where we enter at first, there we abide forever. "If the tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be." (Ecclesiastes 11:3). He that enters in the south, which is Heaven, will be ever happy; he that enters in the north, which is Hell, will be ever miserable.

He, then, who enters Heaven will be always united with God, always in company with the Saints, always in perfect peace, always fully satisfied, because every blessed soul is filled and satiated with joy, nor will he ever know the fear of losing it. If fear of losing the happiness they enjoy could enter among the Blessed, they would be no longer Blessed, for the mere thought of losing the joy they possess would disturb the peace they enjoy.

On the contrary, whoever enters into Hell will be forever far from God; he will be ever suffering in the fire among the damned. Let us not think that the pains of Hell will be like those of earth, where, by the effect of habit, a pain grows less; for, as in Paradise the delights will never cause weariness, but seem ever new as though they were for the first time enjoyed (which is implied by the expression of "the new canticle," which the blessed are ever singing); so on the contrary, in Hell, the pains never diminish their torment. The miserable beings who are damned will feel the same agony through all eternity which they felt in the first moment they experienced the pains of Hell.

St. Augustine used to say that he who believes in eternity and is not converted to God has either lost his reason or his faith. "Woe," cries St. Cæsarius, "woe to sinners who enter eternity without knowing what it is through having neglected to think upon it." And then he adds, "But, O double woe! They enter it, and they never come forth." It is a double woe, the first of which will be to fall into that abyss of fire; the second, that he who falls into it will never come out: the gate of Hell opens only to those who enter, not to those who would go out.

No, the Saints did not do too much when they went to hide themselves in caves and deserts, to live upon herbs and sleep on the ground in order to save their souls. No, "They did not do too much," says St. Bernard, "because, where eternity is in question, no security can be too great." When therefore God visits us with any cross of sickness, poverty or other trial, let us think of the Hell we have deserved, and thus every affliction will appear light. Let us say, with Job: "I have sinned, and indeed I have offended, and I have not received what I deserved." (Job 33:27). O Lord, I have offended Thee and so many times betrayed Thee, and I have not been punished as I deserved; how, then, can I complain if Thou sendest me some affliction—I, who have deserved Hell?

O my Jesus, send me not to Hell, for in Hell I could no longer love Thee, but would have to hate Thee forever. Deprive me of everything—of goods, of health, of life—but deprive me not of Thyself. Grant that I may love Thee and praise Thee forever, and then chastise me and do with me what Thou wilt.

O Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.

Reflection 25

SOULS THAT GREATLY LOVE GOD LONG TO GO AND BEHOLD HIM IN HEAVEN

"WHILE we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord," says the Apostle. (2 Corinthians 5:6). Souls who in this life love nothing but God are like noble pilgrims, destined, according to their present state, to be the eternal spouse of the King of Heaven, but who now live at a distance without seeing Him. Wherefore, they do nothing but sigh for their departure to the country of the Blessed, where they know that their Spouse awaits them.

They know indeed that their Beloved is ever present with them, but He is as it were hidden behind a curtain and does not show Himself. Or rather, He is as the sun is frequently, behind clouds, through which, from time to time, it sends forth some ray of its splendor, but does not display itself openly. Moreover, these beloved spouses have a bandage over their eyes, which prevents them from seeing the object of their love. They live, nevertheless, contented, uniting themselves to the will of their Lord, who chooses to keep them in exile and far away from Himself; but with all this, they cannot but continually sigh to behold Him face to face, in order to become more charmed and more inflamed with love for Him.

Therefore, each one of them often sweetly complains to its beloved Spouse because He does not show Himself and says: "O Thou only Love of my heart, since Thou dost love me so much and hast wounded me with Thy holy love, why dost Thou hide Thyself and dost not let me see Thee? I know that Thou art an Infinite Beauty; I love Thee more than myself, though I have never yet beheld Thee. Show me Thy beautiful countenance; I long to see Thee unveiled, so that I may no longer behold myself nor any creature and may think only of loving Thee, my Sovereign Good."

When to these souls thus enamored of God there shines forth any ray of the Divine Goodness and of the love which God bears them, they would wish to be dissolved and melt away for desire of Him; and yet for them the sun is still behind the clouds, and His fair face is concealed behind a veil, and there is still the bandage over their eyes, so that they cannot gaze on Him face to face. But what will be their joy when the clouds shall disperse, when the veil shall be withdrawn, and the bandage shall be taken from their eyes, and the fair countenance of their Spouse shall appear unveiled, so that in the clear light they shall see His beauty, His goodness, His greatness and the love which He bears to them!

O death, why dost thou so long delay to come? If thou comest not, I cannot depart to behold my God. It is thou who must open to me the gate, that I may enter into the palace of my Lord. O blessed country, when will the day come in which I shall find myself within thine eternal tabernacles?

O Beloved of my soul, my Jesus, my Treasure, my Love, my All, when shall come that happy moment when, leaving this earth, I shall see myself entirely united to Thee? I deserve not this happiness; but the love which Thou hast shown me, and still more Thine Infinite Goodness, make me hope that I shall be one day joined to those happy souls who, being wholly united to Thee, love Thee, and will love Thee with a perfect love through all eternity. O my Jesus, Thou seest the alternative in which I am placed, of being either forever united to Thee, or forever banished far from Thee. Have pity upon me; Thy blood is my hope!

And thy intercession, O my mother Mary, is my comfort and my joy!

Reflection 26

JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

THUS He Himself spoke: “I am the good Shepherd.” (John 10:11). The office of a good shepherd is none other than to guide his flock to good pastures and to guard them from wolves; but what shepherd, O my sweet Redeemer, ever had goodness like to Thine, who didst give Thy life to save Thy sheep, which we are, and to deliver us from the punishment we had deserved?

St. Peter says of Jesus: “Who his own self bore our sins in His body upon the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice, by whose stripes we were healed.” (1 Peter 2:24). To heal us of our ills, this good Shepherd took upon Himself all our debts and paid them in His own body, dying with agony upon a cross. It was this excess of love toward us His sheep which made St. Ignatius the martyr burn with desire to give his life for Jesus Christ, saying: “My Love is crucified,” as he wrote in his epistle, as though he would say, “What! Has my God been willing to die on a cross for me, and can I live and not desire to die for Him?” And in truth, what great thing did the martyrs do in giving their lives for Jesus Christ, who died for love of them? Oh how the death endured for them by Jesus Christ made sweet to them all their torments—the scourges, the racks, the hooks, the red-hot plates of iron and the most painful deaths!

But the love of this Good Shepherd was not satisfied with giving His life for His sheep; He desired also, after His death, to leave them His very body itself, already first sacrificed on the Cross, that it might be the food and pasture of their souls. “The burning love which He bore to us,” says St. John Chrysostom, “induced Him to unite Himself to us, in order to make Himself one thing with us, for such is the instinctive desire of ardent lovers.”

And then, when this Good Shepherd sees one of His sheep lost, what does He not do, what means does He not take, to recover it? And He does not cease to seek it till He finds it. “If He shall lose one of them,” says Our Lord in the Gospel, “He goes after that which was lost until He finds it.” And when He has found it, rejoicing, He places it upon His shoulders, that He may not lose it again; and calling to Him His friends and neighbors, that is, the Angels and Saints, He invites them to rejoice with Him for having recovered the sheep that was lost. Who then will not love with all his affections this good Lord, who shows Himself thus loving to sinners who have turned their backs upon Him and lost themselves of their own accord!

O my amiable Saviour, behold at Thy feet a lost sheep! I have left Thee, but Thou has not abandoned me. Thou hast left no means untried to recover me. What would have become of me if Thou hadst not thought of seeking me? Unhappy me! How long have I not lived far from Thee! Now, through Thy mercy, I trust that I am in Thy grace; and though formerly I fled from Thee, now I desire nothing but to love Thee and to live and die embracing Thy feet. But as long as I live, I am in danger of leaving Thee. Oh bind me, bind me fast with the chains of Thy holy love, and cease not to seek me for so long as I live on this earth.

“I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost; seek Thy servant.” (Psalms 118:176).

O Advocate of Sinners, obtain for me holy perseverance.

Reflection 27

ON THE BUSINESS OF ETERNAL SALVATION

THE business of our eternal salvation is for us that affair which is not only the most important, but the only one which ought to trouble us, because if this goes wrong, all is lost. One thought upon eternity, well weighed, is enough to make a saint. The great servant of God, Fr. Vincent Carafa, was accustomed to say that, if all men thought with a lively faith upon the eternity of the next life, the world would become a desert, for no one would attend any more to the affairs of this life.

Oh, that all had ever before their eyes the great maxim taught us by Jesus Christ: “What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26). This maxim has induced so many men to leave the world, so many noble virgins, even of royal blood, to shut themselves up in a cloister, so many anchorites [hermits] to live in deserts, and so many martyrs to give their lives for the Faith, because they considered that, if they lost their souls, all the goods of the world would profit them nothing in eternity.

Therefore the Apostle wrote to his disciples: “We entreat you, brethren, . . . that you do your own business.” (1 Thessalonians 4:11). And of what business did St. Paul speak? He spoke of that business which, if it fail, implies that we lose the eternal kingdom of Paradise and are cast into an abyss of torments which never end. “It is an affair of eternal punishments and of the loss of the heavenly kingdom,” says St. John Chrysostom.

St. Philip Neri, therefore, had good reason for calling all those persons mad who in this life take pains to gain riches and honors and give little heed to the salvation of their souls. “All such,” the venerable John Avila used to say, “deserve to be shut up in an asylum for lunatics.” How so? This great servant of God meant to say: “You believe that there is an eternity of joys for those who love God and an eternity of pain for those who offend Him, and do you offend Him?”

Every loss of goods, of reputation, of relations, of health in this life can be repaired, at least by a good death and by the acquisition of eternal life, as it happened to the holy martyrs; but for what goods of the world, for what fortune, even the greatest, can be given in exchange the loss of the soul? “What exchange shall a man give for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26).

He who dies in the enmity of God and loses his soul, loses with it forever all hope of repairing his ruin. “When the wicked man is dead, there shall be no hope any more.” (Proverbs 11:7). O God, if the doctrine of eternal life were but simply a doubtful opinion of divines, we ought surely to give all our care to gain a happy eternity and avoid a miserable one. But no, it is not a doubtful thing; it is certain, it is of faith that one or the other must be our lot!

But what do we see? Everyone who has faith, and thinks upon this truth says: “So it is: we must attend to the salvation of our soul,” but few are they who do attend to it in earnest. All are intent on gaining some lawsuit or obtaining some situation, but lay aside the care of their eternal salvation. “Truly, it is the greatest of errors to neglect the business of eternal salvation,” said St. Eucherius. It is an error which exceeds all others, for to lose the soul is an error without remedy. “Oh, that they would be wise and would understand and would provide for their last end!” Miserable are those learned men who know many things and know not how to have any forethought for their souls, that they may obtain a favorable sentence in the Day of Judgment!

O my Redeemer, Thou hast shed Thy blood to purchase my soul, and I have so often lost it, and lost it again! I give Thee thanks that Thou hast given me time to recover it by recovering Thy grace. O my God, would that I had died before I had ever offended Thee! It comforts me to know that Thou knowest not how to despise a heart which humbles itself, and repents of its sins.

O Mary, Refuge of Sinners, succor a sinner who recommends himself to thee and trusts in thee.

Reflection 28

WHAT WILL BE THE HAPPINESS OF THE BLESSED

"ENTER thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matthew 25:23). When the soul enters the Country of the Blessed and the curtain which hinders its sight is taken away, it will see openly and without a veil the infinite beauty of its God, and this will be the joy of the Blessed.

Every object which then it will see in God Himself will overwhelm it with delight: it will see the righteousness of His judgments, the harmony of His decrees regarding every soul, all directed to His own divine glory and the good of each soul.

It will especially perceive, in respect to itself, the boundless love which God has entertained toward it in becoming man and sacrificing His life upon the Cross through love of it. Then will it know what an excess of goodness is contained in the mystery of the Cross, in the sight of God-become-a-servant and dying crucified upon an infamous gibbet, and in the mystery of the Eucharist, in the sight of God concealed beneath the species of bread and become the food of His creatures.

The soul will perceive in particular all the graces and favors bestowed on it, which until then had been hidden. It will see all the mercies He has shown it in waiting for it and pardoning its ingratitude. It will see the many calls and lights and aids which have been granted to it in abundance. It will see that those tribulations, those infirmities, those losses of property or of kindred, which it regarded as punishments, were not really punishments, but loving dispensations on the part of God to draw it to a perfect love for Him.

In a word, all these things will make known to it the infinite goodness of its God and the boundless love which He deserves. Hence, no sooner will it have reached Heaven than its sole desire will be to see Him blessed and happy; and at the same time, comprehending that the happiness of God is supreme, infinite and eternal, it will experience only a joy which is not infinite, because a creature is not capable of anything infinite. It will enjoy, nevertheless, a delight which is immense and complete, and will fill it with joy, and with that same joy which belongs to God Himself; and thus will be fulfilled in it the words: “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” (Matthew 25:23).

The Blessed are happy, not so much through the delight which they experience in themselves, as through the happiness which God enjoys. For as the Blessed love God immensely more than themselves, so the wellbeing of God delights them immensely more than their own on account of the love which they bear to Him. And this love for God will make them forget themselves, and all their delight will be to please their Beloved.

And this is that holy and loving inebriation which causes the Blessed to lose all thought of themselves, to occupy themselves solely in praising and loving the Dear Object of all their love, which is God. “They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house.” (Psalms 35:9). Happy from their first entrance into Heaven, they continue, as it were, “lost,” and so to say, “drowned” in love, in that boundless ocean of the goodness of God.

Wherefore every blessed soul will lose all its vain desires and will have no other desire but to love God and to be loved by Him; and knowing itself secure of always loving God and of being always loved by Him, this will be its blessedness, which will fill it with joy and will make it throughout eternity so satiated with delight that it will desire nothing more.

In a word, this will be the Paradise of the Blessed, to rejoice in the happiness of God. And therefore, he who in this life rejoices in the blessedness which God enjoys, and will enjoy eternally, can say that even in this life he enters into the joy of God and begins to enjoy Paradise.

Meanwhile, O my sweet Saviour and the Love of my soul, I still see myself in this vale of tears surrounded by enemies, who seek to separate me from Thee. O my beloved Lord, permit me not to lose Thee; make me always love Thee, both in this life and in the next, and then dispose of me as Thou pleasest.

O Queen of Paradise, if thou prayest for me, assuredly I shall be with thee eternally, to bear thee company and to praise thee in Paradise.

Reflection 29

THE PAIN OF HAVING LOST GOD IS THAT WHICH CONSTITUTES HELL

THE grievousness of punishment must correspond to the grievousness of sin. Mortal sin is defined by theologians in a single phrase: “a turning away from God”—turning one’s back upon God. And in that consists the malice of mortal sin. It consists in despising the divine grace and in being willing of one’s own accord to lose God, the Supreme Good; wherefore, justly the greatest punishment of sinners in Hell is the pain of having lost God.

The other pains of Hell are also great: the devouring fire, the blinding darkness, the deafening shrieks of the damned, the stench which would cause those miserable beings to die (if die they could), the confinement which oppresses and stifles them. But these pains are nothing in comparison to the loss of God. In Hell the reprobate weep eternally, and the bitterest subject of their weeping is the thought that, through their own fault, they have lost God.

And, O God, how great is the good they have lost! In this life, the present objects, the passions, the temporal occupations, the sensible pleasures and the adverse events, hinder us from contemplating the infinite beauty and goodness of God. But when the soul has departed from the prison-house of the body, it does not indeed instantly behold God as He is, for if it saw Him, it would be instantly happy. But it knows that God is an infinite good, infinitely beautiful and worthy of infinite love; hence the soul, which is created to see and love this God, desires to go and unite itself at once with God; but being in sin, it finds an impenetrable wall (which is precisely its sin), which forever closes against it the way which leads to God. O Lord, I thank Thee that this life is not yet ended for me, as I have deserved. I can still come to Thee. “Cast me not away from Thy face.” (Psalms 50:13). Oh, drive me not away.

The soul, which is created to love its Creator, cannot but find itself impelled by its nature to love its Last End, which is God. In this life, the darkness of sin and earthly affections lull to sleep this inclination which it has to unite itself to God, and therefore it is not greatly afflicted at seeing itself separated from Him; but when it leaves the body and is delivered from the senses, then it sees in clear light that God alone can satisfy it. Hence, as soon as it is set free from the body, immediately it flies to embrace its Supreme Good; but being in sin, it will find itself thrust back by God as an enemy. But though driven away, it will not cease to feel itself ever drawn to unite itself with God; and this will be its hell—to find itself ever drawn toward God and always driven away from God.

Oh, if only the miserable soul which has lost God and can never more see Him could at least find some comfort in loving Him! But no, for having been abandoned by grace and having become the slave of its sin, its will is perverted; hence, on the one side, it will find itself ever drawn to love God, and on the other, it will feel itself constrained to hate Him. Thus, at the same time that it knows that God is worthy of infinite love and praise, it hates Him and curses Him.

Yet perhaps it might in this prison of torments at least resign itself to the Divine Will, as holy souls do in Purgatory, and bless the hand of that God who justly scourges it. But no, it cannot resign itself because, to do this, the assistance of grace is necessary. But grace (as has been said) has abandoned it; hence, it cannot unite its will to that of God, because its own will is altogether contrary to the Divine Will.

Thus also, it comes to pass that the wretched soul turns all its hatred upon itself and thus will live forever, torn by contrary desires. It would wish to live, it would desire to die. On the one hand, it would live, in order always to hate God, who is the object of its greatest hatred; on the other, it would die, in order not to feel the pain it endures of having lost Him. But it sees that it cannot die. Hence, it will live forever in one continual agony of death. Let us pray God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to preserve us from Hell; and he especially ought to pray thus who at any time in his life, has lost God through any grievous sin.

O Lord (let him say), save me, and therefore bind me to Thee ever more by Thy holy love; redouble these holy and sweet chains of salvation, that they may ever bind me more firmly to Thee. Wretch that I am, by despising

Thy grace I have deserved to be forever separated from Thee, my Sovereign Good, and hate Thee forever! I thank Thee for having borne with me when I was at enmity with Thee; what would have become of me if I had then died? But since Thou hast prolonged my life, grant that I may not use it any more to displease Thee, but only to love Thee, and to weep over the offenses I have committed against Thee. O my Jesus, from this day forth Thou shalt be my only Love, and my only fear shall be no other than that I should offend Thee and separate myself from Thee. But if Thou dost aid me not, I can do nothing; I hope in Thy blood, that Thou wilt give me help to be all Thine, O my Redeemer, my Love, my All.

O Mary, great advocate of sinners, help a sinner who recommends himself to thee and trusts in thee.

If we would be assured of not losing God, let us give ourselves in earnest wholly to God. He that does not give himself wholly to God is ever in danger of turning his back upon Him and of losing Him, but a soul which resolutely detaches itself from everything and gives itself all to God loses Him no more, because God Himself will not allow that a soul which has heartily given itself completely to Him should turn its back upon Him afterwards and perish. Wherefore, a great servant of God was accustomed to say that, when we read of the fall of certain persons who had before given tokens of living a holy life, we must conclude that such persons had not given themselves completely to God.

Reflection 30

ON CONTEMPT OF THE WORLD

THE thought of the vanity of the world and that all the things which the world values are but falsehood and deceit has made many souls resolve to give themselves wholly to God. “What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26). How many young persons has this great maxim of the Gospel brought to leave relations, country, possessions, honors and even crowns, to go and shut themselves up in a cloister or desert, there to think of God alone! The day of death is called the day of loss or destruction. “The day of destruction is at hand.” (Deuteronomy 32:35). It is a day of loss, because all the goods which we have acquired on earth must all be left on the day of our death. Wherefore, St. Ambrose wisely says that we falsely call these goods our own goods because we cannot carry them with us into the other world, where we must dwell forever. It is our good works alone which accompany us, and they alone will console us in eternity.

All earthly fortunes, the highest dignities, gold, silver, the most precious jewels, when looked at from the bed of death, lose their splendor; the fatal shadow of death obscures even scepters and crowns and makes us see that all which the world values is but smoke, dust, vanity and misery. And in truth, at the time of death, what use is there for all the riches acquired by one who is dying, if nothing belongs to him after death, except a wooden box in which he is placed to rot? What will the boasted beauty of the body serve when there remains of it only a little fetid dust and a few fleshless bones?

What is the life of man upon earth? Behold it as described by St. James: “What is your life? It is a vapor which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away.” (James 4:15). Today this great man is esteemed, feared, praised; tomorrow he is despised, slandered, and cursed.

“I have seen the wicked highly exalted . . .” says the Psalmist, “and I passed by, and lo he was not.” (Psalms 36:35–36). He is no longer to be found in this his beloved villa, in this grand palace which he built himself; and where is he? He is become dust in the grave!

“There is a deceitful balance in his hand.” (Osee 12:7). In these words the Holy Spirit warns us not to be deceived by the world, because the world weighs its goods in a false balance. We ought to weigh things in the true balance of faith, which will show us what are true goods, which those things can never be called that soon perish. St. Teresa used to say: “We should not take account of anything which ends with death.” O God, what has there remained of greatness to so many first ministers of state, to so many commanders of armies, to so many princes, to so many Roman emperors—now that for them the scene is changed, and they find themselves in eternity? “Their memory has perished with a noise.” (Psalms 9:7). They made a great figure in the world, and their names resounded everywhere; but after they were dead, rank, name and everything was ended for them. It is useful to record here an inscription placed over a certain cemetery in which many men and women of rank are buried:

“Behold the end of all the pomp of earth, All human greatness, beauty, noble birth! Worms, rottenness, a little dust, a stone, Close the brief scene of life for ev’ry one.”

“The fashion of this world passeth away.” (1 Corinthians 7:31). Our life, finally, is but a scene which passes away and speedily ends; and it must end for all, whether nobles or commoners, kings or subjects, rich or poor. Happy is he who in this scene has played his part well before God. Philip III, king of Spain, died young, at the age of forty-two years; and before he died, he said to those around him: “When I am dead, proclaim the spectacle which you now see; proclaim that, in death, to have been a king serves only to make one feel regret of having reigned.” And then he ended with a sigh, saying: “Oh, that during this time I had been in a desert, becoming a saint; for now I should appear with more confidence before the tribunal of Jesus Christ!”

We know the change of life which St. Francis Borgia made at the sight of the corpse of the Empress Isabella, who in life was most beautiful, but after death, struck horror in all who saw her. On beholding her, he exclaimed: “Such then is the end of all the grandeur of this world!” And he gave himself wholly to God. Oh, that we would all imitate him before death comes upon us! But let us make haste, because death runs towards us, and we know not when it will arrive. Let us not so act that nothing will remain of the light which God now gives us but remorse, and the account to be rendered of it to God, when we hold in our hands the candle at death. Let us resolve to do now what then we shall wish to have done and shall no longer be able to do.

No, my God, Thou hast borne with me long enough! I do not wish to make Thee wait any longer before seeing me give myself wholly to Thee. Thou hast many times called me to have done with the world and to give myself competely to Thy love. Now Thou callest me again! Behold me, receive me into Thy arms, for at this moment I abandon myself wholly to Thee. O spotless Lamb, who didst once sacrifice Thyself on Calvary, dying on a cross for me, first wash me with Thy blood and pardon all the injuries Thou hast received from me, and then inflame me with Thy holy love. I love Thee above everything; I love Thee with all my soul. And what object can I find in the world more worthy of love than Thou art, or one who has loved me more?

O Mary, Mother of God, and my Advocate, pray to Him for me; obtain for me a true and lasting change of life. In thee I trust.

Reflection 31

ON THE LOVE OF SOLITUDE

GOD does not allow Himself to be found in the tumult of the world; therefore, the Saints were accustomed to seek the most frightful deserts, the most hidden caves, in order that they might flee from men and converse with God alone. St. Hilarion made trial of several deserts, going from one to another, ever seeking the most solitary one, where there should be no man with whom to speak. And in the end, he died in a desert of Cyprus, after having lived there for five years. St. Bruno, when he was called by God to leave the world, went with his companions who wished to follow him, to find St. Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble, that he might assign them some desert place in his diocese. St. Hugh assigned them the Carthusian mountains, which from their frightful wildness, were more fitted to be a resort of wild beasts than a habitation for men; and there they went with joy to dwell, each living in a little hut at a distance from the rest.

Our Lord said once to St. Teresa: “I would willingly speak to many souls, but the world makes so much noise in their hearts that My voice cannot be heard.” God does not speak to us in the midst of the tumult and business of the world, knowing that if He speaks, He is not heard. The words of God are His holy inspirations, His lights and calls, by which the Saints are enlightened and inflamed with divine love; but he who does not love solitude will not be allowed to hear these voices of God.

God Himself declares: “I . . . will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart.” (Osee 2:14). When God desires to raise anyone to a high degree of perfection, He induces him to retire to some solitary place, far from the converse of creatures, and there He speaks to the ears—not of the body, but of the heart—and thus He enlightens and inflames him with His divine love.

St. Bernard used to say that he had learned much more of the love of God among the oaks and beeches of the forest than from books and from the servants of God. Therefore, St. Jerome left the pleasures of Rome and shut himself up in the cave of Bethlehem, and afterwards exclaimed: "O solitude, in which God speaks familiarly and converses with His own!" In solitude God converses familiarly with His beloved souls, and there He makes them hear those words which melt their hearts with holy love, as the sacred Spouse said: "My soul melted when he [my Beloved] spoke." (Canticle of Canticles 5:6).

We see by experience that treating with the world and occupying ourselves in the acquisition of earthly goods makes us forget God; but at the hour of death, what shall we find of all the labor and time we have spent upon the things of earth, except affliction and remorse of conscience? At death we shall find comfort only from that little which we have done and suffered for God. Why, then, do we not detach ourselves from the world before death separates it from us?

"He shall sit solitary, and hold his peace because he hath taken it up upon himself." (Lamentations 3:28). The solitary is not engaged as he formerly was in worldly affairs; he will sit in repose, and he will hold his peace and will not call for sensual delights to satisfy him because, lifted up above himself and above all created things, he will find in God every good and all his happiness.

"Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?" (Psalms 54:7). David desired to have the wings of a dove, that he might leave this earth and not touch it even with his feet, and thus give rest to his soul. But so long as we are in this life, it is not given to us to leave this earth; let us at least take care to love retirement, so far as it is practicable, conversing alone with God, and thus gain strength to avoid defects in our unavoidable intercourse with the world, as David did at the very time he was ruling his kingdom: "Lo," he says, "I have gone far off, flying away, and I abode in the wilderness." (Psalms 54:8).

Oh, that I had always thought of Thee, O God of my soul, and not of the goods of this world! I curse those days in which, seeking pleasures, I have offended Thee, my Sovereign Good. Oh that I had always loved Thee! Oh that I had died and not caused Thee displeasure! Miserable that I am, death draws near while I find myself still attached to the world! No, my Jesus, this day I resolve to leave all and to be entirely Thine. Thou art almighty, Thou hast to give me strength to be faithful to Thee.

O Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me!

Reflection 32

ON SOLITUDE OF HEART

SAINT GREGORY wrote: “What does the solitude of the body profit if the solitude of the heart is not there?” In the preceding reflection we have seen how much solitude assists recollection of mind, but St. Gregory says that it profits us little or nothing to be with the body in a solitary place, while we still keep the heart full of worldly thoughts and affections. That a soul may be wholly given to God, two things are necessary: the first is to detach one’s self from the love of every created thing; the second is to consecrate all one’s love to God. And this is what true solitude of heart means.

We must in the first place, then, detach our hearts from every earthly affection. St. Francis de Sales used to say: “If I knew that I had a single fiber in my heart which was not given to God, I would instantly pluck it out.” If we do not purify and strip the heart of everything earthly, the love of God cannot enter in and possess it entirely. God would reign by His love in our hearts, but He would reign there alone; He will have no companions to rob Him of a portion of that affection which He justly claims to have entirely for Himself.

Some souls complain that in all their devout exercises, meditations, Communions, spiritual readings, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, they do not find God and know not what means to adopt in order to find Him. St. Teresa gives them the right means when she says: “Detach thy heart from all created things, and then seek God, and thou shalt find Him.”

Many persons cannot, in order to separate themselves from creatures and converse with God alone, go and live in a desert, as they would wish; but we must understand that deserts and caves are not necessary in order to enjoy solitude of heart. Those who from necessity are obliged to converse with the world—provided that their hearts are free from worldly attachments—can, even in the streets, in places of resort and in public assemblies, possess solitude of heart and remain united with God. All those occupations which are undertaken to fulfill the Divine Will do not prevent the solitude of the heart. St. Catherine of Siena was able to find God in the midst of the household labors in which her parents kept her employed in order to withdraw her from devotional exercises; but in the midst of these affairs she remained retired within her heart, which she called her cell, and there ceased not to converse alone with God.

"Be still and see that I am God," says the Psalmist. (Psalms 45:11). To possess that divine light which enables us to know the goodness of God, which when known, is well able to draw to itself all the affections of our heart, we must be still, that is, disentangle ourselves from the earthly attachments which hinder us from knowing God. As a crystal vase when it is filled with sand cannot receive the light of the sun, so a heart which is attached to riches, to worldly honors, or to sensual pleasures, cannot receive the divine light; and not knowing God, it does not love Him. In every state in which a man finds himself placed by God, he must indeed give attention to perform his duties according to the pleasure of God; but to prevent creatures from drawing him away from God, he must in everything else act as if there were no one else in the world except himself and God.

We must detach ourselves from everything, and especially from ourselves, by continually thwarting our self-love. For example, a certain thing pleases us; we must leave it for the very reason that it pleases us. A certain person has injured us; we must do him good just because he has injured us. In a word, we must will and not will, exactly as God wills or does not will, without wishing for anything whatever until we know that it is the will of God that we should desire it.

Oh, how easily does God let Himself be found by everyone who detaches himself from creatures in order to find Him! "The Lord is good . . . to the soul that seeketh Him." (Lamentations 3:25). St. Francis de Sales says: "The pure love of God consumes everything which is not God, in order to convert everything into itself." We must therefore make ourselves an enclosed garden, as the holy spouse in the Canticles is called by God. "My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed." (Canticle of Canticles 4:12). The soul which keeps the door shut against earthly affections is called an enclosed garden. God has given us everything that we have, and it is reasonable that He should require of us all our love. When, then, any creature would enter and take for itself a portion of our love, we must altogether deny it any entrance, and turning to our Sovereign Good, we must say with all our affection: “What have I in Heaven? And besides Thee what do I desire on earth? . . . Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.” (Psalms 72:25–26). “O my God, what but Thyself can satisfy my soul? No, I desire nothing but Thee, either in Heaven or on earth; Thou alone art sufficient for me, O God of my heart and my Portion forever.”

Oh, happy is he who can say: “The kingdom of the earth and all worldly pomp I have despised for the love of my Lord Jesus Christ.” Truly, that great servant of God, sister Margaret of the Cross, the daughter of the Emperor Maximilian II, could say this when at her profession she stripped herself of her rich garments and jewels to clothe herself in the poor woolen habit of the barefooted nuns of the strict rule of St. Clare and when, as the author of her life relates, she cast them away with a contempt which moved to tears of devotion all who assisted at the function.

O my Jesus, for my part I do not desire that creatures should have any share in my heart; Thou must be its only Lord, by possessing it entirely. Let others seek the delights and grandeurs of this earth; Thou alone, both in the present and the future life, must be my only Portion, my only Good, my only Love. And, since Thou hast loved me, as I see by the proofs Thou givest me, help me to detach myself from everything which can divert me from Thy love. Grant that my soul may be entirely taken up with pleasing Thee, as the only object of all my affections. Take possession of all my heart; I will be no longer my own. Do Thou rule me and make me prompt to execute Thy will.

O Mary, Mother of God, in thee I trust; thy prayers have to make me belong wholly to Jesus.

Reflection 33

TO SEE AND LOVE GOD IN THE NEXT LIFE IS THE JOY OF THE BLESSED IN PARADISE

LET us see what it is in Heaven that makes those holy citizens completely happy. The soul in Heaven, seeing God face to face and knowing His infinite beauty and all His perfections, which render Him worthy of infinite love, cannot but love Him with all its powers, and loves Him far more than itself. Nay, even forgetting itself, as it were, it thinks of nothing and desires nothing but to see Him happy who is its Beloved and its God; and seeing that God, the only Object of all its affections, enjoys an infinite happiness, this happiness of God constitutes its entire Paradise. If a soul were capable of anything infinite, its own joy would also be infinite in seeing that its Beloved is infinitely happy; but as a creature is not capable of infinite joy, the soul is at least satiated with joy, so that it desires nothing more. And this is that happiness for which David sighed when he said: “I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear.” (Psalms 16:15).

Thus is fulfilled what God says to the soul when He puts it in possession of Paradise: “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” (Matthew 25:21). He does not bid the joy enter into the soul, because this His joy, being infinite, cannot be contained in the creature; but He bids the soul enter into His joy, that it may receive a portion of it, and a portion so great as to satiate it and fill it with delight.

Therefore, I think that in prayer, among all the acts of love for God, there is no act of love more perfect than taking delight in the infinite happiness which God enjoys. This is certainly the continual exercise of the Blessed in Heaven; so that he who often rejoices in the happiness of God begins in this life to do that which he hopes to do in Heaven through all eternity.

The love for God with which the Saints in Paradise burn is so great that, if a fear of losing Him or of not loving Him with all their powers (as now they love Him) should ever enter their minds, this fear would cause them to experience a very hell of anguish. But no, for they are as sure as they are sure of God that they will love Him always with all their powers and that they will be ever loved by God, and that this mutual love will never change throughout eternity. O my God, make me worthy of this certainty through the merits of Jesus Christ.

This happiness which constitutes Paradise, moreover will be increased by the splendor of that delightful City of God, by the beauty of its inhabitants and by their companionship, especially by that of the Queen of all, Mary, who will appear fairer than all, and by that of Jesus Christ, whose beauty again will immensely surpass that of Mary.

The joy of the Blessed will be increased by the knowledge of the dangers of losing so great a Good which each one has passed through in this life. What, then, will be the thanksgiving offered to God by one who had unhappily deserved Hell by his sins and now finds himself there on high, whence he will see so many condemned to Hell for less sins than his own, while he is saved and sure of not losing God, destined to enjoy eternally in Heaven those boundless delights of which he will never grow weary! In this life, however great and continual be our joys, in time they weary us; but as for the delights of Paradise, the more they are enjoyed, the more they are desired, so that the Blessed are always fully satisfied with these delights and always desire them; they ever desire them and ever obtain them. Wherefore, that sweet song with which the Saints praise God and thank Him for the happiness He has given them is called a new canticle: “Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle.” (Psalms 97:1). It is called new because the joys of Heaven seem ever as new as when they were tasted the first time, because they always possess them yet always long for them; they ever desire them and ever experience them. Thus, as the damned are called “vessels of wrath,” the Blessed are called “vessels of divine love.”

Justly, then, does St. Augustine say that, to gain this eternal blessedness, there ought to be eternal labor. Hence, it was little that the anchorites did with their penitential works and prayers to gain Paradise; it was little for the Saints to leave their riches and kingdoms to gain Paradise; little that so many martyrs suffered in enduring racks and burning irons and cruel deaths to gain Paradise.

Let us at least take care to suffer joyfully the crosses which God sends us, because all of them, if we are saved, will procure for us eternal joys. When infirmities, pains or other adversities afflict us, let us lift up our eyes to Heaven and say: “One day all these pains will have an end, and after that I hope to enjoy God forever.” Let us take courage to suffer and to despise all the things of the world. Blessed is he who at death will be able to say with St. Agatha: “O Lord, who hast taken from me the love of the world, receive my soul.” Let us endure everything, let us despise all that is created; Jesus awaits us and stands with the crown in His hands to make us kings in Heaven, if we be faithful to Him.

But how can I, O my Jesus, aspire to so great a good, I, who have so often for the sake of the miserable pleasures of earth renounced Paradise before Thy face and have trodden underfoot Thy grace? Yet Thy blood gives me courage to hope for Paradise, though I have so often deserved Hell. Yes, I hope for it because Thou hast died upon the Cross precisely in order to bestow Paradise upon those who have not deserved it. O my Redeemer and my God, I resolve to lose Thee no more; do Thou give me help to be faithful to Thee; Thy Kingdom come; through the merits of Thy blood, grant me one day to enter Thy Kingdom; and in the meantime, until death shall come, enable me to fulfill Thy will perfectly, which is the greatest good and is a paradise such as can be possessed upon earth by him who loves Thee.

Therefore, O ye souls who love God, while we live in this vale of tears, let us ever sigh for Paradise and say:

“O beauteous home! where love’s reward
Love will itself bestow;
Where my so sweet and loving Lord
Himself unveiled will show;
When shall I see that blest abode,
And there behold and love my God?
When will that wished-for dawn arise?
While now I cry, ’twixt smiles and tears,
Ah, when? Ah, when shall end my fears?
O Paradise! O Paradise!”

Reflection 34

ON PRAYER BEFORE THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

MEDITATION, wherever it is made, pleases God; but it seems that Jesus Christ especially delights in the prayer which is made before the Most Holy Sacrament, since it appears that there He bestows light and grace more abundantly upon those who visit Him. He has left Himself in this Sacrament, not only to be the food of the souls who receive Him in Holy Communion, but also to be found present at all times by everyone who seeks Him. Devout pilgrims go to the holy house of Loreto, where Jesus Christ dwelt during His life, and to Jerusalem, where He died on the Cross; but how much greater ought to be our devotion when we find ourselves before a tabernacle, where this Lord Himself now dwells in person, who once lived among us and died for us on Calvary!

It is not permitted here on earth for persons of all ranks to speak alone with kings; but with Jesus Christ, the King of Heaven, all—both noble and plebeians, rich and poor—can converse at will in this Sacrament and remain as long as they will to lay before Him their needs and to seek His graces. And there Jesus gives audience to all, and hears and comforts all.

Men of the world, who know no pleasures but those of earth, cannot comprehend what pleasure can be found in spending a long time before an altar, where there is a consecrated Host. But to souls who love God, hours and days passed before the Blessed Sacrament seem but moments because of the heavenly sweetness which Our Lord there makes them taste and enjoy.

But how can worldly people expect to enjoy these sweetnesses if they keep their hearts and minds full of the earth? St. Francis Borgia used to say that in order that divine love may rule in our hearts, we must first banish from them the world; otherwise, divine love will never enter into them, because it finds no place to rest: “Be still, and see that I am God,” said David. (Psalms 45:11). In order to have a relish for God and to taste how sweet He is to them that love Him, our hearts must be empty, that is, detached from earthly affections. Wouldst thou find God? “Detach thyself from creatures, and thou shalt find Him,” says St. Teresa.

What should a soul do when in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament? It should love and pray. It should not stay there in order to experience sweetnesses and consolations, but only to give pleasure to God by making acts of love, by giving itself wholly to God without reserve, by stripping itself of all self-will and by offering itself, saying: “O my God, I love Thee and desire nothing but Thee; grant that I may always love Thee, and then do with me and with all that I possess whatever Thou pleasest.” Among all acts of love, the most agreeable to God is that which the Blessed continually exercise in Heaven, that is to say, rejoicing in the infinite happiness which God enjoys. For, as we have already said, the soul in Heaven loves God immeasurably more than itself and therefore desires the happiness of its Beloved far more than its own; and seeing that God enjoys an infinite happiness, it would thereby feel an infinite delight; but as a creature is not capable of an infinite delight, it is at least quite filled with joy, so that the happiness of God constitutes its joy and its Paradise. These acts of love, even when made by us without any sensible sweetness, please God greatly. For the rest, God gives to His most beloved souls the enjoyment of His consolations in this life, not always, but only rarely; and when He does give them, He gives them, not so much as a reward for their good works (the full recompense of which He reserves for them in Heaven), as to give them more courage to suffer with patience the troubles and adversities of this present life and especially to bear with the distractions and dryness which pious souls experience in prayer.

As for distractions, of these we must not make any account; it is enough to drive them away when we perceive them. For the rest, even Saints suffer involuntary distractions, but they do not on this account leave off prayer. Neither must we do so ourselves. St. Francis de Sales said that, if in meditation we did nothing but drive away distractions again and again, our meditation would nevertheless be of great profit. Then, as for dryness, the greatest pain of souls given to prayer is to find themselves sometimes without any feeling of devotion, weary of it and without any sensible [i.e., “perceived”] desire of loving God; and with this is often joined the fear of being under God’s displeasure on account of their sins, for which He may have abandoned them; and being in this utter darkness, they know not any way of escaping from it, for it seems to them that every way is closed against them. Let the devout soul, then, continue firm not to leave off meditation, as the devil intends. At such times, let the soul unite its desolation with that which Jesus Christ suffered upon the Cross; and if it can say nothing else, it is enough to say this, at least by an act of the will: “My God, I desire to love Thee; I wish to be wholly Thine. Have pity on me; abandon me not!” Say also, as a holy soul used to say to God in a time of greatest desolation:

> “I love Thee, though I seem to be
> But hateful in Thy sight;
> And I will ever follow Thee
> Where’er Thou turn Thy flight.”

Reflection 35

IN GOD ALONE TRUE PEACE IS FOUND

HE that seeks peace in creatures will never find it, because no creatures are capable of giving contentment to the heart. God has created man for Himself, who is an infinite good; therefore, God alone can satisfy him. Hence it comes that many persons, though loaded with riches, honors and earthly pleasures, are never satisfied; they are ever yearning for more honors, more possessions, more amusements; and however many they obtain, they are always restless and never enjoy a day of true peace. “Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart.” (Psalms 36:4). When any person delights only in God and seeks nothing but God, God Himself will take care to satisfy all the desires of his heart; and then he will attain the happy state of those souls who desire nothing but to please God.

Senseless are they who say: “Happy is he who can employ himself as he likes, who can command others, who can take what pleasure he pleases.” It is madness; he alone is happy who loves God, who says that God alone is sufficient for him. Experience shows clearly that so many persons called fortunate by men of the world, however much they are raised up to the possession of great riches and great dignities, lead an unhappy life and never find rest.

But how is this that so many persons, rich and titled, and even princes, in the midst of the abundance of the goods of the world, do not find peace? And, on the contrary, so many good religious, who live retired in a cell, poor and hidden, live so contentedly? How was it that so many solitaries, living in a desert or in a cave, suffering hunger and cold, yet exulted with joy? It is because they lived for God alone, and God consoled them.

“The peace of God . . . surpasseth all understanding.” (Philippians 4:7). Oh, how much does not the peace which the Lord gives to those who love

Him exceed all the delights which the world can give! “O taste and see that the Lord is sweet!” (Psalms 33:9). O men of the world, cries the prophet, why will ye despise the life of the Saints, without having ever known it? Try it for once; leave the world, leave it and give yourselves to God, and you shall see how well He knows how to console you more than can all the grandeurs and delights of the world.

It is true that even the Saints suffer great trials in this life; but they, resigning themselves to the Will of God, never lose their peace. The lovers of the world are seen to be at times joyful and at times sad, but in truth they are ever restless and in trouble. On the contrary, the lovers of God are superior to all adversities and to the changes of this world, and therefore they always live in uniform tranquility. See how the celebrated Cardinal Petrucci describes a soul wholly given to God: “It beholds creatures around it changing into various forms, while within the depths of its heart, it lives ever united to God without change.”

But he who would be always united with God and would enjoy a continual peace must drive from his heart everything which is not God and live as one dead to earthly affections. O my God, give me help to disengage myself from all the snares which draw me to the world. Grant that I may think of nothing but pleasing Thee.

Happy are they for whom God alone is sufficient!

O Lord, give me grace that I may seek nothing but Thee and desire nothing but to love Thee and give Thee pleasure. For love of Thee I now renounce all earthly pleasure. I renounce also all spiritual consolations. I desire nothing but to do Thy will and to give Thee pleasure.

O Mother of God, recommend me to thy Son, who denies thee nothing.

Reflection 36

WE OUGHT TO HAVE GOD ALONE IN VIEW

IN ALL our actions we should have no other end in view but to please God, not to please our relations or friends or great people or ourselves, because everything which is not done for the sake of God is all lost. Many things are done to please or not to displease men, but says St. Paul: "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Galatians 1:10). God only must be regarded in everything we do, so that we may say as Jesus Christ said: "I do always the things that please Him." (John 8:29). God has given us everything we have; we have of our own only nothingness and sin. God alone is He who has truly loved us. He has loved us from eternity, and He has loved us even so as to give Himself to us upon the Cross and in the Sacrament of the Altar. God alone, therefore, deserves all our love. Unhappy is that soul which looks with affection upon any object upon earth to the displeasure of God. It will never know peace in this life and is in imminent peril of never enjoying peace in the next. But on the contrary, happy is he, O my God, who seeks Thee alone and renounces everything for Thy love! He will find that pearl of Thy pure love, a jewel more precious than all the treasures and kingdoms of the earth. He that does this, obtains the true liberty of the sons of God,

for he finds himself freed from all the bonds which draw him to earth and hinder him from uniting himself closely to God.

My God and my All, I prefer Thee to all riches, to honors, to knowledge, to glory, to expectations and to all the gifts which Thou couldst bestow on me. Thou art entirely my Good; Thee alone I desire and nothing more, for Thou alone art infinitely beautiful, infinitely kind, infinitely amiable; in a word, Thou art the Only Good. Wherefore, every gift which is not Thyself is not enough for me. I repeat, and I will ever repeat it, Thee alone I desire and nothing more; and whatever is less than Thee, I tell Thee, it is not sufficient for me.

Oh, when shall it be given me to occupy myself solely in praising Thee, loving Thee and pleasing Thee, so that I shall no more think of creatures, nor even of myself? O my Lord and my Love, help me when Thou seest me growing cold in Thy love, in danger of giving my affection to creatures and to earthly pleasures. “Put forth Thy hand from on high, take me out, and deliver me from many waters.” (Psalms 143:7). Deliver me at that time from the danger of going far away from Thee.

Let others seek what they will; nothing pleases me and I desire nothing but Thee, my God, my Love and my Hope: “What have I in Heaven? And besides Thee, what do I desire upon earth? . . . Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.” (Psalms 75:25–26). My God and my all!

O men, let us undeceive ourselves! All the good which comes to us from creatures is but dust, smoke and deceits; God alone is He who can satisfy us. But in this life He does not grant us to enjoy Him fully; He only gives us certain foretastes of the good things which He promises in Heaven. There He awaits us to satiate us with His own bliss, when He will say to us: “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” (Matthew 25:21). The Lord gives heavenly consolations to His servants, only to make them yearn for that happiness which He prepares for them in Paradise.

O Almighty God, O God worthy of love, grant that in all things from henceforth we may aim at nothing and seek nothing but Thy pleasure. Grant that Thou mayest be our All and our only Love, since Thou alone, both in justice and in gratitude, dost deserve all our affections. Nothing gives me greater pain than the thought that in times past I have so little loved Thine Infinite Goodness, but I desire and resolve, with Thy help, to love Thee with all my strength for the time to come, and thus I hope to die, loving Thee alone, my Sovereign Good.

O Mary, Mother of God, pray for me, a miserable creature. Thy prayers are never refused; pray to Jesus that He may make me entirely His own.

Reflection 37

EVERYTHING SHOULD BE ENDURED TO PLEASE GOD

THIS has been the one only and dearest endeavor of all the Saints, to desire with their whole heart to endure every toil, all contempt, every pain, in order to give pleasure to God and thus to please that Divine Heart which so much deserves to be loved and loves us so much.

In this consists all perfection and the love of a soul for God—in its always seeking the pleasure of God and doing that which most pleases God. Oh blessed is he who can say with Jesus Christ: “I do always the things that please Him!” (John 8:29). And what greater honor, what greater consolation can a soul have than to go through some fatigue or to accept some affliction with the thought of giving pleasure to God? Too great is our obligation to give pleasure to that God who has loved us so much, who has given us all that we possess and who, not content with giving us so many good things, has gone so far as to give Himself to us, first on the Cross, dying upon it for love of us, and afterwards in the Sacrament of the Altar, where He gives Himself entirely to us in Holy Communion, so that He has nothing more that He can give us.

On this account, the Saints knew not what more they could do in order to give pleasure to God. How many young nobles have left the world in order to give themselves wholly to God! How many young maidens, even of royal blood, have renounced marriage with the great in order to shut themselves up in a cloister! How many anchorites have gone to hide themselves in deserts and caves in order to meditate upon God alone! How many martyrs have embraced scourges and red-hot iron plates and the most cruel torments of tyrants in order to please God! In a word, in order to give pleasure to God, the Saints have stripped themselves of their possessions, have renounced the greatest earthly dignities and have accepted as treasures, infirmities, persecutions, the loss of their goods and a death the most painful and desolate.

The good pleasure of God, therefore, if we truly love it, ought to be preferred by us to the acquisition of all the riches, of all the honors, of all the delights of earth, and even of Paradise itself. Yes, for it is certain that all the Blessed, if they were to know that it would please God more that they should burn in Hell, one and all, even the Mother of God, would cast themselves into that abyss of fire and suffer eternally in order to give greater pleasure to God.

For this end has God placed us in the world, in order that we may labor to please Him and give Him glory. Wherefore, to give satisfaction to God ought to be the one object of all our desires, of all our thoughts and actions. Well does that Heart deserve to be pleased in all things which has so greatly loved us and is so anxious for our good.

But how is it, O Lord, that I, an ungrateful wretch, instead of seeking to give Thee pleasure, have so often displeased Thee? Yet the detestation which Thou makest me feel for the sins I have committed against Thee causes me to hope that Thou art willing to pardon me.

Pardon me, then, and suffer me not to be ungrateful to Thee any more. Grant that I may overcome everything to give Thee pleasure. “In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.” (Psalms 30:1).

O Queen of Heaven and my mother, draw me entirely to God.

Reflection 38

BLESSED IS HE WHO DESIRES NOTHING BUT GOD

“BLESSED are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Matthew 5:3). By “the poor in spirit” are meant those who are poor in earthly desires, and wish for nothing but God. These are poor in affection, but not in reality, since they live contented, even in this life; and therefore Our Lord does not say: “Theirs shall be the kingdom of heaven,” but “theirs is,” because even in this life they are rich in spiritual goods which they receive from God. Thus, however poor they are in temporal goods, they live content with their condition. They are different from those who are rich in earthly desires, who in the present life, whatever riches they possess, are always poor and live discontented. For the good things of this life do not satisfy our thirst, however much they are increased; wherefore, these persons are never contented, never attaining to the acquisition of as much as they desire.

In order to enrich us with true riches, Jesus Christ chose to be poor, as the Apostle writes: “He became poor for your sakes, that through His poverty you might be rich.” (2 Corinthians 8:9). He chose to be poor, in order to teach us by His example to despise earthly goods and thus to make us rich with heavenly goods, which are immensely more precious and are eternal. Therefore, He declared that whoever did not renounce everything on earth that he possesses with attachment could not be His true follower.

Happy is he who desires nothing but God and says with St. Paulinus: “Let the rich have their riches and kings their kingdoms; Christ is my riches and my kingdom.” Let us persuade ourselves that God alone can content us, but He does not fully content any but those souls that love Him with all their hearts. And what room can the love of God find in a heart that is full of this earth? Such people may go often to Communion and pay frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament, but because this love of earth is in their hearts, God cannot wholly possess them and enrich them as He would.

Many souls lament that in their meditations and Communions and in their other most devout exercises they do not find God. To such, St. Teresa says: “Detach thy heart from creatures, and thou shalt find God.” Let us strip ourselves of every affection which is of earth, and especially of our own will. Let us give to God our whole will without reserve and say to Him: “Lord, do Thou dispose of me and of all I have as Thou pleasest; I desire nothing but what Thou desirest, and I know that what Thou willest is best for me. Grant me, then, that I may ever love Thee, and I desire nothing more.”

Now, the only means to detach ourselves from creatures is to acquire a great love for God. If the love of God does not succeed in obtaining the mastery over our whole will, we shall never succeed in becoming saints. The means for acquiring this all-holy love is prayer. Let us constantly pray to God to give us His love, for thus we shall find ourselves detached from everything created. Divine love is a thief, which in a holy way robs us of all earthly affections and causes us to say: “What else do I desire but Thee alone, O God of my heart!”

“Love is strong as death.” (Canticle of Canticles 8:6). This means, that as there is no power which resists death, so there is nothing, even of things most difficult to overcome, which can resist divine love. Love conquers all. By the love of God the holy martyrs conquered the fiercest torments, and the most painful deaths.

Oh happy, in a word, is he who can say with David: “What have I in Heaven? And besides Thee, what do I desire upon earth? . . . Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever!” (Psalms 72:2526). What else can I desire in this life and in eternity but Thee alone, O my God? Let others have the good things they desire; be Thou, O God of my heart, my only Good; be Thou all my Peace.

Alas, the soul is always in danger of abandoning God and being lost, so long as it has not given itself wholly to God; while he who has truly given himself entirely to God can rest secure of never leaving Him, because Our Lord is indeed kind and faithful to everyone who has given himself to Him without reserve. But why is it that some persons who at first lived a holy life afterwards fell so grievously that they left little hope of their salvation?

Why is this? Because, I answer, they had not given themselves wholly to God, and this their fall is the proof of it.

O my God, and my true Lover, suffer not that my soul, which was created to love Thee, should love anything apart from Thee and should not wholly belong to Thee, who hast purchased me with Thy blood. O my Jesus, how is it possible that, after having known the love which Thou hast borne me, I can love any object besides Thee? Draw me always more within Thy heart; make me forget everything, so that I may not seek nor sigh after anything but Thy love. O my Jesus, in Thee I trust.

O Mary, Mother of God, in thee are my hopes; detach me from the love of everything which is not God, that He may be the object of all my affections and of my eternal happiness.

Reflection 39

ON DRYNESS OF SPIRIT

SAINT FRANCIS de Sales says that true devotion and the true love of God do not consist in feeling spiritual consolations in prayer and other devout exercises, but in having a resolute will to do and to will nothing but what God wills. This is the one end for which we should apply ourselves to prayer, to Communion, to mortification and to every other thing which is pleasing to God, although we do them without relish and in the midst of a thousand temptations and in weariness of spirit. “With aridity and temptations,” says St. Teresa, “God makes trial of those who love Him. Even if the whole life should be passed in dryness, let not the soul leave off prayer; the time will come when all will be abundantly rewarded.”

As the masters of the spiritual life recommend, in a time of desolation we ought principally to exercise ourselves in acts of humility and resignation. There is no better time for learning our own helplessness and our misery than when we are dry in prayer, wearied, distracted and disgusted, without any sensible fervor, and even without any apparent desires of making progress in divine love. At such times let the soul say: “Lord, have mercy upon me; behold how powerless I am to make even a good act!” Besides, we must resign ourselves and say: “O my God, is it Thy will to keep me thus in darkness, thus in affliction? May Thy holy will be ever done. I desire not to be consoled; it is enough for me to remain here, solely to give Thee pleasure.” And thus we ought to persevere in our prayer during the appointed time.

The greatest pain, however, which a soul given to prayer suffers is not so much dryness, as a darkness in which it finds itself stripped of all good will, and tempted against Faith and against Hope. Sometimes, in addition, it experiences violent attacks of temptations and such distrust that it is in grievous fear of having lost even the grace of God; and it seems to it, as if on account of its sins, God had already driven it away from Him and had abandoned it, so that in this state, the soul looks upon itself as if hated by God; and therefore, at such times even solitude torments it, and mental prayer seems to it a kind of hell. Then must it take courage, and it must know that these fears of having yielded to temptation or to despair are indeed fears and the torment of the soul, but not voluntary acts and therefore are free from sin. At such a time a person really resists temptation with his will, though on account of the darkness which bewilders him, he is not able distinctly to perceive it. And this is proved by experience, for if afterwards he were to be tempted to commit knowingly a simple venial sin, his soul, which loves God, would rather accept death a thousand times.

On this account, we must not trouble ourselves at such times to attain a certainty that we are in the grace of God and that there was no sin. You then want to know and to be sure that God loves you, but at this time God does not choose to let you know it. He wills that you should only strive to humble yourself and trust in His Goodness and resign yourself to His Will. You want to see, and God does not will that you should see. For the rest, St. Francis de Sales says that the resolution which you have (at least in your will) to love God and not to give Him deliberately the least displeasure is an assurance that you are in the grace of God. Abandon yourself, therefore, at such times into the arms of the Divine Mercy; protest to God that you desire nothing but Him and His Will, and fear not. Oh, how dear to Almighty God are these acts of confidence and resignation made in the midst of this terrible darkness!

For forty-one years St. Jane Frances de Chantal suffered these interior pains, accompanied by horrible temptations and by fears that she was in a state of sin and was abandoned by God. So great was her anguish that she used to say that the thought of death was the only thing which at this time gave her relief. She said: “Sometimes it seems to me that my patience is exhausted and that I am on the point of giving up everything and of abandoning myself to perdition.” For the last eight or nine years of her life, her temptations, instead of diminishing, became more terrible, so that whether she was praying or working, her interior martyrdom was such as to excite compassion in everyone who was intimate with her. It seemed to her sometimes that God drove her from Him, so that to relieve herself, she turned her thoughts away from God. But not finding the relief she sought, she turned again to the contemplation of God, even though He seemed angry with her. In meditations, in Communions and in other devout exercises, she experienced nothing but weariness and anguish. She seemed to herself to be like a sick person overwhelmed with diseases, incapable of turning herself to another side; dumb, so as not to be able to explain her sufferings; and blind, so that she could see no way of escaping from the depths of her misery. She seemed to have lost divine love, and Hope, and Faith; for the rest, she kept her eyes fixed upon God, reposing in the arms of the Divine Will. In a word, St. Francis de Sales used to say of her that her blessed soul was like a deaf musician, who sang most admirably, but had no pleasure in his voice, because he could not hear it. The soul, therefore, which finds itself tried with dryness must not lose courage, however much it may feel overwhelmed by darkness, but must trust in the blood of Jesus Christ and resign itself to the Divine Will and say:

"O Jesus, my Hope, and the only Love of my soul, I deserve not consolations; give them to those who have always loved Thee; I have deserved Hell and to be there forever, abandoned by Thee without hope of ever being able to love Thee. But no, my Saviour, I accept every suffering; chastise me as much as Thou wilt, but deprive me not of the power of loving Thee. Take from me everything, but not Thyself. Miserable as I am, I love Thee more than myself, and I give myself wholly to Thee; I resolve to live no more for myself. Give me strength to be faithful to Thee.

"O holy Virgin, Hope of Sinners, I place my confidence in thy intercession; make me love my God, for He has created and has redeemed me."

Reflection 40

ON A LIFE OF RETIREMENT

SOULS that love God find their paradise in a retired life in which they are removed from intercourse with men. No, to converse with God, withdrawing one's self from creatures, does not bring bitterness or weariness. "His conversation hath no bitterness, nor His company any tediousness, but joy and gladness." (Cf. Wisdom 8:16).

Worldly people, with good reason, flee from solitude, because in solitude, where they are not occupied with diversions or worldly affairs, the remorse of conscience makes itself felt more in their hearts; and therefore such persons seek to relieve themselves, or at least to distract their thoughts, by conversing with men; but the more they study to relieve themselves among men and among worldly affairs, the more they meet with thorns and bitter disappointments.

To the lovers of God this does not happen, because in retirement they find a Sweet Companion who consoles them and makes them glad, more than the company of all their friends or relations, or of the highest personages of the earth. St. Bernard used to say: "I am never less alone than when alone, never less alone than when far from men, for then I find God, who speaks to me, and then I see myself, on the other hand, more attentive to His voice and more disposed to unite myself to Him." Our Blessed Saviour desired that His disciples, notwithstanding that He had destined them to propagate the Faith by journeying throughout the whole world, should from time to time cease their labors and retire into solitude, to treat with God alone. We know, moreover, that Jesus Christ, even at the time when He was living on earth, was accustomed to send them into different parts of Judea, that they might convert sinners; but after their labors, He did not fail to invite them to retire to some solitary place, saying to them: "Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little. For there were many coming and going, and they had not so much as time to eat." (Matthew 6:31).

If Our Lord said even to the Apostles, "rest a little," it is therefore necessary for all apostolic laborers to retire from time to time into solitude to preserve their spirit of recollection and union with God and to obtain strength to labor afterwards with greater vigor for the salvation of souls.

He that labors for his neighbor with but little zeal and with little love for God, having some end in view dictated by self-love, of seeking to gain honor or wealth, does little for gaining souls. Therefore, Our Lord says to His laborers: "Rest a little." Certainly Jesus Christ did not mean by this expression that the Apostles were to go to sleep, but that they should repose in holding communion with God, in praying to Him for the graces necessary for living well, and thus should gain strength to employ themselves afterwards for the salvation of souls. Otherwise, without this repose with God in prayer, there is an absence of the vigor necessary to attend well to one's own progress and to the profit of others.

St. Lawrence Justinian, speaking of retirement, wisely remarks that it is to be always loved, but not always enjoyed: meaning to say that they who are called by God to labor for the conversion of sinners must not remain always in solitude, shut up in a cell, for they would be neglecting their divine vocation, to obey which, when God calls them, they must leave their retirement. Yet they should never cease to love and to sigh for solitude, in which God allows Himself to be more easily found.

O my Jesus, I have loved retirement little, because I have loved Thee little. I have gone seeking pleasures and relaxations from creatures, who have made me lose Thee, the Infinite Good. Alas, that for so many years I have kept my heart dissipated, thinking only of the goods of earth, and forgetting Thee! Oh take Thou for Thyself this heart of mine, since Thou hast purchased it with Thy blood! Inflame it with Thy love and make it entirely Thine own.

O Mary, Queen of Heaven, thou canst obtain for me this grace; from thee I hope for it.

Reflection 41

ON DETACHMENT FROM CREATURES

IN ORDER to attain to loving God with all our hearts, we must detach ourselves from everything which is not God, or does not tend toward God. He wills to be alone in the possession of our hearts; He admits no companions there, and with reason, because He is our only Lord, who has given us everything. Yet more, He is our only Lover, who loves us, not for His own interest, but solely out of His Goodness; and because He loves us exceedingly, He demands that we should love Him with all our hearts: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.” (Matthew 22:37).

To love God with our whole heart implies two things: the first is to banish every affection which is not for God, or according to the will of God. “If I knew,” said St. Francis de Sales, “that there was one fiber in my heart which did not belong to God, I would instantly tear it out.” The second is prayer, by which divine love is introduced into the heart. But if the heart does not empty itself of all that is of the earth, love cannot enter, for it finds no room for itself. On the contrary, a heart detached from all creatures becomes quickly inflamed and increases in divine love at every breath of grace.

“Pure love,” says the holy Bishop of Geneva, “consumes everything which is not God, in order to change it into itself, because everything which is done for God, is love of God.” Oh how full of goodness and liberality is God to the soul which seeks nothing but Him and His Will! “The Lord is good . . . to the soul that seeketh Him.” (Lamentations 3:25). Happy is he who, still living in the world, can say with truth, as did St. Francis: “My God and my all!” And thus he can hold in contempt all the vanities of the world. “I have despised the kingdom of the world and all worldly honor for the love of Jesus Christ, my Lord.”

When, therefore, creatures would enter into our heart and take a share of that love, which we owe entirely to God, we must immediately dismiss them, shutting the door against them and saying: “Begone; go to those who desire you; my heart I have given wholly to Jesus Christ; there is no room for you.” And besides this resolution to desire nothing but God, we likewise must hate that which the world loves and love that which the world hates.

Above all, to attain to perfect love, we must deny ourselves, embracing that which is distasteful to self-love and rejecting that which self-love demands. A certain thing is pleasant to us; for that very reason we must refuse it. A certain medicine is disagreeable, because it is bitter; we must take it, just because it is bitter. We do not like to oblige a certain person who has been ungrateful to us; we must by all means do him good, precisely because he has been ungrateful.

St. Francis de Sales says, moreover, that we must love even virtues with detachment; for example, we ought to love meditation and retirement; but when they are forbidden to us through the calls of obedience or of charity, we must leave both the one and the other without being disquieted. And thus it is necessary to embrace with equanimity everything which happens to us through the Will of God. Happy is he who wishes, or does not wish for, whatever happens to him, because God wills or does not will it, without inclining to either side. And therefore, we must beg of God to enable us to find peace in everything which He appoints us.

Let us listen to the words of Cardinal Petrucci, who in a few lines describes well the folly of the lovers of the world and the happiness of the lovers of God:

“What is this fickle world
So false and vain?
A scene of blasted hopes,
Remorse and pain.
Its sweetest charms, its feasts,
Its gilded toys
Bring tortures, though they seemed
Nought else but joys.
Then bravely follow Christ,
The cross endure:

It seems to torture, yet
Gives joys most pure."

It is certain that no one lives more happily in the world, than he who despises the things of the world and lives in continual uniformity with the Will of God. Therefore, it is useful frequently during the day, at least at prayer and Communion, to renew at the foot of the crucifix the total renouncement of ourselves and of all we have, saying:

"O my Jesus, I desire to think no more of myself; I give myself wholly to Thee; do with me what Thou pleasest. I see that everything that the world offers me is vanity and deceit. From this day, I resolve to seek nothing but Thee and Thy good pleasure; help me to be faithful to Thee.

"Most Holy Virgin Mary, pray to Jesus for me."

Reflection 42

PRECIOUS IS THE DEATH OF THE SAINTS

"PRECIOUS in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints." (Psalms 115:15). Why is the death of the Saints called precious? "Because," replies St. Bernard, "it is so rich in blessings that it deserves to be purchased at any price."

Some persons attached to this world would wish that there was no such thing as death; but St. Augustine says: "What is it to live long upon this earth except to remain long in suffering?" "The miseries and sorrows which constantly afflict us in this present life are so great," says St. Ambrose, "that death seems rather a relief than a punishment."

Death terrifies sinners because they know that from the first death, if they die in sin, they will pass to the second death, which is eternal; but it does not terrify the good, who, trusting in the merits of Jesus Christ, have sufficient signs to give them a moral assurance that they are in the grace of God. Wherefore, those words, "Depart, Christian soul, from this world," which are so terrible to those who die against their will, do not afflict the Saints, who have preserved their hearts free from worldly love and with a true affection were always repeating: "My God and my all."

To these, death is not a torment, but a rest from the anguish they have suffered in struggling with temptations and in quieting their scruples and their fear of offending God, so that what St. John writes of them is fulfilled: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord! From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors." (Apocalypse 14:13). He that dies loving God is not disturbed by the pains which death brings with it; but rather, he is glad of them, that he may offer them to God as the last remnants of his life. Oh what peace is experienced by him who dies when he has abandoned himself into the arms of Jesus Christ, who chose for

Himself a death of bitterness and desolation, that He might obtain for us a death of sweetness and resignation!

O my Jesus, Thou art my judge, but Thou art also my Redeemer, who hast died to save me. From the time of my first sin, I deserved to be condemned to Hell, but in Thy mercy Thou hast given me a deep sorrow for my sins; wherefore, I confidently hope that now Thou hast pardoned me. I did not deserve to love Thee anymore, but Thou by Thy benefits hast drawn me to Thy love. If it is Thy will that death should come to me in this sickness, I willingly accept it. I well see that I do not deserve to enter Paradise at once; I go contented to Purgatory, to suffer as long as it pleases Thee. There my greatest pain will be to remain far from Thee, sighing to come and see Thee and love Thee face to face. Therefore, O my beloved Saviour, have pity on me.

And what else is this present life but a state of perpetual danger of losing God? "We walk amidst snares," says St. Ambrose; amidst the snares and deceits of enemies who seek to make us lose the divine grace. Therefore, St. Teresa, every time that the clock struck, gave thanks to God that another hour of struggle and peril had passed without sin; and therefore also, she was so rejoiced at the tidings that her death was at hand, considering that her conflicts were over and the time was near for her to depart and behold her God.

In this present life we cannot live without defects. This is the motive which makes souls that love God even desire death. It was this thought which, at the time of death, rejoiced Father Vincent Carafa when he said: "Now that I finish my life, I cease to offend God." A certain virtuous man gave directions to his attendants that, at the time of his death, they should often repeat to him these words: "Comfort thyself, because the time is near when thou wilt no more offend God."

And what else is this body to us but a prison in which the soul is confined, so that it cannot depart to unite itself with God? On this account, St. Francis, inflamed with love at the hour of his death, cried out with the prophet: "Bring my soul out of prison." (Psalms 141:8). O Lord, deliver me from this prison which prevents me from seeing Thee. O amiable death, who can fear thee and not desire thee, since thou art the end of labor and the beginning of eternal life! St. Pionius the Martyr, standing by the scaffold, showed himself so full of joy that the people who stood by wondered at his delight and asked him how he could be so happy when he was just about to die. “You are mistaken,” said he, “you are mistaken; I am not hastening to death, but to life.”

O most sweet Jesus, I thank Thee for not having made me die when I was under Thy wrath and for having won my heart by so many loving artifices which Thou hast employed. When I think of the displeasure I have often given Thee, I should wish to die of grief. This my soul, which once was lost, I now commit wholly into Thy hands. “Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.” (Luke 23:46). Remember, O Lord, that Thou hast redeemed it with Thy death. “Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.” (Psalms 30:6). I love Thee, O Infinite Goodness, and I desire to depart quickly from this life, that I may come and love Thee with a more perfect love in Heaven. Meanwhile, as long as I shall live on this earth, make me know always better my obligation to love Thee. O my God, receive me; I give myself wholly to Thee, and I put my trust in Thee through the merits of Jesus Christ.

I trust also in thy intercession, O Mary, my hope.

Reflection 43

ON LUKEWARMNESS

THERE are two kinds of lukewarmness: one which can be avoided, and the other which cannot be avoided. Unavoidable tepidity is that which in the present life is endured even by fervent souls because, through natural weakness, they cannot avoid falling from time to time into some slight fault, but without full consent. From such defects, no one, because of the corruption of our nature through Original Sin, is free, without a most special grace, which was granted to no one but the Mother of God. God Himself permits these imperfections in His Saints in order to keep them humble. Often they find themselves without fervor, full of weariness and disgust in their devout exercises; and at such times of dryness they are more apt to fall into many defects, at least without deliberation. For the rest, let not those who find themselves in this condition leave off their usual devotions, nor lose courage, nor believe that they have fallen into lukewarmness, for this is not lukewarmness. Let them go on with their accustomed exercises, let them detest their defects, let them often renew their resolution of giving themselves wholly to God, and let them have confidence in Him, for He will console them. There is true and deplorable lukewarmness when the soul falls into venial sins which are quite voluntary and grieves but little for them and takes even less care to avoid them, saying that they are trifles of no consequence. What! Is it nothing to displease God? St. Teresa used to say to her nuns: “My daughters, may God preserve you from willful sins, however small.”

Some people say: “But such sins do not deprive us of the grace of God.” He who says this is in great danger of seeing himself one day deprived of divine grace and in a state of mortal sin. St. Gregory writes that whoever falls into deliberate venial sins habitually, without feeling pain at it and without thinking of correcting himself, does not remain where he is, but will go on and fall down a precipice. [i.e., into mortal sin]. “The soul never stays on the spot where it falls.” Mortal diseases do not always spring from serious disorders, but often from many slight disorders of long continuance; and thus the fall of certain souls into a state of sin is often to be attributed to the repetition of venial sins, which make the soul so weak, that when attacked by any violent temptation, it has no strength to resist and therefore falls.

“He that contemneth [shows contempt for] small things shall fall by little and little.” (Ecclesiasticus 19:1). He that makes no account of trifling falls, will one day find himself down a precipice [i.e., in mortal sin]. Our Lord said: “Because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth.” (Apocalypse 3:16). This signifies that the soul will be abandoned by God, or at least deprived of those special divine aids which are necessary to preserve us in the state of grace. Let us understand well this point: The Council of Trent condemns those who say that we can persevere in grace without a special help from God: “If any one shall say that a man who is justified . . . can persevere in the justice he has received without the special help of God, . . . let him be anathema.” (Council of Trent, Session 6, Canon 22). Therefore, we cannot persevere in grace without a special extraordinary help from God; but this special help God will justly refuse to one who makes no account of committing many venial sins with his eyes open. Is God bound to give this special help to one who does not abstain from willfully causing Him continual displeasure? “He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly.” (2 Corinthians 9:6). If we are niggardly with God, how can we hope that God will be generous towards us?

Miserable is that soul which makes peace with sins, even when venial! He will go from bad to worse; for his passions, ever gaining ground upon him, will easily blind him; and when a man is blind, it is easy for him to find himself fallen down a precipice [into mortal sin] when least he expects it. Let us fear to fall into voluntary tepidity, for it is like hectic fever [consumption, i.e., tuberculosis], which does not cause much alarm, but is so malignant that with great difficulty is anyone cured of it.

For the rest, though it is very difficult for a lukewarm person to amend, yet there are remedies, if only he is resolved to amend. The remedies are: 1) a resolution to escape at all costs from this miserable state; 2) to remove the occasion of falling, without which there is no hope of amendment; and 3) frequently to recommend himself to God with fervent prayer, that He would give him strength to come out of this deplorable condition and not to cease praying until he finds himself delivered from it.

O Lord, have mercy on me. I see that I deserve to be cast forth by Thee for so many defects with which I serve Thee. Miserable that I am, it is for this reason I find myself without love, without confidence and without good desires. O my Jesus, abandon me not; stretch forth Thy powerful hand and draw me out of this depth of lukewarmness in which I see myself fallen. Grant this through the merits of Thy Passion, in which I place my confidence.

O holy Virgin, pray to Jesus for me.

Reflection 44

ON PURITY OF INTENTION

PURITY of intention consists in performing everything we do solely to please God. Jesus Christ has said that according to the intention, whether it be good or evil, such before God is the action performed. “If thy eye be evil, thy whole body shall be darksome.” (Matthew 6:23). The single eye signifies a pure intention of pleasing God; the dark and evil eye signifies an intention which is not pure, as when our actions are done out of vanity or to please ourselves.

Can any action be more noble than to give one’s life for the Faith? And yet St. Paul says, that he who dies from any motive but to please God gains nothing by his martyrdom.

If, then, even martyrdom profits nothing, unless it be endured for God, of what value will be all the preaching, all the labors of apostolic men, and also all the austerities of penitents, if they are done to obtain the praise of men or to gratify one’s inclination?

The prophet Aggæus says that works, although holy in themselves, if not done for God, are put into bags full of holes—which means that they are all lost directly and that nothing remains of them. On the contrary, every action done with an intention of pleasing God, of however little value in itself, is worth more than many works done without a pure intention.

We read in St. Mark that the poor widow cast into the chest for alms in the Temple only two mites, but yet of her our Saviour said: “This poor widow hath cast in more than all.” (Mark 12:43). St. Cyprian remarks on this that she put in more than all the others because she gave those two little pieces of money with the pure intention of pleasing God.

One of the best signs by which to know if a person acts with a right intention is that, if the work have not the effect desired, he will not be at all disturbed. Another good sign is that, when he has performed any work and afterwards is spoken ill of for it, or is repaid with ingratitude, he nevertheless remains contented and tranquil. For the rest, should he happen to be praised for it, he ought not to disquiet himself with the fear of vainglory; but should the thought present itself, let him despise it and say with St. Bernard: “I did not begin it for thee, nor because of thee will I leave it.”

To act with an intention of acquiring more glory in Heaven is good, but the most perfect intention is to please God. Let us be persuaded that the more we divest ourselves of our own interests, so much the more will Our Lord increase our joy in Paradise. Blessed is he who labors only to give glory to God and to follow His holy will! Let us imitate the love of the Blessed who, in loving God, seek only to please Him. St. Chrysostom says: “If thou hast the honor of doing anything that pleases God, how canst thou ask any other reward?”

This is that single eye which pierces the heart of God with love toward us; as He said to the sacred Spouse: “Thou hast wounded My heart, My sister, My spouse; thou hast wounded My heart with one of thy eyes.” (Canticle of Canticles 4:9). This one eye signifies the one end that holy souls have in all their actions, that of pleasing God. And this was the counsel that the Apostle gave to his disciples: “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31). The venerable Beatrice of the Incarnation, the first daughter of St. Teresa, said: “No sufficient price could be paid for anything, however small, which is done for God.” And with reason did she say this, for all works done for God are acts of divine love. Purity of intention makes the lowest actions become precious, such as eating, working, or even taking recreation, when all is done from obedience, and to please God.

We must, then, from the very morning direct to God all the actions of the day; and it is very profitable to renew this intention at the beginning of every action, at least of the most important, such as meditation, Communion, and spiritual reading; pausing a little at the beginning of these, like that holy hermit who, before beginning anything he had to do, lifted his eyes to Heaven and remained still; and when he was asked what he was then doing, he replied: “I am making sure of my aim.”

And I, O my Jesus, when shall I begin to love Thee truly? Alas, for me! If I seek among my works, even those that are good, for one action done only to please Thee, my Saviour, I do not find it. Ah then, have pity on me, and suffer me not to serve Thee so ill, even till my death! Grant me Thy help, that what remains to me of life I may spend only in serving and loving Thee. Make me overcome all, that I may please Thee and do everything only to give Thee pleasure. Through the merits of Thy Passion I ask it.

O my great Advocate, Mary, obtain for me this grace by thy prayers.

Reflection 45

SIGHS FOR OUR HEAVENLY HOME

HAPPY is he who is saved and who, leaving this place of exile, enters into the heavenly Jerusalem, to enjoy that perfect day which shall be always day and always joyful, free from all cares and from all fear of ever losing that immense happiness.

The patriarch Jacob said: “The days of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years, few and evil.” (Genesis 47:9). The same may be said by us miserable pilgrims, while we remain on this earth, enduring the labors of our exile, distressed by temptations, harassed by passions, and afflicted by miseries and still more by the dangers to our eternal salvation. Seeing all this, we should reflect that this is not our home, but a land of exile where God detains us, in order that we may, by suffering, merit to enter one day into the happy country of Heaven.

And therefore, living detached from this earth, we ought always to sigh for Paradise saying: “When shall it be, O Lord, that I shall be delivered from so many anxieties and think of nothing but of loving Thee and praising Thee? When shall it be that Thou wilt be all to me in all things, as the Apostle writes: ‘That God may be all in all?’ (1 Corinthians 15:28). When shall I enjoy that unchanging peace, free from all affliction and from all danger of being lost? When, O my God, shall I find myself swallowed up in Thee and behold Thine infinite beauty, face to face and without veil? When, in a word, O my Creator, shall I attain to the possession of Thee in such a manner that I may say: ‘My God, I cannot lose Thee anymore?’ ”

Meanwhile, O my Saviour, while Thou seest me an exile and afflicted in this land of enemies, where I have to be fighting in ceaseless internal wars, help me by Thy grace and console me in this so sorrowful a pilgrimage. Whatever the world may offer me, I already know that nothing in it can give me peace and satisfy me; but yet I fear lest, if I have not help from

Thee, the pleasures of the world and my evil inclinations may draw me down some precipice [of committing mortal sin].

Seeing myself an exile in this valley of tears, I would wish at least to think of Thee continually, O my God, and rejoice in that infinite happiness which Thou enjoyest; but the evil desires of the senses often cry out within me and disturb me. I would wish to keep my affections ever occupied in loving Thee and thanking Thee, but the flesh entices me to enjoy sensual delights; hence, I am constrained to exclaim with St. Paul: “Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24). Miserable man that I am, in continual combat, not only with external enemies, but with myself, so that I am weighted down and a trouble to myself! “I am become burdensome to myself,” said holy Job. (Job 7:20).

Who, then, will deliver me from the body of this death, that is, from the danger of falling into sin, from that peril, the fear only of which is to me a continual death, which torments me and will not cease to torment me all my life through? “O God, be not Thou far from me; O my God, make haste to my help.” (Psalms 70:12).

My God, go not far from me, because if Thou goest from me, I fear I shall displease Thee. Rather, draw nearer to me with Thy powerful help; that is, succor me continually, that I may be able to resist the attacks of my enemies. The Royal Prophet tells me that Thou art near, that is, that Thou dost give holy patience to all who are sorrowful of heart and are in interior affliction. “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart.” (Psalms 33:19). Remain very near me, then, my beloved Saviour, and give me that patience that I need to overcome the continual attacks by which I am tormented. How often, when I apply myself to prayer, do not troublesome thoughts draw me away and distract me with a thousand follies! Do Thou give me strength to drive them from me, when occupied with Thee, and crucify all the evil inclinations that hinder me from uniting myself with Thee. And take from me, I pray Thee, the great repugnance that I feel to embrace with resignation anything that is not agreeable to my self-love.

O house of my God, prepared for those that love Thee, to Thee I sigh from this land of misery. “I have gone astray, like a sheep that is lost; seek Thy servant.” (Psalms 118:176). O beloved Shepherd of my soul, who didst descend from Heaven to seek and to save the lost sheep, behold, I am one who, turning my back on Thee, am miserably lost. Seek Thy servant, seek me, O Lord; abandon me not as I deserve; seek me and save me; take me and hold me tight upon Thy shoulders, that I may not leave Thee again.

But, even while I am longing for Paradise, my enemy is terrifying me with the remembrance of my sins; but the sight of Thee, my crucified Jesus, consoles me and gives me courage to hope that one day I shall come to love Thee and behold Thee unveiled in Thy blessed Kingdom.

Queen of Heaven, continue to be my advocate. Through the blood of Jesus Christ and through thy intercession, I have a firm hope of being saved.

LETTERS OF SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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The Centenary Edition

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Bishop of Saint Agatha and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

EDITED BY

REV. EUGENE GRIMM,

Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

THE ASCETICAL WORKS.

Volume XVIII.

LETTERS.

Volume I.

PART I.

General Correspondence

THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION.

RÑDE PATER:

Memoriam gloriosi Congregationis SS. Redemptoris Fundatoris, centesimo, ab ejus obitu, adventante anno, pio et admodum opportuno consilio recolere aggressus es, dum omnia ipsius opera anglice vertenda, et typis edenda curasti. Summus itaque Pontifex, cui tum S. Doctoris exaltatio, turn fidelium utilitas summopere cordi est libentissime excepit 9 volumina huc usque edita, quæ Ei offerre voluisti. Ac dum meritas Tibi laudes de hac perutili tua cura præbet, et gratias de filiali oblatione agit, Benedictionem, quam tuis obsequentissimis litteris petiisti, Emi quoque archiepiscopi Baltimorensis commendationi obsecundans, ex intimo corde impertiit.

Hæc ad Te deferens fausta cuncta ac felicia a Domino Tibi adprecor.

Paternitatis Tuæ,

Addictissimus,

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.

ROMAE, die 4 Junii, 1888.

TRANSLATION.

REVEREND FATHER:

As the centenary of the death of the illustrious Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer drew near, you conceived the pious and appropriate plan of shedding a new lustre on his memory by translating all his works into English and publishing them. The Holy Father, therefore who has at heart the spiritual advancement of the faithful, as well as the exaltation of the holy Doctor, has most graciously accepted the nine volumes thus far published, which you wished to present to him. While bestowing upon you well-deserved praise for your useful labor, and thanking you for the gift inspired by your filial love, he gives you from his heart the blessing which you humbly asked for in your letter, complying also with the request of the Most Rev. Archbishop of Baltimore.

As the bearer of this, I wish you all happiness in the Lord.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.

ROME, June 4. 1888.

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APPROBATION.

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Nicholas Mauron, Superior-General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled “Letters,” which is Vol. XVIII. of the new and complete edition in English of the works of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, called “The Centenary Edition.”

FERDINAND A. LITZ,

Sup. Prov. Baltimorensis.

BALTIMORE, MD., August 5, 1890.

CONTENTS

INDEX

LETTERS OF SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

CONTENTS

Letters

PREFACE OF THE ITALIAN EDITOR

LETTERS OF SAINT ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI

Letter 1
TO MOTHER ANGIOLA DEL CIELO AND TO THE NUNS OF SCALA

Letter 2
TO A COMMUNITY OF NUNS

Letter 3
TO THE BENEDICTINE NUNS OF POLIGNANO

Letter 4
TO TOMMASO FALCOIA, BISHOP OF CASTELLAMMARE, HIS SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Letter 5
TO THE SAME

Letter 6
TO SISTER MARIA CELESTE CROSTAROSA, NUN OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY SAVIOUR AT SCALA

Letter 7
TO THE SAME SISTER

Letter 8
TO THE NUNS OF THE MONASTERY OF POCARA.

Letter 9
TO THE PRIEST GIUSEPPE CERCHIA AT CASTELLAMMARE.

Letter 10
TO THE SAME

Letter 11
TO THE SAME

Letter 12
TO THE SAME

Letter 13
TO THE SAME

Letter 14
TO THE SAME

Letter 15
TO THE PRIEST D. FRANCESCO DE VIVA

Letter 16
TO THE SAME

Letter 17
TO FATHER TOMMASO PAGANO, PRIEST OF THE ORATORY AT NAPLES

Letter 18
TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE IN THE MONASTERY AT CAMIGLIANO.

Letter 19
TO THE SAME

Letter 20
TO MONSIGNOR PIETRO AGOSTINO SCORZA, ARCHBISHOP OF AMALFI

Letter 21
TO MGR. CONSTANTINO VIGILANTE, BISHOP OF CAIAZZO

Letter 22
TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE

Letter 23
TO THE PRIEST FRANCESCO DI VIVA

Letter 24
TO MARQUIS GIUSEPPE GIOACCHINO MONTALLEGRE

Letter 25
TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE, IN THE MONASTERY AT CAMIGLIANO

Letter 26
TO THE SAME

Letter 27
TO THE SAME

Letter 28
TO THE SAME

Letter 29
TO HIS FATHER DON GIUSEPPE DE LIGUORI

Letter 30
TO THE SAME

Letter 31
TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE

Letter 32
TO THE SAME

Letter 33
TO THE SAME

Letter 34
TO THE SAME

Letter 35
TO THE SAME

Letter 36
TO HIS DIRECTOR MGR. TOMMASO FALCOIA

Letter 37
TO FATHER CESARE SPORTELLI, AT SCALA

Letter 38
TO HIS FATHER DON GIUSEPPE DE LIGUORI

Letter 39
TO FATHER GIUGLIO MAROCCO, AT CAIAZZO

Letter 40
TO THE SAME

Letter 41
TO FATHER GIULIO MAROCCO

Letter 42
TO THE SAME

Letter 43
TO MOST REVEREND CASIMIRO ROSSI, ARCHBISHOP OF SALERNO

Letter 44
TO A NUN AT FISCIANO, IN THE DIOCESE OF SALERNO

Letter 45
TO THE VENERABLE GENNARO SARNELLI.

Letter 46
TO THE FOUNDRESS OF A MONASTERY OF NUNS AT SARAGNANO

Letter 47
TO FATHER GIULIO MAROCCO

Letter 48
TO HIS DIRECTOR MONSIGNOR TOMMASO FALCOIA.

Letter 49
TO FATHER GIULIO MAROCCO

Letter 50
TO FATHER CESARE SPORTELLI, AT CIORANI

Letter 51
TO THE PRIEST DON GIUSEPPE SPARANO, AT NAPLES

Letter 52
TO FATHER CESARE SPORTELLI, AT CIORANI

Letter 53
TO THE SAME

Letter 54
TO DON MATTEO GRECO

Letter 55
TO THE KING OF NAPLES

Letter 56
TO HIS FATHER D. GIUSEPPE DE LIGUORI

Letter 57
TO FATHER CESARE SPORTELLI, SUPERIOR OF THE HOUSE AT PAGANI

Letter 58
TO NICOLA MARIA CELESTINO DE ROBERTIS.

Letter 59
TO THE SAME

Letter 60
TO CANON GIUSEPPE SPARANO, AT S. RESTITUTA AT NAPLES

Letter 61
TO THE SAME

Letter 62
TO A MINISTER OF THE KING

Letter 63
TO A GENTLEMAN OF INFLUENCE

Letter 64
TO CANON CASATI, AT ILICETO

Letter 65
TO FATHER XAVIER ROSSI, AT CIORANI

Letter 66
TO FATHER CESARE SPORTELLI, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT PAGANI

Letter 67
TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE

Letter 68
TO THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF BENEDICT XIV

Letter 69
TO FATHER GIOVANNI MAZZINI, THE NEW RECTOR AT PAGANI.

Letter 70
TO CARDINAL GIUSEPPE SPINELLI, ARCHBISHOP OF NAPLES

Letter 71
TO THE MOTHER ABBESS AND THE NUNS OF THE MONASTERY OF THE ANNUNCIATION AT FOGGIA

Letter 72
TO HIS BROTHER D. ERCOLE DE LIGUORI

Letter 73
TO THE SAME

Letter 74
HOLOGRAPH TESTAMENT OF THE SAINT

Letter 75
TO DON FRANCESCO ANTONIO RICCIARDI, ADVOCATE AT FOGGIA

Letter 76
TO FATHER ANDREA VILLANI.

Letter 77
TO FATHER CESARE SPORTELLI

Letter 78
TO THE KING OF NAPLES

Letter 79
TO FATHER GIOVANNI MAZZINI, RECTOR AT PAGANI

Letter 80
TO SISTER MARIA CELESTE POPPA IN THE MONASTERY OF THE ANNUNCIATION AT FOGGIA

Letter 81
TO SISTER MARIA CROCIFISSA PETITTO, AT FOGGIA

Letter 82
TO SISTER MARIA CELESTE POPPA

Letter 83
TO FATHER GIOVANNI MAZZINI?

Letter 84
TO THE PRIEST GIROLAMO FERRARA, NOVICE OF THE CONGREGATION AT CIORANI

Letter 85
TO A FATHER OF THE CONGREGATION

Letter 86
TO FATHER GIOVANNI MAZZINI, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT PAGANI

Letter 87
TO ONE OF THE GENERAL CONSULTORS OF THE CONGREGATION

Letter 88
TO FATHER GIOVANNI MAZZINI

Letter 89
TO MGR. CELESTINO GALIANO, GRAND ALMONER

Letter 90
TO FATHER PAUL CAFARO, HIS DIRECTOR

Letter 91
TO FATHER GIOVANNI MAZZINI

Letter 92
TO A GENERAL CONSULTOR

Letter 93
TO FATHER D. CESARE SPORTELLI

Letter 94
TO THE PRIEST FRANCESCO MARGOTTA OF CALITRI

Letter 95
TO FATHER ANDREA VILLANI, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CIORANI

Letter 96
TO THE PRIEST D. FRANCESCO MARGOTTA, AT CALITRI

Letter 97
TO THE PRIEST DON ANDREA SARNELLI

Letter 98
TO THE KING OF NAPLES

Letter 99
TO THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF BENEDICT XIV

Letter 100
TO A PRIEST

Letter 101
TO A FATHER OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Letter 102
TO THE BISHOP OF AVELLINO AND FRIGENTI, MGR. FELICE LEONI.

Letter 103
TO CARDINAL GIUSEPPE SPINELLI, ARCHBISHOP OF NAPLES

Letter 104
TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE

Letter 105
TO A SUPERIOR OF HIS CONGREGATION

Letter 106
TO SIGNOR D. POMPEO SCIBELLI, AT LEONI

Letter 107
TO D. GIUSEPPE MUSCARI, PRIOR OF THE MONASTERY OF ST. BASIL AT ROME

Letter 108
TO THE SAME

Letter 109
TO THE SAME

Letter 110
TO FATHER FRANCESCO MARGOTTA, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CAPOSELE

Letter 111
TO THE SAME

Letter 112
TO THE SAME

Letter 113
TO THE SAME

Letter 114
TO THE SAME

Letter 115
TO THE SAME

Letter 116
TO FATHER CESARE SPORTELLI, AT PAGANI

Letter 117
TO FATHER FRANCESCO MARGOTTA AND TO HIS CONSULTORS

Letter 118
TO CANON D. GIACOMO FONTANA, AT NAPLES

Letter 119
TO A GENTLEMAN OF VITOLANO.

Letter 120
TO SISTER MARIA DI GESÙ, A CARMELITE, PRIORESS OF THE MONASTERY AT RIPACANDIDA.

Letter 121
TO CANON GIACOMO FONTANA, RECTOR OF THE URBAN SEMINARY OF NAPLES.

Letter 122
TO FATHER FRANCESCO MARGOTTA, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CAPOSELE

Letter 123
TO A NUN OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER, AT SCALA

Letter 124
TO FATHER GIUSEPPE MUSCARI.

Letter 125
TO THE VICAR-GENERAL OF BENEVENTO

Letter 126
TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Letter 127
TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, AT RIPACANDIDA

Letter 128
TO FATHER PIETRO PETRELLA, AT ILICETO

Letter 129
TO FATHER CARMINE PICONE.

Letter 130
TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, PRIORESS OF THE CARMELITES OF RIPACANDIDA

Letter 131
TO FATHER SAVERIO ROSSI, MINISTER OF THE HOUSE AT CIORANI

Letter 132
TO FATHER FRANCESCO MARGOTTA, PROCURATOR-GENERAL OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Letter 133
TO FATHER PIETRO PETRELLA, AT ILICETO

Letter 134
TO MGR. BORGIA, BISHOP OF CAVA

Letter 135
TO FATHER ANDREA VILLANI, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CIORANI AND MASTER OF NOVICES

Letter 136
TO THE SAME

Letter 137
TO THE SAME

Letter 138
TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Letter 139
TO FATHER FRANCESCO BUONAMANO.

Letter 140
TO A FATHER OF THE CONGREGATION

Letter 141
TO THE KING OF NAPLES

Letter 142
TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, A CARMELITE AT RIPACANDIDA

Letter 143
TO A FRIEND

Letter 144
TO FATHER BERNARDO APICE, AT CAPOSELE

Letter 145
TO MGR. PASQUALE-TEODORO BASTA, BISHOP OF MELFI.

Letter 146
TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, A CARMELITE AT RIPACANDIDA

Letter 147
TO THE SAME

Letter 148
TO FATHER CARMINE FIOCCHI IN LACEDOGNA

Letter 149
TO THE NOVICE PIETRO ANGELO PICONE, AT CIORANI

Letter 150
TO A SUPERIOR OF THE CONGREGATION

Letter 151
TO MOTHER ANGIOLA OF DIVINE LOVE, A CARMELITE AT CAPUA

Letter 152
TO SISTER ANNA CAMILLA DE' LEONI, IN THE MONASTERY OF THE MOST HOLY SAVIOUR AT ARIANO

Letter 153
TO THE MASTER OF NOVICES

Letter 154
TO FATHER ANDREA VILLANI, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CIORANI

Letter 155
TO FATHER FRANCESCO GIOVENALE, MINISTER OF THE HOUSE AT CAPOSELE

Letter 156
TO FATHER FRANCESCO MARGOTTA, AT NAPLES

Letter 157
TO FATHER FRANCESCO GIOVENALE

Letter 158
TO THE SAME

Letter 159
TO THE SAME

Letter 160
TO FATHER FRANCESCO MARGOTTA, PROCURATOR-GENERAL OF THE CONGREGATION AT NAPLES

Letter 161
TO THE SAME

Letter 162
TO MOTHER MARIA ANGIOLA OF DIVINE LOVE, AT CAPUA

Letter 163
TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE, AT CAMIGLIANO

Letter 164
TO MOTHER MARIA ANGIOLA OF DIVINE LOVE

Letter 165
TO SIGNORA FILIPPA FARAO

Letter 166
TO D. LUIGI SAGLIANO

Letter 167
TO MOTHER ANGIOLA OF DIVINE LOVE

Letter OF THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF BENEDICT XIV. TO ST. ALPHONSUS

Letter 168
TO FATHER ANDREA VILLANI

Letter 169
TO SISTER MARIA DI GESÙ, A CARMELITE AT RIPACANDIDA

Letter 170
TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE

Letter 171
TO THE SAME

Letter 172
TO DON LUIGI SAGLIANO

Letter 173
TO THE SAME

Letter 174
TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, AT RIPACANDIDA

Letter 175
TO SISTER GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE, AT CAMIGLIANO

Letter 176
TO MGR. FRANCESCO ANTONIO BONAVENTURA, BISHOP OF NUSCO

Letter 177
TO FATHER PASQUALE CAPRIOLI, AT CIORANI

Letter 178
TO CARDINAL ANTONINO SERSALE, ARCHBISHOP OF NAPLES.

Letter 179
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, MASTER OF NOVICES AT CIORANI

Letter 180
TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Letter 181
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CAPOSELE

Letter 182
TO THE SAME

Letter 183
TO THE SAME

Letter 184
TO THE SAME

Letter 185
TO THE SAME

Letter 186
TO THE SAME

Letter 187
TO FATHER SAVERIO ROSSI, THE RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CIORANI

Letter 188
TO FATHER D. GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 189
TO THE SAME

Letter 190
TO SISTER MARIA VINCENZA GIANNASTASIO IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SS. ANNUNZIATA, AT CAVA

Letter 191
TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE

Letter 192
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 193
TO THE SAME

Letter 194
TO SISTER MARIA ANNA DI GESÙ, AT CAVA

Letter 195
TO THE SUPERIORS OF MISSIONS

Letter 196
TO SISTER MARIA DI GESÙ, AT RIPACANDIDA

Letter 197
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 198
TO THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF BISHOPS AND REGULARS

Letter 199
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 200
TO FATHER EMANUELE CALDARERA OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY

Letter 201
TO THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF BENEDICT XIV

Letter 202
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 203
TO SISTER MARIA VINCENZA GIANNASTASIO, AT CAVA

Letter 204
TO FATHER CARMINE PICONE, VICE-MASTER OF NOVICES IN CIORANI.

Letter 205
TO THE SAME

Letter 206
TO THE SAME

Letter 207
TO THE SAME (?)

Letter 208
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 209
TO SISTER MARIA VINCENZA GIANNASTASIO IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SS. ANNUNZIATA AT CAVA

Letter 210
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 211
TO THE SAME

Letter 212
TO THE SAME

Letter 213
TO THE NOVICE LUIGI CAPUANO, AT CIORANI

Letter 214
TO SISTER MARIA VINCENZA GIANNASTASIO

Letter 215
TO THE NOVICE LUIGI CAPUANO

Letter 216
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 217
TO THE NOVICE LUIGI CAPUANO

Letter 218
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 219
TO THE NOVICE LUIGI CAPUANO

Letter 220
TO SISTER MARIA NICOLETTA LEONI (DI CALVANICO), IN THE MONASTERY OF S. GIUSEPPE AT FISCIANO

Letter 221
TO SISTER MARIA VINCENZA GIANNASTASIO

Letter 222
TO THE SAME

Letter 223
TO THE SAME

Letter 224
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 225
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT ILICETO, AND MASTER OF NOVICES.

Letter 226
TO HIS BROTHER D. ERCOLE DE LIGUORI

Letter 227
TO FATHER PASQUALE AMENDOLARA, AT PAGANI

Letter 228
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 229
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, RECTOR, AND MASTER OF NOVICES AT ILICETO

Letter 230
TO THE STUDENT DON MAURO MURANTE, AT MELFI.

Letter 231
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, AT CAPOSELE

Letter 232
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT ILICETO

Letter 233
TO THE LAY-BROTHERS OF THE HOUSE AT ILICETO

Letter 234
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 235
TO FATHER GIROLAMO FERRARA, MINISTER OF THE HOUSE AT ILICETO

Letter 236
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 237
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

Letter 238
TO THE SAME.

Letter 239
TO THE SAME

Letter 240
TO FATHER GIROLAMO FERRARA, AT ILICETO

Letter 241
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, AT THE MISSION GIVEN AT POTENZA

Letter 242
TO FATHER FRANCESCO PENTIMALLI.

Letter 243
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

Letter 244
TO THE SAME

Letter 245
TO THE SAME

Letter 246
TO SISTER MARIA NICOLETTA LEONI (DI CALVANICO), IN THE MONASTERY OF FISCIANO

Letter 247
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 248
TO SISTER MARIA DI GESÙ, CARMELITE AT RIPACANDIDA

Letter 249
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

Letter 250
TO THE SAME

Letter 251
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 252
TO SISTER MARIA NICOLETTA LEONI (DI CALVANICO), IN THE MONASTERY OF FISCIANO

Letter 253
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

Letter 254
TO SISTER MARIA DI GESÙ, CARMELITE AT RIPACANDIDA

Letter 255
TO A FATHER OF THE HOUSE AT CIORANI

Letter 256
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

Letter 257
TO THE SAME

Letter 258
TO THE SAME

Letter 259
TO THE SAME

Letter 260
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, RECTOR AT CAPOSELE

Letter 261
TO THE COUNCIL OF ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS

Letter 262
TO SISTER MARIA ANGELA ROSA GRAZIANO, IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SS. ROSARIO AT NAPLES

Letter 263
TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE, AT CAMIGLIANO

Letter 264
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 265
TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, CARMELITE AT RIPACANDIDA.

Letter 266
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 267
TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Letter 268
TO FATHER FRANCESCO MARGOTTA

Letter 269
TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, AT RIPACANDIDA

Letter 270
TO FATHER ANDREA VILLANI, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT S. ANGELO A CUPOLO

Letter 271
TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Letter 272
TO SISTER MARIA NICOLETTA LEONI (DI CALVANICO), IN THE MONASTERY OF FISCIANO

Letter 273
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 274
TO THE SAME

Letter 275
TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, AT RIPACANDIDA

Letter 276
TO CANON GIACOMO FONTANA, AT NAPLES

Letter 277
TO SISTER MARIA ANGELA ROSA GRAZIANO, IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SS. ROSARIO AT NAPLES

Letter 278
TO FATHER EMANUELE CALDARERA, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY AT NAPLES

Letter 279
TO SISTER MARIA ANGELA ROSA GRAZIANO, IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SS. ROSARIO AT NAPLES

Letter 280
TO FATHER EMANUELE CALDARERA, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY AT NAPLES

Letter 281
TO SISTER MARIA ANGELA ROSA GRAZIANO, IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SS. ROSARIO AT NAPLES

Letter 282
TO THE SAME

Letter 283
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 284
TO DON GIUSEPPE CASELLE, AT RAPPOLA

Letter 285
TO A FATHER OF THE CONGREGATION

Letter 286
TO FATHER CELESTINO DE ROBERTIS

Letter 287
TO MGR. VITO MAIO, BISHOP OF MURO

Letter 288
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CAPOSELE

Letter 289
TO SISTER MARIA DI GESÙ, CARMELITE, AT RIPACANDIDA.

Letter 290
TO THE SAME

Letter 291
TO THE FATHERS OF HIS CONGREGATION

Letter 292
TO SISTER MARIA ANGELA ROSA GRAZIANO, IN THE CONVENT OF THE SS. ROSARIO AT NAPLES

Letter 293
TO THE SAME

Letter 294
TO MOTHER MARIA CHERUBINA DEI SETTE DOLORI, CARMELITE AT RIPACANDIDA

Letter 295
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 296
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA

Letter 297
TO FATHER PIETRO BLASUCCI, PREFECT OF THE STUDENTS AT CIORANI

Letter 298
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, MASTER OF NOVICES AT ILICETO

Letter 299
TO THE PRIEST ANGELO MAIONE, IN THE NOVITIATE AT ILICETO

Letter 300
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA

Letter 301
TO THE SAME

Letter 302
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 303
TO FATHER EMANUELE CALDARERA, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY

Letter 304
TO THE FATHERS AND STUDENTS OF THE CONGREGATION

Letter 305
TO FATHER PIETRO PAOLO BLASUCCI, PREFECT OF THE STUDENTS AT CIORANI

Letter 306
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 307
TO THE NOVICES AT ILICETO

Letter 308
TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Letter 309
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, RECTOR AT CAPOSELE

Letter 310
TO THE RECTORS, MINISTERS, PREFECTS AND SUPERIORS OF THE MISSIONS

Letter 311
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 312
TO THE SAME

Letter 313
TO THE SAME

Letter 314
TO D. GIOVANNI BATTISTA GARGANO, A STUDENT OF THE CONGREGATION

Letter 315
TO AN ECCLESIASTIC

Letter 316
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA

Letter 317
TO SIGNOR PIETRO DE ROBERTIS, AT NAPLES

Letter 318
TO A FATHER OF HIS CONGREGATION

Letter 319
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 320
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT ILICETO AND MASTER OF NOVICES

Letter 321
TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE, IN THE MONASTERY AT CAMIGLIANO

Letter 322
TO FATHER CELESTINO DE ROBERTIS, AT SALERNO

Letter 323
TO SISTER CARLOTTA FRAGGIANNI, IN THE MONASTERY AT SARNO

Letter 324
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA

Letter 325
TO CANON GIUSEPPE SPARANO, AT NAPLES

Letter 326
TO MGR. ISIDORO SANCHEZ DE LUNA, ARCHBISHOP OF SALERNO

Letter 327
TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA SPARANO

Letter 328
TO FATHER PASQUALE DE MATTEIS, OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS AT NAPLES

Letter 329
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

Letter 330
TO THE SAME

Letter 331
TO FATHER MAURO MURANTE, AT ILICETO

Letter 332
TO FRATER ANDREA MORZA.

Letter 333
TO THE SAME

Letter 334
TO MGR. ISIDORO SANCHEZ DE LUNA, ARCHBISHOP OF SALERNO

Letter 335
TO A NUN

Letter 336
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA

Letter 337
TO THE SAME

Letter 338
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CAPOSELE

Letter 339
TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE, IN THE MONASTERY AT CAMIGLIANO

Letter 340
TO FATHER GIUSEPPE MELCHIONNA, AT ILICETO

Letter 341
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CAPOSELE

Letter 342
TO A FATHER ON THE MISSION

Letter 343
TO FATHER CELESTINO DE ROBERTIS

Letter 344
TO FATHER EMANUELE CALDARERA, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY

Letter 345
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT ILICETO

Letter 346
TO FATHER PASQUALE DE MATTEIS, OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS AT NAPLES

Letter 347
TO THE MOST REVEREND FATHER LORENZO RICCI, GENERAL OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Letter 348
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 349
TO FATHER PASQUALE DE MATTEIS, OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Letter 350
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

Letter 351
TO SISTER MARIA ARCANGELA LIPPO IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SS. ROSARIO AT MONTICCHINO, DIOCESE OF MASSALUBRENSE

Letter 352
TO THE BISHOPS

Letter 353
TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Letter 354
TO SISTER CHIARA GAIANO, IN THE MONASTERY OF RAVELLO

Letter 355
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

Letter 356
TO FATHER GIOVANNI RIZZI.

Letter 357
TO D. FRANCESCO PANSA, ARCHDEACON OF THE CATHEDRAL OF AMALFI AT ROME

Letter 358
TO A FRIEND

Letter 359
TO THE BISHOPS

Letter 360
TO A PRIEST OF BISAQUINO.

Letter 361
TO FATHER GIOVANNI RIZZI, AT ILICETO

Letter 362
TO HIS BROTHER D. ERCOLE DE LIGUORI, AT NAPLES

Letter 363
TO SISTER CHIARA GAIANO, IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SSMA TRINITÀ AT RAVELLO

Letter 364
TO FATHER GIOVANNI RIZZI

Letter 365
TO A SUPERIOR OF THE CONGREGATION

Letter 366
TO THE STUDENTS OF THE HOUSE AT CIORANI

Letter 367
TO FATHER GIOVANNI RIZZI, AT ILICETO

Letter 368
TO D. NICOLÒ PENTIMALLI, AT S. EUFEMIA, DIOCESE OF MILETO

Letter 369
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, RECTOR OF ILICETO AND MASTER OF NOVICES

Letter 370
TO FATHER OLYMPIO PAVONE, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT, AUTHOR OF VARIOUS WORKS OF PIETY

Letter 371
TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA

Letter 372
TO THE NOVICES IN THE HOUSE AT ILICETO

Letter 373
TO THE NOVICE, DON VINCENZO BUONOPANE.

Letters

PREFACE OF THE ITALIAN EDITOR

THE lives of the saints and everything that refers to them, no matter how unimportant and common-place they may be, excite in a wonderful manner the pious curiosity of the faithful who derive great spiritual advantage from their perusal. This fact, attested by daily experience, is very beautifully expressed by St. John Chrysostom when speaking of the apostles he says: “Oh, would that we might meet with a man who could give us the history of the apostles! Not a history, however, containing only what they wrote and spoke, but one portraying for us the whole tenor of their lives, what and when they ate, when they remained at home, when they went forth into the world, what they did every day, what places they visited, what houses they frequented, what journeys they undertook by sea and by land, and all narrated with the greatest exactness, for every detail is of the greatest utility to us.” *(In ep. ad Philem.)* And what is here said of the apostles by St. John Chrysostom, may be applied equally well to all the great servants of God, the slightest details of whose lives have always formed the object as well of constant research as of religious veneration. Nor is it only the faithful who take an interest in such matters, but all sensible men who admire genius, because the heroism of Christian sanctity shines with such lustre that no thinking man can fail to recognize in the saints the heroes of humanity.

It is not wonderful then that so great honor has been paid at all times and by all men to their writings, and especially to their letters or familiar epistles in which are displayed before our eyes the excellence of character and the eminent virtues that made them the benefactors of religion, of society, and of the individual.

Feeling the full force of these considerations and confident that we should be doing a pleasing and useful work, we have undertaken to collect and to give to the public in one complete work as many letters of our holy Father St. Alphonsus as we have been able to find, many of which have never as yet appeared in print. We have chosen the present time for their publication on account of its peculiar appropriateness, for we celebrate this year the centenary of our Founder's happy death.

The letters of St. Alphonsus regarded in their complex fall naturally into four classes: 1. Letters to the religious of his own Congregation; 2. Letters of spiritual guidance; 3. Episcopal letters and ordonances; 4. Letters bearing on the Publication of his works and referring to other special affairs of the saint. Taking them as a whole, we do not hesitate to say that they give us a most faithful and perfect picture of this illustrious Doctor.

Nowhere does the saint show more fully than in this correspondence, which extends over the space of a half-century, the secrets of that soul, naturally noble but so perfected by grace, as to render him like unto his divine Master. Founder of a religious Congregation, a missionary powerful in word and deed, a director experienced and enlightened, an exemplary bishop, an author of wonderful fecundity, St. Alphonsus came in contact with persons of the most diverse character, found himself face to face with great difficulties, and had to treat affairs and questions of every kind. His long career is, so to speak, mirrored in his correspondence. At one time the holy Doctor turns to his own sons, spurs them on, directs them; at another he points out to souls hungering after perfection the simplest and safest road; now as a bishop he addresses his clergy, the civil authorities and the princes of the Church; then as a theologian he treats numberless questions in the field of controversy, which are nevertheless very useful; then finally we see him as an author superintending the editions of his numerous works. It is evident that a correspondence of this character cannot but be pleasing and interesting; for considering the abilities of the author, we expect it to contain many excellent qualities. A style simple, natural, free from all obscurity, and a moderate use of ornament, joined to a great fund of topics (or displayed in a great range of topics), show us the author confident of his strength, master of thought, as well as of expression. Then that practical wisdom, that holy, singular and characteristic gift of the saint, reveals itself on every page. Finally, what crowns the work and excites our unbounded admiration is the continual insight into the apostolic soul that dictated these letters. That burning love of souls which ever characterized the saint and which made of him a true apostle, is the formal element, is, so to speak, the very soul that vivifies the whole correspondence and all its parts. No matter whether the saint writes to his own sons or to strangers; whether he gives to persons favored by our Lord safe and gentle rules or spurs on tepid and unfaithful souls to the practice of the virtues proper to their state; whether he gently instils into the souls of the faint-hearted a filial confidence in God or shows to the scrupulous that their only means of salvation lies in obedience; no matter whether he demands justice against the guilty or implores pardon for the unfortunate; whether engaged in missions or in other works of the ministry, superintending the publication and sale of his works or praising the zeal of the publisher, everywhere and in everything we are forced to admire the apostle inflamed with zeal, *animarum zelo succensus,* the apostle who lives no longer for himself, but for Jesus Christ, the love of whom was his only aim and his glory. From this source arose that forgetfulness of self, that absence of all pretension, that true simplicity with its accompaniments, true zeal with its attendants, and which stand out in this correspondence in holder relief than in any other work.

It must not, however, be supposed that the correspondence will on that account be monotonous and consequently less delightful reading; on the contrary, on every page we meet with the most pleasing variety. Take for example the letter; which are intended for spiritual guidance. What a richness and variety of delightful subjects! Here we find the practical solution of questions relating to prayer and to its different species, to frequent Communion, to the line of conduct to be followed in time of spiritual consolation or in time of desolation, to a choice of a state of life, to the selection of a spiritual director, etc. These and a hundred more questions are treated here, we venture to say, more clearly and more concisely than in the other works of the holy Doctor, since he had to adapt himself to a variety of persons, to their different intellectual capacity, and to their progress in the spiritual life. The director of souls and the simple child of the Church, the dweller in the cloister, and the secular, will without great study, be enabled to admire that wisdom of St. Alphonsus in guiding along the heavenly path the souls committed to his care. What a knowledge of divine things! What sweet and prudent slowness! What watchfulness in removing all obstacles to grace! What energy in urging on the negligent! What constant charity in comforting desolate souls and in aiding sufferers of all classes, by showing them the great value of tribulations!

The historical notices of so great importance in our day are as abundant as they are valuable. Not to speak of what relates to the author, whose life is here outlined in great part, or of his Institute, the different phases of which are here described, or of his diocese and its government, the great event of the eighteenth century, the furious onslaught or infidelity, the tyrannical and hypocritical measures of the Neapolitan government, especially that regalism, the sworn enemy of the holiest rights of the Church, the suppression of the Society of Jesus, the persistent and malignant assaults of Jansenism on sound Catholic doctrine, all these great events, the importance of which has not been dimmed by time, gain not a little light from remarks scattered here and there throughout the correspondence. The saint's judgment on men and things expressed in his own peculiar style—(*my concise style*, he said to his publisher, Giuseppe Remondini, in a letter dated April 8, 1770)—will often tell the reader more than he would gain from the pages of history. Moreover, the reader will find here historical matter hitherto unknown which will serve to remove more than one difficulty and solve more than one historical problem. Church history itself cannot fail to be benefited by this work. Finally, no matter how great a man's esteem for the saint may be, he cannot gain a true knowledge of his ceaseless activity, of his services to the Church, not to mention his patience in supporting the vexations of the civil authority and the bitter attacks of enemies banded, together for the ruin of the Congregation, if he remains unacquainted with the saint's correspondence.

We confidently think that the reader will share our conviction and will not accuse us of exaggeration, if he will take the trouble to verify for himself, all that we have said; this he may easily do by taking the general index as a guide.

It will not be out of place to say a few words about the authenticity of the letters. In the editions printed at Rome, 1815, at Turin, 1831, and at Naples, 1848, the whole of the correspondence is not to be found; leaving room for improvement. We need not wonder at this. The works of the saints, and especially their letters, do not all become known at the same time. We may say of their letters what the Holy Scripture, says of their virtues: *Justorum semita, quasi lux splendens procedit et crescit usque ad perfectum diem.*—But the path of the just as a shining light goeth forward and increaseth even to perfect day. (*Prov.* iv. 18.) Such was the case with St. Ignatius of Loyola, with St. Teresa, with St. Jane Frances Chantal, with St. Vincent of Paul and others; these letters, truly treasures, scattered and hidden, were found and collected at the time marked out by Providence for the edification of the faithful. The same happened to the letters of our saint. Having been scattered here and there during his life on account of his wide-spread correspondence, it was impossible to collect them all at one time; long and persistent research was needed to bring them to light. Some were hidden beneath the dust of libraries whence they were providentially rescued some ten years ago; a great number had found their way into the hands of antiquaries and collectors of the autographs of celebrated men; others, finally, more than a thousand in number, having been examined by the Church in the process of the saint's beatification had been given to his numerous clients as precious relics, and had in this manner been scattered broadcast over the world. To obtain possession of these treasures, we resorted to all practices; we even called in the aid of the Catholic press to work upon the benevolence of those who either possessed such letters, or at least knew where any were to be found, in order that we might obtain at least a true copy. Our labor was not in vain; God deigned to bless it. Ecclesiastics and seculars and religious Communities responded courteously to our wishes. And here we feel it incumbent on us to thank them for their kindness, and we pray our holy Founder, to whose glory they have contributed, to grant them his choicest blessings. Nor have we neglected to write at the end of each letter the names of those who so kindly lent them, to show in this way our gratitude. We regret that we are not able to do this in every instance; for some of the letters though scrupulously authenticated by ecclesiastical authority reached our hands without any indication as to the names of their holders.

The number of the letters thus far collected convinces us that our edition surpasses by far the others in point of number, although we confess it is not so complete as we had wished to make it. The catalogue of letters drawn up for the beatification shows us that more than three hundred letters are still missing. Our wishes will some day be fulfilled, and God knows how earnestly we desire this. Again we entreat our courteous readers most earnestly and warmly to help us to fill out this void and to enable us to publish an edition in which nothing shall be wanting.

It will be scarcely necessary for us to remark that we have followed the text most scrupulously, going even so far as to leave unaltered those careless expressions which flow at times from the pen of every writer; as an excuse for this negligence we can say that St. Alphonsus never thought of their future publication; he wrote and dictated them while overwhelmed with business affairs, concerning himself only about the substance of the letter. We thought it advisable to enclose in brackets the common Italian term for some of the words belonging to the Neapolitan dialect which might have presented some difficulty to the reader. For the sake of uniformity the dates have been placed at the beginning of the letters. As however the date is missing in more than one letter, we have endeavored with all possible care to glean the date from the matter treated; we have marked with a special sign all such letters. With the exception of these slight modifications, we may say that the letters remain exactly as they were written or dictated by the saint; we say, dictated, for from the year 1758 he required the services of an amanuensis on account of a malady contracted at that time.

“I am not answering with my own hand (thus he wrote from Nocera, August 3, of the same year), as since my last sickness my hand gives me too much trouble. . . . . If there be a real necessity, I force myself to write what is necessary little by little. . . . . .” To this source we may ascribe the occasional omission of a name in these formulas so frequently used by him, *Live Jesus, etc.,* careless expressions, and especially needless repetitions, for we know that when he was bishop, he was often obliged to summon to his aid a simple lay-brother, the good Brother Francesco Antonio Romito.

It would have afforded us the highest satisfaction, to have been able to reproduce the whole correspondence with the original letters before our eyes, though we can say that we have a great many which we have marked: *After the original.* Although, in spite of our labors, we have not been able to obtain all the originals, we do not think that the authenticity of the letters will be affected thereby. We have found some excellent copies in the general archives, the preservation of which we owe chiefly to the immortal biographer of the holy Doctor, Father Antonio Maria Tannoia; these are marked: *After an old copy.* As for the others, with the exception of a few letters taken from the Neapolitan edition, we have closely followed the Roman edition, as the reader will easily perceive. This latter edition, the work of the Postulator of the cause of the saint’s canonization, Rev. Vincenzo Giattini, is authentic in every respect, as we have been able to compare it with a great number of the original letters. It may not be amiss to add here that though the printed text of the-Roman edition is the text of St. Alphonsus, it is not, unfortunately, always the entire text; having had occasion to compare some letters with the originals, which we had at hand, we found more than one omission which the editor saw fit to make, perhaps because he did not consider the parts omitted directly conducive *to the edification, profit and spiritual advantage* of the reader, the end that he had in view in editing the letters.

We must now say a few words about the order which we have followed in the arrangement of the letters.

On account of the diversity of matter and of persons it would be difficult, not to say impossible, to give an exact classification of the letters. Seeing, however, the great utility of some such arrangement, we have endeavored to meet it by dividing the whole work into two parts, under the heading of *general correspondence* and *special correspondence.* In the first division we place all the letters of whatever import addressed by the saint to his own Sons, and to externs of every class and condition, to ecclesiastical and civil authorities, to nobles, plebeians, relatives, friends, etc., but especially to cloistered persons striving for perfection.

In the second part we shall place, first, the letters referring to the works of the holy Doctor, their publication, the reasons that induced him to write them, his method of writing, the exposition and development of his moral system, etc.; these we shall call *scientific letters;* then follow the letters written during his episcopate, under the form either of *notifications, decrees, instructions* to his clergy and through them to the people, or of *reports* of his Visitation sent to the Sacred Congregation of the Council; added to these are letters wherein he treats *ex professo* of the government of his diocese, of giving missions or exercises to ecclesiastics, etc.; these we shall call generically *pastoral letters.*

As far as possible we have held to the chronological order, which, in our opinion, is the clearest and most natural, as it removes ambiguity, avoids repetition, and causes one to see the activity of the saint developing, as it were, before our eyes.

Finally, in order to place everything in the clearest light, we have thought it advisable to insert here and there notes throwing light upon persons and matters spoken of in the letters; the notes have been taken from most trustworthy sources.

If the reader should at times find them superfluous, especially those relating to members of our Congregation, we ask him to bear with us, as we were anxious to avail ourselves of the occasion to make honorable mention of those who, in our eyes, most deserved it.

True it is that the value of such a correspondence cannot be heightened by our poor labor, but the year in which it sees the light, adds to it a new and well-merited lustre; the year eighteen hundred and eighty-seven is the first centenary of the death of the saintly author! During the past century the spirit of St. Alphonsus has been working in the Church, and She has not forgotten to crown his name with honor. It is therefore with most joyful hearts that we bring our humble flowers to adorn the beautiful garland that decks the brow of our holy Father; we lay our poor offering, the pledge of our filial love, at the foot of his glorious tomb, imploring at the same time for ourselves, our gentle readers, and for all the devout clients of St. Alphonsus, his paternal blessing.

ROME, June 19, 1887, Feast of our Lady of Perpetual Help.

LETTERS OF SAINT ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI

General Correspondence.

BEFORE THE EPISCOPATE.

(1730—1762.)

Letter 1

TO MOTHER ANGIOLA DEL CIELO[16731] AND TO THE NUNS OF SCALA

> The saint gives various exhortations, general as well as particular, and recommends to the prayers of the nuns one of his penitents, who was greatly troubled in spirit.
>
> NAPLES, October 29, 1730.
>
> Praised be Jesus, Joseph, Mary, and Teresa!

May Jesus and Mary always possess our hearts! Finish Thy work, O Lord! and take entire possession of our hearts; we are willing to lose them, and may we find them no more, if only they are in Thy hands, for then they are in good hands.

I received your first letters on the feast of my patroness St. Teresa: it was a consolation for me only to see the envelope, for it told me who had written those letters. I did not write before, because I have been very much occupied, especially with the mission which is being held at Naples, and which is still to be concluded; added to this, I have, as you see, many correspondents to answer.

Now I am writing, and I wish to tell you that though some time has elapsed since my stay at Scala, my remembrance of you is as vivid as if I had departed only yesterday. If this should appear to you to be saying too much, ask our Lord to make me forget you; because, as far as I am concerned, I hope that memory will ever be the same; since, far from drawing me away from God, it serves to unite me more closely to him. I wish you also to know for your common consolation that the words of your letters are like so many arrows that wound me with the love of God. Courage then, Sisters! let us give our hearts entirely to Him who is knocking for admittance, and let us banish from them everything that is not for God. In order to give ourselves to him without reserve, let us endeavor to go out of ourselves, so that God may find no obstacle when he comes to take possession of our hearts.

Up to the present time, as I have already told you, I have been paying up for the agreeable time that I spent at Scala; I am as well as one can expect during the storm; I am in such a state that at times I can see neither heaven nor earth, and I find within myself a dark abyss, *ubi nullus ordo, sed terribilis horror inhabitat,*—where no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth. [*Job*, x. 22.] May the will of God be ever done! and if it be for the greater glory of God that I should be damned, may the will of God be done! This I say in all sincerity. Pray to God for me, that I may not offend him, since it would not be for his greater glory that I should offend him. O Lord! here I am; hell would be little for me.

Mgr. Falcoia[16732] has written to me in terms so affectionate, that he has entirely captivated me; he did not mention when he would return, but I understood it was to be about the 20th of November.

My dear Mother, I beg you most earnestly to pray and to have prayers said for my poor penitent Maria; I know no longer what to do or what to say to her. She does not hear me, she does not understand me. The more I say, the more troubled she becomes; hence she is also tempted to leave me. I have told her that she may go to whom she wishes, but I see that it is only a temptation. She is tempted almost continually to commit suicide. It appears to her that there is no God, and that if there be a God, he hates her and she hates him; moreover, it seems to her that this hatred which she bears towards God does not afflict her, and this thought only increases her misery. Her anguish, the reason and source of which she cannot explain, is so great that she has almost gone out of her mind. Only yesterday, while she was kneeling in the confessional, her pain was so excessive that it brought on a kind of swoon, which rendered her speechless. I tell you all this in order to excite your compassion for this poor desolate soul, who, I must say, consoles me by her prompt obedience even in things the most difficult which I have imposed upon her in order to try her. I ask you to pray for her for at least three days, and to recommend her to the prayers of the Community at holy Communion; moreover, have the Litany of our Lady said, that God may give me light and her strength to obey and to suffer this great affliction. If she does not throw off the yoke of obedience, I hope that she will give great glory to God; but there is need of much prayer and assistance. Pray then for her, as God has perhaps made me acquainted with you in order to obtain your prayers in behalf of this soul. And she in her turn will pray for you as well as she can.

Now, my dear Sisters, do not grow negligent in praying for me. I, who am a priest, called to save souls, should be filled with zeal for the glory of God: pray that I may give him pleasure, and then if he wishes to send me to hell, may his will be done! I shall appear importunate by repeating so often, Pray for me; because I fear that as time goes on you may grow cold. You must know that the very thought that you are praying for me gives me courage, and spurs me on to give pleasure to God, as it seems to me almost impossible that God can refuse to hear you when you pray earnestly for some soul, and say to him as St. Teresa was accustomed to say: Lord, we wish to obtain this for our friend. How discouraged I should feel if you should cease to pray for me! I beg you, if that should ever happen, to leave me in ignorance of the fact, that I may flatter myself with the thought that you are still praying for me. It would be a very great trial for me to find that you had forgotten me in your prayers. I for my part never forget you in my prayers, poor as they may be: to tell the truth, you share in a great part of my unworthy prayers. It seems to me that I pray more for you than for myself: for, as regards myself, I endeavor to be resigned if God wishes me to remain in the lowest grade of sanctity; but as for you, I will not rest until I see you all like Seraphim.

From time to time I turn towards your home and exclaim: O ye enamoured souls! love Jesus. Love him, then; do not lose a moment of time; you can give him the greatest pleasure. Remember that he loves you without ceasing; he loses no time. Speak to him often, especially when you find yourselves before him in the Blessed Sacrament; speak to him of love rather than of anything else: for he enjoys the conversation about love more than any other subject. Love Jesus: love above all his Sacred Heart and his divine will. Do not trouble yourselves as to whether you are among the predestined or the reprobate, among the abandoned or among the favorites of God. Unite your will with the will of God, and then say: O Lord! Thy pleasure and Thy glory are sufficient for me. Let this be our only aim to glorify God in ourselves; after that let disgrace and abandonment, crosses and trials, storms and darkness, desolation and despondency, come upon us;

let them come as often as it pleases God to send them. He remains the same good God, worthy of all our love; may he then be blessed and loved forever!

Let us always speak in this manner, and then place all our confidence in God, for this is what he earnestly desires. I beseech our Lord to cause your hearts to burn in that furnace of love, of which St. Teresa speaks, and in which love is the torture of hearts.

My heart, confide and hope:
The tempest too is able oft
To bring the bark to port.[16733]

Do me the favor to omit henceforward in your letters the title *Most Illustrious*, as I am not a bishop.

Don Giovanni[16734] recommends himself to the prayers of all.

You may read the foregoing in public; but the following lines you will please read yourself, and then read to those particular Sisters to whom I am writing privately.

My penitent is writing to Sister Maria Colomba.

In the first place I address you not as Mother, but as Maria Angiola, and I wish to say to you: My daughter (I call you so because you call me Father), I am deeply grateful to you for whatever you do for me. I know that you not only pray for me yourself, but that you also recommend me very often to the prayers of the Community. To judge from your manner of acting, I should say that you are a woman of deeds rather than of words. You cannot imagine what great pleasure your conduct affords me.

Do not forget to pray for me; I never forget you nor will I ever do so, I assure you. I am no friend of twaddle, but I speak as I really feel. I recommend you to God in a special manner not only at Mass, but also in all my humble prayers; the grace which I ask from God for myself I seek to obtain for you also.

You are a guiding light to me, as I am certain that God reposes in your heart and wishes never more to leave it. Gratitude, as you well know, even towards our neighbor, is not displeasing to God. Your soul is very, very dear to God. It rests with you to inflame me with the love of God: it will be sufficient if you speak only one tender word to him when you recline upon his bosom after holy Communion.

The fears you express with regard to Maria Colomba fill me with great consolation: it encourages me to tell her that she must surrender her whole will to God, for he desires this. I conclude by blessing all your affections, thoughts, words, deeds, and in fact everything that is yours.

I forgot to send you that souvenir. I send you in this letter the verse: *Dio mio, ecc.*—My God, etc.[16735]

I send to Maria Cherubina her prayer: *Gesù mio, ecc.*—My Spouse, etc. Tell her from one that sorrow for sin is not necessary for one who has been already pardoned by God. I wish her to become inflamed with love, to become foolish for love, and finally to die of love for him who became a fool and died for love of us. Let her do this, and I, on my part, will take upon myself the responsibility of rendering an account of her soul; tell her that I bless her.

To Sister Maria Felice: Please tell her, I shall continue to offer her will to God, and that she must continue to do the same in my regard. I send her also the little prayer: .*My Jesus, etc.*, which she has asked for.

To Sister Maria Rosa: Our dear Lord wishes her to become a saint, but without any delay. St. Rose became a saint and died the death of a saint while still very young.

Tell good Sister Maria Raffaella[16736] that I send her the following message: My dear Sister, I rejoice to hear that you have become blind and deaf; I would that you were as I desire to see you. I am delighted to hear again: *Amo, e pure non so che ne sento amore.*—I love, and yet I know not what I love. Whether you are far or near, united or separated, love, love the adorable will of God; do not trouble yourself to find out whether you love or do not love, whether you belong to God or not. Seek neither consolation nor light; do not strive to come forth out of your darkness and misery; everything happens according to the sweet will of God. For example, it is the will of God that you pray for me; abstain then from doing so if you can! Do not give yourself any further thought as to whether your prayer helps me or not. It is certain that if you make a saint of me, I shall be better able to assist you, as you well observe. I shall send the message for you to Mamma,[16737] through my other Mamma, St. Teresa; I know that Mamma will listen to it with the greatest pleasure. May Jesus and Mary bless you!

To Sister Maria Michele: Tell her that if my *imprecations*[16738] were realized, she would have to be pitied; and let her know that I shall not cease to pray for her until I learn that she is fairly burning alive with the love of God. I wish she would obtain from her Spouse, who I know loves her dearly, the same *imprecation* for me. I send her my blessing.

To Sister Maria Eletta: Ask her to keep her word, as I always recommend her to God.

To Sister Maria Emmanuele: I wish her to belong entirely to God before she dies.

To Sister Maria Giuseppa: I do not know whether you delivered my message to her, and whether she has promised to pray for me. Remember me again to her.

To Sister Maria Cristina: She ought to thank our dear Lord for all the lights that he has vouchsafed her; let her be careful to follow them. I thank her for her kind remembrance of me, and ask her to continue to pray for me, as I never forget her in my prayers.

To Sister Maria Evangelista: Tell her that in accordance with the promise that I made her, I recommend her very often to God: I hope that she, on her part, will keep her word. Let her also know that her Spouse is a jealous Spouse; he wishes to have her all his own.

To Sister Battista: I shall beseech our Lord to imprison her in his divine Heart.

You may tell all in particular, if they should ask, that I always remember them in my prayers, since I pray for all; tell them not to forget me.

If it should happen that you have to write to me before Christmas, especially if you wish to speak to me about Mgr. Falcoia, or about your own affairs, please write before the middle of December; for I believe about that time we shall have to set out for a distant mission, a journey of some eight days from Naples.

May God be our all! Praised be Jesus and Mary!

Mamma has begun to finish her work in my regard; this has induced me to compose a little canticle in her honor, which I now send you. You may read it to the others.

I am, your most devoted and humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI, a wretched sinner.

After an old copy.

Letter 2

TO A COMMUNITY OF NUNS

Books sent.—Various counsels.—Exhortations to love Jesus and Mary.

[The year 1731]

My beloved Sisters in Jesus and Mary, praised and blessed forever be Jesus, Joseph, Mary, and Teresa!

Chains! ciliciums! I send you a good supply of books, which will do more to make you holy than chains and ciliciums. I have sent you eight books for meditation. You will please make three divisions of all the books that you receive: one for meditation, one for private reading in your cell, and one for the reading at table.

With regard to meditation, you may make use of one book in the morning and of another during the day. Choose any one that pleases you: they are all excellent.

After you have finished that meditation book on the presence of God, I wish you to begin the book called “Motives for Loving God.”[16739] It would please me very much were you to make your morning meditation, for the most part, on the Passion of our Saviour, using for that purpose the little book, “Meditations on the Passion,” by Da Ponte, or one by Spinola. On the feasts of our Lady or of the saints, take Spinola.

When you make your meditations from the book “Motives for Loving God,” divide a point into three parts; do the same with the meditation on the Passion.

For private spiritual reading I send you eleven books, which Mother Superior will distribute among you; let them be circulated among all the Sisters in such a manner that each one will have the pleasure of reading them all.

I have sent you six lives of saints for the reading in the refectory; they will last a long time, and when you have finished them, begin to read them anew. I do not wish you by any means to give up reading at table in the morning P. Marchese's[16740] little work on the Madonna, which I understand you have. As for the rest, you may read any life.

Pay attention to what I am now going to say (I have already called the attention of the nuns of Scala to this point and they have obeyed me; I forgot to tell it to you before): in the reading at table, be extremely careful to read slowly and to observe the necessary pauses; for otherwise the reading cannot be understood and the listeners grow weary; let it be loud enough for all to hear. Remember this, for if when I arrive I find that you have not obeyed me, I shall scold you without fail. I have spoken with P. Sparano; he has conceded you the privilege of receiving holy Communion every Saturday in honor of our Lady.

Well now, do you want anything else? You see now that I have not forgotten you, and that I have been thinking of your welfare; try to forget me, if you have the heart to do so. Do not omit to recommend my poor penitent Maria[16741] every day to the Blessed Virgin; she is at present plunged in the very depths of misery. Ask Jesus to give her strength to endure this awful visitation, and pray to him for me.

I wish to make another remark with regard to the reading, and that is, that you are free to use for private spiritual reading the books destined for table reading, and those marked for private spiritual reading may be read in the refectory; do as you see fit.

Love Jesus and Mary, love them with all your heart, for they reveal themselves to those that strive to know them.

Love and be happy; he who loves so good a God should never allow dark and gloomy thoughts to enter his heart. Hence I do not wish to see you omit the recreation for any reason whatever; and if anything should ever happen to disturb the joy and harmony of recreation (which I hope will never be the case), let each do her utmost to restore cheerfulness and peace.

Ah! my dear daughters, if you only knew how Jesus loves you, how he always thinks of you and of your welfare, you could no longer live, no, you would die through the intensity of your love. If, then, you do not die of love, live for love; become fools for the love of Jesus, sigh after and desire that adorable Spouse who is so worthy of all our love. You have chosen him from among all for your Spouse; but he had already chosen you from all eternity to be his beloved spouses. Of whom then will you dare to think, if not of Jesus? whom can you love, if not Jesus? Oh, give all your thoughts and affections to Jesus! give them to him without reserve, and he will become entirely yours.

Always have a great devotion to Mamma Mary: in order to induce her to favor you; love her, praise her, honor her; let her sweet name be ever on your lips. Believe me, she loves you most tenderly. Show yourselves grateful by corresponding to her love. Devotion to Mary is a sure pledge of Paradise.

And now do not forget me; I assure you I do not ask you as a mere matter of form to pray for me to Jesus and Mary: I speak from my heart and mean what I say. Yes, pray for me, as you have promised, especially after holy Communion that I may always do the will of God; and when you pray for me, do not forget my poor penitent, to whom I have already promised your prayers. We shall remember you in our prayers.

Assist me in this storm, where I am in continual danger of losing my God.

But you will never lose him, no, never, whilst you are his and he is yours. Do you wish for more? I believe that God can be sufficient for you.

May Jesus, Joseph, and Mary be praised and blessed for all eternity!

ALFONSO DE LIGCORI, a vile sinner.

After the original which is in the possession of Mgr. Raffaele Carbone, at Naples.

Letter 3

TO THE BENEDICTINE NUNS OF POLIGNANO

(In PUGLIA.)

He congratulates them on having been freed, through the assistance of the Blessed Virgin, from the molestations of the demons, and exhorts them to show their gratitude.

[NAPLES, September 10, 1732]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

My beloved daughters in Jesus and Mary: Our Lord knows the consolation that your affectionate letter, informing me of the favor received from Mary, afforded me. I read it to the Superior of the Congregation,[16742] Canon Torni, and he has retained it in order to read it before the assembled Congregation. Beginning with to-day, you must love Mary with new fervor, in a new manner. On Saturdays let each one do something more than usual—one by increasing the number of her vocal prayers and her acts of love, and another by seeking out new mortifications and sufferings. In order to commemorate this grace and to prevent all new attacks of the demons, have some devotion performed every day—either one in honor of the sorrows of Jesus or some other suitable devotion; for if you show yourselves ungrateful, the demons may return. And let a common fast on bread and water for those who are able to observe it be strictly kept on the anniversary of that memorable day, the 13th of August. But the greatest pleasure you can give to Mary is to love Jesus devotedly, who has granted this favor in order to be more loved by you. Think that Jesus, that Prisoner of love, has passed so many lonely nights without being visited by you, prevented as you were by your fear of the beast. Now that you are free you must make up for lost time. I ask the abbess to be kind enough to grant permission to all those Sisters who may wish to pray at night before their Spouse in the Blessed Sacrament. I beg her also to promote frequent Communion in order that the poor panting hinds may quench their thirst at the fountain of that dear Saviour who is the only love of our hearts. If anyone should desire to communicate daily, I beg the abbess to offer no opposition; let her not scruple to give permission as often as the confessor gives his consent. One Communion is at times worth more than a year of prayer. If anyone should remain imperfect, and should show no signs of wishing to amend, it would be well to deprive her of holy Communion.

Now I wish you to recommend me to Jesus and Mary with the greatest fervor every day, for that important matter,[16743] tending to the greater glory of God, of which I have already spoken to you, is about to be settled. As soon as it has been decided I shall let you know, for you have assisted me greatly by your prayers; but you must still continue to aid me. Offer up a holy Communion at least every week for the success of this project, in order that all may be done for the greater glory of God.

I never forget you; I recommend you to Jesus Christ very often during the day. Greet Monsignor for me (for I congratulate him also on the favor received), and your Father Confessor; ask him to pray for me. Live Jesus, Joseph, Mary, and Teresa! The feast of my dear St. Teresa is at hand; celebrate a novena or at least a triduum. Tell Sister Maria Francesca not to forget her agreement, as I do not forget it; please say the same to Sister Maria Agnes.

A miserable sinner and most tender Father.

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI.

After the original preserved in the monastery of the Benedictine Nuns at Polignano.

Letter 4

TO TOMMASO FALCOIA, BISHOP OF CASTELLAMMARE, HIS SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

He entreats Falcoia to give him permission to leave Naples in order that he may found the Institute of the Most Holy Saviour at Scala.

[October, 1732.]

My dear Father, for charity’s sake, make haste, for I am dying with the desire to set out; send for me immediately, withdraw the command that binds me to Naples. Don Giovanni Battista[16744] [di Donato] is also energetic and zealous. See what obstacles the devil is throwing up to prevent the speedy beginning of our work! Let us begin immediately, for they amount to nothing; all will succeed admirably. This is the second last day of the spiritual exercises, and I am to speak on our Mamma Mary. Pray for me constantly, yes, constantly; again, make haste, make haste, for the glory and praise of Jesus and Mary.[16745]

Quoted by Tannoia, “Life of St. Alphonsus,” Book i. Chapter xx.

Letter 5

TO THE SAME

He relates to him his troubles, and conjures him not to abandon him.

[At the beginning of March, 1733.]

. . . . . . Canon Torni has written to me that the Congregation has decided to take from me the chaplaincy, and to deprive me of membership;[16746] but the Cardinal has ordained that nothing should be done in this matter without his command.[16747] I have written to his Eminence expressing to him my thanks, and also to the Canon; the latter tells me that he could not do anything more in my behalf. . . . . .

O my Father! how painful it is for me to associate with D. Vincenzo [Mannarini].[16748] I have experienced this these past days, and it is only the love of Jesus Christ that can render such a situation possible. . . . . .

I thank God for the strength that he gives me to endure these storms (and what is worse my domestic storms), so that I may resist and may not lose courage. This is what I have gained for myself after having, as everyone knows, renounced so much, incurring thereby the displeasure of my family, of my friends, and of the archbishop, upon whom I have turned my back to please God. Still you encourage me to put my confidence in God, even though all my companions should desert me. Ah, my Father, do not abandon me! for without you what could I do? Command, and I will obey. . . . . . .

I send you a plan of the Rules, which we have agreed upon. Have pity on me. . . . . . .

Quoted by Tannoia, Book ii. Chapters iii. and iv.

Letter 6

TO SISTER MARIA CELESTE CROSTAROSA,[16749] NUN OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY SAVIOUR AT SCALA

Sorrow which he feels at seeing her so deficient in humility. He excuses himself for having reprimanded her rather harshly.

[The month of March, 1733.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Celeste, I am answering your last letter, which I received at the same time as that of Mgr. Falcoia, and I tell you that if you are right I am not wrong; for I have not been able to banish from my mind the message of Don Vincenzo [Mannarini], and what was said by Don Silvestro [Tosquez]. When they arrive you may ask them. Still I believe that the Lord has permitted all this to happen for our greater good; judging from what Monsignor writes to me and from what I hear of Don Silvestro, affairs are now in the very best condition. The latter continues to remain on intimate terms as formerly. There is, however, one thorn that pierces my heart and causes me great anguish: it deprives me too of my night's sleep, and it is, my dear Celeste, the thought of you. I see that during this trouble between us you have not uttered one sentiment breathing humility.

Especially in your last letter I noticed how you address me and how you sign yourself; I perceived, too, how little you care whether I believe you or not; now, do not tell me that you are praying to God for me, as if I were already a reprobate, and that you end your letter: I remain in the Heart of Jesus, My dear Celeste, could the most imperfect soul write in a different tone? I know that you bear me no ill-will; but judging from the altered style of your letter, it appears to me that you do retain some ill-feeling towards me. I do not say that I deserve to see you humble yourself before me; I confess that I am not worthy even to sit at your feet, for I know your life and I know my own. But I do not on this account despair of loving Jesus as you do; He will grant me this in his infinite mercy. What I wish to say is that I should like to see in a soul so united with God and so favored by him, as is your soul, the profoundest humility; for the greater our humility is, the more intimate is our union with God: the one is ever in proportion to the other. Humility, however, does not consist at all in saying: *I am a wretch, I deserve much worse than this;* no, it consists in having a low opinion of one's self, and in knowing how to humble one's self most before him who most despises us. I would have desired this humility for you, even though I should have had reason to ask for other things; but up to the present time I have not seen it in you, and this is the thorn that torments me. Understand now that this is the secret cause of my affliction and the reason why I could not approve of your conduct, as I wrote to the Mother Superior before receiving your letter.

It is true I may have written harshly, and perhaps too harshly, but I did so relying on past experience; for whenever, heretofore, I addressed you in that manner, it resulted in great profit for your soul. For it is always salutary for a soul favored by God to meet with humiliations; and the more you experience from me, the more nearly you approach that which Christ has marked out for you. You may rest assured I have done everything for a good purpose; I feel no remorse for what I have done, for I really believed that your naturally high spirit, relying on its own judgment, deserved to be treated in this manner for its own good, and to cause it to be submissive in all things. I do not speak here of your will (for, as I have already written to you, I have not condemned you on account of your will, but rather for having followed your own judgment). Besides, it appeared to me that I had hitherto effected nothing with kind words. Understand now that in matters that relate to the welfare of the Institute I can quickly rid myself of your intrigues by laying the whole matter before Falcoia; however, I have not done so, as it appears to me to be a species of treachery to reveal the situation to Falcoia, when I myself, though troubled and disgusted, can apply the remedy by writing to you. You cannot imagine what great pain it causes me to treat any one harshly, especially as I believe that more may be done by gentleness than by harshness.

If, perchance, through want of reflection and through indiscreet zeal, I have gone beyond the bounds of moderation, and you consequently feel yourself offended, I beg your pardon now and always, and beseech you to pardon me expressly. If I were allowed, I would kiss your feet a thousand times for having so treated a beloved spouse of Jesus Christ; if Mgr. Falcoia gives me permission, I will beg your pardon publicly, before all. But still I want to see you as humble as I wish you to be.

And is my soul, then, of so much importance to you?[16750] Ah, my dear Celeste, do not speak in that strain to me, for it sounds like great ingratitude: the union of our souls in Jesus Christ is too intimate for that. Do you not know that the interests of your soul have become mine? And this is not my work, but God's work; I must desire the same perfection for you that I wish to obtain for myself.

I am seeking for reasons to excuse you, and to calm my alarm at seeing your want of humility, and I am trying to flatter myself that you have not considered this matter sufficiently. Perhaps you have a very good end in view in treating me thus; but the thorn still continues to torment me. If during this time you have had a good end in view, I beg you to let me know it as quickly as possible, and thus to allay my fears.

On my part, I promise to make a special memento for you every day at Mass until I become calm; I began this morning, and I prayed very hard to our Lord that he might grant you perfect humility. And you must ask the same for me from Jesus Christ, that I may no longer resist the allurements of God, who wishes to have me entirely his. I have resisted only too often in the past; that time is gone; I wish with all my heart to give myself entirely, yes entirely, to Jesus Christ, and I desire the same for you; but without humility neither you nor I shall attain anything. Henceforward, study to mortify me in every possible way, and this you should do the more readily in order not to allow me to suspect that you are disgusted. Don Silvestro Tosquez is coming; I hope that all will redound to the glory of God. I do not call you daughter that you may not think I am arrogating to myself what is not mine.

Praised be Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

My dear Celeste, it is not true that I said that Don Silvestro is deceived; I do not remember ever having spoken those words.

After an old copy.

Letter 7

TO THE SAME SISTER

He explains the conditions under which the new Institute can prosper; he reproves her for withdrawing from the spiritual guidance of Mgr. Falcoia, and points out the dangers that threaten her on this account.

[End of March, 1733.]

Praised be Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Celeste, my beloved Sister in Jesus Christ and our Mother Mary, I had asked you not to answer me; but since you have thought fit to honor me with an answer, I beg you to read this letter and then follow the inspiration of God. But read it with resignation, without seeking for a reply to what you read; for if you read with an inclination to contradict, you will find an abundance of reasons for replying, but you will never discover the truth. Heretics have found reasons for opposing the Church, even against holy Scripture. Read then, I pray you, this letter, and spend three days in prayer entirely resigned and with the most perfect indifference, without writing to me or without so much as noting down anything for an answer; then do as you please.

And now, since you require fidelity from me, I ask the same of you; I do not allow you to show this letter of mine or to mention its contents to any one—neither to Don Silvestro nor to others. You already believe that I know all; and so if you really desire not to be defended and praised before men, but to please God by investigating the truth in order to embrace it, allow me, my dear Sister Celeste, to speak frankly and to place the truth before you. I seek nothing but the glory of God and the welfare of your soul, which I so ardently desire. Let us separate the interests of your soul from those of the Institute.

And now let us speak of the affairs of your soul. Tell me, Celeste, why have you left Mgr. Falcoia, who is so saintly and so enlightened, as you yourself have often told me? You know that God himself has given him to you as your director; he has guided you so admirably for many years, that, prostrate on the ground, you ought unceasingly to return thanks to God and to him. What defect have you now perceived in him? Has he perhaps cast you into an abyss? Have you left him because he disturbed you by humbling and thwarting you? But, my dear Sister, do you not see that this course is absolutely necessary to conquer your high spirit, and to prevent you from becoming attached to your own judgment? This is a fault that was perceived in you not only by Mgr. Falcoia, but also by Don Bartolomeo Carace,[16751] and by others who were acquainted with you. It is a fault, of which St. Philip Neri has said that there can be nothing more dangerous in the spiritual life; and St. John Chrysostom assures us that there is more danger for a saint in following such a course than for any other person. Another saint tells us that he who confides in himself has no need of demons to tempt him. Who has approved of the step you have taken in leaving Falcoia? Have you perhaps received lights from God? Are the effects, that joyous calmness, etc., sufficient signs of the correctness of your step? And who has approved of these lights and of this sense of security and peace? Is it that penitent who for eight years labored under a delusion which, judged by its good effects, seemed to her confessor to be from God, and which was afterwards discovered by Father Collelis, as we read in his life, to be nothing else but a delusion?

The most experienced and cautious masters of the spiritual life can be deceived on this point, and you wish to have certainty in the matter by taking counsel with yourself? But has perhaps Don Silvestro [Tosquez] given his approbation? If you suspect Falcoia because he has humbled you, you have greater reason to mistrust the judgment of Don Silvestro, who, as you know, places you above St. Teresa, and sings your praises everywhere, even at Vienna.[16752] He approves of everything, even of his entire dependence on you—a thing, which above all others, a spiritual director should guard against, if he wishes to guide a soul properly and to keep it humble.

O my dear Celeste! how Don Silvestro has caused you to lose the spirit of humility! how he has aided you in wedding yourself, so to speak, to your own judgment! See to what lengths you have gone, asserting openly in your convent that one is not obliged to obey a command of the Superior given *sub mortali*—under pain of mortal sin! My Celeste, what Doctor ever taught such nonsense—that it is not a mortal sin for one who has made the vow of obedience to disobey the command of a Superior in a grave matter? By a grave matter we are to understand either a great evil or something that may have evil consequences; we must always suppose this, for the Superior before giving a command examines the matter carefully. It savors too much of arrogance when a woman who has made no studies wishes to contradict in this matter those whom the Church has placed over us as teachers.

Ah! where is that Celeste whom I knew of old? How has this ruin been effected? Oh! I feel the pangs of death whenever I think of this. Who has so fascinated you? Where is that former prompt and edifying obedience to Superiors? Where is that beautiful spirit of humility which caused you to desire to be trodden under foot and despised by all?

Now, however, having abandoned, as it were, the practice of obedience, you are endeavoring to gain the esteem and approval of all, under the vain pretence of seeking the glory of God. God stands in no need of your self-defence to promote his glory. When he sees you truly humble, and the more he sees you humbled, the more readily will he undertake to defend you and your work. You already understand what I mean.

Let me tell you that Don Silvestro, whose fine teaching on obedience perhaps it is which you have followed, in matters of doctrine is wrong-headed, and very much so. I have heard him say that on the fasting days of the Church people are not allowed to eat until about three o’clock, and that the customary collation in the evening cannot be taken—thus presuming to condemn so many religious Orders and so many saintly men who practised the contrary. He has given utterance to other false doctrines in points of Moral Theology which I shall not mention here. It is sufficient to know that he had the boldness to assert, as you perhaps have already heard, that all who were under the spiritual direction of Falcoia were damned. Hence it is certain that the vision that induced you to leave Falcoia was a delusion, and if you consulted a thousand unbiassed theologians they would all tell you the very same thing, although it should have sufficed for you when Falcoia, who was at that time your spiritual director, pronounced it to be such. Tell me, Celeste, was it possible that your vision could be an illusion? At least you ought to have a reasonable doubt about it when a St. Teresa, in the account that she gives us of her visions, writes of herself that she never believed so firmly that it was God who had spoken that she could have sworn to it, even though it were asserted by others. And for this reason, as she says in the same place, she never did anything in consequence of light received in prayer, but always consulted her confessors; if at times they told her the contrary of that which she had heard from our Lord, she obeyed instantly and executed it.

She acted in this manner especially at the time of the foundation of a house at Malagone;[16753] for God had at first revealed to her that the monasteries were to be founded without revenues, but her confessor told her the contrary. She obeyed, and our Lord afterwards showed his approval of her obedience.

And now let us suppose a reasonable doubt which you have concerning the vision, and which you ought to have, if you wish to walk securely: in whose judgment should you place more reliance than in that of your spiritual director, unless you really wish to disregard that beautiful order of obedience which Jesus Christ has left in his Church to make known to us his holy will? You reveal the vision to your director; he tells you it is a delusion, and you do the contrary! Tell me, would St. Teresa have acted in that manner? And you do a very great wrong to Father Falcoia, who was at one time so dear to you, if you say that this saintly man, through partiality, advised you to act against the will of God, and thus betrayed his conscience. When it is not clear and evident that our spiritual director speaks through passion, we must obey him. Falcoia is partial, and Don Silvestro is not so? Celeste, give this great pleasure to God—leave Don Silvestro. I know that you will have to do great violence to yourself, but the greater the violence, the greater will also be the stride towards perfection. Tell me, if God wishes you to leave Don Silvestro, are you willing to make the sacrifice? *But God does not wish it*, you say. Ah! my beloved Celeste in Jesus Christ, who does clearly not see that you are deluded, and what is by far worse, voluntarily so! I know not what excuse you will have for Jesus Christ on the day of judgment, after hearing the truth from so many persons. To this you will perhaps reply: *That is my affair.* Well, then, let us pass to the other point—the affairs of the Institute.

It is certain that the rules[16754] noted down by you need a thousand and one explanations. Do you not yourself remember telling me when I first went to the convent that Falcoia acted wisely in sifting the divine elements from the human, as there were many things in the rules which owed their origin to self-will? You moreover agreed to this with regard to the Institute for men, when before the opening of the foundation I went to Scala to call upon you; we canvassed the matter and came to an agreement. Besides the numerous explanations of the rules, there are many other points and constitutions which are to be treated separately, as, for example, the schools,[16755] the missions, the houses of studies, the different exercises to be given by us, the occupations which are permitted or prohibited, the academies, the meetings, etc. The missions and schools alone require two separate little books to establish the order which is henceforward to be followed, so that the same observance may ever flourish in the Congregation.

Now, who is to give these explanations and constitutions? Don Vincenzo [Mannarini] and I have no practical experience of Community life; I am moreover an ignoramus, Don Silvestro [Tosquez] is less practical than we. Don Giovanni Battista[16756] [di Donato] still retains an affection for his old Rule; hence, as you know, he is resolutely opposed to the recitation of Office in choir—a point which is so essential. In short, he would like to introduce among us his old Rule. Furthermore, if we should leave Falcoia in order to agree among ourselves upon the rules, Don Silvestro would most certainly wish to play the role of director and of infallible interpreter of your revelations, not only of the past, but also of your future visions. He has been accustomed hitherto to play the teacher and not the disciple, and woe to the man who should dare to contradict him in this matter, as experience has shown me that he wishes to rule in everything. And if, scarcely having entered the monastery, he undertook as a secular the guidance of several Sisters who now, according to their own confession, behold themselves emerging from a pit after leaving his spiritual direction; if, I say, having but entered, he wished that permission should be obtained from him when a letter was to be written to Falcoia—what breach would he not effect between us, if we should forsake Falcoia? What happened to those Sisters, my dear Celeste, ought to be a lesson for you. I already believe that it would be your aim after we should have left Falcoia to induce us all to follow Don Silvestro blindly as an oracle, and to depend on him entirely, as you do. If it were God’s will I would do so, but at present I do not feel that inspiration. Let us return to the conversation about ourselves.

The only way to establish anything on a solid basis is to place ourselves entirely in the hands of one man, and having communicated to him our ideas, to follow blindly his counsels and directions. He must be a man of experience, with a practical knowledge of Community life, missions, and other spiritual exercises; he must be well versed in the sciences necessary for a missionary, a man of enlightened spirit, and finally, one who will solve all doubts and questions without appeal. In this manner charity and unity will be the better preserved among us, for they are, as you yourself say, and as I have so often repeated, in fact *ad nauseam,* necessary for us to guide our little bark aright. And tell me, what Rule of religious Order or Congregation was not established in this way, that is, by depending entirely on one director? I had at first a doubt whether this was the case in the Reform of St. Teresa, when doubts arose concerning the Rule of St. Albert which had been adopted by the saint. Afterwards, however, I discovered that although the first companions of St. Teresa were holy men, experienced in Community life, the Reform was on the verge of destruction because they did not follow one director; so great a diversity of observances was introduced in consequence of this that the saint feared that the Reform would suffer shipwreck. At last, Father Graziano having visited the houses of the Reform, and having found a different observance in each one, drew up the constitutions himself, as we find them to-day in the chronicles; these constitutions were then adopted by all.

Thus, I say, to establish the Rule and Institute firmly, it is necessary for us to place ourselves entirely in the hands of one experienced guide, as well because we ourselves are not fit, as because this way is easy and safe—one which is followed by all religious Orders. Again, such a course will serve to maintain unity among us. Otherwise there will never be that perfect harmony among us; for, on the one hand, we should have unceasingly to discuss our mutual pretensions, and on the other hand, the formation of the rules would go on indefinitely, amid continual jarring and wrangling.

But, you say, *to obviate all this, one should yield to the other.* My dear Celeste, this is impossible. It would be possible and all very well, if there were question here of honors, of comforts, in short, of indifferent things; but when there is question of matters pertaining to the glory of God, no one, unless bound by obedience and by the promise to abide by the decisions of one director, is ready to yield in points which he believes to be for the greater glory of God. And this experience itself would teach you, as it has taught me up to the present moment, for we have not been able to agree even in unimportant things. Hence, we must always—yes, always—have one to whom we can refer our doubts for solution; every man who has the use of his reason and who is not crack-brained will recognize the truth of this. Why, your Don Vincenzo only lately told me the very same thing himself.

You will say: *Place yourself at the disposal of your present Superior.*[16757] I venerate Father Superior, and know that I have to obey him in the rules already established; but I never have had the intention to follow any rules which Don Giovanni Battista might make. I will obey only in that which Mgr. Falcoia ordains, for he is my director and the director of the whole work. My Sister, let me tell you once for all that I have not entered the Institute to become its head and director, or to take precedence in anything, as you seem to insinuate, or to please men. You yourself can remember that when Falcoia begged me to use my influence with Guerriero[16758] to obtain the approbation of your rules, I told him plainly and frankly that he would have to excuse me, as it was against the obedience which was due to my director at that time. I tell you that I have come here solely to obey God, and I hope never to leave, no matter how great the solicitations and importunities of men may be. I have just been implored to return to Naples. I beg you to understand that in so acting I am not following your revelations, as I told you in the very beginning. I am travelling only the well-beaten and secure road of obedience to my spiritual guides, where, as Jesus Christ has promised us, we are sure to ascertain the will of God, and this, as the masters of the spiritual life tell us, he has not attached to all the revelations in the world. St. Teresa in particular says in chapter 10 of the *Foundations,* that we ought in this life to place ourselves unreservedly in the hands of a guide, be he Superior or Confessor, relying entirely on the truth of these words: *Qui vos audit, me audit*—he who hears you, hears me. For, as she adds, our Lord esteems this submission so highly that although what is commanded appears to be utterly absurd, by overcoming ourselves and obeying our Superiors we succeed in fulfilling the will of God most perfectly.

Now you know that I have surrendered myself entirely into the hands of Falcoia, and so I hope to live and die under the yoke of obedience. If you choose to follow another route, good-bye till we meet again, at the place for which you are striving. If I follow the beck of obedience, I shall certainly sanctify myself; but as you have left your guide, I do not know whether you will become a saint. I tell you that I have no intention of deserting Falcoia, even though all—if such a thing were possible—should place themselves entirely in my hands. Do you not see that it is far better to give up one's vocation, than to give up the practice of obedience—that is, if a true vocation could exist without obedience. To conclude, I am content to leave the Institute and to practise obedience rather than remain in the Institute and give up obedience. I am aware that St. Philip Neri thought more of a soul that walked the ordinary way of obedience than of another who, following its own will, did great things for the glory of God. Let me also tell you that when doubts caused by what I now know of you arise in my mind whether your former lights were not also delusions (for it is certain that all the lights and visions confirming you in your obstinacy, which you say you enjoy, are illusions, as Falcoia wrote you, and as everyone can see), I encourage myself with the thought that in this matter I am not following your revelations, but I am practising obedience to my spiritual director. And thus, even if all your visions were delusions, I am walking securely in holy obedience, and I cannot take a wrong step in my vocation.

But to return to ourselves. Let us suppose, then, that a man must be selected to settle all doubts and present difficulties. Don Vincenzo says that *we should choose someone else, not Falcoia!* But, I ask, why must we choose some other person and not Falcoia, unless we wish to make the choice under the influence of passion? As for Falcoia, we have received only too many signs from God, showing that he is the man destined to regulate the work. The fact that he was your confessor would be sufficient of itself to show this; for as your confessor, it was his duty, and no one else's, to explain and approve of your lights and visions, just as the confessor of St. Teresa who guided her in the matter of the revelation with regard to the Reform, directed the whole work of the Reform. Besides, we have the testimony of Sister Maria Colomba[16759] who wrote to me in the beginning (I have just re-read her letter): “I understood that the divine Majesty wishes to have you as head of the Institute, dependent, however, on his beloved son, Tommaso [Falcoia]; for the divine Majesty has chosen him as the principal head to regulate this great work.” Colomba, then, wrote to me that she had heard this from our Lord on several occasions. But then Colomba may be under a delusion? And Celeste, I maintain, can be in the same state. To tell the truth, I look upon you both as saints; but as there is question here of delusions under which our Lord at times permits holy souls to labor, as we know from the life of Sister Maria Serafina of Capri and of others, why should I believe Colomba, and not you, to be deluded, especially when I behold her travelling the safe road of obedience, presenting in this respect so great a contrast to you? You yourself wrote to me several times that we must depend on Falcoia in this work. In a letter which, if you wish I shall send to you,—for our Lord, not without good reason, inspired me to preserve it,—you express yourself in the following terms: “Give yourself no more trouble; leave everything to the judgment of our Father whom God has placed over the work, and on whom all should depend.” What follows is only a confirmation of the above-quoted passage. Now you will say, *I have received contrary directions.* And who, pray, approves of these blessed lights? Have I perhaps to believe what you tell me now, and not what you have told me in the past? Lastly, you must remember, my dear Celeste, that Falcoia, as far as the Institute is concerned, has not followed exclusively your revelations, but has consulted the lights and revelations of others, and in the first place those which he himself received from God, before he made your acquaintance. For this reason he has for many years been endeavoring to establish an Institute of this kind, both at Naples and at Rome, following above all the light of the Gospel, which is worth more than your combined lights—yours and Falcoia’s.

But setting aside those supernatural elements, we should adopt the course I propose, since we see at least that it is the shortest and safest way to establish the rules and to preserve union and harmony; now if this be the case, why not select Falcoia? Before Don Silvestro appeared upon the scene, we had in fact already chosen Falcoia: for his name was ever in our mouths; to him we always had recourse in our difficulties; he is a man of many years' experience, of an enlightened spirit, learned, with a practical knowledge of Community life, of missions, and finally of secular matters; in short, it would be difficult to find many who possess in so high a degree as he all those qualities that are necessary for the regulation of this great work. Or is there perhaps an express revelation that God wishes us to depend upon any one but Falcoia?

Ah! my God, what a terrible hallucination you have been laboring under, Celeste! This happens when an enlightened soul through some fault of her own falls into a delusion; this I make bold to say of you, and I add that a miracle on the part of God is necessary to open your eyes to the light. See how disunited we are, and know that you are the cause of this disunion. Celeste,—I am speaking to you in the name of God,—consider well that you by your obstinacy are devoting to destruction a work that is not yours, but God's. True it is that neither you nor all the men in the world can ruin the work of God if he wills to prevent it; I am inclined to think that if you remain stiff-necked, our Lord will aid us only the more, for when there shall be no longer any talk about lights and revelations, we shall the more easily obtain the approbation of Rome. But as for you, if you appear before Jesus Christ burdened with the charge of having tried to ruin his work, what will become of your poor soul? If I be excluded from the Institute, as you keep repeating, I confess that I deserve to be excluded and am content, provided I am allowed to practise obedience; but I beg you at the same time to understand that neither you nor Don Silvestro can expel me from the Institute: that is God's affair, and he needs neither you nor Don Silvestro. I regard myself unmistakably called to the Institute, for obedience has told me so.

As for you, Celeste, I see you on the brink of an awful precipice, and I shall bitterly regret your loss if you do not turn back. I behold you living without practising obedience to Falcoia whom you are obliged to obey, at least as spiritual director of your Community. It may already be said that you have lost the sense of obedience to your true Superiors and have lost your peace of soul. See that you do not suffer the shipwreck of your soul, for you are on the way. I have had novenas said for you in several places; but I see you are too hard-hearted. I fear that God is already abandoning you.

My dear Sister, I have spoken to you for the glory of God and for the welfare of your soul; do not become angry. It will do no good now to trouble yourself to write to me. I know well that that brain of yours will be able to find replies and counter-replies, but what I do not know is that these will be of any service to you when you stand before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, especially as I see that you are growing only more obstinate in your opinions, and are bent entirely on finding answers, and not on sanctifying yourself.

My dear Celeste, do listen to me: humble yourself; the Lord will certainly enlighten you if you humble yourself; obey your Superiors, and you will fall into no error: Falcoia is holy and meek; do not for a moment imagine that he wishes you ill. If you humble yourself before him, you will be dearer to him than at first; be resigned to the will of God, and pray; otherwise your prayer will be of no service to you, all your reasons will be passions, and your revelations will be imagination and delusion. If you do not care to listen to me and Falcoia, consult other unprejudiced men. Seek other assistance; do not walk blindly on the road of perdition; seek the advice of others, not to find matter for reply, but to discover and embrace the truth with your whole heart.

Believe me, dear Celeste, all that I have written, I have written because I love you in Jesus Christ; if you wish me evil you do me a great wrong. May Jesus and Mary induce you to do the will of God!

My letter is finished; but I feel myself necessitated to say a few more words. My dear Celeste, pardon me if I conclude by speaking too frankly. Do you not recognize the fact that you are attached to Don Silvestro, and that he returns this feeling? You say: *It is an affection in God, because I seek nothing but God.* I do not say that you are sinning thereby; but, am I not right in saying that there is a great deal of this earth in such an affection? You do not seek God alone in Don Silvestro, but look also for something else, which is not God. You are in the mire; take care lest by following Don Silvestro you voluntarily place yourself in danger of losing God. Again you say: *I rely on God.* No. I tell you, Celeste, you do not place your reliance on God in this matter; for God does not assist, nay, he abandons those who of their own free will expose themselves to danger. To sum up: So much is certain, if you follow Falcoia, you will surely become a saint; if you follow Don Silvestro, you will certainly not sanctify yourself, and only God knows whether you will be saved.

Live Jesus and Mary!

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI, a poor sinner.

After an old copy.

Letter 8

TO THE NUNS OF THE MONASTERY OF POCARA.[16760]

The saint informs them of his intended visit.

[1733.]

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

My dear daughters, I remember that in the letter I sent you yesterday I told you I would come Thursday a week; but this is a mistake, because the letter was written before yesterday. I will come on Thursday of this week, and will preach on the same day. Praised be Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

When I arrive, do not force me to listen to useless complaints; let me find you entirely divested of yourselves, so that you no longer have anything of your own.

After the original in the possession of Father Alfonso Fusco, C. SS. R.

Letter 9

TO THE PRIEST GIUSEPPE CERCHIA AT CASTELLAMMARE.[16761]

He exhorts him to leave the world, and to give himself entirely to God.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

SCALA, July 3, 1733.

See, now, to what a fine conclusion you have come: *Spiritus promptus est, caro autem infirma!* [The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.—*Matt.* xxvi. 41.] This is the way in which you correspond to the graces received from our good Mother Mary! Such is the generous resolution that you have formed of giving yourself entirely to God! *Spiritus promptus est, caro autem infirma!*

I beg you, for pity's sake, come quickly, quickly, quickly. Why speak of your family, of your mother, of your brothers, of your relatives! *Audi, filia. . . . obliviscere populum tuum, et concupiscet te Rex.* [Hearken, O daughter. . . . forget thy people and thy father's house, and the King shall greatly desire thy beauty.—*Ps.* xliv. 11, 12.] He that does not leave all for God, will not find God entirely. Make haste! there are many missions to be given, and we wish to have you with us. Your mother is well now; come then to Scala without delay; fix your own time for your departure, and profit by the convenience that I now offer you, for I do not wish to expose you to the unpleasantness of another journey. Come speedily, speedily! Let the desire that we cherish of seeing you, urge you to come without delay; and be convinced that you can work here even better than at Castellammare. *Si quis. . . . non odit patrem suum, et matrem. . . . non potest meus esse discipulus.* [If any man. . . . hate not his father, and mother. . . . he cannot be my disciple.—*Luke,* xv. 26.]

Pray to our Mother Mary for me. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 10

TO THE SAME

He continues the same exhortation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

SCALA, July 13, 1733.

At the beginning of next month we shall begin a mission at Agerola; but we expect to see you at Scala before we set out for the mission. You have resolved not only to assist us in our missions as an auxiliary priest, but also to give yourself entirely to Jesus Christ by sacrificing to him your family, your relatives, and your country. If you do not do this, you will never arrive at sanctity;—never, never! *Si quis. . . . non odit patrem suum, et matrem. . . . non potest meus esse discipulus.* [If any man. . . . hate not his father, and mother. . . . he cannot be my disciple.—*Luke,* xv. 26.] Up to the present, you acted the brave man; all was for God; and now, what is the matter with you?

Come, now! set out at once; you see that the Lord has consoled you by restoring health to your mother; come quickly; obtain an *exeat* from the bishop, and come. We do not wish that you bring with you any baggage or money; food and clothing will not be wanting. There is no question among us of family, of relatives, of strangers: we think only of loving God, and of doing perfectly his holy will. Come without delay; I shall take no excuse. God does not wish you to be a curate in a parish; he wishes you to be in the Institute of the Most Holy Saviour.

Make haste! for you should prepare yourself little by little for the exercises of the missions, in order that disengaged from all care you may be able to give yourself entirely to the service of God and of souls. The souls that belong to God are not only those of Castellammare; those of other places have also been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, and have perhaps more need of succor. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Quickly, quickly, quickly! I wish no answer; you must answer this letter by coming yourself.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 11

TO THE SAME

He renews his request, briefly repeating to him the same reasons.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

SCALA, July 21, 1733.

My dear Don Giuseppe: When will you come, when? You seem to wish that we should purchase dearly your arrival! Come at once; what are you waiting for? We wish to have you; Jesus Christ is calling for you; our Mother Mary is waiting for you: and you remain where you are and say: *Spiritus promptus est, caro autem infirma!* [The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.—*Matt.* xxvi. 41.] But I answer: *Qui non odit matrem, fratrem, etc., non potest mens esse discipulus.* [Who does not hate mother, brother, etc., cannot be my disciple.]

Please hurry; I wish that you should prepare for the instructions that are to be given during the next missions. Come and seek solitude; come to seek God: *Audi filia. . . . . obliviscere populum tuum, et domum patris tui; et concupiscet Rex decorem tuum.* [Hearken, O daughter. . . . forget thy people and thy father's house; and the King shall greatly desire thy beauty.—*Ps.* xliv. 11.] If you do not do so, you will never become a saint;—no; never! Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 12

TO THE SAME

He assures him of his prayers and again invites him to proceed to Scala.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

SCALA, August 11, 1733.

My dear Don Giuseppe: Send me some news about your health. I do not doubt that you will give me good news; for on hearing that you are not very well I recommended you earnestly to our Mother Mary. If you are not in bed, come without delay; you will become well at Scala. Our dear Don Gennaro[16762] has arrived, and at the end of August we shall set out for the missions. Come, therefore, in all haste, as soon as you think that you will be able to bear the journey. In the meantime, I shall not cease to recommend you and to have you recommended to our Mother Mary, and I hope that we shall be heard.

But I beg you to drive out of your head all that keeps you back, namely, your mother, your family, and your relatives. I ask this as a favor, for without it I really believe that you cannot sanctify yourself: *Audi filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam; et obliviscere populum tuum, et domum patris tui; et concupiscet* (what a beautiful word!) *et concupiscet Rex decorem tuum.* [Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear, and forget thy people and thy father’s house; and the King shall greatly desire thy beauty. —*Ps.* xliv. 11.] Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 13

TO THE SAME

He refutes one of his objections.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

SCALA, August 18, 1733.

I very well see, my dear Giuseppe, that you feel a repugnance to be one of our number, and that this repugnance is growing from day to day. Has anyone ever heard it said that a son must renounce a more perfect life in order to attend to his mother when she has with her in the same place, where she is living, several secular sons? *But he should renounce it. Because his mother does not wish to live with them!* If she does not wish to live with them, you are not obliged to give up the more perfect life to which God has called you, and in which you would serve him, divested of everything, etc. In short, I do not wish to say more, for I see that more words would undoubtedly be lost upon you through your fault. Perhaps the foundation at Caiazzo, which had already been decided upon, will not take place, but enough: we do not wish to force any one. At least speak to Don Gennaro Sarnelli to whom you have, it is true, given your word; but such promises are not binding. At all events, let us have you for the missions which will soon take place; we are expecting a definite answer, and when I receive it I will communicate it at once. As for your illness, I have had you recommended to our Mother Mary. Pray at least for us. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

You must also know that if you do not come, you will displease the bishop; however, do as you please.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 14

TO THE SAME

He invites him to assist him at least in the missions as an auxiliary priest.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

SCALA, August 30, 1733.

When one cannot do a certain thing, one cannot do it. Be it so; and I say, When one is not willing to do it, one is not willing.—But that is enough; I have no intention to annoy you anymore. We do not wish to see you among us if you do not come to remain with us with your whole heart; for we do not take people by force.

Give us the pleasure of accompanying us on the missions; as soon as I receive notice of the time they begin I shall let you know. Yet it may be that we shall not first go to Agerola, because sickness appears to continue there; we shall begin in other places. You would then have to come to Scala; but this, you will say, would not be a trifling thing for you to do, since Scala has become so odious to you that you would not wish even to pass through it!

This is enough; more words would be useless. I do not believe that you will take offence at our desire to have you as our confrère. During this novena pray to our dear Mother Mary for me a poor miserable being. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 15

TO THE PRIEST D. FRANCESCO DE VIVA

He exhorts him to detach himself from all human affection.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

VILLA, June 7, 1734.

My dear Ciccio: We see in an evident manner that Jesus Christ is blessing us, and that he wishes to make it known in us that it is of him that it is said: *De stercore erigens pauperem.* [Lifteth up the poor from the dunghill. I *Kings,* ii. 8.]

Continue to labor with Father Campanello for the “little crown of the Infant Jesus.” Go in search of him, or write to him, otherwise you will not succeed.

As for your retreat at Santa Maria del Vignanello,[16763] my dear Ciccio, how can you doubt that I feel an extreme pleasure of having you as a neighbor, since I have been wishing to draw you still closer to me? I believed even that it was perhaps already a settled matter when I saw you so much inclined to a retired life, and so enamoured of the charms of virtue. But human respect, or rather my sins, have placed an obstacle thereto. How could I, after that, not esteem myself very happy to have you at least for my neighbor, and to enjoy, at least sometimes during the year, during the holy missions, the beautiful examples of virtue that you give? But listen to me, dear Ciccio: you will not be perfectly happy, and perhaps even you will with difficulty belong entirely to Jesus Christ if you do not really renounce Campanello, and tread under foot the world with all its considerations. Thomas à Kempis says: *Dimitte omnia, et invenies omnia.* [Put aside all things, and you will find all things.] But I must stop; I do not wish to carry my boldness farther in the case of one that can give me lessons both in science and in virtue.

Recommend me to Jesus and Mary, and recommend to them your affair specially during this month. Who knows what our dear Mother Mary will say to you? Live Jesus, Mary; Joseph, and Teresa!

Be so kind as to send to me four pictures of the Blessed Virgin of Caravaggio; send me also an answer. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 16

TO THE SAME

Great works should rest only on the spirit of faith and on confidence in God.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

VILLA, July 15, [1734].

You tell me that I should write to you often; here I am, but what must I tell you? You write to me that neither Campanello nor human considerations are keeping you from entering the Institute, but from what you say you seem to think it impossible for the work of the Institute to succeed. But I answer you in the words of Jesus Christ: *Apud homines hoc impedimentum est, apud Deum omnia possibilia sunt.* [With men this is impossible, with God all things are possible.—*Matt.* xix. 26.]

But what support have you? We have God. And which supernatural work of great importance has ever rested upon human support? Tell me what human support had the foundation of St. Francis, of St. John of the Cross, of St. Teresa?

You tell me that this priest[16764] has better human resources than we; hence for this reason we should have more confidence than he, since the more important the works are, the more Jesus Christ causes them to rise out of nothing and from the midst of contradictions, so as to make them admired and venerated by all as God’s work, and not as the work of men. And what work was more destitute of human means than the preaching of the Gospel? Ah! my dear Don Ciccio, as long as you speak thus, it will be evident that you are not called to the Institute; because Jesus Christ wishes that there should be in our Institute men who are dead to their own will and their own judgment; men, moreover, who have put their confidence in God, and not in human means.

You tell me that you would wait and see, and then decide; but take care that lest before finishing the reflection life itself may not finish, because very likely in order to see the affairs of our Institute settled many years will be required. For the reform of the Carmelites, fifty years, if I mistake not, had to pass before everything was definitely settled.

O my God! if Jesus Christ should wish that the Institute is to cease with us, what injury would be done if in the meantime, as you see, we should give ourselves up less to prayer and to the salvation of souls, redeemed by Jesus Christ? And although the Institute should be dissolved before the end of our life, would this be ever a great disgrace to us, for having undertaken so holy a work the end of which is certainly very grand? And if ever we should earn thereby the contempt of men, shall we not likely gain the good pleasure of Jesus Christ, since we have been doing what contributes so much to his glory? But you must know, my dear Ciccio, that we shall understand these things better when all of us, we and those that discredit the Institute, shall be in eternity; then we shall see which was dearer to Jesus Christ: to have been a member of the Institute, or to have thrown discredit upon it. Remember that if we do not lose confidence, the Institute will surely not be dissolved. Only if we are wanting in confidence in God, and if we place our hopes in human aid, shall this work be destroyed. This we know by experience, because when we confided in human means the whole work was nearly destroyed.[16765] God is omnipotent, *et Protector est omnium sperantium in se* [and the Protector of all those that trust in Him—Ps. xvii. 31.] And I tell you the truth: my hopes for the Institute are supported by the great confidence that I notice in my companions, who astonish me when I see them advance, and as it were flying, towards perfection. I assure you, I feel ashamed to see myself among them.

Ah! my dear Don Ciccio, who could it have been that has done what has hitherto been done? I or God? And this God can also finish what he has begun.

If therefore Jesus Christ does not wish to afford me the consolation of having you as my Brother, I must have patience, for I do not deserve such a favor. Come soon to Santa Maria del Vignanello; we shall then be at least brethren on the missions. But, my dear Don Ciccio, when you speak of us be careful, because your words can do more harm to us than the words of others, and because we esteem you our friend; therefore your words have greater weight, and what you say will continually be repeated.

Continue to prepare with Father Campanello that *little crown;* but labor is necessary; the Infant Jesus will however reward you for it.

I wish to have the pictures of Santa Maria di Carrevaggio which you have promised me. I shall have prayers said for you by our little Community.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa! Leave word at the house of Rendina that their Gennaro[16766] is content, and that I love him as my own brother. Live Jesus and Mary! Your very humble servant,

ALFOVSO DE LIGUORI.

After an old copy.

Letter 17

TO FATHER TOMMASO PAGANO, PRIEST OF THE ORATORY AT NAPLES

A brief dissertation on the question, whether and when a priest is obliged to go to the country of the heathen, and to preach to them the teachings of the Gospel.[16767]

[July, 1734.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Don Mattheo Ripa[16768] said at Naples that before reaching the Indies we come to the Cape of Good Hope where there are many idolatrous people, and where no one goes to teach the faith. It is asked whether he that knows this state of things is obliged to go there.

The question is reduced to the general question, whether in the spiritual necessities of our neighbor we are obliged to help him at grave inconvenience to ourselves.

It is the common opinion according to the theologians of Salamanca that in regard to the necessities of individuals, we are obliged to help them at the risk of our property, reputation, and life, only in an extreme necessity, in respect to which extreme necessity two things are required, namely: 1. *Ut proximus sine tuo auxilio damnandus sit* [that your neighbor would be damned if you do not help him]; 2. *Ut non habeat a quo sublevetur* [that there is no one to help him]. The theologians of Salamanca therefore say that *non debes navigare ad Indos convertendos, cum sint qui subvenire possunt, et alias est incertum illos esse per to convertendos* [you need not travel to the Indies to convert the inhabitants when there are those that can assist them, and it is otherwise uncertain whether they would be converted by you.] Tamburini says that when there is any uncertainty chiefly about success we are excused from going among the heathen.

The theologians of Salamanca say that it is the common opinion that in reference to the necessities of any Community we are obliged to come to their assistance in a grave necessity even at our grave inconvenience. They say for example: That preachers are obliged at their grave peril to denounce public sins of scandal; or if during an incursion of enemies there is no administration of the sacraments, and without it the faith of the people is endangered, you are obliged to administer the sacraments at the peril of your life.

This doctrine being supposed, it is asked why the theologians of Salamanca put the case of travelling to the Indies among the necessities of individuals, and not among the necessities of Communities, since there is question of entire kingdoms of idolaters; and Bonacina and Viva when speaking of the heathen speak of a case of extreme necessity. Hence it appears that to prove the obligation of which we speak, it is sufficient to establish here a grave, not an extreme necessity.

That these countries are in a grave necessity as regards their spiritual condition appears to be certain, since few missionaries go there. It is true, the theologians of Salamanca say that there is then this obligation of going there when *aliter subveniri non potest* [when otherwise they could receive no assistance]; and Laymann says of this obligation *quando populus infidelis sit Omni sacerdote destitutus* [when the unbelieving people are without a priest]. Of these people it could be said that they are altogether deprived of the services of a priest, *et aliter subveniri non potest* [and cannot be otherwise assisted].

However, speaking of the above-mentioned case of the Cape of Good Hope, it might be said that at least at present there is someone to go to the assistance of its people if this has not been done in the past, or at least some one will be able to do so in future; particularly since bishops are appointed for such places, and they are obliged to provide for them, etc. Thus at least *aliter subveniri potest* [they can be helped otherwise]; hence, individuals are excused from going there. Or if any one of these Communities is altogether destitute of help, it must be supposed that the many missionaries sent to these forsaken places have abandoned them, because there was no hope of being of any benefit to its inhabitants. Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 18

TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE IN THE MONASTERY AT CAMIGLIANO.[16769]

He writes out for her a rule of life, and exhorts her to give herself up entirely to God.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

VILLA, August 26, [1734.]

Beloved Sister and daughter in Jesus Christ, let us praise together the goodness of Jesus, since he has vouchsafed to give you through my letter a greater desire to love him.

As for mortifications, you may use the discipline four times a week, but not to blood, and wear twice the cilicium till dinner-time. Try to mortify yourself also in eating by abstaining from fruit three times a week, and from something more on Wednesdays and Fridays; on Saturdays only you may fast on bread and water. In the evening be careful to eat as little as possible, in order to be well disposed for your devotions in the night and in the morning.

As for prayer, I should wish that besides the hour during which it is made in common, you would devote another hour in private, at the most convenient time, especially during the night and during the hours of the greatest solitude when Jesus speaks to the souls whom he loves. In regard to silence, I wish that it be strictly observed: except during the time of recreation, that is to say, after dinner and after supper, do not speak without necessity, and speak always in a low tone of voice; moreover, during the day, devote two hours to a stricter silence. We never find a soul given to prayer that speaks much. Whoever really loves Jesus should never wish to speak to any other than to Jesus, never to see nor to hear anyone else than Jesus.

Every week, choose a day of retreat for the purpose of spending it entirely in prayer, in spiritual reading, and in other exercises of piety.

Make every day a half hour’s spiritual reading on the virtues; often read in St. John of the Cross that passage in which he speaks of the seven deadly sins, of pride, etc., which one may find at the beginning of the Obscure Night.

In the novenas you may increase the foregoing mortifications by using the discipline every day, etc.

If you follow these rules, you may receive holy Communion, if it is permitted to you, three or four times a week, and during the novenas every day.

Have great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and every day in visiting her, place yourself entirely in her hands.

Make at least three visits every day to the Blessed Sacrament.

In prayer see to what you are most attracted, and meditate upon it; then employ the time in making acts of love to Jesus and Mary, and in asking them for graces. Outside of the time of prayer you must always be sighing for this divine Spouse, who loves you, and who only deserves all your love. If you fall into any sin, rise again with courage by making an act of love of Jesus Christ, and think no more of the sin except to confess it.

In case of illness, omit all the mortifications that may injure you.

This is all that I have to say to you for the present. Strengthen yourself in the resolution to give yourself entirely to God, since he wishes to give himself entirely to you.

The little girl is yet too much of a child to exact from her the spiritual life; you may, however, promote the glory of God by letting her advance in his holy love, but without too great a solicitude. If, nevertheless, she should be truly an obstacle to your spiritual good, endeavor to find out a means of getting rid of her; if not, Jesus Christ will assist you.

I beg you to recommend me to Jesus and Mary in all your prayers and Communions, and to make a novena to Mary to obtain for me certain graces that I desire.

Though I am so wretched, yet this morning I prayed to Jesus Christ for you in a special manner, in order that he may dispose you to give yourself entirely to him by renouncing for the love of him every consolation in this life and the next. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant

ALFONSO DF LIGUORI.

After an old copy.

Letter 19

TO THE SAME

He exhorts her to fervor, and tells her what she is to do on his visit to Camigliano.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

VILLA, September 19, [1734.]

I write in haste, because the porter is in a hurry to depart. I received your letter at Caiazzo, where I was engaged in giving a retreat to the religious. I learn with what fervor you have resumed the service of Jesus Christ, your Spouse; henceforth pray to him unceasingly to obtain perseverance, and fear that you may relapse into tepidity which would perhaps be succeeded by a great chastisement on the part of our Lord who, when he calls, wishes that we respond to his voice. Continue always to make your meditation as you are doing, and do not omit it, however great may be your coldness; be convinced that it is on meditation that your progress in virtue depends.

If you desire my presence, send me the evening before a conveyance with someone to accompany me, and I shall devote a day to your service. At the same time ask for me jurisdiction to hear confessions, and permission to address a few words to the Community, if it be desirable. Do not, however, speak to me about making a general confession; because for certain souls a general confession, after having been once made, is more hurtful than useful. This visit would be only for the purpose of giving the religious some advice, though I have already given it by letter, and I do not know what more important counsels I could communicate by word of mouth. If, therefore, you could spare me this journey, and defer it to another occasion when it would be more urgent, you would afford me great pleasure. However, if you send a conveyance, and obtain the needed permissions, I shall be at your service; but this must not be on a feast-day, nor on a Tuesday, nor a Thursday.

Recommend me always to Jesus and to Mary. It would be better to induce the bishop to have a mission; then we would give a regular retreat to the Community, and very much good would result therefrom. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble and grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI.

After an old copy.

Letter 20

TO MONSIGNOR PIETRO AGOSTINO SCORZA,[16770] ARCHBISHOP OF AMALFI

The saint asks him to fix the time for the spiritual exercises to be given to the clergy of Amalfi, and points out the difficulties that have arisen in regard to making a foundation at Positano.

[End of February, 1735.]

Most Reverend and Dear Sir: Remembering the orders that your Grace gave me in regard to the exercises to be given to the clergy of Amalfi, I beg you to inform me of the time that will best suit you. Rest assured that I will do all I can to oblige you; and I feel myself under the greatest obligation to you for all the kindness and affection that your Grace has shown to poor me.

I should be pleased to have the exercises given during Passion week, beginning on the preceding Saturday, and ending on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, because after Easter I should like to go at once to Caiazzo on account of business connected with the Institute.

I say this, because your Grace already knows of the demands made by the gentlemen of Positano;[16771] they wish that we should take charge of the school; this demand I have regarded as surprising, since from the beginning I have repeated to them many times that I cannot agree to such a proposal. . . . how annoying! Having inconvenienced your Grace and me (God knows in what straits I was in my endeavor to satisfy them) they have brought forward the above-mentioned demand . . . I imagine that up to the present time they were not bold enough to speak to me directly about this matter, knowing what has passed, but I have knowledge of it from another source.

After an autograph sketch preserved at Rome in Father General’s archives.

Letter 21

TO MGR. CONSTANTINO VIGILANTE, BISHOP OF CAIAZZO

Petition.

[June, 1735.]

Right Reverend Sir: Alphonsus de Liguori, Superior of the Congregation of the Most Holy Saviour of the Villa degli Schiavi has the honor of submitting the following fact:

Your Lordship enjoined upon the administrators of the Santissima Annunziata di Majorano, to furnish the Fathers of our Congregation with six ducats every year on account of the school which the Fathers of said Congregation maintain in said city. Now the time for paying the said six ducats having already matured, the said administrators do not intend to pay this debt; hence the said suppliant[16772] has recourse to your Lordship that satisfaction may be made to him. He wishes you to accept now the assurance of his very sincere thanks, etc.

After an old copy.

Letter 22

TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE

He exhorts her to persevere in prayer.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

VILLA, December 31, [1735.]

I remember, my dear daughter, to have received two letters from you, and I know that I have answered the second. I even kept for some time this answer, for the reason that I had no one to whom I might entrust it; then I sent it to you, if I mistake not, through someone from Bellona.[16773]

I answer you now by way of Fondola,[16774] for to-morrow I shall return to Naples. Yes, certainly, I wish you to write to me, and when you do not receive any answer, offer this sacrifice to Jesus Christ.

Begin your retreat as soon as you can, and always tell me whether you persevere in prayer, for everything depends on that. I bless you in the name of Jesus and of Mary. Pray always for me in your prayers and Communions; on my part I will not forget you. When you hear that I am no longer at Villa, continue nevertheless to address your letters to me at the same place, for thence I shall receive them, and thence you will also receive my answers. You must, however, have the patience to wait.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very devoted servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI.

After an old copy.

Letter 23

TO THE PRIEST FRANCESCO DI VIVA

He invites him to come to him.

Live the Infant Jesus, and Mary Immaculate!

RECALE, January 25, [1736.]

My dear Don Ciccio: I hope that your catarrh has diminished. I beg you to come to-morrow morning to see me. We shall order the conveyance for you and for D. Gennaro [Sarnelli], and both of you may go together, arranging this with the coachman who will call for you. From this place your Reverence may travel to Villa, and thence to Dragone; for which place I have also been asked for two Fathers. You may then travel together.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI.

After an old copy.

Letter 24

TO MARQUIS GIUSEPPE GIOACCHINO MONTALLEGRE

Abridgment of the Rule of the Institute of the Most Holy Saviour.

[Month of January 1736.]

Father Ludovico Fiorillo, a Dominican, wrote thus to the saint, January 16, 1736: “This evening, the 16th of the month, I called upon Signor Marchese Montallegre, and was happy to be able to speak to him in detail about the affairs of the new foundation. He promised to do all in his power to obtain the needed approbation. He moreover told me to procure for him an abridgment of the Rule which is observed, so that he may know what to say when he has an audience with the Pope. . . . Send me, therefore, an outline of the Rule.”

In compliance with this request, the saint gave the following account:—It is already four years since a certain number of priests have been living together in Community at Scala; at the request of Monsignor Vigilante, Bishop of Caiazzo, they afterwards founded a house at Villa degli Schiavi, and finally they established one at Ciorani, in the diocese of Salerno. They have been giving satisfaction as much to the bishops and people of those places, as to those who have been coming from the neighborhood where a notable reformation has been wrought in the morals of the inhabitants through the spiritual exercises that have been given.

The principal aim of these priests is to imitate as far as it is possible, with the help of divine grace, the life and the holy virtues of our Lord Jesus Christ, so as to procure spiritual profit for themselves, for the people of the kingdom, particularly of those destitute of help, and to be able to assist the bishops and relieve the spiritual wants of the dioceses.

They live in the above-mentioned houses a perfect Community life, subject to their own Superior, engaged in various labors for the people, some at the school, some in the confessional, others in giving instructions, in preaching to Confraternities, in oratories, and elsewhere.

In the dioceses where they are staying, they go about giving missions; and afterwards, in order to preserve the good that they do through the help of the divine Majesty, some of them return from time to time to hear confessions, to confirm the people in the resolutions that they have made, by instructions, sermons, spiritual directions, counsel, and so forth.

Within and without their own houses they endeavor with the divine grace to follow as closely as possible the footsteps of our divine Redeemer and Master Jesus Christ Crucified, so that they may serve as models to the people both by word and by example.

Moreover, in order to attain this object their Constitutions prescribe twelve virtues for them to practise; these are: Faith, hope, love of God, concord and charity among themselves, poverty, purity of heart, obedience, meekness and humility of heart, mortification, recollection, prayer, self-abnegation, and the love of the cross.

Every week each one makes a day of retreat in order that, while conversing only with the divine Majesty and devoting himself to the care of his own soul, he may draw thence more strength to labor in behalf of his neighbor.

Whenever they remain at home they spend the greater part of the day in silence, in recollection, in the choir, in the practice of mortification, in meditation, which they make three times a day, namely, in the morning at the first hour, during the day about the hour of Vespers, and in the evening after Compline; there are examinations of conscience before dinner and before going to bed. They, moreover, have domestic meetings during which they discuss the ecclesiastical sciences, the mode of advancing more and more in a solid, true, and positive imitation of the sublime virtues of the divine Majesty, the manner of more effectively laboring for the spiritual welfare of souls, especially of those that are mostly neglected, and that live in abandoned places.

The houses of the subjects are not numerous, and in regard to their maintenance they seek to be troublesome to no one, but they support themselves by that which they have brought from their own families, and which they place at the feet of the Superior, and by that which is voluntarily offered to them by the faithful for the love of Jesus Christ.

This is a brief sketch of the aim and purpose of the Institute of the Most Holy Saviour.

After the original written by the hand of Father Cesare Sportelli.

Letter 25

TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE, IN THE MONASTERY AT CAMIGLIANO

Exhortation to practise renunciation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI [1736.]

Your letter, my dear daughter, is the first that I have received from you for a long time, and I do not remember to have received any letter from you without having answered it.

My answer to-day will, however, be short, for you tell me in your letter that you are painfully continuing in the practice of prayer, and that you are always in desolation: two things that afford me great pleasure.

Continue then, and do not even ask our Lord for consolation; make even every day a special visit of renunciation, I wish to say a visit in which you should renounce for the love of him all consolations and all creatures. Continue also to pray to our Lord for me; ask him in particular to deprive me of my will, so that I may perfectly unite myself to his.

I have not forgotten you, and I will not forget you in compliance with, our agreement. Write to me.

I am at Sanseverino. We shall hardly see each other again in this life; but while doing the will of God, let us hope that we may see each other both as saints in heaven. I leave you with Jesus and Mary. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Have your letters taken to Signor Giovanni Oliviero at Naples, Porta di Capua and di San Onofrio. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your very humble servant and Father,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI.

After the original in possession of Signor Andrea d’Isa at Camigliano.

Letter 26

TO THE SAME

Different counsels of perfection.

Live Infant Jesus, and Mary Immaculate!

[VILLA, February 1736.]

Yesterday, my dear daughter, I received one of your letters, and I answer it this morning. The name of the bearer to whom I entrusted my letter is unknown to me; if then it was lost, you must have patience.

I am quite confused on hearing that our Lord uses my letters for the purpose of doing so much good to your soul. But I must tell you that I am at present going to the diocese of Salerno for a new foundation.[16775] Nevertheless I do not wish to omit rendering you all the services that are in my power. Always write to me, and send your letters here to Villa; care will be taken for them to reach me.

Try, in future, not to allow yourself to be cast down by the thought of your imperfections. The best, then, will be to trust more in God, and to abandon yourself lovingly to his paternal guidance. All our confidence, in fact, rests not on our works, but on the infinite goodness which never rejects those who sincerely seek it.

It would be injurious to your health to sleep in the cell of which you speak; if, however, you are able to have it repaired, I would allow you to ask to have it done as an alms. In the meantime, could you not go to the chapel after supper? I give you permission for an hour. And do not fear; he that loves Jesus, fears no one.

In regard to prayer, do not allow the distractions that come to trouble you. When you perceive them, recall your mind to God, but sweetly, without disquietude, and never reflect upon what you have done in prayer. Seek always to unite yourself to God by your will, but always by sweet and unrestrained acts. Read a little; then leave off, and content yourself with walking on this path of obscure faith; it is the sweet path for sanctifying yourself. Nor should you ever try to seek God with the senses; it is sufficient if you find him with pure love and with the will. In prayer, especially when you are in desolation, always recommend poor sinners without forgetting the souls in purgatory, especially those that have been most devoted to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to Mary.

You must not think for a moment that we shall see each other at Camigliano, because I set out to-morrow. Submit yourself on this point to the will of Jesus Christ. Besides, I do not see that my visit to you is necessary. It would undoubtedly cause you sensible consolation; but you should always sacrifice all consolations of this kind to the love of Jesus, of this God who lived on this earth constantly deprived of every consolation.

As mistress of novices, try to instruct more by deeds than by words. Let your words be always full of sweetness. Avoid, as a general thing, reproving the novices in public, and always make your corrections by saying kind words.

As a matter of obedience to you, I say: Always remember my poor soul, above all in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament and in your Communions. I bless you in the hearts of Jesus and Mary. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your very devoted servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI.

After the original in possession of Father Vincenzo Venditti, C. SS. R.

Letter 27

TO THE SAME

He recommends his Institute to her prayers, and exhorts her to persevere in prayer.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, April 18, [1736.]

First of all I must tell you, my dearest daughter, that when you write to me omit the title *Your most illustrious Lord;* it is sufficient to say *Your Reverence* out of respect to the priesthood with which I, though unworthy, am invested.

In the second place, I must tell you that you must not be afraid; when we embrace the cross we also embrace Jesus Christ who is united with the cross.

I thank you for recommending me to Jesus Christ; never omit doing so, whether you receive letters from me or not; and with me always recommend our Institute to Jesus Christ. You must know that we are in great trouble; within a short time we have lost four, perhaps, five subjects; and thus you see how much we need your prayers. Pray to Jesus Christ to send us subjects; I ask especially for a novena to Mary Immaculate and to St. Joseph, that they may obtain for us three subjects.

In regard to the state of your soul, content yourself with having Jesus in your heart if you have him not before your eyes, and offer up to him this pain—a pain that could not be greater—for the soul that loves Jesus it is a pain that drew complaints from Jesus himself on the cross. But what does he know that knows not how to suffer for God? Thus spoke your St. John of the Cross; and St. Philip Neri said that there is no greater tribulation in this world than to have no tribulations. He added that he that desires to suffer little has little love for God. When you are more desolate than usual, raise up by a sigh your heart to Jesus by saying to him: O my Spouse! I ask not Thy consolations; it is only Thee that I wish. Therefore, endeavor also to feel the pain that was felt by St. Aloysius de Gonzaga; it was for him a martyrdom of love not to be able to love God as much as he acknowledged him worthy of being loved.

Pains or consolations, offer them all to Jesus.

How I love to see in you, dearest daughter, this weariness in prayer, and this perseverance in spite of the weariness! It suffices, then, that you always make acts of union of your will with the will of God.

If you would see, dearest daughter, that all goes well with you in regard to God, where would be your suffering? To suffer, then, would be a paradise. When trouble takes possession of you, try to recover at once peace of mind; persevere in prayer and in your other spiritual exercises, notwithstanding every feeling of disgust, even though all should seem to you to be lost; leave all to Jesus Christ.

Guard against all solicitude in relation to my letters, else they will be for you an obstacle to your perfection.

I send my regards to Mother Superior, and I recommend myself to the prayers of this afflicted soul, because afflicted souls are dear to God; on my part I have recommended her to Jesus and to Mary. As regards yourself, I follow the agreement that we have made. Live in the hearts of Jesus and Mary! Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble and very devoted servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI.

After an old copy.

Letter 28

TO THE SAME

Counsels in regard to perfection.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, May 23, 1736.

My dear daughter, I received two letters from you at the same time.

Continue to practise meditation as you are doing; it is good; and have in this no other contentment, no other desire than to accomplish the will of the Lord.

Although you may be in desolation and in trouble, yet endeavor always to practise meekness in your relations with your Sisters, and for this end do violence to yourself. Continue to say to them something about God when such a thing is useful to them. Charity is more pleasing to God than humility. Take care, however, on these occasions to acknowledge yourself (but before God more than before those to whom you speak) as miserable and despicable, as you are; and if a thought of vain-glory presents itself do not heed it.

When even you should find yourself colder than snow, do never omit to pray for poor sinners, for the souls in purgatory, and especially for me, in order that I may gain many souls for God.

It seems to me that I have already told you not to ask me any more for the love of Mary to go to see you; but I see that you have repeated the request. If God wishes this, I would obey him; but it is difficult at present, for I am going to make a long stay at Villa. Do not, therefore, ask for this anymore. Content yourself with what I can do for you, and I repeat, do not be solicitous on the subject of my letters. I have written to you more than once; but either the letters are lost or they are delayed. Jesus will then grant you this consolation according to his good pleasure, and if he wishes that we should wait till we reach Paradise to see each other, you should be resigned; if not, you would prove that you do not yet belong entirely to God.

I now recommend to you three things: Silence, the exercise of the presence of God, and a tender love for Mary. Pray without ceasing to this good Mother for me, for the Institute, and ask her for subjects; for so far no one has come to replace those that have left us. The month of July is consecrated to Mary; go then, every day of this month, to pray to her to my intention and to that of the Institute that she may send us subjects if it be to her glory.

I leave you in the heart of Jesus, and under the mantle of Mary.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very devoted servant and Father in Jesus and Mary,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI.

After the original in possession of D. Antonio Palmerano at Pignataro Maggiore.

Letter 29

TO HIS FATHER DON GIUSEPPE DE LIGUORI

He asks him to help on the work of the Venerable Gennaro Sarnelli.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, July 16, [1736.]

My dear Father: I again recommend to you the affair[16776] of D. Gennaro Sarnelli in reference to the removal of prostitutes; it is truly an important work that is conducive to the glory of God. This courageous missionary is the son of the Baron of the barony of Ciorani who does us a thousand favors. He has given us a beautiful piece of property with buildings, and a garden for a house and church. He has also furnished us with lime, wood, and even money in order that we may begin to build.—Asking you for your blessing, I remain, etc. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 30

TO THE SAME

He begs him to speak to him no more about the episcopate.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, August 5 [1736].

My dear Father: I have just heard what has been done in regard to the affair of Father Sarnelli. I beg you to co-operate with him as much as you can for the glory of Jesus Christ.

In regard to the other affair, the episcopate, my dear Father, do not mention it to me any more if you do not wish to give me real pain. In case it were offered to me, even if it were the archbishopric of Naples, I should not fail to refuse it in order to continue this great work to which Jesus Christ has deigned to call me; for if I abandon this work, I would regard myself as almost one of the damned, for having abandoned the vocation that God has so evidently made known to me. I wish, therefore, that you would no longer speak to me or to anyone else about this affair, the more so, since in our Institute we are obliged by the Rule to renounce the episcopate and all dignities.

I do not cease to recommend you to Jesus Christ. May you bless me always, so that I may remain faithful to God to whom I owe everything. I conclude by most humbly throwing myself at your feet and asking you for your blessing. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 31

TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE

He marks out a rule of conduct for her interior and her exterior life.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, September 26 [1736.]

I yesterday received your two letters. I learned with great pleasure that you have become detached from that person, and that afterwards you have been blamed. What you have told the Superior is sufficient; there is no longer any need of justifying yourself, unless some are really scandalized at your breaking off in this way, supposing that you are entertaining an aversion. To the other religious you must always show a smiling and friendly countenance.

Penances and mortifications should be performed only when you are well.

In regard to the mission, assure the bishop that he did well to call the missionaries of St. George;[16777] for we cannot go so far, and we have so much to do here that we cannot possibly give the mission. Indeed, our number is small; do not, therefore, cease, my dearest daughter, to pray to Jesus and Mary that they may send us companions; always pray, and especially now; for I have been informed that many wish to come. Although we are few in number, yet we are giving missions continually.

I am displeased to learn of the great eagerness that you manifest of seeing me again. A general confession is not necessary, and God does not wish that you should think of seeing me again. I do not go to see even my mother, nor anyone else. As for Villa, it is not at all proper for me to go there; besides, I could not go without permission, and this permission my director [Mgr. Falcoia] would surely never give me if I asked him. Be therefore undisturbed, and I beg you never more to speak to me about this journey. Be calm; God wishes you to be detached from all creatures—from all without exception; he desires to be your only companion and your consolation.

Here is the advice that I give you:

Use the discipline every day, and wear the cilicium till dinner-time; on Fridays you may do something more: but when you are indisposed, especially when you have only little fever, do nothing, absolutely nothing.

As for the fruit, if you can abstain from it, seeing that it is not strictly necessary for your health, you will do well to abstain from it; it is sufficient if you take it only on Sundays, and then only a small quantity; on other days you may abstain from it when you have soup [*minestra*] and there is no other special reason.

Do not, my dear daughter, complain about my silence; if I do not receive your letters, how can I answer them? Signor Giovanni Oliviero has changed his place of residence. He now lives in the Forcella quarter, in the street called *Sopra Muro*. Now let me know to which person I can address my answers so that they may reach you.

As for past faults, think no more of them. Endeavor to keep aloof from every one: go to the parlor as rarely as possible; if, with the permission of the Superior, you could avoid going there altogether, it would be well; but if this cannot be, on account of business connected with your life-annuity, or other necessities, try at least to show yourself there as rarely as possible. However, if it were possible for you to let your relatives and others know that you would no more go to the parlor, oh, how glad I would be!

Write to Luisa that I am very happy to see her continuing as she does; tell her that she should love Jesus and Mary very much by resolving to sanctify herself earnestly and cordially, and that she should pray for me. And as for you, all the time that you may have, employ it in prayer by always asking Jesus Christ for the grace of doing perfectly his will, in order to belong entirely to him. Oh, how beautiful is it to see a soul that belongs entirely to God, a soul that wishes only God, that loves only God, that thinks only of God, that seeks in all things only God!

When obedience prescribes anything for you to do, especially when you are to attend the sick, leave all your devotions; then in your occupations and fatiguing labor sustain yourself by ejaculatory prayers which you should allow to originate from all that you do or see; render also assistance to the sick every time that you can do so.

Always remember me and our Congregation; you see that on my part I do not forget you, and that I am deeply interested in seeing you a saint. O my dearest daughter! the God that we have is so amiable and so good to him that seeks him with his whole heart. Courage, then! Let us seek God only, him only, and nothing more; and let us always pray to Mary that she may help us to find him.

Make a novena to Mary for the new subjects of whom I have spoken, in order that she may send them to us and confirm them in their good-will. May Mary be our hope, and Jesus alone be our love!

Since you desire to give me a more distinct knowledge of your past life, this is what you may do: When you have a little time, write to me all that concerns your past life, your faults, those at least that may be entrusted to a letter; but on the other hand, note also the little attention that you have given to prayer, etc., and the graces that you have received from our Lord. I shall thus be better able to direct you.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble and very affectionate Father,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI.

After an old copy.

Letter 32

TO THE SAME

He prescribes for her the way she should behave under existing circumstances.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, October 26 [1736].

My dear daughter: I returned home yesterday, and I now answer your last letter. The expenses of the missions are incurred by us. We call ourselves the *Congregation of the Most Holy Saviour.* At present it is not possible for us to give a mission at your place; for we have so much to do in this vast diocese of Salerno that we cannot go even to Cava which is near us.

As regards the mortifications, I do not wish you to begin them if you are not well. Eat fruit sometimes when you see that it serves as a remedy either for the stomach or in order that you may not eat something else that will disagree with you.

I am much pleased that you have that companion; I counsel you to use all your influence with the Superiors that she may not be taken from you. Be always friendly to her, and always praise her before others. As for the services that appear to you so lowly in regard to the sick, you know that they have been highly prized and honored by the saints; if the senses loath such things, it does not matter; let nature show repugnance and do your duty.

As to the mission, it is impossible at present: the distance is too great.

Finally, if you wish to be consoled, hear this advice: embrace in all things the will of God, and you will always be content.

Pray always for me, who do not forget you. Pray to Jesus and to Mary to send us subjects. I recommend to you three visits every day to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin by offering for the love of them your life and all things; and in these visits give a sigh of love in behalf of my soul, in order that Jesus and Mary may help me to accomplish perfectly the will of God. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Saviour.
After an old copy.

Letter 33

TO THE SAME

Various counsels.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, April 4 [1737].

My dear daughter: I write you hurriedly these few lines in answer to your last letter, as we are very much occupied in the building [of a house at Ciorani]; nearly fifty persons have come through charity, to assist us. For this reason thank our Lord for us, and beg him to continue to bless us.

Two good subjects have already come to join the Institute.

What you tell me about your severe carnival and the first Friday of March, gives me pleasure.

As for the foundation, I do not yet say that it is either a temptation or an inspiration. Pray to our Lord to enlighten me, and in the meantime keep yourself entirely resigned, as if the thing could never succeed. Write, moreover, to the duchess, and inform me of all.

I am pleased with your sister, and her letter delighted me with the beautiful sentiments that she expresses. Cultivate this soul with care, for I hope that she will produce great fruit.

When, my daughter, shall I come to Caiazzo? I do not know; perhaps this may be when we least imagine it. In the meantime, let us love Jesus Christ with all our power, for he is well worthy to be loved. Always pray for me who will not forget you.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very affectionate Father in Jesus and Mary,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI.

After an old copy.

Letter 34

TO THE SAME

He reproaches her for her great repugnance to suffering.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

[The middle of April, 1737.]

As for the journey to Villa, God knows, my dear daughter, when I shall be able to make it, for I cannot leave this place, and I have no occasion to go to Villa.

I rejoiced to hear of the persecutions of which you are the object; but what you add, that you despair of being able to remain longer in that monastery, gives me pain.

If our Lord wishes a new foundation, he will himself open the way, and let us know when he wishes it. But perhaps this is a great temptation to you; I fear it when I see the horrible repugnance that you feel to bear any longer the persecutions of the monastery. You should, however, desire these persecutions. Do you not see that you are now treated as our Lord, and that in watching you so closely, in keeping you in humility, your Sisters are cooperating in the work of your perfection? And you say after this that you can no longer bear with them!

O my God! what has then become of your desire to suffer for your Spouse, to belong entirely to him? Sister Giovanna, my daughter, nevermore use such language when you speak to me; otherwise you will make me lose the hope of ever seeing you really a saint, and I shall no longer regard you as my daughter.

God wishes you to be a saint, but by means of crosses. In future, far from complaining of being persecuted, do not omit to thank Jesus Christ on this account: even ask him, in all your prayers, to make you live, unceasingly despised by all creatures. Your present aridity is without doubt a chastisement from his hand which is intended to punish your great repugnance to sufferings.

When you are despised or accused, be silent until you are commanded to speak; and in this case, instead of excusing yourself, say that you deserve to be dismissed on account of your imperfections.

Continue to pray for the Institute and for me, and ask God to send us subjects.

To expiate your want of patience, impose upon yourself some supererogatory mortification during eight days, in eating, in taking the discipline, or in wearing the cilicium.

Pray to your divine Spouse to pardon you your want of resignation, and recommend yourself to our Lady of Seven Dolors; she will solicit your pardon.

Write to me, and tell me how you are getting on. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very devoted Father in Jesus and Mary,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI.

After a copy sent by Mgr. Alfonso Giordano, Bishop of Teano.

Letter 35

TO THE SAME

He exhorts her to detach herself from creatures, and offers her advice how to behave towards her sister.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, April 22, 1737.

I have just received your two letters, and I again answer that for the present it is impossible for us to go to your place to give a mission; for our number is small, and we have so much to do here that we can hardly finish. Moreover, it is our rule never to give missions so far away, especially when we have to give them in places that are near us.

I permit you to pray to Jesus Christ as St. Scholastica did; but I forbid you all eagerness to see and to hear me. It may suffice for us to see each other in Paradise in order never to be separated from the beautiful vision of God; while waiting, let us aid each other by prayer, and remain in peace. God only is that good from which we must not be separated. All creatures are creatures that chill in us the love for the supreme good when we desire them with solicitude. I wish, therefore, to help you to unite yourself more and more to Jesus Christ, and not to separate you from him; hence, I desire that henceforth you be more resigned.

What consoles me is that darkness and contempt continue in you. Oh, would to God that in the midst of all the darkness, abandoned and despised by everyone, we may have the happiness of loving and pleasing Jesus Christ! In darkness I recommend to you to employ a great part of your meditation in saying prayers to Jesus and to Mary. Oh, what an excellent meditation is that in which we do not cease to ask of Jesus the love of Jesus!

I send you certain little works of piety with some hymns of my own composition.

As regards your sister, it is necessary that you should neglect nothing to promote her eternal salvation. If there were some means of obtaining a place for her it would not much matter if something should be lost in selling the property. In short, you must take care of this affair, and find out whether the house of your aunt is frequented by a relative or anyone else; for in that case, you must cry out against such a thing, create a noise about it and decide upon measures. Do all that you can, but without losing your peace of mind; what you cannot do place in the hands of Jesus Christ.

Continue to recommend me very much to Jesus and to Mary. We are few in number, and at the present time we are nearly all sick. Make a novena to Mary Immaculate that she may procure for us both health and subjects; we shall then go to give a mission at your place.

I also request you to make without intermission acts of love to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. May Mary be our hope, and may Jesus be our love! Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble and very grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Saviour.

After an old copy.

Letter 36

TO HIS DIRECTOR MGR. TOMMASO FALCOIA

Reflections as to the abandonment of the foundation at Villa degli Schiavi.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, July 12, 1737.

Yesterday Brother Andrea arrived here, bringing good news from Caiazzo, and telling us that Mgr. Vigilante, being ill-disposed towards us, makes no further mention of another foundation.[16778] Cheer up, my dear Father, may Jesus Christ send us tribulations in every way; blessed be his name forever! Meanwhile, I see that the devil is endeavoring to cause us trouble from within. Don Giovanni [Mazzini] and Don Andrea [Villani] have written to me in confidence, and I confide it to you as a secret, my dear Father, that it may serve as a guide for you; but when speaking to them, do not mention that they have written to me. In short, I understand that Don Giovanni, judging from the tenor of his letter, has heard that our people are not to return to Caiazzo, and Don Andrea writes to me that he has had many interior and exterior struggles. I hope, nevertheless, that Jesus Christ will not abandon us.

My dear Father, let me get rid of a scruple concerning the foundation at Villa which torments me very much: it is caused by seeing the great abandonment of these poor souls.

When we went to the prince,[16779] he said in the beginning that we could not expect more than the hundred and fifty ducats which had been promised, and that we should go to the delegate, as he did not understand the matter. I saw then, that, though he did not show himself favorable to us, he would not have been offended if the delegate had done us justice. Judging now from what he has said, it seems to me that I should have acknowledged that we could not claim more than the hundred and fifty ducats. My memory is, moreover, confused, and I know no longer whether or not I would have finished by taking leave. But Don Cesare [Sportelli] suddenly came out very boldly and said to the prince: “We have come hither to take leave, and we want nothing else.” The prince then dismissed us with bad grace. I could then apply no remedy, since leave had already been taken. But during our journey to Villa, the doubt occurred to me whether I was not able to remedy matters, and whether the leave-taking was according to the intention of your Lordship. Yet I brightened up on the way when I heard of the violence used, for we may safely infer the consent of the prince, and furthermore we may conclude that he was opposed to us. I desired to tell you this in order to lighten my mind of a load. As for the rest, I am satisfied with whatever God has been pleased to do through your Lordship.

I also wish to tell you that we were offered three foundations at Cava and at Vietri, but at the time I did not pay much attention to these offers, as I knew that your Lordship wished to see us united, rather than scattered in other places. But if, my dear Father, you wish that when I have to return to those places, I should select the best house as a new foundation, I shall obey.

But, my dear Father, allow me to express my sentiments on this point.

In the first place, it is necessary henceforward to exercise great caution in accepting foundations of this kind so miserable and wretched; for though it is true that we can relinquish them at our pleasure, still such a proceeding reflects great discredit upon our poor little Institute; for people will say, as the talk now goes at Caiazzo, that we have been expelled.

Then I would ask your Lordship, since we are so few, to keep us together; this consoles me when I think of Villa, for Jesus Christ has allowed us to abandon it without remorse, in order to make us more united. My dear Father, where subjects are only too few (your Lordship already know this, but I have had the experience) regular observance and fervor languish, even perseverance is threatened; to tell the truth, everything grows tepid: for let a subject be absent from choir on account of some affair which is always turning up, such as preaching or hearing confessions, or some other business, of course there can be no choir; this happens pretty often. Moreover, when the choir is made up of so few, one can hardly make out what is said, for the same one must be hebdomadary, antiphonarius, and must intone the psalms. Hence, we never learn to say the Office in the proper manner. Retreats and spiritual exercises are seldom made. For my own part, since I am alone, I do not remember that I have ever been able on a single occasion to make the exercises perfectly, as we were so few, and it was necessary for me to occupy myself with some affair or other. As for the domestic conferences, which are such an assistance to us, one is tempted to give them up; one does not know what to say when so few are to be addressed; all that one can do is to moralize a little, in order not to wound the small audience. The faults of which it is customary for us to accuse ourselves in the refectory, are also few on account of the paucity of members, and so the accusation on Friday is often omitted. In the same manner the recreations, especially when one is out of humor, are more tiresome than refreshing. The result of all this is relaxed observance on the part of the subjects; and we, my dear Father, have experienced this. We know it from the divisions, from the dispersion and ruin of the subjects at Ciorani; Don Xaverio [Rossi] and Don Giulio [Marocco], to speak the truth, are not what they were, and I have become colder than all the others. It is good to speak of this, not only on our own account, but also on account of the others, who can with difficulty bring themselves to unite with us, because they see that we are so few.

Only yesterday Father Fiorillo wrote me that there is a good foundation at Grotta Goglierma, beyond Sessa. It is a large village in the diocese of Aquino, where we would have a church quite finished, a house with twenty cells, and an abundance of comforts. Father Fiorillo asked me to go thither to inspect the place, for the municipality, he said, wishes to bestow it upon missionaries.

I answered that I had been informed of it. . . . . . . [The remainder is wanting.]

After the original in the possession of his Eminence Guglielmo Sanfelice, Archbishop of Naples.

Letter 37

TO FATHER CESARE SPORTELLI,[16780] AT SCALA

Live Jesus and Mary!

CIORANI, August 7, 1737.

My dear Don Cesare: I have received your letter from which I learn that you are somewhat better, though the fever still continues. Do not forget that favor which I asked you through Father Fusco, in regard to the *Teresian Chronicles*. Try to do this as soon as possible.

Live Jesus and Mary!

ALFONSO.

After the original preserved in the archives of the convent of the Redemptorists, at Pagani.

Letter 38

TO HIS FATHER DON GIUSEPPE DE LIGUORI

He begs him to be more charitable to his son D. Ercole, and gives him some advice about his own sanctification.

[The end of October, 1737.]

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

My dear Father: I beg you for pity's sake to have a little more charity for your son. This morning he came to see me at Naples,[16781] and began in my presence to weep, because he could not do otherwise on account of the grief that afflicts him. My God! do you wish to make him desperate, and cause him to throw himself into a well, or to do some other rash act? For mercy's sake, stop showing your melancholy at table, give him some assistance, since your poor son is now married, exiled from Naples, without any comfort whatsoever. See that you do not make him do any imprudent act; especially should you show charity towards him now that he is sick. Think that he is your son, and not a dog; hence, he should be dearer to you than possessions, than money; and be assured that if charity is practised towards your own family, God will help you in some other way. What do you wish should be done? What is done is done; and has already been arranged *ab æterno* [from all eternity]; upon whom can you lay the blame?

I beg you, dear Father, to be habitually a little more united with God, to go to confession oftener, to prepare your accounts, because when Jesus Christ comes there will then be no time to attend to this matter. Think that you are already advanced in age; who knows within what space of time you will no longer be in this world? and it is certain that this must be, whether you wish it or not. Every morning I recommend you to God at my Mass, for I fear much for your eternal salvation. I hope the Blessed Virgin will assist you; but the Blessed Virgin will not be able to assist you without your co-operation. . . . .

After the Roman edition.

Letter 39

TO FATHER GIUGLIO MAROCCO,[16782] AT CAIAZZO

The saint complains of his silence, and tells him some news.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, March 9 [1738].

My dear Don Giuglio: What is the matter that I have not seen any of your letters for so long a time? The past week we have been at home after two months spent in giving missions. We wish to know how you are, and when we shall have the consolation of seeing you; when you come from the holy house of the Blessed Virgin, we hope that you will come here directly.

We have learned that Columbano[16783] has become re-united to his wife; through this union Monsignor di Caiazzo was hoping to obtain his consent for the foundation. I should most sincerely wish you to inform yourself how things stand, without, however, making your desire known.

Present my regards to Don Silvestro and also to Elizabeth; let the latter pray to Jesus and Mary for me; tell her that I do not forget her. Remember me kindly to Monsignor, and recommend me to Jesus Christ and to Mary every morning, especially at Mass.

Here they have begun to build the church. . . . We hope to get a good Neapolitan subject; recommend him to Jesus Christ. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your servant and brother in Jesus and Mary,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

P. S. I have already written to you that now there is no more question of going to our Lady at Loreto. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the original preserved at Francavilla Fontana in possession of Mgr. Francesco de Fazio, domestic prelate of His Holiness.

Letter 40

TO THE SAME

It is impossible to give the mission for which he asks. Great desire of seeing him enter the Institute.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

From the mission at CALVANICO,[16784] April 27, [1739.]

My dear Don Giovanni: I was greatly consoled to receive your most esteemed note, because I thought that you no longer remembered us. But your note proved to me that this is not the case; it proved, on the contrary, that you are thinking of us and of our Institute with real affection. O God! how much assistance you could have given us this year by going with us on the missions, and I had so great a desire to write this to you! But I was told not to do so on account of the disposition of your family and of the bishop. The latter, I believe, will grow somewhat cool towards us on account of what your relatives will have told him; the fact is he will not even send us the candidates for ordination next Pentecost. If you have an occasion do not omit, I beg you, to assure him that in regard to this point we are altogether without fault.

Let us now speak of the mission at Dupino. Dear Giovanni, I have received orders from our Father [Mgr. Falcoia] to retire after the mission at Mercato di Giffoni and to give no other, so that, though we had received a most urgent application from Valle di Giffoni—an extensive and beautiful country—we had to leave the people disconsolate, because no mission was given to them. It, however, happened that for a special reason the archbishop positively wished to have a mission given at Calvanico where I am now; our Father has granted us permission to give this mission *tantum* [only], and no more, as he does not wish us to labor any more during the month of May. Now you ask me for a mission at Dupino; but it is too late. The most that I can do to serve you is to send a courier to Castel Montori to obtain permission to go; but I must say to you that such a thing will be impossible on account of the reasons given above. As soon as I receive an answer, Don Cesare [Sportelli] will send it to you. If we cannot go now, we shall wait till the weather becomes cooler. You must thank those gentlemen of the parish for the honor that they have done us. Had they notified me before, I could have taken more suitable measures to serve them.

To return to ourselves. Do not forget us or the Institute. Whatever you may do, you may be sure a good rewarder will pay you; I say no more. Ah, my dear Giovanni, my dear Giovanni! Let me at least know at what time, with the consent of your family and of your bishop, you will be able to help us on the missions; let me know this, so that I may send you word when the missions are to be given. *Messis quidem multa* [the harvest is great] . . . especially for the corning year; oh, what a harvest is awaiting us! There is especially Eboli where there are six thousand souls; and our services have been asked for S. Lorenzo della Padula where there are also six thousand souls. Well then! pray to Jesus and Mary for us, and particularly for me. Asking you to write to me, I remain, etc.

Your very humble and very devoted servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI.

After the original kept at Dragonea in the diocese of Cava.

Letter 41

TO FATHER GIULIO MAROCCO

He writes to him to prolong his stay at Caiazzo.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph!

CIORANI, [June 1739.]

My dear Giulio: When you wrote to me I was absent on a mission. Then Father Cesare [Sportelli] answered you for me, and begged that you would write about the matter to our Father [Mgr. Falcoia]. But now this is no longer necessary, since I have spoken to Monsignor. He says that you should stay at Caiazzo as long as the doctors say that it is necessary for your health. Pray to Jesus and Mary for me.

Salute for me Monsignor [Vigilante], and tell him that we soon expect him and Don Silvestro; be cheerful; for pity's sake, be courageous, take exercise, and do not trouble yourself about anything. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your devoted brother and servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

After the original preserved at Naples in the Oratory of the Archconfraternity of our Lady of Mercy.

Letter 42

TO THE SAME

He hopes to see him soon again at Ciorani, and begs him to recommend to our Lady of Loreto himself and the Institute.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, [End of July, 1739].

My dear Giulio: I was waiting a long time for news from you, and at last I received it. We rejoice that your health is better. We should like to know when we shall have the consolation of receiving you here.

The priest in question wished to enter this summer; as, however, by entering he would have to make the exercises, our Father [Mgr. Falcoia] wished his entrance to be postponed. He will come towards the second week of September.

Know that on the 15th of October I shall begin a retreat to the clergy at Naples, and after that I shall return home. If during this time you would be able to arrange about coming here, my consolation would be redoubled. If not, may God's will be done!

After having written this, I heard that our Father has granted you permission to go to our Lady of Loreto. I am glad of this; pray to this good Mother for me, for our companions and for our Institute, and go to her with great confidence that she may give you either good health or perfect resignation. I suppose that you will go by the way of the Abruzzi in order to avoid the mountainous countries.

I have nothing more to say. May we meet again immediately after your trip.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your brother and servant,

ALFONSO LE LIGU0RI.

After the original preserved in the diocese of Teano.

Letter 43

TO MOST REVEREND CASIMIRO ROSSI,[16785] ARCHBISHOP OF SALERNO

He asks for faculties for the exercise of the apostolic ministry.

[CIORANI, December 26, 1739.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Most Reverend and respected Sir: I write this letter to ask your Grace for two favors in regard to the faculties. The first is this: Your Grace will remember that for a priest of the diocese whose faculties for hearing confessions, granted for six months, were shortly to expire, you granted me an extension as long as the missions would last. Now as the same thing will often happen, and will in fact happen as I understand in the case of some confessors in the missions that are about to be given, I beg your Grace to concede to me also for the future, *the same extension, in a similar case, to approved confessors for the time only during which they assist me on the mission.*

The other favor is this: The evening that I spent at Salerno it seems to me that your Grace allowed me the faculty of employing any one whom I believe fit to help me to hear confessions in the monasteries of nuns; but as on that evening I was so much occupied at the moment that afterwards I did not remember how I had formulated my request on this point, I now beg your Grace for the peace of my conscience to declare to me that you grant me *the faculty of hearing confessions in said monasteries, and of asking anyone whom I think suitable also to hear confessions, with the same faculties granted to me for the missions* when I happen to give the exercises or when I preach in the said monasteries.

For my greater tranquility and for your convenience it will be sufficient, and I beg you that below you inform me that the aforesaid faculties are granted. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph! While humbly prostrating myself at your feet, I have the honor to remain,

Most Reverend Sir,
Your very humble, very devoted,
and very grateful servant,
ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

The archbishop answered in the same letter: “The two faculties asked for, as expressed in this letter, are granted. December 28, 1739.

CASIMIRO, Archbishop.”

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 44

TO A NUN AT FISCIANO, IN THE DIOCESE OF SALERNO

He exhorts her never to omit Communion, notwithstanding all her temptations.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CASTELLAMMARE,[16786] January 6, 1740.

How much am I pained that you have so little faith in obedience, notwithstanding what I have told you and repeated so often! One thing in your letter has, however, consoled me, that in spite of all this you have not given up Communion.

I beg you, and I command you, never to omit holy Communion, even when it should seem to you that you are giving consent to every temptation in the world. For pity's sake, do not treat your Spouse as a tyrant who wishes you evil, and who wishes to punish the soul that is anxious to seek him and not to displease him.

If you cannot swear at first sight to have deliberately consented to the temptation, and consented to lose God, always go blindly. (I take it on my conscience) to Communion, in spite of all disquietudes, and even if you believe you are committing a sacrilege. Act thus; you will no doubt suffer, but you will not on that account be less pleasing to Jesus Christ, since it is only to please him and to obey him that you communicate.

In your Communions and prayers, do not forget the agreement that we have made with each other; on my part, I pray and will earnestly pray for you to this good Master, for I see that you are very dear to him; yes, very dear, although you do not know this. Could you not convince yourself of this? You would then become, miserable creature that you are, grateful to this God your Creator who bears towards you so tender a love.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI.

After the original in possession of the Carmelites of Fisciano.

Letter 45

TO THE VENERABLE GENNARO SARNELLI.[16787]

He gives him advice in regard to the composition of spiritual books.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, April 3, 1740.

My dear Gennaro: We are distressed on account of Father Xavier [Rossi] whose illness has grown much worse, causing him to lose more blood than before. To-day, however, he is a little better. May God spare him to us!

I have read what you have written to me. My dear Gennaro, I have, however, very little time, and soon I must go to Nocera to preach some sermons; besides I am not very well. It would, indeed, be a great work for me to collect those small treatises about the Heart of Jesus and the Passion. I shall do what I can.

I have told Brother Gennaro [Rending] to copy the canticles, because I have not time to do so myself; but I shall revise them. In the canticle of the *Desolate Soul* it will suffice that you change the strophe arranged by Fontana as follows:

E se per me non mai
Vi fosse, o Dio, perdono,
Sappi che tua pur sono
E sempre tua sarò.[16788]

As for the pious meditations on the Passion, the Blessed Sacrament, etc., of which you speak, I wish you to fill them with affections, rather than with citations, revelations and reflections; for in this kind of meditations one should exercise, the will more than the understanding; and what devout persons require more, are affections and not considerations.

Particularly in the meditation on the Passion, when the meditation is on Jesus bound by the executioners, let the prayer be: O Jesus deign to bind us with the chains of Thy love, etc. You will find a similar aspiration written in the paper I send you.

To Jesus covered with wounds by the scourging, the prayer may be as follows; May he wound us with his love, since all these wounds cry for and demand only love, as our Lord himself one day said to Sister Vittoria Angelini.

To Jesus crowned with thorns: May he reign over our hearts and our affections, etc.

To Jesus dying: May he make us die to all the affections of the world.

To Jesus wounded in his heart by a lance: May he wound us, etc.

Read the book entitled: “Sufferings of Jesus;”[16789] you will find in it very beautiful aspirations. See also the exercises which the author gives after the reflections. I conclude. When you have read them give them to Jorio for me.

I will send you later the other affections and the canticles drawn from the “Book of Canticles.” Recommend me to Jesus and Mary.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 46

TO THE FOUNDRESS OF A MONASTERY OF NUNS AT SARAGNANO

Necessity of establishing perfect observance from the beginning, especially in regard to poverty.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, July 12, 1740.

Reverend and honored Mother: I regret exceedingly not to have been able to give you before your departure some useful counsels for the good of the new foundation and for the glory of Jesus Christ. I have therefore thought that I would send you the counsels in writing.

I would say to you in the first place: Prepare yourself to suffer much for Jesus Christ, if you wish that this foundation should be made according to his design. You will have to suffer poverty; you will have to endure persecutions, not so much from outsiders as from those that are within; because the latter are accustomed to live according to their own fancy, and as soon as they see themselves restricted by the Rule, there will be among them malcontents who will murmur and create disturbance; there will also be some who will take their departure. But let those go away with full liberty who do not wish to observe the Rule punctually. It will not matter if you remain alone; Jesus and Mary will come to your aid.

Consider that you have to implant the spirit of fervor which is always to endure in future. But if now you begin to relax, either through human respect, or through fear that complaints will be made, or that some will leave you, remember that the foundation will go from bad to worse.

In all other points, be full of charity towards all the Sisters, especially the sick; try to be the servant of all, and make them understand that you bear great love towards each one of them, because love, and not force, is an excellent means of rendering them docile and obedient. But when you see that any one obstinately resists obedience, and especially the Rule, dismiss her resolutely, and implore the help of the bishop, asking him to support you in this matter, which is absolutely of the first importance.

Keep always before your eyes, Reverend Mother, the beautiful reward that awaits you in heaven if you maintain observance, and the severe chastisement that will, on the contrary, be inflicted upon you if, in order to condescend to the weakness of some Sister, you introduce inobservance by scandalizing the others. And what is not done now, you should despair of doing later, since fervor will always diminish rather than increase.

Take care to instruct more by example than by words. Be the first to observe all the Rules, and as to the observance, lay aside everything else. It is on the observance, understand this well, that the sanctity of this foundation depends.

Watch particularly over the observance of poverty, and *absolutely, absolutely, absolutely,* permit no one to retain anything as her own, not even a needle, if there is no real necessity. Let everything be in common, as is required by the Rule. Do not allow anything to be kept in the rooms that is not strictly necessary. Fruit, sweetmeats, jewels! Of what use will all this be, if not to make us suffer years and years in purgatory? For a much greater reason should you forbid the keeping of linen, of money, or of any other object, even if it has been received as a present. Let all presents be for the benefit of the Community.

Be on your guard, for if now you do not establish good customs, it will afterwards be impossible for you to remove bad ones. Recall to mind what I preached at Fisciano where some abuse had been introduced; and you know what it cost to remove it.

Endeavor also to suppress as much as can be done all talking in the parlor, and see to it that the *listeners* be always present. A monastery in which poverty is observed and in which the grate is closed, is a holy monastery.

Consider, Reverend Mother, that there is now for you question either of becoming a saint or of being damned. Give as much time as possible to prayer, for you stand very much in need of it, and exhort the others without intermission to pray before the Blessed Sacrament and at the feet of Mary, because on this everything depends. Tell the Sisters that all those that begin a foundation usually become saints when they strive to please Jesus Christ.

I already know that in order to execute what I have just written, you will have much to suffer; but it cannot be otherwise. If the members of the Community do not wish to obey you, frankly declare to them and to the bishop that you wish to return to Fisciano where you can have more peace and where you will be in less danger of damning your soul.

Have this letter read by the Sister who is your companion in this undertaking. Your Rule forbids flesh-meat. If you can settle this point, you will do well; so it is practised in the monastery of Tramonti.

Trust in the Lord and fear nothing, even if you see the whole world leagued against you on the question of observance. I hope that all that I have just said to you will be for you at the hour of death a subject of consolation, and not a subject of remorse. May you both recommend me to Jesus and to Mary; on my part, I will not forget you in my prayers.

May Jesus be our love and Mary our hope!

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

After an old copy.

Letter 47

TO FATHER GIULIO MAROCCO

He expresses to him his satisfaction in knowing that he is resolved to persevere in his vocation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, July 12, [1740].

My dear Giulio: I have received your letter which we were longing to receive; and it has consoled us all. This is enough to understand the rest.

Dear Giulio, what frightened us in your letter was not so much the sentence: *I wish first of all to see my health restored,* as the sentence : *for God has clearly made known to me that he wishes me to be in the Institute, not as a sick, but as a healthy man* It is this thought joined to one of your old temptations already known, namely, that you are not made for the Institute if you are sick, it was this thought, I say, that frightened us. As for the words *clearly made known,* they made us think that you had consulted some *rabbi*. But let there be no more of this. We are all of us consoled, and our fear has rendered more intense our desire of seeing you very soon.

For the rest, as this consolation to see us must necessarily be deferred, we as well as you must have patience. You may freely attend to the care of your health, as our Father [Mgr. Falcoia] has already expressed this to you, and has, I believe, confirmed it in another letter.

In regard to the Masses, please to answer Don Giovanni [Mazzini],[16790] so as to take away all scruples. In short, do not give a thought as to whether or not you have celebrated the Masses, whether or not you have incurred expenses; and I say again to you most sincerely that you may send me word for anything that you may need, and Jesus Christ will provide.

You tell me not to write to you as I have done; and I beg Don Giulio, for pity’s sake, not to write to me as he has done; that he should not frighten us again, saying that he wished to leave us. Come now! no more of this. Let the whole of what has been said be buried in the bottom of the sea.

I shall read in recreation this evening your *Maccaronica*. In the meantime recommend me to Jesus Christ and write us where you are and how you are.

I conclude by embracing you in the hearts of Jesus and of Mary. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!'

Your very humble brother in Jesus and Mary,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

After the original in possession of Don Pasquale Petrella, Primicerius of the Metropolitan Chapter of Capua.

Letter 48

TO HIS DIRECTOR MONSIGNOR TOMMASO FALCOIA.[16791]

CIORANI, July 24, 1740.

My dear Father: I am cold; please send me a little of your fire; at least tell me what I have to do and bless me. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your very humble son,

ALFONSO.

After the original in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 49

TO FATHER GIULIO MAROCCO

He tenderly exhorts him to return to Ciorani, as he is certain about his vocation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, August 2, 1740].

My dear Don Giulio: I fear that the letters that I am writing to you at present are becoming wearisome to you. But what can I do? The affection that I bear towards one of the first and oldest companions of this little Congregation impels me to write again.

We have been expecting to receive from Naples the papers or the letters about which you wrote us, but nothing has yet come.

What prompts me to write you to-day is a note of the Bishop of Caiazzo in which, writing to his sister, the Prioress of S. Giorgio, he says expressly of you: “Neither I nor anyone else has put any obstacle in the way of Don Giulio's return to the Institute; on the contrary, I have been the first to urge him to enter it. Although I regarded him not only as useful, but necessary, yet I did not wish to charge my conscience with scruples in regard to his vocation.”

Since now the bishop has approved your vocation, there is no longer any hindrance to your return.

Your vocation was afterwards approved by Father Fiorillo to whom, as your director, you referred the matter.

Monsignor Falcoia has found one of your notes in which you mention to him the resolution that you have made and the approbation that you have received.

Not to weary you, what are you doing at Caiazzo? What resolution did you make?

For pity’s sake, do not take counsel at Naples, nor elsewhere, because if Mgr. Falcoia heard of this he would no more receive you. You were so detached from your relatives, why allow yourself to be overcome by the devil and the flesh? Do you wish to act as Alteriis[16792] acted, whose behavior you once condemned? Nevertheless he had against him the archbishop, who obliged him to remain in his diocese.

Do you perhaps believe that we shall not receive you with the same affection that we received you before? Here you will find more than brothers, more than a mother. Here all are sighing for you, although you have almost discarded us who are your companions.

For pity's sake, do not give any more time to the enemy to gain you over. What a fine excuse you make about your family! Say to them that you wish to obtain counsel at Naples. But you should consult Jesus Christ and at once you would come to Ciorani.

I beg you for the love of the Blessed Virgin to return immediately on receiving this letter. Who knows, if you were perhaps no longer in Caiazzo, you would be cured of your infirmities? We of course know that you will be nearly useless, but here you will find us all charity. And though you are useless, we receive and desire you, not because you are useless, but because you are our companion, and we do not wish you to be separated from us.

I have nothing more to say. After you have read this, consult the crucifix and take a resolution at the foot of it, but at once, and do not rise, I command you, before you have decided. And come just as you are.[16793] Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very devoted father and brother in Jesus Christ,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Saviour.

After the original preserved in the diocese of Teano.

Letter 50

TO FATHER CESARE SPORTELLI, AT CIORANI

He begs him to write to several monasteries in favor of a religious vocation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

S. ANIELLO,[16794] July 12, [1741].

Don C. has told me through D. G. that there is a good priest named D. L. who would come here; he is most anxious to enter the Congregation; but he has with him a sister who is as pure as an angel. As she does not wish to marry, he is in search of a convent where she may enter as a lay-sister.

I am going to write to Cava, to Fisciano, and to the convent of the Purità at Nocera. Let Father Andrea [Villani] be so kind as to write in my name to the Carmelites at Pagani and to those at Penta. Let him also write to the Carmelites at Solofra and ask Vigilante to engage the services of the primicerius who has great influence.

I hope your Reverence will also do me the favor of writing to these three places: to San Giorgio, to endeavor to gain over Polichetti; to Solofra, to the Franciscan Sisters; to Nocera; to the Convent of St. Clare at Nocera. Write also to Tripaldi, and even, if you think it advisable, to Serino. You must say that she is my penitent; that she is truly an angel from Paradise, but poor in this world's goods; and that it is I myself that urges her case most strongly. Please write these letters very soon, and have them forwarded at once.

I embrace you all in Jesus and Mary. Let Father Xavier not tire himself too much before he has fully regained his health.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 51

TO THE PRIEST DON GIUSEPPE SPARANO,[16795] AT NAPLES

He asks him to come to him for a moment’s interview.

Live Jesus and Mary!

S. ANIELLO, July 29, [1741].

My dear Don Giuseppe: I should like to ask an important favor of you. If you would be kind enough when you go to S. Aniello on your way to S. Sebastiano to grant me a moment’s interview, you would do me a great favor.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very devoted and very grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

After an old copy.

Letter 52

TO FATHER CESARE SPORTELLI, AT CIORANI

He expresses to him his desire of promptly returning to Ciorani.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

S. ANIELLO, June 22, [1742]

My dear Father Cesare: If you do not send me Brother Gennaro [Rendina], I shall not be able to send you Brother Leonardo [Cicchetti]; for it is impossible for one Brother to work in the kitchen, to make purchases, and to serve the great number of Masses that are said here.

Nothing new has occurred here. Father Giovanni [Mazzini] is better. About July 3, he will go first to Castellammare and then to Ciorani.

Let all of you recommend me to Jesus Christ, and do so especially during the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Tell all that they should pray to our Lord that if it be conducive to his glory, he may deliver, me from Naples.[16796]

The Cardinal has not yet returned; when he returns, I will speak to him. I am, however, afraid, that he will not allow us to go away for good; we shall likely have to come and go, as the saying is. I remain, etc. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 53

TO THE SAME

Various requests to be forwarded to Mgr. Falcoia.

[CIORANI, October 26, 1742.]

. . . . I wish to tell you that yesterday morning, through the mercy of Jesus Christ, the Archbishop [of Salerno] sent us twenty ducats[16797] as an alms, and published at the same time an order that all the candidates for ordination and those *in sacris* [in Orders] are to make a retreat of ten days, either at Ciorani or at the *Vergini*.[16798] Now since it would seem strange and improper to countermand the exercises in accordance with what our Father [Mgr. Falcoia] has ordered, after they have been arranged, what is to be done? This Don Xavier [Rossi] would like to know, so as to prepare the house. He desires permission to make the necessary arrangements, and see to the removal of the prohibition to do the slightest work on the new building.

As for the missions, there are three to be given at Montuoro, which I should like to give consecutively; it would please me very much if your Reverence were to come. Write to our Father and send me as quickly as possible his answer, whether he wishes us to begin on All Saints, or at some other time appointed by him. . . . .

Transcribed by Father Sportelli in a letter addressed by him to Mgr. Falcoia, October 27, 1742.

Letter 54

TO DON MATTEO GRECO

Method of making mental prayer.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

December 10, 1742.

Abridgment of a method of making mental prayer.

Mental prayer has three parts; namely: preparation, meditation, and conclusion.

I. As to the preparation, it contains three acts: 1. Of faith, in adoring God who is present; 2. Of humility, in humbling ourselves before God and asking his pardon; 3. Of petition for light, in asking God for light for the love of Jesus and Mary, so as to make the meditation well.

Having then said a *Hail Mary* to the Blessed Virgin, we pass on to the meditation.

II. In regard to meditation, we must note several things: First, it is well for us to read that point of the meditation which makes us more recollected, and on which we are more inclined to think; but when we find ourselves moved by some pious sentiment, we should then cease to read and should occupy ourselves with gathering the fruits of the meditation which are as follows:

There are three fruits of meditation; namely: (1) the affections, (2) prayers, and (3) resolutions.

As for the 1., the will of the soul should occupy itself sweetly, without violence in making affections towards Jesus and Mary, etc., acts of confidence, humility, contrition, love, resignation, or oblation, etc.; since the affections are inflamed in meditation, the soul is also inflamed and unites itself to God. This is the principal fruit of meditation.

As to the 2., the soul should try to obtain from Jesus and Mary, etc., the graces that it needs, not only in general, but in particular, as the conquering of some vice, the love of God, holy perseverance, etc. And such a method of making meditation is very useful, and even necessary, especially during the time of aridity, or when our affections are not moved. Then it is best for us to humble ourselves, be resigned, and ask the divine Goodness for mercy; otherwise there is the danger that we either give up meditation because it is tedious, or derive very little profit from it.

As to the 3., before finishing the meditation we should always make or renew some particular resolution of overcoming some more than ordinary defect or practise some virtue that is more useful to us.

III. As regards the conclusion, it is made briefly by these acts:

1. We should thank Jesus and Mary for the lights received.

2. We should offer to God through Jesus and Mary the acts and the resolutions that we have made.

We should pray to the Lord through the love of Jesus and Mary to give us strength to keep our resolutions.

As to speaking more fully about meditation, and the method of making it, we may read the “Guida spirituale” [Spiritual Guide], of [Ludovico] da Ponte, or the “Hondo santificato” [World Sanctified], of Sarnelli.[16799]

Live Jesus and Mary!

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

After the original preserved at Salerno, in possession of Signora D. Angiolina Gargano, *née* Greco.

Letter 55

TO THE KING OF NAPLES

Petition for a foundation of a house at Pagani.

[Towards the end of the year 1842.]

We the undersigned secular priests, Alfonso de Liguori, Cesare Sportelli, Giovanni Mazzini, Andrea Villani, who with other companions are united in the sentiments of mutual charity and zeal for the salvation of souls, especially of the most abandoned that live in the country and poor hamlets, where the necessity is very great and the spiritual help is very little, most humbly represent to your Majesty the following facts:

Since the year 1732, we have been living together for the before-mentioned end, in the city of Scala, in a church and house, to the great profit of its people. But as we have found out that the situation, owing to the rugged mountains, is most inconvenient to the people who are desirous of being benefited by our services, and is most injurious to the health of the subjects who have become ill, because of the great cold that exists there, we are anxious to build at Nocera de' Pagani, at some distance from the inhabited places, a house and a chapel to which the people of the surrounding country may easily come and find the spiritual help necessary for their souls. We therefore supplicate the clemency of your Majesty to deign to grant us permission to erect for the end mentioned the aforesaid house and chapel, being ready to leave them at the least sign of your Majesty, of whose great piety and zeal for the salvation of the souls of your beloved vassals we hope to obtain the favor asked.

In the meantime, humbly prostrate before your royal throne, we promise that we shall always pray to the divine Majesty for the welfare of your kingdom.

After an old copy.

Letter 56

TO HIS FATHER D. GIUSEPPE DE LIGUORI

He informs him of the state of his health.—Various counsels.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, March 28, [1743].

I received your esteemed letter, as also the chocolate, for which I thank you very much. Through the grace of Jesus Christ I find myself in good health, and to-morrow I shall go to Salerno to give the retreat to the clergy. Affairs here are in the same state.

If you wish to buy some lives of the saints, buy the large Life of St. Aloysius de Gonzaga, which has just been published; the Life of St. Philip Neri, and if you can find it, the Life of St. Pascale or of St. Peter of Alcantara. Procure also a little book called the “Eternal Truths,” by Rossignoli, and the “Eternal Maxims,” by Cattaneo.

I conclude by prostrating myself at your feet and asking you for your blessing. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 57

TO FATHER CESARE SPORTELLI, SUPERIOR OF THE HOUSE AT PAGANI

The saint furnishes him with arguments against the adversaries of the Community of Pagani.[16800]

[CIORANI, 1744.]

Live Jesus and Mary!

This morning I was in so great trouble and haste that I forgot to send you the treatise on alms which I think you would like to have.

Passerini says (Book vi. of the Decretals): *We give the name damage only to that which injures a right acquired, and not to that which may injure a contingent right. Consequently it matters little whether certain persons should no longer receive the alms that they now receive, for these depend on the free will of the donors.*[16801] Resting on this saying, he quotes a number of Doctors whose names I have not set down, and brings forward decision 32 of the Rota, n. 32 and 33, part 9, *Recentiorum.*

Speaking specially of the opposition made by the parish priests, he says: *Even should the parish see that the alms are failing it, one should prefer the spiritual profit to the profit proceeding from the alms; otherwise no religious Order could be anywhere established.*[16802] He cites in support of this Pasqualigo and Frances.

In a word, he says that *what should be well considered is the spiritual good that is done to the places.*[16803] And this point having been once established, the bishop is not even obliged to *call together those that are interested.*[16804] He says this at n. 37. resting on decision 742 of the Rota, part 2, *Recent.* And the bishop is not obliged to *institute a process.*[16805]—Pignatelli is of the same opinion as Cespedes, Donato, Lezana, and Pasqualigo, who say: *It is not necessary to institute a tribunal if the place is rich enough that all may find a means of living.*[16806]

On this same subject of alms Rotario (*Theol. Moral. Regularium* lib. 3, cap. 5, punct. 4, n. 3), cites a decision of Farinaccio (tom. 2, part. 2, decis. 745) by which, notwithstanding the opposition of the interested parties who were besides mendicant religious, a new convent could be established with the right of having Masses and burials. The reason alleged was that things of this kind were left free to everyone.

Tamburini, Cespedes, Bordoni, cited by Pignatelli (d. 1. n. 54), also say that *no regard should be had to the diminution of alms; for these being naturally very uncertain, there exists only an accidental damage.*[16807] They adduce in proof the decision 745, adding with Alexander: *One should not on account of an imaginary diminution of alms hinder a public work of public utility.*[16808]

Still, it is true, that Pignatelli is of a contrary opinion, as he brings forward a decision of the Rota; but there was question of building a new monastery with all its immunities and privileges, especially the privilege of saying Mass before the parochial Mass had been said.

The decision was given in this sense on account of the proximity of the two churches; and Don Andrea was told at Salerno that this practice obtained in France where affairs are regulated in a different manner.

If you still desire texts, I will send them to you afterwards.

It is very necessary at this juncture to be as careful as possible not to offend the bishop or the vicar. I say, *as careful as possible*, for it would be folly to lose their favor at present. Try then to obtain justice more by love than by fear.

With regard to appeals, it is necessary to ponder that point well, otherwise we should give offence to the bishop.

If there even be a contrary decree of *Nihil innovare* [no innovation], one may have recourse to *Contrario Imperio* [contrary judgment], *Reclamazione* [counter claims], etc. Then in case of extreme necessity recourse may be had to the power of appeal.

If I find a good opportunity, I will send you the authentic Act.[16809]

May Jesus and Mary bless us all. Live Jesus and Mary!

Try to collect as many proofs as you can, showing the great number of Masses. You will see that our adversaries will try to make capital out of the decrease in the number of Masses and in the concourse of the people, basing their arguments on Pignatelli, etc., as in the decision given above.

Then you must come out boldly with Passerini, Rotario, and the decision of Farinaccio, quoted by the latter.

You can reply in regard to the decision of Pignatelli that there existed particular circumstances, and that, moreover, there was question of a new monastery with its immunities and privileges.

Moreover, Passerini says that the Bull of Pope Gregory [XV.] without regard to the diminution of alms, requires only that no positive wrong should be done to those that had established themselves before.

If it be in any way possible, do not mention Pignatelli.

Remember that a *Nihil innovetur*[16810] [prohibition to do anything new] would not at present prevent us from building, as the request was to the effect that the blessing of the church should be impeded.

I do not as yet send the report[16811] of the blessing, because the bearer is a mere boy. I shall wait for a better opportunity. Live Jesus and Mary!

Do not forget the man who wished to give three hundred ducats; he should begin to give something as soon as possible. You have to work hard; for it is necessary that the work on the church be hastened; Don Xavier [Rossi] torments me, as he finds himself very much embarrassed; he does not know where to borrow more money. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your brother and servant,
ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Saviour.

After the original in the possession of Father Cosma Lojodice, an Augustinian.

Letter 58

TO NICOLA MARIA CELESTINO DE ROBERTIS.[16812]

Exhortation to correspond at once to God’s call.

Praised be the Most Blessed Sacrament, and Mary Immaculate![16813]

CIORANI, March 15, 1744.

Having had knowledge of your good resolution or rather inclination as to your vocation, I have been astonished that you have communicated it to others and not to me whom as the Superior it concerned principally. It has also been the cause of no little regret that you have been advised to wait a long time before you follow your vocation, as this would expose you to the great danger of losing it. For in matters of this kind when the devil is not able to divert one entirely from carrying out a good design, he nevertheless aims at inducing one to defer it. He has then succeeded many a time in making one lose the best vocation.

After what I have heard, your vocation in view of the circumstances appears to me as evidently to have come from God. It is, therefore, certain that your salvation depends on your fidelity in following it. Hence I wish you to come as soon as possible to have an interview with me, as I hope to be able to shorten your road considerably, provided you persevere in the good sentiments you now exhibit. As soon as you have decided on the course you wish to pursue, there will not be wanting to you such facilities as will aid you to come to me by visiting some place in the neighborhood, by offering as pretext that you wish to speak about some scruple of conscience, or by saying that you wish to make a day’s retreat. You are old enough and you possess common sense; you will surely find some way of coming to see me. You also know that in such cases when there is question of obeying the voice of God one must be courageous and do violence to one’s self, and that it does not matter whether or not we displease our relatives, provided only we please God and secure the salvation of our souls.

I fear that my letter may be of no benefit to you, since having been advised to put off for a long time the step you intended to take, you have either changed your mind or you have allowed your fervor to cool. This will not matter, as my letter will at least recall to your mind the voice which Jesus Christ has made you hear, telling you that you should belong entirely to him, or these lines will enable you to perceive the desire I have to confirm you in your resolution. Moreover, if you cannot come at once, please send an answer to me in the same way that I shall employ in forwarding this letter to you, in order that I may learn whether you still persevere in your sentiments and whether I may not assist you according to my power. In the meantime I beg you again to recommend yourself in this matter to Jesus Christ in your holy Communions and in your daily prayers; for I have confidence that you have not given up the practice of prayer. If you have, however, omitted prayer you must again devote yourself to it with renewed fervor, especially in order that you may succeed in carrying out your design. Begin, besides, a novena in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin that she may inspire you to do what will be conducive to your eternal salvation, and what will console you most at the hour of death.

I do not doubt that you will favorably receive this letter which gives testimony of the esteem in which I hold you personally, and of the great desire I have of seeing you belong entirely to God. I earnestly recommend to you to keep secret this letter and your vocation from every one, whoever he may be; because when such things are once manifested, the devil always finds means of opposing you or at least of cooling your ardor by beginning himself to talk by the mouth of others. O how many have lost their vocation in this way! God grant that you may not also relax in your fervor!

What I have written must suffice for the present. I depend upon receiving an answer from you as soon as possible. Should you be at Naples or at Sieti, you will please inform me which is the surest way to write to you and to answer you, and in which place at Naples I may address an answer to you when you write to me. Yet I would rather have you come yourself. Let this be enough! Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa! I remain

Your very devoted and very grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Saviour,
Rector Major,

After an old copy.

Letter 59

TO THE SAME

He invites him to an interview.—Means that he should use not to lose his vocation.

Praised be the Most Holy Sacrament, and Mary Immaculate!

CIORANI, April 7, 1744.

Just this morning I received your esteemed favor, and I am happy to hear that up to the present time you have preserved the good sentiments with which you were inspired during the retreat. Had you spoken to me at that time, you would now perhaps have already left Egypt. It would be useless for me to say more; for in order to use the shortest way in this matter, we must have absolutely a personal interview.

We expect that by Saturday the passage of the Spaniards[16814] will be over. I therefore expect you here without fail during the following week. Come on some pretext or other by way of Salerno.

I see that your resolution is as firm as ever; it is, therefore, evident to me that your vocation comes from God. For this reason if you do not now follow it, you will have to fear a great chastisement; for the Lord punishes severely those that despise these extraordinary graces,—graces that are too precious to be given to everyone.

When therefore you receive this letter, you must again give yourself entirely to God, putting yourself wholly into his hands, and showing your readiness to do all that I may counsel you. Then you must come with the firm resolution of entirely submitting your will to mine, as well in regard to the substance of your vocation, as also in regard to the manner and the time of carrying it out. This determination is necessary for you in order to realize so important a resolution; otherwise you would furnish the devil with the means either to disquiet you for the future or to make you delay so long till you lose your vocation, as has happened to so many others. Come, therefore, as soon as possible; do not lose a moment. You will not be the first that has been admitted here as a secular without having yet received any of the Holy Orders, provided only the requisite conditions are at hand, together with the firm will of belonging entirely to God. A few days ago there were received among us several young persons who left their homes without saying anything to their parents of what they intended to do. We are by no means obliged to manifest to them such a vocation, because by such a communication we run the risk of losing our vocation, and without the special assistance of God our eternal salvation.

Tread, therefore, under-foot all tender affections for your parents, and become courageous. God calls you not to some earthly dignity, but he calls you to the great dignity of being a saint. You must know how to respond to this appeal, and you will soon see how the Lord, who is so generous and so faithful, will favor you with new graces, which he has already prepared for you. Courage, then! consider that for this God who is so worthy of being loved, and who has done so much for our souls, all that we can do, even the sacrifice of our lives, is indeed very little. Endeavor to take generously this step on which depend both your predestination and the plenitude of the favors that God has reserved for you in time and in eternity.

Here are a few things that I wish you to observe during the days that will elapse before you come: Do not cease to recommend this matter to God either before the Blessed Sacrament or before the crucifix in your room. Endeavor to avoid all conversation, and spend as much as possible all your time in spiritual reading and in prayer. Receive as often as possible holy Communion, for you need special strength in order to remove the obstacles that hell will put in your way. God only can give you this strength. If it happens that your resolution should grow a little weak, have recourse at once to the Blessed Virgin, and say to her: O Mary Immaculate! do not abandon me; obtain for me the grace to remain faithful to God.—Then address the following words to God: O Lord! I no longer belong to myself; I have given myself entirely to Thee; give me the needed strength.—If you act thus you will always surely gain the victory.

I hope that you will with pleasure learn from this letter the desire that I have of seeing you a saint and belonging entirely to God; and on your part, you must pray to Jesus Christ to make me what I wish you to be. I close this letter by informing you that my companions as well as myself are impatiently waiting for you. I am, etc.—Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Recommend yourself to St. Stanislas Kostka that he may obtain for you the strength to correspond to your vocation as he did. Live Jesus and Mary!

In order that this letter may arrive without delay I shall send it to Sieti. If you have not time to answer it, it will not matter. I shall be satisfied if you only receive my letter, and if you come to us with the same sentiments that you have expressed in your letter. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your very devoted and very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

Rector Major.

After an old copy.

Letter 60

TO CANON GIUSEPPE SPARANO, AT S. RESTITUTA AT NAPLES

He sends him a sketch of the life of the Venerable Gennaro Maria Sarnelli to have it printed.

Praised be the Most Blessed Sacrament and Mary Immaculate!

CIORANI, July 17, 1744.

Very Reverend and Dear Sir: Canon Sersale[16815] has requested me to write the biography of Don Gennaro of happy memory, and mentioned to me that the Congregation[16816] wished to have it printed together with the biography of Carace.[16817] I have already written it, and have sent it to Canon Rosa, the Father Superior. Sersale told me that you would take care of the rest; I therefore beg you to make corrections in the manuscript as appears best to you, and especially to correct the mistakes that may be found therein; for I had one of our lay-brothers to copy it, and the time for the courier to start is at hand and I cannot revise it. What I ask of you particularly is to urge the gentlemen of the Congregation to have the work printed. This is properly our duty, but God knows how poor we are and if Don Gennaro has left us his books, it is at the price of many legal encumbrances and expenses to us. I know that your Reverence has great influence; I earnestly entreat you to do whatever you can. This publication will not only serve to increase the honor of the Congregation, but it will be of great profit to many readers. Your Reverence loved Sarnelli when he was living; you should love him more after his death, since he died a saint. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa! Wishing you to send me an answer and to recommend me to Jesus Christ, I remain with profound respect,

Your very grateful and very devoted servant,
ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Saviour.

After an old copy.

Letter 61

TO THE SAME

He sends him the manuscript of the little book entitled *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin,* and asks him to revise it.

Praised be the Most Holy Sacrament and Mary Immaculate!

CIORANI, August 10, 1744.

My dear Canon: I have requested Canon Torni to entrust the revision of this little book on the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin to none but yourself, being confident that you would soon attend to this matter. I therefore beg you to lay aside everything else so as to finish the task, because a pious layman has promised to pay for the printing and I fear that if there is a delay the money destined for this purpose will be spent; and then there will be no more question of having the book printed. I believe that the little book will be very useful for those that wish to make a visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin, and I must say that I have seen nothing like it, and this was the reason why I composed it.

I, moreover, entrusted it to your Reverence because it was badly copied, and I was so hurried that I could not have it again copied. You will have the patience to read it as it is. I shall say no more, and I hope that you will render me this service promptly. As for the *visits* that are still wanting, I will send them afterwards, because I am anxious that the printing of the book should soon begin; because that pious layman is so much interested in the matter. As to yourself, you will have to receive your pay from Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and from the Blessed Virgin. I have written it in a very simple style. Your Reverence will please make the corrections that shall appear to you to be necessary, but do not trouble yourself about too much elegance.

I have sent you the biography of Sarnelli [Venerable Gennaro]. Recommend me to Jesus Christ; and tell the bearer of my letter on what day he may return to deliver the manuscript to be printed. Perhaps the royal approbation is not needed for this little book; but if it should be required, tell the printer to see that it be procured.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa! Believe me,

Your very devoted, very humble,

and very grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

After the original in possession of Father Francis Xavier Pecorelli, C. SS. R.

Letter 62

TO A MINISTER OF THE KING

A petition asking for his protection in favor of the house at Nocera (Pagani).

[1744.]

Your Excellency: Alfonso de Liguori and Cesare Sportelli, who with other priests are united in mutual charity, humbly represent to your Excellency the following facts:

Monsignor de Dominicis, Bishop of Nocera, having represented to his Majesty (may God preserve him!) that he had succeeded in introducing into his diocese the suppliants to labor for the salvation of souls, supplicated his Majesty to grant to the same priests the power of building a house and a public chapel, near Pagani at some distance from the city. His royal piety agreed to this project, and was moved to give his consent by issuing the subjoined copy of a royal decree. In the execution of the most revered orders of his Majesty those priests began in the past year, to build and have at present finished the said chapel and house, having in view the good of the diocese, and conforming themselves in everything to the instructions given. But evil-disposed persons are trying, we are told, to molest and to disturb them in their holy exercises, exhortations, sermons, and other spiritual works; they act against the orders given by his Majesty, as appears from the subjoined copy of the royal ordinance directed to the governor of Nocera.

The undersigned therefore, have recourse to your Excellency, and beg you to give orders that we may be no longer molested nor disquieted in regard to the before-mentioned house. Their request is so well-founded that the neighboring hamlets, containing about twenty-five thousand souls, are anxious to receive spiritual help, as may be seen from the annexed testimony of all the municipalities of Nocera united.[16818] And for this favor which you will grant them they will pray that God may reward you.

After the original, sketched partly by the hand of the saint and preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 63

TO A GENTLEMAN OF INFLUENCE

Another petition in favor of the same house at Nocera (Pagani).

[1744.]

In the year 1732, Alfonso de Liguori, a priest and Neapolitan patrician, and other secular priests began to live together in Community in the diocese of Scala by the authority of the bishop and under the direction of Monsignor Falcoia, Bishop of Castellammare (of happy memory). Their principal aim was by missions and by preaching in their own church to devote themselves to the spiritual good of the people in the country, who usually are the most needy and mostly deprived of spiritual help. In the year 1736 they proceeded to the diocese of Salerno where, in a place called Ciorani, by the authority of Monsignor Fabrizio di Capua, at that time archbishop of Salerno, they built a house and a church whence the above-mentioned priests constantly went forth to give missions, not only in the said diocese but in many other dioceses, and whither to make the spiritual exercises the Ordinary always sends his clergy and those that are to be ordained either at the time of an ordination, or at other times during the year. For this reason the present Bishop of Nocera called the said priests into his diocese, assigning to them a small house and church in a place called Pagani. Here with the royal consent as well as with that of the citizens, they built a little church and a residence for their own use. In this city and diocese they consecrate themselves to the service of souls by preaching, by hearing confessions, by giving missions and other spiritual exercises, as may be learned from the above-mentioned bishop. Now some sons of iniquity, moved by various pretexts, are trying to hinder the aforesaid exercises, so necessary for the salvation of souls, and are striving by cunning and violence to drive away those priests from the above-mentioned place. This being against all reason and against natural and divine right, the petitioners have recourse to your eminent piety, zeal and protection, so that you may defend not only the cause of the said priests, but the honor of God and the salvation of souls.

After an original draft preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 64

TO CANON CASATI,[16819] AT ILICETO

He announces to him his approaching arrival.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph!

NAPLES, November 28, 1744.

Very Reverend and Dear Sir: Through Signor Andrea Calvini I have been informed of the very pious desire entertained by your Reverence. I am going to give a mission at Iliceto about the 11th or 12th of next month by request of the prince.[16820] I therefore do not say more, because we shall speak of everything when we meet. In the meantime, I devote myself entirely to your service, and beg you to recommend me to Jesus Christ! Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! I remain,

Your very devoted and very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

After the original in possession of Sister Alfonsa Maria de Gesù, discalced Carmelite at Palermo.

Letter 65

TO FATHER XAVIER ROSSI,[16821] AT CIORANI

Details in regard to the new foundation at Iliceto.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

SANTA MARIA DELLA CONSOLAZIONE] December 19, 1744.

Let us thank Jesus and Mary for having deigned to conclude the founding of the new house, Santa Maria della Consolazione, within a space of eight days. Canon Casati made out this morning the donation *inter vivos* [among the living] putting us also in possession of the property that he gives us. The Bishop [of Bovino, the Venerable Antonio Lucci], has already ceded the place to us; and the Chapter, which here represents the parish priest, has given its consent together with the municipality.

The revenues from the donations given us amount to about three hundred ducats, in return for which we must say two Masses daily. We have also a fine apartment, suitable for a library, and the faculty of employing the revenues of this donation to establish two patrimonies for the members of our Institute.

The property that we have received consists of more than seven hundred acres of arable land, of a vineyard, and of some houses together with a grove of olive trees.

Moreover, Canon Maffei has promised us a free benefice with an annual income of twenty-two ducats.

Thus the house of our Lady has an income of about thirty ducats, and if at least a part of the soil be worked under the superintendence of a Brother, it might yield six hundred ducats. This would moreover not be inconvenient, as the property lies close to the house.

We were received here by all, by the bishop, by priests and by laymen as angels from Paradise; they continually thank Jesus Christ for our arrival. Canon Maffei in particular is overjoyed. There is therefore every hope that the Prince [of Castellaneta] on his arrival will assure us an annual income. I do not speak of a well-founded hope of having a fine revenue of three hundred ducats a year furnished by the inhabitants of the Abbruzzi.

The people here are very affectionate and docile; there are few houses of middle rank; nearly all are country people; they are inclined to be pious; few sins are committed.

The country is fertile and produces everything: wood, wheat, grain, vegetables, good wines, excellent cheese, and an abundance of good fruit. Here are cows, sheep, and goats, and a kind of cheese, the like of which I have never before tasted. The air is very good and very mild. In our place there is water that might be called water from Paradise, together with a fountain of the Madonna; surrounding the latter is a little fish-pond, by which we can always water our garden and keep it clad in bright verdure.

[Here a part is missing.]

The founder has reserved to himself the usufruct of the property, but he has promised us fifty-six ducats a year on condition that we say a Mass daily. Then there are the benefice of Maffei and the profits accruing from the land of the Madonna. It is certain that you will have to live in the meantime on slender means. But God is ever near to assist us. Go on cheerfully. We shall always be beggars in this life.

Before the mission of Modugno, I shall go to Foggia to speak to the President and to the Bishop[16822] of Foggia to obtain permission to give a course of missions to the inhabitants of the Abbruzzi, for I have this very much at heart. I have been informed that the President expects us.

As for the missions at Mirabella, about which I wrote to you, I have learned that it will not be necessary to go there as the bishop is sending the Pious Workers who are at present giving a mission at Buellino. Don Andrea [Villani] and Don Cesare [Sportelli] can then devote themselves entirely to the missions that are given in this place.

Send thither Don Bernardo [Tortora], Don Ignazio[16823] and Brother Romoaldo with two measures of chestnuts and one measure of walnuts. They may take the mules of Bracigliano.

I am thinking of taking up my residence then in the house of the Madonna, at least for some time, until affairs are in order. Don Andrea is to be for the present Rector and Master of novices at Ciorani, and your

Reverence, Minister and Econome. Have a little patience while there, for in a short time you have to be at Iliceto. As soon as matters are settled at Nocera—if God wishes to have them settled—Don Cesare, in compliance with the letter which I have written to him, will go as Minister to Iliceto, and Don Giovanni [Mazzini] will remain at Pagani as Rector; Don Carmine [Fiocchi] and Don Paolino [Scibelli] will also proceed thither. Don Lorenzo [d' Antonio] with Don Paolo [Cafaro] will go to Ciorani. It will be necessary for Don Paolo to remain here for some months; for he has won a great name here.

All with the exception of Don Lorenzo and Don Paolo will begin on the 1st of January to apply the intentions of the Masses for this house. This new foundation is beginning under the beautiful standard of holy poverty. All of us have already said a Mass for the house.

Let the secretary at Nocera preserve this letter. Tell Don Gaetano di Caro,[16824] that if he will be so kind as to assist us this Lent during the missions to be given to the people of the Abbruzzi, he will do us a very great favor.

Don Cesare writes me that Don Paolo will send him as soon as you ask for him.

May Jesus Christ bless us all! Pray for me constantly. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Send the plans also to Nocera. Live Jesus!

According to what the courier says, the Fathers can set out Saturday morning and arrive there Sunday evening.

Please send at once to the hamlets the enclosed letter of Signor Calvini.

Your humble servant and brother,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

After the original, part of which is in the possession of Don Giuseppe de Aquila, apostolic *abbreviatore,* and the remainder is to be found in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 66

TO FATHER CESARE SPORTELLI, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT PAGANI

Project of abandoning the foundation at Pagani.—Service asked for Iliceto.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

ILICETO, December 28, 1744.

I have received your very kind favor as well as the expression of your devoted attachment. At the beginning you write to me about making peace, etc., and the obstinacy of Don Francesco;[16825] but you say nothing of the last letter that I sent you in which I wrote you about giving up Pagani. We could, I said to you, abandon this house on the two following conditions: that Don Francesco becomes responsible for all the debts, and that before renouncing the donation the permission of the king and of the bishop of the city should be asked; in this way we should always be able to excuse ourselves if we do not relinquish our right. On the other hand, this negotiation appears to me to be necessary in order that we may free ourselves from the many disquietudes and come to a definite conclusion; for if things do not become quiet in some way, I should hardly think that God wishes any longer this foundation, which has become so troublesome and inconvenient to the Congregation. It is true, God has made us see wonderful things; but has perhaps had designs other than ours. I also write you that if in this matter you should meet with any difficulties you should propose them to me, and that we were not pressed to hurry the matter. Again, I beg you to write to me about your difficulties if you have any, or to carry out wholly or in part what I have expressed in my letter, since the same thought never leaves me.

I have, moreover, written to you that if the foundation is to be abandoned, it will be necessary that you should continue to assist me at least until affairs have become more quiet.

Here things continue to prosper; but as to the missions among the people of the Abbruzzi, the devil has begun to make efforts to hinder them. There are so far ninety thousand abandoned souls, but O God, how abandoned are they! If I had been able without detriment to the missions to free myself from the missions at Modugno,[16826] I would have arranged for the harvesting of this great crop, that is, the missions among the inhabitants of the Abbruzzi. But it did not seem to me to be proper to omit that mission at present after having made an arrangement in regard to it with the Archbishop [of Bari], the archpriest and the clergy. But on the other hand, by going to Modugno I cannot for a greater reason neglect the missions begun in the Abbruzzi, and therefore I have sent for Father Andrea [Villani] and Gaetano [di Caro] or Father Paolino [Scibelli] if Don Gaetano cannot come; because afterwards Father Andrea and another, with Father Lorenzo [d’ Antonio], I think, will return here after we come back from Modugno.

I have not resolved to remain permanently in this house. When God wills, I shall return to Ciorani. But it appears to me to be necessary that I should not depart from this place for a considerable time, because there are very many weighty things to be adjusted.

I continue to write by another hand, because I am sick in bed with bronchial catarrh and fever. Here the good that can be done under the present circumstances is immense; more so than at Nocera and Ciorani. I omit writing to you everything. But when you come here, God willing, you will obtain every information. There is question of an extreme necessity.

I had hoped that the Prince of Castellaneta would come here to arrange about the annual support of this house; but our Lord has not wished that he should come. Hence it became necessary for me to write to him the enclosed letter telling him how things stood. Your Reverence may read it and then seal it. But it will also be necessary for you to go to Naples to speak to him and to give him my letter, because more can always be done by word of mouth, and the prince will always have less courage to refuse when he is face to face with you than when he writes you a letter. There is no remedy: *we must strike the iron when it is hot;* because if we allow the matter to grow cold it may perhaps become afterwards a difficult thing to obtain anything from the prince. But now it would be well to procure from the prince a hundred and fifty or a hundred scudi annually, to be derived from the income of the estate. Hence your Reverence should try to speak a few words with the prince; you will know how to do so. It will be necessary that on account of this matter you should lay aside everything else, because if a mistake is made now, nothing more can be done. Your Reverence, therefore, will please promptly finish the little mission, which is perhaps now on your hands, and go at once to Naples to speak to Castellaneta; because I am in hopes that after you have spoken to him he will I think write at once to Iliceto. Here the agent and Canon Maffei will give relief to our little vessel, and some good may be accomplished before the prince sets out with his regiment; this may easily happen in the midst of the political turmoil that now exists.

Depart then, dear Father; perpetual works should have the preference before those that are temporal. May your Reverence have patience, and may you take upon yourself this inconvenience for the love of the Most Blessed Virgin.

I embrace all in Jesus Christ. I have written to Ciorani that they should send to you the letters that I have written to this house. Read them and have them read.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

Don Bernardo [Tortora] and Don Ignazio arrived here on Monday afternoon about three o'clock, covered with snow from head to foot.

Your servant and brother,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

[*P. S.*] I inform your Reverence that after receiving this letter you should wait another week and then go to Castellaneta; because within this time I am anxious that he should receive a letter of mine which I sent him beforehand through Oliviero.[16827] Castellaneta's address is: Quarter of *anime del Purgatorio,* at the palace of the Duchess of Pesche.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 67

TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE

He exhorts her to give to prayer all the time that she can snatch from her occupations.

Praised be the Most Blessed Sacrament, and Mary Immaculate!

ILICETO, S. MARIA DELLA CONSOLAZIONE, April 14, [1745].

My dear daughter: I am at present at Iliceto, in a new house that we have just established, and that is two days' journey from Ciorani. I have received here no other letter than the one that was probably the last that you addressed to me.

I know not the answer that Mgr. di Caiazzo has given to you; but I can well imagine it; I beg you therefore to be undisturbed.

That ray that has enlightened you in your jubilee confession I truly regard as a ray of light sent by God himself in order to give you a little strength to endure storms.

Since you have to give yourself up to the occupations of your employment, do so, and snatch all the time that you can for prayer, which is an occupation that will always be profitable to you. Recommend me without ceasing to Jesus and to Mary. Live Jesus and Mary. I remain,

Your very affectionate Father,
ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Saviour.

[*P. S.*] To conclude, quieting you, you might answer Mgr. di Caiazzo that the five thousand ducats are destined for the good work; then think no more about it.

As to the widow, I have recommended her to Jesus. Tell her that Jesus wishes to have her entirely for himself; this is the reason why he has taken her son from her. Let her never omit to offer up to God this sacrifice, and give herself entirely to Jesus. Live Jesus and Mary!

As for the letters, send them to Ciorani. Live Jesus and Mary!

After an old copy.

Letter 68

TO THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF BENEDICT XIV

Petition to obtain the confirmation of the establishment of missionaries at Iliceto.

[May 3, 1745.]

Most Holy Father: Alfonso de Liguori, united with many other priests in the bond of mutual and fraternal charity, and prostrate at the feet of your Holiness expresses the following facts:

The undersigned having, in 1744, proceeded to the village of Puglia, that is to a place called Iliceto, in the diocese of Bovino, to give a mission there, the people and the venerable Chapter of this place requested him to labor among them in behalf of the many abandoned souls. To accomplish this they wished him and his companions to take up their abode in the convent of Santa Maria della Consolazione, situated upon a mountain, and at one time inhabited by Count D. Giovanni Appiani. He most willingly accepted the offer, since thereby there was opened to him a more convenient road to extend his labors through the Puglia, and to give assistance with the divine word and the administration of the sacraments to so many poor abandoned people, and among them to fifty or sixty thousand shepherds, who were absolutely deprived of all spiritual help. The acceptance of this foundation, moreover, makes it convenient for him to go about in the neighboring dioceses, as he has done and is doing at present in so many other dioceses, where the missions produce the most salutary fruits for the reform of morals, to the greatest satisfaction of the inhabitants.

This state of things being known to our most zealous Bishop of Bovino, Mgr. Lucci, he deigned by an ordinance issued in the said year 1744, to grant to the petitioner the permission to reside in said place to the great delight as well as with the express consent of all the people and of the venerable Chapter of Iliceto. And since now the petitioner desires from your Holiness, who is so great a lover and promoter of this work which gives so much glory to Jesus Christ, a confirmation of said place of Santa Maria della Consolazione, he therefore most humbly supplicates your Holiness for this favor, being satisfied that your Holiness will be rewarded by Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin, for the love of whom he asks it, and promising to pray and have the people to pray always more and more for the exaltation of the Church and for the welfare of the government of your Holiness.

After an old copy.

Letter 69

TO FATHER GIOVANNI MAZZINI, THE NEW RECTOR AT PAGANI.[16828]

He begs him to put in force regular observance.

Live Jesus and Mary!

S. MARIA [DELLA CONSOLAZIONE], September 23, [1745].

I beg your Reverence, who are now in charge of this house, to introduce into it the faithful observance of the Rule. This regular observance has been hitherto very difficult on account of the condition of the place in which you live and on account of the law-suits that had to be carried on. Now, however, everything should be set in order, for otherwise the non-observance of the Rule will grow into a custom, and then it will be very difficult to bring the subjects back to a sense of their duty. I therefore charge your conscience with the care of this matter, since being at a distance I can not see nor know everything that is going on. Before God the Congregation will prosper so long as the Rule is observed and the subjects are solicitous about their own sanctification; for when inobservance is once introduced, all will end in smoke. We have now, thanks be to God! three houses and a sufficient number of subjects to attend to the work of the Institute. All that we have to do now is to do the will of God, and to labor earnestly at our own perfection; for then the Congregation will prosper, the number of subjects will increase, and much will be accomplished for the glory of God. If we do not effect this, God will abandon us and everything will go to ruin. Communicate, I beg you, these lines to all the Fathers. I embrace them all, conjuring them, to recommend me to Jesus and Mary. Live Jesus and Mary!

At the evening prayers recommend to the Blessed Virgin the missions that we are to give during this year, especially at Foggia and in the diocese of Troia. I remain, etc.—Live Jesus and Mary! I salute D. Biase [Biagio Amarante], etc.; send me the names, etc. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your brother in Jesus,
ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Saviour.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 70

TO CARDINAL GIUSEPPE SPINELLI, ARCHBISHOP OF NAPLES

Petition to obtain the faculties needed for the missions.[16829]

[December, 1745.]

Most Eminent and Most Reverend Sir: Alfonso de Liguori, Superior of the missionaries of the Congregation of the Most Holy Saviour, established at Iliceto, suppliantly declares to your Eminence that, being actually engaged in giving the exercises of a mission in the diocese of Troia, and having thence to go to the diocese of Cirignola, for the greater promotion of the glory of God and the sanctification of souls, he desires to be provided with the faculties and the indulgences that for this purpose have been granted to your Eminence by his Holiness, submitting himself always to the will of your Eminence; and if you deign to grant the favor that he asks, he will pray to God to reward you.

To this petition the Cardinal gave the following answer:

The better to secure the fruits of the holy missions and thus to promote the salvation of souls, we welcome your petition and we grant you, the Superior of the Congregation of the Most Holy Saviour, established at Iliceto, the powers that our most holy Pope Benedict XIV. has granted and communicated to us, by delegation to us especially as the supreme Director of the missions in the kingdom of Naples. But we desire you to use these powers only for the missions mentioned in the petition, in the exercises of the holy ministry, in the confessional, and by yourself and during the time of the missions only.

Wishing also to favor the piety and increase the devotion of the people, we grant the indulgences of which His Holiness the Pope has made us the dispenser, and willingly concede the seven years and seven times forty days to the faithful of both sexes who attend the missions in any city or place in the kingdom of Naples, or who not being able to attend them, on account of some lawful impediment, pray to God piously for the success of these exercises.

Moreover, to all the faithful who, truly penitent, having confessed and communicated, attend on the last day of the mission, or who lawfully hindered to do so, pray to God, as we have said, after having received the sacraments of penance and Eucharist, we grant a plenary indulgence and the remission of all their sins, available however only for the missions indicated in the petition.

Given at Naples, in our archiepiscopal palace, the 11th of the month of December, 1745.

JOSEPH Cardinal, Archbishop.

JOSEPH ROMANO, Canon secretary.[16830]

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 71

TO THE MOTHER ABBESS AND THE NUNS OF THE MONASTERY OF THE ANNUNCIATION AT FOGGIA

Explanations relative to the use of figured music[16831] and to the expenses contrary to poverty.

[Beginning of the year 1746.]

Live Jesus and Mary!

Very Reverend Mother Abbess and dear Sisters: Having had the honor, without any merit on our part, to give the spiritual exercises[16832] to your pious Community, we have heard that some of our assertions have been misunderstood and wrongly interpreted. For the honor of truth and to satisfy our conscience we have thought it proper to indicate here what we have said about figured music and about the special expenses incurred by the officials.

As for *figured music*, we say that it is by no means suitable for pious persons, and much less for virgins consecrated to God, as appears from the Rules of all saintly religious Orders; and if such a practice exists in any monastery, it is usually condemned as an abuse. If, then, we consider the circumstances that accompany it, we see that it is morally impossible to practise this kind of music without sin on account of the solicitude, the vanity, the distractions, the expense, the infractions of the Rule, and other disorders that inevitably result from it both inside and outside of the monastery. The fault is more or less grave according to the disorders that arise therefrom. According to what has been generally reported in Foggia and outside of it, the disorders that have occurred are not inconsiderable.

As for the *expenses* incurred by the officials,[16833] we have said that the letter of the Sacred Congregation of January 26, 1742, written by order of His Holiness to the Ordinaries, contains and expresses a formal prohibition for all religious in office to expend the least amount of money or to make the least present on feast days or in the discharge of their duties, whether in the monastery or out of it. The words of the letter are as follows: “His Holiness commands that this be inviolably observed by every monastery, even though it be exempt, etc., under pain, in case of infringement, of deprivation of office and of the power of voting and being voted for, to be incurred as soon as the deed is committed.” Consequently His Holiness enjoins upon all the bishops “to impose, by a formal precept of obedience, upon all the officials, the observance of this ordinance, to assure themselves of its exact observance, and to report to him what has been done.”

Also, on April 27, 1742, the bishop acting as the apostolic delegate for executing the holy and paternal ordinances of His Holiness according to the terms of his letter, prescribed the observance of them by a formal precept of obedience, with this explanation, that the above-mentioned penalties, if ever incurred, would last not according to his pleasure, since he is only the executor, but at the pleasure of the Sacred Congregation, as the Sovereign Pontiff expressly ordains.

After decisions so precise, we have said that the officials are obliged to conform to the orders of His Holiness under the penalty of a grievous sin. As it was objected that the Community could not make all the necessary outlay, and that there was not sufficient revenues to supply it, as has been prescribed by His Holiness, in the conference which we gave on the subject, we answered as follows: “In view of these circumstances it is necessary to report to the Sacred Congregation, and in the meantime, supposing that the before-mentioned expenses could suffer no delay on account of the current wants of the monastery, we putting a mild interpretation on the ordinance of His Holiness (for as there is here question of an interpretation, it should be made in a very strict sense), we may strictly permit the officials to make the necessary outlay, but not a superfluous one, as had been too often made in the past.” To all this one could allege nothing else than the established usage. We replied that as to the past, good faith could furnish an excuse, yet for the present, since the matter has been made clearer, this practice can no longer be tolerated without sin, nor even without a grievous sin.

This we have uniformly said; besides, we do not presume to enforce our opinions, nor to set ourselves up as teachers. We have only spoken in order to relieve our conscience by rendering the obedience that is due to the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 72

TO HIS BROTHER D. ERCOLE DE LIGUORI

He complains to him about his conduct, which was anything but brotherly, in regard to certain temporal interests.

[February, 1746.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I have read your last letter in which you say in substance that when I am in distress you will help me.

My dear Brother, this is not the way to arrange the matter, but it is to force on a litigation; and I tell you again that I do not wish to litigate, and I could do so because I am claiming what belongs to me. Rest assured that I should hardly appear in court when it would assign to me the one hundred and fifty ducats with the rest of the money.

If at least you had said to me: *I wish, dear Brother, that you would give up your right to such a sum.* But to seek to bring forward reasons, and to say that the hundred and fifty ducats do not concern me, is very bad treatment on your part.

The two hundred ducats were given me by a legacy; what have they then to do with the portion that my father[16834] has also bequeathed to me in the last disposition of his property? Besides, the two hundred ducats he did not leave to me, but to the Congregation, namely, one hundred for the building at Ciorani, and a hundred which I might dispose of; and then as to the two hundred ducats, according to you my father meant that I should renounce my life-interest of one hundred and fifty ducats and be content with forty-two ducats! What have the two hundred ducats to do with all this? They arise from a legacy, and the one hundred and fifty were assured me by an anterior notarial act. Add to this that in making the bequest my late father did not mention anything about the rest.

You, moreover, tell me that I have not declared that I wished to have the one hundred and fifty ducats.—What obligation is there for me to make a declaration when I am in possession of the notarial act? I have always firmly believed that at the death of my father the one hundred and fifty ducats were due to me, and I firmly believed that you would give them to me. And this payment I always held to be assured, nor did I ever think that you could refuse it to me. Now that I am reading your letters I do nothing but make signs of the cross, and I offer to God what you write to me and the way in which you treat me.

You come out so boldly because you have to deal with me. If you had to deal with D. Gennaro Sarnelli who went to law with his own father and made him give up to him his portion, or with the sisters Marianna and Maria Louisa who in regard to our father had recourse to judiciary measures, you would not have spoken thus.

But I have waited and have borne with this up to the present time in order not to cause you any displeasure. You will however in the end force me to do what is so disagreeable to me.

You write to me that when I am in need and *really in want of money and in great distress, you* will not neglect me. My dear D. Ercole, is this the way that you should treat me? In what manner, then, should I persuade you that I am in such necessity, that I am, as you say, in great distress? How in future am I to prove to you whether or not my difficulties are serious? You have already disbelieved me, since you have not believed what I have written to you. How can I think that you will believe me hereafter? This is the treatment inflicted not by a brother, but by a barbarian, by an enemy. You really wish to make game of me. Your letter has so disturbed me that I have not been able to sleep. Alas! that then only I should have what belongs to me when I am in want and in great straits, so that for the future we should always have to quarrel with each other!

Now, my dear Brother, if you do not really desire to litigate, and if you do not wish to treat me as a bastard, tell me, finally, what you will assign to me every year so that I may be able to make up my accounts. I beg you for the love of the Blessed Virgin Mary not to ill-treat me anymore. See how I treat you with brotherly charity and how patient I am. After that, do not complain of me if I claim all that belongs to me, that is, more than one hundred and fifty ducats; there are fifteen hundred Neapolitan ducats invested in our house and it is from my property that they have been drawn. I could make you weep, but I will not do so, since I love you.

I thought in order to satisfy you to give up to you thirty ducats a year, and finally even forty-two of the one hundred and fifty. Does this perhaps appear to you unacceptable? I repeat, as long as I can, I wish to proceed only with you in all charity. But I see that you wish only to abuse my goodness. God and the world will however justify me.

Behold now the fraternal charity of which you speak to me. Your love, to tell the truth, consists merely in prattling and in making no account of me.

Now more than ever you make me know that there is no other than God who truly loves us.

And so, my dear Brother, I again beg you for the love of the Blessed Virgin not to write to me any more in this manner; but tell me what do you wish to assign to me every year till the death of Donna Francesca and Don Domenico, as you say? For pity's sake, do not ill-treat me anymore. If you have not the two hundred ducats, it will hardly do to borrow them at interest; arrange now for me the annual assignment; this is important for both of us in order to live quietly. . . . Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! . . .

I send the bill and the receipt. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your very affectionate brother,

ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

After the original in possession of Mgr. Francesco Giordani, auxiliary bishop of Cardinal Monaco La Valetta, in Albano.

Letter 73

TO THE SAME

He exhorts him to make the spiritual exercises.

ILICETO, February 22, 1746.

. . . . Now answer me at once, and I beg you to restore peace to my mind for the love of the Blessed Virgin. All is right, and do not omit to make this week the exercises[16835] in honor of the Blessed Virgin, and approach the sacraments. I make you that concession;[16836] but I wish you to be under an obligation to serve the Congregation when your personal services are needed for any business at Naples. The persecution against us has already begun here. It will be difficult for me to go again to Naples, and God knows whether we shall again see each other. . . . .

After an incomplete old copy.

Letter 74

HOLOGRAPH TESTAMENT OF THE SAINT

[March 5, 1746.]

Live Jesus, Joseph, Mary, and Teresa!

I the undersigned, Alfonso de Liguori, declare this to be my last will after my death. Although this my will may not be invested with all the required conditions of a testament, yet it has the best possible validity for dispositions *ad pias causas* [for charitable purposes] without detracting from the *Falcidian* or *Trebbellian* law.[16837]

I leave the holy Mother of God and my own Mother, and through her the Congregation of the Most Holy Saviour, as my universal heiress of all the goods that belong to me, and especially of the arrearage of the annuity of one hundred and fifty ducats a year, which is due to me from my family since the month of December 1745 after the death of my father. And although I was satisfied that my brother D. Ercole, in his present straitened circumstances and until his affairs improve, should pay me only seventy-two ducats a year, yet I desire that after my death all the arrears together with the balance of the one hundred and fifty, that is seventy-eight ducats, should all revert and be paid over to the Congregation. And furthermore, I bequeath for the benefit of the same Congregation the capital of three or four hundred ducats, or as much as it is, which I reserved to myself in the renunciation[16838] that I formerly made, as appears from the writing drawn up by the hand of a notary about the year 1725. . . . at Naples. I no longer remember the name of the notary; but my brother may remember it.

And all this is to be at the disposition of the subsequent Rector Major.

At the house of S. Maria della Consolazione, March 5, 1746.

I ALFONSO DE LIGUORI dispose, as above.

CARLO RICCIARDI, witness.

GIUSEPPE BONASISSA, witness.

Moreover, I leave to the same Congregation the portion left me by my father in his last will, made in regard to the property which he owned before his death.

After the original, the property of his Eminence Cardinal Guglielmo Sanfelice, Archbishop of Naples.

Letter 75

TO DON FRANCESCO ANTONIO RICCIARDI, ADVOCATE AT FOGGIA

Nature and advantages of renewals of missions.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

S. MARIA DELLA CONSOLAZIONE, March 30, [1746].

My dear Don Francesco Antonio: Don Paolo [Cafaro] forgot to arrange with Mgr. di Troia in regard to the time when he desired that we should go to Foggia and to Troia for the Renewal. This exercise which we are accustomed to give in the places where we have given a mission produces the most salutary fruits.

I therefore send word to you expressly to do me the charity to go personally to Monsignor and to ask him whether it is pleasing to him that I should go with one or two other companions, to Foggia for three or four days and to Troia for two or three.

As for a dwelling and beds, tell him that he need not concern himself about them, since owing to your kindness we shall remain at your house at Foggia; and at Troia we shall stay at the house of the vicar Don Camillo. Let him understand that this will be only for a few days, and he should have no fears. This will suffice; but it will be necessary for you to go to see him personally, as he will riot say no to you.

You must, however, tell him that this Renewal, or this visit to Foggia, should be given soon, before the month of May and before the hot weather. I have, thought of going there on the Sunday after Easter with one or two others, because the other companions will have to go to Orsara to give a mission there, as has been arranged by the bishop. Let me know whether or not the bishop is satisfied as to the time at which we are to go. If he however, does not wish me to go any more to Foggia, I shall be pleased; for what an amount of inconvenience would not such a journey to Foggia cost me!

Inform me whether he wishes us to go at least to Troia.

See whether he will not say, *What use of having so many missions one after the other?* Answer him that this is not a mission. It only serves to remind the people of the mission, of the sermons that were preached, and of their promises. By means of this Renewal of the spirit many, are confirmed in leading a good life. Many times the Renewal does more good than the mission that was given. Thus you may answer him that it is not a mission, but only a reminder, a remembrance of a mission; hence two Fathers for a few days will be sufficient.

I speak on behalf of God’s glory, for in regard to my feelings I should rather have-the bishop to say no.

You would oblige me if you would write to some friend at Manfredonia to find out whether any mill-stones could be had there, because we have need of some. Please send your answer to me at this place. Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary! I remain,

Your very humble and very grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

[*P. S.*] I have thought better of the matter: Please do not arrange the time of our arrival at Foggia for the Sunday after Easter, but for the Sunday following, that is, two weeks after Easter; because on the Sunday after Easter I cannot be absent. Live Jesus and Mary![16839]

After the original in possession of the priest Alfonso Carinci.

Letter 76

TO FATHER ANDREA VILLANI.[16840]

Gravity of the decision of a General Chapter.—Precautions that should necessarily be taken.

[ILICETO, October 1746.]

Live Jesus and Mary!

My dear Don Andrea: I have a little complaint to make about your Reverence. I hear that you have brought to the consideration of others the question in regard to the novitiate of the Brothers.[16841] Your Reverence, it seems to me could have spoken to me about the matter in all confidence, and knowing the affection that I bear you and the liberty that I wish to see prevail in your relations to me, you could have, I say, told me secretly your idea on this point without undertaking to have the Chapter decide that the Rector Major cannot grant a dispensation when there is question of the novitiate. This is equivalent to overthrowing absolutely the powers of the Rector Major and to destroying the principal rule traced out by our Father [Mgr. Falcoia], which wishes a *government by a single head* like the *government* of the Church.

I for my part have desired, and I do now desire, at least under present circumstances, to keep aloof, occupied in looking on others acting and serving the Congregation. As for the government, I have accepted it through obedience, and it is only obedience that makes me retain it, for with the direction of the Institute and the thousand cares continually accompanying it, I can attend but little to the care of my soul.

But if I see that harmony is going to be destroyed, I would by all means resign, promising however to serve the Congregation with the same affection with which I have served it heretofore. If in fact one wishes to destroy what is even the very foundation of the Institute and make a rule against a rule, it would be better in order to avoid so supreme a confusion that I should resign and that a Rector [Major] according to your own ideas should preside over you.

I wish you not to mention this affair, which I have written specially for you. Only Don Saverio [Rossi] may read my letter, since to save time I do not desire to write again to him these same things.

And I secretly request you to bring about as prudently as possible the speedy dissolution of the Chapter; it should be put off to a later date. The devil had indeed based great hopes on this Chapter, and it has been a special grace given to us by God that no decree has as yet been made; for if the points just mentioned had been decided, I assure you, and I can assure you, that the greatest confusion would arise. But God has prevented this evil, in the first place, because I cannot go to Ciorani with my bronchial catarrh, and because affairs so grave require necessarily my presence. Hence if ever the Chapter is to be held, it would have to be held here; now to make you all come to Iliceto at this time would produce disturbance in many things, as, for instance, in the missions, in the houses, etc. In the second place someone must go to Naples,[16842] and lastly the order of the missions must be regulated.

Besides, there is question of affairs of vast importance, involving the establishment of new rules which are to last *in perpetuum* [forever]. All this will require many discussions and many explanations; and now in view of all this, so far separated as we are from one another, I myself being obliged to remain here, how could we desire to come to any determination in such a confused state of things, and when the *voters* are not even assembled?[16843] I therefore do not intend to give my consent for the holding of this Chapter so unlawful and so irregular. I thought that only those things would be proposed about which letters had been sent to me, which indeed were matters of little importance. But there are matters in regard to which we must discuss and confer with one another. Moreover, I believed that the votes given by the living voice could all be sent hither *in writing;* but this was found to be impossible, as it is against the Rule, and I am opposed to it.

Hence I declare that for all these just reasons the Chapter should be dissolved, and should afterwards be assembled in due time with all the necessary and essential formalities; otherwise it would be null and void and would only serve the purpose of causing disturbance. Do not doubt that I will take care that the Chapter be held without fail, but I and all the voters must take part in it.[16844]

Your brother,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

After an autograph sketch preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 77

TO FATHER CESARE SPORTELLI

Prudence to be used in the proceedings of the General Chapter.

Live Jesus and Mary!

ILICETO, [October, 1746.]

My dear Don Cesare: Whatever I write to you I beg you to keep secret for the present, according as it may seem to be expedient.[16845]

These gentlemen submitted to your consideration those points that concern the Rector Major, instead of proposing them in Chapter for the purpose of making decisions about things already decided and established.

It seems that they are taking away from the Rector Major the faculty of dispensation; but such a thing is contrary to all rules, because it belongs essentially to human laws to be subject to dispensation. And will it not be sometimes necessary to give a dispensation, and especially in regard to the novitiate of the Brothers and the students? . . .

This point gives me more concern than anything else, because it involves a matter of conscience . . . but so I have regarded it before God.

Moreover, with God's help and in time I hope, and perhaps shortly, I shall put the Rule in force as I have intended to do; and since this point especially creates objections, I will hereafter endeavor to be more reserved.

As to the questions proposed, some refer to things of no importance; it will be sufficient if we speak about them, there being no necessity to have capitular decisions given upon them; for a multiplicity of decrees would in its time be the ruin of the Congregation. Others have reference to points already determined by the Rule; if they are found not to be clear enough, it would be better to comment on them than to submit them to the deliberation of the Chapter.

To come back to what I have already written to you: what is necessary for the present is, that you set out for Naples in regard to the affair of Caposele.

As I have explained to you, it will suffer no delay, and we shall have the remorse of having failed in this foundation, as it may happen if we delay any longer. Your stay at Naples will very likely be prolonged, for I beg you not to leave the city before the affair is brought to a conclusion. You must moreover write to me from Naples; for if things are protracted too long, we shall let you know what is to be done. . . .

After an autograph sketch, partly illegible, preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 78

TO THE KING OF NAPLES

Petition for founding a house at Caposele.

[1746.]

The undersigned, missionary secular priests, humbly expose to your Majesty the following facts:

Having during this year given missions in the archdiocese of Conza, they have been most urgently asked by the Most Reverend Archbishop[16846] and by the people to establish themselves in this diocese, particularly in the territory of Caposele. Here there is a church under the title of *Mater Domini* together with a house containing a few rooms. These priests could thus help the souls in this vast archdiocese whom the distance from Naples deprives of many spiritual aids, especially of missions.

Prostrate, therefore, at the feet of your Majesty, who are so zealous for the welfare of your vassals, they humbly supplicate you to deign to give your royal consent so that the petitioners may live together in the convent of *Mater Domini,* and may also enlarge the house which is at present too small. In the meantime profoundly humbling themselves before the royal throne they promise that they will always pray more and more to the divine Majesty for the happiness of your kingdom.

After a copy marked with the following motto written by the hand of St. Alphonsus: “Live Jesus and Mary!—Memorial for Caposele.”

Letter 79

TO FATHER GIOVANNI MAZZINI, RECTOR AT PAGANI

Various regulations in regard to studies.

Live Jesus and Mary!

[TROIA], November 27, [1946].

I write you in all haste this Sunday morning, the last day of the mission. The concourse of the people, as well as the praise that we have received, was truly wonderful. The people say that they never had such a mission. *Soli Deo, etc.*

As for the promised help, I have learned that my father placed at my disposal not two hundred ducats, as I thought, but only one hundred. Hence fifty ducats are for you.

I shall send the manuscripts, etc., to Don Francesco.[16847] But I wish that he should continue to compose his treatise on Scholastic Theology, and I require of him that he should consult no other books than those of Habert. Let him only put into it, but in a more abbreviated form, what is found in Habert, leaving out one or the other proof or useless objection. Tell him to obey without making a reply; and for mercy's sake let him attend more to clearness than to elegance of style.

I rejoice at what I hear about Don Nicola;[16848] let him apply himself to his studies but little, till he has entirely recovered. It is sufficient if he only listens without writing. Let Don Biagio [Amarante] go out, and point out to him, as you think best, the walks that he is to take.

Let all recommend me to Jesus and Mary.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 80

TO SISTER MARIA CELESTE POPPA IN THE MONASTERY OF THE ANNUNCIATION AT FOGGIA

He points out what should be done in order to abolish the figured chant.

Live Jesus and Mary!

S. MARIA DELLA CONSOLAZIONE, January 30, [1747].

I answer your letter. You are not obliged to obey in that which regards the figured chant;[16849] for if it knew all, the Sacred Congregation would certainly forbid this cursed chant. But since hell is making so many efforts to reestablish its use, why should you not do something on your part for the love of Jesus Christ? I would advise you and Sister Crocifissa, or you alone, secretly to address another letter to the Sacred Congregation, in which you might state the facts as follows: “The figured chant has just been abolished in our monastery; from it resulted innumerable disorders in the monasteries of Foggia on account of the teachers who had to be employed, the meals and refreshments that had to be offered to seculars, especially during Holy Week, without speaking of the distractions given to the nuns, of the vanity that this chant provoked, of the expense, of the faults against the Rule, and of other inconveniences. Now we have heard that application has been made to the Sacred Congregation to have this prohibition removed. But perhaps no statement was made about all the abuses that we have just enumerated. Hence to obey the dictates of our conscience and to promote the honor of Jesus Christ, we have believed it to be our duty to point out the disorders that have resulted therefrom, and that have stirred up general murmurings at Foggia and outside of it; and this in order that your Eminences (*the plural must be used*) far from permitting what is asked of you, might formally and forever forbid it.”

Finish the petition by these words: *The undersigned, full of gratitude, will pray to God to reward you.*

The petition should have at the beginning the words: *Eminent Sirs.*

It should end as follows: *Sister Maria Celeste Poppa and Sister Maria Crocifissa Petitto, professed religious of the monastery of the Annunciation at Foggia, have the honor of exposing to your Eminences the following facts: The use of figured music has been lately abolished in our monastery,* as above.

On the envelope you should write:

To his Eminence

The Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.—Rome.

Send, then, secretly your letter to Sister Maria Celeste of the Most Holy Saviour[16850] that she may frank it at the post-office by paying two or three grains;[16851] tell her from me that there is question of an affair of very great importance to the glory of God.

This measure will cause you trouble; but do not hesitate to take it, and if you have to suffer on account of it, suffer for the love of Jesus Christ. If you neglect this matter, and the answer having once come from Rome and the crying abuse having been re-established, you will perhaps not be able to remedy it, and this would be for you a cause of continual remorse.

As for direction, continue freely to be guided by the advice of your confessor, and go on whether you are cold or not. It is well to have the holy fear of God, that is, the fear of displeasing him; but confidence should always overcome fear. Dilate unceasingly your heart by confidence in the infinite goodness of God and in the merits of Jesus Christ with the desire to become the first saint in Paradise, if such is the good pleasure of the Lord, not for your own good, but in order to render greater glory to God, and to love Jesus Christ more. Always pray to Jesus and Mary for me. I remain, etc. Live Jesus and Mary!

Acquaint your confessor with everything. As to Sister Maria Emanuella, if your confessor puts you under obedience to give her a reprimand, do so through obedience, but do not continue to treat with this Sister in a familiar way. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your servant.

After the original in possession of Cavaliere Giancarlo Rossi at Rome.

Letter 81

TO SISTER MARIA CROCIFISSA PETITTO, AT FOGGIA

The same subject.

S. MARIA DELLA CONSOLAZIONE, [January 30, 1747].

All goes well. Continue in all security to follow the direction of your confessor, and desire once for all to become a saint. I have written to Sister Celeste what I wish you to do to prevent this cursed chant. Don Cesare [Sportelli] is not here. I will see, etc. Tell your sister that she is foolish to act thus. Pray always to Jesus and Mary for me.

Live Jesus and Mary!
Your very humble servant,
ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Saviour.

After an old copy.

Letter 82

TO SISTER MARIA CELESTE POPPA

The same subject.—Utility of persecutions.

Live Jesus and Mary!

S. MARIA DELLA CONSOLAZIONE, [March 10, 1747].

I have received your letter, full as it is of fears and human considerations. A fine spouse of Jesus Christ is she who is afraid of being persecuted for the love of Jesus Christ! You have performed a good action,[16852] and now you repent of it! Do you not know that it is a fault to repent of the good that one has done?—But you say, *I shall be persecuted.—Amen.* You should rejoice at this, even desire it, and not fear it. *Beati qui persecutionem patiuntur, propter justitiam.* [Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake. —*Matt.* v. 10.] I would like that, for the love of Jesus Christ, you would be without ceasing exposed to the persecutions of the world. You very well know the disturbances that have been created; and if you do not know them, I know them and all Foggia knows them. For pity's sake, do not exhibit again such pusillanimity; if not I shall almost lose the hope of seeing you one day in heaven. I say the same thing to Sister Maria [Crocifissa]. Do what I have written to you, and pray for me. I also ask the prayers of Sister Maria [Crocifissa]. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 83

TO FATHER GIOVANNI MAZZINI?

Confidence of the saint in the Blessed Virgin.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NAPLES,[16853] June 25, [1747].

In reference to the affairs at Nocera our opponents announce that they will be victorious. I firmly hope, however, that through the protection of the Blessed Virgin this will not be the case.

The *exequatur* for Caposele is already in my hands, and without conditions. Live Jesus and Mary!

Offer in the evening a special prayer to the Blessed Virgin; for we wish to make an attempt to obtain from the king the approbation of our Rule. Have also Communions offered for this purpose. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 84

TO THE PRIEST GIROLAMO FERRARA, NOVICE OF THE CONGREGATION AT CIORANI

Vocation and family affairs.—Examination of a particular case.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

[NAPLES], July 1, [1747].

May the will of God be always done! My dear Girolamo: The news[16854] about your brother's death has made me make a powerful act of resignation.

To be short, if your two sisters had sufficient means to live at home, I should not hesitate to counsel you to remain in the Congregation; for there is morally no danger in regard to their virtue; in fact even in case you should die, this danger would not exist, since one of them is already old enough to take care of the house.

The only difficulty is that, as the revenues consist of rents, I do not know whether women without the help of a man would succeed in collecting the dues; but you know the people and the customs of the country, and may be able to settle this question better than I.

As for placing your sisters in a convent, my dear Girolamo, this is a matter that seems to me to be very difficult, and even morally impossible. At first, it would be difficult to find a convent that would be willing to receive persons so aged; and besides, they would reluctantly give their consent to be shut up there (this would require a divine vocation), in order to permit you to retire among us. Moreover, if no one remains at home, who will take care of the rents, and would pay what would be owing to the convent? You must, therefore, think no more about your plan in regard to the convent.

It would be more easy to admit that your sisters could quietly live at home without you; and even if this would now appear to them impossible, yet if they knew that you have decided not to leave the Congregation, and if they become convinced of this by experience during a certain time, I should think that they would then find means of subsisting by exacting the payment of what is coming to them, just as they would have to do if you were to die. The archpriest[16855] seems to hold for certain that you are obliged to return to your family. There is no doubt that in a similar case Rome would grant even to professed religious the permission to leave the convent and to return home. But we must observe that it is one thing to have the permission to live in one's family, and another thing to be obliged to do so when there is no danger to morals, and there is a way of subsisting without being there to give assistance.

However, I can see no difficulty in allowing you to spend some time in your family in order to regulate the affairs, and especially to settle the pretensions of your married sister by arranging everything as well as you can. But I do not wish you to interfere too much in other disputes for fear that you might furnish an additional reason for being obliged to remain with your family.

I see with pleasure the affection that you bear towards the Congregation; but I prefer to have you yourself in the Congregation rather than your property.

The archpriest wishes, he writes, that you should hasten to come to the assistance of your family; but I think that there is no need of hurry; perhaps it would even be better for you to remain with us to see how things will end, and to write that you are bound by the vow of obedience, etc.,[16856] that your sisters are grown up and reasonable, that they have enough on which they can live. Try this means first, and you will see what will be the result. I do not doubt that at first sight such an answer will create a great stir; but I believe that in time people will persuade themselves that you are not disposed to return home, nor to leave the Congregation, and then they will become reconciled; and as *vexatio dat intellectum* [vexation gives understanding], I believe that your sisters will consent to see to the revenues themselves and find means to live comfortably without you.

The Doctors of Salamanca[16857] say with Sanchez, Castropalao, Suarez (and Bonacina is of the same opinion), that it is only in case of extreme necessity, either of poverty or of danger of prostitution, that the brother is obliged to come to the assistance of his sister by leaving the Community, especially if he is bound by a vow or an oath. Now such a necessity does not exist here.

However, my dear Girolamo, in order to be able to give you a decided answer I should have to speak to you orally; but I desire that the Rector [Father Andrea Villani] and Fathers N. and N. should first hold a consultation about this matter, and that then they should write to me what they think; for the case is so complicated.

Why could not your sisters retire to the house of your married sister and live with her? In order that they might be received there, I should not make any difficulty if you would make a present of your share, etc. I repeat that we need not be in too great a hurry. Let the affair first be maturely discussed with the Fathers; then communicate to me the opinions, and we shall come to a decision; for if you go home, I know not what entreaties the archpriest and the Archbishop [of Conza] may have in reserve for you, so that you will no more be able to extricate yourself.

Let us have recourse to prayer, and let us hope that God will enlighten us to know surely his will; this is all that you desire, and this is all that I desire. I remain, etc.—Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 85

TO A FATHER OF THE CONGREGATION

Course of action in order to save the vocation of Don Ferrara.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

[NAPLES], July 4, [1747].

Father Andrea writes to me from Ciorani what Don Girolamo says.—I am decidedly of opinion that he should not depart from Ciorani, as I have written to him; and if he departs, I shall impose it upon him as a matter of conscience. I positively say that his sisters stand in no need of his assistance. As to matters in litigation and to other necessities, let the sisters take care of these things themselves as they did before: *Mortui sepeliant mortuos suos.* [Let the dead bury the dead.] And if something has been overlooked, or if a suit has been lost, what matters it? Don Girolamo should not on that account lose his vocation, or expose himself to lose it. I regret to see by his letter that he inclines somewhat to go to Teora; but he has finally left the matter to be decided by me.[16858] I have recommended myself to God, and what I have just said is my decided opinion. Now you will notice that the archpriest [of Teora] will still write to him, or send him word, etc. Father Andrea [Villani] should then take care not to let him read the letters of the archpriest, as he let him read the last letter. This was wrong; it would have been sufficient had he told Father Girolamo about the affair, because the archpriest caused him to have scruples, and you know that Don Girolamo is naturally scrupulous. This scruple I am willing to take upon my own conscience. As much as possible prevent him from seeing anyone that has come from Teora. Moreover, if a letter should come from the archpriest or the Grand-Vicar, and the letter might renew his scruples, let Father Andrea keep him in ignorance of it; send me the letter, and I will answer the archbishop.

I remain, etc.—Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa! Recommend me to Jesus Christ and to Mary.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 86

TO FATHER GIOVANNI MAZZINI, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT PAGANI

Solicitude of the saint to obtain the royal approbation of his Institute.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

[NAPLES], July 4, [1747].

Send this little document at once to Father Andrea at Ciorani, so that on Friday without fail he may return it through Angelillo. It is an abridgment of the Rule which I composed with D. Cesare [Sportelli] and which is to be presented to the king. I wish, however, that Father Andrea should see the manuscript before it is copied, so that he may make some remarks; and if your Reverence before sending it to Father Andrea would look it over and note whatever you think needs improvement, I should be greatly pleased. But there must be no delay, as in every case, it must be forwarded to Ciorani on Friday. Send, therefore, this letter to Father Andrea. You will notice that we have written only what is most necessary, and that we have purposely omitted matters of little importance. In reference to that most important affair about which Don Cesare has spoken to you I yesterday called upon Brancone,[16859] who told me that he had forgotten it. It will be necessary that we again apply to him. In the meantime, continue the prayers, since this affair is of the greatest importance to our Congregation. Hence the necessity of offering many prayers.

You will remark that we have purposely inserted *oath* instead of *vow* of perseverance, in order to take away the fear that people have of seeing a new Order established. The fact is the oath from the obligation of which the bishops cannot free any one, is more solid than the vow, in regard to which they certainly can give a dispensation.

My purgatory at Naples still continues, and will continue, I do not know how long. I remain, etc. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Recommend me to Jesus and Mary. Send me from Ciorani a pair of white stockings. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 87

TO ONE OF THE GENERAL CONSULTORS OF THE CONGREGATION

He complains to him of the difficulties raised against the project of obtaining from the king the approbation of the Institute.

[NAPLES], July 4, 1747.

To tell the truth, if it were not for the sake of the Congregation, I would leave everything and would shut myself up in a cell at Ciorani without busying myself about anything; but my conscience will not permit such a thing. I imagined that your Reverence and the others would have referred to me this affair in which I proceed so carefully, or at least to me and D. Cesare [Sportelli] as the Fathers of Pagani have done; but your letter filled with scruples conditions and fears has caused me greater trouble. You leave me in this disturbed state so that I know not what to do. I do not wish however to hear more complaints in the Congregation; I have heard enough of them.

Remember well that in regard to the affairs we are in great hopes; for Brancone takes an interest in them, the king is favorable; the more so since Father Pepe[16860] has spoken to him; the Grand Almoner wishes to help us; later on things will change and evil impressions will be dissipated. Does it therefore seem prudent to protract things? I assure you in the presence of Jesus Christ that if this great affair miscarries there will be no longer any remedy. I say this *great affair,* because on it depends the stability of the Congregation. All your fears are frivolous: the greatest fear that we should have is that the Congregation, deprived of the king’s approbation, may never have true stability and may perhaps end by being dissolved.

Now, this being said, I decline all responsibility before God; it is sufficient for me if the affair does not fail through my fault. I do not speak thus because I wish to play the part of a founder and of a despot. You see how I am seeking counsel in my doubts and how I have been seeking it from the beginning. When one sees that things are done with maturity and discretion, do you think it praiseworthy to wish to thwart them? I pray to Jesus Christ to close his eyes to my sins and not to destroy on their account this work which is his own. You should also have the prayers continued.

Why should you put before me so many difficulties which you see in this union?[16861] I am myself so much opposed to it that I will never give my consent, for the reason that you give and for other reasons, except in a case that is morally impossible, since this affair could not be brought about except *causa cognita* [the cause being known] and with your consent . . . [The rest of the letter is wanting.]

After an old copy.

Letter 88

TO FATHER GIOVANNI MAZZINI

Request for counsel in a difficult affair.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NAPLES, July 22, [1747].

If the affair had gone on as I wished it, it would have gone on too smoothly; but now it will go on with many embarrassments and much labor; but the case is not desperate.

This morning I received the answer. Our friend [Marquis Brancone] has spoken with great force. The king has conceived a high idea of our work, but he is a little afraid of new Institutes. Hence he desires the affair to pass through the hands of the Grand Almoner and the Royal Council so as to find out what views are held by them. The king, however, has so high an opinion of our work that he himself has thought that we should write to the Pope to ask him to give up one of the many convents that exist, and to put into it members of our Congregation. To-day the royal ordinance with a copy of our Rule is to be sent to the Grand Almoner, who will make his report.

I also spoke this morning to the Grand Almoner, who repeated to me more than once: “Unite with Mannarini, and come together to see me.” I positively refused to entertain the idea of union, because such a thing would be impossible, as the Institute is different from ours, has schools, and prefers cities, etc.[16862] This I said and will always say. But a thought has come to my mind which has agitated me in a thousand ways. I thought within myself: “Let us secure now the king’s approbation on which depends that of Rome, and consequently all the rest; and then *Deus et dies* [God and time]. The partisans of Mannarini will attend to their own affairs and we to ours.” Wherefore I regard this as certain: the Grand Almoner is favorable to Mannarini, and would not like to see our Congregation approved, while to the Congregation that is protected by him the approbation is refused. Hence if we wish both Congregations to be approved together, he will be in our favor; but if this is not done, the contrary will happen, and the affair will be a failure, because the king wishes to depend on his Council.

Here are then my considerations: On the one hand, I consider that by obtaining this approbation, the establishment of the Congregation would be secured; but which Congregation is to be approved, ours or theirs? our Rule or theirs? These are the differences that would have to be settled, and it appears to me to be most difficult, because we do not wish to change our Institute nor are they willing to change theirs.

Come together, talk over the matter, reflect upon it; and then on Monday or Tuesday let D. Cesare be so kind as to come to me at Naples and report to me what have been the views expressed. Send someone to Ciorani to-morrow with this letter, and let them also tell you what is their opinion. The case is very embarrassing. I do not write to Ciorani so as not to be obliged to repeat the same thing. Every evening let all our houses say the prayers for the king; and let this be done if possible at Mass.

As for the *suit*,[16863] information will be given at the beginning of next week.

After the Neapolitan edition of 1848.

Letter 89

TO MGR. CELESTINO GALIANO, GRAND ALMONER

Considerations in view of the memorial that is to be presented for obtaining the royal approbation of the Institute.

[Month of July, 1747.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

For the *report* that is to be presented we ask to subjoin the following reflections:

1. Experience has already proved how useful and even necessary the missions are for the rural districts, especially of the kingdom of Naples, where the hamlets are so numerous, so thickly settled, and at the same time, so destitute of spiritual help. Although the city of Naples is well provided with such help, yet this is not the case in the remaining part of the kingdom; and although from the city of Naples and other populous cities of the kingdom every year various missions are given, these labors nevertheless correspond only in a feeble measure to the immense want that exists, so that many places remain from twenty to thirty years without a mission. Hence this is the cause why so many people are found there without even knowing the necessary mysteries of faith. It, therefore, seems to be very necessary that there should be more houses of this Congregation of missionaries of the Most Holy Saviour, who devote themselves to this exercise and to the spiritual culture of these country places, for which the missions are so useful and even necessary. They could then spend their time as well in instructing in divine things so many poor people that live in these places, as in remedying the bad confessions that are made, especially in the kingdom of Naples where the rural hamlets are as numerous as they are populous.

2. Moreover, this work is known to be most useful on account of the continual assistance that it furnishes to the places where missions have been given. The missions do certainly a great deal of good; but the misfortune is

that, if after the missions have been given, the people do not see the missionaries and are not able to go where they live, they fall back into their old evil ways. This Congregation has for its aim not only to go through the country, helping the people who mostly need spiritual help, and going in search of them in the most abandoned places and in hamlets, but it has, besides, for its chief rule that its members must return from time to time to the places where the missions have been given for the purpose of preaching, of administering the holy sacraments; and thus they renew and preserve the fruits of the missions. And for this end the Congregation has as its fundamental rule to establish its houses outside of the inhabited places and in the centre of the dioceses, for these reasons: that they may better attend to this duty of travelling continually through the country; that the country people round about may find it convenient to have recourse to them as often as they wish in order to see the missionaries in the church and settle the affairs of their conscience; and finally, that in these dioceses an opportunity be given to ecclesiastics and priests to make their retreat while remaining in the houses of the missionaries.

After an autograph sketch preserved in the archives of the house at Pagani.

Letter 90

TO FATHER PAUL CAFARO, HIS DIRECTOR

The king of Naples, after the death of Mgr. Domenico Rosso, Archbishop of Palermo, wished to promote to the archbishopric our saint, who thus expresses his dislike for such a dignity.

[End of July, 1747.]

. . . . .Now we must use entreaties, we must pray, because I see myself exposed to a grave persecution and in the greatest distress. The king has resolved to select me to be archbishop of Palermo; but I would rather hide myself in the woods than accept such a dignity.[16864]

Quoted by Tannoia , "Life of St. Alphonsus," Book ii. Chapter xxviii.

Letter 91

TO FATHER GIOVANNI MAZZINI

Difficulties that the saint meets with at Naples on account of the approbation of the Institute.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

[NAPLES], August 1, [1747].

I write in haste a letter for all, as I have but little time. I have your letters and those from Ciorani. You must now pray to Jesus Christ to give me strength and light, for I have lost sleep, appetite, etc. Yesterday morning the Grand Almoner almost absolutely refused at first to take our affair into consideration; afterwards, however, it was taken up; may God grant that the report may not be adverse! The Blessed Virgin can obtain for us success; hence continue and have others to continue the prayers. To-morrow I must return to the charge.

This morning I came to a successful understanding with Mannarini and spoke to him decidedly on a certain point. He has acquiesced in a few things.

These are not things that should be written in a letter, either because it is not expedient to confide them to paper, or because we need each time ten pages to say everything.

In the midst of this confusion and embarrassment the news from the novitiate consoles me; especially do I rejoice to hear that Don Girolamo [Ferrara] is so happy and cheerful.

Father Cesare[16865] may now set out for Caposele with God's holy blessing. Father Andrea has thought fit to put me to shame with all his humiliations, which are but subjects of confusion to me. But it is impossible at a distance to confer with one another by letter.

Father Cesare should speak to the Archbishop of Conza to find out in what way it might be brought about at Rome that a Cardinal be appointed by the Pope to interest himself in having the Congregation approved. For if the Blessed Virgin would help us to succeed with the king, etc., we should take care that at least the cause of the approbation may be introduced at Rome.

Recommend me to Jesus and Mary. Perhaps I shall send you a priest who is already a missionary. I must however maturely examine this matter which is rather a delicate affair and needs a dispensation. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 92

TO A GENERAL CONSULTOR

Trials and annoyances that the saint has to endure at Naples.

[August, 1747.]

. . . . Continue to pray for the Congregation and for me who am here pining away at Naples while treating with those ministers who are making life a burden to me. My heart is filled with bitterness; I cannot endure this any longer; I should like to run away, and yet I cannot leave Naples. I must assist in bringing our affairs to a close as soon as possible.

A consultation is now going on, and our affair has been proposed in the Royal Council. The king has thought of adopting a plan which will perhaps be more useful to the Congregation.

D. Vincenzo [Mannarini] is going about trying to effect a union; but I always put forward the excuse that such does not really appear to be the will of God. It is my firm conviction that this union cannot be accomplished, nor shall I ever give my consent to it. . . . . .

After an incomplete copy.

Letter 93

TO FATHER D. CESARE SPORTELLI

A power of attorney in regard to the founding of a house at Caposele.

[November 27, 1747.]

This present power of attorney, *per epistolam* [through letter], is given by me the undersigned Father D. Alfonso de Liguori, Rector Major of the priests, called the priests of the Most Holy Saviour, and of all their houses, in my own name as well as in the name of all my companions, present and future.

Not being able to be personally present to transact the affairs of [Conza and Caposele], and confiding in the fidelity and integrity of the Very Rev. Father Cesare Sportelli, my companion, who although absent is just as if he were present, I appoint and constitute him my procurator [attorney] and that of my companions, present and future, with all the sufficient and necessary power, *even* with the clause *ut alter ego* [another self] to make as it will seem best one or more agreements, with the Illustrious Monsignor D. Giuseppe Niccolai, Archbishop of Conza, with the Reverend clergy of Caposele and with all other benefactors, who intend to co-operate in the establishment of those Fathers, priests of Caposele, and especially in the place or monastery, called *S. Maria Mater Domini,* where there is question of conveying to them the church and the house situated there, with the actual annual income of four hundred ducats *to be assigned* for their maintenance, that is, a hundred and fifty ducats from the Reverend clergy, and the rest from the Most Illustrious Monsignor, the archbishop and other benefactors; with all the agreements and conditions that will appear to be suitable, and about which agreements have been made by the said procurator appointed by me, promising to ratify and confirm them all and again to ratify them should it be necessary.

CIORANI, November 27, 1747.

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI, *Rector Major.*
CONSTANTINO ZAMPOLI, witness.
D. ANDREA GAUDIELLO, “
D. FRANCESCO DI MARI, “

I Francesco Aniello Zampoli, notary, attest that the foregoing signature is that made by the hand of the above-mentioned Very Rev. Father Don Alfonso de Liguori, Superior-General.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 94

TO THE PRIEST FRANCESCO MARGOTTA[16866] OF CALITRI

He admits him into the Congregation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, December 7, 1747.

My dear and much esteemed Francesco: I must inform you that last evening we read, first, the letter that contained the news of the new foundation [of the house at Caposele]; then your letter in which you make known to us your resolution. But I really do not know which gave to all a greater joy, the news of the foundation or the news of the resolution that you, my dear Brother, have taken. I use the title *my dear Brother,* because, in accordance with what I herewith communicate to you, I receive you to-day into our Congregation as a brother and as a dear companion, so that your novitiate begins to-day even though you may be obliged to remain at Calitri for some time in order to settle your affairs. You have given to the Congregation all that of which you could dispose; but know that our Congregation and each one of us love you in such a manner that even if you had brought nothing, we would gladly have admitted you. The reason of this is because in you we shall receive a confrere that really wishes to become a saint. I am quite confident that you will attain the object of your desires, especially after you have maturely considered the matter, free from all excitement or passion, and your director, as well as the archbishop, has fully concurred in all your plans.

Remain, therefore, dear Brother, at Calitri without the least uneasiness as long as it will be convenient to you to arrange your affairs. It is true, we are all impatiently awaiting your arrival; yet I wish that you should settle matters in a quiet way. Such is your ardent spirit that you will need no motives to induce you to enter solitude as soon as possible. I can imagine, and am convinced, that your heart is sighing for the moment in which you may be able to enter the asylum that God has destined for you from all eternity that you might sanctify yourself. I would be delighted to see you here before my departure for Naples whither you know I must go either the day after New Year or after Epiphany to attend to the business of the Congregation. But I repeat, I do not wish that you should become disquieted on this account; for if I have not this consolation I shall offer it as a sacrifice to Jesus Christ. Be assured that all are expecting you with open arms. Above all have Fathers Paolo [Cafaro] and [D. Girolamo] Ferrara heard the news with inexpressible joy. To-day all the novices will go to Communion for you in order that Jesus Christ may bring to a speedy conclusion all your most necessary affairs, and you may be enabled to come among us as soon as possible.

From this time forward you must pray for me, but in a way different from that in which you have done heretofore, since from this moment I impose upon you this duty of praying for me by virtue of obedience, because you are now one of us. Hence every morning at your Mass and during your thanksgiving recommend me to Jesus Christ that he may bestow upon me *a love for him and a love for his Mother Mary, and that I may accomplish the divine will* in a perfect manner. I point out in a precise way my intention, so that you may always have it impressed on your mind what prayer you must say, and may not forget it.

On my part I shall in return do you the same favor. Therefore, in the name of the Most Blessed Trinity, of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and of Mary Immaculate, I admit you, receive you and bless you, that you may belong entirely to God, as such is doubtless his holy will. As soon as you write to your director, Don Angelo, I enjoin upon you the duty of expressing to him my thanks for the permission that he has granted you, and of telling him at the same time that the whole Congregation will always owe him a debt of gratitude. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 95

TO FATHER ANDREA VILLANI, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CIORANI

(This letter was written in the name of the saint by Father D. Celestino de Robertis.)

The saint consents to the making of a new agreement with the founder of the house at Ciorani but on certain conditions.[16867]

Praised be the Most Blessed Sacrament and Mary Immaculate!

NAPLES, February 4, 1748.

In reference to the affair about Nocera, our Father [D. Alfonso] does not think it well to have anything done at the present time, because there would be too much risk on account of circumstances which cannot be mentioned in a letter, and the loss of this case might be for us the loss of other foundations. The Father wishes to have your opinion and that of Father Saverio [Rossi] about this matter.

As regards the letter of Don Andrea [Sarnelli], let him know immediately (for this purpose Father Saverio should go there at once if he can, or your Reverence should go, because he [Don Alfonso] wishes to receive an answer by Saturday) that our Father entertains the greatest affection and veneration for him who with so much love has brought us to Ciorani. Hence in order to comply with his desires, he consents to the incurring of some loss, but not so great a loss as would give him scruples of conscience. For the rest, he will do what he can to please him. In short, let him know this in these or similar words, according as you think best. Tell him, therefore, that of the one hundred and fifty ducats, which he now wishes to give us annually during his life, we cannot put ourselves under any obligation of spending a part for the benefit of the church. We shall do what we can, as he has seen us do in the midst of all our miseries; hut we must not be put under any obligation. He knows the straits in which we are, and so for pity’s sake, he should not oblige us to do such a thing.

In regard to the establishment of other houses, of which he speaks in his letter, it is well for him to know that we have had hints given us by the ministers not to accept any more houses. Our Father, therefore, plainly says that he will not have the boldness to ask for new foundations. He [Don Sarnelli] sees how many subjects we are, how poor we are; therefore, he who loves us should help us as much as he can. He has already seen that we have always held him in high esteem. Tell him that when he wishes to make the contract, our Father will be ready; but inform him that Father Alfonso himself wishes to draw up the minutes of the contract so as to avoid all litigation, which may afterwards be begun by the relatives of Don Andrea who, he already knows, can hardly look at us. For this reason it will be necessary for him to give us all the papers, or at least an abstract of them, so as to be able to protect ourselves.

All this you will say to him, and send an answer by Saturday. Our Father also says that it will be necessary to write this new contract in words other than those in which the first contract was drawn up. We have lately received information about certain points that cannot be entrusted to paper, and that make it our duty to ask Don Andrea to write out this agreement. The foundation of Ciorani has not the express approbation of the king. The brother of Don Andrea has uttered the threat that when the latter dies, measures will be taken to drive us at once from Ciorani. This, besides other things, is what we know from a good source. Hence should Don Andrea wish to give us less than one hundred and twenty ducats, it would still be necessary to make a new contract; but I repeat, it must be worded differently, and state that the donation is destined, *not for the Congregation*, as was mentioned in the first contract, *but for us, priests of the Most Holy Saviour, as private individuals*. It might also be well, by way of greater precaution, to add to this donation the obligation of saying, for example, one Mass every month; but it must be remarked that this new contract does not depend at all on the first contract; for if ever the first should be annulled, the second would also be annulled. It is necessary to say that the first contract has become null and void, and that regard should be had only to the second, in which it is mentioned that a donation is no longer made to the Congregation to found a house at Ciorani, but that it is bestowed upon us who are named in the contract, and to the priests, our companions who live and who will live in the house at Ciorani, and who are engaged in the care of souls, with the obligation of saying those Masses, of performing the exercises on Saturdays in honor of the Madonna, or otherwise, according to the wishes of Don Andrea. Thus we must insist with prudence on the point that we ourselves have to plan this contract. As for Don Andrea, it will surely be sufficient for him if he has substantially all that he desired. Try then to see him immediately and to conclude the affair without delay, for Don Andrea is changeable.

Preserve this letter, for it may be useful for the object that we have in view. In case Don Andrea wishes to make the contract at once, send us the paper that he has drawn up, and add to it a copy of the beginning of the document that concerns Caposele, for our Father wishes to ask more advice. But try your best to bring the matter to a speedy conclusion. Believe me, my dear Father,

Your servant and brother,

CELESTINO DE ROBERTIS,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

Letter 96

TO THE PRIEST D. FRANCESCO MARGOTTA, AT CALITRI

Solicitude of the saint in regard to the observance of the Rule.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NAPLES, February 7, 1948.

My dear Francesco: I am still at Naples to finish the affairs of the Congregation, and I hope to finish them soon. However, it seems to me that a thousand years have still to elapse before matters can be concluded. We are all of us praying continually for you that you may soon come among us.

The Archbishop [of Conza] was very much displeased with me since for what I believe to be very good reasons I did not allow Father Cafaro to preach the Lenten sermons at Calitri. Father Paolo [Cafaro] must during Lent direct the theological studies at Iliceto; and this cannot be done except by him as he is the author of the text-book that is used. Father Cafaro will not therefore preach the Lenten sermons. Besides, as he has no Lenten sermons prepared it would be undertaking great and unnecessary labor since the preaching of Lenten sermons is foreign to our Institute. This last was my principal reason; for the preaching of Lenten sermons is an occupation altogether against our Rule; and if I permitted it on this occasion, I could no longer refuse the same thing to other bishops who have our houses in their dioceses. Moreover, the archbishop has promised, in a letter which is preserved, that he would treat us as other bishops do; and in the contract it is expressly mentioned that he is to employ us in accordance with our Rule.

As for yourself, if you do not speak earnestly with the archbishop by telling him that you have been already received, etc., you will never be able to tear yourself away. Represent to him that it is a matter of conscience with you in regard to your vocation. This is enough, for you are not wanting in judgment or prudence. After all, what must we do? We must be patient; perhaps our regret in not seeing you among us is greater than yours.

Recommend me to Jesus Christ that I may soon be able to leave Naples. It seems to me that a thousand years are still to pass by before I finish with these blessed ministers who fill my heart with bitterness. If it were not for the Congregation I would have nothing to do with them.

If the archbishop complains of me, he does so unjustly. I believe that up to the present I have served him as well as I could; and to oblige him I have even been unmindful whether or not I pleased other bishops. God knows what I was obliged to do in order to send him now the Fathers that are to give missions to his people and retreats to his clergy. And if he wishes that Father Fiocchi who has been sent to give a retreat to the priests, should stay, as I have heard, to preach the Lenten sermons I shall even then give my consent, although this Father is destined for Nocera where he is much needed and where the bishop is greatly dissatisfied. I really do not know what more to do to satisfy him. But to trample upon the Rules and Constitutions in the very beginning, I cannot allow. When an occasion presents itself, communicate what I have written to the archbishop. I remain, etc.—Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 97

TO THE PRIEST DON ANDREA SARNELLI

He gives his consent to the making of a new contract, but under certain conditions.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph!

NAPLES, February 10, 1748.

My dear Don Andrea: I have already written two long letters to the Rector at Ciorani about the affair concerning which you wrote to me. Now I am answering your letter, and I say in substance that I am ready to do what you have written to me. I should however be pleased to have the contract renewed for the benefit of this house; because this new contract would now have to be drawn up in other words in order to render this foundation more firm. But at present I shall not write the words of the new contract. But when you have resolved to write it, it will be necessary for me to let you know everything. The contract will have to be worded as that one was worded for the founding of the house of Conza [at Caposele]. And if you are desirous of knowing its contents, I will make no difficulty in letting you know them. Let the Rector of Ciorani know your wish, for I have written to him all the particulars; let him see this letter, and he will tell you all.

What before all I recommend to you is secrecy, so that your relatives may not learn of this affair, and may not involve us in a law-suit after the death of the Baron,[16868] as has already been said by them. I have no fear of the Baron nor of Don Nicola, because both have always favored us, and both are inclined to piety. I am however afraid of Don Domenico who, I know not why, cannot bear to see us at Ciorani, and when near the Chinese College these or similar words were used by him: *Only let my father die, and we shall see what will become of the Fathers at Ciorani.* As for the other brother Don Francesco,[16869] I know not whether he inclines towards Don Nicola or Don Domenico, and for this reason I should not like that anything should be known by Don Domenico in regard to the new contract.

This is sufficient. In regard to yourself I hope that there will be no difficulty (since you will have attained your end) in modifying the old contract, so that the house at Ciorani may be firmly established, and all danger of having lawsuits may be removed.

I beg you to give me at once an answer for my own guidance, and I ask you not to change your mind in reference to what you have written to me. Recommend me to Jesus Christ. May the Blessed Sacrament and Mary Immaculate be praised! I remain,

Your very humble and very grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

[*P. S.*] My dear Don Andrea, excuse me for not answering your letter immediately, because I have been ill at Naples; it is now seven days that the weather has been very wet and I have been suffering from my chest. Recommend me to Jesus and Mary.

After the original preserved in the archives of the Redemptorist Fathers at Pagani.

Letter 98

TO THE KING OF NAPLES

Petition to have his permission for the legal existence of the four houses of the Institute.

[February, 1748.]

Sire: The priest Alfonso de Liguori, together with his companions, missionaries of the so-called Congregation of the Most Holy Saviour, humbly presents to your Majesty the following petition: Your Majesty not having thought it well to sanction with your royal permission the project of uniting their society to that of the priests of the Congregation of the Most Holy Sacrament so as to form only one Congregation[16870] the suppliants ask you, Sire, to deign at least to recognize their four houses (and only these) in order that your royal authority may serve as a support to another work founded in favor of the poor people in the country, as your Majesty well knows. These houses are situated in the dioceses of Salerno, Nocera, Bovino, and Conza.

The undersigned declares that there is no desire of founding more houses but only of seeing established those that exist. And as for the purchase of property for the maintenance of these houses and of the work of the missions, he is satisfied with what your Majesty may think fit to arrange; provided he sees this holy work organized with the authority of your Majesty he will be satisfied with whatever is prescribed; because he does not wish that these houses should become rich, but only that they should have what is sufficient to maintain the work, for the propagation of God's glory and the profit of your Majesty's vassals.

If ever it should happen (may God forbid!) that the subjects of this Congregation should become faithless to their Institute, and the work should fail, the petitioner in his own name and in that of his companions will be content, and they even pray your Majesty that the Sovereign Pontiff he requested, to disband and suppress not only one or the other of the houses but the entire Congregation. Henceforward, the petitioner, in the name of the members of the whole Congregation, present and future, binds himself that they will not defend their conduct in any juridical way, but will submit in all things to whatever your Majesty shall see fit to arrange. The undersigned and all his companions desire nothing else than that this work may be pleasing to the zeal that inspires your Majesty for the good of the abandoned people in the country. The petitioner also hopes that in future this condition that is now made may also serve as a check on all the members of the Congregation and prevent them from being relaxed, and as an incentive to preserve the right spirit and continue the work as it has heretofore been carried on. If your Majesty deigns to favor this petition the undersigned will pray to God to reward you. May God grant that we receive this favor!

After a copy preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 99

TO THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF BENEDICT XIV

The saint asks him for the apostolic approbation of his Congregation.

[March 30, 1748.]

Most Holy Father: The priest Alfonso de Liguori, a Neapolitan, and with other missionaries, his companions, having become associated under the title of the Most Holy Saviour, humbly supplicates and exposes to your Holiness what follows: Having for many years been giving missions as a member of the Congregation of the Apostolic Missions, erected in the cathedral at Naples, the undersigned observed how greatly abandoned are the poor people, especially in the country, of the vast territories of the kingdom. Since the year 1732 he has associated himself with the said priests, as his companions, under the direction of the late Monsignor Falcoia, Bishop of Castellammare, for the purpose of devoting himself to aid by missions, instructions and other exercises, the souls of the poor in the country, who are mostly destitute of spiritual help, since they are frequently in want of those that may administer to them the sacraments, and to preach to them the word of God. Indeed, many of them for want of laborers approach death without even knowing the necessary mysteries of the faith, since there are few priests that devote themselves earnestly to the religious education of the poor country people on account of the expenses and also on account of the inconveniences that they have to suffer from such a task.

The undersigned have therefore since that time given assistance to the poor people by giving them missions, by going through the country visiting the most abandoned places of the six provinces of the kingdom. Their success was so great and universal that his Majesty, the king, having heard of it, and especially of the labors so profitable to a great number of shepherds in Puglia, deigned to make an annual appropriation for the maintenance of this holy work, recommending it as most useful for the general good of his kingdom.

His Eminence, the Archbishop of Naples, who governs his church with so much zeal, has also deigned to call the petitioners to render him services, and they have done so by giving missions in many villages of his diocese.

For this purpose, the petitioners, with the canonical approbation of the Ordinaries and also with the permission of the king, have united to live together in certain houses or secluded places, situated away from towns and villages in different parts of the kingdom. These houses are in the dioceses of Salerno, of Bovino, of Nocera, and finally, in the diocese of Conza, in which with the apostolic consent of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars there has been ceded to the petitioners the church of S. Maria *Mater Domini* with the adjacent house, together with an income derived from a benefice given them by the clergy of Caposele, and other kinds of income assigned by certain benefactors, especially by the archbishop of the said diocese. Besides the missions to which the missionaries are constantly devoting themselves, there are given in these houses opportunities for the people who have had missions, to visit the missionaries so as to renew their confessions and became re-established by means of sermons. Moreover, in these houses are given more than once a year private spiritual exercises to the candidates for ordination, to the pastors and priests sent by their bishops, as well as to seculars. This has been a source of great profit both to themselves and to others, since by such exercises the priests come forth reformed, and are made worthy members of the sanctuary, to the benefit of their flocks. And all this work is continued, and is always increasing the concourse of the people and conferring spiritual benefits upon them.

The Lord has then greatly blessed this work, not only by the conversion of many abandoned souls and to the profit of the country places where the petitioners have been laboring, but also by an increase of subjects who have joined this Congregation, so that they number about forty members.

Most Holy Father, this is the state of the above-mentioned work. But if your Holiness does not vouchsafe to grant the apostolic approbation, the work will not continue to meet with success. Prostrate, therefore, at the feet of your Holiness, the petitioner and his companions beseech you, by the love that your Holiness entertains for the glory of Jesus Christ and for the salvation of so many poor country people, who are the most abandoned children of the Church of God, to grant your apostolic consent, that the aforesaid members may constitute themselves a Congregation of secular priests, under the title of the Most Holy Saviour. The Congregation would always be subject to the jurisdiction of the Ordinaries of the places, *ad instar* [like] the Congregation of Fathers of the Missions and of the Fathers called *Pious Workers*, with this difference that the members of the Congregation must always live outside of inhabited places, and in the centre of the most needy dioceses, so that they may be better able to devote themselves to the care of country people, and to be also more ready to give them assistance. May your Holiness also deign to approve the Rules that will in time be placed at your Holiness's feet. We hope that your Holiness, who has so much zeal for the salvation of souls, especially for the souls of poor country people (as has been proved by your Holiness's letter sent to the bishops of the kingdom of Naples that they should give all possible spiritual aid to the people by means of holy missions), may vouchsafe to establish by your supreme authority a work not only useful but also necessary for the many poor souls in the rural districts of this vast kingdom, who are living destitute of all spiritual help. For this favor they will pray to God to reward your Holiness.

After the original preserved in the archives of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.

Letter 100

TO A PRIEST

He gives him some salutary advice.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

CIORANI, April 26, 1748.

I received your letter, and I read your reasons which convince me that by your resignation you would derive greater quiet, but not the greater glory of God and the greater profit of souls. You flee from one cross, but you will find that you must carry another. I think that you should withdraw and make privately the spiritual exercises, in order that the Lord may help you to decide what will be for his greater glory. At this house at Ciorani the exercises will begin on the 27th of next May; hence if you wish to make them here, you are now informed of the time when they begin. I recommend myself to your prayers. Praised be Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and Mary Immaculate! I remain,

Your very devoted and very grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 101

TO A FATHER OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Affection and veneration of the saint for the Society.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, May 31, 1748.

I received your much prized letter together with the pious and magnificent present. I have been much confused thereby, and with sentiments of confusion I thank you most cordially for it. As a sign of my gratitude and of the affection that I bear towards the Society of Jesus and towards every one of the Reverend Fathers, I beg you to accept a few small books of devotion, together with some pictures which we have had engraved. I also send you the *Pratica del confessore*[16871] [Practice of the Confessor] which I lately published, and which in substance is a compendium of the large work on Moral Theology which preceded it. I beg your Reverence to accept it in the right spirit.

News about the Society I have not yet received, because Father Centola scarcely left the box when he continued his journey, and I did not see him; but I shall meet him at Salerno on Friday. I am as anxious about this news as if it concerned our own Congregation, since there is question of an Order that has, one may say, sanctified and continues to sanctify the world. Above all do I thank you for the cordiality with which your Reverence writes to me; and I beg you therefore to recommend me most earnestly in your holy Mass to Jesus Christ, at least for three days. Humbly kissing your hand, I remain most respectfully . . .

After the Roman edition.

Letter 102

TO THE BISHOP OF AVELLINO AND FRIGENTI, MGR. FELICE LEONI.[16872]

Request for a favor relative to ordination.

May Jesus and Mary be our life!

CIORANI, August 25, 1748.

Your Lordship has had the kindness to promise the deacon Salvatore Gallo, your subject and a member of our Congregation, the favor of promoting him to the priesthood at the coming ordination in September. I send therefore a Father, the bearer of this, to receive the favorable rescript and also to render many thanks to your Lordship for the very great favor that has been conferred. Encouraged by such extreme kindness, I make bold to ask you to deign to grant to this our Congregation the favors which many bishops, and especially the Archbishops of Salerno and Conza, as also the Bishops of Bovino and Nocera (in whose dioceses our houses are situated) have bestowed on similar occasions when an ordination of our subjects was to take place, namely, to refer to the Rectors of the said houses, or to me who unworthily hold the office of Rector Major, the examination of these candidates. So particular a favor will be a special proof of the most courteous love and affection that you bear towards our Institute. It will be for me and for the whole Congregation a motive for placing ourselves under a lasting obligation to you, and will be an incentive to retain continually a memory of it in our poor prayers to the Almighty for the preservation and happiness of your Lordship, of whom I remain,

Your most humble and devoted servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Saviour,

Rector Major.

After the original, the property of the Orlando family at Torre Annunziata.

Letter 103

TO CARDINAL GIUSEPPE SPINELLI, ARCHBISHOP OF NAPLES

Notes written by the saint to the aforesaid Cardinal who was to draw up the report requested of him by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars for the approbation of the Institute.[16873]

[September, 1748.]

It will be a matter of surprise when it is made known that after so many Orders, Congregations and Institutes have been founded in the Church, the approbation as well as the confirmation of this new Institute is asked of the Holy See; for some say that it would be better to dissolve or reform the old Institutes rather than institute new ones. But the surprise will cease when people understand the end and aim of the Institute and the blessings with which the Lord has favored it. Moreover, it must be remarked that all the Institutes established during several centuries have met with the same opposition. Thus were opposed the Theatines, the Jesuits, the so-called Congregation of the Mother of God, the Pious Workers. Nevertheless the Holy See inspired by the Holy Ghost did not hesitate to approve them, and experience has shown of what great profit each one of these new Institutes has been to the Church of God.

But all these Institutes, it is said, began with great fervor, and then became relaxed. This will be the case with the new Institute.

In answer to this we say that in many Institutes fervor has been and is maintained; and although it is not the same as that with which the first members began, yet it is such as has heretofore been of great advantage to God's Church, as well on account of the examples of regular observance as on account of the works that have been done for the good of their fellow-men.

Then it is said that it is impossible to expect human nature to change; according to the present condition of men they begin with great fervor, but afterwards they grow cold. The farther water is removed from its source, the less limpid and the more turbid it becomes. But we see that God, who loves his glory above all things, and certainly was the author of so many Institutes which have been founded, has thought it well to govern his Church in such a manner that from time to time new Institutes should be established, not only that the garment of his Spouse might be adorned with various colors, but that, should the fervor of the ancient Institutes fail, it might be supplied by the fervor of new ones, which usually begin in this way. This fervor generally speaking endures for many centuries to the immense profit as well of the members of the Institute as of the people. If in a vineyard new plants are not substituted for the old ones, what will happen? The old ones dry up, and if new ones are wanting, the vineyard will come to an end.

But now, some say, so many Orders, so many Congregations have sprung up that finally they will become more than enough for the religious education of the people.

O would to God that these were enough! *Messis quidem multa!* [The harvest is great.] Whoever is somewhat familiar with the care of souls knows how scarce is the number of laborers who truly seek the salvation of souls, and he also knows how many souls are lost for want of spiritual aid. And it is certain for several reasons which any one may find by himself here, that this is the case especially in rural districts.

To this end so many zealous priests have sought to engage in giving missions, which if useful in cities are altogether necessary in country places; since in these latter there is for the most part a want of good priests who break to these unlettered people the divine Word, and give them the needful instructions. Besides, the missionaries are necessary in these rural places for the reason that there are few priests there, and these are natives of the country; hence many souls make sacrilegious confessions on account of the repugnance that they feel in confessing to one who knows them. It, therefore, happens that if these souls who have thus fallen into sin have not the convenience of a mission, so as to be able to manifest their consciences to strange priests, it may be said with moral certainty that they will continue to live in disgrace with God, and will surely be damned. Experience has proved that the greatest benefits are derived by souls from the missions which, as has been seen, have sanctified the entire population.

But would to God that the fruits of the missions were lasting! There would not be seen this corruption of morals as is seen even after the missions, and few souls would be lost. But the misfortune is that after some time the people grow cold and return to a still worse state on account of the light that they received during the missions.

Now, it is the aim of our most humble Institute to make permanent the fruits that have been gathered on the missions. For this purpose it is required by its Rule that the houses be located in the centre of dioceses so that the poor people may not only visit them in order to be helped in their spiritual wants, but may be otherwise aided by instructions, novenas and other exercises which the Fathers give, now in one place, now in another of the dioceses in which they live; and thus the fruit that has been derived from the missions is seen to continue among the people.

Such aid is of the greatest consolation to the people, because when in the small country places there is a scarcity of confessors, and in many districts scarcely a parish priest, it happens that very many hardly ever receive the sacraments; or if they go to confession, many through shame and repugnance make sacrilegious confessions. Confessors who go about know what comfort this help is, and how much the people are thereby consoled.

And in order that the subjects of this Congregation may be entirely free from all the cares in which are usually involved those laborers that live in inhabited places, it has been established that their residence should be outside of inhabited places in order to attend better to the spiritual care of the country people.

This Congregation, therefore, performs a work that is for the benefit of the people in the country, which is performed by no other Congregation of missionaries; hence it is hoped that the approbation and confirmation of it may be obtained.

The aim and purpose of the Institute is to form a Congregation, under the title of the Most Holy Saviour, of secular priests, living in common, subject to the jurisdiction of the Ordinaries of the places, *ad instar* [similar] to the Congregation of the Fathers of the Mission and of the Pious Workers, with this distinction, however, that its members are to live in the centre of the most needy dioceses, and outside of the inhabited places, in order that they may the better devote themselves to the abandoned people of the country, and be more prepared to offer them assistance by missions, instructions and the administration of the sacraments.

They observe moreover the following twelve rules. . . . .

After the original preserved in the archives of the house at Pagani.

Letter 104

TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE

Obligation of a religious to sustain observance, especially in regard to the admission of novices.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, September 15, [1748].

I have just received your long letter. You have done well to maintain the observance of the monastery in regard to the first point as well as the second about which you have written to me. We must prefer the common good of the monastery to every private good; otherwise the monastery would become an abode of worldly-minded women, instead of being a sacred asylum of spouses of Jesus Christ. In this matter be firm, and do not yield.

Omit one of your ordinary Communions as a penance for the weakness you have shown in the last case by giving your vote out of compassion. In future do not commit the same fault; otherwise I shall have to command you to abstain from Communion for a whole month without speaking of the scruple of which you would have to purify your conscience by confession. Certainly, we should be very scrupulous in admitting to the monastery a person who has not given signs that she has really entered it in order to serve God. In this manner the convents are ruined through the fault of those that give their votes through human respect In future, therefore, be firm, and encourage your companions to show the same firmness; they will thereby acquire great merit with Jesus Christ; above all, if on this account they have to suffer persecution: *Beati qui persecutionem patiuntur propter justitiam.* [Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake.—*Matt.* v. 10.] Always act thus, enduring persecutions with joy, without being disturbed; and answer that you act thus not out of passion, but because you think that you should commit a sin if you acted otherwise; and say nothing more.

Recommend me to Jesus and to Mary. I am, etc. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Pray every day to the Blessed Virgin in behalf of our affairs; for just now the question of our approbation is before the authorities at Rome. This I enjoin upon you as a matter of obedience. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your Father and servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Saviour.

After the original in possession of Chevalier Felice Toraldo, son of the late Horace Toraldo, at Tropea.

Letter 105

TO A SUPERIOR OF HIS CONGREGATION

Two important regulations; one in regard to the health of the subjects, the other about the protection of their vocation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, December 26, [1748].

O my God! how dreadful was yesterday’s weather for travelling!—I was at the altar; but you might have said one word to let me know that it was raining, and I would not have let you go. This inordinate eagerness for missions does not please me. When afterwards a subject becomes sick, the evil would be greater than if we had omitted giving ten missions.

Henceforward, for the rest of my life, I establish a general rule, that you shall read to all those that are with you, and which you shall afterwards communicate to the Rector of Caposele and to all the rest; for I recollect the great haste that was exhibited at the departure from Cirignola.[16874]

I declare then that it is my express wish, which must not be interpreted, that no one, at least of the chorists, should ever set out in the rain, unless it be in summer time, or the journey be a short one, or when some extraordinary emergency arises. I mention these exceptions for the greater tranquility of the Superiors. Hence I wish that no chorist shall ever set out on a journey in the rain, even though there were question of giving a mission at Paris. Preserve this letter so that you may remember this rule.

Another thing to which I intend never to give my consent is that permission be given to the Fathers or to the Brothers to visit their families because a relative is either sick or dying. This is permitted only when the father or the mother is seriously ill; and in this case I should be better satisfied if even then one did not go there. I also except any very extraordinary case, in regard to which I leave it to the Superiors to decide.

The first of these measures aims at preventing the health of the subjects from being endangered; the second, at preventing the loss of vocation and of the salvation of the soul.

Also in respect to any other case than sickness, I leave it to the Superiors to examine whether the case is extraordinary, or whether there is question about the wants or the affairs of the Congregation.

I send you again twenty *carlini*[16875] to help you. After the mission of St. Michael send Father Criscuoli to this place. Live Jesus and Mary!

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Saviour.

After an old copy.

Letter 106

TO SIGNOR D. POMPEO SCIBELLI, AT LEONI

He asks him to do him a service.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, February 15, 1749.

My dear Don Pompeo: Please have the enclosed letters forwarded to their destination.

As to the young man,[16876] I have already written that, since the Bishop [di S. Angelo de' Lombardi] does not wish to register his patrimonial title in the episcopal chancery before his ordination, you may send him to us. But as I have said, you should at least examine his patrimony and his papers, so that I may be assured that there is no mistake in regard to this matter. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your Reverence already knows that we have received the Pontifical approbation;[16877] thank Jesus Christ for us. Live Jesus!

Your very devoted and grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 107

TO D. GIUSEPPE MUSCARI, PRIOR OF THE MONASTERY OF ST. BASIL AT ROME

Various communications relative to the affair of the approbation and of privileges.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, March 20, 1749.

Last evening I received your very kind favor in which you inform me that Father Villani set out for Loreto[16878] on the 7th; by this time I think he has already reached the place. In regard to the faculties of the Penitentiary, I have written to him several times that he should use greater despatch so that the whole Congregation may receive them. How astonishing! By the grace of Jesus Christ we have received the approbation; a favor so immense that I can hardly believe that it is so; and then a matter that is as easy as the obtaining for the missions the faculties which are possessed by so many Congregations, the Congregation of the priests of the archdiocese, the Congregation of S. Pietro at Cesarano, which are few and not approved;—these faculties I say which I believed could certainly be obtained, we should not be able to obtain!

As for the attestation, Don Andrea did not write to me that he wished the attestation of the Ordinary; he told me that the attestation was necessary, or that I might give him leave to speak. And I have sent it to him.

Now from your letter I learn that the attestation of the Ordinary is required; I have, therefore, written to Salerno, and when the attestation arrives, I will send it to your Reverence, or to another whom you may mention; because after Father Villani has come from Loreto, it seems to me that he will be able to return to the kingdom, so long as he has not on his hands any other important matter about the settlement of which I shall look to him.

I have also written, and I do so again, that he should not fail to procure for us the favor of the privileged altar. As to other privileges, there is no more need of speaking of them at present. It is certain that it has been an important matter to obtain the approbation for which, as we know, your Reverence has done so much. May God reward you for what you have done; and for which I give you a thousand thanks. As for that affair,[16879] we shall not omit to pray to the Blessed Virgin. I also thank you for the trouble, which you took in superintending the printing of the Rule.[16880] As I have already decided and written to Father Villani in my last letters, this Rule I shall have carefully printed at Naples in small form. If Father Villani should be obliged to defer his return among us, you might send one of the Briefs with the Rule.

I do not now write to-day a special letter to Father Villani, because your Reverence may allow him to see this letter; and as for other things he will find them written in my other letters that I have sent by post.

Tell him that I have received ten ducats from P. D. Lorenzo d' Antonio for that transaction of which he knows; if he wishes me to send them by a bill of exchange, I shall do so.

In regard to the Office of the Most Holy Redeemer[16881] there is question, I hope, of the Office with the octave. But I do not see what would have to be suppressed and what would be proper for Venice; for we have examined it, and it contains nothing that might not suit for all places. For the rest I shall acquiesce in what is right.

Recommend me to Jesus and Mary, as we all do not fail to do for you. May Mary the Most Blessed Virgin obtain for us this favor. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa! I bless the journey made by Father Andrea and Brother Francesco to Loreto; I bless their journey home. Tell Father Villani that when he arrives at Naples he should go to the house of Don Giovanni Olivieri; he lives in the street of the Monastery of the Madonna, a little beyond the convent, opposite to the parlor, at the portico that is always closed. There he will find a letter from me, which will tell him what he has to do at Naples before returning here, that is, he is to make a visit to Marquis Brancone and to the Grand Almoner. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble and devoted servant,

ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the oratory of the Arch-confraternity of our Lady of Mercy and of St. Alfonso de Liguori, at Naples.

Letter 108

TO THE SAME

He accepts his religious profession.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I the undersigned, Rector Major of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, accept the oblation and the oath, made by the Very Reverend Father Abbate Don Giuseppe Muscari, of the Order of St. Basil, of persevering in our Congregation by virtue of the permission obtained by him from His Holiness our reigning Pontiff Benedict XIV., so that he may pass from his Order to the said Congregation. And by the power that I possess, as Rector Major of said Congregation, I dispense the same from the year's novitiate, and I now receive him as a member[16882] of our house of St. Michael at Nocera di Pagani this (*the date is wanting*).

DON ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer,
Rector Major.

After the original in possession of Abbé Depotter, professor at St. Omer, France.

Letter 109

TO THE SAME

He charges him with a commission.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, May 28, [1749].

I have already written to you in another letter about Father Bianchi's work against Giannone.[16883] You willl find Brother Francesco opposite the church of the Annunziata of Aversa.[16884] But if perchance you do not find him, as you will perhaps travel at night, leave the book with the priest Don Francesco Romano, confessor of the Annunziata of that city, and tell him that Brother Francesco Tartaglione will call for it, and that he should not give it to anyone else.

Remember that we are ardently looking for you. I embrace Don Giuseppe Rosa.[16885] I hope that now by your religious profession you are entirely ours. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved at Cotrone in possession of Canon Filippo Messina, Prothonotary apostolic.

Letter 110

TO FATHER FRANCESCO MARGOTTA, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE
AT CAPOSELE

The saint expresses his regard for the Archbishop of Conza.—Various affairs.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CARIFI, November 13, [1749.]

I received the letter of Brother Gennaro [Rendina] containing the news. I am happy to hear of the success of the mission. *Gloria Patri!*

What is to be done about the mission of Caposele? Have patience; give the mission in order to please Monsignor, whose hand you will please kiss for me. Let Fathers Villani and Cafaro remain to give the mission; afterwards they are to set out for this place. It will be necessary to send Father Robertis to Sieti, where a mission is to be opened next Sunday the 15th; otherwise, I will have to leave the place; for God knows what complaints his sisters would make.[16886]

Here is Father Villani writing me for another mission to be given at Conza. What is to be done in the end? If Monsignor really desires the same for Conza as for Caposele, I shall be well satisfied. Tell him that I cannot say no to his wishes. I had already marked out a great number of missions; but on account of the great love we have for him I will postpone them.

We shall give here the exercises to the candidates for ordination. It is necessary for you to go to the mission of Sarno, which is to begin the day after Christmas.

Let Fathers Villani and Cafaro go to Conza and Caposele; if you need the assistance of another Father, let me know immediately. But if you can do without him, so much the better. In this case, let me know this in time.

I am delighted to hear about [Fr. Don Gerardo] Grassi; let him write to me immediately. Please see whether [Fr. Pasquale] Amendolara cannot receive subdeaconship. Tell Monsignor that I take the ordination upon my conscience; meanwhile I am making Amendolara study diligently, and am very watchful. Let him be without fear; if this subject were not capable, I myself would feel a scruple in thus advancing him.

I am giving a little mission at Carifi; I shall have to leave the place Saturday, for I have to set out for Cava where a novena is to be held in honor of Our Lady of the Elm; the picture is to be exposed in order to stop the ravages of the pest prevalent among the cattle at present.

I have just received an excellent priest of Ischia;[16887] he is a good confessor, a good preacher and an excellent scholar. He is about forty years of age; he will be a good subject, for he has the reputation of a saint. He has left us to settle his domestic affairs; he will return within a month. Two others have come from Ischia; one of them is in his twenty-fourth year. I have not even examined them, for they seem to me to be in poor health. Later on we shall see. I embrace and bless all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very affectionate Father and confrère,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the parish church of Curti Giffoni, in the diocese of Salerno.

Letter 111

TO THE SAME

He congratulates Father Margotta on the success of certain apostolic labors.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CAVA, November 19, [1749].

I am here at Cava, crippled though I am, giving a novena in honor of our Lady to implore the cessation of the plague. The place is crowded and I shall likely remain eight days longer to give the exercises to the monastery of S. Giovanni.

I received from the archbishop a most courteous letter, which I shall answer. *Gloria Patri* for your success, for the good will of Monsignor, for the hundred ducats, for Grassi, for Amendolara, and for everything else.[16888] *Digitus Dei est hic*. [The finger of God is here.] Father Villani writes to me that Monsignor has given the faculties for all the Fathers that go to Caposele; but he does not say for what purpose they are given. I allow you to give those missions up to Christmas; for the day after the feast the mission of Sarno must be given.

I have settled matters with Father Garzilli; I expect him to go to Foggia to have an interview with Fazzioli. If Fazzioli wishes us to take the schools, we must answer that it is impossible.

As for [Don Gerardo] Grassi, let us wait for the Brief; as for Amendolara, let us wait till Lent.

I am expecting the young candidate from Calitri.

As for the others, tell them I will not receive them without the consent of the archbishop; hence after testing their vocation, let them obtain his consent.

Affairs are going on well at Nocera.

With regard to the mission of Melfi, I understand that [Vincenzo] Mannarini's subjects[16889] are to give it. Write me what you know about this affair. I embrace and bless you all in Jesus and Mary. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in our convent at Leoben, diocese of Seckau, in Austria.

Letter 112

TO THE SAME

He gives Father Margotta various orders with regard to the sale of his books; he speaks of the reception of novices and of the new building at Caposele.

[End of January, 1750.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I was under the impression that the books[16890] had been delivered at Conza two months ago, and now I hear that not a single book has been sent thither; hence it is necessary for you to send them immediately together with the other works that were asked for; write at the same time to the archpriests to tell them that they can obtain a copy of my book at the price of a certain number of Masses; the moment is favorable; for in a short time I shall have no more Masses. Have patience; be kind enough to do me this favor.

Now, as for the young men, speak frankly to them; tell them that the Consultors here wish to examine them and more rigorously than heretofore; if they do not stand the examination, they have to return whence they came. In the case of that boy who has not attained the required age, I am satisfied [here a few words are missing] with the ten ducats which will be better for him to leave here. The other young man, the notary's son, can also come. It is necessary that they have their patrimony accepted and registered at the episcopal chancery; otherwise what happened to de Angelis,[16891] may also happen to them; difficulties now arise about his patrimony, and he cannot make his profession.

To please Monsignor, tell him I will send the Fathers to give the mission at Auletta,[16892] the first week of Lent; they will, I think, set out on Wednesday from Salerno in a coach which goes to these suburban places, to Selvitella, or Buccino, or Auletta. Six Fathers will be sufficient. As it will be necessary for me to send Fathers from this place, I shall send Fathers de Robertis, Scibelli and Giovenale.

Oh, what difficulties surround me? Mgr. di S. Angelo wishes Father Cafaro to give the exercises to his clergy; and Mgr. di Nocera would like to have two missions during Lent. May the Madonna come to our assistance? Spiritual exercises at Ciorani and spiritual exercises at Iliceto! The Fathers are nearly exhausted.

If you should have no means of communicating with the nephew of the archpriest of Muro, have patience! Poor young man! I pity him sincerely. He wrote me a letter expressing his ardent desire to come to us. I am told that he is an angel, and moreover a very bright and able youth; but his parents are opposed to the step he wishes to take. Well, see whether we cannot help him in some way.

We are expecting Don Benedetto;[16893] we are praying for him.

Your Reverence will please see that the building be completed for this summer, so that it may be occupied in September; and for this purpose I beg you to purchase sufficient lumber and all the required material. Lime you have already. Do not forget what I say. It appears to me that a thousand years are yet to pass before I shall see the house ready and the exercises given. When I visit you after leaving Melfi, I hope I shall find everything in good order.

I am somewhat troubled about the Masses that are in arrears. I beg you to settle the matter quickly with the priests of Caposele, Calitri, Teora, or elsewhere. Tell them to say a hundred or at least sixty-two Masses according to my intention, during the month of February. Please do me this favor to relieve me of my scruples; let me know how you have settled the matter.

If you receive their promise to say the Masses during the whole month of February for the eight or nine books, you need not trouble yourself about the other matter.

Ask permission of the archbishop to give the mission at Melfi; I wish to have you with me on that mission which I shall open the Sunday after Easter. Do not forget poor Amendolara.[16894] I embrace and bless you. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Send me the books immediately, and let me know. I have already made the intentions with regard to the books marked below. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very affectionate Father,

ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer,

Rector Major.

From the original in possession of Canon Francesco Saverio Martini, Vicar-General of Alatri.

Letter 113

TO THE SAME

He tells him to remain more at home, and to moderate his mortifications.—Details relative to novices.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

[CIORANI], January 23, 1750.

I have received the last letter that you wrote me from Atella.[16895] I have felt some displeasure in hearing that you are still in this place. A sojourn so prolonged outside of the house annoys me. Remember that you are now Rector. In future, endeavor to keep yourself free from similar embarrassments. I have already answered the Bishop [of Melfi] that in regard to the exercises to be given at Melfi, such a thing is not possible at present. When the Rector is absent from home all things go wrong. Resolve in future to stay at home as much as possible except when one or the other mission is to be given, or there is some real necessity.

I imagine that on his part the Archbishop [di Conza] is complaining that I am sending you hither and thither. This would be very disagreeable to me if it were the case.

I hear besides that your health is shattered. For mercy's sake, take care of it; retrench all those mortifications in eating, etc.—Now it will be better for you to practise obedience.

You have embarrassed me by that other mission at Auletta. The Fathers are exhausted. In short, on the return of Father N. for Lent, we shall speak to him about it, and make arrangements. In future dispose things in such a way that you may avoid giving missions in Lent.

Father Villani has written to you about Frater Amendolara; I also recommend him to you myself. Make out the memorial as regards the requisite qualifications, and endeavor to spare him a journey for the examination. Assure the archbishop on my conscience that he is a capable subject. I have always directed his studies; he is capable of being not only subdeacon but priest.

I also recommend to you to write to N.—You undoubtedly know that he wished to return, and was only awaiting my consent. I have written to him to come to me, since his conscience was at rest in regard to the wants of his family; but I have not as yet seen him. Perhaps my letter may not have reached him; write him again the same thing in my name.

O what a trouble to me is the mission that is to be given at Auletta; so much expense, and so much fatigue for the Fathers at this time, and with such roads! why? for the sake of a mission. Think at all events of the means of conveyance, since at least six missionaries will be needed.

The son of N. has again been examined, and in the same way has been found incompetent; besides to judge him by what he says, I should think that he has no vocation. He has also not yet reached the proper age, and his father is inclined to do but little for him; this would be at least a pretext for dismissing him.

As for the other young man,[16896] I adhere to what I have written you. Let his uncle at least contribute as soon as possible the twenty ducats that he has promised. This is little enough for one year and so many months during which he is to stay with us before entering the novitiate; but we must try to obtain at least this sum.

As to the two young men of N. and of N.,[16897] I have already written to you about them. N. may come; for as he is obliged to escape secretly, we cannot, at least for the present, exact the twenty-five ducats. In regard to the young man of N. he may also come; he is capable; since after having examined him, Father N. and the archpriest, who is his uncle, I believe, tell me that they are satisfied with him, and that his affairs are in a good condition. See to it, therefore, that his patrimony be settled, that we be assured of the twenty-five ducats, and then let him come.

Gloria Pairi! There is such a concourse of young men that we can scarcely receive them all; provided however, they be good, I shall not lose confidence.

For mercy’s sake go to bed in the evening immediately after the ringing of the bell; I have been told that you sometimes sleep on the floor. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

From the Roman edition.

Letter 114

TO THE SAME

Grave exhortations.—Duties of a Rector.—Necessity of dying to one’s self.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, February 1, [1750].

I beg you to read this letter with attention and to preserve it, because in future it may be of service to you.

Before all, to speak freely to you, I say that I do not think that you would wish to be treated with delicacy and consideration in reference to matters concerning obedience, as if you were a weak subject and a man of no good will. This, between you and me, is the case with some members of the Congregation. I have a different idea of your Reverence; for I am convinced that you wish what is most perfect and agreeable to God.

Let us now come to the point. You know that I have always esteemed you and that I still esteem you; facts have proved this. I should regret if anyone would recall vividly to my mind what has already been told to me, namely, that you are a saint, but that you are not fit to be Rector, perhaps for the following reasons: That as Superior you are but little at home; there is wanting the necessary order in all that regards the house and regular observance; that your Reverence takes upon yourself the care of a multitude of useless things, *piglia tante gatte a pettinare,*[16898]—so many letters, so much correspondence, so many unsuitable occupations, etc., especially, however, so many devotions to which you appear to be attached, to the detriment of regular observance.

We are all convinced that you do not go out, that you do nothing unless it be for God; but, *ne quid nimis* [not anything too much]. Now that you are in the Congregation, above all as Superior, you should think that the greatest glory that can be given to God is, that you watch over the maintenance of observance and the good of this house, which is one of the best, and even, I may say so, the best that we have. It is true, as at present your number is small the order of the day, etc. cannot be entirely kept; but why not adhere to it when it can be done conveniently? Hence in regard to sleep, be kind enough to listen to me. I beg you to go to bed at the time fixed by the Rule, at least for the night. All that I permit you is the half hour that I have granted you; nothing more. After that, if you have to attend to some necessary affair, you may do so in the morning by omitting prayer at the time of rising, and you may act thus only in some other very rare case that may present itself at the most once or twice a year. But this half hour you must measure by your hour-glass, so that you must be in bed as soon as the half hour has elapsed; and this is to be understood only when you are at home; for when you are on missions, charity towards your companions requires that you should go to bed when the others do.

As for going out, you have already noticed that when the head is wanting everything gets out of order. I do not however forbid you to go out when there is question of some affair that concerns the house or the Congregation, or the glory of God in a matter of importance; but if for the glory of God you wished to avail yourself of every occasion that presents itself to you every day, in every part of this diocese, you would not be able to be at home for a moment. The greatest glory of God and the will of God require, I repeat, that you watch over the interests of the house, of the church *Mater Domini*, and of regular observance, so that there may not be verified in you what others have suspected.

I write to you with all affection, because I esteem you and esteem you much; I have a high idea of your merit, and I hope that you will be one of those who in the Congregation wish to sanctify themselves like Fathers Cafaro, Villani, Mazzini, Fiocchi, Ferrara, etc., who are dead to their own will, and you would not wish to resemble certain others whom I must treat with great consideration. I will treat them in this manner; but I see that they will not become saints like those whom the Superiors can, according to my usual expression, cut to pieces. You see that I speak to you with sincerity and for your advancement. Why have you given yourself to God with all that you possess? In order to sanctify yourself. What misfortune would it then be for you if now you should not attain this object! God has wished and wishes, as you see, great things of you; but what he chiefly desires is, that *you should be dead to your own will and to your own gratification.* You know better than I that this is the essential point, and merely by entering the Congregation, you have made a sacrifice of your will; beware lest you take back the least part of it; for this would surely hinder you from attaining sanctity. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 115

TO THE SAME

Joy at seeing him humble and resigned.—Different details.

CIORANI, February 7, [1750].

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your letter, so expressive of humility and of resignation, afforded me the greatest consolation. I expected this, and for this reason I took that liberty with you. You know now how I esteem and love you.

I agree with your Reverence with regard to the young men of Morra; it will be very difficult to induce the bishop to accept the patrimonies presented; he may give the same answer that he gave in the case of Niccolò. Now, as soon as the patrimonies are settled and signed before law, you may send the two young men, but with the understanding that they are to undergo an examination.

Try to send Don Paolino [Scibelli], as I told you in my last letter. I shall be satisfied if he arrives at the beginning of the mission. I am also asking Don Angelo[16899] to render some assistance.

If [Don Pasquale] Amendolara does not go to the archbishop in person, he will not be able to effect anything.

I know the debts contracted in the building of the new house.[16900] But remember that the archbishop after giving one hundred ducats of his own money and contributions from other priests, wishes to see the building erected. Act with your usual prudence, and do all that you can to have those rooms that were lately planned, finished as quickly as possible. That arrangement about the books in return for the Masses is working admirably, as you wrote to me; however, I ask your Reverence to see whether others who have not taken the obligation upon themselves, are saying the Masses.

Only ten requests for books, as I wrote to you, were sent in from the diocese. Now do not send more than this number, and do not send away any in future without letting me know, and then I shall write to you. It is true that I have certain other Masses; but still I wish first to be informed. For these ten copies they will have to say Masses during the month of May. I have already made the intentions; you may give the Masses to whomsoever you wish; with regard to other books please write to me first. As for those ten copies destined for the diocese, I wished to say that if now you can dispose of eight or nine of them for Mass-intentions, it will not be any longer necessary for me to procure an exchange of intentions. But this is with the understanding that the Masses in payment of these eight or nine books be celebrated during the month of February; for if they should be said during the month of May, it would be necessary for you to obtain for me an exchange of intentions, and I should repay you in May.

It will not be necessary to have one hundred Masses said on a loan; seventy-two will be sufficient. Mind well, seventy-two are sufficient. Remember this, *no more,* otherwise I shall find myself in trouble. Please then tell me when, and on what day you give or have given the aforesaid books, either to persons in the diocese, or in any other place where you can also give them if you wish.

I have already received the twenty *carlini* together with a list of twenty Masses from Brother Gennaro [Rendina].

I embrace and bless you all; salute for me Don Angelo [Latessa].

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very affectionate confrère,

ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of Father William Lœwekamp, C. SS. R.

Letter 116

TO FATHER CESARE SPORTELLI, AT PAGANI

He rejoices to hear that he is in better health,

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, March 11, [1750].

I feel sorry about Father Tannoia, and I am glad that your Reverence is better, and that I have before me your letter. In regard to the saying of Mass, you must be obedient to the doctors. Here the news was received that you were worse, and we have therefore begun a novena to the Blessed Virgin for your Reverence.[16901]

Tell Father Rector [Don Carmine Fiocchi] that this morning, at a late hour, the Fathers will go to Santa Maria Maggiore.[16902]

Propose to the doctors whether it would not be better to send as soon as possible Father Tannoia to Iliceto to inhale the air of Puglia.

On Monday when Angelillo returns let him bring me all our books on Moral Theology, namely, those of Busembaum that are there. I have to send them elsewhere. Those books only need remain that are in plain binding. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa! I embrace and bless you all.

Send to me Angelillo every Monday, and on Sundays and Wednesdays as soon as the carrier from Nocera brings the manuscripts. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your very affectionate confrère,

ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of Signor Vincenzo Tramontano at Pagani.

Letter 117

TO FATHER FRANCESCO MARGOTTA AND TO HIS CONSULTORS

J.M.J.

Orders left after the canonical Visitation made in the house of *Mater Domini* in Caposele, May 16, 1750.

The present state of this house for want of a dwelling suitable for our Institute induces us to urge upon the Superior the necessity of making some improvements in it, so that regular observance may be established.

We further ordain that a door should be made from the church leading to the well, as also that a lock should be put on the door of the sacristy, and finally, that there should be appointed a secular procurator who is to collect what is due to the house.

This is what we have thought well to ordain for the present Visitation, confiding for the rest in the prudence, piety, zeal, and rare qualities of the Superior of this house, which are well known to us.

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI, *R. M.*,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

GIOVANNI MAZZINI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer,

Co-Visitor and *Vice-Secretary.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 118

TO CANON D. GIACOMO FONTANA, AT NAPLES

He sends him his book “The Glories of Mary.”

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, October 12, [1750].

I send you my work on the Madonna. This poor book has met with many contradictions;[16903] it was finally published after many difficulties, and a labor of many years employed in condensing what it contains.

I have been suffering from a catarrh of the chest, but at present I am better. We shall see each other at Naples, shortly. In the meantime recommend me to the Madonna, and believe me,

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] I send you two copies of the work. One is for you, the other is destined for Don Matteo Testa[16904] who, I am happy to hear, is better; be kind enough to send it to him. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I have already sent two copies to Signor D. Giacomo Martorelli.[16905] He will have received them by this time, I hope; if not, he will receive them soon. Live Jesus and Mary!

After an old copy.

Letter 119

TO A GENTLEMAN OF VITOLANO.[16906]

Arrangement about a mission.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NAPLES, November 7, 1750.

I received your second most esteemed favor here at Naples where I am engaged in giving a mission at the church of *Spiritu Santo.* I have already answered Signor *[name illegible]*, and the mission has already been arranged. I cannot go myself, but my companions will serve you and the gentlemen of Vitolano to whom I have also written. After the mission at Gesualdo,[16907] they will go to Montefalcione, and from Montefalcione[16908] they will send word to those gentlemen of the day of their arrival. So I have written to my companions and they have written to me that they would act accordingly. Everything is now arranged [*some words illegible*]. Live Jesus, Mary!

Your very devoted and very affectionate servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After a copy.

Letter 120

TO SISTER MARIA DI GESÙ, A CARMELITE, PRIORESS OF THE MONASTERY AT RIPACANDIDA.[16909]

Answer to a difficulty in regard to holy Communion.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, December 30, [1750].

I answer your letter briefly. As for continuing to be guided as you were before according to the advice of your old director, I not only think this to be good, but it is even necessary; otherwise you could not know with certainty the will of God.

In regard to the union with God which your soul experiences after Communion, you should be without fear; you do not commit an act of idolatry; for it would be idolatry if you adored yourself.[16910] It is an effect proper to this sacrament to transform the soul into Jesus Christ so that the soul may say with St. Paul: *Vivo ego, jam non ego, sed Christus in me.* [I live now not I, but Christ liveth in me.] Endeavor therefore to check yourself so as to allow nothing to appear in the presence of your Sisters; but for the rest, abandon yourself to God, and do not put any obstacles in the way of the divine operations. All that you have then to do is, to annihilate yourself before God, and to offer yourself to him without reserve to the end that he may dispose of you according to his will.

I am pleased with what you tell me about the newly professed, and especially about the daughters of Don Benedetto:[16911] let them pray for me to Jesus, their divine Spouse. Now tell me what I can do at the bishop’s to be useful to you and to oblige the Community which is so dear to me. You are all of you in my eyes more than my own sisters; for I know that you love Jesus Christ, my Master. Recommend me without ceasing to Jesus Christ—me and the Congregation, and let the Sisters do the same. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,
ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 121

TO CANON GIACOMO FONTANA, RECTOR OF THE URBAN SEMINARY OF NAPLES.[16912]

He asks him for information in regard to the studies at the seminary.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, January 28, 1951.

My dear Canon: Be so kind as to tell me in a few words what rule is followed in the seminary in regard to the study of theology. I should like to know how much time is devoted in the morning to study in the rooms, and how long the class lasts. What is done after dinner? When do the theses, conferences, repetitions take place? What is the occupation in the evening?

I should like to know, moreover, whether during their course of theology, the students also follow another course either of the study of languages or of another science. Please furnish me with these details and recommend me to Jesus Christ. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Believe me, my dear Canon,

Your very devoted and very grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 122

TO FATHER FRANCESCO MARGOTTA, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CAPOSELE

He complains of a lay-brother and of Father Margotta himself.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, March 7, [1751].

I hear in regard to Brother N. that by his bad conduct he renders himself disagreeable, not only to the Community, but to strangers, especially by his disrespectful way of speaking to the Fathers, by his rudeness and his stinginess. I draw your attention to this last point: for pity's sake, if the food given by the Community is simple and frugal let the Fathers and the Brothers at least not suffer in this respect. What good does it do to build within and to demolish without? If anyone loses his vocation through our fault, we shall make ourselves accountable to God. It will be necessary that I withdraw this Brother from your house and send him to Ciorani to be the assistant of the cook. Give him a severe reprimand, and tell him if he becomes incorrigible and does not conduct himself as a lay-brother should, I shall be obliged, notwithstanding the interest that I take in him, to expel him from the Congregation. After what has happened in Father N's case I am resolved to be no longer indulgent. For him that does not wish to live in the Congregation as he should, the door is open; I do not wish to lose my soul for the sake of any one. I beg you to tell him all this word for word.

As to what your Reverence writes to me, namely, that *I should not give you any command, because it would place you in an embarrassing position and make you run risks,*—I must say to you, my dear Francesco, that I give you no command, but such language is displeasing to me. Consider, my dear Francesco, that in this way you will surely never sanctify yourself, and if you wish to live in the Congregation in such a manner that the Superior may not give you any command for fear of *embarrassing or making you* *run risks*—grave words which your understanding did not dictate and which have caused me singular pain—your interior trials[16913] will always increase; for then you take back your will which you have given to God; then the Lord will leave you to be a prey to your own troubles of conscience, and I know not what will then become of your eternal salvation. I beg you to reflect on this before the crucifix, and to write to me in regard to this matter so as to remove my anxiety.

I moreover hear that you have perhaps changed your director by leaving Father Paul [Cafaro]. This I should very much regret; for if that is the case, I should think that you have left him without a good reason, simply because he does not enter into your views. It seems to me however that this is not the right way. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 123

TO A NUN OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER, AT SCALA

She should allow herself to be guided by obedience.—The way of desolation is the way of divine love.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, May 30. [1751?]

Gloria Patri! You say that you have been brief, and it is almost a memoir that you have sent me! Yes, to oblige you, I answer you, although my first letter should have sufficed; I answer you in order that you may become still more tranquil, and before writing I recommended myself to the Blessed Virgin. I assure you that you are in the state of grace, and that God wishes to sanctify you by means of these tribulations. You should not desire that the Lord should conduct you by an easier way; allow yourself to be guided as it pleases him. I see with satisfaction that you often invoke God and Mary; but I desire that you should ask him for the grace of always doing the divine will, by always offering yourself to God and by praying to him that he should treat you as he pleases. You pray for consolation, and such a prayer will help you but little, because there is too much self-love in it. Ask our Lord for the grace of loving him; but it does not matter whether he makes known to you that you love him. You write to me that you have confidence in what I may enjoin by obedience. But upon whom, think you, should I enjoin anything by obedience? Upon God? I cannot give any command to God; and if I could, I would not do so, because the road on which he conducts you is the best road for your salvation, and I clearly see that God is thus surely conducting you to his love. If you wish that I should give to the devil the order that you desire, I must declare to you that I do not wish to have anything to do with that beast. I therefore give you the order if you have confidence in me; for if you have no confidence in me, of what use is it to lose your time in writing to me and to make me lose my time in answering you?

Hence I tell you in the name of God, and repeat what I have said, that you are in the state of grace, and that he certainly wishes to lead you to sanctity on the road on which he keeps you. If you depart from this road to withdraw yourself from the sufferings and tediousness that you experience, I do not know what will become of your eternal salvation. Continue to move onward as you are doing; offer to God all this anguish; pray to him that he may give you strength to bear it, that he may not deprive you of it, and do not ask for consolations. Why should you speak of exorcisms, possessions, and visiting holy sanctuaries? In the name of obedience, think no more of them, and drive from your mind every thought against your vocation. If you lose your vocation you will lose your soul and your God. But you will say, *How shall I be able thus to hold out?* Have patience; such is the good pleasure of your Spouse, who very much loves you; yes, believe me, he loves you much, and does everything for your good. It would be to you sweet consolation to know that in all that you suffer you give pleasure to God; now suffer for God, even without knowing this; this will be far better.

If you answer me that it is possible for me to be deceived, I would then say to you that it will no longer be necessary for you to write to me; seek another director in whom you have confidence, come to an understanding with him, and let there be no question about me.

I command you, moreover, in a formal manner, never, never, never to confess these temptations, even if you believe to have consented to them. I say this and take it on my conscience. Do not do so even if you were at the point of death; for there is no sin in all that, as far as you are concerned. The *sentiments* of which you speak are apprehensions, fears; but they are not sins.

But you will say that just the contrary appears to you to be true.—But I say to you, you have not to believe what appears to you to be true, but what the ministers of God say to you.—*And when I shall die? If I die in this state, with these temptations, these sentiments, this affection for sin?*—I say to you that if you die in this state, your salvation is sure.

Well then! I repeat, preserve this letter, and when new trials assail you, go in search of Sister Maria Angiola, and give her this letter to read. Then, I impose it upon you as a matter of obedience, that you do all that she tells you to do, that you believe all that she tells you, although it may appear to you that new circumstances have supervened.

Recommend me always to Jesus Christ, especially now when I have to go to Naples. This will be in the month of July, and God knows how many months I shall have to languish there on account of our affairs. Here we are in a house full of sick people; recommend to Jesus Christ so many young men who are thus sorely tried.

I send regards to Sister Maria Raffaella, Sister Maria Angiola, Mother Superior, and other Sisters; let them all recommend me to Jesus Christ. Live Jesus and Mary!

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 124

TO FATHER GIUSEPPE MUSCARI.[16914]

Immense wrong that he has done to the Congregation.—Entreaty that he should no more bring the Institute into disfavor.

[CIORANI, October 16, 1751.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

It is now two nights, my very dear Father, that I have not closed an eye. It is impossible for me to find peace when I recall to mind the disaster brought upon our poor Congregation, which was once so dear to your Reverence, and which has become so odious to you since you have entered it. I could not at first persuade myself that you took any part in the loss of vocation of these unfortunate young men; but now I am convinced that you did both by what they have told me themselves, and by what I have since learned from others. I do not here enter into any details; it would be useless and you would grow only more incensed. You know, my dear Father, that I loved and esteemed you before you had come among us. You also know since you entered what I have done for the purpose of honoring you as much as is possible to do in a poor Congregation such as ours is. I confided to you from the very beginning what I would call our most precious treasure, our young men. I conferred upon you at once the title of Professor, Prefect and spiritual Father of these interesting young men. In order to prevent all ill-feeling, I sent away from Nocera Father Mazzini an estimable and edifying member of the Congregation.[16915] This was done not without fear; you understood it well.

You will say, my apprehensions are groundless. Alas! experience has but too well proved that they were not without foundation when we see the ruin of four young men, who were truly angels, and who yesterday morning presented themselves before me like so many furies. I began to entreat them with the most tender affection; I went so far as to throw myself at their feet, begging them to put off at least for three days their departure, which they wished to take at once. Poor children! I loved all four of them as the apple of my eye, because they had been real angels, who had particularly distinguished themselves by their sincere humility, edifying all the rest. Yesterday, however, you would have been scandalized yourself had you witnessed their violent agitation, the arrogance with which they spoke to me, the tone of contempt and menace in which they cried out against the Congregation, going so far as to say that they would have recourse to his Majesty and denounce me as trying to keep them back by force, because I refused to grant them the dispensation from their vows and their oath. Good heavens! it was they that bound themselves to Jesus Christ, and they accuse me of holding them back by force! And why then did I not grant them the dispensation for which they had asked? Was it not because I loved them, because I had compassion on them, and because I saw them sacrifice their vocation on account of a mere temptation of the devil?

But enough of this. I do not wish to give you more annoyance; for I very well see that every one of my words must give you pain. Yes, enough of this. Yet neither I nor the Congregation has deserved such treatment from you. I forgive you, and I beg Jesus Christ to forgive you; because I still esteem you, because I love you, and because I entertain the hope that if now you do not open your eyes to your present condition, a day may come when the Blessed Virgin will make you know and deeply deplore an error that has been so fatal to the Congregation and to these four young men. Nothing can dispense you from the obligation of acknowledging this; for the public loudly accused you of having betrayed the Congregation; the very stones can attest this.

You have written that you would not do the Congregation any harm, that you would even try to be useful to it; well! I conjure you to-day not to inflict any injury; for you would thereby outrage Jesus Christ himself. We are only in this world to suffer and to labor in order to gain poor souls for Jesus Christ; no one knows this better than you. But I tremble to think that hereafter at the very name of the Congregation, the devil may recall to your mind the object of your greatest hatred, and that he may persuade you that you have no other means of justifying your conduct than to defame us. Do not follow this suggestion, my dear Father. I write to you in all sincerity and with tears in my eyes. I entertain the hope that when the passion that actuates you against us and against our wise counsellors has subsided, you will by facts show that the love that you once bore towards our Congregation has again entered your heart.

As for your effects and your books, have no anxiety. It was your person that we have loved and desired, not the objects that you have brought with you. Now it is only your person that I regret to lose; I disregard all the rest. Once more; it is you that I love, and you are not ignorant of my affection and my esteem; as for anything else be without fear; you will be perfectly satisfied.

I remain, yours most respectfully, etc.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 125

TO THE VICAR-GENERAL OF BENEVENTO

He asks him to do a service.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, November 4, 1751.

Very Reverend and dear Sir: I recommend to your charity our Frater de Angelis, who is truly an angel of virtue. He will call upon you with a letter[16916] in reference to the settlement of his patrimony.

At the beginning of the month I will send our Fathers to serve his Eminence[16917] and your Reverence in certain places of the diocese of Benevento, and if I can render you any other service, I shall be at your command. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very devoted and very grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an original copy preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 126

TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Means of preventing the loss of vocation.—Various ordinances regarding the missions.

[November, 1751.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph!

My very dear Brethren: Know that I am not afflicted to hear that any one of my brethren has been called by God to another life. I am touched by such a thing, because I am a creature of flesh; yet I am comforted because he has died in the Congregation; for then I hold for certain that he is saved. Nor am I afflicted when any one among us, because of his faults, ceases to be a member of the Congregation; on the contrary, I am happy to see that we are delivered from a sickly sheep that might have infected others. Far less am I afflicted because of persecutions; for they inspire me with courage, because if we conduct ourselves well, I am sure that God will not abandon us. But what alarms me is, to hear that there is among us any one that is negligent, that obeys little and pays no attention to the Rule.

My Brethren, you well know that several who have been with us are now out of the Congregation. What their end will be I know not; but I am sure that they will lead a life of continual misfortune; they will live in trouble and die without peace for having abandoned their vocation. They have left us to live more happily and contentedly; but the thought that they have abandoned God to live according to their own caprice, will never leave them one day of rest. They will practise with difficulty the exercise of prayer, because in prayer they will be harassed by remorse of conscience for having left God; and thus they will abandon prayer, and God knows where they will end.

I beseech you to avoid deliberate faults, and above all those faults for which you have been reprimanded. If correction leads the delinquent to amend, the fault will be nothing but when he does not amend, the devil will employ every artifice to make him lose his vocation. It is by this means that he has already caused the loss of so many others.

By the grace of God, whenever we go on missions we perform wonders; people say that they have never had a mission like ours. And why? Because we go by obedience, we go in poverty, we preach Christ crucified, and each one is attentive to acquit himself of the charge that has been imposed upon him. I have, however, been deeply grieved to hear that some among you when on missions have been desirous of obtaining the more honorable employments, such as preaching or instructing. But what fruit could he produce who preaches through pride? This is something that I view with horror. If this spirit of ambition enters the Congregation, the missions will do little good, or they will produce none at all.

I have also been informed that some of you have begun to preach in a flowery style. I repeat that the familiar style is that by which the missions, novenas and spiritual exercises are made successful. In all the sermons, even for the festivals of the saints and other special occasions, I wish that everyone should speak familiarly without a studied tone of voice or choice expressions. When one preaches to priests or before a select audience, one should not use in the discourses phrases so popular as those that one uses when preaching to the people composed of educated and ignorant persons; one should however always speak familiarly; and I pray to Jesus Christ to chastise in a signal manner whoever wishes to introduce a figurative style. Let us take care; for it is certain that pride has driven many out of the Congregation.

On missions pay attention to the food. What aids us to make our missions give great edification is, that we are satisfied with the little that the Rule permits in accordance with what has been our practice heretofore. During the time of the missions I absolutely forbid the eating of chicken or of other things forbidden by the Rule; I will hardly allow in case of accidental sickness the eating of chicken when such a thing has been prescribed by the physician. It would be better to find some other remedy. The same prohibition extends to the case in which one stays at a house in passing from one mission to another, because this time still belongs to the time of the mission.

I also forbid[16918] all the Superiors and Ministers without my express permission to allow women of whatever rank to enter our houses, to go to the refectory or the kitchen. I moreover forbid the Superiors to give subjects permission to procure certain special things for their own personal use; if they need these things, let the Community furnish them. I forbid the subjects the keeping of money that is at their free disposal.

My Brethren, let us conduct ourselves well before God, and God will aid us in all the persecutions that men and demons may raise against us. I pray every day, and several times a day, for you all and for each one of you, and I desire each one of you to recommend me in a special manner to Jesus Christ. I conclude by blessing you all, one after the other.

BROTHER ALFONSO MARIA,

Rector Major.

After an old copy.

Letter 127

TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, AT RIPACANDIDA

The interest taken by the saint in the Community at Ripacandida.

[December, 1751.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Be without fear; I have punctually received your two letters, and I thank you for your charity. As for going to see you, my dear Mother, the thing is not possible at present. My health will not allow me to make such journeys; besides, I am very busy having a work printed for the use of confessors. I have therefore not a moment to spare this year, and I never leave the house. Later on, who knows? If God wished the foundation,[16919] nothing is impossible before God. Mgr. [di Melfi] is much in favor of it; but the difficulty is to receive the king's permission. Pray then for this intention. Who knows what will happen?

But if I do not go to Ripacandida personally, be not disturbed. To give the retreat I will send you a Father with whom, I hope, you will be satisfied. In the meantime tell me what I can do for you with Monsignor to be useful to you and to oblige your Community which is so dear to me. You are in my eyes more than my own sisters, for I know that you love Jesus Christ, my Master. Write me the request that I might make of Monsignor in regard to the confessor and the procurator, and always recommend me to Jesus Christ.

In regard to the servant, I have spoken about the matter to Father Fiocchi, and I see no difficulty; the more so as she had already entered; and if she went away it was on account of health. Besides, the other servants are all a little sick.

As to the chorists, I beg you to be firm and not to allow the number to go beyond twenty-one. I have told Father Fiocchi that if he ever uttered a word to the contrary, he should take it back and write to you.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!
After an old copy.

Letter 128

TO FATHER PIETRO PETRELLA,[16920] AT ILICETO

Obedience to Superiors is the most essential thing in the Congregation.

Live Jesus and Mary!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, January 5, [1752].

I have been informed that in your house the new Superior, Father Gallo,[16921] is not much respected, perhaps because he is young. Let all the Fathers and Brothers who are members and will soon be members of the Community, understand that it is my wish that every Superior whom I send (even though I should send a stick) should be respected as if he were myself; and I wish that he should be esteemed and obeyed like myself. Should anyone not wish to do this, your Reverence should promptly inform me, and it will then be my duty to inflict upon him an exemplary penance, and in the end if there be no other remedy, I shall be obliged to expel him from the Congregation, even though he were my own brother. If you take away from the Superior all esteem and obedience, of what use will then be the Congregation? If the Superior does something that appears to be wrong, let the subject write to me; in the mean while obey, and do not murmur among yourselves. Read this letter to the members of the Community, and from time to time your Reverence should send me a report about this matter; this I expressly enjoin upon you. Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an authentic copy preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 129

TO FATHER CARMINE PICONE.[16922]

Request to sound the disposition of the Archbishop of Conza on one point.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, January 15, [1752].

My dear Carmine: Now that you are there, if any one of you should have an occasion to see the archbishop, as is probable before your departure, let him ask him what we should do with the nephew of Father Ferrara[16923] who is doing exceedingly well and who declares that he would rather die than go away.

Do not show that you take the affair too much to heart; but recommend to the archbishop this poor young man, who gives great hopes. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 130

TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, PRIORESS OF THE CARMELITES OF RIPACANDIDA

How she should behave in the absence of her director.—Various counsels.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, January 27, 1752.

I answer you in a few words. Although I sympathize with you in your sufferings, yet I am consoled in seeing you and your companions placed on the cross; but I regret to hear of the disquietude of your Sisters,[16924] which appears to me to be excessive. It is true, you tell me, that they are resigned; but the resignation is not perfect when it is accompanied with disquietude. Ask them for me whence comes this disquietude; perhaps because they do not find such a director as they would desire? But when God wishes this to be so, why should that which pleases God displease them? It is certain that God wishes this to be so, because it is thus commanded by the bishop. It is useless to say that the bishop has been misinformed; for though the bishop may have been deceived in this matter, yet it is certain that God wishes this of you. Besides, I hold for certain that the bishop had good reasons to act in this manner, either to put an end to the talk, etc.

But you will say, *What shall we do without a director?* What! is God no longer here? How many souls have sanctified themselves in grottoes, in deserts, in which they had no other companions than birds and trees? When we have a director that is suitable, and do not wish to avail ourselves of his services, God will give us no assistance; but when such a director is wanting, as is frequently the case outside of Naples, to the great regret of many good souls, then God takes charge of everything. The Lord will not fail to assist those that seek him with their whole heart.

Read this letter to your Sisters, and after some time write to me again; console me with the information that you and your companions have thrown yourselves into the arms of the amiable Jesus, who allows himself to be easily found by the soul that seeks him.

Have no scruple, neither now, nor later, for having written to me without permission. It is sufficient that I tell you this, and do not try to find out the reason. But tell your Sisters, who are also my sisters, to keep this a secret from everyone, from the confessor, and even from the bishop.

As for the supernatural graces, recommend to the Sisters never to speak of them to that confessor, and I give you the same advice in regard to whatever may concern you; tell him only your faults in order to receive absolution from time to time. Let the Sisters make known all the rest to yourself; and you, as a general thing, after having heard them, will answer that those things are dreams and effects of the imagination, and that the important thing is to wish only what God wishes, to embrace and to love sufferings, contempt, poverty, and contradictions. Take care that the Community observe in a perfect manner obedience, prayer, and poverty; with these three things perfection will always increase in the monastery. In your familiar discourses, in the Chapters, chiefly revert to these three points.

The fears that you experience console me; I tremble for souls that rest too securely in their spiritual affairs. However, I do not wish any disquietude; the true fear of God produces not disquietude, but peace and joy. For myself, I assure you that God is with you; what more do you wish? and as for the things that concern you and that you have communicated to me, I regard them, for the most part, as the things of God. That is enough. In all your fears, say: My God, I wish only Thee. Then be calm, and banish all uneasiness; for after what you have written to me, I have also discovered a certain excessive disquietude, which does not please God.

I pray for you and for your Sisters. But do not fail, you and your Sisters, to pray in all your Communions for my soul, for the Congregation, and also for the foundation at Rionero, on the subject of which I fear that the bishop has grown indifferent. Impose this upon your Sisters in all their Communions. We have on our hands an important affair concerning the Congregation. Moreover a Father who is very useful to the Institute is sick.[16925] To my intention make a novena of nine *Hail Marys* every day to obtain these favors, and ask for them during the nine days in holy Communion. Remain in the hearts of Jesus and Mary. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved at Scicli in the family of the Dukes La Rocca.

Letter 131

TO FATHER SAVERIO ROSSI, MINISTER OF THE HOUSE AT CIORANI

Penance which he imposes upon a lay-brother for having committed a grave fault.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, 10, [May, 1752].

Brother Francesco deserves no compassion; however as he has spent many years in the Congregation, and has humbled himself, we desire to be indulgent towards him; but he must accept a penance that will be long and severe.[16926]

Take the habit from him, and let him wear the secular dress, since he no longer belongs to the Congregation, having been dismissed, and his condition is like that of an ordinary postulant. In this point we cannot be indulgent. Let him remain secluded in the novitiate; he should not come to the refectory, to recreation, and should not go out. In regard to meals, impose also some mortification upon him, which I leave to your prudence. Help him or have him helped as to his spiritual wants. He may receive Communion once a week.

Tell Don Angelo Antonio[16927] to come some day to see me, for I wish to instruct him what and how he should study.

Send me again a little roasted coffee. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Tell Brother Francesco that it is to me that he owes this indulgence, because I wish him well. I hardly think that another Superior would have done all this for him. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO.

After the original in possession of Prince Antici at Rome.

Letter 132

TO FATHER FRANCESCO MARGOTTA, PROCURATOR-GENERAL OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

He begs him to regard the poverty of a house of the Congregation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, June 2, 1752.

A Mass-intention should not be taken from Iliceto, for Father Fiocchi (I did not think of telling you) celebrates Mass for this house at Pagani, which has no other revenues than those derived from Mass-stipends. In fact it is impossible in view of the circumstances which you know to force the debtors to pay at the present time. They give you threats for an answer. Patience then, for pity's sake. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Oliviero writes to me that when he called upon the book-seller of whom you spoke, *Tournely* had been sold. I have told him to look for it elsewhere. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of Father Frederico Bozzaotra, C. SS. R.

Letter 133

TO FATHER PIETRO PETRELLA, AT ILICETO

He grants him various permissions.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, June 7, 1752].

Yes, I received your second letter, which it was not necessary to answer. When you are not well, obedience in regard to study is not necessary; when afterwards you are not using medicine, you may apply to study during the hour that I have assigned to you. Tell this to the Superior and also mention to him the obedience under which I have put you, and then do what he says.

Yes, go to take the baths, and be guided by your Superior.

Blasucci[16928] is at Caposele: we are going to see how he will get on there, and afterwards we may think of what is to be done. As for Andretta, go there with a companion. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After a copy.

Letter 134

TO MGR. BORGIA, BISHOP OF CAVA

Details relative to the vocation of a young priest.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, June 7, 1752.

I have received your last most esteemed letter, and at the same time another letter from the house at Ciorani in which it is stated that the parish priest of N. and another relative of the said priest had arrived there. They made a new assault upon the latter so as to make him set out for his home, etc. I am, however, informed that Don Antonio strongly insists that he will on no account return home, because he fears that he will lose his vocation in the midst of so many temptations that he foresees will assail him. My dear Monsignor, under such circumstances, I do not dare in conscience to dismiss him, and to order him positively that he should return home. I should feel a scruple if I did so, after what the young man has himself told me, and according to the letter which I sent your Reverence yesterday, which I hope you have already read. God knows what remorse I felt when I suggested to him the other day that he should go to his own home at Naples. In order to satisfy his relatives and not to see us disquieted by what his father has threatened to do, if he remained in our house, Don Antonio is at present ready to go to some monastery of monks until the tempest has subsided and the danger that threatens to disturb us has ceased. I have, therefore, written to the Fathers at Ciorani to favor this design and to send this subject to some religious house other than ours outside of Naples; because it would be inexpedient to have him stay at Naples, under the present circumstances. After this has been done, I do not know what else the relatives could claim, since no other order could come to us from Marquis Fraggianni, or from the Palace, than that he should be sent to a neutral place. This once happened to Father Fiocchi, who obeyed the order, and afterwards returned to the Congregation. I urge this the more, since I hear that the mother is already beginning to be more tranquil, and the father will hardly carry out what he has threatened to do. For the rest, my dear Monsignor, do not doubt that I will not receive the above-mentioned priest into the Congregation unless you have given your consent. I remain, very respectfully, etc. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 135

TO FATHER ANDREA VILLANI, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CIORANI AND MASTER OF NOVICES

Various details concerning the novitiate and the house at Ciorani.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, 14, [June, 1752].

As for Don [Angelo] Antonio, I have no doubt that he will succeed, since his father himself says that he has always been an angel of virtue. But we must wait and try to satisfy Mgr. Borgia. This is sufficient; later on you may shorten his novitiate by adding this time to it.

As for the young man of Riccia and as for Pietro Picone, they may begin their novitiate.[16929]

In regard to Melaccio and Cimino, do what your Reverence thinks best.[16930]

I am glad to hear about the altar, and I give my blessing for artificial flowers and candlesticks.

When recited privately it seems to me that it is not forbidden to use the usual formula.

For your guidance, a letter has been written [to Naples] to Don Giovanni [Oliviero], and the latter writes me that he is going to open the subscription without delay.[16931]

I have appointed the consultors for Iliceto; but write again to this house: they are Fathers Ferrara and Carbone. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Tell the Vice-Rector [Father Saverio Rossi] about what [D. Andrea] Sarnelli writes, that he should do what he says, and procure some alms; at least let him endeavor to satisfy Don Andrea and to inform him that what has been ordered has been done. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Let Father Saverio come to an understanding with the Baron [Nicola Sarnelli] in regard to the place where the church[16932] is to be. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO.

[*P. S.*] I send the prospectus of the subscription, Oliviero writes that in October the first volume will be issued.

Send me your manuscript copy of the exercises of the missions; and if yours cannot be found, send me at least that which Father Buonamano has copied. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the original preserved at Naples in the church of the Redemption of Captives.

Letter 136

TO THE SAME

Various affairs.

[June 19, 1752.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I have received the writing. As for the ambrette-flowers;[16933] you may send them later, if there is no risk in the delay.

As regards the lot it is sufficient to talk about the matter and come to some agreement; and so, in regard to the demand of Don Andrea Sarnelli, it is enough if he sees that something is done.

I am glad to hear about Father Corpo;[16934] do what you think will be best.

After the morning and the evening meditation, say a *Salve Regina* with the prayer *Defende* for the house at Iliceto which is passing through great misery. The people of Iliceto have become our opponents, saying that they wish to have there a seminary.

To-morrow, Tuesday, I must go to Salerno on account of Sarnelli's affair.[16935]

Don Angelo Antonio has informed us that his infirmity is but too true, that he cannot apply his head to anything, and that during these past few days he was quite ill. He himself has doubts about his vocation; hence I plainly told him that the Congregation was not the place for him. He at once started this morning for Cava. I gave him a letter addressed to Monsignor. I wish him a safe journey!

He was a good young man, but he had not studied, nor could he study, nor be confined to the house; I therefore would have been troubled with scruples had I received him. As to the watch, I spoke to him about it; but when I handed it to him he said that nothing further need be said about it. He said Mass for Ciorani up to Friday.

On Thursday send me Father [Gerardo] Grassi, if he is there, or another Father to be the companion of Father Lorenzo [d’ Antonio] for the novena at S. Matteo.[16936] Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of Father D. Francesco Sav. Imperio, C. SS. R.

Letter 137

TO THE SAME

Solicitude of the saint about the health of his subjects.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NAPLES, July 22, [1752?]

In reference to Father D. Antonio [Tannoia], yes; do as you think fit; you may send him to Pagani. It will also be necessary to send to the same place Father Celestino [de Robertis] if his chest-trouble does not become better. But try, if possible, to send a little help to Pagani. See to it that the novices do not take too many bloody disciplines during this hot weather. Inquire whether the air of Iliceto might not be better for Father Antonio; but try Pagani first. Live Jesus and Mary!

Recommend me to the Blessed Virgin, etc.—Live Jesus and Mary!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 138

TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Humility, but profound humility, is the true safeguard of perseverance.

[July 27, 1752.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

My dearest Fathers and Brothers in Jesus Christ:

I pray God to drive out quickly those proud spirits who cannot and who will not bear in the Congregation any reproof or slight, not only from Superiors, but even from their equals and their inferiors. And I beg of the Lord to drive me out the first if ever I should be led by this spirit of pride. See how this cursed spirit has driven Father Tortora[16937] out of the Congregation: and I thank Jesus Christ for this, because such subjects ruin the Congregation and keep back from us the blessings of God. He that is not determined to be as earth, and to let himself be trodden under foot by all, let him go, and go quickly. Our Lord will be more pleased with the perseverance of two or three that are really humble and mortified, than with a thousand such imperfect subjects. And what have we come to do in the Congregation, if we do not wish to bear even some slight for the love of Jesus Christ? How shall we have the face to preach humility to so many people, when we ourselves have such an abhorrence for humiliations? But since we are all miserable creatures, I beg each one of you—and that your Reverences may the better remember what I now say, I even give you the obedience, to ask of the despised Jesus, every day during the meditation or thanksgiving, the grace to bear contempt with peace and cheerfulness of spirit; and the more fervent shall positively pray that Jesus may let them be despised for the love of him. And let him who will not make this prayer from his heart and with the desire of being heard fear lest his pride drive him out of the Congregation, in the same way as pride has already driven out more than one.

Next, I earnestly recommend you never to talk among yourselves of the affairs and of the proceedings of the Superiors. Those that are led by this spirit of indiscreet zeal do much more harm than good to the Congregation. Those that are really zealous, when they perceive some disorder or want of observance, should tell it privately to the Admonitor of the house, or even inform the Rector Major of it; and if they perceive that even the Rector Major neglects to remedy it, they should speak or write to his Admonitor. Let all pay attention to this point, otherwise they will cause me great displeasure, and will oblige me henceforward to mortify them severely. And let us be careful to guard against small faults, because the devil makes use of these little *foxes* to destroy the Spirit of God, and even our vocation. Therefore, my dear Brethren, let us always strengthen ourselves by meditation and prayer, otherwise we shall succeed in nothing.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very affectionate confrère,

ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] I, the undersigned Rector Major, impose upon all the professed members of our Congregation or Society and give the formal precept of obedience to them not to leave any of our houses without the express permission of the local Superior, except when any one wishes to speak to the Rector Major or the Sovereign Pontiff: in this case he is yet obliged to ask the permission of the local Rector; but if he does not obtain it, he may set out, without however staying at any other place.

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

Rector Major.

After an old copy.

Letter 139

TO FATHER FRANCESCO BUONAMANO.[16938]

He congratulates him on the detachment that he showed in regard to his relatives.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, September 16, [1752].

Your letter to Father Pentimalli has given me much consolation by acquainting me with the beautiful sentiments with which you are animated in regard to your relatives; I wish all were so disposed. I permitted Father Pentimalli to send you to Ischia, because I thought that you perhaps desired to go there; but as your Reverence is unwilling, I repeat, I am consoled, and I do not tell you to go there. Remember me every day at your Mass. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I give you my blessing. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 140

TO A FATHER OF THE CONGREGATION

A great trial to which the Congregation is exposed.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NAPLES, Saturday 23, [September, 1752.]

I am to remain here till Saturday a week. Next Thursday our affairs will be transacted. Let us pray to God that at least the houses may be left to us. Marquis Brancone has insinuated to me that I should give up two of them. However, if the houses are left to us, we shall be obliged in looking for revenues to abandon ourselves to the will of God; for things will then go badly. But if we had not had Brancone we should perhaps be now dispossessed; for in the last council the king spoke perhaps most strongly against us. Let us, therefore, be satisfied with the things as they are, and with the decrees of divine Providence.

Communicate this to the other chorists according as prudence may dictate, in order that they may pray fervently during these days in which we are not yet out of danger. This morning I had a lively dispute with Brancone, and I am astonished that he is not tired of our affairs. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After an old copy unfortunately incomplete.

Letter 141

TO THE KING OF NAPLES

Petition to obtain the exequatur of the Apostolic Brief Ad Pastoralis dignitatis fastigium—a Brief given in confirmation of the Institute of the Most Holy Redeemer).[16939]

[September, 1752.]

Alfonso de Liguori, a Neapolitan priest, and his companions, missionaries of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer humbly represent to your Majesty, that it is already nineteen years that they are devoting themselves to the spiritual culture of the abandoned people in country places. They travel over the mountains, visit the huts of the shepherds and places most destitute of spiritual help, to instruct these poor people by missions, instructions and other devout exercises. They have now succeeded in giving about forty missions a year, in the space of at least nine months in the year, during which they consecrate themselves to this kind of work. The great and general good that is seen resulting from this work in many provinces of this kingdom where the missions have been given, has stimulated the zeal of some bishops and has induced them to introduce said Institute into their dioceses; thus it is established in the diocese of Salerno at Ciorani; of Nocera at Pagani; in the diocese of Bovino at Iliceto; in that of Conza at Caposele. In each of these places the missionaries have their own house where they live together, and this is done with the consent of your Majesty who has even deigned by several royal decrees addressed to the civil tribunal to approve the great benefit of this work by applying to it the superfluous income of the laic chapels, an aid that could not be procured, as there was no income over and above the expenses that were incurred by them.

Then the number of the subjects having increased in this Congregation, in order to establish in perpetuity so great a good, a petition has been addressed by its members, as well as by the bishops of the dioceses above-mentioned, to the present Sovereign Pontiff, to obtain through his apostolic authority the confirmation and approbation of the Institute and of the Rule of this Congregation. And now after the information gathered by the Sacred Congregation of the Council, to which His Holiness entrusted this affair, there have been obtained, conformably to the wish of the examiners, the apostolic Brief of confirmation, which begins with these words: *Ad Pastoralis dignitatis fastigium.* No use, however has been made of this Brief, hoping that your Majesty would deign to grant the *exequatur,* as we hope to obtain by this petition.

This is the reason why the undersigned humbly have recourse to the royal clemency, and beg your Majesty to grant them the favor of the said *exequatur* in order that in this kingdom may remain established this work which concerns so much the glory of God and the spiritual good of those subjects that are most abandoned. The latter are ignorant even of the most necessary things of faith, especially the shepherds who live in the territory of Puglia, belonging to the royal patrimony of your Majesty. The undersigned missionaries have also taken a house in this last mentioned Province in order to bestow every care upon those poor shepherds, the number of whom is about forty thousand.

Confiding, therefore, in the great piety and zeal of your Majesty, the petitioners humbly present the Apostolic Brief and hope to obtain the favor that they solicit.

After the original in possession of the Redemptorist Fathers of Vaals (Limbourg, Holland).

Letter 142

TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, A CARMELITE AT RIPACANDIDA

The saint recommends to her prayers Marquis Brancone on account of the resolution that the latter had formed.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, December 12, [1752].

We have run a great risk of seeing the Congregation completely dissolved; but by the grace of God the king afterwards honored us with a very favorable decree. Marquis Brancone has strongly sustained our credit; please, my dear Mother, recommend him to God. I also beg you (this in confidence) to make a novena to his intention. He is filled with uncertainty; there is question whether or not he should renounce his charge in order to devote himself to his own salvation by leading a private life. I have dissuaded him from this project; for the good of the Church requires that he should not give up his post. After the novena let me know with what the Lord[16940] has inspired you. Recommend me to Jesus Christ.

Let the Carmelites, the Dominicans, etc., and others, whoever they may be, come; do not deviate from that which I have written to you. Write to me about the doubts that you have; but abridge your letter as much as possible. I knew that the Carmelite Father had forbidden you the daily Communion. I have created a noise about this with Monsignor (but say nothing about this). I know not what he will do.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After an old copy.

Letter 143

TO A FRIEND

He thanks him for the interest that he takes in the Institute.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, December 25, 1752.

I have received your very dear letter, and I thank you for the great affection that you bear towards this poor little flock of Jesus Christ in the midst of persecutions. The tempest that hell has raised against us is not a small affair; but the Lord has turned it all to a good account; for the king who was at first somewhat against us, is now in our favor. It is true that in the decree some restrictions have been placed upon us; but we are satisfied with the result, because the work is now approved and established; and this is most important. For the rest, if we remain poor, it is sure that as long as we conduct ourselves well, God will not fail us. I know that you have always been our protector, and I hope that you will ever be so. I recommend myself to your prayers, and I wish you a happy, new year, that is a year full of love for Jesus and Mary. I remain, etc. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 144

TO FATHER BERNARDO APICE,[16941] AT CAPOSELE

He refuses to grant him permission to change his abode and tries to quiet him.

[1752 or 1753.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I received a letter from Father Paolo [Cafaro] that I should send you to Iliceto. But I see that this is not the will of God, but a temptation of the devil who sees the good that you are doing in the place where you are. If you go to Iliceto what good will you do there? Father Paolo says that all things appear to you to be black at Caposele. But if you give yourself up entirely to obedience, they will all appear to you to be white. Hence I beg you to devote yourself to the doing of God’s will, otherwise you will everywhere be full of disquietude. At least write to me what it is that troubles you in that house; it may induce me to make a change; for so far I do not see what can be a sufficient reason for altering my views in your regard. My dear Bernardo, know that I have always wished, and do now wish, well to you. Be calm, for your disquietude will also be mine. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 145

TO MGR. PASQUALE-TEODORO BASTA, BISHOP OF MELFI.[16942]

Confidential letter in regard to the ordination of a subject.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, February 10, 1753.

Right Reverend and Dear Sir: I ask your Lordship to read this letter privately, and then to destroy it.

Don Angelo Antonio Grazioli[16943] is anxious that I should ask your Lordship to confer upon him during this Lent the last two sacred Orders. In regard to the interstices, he would himself, he says, ask the necessary dispensation at Rome. I therefore write to you on this subject; but for the rest, your Lordship may do what you think will be best before God.

As for the foundation,[16944] I beg you, Monsignor, not to take any steps before we have had an understanding with each other; for a favorable moment must be chosen if we do not wish to risk ruining both the foundation and the Congregation.[16945]

With respect to Don Angelo Antonio, be so kind as to write me a letter which I may give him to read; but do not say, I beg you, that I wrote to you so dryly. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Begging your blessing,

I remain your Lordship's,

very humble, devoted, and grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved at the cathedral of Melfi.

Letter 146

TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, A CARMELITE AT RIPACANDIDA

He refuses to allow a Father of the Congregation to be extraordinary confessor, and exhorts her to remain firm in the defence of regular observance.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, February 23, [1753].

I answer your two letters. I rejoice that you are laboring to re-establish regular observance. Continue, and be firm. In reference to your doubts, recommend yourself to Jesus Christ, and go ahead.

As for your request that you make to me to grant you Father Fiocchi as extraordinary confessor two or three times a year, how can I consent, since that is expressly forbidden by our Rule? What! do you wish me to be driven out of the Congregation? If the consultors hear that I am introducing such an abuse against the Rule, they may expel me. I highly esteem your monastery and your Rule; but I cannot do what is against our Rule. You know how difficult it is to remove an abuse when it has once been introduced; I hope to be able to die with the consciousness of never having permitted any. If I should grant to your monastery what you ask, I could not refuse it to others, or at least, the Superiors that come after me would grant it after my example; and thus you see the Fathers would give up the missions in order to become extraordinary confessors and to give retreats to religious. I should be very glad if you would make this clear to the bishop, whom I very much esteem, and to whom I regret to be obliged to refuse anything.

The answer that I am now giving you will appear without doubt very harsh; but I should wish that you were in my place. If you were Rector Major you would speak as I do. I know by experience what fine things I have been obliged to hear from my confrères when I have given any permission that was against the Rule, though there was question of matters by no means so important as this. You may also write to Father Fiocchi; you will see that his answer will be like mine. May this, however, not prevent you from recommending me to Jesus Christ, just as I do not omit to pray for you and for all your Sisters.

I do not answer separately the letter that Sister Maria Cherubina has written to me; but as there are no secrets between you and her, I here say to her as well as to you, and to all the other fervent religious: Be firm like a rock; answer resolutely the bishop, the Carmelite Father, and all the others, that you have made profession according to the Rule of St. Teresa; that you wish to observe it punctually, *ad literam* [to the letter]; and that no one can exempt you from it. The Carmelite Father will speak perhaps in this manner, because the Rule has been mitigated for the nuns of his observance; answer that you do not wish to follow the Rule of these religious, but the Rule of St. Teresa. Remain firm; Jesus and Mary will sustain you.

You should do this yourselves, because Father Fiocchi cannot place himself in opposition to the bishop; but you yourselves can well do this when there is question of defending regular observance. You have scarcely begun, and you already wish to have your Rule mitigated! But if the Rule is now mitigated, what will become of the Rule fifty years hence? Indeed, poor religious are those that ask for a mitigation of the Rule! I pity them; for they will have to render an account to God not only about themselves, but about all the others. I pray you, be firm! If you think fit, you may communicate these my sentiments to the others. If you were to inform me that the rigor of the Rule has been relaxed, you would make me lose all the affection that I entertain for this monastery, which I at present esteem so much. Tell Sister Maria Cherubina that she should incessantly raise her voice against the Carmelite Father, who is trying to bring about a mitigation; let her have no scruple in this respect. Of what use is it to look for directors and to ask for Father Fiocchi? It is your Rule that should direct you; keep your Rule, and you will all become saints.

As for me, I will see what I can do in this matter. At all events, banish from your mind the idea of having Father Fiocchi twice or three times a year as your extraordinary confessor: that is impossible; it is forbidden to us to exercise this function even once, outside of the time of the mission.

Write about this to Father Fiocchi, and tell him also to write to me about it. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 147

TO THE SAME

Signs of illusion.—How to act in reference to extraordinary graces.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, March 28, [1753].

I have received your last letter through your brother. Relatively to the direction by Father Fiocchi, I am satisfied with the sensible and holy answer that you have given me; for you may rest assured that what I do not do for your soul, I would certainly not do for any other. Moreover, I cheerfully permit that Father Fiocchi should answer all your doubts, and I shall also allow him to call upon you sometimes.

As regards what you add, namely, that you are in great fear and uncertainty, and that several Fathers tell you that you are laboring under an illusion and that you are in error, I am more glad to hear this than that you raised ten dead persons to life. All this gives me the assurance that you are not under an illusion nor in error. Persons that are led astray by illusions fully believe in their errors; but you fear illusion, and this is a sign that you are not deceived. Pray therefore to Jesus Christ to preserve you in this fear, if it contributes to his glory. I moreover, in the name of Jesus Christ, command you to dilate your heart towards God, and act as you did before, with liberty and great confidence. I assure you that you are neither deceiving yourself nor are you deceived. Receive with affection and without fear the lights and the marks of tenderness that the Lord gives to your soul; and in future banish all fears as temptations, whatever others may have said and still say to you.

Those directors had the best intention in speaking thus to you, since they have followed the general rule which requires that favored souls should be humbled and kept down lest they fall into pride. This rule, however, does not apply to your soul. You are not going to boast of ecstasies or of prophesies. You are not going to publish to the first one that you meet what concerns you, as others do, whereby they certainly give rise to the suspicion that they are under illusions, and that they are deceiving others. I know that you do not speak except in case of necessity, when you ask aid and counsel.

On the other hand, God gives you enough light to know what you are, and what you merit because of your defects and your miseries. Is there, then, any reason why you should be deceived by the devil? What! the devil! No, no; it is God who keeps himself near you and around you, because he wishes you to belong entirely to him. Hence when he removes the veil to speak to you by communicating to you his lights, begin by humbling yourself when you see him granting such favors to so ungrateful a soul; abase yourself by considering your nothingness; then, confiding in the mercy and infinite goodness of the Sovereign Good, abandon yourself as a dead person to his tender arms, and receive with gratitude and affection all the lights and all the other favors that he lavishes upon your soul. May they cause you to humble yourself still more, and to redouble your zeal and fidelity in his holy love. I also recommend to you, when God leaves you alone and does not bestow upon you any caresses, not to complain either interiorly or exteriorly, not to become disquieted on account of their absence, nor to seek them, because there may be some illusion in this search. Henceforth, I repeat, do not be disturbed about what is said of you; as an answer, say within yourself: *I wish only God,*—and then remain quiet. Uneasiness suits only the soul that seeks everything else but God.

Preserve this letter in order to derive strength from it when others again disturb you. If anything particular happens to you write me briefly the substance of it; I shall then steal a moment, as I do now, to answer you; yet only in a few words, as I have not a moment’s time. Furthermore, I beg you not to raise so many doubts, and not to wish to know in everything whether or not it is God that speaks, as this solicitude may injure you. With God, with this infinite Goodness, we must walk quite simply and honestly. Do therefore what you think is best, and move onward.

In meditation, if you experience dryness, always sustain yourself by prayer and by continual offerings of yourself to God; but as soon as the Lord speaks to you, abstain from speaking, and open your soul to receive all that he has to communicate to you. In all your prayers remember my soul. Never forget to recommend the souls in purgatory and poor sinners. Pray especially for Naples, where it is said there are many atheists who deny the existence of God; remember them as well as our Congregation. Take courage! God is with you. *Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea; quem timebo?* [The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?—*Ps.* xxvi. I.] May Jesus be our love and Mary our hope! I am having printed a little work on the “Manner of Conversing with God:” I shall send it to you.

[*P. S.*] One word more. I have written to the bishop to ask him to give you permission to answer Brancone. If he gives you permission, answer the Marquis that you do not forget to recommend him to God without ceasing, in order that the Lord may give him the necessary light and strength to walk on the right road by defending the interests of the Church in the position that he occupies; and you must encourage him. It matters little that his letter was lost; for it contained nothing more than a request that you should recommend him to God. Answer him then, as I have indicated, if you receive permission, without saying that his letter was lost. You may say without scruple: *I answer your letter, etc.* Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After an old copy.

Letter 148

TO FATHER CARMINE FIOCCHI[16946] IN LACEDOGNA

He speaks to him about some missions that he wishes him to give.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, April 2. [1753?]

Mgr. [Antonio Manerba, Bishop] of S. Angelo wrote to me for a mission to be given after Easter; I wrote back to him that I would serve him; but his nephew again wrote that the affair would be spoken of when Monsignor returned home. See therefore that the time of this mission be fixed for the Sunday *in Albis* [Low Sunday]; because if the date is not acceptable, we shall have to go to Frigenti and then to Fontanarosa, as I have promised Mgr. [Felice Leoni, Bishop] of Avellino. And then in Avellino itself; that is, in the diocese of this name, we should have to proceed to Villamaiana and S. Stefano.

We shall have to repair to Trevico and Flumari, which have also been promised. Take as many subjects as you can from Caposele and Iliceto, and I will send you others from this place; you most divide them between Trevico and Flumari, since the spring is short. You must, therefore, write at once and appoint the time, so that all may be prepared when you arrive. The first mission will begin in *Dominica in Albis* [Low Sunday]. Give my regards to Don Michelangelo Colabella, and tell him that I have recommended him to the Madonna. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

At Naples I have obtained important favors for the Congregation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of Father Francesco Saverio Pecorelli, C. SS. R.

Letter 149

TO THE NOVICE PIETRO ANGELO PICONE,[16947] AT CIORANI

He consoles him and admits him to religious profession.

[The beginning of June, 1753.]

Live Jesus and Mary!

My Son: I have learned from your letter and I had already heard before, that the doctor has said that your native air may do you good, and I have acquiesced in the desire that you have in regard to your health. For the rest, you have not given me any cause for complaint, and since you do not care about going to your native country, I am satisfied if you go for a change of air to any one of our houses. I have already ordered that you should be sent to our house at Caposele whence if the air does you no good you may pass to the house of Iliceto; and I desire nevertheless (tell them about it) that about July or August they may allow you to take the waters of Monticchio. I am moreover satisfied that on the feast of St. Louis you should make the vows, since you so ardently desire to do so. You see now whether I wish to drive you out of the Congregation.

During your illness do not apply yourself much to study. Take care of your health, go out walking in the mornings, do what the doctor says, and pray every day for me. I will not make you stay either here or at Ciorani, because the air of these two places has not benefited you. Let us see what other climates will do for you. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 150

TO A SUPERIOR OF THE CONGREGATION

Change of abode of two subjects.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

June 25. . . .

Write to Signor Nicola Santoriello at Caposele and ask him to send to Iliceto the young tailor Nicola, as I learn that he has recovered. Then write to Iliceto that they should send to Pagani either Nicola or Brother Romualdo, whichever of the two needs most to go there for his health. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa! I remain, etc.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 151

TO MOTHER ANGIOLA OF DIVINE LOVE,[16948] A CARMELITE AT CAPUA

He asks her to use her influence with the Queen of Naples to obtain the approbation of the Institute of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, July 4, [1753].

I have received your most esteemed favor, and I first thank you for the remembrance that you have kept of me, and then for the recommendations that you have made for me. You are right, my dear Mother; it is not prudent to present the Brief if circumstances are not favorable.

I have suffered from pains of the body, especially from headache; yet I have never forgotten to recommend you every day at Mass. On your part, I beg you, continue to recommend me to our Lord that he may make me entirely his. That is the important thing. For the rest, and in regard to the approbation, God will provide.

However, my dear Mother, when the Queen arrives at Caserta, do not forget what I wrote to you in my last letter.

The whole difficulty rests upon the acquisition of property. His Majesty the king may do in regard to this whatever he wishes; we shall accept anything. If the king wishes that we should never be allowed to possess anything and that the bishop should only be permitted to furnish us with some alms, he has but to command, and we will obey. It is sufficient that he gives us the approbation and that he does not thus leave us in suspense. If the king knew that we were making this proposition, I believe that he would be appeased, seeing that we do not wish to possess anything. But who will make this proposition to him? If I could speak to him, I would do so; but the king grants no audience. I have tried to have an interview, and the thing was impossible. But the Queen can speak to him if she wishes. Enough. When the moment comes I beg you to submit to the Queen this proposition.

I continue to hope, my dear Mother, that our dear Lord will use your intervention to establish this work destined to save so many abandoned souls. Who knows whether God has not disposed this favor of the Queen not only for the benefit of your reform, but also for the success of all that is undertaken for his glory! However, if you think that the glory of God is not concerned in our approbation, I will not ask that you should any more speak of this affair. Now I think, and I always say, that the Lord wishes to mortify my pride, and that this approbation will not be obtained before my death. *Dominus est: quod est bonum in oculis suis, hoc facial.* [It is the Lord: let him do what is good in his sight.—I *Kings,* iii. 18.] May Jesus and Mary not cease to diffuse over us their blessings.

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 152

TO SISTER ANNA CAMILLA DE' LEONI, IN THE MONASTERY OF THE MOST HOLY SAVIOUR AT ARIANO

He exhorts her to bear her interior trials courageously, and writes out for her a rule of conduct.

NOCERA, July 5, 1753.

Modicæ fidei, quæ dubitasti? [O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt? —*Matt.* xiv. 31.] It is nothing, it is nothing, it is nothing. I even assure you that God loves you now more tenderly than ever. You fear on account of the things about which you speak to me; and I fear that the Lord, to punish your pusillanimity, will not make the trial cease to which he has put you in order to make you entirely his. I assure you on my conscience that you are in favor with God, you love God and God loves you. If you could see, while you are reading my letter, the love which he who is the infinite Good bears you, you would die with joy.

I see from the tone of your letter that God in his goodness wishes to raise you to a sublime state of love. Do not place any obstacle in the way. And do not believe that the obstacle comes from the multitude of sins which frighten you, as you say, and which you call the sins of hatred of God and of the Sisters who speak of God, the displeasure of being a Christian, the desire of being damned, the wish of calling the devil to your aid. Do not positively make any account of those thoughts, desires, temptations against faith or against any other matter; do not by any means confess them, and always receive Communion, notwithstanding all those incitements to despair, and however horrible may appear to you those desires; for in all this you commit no fault. If you had not committed any sins in the past, you would be at this moment as innocent as a child. In order to commit a sin there must be full pleasure and the full consent of the will; you, on the contrary, detest these things, although the darkness, the trouble, and the aridity in which you are make you believe that you are giving consent. The obstacle which in my opinion you can put in the way of your spiritual progress is your importunity in praying to God to deliver you from these troubles. You do not feel the love of God; but thank God that you have it; if you did not possess it, God would not make you feel the pain that you have, I wish to say, the fear in which you now are of offending him or of having lost his friendship. The more desperate you feel, the greater confidence you should have. Honor this infinite Goodness by taking as the measure of your confidence in him the greatness of the chastisements of which you acknowledge yourself to be worthy. *Nullus speravit in Domino, et confusus est.* [No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.—*Ecclus.* ii. 11.]

I send you this little work. Keep a copy of it for yourself; give one to the abbess; put another in the choir for any one that may wish to read it. Read a little every day out of this book. But let us proceed to what you should do in the state in which you are.

First, humble yourself before God, and acknowledge yourself worthy of every chastisement. Then, as I have told you, far from asking to get rid of this state, offer yourself to remain therein your whole life and through all eternity if so God wills. Ask him only to help you to avoid every fault, particularly tedium and little resignation to the divine will. Cast yourself like one that is dead into the amiable embrace of Jesus, your Redeemer, by assuring him unceasingly that he can do with you what he pleases, provided you love him and are pleasing to him. Say to him: O Lord, here I am! I no longer belong to myself, I belong to Thee; do with me as Thou wishest. I care not for pains, provided they procure Thy glory. I do not desire consolations; it suffices if I belong to Thee and love Thee. Then, rejoice and be consoled by remembering that the infinite Good, the object of your love, is infinitely happy.

Secondly, while in this state guard against giving up your exercises, and particularly Communion. Even ask your confessor, under the pretext of making some novenas, to increase if possible the number of your Communions while you are under this trial. As for the apprehensions of which I have spoken, namely, the hatred of God, despair, incredulity, etc., do not confess them. And when you call upon your confessor, let not this be in order to seek for consolations, but only to obtain strength in your trials.

In the state in which you are, take care to obey punctually, and show the same obedience to the Superiors of the monastery. In this kind of trial all must be done forcibly and against one’s will; but *in this is found the good Measure of God.*

Thirdly, have recourse to the comforter of the afflicted, the Blessed Virgin by saying to her: My good Mother, have pity on me! As for prayer and thanksgiving after Communion, do not trouble yourself if you find yourself distracted, sick and tired, and if you think that by your thoughts you are displeasing God rather than pleasing him. It suffices that you simply say from time to time: My God, my Jesus, it is Thee alone whom I wish, and nothing more. And it is sufficient if you say this with the superior part of the will, without any sentiment; say it by the glance of the eye at the crucifix, at heaven, or at the Blessed Sacrament; and that will be sufficient.

Fourthly, do violence to yourself so that you may not show melancholy in the presence of the Sisters. Try to appear joyful as much as possible, and be obliging to every one; and if some impatient words should escape you, do not trouble yourself; for in the state in which you are God will have greater compassion on you.

In the midst of these trials, recommend my poor soul to Jesus Christ, for these trials render you dearer to his heart, and he most willingly hears your prayers. Courage! be without fear. God wishes you all to himself.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 153

TO THE MASTER OF NOVICES

He should employ kindness and discretion towards the novices.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I beg you to treat N. with great kindness. He must remain in the novitiate like a novice; but he must accuse himself with the other professed. Tell him that he is a member of the Congregation, because this is a sore temptation to him. Endeavor to encourage him.

Now that the hot weather is coming, moderate the exercises of the novices; let them go out often and diminish their application; for we see how all become ill. Let them gradually copy the exercises of the missions, and see to it that they learn by heart at least two or three exhortations, Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 154

TO FATHER ANDREA VILLANI, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CIORANI

The saint acquaints him with the serious illness of Father Paolo Cafaro, and asks his prayers for the latter's recovery.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, August 5, [1753].

Gloria Patri! Father Paolo Cafaro is very ill. Read this letter and return it to me. There is great need of fervent prayer. I have asked for prayers at Scala and at all the monasteries of this part of the country. You and all the others will please say ten Masses for Father Paolo; I shall do the same here; begin a novena with a litany. Please say for nine evenings three times the *Our Father,* the *Hail Mary* and *Gloria Patri,* in honor of the Most Holy Trinity for the favors granted to the archpriest of Ripacandida,[16949] and to solicit the recovery of the sick man through the merits of this servant of God. Please send immediately the same request for prayers to the monasteries of Solofra, Saragnano, S. Giorgio, and Penta, as soon as you can do so conveniently, but it would please me very much if you wrote to Solofra immediately.

Write to Iliceto to tell them to begin the novena together with the ten Masses; let them make the novena also for [Marquis] Brancone.

I wish you could come here to-morrow, or Wednesday or Thursday, to settle several points.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After a copy.

Letter 155

TO FATHER FRANCESCO GIOVENALE,[16950] *MINISTER OF THE HOUSE*
AT CAPOSELE

Prayers prescribed for the recovery of Father Cafaro.—Triple obedience imposed on the sick man.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, August 6, [1753].

May God be ever blessed and may his holy will be done! You did well in sending for Cappuccio[16951] and also for Boegio.[16952] This sickness is probably a coagulation of blood and the effect of an epidemic that is perhaps prevalent among you; hence I think a cold water treatment would be beneficial. For the rest, I frankly admit, I am not a doctor. The illness is becoming very serious. Prayers are needed. I have already requested prayers to be said at the convent at Scala and at different monasteries of the neighborhood. Please ask the monastery and the town of Calitri to say the litanies of the Madonna; you might also ask at Guardia and at Pescopagano, where Father Paolo [Cafaro] lately gave missions. Besides the novena to the Madonna (which you are to say also for Marquis Brancone, as I promised him) you will also say ten Masses for Don Paolo's recovery; I have ordered the other houses to do the same; and during nine days, recite three times the *Our Father, Hail Mary,* and *Gloria Patri* in honor of the Most Holy Trinity, in order that Father Paolo may receive his health through the merits of the archpriest of Ripacandida, Giambattista Rossi, who works so many miracles. If perhaps you have some relic of this holy priest, apply it to the sick man; if you have none, try to procure one at Pescopagano.

As for Father Paolo, as soon as he has recovered from his stupor, please read to him these three points which I give him:

"I, Alfonso, as your Superior, taking the place of Jesus Christ, give you the obedience and command you to calm yourself and to believe with all confidence that you are in the state of grace, and that God in his infinite Goodness loves you dearly. If the Lord calls you to the other life, do not forget to recommend to him the Congregation and my own miserable self.

"In the second place, I command you to ask from God your cure, if it be for his glory, in order that you may serve him with greater fervor and zeal.

"In the third place, I give you the obedience from our Most Holy Redeemer to get well if it be for the glory of God."

This is for Father Paolo.

I am writing to-day to Naples and am telling Father Margotta to go to your house.

I should gladly send Father Mazzini but I will not do so, for I fear the epidemic which I think is at present prevalent there. It is not good to risk the life of this good Father, who God knows is in a poor condition and is using remedies.

Please tell Father Paolo when he is well to let me know what he saw and heard in that dream of which Father Picone spoke.

You may easily imagine the affliction in which we are; hence I ask you to let me know how Father Paolo is getting along after the obedience that I have given him.

You and all should earnestly pray to Jesus Christ and to our Mother Mary; say the litanies in the church, morning and evening.

I bless you all; let us resign ourselves entirely to the will of God, if we wish to obtain graces.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 156

TO FATHER FRANCESCO MARGOTTA, AT NAPLES

He informs Father Margotta of Father Cafaro's illness.—He asks him to return to Caposele.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, August 6, [1753].

Blessed be God forever! We are plunged into new afflictions. A messenger came yesterday from Caposele with the sad news that Father Cafaro has a very malignant fever accompanied by a certain stupor, so that they were obliged on the second day of the attack to blister him. They wrote to me that they would like to have your Reverence return to them. I say that you *for the present* may regulate your movements according to the business that you have in hand.[16953]

I say, *for the present*, for if Father Paolo grows worse, it will be necessary for you to go to Caposele.

Let the Brother [Francesco Tartaglione] take with him to Don Giovanni Oliviero the enclosed fifteen ducats which I am sending him.

May the divine will be ever done! Judge how much concerned we are for Father Paolo. Pray and have all prayers possible said in one or the other monastery.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of the priest D. Antonio d' Amico at Molina di Vietri in the diocese of Cava.

Letter 157

TO FATHER FRANCESCO GIOVENALE

Recommendation in regard to Father Cafaro's illness.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

[NOCERA], August 9, [1753].

May God's will be always done! If God calls Father Paolo to himself you will have to govern the house, and in the mean time I shall be thinking of sending you another Rector.

If Father Paolo should die, put off his funeral oration until we are able to gather from Cava[16954] and other places the necessary particulars. However, I have not ceased to place my hope in Mary, my good Mother. I hear that water has been given to him, but I did not yet learn that oil of almonds had been administered to him.

You may imagine how great is our affliction; I am, especially so afflicted, that I have become like one stupefied. Yet I have not lost all hopes that our Mother will leave him among us for the glory of her Son.

If he dies, tell Apice[16955] to send me the particulars that he has gathered. I shall afterwards send him the rest. If the sick man should happen to become better, send me at once a messenger. I bless you all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

If Father Paolo is still alive, tell him from me to hear with submission what I impose on him in the name of obedience; then, whether he regains his senses or not give him the obedience that I have sent you. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 158

TO THE SAME

Sentiments of resignation to the will of God inspired by the death of Father Cafaro.[16956]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, August 14, [1753].

May the divine will be adored and fulfilled forever! God's will is our will. Father Paolo will assist us more in heaven than on earth. We must now be resigned; God wishes this of us, and we must obey.

You may bury him apart from the other graves; you may also deliver the funeral sermon if you think fit. Send out invitations that there may be many present. After Father Apice[16957] has finished the funeral oration, please send it here that we may also deliver one.

Let your Reverence, as I have already said, act as, Superior for the present; I shall send a Rector afterwards. Send me all Father Paolo's manuscripts for safe-keeping. If then you should wish for any one of his sermons, you may write to me and I shall then send it.

As for Father Paolo's picture, if you are not able to procure one that is well done, we have a good one here. We could then take this for a model.

Send me, I repeat, all his manuscripts and memorandum books and a small piece of his habit. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I have already determined the Rector for your house; it is Father Giovanni Mazzini, and God knows what pain it causes me to send him away to please your Archbishop [of Conza]. Now send a Brother with a mule for the journey. Have confidence, great confidence! Father Paolo has to do more for us above than he could do while here below. He has to obtain for us the *exequatur,* but quickly, quickly.

Write me the particulars of his death; let Father Apice send me a detailed account. I embrace you all in Jesus Christ, hoping that you may all die as Father Paolo died. Now let us become saints, let us observe the Rule strictly. These deaths are warnings for us. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of the priest Don Francesco Apice.

Letter 159

TO THE SAME

He should govern the Community at Caposele till the arrival of the new Rector.—Various measures.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, August 21, [1753].

I have been wishing to send Father Giovanni [Mazzini]; but the news spread in regard to your surroundings is so frightful that I cannot make up my mind to expose this excellent subject to any dangers.

I have received the manuscripts, but I regret that the *instructions* on the virtues have been lost. See whether someone has them, and try to recover the instructions given at Melfi.

In the meantime do the best you can, and when all danger is over and there is no suspicion of it, you may send for Father Giovanni.

As for the picture, we shall have it made.

Your Reverence may keep Father Paolo's crucifix, *donec aliter provideatur* [till otherwise provided.]

See to it that regular observance be maintained: exhort, beg, but do not give penances, unless it be to the lay-brothers.

As for Brother Nicola, we must think of sending him elsewhere. Here his health has been worse; he will at your house breathe the air of his native place. If it is God's will to call him to himself, let us be resigned; but make him take the necessary remedies, such as, milk, broth, etc.

In regard to the sermons that you wish to have, we shall speak of them afterwards.[16958]

Tell Father Apice that he should have patience; we shall return the manuscript. But to hear him say: *It must be finished promptly, at once, on the same day; one should write while the other is dictating;* this is indeed a fine thing! or rather fine vanity!—All this in order that the manuscript might be read and copied by the admirers at your place so that the balloon may become more inflated![16959]

I am told that the Archbishop [di Conza] was displeased because I used my influence in procuring a bishopric for his Vicar-General. I did not think that this would be the case, nor did I suspect that I would thereby cause him displeasure. Henceforward I will never interfere in such things.

Have the enclosed letter forwarded to Muro as soon as possible and cautiously; so that it may not be lost and may arrive safely. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Have the whole Community recommend to God the brother of the archpriest of Teora. Live Jesus and Mary!

When the young man Francesco Antonio de Paola[16960] comes, receive him kindly and send him here at once if he can come. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

(*Postscript written by another hand*): Our Father wishes to add here, that when you send the riding animals to take Father Giovanni and the goods that have come from Naples, send them laden with good grain; of this arrangement Father Apice has been informed.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 160

TO FATHER FRANCESCO MARGOTTA, PROCURATOR-GENERAL OF THE CONGREGATION AT NAPLES

Solicitude of the saint in regard to the health of the subjects.—Details as to temporal affairs,

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, 31, [August, 1753].

How can I permit Father [Francesco] Garzilli to go to Caposele when I have been informed by letter that Father Buonamano is suffering from a fever like that of Father Paolo?

As for Gaetano d' Ischia, it would not be well to think of sending him thither. I await a list of the books for the exercises.

With regard to the purchase of investments, thus much is certain: you cannot now leave Naples. The purchase of investments in tobacco seems to me about the best bargain; but I fear after what I heard, the four per cents do not offer entire security. I think the investments in the fief is also good. Before investing in houses, it would be well to see what will be the income. As for the Carmelites, it is certain that they will return the money in a few years: add to this that Don Bernardo is rightly in their favor.

Now I receive from Caposele another letter apprising me that Father Picone has also been attacked by fever, and that to the fever with which Father Buonamano is afflicted a very severe headache has supervened. I also hear that the mortality is still very great at Apulia. I therefore would not dare to send Father Lorenzo d' Antonio to Iliceto. I remain, etc. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

If you ever have to give a novena to the children of the Congregation of Borgia,[16961] I should be pleased, and I give you my blessing. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of Sister Maria Crocifissa Berlingieri, a nun in the convent of S. Chiara at Naples.

Letter 161

TO THE SAME

Details relative to temporal affairs, to the mission at Calabria and to various subjects.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, September 2, [1753].

As for those books of exercises, by Maffei and Muratori, we already have them. Please send me that work of Father Barbugli[16962] and let me know the price of it; but look out for some other works.

About the purchase of tobacco, three and six *carlini* would be suitable prices. As for the purchase of the fief it is a wearisome thing to be obliged to quarrel with powerful people about boundary lines; in the course of time they take everything from you little by little.

About the chaplaincy, *bene provisum* [you have well provided for it]. Your Reverence thinks only of Caposele.[16963] Why does not someone think of the afflicted house at Nocera which has nothing? But enough of this; do the best you can. Please however do not let the chaplaincy bear our name, as that is now forbidden by the king.[16964] You can leave it to the archbishop that he may have us to say Masses and that he give us the revenues of the benefice, or you can leave it to the church of *Mater Domini* by founding the chaplaincy there. Enough on this point; take the best measures that you can in order that we may not get into trouble with the royal treasury.

I do not care too much about accepting the annual income of thirty ducats in favor of a mission for the village of Solopaca; but poverty forces us to accept it for the present. See whether you could arrange for a mission every five or at least every four years.

Our Frater [Pietro Paolo] Blasucci is already of age required for the priesthood; hence he could be ordained at Christmas; but the consent of the Bishop of Muro is necessary. I hear that the bishop is at present at Naples. Try to find him and ask his permission.

It is not possible to give now the mission in Calabria you know how many subjects we have lost. Next year the young men who are now studying Moral Theology will finish their course, and then we can oblige our *friend*.[16965] But I will not have a mission given in Calabria without one of these two conditions: either a foundation is to be established; and for that our friend would have to have an understanding with the bishop, and the bishop should express his desire to the king of uniting at his expense some missionaries in one of his houses; or there must be a legacy of two thousand ducats. But then everything that we wish to have done must be exactly determined; if for example, it is desirable to have every four or five years missions lasting two or three months. But if our ministry should be required every year, or if we should be asked that within the space of five years all the places in the diocese be evangelized, such a thing would not be possible. There is question of seven or eight days to be devoted to travelling.

I have received Monsignor Bonaventura's[16966] letter, and give you my blessing for the instructions that you are going to give at the Conservatory of Father Pepe.

As you have already bought the works of St. Peter Damian, leave them for the house at Caposele; but they are not of much value.[16967] It would have been much better if you could have bought the works of St. Thomas of Villa-nova, which are very fine.

Yes, tell Signor Cestoni that I shall not have any more *Visits* printed on my account, but shall get them from him. However I have asked him to give me a copy of his edition to revise it; it is full of faults. Hence if he intends to print any more, I would wish to revise the edition; I shall take copies from him, after I have disposed of my own, which are not many.

Let me know the *authors of the exercises* which you have found.

Try to find out whether the sixth volume of Tournely's Moral Theology has been published; I already have the fifth.

I am sending back Brother Mattia, as I have no other Brother to send you from this place; how could you have got along without a Brother? And then, what necessity is there to send the half-sick Brother [to Caposele], where the pest is raging at present?

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 162

TO MOTHER MARIA ANGIOLA OF DIVINE LOVE, AT CAPUA

He begs her to obtain through the Queen the royal approbation of the Institute of the Most Holy Redeemer.

NOCERA, September 8, [1753].

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Now the favorable time has come for you, my dear Mother. In my last letter I asked you to find out whether it were expedient to hand to the Queen before the chase the writing in question; for I feared that amid the distractions of the chase it might be lost. Now I tell you that you should do as you think best; and if you think that you should give the writing before the opening of the chase, give it. But I again recommend to you to employ on this occasion all the influence that you can exert. Make the Queen especially understand the injury that the want of the approbation has caused us; on the other hand, tell her that we renounce the right of making any acquisition whatever, and that we shall be satisfied with what the king allows us through the hands of the bishops. I also ask you in reference to this matter to read this writing, for everything is there briefly exposed. For the service that you will render me, my dear Mother, it is not I that will reward you, but it will be Jesus Christ himself, whose cause you will plead.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I have conveyed to Marquis Brancone the communication with which you have charged me, and I beg you to recommend me to Jesus Christ.

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 163

TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE, AT CAMIGLIANO

She should not refuse any charge.—Avoid dissipation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, September 30. [1753?]

I answer briefly. As for asking the Prioress that she should not give you employments that may distract you, is something that does not please me; for a religious should neither ask for nor refuse any employment; but when it is given by the Superiors it is God himself who gives it.

In regard to placing into the hands of another religious whatever you have, that would not displease me if you find one that would desire to charge herself with the care of it. You may, therefore, make an attempt, but without coming to a final decision.

In respect to your feast, what shall I say? I do not like these particular feasts which the religious celebrate. I would advise you to deposit with the Prioress what is to be spent for the feast and to concern yourself about nothing except to praise and to offer prayers to the saint; otherwise you will derive therefrom more disquietude than devotion.

As for your brother, if he comes it will be well. If he does not come, do not take the trouble to have him come; for self-love would have therein a greater share than the love of God.

I recommend you to Jesus Christ; on your part continue always to do so for me, and make a novena to the Blessed Virgin for my Congregation; for we are overwhelmed with trouble, especially now as we are menaced, so they tell me, with a great persecution. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of Sister Maria Alcala, religious in the convent of S. Chiara, at Naples.

Letter 164

TO MOTHER MARIA ANGIOLA OF DIVINE LOVE

He sends her some books.—Hopes in regard to the extension of the Reform of Carmel.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NAPLES, October 6, [1753].

I send you, my dear Mother, my book on the Blessed Virgin with the "Novena to St. Teresa" and the little book of canticles. Please to give the other copy of the "Glories of Mary" to my dear friend Father A. Pagnani in order that he may not forget me before the Madonna. You yourself, my dear Mother, should take care to recommend me to Jesus Christ after Communion and solicit for me from our heavenly Mother the love for her divine Son. I desire nothing else.

I am glad that the affair of the foundation of your monastery of Gruma has again been brought up for discussion; so I was told at Naples. Your holy Institute will, I hope, extend more and more over Italy and in the whole of Europe, to the glory of the divine Spouse and your divine Mother. Well, now! recommend me with fervor to Jesus Christ, I say *with fervor,* otherwise I shall derive no benefits. Recommend also this Congregation to this divine Master. I will on the other hand pray for yours. May Jesus be our love and Mary be our hope!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer,

After an old copy.

Letter 165

TO SIGNORA FILIPPA FARAO

He briefly explains to her the Rules of the Nuns of the Most Holy Redeemer at Scala.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, 29. [1753?]

Your letters are too long. I rejoice that your uncle has consented to send you to Scala; but it seems to me to be difficult for you to attain your end. We must pray much; this is the means of obtaining this grace.

As for the Rules at Scala, a careful search has been made for them, but they have not been found.[16968] The following is substantially what they contain: Perfect poverty; three hours of silence during the day, after recreation; an hour and a half of meditation; there is but one grate, and for relatives, and conversation is held there with the veils down; spiritual reading etc., and similar things; chemises and bed-sheets are of linen; flesh-meat is eaten, etc. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

For pity’s sake, keep secret what I say to you, and destroy my letters. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 166

TO D. LUIGI SAGLIANO

He begs him recommend to the Queen through Mother Maria Angiola the affair of the approbation of his Institute.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, October 30, [1753].

My dear Don Luigi: I have received your very dear letter and that of Canon Farao whom I am going to answer; I have also received the two catechisms. I am glad that *the house is catching fire.* St. Francis de Sales says that when the house catches fire the furniture is thrown out of the window. He wishes to say that when in a soul the love of God is enkindled, the soul detaches itself and gradually casts off everything that is not God.

I do not forget you in my poor prayers, and you do not forget me. I know not how to prophesy, but it appears to me that God expects great things from you. Well, then, I wish that you would help our poor Congregation, and do your share in assisting this great work that will do much for the glory of our Lord.

I entrust a secret to you: When I took leave of Sister Angiola, I also recommended to her our persecuted Congregation, telling her that for four years we had been laboring and had not succeeded in procuring the *exequatur* for the apostolic approbation. I then said to her that she should help us through the Queen; she promised to do so, and now she writes to me that she has not forgotten her promise. This is the favor that I wish you to do for me. When you find out that the Queen is going to Caserta I beg you (excuse the importunity) to go to Sister Maria Angiola on the day before the coming of the Queen, and instruct her on the manner in which she should engage the Queen to interest herself in obtaining for us the royal approbation on which this work depends for its stability; as otherwise it will be of no value. Tell Sister Maria Angiola that I have entrusted this to you as a secret, and you should show her that you are recommending this matter to her, because you are actuated by the desire to have the glory of God made manifest. When the Queen has promised this to Sister Angiola, I shall at once present the Brief and have my memorial referred by Marquis Brancone. But I cannot run the risk of losing the Brief if I am not sure of the promise of the Queen. The whole affair revolves on the acquisition of property. We do not wish riches. We shall be satisfied, if the king approves of the arrangement, that he should restrict us as to our purchases and revenues just as he may think fit; we shall be satisfied with fifteen grains[16969] a day for each one, and even less after the manner of servants in livery. We have only four houses in each of which there must be twelve Fathers and seven lay-brothers. For this reason has the king assigned to us what will pay for the food, and nothing more.

I would like to have this work established before my death, which is not far off. My dear Luigi, for that which you do I shall not pay you, but Jesus Christ, who loves this work so much. There is question of saving hundreds of thousands of souls, as there is question of restoring every year to the grace of God thirty or forty thousand helpless souls, together with about forty missions, and as many courses of exercises which are given at home.

But if Sister Maria Angiola urges this matter only in a lukewarm manner, and the Queen promises her assistance only in the same way, the whole affair will come to nothing; and I repeat that I shall not take the risk of presenting the Brief. Sister Maria Angiola would have to say to the Queen that God wishes (this is certain) that she should interest herself in establishing this great work and that after God we place all our hope in the Queen. She should tell her that God positively wishes her to put forth every effort in regard to this matter.

My dear D. Luigi: Jesus Christ will repay you for whatever you do in behalf of this work. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa! I remain,

Your very humble and very affectionate servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of Cardinal Guglielmo Sanfelice, Archbishop of Naples.

Letter 167

TO MOTHER ANGIOLA OF DIVINE LOVE

He again recommends to her the affair of the legal recognition of the Institute.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, November I, [1753].

I have received your answer. It is too much for you to thank me for those little works. I should like to know how your affairs are, for I have understood that a Theatine came from Rome to examine what is the spirit that guides you. I can do nothing; but occasionally I have tried my best to defend you and your work against certain attacks. Enough; I desire only to know how things are. I have no influence; but I will not omit to promote your work as much as I can for the glory of God and of our Mother Mary.

Please again remember me kindly to our dear friend Father Pagnani; no doubt I should have been much happier to make his acquaintance than he to make the acquaintance of me, a poor wretch. May it please God to let me see him again; but already the cold weather has set in, and I shall be condemned not to go out any more on account of my sickness of the chest. Perhaps we shall see each other once more before I die. I also desire to know of your spiritual Father what Mgr. Zortù (?) has said about the spirit that is leading you; for I have heard that he did not approve it, but I do not know on what point. If I desire to know all, it is only for the glory of God.

Well! let us become saints, and do not forget to cast, at least once a day, a look upon the Blessed Sacrament for me and for our poor and afflicted Congregation. You have consoled me by saying that you have recommended the Congregation to God, and that you have reflected on the means of assuring its future. Now I would say to you, and it is the Lord that gives me this hope, that I count on seeing, before I die, this work definitively established, and this thanks to the Most Blessed Virgin, and, then, to your own self. But if you do not speak strongly to the Queen; if you do not tell her that in order to please God she should certainly occupy herself zealously in regard to the future of this Congregation, we shall not succeed. For my part, without the formal assurance of the efficacious concurrence of the Queen, I would not expose the Brief from Rome to fall into the hands of the ministers, for they would surely declare themselves against me. I have already told you, my dear Mother, that we are not anxious to be rich; let the king assign to us what he wishes for the benefit of our four houses. We are satisfied if he gives us each fifteen grains a day, and if he grants us his approbation. Our Congregation will then not be hanging so to speak in the air, and what good it does for so many souls, everybody knows. There is here question of restoring to the grace of God every year from thirty to forty thousand persons by means of forty missions that we annually give. This being the case, may God provide! My hopes and those of my companions to whom I have confided the affair under a secret, rest, I repeat, first on the Blessed Virgin, then upon you, my dear Mother.

May Jesus bless you, and may he grant you the only thing that is necessary, namely, his holy love. I remain, etc.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Be so kind, my dear Mother, after you have spoken to the Queen, not to wait for Don Luigi [Sagliano] or his servant; but write to me at once by post, addressing the letter to Nocera de’ Pagani. If God blesses your interview with the Queen, let me know whether you wish to have the memorial or only an abridgment of it, in order to give it or send it to the Queen. It will suffice for her to express the desire to have the memorial to give it to Marquis Brancone, or for her to say to the latter that he should propose the affair to the Council in her presence. Pardon me for my importunity, but there is here question of the glory of Jesus Christ and of the salvation of innumerable thousands of souls, and of abandoned souls. You love our Lord, my dear Mother; you will therefore willingly render this service. Our Lord will not forget it; he will know how to reward you for the part that you will have in the good that will be done by our Congregation till the day of judgment; to which day I hope this Congregation will continue if now you will labor to establish it. Live Jesus and Mary!

For pity’s sake, let me occasionally enjoy the pleasure of receiving a letter from you; I shall be satisfied with one line, it will prove that you have not forgotten us. Live Jesus and Mary!

I have the honor to be, my dear Mother,
your very humble servant, once your spiritual Father,
ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter OF THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF BENEDICT XIV. TO ST. ALPHONSUS

[November 2, 1753.]

Benedict XIV., Pope

To our beloved Son, health, and apostolic benediction.

We have received the first volume of the *Moral Theology*[16970] dedicated to us; we thank you for the honor that you have paid us and for the opportune insertion of our encyclical Letters in the above-mentioned work. We assure you that the work will be read by us on opportune occasions, as we have a due estimate of your merit, your diligence and your prudence in your judgments. In regard to the state of your Congregation,[16971] we can do nothing more than pray to the Lord and recommend to others that they should pray for the prosperity of your Institute, which is so useful to the Church of God. We conclude by giving you and all the members of your Congregation the apostolic blessing.

Given at Rome, at St. Maria Major, the second day of November 1753, in the fourteenth year of our Pontificate.

Letter 168

TO FATHER ANDREA VILLANI

Solution of a difficulty.

[Anno 1753]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Don Gennaro Farina[16972] wishes to go on the mission. I should have no difficulty about allowing this, but one thing embarrasses me, and that is, that Genovese and Tortora[16973] might complain that we accept Farina’s services, while we refuse theirs. However, you can say that he is not a professed member, as they once were.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO.

After the original in possession of D. Merolla at Alife.

Letter 169

TO SISTER MARIA DI GESÙ, A CARMELITE AT RIPACANDIDA

He recommends to her prayers the Congregation and himself.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, December 4, [1753].

I have received your letter, and I thank you much for the charity that you have in recommending me to Jesus Christ; I do the same for you. At the present time please to pray in a particular manner for our Congregation; for there is question of obtaining its approval by the government, and if we fail this time, God knows when the question will again come up. But may the will of God always be done!

In your fears always throw yourself as if you were quite dead into the lovely arms of Jesus Christ and of his very holy Mother. Think no longer of your past faults; when doubt and mistrust attack you, say resolutely: *In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in æternum.* [In Thee, O Lord! I have hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.]

As for seeing each other here below, I do not know whether that will ever happen; it may happen, and perhaps not. I am old and infirm; it will be difficult for me to make so long a journey. At present I hardly ever leave the house as I am often visited by fever. It is necessary that I should prepare myself better for death, which must be near; help me, therefore, to prepare myself for the day of reckoning. Be so kind as to offer for me this special prayer, namely, that Jesus Christ may let me know during these last days of my life what I have to do to please him, and that he may give me the strength to execute it. Do not forget this.

Present my regards to the Prioress[16974] and to all my Sisters; for I acknowledge them as such. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 170

TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE

One must perform the duties of the offices imposed by obedience.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

December 4. [1753?]

To think of leading a solitary life at Caserta is something unreasonable. Now that you are a religious, you must occupy yourself in the employments that are given to you, and you must serve the Community.

As for other things, you must leave all when you have duties to perform; but when you are free, do not fail to make your day of retreat and to attend to the other exercises of meditation; and once every month, or on the day of the retreat, ask the Prioress to appoint a substitute for you, if such a thing is possible. Pray for me. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 171

TO THE SAME

Prohibition to change her convent.—Counsels in regard to patience.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, December 12. [1753?]

Herewith I answer your last letter. The thought that you have of changing your convent is a temptation of the devil, who will always keep you in uneasiness and will never allow you to do anything good. If this temptation returns, I command you to banish it, and to say then: I wish to die here, because God as well as obedience wishes this. Crosses are found everywhere; if you take into your head to go to San Gaudioso[16975] you will find there other crosses than those that you have now to bear.

Continue as I have told you to receive holy Communion, to pray, to perform all the mortifications that you can, and above all, bear contradictions that prove what you are; if you are quite resigned to bear these trials by conforming to the will of God, you will not think of changing your convent.

Continue to pray for me and for our Congregation, as there is now question of a most important affair. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

ALFONSO.

After an old copy.

Letter 172

TO DON LUIGI SAGLIANO

Exhortation to love Jesus Christ.—He sends him various little works.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, December 19, [1753].

My dear Don Luigi: I know not how to thank you for the great charity that you have shown me; I am praying to Jesus Christ, and I am praying to him with all my heart that he should reward you. As long as the Prioress [Mother Angiola] has the desire to render the service as she should, I do not very much care if I must wait as long as it is necessary; but not so long that it will never be rendered.

Enough on this point; at the favorable moment recall the affair to her memory.

In regard to the persecutions which you mention to me, on the one hand they afflict me, on the other they console me when I see how the Lord is detaching you from the world, and weaning you entirely from it. In the same way the Lord has cut me loose from the world, and now I find myself more content than if I had been made king of the whole world.

How much am I pleased that you take delight in meditating on the love that Jesus Christ bears towards us! I therefore send you another little book by Father Nepveu, who treats in a heavenly manner of the love of Jesus Christ; and truly this sweet Saviour deserves to be loved by us. Continue, therefore, to meditate upon his love; because whoever reflects upon it cannot help loving this good Master and to do everything that will give him pleasure.

Inform me at once whenever there is anything new, and I remain,

Your very humble and very grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] I have not omitted, and I will not omit to pray for you, and you must also pray for me. I shall be delighted to have you come to make the exercises at our house at Ciorani when they are given to seculars. I am sure that you will derive consolation from them. These exercises for seculars are usually made in Lent. You have time to think of the matter. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph!

I send you also another little book about the eternal maxims, with some beautiful considerations for devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the original in possession of the Sagliano family at Aversa.

Letter 173

TO THE SAME

He exhorts him to make a retreat.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Teresa!

NOCERA, March 4, 1754.

My dear Don Luigi: I am writing you by another hand, because I am in bed, and have been sick for many days. I again thank you for the charity that you have done me in regard to the Mother Prioress, we shall wait to see what she will do.

I am glad to hear about your new business enterprises as they concern the body. But as to the spiritual part I know not whether I should be glad, because I see that this year they have deprived you of the exercises of Passion week about which I sent you word.

My dear Luigi;—I do not oblige you to come precisely to Ciorani, but I recommend this most strongly. Every year lay aside all business and do not omit to devote yourself for eight days to the exercises if you wish to acquire the true spirit. *Dedimus corpori annum, demus animæ dies.* [We have given a year to the body, let us give days to the soul.] Let me know whether the Mother Prioress has been successful, and if she has been so, may she be a saint! Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

Believe me,

Your very humble and very devoted servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of his Eminence Cardinal Guglielmo Sanfelice, Archbishop of Naples.

Letter 174

TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, AT RIPACANDIDA

Exhortation to obedience and to confidence in God.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, March 24, [1754].

I have been sick for some time, and at present I am not yet free from my trouble.

I have received your letter, and I am happy that the direction of Father Fiocchi has helped you to find peace. Continue then to obey; throw yourself into the arms of the divine Goodness, and go ahead.

You would like to be absolutely without any fear; if this were your state, it would be a sign that you are walking on the wrong road. I then repeat; obey, and move onward in the midst of darkness without knowing whither you are going.

Mauriccio is doing well and is becoming a saint; Michele[16976] is also doing well, but his health is not good. If he so continues, I think of sending him for a while to Melfi to recover his health; he will return immediately after his recovery. It is a long time since I have heard any news from Don Luigi Mercante,[16977] as he has not written to me for some time. He has very likely grown cold. Try to write him a strong letter, and make him have a lively fear of the misfortune of losing his vocation.

Recommend every day me and Father Carmine [Fiocchi] to Jesus Christ; I am doing so for you.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After an old copy.

Letter 175

TO SISTER GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE, AT CAMIGLIANO

She should not desire to change her convent.—Various counsels in regard to perfection.

NOCERA, April. [1754?]

I went to Capua on account of a very important affair,[16978] and I could not go to Camigliano, as I was travelling with a friend. I must tell you that I have nearly always been unwell, and moreover, that if I had gone to see you, I would have told you what I am now writing to you.

I answer your last letter. It is regrettable that you have not received my letter; in it I said to you that you should positively banish the idea of changing your monastery. At present I say the same thing to you, and if you ever speak to me again about such an affair, I will no more answer you.

You should become a saint in the place where God wishes you, and not in the place where you wish to go. To wish to change your place of residence is pure self-love and shows the desire of fleeing from the cross. I wish to see you become a saint by bearing with contempt, contradiction, poverty, and all that you have to suffer in the place where you are; you, on the contrary, wish to sanctify yourself in holy solitude.

Even the fact that you reserve for yourself a separate cell does not please me. I wish that, poor as you are, and even poorer than the others, you should be occupied in serving as much as you are able the Community and all the Sisters. For the rest, if you wish to pray, the choir is there; you should go there during the time in which you are not obliged to serve the convent or some Sister, especially any one that is sick.

If you do not positively banish the thought of changing your monastery, you will never become a saint; for this thought nourishes in you distractions and disquietude, and hinders you from loving sufferings, injuries and contempt on the part of others. It is, however, just this love that I wish to see in you.

As for solitude, I wish you to love it, but in the way of which I have spoken. Flee from useless conversation, from the grate as much as possible, and withdraw to the choir, unless you have to render a service to the monastery or to any Sister, even though she may be ungrateful. Such is the life that does not please you, but that pleases Jesus Christ.

Well, then, abstain for a month from every mortification, such as disciplines, little chains, abstinences, etc., and attend only to supporting with patience the contempt, the contrarieties, and the unpleasantness which you meet with in the monastery. Afterwards you may resume the accustomed mortifications.

You should also mortify the excessive desire of receiving a visit from me. God knows with what haste I departed from Capua. I did not even stay a day at Aversa, notwithstanding the pressing solicitations to stay.

Live Jesus. Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] Give my regards to Signora Camilla Rossi and to her brother.

After the original in possession of D. Giovanni del Vecchio at Naples.

Letter 176

TO MGR. FRANCESCO ANTONIO BONAVENTURA, BISHOP OF NUSCO

He excuses himself for having retained two priests for the mission at Amalfi,

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, May 18, 1754.

Right Reverend and Dear Sir: On account of the evident necessity of the mission that is given by our Fathers in the populous city of Melfi, I have taken a liberty with your Lordship, through the friendship which I profess for you, of sending thither to assist the Fathers two priests of Cassano,[16979] your subjects. They were unwilling to go, since they alleged that by staying so long away from their home they would displease you, and especially since one of them had charge of a confraternity of his place. I have induced them to go thither, making myself responsible to your Lordship for any fault on their part. The reason why I did this was sheer necessity, the other Fathers being engaged in giving other missions. I could not think of employing any other priests than the above-mentioned, as they gave so much edification and satisfaction to our Fathers, and during the time they assisted them they exhibited the highest proofs of their good qualities and their zeal. On this account I hope that your Lordship will pardon my arrogance. Most respectfully kissing your hand, I remain,

Right Reverend Sir,

Your very humble, very devoted,
and very grateful servant,
ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of the Vecchi family at Volturara Irpina.

Letter 177

TO FATHER PASQUALE CAPRIOLI,[16980] AT CIORANI

Solicitude of the saint for the restoration to health of Father D. Saverio Rossi.

[About May 20, 1754.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph!

Here we are continually saying and reciting litanies for D. Saverio. I am also saying Mass for him. I have promised ten ducats for our altar of Mary Immaculate if she does us this favor. Send me good news to-day. Tell that wretched hiccough on the part of Mary Immaculate to go away at once and not torment any more Don Saverio and us.[16981] I feel great compassion for the sick man.

When Father Amendolara returns send him to us immediately so that we may send back Father Apice.

Tell Father Caprioli to send me the two other texts.

I bless Don Saverio and all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I send you the two papers; preserve them. I have already sent the act to Don Andrea at Naples. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO.

After an old copy.

Letter 178

TO CARDINAL ANTONINO SERSALE, ARCHBISHOP OF NAPLES.[16982]

He humbly exposes to him his views in regard to the state of the diocese of Naples and to the proper measures to be taken to remove certain disorders.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, June 18, 1754.

Most Eminent and Most Reverend Sir: Since my health does not otherwise permit, I wish by writing to you this letter to kiss your Eminence's feet and to express to you my profound respect as your old servant, and now as your subject and son.

It is not necessary for me to express to you the consolation that I felt when I heard that your most worthy person had been chosen to govern the Church of Naples; your Eminence can well imagine this.

But your Eminence will no longer find the Neapolitan clergy as you left it; you will find a ruined clergy,[16983] and as a consequence a ruined people. You will especially find a decadence of the right spirit in the candidates for ordination, and also what is worse, you will find the same in the three Congregations of priests.[16984] It was by means of these Congregations that there has been preserved during many years the fervor of the Neapolitan clergy, who have been an example to the whole kingdom, and I might say to the entire world; but at present one might shed tears in seeing the state to which they have been reduced.

I hope that Jesus Christ has sent your Eminence to remedy all these evils, and I hope to see renewed the time of St. Charles Borromeo, who preached to the people with so much fruit; in this manner I hope to see your Eminence preach to the people of Naples.

Oh, how much greater art the fruits produced by the words of the Pastor! Your Eminence formerly preached so well as a missionary;[16985] now I hope to have the consolation of seeing you preach at Naples as Pastor.

Pardon my boldness, if I speak thus; it is only for the glory of Jesus Christ. What good would your Eminence effect if you would have missions held in Naples, and would yourself preach at least in two or three places, if only during the first years, and would also give the exercises to all the clergy, strongly exhorting them to frequent the Congregations, to observe their Rules, and particularly to apply themselves to the missions, since by the missions from Naples we extend spiritual help to the whole kingdom! As for the candidates for ordination, you should make them understand that they should either give signs of a true vocation or should retire, since the Church deplores the ruin caused by admitting many subjects who are without a vocation. Your Eminence might at the same time inform them that you will admit to Holy Orders only those that have been well tried not only as to science, which is of less importance, but as to their moral conduct and as to their ecclesiastical spirit,—things that are most necessary.

I also beg your Eminence to listen to Don Giuseppe Iorio and Don Giov. Battista Fusco,[16986] two priests, who are truly men of God and of true zeal, without self-interest. They will represent to you the truth of things, and draw attention to many good works that will be conducive to the welfare of a people that are spiritually ruined. I beg your Eminence at least to listen to them.

I conclude by humbly prostrating myself at your feet, and asking for your blessing. Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! I remain,

Your very humble, devoted, and grateful servant and son,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 179

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA,[16987] MASTER OF NOVICES AT CIORANI

He regulates the studies of some novices.

[The year 1754.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Who has ever said that the novices have to study during three hours? I have not time to answer in regard to all your difficulties, and from afar I cannot arrange things. If I were with you I might adjust everything after having asked certain questions. Besides, I have spoken of the matter continually, supposing that [Frater Girolamo] Ferrazzano had completed the humanities; but I now hear that he has not even finished his course of arithmetic.

As to [Frater Domenico] Caputo, that he has not finished rhetoric does not matter; he will do so afterwards, having already studied logic. As to physics, geometry is not absolutely necessary, nor is it necessary at least in many cases. Caputo is of age and might learn at present some necessary figures. Physics is something not absolutely necessary; it is ornamental not necessary to a priest.

As for [Frater Pasquale] Bianchi, it appears to me that he has already gone through logic. In a short time he will leave the novitiate. But I should like to be there, to speak to Father Spera and settle all difficulties. Hence since the study of physics has been begun, let things take their course. But when the young men reach the end of their novitiate, inform me, and we shall see what is to be done.

Another time you must write to me directly in regard to the difficulties that may arise as to what I have told you. Do not involve me in disputes with others. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] I have just now received your second letter. It is not necessary to dispense Bianchi from the novitiate. Let him remain among the novices and follow the course during the time that is absolutely necessary. Have an understanding with Father Spera. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After a copy.

Letter 180

TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Important recommendations in regard to the observance of the Rules, the study of theology, and other different points of religious discipline which constitute the practice of perfection.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, August 8, 1754.

I beg all of you, my Brethren in Jesus Christ, before you hear this letter read, to say the *Veni, Creator Spiritus,* and to ask of God the light well to understand and to put in execution what in the name of Jesus Christ I write to all and to each one in particular. My Fathers and my Brothers: It is not yet two-and-twenty years since the beginning of the Congregation, and it is five years since it was approved by the Holy Church; so that at this moment it should not only have maintained its first fervor, but should moreover have increased it. Many, it is true, are behaving well; but in others, instead of advancement, there is a want of spirit. What will become of these, I know not; for God has called us into the Congregation (especially now at its beginning) to become saints, and to save ourselves as saints. As for him who wishes simply to save his soul in the Congregation, but not to become a saint, I know not whether he will be saved at all.

Poor Congregation if this want of spirit spreads among us! What will it be fifty years hence? One should have to weep and say, Poor Jesus Christ! if he be not loved by a member of the Congregation, who has received from him so many special lights, by whom will he be loved? My God, of what use are so many Communions? and why have we entered the Congregation, and for what purpose do we remain in it, if we are not endeavoring to become saints? Is it to deceive the people, who regard all of us as saints, and to make them laugh at us on the day of judgment when they will know our imperfections?

We have now many good novices, but they and others that come after, will through our example, be worse than we are; and in a short time the Congregation will become thoroughly relaxed, because imperfections will give place to scandals; and if this is to happen, far better will it be, my Brethren, that we pray the Lord to suppress the Congregation at once.

I am already old and in bad health, and am already drawing nigh to the day of account. I desire to be of as much service to you as I can; and God knows how much I love each one of you, more than my brothers and my mother: but it is not the will of God that I should endanger my eternal salvation through love (but an inordinate love) of any of you. We are all miserable creatures, and we all commit faults, but I am not pained by passing faults, but by those that are permanent, and by certain weaknesses that do harm to the whole Community. If anyone would with his eyes open espouse such faults as these, and defend them, or at least excuse them as endurable, I, for my part, declare that I cannot, and ought not to tolerate them. Such would be, for example, faults either against obedience or against poverty, against humility or fraternal charity. I hope, by the grace of God, to maintain this resolution to my death, and faithfully to act upon it, as I have promised God never to allow myself to be overcome by human respect, so as to see the brethren fail in things important and prejudicial to the others without correcting them. You are already aware that perhaps my weakest point is to be too indulgent; but I hope that God will give me firmness not to bear with the imperfect who will not correct themselves and who defend their imperfections; and I beseech you who are young, and who remain to govern the Congregation, never to tolerate a subject who should be so imperfect as not to humble himself after a fault, but should even defend it. I protest that on the day of judgment I will accuse before the tribunal of Jesus Christ the Superior who, in order to avoid causing pain to a subject, shuts his eyes to faults that do harm to the Community, and is the cause of the Congregation being relaxed. With regard, however, to the past, if there be any one who has been guilty of some fault, I do not intend now to reproach him with it; I speak only for the future.

But to come now to certain special points, I beg each one to pay attention to the following remarks:

First, then, I beg of each one to value his vocation. It is the greatest blessing, next to that of creation and redemption, which God could bestow on him. Thank Almighty God every day for it, and be afraid of losing it. Do not be deceived by the enemy of souls, who will perhaps say that you could do good even out of the Congregation, at home, and would enjoy greater peace out of it. And what good? *Nemo propheta acceptus in patria sua.* [No prophet is accepted in his own country.—*Luke,* iv. 24.] Everyone knows this, and experience proves it. A priest will save more souls in one year in the Congregation than in his whole life out of it. And to speak of personal advantage, a member of the Congregation will gain more by practising obedience for one year than he would gain in ten by living according to his own fancy out of the Congregation. And besides, we have to do the good that God wishes of us, and not that which we wish ourselves. Now God wills of him who is called to the Congregation that good and those labors that are imposed upon him by the Rule and by his Superiors. Peace, indeed; what kind of peace? *Quis restitit ei, et pacem habebit* [2] [Who hath resisted him, and hath had peace?—*Job,* ix. 4.] We see it, my Brethren, in those who have abandoned the Congregation. What kind of peace will God give to those faithless ones who, out of some caprice, and for want of mortification, lose their vocation, and turn their backs upon the will of God? And especially when they come to die, how shall they find peace, when they remember that they are dying out of the Congregation? I will not say more on this point, because now everyone already well understands it. But the evil is, that in the moment of temptation we are blind, and the loss of vocation is not considered an evil. I call attention to this: let no one think to frighten us by saying that he wishes to leave. Thanks be to God, the Congregation has at the present moment many good subjects, and at the same time every day you see there come to us young men full of fervor and talent; for the good name of the Congregation is spread throughout the kingdom, and even out of it; and it is believed that there is great fervor and perfection in the Congregation (would to God that only half were true!): and thus the good subjects will remain with us, to give missions and retreats. And even were we obliged to give fewer missions, it will always be better to keep up the spirit of regular observance with a few subjects, than to see the Congregation become relaxed. Those few that go on conscientiously will please God more than a thousand that lead imperfect lives. So, then, to sum up this point, unhappy he that loses his vocation! And, by the way, I renew for each one the formal obedience that I have given at other times—not to leave the Congregation without having first obtained my express permission, together with the dispensation from the vows and oath of perseverance, unless this has been already obtained from the Sovereign Pontiff.

Secondly, I beg each one to obey and to make no resistance to the commands of the local Superiors. If a subject has some difficulty, he is allowed to make it known; but then I beg him to make up his mind to obey before he makes his representation, should the latter not be entertained. So resolved, let him go and explain his difficulty, whatever it may be; otherwise, if he does not act thus, he will remain disquieted, should his difficulty not be admitted; and, being disquieted, the devil will gain much with him. Father de la Colombière made a vow always to go against his own will. Should anyone not have the courage to do so much (and I do not exact this), at least he ought to be careful on all occasions to mortify his self-will, which is the ruin of souls. Speaking of obediences which are difficult (for there is no great merit in those that are easy), St. Catharine of Bologna says that we should perform them without murmuring exteriorly; for instance, by complaining of the food, clothing, or the manner of acting of Superiors, which latter is a great fault; and also without interior murmuring, for this also disturbs the soul.

I beg in a special manner of each one not to wish to change his house without evident necessity; and even should the necessity be evident, I nevertheless beg him, before he makes his request, to resign himself entirely to the judgment of his Superior, should the latter take a different view of his case. And for my own part, I declare that I will not grant this to any one without a plain necessity; for to act otherwise might become the source of much disquietude to the subjects.

Thirdly, I beg of all not to complain one to another of what the local Superiors do. To do so may be a cause of great temptation both to themselves and to the others.

Fourlhly, I beg each one to ask of Jesus Christ his holy love, otherwise all the good purposes will be of but little profit. And in order to obtain this holy love, let us strive to have a great love for the Passion of Jesus Christ, by praying and making a little meditation on it during the day, and when it is possible by making the Way of the Cross. Jesus Christ is surely much pleased when we think of the sorrows and the scorn that he endured for us. It seems to me impossible for one that thinks often of his sorrows and of his Passion not to become full of love for Jesus Christ. I pray both present and future Superiors often to insist at the Chapters on the love of Jesus Christ and of his Passion. There is nothing on which we insist in the missions more than on this love for the Passion of Jesus Christ. What a shame, then, for one of us to be found on the day of judgment to have loved Jesus Christ less than some poor woman!

And therefore I beg each one to love his cell, and not to become dissipated by wandering about here and there during the day. Let us husband our time, in order to spend it in prayer, in visits to the Most Holy Sacrament, which we have in the midst of us for this very purpose, and also in study, because this too is absolutely necessary for us. Hence I recommend to those that are confessors the study of Moral Theology; and I beg them not to follow blindly the opinions of certain theologians, without having first considered the intrinsic reasons for them, and especially those opinions which, as may be seen in the second edition of my work [on Moral Theology], I no longer allow to be probable. This I say, and the probabilists say it likewise, that every confessor is bound to consider first, in each case, whether there be an intrinsic reason capable of convincing, for thus the contrary opinion becomes improbable. It is only when we are not convinced by such a reason that we can avail ourselves of an extrinsic probability: *probabilitas extrinseca.* Pay attention to this point; for I fear that some in the Congregation make serious mistakes in this matter. And remark that in my second book I ordinarily admit only those opinions to be probable that I expressly call probable. I do not pretend that my opinions must necessarily be followed; but I beg that before you reject them you read the book, and consider what I have written with so much labor, inquiry, and study. Now I did not undertake this labor, my Brethren, for others, or to acquire a reputation; if I had only wished to gain a passing applause, I should have willingly done much less. God knows the tediousness and the trouble that it has caused me. I have done it solely for you, my Brethren, in order that you might have a solid doctrine to follow, or at least might act after reflection. I confess that at first many opinions seemed to me well-founded, but afterwards I saw that they were improbable. Wherefore, I beg all the confessors as well as the students to read my book, for I wrote it for this end; and then let them follow the opinions that seem to them the best before God. Among improbable opinions I include especially that which holds that a candidate for ordination who is in the habit of grievous sin may be absolved, although he may have the disposition sufficient for receiving the sacrament of penance; whereas for such a one positive virtue is not fitting merely, as some falsely suppose, but is necessary, not on account of the other sacrament that he is about to receive—because for this the state of grace would be sufficient—but on account of that exalted state upon which he enters. For such a state a high degree of virtue is absolutely necessary, since the Canonists and Doctors commonly say with St. Thomas, that such virtue *prææxigitur, requiritur, necessaria est:* words that imply a real necessity and not a fitness; and the reason is, because a candidate for Holy Orders, both on account of the dignity of the state which he embraces, and of the most holy ministry which he has to exercise, must possess that positive virtue, which implies not merely an exemption from mortal sin, but the possession of a degree of virtue acquired by the previous practice of virtuous acts. Formerly I myself defended the contrary opinion; but afterwards I came to see that it was most improbable, and therefore I have retracted it.

Fifthly, and lastly, I recommend to the Superiors, both present and future, the observance of the Rules. This observance is in their hands. The Rector Major is far away: if the local Rector does not attend to it, the Rector Major cannot remedy what is amiss; and therefore it is necessary for the Superiors not merely to preach this observance, but to be the first to practise it. That which is seen makes far more impression than that which is heard. At the same time I recommend to the Superiors charity towards the subjects, in consoling them in their temptations, and in endeavoring to assist them in their necessities as far as possible, and by inquiring expressly (in the account of conscience) if there be anything of which they are in want. I recommend, above all, the monthly account of conscience, if possible the first Monday of the month; and when it cannot be made or finished the first Monday, let it be on the second. I especially recommend attention and charity to the sick, in visiting them and providing them as far as possible with the necessary remedies, and in asking them if they are in want of anything; and if this or that be not compatible with poverty, at least in consoling them as much as possible. I also recommend the Superiors to correct in private; for public corrections do but little good, except in the case where the fault was public, for then the correction does good to the others; but even here it is better first to correct the subject in private, and afterwards publicly.

So much for the Superiors. As to the subjects, I beg them never again to say that the Congregation is not so strict as it was, and that the primitive observance is relaxed. Even if on account of the increased number of subjects more faults are committed, nevertheless each one should endeavor to correct himself, and to live in observance of the Rule; and let him understand that the non-observant, who will not correct themselves, will not be tolerated in the Congregation. Hence, when any one commits a fault, let him at once humble himself interiorly, if the fault was interior, and exteriorly, by accusing himself of it, if the fault was exterior; and on falling into any fault, let him at once make the purpose of amendment. If anyone has some grievance against one of his brethren or against his Superior, let him try to take no step while in the heat of passion; let him first become calm, recommending himself to God; and then if he think it necessary, let hint act, or let him speak or write to the Superior. For the love of Jesus Christ, I beg you to pay attention to this point. Oh, if this were observed, how many faults would be avoided! because in the heat of passion things appear very different from what they really are. And on this account I also beg the Superiors not to correct when they are under the influence of anger, but to wait until the mind becomes calm, otherwise they will always be falling into excess, and their corrections will avail but little.

I recommend as strongly as I can detachment from relatives, who are certainly, as Jesus Christ says, the greatest enemies of our perfection. Let everyone be on his guard not even to mention the word *stima propria* [honor] in the Congregation; the greatest honor that a member of the Congregation should desire is to love obedience, and to be despised, and to be thought little of. This was the desire of the saints, to be despised as Jesus Christ was despised. He who does not make up his mind to become a saint cannot persevere in the Congregation; Jesus Christ himself, who loves exceedingly this Congregation, will drive him out. It is not the will of God that the first stones of this his own building should be so weak as to be not only unable to encourage and to give good example to those that shall come after us, but even to give little edification to those that are in it at present. Let each one well understand this. I recommend also the love of poverty, and beg all to take notice that faults against these two virtues—poverty and obedience—are not, and cannot be, tolerated in the Congregation; for if the practice of these two virtues fail, the spirit of the Congregation is wholly destroyed and at an end.

I again protest that what I have now written—just as it came into my mind—is not against any one in particular, but in general for all, and rather for the future than for the past. And I moreover beg all of you, after hearing this letter, not to suppose that I have any ill-feeling towards any who in past time may have committed some fault. I declare that as Jesus Christ has forgotten the faults of those who have humbled themselves for them, so also do I forget them. And let each understand that when any one has the misfortune to fall into a fault, if he will only heartily humble himself for it, he may be sure that I will heartily forgive him; and even by his humiliation he will make himself more dear to me than before. I say this in order that no one may lose courage, if by chance he should ever fall into some fault. But, on the other hand, let all guard against committing faults—even the smallest—with open eyes; because the devil is wont to make use of such faults as these to lead us into more serious ones, and then to tempt us to lose our vocation; and by this snare the devil is able to drive more than one out of the Congregation.

Lastly, be assured, my Brethren, that I love each one of you, after God, as my only love on this earth; and I offer for each of you, from this moment, my blood and my life: for you who are young may do much for the glory of God: but as for me, who am old, and ill, and useless, what more service can I render? And therefore I beg each one, if he is at a distance, to write to me whenever he has the need, and to banish the idea, which the devil has been making use of to disquiet me and others, that he will annoy me by speaking or writing to me. Be sure the more one shows me this confidence, the more he binds me to him; and remember that where there is question of consoling one of my brethren and children, I leave everything. I consider it of greater importance to help one of my children than to do any other good work; and God demands this of me in my office more than anything else.

To conclude, then, my Brethren; let us—in what remains of our lives, little or much, we know not (within a short time have died three of our young men: Muscarelli, Blasucci, and Zabbatti, and Father Paul [Cafaro], whose health was that of a young man)—let us, I say, become saints; and let us love Jesus Christ very much, for he deserves to be loved, and especially by us, whom he has loved more than others. Let us love a God who died for the love of us. Let us enliven our faith, and remember that we have but a few days to live on this earth, and that eternity is awaiting us. We preach these truths to others, and indeed they are truths of faith. So, then, we have no longer to live for ourselves or for the world, but only for God, only for eternity, and in order to become saints. And therefore let us continually offer ourselves to Jesus Christ, that he may do with us what he pleases; and let us continually beg of the most holy Mary to obtain for us the great treasure of the love of Jesus Christ. And when the devil tempts us against our vocation—and this is his great business with each one of us—let us recommend ourselves to this Mother of perseverance, and we shall certainly not lose our vocation.

I bless and embrace you all in the Heart of Jesus Christ, that having loved him exceedingly on this earth, we may all be one day united in loving him in our heavenly home. Let us not lose the beautiful crown that I see prepared for every one that lives in observance, and dies in the Congregation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, St. Francis Xavier, and St. Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 181

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE,[16988] RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CAPOSELE

He reproaches him for his excess of condescension.—Various dispositions.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, August 31, [1754].

I beg you for mercy's sake not to be so condescending. To send some one of ours to fetch Father Apice's sisters is something that I cannot approve. You would have done well if you had tried to prevent them from coming to Caposele; for their journey to Caposele may be a cause of surprise to the relatives of the Fathers, and of inconvenience to the people of the village, etc.

If similar novelties, not authorized by usage, should again occur, be careful not to grant permission without first sending me word. This whole affair has pleased neither me nor those that have heard of it.

I have been asked from Caposele for permission for Father Francesco Saverio de Leo to hear the confessions of men. A little patience! I wish him yet to study two months so as to finish the necessary treatises. Then he may hear confessions in the missions, and especially at Corato where he will probably go. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I bless you and embrace you all. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] Invite the usual persons to the feast.[16989]

When the sisters of Father Apice come to see him, I absolutely wish that none of ours should accompany them to Caposele. Send someone belonging to the place.

This affection of Apice's for his relatives very much displeases me; gently endeavor to withdraw him from this attachment by making him perceive the danger of it. This young man makes me tremble.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the original preserved at the Redemptorist convent of Contamine-sur-Arve (Haute-Savoie).

Letter 182

TO THE SAME

Various recommendations.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, September 8, [1754].

Bear with me if I give you some advice. With age and experience I have learned many things.

As the air of Caposele is not beneficial to Father Giovenale, send him to Iliceto; in his place I shall send another Father. Let him tell you all that he knows about the Community which you are to direct.

Take care that all may make their retreat, especially should you permit Father Garzilli to do so; he justly complains that you have not for a long time given him an opportunity to make it. Let all have finished with their retreat by the 20th of October.

I hope that at this date Father de Leo has finished the study of the necessary things and that he will be able to hear confessions in the missions. If he needed to employ for this work the ten days of retreat, I should permit him to do so, in order that he may go on the missions.

What am I to say about Father Margotta? He will soon come here, and we shall talk to each other. Tell this to Father Garzilli.

I have had prayers ordered for Father Strina[16990] that he may become cheerful. I embrace and salute you all, particularly my dear Don Benedetto Grazioli,[16991] whom I wish well, since he is so earnest in his love for Jesus Christ.

I have also been much pleased with your Reverence, since I noticed that my corrections did not disquiet you. Thank Jesus Christ for such a grace, as many fail in this respect. I understand very well that it is not possible on so many occasions that present themselves, always to conjecture what is the wish of the Rector Major; hence we must have patience and afterwards comply with obedience.

I embrace and bless you all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

ALFONSO.

After the original preserved at the cathedral of Monte Casino.

Letter 183

TO THE SAME

Various commissions.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, September 21, [1754].

As for the two young men of Montella, send them both, or only the one that can come.

But inquire whether they have any patrimony.

I send a thousand blessings to Father Latessa and Frater Picone,[16992] who should recommend me to the Madonna, because I do not omit to do the same for them.

As regards the économe, since Brother Gerardo[16993] is back again, let him be économe, especially because, as I remember, Brother Gennaro is deaf, and moreover, is busy at the building.

As for your retreat, three days are sufficient for your Reverence.

As for the retreat for Mgr. di Nusco, I say yes, and give you permission, provided it is given within the month of October; because on the 1st of November the Fathers will have to set out for the missions.

Tell Don Benedetto [Grazioli] that I will most cordially recommend him to God, and have others to do the same. But let him render me the same favor; and your Reverence should recommend me every morning at Mass.

I embrace and bless all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the sacristy of the Oratorian Fathers at Naples.

Letter 184

TO THE SAME

Measures to be taken in regard to a student.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, September 28, [1754].

Donato Antonio, bearer of these lines, was anxious to have his son at Bovino;[16994] but such a thing could not possibly have been allowed him. I have, however, consented that for the re-establishment of his health the young man might go to Our Lady of Consolation [Iliceto]. See to it, therefore, that he be sent at once to Iliceto with one of our Fathers; and I should prefer that you yourself would accompany him.

If you cannot at once send Father N. as his companion, send him as soon as you possibly can. The Father that is to accompany him must behave with circumspection.

The two young men have been sent away; one had no patrimony, the other was a seminarian, and a seminarian of the Bishop of Muro.[16995] Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Frater N. told his father that he felt as if he had a hot iron in his intestines. For what reason did he express himself in this way to his father? See what is at the bottom of this, and act accordingly. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 185

TO THE SAME

He approves of the manner in which he acted in regard to the student Manfredonia.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, October 2, [1754].

Give thanks to Jesus Christ for having inspired you to send the young man away at night.[16996] You must, however, not be disturbed. What fault could you have committed in permitting him to speak to his father in company with Father Strina? Sometimes it is unavoidable to allow young people to speak with their relatives.

Last evening I had an interview with him; he is a little hardened. That he concealed his temptation so long is what injured him. As for a dispensation, he must not think of it. If he wishes after all to lose his vocation and his soul, so much the worse for him. We shall try to help him as much as we can.

For pity's sake, do never use in regard to yourself the words: *Drive me out of the Congregation.* You thereby inflict a wound on the love that I bear you. I really love and esteem you very much. Even though I sometimes reprimanded you, I never yet doubted your good intentions. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Recommend and have recommended to God Father Fiocchi who is suffering greatly from fever at Ciorani. Live Jesus and Mary!

Inform me what the relatives of Manfredonia did afterwards. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 186

TO THE SAME

Sentiments of the saint in regard to dispensation from the vows.

[October, 1754.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I bless your exercises and your triduos.

Your Fathers do not reason well in regard to the affair of Manfredonia. If this door is once opened, it will be sufficient for any one that is tempted and wishes to leave, to become stubborn in order to be dismissed with a dispensation; then there would be no use of making a vow of perseverance.

It is true that this subject does not render any more services, and I do not know how it will all end;[16997] but so much the worse for him. For the sake of an individual I cannot possibly inflict an injury on the whole Community. The example that I would give by now dismissing him with a dispensation would afterwards create a temptation in the minds of many. It is cast up to me that I have injured the Congregation by having granted a dispensation to those that have already left us; but in their case other reasons had supervened, and perhaps I proved myself too weak in their regard. Henceforth,—let this be communicated to all—he that wishes to leave the Congregation without a reason, must make up his mind to leave it in mortal sin. No one will be able to take away from me this conviction; and tell your Fathers that no one should speak to me any more to the contrary.

This time you do not deserve a penance, but at another time if this happened again you would deserve one. I bless you. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 187

TO FATHER SAVERIO ROSSI, THE RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CIORANI

Exemplary chastisement inflicted on a disobedient subject.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

[NOCERA], October 18, [1754].

Since Father Grassi[16998] has refused to go to Iliceto, write to him at once that on account of this refusal I dismiss him and declare him excluded from the Congregation.

Let us pray to God that, if there are similar subjects among us, they may leave us promptly. If perfect submission to holy obedience is lost among us, it will be all over with the Congregation.

It will be well to notify the Vicar-General that this man is no longer a member of our Congregation. Also inform the Bishop of Cava of what has happened, since this gentleman might assume importance in that part of the country and thus throw dishonor upon us. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 188

TO FATHER D. GASPARO CAIONE

Various recommendations relative to the house at Caposele, to private retreats, and to the students.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, December 12, [1754].

I cannot but approve of the sale of the vineyard. As for the proceeds of this sale, since you desire them to be devoted to the benefit of the Congregation for the glory of Jesus Christ, we shall examine with Don Andrea [Villani] what is the best use we can make of them. I am of the opinion that the whole should be converted into capital for the benefit of the Congregation.

If the Archbishop Nicolai [di Conza] insists, answer him again, but only as if the answer came from yourself, that you have received from me the order to keep no one in the house longer than twenty days; that you had taken it upon yourself to allow a stay of thirty days, while the Lazarist Fathers keep no one longer than fifteen days. It must be understood that our houses are not prisons; otherwise we shall render ourselves odious to the whole diocese. If after this the archbishop still presses the matter, tell him that you must write to me about it, and then send me a few lines.

For certain good reasons I do not deem it expedient that Brother N. should return to your house; let him go to Iliceto whence Brother N. will come.

I am very glad to hear that there is a prospect of having dry rooms; for I am continually disquieted by the fact that the rooms there are so damp. Hence see to it that as soon as the season arrives,—in April or May,—the plastering of the rooms should be begun, according to the opinion of Father Garzilli and others.

Tell the Brothers that they must not give to women any orders to purchase things for them.

I am told that Frater N. has been given to melancholy for some time, and it is whispered here that one of the students has been mentally affected. Inform me whether the fact is true about N. and how his health is now, and whether I should write to him.

Fears are here expressed about the students who are and who will be in this house; for I am informed that they have so easily an occasion to see young girls who are engaged in working at the building. Give me your opinion about this matter, and be on your guard; for if it be necessary, we shall have to remove the young men to another place.

In regard to yourself personally send me some news about your health. I have made inquiries and was told that you are still very much enfeebled.

On, feast-days it is sufficient if you hear confessions till half an hour after the particular examination, that is, till after dinner, and no longer. Do not trouble yourself about the number of confessions; and let things go as they go. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

In regard to the work on the building, I bless all that you do; yet be careful always to take counsel; and, moreover, do not incur too many expenses; for I have remarked that all Superiors are anxious to build in order to show what they have done. I beg you not to trouble yourself too much about the work on the buildings; and on account of the improvements that are to be made the Community should not be made to suffer any privations either in regard to food or clothing. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 189

TO THE SAME

Answer to be given to his bishop if the latter should wish to recall him to his diocese.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, December 14, [1754].

The enclosed letters having reached me, I opened them to see what they contained; for I had been informed of the agreement made between the Signor Cantore and the Bishop of Troia, for the purpose of forcing you to go to Troia to take charge of the seminary. I do not doubt your constancy, and I have read with pleasure the letter of your worthy uncle,[16999] who says that it is a conspiracy that hell has formed in order to disquiet you. But I hold for certain that this will not cause you any disquietude, and that it will only make you laugh.

Let us come to the point. The bishop threatens to order you to return to Troia. You know what answer to give; but allow me to suggest something. The bishop says that you have promised him obedience. In the first place, the reigning Sovereign Pontiff, Benedict XIV., in the Constitution *Ex quo dilectus, etc.,* of January 14, 1747, has declared that this is to be understood in the sense that the one ordained cannot leave the church to which he has been attached without the permission of the bishop, unless he enters some religious Order or regular Chapter, which our Congregation resembles. This as you see, refers to the case when the one ordained is attached to some church of the diocese. Now you have been ordained for the Congregation without having been attached to the diocese of Troia.[17000] It also refers to the case when the one ordained wishes to live outside of the diocese, and not when he has entered a Congregation approved by the Pope.

Declare, therefore, to Cantore that it is not necessary for the bishop to make a move in this matter, since you yourself are able to have recourse to the Pope at Rome. I say this, because the bishop counts perhaps on the good standing and influence that he enjoys in Rome; but he surely will never succeed.

I doubt whether it is expedient to answer Cantore immediately, or to await a second letter; for if you do not answer, the bishop may give up his intention. I leave this matter to your prudence. At least I should wish that you defer your answer as long as possible; and as Cantore has taken the affair upon himself, and has compromised the bishop, I would counsel you to complain about this proceeding in your answer.

It is nevertheless desirable that you should write at once to your uncle, to thank him for his good advice, and to ask him, if an occasion offers, to persuade the bishop not to follow up his intention. I fear that this good prelate may give you and me a great deal of trouble. He has near him Don Carmine. . . . . . . who has been at the Chinese College, formerly Rector of the seminary of the neighboring diocese of Troia, a learned and saintly man; why does he not take him? If you write to Cantore, you may hint this to him. After all, if the bishop wishes a good Rector, let him not grudge the expense, and he will have one.

To sum up. Write so forcibly that they will persuade themselves that they will never succeed in shaking your resolution. I think that even now it would be better to send an answer, but do so only after two weeks; otherwise the bishop might become ill-disposed towards us, thinking that we had withheld your letter.

Give me a copy of what you have to write, so that I may be able to make my answer agree with yours; for it may easily happen that the bishop will afterwards write to me about the matter. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 190

TO SISTER MARIA VINCENZA GIANNASTASIO IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SS. ANNUNZIATA, AT CAVA

Behavior amid contradictions.—Advice in regard to direction and confession.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, January 8. [1755?]

I have received the stipends for fourteen Masses, and the two baskets of sweetmeats; for which please accept my thanks. For pity's sake, not so many presents! What I desire of you is that you should become a saint.

As for the persecutions to which you are subjected, love them. They please me more than if you were working miracles.

Always recommend to our Lord in a particular manner those persons who persecute you more, and render them services whenever you can. Show them at least a pleasant countenance, salute them affectionately, but without affectation; speak well of every one, and whenever you commit a fault against meekness, repent of it at once; then become quiet.

The advice of Father Stasio is good, but it is not good for you. It is better for you to think of the mercies of God of which you have been the object, and of the immense and ardent love that Jesus Christ bears to a loving and faithful soul when it remains faithful even in aridities and mortifying things. The Lord draws you by the way of love; it is this way that you should walk: it is that which appears to me the surest for everyone. It closely unites souls to God; it gives strength and perseverance. *Quis me separabit a caritate Christi?* [Who shall separate me from the love of Christ?—*Rom.* viii. 35.]

I have spoken of the confessor to Mgr. [of Cava]. Have patience; do as I tell you. Far away from you as I am, I can give you but little assistance. Take then D. Pietro Galise; tell him all that I have told you, and you will see that he will not differ from my direction, at least in essential things. For the rest, in accidental and less important things, as the omission of Communion or mortifications under certain circumstances, you should always be guided by his decision. Have patience. Here is what you should do: Ask Monsignor for this good priest, and he will surely send him to you.

If, however, Don Pietro should give you instructions that are absolutely opposed to mine, we shall then arrange with each other afterwards. But in the meantime, do what you are told; begin in this way; then write to me from time to time, and let us see how the vessel will sail. I will not fail to give you all the necessary assistance. You should say to yourself that after all it is God who is to make you a saint, and not the confessors.

Recommend me to Jesus and Mary. Live Jesus and Mary!

I remain

Your very humble servant,
ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 191

TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE

He exhorts her to love contempt and to love the Sisters that oppose her.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, January 14, 1755.

I have been sick; and now I answer your letter. I hear that you are disconsolate, and that pleases me; but what displeases me is that when any one bestows upon you marks of contempt, you complain and lament for entire months. This shows that you are not yet humble and dead to yourself. Do not tell me any more such things, but inform me that when you receive any injury you are inferiorly pleased, and that you feel great affection for the one that has gratified you in this manner. In your meditations let all your resolutions and prayers be directed to the attainment of this disposition; and then if you commit faults, renew your resolution and be calm.

I again recommend to you a day of retreat more than the use of the discipline.

As for your idea that you wish no more to see creatures, tell me what do you mean by that? You are in the convent, in which you must necessarily have intercourse with your Sisters and serve the Community. As for the parlor, do not go there except through obedience and sheer necessity. Explain therefore to me what is your idea.

Always recommend me to Jesus Christ, and try to love him much. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 192

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

He presses him to make another application to the Archbishop of Conza.—Various details.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

PAGANI, January 27, 1755.

I have just received your letter in which you say nothing about going to the Archbishop [of Conza], because perhaps you may not yet have received my letter. I therefore briefly say again what I have written.

Please go as soon as possible to the archbishop and beg him in my name to remember his promise, that is, of sending if he thinks fit, the candidates for ordination to our house when the time for the ordination arrives. Tell him that I have not Fathers to give the exercises at the seminary more than once a year. On these occasions sermons must be preached for the seminarians that study, and also for the priests that come there, and sometimes in the presence of the Monsignor himself. Hence it is necessary for us to know what kind of ecclesiastical sermons are to be preached; and there are some of us who know not how to do this kind of work; nor can one repeat the same sermons that are once preached.

This was the substance of my letter. Your Reverence is prudent enough to represent this to him most distinctly, but you must speak resolutely. It is necessary that this affair should be at once settled; for the longer we follow a custom, the more difficult will it be for us afterwards to break through it.

As to the students, the matter is understood. It may be that I shall send you Frater de Michele,[17001] because the air here does not benefit him.

To Signor Cantore [of Troia] it seems fit that your Reverence should write again briefly what you have already written. I have already received your letter and have forwarded it. Erase from it the words; *although the Pope should command it.* It is sufficient to say that if the bishop should give a formal order, you would not be obliged to obey. And if an order comes from Rome you are also ready to go to the Pope.

As regards the flag-stones for the rooms, I have been told that they are the cause why so many insects are in the rooms; this is the reason why I wish to have them replaced if possible by a sort of pavement, although this would increase the expense. If possible I shall have workmen come from this place.

In the Chapters recommend obedience in the missions, and inform them that during the mission they should not touch any one, big or little; that they should make meditation, at least once a day, and should have Chapter.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

BROTHER ALFONSO.

[*P. S.*] The secretary sends his regards, and copies as much as he can of what you have written to him, but it is not very suitable. I send you a paper on the manner of preaching, and if you could have it gradually copied, and then have it sent me, you would do me a favor, because I have not time to copy it.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 193

TO THE SAME

He gives instructions how a Father is to be treated who is destined to teach.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, March 23. [1755?]

Father de Meo is coming to you. It is sufficient if he applies himself to his studies. Do not charge him with the duty of attending to a confraternity nor of hearing the confessions of grown up persons. However, if he manifests a desire to hear confessions, let him be satisfied with preaching, but do not urge him to do so.

Let there be no writing done during class.

Send me the writings of the deceased members, particularly those of Father Cafaro.

After a copy.

Letter 194

TO SISTER MARIA ANNA DI GESÙ, AT CAVA

Counsels in regard to prayer and the practice of religious virtues.

[The year 1755?]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

To judge by your letter, the Lord calls you to perfection. Take care then not to grow lukewarm; for souls whom God calls to perfection with a special love and whom he destines to walk on the narrow road of virtues, should respond to his offers. If they wish to follow the wide road of lukewarmness, they run the great risk of being abandoned by God and of being damned.

Thank the Lord for the lights that he has given you, and especially for the gift of prayer of recollection of which you speak. Although one does not meditate on any subject in particular, this prayer is the best of all when God grants it. But God does not grant it always. Now when you are a prey to desolation without the power of meditating and without the power of recollecting yourself, continue to make prayer with patience and perseverance. Do not doubt that you will be dearer to God than before.

Now since you have not this recollection at prayer, you should help yourself with books; and when you cannot do any other thing, resign yourself to the divine will, abandon yourself to the mercy of Jesus Christ, ask his pardon, and multiply the prayers and the acts of love towards Jesus and Mary. Whatever you suffer in this state offer always to God.

Besides detachment, I recommend to you scrupulous attention to holy poverty and to obedience; it is in this delicacy that consists in great part religious perfection.

I also recommend to you charity towards all your Sisters; support meekly and peacefully reprimands and contempt, and render good for evil to the one that persecutes you. The religious that does not do so will never become a saint. Let it, moreover, be one of your exercises in prayer to prepare for contradictions.

Finally, in the state of desolation in which you are, try to obtain the needed permissions to communicate as often as possible; and when it happens that you commit some fault, such as some act of impatience, etc., do not be troubled; humble yourself, quietly repent of it, and unite yourself more closely to God by an act of love and of confidence. If you fall *a hundred times* a day, use *a hundred times* the same remedy.

Follow these counsels, and recommend me to Jesus Christ in your visits to the Most Holy Sacrament and to the Most Holy Virgin. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant in Jesus and Mary,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 195

TO THE SUPERIORS OF MISSIONS

Regulations relative to confessions.

[The year 1755?]

All the Superiors of missions should know that it is my express wish, without any possible interpretation, with the exception of a case of necessity, which will rarely happen, that in all our missions the people when the mission is given should be fully satisfied in regard to their confessions. If therefore it should be necessary either the number of the sermons should be increased, or the Fathers should remain for some time to hear confessions without preaching. Moreover, let the meditation be made in common, at least once a day, in accordance with the Rule. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Let everyone understand that he is obliged to act in conformity with this order, if he sees that the contrary is practised. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

ALFONSO,

Rector Major.

After an old copy.

Letter 196

TO SISTER MARIA DI GESÙ, AT RIPACANDIDA

Answer in regard to some difficulties.—The sending of two little works.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, April 2, 1755.

I am happy to know that you are in peace, and I answer your two difficulties.—You have at present, so you tell me, neither doubts nor troubles. Besides, you enjoy a peace that is troubled by nothing.—Here is my answer in a few words: Keep this peacefulness as long as fears do not come to visit you; and when they come, abandon yourself to the hands of God. I say *when they come;* for I believe that you will not always enjoy this tranquility. Our life should be interwoven with flowers and thorns. But this is sufficient. Let us always say: I wish for myself what God wishes, and nothing more.

I send you the *Visits*[17002] with the appendix which I have added, and I very much thank you for your remembrance of me before God. I beg you for the love that you bear to our Lord, to continue; for I need graces for myself and for others. I also send you the "Novena to St. Teresa."

Recommend to God a very important affair which refers to the Congregation; and ask Mother Prioress to have the Community recite for this intention the *Salve Regina* every day for nine days.

I am writing hurriedly; tell therefore the Mother Prioress that I thank her for the love that she shows for our Congregation; but how can I prevent other priests from adopting our costume? Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of the Chapter of the cathedral of Cagli.

Letter 197

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Discretion of the saint in regard to a vocation and to the foundation of a new house.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NAPLES, May 19, [1755].

Francesco de Paola[17003] is making me lose patience with his letters. I feel sorry for him, but I know not what I can do for him. If he should ever leave home and come here, I would not send him back; but I cannot write this to him. I should feel a scruple in regard to the Congregation if I would expose it to the danger of having a useless subject who could not be ordained. Besides I could not even write this since I fear that my letters might be intercepted. For this reason the enclosed letter is written in a tone of indifference.

I am staying here to arrange that affair of Sicily; the archpriest of Girgenti has already come; but I see that there is trouble ahead. In fact negotiations have been going on with the Fathers of the Mission, and I have declared, that as long as these negotiations are continued with the said Fathers, it is altogether improper for us to become involved in this affair about the foundation, otherwise it might appear that we wish to supplant them.

As to the new Father of whom you speak, have patience. Father Gallo has had a severe attack of illness and is using remedies: let us see how he will get on. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I must inform you that towards the end of July Father Apice should come here in order to go to Sorrento to give a novena, for which Canon Corbo, who lives with the Cardinal, has most urgently applied to me. Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of a family of Gragnano, diocese of Castellammare.

Letter 198

TO THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF BISHOPS AND REGULARS

Petition for the confirmation of the foundation of the house at S. Angelo a Cupolo in the archdiocese of Benevento.

[Month of May, 1755.]

The priest D. Alfonso de Liguori, Rector Major of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, humbly exposes to your Excellencies the following facts:

For the greater glory of God and the profit of souls, he has for about three months, with the permission of Mgr. [Francesca Pacca] Archbishop of Benevento, as appears from the permission granted to him, begun the foundation of a new house at S. Angelo a Cupolo, a district of the city of Benevento and a fief of the archbishop. This foundation will, with the divine help, result to the greatest spiritual advantages of the clergy, since in said city and in this whole vast diocese there is not a house in which the spiritual exercises can be given to the candidates for ordination, nor any Congregation to instruct the same in the art of preaching, giving missions, hearing confessions, and so forth. This foundation will also benefit the people who are both in spiritual want and numerous, as well as destitute of the ministry of priests in such a manner that hardly had some of the Fathers of the Congregation gone among them and given them some missions and other exercises of piety conformably to the end of their Institute, when they were in the greatest request in most places of the diocese. Hence, for the greater stability and safeguard of so useful a work, besides the received permission of Monsignor Archbishop of Benevento, and the testimonies of extraordinary contentment of the people of said district, the petitioner also desires the approbation and good pleasure of your Excellencies; humbly begging that he may be consoled with such approbation, etc.

Answer of the Congregation. “The Congregation of the very Eminent Cardinals who preside over the affairs and consultations of the Bishops and Regulars, in view of the report of the Archbishop of Benevento, has charged the latter (the truth of the facts given having been demonstrated) to grant to the petitioner the object of his request according as he shall think fit.

ROME, June 13, 1755.

C. A. CARD. CAVALCHINI.

P. GUGLIELMI, secretary.”[17004]

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 199

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Various recommendations.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, June 1, 1755.

Since Father Garzilli has arrived at your place, let Father Nittoli go to Iliceto.

Father Apice is wanted by all means at Sorrento for the novena of the Assumption. Hence see that he goes there as soon as possible during this month.

I bless all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the Neapolitan edition of 1848.

Letter 200

TO FATHER EMANUELE CALDARERA OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY

He sends him two of his works.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, June 4, [1755]

I send you the second volume [of my Moral Theology] with a little work on the religious state. This little work, it is true, is directly addressed to our Congregation, but may also be useful for religious vocations of every kind. At least you may use the *considerations* that are at the end, and you will no doubt be pleased with them.

Father Pagano[17005] has told me that he wished to take my Moral Theology for those that follow the longer course in your house. Remind him of this promise if you think fit.

Please let me know at an opportune time what has been concluded in regard to the foundation of Girgenti.

Do not forget to recommend me to Jesus Christ; I have also been recommending you and are recommending you still. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

While humbly kissing the hand of your Reverence,

I remain your very humble and very devoted servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 201

TO THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF BENEDICT XIV

He sends him the second volume of his Theology, and asks him for some spiritual favors for his Congregation.

[June 8, 1755]

Most Holy Father: I send to your Holiness the second volume of the Moral Theology which has caused me two years of labor. I hope that it will not be disagreeable to your Holiness to deign to cast a glance at it.

Besides the Bull of your Holiness, I confess that I have received great light from your most worthy *notifications* which have been my guide in the questions that are therein examined with great learning and labor. Of the practical matters appertaining to the instruction of confessors, I have made an abridgment in the vernacular, have inserted it in the work, and had it separately printed, and I send it to your Holiness together with other little ascetical works which I take the liberty of offering to you, trusting that in your kindness you will be pleased with it. The said abridgment entitled *Pratica* will I hope be of great use for the instruction of new confessors in regard to every state and every kind of persons, both good and bad.

I am not so presumptuous as to claim a recompense; it is sufficient for me that your Holiness accepts and blesses what I have offered, so that my books, if there is any good in them, may contribute to the salvation of souls. But prostrate at your feet, I supplicate your Holiness for a spiritual favor in behalf of my little Congregation. By the approbation of your Holiness our Congregation has come into existence. The favors that we ask your Holiness are: the communication of the privileges of the Fathers called the Pious Workers,[17006] and the faculty of being able to have the subjects of the Congregation ordained under the title of *mensa communis,* at least for a certain determined number, conformably to what you have kindly granted to the Fathers of Monte Argentaro, called Passionists. In this way the

Congregation will be able to develop itself, since the harvest that we have had at hand is so great.

But in order that the favor may be complete would your Holiness be so kind as to grant to the Rector Major of our little Congregation the faculty of giving *Letters dimissory,* to the said candidates for ordination, and that the same may be ordained by the Archbishop of Benevento? Finally, to comply with the request of the archbishop of this diocese we have founded a house which is entirely subject to your Holiness; it is in the diocese of Benevento, at S. Angelo. Hence I beg you to give a special blessing to this foundation, by which we are doubly the subjects of your Holiness. I have asked that *they may be ordained at Benevento;* otherwise the favor would be useless for the reason which the sagacious mind of your Holiness can appreciate. Should we not be thought worthy of obtaining this favor from your Holiness who has called into being this our little Congregation, much less should we be able to obtain it from your successors.

We are moreover in trouble by not having the royal *exequatur;* since we have not yet thought the time opportune for presenting the Brief of your Holiness granted to us seven years ago. If your Holiness were to say a word to our king in regard to the royal consent, I should think that it would be of great avail. . . . . (*The rest is wanting.*)

To this petition the Pope sent the following answer:

[July 15, 1755.]

To our son Alfonso de Liguori, priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer at Nocera de’ Pagani.—Benedict XIV.

To my dear Son, health and apostolic benediction.

We have received your letter of June 8, together with the second volume of your Moral Theology, and the other books of less bulk, but of great profit to the salvation of souls. We thank you for your present, and having cursorily looked at your book on Moral Theology (which is dedicated to us, for which we send you special thanks) we have found it full of valuable information; it will surely meet with universal approbation and will be most useful to the public. We shall gradually read it, and we hope that what remains for us to read will correspond to what we have read.

We have read the petitions that you have offered in behalf of your Congregation. With the exception of our blessing, which we willingly bestow upon you and upon the whole Congregation, the rest will be of little service to you as long as you have not obtained the royal *exequatur* for our Brief, expedited seven years ago. We shall not omit to do our part with the Duke of Cerisano, ambassador of the king and of the two Sicilies, who is with us, and if our efforts are successful, we shall think of the rest. . . .

Given at Rome at St. Maria Major, July 15, 1755, the fourteenth year of our Pontificate.

According to the original draught preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 202

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Various affairs.—Orders and counsels concerning the building of the house at Caposele.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, June 10, [1755].

I answer your last letter. I have written to you a letter in which I told you that there is no need of coming in July since the Chapter had to be postponed till October, and D. Saverio [Rossi] has been unwell and had to go away for a change of air, and I do not know how his health is at present. There are other reasons, but the chief reason is that Don Andrea [Villani] must necessarily be present at the foundation of the house at Benevento; a storm is feared on the return of the archbishop.

As regards Father N. my dear Gasparo, I have told you, and I say, that this young man makes me tremble for his perseverance because he has a head too thoughtless and unsteady.[17007] At the end of July he is to come here to give the exercises at Sorrento; if he has to drink the waters at Castellammare, he may set out sooner and come at the beginning of July. But he does not like the idea of staying with me, because I gave him a gentle correction. Now what is to be done? If he should at the end do something rash, so much the worse will it be for him. God will then have no need of him. Let us assist him, but it is not necessary to satisfy him in everything, for he is never satisfied. I commit him in this matter to your prudence.

Concerning Father N., his brother has written to me. I answered him that for an interview with the said Father I gave him permission, although I hear that the interview has already taken place. As to going afterwards to Naples, I forbid, have forbidden and will forbid such a thing; and inform the Father of this in a gentle way so that there may be no thought of going to Naples. What trouble we have with so many different heads!

As regards the paving-tiles, that is understood. As to the plinths they may be put down afterwards, and it will be better to make a trial with paving-tiles in two or three rooms; and a trial might be made with the rough-casting of which Father Ferrara has spoken; but the architect says that this will all be useless, and that the dampness of the walls, the frost of winter coming a little afterwards, will make all come down.

The news about Fr. Agostiniano pleases me, but I have a doubt about his perseverance.

I bless all. The affairs at Benevento are now prospering.

Let me hear at once, when you receive information, whether Father Margotta has made good arrangements with [D. Benedetto] Grazioli. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

When speaking about the building with the Archbishop [of Conza] especially about remedying the dampness, be careful not to enter into any promise that things should be done so or so. If he speaks of the matter evade the question and say that counsel has been taken about the best method, that a trial would be made, etc. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the Neapolitan edition of the year 1748.

Letter 203

TO SISTER MARIA VINCENZA GIANNASTASIO, AT CAVA

Counsels regarding the acceptance of employments and the use of mortifications.

[The year 1755?]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I never promised Don Francesco di Franco that I would come to give the novena; I only said to him that I would try to send another Father. But this has not been possible.

See whether five hours of rest are not too little for you; take six hours of rest if you suffer from want of sleep. As for employments, in future neither desire nor refuse any, and pay attention to this point, for thus you will do the will of God. Continue your Communions as I have regulated them, and do not trouble yourself about the rest. As regards mortifications, those that I have allowed you are sufficient; do not do more; only you may wear during the day a little chain on your arm in order to remind you that you should offer acts of love to Jesus and Mary.

I have told you that I can direct you from afar; do not therefore say any more that I should call upon you. This would give me pain, and I would not come.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 204

TO FATHER CARMINE PICONE, VICE-MASTER OF NOVICES IN CIORANI.[17008]

He tells him to invest certain postulants with the habit.

[About June 12, 1755.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Francesco Antonio is coming; keep him with the novices, and let him do all that which those must do that are preparing for receiving the habit. He may receive the habit with the two others[17009] on the feast of St. Aloysius.

Let them make the exercises, but allow them to come to recreation. Also moderate for all the practices of devotion and application during the warm weather. Let them go out often, and moderate the use of the little chains while the weather is hot. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

From an old copy.

Letter 205

TO THE SAME

A recommendation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Certainly, grant to N. some solace and more liberty; but assist him, as he has much to contend against. See that you give him some remedy, milk or some other thing. Tell him from me that he should have confidence; that nothing is the matter.

I bless you all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

From the Roman edition.

Letter 206

TO THE SAME

Qualities that novices should have.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your Reverence should go on with great courage and confidence in God, and not be disturbed about anything, nor be grieved, if a novice grows cold and leaves us. Help all of them as far as you can; but if any one commits habitual faults and does not show the right spirit, let me know this, because then I will send him away. Let him remain, who is willing to remain. Let only those remain *that wish to suffer all, and wish to be really saints!* Tell this to all the novices and add that he that has not this spirit, is not made for the Congregation.

There are now many of us. The Congregation has no need of men who are without fervor.

Among other things see that they obey you. Always tell them that *those that are stubborn, or attached to their relatives and to self-esteem,* cannot be of any use to the Congregation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 207

TO THE SAME (?)

Encouragement to be given to a postulant.

Live Jesus and Mary!

If N. does not come to receive the letter, carry it to him yourself, and encourage him. He will still have many tempests to go through in order to follow his vocation, as his father is at present by no means favorable.

I very well know that his father is disquieted; but what I am sorry to hear is, that the young man has grown colder and has become discouraged. If he remains firm, he must not doubt that God and we shall come to his aid. But if he begins to waver, saying now yes, then no, you must declare to him that I will even refuse to receive him.

Carefully inquire about his health; for I have been told that he has some trouble with his chest, and that he has been spitting blood. If this is the case how could I receive him if he suffers from his chest? Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 208

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Various recommendations relative to the works of the saint and to the interests of the Congregation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, June 22, [1755].

Let me know what business Father Margotta has transacted with [D. Benedetto] Grazioli, if you have any news about it.

Don Andrea Villani asks and begs that an alarm-clock be sent to the place where he is [at S. Angelo a Cupolo]. Have patience; you may keep for yourself the English clock with the alarm, and send the old one to Don Andrea.

I expect Father Apice; he is to drink first the mineral waters, then he is to go to Sorrento to give a novena or a retreat. He will come on the 10th of July.

I send six copies of the *Pratica*.[17010] Later when I have an opportunity, such as to return to you the conveyance to bring Father Apice, I will send you the second volume[17011] with other copies of the *Pratica* to sell.

Then you must inform Father Caprioli of the cost of the second volume. The *Moral Theology* is sold at twenty *carlini*.[17012] An appendix has been added, and it cannot be sold for less. The *Pratica* costs one *carlino.*

As for all the books sold and that are to be sold, and all the other books which you will require of me do not write to me, but have in everything an understanding with Father Caprioli; the care of them has been entrusted to him by Father Saverio [Rossi] who pays for the printing.

I have already received news of Father Margotta through Father Ferrara. Tell therefore Father Margotta that as soon as he receives anything from Grazioli he should at once come here to see me; we shall then see what is to be done.

Should Father Fiocchi be with you, tell him that I have written to him two pressing letters, to return at once to Iliceto, because his presence is needed there.[17013] Let him speak to Father Giovenale. Tell this secretly to Father Fiocchi, so that he should set out at once.

It would be well if in kind words, without dispute, you could obtain a diminution from the tax.[17014] If you succeed in doing so, you must thank all those who have in any way assisted us.

Let me know all about your affairs and what has been done in regard to the tiles. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the Neapolitan edition of 1848.

Letter 209

TO SISTER MARIA VINCENZA GIANNASTASIO IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SS. ANNUNZIATA AT CAVA

Behavior that she should adopt in the state of desolation in which she finds herself.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, June 22, [1755].

I answer you briefly. I have read your letter, and I feel more happy because of the desolations through which the Lord has made you pass than if you had written to me that you had wrought ten miracles.

All the lights, inspirations, knowledge and intimate communications with which you have hitherto been favored came from God; of this I assure you in his name. Now God wishes you to be a saint without delay; and it is because he wishes you to be really a saint that he has put you into the state in which you are.

In this state continue to persevere in all your exercises. I also permit you, when you have time, to make another half hour's meditation; finally, continue your Communions and all the rest. As for meditation, always make it with a book, and use for this purpose my little work; especially read the *considerations* on the Passion of our Lord, and more particularly the affections that follow them.

In the state in which you are, you have to perform more frequently three things when you pray and communicate. You should, first, humble yourself, by acknowledging yourself worthy of severe chastisements. Secondly, resign yourself entirely to the will of God, and offer yourself to remain during your whole life and during eternity in this state of pain, and even in still greater pain if it is God's will. Thirdly, abandon yourself absolutely to the arms of the divine mercy.

Have frequent recourse to the Blessed Virgin. Let your acts of love ordinarily consist in an entire offering of yourself to God. Finally, always recommend me to Jesus Christ.

Confidence and courage! I see that Jesus Christ wishes to make you really a saint.

I thank you for your little present. I do not wish you to take again so much trouble.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 210

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Recommendations in regard to various works of the saint.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, June 28, [1755].

Send the enclosed letter to Ripacandida at the first opportunity.

It seems to me that I have sent you a certain number of copies of the *Pratica* for the use of your Community. Now I send ten more to be sold. Show them to those that come to visit you. In regard to the cost of the copies of the *Pratica,* I answer as I did in regard to the *Pratica* and the *Moral Theology,* have an understanding only with the Fathers at Ciorani,[17015] and punctually send them what they order.

The *second volumes* I will send you at the first opportunity when your conveyance returns, so that they may surely arrive.

I expect [Father Bernardo] Apice when he comes to drink the waters at Castellammare. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!—I also expect Father Margotta as soon as he has settled his affairs with Grazioli. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the Neapolitan edition of 1848.

Letter 211

TO THE SAME

Various recommendations about different subjects.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, June 30, [1755].

You have appointed Father Margotta to perform certain labors, now that we stand in need of him; but what is done is done. I beg you, however, do not in future arrange any exercises within the month of June, unless it be at the beginning of the month.

As for the missions which the Archbishop [of Conza] wishes us to give it is sufficient that you have mentioned this to me. Answer neither *yes,* nor *no;* do not accept any more missions, nor hold out any hopes for any more; because in the coming year I do not know whether we shall be able to give even one mission there, especially in winter. Now when the time arrives and it will be necessary to give the promised missions at Benevento; I shall send my excuse to the archbishop.

Let Father Apice be here about July 10, to drink the mineral waters.

For Polestra and Melaccio[17016] it wil be necessary to procure letters dimissory.

In regard to Mgr. di Muro the affair is settled.[17017] I have written to him that Francesco Antonio de Paola is with us, that when he wishes he may send for him.

As for closing the church, you have to come to an understanding with the archbishop.

As to the économe, your Reverence is the Rector. Appoint Brother Gennaro for this charge if you think fit; and Brother Gasparo you may employ wherever you please. Afterwards I will try to send him with Father D. Andrea [Villani, of S. Angelo a Cupolo]. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

When Father Apice comes, send me all the *second volumes* that you have there,[17018] because I wish to insert some sheets and have them bound; and then I will send them back. This I will do when the conveyance that brought Father Apice returns. I will send you the *second volumes* to-day if the young carrier will take charge of them, together with six copies of the *Pratica* and two of the *Dissertations on probable opinion.*[17019]

I send you also a package containing copies of the *Elenchus* for the second volume; have them distributed among those that have the first edition of the work. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I embrace and bless you all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Tell Father Margotta to read the letter at once. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved at our house of Monterone at Rome.

Letter 212

TO THE SAME

He enjoins upon him obedience to the physician.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, 6. [July, 1755?]

Before speaking of other things I must tell you that you do not belong to yourself but to Jesus Christ and the Congregation; hence you must take care of your health and be obedient.

In a word, I tell you that you must obey the physician in all things, just as the Rule commands us to do, either on the one hand by eating no more food prepared with oil, or on the other hand by taking the medicine that is prescribed. Moreover, during the day you must sleep at least half an hour, and during the night, six full hours.

What shall I say in reference to the letters dimissory of the young men? I pray to Jesus Christ to grant me patience. I have also written a petition to the archbishop, which you will please forward as soon as possible. If an answer comes addressed to you, open it; and if you see that the archbishop remains inflexible, ask Father Margotta in my name to go himself to the archbishop and to ask for this favor, etc. Write also to the Vicar-General, and thank him specially for me for all that he has done with the archbishop in favor of these young men. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 213

TO THE NOVICE LUIGI CAPUANO,[17020] AT CIORANI

What was to be his behavior under difficult circumstances in regard to his vocation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

SARAGNANO, July 16, 1755.

My dear Brother, summon up courage! I am confident that God expects great things of you, since hell creates so much noise in order to draw you away from your vocation.

It may perhaps happen as I have told you, that you must go by order of the king to some monastery, to be examined in regard to your intention. Recommend yourself to the Mother of God, and fear nothing.

To the monastery your relatives will undoubtedly come to tempt you, and the monks themselves will practise the devil's art under pretense of appeasing your father and your mother; they will represent to you that it is a matter of conscience if you thus bring ruin upon them. Make no account of such scruples; if they wish to be ruined, it will be their fault. Tell them that in order to appease them you cannot imperil your eternal salvation by losing your vocation, which is quite certain.

Do not doubt that, after this trial at the monastery, your relatives will no longer annoy you.

Pay attention to this point: if you go to the monastery, do not believe what certain religious may tell you; they have been gained over by your relatives, and will give you a thousand reasons to induce you to return home. If they come, be careful not to listen to them, and be sure that they wish to deceive you. Hence as soon as they begin to perform the office of the devil, dismiss them in a kind manner. Do not undertake to answer them, because they will succeed in perplexing you. The best thing would be not to answer, but to say that you will recommend yourself to God in order to find out his will; and then rid yourself of them in this way.

I say this, not that you must now pray to God that he may make known to you his will, since he has already made it known to you in making you understand that he wishes you to be a member of the Congregation; but this answer will deliver you from their importunities. By saying that you are praying to God to enlighten you in regard to his will, you will silence them, and thus force them to retire immediately.

Since Father Tannoia is not there, be guided by [Father Alessandro de] Meo. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in our house at Prague, Bohemia.

Letter 214

TO SISTER MARIA VINCENZA GIANNASTASIO

She should, notwithstanding her interior desolations, persevere in her exercises of piety.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

SARAGNANO, July 21, [1755].

Your whole letter pleases me. One thing, however, would give me pain; it would be to hear that you are now abandoning the career upon which you have entered.

Courage, then, and firmness! Continue the exercises that you have begun, although they may be to you like the pains of hell; continue, and be assured that you will certainly become a saint.

I have told you already, and I repeat, that according to the rules laid down by the saints it is clear to me that the state of desolation and pain in which you find yourself will last a long time; perhaps it may last even till your death.

No, it is not true that God has abandoned you; on the contrary, he loves you more than before; but he wishes to try you, and to consume in the fire of tribulations the rust which your past faults has attached to your soul. Take courage, then, and go on. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 215

TO THE NOVICE LUIGI CAPUANO

Additional advice as to the trial to which he was to be subjected.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, July 22, [1755].

My dear Brother: Your relatives have already addressed to the king a memorial, in which they say that *you entered the Congregation, having been misled by an elder brother, who had interested motives, and that you were taken against your will to our house at Ciorani; moreover, that the Fathers, seeing your mother advance to embrace you, rudely repulsed her and caused her to fall to the ground, to the great scandal of all.* See what lies and what calumnies! Now this memorial they did not present to the king, but they carried it to Mgr. Borgia, who has written to me that we must satisfy your relatives in having you examined as to your intentions in a place where you would be under no restraint. Monsignor must, therefore, be obeyed.

Do not fear; for everything will turn out well, and so also the bishop thinks. We shall send you to Naples to the Chinese College, the Superior of which and those that are there are my friends; all will favor your vocation. If, however, your relatives send priests or religious to find out your intentions, answer according to the letter that you sent me last.

It was with regret that I read in your letter *that you had experienced a very violent attack on your vocation,*—words that made me doubt at first about your constancy; for I feared that you had somewhat listened to the temptation. I was, however, consoled by what you afterwards wrote to me, namely, that you knew perfectly well what you have to do, and that you would resist every temptation until death.

Always recommend yourself to the Blessed Virgin; and when a suggestion from hell is made to you, do not reason about it, but simply answer by pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary. Do not allow yourself to be shaken; after this struggle I hope that your relatives, that is I should say, your enemies, will become quiet. I bless you. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 216

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

He charitably excuses the defects of a subject.—Various matters.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

CIORANI, August 3, [1755].

My dear Don Gasparo: What shall I say about Father N.? He believes that he is doing right when he does those things, and disturbs others and also himself; and I fear, as I have frequently said, that the devil may on this account make him one day lose his vocation. He is, however, humble, zealous, observant of the Rule, and loves the Congregation; but he labors and engages in work with such a passion that he disquiets himself and others. What is to be done? Everyone has his faults. I have more of them than others.

As to Brother Gerardo, *fiat voluntas tua!* [Thy will be done!] I send him the blessing.[17021]

In regard to the grain, those at Pagani wish that I should write to you to send them ten *tomoli.*[17022] I have answered them: What right have you to ask for these ten *tomoli?* Now I have written that your Reverence had spoken to me in your last letter about debts, provisions that you have to buy, etc.

For the rest, if your Reverence could send them, as if of your own accord four or five *tomoli,* it would be well.

As to the sick Fratres, I am glad that they are somewhat better. Say from me to Frater Melchionna that Father Ferrara has said nothing to me, that he was feigning sickness, and that if he had said anything to me about it, I would not have believed him; tell him to take care of his health, to do the will of God, and remain quiet.

Let twenty-five *carlini* be sent to us, as I have spent that amount for repairing a copper-plate engraving of the Madonna. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the Neapolitan edition of 1848.

Letter 217

TO THE NOVICE LUIGI CAPUANO

He advises him how he should behave in the temptation to which his vocation is exposed.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, August 4, [1755].

Your relatives have become somewhat pacified, but not entirely; and as I hear, your father and your mother are going to Ciorani to tempt you by tenderness and by false reasons. Be on your guard; this will be the last assault; do not give a chance to the devil to raise a laugh at your behavior up to the present day.

Yet while reading in your letter that you are continually agitated by temptations to give up your vocation, I cannot help fearing for you. But it is not on account of these temptations; for as long as you recommend yourself to God and repel them, there is nothing to fear. What I fear is, that you give too much ear to them, that you reason with them, and that you do not take care to have recourse to Jesus and Mary when they come. If you act differently from what I tell you, you will lose the grace of vocation and of eternal salvation; for your vocation is clearer than the noonday sun; if you lose it, what will become of you?

I should like you to write to me again and to tell me what motives the devil proposes to you to leave the Congregation after you have so much desired to enter it, and God has given you so many graces to enable you to do so. Is it perhaps your fondness for your relatives? But why? To please your relatives should you wish to abandon Jesus Christ who has deigned with so much love to call you to a life of sanctity? Is it perhaps because in the Congregation one has to suffer?—Enough of this! for I am only speaking to the winds, not knowing in what way the devil wishes to entrap you; this is the reason why I beg you to write me in detail what are your temptations.

For pity's sake! my dear D. Luigi, do not expose yourself to lose this precious crown that Jesus Christ is preparing for you. When an infernal thought enters your mind, represent to yourself the moment of death, and consider what remorse you would feel if you had the misfortune to die out of the Congregation after having abandoned God on account of some earthly purpose. Ah, how I should regret to see you lose your vocation! The efforts that Lucifer has made to excite your relatives, or rather the enemies of your soul, to do what they have done, convince me that if you remain firm, you are destined to do great things for God; for all those who in the Congregation have been engaged in these terrible contests with their relatives, without allowing themselves to be shaken, have afterwards done marvelous things.

For mercy's sake, when the temptation presents itself, repel it forcibly and indignantly by invoking the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and often repeat these all-powerful names. Renew then your resolution by saying: No, my Jesus! I do not wish to leave Thee; no, never; should I even be obliged to die on account of my resolution.—And if, notwithstanding all this, the temptation does not leave you, go if you have permission, to the foot of the altar, before the Blessed Sacrament, or throw yourself, in your room, at the foot of the crucifix, and sigh and pray in this manner: My Jesus, help me; I do not wish to leave Thee; no, no, no!—Then without delay confer with the Master of novices about your temptation; and if it be necessary, write always to me.

I wish to help you as much as I can; but if you neglect to have recourse to Jesus Christ and to the Blessed Virgin, who is the Mother of perseverance, and to consult the Master of novices, I regard your vocation as lost. Look at poor N. and poor N. on the point of leaving the Congregation, yet without their own fault; oh, how I pity them! and you should voluntarily listen to the suggestions of hell by returning to the world, so as to become the laughing-stock not only of hell, but of your whole diocese, of Bishop Borgia, and of everybody! I hope to God's goodness that this may not be so.

Every morning, on rising, I beg you, renew the firm resolution to persevere in the Congregation, and always repeat it during meditation, at your Communion, at your visit, and at your examination of conscience. Always invoke Jesus and Mary, and consult your Father Master. By acting in this manner you need not fear to lose your vocation.

I bless you and I await your next letter so as to know in what way the devil tempts you. I recommend you to Jesus and Mary; do also the same for me. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 218

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

He counsels holy revenge.[17023]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, August 5, [1755].

I have heard in what a complimentary manner the people of Caposele have acted towards you. Well! we must try to revenge ourselves! Be therefore careful to increase almsgiving at the door, and be liberal to those that ask alms. Besides, take special care of the confraternity of which those ungrateful men are the members.

What I regret is that these disturbers of the peace will leave the confraternity and not have the courage, to return to it; for from this will arise a spiritual injury for which I am more sorry than for the temporal. Try therefore and ask others to try by kind words to induce them not to give up the confraternity; invite them especially if it be necessary, without however making mention, particularly in sermons, of what has happened. During the novenas let the preacher encourage them to frequent the confraternity.

As for those that have conducted themselves so loyally, you must thank them in a special manner; and it might be well, if you think fit, to go from house to house to thank them; at least you will derive the advantage that they will remain attached to us. What else could we do? Such is the world. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 219

TO THE NOVICE LUIGI CAPUANO

Happiness that one enjoys in the Congregation.—Answer to several objections.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

SALERNO, August 7, [1755].

I have read your last letter, and I am consoled to hear that you are adopting the means to overcome the temptations of the enemy.

As for your relatives, besides Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints, who are to you more than a father, a mother, and brothers, are we not also brothers to you? Your relatives love you, but as enemies, because they wish that which will make you lose your soul; we, on the contrary, love you as true friends, desiring to see you happy in this life and in the next. Happy, I say, even in this life; for the pleasures of the world do not satisfy the soul, while a holy life with the innocent recreation that the Congregation permits, is able to delight the soul, because in such a life it finds God. In the beginning you may not entirely enjoy this peace, since you must first overcome the temptations by which God wishes to try you; but after the victory one enjoys the peace that surpasses all the delights the world and the senses can procure: *quæ exsuperat omnem sensum* [which surpasses all understanding].

Besides, as you see, it is not true that with us we are always shut up in the convent. When you are a priest you will go on missions the greater part of the year, moving through the country in order to save souls.[17024]

One dies young. This is not true; for many among us enjoy better health in the Congregation than they enjoyed in the world. And after all, if die we must, can there be anything more beautiful than to die for the love of Jesus Christ? Of what use is life, if we do not employ it for God?

O how much was I pleased by what you wrote at the end of your letter concerning your relatives! Thank Jesus Christ and his holy Mother, who have inspired you with these holy sentiments. Courage then! let us sanctify ourselves, and pray to Jesus Christ for me. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 220

TO SISTER MARIA NICOLETTA LEONI (DI CALVANICO), IN THE MONASTERY OF S. GIUSEPPE AT FISCIANO

He recommends to her resignation to God's will.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

SALERNO, August 11, [1755].

I have received your first letter enclosing a *honorarium,* and the Mass has been said. I received your second letter to-day here at Salerno, also enclosing a *honorarium;* and to-morrow I will say the second Mass for you in order that the Blessed Virgin may obtain for you the grace that you desire. But you should be fully resigned to the divine will; if not, the Blessed Virgin will not grant you the grace. I recommend myself to your prayers. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I did not answer you the other day, as I did not know whether you were at Fisciano, your letter not indicating the place where it was written. If I answer you to-day, it is because I learned by chance that your letter came from Fisciano. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of the Leoni family at Calvanico.

Letter 221

TO SISTER MARIA VINCENZA GIANNASTASIO

He encourages her to suffer contradictions in a Christian manner, and gives her important advice.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

SCALA, September 14. [1755?]

I write you from Scala where I received your letter. All the storms, both exterior and interior, which you experience, I have foretold you. They are the cause of affliction to you; as for me they afford me consolation.

How happy am I to know that you are treated as a foolish woman! Be courageous, and continue to be thus foolish for the love of Jesus Christ.

The words of your confessor were for you a cross harder to bear; but he spoke to you with the best intentions. For the rest, I repeat my appreciation and the former obedience that I have imposed upon you, and I assure you on the part of the Most Blessed Trinity that you are in the grace of God. Not only does God wish your salvation; not only has he pardoned your sins; he also really wishes you to be a saint if you persevere.

Be then firm in omitting nothing of what I have told you; and unceasingly pray to Jesus and Mary to obtain perseverance. To this you should always come back, for the persecutions are great, and I believe that they will become greater.

If you think fit, confide entirely in the ordinary confessor, and beg him to speak in your defence to the Superior of the convent in order that you may be able to live in peace. If you do not wish to make this offer to the confessor, beg at least the bishop to come to see you; expose to him in a general way the past and the present state of your conscience, and tell him what I have advised you to do. Monsignor can indeed render you a great service by ordering that you should be left alone.

To go to the parlor? To see your relatives? There is no longer any question about that. Henceforth there should be for you only God, and nothing else.

Take care not to omit the common exercises, and to attend them punctually; fulfil also the duties of your employments, and render service to the Community as much as obedience imposes this upon you; for if you fail in this point, you may be attacked and may be charged with illusion. But how could this be done, if you never fail in any of the duties of your state of life?

The attractions that you feel from time to time, I am convinced, come from God. It is God that draws you to his perfect love by communicating his strength to your soul in order to resist the storms to which you are exposed. They are, you may be sure, not illusions, but divine favors, and great favors, which God grants to you in order entirely to gain your heart. Regard this as certain, and your poor soul will in this conviction take courage to resist the attacks of temptation, of distrust, of all kinds of contrarieties.

If the persecutions should continue, I should be happy, I repeat, if you could have an interview with the bishop; for he is a man of God, is prudent, and well understands how to guide souls. He will encourage you and deliver you from the annoyances which the religious and the directors may cause you.

Follow then my advice and continue the Communions, prayers, mortifications, and all the rest. However, whenever you are not very well, omit without scruple your mortifications according to the degree of your infirmity; and in doubt, do rather less than more.

If you speak to Monsignor tell him that it is I who have wished you to have this interview. You would also do well, in ordinary doubtful things and daily difficulties, to consult your ordinary confessor, whoever he may be, and to obey him if he imposes something upon you, or if he diminishes *for a time* your various exercises. I say *for a time;* for, as a general rule, I do not wish you to omit anything that I have arranged for you. I speak thus because, being far away I cannot direct you in all things that daily occur. For the rest, go on, and have not the least doubt that you are on the right road.

In your Communions always pray for me and for the Congregation, especially at this time when our wants are so great. I bless you. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,
ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 222

TO THE SAME

She should accept a charge without objection.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, October 16. [1755?]

I answer your letter in a tardy manner; for I have been ill for a long time.

As for the office of attendant at the *turn*, if it is entrusted to you, accept it without objection. The distractions that it will cause you will be distractions which God wishes.

You will have, you tell me, a thousand eyes fixed upon you.—I am delighted that this is so, for you will thus be more attentive not to commit faults. Otherwise they will say: *See the saint! how beautiful is her speech, how beautiful is her conduct!* Let me know whether you have spoken to Monsignor. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humbly servant,

ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 223

TO THE SAME

He exhorts her to tend to perfection with courage and perseverance.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, November 2, [1755].

For pity's sake, no more presents. I thank you, but I desire of you but one thing: it is that you devote yourself to the task of becoming a saint. Why speak to me of coming to preach a novena? I set out for Benevento in a few days with nearly all my companions.[17025]

The answer that you gave to Monsignor afforded me great pleasure. See how God comes opportunely to your aid through your Superiors! Be then faithful, and do not leave the path on which you are now walking, even though you should have to combat hell within and without.

Above all, do I recommend to you to be faithful to your accustomed prayers as long as your services are not needed by the Community. I also recommend to you detachment from all, and from myself in particular, since I can assist you only from afar. I have written out for you certain rules; observe them, and imagine that I am always repeating to you what I have said and written to you.

I send you the new edition of the little work called the *Visits,* printed by D. Benedetto Gessari; hymns are added to it, and at the end you will find a treatise on the will of God. As all perfection consists in conformity to the divine will, you may little by little use this short treatise even for meditation.

Always recommend me to Jesus Christ in your prayers and in your Communions. I wish you to receive holy Communion every day, except on one day of the week. Communion will obtain for you perseverance. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After a copy.

Letter 224

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

He reproaches him for incurring a superfluous expense.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

November 16, [1755].

I saw Brother Francesco, and having asked him what he had been doing at Naples these past days,[17026] I received the answer that he had been looking for a copy of St. Augustine which he expected to purchase for forty ducats. But I know that you already have St. Augustine in your library. Why then make such an outlay? You will say that the copy which you have is badly printed; but I answer it is sufficient that it is a copy of St. Augustine, and a copy that is suitable for us poor people.

Then I should like to know with what money you have made this purchase. If it is money from uncertain restitutions, I should feel scrupulous about exchanging it for a better printed copy of St. Augustine; if it is money from, Don Gerardo,[17027] the priest who has been received, I wish also to have a word to say; since I am bankrupt on account of the many expenses that I have made; and on the other hand, I find myself indebted to the amount of thirty ducats for the work on the *Explanation of Scripture.* The publisher calls for his money, and I know not what to do. If it is the money of that priest, we should at least divide the sum between us.

You have in your house two bad Consultors, Fathers Fathers Apice and Leo, who wish to have books in a grand style, but not in accordance with our poverty. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

If you have any money to spend I would rather have you buy the works of Bellarmine, Spondano, Rinaldo (Compendium of Baronius), the library of Mansi. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the monastery of the discalced Carmelites at Modena.

Letter 225

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT ILICETO, AND MASTER OF NOVICES.[17028]

He forbids him to incur a superfluous expense.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BENEVENTO, November 17, [1755].

I have heard in what misery you find yourself. For the present I do not see how you manage to live. There is but little income to be hoped for. The lands are not leased. But you would say: *Let us go to Iliceto; let us go to Iliceto.*[17029] And now have you anything to live on there?

Could not your Reverence in this embarrassed state of affairs avoid certain expenses? I tell you and beg you to expend no money except for what is absolutely necessary for your support. If this produces no effect, you will all have to remove to Ciorani. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 226

TO HIS BROTHER D. ERCOLE DE LIGUORI

He begs him to ask for him the blessing of his dying mother.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BENEVENTO, November 23, [1755].

Yes; to serve you I have already written to Brother Francesco [Tartaglione] to assist you until God calls our mother to himself.[17030] How greatly am I consoled that she is now undisturbed by scruples!

Here we are giving a large mission in the city of Benevento; there is a great concourse of people, and there are eighteen Fathers engaged. We shall stay here for a month. There is no other news.

Send me the ornament which was promised by you to the Blessed Virgin; it will serve to adorn her crown. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Ask mother's blessing for me and tell her that God and the Blessed Virgin will surely secure for her eternal salvation. And I have recommended her to the prayers of the people. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your very affectionate brother,

ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of the Boccafogli family at Rome.

Letter 227

TO FATHER PASQUALE AMENDOLARA,[17031] AT PAGANI

Various recommendations.—Some details in regard to the mission at Benevento.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BENEVENTO, November 23, [1755].

I rejoice to hear that Father Mazzini is better, but he might have waited a little while longer and not set out while suffering from fever.

You did well in regard to Frater [D. Fabrizzio] Cimino. Your Reverence should write to Father Caione to speak or write for me—it would be better to have an interview—to the Archbishop [of Conza] in behalf of Polestra and Melaccio. But in the meantime Polestra and Melaccio should prepare for the examination for subdeaconship, because the archbishop will come to examine them. It is necessary for them to know the treatises *de Horis canonicis*, *de Ordine,* and especially *de Subdiaconatu,* with the treatise *de Sacramentis in genere.* Tell Father Siviglia to direct them in this matter.

I send to Ciorani the manuscript of Father Mazzini.

As for Frater [D. Ignazio] Fiore, the affair is being arranged.

I have already written to Ciorani and to Naples for copies of the Moral Theology and of the *Pratica.*

Here the mission continues amid a great concourse of people. On Saturday a mission will begin at four other places, and we shall give one to the nobles. There are many that wish to enter our Congregation, but are moved to do so by the exercises and the missions; their vocation must however first mature.

We have made great friends with the Jesuits. Here there is being established a beautiful congregation of young ecclesiastics to make them good apostolic laborers.

I bless you all, and especially the students. I will return about the 21st of December. This time will appear to me a thousand years. So far I have been ill twice. Now I am well, and am at work. Live Jesus and Mary! Father Spera is at work and gets along. Live Jesus and Mary!

Tell Father Mazzini to mention in Chapter that it would be a very great fault if one, when writing to any one of us, would put on the letter the words *matters of conscience* and the letter should contain nothing of the kind.

Write this also from me to Father Caione so that he may speak of it in Chapter. Live Jesus and Mary!

If you have an opportunity, send me some more copies (the small edition) of the *Visits* printed at Naples. Find out the time when the conveyance comes from Ciorani to this place. Live Jesus and Mary!

Send a hundred *Visits* to Ciorani so that they may be sent to me at the first opportunity. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the Neapolitan edition of 1848.

Letter 228

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

The measure in which accessory sciences should be studied.

NOCERA, December 15, 1755.

. . . . As for the cornices, that is understood; leave them in the choir, because the choir belongs to the church.[17032]

I have heard some whispering that Father Leo wishes to teach mathematics, or geometry. For the principles of geometry and the four rules of arithmetic, *concedo* [I grant permission]; for more, *no*. Even Father Mabillon, who was at the head of learned men, forbade this to the religious. Tell Father Leo that by all means the course of philosophy should be finished in two years. I regret to see in the Congregation that the spirit of vanity and useless erudition is gaining ground to the detriment of important sciences. . . .

After an old copy.

Letter 229

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, RECTOR, AND MASTER OF NOVICES AT ILICETO

Advice in regard to the health of the subjects, to useless expenses, to the practice of mortification.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, December 31, [1755].

In regard to Ansalone, Father Ferrara has written me a fiery letter. He tells me that it is suspected that he has been spitting blood. Hence as to his admission, tell him in my name that he must have patience, and that he should wait another month, in order that it may be more surely seen how his health will be, especially since his father has written that he was suffering from costiveness. Let him in the meantime not be dejected; I will afterwards shorten his novitiate.[17033]

I say that he should still wait another month; but when he has been once received, and has been sent by me into the country to see whether he will recover, what need is there of a new admission? However let us give this satisfaction to Father Ferrara, by keeping him in suspense for a month. But though he may have been received a second time I should have to dismiss him if he has a relapse.

Ansalone himself writes to me that he is perfectly well. Tell him in my name to take courage; he is already a member of the Congregation; why should he fear? If he continues to remain well, he shall be one of us; but if bad health returns, his admission will not hinder him from being sent away; let him be patient and cheerful.

Let us now come to a matter of greater importance. You write me that bread is wanting. . . . . . But why incur so many useless, or unnecessary expenses,—expenses that are out of proportion to the present scanty resources of this house, or hardly conformable to the obedience that I have given you not to incur any expense except through sheer necessity? For pity’s sake, do not now think any more of making improvements in the building, nor of any other expense but what is absolutely necessary. At present remain as you are; provide for your wants as well as you can; later on we may think of doing these things if divine Providence will permit us. According to what I learn there is a debt of a hundred and sixty ducats at Lacedogna; there are also debts at Foggia; and there is a want of oil, grain, wine, etc.; well! to what a pass will you find yourself reduced? Are you going to feed on grass, or will you be imprisoned for debt? I shall at last be obliged to treat you according to the rumors that now prevail at Ciorani.

The Chapter[17034] against my opinion has permitted the giving of a second glass of wine to any one that expresses a wish for it; but you must inform the novices that he that does this always or without a real necessity will give very little edification, and show but little mortification. I beg you to pay particular attention to this matter; for when there is question of profession I will ask you about it.

As regards having two rooms made for yourself, give up the idea for the present; later on we shall speak of it.

Frater N. writes to me for sweetmeats; I send him something that I withheld this morning from the young people among whom they were to have been distributed. I should have been better pleased had the novices asked me for mortifications and the means of loving Jesus Christ, rather than for sweetmeats.

The novice D. Gerardo [Gisone] writes to me that he is quite content, etc.; pay particular attention to him; for priests in the novitiate have more temptations than others.

I bless you all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I send you the hymn of St. Aloysius.[17035] Live Jesus and Mary!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 230

TO THE STUDENT DON MAURO MURANTE, AT MELFI.[17036]

He permits him to return to Pagani.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

PAGANI, January 7, 1756.

I have read your letter, and it has so much affected me that I cannot help granting your request. Come, then, to this house at Pagani; but travel in the most convenient way possible, and take, I beg you, the same precautions as at your departure for Melfi. Choose also for this journey favorable weather and less frightful than we have at present. I am here waiting for you. Do not forget to bring me the accounts that you will be able to collect in regard to Brother Gerardo.[17037]

While awaiting the pleasure of seeing you soon, I embrace you in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

[*P. S.*] I am expecting you, my dear Frater Mauro, and hours appear to me to be ages; but whether you are sick or well, it suffices that you belong to God. Do not, however, set out, I beg you, in damp weather, and as much as possible protect yourself against the cold.

I bless you. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of a family at Melfi.

Letter 231

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, AT CAPOSELE

The sending of some points with regard to the Life of the Venerable Brother Gerardo.—Various counsels.—Seditious pretensions of the lay-brothers at Iliceto.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, January 11, [1756].

I have received your long letter which you first wrote to me.

I understand that St. Augustine’s works were already bought, but I was wishing you would have bought Petavius. But have patience; let us divide the twenty ducats. For in the destitution in which I am (and God knows how great it is) I have bought this *Commentary on Scripture*, and I am half sorry for it; nevertheless it is certainly useful; it gives only the literal sense, but it is a sense that is indeed very necessary for one to know.

Please inform me whether the Archbishop [of Conza] is in the diocese or at Naples. If he is in his diocese, write to him from me to ask him whether he will allow Frater [Don Vito] Polestra to take Orders *in tribus diebus*, as the young man has completed his studies, has abilities, and has attained his twenty-sixth year.

I send you hererewith the *notes* taken by Father Giovenale[17038] on the Life of Brother Gerardo. Preserve and take a copy of them as well as you can, as I have asked you to do. See also about the time that you can devote to this matter. It would be well for you to spend about a quarter of an hour every day on the work, and thus you will finish the work gradually. I send you also your own manuscript; it will serve to remind you of a great many things.

I am glad that the seminarian Guglielmo has joined us. I would wish you to write to him to procure the permission of the archbishop before he sets out for Naples. His resolutions under the form of promises to the Madonna are truly full of tenderness.

As for Father Nittoli, I told him to continue to act as Prefect according to what you wrote me in your last letter. Tell him, however, from me that he should make no difficulty in giving absolution even several times a week to those of our Fratres who accuse themselves only of venial sins, past or present, provided *at the time* there is no habit of relapsing into sin and even when there is no extraordinary sign.

With regard to the contributions,[17039] do as seems best to you.

I bless all and especially the Prefect of the students with all his subjects.

Inform me of the number of retreats that you will have to give during this Lent. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa.

Have a watchful eye upon the lay-brothers, and do not allow them to claim *rights.* At Iliceto there has been a semi-revolution on this subject. The Brothers maintained *that they should take precedence of the novices; that they should make the common acts after dinner, and not in the evening after having toiled all day,* as is customary in other houses, now that the winter is here; and *that they should have the privilege of taking a siesta*[17040] *after dinner,* which they have not now, as the days are short and the night's sleep is sufficient. Moreover, they assert that the Carmelite lay-brothers and the Franciscan lay-brothers gained the exemption from washing dishes, and I do not know what other privilege. A fine state of affairs, truly! Hence your lay-brothers have to perform the common acts every evening. Do not allow the *siesta* during the day, unless there be a real necessity for it. As for washing the dishes and serving at table, it will suffice to have the chorists do this occasionally, with interruptions, and when the lay-brothers have had special work to perform.

Finally, let us carefully avoid customs that may afterwards give rise to disputes. Read my letter to Father Apice; read it to the chorists of the house, and then send it as soon as possible to Father Apice.[17041] Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of our convent of Saint-Trond, Belgium.

Letter 232

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT ILICETO

Punishment that he should inflict upon the seditious lay-brothers.—The study to which he should devote himself,

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, January 13, 1756.

I have just read of the fine doings of the Brothers. All those that have conspired to go away deserve to be expelled. I will however pardon them this time. But I cannot pardon the novice-brother; send him away at once. As however he is the ring-leader and hot-headed, I fear that he might do you some harm or might lead astray some other Brothers, if you dismiss him from Iliceto. Hence I should say that you send him to another place, for example to Lacedogna, or elsewhere, with a letter addressed to some friend, telling him that as the bearer is no longer a member of the Congregation he should do me the favor of dismissing him. Enough; do as you think best, bit expel him immediately, and endeavor as I have said to prevent a scene.

Then take the habit from Brother Giacomo until further orders; he should eat his meals outside of the refectory, and receive Communion only on Sundays.

Since they have mentioned the dispute among the Carmelite and Franciscan lay-brothers, take care that no new custom be introduced in regard to serving at table and washing the dishes. For the beginning at least see that as heretofore the lay-brothers are made to wash the dishes and to serve at table, and only *from time to time but with interruptions* appoint the novices to do this work.

It does not matter that on this account it will be necessary to free the Brothers of other work. But enough on this subject. Let us keep up our customs, let no other customs be any longer mentioned, and let the Brothers avoid saying: *That is none of our business.*

Call all the lay-brothers to you, one at a time, and tell them that I am angry with them, etc., and let them read the enclosed letter that I have written to them. Call Brother Cesare and tell him privately from me that he should be watchful to see who murmurs and complains, and report the matter to you; you should then communicate the name of the culprit to me. Tell him that he should at once reprimand the one that says a word.

I also hear at the same time of your miseries. I do not know how you can subsist without grain, without oil, without linen, and without money. I send you ten ducats (and I give fifteen *carlini* to the Brother for his journey): but will this be sufficient? I am thinking of imposing a little tax on all the houses. But with all this shall we succeed in remedying the evil?

Father Ferrara writes me that he could send away Frater Vitelli on the ground that there are doubts about his patrimony. If it is certain that he has none, he cannot of course be received. He has however been already received; it is true, he is deficient in talent, but he behaves well. When Father Villani comes consult him and write to me.

In regard to Father Villani, I have indeed made him *Visitor;* but you need not send for him during this carnival, and make him leave the many missions that he has to give.[17042] It is sufficient if he comes during Lent. Write to him at once to remain where he is. It would have been better, before writing to him to come, you had written to me.

I have written to Ciorani that they should send you a copy of the “Glories of Mary.”

I allow you to have duplicate books of devotion for the novitiate; but I cannot allow you to read Cassiano and Alessandro. How head-strong you are! I should rather have you read half an hour every day my Moral Theology so that you may be able to hear confessions. Are you never to hear confessions? It is not for want of intelligence. You must acknowledge that in this matter there is some tepidity, or may be laziness, on your part. Study at least the principal treatises, as *de Præceptis Decalogi, de Peccatis, de Pœnitentia, de Matrimonio, de Censuris, de Charitate, de Conscientia* and *de Legibus.* I mention those treatises that you have not yet read. I do not wish to impose this upon you under obedience, but try to study them when you can.

I bless all and especially the novices. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of the house at Pagani.

Letter 233

TO THE LAY-BROTHERS OF THE HOUSE AT ILICETO

He complains of their conduct and threatens them with punishment.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, 13, [January, 1756].

Dear Brothers: God knows what great pain it caused me to hear of the faults committed by you in so short a time, faults especially of pride; it should be your duty to acquire the virtue of humility which is the virtue proper to lay-brothers.

Well (speaking in general), I pardon you all; but I beg you not to force me to chastise you again for such chastisement may and will draw after it eternal punishment: if you oblige me to expel you from the Congregation, I do not know what will become of you; I should tremble for your eternal salvation.

Do not think to intimidate me by saying that you wish to leave. Every day I am forced to refuse admission to men who wish to enter the Congregation; however even if no new-comers were to arrive, Brothers might be obtained from other houses, where they happen to be numerous.

Hence I beg you not to talk any more about leaving, for that alone would induce me to dismiss you from the Congregation.

Now that the winter is here, you will make the common exercises of the day in the evening, for then you have time, as you have not to study like the chorists. Moreover, as the days are short, the *siesta* is not necessary; the night’s sleep is sufficient for you. That is the practice in the other houses.

I ask you, if you were at home living with your relatives would you rest and make your exercises during the day, or would you work? We should always be charitable to those who are not in so good health as we, for they need our charity. You are always to take the last place, after the Fathers, students, and novices. What a shame, to see Brothers claiming precedence!

The Carmelites and the Franciscans are members of Orders, making solemn vows; you on the other hand, belong to a Congregation in which the Rector Major can dismiss subjects whenever he sees fit to do so.

The duties of the chorists are to preach, to hear confessions, and to study. The office of the lay-brother is to serve and to do whatever he is commanded. Understand well, that serving at table and washing dishes are the duties of the lay-brothers; sometimes and only *sometimes* the chorists may perform these duties, but only to make them practise humility.

Well now; do not cause me any more displeasure; I love you as brothers, but I wish you to become holy. Of what use is it to enter the Congregation, if you do not wish to become saints? Now the virtues that are necessary for your sanctification are, humility, obedience, and patience; without suffering there can be no true sanctity.

I bless all the Brothers who have a good intention, and I curse those who have a bad intention; and remember that my curse will be accompanied by that of Jesus Christ.

Live Jesus, Joseph, Mary, and Teresa!

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 234

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

He again refers to the treatment to be given to the lay-brothers to prevent subsequent disorders.

Live Jesus, Joseph, Mary, and Teresa!

NOCERA, January 16, [1756],

I believe that I have written to you in regard to the Brothers, that they should make the common acts in the evening in winter during which the days are short, and that they must do without the hour of repose as it is permitted only to the chorists.

Now in reference to the hour of repose my wish is that you inform the Brothers that half an hour, if not a whole hour, of rest will be granted to those that need it. In this matter you must be governed by prudence. At all events the practice of the Brothers taking an hour's rest in winter must be stopped, since it is permitted only to those that study.

I recommend to you, besides, that you take care that the Brothers nearly always wait at table and wash the dishes. It will suffice that the students do this work once or twice a month. Exhort these Brothers not to murmur, since those that did so at Ciorani are now suffering punishment, and will have to suffer it for some time to come.

In future, I shall probably not admit the Brothers to profession till after a probation of ten years. Tell, therefore, the new Brother of Grazioli[17043] that I will receive him, but only on condition, now imposed on all others, that he must serve as a secular for several years—at least during four years—before it will be permitted him to enter the novitiate. Your Reverence must not, therefore, during your Rectorate, apply to me for permission to give him the habit.

As for those that have already received the habit and that are to be professed, you must inform me of the least faults that they commit, as I may perhaps defer their profession. These good Brothers, after they have made their profession, are apt to become proud. Live Jesus, Joseph, Mary, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 235

TO FATHER GIROLAMO FERRARA,[17044] MINISTER OF THE HOUSE AT ILICETO

He declares his intentions relative to the religious profession of the lay-brothers.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

PAGANS, January 18, 1756.

Brother N. wishes to enter the novitiate according to what he writes to me. Tell him that he may enter for some time, say two or three months, according as you think proper.

Tell, moreover, the novice-brothers, who have or who have not yet received the habit (and tell each one in particular, each time, so as to prevent the forming of plans), that I have no intention to admit to profession the lay-brothers except after a very long trial of their virtue. For this purpose take care to gather information, mark down on paper and send it to me, what are the particular defects of the lay-brothers that are in your house, so that I may use your report as a legitimate pretext when they asked me to admit them to profession. It has been remarked that these good Brothers after their profession begin to relax in their fervor and that they become very imperfect. Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

As for Brother N., it is well that he enters the novitiate; but in order to receive the habit, he will have to wait a long time. What I have said in regard to others, I also say in regard to him; for if I am indulgent towards him, I shall be obliged to be so towards others.

I bless you all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 236

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Expression of disapprobation on the subject of the mission given at Potenza.—Conditions essentially required that missions, and above all important missions, may be accepted.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph!

NOCERA, 19, [January, 1756].

First remark. It appears that a mission is to be given at Potenza. I had already refused this mission, and I therefore do not understand why you accepted it.

I have said to myself, and I say so again: This mission at Potenza, in view of the number of subjects whom you will employ and the inconveniences that they will suffer, will be for you an occasion of a conspicuous failure. You yourself, my dear Father, are suffering from a severe cold in the chest; on the other hand, Potenza is a place where the cold is extreme. I really cannot understand how you can go there.

I beg you, therefore, that as soon as you can travel and you have had a favorable journey, return to *Mater Domini* (Caposele) and do what the physician tells you. If he orders you to go to bed, remain in bed till your cold has disappeared; for a cold so obstinate might kill you, or at least disable you for the future. For the sake of one mission you might render yourself unfit for all the missions that you might give afterwards.

As for this mission at Potenza, I should have wished you had first spoken to me; I should have examined whether it would prove successful. For this work you would need fourteen or fifteen of the best subjects; as the city is a difficult place to preach in. But the date has already been fixed; what is to be done?—I do not forbid you to give the mission, but I say that it might easily be dropped; you are in fact too few, and several among you are still young. If then it were possible to put it off till the next year, it would be preferable. For the rest, I refer the matter to Father Fiocchi; but tell him from me that when there is question of so large and so important missions, I wish to be informed in advance.

Since you tell me not to send either of the two Brothers, I will not send him. But you must know that the Brother for whom you asked us is not fit to transact business outside of the convent.

Father Fiocchi (I see from his letter) wishes to have Father Cimino. At present I will write that he should be sent if this can be done; but you may be sure that he will not come. In fact, missions that have been engaged and promised are to be given at Ariano, and without Cimino it will be impossible to give them. You see what happens when we thus accept at random missions, and difficult missions.

Read to Father Fiocchi all that I have just written, that is, all that regards this mission at Potenza which has given me so much annoyance. All could have been arranged if you had sent me word. Now you are to go back to the convent; Father Cimino will surely not come: indeed that will be a fine mission that is going to be given!

As for Father Apice, if he also suffers from his chest, *I do not wish, I do not wish, I do not wish* him to preach the evening sermon. When we have lost a subject, all the inhabitants of Potenza would not be able to restore him to us.

This then would be my opinion: It being now settled that you cannot take part in this mission, that Father Apice is also suffering, and that Cimino cannot come, Father Fiocchi would have a good reason to withdraw his word in regard to Potenza. He should simply write: Several Fathers have fallen ill, and the others are engaged.

Steps have been taken to give the mission at Potenza, but as for the missions to be given at Conza, asked for by the Archbishop [Mgr. Nicolai], have they been given or not?—I do not wish the missions at Conza to be omitted in order to give other missions. Why do you wish to make the archbishop indisposed towards us?

Don Benedetto Grazioli writes to me that he is most anxious to have the consolation, that at the baptism of a child expected by him from day to day, Father Margotta should fulfil the duties of parish priest and Father Fiocchi those of sponsor. I am sending a messenger to Naples to have Father Margotta come, since I cannot refuse this consolation to Don Benedetto, and I dispense from the Rule in this case. Tell then Father Fiocchi to put off the day on which he is to go to Atella; or rather, I am going to write to Don Benedetto that at the desired moment he should send for Father Fiocchi. The latter, when he arrives at Atella should ask Don Benedetto (as I have already written to him) to send at once to Benevento the whole amount that he wishes to give; for if he sends it little by little, it will be used in paying the expenses of the building, and the house would derive no income that would assure its future.

Grazioli writes to me that he has sent or will send (I do not well understand him) five hundred ducats for Benevento. If they have reached you, or as soon as they reach you, send them to me in order that I may determine the use to which they should be applied.

I hear at this moment the following piece of news: The mission has begun at Potenza, and notwithstanding your cold in the chest you have begun to preach the evening sermons. *Gloria Patri!*—Here is once for all the general rule: I forbid every one suffering from a cold in the chest or an obstinate cold, I forbid him, I say, to preach the evening sermons, especially in places where people are hard to please; and it matters little whether we give up a mission already begun. You must then examine what is to be done in the present case. Here you see what it is to burn one's vessels without thinking of the future. This mission at Potenza has been of singular torment to me.

In regard to the mission at Capaccio, I hope to provide for it with the subjects of this house; but as to Castellucia, it is incumbent on you to think of it.

To return to the mission at Potenza, I see that my letter will embarrass you. I do not however wish to cause you trouble; this is the reason why I refer the matter to the decision of Father Fiocchi, who will judge what is best to be done. Yet as for risking the health of the subjects, especially that of Father Apice and yours in making you preach in spite of all, I beg Father Fiocchi to be prudent so that I may not grow angry as I fear I shall be obliged to. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

(Postscript written by the hand of the saint): I am not very well; recommend me to Jesus Christ. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the original preserved in one of our houses in the French Province.

Letter 237

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

Mistake to be remedied in the case of a lay-brother.—Punishment inflicted on the guilty ones at Ciorani.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

NOCERA, January 20, 1756.

I wrote that you should dismiss the novice-brother; but you may have noticed that I was mistaken when I believed that he (as appears I indicated in my letter) had committed some impertinence by employing force to remain in his room. But now I hear that the one who committed this fault was Brother Andrea, who is already professed; him I cannot send away merely on this account, but he deserves a severe penance.

Besides, Brother Bartolomeo, that is, the novice, as I see from the letter of Father Ferrara, did not commit such a fault as to deserve to be dismissed. So I hope that you have understood the mistake and have not yet sent him away.

I have spoken kindly to Brother Giacomo and he confessed his guilt. Hence as regards the penance that he as well as Brother Andrea and all the rest have deserved, I leave all to your Reverence and to Father Ferrara.

I do not write with my own hand, because I have been ill these past four days; I therefore do not write specially to Father Ferrara. It will be sufficient to let him read this letter.

As for Frater [D. Fabrizio] Cimino, his illness is not serious, and I will have him take here some little remedy.

At Ciorani justice[17045] has been done. I have dismissed Brother Crescenzo; he had murmured and then refused to do the penance. Brother Carlo and Brother Giuseppe Trombetta of Naples are confined to their rooms [*carcerati*].

All the others that have murmured have been put under penance. Brother Domenico is confined to his room here.

I bless all. Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 238

TO THE SAME.[17046]

He asks him to assist a Brother tempted against his vocation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, January 21, 1756.

Brother N. writes to me that he is disquieted and on the point of losing his vocation; that such a trouble should also come upon us! I have answered him firmly and kindly.

Try if possible to calm him by kind treatment. Allow him more sleep, if he wishes it. O my God! these Brothers!

Brother N. has asked me to admit him to the novitiate; see whether you can allow him to make a part of it. However, I have told him that no one should speak to me about receiving the habit till the lapse of several years; and as for the vows many years will have to pass by.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 239

TO THE SAME

He refuses to dismiss a subject.

[End of January, 1756.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

As for Brother [Bartolomeo] I have no reason to send him away. I first wrote that he should be sent away, but through a mistake I thought that he had done what Brother Andrea has done. I therefore wrote that he should be kept; now how could I send him away?

Let us see how he behaves himself; and if he behaves badly, he may afterwards be dismissed, and then he may feel sorry, but I shall not. I shall feel sorry for my own sins, but not for this act of justice.

You wrote me about the priest of N. that he is suffering from lunacy. Now you write me that this fact is doubtful. You should therefore see (now is the time) whether he is really suffering from such a disease.

I am glad to hear that those that have received the habit[17047] are doing well.

I bless all, and especially the novices. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 240

TO FATHER GIROLAMO FERRARA, AT ILICETO

Conditions required for dismissing a subject.

[End of January, 1756.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I have written to Father Rector on account of Brother Andrea and Brother Bartolomeo.

For pity's sake, let Father Rector not trouble me so much about these Brothers! When I have written and decided something, of what use is it to torment me again about it?

I have already written to him that Brother Bartolomeo should stay; why urge me again to send him away?

After admission *grave* reasons are required to dismiss a subject; and after profession, we must have *very grave* reasons joined with incorrigibility; without this it is a mortal sin to dismiss him.

I bless you all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After an old copy.

Letter 241

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, AT THE MISSION GIVEN AT POTENZA

He forbids any postulant to be sent him without his previous permission.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, January 30, 1756.

I received your two letters, and I am greatly surprised to see that you have not received my letter which I recommended to our people at Ciorani to send at once by a messenger. However, you will soon receive it.

The letter contained a complaint about the mission that was begun by you when I had refused to give it at least at the present time, and when your Reverence and Father Apice were suffering from a cold. I hope to God that in future this may not again happen. You will read the rest in my letter.

I hear now that the mission has been successful. How wonderful! No mission had for a long time been given at Potenza. But it would have succeeded far differently had it been given at the proper time and with a sufficient number of Fathers.[17048]

Gloria Patri! Within a short time you have sent us four young men without having first informed us that they would come. From this day forward (and tell this to all most especially) send me no one without having first informed me, and before I have sent a favorable answer.

The two young men have been admitted; but the tall one I had already dismissed because he is only very mediocre, and we are not now in a condition to receive those that are mediocre; there are enough of us, and there is no bread. But then there was so much weeping, and I felt so much compassion for him now that he had made such a journey that the Consultors themselves proposed him to me to admit him.

But we no longer wish to be exposed to receive any more subjects through compassion. And so remember, and I repeat, tell this to all, to send me no one, *no one, no one*, if I have not told you that he may come. But all this it seems to me your Reverence already knew.

I bless all. Father Cimino[17049] should come here immediately after the mission at Rocca is finished, because a great deal is to be done; and I would also wish that Father de Meo should come.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 242

TO FATHER FRANCESCO PENTIMALLI.[17050]

He exhorts him to perfect obedience.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA February 11. [1756?]

My dear Francesco: I have learned with pleasure that you have recovered from your illness; but I was somewhat pained to hear that you have given to the Superior and to your brethren an answer that was rather sharp.

Many things may appear to us preposterous, which are nevertheless right for us, when they have been dictated by obedience. If every subject wished to do what seemed best to him, there would be at end to obedience.

I beg you then to be patient when certain things seem to you to be what they should not. When you have given your opinion, then become quiet; it will be sufficient that you reserve to yourself the privilege of writing to me or of orally reporting to me what seems to you to be suitable.

I beg you for the rest of the missions to stand by whatever the Superior ordains; afterwards, when you return, you may tell me all.

I bless you. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 243

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

He sends him different kinds of help.

[February, 1756.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Take care of Frater N. who is suffering from catarrh; see that he does not take cold.

I again send two pounds of chocolate for those that have a cough or have a cold.

I also send ten ducats to help you a little in your distress.

I bless you all, especially the novices. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 244

TO THE SAME

Measures to be taken in regard to various subjects.

[February, 1756.]

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

First of all in regard to the Masses of [Father Pasquale] Basile, there is some commotion at our house in Ciorani;[17051] I approve of the application of Masses such as you have made for this house. But in regard to the Masses that you have applied to yourself you must by all means have them supplied; because we must keep up the established custom, namely, that the application of the Masses does not change, whatever may be the temporary changes of residence among the subjects.

As for the priest Saltarelli, try to have him go away as soon as possible. Think of some way and of some pretext. However, by all means see that he is sent away at once. And tell him that it is not necessary for him to come here to importune me, because this would be a loss of time, since I have good reasons for believing that the Congregation is not made for him.

As for the physician, what is to be done? There are no such deficiencies, etc. I have written to him. Read the letter that I am sending to him, and then give it to him.

As to the young man of Resina, since he is suffering from pains in the limbs, there is no reason why he should stay in the Congregation. Tell him that all our houses are very cold, and he would thereby soon lose his health. Induce him to go away. I feel sorry for him, for he is a good young man; but there is no remedy; God does not wish him to be in the Institute.

I say the same thing in regard to the two other young men from Ischia and Bosco. They are good, but not good for us.

Say, however, to these two that I do not dismiss them altogether; I wish only that they should go home and re-establish their health; for as soon as they have become well, I will receive them; and so let them go away with this certain hope. Send them away, however, in their secular dress.

As for Frater [D. Francesco Antonio] de Paola I have ordered that he should be sent.

I bless you all. Live Jesus and Mary!

In regard to the two Brothers, Saverio and Domenico, if they do not do what they should, they will be dismissed without fail. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of our house at Pagani.

Letter 245

TO THE SAME

Project of a foundation at Matera.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NAPLES, March 6, 1756.

As soon as Father Villani arrives tell him it is impossible for me to send Father Amarante, as we are overburdened with work, which even with Father Amarante's assistance we can hardly accomplish; the mission is very large. Nor is it possible to send any students, for I do not wish them to be taken away from the study of Moral Theology; otherwise they will not be able to go out on future missions.

The house at Benevento had too many missions this year.

Touching the matter of Matera,[17052] I do not desire to say anything either to favor the undertaking or to hinder it, because it will be difficult for us to find later on a foundation as advantageous as that, and even to have another foundation in the kingdom under like circumstances. This reasoning appears to me to be just. However, God will help us, and I shall not accept it until I see everything well arranged. But the affair will hardly be allowed at Rome, since there is danger of giving offence to a great religious body.

All that I have said has also been admitted by the Cardinal [Sersale], who has also promised not to throw any impediment in the way.

Tell also Father Villani that I recommend to him among others the young man from Torrecuso.[17053]

Should D. Andrea [Villani] not come in time to receive this news, you will please write it to him, and thus spare my head, which God knows how it fares when I am eating nothing. There is nothing else. May you keep well! Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

(*Postcript written by the secretary*): Father Rector Major says that the person sent by Don Benedetto Grazioli may stay as long as he wishes.

The young man from Panni is always writing to me; see whether you can grant his request.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 246

TO SISTER MARIA NICOLETTA LEONI (DI CALVANICO), IN THE MONASTERY OF FISCIANO

He earnestly recommends to her to resign herself to the will of God.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NAPLES, March 9, [1756].

Your letter has reached me here at Naples. I shall say the Mass for you to-morrow; but you may be sure the Madonna will not obtain for you the grace that you desire, because your prayer has mistaken its object.

You should ask for patience and not for health; and even this last, it seems to me, you ask with but little resignation. If in asking for patience, or at least for health, you were resigned to God's will, you would more easily obtain both.

Do what I tell you: Ask in future that you may be able to bear patiently not only sickness but the contempt that you receive from your Sisters. To suffer as Jesus Christ has suffered, to suffer and to be despised to suffer even without exciting the compassion of any one, can anything be more meritorious for gaining Paradise?

Think of it: with the numerous infirmities which you suffer, your life will be but little prolonged. Try then to provide for merits during the short time that still remains to you.

Drive far from you the horrible temptation of leaving the monastery. Ah! do you wish to run the risk of losing your soul?

Now that you have read this letter kneel down, or even from your bed, make to God an entire offering of yourself, and beg him to treat you as he pleases. Unite also your pains and your annoyances to those that Jesus Christ had to suffer.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 247

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Solicitude of the saint for the house at Iliceto and for the health of the students.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NAPLES, March 20, [1756].

The first thing that I have to ask you, my dear Gasparo, is to take up again the work on Scripture. I am not exactly pleased with it myself.[17054] Yet it is after all Scripture; at least in Communities it may be of great benefit.

Secondly; at Iliceto the novices are in want of the necessaries of life, and are suffering very great misery. I have, therefore, been thinking of removing them from that place. For the present I have ordered to be sent to them ten ducats from Ciorani and five from Pagani; I now ask you to send when you can ten more ducats.

As for Frater Michele [de Michele], I do not wish that he should study. It will do no good if he has a relapse, and we shall lose all that we have gained. It will be sufficient if he sometimes goes to class and listens a little to what is said. Let him walk out and take exercise. After Easter send him to the missions that are to be given with Father Fiocchi, at first at S. Angelo, etc.

Tell Frater Castaldo that I participate in the consolations that he enjoys; let him pray to God for me. I do not send a special answer as I am about ascending the pulpit to preach.

I have promised you Father Fiocchi for a change; but being here I do not know what arrangements have been made by the Fathers of Nocera and Ciorani to whom I have entrusted the giving of all the spiritual exercises.

Here much good is done by the Congregation. I bless you all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 248

TO SISTER MARIA DI GESÙ, CARMELITE AT RIPACANDIDA

Counsels regarding observance and resignation.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

PAGANI, April 22, 1756.

In answering your letter I am using the hand of another o write to you, for it is only a little while ago that I recovered from serious illness.[17055] Here is my answer in a few words.

In the state in which you are you have nothing else to do than to observe the Rule and to show zeal for its observance. Then you should without ceasing offer yourself to God and be resigned to his will in whatever state he may wish to put you.

I feel extremely grateful to you for remembering me in your prayers; for my part I am doing the same for you. Continue, I beg you, to do so during the few days of life that still remain to you.

I shall do what I can to intercede for you [with the Bishop of Melfi] to have Communion restored to you; but I must wait for a favorable opportunity. In the meantime be resigned in everything; this is what Jesus Christ wishes.

Salute all the Sisters for me, but especially the Mother Prioress; let her have the charity to recite during nine consecutive days the Salve Regina on account of two grave matters that concern the Congregation. Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 249

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

Confirmation of an order already given.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, May 2, [1756].

Yes, it is understood, only Nigro[17056] should pass to the study of philosophy as we have agreed upon. When a thing has been said, why repeat it? Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 250

TO THE SAME

Request that he should work at the Constitutions.—Various measures.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, May 11, [I756].

Before all things, I beg you to set your hand to the Constitutions at once and as often as you can; for they should be read in the houses where they are little known, else it might be said that they are not obligatory because they are not published. Finish them as soon as you can, with the assistance of Father Ferrara, just as the Chapter has ordained. Be very careful to preserve the original copies, so that one may consult them whenever a difficulty arises.

In respect to allowing you to have the Blessed Sacrament in the oratory of the novitiate, I have always felt some repugnance. It is true, after your arrival from Naples I appeared to consent to having it kept there; but at present I am confronted by another difficulty. Meditation is made in the choir, the visit is made in the choir, what need is there still of the Blessed Sacrament in the novitiate? It affords you consolation, you will say; but have patience, deprive yourself of this consolation. If you have not placed the Blessed Sacrament there, you had better not do so; and if it be there, you must take it away.

All is going on well: Nigro and de Sanctis go to Caposele [to begin philosophy]; de Paola remains at Iliceto. Passari and de Gattis can also remain there to perfect themselves; they can begin their rhetoric and logic in a short time.

For the study of rhetoric take Cuione.

You are right: there was no cause for sending these students to Caposele.

I have asked more than once for that book on the Madonna [“ The Glories of Mary”] and the Brother has received nothing. Send it to me as soon as you find it convenient.

For the humanities, books will be sent from here, and I will write to Ciorani; a copy of *Calepino* of Torino will be kept here, because we need it.

I am answering Perez. Read the letter I have written to him. Instead of having him make fifteen days retreat before receiving the habit, it will be sufficient if he makes ten.

A safe journey to Vitelli and Pica![17057]

I bless the profession of Paravento and Leggio;[17058] tell them from me to practise humility; watch them carefully.

I bless the novices and all the others. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Father Margotta writes me that you wish to pay a part of the expenses of the printing of the “Glories of Mary,” and while the book is being printed you will have nothing to eat! Live Jesus and Mary!

What I now add, you must keep secret and allow no one to know except Father Ferrara. Father N. will come to you in June for the purpose of recollecting himself as he says; but would to God he would truly recollect himself and would not peruse books without caring about the observance!

Now you must know that I have expressly forbidden him to hear the confessions of women or to speak with them. Hence do not allow him to be called for this purpose; and if he be called, forbid him to hear the confessions of women even if they be dying. I have been obliged to come to such a decision in regard to him on account of his extravagant notions. I have written you a longer letter on the subject and have sent it by way of Bovino; try to procure it, and destroy it after having read it. Say nothing of all this to N. except in a case of necessity, and unless you see him hearing confessions of women. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original, the property of D. M. Alfonso Lombardi in Cimitile, diocese of Nola.

Letter 251

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Various matters.—The sending of a little work composed by the saint.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, May 16, [I756].

I am glad to hear the news about the mission at S. Angelo. I have already heard about it through [D. Benedetto] Grazioli. I will say Mass for the Abbess of S. Maria di Troia, and will write to Father Villani.

As for Father N., let him go to Iliceto where he wishes to go to recollect himself, because he has been exposed to a great deal of dissipation.

I have written to you another letter in which I say to you that I forbid N. under the formal precept of obedience to hear the confessions of any more women; hence do not allow him to be called to hear women's confessions when he comes to your house to give the exercises; and even if you see him hear the confessions of women you must forbid him to do so. Let him then go to Iliceto. When afterwards these young men have finished their course, I will send you someone else to replace him. This treatment of Father N. has been found to be necessary because of his extravagances. Keep this, however, as a secret.

Frater Contaldo should be sent as soon as possible to Iliceto for a change of air.

If Father N. comes to your house, Father Pentimalli will not come. Have patience then, and do the best you can.

If I mistake not Father Pentimalli has to go to Lauro. Father Apice has been promised to Iliceto. Have an understanding with Iliceto, but if not, how will they be able to get out of their difficulties? Father Apice must necessarily go to this house.

I bless you all. I can scarcely write on account of my head. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Here is a letter which Father Pentimalli's brother writes to me; try to satisfy him. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] I send you some copies of my little work[17059] written *against unbelievers.* Two are bound in parchment; give one to the archpriest of Caposele, the other to the Vicar with my compliments. The other two are for your house. Live Jesus and Mary!

If it is not really necessary I beg you not to take Brother Mattia[17060] from his clocks; for now I hear that he has been sent to accompany the Fathers on a mission.

After the original preserved in our house at Pagani.

Letter 252

TO SISTER MARIA NICOLETTA LEONI (DI CALVANICO), IN THE MONASTERY OF FISCIANO

He reproves her for her continual impatience, and exhorts her to be a true nun who is entirely resigned to God's will.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, May 19, [1756].

I have received your letter with the stipend for a Mass, and I will comply with your intentions. As for paying you a visit, I beg you, should you write again, not to mention such a thing, for it would give me useless annoyance. I hardly ever leave the house; I do not even accept the invitations that I receive from the convents of Nocera, which are quite near. How could I go to Fisciano?

Moreover, if I went to see you I would say nothing more than what I have repeated to you more than once, and I should gain nothing with the religious of your convent, though you may think otherwise.

As for confessors, there will be no lack of them. But one thing is more necessary to you than confessors: it is patience, or rather the love of Jesus Christ.

The saints have loved Jesus Christ and have had other sufferings than you have; they have had to bear other sorrows, other diseases, other kinds of contempt and of abandonment than you have to bear. Yet they believed that they were suffering nothing when they reflected that a God died for us in an ocean of contempt and of sorrow.

Hence all the trouble that you have is caused by yourself when you complain about everything and show so little patience.

In short, what will you find at the hour of death, which in view of your maladies is not far off? You will find only acts of impatience and sins; only venial sins, I hope, but these may lead you farther if your impatience goes on increasing.

Well, now! take counsel of your crucifix, look upon it often, and offer to our Lord what you suffer. Your evils would be changed into pearls of Paradise, but they are changed through your fault into so many thorns, and into sins which you will have to expiate in the flames of purgatory.

When then will you write to me that for once you will with God's help bear patiently all your trials? When you feel yourself weighed down by affliction, cast immediately a glance at the crucifix, have recourse to our Lady of Sorrows, and always ask this good Mother for this one grace, that she should obtain for you resignation to the will of God.

I entreat you, do not again write to me the words that you have used, together with the interminable lamentations: *I cannot bear this any longer. Such treatment is too much to bear,* and the like. If I mistake not, you suffer less from your corporal pains than from the contempt that is heaped upon you; your want of humility is, therefore, it seems to me, more than anything else the source of your trials. Here is my little work, the *Visits,* a new edition; I send it to you that you may read the little treatise on the *will of God* which is added to it (see page 209). Read it little by little, and when you have finished it, begin again.

Oh, if you would embrace with all your heart the will of God! If you were persuaded that in accepting your pains with an entire resignation, you would rejoice the heart of God, and with what joy, with what love would you endure them! Hence, when you feel yourself more than usually weighed down, I beg you to re-read this letter.

May God grant you his light and his love! He that loves God does not suffer; he rejoices even in suffering.

Perhaps you will tell me: *But I am not a saint.* I answer: You are not a saint and you do not wish to be a saint. Do you wish to become a saint amidst tenderness and consolations? And if you do not wish to become a saint, why did you leave the world? Did you perhaps enter the convent to be served and honored, and not to suffer? What would you say to one of your Sisters who would complain to you? What you would say to her, say to yourself; offer, offer all to Jesus Christ, and ask him without intermission, not that your trials may cease, but that you may have his love and may be patient. This is the way to transform all your pains into pearls of Paradise.

In order to write you this letter I had to snatch a moment from my numerous occupations.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy,

Letter 253

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

He blames indiscreet zeal and gives various counsels regarding the novitiate.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

PAGANI, May 25, 1756.

I have received information about the affair from Father Rizzi.[17061]

If things remain in the same state, and Monsignor is not pacified, so that we may have to fear that he will put the Father into prison, send him to Caposele without losing a moment.

Tell, however, this Father that he did not do well to write that letter. He wrote it through zeal; but he does not know that it is forbidden to us outside of the confessional to meddle with affairs that may cause embarrassment to others. For the love of God let him in future give up such kind of zeal. We must think of the general good of the Congregation rather than of the good of others.

As for the question about the Blessed Sacrament in the oratory of the novitiate, I wish to consider the matter more fully with my Consultors, and when Father Fiocchi returns, I shall send him thither immediately to give you the answer to this as well as to some other questions.

Tell Frater N. that the three young men have presented themselves. He knows that Andrea will not suit us, for he does not understand enough Latin, and at Naples I told him that he would not be received.

As for the other youth, I mean N., there is a difficulty, for it is not known where he is to be ordained.

Finally, another young man came; but he had no patrimony. I shall therefore send the two candidates who have received the votes of the Consultors.

When Father Fiocchi comes, he will give you the answers to other questions. Please give the enclosed letter to Frater Perez.

Send immediately a copy of my book [*Dissertation on the Errors of Modern Unbelievers*] to Canon Vitale at Bisaccia. Tell Father Rizzi to say three *Hail Marys* as a penance.

[Father Francesco] Pentimalli must come without fail to Ciorani, even though they desire to keep him at Caposele. Give yourself therefore no trouble about him. I have written to Caposele to send you at least Father [Andrea] Strina who preaches very well, and Father [Stefano] Liguori: and so you will be able to do your work.

I am now engaged in writing to Mgr. di Bovino, and I hope to appease him. Father Rizzi should have mentioned those points to the bishop when he heard the latter’s confession; he should not have written him a letter.

If Father Fiocchi arrives here in time, I will send him immediately. Say no more about this. As soon as I can have him I shall send him to you; I have sent to Ciorani for him and have called him away from the exercises that he is giving, at Ciorani in order to please you.

I repeat: If matters are now settled, it is not necessary to send Father Rizzi to Caposele; if Monsignor should come to the house, it would be well for Father Rizzi to go to him privately, to throw himself at his feet and beg pardon for his indiscretion.

Let Frater [Michele] Ferrazzano become a little stronger and healthier before speaking of making his profession. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Father Margotta tells me that you wish to contribute towards paying the expenses of the Madonna [“Glories of Mary”]; but where is the money? Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the Neapolitan edition of 1848.

Letter 254

TO SISTER MARIA DI GESÙ, CARMELITE AT RIPACANDIDA

Explanations regarding spiritual direction.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

PAGANI, June, 1756.

I have read your very long letter, and I answer it in a few words.

I expect within a few days Father Fiocchi, who is to go to Naples; I must first hear him and examine afterwards what I can do to oblige you.

While waiting, place yourself entirely at the disposition of God for his greater glory; now it is for the greater glory of God to do his most holy will.

Present my respects to the Mother Prioress, to Sister Maria Giuseppe, to Sister Maria Celeste, and to all the rest. Let all recommend me to Jesus Christ; for I repeat, I wish to do what I can to be useful to you, but I must first hear what Father Fiocchi has to say.

I am fully persuaded that he did not withdraw on account of some disobedience on your part or on the part of the other religious, but for some other important reason. Who knows what the Bishop [of Melfi] has told him! Perhaps out of regard for the Carmelites? I do not know what to say in this matter.

However, if Father Fiocchi returns to you, you must be satisfied with the little that he can do; for you know that our Rule expressly forbids us the direction of religious, either in general or in particular. Be satisfied with the counsel that is given to you every time that an occasion presents itself.

In the meantime follow the advice that Father Fiocchi has given you; and if anything new occurs, do nothing exteriorly without the order of the Superior. As for interior things, to remove every doubt, it will be sufficient to say: My God, I wish only Thee and Thy good pleasure; say nothing more.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 255

TO A FATHER OF THE HOUSE AT CIORANI

He sends pecuniary aid to the poor house of Iliceto.

[June 3, 1756.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

My dear L.: Have patience; it is necessary that you should go to Iliceto where the spiritual exercises are to be given to the candidates for ordination as there is no one to help to give them.

I send you secretly thirty ducats: carry them to the Superiors of Iliceto for the purchase of food, because I hear that they are in embarrassed circumstances.

You must not say anything to others about these thirty ducats; but you must tell them at Iliceto to celebrate seventy-two Masses to the intention of those that have given the money. Take out of this sum of thirty ducats what will pay the expenses of your journey. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I bless all the novices. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 256

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

How he was to act in regard to an imprudent subject.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

June 3, [1756].

Father N. through his extravagances has thrown me into the greatest confusion.

Forbid him to say Mass till the 15th of this month; after that let him again say Mass. But, for pity's sake, do not employ him too much in preaching, nor let him go out too often. Make him remain at home to recollect himself and to regain a little fervor; for it was for this reason that I sent him to you.

Tell him that I command under formal obedience that he shall no longer hear women's confessions, nor the confessions of young persons under seventeen years of age. He may hear the confessions of men and of boys who have completed their seventeenth year; for I have heard that by his extravagant questions he has taught young persons certain things of which they were ignorant, and now they complain of this. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 257

TO THE SAME

He prescribes to the novices moderation in prayer, and expresses his sorrow on account of their poverty.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, June 24, 1756.

I have received from the novices a package of letters expressive of their thanks for having allowed them the Blessed Sacrament.[17062] I hear, however, that they go to excess, and that they have already begun to make themselves sick, as, for instance, N. N., etc.

I beg you to moderate their prayers in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament.

It is sufficient if they make the ordinary visit by adding to it, in the evening and during the day, one or two other visits that must not last longer than half of a quarter of an hour.

This is understood of days outside of the retreat days.

I do not answer the letters of the novices; for it would take me two months to answer them.

I hear that at your house you have no soup at your meals. Why do you not send to Ascoli since you have four animals for riding? It would be well to send to the environs for a little wheat, etc., but the misfortune is to know whom to send.

On the subject of cheese, all are opposed to Father N.; and in other houses they continue to give it. But as to your house, what can we do? Should we wish to witness some scene? It is better for you to dissimulate, and to he guided by prudence.

I see that Father N. has told me the truth; for there is truly no way of living in that place. Now I send you a little help; but afterwards what can be done? It is a heart-rending spectacle thus to see the sufferings of so many young persons that have just left the world!

As for Brother N. although he has made his vows, keep him near you, so that his health may improve. He may do some light work that Father N. may assign to him.

Please to send from time to time to Ascoli or elsewhere to procure the wherewithal to make a little soup [*minestra*]. I bless you all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 258

TO THE SAME

He complains of the useless expenses incurred in the house at Iliceto.

[End of June, 1756.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I write by the hand of another, since I cannot do so myself on account of my head.

Father N. writes that in fifteen days you will not know what to do, since you are without grain, without wine, without cheese, without lard, and without money, for the reason that the thirty ducats sent you have been given to Maffei.

As for myself, I really do not know what to do. It will be impossible for me to force the other houses to send you money. Reflect on some means, think of what might be done, and speak about the matter to Father N. Examine whether it is necessary to abandon Iliceto in order not to see our young people die of starvation.

I beg you to be in all that you do as much as possible in accord with Father N.; for otherwise it will be impossible to navigate the little vessel.

I bless you all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 259

TO THE SAME

New complaints in regard to useless expenses.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

July 4, [1756].

Briefly, when I receive news from Iliceto it seems to me that each time I must swallow a cup of poison. The other day assistance was sent, and it disappeared immediately. Now something again has been sent, and I hear that it has also disappeared. Father N. wishes to construct a cistern, and you wish to be the architect; and for this purpose Father N. says beams are needed.

I therefore say again and again that it is my wish that no expenses should be incurred except for what is absolutely necessary, namely, for food and the necessary clothing; for you are in want of linen, of bread, etc.

How often have I not forbidden the incurring of extraordinary expenses! And now I learn that you wish to buy planks on credit. On credit, and without the means of paying for them!. . . . Have patience; think only of your support for the morrow, and of nothing else. I feel like dying with compassion for these young people. I repeat: At present think only of keeping alive. I shall assemble my Consultors to find out what means may be employed;[17063] for it is impossible for the little vessel to sail on in this way.

I bless you all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 260

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, RECTOR AT CAPOSELE

He reprimands him.—Theological reasons in favor of ordination titulo patrimonii.

[Beginning of July, 1756?]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I can no longer dissemble; I will tell the truth. That you have sent Father Apice (and may God prevent you from sending another!) to San Gregorio has pierced my heart, the more so since you had at first resolved to write to me, and afterward: you did just the contrary. My God! to send a subject that costs us our blood, to die in a sickly place during the great heats, and at a time when there is an epidemic raging!

But, he is needed there.—True, but all the priests are not dead; there is always one remaining that can give absolution. For pity's sake, in future, and before doing any of these extraordinary things write to me.

It is necessary to obey the Archbishop [of Conza] but *cum grano sails* [with some allowance], in those things in which we are obliged to obey.

I am starting for Naples to-day, and God knows what sorrow and pain I feel on account of what you have written to me. May God be propitious to us!

See that Father Apice procures as quickly as possible the letters dimissory for those young men, and tell him to let the Vicar-General understand in a very gentle way that he has not acted very charitably towards us, by refusing to recognize the title of patrimony when all the other Vicars made no difficulty about it.

We are rendering service to the universal Church. According to a *Papal Brief* we are allowed to be ordained with a patrimony; added to this, we are engaged in serving the diocese of Conza. Still the most cogent reason is that we are working for the universal Church, and that the universal Church has already approved of our ordination under the title of a patrimony.

If there should happen to be a Father at present at S. Gregorio, recall him immediately. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO.

(*Postscript by another hand*): As our Father was on the point of setting out, he requested me to add a few more reasons in favor of the admission of the patrimony.

In the first place, the permission of the Sovereign Pontiff, according to our Rule, allows us to ordain our subjects with a patrimony. Then we have the permission of his Majesty, who considers us very useful in the kingdom on account of the houses which we have; for under that title we shall not be a burden to him; we know that as a general thing he refuses this title in order not to multiply the number of useless priests.

Again, the Concordat does not take the privilege from us; for according to the terms of that document it is left to the judgment of the bishop to ordain with a patrimony when he sees it would be useful for the Church, without specifying the particular church of those who are to be ordained. Hence Mgr. Borgia says that it is his custom to ordain a number of priests in a place where there is no want of priests, in order to be able to transfer them afterwards to places where they are needed. Thus we see that he ordains according to the need or utility of the Church, not of the church of the *one who is ordained*, but of the *one that ordains*. This practice is also in accordance with the Council of Trent [*Sess.* xxi. cap. ii.] which gives to the bishop the faculty of ordaining clerics under the title of a patrimony, if he thinks it useful and necessary for his churches: remark here the wording *suarum* [his churches], that is, the churches of the bishop, and not *illorum* [their churches], that is, the churches of those *that have been ordained*. Supposing all this, who can deny that the Fathers of our Congregation are useful to the churches of the Archbishop of Conza, seeing that he uses us as he wishes?

Father Villani had intended to write these points to you; but learning that I had done so, he omitted sending them to you.

After the original to be found partly in our house at Mons, Belgium, partly in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 261

TO THE COUNCIL OF ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS

The saint solicits the legal approbation of his Institute, and he refutes the objections that could be raised against it.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NAPLES, July, [1756].[17064]

Since the year 1732, the priest Don Alfonso de Liguori and other priests, have learned by giving missions the great spiritual need of the people in the country, and especially of those living in hamlets and small towns of this kingdom; and on the other hand, how little is the assistance that they receive from the missions that are given from Naples. These priests have, therefore, united and have by giving missions applied themselves to the spiritual care of these abandoned people.

To carry out this work, the first house was erected in the diocese of Salerno, and then with the permission of the king, three other houses were founded in the dioceses of Nocera, Bovino and Conza.

Afterwards, in the year 1749, at the instance of the bishops of said dioceses, the reigning Pontiff, knowing the benefit and necessity of this work, a decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Council having been previously issued, approved by an apostolic Brief this Institute in the form of a Congregation under the title of the Most Holy Redeemer, subjecting it to the diocesan Ordinaries.

The before-mentioned Brief has not been put in execution, as it is still lacking the permission of his Majesty. But in the meantime the aforesaid missionaries have continued to devote themselves to the giving of missions, travelling for nine months in the year through six provinces of this kingdom, giving about forty missions a year to these poor country people.

The royal clemency of our Sovereign has in the meantime been petitioned that for the good of so many of his vassals, he may deign to grant permission so that this work may be firmly established. Otherwise it will come to nothing, because, on the one hand, the young men who have been called by God to leave their families to live in ecclesiastical Communities, will hardly be induced to enter a Community that is not established with the royal approbation; and on the other hand, those that have entered, on seeing that the approbation is deferred, will be tempted to leave it for fear that after the work has been given up, they would have to live outside of their own homes as well as outside of the Community.

The reasons for making difficulties in granting the royal *exequatur* are the following:

1. That in the kingdom of Naples the number of religious houses already existing is excessive; and that for the spiritual want of souls, the pastors and priests of the country places and the missions that are given from Naples, furnish ample means.

2. That the increase of religious houses is an injury to the interests of the laity because of the purchase of property made by said houses, and because they then remain in the possession of this property.

3. These foundations begin well, but in time they are rather injurious, or at least useless.

To the first objection the reply may be given that although the religious houses in the kingdom might be sufficient and excessive, yet the houses of missionaries that attend to the spiritual culture of the poor people of the country, are very few in proportion to their wants. Everywhere zealous bishops are heard complaining, because they see a great part of their flocks perishing for want of help; they ask for missions, but they cannot have them, since the missions from Naples do not reach the hundredth part of the wants that exist. There are, it is true, many ecclesiastics (and would to God there were fewer!), but very few of them are good apostolic workers.

To the second objection that the increase of religious houses is prejudicial to laymen we reply that the king has already provided for this, by ordering that the above-mentioned houses of the missionaries cannot acquire any annual income, and that which they possessed in the beginning are administered by the bishops who are to furnish each of the subjects with two *carlini*[17065] a day, and all the rest is to be given to the poor of the place. And this supreme disposition of the prince has been resignedly accepted by said missionaries, who were even satisfied with the disposition made by his Majesty. To this must be added that the same exact nothing from their own families; hence it happens that their patrimonial income remains for the benefit of the laity, their relatives.

As for the last objection, that these foundations begin well and then end badly, or remain at least useless, we ask you to cast your eyes not upon all religious houses, but only upon the foundations of missionaries, such as those of the Pious Workers and of the priests called Priests of the Missions, and you will see that these Institutes, although founded more than a century ago, are still useful to the public, either because the obligation of continually laboring keeps them from dissipation and engaged in prayer or study, or because the power of dismissing the negligent being in the hands of the Superiors, it happens that those that remain devote themselves to the work of their Institute.

As, therefore, an experiment of this new Institute of missionaries has been made during the space of twenty-three years, as it has furnished a good number of missionaries, and has already received the approbation of the Sovereign Pontiff, who gathered the most exact information about them, it is hoped that our most pious Monarch by his permission will render this great work perpetual in his kingdom, for it is a work that is devoted to the welfare of his vassals, and that is established to maintain purity of our holy religion, on which even the tranquility of the State depends.

After an old copy.

Letter 262

TO SISTER MARIA ANGELA ROSA GRAZIANO, IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SS. ROSARIO AT NAPLES

He announces to her his early departure from Naples.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NAPLES, [end of July, 1756].

I have not had a moment for myself, occupied as I have been with important affairs of our Congregation. I will leave the city to-morrow in all haste, and when I return to Naples I will send you our Brother [Francesco Tartaglione] to whom you may tell all and give the money.

Recommend me to Jesus Christ, for we are persecuted and endure all kinds of woes. Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 263

TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE, AT CAMIGLIANO

He exhorts her to fervor in the service of God.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, August 3, 1756.

I answer your last letter; it contains nothing important that needs a special answer.

I am only very glad to know that you have been insulted; yet I regret that there was so very little insult, and that the blows were measured instead of being given plentifully.

Do not omit going to Communion, even when you are told a hundred times that you are damned, and that you are a demon. Do not love the less those that show you greater contempt; render them services and pray for them.

In regard to the discipline, omit it when you are ill; but when you recover, resume it, notwithstanding that you have lost strength; take it then at least a little so as not to lose the habit of it. I recommend the same thing in regard to the spiritual reading.

It will be impossible for us to go to Caiazzo. The king does not permit us to have any more foundations; the same prohibition holds good for all religious whoever they may be.

Pray always for me. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of Signor Andrea d’ Isa at Camigliano.

Letter 264

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Zeal of the saint for regular observance.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, August 6, [1756].

I have just received your letter in reference to the office of Examiner, etc. Father Ferrara tells me that this is only for once, and that there is question of nominating an archpriest at Andretta.[17066]

This is sufficient. When you receive the formal letter of the archbishop in regard to the matter, you will take care at first to thank him kindly, and then to excuse yourself by saying that to accept the office you are obliged to write to me and to obtain a dispensation, since such a thing is forbidden by our Constitution. If nevertheless he presses you to accept, and wishes to push the matter, then, as there is question of doing this but once, I dispense you only for this case.

Tell Father Leo from me to give up the idea of again having copies of *Tournely*[17067] sent from France. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 265

TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, CARMELITE AT RIPACANDIDA.[17068]

The duties of a Prioress.—Various recommendations.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, August 17, 1756.

I answer: Yes, God is worthy of being loved, and he wishes to be loved by you, although you have no director.

You have again been appointed Prioress; the Prioress of a convent should also be *prior* in love, that is to say, the first in loving God, and this is the rule of conduct that I give you.

Since you have received Jesus Christ anew,[17069] recommend me to him when you receive him as food; at least on those days on which Communion is not taken from you.

I have written to Mgr. [di Melfi] to permit you to answer Brancone. If this is granted, answer the Marquis that you never forget him in your prayers. Encourage him and say to him that you are praying to the Lord to grant him strength and light to walk on the right road and to defend the interests of the Church in the office that he occupies.

I thank you for the novena that you wished to make for me, and for the remembrance that you have of me. I thank Jesus Christ that he reminds you of me, and I pray to him that he may always remind you of me.

Thank also our Lord for the signal favor that we have just received from the Pope; for he has given us all the privileges of the Pious Workers and of the Fathers of the Christian Doctrine.[17070]

Give the enclosed answers to the Sisters who have written to me; but tell them that when they write, they should not, especially if the letter is somewhat long, expect an immediate answer; for time is wanting to me. I had even to steal the moments to write to you.

In your position, you have nothing else to do than to observe the Rule and to exact its observance. Unite yourself, then, to God by a continual offering of yourself, and in whatever state of soul you may be, humbly resign yourself.

Salute for me all the Sisters, and let all continue to recommend me to Jesus Christ. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 266

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Exhortation to practise patience.

[NOCERA, month of August, 1756.]

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

I have read your letter and said: Alas! that this new misery should come upon us during the festival, and now we are all involved in it.

Your Reverence is asking a Mass from Petrella.[17071]—In the first place Petrella has gone to Iliceto. Secondly, you must know that Father Saverio [Rossi] usually talks when he comes here about having more Masses; because he has about forty subjects to board and a debt of about two thousand ducats; and what he obtains from the vineyard he has to give to the Baron.[17072] But seeing the misery of this house he has not the courage to speak of it. To take now from Ciorani the Mass of Petrella and to give it to him, is a thing that cannot be thought of, the more so since this Mass already belongs there.

Therefore, in order to give you some other Mass I should have to take it from the house at Pagani. Now you know what is the condition of this house.

There is a debt of about two hundred ducats, which has to be paid to butchers and others, who are anxious to be paid. Hence Father Mazzini has declared that he felt no confidence in being able to support the novitiate, although I have assigned to him another Mass which I had assigned to the impoverished house at Iliceto. Hence if there is no prospect of obtaining help, it will become necessary to remove the novitiate from this place.

Now just think, from whom could I take this Mass? I feel compassion for you all, and say that you are right. But I would like to have someone to say to me what I am to do in order to satisfy all. I have already praised you for not having complained, and I see that now you have complained being forced by necessity; but we must embrace our sister, *patience, which is poverty's own sister.*

I thank you for the little paper that you have written, and I expect the other.

I have received no letters from Benevento. I bless all, and I pray to God to grant you patience.

After the feast of the Blessed Virgin is over,[17073] have the Fathers who can do so make their retreat, because in October of this year there will be work for them; perhaps it will be a mission at Amalfi, which I have heard mentioned. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 267

TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

He exhorts a rigorous observance of a point of the Rule.

[NOCERA, August 18, 1756.]

Alfonso Maria de Liguori of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer Rector Major.

The rule that forbids the receiving and the sending of letters without the permission of the Superiors is a matter of great importance. The non-observance of this rule may make room for innumerable disorders that would ruin the Congregation. Hence in order to provide temporarily till the next Chapter for the exact observance of the foregoing rule, we ordain, for the porters of the houses and for all the Brothers, that all the letters that they receive for the subjects, except the letters addressed to the Consultors or written by them, should be carried to the Superiors of the houses or of the missions. In regard to those letters referring to matters of conscience they must conform to the constitution of the Chapter.

Should a Brother neglect the execution of this ordinance, we forbid the subjects to open the letters that they receive; nor should they forward the letters that they write, before having shown them to the Superior, at least sealed if there is question of matters of conscience.

We charge the consciences of the Superiors with the faithful observance of this rule, and exhort them to punish severely those that are guilty of any infraction of it; otherwise they will make themselves responsible, and will be sternly dealt with by me, since this is a matter of very great importance, and for certain reasons of much greater than some imagine.

In regard to letters concerning matters of conscience, it has been decided in the constitution of the Chapter, that the Superior shall not open them; but we declare that this must be understood of letters from strangers, and not those from relatives.

Given at Nocera de’ Pagani at the convent of St. Michael, August 18, in the year 1756.

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

Rector Major.

After an old copy.

Letter 268

TO FATHER FRANCESCO MARGOTTA

He charges him with a commission.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, September 1, [1756?]

When you have spoken to Mgr. di Troia you had better come home; but, if your Reverence cannot do so, Fathers [D. Alessandro de] Meo and Caione should depart as soon as they have had an interview.

Let Father Meo take care not to become overfatigued. I hear that he has been spitting blood, and that his chest is affected. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 269

TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, AT RIPACANDIDA

He explains to her the conduct of Father Fiocchi.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, September 24, [1756].

I have received your letter, and Father Fiocchi just happens to be here.

He says that if he ceases to have any relations with you, it is because from a distance and by letter he can hardly do more than undertake the direction of your conscience. For the rest, as soon as you become reconciled to this fact, my dear Mother, he will give you this satisfaction, and I have told him to do so. But in return always recommend me to Jesus Christ; for this is a particular dispensation that I grant in your favor, since our Rule prohibits such a thing.

May Jesus Christ reward you for the charity with which you recommend me to him! Our good Mother in heaven will, I hope, always put you in mind of this.

As for poor me, I do not forget you in my prayers. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 270

TO FATHER ANDREA VILLANI, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT S. ANGELO A CUPOLO

Recommendations relative to the interests of the Congregation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, October 1, [1756].

I have sent the letter to Marquis Petruro.

You tell me that if the same assistance had been given to Iliceto, it would have been possible to support the novitiate there!—O my dear Andrea! what do you say? Did you therefore hope that the Masses would be said here, and that the money for them would be sent to Iliceto? At Iliceto you would not have received ten *carlini* a week. You had better drive this idea out of your head; for it can never be, no, never, that one house should support the other, because all the houses in whatever condition they may be are really hospitals in which every *carlino* that comes in goes out.

A long explanation would be necessary to make this clear to you. If there had not been secretly set on foot the making of stalls, the carpenter-work for the upper story, etc. we should not now find ourselves in this embarrassment; but now things are done, and we must be silent and must suffer.

When the contract of the farm is settled at Naples I will be able, I hope, to furnish you in November with money from [D. Benedetto] Grazioli to make the purchases.

When you make the purchases do not fail to found two chaplaincies, or at least one of them, in order that we may be able to ordain one of our subjects who would not have any patrimony, a chaplaincy for instance, for Frater [Lorenzo] Nigro, who is moreover the only son, though in Minor Orders.[17074]

The chaplaincy should be founded entirely in Masses, with an annual revenue corresponding to the tax of the patrimony which at Benevento is thirty ducats; with this should be connected the obligation of celebrating these Masses in our church of the Assumption.

I say this in order that the subject who is deprived of the chaplaincy, if he should leave us [the Institute], may not lay claim to the fruits without coming to celebrate in our church.

The chaplaincy would have to be founded when making the purchases; otherwise it cannot be founded afterwards, as it would be alienated; and alienation would require the intervention of Rome.

The chaplaincy may be founded on the interest-money of the annual revenue. About this you would have to consult the Vicar-General.

We must think of this matter now, because there would be no time after the purchase has been made.

In regard to furnishing another Father to help you on the missions, there is great misery; because applications for missions are innumerable.

For Benevento are already destined Fathers Amarante, Grossi, Buonamano and de Angelis. You may, however, when you wish send for them. [Father] Buonamano can help me at Amalfi whither I shall go at the beginning of the week.

As for the large mission asked for by the Archbishop [of Benevento] write to Father Fiocchi, who will be near Conza, or write to me, and we shall see whether we shall be able to detach one or two of the Fathers.

The subjects destined for the missions are too few for this campaign.

I conclude, because my head allows me to say no more. Missions, debts, departure for [the mission at] Amalfi, etc. Oh, what embarrassments! Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of Canon Francesco Saverio Martini, Vicar-General of Alatri.

Letter 271

TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Prohibition to go out without a special permission.

NOCERA, October 2, 1756.

No subject is allowed to leave home without the permission of the Rector, and unless the Rector advises him to come to speak to me.

In case the subject does not wish to communicate his affairs (for which he wishes to come) to the Rector of the house, or the Rector does not think it necessary for him to come to me, the subject may write to me; and when I shall say to him to come, he may come.

After an old copy.

Letter 272

TO SISTER MARIA NICOLETTA LEONI (DI CALVANICO), IN THE MONASTERY OF FISCIANO

He reproaches her for her impatience and exhorts her to resignation.

NOCERA, October 6, [1756].

I have received your letter and with it the stipend for a Mass.

I will pray and have others to pray for you; but if you do not do your share of co-operation in practising patience, God will not come to your assistance, and you will always lead a miserable life. I do not even know what death you will die if you die in the like sentiments of impatience.

You say: *I am surrounded by enemies.* Is this the language of a religious? Enemies, when you yourself tell me that a servant was hired expressly for you? Is it the fault of the Sisters if afterwards this servant falls ill?

Your acts of impatience, it seems to me, are continual, and you blame now the Sisters, because they do not assist you as you wish, now Almighty God, because he does not deliver you from your illness. This is the way that you suffer without merit, and after having thus suffered you will have to go to purgatory to expiate all your acts of impatience.

Well, then, stop all that! otherwise you will die a bad death. Put yourself in God's hands, ask him for good health, but ask with resignation; and if God does not grant it to you, you should say that your illness is good for your eternal salvation.

Is there anything grander than to offer one's sufferings to Jesus Christ, to him who has suffered so much for the love of us, and who has endured greater sufferings without having deserved them? Do this, and you will suffer in peace, and you will weave for yourself a beautiful crown for Paradise. Among the sufferings that you must offer to God is the little assistance that you receive from the Sisters.

But they forget me!—And you forget that you are a spouse of Jesus Christ; you forget the sins by which you have offended your divine Saviour, the promises that you have made to him, and the love that he has borne you.

In future, I hope that you will do what I have just told you. Renew every day the resolution of offering to God all your pains, and at this very moment when you are reading these lines, make this offering at the foot of the crucifix.

But if you wish to continue to complain of your illness, of your Sisters, etc., it will be useless for you to write me anymore, for I loathe to see a religious so impatient and always complaining about the Sisters. If the Sisters do not do their duty, do yours by bearing with them. You will act so, I hope.

I bless you in the name of Jesus Christ and of Mary, so that you may hereafter obey me. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 273

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

He begs him to watch over the health of the students.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, October 27, [1756].

I am told that Frater Michele [de Michele] has begun to look as badly as he did before.

I beg you to examine how he is; and if it be necessary do not allow him to study, nor to do even what I have permitted him to do. If this young man has a relapse, it will be all over with him.

I have also been informed that Frater [Lorenzo] Nigro and others are seriously affected with bowel troubles.

I give you full power to moderate the studies of these young people, and in case of doubt to incline always to the side of health. I give you all the faculties, on condition, however, that you afterwards render an account of what you have done. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 274

TO THE SAME

Various recommendations.—Explanation regarding some points of the Rule of the students.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, 29, [November, 1756].

According to what I hear, my dear Gasparo, you are greatly tortured by that detestable fever. May the will of God be done! I also have been favored these past few days with a little fever.

I beg you not to be troubled about the confessors. There is no harm if all those that come to confession [in our chapel] are not heard. During the missions things are not otherwise. It is therefore sufficient if two or three remain at home.

As you feel indisposed at present, Father [Ignazio] Fiore will remain; when you are better, you can go out for some time, then Father Fiore may take his turn.

Father Picone is now hearing the confessions of men and women, and as he is Prefect of the students, he can engage in the work during the time of studies, of retreat, etc.

Tell Father Leo from me that he should be patient; that he may hear the confessions of men on all feast days; what is done, has always been done.

I am so much embarrassed at present with missions, especially with those of Calabria that I find it necessary to set out myself sick as I am.

Now attend solely to the restoration of your health.

In relation to the controverted points in the Constitution of the students here is my answer:

1. In regard to the semi-retreat of Sunday mornings, an hour of preparation and an hour of thanksgiving appear to me to be too much; half an hour for each is sufficient. Let there be a conference, a general

Communion, a half hour’s spiritual reading, the Little Hours in common. The rest of the time every one may spend in private devotion.

2. As for going out, let the Prefect accompany them, or if he is prevented they may be presided over by a discreet student, or the Rector may appoint a Father for this purpose.

The Lector may go out with the students on study days; on recreation days he must go out with the Fathers.

In reference to spiritual direction, the students should address themselves either to the Prefect or the Rector of the house.

I bless you all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 275

TO MOTHER MARIA DI GESÙ, AT RIPACANDIDA

He exhorts her to correct abuses with prudence.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOLA, December 4, [1756].

I answer you from Nola, where I am at present.

I am very glad that you have undertaken to remedy the abuses that have been introduced against the Rule. May Jesus Christ bless you for your zeal, and give you the strength of which you stand in need! For if in the beginning such abuses are introduced, twenty or thirty years will not pass by before the entire Rule will have been swept away.

As for the *distressed souls* that come to consult you, I advise you not to fail to assist them; since they call upon you expressly for this purpose, we may hope that they will be docile to your advice. Retrench, however, all useless discourse, and endeavor to go straight to the point; yet do this prudently, for you may not be able to do this in the beginning.

Continue to recommend me to Jesus Christ. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 276

TO CANON GIACOMO FONTANA, AT NAPLES

He speaks to him about one of his little works: “Rule for Seminaries.”

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOLA, December 9, [1756].

I have received your most esteemed note; I will send to his Eminence for the offering of which you speak.

The little work *on Seminaries* is already in press, and will be issued in accordance with the corrections which you have kindly made.

I shall present a copy of it to all the bishops; I hope that they will read it, as it is short; and I trust that it will redound to the glory of God.

I shall be at your service, and I beg you to recommend me to the Infant Jesus.

In conclusion, I would most humbly kiss your hand. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

It is to you that I have entrusted the revision of the little book *on Seminaries,* since you have had the kindness to read and to correct it. When you read it, you will find all your corrections. I will send you the proofs and the original that you may compare them. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your most humble and devoted servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

The following is the eulogy pronounced by the Canon in his report to Cardinal Sersale:

Most Eminent Sir: In compliance with the order of your Eminence I read the little work entitled “Rule for Seminaries.” The most pious author, always bent upon promoting the glory of our Lord, has most accurately explained in this work whatever is required for the good direction of seminaries; hence I judge that its publication will be a public benefit.

I have the honor to remain,

Most Eminent Sir, with profound respect,
your obedient and humble servant,
CAN. GIACOMO FONTANA.

NAPLES, December 19, 1756.

Letter 277

TO SISTER MARIA ANGELA ROSA GRAZIANO, IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SS. ROSARIO AT NAPLES

Some advice in regard to the spiritual life.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, December 12, [1756].

I thank you most cordially for the little present, but do not inconvenience yourself on my account.

God knows when I shall go to Naples, especially during winter. For the rest, you have no need of me; you have your director and I am far away.

I send you some spiritual works which I have just published. Read especially the “Practice of Perfection” which comes after the “Novena to St. Teresa,” and the “Glories of Mary.” You can read some of it every day, even if only half a page. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Write me some particulars about your life, your exercises of piety, and your penances. I will then send you a general rule which you may follow; however let this be with the consent of your director. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of the Redemptorists of Saint-Nicolas-du-Port, diocese of Nancy, France.

Letter 278

TO FATHER EMANUELE CALDARERA, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY AT NAPLES

Thanksgiving.—Asking for a favor.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, 17, [January] 1757.

My dear Father Emanuele: I thank you very much for having given me to read the first volume of the *Trappists*.[17075] Please to send the others when you can. I have searched in Naples in order to find the Lives of these religious, and I did not succeed. You will surely do well if you send them to your brother that he also may read them.

I send you the little works about which you have been informed[17076] with the letters that accompany them; if possible have them sent to Sicily to one of your friends, and beg him to see that they reach their destination.

It matters little that the name of the bishop is not found on some of the letters; that of the episcopal city is always given, and this is sufficient.

You can now offer the holy Sacrifice; grant me, then, my dear Father, a memento in your Mass; I will render you the same service. Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! Believe me always,

Your very humble and devoted servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the sacristy of the Oratorian Fathers at Naples.

Letter 279

TO SISTER MARIA ANGELA ROSA GRAZIANO, IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SS. ROSARIO AT NAPLES

He exhorts her to a perfect love of Jesus Christ.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, 23, [January, 1757].

I yesterday received the box, of which you make me a present. I beg our Lord to reward you for it.

Tell your director that I have been sick for some time through his fault; I mean since the novena which he made me preach for him at Nola.

I am glad that your sister will soon take Jesus Christ for her Spouse. As for you who are already the spouse of this good Master, love him as a spouse, that is, purely through love without having in view temporal or spiritual consolations; and when you go to Communion, pray for me as I always do for you. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved at Rome in the Massimo palace in the chapel of the *Miracolo* di S. Filippo Neri.

Letter 280

TO FATHER EMANUELE CALDARERA, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY AT NAPLES

Thanks for services rendered.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, January 28, 1757.

My dear Father Emanuele: You may be assured that in sending me these *Lives of the Trappists I* have received them as a treasure. I had been looking for them so long a time and I could never find them.

It would be a fine thing if after that the head of the house should need ask permission to read his own books! Whenever your Reverence wishes again to read the two books that I have or the others when you have finished reading the former, send me word and I will send them at once to you.

I thank you for delivering the letter addressed to the bishop.[17077]

Recommend me to Jesus Christ, because I have done so and am doing so for you with all my heart. I thank you again and am at your service.

Your Reverence knows that I do not wish to be prolix. Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! Kissing your hand, I remain,

Your very humble and very grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 281

TO SISTER MARIA ANGELA ROSA GRAZIANO, IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SS. ROSARIO AT NAPLES

She should ask her director for a rule of conduct such as she needs.

[March, 1757?]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

The following is an answer to your letter.

Since Don Giov. Battista does not give you a rule of conduct such as you need, you must ask him for it. Ask him to tell you, for example, how long a time you should spend in prayer, what mortifications you are to practise, how often you are to communicate, etc. Always ask for Communions and mortifications, and then obey what is prescribed.

As for myself, it is impossible that I should direct you so far away, and moreover, I have no time at my disposal.

Pray to Jesus for nee. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 282

TO THE SAME

He exhorts her to persevere in prayer.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, April 8, [1757.]

I have received your letter together with the present, for which I thank you; but for pity's sake do not inconvenience yourself on my account.

I have not at present any occasion to go to Naples; when I shall be able to go there I shall call upon you. But you have your director; in what way could I be of service to you?

This morning Don Giov. Battista was here, and he told me that you are doing well; this gave me much pleasure.

As for prayer, that which we perform without relish is the best; for the less it pleases us, the more it pleases Jesus Christ.

Always recommend me to Jesus Christ as I recommend you. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Do not be uneasy in regard to the fancies that importune you during prayer; despise them, and quietly proceed by offering to God this pain. The devil would like to have you abandon prayer; spite him by remaining faithful to prayer. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 283

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

He speaks of a mission that is to be given and of various other subjects.

NOCERA, April 17, [1757].

Be so good as to see to it that this letter may safely reach Giuseppe Caselle. Read the letter addressed to me by the Vicar-General of Salerno; he continues to insist that we should give a mission at Castelluccia. Try in any case to send at least two Fathers; however, two cannot do the work; we need three of them; and it would be well to go to Teora immediately after. In a word, see to it that this little mission be given immediately, and for this purpose let everything else be laid aside. You should without delay inform Father Fiocchi of this arrangement.

My dear Gasparo, how painful it was to me to see what Father N. has done! I had begged him several times, and the last time I begged him most earnestly, to go to Iliceto to speak to Francesco Antonio Maffei, and instead of going himself he sent a messenger to ask Maffei whether he wished to see him. This made Maffei still more angry, and he renewed his prohibition to gather even dry wood in the forest.[17078]

If we have Maffei against us, it will be all over with this house. My God, how can I direct the Congregation when people act in this manner! Let me know why he did not wish to go there. Did he perhaps feel unwell? I purpose to give him a severe penance, but I shall wait for a more favorable opportunity.

As for Brother N. I must say that I tremble for him; for he seems to me to be of a disposition not easy to get along with. However, as to the affair of the blows given to a novice, I have found out that that was not true; for he scarcely touched his head in a playful way. But there is no doubt that he has committed a thousand faults. The letter, however, that he has written to me has consoled me. Let him read my answer to him, and be kind enough to direct him and make him render an account of all that he does, because he is a subject of great hopes.

Then tell Brother N. that his letter has afforded me great pleasure. His penance shall consist in one more visit to the Blessed Sacrament, that he may obtain the grace of practising obedience, and I bless him also. I do not write to him a special letter, because I am not able.

I bless you all, and especially your Reverence in the pitiable state in which you are now. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 284

TO DON GIUSEPPE CASELLE, AT RAPPOLA

He recommends to him that he should regulate his family affairs.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, April 18, 1757.

I have just received your last letter.

All goes well. As for myself, do not be uneasy. *Quod scripsi, scripsi.* [What I have written, I have written.] Do not spend your time in entertaining doubts. Devote yourself to the arranging of your family affairs, so that you may no more be annoyed by them.[17079] In the meantime finish the study of Moral Theology, and recommend me to Jesus Christ. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 285

TO A FATHER OF THE CONGREGATION

Hints as to the Composition of a theological treatise.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

June 3, [the year uncertain].

Ask in my name Father N. to compose a treatise *de Incarnatione* to be studied by our young men, because that of Father N. does not please me; but do not let the latter know this.

I should wish him to consult various authors, such as Giovenino, Habert, Contensone, Petavio, Tournely, Gonet, the Manual of Petrocorese, and to write not a book, but *Elements* in which may be found the principal things. On each question let only the principal reasons as also the principal objections be given in a concise but clear style. The *Elements* should exhibit the general notions of certain things and of things controverted, so that one may thereby avoid advancing an error or affirming anything that is controverted. If need be, let him read those authors that treat the matter in detail.

Let Father N. read these remarks, and gradually set to work to compose the treatise, especially as I hear that he has already begun to do so.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 286

TO FATHER CELESTINO DE ROBERTIS

He begs him to change his place of abode.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

June 4, 1757.

My dear Celestino: I see that in that house [of S. Angelo a Cupolo] your Reverence and Father Villani do not agree because between you two there exists a spirit of contradiction; for this reason I have to remove either your Reverence or Father Andrea [Villani].

But it is not convenient for me at present to take away F. Andrea, because the Archbishop [of Benevento] has asked me not to take the latter from him; hence if now I remove him I should displease the archbishop. I therefore beg you to leave that house immediately and to go to Ciorani as soon as possible.

When setting out perform some act of humility in regard to Father Andrea, because I do not wish that any grudge should remain between you. A divergence of opinion or of appreciation should not take its abode in the heart of him who wishes only God.

I bless you. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in our house at Innsbruck, Tyrol.

Letter 287

TO MGR. VITO MAIO, BISHOP OF MURO

Promise made to a prelate who was ill-disposed towards the Institute.

[June 8, 1757.]

We the undersigned, Rector Major and Fathers of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, promise and also bind ourselves with an oath *facto pectore more sacerdotali* [with the hand on the breast after the manner of priests taking an oath], not to receive nor cause to be received into our, the said Congregation any subject (of whatever state, grade, and condition, for whatever motive and even most important reason) of the city and diocese of Muro, without the express consent of Monsignor the Bishop of that city and diocese; which consent for greater caution must be *in writing.*

The 8th day of June, 1757.

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI, *Rector Major,* promises and swears as above.

Giovanni Mazzini, Consultor, promises and swears as above.—Francesco Maria Margotta, Consultor, promises and swears as above.—Girolamo Ferrara, Consultor, promises and swears as above.—Lorenzo d’ Antonio, Procurator-General, promises and swears as above.—Celestino de Robertis promises and swears as above.—Francesco del Corpo promises and swears as above.—Donato Melaccio promises and swears as above.—Pietro Blasucci promises and swears as above.—Gaetano Spero promises and swears as above.—Pasquale Bianco promises and swears as above.—Mauro Murante promises and swears as above.—Pasquale Amendolara promises and swears as above.—Salvatore Gallo promises and swears as above.

After the original preserved in our house at Pagani.

Letter 288

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CAPOSELE

He requests him to watch over the observance of the Rule and the preservation of the health of the subjects.—Rules in regard to the teaching of theology.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, 15, [July, 1757.]

You have answered wonderfully well in regard to the ordinary confessor for Calitri.[17080] Continue now to say that you do not dare to write to me on the subject, because that would give me much pain, and I would never consent to so grave a thing against the Rule, no, never; I say no more.

Father Margotta says that when there is question of the interests of the whole Congregation, we should know how to resist and be deaf to every solicitation for three and even ten years.[17081]

As for Frater Ricca, let him recover entirely, for he has always been ailing and weak; in October we shall speak of his coming.[17082]

I await Brother Giuseppe Caputo to arrange matters for the ordination of his son.[17083]

Send Father [Pietro] Petrella to Ciorani to drink the waters. Here no more persons are received.

As for the affair of Brother N. reported to me by Father Ferrara, do you really believe that I ever lent an ear to what that good Brother said? The Brother, you know, often talks nonsense, and I reprimanded him severely; still he will always remain what he is.

I hear that several students have been a little unwell. In the morning, during the hot weather, let them go out during the time one may walk without being inconvenienced by the sun, that is, before the sun becomes very warm.

I wish that the students should enjoy good health; it matters little that they lose on this account two hours of study. Let them go out also in the evening, and have at least an hour's recreation.

If you have still to speak in reference to the confessor for Calitri, express yourself in regard to the matter yet more strongly. Arrange things in such a way that, if it can be done, I may not be obliged to write about this subject; for if I must write I should have to express myself with still greater force, and we might thereby displease the archbishop.

As for Frater [D. Vincenzo] Striano I should like to know what is to be done; I shall have to reflect on the matter.

As for the scholastic questions about the sacraments, I do not wish that there be taught opinions contrary to those that we hold in Moral Theology. I speak of the principal questions; of attrition, of the minister of marriage, and also of the intention that the minister must have to do what the Church does, etc.

In important and the like principal questions I wish that the common opinions and those that I myself reach in my Moral Theology should be followed and maintained as much as possible. I do not write specially to Father Leo because the Brother is about to depart; but you may tell him that on this point I do not wish him to make any reply. If the Lector holds a contrary opinion, let him keep it to himself; for the rest he must practise obedience, and endeavor to defend our opinions by the best possible reasons, endeavoring to become attached only to those opinions that are conformable to obedience.

Tell Father Leo that I shall not listen to Father N. . . . . . and that he should guide himself as seems best to him. It will be sufficient that a two year's course in theology be given, and that the principal treatises, *de Deo, de Trinitate, de Incarnation,* and *de Gratia* be taught. Ask him from me not to devote too much time to history, as Father [Alessandro de] Meo has done.

What I wish him to do is to explain thoroughly the dogmas, the distinctions, terms, and principal questions treated by the scholastics: these, called *Elements,* are necessary for preaching, etc. As for the rest, everyone will study what he can.

I have spoken of certain questions, such as the institution of marriage, etc. I have not done so in order to criticize N. . . . . I intended to write to him, for I do not wish outsiders to look upon us as fanatics, nor as would-be-learned men. Common opinions as a general rule are the most probable, and when we follow opinions that are common, we cannot be criticised.

Recommend to Frater [D. Giuseppe di] Lucia not to be uneasy about what he hears those say that are not Superiors; and when he hears the Superior speak, he should grow calm by conforming to obedience; and if obedience requires that he should not study, such will certainly be the will of God.

I bless all.

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] I do not wish that Purcozio[17084] should be any more criticised as I hear that he is, for the purpose of bringing him into discredit. This book has met with general approval; why should we criticise it? If any one wishes to find fault with it, let him do so privately; for my part I wish to be obeyed. If obedience ceases with us, it will be all over with the Congregation.

Privately: N. N. . . . writes to me in great trouble that the spirit is waning, *poverty is practised only partially and charity is no longer disinterested;* do not say a word to him, for he has written to me with great secrecy. Be careful. This subject makes me tremble. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Neapolitan edition of 1848.

Letter 289

TO SISTER MARIA DI GESÙ, CARMELITE, AT RIPACANDIDA.[17085]

He exhorts her to patience and gives her other advice.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, July 22, [1757].

I have received your letter of July 4, with the letter of Marquis Brancone.

How great was the joy I felt when I learned that you had descended to the rank of a simple subject for the greatest benefit of your soul! But the harrowing fears that produce in your soul a sort of agony cause me still greater joy. If you had not these trials I should fear that you are not a true disciple of Jesus Christ; for Jesus Christ treats his cherished souls as he himself has been treated. Oh, how beautiful it is to walk in the way of the cross and to accompany our blessed Redeemer! Oh, how sure is this road on which one cannot go astray!

I feel very grateful to you for the remembrance of me in your prayers. Continue, I entreat you, to remember me always, especially now, when having fewer external cares, you can commune with Jesus Christ all by yourself.

I do not write specially to Sister Maria Celeste, but I communicate to her through you who knows all. Recommend to her, my dear Mother, not to say to Mgr. [Teodoro Basta] that she does not wish his direction; and induce her not to take another director: this would not be proper. Let her keep herself in peaceful indifference, and in her difficulties let her ask your advice.

I send you the portrait of Brother Gerardo;[17086] it is one of those that Don Benedetto gave me and that he had printed. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 290

TO THE SAME

The feelings of the king towards the Congregation are not those of Marquis Brancone.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, October 2, [1757?]

A few lines only.—I have had the fever for many days past; but to-day, thanks be to God, I am free from it.

Canon Caselle has already arrived; but I have yet to speak to him at my leisure. Pray to God to grant him the necessary strength; for in the embarrassed state in which we find ourselves many privations will have to be endured.

In regard to Marquis Brancone, I thank you for the zeal with which you have recommended us to him. May Jesus Christ reward you for this! But, my dear Sister, if our affairs do not turn out well, it will not be Brancone’s fault. He does all that he can to assist us. It is the king that does not wish to grant our request; this he himself has declared to the Archbishop of Naples who spoke to him in our favor. We must then ask God to change the heart of the king. However, may God bless his Majesty, and may we become saints!

Recommend me to Jesus Christ and salute for me all your Sisters. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 291

TO THE FATHERS OF HIS CONGREGATION

Explanations as to the vow of poverty.—Various Recommendations.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, October 3, 1757.

My dear Brethren in Jesus Christ: For the benefit of general observance I have thought it to be my duty to lay down the following rules:—

After having carefully examined with the Consultors whether it is contrary to poverty to receive uncertain restitutions, and whether the confessors can apply them at their pleasure to pious works, it has been decided upon the authority of Doctors and upon the authority of reason that to act so would undoubtedly be against poverty.

Father Lohner in his *Bibliotheca manualis* puts this question: *Is it permitted* (to a religious) *to receive money or anything else to distribute among the poor?*—and he answers: *By receiving any object with the power of giving it to these persons or those, he that receives it would act against his vow if he distributed it at his own pleasure without being authorized to do so by his Superior; because it is out of order that he that is bound by the vow of poverty should act as if he had the ownership or the use of what has been put into his hands.*[17087]—For the same reason Father Rodriguez says that "not only is it contrary to the vow of poverty to take a thing as one's own, but to have the use and free disposal of it without the permission of the Superior."[17088]

Azor says that this decision is conformable to the common opinion of authors. *It is equally certain,* he says, *a religious cannot have any peculium of the second kind* (that is, with the faculty of disposing of it at his own pleasure); *for the use or the administration of a good is indeed repugnant to the vow of poverty as long as the Superior cannot direct in this the will of his inferior. In fact, a religious cannot possess anything as his own; now the* *power of using or disposing of property without dependence on the will of the Superior would be equal to the possession of a thing as one's own.*[17089] It is for the same reason, adds Azor, that the Council of Trent has decided *that the use of movable property belongs only to those who are officials, and that they are to act only according to the will of the Superior.*[17090]

The reason of this decision is clear; because the use of an object that is made independently of the will of the Superior by him that is bound by the vow of poverty in an act of ownership, which is injurious to the vow.

This being established, in order to relieve myself from every scruple as to the oath that I have taken to permit no personal use independent of the Superior, and also to obviate many other inconveniences, I have found it expedient to ordain, and by these presents I ordain for each and all, that all uncertain restitutions received by our confessors, when they are at home, should be carried to the Rector, to be employed in pious works; and if they are on missions these restitutions shall be put into the hands of the Superior of the missions, who shall use it with prudence for the expenses of the mission, or to give them in alms. Finally, in order to avoid all violation and all misinterpretation of the ordinance I am giving, I expressly forbid confessors to suggest to their penitents that they should express the intention that the restitution be assigned to such or such a work; for this would be eluding this ordinance.

As for the obedience that is due to me, I am often obliged to repeat the same things in order to be obeyed. Where is then, my Brethren, this delicate fidelity that God asks of you? What peace can a subject have who acts contrary to the intention of his Superior? As for myself, I know not how this can be excused before God. I fear that some great chastisement from God will befall him. It is only twenty-four years since the Congregation has been established; and if such behavior continues, what will become of it a hundred years hence?

I recommend to you what the Rule says about letter-writing. I do not wish the subjects to receive letters unless they have before submitted them to the inspection of the Superior. He shall not read them if they regard matters of conscience; otherwise I charge the Superiors to open all the other letters without exception, and at least to glance over them before giving them to the religious to whom they are addressed.

I expressly forbid our religious to go to the houses of seculars without permission from the Superior, unless in a case of urgent necessity when there is no time to ask permission. I specially recommend that we should not go to the monasteries of nuns without the permission of the Rector himself.

I earnestly recommend that no one should make known to strangers the affairs of the Congregation or of the house. What misery it is to see strangers better instructed about our affairs than our own people!

I again advise and recommend that when there is question of allowing the subjects to spend the night outside of our houses, especially if it is for several days, you take care to give me notice if there be time to do so.

I recommend that obedience should be paid to the Superiors of the houses and of the missions as it is paid to myself. In regard to this I have heard many complaints.

The Chapter has declared that in reference to the question of knowing whether as to the expenses of more than twelve scudi the Consultors have a decisive voice, we should conform to the practice of the Pious Workers. Information on this subject has been asked, and the answer was in the affirmative. Let all the Rectors, therefore, be guided by this decision.

I earnestly request that no postulant be sent to me to be received, unless I have previously received notice.

I strictly enjoin that there be put in execution the ordinance of the Chapter prescribing that in every house a book should be kept of receipts and expenses also of the alms; moreover that in the sacristy, as the Sovereign Pontiff ordains, there be a table giving the Masses that have been founded.

I recommend above all that the Masses be not said with precipitation; for this would give more scandal in us than in other priests.

As to the missions, I advise (1) a day of retreat for each month. Let us (2) not seek to have particular food during the missions; provided we have soup and boiled meat, we should not ask for anything else. The observance of this rule will give great edification; if now we begin to relax in it, we shall in a short time relax in everything. (3) We should not, especially on missions, make confidants of strangers; let there be no useless conversation. We must always be polite although we should be reserved. (4) I recommend modesty of the eyes; it is even more necessary than the preaching of sermons. (5) The Chapter of faults should be held on all the missions. (6) We should guard against joking in the presence of strangers. Let the Superior always appoint a censor who is to take notice of faults and to inform me of them. (7) There should always be a Prefect of the church, and a Prefect of peace; the latter may at the same time take charge of those that are engaged to be married, and he should persuade them to marry as soon as possible. (8) I recommend to him that is charged to preach the principal sermons to recite with the people before the sermon, morning and evening prayers according to the formula that I have indicated in my little book. We should recommend the tolling of the bell to announce that someone is dying; let the manner of tolling be different according to the rank of the person. We should invite the faithful to recite then an *Our Father* and a *Hail Mary* for the dying. This practice is useful both for the sick and for those that are in good health.

I embrace you all in Jesus Christ. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 292

TO SISTER MARIA ANGELA ROSA GRAZIANO, IN THE CONVENT OF THE SS. ROSARIO AT NAPLES

He recommends to her obedience and perfect detachment.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

[NOCERA], October 16, [1757].

I answer your letter.

As regards your direction, I have assigned to you a good guide; obey him then, and you will become a saint.

As for mortifications, ask for them frequently; then do what you are told. I rejoice that you are detached from your relatives, but I regret that you are so troubled on account of my absence. All your affections, you should know, should be reserved for the infinite Good who alone merits all love. Moreover, when I go to Naples, all my time is taken up with business, and I afterwards try to go away as soon as possible without seeing relatives or friends. You will then do well to pray for me. On my part, I pray to Jesus to your intention that Jesus Christ may entirely possess your heart without any reserve. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 293

TO THE SAME

Recommendations in regard to obedience.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, 28, [October, 1757?]

Since Don Giovanni Battista is absent, provided he has not returned, begin to do what I have told you; but on his return, ask him for the necessary permissions. Pray to Jesus Christ and Mary for me. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Letter 294

TO MOTHER MARIA CHERUBINA DEI SETTE DOLORI, CARMELITE
AT RIPACANDIDA

He exhorts her zealously to maintain regular observance.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, October 29, [1757].

I have read your letter, and I see with regret that you are so timid, and that you have too much consideration when there is question of maintaining regular observance: for the loss of observance is the ruin of the monastery; and if you begin thus, what will happen later?

S. Andrea Avellino, when there was question of observance, always raised his voice against those Superiors on whom regular observance depended. Speak then forcibly, and speak always, without troubling yourself about the fact that you are regarded as indiscreet and imprudent.

Yes, for a work of charity, the Prioress can sometimes omit the common acts, but if this happen often, it would not be well.

For you as well as for the others to have special conveniences without a particular reason, for instance, on account of sickness or the like, is a disorder that may ruin the Community. I say the same of other things.

Prayer is recited before meals, after meals, and at all times, even in the last agony; do not therefore fear to pray after having eaten, and even to read something, though this should be done without effort.

When you write, write briefly, and only what is necessary. Pray every day for me. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 295

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

He indicates to him the manner of treating a student who is tempted against his vocation.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

November 3, [1757].

My dear Don Gasparo: Frater Siniscalchi is very much disturbed, and I see that he has many faults. I shall answer him accordingly. But, what can be done? Let us apply the best remedy that we can.

I have written to him that he should depend on you; try to arrange this matter. He has, as far as I can see, a taste for the study of Moral Theology; but Father Leo wishes him to review arithmetic and those things that he has already studied, and requires him to spend the whole morning in this kind of study.

It is indeed useless to make him repeat what he has already gone through. Hence it is my wish that he should apply himself to Moral Theology according as you may judge best, as I am too far away and cannot attend to this matter. Act as if all this came from yourself and settle everything. Let us in this way remedy two evils.

Frater Siniscalchi says, moreover, that you as well as Father Leo cannot look at him, and that you tell Father Leo all that you know about him. I tell you this for your own guidance, but I beg you to keep this a secret.

He is a young man of much talent, yet at present he is weak and very much tempted.[17091] Let us help him as far as we can without prejudice to regular observance.

The retreat of half a day on Sundays should last till the signal is given for dinner, and no longer; after this time there is no longer any retreat.[17092]

Among other things Frater Siniscalchi complains that when he speaks to you, you scarcely answer him. I inform you of this that you may treat him with greater consideration; for you must know that he is violently tempted.

Tell Father Leo that I have ordered twelve copies of Tournely’s Compendium; but these cost money and I am bankrupt. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved at Rome in our convent at Monterone.

Letter 296

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA

He reproaches him for having revealed to him too late the unworthiness of a novice.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, November 25, [year uncertain].

I have received your letter, and I say: May God make you a saint!

Only now, you and Father N., etc., send me information in regard to Frater P. after he has made the vows! Had I known what I know now, I would have dismissed him a thousand times. But now what is to be done?

I had put off the profession, and still nothing was said to me. Well! may God make you all saints! I have restricted him so that he might take his departure of his own accord. I have sent him word that he should not think of Mass, etc.—In a word, may God make you all saints! to have waited till now to send me the necessary information! Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 297

TO FATHER PIETRO BLASUCCI,[17093] PREFECT OF THE STUDENTS AT CIORANI

How he should act in regard to an indocile student.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, December 20, 1757.

Oh, what a fine remedy you have found for Frater Tamangi! *I shall send him back to you at Christmas!*

I absolutely forbid your Reverence and all the Superiors (and tell this to all, to the Rector, Father Saverio, etc.) never to send him to me; and I particularly forbid him to call upon me unless he has first humbled himself and comes to ask my pardon; tell him that unless he does this he shall never see my face again. Command him then in my name to come no more in search of me, if he has not changed.

If he wishes to write to me, let him do so; but I have already told him that if he speaks to me about a dispensation I will, at the very beginning while reading his letter, tear it to pieces and send him no answer.

I will therefore send him to you at Christmas! Now what more have I to say to him that I have not told him? If he begins to commit faults, and does not wish to study for the purpose of leaving the Community, make an arrangement with the Superior; have recourse to punishments, to fasts; keep him away from the society of others; take away his Communions.

In regard to Communions do what you think best; but as for so many Communions for one that is unfaithful, for one that wishes to abandon God, after God has called and accepted him, I know not what good they can do him. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

As for [the student Don Giuseppe] Paravento, of course send him with the others to Iliceto for the feast.

With regard to the young man of Cava, he has been accepted, but it will be necessary to have an understanding with Mgr. Borgia. He himself will speak to you. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in our convent at St. Trond, Belgium.

Letter 298

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, MASTER OF NOVICES AT ILICETO

He earnestly recommends to him a postulant.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, April 5, 1758.

Read the enclosed letter which I have addressed to Father Rector [Francesco Giovenale], and send it at once to him by a messenger.

I recommend to you this young man; give him the habit, and show him great charity; listen to him every time that he wishes to speak to you, and assist him, for he is a subject of great promise. He is now well disposed, but he is greatly tormented by temptation, having led in the past rather a free life.

If he should unfortunately fall into sin, frighten him, but at the same time animate him with confidence for all that. Do not you yourself lose confidence if he now and then happens to fall. Say the same to Father Gisone[17094] or to any other Father whom this young man chooses as his confessor. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 299

TO THE PRIEST ANGELO MAIONE,[17095] IN THE NOVITIATE AT ILICETO

His fears in regard to the health of this novice.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, April 9, 1758.

My dear Don Angelo: I have read your letter; but I also received a letter from Father Master, in which he informs me that he has it from your own mouth that you have been suffering from this pain in the head for several years, and that you are troubled even with vertigo.

My dear Don Angelo, if it is true that you are subject to this headache, how could you remain in the Congregation in which one must give much time to spiritual exercises, and remain shut up during the novitiate, and then besides these exercises apply one's self to one's studies? If you fatigue your head by forced work, you will entirely ruin your health, you will become useless both to yourself and to the Congregation, and you will lead a miserable life; for if the pain has once become settled in the head, it cannot be got rid of.

However, I do not say that you should leave at once; let us wait a little while to see how things will turn out. Consult Signor N., and let me know what he says when he returns; tell him to write to me clearly what he thinks of your health. Recommend me to Jesus Christ.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 300

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA

Various counsels relative to the Master of novices and to the novitiate.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, April 10, 1758.

I have received a copy of the long address against N.; and I have also received the reproof that you administer to me.

I well understand that the Master of novices would be more tranquil if he himself were the Rector of the house; that would be better for his own repose, but still greater inconveniences would result therefrom.

I shall write to the Rector and mark out for him a line of conduct, and let him know that he should not interfere in the internal concerns of the novitiate; but it will not be well to let others see my letter; it suffices that I write him privately.

As for the young man, I will briefly, as I am not well, point out to you what you should do. Keep him still on trial at least for a month; watch his behavior, and after this delay, if he conducts himself well, give him the habit.

As for the disease from which he has been suffering, the doctors write to me that he has entirely recovered. If this be not true, it will be a disease that one cannot hide, and then we have still one year for his probation. In the meantime it would be well to try him by mortifications; and then, if he receives the habit, we should always subject him to trial.

I also hear that the priest of Masi has a delicate stomach so that he cannot retain his food. Write to me what is his condition.

I bless you all. In summer you may permit the novices to go out evenings.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 301

TO THE SAME

The saint makes some arrangements in the novitiate and the house at Iliceto.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, April 29, 1758.

As for Scalese,[17096] I wish him a happy journey.

In regard to Maione, inform me how he is doing. He has written me a very touching letter.

When your Reverence comes here, bring with you the *directory,* since the series of exercises for the morning appear to me to be too long; try to divide it. And now that the weather has become warm, it will be necessary for the novices to go out often.

When Father Polestra comes, tell him privately that I appoint him inspector of the house. He should inform me every month of any disorder that strikes him as important: I say *important,* because it will not be necessary to send word to me about trifles. It will be sufficient if he writes to me this one line: *there is nothing of importance.*

Tell Father Giovenale that I do not write to him, as there is no news.

Father [Stefano] Liguori has arrived in time; had he not arrived, there would have been great confusion, because there was no one to give the spiritual exercises to the priests.

The three novices[17097] that have been sent have been admitted to profession.

Believe me, dear Father,

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*Postscript by the secretary*]: Our Father says that at table should be read *li Disinganni*[17098] till it is finished, but only the *Lives,* not the *Reflections.*

After the original preserved in the archives of our house at Pagani.

Letter 302

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

One cannot without the gravest inconveniences absolve a subject who has left the Congregation without having received his dispensation.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

May 30, 1758.

My God! what news must I hear from that house! I learn that in consequence of a consultation held by several, N. has been absolved on condition that he asks for a dispensation! Now he has hundreds of times asked me for a dispensation; it was, therefore, not necessary for you to impose this upon him as an obligation. In short, what he could not obtain from Rome he has obtained from this house!

Oh, what pain has it been to me to hear such news! But what necessity was there for you to touch upon so delicate a point on which depends the maintenance of the Congregation? If you thought that he could be absolved on this condition, were there no other confessors in the world to absolve him? As to the one that has thus absolved him outside of the danger of death, I do not know how he could have formed his conscience. When there is question of doing difficult things, as has really happened, one does not give absolution before the accomplishment of that which has to be performed.

And then whence should this dispensation come? I for my part will never give it, if he that leaves without dispensation does not return to the Congregation. When he returns and has received the required penances, then I will reflect on what should be done. I judge that this is the way every Rector Major should act, if he does not wish to lose his soul and be the cause of ruin to the Congregation.

I have conferred with the Cardinal Penitentiary at Rome in regard to this matter; and if I should see that the *Penitentiary* would grant such dispensation, I would resolve to write and write again to the Sovereign Pontiff. But our house at N. does what the *Penitentiary* at Rome does not do!

Communicate the contents of my letter to all the Fathers of your Community, and especially to those that have given this beautiful advice. I also beg you to make known in accordance with prudence the substance of this letter to all our young men [students] and to the Brothers so that this example may not be the cause of ruin to others.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 303

TO FATHER EMANUELE CALDARERA, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY

He testifies his friendship for him and recommends himself to his prayers.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, June 9, 1758.

My dear Father Emanuele: I am consoled to hear of the little present that you have received from Jesus Christ, of the mortification that he has sent you; but I am sorry on account of the loss of souls.

Be without disquietude; I will not omit to recommend you to the Lord; but I beg you do not forget our agreement.

About the middle of July we may see each other at Naples.—I have destroyed the letter. Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

I have read with great joy what you tell me about the four novices.

Do me the favor of sending the enclosed letter to one of your Fathers at Palermo.

Believe me, dear Father,

Your very devoted and very grateful servant,

ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 304

TO THE FATHERS AND STUDENTS OF THE CONGREGATION

(This letter was written in the name of the saint by Father Fabrizio Cimino.)

The Propaganda had requested missionaries for Asia; an appeal is made to the zeal of the subjects of the Institute.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, July 18, 1758.

My dear Fathers and Fratres in Jesus Christ: I have been requested by our Father to communicate to you the news that he has been asked to send young men to the foreign missions of Asia. There various people of the Nestorian sect have most earnestly asked to be instructed in Catholic dogmas in order to be united with the Roman Church in which the grace of our Lord makes us know that eternal salvation is to be found.

Behold there is opened to us a vast field in which the harvest is quite ready and is waiting to be gathered in by workmen animated with zeal. Look at those unfortunate nations who bathed in tears raise a suppliant voice to heaven, and conjure the Lord to send you to them. They extend their arms towards you and beg you to come to withdraw them from the fatal ignorance in which they have lived for more than thirteen hundred years. Unfortunate people! they do not wish to resort to those that have hitherto guided them in the ways of error, and they address themselves to you whom they regard as the true dispensers of divine wisdom. In their extreme poverty, they ask for nothing else but to be returned to the bosom of the Church. It is you whom they supplicate; you, I say, that show yourselves so generous towards your fellow-countrymen; it is you whom they conjure not to value their souls less than those of our own country. They have had the same Creator, they were formed of the same substance, and have as much right as we have to the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

One may even say that there is a species of justice that should urge us to carry the light of truth into the country whence we have received it.

If the journey frightens you, they promise to recompense you by a most affectionate reception; if the inconveniences make you shudder, they assure you of a rich harvest. If the fatigue that you would have to endure causes you to fear, you should be encouraged by the eternal reward that awaits you. And what reason could we have of not coming to their assistance?

My Fathers and Brothers, I am certain that several will express to me their desire not to lose the crown that the Lord deigns to present them with his divine hands,—a crown with which I wish to see that the forehead of each one may be adorned in the heavenly country.

In conclusion I recommend myself to your prayers, and while humbly kissing your hands I sign myself

Your servant and Brother in Jesus Christ,

FABRIZIO CIMINO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Letter 305

TO FATHER PIETRO PAOLO BLASUCCI, PREFECT OF THE STUDENTS AT CIORANI

He answers the students and gives them important advice.

(Read this letter to all the young men.)

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, July 27, 1758.

My dear Brethren: The petitions that you have sent me have afforded me great joy; be assured that I say this sincerely. I should be most desirous to see several of our young men go among the heathen to give their lives for Jesus Christ; but I must first be certain of the spirit and the perseverance of each one. I therefore beg you to apply yourselves for the present to your studies; for you cannot set out without having finished your studies and having undergone an examination at Rome. You should, above all, become closely united to Jesus Christ. He that goes among the heathen without having provided himself with the love for Jesus Christ and with the desire to suffer, runs great risk of losing the faith and his own soul.

Those that persevere in these dispositions will do well to renew their request from time to time, say, every nine or ten months. In the meantime become closely attached to Jesus Christ, and pray to him every day that he may make you worthy of so great a grace.

Pay attention, my dear Brethren: *Leo rugiens circuit, quærens quem devoret.* [The devil as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.—*I Peter,* v. 8.] You see that Frater [Maturazzo][17099] is already out of the Congregation. In a short time God has driven away two that a short time ago were among you. Be on your guard against faults; for the devil acts in the following manner: At first he lets us commit faults, and then he causes us to lose our vocation. Be convinced that God wishes to have in the

Congregation *only those that have a true desire to sanctify themselves;* as for the imperfect, sooner or later he will find means of expelling them.

I therefore beg each one of you to ask every day especially for the grace of perseverance in your vocation; by neglecting this many have lost their vocation. Let us always tremble and pray; he that does not tremble and does not continually pray cannot persevere.

Let us not count upon the spiritual fervor that we may experience; for if afterwards there comes over us rough and stormy weather, all the resolutions that we have made will disappear; and if God does not aid us, we are lost. Always sustain yourself by prayers, and ask without ceasing our Lord to help you to die in the Congregation.

I love each one of you as much as I love myself or rather I should say, more than I love myself; yet when I see any one no longer loving the Congregation, I am forced in spite of the pain that such a duty gives me to dismiss him even if he were my own brother. I bless you, and I remain, etc.

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] Please tell Fathers Pentimalli and Buonassisi to call on me one of these days as I wish to be informed of certain matters.

After the original preserved in our house at Frosinone.

Letter 306

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Another answer to the letters of the students.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, August 11, 1758.

I am gladdened and am consoled by the request made to me of going among the unbelievers. The going among these unfortunate beings should always depend on obedience, since I cannot send all those that have applied to me. It will however be necessary that the Lord should make known to me who is truly called to do this work, and who is not. . . . .

After an old copy.

Letter 307

TO THE NOVICES AT ILICETO

He urges them to render themselves worthy of one day going among the heathen.

[August 1758.]

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

My dear Children: Yes, if you always manifest to me by proofs that you really have what is necessary in order to go to evangelize the heathen, there will be no difficulty in sending you.

But these proofs are not seen in the contempt that we meet with purposely, but in the contempt which is patiently borne when occasions suddenly arise. The contempt voluntarily sought after, or when one knows that it is purposely given, will cause but little pain.

And so pay attention that from this day forward no one should say to you: *Are you one of those that wish to go to Japan?* Every day, especially at Communion, pray to Jesus Christ for me, and I say this to all the novices as a matter of obedience. Live Jesus and Mary!

Your brother ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original to be found in the diocese of Sant’ Agata de’ Goti.

Letter 308

TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

He inculcates upon them the observance of various points of the Rule.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

NOCERA, August 13, 1758.

My dear Fathers and Brothers: I again recommend to all the observance of the Rule, and especially of obedience in regard to which I learn that many are delinquents.

Endeavor to have always before your eyes the happy death of so many of our departed brethren, young men as well as Fathers'; and on the other hand, consider the unhappiness of so many still alive, who live, or rather who drag a weary existence outside of the Congregation; and if someone among them far from deploring their condition, congratulates himself, he is only still more deserving of compassion and of tears. Let us, therefore, be on our guard, because a repetition of the faults of which they have made no account has been the cause of their ruin and has made them lose their vocation. This is the reason why I here recall several things that I have already spoken of and published, and that will be of service to the new-comers.

In the first place, I will never give, and I cannot in conscience give a dispensation from the vows to him that asks it without a necessary and just cause; but it is not the business of the subject to judge of this necessity and of this justice; for when he is under the influence of passion, it is not he, but his passion that will judge. Therefore, I renew the formal prohibition, under pain of grave sin, that no one leave the Congregation without my permission. If anyone from the other houses wishes to call on me, let him ask permission of the local Superior; if he cannot obtain permission, let him write to me, and let him not leave the house without my express permission.

This command I also give under obedience, but not under formal obedience; only it should be known that he that acts contrary to it will be subjected to a penance.

In case anyone without a just cause asks for a dispensation to leave the Congregation, I renew the order already given; namely, one should first endeavor to quiet him who is thus agitated by temptation; and if after that he does not wish to be satisfied, let him be kept in strict seclusion for a month, with three days of fast on bread and water every week. Moreover, let each one know that if anyone without just cause, through caprice or passion should ask a dispensation from his vows, by that very act he renders himself unworthy of remaining in the Congregation, and can be justly expelled from it even against his will.

You know the case of the Brother who, having gone away without permission several months ago, continues to live at enmity with God, with a sacrilege on his soul, without finding any one to absolve him. His example should make all those tremble that still have a fear of sin. Again, when the temptation comes, communicate it at once to those who you know are able to help you. Understand well, that the temptation against our vocation is for each one of us the most hurtful that the devil can offer, because of its sad consequences. Therefore, my Brethren, let each one of you, every day, while visiting the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin, ask in a special manner for perseverance in your vocation. I advise each one in particular not to trust his own good resolutions or feelings. When passion comes, light is lost, and everything seems changed. To speak the truth, I have seen enough in others to make me tremble for all of you.

All, and especially the young members, should know that it is a grave fault to ask in case of sickness the permission to go home to breathe the native air. General experience teaches us that when one lives in Community and according to regular observance, the air of one’s native country and of the paternal home is an air that is pestilential to the interior spirit and to one’s vocation. For this reason let each one know that in cases where a change of air has been ordered by the physicians, the Superiors, according as they think best, shall send him to one of the houses of the Congregation situated in another place, and let all henceforth renounce the idea of even going elsewhere, because experience has shown what temptations may be introduced by such indulgences.

I would remind all that it is not permitted to go to the houses of seculars, and still less of relatives without a just cause and an express permission. Such is the rule, and I wish this rule to be observed with even more rigor than other rules. Only in case of the mortal illness of a father or a mother the Rule permits a visit. But there have been several who in similar cases have sent word to their dying parents that their presence and their care were not necessary, and would only serve to increase their sufferings, and that they would recommend them to God where they were. They have abstained from going, and I have been greatly edified by their conduct. It is certain that on such occasion: they have rendered themselves very agreeable to God by the example that they have given to others, as well as by the mortification that they have practised.

I recommend again to all, to Fathers, young men, and Brothers, obedience to any one that may be the Superior of a house, even to him whose functions give him for the moment a right to command, and were he even the least of the brethren of the Congregation. It is on such occasions that we see who is truly obedient. I am not edified so much by the obedience given to me, as by that shown to local Rectors, Prefects, Ministers, and other officials that preside over the work of which they have charge. Faults are committed against obedience. I trust that for the future, with God's help, certain things of this kind that give me great pain will not occur again. Obedience is the only thing that can preserve the Congregation, since it is that which inspires fervor; but obedience, I repeat, is to be paid him who may hold the place of Superior, otherwise it will be all over with the Congregation. All other faults can be more easily pardoned than the faults of disobedience.

The faults against poverty are not less serious. Hence I recommend to all the local Superiors, present and future, that when anything is given through friendship to a member of the Congregation, such as a snuff-box , a skull-cap, handkerchiefs, stockings, and such like things, they should not let him use them, but should it be necessary they should give him something else of the same kind. This precaution is necessary in order to maintain the spirit of poverty in its purity; otherwise many inconveniences would result therefrom, and a door would be opened to the destruction of poverty, and poverty is another virtue that preserves the spirit of the Congregation. As to the garments, habits, simars, and cloaks, when they are old and torn, let the

Superiors be careful to have them mended as long as they are worth being mended. The Congregation is to be pitied if the subjects are ashamed to appear in patched garments. I hope that we may not have to deplore a like misfortune.

As to what concerns myself, I again say, let all write freely to me without fear of importuning me or hindering the publication of my books. As Superior I am obliged to listen to the humblest Brother of the Congregation, and to read the letters that are addressed to me; this I am obliged to do, but I am not obliged to publish books. I can only employ myself in this way when I have spare time in the evening, after having listened to all that wished to speak to me and after having answered all the letters that have been addressed to me. If anyone, notwithstanding, abstains from speaking or writing to me concerning his own welfare or the welfare of the Congregation I make this a case of conscience, and will ask an account of it from him on the day of judgment. I protest with regard to this that if I were actually on my death-bed, I should have nothing to reproach myself on this score. When it happens that any one writes to me or comes to speak to me on things that are of interest to himself or the Congregation, I lay aside everything. I do not write with my own hand, because ever since my late illness the weakness of my head hinders me from writing; and when a religious wishes his name to remain secret I so manage that it is not known even to him that writes for me; for when it is necessary I address it myself; I force myself to write the whole letter at intervals with my own hand.

Let everyone remove from his mind the impression that I manifest the secrets that have been confided to me either orally or in writing. I am very careful what I say, and I tear up the letters. This fear often arises, for example, from the fact that when I correct anyone or do anything that displeases a subject, the circumstances are easily combined in order to conjecture who it was that has written or spoken to me, and at times it is rightly conjectured. Then the complaint is made that I reveal secrets. However, let no one pretend that I am obliged to keep a thing secret so that it may not injure him that writes or speaks to me. To complain that I tell others certain things that do not require secrecy, is ridiculous. If however anyone desires that I should keep a thing secret that of itself requires no secrecy, let him tell me so expressly, and I will comply with his wish.

In general, I recommend to you a few things, namely:

1. Let the Mass be said with gravity; for I hear that many say it without observing order and decorum in the ceremonies, or say it too precipitately. We preach to others; and then. . . . .

2. As to the Fathers that have travelling bags that may be locked, they should, when at home, always leave them open, so that the Superiors may examine them as often as they wish; otherwise they may keep them locked.

3. No one should take away the writings of another without the express permission of the Superior. On this subject I have heard many complaints on the part of some who have lost their writings.

4. When a punishment is inflicted on the subjects by the Rector Major or other Superiors, let no one endeavor to find out by captious questions who gave information to the Superiors of any disorder or any fault by addressing those who he suspects have given the information; for this would injure the common good, since some fearing that they would not be able to know how to answer when questioned, would abstain from telling the Superiors what they should tell. This especially holds good for those subjects that have been appointed Zelators, or those that are suspected of being secret inspectors.

5. I recommend anew, that all should hand over uncertain restitutions to the Superior of the mission, and to the Superior of the house when they are at home.

6. It is also again recommended not to make known our affairs to strangers who through the fault of the subjects are better informed than we ourselves. Even disedifying things are communicated to them, and they afterwards spread them everywhere.

7. Finally, I again remind you that when any of the Fathers go to preach novenas, triduos, special exercises, etc., or when they have to discharge any similar duty, they should observe the same regulations as to food as when they are on missions. I recommend this particularly to the one that is chosen Superior, because he must render an account, and on him the penance will be imposed.

I embrace you all in Jesus Christ. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 309

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, RECTOR AT CAPOSELE

He exhorts him to moderate his labors, and gives him advice in regard to an important matter.

Live Jesus, Mary, Michael, and Joseph!

NOCERA, September 24, 1758.

I am obliged for just reasons to confirm you in your office of Rector for the coming three years; but I do not wish you to undergo excessive fatigue as you have been doing. I say no more for the present. You must come here after we find out the result of the illness of the archbishop and after you have regulated your affairs conformably to my instructions. We shall then speak of several things, and in particular of the moderation with which you should apply to your work; for your health cannot endure so great fatigue.

We shall speak together among other things about Brother Matteo. In fact he or Brother Pasquale is to come here; but I think Brother Matteo would be preferable, since Brother Pasquale has of old ruined his health in this house. If then you could send Brother Matteo beforehand, it would be well.

I expect you and Father Apice, as soon as you can set out. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

As for the affair of *Postulation,*[17100] I have maturely reflected on it, and this is my advice. Not only would it be necessary to wait for the death of the archbishop, but we should have to proceed in everything with great secrecy; for if the proposal is not accepted the new archbishop will always feel incensed against us for having interested ourselves in favor of another. The strictest secrecy should be kept. Perhaps it would be better to abstain from all intervention. For *postulations* are, I think useless. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original, the property of Signor Marchese Ferraioli at Rome.

Letter 310

TO THE RECTORS, MINISTERS, PREFECTS AND SUPERIORS OF THE MISSIONS

Various recommendations.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, September 30, 1758.

1. I recommend that the Prefects of the Brothers should be appointed, and when one is wanting another should be substituted.

2. I recommend that according to the Constitution a consultation should be held, in conformity with the Rule, as to the necessary expenses. In view of the actual poverty and embarrassed circumstances, when the expenses go beyond the sum of forty ducats,[17101] I request the Superiors to give me notice beforehand, since many useless expenses have been incurred in certain houses. This, however, is not understood in regard to the provision that is to be made for subsistence. If the Consultors, who have been appointed are not at home at the time when the consultation is to take place, there shall be called in those Fathers of the house that are the oldest in the order of their entrance into the Congregation.

3. All the shirts shall bear the mark of the house, so that on missions there may not be any confusion on this account; however, one should not be so uncharitable as to refuse the use of shirts to others that may stand in need of them.

4. I recommend in general to all Superiors that they should avoid all blameworthy partiality.

5. The Minister shall not give to the subjects of the Congregation anything to eat outside of the house, excepting fruit that is owned by the Congregation.

6. I earnestly recommend that in regard to food you treat well the strangers that make the exercises; for I hear that for some time there have

been great complaints in regard to this matter. On account of a little expense one endangers the great good that the exercises produce.

7. I recommend to the Rectors to remind their subjects that every month they should make a manifestation of conscience. They should also have bread made twice a week, if possible.

(*What follows should be read only to the Fathers, and should not be communicated to the young men.*)

To you especially, my dear Fathers, I recommend the practice of holy obedience, not so much towards me as towards the Superiors of the houses and of the missions. On this point I experienced last year many annoyances; I do not enter into particulars, because I hope that these annoyances will no more be given. It appears that at present the Superiors must repeat an order a thousand times in order to be obeyed; and even then on the part of some subjects there are so many excuses, so many objections that, finally, the Superiors are obliged in order not to trouble them to relieve them of obedience. I repeat, I do not wish for good reasons to reprove in particular any one of those who I know has committed faults; but I remember and will remember what I know.

Hence I recommend above all to the Fathers that they should obey, especially on missions, any subject, whoever he may be, that takes the place of the Superior. We have at present so many young men full of talent and piety, who can do a great deal of good. About twenty-five of them have asked me to go among the heathen, and they have asked me so courageously and fervently that I have been filled with joy. But when they go out to work in the ministry and continually see objections, excuses and the unwillingness of the old Fathers to obey the Superiors, they will do the same thing; and then how will the Congregation get on?

I also recommend that on missions one should not be too free with the people of the place. We should act towards them with the greatest politeness, but we should never be wanting in gravity, so that they may learn and preserve towards us the veneration that is due to men who are holy and without blemish; this being necessary for their edification. Otherwise, if we unbosom ourselves in conversing with them, in talking about things that do not concern the soul, they will discover in us a thousand defects, and will by no means be edified. This is a thing that has already been spoken of more than once; but I regret that faults are always committed in this matter. If anyone should not correct himself on this point, I shall be obliged to keep him away from the missions. Let no one, I beg you, meddle with the affairs that do not concern the conscience of the people that attend the mission. As to certain things that might cause some disorder or inconvenience, let them never be done without counsel and without obedience. *Non omnia expediunt*, [all things are not expedient].

I recommend moreover that the sermon on prayer should never be omitted, and in case this cannot be done, let the subject be treated at length in the last discourse at the close.

It must be remarked, as is said in the Constitution, that on the missions it is not allowed to partake of dainties no matter in what manner they may have been received.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 311

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Details relative to pecuniary matters and to the purchase of books.

[November 1758.]

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

I have received twenty-one ducats, that is seventeen and a half for *Tournely,* twenty *carlini* for the other books, and fifteen *carlini* for the *Novenas.*

As for the *Novenas,* I send twelve of them. Of these twelve, six are paid with the fifteen *carlini,* and for the six others, if you succeed in selling them, keep the money for me, for I am overwhelmed with debt.

As for the copies of *Tournely,* we had already written to Venice for the ten copies, because there are none here; but ten copies cost at least twenty-four or twenty-five ducats; it will therefore be necessary that you have an understanding with Father Apice, because I cannot now remit even three *carlini* to pay the debt that I owe.

I was also expecting you here to speak to you about the manner in which you might spend the money that has been bequeathed;[17102] but now I hear from a letter written by Father Ferrara that you have a debt of three hundred and fifty ducats. Now there is no remedy; this money must be paid. The bedsteads must also be made, and the rest of the money will be spent on the building; hence it is not necessary for you to come here about this matter, because I did not know anything about the debt of three hundred and fifty, ducats. However, that the order given in the letter may be observed, inform me in what way you intend to spend the rest of the money, after having deducted that debt and the expenses for the bedsteads. I say only this to you: if even I should need to borrow fifty ducats to pay off a certain debt, I shall send you word; but I hope to remedy this in another way.

Those copies of the Moral Theology, bound in two volumes, which I have sent you, are worth twenty-six *carlini;* but I shall be satisfied with twenty-five, and even with twenty.

I have made a mistake: those copies of the Moral Theology are still here; I will, therefore, send them to you on Saturday through the carriers of Teora; when they reach you pay the freight and I will settle with you when I write.

As for the young man from Avigliano,[17103] it is not necessary to have him come here; you may send him at once to Iliceto, since he has been already received. Send with him twenty-five ducats, and tell the Superior of Iliceto expressly from me that *without interpretations* he should immediately have some new clothes made for him, namely, a cassock, a simar and a cloak.

Yes, I will write to Father Margotta; but I hear that he is now prevented on account of the money that has to be collected from Gessari for Grazioli. I shall tell him to hurry. I bless your Reverence and all.

Do not forget to have copied for me the treatise on Sacred Scripture by Genovese, which I mentioned to you.

I send the image of the crucifix with that of the Madonna for Frater de Iacobis, the other pictures of the Madonna are for the other students. Tell this Frater that in regard to the other thing about which he writes to me I have heard nothing, and therefore I do not write specially to him. I have none of the little rosaries that are carried in the hand.

A copy of *Duplessis*[17104] I have tried to procure at Naples, but I have not succeeded. I would therefore wish you to endeavor to obtain it from the Frenchmen.[17105]

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] In regard to Frater Nigro I must here add that I will not have him take any Orders, unless he makes an assignment of his property, because I do not wish the Congregation to be disquieted.[17106]

After the original preserved in the church of St. Paul at Piacenza.

Letter 312

TO THE SAME

He speaks of the utility of having critical spirits in the Community, of his poverty, and of some other things.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

NOCERA, November 22, 1758.

I never appointed Fr. de Iacobis I never dreamed of appointing him, nor do I intend to do so. But I say that I could have appointed him, and in case I had appointed him I should not have recognized you in the remarks that you have sent to me.[17107] Moreover, to none of the subjects can it be forbidden to write to me. As to the visiting the rooms, I never gave permission, nor do I know who gave it. And the affair about the *Bambino* [Infant Jesus] has also displeased me.

Besides, speaking in general, I must say that these critical spirits, as long as they do not go too far and do not assume an authority that they have not, are very useful to the Community, because they serve to keep everyone on his guard. This is exactly the case of Father Ferrara who by his censures is very little loved by others, but, to speak the truth, he greatly assists me in maintaining regular observance. Now what is to be done? In Communities one must swallow these bitter pills, but *omnia cooperantur in bonum* [All things work together unto good—*Rom.* viii. 28.]

This evening I dismissed from the Congregation Father Barberio[17108] not on account of grave faults, but for just reasons.

Let us now come to another pill. Here on account of the litigation that is going on with that *blessed* priest of Calvanico, we shall have to come to some agreement, so as to free ourselves at least from vexation; and I fear that there will be no other way of obtaining money. Hence I beg you to lay aside for this purpose one hundred ducats. I do not wish to say that the house is to lose thereby, but assistance must be given to me, and afterwards I shall have you re-imbursed.

Tell Frater [D. Giovanni] Lauria that I have received his letter; that I have no more to say at present; when the time comes we shall speak about the matter.

Tell Frater Nigro to drive away all fear. He has made the vows and has been accepted. How foolish is this fear of being dismissed! As regards other things let them be settled by the Prefect, and in default of the Prefect by your Reverence.

I have written in the meantime a reprimand for Frater de Iacobis. Indeed, my dear Gasparo, you will have to bear these contradictions in every Community, even if you were a St. Francis. How many of them have I to bear! How many anonymous letters containing reproaches and insults!

Moreover, I must inform you that Don Silvestro, a nephew of Abate Ciceri[17109] is going to the seminary, at our expense, and money is required. Every house shall pay its share; at present send ten ducats. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 313

TO THE SAME

Various recommendations relative to the Community at Caposele.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

NOCERA, December 12, 1758.

As regards the missions, your presence is more necessary at home than on the missions; hence govern yourself accordingly, but under present circumstances the less you have to go out, the better I shall be pleased.

As for Father [D. Ignazio] Fiore if he is not yet twenty-nine years of age, I cannot grant him permission to hear the confessions of women.—But you will say *why can others do so?* etc.—But this would take too long, and so it is not necessary to speak of it.

In reference to the quartan fever with which Father [Domenico] Caputo is afflicted, try to procure the recipe from Don Domenico Antonio Cappuccio; the medicine consists of brandy and chincona bark; it is a great remedy and cured Father Landi at once; but if I mistake not, ten paroxysms of fever have to be gone through.

I have received the ten ducats. Here we are engaged in litigations and greatly involved. The Lord is chastising us.

Father Fiore will likely have to return to Ciorani to teach the humanities; although I should wish to have him stay there as little as possible.—And as Father Margotta says, it will not be improbable that your Reverence will have to go to give the exercises to the clergy of Cava two weeks before Septuagesima Sunday, the exercises to begin on Tuesday. I bless all.

The Brother tailor has not yet come, and here we have been expecting him.

Father Brescia’s work, which Father Leo at your house procured for himself saying that he would procure it at the expense of Caposele, costs five *carlini* and a half; you will please therefore send the money.

In regard to Frater Nigro, you have sent me no answer. What have you concluded to do? I answer: if he does not assign his entire portion to his relatives, I cannot have him ordained at Benevento. He must give up all; so that those interested can no longer lay claim to anything. See that this affair be concluded as soon as possible.

I hear that you have procured the works of St. Bona-venture which will perhaps cost more than twenty ducats. Have patience; henceforth when the expenses for books are considerable, I wish to be informed about the matter; so I have written to the other houses.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the Orlando family in Torre Annunziata.

Letter 314

TO D. GIOVANNI BATTISTA GARGANO, A STUDENT OF THE CONGREGATION

Various points in regard to spiritual direction.

Live Jesus and Mary!

NOCERA, December 13, 1758.

In respect to remaining up in the evening, if I mistake not, I have already written to you my way of thinking about the matter, namely, it matters little that you have to study; I wish you to go to bed like the rest.

In regard to fasting, if there is question of fasting on bread and water, I permit it only once a week; you may on another day restrict yourself to bread and soup *[minestra]*.

As for direction, it is true that the use of discipline and little chains belongs also to the interior, but as these are things that may afterwards be indirectly found out by the Prefect, it is also necessary to have his permission for using them. I bless you.

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] I cannot grant the request that you make, because it is against the Rule, and because it would establish a precedent, so that if I grant it to you, I should afterwards have to grant it to others.

The Rule requires that the students should be directed by the Prefect. . . . . . It is my wish that all the students should submit to his direction; for I hold for certain that God gives the Prefect special assistance because we keep the Rule; even if we feel repugnance in keeping it. God favors not what is agreeable to us, but what is done out of obedience.

After the original in possession of Archdeacon D. Michele Camera, at Amalfi.

Letter 315

TO AN ECCLESIASTIC

He congratulates him on his promotion to a dignity.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, January 9, 1759.

Very Reverend and Dear Sir: It was to me not a wonderful, not an unexpected thing, to hear from you that the election has turned out in your favor, because I foretold this not less on account of the merit acquired by the innumerable good qualities that adorn your mind, as on account of the very high opinion and good will that everyone entertained about you in this city. Hence the Canons have acted in accordance with your merits.

I rejoice with you, Very Reverend Sir, and in the meantime hope that the Lord will assist you and help you to gain merits for eternity.

Kissing your hand, I remain most respectfully,

Your very humble and very devoted servant,
ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 316

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA

Various communications.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, January 9, 1759.

Since Frater Buonopane still remembers his philosophy, I say yes, and it would be well to send him to Ciorani,[17110] so that he may at least refresh his memory. Write to Father Blasucci to arrange the matter.

In regard to Father [D. Alessandro] de Meo, I have already written to Father Caione, who holds a different opinion; it is therefore necessary to have patience. Father Caione will have to come himself in a few days to arrange definitely the mission at Trani. I do not know whether the date can be fixed before the first day of Lent.

I rejoice that Santorelli is doing well; but we are forced to send him to some monastery to find out his inclination while the “Writer” at Naples is creating an uproar and threatens to have recourse to the king. With Mgr. Volpe [Bishop of Nocera] who has the affair in hand we have been thinking of sending him to the monastery of Father Druisi which is under his direction at Solofra. A better monastery than this we cannot find. But there will certainly be many a struggle,[17111] because others sent by relatives will come for the purpose of finding out things and of tempting him. Hence let him prepare himself, because after a short time, when I shall send him word, he will have to set out.

Yes, I will send the package to Brother Francesco [Tartaglione at Naples].

As to the stipend of the Mass of Father Maione, what does Father Mazzini think, since after the month of May the students are to come to Caposele to study Moral Theology? The most that I have settled with Father Ferrara is that secretly one half [of the stipends] of the Masses be given to you and the other half to this place.

Perhaps about Lent Don Domenico Cacciatore will come to you to make a short novitiate of four or five months, because he has again been received on account of the many good signs that he has manifested to me.[17112] He is now on missions with our Fathers. I bless all. Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

I particularly recommend to you to send the enclosed letter to Monsignor d' Amato in Lacedogna, and to procure for me an answer. I wish to obtain a document from him; for the people of Caposele have prepared for us a fine lawsuit on account of the thousand ducats bequeathed to us by the archbishop.[17113] Live Jesus and Mary! I beg you to have the answer delivered as soon as possible in a safe way.

Of those books, on *Death,*[17114] send some to some friends at Foggia and at Melfi, so that they may at least examine them.

I am sending more copies, now that there is an opportunity, so that you may have them sold during Lent when the spiritual exercises are given at the house at Iliceto. And when you have an opportunity, send a copy to Corato.[17115] Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] I send the little books on *Death,* and *Counsels* [*on religious Vocation*], in order that when an occasion offers, you may spread them through the countries of the Puglia; place them therefore on your table.

Whoever examines well this little work on *Death* will certainly purchase it.

After the original preserved in our house at Pagani.

Letter 317

TO SIGNOR PIETRO DE ROBERTIS, AT NAPLES

He announces to him a visit and thanks him for an important service.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph!

NOCERA, February 23, 1759.

Dear Sir: In compliance with your request I long ago charged Father Celestino [de Robertis] to inform you that he would go to see you at Naples immediately after the mission given at Bosco; but the day before yesterday, at the moment when I was leaving Nola I learned that he had not yet paid the visit.

I have reprimanded him for his want of regard for which he rendered me responsible to you, and to-day I take this occasion to assure you that he will call upon you the second week of Lent.

I must also offer you my most sincere thanks for your memorial relative to our process; this will take me to Naples the first week of Lent, and I will not fail to go myself to consult you once more in regard to this affair. Baron Sarnelli pretends to have the wind in his favor and his little vessel is vigorously managed by him; but I have found new reasons that militate in our favor. We shall examine them together, please God.

I remain most cordially, my dear Sir,

Your very devoted and very grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the de Robertis family, at Sieti, a hamlet of Giffoni (Province of Salerno).

Letter 318

TO A FATHER OF HIS CONGREGATION

Recommendation of a person tormented by interior trials.—He blames him very much for entertaining an opinion contrary to the infallibility of the Pope.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, February 27, [1759?]

In reference to that beautiful property, I do not wish my conscience to be charged. . . . . . In a word, deliver me from all scruple.

If you are going to give the retreat at N., remember that there lives there a good soul, I should say, a great soul, who is in the habit of writing to me. It is an afflicted soul who thinks that she hates God, and the like things. God conducts her by the way of the cross. Encourage her; if you think fit, do not allow her to be present at soul-stirring sermons. Persuade her, above all, not to omit the daily Communion that I have allowed her.

I love to think that you are not a disciple of Arnauld, as you are, I am told, already of Giovenino, who refuses to believe in the infallibility of the Pope, *nisi consensus Ecclesiæ accedat* [unless with the consent of the Church]; this, I confess has scandalized me. The French are known to do such a thing; but it is too much to hear that an Italian priest holds the definitions of the Pope to be fallible while Bellarmine, Bannez, and Suarez regard our opinion as *almost an article of faith*, Bellarmine saying that the contrary opinion *videtur omnino erronea et hæresi proxima!* [seems to be altogether erroneous and next to heresy!]

You see then what it is to be a probabiliorist: it is to hold as more probable opinions that are near heresy!

Enough of this. If you wish to hold this opinion, I beg you not to tell anyone that you hold it, otherwise some young man resting on your authority may also hold it to be probable.

I salute and embrace you all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 319

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

He asks his aid in order to oblige a bishop.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, March 19, [1759?]

Mgr. di Melfi has written to me, begging me most earnestly to send a Father to give the spiritual exercises to dose whom he is to ordain on Holy Saturday.

I have written to him that this will be impossible, though I would write for a Father. I also write to your Reverence to ask whether you can give a Father of your house; but I write to you only for the purpose of saying that I have written.

See whether you can send Father Agostino. I should not like to displease the bishop, as he has written to me three times. Perhaps Father Strina would do better.

O God! what perplexity and what confusion during this year, and how many requests and how many are displeased! Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 320

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT ILICETO AND MASTER OF NOVICES

He speaks of the date to be fixed for an important mission.

(Read at the end.)

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

NOCERA, April 12, 1759.

These large missions about which we should confer oftener, should first be applied for and should have the time fixed, not once, but several times.

Yes, the first mission applied for the past winter was the mission at Ariano; but I answered that there was question of giving it at Easter, and I also said that if this mission could not be helped along in regard to the expenses, it could not be given.

Afterwards I had no other application, and not even a letter from the bishop; hence I thought that the mission would not be given, and I appointed other missions. Now all at once I hear that the mission is being given, and that the time fixed is immediately after Easter.

Now I cannot send you any help, because two other missions have been promised, and especially the mission at Mercato S. Severino, which is to be a large mission. At the most, I shall be able to send you help if the mission of Ariano begins on Saturday, not on the 21st, but on the 28th of this month.

Let this arrangement be made: You will begin the mission on the 28th, and during the mission of Ariano I will send you help.

If then you should think of beginning the mission after the said time, you will have again to inform me, so that I may arrange the matter. In the meantime you may finish one or two little missions so as not to lose time.

When the mission has begun at Ariano it will be well to begin, two or three days afterwards, the exercises for the nuns, as there are no more than two monasteries.

Let me know what Father Fiocchi has done in regard to Maffei, whether any agreement has been made.[17116]

We are again in conflict with Baron Sarnelli.[17117] In regard to the other affairs, Father Ferrara will write to you.

I bless you all.

In fifteen days you may send for the other books which I have promised on account of the clothing that was furnished. But let me know how many books you have received on my account.

After the mission Father Garzilli will go to Caposele, and Father Nittoli to Iliceto.

I bless you.

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] Having reflected more carefully on the matter, I think that in order not to lose the time that is to elapse before the 28th of this month it would be better for you to begin the mission, as you have written, on the 21st, Holy Saturday, because I will begin here a little mission on the Tuesday after Easter, so that when the latter is finished the Fathers may go to Ariano.

It is understood that I will send you among other Fathers [Stefano] Liguori and Father [Carlo] Gaiano, so that they may assist you in giving the exercises to the nuns or the priests. But you will have to wait for them, since they will not be able to join you before the Tuesday or Wednesday after the Sunday after Easter; this will be on the 24th or 25th.

After the original preserved in the archives of our house at Pagani.

Letter 321

TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE, IN THE MONASTERY AT CAMIGLIANO

Reasons for which the foundation at Villa degli Schiavi cannot be resumed.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

NOCERA, May 25, 1759.

I have received your letter and the letter of the Princess of Colombrano. This lady, I see, would be most anxious to see us return to Villa, and I know that she is very pious.

But the affair is very difficult; since, in the first place, Villa has not a sufficient income for the support of a Community like ours, which counts no fewer than twelve priests, as we do not accept small convents.

In the beginning, it is true, we accepted this foundation; but the Congregation is at present in a different state, as it possesses already four houses.

Moreover, the greatest difficulty at present is to obtain the royal approbation. From all sides many foundations are asked of us, but God knows which of them will be accepted.

I should myself most willingly comply with the desire of the prince or rather as I have now left Naples and I am not well, I would have one of my companions to take my place, but at present it will not be possible.

Recommend me to Jesus Christ. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 322

TO FATHER CELESTINO DE ROBERTIS, AT SALERNO

He asks him to go to the mission at Agerola.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

NOCERA, May 29, 1759.

The Fathers at Agerola have written to me that they do not know what to do, because through a mistake they find that they are now engaged in giving a large mission. Hence you need not now go to Perdifumo, but go to Amalfi and thence to Agerola.

If the sea happens to be too stormy so that it will not be possible for you to travel by sea, come here, because you may go overland through Gragnano; but I hope that the sea will be navigable as far as Amalfi; yet according to my opinion, this Tuesday evening, it will not be possible to pass over the gulf as far as Perdifumo. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original, the property of Canon Nicola Camera, at Amalfi.

Letter 323

TO SISTER CARLOTTA FRAGGIANNI, IN THE MONASTERY AT SARNO

He accedes to her request.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

NOCERA, June 9, 1759.

When Father Celestino [de Robertis] returns I will send him to you, but only for three days. Live Jesus and Mary!

I recommend myself to your prayers and I remain
Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 324

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA

Earnest request for prayers.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, June 14, 1759.

I am glad that the statement of the Brother is not true.

I am sorry that you are so unwell. Probably Father Ferrara with Father Corsano will arrive at your place to drink the waters of Monticchio.

Let the novices pray in a special manner to my intention for three evenings. One annoyance after another together with law-suits against the Congregation are coming upon us, and particularly do I fear that a great trial will befall us if God does not come to our assistance. And with [Baron Nicola] Sarnelli our troubles have begun.

Father Fiocchi remains here at Ciorani, but I will not fail to send him to Iliceto to talk to you in order to have an understanding with Maffei. Live Jesus and Mary!

Believe me, dear Father,

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of our house at Pagani.

Letter 325

TO CANON GIUSEPPE SPARANO, AT NAPLES

He declares himself ready to grant the requests of the Archbishop of Naples.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, September 7, 1759.

Since his Eminence [Cardinal Sersale] and your Reverence wish me to give some occupation to the young man Don Giuseppe, I have thought of keeping him here with me in this house at Nocera, since the young men that have finished scholastic philosophy are just now going through the course of Moral Theology.

I shall however send him to the house at Ciorani when the exercises are given there; and then I shall have him return to this place.

I have also received the order of his Eminence to give the exercises to the *Pellegrini;*[17118] I hope that I will, be able to do so; but we must ask God to give me the necessary help during that time, since as soon as winter sets in my troubles in the chest begin, and for this reason my stay at Naples will weigh heavily upon me at such a time, and the time of Lent may perhaps be more injurious to me.

However, I cannot oppose the wish of his Eminence and the honor that the gentlemen of the Congregation wish to confer upon me.

As for the book,[17119] we have arranged everything. It will be necessary for me to have certain pages re-printed; but we must have patience! Enough; I did not wish to yield at all, as the revisor desired me to do, and I did not insert a word that could redound to the injury of the Church.

Humbly kissing your hand, I remain,

Your very humble, devoted, and grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 326

TO MGR. ISIDORO SANCHEZ DE LUNA,[17120] ARCHBISHOP OF SALERNO

Request for faculties for all the missionaries of the Congregation.

[November 3, 1759]

Most Reverend and Dear Sir: Don Alfonso de Liguori, Rector Major of the Congregation of missionaries of the Most Holy Redeemer, suppliantly exposes to you that in view of the occupation of the priests of his Congregation who are always engaged now in the holy missions, now in every kind of exercises of piety during the whole course of the year, he obtained from your predecessor Mgr. Rossi of happy memory the general communication of all his faculties as to the administration of the sacrament of penance and the preaching of the divine word, without any limitation, not even of cases that require special mention, and without exception, not even of nuns, through the whole diocese of Salerno, together with the power of communicating these faculties to the subjects of his Congregation according to the dictates of prudence, in imitation of his predecessors since the time of Mgr. Capua of illustrious memory. In asking for these faculties the petitioner also takes into consideration that as the subjects of said Congregation are distributed among many houses, and by order of the Rector Major have frequently to pass from one house to the other, and as frequently the subjects of the different houses have to unite as is required on the occasions of missions, of retreats, and other exercises, which are ordinarily given by said Congregation, it would be impossible to accomplish all these works if they would always have to return to make requests for new faculties to be presented now by this one, now by that one.

The petitioner therefore asks your Grace for the communication of these the above-mentioned faculties, granting them in the aforesaid manner as is done by all the prelates in whose dioceses the Congregation labors, just as it has and always will be ready to serve your Grace in your diocese of Salerno and to obey your every command.

To the petition the archbishop thus answered:

Mindful of the well-known virtues, the exemplary conduct, the learning, discretion, and great prudence of the petitioner, we grant to the same, on the occasions of holy missions and exercises which he may give in our whole diocese, the power, whenever it may seem suitable to him, to communicate our faculties of reserved cases to any of his subjects to whom he may see fit to give them; these faculties being granted as long as it seems good to us.

SALERNO, from our archiepiscopal palace, November 3, 1759.

ISIDORO, Archbishop of Salerno.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 327

TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA SPARANO

He marks out for her a practical rule of conduct in regard to a particular case.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, November 26, 1759.

I answer your letter. I would do so in a more precise manner, but in order to do so I should have to put some questions to you. I therefore answer you in a general manner, according to the rules applicable to everyone, and I say that neither temptations nor bad inclinations are sins, but the consent averted to and desired is a sin.

Every time that you have not consented to a bad thought in a grave matter, even though you should have some inclination or pleasure to speak, you have not committed a mortal sin. It is true, you must avoid speaking through a natural inclination. In this kind of interviews you should direct your intention only to God and to your spiritual profit. While thus engaged in this conversation with a right intention it might happen to you while speaking that you feel a certain natural complacency. As long as you do not give consent in matters that are grave, you may be certain that you do not sin mortally; you are not even obliged to confess the circumstance. At all events it will be sufficient for you to say: *I accuse myself of all the bad complacencies in matters not grave,* without saying with whom; and in doubt whether your consent was deliberate, you need not confess it.

Do not therefore confess any more the past doubts which you mentioned to me, if you have not given consent, and a certain consent, in the matter of mortal sin.

But tremble, for I fear that this is the last appeal that God makes to you. Then when you see any natural inclination, use all possible circumspection in order to avoid every attachment. You are on “the cutting-edge of the knife:” *either a saint, or in hell!* But God wishes you to be a saint. Flee then with all your strength from natural attachments, and pray without ceasing while saying: *Mercy, O Lord! Do not allow me ever to abandon Thee. To Thee only do I wish to give my heart, and to give it entirely.*

If God gives you consolations in your prayer, be thankful to him; but do not seek these consolations. You will have to pass through many great trials; this is at least my opinion. In prayer you should repeat again and again the words: *Mercy, O Lord! mercy, O Lord!* Have also recourse to the Madonna. Go to Communion often, and as often as possible, for you need strength. Never omit to make a two hours' meditation, even though you should feel therein the agonies of death.

Father Mazzini is not here. He is giving a mission and will return, December 8.

Recommend me to Jesus Christ, and take courage. That you are in the grace of God; I have a firm belief; and I am morally convinced that in the case of which you speak, you have not committed any mortal sin; if you had committed a mortal sin, you would be certain of having done so. I believe, on the contrary, that God will give you the grace to fear mortal sin, and that he will give you the desire to love him. Therefore, take courage.

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 328

TO FATHER PASQUALE DE MATTEIS,[17121] OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS AT NAPLES

Grief of the saint on learning the trials of the Society.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, December 3, 1759.

Very Reverend and Dear Father: I received the information that you have sent me about the book, and I thank you for it.

In regard to the news from Portugal,[17122] I have always felt great sorrow on account of what has happened; all those to whom I have spoken were also greatly distressed. There were some that appeared to be glad; on the other hand, when I heard the fatal news I felt as if it concerned my own Congregation. I have been at least consoled to hear from your Reverence of the great constancy exhibited by those that are not professed; this is a sign that the spirit of God reigns in the Society.

I am, however, in hopes that the Lord is to derive from this storm something great that will redound to his glory and to the welfare of the Society. I know, moreover, that the Pope and many Cardinals who are around the Pope are greatly in favor of the Society.

I send you two copies of my little book about forbidden books;[17123] one of them you may keep, and the other you may put on the shelf of your library.

I am now engaged in a larger work which is divided into three parts, in which I treat at length of the exercises and instructions for priests.[17124] It is a work that has cost me much labor.

Next Lent I am to go to Naples to give the exercises to two Congregations, and then I shall kiss your hand and speak to you about many things. In the meantime, recommend me in your holy Mass, and believe me, dear Father,

Your very humble and devoted servant,
ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.
After an old copy.

Letter 329

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

He consents to the profession of several novices.—Various counsels.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

PAGANI, December 6, [1759.]

Yes, Fratres Palumbo, Santorelli, and Mazzarelli[17125] may make their vows.

The young man from Bosco should be sent to Caposele to see whether the climate will afford him some relief.

The doctor's brother gives very bad example; let him know that he will be sent away.

As for Father [Mauro] Murante, *fiat voluntas tua!* [May thy will be done!] See whether it is necessary that he should have a change of climate, I feel sorry for you on account of the expense, but I console myself that the Rule and Constitutions are pushed forward.

I bless your Reverence and all.

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of our house at Pagani.

Letter 330

TO THE SAME

He announces the arrival of two novices.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, December 9, 1759.

The priest, Canon of Montecorvino [D. Bartolomeo Corrado] will come.

I had refused him admission on account of his want of constancy; then, finally, after many petitions and lamentations on his part, I admitted him, but on condition that in regard to him there would be question of a novitiate of two or three years, and as long as I should think fit.

I write this that you may be informed of the matter. Besides, he has been here about two months, and has behaved very well.

After he has passed one year with you, let me know how he is getting on, and then we shall see what is to be done, but not before a whole year has elapsed.

Don Angelo Antonio [Grazioli] will also come. He made application to me to be received. I told him, and told him again many times, that he was welcome to remain in the novitiate or in another house, to come to the mission whenever he finished his studies; to remain as a guest, to make even the vow of perseverance and of poverty to his confessor; but to be received as a Father with the vows of the Congregation, he should not think of such a thing.—Now this is for your own information.

See that at the beginning of Lent, that is on Thursday or Friday after Ash-Wednesday, Father Strina comes here for certain exercises that have to be given to the nuns of Nocera. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of our house at Pagani.

Letter 331

TO FATHER MAURO MURANTE, AT ILICETO

He forbids him to go to his family to be cured, and deplores his want of fervor.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, December 14, 1759.

My dear Don Mauro: I answer briefly your long letter, which has been a source of very great sorrow to me, because I read therein not so much about the infirmity of your body as about the infirmity of your soul by wishing a change of climate, and thereby living outside of our houses.

I also received a letter from your mother. She tells me to send you to Melfi. I answered her that this would not be possible, and that she should not urge the matter as I would never be turned away from the resolution taken in regard to our subjects, namely, that the sick should not remain outside of our houses.

In consequence of the disorders that have arisen from granting a permission such as you ask, I have taken a resolution from which no one will be able to dissuade me.

In the meantime, I am greatly afflicted because the desire of becoming well has made you lose your fervor,[17126] so that if you were to die now, you would not die as a saint, as I had hoped.

I ordered you to Iliceto because I saw that you were anxious to go there; besides, I had already been thinking that the air of this place was doing you no good. Here, by means of the baths, you have improved a little, and I hoped that afterwards you would continue to improve, since your disease needs a long time in order to be cured.

It is true, you end your letter by submitting yourself entirely to my will; but I see that you write in this manner only by way of ceremony, because you have clearly made known to me your wish. May God bless you, because I do not dare to bless you. Live Jesus and Mary!

I may well suppose that you had an understanding with your mother in regard to the letter that she wrote to me. May God forgive you! To tell the truth, I was amazed.

Believe me, your Reverence,

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of the Redemptorist Fathers in our house of S. Maria Maddalena in Brussels, Belgium.

Letter 332

TO FRATER ANDREA MORZA.[17127]

He refuses to grant him certain dispensations.

[End of the year 1759.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

My dear Frater: In these things commanded by the Rule I cannot give a dispensation.

If every student wished to have his own particular confessor, the Rule would be overthrown. If I gave you a dispensation I would not be able to refuse it to others.

Let us do this: Ask counsel of Father Leo; but then continue to go to confession to the Prefect.

Live Jesus and Mary, Joseph and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 333

TO THE SAME

Encouragement to fervor.

[End of the year 1759.]

Live Jesus and Mary!

I have read your letter, and I say to you be cheerful. Perform the usual exercises, and it does not matter whether you perform them with tediousness and pain. It is sufficient that you perform them, practising them as they come, such as the exercises of Communions, etc., and do not be afraid. *By means of the snow in winter grain becomes more productive.*

Do not give up the desire of becoming a saint, make progress, and recommend me to Jesus and Mary. I bless you.

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 334

TO MGR. ISIDORO SANCHEZ DE LUNA, ARCHBISHOP OF SALERNO

He asks him for faculties for reserved cases.

[January 22, 1760.]

Most Reverend and Dear Sir: Father D. Alfonso de Liguori of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer suppliantly exposes to your Grace that it frequently occurs both in regard to seculars as well as ecclesiastics in the spiritual exercises that are given several times a year in our house at Ciorani, in your diocese, that the Fathers of his Congregation hear the confessions of penitents guilty of sins to which is attached a censure in accordance with the reservation made by your Grace. He therefore begs you to deign to grant the faculty of absolving such sins in the manner and form as shall be pleasing to your Grace.

Moreover, as it is frequently necessary on the occasion of the aforesaid holy exercises to call for Fathers living in other houses to assist in hearing the confessions of those in retreat, he asks your Grace to grant to them the faculties to hear confessions and to absolve from the reserved cases, in the same manner that they have been granted to those Fathers that have received the *list of faculties* from your Grace.

To this petition the archbishop gave the following answer:

Having noted what has been exposed to us, we willingly grant to the Most Reverend Alfonso de Liguori, Rector Major of the Venerable Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, all power (revocable at our will) to absolve cases that are reserved to us with or without censure.

As for the Reverend Fathers, religious of the house at Ciorani, in our diocese, and approved by us to hear the confessions of persons of both sexes, we grant them the same powers, except however the following cases: *the fourth, the sixth, the tenth, and the twelfth with censure.*

The same rule applies to the Father confessors of other houses of the said Congregation approved by their Ordinaries: we grant them the faculty of absolving from the same cases, and moreover that of hearing the confessions of persons of both sexes in our diocese. All being revocable at our will.

SALERNO, in our archiepiscopal palace, January 22, 1760.

ISIDORO, Archbishop of Salerno.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 335

TO A NUN

What one must do in order to love God.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, January 27, I760.

I have just received your letter with the letter of Sister Mariangiola and of Sister Maria Ventura. Without asking me any particular question you all three ask me what you must do in order to love God.

As I am very busy and have hardly time to breathe, I answer all three of you briefly, and in a general way. To love God with one's whole heart one must do two things: first, one must empty one's heart; then, one must fill it.

The heart is emptied by detachment from the goods of this world, from relatives, from the parlor, and from every sensible satisfaction. The heart is filled by means of meditation, of Communions, and above all of prayer. Let us pray without ceasing: he that prays, will receive.

I recommend to you obedience to your director. Try also to receive Communion as often as possible: every day, if your director allows you; but it is not necessary to confess every day.

Recommend me to Jesus Christ; I will on my part pray to him for you. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Believe me, dear Sister,

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 336

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA

Zeal of the saint for the practice of obedience.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, February 22, 1760.

I thought that your Reverence had not carefully read the letter in which I told you that Frater Pompilio should remain there, because the air of this place is injurious to him; meanwhile you have sent him in haste to us. But if your Reverence did not read the letter, then Brother Domenico deserves a severe penance, for he knew it was my express wish that the Frater should remain there. When he saw the Frater departing, he should have informed us. Be that as it may, the orders of the Superiors are to be obeyed *without seeking or knowing the reason why.*

To tell the truth, when I saw him coming against my express command, I was beside myself, and said that you had not perhaps read my letter. But it displeased me very much to hear that you had read it, had understood, and still had done the contrary, perhaps with the approval of others.

Let him [Frater Pompilio] return immediately and as some atonement [your Reverence] will pay the expenses of the journey. I give you all my blessing.

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] Send me without delay a list of your subjects.

Live Jesus and Mary! I wish your Reverence to give me a plain detailed account of Frater Pompilio’s departure, and to tell me which Fathers counselled you to send him against my orders.

If we cast obedience to the winds, it is all over with us. Live Jesus and Mary!

After a copy.

Letter 337

TO THE SAME

He reassures him on the subject of the preceding letter.

Live Jesus and Mary!

NAPLES,[17128] March 4, 1760.

I have already told you that I could not believe you had read the letter, and had then acted contrary to my orders. Frater Pompilio’s assertion frightened me. Now I am calm again.

With regard to changing his place of abode, I beg you to remind me of the matter when I return to Nocera, as I am not in a condition to settle such things now.

Recommend me to Jesus Christ, for here [at Naples] as well as at Minervino, I have my hands full of trouble.

I bless your Reverence and all.

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of the house at Pagani.

Letter 338

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CAPOSELE

He asks him to obtain information about two postulants.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, April 2, 1760.

I answer your letter in reference to the two priests. In regard to receiving them I have my doubts, since they are over thirty years of age, and as your Reverence writes, they understand only the Latin language, so that they would have to begin anew their studies for the purpose of hearing confessions and of preaching.

However, seeing the manner in which they write, which appears to me quite refined, knowing them to be gentlemen, and having heard of the mode in which they obtained their vocation, I will not refuse them admission. Still, I say this to your Reverence, privately, that I should like to have it made clear that in their native place they have not given scandal. Hence if your Reverence becomes sure of this, I will receive them, and they may be sent to Iliceto to begin their novitiate.

If however you are not certain that they did not lead a scandalous life, I beg you to write to the city to a faithful friend or to the Vicar-General Giannini, so that he may secretly give you notice of the conduct of said priests, begging him moreover to inform you in a prudent way whether he has not heard anything. I say this, because without knowing it we might get ourselves into some predicament.

Finally, I entrust this case to your prudence so that you may not receive into the Congregation anyone who has led a scandalous life. See that they bring with them to the novitiate twenty-five ducats, at least let them bring with them what they can give.[17129]

I bless all. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 339

TO SISTER MARIA GIOVANNA DELLA CROCE, IN THE MONASTERY AT CAMIGLIANO

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin a guarantee of a good death.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, April 30, 1760.

Sometimes I answer you, and my answer does not reach you.

As for that religious, tell her in my name not to be uneasy. Certainly it was God who wished to have it so. Had she entered she might have been a cause of temptation to her brother; besides, how could her entrance have prevented death from taking place?

After all, why does she fear for her brother, who was a good priest, and who died while invoking the Blessed Virgin! He that dies while invoking the Mother of God cannot be lost.

As to yourself, continue to practise obedience by bearing up under adversities, and be not uneasy. Furthermore, as long as we live we cannot be entirely without fear.

Always recommend me to Jesus Christ; this is what I also do for you. Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 340

TO FATHER GIUSEPPE MELCHIONNA,[17130] AT ILICETO

The saint reproves him very gently for his indiscreet request.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, April 30, 1760.

Yes, my dear Father, tell Father Rector [Don Antonio Tannoia] from me that he should send you hither, to Nocera as quickly as possible.

When St. Anthony begged St. Paul the Hermit to open the door, saying that he would otherwise die outside, the latter answered, as he opened the door: That is a very fine way of asking with a threat. I must say the same to you. I sympathize with your condition. Are you dreaming? Who said that you were sent to Iliceto as a punishment?

How could the Brothers have blamed you, since all Iliceto knows about that affair of Brother Domenico?

You say: *otherwise I will ask for a dispensation!*—You will ask for it, but who will give it to you? *O Master Giorgio*, why lose so much time? Do not trouble yourself about the temptations; they are not sins. Have recourse to our Lady, and fear not.

Rest assured I shall not send your letter to Father Ferrara. But for charity's sake, do not show such anger again. If I did not know you well, I would give you a good whipping. Now, come quickly; I am waiting for you.

Let me tell you that subjects are changed from house to house, not only on account of their faults, but for any reason whatsoever. *Are we then monks properly so-called?* I answer: I pity you for it is not you who speak, it is your imagination. However, tell your imagination to speak with a little more discretion the next time.

I bless you. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 341

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT CAPOSELE

Various counsels.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, May 2, 1760.

Know that I have forbidden Father N. to hear confessions on account of his strange notions.

I am troubled about Father X. at present; for, if I mistake not, Father A. told me that the former entertains some very extravagant ideas. If you should notice this, forbid him to hear confessions, and send him to me that I may get rid of my scruple.

When Father Apice returns from the missions, please send him to me; I need him for a very urgent affair; do not forget.

In future, do not take any Brothers [postulants] on trial in your house without my permission, for after they have been there for some time, we dislike to send them away; and so they live on us.[17131]

Father Leo wrote to me about the young man from Tito.[17132] When the Father returns, send for the young man and examine him thoroughly.

I bless you all. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 342

TO A FATHER ON THE MISSION

He gives him an order.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, May 12, 1760.

Having finished the second spiritual exercises, you will please go to the house of S. Michele; and I bless you. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Same source.

Letter 343

TO FATHER CELESTINO DE ROBERTIS

He names him Superior of a mission.—Various counsels.

[About May 16, 1760.]

Live Jesus and Mary!

I have destined you to be the Superior at the mission at Sava, and you are to preach the evening sermon.

I learn that at Giffoni more than one disagreement has taken place; but I know not between whom or on what account. I should be glad if you would send me particulars.

At present I recommend to you regular observance, but especially kindness to all. If there should be *anyone that is stubborn* it will be sufficient to let me know this after the mission.

The sermon should not last longer than an hour and a quarter, or sometimes at the most an hour and a half.

I bless your Reverence and all the others. Live Jesus and Mary!

As for the expense that you will incur, ask help of Ciorani. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 344

TO FATHER EMANUELE CALDARERA, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY

He declares his opinion about a foundation in Sicily.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, June 30, 1760.

Very Reverend and Dear Father: I have received your second most esteemed favor, and I feel grateful to you for it. But my dear Father, how could I wish to send subjects to that place when the Archbishop [of Palermo] has declared that he does not want us?—We must wait and procure, first of all, the consent of the archbishop. See whether there is any one there who could obtain it from him; but I already see that it will be difficult, since he is not popular with the Sicilians.[17133]

Signor Bonano, the bailiff, insists strongly that it will be first necessary to have a *representation* emanating from deputies of the kingdom.

What makes me afraid is that the Fathers of the Mission after having been called to Sicily by the bishop with so many pressing solicitations, should afterwards have to leave it.

Before, therefore, sending the Fathers I do not wish a certainty but at least some solid probability, that they will not have to return home, to our great shame; the more so, since the expenses of the journey are great, and the income of that place is at present small. I am not opposed to the matter, but I should prefer to have some security for the future.

I therefore inform you that just this week I received a letter from Mgr. [Andrea Lucchesi] of Girgenti in which he tells me first that he cannot send me the alms, in accordance with my request because his treasury is exhausted.

There is no doubt some mistake, someone having asked for alms in my name; since I have never dreamed of asking for such a thing.[17134]

Monsignor also writes to me that he has established a revenue of one hundred and fifty ounces,[17135] that he hopes soon to increase this amount to two hundred, that he wishes to have a *house of missionaries for spiritual exercises and missions,* near his palace, and that he desires our Congregation to be established there.

I have answered him that I was ready to send him subjects, but I begged him to have, if possible, the house outside of inhabited places, according to the poverty of our Institute, with cells of twelve palms and corridors of eight. I know not whether this affair will be successful, because the bishop is old, and he moves slowly.

Please inform me whether you know anything, and give me some instruction about this matter, and recommend me above all to Jesus Christ.

I am glad that the affair has been deferred to some other time. Who knows, perhaps matters may turn out better in the meantime.

Kissing your hand, I remain,

Your very humble and very devoted servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 345

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, RECTOR OF THE HOUSE AT ILICETO

Recommendations relative to various subjects and to studies in particular.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, July 18, 1760.

I have received Father Ferrara’s letter.

Yes, my dear Father, let Father Polestra be sent to Caposele and then Frater [Don Amato] Ricca can stay a little longer. It displeases me also to send him. But please try to find out whether his father has the means of supporting him, for he has the dowry of his wife and the aid of his brother who promises to assist him; for this reason it would perhaps be well for Frater Ricca to write to his uncle.

Mgr. [Bernardo Onorati, Bishop] of Trevico writes to me and begs me to send Father Melchionna to the renewal at S. Nicola; but as I had already thought of sending him to another house, I am asking the Monsignor to excuse me if I send another Father. See, however, whether you can send two subjects to the places where missions have already been given.

Father [Celestino] de Robertis will probably go there to make himself a true Carthusian, as Father Villani and others say that it is not becoming for him to stay at Caposele where he has been so long a time and where he has had a large number of penitents. Let Father Ferrara tell you of the formal obedience which I gave to Father Celestino and of which I should like to hear something.

I bless you all.

I advise Father [Don Giovanni] Rizzi to exercise the students in arguing and in sustaining theses, and on the question of *grace* to adopt the system laid down in my little book *on prayer;*[17136] let him read carefully to them the third and the last chapter of the *second part,* and let him compose theses on this point.

If he wishes to have a number of copies for this purpose I will send them; but I believe there are already some copies there. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of our house at Pagani.

Letter 346

TO FATHER PASQUALE DE MATTEIS, OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS AT NAPLES

Sentiments of the saint on account of the persecutions of the Society of Jesus.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, August 17, 1760.

Very Reverend and Dear Father: I am exceedingly thankful to you for the beautiful work of Father Natale.

I have still heard more bad news about Portugal. Poor kingdom! I pity it.

During the coming October I shall pay my respects to you at Naples. In the meantime I do not omit to dispute with those that are anxious to accept as true all that is said against the Jesuits. I at least say that even tyrants do not neglect to interrogate the guilty before condemning them; only the Jesuits are condemned without being heard.

I however console myself by saying that there is a God who will one day manifest the truth.

I recommend myself to your prayers; may we meet again in October. On the morning that I arrive you must know that I shall arrive with the thought of dining with you whether you wish me to do so or not. Live Jesus and Mary!

Believe me, dear Father,
Your very devoted and very grateful servant,
ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 347

TO THE MOST REVEREND FATHER LORENZO RICCI, GENERAL OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

He asks him to have someone to refute the calumnies spread against the Society of Jesus.

[The year 1760?]

Although I have not the good fortune of belonging to the Society, yet I love it as if I belonged to it; seeing it, therefore, so much accused by what Father Norbert[17137] relates in his book, which has been condemned. I have begged your subjects, especially those at the college at Naples, to make a reply so as to be able to refute the learned men of the present day, to whom it appears impossible to obtain the diploma of doctorship without speaking ill of the Jesuits.

Your Paternity must excuse me for saying so much. Your Society has been placed by God in his Church for the general welfare of Christianity; and we see the good that it has accomplished the past two centuries, and does still accomplish in the whole world through the labors of its members. Apostolic laborers need a good name, must have a good reputation. Now this good name the enemies are striving to take away by pointing to Father Norbert’s book, which is to be found everywhere, and in which as your Paternity knows are related horrible facts. Now as no reply is given to disprove these facts, there exists this dilemma: if the facts are not true; why do not the Jesuits answer, and bring out the truth in a clear light? or if the facts are true, why do not the Superiors punish and condemn the evil-doers rather than defend them?

Other horrible imputations are added to the events that are said to have happened in Malabar and China; I feel like dying when I hear of such things.

Hence, for the honor of the Society and for the glory of God, I feel myself urged to send you this request in which I beg you to write to all those places to which it is necessary to write, and to give orders that those things should be explained so that the. Society may be cleared of these charges. Such efforts and such diligence on the part of the Society appear to me to be necessary. I hear that in France there exists a publication that was written against Father Norbert. Your Paternity should at least send for it, and have it printed either at Rome or at Naples.

Pardon me, I again beg you, for having written these things. I repeat: the affection that I bear towards the Society urges me to write to you. Though I am good for nothing, you may know that I am still the publisher of the praises of the Society.

Quoted by Father Celestino Berruti in his work entitled: “Lo Spirito di S. Alfonso M. de Liguori” (Spirit of St. Alphonsus M. de Liguori, chap. xxvii. Naples 1873.)

Letter 348

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Recommendations regarding certain members of the Institute and various apostolic labors.

[November 1760.]

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

Father Corrado who is troubled with his stomach[17138] is going to your place. Let him go on all the missions which are given there; let him preach, give the instructions, etc. as the time has not yet come for him to hear confessions. The travelling and the attendant excitement may restore him to health; otherwise he is lost.

Father [Alessandro de] Meo has written to me that according to the opinion of medical authorities the air of Iliceto will hasten his death, as he is in very poor health. Whereupon I wrote to him to come to Pagani. Meanwhile let Father [Francesco de] Leo continue to teach theology; as for the missions, it will be impossible to send out two bands of missionaries, since we stand greatly in need of more subjects. Let your Reverence act as seems best to you.

Please let me know whether [Don Francesco Antonio] de Paolo has had two attacks of the gout, as Father de Meo wrote me. Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

Do not forget to send the two subjects to Minervino, as I wrote to you some time ago, namely, Father Picone and another Father to give the exercises to the priests.

The Bishop [Mgr. Stefano Gennaro Spani] answered me and said that he is anxiously awaiting the Fathers. They must go before Christmas. If you could send three, I should feel highly pleased. It would be well if they could start during the novena of the Conception; if at all possible, let them start before that time, though according to the letter of the bishop he would like to have the exercises during the novena of Christmas. But I think it better to give them before that time, for during the novena the poor people are overburdened with work. I do not know exactly what to say; let your Reverence act as you see fit.

It would be good before setting out to send notice and to ask for horses; they will be given with the greatest pleasure. I bless all.

Father Blasucci has insisted several times that we should admit to religious profession Don Pasquale Giuliano, the doctor who studied at Ciorani and who is now a novice; he tells me that the latter has behaved very well all this time. Your Reverence will send your vote.[17139]

I received your letter concerning the accusation of three gentlemen of Acerenza. I am of your opinion; it is necessary to acquaint the Vicar-General Ganini with everything.

As for that mission, I wrote to Father Margotta that he should go to the Archbishop of Matera [Mgr. Serafino Filangeri] to tell him that I place the matter entirely in his hands; your Reverence will please act according to the answer of the archbishop which Father Margotta will send to you.

Pay no attention to the accusation. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 349

TO FATHER PASQUALE DE MATTEIS, OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Zeal of the saint in defence of the persecuted Society.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, November 21, 1760.

My dear Father: I send you those lax opinions which Father Concina[17140] holds. If they are not lax they do not at least appear to me to be sufficiently probable.

I have begun to read those books published at Venice in defence of the Jesuits, and I have given them to others to read and even to those that dislike the Jesuits; and all are astonished at the insolence of the author of the *Reflections*. Especially does Mgr. Borgia [Bishop of Cava] praise these books most highly.

During Lent I shall be with you to kiss your hand. In the meantime recommend me in your holy Mass. I remain,

Your very humble and very devoted servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] I shall have as many as possible to read those books, and I am also making a synopsis of the most remarkable things that they contain. Live Jesus and Mary!

Letter 350

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

He speaks to him of an important affair.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, December 12, 1760.

I have received the answer of the Duke of Andria[17141] in which he says that he has this foundation very much at heart; in fact he would be ready to give all, even his own blood, to bring it about. Hence you can write to Corato.

I have already written to him that we cannot come forward in this matter even if an income of four hundred ducats a year is assured. It is the archbishop[17142] and the commune that must make the first offer by asking not only for a foundation, but also they should see to it that the Fathers have a house to live in by giving them the superfluous revenues of a chapel and of other special funds. Enough for the present; I shall send you a sketch of the memorial which is to be presented by the archbishop and by the commune.

It is not true that I said I was thinking of the royal approbation. I said that if the question about the revenues were settled, I should know how to obtain this approbation.

It grieved me very much to hear that the house [at Iliceto] is in danger of falling, owing to the awkwardness in taking away one of the foundation walls. *Fiat voluntas tua!* [Thy will be done!]

I bless you all. Live Jesus and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After an old copy.

Letter 351

TO SISTER MARIA ARCANGELA LIPPO[17143] IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SS. ROSARIO AT MONTICCHINO, DIOCESE OF MASSALUBRENSE

He complies with one of her wishes, but reproves her for insisting.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, December 22, 1760.

So, then, if Father Apice should die, would there be no more hope for your salvation?

Father Antonio and Father Chiesa[17144] have spoken to me of your desire, but it has not been possible for me to satisfy you; for Father Apice is at Gaeta whither the President of the Council has sent him. He there devotes all his care to the conservatory which you know shelters three hundred persons,[17145] if I mistake not; and he cannot absent himself. I have tried to recall him, but have not succeeded.

But, O my God! you have at your disposition, quite near you, so many confessors who can take away your scruples, and you are thinking only of Father Apice! If however the latter were not now at Gaeta, he would perhaps be at a mission at Conza, at a distance of several days' journey, and would then not be able to see you. It is the devil who in order to destroy you makes you so obstinate.

Yet I feel compassion for your soul and I send you from this place another of our subjects, Father Celestino de Robertis. He is a good Father and nowise inferior to Father Apice. Ask immediately the bishop for permission necessary for the Father to hear your confession, and at once tell the latter all your scruples.

This Father could be of great service to me at present; but for the good of your soul I make a sacrifice and send him to you. Profit by his presence, I entreat you, now while you have him; and if you do not wish to manifest your conscience to him after I have put myself to so great inconveniences to send him, you must no more ask me for Father Apice or any other Father of our Congregation; for I will no longer answer you.

Tell then all your troubles to this Father, and I beg you to get through with him as soon as possible, for he is needed here. And in future, never think of making this request either for him or for others. The journey to Massa is very inconvenient. I remain, etc. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

My companions are continually going about preaching in distant villages. If I should have to send them to remove the scruples of the religious in all the monasteries which they have had occasion to see, it would be a fine thing. Once that we have evangelized a place, we have no longer anything to do with it.

I say this in order that you may no more speak to me about Father Apice, whom it is utterly impossible for me to call away from Gaeta. Would to God I could have him come to assist me. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Recommend to the Blessed Virgin,

Your very humble servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original, in possession of the Carmelite nuns at Ferrara.

Letter 352

TO THE BISHOPS

He forwards his little work entitled “The Mass and the Office that are Hurriedly Said.”

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

December 27, 1760.

Right Reverend and Dear Sirs: Seeing the haste and the little account that the priests make of Jesus Christ in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, I have been urged by some good friend to publish the little work on the *Mass said in haste.*

I have endeavored to make the treatise short, so that priests may be more easily induced to read it.

Hence I take the liberty of sending to your Lordships a few copies, that you may deign to glance at them, and at the same time may give them to the priests, your subjects, to read, so that they may understand the attention and the reverence due to so holy an action, which at the present day is ordinarily thought too little of by those that perform it.

Finally, there has been added a brief treatise on the manner of saying the divine Office with devotion and fruit.

And herewith offering to you my humble services, and kissing your hand, I remain, etc.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 353

TO FATHER GASPARO CAIONE

Various commissions.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, 9, [January] 1761.

As Father Villani has not called you, it is a sign that you are not needed.

Father Meo wished to return immediately [to Caposele] to begin again his studies; but I have sent him on a mission. May God make Father Gallo a saint!

When you find it convenient, send me the money for the books.

With regard to the vineyard, I told Father Ferrara to write, in order that everything needful may be done. I bless you all.

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of Signor Conte Azzolini at Rome.

Letter 354

TO SISTER CHIARA GAIANO,[17146] IN THE MONASTERY OF RAVELLO

He prescribes for her a rule of life.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, January 11, 1761.

It consoles me to hear that you are grateful to Jesus Christ for the grace that he has given to you, namely, the grace of vocation to the religious state. The Lord wishes that we should testify our gratitude for similar graces; for these are favors that he does not grant to everyone.

I recommend to you prayer. When you have free time give it entirely to Jesus Christ; and when you are in aridity, use a book. Be on your guard; a time will come when you will experience disgust, darkness, and perhaps temptations, regretting to have come to this monastery. Heed not this temptation, and say then: *My Jesus, I have come to this place for Thee, and I wish to die here at Thy feet.*

Preserve this letter, and read it when the devil wishes to trouble you. I tell you this because I have not always time to answer; this is the reason why. I write to you to-day at length, so that this letter may be of service to you in future.

Love therefore prayer; but when obedience imposes anything upon you, leave all and obey; by obedience you will give more pleasure to God.

Be also careful to accept cheerfully contempt and correction; offer them immediately to Jesus Christ, and make no reply.

If you commit a fault, make an act of love for God, and remain tranquil.

Flee from the parlor as you would from death. Always love to be either in the choir or in your cell, as long as obedience does not ordain otherwise; and in everything keep yourself united with the will of God, saying always:

My God, it is Thee only that I desire; I desire nothing more; and all that Thou wishest, I also wish.

Always pray to Jesus Christ to give you his love, and ask without ceasing the same grace of Mary by saying to her: *My Mother, help me that I may love Jesus Christ.*

Communicate often, and after Communion recommend me to Jesus Christ; do this out of charity, and also because I have seconded your vocation.[17147]

Good-bye till we see each other in Paradise. I am, etc.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 355

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, AT ILICETO

He expresses astonishment at not having received certain news.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, January 22, 1761.

There was an opportunity of sending me the manuscript for the *Life* of Frater Blasucci and for that of Father Don Cesare,[17148] by the man whom you sent to me; but I saw nothing, although I wrote to you several times; and again, you write me nothing about the new foundation at Corato, though I told you that the duke[17149] was highly delighted with the idea, and that he said he would even shed his blood for it.

What is the matter? Do you never take any letters from the post-office?

I am sending you six packages of the little books entitled *Messa strapazzata* [Mass hurriedly said] together with the letters [to bishops]. Your Reverence will please send them to the bishops as quickly as you find it convenient.

The two single copies are for you and your Community.

As for the foundation at Corato, they have to attend to it, for I cannot meddle with the affair.

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of our house at Pagani.

Letter 356

TO FATHER GIOVANNI RIZZI.[17150]

He approves of one of his decisions.

Live Jest's, Joseph, and Mary!

NOCERA, April 10, 1761.

You did well in getting Father Picone to remain to help Canon Maffei; Father Picone can in future ask the Canon to let him go out on missions occasionally, as it will benefit his health.

I thought that your Reverence had already had Mgr. di Sisteron's[17151] book, but I find that it is still here. You did not remind me of it, and so it remained here; however I shall send it at the very first opportunity.

I bless you all. Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of our house at Pagani.

Letter 357

TO D. FRANCESCO PANSA, ARCHDEACON OF THE CATHEDRAL OF AMALFI AT ROME

He asks a favor of him.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, May 6, 1761.

Very Reverend and Dear Sir: I have received your very kind answer about the works of Father de Leonardis, but your kindness makes me importunate.

I beg you to get for me the book or directory of the present year 1761, in which are given the names of all the Cardinals, bishops, officials, Congregations, etc. It bears the title “Notizie per 1’ anno.”

Hoping that you will pardon me the liberty that I take, I remain,

Your very humble and very devoted servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of Mgr. Gaetano Ruggieri at Rome.

Letter 358

TO A FRIEND

He asks him to do a favor.

[The year 1761?]

Live Jesus and Mary!

My dear Don Urbano: Please order the coach for us on Tuesday morning, as I have asked you to do, and let it be at Corvara about seven o'clock.

Let me know by the bearer of this how much I am to pay the coachman, drink-money included. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the original in possession of the priest Roberto Pepe at Pagani.

Letter 359

TO THE BISHOPS

He sends them his Letter to a religious on the manner of preaching.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

[NOCERA], May 10, 1761.

Right Reverend and Dear Sirs: The compassion that I feel for so many miserable, uneducated persons who go to hear sermons, but derive but little profit from them, because the preachers speak in a lofty and florid style, and scorn to lower themselves to break to them the bread of the divine Word according to their comprehension, has impelled me to publish the present letter, which I have the honor of sending to your Lordships.

I beg you to read the letter first, and then to have it read by the priests of your dioceses who are engaged in preaching, and also to send it to the convents of religious men, recommending it to the Superiors to have it read by those that usually preach.

I also request you to have it read by the preachers who come to preach the sermons of Lent and of Advent. It is true, these already come with their sermons prepared, but who knows whether they may not correct themselves in future, thinking of the great account that has to be given to God by those who do not make themselves understood by the poor people?

For this end I send you several copies. And if you need more, you will oblige me if you write to Nocera, whence they will be sent to you immediately; for I had them printed for the purpose of distributing them.

Renewing my obligations to you, I recommend myself to your prayers. Humbly kissing your hands, I remain, etc. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 360

TO A PRIEST OF BISAQUINO.[17152]

He recommends to him to practise filial piety under very difficult circumstances.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, May 19, 1761.

Reverend and Dear Sir: I have heard of your reasonable anxieties, and I feel sorry for you; but from afar counsels cannot be given to you: what can be given are general rules, because there are always circumstances that change cases. Therefore, to give you my opinion as I know it to be before God, I hold that in the case that you point out, you should by no means neglect to assist your father, who, the more troublesome he is, the greater will be the merit of your charity and filial piety.

We know by faith that God has commanded that our parents should be honored; no exception, whether they are good or bad; and we read in the Lives of so many saints having either heretical or infidel parents, to whom they were however most respectful and gave them temporal support.

Your Reverence should, therefore, do the will of God who *ab æterno* [from eternity] has destined you to be the son of such a father and who he knew had such a disposition.

St. Charles made a beautiful answer, quite worthy of himself, to one who was trying to dissuade him from using so much tolerance towards certain perverse people who, the more good that was done them, the worse they became. He said that *the mercy of God is occupied with those that are miserable, but who is more miserable than the one who knows not his misery?*

This remark I suggest to your Reverence. You already know that your father is reduced to such a state that he hardly distinguishes good from evil; you should therefore always assist him charitably and patiently so that you may either have more merit before God or that you may see that perhaps by your virtue you may overcome his obstinacy, thereby imitating the angel guardians who do not leave souls, although they see that they do not profit by their inspirations.

Be strong and full of courage; I remain,

Your very devoted and grateful servant,
ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[*P. S.*] Live Jesus and Mary! In case, however, your father needs not your temporal assistance, and in case that he hinders you from God’s service and from duly attending to the duties of the priesthood, you could leave him; yet you would be obliged to examine many other circumstances. Live Jesus and Mary!

After a copy.

Letter 361

TO FATHER GIOVANNI RIZZI, AT ILICETO

He asks him to aid a Father in his studies.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, May 21, 1761.

You did well to send Father Melaccio. When the matter admits of no delay, do not wait for my permission.

It displeases me very much to hear that the Rector [Father Tannoia] kept at home not only Father Picone, who had to remain on account of Canon Maffei, but also Father Michele. He has thus been the cause why an important mission has been a miserable failure. Yet the Rector has been asked in a special manner for this mission by Father Michele.

At the time of missions, it suffices if the Rector and one or at the most, two Fathers, remain at home; but when there is a necessity, one Father will suffice.

I am sending the little chains to the novices, and I give them a special blessing that God may make them saints, and that they may recommend me to Jesus Christ.

I am also sending five bundles of cord; it is all we have at present; I shall order some from Naples.

Father Corrado is going to your house, as the air here has not proved beneficial. I ask your Reverence to help him in the conferences on Moral Theology in some treatises which he has yet to study, especially, *de Pœnitentia, de Matrimonio* and *de Censuris,* and parts of *de Contractibus.* He is an able young man, but he has not gone through a course of Moral Theology. I beg your Reverence to do him this favor.

I bless you. Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of our house at Pagani.

Letter 362

TO HIS BROTHER D. ERCOLE DE LIGUORI, AT NAPLES

He asks him for the payment of the interest on his life-annuity.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, May 24, 1761.

My dear Don Ercole: Have patience, because now as Brother Francesco writes, there are three payments due, which amount to sixty-seven ducats, and he says that he has received no more than seventeen ducats: at one time thirteen; and at another four; according to what he keeps marked down in his books there are fifty ducats still due.

God knows in what straits we are. We have to buy grain, and we know not how to do so. Hence I wish to have the interest of my life-annuity, for I cannot bear the idea of seeing these maturities accumulating, as they have done.

Have patience with me; try to settle our account, because I am in need.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Brother ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in our house at Bishop-Eton, diocese of Liverpool, England.

Letter 363

TO SISTER CHIARA GAIANO, IN THE MONASTERY OF THE SSMA TRINITÀ AT RAVELLO

Rules of conduct amidst trials.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, May 28, 1761.

Don Carlo,[17153] your uncle, has gone to Naples. He asked my permission to go to see you; but I refused him, because it is forbidden by our Rule to visit relatives without necessity, and because this necessity does not exist in this case. You could not confess to your uncle; as for other things you may write to him. This is what I have told him and what I am also telling you.

In regard to the trials that you experience in the convent, I am more pleased than if you performed miracles and had ecstasies. *Persecutions closely attach us to Jesus Christ, and help us to love God only.*

Take care not to complain about them to any one, whoever he may be; and when you feel them, offer them to Jesus Christ without defending yourself.

If sometimes it happens that you are uneasy, do not then trouble yourself, for having been troubled; humble yourself, make an act of love for God, and recover your spirits. Pray every day to Jesus Christ to permit that you be despised as he himself has been for the love of you. What will the entrance into the convent help you, if you do not know how to suffer to be despised for the love of Jesus Christ?

This is the very great advantage that you have in being in the convent.

Devote yourself to bearing all for Jesus Christ, and recommend me in holy Communion. Live Jesus and Mary!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 364

TO FATHER GIOVANNI RIZZI

He combats his scruples of conscience.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, July 5, [1761].

I learn that you are afflicted by scruples.

You are a prey to this torment because you do not wish to do what I have so many times recommended to you.

All those temptations, the consent, the pleasure, etc., that occur, as you say, you must not confess; no, no, no; and this I take upon my conscience. I assure you on the part of God, that these are only trials, not sins; no, no.

And what I tell you would be told to you not only by the probabilists, but even by all the probabiliorists and tutiorists, such as Concina, Sinnichio, Vendrochio, Fagnano. Only one that has lost his head would tell you the contrary.

Be therefore calm, and remain peaceful; you are always in the state of grace. In these suggestions you not only do not offend God, but you gain merits. Do not, therefore, confess these things, but say Mass with perfect liberty and every assurance. Do you not see that in acting otherwise, and in always being so disturbed you lose devotion, the spirit of prayer, and your peace of mind?

Recommend me to Jesus Christ. I bless you in a special manner. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 365

TO A SUPERIOR OF THE CONGREGATION

Acceptance of a house in Sicily.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, August 3, 1761.

Father Margotta has been of the same opinion as your Reverence in regard to the establishment of a mission at Sicily.

It is true, at this time, there is no hope of obtaining the authorization to found a house. All that we can hope is that the affair will be connived at. I have resolved to send Father Blasucci as Superior with Fathers Apice and Caputo. Within twenty days, therefore, send me, Father Caputo, but without mentioning anything either to him or to the others, and this for good reasons.

You are at my disposal for Benevento which is more important than any other foundation.

I bless you all. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the Roman edition.

Letter 366

TO THE STUDENTS OF THE HOUSE AT CIORANI

Regulations made at the canonical visitation.

[The year 1761.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Teresa!

To repair the disorders that have existed until now among our young men, and to preserve as far as possible the good spirit imbibed in the novitiate, I have thought it advisable to leave these regulations, which are taken for the most part from our Rules and from the Constitutions for our young men.

1. Students shall show all possible respect, veneration, and obedience as well to the Prefect as to the Lector; they shall neither defend nor excuse themselves in their presence. They shall be attentive to what they say with every mark of veneration; they shall not murmur among themselves.

2. Except at the time of recreation or when otherwise necessary, they shall not leave their rooms; nor is it permitted them to walk up and down in the corridors, to go to the class-room, to the choir, or to any other place outside of the studentate without the permission of the Prefect; especially during the time of *siesta* shall they remain in their rooms.

3. In going to the common acts, as for example going to or returning from class, they shall go two by two, with hands folded and eyes modestly cast down; and after the examination in the evening they shall return to the studentate in the same order.

4. During the time of general study they shall observe the strictest silence; they shall not be allowed to speak among themselves, but only to their Prefect and to their Lector.

5. They shall not be allowed to play ball, as it is a source of great distraction and, as we have already seen, scandalizes outsiders.

6. Only the Zelator shall be allowed to have a common key.

7. Let there be no disputes among them, but let one yield to the other. The Zelator shall pay special attention to this point.

8. The Rector as well as the Prefect shall not give permission too readily to students to speak to seculars; nor shall they allow outsiders, or even Fathers and Brothers to go into the recreation of the students. The students with their Prefect or with another Father assigned by the Rector, shall take their recreation apart from the others. Let not permission to eat outside of meal-time be too easily given even to eat fruit, if they go out very often. The recreations in the gardens shall not be given too often, as they cost a great deal. It can also be a source of scandal.

9. In assigning offices to the students, the Minister shall first come to an understanding with the Prefect.

10. The Rector shall not be too easy in giving permission, when there is question of speaking with seculars; he shall speak to the Prefect and shall assign to the students a companion who is to remain near when they speak to outsiders.

11. The Prefect shall not easily give permission to students to give up study, even though they are laboring under a slight indisposition; instead of allowing them to roam about, he shall make them attend class, if they cannot study.

12. When they go out, they shall always be accompanied by a Father in the absence of the Prefect.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

Rector Major.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Letter 367

TO FATHER GIOVANNI RIZZI, AT ILICETO

He exhorts him to despise his scruples and charges him with making an inquiry.

[November 1761.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I tell you now what I think before God. You are not only not obliged to confess the sins which, as you write me, you certainly remember and can swear never to have confessed, but you do wrong when you accuse yourself of them; hence you are not obliged to accuse yourself of them, and the confessors that hear you do very wrong.

It is not necessary that you know in detail the reasons, which are certain for me; it is sufficient that I tell you so on my own conscience and before God.

I also add: You should rejoice, for I regard your eternal salvation as assured.[17154]

As for Molfetta's son,[17155] I, as well as Fathers Ferrara and Mazzini, leave the matter entirely in your hands; I also hold Father Margotta's *vote:* hence you see the youth stands a very good chance.

However, before receiving him write to Fathers Villani, Caione and Fiocchi.[17156] I intend to write to them, but perhaps I shall forget to do so: I therefore ask your Reverence to write also as soon as you find an opportunity.

It must be understood that the young man has a patrimony and that, moreover, there is no obstacle to prevent him from entering the Congregation. Live Jesus and Mary!

I bless you.

BROTHER ALFONSO,

of the Most Holy Reeeemer.

After the original preserved in our archives at Pagani.

Letter 368

TO D. NICOLÒ PENTIMALLI, AT S. EUFEMIA, DIOCESE OF MILETO

Sentiments of condolence for the death of Father Pentimalli.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, November 28, 1761.

Very Reverend and Dear Sir: I know not whether my sorrow at the death of your brother[17157] has been greater than yours. May the divine will always be done!

Please accept my very great thanks to you for your charity to our Fathers, and should they still be there, encourage them, and tell them that I have written to them to Messina, thinking that my letter would no longer find them at your place. Let them know that they should also say Masses[17158] for Father Amarante[17159] whom God has called to himself.

I again thank you for your great kindness towards my companions, and I remain,

Your very humble and very devoted servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in possession of Signor Vincenzo Pentimalli, doctor of medicine at S. Eufemia d’ Aspromonte.

Letter 369

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA, RECTOR OF ILICETO AND MASTER OF NOVICES

Announcement of the arrival of a novice.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

NOCERA, November 28, 1761.

The young man who has no patrimony is coming, but as he is a youth of great talent and of an excellent disposition he has been received.

If I mistake not, Fathers Villani and Caione have been written to, but I do not remember having received an answer. Let your Reverence see about the answer, so that afterwards they may not complain.

I hear that the other young man of Molfetta [Francesco Romano] has come and that he is even brighter than the first; the examination of these two youths we shall leave to Father Rizzi.

I bless you all.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 370

TO FATHER OLYMPIO PAVONE, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT, AUTHOR OF VARIOUS WORKS OF PIETY

He congratulates the author on the subject of his compositions and on the manner in which he treats them.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph!

NOCERA, December 27, 1761.

My very dear Father: I have read your works; you have given to them all one aim, namely, the frequent reflection on eternity. How much are you not yourself penetrated with the thought of eternal things! Your books prove this; but your conduct has proved this in a still more striking manner. If indeed you have renounced all the affection for this world, if you have entered the holy society of missionaries to which you belong, you have done so only in order to occupy yourself with the eternal Good.

The salutary effect that these thoughts have produced on your mind, you have vividly portrayed in your works, and all those that read them attentively will derive from it, I hope, the same profit. Like reflections are in fact powerful enough by themselves to convert the soul that is most attached to the perishable goods of this earth, and to stimulate pious souls to walk on the road that leads to perfection. Who could deny this? Saints became saints only by reflecting on eternity.

Please accept, my Reverend Father, the expression of the profound respect, with which I have the honor to be

Your very devoted and very grateful servant,

ALFONSO DE LIGUORI,

of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After a copy printed at the head of the book of Father Pavone, entitled “Via Facile del Paradiso” (The Easy Way to Paradise), edition of 1863.

Letter 371

TO FATHER ANTONIO TANNOIA

He sends a letter addressed to the novices.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, January 28, 1762.

I write specially to the novices who have written to me, but I have besides written another general letter which I beg your Reverence to read *leisurely* to the novices in the chapel. In the next Chapter it may serve the purpose of a sermon.

Let them hear the letter on their knees, so that they may accept it with greater devotion, and read it and make them hear it slowly, slowly; and preserve it, because it will be of use for other novices. I bless you. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Have the novices read my work *on religious,*[17160] because it is full of practical things; point out to them the chapters that are to be read.

After the original preserved in the archives of our house at Pagani.

Letter 372

TO THE NOVICES IN THE HOUSE AT ILICETO

Inestimable value of the religious vocation.—Means of preserving it.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

NOCERA, January 28, 1762.

My very dear Brethren: God knows how much I envy you. Had I only had in my youth, like you, the happiness of living retired in God's house in the midst of so many virtuous companions, who excite one another to love our Lord more and more, and far from this cursed world in which so many are lost!

Yes, I envy you, and I recommend to you to thank God unceasingly for the grace that he has given you to leave the world for the love of him.

These are graces that are not granted to all. How many companions of your age, in your country, are now living a life of distraction, of uneasiness, are exposed to a thousand dangers, and are probably living even away from God; for it is difficult for a young man to live in the world without being a slave of the devil!

But be on your guard; for the enemy always seeks to make you lose your vocation. When he has gained this point, he will have gained everything.

Let every one of you be convinced that there is no one that will not have to encounter his storm amidst great darkness.

There is, therefore, no other remedy than to keep from reasoning with temptation and to have immediately recourse to God, saying: *O Lord! I have given myself entirely to Thee, and I do not wish to leave Thee; even if all the rest abandon Thee, I will always be united to Thee.*

You should also have recourse especially to Mary, who is called the Mother of perseverance; if we have recourse to this tender Mother, and this we should constantly do, it is impossible for us to lose our vocation.

Hold for certain that whoever dies in the Congregation will not only be saved but will be saved as a saint, and will have a high place in heaven.

Attach yourselves, therefore, more and more to the love of Jesus Christ; love is a chain of gold that attaches souls to God, and attaches them so closely that they seem not to be able to become separated from him.

Hence I wish you always to make acts of love in your prayers, Communions, visits, spiritual readings, in your cells, in the refectory, at your walks, in every place and at all times.

He that loves Jesus Christ with his whole heart does not fear to lose him, and he is ready to suffer for the love of him every kind of pain, of contempt, of poverty.

If anyone, on the contrary, does not adopt this method he will easily lose his vocation; and this, my dearly beloved Brethren, is the greatest misfortune that can befall you. Hence I pray to God to send you death rather than permit you to lose your vocation—a misfortune that would drag along with it all kinds of evils.

Be persuaded that if you return to the world after having lost your vocation and turned your back on God, you will not have the courage to apply yourselves to prayer; for while wishing to apply yourselves to it you would always hear yourselves reproached for your unfaithfulness. If you would thus neglect prayer, as it is probable you would, and if you found yourselves in the midst of the world, of bad companions, of dangerous occasions, when you would no longer receive special favors from our Lord, who usually treats in this manner those that are unfaithful to his call, what would become of you in time and eternity?

And even if you would save your soul, though this would be difficult, you would at least lose the beautiful crown that God would have prepared for you in order to reward your fidelity. In any case, be assured that you would always lead upon earth an unhappy life, full of continual disquietude, and tormented without ceasing for having left God in order to follow your own caprice.

I repeat: I pray to God to send you death rather than permit that such a misfortune should befall you.

I bless you now in the name of the Blessed Trinity, and especially of Jesus Christ, who by his death has merited for you the supreme and inappreciable grace of holy perseverance.

I beg you to love very much the Blessed Virgin so that she may obtain for you holy perseverance.

I beg you to love much the Mother of God and to call her to your aid if you wish to sanctify yourselves.

Be full of courage, be joyful! become saints and love Jesus Christ much, for he gave his life and blood for each one of you.

Become saints, and pray to God for me, a poor old man, who is near death without having done anything for God; do you at least who remain here below love him for me.

I hope, however, before death, to see you and to embrace you after you have attached yourselves to Jesus Christ by the holy vows.

I do not cease to pray for you, every day and several times a day; do the same for me.

I embrace you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, and bless you anew. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

I have a favor to ask of you; if anyone should feel himself importuned by a temptation against his vocation,—I do not mean a transient but a permanent temptation—let him write to me at once, and let him not resolve upon doing anything till he has received my answer; then let him do what he wishes.

After the Roman edition.

Letter 373

TO THE NOVICE, DON VINCENZO BUONOPANE.[17161]

He exhorts the novice to unite himself more and more to Jesus Christ.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, 28, [January, 1762.]

It affords me great pleasure to hear of your consolation. The time for which you so ardently longed has come. See that you do not allow the devil to laugh at you.

Seek to unite yourself closely to Jesus Christ and to our Lady, and do not look for sensible consolations.

When you feel dry and weary, pray and offer yourself to our Lord. Do not doubt that our Lord wishes to make a saint of you.

It grieves me to hear that I have lost the favor of Mgr. Martinez[17162] on your account; but I hope he will soon be appeased.

I bless you, and I recommend myself in your prayers to Jesus Christ after holy Communion.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the house of the Redemptorist Fathers, at Dongen, Holland.

—LIFE OF THE AUTHOR—

THE LIFE OF SAINT ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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THE LIFE OF ST. ALPHON SUS LIGUORI,

BISHOP, CONFESSOR, AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH,

FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.

BY A MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF MERCY.

At the first sound of the bell, the villagers hastened to the Church: “Let us go,” they cried out, “let us go to hear our saint that loves us, and that smooths our path to heaven!”—TANNOIA’S MEMOIRS.

“Would that sweet spirit, Saint Alfonso, have been half as lax had he been but half so holy?”—FABER.

“Lord, Thou knowest that all I have thought, said, done, and written, has been for souls and for Thee.”—ST. ALPHONSUS.

NEW YORK:

P. O’SHEA, 27 BARCLAY STREET.

1874.

STEREOTYPED AND PRINTED AT THE NEW YORE CATHOLIC PROTECTORY, WEST CHESTER, N. L

TO “THAT SWEET SPIRIT, St. Alfonso,” THIS FEEBLE ATTEMPT TO PORTRAY HIS LABORS AND HIS SANCTITY, IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED; IN GRATITUDE FOR THE EDIFICATION AND INSTRUCTION IMBIBED IN THE PERUSAL OF HIS WORKS, AND THE GRACES RECEIVED THROUGH HIS POWERFUL INTERCESSION.

APPROBATIONS.

Having submitted to a careful examination the works, original and translated, of a member of the Order of Mercy residing in our diocese, we cordially and earnestly recommend them to the faithful under our charge.

NAPOLEON. JOSEPH,

Archbishop of New Orleans, La.

NEW ORLEANS, January 10, 1873.

The book entitled “Life of St. Alphonsus Liguori,” by a member of the Order of Mercy, authoress of “The Life of Catharine McAuley,” etc., having been carefully examined by learned priests; who have given me a perfectly satisfactory account of it, I recommend it to all classes of readers, as useful both to the members of the clergy and to the faithful at large.

N. J. PERCHÉ,

Archbishop of New Orleans, La.

We cheerfully concur in the above approbation of the most Rev. Archbishop Perché.

AUG. MARIA, Bishop of Natchitoches, La.

WILLIAM HENRY, Bishop of Natchez, Miss.

JOHN QUINLAN, Bishop of Mobile, Ala.

C. M. DUBUIS, Bishop of Galveston, Texas.

EDWARD FITZGERALD, Bishop of Little Rock, Ark.

JAMES F. WOOD, Bishop of Philadelphia, Pa.

S. H. ROSENCRANS, Bishop of Columbus.

R. GILMOUR, Bishop of Cleveland, O.

JOHN, Archbishop of New York.

LOUIS DE GOESBRIAND, Bishop of Burlington.

JOHN J. CONROY, Bishop of Albany, N. Y.

W. O'HARA, Bishop of Scranton, Pa.

LOUIS M. FINK, Coad. of Vicar Apostolic of Kansas.

RICHMOND, January 12, 1873.

I cheerfully unite with the most Rev. Archbishop Perché, in recommending to the Catholic public the new life of St. Alphonsus, written by a Sister of Mercy, and carefully examined by two learned priests of New Orleans.

JAMES GIBBONS, D. D.,

Bishop of Richmond, Va., and Administrator

Apostolic of North Carolina.

SAVANNAH, August 21, 1873.

It affords me very great pleasure to unite with Monseigneur Perché in recommending to the public the Life of the latest Doctor of the Universal Church, St. Alphonsus Liguori just written, by a Sister of Mercy.

WILLIAM N. GROSS, C. SS. R.,

Bishop of Savannah.

With full confidence in the judgment of the most Rev. Archbishop of New Orleans, and the priests deputed by him to examine the aforesaid work, I earnestly concur in recommending it to the Catholic public.

RICHARD V. WHELAN,

Bishop of Wheeling.

I yield very willingly to the request to add my name to the foregoing approbations of a good book.

J. B. PURCELL, D. D.,

Archbishop of Cincinnati, O.

A new Life, in the English language, of the great Saint, illustrious missionary, and eminent Doctor of these modern times, cannot fail to prove exceedingly interesting to every lover of our Holy Church, and it affords me great pleasure to recommend it to the faithful.

AUGUSTIN VÉROT,

Bishop of St. Augustine, Fla.

I take great pleasure in recommending to Catholics the “Life of St. Alphonsus Liguori,” written by a Religious of the illustrious Order of Mercy, and approved by the learned Archbishop of New Orleans.

WILLIAM,

Bishop of Louisville.

From the approbation given by the most Rev. Archbishop and suffragan Bishops of the Archdiocese and Province of New Orleans, I have no hesitation in recommending the “Life of St. Alphonsus Liguori,” by a member of the Order of Mercy, and authoress of the “Life of Catharine McAuley,” etc., as a work edifying and instructive both to clergy and people.

STEPHEN VINCENT,

Bishop of Buffalo, N. Y.

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 12, 1873.

Any good work on St. Alphonsus should be dear to every Catholic; I therefore take great pleasure in giving my approbation to the Life of the Saint, by a Member of the Order of Mercy, authoress of the “Life of Catharine McAuley,” etc., relying on the recommendations it has received from the learned and most worthy Archbishop of New Orleans, and other high dignitaries.

JOSEPH S. ALEMANY, O. P.,

Archbishop, San Francisco.

MARYSVILLE, CAL., Sept. 27, 1873.

DEAR SISTER IN CHRIST:

You honor me highly by asking my approbation of your forthcoming “Life of St. Alphonsus Liguori,” the last, but not the least illustrious Doctor of the Catholic Church. Let me assure you, dear sister, that I hail your Life of St. Alphonsus as much as I do the admirable “Vindication” of his Theology by the Redemptorist Fathers; convinced as I am that both these works will put the great Doctor’s sanctity and learning in a clearer light, and promote throughout this country the devotions which your favorite Saint had so much at heart,

I remain, dear sister,

Your obliged servant in Christ,

E. O’CONNELL,

Bishop of Marysville.

Extract from a letter to the Authoress, approving the “Life of St. Alphonsus.”

ST. JOSEPH, MO., Oct. 25, 1873.

MY DEAR SISTER:

I hope your book will soon be out of press. I could not hesitate to write my name in recommendation of anything coming from your pen; for you have already very much surprised and edified myself and many others by your successful labors, in which I am glad to learn that you are persevering. I have read all your books, and some of them several times over.

I remain,

Your most devoted servant in Christ,

JOHN J. HOGAN,

Bishop of St. Joseph.

CONTENTS

- INDEX
- THE LIFE OF SAINT ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI
  - CONTENTS
  - The Life of Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori
    - PREFACE
    - INTRODUCTION
      - I
      - II
      - III
      - IV
      - V
    - *Chapter I*
    - *Chapter II*
    - *Chapter III*
    - *Chapter IV*
    - *Chapter V*
    - *Chapter VI*
    - *Chapter VII*
    - *Chapter VIII*
    - *Chapter IX*
    - *Chapter X*
    - *Chapter XI*
    - *Chapter XII*

[Chapter XIII]

[Chapter XIV]

[Chapter XV]

[Chapter XVI]

[Chapter XVII]

[Chapter XVIII]

[Chapter XIX]

[Chapter XX]

[Chapter XXI]

[Chapter XXII]

[Chapter XXIII]

[Chapter XXIV]

[Chapter XXV]

[Chapter XXVI]

[Chapter XXVII]

[Chapter XXVIII]

[Chapter XXIX]

[Chapter XXX]

[Chapter XXXI]

[Chapter XXXII]

[Chapter XXXIII]

[Chapter XXXIV]

[Chapter XXXV]

[Chapter XXXVI]

[Chapter XXXVII]

[Chapter XXXVIII]

[Chapter XXXIX](#)

[Chapter XL](#)

[Chapter XLI](#)

[Chapter XLII](#)

[Chapter XLIII](#)

[Chapter XLIV](#)

[Chapter XLV](#)

[Chapter XLVI](#)

[Chapter XLVII](#)

[Chapter XLVIII](#)

[Chapter XLIX](#)

[Chapter L](#)

[Chapter LI](#)

[Chapter LII](#)

[Chapter LIII](#)

[Chapter LIV](#)

[Chapter LV](#)

[Chapter LVI](#)

[Chapter LVII](#)

[Chapter LVIII](#)

[Chapter LIX](#)

[Chapter LX](#)

[Chapter LXI](#)

[Chapter LXII](#)

[Chapter LXIII](#)

[Chapter LXIV](#)

Chapter LXV

Chapter LXVI

Chapter LXVII

Chapter LXVIII

Chapter LXIX

Chapter LXX

Chapter LXXI

Chapter LXXII

Chapter LXXIII

Chapter LXXIV

Chapter LXXV

Chapter LXXVI

Chapter LXXVII

Chapter LXXVIII

Chapter LXXIX

The Life of Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori

PREFACE

THE great bishop of St. Agatha appears wonderful, even among the Saints of God, yet it would scarcely be possible to select a biography more instructive, and even interesting, to readers of every class and condition. A transcendent model for laymen, priests, religious and secular, superiors of communities, and rulers in the Church of God; a man who was a hero to his valet, of whom his own officials affirmed that “a hundred bishops would not do what he did alone;” of whom Clement XIV said, when refusing to accept his resignation of the mitre: He can govern the diocese from his bed; his ,very shadow is sufficient to govern it; a missionary through whom the Holy Ghost spoke so forcibly that some of his auditors actually *died* of the grief and contrition his burning words inspired; a Founder, whose sons still recall to our minds his lineaments, and, thanks to God, his virtues, his contagious simplicity, his ardent love for the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Mother; a contemplative who passed whole nights kneeling absorbed before his Love; an author who has enriched Catholic theology with over a hundred works, sufficient to earn for many a well-merited immortality; a scholar who has quoted in his writings nearly eight hundred Christian authors—Italian, Spanish, German, Irish, English, Scotch, African, and American; a preacher whose zeal never flagged, who was often known to preach several times a day; a confessor who was always the first to enter the confessional and the last to leave it; and, most wonderful of all, a man who, having lived over ninety years, “returned to his Creator, without a spot, the stole of innocence he had received in baptism,” as the acts of his canonization attest.

When we add his many foundations, missions given and repeated in almost every town and hamlet in the kingdom of Naples, innumerable souls guided in the higher paths of the spiritual life, conventual and educational establishments founded or reformed, we may well revert to the marvelous industry of the earlier monastic founders, which our saints alone have been able to rival in modern times,—to Columbanus, who ordained that his monks should go to rest so fatigued as to fall asleep on the way, and get up before they had slept enough; for, what was the whole life of our saint but an heroic and successful effort to keep religiously the appalling vow by which he bound himself *never to waste a moment of time*.

This work, undertaken through obedience, has been for us a labor of love and devotion. It is hoped that it will become, if we may so speak, a popular life of the great Doctor, the size and price of which will place it within the reach of the multitude. In its preparation, we have used “Tannoia’s Memoirs,” Cardinal Villecourt’s “Vie et Institut de Saint Alphonse,” “The Oratorian Life of Saint Alfonso,” A Life of Saint Alphonso by a Redemptorist Father, Life of the Saint, by Rispoli, the rule, the letters, and other works of the Saint, most of which have not yet appeared in English.

We give, as an appropriate introduction, the admirable *Etude* entitled MERCY AND LOVE, published by Léon Gautier, in *L’ Univers,* on the publication of Cardinal Villecourt’s Life of our Saint, in 1863.

ST. ALPHONSUS’S CONVENT OF MERCY, NEW ORLEANS,

Feast of St. Alphonsus, 1873.

INTRODUCTION

MERCY AND JOY.

IT is not without a special design that God places each of His saints on the theatre of this world at one epoch rather than another. In the Divine economy nothing is abandoned to chance. Wherever the Church approaches a crisis, and seems menaced with a defeat, God gives a saint to earth. And such a saint—in himself alone a magnificent gift of Providence—is invariably endowed by heaven with the graces peculiarly necessary at that precise moment for the healing of the world and the victory of the Church.

Against Arianism, God raised up an Athanasius, a Hilary of Poitiers; to counteract Roman decadence, God sent St. Benedict and his legions of toiling monks; to the hypocritical poverty of the Manichean Albigenses, God opposed the sincere and most magnificent poverty of Francis d’Assisi; the verbosity of the heretics He neutralized by the eloquence of a Dominic and the science of a Thomas Aquinas; against the perpetual militia of Protestantism there came forth from the soil of Catholicism the standing armies of St. Ignatius and St. Vincent de Paul.

Finally, and to come to our subject, at a time when the Christian world was in danger of becoming Jansenist; when Mercy and Joy were banished as foreign from almost every country and every hearth; when confessors armed themselves with iron sternness against weak and shuddering sinners; when frequent communion began to be regarded as an impossibility, if not a crime; when the heretics would have effaced from our Sacred books, whose every page they replenish and illuminate, the words *Gaudium et Lætitia;* at the critical period between the seventeenth century, which commenced universal secularization, and the eighteenth, which was about to consummate it, God sent into this world a saint destined to take *Mercy* and *Joy* by the hand, and render them victorious in every Christian household; a saint who would rob confessors of the heavy armor which. suppressed the beatings of their hearts and rendered their arms powerless to embrace sinners; a saint who was to make frequent communion the cherished practice of new Catholic generations; who would love, and cause others to love, the words *Joy* and *Gladness*, and would make Sweetness, Unity, and Love triumph for many ages, perhaps forever!

Who this saint is, our readers have already conjectured. It is Saint Alphonsus Maria di Liguori, who was born September 27, 1696, and died August 1, 1787, aged ninety years, laden with virtues and resplendent with miracles.

We will now speak of Alphonsus as being in a peculiar manner the destroyer of Jansenism.

I

St. Alphonsus was gifted with a most ardent temperament, and expressed his thoughts with a happy vivacity. More than once he turned the fire of his eloquence against the Jansenist sectaries: "That meeting which took place at Bourg-Fontaine was less an assembly of men than of demons." And again: "WHAT GOOD HAVE THE FRENCH JANSENISTS EFFECTED BY MAKING GOD SEEM LIKE A TYRANT?"

These words show the fixed sentiments of our saint, and he was not among those who change their sentiments every day. But previous to refuting these heretics in his books, he had already refuted them by his acts. The most beautiful *Treatise against Jansenism* is the Life of St. Alphonsus!

Scarcely had he been admitted to Holy Orders, when the ruling passion of his life became manifest, with all its ardor, with all its enthusiasm—his passion for great sinners. He put himself in their way; he met them everywhere; he pursued the most wretched; he attracted them; he heard their confessions and absolved them. "He could not endure," says Cardinal Wiseman,[17163] in his beautiful panegyric on our saint, "those confessors who received their penitents with a discouraging, supercilious air; or who, having heard them, sent them off disdainfully, as unworthy or incapable of the divine mercy. His whole life was a protest against proceedings of this nature, and towards the close of his career, he could use those magnificent words which are the confirmation of his glory, and which should be written in letters of diamond: 'I DO NOT REMEMBER THAT I EVER SENT AWAY A SINNER WITHOUT ABSOLUTION.' "

In fact, the great honor of St. Alphonsus is, that he restored *Mercy* to its true place in the Church. God had been regarded as a sort of giant, harsh and terrible, before whom men trembled, pale, ghastly, devoured by fear. Our saint annihilated these unworthy representations—dangerous and stupid pictures, which distorted the lineaments of the true God. He has shown us what is really the divine aspect; he has pointed out Jesus weeping over sinners, and lovingly extending His arms towards them. The Jansenists suppressed the paternity of God. St. Alphonsus is among those who have restored to Him His character of Father, that is to say, His goodness.

And when our saint took up his pen, his doctrine was not at variance with his practice. In his "Praxis Confessarii," the great bishop of St. Agatha lays it down that the confessor is at once a *father,* a *physician,* a *teacher,* and a *judge*. Well, the procrastinating Jansenists would not agree to all this. Here is a great sinner, who, with trembling knees and shame-stricken countenance, comes to make an agonizing confession of twenty or thirty years' infamy. "Will you," asks the saint, "terrify him, and turn him off from month to month, according to the present regime? No, no; it is a Jansenist doctrine thus to defer absolution." And with a countenance almost terrible, he adds: "It is not difficult, then, to say to your brother: 'Go off, you are damned; I cannot absolve you.' But if we consider the value of the Blood of Jesus Christ, we should hold such conduct in abhorrence? "

Thus speak the saints: those who have least need of mercy for themselves dispense it most freely to their brethren. True physicians, they do not say to the sick, "Wait; in some days I may dress your bleeding wounds." True fathers, they do not say, "Wait; after some months, I shall open my arms to embrace my repenting son." True teachers, they do not refuse to give decisions, and leave poor souls to perish in the dark. True judges, they do not inflict on the accused a horrible suspense, broken by sobs and watered with tears. The Jansenists, in being very severe, imagined themselves very wise; but what did they do? What use to say to penitents, "Come back to-morrow." The penitents did *not* come back. They made humanity loathe pardon by selling it so dear; and peace, being so tardy in bestowing it. I know that some will object to us the *probabilism* of St. Alphonsus; they will affirm that he sinned by an excess contrary to that of the Jansenists; *they* were too severe, *he* was too lenient. The Saint, with an elevation of principle which is well known, a thousand and a thousand times proclaims that “it is always necessary to act with moral certitude.” He contents himself with adding “of two probable opinions, one is not obliged to adopt the more rigid.” Is this, then, laxity? Or do you prefer the Jansenist proposition: “Some commandments of God are impossible to man?” Morose, forbidding, and austere, the Jansenists pointed out the way of salvation, but they strewed it with difficulties almost insurmountable—angular stones, sharp blades, and burning coals; all these must be encountered.

“My brother,” says a sweet voice, “begin by walking in the path before you; it is uneven, stony, rough, but you can tread it, and you will even find thereon some flowers which the goodness of God scatters, to cheer and console you. Later on, you may enter on more difficult ways, but you must not despair in the beginning. God is good!” Thus speaks Alphonsus, and man takes courage. “Always acting with moral certainty, but not always adopting the more rigorous sentiment,” he has confidence in mercy, he experiences some joy, he looks hopefully toward God. And not only does he attain salvation, but often goes farther, and acquires perfection. This is the work of our Saint, of his writings, of his actions. Yet more, he has been the consoler of desolate humanity.

II

It is well Alphonsus has triumphed. He has made the confessional a consolation; he has installed therein goodness instead of indignation; the Father, in a word. But his mission is far from being fulfilled. In our churches reigns a timid, or rather, affrighted silence; eyes are no longer lifted to the tabernacle; the Eucharistic Majesty is dreaded; once a year the faithful are admitted, after a protracted and austere preparation, to approach the terrible altar; once a year the banquet of the heavenly Father is spread before them; once a year they may receive their God. During the remainder of the year, they can only remember or expect Him. Mothers in tears cannot unite themselves to the Consoler of their sorrows; sinners cannot more frequently draw from the tabernacle the strength their weakness so often needs the children cease to remember the Eucharist. On the door of the tabernacle, the icy finger of implacable Jansenism had written: “Love is not permitted to descend into the hearts of men oftener than once a year.”

Arnauld’s book, “Frequent Communion,” has accomplished a mischief that can scarcely be undone. It has plunged Catholic souls into a lethargy—those souls that God created to be everlastingly awake. The very movements of our hearts are arrested by the chilling touch of Jansenism. Hearts must not beat, love must not appear—fear, terror, awe—these alone are authorized. Mercy no longer dwells on our altars; the terrible God enthroned on them is always ready to hurl his thunderbolts. Frightful doctrines, which Alphonsus alone was able to undermine.

This great man enters our churches; with energetic zeal he opens a passage to our altars; he ascends the steps; a finger is lovingly pointed toward the tabernacle, and a powerful voice cries out to all Christian people, “Come, come; Love suffers strangely from your absence; Love is left alone.” Then they come. The beautiful books of the Saint have reassured all souls. And these are only echoes of the words of all the saints. Alphonsus is in perfect accord with St. Charles Borromeo and with St. Vincent de Paul; with Popes and with Councils; with Jesus Christ, above all. He has expanded, he has dilated souls. Our hearts are more vast since his day. A moment ago, we said that he had raised MERCY to its rightful position among men; the same he has done with LOVE.

Who can sum up the incomparable prayers, the effusions of love, the crimes prevented, the virtues acquired or preserved, through the influence of our Saint? He has augmented Communions by hundreds of thousands; by hundreds of thousands then must we count up the wonders of purity, innocence, and virtue, which he has really produced in the world of souls.

III

There are certain men who, in closing their eyes on the sun of this world can bear themselves this magnificent testimony: “I have always loved what is great.” Well, on the bed of death every Jansenist might have said: “I have always loved what is little.” I cannot imagine a Jansenist having an elevated thought. We have seen them dry up the sources of Mercy and Love; nor did their harshness stop here, they must dry up the very sources of salvation. Their hideous doctrine of grace drove *Love* not only from earth, but even from heaven; so that poor, stolid humanity with tearful eye and riven soul, knew not where to find it. “Jesus Christ did not die for *all* men,” said the

Jansenist murderers of Love; God wills to save only the predestined, and these are necessitated to do right, since man cannot resist interior grace.

Here my heart rebels, my anger is enkindled. Such were the doctrines proposed to the Christians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries! And we are astonished that they became disgusted with such odious principles! We are astonished that humanity, to whom the smile of Mercy, the smile of Love, the smile of Hope, were interdicted, became Jansenist or revolutionary! I am no longer amazed at the excesses of the National Assembly, since I see so many Jansenists on its benches. Still less am I surprised at the excesses of the Revolution, since among its terrible actors figure so many ancient Jansenists. These men had hearts of steel! their actions were eloquent of the fatalism and despair of their doctrines!

Well, whom does God send to restore to men the hope of an easier and more universal salvation? Who will become the consoler of wretched humanity, and open anew the beautiful paths to beatitude? 1. is still St. Alphonsus. He begins by laying down the principle that "God wills with a true and sincere will, that all should be saved, and none lost—that Jesus Christ died for ALL men." Then, in his memorable book entitled "The Great Means of Prayer," he establishes incontestably that, "*God, willing the salvation of all men, has given to each the graces necessary to attain it.* If He fail to give the efficacious grace, He at least gives the *sufficient grace* of being able actually to pray. And by prayer, *everyone can obtain the efficacious grace to fulfil the law, and work out his salvation.*"

The most culpable of the damned, had he wished to profit by the grace of prayer common to all, would have obtained by prayer the requisite grace, and *would have been saved.*

Ah! at last I breathe freely. No longer is hope deadened within me. I see heaven peopled; I see the ways of salvation frequented; I see that God is good. I can throw myself on my knees; God is not inexorable. Away with these odious Jansenist crucifixes, whose arms are so contracted; I must have wide arms, immense arms, capable of enclosing all the sinners in the world. Give me the Jesus Christ of St. Alphonsus, not him of Arnauld and Saint-Cyran.

A phenomenon which has always seemed strangely surprising to me is, that all revolutionists have been passionately attached to the Jansenists, and passionately beloved by them. It is nevertheless certain that the Jansenists were the most intolerant, morose, and illiberal of sectaries. It is equally true that we, Catholics, defended against them all human liberties, and at the same time, the cause of Mercy, Love, and Hope. But the Jansenists were rebels; that suffices for our adversaries. And above all, they were enemies of the Holy See; that explains everything. It cannot now be a matter of surprise to see among our opponents Michelet and Nicole, the *Siècle* and the *Provinciales*, the Socialists even, with Saint-Cyran and Arnauld. All rebellions are connected, and are true to each other.

Not satisfied with effacing from the world all ideas of love, goodness, and hope, the Jansenists wished also to blot out the idea of unity. They were the most ardent and the most dangerous of Gallicans. This fact is so notorious that it is unnecessary to demonstrate it. We may add that the Jansenists managed their revolt well. Yes, during two centuries a school existed in the bosom of the Church which affirmed that “a Council is above the Pope,” in other words, that members are superior to their head, and can assume its peculiar functions. Yes, during two centuries certain theologians used their best efforts to annihilate the idea of Infallibility, an idea which is the grandest honor of the human race; for, as the good Bishop of Lille recently said: “Man is so great that he must have for his guidance on earth a perpetual Infallibility; and each of our little ones has a right to say to his master: ‘Do not deceive me; be infallible.’ “ For two centuries has been exhibited the strange spectacle of a crowd kneeling before the Roman See, and crying out to the sovereign Pontiff: “We see in you the Vicar of Jesus Christ, but a most fallible Vicar—perpetually fallible, necessarily fallible.” Yet the Jansenists dared to assert that they preserved Catholic Unity. Yes, after the fashion of a branch which, though lopped off, still holds on to the tree by some vegetative fibres, receiving just enough of sap to save it from immediate death, and which droops mournfully with its withered leaves, from a tree, always green, always beautiful, always living.

The idea of Infallibility, the idea of Unity, had all but disappeared from the earth when St. Alphonsus came. It has been remarked that he was by excellence the Saint of Infallibility; it may be said with as much reason or more, that he was also the Saint of Unity. “The Declaration of the French clergy in 1680 was a thorn that pierced his heart.” But do not some maintain in these days that Gallicanism was the distinctive sign, the essential adornment, of all great minds, and that we have nothing to oppose to their celebrity? What? Is not St. Alphonsus, in a literary point of view, equal to the most celebrated Jansenists, the most illustrious Gallicans? Listen! His sweet voice is changed into thunder when he vindicates the rights of the Pope. He styles him the Prince, the King of Theology, *Theologiæ Princeps;* the Governor, the Moderator of the whole Church, *Ecclesiæ Moderator;* the Preserver, the Supreme Defender of divine truth among men, *Divinæ veritatis conservator et vindex;* the Sovereign Judge of all doctrinal controversy, *Unus controversarium Judex,* the Universal Doctor, and Infallible Interpreter of the divine will.

And since the days of Alphonsus—thanks to him—these epithets are as “household words” on the lips of Catholics. He has trampled on Gallicanism as on Jansenism; he has been doubly triumphant. And to come to the natural result of what has been said, he has restored Unity to the world, having previously restored to it Mercy, Love, and Hope.

V

His task was not yet completed. A joy was still wanting to the Christian world; the Blessed Virgin had too poor a place in liturgical invocations, in prayers, in the heart. The Jansenists professed a peculiar horror of the Immaculate Conception; they obstinately insisted that some stains had sullied the whiteness of this mystic swan. Mary, being thus almost entirely riven from the devotion of humanity, Joy disappeared, for, as our liturgy says, the Virgin announces Joy to the whole universe: *Gaudium annunciavit universo mundo.* St. Alphonsus perceived this danger as he had perceived all the others, and he undertook to restore to the Mother of God the glories of which Jansenist hands had robbed her. God worked with him, and glorious miracles gave his doctrine a supernatural consecration. In presence of thousands of spectators, Our Lady more than once appeared to vindicate her own cause. And Alphonsus was encouraged to proclaim boldly and distinctly the Immaculate Conception of the Co-Redemptrix of the human race; to cry out always and everywhere that “all graces come through the hands of Mary.” Now let us open our eyes and ears. What language do all

Christians now hold of the Blessed Virgin but the language of St. Alphonsus? Has not the dogma of her Immaculate Conception, so dear to him, been solemnly defined? Have not his works on the Mother of God become standard? Verily, our Saint triumphs.

Even in the bosom of the family, the Jansenists had acquired an influence truly deplorable. They drove out Joy. We know what Jansenist education meant. The little children were sternly treated. They must not jest or laugh too loud, or show their pretty little teeth in smiles. They were forced to submit to sacrifices which, to be meritorious must be voluntary and free. Their parents rarely mingled with them, *e longinquo auctoritas*. Their home was gloomy. The feasts of Our Lady and the Saints were diminished in number. The little ones were taught to enter a church in fear and trembling—*pavete ad sanctuarium meum;* their sweet little eyes must not presume to wander toward the tabernacle. Such an education, I tell you, was cold, dismal, and desolate.

The doctrine of St. Alphonsus has yet to triumph in the family, where a contrary system has replaced the Turkish regime of the Jansenists. To-day we are in the opposite extreme; we make our children our companions; the Jansenists wished us to make them our slaves. Between these extremes is true Christian education, grave but cheerful, austere but joyous, paternal and maternal—peals of laughter mingled with noble teachings, plays with lessons. St. Alphonsus has not yet wholly triumphed over the false austerity, the gloom of the Jansenists. But he who has brought back among us Love, Hope, and Goodness, will assuredly restore to us Joy. Melancholy was regarded in the Middle Ages as the eighth capital sin; Joy is a great virtue, and the Church incessantly says to us: *Rejoice, again I say to you, rejoice. Gaudete, iterum gaudete!*

LÉON GAUTIER.

LIFE OF ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI.

Chapter I

Characteristics of St. Alphonsus.—Antiquity and nobility of his family.—Piety of his parents.—Birth of Alphonsus.—His brothers and sisters.—Childhood of the saint.—Remarkable prediction of St. Francis Jerome, S. J.—Singular coincidence.

THE life of St. Alphonsus Mary di Liguori is a mirror of every virtue; well known and deeply meditated, it cannot fail to inspire a holy ambition to walk in his footsteps. He was exemplary in the world; as a priest, he has become the great model of evangelical workmen. Founder of a congregation of missionary priests, he perpetuates in his children his piety and zeal for souls. As a bishop, he proved himself worthy of companionship with the apostles; as the author of numerous works, inspired by his faith, his charity, his devotion to the Church, *being dead, he yet speaketh* to the incredulous who run blindly to perdition, to heretics who despise their true mother, to moralists tempted to the extremes of laxity or rigorism: in short, his writings have won him a place among the Doctors of the Church.

It were superfluous to enlarge on the antiquity and nobility of the family of our saint, a family whose origin is anterior to the Neapolitan monarchy; this would be absurdly out of place in the biography of one who so thoroughly despised mere worldly grandeur.

Happily, his family was ennobled by virtue as well as by rank. His father, Count Joseph di Liguori, of the Royal Neapolitan Marine, was remarkable for his sincere piety. When at home, he frequented the churches, and at regular intervals approached the sacraments; while at sea, he decorated his berth with so many pious emblems and pictures that it seemed like the cell of a religious. He would not allow an unseemly expression to be uttered in his presence, and he never submitted himself to that false code of honor by which so many noblemen of his age were unhappily governed. He was specially devoted to the passion of Christ.

The mother of Alphonsus was the Lady Anne Catherine Cavalieri, a matron of extraordinary merit and virtue, who loved prayer, was devoted to the poor, and excelled in every quality esteemed in a truly Christian wife and mother. Penances and mortifications were her delight; she was never to be seen at the theatre; worldly society was burdensome to her; secluded in her palace, she occupied herself chiefly with God, her soul, and the Christian education of her children.

Such were the parents of the holy Doctor whose life we write. God willed to consecrate to himself in a peculiar manner the first of their holy union.

Alphonsus was born on September 27, 1696, the feast of the glorious martyrs, Cosmas and Damian, at seven o'clock in the morning, at Marianella, the country house of his family. He was baptized in the parochial church of St. Mary at Naples, September 29, under the auspices of St. Michael; and the names, Alphonsus, Mary, Antony, John, Francis, Cosmas, Damian, Michael, Gaspard, were given him in memory of the most illustrious of his ancestors, and to honor the saints on whose respective days he was born and baptized.

From the moment of his birth, he was placed under the special protection of the Blessed Virgin, that she might adopt him as her son, and be to him in all his necessities an advocate and a mother; hence he was always called Alphonsus Mary.

Three other sons, and three daughters, were born to Count Joseph Liguori: Benedict, who became a Benedictine, and honored the religious habit by a holy and mortified life; Cajetan, who chose the sacerdotal state, and lived like a hermit in his father's house; Hercules, who embraced the married state; Mary Louisa and Marianne, who became nuns; and Teresa, who espoused the Duke of Presenzano and led a saintly life in the world.

The birth of Alphonsus filled the hearts of his parents with the most lively gratitude to God. In testimony of this, they resolved to watch so carefully over their precious child that he should never lose the divine grace which had regenerated him. Even in infancy, this predestined babe seemed endowed with the germs of those rare qualities which afterwards attracted the admiration and secured the reverence of all who knew him. When the countess presented her fair child to St. Francis Jerome, who happened to visit her, for his benediction, the saint, looking with loving eyes on the little Alphonsus, blessed him, and, illumined with the spirit of prophecy, exclaimed: “ This little one will not die before his ninetieth year; he will be a bishop and do great things for Jesus Christ.” The happy mother, struck by this prophecy, received her child from the arms of the saintly Jesuit, as a special gift from heaven; a child who would increase in wisdom and grace as in age, and one day become a powerful agent in the hands of God, to promote his glory by procuring the salvation of innumerable souls.

It is a singular coincidence, that the prophet and the subject of the prophecy were canonized on the same day, May 26, 1839, by Pope Gregory XVI; upon which auspicious occasion St. John Joseph of the Cross, St. Pacificus, and St. Veronica Juliana were also raised upon the altars of the Church.

Chapter II

Early education of Alphonsus.—His first steps in piety.—Father Tannoia's reminiscences of Madame Liguori.—Alphonsus as a boy.—With the Oratorians.—He attains to sublime prayer.—Remarkable incident.

THE mother of our saint cheerfully assumed the charge of her son's education, a burden rendered light indeed by her love for her precious first-born, and the ardor with which he advanced in virtue, far beyond her most sanguine expectations. Every morning she gave him her maternal benediction, and then heard him recite his prayers; every evening she instructed him, as far as his childish capacity would admit, in the sublime truths of our holy faith. When other children were born to her, she adopted a similar course with them, and it was delightful to see her surrounded morning and evening by those fair olive branches which the Divine Husbandman had given her to prune and nurture for his heavenly vineyard.

The seeds of virtue cast into the young heart of Alphonsus, did not fall on sterile ground; piety seemed, as it were, natural to him. The ordinary amusements of childhood pleased him not; but he loved to decorate little altars, to celebrate in his own fashion the ever-recurring festivals of the saints, and to imitate the beautiful ceremonies of the Church. Already he began to taste those celestial joys which are the portion only of souls far advanced in the ways of God. As soon as he was old enough, his mother prepared him for his first confession, and placed him under the spiritual direction of Father Thomas Pagano, an Oratorian of the church of St. Jerome, her own director, and a relation of her family.

Father Tannoia, who has left us such copious memoirs of the blessed founder, and several of the earlier members of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, was well acquainted with the noble and pious lady who formed the plastic heart of Alphonsus to every virtue. He loved to compare the Countess Liguori to that royal mother who directed the religious education of St. Louis, and planted in his infant mind the germs of every kingly and Christian virtue. As Queen Blanche desired that her dear Louis should be all for God, so the mother of Alphonsus had no desire in connection with her children but that they should become saints.

This was the great object of her zeal; and hence she inspired them with a tender love for Jesus, and a filial confidence in Mary. All her children eagerly responded to her pious care. Indeed five of the seven consecrated themselves to God in the ecclesiastical or religious state; but in this holy family Alphonsus was ever preeminently distinguished. As a boy, he closely imitated the piety of his mother, accomplishing with delight all the acts of devotion he saw her perform. His obedience was so prompt and perfect, that at the least sign from his parents he instantly executed whatever they desired.

The life-long zeal of our saint to instruct the faithful in the fundamental truths of religion, and to kindle in all hearts the love of Jesus and Mary, undoubtedly originated in the instructions of his excellent mother, who will assuredly be eternally recompensed in heaven for all the good her son will have produced in souls.

During the childhood of Alphonsus, the Oratorians of St. Jerome established at Naples a pious congregation to promote the spiritual welfare of the young nobility. Alphonsus was scarcely nine years old when his parents placed him under their care. The good Fathers soon recognized in their precocious pupil those rare virtues which excite the admiration of the good. Every Sunday he was among-the earliest arrivals, and was so docile, so recollected during the spiritual exercises of the congregation, so eager to hear instructions and profit by them, that he was an example of fervor to the other young noblemen, and a source of comfort and edification to his superiors.

Every week he confessed to Father Pagano, and it was from his hands that this child of predilection received his first communion. It was an edifying sight to see him on his knees hearing mass with singular devotion; and whenever he approached the holy table, his fervor and piety, his diligent preparation and prolonged thanksgiving, excited a holy emulation in the breasts of his companions.

The solicitude of his good mother continually increased; she formed his heart to prayer, and instructed him in all the duties of a Christian nobleman. She inspired in his soul a horror of sin, even the slightest, because it offends our dearest Lord. Her language made the deepest impression on his young heart, and this zealous mother was delighted to find in her gifted son a rectitude of judgment and a docility of heart, which rendered all her instructions efficacious. Every one admired his constancy in his devotional exercises; when the time came for performing them with his mother, he was always ready to join her; nor was he less punctual with regard to the pious practices he imposed upon himself.

That he had already attained to sublime prayer even at the age of twelve, the following remarkable occurrence will show:—The Fathers were accustomed to take the young members of their congregation, every Sunday after Vespers, to some country house for recreation. On one of these occasions, while amusing themselves at the villa of the Prince de la Riccia, one of the boys suggested a play called "the game of oranges," and Alphonsus was invited to join. For a while, he excused himself on the plea of not understanding the game, but he was at length prevailed on to yield to their entreaties.

Fortune favored the young tyro to such an extent that he won thirty times in succession. His success excited the jealousy of his companions; and one of the oldest among them, the boy who had insisted the most on his joining in the play, exclaimed in a rage: "What! so you did not know the game!" adding in his anger an expression that was more than impolite. Alphonsus blushed when he heard it, and turning towards the other boys, exclaimed with severity: "How is this? Shall God be offended in this fashion for a few miserable cents?" Then throwing down contemptuously the coins he had won, he said: Take back your money!" and immediately left his companions, his countenance still glowing with a holy indignation.

Ashamed and confused, the boys gazed on him as he retired to a distant part of the garden, but presently resumed their game which they continued till the fall of evening. When it was time to return to the city, they called him and sought him, but no trace of him was discovered. After a long and weary search, they finally caught a glimpse of him, kneeling behind a laurel tree. Coming closer, they found that he had suspended from one of the branches the picture of Our Blessed Lady, which he always carried about him. He was so absorbed and ravished in God, that he neither heard nor saw his companions for a considerable time. When the boy who had offended him, and who was really anxious to excuse himself, perceived the rapt and glowing countenance of his holy playmate, he exclaimed: “Alas! what have I done? I have maltreated a saint!”

Indeed Alphonsus was regarded in this light by all who knew him. One day when someone spoke of his virtues in presence of his friend Antony Villani, the latter tearfully exclaimed: “Ah, you little know the holiness of that great servant of God, who has been a saint from infancy!” Then, recovering from his emotion, he related the above incident, of which he had been an eye-witness.

Chapter III

Studies of Alphonsus.—His musical and poetical talents.—Painting and architecture.—Evidences of his general knowledge of liberal arts and sciences.—His success in jurisprudence.—He receives the degree of doctor.—His exploits at the chase, and fowling.—Lost time.—Increasing solicitude of his mother.—His love and gratitude towards her.

THE talents and virtues of Alphonsus were a source of delight to all his friends, but chiefly to his parents. His father, proud of his rare capacity for acquiring knowledge, was determined to procure him the best possible education, that he might become a proficient in all the learning and accomplishments suitable to his rank and expectations. But partly through affection for his son, and partly to shield his innocence from the dangers to which it might be exposed in the public colleges, the Count resolved that the education of Alphonsus should be conducted under the eyes of his parents.

Accordingly, he engaged for him the most distinguished masters, men eminent in scholarship, and of irreproachable morals, that his boy's progress in virtue might not be retarded by his progress in learning. His quick and tenacious memory, his ripe judgment and extraordinary docility, rendered the office of his instructors a pleasure rather than a task. He soon attained considerable proficiency in the Greek, Latin, and French languages, and commenced the study of canon and civil law.

But his parents, desiring that he should become an accomplished gentleman as well as an able man of letters, procured him instructions in drawing, painting, and architecture; and in these arts he succeeded so admirably that, even in his old age, he executed pictures of Jesus Crucified and Our Lady with remarkable skill, and often designed and sketched the devotional emblems he was so fond of distributing among the faithful. He usually made the plans for the houses of his congregation, and when he had not sufficient leisure for this, he required the architects to submit their sketches to his criticism.

Specimens of our saint’s skill in painting may still be seen in some of the older houses of his congregation. At Ciorani is a representation of the corpse of Alexander the Great, preyed upon by hideous vermin; the whole showing, more eloquently than any words, the utter vanity of all human greatness. In the refectory of Illiceto is an immense skeleton, painted by the hand of the artist-saint, with the usual doleful surroundings; and in the church of the same house hangs an ancient portrait of Our Lady which he entirely renovated. The beautiful landscapes and figures in oils that adorn the draperies of the grand altar, representing Jesus adored by the shepherds, give still more conclusive evidence of his artistic ability.

But the accomplishment in which his father was most desirous Alphonsus should excel, was music. For three hours a day, the boy was obliged to practise under the eye of an able master, and the count was so passionately fond of music, that he generally assisted at the lesson himself; if business required his presence elsewhere, he would lock the door on teacher and pupil that it might not be abridged. The result of this severe discipline of the extraordinary musical talent of the youth was, that he touched the harpsichord with the hand of a proficient before he had attained his twelfth year. He was equally successful in Latin and Italian poetry; and was accustomed even in old age to compose the beautiful hymns by which he sought to reanimate the devotion of the people, and set them to music.

In mature age, he often bewailed as lost the time he had devoted in youth to the study of music. “Fool that I was,” he one day exclaimed, looking at his harpsichord, “to have wasted so much time on that! but my father would have me perfect myself in music, and I was obliged to obey him.” His poetical genius would probably have taken a higher flight, had not his aim been rather to foster popular piety than to gratify the cultivated tastes of the few; yet many of his canticles are of rare and touching beauty, and give incontestable evidence of a high order of talent.

The numerous theological and metaphysical works published by Alphonsus, furnished abundant proof that he was fully up to the age in philosophy, mathematics, and all the liberal arts and sciences. An astronomical instrument may still be seen at Illiceto, which shows that our saint possessed no mean amount of mechanical expertness. When head of a congregation, he himself gave the young clerics lessons in geography, cosmography, and kindred sciences, and it was to illustrate some scientific lecture that Alphonsus designed the ingeniously constructed instrument to which we have alluded.

His father, ambitious of seeing his precocious son raised to the higher offices of the state, made him apply diligently to the study of civil and canon law. This Alphonsus did with such success, that he received the doctor’s gown in 1713, by virtue of a dispensation of three years and nine months, he being then little over sixteen years. He was still quite boyish in appearance and of low stature; consequently, the admiration his abilities excited did not hinder people from smiling as they noticed his doctoral gown trailing on the ground when he went to the courts. In after life, Alphonsus himself sometimes jested at the ludicrous appearance he made when a legal practitioner of sixteen: “My long cassock,” said he, “perpetually twisting itself about my feet, provoked the laughter of every one I met in the streets.”

Despite his youth, however, his success before the Neapolitan tribunals was prodigious. His father still kept him under the tuition of the ablest advocates and jurisconsults then practising in Naples, among whom were the celebrated lawyers, Perani and Jovene. Under these masters, he became so absorbed in his legal studies that he soon began to deny himself all kinds of amusements. He associated only with the pious and learned president, Dominic Caravita, whose house was a sort of academy for the most studious among the younger members of the bar.

Previous to this, however, he had indulged a little in the games then usual in good society, in which his mind found some recreation; and his father, who allowed him relaxation very sparingly, did not object to his spending an hour every evening at the house of his friend, Charles Cito, at which a few of the most virtuous and studious of the young nobility occasionally met, to enjoy a game of terzillio or ombre. Several times, however, he displeased his father by prolonging his visit; and on one of these occasions the count, wishing to punish his tardiness, removed from his table all books of study, substituting for them packs of cards. Awaiting his son’s return, he greeted him thus: “Behold your studies; these are the authors that have made you so punctual in returning at the appointed hour to your home.”

Alphonsus felt this mortification most keenly, but it had the desired effect. Henceforth he strove more earnestly than ever to obey his father’s injunctions. In old age he mentioned, that, as a youth, he had been very fond of hunting and fowling, though he never indulged in these pastimes but on days on which he was excused from study. “The birds that had to do with me were fortunate,” he added, for, despite all my efforts, I rarely hurt one.” Then seeming to regret a passing allusion to what he regarded as the follies of his youth, he would immediately pass from the subject of snaring birds to that of hunting for souls, remarking how dear to God, and becoming to apostolic men, is this burning zeal for souls.

His parents, especially his mother, kept anxious and unceasing vigilance over the morals and religious training of this wonderful youth. Dancing and fencing were not among his accomplishments, because they were considered dangerous to his soul.

Although Alphonsus always testified love, reverence, and gratitude to both these pious parents, his heart was particularly touched by the unwearied devotedness of his excellent mother. Even in extreme old age he blessed God because of her, and was wont to say: “If there was anything good in me as a child, if I kept clear of wickedness, I owe it entirely to my mother.” His father, being frequently absent on his naval excursions, was unable to give to the education of his children the constant surveillance which so grave a duty merited; hence it necessarily devolved entirely on his mother, a fitting instrument, in the divine hands, since she reared for the Church a family of saints. “At the death of my father,” said Alphonsus, on one occasion, “I refused myself the consolation of going to Naples to assist him; but when my mother is dying, if it be at all possible, I shall watch over her last moments.”

Chapter IV

Success of Alphonsus at the bar.—The rules which guided him.—His pious practices.—His retreats.—His love of purity.—His love for the congregation of St. Philip.—The edification he gave to all who knew him.—Conversion of a Moorish slave.—Motive of his conversion.—His happy death.

ALPHONSUS applied himself to the practice of law with so much success, that before he had attained his twentieth year his clients were numerous and often distinguished, and his merit had won him an honorable place among the leading advocates of the kingdom. His father had at that time friends and relatives among the principal senators, who, recognizing the superior ability of their young kinsman, promoted his advancement in every way which their friendship suggested. Nor was the young lawyer himself indifferent to public esteem. On the contrary, he knew so well how to attract it that, in a short time, the most important causes were confided to him. And his success was not undeserved; for if his talents and industry gained him universal admiration, his probity and disinterestedness made him universally respected. It is worthy of remark, that he gained all the causes entrusted to him from 1715 to 1723.

The following are the rules by which our young lawyer governed himself:—

1. Never to accept an unjust suit.
2. To defend clients by lawful means only.
3. Not to burden them with unnecessary expenses.
4. To defend their causes with as much care as he would his own.
5. To study the details of a process diligently, that he might strike out the best line of defence.
6. To suffer no fault of his to retard the cause of his client, which would be contrary to justice.
7. To implore the assistance of God in order to succeed; He being the first protector of justice.

8. Not to load himself with causes which surpassed his talent and strength; nor to accept of any, of which he foresaw he would not have sufficient leisure to prepare the defence.

9. Justice and honesty should be the characteristics of a lawyer, which he must preserve as the apple of his eye.

10. A lawyer who loses his cause through negligence is obliged to make restitution for the losses of his client.

11. In the defence of a cause, it is necessary to be respectful, and to ground one's pleading, not on chicanery, but on sound logic.

12. Diligence, truth, fidelity, and justice are the qualities necessary in a lawyer.

Guided by such principles, it is not surprising that he gained so great an ascendency over all hearts, that his very adversaries often ranged themselves on his side, and that innumerable clients confided their interests to his care.

But if Alphonsus desired a brilliant career at the bar, he was not less anxious to render himself dear to God by increasing daily in virtue. Two years after receiving the gown, he passed from the congregation of young nobles to that of doctors, also directed by the Fathers of the Oratory. These good priests did not omit anything calculated to promote the spiritual advancement of their pupils. Alphonsus responded to their pious care with ever-increasing ardor. He frequented the sacraments, visited the sick in the hospitals, practiced prayer and mortification, and would never enter the courts till he had heard mass and finished his morning devotions. His confessor, Father Pagano, he regarded as a second Guardian Angel. To him he exposed his doubts and fears, and was always strictly obedient to his counsels. About this time, he with other brethren undertook to serve the sick in the hospital of Incurables; and a nobleman of Vitri, named de Senlis, has recorded that he remembered our saint making up the beds, though encumbered with his lawyer's gown, and feeding the patients with the greatest charity and compassion.

Every year Alphonsus, at the suggestion of his father, used to make a retreat of eight days, either in the house of the Fathers of the Mission, or that of the Jesuits. A retreat, conducted by Father Buglione, S. J., greatly affected him. "I was only eighteen at that time," said he, some years later; "but the sanctity of the preacher, the admirable order of the exercises, and the precious advantages I derived from them, remain indelibly engraved on my soul.”

From this period, he began to entertain a special love for the virtue of holy purity. His *modesty* was, literally, *known to all,* and a word or gesture expressive of the slightest impropriety never escaped him, even when his father made him mingle in the gayest society. He composed himself to sleep, holding a wooden cross in his hands, a practice he continued to the end of his life. He continued always tenderly attached to the Congregation of St. Philip Neri, and, even during his episcopate, never failed to visit his ancient brethren whenever business brought him to Naples.

The edification resulting from such a pious life, will be fully known only in heaven; but we will cite one instance of it in these pages. His father, as captain of the galleys, had several Moorish slaves in his service, one of whom he selected to wait upon Alphonsus. He was not slow in manifesting an inclination to become a Christian, and when asked what had made him think of this, he replied: “The example of my young master. That religion cannot be false, which makes him lead so pure and holy a life.”

Father Mastrilla of the Oratory commenced to instruct him gradually, but he soon became very ill. One night he eagerly requested to be baptized, saying: “I have seen Our Lady, St. Joseph, and St. Joachim, and they told me I must be baptized now, because they want me in Paradise.” The priest objected, that his illness was not dangerous, and that he was not sufficiently instructed. “Question me, Father, and you shall see,” said he; and he answered correctly every question proposed to him. He was then baptized, and the priest having told him to rest a little, he said: “This is not my place of repose, for I must go immediately to heaven.” The spectators smiled at this, but in a little while the poor slave, his countenance radiant with joy, surrendered his purified soul to his Creator.

Chapter V

Matrimonial projects.—Teresina Liguori.—Birth of her brother and consequent alteration in her prospects.—Negotiations abandoned and renewed.—Indignation of the young princess.—She enters a convent.—Alphonsus becomes her biographer.—Indiscretion of our saint on one occasion.—Anger of his father.—Humility of the son.—Cooling of his fervor.—Testimony of Charles Cito.—Retreat.—Terrible incident.—Effect on Alphonsus.—His devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.—His zeal for decorating altars.—His gratitude to his friend, the Duke of Casabona, and to the Fathers of the Mission.—Interesting letter.

ALPHONSUS was now almost twenty; and as he continued to make progress in every respect, his friends expected that with such powerful interest at court and such distinguished talents, he would speedily attain to the highest dignity in the magistracy. His expectations were known to be so great, his morals so irreproachable, and his manners and appearance so elegant, that the first families in Naples, having marriageable daughters, were desirous that he should form a matrimonial alliance with one of them.

The choice of his father fell on the beautiful and accomplished princess, Teresina Liguori, a distant relation, only child and heiress of Francis Liguori, Prince of Presiccio, then in her thirteenth year. The parents of the young lady esteemed Alphonsus so highly that the affair was considered as settled, though the nuptials were not to be celebrated until the bride-elect should have attained a more mature age. The parties, most deeply concerned, seem to have had no share in these arrangements.

Meanwhile, the Princess of Presiccio gave birth to a son, an incident which immediately changed the designs of the count, who no longer considered Teresina an advantageous match for his heir. But the infant, who had so inopportunely ruptured the plans of the worldly-wise father, dying in a few months, matrimonial negotiations were again renewed by the family of the proposed bridegroom, and favorably received by the prince and princess; who, though pained by the late desertion, were willing to overlook an insult, which, however, their daughter bitterly resented. With a firmness rare in Italian girls under similar circumstances, Teresina obstinately refused to listen to these renewed proposals. “No, no,” said she with spirit;

“when my brother was alive, I was not considered a suitable match for Alphonsus di Liguori. It is my fortune that is sought, not myself. I know enough of the world now, and I will have no more to do with it. I desire only Jesus Christ for my spouse.”

The young princess kept her word. She took the veil in the convent of the most Holy Sacrament, at the age of sixteen, and died five years later, full of merits and good works, October 30, 1724. Alphonsus, at the request of her religious sisters, wrote the edifying life of her whom parental ambition had destined for his bride.

The rupture between Alphonsus and Teresina must be regarded as providential. Both, reserved by God to adorn higher paths than even the pride of their illustrious kinsfolks could covet for them, lived to attain eminent sanctity. It is probable that the example of Teresina had a powerful influence on Alphonsus. Certain it is, that her truly angelic life, and the odor of sanctity diffused by her early death, made an indelible impression on the mind of our saint, as is evident from the concise but beautiful biography he wrote thirty seven years later (1761) of his virtuous cousin, Sister Teresa Mary di Liguori; in which, however, the saint makes no mention of the relations in which the lawyer of twenty and the princess of thirteen once stood to each other by the mutual consent of their respective parents.

The following circumstance, which occurred about the time Teresina took the veil (1719), shows the docility of Alphonsus, and the submission his father continued to exact of him. One evening, the count having given a party, it happened that one of the servants, whose office it was to light the guests from the palace to their carriages, behaved with the most unaccountable stupidity, which so displeased the host that he could not cease reproaching him. Alphonsus, feeling pained for the poor servant, whose fault was quite involuntary, said: “What a noise you make about a trifle, father! once you begin to scold, you can never stop.” This indiscreet speech so displeased the angry nobleman, that he immediately replied by giving his son a blow on the face.

Humbled and confused, Alphonsus withdrew in silence to his room. As he did not appear at supper, his mother went to call him. She found him at the foot of his crucifix, weeping bitterly for the disrespect he had shown his father. Having earnestly besought her to intercede for him, he accompanied her back, and, kneeling, implored the count to forgive him. This he readily did, more affected by his son’s humble repentance than he had been wounded by his late indiscretion. What reverence towards a father on the part of a son who was already eminent among the most distinguished lawyers of Naples!

Alphonsus confessed in his old age that at this epoch of his life his piety grew cold; he would omit his spiritual exercises on the slightest pretexts, and was in imminent danger of losing his soul. This decay of fervor is easily accounted for by the fact, that his father compelled him to comply with all the requirements society seemed to authorize: besides being flattered and caressed in every direction, the compliments showered upon the elegant and successful barrister, were more than enough to turn the head of an ordinary individual. “I should have been lost,” said he, had all this continued much longer.”

Yet it is possible that he spoke with an excusable exaggeration of his remissness at this period, for several who directed his conscience are of opinion that he never offended God grievously, though not always shielded from the occasions of sin. Indeed, he himself made the following acknowledgment: “I frequented the theatre, but, God be thanked, I never committed even a venial sin there, for the music absorbed all my attention, and was my sole attraction.”

Even at this time, every one regarded him as a young man of irreproachable conduct; and his intimate friend, Charles Cito, being asked later on if he had ever perceived any levity of manners in Alphonsus, replied, bowing his head respectfully: “No; he was always most virtuous: I should blaspheme, if I spoke otherwise.”

What is certain, however, is, that his ardor had cooled to so great a degree that his most intimate friend, Francis, Duke of Casabona, beginning to be alarmed at his negligence, and desirous of reviving his own fervor, proposed that Alphonsus should join him in a retreat of eight days, to be given early in the Lent of 1722, at the house of the Lazarist Fathers. To this he cheerfully assented, and the retreat was conducted by the Superior, Father Vincent Cutica, so justly celebrated for his piety. When this man of God spoke of holy things, it was from the abundance of the heart. He made his auditors weigh well the shortness of time and the length of eternity; and painted striking pictures of the hideousness of vice and the ravishing beauty of virtue.

These exercises were productive of immense spiritual profit to all who made them, but particularly to Alphonsus. Faithful to grace which knocked at the door of his heart, he exclaimed: “The world which covets my heart has nothing solid to offer; nothing capable of satiating the yearnings of an immortal spirit: whereas, by sitting at the table of the Lamb, I can fully satiate the hunger and thirst which devour me.”

With these salutary meditations, the divine tight penetrated his soul, and immediately the seeds of piety began to germinate, despite the thorns of passion which had well-nigh choked them. He now bitterly deplored the moments he had sacrificed to dissipation, and solemnly resolved to renounce the follies which had lately occupied him. “Believe me,” wrote he, many years after, “all is foolishness,—festivals, comedies, company, games: these are the joys of the world, but joys full of gall and bitterness. I have made the experiment and bitterly lament it.” Thus did this great saint bewail his youthful wanderings, and, like the royal model of all true penitents, keep his sin continually before him.

What contributed to impress the pious youth still more deeply, was an account given by the preacher of an event that had recently occurred in Florence, during a retreat given by the fathers of St. Vincent de Paul. A gentleman who had been leading a scandalous life was suddenly converted; and, as the partner of his guilt had just died, he knelt to implore the divine mercy for her miserable soul. At the same moment she appeared to him, and said: “Pray not for me; I am damned.” To convince him that it was no mere phantom of his imagination, she laid her hands on the table before which he knelt in prayer, and the parts which she touched were burned.

This table, which had been brought from Florence to Naples, was exhibited by Father Cutica to his audience in his sermon on hell; and so deeply moved was Alphonsus, that he instantly resolved to renounce marriage and all the vanities of the world, and give himself entirely to God.

This retreat our saint ever regarded as one of the greatest blessings of his life. Among the fruits he derived from it, was a special and tender confidence in Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament. Henceforth he was wont to approach the holy table several times a week, and visit daily the church in which the Forty Hours’ adoration was being made, when he would remain for hours kneeling in contemplation before his hidden Savior.

He loved to see the altar richly decorated, and often purchased flowers for his parish church; a pious practice he preserved during his whole life. In one of his hymns he sweetly says, that he envied those innocent creatures destined to repose night and day before their Creator, and breathe out their sweetest perfumes for him. In after life, he would procure the rarest seeds and cultivate them himself, to embellish the altars of the churches of his congregation; a practice he often recommended to the rectors of the houses, for he ever loved to see the altars adorned with the choicest and most fragrant flowers.

As a recompense for his tender devotion, the Blessed Sacrament became the source of all the graces bestowed on him through life: “If,” said he, I have abandoned the world to devote myself to God, I owe it entirely to Jesus in the most holy sacrament, though, alas! coldness and indifference have so frequently mingled with my devotion to him.”

Alphonsus was accustomed during his after life to mention his friend, Francis, Duke of Casabona, in terms of the warmest gratitude. “Under God,” he would say, “I owe it to him that I am not still the slave of the world, and a prey to my own passions.” Nor was he less grateful towards the priests of the Mission. More than half a century later, he thus addressed the superior of that congregation, to whom he had just sent a copy of his translation of the Psalms: “Accept the profound respect of one who deems it an honor to be the son and servant of you and all members of your society; for it was in your house, during the holy exercises of retreat, that I learned to know God, and resolved to renounce the world.”

Chapter VI

Retreat of Alphonsus and his father.—Effect on the latter.—Another matrimonial project.—The interrupted duet.—Alphonsus gains his mother to his side.—The lost cause.—Emotions of Alphonsus.—Measures of his parents.—His resolutions.—His opinion of the legal profession.—Why he renounced it.

IN March, 1723, Count Joseph and his son Alphonsus made a retreat in the house already mentioned, during which the latter was still more confirmed in his pious design of devoting himself to God. He determined to resign his birthright in favor of his brother Hercules, although he was as yet undecided as to whether he would abandon his legal practice. His father, knowing nothing of the extraordinary change which had just taken place in his heir, projected another marriage treaty. The lady was daughter of the Duke of Presenzano, and the proposals were at once agreed to by her father, to whom they had been made without the knowledge of Alphonsus. As he had not courage to speak his whole mind to his parents, with a view of temporizing, he visited the Presenzano palace, but so unwillingly, that afterwards he often said that in the amusements of which he partook he found only thorns, and longed only for the moment in which his martyrdom would end.

The count used all possible means to counteract the manifest indifference, or, rather, repugnance of his son. He expatiated on the singular good qualities of the princess, her superior education, her cultivated mind and elegant manners; arguments which could have no weight with one who had vowed celibacy to God. Yet the reluctant Alphonsus feared to refuse decidedly; his excuse was, that weakness of the chest and tendency to asthma warned him not to think of marriage. His father, attributing his evident reluctance to mere bashfulness, continued to take him frequently to visit the young lady; but on these occasions he behaved with such circumspection, that no one could suspect him of going thither as a suitor.

One evening being invited to perform on the harpsichord, he willingly consented. The princess obligingly proposed to accompany him in a song, and rising, took her place by the instrument, her face turned towards the embarrassed performer. Alphonsus immediately turned his head in an opposite direction; and she, thinking it accidental, made a corresponding movement, but had no sooner done so, than he turned abruptly from her. Perceiving this, she was highly indignant, and immediately withdrew, remarking to the company: “That young gentleman has become moonstruck.” Mortified though he was, he made neither apology nor explanation, preferring that the young lady should understand his real sentiments. Nor were the hints he gave her thrown away; she herself declared to her father her unwillingness to marry a man who would hardly look at her.

As his father was so obstinately bent on hastening the marriage he had projected that he would hear of no excuse, the son had no resource but to open his mind to his mother, who unfortunately happened to be just as eager for the alliance as her husband. She urged upon him the advantages the family would derive from the connection, the displeasure his refusal would cause; but to no purpose. He declared that nothing would induce him to settle in the world, and earnestly besought her to persuade the count to cease his importunities. The poor lady, knowing that her husband had set his heart on this union, was sorely puzzled; but she did not long resist the passionate pleadings of her beloved son.

A providential and most unlooked-for event soon changed the aspect of affairs, and demolished at one blow all the worldly hopes indulged by Count Joseph for his son. The tribunals of Naples were occupied in 1723 with a feudal process of great importance between the Grand Duke of Tuscany and one of the most powerful nobles of the realm. Six hundred thousand ducats depended on the decision. Alphonsus undertook the cause of the nobleman; and after an entire month devoted to a most careful study of the case, he believed it impossible that he should not gain the cause for his client, so thoroughly had he mastered its salient points. Yet, despite his prolonged and severe study, he had completely overlooked one document, which was so important as to secure the victory to the adverse party. From the tenor of his speech, which was a masterpiece of erudition and eloquence, the opposing lawyer readily concluded that this important paper had entirely escaped him. On the conclusion of his eloquent address, one of them rose, and sarcastically directed his attention to a certain document which would prove the right to be in quite a contrary direction. “Produce it, then,” said Alphonsus with assurance; “the decision depends on the question: Was the fief granted under the law of Lombardy, or under the French law?” But on examination, it was found that the Grand Duke’s advocate was correct. “You are right,” said Alphonsus, generously, it is I who have been deceived.” But never was a discovery more unexpected. Everyone could perceive his emotion. Fear of being suspected of unfair dealing, filled him with consternation. It was in vain that the President Coravita, who loved him and relied on his integrity, endeavored to reassure him. He was perfectly inconsolable. Overwhelmed with confusion, his head sank on his breast, as he muttered: “World, I know thee now! Courts of law, you shall never hear me plead again! “

Even in old age, he could never understand how that important paper had escaped him. But Providence had permitted him to overlook it, that it might he an occasion of opening a more direct way for the accomplishment of God’s designs on him.

He abruptly left the assembly, still repeating to himself: “World, I know thee now!” He entered his house, not knowing how he came there; and gaining his chamber by a sort of instinct, fastened the door. When dinner was served, he was absent: his mother, knowing that he had returned from the courts, though ignorant of his distress, went to call him. He said he would eat nothing. She returned with some of the family, but to their reiterated entreaties he would not even reply. Towards supper time, they insisted that he would at least open the door, but they insisted in vain. All the household were alarmed, for no one was aware of what had happened in the courts.

Next day, when his father who had been out of town came home, the countess informed him of the astonishing obstinacy of their son. He went straight to the room, but was refused admittance. Don Joseph could no longer dissemble his indignation; and while his wife wept and cried out, “My son is dying! my son is dead!”—“Well, then, let him die!” was the angry retort of her indignant husband.

For three whole days he continued deaf to all entreaties; but at last he opened the door to his mother, overcome by her tears. Even then he would not touch food, and it was with difficulty she forced him to take a slice of melon, which, he afterwards declared, seemed more bitter than gall.

This extraordinary and terrible emotion being somewhat calmed, a ray of divine light irradiated his bewildered soul, and showed him the utter vanity of all that ends with time. Obedient to the impulse of grace, he determined to break with the world for ever, and devote himself entirely to God; though something was yet wanting to the perfection of his sacrifice.

It was not, however, on account of the disgrace he imagined himself to have incurred in his last suit, that he renounced the bar. “Law is a dangerous profession,” he afterwards remarked to a friend, “and exposes one to an unprovided death. I renounced it because I wished above all things to save my soul, and must under all circumstances follow the dictates of my conscience.”

Chapter VII

Alphonsus begins to lead a life of seclusion.—The anguish of his father.—Alphonsus refuses to transact the legal business of his family.—The birthday of the Empress Isabella.—Supernatural favor.—Final renunciation of the world.—Favorite church of our saint.—His devotion to Our Lady of Mercy.—During his last visit to Naples he makes a novena in her church.—He acknowledges his indebtedness to the Mother of Mercy.

ALPHONSUS now renounced the bar in good earnest. When rest had somewhat calmed his troubled spirit, and when he had bewailed before God the transports of grief and indignation in which he had indulged, he politely dismissed his clients, and began to lead in his own house the life of a hermit. Grace acted more and more powerfully on his soul; his greatest pleasure was to divide his days chiefly between the church and the hospital of Incurables. When at home, he studied the lives of the saints, and entertained himself with God.

But his chief delight was to kneel before the Blessed Sacrament in the church in which the forty hours adoration was being made. There he might be daily seen for two or three hours together, kneeling immovable, and so absorbed in his devotions, as to be unconscious of all that was passing around him. He thus drew upon himself the admiration of the pious, especially of some priests who were greatly devoted to this adorable mystery.

The behavior of the son was a source of the greatest distress to the worldly-wise father. “What can he be thinking of?” said he to the mother; and the Lady Anna shared his uneasiness. They had a presentiment of the truth, but knew not how to baffle the projects of their son. One day, Count Joseph handed Alphonsus a process of much interest to the family, desiring him to examine it. “Give it to someone else,” returned the youth, “the tribunals no longer suit me; henceforth I will occupy myself solely with my salvation.” This reply fell like a thunderbolt on the ambitious father, and he began to weep bitterly. His wife offered all the consolation her tenderness suggested, and expressed a hope that, when the crisis was over, their son would resume his practice.

“No, no,” sighed the Count, Alphonsus is too obstinate; he will never waver;” yet he hoped against hope, that the event would prove him a false prophet.

Another altercation soon took place. It was the birthday of the Empress Isabella, wife of Charles VI (August 28); a day ever memorable in the annals of our saint. There was to be a grand *fête* at court, at which Don Joseph wished to assist with his heir. “What should I do there?” replied the latter, abruptly: “all that is but vanity.” The Count, transported with rage, exclaimed: “Do what you like—go where you please!” Alphonsus, grieved that he had provoked him, said gently: “Do not be offended, dear father; I will accompany you to court.” “Go where you will—do what you will,” reiterated the count in a rage, and turning his back upon his son, he entered the carriage, and drove to his country house, where he gave free vent to his chagrin.

Deeply afflicted at seeing the vexation of his father, Alphonsus exclaimed: “My God! what shall I do? If I resist him, I do wrong; if I obey him, I do worse.” In hopes of finding consolation by assuaging the miseries of others, he went to the hospital of Incurables. This refuge for the most grievous physical maladies, was to become a paradise to him. It was here that God awaited him, as he had awaited Moses in the burning bush. At a moment when the care of the sick completely absorbed him, he was suddenly surrounded with resplendent light. The house seemed to be shaken as by a violent earthquake, and a voice repeated: “Forsake the world, and give thyself entirely to me.” Awed and amazed, he continued to wait on his patients; but when about to leave the house, just as he reached the staircase, the same light again encircled him, and the same solemn words resounded once more in his ears.

Alphonsus waited no longer. Like another Saul, he was perfectly converted to God. Weeping bitterly, he cried out: My God! I have too long resisted thy grace. Here I am at last: do with me what Thou pleasest.” Deeply moved, and, as it were, out of himself, he proceeded to the church of our Lady of Mercy,—a church he loved to frequent, attracted at first by the magnificent statue of the Blessed Virgin which adorned it. He prostrated himself before the altar, and earnestly implored the protection of his Mother in heaven.

Environed with celestial light which radiated from his countenance, he consecrated himself unreservedly to God, renouncing the world and its vanities, offering generously the sacrifice of his birthright, and promising to enter the congregation of St. Philip Neri. As a pledge of his fidelity, he laid his sword on the altar of Our Lady of Mercy.

This memorable day was ever present to the mind of Alphonsus. He called it the day of his conversion, and never visited Naples without repairing to the church of Our Lady of Mercy, to thank the divine goodness for the multitude and greatness of the favors there showered on him, through the mediation of his divine benefactress.

In his last visit to Naples, he made in his favorite church the novena preparatory to Our Lady's Nativity, and went thither to pray as often as his occupations permitted. "Behold," said he to two friends, on one of these occasions, pointing to the image of Mary—"behold her who attracted me from the world, that I might consecrate myself to her in the ecclesiastical state."

Chapter VIII

Evening of the memorable day.—Remark of Father Pagano.—Fervor of his penitent.—He remains three days without food.—Interior lights.—Holy impatience of the youth.—His father endeavors to persuade him to resume his profession.—Firmness of the saint.—Scenes between father and son, which disturb domestic tranquility.

ON the evening of this memorable day, our saint confided to his confessor what had passed; declaring that he was resolved to join the Oratorians immediately. "This is not a thing to be hastily decided," prudently observed Father Pagano; "I must think it over for a year before I can give you a decisive answer." "A year!" cried Alphonsus; "I will not wait a single day." The wise director admired his fervor and encouraged his design; and after suggesting several suitable reflections, concluded with these words: "Let us recommend the matter to Jesus and Mary." The youth returned to his father's house, but his heart and soul were in the oratory.

For three days after these remarkable occurrences, he tasted no food, eager to do penance for his delay in obeying the call of grace; but if his body languished for want of nourishment, his soul was filled with heavenly manna. He discovered to Father Pagano the interior lights which irradiated his soul; the holy violence which grace exercised over his heart; the disgust he felt for all that this world values; and the holy impatience with which he sighed to consecrate himself wholly to God among the children of St. Philip. The pious director recognized in all this the evident and incontestable operation of grace, and mentioned to the Superior and other Fathers the vocation of the youth; but their unanimous opinion was, that this affair should be concluded very gradually so as to obviate, as much as possible, the grief it would cause the Liguori family.

His father, who had been absent while these events transpired, on his return learned with dismay that his son had not shown himself at table for three days. His vexation was excessive, yet he controlled himself so far as to plead, with all possible gentleness, that Alphonsus would renounce his present views and resume his practice, enlarging on the losses the course he contemplated would entail upon the whole family. But he pleaded in vain.

Similar scenes were daily repeated, and to such an extent, that the household was in constant commotion. Sometimes the affliction of Don Joseph became so violent, as to distress extremely both his wife and his son. Yet the resolution of the latter remained unshaken. Neither prayers nor tears had the slightest effect on him in this particular; he trusted in God, and bore sweetly, for his sake, the pains and penalties of his present state, imploring continually the divine aid to be faithful to the graces bestowed on him.

One day Don Joseph, unusually excited at the thought of his son's splendid talents being lost in inaction, exclaimed with unwonted bitterness: "Would to God that either of us was called out of the world, for I can no longer bear to look at you!" This urged Alphonsus to put his resolution in practice. "What!" said he within himself, "am I then an object of horror in the eyes of my father, that he beseeches God to separate us by death? Henceforth God is my only friend: I must be satisfied with him alone."

He then rendered his vows, offering himself to God a living sacrifice. Hitherto he had feared to declare his intentions, but now he felt courage to speak out manfully: "My father," said he, soon after, "it is I who cause your affliction, and therefore I must tell you that I am no longer for this world. God has called me to the Oratory; do not be offended if I follow my vocation, but console me with your benediction." These words froze the blood in Count Liguori's veins. In the utmost consternation he withdrew to his chamber, where his profound grief vented itself in groans and lamentations. But he did not remain long in this dismal solitude. Coming forth to the room in which his son was, he regarded him with an expression of unutterable contempt. Thenceforth he treated him with extreme severity, and went so far as to deny him the necessary clothing. Consequently his heir was seen abroad in torn garments.

This means proving ineffectual, the devil suggested a more dangerous one to the bewildered father: the most tender entreaties, the most pathetic exhortations, the mediation of friends—he would cloud the brilliant prospects of his brothers with the Austrian court—he would ruin their interests—he was not guided by a divine inspiration, but by a diabolical illusion:—even priests were against him. Father de Miro insisted that he was influenced by a melancholy humor, and urged him to obey his father.

“Be assured, reverend sir,” replied the saint, “God has called me out of the world: I must conform to His will, not to the wishes of my father.”

Others were employed by his father to shake his resolution, but their efforts were fruitless. His constant reply was: “God has called me, I cannot resist him.” At last, the unhappy old man threw himself on his child’s neck, exclaiming in tones of anguish: “My son, my dear son, do not forsake me!” Terribly as these manifestations of paternal tenderness affected our saint, his resolution remained unshaken. Finally, his maternal uncle, Monsignor Cavalieri, Bishop of Troia, was commissioned, or, at least, entreated to use his authority with the obstinate heir.

But the pious prelate, convinced that his nephew only obeyed a divine call, replied: “What a beautiful commission you entrust to me! I myself renounced my right of primogeniture, the better to secure my salvation; and now you want me to risk my nephew’s soul and my own.”

Another distinguished ecclesiastic, yielding to the importunities of the inconsolable father, essayed to argue the youth out of a divine vocation, but he, too, was repulsed: “I have been the devil’s advocate with Don Alphonsus,” said he, later on, “but I could make no impression on him.”

Amid these trials, Alphonsus had some defenders of his cause. Besides Monsignor Cavalieri, Father Vincent Cutica, superior of the priests of the mission, Father Pagano, the canon Peter Gizzio, also his uncle, and several other ecclesiastics, ably befriended him. These true friends of both parties at length succeeded in obtaining from the count a reluctant consent to his becoming a priest, provided he did not leave the paternal mansion. The Bishop of Troia advised him to submit for the present to this condition; and Don Joseph could no longer avoid presenting his son to the Archbishop of Naples, Cardinal Pignatelli. His Eminence, struck with the firmness of the youth, exclaimed: “What! does Don Alphonsus Liguori want to become a priest?” Would to God it were otherwise,” replied the afflicted father, unable to conceal his agitation, “but his resolution is unchangeable.”

Even after this decisive step, Don Joseph refused, on one pretext or another, to furnish ecclesiastical costume for his son; but Alphonsus found means to provide it himself, and on the 23d of October, 1723, renounced forever the livery of the world. When he appeared before the count in the garb of a cleric, the old man uttered a piercing shriek, and for a year after never addressed a word to his once idolized son.

Chapter IX

The parents.—Former friends.—Maio changes his opinions.—Domini Bruno.—Newer and truer friends.—Cheering prophecy.—Zeal of our saint for little children.—Contrast between Don Alphonsus the successful lawyer, and Alphonsus the catechizer of little ones.

THE unhappy nobleman refused even to meet his son. If he chanced to perceive him at a distance, he would take an opposite route to avoid all contact with him. The heart of his mother, however, could not repudiate him. Far from it: she now recognized his vocation as the work of God, and cheerfully submitting to the divine will, endeavored to soothe the irritation of her husband, and second the intentions of her best-beloved child.

The world continued to condemn him loudly. Lawyers and senators, who were formerly proud to be in the category of his friends, now convicted him, unheard, of the most egregious folly. The President Maio, who had heretofore shown him the tenderness of a father, would not now tolerate him in his presence, and passed him by as a creature utterly beneath his notice.

Later, however, Maio judged differently. On his death-bed, when visited by Alphonsus, he cried out: “Oh, Don Alphonsus! how happy are you to have comprehended and followed your vocation! You have chosen the sure path: would that I had done likewise! Miserable wretch that I am, I must now appear before the tribunal of God, and render an account of all the judgments I have passed upon others. Alas! you were truly wise, but I was blind to my real interests.”

One reads with pleasure the following little anecdote:—A celebrated advocate of the day, Don Domini Bruno, who had recently been defeated by Alphonsus in an important lawsuit, met him clothed in the ecclesiastical dress, and having congratulated him on his choice, added: “God forgive you, Don Alphonsus, for not taking this step a year sooner. I should then be saved the disgrace and disappointment the loss of that suit caused me.”

But if worldly friends deserted our saint, God was not slow to replace them by others more sincere, who had similar aims and aspirings. Among these was the Reverend Joseph Porpora. He had often been edified by the devotion of Don Alphonsus when he saw him prostrate for hours before the Blessed Sacrament; but he did not discover who this model of piety was, until after he had seen him in the ecclesiastical dress. He wished to make his acquaintance, but human respect restrained him. One day, however, seeing him conversing with a mutual friend, Reverend John Mazzini, he threw himself between them, unable to dissemble his feelings any longer, and cried out: “And I also wish to belong to you.” Then embracing Alphonsus, he foretold the blessings Heaven would hereafter shed upon him and his followers, congratulated him upon his vocation, and declared himself his friend and companion. From that time the three friends were one. Every evening they might be seen before the Blessed Sacrament, in whatever church the forty hours devotion was being celebrated; and they continued to excite one another to advance in the path of perfection.

Having received the ecclesiastical habit, Alphonsus attached himself to the parish of St. Angelo. He immediately offered his services to the pastor, and every day afterward might be seen serving mass, and assisting at all the ceremonies. So remarkable was the modesty of his deportment, that the very world, which had lately proclaimed him a fool, now loudly applauded his generosity in sacrificing his brilliant prospects for the love of God. What excited the greatest admiration was, to see him going about, crucifix in hand, in search of children. These little ones he would lead to the church, singing simple canticles, often of his own composing, and catechize them with the greatest zeal, especially when preparing them for first communion. The contrast between Alphonsus the catechist, and Don Alphonsus de Liguori who had so frequently electrified the tribunals of Naples by his eloquence, was sufficiently strong to attract the attention, if not the admiration, of the whole city.

Chapter X

Alphonsus applies himself to ecclesiastical studies.—He seeks the society of the most eminent churchmen.—His hymns become popular.—He becomes more austere.—He receives the tonsure and is ordained subdeacon.—New occupations.—He joins the congregation of the mission.—The rules he observed as a candidate for the priesthood.—His first sermon.—Illness.—Miraculous recovery.—Rules for a priest.

ALPHONSUS had no sooner embraced the ecclesiastical state, than he sought to perfect himself in all the learning so holy a vocation exacts. Already well versed in *belles-lettres*, philosophy, civil and canon law, he now devoted his time to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and moral and dogmatic theology; the canon, Julius Torni,—afterwards bishop of Arcadiapolis,—a man eminent for learning and virtue, being his principal master. As, when a law-student, he had frequented the house of the President Caravita to increase his knowledge of jurisprudence, so now, having become an ecclesiastic, he sought out the most learned among the Neapolitan clergy, whose houses were soon transformed into academies for theological sciences. The elegant accomplishments he had already acquired, he consecrated entirely to the glory of God; and he had the satisfaction of seeing the beautiful hymns he set to music, replace, in many instances, the loose and dangerous songs which had unfortunately become popular.

From the date of his assuming the clerical habit, his life became more austere. His time was chiefly devoted to prayer and study; he crucified his flesh and refused his senses every indulgence; used the discipline, wore a hair shirt, and practised all kinds of penitential exercises. He fasted every Saturday on bread and water, in honor of the Blessed Virgin; his clothes were of the plainest description; for a while, to please his father, he tolerated the attendance of a footman, but he soon dispensed with this encumbrance, and traversed the streets of Naples unattended, like the poorest of the priesthood.

In December, 1724, he received the tonsure from Monsignor Mirabello, Archbishop of Nazareth; and nine months later, September 23d, 1725, he was promoted to minor orders, in virtue of a dispensation from Cardinal Pignatelli. In December he was made subdeacon, and immediately after, entered as a novice in the Congregation of the Missions, which then counted among its members the *elite* of the clergy and the clerical nobility of the Neapolitan kingdom.

He at once applied himself diligently to the observance of the rules; he frequently accompanied the missionaries to country places and catechized the children. Nor did his zeal find full scope in this congregation. He also aided the Fathers of St. Vincent, and associated himself to a society called the Congregation of the White Monks, whose object was to procure the comforts of religion for condemned criminals.

We will here transcribe the rules he composed for his guidance as a candidate for the priesthood:

1. The cleric ought to frequent the society of holy priests, to be edified by their example.

2. He should spend at least one hour daily in mental prayer, that he may live in fervor and recollection.

3. He ought to visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently, especially during the time of exposition.

4. He should read the lives of holy priests, that he may imitate their virtues.

5. He must cultivate a special devotion to the Holy Virgin, the Mother and Queen of the clergy, and consecrate himself particularly to her service.

6. For the honor of the ecclesiastical state, he must be most careful of his reputation.

7. He ought to fly worldly conversation, and not be too familiar with the laity, especially women.

8. Seeing God in his superiors, he must obey them, because such is the divine will.

9. He should be modest, but without affectation, severity, or fastidiousness, and he should always wear the cassock and tonsure.

10. He ought to be quiet and gentle at home, exemplary in class, and edifying in the church, especially during the public offices.

11. He ought to confess every eight days, and communicate still oftener.

12. In short, the priest should have negative sanctity, that is, to live free from sin; and he ought to have positive sanctity, that is, to practise every

virtue.

Edified by his sanctity, the Cardinal Archbishop conferred upon him deacon's orders on the 6th of April, 1726, by dispensation, and authorized him to preach in all the churches in Naples.

His first sermon was preached in the Church of St. John at the Latin Gate, from this text of Isaiah: *O, that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down! the waters would burn with fire.* His burning zeal and eloquence touched all hearts. He painted in glowing colors the wondrous love Jesus Christ bears us, and our monstrous ingratitude towards this divine and eternal Lover. So powerful were the effects of this sermon, that invitations to preach poured in upon him from all quarters. His favorite subject was the Eucharist, and he usually preached in the church in which the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. He spoke with vehemence of the hideousness of vice, and the injury it does to God; and the people, in their eagerness to hear him, deserted the other churches. Though only a deacon, the Fathers of the Mission sent him into various parts of the kingdom; and he preached with such unction and eloquence, as to promote in a wonderful manner the glory of God in the salvation of souls.

Don Joseph became more afflicted than ever, fearing that the young deacon would shorten his days by his excessive labors and austerities. The Lady Anna shared his sentiments: though she felt great consolation in seeing her son so devoted to the apostolic life, she could not bear to think of losing him. She wept continually, and conjured the Fathers of his acquaintance, especially his confessor, Father Pagano, to urge him to mitigate his astonishing labors and mortifications. The fears of the anxious parents were but too well realized. Mind and body, overcome by continued exertion, sank beneath an illness of so fatal a character, that the physicians, despairing of his recovery, sent one night in haste for a priest to administer the last sacraments to their exhausted patient.

In this extremity, experiencing an extraordinary sentiment of confidence in Our Blessed Lady of Mercy, he eagerly besought the attendants to go to the Church and bring him her statue, before which he had renounced the world. They did not refuse him this consolation: the miraculous image was brought to his room and placed upon his bed. He was immediately pronounced out of danger, so speedily was his confidence rewarded by Our Blessed Lady.

On the 21st of December, 1726, he was ordained priest; and from that date, his ardor and zeal redoubled. On descending from the altar, he seemed ready, like a lion, to pounce upon the strongholds of Satan, so amazing was the love that consumed him. Cardinal Pignatelli appointed him, almost immediately after his ordination, to give spiritual exercises to the clergy of Naples; and his Eminence had reason to congratulate himself upon his choice, for he saw in an unmistakable manner that God signally blessed the ministry of his servant.

Yet the cardinal was severely criticized for thus distinguishing the young priest. “There are some,” said a person in authority, “who thrust into the ministry subjects wholly untried, heedless of the danger to which they expose them.” Nevertheless, the prelate was right; ere many days elapsed, all Naples testified to the virtue of Alphonsus, and spoke with admiration of the apostolic spirit which animated him.

We will give here what Alphonsus wrote at this epoch on the obligations of a priest who wished to attain sanctity, merely adding that it was the rule by which he regulated his own conduct.

1. I am a priest, my dignity is above that of the angels. I should then lead a life of angelic purity, and I am obliged to strive for this by all possible means.

2. A God deigns to obey my voice. I ought with far greater reason to obey His, speaking to me through his inspirations, or my superiors.

3. The Holy Church has honored me; I must therefore honor myself, by sanctity of life, by my zeal and labors, etc.

4. I offer to the Eternal Father Jesus Christ, his Son; it is then my duty to clothe myself with the virtues of Jesus Christ, that I may become fit for my office.

5. Christian people see in me a minister of reconciliation, a mediator between God and man; consequently, I must always keep myself in the grace and friendship of God.

6. The faithful desire to see in me a model of the virtues to which they should aspire; I must then be edifying always and under all circumstances.

7. Poor sinners who have lost the light of grace, come to me to be spiritually resuscitated; I must therefore aid them by my prayers, exhortations, and good example.

8. Courage is necessary to triumph over the world, the flesh, and the devil; I must then correspond with divine grace, that I may combat these enemies victoriously.

9. To defend religion and fight against error and impiety, one must have knowledge. I will then strive, by every means within my reach, to acquire the necessary knowledge.

10. Human respect and worldly friendships dishonor the priesthood; I will then avoid them.

11. Ambition and self-interest have often caused priests to lose their faith; I must then abhor these vices as sources of reprobation.

12. Gravity should accompany charity in a priest; I will then be prudent and reserved, especially with regard to women, without being proud, rough, or disdainful.

13. I can please God only by recollection, fervor, and solid virtue, which nourish the holy exercise of prayer; I will then neglect nothing which may tend to their acquisition.

14. I ought to seek only the glory of God, my own sanctification, and the salvation of souls; consequently, I must achieve these ends, though it should cost my life.

15. Being a priest, it is my duty to inspire virtue in all with whom I come in contact; and to glorify Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest.

Chapter XI

Popularity of Alphonsus as a preacher.—Remark of Capasso the Satirist.—The count hears his son preach.—He is deeply affected.—Pious practices of our saint.—Mode of life.—He unconsciously forms the plan of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.—He begins to hear confessions.—His extraordinary gentleness.—Striking conversions.—Our saint as a confessor.

ALPHONSUS was no sooner invested with the sacerdotal dignity, than pastors entreated him to preach in their churches; congregations besought him to give them the spiritual exercises; and monasteries desired with avidity to share in the blessings inseparable from his powerful eloquence. Animated by the spirit of God, he preached Jesus Christ and him crucified, avoiding most carefully the vain ostentation which sometimes urges preachers to display their superfluous erudition, rather than convert and instruct their audience.

Everything concurred to give effect to his preaching,—noble birth, rare talents, supernatural gifts; but what chiefly rendered his eloquence persuasive was his profound humility, his recollection, his contempt for this world. His sermons were not florid or pompous; he sought to make himself understood by the poor and the unlettered; yet all the nobility and intellect of Naples besieged his pulpit.

Sometimes his auditors left the church in tears, their heads bowed low upon their breasts, and their whole deportment eloquent of sorrow and compunction. Nicolas Capasso, a man celebrated for his vast knowledge, and dreaded for his powers of satire, was never absent from these sermons. One day he met the preacher, who remarked pleasantly: “You always come to hear me; should you not like to make me the subject of some new satire?”—“No, no,” returned the satirist, “I listen to you with pleasure, because I see that you forget yourself to preach Christ crucified.” So powerful is the gospel in the mouth of a man who illustrates it by his example.

Don Joseph now fully recognized the divine vocation of his son. One day; while Alphonsus was preaching in the Church of the Holy Ghost to an immense concourse of people, he happened to pass by as he was returning from the royal palace, and recognizing the preacher's voice, he felt irresistibly impelled to enter. He was soon moved to tears, and bitterly reproached himself for his past harshness and violence. Full of a salutary remorse, he returned home and scarcely had Alphonsus entered the house, when he went to his room, and tenderly embracing him, exclaimed: "O my son! what do I not owe you? You have taught me to-day to know God! I bless you a thousand and a thousand times for having embraced a state so holy and so pleasing to God! "

The zeal of our saint for the souls of his brethren did not cause him to neglect his own. Every day he consecrated a few hours to meditation, and spent some time reading the Lives of the Saints, which he called "the gospel in practice." Not a day passed in which he failed to visit the Blessed Sacrament, in whatever church the "Quarante Ore" happened to be making: these visits were of considerable length. His morning mass, with preparation and thanksgiving, absorbed most of the forenoon, but this seemed little to his fervor. Before the Blessed Sacrament, hours scarcely counted as moments. From time to time, following the advice of his Divine Master, he would enter into his chamber, shut the door, and commune alone with his God. It was in these silent communings that he sought that "little repose" which Jesus Christ prescribed to his apostles.

He had, as we have already intimated, contracted an intimacy with several priests whose views and feelings were similar to his own. To cement their union, they were accustomed to take occasionally a little recreation at a country house owned by Don de Alteriis, one of their number. Once a month they retired thither, to spend a few days in penitential exercises and spiritual conferences. They arranged an oratory, in which they placed a beautiful statue of the Blessed Virgin, still devoutly preserved at Ciorani. Their repasts were frugal; a little image of the Infant Jesus was placed as if presiding at table; and each made to him an offering of some part of the food served him. Father Mazzini afterwards remarked that these meals were more spiritual than temporal, so abundant were the ejaculatory prayers. Their recreation was singing hymns, before they resumed their holy meditations.

Sarnelli soon rented a more solitary house, near St. Januarius, without the walls, and here they applied still more freely to their pious exercises. It was here that Alphonsus almost unconsciously formed the plan of the Institute which he afterwards gave to the Church.

It is not customary in Italy, as in France, to authorize priests to hear confessions immediately after ordination. They have to wait some years, during which they must give solid proofs of their piety and capacity, and finally submit to a rigid examination. Should they pass this successfully, faculties are given them for hearing the confessions of men; and on attaining a higher degree of maturity, they are allowed to hear those of women.

Alphonsus was scarcely a year a priest when Cardinal Pignatelli empowered him to hear the confessions of men and women, to the great joy of many who sighed for the moment in which they could open their hearts to him. He was quickly besieged by persons of every rank and condition, all of whom he received with the tenderest charity; and so devoted was he to this holy office, that he was the first to take his place in the confessional and the last to leave it. It was his constant opinion that the office of confessor is more profitable to souls, and less apt to produce vain glory in the priest, than any other sacerdotal function. For, by confession, sinners are immediately reconciled to God, and the grace of Jesus Christ superabundantly applied to their souls.

However severe towards himself, he was all mercy and compassion to sinners. The more a soul was degraded by vice, the more lovingly did he strive to snatch it from the fangs of Satan, and to place it in the ever open arms of Jesus Christ. He delighted in being surrounded by the beggars of Naples, and effected many remarkable conversions among them.

He received the vilest and most vicious with inexpressible meekness, instilling into their minds confidence in the precious blood of Jesus Christ shed for them on Calvary, and teaching them how to withdraw from sin. He never received poor penitents with a haughty, supercilious air, or dismissed them as unworthy or incapable of the divine mercy, and he has left us these beautiful words on this subject:—

“The more deeply our fellow-creature is plunged in sin, the more tenderly should we cherish him, and the more strenuously should we endeavor to wrest him from the devil and place him on the bosom of his Savior. It is very easy to say to a poor sinner, ‘Go away; you are damned; I will not absolve you;’ but whoever dares to use such language has forgotten that souls are purchased by the blood of Christ!”

In his old age he used these remarkable words: *I do not remember having ever sent away a sinner without-absolution.*

It was not, however, that he absolved indiscriminately all who approached him. No; but he received sinners with such unalterable mildness, instructed and admonished them with such extraordinary patience, and manifested for them such warm affection, that they were glad to return to finish their confession and make their peace with God, through the instrumentality of a minister who so well represented to them his mercy, goodness, and compassion.

“If a sinner is repulsed,” said he, “he will never abandon sin;” and he was so particular in this matter, that even as sacramental penance, he would impose only what his penitents would cheerfully perform. “Let us beware,” said he, “of overloading them with obligations they would accept with repugnance, and afterwards easily abandon. The penance should tend to inspire horror of the sin, but not of the penance.” Thus he frequently enjoined the penance of returning to confess, of frequenting the sacraments, of hearing mass daily, of meditating on the Passion of Christ, or some eternal truth.

He also imposed as penances, visiting the Blessed Sacrament or some oratory of Our Lady; reciting the Rosary; and in case of heads of houses, he would have them recite it regularly with their families. As for fasting, disciplines, and hair-shirts, he might sometimes counsel, but he never commanded them. “If the penitent be truly contrite,” he observed, “he will do these things of himself; but if they be made obligatory, he may neglect them and relapse.” By this sweet but salutary conduct, he made penitents love the confessional, and easily withdrew them from sin.

Such was the system Alphonsus invariably followed during the whole course of his long and eventful career. This method full of sweetness, this direction wholly paternal, mild but salutary, won to our sweet Savior many hardened sinners, once slaves of the devil and their passions, but soon to be replenished with burning love for their Divine Master.

Two of these conversions were striking. One was Peter Barbarese, who, though young in years, was old in crime. A schoolmaster by profession, instead of enlightening the minds of his scholars, he corrupted their hearts. Fortunately he went to hear Alphonsus preach; and so deeply did the words of the saint sink into his soul, that, full of sincere repentance, he cast himself at his feet. Received with utmost kindness, he at once forsook sin, devoted himself to the service of God, and embraced a life of penitence. He now earnestly strove to undo the evil he had done; he awaited his children early at the school, conducted them to church, taught them to meditate on some eternal truth, finishing these morning devotions by acts of faith, hope, and charity. In the evening he took his children to visit the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady, choosing the least frequented churches, to avoid all display, being penetrated with repentance and confusion for the scandal he had formerly given. Once a week he brought his scholars to confession, disposed the more advanced for communion, and during mass suggested acts of contrition, faith, hope, and charity. After communion he pronounced aloud the acts of thanksgiving; a pious custom still observed in the Neapolitan churches.

The other remarkable conversion was that of Lucas Nardone, who had long led an irregular life as a soldier. Several times he had deserted, and his last desertion had been so audacious that death might have been the penalty, had not his brother, an officer of the royal guard, interceded for him. He was, however, expelled the army as an incorrigible wretch. One day he happened to hear Alphonsus preach, and immediately grace touched his hardened heart. He knelt before our saint, confessed his innumerable crimes, and, consoled and encouraged by Alphonsus, began to lead so holy a life that he edified all, and attracted many souls to Jesus Christ.

Alphonsus never used far-fetched or studied language to dispose sinners to repentance; and yet his words were so efficacious that they overcame the most obstinate. All his auditors attested that his appeals were accompanied by a special influence of the Holy Spirit, which urged sinners to repentance; often he had no sooner opened his mouth than compunction penetrated their hearts.

A young gentleman once accused himself in confession of several enormous crimes, in a tone of the utmost indifference; when he paused, Alphonsus asked if he had any more to say. The youth answered in the negative. “What!” returned the saint, “is that all? Now do you not see that the only thing required to make you a Turk is the turban? Tell me now, my son," he continued, in accents of touching tenderness, "what evil has Jesus Christ done you?"

These words went directly to the heart of the sinner, and, filled with confusion, he said to himself, "Have I then committed such crimes that there cannot be greater?" and in sentiments of the deepest contrition, he bewailed his past disorders, and having placed himself entirely under the guidance of Alphonsus, ever after led a most exemplary life.

The means our saint employed to lead his penitents to perfection were chiefly two: meditation or prayer, and mortification of the passions. Meditation, as the mirror in which the soul sees her own deformity; and mortification, as a knife to cut or prune all the excrescences of nature. "There is no true prayer," he affirmed, "without mortification, nor is there any true mortification without the spirit of prayer."

But above all remedies, he prescribed frequent communion and daily visits to the Blessed Sacrament. In his admirable little book of "Visits to the Blessed Sacrament," he acknowledges that this devotion had been in his regard the source of all the graces he had received while living in the world. "O what exquisite happiness," he would exclaim, "to converse familiarly with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, asking pardon for our sins, exposing our wants as a friend does to a friend, and begging his love with its abundant graces! Can anything be sweeter to a faithful soul?"

While in Naples, he always advised his penitents to pay their court to Jesus in the church when the Blessed Sacrament was exposed during the forty hours adoration. There might he himself be seen in an ecstasy of devotion for several hours, encircled by his faithful penitents.

He inspired them likewise with a filial confidence in the divine mother, Mary. "As all good comes to us from the celestial Father though the mediation of Jesus Christ; so all good comes to us from Jesus Christ, through the medium of Mary." He wished all to recite the Rosary daily in her honor, visit her altar in some church, and place her picture at the head of their bed. With his penitents, each of her feasts was a day of general communion; and he was careful to propose some devout exercise for her novenas, to dispose them to receive her favors. He used to fast in her honor on Saturdays and the eves of festivals, and he frequently recommended to others the same salutary practice.

Chapter XII

Conferences.—Our saint’s audiences.—Other priests take part in the good work.—What is new, not necessarily wrong.—The cutlets.—A captain of the Royal Guard mystified.—The governor orders the arrest of preachers and auditors.—The order executed.—Alphonsus appeals to the Cardinal.—False reports.—Good effected.—Fervent disciples.

ALTHOUGH our saint preferred to devote himself to the poor, he did not refuse to hear the confessions of people of the highest rank, well knowing how powerful their example is for good or evil. But his chief delight was to evangelize the poor. So great was the crowd that applied to him for spiritual direction, that he judged it expedient to assemble them during the summer evenings in some solitary place, and give collectively the instruction he had not leisure to bestow on individuals. His audience consisted of nobles and lazzaroni, with many laborers who, after the day’s toil, walked a considerable distance to hear him; and it was remarked that, the lower the condition of the auditors, the more friendly was their reception. Other priests took part in the good work, among whom were Fathers Porpora, Alteriis, Mazzini, and Sarnelli. Alphonsus preached daily to this motley assemblage, enlarging particularly on the loathsomeness of vice and the sublime beauty of virtue.

There were some individuals residing in the neighborhood to whom these meetings seemed not a little strange, they taking it for granted that, because they were somewhat novel, they must necessarily be evil. In hopes of confirming their suspicions, they concealed themselves behind their windows to hear what was going on. Now, some of the poor people were so eager to do penance, that they fasted far more rigorously than our saint would allow; and one artisan, though obliged to work hard for his family, had already begun to live on roots and raw vegetables. Alphonsus reprehended him severely for this excess, and forbade him to continue it. Father Porpora, happening to be present, remarked that God wills we should eat in order to live; and he added laughing: “If any one gives you a few cutlets, eat them without scruple, and much good may they do you.” The audience were highly amused at this, and passed the joke from one to another. The listeners, catching only the words, “cutlets” and “eating,” put an ill construction upon the whole, and ranked all concerned in the category of libertines or Molinists.

This was not all; they reported their conjectures to Cardinal Pignatelli as facts; and as the accusation was lodged against nocturnal assemblies, His Eminence was ready to believe the worst. Information was conveyed to the Governor of Naples, who immediately ordered a captain of the guard to attend one of the meetings, in disguise. They were then making the novena of the Nativity of Our Lady; and Alphonsus, to illustrate some truth he wished to impress upon his simple auditors, happened to mention some articles necessary for an infant’s wardrobe. The captain was completely mystified. He immediately reported to the governor that he had heard a *melange* of things good, bad, and indifferent, but was wholly unable to infer from them the purport of the meeting.

His Excellency at once leaned to the opinion, that it was composed of evil-minded persons; and he the more readily acted on his suspicions, as some bands of Lutheran soldiers had lately created considerable disturbance in the city. He therefore, in conjunction with the cardinal, ordered the arrest of all, preachers and people.

Next morning, Alphonsus, calling by chance on the archbishop, happened to hear of this order, and suspecting that it referred to his own assemblies, hastened to warn his penitents not to go to the usual meeting-place. It was impossible to reach all. Consequently, those who lived at a distance came, and among them were the fervent penitents, Peter Barbarese and Lucas Nardone.

They had scarcely arrived when they were surrounded by archers and soldiers, and carried off to the guard-house, whence they were cited before the fiscal procurator. “Comrade,” said Lucas to Peter, “I would like to know whether this courtesy is to your taste.”—“I am perfectly satisfied,” returned Barbarese; “they treat us much more civilly than the Jews treated our dear Lord. His arms were bound with ropes, and mine are bound only with a pocket-handkerchief.”

The procurator having ordered them to specify their nocturnal proceedings, they replied: “As we are poor ignorant creatures, Don Alphonsus Liguori and other priests instruct us in our duties as Christians.”

On hearing the name of Liguori, the representative of the law exclaimed: “May God forgive you! you have alarmed two courts, the ecclesiastical and the civil.”

The governor, in whose house they were, took pleasure in questioning them about the pious practices they had been taught; but, as he proceeded, they heard the sound of bells announcing that the Holy Viaticum was being carried through the streets; they immediately prostrated themselves upon the balcony, crying out: “It is our Divine Spouse! it is our Divine Spouse!” The governor asked no more questions, but dismissed them with tears of tenderness and consolation.

Alphonsus, upon hearing of this arrest, went to the cardinal, and acknowledged himself alone as guilty of whatever might be considered reprehensible in the meetings. His Eminence quieted him, by expressing satisfaction at the good he had done, but nevertheless advised him to discontinue these meetings. “The times are too critical,” said he; “we must be careful that wolves in sheeps’ clothing do not do harm under the shadow of your name.”

Yet a false report spread through Naples, and Alphonsus and his companions were constantly asked to offer their prayers to God for the conversion of the heretics! One of the Camaldolese Fathers one day asked Father Mazzini, who had just said mass in their convent, whether anything else had been discovered touching the new sect that had lately appeared. “What sect?” asked Mazzini.—“The sect of *Cutlets,*” returned the monk, and he volunteered the following particulars: “We have heard that certain priests every evening meet certain people at the Place of the Star—they form a species of club. Some think them Molinists.”

Mazzini reassured the good Brother, saying pleasantly that no great danger was to be apprehended from the new sectaries. Alphonsus, however, had already done immense good by his conferences; many of those who heard them, ever after led the lives of saints. Some entered religion, others remained in the world, but adorned it by their virtue. The most remarkable among the latter were Antonio Penino, who sold eggs through the town, yet found means, while pursuing this trade, to draw many souls from perdition; and Leonardo Christano, who went through the streets with his ass, and sold chestnuts. Both of these traders wrought miracles during their lives and after death.

Chapter XIII

Barbarese continues the work of the conferences.—Reminiscences of Brother Angiolo.—The seed bears fruit.—Sentiments of our saint.—Exercises of his penitents.—He establishes a school for women.—Labors in the hospital.—Exercises for the patients.—Perseverance of Barbarese.—Meeting between him and Alphonsus.—Death of this good man.—Death of Nardone.

ALPHONSUS, being prohibited his favorite conferences, endeavored to defeat the machinations of the devil, by suggesting to his docile disciple, Barbarese, that he and a few others might instruct the lazzaroni and other poor people, taking precaution to select for the purpose places remote from public observation.

Barbarese, thus encouraged, began to instruct the little errand boys of a neighboring barber's shop. A priest, who noted the good he effected, advised him to assemble his little flock in a chapel hard by. He did so; and every evening some sixty young people attended, as well as several of more mature age.

Lucas Nardone and several others pursued a similar course in various quarters of the city, and Alphonsus frequently visited these reunions, to animate the zeal of his penitents and excite them to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Crucified.

Brother Angiolo, a saintly religious, of the order of St. Peter Alcantara, used, in old age, to describe one of these meetings which he attended when a boy. A wool-carder by trade, he one day strolled into a barber's shop, and seeing several persons enter the inner part of the house, he became curious to know their business.

Following the last corner, he found within several persons, some sitting, some kneeling before an image of Mary, and on his inquiring the meaning of all this, a man answered: "It is here Don Alphonsus instructs us in the science of salvation; and when he does not come, our lost takes his place."

Alphonsus not appearing, the barber fulfilled the function of catechist, after which all performed various acts of piety. The wool-carder was so touched by this spectacle, that he never after missed a meeting, till, touched by grace, he embraced an austere rule, under the name of Brother Angiolo.

Peter Barbarese presided over the most numerous flock. One evening, Canon Romano was taking a walk in the vicinity, when a friend met him and said: “Come with me, and I will give you an agreeable surprise.” On seeing the canon, Peter rose and courteously offered him a seat.

Delighted with what he saw and heard, Romano could not help telling the whole to the cardinal, who was so much pleased that he suggested to his informant to instruct the people himself. Peter gladly resigned his post, and immediately began to assemble the porters and lazzaroni of another district. Thus did the grain of mustard seed multiply, till, in every quarter of Naples, the fervent penitents of Alphonsus might be seen instructing and catechizing the ignorant.

In after times, Alphonsus never came to Naples without visiting those favorite haunts, and exhorting all to persevere in the divine service, and in gaining conquests to Jesus Christ. He was particularly consoled by the thought, that the overthrow of one good work had been the very means of establishing another, far more important and more glorious to God.

Very soon these assemblies, protected by the cardinal, emerged from shops and back alleys, and were transferred to churches and oratories. Every evening, at the *Angelus* bell, the associates commenced their devotions and continued them for about an hour and a half. Rosary, acts of faith, hope, and charity, half an hour’s instruction on some Christian duties, fully occupied their time. Every Saturday zealous priests heard their confessions, and on Sundays, after a half hour’s meditation on the sufferings of Christ, they heard mass and received holy communion, a priest pronouncing aloud the affections and thanksgivings, all concluding with Benediction.

Such is the origin of the *Chapels* established in Naples by Alphonsus and his penitents. Their number continued to increase. In 1734, they amounted to one hundred, in each of which over three hundred persons of the working classes assembled. There is no tax to pay, no special office, no formality of association, the doors are open to all; and the working has been such, that the archbishops of Naples have derived the greatest satisfaction from these humble gatherings.

Alphonsus established similar meetings for women, but this good work lasted no longer than the life of the worthy lady whom he selected to preside over it.

The members of these assemblies afterwards agreed to visit the public hospitals on Sundays and Thursdays. They made the beds, swept the floor, attended to the spiritual wants of the patients, exhorted them to patience, and prepared them for the sacraments. When everything was arranged for the comfort of the patients, a zealous priest exposed the Blessed Sacrament on a gallery prepared for it, and having spoken for a short time on some Christian truth, carried it through all the wards to bless and console the suffering.

Barbarese and Nardone lived to an advanced age, and persevered to the end in their pious labors. The only visit Alphonsus made to the capital during his episcopate, was an occasion of holy joy to Barbarese. Eager to hear him once more, the affectionate disciple hastened to the hospital of the Annunciation, where he met his old master. “What are you about here?” asked the latter, smiling. “Come to hear the Holy Ghost,” was Peter’s quick rejoinder.

This worthy man died on Saturday, September 19, 1767, the eve of the Seven Dolors. He left behind him a great reputation for sanctity; in fact his body was deposited near the high altar of the Church, as though he were a saint. We are ignorant of the particulars of Nardone’s death, though he, too, died in the odor of sanctity, and his remains were laid in the place of honor in the church of St. Matthew.

Chapter XIV

The Chinese College.—Alphonsus in his new abode.—Privations and penances.—Spiritual dryness and obscurity.—Zeal for souls.—Father Ripa's testimony.—Extraordinary gifts of Alphonsus as a confessor.—His penitent Mary.—Incessant labors of Alphonsus.—The epidemic of 1731.—Illness of our saint.—The earthquake at La Pouille.

ALPHONSUS failed to find in his father's palace the solitude for which he sighed, and which he experienced in the monthly retreats he made with his companions, in the country house already mentioned. It happened about this time that the celebrated missionary, Don Matthew Ripa, returned from China accompanied by a Chinese doctor and four zealous young men, with the intention of founding at Naples a college for the Chinese.

God blessed the enterprise, and on the 14th of April, 1729, they opened the house of the Chinese mission, to the great satisfaction of the founder, the Pope, Benedict XIII, and the King, Charles VI. Alphonsus, struck with the excellence of this work, the rare merits of its founder, the great fervor which reigned in the house, and the poverty and privations which both Neapolitans and Chinese joyfully endured for love of God, resolved to join Father Ripa, who knew how to appreciate so invaluable a subject. He entered the college in June, 1729, to the great mortification of his father, who grieved to lose one whom he regarded less as a son than as an angel; yet he did not oppose so laudable a design.

No sooner did our saint find himself freed from the anxious watching of his parents, than he redoubled his former austerities. His garb was sackcloth, and chains of iron bound his loins. Several times a day he disciplined himself to blood. Scanty and miserable as was the food he took, he seasoned it with myrrh, aloes, and wormwood, and he generally ate in a kneeling posture. In his chamber he would not allow himself a chair, but stood while he studied, and even put little stones in his shoes. The Bishop of Cassano affirmed that his penances surpassed even those of St. Peter Alcantara.

Besides these voluntary penances, he cheerfully bore the privations common to all, and these were neither few nor slight. The rule limited them to the use of vegetables and a little boiled meat, but they frequently had no meat, and were obliged to dine on a salad of mushrooms. Sometimes they could afford to buy only bones, from which they strove to extract a miserable soup. During Lent they scarcely ever had fish, and when they had, it was always of the poorest and cheapest description. They sowed radishes in a little plot of ground near the house, and for months they lived on these roots. Their evening repast usually consisted of the remnant of the dinner, boiled with a few coarse biscuits. And far from even showing the slightest repugnance to all this, Alphonsus rejoiced, and encouraged the others to suffer with pleasure, that they might become more holy and pleasing to God.

Through all this he was sustained by prayer and by the example of the saints. By reading their lives, he studied their virtues and imbibed them. He burned with an ever-increasing desire to love God and give proofs of his love. Besides the community meditation, he daily spent at least an hour and a half before the Blessed Sacrament. The very rest nature claimed was given grudgingly, and not without many contrivances to render it as disagreeable as possible: he often lay on the bare ground or on a hard table.

It might be surmised that these pious practices and austerities, undertaken and endured solely to please God, would procure for our saint a foretaste of heaven, which nothing worldly can either give or take away; but this was not the case with Alphonsus. God permitted him to share in the anguish of our dear Lord when he exclaimed: “My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?”

Deprived of all the favors which make the cross light and easy, his heart enjoyed no consolation. He believed he had lost all devotion: “I go to Jesus,” said he, “and I am repulsed by him. I have recourse to the Blessed Virgin, and she will not listen to me.” During these trials, he acted entirely by faith which made him resolve to please God in all things, even though there were no hell to punish his sins, or heaven to reward his virtue.

While he remained in this college, he gave proofs of an extraordinary zeal for souls. Crowds besieged his confessional and pulpit. Every Friday he preached on the glories of Mary, and recited with his audience the chaplet of her sorrows. During the year he celebrated several novenas, and gave retreats which attracted immense concourses. So devoted was he to his penitents that he scarcely took time to eat, but remained in the church as long as they required, often till late at night.

Father Ripa in his Memoirs of this congregation, writes as follows of our young apostle:—

“We had with us the Count Alphonsus de Liguori, a priest eminent not only for his birth, but still more for his holy life, and wonderful, qualifications as a missionary. He was in the house almost from the first, and though not aggregated to the Mission, he held himself in readiness to preach the gospel in China, as he more than once declared to his director. Assured of his zeal and talents, I gave him entire charge of our church in what regards the confessional and preaching, and he discharged these duties to the great advantage of souls.”

It is impossible to enumerate the obstinate sinners his sweetness attracted to the love of Jesus Christ. He possessed a peculiar gift in the confessional of inspiring sinners with contrition. A famous courtesan whom he converted, became, under his guidance, a model of sanctity. This was but one instance in hundreds. At his feet sinners were touched with sorrow, and persons of ordinary virtue were inspired with the desire of giving themselves entirely to God. In short, to kneel to him and to feel compunction—the latter seemed a natural consequence of the former. This enables us to understand that wonderful saying of a later period of his life, that *he had never sent away one penitent unabsolved.*

The first sermon of a retreat he gave in the Chinese college, inspired fifteen young persons with a generous desire of consecrating their virginity to God. When he spoke of the beauty and dignity of virginity, the most indifferent among his hearers were forced to love and admire it; and frequently, inflamed by his words of fire, the gay, the beautiful, the talented, renounced the fading pleasures of earth, and devoted themselves under his direction to amassing the imperishable riches of heaven.

A young lady named Mary, whose heart was completely eaten up by the vanities of the world, was recommended by her anxious mother to the prayers of our saint, and soon began to reform a little; but her reformation was of a very temporary nature. Again the poor mother had recourse to the saint, who, at her earnest entreaty, spoke seriously to the girl, representing strongly the danger of her position. This happening in the church, the girl was touched to the: heart, and going into a corner, began to bewail her sins most bitterly. Alphonsus, seeing this, called her to his confessional, and said, “Mary, Will you sincerely give yourself to God?”—“Yes,” was the quick reply. “But with your whole heart, and without the slightest reserve?”—“With my whole heart, and without the slightest reserve,” repeated the poor girl energetically. “Then,” said he, “go instantly, cut off your hair, and become a Carmelite.” She obeyed, and died a saint. God sent her many severe trials to produce this result; for several years she was sensibly tormented by the devil. She made a most edifying end, and, being invoked by many, wrought several miracles after her death.

We find some particulars of this privileged soul in a letter addressed by Alphonsus to Mother Angela, superior of the monastery of the Holy Savior at Scala. “I beseech you pray, and procure prayers, for my poor penitent Mary; I really know not what to do for her; the more I speak to her, the more I increase her inquietude. Her temptations are fearful, yet they are *but* temptations. . . . I tell you all this, that you may have compassion on this desolate soul. She consoles me, nevertheless, by her prompt obedience, even in the most difficult matters. Pray, and cause the community to pray, I entreat you, at least during the next three days, that our dear Lord would give me light, and to her strength to obey, and to support her terrible trials.” Many similar souls were under the direction of Alphonsus.

At this period of his life, his labors were incessant: preaching, giving retreats, hearing confessions, going on missions to neighboring towns, which fully occupied him. Yet the saint, who, later on, made a vow never to lose a moment of time, found leisure for all without encroaching on his studies or devotions. “I never remember,” said Father Fatigati, “to have seen Alphonsus waste a moment when he lived with us; he was always preaching, or hearing confessions, or at prayer or study.”

In 1729, Naples was ravaged by a frightful epidemic. This gave our saint occasion for still more heroic self-sacrifice; he was ever foremost in anointing the sick. Besides, he opened a mission in the great Church of the Holy Ghost, and turned the common calamity to advantage, by using it as an argument to withdraw souls from the power of Satan.

In consequence of his great fatigues, he was seized, the following year, with a pulmonary complaint, which brought him to death’s door; but again his beloved Mother wrought a miracle in his favor.

In the spring of 1731, La Pouille and the adjoining provinces were desolated by an earthquake. The bishops, not to lose this opportunity of calling their flocks to repentance, invited the missionaries to preach to them. Alphonsus, as usual, produced miraculous effects. The nuns of St. Clare, hearing several speak of him, entreated their superior to procure them the gratification of hearing him even once. Their request was granted, and they afterwards said that, in listening to him, it seemed as if a seraph were speaking: his words penetrated their inmost hearts.

Chapter XV

Our Lady of Foggia.—The apparition.—Alphonsus preaches a novena.—Success.—Our Lady appears to him.—Picture of the Vision.—Alphonsus visits Mount Gargano.—He is reprimanded by Canon Torni.—His sweetness and gentleness.

FOGGIA suffered more than any other town from the earthquake, little more than a mass of ruins being left of it; but God, who smote his people, would also comfort them, by giving them a miraculous proof of his love. In Foggia, was venerated a very old and miraculous picture of the Blessed Virgin, which was glazed and curtained, its colors being almost obliterated by age. Terrified by the repeated shocks of the earthquake, the people came in crowds to place themselves under the protection of the Mother of Mercy. On the morning of the 22d of March, while the multitude were kneeling before this picture, the Holy Virgin showed herself to them under the appearance of a young woman, and this miraculous manifestation was repeated for several days, and seen by all who came to venerate the picture.

This apparition made an extraordinary sensation throughout the kingdom; and at the conclusion of the mission, Alphonsus and his companions went to visit the miraculous picture. Monsignor Falcoia, the bishop, insisted that he should give a novena in honor of the Blessed Virgin. He at first demurred, having no permission to prolong his stay, but finally yielded to circumstances, the bishop promising to assume the responsibility of his delay. So immense was the concourse, that the greater portion could not find room in the church; a pulpit therefore was erected near the door, beside which was exposed the miraculous picture. The effects were wonderful. Numerous as were the priests, they were not sufficient to hear the confessions of the crowds who, touched to the heart by the discourses of our saint, turned from their wickedness and sought to be reconciled with God.

One day, after the people had left, the image having been replaced in the church, he ascended the altar over which it was placed, to examine it more closely. Scarcely had he placed himself in front of it, when he fell into an ecstasy which lasted nearly an hour. The Holy Virgin would fully satisfy his devotion by showing him her face, radiant with celestial beauty. When the vision disappeared, he came down, inebriated with joy, singing the *Ave Maris Stella*. He afterwards attested that he had seen the Virgin Mother, under the form of a girl of thirteen or fourteen, wearing a white veil. Next day he described to a painter what he had seen, and the picture executed on that occasion is still preserved in the house of Ciorani. Throughout the Congregation of our most Holy Redeemer, the feast of our Lady of Foggia is celebrated on the anniversary, March 22d; the regular and secular clergy of Foggia celebrate the same feast on the same day.

From Foggia, Alphonsus proceeded home by Mount Gargano, where he desired to render homage to the Archangel Michael. At Manfredonia, the archbishop and his chapter came to meet him, accompanied by the most distinguished people in the town. They besought him to preach, but he declined, on the plea that he had no leave from his superiors. Next morning he said mass at the altar of the Archangel, with a devotion that attracted the gaze of all.

On returning to Naples, about the middle of May, he found that his fears of being blamed for delaying to preach the novena, were to be realized. The Canon Julius Torni, either because he disapproved of what he had done, or wished to exercise his humility for his spiritual profit, reprimanded him severely in presence of the whole Congregation. Alphonsus received the rebukes of his superior with his usual gentleness and sweetness. Far from excusing himself, he rejoiced to see himself mortified and humbled before so respectable an assembly.

Chapter XVI

Alphonsus retires to Amalfi.—Proposal of the Vicar of Scala.—Alphonsus and his companions evangelize shepherds and goatherds.—Sermon.

WORN out by his labors and austerities, the friends of our saint began to feel serious apprehensions regarding his health, and it was determined that he should repair to the country to regain his strength. Amalfi was the place selected. Here there was a hermitage on a hill opposite the sea. Several of his co-laborers accompanied him.

On their arrival, after a rough voyage, they went to pay their respects to the Archbishop, Monsignor Scorza. Meeting the vicar-general, he strongly urged them to go to a more convenient hermitage at Scala, where they could benefit the poor goatherds of the vicinity, who were destitute of spiritual aid. “Only go,” he urged, “I will give you full powers.”

The proposal was joyfully acceded to, and they established themselves at Saint Mary’s of the Mount, as the hermitage was called. The Blessed Sacrament was placed in their oratory, and while our saint was recovering his bodily health, his soul gained new strength in the presence of his beloved Savior.

They began to catechize the shepherds and goatherds of the Mount, and the inhabitants of the adjacent country, and to hear their confessions. It was now that Alphonsus learned the extreme spiritual destitution of the scattered population of this district, many of whom had to be instructed in the rudiments of faith before they could make their confession. He met with many who were entirely ignorant of the essential truths of religion, deprived of the sacraments and the word of God. These poor people he instructed with his wonted gentleness, and their progress was to him a source of indescribable consolation.

The people of Scala, hearing that the celebrated missionary was in their environs, were very desirous of hearing him preach, and the bishop besought him to gratify their pious curiosity. He preached one sermon to them, which had the full effect of a regular mission. He spoke so powerfully of the love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and the pressing motives which oblige us to return him love for love, that the entire congregation wept and sobbed, their groans resounding through the whole neighborhood.

The superioress of the nuns of the Holy. Savior entreated him to preach in their church, which he did with his usual unction; and the bishop was so delighted at the success of his labors, that he engaged him to preach a novena in the cathedral, preparatory to the feast of the Holy Redeemer, celebrated in September.

Having continued his labors among the shepherds till the appointed time, he returned to Scala, accompanied by his inseparable companion, Father John Mazzini. During the novena, he conducted a retreat for the nuns of the Holy Savior. There was among them a religious of great sanctity, eminent for many supernatural gifts. Being in an ecstasy on the 3d of October, she saw a new Congregation of priests evangelizing thousands of the hitherto neglected inhabitants of remote villages and hamlets, and at the head of it she saw Alphonsus, and heard a voice which said, “It is this soul I have chosen to be the instrument of my glory in this great work.”

In a conversation subsequently held with him, she made known what she had seen in spirit, and what God required of him. Although her sentiments perfectly coincided with his own, and although he had frequently besought our dear Lord, even with tears, to raise up an apostle for the most abandoned, and gather their precious souls into his fold, he now reproved the nun and treated her as a visionary. Yet struck by the conformity between her vision and his own reflections, he at first regarded it as coming from God. The more he repulsed the good religious, the more firmly did she maintain that God had chosen him for a sublime mission.

He returned to Mazzini, terribly agitated, and on his hesitating to tell the cause, his friend said: “I know you have been disputing with one of the nuns, for I overheard you speaking rather loudly.” At length, Alphonsus essayed to tell him what the nun had said, and this Mazzini treated very seriously. The sanctity of the nun was undoubted: “Besides,” argued he, an institution of this nature is greatly needed in the country, and who knows what designs our dear Lord may have upon you?”

“I highly approve of such an institution,” returned Alphonsus, “and I foresee its glorious fruits; but what can I do alone? Where are my companions?”—“Here I am for one,” answered Mazzini, “and I am sure other priests will not be wanting to consecrate themselves to an enterprise so fraught with the interests of God’s glory.”

While he was weighing this matter in his mind, Mgr. Falcoia, bishop of Castellamare, arrived at Scala. He was a man of well-tried sanctity, skilled in spirituality, who had been intimately acquainted with Alphonsus in the Chinese College. Mazzini induced his friend to open his mind to this estimable prelate, and to the Bishop of Scala, who was nowise his inferior in virtue. After several days spent in closely examining the subject, these prelates agreed that the inspiration came from God, and the vision of Sister Celestina only strengthened their belief, she being a person of extraordinary sanctity. Mgr. Falcoia, in particular, admired in this incident a special mark of God’s providence; for, ever since his elevation to the episcopal dignity, he had desired the establishment of a work of this nature, having had proof of the extreme spiritual destitution of remote hamlets and villages. On learning that Alphonsus felt moved to undertake it, his heart was filled with consolation, and he urged our saint to hasten the execution of the project. But Alphonsus still demurred, and finally consented to refer the decision to his own director, Rev. Thomas Pagano.

Chapter XVII

Conflicting sentiments.—Opinions of Pagano.—Cutica and Manulio agree with him.—Opposition.—Gizzio and Torni.—Others deride our Saint.—The nun of Scala, Sister Celestina.—A miracle.—Father Fiorillo.—His letter to Alphonsus.—Embarrassment of our saint.—He shows the letter.—Letter of Mgr. Falcoia.

THE interior light which illumined the soul of Alphonsus, strengthened by the advice of holy and experienced individuals, should have been for him a powerful motive of confidence; but when he considered his own weakness and incapacity, he was filled with indescribable anguish. He feared to oppose the divine will, and he feared, on the other hand, to engage in a rash enterprise.

Father Pagano, after a careful consideration of some days' duration, declared that the institution in contemplation must tend to the glory of God and the salvation of souls; but through a holy diffidence in himself, he forbore to give a final decision, and referred his penitent to Father Vincent Cutica, and Father Manulio, a Jesuit. Their opinions coincided with that of Pagano, and they urged Alphonsus to begin the good work at once. Several other religious, equally estimable, were of the same mind, so that he could no longer hesitate.

He now took courage, for he felt that he knew for certain God's will in his regard. He therefore gave himself unreservedly to God, sacrificing his love for his native city, and offering to spend his life in villages and remote districts among the poorest and most neglected class.

As soon as our saint's determination became known, all Naples exclaimed against him; some hinted that his brain was affected, others treated him as a madman; not a few considered him a visionary, and a respectable quota of the more rational adversaries judged that the promising young priest had been spoiled by too much praise. His brethren of the Chinese College were his most uncompromising opponents. Father Ripa used his most strenuous endeavors to persuade him that his designs were impracticable. This good priest had dearly loved our saint, and had from their first acquaintance regarded him as the firmest pillar of the college. Now he chose to believe him the victim of a lamentable delusion, and publicly and privately reproached him for his extravagance.

Having heard of the vision of the nun, the Fathers of the Propaganda imagined it to be the sole basis of his plans, and were shocked that a man of his ability and good sense should allow himself to be led astray by such reveries. What afflicted him most was, that these opinions were shared by his uncle, Matthew Gizzio, Rector of the Seminary, and his friend and professor, Julius Torni. When assailed by such respectable adversaries, he meekly replied that he would do nothing without the consent of his director.

“It is not God who directs you,” said Gizzio, bluntly; “you are guided by the reveries of a young nun, and you will not see that you are deluded.”—“I do not regulate my conduct by visions,” returned our saint, gently, “but by the Gospel.”

One day, Gizzio jeeringly asked if he ever expected to realize that brilliant scheme of his. “He who trusts in God can do all, and should hope all,” returned Alphonsus.

Finally his uncle treated him as a fool, saying that his brain had been turned by self-conceit. On one occasion, as he entered the sacristy of the cathedral, several persons of rank began to insult him: “Keep to your word now,” said they derisively; “be quick and show us these new institutions which you have promised the Church.”—Alphonsus humbled himself interiorly, but would not utter a word in his own defense.

Gizzio had for his director Father Louis Fiorillo. “Why,” said he one day to his nephew, “why do you not guide yourself by the counsels of Fiorillo?”—“I am directed by Father Pagano,” answered Alphonsus. But Father Pagano himself referred his saintly penitent to Fiorillo; and the moment Fiorillo saw him, he said: “God is not yet satisfied with you; He wishes you to be entirely his, and expects great things from you.”

At these words Alphonsus seemed to breathe more freely, and felt his heart penetrated with new life. Thus encouraged, Alphonsus opened his whole soul to the good Dominican, and it was agreed that he should continue to consult him. He began to perform the most severe penances, that the Father of Light would enlighten his servant Fiorillo, upon whose decision the affair seemed to depend. He recommended himself to the prayer of many holy persons, but above all to the nun of Scala. All the other nuns of her monastery joined her in prayers, fasts, and mortifications, to beseech God to enlighten our saint’s directors. An occurrence which must be considered miraculous; confirmed the opinions of those who believed Alphonsus to be called to establish a new Congregation. One day, when the nuns were, speaking for and against the project, Sister Celestina exclaimed in ecstatic transport: “It is the work of God, and you will see it accomplished!”—“Yes,” returned one of the most incredulous, “I will believe it when Sister Magdalen is cured.” Hardly were the words uttered when this poor Sister, who had been deranged for many years, perfectly recovered her senses.

When Alphonsus made known to Father Fiorillo the lights he had received from God at Scala, and the lights he still continued to receive, the man of God replied: “In a similar conjuncture, St. Louis Bertrand asked six months from St. Teresa to reflect before giving an answer: I ask the same of you.”—“Not six months only,” said Alphonsus, take a whole year.”

Some days after, however, they met again, and the venerable man, tenderly embracing him, said: “Be of good courage, for this work certainly comes from God. Throw yourself into his arms as a stone falls into a valley. You will encounter contradictions, but be of good cheer; have confidence, God will help you.”

But having other good works on hand, and fearing to offend the clergy who might cease to aid them, he begged Alphonsus to conceal his approbation and not to visit him again. Fully satisfied that he was but fulfilling the divine will, the saint now began in earnest to look out for companions, Fathers Cutica and Manulio also authorizing him. He wrote to Fiorillo, asking him to point out some suitable individuals.

The reply was as follows:—

“Do not suppose I forget you in a matter so intimately connected with the divine honor. I have your interest more at heart than ever. Be tranquil, and place all your confidence in God. He will aid you in a work so dear to his Heart. At this moment I have no subjects to offer you, but should I meet with any, I shall be happy to present them. Would that I were young myself! I would gladly follow you, were it only to carry your baggage. Fear not because your disciples are few; they will be strengthened to do the work of many. A small number of perfect men can do more than an army of the ordinary stamp. I bless you in the name of Jesus and Mary, and embrace you tenderly and with humble respect, in the charity of our Lord."

Meanwhile, nothing was talked of in Naples but the new Congregation and its presumptuous founder. The missionaries of the Propaganda were the first to prepossess the public mind against Alphonsus. They publicly regretted that he had ever been of their number, and bitterly resented the slur they imagined he cast upon them. "Do you not yet perceive that you are a visionary?" said Gizzio to him one day, on which he had accidentally met him in the church; "all are against you; neither Pagano nor Fiorillo is with you, and you obstinately persist in your own notions, submitting only to the reveries of a nun! Fool that you are! can you not see that you act the part of an idiot?"

"Say what you please, Uncle," said the founder with his accustomed gentleness; "I assure you, nevertheless, that I am not acting in consequence of any one's reveries, but am ruled by the word of God, and guided by those to whom I ought to submit."

Naturally, his embarrassment was great at this period: he was bound not to betray Fiorillo, who was then absent and, on the other side, the scandal and astonishment of the people were on the increase. Pagano advised him to keep the secret no longer; the bishops of Cassano and Ischia agreed with Pagano; and, after several consultations with them and others, he determined to obey his director.

Hardly had he entered his uncle's abode, when that dignitary and Canon Torni attacked him with more than ordinary rancor. You are deceived," said he calmly; "my conduct is the result of the counsels of Father Fiorillo." He then placed a copy of Fiorillo's letter in his uncle's hand. "But," said the cautious Torni, "I would see the original." Alphonsus presented it: "Now," said he, I want no other testimony; this is sufficient for the honor of my Congregation."

After this, Alphonsus expected some respite; but his brethren of the Propaganda refused to be reconciled with him, and threatened to expel him ignominiously from their congregation. But Cardinal Pignatelli, although he had been prejudiced against the founder, warned Torni to beware how he took any steps against Alphonsus de Liguori.

Father Ripa, far from withdrawing his opposition on learning that Alphonsus was acting under the advice of Father Fiorillo, became more violent than ever, accusing the saint and his director of being duped by a nun’s reveries. He believed himself justified in opposing schemes which would withdraw Alphonsus from Naples, and deprive the Chinese College of some of its most zealous subjects; for Januarius Sarnelli, son of the Baron of Ciorani, and Vincent Mandarini had signified their desire of following him. He called the plan a suggestion of the devil. He quarreled with Pagano and Fiorillo, and wrote a very bitter letter to Mgr. Falcoia, whom he suspected of being in some manner the inventor of the vision connected with the name of the pious nun of Scala. The reply is too admirable to be omitted here:—

“Your esteemed letter has just been received, and, despite the bitterness it displays, it is still dear to me as coming from you. I reply immediately, because I would not have your annoyance continue a moment if I can help it. You know it does not belong to a spiritual father to give his penitents any vocation which may happen to please himself. This is the province of Almighty God, who has prepared niches in Paradise for the statues He fashions here below. On earth He establishes different studios, and is daily opening new ones, where these rational statues are to be molded to perfection according to his will, ever most holy, that they may be prepared for their position in eternal glory. But that all may not be crowded together, God has destined one to be sculptured in one studio, and another in another. It is not the province of a spiritual father to do anything but approve or disapprove.

“When a soul is faithful to God and his holy words,—‘He that heareth you heareth me,’—we may believe she cannot wander. You may argue that a spiritual father can be deceived; but I would reply that God, who is always faithful, will not fail to communicate his will to those whom He has appointed to enlighten others. Were it otherwise, what security could we have in deciding what was God’s will?

“Now, inasmuch as Alphonsus has followed this rule, he cannot go astray. I see from your letter that you condemn me as one who would overturn your Congregation, and ruin a valuable work which owes all to your labors. But fear not. Is the arm of God shortened? is he not able to sustain your Congregation and many others at the same time? Let God perform his own work, for a work that comes from him may aid, but cannot destroy, another equally divine. But this enterprise, you say, will dissipate itself. If so, you will lose nothing; but, according to my view, the project comes from God, who will not permit it to perish if he who is charged therewith continues faithful. To oppose it, therefore, is to oppose the divine will.

" 'But,' you persist, 'we shall lose our subjects.' I wish, dear Father, we all had more confidence in God and less in man. When the Congregation of the Pious Workers was established, four of its most useful members left and founded four different Congregations. Yet the venerable Fathers Carafa and Colellis were not disturbed by their secession, nor was their Congregation ruined; on the contrary, new arrivals filled up the vacant places. Be persuaded that the work which Don Alphonsus is about to undertake has not been suggested by the devil; on the contrary, the devil opposes it, as he has always opposed every good work calculated to injure his empire on earth."

Despite this reasoning, strong and supernatural, Father Ripa continued to blame, our saint; and, in his memoirs of his Congregation, bitterly inveighs against Alphonsus di Liguori, and all who approved or forwarded his projects, though he never ceased to regard him as a dear friend.

Chapter XVIII

Fathers Pagano and Fiorillo decline the direction of Alphonsus.—Alphonsus places himself under the guidance of Mgr. Falcoia.—Canon Torni endeavors to shake the resolution of Alphonsus.—Retreat for the Clergy.—Missions.—Letter.—First disciples of Alphonsus.

WHEN Fathers Fiorillo and Pagano saw that the tempest, instead of abating, rather increased, they began to_ fear for the success of their own immediate affairs, if they continued to bear the blame of directing Alphonsus. They therefore strongly urged him to place himself under the guidance of Mgr. Falcoia, a prelate of extraordinary sanctity, and particular light in what concerns the religious state, and venerated by all Naples.

Alphonsus was unwilling to leave Father Pagano who had been his director from childhood, but he determined to seek help from his Blessed Mother; and for this end commenced a novena, the feast of the Assumption being at hand. The Divine Mother listened to her favored child, and filled his soul with light as to his future course. He then placed himself in the hands of the holy old prelate, and never was child more obedient to a parent.

The Canon Torni, though convinced of the wisdom of those who directed Alphonsus, and aware of the approbation bestowed on his projects by persons of the most respectable character and position, could not bear to think that his services would be lost to Naples. He therefore began an indirect opposition, in his capacity of Superior of the Propagandists. He charged him with several important matters, hoping that, when he saw the good he was effecting in the capital, he would relinquish the idea of going elsewhere.

In October, he commanded him, in the name of the cardinal, to give a retreat to the clergy of Naples. He obeyed, despite the repugnance he felt to appear before priests, many of whom had interpreted his intentions in a manner contrary to charity; but the will of his superior was always for him as the will of God. The divine blessing rested abundantly upon this retreat. Most of his auditors were touched to the heart, despite their prejudices against him. The cardinal himself was so moved that he exclaimed: “One may easily see that he is a vessel of election, for the Holy Ghost speaks by his mouth.”

Several of the clergy, who had heretofore been cold and indifferent, became zealous and fervent pastors. No sooner was the retreat finished, than he was ordered to give missions in three other churches. From all parts of the city multitudes crowded to hear him, and his confessional was besieged from morning till night. But, notwithstanding this abundant harvest, our saint longed for the moment when he could set out for Scala, to establish there the cradle of his new Congregation.

Mgr. Falcoia, either because the opposition was rather on the increase than on the wane, or because he wished to test still more the constancy of our saint, delayed to give his parting benediction. “Father,” wrote Alphonsus, “I beseech you hasten to call me hence; I am dying with anxiety to set out; release me from the obedience to remain at Naples. The devil is doing all he can to delay us, but let us hasten to the work, and obstacles will vanish; all will succeed wonderfully. I am on the eve of the last day of the retreat I was directed to give, and I must speak to-day of my Mother in heaven, the glorious Virgin. Pray for me always, always, and for the glory of our dear Lord begin the work at once.”

The more dearly Fathers Ripa and Gizzio loved the saint, the more they imagined themselves obliged to counteract his designs. Heaven sometimes permits similar delusions even among the most fervent. Later, however, when the blessings of heaven descended on the institute, now only in contemplation, his most bitter opponents applauded the work, and gained the rising institute many sincere friends and not a few disciples.

Even now several distinguished ecclesiastics offered themselves to follow our saint; but when the moment came for executing their good resolutions, the majority withdrew under different pretexts.

His first companion was Vincent Mandarini, a nobleman of Calabria. Like Alphonsus, he was a pensioner in the Chinese College, an excellent theologian, and a man of singular learning and virtue. He was followed by his bosom friend, Sylvester Tosquez, who, though still a secular, was well versed in theology and jurisprudence, and had an ardent zeal for his perfection; by Don Januarius Sarnelli, also of the Chinese College, son of the baron of Ciorani, a priest of eminent sanctity; by Don Peter Romana of

Scala, Dr. Sportelli of Aquaviva, Don Jerome Manfredi, Don John Baptist Donato, Don Joseph Banza; and by two others whose names have not reached us. These formed the catalogue of the first disciples of Alphonsus.

These, as became corner-stones of a new edifice, were all animated with lively zeal for the glory of God, and devotion to the cause they had espoused. But our saint placed all his confidence in God and in the protection of our Lady. A gentleman named Vitus Curzius, whose vocation was evidently miraculous, was the first lay-brother. He had been secretary of the Marquis of Vasto, and was very intimate with Sportelli, of whose vocation, however, he knew nothing. One day he mentioned to him a dream he had the preceding night. “I thought,” said he, “that I stood at the foot of a high and, steep mountain which many priests were trying to ascend. I wished to follow them, but at the first step was thrown backwards. Unwilling to give up, I tried to ascend several times; but to my great annoyance, I always slid back, till a priest, moved with compassion, reached out his hand and helped me.” Towards noon, as they walked to the Chinese College, they met Alphonsus. Curzius, who had never seen him before, struck with astonishment, exclaimed: “There is the priest who gave me his hand last night!” Sportelli now understood the dream, and mentioned the design of the founder, whereupon Curzius instantly begged to be admitted among the disciples of the saint, but in quality of lay-brother. His request was granted.

Chapter XIX

The germs of the new Congregation.—The missionaries in Scala.—Touching incidents.—Penitential life of the missionaries.—Alphonsus signalizes himself even among saintly men.—Pious customs he introduces.—Consoling Letter of Canon Torni.New Persecutions.—The Archbishop defends the saint.—The flame of resentment is arrested but not extinguished.—Gratitude of Alphonsus towards his defenders.

THE year 1732 was destined by God to give birth to the Congregation of Our Most Holy Redeemer. Clement XII then occupied the Chair of Peter, and Charles VI the throne of Naples. After receiving the benediction of Fathers Pagano and Fiorillo, Alphonsus, without acquainting either friends or relations, hired a wretched donkey and set out for Scala, November 8. Mgr. Santoro, who impatiently expected him, received him as an angel from heaven, and blessed God that he had lived to see so happy a day. The dwelling prepared for the missionaries, pleased them in every respect. It was a hospice belonging to a convent, almost destitute of furniture, poor and inconvenient. The day after their arrival they assembled in the cathedral, and after prolonged meditations, chanted the mass of the Holy Ghost, in thanksgiving for the establishment of the Congregation, and to beg God's blessing upon the work. They styled it "Of the Holy Savior," placing it under the protection of the chief of all missionaries. The founder hoped to form a company of priests animated with great zeal, who would willingly embrace a kind of apostolic life, poor and humble, despising all earthly things.

Alphonsus, on leaving Naples, had entirely broken with the world. The August previous, he had returned home to adjust his business. It was then that Count Joseph made a last appeal to this cherished son. One day when Alphonsus had lain down to take a little repose, the wretched father entered the room, and throwing himself on the bed beside him, exclaimed in piteous accents: "My son, my son! why will you abandon me? I do not deserve that you should cause me such misery!" For three hours this scene lasted, the father embracing him and passionately repeating: "My son, my son, do not abandon me!”—Alphonsus afterwards spoke of this trial as the most terrible he had ever endured.

The newly established missionaries applied themselves seriously to prayer and penance, their hearts overflowing with gratitude and love. Even their repasts they signalized by penitential exercises. Some kissed the ground; others knelt and remained for some time with their arms extended in the form of a cross. They ate kneeling or in some other penitential posture, and some hung heavy stones about their necks. Their scanty food they seasoned with bitter herbs, so that the very beggars refused to partake of what was left.

The end which Alphonsus proposed to himself was, to unite in one body zealous priests who had but the glory of God and the salvation of souls in view. They were to lead an apostolic life, conforming themselves to Jesus Christ in poverty, humility, and self-abnegation. Prayer and penance were conspicuous in Alphonsus and his disciples; they were so inflamed with divine love, that they could scarcely think but of God. To their bodies they refused every comfort.

Alphonsus signalized himself in this holy assembly. He was ever to be found with God in prayer, or with God in works undertaken for his glory. Never was he seen to waste a moment of time. After a lengthened preparation, he daily celebrated the holy sacrifice of the Mass; after which he made a most devout thanksgiving. No sooner did business leave him free, than he prostrated himself before the Blessed Sacrament, to satiate his love in that source of love.

Besides laboring most zealously for his own perfection, he endeavored to convert or sanctify the people of Scala. He introduced the custom of giving a meditation every morning in the cathedral, and of making visits to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Mother every evening. Every Thursday he gave a sermon and exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament. On Sundays and Feasts he instructed and catechized the people. He established two confraternities, one for noblemen, the other for artisans, and similar associations for the other sex; and to each of these he gave a particular instruction every Sunday. In a word, Scala was soon thoroughly reformed, to the great satisfaction of its zealous bishop. Ably seconded by his companions, Alphonsus gave missions in various town and villages adjacent; so that the renown of the new Congregation began to spread everywhere, and bishops were constantly beseeching the founder to evangelize their flocks, and even to accept of establishments in their respective dioceses. In a letter, dated December 29, 1732, addressed to Mgr. Falcoia, we find the following:—

“The Bishop of Caiazzo expects us, and counts the moments till our arrival. It is the same with the Bishops of Cassano and Salerno; but for this, experienced subjects are necessary, and it takes time to form them. What is of the utmost importance is, to have men who are all animated by the same spirit.”

While matters were progressing so favorably at Scala, the fathers of the Propaganda in Naples became more and more embittered against their late companion. Their conduct so deeply grieved our saint that he wrote to their Superior, Canon Torni, who comforted him by the subjoined reply:—

“I could not restrain my tears on reading the letter with which you honored me, and in which you make known to me the afflictions that assail you on all sides. Wherefore I have not ceased to pray to our Lord that he might deign to bestow on you the fortitude you so greatly need to bear the trials to which his all-wise Providence has willed to subject you, and to communicate to you with ever-increasing abundance light to see his holy will.

“Do not imagine that I entertain for you sentiments of aversion: such would be impious in my eyes. I have always loved you with the tenderest affection, and now more dearly than ever. You may then write to me whenever you think proper; your letters will always be most welcome.

“Our Congregation has not ceased to regard you as one of its most cherished members. We shall take no step in your regard but by order of his Eminence; and you may be sure that while I remain Superior, so far as depends on me, nothing will be done against you.”

Notwithstanding the friendly sentiments of Torni, he was finally forced to yield to the importunity of his subjects, and permit them to affix to the door of their house the following notice: “According to the order of the Superior, on the 23d of February there will be a general investigation touching the following questions: Whether the brother Don Alphonsus Liguori should be expelled from the Congregation? And whether he ought to be deprived of his chaplaincy?”

Canon Torni, who had submitted so reluctantly to the dictation of his unworthy disciples, was determined to frustrate their iniquitous designs. Therefore he secretly informed the cardinal of their proceedings, and spoke strongly of the injustice contemplated against Alphonsus. “One may see,” said he, with a burst of generous indignation, “that it is nothing short of madness. Not content with blasting his reputation, they would deprive him of the means of subsistence.”

The cardinal was exceedingly annoyed, but he would not hinder the convocation: “Let them deliberate,” said he, “but fear nothing.” They did deliberate, and with incredible rancor. They unanimously decided to expel him, and deprive him of his benefice; and to prevent interference in his favor, all was conducted with the utmost secrecy. One of the members, probably his uncle Canon Gizzio, delivered himself as follows: “I have never given a vote of expulsion in this Congregation, but to-day I do it with pleasure.” Don Buonacquisto, who related the above, added that the scene reminded him, forcibly of the last judgment.

Gizzio and the other principal members went to implore the cardinal to ratify what had been done. But his Eminence showed intense displeasure: “Why,” asked he, “do you proceed to such extremities? Either God will bless the enterprise of Don Alphonsus, and it will prove glorious to you; or He will overthrow it, and nothing worse can be said than that a good work was attempted, but did not succeed. In any case, I see no dishonor in it.” He added in a tone of authority: “I am Superior of your Congregation; I desire that Don Alphonsus de Liguori be reinstated, and that he continue to enjoy his chaplainship; and I forbid you to take any steps against him, unless authorized by me to do so.”

This generous conduct arrested the flame, but did not extinguish it. The deputies were silenced indeed, but they retired more determined than ever, never to recognize Alphonsus as a member of their Congregation.

Alphonsus wrote to the cardinal and to the canon in terms expressive of the most lively gratitude; but it is remarkable that in these letters not a word escapes him with reference to the cruel treatment he had received from his brethren; neither does he justify himself or declare his innocence, but suffers all with admirable sweetness and resignation.

Chapter XX

The severest trial yet.—Odd Proposals.—Firmness of the saint.—Withdrawal of Mandarini.—Letter.—Modest proposal of Mandarini.—Secession.—Grief of St. Alphonsus.—Freezing reception accorded by Bishop Falcoia.—Temptations.—Terrific struggle.—The pulpits resound with anathemas.—Deserted by all.—In Naples.—At Scala again.

THE storm was subsiding at Naples, and Alphonsus was living in profound tranquility at Scala, when God, to try His servant more severely than ever, permitted discord to appear in the new-born Congregation. Alphonsus wished that his brethren should be occupied only in promoting the sanctification of clergy and laity, giving spiritual exercises in convents, and instructing destitute souls—by means of missions. Mandarini would add colleges to the plan; and each giving his individual opinion, Tosquez maintained that, as the end of the Institution was to imitate Jesus Christ, it would be necessary to dress in a dark-red cassock and a mantle of celestial blue, these being the colors our Savior was said to have worn!

Some disliked. the recitation of the office in common; others objected to sleeping on straw; a few saw no necessity for rigorous poverty; and the perfect community life to which the founder persistently held, was not pleasing to all. Tosquez, who seems to have had a wonderful liking for extremes, insisted that the brethren should embrace the reform of the most austere mendicant order, having previously sold their estates and laid the price thereof at the feet of the Superior.

Alphonsus could not forbear smiling at the proposal of Doctor Tosquez: “Would it not be absurd,” said he, “for simple priests to appear in masquerade, by adopting a blue and red costume?” And with regard to the other proposal, he pleasantly added that he feared the Ananiases would be so numerous, that it would be impossible to bury all who would come forward with a lie in their mouth.

He approved of establishing a choir, as being a good means of reciting the office well; and insisted on the vow of poverty, without which it would be impossible to observe community life. “If,” said he, “the words *mine* and *thine* are heard among the brethren, great inconveniences will result; they will go on missions not for God and souls, but for mere temporal emolument."

These conflicting sentiments were well calculated to disturb his serenity; he spoke, he supplicated, he had recourse to prayer; he consulted Mgr. Falcoia, Father Pagano, and Canon Torni, who all looked upon it as a stratagem of the devil. Finally, Mandarini, refusing to yield to the founder, withdrew, accompanied by all the disciples of his master, except Sportelli.

Previous to this sad separation, Mandarini's conduct and influence had been but too instrumental in causing coldness and misunderstanding to creep into the little community. Nor was Alphonsus slow to perceive this: "O my father!" wrote he to Mgr. Falcoia, in the bitterness of his soul,—"you know not how painful it is for me to associate with Don Vincent Mandarini. It is only the love of Christ that has enabled me to keep up friendly relations with him. Thank God, who gives me grace to endure these storms. See what I have deserved for obeying God, renouncing my family, and making light of the reproaches of friends and relations. Still you encourage me to put my confidence in God, even though all my companions should desert me. Ah, my father, do not abandon me! Command and I will obey. Have pity on me, your unworthy son."

The withdrawal of Mandarini and his companions took place in March, 1733, just four months after the auspicious opening at Scala. Yet almost alone as Alphonsus was, he continued to labor for souls with extraordinary zeal and success. Mandarini coveted his zeal and abilities for his own projects: "If your Reverence would only come to us," he wrote from Naples, "we all most earnestly desire a reunion; but if, as I will not believe, you persist in remaining, it will be for us the greatest misfortune."

With this modest request of his late novice, Alphonsus, as will be readily surmised, declined complying. "With God, one is a majority," says a representative man of our day; but St. Teresa had already said as much and in stronger terms. No doubt St. Alphonsus felt this when he was forsaken by the men of learning and prestige, who had renounced the world and undertaken a glorious enterprise at his bidding. Yet Mandarini seems to have been sincerely attached to him: "Command me," he wrote, "if I can ever be of the smallest service to you; for, though absent in body, I am with you in spirit."

The paths of these men diverged from the first separation. Mandarini founded a Congregation which embodied all his plans; and though, later on, he was willing to adopt the views of St. Alphonsus and affiliate his foundation to the order of the Most Holy Redeemer, our saint wisely declined his proposals.

This separation was a terrible trial to the tender heart of the founder. Gloomy thoughts filled his troubled mind; and the rocks of Scala, once so dear to his heart, now seemed to frown upon his projects. In imagination he heard taunts and jeers uttered triumphantly in the *salons* of Naples when it was announced that his enterprise was a failure, and he shuddered at the scorn the world would lavish on him. Unable to bear up any longer, he sought Mgr. Falcoia, sure of finding in him a friend who would at once strengthen and console him. But God permitted him to be grievously disappointed. The bishop, who had heretofore zealously defended him against all opponents, felt wounded at the disgrace which must necessarily fall upon himself from the failure of the scheme, and received him with marked coldness. “God has no need of you or your companions,” was his greeting to his disconcerted protégé; “if He wills you to go on, He will raise up other disciples for you.”—“My Lord,” returned Alphonsus, regaining his courage, “I am well aware that God has no need of me or of my labors; nevertheless I believe it to be his will that I should proceed in this work, and, deserted as I am, I shall yet succeed. I have not left Naples, I have not renounced the world, to gain the glory of founding a new order, but to do the will of God and promote his glory.” This reply deeply affected the prelate, who suddenly changing his manner, said: “Put your confidence in God; He will certainly bless your good intentions.”

He returned to Scala, much comforted by this interview, but the devil would not leave him in peace. Don Sportellia was necessarily absent frequently; and when Alphonsus found himself alone on this desert mountain, disgust, anxiety, and depression assailed him more strongly than ever. One day, when these temptations were at their height, he fell on his knees and solemnly vowed to consecrate himself to destitute souls, even though he should be left entirely alone. God blessed this heroic act; his fears and anxieties vanished, and he was filled with courage, hope, and consolation.

Even in his old age, our saint could not remember without a shudder the terrific struggle he had sustained on that occasion; and he told his director, Father Dominic Corsano, that this, and his separation from his father, were the two most dreadful trials he had ever undergone.

No sooner was it known that the new founder was abandoned by his companions, than everyone in Naples ridiculed the whole affair, condemning the fanaticism of the would-be head of a Congregation who had blindly lent himself to the fancies of a visionary nun. Some even affirmed that the Pope himself had interfered to prevent the establishment of such a Congregation. The very pulpits resounded with anathemas. Preachers showed how even the most favored individuals can go astray, when they allow themselves to be ensnared by the devil, and neglect the practice of humility; and they pointed at Don Alphonsus Liguori as an illustration of their theories.

Even his friends were silenced by the mockery and contempt which everywhere greeted them. Not one was to be found in the city of his birth to say a word in his defense. Father Fiorillo, indeed, felt sure that the devil had raised this storm, and that God would uphold his own work. The cardinal pitied him: “After all,” said he, “there is nothing reprehensible in his projects; but who can know the judgments of God?” Embarrassed, however, by an infinity of conflicting reports, he desired Canon Torni to recall Don Alphonsus to Naples.

The reception that awaited him may well be imagined. Canon Gizzio refused to see him or hear his name mentioned. Father Ripa would have no further connection with him, and his example was followed by others who had once held him in the highest esteem.

He at once visited Cardinal Pignatelli, accompanied by Canon Torni. His Eminence was grieved to hear the number of false reports that had been circulated concerning him. The canon, eager to retain his friend in Naples, remarked that, if the work had been pleasing to God, He would not have withdrawn the means of carrying it into execution. To which Alphonsus replied with entire confidence: “We have reason to be convinced that the devil is the author of what has happened at Scala; but do not imagine that I am conquered because the devil has crossed my path. If my first companions have deserted me, other zealous priests can be found; but I should not hesitate to devote myself alone to the salvation of the destitute souls of this kingdom.”

The cardinal, unable to refrain from admiring this speech, turned towards Torni and said: “It will not do to abandon Scala just yet; let us have recourse to God, to learn his holy will.” Then, to encourage Alphonsus, he said to him: “Trust in God; place no confidence in man, for it is God who will help you.” He approved his constancy, and advised him to decline all overtures of reunion with those who had forsaken him.

Consoled by the sentiments of the cardinal, Alphonsus returned to Scala, full of hope. Meanwhile, the opinions expressed by his Eminence reduced to silence those who had previously railed against him. The germ of the future Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer consisted of the founder, Don Sportelli, still a layman, and Vitus Curzius, a lay-brother. Alphonsus soon had the consolation of seeing his solitude peopled by promising subjects. “Our novices,” wrote he, in the fullness of his joy;—“our novices think neither of country nor friends, nor even of suffering: all their desire is to love God, and conform perfectly to his will.”

About this time (July, 1733), they left the hospice for a dwelling equally poor, which an eye-witness has described in the following terms:—“There was one small parlor, in which Alphonsus had made an oratory and set up a crucifix so beautifully carved, that it drew tears from the spectators. A square apartment underground, more like a vault than a chapel, answered for their church. Poverty reigned supreme; they had not even a tabernacle for the Blessed Sacrament, which Alphonsus was obliged to place in a box decorated by himself. The altar was poor, but they endeavored to hide its poverty under bouquets and garlands of flowers. The greater part of the night they passed before the Blessed Sacrament, taking their scanty repose on the bare ground before it.”

Chapter XXI

The grotto near Scala.—Prospects brighten.—Don Xavier Rossi.—A foundation after the saint's own heart.—An incident.—Father Mazzini.—Loss of a Novice.—The wonders of the Thebaid renewed.—Tosquez becomes a financier.—Mandarini endeavors to make reparation.

AFTER the departure of Mandarini and his companions the spirit of prayer and penance resumed its sway at Scala. All breathed self-denial and mortification, Alphonsus, as usual, signalizing himself above the rest. Close by the house was a half-ruined grotto, where every day he inflicted on his body the most rigorous penances. There is a tradition among the inhabitants that, while practicing self-mortification, our Blessed Lady appeared to him, and bestowed upon him many spiritual favors. Even in extreme old age he was wont to sigh after this beloved spot, and cherished the hallowed remembrance of the graces received therein. Whenever he came to Scala, he visited his beloved grotto, exclaiming, "O my grotto, my cherished grotto! why cannot I possess thee now as in bygone days!"

Four months had scarcely elapsed, when our saint was enabled to resume his missions. Meanwhile he had been joined by Don Sarnelli of Ciorani, a priest; and in the following January, yielding to his pressing solicitation, accompanied him to that territory. The inhabitants never lost the remembrance of this first visit, in which they were edified no less by the holy example of these two friends, than by the instructions they gave. After a few days they were invited by the bishop of Cajazzo to give a mission in his diocese. The general reformation which followed excited in the people an ardent desire to have a house of the Order in their midst, but the Fathers were not as yet sufficiently numerous to form a new establishment.

At Formicola, there was a house well suited to the Congregation, with a church adjoining. Among those most anxious that the Fathers should effect a settlement in the town, was Don Xavier Rossi, a young nobleman who had already taken priest's orders. He exerted himself to the utmost, commissioned an architect to make the necessary alterations and repairs, and ordered that all should be done at his expense.

Alphonsus, delighted with the purity of soul he found in Rossi, one day addressed him thus: “Don Xavier, it is yourself God wishes to have, and then this foundation.” This saying was a prophecy. At that time, however, Rossi, though filled with admiration for Alphonsus and his companions, had not the courage to imitate them. But, after a while, a sudden movement of grace impelled him to go to Alphonsus, and even in spite of himself to join his little band. He served his mass, and was wont to remark, that it was not a man but a seraph that offered the holy sacrifice. The founder, perceiving his emotion, earnestly entreated the Heart of Jesus to captivate the young patrician; and so effectual were his prayers, that, the moment mass was over, he knelt before Alphonsus and begged to be admitted among his sons. To prove his sincerity, the saint counselled delay; but he gave such incontestable proofs of a strong vocation, that he was speedily admitted to the novitiate. Xavier became a corner-stone of the new Congregation; and having rendered it the greatest services, departed to our Lord in the odor of sanctity.

This foundation was precisely what our saint desired. Situated on the confines of four dioceses, the adjacent country was very thickly peopled, and villages were scattered in every direction. Poverty reigned among the founders of this institution; one carlino (about eight cents) was assigned to each Father for his support. Only a belfry distinguished their dwelling from the surrounding houses. While the building was in progress, the people piously assisted. The neighboring nobles might be seen mingling with the neighboring plebeians, carrying materials. Alphonsus labored like a common workman; and, when the gentlemen endeavored to dissuade him, he said: “I wish to have my share in the merit as well as the rest.”

One day, while a poor woman was carrying a large stone, another equally large fell from the scaffolding on her head. Everyone thought that the blow was mortal, but Alphonsus addressed himself to our Lady: his prayer was heard, the woman rose up unhurt. No one evinced greater zeal than the young novice Rossi. Not only did he bestow on the good work all he could call his own, but he went about the country begging alms for it, regarding neither the excessive heat, nor the streamlets overflowing from recent rains, that obstructed his passage.

Alphonsus remained here until August, and it was here he had the happiness of receiving Father John Mazzini. Already had this priest attained a high degree of virtue; and such was the opinion the founder entertained of his sanctity, that he made him rector of the new house.

The consolation he derived from this acquisition was neutralized to some extent by the grief he felt at the loss of a promising cleric, Michael Alteriis, whose friends violently forced him away.

Michael had lately joined the Congregation, much to the indignation of his father, who came to the house accompanied by a body of police to carry him off. Alphonsus helped him to escape during the night; but his enraged relations appealed to the cardinal, who advised our saint to let him go.

“This victory will cost them dear,” was the comment of Alphonsus. Hardly had the youth returned home, when the eldest son died quite suddenly. In his bereavement, the unhappy father exclaimed: “I have carried off one from God, and God has carried off one from me.” However, God blessed Don Michael, because he had always obeyed the voice of his superiors. He subsequently returned to the service of God, and became an infatigable laborer in the vineyard of the Lord; and, after a useful and holy life, died in the odor of sanctity.

The life which our saint led with his dear brethren, renewed the wonders of the Thebaid. He ate sometimes on his knees with a heavy stone suspended from his neck; his food usually consisted of pottage which he seasoned with bitter herbs. He took the discipline in private as well as in common, wore a heavy haircloth, and reposed, it may be said, on the boards, so thin was his poor mattress. His humility was extraordinary; before and after meals he would frequently kiss the feet of his spiritual sons, placing himself in spirit beneath the lowliest of them. His cassock was so worn and mended, that there remained scarcely any of the original garment. On his journeys he would never use a horse, but went on foot or mounted on a sorry mule.

A profound silence reigned throughout the house. Towards evening all assembled for recreation, which was in their case little more than an interchange of sentiments on spiritual things. Besides the meditations made in common, our saint was in continual prayer, and spoke only when necessary.

Many priests and able young men were attracted to the rising Institute; and these, charmed and edified by the sweetness and sanctity of Alphonsus, drew others after them. But if subjects came in crowds, unfortunately they withdrew in crowds, for few could endure a life so painful to flesh and blood.

From a missionary and projector of an order of men to be dressed in red and blue, Don Tosquez became a financier and minister of state. A brother of his having died at Vienna, he went thither to administer his estate. On the way, he visited Pope Clement XII, to obtain a dispensation to be promoted to the priesthood. But at Vienna he displayed such consummate business talents, that the Pope, on his return, made him inspector of all the posts on the Adriatic in the Roman States. Every week he had a private audience, which gave him admission to the Council of Cardinals charged with the administration of civil affairs.

He repented of the absurd projects he had once suggested to our saint, and frequently spoke of him with the greatest esteem to his Holiness, who in consequence took no small interest in his success as founder of an Order.

Mandarini equally regretted the division. He even went with Tosquez to the Pope, to render justice to Alphonsus. His Holiness was much delighted to hear such good tidings, and promised to do everything he could for the founder.

Mandarini wrote to Alphonsus, begging him to come to Rome immediately and take advantage of the Pope’s favorable dispositions. “The Head of the Church,” wrote he, “being so favorably disposed towards your enterprise, I unite with all the others to beseech you to reunite the scattered sheep, that we may more efficaciously cooperate for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.”

Although this letter rejoiced our saint, he did not judge the proposed reunion advantageous to his work. He therefore sent a polite but indecisive reply.

Chapter XXII

Alphonsus preaches the Lent in the cathedral of Scala.—Singular incident.—Reception of the Fathers at Ciorani.—Abundant fruits of that Mission.—Retreat for the nobles.—Villani joins the Congregation.—Trials.

WHEN the new foundation seemed sufficiently consolidated, Alphonsus returned to Scala. He was greatly consoled by the good which Sportelli had effected in his absence; nor was his consolation abated on learning that many candidates had been awaiting his arrival with impatience. At the request of Bishop Santoro, he reluctantly consented to preach the Lent in the cathedral of Scala, after which he conducted retreats in several monasteries of nuns.

It happened one day that the bishop was preparing to assist at some representation, and, Alphonsus calling, the prelate invited him to accompany him. Our saint excused himself on various pretexts: “Oh, you are scrupulous!” remarked the prelate; but where a bishop can go, missionaries may surely appear.”—“It is not that” returned Alphonsus, but I fear the platform will give way.”—“Father Liguori,” interrupted the bishop, “I know you are an excellent spiritual father, but I do not yet recognize you to be a prophet.”—He then ordered the master of ceremonies to have chairs placed for Alphonsus and his companion. Our saint, no longer able to resist, begged the prelate to allow them to sit near the door. Scarcely was the prologue terminated, when the platform gave way and the play came to an end, in a manner painful to several present.

Father Sarnelli ardently desired to see a house of the Congregation in the territory of Ciorani, of which his father was baron. The pastor, Angelo Guadiello, learning the good done by the missionaries in the neighboring parishes, earnestly sought similar advantages for his own. Don Andrew Sarnelli, brother of J. Sarnelli, entered with spirit into the scheme; and persuading the baron of the immense advantages that would result therefrom, easily obtained his consent. By April, he had secured for their maintenance a rent of one hundred ducats, which was afterwards increased to two hundred, and finally to five hundred.

When the Archbishop of Salerno was informed of this, his joy was boundless. As soon as the necessary arrangements had been made, Alphonsus came to Ciorani with Mazzini and Rossi, in May, 1735. Four wretched donkeys formed their equipage. An immense concourse awaited them, among whom were the pastor and his curates. Hundreds of men appeared carrying muskets, which they fired off at intervals, *vivas* resounding in every direction. “Behold the saint! Behold the saint!” was the salutation which greeted Alphonsus on all sides. The bells rang out their most joyous peals, as the fathers led the way to the parochial church.

Inspired by the presence of so vast a multitude, Alphonsus ascended the pulpit; and taking as his subject the motive of his coming—the salvation of their souls—he preached with such powerful effect, that the hearts of his auditors were penetrated with compunction, and their eyes suffused with tears.

The baron asked him to become his guest, but on that day he sought no repose: the sick who were unable to leave their houses, sighed for a visit from the servant of God, Overflowing with charity, he would not delay to gratify their longings.

Next day, he received the felicitations of the pastors of the neighborhood and the noblemen of the country. In the evening he opened the mission, and the immense church was not capacious enough to contain the crowds that followed him. Seeing the saint so poor, so humble, so radiant with devotion, the most hardened sinners were touched, and the conversions effected were innumerable.

The house which the baron had given them consisted of a species of cellar or cave which served as a kitchen, and two rooms more spacious than those of Scala. He afterwards added two more rooms; but, in passing from one to the other, they were obliged to cross an open court, which was a great inconvenience, especially in winter. Planks formed the exterior wall of these apartments, admitting wind and rain through innumerable chinks. But these inconveniences were small, compared to that resulting from the fact, that the basement of their dwelling was occupied partly by a public house, and partly by a prison.

In one of these chambers Alphonsus, with the sanction of the archbishop, erected a small oratory, reserving the remaining room for a sleeping apartment. Far from having superfluities, necessaries were often wanting to the missionaries; but they rejoiced in these privations, happy to participate in the sorrows and sufferings of Jesus Christ. Their oratory was their heaven. There might the holy founder be seen in the stillness of the night, pouring forth his soul into the bosom of his God.

So great was the concourse of people that attended the mission, that the Fathers had scarcely time to eat or sleep. From morning till night the confessionals were thronged; but, as penitents came very early and disturbed the slumbers of the poor old pastor, Alphonsus undertook to repair the ancient church of St. Sophia, annexed to the baronial palace, and in future received the people there. As all the inhabitants of the neighboring villages could not come to Ciorani, Alphonsus sent missionaries on feast days, to preach in distant places and comfort the sick and aged.

Ere long, Ciorani was thoroughly reformed. Quarrels and dissensions were unheard of, the pious canticles of Alphonsus replaced the profane and licentious songs that had heretofore sullied the lips of the young people, and all emulated the virtues of the first Christians. When the inhabitants met, they saluted one another by saying, “Praise be to Jesus and Mary!” The little children, taught by their mothers, lisped this blessed salutation whenever they met the priests. So abundant were the seeds of salvation sown in this territory, that their fruits are still to be seen among the inhabitants.

Many persons of quality, seeing the effect produced on the humbler classes, ardently desired to have a kind of mission for themselves. The baron being then in Naples, Alphonsus obtained leave to give the mission in the great hall of the castle. Several ecclesiastics assisted at this mission, and the fruits were recognized in their redoubled zeal for souls. It was in this retreat that the young priest, Andrew Villani, a descendant of the dukes of Sacco della Polla, resolved to despise the transitory joys of this world, and consecrate himself to God in the new Congregation, of which he became so admirable an ornament.

But while these works, so glorious to God, were progressing, the devil excited the jealousy of some neighboring curates, who, instead of emulating the zeal of the missionaries, regarded it as a reproach to themselves, and so embarrassed the archbishop with their complaints, that he began to think of suppressing the house. But this misfortune was happily averted, God permitting the opponents, both secular and religious, to be disabused of their error. Hence, on the 12th of December, 1735, his Grace, by a pastoral letter, definitely authorized the new foundation, to the general satisfaction of the whole province.

Chapter XXIII

Imprudent Suggestion of Don Andrew Sarnelli.—Evil consequences.—The Archbishop defends Alphonsus.—Terrific incident.—Extraordinary success of the mission at Naples.—Interesting Conversion.—Mission at Santa Lucia.—Violent Persecutions.—Punishment of the persecutors.

THE house at Ciorani was prospering miraculously, when the devil again assailed it. Don Andrew Sarnelli, moved by an injudicious zeal, suggested to the archbishop that, as so many pastors profited by the labors of the missionaries, each should contribute a trifle towards their support. This measure was violently opposed by the pastors, several of whom demanded that the missionaries should be driven out of the territory. The pastor of Ciorani, on being invited to join the adverse party, indignantly exclaimed: “What I would you have me deprive my flock of the great help afforded by these holy priests who labor incessantly in my parish?”

They then represented to the archbishop, that the missionaries, under pretense of zeal and devotedness, sought to enrich themselves at the expense of the legitimate pastors. His grace smiled coldly and said: “I know Alphonsus di Liguori. Like myself, he is of noble birth. Vocation, not necessity, induced him to renounce the world. Whatever anxiety he has is to sanctify souls and himself, not to amass wealth.”

As soon as the inhabitants of Ciorani heard of these complaints, they sent a deputation to the archbishop to vouch for the zeal and disinterestedness of the missionaries, and his Grace replied very graciously that he took the missionaries under his immediate protection, and approved of the works to which they had devoted themselves, as being most advantageous to the souls confided to his pastoral care.

This storm having abated like its predecessors, the priests who were most opposed to our saint were the first to profit by his labors.

In the course of a retreat he gave to priests about this time, the following terrible incident occurred: Speaking of the enormity of sin in the sacerdotal state, he quoted the words of St. Chrysostom: “In the priesthood, to sin is to perish.” At these words, one of his auditors exclaimed, *Nego* *consequentiam:* “I deny this consequence.” The unhappy man soon experienced the consequence. Next morning, on beginning the psalm, *Judica me, Deus,* “Judge me, O God!”—he dropped dead on the altar steps.

In October, 1737, at the pressing entreaty of the Superior of the Propaganda, he went to Naples to conduct the mission to be opened in the church of the Holy Ghost on the 26th of that month. The good which God operated by his ministry was so abundant, that volumes would be required to register the conversions he made on this occasion.

After this mission, he proceeded to Amalfi; and thence to Majuri. In this place, a poor woman whose son had been assassinated, had persistently refused to pardon the murderer, though urged by the most influential persons. But a sermon by our saint so touched her heart, that she immediately wrote a declaration to the effect that she had pardoned the murderer, and, bringing it to the church, publicly laid it at the foot of the crucifix.

He was now called by his uncle, Mgr. di Liguori, to the hamlet of St. Lucy, in the diocese of Cava. The inhabitants led very irregular lives; but where sin had abounded, grace did much more abound. Abuses were extirpated, restitutions were made, scandals were repaired; and so convincingly did he treat of the merit and dignity of chastity, that many left the world to consecrate themselves to God in religion.

The buildings at Villa dei Schiavi were nearly completed, and the house was filled with priests and candidates for the ministry, whom Alphonsus directed in the way of perfection. A congregation of artisans had been established, which already numbered more than two hundred brethren, whose zeal and fervor made them missionaries throughout the district. The frequentation of the sacraments became general, and many individuals were aiming at a high degree of perfection.

But again a storm arose which withered these blossoms, so full of hope for eternity. Under the pretext of defending the interests of the resident priests, a certain sower of discord began to declaim against the missionaries for coming hither to eat the bread of the inhabitants. The calumnies increased to such an extent, that their morals were attacked. Father Liguori himself was denounced as a hypocrite who made traffic of his affected sanctity.

Nor did the iniquity stop here. A wretched creature was suborned to defame Alphonsus, and she boldly showed presents which she declared she had received from him. But he took these slanders quite calmly, knowing that persecution is the inseparable accompaniment of works undertaken for God; he merely cautioned the community to be still more circumspect in behavior, and to recur more frequently to prayer and penance, as their great resource.

The promoter of these infamies finally succeeded in prejudicing the baron himself; and when our saint went to claim his protection, the irritated nobleman designated him as "one of these nasty hermits," and immediately dismissed him with many opprobrious marks of contempt.

This scene being widely noised abroad, filled his enemies with joy. They now even dared to solicit the Neapolitan tribunals to interfere, but without success. Finally, they had recourse to open violence. As one of the lay brothers was going to the church to ring the *Angelus,* a warden, accompanied by several disaffected persons, met him, forced the keys out of his hands, locked the church, and ignominiously drove him back to the house. To forestall any defense friends might be disposed to make, they placed men, armed with loaded muskets, on the belfry.

They next besieged the house, to which all communication with the outer world was sternly interdicted. The situation becoming every day less endurable, their friends at Naples advised them to abandon the place to its fate. The bishop wept with regret, the poor people were disconsolate, and the surrounding villages were in mourning. On the night of June 10th, 1737, the Fathers shook the dust from their feet, and left the hamlet they had come to evangelize.

God did not permit all this wickedness to go unpunished. The wretch who had accused the saintly missionaries had her tongue eaten by worms, so that she could not receive the Viaticum. Seized with the acutest remorse, she publicly confessed that she had uttered the most infamous calumnies. More terrible was the fate of other calumniators: one died in despair, uttering the most frightful cries; another howled like a maniac, and died in that state; a third, who had suborned false witnesses and written down their testimony, had his hand withered; the death of an only son soon after caused him to become an idiot, and he died in indescribable misery.

A fourth, who had been bribed to attest all the slanders, died in impenitence. A fifth, a healthy young man, fell dead on the ground immediately after the departure of Alphonsus. The chief instigator remained deaf to all these warnings. During a tremendous storm a thunderbolt fell at his feet; it stunned him, and he remained for some time without sense or motion. Yet even this warning he failed to recognize. But, ere long, he fell into disgrace with his prince, was ill-used and persecuted, and within a year was found one morning a corpse under his bed, weltering in his blood. In a word, all who persecuted our saint and his children were made terrible examples of the divine vengeance, as all the ancient inhabitants of the place have testified.

Chapter XXIV

Another mission.—Apparition of our Lady to Alphonsus.—Castellamare.—The new house at Ciorani.—Scala relinquished.—Regret of the inhabitants.—The rain at Aquarola.—Priests.—“The Apostle.”—Wonderful cure.—The standard-bearer of the Redemptorist Order.—Alphonsus writes his epitaph.

A VAST field was now opened for the labors of our saint. He gave numerous missions, everywhere reaping the most abundant harvest. In the little village of Ajillo, especially, God gave him extraordinary success. Scandals disappeared, the taverns were deserted, and the churches were filled. There was not a house in the place in which the rosary was not said in common every evening.

It was here, too, that the Blessed Virgin was pleased to give Alphonsus a public testimony of her love. One evening, while he was expatiating on her glories, he was ravished in ecstasy and raised some feet above the pulpit; at the same time rays of glory darted from a statue of our Lady and rested on the head of her chosen servant.

Shortly after, he visited Castellamare, a maritime town, in great need of spiritual succor. Eight companions shared his labors, and multitudes were converted. Smuggling was discontinued, and the magical practices common among the sailors given up. The churches were crowded, the sacraments frequented, and the whole town breathed an air of sanctity.

By this time the new house at Ciorani was finished, together with the small church, and the missionaries removed into it. Here, too, poverty predominated, and piety was the chief ornament. It was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and in it our saint placed the beloved statue of that dear Mother before which he had so often poured out his heart in the retreats he made with his companions at the house of Don Alteriis. The conveniences which the new establishment afforded, drew thither numerous ecclesiastics and laymen, especially in the general missions, so that our saint and his sons, to practice hospitality, had frequently to sleep on the floor of an apartment which had formerly been used as an oven room.

It is doubtful whether Nitria or the Thebaide ever counted, among the solitaries that enlivened them with still life, more perfect models of every religious virtue than the Fathers of Ciorani. Not a superfluous word, no going out without necessity, profound humility, perfect obedience, no pretension, no repugnance, no jealousy,—each was content with his employment, the will of Alphonsus was regarded as the rule by his brethren and sons in the Lord.

But the more he endeavored to consolidate the new work, the more the devil sought to destroy it. Several individuals, having learned what had happened at the Villa began to murmur and to excite the jealousy of others. Alphonsus, to avoid new misfortunes, removed from Scala; a proceeding deeply painful to the good bishop and the inhabitants.

Hell rejoiced at this step; and, years after, Father Tannoia heard from a soul far advanced in perfection, that, on the night of the departure of the missionaries, the shouts and dancing of the evil spirits disturbed the repose of the inhabitants. No wonder: Scala had been thoroughly reformed. Two years later, when a mission was preached there by the Pious Workers, they scarcely found among the people a voluntary venial sin, and all sorts of pious practices were rigorously kept up. Yet calamities followed the departure of the missionaries. A few days after, a violent storm destroyed the chestnuts upon which the poor of that district chiefly live. But Alphonsus could not forget his beloved Scala. Absent in body, he was often present there in spirit, and every year either went thither himself, or sent some of his Fathers, to give the novena of the crucifix, that the nuns, who afterwards took the name of Religious of the Most Holy Redeemer, might not be deprived of their annual retreat.

The fields in which the holy founder labored during the following autumn and winter, were not less fertile in fruits of salvation. At Castiglione the concourse was so great, that people, desirous of hearing him preach in the morning, passed the night in the church. The name of Alphonsus had become so renowned in these parts, by reason of the wonders of grace operated by him, that people often walked a distance of seventeen miles to confess to him.

At Calvanico, the ecclesiastics to whom as usual he gave the spiritual exercises, were animated with such fervor, that they followed in his suite to assist at the missions,—a practice not unfrequent at present.

In the summer he returned to Ciorani, to give a little repose to the body overpowered with fatigue, and refresh the spirit in retirement.

In the beginning of 1740, accompanied by eleven brethren, he evangelized the country, shedding the benedictions of heaven on many villages in which great disorders had previously reigned. Having finished the spring missions, he again returned to Ciorani to regulate the affairs of the Congregation, and reanimate his brethren by his example in the observance of the rules.

The country of St. Severino suffered from great drought this year. To obtain the divine mercy, the inhabitants of Aquarola invited Alphonsus to give a mission towards the end of July. Their fervor was rewarded: one day he foretold that at a certain time rain would fall. The day indicated set in without any appearance of rain, but all at once a very small cloud was perceived above Salerno. When our saint saw it, he extended his arms, as if to invite its approach; and then, prostrating himself on the ground, he besought the divine mercy in behalf of the people. Immediately clouds obscured the sky, thunder rolled, lightning flashed, and during the next five hours the rain fell in torrents.

In autumn he continued his missionary labors, with signal success. Among the thousands who owed their conversion to his zeal, were several bandits and murderers. Many ecclesiastics who had been cold and indifferent, now devoted themselves to God with admirable fervor. This rejoiced our saint exceedingly: “The conversion of a priest,” he would say, is more glorious to God than that of a hundred seculars; for no layman, though he be a saint, can perform the good works peculiar to the priestly office.”

He had great consolation in revisiting two monasteries, whose inmates led lives of wonderful virtue. He strove to confirm them more and more in regular observance, love of prayer and recollection, detachment from the world, frequentation of the sacraments, and love of Jesus and Mary.

A zealous priest of Nocera, Don Nicholas Tipaldi, who had become acquainted with the Fathers at Ciorani, eagerly desired the blessing of their presence near his own home. Knowing that Contaldi, the Dean of Nocera, had resolved to endow a house of missionaries, he spoke to him and to the principal inhabitants of the virtues of Father di Liguori and his companions, and arranged that they should give a mission in the town. This had the greatest success. Numerous conversions were wrought among ecclesiastics and seculars, and Alphonsus was universally designated the “Apostle.’’

He certainly enjoyed many supernatural gifts: he knew how to touch all hearts. The spirit of prophecy and the gift of healing accompanied him; and he often cured the most grievous fevers, by merely making the sign of the cross over the patient.

While he lodged in the house of Don Nicholas, the mother of that priest who was subject to violent convulsions from acute pains in her arms, full of faith in the sanctity of her holy guest, wrapped herself in a shirt belonging to him, and was immediately cured. This made the people more anxious than ever to have the Fathers among them, but their hopes were not realized until a later period.

It was on the 18th of April, the same year, that God called to himself the first member of the Congregation, Joachim Gaudiello, lay-brother. He died in transports of joy, exclaiming: “It is I who carry the standard!” All the virtues seemed to have made their home in the beautiful soul of this good brother. As his portrait had not been taken before burial, the Fathers allowed his coffin to be opened eleven days after his death, in the hope that his body might still be incorrupt. The event justified their expectations: the sacred remains were found entire and flexible, as if still animated by the pure soul.

The holy founder himself wrote in Latin the epitaph of this dear and cherished son. We give a translation:—

“Brother Joachim Gaudiello, rich in every virtue, sighed only for perfect resemblance to Jesus Christ, assimilating himself in every respect to this divine model, especially by his patience in infirmity, and his sweetness under adversities. He was particularly remarkable for his obedience: always the same, his whole life was but a following of Christ. Not on the wood of the cross, it is true; but yet with the desire of the cross, and embracing the crucifix, the first member of our dear Congregation was crowned with celestial glory.”

Chapter XXV

Mission in Naples.—Disagreeable incident.—Firmness of the cardinal.—Alphonsus' Christmas Hospitality.—Father Cafaro becomes a Redemptorist.—Proposals of the cardinal.—Rejected by the saint.—He is mistaken for the cook.—His unselfishness.—Renewal of missions.—He originates the Novenas previous to our Lady's Feasts.

PROVIDENCE had prepared for our saint yet another field to cultivate. In the spring of 1741, his Eminence Cardinal Spinelli, who had succeeded Cardinal Pignatelli, lately deceased, invited him to give some missions in Naples. He declined, on the plea that the capital was much better supplied with priests than the country, but the cardinal insisted, and he was obliged to yield; for the city of his birth had certainly some claim upon his services.

That his other missions might suffer but as little as possible, he took from his own Congregation only Fathers Sarnelli and Villani; but, in compliance with the wishes of the cardinal, he chose the elite of all the Neapolitan Congregations to assist him, his Eminence being anxious that others might learn from him how to conduct missions with success. A country house in the Barra was placed at the disposal of the missionaries.

The Superior of the Propaganda was exceedingly annoyed at this arrangement. He affirmed that his Congregation enjoyed precedence over all the other Congregations in the kingdom, and that therefore to him belonged the right of nominating the chief; but the real motive of his opposition was the unwillingness of the members of the Propaganda to submit to a priest whom they had endeavored to expel. But the cardinal would not admit their claims: "I am your Archbishop," said he, "I am Superior of all the missions in my diocese: if the missions depend on me, it is I who will regulate them, and not others."

In May, the missions commenced at Fragola, where Alphonsus opened three at once, in three parochial churches. As usual, he established the practice of morning and evening prayer in the church, visits to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and protestation for a good death, once a month. To render the priests more skilful in the confessional, he instituted conferences to be held every eight days, in which were discussed cases of conscience. He established the Way of the Cross in each parish, and exhorted the faithful to the practice of this devotion, especially on Fridays, in memory of the sufferings of our Lord.

When the summer heats came, the holy founder dismissed the Neapolitan missionaries, and remained with his own Fathers at St. Agnello, where they continued to preach and hear the confessions of crowds who came from all quarters. On feast days they evangelized the neighboring hamlets, exhorting the people to repentance.

On these missions, they followed the rule established for the Congregation. Their bill of fare was rather frugal. Soup, vegetables, boiled meat, fish of the cheapest description, were the principal dishes, even when persons of distinction dined with them. This rule was but slightly relaxed even at Christmas. Persons attached to the household of the cardinal, who dined with the Fathers on that feast, jested about “the grand dinner” on their return. “Your Eminence is not aware,” said they, “of the great treat Father di Liguori gave us at Christmas: forcemeat balls were added on that occasion, at the risk of ruining his household economy!”

Alphonsus, whether at home or on the missions, provided necessaries, but he had a horror of superfluities. He allowed the other missionaries to travel in carriages, because they were accustomed to it; but asses and mules served for himself and his brethren.

For a long time, Father Paul Cafaro, pastor of St. Peter’s at Cava, had wished to join the Congregation; he was a man skilled in theology and canon-law, pious and full of zeal for the salvation of souls. Admitted by Alphonsus, much to the chagrin of Mgr. Liguori, bishop of Cava, he ultimately became one of the principal pillars of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

In November, the missionaries met again and resumed their labors. During Holy Week, 1742, Alphonsus, though in the service of Mgr. Spinelli, could not refuse to go to Nocera to give the exercises in honor of the Holy Sacrament, in the great church of Corpus Christi, the salutary effects of which were most consoling.

The cardinal, in view of the wonderful blessings that followed the labors of the Fathers, proposed to establish them in Barra, situated in the center of his diocese. But Alphonsus objected. “When my missionaries,” said he, “will be settled at Barra, and have ladies and gentlemen for their penitents, will they be willing to leave that place for hamlets, and mountains? Who knows but that, fascinated by their noble penitents, they may fix themselves, at Naples for the greater part of the year? Your Eminence is in no want of able workmen at Naples, but other bishops have not the same advantages. It is not from Naples that we can draw missionaries for the remote villages.”—This reasoning appeared conclusive to the cardinal, who no longer insisted on the proposed foundation.

During the Octave of Easter, he resumed the country missions; and, before the close of the season, he had given seventy missions, besides the spiritual exercises. An eye-witness, speaking of the effects of his labors, says: “Were I to report all the facts that came under my observation, they would fill volumes. In the diocese of Naples, Father di Liguori banished scandals and abuses without number. No more unbecoming conduct in church; women no longer dressed in a mariner calculated to give scandal, and occasion sin in the weak. Girls who formerly seemed ignorant of the very name of modesty, now behaved with becoming reserve. Taverns were no longer frequented, dangerous pastimes were abolished, and the licentious songs, so common in the harvest and vintage, now gave place to pious canticles.”

Meanwhile, the labors of Alphonsus were extraordinary: mind and body were continually on the stretch. He managed to do what would have overpowered another, so that people said he lived by a miracle. He often preached twice, and sometimes even thrice a day. His meals were always frugal, or, rather, poor. He gave but little time to sleep. During his journeys and missions he never diminished his bodily austerities, although he made others take some care of themselves. He always travelled on an ass, and those who did not know him often mistook him for a domestic. One day, as he preached the opening sermon of a mission, the peasants, struck by his beautiful language, said to one another: “Well, if the cook can preach in that manner, what will it be when the others begin?”

He always reserved for himself the worst bed and the most incommodious chamber. Everything came well to him, provided he was mortified and humiliated. At Casal Nuovo, he gave up to his companions the only three rooms to be had, and reserved for himself a miserable ruin, still pointed out as having once accommodated Father Liguori.

As the harvest time approached, our saint thought it best to confirm the good already done, before beginning new labors. He therefore sent missionaries in small numbers, and for a few days only, to those places in which missions had already been given. These renewals produced much fruit. They reanimated the fervor of confraternities, confirmed the people in their pious practices, raised up those who had fallen, and encouraged those who persevered in virtue.

During this summer, he labored incessantly to promote devotion to the Mother of God, giving retreats for nine days previous to each of her feasts. He thus originated the novenas, now so common in Naples and other places, and so beneficial to those who engage in them.

Chapter XXVI

The saint resolves to form his disciples into a regular community.—Reasons.—Withdrawal of Father Majorino.—His letter.—Poverty.—Ecclesiastical Dignities.—Obedience.—Vow of Stability.—Dispensation.—The saint leaves Naples.—Father Sarnelli replaces him.—Interview with the Cardinal.—He returns to Ciorani.

HITHERTO our saint and his companions had lived together, without binding themselves by vows; but, remembering that the spirit of religion is liable to decay rather than increase, he now determined to fix the spirit of piety by vow, and form his Congregation into a religious community.

He therefore represented to his companions the merit they would acquire when, by vow, they would have freely sacrificed their own wills, and despoiled themselves of worldly wealth. “The renunciation of our own will,” said he, “procures more glory to God than all the good works we would undertake by choice. A delicious fruit is pleasant to him to whom we present it; but, if with the fruit we offer the tree that has borne it, the offering acquires far greater value. The vow will be as a buckler against the devil and our own inconstancy. It will confirm us in the service of God, and be as an anchor to preserve us secure, when beaten about by the winds of temptation.”

Fathers Sportelli, Mazzini, Sarnelli, Rossi, Vilani, and Cafaro, were regarded as the foundations upon which the Congregation was built, not only because they were its earliest members, but also on account of their distinguished merit. No importunity was necessary to induce them to make this generous sacrifice; on the contrary, they incessantly besought the holy founder to permit them to make it. The decision was hastened by the withdrawal of Father Charles Majorino, a zealous priest and a man of undoubted virtue, but who returned to the world through excessive tenderness for his relations.

Hardly had he left the Congregation—which he did without even acquainting Alphonsus—when he recognized his error; but, unhappily, he had not courage to repair it.

“My Father,” he wrote to Alphonsus, “I condemn my inconstancy and my inordinate attachment to my parents. I have always praised the great virtues practiced in your community, and shall ever continue to praise them. How happy you are! I weep, I shall always bewail my misfortune. I shall never cease to praise the virtues practiced among you: whoever envies not your lot shows that he knows not God, or that he has lost his senses.”

As the inconstancy of a man so exemplary as Majorino, was a subject of grief for his brothers, it was also for each of them a powerful incentive to consummate without delay the sacrifice they meditated for God.

Regarding poverty, it was determined that each, in preserving his wealth, should renounce the temporary use of it in favor of his relations; but when they did not require it, the revenues should be placed at the disposal of the superiors of the Congregation.

As to ecclesiastical dignities, it was agreed that they should refuse everything of the kind, unless commanded by the Pope himself. No distinction of rank or merit was allowed, that the life might be perfectly in common; to the end, to unite them more closely to God and to one another.

Having by these regulations banished interest and cupidity, he desired above all to unite hearts, by the vow of obedience, to the will of one superior.

“Where obedience is wanting,” said he, “true religious cannot live; and what would have been a paradise by concord, becomes a hell by diversity of feeling and sentiment.”

He therefore ordained that there should be no will but that of the superior; and that, in the Congregation, reply and excuse should be unknown. He established by unanimous consent that every one, on the termination of his novitiate, should make a vow to live and die in the Congregation; but, in case of sufficient cause, dispensation could be obtained, but only from the Sovereign Pontiff or the Superior-General; while the Congregation would always be free to dismiss any member whose conduct should be disedifying, and who should prove incorrigible.

Distrusting his own lights, he had recourse to God, and consulted many pious persons, especially Mgr. Falcoia. His plans being approved by all concerned, it was resolved that the profession should take place on St. Mary Magdalen’s feast, July 22, 1742, after three days of retreat. The Institute not being yet confirmed by the Pope, and Alphonsus having no legitimate character of superior; they agreed to make their vow of perseverance to Mgr. Falcoia, in his quality of bishop, as he took such a deep interest in the Congregation. All were filled with the most lively joy; and our saint, after giving thanks to God, and exhorting his brethren to be faithful to the grace of their vocation, returned to the Barra with Father Villani, to resume his labors.

Although convinced of the great good which resulted from his missions in the diocese of Naples, and the extreme satisfaction of the cardinal, it was with regret that he labored in the capital, knowing that his Eminence had many zealous missionaries at his own disposal, and that there were hundreds of other places in extreme spiritual destitution. He prayed, and besought his brethren to pray, that he might be delivered from Naples. He also entreated the Canon James Fontana; a man of great merit and very agreeable to the cardinal, to obtain leave for him to withdraw from these missions.

His Eminence was not pleased at this proposal, and peremptorily declared that, if Alphonsus left, he would discontinue the missions altogether. Fontana, however, persisted, and finally persuaded him that the missions could be carried on successfully_ without Alphonsus. But it was only on condition that Father Sarnelli should remain to superintend them, that the cardinal consented to part with Alphonsus.

Mounted on a wretched mule, Alphonsus traversed the streets of Naples, and alighted at the gate of the archiepiscopal palace. Some were edified by his humility, others laughed at him. He sat in a remote recess of the anteroom which was filled with ecclesiastics and other gentlemen. In a few moments the cardinal came out, and, not noticing the other visitors, went straight to the holy founder, took him by the hand, and led him into an inner room. He spoke of the missions, and thanked the saint for the zeal he had shown in the cause. He begged advice regarding all that could be useful to the people, and testified the greatest regret at losing him. Alphonsus thanked the good prelate for the favors received at his hands, and begged a continuance of his protection for the new Congregation.

He then proceeded to the Barra, where he had promised to make the novena of the Assumption; and, this being finished, he returned to Ciorani, accompanied by Father Vilani.

Chapter XXVII

The House at Pagani.—Humiliations.—Ambition of Count Joseph for his son.—Edifying letter.—A new foundation.—Miracle.—Wonderful fruits of the mission.—The Blessed Virgin sends a sinner to Father Liguori.

THE zeal of the dean of Nocera and the ardent desire of the inhabitants of Pagani were now about to be recompensed. Clergy and laity were equally desirous of having the Congregation established among them. The dean gave the house and furniture, promising to give at his death a further legacy of three thousand ducats. He expressed his intention of living in the house with them, and they promised to treat him as if he were one of themselves. The house was opened, October, 1742, to the great satisfaction of all. Father Sportelli was appointed rector, and Fathers Mazzini and Jourdan were to remain with him.

Having given up Naples, Alphonsus commenced preaching missions in the more destitute parts of the country. As usual, his apostolic labors were crowned with the most astonishing success. God furnished him with many occasions of exercising patience, meekness, and humility.

In one of the many villages which he evangelized, the abbot of a monastery refused him hospitality; and, when ordered by the archbishop to receive him, obeyed with a very bad grace. As soon as the mission was over, he declined to accommodate his saintly guest any further; and, though suffering from fever induced by excessive fatigue, Alphonsus left without uttering a word of complaint.

By order of the archbishop, he repaired to St. Thecla, although scarcely convalescent. Here, too, he was badly received, the pastor pretending he could not lodge him, and that he had sent a message to that effect. A notary who was present on this occasion, was so indignant at the language of the pastor, that he offered the saint and his companions the use of his own house, which they gratefully accepted.

Again at Carrea, the pastor would not allow him to give a mission, though the archbishop of Amalfi had commanded it, and positively refused to receive Alphonsus into his house. Not in the least disconcerted, he quietly took refuge in a corner of the church. A gentleman who had witnessed these inhospitable proceedings, received the missionaries into his own house, and God blessed their labors with signal success.

When Alphonsus, always more and more disgusted with the world, retired to Ciorani to pass his days in prayer, penance, and labors for its salvation, the world again beset him with its allurements. Don Joseph could not bear to see him devote his brilliant talents to poor shepherds and peasants, but longed intensely to see him raised to an eminent position in the Church. To compass this, he employed every imaginable artifice, but his blessed son was invulnerable to all his attacks. “Speak to me no more, dear father,” he wrote, “about the episcopate; for, if you should succeed in obtaining it for me, I would refuse it. We make it a rule in our Congregation to refuse all such dignities and honors.”

The count longed to have his son elevated to high rank on earth, but Alphonsus only coveted for his father the highest degrees of heavenly honor. “I beseech you, my dear father,” he wrote, “to keep yourself more closely united to God. Confess often, and have your accounts ready, for our Lord will come when we least expect him. Think of your advanced age: who knows how soon you may be called from this world? Come the day will, whether we watch or not. I recommend you to hear mass daily, for I fear much for your eternal salvation. I hope the Blessed Virgin will assist you; but, without your cooperation, she will do nothing. Pray that I may accomplish the designs of God. I humble myself before you and kiss your feet, imploring your paternal benediction.”

The affairs of the Congregation continued to prosper at Nocera. Mgr. Dominicis having represented to King Charles the spiritual destitution of his diocese, and the good that Alphonsus wrought in it by missions, the monarch wisely consented to the formation of a mission-house, and letters of authorization were speedily issued. When the first stone of the establishment was laid, the chapter of the cathedral and four pastors attended, the dean himself giving the benediction. Hardly was the edifice commenced, when materials flowed in from all quarters, as if by miracle. Men and women strove to rival one another in contributing towards its erection; even ladies of quality divested themselves of their jewels in its behalf, and, like the gentlemen, worked with their own hands at the building.

When the people of Angri learned the good our saint was doing, they insisted on having a mission, the place containing about five thousand souls. He went thither in November, and was received as an apostle. The people strove each to procure some object he had worn or touched. He lodged in the house of one Lawrence Rossi, whose daughter Teresa obtained from a lay-brother a pair of stockings tinged with his blood. She preserved them devoutly till a religious reproved her for doing so, as the owner of them was not yet canonized; upon which she gave them away to a poor man whose legs were swollen by dropsy. Some days after he returned to the house entirely cured; and, when she expressed her astonishment, he replied, “From the time you gave me the stockings, the swelling disappeared.”

Wonderful were the fruits of this mission. One hundred and twenty-eight abandoned women were converted, three hundred girls embraced the religious state, and a clergyman of scandalous life became a sincere penitent.

The mission of St. Matthew quickly followed. To inspire the people with devotion to the Blessed Virgin, he exhorted the faithful to erect a statue to our Lady of Dolors in the church. Immediately the women brought everything precious they had in gold and silver; so numerous were the offerings that a considerable sum remained, which was given to the poor of the neighborhood.

Alphonsus was so devoted to the Blessed Virgin, that this glorious Mother testified her love for him, by operating the most extraordinary conversions at his intercession. The evening he arrived, an unfortunate young man arose in the night to engage in a sinful transaction; but feeling a repugnance to commit sin with the scapular on his neck, he took it off to place it in a hole in the wall, when, upon extending his hand, he felt himself drawn back, and fled from the spot in terror. The following night the Blessed Virgin appeared to him in a dream, and said: “Miserable being, thou hadst respect for my scapular, and thou hadst no horror of offending my Son! Tomorrow Father Alphonsus will come here to give a mission: go, confess to him, and amend thy life.”

The young man had never heard of Alphonsus, and knew nothing of the mission; but next morning he went to a fortune-teller to have the dream interpreted. Before he opened his mouth, she exclaimed: “Do you not know that Father Alphonsus has arrived to-day to give a mission?” When he heard the words, “Alphonsus” and “mission,” he was thunderstruck; he instantly went to the dwelling of Alphonsus, and recounted to him the whole story. “So then,” murmured Alphonsus with emotion, “our good Mother has sent you to me.” He heard his confession; and thenceforth the penitent led an edifying life under his direction.

Chapter XXVIII

Obedience of Father Rossi.—A welcome postulant.—The saint is summoned to Naples.—His father comes to Ciorani to enter as a lay-brother.—The saint dissuades him.—Persecution in Nocera.—Alphonsus appeals to Mgr. Falcoia.—St. Michael.—Death of Bishop Falcoia.

THE house at Ciorani was much too small to receive the numbers of clergy and laity who came thither to make retreats. Alphonsus proposed to enlarge it; but Father Rossi, who was then superior, objected, on the ground of insufficient funds. “Father,” said the holy founder, “we ought not to build as seculars do; they amass money and then begin. We should build, and look to Providence for what is necessary for our undertakings.”

Animated by the confidence of the saint, Rossi commenced with one sequin; yet he never had cause to regret his obedience. Means flowed in upon him from all quarters. One day when prospects seemed unusually dull, a young man presented himself to be received as lay-brother. On withdrawing after Father Rossi had received him provisionally, he slipped into the Father’s hand some pieces of money wrapped up in paper, which, to the intense surprise of the recipient, contained a hundred gold ducats. He immediately called the youth back, but he never appeared before him again. One day Alphonsus directed the young students to get up a petition to Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament, for the success of the house in course of erection. This he deposited in the tabernacle, having added his own name to the names of the young clerics, his children.

Scarcely was this done, when he was summoned to Naples to assist at a council regarding the admission of several gentlemen to the honor of knighthood. Arrived at the place of meeting, he descended from his well-known mule; and being about to enter, the guard, seeing his tattered garments, mistook him for a beggar and rudely repulsed him. The saint smiled at the mistake, and stood aside until the chevalier in waiting perceived him. This gentleman advanced to meet him and respectfully kissed his hands, to the great astonishment of the guard. On this occasion a sum of money so considerable was offered him, that it sufficed to finish the building. Having related this to his brethren on his return, he said laughing: "After that, how could I refuse my vote even to the son of a coal-heaver?"

About this time Count Joseph Liguori came to Ciorani to visit his son, and scarcely had he entered the house when he was penetrated with deep devotion. He admired the edifying lives the Fathers led, the silence which reigned through the house, and the odor of sanctity that pervaded everything. His mind became full of thoughts of a blessed eternity, and his heart wholly detached from earthly things. He pressed his son to his bosom, kissed him, and blessed God for the benedictions showered upon the house. Every day more in love with the humble, peaceful life of the Fathers, he resolved to renounce his rank and its accompaniments, and serve God under the wise direction of his saintly son, as a humble lay-brother. So intent was the old nobleman on making this sacrifice, that he begged for admission with tears.

The holy founder, though edified with the humility of his father, dissuaded him from his purpose: "This vocation," said he, "does not come from God; you must live in the world and edify it by your example as father of a family, in which condition God has placed you."

Don Joseph returned to Naples an altered man. Not content with being a pious nobleman, he endeavored to become a saint, living the life of an anchorite. He kept up a regular correspondence with his dear son, following his counsels in all that concerned the salvation of his soul.

Meanwhile, the house of Nocera began to experience persecution. The esteem of the bishop, the applause of the gentry, the concourse of people who frequented the church, gave umbrage to some curates, and excited their jealousy to such a degree, that they repented having given consent to the establishment of the missionaries. This operated to so great an extent, that it alienated the minds of many, and diminished the reverence felt for the missionaries. As they could not reproach them on the score of morals or regularity of life, they sought to blacken their motives. These evangelical laborers, who led lives so poor, were represented as grasping, covetous men, who would monopolize all the alms usually bestowed on the priests of the place.

There were but two priests in Nocera who were not opposed to the missionaries. A regular plot was now formed, and the first move was to endeavor to prejudice the king; but God showed his displeasure in an unmistakable manner.

The enemies of our saint had employed a celebrated lawyer to write out a memorial of their grievances. He took up a pen, but it would not write; he tried a second and a third, but all to no purpose; finally, he succeeded in writing a page, but unintentionally threw ink over it instead of sand. Struck by these mysterious accidents, he exclaimed: “Employ whom you will, I will do nothing against these Fathers.”

They employed another, and God permitted him to arrange the memorial. They would fain have the bishop to concur in their views, but he indignantly refused; and to show how highly he esteemed the calumniated Fathers, he chose one of them for his confessor, and two to accompany him on his visitations and aid him in preaching to the people.

In spite of the bishop’s friendship, the trials of the missionaries rather increased than abated. If any of the Fathers appeared in the town, he was instantly assailed with taunts and insults. One morning, while preparing to celebrate mass in the parochial church, a Father had the amice snatched out of his hands. Brother Antony, while digging one day in the garden, was grossly abused by a passer-by, who, irritated by the meekness of the Brother who continued to dig as though nothing disagreeable were taking place, dealt him a violent blow in the face.

The holy Brother not only showed no resentment, but knelt down and offered his other cheek.

During the stillness of the night, wretches would come howling under the windows, insulting the brethren by indecent songs and violent language. As soon as Alphonsus, who was then at Ciorani, learned what was going on at Nocera, he came thither with all possible speed. But how different his reception from what it had formerly been! One person addressed him as a vagabond, accusing him of coming with his companions to eat the bread of the inhabitants and ruin them. The gentle saint humbled himself before this vile adversary, whose audacity was but increased by his sweetness and humility.

The petition addressed to the king, was wholly unsuccessful. The same was the case with another, addressed to the viceroy while his majesty was absent in the Abruzzi. Defeated, but not disheartened, they went to Cantaldi, on whom our saint greatly relied. So successfully did vice personate virtue, that the dean began to regret what he had done, gradually withdrew the assistance he had given them, and, though living in the same house with them, never addressed them a word. Alphonsus, warned by sad experience that the new foundation was in danger, consulted God in prayer, and went to Naples to advise with those wise and enlightened friends who had so often helped him through difficulties. He also went to Castellamare to consult Mgr. Falcoia, who, while they were conversing, suddenly exclaimed; “It is the devil! hold firm, and continue to fight.” Then casting his eyes on a small statue of St. Michael, he added, “God and St. Michael will protect you!” He then advised him to dedicate the house and church to the Archangel Michael.

Alphonsus, as has been already remarked, was directed to a great extent, both in what concerned his own conscience, and in what regarded the affairs of his Congregation, by Mgr. Falcoia; but this prelate having passed to a better life, April 20, 1743, he chose for director Father Paul Cafaro, a priest of saintly life, and well skilled in the guidance of souls. Alphonsus made a vow to obey him in all things as he had Mgr. Falcoia.

The death of this holy prelate was a great blow to the persecuted Congregation. He had loved the work of Alphonsus, and favored it to the utmost of his power. The last moments of this great man were sweetened by the presence and assistance of his spiritual son, Father Sportelli, and several other members of the Congregation. When at the point of death, he turned to the archbishop of Sorrento, and collecting his remaining strength, said: “My Lord,”—here he pointed towards Father Sportelli,—“this is the work of God; he will bless the Congregation and propagate it as the grass of the fields.”

Chapter XXIX

The enemies of the Congregation.—Its friends.—The wicked triumph—but not for ever.—Cantaldi’s sister.—Pope Benedict XIV charges Cardinal Spinelli to inquire into the affairs of the Congregation.—Advice of Mgr. Dominicis.—His death.—His successor.

THE tempest at Nocera, far from abating, continued to rage with increasing violence. The holy founder, while having recourse to human means, prayed and mortified himself, beseeching many holy souls, especially of religious houses, to intercede with God on behalf of his persecuted family. His enemies wished to blot the Congregation out from the face of the earth.

But their intrigues and revilings at length aroused the zeal of several gentlemen of the place, who boldly declared in favor of the missionaries, and soon there was hardly a respectable family who did not side with them. When this manifestation of good feeling was reported to Alphonsus, he wept with joy on finding his labors appreciated by the most influential class. Yet this only embittered his enemies still more, and in June, 1774, they carried their complaints to Rome and Naples. Though the foundation had been made with the consent of the king, they pretended that its existence was unauthorized, and its members useless to the state and hurtful to religion. At Rome, they described it as a conventicle founded in opposition to canon law and the decrees of Sovereign Pontiffs!

When the saint saw that his enemies had determined to crush his Congregation root and branches, the lawyer rose up within him; and the nobleman who had formerly electrified the Neapolitan tribunals with his eloquence, now reduced his enemies to silence by an energetic statement of the circumstances under which a religious house could be considered lawful or illegal. At Rome, he confounded them by bulls of Sovereign Pontiffs and the authority of canon law, and showed that no institution had been definitely approved until after a period of probation, having been in infancy protected by episcopal sanction. These documents, wonderful for their profound legal acumen, satisfied the king at Naples, and obtained favor with the Pope and cardinals.

The malecontents now had recourse to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, alleging that the house in question was injurious to the welfare of religion, repeating all the former calumnies, and adding that the Fathers carried on a shameful traffic in crucifixes, beads, &c., and compelled the people to carry stones for the new building.

The gentlemen of Nocera, Pagan, Corbora, and St. Egidio, no sooner heard of this new attack, than they undertook the defense: thirty-six of them charged themselves with the management of the affair at Rome, whither they sent an advocate and procurators. Several pastors, the chapter of the cathedral, the clergy of Nocera, and twenty-three clerics of Pagani addressed the Pope Benedict XIV, in favor of Alphonsus. His Holiness instructed Cardinal Spinola to obtain exact information from the bishop of Nocera. In his statement, Mgr. Dominicis, after having shown that the complaints they had made were unfounded, and their accusations calumnies, proceeded to the most important point, namely, the end for which Father di Liguori had founded the Congregation. He concluded by an elaborate eulogium on the sanctity of the founder, and expatiated on the high esteem in which he was held by the cardinal archbishop of Naples and many other distinguished prelates.

Unable to obtain the suppression of the house, they sought to interrupt the erection of the church, and by bribing the underlings of office, they altered the words, the king permits the erection of a house with a church," to "the king permits the erection of a house *without* a church," and showed it to the commissary who was thereby persuaded that Alphonsus had exceeded his limits. The commissary therefore dispatched an order to Nocera to discontinue the work.

This time the wicked triumphed; and our saint was in great embarrassment, not knowing how to proceed. He sent Father Sanseverino to Naples to inform the Minister of State, Marquis Brancone, of the obstacle, and entreat him to remove it.

The marquis was astonished, for he remembered expressly having given leave for the erection of a church. He ordered one of the clerks of the Bureau to produce the paper, and wrote with his own hand "a house with a church." On the 21st of July an order was transmitted to the syndic of Pagani, to permit the building to proceed.

While God arranged the happy issue of this affair, He mingled bitterness with the sweetness. The good Father Sarnelli was called to a brighter world, and rendered his beautiful soul into the hands of his Creator, June 30, 1744, having spent himself in the service of God and his neighbor. All good people bewailed his loss; and the affectionate heart of Alphonsus, who loved this dear son most tenderly, could find no consolation but in the hope that the Congregation had acquired a new protector in heaven. Unwilling that the example of such sanctity should be lost to the future members of the Congregation, Alphonsus wrote an abridgment of his life, a labor of love to so loving a father.

Silenced at Naples and repulsed at Rome, the enemies of the saint employed the sister of Cantaldi to declare that the house given them by her brother was her private property. Accompanied by twenty-two persons, including two notaries, she forced herself into the house, her brother refusing to appear openly against the Fathers.

Greatly distressed, Alphonsus came to Nocera, but the bishop and other friends advised him not to yield. An able lawyer was engaged, and the pretended proprietorship of the sister was soon exposed, to the confusion of the plotters who, nevertheless, became more violent than ever. One day a person of rank and a priest said to him: “If you will act the thief and rob people by force, why do you not take to the highway?” “Blessed be God,” rejoined the saint, “I have given up my own house to be treated like a robber at Nocera.”

In August, they made another attempt, but warned by experience, they no longer attacked Alphonsus whose sanctity was venerated by all: their infernal rage expended itself on his companions. Accusations against them, however, Alphonsus always treated with contempt, well knowing their virtues and labors in the cause of God. The matter was again carried to Rome, and the most respectable inhabitants of Nocera took upon themselves the expense of defending the Congregation at Rome. Benedict XIV once more charged Cardinal Spinola to make inquiry anew of Cardinal Spinelli at Naples, and also of the archbishop of Salerno, Mgr. Rossi. All this happened in the designs of Providence, who willed that this great Pope should be made fully aware of the merit of the saint and his works, and disposed in advance to approve an institute recommended by such estimable prelates.

Meanwhile Mgr. Dominicis attempted to arrange the affair by arbitration; but when Cantaldi offered to assume the debts, but made it a condition that the Fathers should leave the place, and, in case they refused, threatened to shut up their church and force them to live as simple individuals, the bishop indignantly broke up the meeting, and, turning to his clients, said: “Defend your cause at Rome and Naples; trust that Cardinal Spinelli will recognize the justice of your cause, for God is with you.”

This worthy prelate, who was so deeply interested for the Congregation, died August 22, 1744, to the great regret of Alphonsus and his companions. The adversaries of our saint were rejoiced, because the Congregation had lost so ardent a protector; but God raised up for them a friend equally well disposed towards them, Mgr. Gerard Volpi, a prelate illustrious for prudence, zeal, and piety, and for every virtue that could adorn the episcopal character.

Chapter XXX

Illiceto.—Alphonsus miraculously raised several feet from the ground.—Early days at Illiceto.—Happy death of Brother Vitus Curzius.—Grief of Alphonsus.—New Trials.—Father Sportelli a match for his enemies.—Right victorious.—Might defeated.

WHILE our saint and his companions suffered in their last foundation, God opened a new field to their labors. The Prince of Castellaneta, D. Mathias Miroballi, besought the holy founder to visit his fief of Illiceto, to give the people the instruction they so much needed. The Bishop of Bovino dispatched a canon of his cathedral to urge the prince's petition. This mission was crowned with success.

The canon had another object in view. In a wood called Vallin-Vincoli stood an ancient church dedicated to our Lady of Consolation. It had formerly belonged to the Augustinians. In it was a large painting of the Blessed Virgin, for which the faithful of the vicinity had a great devotion. There the canon had resolved to found a community. Alphonsus, however, hesitated, because the distance between the church and any human habitation was considerable; but, when visiting the picture, he was so captivated, that Fathers Cafaro and St. Severino easily persuaded him to accept the offer.

Near Illiceto, were vast domains of the crown where thousands were employed in keeping flocks and herds, and cultivating the ground. Touched by their destitution, Alphonsus sent Fathers to distribute to them the Bread of Life; and he looked upon the house in prospect as destined to supply spiritual succor to these abandoned people. The king gave his royal assent for this foundation, January 9, 1745.

Having arranged the affairs of this house, he departed for Madugno, where Don Dominic Fiori, professor of music in the Cathedral of Naples, had invited him to give a mission. This mission was an arduous one, and cost much labor and fatigue, lasting forty days. It was during its continuance that Alphonsus, while saying mass, was raised several feet from the ground, as many eye-witnesses attested. As for the foundation proposed by Fiori, our saint advised him to make arrangements with the Fathers of St. Vincent de Paul, having heard that the king had granted them an establishment in the neighborhood, and not wishing to interfere with them.

After their return, Alphonsus and his companions suffered much at Illiceto. A priest who was there that winter, said in a letter: “Their bread was of rye mixed with bran, black as coal and ill-baked. Sometimes they had none at all, and were obliged to accept the charity of an old man who lived by the produce of his goats and the cultivation of a small field near his cottage. They were regaled with meat only when some sheep or cow died of exhaustion. Wild chestnuts or crab apples were their ordinary dessert. They had no linen, and were almost shirtless. The house was a mass of ruins. The wind blew more keenly within than without, the windows were of oiled paper instead of glass, the roof was so bad that snow frequently formed their coverlets.”

Amid these miseries or, rather, in consequence of them, Alphonsus had the misfortune to lose the good Brother Vitus Curzius. In July, he was sent out to beg a little corn. Although unaccustomed to traverse the country during the burning heats, he obeyed cheerfully; but one evening, being refused a lodging where he had applied for one, he slept in the field, and was seized during the night with a burning fever. Unable to drag himself to his convent, he was received into the house of a charitable priest, and, after forty-nine days of intense suffering, was called to receive the reward of his labors. This death deeply afflicted the tender heart of Alphonsus, though he was consoled by the reflection that his beloved son had passed away rich in merits and good works.

The Chapter of the Cathedral and many religious priests united with the missionaries in paying the last honors to the sacred remains of this poor lay-brother, once a wealthy and elegant gentleman, but who, like his Divine Master, had chosen to serve instead of being served. All the confraternities and numbers of the people assisted, but rather to implore his protection than to pray for his chastened soul. The holy founder sang mass, but was frequently interrupted by tears. He afterwards consoled his bereaved heart by transmitting to his children a faithful sketch of this tenderly loved brother, whose sanctity shone resplendent even among the companions of St. Alphonsus.

New plots were meanwhile being concocted to ruin the missionaries, God permitting his elect to be proved by extraordinary afflictions, that the strength of his omnipotent arm might be more triumphantly displayed.

Cantaldi now openly attacked them. He revoked the donation he had made them, and, in concert with his sister, cited them before the royal council. He pretended that the missionaries had deceived him by usurping the title of Congregation, and demanded that they should be forbidden to build, protesting he had made the donation, not for a religious community, but for a college of priests. But the council having accredited an auditor to verify facts, the missionaries were confirmed in possession of the property, the deeds having been found perfectly valid.

But the animosity of these unfortunate people was far from being abated. Going from bad to worse, they at last laid two barrels of gunpowder under the foundation, and had not one of their accomplices, stung by remorse, revealed the plot, all would have been destroyed. In future, Father Mazzini was obliged to keep a strict watch nightly.

Alphonsus was then at Illiceto. Far from being discouraged, these barbarities but increased his confidence of ultimate success. Meanwhile the Fathers remained as if in prison in Cantaldi’s house, but such were the restraints and other miseries of accepting, or rather compelling, his hospitality, that they determined to quit it as soon as their own convent offered the merest shelter. Accordingly, the walls of the new building were scarcely finished when they removed thither, without heeding the dampness and other inconveniences. On the Feast of our Lady of Mercy, September 24, which occurs during the Octave of the Archangel Michael, protector of the Congregation, they entered their new abode.

When Alphonsus heard of their removal, he rejoiced exceedingly, and wrote from Illiceto to urge them to a stricter observance of rule, assuring them that God would bless and sanctify them only inasmuch as they observed their rules with strictness and fervor.

The malecontents, provoked to see the Fathers established in their new house, obtained an order from the council forbidding them to undertake any thing additional; intending thereby to hinder the completion of the little church in course of erection and hoping that, by depriving them of every opportunity of exercising the functions of their ministry, they would ultimately force them to abandon the foundation.

Informed of all this, Father Sportelli prevailed on some friendly gentlemen of Nocera to detain the king’s officer for one night. He then sent for the workmen, and despite the protestations of the architect, the scaffolding was removed, the earth smoothed, a portable altar erected, and a confessional arranged. The Fathers ornamented the altar and walls as magnificently as their poverty would admit, with garlands and tapestry. Permission having been previously obtained to bless the church, Father Sportelli celebrated mass therein at daybreak, preached, heard confessions, and gave Holy Communion.

The officer arrived early, and, calling Father Sportelli and the rest of the community, declared that by order of the king no one must have the temerity to attempt anything new, at the risk of incurring the penalties mentioned in the royal decree. “We shall do nothing new,” replied Sportelli; “nor shall we disobey the king’s order. But I protest that this edifice is a church; the holy sacrifice has been offered in it, we have preached in it, and administered the sacraments to the people.” The adversaries were again outwitted, but they did not yield the victory without a fierce struggle.

Chapter XXXI

Missionary Project of Benedict XIV.—Terrible example.—Our saint's countenance is radiant with heavenly light.—Precious death of Count Joseph Liguori.—Illness of the saint.—A liberal benefaction.—Gratitude of the founder.—He is again invited to Foggia.—A new foundation.—An inhospitable noble.—The saint sees from one foundation what is done in another.—Signor Corona.—Prophecy fulfilled.

WHILE Alphonsus was at Illiceto, he received new encouragement to labor for the salvation of souls. Benedict XIV, convinced of the great good produced by missions, conceived the project of reforming, by this means, the whole kingdom of Naples. By a brief, dated September 8, 1745, he delegated Cardinal Spinelli to superintend this work, with full powers to send whom he would. Many bishops solicited him to send into their dioceses the holy founder and his missionaries; and when the vintage was over, they began to evangelize Foggia. Here occurred a terrible example of the divine justice, which served as a powerful warning to sinners. One of the Fathers happened to go through the public places to call the people to church. An unfortunate wretch, who had been indulging in deep potations, holding up a glass, cried out, "Father, would you like to know my mission?" and putting it to his lips, he instantly dropped dead! An appalling incident, and the most powerful sermon ever given to the people of Foggia!

Another extraordinary incident, of a more consoling nature, confirmed the spectators in their high opinions of the sanctity of Alphonsus. One evening as he was preaching before the image of our Lady of the Seven Veils, exposed for the occasion, he appeared more like an angel than a man, as a ray of brilliant light darted from the image and was reflected from his countenance. Simultaneously an ecstasy came upon him, and he was raised several feet in the air. The people uttered cries of joy which brought crowds into the church. Over four thousand persons were the delighted witnesses of this miracle.

For forty days this mission lasted, and its effects were wonderful. The floodgates of charity were opened in the hearts of the rich, and they enabled their apostle to aid young and friendless girls whose poverty placed them in danger, and to procure asylums for the aged and for repentant sinners.

During the mission at Troia, as Alphonsus was about to ascend the pulpit, news was brought him of the death of his beloved father. He devoted a few moments to prayer, and then begged his auditors to recommend to Jesus and Mary the soul of his dear father. He had heard of his serious illness: but engaged in his apostolic labors, he denied himself the sad gratification of watching over his closing hours. Count Joseph di Liguori died laden with years and merits. He had led the life of a saint, especially since he had placed himself under the direction of his saintly son, and the memory of this illustrious and pious nobleman is still held in benediction.

This death was the first of a series of family afflictions which rent the tender and affectionate heart of our saint all the more painfully as his duties, no less than his sublime resignation to the divine will, forbade him to give vent to the bitterness of his grief.

While at St. Agatha, Alphonsus was seized with a violent fever, resulting, perhaps, from the depths of grief and affection awakened by his recent bereavement; but this did not impede the mission, and when he appeared in the pulpit, the mere sight of him produced compunction in the hearts of his audience.

After this mission, he was summoned to Illiceto, to the bedside of his friend Canon Casati, who lay dangerously ill; but, despite his haste, the dying man expired before his arrival. This worthy dignitary left his whole property to our Lady of Consolation, beneath the shadow of whose image his remains repose as he desired. Full of gratitude for this devotion, the holy founder celebrated his obsequies with the utmost magnificence, and had one hundred ducats distributed to the poor for the soul of his benefactor.

Alphonsus was not yet rid of his fever when the inhabitants of Foggia, whose territory was desolated by a protracted drought, besought him to give them a novena in honor of the Blessed Virgin, who had always been so propitious to his prayers. Our saint hurried to the relief of his suffering children, and, probably as a reward for his zeal, the fever suddenly left him. Scarcely were the exercises begun, when rain fell in abundance. The seed was saved, and produced a rich harvest.

Meanwhile, a new foundation offered. Mgr. Nicolai, regretting to find himself at the head of a large diocese in great want of spiritual assistance, was one day lamenting his position in presence of two pious priests: directly they suggested the establishment of a Redemptorist Convent, and the archbishop eagerly embraced the proposal. Alphonsus, however, was not by any means anxious to bring the matter to a close, yet, at the request of Father Villani, he consented to give a mission in the place.

The joy and consolation his mere presence diffused among the population, seemed incredible. They regarded him as another St. Paul. His words seemed less words than arrows which pierced all hearts. During the mission he went with several gentlemen to inspect the church offered him. The situation pleased him, being in the center of an archdiocese, surrounded by several dioceses, all in great spiritual destitution.

The archbishop being then at Calabritto, Alphonsus set out mounted on a mule to visit him. Hearing he was at dinner, and loath to disturb him, he retired to a small chapel in a wing of the palace, to say his office. While there, the eldest scion of the del Plato family, in which the prelate was staying, came to close the door, and seeing a man covered with rags, he took him for a vagabond come to beg from the honored guest. Fearing he might steal something, the youth ordered him out. “Would you have the goodness to wait till I finish vespers?” pleaded the saint. “No, no,” was the uncourteous reply; “it was only yesterday we had a napkin stolen; it would be too much to lose another to-day.” The saint instantly eased the mind of the inhospitable Don Xavier, and finished his vespers in the street.

After some time, he again presented himself in the palace, and the archbishop, hearing of his arrival, came out and received him with every mark of respect. Xavier del Plato’s confusion increased, when he learned that our saint was a nobleman and superior of a Congregation. The conversation went on as though nothing unusual had happened, Alphonsus not noticing the young man’s embarrassment. When the archbishop heard what had occurred, he was more than a little annoyed.

God showered his benedictions on this mission. The humility, modesty and self-contempt of which our saint’s whole life was eloquent, touched all hearts. All this time he suffered such violent toothache as to produce convulsions; nevertheless, he sometimes continued his labors till so overcome with pain and fatigue, that he had to be carried from the church. Generally in his sermons he seemed ravished out of himself. One evening God showed him in spirit what was passing at Illiceto. “While we are occupied here with the mission,” said he, “the devil is tormenting my poor children at Illiceto.” Next morning a lay-brother came thence, and spoke with him for three hours of the afflictions they were there enduring.

The archbishop arrived at Caposele according to previous arrangement, and he was so deeply affected at hearing Alphonsus preach on the Blessed Virgin, that he shed tears of devotion. The priest, Don Salvatore Corona, a learned and influential man, came to oppose the foundation; and having entered the church, his mind filled with thoughts hostile to the Congregation, he was struck with apoplexy, as he approached our Lady’s altar. He immediately recognized the divine hand, and said: “Mother of God, I protest I will no longer oppose this foundation. Scarcely had he uttered these words when he recovered, and his mouth which had been twisted on one side by the paroxysm, resumed its natural position.

True to his word, Corona advocated the foundation with all his eloquence; but on a sudden the archbishop was seized with indecision, and spoke of delay. Alphonsus declared that he had come to give a mission, not to found a house, and that, his business concluded, he would depart. Whereupon, the Archpriest Rossi burst into a passionate fit of weeping, and casting himself before the feet of the archbishop, besought him to arrange matters at once. The establishment was finally decided on, June 4, 1746.

On hearing this, the people testified the most unbounded joy. Every house was illuminated, guns were fired, and fireworks displayed. A noble family in the neighborhood put their forests at the disposal of the missionaries, to supply wood for the buildings. The inhabitants had no small consolation in the fulfilment of the prophecy of St. John Joseph of the Cross, that in twenty years a devout and zealous community of missionaries would be established among them. That period had just expired.

Chapter XXXII

The foreign comedians.—Vision.—Our Lady sends a penitent to the Missionaries.—Removal of the Novitiate.—Our saint begins to publish.—His devotion to St. Teresa.—His work on the episcopacy.-An opponent.—He refuses the mitre.—He pleads his cause before the king of Naples.—He refuses to receive Mandarini.—Insults.—Instructions on various subjects.—Sermons.

CANTALDI continued to harass the Fathers at Pagani,[17164] but his machinations were powerless to hurt them. Alphonsus sympathized most deeply in their sorrows, and wrote from time to time to comfort and encourage them. He continued to give missions wherever he was invited, and in every instance success crowned his labors.

On one occasion, while giving a mission at Foggia, a town greatly devoted to him, he found that a company of foreign comedians had the start of him, and that certain gentlemen had bound themselves to support them. This, as a new occasion of sin, grieved him exceedingly. He endeavored to have them dismissed, but without success; so he left the town, and when the people urged him to stay, he replied: “We cannot serve God and the devil at the same time. Foggia will not hear me, but God will lay a heavy hand upon her and chastise her for her libertinism.” Scarcely had he departed when the town was shaken by an earthquake, to the great dismay of the terrified people.

The erection of the new house of Caposele now approached completion. The Blessed Virgin deigned to show her love of this establishment in a special manner. There lived in a neighboring village an unfortunate creature who had been confined to bed for three years by a most loathsome disease. Every night he saw the devil, under the form of a goat, place himself on his breast, and press his throat and sides until he was nearly choked. One morning the Blessed Virgin appeared in his chamber radiant with beauty, attended by two angels. “My son,” said this loving mother, how hast thou the audacity to live in sin? Change thy life. Tomorrow thou shalt see my children of the house of Mater Domina. Confess, repent of thy sins, and Jesus will pardon thee!”

The vision disappeared, and the sinner felt inspired to amend, but he knew nothing of the approaching mission. Next day he heard the bells ringing, and on inquiry learned that the Fathers had arrived. Full of joy, he immediately sent for one of them. The Father, to whom he confessed with torrents of tears, asked if he had been in the habit of practicing any devotion to the Blessed Virgin. He replied that he had made a vow to say the Rosary every day, and had religiously kept it. He died during the mission, giving evident signs of sincere repentance.

As yet, the Congregation had no regular novitiate. Only subdeacons were admitted, and these made their novitiate, following the founder from hamlet to hamlet. He soon commenced a novitiate at Illiceto, admitting young men not in orders. But because of the extreme poverty of the house, the young levites were discouraged. Some, not having courage to declare their weakness to Father Cafaro, the novice-master, fled secretly through the windows, the doors being shut. Finally, the novitiate was removed to Ciorani; and there were soon, under Father Villani, the new novice-master, some twenty novices, whose conduct caused the greatest consolation to our saint.

It was from Illiceto that Alphonsus first began to write and publish his beautiful works. Missions, fruitful as they were, seemed too narrow a field for his burning zeal. He desired that all Christians might profit by the reflections which consoled and animated himself. While he was still in the world, the Blessed Sacrament was the divine object of his dearest affections, and the prolific source of all the graces bestowed on him. He therefore arranged some of the beautiful sentiments which fed his devotion, in the form of visits for every day in the month; and as he knew not how to separate Jesus and Mary, he published at the same time prayers and reflections on our Blessed Mother, to excite the faithful to love and serve this powerful advocate of sinners.

This charming little work, so replete with the unction of divine grace, was joyfully welcomed by all pious Catholics. It circulated rapidly through the kingdom of Naples and the whole of Italy; and, in an incredibly short time, a French translation was made from the fiftieth Italian edition!

His next work was “Thoughts and Reflections on the Passion of Christ.” “That man,” said he, “has no heart or no faith, who is not moved at the sight of a crucifix.” Since he had embraced the ecclesiastical state, he had chosen

St. Teresa for his special advocate, and frequently indeed did he experience the efficacy of her intercession. Desirous of seeing her honored, he published meditations and prayers in form of a novena, which comprised every beautiful thing that could be said in her praise.

He next composed a book on the obligations of the episcopacy; he sent copies to all the bishops in Italy, and many of them responded with thanks and compliments. He published, too, his opinion regarding certain cases of conscience, but this work gave some offence. A certain priest, instead of discussing the question, wrote: “Who are you, coming out of the woods to set up for a doctor and lay down the law to others?” He then accused him of being a heretic and condemning vocal prayer; to which the saint gently replied: “How can I proscribe vocal prayer, I, who have made a vow to recite the Rosary daily, and exhort every family to do the same? Besides, is it not our practice to recite it publicly in all our missions?”

In April, 1747, Alphonsus repaired to Ciorani. He found the novitiate full of virtuous young men, and priests eminent for learning and sanctity. At Pagani, he was consoled in a similar manner. The success of these two houses made him shed tears of holy joy. But remembering that the argument constantly brought forward by his adversaries was, that the Congregation was not authorized by the king, he resolved to go to Naples and obtain the necessary authorization.

Having arrived at his destination, he immediately called on the Marquis Branconi, Minister of State. “The king has determined to make you a bishop,” was the salute of the prime-minister. Confounded by this information, our saint instantly refused the proffered mitre, and when his Excellency would persuade him to accept, he said: “If you love me, never speak of such a thing. I have renounced the world: its dignities can inspire me only with horror;” nor would he desist, until the marquis promised to torment him no more on the subject.

Having recommended to him the interests of the Congregation, he begged of the chamberlain to procure him an audience with the king. This was speedily granted. One day, as he was saying his office in the cloisters of St. Catharine, he was told that the king awaited him. Introduced to his majesty in the usual patched cassock, he eloquently expatiated on the want of spiritual succor to which the poor were subjected, and the evils resulting to the commonwealth from the ignorance of so large a class. The missionaries, he said, had done more than their share to alleviate the deplorable effects of this state of things, but they could no longer endure the anomaly of their present position: it was essential now that his majesty should recognize their institute for a regular Congregation.

He then presented the rules, and in a few words explained the objects of the Institute. The heart of the pious monarch was touched; he took notes with his royal hand, and placed the rules and the accompanying petition in the keeping of his grand-almoner.

All this coming to the ears of Mandarini, he became more pressing than ever for a reunion, and even went to Ciorani, and offered, on the part of his companions, to embrace unreservedly the rules of Alphonsus. Though deeply moved by this step, our saint feared to consent. “One who has been accustomed to possess and to command,” said he, “will not like to find himself poor and deprived of his liberty. To-day he is ready to sacrifice his own will, to-morrow he would regret having vowed obedience to another. A reunion, without being beneficial to your subjects, might be hurtful to mine.”

Mandarini applied to the grand-almoner, who signified his wish to Alphonsus that he immediately accept the humble proposal of Mandarini; but our saint by prayer, entreaties, and the influence of many distinguished friends, finally gained his point.

While these affairs were progressing, he hardly took time to eat or sleep. Overpowered with fatigue, he might daily be seen going from palace to palace. Some refused him admission, others listened with a cold, abstracted air. One day a princess who had formerly known him, happened to pass through the antechamber in which he was seated. Seeing him so poor and ragged, she exclaimed, “Oh, how dirty you are!” “I do not understand you,” rejoined the saint. “Ah! then,” said she, turning her back upon him, “you must be from Calabria.”

The king, though temporizing, to say the least, about approving the Congregation, wished to adorn Alphonsus with the mitre. The see of Palermo becoming vacant, he exclaimed: “The Pope makes good selections, but I will make a better.” He then ordered the prime-minister to notify the bishop-elect, that his majesty would take no refusal.

Foreseeing that the Pope would sustain the action of the king, he felt no repose day or night; he wrote to Father Cafaro, his director, that he would sooner hide in the depths of the forest than become a bishop. He charged all the houses to have special prayers offered up for him, and begged the same favor of all the holy souls he knew, redoubling, meanwhile, his own austerities. For a whole month, the king continued inflexible, but God was pleased ultimately to grant the desires of his servant. Quite unexpectedly the sovereign yielded to the reasoning of Marquis Branconi, who maintained that Alphonsus the missionary was much more useful to the kingdom than Alphonsus archbishop of the distant see of Palermo would be.

The refusal of Alphonsus gave offence to many, but, on reflection, all were edified by his humility. “The church,” said he, “is not in want of bishops, but of men who will labor for souls in remote and abandoned places.”

He now retired to Ciorani for some days. On his return, he was requested by his old friend and companion, Don Joseph Porpora, to preach the novena preparatory to the festival of the Assumption. Though wholly unprepared, having left his books and notes at Ciorani, he at once exclaimed: “Well; I will say everything the Blessed Virgin will put into my mind.”

He treated of the humility of Mary as contrasted with the pride of men, the ardent love of Mary and the coldness of men, the union of Mary’s will with the Divine will, and the opposition of the will of men to the will of God. He depicted the precious death of Mary, and the help she affords her cherished servants in their last hour. Finally, on the day of the Assumption he enraptured his audience, by dilating on the glorious triumph of Mary crowned in heaven. During this novena, thousands awoke from sin, and, penetrated with lively sorrow, returned to God, by beginning a new life.

He was now invited by Canon Borgia, Superior of the Apostolic Missions, to give a retreat to his brethren. Our saint consented, and during the exercises, he expatiated chiefly on the obligation of preachers to make known Christ crucified, and not to preach themselves. He spoke vehemently against a celebrated preacher, lately deceased, who, by his style of preaching, had shown himself a traitor to the word of God. “Fill your discourses,” said he, “with the truths of the Gospel, and do not fatigue yourselves, seeking for vain ornaments which produce no fruit. Ah! I pray that he to whom I now allude may not have to expiate his vanity in purgatory.”

Several young ecclesiastics were offended at the apostolic boldness of the Saint: To blame such a preacher!” exclaimed one, “and that publicly!” “One does not speak in public,” returned Alphonsus, “when he addresses only ecclesiastics.” Don Borgia was so delighted with this sermon, that he begged the saint to give another on the same subject, which was done, and in still stronger language. More than one of the audience was filled with a salutary confusion by the saint’s remarks.

During his sojourn at Naples, as he was saying Mass in the Oratorian Church, when he turned around to give communion, he perceived a gentleman seated cross-legged in the choir. “Have you lost the use of your limbs that you cannot kneel?” was the indignant exclamation of the celebrant; whereupon the man sank on his knees, but, being excessively provoked, he began to cough and make all manner of noise. When Mass was over, he ran to the sacristy to inquire what wretched priest had said Mass. But when the name, Don. Alfonso di Liguori, was uttered, he felt greatly ashamed, and was careful to retire before the saint returned to the sacristy.

For over three weeks Alphonsus suffered from violent toothache, but he never ceased a moment to apply himself to his ordinary avocations. At last he was obliged to have a tooth extracted, and for this purpose he repaired to a barber’s shop, like the poorest laborer. Soon after, perceiving that Father Francis preserved the tooth, he asked to see it, and snatching it up, threw it into a ditch.

Towards the end of autumn, our saint returned to Nocera, to prepare for new labors.

Chapter XXXIII

The saint repairs to Naples.—Tanucci opposes him.—Illness.—A strange calumny.—Renewed efforts to procure the confirmation of his institute.—Mission.—Fortunate circumstance for Alphonsus.—Incessant labors.—He gives a retreat in the Cathedral.—Criticism.—Changes suggested.—Father Villani in Rome.—Ruse.—Graciousness of the Pope to Father Villani.

IN the beginning of 1748, Alphonsus having returned to Naples, Branconi informed him that the king was dissatisfied that the Council of State had refused to recognize his Congregation. Our saint therefore presented a new petition for the confirmation of his institute, declining to ask for a subsidy for its support, which, owing to the favorable dispositions of the king, would have been readily granted. His disinterestedness greatly pleased the marquis, but the chief minister, Tanucci, had political views not in accordance with the pious designs of the monarch, and the petition, though presented by Branconi, remained unnoticed.

Scarcely twelve days had elapsed since his arrival, when he was seized with an asthma so violent that he could not speak. For some weeks he was unable to say Mass, but though obliged to remain in bed, he directed all who came to him on affairs of conscience. Upon recovering, he resumed all his labors, and multitudes were converted by his discourses.

About this time he became the object of a most malicious calumny. Speaking of the love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and the readiness with which He receives us, he quoted these words of St. Teresa: “It is not thus with earthly kings, they give audience only a few times a year: and how much it costs to obtain an audience! Then no one dares to say all he wishes, while we can open our hearts to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with the fullest confidence at all times.” These words a wretch present construed into an insult to the king; and to ingratiate himself with his majesty, he represented Alphonsus as a person who endeavored to sow discord between the monarch and his people. Tanucci, the minister, being unacquainted with our saint, believed the calumny, and threatened to banish him from Naples.

Six days later, Alphonsus learned the evil construction that had been put upon his words. He immediately informed the cardinal, who was extremely indignant at the calumny. Through the medium of that estimable prelate, the king and his minister were speedily undeceived, and from that moment held Alphonsus in higher esteem and veneration than ever.

He renewed his efforts to procure the confirmation of his institute, but was again unsuccessful, though the king graciously bade him rely upon the royal protection. He was now requested to give a retreat at the barracks of Pizzo Falconi. The exercises were attended by the prince and the state-major in command. Seeing the effect the spiritual exercises produced on the officers, he was asked to extend his zeal to the privates, which he gladly did. Scandals rapidly disappeared from among them. Our saint furnished them with a small library at his own expense. So thorough was the conversion of these men, that five quitted the service to dedicate themselves to God in religion.

Alphonsus now returned to Nocera, and here an event occurred which at last brought peace to that much-afflicted community. A dean in the neighborhood, who had been greatly prejudiced against the Fathers, had a relative who led a very bad life. Offended by the charitable warnings of his friend, the young wretch overtook him one evening, beat him, wounded him on the head, and left him for dead. Father Mazzini, hearing this, made haste to offer him the necessary spiritual and corporal aid, and, alternately with the other Fathers, nursed him with all possible tenderness and assiduity till he became convalescent. The poor dean was so grateful for this kindness, that he thought of nothing but how he could recompense his kind benefactors; and through his means, aided by the worthy bishop, the leaders of the conspiracy were convinced of the pernicious nature of their proceedings, and peace was soon restored.

Though the royal council had decided in favor of Alphonsus against Cantaldi, yet our saint, having the peace of his Congregation more at heart than its temporal interests, persuaded the bishop to allow him to resign at once the donations made by Cantaldi. This disinterestedness was duly appreciated by all good men, and gained general applause throughout Naples. Mgr. Volpi contributed much to the establishment of peace, for he knew how to value Alphonsus and his companions. He consulted them in every emergency. He gave audiences at their house, and ordered many to come thither for spiritual exercises, instruction in the rubrics, and to reform their conduct. The esteem shown them by the bishop conciliated their enemies.

Alphonsus continued his warfare for God in every direction, his burning zeal allowing him no repose. “Who knows,” said he, “what God requires of me? perhaps the predestination of certain souls may be attached to one of my sermons.” He opened a mission in the church of St. Anne, and it seemed as if he had but to cast out his net to receive a miraculous draught of fishes. He continued his labors in the suburb of St. Anthony, to which the unfortunate women of the town had been compelled to withdraw through his exertions and those of Father Sarnelli. Many of these poor creatures, touched by grace, approached the tribunal of penance and were thoroughly converted. Of these fervent converts, some were placed in houses of refuge, and some were taken care of by charitable women. He also preached frequently in religious houses, to console and animate those consecrated virgins whom he regarded as the most precious portion of the flock of the Good Shepherd, and to inflame their hearts more and more with divine love. Besides, his room was almost always crowded with persons of distinction, lay and clerical, who daily repaired to him for instruction and direction, so that he could scarcely find time for his office and other devotions.

Cardinal Spinelli requested him to give a retreat in the cathedral, and that immense church could hardly accommodate his hearers. An eye-witness remarked that eternity alone can disclose the wonders of peace operated in the hearts of many, even of professed infidels.

At length he went to the country to distribute the bread of life among the poor peasants. At Victry, a daring fellow entered the church to criticize the preacher, but though “he went to scoff, he remained to pray.” “The sermons of other preachers” said he, “speak to the mind, but the words of Father Liguori penetrate the heart.” He immediately went to confession, and he persevered to the end.

In 1748, the new Congregation had already become rich in subjects of profound learning and eminent sanctity, and was approved by the episcopate of the kingdom. He therefore determined to apply for the approbation of the Pope. He addressed a petition to Benedict XIV, through Mgr. Puoti, a prelate honored with the particular friendship of his Holiness.

The Pope ordered Cardinal Gentili to charge Cardinal Spinelli to take informations on the subject. The rules were at once submitted to his Eminence, who, though admiring the wisdom of the general arrangements, thought that the health of the Fathers must fail, if so much fasting were joined to such fatigues, for a workman needs his health; also that it might be best to limit the number of consultors to six, Alphonsus having determined upon twelve, in honor of the twelve apostles.

Every one now advised our saint to proceed to Rome, but he concealed his humility under pretense of infirmities, and delegated Father Villani and another Father to act for him. Many bishops, besides those in whose dioceses the Congregation was established, wrote to give favorable testimony at Rome, and several noblemen and other distinguished persons wrote in their behalf to Cardinal Orsini and the Duke of Tora.

When the rule was presented to the members of the Sacred Congregation, they retrenched, as superfluous, the vow of placing themselves at the disposal of the Pope: “We suppose,” said the cardinal, “that all religious orders are ever ready to obey a sign from the Holy Father.”

Full of admiration for the rule, the cardinals unanimously approved it, though an auditor who had read the laudatory approbation of Cardinal Spinelli, regarding the good done by the institute in Naples, pretended that this meant that it ought to be confined to that kingdom. But the Cardinal answered that Alphonsus had applied for sanction for his Congregation throughout the whole Church, and added: “It is but just that a work of such magnitude should be universal.”

Yet no decree was issued. Towards the end of February, Father Villani visited Cardinal Orsini, who thus addressed him: “Be comforted; this morning the Sacred Congregation has had one of its most difficult conferences.” “But,” said Father Villani, “what cannot be done in the Congregation might be done at the house of the cardinal-prefect?” “True,” returned his Eminence, “and I will repair thither immediately. Recommend my business to God with yours.” The same day the decree of approbation was given.

Father Villani, on being presented to the Pope, asked for a confirmation of the decree. Next day, His Holiness read the decree and the rule. He was particularly pleased that the offices of the Rector-Major and his councillors were perpetual.

"This," he said, "hinders parties and divisions among the Regulars." He then suggested that the Congregation should take the name of *Holy Redeemer,* instead of *Holy Savior,* the latter being already borne by a Congregation at Venice.

The Pope named Alphonsus perpetual Superior of the Congregation, but our saint piteously entreated to be delivered from so heavy a burden. Your Reverence must have patience," wrote Villani in reply; "since you are named perpetual Rector, you must submit to the yoke. Speak no more on the subject, dear Father, for you are bound by duty, justice, and gratitude."

The devil, however, wished to thwart the work of God. There was at Naples a community, otherwise very respectable, which beheld with a jealous eye the progress of the Congregation, and sent one of its members to Rome to give Alphonsus all possible opposition. But he arrived too late. Yet, determined to effect some mischief, this envoy gained over one of the officials to pretend that the rules were approved, but not the institute. The Pope, seeing the *ruse,* was very indignant, and wrote with his own hand *Regulam et Institutum;* so that, to the confusion of the malevolent, Alphonsus had the satisfaction of receiving from Rome, February 25, 1749, the confirmation of the Rule and Institute.

When our saint heard this news he shed tears of joy, and prostrating himself on the ground with the other Fathers, thanked God for His mercies. The community bell was rung, and all went to the church to chant the *Te Deum,* after which Alphonsus exhorted his spiritual children to correspond to so great a grace by ever-increasing fervor in the exact observance of rule, and in the love of Jesus and Mary.

At the last audience accorded to Villani, His Holiness inquired whether he had anything further to ask. The Father begged the apostolic benediction for the holy founder and all the members of the Congregation, which was freely accorded, with several special indulgences and other favors. From whence are you, my son?" continued the Pontiff. "I am of Naples," was the reply. The Pope said in a sweet and gentle voice: "I bless you, your father and mother, and all the members of your family," at the same time according him several graces, with power to impart them to his friends.

Chapter XXXIV

An abbot resigns his mitre to follow Father Liguori.—First general chapter.—Liberality of the gentlemen of Pagani.—The jubilee at Sarno.—Missionary:—Precious death of Father Sportelli.—A beautiful flower on a barren rock.—“The Glories of Mary.”—Other publications.—Sad events.—Letters.

THE approbation of the institute made a great sensation in Rome. Every one admired the fervor and charity that reigned among the Fathers, and, in consequence, men eminent for sanctity and learning applied for admission to their body. Among these was an abbot who had rendered great service to the Congregation at Rome. Though Alphonsus had resolved never to admit to his Congregation anyone who had lived in another, yet, in consideration of the distinguished merit of this applicant, and the aid he had given the Fathers with regard to the approbation, he readily received him. Released by a brief from the Order of which he had been chosen Abbot, he took the habit of a Redemptorist, and departed for Cioram.

In October, our saint held his first General Chapter. He invited all the members to accept the rules, and proceed to a formal election to the general offices. Though confirmed in perpetual rectorship by the Pope, he resigned his authority, humbling himself, and begging pardon for all he had done amiss in the exercise of it. He then suggested a retreat of three days, and insisted that the vocals should vote for those whom they deemed before God best qualified to fill the respective offices, doing all he could to rid himself of the burden of the generalship. All joyfully accepted the rules, and renewed their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, with the oath of perseverance till death.

Despite his precautions, our saint was unanimously elected Rector-Major. The other offices being filled, necessary regulations were established for the novitiate and house of studies; and the authors to be followed in *belles-lettres*, philosophy, and theology, were selected. The abbot was appointed professor of philosophy and theology, a post for which his vast erudition eminently qualified him.

During the session of the Chapter, the heart of the holy founder was gladdened by the liberality of some gentlemen of Pagani. From the modesty and general good conduct of the young students, they had formed a flattering opinion of the institute, and earnestly entreated him to transfer them to Pagani, promising to contribute to the expense. All, including the bishops and the dean already mentioned, subscribed annual stipends, and manifested the greatest interest in the education of the students.

Alphonsus opened the autumn mission, by preaching the jubilee at Sarno. Many professional brigands placed their daggers, pistols, and bayonets with the Fathers, and embraced a Christian life. For ten years after the taverns were quite deserted. The bishop, wishing to try Alphonsus, whose toilet was poor as usual, said laughing: “Notwithstanding our wish to be economical, we will undertake the expense of having you shaved.” Alphonsus presented himself to the barber with perfect indifference, although for eighteen years a razor had not touched his chin. Four times he underwent this operation: first, at Rome, when he presented himself to Clement XIII for examination; second, at Naples, when he was invited to the table of King Ferdinand IV; third, when ordered by Mgr. Giannini; and fourth, as we have just related.

The clergy profited greatly by this mission, to the unbounded joy of the good bishop. Christian piety everywhere replaced idleness and licentiousness, and the frequentation of the sacraments became general among all classes. Accompanied by fourteen Fathers, he made a missionary tour through the whole diocese, and was everywhere blessed with the most signal success.

While at Malfi, our saint heard of the precious death of Father Sportelli, his first companion. Though partially prepared for this melancholy communication, as the good Father had recently been suffering from an attack of apoplexy, he was nevertheless extremely afflicted. Some months previous, Sportelli had foretold the day and hour of his death, adding (he addressed a Father about to join Alphonsus): “Kiss the hand of our Rector for me, and tell him to recommend my soul to Jesus Christ, when he shall hear of my death.” He died as he had lived a saint, and God glorified him by miracles. Years after his death, his body was found incorrupt, and blood was drawn from his veins. Alphonsus himself endeavored to procure the beatification of this dearly loved son, and it is piously hoped that God will yet glorify his faithful servant by raising him on the altars of the Church.

While laboring in the diocese of Malfi, Alphonsus gave a retreat to a convent of Carmelite nuns, whose piety and perfect regularity greatly edified him. He found it expedient to moderate their fervor, and to prescribe some relaxation of mind and body. The sanctity of these dear sisters filled him with admiration, and, poet as he was, he exclaimed with a burst of generous enthusiasm: “I did not expect to find so beautiful a flower on the barren rock of Ripacandida.”

In the course of this year (1750), he published his Useful and charming work, *The Glories of Mary.* It is incredible with what delight this beautiful book was received. It was speedily translated into every tongue of Europe, and has gone through numberless editions.

About the same time, he wrote his *Advice regarding a Religious Vocation,* in which he shows that when God calls, his creatures must obey, and expatiates with the unction characteristic of all his works, on the excellence and advantages of the religious state. His *Advice to Novices* is a sequel to the former. He presented these admirable little works to all the novitiates in Naples, and they were everywhere received with gratitude and delight. “If I could only contribute to the perfection of one of those called to the religious state,” said he, “I should be abundantly recompensed for my pains.”

As our saint was sometimes obliged to witness the spectacle of men who boasted of their knowledge of philosophy and theology, yet were incapable of writing their mother tongue correctly, he compiled for them an abridgment of the most essential rules of *Italian Orthography.* He even applied his prolific genius to the troublesome task of composing an elementary arithmetic for the use of the lay-brothers. So true is it that charity, when ardent and sincere, finds a thousand ways of being useful to others.

Everything had gone on wonderfully well, when a reverse came which changed the joy of the holy founder into bitterness. The abbot had gained the admiration of the students by his brilliant talents, and their affection by his edifying conduct. He had been sent with twelve of the most talented to Pagani, and their progress under his able superintendence exceeded all expectation. The fervor of the poor abbot, however; proved somewhat evanescent. Accustomed to command, he could not easily obey. The rule became too great a restraint on him, and he used his influence over the young men to inspire them with his disedifying sentiments. Father Mazzini gave him a friendly admonition, which was received with a bad grace. Alphonsus treated him with the utmost gentleness and sweetness, and even removed Father Mazzini against whom the abbot was greatly embittered, though without any cause. Finally, the students resolved themselves into two parties, and matters grew so bad that it became necessary to withdraw immediately *the sower of discord* from among the brethren.

Yet the compassionate heart of the holy founder shrank from inflicting a public humiliation on the hapless abbot. He merely invited him to Ciorani to give a retreat to some clerics who were preparing for holy orders. But *belles-lettres* seemed preferable in the eyes of the distinguished scholar, and he showed such discontent that the saint was obliged to tell him that, in case he would not obey, he was free to leave the Order. Doubtless it was the heart of Alphonsus, rather than his judgment, that permitted the abbot to return to Nocera a little later and resume his lectures. Again, some were of Paul, and some of Apollo. The gentle saint was still unwilling to pain an aged man, and recalled him to Ciorani, but ostensibly for the purpose of establishing a house of the Congregation at Rome.

The abbot, suspecting the real motive of his recall, dissembled his displeasure, and meanwhile sought to involve the students in his ruin. He proposed to them to join him in founding altogether a different establishment, and four, the flower of the rest, determined to follow him. Next day Alphonsus learned the worst, when these poor deluded youths presented themselves before him, with staves in hand and mantles on their arms, demanding a dispensation from their vows. The affectionate Father could not bear up against this. Falling prostrate before them, the tears gushing from his eyes, he besought them to avoid the snare laid for their virtue by one who had so basely abused the confidence reposed in him. He proposed a retreat of eight days, but all was useless. These unfilial youths turned their backs upon the best of Fathers, and, without even waiting for a dispensation, set out on their ill-starred journey.

Circumstances now showed the protection a good God granted to his holy servant. To justify himself, the abbot had drawn up a memorial signed by these unfortunate young men, and addressed to the Pope, in which was stated every calumny his malignity could invent. Alphonsus the same morning had sent an order to the rector of Nocera to inform the abbot that he no longer belonged to the Congregation. The abbot had gone to take leave of the bishop, and the rector followed to deliver his message. In his astonishment, the culprit had not presence of mind to return to his room and remove his papers. The memorial which fully unmasked him was found open upon his table.

At Naples, the unfortunate man was joined by the four students, and deceived a promising young priest, by saying that he had already established his Congregation at Rome, and that the Pope himself had signalized the four students as so many apostles destined to win the palm of martyrdom among the infidels. This done, the traitor abandoned his five victims, and proceeded alone to Rome.

These sad events made a painful impression everywhere. A most respectable Father of the Order to which the abbot had belonged, paid Alphonsus a visit of condolence, but the latter merely said: “The abbot has made us weep to-day, but later on he will make you weep.” This prophecy was fulfilled when he disturbed the whole Order by separating the abbeys of the kingdom of Naples from those of the Pontifical States, and causing himself to be declared perpetual Abbot in Rome, and Commissary-General for life to the abbeys of the Papal States, and causing many annoyances to the convents in both kingdoms.

Alphonsus attributed the discovery of the plot to St. Teresa, for it happened between the first and second Vespers of her feast. His affliction was tempered by the return of two of the young men, whom he received as a tender father, and to whom he ever after showed a special affection.

“My dear children,” said he, to the students on this occasion, “I earnestly recommend you never to keep your consciences closed, for, if these unfortunate youths who have gone out from us had manifested their temptations to their superiors, they would not be where they are now. Had they opened their hearts to those who hold the place of Christ in their regard and could not deceive them, this had not happened. During a temptation, never make a resolution, however praiseworthy it may seem, but go at once and discover all to your superior. When the temptation is upon us, we do not recognize that it comes from the devil. He conceals himself and puts upon our eyes treacherous spectacles, making us see things, not as they are, but as our passions represent them. The strongest temptations can never shake a soul that gives herself entirely to God.”

The abbot had introduced among the students a forced application to study which afflicted our saint, because it was detrimental to piety. Yet he always recommended the closest application to science, both to students and priests. “A laborer without science,” said he, “though he be a man of prayer, is like a soldier without arms.” He would add: *Be wise, but be wise unto sobriety.*

These sad events caused a general discouragement throughout the Congregation. To reanimate his spiritual children, the saint addressed to all the houses the following circular:—

“To my brethren of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. Blessed be Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa:

“My very dear brethren, you know I am not afflicted when God calls some among us to another life. As a creature of flesh and blood, I am touched by the loss of a dear son; but I am comforted because he has died in the Congregation, all the members of which I know will be saved.

“Neither am I afflicted when persons leave us because of their faults; yea, I am consoled, seeing we are delivered from a sickly sheep that would have infected all the others. Far less am I grieved at persecutions; on the contrary, they inspire me with courage, because, if we serve God faithfully, we are certain God will not abandon us. What alarms me is to see among us persons who are negligent in obeying, and have little regard for the rule.

“My brethren, some who were with us are now out of the Congregation. What will their end be? I cannot tell. But of this I am certain—they will live in continual trouble, and die without peace, for they have renounced their vocation.

“They have left us that they may live more happily; but the thought that they have left God to follow their own caprices, will never leave them one day’s rest. In prayer they will be torn by remorse, and God knows where they will end.

“I beseech you to avoid faults of deliberation, especially those for which you have been reprehended.

“If correction lead the sinner to amend, the fault will be nothing. But if he will not amend, the devil will employ every artifice to make him lose his vocation: thus he causes the loss of many.

“By the grace of God, wherever we go on a mission, we work wonders, and people say they never had such a mission before. Why? Because we go by obedience, we go in poverty, we preach Christ crucified; each acquits himself perfectly of the charge imposed upon him. I have been grieved to learn that some desire, the more honorable employments, as preaching, instructing. But what fruit could he produce who preaches through pride? I have a horror of this. If ambition enter the Congregation, the missions will do little good, or, rather, none.

“Your most affectionate Brother,

“ALPHONSUS MARIA,

“Of the Most Holy Redeemer.”

Chapter XXXV

Alphonsus resumes the missions.—A new sorrow.—Circular letter.—The saint's reception at Naples.—Illness.—Another annoyance.—Reaction.—Extraordinary Conversions.—The saint pleads his cause before the king.—Insults.—His sojourn in the capital.—Prophecy.—His moral theology.—High opinion Pope Benedict XIV held of Alphonsus.—Offer of the king.—Miracle.—Death of Father Cafaro.

TOWARDS the end of autumn, Alphonsus resumed the missions, and, as usual, with effects hardly short of miraculous; but his heart was pierced by a new sorrow, occasioned by the departure of a Father whom he tenderly loved, and who was most useful on the missions.

Offended by a reasonable admonition of the Superior, he set off to join Alphonsus, believing he would give him satisfaction. On the road, reflection opened his eyes, and seeing that he was wrong, he had not courage to present himself to the saint, but directed his steps to his own house. All the efforts of Alphonsus and the rest to induce him to return, were unavailing. On this occasion Alphonsus again addressed a circular letter to his children, to make them still more fearful of the great disasters which pride is capable of producing in the souls of those who yield to its suggestions:—

"To the Fathers and Brothers of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

"My dearly beloved Fathers and Brothers in Christ:

"I beseech God to deliver us immediately from all haughty spirits who will not brook the least correction or humiliation. Whoever refuses to be as potter's clay under the feet of all, let him fly. Our Lord will be better pleased if there remain but two who are humble and mortified, than if there were a thousand imperfect. What are we doing in the Congregation, if we will not suffer something for the love of our dear Lord? How dare we preach humility to the people, if we have a horror of humiliations? But as we are all so miserable, I command you, in prayer, in thanksgiving, to beg daily of Jesus Christ to be able to bear contempt without losing peace and interior joy. The fervent will even pray to be despised for the love of Jesus.

"I desire to impress this upon your hearts: never speak ill of your Superiors. Take account of your smallest faults, for these are the little foxes the devil uses to devastate our souls and render us careless about preserving our vocation. Let us recur continually to prayer, my dearest Brethren, otherwise we shall not succeed in anything.

"Your most affectionate Brother,

"ALPHONSUS MARIA,

"Of the Most Holy Redeemer."

After the mission of 1757, our saint passed through Naples on his return home. He alighted at a small hospice given him by his Brother Hercules; and the people, seeing his miserable dress, mistook him for a vagabond, and began to hoot and ridicule him. All this he was taking very good-humoredly, when a merchant, calling him by name, made the crowd understand that he was the brother of Don Hercules di Liguori. He had just lain down to rest when his brother came to visit him. Unwilling to disturb him, he withdrew and returned next morning; but, finding he had not yet risen, he forced the door, fearing some accident. He found him extended upon his bed in a fainting fit.

The nearest physicians were summoned, and they ordered that he should be immediately undressed. His body was found to be entirely covered with sackcloth. A copious bleeding restored his consciousness, and he complained bitterly to his brother for having permitted him to be undressed. Fatigued and exhausted as he was, he consented to preach to the students of the archiepiscopal seminary; nor did he refuse to visit any monastery which asked his aid.

This year a new annoyance disturbed Alphonsus. The king, while hunting in the territory of Illiceto, inquired concerning the house of the missionaries, which he perceived at some distance. "It is the convent of the new Fathers," replied the cavalier in waiting, "and they have done tolerably well here, being heirs to sixty thousand ducats." "Ah, then," rejoined the king, "they are like the rest; they have scarcely commenced when they endeavor to amass wealth." The chevalier had referred to the will of the late canon of Illiceto.

Deceived by what he had heard, the king speedily let the court see that he had changed his opinion of Father Liguori’s missionaries, and every one spoke of their avarice and ambition. The Fathers were greatly alarmed, but the holy founder reassured them. Full of confidence in God, he exclaimed:

“The Lord will make our Congregation prosper, not by applause or the protection of princes, but by poverty, contempt, misery, and persecutions. When have we seen the works of God begin with applause?”

He had recourse as usual to our dear Lord, hoping to obtain mercy by prayer and penance, and exhorting the brethren to unite with him in these holy exercises. A reaction in his favor soon took place; and it being left to Alphonsus himself to state the amount of revenue his Congregation possessed, he did so with a candor that confirmed the king in the high opinion he had entertained of him. Nevertheless the ministers used their utmost endeavors to suppress the, Congregation, saying, among other things, that, far from consenting to the establishment of new Orders, they would gladly abolish some of those already in existence. Alphonsus did not lose courage. He said that the souls would be blessed who should defend his Congregation; and he abandoned its interests to the protection Providence and the piety of the king.

After Easter, 1752, he evangelized the territory of Gragnano, accompanied by twenty-two Fathers. Prodigies of grace occurred, especially among malefactors, many of whom deposited their daggers and pistols at the feet of the Blessed Virgin. One bandit, in the procession made for the purpose of erecting a Calvary, carried one of the crosses on his shoulders, weeping so as to cause the people to shed tears of joy.

Meanwhile, the Marquis Branconi invited our saint to proceed to Naples and plead his cause before the king. Accordingly, he presented himself at the palace, and informed his Majesty that for nineteen years he and his companions had been giving missions, chiefly in remote and abandoned villages, that thousands had been converted on his own royal domains, that they had given yearly over forty missions, that the archbishops of Conza and Salerno, and the bishops of Bovino and Nocera, seeing the good effected by the missionaries, had established houses of the institute in their respective dioceses, and that the Sovereign Pontiff had approved the Congregation for the whole Church.

As for acquiring riches, he showed the king how far he was from desiring the temporal aggrandizement of the Congregation: “I am persuaded,” said he, “that whenever abundance reigns, the laborer will quit the axe and the spade, and take his ease. I seek only to procure a modest livelihood according to the intention of the Pope, and I beseech your Majesty to name a fixed revenue beyond which we may not go.” He secured the influence of the queen, through the celebrated Jesuit, Father Pepi, and Mother Angela of Divine Love, who had once been his penitent. He visited the ministers, to urge upon them the importance of aiding to promote the salvation of the people. But on these occasions neither his well-known sanctity nor his illustrious birth always sufficed to protect him from insult. One minister listened to his passionate pleadings with marked incivility, and almost turned him out of doors, saying: “Do not talk nonsense to me; tell your stories to some old woman.” The saint bowed his head and remained silent. On another occasion, he said to a minister: “My Lord, I recommend to you the cause of Jesus Christ.” “Jesus Christ has no cause in the royal chambers,” was the contemptuous rejoinder.

His sojourn in the capital was a continual mission. He gave a retreat during which many hardened in sin yielded to grace, and hundreds of infidels abjured their errors. The Chinese college and several convents profited by his labors. When the negotiations approached a close, he had many masses said, and multiplied his penances, to force, as it were, the blessing of heaven. To the souls in purgatory, to St. Joseph and St. Teresa, he made special vows, and he wrote to many monasteries, begging prayers and novenas for his intention.

Finally, the royal approbation was obtained, the king forbidding any increase of revenue, and allowing but the merest pittance for the support of each member. So many conditions and restrictions were placed in the decree, that it rather embarrassed the saint than helped him. Thus was partially fulfilled a prophecy he had made some years previous to Sister Mary Angela of Capua: “I believe that God will mortify my pride, and that this approbation will not be given until after my death.” In reality the Congregation was not set on a proper footing till the next reign, and long after his soul had passed sweetly to heaven.

Notwithstanding his grave and multiplied embarrassments, Alphonsus published, in 1753, his justly appreciated *Moral Theology.* At the request of his spiritual children, he had, in 1748, enriched Busembaum with notes, which they wished to have printed, to be more easy of reference. At a later period, he enlarged this work, and dedicated it to Benedict XIV, who gave it his approbation.

This invaluable work, like every other that came from his pen, was the fruit of zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. The images of Jesus and Mary were constantly before him, for he never handled his pen without invoking them. In short, it was seen even then, as the Pope himself prophesied, that Alphonsus was destined to be universally approved. Once when a celebrated Neapolitan ecclesiastic came to consult this learned Pope on a difficult cause, his Holiness would give no decision. “You have Father Liguori at Naples,” said he; “consult him.” Indeed this excellent Pontiff, whose erudition was a marvel, quoted our saint with approval, in his valuable work, *De Synodo Diocesana*.

The king, more and more pleased with the great missionary, offered to endow the Congregation with the estates of a once powerful body of monks, now dwindled away to the merest shadow of its former greatness, on conditions that seemed advantageous to all concerned. For grave reasons, the saint finally declined the flattering proposal, though deeply grateful for the favor his sovereign had shown him.

In July, 1753, he accepted an invitation to give the Novena of the Feast of Mount Carmel, at Saragnano. The missionaries lodged in the house of one Doctor Mari. Twelve Fathers arrived on a Thursday at dinner time, and as they had not been expected, no preparations had been made for so large a party. “Put what you have on the table,” said Alphonsus to the embarrassed host, “and God will supply what is wanting.” And lo! as the servants were carving in the kitchen, the meat became visibly larger, and when the whole party was served, a considerable quantity remained. Mari attested that the meat had been increased at least sevenfold. In reply to his exclamations of astonishment, the saint said: “In all embarrassments, let us have recourse to God, and never doubt his Providence.”

The autumn and winter of 1753 were fruitful in missions. Resina asked a mission, but Alphonsus refused, on account of its proximity to Naples. The people then applied to the king, who commanded the saint to gratify them, and paid all expenses himself. The missionaries afterwards went to Persano, at the expense of his majesty, whose good heart delighted in affording means of grace to his subjects. The spiritual exercises were given in various religious houses, and were, as usual, signally blessed by God. Applications were sent from all quarters for the Fathers, and every diocese in the kingdom wished to have a Redemptorist convent. But the holy founder was slow in answering these applications, not having a sufficient number of subjects. The king proposed to suppress certain convents, and give Alphonsus the revenues to found new establishments; but he would never consent to anything so detrimental to the ancient religious, whom such arrangements would affect.

This year, the tender heart of our saint was again rent by the decease of a companion, at once his father and his son,—Father Cafaro, his spiritual director. Prayer and mortification were the inseparable companions of this holy man. Untiring in his labors, he animated the other Fathers by his example to immolate themselves for God and for souls. How earnestly did not the sainted founder pray for the prolongation of his precious life! What prayers did he not procure for the same end, both in his own houses and in many monasteries of virgins! But the good God saw fit to grant him other blessings instead of this much-coveted boon, and he bowed profoundly beneath the divine hand that chastened him. His sentiments on this trying occasion found vent in a beautiful canticle on *Conformity to the Divine Will,* which he sovereignly loved and adored under the most distressing circumstances.

Chapter XXXVI

Circular letter.—A foundation in the States of the Church.—Retreat at Ciorani.—Discussion.—Death of the Countess Liguori.—Mission at Benevento.—Retreat to the Neapolitan students.—To the servants.—Other effects of the saint's zeal.—New publication.

YEARS and sorrows had already begun to tell upon the once vigorous frame of our saint. Though scarcely fifty-six, his frequent infirmities hindered him from visiting his absent children as often as his paternal heart desired. In 1754, August 8, he addressed to all the houses the following circular:

"Fathers and Brothers, it is not yet twenty-two years since our Congregation was formed, and but five have elapsed since its confirmation by the Holy See, therefore it ought not only to have preserved its first fervor, but also to have made progress. Many, I know, lead holy lives, but some are too easily discouraged. Yet God has called us into the Congregation to live as saints; and if remissness succeeds to fervor, where will our poor Congregation be fifty years hence?

"Poor Jesus Christ! if Thou art not loved in this Congregation which has received from thee so many special lights and graces, by whom wilt Thou be loved? Now that I am already old and sickly, the day is near on which I must render up my account. I wish to be as useful as possible to you, and God knows how I love each one of you as my mother and my brethren. But it is not the will of God that I should imperil my salvation by an immoderate love for any one of you. We all commit faults; but faults against obedience, poverty, humility, and brotherly charity, must not be established among us. I adhere to the promise I have made to God,—never to yield to human respect, never to see my brethren fail in any important point, or in any manner hurtful to their neighbor, without reproving them.

"You know that my greatest fault is too much condescension; but I hope God will give me strength not to suffer those who will not amend—who even justify their imperfections. I beseech you, who now hold offices in the

Congregation, never to excuse those who, after faults, justify, instead of humbling, themselves.

“I declare to you that I will accuse that superior at the tribunal of Jesus Christ, who, to avoid displeasing the imperfect, would wink at dangerous faults, and cause relaxation in the Congregation. I speak not of the past, but of the future; if anyone has committed a fault, I do not mean to reproach him.

“I exhort you to value your vocation as the greatest favor God could bestow on you, after the benefit of creation and redemption. Thank God for it every day, and tremble lest you lose it. Do not allow the devil to deceive you—each of us knows that a priest, in the Congregation, will save more souls in one year, than he would during a whole lifetime out of it; and, as regards personal advantage, a subject will gain more in one year by practicing obedience than he would in ten years, living according to his own caprice. By the grace of God, the Congregation is now well provided with subjects full of fervor and talent. Our fame is spread throughout the kingdom, and even beyond it. We are asked for missions on all sides. But should we not be able to do all we desire in this respect, it would always be better to preserve regular observances with a few, than to see the Congregation increased by relaxed subjects.

“Finally, my brethren, be persuaded that each of you is, after God, the single object of my love, and that for each of you I would willingly offer my blood and my life. Fear not to address yourselves to me in all your wants. Those who are at a distance can write. Do not fear to importune me; the thought that you can trouble me either by speaking or writing, can come only from the devil. Believe me, the more confidence you show towards me, the more closely you will bind me to you. I leave everything when my children require my assistance. It is of more consequence to me to succor one of them, than to perform any other good work whatever. This is the good work God asks of me, especially while I am charged with the souls of others.

“To conclude: let us love Jesus Christ. We, above all others, owe him this. Let us love a God who has died for love of us. Let us become saints, offering ourselves to him to do with us what He pleases. I bless and embrace you all in the heart of Jesus. Lose not the beautiful crowns I see prepared for all who live according to our rules, and die in our Congregation.”

Although approved by the Pope, the Congregation had no house in the States of the Church, till Mgr. Pacca, Archbishop of Benevento, applied, in 1753, for one. To arrange this business, Alphonsus dispatched Father Villani, and Mgr. Borgia offered to accompany him.

The travelers experienced a special protection of divine Providence. Twice a thunderbolt fell at Mgr. Borgia’s feet, without injuring him or his companion. The archbishop was so charmed with the results of the first labors of Villani,—a retreat given to the students, that he went to Nocera to thank the holy founder; and during this visit, declared that it was to him, after God, he would confide the interests of his diocese.

During Passion-Week, our saint gave a retreat at Ciorani, on the invitation of Father Rossi. Priests and people crowded about the veteran missionary, till messengers had to be sent in different directions to warn them that there was no more room; but they passed the night in the air, rather than give up all hope of hearing his voice. About this time a discussion took place between Father Liguori and a Jansenist who had attacked his *Moral Theology*, and was not sparing of insulting personalities. But the sweetness and moderation with which Alphonsus met his adversary, drew upon him universal esteem.

On the road to Benevento, whither he repaired to give a mission at the request of the archbishop, he stopped at Naples to visit his beloved mother, then in a dying state. Having quieted her conscience on several points, and entirely cured her of some scruples that tormented her, he heard her last confession, and administered the holy sacraments of Viaticum and Extreme Unction. For three days, he was unable to tear himself from this revered and cherished mother, consoling and animating her; but, as he could delay the mission no longer, he begged her parting benediction, and, consoled by her sanctity, he set out for Benevento, happy to think she was about to die a death precious in the sight of the Lord, while she rejoiced that her son left her only to conquer souls for Jesus Christ, and bestow on others the blessings he had conferred on her.

He opened the Benevento mission with twenty Fathers. A prelate who attended, afterwards wrote: “It is long since we have seen men so truly apostolic. One can form no idea of the effects they have produced; but the arrival of Alphonsus awakened recollections that had long slumbered. The voice of the holy missionary was weakened by age and fatigue, bait the sight of him was enough to soften and melt the hardest hearts. Benevento has been sanctified. The very malefactors have become models of piety. A general reformation of manners is the result of his labors.”

The renown of this mission reached Rome, and Cardinal Orsini informed Alphonsus that the Pope had been so pleased with the good tidings, that he spoke to the Duke of Cerisan to obtain from the King of Naples an *exequatur* to the brief of approbation given to the Congregation.

After this mission, to render priests more skilful in hearing confessions, the saint published his *Moral Theology* in Italian, adding three interesting appendices. This work met with immense circulation. The demand became so great outside of Italy, that he re-wrote it in Latin under the title of *Homo Apostolicus.*

Business called him to Naples, February, 1756. Cardinal Sersales besought him to give the spiritual exercises to some students in a hall of the palace. But, instead of a few young men, the whole community assembled to hear him, and, with canons and other dignitaries, his audience swelled to a thousand. Even bishops attended, and pressed forward with the rest to kiss his hand, but he humbled himself interiorly, and endeavored to escape observation.

The cardinal, admiring the miraculous effects of this retreat, insisted that he should preach to the diocesan students, at least, once a week. Directors of seminaries in the city and its environs made the same request, so that he often preached several times in one day.

He did not forget the servants of the cardinal and of the seminaries, but, following the divine instinct which urged him to seek out the lowliest and most neglected, he assembled every one of them, and instructed them on the duties of their state. Henceforward, they were a comfort to their employers; and, besides performing all their duties well, found time to pray and to approach the Sacraments. The cardinal wept tears of joy over this reformation.

The convents, as usual, sought his assistance, and he never refused to instruct and console their cherished inmates, many of whom had once been his penitents. He greatly deplored the increase of vice consequent upon the reading of the infamous works of materialists and deists. To inspire the people with a horror of such productions, he condemned from the pulpit all who sold such books, or kept them in their homes, as guilty of grave sin. To neutralize as much as possible the evil effects of these devices of Satan, he published his erudite *Treatise in Defence of Religion and of the State,* a work which was found particularly useful against the sophists, who undertook to pervert the minds of the people and sap the foundations of their faith. This magnificent treatise is an enduring monument of our saint's elegant style and profound learning.

Chapter XXXVII

The queen-mother consults our saint.—Stratagem.—Work on the confessional.—Criticisms.—The circus at Amalfi.—Earthquake.—Nola.—The Seminary.—Bi-location.—The saint loses his dear son Rossi.—Miracle.—Missions to Calabria.—

ALPHONSUS returned to Nocera in Holy Week, 1756, but scarcely had he arrived, when he was summoned by the queen-mother, who desired to consult him on affairs of conscience. The court was then at Lauro. Here was also a monastery. The nuns, wishing to get a piece of his clothing, invited him to visit a beautiful reliquary in their church, and while he was giving it to them to kiss, one of the boarders cut off a large piece of his mantle. As it was cold in the evening, he spread his mantle on his bed; but finding it rather jagged, exclaimed to F. Galdieri who accompanied him: “This mantle is not mine; is it yours?” “It is yours,” returned the Father, “but the nuns have been playing you a trick.” “Yes,” rejoined the saint, somewhat confused, “I see why that little girl was always so near me; but now it would require an old-clothes shop to mend it.” Thefts of this nature were not infrequent wherever he went.

In July, he was again in Naples endeavoring to obtain the *exequatur* of the Apostolic brief. He had prayers and mortifications without number offered up for this intention: As usual, he had not a moment’s rest. He published at this time his Method for a Confessor to exercise his Ministry well, in which he considers the Confessor as father, physician, teacher, and judge. Such was the admiration this work excited, that it was said his Guardian Angel had specially assisted him in its composition. In his *Dictionary of Illustrious Men*, Feller says of it: “It breathes a divine unction: all is moderation, gentleness, and that charity which seeks only the salvation of souls.”

“What a precious book!” exclaims the learned Jesuit Zaccharia, in his *History of Literature:* “Father Liguori follows a just, a reasonable method which smooths the way for the poor penitent.”

The name of Alphonsus was now celebrated. All the provinces of the kingdom, except Calabria, had been visited by the Congregation. An eminent physician offered to defray the expenses of the Fathers to this distant region. While the missionaries labored successfully there, our saint, with fourteen companions, repaired to Amalfi. During this mission, every woman of bad character in the place was converted. The evening before he left, Father Liguori said in a sermon: "We have been much fatigued in laboring for you, but as soon as we go, a devil will come from the mountain to destroy the fruit of this mission. Beware! otherwise God will punish your reprehensible curiosity by an earthquake."

Next day, a buffalo was let loose for the amusement of the people; but scarcely was the play begun when a violent shock frightened the whole town, and the terrified people ran from the ring to the church. The bishop received them, and as he recalled the prediction of the venerable Father Liguori, and the contempt they had shown for it, another shock was felt, so violent that the chandeliers were turned upside down. The prelate became alarmed, and ordered the priests to give absolution to all present.

From Amalfi he passed to Nola, whither he was invited by the bishop to aid in reforming the episcopal seminary. Many of the young people had given themselves up to all kinds of irregularities, discipline was unknown, and for several days he might as well have preached to the walls. The most awful truths of eternity became subjects of their ridicule, and not a few of the young wretches amused themselves by mimicking the tones and gestures of the preacher.

Though the bishop thought gentle means would do here, our saint knew that the case was a desperate one, and he warned the prelate that, by conniving at the evil by injudicious gentleness, he risked his eternal salvation—insinuating that bishops had been damned because of their seminaries. He continued to preach; but it was not till the exercises were nearly over, that any fruit appeared. Then all were seized with a sudden terror. Four of the most turbulent fled, and the remainder became truly contrite. This unexpected result was attributed wholly to the prayers and mortifications of the saint. During his long life, Alphonsus continued to take a deep interest in this institution, and every year, sent his missionaries to give the retreat, if he could not go in person.

When he had restored fervor in the seminary of Nola, he went to Cerreto. From the palace-gate, he was ushered into a hall which a servant was sweeping. “Please inform the bishop that I wish to have an audience,” said the visitor. “Wait till I finish this,” was the rough reply. As the broom whisked about the corner into which our saint had shrunk, the menial continued: Don’t you see me? Is there no possibility of making you rise?” Alphonsus rose, and when the sweeping was finished, repeated his request.

The bishop, on being informed that a poor ragged man awaited him, sent to learn his name and business. But, when the noble name of Liguori was announced, the prelate, who happened to be in his dressing-gown, called out to one servant for his soutane, to another for his wig, and to a third for his pectoral cross, that he might receive such a guest in a becoming manner. The servant speedily hid himself. When compelled to appear, he threw himself at the feet of our saint. The bishop having asked an explanation, the poor man told, with tears, of the rudeness with which he had treated the great servant of God,—Alphonsus laughing good-humoredly all the time.

While our saint was staying at Naples this season, the following example of bi-location took place. A woman whom he had reclaimed, used to come every. Sunday for alms. Being told he had gone to the capital, she went to the Church and recommended herself to God. While praying, the saint called her to the sacristy and bestowed the usual dole, beseeching her to remain faithful to God. The woman then reproached the pastor, saying, “How is it that people think you a saint; and yet you tell lies? Father Liguori is here; he called me just now and gave me money!”

The pastor informed the rector, who, upon inquiry, found that the saint had been laboring in Naples, and giving alms and good counsel in Nocera at the same time. A similar miracle happened at Amalfi, where he was preaching in the Church and hearing confessions in the house, simultaneously.

Other missions were asked for Calabria. Our saint supplied them, regretting that he could not go thither himself. On the 2d January, 1758, he went to Salerno with twenty companions. Of their mission, Mgr. Pinta wrote long after: “The conversions were innumerable and astonishing; the benefits conferred, great and lasting. The aspect of the whole town was changed; I myself owe the grace of being able to renounce the world, to the light I then received.” It was everywhere said that, had the apostles themselves preached, greater effects could not have been produced.

The consolation derived from this mission by the apostolic man was not unalloyed. During its course, he had to bewail the loss of Father Xavier Rossi, the support of the house of Ciorani. But if he were afflicted by this premature death, he had sweet comfort in knowing that his old and cherished companion had died a saint. Despite his failing health, Rossi had always been a model of regularity. His obedience and humility were quite wonderful, and such was his devotion to Jesus, in the Blessed Sacrament, that it was said that there was no veil between him and his Savior. He had to combat against a temper extremely passionate. When almost overpowered by anger, he would struggle so violently against that passion that his face became yellow, and almost black. On several occasions, when it seemed impossible to resist it any longer, he ran into the stable and flung himself at the feet of the ass, humbling himself before the brute, until he could rise perfectly calm. He was singularly charitable; and Alphonsus, who knew the generous tendencies of his compassionate heart, set no limits to his liberality. The memory of Xavier Rossi will always be held in benediction by the Congregation of which he was so admirable an ornament.

During a visit made by Alphonsus to Naples, in Lent, the blood of the proto-martyr, St. Stephen, preserved in the monastery of St. Gaudioso, liquefied in his presence, a miracle never before known to happen except on the feast of the martyr, or at the translation of his relics.

His companion, Father Galdieri, being about to embark for Calabria, the saint said: “I wish you would go by land. Wait a little: in a few days someone will arrive who has travelled by land, and you can return on his mule.” Galdieri obeyed, and all happened as the founder had said. The vessel in which he was to have sailed was wrecked, and all on board perished.

The saint was considerably occupied with convents and monasteries, to which he always gave assistance when asked. One evening, having returned from the nuns, he had his office to recite and some proof-sheets to correct, when a duchess sent for him in the greatest haste. “Tell the duchess,” said he to the messenger, “I cannot go now. The duchess will recover, and I shall see her grace to-morrow.” The lady was perfectly cured.

His extraordinary gifts made our saint the object of universal veneration, but he ever humbled himself more and more. Invited by the Provincial of the Jesuits to dine at their house, the Fathers, being very anxious to have something that had been worn by him, remarked that his belt was completely worn out, and offered him a new one. Guessing their design, our saint smilingly fastened on the new cincture without removing the old one.

Retreats and missions crowded upon our saint, as usual miracles and extraordinary favors were wrought wherever he appeared. At Amalfi, his face glowed like a live coal, as it reflected the sunbeams that darted from our Lady’s statue. Whilst thus favored, he published his beautiful *Preparation for Death,* a work that produced the effects of a gigantic mission throughout the whole kingdom.

In 1758, also, the cardinals of the Propaganda asked the saint for apostolic men, to labor among the Nestorians, who had declared to Clement XIII their desire to be united to the Roman Church. He instantly consented, and wrote to the Fathers to inform them of the circumstance, and inquire who among them were desirous of gaining the crown in a work of such great difficulty. Every one offered; all being eager to give their lives for Jesus Christ. Thirty novices wrote letters in their own blood to signify to him their desire of suffering martyrdom in the cause. Their zeal filled the glowing heart of their Father with ineffable consolation and delight.

In 1759, the Fathers, owing to a similar circumstance, were invited to Sicily. A swindling Neapolitan, knowing the veneration in which Father Liguori was held, wrote, in his name, to different dioceses, asking pecuniary aid. Large sums were sent him,—twenty ducats of which fell into the hands of our Saint, sent by Mgr. Lucchese, bishop of Girgenti. Alphonsus wrote to thank him for his bounty, and thus the swindle was discovered, but the correspondence ended in the missionaries going to Sicily.

Chapter XXXVIII

Reformation of the Royal Hospital of Gaeta.—New Publication.—The Sicilian Mission.—The True Spouse of Christ.—The Fishermen.—The Fathers Wrecked.—The Young Calabrian.—His tragic end a fulfilment of Father Liguori's Prophecy.

THERE was a royal hospital at Gaeta for female foundlings, which by mismanagement was reduced to a most miserable condition. The little ones, about four hundred in number, were consigned to the care of the more grown children, and as a necessary consequence of this unfortunate arrangement, everything about the place breathed misery and sin. The king, knowing the zeal of Alphonsus, charged him with the reform of this place, which had already been unsuccessfully attempted by several clergymen.

Our saint shed tears of sorrow on hearing of the unnatural conduct of the mistresses of the institute, once founded by pity, and still liberally furnished with everything necessary; yet, no better than a stable for the body and a hell for the soul. He sent thither Fathers Mazzini, Fiocchi, and Gajano as the best qualified for this difficult undertaking, and after working, not for months, but for years, they succeeded: with the aid of four Sisters of St. Vincent, this wretched asylum was converted into a little paradise, to the delight of our saint and the great satisfaction of the king.

Ever burning with zeal for souls, Alphonsus published (1759) *The Great Means of Prayer,* of which work he himself said, that, he wished to have means to place a copy in the hands of every human being; the neglect of prayer being the great cause of the ruin of those who are lost. This was quickly followed by a learned dissertation entitled *Of the Just Prohibition of Bad Books*. The Marquis Tanucci was displeased that such a work had been published, and immediately sent his emissaries to seize all the copies. But his opposition only served the good cause. The book, previously little known, was now so eagerly sought, that the booksellers raised the price, and, to supply the increasing demand, secretly printed many copies.

His next work was *The True Spouse of Christ,* published in Lent, 1760; an admirable book, full of sublime lessons on Christian virtues, by which all may profit, according to their respective states. This was soon followed by *Reflections and Affections on the Passion of Jesus Christ,* and that useful work known under the name of *Selva,* in which he treats of the sacerdotal dignity, gives directions regarding preaching, and the Sacrament of Penance, and lays down the principal rules of that popular eloquence of which he was so perfect a master. Meanwhile, the powers of hell seemed to have raised every possible storm that could keep the Redemptorist Fathers from Girgenti. They had embarked under a cloudless sky, and were soon in sight of Palermo, but a furious storm threw back their vessel to the Gulf of Naples. They set out again, but were driven from Palermo into the straits of Nocedo. A third voyage was met by a third tempest, and they were dashed between Sardinia and Corsica,—the vessel being so much damaged that the passengers were hopeless of ever landing.

All this war of elements was seen in spirit by the holy Founder, who was heard to cry out, raising his tearful eyes to heaven: “My poor children! my poor children!” The tempest lasted twenty-four hours. On the third day, the vessel, with great difficulty, reached Baja; their safety being an evident miracle wrought by the prayers of the saint.

Alphonsus, like an old soldier who desires to die sword in hand, went to wage war against the enemies of God at Amalfi. The town was ravaged by an epidemic which defied every kind of treatment. A canon having procured an old shirt of Alphonsus, lent it to several of the stricken, and every one whom it touched recovered. Going to and from the church, the canons were obliged to escort him, to save him from the pressure of the crowd that thronged about him.

The nuns of Conca entreated him to give them some instruction; and, as he proceeded to that place by sea, several fishermen complained that the sea no longer supported them, and besought him to bless it. Scarcely had he complied, when the fish appeared in myriads, and they quickly loaded their fishing-crafts.

At the Convent of St. Marcelina, he found one of the pupils, Catharine Spinelli, dangerously ill. “Catherine,” said he, “do you wish to live, or die?” “To live!” said the girl. He made the sign of the cross over her, and said: “You will live, but you must become a saint.” She was instantly cured, and afterwards became a nun of eminent sanctity.

Other retreats, missions, and miracles, were accomplished, and all the gifts of the apostles, “the first fruits of the Spirit” seemed revived in this great missionary. Inflamed with a desire of seeing priests perfect as to the fitting celebration of the holy mysteries, he published a work on the necessity of observing the holy rubrics, replete with salutary instruction on the dispositions with which the Holy Sacrifice should be celebrated.

He published also in the epistolary form, a dissertation, on the manner of preaching Jesus Christ. “Puffed-up orators,” said he, “give out but wind; they think more of displaying their own eloquence than of glorifying Jesus Christ. If they escape hell, they will at least have to get rid of their inflation in purgatory.”

His sermons, possessing as they did, genuine eloquence, continued as usual to people the cloisters, and cause every Christian virtue to bud and blossom in the hearts of his hearers. Once, whilst preaching in the Church of the Holy Ghost, he suddenly exclaimed in a transport: “O, thou who enterest here, and dost flatter thyself that thou canst be saved in the world as well as in a convent,—unhappy that thou art!—how far art thou wandering!—ere long thou shalt come to a deplorable end!” At that moment, a young Calabrian entered the church who had long struggled against the inestimable grace of a religious vocation. He naturally applied to himself, the words of the venerable preacher, yet, he dared to smile at the menace. Scarcely a month elapsed when he was killed by a musket-shot. When dying, he related to a friend the words, which Alphonsus, inspired by the Holy Spirit, had addressed him from the pulpit.

Chapter XXXIX

Alphonsus as a Superior.—Humility.—Health.—Preaching.—Father de Meo’s Sybils and Argonauts.—Confessors.—Example of a rigorist.—Father Rizzi obliged to apologize for an indiscretion.—Poverty and obedience.—Instruction on various matter.—Rules for a Superior.

ALMOST seventy years had passed over the head of the greatest missionary of modern times, and he already believed himself close upon the end of his career. But it was the divine will to preserve him many years yet, that in a higher sphere, he should glorify God by giving to the world a perfect model of a fervent and zealous bishop, as he had successively been a model to laymen, ecclesiastics and missionaries. Before we follow him into this exalted station, we will speak of him in his quality of *Superior* and *Founder* of a religious congregation.

His first care was to inspire his brethren with his own burning zeal for the salvation of souls. “What have we to do in the world,” he would often exclaim, “and why have we entered the Congregation, if not to sacrifice ourselves for the glory of God? We are His special children, and more than all others, we should be foremost in the ranks to fight His battles, since He gave His life for us. The love of Jesus Christ constrains us to love Him, to draw all to His love. I am ready to die with grief when I see a priest indifferent about any thing that concerns God’s honor. Our employment is the same as that exercised by Our Divine Redeemer and His Apostles. Whoever is destitute of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and the zeal of the Apostles is not fit for this ministry.”

The next virtue he required was humility: “Humility,” said he, “makes us respected by the people; it attracts and gains sinners, however haughty and proud they may be.” Having heard once that a missionary had shown a want of submission to a bishop, he sent him directly to make the fullest apology for his conduct. He exacted from the Fathers great humility towards each other, and especially towards Superiors.

Insubordination was a fault inexcusable in his eyes. He was willing that every difficulty the Superior might not have foreseen should be pointed out to him but simply, and without the least display of resistance. “If obedience be wanting,” said he, disorders and confusion will be the result.” He cultivated in his brethren a spirit of mortification and a love of suffering, but he distinguished between effeminate delicacy and a reasonable care of health. “Health,” said he, “is the capital of a missionary; if that fails he is bankrupt.” But he charged the Superior to attend to the health of each, and would allow no discontent to be expressed with reference to food, clothing, or lodging.

He disliked undue familiarity with laymen, and considered idle discourses unworthy of the sacred ministry, He enjoined that in every sermon his Fathers should preach Christ Crucified, and required a simple, popular style, that everyone could understand. “Jesus Christ,” said he, “understood rhetoric better than we, yet, to be the more easily comprehended by the multitude, He chose ordinary comparisons.” One Saturday, Father Alexander Meo, in preaching on the Blessed Virgin, introduced the Sybils and the Argonauts. “What!” he exclaimed, “is it thus they preach here?” He afterwards reproved the preacher severely, and condemned him to three day’s silence, though he was a most exemplary man.

From confessors he exacted great prudence and profound skill, as from their judgment there was no appeal. He was rigid in examining confessors, and, when bishop, if he did not find the candidate fully competent, he refused him faculties. He inculcated the greatest charity and gentleness towards sinners. “Harshness,” said he, “distinguishes the Jansenists, who do more harm than good, and certainly have not the spirit of Jesus Christ, or of the apostolic men whom we honor on our altars. An energetic word is sometimes useful, but it must not be repulsive, and before the penitent withdraws, he must be calmed by kind words, that he may be full of hatred for his sin, but at the same time full of confidence in his confessor.” On another occasion he said:

“If it happen that you feel overpowered by bad humor, leave the confessional immediately, because your irritability would cause some penitents to commit more sacrileges than others would make good confessions.”

He deemed it scandalous to show respect of persons at the confessional, “Charity,” said he, “but not partiality. Ladies of quality will make way for themselves. It is not the confessor’s business to take care of them. He ought to be equally at the service of all, and receive everybody with kindness and gentleness.”

To encourage the timid, and inspire all with a great desire to train souls in the confessional, he said: “The preacher sows, but the confessor gathers, the harvest. The confessional is the touchstone of the true laborer. Whoever does not love the confessional, disregards souls, to whom is applied therein the blood of Jesus Christ. In the sacred tribunal, we gather for ourselves and our penitents; in the pulpit a breath, a vanity, may destroy the merit of our labors.

He insisted that his Father’s should listen patiently to all, however wicked, and if they could not always give absolution, they would at least encourage the poor sinner, point out the means of amendment, and induce them to come back to God. He was especially delighted when he saw his young priests, zealous for abandoned souls. A learned and talented professor, fascinated by the doctrines of the rigorists, was deprived of the faculty of hearing confession by the saint, who had vainly employed every other means of correcting him. He haughtily demanded his dispensation. “My son,” said Alphonsus, “if you abandon the Congregation because you persist in your erroneous opinions, you will suffer awful consequences.” The words were verified. The poor man was attacked with a cancer in the face, after he left, and in an agony of despair, he ran about the streets uttering piteous cries. When near death, he begged with tears to be reinstated in the Congregation, and in consideration of his condition, his prayer was granted.

To inspire his sons with a true sense of humility, he would say: “Humility is necessary in the mission, in the house, at all times and in all places, if we would please God. I beseech God to destroy our Congregation the moment the spirit of pride predominates in it.” One day, a Father chanced to say, “On my honor.” This was a grave fault in the eyes of the saint. At the next conference, he continually repeated, “On my honor.” “Our honor,” said he, “is to be despised and vilified—to become like Jesus Christ, the reproach of me and the outcast of the people. This is all the honor we can claim.”

He never approved of indiscreet peal. Father Ricci, having written to a bishop with whom the people were greatly dissatisfied, to remind him of his duty, the saint wrote to the superior: “Tell Father Ricci, he has done wrong.

He acted through zeal, but he forgot that we are forbidden to meddle with things out of the confessional which may cause embarrassment to others. Let him say three *Ave Marias* as a penance, and when his Lordship comes to the house, he will go to him privately and throw himself at his feet, confessing his indiscretion and asking forgiveness.”

Poverty and obedience he looked upon, as the foundations of the Congregation. Yet, he did not wish to have poverty practiced to such a degree as would be contrary to decency. One day, he noticed on a young cleric a pair of shoes greatly worn. He began to cast such looks from the shoes to the superior, that the latter readily understood his meaning. If he saw any superior negligent in procuring for the subjects what was necessary, urged by a holy zeal, he reprimanded and even chastised him for it. He was particularly displeased when he found superiors indulgent to themselves and stingy with others. “Oh,” he exclaimed, “how many superiors will be damned for having violated the vow of poverty, and ruined charity and the common life.”

Some of the Fathers thought common cloth not durable enough for mantellas, and that the houses would gain by purchasing a better material. “It is we,” he answered, “and not the houses, that have made a vow of poverty; it is we, not the houses, that must take the consequences of the vow. Common cloth humbles and abases, and that is what is required by poverty.”

To inspire his children with a high idea of their vocation, he used to say that vocation and predestination were the same thing, and that having been chosen by God to form part of a rising congregation was a grace, which of itself, required in us a great degree of holiness. “We must, therefore,” he would add, “pray that the Almighty may cause us to understand the value of this grace, for should we fail to correspond to so holy a vocation, our eternal happiness would be risked. God has chosen us to be coadjutors of His Blessed Son, and to rescue souls from the grasp of the devil.”

“We should be most grateful to God,” said he, “for having taken us from the world into his own house, where the truths of faith are constantly put before our minds by meditation, spiritual reading, pious discourses and good example. All these things are great helps to us in difficult positions; whereas, those who are in the world, being constantly occupied with the things of the world, have few good ideas, and many depraved ones, which cause them to fall in slight temptations."

When God called any of his children to heaven, the saint felt mingled joy and sadness. If he wept for the loss of a fellow-laborer, he rejoiced at the translation of a saint. Therefore, he ordained, that whenever death visited his houses, general recreation should take the place of mourning.

He instructed all not to be satisfied with ordinary holiness. "If we do not aim very high," said he, "we shall not easily succeed in reaching the end God has appointed for us. "If a reverse of fortune befell the parents of any of them, he sympathized with their distress, and did not fail to relieve them, despite his great poverty. Some of the fathers judged such charity excessive, but our saint replied: "Charity never falls into excess, and God repays all that is given in His name."

The heart of the most tender father could not feel greater love for his children than Alphonsus did for the students. We are their Fathers," said he, "and the Congregation is their mother. They are the hope of the Congregation, because one day they will replace us, Since they have left their parents to give themselves to God, it is right they should be treated with the greatest charity."

He did not like to see them eager to study what is unnecessary. "True knowledge," said he, "consists in knowing Jesus Christ. Of what use is knowledge to us if its end is not to seek God? We must study, it is true, but our sole aim ought to be to please God, otherwise we may have to expiate the fault by a long purgatory." To inspire his students and novices with fidelity, he was wont to say: "Vocation and perseverance are two distinct graces; God may give us the former in the midst of our infidelities, but we must labor for the grace of perseverance." He required of the novices, humility, obedience and openness of heart; and when he found these dispositions, he felt sure there was nothing to fear. With regard to the novices who became sick, his maxim was that if they were patient and pious, they drew innumerable graces on the Congregation. When a fervent novice was on the point of death, he was not distressed, but if a novice wished to leave on this account, he granted leave with pain. "If the doctors and remedies we have here," said he, cannot restore their health, they will not recover in their parents' house. If God wills their death, it is better they should die in the Congregation than amid the snares of the world."

We will conclude this chapter by transcribing the wise rules Alphonsus laid down for superiors, and by which he guided himself, thereby becoming a perfect superior:

1. A superior ought to lead an exemplary life, for if he does not practice what he teaches, his government will be useless or dangerous.

2. The superior should constantly labor for God, and be persuaded that he will often meet with ingratitude from man.

3. A superior who is too severe, makes the subjects imperfect and deceitful, because they will act only through servile fear.

4. Pride makes a superior odious to all; it hinders his own sanctification and that of his subjects, as well as the preservation of order in the institute.

5. The superior should possess heroic patience. He must bear all kinds of labor, fatigue, and contradictions, and always appear calm, and be affable towards all.

6. The superior should give everyone a reception full of charity and affection, and be all to all on every occasion.

7. The superior should show the same love for all, and assist all alike in their spiritual and temporal wants.

8. The superior who does not overcome his antipathies, is hasty in his judgments and commits many faults.

9. The superior ought not to be so presumptuous as to govern by his own light, only; he always needs prayer and counsel.

10. The superior should provide for the spiritual and temporal wants of his subjects, and relieve them with all the care of a father and a brother.

11. The superior ought to be vigilant as to observance of the rule; he must therefore, inquire into everything with great exactitude.

12. The superior must not judge things hastily, but weigh them well, and inquire and reflect, before giving any decision.

13. The superior should punish offences against the rule, but must first give repeated warnings, which should always be accompanied by charity.

14. The superior ought to be firm with the incorrigible, and take care to prevent the contagion of bad example.

15. The superior must be just, exemplary, prudent, affable and vigilant, if he would not undergo a terrible judgment at the tribunal of God.

Chapter XL

The Congregation thirty years after its foundation.—Saintly members.—The vacant See of St. Agatha.—Father Liguori selected to fill it.—He declines the honor.—His intense love for his Congregation.—A command from Rome.—“The voice of the Pope is the voice of God.”—Terrible agitation of the Saint.—His heroic obedience.—He prophesies that he will return to die among his brethren.—Touching meeting of the Saint and F. Fatigati.—The episcopal ring and cross.—The Saint at Rome.

THE reputation which the Congregation had gained was a subject of consolation to the holy Founder, but its zeal and fervor filled up the measure of his joy. The rule was everywhere in full force; the love of holy poverty was universal; resistance and excuses were unknown; even the intentions of superiors were held in reverence.

The old were models for the young, and the young excited the emulation of the old. His children died saintly deaths; Father Sportelli and Brother Gerald are still invoked by devout clients with no small profit.

Such was the Congregation thirty years after its foundation, when God saw fit to deprive it of its head.

The episcopal see of St. Agatha, had become vacant, and the succession to it was solicited by at least sixty candidates, among whom were bishops, and even archbishops. Clement XIII, embarrassed by the number of competitors, consulted the cardinals, and Cardinal Spinelli gave advice to choose a man whose merits surpassed those of all the rest, and proposed Father Liguori, who, from the lustre of his origin, science, and sanctity, enjoyed an esteem as general as it was well merited.

The news of the Pontiff’s decision was hailed with unqualified delight. Several distinguished persons who had known the saint in Naples, congratulated his Holiness on having raised a saint and a scholar to the mitre.

But little did our humble Father Liguori suspect what was going on in his regard. One day he remarked to Mgr. Borgia, that one of the greatest graces he had ever received, was that of having escaped the peril of being bishop; “a peril,” he said, “he should have had some difficulty in avoiding had he remained with his family.” Just then a courier arrived bearing letters which announced to him his election to the bishopric of St. Agatha.

Father Liguori was thunderstruck; he could not speak. His sons hastened to his room and found him silent, agitated, and bathed in tears. He, however, became calm, feeling sure that his refusal would end the matter, and that the election was a mere mark of esteem the Pope wished to confer upon him. He remembered how easily he had got rid of the crozier Palerno.

He wrote to thank the Pope for his goodness, but enlarged on his own incapacity, his great age, his habitual infirmity, the vow he had made never to accept any dignity, and the scandal his acceptance would give the Congregation. When the courier was gone, Alphonsus said to Father Corsano: “This storm has cost me an hour and five ducats,” alluding to the money he had given the messenger; he then added that he would not give the Congregation for all the kingdoms of the Grand Turk.

At the same time he wrote to every influential ecclesiastic he was acquainted with, insisting particularly on the vow that should retain him among his companions, and bringing forward every other reason that could be adduced by a man determined not to accept. Bishop Borgia in answer to one of these letters brought him a confidential communication from Cardinal Spinelli; stating that the Pope wished him to accept the bishopric immediately, to relieve him of his embarrassment, but that he should be at liberty to renounce it afterwards. The saint was in consternation at this. Persuaded that there was now no hope but in God, he made his brethren pray that the Lord would deign to exempt him from a punishment he deserved for his sins. He sought prayers on all sides, and redoubled his penances, neglecting no means of averting what he considered the heaviest of crosses.

He remained balancing between hope and fear, often repeating: “May the holy will of God be done.” “If the courier comes,” said he to the Fathers, “do not let me see him; he would seem to me like an executioner, axe in hand.” At Rome, several distinguished persons interceded for him, dwelling particularly on his advanced age, and his enfeebled frame; and they had all but succeeded, when the Pope, without giving any reason, ordered the Cardinal-Auditor to expedite the letters of command, silencing all objections by simply saying: “*I will it.*”

Spinelli amazed at this sudden change, bowed his head saying: “God wills it. The voice of the Pope is the voice of God.” Alphonsus awaited the result with extreme agitation of mind. When Fathers Ferrara and Mazzini after having made him recite an *Ave Maria*, made the worst known to him, he raised his eyes to heaven, bent his head in token of submission, and said with David; “*I was dumb, because Thou hast done it;* it is the will of God; God drives me out of the Congregation for my sins.” Then turning towards the Fathers with an expression of unutterable tenderness, he said: “Do not forget me. Ah, must we separate, after having loved each other for thirty years!” The Fathers said, to console him, that there were friends at Rome who would make the motives of his renunciation prevail. “That is not possible,” said the saint, “the Pope has declared his will in absolute terms, I must obey.” At these words, he fell into convulsions, and for five hours remained speechless. When consciousness returned, he wrote to the Cardinal-Auditor and to the Nuncio, that he was ready to submit to the will of the Sovereign Pontiff.

All Rome admired the humility of the Saint in refusing the bishopric, but his prompt obedience gave still greater edification. When Don Hercules heard that his brother had accepted the mitre, he rejoiced, and immediately offered his services. “My dear brother,” replied the bishop-elect, “I have been so stunned by the command of the Pope, that I have lost my senses. I thank you for your offer of advancing money. I was about to inform the Pope of my poverty, in the hope that my indigence should plead in my favor; but Cardinal Spinelli, who was to have done me this good office, has done just the contrary. You rejoice, I can only weep. Sleep and appetite have fled from me. A fever seized me this morning, and this evening it is not gone. I ask myself why is my old age to be afflicted by the painful labors of the episcopate, and why the Pope who never gives such commands, adopts a tone of such severity with me? To conclude, may the will of God be done; He desires the sacrifice of my life, I submit to His will.”

It being customary in Naples, that bishops should possess in the city, houses suitable to their dignity, Alphonsus wrote to his brother: “As regards the house, I will not charge myself with much expense. One or two rooms on the first floor will be enough to receive the people who may wish to speak to me.” To the lay brother who was to act as major-domo in this magnificent establishment, he wrote: “Four straw chairs will suffice. If I have accepted the bishopric out of obedience, I must follow the example of saintly bishops: do not speak to me about a carriage or livery. What good will it do me to act the great lord in Naples?” Bishops Borgia and Volpe, and his director Father Villani, having shown him the necessity of his having a carriage, he consented, and wrote to his brother: “Since I must have a carriage, I wish to learn first, whether my predecessor has not left one, because I should get such a one much cheaper. I shall make such a short stay in Naples, that I shall not need to buy a carriage and mules at once; I can use the carriage of the Cordeliers during my visit.”

The heroic effort Father Liguori made to obey the Holy Father, brought on a fever so violent that his life was despaired of. One thing alone consoled him: it was the hope of re-entering the Congregation. “I believe,” he said, “that after the divine wrath is appeased, the Pope will compassionate my sorrows, and choose a more worthy successor for Mgr. Danza. Then he will send me back, to die within these very walls which I am now compelled to leave.”

The illness of the saint afflicted the Holy Father, who was obliged in consequence to defer his journey. Don Hercules, hearing of his dangerous condition, hastened to Nocera, bringing one of the first physicians of Naples. When interrogated as to his state, the holy invalid replied: “I am under the hand of God.” Several of his religious hastened to visit him. On seeing them, he wept and said: “You have come to expel me from the Congregation.” When Don Hercules endeavored to console him, he cut him short saying: “I must accomplish the divine will.”

The submission of Father Liguori to the will of the Pope caused great joy at St. Agatha, but the news of his serious illness spread consternation among the inhabitants. In union with their clergy, they offered up prayers for his restoration. Public supplications were also offered to God in all the houses of the Congregation, that God would spare him who had been so long their cherished Father.

As his mind became calm, his body regained its strength. On Easter day he resolved to go to his bishopric. He set out for Naples in a miserable conveyance, accompanied by Father Villani. On the Saturday before his departure, he had preached, according to his custom, in honor of Holy Mary. On leaving Nocera, he begged all present not to forget him in their prayers, that the Lord Jesus and His Blessed Mother might aid him to bear his heavy burden. “Do not grieve, my brethren,” he added, “because I am going away; I promise to return here to end my days.”

He stopped a few moments at the house of the Garganas, a family greatly devoted to him. “I go to Rome,” said he, feeling sure that representations which were powerless at a distance, will be favorably heard when I am on the spot. The Holy Father will let me die among my brethren when he sees this miserable carcase of mine.”

At Naples, being obliged to pay his respects to the ministers and magistrates, and beset at home by crowds who came to compliment him, he was literally miserable. “Recommend me very particularly to Jesus Christ, and tell the rest to join you,” he wrote to Father Mazzini, “for if I do not lose my senses now I shall never lose them. Unhappy that I am! I left the world in my youth, and in my old age I am obliged to return to it.”

Very touching was the meeting between our saint and F. Fatigati. Some years before, having heard that this friend was going to be elected bishop, he said to him impressingly: “Father, do not accept the episcopate; if you do, you will be damned.” When they met, they were mutually silent; they wept together, the features of Alphonsus showing the bitterness of his heart, while those of Fatigati were eloquent of the compassion he felt for his friend.

In Father Liguori, the poor religious was more conspicuous than the bishop. His episcopal ring cost a few carlins; it was adorned with a bit of glass; the brilliants in his pectoral cross were false. “Oh, what a heavy cross you bring me!” he cried out to the jeweler, “so heavy alas, that I know nothing more overwhelming.”

He set out for Rome, accompanied by Father Villani, April 19. At Cisterna, he visited Cardinal Spinelli. “My lord,” said he, you have not acted fairly towards me.” His eminence related all that had passed at Rome, and urged him to take up his cross courageously, adding: “My lord, be of good courage, for God has certainly called you to this bishopric.”

His first visit, on arriving at Rome, was to the Tomb of St. Peter. For over an hour, he remained before the altar in an ecstasy of devotion. All Rome seemed prepossessed in his favor. The pious workers wished him to make their house his home, and the Prince of Piombino placed his palace and carriage at his disposal. The latter was accepted on account of his age and infirmities. “I have no quality which in the least fits me for a bishop,” said he, to the Abbé Bruni who visited him, “I submit because the Pope commands, and God wills that I should obey His Holiness.” “I have come to Rome,” said he, to Abbé Troppi, to let the Pope see that I am but a machine out of order.”

He excused himself courteously from most of the invitations he received. The Fathers of the Mission having invited him to dinner, he said: “Please give my dinner to the poor of Jesus Christ for me, that he may show me his holy will distinctly while I am in Rome.”

Cardinal Arsini who had invited several distinguished persons to meet him, would take no excuse. He was told he must put on a court-dress, but he presented himself in the habit of his Order, saying: “I have come as I was, your Eminence, and I know you are ashamed of me.” “Well,” returned the cardinal, smiling, my wish is that you should shame me,” and heartily embracing him, he led him to his cabinet.

Receiving and returning mere visits of ceremony was irksome work to our saint. “My sojourn in Rome,” wrote he to Count Hercules, “seems like a thousand years. O how I long to be free from all their tiresome ceremonials.” As the Pope was at Civita Vecchia, he resolved to visit the holy House at Loretto. Father Villani tried to dissuade him from this additional fatigue. My good mother Mary will strengthen me,” he replied. “Nothing will hurt me if I have the satisfaction of visiting the house in which the Eternal Word became man for me.”

This journey was a real pilgrimage. He commenced before daybreak a long meditation. This was followed by the canonical hours, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin, the Rosary and Litany. He then made his servants recite the Rosary with uncovered heads. He said many prayers for the souls in purgatory, and filled up the remaining time in singing pious hymns and in holy converse with his companions.

Every day he celebrated Mass, making a long preparation and a still longer thanksgiving. Other spiritual exercises he undertook during the evening, and, on arriving at the inn, he said Matins and Lauds for the next day. His attendants were humility and poverty. He ate at the same table with the drivers and servants, as if he were one of them.

During the three weeks of his stay at Loretto, he experienced ineffable consolation. It is here he would rapturously exclaim, *that the Word was* *made flesh!* Here Mary held Him in her arms! During the twenty-one nights he never went to bed, as was testified by his servant who watched him through the crevices of his door.

The pilgrims crowded around the saintly man, and he relieved spiritually and corporally as their respective necessities required. The days he passed at this holy place were days of intense spiritual joy; and it may be said that, when he withdrew, he left his heart behind him.

A heavy rain fell the night after his departure, and next morning, leaving Marino in a boat, the saint fell into the swollen Tarni, and disappeared in the midst of its waters. The servant threw himself into the stream and succeeded in saving him, almost miraculously. Mgr. Acqua, Bishop of Spoleto, being informed of the approach of his saintly colleague, sent his carriage to meet him. This prelate was then confined to bed, and in great mental anguish regarding the state of his diocese. He opened his heart to one whose writings he admired so much, telling him of all his trials. Our saint consoled the holy bishop, who passed most of the night with him, blessing God for being permitted to converse with a man so filled with the divine spirit.

Alphonsus reached Rome just as his Holiness had returned from Civita Vecchia. He immediately went to do homage to Christ’s Vicar; as he bent to his feet, the Pope raised him up, and, embracing him, made him sit beside him. A second time the holy man prostrated himself before him, begging with tears to be exempted from a charge for which his age, his infirmities, and his incapacity, rendered him unfit.

“Obedience,” answered the Pope, “enables one to work miracles. Trust in God, and He will assist you.” He then questioned him upon the state of Naples, both in its political and its spiritual relations, and for an hour and a half they continued to converse.

When visiting the Cardinal-Secretary, he would have remained in the ante-chamber till all who had asked audiences were satisfied. But a bishop who happened to know him came in, and immediately informed the gentleman-usher who had taken him for a beggar.

The Pope conferred with him on many affairs of importance to the Church, and spoke of him with the greatest admiration, so that it was rumored he would be made cardinal. In one of these interviews, the conversation turned on frequent communion; and Alphonsus mentioned that he had been opposed at Naples on that subject by several ecclesiastics more rigorous than devout. The Pope charged him to refute his adversaries. Our saint therefore published a treatise on the subject, which the Holy Father received with great satisfaction.

When he was asked what treatise he would be examined on, he left it to their own choice; but as the examiners insisted that he should name some, he named *De Muto* and *De Legibus*. On the eve of the examination, the thought of the burden about to be imposed on him brought on a sick headache which deprived him of rest and appetite. One of the questions proposed was: “Is it lawful to wish for the episcopate?” Alphonsus begged the questioner to raise his voice a little, whereupon Cardinal Gallo provoked a smile from the Pontiff and the assistants, by remarking: Holy Father, he does not hear because he does not want to hear.”

When, at the conclusion, a cardinal suggested that he should return thanks to the Pope, he feigned not to understand him. The suggestion being repeated, he said: “Most Holy Father, since you have deigned to elevate me to the episcopate, pray God that I may not lose my soul.”

On the 10th of June, he was consecrated in the Minerva by Cardinal Rossi, assisted by two bishops. That was the saddest day he ever saw. He confessed that he had had two great battles in life: one when he had to struggle against the tenderness of a father who clasped him tightly in his arms; the other, when he was forced to be consecrated bishop. “Then,” said he, “I was terrified to think of the burden to be imposed on me, and the account I was one day to give of it to God.”

Someone hinting that if he wished to wear a *calotte* at the altar, he must obtain a brief: “A fine proposition truly,” he exclaimed, “so I must apply for the privilege of showing less respect to Jesus Christ!”

The Fathers, fearing for the Congregation after his departure, besought the Pope to allow him to remain Rector-Major of the institute. This favor the Holy Father, after some demur, granted with great kindness, saying to Father Villani: “I desire that your Congregation should prosper, and be supplied with subjects; nor do I intend it should suffer any harm from the elevation of its founder, for the good it has effected in the Church and in the kingdom of Naples is a great consolation to me.” This helped to alleviate the sorrow of Alphonsus who had believed himself cast out of the Congregation for his sins.

The Holy Father desired the new bishop to come to a private audience on six or seven occasions. At his last visit, he loaded him with kindness and seemed unable to separate from him. He recommended himself and the Church to his prayers, and in his turn Alphonsus besought him not to forget before God the poor bishop of St. Agatha and his diocese. The good Clement XIII gave him his bulls gratuitously, and the Secretary of the Consistory defrayed all his other expenses.

Before leaving the Eternal City, the bishop went to Frascati to take leave of the Prince of Piombino who had testified the greatest respect and veneration for his person. He always dressed in the habit of the Congregation, wearing the rosary at his girdle, and a broad-brimmed hat. A person of high rank once said to him: “In retaining the habit of your institute, you have given a most edifying example here.” In short, such was his life at Rome, that the Pope, with supernatural discernment and the spirit of prophecy, exclaimed: “On the death of Bishop Liguori we shall have to honor another saint in the Church.”

Chapter XLI

Bishop Liguori leaves Rome.—In Naples again.—The priest of Arienzo.—The equipage of the saint.—His shoe-buckles.—At Nocera.—His intense grief.—His entrance into his diocese.—Green pears.—The new Bishop will not give sumptuous repasts.—His Rule of Life.—His circumspectness regarding women of ill repute.—Meals.

ON the 21st of June, after celebrating Mass at the altar of St. Aloysius at the *Gesu*, Bishop Liguori left Rome. Poverty continued to be his inseparable companion. Though a bishop, he ate with the drivers, and would allow no distinction to be made in his favor. He reached Naples on the 25th. The first nobility of the capital hastened to compliment him. He visited the regents of the young King Ferdinand, and was invited to the royal table. To a minister, the Marquis of Marco, he said: “I go into a diocese somewhat in disorder, and each one will wish to justify his conduct. I pray God they may be really able to do so; but I entreat you to regard the honor of God and the welfare of souls.” “Do not be distressed,” rejoined the minister, “and if you require the king’s support, be assured you will obtain it.” In drives through the city, he ordered the coachmen never to seek precedence, but to give way on all occasions, even to a groom. The religious of the principal convents invited him to their churches, but he was able to gratify only a few of them. With the concurrence of the cardinal, he gave the sacrament of Confirmation to a daughter of his cousin, Francisco Cavaliere, in the chapel of the Cavaliere palace.

Among other visitors came a priest of Arienzo, all curled and perfumed, whose buckles covered his shoes. “My son,” said the bishop, “these buckles are not becoming to a priest, and that head-dress does not at all suit you. If you act thus, who should be an example to the people, what will men of the world do?” This correction was taken in good part and produced amendment.

Cardinal Sersale received our saint with the tenderest proofs of friendship, and said, smiling: “You are caught at last.” “Obedience has so willed it,” returned the bishop. “But you have assumed the livery of a cardinal?" continued his Eminence, looking at his equipage. "It was not I who ordered it, but Hercules," was the reply. He wished it to be of a dingy ash-color, but the count had it made crimson on a blue ground! Looking on his shoe-buckles, the cardinal proceeded: "These buckles are superb; you have no doubt bought them at Rome at a dear rate?" The mean little iron buckles had not cost five cents.

He arrived at Nocera on a Saturday, and preached, according to custom, on the Blessed Virgin. His audience melted into tears. The Fathers, knowing that many visitors would crowd around him, gave him a commodious room with a cell adjoining. One evening, passing before his old sleeping-place, he exclaimed: "O my cell! formerly it was my consolation to see thee, now it is my affliction!" He was so overcome that he could not refrain from weeping.

"My brethren," said he with the utmost tenderness, as he took leave of the Fathers, do not forget me. I go into exile far from my dear Congregation."—He could say no more, for sobs choked his utterance—his emotion was extreme.

As the burning heats of summer still continued, the doctors of Nocera advised him to defer his journey; but considering that a good shepherd gives his life for his sheep, he set out immediately, saying: "A bishop should never think of his own life, but should sacrifice himself for the souls confided to him." They also counselled him to reside some time at Arienzo, on account of the comfortable house and salubrious air he would have found there; but he would rest only at St. Agatha, the place where God had fixed his abode.

Crowds lined the roads as he entered his diocese, on Sunday, July 11, eager to receive his first benediction, and he was welcomed with such demonstrations of affection that he wept with emotion. His entry into his episcopal city was a complete ovation. The peals of cannon and the acclamations of a joyous people rent the air, and the streets were so thronged as to be almost impassable. Affected by the pious eagerness of his new children to participate in his first benediction, he descended from his carriage, entered the parish church, and after a short act of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, comforted them by a simple pathetic discourse.

He was received by the regular and secular clergy, and a number of distinguished inhabitants of the town and diocese. The canons, discovering that he had no hat or green cap, presented that which was placed on the tomb of the late bishop. After the Blessed Sacrament had been exposed, he prostrated himself for a long time with his face on the ground which he bathed with tears. When the *Te Deum* was chanted he descended from the throne, and delivered an exhortation in which his love and zeal were equally shown forth. The assistants shed tears of joy, and thanked God for having given them such a pastor. “We have a saintly bishop—we have a saint among us,” was repeated on all sides by his flock as they left the church; so wonderful was the impression made by the sight of his poverty and humility, and the words of his burning zeal.

During his first sermon he had been attacked by an obstinate fit of coughing, upon which one of the canons jocosely remarked that it would soon be necessary to elect a new vicar-capitular, as Monsignore would not be able to stand another similar attack. This speech being related to Alphonsus, he jestingly retorted: “The canon does not know that green pears fall more easily than ripe ones.” Shortly after, this ecclesiastic, then in the prime of life and in vigorous health, died suddenly.

This evening (Sunday July 11) he returned quantities of provisions sent him by the wealthier people of the town; giving money to the servants, and expressing gratitude for their kindness. Later in the week, the Provincial of the Dominicans sent him several choice dishes, but he declined all. The Conventual Fathers sent him a basket of little cheeses, with a quantity of sweetmeats and wax tapers. He took one of the cheeses and sent back all the rest. The secretary in consideration of Count Hercules and several distinguished guests, having provided an elegant repast, “God forgive you,” said the holy prelate, what have you done? I have not come here to give sumptuous suppers; I do not wish to treat you harshly, but let me have no more of this extravagance. When poor people are starving, it does not become us to make such good cheer.”

His austerities, far from abating, became more severe than ever. He chose the plainest and most inconvenient room for himself, and even the very first night of his arrival did not retire to his empty paillasse on boards, till he had severely disciplined himself.

Finding the kitchen garden destitute of trees and vegetables, he ordered a brother to plant a number, as if it were spring. The brother obeyed cheerfully, though not without representing that it was not the proper season. Everyone was surprised to see that all throve wonderfully well.

His rule of life was this: As soon as he arose, he took a severe discipline. Then followed half an hour’s meditation with the household, the grand vicar alone being free to absent himself. The canonical hours recited, he prepared for mass, which being over, he heard a mass of thanksgiving. He next gave audience to all who desired it, and to relieve them of the tedium of the antechamber, he desired his servant to usher in immediately every person, however poor. Pastors, vicars, and confessors could always enter unannounced. “These are my privileged ones,” said he, “they must not suffer any restraint.” Should no audience be asked, he began to compose or dictate, for, so avaricious was he of his time, that he could not bear to lose a moment.

The furniture of his room was plain and scanty, the chief decorations being the crucifix and a picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel. People soon learned that he was unwilling to waste time. If after hearing what they had to say and giving counsel, they did not retire, he would say: “Now then, let us not lose time,” or, “Recommend me to Jesus and Mary.” If dealing with people whom he could not with propriety dismiss, the constraint he suffered was sometimes depicted on his countenance.

If ever he had to reprimand women of loose behavior, he wished to have some member of his household present. When he went to the Church, he wrapped his right hand in his handkerchief, and held the left in the opening of his cassock. Should a women offer to kiss his hand, he would say: “Kiss the habit, that will suffice, my child.”

As bishop, our saint presided at high mass, vespers and the canonical hours—no indisposition hindered him; he was known to officiate when seized by fever, and when from the effects of the painful remedies applied to his distempers, he trembled from head to foot.

During meals, each of his household read in turn, generally from the life of St. Charles Borromeo. The time he passed at dinner and recreation did not exceed an hour and a half. At dessert, he conversed with the grand-vicar on the affairs of the diocese, or on some point of devotion, or received those who had not been able to speak to him in the morning, especially if they were poor, or messengers. After dinner he took some rest; twenty minutes or half an hour sufficed for him. He never neglected to say before lying down the Five Psalms in honor of the Name of Mary, a devotion he had practiced from his youth. He was so particular in turning his time to good account, that he often studied, instead of taking this little siesta, which he needed so much.

Chapter XLII

The Lives of the Saints.—Pious exercises.—The prelate's household.—The diocese in a lamentable condition.—Extraordinary zeal of the saint.—His last tooth extracted.—He officiates pontifically.—Sad events.—Mildness of the saint.—His Firmness.—Funeral of an excommunicated man.

OUR holy bishop attached great importance to the reading of the Lives of the Saints. "The example of the saints," said he, "encourages us and excites us to do good." He never omitted to employ half an hour each day in this exercise, as he had done in the Congregation. He liked above all to study, the lives of sainted prelates, among others, the Lives of the Venerable Bartholomew of the martyrs, of St. Francis de Sales, and of Mgr. Cavalieri, Bishop of Troia, his maternal uncle.

On feast days, and especially in Lent, he instructed the children and taught them the catechism. He was too ardent a lover of God and man to be unmindful of the works of mercy. He visited the poor and sick every evening. He was particularly attentive to ecclesiastics who might be unwell, regarding it as an indispensable duty to comfort them.

At half-past five, the bell rang for the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and he daily discoursed to the people for half an hour, to inspire them with sentiments of faith and love towards Jesus in this mystery. On these occasions, he introduced hymns full of piety and unction, giving out the tone himself and singing with the people. A doctor warned him that this weakened his chest, but he replied: "I must make the people like these hymns to disgust them with dangerous songs."

In the evening he gave audience again, and distributed alms, then said matins and lauds, followed by half an hour's meditation with the lay-brother. In winter he worked till nine or ten, but in summer he assembled his household early, for rosary, litany, examen, acts of faith hope and charity. All who happened to be in his house had to assist at these devotions; even prelates, princes, and great lords were not exempt. Supper was next served, after which the bishop conversed a while with the grand-vicar and others, on affairs of his diocese. When all had retired, the saint resumed his literary occupations or continued in prayer. For a long time he took no supper but a glass of water, and Father Buonapane attested that he regularly employed sixteen hours a day in prayer, study, and work.

The family of the prelate included a priest who filled the offices of secretary, steward, and almoner, one servant, a watchman who did the work of groom and cook, besides the vicar-general and Brother Antony.

The servants were obliged to assist at Mass daily, and to approach the sacrament every fortnight. Gaming was forbidden them, public houses still more strictly; in a word, he desired that the members of his household should be irreproachable. Regarding their moral conduct, he was extremely exact. He made it a rule never to receive a servant who was not married, and who had not his wife at St. Agatha. He incessantly reflected on that maxim of the Apostle: “He who knows not how to govern his own house is not fit to rule the church of God.”

Alphonsus found the diocese in a lamentable condition. On the Sunday after his arrival, he began the spiritual exercises for the clergy, and on the evening of the same day, he opened a mission for the people. This sanctified St. Agatha: the sacraments were frequented, the Blessed Sacrament and the Holy Virgin became objects of great devotion, and every evening saw the church filled with fervent worshippers.

Everyone was surprised to see a man laden with years and infirmities subject himself to such incessant labor. “We prayed God to send us a good bishop,” said a dean, “and he has heard us, but Monsignore will kill himself.” The grand-vicar was reproached for allowing a bishop who had cost his flock so many prayers and tears, to shorten his days by excess of work. And his confessor was appealed to, to moderate the zeal of this saintly penitent, whose *love* allowed him no repose.

As often happened to him before, he began to suffer such violent pain from toothache that he could take no rest. Some suggested that a Neapolitan dentist should be sent for, but he would not hear of it: “Have we not a barber?” he asked. “Let us be patient; God wills that I should employ the people of my own diocese.” The barber having been drinking all night was unable to present himself till morning. The secretary advancing to hold him, he pressed his crucifix to his lips saying: “What better support can I have than He who suffered such pain for me?” He bore the extraction without the least word of complaint. He had now only one tooth, and as that troubled him considerably, he determined to relinquish it, but it was removed only with the greatest difficulty. “Oh,” he exclaimed, “how firmly it was fixed in!” Then turning to the barber, he said, gaily: “Signor, for the future you will have no more of my custom.”

Mgr. Liguori celebrated pontifically at St. Agatha for the first time, on the Feast of the Annunciation, the title of his cathedral. He obtained of the Pope a plenary indulgence for all who should be present, or visit the cathedral on that day, on the usual conditions. From morning till night, the cathedral was thronged. He attained the same favor for his episcopal visitations. He was greatly consoled by the success of his first labors, yet there was a gloomy side to the picture: “I am well,” he wrote to the Fathers of Nocera, “and thanks to God, our labors are fruitful.” But he wrote to Father Villani: “I am full of anxiety for my church, the spouse which God has-given me.”

The saint had not yet been able to convert all. To a canon who for many years had given scandal, he showed unalterable meekness. Throwing himself at his feet, he presented the crucifix, and said with tears: “My son, if you will not obey me as your bishop, be converted for the sake of Jesus Christ, who died for you and for me.”

But the unhappy man was insensible to everything except the gratification of his sinful passions. Alphonsus sent several good people to reason with him, but without the least success. Seeing that meekness and gentleness only hardened him in sin, the saint threatened to recur to the royal authority. This so exasperated the culprit that he almost used personal violence towards the bishop.

Mildness was equally unsuccessful with a beneficiary at Majano. Hearing that the mother of the object of his passion had appealed to Alphonsus, he fired against the door of the house, killing her, and wounding a little child. Alphonsus then applied to the king, and the two culprits were imprisoned. The relations of this person used all their influence to conciliate the bishop, who, in consequence, sought for someone to inform them of the impossibility of yielding to their unreasonable demands. Happening to call a chaplain who was vested in choir-dress, he said in an excited tone: “Take off these things.” At these words the chaplain fainted and fell at his feet. Our saint quickly understood the cause of his terror. Being engaged in evil courses, he thought himself arrested like the other: “Two pigeons are taken with one snare," remarked Alphonsus; "the finger of God is here let us pray Him to perfect what he has begun." This poor man became so sincere a penitent, that some years after, the bishop restored his faculties. One day, Alphonsus sent for the other delinquent, and said: "My dear canon, it is not you I punish but your sin. I love your soul, and cannot consent that it should be lost. Remember that you have a soul, and that there is a God." The excessive sweetness, and tender paternal admonition of the saint, were unexpectedly rewarded. By degrees, the hard heart softened. He often sent him books of devotion and pictures of Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother. Finally this poor sinner also became a sincere penitent.

There was in the diocese a monastery of four religious whose conduct was anything but regular. They laughed at the saint when cited before his episcopal court, and when he complained to the provincial, the latter defended them. The saint was sternness itself on this occasion: "Your Reverence," said he, "must then order your subjects out of my diocese, otherwise I shall call in the secular power." This menace had the desired effect.

In the first mission, a woman whose life was openly scandalous was so touched by contrition that she publicly confessed her sins in church, and begged pardon of the people for the scandal she had given them. To the inexpressible sorrow of the bishop, she again fell into sin, and the accomplice being admonished by the saint, openly threatened him. The king was informed of it, which so provoked the wretch that he hired a troop of brigands and would have proceeded to extremity had not a gentleman dissuaded him. When the bishop heard of this, he said calmly: "He can assassinate me, if he likes; well! he will only give me the crown of martyrdom." The woman was finally banished the diocese. The gentleman being obliged to fly, afterwards stealthily returned, and remained concealed in his own house. Our saint feigned ignorance of the matter, and in the end had the satisfaction of seeing his meekness and clemency triumph, for a day came when the wretched man cast himself at his bishop's feet, and consoled his loving heart by the sincerity of his repentance as much as he had formerly grieved him by his scandalous conduct.

The sentiments inspired by these occurrences were productive of salutary effects. A still more deplorable event cast a gloom over the people and their zealous bishop. A young liberated galley-slave was living in crime at St.

Agatha, and being frequently reprimanded, despised all charitable warnings. At last the bishop referred the case to the magistrate. The hapless creature was seized in the house of his accomplice, and resisting the officers of justice, was killed on the spot. His corpse was placed on a mule, between four lighted torches, and carried out of the town to be thrown into a ditch.

The blessing of heaven followed all the acts of the saint. Only God could have enabled him to change this field full of weeds into a flourishing garden of the church.

Chapter XLIII

Episcopal visitation.—The Seminary.—Judicious Regulations made by the saint.—His rigid discipline.—Examples.—His severe but just censures of Genovesi.—He prohibits the use of his work in the Seminary.

ALPHONSUS began his episcopal visitation in the town and adjacent districts, "Why put off till to-morrow," said he, "that which can be corrected to-day?" when some persons would dissuade him, "it is wrong to temporize with abuses." He convoked several distinguished ecclesiastics to advice with him regarding the interests of his diocese. The seminary was the principal object of the first visitation: "All my hope of sanctifying my diocese rests on the seminary," said he, "if that does not second me, all my trouble will be of no avail."

He found it populous enough in scholars, but all were not according to his heart. He therefore ordered a general examination at which he assisted in person, and then gave vacation earlier than usual.

Vacation over, he wrote to all the pupils telling them that if they wished to reenter the seminary, they should each address him a letter to that effect. Thus he was able to make his choice: the pupils were decimated, so to say; a proceeding painful enough to the rejected subjects, though they soon appreciated the wisdom of their bishop, and were consoled more speedily than were their friends and relations. The seminary buildings wore rather the aspect of a prison, being confined, unhealthy, and subject to a very plague of troublesome insects in summer. He summoned architects from Naples to repair them, but instead of wasting much funds in repairing, he judged it best to have them pulled down, and replaced by the present spacious buildings.

For the government of the seminary, he established new rules, so full of wisdom and prudence that other bishops adopted them. Don Lucas who had been head of the institute for years was more than an octogenarian, and for that, and other reasons, little suited to so arduous an undertaking; but, unwilling to hurt the feelings of the poor old priest, he confirmed him as president for life, and gave him a coadjutor in the person of Father Caputo, a Dominican, and master in theology. Nothing was spared to procure good teachers. He abolished the custom of giving the office of prefect to a student, thinking that such an office required rather an exemplary priest. For porter he chose a diligent man, full of the fear of God. “If death enters us by the windows,” said he, “it enters seminaries by doors.” Alphonsus dismissed a porter for no other fault than having gone out without leave from the president.

The autumn vacations were shortened, and replaced by innocent recreations and feasts. “A month of vacation,” said he, “is enough to destroy all that has been gained with much labor during the year; he found the terms reasonable, but he would not allow the scholars to be charged if they happened to be removed through sickness or any other cause; and it was with difficulty that he consented to the seminary’s receiving money for the month of vacation, though the custom was universal.

He did not wish to see any distinction as to food, between the rector, the professors, and the young men, but ordained that all should fare equally well, and he himself frequently went to the college to examine whether good, nutritious food was served up, whether all was clean and neat, and he was very particular as to the quality of the bread and wine. On one of these occasions, he found that the bread was not good. He immediately reprimanded the superior and housekeeper, and ordered that all the bread in the house should be given away. Whenever he officiated pontifically, he provided sweetmeats for the seminarists. Indeed he sometimes sent his own cook to see that all was right in the kitchen department, but if the converse of “practice makes perfect” be true, the visit of Mgr. Liguori’s cook could not much advance the benevolent object his master had in view in sending him to superintend.

He ordained that printed books should be used, instead of dictating the lessons—Italian poetry and romances were prohibited. Greek, he did not deem necessary: “It is very good in the East,” said he, “but for us in the West, Latin is what we want. My diocese requires good confessors, who may aid me in saving the souls of the poor country people.” However, he wished as much Greek to be studied as would enable the pupils to understand certain passages that occur in the philosophical and theological course.”

He did not admit day scholars, saying: “They serve as messengers for the seminarists, which is dangerous to the morals of both parties.” He delighted to listen to the rehearsals, and took part in debates and discussions. Once a month, theses were publicly maintained in theology and philosophy, and so anxious was he to be present at these exercises that when confined to bed by illness, he desired that the meetings should take place in his room.

He interdicted the celebrated work of Genovesi, because it contains this passage: “Preserve the religion of your country, and combat for it.” To a priest who endeavored to explain this in a good sense, he wrote: “How can you put a good construction on ‘the religion of your country,’ when it is followed immediately by this blasphemy, *even though it be false.* According to this sophistry, we should become heathens if we went to China, and defend the Koran in order to obtain citizenship in Constantinople! It is true the author elsewhere has put *the Christian religion,* but that is precisely what proves his bad faith, for why not say THE CATHOLIC RELIGION? And even with this change, we should still be in doubt, since he adds, *even though that religion should be false.*” Genovesi was wounded by this prohibition, but Alphonsus severely called him to ask, instead of withdrawing his censures.

Chapter XLIV

Spiritual exercises of the Seminarists.—Mortifications.—Vigilance of the saint.—The Seminary becomes a model.—Liberality to poor students.—Solicitude of the saint with reference to penance and the Holy Eucharist.—The elaborately-curled wig straightened out by the saint.—Minute regulations.—Neatness of the churches.—Dangerous illness of the Bishop.—Cases of conscience.—Confraternities.—Mental prayer.—New Books.

ALPHONSUS was not less zealous for the sanctification of the seminarists than for their instruction and comfort He established a half hour's instruction daily after mass, and prescribed examen in common, thrice a day, besides a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin, and the recital of the Rosary. Spiritual reading was made at two meals daily. On Saturday before going to the church, he would preach to them on the beauty of virtue. He introduced the practice of novenas before the principal feasts, with some mortifications occasionally, recommending them to forego something at table, to eat kneeling, or sitting on the floor, bidding all the young people to fly effeminacy. He exhorted them strongly to cultivate humility, obedience, and fraternal charity. One day in each month was devoted to retreat, and an eight day's retreat preceded the opening of the classes after vacation. He composed hymns for them, set them to music, and employed a professor to teach them chanting. Nothing delighted him more than to see these young sons of his joyous and contented.

Under this judicious surveillance, the seminary became a model. Charity dwelt amongst the pupils, and their proficiency soon became a marvel. The bishop was wont to call it the apple of his eye, and the jewel of his diocese. To preserve it in this flourishing state, he watched diligently to keep out every seed of corruption. Secret inspectors did duty here, and the rooms were frequently visited. No one was spared: a very orderly young man was surprised reading a Neapolitan poet. Alphonsus made him come down from rhetoric to the grammar class, in which he had to remain until a new course began.

Several instances of his severity are recorded. He once dismissed the nephew of a professor, who asked the youth’s pardon with tears, and because it was not granted, sent in his resignation. But it was only to the vicious that he was inflexible. “What charity! What! charity!” he would exclaim to those who interceded for the culprits, “to ruin all the rest through pity for one; that is not charity, but cruelty.”

Such of the students as were poor he generously aided, and when he found promising boys among the peasantry, he would receive them free, if they gave any signs of vocation. To those who objected to this most useful charity, he said: The seminaries were founded for the help of the churches; pious persons who endowed these establishments could have no other intention than the good of the people, especially the poor. The saint made rules even for vacations, and sent copies of them to the respective pastors. No one was readmitted to the seminary who had not a certificate of good conduct from his priest.

During the visitation, his principal care referred to the Sacraments of penance and the Holy Eucharist. He instructed the priests in the rubrics, and when he found them very ignorant on this subject, he sometimes suspended them for months. This necessary rigor caused the rubrics to be studied diligently. He examined several priests with regard to the confessional to see if he could with propriety continue their faculties, and when he found them incompetent, he withdrew the faculties, but in such a manner as to save their reputation. With regard to pastors who found pretexts for non-residence, he compelled them to resign their benefices or reside at their parishes.

Seeing an elaborately-curled wig on a priest, he asked leave to examine it, and quickly straightened out the curls by plunging it into boiling water; curls, perfumes and colored mantles he would not tolerate in ecclesiastics of any grade. In this matter he was particularly exact with the younger clergy. It was his greatest grief to find priests whose lives did not fully exemplify the holiness of their vocation.

He made stringent regulations against precipitation in celebrating the holy mysteries. He ordered that, throughout his diocese, the children should be catechized on Sundays and Feasts, as in Lent. To remedy the gross ignorance of many, he made an abridgment of the Christian doctrine, and had it printed on a sheet for their convenience; besides, he ordained that these short instructions should be read from the altar every feast day at the first mass, which most of the poor were in the habit of attending. Nor would he have any one admitted to absolution at Paschal-tide without being examined on the principal points of Christian doctrine. Fearing that private baptism was not properly administered in dangerous cases, he examined the nurses himself, and instructed them if necessary. He caused all women of loose lives to be brought to him, and thus addressed them: “If you reform, you will find in me a father full of compassion and charity; but if you remain obdurate, then shall I be to you a severe judge, who will never leave you at rest.” A great many of this unfortunate class experienced his love and clemency, but with the incorrigible he kept his word, though his worst severity was always tempered with mercy.

This Saint of the Blessed Sacrament was not less zealous even for the material churches, in regard to which he descended to the minutest particulars, such a careful dusting, cleansing of the holy-water stoops, and he insisted on their being kept with neatness and in good repair. Cleanliness and decency become God’s house,” said he; “too much pains cannot be lavished on a place so worthy of respect; and besides, how can people pray when their sight is painfully affected by what they see!”

He desired that images should not be kept which had become disfigured by time. “An image is useless,” said he, “when it fails to inspire devotion.” On his visitations, he insisted that things capable of being repaired should be put in order, and rejected many albs, copes, chalices and missals, as unfit for use. Perfect cleanliness he required in all details, and as much magnificence as possible. When altar linens, canopies, &c., were wanting, he procured them, and he would have all tabernacles lined with silk. So exact, and even severe, was he with persons inclined to carelessness in this respect, that he declared that wherever these items were neglected he would stop the revenues.

As he continued his visitations everywhere, stirring the good spirit in the hearts of his clergy, and inspiring them with his own intense devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Mary, God proved him by various infirmities. At Airola he became so ill, that some clergy and other gentlemen proposed to send to Naples for a physician. “The doctors of Airola will suffice for me,” said the saint; “have they not the same books as the Neapolitan doctors? besides, my life is of no great value.” During this illness, he communicated daily at a mass said in his own room, and never failed to make his customary meditations. On the ninth day, he inquired if there were any real danger, to which the physician, knowing his firmness, replied in the affirmative. The saint then sent for his secretary and begged him to administer Extreme Unction which he received with sublime devotion. Far from fearing death, he invoked it as the friend that was to deliver him from his exile and restore him to his true country.

When visitors called, they never delayed very long; for they always found the illustrious patient meditating, or listening to the reading of some pious book. To the doctor, who feared he would injure himself by excessive application, he replied: “It is that which relieves me: without it, my illness would be too painful.” After the fifteenth day, his health began to improve, and he was scarcely convalescent when he resumed his labors for the good of his diocese.

In all populous parishes he instituted “Cases of Morals” for the clergy, and in order that the same “case “ should be discussed on the same day throughout the diocese, he had the list of cases for each week published in the calendar of the diocese. Notes for future reference were taken at all the conferences. He founded, besides, a school of moral theology attached to the cathedral which assembled every week in his palace, he himself presiding over each session as often as possible. This academy was a source of sweet consolation to the bishop, and among its members he generally sought out pastors. He founded societies for aiding to educate young men of ability too poor to maintain themselves in colleges; also a society of priests at St. Agatha destined to give missions; confraternities for gentlemen, for the old as well as the young, boys and girls, rich and poor, in which all were instructed in their duties, and encouraged each other in virtue and goodness. One day, as he preached to the gentlemen’s confraternity, he suddenly fell into an ecstasy, in which his countenance appeared so radiant with celestial glory as to illuminate the whole church.

He introduced the practice of mental prayer in common in all the parishes. To facilitate this holy exercise, at the first mass a priest read at intervals sentiments on the passion of Christ, the enormity of sin, and the joys of heaven.

To remedy several disorders he had perceived in the course of his visitation, he composed his little book on the Mass, with acts of preparation and thanksgiving; also, another practical book containing an easy and devout method of assisting the sick and dying; of both of these he distributed copies to all his priests. Finally, he summed up in one small volume all that is essential for the right administration of the Sacrament of Penance: this invaluable treatise was written in the vernacular, and entitled by the author, *The Guide for the Confessors of Country People*. “The words of this admirable book,” said the celebrated Dominican, Sacco, “should be weighed, not counted; for the author has included enormous treasures in few words.” Many bishops testified their gratitude for this treatise, and it was speedily to be found in the hands of every ecclesiastic throughout the kingdom.

As long as our saint was bishop, he made a through visitation of his diocese every two years, each year doing half. He never once failed in this important point.

Chapter XLV

The saint's mode of progress through his diocese.—Apt rejoinder.—He refuses a carriage.—Compares himself to a vender of fowls. Kindness to a servant.—Accident.—Miraculous cure.—Magnificent hospitality of the Prince of Biccia.—"The saint that smooths our way to heaven."—The little monk.—The saint's kindness to children and young people.—His vigilance.—His charity to the poor.

HUMILITY and charity were the companions of the bishop of St. Agatha, on his visitations as well as everywhere else. His suite consisted of himself, his vicar-general, his secretary, a canon of his cathedral, and a servant. Being very aged and infirm, a servant had to support him in the saddle, while the servant's son, a lad of twelve held the bridle of the ass upon which the great dignitary rode. As he never omitted his ordinary devotions, and never let any poor person pass by without consoling him, the burning heats of noon commonly overtook him, for which reason the grand-vicar excused himself from starting, and was satisfied to catch up with the cortege towards night.

"Why do you travel on an ass, my lord?" said a distinguished gentleman of Frasso, who coveted the honor of the saint's presence in his house. "Some in chariots, and some on horses, but we in the name of the Lord," was the apt rejoinder of the smiling prelate.

A gentlemen at Mignano once offered him his carriage. "I am really so comfortable on this poor beast," said he, "that it is wonderful." On another occasion of this kind he pointed to a vender of fowls who was passing, and asked: "Which of us is the more comfortable—this man tramping on foot with his basket on his head, or I seated on this ass?" One day he could not procure beasts enough for all his followers; unwilling to inconvenience any one, he set out on foot, accompanied by his servant. As it was during the heats of August, the young man perspired profusely, and the saint, compassionating him, made him remove part of his clothes, and insisted on carrying them himself, to the confusion of the poor servant. Once in going from Durasano to Frasso, being indisposed, he used a vehicle, to please the vicar. The coachman upset them twice. The second time, Alphonsus fell over the vicar and dislocated his wrist, but though in great pain he showed no sign of dissatisfaction, but continued his journey on a mule. Arrived at Frasso, he repaired to the church as if nothing had happened. He opened the visitation, and consoled and instructed the assembly with his usual gentleness and sweetness.

A merchant who had forced him to alight that the surgeon might set his wrist, was rewarded for his charity by the miraculous cure of his son, who had been despaired of by all the physicians in that part of the country.

At Airola, the prince of Riccia placed his palace at the disposal of the holy bishop, and he accepted the generous hospitality, only that he might not displease a nobleman who had so powerfully protected him. The steward had prepared him a magnificent bed in the apartment the prince usually occupied. Alphonsus praised the elegant apartments, but he chose to sleep in the room destined for his valet, saying: “I shall be best off here, because my chest suffers in large apartments where there is too much air.” At Frasso, the grand vicar was much dissatisfied with the room prepared for him. While he was at church, Alphonsus had his own straw pallet moved into it, and made that dignitary sleep in the airy room destined for his own use.

At Real-Vale, the room in which the good bishop slept had been for many years infested with beetles; but, after his departure, it was entirely freed from these annoying insects. It was during his visitations especially, that he won the love, confidence and reverence of his people. His incessant labors in their behalf, the unvarying kindness and gentleness with which he received them, no less than the affecting spectacle of his heroic sanctity, were well calculated to inspire these sentiments in the breasts of a people naturally religious. Already was *the voice of the people*, in his regard, *the voice of God:* “Let us go,” they would exclaim, as he entered their hamlets, “let us go to hear the saint that smoothes our way to heaven.” Glorious testimony! glorious indeed from the mouths of infants and sucklings, from the mouths of the people, of the poor. Glorious testimony! and gloriously confirmed by the universal church: for the upright of heart have ever recognized in this sweet saint, THE SAINT WHO SMOOTHES THE WAY TO HEAVEN. Which of us has he not consoled, soothed, reanimated, in the weary pilgrimage from our exile to our *home*, our *patria?* Who, since his day, has led a life of holiness without the aid of the great doctor, *strong* and *sweet* in his teachings? But well does Faber ask: *Would that sweet spirit, St. Alphonsus, have been half as lax had he been but half as holy?* Verily, to posterity as well as to contemporaries, will the admirable Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer be sweetly known as THE SAINT WHO SMOOTHES THE WAY TO HEAVEN.

This sweet and childlike spirit loved to be surrounded with guileless little ones. He was wont to assemble the children after vespers, and teach them to love Jesus and Mary. He deemed it a privilege to prepare them himself for the holy sacrament of confirmation. Once a mother of Durazzano presented him a little cherub of five, already arranged in the religious habit, beads, and cincture—by reason of a vow she had made before his birth—and besought the holy prelate to confirm him. But the saint though charmed with the precocious piety of the infant, declined to admit him to this sacrament. Next day the mother again presented him, but in the ordinary garb of a child. Among hundreds of children, the dear saint recognized the babe and smiled upon him, saying: “Ah, there is my little monk.” The pastor besought him to gratify the pious mother, whose eloquent pleadings had already touched the tender heart of him who could never bear to refuse what it was at all in his power to grant. Eager to have her boy confirmed by a saint, she feared Alphonsus would not live long enough to impose hands on her “little monk,” if his confirmation was delayed; hence her gentle pleadings backed by the intercession of the good pastor, and hence her innocent *ruse* to deceive the holy bishop, upon whose tender heart the guileless face of her angel-child had made such an indelible impression.

When he learned that young people and children were in danger of death, he would visit them, and, if necessary, administer to them the sacrament of confirmation, lest otherwise they should be too long deprived of this powerful means of grace. Once when he went to confirm a sick youth named Pascal, he said: “Be glad and rejoice, my dear Pascal, for in three days you will go to paradise.” The prophecy was fulfilled, contrary to all expectation, and Alphonsus was consoled, because he had “smoothed” for this poor boy, as for so many others, the straight and rough “paths that lead to heaven.”

He was extremely watchful over every ecclesiastic in his diocese. His priests found him indeed the tenderest of fathers. For any irregularity, his usual remedy was to send the erring party to make a retreat of eight days in a house of his own Congregation or in the Congregation of the Mission. If he found good priests not well instructed in the rubrics, he would remedy the defect, but without reproaching them for it. He was, if possible, still more strict with religious priests, and, in case of their not correcting any serious defect he pointed out to them, he would appeal to their provincial, and even request their removal. The poor were the constant objects of his solicitude; he inquired into their condition, and if he found such evil effects arising from poverty as might lead to crime, he would go to any expense to obviate them. He was particularly exact in seeing that the houses of the poor were supplied with a sufficient number of beds for each family. Widows and young women in danger, the sick, and especially the sick poor, shared his solicitude; and food and medicines were daily furnished to the needy, all at his expense. In this respect his charity knew nothing of worldly prudence; he invariably returned from his rounds wholly destitute of money, and not lightly burdened with debts, which it was not always easy for him to meet, as he had reduced the visitation fees to almost nothing. He would never allow his servants to importune people for their perquisites, according to the custom of the time and place, recommending them to be guided by that maxim of St. Francis de Sales: “Ask nothing, refuse nothing.” Such charity and disinterestedness won him, everywhere, admiration, love and esteem, so that people revered him as a saint, and deemed themselves happy if they could procure a shred of his garments. Whatever had been sanctified by his use, they preserved as relics; and God blessed their simple faith, for miraculous cures have been operated in favor of the sick, to whom these relics were applied.

Chapter XLVI

Count Hercules Liguori marries a second time desiring to have heirs.—Letters.—The saint's present to the bride.—The bridegroom's indignation.—Preaching.—Sermons.—Ecstasy. Periodical missions.—Rigor more hurtful than indulgence.—Style.—Extraordinary meekness of the saint.—"Poor Jesus Christ."—The Famine.—Heroic Charity.

IN 1763, Don Hercules Liguori, who had lost his first wife Donna Rachel Liguori sometime previous, informed his brother of his determination to choose a second, asking his prayers and the celebration of many masses, that God might bless his second marriage with an heir, the late countess having brought him no children. The following is the reply of our saint: "I have this morning again celebrated mass for the lady Rachel, at the privileged altar. To-morrow and after, I hope to celebrate for your intention. I pray you to be very careful as to the person upon whom you fix your choice. She should be of the purest morals, without haughtiness and without vanity, and not too young, lest she should take advantage of your advanced age. . . . . It would be better that your wife should be of humbler birth and less fortune, than that you should run the risk of some vexatious embarrassments. Declare your intention from the first to the object of your choice and to her parents. When the wedding is over, take your bride to Marinella and keep her there as long as possible, that she may have good habits from the first."

In a subsequent letter, dated November 12, he says: "I rejoice that such good alliances are offered you. Use all possible diligence to make a choice which you will not have reason to regret. I wish to give you another caution: now that you are alone, dismiss all your young female servants. You can promise to take them again when you set up your establishment."

Don Hercules espoused Lady Mariana Orsini, of the illustrious house of Nilo, a lady of exemplary conduct and extraordinary piety, whom Alphonsus was proud to have as a sister. "I promise myself all sorts of felicity," wrote the count, "as a consequence of your prayers and those of your congregation, as well as the excellent qualities I perceive in Donna

Mariana. She has always been pious, but her goodness at present quite astonishes me." The enraptured bridegroom was not many years younger than his episcopal brother.

The solicitude of our saint for the count, proceeded from an intense zeal for the happiness and salvation of his dear brother. He never showed the least curiosity regarding the temporal interests of his kindred. During the thirty years he lived in the Congregation, he never set foot in his own house but once, and that was to aid and console his pious mother in the illness that carried her to the tomb. Though Don Hercules lived in the palace in which the saint had a hospice for his brethren, he never once entered his brother's apartments. On the count's marriage, the saint being invited to officiate, politely declined. His wedding present to the bride was a paper print of the Blessed Virgin, enclosed in a little wooden frame, which Don Hercules indignantly sent back. "My brother is offended," said the saint, "though I have more cause; what did he expect to receive? I have poor here dying of hunger, and yet people want me to make presents!"

Alphonsus held preaching to be among the first duties of a bishop. "This ministration is almost the only one that Jesus Christ seems to have imposed on his apostles; it is the one which he exacts of bishops, and to fail in it is to neglect an express command." He accomplished in this article the advice he gave to Cardinal Sersale when the latter was raised to the See of Naples, in 1754: "I hope our Lord has sent your Eminence to remedy all defects, and I feel that I shall see you renew the days of St. Charles Borromeo, who preached with such fruit to the people of Milan. O how much more efficacious are the words of the chief shepherd than those of others!. . . . . Pardon my boldness; it is only for the glory of Jesus Christ that I speak. How much good you may do by preaching, especially in the first year! I desire equally that you would give the spiritual exercises to all the clergy. . . . . All the disasters that the Church deplores come from this: that men are admitted to the altar who were not called by God. It imports much then, that those you select give proofs of their divine calling, not merely as to doctrine, but chiefly as to morals and the ecclesiastical spirit; this is the most indispensable point."

Our saint was remarkable for his assiduity in preaching. Every Sunday he preached after vespers, and on all feast days which fell during the week he preached in the parish churches. Every Sunday before the sermon he catechized the children, giving them rosaries, pictures, and even money to attract them; and he preached later in the day to the congregation of nobles, and to the sodality of young girls which he had founded. When he was at Arienzo, as the people could not easily come to the collegiate church, he preached alternately in one of the seven parishes, and, as his sermon was always accompanied by exposition, he provided the candles for these occasions himself, saying: "I desire God's glory, but I am unwilling to burden you with expenses." Every Saturday he fulfilled his vow to publish the praises of Mary. The protestation for a good death, he made for the people at least once a month, with sermon and exposition. It is impossible to calculate the good effects of this practice alone.

During the last three days of the carnival, the holy prelate endeavored to hinder the people from going to the public shows, by making the ceremonies of the Church as attractive as possible throughout the diocese. Sometimes he preached in convent churches, and upon these occasions he ordered the sums set aside by the nuns for this purpose to be given to the ordinary clergy. During Lent, he always assembled the secular and regular clergy, for the spiritual exercises either at St. Agatha or at Arienzo. He continued to lay the greatest stress on preaching, and with reason: "We have lost much of our trade since Monsignore's arrival," said a Neapolitan magistrate; "for his sermons and those he caused to be preached have made the people so peaceable that there is no longer any disorder to be found."

He sought workmen of learning and piety to aid him in the gigantic task of reforming his diocese. Jesuits, Dominicans, Priests of the Mission, Pious Workers—all were pressed into the service by this untiring laborer, whose zeal literally gave him no moment of rest. Once, when speaking of Mary, at a mission at Arienzo, his countenance glowed and sparkled till the whole church was illumined by its rays of supernatural splendor. "See," he cried out in ecstasy, "the Blessed Virgin is coming to scatter blessings among us; ask her, she will grant you everything." This was but one of many similar occasions when his soul exhaled its divine ardors and his face beamed with heavenly fire. He ordained that a mission should be given in every parish in his diocese at least every two years, besides the novenas and triduos with which he strove to confirm the good and awaken the sinful. At first he would not invite missionaries of his own order, lest he might be suspected of some sinister intention; but when the people knew him, this was not to be feared, and he freely employed Redemptorists towards the close of his episcopate. Charity towards sinners, and a popular style of preaching, were what he chiefly desired of the missionaries. To one who leaned towards rigorism, he said: “My father, too much indulgence may be hurtful to souls, but too much rigor is still more so. . . . With sinners, mildness and charity are necessary. This was the method of Jesus Christ, and if we would save souls we must not imitate Jansenius, but Jesus Christ, the Chief of missionaries.”

As to preaching, the saint was wont to say: “When Jesus Christ preached, he did not use obscure but elegantly turned periods, words of learned length or rhetorical exaggerations; all his words were on a level with the people’s comprehension. His proofs were natural and never abstract. He used parables and comparisons which triumphed over the will by striking the mind and heart. The apostles followed their Divine Master in this respect, and if we fail to imitate them, journeys, expense and fatigue will be useless.

The expenses of these incessant missions were entirely defrayed by himself. He even furnished, oil and candles for the churches, and enabled the missionaries to give much relief to the poor, charging them to take particular care of all necessitous families, converted women, and young girls in danger. Still, he sometimes found priests who were unwilling to have missions; one excused himself saying, he had no house for the fathers. Alphonsus, who divined his real feelings, said: “Well, purchase one at any cost. The expense will be defrayed for you.” The priest replied in such terms, that the grand vicar and other dignitaries said he ought to be imprisoned. But our saint blamed their imprudent zeal, and pitied the weakness of the poor priest, who was so won by his sweetness that he himself asked for the mission. The holy bishop even apologized to him. “I do not say,” he wrote to him, “that your reverence has put any impediment in the way, but I thought you did not show the anxiety I would have wished; if I have been wrong in this, I hope you will excuse me, and now let us love each other as before. Blessed be God who has permitted this unpleasantness to arise to you as well as to me.”

During Lent, he wished the confessors mutually to exchange parishes, and by this means the Lenten exercises produced general advantage. When preachers and confessors presented themselves for his benediction, he liked to keep them for some days with him that by conversing with them he might form some idea of their capability and knowledge. He could not bear those preachers whose high flown oratory rendered them unintelligible to the people. “Poor Jesus Christ!” he would murmur as he listened to them. To one of this genus, he indignantly said: “Is it not to betray Jesus Christ and the people, to preach in that way? If I did not order you out of the pulpit, it was through respect for the habit you wear. What fruit have the people gathered from all the tropes and metaphors and pompous phrases with which you entertained them? For yourself, this was mere vanity, to be expiated in purgatory. Your end should be to move hearts, and cause tears of contrition to flow; but no one was touched, the people understood nothing.”

In 1763, Italy was ravaged by a fearful famine, which our saint had predicted previous to his elevation to the episcopate, and on several occasions after that event. During the harvest of the fatal year, like another Joseph, he ordered his secretary to buy up an enormous quantity of the cheaper kinds of provisions. Everybody laughed at this, but ere the end of November the scarcity had spread from one extremity of the kingdom to the other. The starving poor had recourse to their common father; by hundreds at a time they thronged his halls and besieged his residence, craving a morsel of bread. Alphonsus was affected to tears by this misery, and commanded his servants to relieve them all, saying: “They only ask for what belongs to them.” He sent in every direction to procure corn, and applied to Count Hercules, then governor of Naples, who liberally supplied St. Agatha, though corn was already sold at famine prices. He appealed to his rich patrons and friends, and they were not slow to respond to the pleadings of his charity. Our dear old saint was overjoyed at being able to assist his suffering children. In the great hall of his palace all the necessitous were registered alphabetically, and they received relief as they presented themselves. But this did not satisfy the all-reaching charity of his paternal heart. He could not sit down in comfort while a single human being in his diocese wanted bread. He sought out those who were ashamed to beg, and those who, through infirmity, were unable to leave their cold and dreary homes. Love, and even reverence, for the poor! Beautiful Catholic charity!—what is like unto thee? Political economy! A plague upon the hateful thing that would stamp the divine image from out the lineaments of the poor, the sorrow-stricken and the lowly! Accursed progress! Vile civilization! whereby man calls his brother a *pauper!* Yet triumphant charity, all-pervading *Spirit of Jesus!* Triumphant indeed, since it is Catholic charity, in fact, and in tradition, as well as in heroic example, that compels even the infidel governments of to-day to dole out a niggard stipend to the poor, having first robbed them of their revenues, and rendered powerless the arm that was wont to sustain them. The heroic, the ever-living charity of the church has *shamed the heretic and the unbeliever;* for Alphonsus is neither the first nor the last saint, who not only relieved all who presented themselves, but made it a *duty* and a *study,* to seek out the bashful and infirm poor, and relieve their bodily wants without paining their over sensitive hearts. Beautiful spirit of Jesus! Glorious characteristic of His Church! The poor we have always with us, and He who deigns to be styled the Father of the Poor can never be far from those who love His dearest children.

Despite the excessive tenderness of our saint, the frenzied people often reproached him, and even accused him of having sold the corn his own brother had sent him for their relief. “My poor people deserve compassion,” said this good pastor, “it is not they who speak, but the famine within them; their hearts are good.” And, verily the saint meant what he said; for, a furious woman having violently assailed him, and the Sacristan having scolded and pushed her away by the shoulder, the good Bishop was so indignant at the officious and censurable zeal of that rough official, that he actually sent him to prison for four days.

The scourge increased to such a pitch, that, as our saint had predicted, human beings were seen devouring the grass of the hedges, and roving through the county like spectres. Alphonsus was almost heartbroken. He sought assistance from the wealthy, and commanded priests and superiors of convents to retrench their ordinary expenditures in behalf of the poor. Nothing but the cheapest and coarsest food was served on the episcopal table: “We must do without something,” said the saint, “when our people are dying of hunger.” Hearing that the superior of a wealthy convent was stingy towards the poor, he reproached him severely for his hardheartedness. “I am obliged to maintain my family,” said the superior, “what is over and above, I give to the poor.” The saint burning with indignation, rose from his chair and exclaimed with vehemence: “Do you know what *maintain* means now? Eat enough to preserve life, and give the surplus to the poor. You became a religious to lead a life of poverty and penance. Do you believe in the Gospel or are you a Turk?"

This reproof doubly terrible in the mouth of the meekest of bishops, had a powerful effect on him to whom it was addressed. The poor of his quarter were ever afterwards bountifully, and even tenderly, cared for.

Rest was unknown to Alphonsus during this terrific season. Not a single room in his palace but was open to the poor, and not an hour of the day when they did not throng around him. One evening after all had been relieved, a man was found stretched in the hall, motionless and apparently expiring. The holy prelate hearing this, came quickly with the ordinary restoratives, but it was only after repeated efforts that he had the happiness of seeing the poor creature restored to consciousness.

The famine continued to madden the unfortunate people. One day they rushed upon the dwelling of Dominic Carvo, the superintendent of provisions, whom they threatened to assassinate. The hapless official succeeded in escaping to the episcopal residence, but the mutinous crowd followed shouting; "Life for life!" The saint offered himself as a victim to appease their rage: he went into the midst of them, wept over them, pressed them to his heart, and when this spectacle had somewhat calmed, or rather stunned them, he distributed all the bread and meat in the palace, seminary, and public stores, among his dear children, the poor rioters.

When our saint had exhausted his own resources and the fruits of the bounty of his friends, he obtained leave of the Holy Father to mortgage all his income for the poor. He would have sold the plate of his predecessors, the pectoral cross, ewer and candlestick, heirlooms of the See, had not his canons refused to allow this episcopal property to be alienated. However he sold the ring which had been presented to him at his consecration by his friend and penitent Jane Versale, as well as that which he had received from Bishop Giannini. His own pectoral cross quickly followed; a plain gilt one served in future for pontifical ceremonies. He ordered his secretary to sell what little plate he owned, and was about to dispose of his very rochet, until he was assured that it was all but worthless. When his grand, Vicar urged him not to sell his carriage, he said: "St. Peter was Pope and he owned no carriage, I am not greater than St. Peter, and therefore can do without one." To the count Hercules who also objected to this measure, he wrote; "Pretexts to induce me to keep my carriage, I regard as temptations of the devil. . . . . I cannot bear to see mules in my stable nearly all the year with nothing to do; the coachman wasting his time the while, and the poor asking for bread.” His brother Cajetan purchased the episcopal carriage and mules at an exorbitant price, to prevent their passing into the hands of strangers.

It struck the saint that though the canons would not allow him to sell the episcopal regalia pertaining to the See, they would at least agree that he might pledge them. But they negatived this proposal also. The poor, dear bishop wept and wrung his hands in anguish, and here we have a singular spectacle—Alphonsus, the saint of holy poverty, envies rich prelates who need place no bounds to their benevolence. Nay, he even desires supernatural power, but not separated from sanctity. “O that I merited as much before God as St. Thomas of Villa Nova,” he exclaimed with holy envy. “I might find my granaries filled with corn as he did!” Covetous saint; but covetous only for the poor of Jesus Christ whom he carried in his heart as his best beloved children.

Regarding sin as the cause of the terrible scourge that desolated the diocese, he redoubled his austerities to appease the divine wrath, or turn its darts from his children upon himself. He daily addressed heaven in their behalf, and besought the sinful among them to be converted to their heavenly Father, and to weep over the sins that has brought upon the country so dire a calamity. At last God was propitious to the prayers of his servant; the famine gradually abated, and returning spring brought with it new resources. But the disorders and abuses consequent upon this awful visitation were neither few nor slight. Creditors tortured their debtors, usury was extensively practiced; nor could a broken-down people resist the unjust and the hard-hearted. The father of the people inveighed against these abuses with his usual fervid eloquence, and the merchants and financiers, to their credit be it recorded, could not withstand the sweet pleadings of this great heart. He enjoined upon the parish priests the relief of the sick, the convalescing, and the necessituous, and secured their co-operation, and that of the most influential people of the diocese, in endeavoring to do away with the miserable effects of the famine as speedily as possible. So powerful is heroic sanctity.

Greetings, shouts of joy, ovations improvised by the hearts of a grateful people, awaited Alphonsus at every stage of his next progress through his diocese. His mere presence among them, caused his people to exult with the most rapturous delight. He was now not merely, “*the saint who smoothes our way to heaven,*” but the saint who carried them in his bosom, who bewailed their trials as his own, who suffered in his soul, and even in his body, the physical evils which, but for him, would have tried them beyond endurance, and which he had more than beggared himself to alleviate, if he could not wholly remove.

Chapter XLVII

Alphonsus presides at a General Chapter of his Congregation.—His old opponent Patuzzi again attacks him.—Alphonsus dedicates his Defense to the reigning Pontiff.—Want of courtesy in Patuzzi.—Apology.—Proposed Synod.—Decrees issued.—New arrangement of parishes.

IN July 1764, our saint accepted an invitation to preside at a general chapter of his Congregation to be held at Nocera, whither he repaired towards the close of September. In passing through Nola, he stopped at the Seminary, and being asked to address the seminarians, he spoke to them for over an hour on the subject with which his heart was ever filled, the love of Jesus. Here he saw bishop Caracioli, a kindred spirit; they met with mutual delight, and conversed a long time on the affairs of the Church in general, and of their respective dioceses. The bishop among other things remarked that a colleague had lately addressed him as "Eccellency," but that he did not return the compliment. "You did well," rejoined Alphonsus, "I cannot understand how this title came to be used. The Council of Trent deigned to grant us the title of 'Right Reverend,' now some wish to add, 'Most Illustrious.' If we had coveted 'Excellency,' we should have remained at home."

When the saint entered the church to adore the Blessed Sacrament, he was conducted to the episcopal seat, but, with that elegant politeness and keen sense of propriety which always distinguished his intercourse with his brother clergymen of every order, he rested on a simple bench, declining to usurp any mark of distinction in the cathedral of another prelate.

During the chapter which lasted a month, the rules and customs already in use were revised and confirmed. As the saint was the soul of the assembly, everything was done in a manner most satisfactory to all concerned. Eager to rejoin his flock, he set out for St. Agatha on the termination of the chapter, and was then obliged to combat a new enemy.

Father Vincent Patuzzi, who had formerly criticized very severely the Moral Theology of the saintly Doctor, now renewed his attacks. "I am rejoiced that he attacks me," said the saint, "for the truth will be displayed all the more clearly, which is solely what I seek. If he proves me wrong, I am ready to retract."

The holy bishop replied to his adversary in a learned and moderate address, in which he sustained his doctrine by the authority of the canons, the holy Fathers, the most celebrated theologians, especially the great Dominican Divine St. Thomas Aquinas, and which he dedicated to Pope Clement XIII, with this declaration.

"I protest that in all I have written, I have had no desire, save to make the truth evident in so grave a matter, on which depends the good or evil direction of consciences; and as I had the honor of dedicating my Moral Theology to the sovereign Pontiff, Benedict XIV, I venture to submit to your Holiness, this treatise, which is an appendix to its sense; that your Holiness may deign to correct, modify or cancel, whatever may be opposed to the maxims of the Gospel and the rules of Christian prudence."

It is not pleasant to describe the spirit in which Patuzzi continued the controversy, and we do not find it easy to excuse the opponent who could use towards a prelate of undoubted sanctity and extraordinary learning the following phraseology: "It is impossible to imagine how you could have so far mistaken the doctrine of St. Thomas . . . Study these questions better, that you may not expose yourself to the raillery of intelligent men . . . You have no just ideas on_ these matters . . . You ought to blush for your statements." . . . [17165]

It is singular that Patuzzi should regard as calumny our saint's eloquent but temperate refutation of his ill-judged attacks. "If you think I have calumniated you," the bishop wrote, "pardon me, I can only offer my excuses." But he facetiously adds: "Unhappy that I am, I am abused, and then accused of being the culprit!"

Alphonsus sent his "Apology" to the archbishops and bishops as well as to other theological doctors, who all united in praising his wonderful learning, and still more the extraordinary humility and moderation he displayed towards so virulent an adversary. The numerous letters of approbation he received on that occasion, were afterwards appended to the *Moral Theology* of the saint, where they may still be seen by those who desire to examine them.

The discussion or rather dispute, was briskly kept up, on one side at least. “I have received,” wrote Alphonsus, “your well-meant letter of mingled praises and reproaches, admonitions, menaces and counsels. You say you are astonished that, while leading an edifying life, (it were more correct to say that I deceive the public), I profess erroneous doctrine. My dear Father, I judge precisely the contrary. I see that my life, far from being exemplary, is full of faults, while I regard my system as wise, and even incontestable.

Elsewhere the saint writes: “As your reverence counsels me to reflect whether I am not guilty before God for having maintained too indulgent an opinion; I would suggest that you, who are constantly administering the sacrament of penance, would examine whether you may not have a stricter account to render than I, for having followed rigorous opinions, by which you have embarrassed consciences, and forced your penitents to hold as sinful that which is not sinful; in consequence of which you may have caused many formal sins to be committed which were not such before God, and occasioned the damnation of many souls.” As it was now evident to all the world that Patuzzi acted through mere party spirit, several prelates advised the saint to take no farther trouble to refute his sophisms, an advice he willingly followed, convinced that having once clearly stated the truth, his time could be more profitably employed than in refuting an opponent with whom it was no honor to grapple. Posterity as well as contemporaries have abundantly vindicated the great saint, on whose brow our Infallible Pontiff has but lately placed the crown of Doctor of the Church, a dignity as rare as it is illustrious.

When the bishop had made himself thoroughly conversant with the state of his diocese, he informed the Pope of the necessity of holding a synod, but as this proposal was not well received by his brother-prelates whom he had consulted,—though the approbation of His Holiness was freely given—the saint gave up his design, saying: “I will accomplish by simple decrees what I wished to regulate in a synod.” After advising with the most eminent and learned among his clergy, and others celebrated for wisdom and moderation, the articles prepared for the synodical assembly were replaced by six ordinances, which he promulgated in due form and caused to be rigorously observed.

The first decree referred to canons and chaplains, priests of the cathedral, the rubrics, the discipline of the choir and other similar matters.

The second referred to the duties of archpriests, vicars and rectors. He renewed the order he had previously issued regarding the instruction of people and children in the Christian doctrine, and added several minute directions as to preparation for paschal and first communion; he gave particular directions that all who desired to enter the married state should be examined in the Christian doctrine, and if necessary instructed. He inculcated the duty of preaching every Sunday, and reminded the parish priests that they sinned grievously if they did not administer Extreme Unction till the dying person had lost his reason. To prevent sin, which may be said to have been the great aim of his life, he ordered the parochial clergy to require that all betrothments should be followed speedily by marriage. Besides the Easter Communion he appointed two general communions for the young of both sexes. It was prohibited to accept of any legacy without first informing the bishops, who had to decide whether the conditions imposed by the testator could be fulfilled. Various other regulations increased the usefulness of this ordinance.

The third reminded all confessors of the absolute necessity of studying moral theology, and added some valuable instruction as to the duty of the confessor in the confessional. He called their attention to the Bull of Pius V which imposes on physicians the duty of sending for the priest after their third visit to a patient in danger. He advised the confessors to exhort their penitents to pray often, especially in times of danger and temptation, to invoke incessantly the names of Jesus and Mary, to recite the rosary, and three *Aves* morning and evening in honor of the Mother of Purity and Perseverance, and to teach a brief method of mental prayer to those most inclined to piety.

The fourth decreed suspension to any priest who should celebrate mass with such indecent haste as to finish in less than a quarter of an hour. Under the same penalty games of chance were prohibited. He forbade hunting with a gun or with nets, without the written permission of the bishop, which never extends to days of obligation, and he exhorted all clerics to aid their parish priests in instructing the people in the Christian doctrine.

The fifth related to candidates for holy orders.

The sixth to the dress of the clergy, and affords a curious illustration of the age and country. The hair was not to be curled, perfumed, studiously arranged, or worn so long as to cover the neck or ears; colored cloaks, shirt ruffles and plaited lace were severely interdicted. The holy bishop enforced these regulations so as to punish rigorously all infractions, “Any contempt shown to myself does not affect me at all,” he said, “or rather, I thank God for it; but I cannot suffer my ordinances to be disregarded.”

During his pastoral visitations the saint found that thousands of his people were so situated as to be left in great spiritual abandonment. The population of his episcopal city and its suburbs exceeded twenty four thousand. Some of these people were four or five miles from their parish church, a great distance for the poorer classes who had no conveyance, and who found walking painful in the summer heats, and nearly impossible in the snows and rains of winter, which rendered the bad roads almost impassable. The very old and the very young rarely saw their pastor. The instruction of the people was neglected, and many died without Extreme Unction and Viaticum.

To remedy these evils as much as possible, the saint made a new division of parishes, and with the surplus benefices of the richer parishes was able to supply several rural chapels. When this was not practicable, he established a chaplain, to celebrate mass on Sundays and festivals, and added to his salary from his own income to induce him to preach and to catechize the children. This, as will be readily perceived, was a work of extraordinary difficulty, as it required all the energy as well as all the meekness of the saint to encounter the opposition manifested by interested parties. But his persuasive eloquence, supported by his all-powerful example overcame all obstacles, for who could resist one that did a thousand times more than he exacted of the most fervent?

Chapter XLVIII

Dangerous Illness of the saint.—‘Non recuso laborem.’—Miracle.—The saint refuses to play on the harpsichord.—At Nocera.—Impatient to return to St. Agatha.—Letter.—Bad books.—The saint’s measures against their circulation.—His Prophecy regarding the Free Masons.—Papal Infallibility.—The assembly.—Society of Jesus.—Circular Letter.—He endeavors to resign.

EXCESSIVE austerities and perpetual labors laid our saint in a bed of sickness towards the close of 1764. His life being despaired of, Extreme Unction and Holy Viaticum Were administered; and the saint besought the priests who stood near his straw pallet to suggest some sentiments of love. Tears choked the utterance of the Dominican Father Caputo, but a deacon who was present, said: “My Lord, when St. Martin was near death he addressed to God this prayer: If I am still necessary to Thy people, O Lord, I refuse not to labor.’ “Our saint who scarcely breathed, faintly echoed: “*Non recuso laborem,*” I refuse not to labor.

Bitter was the grief of the inhabitants of St. Agatha at the dismal prospect of losing their bishop and their Father. The poor especially bewailed their best benefactor, and their tears and prayers were incessantly poured forth for his restoration, and heaven was not deaf to their supplications. While yet oscillating as it were between life and death, a miracle attested his sanctity. One day, the canon Charles Bruno, brought him a present of fig-peckers. He was accompanied by his nephew a boy of four, who had never yet uttered a syllable. The saint with his customary sweetness towards children, desired a lay-brother who was present to bring the little innocent some bonbons, and asked the canon his name. “He is called Thomas,” was the reply, “but,” added the uncle, sadly, he is quite dumb, he has never articulated a single word.” This intelligence grieved the saint. He made the sign of the cross on the child’s upturned forehead, and giving him a picture of our Lady to kiss, said: “Do you know, my little one, how this Lady is called?” The child kissed the picture, and without the least hesitation, replied, “The Madonna!” From that moment the child spoke perfectly well. Alphonsus, to conceal the miracle, said to the canon: “The child is not dumb, there is an impediment in his speech, but that will gradually disappear.” Nevertheless, the miracle became noised abroad, and added to the high idea already entertained of the venerable prelate by all who knew him.

The doctors ordered him to Nocera, but he refused to leave his See, and it required a command from Father Villani, his director, to induce him to obey them. When he was with his dear Congregation once more, he never failed to be present at all the common exercises, and when he had any leisure, he would resume his literary labors. One day a priest asked him to play the harpsichord, an instrument on which he greatly excelled. “What!” he exclaimed, “ought it be said of a bishop that he passes his time playing on an idle instrument instead of thinking of his diocese? It is my duty, and the duty of every bishop, to give audience to all, to pray, to study, but not to play the harpsichord.”

The rector caused him to be treated with some distinction, because of his dignity and infirmities, but this well-meant politeness was a martyrdom to him. One day, he asked for a glass of water, and the brother who was waiting on him handed him in mistake a vase of water in which flowers had been kept some days previous. The saint drank it as if it had been just drawn from the purest spring.

God continued ever and anon to favor him with graces that seem to belong to a brighter world than ours. One day as he was beginning Mass, he fell into an ecstasy as he cast his eyes on the picture of our Lady of Sorrows. It was not until the Father who served his Mass had shaken him several times that he was able to proceed. He could not rest while away from his diocese, and was perpetually tormented with scruples. Hearing that a person whom he had banished from St. Agatha on account of her ill-conduct, had returned, he would delay no longer. Mgr. Volpi one day said to him: “My Lord, why are you so unquiet?” “Because I am a bishop,” was the reply. “My Lord,” said he to the same prelate, on another occasion, “I have a spouse. God wills me to be with my spouse at St. Agatha, not at Nocera.” When his strength was somewhat restored, he continued his visitation, and would have resumed all his ordinary austerities, had not his director, Father Villani, prohibited them. When he judged that his health was quite restored, he wrote to Father Villani, October 28., as follows:

“The milk diet has quite cured me, and if you permit, I will resume the straw bed again. I have begun to wear the chains on the part where the old blister were. I ask your blessing for this . . . Father Majone has desired me to partake of a second dish at dinner; but I ask your Reverence as my principal director to allow me to eat the bouilli only; if you do not approve of this, I will submit to your decision."

The mind of our holy prelate was continually on the rack at this epoch. Bad books, issued from the press by thousands, especially in France, were clandestinely circulated through Naples to the great detriment of faith and morals. His age and still more the heavy burden of the episcopate left him no leisure to refute the errors now breathed everywhere, but he besought the king and his ministers to hinder the introduction of this silent but powerful emissary of evil. He desired Father de Meo to undertake the refutation of the pernicious works of Basnage, whom he ironically styles *our friend*, and whose works he considered particularly injurious. His Moral Theology was again attacked by Father Patuzzi, who was now joined by Father Gonzales. "Let them do as they please," wrote the saint, "I did not write to gain honor, but to make the truth known. If my writings bring conviction to my readers, it is well; if not, I do not wish to be victorious by obstinacy . . . Meanwhile souls go to ruin; let us pray God to put a stop to this."

The proceedings of the Jansenists almost broke his heart. "Their intention," says he, "as unveiled by themselves is to overthrow the Church." Arnauld's book on Frequent Communion, flippantly quoted at the time as *La Frequente*, particularly annoyed him. "He speaks only of the purity and perfection with which one should approach the Holy Eucharist, but his sole object is to keep the faithful from this Sacrament, the only support of human weakness.

His words with regard to the sect of Freemasons were prophetic: "This sect," said he with tears, "will cause evil not only to the Church, but also to kingdoms and sovereigns. Kings will recognize their fatal significance when too late. The Free-masons act against God now, but they will soon attack kings." Must not the saint have seen in spirit the shattered thrones of the nineteenth century! But he held the Jansenists in especial aversion. "They are more dangerous," said he, "than Luther and Calvin, because they are hidden, and one does not avoid them."

About this time he wrote Father Saprio of the Oratory:

"I am engaged in writing a complete refutation of the errors of modern deists and materialists. Recommend me to God that He may aid me to write, so as to undeceive poor young people who, in such numbers, imbibe these errors, principally from bad books. We must weep and pray over the poor church, but let us have confidence, *the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.*”

His greatest sorrow was to hear the Papal Infallibility questioned. In his “Reflections on the Declaration of the Assembly of France, &c” he proved the Pope’s Infallibility as a matter of faith, by the authority of the holy fathers and Ecumenical Councils; and showed how little value was to be attached to this Assembly, which, so far from being a general Council, consisted only of forty-four bishops, convened by the command of Louis XIV, who, in retaliation for the Pope’s having refused him the revenues of the vacant bishoprics, forbid the Sorbonne to make any opposition, and commanded the adhering bishops to teach this doctrine in their dioceses.[17166]

The saint was deeply grieved at the dangers which threatened the Society of Jesus. He wrote to J. Mattei, Provincial, as follows: “I have not received any tidings about your Society, and I feel almost as uneasy as if the disasters threatened our own little Congregation. A Society is threatened, which has, so to say, sanctified the world, and which continues unceasingly to sanctify it.” When Clement XIII. issued a Bull to confirm the Society anew, the saint was so rejoiced that he wrote to the Sovereign Pontiff to thank him from the depths of his heart.

Weighed down, as it were, by his solicitude for all the churches, he did not by any means neglect his own Congregation. This was the dearest of his works, and he cherished it as his own soul. The smallest defect, the least stain, grieved him to the heart, and in this respect, trifles were considerable in his eyes. Love and grief made him speak of the little faults and weakness of his sons in a true exaggeration, for he would not have spot or wrinkle in a work he so tenderly cherished.” “I perceive with sorrow,” he writes, “that fervor is begins to decay among the members of the Congregation. I beg of each to watch carefully over himself for the future, because I cannot suffer any relaxation in the rule. I am told there is very little inclination for poverty and mortification. Alas, have we entered religion to enjoy ease and escape pain? I hear also that obedience is less strictly observed; if obedience ceases, the Congregation will not survive it.

"I have told Father Villani to punish public faults by public mortifications, and to expel the incorrigible. We have no need of subjects, we covet only those who are resolved to become saints. If ten who really love God remain, it is enough. It is too ungrateful to repay God by failings, for the love he bears towards the Congregation. Do we wish to become like those who cause scandal rather than edification to the Church? I have told Father Villani that his government is too weak and mild, and that I wish to be better informed of everything of consequence that occurs for the future. . . . Let none of the young Fathers ever fail to have his sermons revised by some of the seniors who understand the matter, and let each before preaching or giving an instruction, read over what he has to say, that all may bear the impress of order and solidity, without studied terms or highflown language . . . Above all we must mortify ourselves to please God, otherwise God will not aid us, and we shall preach in vain."

In the year 1764, our saint thought of resigning his bishopric, as he had been promised when he accepted it that he could afterwards renounce it. But the Pope refused to accept his resignation. The saint, however, was not discouraged by this refusal. Later on he wrote some letters on the subject from which we give the following extracts:

"The principal reason for my resignation must not be the desire for retirement (this not being a sufficient one) but my advanced age and ever increasing infirmities. Besides my usual affliction of the chest, I was ill almost constantly last winter. I may say I am so still, having been confined to bed for upwards of a month. It is true, for I must tell all to prevent scruples—that I attend to business, and that everything is done as usual; but as long as winter lasts I am unable to go on the visitation, or to assist in choir. In summer I can go through my diocese during three or four months. I am forced to ask my demission, for I am overwhelmed with scruples at seeing scandals which I should not tolerate. I tremble too, lest I may seek my own ease in this resignation, and not God's glory: hence I wish to be sure as to what will really conduce to the divine honor.

"I meet with much to disgust me, but I have the words: *If you love me, feed my sheep,* and it matters little whether I live or succumb. The uncertainty as to whether or not I do God's will in giving in my resignation, is my greatest anxiety."

All this our saint represented still more strongly to the Pope, though with entire submission. Cardinals and prelates took sides with the holy, old man, but to no purpose. “*His shadow alone would suffice to govern the whole diocese,*” was the energetic reply of the Pope. Among other mediators, the saint had employed Mgr. Pallaviano, the Nuncio at Naples, but the Pope informed him also, that he positively wished that Bishop Liguori should continue to bear the burden of his high charge. “The same will of God which made you a bishop,” said the Nuncio to him, will know how to aid you in ruling your church.”

Mgr. Borgia, who had also interceded for him, now soothed him saying: “Do not be distressed; it is indeed the will of God.” And the thought that it *was* the divine will enabled the saint to endure, even if he had to sink beneath the burden. Singular to relate, from the first of June 1765, he and those about him, heard a great number of little blows from his pectoral cross every time he said the rosary. They examined whether there was an insect in it, but found none. But as soon as he had received the Pope’s negative, they were heard no more.

He concluded that God willed him, for the present, to continue to bear the cross with which he had been invested by apostolic authority.

Chapter XLIX

Nuns of the Most Holy Redeemer.—Remarks of Archdeacon Rainone. The Church of St. Nobody.—Sister Mary Raphael of Charity.—Additions.—Grand Reception.—Our Saint's Attention to the Wants of the Sisters.—Success of the new foundation.—Alphonsus conducts the retreat of the novices.—Liberality of the Saint.—His Kindness to the Sisters.—His way with them.

ONE of the most important works undertaken by our saint was the establishment of the nuns of the Most Holy Redeemer. It is singular that so ancient and distinguished a city as St. Agatha, had no convent for the education of young ladies of high family. The absence of such an institution was regretted, on account of the expense and inconvenience consequent upon sending to a distance, the daughters of noble houses, to receive their education, and often to take the veil. To supply this deficiency, our saint exerted all his ingenuity, and he succeeded, despite obstacles that seemed insuperable.

"The establishment of the convent of the Most Holy Redeemer" wrote Archdeacon Rainone to Father Tannoia, (who may be called the Boswell of the great Bishop), "is undoubtedly a work most worthy to promote the glory of God, most honorable to his Lordship, and most useful to our town. The Lord has reserved for our saintly Prelate, the honor of making this foundation; his zeal, his constancy, and his great solicitude were necessary for its success."

Two centuries ago this work had been attempted, but failed. In 1610, the Lords of Mazzi had begun something similar, but this patrician family became extinct before the building was finished, and the church, partially raised, was styled by the people, St. Nobody's Church. During the episcopate of Mgr. Danza, who was raised to the see in 1681, Canon Talia established in this church without a patron, a pious confraternity, which became the edification of the whole town, but this did not long survive the death of its worthy originator. A community of Franciscan nuns replaced the scattered brethren, and did much good during half a century, but discord penetrated into this holy spot, and it was finally abandoned. The Duke of

Costa thought of establishing a convent of cloistered nuns there, but his death prevented the realization of his pious wishes. Finally the edifice became a sort of temporary barracks for superfluous troops.

When it became known that Alphonsus designed to change these unlucky quarters into a nest for doves, he was assailed by a storm of opposition. Some wanted a cloistered monastery, some an asylum for men, and others, nothing of the kind. “Explain your meaning,” said the saint to the more influential, “if you intend to found a convent of servants of God, I will co-operate, but if you want a mere assemblage of women, you better say no more about it.” At last, the people wisely agreed to leave the affair entirely to him, and he decided on inviting a little colony from the convent of the Most Holy Redeemer at Scala. There was no sufficient revenue for this purpose, but the holy prelate redoubled his confidence in God, and ere long an income of over six hundred ducats was forthcoming, which, with the dowries, was quite sufficient for his designs.

The work seemed to go forward as if by magic. The saint was on the spot every day, to encourage and quicken the workmen. He was greatly aided by Don Francis Mastillo, agent of the Duke of Maddalon. When the approbation of the Pope and the consent of the King had been obtained, Alphonsus presented his request to the monastery of Scala. Sister Mary Raphael of Charity was chosen superioress, Sister Mary Felicia of the Holy Nails, Sister Mary Celestine of Divine Love, and a lay-sister, Mary Joseph of Jesus and Mary, completed the foundation. All four were models of piety. They reached Nocera June 27, 1766, and St. Agatha next day. They were accompanied by two ladies, who had gone to meet them, the treasurer, a canon of the cathedral, and Fathers Villani and Ferara. Two young ladies of quality were so taken with the virtues of Mother Raphael during her stay at Nola, that they immediately joined her.

The saint was so rejoiced at the arrival of the sisters, that he persuaded the people to adorn the gates of the town with unusual magnificence, and to ornament the streets with wreaths of myrtle, rosemary and evergreens. He advanced to meet them in his pontifical vestments at the head of his chapter and all his clergy. The firing of cannon and the ringing of bells were in unison with the joy of the people. After visiting the Blessed Sacrament, the religious went in procession to the new convent, preceded by the conventual fathers, the seminarists, the clergy, and the chapter, after whom went the bishop followed by all the nobles. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed in the convent chapel and the *Te Deum* chanted. The ladies of the city had the privilege of visiting the sisters until Wednesday, the Feast of the Visitation of Our Blessed Lady, on which day the grand Vicar went in the bishop's name to establish enclosure with the usual ceremonies.

The saint provided everything for these his dear children. Corn, wine, cooking utensils, table-linen, furniture—nothing was wanting. For the first eight days, he sent their repasts already cooked, and would have continued this liberality for a month, but the nuns declined, wishing to live in the poverty prescribed by their rule. When it became known that Bishop Liguori had made a foundation, the convent was speedily filled with pupils, and the good odor of Jesus Christ was spread abroad by the regularity of the house and the holiness of its foundresses.

The two accessions already mentioned, were speedily increased to four, and all about to take the habit. The Bishop gave them the spiritual exercises himself, and their fervor filled him with joy. But there was one postulant so tormented with melancholy, that she wept and sighed unceasingly for her father's house. One evening, our saint called her, and having succeeded in restoring her serenity, gave her a crucifix to kiss, and made her promise to take Jesus Christ for her Spouse. The poor child felt within her a complete change, she returned joyfully to the novitiate and was never again troubled by such temptations.

Alphonsus acted differently towards another postulant, who repented of the step she had taken and lived in such a manner as to injure herself and do no good to others. "We must distinguish between temptation and obstinacy," said he, and though the lady was Archdeacon Rainone's niece, he silenced human respect, and sent her home to her parents.

The young ladies who had joined Mother Raphael at Nola, were objects of the saint's peculiar kindness. Their brothers, dissatisfied with the step they had taken, for several years refused to pay their pension. The holy bishop knowing their sensitiveness on this point, paid it for them, but their brothers refunded their portions previous to their profession.

This convent was to Alphonsus as the apple of his eye; it successfully rivalled the seminary in his affections. He never ceased to be its most liberal benefactor, never failing to send presents of oil, wine and corn at stated times, besides frequent donations of from ten to thirty ducats, the stipulated allowance he sent the Sisters once in a week, or at the farthest, once a month, and he promised to maintain the four foundresses while he lived. On feast days, he always sent presents of some kind, and whatever sweetmeats etc. were sent him from Naples by his relations or others, found their way, for the most part, to his dear monastery.

The third Sunday in July was chosen for the solemn feast of the Most Holy Redeemer, and the saint caused it to be preceded by a *triduo,* and celebrated with extraordinary pomp. These good religious called *Redemptoristines,* have spread into Austria, Belgium, Holland and Ireland, and "everywhere," says Cardinal Villecourt, " The daughters of Alphonsus have shed the sweet odor of their virtues."

The saint, as will be readily conjectured, always took the greatest interest in convents. He wished to revive everywhere ancient monastic discipline, and nothing calculated to compass this end escaped his incessant vigilance. On his first arrival at St. Agatha, he sent Father Villani and other Fathers to give spiritual exercises in all the monasteries, and this was repeated at least once a year, "A retreat," said he, "is a fire in which the most rusty iron ought to become purified." He frequently visited the convent himself, and would preach on religious duties at the grate, exciting in the sisters, his most dear children, an ardent love for Jesus Christ, and special confidence in His Holy Mother. He particularly advised them to practice frequent communion, and by this means caused them to love prayer, and mortification, and led them into paths of the sublimest perfection.

Virgins consecrated to God he considered the most precious portion of the flock entrusted to him. When he preached to them, he often spoke quite strongly about trivial faults, so that they remarked he went too far. "What shall I do?" said he smiling. "Ought I to have told the sisters they were saints? when one preaches, one may suppose things which do not yet exist." He enjoined abbesses and confessors to watch over the intercourse which took place at the grate, and wished to be informed of all disorders, however small, that he might remedy them immediately, and as the nuns were strictly cloistered, he did not wish them to be visited, except by relations of the first and second degrees.

Alphonsus was extremely cautious in selecting confessors for convents. He weighed the gestures, the words, and searched into the very opinions of the candidate. He allowed the confessor to receive some tokens of gratitude from the nuns on certain feast days, but would not tolerate the frequent giving of presents, and required all to be offered in the name of the community. Nothing gave him more delight than to see young virgins consecrate themselves to God. He aided them in every way, and left the most important business to assist at the ceremony. He accepted every invitation to a profession, whether of a choir or lay-sister, and never omitted to preach. “It is my privilege and my duty;” said he, “to consecrate to God these victims of divine love.” To stimulate their fervor, he gave his religious every possible advantage, introducing into their churches exercises calculated to increase in their hearts the love of God, as benediction, exposition, novenas, and a sermon in honor of the Blessed Virgin on Saturday evening. He often preached this sermon himself in the convent chapel.

He arranged that the nuns should have an extraordinary confessor whenever they asked for one, and he sent such confessors to all the convents every three months, whether asked for or not. In short, with regard to conscience, he insisted that religious should enjoy perfect liberty. “When a religious asks for a new confessor,” said he, “it is a sign she has not courage to open her heart to the usual confessor, and if there is a sin on her conscience, she may be led to commit a thousand sacrileges.” He was deeply grieved on learning that a neighboring bishop was too cautious in granting these privileges, and that nuns absented themselves from the holy tribunal in consequence. Hearing that a regulation allowed the religious of a certain convent to write only to the ordinary confessor, he sent for the superior, and ordered, that this rule should be relaxed whenever any of the religious wished to apply to any confessor of well-known probity.

Although several instances of apparent severity, regarding the dismissal of subjects, are recorded in the memoirs of the saint, yet perhaps no founder of an order was ever more lenient in this respect. When urged by Father Tannoia, novice-master for twenty-four years, to consent to the dismissal of a lay-brother, he wrote the following reply, which undoubtedly explains his own practice in this respect.

“When once a subject is admitted to the noviciate, he should not be sent away without grave reason; and when he has been admitted to profession, the reasons should be still more grave, and the subject incorrigible;

otherwise a superior sins mortally in expelling a subject.” This deserves to be generally known.

He endeavored to restore monastic discipline everywhere. Among the Franciscans of Ariola, the rules were so difficult that the nuns could not fully observe them. “He curtailed all that was too rigorous,” said Sister Mary di Lucca, “and what he reformed was fully observed.” In the new edition of the rules which he had printed, one recognizes the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, for he condescends to every want, yet avoids effeminate indulgence.

In connexion with this convent, he learned that the religious suffered great annoyances, because their revenues were collected and administered by strangers, and purchases made in such a manner, that, with ample rent, the poor sisters were often without food or clothing. The saint appealed to the Prince of Riccia, and backed by this powerful noble, deprived the stewards of the convent money, and placed it in the hands of the, abbess. He endeavored to establish community life everywhere, but when his designs were violently opposed, he temporized. “Calm yourselves,” said he to the nuns on one of those occasions, “I proposed this measure for your good, but as you judge others wise, forget all I have said about it.” So far from being offended with these religious, he paid them a fatherly visit the very next day, and made no allusion whatever to it.

It was customary in a certain convent that when a young lady was clothed or professed, she should remain seated at the door during the rest of the day to receive the congratulations of her friends and relations. Seeing in this senseless custom an occasion of general dissipation, he ordered that neither the grate nor the door should be opened after dinner, and allowed exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, that the new bride of Christ might obtain of her Spouse abundant blessings.

Again: when a candidate made the vows or took the habit, it was permitted her to dine in the parlor with the guests. This the saint entirely abolished when two noble ladies, daughters of Lady Catherine di Lucca, made their profession. The guests he allowed to be entertained but the newly professed dined in the refectory with her sisters.

The ritual of a convent in Arienzo stated that the novice should make her profession between the hands of the bishop, and, ridiculously enough, this was interpreted, literally: at a profession, the master of ceremonies explained it to the bewildered saint. “O Jesus!” he exclaimed with unwonted impetuosity, “what has that to do with the vows? Let her keep her hands to herself and I will keep mine.” He afterwards explained the true meaning of the phrase, and suppressed forever this foolish ceremony.

He next undertook to reform the music of the convents, and help to restore the grand and solemn Gregorian chant, by forbidding the flimsy music, with which bad taste had replaced it. “The church,” said he, “is not a theatre, and religious are not opera singers.” Besides, he did not wish the nuns to sing solos. The musicians, however, were not over scrupulous in carrying out his views. One evening, while a nun was singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin to figured music, the bishop suddenly presented himself, and it was to no purpose that the *artiste* with much presence of mind, continued the words to a Gregorian air, for Alphonsus himself was an accomplished musician, and possessed even in old age a voice of such refined culture and marvelous sweetness, that, when he sang, his auditors melted into tears. After a while, he approached the grate, and said, laughing: “You have been trying to deceive me, and that was not right, I forbade light music, because I thought it might attract young libertines to your church, which would be a source of numerous irregularities.”

A daughter of a choir-conductor who was an excellent musician, applied for admission, and the saint not liking to refuse the nuns, consented, but prophesied that the musical novice would not persevere. The nuns soliciting the admission of another, also a musician, the saint consented, saying: “This one will not persevere any better.” Both returned to their homes after a few months, and the nuns resolved to be satisfied with the plain chant in future.

On one occasion when it was thought he would command two windows of a certain monastery, which looked into a house belonging to seculars to be closed, one of the religious openly resisted him, and threatened to appeal to the king. To this unexpected insult, the saint mildly replied: “Be tranquil, I do not wish to cause you any pain;” after which, he dexterously changed the subject, and the conversation went on peaceably.

The Rochettines of Arienzo wishing to obtain purer air, asked leave to open a little belvidere about their church door. The bishop sent the Vicar General and two architects from Naples, to examine the place. When he heard that the proposed belvidere would look into the premises of the Augustinian Fathers, he immediately refused. The good religious were not at all offended at this, for, on reflection, they themselves saw the impropriety of their request.

From time to time, the Pope had granted cloistered nuns permission to absent themselves from the convent. Some nuns were about to seek a similar dispensation, but Alphonsus warned them to abstain: "The Pope refers it to the ordinary," he said, and I will never grant it. I know what a bad reputation these goings out have. The least evil which results from them is great dissipation of mind." To the lady Catharine di Lucca who had leave from the Pope to spend one day in the year with her bedridden daughter in a cloistered convent, he sent the following message: "Tell Donna Catherine that I suspend the permission for the present. The Pope can do what he pleases, but if he refers it to me, I cannot grant it, as others would seek the same privilege to the injury of enclosure." Some nuns complained that they never got anything they asked from him, and that they had met with three refusals consecutively. "Let them ask what is right," said he, "and I will be sure not to refuse them, but to unreasonable requests, I must give a decided refusal."

Whenever any of the nuns wanted one of his fathers as extraordinary confessor, the favor was granted. Those at a distance from the father they wished to consult, could do so by letter, and it was the saint's wish that the father thus consulted should be allowed to respond. Father Villani, when rector, having refused a permission of this nature, the saint wrote to him immediately telling him to comply. So desirous was Alphonsus that these doves, whose office it is to hover about their heavenly spouse and sing his praises, should never know a moment's uneasiness which it was in his power to prevent.

No saint ever did more for virgins consecrated to God, and for the religious state in general, than this great doctor. It is indeed doubtful if any other saint did so much. His writings reanimate and reform religious, console and fortify them, in every clime. *The Nun sanctified, Exhortation to Religious to advance in the perfection of their State, Advice to Novices, Consideration on the Religious State, Advice regarding Religious Vocation,* various admonitions to superiors, subordinates, lay-brothers, scattered through his rules, his circulars, his private letters, form a complete epitome of all that is necessary or useful for those concerned.

In his sermons and instructions, he was ever urging the religious under his charge to heroic perfection. Frequent communion, even daily communion, became customary among them. He rigorously examined the confessors he sent them, lest the Jansenistic tendencies, then too common, should enter this cherished fold, and he knew well what Jansenist confessors had done with all the convents in France to which they had gained access. The nuns under his jurisdiction never knew the want of any spiritual advantage. He himself was ever ready to console and encourage the lowliest among them in moments of desolation or temptation. He received them, he professed them, he instructed them, he gave them retreats, he heard their confessions, in short, he wished that in all their necessities, spiritual and temporal, they should know they had in him a *Father,* whose greatest happiness was to assist his cherished children. But in proportion as he loved to see these dear spouses of Christ fervent and devoted to Jesus, he dreaded relaxation, and was wont to say, that it was easier for a soul to be saved amid the gayeties of the world than in a relaxed religious house. Severe judgment from the most enthusiastic advocate of convents that ever lived; but, as Faber remarks, "few men have had such experience of these matters as good St. Alphonsus."

Chapter L

Zeal for material temples.—New persecutions.—“The Truth of Faith.”—The saint goes to Naples.—His urbanity.—His episcopal hat.—Accident.—An easy victory.—Apostolic labors.—The Abbot at Regina Cœli.—Christening of the saint’s nephew.—His labors among the lower classes.—In convents.—His sister Lady Marianna Liguori.—His marvelous eloquence.

A SAINT so intensely devoted to the most Blessed Sacrament must naturally have interested himself in the material temples wherein Jesus reposed, veiled in the great mystery of his love. He rebuilt or repaired every church in his diocese that needed renovation, and spared no expense in decorating them. Several of the churches of the diocese from being little better in appearance than ruinous barns, became under his fostering care basilicas, worthy to rank with those which have gained the world’s admiration in Rome and Naples.

Paintings by the first masters, and statuary whose beauty could not fail to elevate the minds of the worshipers, became quite common in the days of our saint, who wished that the priceless gems of the great masters, of whom Italy has been so prolific, should be gathered in at any cost to beautify the house of God. Ornamented pillars, door-dressings, stuccoing, elegant ornaments of every kind supplied employment to architects and artists during the saint’s episcopate and for many years after. Nor did he give less attention to the interior embellishments of the house of God. He required that the churches should be kept scrupulously clean, and the altars decorated with magnificence, or at least, becomingly. He was extremely particular about the altar linens, and insisted that they should be changed at stated intervals, and removed as soon as they began to wear out. “I have never seen a priest allow soiled or worn linen at his table,” he said, “everything they use for themselves is neat; it is only for Jesus Christ that dirty things are allowed.” He desired to see the altars profusely ornamented with flowers, and from his day it has been customary in his congregation to cultivate the rarest flowers to bloom and fade before the tabernacle. So accomplished a musician, could not fail to make stringent regulations regarding the singing of high mass and the chanting of the office, but he never favored what he called theatrical music. He loved the grave, dignified music of the Church, of which a true musician never wearies, and which fully answers the end of church music, to inspire or aid devotion.

It was not the divine will, that our saint should sanctify himself in prosperity and peace. Persecutions thickened around him towards the close, and his last years were dragged wearily out, in misery and sorrow, but the joy of the Holy Ghost sustained him, and now "he remembereth his anguish no more." His congregation was flourishing; its name and fame had reached distant lands, but hell instigated a new persecution against it. Some three years back, a difficulty occurred between the house at Illiceto, and Don Maffei, a proud, turbulent noble, about a certain fief then in litigation. The fathers remained neutral for peace' sake, but Maffei was so incensed at their not taking sides with him that he swore to destroy the whole congregation, saying: "He that is not with me is against me." Baron Sarnelli also cherished a secret resentment against them, because of the property bequeathed to Alphonsus by his brother, Father Sarnelli, of holy memory. Some mark of attention having been accidentally omitted in church towards his wife, the baroness, this was as the last drop which caused the vials of his wrath to overflow. Between Maffei and the baron, the Fathers were vilified in every part of the kingdom. "If Don Maffei is offended," said the old bishop sadly, "I grieve for the poor house! I know his dispositions, and what he caused the venerable Mgr. Lucci to Suffer. May the good God deign to be our protector."

He ordered fasts and prayers throughout the congregation, and recommended that discretion and charity should be exercised towards their adversaries, against' whom no arms were to be used but prayer and observance of rule. "Behold my dear brothers," he wrote,"how the Lord has visited us in these tribulations—He chastises our negligence in regular observance but let us hope in His mercy; He will not permit the congregation to be destroyed. Let us appease the divine wrath by prayer, and by avoiding all voluntary transgressions, especially such as result from disobedience or nonobservance."

Calumnies of the strangest description were everywhere circulated against the Fathers, and the rage of Maffei went so far that he appealed to the Supreme Court to deprive them of their rights of citizenship, as men who habitually plotted against state and sovereign and led scandalous lives! The saint, besides urging his own spiritual sons to penance, solicited the prayers of several monasteries and holy persons at Naples. He also sent a great quantity of wax candles to the hermitages of Camaldoli, that they might expose the Blessed Sacrament and intercede for his congregation, and he sent several large alms to the Capuchin nuns entreating them to make novenas and other pious exercises for his intention.

It was while this infamous persecution was going on, that the holy doctor published his great work in defense of the Church. “The Truths of Faith,” which was received with universal applause. A canon of Naples in a report on this work addressed to Cardinal Sersale, wrote as follows:

“Nothing can hinder or slacken the zeal of this apostolic man. In his devotion to the salvation of souls, he enters into the lists with indefatigable courage to maintain a generous combat for truth, despite the double burden of the episcopate and old age. In this book he has re-established the integrity of faith and morals among the faithful, to avenge the calumnies of the wicked, and to scatter the darkness of error. He completely overthrows all the dreams of materialists, deists and other impious men.”

Pope Clement XIII was extremely gratified on reading this great work and acknowledged the dedication (to himself) by a brief, testifying in flattering terms his high esteem for the extraordinary learning of the great doctor.

At the same time he published his useful “Instructions on the Decalogue, &c,” which was and is highly prized by all who have at heart the instruction of the people.

The disturbances regarding the houses of Illiceto and Ciorani increased to such a pitch that the fathers besought Alphonsus to go to Naples and confer with the minister Tanucci.

He refused to leave his see, thinking that the business would be done as well by letter, and by friends in the capitol, but Father Villani and some other father came to St. Agatha and with tears described the imminent danger of the Congregation, adding that if he wished to save it from utter destruction, his presence in Naples was essential. Moved by their entreaties, and still more by their affliction, he borrowed a carriage and set out for the capitol which he reached July 16.

His first visit was to the Cardinal Archbishop, who having greeted him with utmost cordiality, inquired the cause of his unexpected presence in Naples. My Congregation is passing through a crisis, your eminence,” answered the saint, “our enemies wish to destroy it, but I rely on the omnipotent arm of God to sustain it.” As he took leave, the Cardinal said: “Monsignor, you are Archbishop of Naples, you have all the power that I can confer, use it as you please.”

Prelates, canons, nobles, thronged the room of a man whom they regarded as an honor and an ornament to their country. He was unable to acknowledge their profuse courtesies as he desired, and with that elegant urbanity which has always marked the dealings of the saints with their friends and benefactors, he begged them to excuse him, if, having come to Naples on urgent business, he reluctantly failed in any of the duties of politeness or civility. He accepted of his brothers’ hospitality, but declined the magnificent state apartment that had been prepared for him, and took refuge in a lumber-room. He wore the habit of his Congregation, now so old and patched that it gave him the appearance of one of his townsmen, the lazzaroni. His shoes and hat were quite in keeping with the habit. Count Hercules was particularly annoyed at the hat, as the like had not been seen in Naples for years; he abstracted it and put one of the current fashion in its place. This made matters worse, as the saint had nothing to match this elegant addition to his scanty wardrobe, however he sold it, and having bought four common hats with the proceeds, gave three away and kept one for himself. As he had no cloak he used an old mantilla, but being told that it was unsuitable, he sent it to a pawnbroker and got an old cloak in exchange. It particularly annoyed him to be styled Excellency. “Come now,” said he to a servant one day, “drop this word, I will not have it.” “But you are a nobleman by birth,” returned the servant, “it is only your hereditary title.” “That is enough,” said the saint shortly, “never let me hear it from you again,” and he was obeyed. To a gentleman who observed that he carried humility too far, he replied: “Humility has never injured any one.”

The saint’s mode of defending his beloved Congregation was such as to increase the esteem and veneration in which he was already held. He managed to justify the Fathers without injuring those who had calumniated them. But his very appearance in Naples had ruined the cause of his adversaries. They wished to suspend the business indefinitely, but through the influence of Alphonsus, the eleventh of September was fixed for the discussion of the cause of Sarnelli. About this time the saint's carriage came into collision with another carriage. The windows were broken, the coachman wounded, our saint and his companion hurt severely but not dangerously. The Duchess of Pirelli, whose palace was at hand, sent for them, and after they had rested awhile, lent her own equipage to take them home. When this accident occurred, the poor bishop had the misfortune to lose his splendid new hat, and the wooden stick he used as a cane—to his infinite regret, for they were not easily replaced.

The royal court of St. Clare was in session, Sep. 11, but no plaintiff appeared. One of the advocates alone came, but only to declare, that he had not courage to speak against a bishop whose sanctity was proclaimed by the whole kingdom. The saint was displeased that an opportunity had not been offered him of disproving one by one all the calumnies his enemies had been circulating, and which they were expected to produce in open court; but his triumph was all the greater, his very presence confounded his enemies.

During his stay in Naples, the saint as usual occupied himself in waging war against sin, and planting virtues in the hearts of all with whom he came in contact. Among other good works, he thoroughly reformed the convent of the "Religious of the Wood." He put an end to all dissensions, restored perfect peace and harmony, and reestablished prayer, the frequent use of the holy Sacraments, and perfect observance.

The superior of the Propaganda was desirous that the saint should preach the novena of the Assumption, but feared to ask this on account of his other great labors. A canon suggested that by his authority as superior he could obtain what he desired, the holy bishop being still a member of the Congregation of the Propaganda. When the order reached him, he bent his head and said: "Pray that the Blessed Virgin may give me strength, for I have not time to prepare anything; you must be satisfied with what God and Our Lady will deign to suggest to me," And never had an audience been better satisfied.

One evening the saint's servant was obliged to use the carriage of Don Hercules for his master, but lest the latter would persist in going on foot rather than ascend such an elegant vehicle, old harness was put on the horses and old covering on the seats, which caused the bishop and his equipage to present a singular if not ridiculous appearance. The novena was wonderfully blessed. Every day the cardinal assisted, and could not refrain from weeping at the touching spectacle of a whole congregation in contrition. It was said that ten missions would not have effected so many conversions. Already was the man of God revered as a saint. Pieces were cut off from his garments, and Mgr. Bergamo deemed himself fortunate in being able to exchange his hat for another. He attempted also to take his rosary, but Alphonsus missed it and asked for it, on account of the indulgences attached to it.

On the eve of the Assumption he went to visit the Blessed Sacrament in the church of the convent Regina Cœli. It happened that three abbots were officiating pontifically while the nuns were chanting vespers, and when one of them recognized Monsignor Liguori. “Just look at that bishop,” said he, “does he not disgrace his character.” But the prince of Monte Miletto was not of the same opinion. Despite the shabby garments of the saint, he approached, knelt to kiss his hand with every demonstration of reverence. The Duke of Andria and other noblemen present offered the same homage, having more correct discernment than the Abbots. When the Carmelites commenced the devotions of the Wednesdays in honor of St. Teresa, Alphonsus attended, but sat on an humble bench among the people. The Fathers presented him with an easy-chair and a velvet cushion, but the saint declined all marks of distinction, as was his wont.

The gifts of knowledge, counsel and prophecy were often made evident in our saint. A daughter of the Duchess of Bovino was about to marry, and sent her mother to ask his prayers: “No, no,” said he, “she will not marry. God will detach her from the world and draw her to himself.” The duchess no sooner returned home than a note was handed her from her daughter stating that it was her intention to enter a convent.

During our saint’s stay in Naples, his sister-in-law gave birth to a son, whom he was asked to baptize. While the ceremony progressed, an attendant priest continually addressed Alphonsus as “Excellency.” At last his annoyance found vent in this mild rebuke: “Reverend sir, if you wish to style me most illustrious, you can do so, but you would oblige me very much by using the simplest language in addressing me.”

The indefatigable bishop preached for the confraternity of coachmen, footmen and other domestics. His dear brethren of the chapels, among whom was his old penitent Barbarese, had the intense gratification of hearing him once more. He also preached, at the request of the worthy men at the head of the guild of saddlers, to an immense concourse of the lowest classes. They besought him to preach the novena of our Lady's Nativity, and he refused no request of these humble disciples and fervent admirers. He preached to three hundred orphans by special request, but this did not end his labors. The people not only crowded about the church in which he officiated, but thronged his house, though for want of enough of chairs, most of them had to sit on the floor; and his loving kindness to these poor people won him the admiration of all Naples. He visited almost every convent in Naples, preached to the nuns, and heard the confessions of any who wished to come to him. But here he practiced his customary humility, for when the first religious asked him to hear her, he applied to the cardinal for faculties, although his Eminence had already given him the fullest power to preach, confirm, officiate, and in fact, do what he pleased.

Shortly after this, our saint had an affliction in connection with his sister, Lady Mariana Liguori, a nun in the convent of St. Jerome, which did not grieve him the less because it happened to be a realization of his own prophecy. This lady suffered much from scruples, and as she would not submit to her director, the only cure for one in her condition, the saint predicted that she would die crazy, which happened soon after. Of the Princess Zurlo, who wished to become a nun, he said: "No, she will return to the world and lead a saintly life there." Of another young lady, he said to an over-zealous relative: "Leave her alone, the convent is not for her; she is not fit for it, nor does she want to go there."

Alphonsus was totally free from human respect. He acted in the same manner towards convents for the rustic and the penitent, and visited them as frequently as convents for women of noble birth, or rather he gave the former the preference. He was accustomed to visit the sick and infirm in all monasteries, especially such nuns as had once been his penitents. Indeed he preached for all religious societies whenever he was asked, and, faithful to his own instructions, he preached Jesus Christ in such a manner as to cause an audience of priests to exclaim: "A true apostle! thanks to God for having given us a bishop of the primitive age!" In his sermons, heart spoke to heart, both preacher and auditors were so absorbed as to be utterly unconscious of the extraordinary eloquence that renewed upon the earth the marvels of conversion and contrition which were as “the first fruits of the spirit” in the days of the apostles.

Although the saint, like his Divine Master, went about doing good, and heaven visibly blessed his unceasing labors, yet he counted the moments until he could return to his diocese, the spouse, as he said, that God had given him to cherish. “Were it not for the interests of my persecuted Congregation,” said he, “which labors so successfully for God’s glory and the salvation of souls, I should believe that I sinned mortally in remaining so long in Naples.” Not a day passed on which he did not receive a courier from his diocese, and regulated from afar its now prosperous affairs. The business that brought him had no sooner reached a successful issue than he replied to those who would have urged him to remain a little longer that he might preach other sermons and novenas, “Jesus Christ no longer wishes me at Naples: St. Agatha is my place.”

On one occasion he went to the Prince della Riccia to procure through his influence the admission of a woman who had been in his service, into the refuge of St. Raphael; but the valet said the prince was absent, attending on the king. A soldier of the Italian guard seeing the neglected appearance of the saint, who, except as regarded personal cleanliness, took little pains to keep up his dignity in externals, remarked to a comrade: “Look at that shabby lord; he has not a penny to get himself shaved.” Alphonsus smiled and said: “I thank Thee, oh Lord, for allowing me to be censured even by soldiers.” A second time also, he was unable to see the prince. On a third visit the secretary suspecting the real cause of these refusals, slipped some money into the valet’s hands and lo, the prince was at home. He was very angry when he learned that he had been denied to the saint, and immediately did all that was requisite for the penitent woman, so that the saint had the consolation of seeing yet another of his straying sheep, in a place of safety.

Chapter LI

The saint leaves Naples.—His Emotion.—Letter.—Unreasonable complaints.—Calumnies.—Letter to Father Villani.—Fault finding.—The meekest of bishops accused of rigor.—Incident.—Murmurs against his works.—His reply.—Illness.—He makes his will.—Sufferings.—His tedious convalescence.—The most zealous doctor.—New literary labors.—Treatise for men.—He again appeals to the Pope to ease him of the burden of the episcopate.

OUR saint left Naples, after a busy sojourn of two months and three days, with a firm conviction that he would never again return to that dear city, in which he had so often tasted the ecstasy of joy as well as the anguish of grief. When he visited for the last time his beloved church of Our Lady of Mercy, where he had received so many graces,—graces that had been the turning points in his life,—recollections of his early struggles and successes, of the joys and sorrows of his marvelous vocation, rushed upon his mind and for the moment completely overwhelmed him. Raising his tearful eyes towards Mary, his Mother, towards that dear image of OUR LADY OF MERCY through which miracles had been wrought in his favor, his emotion became incontrollable: “O my Queen!” he exclaimed, in broken accents, “we shall meet no more in Naples, but we shall see each other again in Paradise!”

He reached Arienzo September 19, 1767, his mission to the capital having been entirely successful. He was now firmly resolved to leave his diocese no more, unless, indeed, the Sovereign Pontiff, in consideration of his years and infirmities might allow him to retire to the bosom of his beloved Congregation, and prepare to render to the Chief Pastor of Souls, an account of his stewardship a hope he fondly cherished. “Tell my brother, Count Hercules,” he wrote from St. Agatha, to his man of business in Naples, “that he may freely dispose of the apartments which he reserves for me, because I shall return thither no more.”

The extraordinary vigilance of our saint in the government of his diocese gained universal approbation, the Pope himself was accustomed to cite him as a model bishop. The people regarding him less as a man than an angel, were sometimes unreasonable enough to fancy that he was capable of annihilating sin in his diocese, and hence they loudly criticized the least disorder. The murmurs reached Naples, and a certain respectable religious of that city condemned several regulations made by Alphonsus, of which he had heard. Being asked to justify himself, the saint replied: “There is no need of my doing so; St. Francis de Sales, Father Torres and so many others have declined to defend themselves. . . . . Tell me where is there a diocese to which nothing is wanting?. . . . I cannot avoid these reproaches; besides, they are useful for my spiritual welfare, by humbling me through the contempt and disfavor I meet with. I should be delighted if Father N.—would come to see me; then he could see the real state of things.” The religious really did visit the saint, and not only was undeceived, but from that period became his warmest panegyrist.

The saint liked to hear whatever was said in dispraise of him, and Father Villani who tenderly loved him, was always careful to let him know of every complaint he heard, that he might be always on his guard, for open enemies and deceitful friends were never wanting. A priest on one occasion having informed him of an injurious report circulated against him, he wrote in reply: “I thank you for the information your letter conveyed. These things serve to maintain me the more in humility and vigilance.”

It was next affirmed that his reputation had become so low in Rome that the Pope was by no means proud of having made him a bishop. This report pained the Congregation deeply, and no doubt touched the heart of the saint at his most sensitive point. “I do not know,” he wrote to Father Villani, “how I could have been more careful. I always note down in writing all that has to be done for the present day and the following, and when any business connected with the diocese is in question, I leave everything else to attend to it. Everyone who knows me knows this, God will do the rest, but after all, this will only enable me to get my resignation accepted the more easily.”

Again, our saint, the great model of episcopal meekness was accused of exercising too much rigor in his government. But he kept the even tenor of, his way, whether he was accused of superfluous meekness or superfluous severity. “Human respect,” said one who knew him well, “could never succeed in influencing Monsignor Liguori,” One day, several gentlemen were discussing the case of a priest whom they alleged to have been unjustly banished. Yet the offences of this priest were of a grave character, but our saint had thrown the cloak of charity over them for the love of God. When he heard that he had been censured for his action in this matter as he had never particularized the offences for which he banished the delinquent, he smiled, but not a word escaped him. That he might taste the bitterness of the cross in every form, some, and even those of his own Congregation, carped at the publication of the wonderful works which in our day have gained him the title of Doctor, as though he neglected the care of his diocese to compose them. Being informed of this, the saint wrote thus to Father Villani:

"In reply to those who regard my labors of the pen as a crime, I could remind them that the bishops most celebrated for zeal, published works while ruling their diocese, as St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Francis de Sales, and many others. In winter I am forced to keep my room, and I see no society. I make meditation three times a day, I make an hour's thanksgiving after mass, as well as a spiritual lecture, at least when not hindered by some urgent duty. Afterwards I endeavor to turn to profit my few moments of leisure by laboring at things which I consider useful."

Even the expenses which his works were supposed to entail—works worth a million times more than their weight in gold, or rather immeasurably beyond all earthly price,—excited the disaffected and called forth their murmurs. It is superfluous to say that the holy doctor did not write to make money, yet he brought out his works without any pecuniary loss. His own letters to his publishers prove this. But when we consider the utility of his hundred volumes, not a line of which is without its use,—works written for the most part to supply the wants which he himself discovered, in those whose ignorance would become the ruin of their flock, or to defend the doctrine and discipline of the Church of Christ against powerful and numerous adversaries—we can well imagine the anguish which these censures must have caused his sensitive heart. It was a consolation to him, as it is pleasant to us to recall, that Clement XIII, far from sharing the sentiments of these ignoble murmurers, encouraged the saint in his literary labors, by assuring him that his works were useful not only to his diocese but to the whole Church. But the saint was not to be deterred by the grumblings of these petty, we had almost said, contemptible, spirits. He wrote solely for the glory of God and the good of the Church, and his *works remain to praise him in the gate.* Could these narrow-minded murmurers but have foreseen the day when in consideration of these very works, the delight, the edification and the glory of the Church, over eight hundred prelates of Christendom would petition the Holy See to place the name of Alphonsus de Liguori, in the short but illustrious category of DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH!

The year 1768 had other troubles in store for our saint; for God overwhelms with sufferings those whom He designs to elevate to high sanctity, and this is the explanation of the chain of spiritual and corporal sufferings which traversed, his long career. He was almost seventy-two years old when he was attacked by a violent fever, which, after three days, suddenly disappeared to give place to a sciatica arising from rheumatic tendencies, of which he gives the following account in his letter to Rev. Father Villani, his director:

"I am continually tormented with internal pains, so that I am only half alive; the pain seems to fix itself in the hip-bone. Blessed be God who has sent me this suffering! It will be difficult for me to make the visitation this year. The physicians no longer know what to think of my case. I place myself in the hands of God to bear my cross as long as it shall please Him."

He strove, however, to preach the novena of the Assumption, and, despite his suffering, he succeeded in crawling to the pulpit. But on the sixth day, the pain became so intolerable as to render it impossible for him to go on. He had to go to his bed once more, but even here it was only the body that rested. He administered the affairs of his diocese, dictated his works, and continued to direct the ordinary exercises of his household.

As no relief could be obtained, it was proposed to him to send to Naples for a physician, but, as usual, he would employ only those of his own diocese, and when those who loved him disobeyed him in this matter, his countenance plainly showed how much he suffered.

Everyone was affected by the tender piety of the saint, which found vent in the most touching ejaculations to Jesus and Mary. But he seemed quite confounded that he had not, as he affirmed, corresponded to their goodness. To a Father of his Congregation, who was about to say mass, he said with profound humility: "Pray that God may be merciful towards me." His confidence being chastened by a holy fear which made him tremble at the thought of the judgments of God, he repeated from time to time: “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, but deal with him according to Thy mercy.” Having received the last Sacraments, he made his will on the 26th of August. He would not have had anything to bequeath had not two farmers of the episcopal demesne just paid his steward four hundred and twenty-three ducats. He ordained that this sum should be deposited with the archpriest Romano, who was to devote a certain portion to have masses celebrated for his soul, another to the poor, and the rest to be distributed to his servants, in token of his gratitude for their services, two hours after his death. He wished that his body should repose in his cathedral.

As the fever abated, his pains increased until they became so violent, that being unable to remain in bed, he was obliged to get into an arm-chair, but he was unable to rest anywhere. As he could not help himself in the least, and was at times unable even to move, his sufferings, though they elicited no groan from himself caused his attendants to shed tears of compassion. “Lord,” he would exclaim, “I thank thee for having given me some share in the sufferings Thou didst endure in Thy nerves when Thou wast nailed to the Cross. I wish to suffer, dear Jesus, as Thou pleasest, and as much as Thou pleasest, only give me patience. Here burn, here cut, but spare me for eternity. Poor damned souls, how can you suffer without merit! My Jesus Thou art my only hope, the sole remedy, for all my ills!”

As death seemed to approach, he would cry out joyfully: “O how good it is to die fastened to the cross! The poor who love God die more content than the rich of this world.” As he was tormented by want of sleep, he said: “I should like to have a little repose, but God does not will it; well, I am glad to dispense with this comfort.” And casting his eyes on his poor bed, he exclaimed: “O my paliasse, thou art worth more than all the thrones in the world!”

Terrible were his sufferings when the rheumatic or neuralgic affections to which he was a martyr settled in the vertebrae of the neck. His head bent over his chest to such an extent that, viewed from behind, he seemed almost headless. The beard pressed into the skin by the weight resting upon the chin, made a painful wound in the breast, and when the surgeons endeavored to raise the head, they were obliged to desist lest they might break his neck. By stretching him on a sofa, however, they were able to examine the wound but as it almost bared the bone, they had considerable difficulty in preventing mortification. During the remaining seventeen years of the saint’s life, his head continued to rest on his chest, in which position his later pictures always represent him.

During this cruel malady his patience was superhuman: “Through a mass of pains,” said Father Raphael, Provincial of the Alcantarins, he never uttered the slightest complaint. A look towards heaven, a fervent aspiration—such were the signs of unusual suffering; but through all, he expressed himself so calmly that all present were confounded.” A surgeon from Naples could not conceive how he suffered these terrific pains with unalterable serenity.

“Had I to endure such tortures,” said he, “I should become frantic.”

At last the saintly invalid was removed from the sofa to his poor bed. For nearly fifty days he remained almost immovable in the only position he could adopt, a position at once painful and uneasy. Through all this anguish, he verified the words of St. Augustine, that he who loves does not suffer. His obedience to the orders of physicians was remarkable. “Let us obey them,” said he, “and then resign ourselves to die.” He never showed the slightest repugnance to any remedy, however painful or disagreeable. One day he said to a doctor: “At my advanced age what can I hope for? I obey you that I may do God’s will in doing yours.”

Our saint was not only serene but joyous, in his sufferings. A priest having asked how he passed the night, he laughingly replied: “I chase flies by day, and I catch spiders all night.” To a canon he once pleasantly remarked: “People have called me a cripple so often that I am caught at last.” “There,” he exclaimed on another occasion, slightly raising his head “that is the *ne plus ultra,* my head can do no more.”

Despite his agonizing sufferings, he neglected none of his customary exercises. It was in his room that his household assembled every night to recite the rosary, the litany and other prayers. During a great part of the day, the Lives of the Saints were read to him by a priest or by Brother Anthony. The affairs of his diocese he administered with his ordinary diligence. He desired that every parish in it should receive the benefit of a mission this year, and entreated Father Villani and several heads of Congregations in Naples to send an extraordinary reinforcement of laborers into his vineyard.

“What astonished me most,” said a canon, “was that he not only never ceased to watch and labor for the good of souls, but even extended his zeal beyond the limits of his own diocese.” Having learned that a bishop had done something detrimental to the glory of God and the salvation of souls, he sent him a letter by an express to draw his attention to the error. “It is thus, my dear Benedict,” he remarked to me, “that we are obliged to aid each other,”

Amid these pains and labors, he prepared for the press that admirable work entitled THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST, in which he but lays bare the sentiments that inflamed his own great heart. Knowledge, piety, and ardent zeal and the special characteristics of this beautiful book, every page of which tells us to avoid sin, to love our dearest Lord, to refer all our actions to Him, with the superhuman eloquence and peculiar unction characteristic of the devotional works of our *Most Zealous Doctor.*

His convalescence was painful and tedious. He was obliged to walk about on crutches, supported by two persons, but reaped no particular benefit from this clumsy mode of taking exercise. On the 2nd of November 1768, he tells Father Villani, that he is still incapable of moving, but he adds: “However, my head is clear, and by God’s grace, I am cheerful and resigned.” He composed at this time a work against a writer in Naples who had attacked the authority of the Church and her immunities, but never published it, as Father Villani, on account of several circumstances, advised him not to have it printed. He published an excellent treatise ON THE CEREMONIES OF THE MASS, in which he clearly expounds all the rubrics to be observed, enlarges upon the defects most commonly committed in this respect, and urges upon all priests the absolute necessity of making the preparation and thanksgiving so august a mystery demands.

As his sufferings every day became more and more acute, he wrote a touching letter to the Sovereign Pontiff, begging to be released from the burden of the episcopate, yet as before, protesting that he would regard the will of the Pope as the will of God. This letter was forwarded in December 1768, but it is probable it never reached the hands of Clement XIII, who passed to a better life early in 1769.

Chapter LII

The new Pope, Cardinal Ganganelli.—The Congregation persecuted in Sicily.—Interesting Letter of the Saint.—His Moral Theology again attacked.—Increased alarm of the saint regarding his houses in Sicily.—Incident.—Letters.—The saint refuses to moderate his zeal.—Remarkable cure.—Accidents.—"An old carriage, an old coachman, old horses, and an old Bishop."—Recreations.—He resumes the daily celebration of mass.—Regularity and austerity of his life.

PENDING the election of a pope, the saint ordered all his priests to say daily the prayer *Pro eligendo summa Pontifice,* and he recommended all the persons who visited him to pray that God would grant a worthy pastor to his church. "After God," said he, "is the Pope. Without him, in what confusion should we not be! It is the Pope who makes known to us the will of God, and puts our consciences in peace."

When he heard that Cardinal Ganganelli was elected, he wrote him a congratulatory letter, in which he extols his learning, his piety and his zeal for our holy religion. He dedicated to the new Pope his great work on dogmatics, a compliment which Clement XIV appreciated so highly that he thanked the aged author in a special brief. It is a proverb that troubles never come singly. While our saint was nailed to his bed of pain, a violent persecution arose against his Fathers in Sicily, where they had been previously so much valued and honored, that he had written more than once to the Superior: "This universal applause makes me tremble." But the Sicilian Missionaries could no longer complain of having no share of the cross. Their revenues were sequestered, their acts calumniated, their doctrines branded as heretical. "I have received the sad tidings you sent me," wrote the saint to Father Blasucci, "but no, nothing can be sad God wills. He wishes to mortify us, may His name be blessed forever! What I beg above all is, that you do not lose confidence in Jesus Christ. If turned out of your house, rent another. You must not yield too soon; on the contrary you must persevere until God shows you that he no longer wills you to be at Girgenti. At the worst, there will be fewer missions, but you will never want a morsel of bread. Wait and see what the deputies will do, what steps the new bishop will take; and, above all, what God's will may be. I am crippled from head to foot, but I bless God, and thank Him for having given me peace and patience."

As Alphonsus learned that his Moral Theology was attacked on this occasion, he wrote to all the bishops of Sicily in justification of his doctrine. He also represented the true state of things to the Marquis of Fogliani, Viceroy of Palermo, who in reply eulogized the virtues and learning of the great prelate.

This wound was not healed when a new misfortune increased his alarm regarding his children in Sicily. In the seminary of Mgr. Lanza, the new bishop, there was a wolf in sheep's clothing, whose blasphemous doctrines, secretly disseminated, compelled the good prelate to withdraw his faculties as confessor, and dismiss him. As Father Blasucci had been chosen by the bishop as his confessor and theologian, the degraded priest blamed him for his dismissal and vowed vengeance against the Congregation. Having gained several influential persons to his side, he presented himself at the royal junta of the viceroy and the president, declaring that he had been persecuted by the missionaries, because he had deemed it a duty to oppose the heresies they were promulgating, to the prejudice of souls.

Although Mgr. Lanza immediately undertook the defense of the Fathers, and gave the true character of their infamous calumniator, yet many who had heard the accusations, knew nothing of the refutation, and their dismissal from the island was confidently spoken of, to the dismay of many pious persons, who fasted, prayed, caused masses to be said, and gave abundant alms, that God might avert so great a calamity. Alphonsus urged the members of his Congregation to be humble and respectful towards all, to be patient and silent, and if the truth must be made known, to declare it, without injuring those who had shown such perfidy towards them. "I put all my confidence in God," he wrote, "He will protect us as He has always protected His Holy Church, persecuted throughout all ages. Let us act towards God as we ought, and He will comfort us." An "apology," written by Father Blasucci with spirit and energy, undeceived the royal ministers, and helped to produce a calm, but a treacherous calm, as we shall subsequently see. Our saint testified the most lively gratitude towards God, and wrote to his children; "We see that Jesus Christ has lovingly defended us against the efforts of hell. Thank Him, and thank Mary who has protected us in a special manner. . . . I recommend to all the perfect observance of the rules. Remember that we are surrounded by enemies who wish to work our utter ruin—they will speedily succeed if our conduct is not what it ought to be. I pray God to protect with His omnipotent arm this mission so advantageous to souls.

“The prayers of Monsignore Liguori,” said Father Drago, an eminent Oratorian, to the missionaries, “will protect the house at Girgenti. Have confidence. God will change your confusion into glory, and after these reverses, your Congregation will be more honored than ever in the Island of Sicily.”

The saint meanwhile continued to work and pray as heretofore. “If it has been said of St. Jerome,” remarked a venerable ecclesiastic who visited him, that he triumphed over his maladies by reading and writing incessantly; if there is reason to marvel at the voluminous writings of St. Gregory who never enjoyed good health, the holy bishop of St. Agatha may well excite admiration in the highest degree, because of the numberless works he accomplished when in a worse state than even St. Jerome or St. Gregory endured.”

Friends and admirers of the heroic old man besought Father Villani as his director to moderate his labors, but he mildly replied: “I do not think I ought to remain idle. I could employ myself in reading instead of dictating, but my head would gain nothing by that. When I have read for twenty minutes or half an hour, I can do no more. Besides I do not neglect my devotions. But there are many days which are entirely taken up with the affairs of my diocese, and while the visitation goes on I leave my writings to slumber. I enter into all these details with your reverence, that I may obtain your blessing.”

On account of the unnatural curvature of the saint’s neck, it was a martyrdom for him to eat, and nearly impossible to drink. It was only by means of a quill or pipe that he could imbibe liquid nourishment. One of the lay-brothers made him a wooden pipe, but it was found that silver alone—as a still more precious metal was not to be thought of,—could transmit hot drinks without splitting or rusting. A silversmith made him a silver pipe, but was obliged to pretend that it was of some less precious metal, as the saint would be horrified at the idea of using anything so costly. It pained him to be unable to visit his dear sick, though he procured zealous priests to supply his place, and sent them everything needful. Hearing that a poor cloistered nun had met with an accident that rendered her unable to leave her room, though she was still able to knit and sew, he assigned her a pension of five carlins a month. When Father Morgillo of the Pious Workmen broke his leg and endured dreadful sufferings for ten days from the unskillful manner in which the bone was reset, Alphonsus sent a servant to him with a little picture of the Blessed Virgin, telling him to have confidence, for Mary would obtain his cure. The sick man placed the picture on his face saying: “My Queen! by the merits of Bishop Liguori deliver me from this torture,” and he was cured from that instant. Father Morgillo ever after honored the picture as a relic of the saintly prelate from whom he had received it.

The doctors seeing the body of the saint almost entirely paralyzed and his mind devoted to study, ordered that he should drive out daily. But this prescription did not please him. “The money a carriage and horses would cost me,” said he, “ought to be employed in relieving the poor.” Yet a poor carriage was procured which he was informed, was a present from Don Hercules. The horses and harness were quite in keeping with the carriage; so that the wits of Arienzo sometimes amused themselves at his expense. “An old bishop,” said they, “on old coachman, an old carriage, and old horses.” His drives afforded him but little pleasure. If the wheels came in contact with a stone, it was torture to the invalid, whose head was so to say dislocated by every jolt. Once the carriage was upset, and it seemed miraculous that the fall did not kill him. Brother Antony and the servant lifted him up, and some poor woman who perceived him, moved with compassion, lent him a chair. Frequently a shaft or something else broke, and he had to wait in the middle of the street till the damage was repaired. One of the horses had singular habits: after various contortions of his stubborn head, he would suddenly lie down, and refuse to get up again till he had been pulled by the ears for a long time. The incapacity of the poor coachman multiplied the accidents; either he did not see what was in the way, or else, did not know how to avoid obstructions, so he was sure to dash against something at almost every step. But the bishop, to whom these drives must have been anything but pleasure trips, never thought of changing coachman, carriage or horses.

Not to lose a moment, at the beginning of these charming recreations he would recite certain prayers, and then have a spiritual book read to him. He most frequently went to St. Mary de Vico, where he visited the Blessed Sacrament, and excited the people to devotion by a fervid exhortation. When helped back to the carriage, the reading was resumed, and the book was not closed till he reentered the palace court. Even in his bed, the watch was always before him, and he often prolonged his studies till midnight, especially in summer.

After some time he became scrupulous about the expenses of this elegant equipage, and wished all to be sold for the benefit of the poor; and this would certainly have been done despite the representations of the grand vicar and the doctors, had not Father Villani commanded him to desist.

For more than two years the saint was unable to celebrate mass, and this without doubt was the greatest privation he ever experienced. He was however daily present at mass and received Holy Communion from the officiating priest. One day, Father Marcorio an Augustinian came to invite him to preach in the church of St. Augustine, and the saint after having accepted the invitation, exclaimed: “Oh, if I could only celebrate mass in your church as well as preach, what a consolation it would be for me!” The Augustinian pitying his intense affliction, told him that necessity dispensed him from the less essential rubrics, and that by placing himself on a chair, he could easily partake of the sacred contents of the chalice. These words caused him the greatest joy, and he could not cease thanking the priest who had suggested such a happy expedient. From this time he said mass every day, and obtained permission from Rome to say the mass of the Blessed Virgin at all times.

As he was exact in observing the rubrics, he used to bend his knee until it touched the platform, which rendered his genuflections very painful, for he could not raise the knee again without aid, and when mass was over he was quite-exhausted. But his devotion was so great that the seraphic ardors of his soul gleamed on his countenance. In thanksgiving he would hear the mass of his chaplain, and at the *Et incarnatus est*, he always fell to the ground in humble adoration, as he did also at the consecration.

Such was the condition of our saint during the remainder of his episcopate. “His life was so austere and so regulated,” says one of his Fathers, “that I suffered when sharing it with him at Arienzo, though I was then but thirty three years old. As for the bishop, notwithstanding his great infirmities, he never appeared to be fatigued.”

Chapter LIII

Ever increasing zeal of the saint.—The Seminary.—The Visitation of 1769.—The saint does more than a hundred ordinary bishops.—He defends his Grand Vicar.—He is accused to the King.—Letter.—The saint defends his conduct.—Reply of the King.—The saint's conduct towards his calumniator.—Absurdity of the charges preferred against the bishops.

WHILE overwhelmed with physical sufferings the saint never neglected the concerns of his diocese. He caused his bed to be placed in a room where all could come to him, and the door was open to everyone, the only privileged class being his priests and the poor. Every day he seemed to increase in solicitude; if he heard of any disorder, he knew no rest until he had concerted measures for its removal. "You see the state in which I am," he would say to his priests, "if you fail to inform me of disorders, you will be responsible for their evil results, and I myself will accuse you before the tribunal of God." "He took neither food nor rest," says his grand vicar, "until he saw the evil which was reported of him cut down to the roots, and when anything of this kind was in question, the only meal he took was supper."

His interest in his seminary rather increased than diminished. Several times a week he inquired concerning all that was done there, and when he received information detrimental to any seminarian, he caused him to be reproved, and if this was not followed by amendment, the delinquent was expelled; so that the young men were more afraid of displeasing their bishop when he was a paralytic, unable to move from his bed then when he was up and well. He spared nothing that could conduce to the health, comfort and happiness of the pupils, but his vigilance over their morals and his severity towards candidates for ordination and for the faculties of confessors, redoubled in his later years, because, as he said, he did not wish to give his successors occasion to weep over sin.

He opened in person the Visitation, on the 2nd of July 1769, in the collegiate church of Arienzo, being helped thither and supported by the servants. The audience were affected to tears on seeing and hearing him once more. He always manifested the greatest interest in these pastoral visitations, and considered them of paramount importance. As he was now unable to go to distant places, he delegated his grand vicar to act for him, to whom he especially recommended the poor widows and young girls whose indigence exposes them to danger.

He watched particularly over the regulations he had made for what may be called the externals of divine worship. When a church needed repairs, or had bad furniture, or soiled vestments, or was not kept with that neatness and regularity becoming to the house of God, he sometimes caused the money necessary for these purposes to be deducted from the revenue of the incumbent, but more frequently paid for all himself. As he was no longer able to conduct the spiritual exercises for priests and religious, he frequently assembled them in his palace, and for two or three days together instructed them on the duties of their state. Zeal was more than ever, if possible, his distinguished characteristic; he neglected nothing calculated to promote the spiritual advancement of his people. “A hundred bishops together,” said Archdeacon Rainone, “would not have done what Mgr. Liguori did alone, notwithstanding all his infirmities.”

It was rumored that if no one could reproach the invalid saint with anything, it was not the same with the grand vicar. Referring to this, in an animated manner, Alphonsus one day said smiling: “The Marquis Tanucci has said that I am a saint, and that my grand vicar is unjust: two fine lies! I am not a saint, and my grand Vicar is not unjust; he does nothing but by my orders.

But saint and wonderful saint as Alphonsus was—and wonderful especially in his sleepless zeal for the spiritual and temporal welfare of his flock, he was never long without accusers and calumniators. A lawyer whose unjust pretensions he was unable to gratify, accused him to the king of despising his episcopal city and residing elsewhere, and of committing or countenancing several other grievous abuses. His Majesty transmitted to the saint the heads of the charges lodged against him, and this being a tacit command to justify or explain his conduct, the saint forwarded to the king a letter of which the following is a condensed translation:

“SIRE,

“I have received with respect the dispatch sent by your Majesty, in which two causes of complaint are alleged against me: first, that I do not reside at St. Agatha; and secondly, that I confer prebends on strangers in preference to inhabitants of the town. . . . . . I lived at St. Agatha for about five years from my entrance into the episcopate; but that city is very damp on account of the mountains that surround it, and I was compelled at last to seek a drier air because of the asthma to which I am subject, but I acted according to the physician’s order. Arienzo is a portion of my diocese. My health has been benefited by the change, and I remain without scruple, as Pope Benedict XIV declares in his bull, ‘Ubi primum,’ that it is enough if bishops reside in their diocese.”

The learned prelate proceeds to show at some length that in conferring benefices, and especially prebends, on the most worthy, he has acted in accordance with the fathers and the canons, and kept in view the will of the founders, the bishop being not the master but the distributor: having explained the office of the canons of a cathedral, he adds with energy:

“Such being the case, if the citizens of a cathedral town should always have the preference, over our more worthy diocesans, a common and a double injury will result to the whole diocese; for the diocesans will take less pains to advance in their studies, knowing that citizens will always be preferred to them; and the citizens will take little pains to become meritorious, knowing that they will always be preferred to more worthy diocesans; the chapters will be filled with ignorant men, and bishops must recur to strangers for advice.

“I have thus represented what I could touching this matter, conformably to your majesty’s orders; I have now only to prostrate myself before your royal throne in expectation of your decision.”

This erudite and reasonable letter fully satisfied the king, and the saint received a private as well as the official letter, in which he was told to continue to bestow benefices with perfect freedom, as he judged right before God.

The saint, as usual, showed great affection to his calumniator, and did him substantial service, to the great indignation of the citizens who ill-naturedly, if not ill-humoredly, remarked that in order to get into Mgr. Liguori’s good graces, it was necessary to win his favor by loading him with injuries and ill-treatment.

But what complaints! The king must be appealed to, because a bishop gives offices to the most worthy; and because Alphonsus, a poor, bedridden invalid, resides at Arienzo by order of his physicians and directors! And Arienzo is but a pleasant walk—scarcely eight miles from St. Agatha! The second charge is even more absurd than the first.

Chapter LIV

The Count and Countess Liguori visit Alphonsns.—Prophecy.—The saint and his god-children.—Death of one of his nephews.—The bishop comforts the afflicted father.—Advice regarding the surviving children.—Their mother Lady Marianna loses her senses.—Circular Letter.—Tannucci.New Troubles in Sicily.—Apology of Alphonsus.—Maffei's expedient for regaining Popularity.—The Fathers leave Sicily.—Request of the people.

COUNT HERCULES and the Lady Marianna came to Arienzo to visit the bishop just before the birth of their first child, which they earnestly hoped would be a boy. The saint gave his sister-in-law a little picture of the Blessed Virgin, saying: "You will give birth not to a boy but to a girl, and I should like you to call her Mary Teresa." A year or two later the parents of the little Mary Teresa followed the saint to Airola, to entreat him to pray God to give them a son. Alphonsus told his sister that God would grant the prayers, and presented her with two little pictures of St Louis. Two pictures of the same saint seemed one too many, but the pious lady understood the mystery when shortly after God blessed her with twin sons. In the course of the following year, a third son was given heir. The saintly uncle became sponsor to each of these children, and this office made him exact in seeing that they received a thorough Catholic education.

He frequently wrote to urge his brother to attend to the education of his children. He even composed a rule of life for them, and desired to be informed as to their progress in virtue and learning. "For the love of God," he wrote to his brother, often call to mind the business of your eternal salvation, as I have frequently begged you to do. I am pleased to hear that my little god-children practice the devotions I have recommended for them; I hope they will be inclined to become saints.

Don Hercules was rejoiced at obtaining three sons from God in his old age, and as he thought he owed this favor to the prayers of his brother, he took the three to Arienzo to present them to their illustrious kinsman. "See, Alfonso," cried the infatuated father, "how beautiful they are! This is Alfonsino, and here are the twins, see how well they behave." His lordship looked at the twins earnestly, and said: “Would you not be very sad to lose one of these little ones?” “O heavens!” cried the old noble, “do you tell me that!” The saint had prophesied. Some months after, one of the twin-brothers died. The afflicted father came to the bishop for consolation. “Ah! my brother,” said he, “say no more of the future of my children; your prophecies are too inauspicious.” “Fear not,” returned Alphonsus, “your boys, Joseph and Alfonsino, will live to grow old.” The saint took great interest in the progress of these children. He explained to them their duties towards God and their parents, the hideousness of sin, how greatly bad conduct dishonors a Christian and a gentleman: above all he endeavored to inspire them with a tender devotion to Jesus and Mary. It was he himself who confirmed them, after having diligently instructed them. One of these nephews, then a venerable gray-haired man, supported the pendant of St. Alphonsus Liguori’s banner, in the magnificent procession which commemorated our holy bishop’s canonization by Pope Gregory XVI, 1839.

Count Hercules wishing to place his sons in the college for the young nobility, communicated his design to his brother, who wrote: “I cannot approve of your placing your sons in that college, because I have not a good opinion of it; besides, boys should not enter a college until they are at least ten or twelve; lest they should imbibe vice in their childhood, keep them with you. Later on, we shall see God’s will regarding them. I should like them to be where they may become virtuous as well as learned.”

In a subsequent letter he wrote: “Keep them under your own eyes. The malice of one pupil is enough to ruin a hundred. Have their spiritual good at heart, and Providence will take care to supply their temporal wants without detriment to their souls. “The old father now became anxious to present his beautiful and idolized boys to the king, but their unworldly uncle would not hear of it. “If the king were to tell you he wished your sons to become cadets in the brigade or some other regiment, you would be obliged to make them cadets or soldiers, thereby risking their souls as well as their bodies.” He goes on to express his fears that they will not be brought up properly, and adds: “It is the love I bear towards you and your dear children which forces me to write in this manner.”

The mother of these beautiful children became such a prey to scruples in 1768, that she partially lost her senses. This was a grievous affliction to her aged husband, and was deeply shared by our saint, who wrote to his poor brother in the tenderest strain, and endeavored to console him. He also wrote to Father Villani to have prayers offered in all the houses of the Congregation for the hapless wife and the bereaved husband. In view of the great age of Hercules, and the still greater age of his brothers Cajetan and Alphonsus, the latter prevailed on him to make his will and select suitable guardians for his children.

About this time he addressed to his Congregation a beautiful circular, in which he admonishes his brothers and sons of their faults, expatiates on the virtues they should strive to acquire, and insists on the perfect observance of the rules. However slight external faults might be, he would have them followed by penance. “Uncorrected faults,” said he, “become established evils.” Hearing that some clerics had relaxed in the observance of the rules, he sent them back to the novitiate to regain their fervor, nor would he ordain them till he was assured of their amendment. He had severe trials from some of his own Congregation. Two went so far as to answer his gentle remonstrances by defying him to his face, and saying they would remain in the house in spite of him. The old bishop was deeply grieved, but yet would not expel them, remarking that God would do it for him, which accordingly happened. Both asked their dispensation within the ensuing year. “I know,” he wrote to the superior of Frossinone, “that the patience of a saint is necessary with some. . . . but we must fulfil our duty, happen what may.” And to father Cajone, he wrote: “I beg your reverence to govern with all possible mildness, but be firm against attacks on the rules, for they do us more harm than all our persecutions. When you must correct, do it privately in the first place, and with charity, and treat everyone with affability and kindness.

The enemies of his Congregation were active indeed. No sooner had he left Naples, than with a bravery common to calumniators, they again attacked his sons, and rather increased than diminished the former slanders. So violent were these opponents and so artfully did they gain the ear of the influential, that it was commonly thought that the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer would be suppressed, and the most sanguine did not expect that it would survive its founder. He strove to re-animate his desponding children. “This Congregation does not come from me,” said he, “it is in no sense dependent on my existence. God, whose work it is, and who has preserved it for two and forty years, will continue to maintain it. . . . . Our stability depends first on Him, and next on our own good conduct. Let us then be careful to unite ourselves to God, to observe our rules, and be charitable towards all; above all let us be humble, for pride can destroy us, as it has destroyed other societies.”

But the Fathers did not share his confidence. Villani and other Fathers besought him with tears to repair again to Naples. Perceiving by the earnestness of their supplications that they looked forward with fear and trembling to the speedy death of their founder, he bade them not be alarmed, for that he was not to die yet.

Maffei now applied to the Prime Minister Tanucci, who certainly had proved himself no great friend to the Congregation. New slanders varied the old ones, and affairs began to assume a worse aspect than ever. It was no great feat to gain Tanucci to the wrong side, for he was rarely on the right in religious matters. This worthy prototype of the robber ministers, who act for the robber kings of to-day, was of obscure birth; he governed the two Sicilies for nearly half a century, hated by the people and despised by the nobility, during which period, besides innumerable other acts equally edifying, he suppressed seventy eight monasteries, and showed himself on all occasions the implacable enemy of the Sovereign Pontiff, and indeed of every worthy and zealous prelate and priest with whom he came in contact. He pursued the Jesuits with unrelenting hatred, and when he had annihilated the Society of Jesus in the Neapolitan dominions, he endeavored to persuade the king that the Redemptorists were but a reproduction of the Society of Jesus, and deserved a like fate. But the saintliness of Alphonsus had gained him friends and protectors in the highest circles, and the upstart minister was happily over-matched by the saint. The holy founder never wavered in his trust in God. “Let us act as we ought towards God,” said he, and He will aid us, for God can do more than man. Let us recur to prayer; innocence and prayer are all powerful with God.”

To his children in Sicily he addressed a consoling letter, bidding them however, prepare for new trials. He was suffering so much with his limbs when he wrote it, that he signed it “Brother Alphonsus Mary, the cripple.” His forebodings were prophecies. Their adversaries in that island renewed their attacks daily with ever increasing malignity. Their settlement in Girgenti, their doctrine, their morality,—all were grossly misrepresented.

Alphonsus was obliged to justify himself and his sons in an eloquent apology; Father Peter Blasucci made similar representations to the supreme junta at Palermo, protesting, with the energy of truth, that both he and his Fathers followed, whether in morals or in dogma, the system most conformable to the spirit of the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The minister sent a kind reply to the aged bishop, and the slanders of their arch enemy, Canella, were crushed for the time. But Maffei had prepared another snare. All Illiceto, except the poor, aided him in endeavoring to compass his ends. This proud, turbulent noble was always at war with the populace, and he now hit upon the bright expedient of making friends with the Fathers, that they might become mediators between him and the common people, with whom, he found it rather inconvenient to be at variance. The friends of the Congregation approved greatly of this project, but Alphonsus saw deeper than the lawyers who undertook to befriend him. When Father Villani informed him of the proposal, he gave a decided negative. “It would only,” said he with his usual acuteness, it would only alienate the people from us, without effecting our reconciliation with Maffei,—If our Father Fiocchi spoke in favor of Maffei, they would believe we spoke not because he is right, but to win his friendship. Now everything leads me to believe that right is not on the side of Maffei, but on the side of the poor people whom he oppresses. It would therefore be difficult for Father Fiocchi to say anything in favor of that man without wounding justice. . . . I am therefore decidedly of opinion, that no member of the Congregation should accept the office of mediator, on any terms whatever.” This decision greatly disconcerted the turbulent baron, who now explained his difficulties with the people, by representing the missionaries as the instigators of the disaffection they showed towards him.

Meanwhile the situation of the missionaries in Sicily became so precarious that the holy founder recalled them. “If God wishes us to be there,” said he, “He will know how to procure our return, and then we can go back blessing God and the king.” This was a source of the most lively anguish to the pious Monsignor Lanza: “You shall return here again,” said he, “in spite of hell. Were it necessary to sell my mitre and cross for this end, I would not hesitate to sell them, for God, for you, and for your work.” The chevaliers, magistrates, nobles and ladies of high rank sharing the sentiments of their worthy bishop, petitioned the king to obtain the return of the Fathers. Although they departed secretly in the night, multitudes accompanied them to the shore, bewailing the loss they were about to sustain. The clergy and religious orders, without exception, addressed the king and the holy founder, imploring the return of their dear Fathers. Alphonsus was deeply affected at this touching testimony of the love and esteem his sons had inspired and promised to yield to their wishes, as soon as the storm then raging should have passed away; a promise which he religiously fulfilled a little later.

Chapter LV

Clement XIV refuses to accept the saint's resignation.—Prophecy.—Circular letter.—New literary labors.—Foundations.—Gratitude of the saints.—Letters.—Work on the Psalms.—Criticisms.—Persecutions.—Revolution.—His grief at the suppression of the Jesuits.—He regards it as temporary.—His sympathy for the Pope.—He assists at his death bed.—Belocation proved.—The saint requested to write the qualifications necessary in the future Pope.—He complies.—

THE saint imagining that his infirmities rendered him all but useless to his Church, and hoping, that though unfit for episcopal function, he could still aid his Congregation, again petitioned to be released from the burden of the episcopate, at the same time resigning his will entirely to that of his holiness. Clement XIV, aware of the good he still effected, encouraged him to continue the administration; and when Cardinal Castelli solicited him to consider the great age of the saintly prelate and release him, his holiness replied: "It suffices that he governs his diocese from his bed." "But he is not able to make his visitations," objected the cardinal. "One prayer addressed to God from his bed of sickness is worth more than a hundred visitations," was the reply of the Pope. "The voice of the Pope is the voice of God," said Alphonsus, "I am now content to die under my cross." Several bishops and missionaries counselled him to give in a formal resignation; seeing him crippled with rheumatism, suffering the most excruciating tortures in every joint, his head so bowed upon his breast, that viewed from behind he seemed headless, they thought that mercy itself, demanded his release. These venerable men laughed heartily when the paralytic cheerfully replied: "This Pope is firm; if I gave him my resignation he would not accept it; let us have patience and wait for his successor." Ganganelli was not then sixty, and was of a robust constitution and vigorous frame. He was seventeen years younger than Alphonsus; yet the words of the saint were prophetic; this celebrated Pope died two years after, 1774, and the bishop lingered thirteen years longer (1787,) not however without obtaining his demission from the next pontiff, Pius VI.

Our saint being entirely incapacitated from visiting his dear children of the Congregation now addressed them a beautiful circular, in which, having as usual exhorted them to a more fervent observance of rule in order to merit the favor and assistance of God, he adds pathetically: “I can do no more; I, who am decrepit, bedridden and paralyzed. It is you, my beloved children, who must sustain the Congregation, and be assured that if we only act as we ought, God will always assist us, and the more poor and despised and persecuted we are, the more good we shall do, and the greater will be the reward which Jesus Christ will reserve for us in heaven.”

But our saint could do much more than he admitted. Within a short interval, he published three valuable works called forth by the exigencies of the times; viz, “Reflections on Divers Spiritual Subjects,” his book “On the Truth of Faith,” and his long and learned dissertation entitled “Reflections on the Truth of divine Revelation, against the Deists.” “If the enemies of our religion,” said he, are never satisfied, although they publish thousands of books against it, why should the friends of religion grow weary of defending it?”

Close upon the above works followed his “Triumph of the Church” in which he warmly defends the infallibility of the pope and his preeminence in the Church; and his “Sermons.” In the appendix to the latter we find his most useful “Letter to a student deliberating as to choosing a state in life;” also a second and a third letter, in which respectively he treats of the great utility of missions, and of the manner of preaching with apostolic simplicity.

His next was that precious little book “On the True Happiness of Man, and on His Submission to the Will of God.” This was said to have been inspired rather than composed. A pious person was so moved by the benefit he derived from it, that, in gratitude to God, and desirous that others should participate in this favor, he caused it to be gratuitously distributed everywhere.

Amid all these labors and troubles, God willed that Alphonsus should have the comfort of seeing his Congregation make two new foundations in the States of the Church. The first occasioned the second. In the course of their missions, Father Francis de Paul, superior of the new house, and another father, visited the celebrated Trappist Abbey of Casamari. The virtues of these Fathers gained the affection and esteem of their hosts, and a plan was concerted between both parties for establishing a Redemptorist Convent in the neighborhood. A priest of Avignon had recently built a church for the peasants of the neglected hamlets of Scifelli, Candi and St. Francis, and had just added a commodious dwelling for such priests as he hoped would join him. However, the bishop of Veroli coveted the services of this holy man, and named him his grand vicar.

When Alphonsus heard of the spiritual destitution of the poor laborers who formed the population of these villages, he shed tears of compassion, and instantly resolved to send his missionaries among them. “I have consented to let this foundation be made,” he wrote to Father Francis de Paul, May 28th 1773. “I have written to thank the Abbe Arnaud for it; it is to him we are indebted for all concerning it.” Abbe Arnaud, the priest above alluded to, willingly bestowed on the missionaries the spacious house he had built, and Alphonsus was anxious that so particular a benefactor should be most graciously treated by his missionaries. Nothing is more remarkable in the Lives of the Saints, than the gratitude they evince towards benefactors. “Take care,” wrote he to the new rector, “not to displease him in things not absolutely contrary to the good order of the house, for we owe him everything. Divers things must be yielded for the sake of peace and conscience.

“Let him see that you esteem him, and listen to his opinions as far as possible. . . . Nevertheless I advise you to keep up the observance of rule from the beginning, and this I beg of you for the love of God and your neighbor.” In another letter he says; “I trust to your prudence not to do anything to pain Mr. Arnaud, and that all the fathers and brothers will maintain strict observance of rule.”

The new house was extremely poor. Alphonsus did not fail to assist it; not however, with the revenues of his diocese, but with the pension he received from the College of Doctors in Naples. “Tell the subjects in my name,” he wrote to the superior, to remember that this foundation is new, and in another kingdom. In all new foundations there is much to be suffered, both on account of poverty, and also because one has to deal with people whom one does not know.” But hearing that the superior had purchased some books while his subjects suffered for want of necessaries, he was much distressed and wrote to him: “Is this a time to buy books when your children have not enough to eat? Really, I can hardly believe it. See if those books cannot be sent back, even at some loss."

Father Francis was very much displeased that the missions should be interrupted, because the bishop of Veroli wished to have the missionaries with him in his pastoral visitations, but Alphonsus wrote to him as follows: "By making the visitation with the bishop you may do much good, for you can remain long enough in each place to give at least a *triduo,* and also some little mission where there has not yet been one. Arrange these matters with the bishop, whom we are bound to obey next to the rule."

God blessed the labors of the Fathers in these parts most abundantly. "I cannot help giving thanks to God," wrote the saint to Father Francis de Paul, "for having given me so many consolations in my old age. Praised forever be Jesus and Mary."

Early in 1774, Alphonsus made a translation or rather a paraphrase of the psalms into the vernacular, which he dedicated to the reigning pontiff, Clement XIV. This work was so highly esteemed that Benedict Cervone who subsequently became bishop of Aquila said: "Had the saintly bishop of St. Agatha written nothing else in support of religion and the Church, this work alone would suffice to render him worthy of immortality." The learned Canon Massa, passed a high eulogium on Alphonsus for having given to the faithful this greatly needed work. He extols his piety, wisdom and indefatigable zeal, which neither infirmities, nor age, nor the labors of his administration could slacken. "He explains the meaning of the psalms," says he, "and the obscure passages in them so skilfully, that, without detracting from the purity of the inspired word, he aids the minds and hearts of those who read it." In the same year, he published his "Triumphs of the Martyrs," the object of which was to kindle in all hearts a greater love for Jesus Christ and a greater zeal for that faith for which the martyrs so cheerfully gave their lives. By this, as Cervone said, he showed himself full of solicitude for the grand affair of salvation, omitting nothing that could open or facilitate the road to the celestial country."

Meanwhile Baron Sarnelli and Don Maffei renewed with ever increasing venom their malignant attacks. Broken down by years, labors and infirmities, as the old bishop was, the spirit of the lawyer rose up within him, and he himself arranged a plan of defense and placed it in the hands of the advocate Celano. However he was very uneasy as to the result. "I have caused prayers to be said everywhere," he wrote, "and masses to be celebrated. . . . Get the people to say an *Ave* before the sermon, and procure prayers in as many monasteries as you can." To Father Majone, he wrote: "When the ministers are spoken to, the Congregation must not be named; I only should be spoken of, since I am the person principally aimed at in this affair." He addressed all the prominent ministers and lawyers, and in an eloquent memorial to the king; he represented the innocence of his missionaries, the labors they daily underwent for the welfare of the kingdom, and their respectful submission to all the royal decisions. In a lengthy circular to all his houses, he exhorts his beloved brothers and children to increased fervor in virtue and regular observance, as the best means of securing the divine protection to the congregation. "I am sure," he added, "that God loves our little Congregation as the apple of His eye; for we see that He never ceases to protect us amid so many persecutions, and to render us more worthy of laboring for His glory in divers countries, by the assistance of His manifest graces. I shall not see it for my death is at hand, but I know that our little flock will increase more and more, and that, through our labors, Jesus Christ will be better known and loved. We shall one day meet again; we shall be re-united in our heavenly home never more to be separated. We shall meet there, in the enjoyment of eternal happiness, hundreds of thousands who once lived without the love of God, but who, through us, recovered His grace, and will form our glory and our joy for all eternity. Should not this thought alone stimulate our fervor and make us love Jesus Christ and draw others to love him?

His biographer regards as certain that the saint had been favored with some special revelation on this subject which his humility made him conceal, for the same year he wrote to Father Majone: "I am full of joy, for it seems to me that the Blessed Virgin will bring us safe and sound out of this tempest. Therefore let us abandon ourselves into the hands of Jesus Christ; let us pray to Him, and He will turn all to His greater glory.

Our great bishop who may be said to have carried the whole Church in his bosom, could not see scandal or disorder anywhere, without being, as the apostle said of himself, on fire. During the stormy pontificate of Clement XIV, his heart was torn by the troubles that disquieted the Church, and he continually offered up prayers to God for the hapless pontiff and his persecuted flock. What particularly distressed him was, that most of the crowned heads of Europe, to their eternal shame be it recorded, incited by Jansenist or infidel influence, insisted on the suppression of the world-renowned Society of Jesus. “No one,” says his friend and biographer Tannoia, “can imagine how he sorrowed over the storm that raged against the Jesuits; he never spoke of it without feelings of the deepest distress.”

“It is nothing but intrigue on the part of the Jansenists and the unbelieving,” said the saint; “if they succeed in overthrowing the company, their wishes will be accomplished, but if this bulwark falls, what convulsions will there not be in Church and State! The loss of the Jesuits will place the Pope and the Church in a most disastrous situation; the Jansenists aim at them, because through them they will be the more certain of striking at Church and State.’’

Such were the fears and sentiments of St. Alphonsus, but the judgments of God are impenetrable! Clement XIV suppressed the Society of Jesus, by a brief dated July 22, 1773. When the aged bishop heard this, he felt as though a thunderbolt had been hurled against him. It may well be believed that of the thousands of Jesuits which this brief disbanded, not one felt the blow more keenly than Alphonsus. Respect for the pontifical judgment closed his mouth, but the unspeakable anguish of his heart was plainly depicted on his venerable countenance. When he received the brief, he adored in silence the judgment of God, and then said: “The will of the Pope is the will of God.” One day the grand vicar and other persons of distinction appeared to cast blame on the dispositions of the Pope: “Poor Pope,” he exclaimed, “what could he have done in such delicate circumstances, when so many monarchs demanded their suppression. As for us, we have only to adore the secret judgment of God, and remain in peace.” Yet he seems to have regarded the suppression as merely temporary: “I assert,” said he with unusual energy, “that if but a single Jesuit be left in the world, he alone will be sufficient to re-establish the Society.”

After this sad concession, made to worthless sovereigns, on the principle that the peace of the Universal Church required the sacrifice, troubles accumulated upon the unfortunate pontiff. “Pray for the Pope,” wrote Alphonsus, “he is overwhelmed with sadness, and not causelessly, for there seems not to be a shadow of peace for the Church. Pray for the Pope; God alone knows how I feel his afflictions. I have heard that he wishes for death, so great is his distress at the trials which afflict the Church. I pray that God may come to his aid.” In another letter we find this passage: “I hear from various quarters that the Pope is in sorrow, that he is shut up and does no business. Let us beseech God to deliver him from this profound melancholy.”

On the morning of September 21, 1774, Alphonsus immediately after mass threw himself into his arm-chair, in which he remained all that day and all the following night perfectly motionless, and without articulating a single word. The servants not knowing what this portended, remained all night at the door without daring to enter. Later in the day, he appeared to awake, and rang the bell to announce that he was about to celebrate mass. At this signal, his whole household surrounded him, and Alphonsus with an air of surprise asked what was the matter. “You have neither eaten nor spoken for two days,” they replied, “and you ceased to give any signs of life.” “That is true,” said he, “but you do not know that I have been with the Pope who has just died.” Tidings soon reached the town that Clement XIV had passed to a better life, September 22, at eight in the morning, the very moment in which Alphonsus had come to himself. The advocate of the cause of our saint has ably demonstrated that this prolonged repose, or apparent stupor, was a continual ecstacy, “an admirable favor which God accorded to our saint and to the dying pontiff.”

Cardinal Castelli aware of the high reputation of Alphonsus for sanctity and the veneration with which the sacred college regarded him, asked him to write a long letter on the abuses which ought to be rectified in the various orders of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The cardinal wished this memorial to be presented to the Conclave, hoping that it would be of use in causing a pope to be elected capable of remedying all the ills of the Church. Such a request covered the humble prelate with confusion, but, urged by the friends who were commissioned to use their influence with him, he invoked the light of the Holy Ghost, and complied, in the following form:

“MOST REVEREND CARDINAL:—You ask my sentiments on the present state of the Church and the election of a pope, but what sentiments can a miserable creature such as I am express? All I can say is that it is necessary to pray, and to pray much; for in order to raise the Church from the remissness and confusion which, alas! are but too prevalent, prudence and human wisdom are, insufficient; nothing short of the powerful arm of God will suffice. Few bishops have true zeal for the salvation of souls. Most religious communities are relaxed; observances are neglected and rules despised.

"The situation of the secular clergy is still worse; therefore an absolute reform is necessary among ecclesiastics that they may afterwards be able to reform the conduct of the laity; we must then pray to Jesus Christ to give His Church a head containing something more than knowledge and human prudence; to give her, in short, a pontiff who through the spirit of God may be filled with zeal for His glory, and totally detached from all parties so as to be able to resist the suggestions of human respect. If we have the misfortune to have a pope who has not God's glory in view, we shall receive but little aid from heaven, and things will become worse.

"Prayer is the sole remedy for such great misfortunes. Hence I have not only enjoined on my little congregation to pray with more than ordinary fervor for the election of a Supreme Pontiff, I have also ordered all the regular and secular clergy of my diocese to say during mass the Collect, *Pro eligendo Summo Pontifice*. I pray frequently during the day about this election, but what can my poor prayers avail? Nevertheless, I put all my trust in the merits of Jesus. Christ and of the Blessed Virgin, and I hope that God will comfort me, by permitting me to see the Church relieved before my death, which my age and infirmities admonish me cannot be far distant.

"I desire also to see all reigning disorders reformed, and a thousand ideas on this subject come into my head, which I should ardently wish to communicate to you, if the knowledge of what I am, did not take away all boldness, by convincing me that it is not for me to pretend to reform the world. I desire that the future pope, when he has vacancies to supply in the Sacred College, would select only the best informed and most zealous among those proposed, and that he would request all princes not to present any but men of well-known learning and piety as candidates for the cardinalate.

"I wish also that he should exercise unalterable firmness in refusing livings to those who are already sufficiently provided for, repress luxury in prelates, and fix the number of their servants. This would help to put a stop to the slander and detraction of our enemies. He should also endeavor never to confer benefices on any but those who have merited well by their labors for the Church.

“I should wish him to be very strict in choosing bishops and to obtain information at all hands, about those proposed for this high and important office, and be certain as to the goodness of their character and doctrine, which are indispensable qualities in ruling over a diocese. It is on these chief pastors that the good of religion and the salvation of souls chiefly depend. I should like him to require metropolitans and others to inform him in secret as to any bishops who are careless about the welfare of their flocks; also to threaten with suspension or the supervision of a vicar apostolic, both negligent bishops and those who are non-resident, as well as those who scandalize the world by the luxury of their attendants and the excessive expense of their equipage, festivities, &c. In some cases it does not do to be afraid of putting these threats into execution; corrections purify the Church from the corruptions that sully her, and restrain other bishops through fear of public blame, which admonishes them of their back-slidings, and causes them to return to a sense of their duty, to the great advantage of their flocks.

“In fine, why should the future pope be too lenient in granting favors injurious to the maintenance of discipline, such for instance, as permitting nuns to leave their enclosure without any real necessity? He should not readily consent to the secularization of religious, on account of the evils which result from it; and above all he should recall all religious to the primitive observance of the rules of their institute, at least on all important points.

“I will not try your patience any longer; I can do nothing further, save to beseech God to give us a pontiff full of His own spirit. Accept the sentiments of profound respect with which I have the honor to remain,” &c., &c.

Chapter LVI

Calumnies against Alphonsus.—His Moral Theology censured and defended.—Violent persecutions.—He refuses to go to Naples.—He prescribes means of obtaining the Divine Mercy.—He refuses to seek the mediation of a lady.—Some gleams of sunshine.—Good Bishop Lanza. The saint's administration.—Examples.—Testimony of Tannoia.—Extraordinary sweetness of the saint.—His zeal to prevent the slightest faults in priests.—His surveillance extends beyond his own diocese.—The regulars.—Vigilance over the laity.—Anecdote.

UP to this time the enemies of the Congregation had spared its head; the veneration inspired by his name caused them to leave him in peace even while they persecuted his cherished children. But seeing that they could not injure the members while they evinced respect for their head, they now turned their weapons against him. As his private life was not only blameless but saintly, they attacked his doctrine, and published everywhere that his *Moral Theology* was not only too indulgent, but contained all the lax principles attributed to the *Jesuits,* the mere word *Jesuit* being sufficient, then as now, to rouse the worst passions of the impious.

The book was no sooner denounced than the Congregation shared its fate. But God caused it to be approved at the very time its adversaries expected its condemnation. Some copies were sent from Naples and had reached the custom-house, when they were stopped by the king's procurator-general who was prejudiced against the work, and wished it to be examined with utmost strictness by Father Majone, a Conventualist. This learned religious assured him that the doctrine was perfectly sound, and that there was no proposition in the book deserving of censure—a judgment since repeated by the highest earthly tribunal. "Well," exclaimed the officer, "what atrocious calumnies have been spread! I am delighted and rejoiced at this news, for I should grieve to be obliged to pain this saintly old man." Thus did heaven frustrate the plots of the wicked and turn them to the glory of the servant of God.

But the enemies of the Congregation were still active. The suppression of the Jesuits caused ancient and distinguished orders to tremble; how much more those which as yet had scarcely taken root. Maffei and Sarnelli were as powerful and as inveterate as heretofore; they redoubled their attacks, leaving nothing undone to compass the ruin of missionaries who had done them all manner of good, and never, even under extraordinary provocation, done them the slightest injury. Even Alphonsus, who heretofore was full of courage, now trembled, as though God had withdrawn the powerful grace that had hitherto sustained him. The Fathers themselves considered matters all but desperate. All, especially Father Villani, besought him to go to Naples and cast himself at the feet of the king. The old man thought of his shrunken figure, his paralyzed limbs, his bowed head, his wasted frame, and said smiling: “What a figure I should cut before the king as I now am! Would he not mistake me for a phantom, and order me out of his presence? My brothers, let us place ourselves in God’s hands, and distrust human means; for the Congregation is a divine work, not the work of man, nor is man capable of upholding it.”

Alphonsus did not neglect any means of obtaining the divine mercy. Besides the customary penances and mortifications, masses and prayers were obtained, and the Blessed Sacrament exposed in all the houses. The psalm *Qui habitat* was recited in common, followed by an *Ave* for the persecutors.

Other causes of anxiety arose, too tedious to dwell upon. As the Congregation was in imminent danger of ruin, Alphonsus was advised to gain the patronage of a lady who was very influential in a certain high quarter, but with his usual dread of sin or its occasions, he would not entertain such a proposal. “Never,” wrote he to Father Majone; “let the Congregation be destroyed rather than become the occasion of even the shadow of sin or scandal to anyone.”

Amid these incessant tempests, the aged prelate enjoyed some gleams of sunshine. In April 1775, the house at Girgenti was resumed in a manner honorable to the missionaries and their sainted Founder. The clergy and people testified the most lively joy at seeing them once more. The good Bishop Lanza was so deeply affected that he could not forbear exclaiming with holy Simeon: “Now dost Thou dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.” And indeed he might well have adopted these beautiful words, for he fell asleep in our Lord, in the arms of his tenderly loved missionaries, but a few weeks after their return. His successor Cardinal Branciforti was equally devoted to the Congregation.

As we have now almost reached the term of our saint's glorious episcopate, we shall here add some details of his mode of administration, which will serve to magnify our ideas of his wonderful zeal as chief pastor.

Alphonsus had so high a standard for the ecclesiastical state that he wished sanctity to shine brightly in all who embraced it. The clergy were the dearest and most valued portion of his flock. What did he not do to banish vice from among them, employing for their amendment, now sweetness, again severity, but always with the most admirable prudence! Father Caputo thus describes the methods used by the holy bishop to draw them to God: "His lordship's first reproof was full of sweetness and humility, if no improvement followed, he gave a second reprimand of mingled sweetness and severity. If he found that the delinquent was incorrigible, chastisement followed," irrespective of the rank, talent, or position of the culprit.

Drunkenness and incontinence were the vices he specially abhorred. He said that we can expect more from a brute than from a drunkard; as to the other vice, homicide in his eyes was no worse. When he saw ecclesiastics in danger, or who through weakness had made a false step, his principal remedy was a retreat; but if things went farther, he used the strongest method for eradicating the evil. One day, having placed a large crucifix across the doorway, he sent for a person who had grievously offended. Having arrived, the wretched man seized with sudden terror drew back: "Enter," said the holy bishop, "trample the crucifix under foot; perhaps it will not be the first time." He then gave free vent to his zeal, and with burning words set forth the enormity of the crimes, which he held in such abhorrence. The culprit wept bitterly, and solemnly promised to change his life. He not only kept his word, but for the rest of his days was a model of edification.

Mild measures were not always successful, and when they were exhausted, the zealous bishop imposed exile to remove the sinner from the occasion of sin, and suspension to avenge the dignity of the sacred ministry. He even had recourse to the king and the pope, in short he left no method untried to root out vice of every kind. One day he said to Don Nicholas Rannucci of Naples: "If a priest falls from grace, I must render an account of it;” and as this good priest tried to tranquillize him, he repeated in an agitated tone: “It is I, my dear Nicholas, and no one else, who must account for it to God.”

Sometimes the saint exiled culprits for six, or even ten years, sometimes he imprisoned them. There was one who, after many paternal warnings and remonstrances, relapsed into sin. He was shut up in the prison of St. Agatha, but did not amend: “Let him alone,” said the saint to his vicar, “God’s justice will reach him;” and in fact, he shortly after died suddenly. Sometimes he merely sent such persons to some religious house; mercy always tempered his justice, and however degraded the erring man might be, he invariably allowed him from his own poor resources, sufficient for his maintenance. In one instance, as the sin had been public he determined to inflict such a punishment as would strike terror into all evil doers. “Who can keep the keeper?” he exclaimed with holy indignation. The miserable culprit became alarmed, and knowing the goodness of the old saint’s heart, went to him, like another prodigal son, and obtained the forgiveness he so earnestly implored. The example of this true penitent, was such in after life, as to produce the most salutary effects upon all with whom he came in contact.

While giving a mission at Arienzo, he was informed that an ecclesiastic had entered a dangerous house. He immediately had him seized and brought into his presence. Indeed his severity or rather his unsleeping vigilance was so well known throughout the diocese, that there was no chance of rest for a dissolute man, but to give clear proofs of amendment. Yet for one whose angelic soul, so utterly abhorred the shadow of vice, who had never sullied, even by the least wilful thought, the delicate lily of his purity, his mercy to these unhappy people was surprising. A priest who had been summoned to St. Agatha was sentenced by the chapter to pay a fine of four ducats. His lordship no sooner understood that he was poor than he gave him twenty carlins, merely telling him to give the balance in charity. To a priest who disapproved of his lenity on this occasion, he said: “We must punish the guilty, but they should be dismissed with mildness the better to correct them.” If he found it necessary to remove a priest for a time from his missions, he would always support him at his own expense. When he had evidence of certain faults in priests, he not only suspended them as confessors, but forbade them to celebrate the holy sacrifice. His severity, however, was only for the incorrigible. To one who complained of the rigor with which he was treated, the saint said with touching sweetness: “My son, do you think I have acted through anger? Have not you yourself constrained me? Amend, and I will gladly give my life blood for you.” “He had,” says Tannoia, “a most admirable charity for those who really amended; he received them to his heart with all the tenderness of a father, and forgetting their misconduct, never again alluded to the sorrow they had caused him.

An ecclesiastic, belonging to a noble and distinguished family, who lived in a most disedifying manner, was sent for by the saint three times but never deigned a reply. The prelate told his vicar to make out a cause against the nobleman, and left orders that if he called he was to be sent to the vicar. The delinquent hearing this and fearing lest his name might figure in the public records, hastened to the palace. Being refused admittance to the saint’s room, he created a great disturbance in the ante-chamber, so that the invalid was obliged to send for his secretary to learn the cause of the commotion. The “cause” followed the official, and Alphonsus seeing him enter, immediately referred him to the vicar. But the poor man fell on his knees at the foot of the bed, saying: “I do not know the Vicar Rubini, but I acknowledge Monsignor Liguori for my father.” At these words, the servant of God became deeply affected: “My son,” he said, “I sent for you and you would not come; I was obliged to place you in the arms of justice; you know the scandal you have given.” Ashamed and confused, the delinquent now truly contrite, confessed his sin with bitter tears upon the spot, adding: “This is my confession; now do with me what you will.” “Since you acknowledge your fault,” said the man of God, with the greatest sweetness, “ and confess the truth to me, I leave you to choose your penance.” So much goodness completely unmanned the penitent; he answered with sobs: “I choose the house of San Angelo for my place of retirement, and never will I depart from it till God tells me he has forgiven me.” Seeing that his repentance was sincere, his lordship took the papers which had been prepared against him whether as indictment or proof, and tearing them in pieces, said: “My son, may God do the same in heaven.” Father Caputo, Ferrara and Crisci who were present, were filled with admiration at such excessive charity. It is pleasant to add that the priest who was the object of it became a model of edification in the diocese.

In his eyes the slightest fault was a considerable sin when there was question of a priest. Thus he severely reprimanded an ecclesiastic who went into a public square dressed in a slovenly manner. Another who had taken part in a play, relying on the protection of the prince in whose palace the play was performed, was suspended for fifteen days and ordered during that period to refrain from saying mass, and remain in the strictest retirement. His surveillance extended over those portions of other dioceses that touched his own; as soon as anything disedifying happened, Monsignor Liguori knew all about it; sometimes he knew all without any visible means of finding things out, so that certain culprits once exclaimed: “It is either an angel or a devil that betrays us, and tells him everything.” By this constant vigilance, and his extraordinary prudence and charity, Bishop Liguori worked the complete reformation of his diocese.

With the regulars, he was still more severe. “Edifying religious,” said he, “are a consolation to bishops and priests, but if religious are imperfect, they are a burden to their bishops and a misfortune to the people.” He spared no pains to convert irregular subjects: “For,” he remarked, “if they are not cured, their malady will be communicated to others; it is with them as with fruits—the bad spoil the good by contact, and to avoid the loss of all, the bad must be thrown away.” Besides private reprehensions, he called in the aid of their superiors and provincials, and if speedy amendment did not follow, he insisted on their being sent elsewhere. To one who neglected the poor, to visit families of rank, he said, after withdrawing his faculties for hearing confessions, “How can you feed the flocks of others, who allow your own to be ravaged with impunity?” If application to the superiors or provincial failed to succeed, he appealed, and never in vain, to the general of the order. In one year alone (1768) he compelled as many as fifty two to leave his diocese, I can truly say, that during his lordship’s time the monasteries of the diocese were so many gardens where all breathed forth the sweet odors of innocence and virtue.” Such is the testimony of his grand vicar, Rubini, witness, and sometimes minister, of his zeal.

But the servant of God held in particular esteem and affection religious who walked worthy of their high calling. He appointed them examiners, confided to them the care of many convents; often sent them to preach the lenten sermons, consulted them on knotty questions, and liberally rewarded their merit. He took particular pleasure in assisting and befriending these worthy priests in every possible way.

The laity were almost as strictly watched over as the clergy, especially if their irregularities were of a nature injurious to public morality. “I am not merely the shepherd of priests and religious,” said the saint, “a bishop’s flock includes all classes; God has confided all these souls to us and we must render Him an account of them.” “Never was there a bishop,” says one who knew our saint well, “who employed himself in stopping offences against God and procuring the good of the faithful with more ardor than Monsignor di Liguori.” He held sin in such abomination that he was implacable in hunting it out, even from its most hidden entrenchments. He appealed to magistrates and syndics, and with tears besought them to use the strong arm of the law against such scandalous sinners as lived in open crime. He even, if the expression may be applied to *his* dealings, bribed the officials; a large fraction of his revenue was spent in making presents to those among them who could inform him of existing scandals and aid him in rooting them out. But before calling on the secular power, he tried every gentle method that his fatherly heart could devise. He would send for the offender whether noble or plebeian, reprove, entreat, command him—and not till he was convinced of the inutility of such measures, would he adopt more rigorous ones. A gentleman of high rank seeing that the vigilant pastor thwarted all his infamous plans, repaired to the palace and angrily reproached him for not leaving him alone. The saint calmly told him he was about to inform the king of his ill conduct, which gratuitous information excited the wretched man to fury. “Ill-treat me,” said the courageous old man, abuse me if you will, I do only my duty; I did not accept the episcopate to be damned. Would to God that I might have the honor to die a martyr in His cause! My dear child, I pity you! return from your evil ways, otherwise I shall never let you rest in your sins.”

Chapter LVII

The saint’s zeal to convert women of irregular lives.—He establishes prisons for the incorrigible.—He exiles some.—An objection answered.—Examples.—He reproves his secretary’s remissness.—He replenishes the wardrobe of one of his protegés.—One of the ninety-nine just reproaches him.—Marriages.—His care to preserve the innocence of his lambs,—The gold necklace.—The Most Zealous Doctor.—The office of a bishop.—The saint and the amateur actors.—He will not allow women to be instructed in the priest’s house.—Letter to the king against duelling.—Burthen of the episcopate.—Brother Welcome.—The saint’s strictness regarding the Paschal precept.

OUR saint was indefatigable in laboring to convert or punish women of irregular lives. He entreated them, he warned them, he pictured in the burning words of his extraordinary eloquence the enormity of their crime, and hell yawning beneath their feet; then in order to deprive them of all excuse, he offered to maintain them. When his Fathers went on missions, he recommended them especially to look after these unfortunate creatures. “The conversion of one of these,” said he, “is no small gain. Grant them whatever they wish, regardless of expense, provided they sincerely renounce their shameful course.” As some of them unhappily would not be converted, and as the prisons already in existence were in a miserable condition, he got a prison for women built in each place; and when imprisonment did not produce the desire effect, he would have them exiled. The authorities did not always relish this mode of dealing with them. I have just given an order for the banishment you desire,” wrote a commissioner,” and wish nothing worse may result. But these culprits will go, where, being free from your paternal admonitions, and deprived of your alms, they will abandon themselves to their worst passions.” “Let each bishop protect his own sheep,” replied the saint, and when these miserable people find that they are chastised wherever they go, left without refuge and covered with infamy, they may open their eyes and renounce their sins.”

One of these women had become quite notorious for her evil behavior. The saint ordered that she should be brought before him. When the secretary saw her exceedingly repulsive countenance, he hastened to tell his lordship that, being as ugly as famine, she was incapable of doing harm. Well, but in time of famine, even hemlock is eaten," was the episcopal comment. Being severely reproved, she made protestations of future good conduct, and explained the misery from which her ill life resulted. The saint touched by her sorrowful story, forgave her, and dismissed her with a considerable alms and a paternal admonition.

The grand vicar, Rubini, used often relate that when the bishop received tidings of the arrival of some intriguer in the town, he would not sit down to table till he had put it out of the power of the miscreant to do any harm. Things of this description" said he, "do not admit of any delay; offences against God are in question, and if there were but one single sin involved we are bound to prevent its commission." "Don Felix," said he one day to his secretary, who had shown a little remissness in taking steps to stop a scandal, "when an offence against God is in question, we should leave everything to put a stop to it."

He spent enormous sums of money in procuring the arrest of the incorrigible, and aiding true penitents, especially those whose indigence had been the occasion of their ruin. Even the soldiers could not refrain from extolling his extraordinary zeal in this respect. "It is incredible," said one of them, "how many sins Monsignor Liguori prevented, and how many scandals he extirpated." But the joy he experienced when he succeeded in converting one of these hapless creatures fully repaid his toil. There was no sacrifice which he was not ready to make to rescue them from sin and misery. A wicked girl, who had ruined soul and body by her vices, was at last obliged to seek refuge in the hospital of incurables. Our saint sent several priests to aid her to save her soul, but it was long before the poor creature yielded to the inspirations of grace. When he heard that she was beginning to show some good dispositions, he shed tears of joy. As her mother was a good poor woman, he agreed to her taking out the girl, and promised that they should not want. The following contains a list of the articles which he considered necessary for her simple wardrobe. It is taken from a letter addressed to the priest Tramontana:

"I hear this girl is in the greatest destitution; she must then be clothed from head to foot. . . . Procure for her two new chemises, a kerchief for the head, and another for the neck, a serge petticoat, an under-dress of canvas, a mantle, white stockings, and a pair of shoes. . . . I should not trouble you with all these commissions but that I know your great charity. . . . Inform me how much money I must send you, because as soon as she is clothed I shall make her mother take her back."

His liberality towards these poor penitents did not always please the "ninety-nine just." One evening, as he was leaving the church, a woman thus bitterly reproached him: "Monsignor, it is only wicked women that get into your good graces; would to God you had never come here. Those who lead virtuous lives need not hope for anything from your lordship." The indignant secretary who accompanied him would have scolded this woman, but the saint interfered: "Be quiet," he commanded, "perhaps the poor woman has some want which I can satisfy." Then turning to her he said: "I should like to assist everybody, but I must begin with those who are in sin; it is of urgent importance to free them from it," Even some priests thought he was too liberal to these persons, and told him plainly that not a few of his supposed penitents were impostors: "It matters little if I am deceived," he used to reply, provided I thwart the plans of the devil. It is no slight gain if one can prevent sin, were it but for a quarter of an hour. Besides several of them are really converted and do persevere in virtue." To Archdeacon Rainone who suggested that he should withdraw the allowance from some whose perseverance was doubtful, he said: "If I abandon them they may yield to despair; besides, if they commit but one sin less, is not that a great thing for God's glory?" On another occasion he said: "I am ready to give my blood and my life for these poor penitents; if they act sincerely, I will not fail to assist them, were I obliged to go without food for that purpose.

Alphonsus, if he could not induce the persons to enter some refuge attached to a religious house, endeavored to get them married, and if possible to those who had led them astray. He was always willing to dower these poor brides with a sum that was quite a fortune for an Italian girl of the humbler class. In these cases he dispensed with all fees, and procured the necessary license at his own expense. It was universally remarked that these marriages turned out happy ones, although our saint himself said that he did not approve of forced unions, "but," he added, of two evils one must choose the less."

Though the saint loved to rescue his wandering sheep, he took, if possible, greater pains to save the lambs confided to his care. Poor girls beyond number owed the preservation of their honor to his timely alms. He even went so far as to procure them innocent adornments to take away from them all temptation to envy or sin. A poor woman of Cava called to see him one day accompanied by her daughter, whose neck was graced by that hideous appendage, a *goitre*. The mother took the bishop entirely into her confidence, and, among other things, informed him that the girl had had an offer of marriage, but that she could not procure the indispensable *tonnino*. The puzzled saint, upon further inquiry, learned from the lady that this precious article was a collar of small gold beads to adorn the neck; upon which the secretary burst into a fit of laughter, and volunteered the ungallant remark that all the *tonnini* in the world would not be enough to ornament a neck like that. His lordship could not help smiling, but moved with compassion, he ordered that the bride elect should be given a sum more than sufficient to purchase the coveted trinket. No doubt the necklace gratified the heart of the poor maiden, besides helping her to make a more imposing appearance, even if it had the undesirable effect of making her deformity appear more conspicuous.

Were we to mention but half of the instances, recorded of the extraordinary and unflagging zeal of the saint, our work would necessarily appear in many volumes. To prevent sin, to destroy the effects of sin, to draw souls to the love of Jesus Christ—here was the sole aim of his life. Verily, we have had a golden-mouthed doctor, a seraphic doctor, an angelic doctor, a honey-tongued doctor, a subtle doctor, and even a monarch of the doctors, but it was not a less happy inspiration which styled our great Neapolitan saint, the MOST ZEALOUS DOCTOR.

There was nothing too high or too low to escape the notice of the bishop when there was sin, or danger of sin. He was a peace-maker among his flock; enemies were reconciled by his gentleness, who had resisted the strongest entreaties from other sources. He promoted and maintained a good understanding among his clergy, regular and secular, and did all in his power to make them holy and happy. To bind up wounds, to heal dissensions, to unite all, clergy and laity, in God, in charity,—such he regarded as the chief function of a bishop. Whatever seemed an occasion of sin, that he strenuously set his face against, using mildness or force, meekness or rigor, persuasion or threats, irrespective of persons, as occasion seemed to require.

Upon arriving at St. Agatha, he learned that the principal gentlemen of the place were casting a play for the carnival: entitled, “La Contessa Sperciasépé.” He gave them the spiritual exercises, and immediately after administering to them the holy communion, he said to them: “Will you not be good enough to do me the kindness of adding to the promises you have already made to Jesus Christ, that of not acting the comedy?” The gentlemen did as he wished, and the play was cast in vain. It may be here added that actors and strolling players, found little favor with a bishop so sternly bent on removing the occasions of sin; though he himself had once been a play-goer, and escaped unscathed, he bewailed to the last day of his life the moments lost at this diversion.

Hearing that women were instructed in the houses of some pastors, he strictly forbade it, and commanded that children and others, requiring instructions, should be instructed in the church. The barbarous custom of duelling, caused him much anxiety. He addressed to the king, a learned and elegantly worded memorial on this subject, which concluded as follows:

“SIRE,

“Your Majesty will greatly enhance your glory, if you extirpate from the kingdom, this accursed plague spot, which kills life both in soul and body. The undersigned, therefore, humbly entreats your Majesty, to renew the laws published by your predecessors against duellists, and cause them to be strictly observed by enforcing the penalties against all, but especially against the military, among whom duels are so frequent; and also to declare that those who do not accept a challenge, will preserve their office and their honor, but that duellists shall always be branded with infamy, as transgressors of the law.

“This declaration will be especially useful to your Majesty at present, as you have established the new royal brigade composed of valiant men in the flower of their age, whose effervescing passions might easily lead them to challenge each other in their disputes. Your Majesty’s soldiers should not lose their blood or their lives for a false point of honor, but only for the defense of their faith, and the preservation of their prince and country.”

Upon receipt of this admirable letter, the king promulgated another very severe law against duelling.

Though our saint’s zeal never flagged, though his efforts to destroy sin and promote virtue were unceasing, yet he often trembled at the bare thought of the account he must on the judgment day, render to God for the souls committed to his care.

One day, Monsignor Albertini, whose guest he was at the time, asked him the number of the souls in the diocese of St. Agatha. “Forty thousand,” replied the saint. “There are as many in mine,” observed Monsignor Albertini whereupon Alphonsus bent his head, and said: “My lord, we have each of us a burden of forty thousand hundred weight upon our shoulders; woe to us if one of these souls be lost through our negligence!”

Among other vices, he urged a determined war against blasphemy. As the law that compelled a blasphemer to stand in the public square had been abolished, he enjoined the magistrates to punish this execrable sin by imprisonment. There was a public crier nicknamed Brother Welcome, from having once been a novice with the Capuchins, who was greatly given to this vice. The saint commissioned his servant Alexis to bring him to the palace, but this was effected only on the servant’s pretense of wishing to learn the price of corn. When the culprit appeared, the bishop plainly told him what he wanted with him; “I hear,” he added, “that there is not a saint in heaven that you do not blaspheme.” He threatened to have him arrested and condemned to the galleys, and this Menace completely cured him. In future whenever Alexis chanced to meet Brother Welcome, the latter would pleasantly ask him if he wanted to know the price of corn. The poor brother became a true penitent, and made a happy end.

The saint was very particular in enforcing the observance of the paschal precept, and in this matter as well as others, he showed how entirely devoid of human respect he was. In case of failure to comply with it, the first gentlemen in the land had to submit to the mortification of seeing their names affixed to the church door. He ordered priests to refuse the sacraments to those who had given public scandal, or neglected their duties, however rich and noble they might be. A notorious sinner had the boldness to present himself, unshrived, to receive Holy Communion on Monday-Thursday; the bishop stopped short before him, and said: “What! do you not blush to approach the altar? We do not cast pearls before swine. Unhappy man, change your life.” The saint passed on, communicating the rest, and the wretched man withdrew from the communion rail in great confusion, but whether he was converted or not, the archives do not say.

Chapter LVIII

Supernatural lights of the saint.—Example.—Testimony of one of his officials.—Incident.—Persecutions.—The saint's goodness towards his enemies.—His Patience.—His exquisite tenderness of heart.—The Doctor.—Trouble in the episcopal kitchen.—The saint a hero to his valet.—His extraordinary meekness and humility.—Instances.—The saint a thorough gentleman.—His deference and politeness towards his priests.—He refuses his likeness to his publisher.—Alexis obtains it.—The device of the Congregation.—Episcopal immunities not claimed by the saint's household.—His deference to members of his own Congregation.—Father Majone refuses to live at St. Agatha.

AMONG other rewards which the Great Pastor bestowed on the vigilant bishop, may be reckoned those particular lights with which he was favored, and by which he frequently discovered in a supernatural manner, the evil intentions of several members of his flock, and hindered their being perpetrated in outward actions. One night his own cook and his coachman agreed to commit a grievous crime, but being suddenly seized with fear, they happily desisted. At daybreak our saint summoned them to his presence, and having reproached them with his accustomed fervor, exhorted them to prepare for confession.

"It was marvelous," said one of his priests. "that many things of which we were ignorant came to his lordship's knowledge. Iniquity committed at dead of night, or in a distant village was made known to him instantaneously, and he would caution us to take immediate measures against it." There was a notary in the diocese whose misconduct was a source of grief to the aged prelate. Having reprimanded him several times without any good result, he warned him with tears that the life he was leading would bring him to a miserable end. When this unhappy man was waiting in the prison chapel to be conducted to the scaffold in January 1800—he had just been condemned to lose his head for participating in the conspiracy of the Jacobins—he said weeping: "This death was foretold me in my youth by Monsignor Liguori." Although up to that moment, he had remained hardened in his guilt, the remembrance of the gentle but fervid admonitions of the saint, who had so often vainly claimed him as a son, caused him to reflect then, to repent sincerely, and fortified by the sacraments of the Church he died full of hope and peace, invoking the saint in heaven who had wept over his follies on earth.

Those who were the objects of the saint’s zeal were not, very naturally, always pleased with his efforts to reclaim them, and it sometimes happened that the excitable people, among whom his lot was cast, loaded him with injuries, and not only threatened his life, but almost attempted to take it. The saint made ample allowance for the effervescing character common among his countrymen, and bore their insults as well as their weakness with incomparable meekness and charity. “When charity is patient,” said he, “it is also kind; if we are really anxious to win to Jesus Christ those who do us harm, we must do them good.” Upon this principle he used to shower all possible kindness on those who ill-treated him.

A priest who was exasperated, because the saint had inflicted some punishment on his brother, came into his presence and bitterly reviled him: “Do you not see,” said he you are unfit for your office? How much better had you remained at Ciorani to weep over your sins, rather than come here to play the role of bishop?” The saint smiled sweetly on his adversary, but the grand vicar requested that the delinquent should be deprived of his post. Alphonsus not only did not accede to this request, but promoted him to the next vacancy.

A gentleman whose evil plans had been thwarted by the bishop, came to the palace in a rage and asked to see him. Volleys of abuse burst from the lips of this poor crazy sinner, and as his insolence was speedily made known to the governor, the latter hastened to imprison him. When this news reached the ears of Alphonsus, he was greatly distressed, and sending for the magistrate begged the release of the prisoner, nor would he desist till he procured his liberty, that very day.

In the case of another who had grievously injured him, the saint acted in a similar manner. The grand vicar, Rubini, was greatly displeased, and earnestly entreated him to allow the culprit to be left in prison, as the governor had just incarcerated him. Rubini expatiated particularly on the dignity of Don Alphonsus Liguori, and on that of the bishop of St. Agatha. “What position, what dignity,” exclaimed the prelate, “if people must be put in prison on my account!” He would not rest until the offender had been released.

To a priest who threatened to injure him and his Congregation with their enemy, the procurator-general at Naples, Alphonsus turned a deaf ear. The grand vicar who could not bear to see the saint insulted, wanted to interfere, but he prevented him. Sometime after the priest fell ill. The saint immediately visited him and showed him every possible kindness. He continued to assist him until his death which occurred soon after.

Instances of the extraordinary meekness of our saint are as numerous as those of his wonderful zeal. One day, an ecclesiastic from the country insulted him grossly. Archdeacon Rainone, who was present, was not pleased by the gentleness which knew not how to take offence: “My lord,” said he, “the manner in which you act is degrading to your character and encourages the wicked.” “Oh, my dear canon,” returned the saint, I have been laboring for forty years to gain a little patience and you want me to lose it all in a moment.” “Our saint,” said the Dominician Father Caputo, “acquired such complete control over himself, that he no longer seemed human, but rather an angelic being in the form of a man.” “I know not,” said Rainone, “whether he bore insults more like an incarnate angel or a perfect man.”

Neither years nor sorrows abated the exquisite tenderness of heart which our saint habitually displayed. “You cannot imagine,” he wrote to a penitent at Naples, “how much it costs me to use severity towards certain persons; I think one succeeds better by gentleness.” He would weep if obliged to reprimand sternly, and his tears more than once touched the hardened hearts of some whom his eloquence had failed to move. If he only spoke a little too strongly, he was sure to do some kindness to the person to whom his words had been addressed. Once having spoken authoritatively to his physician, he presently sent for him to feel his pulse. “But,” said the doctor afterwards, “he was very well, and only made use of this harmless stratagem to show that he harbored no ill will towards me.”

The troubles of the episcopal kitchen not unfrequently ascended to the audience-room. One day the cook and the scullion became so animated in a dispute, that the latter brandished a knife which caused his adversary to beat an ignominious retreat. The ruler of the kitchen rushed into the saint’s room, and held the door firmly closed, but the scullion who seemed resolved on killing him, pushed it violently from outside; Alphonsus ordered the door to be opened, and with a look and a gentle word calmed the infuriated menial. The officials of the palace wanted to have the hero of the knife dismissed and imprisoned, but the saint preferred to reconcile enemies, and from that day these two servants were the best of friends.

Tannoia testifies that Bishop Liguori’s meekness was perfect. Brother Francis Anthony who lived with him fifty years, declared that whether with his brethren of the Congregation or with strangers, he always evinced unalterable sweetness and equanimity; Father Tannoia who was in close communication with him for forty years attests the same; and the venerable priest Arcieri invariably described him as the Francis de Sales of the age. The saint himself said with unwonted energy: “There is nothing more unseemly in a bishop than anger. A bishop who gives way to this passion is no longer the father of his flock; he is an intractable tyrant who draws upon himself universal hatred.”

The humility of the saint was not less admirable than his meekness. Entirely detached from the world, which he regarded as vanity and dross, he gloried not in the nobility of his origin, and would not allow the great achievements of his ancestors to be mentioned in his presence. When one of his guests happened to mention the honors and dignity which his deceased cousin the Count Cavalieri enjoyed while governor of Mantua, the saint exclaimed “How much more should I rejoice if I heard him praised for his virtue! How much more proud of him would I be if his death had been the death of a saint!”

In his palace the saint was more like a servant than a master. He made his bed, cleaned out his room, dressed the issue which annoyed him for years, and never allowed a valet to assist him in dressing or undressing. “By God’s grace,” said he one day, I have never yielded to vain glory. Yet once, while I was being incensed on my throne, I experienced a sort of pleasing sensation. Now see how the devil tried to tempt me.”

The holy bishop as far as possible dispensed with all the state and attendants which were considered, in his age and country, as essential to the episcopal dignity. He went out alone, especially to his devotions in the church. If he found the door closed, he would patiently await the coming of the sacristan. The slightest mark of deference was more annoying than pleasing to him. He would give the *pas* to any one that happened to come across him, and when walking or driving with any of his clergy, he declined the post of honor, and made another take it. Nothing grieved him more than to be made the object of any special attention. The officials in his house who were kept partly for state, soon found their office the merest sinecure.

So far was Alphonsus from domineering over his clergy that, in things lawful and indifferent, he was submissive even to his servants. Judging from the copious details left by his biographers, his manners in private life were those of a perfect gentleman. The saints as a class have been distinguished for their exquisite urbanity, and Alphonsus is remarkable for this, even among the saints. No word ever escaped him which denoted arrogance or a domineering spirit. Even to the lowest among his servants, he never spoke but in such terms as these: "Do me the kindness—Have the goodness to—I beg you to do such a thing—&c.,"—But towards his priests, his conduct ever displayed the most extraordinary deference. He would never, during the whole time he was paralyzed, allow a priest to wait on him; nor would he ask a priest to do him the slightest service; if, while one priest or more, were in his room, he wanted his pen or a book or anything else, not being able to reach his half paralyzed arm for it, he would ring for the lay-brother who waited on him in his illness.

Nor would he give an order to a priest but by way of a request. When he wanted Don Bartolini to continue the spiritual exercises in a convent a few days beyond the ordinary time, instead of commanding, he said: "Don Pascal, the nuns would like to have you a little longer." "Your lordship can dispose of me," returned the priest: "You have but to command." "True, said the polite bishop, but a superior ought to be discreet." If a request sufficed, he would deem it wrong to command.

He used to say that a tone of superiority can only diminish the authority of a bishop; yet if he were resisted in a thing he had a right to demand, he would let it be seen that he was a bishop, though, however great his firmness, he always spoke politely and never said anything offensive. When he wrote to his vicars and priests, he always gave them the title of Most Illustrious, though he declined it for himself. In dealing with the superiors of religious houses, he almost put himself in the position of a subject. Happening to go to the Capuchin Church on St. Anthony's day, and seeing that it was quite crowded, he turned to the superior and said in the humblest manner: "Father Guardian, if you permit it, I should like to say a few words to these people." He acted in a similar manner towards all ecclesiastics, especially those in office, nor would he officiate in their churches at any unusual time without asking permission.

He would not allow the simplest cleric to remain standing in his presence. Whoever called to see him, whether priest or layman was invited to his table, for he was the soul of hospitality, and for admission to his humble board no pompous invitation was necessary. He loved to converse with the rude and illiterate and to inquire into their affairs, hence they were always kindly received in his palace. Father Fatigati, the great friend of Alphonsus, made the following observation to Father Tannoia: "During my life I have known two bishops who were thorough gentleman, and who took pleasure in being with the poorest people and treating them with familiarity; these were Monsignor Liguori and Monsignor Borgia."

Our saint's publisher, Remondini, wishing to give greater value to his *Morals*, besought him to have his portrait taken, for a frontispiece. The aged author laughed at what he considered the absurdity of such a request, and on being urged by his secretary to consent, said: "Do not speak to me of such a thing; my work would only be depreciated in value if the head of such a mummy were put in it. The publisher was not to be daunted, however. He gained his cause with Alexis, the servant, who secretly made a hole in the door of the episcopal dining room, and thus a painter was able to trace his venerable features while he took his repast.

The arms of the noble house of Liguori were not to be seen in the vicinity of Alphonsus, he preferred the device he had chosen for his Congregation, and this consisted of the instruments of the Passion, with the appropriate verse. *Copiosa apud Eum redemptio, With Him there is plentiful redemption.* When the arms of his predecessor were removed from some episcopal vestments, lest the sight might prove offensive to the saint, he ordered them to be replaced, asking whether the ceremonies, during which these vestments were to be worn, would be of less value on that account. His brother, Count Hercules, once made him a present of a magnificent piece of cloth, which the saint had made into vestments. When the canon, spoke of having them adorned with the arms of his house, he rejected the proposition on the plea that what he had expended for the making of them had not come from his personal income, but from the episcopal revenues, of which he did not consider himself the owner.

Nor would the holy bishop allow any of his household to avail themselves of the immunities which custom seemed to authorize. “Formerly,” said the agent of the Duke of Maddalon, “no one dared to bring before the courts of justice, any of those who were attached to the bishop’s establishment, such as farmers, &c., but in Monsignor’s time, the horror he had for all sorts of unjust pre-eminence, caused him to abolish these privileges.”

When he required anything unusual of his own subjects, he entreated it as a personal favor. As founder and superior-general of the Congregation, he had a right to claim the services of any member of it, but he did not do so. Desiring to have Father Majone to assist him at St Agatha, he had the mortification to learn that this Father did not wish to go. “This gives me great pain,” he wrote to Father Villani, “I want an able subject, who can assist me in difficult cases; for I am surrounded by a thousand difficulties. . . . Try to induce him to aid me willingly; me, a poor old man weighed down by cares and crosses. Tell him he will thereby be sure of doing God’s will, and that he will do me a great charity. . . . I say *willingly*, for otherwise he would be more burdensome than useful.”

Chapter LIX

Wonderful charity towards the poor.—The saint’s present to his sister-in-law.—He does not wish her to remain too long at his palace.—His preference for the poor.—The fair at Maddalon.—Alphonsus’ care of the bashful poor.—Instances.—The poor noble.—How a bishop should act with regard to giving charity:—How the saint acted when poverty was an occasion of sin.—His privileged poor.—His charity to pilgrims and strangers. To members of his household.—Testimony of an eye-witness.—Prisoners.—St. Misery.—Mario.—All misfortune appeals to the saint.—Letters.—Indignation of the saint at the imprisonment of one of his servants.—The smuggler.—The Albanian soldiers.—

THE saint’s charity to the poor has already been alluded to, but it would not be possible to describe it fully. His palace was open to all, and he never sent away any one till he had relieved his wants. Rubini affirms that he gave all his income, subtracting official’s salaries and the expenses of his table, to the poor. On Wednesdays and Fridays, there was a general distribution of alms, but the needy came on all days, some asking for sugar, some for salt, some for lard, some for money. They applied to him also for medicines, and he continually kept a stock of quinine and other simple remedies for their use. According to the united testimony of his biographers, he not only deprived himself of necessaries for the poor, but contracted heavy debts to relieve them.

When Count Hercules and his second wife, the Countess Marianna, came to visit him, the grand vicar suggested that he ought to make the bride a present. He immediately sent her a garland of flowers which had been presented to himself. When the trifling nature of the gift was represented to him, he replied: “Do you want me to rob the poor, in order to make presents to my sister-in-law?” The countess took pleasure in prolonging her stay at St. Agatha, but the saint did not like the expense of entertaining her retinue and he plainly but very politely intimated the same to Don Hercules. “It would be pleasant to me to keep your retinue a long time,” said he, “but how could I meet the expense it entails? What one takes from the Church, one takes from the poor.”

When candidates for offices in his household presented themselves, he always chose the, poorest, if they were as fit as the others. When he read of anything in particular done by some saint for the poor, he presently endeavored to imitate it. Once a recently elected prior of the Dominicans sent him a present of excellent fish. The same day the brother read spiritual lecture for him out of the life of the Venerable Bartholomew, and, coming to a passage where it says, that the Archbishops of Prague were in the habit of sending a certain fish to the king every year on a particular solemnity, and that Bartholomew in consideration of the expense of this, resolved to employ the money in the service of the poor, his Lordship thus interrupted the reading: “To-morrow there will be a fair at Maddalon; take care to sell the fish and give the money to the poor.” It being objected that it was too trifling a thing, and that the payment of the man for selling it would amount to more than the fish was worth, he replied: “I know nothing about that; do as I tell you.”

The good bishop charged himself with anticipating the wants of the bashful poor, and always ordered the priests to make them known to him. He secretly supplied whole families with food and clothing, and gave several others a monthly allowance of from five to six or more ducats. Hearing that a young orphan of rank lived in great misery, he immediately charged himself with her maintenance, and amply supplied her necessities through the medium of her parish priest. To a lady, mother of a numerous family, who was in great distress, her husband being a gambler, he sent a supply of corn every month; but the gambler got someone to go for the alms in his wife’s name, and he no sooner laid hold of it than he sold it and gambled the proceeds. Alphonsus then sent the allowance in the absence of the gambler, but hearing that he again got hold of it, he secretly sent the poor woman a monthly stipend by a priest.

Though our saint, on the whole, disliked visits, he took pleasure in receiving certain reduced noblemen, and one in particular who had a very large family. In relieving the poverty of this family, the saint exercised the most refined delicacy in deceiving the excusable pride of the indigent nobleman. One of the king’s officers, whose family was too large for his income, informed the bishop of his position, and while his regiment remained at St. Agatha, a monthly allowance was given him from the episcopal revenues.

“Whoever is raised to the episcopacy,” said the saint, ought to think a great deal about the poor, whose tears no one thinks of drying; it is they who are chiefly recommended to us by Jesus Christ.” One day when he was with the bishops of Gaeta and Fondi, who were both his penitents, the conversation turned upon alms-giving. “As to that,” remarked his lordship of Gaeta, “I do not believe I am much in fault; thanks be to God, I give largely to all who ask me.” “It strikes me that you act as a priest rather than as a bishop,” returned the saint; you do not understand the meaning of these words of the Gospel:” ‘Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand giveth.’ I advise you to think, in giving alms in secret, of widows, of families in trouble and of the poor who hide themselves.”

When poverty became an occasion of sin, the saint was even prodigal in relieving it. Hearing that the six children of a poor woman shared the same bed, he instantly sent thither all that was necessary to remedy this; he was always particular in this regard with the poor, and desired to be informed where families were too poor to procure as many beds for their children as decency and modesty require. Not only did he keep a well-stocked storeroom for his poor, but he bought a great quantity of stuffs of various kinds to help to clothe them. He called the nuns of the Holy Redeemer his privileged poor, and he extended the same epithet to those of St. Philip, and the Capuchinesses. Besides alms in money, he every year supplied them with stores of oil, corn and wine. The money he received on his pastoral visitations he remitted to his vicars, to be distributed among poor families. His charity embraced the poor of his whole diocese. If he found among his letters a petition from a poor person, he would joyously exclaim: “Ah, this pleases me: it is a request for charity.”

Though the saint considered it his chief duty to aid the poor of his own diocese, yet he was liberal even towards strangers and pilgrims. One of these who was of noble birth had a regular weekly allowance from him, and as this did not at times cover his expenses, he would come to the palace and insist upon having more. On one of these occasions the saint said with ineffable gentleness: “My son I am overburdened with poor, and I know not what more I can sell to aid them, be satisfied for the present, and God will provide the rest.” But as the man went off grumbling, he sent after him, and gave him twenty carlins. He was particularly kind to the sick of his own household, and never failed to visit them daily. When his servant Alexis became ill, he allowed his wife a sum sufficient to meet her expenses, and promised in case of her husband's death to allow her his wages as long as she lived.

The following testimony of a priest, who knew our saint well, may fittingly conclude this subject:

"I was filled with admiration at the acts of charity this saintly old man practiced, especially towards the sick.

"Infirm, paralytic, bending under the weight of seventy-seven years, he still continued to go about the neighborhood to visit the sick. To see an old man almost wasted away, so weak as to require the aid of myself and his attendant in getting in and out of the carriage, to see such a one enter houses in search of the suffering was a sight which I could not contemplate without tears. I asked him one day how he, who received daily the visits of two medical men, could continue to visit the sick, he said with vivacity: "What sort of charity should I have, were I not able to suffer something for my children? O how much greater are the obligations of a bishop than those of any other Christian! I will even say, of any other ecclesiastic! The shepherd who watches over his flock properly must not forget his sick sheep, but should take care of them according to their requirements."

His presence among the sick and afflicted was as the presence of an angel. He exhorted them to patience, he encouraged them to receive all trials as punishments sent by God; he disposed them to receive the sacraments, he inspired them with love and confidence towards the Blessed Virgin, whose picture he always gave them. He inquired into their wants and had them supplied immediately.

The saint loved to visit prisoners, and in case of those incarcerated for debt, he usually freed them himself, by defraying the claims of their creditors, or at least interceding for them. At the opening of one of his pastoral visitations, he told the people how ardently his heart desired to relieve all their miseries and assuage all their sorrows, and expressed regret that his poverty would not allow him to do all his love wished. At this, a wit, named Mario, turned to the priest and said jestingly, "We have at last found our prefect," in allusion to a confraternity, called in derision, *of St. Misery.* When this was repeated to his lordship he only laughed, but hearing soon after that Mario was in prison for debt and his family starving, he remembered the witticism and said laughing: "We must assist him since he is our fellow-member.” He then paid the debt, and as Mario was in debt elsewhere, he settled on him a monthly allowance.

Every description of misfortune appealed to Alphonsus as to the refuge of all; smugglers, criminals of every shade, conscious guilt and oppressed innocence—all recurred to the mercy of the tender hearted bishop. His letters to persons in authority and to his personal friends teem with requests like the following:

“Take pity on this unfortunate man and do not have the cruelty to allow him to die in prison. My dear Don Carlo, do me this kindness and I will not fail to recommend you to God. . . . I hope you will kindly give me this consolation, and spare me the sorrow of hearing that he has died in his mournful prison, and perhaps destitute of spiritual aid.”

Hearing that one Mark Berjamo was about to be ejected from his farm, and the said Mark having appealed to him, he wrote to Don Pavone, the landlord, as follows:

“I assure you that this farmer is an honest man, and if he has not satisfied you it is not his fault. I therefore earnestly entreat you to leave him in his farm, and to treat him with all the charity with which your good heart is filled: I shall never cease to be grateful to you for what you shall do in his favor.”

This compassion our saint had sometimes to exercise at his own expense. One of his servants who had been robbing the episcopal storerooms for a long time was found out at last, and lodged in jail by his indignant companions. When the saint heard this he reproved them severely. “What!” he cried “imprison a poor creature for a few apples! go to the magistrate directly and get him set at liberty.”

Among the saints correspondence we find numerous letters regarding the relief and release of prisoners. Indeed the great and the powerful who were friendly to him had often to show their friendship, with regard to the unfortunate, for it was impossible to resist the pleadings of his paternal heart. As privilege of sanctuary was then allowed, he was greatly pained to hear that a poor man who had smuggled some tobacco, and, on being discovered, taking refuge in a church, had been dragged from that holy place and cast into prison. “Our immunities are in question,” said he, “and I would sell my mitre to obtain justice.” He immediately demanded the release of the delinquent, and would not rest till he had obtained it.

Five Albanian soldiers having deserted, were rash enough to turn their arms against the officers who were sent in pursuit of them. Two were killed, and the survivors being captured, application was made to the bishop to know if, under the circumstances, they could enjoy the privilege of sanctuary. They unfortunately could not, but as he abhorred the thought of imbruing his hands in their blood, he would give no decision. “My Lord,” said one official to him, your pity injures the culprits, for now that the mixed court must decide their case, they will surely be condemned to death. “These words so alarmed the saint that he immediately sent for the commanding officer and asked what could be done for these unfortunate men.

“Nothing but your intercession can save them,” was the reply; whereupon the saint immediately dispatched couriers to Prince Jaci, to the Marquises of Tannuci and Marco, and to the secretary of war, to ask the pardon of these criminals, saying that, if he were not assured of their safety, his own life would be endangered; for, paralytic as he was, he would go in person and throw himself at the feet of the king. To the amazement of every one, they received a complete pardon, and soon after came, accompanied by an officer of justice, to thank their deliverer. He received them with the greatest joy, remonstrated with them as a tender father, and labored to save their souls as he had already saved their bodies.

Chapter LX

The saint's hospitality.—The Archpriest and his companions.—The bishop's coachman.—The saint's disinterestedness.—Instances.—His advice to Bishop Rossi.—His care of the episcopal property.—His dislike of lawsuits.—Letter.—His elegant courtesy towards the Duke of Maddalon.—His efforts to improve his lands, &c.—His interest in the culture of olives, mulberry trees, &c.—The raising of silk-worms.—He beautifies the episcopal gardens.—

WE shall here allude once more, to the hospitality and other virtues which Alphonsus invariably practiced. All priests, students and even agents of priests, who came to St. Agatha were invited to stay at the palace. Priests who came to give the spiritual exercises, or act as extraordinary confessors, had the same general invitation. The archpriest of Durazzano who did not know of this universal hospitality, asked Alphonsus on one occasion, whether he might remain at the palace during his stay at St. Agatha. "By all means," said Alphonsus, and perceiving that two gentlemen who accompanied him were about to start for the hotel, he would not allow it, but commanded them also to stay, saying that the house of a bishop is at the service of all, especially ecclesiastics. On these occasions, which indeed were frequent, often daily, the episcopal table was better supplied than when there was no company, which made one of his guests laughingly ask: "How does this sumptuousness agree with the poverty of your lordship?" "Hospitality," exclaimed the saint, "is the daughter of charity not of poverty."

The palace was frequently turned into a public hospital. If his guests or their servants took ill, he would not allow them to leave, but had them carefully nursed and supplied with medical attendance at his own expense. When Bishop Borgia's coachman fell ill, while his master was conferring with the saint, he was immediately placed in a comfortable room, and as his illness became serious, the last sacraments were administered, and his host frequently came to assist and console him. The son of the coachman came from Naples to see his father, and he too was received with the greatest kindness, and made remain until the invalid was perfectly recovered; for a month, Alphonsus watched over the convalescence of this humble servant, saw that light and nutritious food was served to him, and treated him with the greatest consideration. According to the testimony of the saint himself, his palace was almost always full, and he was sometimes obliged even to borrow beds.

Our saint's disinterestedness lessened the revenues of his diocese at least one half, "I have retrenched many of the sums I formerly received," he wrote, "for I felt scrupulous about them, and I think with reason . . . I consider it a very good kind of alms to decline marriage fees, especially if there is poverty or danger in question. . . . I often remit considerable sums, and those who serve me know what a horror I should feel in violently exacting what is due to me." He refused to receive anything for ordinations, saying: "What has come to me gratuitously ought to be given away for nothing." Nor would he accept of the ordinary offerings made at the reception or profession of nuns, "I cannot ask anything for these ceremonies," said he, "since nothing has been fixed by Pope Innocent III."

There were sixty-four very rich chapels in the diocese, the administrators of which were obliged to pay the bishop a considerable sum at the patronal feast of each, but he generally left this in their hands for the poor of the place. The people of this diocese were noted for being very generous to their pastors, but the saint would never receive a present from the poor, knowing that his duty was to nourish rather than impoverish them. When he elevated priests to canonries or other offices, he declined to accept any present on the occasion, saying: "One ought not to receive any present for doing one's duty."

With regard to the episcopal farms, he was most careful that the farmers should not make bargains injurious to their own interests. In a word, says his grand vicar, Rubini, he made so many deductions that he never had a tenant who paid him the full amount.

Alphonsus ejected from a house of his a woman against whom several false reports had been made him. The poor woman began a novena to St. Joseph, and then appealed to him in person. Having asked to what saint she was most devoted, she replied, "St. Joseph." "Ah, well," he continued, for he had already been undeceived, "St. Joseph has been gracious to you, and has ordered me not to turn you out." This was not enough; the petitioner complained the rent was high. "How much do you wish to pay?" he asked.

“Twenty-one ducats,” said the tenant who had previously been paying twenty-seven. The saint agreed to this, but after his resignation she was obliged to pay thirty-one.

On one occasion the bishop found that a steward had a deficit, amounting to about one fifth of the episcopal revenues, but, as he confessed his fault with tears, the easy master sent him away in peace. Several people said such a culprit should be brought to justice. What do you say about justice?” exclaimed the saint with emotion: “This man has satisfied justice by confessing his fault, what a sight it would be—a bishop bringing an unfortunate man to the courts to ruin him outright, for sake of his own interests?” We may add here that the saint was particularly exact in paying the wages of his servants and workmen; he often even forced payment on them for mere trifles. “I am an old man of ninety,” said Father Raphael de Ruvo, “and yet I never saw a prelate so charitable and disinterested as Monsignor Liguori. His purse was always open to give, and closed only against receiving,” everything was gratis for others, but he paid doubly what he himself owed. “When the saint’s successor visited him, he gave him this advice: My Lord, if you wish to do good and to succeed at St. Agatha, dispose of your own purse, but never of that of others.”

The saint, however, knew how to distinguish between his own personal interests and those of the episcopal revenue. One day a priest said to him with reference to a yearly tribute due the bishop: “I cannot see what gave rise to this custom, would it not be better to give this tribute to the poor?” It is I who have to give the alms,” said Alphonsus quietly, and he declared he would not do anything calculated to injure the rights of his successor. On hearing that the syndic (mayor) of Arienzo had hindered a priest from sending his dues to the cathedral, he wrote to all his priests advising them to state the matter to the royal council, adding that if the syndic or any other official prevented justice being done, he himself would undertake to defend the canon law. Yet he hated lawsuits of every kind, and was accustomed to say that a bad accommodation is better than a good lawsuit. He endeavored to settle by arbitration some difficulty he had with a certain priest, and sent for him several times without even receiving an answer. At last he wrote in the following humble strain: “If I had a carriage, I would have sent it for you long ago; come, I entreat you.”

In a dispute which arose between the saint and his friend, the Duke of Maddalon, regarding the right of pasturage over a fief belonging to the episcopal revenue, he wrote to the ducal agent: “I am obliged to defend the property of the see, which possesses the double right of pasturage and lordship. . . . If I be pushed to extremities I will apply directly to the Regency . . . Could I reconcile it to my conscience, I would yield up my rights and say no more of this affair. God knows how I detest lawsuits, the very name makes me tremble; yet how can I yield after having taken an oath to defend the rights of my church?.” . . . This weighs upon my conscience, otherwise I would yield directly.” Nevertheless the saint, with that elegant courtesy which always distinguished him, placed the whole business in the hands of one of the defendant’s lawyers—a delicacy of politeness which so disarmed the generous nobleman that he ordered his agent to leave things as they had formerly been, and pay up all the arrears which the bishop could claim. Indeed everyone who knew Alphonsus, believed, with the Neapolitan lawyers, that, “what is taken from Monsignor Liguori is taken from the poor.”

A poor gentleman whose family was very large had great difficulty in paying for one of the episcopal farms which he rented, and got the Lady Catherine di Lucca to intercede for him. The saint not only remitted the debt, but gave him a monthly allowance of corn. Yet to prevent injury to the episcopal property, the debtor was obliged to appear every year with the rent, which the saint accepted and then gave back to him as an alms. In consequence of the saint’s judicious administration, the property rather increased in value. He was careful to have dead trees removed and new ones planted, especially olive trees, so useful in Italy. He would not have the episcopal gardens so bare and unsightly as he found them, but had them profusely planted with lemon and orange trees, flowers of every hue and variety for the altar, and the plants and vegetables most useful for the kitchen and for medicinal purposes; thus giving employment to many hands, and spreading among the humble classes knowledge of the most useful kind. We may well believe that the aspect of the episcopal city was greatly beautified under a bishop who was an elegant amateur in horticulture and architecture, as well as in music and painting. But he did not confine himself to the beautiful; he was still more anxious to promote the useful; and as the raising of silk was the great industry of the people of his diocese, he paid particular attention to the cultivation of mulberry trees, carefully informing himself as to whether the white or black mulberry yielded the most profitable leaves, and propagating only the best species.

Chapter LXI

How the saint practiced holy poverty.—He wears out the old clothes of Bishop Danza.—He replenishes his wardrobe from an old clothes shop.—Putting in new sleeves.—“Old things suit an old bishop.”—Letter of Don Spota.—Why the saint practiced economy.—Details.—Opinion of the bishop of Caserto.—The saint’s episcopal ring.—He will use only the produce of his own diocese.—His mortification.—Incident.—He takes vinegar for wine.—Fruit sent to him does not stop at its destination.—Why he did not keep caged birds.—The harpsichord.—Rubini’s testimony.—

AS our saint was a member, or rather the founder of a religious congregation, he was eminent also in the virtues which may be regarded as peculiar to the religious life, and especially holy poverty. By this virtue, made obligatory by vow, the religious not only renounces all property in earthly things, but detaches his heart from them, and endeavors to assimilate himself to the poor in spirit, to whom belongs the kingdom of heaven. On his elevation to the episcopate, Alphonsus could not avoid procuring one violet suit, but when these, and it was of the plainest description,—was worn out, he was satisfied with the old robes of his predecessor, and used no other during the thirteen years he governed the See of St. Agatha. The habit of his congregation was his ordinary dress, because nothing plainer, could be devised. He had but one, and while that was mending, he was obliged to have recourse to Bishop Danza’s old wardrobe, or remain in his room. One day as he was passing by the Dominican monastery in a cassock pretty well patched, but out at the elbows, one of the fathers could not forbear compassionating such poverty. The saint pleasantly accounted for it by saying that he had sent to an old clothes shop in Naples for four articles of clothing, but that they had not yet reached him.

On one occasion, a brother adroitly substituted a new habit for the old one. “Ah,” said the saint next morning, you have been putting in new sleeves.” “Yes, monsignor, the others were too much worn,” was the reply. But later in the day finding the whole garment was new, he said in a tone of authority which he rarely assumed: “I am the master here, and I think this cassock is quite new.” “Well,” said the brother, apologetically, “the other was no longer decent.” “Never mind that,” said his lordship, bring it hither.” The excuse for its nonappearance was that it had been given to a beggar. “You will always act of your own accord, was the bishop’s indignant comment.” Hempen shirts and a habit of common cloth, dyed black, composed his wardrobe; his rosary was of wood, and his garments were such that the beggars used to refuse them. The laundress having complained that his shirts fell to pieces in her hands, Father Telesca told him he ought to get new ones. “Old things suit an old bishop,” observed the saint; “besides I ought to think of clothing the poor.”

Don Dominic Spota, grand chanter of the cathedral of Girgenti, after a prolonged visit to the bishop of St. Agatha, wrote the following details to Father Blasucci:

“I have admired Naples, I have been overawed by the magnificence of Rome, but the life of Monsignor Liguori has made a greater impression on me than either. . . . I have seen a saintly bishop of the primitive ages; he is confined to bed by the most painful infirmities, but his serene countenance, betokens the tranquility of his soul. The glory of God and the government of his diocese, occupy him unceasingly; I have noticed his extreme moderation in sleep and food, and such is his poverty that the only blanket on his straw bed is his cassock; his pastoral ring would not excite the envy of a beggar—a false stone is its only ornament; and his pectoral cross is in perfect keeping.”

One of our saint’s principles was that whatever was wasted or superfluous in a bishop’s household, was so much taken from the poor, he practiced the strictest economy as regarded himself. His table was of unpolished wood, and so old, that it could not be sold except as firewood, or valued except as a relic. His inkstand was of bone, his snuff-box of wood, for his compositions, he used the cheapest paper that could be procured, and the envelopes of letters. “If we were to act, as he does,” exclaimed the bishop of Caserta, after making the saint a visit, “we should continually breathe forth the odor of sanctity.” Everything about Monsignor Liguori commands respect, veneration, and homage.” Besides his books, the only ornaments in his room were the crucifix, which he had always before him, and a little picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel, which was on his table.

One morning as the bishop was going to officiate, his ring could not be found. A gentleman who happened to be present was distressed at its disappearance: "If it is the loss of the gem which makes you uneasy," said his lordship, smiling, "never mind; it is only a bit of glass. My uncle's[17167] ring which was given me, was sold for the relief of the poor." Once when the members of the household were joking about the value of his ring, he said pleasantly: "Such as my ring is, it has figured at Rome, and every one regarded it as a precious article; 'but you do not know,' said I to myself, 'that I broke my best decanter to adorn it.' "

It was culpable in the saint's eyes to send to a distance for meat, wine or fish. He would not allow this even in his worst illness. "I ought to eat the produce of my own diocese," said he, "I cannot waste money that belongs to the poor. I am their father and their steward, not the destroyer of their possessions."

The spirit of penance and mortification was equally conspicuous in our saint; he unceasingly offered himself to God as an expiatory victim for the sins of his people. Every day he disciplined himself to blood. A Dominican prior who had come to his house on account of the examinations, occupied a room near the bishop's, and as he was leaving, the very day they were over, being entreated to remain longer, he said, "I would return home were it midnight, for I have not the heart to listen any longer to the flagellations of this poor old man."

For several years, the saint ate but once a day, and during another period of his life he ate only abstinence food. Even this he was accustomed to season with bitter herbs. During the whole time he was bishop, he never once complained of any dish being badly cooked, though accidents of this nature, were of frequent occurrence in his house. One day at dinner the servant served vinegar instead of wine. His lordship drank it, but the grand vicar no sooner tasted it than he angrily reproached the servant. The saint excused him and laughed at the accident. On another occasion the same thing occurred, but he drank it without making a remark. Next day however, he said pleasantly to the servant: "Do not give me the same wine I had yesterday; I really took it for vinegar."

The saint liked fresh fruit, and it was very beneficial to his health; for this reason his brother used to supply him with the best fruit to be procured at

Naples. But Alphonsus usually sent it to the nuns of the Holy Redeemer; he disposed in a similar manner of rare fish, bonbons and other delicacies which his relations frequently sent him.

He would not allow caged birds in his palace. “A bishop’s house,” said he, “is not a place of pleasure but of penance.” One day when he was offered a present of canaries, he refused them saying: “No, no, a little later and we should weep over them.” “These things” he remarked to his secretary, are so easily destroyed, and when one loses them one feels sorry for weeks after.” Before he became a bishop, he used often play on the harpsichord or piano at the community recreation, especially when the young students were present, to amuse them and teach them to sing his hymns; and of these instruments he was a perfect master; but while he governed St. Agatha he entirely denied himself that innocent pleasure.

Even in his sufferings, the saint rarely sought any alleviation beyond that prescribed by physicians. One day as he was oppressed with a violent headache, Father Caputo suggested that he should have recourse to St. Vincent Ferrer, “For such a little thing!” he exclaimed. “Ah, let us rather ask him for the salvation of souls, and for a good passage to eternity.”

We will conclude this chapter with the testimony of the grand vicar, Rubini:

“His lordship was as cruel to himself as he was kind to others. I should make you shudder were I to relate all the particulars of his macerations, his abstinence from food, his daily scourgings to blood,—of the hair-shirts and iron chains which kept his body in continual mortification, his watchings—in short everything that can afflict the flesh was made use of unceasingly by Monsignor Liguori.”

Chapter LXII

Doubts and fears of the saint as to his resignation of the bishopric.—Regret of the people.—A general mission.—Wonderful vigilance of the saint.—His resignation accepted.—Letter.—Grief of the clergy.—Sentiments of the retiring bishop.—Of the citizens of Naples.—The weight of Mount Taburno removed from the saint's shoulders.—The Vacant See.—Monsignor Rossi.—The pension Characteristic disinterestedness.

WE shall ere long have to follow our saint into retreat, for no sooner had he assisted at the deathbed of Clement XIV, than he resolved to resign his bishopric, knowing as he had already prophesied, that the successor of Ganganelli would accept his resignation. But as usual he was full of doubts and fears, and he would be glad if the new Pope would, of his own accord, release him. "Show me that I do God's will in leaving my diocese," he wrote to Father Villani, "that I may leave it in peace." Though this Father had not heretofore approved of his resigning the bishopric, he now gave full consent, and the holy bishops, whom he had consulted for the saint, were also of opinion that, in consequence of the accumulation of maladies, which rendered him unable to make the least movement without assistance, he need have no scruples in resigning his office. Father Villani doubted whether the resignation would be accepted; "but," wrote Alphonsus, "there is no reason to doubt; the Pope will accept it, I am certain that I ought to die in the Congregation, and you will even see that I shall die as a subject."

No sooner was it known at Arienzo that the saint had sent his resignation to the Pope, than the news spread throughout the diocese and caused general regret. The superiors of religious houses wept for the loss of a protector who was no less powerful than zealous; the nuns for a Father and a consoler; while the clergy felt as if, in losing him, they lost the very soul of the ecclesiastical state. The people bewailed the most tender and vigilant of fathers; all classes united in supplicating heaven for the preservation of their saintly bishop, consoling themselves with the hope that, as Clement XIV had decided that he could govern the diocese from his sick bed, Pius VI would refuse to accept his resignation.

Pending the decision of the Holy See, the saint redoubled his exertions for the welfare of his diocese. To the last moments of his stay, he was zealous in rewarding the most virtuous, chastising the tepid, and expelling the incorrigible. He designed that, previous to his leaving, the whole diocese should be thoroughly evangelized, and he applied to the head of Congregations for the necessary workmen. His zeal was so fully seconded by all to whom he appealed, that not a hamlet, town, village or estate throughout his diocese was left without a mission. From his bed or his arm-chair, he arranged the smallest details of this great work. He bespoke the hospitality of the nobles or princes of each district for the zealous missionaries, who had so generously responded to his call; and it was freely accorded. Meanwhile, but little of what was done throughout the diocese escaped him, "You must be watchful of N—." he wrote to one of his missionaries, by his secretary; "You know where he lives, and you must see whether he continues to visit the house of N—., to the scandal of the neighborhood. I want to be informed about this as soon as possible. Come this morning that I may consult with you about this matter."

That the Passion of Jesus Christ might be engraven on all hearts, he caused a large picture to be painted, in which the more striking scenes of it were depicted in the most natural manner, and had it carried in procession through the church on the last evening of the mission. To excite the faithful to compassionate the Sorrows of Mary he also caused the statue of Our Lady of Dolors to be exposed and carried processionally. Besides, he indicated to the Fathers in a circular letter, all that should be done in order to excite the people to compunction. "Let the preachers," said he "inculcate what a grievous crime it is to conceal a sin in confession through shame; in their sermons let them dwell much on the necessity of recommending oneself to God, especially when assailed by temptation, let them always make mention of love towards Jesus Christ crucified, and devotion to the Blessed Virgin. And when any habitual vice exists in a place, frequent reference must be made to it. . . . If the people are made to say an *Ave Maria* it should be said before the sermon, not after, for fear they may get cold, and complain when they return home."

When Cardinal Castelli presented to the Pope our saint's resignation, his Holiness was not in the least disposed to receive it, though the cardinal represented his great age and incessant illness; for he knew too well the wonders the saint was effecting who "ruled his diocese from his bed." About this time, two Fathers of the Congregation presented themselves to pay their homage to the Holy Father, who at once inquired about Monsignor Liguori. Thinking to do something pleasing to their holy Founder, and eager to have him once more in their midst, they did not fail to confirm what the Pope had already heard concerning his infirmities, and even exaggerated them. "If this be the case," said the pontiff, "we must not distress him further." He therefore commissioned a cardinal, May 9, 1775, to write to the saintly bishop of St. Agatha, as follows:

"His Holiness felt sincere sorrow on learning, through the letter forwarded to him by Cardinal Castelli, of the sad state of your health, which has urged you to tender your resignation. This causes the Holy Father to feel great regret knowing as he does, how to appreciate your merits and your pastoral vigilance; but being aware of the full justice of the motives which impelled you to this step, he declines to prolong your mental anxieties, and accepts your resignation, which must be made according to legal formalities. With sentiments of the highest esteem, I heartily kiss your hand, and am &c."

This letter filled the saint with joy, but among his poor children lamentations resounded everywhere. "It is a chastisement from God," said Archdeacon Rainone announcing it to the chapter, "we have not known how to appreciate him." There was not a canon or priest in the whole diocese who did not go to Arienzo to complain with tearful eyes of the step he had taken. The gentlemen of the diocese came in a body to express their sorrow, and those who had experienced his severity, were among the first to express their grief for the irreparable loss their district was about to sustain. Canon Francis Petti, whose indignation the saint had aroused by causing the arrest and imprisonment of his brother, repaired to his bedside weeping, and exclaimed: "What are you about, my lord? may God forgive you! The harm you are doing our diocese can never be repaired."

"Which of us can now fulfil his duty?" cried out the disconsolate clergy. "With Monsignor Liguori disorders were remedied by merely telling him of them, for he could do anything both for priests and seculars, with the barons and the king. Where shall we now find the purse always open to relieve suffering or prevent sin?" Even the archpriest of Frasso, who had given him so much trouble, when told that Alphonsus, sinking under the double weight of years and infirmities, felt unable to govern the diocese any longer, said: “That is not true. Monsignor Liguori is capable of governing our diocese by his name alone,” and he expressed the bitterest regret for the approaching departure of the saintly prelate.

“Do you think I am not sad at leaving you?” said the loving saint to his weeping clergy. “In truth I am but too sad, for I shall leave my children. I go, only because God wills it. The state to which I am reduced compelled me to inform the Holy Father of my sufferings, but I declared to his Holiness that if my diocese would suffer the least injury from my departure, I was ready to toil on here until my death. If I go away in body I leave my heart in the midst of you.”

The poor felt the loss most keenly of all. Indigent and penitent women, distressed families who had relied on his assistance, the bashful poor, even among the nobles, whom he secretly relieved, bewailed it as the greatest of earthly calamities. The peasants were inconsolable. It is not generally known that the holy bishop kept a *créche* in his establishment, but such was the case. When these poor people went to work they dropped their babes at the palace door, knowing that their good Father would have them nursed and fed. “Alas,” said a poor villager to Father Gaudinot, “who will now receive our poor little ones? When we used to go to the mountain, we left our children at his lordship’s palace, and we felt sure that they would be fed and cared for; but now that he is going away, to whom can we have recourse?”

The sick and the prisoners wept with the rest. “Alas,” said the latter, “who will now comfort us, who will send kind friends to console us, intercede for us with the magistrate, or plead for us with our creditors? Monsignor was a saint, every one honored him as such, and he was all-powerful.” This universal outpouring of filial love grieved the affectionate heart of the saint, and if it had cost him much to be united with this dear spouse, it cost him still more to separate from her when he had learned to love her.

At Naples the people entirely sympathized with the bereaved flock of St. Agatha. “His presence was enough of itself to govern his diocese, and make every official in it do his duty.” said the Marquis of Avena, a member of the royal council, and he severely censured Monsignor Liguori for having taken this step.

The saint’s resignation being formally accepted, someone jestingly remarked to him that he appeared to hold his head more erect since he heard the news: “Yes,” he replied, “and that is not surprising, since the weight of Mount Taburno[17168] has been taken off my shoulders.” From the depths of his grateful heart, the ex-bishop thanked his holiness for the great favor of releasing him from an office, the responsibilities of which weighed so heavily on his over-sensitive conscience. He then entreated to be permitted to preserve the privileges annexed to the episcopate, especially the portable altar. The Holy Father having granted his request, expressed an opinion that he ought to enjoy a pension from his church, and Alphonsus, not wishing to be burdensome to his dear city of St. Agatha, named four hundred ducats as sufficient; the Pope was so edified at this moderation that he assigned him double that amount, and released him from a debt of one hundred and five ducats which he owed to the apostolic chamber. The College of Doctors at Naples, of which he was so bright an ornament, agreed, without a dissentient voice, to give him his whole pension, and not enforce the ordinary condition, residence at Naples.

The saint was not oblivious of the interests of his own institute. He prevailed on his brother, Hercules, to settle on the Fathers of the Congregation the apartments which they were accustomed to occupy in his palace, as sons of the great Founder, Don Alphonsus Liguori. Mgr. Rossi, Bishop of Ischia, was nominated to the vacant see of St. Agatha. When the saint heard of this appointment he exclaimed, with unusual earnestness: “My God! my God! I will at once write to Rome to obtain leave to reside here till the arrival of the new bishop. My poor church,” he continued, with unwonted animation, “how long thou wilt have to remain a widow!” This was a prophecy, for the clergy of Ischia incited the Neapolitan government, or the government incited the clergy—to oppose the translation of their bishop, and St. Agatha remained without a bishop for over four years. Alphonsus would have resided there till the arrival of his successor, but, according to present discipline, a bishop, whose resignation was accepted, had to leave his diocese immediately. At the request of the saint, Monsignor Rossi visited him at Nocera, and learned from his own lips the real state of that dear church, in which the greatest of its bishops had left his heart, as he himself had declared to his loving children.

Chapter LXIII

The saint's last visitation.—Touching scene.—The art of arts.—Anecdote.—He visits his religious communities.—His present.—Mother Raphael.—An alms.—The church.—Miracle.—The saint's departure from St. Agatha.—His constant residence during his administration.—A melancholy ovation.—Reception in Nola.—Miracle.—Enthusiastic reception in Nocera.—Eased of one burden to assume another.—Touching letter.—New persecutions.—Discipline relaxed.—The saint endeavors to restore perfect observance.—His labors among the people.—The carminello.—His apartments.—

UNDETERRED by his infirmities, the saint once more visited his dear children in person, to testify the warmth of the affection they had inspired in him, and to leave them his blessing. In this last visitation of the parishes, he inculcated perseverance in well doing, the avoiding of sin, the frequentation of the sacraments, and above all, love of Jesus Christ and devotion to Mary. He then humbly asked pardon for his numerous failings and the scandal he had given, according to his own account of his administration, and besought them to pray earnestly for his soul, especially when they should hear of his death. He protested that he had loved them all without exception, and indeed of this there could be no doubt, since those towards whom he had acted with the greatest severity, regarded his chastisements as gentle strokes of a fatherly hand, and were inconsolable at the prospect of his departure. Indeed the intense affection manifested for Alphonsus, both within his congregation and outside of it, would lead us to suppose that the few instances recorded of his severity are greatly exaggerated. He appears to have been a perfect master of that art which the saints themselves agree to be the most difficult of all arts, as it certainly is the most disagreeable of all duties, that of correcting others: that the saint sometimes corrected severely is manifest from his own letters, but in scarcely one instance was the reproof badly received; some, indeed, were carried away by anger, but it was only for the moment. Even those who were not at once converted, afterwards acknowledged the justice of the admonition, and the saint's, zeal invariably bore fruit in time. "Now," said he to a wicked surgeon whom he had imprisoned, "that I am going to leave my diocese, do you leave off vice.” The poor sinner was so moved by the tender entreaties of the saint that he mingled his tears with those of his benefactor. He afterwards made a public confession of his crimes, and died in sentiments of sincere repentance, blessing the name of Alphonsus di Liguori.

The saint visited all his religious communities, humbling himself wherever he went, and beseeching the religious to pardon the, perhaps too great, severity with which he had endeavored to maintain them in perfect discipline, assuring them that it was inspired by the great and singular love he bore them, and that he had always sought to have them honored as the most precious portion of the flock of Christ, and conciliated the esteem of the people in their regard. He exhorted them once more to perfect observance of rules, and advised superiors especially to have no human respect where the glory of Jesus Christ and the good of souls were concerned. “Remember me before the tabernacle, and forget not my poor soul when you shall hear of my death,” were the touching words with which he concluded every exhortation made to his beloved children.

The nuns of the Annunciata having asked him for a keepsake; he sent them the little picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel which he used to keep upon his table. He gracefully added that he left them his heart, and begged: them to say a Hail Holy Queen for him every Saturday before that picture, and recite the litany for his soul, for three days, when they should hear of his death, all which they faithfully accomplished.

Mother Raphael, not being able to see him, wrote him a most affectionate letter, and, among other things, said she hoped that he would bequeath his heart to his daughters of Our Most Holy Redeemer at his death. This request did not by any means edify the saint: “I have always considered. Mother Raphael a sensible woman,” said he, “but now I cease to have a high opinion of her.” The only memento he sent them besides a letter of good advice, was a simple wooden cross with the emblems of the passion, which had, adorned his dining-room, and which he used to kiss whenever he entered or left the-room.

To the canons he left the large wooden cross that stood on the first landing of the staircase of his palace; to the Capuchins some flowers which adorned the altar of the Blessed Sacrament in his chapel, to the seminarists several books which belonged to him as bishop, not having been procured for him by the Congregation, and copies of all his own works. His old mattress and arm-chair he begged as an alms from the chapter of the cathedral, who, while granting his request, shed tears of devotion at the poverty of their beloved bishop. Everything about his room was carried off; already those who knew him felt certain he would one day be raised on the altars of the Church. The barber of the palace not being able to find anything better, asked for his crutch. “Take it,” said the saint, “it may one day be serviceable to you.” Some years after, it was used by the barber to affect a miracle on his daughter-in-law, when all had despaired of her recovery.

It was on the 27th of July, 1775, that Alphonsus bade a last adieu, to his dearly loved diocese. Amid the tears and graces of his clergy and people, especially the poor, he was helped into his carriage. The affection of his cherished children pierced his paternal heart like a sword, and his eyes were suffused with tears. He had governed the Church of St. Agatha for thirteen years and fifteen days, during which period he had so scrupulously observed the law of residence, that he was absent only three times, and on each occasion but for a very short period. The first was in 1764, to assist at a general chapter of the Congregation: the second in 1765, when, by order of his physicians, he went to Pagani for the benefit of his health after a severe illness; and the third, in 1767, when he repaired to Naples to avert the threatened destruction of the Congregation.

An immense concourse of people impeded the progress of the episcopal cortège, eager to receive the last blessing of the saint. But when the object of this melancholy ovation perceived that the priests, canons and other gentlemen intended to convey him to his destination, he tried to dissuade them, yet graciously thanked them all, and assured them of his abiding gratitude for this last token of their affection. Some, unwilling to yield to his entreaties, accompanied him to Nocera. On the way he continued his devotions, and said the rosary and the canonical hours with Father Villani, who sat by him in the carriage.

It was dinner time when they reached Nola. The retired prelate was received there as an angel from heaven. Owing to the intense emotion he felt at parting with his beloved flock, he had not said mass in the morning; he therefore went to the seminary and offered the holy Sacrifice in presence of the faculty and the students, who were extremely edified at his extraordinary devotion. He made his thanksgiving during Father Villani’s mass, which followed his own, and, at the request of the superior, addressed a few simple but burning words of superhuman eloquence to the pupils, and gave them his blessing. As he re-entered the carriage he wrought a miracle on a nobleman who had become blind, by making the sign of the cross on his eyes.

When they reached Nocera the bishop, Monsignor Sanfelice, who had the greatest esteem and veneration for his holy colleague, ordered that all the bells should ring out to welcome him. The people testified the most lively joy at seeing once more the great doctor, whose learning and sanctity had shed such lustre on their little city, but, they were grieved to find him in so helpless a, condition, and wept as they called to mind his ancient, promise to come to Nocera to end his days among them. All the clergy and several of the nobles approached to kiss his hand and beg his blessing as he descended from the carriage. When on the threshold of the convent he paused, and exclaimed, with transport, "*Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto!*" On reaching the choir he prostrated before the Blessed Sacrament, saying: "My God, I thank Thee for having released me from so heavy a burden. My Jesus, I could bear it no longer." The community assembled in choir to receive him and sang the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving to God for having restored to them their beloved Father.

The grand vicar of Nocera visited him that evening to pay his respects, being deputed by the bishop. In the course of conversation that dignitary observed, that the people of St. Agatha were very much displeased at his departure. "And why?" asked the saint, innocently. "Because they have lost a pastor who did so much good," was the natural reply. "Jesus and Mary!" exclaimed the holy bishop, greatly disturbed, "what does the grand vicar say of me, who have done no good at all, *none, none, none!* If any good has been done, it was God alone who did it." Monsignor Sanfelice came himself next morning, and courteously conferred full powers on him to exercise all authority in the diocese. The bishops, nobles, superiors of monasteries and people of rank of the neighboring cities were continually pouring in, so that several days elapsed before he could obtain any rest.

The saint was filled with joy at being once more among his beloved sons. "By God's grace I am at Nocera," he wrote, and I feel as if I were in paradise," but he soon found that he had been eased of one burden only to assume another. All had recourse to him for advice and consolation, "I had hoped,” he wrote “to find relief at Nocera, but I have met with a thousand cares which deprive me of rest. My head is exhausted. I am obliged to keep a wet cloth constantly beside me, to prevent giddiness or fainting, so great is the number of letters I have, to write. . . . I feel scrupulous if I neglect writing the inspirations God sends, for He gives, to superiors knowledge which he does not communicate to others, and it is this thought that makes me write so often.” Serious dangers again threatened his beloved Congregation, and its adversaries never ceased to beset the royal courts, but the saint while using all the precautions prudence suggested, felt a holy confidence, or rather certainty, that his great work would survive him. “I experience a sweet security,” he wrote to the Fathers, because I know for certain that Mary will help us to weather this storm.” The following paragraph forms the conclusion of the circular letter he addressed to his sons at this time:

“I bless you all one by one. Pray about the persecution we endure, now more intense than ever. I trust in Jesus and Mary, who will not abandon us. Pray daily for me that I may have a happy death. For my part, I do nothing but pray for you, you know well that I love you far more than I ever loved my own relations. May you be blessed, and blessed also be all the labors you perform, both in the houses and on the missions.”

Meanwhile the holy Pope Pius VI testified in every possible manner the affection he felt for the veteran missionary. “One cannot do enough for Monsignor Liguori,” said his holiness. Indeed Pius VI had so high an opinion of Alphonsus that he sought occasions of doing him favors, and loved to exhibit the esteem and veneration which his virtues inspired.

The perpetual and ever-increasing persecutions the Congregation had to endure, disheartened some of the weaker brethren, and notably affected religious discipline. The fear of being dispersed any day by the secular power, made some even think of leaving, without waiting to be turned but. All this pained the holy Founder intensely. He endeavored to remedy all deficiencies by laboring to restore perfect regularity and primitive fervor. “Persecutions,” said he, “are to the work of God what frosts are to plants in winter; far from being hurtful, they make them take deeper root, and become more fruitful. It is chiefly worms that injure plants. The worms we should fear are voluntary faults; let us root out these and God will infallibly protect us. . . . One violation of rule gives me more pain than a hundred persecutions. Let us kiss the very walls of our cells, and the more we are persecuted the more closely let us be united to Jesus Christ.”

Every Saturday, however weak or ill he might be, he never failed to drag himself to the chapel to assist at the chapter of faults, and to animate his dear religious to perfection. “What are we doing in the Congregation,” he cried out one day, “unless we become saints? This is the end our dear Lord had in view in calling us from the world. Had He not willed our sanctification He would have left us in the midst of its dangers.” He inculcated *zeal for souls* as the great end of the institute. As he had made a vow to preach every Saturday on the glories of Mary, he would ascend the pulpit, aided by a lay-brother and his servant, and preach as if he were quite well; but the people, on seeing, his emaciated countenance and broken frame, would weep tears of compassion. His burning words, spoken from the abundance of a heart on fire with divine love, excited the faithful to love Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and Mary, His ever blessed Mother. Priests and lay-men, nobles and plebeians, crowded his poor room that they might profit by his advice. The confessors of the royal family, and the ministers of the kingdom, sought to be enlightened on their duties by the words of wisdom which dropped from his lips; and many ladies of the highest rank learned from him to be docile children of the Holy Church, without neglecting an iota of the onerous obligations of their state in life.

A zealous congregation of priests at Nocera admired the saint so much, that they wished to have him among them as often as possible, to renew their fervor, through his touching exhortations. One day, as he was conversing with them on holy purity, he used the following remarkable words: “Old as I am, even in coming here, I must come with downcast eyes, to prevent temptations against this delicate virtue. Some people use no control over their eyes, and then wonder that they are tempted.” He visited the nuns of the city from time to time, to gratify their pious eagerness to learn from his lips the love of Jesus and Mary. His mere presence effected in the asylum, called the *Carminello,* what several confessors had vainly attempted, the reconciliation of two of its members who had lived in a state of scandalous enmity. Upon seeing him one of them humbled herself, and cast herself on her knees before her enemy, and they mutually asked pardon and embraced each other in charity. The superior of this establishment one day begged him to remember her in his prayers, that she might obtain the cure of a cancer in her left breast, which the doctors declared incurable. He encouraged her to bear it patiently: “Even should it reduce you to the last extremity,” said he, “do not distress yourself; place yourself in the hands of God, and embrace your cross; you will thereby please Jesus Christ, and your sufferings will be more easy to bear.” Still the saint’s heart was touched with compassion for the poor invalid, and he could not refrain from exercising the gift by which he had cured and comforted so many. On his return, he sent her a bottle of water with directions to bathe the diseased part, and when she had done so, she was entirely cured, to the great consolation of herself and her sisters.

The suite of apartments devoted to the use of the retired prelate consisted of two little rooms, one of which served as his oratory. There might he be found during the greater part of the day praying, reading, or composing. The crucifix and a few pious pictures, were its only ornaments. The poor were still his friends and favorites, and on them was expended the greater part of the annuities he enjoyed as bishop and doctor.

Chapter LXIV

New work.—Opinion of Bishop Cervone.—Other works.—Letters from Pius VI.—Persecutions.—Prophecy.—Gratuitous counsels.—Tanucci retires from office.—De Leon’s animosity.—His ironical prediction fulfilled.—“Time is a courteous gentleman.”—Honor done to the missionaries.—Letters.—Circular.—Untimely death of two of the saint’s persecutors.—The Baron of Ciorani ceases to afflict God’s servants.—Alphonsus victorious over all his enemies.

THIS year the saint finished his celebrated book on *Divine Providence.* To this work he added a treatise on the love of God and the methods of acquiring it, and another, containing advice to a soul in desolation. This book eloquently proved that neither age nor suffering had abated the zeal of the saint who was one day to be known as the Most Zealous Doctor. When Monsignore Cervone, the royal censor, examined the work, he wrote a critique on it for the king, in which the following passage occurs:

“The writings of the most religious Don Alphonsus di Liguori, late Bishop of St. Agatha, are far above the average of ordinary spiritual writings, being as superior to them as he himself is to our other writers in personal holiness.”

The saint next undertook to refute an eccentric priest of Calabria, who had endeavored to throw discredit on certain approved practices of devotion to our dear Lady, “practices which,” says the devout client of Mary “are most salutary, and have been dear to me from my earliest infancy.” In token of gratitude to Pope Pius, for many favors received from his Holiness, he dedicated to him his work on *Divine Providence,* which he sent him, together with all his later writings, begging him to correct whatever was amiss, and bless whatever might be useful to the faithful. The Pope was much gratified at hearing once more from the venerable bishop, and testified his satisfaction in a brief, of which the following is the tenor:

“We have received with particular pleasure, your works, in which shine forth the admirable zeal for virtue which your piety inspires, no less than your wonderful learning. These are fresh motives to cause an increase of our paternal love for you, founded on your virtues and merits. Be persuaded that all we have hitherto done in your favor is only an earnest of the good will which we shall evince towards you on every occasion, to the utmost of our power.”

Alphonsus, overwhelmed by so much goodness, hastened to offer his most humble thanks to the Holy Father, but Pius VI, who would not permit himself to be outdone in courtesy, responded by a new brief, dated November 16, 1776, from which we make the following extract:

“You could not have bestowed upon us anything more acceptable than your late works, for which we are as grateful as if you had sent us a gift far more valuable in the eyes of the world. We have glanced rapidly over them, and will read them attentively as soon as we are at leisure. To us they are a fresh and conclusive proof of your indefatigable zeal in feeding the flock of Jesus Christ as far as lies in your power. Though you have resigned your bishopric, you have not therefore renounced the solicitude and duties of a bishop. As to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, which you recommend to the protection of the Holy See, be persuaded that there is nothing which we would not cheerfully do for you and for it, because of the eminent piety which animates you and which we delight to honor.”

The Dogmatical Dissertations (1776), and the *Victories of the Martyrs* (1777), were composed by our saint, with several minor works, after his resignation of his bishopric. While he continued to turn to account every moment of his precious time, according to the terms of his vow, the enemies of order and religion persecuted his Congregation with a persevering malevolence which ended only with their lives. These wretches were among the miscreants who had persecuted the society of Jesus, and all but compelled its temporary suppression; already their diseased imagination saw the Church, the real object of their bitter hatred, deprived of the devoted Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, and gloried in its destruction, which, nevertheless, was not to take place.

“We shall now see,” said some, “what this Liguori is, and what kind of disciples he has mustered together.” “The tribe of relaxed casuists and their adherents will be extirpated,” said others. Alphonsus himself acknowledged that, humanly speaking, no redress was to be hoped for. The chief of the commissioners entrusted by Tanucci with the examination of the affair had already declared that the Congregation was useless. “My God!” wrote the saint,” we have been of use for upwards of forty-four years, aiding the souls of so many poor shepherds and villagers in the mountains of Calabria, in the Abruzzi, in La Pouille, and now we have become useless and even hurtful! “The Fathers were anxious that he should go to Naples, but he was unable to undertake the journey. His health was so much impaired at this period that his adversaries proclaimed that if their efforts failed to destroy the Congregation, the death of its Founder would ultimately extinguish it. “They say,” he wrote, “that when I die the Congregation will become extinct, but I affirm that this Congregation is not my work but the work of God, and that He will sustain it after my death as he has hitherto done.” To some of the Fathers he remarked: “Do not be afraid, I shall not die just yet God wills that I shall die a subject, and not chief superior.” Several years previous, the saint made a similar observation, and the event showed that he prophesied.

When people imagined that the society of the Redemptorists was about to be dissolved, many undertook to give the holy Founder, enlightened as he was by the the Eternal Son of Justice, the benefit of their flickering lights. “Make each house independent,” said one; “open seminaries for the education of youth,” quote another; “preach Latin sermons “ was the advice volunteered by a third. But the saint, who knew well that in his regard, the light that was given by officious friends was darkness, declined to be guided by it, confiding in God, who would infallibly preserve the Congregation so long as it remained faithful to its special vocation, as it had heretofore done, to the immense benefit of souls in every grade of life.

An old calumny, the enemies again affirming that they hoarded money in their houses in the Papal States—and a hardly less mischievous one, which was far from being new—that the doctrines of Alphonsus contained laxity, error, malice,—caused Tannucci to withdraw the cause from the royal council and refer it to the Junta of Abuses. Their adversaries had recourse to bribery in order to obtain false testimony against them, and according to all human calculations, the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer was close upon its end. The saint prayed and procured prayers; he wrote to the great and powerful; he interested in behalf of his cause, every influential person at court, with whom he was at all acquainted—no lawful means, natural or supernatural, was left untried, to promote the preservation and well-being of the community. It was considered providential, and an answer to the united prayers of so many fervent servants of God, that, in the midst of these troubles, October, 16, 1776, the prime minister, Marquis Tannucci, retired from office, and was succeeded by the Marquis of Sambuco, a great friend of our saint, and his institute. This event, so favorable to the hopes of the persecuted Congregation, did not in the least disconcert the persecutors.

The report of the procurator, Leon, was at length presented to the king, February 13, 1777. In this the hapless members of the Congregation were styled *rising Jesuits,* than which, in the eyes of the world; a more injurious and opprobrious epithet could not well be devised, even by the implacable enmity of Leon, at that particular epoch. Numerically small as the Congregation then was, its archives show that during the first five months of the year 1778, thirty-five missions were given, eight retreats were conducted for priests, seven for seminaries, and nineteen for convents; besides many triduos and other devotions, by its members. Therefore Alphonsus had some reason for saying: “Redeemed souls ought to be the advocates of our cause;” and by expatiating on the success, that almost invariably crowned their labors, he sought to inspire them with ever increasing zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

The bishops and clergy did not show themselves ungrateful for the wonders of grace which the missionaries had been instrumental in effecting in their respective districts. Numerous petitions reached the king, which bore grateful testimony to the probity and disinterestedness of their lives, their submission to authority, and the good which was invariably effected by their labors; and in consequence it was finally decided, that the cause, after having been examined by the minister, should be sent back to the royal council. Alphonsus, overjoyed at this arrangement, wrote to Father de Paul: “I can do nothing, but thank Jesus and Mary for the many blessings they shower on me in these latter days of my life. . . . Matters have now assumed an altered appearance. Blessed forever be Jesus and Mary. Amen.”

The following curious passage forms a fitting conclusion to the infamous document which Leon had the audacity to lay before his king:

“Let not your majesty imagine that you can arrest the progress of this new institute without using powerful remedies. Other orders have arisen amid contradictions; nor will contradictions suffice to destroy this. They will wait for a more propitious time; and ultimately the controversy of to-day will be numbered among the glories of the institute; and my name, which otherwise deserves obscurity, will be famous in the Life of Don

Alfonso di Liguori, *wherein it will be related that the devil stirred me up against the Congregation, as he always raises up enemies against every good work.*”

Verily, out of his own mouth we may judge this new Caiphas. His candor is admirable when he truly avers that his name deserves to be consigned to oblivion; but who would expect to find him playing the role of prophet, and not proving a false one? Undoubtedly, the name of the procurator has become immortal only as the bitterest among the opponents of the saint, “*stirred up*” to use his own remarkable words, “*by the devil, to destroy the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.*”

In defense of his *Moral Theology,* also attacked by Leon, the saint wrote an able pamphlet, in which he proved himself, despite his advanced age and unceasing infirmities, a master canonist and theologian. While he defended his doctrine and disciples, he was so courteous and gentlemanly towards his enemies, that they were constrained to acknowledge his moderation, and in future they ceased to attack him save through his missionaries.

Though the saint wrote to every influential friend he possessed, he did not wish the cause to be immediately discussed in the council. “Time,” said he, “is a very courteous gentleman; he is of wonderful assistance to the persecuted.” His adversaries also would willingly temporize, but they feared that delay would be dangerous to their cause. It was, nevertheless, deferred till August, 1779, when the Marquis of Marco wrote to the saint as follows:

“I stated to the king the representations of your lordship touching the accusations so injurious to the Congregation you direct. His majesty has commanded me to reply that, as the Catholic king, his august father permitted the missionaries, of whom your lordship is the head, to give missions, and to reside in the houses of Ciorani, Nocera, Caposele and Illiceto; and prescribed the conditions under which this great undertaking was to be maintained, his majesty also consents to there being a superior in each of the above named houses, to watch over internal order, and see that the other offices be properly distributed; and as it was the intention of the Catholic king[17169] that this salutary work should never cease to exist, his majesty also approves of young men being received, and taught such things as are needful to enable them to supply the places of those who may become incapacitated through advanced age or any other cause."

In proportion to our saint's gratification on learning the contents of this letter, was the chagrin of Leon: "If the Grand Duke of Tuscany had come here in person," said he, "he would not have obtained from the court the favors which this handful of upstarts have got."

Nor did the king's favor stop here. The Pope having granted leave on Nov. 21, 1777, to have a jubilee celebrated in the kingdom of Naples, the king selected the Redempiorist Fathers to announce it to the people, and, about a year later, the Marquis of Tambuco wrote to the holy Founder:

"In consideration of the constant labors of the missionaries of the Most Holy Redeemer, which tend to instruct the people and lead them to true piety, and of the solicitude with which they disseminate those good principles which are calculated to form pious Christians and loyal subjects, his majesty has determined to make use of your Congregation to publish a jubilee, the sole object of which is the salvation of the faithful and the good of the state. Therefore the king has commanded me to inform your lordship that, in return for the happy success which will bless your labors in this undertaking, he will not fail to give you proofs of his royal gratitude."

Many circumstances rendered this mark of the royal confidence invaluable to the Congregation. Our saint seconding the zeal of the pious sovereign, addressed to his sons, on the 8th of November, a short circular in which he sets forth the excellence of the missions, and exhorts them to further, by every possible means, this great work for the glory of God and the good of souls, reminding them that what the king counseled and commanded was nothing more than the accomplishment of the end of their institute. Full of gratitude for the blessings which Providence continued to bestow his first thought was to thank Him for them. He wrote to all the houses, directing that every evening the following prayers should be recited in common three times: "What have I in heaven, and besides Thee what do I desire on earth? Thou art the God of my heart and my portion forever. My Jesus, I devote myself entirely to Thee, I wish for nothing but Thee," adding each time a Pater, Ave, and Gloria Patri. He incessantly inculcated that prayer is all-powerful with God, and that He is to be perpetually thanked for his benefits.

The honorable distinction conferred by the king on the Congregation was a real pain to its enemies, especially the procurator. “Strange fancy!” he exclaimed; “it would seem as if scandal is to be made lawful, though it should ruin Church and State.” The decree by which his majesty sanctioned the mode of government established among the missionaries tried his patience still more severely; but had he been able to draw aside for a moment the dark veil of futurity, he would have seen how little he need be concerned about sublunary things. He was prematurely cited before Him who will judge with justice, dying as he came out of a bath, without having time to receive the last sacraments. His companion, the commissioner, quickly followed him: this unprincipled official was found dead in his bed a little later. One by one the other supporters of the Baron of Ciorani disappeared, and all in a tragic manner, so that, recognizing the hand of God in these unlooked-for occurrences, the stubborn noble no longer had the heart to persecute God’s servants. Thus it was that sooner or later, God rendered his servant victorious over his enemies, prolonged his life, blessed him on earth, and delivered him not to their impious will.

Chapter LXV

The saint’s zeal for the houses outside the kingdom.—He insists upon each religious having a cell to himself.—Letter.—Favors granted by Pius VI.—The saint’s solicitude for the health of his sons.—His great love for them.—His endeavors to promote perfect charity.—He wished superiors to show great gentleness towards them.—His work on *Fidelity of Subjects to their King.*—Extract.—His zeal for the great.—He destroys letters received from sovereigns.—He stirs up the zeal of his literary friends.—Correspondence with Abbé Nonnote.—Voltaire.—Conversion of Metastasio.—

MEANWHILE Alphonsus considering the continual dangers and persecutions to which his Congregation was exposed in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, left nothing undone to consolidate his establishments in the States of the Church, regarding them as a secure refuge in the event of a temporary suppression in the kingdom. “The house of Frosinone,” he wrote to Father de Paul, July 7, 1772, interests me more than that of Girgenti, because it is independent of the kingdom. I attach the greatest importance to maintaining that foundation, for which we are indebted to the Pope. . . . If it be God’s pleasure, I should like to live until I can succeed, through my pension, in finishing the building, now commenced. . . . . I hope to receive some money from St. Agatha soon, and be sure I will send you as much as I can.”

The saint was very particular in seeing that the subjects had each his own room, and always planned his convents so as to make that luxury universal, instead of permitting the members of his institute to sleep in dormitories. Without a cell of his own,” he wrote, “a religious is a most miserable creature; he can have no privacy, spiritually or temporally.” His opinion on this point has had considerable influence, and has caused, and will yet cause, many a recluse to bless his name.

The poverty of the houses in the States was extreme. The saint’s letters at this period show that he not only grieved over it, but sent his dear sons almost all the money that came into his hands,—his pension, his allowances,—in short all that he could claim, beg or borrow. He desired to be informed of everything that occurred in these distant foundations, and so great was his solicitude for their welfare, that it pained him to be left in ignorance of the smallest matter that involved their interest. “I have never dispensed you,” he wrote to Father de Paul, “from communicating to me what you do. Thank God, I am not dead yet, nor have I lost my senses. I have been a lawyer and a bishop, and have had to transact such business frequently. I am still superior general, what reason can there be then for not informing me? In charity, tell me what is done. I have given a thousand opinions as bishop and as advocate, but you do everything of your own accord and look on me as quite useless. . . . Perhaps no house has caused me more trouble than Frosinone. God be praised!” He knew little how much it was yet to give him. The solicitude of the saint extended to everything, especially the missions. “I wish” he wrote, “that missions, should be conducted with all possible prudence and edification, and in an apostolic spirit.” To increase the good produced by them, he entreated Pope Pius VI to communicate to the Congregation the graces, privileges and indulgences lately granted to the Passionist Fathers,[17170] a favor which His Holiness readily granted. He did not wish his missionaries to undertake Lenten sermons, panegyrics, or any species of oratory which might attract the public attention from the matter to the manner, and excite admiration without changing the heart. He was displeased when Fathers accepted engagements of this nature, and wrote very decidedly on the subject to Father de Paul. He continually urged upon all the rectors of the States, the necessity of keeping and enforcing the rules. “You know,” he wrote,” I keep up those houses in the Romagna, that the rule may be rigorously observed. Manage so that the Fathers can make the accustomed retreat, or, if they are ill, at least part of it.” He was ever scrupulously careful of the health of his sons: “You tell me,” he wrote to Father de Paul, that the house might very well be inhabited, but the doctor thinks it should not be used before October, and I will not suffer remorse for causing the death of any of my brethren.” The following letter addressed to the same Father, when made superior of Frosinone, shows how ardently he desired that those who govern in the Congregation should rather be Fathers than superiors:

“I entreat your Reverence to be humble towards your companions, and affable towards all, especially in mission times, and to treat your brethren with all possible consideration, remembering that they are far from their country and their family, and therefore have the right to claim that charity should be redoubled in their behalf.”

He was accustomed to say that, when health is lost, a subject can no longer be of use to himself or his neighbor, and he was, as his letters show, extremely particular on this point. But though nothing escaped his affectionate vigilance, he always dwelt most emphatically on the importance of preserving perfect union and charity. “If we had the riches of Crœsus,” said he, “all would be useless without charity. When the bond of love is wanting, everything is wanting. He was especially displeased if the superiors manifested the slightest want of charity with regard to their subjects, or assumed imperious airs when treating with them. His own exceeding gentleness and considerateness made him inexpressibly dear to such of his subjects as had personal intercourse with him.

About this time he composed a most useful and opportune work entitled, *The Fidelity of Subjects towards God is a sure pledge of their Fidelity towards their King*. “Monarchs will never have peace,” said he, “if they do not aim at the prevention of immorality. Where religion does not reign, perfidy is rife; admit sin, and all is in danger; but if kings only make their subjects faithful towards God, they will be equally faithful towards them.” Though the saint’s zeal was chiefly for the destitute and abandoned, he at all periods of his career endeavored to lead to sanctity, nobles, magistrates and persons in power, hoping, through them, to influence the masses, and hence we find him ready to repair to court whenever he was summoned thither for the spiritual direction of any member of the royal family. In this way he was able to effect much good for his diocese, and for many who sought his mediation, even in temporal matters. When he wrote the above work he said to one of the fathers, in a transport of holy zeal: “Have as many missions as you please, but if I gain one sovereign, I shall regard the conquest as worth more than a thousand missions; for the good a monarch can effect who is touched by the grace of God, could not be effected by a thousand missions.” He transmitted copies of this work through Cardinal Castelli to all the foreign ambassadors, and directly to the august empress, Maria Teresa, to the electoral princes of Cologne and Tréves, and to the Prince-bishops of the German Empire; also to Prince Charles, governor of the Netherlands, the kings of Spain and Portugal, the grand Duke of Tuscany, the Duke of Parma, and all the other Catholic sovereigns. These august personages courteously acknowledged his gift by autograph letters expressive of admiration for his vast and wonderful erudition, and reverence for, his undoubted sanctity, but with his characteristic humility, he destroyed every one of these flattering epistles. The book was immediately translated into French. “This work,” says the translator, “is the voice of a soul which thirsts only for the glory of religion, the spread of morality, and the welfare of rulers and their subjects, and which has no ambition but to make men virtuous and happy.”

When age and infirmity no longer left our Most Zealous Doctor, able to wield his most prolific pen in the cause which was dearer to him than life, he encouraged his literary friends in Naples and elsewhere, to refute the errors of the infidel writers of the day, especially Rousseau and Voltaire, over whose libertinism he often wept bitterly. The writings of these renegades were already handed about in Naples, and even formed one of the pastimes of several Neapolitan ladies, to the great detriment of religion and morality. Happening to see a French work by the Abbé Nonnote, in which the errors of these murderers of morality were ably combated, he was filled with joy, and thanked God for having raised up a man who braved the spirit of the world and devoted himself courageously to the cause of God. In an elegantly-worded letter, he congratulated the zealous abbé on his useful achievement, and encouraged him to persevere in directing his able pen against the impious.

This letter from the most distinguished prelate of the age, afforded inexpressible pleasure to the worthy priest, as he testifies in a lengthy epistle which contains the following passages:

“I am accustomed to appreciate nothing except in conformity to the spirit of God; and it is an unspeakable pleasure to me to meet with men who entertain similar sentiments. Your letter informs me, that there is at least one such man in the kingdom of Naples—one who appreciates only the things of God, and who being in himself greater than great dignities could make him, forces one to doubt which should be the more admired, your genius or your virtue. . . . All who have read your excellent and justly celebrated work on *Moral Theology,* congratulate me on having received such a flattering letter from so eminent a prelate, and I congratulate myself for having deserved the approbation of so distinguished a man.”

The correspondence between the bishop and the abbé did not cease with the occasion that called it forth. In a subsequent letter, Nonnote gives a gloomy picture of the state of religion in his native country, and informs his illustrious friend that, for over twenty years, he has been fighting against the errors of the sophists, and far from getting help from any one, he was loaded with invectives by the impious. “O God,” exclaimed the saint on reading this sad letter, “is there no one else at Paris, which abounds with Christian orators, to oppose this monster Voltaire?” The abbé had informed him, that he could not publish at Paris a book he had written in defense of religion, because of the great fear inspired by this sarcastic man. “Miserable beings that we are,” proceeds the saint; “this is the authority of the Church at Paris! She cannot face an infidel and reprove his audacity! A book in defense of religion, must be transported to Geneva for publication! Poor France, I pity thee and the many innocent people who will be involved in thy ruin! “Remarkable words! Or rather prophetic words, when we consider that they were uttered only ten years before the revolution which deluged the county with innocent blood.

A rumor of the conversion of Voltaire was a gleam of consolation to the holy prelate, and he wrote to the prodigal to congratulate him on his return to grace, and the great good his conversion would effect. To encourage him to a public retraction of the ruinous errors he had spent his base and wretched life in promulgating, the saint addressed him an affectionate and most eloquent letter, felicitating him on his supposed conversion, and encouraging him to perform the little that lay in his power to undo the mischief he had already done, and even to attack Jean Jacques Rousseau, a name almost as vile as his own. But the saint had the affliction to learn that it was merely a hypocritical simulation of conversion in an impious man, who had once corresponded with the great Benedict XIV, that now for the hundreth time or more, deceived the people. “Alas!” cried the saint, “such conversions are not common; they are effects of the divine mercy, but not in its ordinary degrees. God grants blessings of this kind only to those whose errors have not arisen from a bad intention, like St. Paul. But in Voltaire all has been excessively bad.” Already this wretch was almost blind, and the saint had encouraged him to dictate some refutation of his blasphemies, if he could not write. But God did not will his cause to be aided by the vile pen of Arouet de Voltaire.

On the thirtieth of May this year (1778) the infamous philosopher of Ferney passed from his miserable death-bed to eternity, vainly coveting the favors conferred on the dying, through the ministry of that blessed Mother-Church which he had spent his life in reviling. Suicide rid the earth of his colleague Rousseau a little later. “Thanks be to God,” exclaimed our saint, “for having in so short a time delivered the Church from two of her greatest enemies.”

Our saint had, however, one consolation of this nature in the thorough conversion of the celebrated Metastasio, for whom he had always entertained esteem and admiration. This elegant poet and complete master of the Italian language; entirely gained the heart of his most zealous contemporary by the sorrow he eloquently expressed for having written the beautiful but dangerous poetry which had gained him a European reputation. “May I be permitted to manifest,” wrote the saint,[17171] (*Spiritual Reflections*), “the great joy that filled my heart on learning that the celebrated Peter Metastasio, whose poetry received so much praise throughout the continent—poetry which is all the more dangerous because of its exceeding beauty—is going to protest his profound repentance, and his wish, if possible, to withdraw his profane poems from the hands of the public at any expense, even that of his blood. . . . I have learned too, that he leads a retired life, quite devoted to prayer and spiritual exercises. This has given me unspeakable consolation, because this public declaration and the great and good example he gives, will cause many misguided young people to think seriously, who have tried to gain applause by amorous poems written in imitation of his. It is certain that Metastasio gains more praise by this, than if he had published a thousand brilliant poems . . . Therefore while I detest the vanity which made him glory in being the author of such compositions, I cannot now cease to praise him, and were it possible I would gladly kiss his feet, seeing that he has become the censor of his own works, and desires to stop their circulation, even though it should cost his life, as he declares.”

Alphonsus abhorred all amorous poetry, however great the genius it displayed, to such an extent as to inspire a natural aversion for its authors. On the contrary, his delight in sacred poetry was so great, that when any well written poems came under his observation, he became the most ardent panegyrist of their authors. He was particularly pleased with the style of Xavier Maffei who translated the Psalms into elegant Italian verse. “If all poets,” said he, “consecrated their talents in this way to the giver of all good, we should soon see lascivious poetry banished from the lips of youth.” Maffei, grateful for the praises lavished on him by Alphonsus,—who, besides being a saint, was universally regarded as the most elegant scholar of the day, and had early distinguished himself in poetry and music,—publicly thanked him in the preface to his next work, and, at the same time, forwarded him a private letter, expressive of his intense gratification at having won the approbation of the most distinguished *savant,* and the holiest man in Naples. Alphonsus wishing to encourage his brother-poet to pursue his literary labors, wrote to him in a highly appreciative strain, Nov. 30, 1774:

“Your dear letter overwhelmed me with delight. When I made my little translation of the Psalms, I kept your excellent work constantly before my eyes. You have written for the learned and the ignorant, and your charming poetry is as instructive as it is enchanting. It has been applauded by literary men throughout Italy, and, I may say throughout Europe; while my prose is only for the ignorant, and will scarcely please a small number of the devout. I am pleased at the renown you gain as a lawyer, but what joy it will give me if you continue to use your great talents and science for the advantage of the Church. But, even in your present position, you can do a great deal for religion, since in our days every one undertakes to discuss theology and the Holy Scripture, and puts forth whatever propositions suit his fancy.”

Chapter LXVI

The greatest evils done the Congregation.—Efforts of the founder.—“Edify or go.”—Family matters.—Little Joseph.—Interesting letter.—Death of Count Hercules Liguori.—Resignation of the saint.—Cure of Don Gavotti.—The Lady Teresa Liguori.—Letter.—The lady Antonia Liguori.—His anxiety about his niece’s vocation.—His usual advice to noble spinsters.—Teresa becomes a nun.—Her visit to her uncle.—Her profession.—The young Count Joseph.

THE greatest evil done the Congregation by its enemies, was the interior derangement and relaxation that resulted from the perpetual uneasiness in which the members were kept, as to whether it would not ultimately be entirely destroyed.

Some took advantage of these troubles to insist on having their own way; others even pretended to brave the rule and yet wear the habit, and a few went to the lengths of supplying the adversaries of the institute with weapons against it. But these last, God did not suffer to remain long in his house.

After the defeat of the enemies of the Congregation, the holy Founder, who now enjoyed the good graces of the sovereign, endeavored to remedy the injuries which regular observance had sustained. “Edify or go,” was the alternative he proposed to such as were remiss. “I require,” he wrote to the local rectors, “that each be compelled to the most exact observance of rule. All have embraced it of their own free choice, and besides, we do not keep any one by force. If any repent of having come amongst us, let them settle the question with God; I am ready to dispense them; better be few but good; those who are not edifying are always a burden, injurious to themselves and to others. “

While the saint was thus endeavoring to reestablish perfect discipline, he heard of an event in his own family that caused him great pain. His nephews, Joseph and Alfonsino were still at the College of Nobles, when Count Hercules entered into a matrimonial negotiation for the elder, then a boy of thirteen. “Ah” exclaimed the saint on learning this, “my little Joseph is going to lose the grace of God.” Father Villani having observed that the affair would remain a secret, between Don Hercules and the father of the intended bride, he remarked: “It suffices that it be known to one servant. It is by valets and coachmen that the children of the nobles are led astray. The domestics will begin by saying: ‘good news, little Joseph! Your papa has found you a pretty wife.’ This is accompanied by other light words and unseemly gestures; and thus young hearts are corrupted.” He wrote a most severe letter to Don Hercules, who was prompt enough in excusing this premature engagement. But he could not satisfy the saint, who would allow of no necessity for seeking a bride for a boy of thirteen; and indeed Count Hercules had no excuse to allege for his indecent haste, save that of his own advanced age.

That our saint took great interest in the education of his nephews may be gathered from the following letter, which he wrote them, April 4, 1780:

MY VERY DEAR NEPHEWS,

“I would gladly have you with me in order to bestow upon you my last benediction and my last advice; for it is by a miracle of his goodness, that God prolongs my life to give me leisure to weep over my sins. I bless him though he does not give me the consolation of seeing you; I do not deserve it. From the depths of my heart I bless you, and I pray God to send you his benediction from the heights of heaven, to fill your young hearts with his fear and his love, and thereby to conduct you to a happy eternity, where I will await you if he shows me mercy. Always fear God as your sovereign master, but love him as your tender father. Every day you call him by that sweet name of *father*, when you say OUR FATHER in the Lord’s prayer. Since he is your Father, love him tenderly. He is a father, good, sweet, loving, beneficent and merciful—these titles should inspire you to love him with a cordial, tender, and grateful affection. Happy, if from your infancy you love him sincerely! The yoke of the Lord would then never be burdensome to you. You would find it as sweet as his holy law is amiable.

“Learn to correct all that is disorderly in you, and to triumph over the enemies of your soul. Habit will make virtue easy; you will find sweetness in what is very difficult to those who have not learned to serve the Lord betimes.

“Love God, my children; I call you my children because I love you as a father, and because I wish to inspire a holy love in your hearts. O my dear sons! love the Lord God and his son, Jesus Christ; love him much; preserve this love jealously in your hearts, fearing to lose it. It is a great loss to lose God, his grace, and his friendship. Yes, it is a frightful calamity to incur his indignation, and expose one'self to his vengeance.

"I recommend you to be humble: he who is humble avoids danger; and if temptation comes in spite of him, he has recourse to God with confidence, and thus preserves divine love. The proud easily fall into disgrace with God. Without humility you would never do good, your virtue would be neither sincere nor solid, and you would easily lose it. God resists the proud, and shows mercy to the humble; he looks on the humble with an eye of goodness, they are his friends. If you reflect well on yourselves, you will not be proud, because you can always find enough to humble you. Your birth is a gift of God to which you have not contributed. You are in a college which is directed by professors, full of zeal and science, whose nobility of blood is enhanced by their rare virtues; your education is conducted by prudent, wise and regular men; this is another benefit from the Lord.

"You are now, I trust, in the grace of God; this also is an effect of his goodness. Whatever is good in you is a gift of God, for which you are indebted to his tenderness, and should use only for his glory. If you look on your failings,—and such things are truly and properly yours—you will undoubtedly find matter enough to keep you humble. If you be humble, you will always obey, with sentiments of gratitude and love, your superiors, who take such pains to instruct you. Whether they treat you mildly, or correct you, they always give proofs of their affection. It is true that their corrections may pain you, but, nevertheless, they are effects of the love these good religious bear you. Obey them as your father, for it is your father who has confided you to their care; you should then obey, love, and respect them as your own father. I hope you will show these dispositions to please God, your father and myself.

"I learned with disappointment, that you had but little application to study. O my children, how you would weep could you see the consequences of this! Ignorance and idleness are the two great sources of sin. Study, then, attentively, diligently, and ardently, to know God, his benefits, his rewards; to be able to contemplate and love him much. An ignorant man has little knowledge of God, of the duties he imposes, and hence, he leads an evil life. Study well then, and before I die let me have the satisfaction of seeing that my advice has not been fruitless. I approach the term of my career, and know not if you shall ever see me more; let my last words then, be engraven on your young hearts, and produce in you the effects desired. Read this long letter, get someone to explain whatever you do not understand in it, and imprint my counsels on your memory that you may put them in practice."

"Have a great love for God, study to know and love this amiable master, and to love him always more and more preserve in your hearts this holy love with humility, obey your superiors and your fathers with docility and affection. Observe exactly the rules of the college, in order to please God. Be devout to the Blessed Virgin; I leave you under her protection, and I recommend you to her with affectionate tenderness. I bless you in Jesus Christ, that you may be devoted to him as I desire and hope, in time and in eternity."

Five months after the young scions of the illustrious house of Liguori received the above beautiful letter, their aged father, Count Hercules, who had always enjoyed the most robust health, was suddenly snatched away by a violent illness. God had given our saint a presentiment of this, some three months previous to its occurrence; "Hercules will cause me sorrow this year," said he to Father Costanzo; and when this afflicting news arrived, the Father asked: "Is not this the sorrow which you said Don Hercules would cause you?" But the saint replied only by his silence. On learning that his brother was no more, he bowed his hoary head in submission to the divine will, and exclaimed: "Blessed be God!" He was much consoled on learning that the deceased had given the tutorship of his children to the lawyer Peter Gavotti, but subject to his own authority, and that of Don Nicholas Vespoli, a relation of the family. In reply to a letter written by the saint, urging the tutor to attend to the religious education, not less than the temporal interests, of his wards, Gavotti wrote: "I am quite at your service, and will devote myself as much as possible to the interests of these children, but your lordship must beseech God to deliver me from headache, which continually torments me." "Take care of these little children," replied Alphonsus "and be sure that God will relieve you." Gavotti has attested that when he received this letter, he was instantly cured and never after suffered from headache.

Our saint took particular interest in his niece, Donna Teresa, who was now about sixteen, and still a boarder in the Convent of St. Marcellinus at Naples. This young lady was a precious pearl in the eyes of her aged uncle, who eagerly desired to see her consecrated to God. “Being now eighty-five years old,” he wrote to her, “I feel that I am no longer good for much, yet whenever you need anything let me know, and I will see that nothing is wanting to you. Meanwhile, recommend me to Jesus Christ. If anyone advise you to leave the convent and throw yourself over a precipice, (marry), listen to no such counsel, for you would repent of it the second day. Think only of saving your soul; it is the most important of all affairs. Ask advice of your confessor, and of some exemplary religious. I recommend you to Jesus Christ, that He may inspire you to take the true road to heaven. Pray to our Lady for me, because the hour of my death is near.”

Writing to his cousin, Antonia Liguori, a nun, he says: “Salute Teresa, my niece, on my part; tell her not to be duped by the world which would persuade her to renounce Jesus Christ. This would be a sure way to create for herself a miserable life, and a still more miserable death. Nowadays, ladies in the world are hardly saved. See that she does not neglect prayer and communion, and that she reads pious books. I am afraid that some servant of the monastery puts the world in her head. I am very grateful to you for the care you take of this dear child. I know she wishes to become a religious, but I fear lest she should change these pious sentiments for worldly views.”

As the young lady ceased for a while to open her mind to her saintly uncle on this subject, he wrote to her guardian: “I will not dissemble the pain I feel regarding my niece, Mary Teresa, who had once a great desire to enter religion, but now no longer speaks of it. I fear some marriage may be arranged for her, and this would endanger her eternal salvation. Married women are saved only with great difficulty, because the greater portion of them live in sin, in consequence of the dangers to which they are exposed. I have prayed her confessor to nourish her religious vocation. I ask the same favor of you, for, if she marries in this corrupt age, I shall look upon her as lost.”

He repeats the same sentiment in a letter dated April 23, 1781, to the Lady, Mary Teresa, herself:

“Yes, my dear niece, I shall continue to pray for your vocation, since you desire it. A little while ago, before your father’s death, you longed to take Jesus Christ for your spouse; you then felt the greatest distaste for the world.

“I beseech Him to confirm you in these sentiments, for if you change them, it will be difficult for you to persevere in the grace of God. What I say to you, I have already said to all the noble young ladies who have come hither to consult me, showing them that if they settled in the world, it would not be easy for them to save their souls. So corrupt is the world of to-day, that, so far as I have been able to observe, ladies who mingle in society ordinarily lose the grace of God. Think not, then, of forsaking Jesus Christ for the world; that would be to lose Him and your soul by your own act. All my relations who died during my lifetime, have, God be thanked, died happily; and I comfort myself with the hope of rejoining them in paradise. I would have you also with me there.”

God, who grants the desires of His saints, soon called the young Teresa to His immediate service. When only seventeen, she declared, with a spirit worthy of her cousin and namesake, Teresina, whose example had quickened the fervor even of a saint, that she would become a nun, and she insisted on following out her vocation immediately. Her guardian refused consent on the plea that, her father had declared, that, if she manifested this inclination, she must not put it in execution until she should have completed her twenty-first year. However, as the young lady incessantly importuned him, and easily won her uncle to her side, by convincing him that her attraction to the religious state was not a passing fancy but a real vocation, she speedily gained her point.

It is not allowable in Italy for a young lady to pass from the schoolroom to the novitiate; every boarder desirous of becoming a religious, must return to the world for a short time, that her vocation may be tested. But our saint would not allow his niece to return to her relations who seemed to have grown so worldly since the death of Don Hercules, that he feared she would lose the love of God, and her vocation among them. He therefore confided her to his penitent, the duchess of Bovino, who joyfully welcomed her. When she left the monastery (Feb. 16, 1781,) the saint wrote to her to recommend, as was his wont, divine love, holy modesty and detachment from earthly things. “Above all,” he continues, “avoid going to public festivities. The duchess thinks as I do in this matter; consult her, and you will see how far she is from wishing to expose your soul to perils of this nature.” The young lady never gave her protectress the least anxiety on this point; her sole desire was to return as soon as possible to the monastery of her choice, and the only favor she asked was, to be permitted to visit, her uncle at Nocera, and receive the blessing of a saint.

The duchess and her daughter accompanied Dona Teresa to Nocera, where the party remained three days. The aged saint evinced the greatest delight at seeing his dear niece, whose birth he had foretold, and whose name he had chosen, perhaps in memory of that young and lovely Teresina, who had set him the example of counting all things as loss for the love of the Lord Jesus, and who in a short time had fulfilled a long space.

For ten months, Teresa had been inconvenienced by a wound in her leg. The saint was greatly distressed on hearing it; and when she knelt to ask a parting benediction. “I bless you,” said he,”as your uncle and as a bishop.” When the wound was unbandaged that evening, it was found perfectly healed, as not only the duchess, but the surgeon and other members of her household testified. His parting gifts to this much cherished niece were copies of *Preparation for Death,* and his *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament,* with a relic, in a little box of no value.

The holy bishop desired that the ceremonies attendant on Dona Teresa’s entrance into the convent and profession, should be conducted with as little pomp and magnificence as possible. But as her other guardians held different views, all was arranged with reference to the birth and fortune of the only daughter of the illustrious Count Hercules di Liguori. The cream of the Neapolitan nobility deemed it an honor to be invited to these ceremonies. The ardent novice besought her holy uncle to come to her profession, but he was unable to gratify her: “Your last letter,” he wrote, “has given me such comfort that I have not been able to restrain my tears. Sad indeed I am, to be unable to comply with your wishes. If God had granted me the favor of being present at your sacrifice, I should certainly have done nothing during the ceremony but weep tears of joy; but as He has been pleased to deprive me of this consolation, I shall not cease to recommend you to Jesus Christ that He may inflame you with His holy love, and that you may one day contemplate Him face to face in paradise. I beseech you to recommend me often to Jesus crucified, that He may give me the grace of a happy death, for my sins inspire me with great fear regarding my eternal salvation. I bless you; you are always before me in my memento. Every day in my communion I ask Jesus Christ to give you grace to be entirely His.”

It being customary then as now for the relations and friends of ladies about to make the vows, to present them with some token of remembrance and congratulation, the saint forwarded to his niece a picture of the Blessed Virgin “to remind her to thank Our Lady, and implore her protection.” He had always manifested a warm affection for this niece, and his joy was complete when he saw her consecrate herself to God in religion.

As to his nephew Joseph: when this young nobleman showed an inclination to enter the married state, the saint referred the matter entirely to the guardians, desiring them, not to constrain him in any way, and to select for him a wife of exemplary life and suitable birth. When the choice was fixed, Don Joseph paid his uncle this mark of respect, that he went to Nocera to bring the news himself. “I bless you, and pray God to bless you,” said the aged prelate, and then haying added some good advice, he sent the youth away consoled and satisfied.

It was about this time that Alphonsus revised for the last time his Moral Theology, already well known in every civilized country. Seven editions of this most valuable work were published at Naples and Venice during his own lifetime. Most of his other works had been reproduced in almost every language of Christendom, and had in all cases been productive of untold good. Years, infirmities and sorrows now began to proclaim more loudly than ever that his sun was about to set on earth: and Father Villani, fearful that the labors of the holy doctor might shorten the precious days during which his sons could still gaze on the venerable beauty of his emaciated countenance, and learn from his beloved lips the secrets of a love stronger than death, commanded him to lay aside his eloquent pen, and rest from his labors. But the “Most Zealous Doctor,” who did not desire to know any rest on earth, prevailed on his director to allow him to write still, by way of relaxation; a request that could not easily be refused. Several of his smaller works belong to this epoch. Father Tannoia having one day remarked that he had written many beautiful things with the intention of honoring the saints, but nothing in particular for the souls in purgatory, he composed his charming little *Novena* for these holy souls, and to please and gratify his dear disciple.

In short, Alphonsus did not forget any class of persons; all souls were dear to him as ransomed by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ; and, in the decrepitude of old age, he labored for them with all the ardor of youth, or rather more ardently than ever. He would have wished to annihilate sin in a sinful world, and change sinners into saints, for the glory of his divine Master. He can no longer go on missions as in days gone by, but he will not stand idle in his Lord’s vineyard—his prayers, his tears, his sufferings, his writings—he is prodigal of all these, *for a necessity lieth upon him to preach the gospel.* And reverently be it added: When they saw these things, then did the people remember the words of the Prophet: *The zeal of Thy house hath devoured me.*

Chapter LXVII

The severest trials of Alphonsus.—The protection afforded the Church by the mighty ones of earth.—Treachery.—The saint refuses to be convinced.—Letters.—Father Villani conceals from Alphonsus the treachery of Majone.—How the saint suffered from his friends.—Terrible scene.—Profound dejection of the holy Founder.—Letter.—Important document.—Letter to Majone.—Astonishing meekness of the saint.—Obstinacy of Majone.—Unavailing efforts of the saint to restore concord.—Indignation of his subjects.—Alphonsus had foreseen all.

THE most terrible trials of our saint were yet to come. Twice had he foretold that he would die a subject, but how this was to be brought about, it is probable that the divine mercy, veiled even from his prophetic eye. The preceding pages will have shown that his life heretofore was but a tissue of sufferings, hardly illuminated by the feeble rays of consolation which a loving Father doled out sparingly to the son he so severely chastened. But now the time is at hand when his own brethren and sons will disown him; when he will be regarded as a traitor to that cherished child of his brain and heart, and the power of God working by him, his beloved Congregation; yea, when the vicar of Christ himself shall condemn the saint of Unity, the doctor of Infallibility. Then it is that we shall behold Alphonsus di Liguori in all the grandeur of his sublime and heroic virtue. Wronged, outraged and defamed as saint never was before, no complaint issues from the lips of calumniated innocence. “My sins have deserved more than this, Lord, it is good for me that thou hast humbled me!”

The devil, unable to annihilate the Congregation by persecutions from without, endeavored to stir up treasons within, the surest means of destroying a work that had evidently come from God.

As the government of Naples was ostensibly Catholic, it was necessary that each religious establishment, should receive, not only the papal approbation, but also an official sanction from the king and his ministers. History demonstrates that this official protection or approbation from so called Catholic governments, if it were not in all cases such protection as the wolf affords to the lamb or the hawk to the dove, usually consisted in raising all possible, and impossible obstacles to the very existence of good works set on foot by saints and saintly persons, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. And at best, dearly has the Church paid for any "protection" ever given her by the mighty ones of earth.

On the 24th of August, 1779, the royal approbation was graciously bestowed on several points of the rule. This was regarded as a favorable moment to ask a general approbation, which would prevent all troubles on this score for the future. The grand almoner, Monsignor Testa, promised to use his influence for the saint, provided some decrees relating to pecuniary matters were omitted. This being agreed to, Father Majone, one of the consultors, was entrusted with the management of the business. Majone under the pretext that the king might still refuse, and his refusal become known to their enemies, proposed, that the consultors should each take an oath to preserve secrecy in regard to all concerning this affair, which was done. But under cover of this secrecy, Father Majone and the consultor, associated with him, Father Cimino made such arbitrary changes in the rule as to give it altogether a new form.

Notwithstanding the precautions of these unfaithful men, or rather because of these precautions, suspicions were awakened in the minds of the subjects. They protested against all novelties, and assured the holy Founder of their wish to have the rule remain unaltered. The saint, incapable of any species of double dealing himself, could not suspect it in others. Moreover, Father Majone had on several occasions transacted the business of the Congregation at court and elsewhere, to the satisfaction of all concerned, and Alphonsus had made him understand that the points which he was empowered to yield to the king, if necessary, did not properly belong to the rule at all, being only questions as to, revenue upon which probably no rule capable of universal application could be made. "My dear Antonio," wrote the saint to Father Tannoia, "there is no truth in the report that the rules are being changed. Be tranquil, and tranquillize others; the rumors which have disturbed you are entirely false,"

"I have heard,"_ he wrote to Father Corrado, "that some of our subjects fear that new rules will be substituted for the old ones. I know not how such fears can ,be entertained, since all must know how jealous I have always been of maintaining the rule." "You cannot," says he, in another letter to the same Father, "suspect me of duplicity. Now I tell you I will not tolerate the least change in the rules. What more can I say? If you will not believe me, I must bear all in expiation of my sins.” He wrote in a similar strain to the other Fathers who had expressed fears on the subject. Nevertheless as appeals continued to come, the saint wrote to Majone, plainly stating that some innovation in regard to poverty and the community life, was suspected, and that he would never agree to anything of the kind. Majone hastened to reassure him, saying: “As for what you have written to me touching community life, to do away with this regulation would be to destroy the Congregation. I hope that Divine Providence will punish all those who thus spread discord.” With astonishing effrontery, he presented the regulations he had made to Alphonsus, assuring him that all was in conformity with the rule, save the point regarding property, already alluded to. The waning sight of the holy old man rendered him unable to decipher the small, illegible writing of his treacherous disciple, which was, moreover, covered with erasures and interlinings; so he handed the document to Father Villani, desiring him to examine it carefully. With one glance, he saw that the rule had been changed, and testified his surprise to Father Majone, who simply said: “The King does not wish to have vows. Besides, it is not for us to make the laws; we must receive them from the almoner, and if some slight changes must be made in order to obtain the royal approbation, it matters little.”

Father Villani, overawed by the pompous bearing of Majone, who was now in favor with the higher powers, or fearing to embitter too much the few hours of life that still remained to an aged paralytic, deaf, nearly blind, and hardly able to articulate, said that all was well. The saint immediately intoned the canticle of holy Simeon in thanksgiving, and impatiently awaited the arrival of the royal approbation. Meanwhile, Majone returned to Naples well satisfied with the result of his visit to Nocera. The favor of the King and the venerated name of Alphonsus obtained all he desired. The grand almoner and the rest of the council gave a unanimous vote, believing—they too had been deceived—that they were conferring a favor on the Congregation which would console the declining years of its saintly founder.

The crosses that galled the shoulders of our holy bishop from this period to his happy death, came to him chiefly from friends and brethren whom he had tenderly loved, and trusted with his whole heart. Majone had lived with him at St. Agatha as his faithful counsellor. Father de Paul had been called to the Congregation by an extraordinary vocation, and selected by its founder for the great work of establishing it in the Papal States. The grand almoner, Monsignor Testa, who had formerly been his companion and bosom friend, henceforth allied himself with the traitor Majone. By the divine permission, even the Sovereign Pontiff himself encouraged the enemies of the saint—Pius VI. who had given him such tokens of veneration and holy friendship, persuaded, that his great intellectual powers were extinguished in a second childhood, contributed above all the rest to fill up the measure of the woes that embittered his days and broke his heart—Pius VI. who when later on, he heard that Alphonsus Liguori was no more, exclaimed with tears: “Alas, I have persecuted a saint.”

The mutilated rule having reached Nocera, with an official letter from the grand almoner; February 27, 1780, Father Villani did not open the documents, as the saint was extremely ill. But anxiety and consternation spread among the Fathers, they surrounded Villani, and insisted on seeing the rules about to be forced on them. Except Alphonsus, no one in the house slept that night. Before daybreak, he was aroused from his peaceful slumbers by his outraged children, who told him of the alterations made, and demanded that justice should be done them. The holy old man was stupefied with amazement. He looked at the new rules: “It is not so!” he exclaimed, “it cannot be!” Then turning to Father Villani, he said reproachfully; “Don Andrew, I did not expect such deception from you.” Afterwards addressing the community, he said: “I deserve to be dragged at a horse’s tail, for I ought to have read everything myself, as I am superior.” Then looking at the crucifix; he exclaimed: “My Jesus pardon me! I trusted to my confessor, in whom could I have more safely confided?” “You know,” he said to the assembled brethren, “how much it costs me to write even a line,” sobs and tears almost choked his utterance. “I have been deceived,” said he, sadly. He passed the whole morning in a state of absolute dejection. Grief so completely overpowered him that it was with difficulty he was made to taste food, and what he ate was moistened with his tears.

“Ah Lord!” he repeated in doleful accents, “punish not the innocent, rather punish the guilty one who has destroyed thy work.” His grief became so terrible that for several days and nights sleep never once visited his eyelids, and his life was in danger. Not knowing what to do, he was constantly sending now for one subject, now for another, hoping that someone would suggest a means of extricating the community from this extraordinary difficulty. He sent to Illiceto for the Novice-Master, F. Tannoia; then to Naples for Father Corrado. The first words he addressed to some missionaries who returned from Calabria were: “They have changed our rule!”

It was reported, but falsely, thank God, that Father Cajone, Rector of Benevento, approved of these alterations. “I wish, dear Father,” wrote Alphonsus to him, “that you would seriously examine the changes Father Majone has made. Our first rule was examined by Mgr. Falcoia, who has wrought miracles; it was afterwards submitted to Cardinal Spinelli, and finally to Pope Benedict XIV, who gave it his approbation. Now all is changed, and I marvel how anyone can think this change an improvement. It is not the king, it is not his secretary that has done this, it is the work of Father Majone. I believe his intention is good, but it is impossible to recognize the work of God in these alterations. As for me, I have but a little time to live, and all my desire is to die at the feet of Jesus crucified.”

In April 1780, the saint wrote a document of considerable length to the houses of the Papal States, through Father Ficocelli. He details the alterations made, and contrasts the new rule with the old, in a clear, lawyer-like manner, which proves that as yet his intellectual powers had not undergone the slightest deterioration. As founder, theologian, and lawyer, the saint never wrote anything of its kind to surpass this production of his eighty-fifth year.

Majone, seeing that all the Congregation opposed him, put on an appearance of zeal, and feigning to pity Alphonsus, represented him to the grand almoner as sinking under afflictions in the midst of rebellious subjects. Consequently, this official dispatched a letter to the Congregation, which was afterwards discovered to be of Majone’s composition, enjoining the holy Founder and his associates to follow the new regulations in every particular, from March 1, 1780. The style is exceedingly overbearing: “Your lordship,” says this precious document, “as Founder and Superior-General of the Congregation, must inform each member in my name, that this regulation must be immediately enforced, without any alteration or retrenchment whatever, for it is now the only rule, and is binding in all and each of its parts, on all the members of the Congregation, present and future, superiors, priests, students and lay-brothers, without any room for reply or opposition.” It is easy to conceive the universal indignation which this letter excited. Alphonsus, who had to bear the brunt of all the discontent aroused on every side, endeavored to calm the excitement, and reestablish peace, not wishing the death of his treacherous son who had caused all there disorders, but rather that he should be converted, and live and die among his children.

“I write to you, my dear Angelo,” he says, (March 20) “at the feet of Jesus Christ, where I beg you to put yourself, in these days in which Jesus Christ, sacrifices himself for love of us. Let us forget the past. I beseech you to retire to our house at Ciorani, but if you prefer any other house, I leave you free to choose it. Be sure that I will love you as heretofore, and even more; you will find it by experience. You shall continue consultor-general, and have a voice on all subjects important to the Congregation. Placer your reputation in my hands; I shall never cease to defend it with your brethren and with strangers. . . . I bless you and pray Jesus Christ to fill you with His holy love, that you may be all for Him as He desires.”

On the same day, the saint wrote to Father Corrado: “I believe it my duty to use the greatest meekness towards Father Angelo, because such is the will of Jesus Christ, and it is in this manner He inspires me to act. I have besought him for the love of Jesus Christ to trample the past under foot, and to retire to Ciorani or any other house he pleases. Thus I shall continue to act until it please God to restore peace. In employing this means, which is certainly the most agreeable to Our Lord, I hope to obtain all. We must be patient, and recommend ourselves to Jesus Christ, and to Mary the Mother of peace. “

Far from yielding to such loving entreaties, Majone became more inflamed than ever against Alphonsus and the Congregation, Seeing that his designs were thwarted he resolved to petition the King to compel all Redemptorists to submit to his new rule or quit the Congregation. When the missionaries heard this, their indignation could scarcely be restrained within bounds. Alphonsus, to prevent the evil consequences of such a step, wrote to Naples revoking the pro-curatorship which he had conferred on Majone, and bestowing it on Father Corrado. “I have learned,” he wrote to the new procurator, “that our friend, by making an unauthorized use of my name, has endeavored to procure an order, in virtue of which the subjects must accept *his* rules or leave the Congregation. In short the author of this document would make me the murderer of my brethren. If Monsignor Testa is not convinced of the deceit that has been practiced on him, we shall obtain nothing; for he will say he has done all I wished, which is not the case. . . . Try to make him comprehend the state of our Congregation. We have more than a hundred young men who have finished their studies, and who would honorably distinguish themselves at the Sorbonne or at Louvain; but Don Majone would see them all out of the Congregation rather than not attain his ends Tell Monsignore Testa that I have not become imbecile, as this person reports; I have still my right mind, though he labors to make me lose my senses.” On the same day, April 10, he wrote to the grand almoner himself, representing, with his customary eloquence, the treachery of which he was the victim, and describing the sordid spirit that actuated Father Majone, “who, to increase his own importance as consultor-general, seeks to deprive the rector-major of his rights, and has added to, or retrenched from, the regulations as his own fancy suggested.”

The subjects, finding that they would be forced to obey a rule which they had never promised to observe, protested against the consultors, and even against the holy Founder himself, for having kept the affair secret. So great was their dissatisfaction that it weakened considerably the veneration which they had hitherto manifested towards him. The aged saint not knowing where to turn for aid or consolation, spent most of his time weeping and praying before his crucifix. He again addressed the grand almoner, and besought former friends, now occupying eminent positions, to aid him with their influence.

But Monsignor Testa, heretofore one of the warmest friends and most enthusiastic admirers of the holy Founder, now refused to annul what had been done, and maintained that the changes made by Majone in concert with himself were excellent, and must be rigidly enforced. This prelate seems to have been so completely duped by the unfaithful deputy whom Alphonsus had commissioned to bring matters to a close at court, that he no longer showed even common courtesy to so a old friend, a bishop like himself, and possessed of all possible titles to the consideration, or rather veneration, of every dignitary in the Church.

The saint had foreseen all this in a general manner as far back as January 25, 1780. At the close of his meditation that day, he exclaimed: “I foresee that the devil will do, all in his power to overthrow us this year.” He informed Father Caione of the revelation he had on this subject, adding: “Your Reverence will therefore have the goodness to have the prayers indicated on the enclosed paper recited in common from the beginning of February till the end of May.”

Chapter LXVIII

Alphonsus takes a bold step.—He proves that his intellect is as sound as ever.—Testa begins to relent.—A turbulent member.—A new conspiracy.—Stormy scene.—The founder invited to resign.—His re-election.—He is calumniated at Rome.—Consequences.—Action of the Pope.—Ingratitude of some of the saint's children.—F. de Paul coolly accepts the office of general.—Hypocrisy of Leggio.—Resignation of the saint.—His fearful temptations.—His charming frankness.

ALPHONSUS having now but a choice of evils, took the bold and dangerous step of suspending the execution of the new regulations until the result of the deliberation of a general assembly of the Fathers, to be immediately convoked, should be laid before_ the King. "If we are permitted to recur to the prince," said he, "to ask an augmentation of his favors or to be enlightened to understand them better, I do not think any harm can be done by suspending these new rules until we shall have exposed to him our wants, and the result of our deliberations." Several eminent and learned personages, lawyers and canonists, whom Alphonsus consulted, approved of this plan. He immediately informed the grand almoner, but as he received no reply, he commissioned a Father then in Naples, to let that dignitary know all, and added that if this did not suffice, he would go himself to Naples, all paralyzed as he was, and should he find it impossible to obtain an audience, he would write a thousand letters to the Prime minister, and send a thousand petitions to the King himself. Now at least, the early friend of Alphonsus saw that his intellect was as clear and strong as ever, and that as in his earlier days, no difficulties could deter him, no opposition deaden his resolution or weaken his efforts, where God's glory was concerned. He took the trouble to inform himself of the real state of the Congregation, and when he learned how egregiously he had been deceived, he presently showed some disposition to retrace his steps.

Inexpressibly consoled at this, the saint informed the Fathers of it, in a circular letter in which he fixed May 1, for the general assembly, and urged all to be tranquil in the interim and pray for the success of their cause.

While the saint was laboring to arrange all to the satisfaction of his sons in the kingdom of Naples, the devil endeavored to stir up dissensions in the houses of the Pontifical States. The house of Frosinone contained among its members one of those restless, and turbulent spirits whom God sometimes permits to disturb the peace of communities. The name of this unmanageable individual was Leggio. A burthen to superiors and to his brethren, the Founder was constantly obliged to remove him from place to place as he did not wish to expel him from the Congregation, unless matters became so desperate as to admit of no other alternative. These changes were very displeasing to Leggio; he nourished a secret ill-feeling against the saint, and, as revolutions in states generally give bad men opportunities of displaying their abilities, he no sooner heard of the difficulties of the Neapolitan houses than he determined to take advantage of them to create discord between the houses of the States and those of the kingdom. Of course he was actuated by the most lively zeal—who could doubt it, when he only proposed rebellion against the founder, and separation from his government?

It is quite true that nearly all the Redemptorist Fathers, who had ever known Alphonsus, entertained for him the deepest veneration and the warmest affection. But when he was denounced as an accomplice of Majone, appearances certainly not being in his favor—since outside the kingdom nothing had transpired but that the consultor was the trusted friend of the founder and was authorized to act in his name—it was easy enough to persuade the majority, either that God had forsaken him in his old age, or that years, sorrows, and infirmities had robbed him of the brilliant mental powers, which had once been sufficient to overcome those who would have been incapable of appreciating his higher and nobler qualities. It was therefore arranged that a general chapter of the subjects in the States should be convoked, to entreat the Pope to allow them to separate from their brethren in the kingdom, and give them power to elect a new superior-general, they having already deposed Monsignor di Liguori.

The circular letter of Alphonsus elicited no reply. He was therefore obliged, much against his will, to order the houses of the states to send their deputies, in virtue of obedience. This mandate was obeyed, but the deputies were accompanied by Leggio, who came firmly bent on carrying out the separation he had projected.

The meeting was opened on the twelfth of May, but Alphonsus saw he had no longer docile subjects to deal with; nearly all expressed in the strongest language, their indignation against Majone and his colleague, but instead of entreating the unhappy pair by the mildness and benignity of Jesus Christ, some insisted on their immediate expulsion, and others wanted to have them deprived of their offices. So great was the spirit of subordination displayed at this assembly, that the holy Founder sincerely regretted that he had ever convoked it. “Some are for Jesus Christ,” said he, “some for the devil, and I am between the contending parties.” General dissatisfaction was expressed at the lenity with which he treated Majone and his colleague, and if these indocile spirits were not audacious enough to depose the Holy Founder of their Congregation, they compelled him to resign his office, which he willingly did, for he would gladly have given his life for the restoration of peace.

At a new election held May 26, the saint was re-elected superior-general,—as strong proof of the love and reverence with which he was still regarded—but of the six former consultors only Fathers Villani and Mazzini were re-elected, and these in consideration of previous services. Instead of Father Villani, Father Corrado was nominated vicar-general, but he declined so weighty and troublesome a charge. “I beseech you to accept the office to which you have been nominated,” wrote Alphonsus to this father; “I conjure you on bended knees not to pain me by refusing.” This did not suffice, the saint was obliged to use to the utmost the shadow of authority that still remained to him, and command the unwilling subject under pain of sin.

Powerless to avert impending evils, Alphonsus bewailed at the foot of the crucifix the deplorable state of his beloved Congregation. Some reproached him for one thing, some for another: some completely forgot the respect due to his person and character, and even dared to say with disdainful bitterness: “You have founded the Congregation, and you have destroyed it. We know not whether God will forgive you this sin.”

The saint suffered all in silence, and far from showing the least resentment, redoubled, if possible his gentleness and kindness towards every one, resolved to drink to the very dregs the chalice which his Father had sent to embitter the closing days of his long and weary pilgrimage.

As will be readily conjectured, Alphonsus now found his office of rector-major the merest sinecure. The spirit of insubordination had spread, and there were few even of the lay-brothers that did not undertake to discuss the administrative affairs of the Congregation, and give opinions or rather decisions with more authority of voice and manner than the holy Founder had ever been known to assume. Still worse, there was no longer harmony between the houses in the kingdom and those of the states; diversity of opinion produced division of hearts; some blamed one party, some another, and hardly a voice was raised in defense of the common Father of all. Leggio repaired to Rome, and signalized his zeal before the Holy Father, by painting our saint in the colors of a hypocrite. The calumnies seem to have been very generally admitted, though no one could understand how a man, once universally recognized as a saint, could deviate in such a lamentable degree from the paths of rectitude. As the court of Naples was then endeavoring to infringe on the prerogatives of Rome, the king ordered that no subject of his should write to the Pope, or hold any intercourse whatever with the Roman Court. To disobey openly the royal mandate would be to destroy the Neapolitan houses; hence the only resource of the Founder was to select subjects in whose integrity he could confide, and depute them to represent to His Holiness the real state of the Congregation. Meanwhile, it might easily have been believed at Rome that Monsignor Liguori, now overwhelmed with years and infirmities, was unable to cope with the difficulties of the times, and fearful of seeing his dear institute suppressed by the king, like that of the Jesuits, granted concessions and made alterations entirely at variance with the rules he had formerly presented to Benedict XIV, for approval. Be this as it may, it is certain that God permitted the perfidious Leggio to work his worst upon a saint, whom he should have loved, revered and obeyed.

This unhappy traitor had the audacity to present himself before Pius VI, and having expatiated on the novelties introduced into the rules at Naples, claimed the Pope’s protection for himself and for the houses in the Pontifical States. He had already ingratiated himself with the members of the sacred college, which explains the readiness with which he obtained that a decree should be forwarded to Cardinal Banditi, charging him, in the name of the Pope, to inform the members of the Congregation residing in his diocese of Benevento, that they should strictly observe the rules and constitutions approved for them by Benedict XIV, without making the slightest alteration. A similar decree was dispatched to the bishop of Veroli, with reference to the houses of Scifelli and Frosinone.

This news gave great delight to Alphonsus: “God be praised,” he exclaimed! “by this order from the Pope our brethren in the papal states, are deprived of the liberty to alter the rule. My Jesus, bless the work, for it is thy own!” He did not perceive that the first effects of an order, so desirable in itself, would be disastrous to his poor Congregation. As soon as it was generally known that the Pope had guaranteed the integrity of the rule in his states, several of the most promising of his subjects withdrew from Naples, and joined their brethren in the papal territories, without even consulting the saint, though he was still, nominally, at least, rector major of the Redemptorists. Deserted by the flower and hope of the Congregation, he bowed his head in resignation to the divine will, which had permitted this terrible blow to fall upon his devoted head. He besought his great friend, Cardinal Banditi, to protect the poor Congregation, giving him perfect freedom, as to the means to be used in rectifying the disorders from which it suffered so grievously. “If your Eminence,” he wrote, wishes to release me from my office of superior-general, do whatever you judge before God to be for the best. I have no desire but to see peace restored to my poor children.”

As the wicked are generally bolder to plan, and more courageous to execute for the devil, than the good are in the service of God, Leggio now assumed such airs that no one seemed able to resist him. His next exploit was to obtain that “separation” which rankled as a thorn in the breast of the aged saint during the short space of life that remained to him.

On the fourth of August, an order was expedited in the Pope’s name to the bishop’s of Benevento and Veroli, to the effect that the Redemptorist houses in their respective dioceses had no further connection with those of the kingdom. When Alphonsus heard that some arrangements were being made regarding these houses, he immediately sent for their most ancient fathers to inquire concerning them, but they replied that, as he was no longer their superior; they were not obliged to obey him. These words pierced his heart. Though perfectly resigned to suffer whatever his good Father might permit to befall him, the sorrows he now endured almost cost him his life. Endeavoring to conceal what he suffered, he encouraged the faithful few who had not yet deserted him, and peacefully awaited the stroke of death which he thought must now come; but his chalice was not full, the most bitter ingredients had yet to be dropped in.

Concealing every circumstance that could tend to place the late rector-major in a favorable light, Leggio now strove to have a president elected or nominated for the four houses, and petitioned the sacred Congregation to that effect.

That venerable assembly, with its wonted prudence, desired to examine thoroughly the real state of affairs, and instructed the inter-nuncio at Naples to take secret information, and report the result faithfully. Alphonsus received an order from the prefect of the sacred Congregation to transmit to Rome all the acts drawn up at the last assembly, with an account of what had since taken place.

This order greatly perplexed the saint. As unpleasant relations still existed between Naples and Rome, he could not readily comply with it. Unwilling to disobey the Pope he wrote to the cardinal, (August 24,) that he would send two fathers to Rome the following November to give the desired information. Lest this should not suffice he wrote anew, (August 28,) exposing to his Eminence the critical circumstances in which he was placed, and his powerlessness to remedy, such grave disorders in a moment. “My most terrible trial,” he writes sadly, comes from my, own sons, especially of the house of Frosinone, who wish to divide the Congregation, and establish a second general. Small is the importance I attach to my office as regards myself, for my death is at hand, but it is hard for me to see the ruin of our Congregation.” But Leggio was beforehand with him. He exaggerated the pretended offences of his spiritual father, represented the delay sought for as a piece of chicanery on part of an able lawyer, in order to gain time, and thereby elude the commands of the Holy See, and multiplied his petitions urging the injury the absence of a head might occasion. He was supported by the house of Frosinone, for the relief of which Alphonsus had, a few months before, sold his four silver services, which had been kept for the use of the distinguished strangers who so frequently visited him, and he could scarcely be prevented from disposing of his carriage, and depriving himself of the very necessaries his years and infirmities required, lest his children there suffer want. He had now the bitterness of learning in detail how his benefits had been requited, and might well exclaim in the anguish of his heart. The sons of my mother have risen up against me!

The grave disagreements existing between the courts of Rome and Naples favored the private ambition of Leggio. The saint fell into disgrace with the Pope, whose next step was to declare him deposed from his office, adding what was still harder to be borne, that the Neapolitan houses no longer formed part of the Congregation. Father de Paul was nominated superior or president of the houses in the Papal States.

This Father must have known how untenable the grounds were, upon which the holy Founder was condemned, but he does not appear to have uttered a word in his defense, or made the smallest endeavor to explain the obscure and critical circumstances in which he had been placed since the discovery of Majone’s treachery. De Paul quietly accepted the post of president, and was elected rector-major in 1785.[17172] When the Pope and the king of Naples consented to a re-union of the Roman and Neapolitan houses in 1790, De Paul was deposed, and F. Blasucci elected rector major of the whole Congregation. But the happy days of re-union and restoration, our saint did not live to see.

When Father Tannoia and Gallo arrived in Rome as deputies of Monsignor Liguori, they learned the full extent of the mischief without being absolutely certain as to what means or combination of means had been employed to produce these disastrous results. Leggio pretended that he experienced the most acute sorrow at the orders which had lately emanated from the Pope. “I have done all I could to disabuse His Holiness, but he will not be persuaded that Monsignor Liguori was deceived, and is innocent of the charges made against him,” was his hypocritical assurance to them.

But he soon threw off the mask. The representatives of the saint could not procure a hearing; the sacred Congregation held no session; during this season, and the cardinals had retired to their country houses. He informed Tannoia that the Pope abhorred the very name of Alphonsus, and would not permit it to be mentioned in his presence. Having now no object in dissembling his real sentiments, he one day exclaimed with an air of triumph: “Bishop Liguori has been disappointed of his canonization,” thus showing that his wretched malice would, if possible, pursue its saintly victim even beyond the tomb.

When they returned to Nocera with their sad tidings, they could not bear to make known to their beloved Father the whole extent of his misery. Next morning as he was preparing for mass, at which he was about to communicate, Father Villani told him all. The dreadful news seemed to freeze the life-current in his veins, but he rallied a little, and profoundly bending his head, said: “God alone is sufficient for me. His grace will not fail me. The Pope wills it thus: “May God be praised!” He said no more, but quietly resumed his preparation, heard mass, and received Holy Communion. After his thanksgiving, as he went out in the carriage, the devil assailed him violently, representing the destruction of the Congregation as his own work, and as a punishment of his sins, that God had abandoned him, and that he might now renounce all hope of salvation. During this temptation, he humbled and abased himself, but his humility seemed as if it were false, his hope presumption, and the temptation increased in intensity. He immediately returned, and had no sooner gained the threshold, than he wept bitterly, and exclaimed in heart-rending accents: “My brethren, aid me, the devil wants to make me despair; it is my sins which have caused God to abandon our Congregation; come to my assistance; I do not wish to offend God. The struggles of the holy old man were terrible, but Fathers Villani and Mazzini succeeded in reassuring him, saying that God could never fail to protect innocence, and that he would assuredly not abandon his own work. Pale and trembling, he heard all the words of consolation those good Fathers spoke, and when the temptation passed away, a smile of joy lit up the emaciated lineaments of his noble countenance. “My Mother, I thank thee,” said this ever-devoted son of Mary, “thou hast helped me just now, always aid me, oh my Mother! My Jesus, my hope, let me never be confounded!”

When the fathers assembled about him after supper, he said, with his accustomed serenity: “The devil has been tempting me to despair during the day, but Mary helped me and by God’s grace I have not made a single act of diffidence.” Our saint possessed that charming frankness of manner which is so endearing in a community. He rarely concealed anything from his beloved sons, his pains, his difficulties, his temptations,—he spoke of all occasionally, and even wrote of them in ordinary intercourse with those whom, as he often declared, he loved better than father, mother, sister, or brother. This is how he won entire confidence as a superior, and was able to apply continually his extraordinary skill as director of souls. In proportion to the affection with which he cherished his *dear little Congregation,* was the sorrow he now felt at the strokes that fell thick and fast upon him from those whom he so tenderly loved, that he would have given his heart's blood for the least among them.

Chapter LXIX

Alphonsus unconsciously justifies himself.—The last touches given to his sanctity.—The saint displays his most noble qualities.—His submission to the new rector-major.—His meekness towards Majone.—"Servant of the Church till death." The Pope's words absolute.—He reads the Life of St. Joseph Calasanza.—He will not allow his sons to appeal to the king.—The respect and obedience he compels them to evince towards the Pope.

THE Pope had been made to understand that the late Bishop of St. Agatha cared little for pontifical decisions, and was far more anxious to secure his own authority than to inculcate among his subjects, respect for decrees emanating from Rome. Apparently there was proof enough of this: what defense could be made for a man who had set aside the rules arranged by himself, when his mental powers were in full vigor, and approved, not merely by eminent theologians and high dignitaries, but by the Pope himself, and by such a Pope as Benedict XIV? A superior who would compel his subjects to keep rules which they never promised God to observe, and who would increase and diminish, alter and mitigate, according to his humor, without even condescending to explain his vagaries to the higher powers, or attempt to account for them. Could the Pope have seen and heard him, he would not have waited till after his death to exclaim with that bitterness of heart which we all feel, when we find we have wronged virtue and innocence, and that it is no longer in our power to make amends to the objects of our persecutions: "Alas, I have persecuted a saint."

This great trial was necessary to elevate Alphonsus to the highest pinnacle of perfection. We have already seen him loved for those endearing qualities which he possessed in so eminent a degree, revered for his extraordinary sanctity, and universally regarded as a prodigy of erudition. Unlike so many other saints, his great qualities and wonderful mental endowments, were fully recognized during his life, and bishops, cardinals and Popes delighted to honor him. Crowned heads had been among his correspondents, and these included the learned of all nations; the kings of Naples, through whose reigns his tedious pilgrimage extended, had prided themselves on possessing such a subject, and had invariably treated him with astonishing courtesy. But now a change has come. Kings do not know him; ministers and prelates are indifferent to him when they do not actually persecute him; his own sons rise in rebellion against him; some moved by pity have not quite deserted him, but respect, veneration, gratitude, have disappeared; children whom he begot in Christ and brought forth in pains and anguish, now treat him as if his mind were as feeble as his body, or rather as if he were too insignificant to merit the slightest notice; his day is past, he has become a burden in his own Congregation. Worse, he is driven from that Congregation; both he and the few who still surround him are no longer styled Redemptorists.

As our dear Lord was never more deserving of our love, than when His enemies had done their worst upon him, so no epoch in the life of our great doctor is more admirable than this. It is now that we find Alphonsus Liguori displaying in the most striking manner the heroic virtues honored on our altars. Naturally enough, when the sad events, which formed the climax of his misfortunes, were discussed in his presence, the poor subjects who found themselves suddenly cut off from an order in which they had sworn to live and die, ventured to allude to the injustice done to him and to them. But the gentlest of saints sternly silenced them saying: “The Pope deems it his duty to act thus; may God be blessed! the will of the Pope is the will of God.” Father de Paul appears at last to have been moved with compassion at the thought of the sorrow the poor old man must feel at being ignominiously deposed from his office, seeing his beloved Congregation divided, and more than all, being actually expelled from it. He wrote to represent the, regret he experienced at being constrained to displease him through the mandate of the Pope. “By God’s grace, I have never lost my judgment,” wrote the saint in reply, “I rejoice that your reverence is appointed superior; all is right, you must in everything fulfil the will of the Pope.” To a religious who testified great displeasure at the appointment of F. de Paul, inasmuch as it was the expulsion of the Founder, he said: “I care little about being deprived of my dignity of rector-major; it suffices for me that they have not taken away Jesus Christ and my mother, Mary.

The saint immediately put himself under obedience to the new general, and even resolved to go to Benevento and live there as a subject for the rest of his days. To dissuade him from executing this project, Father Villani told him that it was impossible in such a state of health, and that, since the rule was observed throughout the kingdom, the Congregation still existed therein. “Whatever may be the state of things here,” said he sadly, “the Pope no longer recognizes these houses as forming part of the institute.” Only one reason caused him to desist: he feared that such a step would complicate still more the difficulties already existing between the Pope and the king. He quieted his conscience by writing to the new president to assure him of his entire obedience; nor was he satisfied till Father de Paul commanded him to remain at Nocera, assuring him that he should always belong to the Congregation. The saint invariably evinced towards this Father the respect and submission of a most docile subject, and never resented in the slightest degree his conduct during the late troubles. If Father de Paul ever coveted the generalship which had come to him by such unworthy means, he no doubt found thorns enough in the crown of superiority, were there no other than the having among his subjects such a man as Leggio, and owing his position to the same. As rector of Frosinone, he had given but little satisfaction to the holy Founder; he seems however to have been tolerably respectful towards him, on paper at least, during the few days that remained to him, for they never again met on earth. He survived the saint about a quarter of a century.

The decree of the Pope all but destroyed the Neapolitan houses. Several of the Fathers passed into the States without even visiting Alphonsus. The more docile asked his advice, which he gave in the words: *Obey the Pope.*

Many were shipwrecked in the tempest, and retired to the world. Among others, a student whom he tenderly loved joined Majone and his companions. This almost broke the affectionate heart of Alphonsus. The unworthy object of his affection subsequently became canon, and gained such an ascendency over his bishop, that he disposed at his pleasure of all the offices in the diocese. But God did not bless his ways. While still young, he was suddenly summoned before the supreme tribunal of the Almighty Judge, having been found dead in his bed one morning.

With regard to the unfortunate Majone, all that Alphonsus desired was to see him converted. He could not bring himself to act harshly towards an old companion, who had been his domestic chaplain at St. Agatha, and whom he once loved so tenderly. Seeing the climax of the terrible evils he had done the Congregation—all happened during the first nine months of the year 1780—Majone was ashamed to return among his brethren. After having recalled him several times, Alphonsus informed him that if he did not return before a given date, he would be excluded from the society. Shame deterred him from obeying, and he so far forgot his dignity of priest as to undertake to administer the temporal affairs of a baron. In the house of this nobleman he died a premature death, detesting his sins, and bewailing his unhappy fate. May God, whose mercy is above all his works, have received his late but sincere repentance.

The saint, through all these reverses, appeared insensible to the dreadful humiliation that had come upon himself; his great soul was entirely occupied with his beloved Congregation. To see the innovations of Majone done away with, and the houses once more under one head, this was all he coveted. To attain his end nothing was left undone. He wrote a full statement of the case to Cardinal Banditi, begging him to make all known to the Pope, and caused prayers, masses, and novenas, to be offered for success. This elegant and statesmanlike document showed that the lawyer and the saint had not yet lost the qualities which once elicited universal approbation. The Cardinal himself signed the letter, but it was God's will that it should not serve the holy Founder's cause.

"Alas," he wrote to Father de Paul, "if the Pope knew all, he would not blame me. In due time I will make everything known to him, and perhaps recover his good graces: for I have never lost the remembrance of the affection he once deigned to show me, notwithstanding my great unworthiness, and come what may, I will die his faithful servant, and the *faithful servant of the Church.*"

His most grievous trial was the Pope's displeasure. "What shall we do to satisfy him?" he asks the president, "to obtain once more the faculties and privileges necessary to the success of the missions?" So extraordinary was his reverence for the Vicar of Christ, that he took all that proceeded from him as literally as possible, and would not allow anyone to interpret his will. "If the Pope," said the Fathers, "speak of those who give up the rule, that cannot apply to us who have always observed it?" "It is not for us to judge," said the saint. "Who will dare to constitute himself judge between the Pope and us? Let us humbly bow our heads in submission. If the Pope has cast us down by one rescript, he can raise us up by another; we must under all circumstances obey, without ever seeking to put our interpretation on his will."

"The Pope did not, and could not, have you in view," said Monsignor Carafa to Father Tannoia at Rome, when this good Father complained to him. When this was related to Alphonsus by the poor Fathers, whom it had consoled, he replied: "I understand all; but it is Bishop Carafa that speaks, and not the Pope." The Pope subsequently confirmed what he had done.

"It is hoped at Rome," wrote the poor old man to Father de Paul, "that the Pope will reestablish me rector-major; but how little I care about that office! What grieves me is the privation of those faculties, without which we can be of little assistance to souls." He commissioned him to represent this to the Pope, and endeavor to obtain a restoration; and he urged Father Caione to the same effect. "If I were not absolutely incapable of undertaking the journey," he added, "I should be already on the road." Had the saint been able to present himself before the Pope, there is no doubt but he would have gained whatever he asked, but among those now influential with his Holiness, he was unable to procure a faithful ambassador.

From a letter to Cardinal Banditi on the same subject, we learn that the saint was never more zealous in promoting the work of the missions. "We have not ceased to labor for the good of souls," he wrote; "we give a great many missions. That of Foggia may be counted as four, for it will last a month and a half, after which missions will be undertaken at Nocera and elsewhere."

Monsignor Bergamo, who loved Alphonsus as a father, having come to Nocera to console him, was so grieved for him, that he journeyed to Benevento, to use his influence in his behalf with Cardinal Banditi. This eminent man was greatly distressed on learning the true state of things, but he thought it was not then expedient to take any steps at Rome to rectify the past. What the saint feared most, was that charity might suffer in consequence of these unfortunate circumstances; "I strive to instil into all my brethren a perfect spirit of charity," he wrote to the president; "do you the same, my dear Father, for God loves those who love charity." His only consolation at this time was to weep and pray before the Blessed Sacrament, and meditate on the Passion of Christ. He read and re-read the Life of St. Joseph Calasanctius, who, towards the close of his long life, had been deposed from his office of superior-general, and his Congregation suppressed, and who died in disgrace with the Pope.

Alphonsus respected the very wishes and thoughts of the Pope. He would not allow his Fathers to claim the royal protection, or even to inform the king of what had been done in the States, chiefly, if not solely, by Neapolitan subjects; and when he learned that some subjects, growing disheartened and restive under ceaseless persecution, had determined to write to the king, fearing that this would lead to some complication dangerous or troublesome to His Holiness, he wrote to the acting superior-general, Father Corrado: “I know not how I could excuse from mortal sin any Father who, in this present conjuncture, would have recourse to the king.” In a word, the respect and obedience he showed the Pope and compelled those under his charge to show him, edified and affected every one.

Chapter LXX

Incessant efforts of the saint to bring about a reunion.—He appeals to the king, who grants his request.—The protection accorded by kings.—Letter to Leggio.—New Trials.—Arrogance of Leggio.—Scruple.—Division—The Pope calls Alphonsus a saint.—He does him full justice only after death.

THE efforts of Alphonsus to bring about a reunion, through every alternation of hope and peace, were incessant. Knowing that if the evils done by Majone in Naples could be repaired, the great obstacle would be removed, he entreated the king to allow the Fathers to make an oath to do what they had been forbidden to do by vow, following the precedent of St. Joseph Calasanctius and his clerics. The king graciously granted all that was asked. Alphonsus learned this good news from a letter dispatched to him by his old and constant friend, the Marquis of Marco: "His Majesty, grateful for the zeal and indefatigable labors of the missionaries, and their success in preaching the jubilee, has deigned to grant all the favors you have asked: he permits (1) that the missionaries make oaths of a life in common, and of poverty; (2) the said missionaries may take the oath of perseverance; (3) they may accept some assistance from their friends and benefactors during the wheat and olive harvest."

Readers of this age, in the western countries at least, can scarcely imagine a state of things in which it was necessary to appeal ostensibly to a prince for such permissions. Fancy a religious Congregation asking the President of the United States for leave to keep its rules! Here is a specimen of the protection the Church was wont to receive from the secular power. The king was born a Catholic, and condescended to remain one, but he must in consequence reduce the power of the Catholic bodies in his kingdom to the merest shadow. Otherwise a harmless man, he must discuss in his cabinet the minutest details of conventual establishments, and impose his silly notions on religious, with an authority which the Pope himself has rarely assumed, imitating, according to his little capacity, the imperial sacristan of Vienna, his august contemporary. The unfortunate kingdom of Naples has had too many monarchs of this description.

As the saint could not get all he required, he was glad to take what he could get, and he notified all the houses to make fervent thanksgiving to God for these concessions, at the same time inculcating the most rigorous observance of rule. So important was this royal decree considered at the time, that the rector of Illiceto wrote to Alphonsus: “We cannot find words to express the sentiments of our hearts; our consolation surpasses the anguish we have endured; in spite of hell, we have been restored to life. God has now comforted us, and we conjure him to give us perfect peace.” This joy passed outside the Congregation; its friends seemed as delighted as its members, and the people of Illiceto lit bonfires in their boisterous rejoicing.

All was now ready for a reunion; the Fathers of the kingdom longed to be placed on the same footing as their brethren in the states, and the Fathers in the states longed to be once more under the mild and affectionate rule of a saint. But they were not worthy of this great happiness. Alphonsus humbled himself so far as to write to Leggio himself: “I pray you to remember,” said he, that if you persevere in maintaining this division, you will never experience a moment of peace, for peace cannot be associated with the spectacle of a disunion of which you have been the author, and which you can no longer remedy. I beseech you, for the love of Jesus Christ, to consider this well at the foot of the crucifix; I embrace you, and beseech God to make known to you His holy will.” But Leggio was far from listening to the prayers of the spiritual Father who had begot him in Christ. By some unaccountable means, he prepossessed almost every one against him: “Monsignore Liguori,” said he, in a tone of contempt, “demands too much. He wants to enact the role of Pope, or to arrange matters quite independently of the Pope. . . . The Pope does not receive the law, he gives it. We wish for the rule of Benedict XIV, not the reform of Monsignore Liguori.”

Beset on all sides, the Pope confirmed the previous decisions. Only one voice, that of Cardinal Telada, was in favor of Alphonsus in the Sacred College. When he heard of these sad and tiresome proceedings, he repeated with perfect resignation: “I will what God wills; the will of God can redress all wrongs.” Nor did he ever despair of regaining the Pope’s favor, or cease his efforts for a single day to bring about the coveted union. Always trying, never succeeding, still hoping, such was the record of the few days that remained to our Most Zealous Doctor. When his last effort failed, his degenerate son, Leggio, remarked with disgusting arrogance: “He played for his canonization, and has lost it.” The news of this failure having reached him who was unconsciously *working*, not playing, for his canonization, he said: “For six months I have not asked anything of God but that his holy will might be accomplished. Lord, I will only what thou willest! “A few years after, when the minute examination of his virtues took place in the sacred Congregation of Rites, the calumnies of his adversaries redounded to his honor. Then did Pius VI issue a solemn decree containing these words: “We preserve the remembrance of the eminent piety of the servant of God, of his reverential submission to the Holy See, as his words, his actions, his writings testify.”

Owing to the saint’s extreme delicacy of conscience, he had another source of anxiety. Through love of holy poverty, he had engaged himself by vow to depend on the local rector like any other subject; but as the rectors of the Neapolitan houses were not lawful superiors, since the Pope did not recognize them as such, to whom was he to recur? Not daring to address the Pope, to whom he had been so grievously misrepresented, and who was so prejudiced against him, he entreated Father Corrado to obtain the Pope’s decision for him. It was not to the Pope, however, but to the Cardinal Penitentiary, that the Father applied. His Eminence admired the extreme exactness of the saint, and directed that he should submit to the decision of his confessor.

It is somewhat singular that the Pope, even while giving decisions against Alphonsus and using the utmost severity towards him, never doubted his sanctity. When Cardinal Banditi and Monsignore Bergamo endeavored to exculpate him, the Pope remarked that it is not well to change the rule of a Congregation without the sanction of the Holy See. These good prelates explained that Alphonsus had made no change; the changes fraudulently made by Majone were repudiated by him as soon as he heard of them; he had since been making superhuman efforts to rectify the errors of the treacherous consultor, and had, thanks to God, almost succeeded. They enlarged on what was notorious, the sanctity of the holy old man and his devotion to the Apostolic See: “I know,” returned the Pontiff, “ that

Monsignore Liguori is a saint, and that he has been most obedient to Christ’s Vicar, but he has not done well in this circumstance;” and being asked to bless him, he said: “I bless him with all my heart, and I bless all the members of his Congregation.”

When he, whose displeasure was most grievously felt, entertained so high an opinion of the old man, towards whom he showed such severity—a a severity altogether foreign to the gentle and benign nature of Pius VI—what can we conclude, but that God inspired the Sovereign Pontiff to act in this seemingly unaccountable manner, in order that the last fine touches might be added to this wonderful sanctity of Alphonsus Liguori.

Although the Pope seems to have shown a little lenity towards him from this period, they were never fully reconciled. Pius VI did him ample justice, but not till he was already enjoying, among the just made perfect, the fruits of his heroic patience.

Chapter LXXI

Prosperity of the Congregation.—Touching letters.—Alphonsus utters no reproach.—Paroxysms of grief.—Heroic confidence in God.—He is universally regarded as a saint.—Petition.—Audacity of Leggio.—The missionaries acquitted by the royal council after nineteen years' litigation.—Gratitude of the saint.—The most diabolical of all works.—The Sicilian subjects choose a general for themselves.—The Neapolitan Fathers elect a coadjutor for Alphonsus, with right of succession.—Change of sentiments.—The last drop.—Perfect submission.—The German house.—Last days and deeds of Leggio.

DESPITE the perpetual trials to which they were subjected, the Redemptorist houses prospered. The Pope this year (1781) established a hospice at the Church of St. Julian, near St. Mary Major, a foundation at Gubbio, and another at Spello, to supply the necessities of his States. The saint experienced the greatest joy on learning this, and wrote several letters to the Fathers in the States, congratulating them on their success, and testifying the lively joy he felt at the flourishing state of their novitiate. On hearing of the contemplated foundation at Ravenna, he prophesied that it would not take root, nor did it.

As life was slowly ebbing, the saint's mind continually turned towards his brethren in the states, and the messages he sent them from time to time show, not merely that he fully and freely forgave those among them who had wronged him so deeply, but rather that he entertained no recollection of any injury done him. Father de Paul having in a letter referred the good done by the Congregation to Alphonsus as Founder, the latter wrote:

"I thank God that he has made use of me to give birth to the good now effected by your reverence, with the sanction of the Pope." As the saint was at times scarcely able to dictate, Father Villani informed the president of the great consolation he experienced on hearing of the progress of the institute in the pontifical states. "I thank you, he wrote, for the welcome letter by which you have made known to us the benedictions heaven showers upon you. I can assure you it has been a source of great consolation to us. Monsignore our Father is particularly delighted at the news; he blesses God for it, and speaks of it frequently. I may add, that he has desired me to write to you to this effect."

"Monsignore, our Father," wrote Brother Francis Anthony to the same, "has twice charged me to tell you that he embraces you tenderly, and that he desires you would pray, and make your community pray, for him. He will never more be well, and he wants me to tell you not to forget that he and you were once companions. I use the very words he desired me to employ."

Father de Paul seems to have shown all the kindness he now could show to the aged saint: "We do not fail," he wrote, "to remember you in all our common prayers, and you may rest assured that, when the Lord shall call you to himself, all the masses prescribed by the constitution shall be celebrated for you by the Fathers in the states."

The saint was so delighted with the promises contained in this letter, that with the touching gratitude which had always characterized his great heart, he would thank Father de Paul the very day he received it, June 21, 1782. His letter, like all he ever wrote to his brethren, overflows with the warmest sentiments of divine love and tender affection for his cherished children, but it is remarkable that he does not terminate it by giving his benediction to his correspondent, which, as a bishop he might have done under any circumstances: "I pray Jesus Christ," he says, "to bless you and your houses, and those who dwell in them." As he recognized the president for his superior, he simply subscribed himself, "Your affectionate and much obliged, BROTHER ALPHONSUS MARIA, of the Most Holy Redeemer."

His heart was filled with sorrow because his houses were deprived of the privileges and other favors formerly allowed by the Holy See, and during the crisis of a fever, brought on by mental sufferings, he would at intervals exclaim: "What! are we not of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer? Do we not acknowledge the rule of Benedict XIV? If we observe that rule, why are we not of the Congregation?. . . . Perhaps they doubt whether we do keep our rules, and this is why we are rejected? But God wills it, let us have patience." On being told that his sons were real Redemptorists, he would instantly become calm. It was observed that during the deliriums that occasionally supervened in the fevers his domestic calamities had brought on, he never uttered a word of dissatisfaction against the Pope, or showed in any way that he felt the slightest resentment against those who had injured him so deeply.

Some fathers who had just returned from a mission having gone to his room to beg his blessing, Alphonsus, as the same idea always filled his mind, said: “I cannot understand how it is that we do not belong to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, since the rule of Benedict XIV has always been observed by us, and is observed still.” “Without doubt we do belong to it,” said Father de Meo, “since the Pope and the king designate your Lordship as founder of the Congregation.” “I wish not to be even named in this world,” he returned, “but I desire it to be known that the rule observed by us is the very one we received from the Pope, and from which we have never departed.” “True,” said the father, “and it must always be acknowledged that the Congregation exists here, since the rule given by Benedict XIV to Don Alphonsus Liguori is kept here.” “What does my name signify?” interrupted the saint. “All I care for is, that it be known that we are subject to the Pope. Let us bless God for all he has done.”

During the darkest hours, the holy Founder knew and felt that the work of his life was to endure: “Never lose confidence,” he would say to his fainthearted sons, “Lazarus lay four days in the tomb before he was resuscitated. Only let us be what we ought to be in the eyes of God; he is all powerful, let us pray, and resign ourselves to his will.” This remarkable confidence, or rather profound conviction, struck his friends as extraordinary, and ere long these sentiments were so extensively shared by the Fathers that all regarded the subsequent restoration of the privileges of the institute in Naples, and still later, the reunion of the Roman, Sicilian and Neapolitan houses, merely as the fulfilment of the oft-reiterated prophecies of a saint whose confidence in God no amount of misfortune, persecution, or trial, could shake or diminish.

It afforded no small consolation to the struggling houses of the Institute in the kingdom, that from first to last the most eminent bishops and cardinals sustained and defended them. These dignitaries wrote and re-wrote in favor of missionaries, whom they regarded as their most potent auxiliaries, and used all possible influence to obtain an adjustment of their difficulties. Their letters, quoted at full length in the original memoirs of the holy Founder, show the high esteem in which the missionaries were held, and that Alphonsus was universally regarded as a saint.

The united petitions of cardinals, bishops, canons, princes, and congregations, could not fail to make some impression on the Pope, and

Alphonsus was not slow in turning the favorable change to advantage. Careless he was about his own reputation, but the loss of the privileges formerly enjoyed by the Fathers, cut him to the heart, because of the damage resulting to souls. Strong in his innocence, and confiding in the clemency of the Holy Father, he addressed to him the following petition.

"MOST HOLY FATHER! The bishop, Alphonsus Mary di Liguori, prostrates himself at the feet of your Holiness, humbly entreats you to grant to his missionaries all the graces, faculties, and privileges conceded by the Holy See to the venerable Congregation of Redemptorists in the Pontifical States."

This petition was forwarded in March 1783, and on the 4th of April following, the Pope granted to all members of the Congregation, present and future, the indulgences and other spiritual favors which the Redemptorist missionaries enjoyed in the States of the Church during missions, and all other exercises of their ministry. This rescript wounded the heart of the parricide Leggio, and knowing that it could not be gainsaid, he forged a document, to which he had the audacity to affix the honored name of Tannoia, containing several questions, and praying that the graces conferred should be distinctly specified. Being himself on the spot, he hoped to reduce the pontifical favors to the faculty of blessing rosaries, but this time his intrigues failed. He was officially informed that the rescript was so clear as not to need any explanation.

Another consolation awaited the much-tried servant of God. The affair with the baron of Ciorani, and other existing difficulties, being brought for the last time before the royal council, Alphonsus was triumphantly acquitted, and his missionaries declared free from all contravention of royal decrees. A royal decree, dated April 10, 1784, approved of the proceedings of the council, and the missionaries and the Founder were fully exonerated: these affairs had been before the Neapolitan tribunals for nineteen years. Such auspicious events, following close upon each other, filled the heart of the old saint with joy and satisfaction. He immediately showed his gratitude to his "sweet Jesus," by ordaining that special thanksgivings should be offered to God and to our dear Lady for the *great miracle*. A miracle undoubtedly it was; but a miracle entirely due to the prayers and penances of the saint. The archtraitor Leggio had not yet forsaken his evil courses. He was still successfully engaged in the most diabolical of all works, sowing cockle or discord among his brethren. The fruits of his miserable diplomacy soon appeared, and the reunion of the dismembered institute became more difficult than ever, when it was known that the Sicilian members had broken off from their brethren in the kingdom, and chosen a rector-major for themselves. The few that had heretofore been faithful to Alphonsus now trembled for their existence as a religious body; and lest his death, which might occur at any moment, should suddenly deprive them of a head, they elected Father Villani as his coadjutor and future successor.

Meanwhile, the hearts of his former children began insensibly to turn towards that dear father who had nurtured them in Christ. His heroic patience and charity, tried by every possible reverse, moral, material, and physical could not long continue powerless to touch them, and they yearned for their Father's home, poor and insignificant as it had now become. Many of the Fathers of the Papal States, and two in particular who had been most obstinate in maintaining the division, most humbly begged to return to the holy Founder, adding that they would be content to take the lowest place if they could only live under his fatherly rule once more. This, though in itself a great consolation, became the occasion of adding the last drop to the bitter chalice which the saint had to drain to the dregs; for Father de Paul, seeing that his houses were becoming depopulated, asked the Pope if he could in conscience permit his subjects to return to their first allegiance, and received a negative reply. This was, perhaps, the rudest shock the saint ever experienced; but he received it with perfect resignation. "What the Pope wishes, I wish," said he; "the will of the Pope is the will of God, and the will of God turns all bitterness into sweetness."

Alphonsus had not only to bear these reverses himself: a far more difficult task was to reconcile his sons to them. Continual trials from within and without had well-nigh disheartened them; weary and fainthearted, they poured their complaints and repinings into the ear of their overindulgent father. And, alas for poor human nature, it is by no means improbable that these repinings were sometimes accompanied with threats of following the majority. But the saint never lost patience for a moment: "We will pray for our brethren in the states," said he, soothingly, "and they will pray for us, and thus, we shall all, please God, attain sanctity. They will do good there, and you will do good here, and the will of God shall be accomplished by all."

The rector of Nocera having animadverted severely on the conduct of Majone, the primary cause of all these calamities, Alphonsus testified displeasure at his language. “That is his affair,” said he; “our whole business is to think and to say, *God wills it.*” Nor would he permit a word against those men, now so sadly changed, who had once gloried in the title of his sons, or indeed against his worst enemies. It was in these adverse circumstances that all the grandeur of our saint’s character became fully apparent. The extraordinary nobility of soul which he displayed seemed rather to belong to the state of the just made perfect, than to one who, however great his sanctity, was still encumbered with a perishable body.

About this time the fame of Alphonsus attracted from Austria the two first German subjects, Clement Hofbauer and Francis Hüble. They were admitted to the novitiate in Rome, and were so sanguine about the introduction of the Congregation into Vienna, that they would see no obstacles in the way. The Fathers laughed at the projected German foundation, but Alphonsus prophesied that the hopes of the fervent novices would be realized. “God will not fail to spread his glory by their means,” said he; “the suppression of the Jesuits has left their fatherland almost destitute of evangelical workmen. Instructions will be more useful there than sermons, as the people must live among Lutherans and Calvinists. At the beginning, they should be made to say the *Credo,* and then admonished to avoid sin. These holy men will do good, but God does not will that I should mingle in this affair. My sweet Jesus! humble me more and more, that thou mayest be the more glorified.”

In consequence, partially at least, of the late prohibition, the lack of subjects soon began to be painfully felt in the kingdom. With a sad heart, Father Villani represented to the saint that the house of Illiceto was no longer able to maintain the *Studentat,* the other houses being, through extreme poverty, incapable of assisting it. “Alas,” said the holy Founder, sighing, “our houses are now falling into decay; ah, Lord, thy will be done! May that happen which is most pleasing to thee!”

To afflict still more this poor old man, whose sorrows should have excited the deepest sympathy, the implacable Leggio asked the Holy Father to specify the existing houses of the Congregation, which was done in a brief, dated December 17, 1784, wherein the Pope declared that the only houses of the institute were those of Benevento, San Angelo, Scifelli

Frosinone, Spello, Gubbio, and the hospice of San Julian in Rome. The last mentioned now became the principal or mother-house of the Congregation. The wickedly fertile brain and bad heart of Isidore Leggio planned still deeper humiliations for the hapless Fathers of the kingdom, but he paused, fearing lest his intentions might appear through his assumed zeal. His policy at this epoch was to render the saint contemptible. “Poor old man,” said he to a prelate who had been inquiring about him, “he is in a pitiable state; his mind is so impaired that he is no longer a man. He has lost his senses, and is now in his second childhood.” The mortal enmity of this wretched man reached still greater lengths. One day a young relative of the Liguori family having delivered a very eloquent speech, a prelate, who happened to call at San Julian, naturally felicitated the Fathers on the fact that the orator was related to their Founder: “When was Monsignore Liguori our Founder?” interrupted Leggio in a tone of undisguised contempt; “Bishop Falcoia is our Founder.” The prelate, who could scarcely restrain his indignant astonishment at this absurd declaration, retorted with spirit: “It should be no small glory for you to claim as your Founder a man so eminent by his birth, sanctity, and learning, as Monsignore Liguori is universally admitted to be.”

But Leggio went further. He tried to introduce into the Congregation of Rites the cause of the canonization of Bishop Falcoia, hoping to be able to secure to him the title of Founder of the Redemptorists. Proud of having contributed to establish the houses of Spello and Gubbio, his extravagances outstripped all rational bounds. “I am the real Founder,” he said; “if the Order still exists, it is to me it is indebted, for I have sustained and still sustain it.” The hatred of this deluded man followed the servant of God beyond the tomb; he lived to work in vain against the canonization of St. Alphonsus. At length the eyes of the Pope were opened; and when the impostor endeavored to stir up discord between the Cardinals, and disquiet the Pope himself, he appeared in his true colors, and was promptly forbidden to approach the Vatican. Alphonsus had foretold that he would one day receive a great chastisement. Feared and despised by all, though powerless to inflict the injuries he had once dealt out with no sparing hand, he died suddenly, on the feast of the Most Holy Redeemer, 1801. No word of faith, love, or hope, was uttered by this dying renegade—no confession, no viaticum. When the agonies of death seized him, extreme unction was hurriedly administered—he had previously refused both physicians and sacraments, insisting that he required neither. Seeing that life was really drawing to a close, the persecutor of St. Alphonsus raised his hand, struck the bed violently, and died without uttering a word or making a sign which it would be a comfort to his friends, if he now had any, to remember.

Chapter LXXII

The saint’s marvelous gift of eloquence.—His continued interest in the missions.—In the Church in general.—His gratitude for being a child of the Church.—Gratitude for the hospitality shown the Jesuits by Catherine of Russia and Frederick of Prussia.—His conviction that the suppression would not continue long.—He defends them.—His hatred of the Jansenists.—Arnauld.—The Blessed Eucharist.—“Mercy to sinners.”—How to deal with sinners who come to confession badly disposed.—His perpetual sermon, Avoid sin.—His last visit to the nuns of Nocera.—Obedience.—His occupations.—His politeness.—Accident.—He sells his horses.—Temptations.

SOME time before the fatal catastrophe of 1780, our saint was reduced to such a state of physical weakness that his life seemed but a prolonged agony, yet he continued to preach every Saturday on the glories and virtues of Mary, and to expatiate from time to time on the Passion of Jesus, and His real presence in the Blessed Sacrament. The faithful lovingly crowded around him, to gather, as they said, the last precious pearls that fell from his lips. But so much did these efforts of charity cost him, that the ever-faithful Father Villani, in concert with the doctors, forbade him to continue them. His zeal now found vent chiefly in prayer. His feeble voice no more resounded in the beautiful church of Nocera; his burning eloquence no longer thrilled the hearts of the pious crowd, so avaricious of gathering “the precious pearls that fell from his lips.” Judged by its effects, his preaching must always have been something marvelous; he himself described it when he said that he liked preachers whose words did not pass directly from the head to the tongue, *but descended first into the heart*, to be inflamed by its fire before rising to the lips. Who thinks of brain, or head, or logic, when reading the instructions of St. Alphonsus? All fire, all unction, all devotion, all sweetness,—verily it was out of the abundance of his burning heart that his sacred lips, cleansed and consecrated, as we may well believe, by an angelic spirit, (like to him who touched with a fiery coal the lips of the prophet), spoke to the hearts of all.

To the last our wonderful saint manifested the greatest interest in the apostolic works of the Congregation. When his sons returned from missions, he welcomed them joyfully, and listened with ineffable delight to the glad tidings they brought him, of souls converted to God, or attracted to perfection. These recitals would at intervals cast a gloom over the great soul of this extraordinary missionary. “Alas!” he one day sighed, as visions of earlier days arose, when his harvests were greater than he and his brethren could gather in—“what do I do? I am useless, and even a burden to the Congregation.” “Others labor now,” said a Father soothingly, “and you, as Founder, participate in their labors.” “Founder?” he repeated, “I am but a miserable wretch. I can do only evil. God alone founded the Congregation. I have merely been a worthless instrument in His hands.”

His zeal for the general interests of the Church rather increased as he journeyed towards heaven. When strangers came, he was always inquiring about the state of religion, and he felt such keen sorrow if he heard the Church was persecuted or despised in any place, that Father Villani was obliged to tell those who were going to visit him, to say nothing of the dark picture Catholic Europe then presented, and to be particularly silent about the trials the Holy Father had then to endure from so many unruly sons and faithless subjects.

He loved to read the authors who defended the Catholic faith, and, like his great patroness, St. Teresa, he frequently, and with indescribable fervor, thanked God that he was a child of the Church. “Thanks to God,” he would say, “that I was born in the faith, and in Italy, which is the center of religion. O how wretched we should be if we were deprived of Jesus our hope!” He thanked God for every grace and favor he heard of, and rejoiced in the success of bishops and priests; but he testified particular gratitude to God whenever he learned that any good deed had been done by a sovereign. When he was told of the hospitality shown the Jesuits by the otherwise infamous Empress Catharine of Russia, and by Frederick of Prussia, he loved to magnify this princely hospitality, and never ceased to thank God that the good seed was preserved in these remote and uncongenial countries. At the time of their suppression, which he lamented almost more than themselves, he had said, “If there remains only one Jesuit on earth, the order can be restored;” and he had always the fullest confidence that these valiant soldiers of Jesus Christ would again take their rightful place in the armies of the Church. “Let us pray God,” he would say, “for these holy religious, because their institute renders great service to souls, and is a powerful arm of the Church. People assert that they are schismatics! Verily, they are singular schismatics! Pope Ganganelli was God's instrument to humble them, and Pius VI is God's instrument to raise them up. It is God who kills and brings to life again. Let us pray to him, and he will not fail to bless them."

He was more uncompromising than ever with his old opponents, the Jansenists. "O blood of Jesus Christ!" he would exclaim, "how thou art trodden under foot by the impious, those wolves in sheeps' clothing, who pretend to revive among the faithful the spirit of the primitive Church! It was by a kiss of peace that Judas betrayed Jesus; it is by the same kiss of peace that these innovators to-day betray Jesus Christ and the souls he died to save! "Speaking of that unfortunate meeting of Bourg-Fontaine, he said with unwonted energy: *It was less an assembly of men than of devils.* The worst point of Jansenism in the saint's eyes was, that it practically closed up the greatest fountains of grace to fallen man—penance and the eucharist.

"Arnauld," said he, "could not find a more efficacious means of making the great sacrament inaccessible, than to exaggerate the dispositions which St. Paul requires for receiving worthily. I know that the angels themselves are unworthy of this sacrament, but our dear Lord has instituted it for men, to help their weakness. All our good comes to us from this sacrament; without it, we should be lost." He could never endure confessors who testified a sort of abomination for poor sinners. He was always inculcating upon his Fathers, and upon all the priests who placed themselves under his direction, or merely visited him, the tenderest compassion for great sinners. "Jesus Christ never showed anything else for them," said he. His instructions on this point are invaluable to all who have a care of souls. He was, and is still, admitted to be the greatest theologian of the day; his learning was extraordinary; his sanctity won him universal veneration; being almost a centenarian, his experience was necessarily vast; nevertheless his one cry is, MERCY TO SINNERS!

"The penitent," says he, "knows his state and detests it. He must not be left to his own strength; he must have the grace of the sacraments; this supplies what he cannot attain by his own strength. *It is a Jansenist doctrine to defer absolution.*" Again he says: "Many come to confession badly disposed; but when the confessor explains to them the hideousness of sin, the loss of paradise which it involves, the offence committed against God, they change their sentiments. The confessors themselves should endeavor to enkindle compunction in their penitents, when they are not contrite."

So our saint continued to the end the Most Zealous Doctor. He instructed all who approached him, by word and example. When secular gentlemen came to the convent to make the spiritual exercises, he would cause himself to be carried to the church that he might encourage them to avoid sin and devote themselves entirely to God. On one of these occasions he insisted on being brought thither, though he had just been bled. The effort of an hour's sermon on the love of Jesus and Mary reopened the wound, and blood flowed abundantly while he gave them his blessing. The audience reverently dipped their handkerchiefs in the oozing fluid, and ever after regarded them as relics. When priests made retreats in the house, he would always invite them to his room, and go through some spiritual reading with them. His great aim was to inspire them with devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin, horror of sin, *and mercy towards sinners.*

In June 1871, he paid his last visit to the nuns of the Convent of the Purity. He spoke as usual of the love of Jesus and Mary, of the benefit of a religious vocation, and the strictness with which religious should observe their rules. The nuns offered him a beautiful bouquet, which he accepted, and placed on Our Blessed Lady's altar. His solicitude for those who were more immediately his spiritual children, seemed to increase in intensity. "It is certain," said he to them one day, "that God wishes you to be saints. I recommend to you poverty and obedience; obedience, were it even to the cook. He who fails in obedience fails in his duty to God, and God will drive him out of the Congregation. I regard failings against poverty and obedience as capital offences."

He was, if possible, more particular than ever about enforcing punctuality in all the common exercises. "I do not want great things," said he, "let them be little, provided they be constant." But he did not suffer the less spiritual matters to escape him, and was always sure to inform himself as to how his dear sons were treated with regard to food, clothing, and lodging. We receive strangers hospitably," said he, "and are we to neglect our own?" He once gave his director, Father Villani, a very sharp reprimand for not making it his business to see that the Fathers and Brothers were supplied with all necessary for them; nor would he receive any excuse for neglect of duty in this particular. When unable to leave his bed, he was always reading, praying, or meditating; and if anything struck him as particularly worth remembering, he made it a point to tell it to the Fathers who came to sit with him after supper, that they too might be benefited.

The only thing about his infirmities that displeased him was that they made him burdensome to others. He could not bear to have his food brought to his room, until Father Villani commanded him, as it was impossible for him to go to the refectory. When a service was done him he testified his gratitude with a gracefulness peculiar to himself, and he would not ask the smallest favor except in the humblest manner.[17173] In short, he continued to be to the end, and in all his relations, what an admiring friend once described him, "the most perfect gentleman among the Neapolitan clergy."

His condition became unusually painful from September 19th, 1784, when an internal rupture took place as he was taking his daily drive. He was taken out of the carriage, brought to a neighboring house, and placed on a bed, to all appearance quite dead. The surgeons who were instantly summoned had great difficulty in repairing the effects of this new calamity, the rupture having become much worse by the jolting of the carriage, and he was brought home in a most alarming condition. Nevertheless he rallied a little, but as he could never again enter a carriage, the doctors ordered that he should be carried out in a sedan chair. The rector had to use all his authority to induce him to try this new vehicle, but after the first essay the saint had quite enough of it. "What!" he cried, "must I be carried on the shoulders of these poor men? The thought of it made the going out yesterday more painful than salutary." The Fathers explained that these people had no repugnance whatever to carry his chair or litter, that they earned their bread by this kind of labor; but it was all useless, and not to distress him again in this respect, a wheel-chair was procured, which could be easily propelled up and down the corridor.

He now sent his horses to Naples to be sold, and introduced them to the nobility and gentry of that city by the following flattering description: "As for the horses, I do not wish to have any scruples about them: mention therefore that one of them suffers in the jaws and cannot eat hay or oats; the other, which is older, suffers from vertigo, and throws himself on the ground from time to time; his ears must be pulled in order to make him rise. Explain all this, as I wish to be free from scruples." Such rare candor did not add to the value of the horses. One was sold for the equivalent of eighteen francs; the other for six! Such was the inglorious fate which awaited the superb equipage pertaining to the aristocratic prelate of St. Agatha.

On Friday, November 25th, 1784, the saint celebrated mass for the last time. As he gradually became more infirm, Father Villani felt constrained to deprive him of this, his greatest consolation. But he continued to hear mass and receive Holy Communion daily; sometimes he heard five or six masses, and he was accustomed to remain before the blessed sacrament, rapt and motionless, five or six hours every day, as Brother Francis Anthony testified.

He now began to suffer all the anguish, scruples, terror, and perplexities, which are the martyrdom of privileged souls; he became the sport of diabolical temptations to such an extent that he quite lost his ordinary serenity. “Who knows,” he would say, weeping, “whether I am in the state of grace, and whether I shall be saved? Ah! my sweet Jesus, do not allow me to be lost, for in hell I could not love thee. Punish me as I deserve, but do not cast me from thee! “He had also to struggle against the rebellion of his senses, and against thoughts of vanity, presumption, and incredulity. “There is not one of our mysteries,” said Father Mazzini, “against which he was not tempted I have been terrified at his temptations, but amazed at his courage in resisting them.”

Only one thing could quiet him—the voice of his confessor. Hence when these awful temptations were unusually importunate, he would drag himself to the room of Father Villani to receive a word of consolation. If Father Villani were not within reach, he would tell his temptation or scruple to any priest he could find; and, as he always hesitated about disturbing or inconveniencing any one, it cost him incredible pain to address himself to a Father, at the unseasonable hours during which these mental struggles usually became most violent.

What will seem almost incredible is, that this aged saint, broken down with sorrows and wasted to a shadow with bodily infirmities—a saint, moreover, who had always led a life of angelic purity—should now be a prey to those sensual temptations which become so dreadful a cross to a soul that has chosen Jesus Christ as her only spouse. So violent were these horrible temptations that at times he could not distinguish feeling from consent; and then he would sigh, and groan, and strike his feet against the ground as one writhing in agony which, passing outside of the soul, convulsed the body also. “My lord,” said a priest who called to see him one day, “you seem so melancholy, you who were never known to be other than cheerful.” “Alas!” replied he, “I endure the torments of hell.” Sometimes when unable to sleep at night, he would call the brother who usually waited on him, and the faithful Alexis who had followed him from St. Agatha, that they might aid him to dissipate his terrors, and not unfrequently were they obliged to summon Father Villani or Father Mazzini to his bedside.”

Even in prayer he ceased to find conscious support. “I go to God,” said he to his director, “and he repulses me. This morning I said: ‘My Jesus, I love thee,’ but a voice within me insisted: ‘That is not true.’ Alas! my Jesus,” he sighed, looking towards the crucifix, “shall I not have the happiness of loving thee eternally? My dear Mother Mary, why must I not love thee forever?” When tempted against faith, he was heard to murmur incessantly: “I believe, O Lord, and I wish to live and die a child of the Church.” Wonderful faith, but still more wonderful humility! A founder, a bishop, a theologian of European reputation, a master in Israel—his only boast, the only claim he makes on the Divine Mercy which he so loved to magnify is, not that he is priest, or bishop, or founder, or doctor, but a simple, docile child of the Church—a child such as Jesus took by the hand and set in the midst of apostles, saying: *Unless you become as* THIS LITTLE CHILD, *you shall not enter heaven.*

Temptations against chastity harassed him almost to the end. “I am eighty-eight years old,” said he one day to Father Criscuoli, “ and the fire of my youth is not yet extinct. My Jesus,” he would exclaim, in these terrific straits, “grant that I may die rather than offend thee! O Mary, if thou wilt not assist me, I may sin worse than Judas! Alas,” he sighed, “I have trodden under foot all my obligations; I no longer say mass or office; I neglect good works; my senses are rebellious, and I eat like a wolf. I cannot understand how God bears with me.”

When his meals were brought to him, he could scarcely induce himself to eat, for fear of sinning, and after having commenced, he was seen to stop suddenly, fearful of the mere natural gratification which a hungry man takes in satisfying his hunger. One day he said to Father Villani: “I hear an interior voice saying: ‘Thou hast forsaken thy God, and he has forsaken thee.’’ “The Father enlarged on the goodness of God, who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live. “O my God!” exclaimed the saint, “how many times have I said these words to encourage sinners, and see how I have forgotten them myself!”

The thick gloom that shrouded his once brilliant mind used to increase in intensity as the hour of communicating approached. Love made him long to be united to Jesus Christ, but fear sometimes predominated. Several times he would not have approached the Holy Table, if Father Villani had not come just in time to command him. One day he remained irresolute until noon, when his scruple suddenly passed away, and he cried out, shedding tears of devotion: “Give me Jesus Christ!” On another occasion, he was so intensely eager to communicate that moments appeared ages, and he repeated again and again with seraphic ardor: “When wilt thou come, my dear Jesus? I wish to satiate my love. I hope to love my Jesus eternally, although my sins have deserved hell.”

While most grievously assailed by temptation, he petitioned to be brought to the church, saying that the devil left him in peace while he was before the blessed sacrament. Heavily as these desolations and obscurities weighed upon him mentally, and even physically, he received all who came to consult him with his accustomed urbanity, resolved their doubts in his clear, incisive manner, and consoled them in their little afflictions as though he himself stood in no need of consolation. The mystery of direction in the Catholic Church! he could impart light though he was conscious only of darkness, and console others while he felt himself utterly abandoned by God! A cousin of his, member of a religious Congregation in Naples, who happened to be tormented by scruples and temptations, at the same time wrote to him for advice and received the following reply:

“Your Reverence tells me there are times when you believe yourself lost: let us console each other and be of good cheer, for I am often in similar straits. Although so near death, temptations do not leave me, and like yourself my only resource is the crucifix. Let us then embrace the cross, and keep our eyes immovably fixed on our dying Jesus. Thus shall, we have ground to hope that he will not condemn us to hell, where we should be separated from him, which would constitute the hell of our hell. Let us therefore say to him continually: ‘Lord, cause me to love thee, and then send me where thou pleasest. Chastise me as thou wilt—my sins deserve all

—but do not deprive me of the happiness of loving thee.’ . . . Amid all these disturbances, do not forget to pray for poor sinners, especially towards the close of your meditations.”

It is worthy of remark that despite all these scruples and desolations of spirit, our saint never omitted any of his devotional exercises. Prayer and spiritual reading divided his days. He read with particular satisfaction the Lives of St. Gregory Nazianzen and St. Francis de Sales, as they had both gone through trials resembling his own, and had come forth from the crucible unscathed and purified.

Chapter LXXIII

Diabolical phantoms.—The Neapolitan missionary.—The phantom-priest.—Another temptation.—Heavenly favors.—Supernatural instinct.—The feast of the Blood of Jesus.—The mental power of the saint not impaired.—The act of love.—Saintly coachmen.—God glorifies the sanctity of His servant.—The burning mountain.—The little children.—The saint's testimony to Father de Meo's sanctity.—Gift of prophecy.—Humility of the saint.—His heroic obedience. His gentlemanly demeanor among his brethren.—"Always crooked."—Advice to a young cleric.—Pious practices.—Vacant sees.

ORDINARY wiles not succeeding, the devil presented himself before the saint under the guise of strange phantoms. These apparitions came sometimes in one shape, sometimes in another, to alarm and annoy him. Once it was as a Neapolitan missionary who lauded his works to the skies, but Alphonsus humbled himself saying: "I have indeed done what I could, but all the good results from the divine assistance." "That is true," was the rejoinder, "but it will always be said they are your works, and you shall have the entire credit of the good effected by them." At this Alphonsus prayed and made the sign of the cross, upon which the phantom immediately vanished.

Another day the devil entered his room in the form of a priest, and endeavored to excite him to despair. "I have done nothing good of myself," said he, "I am incapable of anything good, I have no merits, save the merits of Jesus Christ." This humble confession quickly dispatched the tempter. "Oh, these are only natural feelings, and therefore perfectly sinless," said the devil on another occasion, when Alphonsus was molested with a sting of the flesh. Although the malignant spirit had come in the form of one of the Fathers, Alphonsus resisted this impious doctrine with so much energy that he almost fell from his chair.

Again the demon approached the saint as a gentleman whom he tenderly loved: "What can you hope for," said he, "what can either of us hope for, if both are destined to be damned?" "Even in hell I will love Jesus Christ," returned the fervent lover; "I trust not in my works, but in his Passion and death.” The cloven foot was made apparent by the effects of this confession, and its owner rapidly disappeared.

But our generous confessor was not left wholly without solace. Indeed his raptures and ecstasies were more frequent than ever during his latter years, and his more violent temptations were invariably followed by some precious heavenly favor. The Fathers who were honored by personal intercourse with him, love to expatiate on the ravishments of divine love which ever and anon irradiated the wasted lineaments of his noble countenance. Hours passed by unheeded when he knelt before the beloved of his soul, and in these intimate communications with his God, he already realized the perfect charity that casteth out fear. Even now was his hoary head decked with the halo of sanctity, and the darkness of night was often illumined by the celestial light which brightened his countenance. He knew by a supernatural instinct when the blessed sacrament was near, and on one occasion when Father Garzillo, who was ninety years old, had inadvertently passed from the memento for the living to the memento for the dead, the saint observed to the brother: “Father Garzillo has not consecrated to-day,” and the servant Alexis who had served the mass, testified that this was the case.

Once on Wednesday in Holy Week, Alexis overheard him repeat ten times over, “To-morrow is the feast of the Blood of Jesus.” Brother Anthony went in and said: “True, to-morrow will be Holy Thursday, when commemoration is made of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.” Alphonsus, perceiving that he had been heard, said no more. What made this a little remarkable is, that for some time previous he had been unable to distinguish the month of the year or the days of the week. Nevertheless his mind was not in the slightest degree impaired. One day he asked the young clerics who had come to pass the recreation hour with him, to explain a stanza of a hymn by St. John of the Cross. The mystical sense of this poem was too deep for students, but the saint explained it with such unction and eloquence, depth of learning and supernatural light, that both Fathers and clerics were mute with admiration.

Once when the saint had been bewailing that he was no longer able to serve God as of old, that he now satisfied none of his obligations, one of the Fathers, compassionating the genuine grief from which these lamentations exhaled, explained that his age and infirmities dispensed him from the pious exercises he had once performed with such fervent alacrity, and that an act of love would supply for all. “Teach me, then,” he said with emotion, to make an act of love.” The father bent over him, and uttered the beautiful words which we learn in childhood, and hope to repeat with ever increasing fervor as the dark shadows of death thicken about us: “My God! I love thee with my whole heart!” “My God! I love thee with my whole heart,” echoed the saint, and he repeated again and again this cherished aspiration, sucking sweetness out of every word till he was ravished in ecstasy.

Joseph di Mauro, one of the king’s architects, having come to Pagani to examine the Redemptorist church, went to pay his respects to the saint, who, when the first salutations were over, asked whether the theatres were much frequented at Naples. Mauro having replied in the affirmative, he continued with still greater interest: “And the churches—are they much frequented?” “O yes,” returned the architect, and you cannot imagine the good that results from this. All classes, especially the working people, crowd them, and we have saints even among the coachmen.” At these words the saint rose quickly from his recumbent position, and exclaimed in a tone of joy and triumph: “Saintly coachmen at Naples! *Gloria Patri.*” He could not sleep for joy at this intelligence, but during the night would frequently call to the brother or to Alexis:” You heard what Don Mauro said: ‘Saints among the coachmen at Naples!’ what do you think of that?”

During an eruption of Mount Vesuvius God glorified the sanctity of his servant. The town in which the saint lived was in great danger, from its proximity to the burning mountain. The Fathers, terrified at the frightful spectacle, informed Alphonsus of their peril; and, unable to resist their reiterated entreaties, he looked towards the flaming summit, and said: “I bless thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” He had scarcely uttered these sacred words, when the fiery torrents took another direction, and the volcano vomited its burning matter into the gorge of a neighboring valley.

We have already remarked the tender affection which Alphonsus always manifested for children. While he was able to go out, mothers would hold up their little ones for his blessing, and on perceiving them, he always had the carriage stopped. If they were ill, he blessed them and prayed over them, and his wrinkled hands lingered lovingly on their pretty little heads. When he could no longer leave the house, the mothers still brought their babies to him, especially the sick, and the brother and servant who usually presented them declared that he effected thousands of cures on these innocent patients.

The gift of prophecy with which he was endowed manifested itself more frequently as his end approached. One day he remarked to the Fathers, that the Congregation was about to sustain a great loss. Shortly after, that prodigy of erudition and sanctity, Father Alexander de Meo, was struck with apoplexy while preaching at Nola, and died in the church. Alphonsus felt this loss keenly, as he loved the deceased Father most tenderly, and revered him as a saint. “Father de Meo,” said he, “is such that he gives one an idea of the wisdom of God.” Wonderful praise, from a savant to a savant, from a father to his son, from a saint to a saint!

To a young man who came from Naples to be cured by the saint, he said: “Pray to our dear Lady to assist you to die well.” The youth understood him, took his advice, and in a few days was no more. Looking into futurity, Alphonsus in the spirit of a patriot and a saint, thanked God that he was not to live to witness the entrance of the French into his native city (1799). He often unconsciously gave evidence that he could read the secrets of hearts. A gentleman one day asked him to do something for his daughter, who was said to be possessed. “Possession!” he exclaimed, “let the girl make a good confession.” She followed his advice, and immediately ceased to be possessed.

The saint disclaimed all power to work miracles. “If I had any such power,” he said, “would I not heal my own crippled limbs, and “my paralyzed body.” Yet miracles he wrought almost every day of his life.

The faithful knew that God was with him, hence he never made his appearance without being surrounded. “Must I bless all these?” he once asked of Fathers Villani and Mazzini, his humility being alarmed at the gifts they attributed to him. The Fathers assured him that it was a bishop’s office to bless, and that it would not be right to refuse. The children, above all others, delighted to surround him; they instinctively knew that he loved them dearly. Look at these young sparrows around an old owl,” he once said gleefully, as the little ones clung to his habit or gamboled at his feet. He sometimes scrambled to the convent door to get a little fresh air; on these occasions his little favorites never left him alone.

The obedience of the saint was so perfect that he literally did, not wish to move, if possible, without permission. He obeyed even the servants who waited on him. They could make him do whatever they pleased.

His love of holy poverty grew stronger every day. If anyone chanced to say, “your book,” “your pen,” he would gently observe that he had nothing of his own. The poorest fare pleased him best, and it was with difficulty he could be persuaded to use any other.

To the last, he showed himself a perfect gentleman in his intercourse with his brethren. He hated to enter his wheel-chair, because one of his sons, or his dear humble friend Alexis, had to draw it. Father Villani refused to allow him to dispense with the poor comfort. “But,” objected the saint, “the noise of the wheels disturbs the Fathers on both sides of the corridor. There should be perfect silence while they write or study.” He insisted so much on this that the rector compromised by consenting to have the wheels of the noisy vehicle covered with leather. So scrupulous was the servant of God in all that concerned religious modesty, that he would only allow his wounds to be dressed when commanded by his director.

As he was unable to inflict those corporal mortifications to which he had accustomed himself from youth, he adopted the equally painful though passive one, of remaining motionless in his chair from morning till night. Alexis having one day placed him in an uncomfortable posture, set about rectifying the mistake. “What is the use of my moving,” pleaded the saint, smiling, “whichever way I turn, I am always crooked.” The grand vicar Rubini had noticed at Arienzo that he often kept the same position for five or six hours together.

The love of God inflamed his heart to such a degree that he seemed to lead the life of a seraph. “By the divine mercy,” said he to Father Villani, “I do not feel attached to anything terrestrial.” Very often his whole day seemed an uninterrupted transport of love. His sole delight was to receive Jesus Christ, or to remain, unconscious of the lapse of time, before the eternal lover of his soul in the tabernacle. Even during sleep, he could think only of Jesus and Mary: “O my sweet Jesus,” he would exclaim in his dreams, “how beautiful art thou! How lovely art thou, O Mary!” So great was his love for Jesus crucified, that when he was no longer able to make the stations, he used to perform the way of the cross in spirit in his room, before a large crucifix.

To a young cleric who came to ask his blessing he said: “My son, if you wish to persevere, communicate several times a week, and be devout to the blessed sacrament and the Blessed Virgin.” The youth longing for another blessing, again sought his father’s room: “My son,” said the saint at the second visit, “I to you recommend holy obedience. By obedience you will please God, and be loved in the Congregation; but I especially recommend you to be devout to Mary and the holy eucharist.” And on a third visit, the saint received him with more kindness than ever, and said: “If the enemy of God tempts you to leave the Congregation, immediately have recourse to Jesus and Mary, and do not cease to invoke them till the temptation vanishes.”

As he perceived his memory to be failing in some things, he made Brother Francis write some of his daily pious practices, lest he should forget them: “Ten acts of love; ten acts of conformity to the divine will; ten acts of love towards Jesus Christ; ten acts of love to the Blessed Virgin; ten acts of love to the blessed sacrament; ten acts of confidence in Jesus Christ; ten acts of confidence in Mary; ten acts of resignation in suffering; ten acts of abandonment to God; ten acts of abandonment to Mary; and ten prayers to do the will of God.”

The same interest in the temporal concerns of his Fathers and brothers, the same solicitude for the sick, distinguished him to the end, but he was far more interested in their spiritual good. His zeal extended over the whole Church, and he might say with the apostle whom he resembles in many respects: “Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is scandalized and I am not on fire?” Tell him of some scandal or disedification, and it affected him so deeply that he could neither sleep nor eat; but recount some of the glories of the Church, and the aged invalid visibly grew young again. Hearing from Father Falcoia that the missionaries were effecting much good in the Pontifical States, he testified the liveliest joy, and incessantly repeated, “God be praised forever! God be praised!”

When he heard there was a prospect of reconciliation between the courts of Rome and Naples, he seemed transported with gladness. The pretensions of the Neapolitan court caused many sees to be left vacant. “I am anxious that the bishoprics should be provided with holy prelates,” said he, “for when sees are vacant, things go wrong, and souls are lost. Do you know what results from the absence of bishops? The loss of souls, without any notice being taken of it. This has caused me to weep before God for the past six months. The want of a bishop is the ruin of a diocese."

When the Bishops of Gaeta and Avellino came to inquire after his health, he replied: "I am as one who must soon appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ." Then, with a touch of his old fire, he said to the former: "Now that you are going to Naples, I entreat you to send for Father N—, and tell him from me, not to maltreat souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ." This was a priest of Jansenistical proclivities. One day our most zealous doctor was accidentally overheard bearing to himself this magnificent testimony: "Lord, thou knowest that all I have thought, said, done, or written, has had no other end than thy glory and the salvation of souls." With regard to the habitual candor and sincerity of his language, he once let these words escape, when conferring with Father Villani on the state of his conscience: "I am a bishop, and I ought to tell the truth; I do not remember having ever uttered a deliberate falsehood, even when I was a child."

Chapter LXXIV

God alone.—Incorrect conclusion.—Vigor of the saint’s intellect.—His fear of God’s judgments.—His exalted idea of the sacerdotal dignity.—His consummate tact.—Celebration of his ninetieth birthday.—Young men of ninety.—Foreshadowing.—Interesting details.—The saint is visited by his absent children.—“By thy words thou shalt be justified.”—Visit of Count Joseph Liguori.—“Save your soul.”—Parting benedictions.—Brother Gerard.—Delicate attentions of the Neapolitan bishops.—Universal grief for the hopeless condition of the saint.—Miracles.

WE now approach the term of our saint’s long and weary pilgrimage. More than ever, *God alone* possessed his whole heart and soul, and nothing save what concerned the glory or service of God awakened within him the slightest interest. When people spoke in his presence of mere worldly matters, he would make his deafness an excuse for keeping silence, or assume an air of imbecility that made superficial observers imagine that the once bright intellect of the great doctor was now obscured by the dull mists of dotage. Yet when subjects were introduced which he considered worthy of his attention, he conversed as gracefully and intelligently as ever, and proved himself capable of grappling successfully with the more obscure questions of moral, mystical, or dogmatic theology. Those who consulted him on matters of conscience, had their doubts resolved and their difficulties cleared up as lucidly as he could have done it in the prime of life.

“Pray for me,” said he to some priests who visited him, “I am about to present myself at the judgment-seat of God;” and this idea affected him so deeply that the priests withdrew in terror, saying: “If he trembles, what will become of us?” He had a most exalted idea of the sacerdotal dignity. Two newly ordained priests having come one day to pay their respects, he kissed their hands with devotion, and exclaimed: “O what a great dignity is the priesthood! You are now exalted above sovereigns, kings, and emperors!” He showed a ready tact in accommodating his conversation to his visitors. When Don Gaetano Celano and his wife, who were munificent benefactors of the Congregation, visited him a little previous to his happy death, he received them with his usual urbanity, and testified the liveliest gratitude for the favors they had done him. Then, determined that they should not leave him without receiving some spiritual benefit, he dexterously turned the conversation on the duties of the married state, and gave them some useful counsel, assuring them that their happiness depended on their having but one heart and one will.

His biographers give numerous other instances to show the acuteness of his fine mental powers to the very last. And not a few among the eminent men of Naples came at one time or another to test them; but it was not a wreck of genius they encountered, the saint, the scholar, the philosopher—he was all these, as in the heyday of youth and strength.

On the 27th of September, 1786, a solemn high mass was celebrated in the church of Nocera, in thanksgiving for the preservation of the Father and Founder for so many years. Father Villani and the community paid him an early visit, to announce to him that he had completed his ninetieth year, and offer their warm and sincere congratulations. The saint was deeply moved by this graceful attention, and shedding tears of joy he said: "I do not deserve such kindness; all comes from the divine mercy. I thank my dear Fathers and Brothers most sincerely. God himself will reward their charity."

When he heard of the death of his old friend, Father Garzillo, who was almost a hundred, he made an act of resignation, said a *De profundis,* and then jocosely remarked: "I am another of these young men." He knew that he would soon join the friends of his youth and the companions of his declining years, and he rejoiced in the thought. To a Carmelite father who was in the habit of visiting him every year, he said, in September, 1786: "Father Joseph, we shall not meet again next year." His words were prophetic. On the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16, 1787, he observed in a joyful tone to his faithful attendant: "Brother, I have a new function to perform." He alluded to his approaching death.

Two days after, the gravest symptoms supervened. As the body became weaker, the soul increased in fortitude. Not a doubt, fear, or scruple now disturbed the dying saint. "I was constantly beside him," wrote the affectionate and devoted Tannoia, "and I did not suffer the gentlest sigh of him who had loved me so well, to pass unheeded."

Mass was celebrated in his room, and he communicated daily, as usual. It was crowded from morning till night. The Bishop of Nocera, Monsignore Sanfelici, came every day, as did all the neighboring priests and religious, anxious to gather some of the precious pearls that dropped from the lips of the dying saint. To a Father who asked how he was, he said sweetly: “Recommend me to Jesus Christ.” To a similar question from the faithful Brother Anthony, he merely said: “Thanks be to God.”

When the same brother asked him to bless all the Fathers and Brothers, he said with touching tenderness: “And you too. You must pray to God and the Blessed Virgin for me,” he continued, as he blessed his beloved children, and, fixing his dying eyes upon them with unspeakable tenderness, foretold them all manner of benedictions.

On the morning of the 24th, he frequently asked the surrounding Fathers to be quick in giving him holy communion. But there was some delay, and when the time for receiving came he was unconscious. The doctors now gave him over. When somewhat recovered, he was told to prepare for extreme unction, but remembering he had not communicated, he said; “I wish to have his body.” He was again told to prepare for his last anointing, but his mind was full of one idea, and he repeated, “give me his body.” Fearing that he was not sufficiently conscious, his director did not comply with this request, but administered extreme unction, and then desired him as bishop and superior to bless the Congregation in the names of Jesus and Mary. Alphonsus raised his hand, and imparted to all his children the coveted benediction.

As soon as his life was despaired of, Father Villani notified the distant houses, and all the rectors and as many of the Fathers as could be spared, set out to visit him. This pleased him greatly, and his delight at seeing his dear sons once more, especially those of the States, lit up his wasting lineaments, as he blessed them with the sign of the cross.

“By thy words thou shalt be justified.” Collecting the scattered sentences that escaped from this profoundly learned, eloquent, and holy man, during the closing days of his mortal career, we present a few to our readers as his most fitting panegyric. “My Jesus, I love thee with my whole heart, because thou didst die for me.” “Give me my Jesus.” “I offer all my sufferings to Jesus.” “I believe all the Holy Catholic Church teaches, and therefore I have hope.” “Is the eucharist coming?” “My Jesus, do not leave me.” Such are the blessed aspirations that issued from the abundance of the burning heart of this earthly seraph.

His nephew, Don Joseph, came from Naples with his wife and her uncle, the Prince of Polleca, and on entering his room, said: “I have come to see you, and to ask your blessing.” “I thank you,” said Alphonsus, with the exquisite courtesy which always distinguished him; but when the young nobleman asked for some good advice, the dying man repeated impressively: “SAVE YOUR SOUL.” The young wife, Donna Gusmana, having come in with her uncle, Alphonsus blessed them also. Joseph desiring to hear more words of wisdom from the saint who had watched over his childhood, and guided his boyish steps in virtue, came closer, took the cold and clammy hand, and reminded the dying saint that he was his nephew. The saint pressed his hand, and held it for some time, after which he endeavored to raise his feeble arm in benediction over the heir of his dear, deceased brother; but finding that the party still lingered, he said: “Be satisfied; it is finished; you can go now.” SAVE YOUR SOUL was the alpha and omega of his advice to his relatives on all occasions.

Temptations of most violent character now assailed him at intervals, but the voice of his confessor, or a pious ejaculation, sufficed to disperse them. The Fathers would suggest, as occasion required, acts of every virtue, which he repeated distinctly. Once he asked suddenly: “What must I do to merit?” “Do the will of God,” rejoined a Father. Then the saint remained silent. Sometimes he would fix his eyes lovingly on a picture of Our Lady of Sorrows. Every morning many masses were celebrated in his presence, the Fathers being anxious to gratify him in every particular; and to say or to hear mass he had always regarded as his greatest privilege and delight. Brother Francis Anthony asked him to bless the houses of the Papal States, which he did in a loud voice, and with evident emotion. He gave his parting benediction to his former diocese, and in particular to the nuns who had loved him as a Father. Then he said with emphasis: “I bless the king, all the generals, princes, and ministers, and all the magistrates who administer justice.”

Although the saint’s advanced age gave little hope of his recovery, yet prayers ascended to heaven without intermission, for that intention, from convents, churches, religious congregations, and the poor. When one of the Fathers placed in his hand a picture of his dear son, Brother Gerard, to whom he had much devotion, guessing the intention of the donor, he said sweetly: “God does not will that Brother Gerard should cure me.”

Though the news of the change for death could not excite much surprise, it caused universal grief. It was only now that priests and people realized how much they loved him. Prayers were offered all over Naples, that God might give him a happy passage; and the town of St. Agatha rivalled his native city in demonstrations of grief and affection. Many of the bishops of the kingdom ordained that the collect *Pro infirmo* should be said at every mass until the purified soul of this distinguished colleague should have passed to a brighter world.

The wound in the saint's throat from which he had suffered so much at Arienzo, reopened some days before his death, and rendered his condition intensely painful; but his patience and resignation under this new affliction could not fail to enhance his crown. God again glorified his sanctity by miracles. His touch and his blessing restored hearing to Father Samuel, ex-Provincial of the Capuchins; healed the inveterate ulcer of Father Buonopane; and enabled the crippled canon, Dominic Villani, to throw away his crutches, and spring about with all the ability of his youthful days.

Although Alphonsus had prophesied that his death was at hand, and appearances fully justified the prediction, his sons could not accustom themselves to the idea of losing him. Prayers were offered day and night, that he might be left with them just a little longer; and, not to neglect human means, they summoned two eminent physicians from Naples. But, as the departing saint himself observed, it was not God's will to restore him. Towards midnight on the 25th of July, he became so faint that the attendants thought his chastened spirit had already passed the blessed portals of death. Masses succeeded each other in his room, from two in the morning of the 26th until noon. At the *Sanctus* of the first mass, he opened his eyes and looked at the celebrant; at the *Elevation* he did the same, and moved his lips as if in prayer. Absolution was pronounced over him at three A. M., and the prayers for the dying commenced, but he revived during the litanies. Six of the students having come from Ciarani for his last benediction, he recognized them, though in his agony, and appeared pleased to see them. Twice over he blessed these dear children of his heart.

At a later mass he communicated, and during a following mass made his thanksgiving. The Fathers who tried with all their ears to distinguish every word he pronounced, now seized only these: "I hope so," but his lips continued to move in inaudible prayer. He asked for his beads, and having received them, commenced to recite the rosary, but so gently that his breathings no longer formed audible words.

On the twenty-seventh, his sufferings were intense. Unable to find rest in any position he cried out at intervals, “Help me,” “unbind me,” “place me on the ground.” During these terrible spasms, he often exclaimed: “My Jesus!” Mortification having already set in, a poultice replaced his bandage; but, when he felt the infirmarian applying it, he said with tears: “They have touched me.” Being informed that it was only Brother Leonard, who had been with him about half a century, he appeared satisfied.

Next morning, being asked how he felt, he replied: “I am dying.” Then perceiving the solicitude evinced by the Community and the medical men, he said: “It is finished.” Being asked whether he would like to hear mass and communicate, he joyfully signified his assent and began his preparation. This was on Saturday. It was the last time he received Jesus his love, in the blessed sacrament, to which he was so tenderly devoted.

Chapter LXXV

Details.—"Give me the Madonna."—The saint can no longer articulate.—He is visited by our Lady herself.—Answer to his prayers.—The crucifix.—His prayer to die among his beloved brethren.—It is beautifully answered.—He dies in an ecstasy of love.—His soul among the seraphim.—His personal appearance.—Character.—obsequies.—Veneration of all classes, especially the clergy.—Funeral honors, devised by the Bishop of Nocera, dispensed with.—Masses celebrated without intermission.—The funeral.—Miracles.

TO a last inquiry of his medical friend as to how he felt, the saint replied: "My hour approaches." Fearing that mental and bodily weakness might prevent his raising his heart to God by aspirations of love and oblation, he begged the Fathers to suggest pious affections, and he repeated in a faint tone every ejaculation they uttered. Once, when they ceased, fearing to fatigue him, he said in a tone of loving reproach: "Have you no more holy thoughts to suggest to me?" When he seemed about to expire, the blessed candle was placed in his hands, and the beautiful prayers with which Holy Mother Church soothes and sanctifies the last breathings of her children, were once more affectionately recited. After a while, a picture of Our Blessed Lady was given him; he opened his eyes, and joined his hands in an attitude of prayer. Then having kissed the picture, he recited distinctly the *Ave Maria.* His mind now seemed agitated by conflicting emotions, and pressing his hand to his forehead, he exclaimed: "My thoughts, will you not let me rest?" Next morning he took the crucifix, raised it to his lips, opening and reopening his eyes to contemplate it. When told to place himself in the hands of Mary, he stretched out his arms to signify that he offered himself to his dear Mother.

Next morning a picture being placed in his hands; he looked at it attentively, and said: "Is this St. Joseph?" "Yes," returned a Father, "recommend yourself to him." The servant of God continued to gaze fixedly on the image, and gently murmured some words, the sense of which the attendant Fathers could not catch. When the devoted Alexis inquired whether he wanted anything, he replied: "All is over." Then he said: "Give me the Madonna." When a picture of Our Lady was put in his hands, he began to invoke her, and recommend himself to her protection. In the evening the death rattle commenced, and it never left him. About nine (Aug. 29th), the prayers for the dying were again said, and the holy sufferer being asked to bless the Congregation once more, moved his head in acquiescence, being no longer able to raise his hand. He had frequent fainting fits next day, but to rouse him to consciousness it was sufficient to repeat the sacred names of Jesus and Mary. A Father having offered him the picture of St. Michael which hung at the head of his bed, he kissed it, and gazing on it with affection, recommended himself to the blessed archangel. To the acts of faith, hope, and charity suggested, he murmured assent, but almost inaudibly. Ere long he could not articulate anything, but he continued to respond to each pious affection, either by opening his eyes, or moving his lips.

Our Lady herself consoled him in his last moments. At the close of day, the two Fathers who assisted him saw his face suddenly become resplendent, and a sweet smile overspread his lips. He held a picture of Our Lady which a Father had put in his hands, reminding him to invoke her for a happy death. As soon as the sweet name of Mary was mentioned, he opened his eyes and looked at the picture. About seven, he appeared to have another interview with the Queen of Heaven, as his biographer Tannoia has left on record.

Then was the life-long prayer of the servant of Mary answered. “O Consolation of the afflicted,” he exclaims, “do not abandon me in my last hour! Obtain for me the grace of invoking thee often, that I may expire with thy sweet name, and that of thy divine Son, on my lips. Pardon my boldness, O my Queen; come thyself to console me with thy presence before I expire. I am a sinner, it is true, and therefore do not deserve this favor; but I am thy servant, I love thee, I have great confidence in thee.[17174] O Mary, I hope in thee; do not refuse me this consolation. . . . Thou hast bestowed it on many others; I also long for it. If my boldness is great, thy goodness is greater, for it seeks out the most unworthy to console them.”[17175]

The dying prelate wished to have a crucifix continually in his hand, and as everyone desired to possess one that had been used by him, a new one was substituted every few minutes for the one he held. He had always longed and prayed to die among his beloved sons. “O my God!” he exclaims in his “Preparation for Death,” “I thank thee now for the favor thou wilt one day grant me, of dying surrounded by my dear brethren, who will have no anxiety but for my eternal salvation, and who will all assist me to die well.” God gave him this consolation most munificently. The Fathers crowded in from all the houses, and like another Jacob he died surrounded by a numerous progeny. It was not in a death struggle but in an ecstasy of love that the great spirit of Alphonsus di Liguori passed from earth. No pain, no sigh, no sorrow, marked its exit. The martyr of love fell asleep in the arms of Jesus and Mary as the *Angelus* bell was ringing. The body, chastised and brought under subjection, lay in the solemn and venerable beauty of “precious death;” the soul might now be sought among the seraphim. He at last rested from his labors, an eternal rest; his works still follow him.

The great Neapolitan saint exchanged exile for paradise on the 1st day of August, 1787, at the age of ninety years, ten months, and five days. The Congregation had then entered its fifty-fifth year, and more than twelve years had elapsed since the saint had resigned the episcopate.

Alphonsus di Liguori was of middle size, and was remarkable for personal beauty; his head was rather large, his complexion fresh. A broad, lofty forehead, piercing, but tender blue eyes, an aquiline nose, and a small mouth often relaxing in a heavenly smile, were his most attractive features. His hair and beard had been jet black; but sorrows and labors blanched them while he was still in his prime. Being naturally short-sighted, he usually wore glasses, except when preaching, or conversing with women. His voice was clear and sonorous; it was capable of filling the most spacious edifice, and it never failed him till the last. He had an imposing mien, but his manners, though somewhat grave, were exceedingly frank and gracious. From infancy to old age, he always made himself amiable and agreeable to everyone. His judgment was subtle and penetrating, his memory prompt and tenacious, his mind precise and methodical. His life was one of continued application; a fulfilment of his vow *never to lose one moment of time.*

He was by nature courageous and enterprising, and he usually succeeded even beyond his own expectations, because his confidence in God never failed. Not to be cast down by adversity, he was never unduly elated by prosperity.

His reprimands were energetic, but he softened their severity by his habitual gentleness. Unpitying towards himself, he was all charity towards others. Such is the description biographers concur in giving of our saint.

The obsequies of the great doctor were solemn and beautiful, such as he himself would have desired; tears, devotion, veneration—such were the manifestations of all who came to pay him the last duty. The Bishop of Nocera, Monsignore Sanfilici, ordered that every possible respect should be shown to the sacred remains of his illustrious colleague; and by his order, the bells of all the churches in Nocera responded to the solemn tolling which, from the belfry of the Redemptorist convent, announced that the magnanimous soul of the holy Founder reposed in the bosom of the Father.

The city and the adjacent country poured out their inhabitants to give a last look at the calm and beautiful face, so familiar to them all in its aspect of suffering and resignation, of sweetness and benignity. So great was the concourse that a detachment of the royal cavalry was required to preserve order. Every one wished to touch the sacred body; rosaries, scapulars, and other objects of devotion were constantly being applied to it, and whatever was sanctified by contact with this emaciated frame, so long the tabernacle of the Holy Ghost, was ever after treasured as a relic. The bier was surrounded by star-like lights, emblematic of his faith, *the victory that overcometh the world,* and covered with the fairest blossoms which the beautiful gardens of Nocera yielded, fitting types of the purity and innocence of his life, and the “good odor of Christ Jesus” which he was, and is, to the world.

The priests, regular and secular, of the diocese of Nocera, relieved each other all day in chanting the office and the *Libera,* for one who so long had been their father, their doctor, their saint, their pride. His extraordinary erudition had made him an oracle among them for more than half a century; his undoubted sanctity had challenged their admiration; his wonderful sweetness had won their hearts, and disarmed the petty jealousies which poor human nature is sometimes weak enough to show, when there is question of virtue and talent almost above its own comprehension. Alphonsus de Liguori was always extremely beloved by every order of the clergy. As he surpassed all his contemporaries in learning, so he surpassed them in humility; and in their intercourse with him, instead of being dazzled by his wonderful mental gifts, they were invariably captivated by the genuine goodness of his heart. He loved his own Congregation, but he loved, too, every congregation, every order, every priest, every religious, that labored for Jesus and Mary. Nothing small, mean, or ignoble, ever sullied the expansive soul of our most zealous doctor; he was a thorough gentleman in his intercourse with the clergy, and in his dealings with them self-interest never entered into his calculations. He was edified by their virtues, he took pride in their learning, he gloried in their success! Far from confining his zeal or his sympathies within the limits of his own Congregation, he would have all to be preachers, prophets, saints—*Redemptorists,* in the sense that every priest is the co-laborer of the great Redeemer, *with whom there is mercy and copious redemption.* Hence the extraordinary affection and veneration shown him by all orders of the clergy, especially those to whom he was personally known.

It was arranged that the blessed corpse should be carried in procession through the town, resting during the chanting of the *Libera* in the church of the saint's dear daughters, the Poor Clares, and giving a similar consolation to his equally dear nuns of the Purity; the cortège to return, in the same order in which it set out, to the Redemptorist convent. But the gentlemen of Pagani, or the lower town, would not hear of this arrangement, fearing that by some pious stratagem the bishop would seize the blessed remains for his cathedral. Vainly did Monsignore pledge his word that nothing of the kind was intended; it was only when the Fathers themselves assured the excited people that no such project was contemplated, that they became calm; the bishop, fearing a tumult, dispensed with the elegant arrangements he had projected for the funeral, and decided that everything should be conducted with the greatest simplicity.

Although on this account no invitations were issued, the church and convent of the Redemptorist Fathers were crowded with ecclesiastics of every grade. Temporary altars were erected for the accommodation of the numerous priests who wished to offer up the holy sacrifice in presence of the blessed remains, and masses succeeded each other without intermission from dawn till noon, each day while the holy body remained unburied, in that church doubly consecrated by the preaching, the prayers, the tears of a saint.

Crowds besieged the church from daybreak, the inhabitants of the neighboring villages insisting upon offering their homages to “the saint.” The clergy, regular and secular, of the city and the adjacent towns, formed as it were a guard of honor around the blessed bier, praying rather *to* a saint than *for* a saint. The mothers, as usual, presented their children to touch and kiss the blessed body, and Brother Francis Anthony and the ever faithful Alexis “suffered them to come,” remembering the delight which their beloved master had always taken in being surrounded by the precious little innocents, and that he had never shown himself weary of the importunity of the eager mothers who presented them.

At a signal from the bishop, Monsignore Sanfelici, the funeral procession began to form. Six gentlemen of Nocera begged the honor of carrying the relics of the saint, but the rectors of the four Redemptorist convents in the kingdom of Naples refused to relinquish their prior claims. The precious burden was therefore placed upon their shoulders; canons held the corners of the pall, and six gentlemen surrounded the coffin bearing lighted torches. The Fathers of St. Francis of Paula, the Carmelite Fathers, the Redemptorist priests, students, and lay-brothers, and the Cathedral Chapter, preceded the bier, the Bishop of Nocera followed, and behind him the military and the townspeople. The procession did not enter the town, but merely described an immense semicircle before the church and monastery, going out by the great door of the latter and returning through the principal gate of the former. When the rectors laid down the sacred remains, the canons chanted the office, after which a grand requiem mass was celebrated. The funeral oration was pronounced by the celebrated Don F. Pinto, afterwards Bishop of Tricarico. To satisfy the surging mass of people who could not find room in the church, the pulpit was placed near the main entrance.

At eleven o’clock A. M. (Aug. 2) a celebrated artist of Naples came, without being at all invited, to take the likeness of the saint. All trace of pain and suffering had vanished from the noble countenance, which now appeared full of vigor and manly beauty, more expressive than ever of the two great qualities which preeminently distinguished the most celebrated of our modern bishops, sanctity and intellectual gifts. When the cast was removed, part of the skin of the left nostril adhered to it, and the bright blood which issued from the wound was eagerly but reverently gathered by the pious multitude.

Whole communities of monks were hourly arriving, with clergy of every order, to the number of several hundreds, from all quarters. The space in front of the church was thronged with the carriages of the nobility, who vied with the poor, the dearer children of the "good bishop," in testifying their affectionate veneration. Every one begged to have something that he had touched, but it was impossible to gratify the pious avidity of so many thousands. At seven in the evening, the bishop, fearing that some disorder might occur in such an immense concourse, or that some disagreement might take place between the people and the soldiers on guard, ordered that the holy body should be buried. It had remained on the catafalque for over thirty-three hours, yet notwithstanding the oppressive heat of the weather, it emitted no unpleasant odor. It was deposited in a leaden chest, sealed with the seals of the bishopric of Nocera, the municipality of Pagani, and the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. This chest was fastened with three keys, one of which was given to the mayor of the town, the second to the saint's relative, the Prince of Polleca, who attended in the name of the Liguori family, and the third to the Rector of Pagani. The chest was deposited at the left angle of the high altar. Several beautiful epitaphs were composed for a mausoleum which the Fathers intended to raise to their saintly Founder, but as this project was not carried out, the door of his vault was closed with a simple marble slab, bearing a concise Latin inscription, of which the following is a translation:

HERE REPOSES THE BODY
OF THE
MOST ILLUSTRIOUS AND REVEREND LORD
ALPHONSUS DI LIGUORI,
BISHOP OF
SAINT AGATHA OF THE GOTHS,
AND FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE
MOST HOLY REDEEMER.

In those days when neither steam nor telegraph had come to annihilate space, the news of our saint's happy translation to eternal glory was slow in reaching the more distant towns and hamlets which he had formerly evangelized. Many of the people of these places, especially the peasants—for Alphonsus di Liguori, patrician as he was by birth, had always been, like all our great and holy churchmen, the friend and Father of the working classes and the poor—thronged the church for many days subsequent to the funeral, to pray beside his tomb and touch it with their scapulars and rosaries. And the little children loved to testify their affection and veneration for the gentle Father to whom their innocence and candor had endeared them, by kneeling near his sacred relics, and kissing, with humility and devotion, the sepulchral stone which enclosed "the saint."

Miracles immediately began to glorify the memory of the humble servant of God. Wherever he was known or had ever been heard of, the sick and the sorrowful were inspired on a sudden with an extraordinary sentiment of his power before God; and they felt that he who had always testified such tender compassion for the corporal and spiritual miseries of poor human nature, *could* and *would* relieve their sufferings. Hundreds of well-authenticated miracles prove that the new saint did not disappoint the confidence of his clients. As an appropriate and touching tribute to the wonderful innocence of his long life, his boisterous friends, the little children, uniing versally styled him "the saint." And this praise literally proceeded also from the mouths of infants and sucklings, for a child of a year old, who had just been cured of a mortal illness by Alphonsus, on being shown his picture, raised his little hands and eyes to heaven, and exclaimed several times: "The saint is in heaven! Alphonsus the saint! "The infant had never before uttered a syllable.

Chapter LXXVI

Honors shown to the saint's memory.—Testimony of the Archbishop of Palermo.—Of Cardinal Benediti.—Of the Archbishop of Amalfi.—Letter of Monsignore Lopez.—Magnificent obsequies.—Letter from the Bishop of Nusco.—The Superior-General of the pious workmen.—Mother Raphael.—The modern Francis de Sales.—Cardinal Spinelli.—The Archbishop of Salerno.—Other distinguished testimony.—Alphonsus a model for all orders of the clergy.—His extraordinary sweetness towards sinners.—His life-long propensity to magnify the mercy and goodness of God.

ALL the Redemptorist houses, both in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the Papal States, vied with each other in the posthumous honors they showered on their sainted Founder; but reverence and affection for the great Bishop were by no means confined to his more immediate children. All the religious congregations to which he had ever been affiliated, now proudly claimed him as a brother, and no royal personage was ever honored with obsequies as magnificent as were everywhere spontaneously celebrated for the most zealous doctor. Music, painting, poetry, and oratory, of the first order, were brought into requisition to commemorate one who excelled in all these departments. The most distinguished literary men of the day delighted to consecrate their worthiest efforts to him whom they had long looked upon as their greatest glory and honor. A mere collection of the orations in which his virtues were extolled, and his intercession invoked, would fill a larger volume than we have been able to devote to his life. As a testimony of the universal veneration in which he was held, we shall here make a few extracts from the numerous letters of condolence which flowed in upon the Fathers of Nocera, when it was known that the saint had passed from earth, entirely omitting those which were written by his own sons, the Redemptorist Fathers.

"Let us fearlessly assert," wrote Monsignore San Severino, Archbishop of Palermo, "that we stand in need of the prayers of the saintly bishop, who has now received the reward of his labors, his struggles, and his virtues. . . . As for me, I expect great assistance from him, because he always loved me during his mortal life. He will obtain of God, that I may lead a better life henceforth, and belong wholly to Him.” “The loss of Monsignore Liguori,” wrote Cardinal Banditi, “ has been felt by me with a keenness proportioned to the great love I bore him. The particulars of his death have affected me to tears, and the miracles he continues to work in all directions prove that he will one day be numbered among the saints whom the Church delights to honor.”

“I pray,” wrote Monsignore Puoti, Archbishop of Amalfi, when he heard that his saintly brother in the episcopacy was dying, “that when the venerable Bishop Liguori shall have gone to enjoy the Divine beauty, he will, through the great kindness he has ever shown me, remember me, and obtain for me a double share of his spirit, that I may perform well my laborious and difficult ministry, and finish my course in the peace of Christ.”

The following is from Monsignore Lopez, Bishop of Nola, who was afterwards viceroy of Sicily:

“My soul has been filled with the most lively sorrow at the sad tidings of the death of Bishop Liguori. I grieve for his loss as much as his venerable Congregation do; if they weep for a father and a founder, I weep for a man, worthy of the greatest respect for his holiness and learning; but the bitterness of my sorrow is tempered by a firm confidence that God has crowned him with the glory of the saints, and that he is now our most charitable intercessor in heaven.

The Fathers having gratefully acknowledged the respect shown to their illustrious Founder by Monsignore Amato, Bishop of Lacedogna, who had magnificent obsequies celebrated in his cathedral, he answered Father Villani, September 22, 1787:

“I have only performed a duty. I wished to honor the memory of our saintly and admirable prelate; and though fully persuaded that he needs not our suffrages, I feel bound to have many masses offered, to satisfy in a trifling degree the great obligations I am under to him.”

“I feel my confidence in his powerful intercession increase,” wrote Monsignore Bonaventure, Bishop of Nusco, “and I more than ever invoke him in my spiritual wants. His picture I wear around my neck, and I long above all things to possess the relic you promised me. God is wonderful in his saints. . . . I hope, despite my extreme misery, to obtain everything through the intercession of him whose death we unite in deploring, although it is less a subject of grief than of joy.”

Father Antonio, Superior-General of the Congregation of Pious Laborers, wrote: “I have always regarded Don Alphonsus Liguori as a saint, and every member of my Congregation shares my sentiments. You ask me to procure prayers for him, but you should rather advise me to recommend myself and my brethren to him, that he who loved us on earth may continue to protect us in heaven.”

“The sad news of our common Father’s decease has produced in my soul conflicting sentiments,” wrote that dear daughter of our saint, Mother Raphael, superior of the nuns of the Most Holy Redeemer at St. Agatha, “sorrow because of the loss he will be to the world, and joy from the firm conviction I feel that he now lives in the mansions of glory, where he will become our intercessor with God.”

Don Mariano Arcieri, who is so celebrated for his virtues that it is hoped he may one day be raised on our altars, was not at all astonished at the miracles which followed the holy bishop’s death: “I have always considered him a saint,” said he, “and as such I have recommended myself to him even during his life.” Arcieri was so charmed by the excessive meekness of the saint, that he never called him anything but the modern St. Francis de Sales.

Indeed, Alphonsus had been regarded as a saint for almost three quarters of a century. Cardinal Spinelli wrote of him to one of the great Roman Congregations, in 1748: “We can truly assert that Don Alphonsus Liguori, a Neapolitan chevalier, professor of theology, and an indefatigable missionary, merits, as much through his rare piety as his extraordinary erudition, especially in ecclesiastical matters, to receive from the Holy See permission to read and retain the works of all prohibited authors.” Monsignore Rossi went so far as to accept the archbishopric of Salerno at his request. Alphonsus having once asked a certificate for some person: “I would not have granted it to anyone else,” said the archbishop, “but my conscience can repose on your word in perfect security.” The same prelate designated Alphonsus to Pope Benedict XIV, as a man of wonderful learning, unvarying uprightness, consummate prudence, and angelic life.

The aged Monsignore Giannini sought to be directed in all things by the holy Founder, and was wont to style himself his son, and beg the reluctant saint to treat him as a son. The Bishop of Caserto used to call him a perfect mirror of justice. Bishop Rosa was accustomed to say: “We have a true saint on earth in Don Alphonsus Liguori.” Canon Barba, who was more or less connected with the saint for many years, bore him this splendid testimony: “In all the varied intercourse I had with him, I saw that his life resembled the Lives of the Saints whom the Church honors on her altars. He always reminded me of a Francis de Sales or a Philip Neri.”

The celebrated Don Joseph Jorio once wrote to some ecclesiastics who begged him to give a mission in their territory: “I entreat, I exhort, I most earnestly beseech you, to engage Father Alphonsus to undertake this work, for he is the first missionary in the kingdom for learning and sanctity.”

Monsignore Kalifati, the learned Bishop of Osia, in one of his works describes his brother prelate “as very celebrated in the Church of God and in the republic of letters, for prudence, zeal, piety, and vast learning, and for his excellent works, all which rendered him deserving of unbounded praise.”

The learned authors of the Historical Dictionary of Illustrious Men (Venice, 1796) style him a truly apostolic man, a perfect ecclesiastic, an accomplished model for bishops, and a most powerful defender of Christian morality; and speak of his works with unbounded enthusiasm.

The Archbishop of Morreale, in his “Vera Sposa,” says: “Monsignore Liguori is the hero of our age. A priest after God’s own heart, a man of truly apostolic character, an elegant orator, an excellent superior, a tender father, a bishop like those of primitive times. The Holy Ghost has ever been his guide. . . . . . In imitating his Divine Model, he never relaxed. All who knew him concur in saying that he was a lively and faithful copy of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The same prelate, in another of his works, styles him, “a man of the greatest piety, a most useful writer, a judicious and irreproachable theologian, a celebrated founder, a truly great bishop, and the apostle of his age.” And addressing his clergy he continues: “Study then this bishop, so highly elevated above his contemporaries by the nobility of his birth, his faith, his charity, his erudition. His room was like to that which the Shunamite woman prepared for the Prophet Elias. A bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, comprised all its furniture. His food was frugal, he retrenched all superfluities that he might have wherewith to give in alms. . . . The poor of Jesus Christ were his only riches, and the joy of his heart.” Even in

Rome, which the saint never visited but once, his name had more weight than the names of all the illustrious and distinguished scholars that crowded its colleges.

From every country in Europe testimonials highly honorable to the saint reached Nocera. His mission was far from being confined to his age or country, and this was readily seen by the most enlightened of his contemporaries. He was set in the Church as a burning and shining light, to enlighten the people of his day and all coming generations, and to inflame the cold or tepid hearts of men with love for the Divine and Eternal Lover of their souls. He opened anew the life-giving sacraments to all Christians, and encouraged them to draw water with joy from the fountains of the Saviour. He has instructed with the glowing eloquence inspired by his heroic charity, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, men and women of every age and condition. Penetrated to the very marrow of his bones with a life-long horror of sin, he lifts up the fallen, he presses the most wretched to his innocent heart, he calls the slave of a thousand vices, *My brother!* Only be resolved to sin no more, and he shows you Jesus awaiting you with outstretched arms, and even pressing forward to meet his guilty child. It is always Jesus—an inexhaustible fountain of mercy, love, and goodness—that he preaches. He indeed reminds us of the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is never extinguished, and the smoke that ascendeth forever and ever; still more does he expatiate on the rapturous bliss which our own God has prepared for those who love him, glory unutterable which the eye hath not seen, the ear heard, the heart of man conceived; but the only hell which this ardent lover could fear was to be separated from Jesus, and the only heaven he yearned for, was to repose in the bosom of the Father. No wonder then, that the great and good of his time vied with each other in testifying affection and veneration for this seraph of earth. The saint of unity, the saint of infallibility, the saint of Jesus and Mary, the saint of penance, the saint of the eucharist, the man after God’s own heart—what other saint has so many claims upon Christians? His sweet and touching words resound through the universal Church everywhere and forever: My brother, cease to sin, avoid the occasions of sin; our sweetest Lord will help you by His grace; His grace is always to be had for the asking; *ask and you shall receive;* pray, strive to love Jesus more and more; come to Him by confession, receive Him in communion. He loves you, He loves you with an eternal love, He longs for your love; if you be holy, become still more holy; if a sinner, a relapsing sinner, yea, a sinner covered with the filth of every abomination possible to human depravity incited by diabolical ingenuity—though your sins be red as scarlet He will make them white as wool; He willeth not the death, but the conversion, of the sinner; His mercy is above all His works. *My brother!* come to the Lord Jesus! He cannot spurn the penitent. See His hands and feet fastened to a gibbet; it is love for you, my brother, that renders the omnipotent God powerless to hurl His thunderbolts on your guilty soul. A man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity, He will understand your griefs, your struggles, for we have not a high-priest who cannot compassionate our miseries. O how well does our great bishop follow the counsel of his prototype: *An ancient man rebuke not, but entreat him as a father; young men as brethren; old women as mothers, young women as sisters:* he rebukes none, all are his fathers, his mothers, his brothers, his sisters—they are more, they are his children: My little children of whom I am again in labor till Christ be formed in you! Verily, it is easy to comprehend the wonderful effects which this great voice of one crying in the desert of this world must have produced, when he depicted to surging multitudes the love borne to sinners by Him whom we find true when all other loves die or prove false! *Can a mother forget her son? And even if she should, I will not forget thee.* Even now, from the cold, dead page, do not his words of fire burn into our hard, unthankful hearts, disarming criticism with their unearthly beauty; echoes of the communings of the Creator with his virgin creatures in the paradise of pleasure, or of the divine words with which the Incarnate Wisdom of the Father consoles the sad hearts of His fallen, but not rejected, children: *Come to me, all of you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. My yoke is sweet and my burden light.* Foolish and slow of heart to believe must we be, if the words of this friend of publicans and sinners stir not the deepest depths of our hearts. Rather may they revive in us faith and hope, that we may exclaim with the lepers of the Gospel: “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us,” and that, being grateful recipients of that mercy which our saint never tires of preaching, we may return Him love for love, to the end that our many sins may be forgiven us, because we love much.

Chapter LXXVII

Alphonsus as a child.—His three great sins.—Early sympathy with the humbler classes.—As a priest.—“Keep your rules.”—As superior.—Remarkable instances of his kindness and compassion.—A model for bishops.—His excessive clemency.—His love for his subjects.—His unbounded confidence in them.—Instance.—Alphonsus as a theologian.—His attachment to his clergy.—Their love for him.—Instances.—Accused of laxity.—Characteristic defense.

WE shall conclude our sketch of the servant of God by glancing at him once more, in the different roles in which Providence placed him during his prolonged and varied career.

Alphonsus was, as we have seen, a child of benediction. Wherever saints pass they leave blessed traces, and as an infant he had been caressed, and fondled, and blessed, by the sainted Jesuit who afterwards shared with him the honors of canonization, and who prophesied that he would be a bishop and do great things for Jesus Christ. He had a saintly mother, and it is to her teachings and example that he was wont to attribute anything good in him as a child. The office of his festival declares that he never sullied his baptismal robe by mortal sin, but his confessors believed that he scarcely committed even a wilful venial sin. Yet he was naturally proud and high-spirited, as the very faults into which he fell prove. His three great sins, as he used to style them, have been already recorded. The first was characteristic. Hearing his father scold a poor servant unmercifully for some trifling omission, his natural generosity of soul and sympathy with the humbler classes tempted him to reproach the Count with making a great noise about nothing, a liberty which the haughty noble could not brook and for which he struck him a blow before several guests. Again he bewailed a relaxation of fervor; and, as the greatest of his sins, he wept over the excess of dejection to which he had yielded through wounded vanity, when he failed in the last lawsuit he undertook. As a child, as a boy, as a young man living amid the gayeties of the world, he is a model to all youths, especially those of gentle blood like himself, or rather absolutely to all.

But still more resplendent is the example he gives to priests. His life so pure, so holy; his labors, his penances, his hours of prayer before the blessed sacrament; but above all, his incomparable zeal—the Lord Jesus had spoken to his heart, and what he heard in the ear, he preached on the house-top. In industry few of the saints of God equal him, and perhaps none surpass him; his vow, *never to waste a moment of time*, gives some feeble explanation of the life-long toil, for the blessed results of which we thank God today. As a student, he might be considered slow. In some particular instances, when he had any doubt as to whether his views were the exposition of the divine law, he would write to all the learned men of his acquaintance, especially those of the Roman Congregations; but above all, he would *pray.* As a priest, he was always to be found at the altar, in the confessional, by the bedside of the sick and dying, or instructing with tongue or pen the souls which Jesus died to save.

Next, we have St. Alphonsus as a religious, *Keep your rules;* this is the burden of all his discourses: *Fear nothing but sin:* this is the epitome of all his warnings. There is no instance recorded of our saint having ever broken a single rule, and this cannot but give us the highest idea of his sanctity, since a great pope has not hesitated to declare that a religious who faithfully observes his rule is fit for canonization.

It is chiefly as Superior that all the beauty of the saint’s character comes out. He was more a father than a ruler, more a mother than a father. No one was sad that he did not console; sick, that he did not relieve. The troubles of his children were his troubles; he made his own of their gains and their losses; he invited them to come to him at all times; he corrected them but rarely, and his words were full of sweetness and compassion. His whole aim was to make them realize that the yoke of the Lord is sweet and his burden light, that a day spent in his courts is preferable to years passed in the tabernacles of sinners.

He was always urging them, but with ineffable sweetness, to become saints. They were his joy and his crown. His heart followed them everywhere, and in all their labors they were strengthened by his blessing and his prayers. His letters, of which we have hundreds, show that they were never absent from his mind, and that, if possible, he never ceased for a moment to interest himself about their welfare. Their vocation he was always trying to strengthen and confirm; their studies he encouraged and directed; their pains of mind and body he relieved. In writing to rectors, he was always insisting on the importance of having the rules perfectly observed—for his first care was, that his children should become saints, and he feared the slightest wilful fault more than a hundred persecutions. But sweetness and kindness continually mingle with his instructions. I beseech you to govern with all possible meekness," he writes to the Rector of Caposele; "treat everyone with affability and politeness. I recommend this to you with the greatest earnestness." And the same he continually repeats in one shape or another. "I love you, I esteem you, and if I have sometimes found a little fault with you, I have never doubted your good-will," he writes to another rector, who had given him grave cause of displeasure. "Treat N. with great kindness," he writes to the novice-master, "because he is tormented by temptation; keep up his courage. And now that the weather is so warm, lessen the exercises of the novices, make them go out often, and do not ask them to study so much." The saint sometimes speaks sternly enough in the circular letters he addresses to his dear children, but the severity is sweetened by such phrases as these perpetually recurring: "God knoweth that each one of you is dearer to my heart than my brother and even my mother. Each one of you is the object of my peculiar affection, for whom I am ready to give my blood and my life." "Be attentive to Brother N., and see that he is not exposed to cold." "I rejoice at what you say of. Brother Nicholas, but do not allow him to do much until his health is completely reestablished." "Make Brother B. go out every day, and show him the best road." "I do not wish Brother M. to study, for fear of a relapse. Make him take out-door exercise." "Tell Father de Meo to beware of fatiguing himself; I hear his chest is affected." "I beseech you not to expose yourself to contract any sickness. Endeavor to preserve your health, it is most necessary that you should."

But we should not soon have done were we to transcribe all our saint wrote concerning the temporal, and far more, the spiritual welfare of his brethren. As a superior we find him always on the alert to support, counsel, and befriend them, and this he evidently considers his first and dearest duty. No father, no mother, ever showed more patience with wild, unreasoning children, than Alphonsus showed towards the least edifying of his subjects. In their regard, he was all patience, all goodness, all hope. He never expelled a subject who had not previously expelled himself; he could, though not very readily, see their faults, and correct them; but he was powerless to cast one of his children from him. In this respect, it seems to us, that he surpassed every other saint that governed a community. Even when they yielded to the tempter, and, in the heat of passion or temptation, asked to go, his policy was to gain time, that he might, in some way or other, dispel the illusion.

To a young Father, who for some trifling cause had asked a dispensation, he pleasantly wrote:

“ St. Paul the hermit said to St. Anthony, who, asked him to open the door, if he did not wish to find him dead before it, ‘Verily a beautiful way of begging; you beg with a menace!’ I say the same to you. You say, “Let me do this, otherwise I ask to be released from my vows.” But who will release you? For the love of God, my dear father, do not be so carried away any more. I have compassion on you, for *it is not you who speak, but the temptation which agitates you.*”

To Father Tannoia, the novice-master, who seems to have been a very strict disciplinarian, he wrote the following note, which will explain itself:

“Once a subject is in the novitiate, he must not be sent away without grave reasons; and if he have made his vows, the reasons must be still graver, and the subject incorrigible; *otherwise one sins mortally in dismissing a subject.*

To Father Villani, who showed, in a few instances, an inclination to severity, he wrote on the same subject: “To justify expulsion, the faults of a subject must be real, deserving of no compassion, and leaving no room to hope fox amendment.”

Verily, that sweet spirit St. Alphonsus *would not have been half as lax had he been but half as holy!*

We will now quote an instance of forbearance unexampled in the annals of religious orders, at least in modern times.

The lay-brother, Francis Tartaglione, being one day in the refectory of the Redemptorist house at Nocera, became so angry at some remark another brother volunteered, that he dashed a glass with its contents in his face. Here was an unheard-of outrage. The older Fathers were not long in deciding on the course to be pursued; but, fortunately for the delinquent, Father Alphonsus happened to be at Nocera. Previous services rendered to the Congregation, and the virtue which he knew this poor brother to possess, despite a fiery temper which he had worked hard to subdue, inclined the saint to recommend delay; and the end of it was that the brother, instead of being expelled, was seen humbly performing a course of penance, and was heard from time to time blessing the kindness and charity of the good Father who knew so well how to pity and forgive his erring but repentant son.

Alphonsus ever showed the greatest respect and esteem for his sons, and was not ashamed to let them see how tenderly he loved them. In his letters he generally addresses them by their Christian names. Even Father Villani is simply called, “My dear Andrew,” but those whose birth entitled them to the aristocratic *Don* usually received it from the urbane Rector Major, whether in speaking or writing.

The confidence he placed in his Fathers and Brothers was literally unbounded. A miracle of truth and candor himself, he was incapable of suspecting the opposite qualities in others; he was even faulty, or at least obstinate, in this respect. Witness his conduct with regard to Majone. The whole Congregation saw through his duplicity, while the saint refused to credit the evidence that convinced others, and would not believe, till the document was placed in his hands which showed him that the Congregation was, well-nigh ruined. This was the immediate cause of the troubles which clouded his latter years. Majone’s intentions were so glaringly evident, that it was easy to convince the inimical or the indifferent that the saint was himself a party to the changes his treacherous son wrought in the rules, in direct violation of his commands.

As a bishop, Alphonsus is a perfect model for every personage raised to that exalted office. This will be readily seen by the few details we have given of his life at St. Agatha. Other prelates, who assuredly were competent judges, used to style him a new St. Charles Borromeo. He was completely at the service of his clergy; he wished each of them to recur to him, as to a tender, indulgent father, in every emergency, and he always made them understand that his chief business was to advise, instruct, assist, and console them. His purse was always at their disposal, and he seldom accepted even his ordinary dues. His vigilance was miraculous; nothing escaped it. The common opinion was, that an angel or a devil made known to him every scandal that was attempted in his diocese: and, once known, he would not rest till the evil was eradicated. As a superior, and consequently a judge, no human being ever surpassed him in lenity to the accused. He gave them the benefit of every doubt. He insisted on hearing the sentiments of all who had means of knowing the truth. When asked, a little before his death, to give consent, as Rector Major, to the dismissal of a subject, he inquired whether all those who ought to be consulted had consented, "for," he continued, "*if there be a single one of a different opinion, I must hear his reasons.*"

He governed his priests by loving them, by devoting himself entirely to their interests; and never was a bishop more passionately beloved by priests and people. Even those whom he had withstood with all the apostolic boldness of a perfectly fearless character, acknowledged the justice of his proceedings, and were foremost in bewailing his resignation of his see. As for human respect, if it be possible for human nature to be wholly free from it, he was. When there was question of ordaining clerics, or bestowing benefices, he settled the matter according to his own conscience, and all the kings of earth could not induce him to abate one iota in the qualifications he required. Both as bishop and as superior, mercy was his prevailing characteristic; at the least sign of repentance, he anticipated a returning prodigal, and assumed the greater part of the penance himself. When Father Villani insisted on expelling a subject who had given him much anxiety and trouble, the saint wrote: "I have compassion for this poor Father. I know he has done very wrong; but if he repents, we cannot send away a man who humbles himself sincerely." The poor Father wisely opened his whole heart to Alphonsus, who in turn procured his pardon from Father Villani. "I have read," wrote the saint to this dear child of his heart, "all that you have written to me of your troubles. Now then, do all you have promised, and be assured that God will more willingly accept the little you do amid so much anguish, than if you did it in sweetness and consolation. You have made great progress, and I bless God for having given you such strength . . . Go, then, and place yourself in the heart of Jesus. I tell you for certain that Jesus and Mary love you."

It is true that the saint was strict in driving away sin, and all occasions of sin, from his subjects; zeal against sin was, as has been already said, his most salient characteristic. It is no less true that he insisted that the spirit of the priesthood should always and under all circumstances be, as it were, palpable, in the favored priests of whom he was the tender father and watchful shepherd; it is true, that being himself among the most industrious students that ever lived, he required that his priests should continually study the divine law of which they were the exponents; that, having an acquaintance with the sacred Scriptures as intimate, perhaps, as any theologian ever attained, if not more so—and his works fully bear out this assertion—he insisted that his priests should continually inculcate that all *Scripture is profitable, to teach, to reprove,* and that a priest ignorant of what he ought to know, or a priest who in the matter of sacred learning would, ever say, *It is enough,* should be unheard-of in the flock confided to his pastoral care. The man that minutely, laboriously, and conscientiously examined, and even quoted nearly eight hundred Christian authors, and not a few pagans, for the composition of a single work, could not sanction any undue recreation for his clergy; but, despite all this, and despite his own life of innocence almost unsullied and penance so severe as to cause him to be likened to St. Peter Alcantara, St. Alphonsus Liguori is the largest-hearted of saints, the most readily understood of theologians, and the easiest and sweetest master that repenting sinners can choose. In the spirit of the divine Lord, who forgave all who had faith to come to Him, not exacting of them more than the least of that which his sanctity inflexibly required, St. Alphonsus drew to the fountains of the most Precious Blood all who had need—the most stained, hardened, and outcast—exacting of them only the least which the sacrament of penance imposes as the condition of our pardon.

During his life, he was frequently accused not only of laxity of doctrine, but also of excessive indulgence, even of weakness, so notorious was his lenity in all the relations of life. Indeed he himself saw this, and he admitted it, when reproached for what seemed a sort of stain on an otherwise perfect character. His defense is characteristic of the whole man. In our imperfect state we are scarcely capable of invariably recognizing the golden mean; with the best of intentions, we easily glide into either extreme. The saint, knowing this, readily pleaded guilty. “But,” said he, “if I must err, let it be on the side of mercy and charity, of meekness and compassion. If I must be punished in the next life, let it be for too much indulgence, rather than for excessive rigor.” Verily, a worthy disciple of Him whose mercy is above all his works!

Chapter LXXVIII

Miracles attest the sanctity of Alphonsus.—Magdalen de Nuncio.—Francis de Octajana.—Antoinette Tarsia.—The nun of Salerno.—The saint’s countrywoman, Dona Giordani;—Miracle wrought on the Lady Louisa Palatella.—Two processes.—The saint declared Venerable.—Proceedings suspended.—Alphonsus is beatified.—Canonization.—Indulgences granted.—The city of Naples chooses him for patron.—Respect paid to him by the Royal family and people of Naples.—High esteem of several popes for Alphonsus, especially Pius IX.—Raised to the Doctorate.—Conditions.—The excellences of all the Doctors reunited in our saint.—Extraordinary pomp and splendor of the saint’s beatification and canonization.—Decree.

THE saint had no sooner accomplished his happy transit from earth to heaven, than hundreds of miracles attested his power with God. Several of these are mentioned in the bull of his canonization, as the instantaneous and perfect cure of Magdalen de Nuncio, who, being at the point of death, a great portion of her breast having been amputated on account of a gangrenous ulcer, invoked Alphonsus, and immediately arose, perfectly healed, her breast having become whole again; the cure of Francis de Octajana, of the reformed Minors, who, being in the last stage of consumption, his life despaired of, prayed to Alphonsus for several days, and was suddenly cured, every trace of the malady instantaneously disappearing; of Antoinette Tarsia, who, having fallen, loaded with a heavy burden, from a high place, was on the point of dying of the injuries received, but having earnestly implored the aid of Alphonsus, suddenly arose entirely cured.

Others equally striking are recorded. Dona Catherine Biscotti, a Benediction nun of Salerno, after suffering for fourteen months from a grievous malady, was declared to be dying. The doctor thought mortification had already set in. While in this state she exclaimed: “Alphonsus Liguori, prove to me that you are really a saint, as is everywhere proclaimed; you must cure me of this illness, and as the process of your canonization will have to be drawn up, I promise to bear witness to my cure juridically, and to have a mass and a *Te Deum* sung in thanksgiving." Having said this, the nun fell asleep, and on awaking found that she was perfectly cured.

Another miracle evinced the affectionate confidence of a client of our saint. Don Julian Jourdain,[17176] a lawyer of Lucere, was sick unto death of a violent fever. His sister, who tenderly loved him, was heart-broken at the prospect of his death. Rushing into his chamber, she fell on her knees before a picture of Alphonsus, and cried out: "My holy countryman, I, a poor stranger, have recourse to you. You must spare me my brother, I will obtain this favor." She then seized the picture with faith and confidence, and gave it to her brother, who simply said: "Monsignore, succor me!" Instantaneously the fever ceased, and the sick man's recovery was complete and lasting.

When the Lady Louisa Palatella of Foggia was in momentary danger of death, the physicians having pronounced her case hopeless, Father Tannoia suggested to her to have recourse to Alphonsus. She did so, and holding his picture with devotion, made a vow to offer him a number of wax-lights, and to support an abandoned girl, if he would assist her. Her confidence was rewarded, and she was safely delivered, though her child had been dead for several days.

The miracles wrought by the servant of God are so numerous that many volumes would be required to contain a concise account of all. "The Lord was truly lavish of such favors towards His servant, in order, undoubtedly, the sooner to illuminate the Church, his tabernacle among men, by causing him to be placed on her altars as a burning and shining light."

Two verbal processes were speedily drawn up: one at St. Agatha, which loved the memory and gloried in the heroic virtue of its former bishop; the other at Nocera, which had been blessed by the sanctity of his latter years, and still possessed the treasure of his relics. These processes were signed by eighty-seven witnesses, all distinguished for learning and piety, who deposed on oath to the sanctity and miracles of the great doctor. The acts of these processes were then forwarded to Rome, to obtain the introduction of his cause. Four hundred and eight petitions to this effect immediately followed, from cardinals, archbishops, bishops, collegiate establishments, religious bodies, magistrates of the highest standing, including one from Ferdinand IV, King of the Two Sicilies.

As early as July 9, 1794, Cardinal Archinto was appointed reporter of the cause. Despite the troubles that disturbed the Holy See towards the close of the last century, this cause progressed, and on the 4th of September the servant of God was declared *Venerable.* On the 14th of May, 1803, the Sacred Congregation decided, after a rigid examination, that nothing in the printed or manuscript works of the Venerable Alphonsus di Ligouri deserved censure. On the 25th of June, 1803, Pope Pius VII granted a dispensation from the decree of Urban VIII, which forbids any special examination of the virtues of a servant of God to be undertaken until fifty years have elapsed after his death. On the 7th of May, 1807, being the feast of the Ascension of Our Lord, the Holy Father published the solemn decree on his virtues, proclaiming that Alphonsus Maria di Liguori had possessed the theological and cardinal virtues in a heroic degree. The extraordinary examination of his miracles was appointed for 25th September, 1809, but the invasion of Rome and the captivity of the Holy Father suspended the proceedings, which were not resumed until February, 1815. The Feast of the Seven Dolors of Our Lady, which fell that year on the 17th of September, the Octave of the Nativity, was selected for publishing the decree on the miracles, on account of the great devotion which he had ever displayed towards the sorrows of Mary. On the 26th of September, 1816, his holiness signed the brief of beatification, which conferred the title of *Blessed* on the illustrious doctor, declaring him to be most assuredly in the enjoyment of eternal glory, and that his relics and pictures might be exposed to the veneration of the faithful, and authorizing the dioceses of St. Agatha and Nocera, and the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, to celebrate yearly in his honor the mass of the beatified. The ceremony of the beatification was celebrated nine days later, with extraordinary pomp and splendor, little more than twenty-nine years having elapsed since the precious death of Alphonsus.

After the beatification, God continued to manifest the glory of his blessed servant, by many extraordinary miracles. Pius VIII approved of two of these in particular (December 3, 1829), and declared, with the usual formalities, that the solemn canonization of the blessed Alphonsus Maria di Liguori could safely be proceeded with (May 16, 1830). This holy pontiff dying some months later, was succeeded by Gregory XVI; but political and other reasons, which it is unnecessary to enumerate, delayed the solemn canonization till Trinity Sunday, May 26, 1839. On this auspicious day, Alphonsus Maria di Liguori and four other servants of God were solemnly declared saints, the ceremonies being conducted with a pomp and magnificence heretofore unequalled even in the Eternal City itself.

Besides the special indulgence for the canonization, our Holy Father granted in perpetuity, Jan. 10, 1840, to each and all of the faithful of both sexes, who, being truly contrite, shall, after having confessed and communicated, devoutly visit one of the churches of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer on the Feast of St. Alphonsus, August 2d, or during the octave, a plenary indulgence, applicable to the souls in purgatory, on the usual conditions of praying for peace among. Christian rulers, for the extirpation of heresy, and for the exaltation of the Holy Catholic Church. The same holy pontiff prescribed that the Feast of St. Alphonsus should be celebrated throughout the world by all who are obliged to say the breviary, and by the faithful in general, under the rite of *duplex minor*, and inserted his name in the ecclesiastical calendar.

The city of Naples declared her most illustrious son her patron, jointly with St. Januarius, July 4, 1839, with the sanction of the king and the ecclesiastical authorities. The fête on this occasion lasted nine days. A silver statue of the saint, in which was enclosed a relic, was presented to the native city of their holy Founder by the Redemptorist Fathers. It was carried in procession to the cathedral, with extraordinary pomp, and placed beside the statue of St. Januarius, the first patron of Naples. During this fête, all Naples, and thousands of the inhabitants of the neighboring towns, paid their willing homage to this new glory of the Neapolitan Church, the king and queen, the queen-mother, the prince and princess of Salerno, and the younger members of the royal family, mingling with their subjects on this occasion, and edifying all by their truly religious deportment and their affectionate veneration for the august prelate whose noble head was now resplendent with the aureola of sanctity.

The vast and profound learning of Alphonsus, joined to his eminent sanctity, had fixed on him, even during life, the suffrages of the Catholic world; and devotion to him, and appreciation of his doctrine, have but increased with time. Every pope, from Benedict XIV to Pius IX, has been lavish of praises of this great son of the Church. Benedict XIV, whose extraordinary learning won him the praises even of a Voltaire, quotes Father di Liguori as an authority in one of his elegant and erudite works. To this great pontiff the saint dedicated his “Moral Theology,” and the compliment was not unappreciated, as an elegant letter from the Pope to the priest eloquently testified. When Clement XIII, who compelled him to accept the mitre, had seen and conversed with him, he remarked to a prelate of his court: “At the death of Monsignore Liguori, we shall have one saint more.” Clement XIV would never allow him to resign his bishopric, saying that he could govern his diocese from his dying bed, and that a single prayer of the holy bishop was worth more than a hundred ordinary episcopal visitations. Pius VI, even when permitted by Providence to be numbered among those from whom the heaviest crosses of the aged Founder proceeded, habitually called him a saint, and was wont to kiss his picture with devotion. He ordered his cause to be introduced immediately after his death and kept on his table some of his works to read, whenever he had a moment of leisure. Pius VII called him a most brilliant star in the firmament of the Church, and deemed it an honor to celebrate the beatification of so great a saint. Leo XII ordered the canonization of the Blessed Alphonsus to be proceeded with before all others, and sent a special blessing, a letter, and a medal, to the publisher of his complete works, which he graciously permitted to be dedicated to himself. The great canonist, Pius VIII, during his short pontificate, published the important decree which declared that the canonization of the Blessed Alphonsus Liguori might in all safety be proceeded with. Gregory XVI loved to praise the profound learning and eminent sanctity of Alphonsus. He placed his name in the ecclesiastical calendar, and extended his mass and office to the universal. Church. “He is resplendent,” said that great Pope, “even among the brilliant lights that adorn the Catholic Church.”

Our reigning pontiff, Pius IX, has declared that the works of the saint are of the greatest utility, not only to the simple faithful, but also, and chiefly, to ecclesiastics, and to all who are charged with the direction of souls; and has, moreover, graciously responded to the petition of 39 cardinals, 10 patriarchs, 135 archbishops, 544 bishops, 4 right reverend abbots, 25 generals of orders, 4 faculties of theology of universities, 15 metropolitan chapters of cathedrals, three congregations of missionary priests, and all the parishes of the kingdom of Naples, by declaring St. Alphonsus a Doctor of the Church—a distinction which had not been conferred on any ecclesiastical writer or theologian for six centuries.

The conditions which the Church requires for this rare and honorable distinction are: eminent knowledge, great sanctity, and the declaration of the Church. Now our sainted prelate has not only fulfilled the necessary conditions, but seems also to have reunited in himself the peculiar excellences of the most celebrated among the doctors: the spirit of penance of St. Jerome; the apostolic boldness of St. Ambrose; the divine unction of St. Augustine, the tender piety and love of Mary which distinguished St. Bernard; the devotion to the Church and zeal for the clergy which characterized St. Peter Damian; the lofty intellect and angelic meekness of St. Thomas Aquinas; and the lively faith and ardent love which gained for St. Bonaventure the beautiful title of *Seraphic Doctor.*

The style of St. Alphonsus is eminently his own; yet in his devotional works there is some resemblance to the vehement and fiery, but sweet and tender style of the *Last of the Fathers,* the honey-tongued St. Bernard, to whom, as a lover of Mary, our saint was especially devoted.

The beatification, canonization, and elevation to the doctorate of Alphonsus were conducted with singular splendor. The beatification took place in the basilica of St. Peter. In front of this glorious church floated a magnificent standard representing the Blessed Alphonsus in glory, with a Latin inscription, commemorative of the innocence of his life, his burning love of God, and his unflagging zeal in the divine service, A beautiful picture of the miracle of Foggia representing the rays of light issuing from the image of Our Lady and reflected on the forehead of the preacher while he was in ecstasy, hung over the chief entrance of the majestic portico, which was decorated at various points with inscriptions referring to incidents in the life of the saint, or miracles performed by him. St. Peter’s Church, by far the largest and grandest edifice in the world, was hung with the richest damask embroidered with gold. Above the chair of St. Peter, radiant with wax-lights innumerable, was an oval picture representing the serene and beautiful countenance of the beatified. When the brief was read, the picture of the saintly prelate was exposed to the multitude, amid the music of bells and the deep bass of artillery, all present falling on their knees to offer him the first public homage. The glorious *Te Deum,* sung by hundreds of the finest voices on earth, was but a poor expression of the gratitude and delight of the enthusiastic multitude.

Towards evening, Pius VII himself was seen prostrate before the picture of the beatified, the whole Sacred College praying with the august Head of the Church on earth. When the Holy Father arose, the postulator of the cause, Father Vincent Giattini, a worthy son of blessed Alphonsus, presented to the Vicar of Christ and each of the illustrious members of the Sacred College, a copy of the life of the blessed Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

At the canonization of Alphonsus, the decorations of the great basilica occupied several thousands of people for weeks. On the eve of the eagerly desired day, cannon boomed from the castle of San Angelo, and all the bells in Rome rang out their merriest peals, to announce its approach to the eager people. At midnight, the trumpets of the guards resounded through the town, and music burst forth in every direction; at four in the morning, a hundred cannon were fired in honor of the festal day.

Rome was filled with strangers from every clime under the sun, and, as on the day of Pentecost, there was not a man who could not hear his own language in the beauteous city of the popes. This august dynasty rules not the church of a nation or an empire, but the CATHOLIC CHURCH, whose maternal bosom nurtures every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and makes them to her God a kingdom. The vast square before St. Peter’s was but a mass of human beings; perfect order being preserved by the grenadiers and guards of Rome, in their showy but elegant uniforms.

At six o’clock A. M. a procession which could be formed only in Rome, wended its way towards St. Peter’s. First came the cross—the badge, the glory, the standard of Christian Rome. The well cared for orphans of the great charitable institutions and the schools of Noble children; religious orders with their gorgeous banners and quaint but picturesque costumes—Alcantarines, with brown habits and blue cords; barefooted Augustinians in their heavy, though not ungraceful robes; Capuchins, with flowing beards and sandalled feet; Carmelite monks, in white and brown; the white habit of the Brothers of Mercy and the ample black robe of the Benedictine; the flowing white and black costume of the son of St. Dominic; the red and blue crosses of the Trinitarians; the sombre brown of the Maronite habit, and the celestial blue of the Coptic monk—canons of cathedrals, collegiate establishments, confraternities, the members of the Congregation of Rites, the secular clergy, citizens bearing torches, the banners of the new saints. The pennant of St. Alphonsus was supported by a venerable white-haired man, whose noble bearing and military air attracted many a reverential gaze. This was a nephew of the saint, who had received the sacrament of confirmation at his hands; he was now a general in the royal army of Naples, and the group of handsome young officers who attended him were grandnephews[17177] of Alphonsus. The Pope's heralds, his court, the singers of the Papal chapel, bishops, mitred abbots, cardinals, the prefect of Rome, the chief civil officer, and the Pope, surrounded by the principal personages of his household and followed by the generals of orders—this imposing array of the dignitaries and sons of the Church, with its august head, awakening so many historic associations and holy recollections naturally, as it were, marshalled itself into perfect order, as it slowly advanced through the surging mass of human beings, the sombre garb of high civilization contrasting with the bright and varied costume of the light-hearted Italian peasants who had travelled many a weary mile, and faces of every hue, red, yellow, brown, and from black to white.

The immense basilica[17178] was superbly decorated and brilliantly lighted, the sun being completely shut out by the gorgeous damask hangings of the windows. Golden lustres and chandeliers swung from the roof, and candelabra of exquisite workmanship supported the airy bubbles of light that glistened before the pictures of the new saints. The glare of more than four thousand wax-lights was sufficient to illumine the greatest temple ever raised by man to the Divinity. In a tribune near the papal throne were the kings of Naples and Bavaria, Don Miguel of Portugal, and the Queen of Sardinia.

The grandest part of this magnificent ceremony was when the assembled thousands rose as one man, and listened with subdued mind and tear-bedewed eye to the INFALLIBLE VOICE, which proclaimed, *ex cathedra*, the sublime holiness of the five servants of God associated in this august ceremony. Seated in the chair of Peter, the 258th successor of him who was appointed to *confirm his brethren*, spoke, in simple but majestic language, his final judgment as Supreme Doctor and head of the Catholic Church, his sonorous tones thrilling through every heart:

"In honor of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity, for the exaltation of the Catholic faith and the increase of piety among Christians, by the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own, WE, after mature reflection and oft-repeated invocation for the divine aid, and after having consulted our venerable brethren the cardinals of the Roman Church, the patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops of this capital, decide and pronounce, that the blessed Alphonsus, blessed Francis of Jerome, &c., are saints; we number them among the saints, and ordain that their memory shall be annually honored by the worship of the Church on the day of their birth,[17179] namely, that of Alphonsus on the 2d of August, &c. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The clear and thrilling tones of the Vicar of Christ now gave out the *Te Deum,* in which thousands of voices were quickly blended. The cannon of San Angelo, the innumerable bells of Rome, the sound of trumpets, the joyous burst of military music—all combined to render the scene one of triumphant and bewildering splendor. Mass was celebrated by the Holy Father himself, who had previously chanted the prayers of the office of the newly declared saints. This being over, His Holiness bestowed from the *loggia* the pontifical benediction on his children of every clime and color, who in tens of thousands knelt with bowed head and reverent mien to receive it, and on the still more numerous children of his paternal heart, who were denied the privilege of assisting at that great day's celebration, *urbi et orbi.*

A far rarer honor than canonization was decreed our saint by our present illustrious pontiff, which has associated the already honored and venerated name of Alphonsus Maria di Liguori with the greatest event of our time, the Vatican Council. The following is a translation of the decree which placed his name in the category of the Doctors of the Church:

"Among those who have done and taught, and whom our Lord Jesus Christ has declared should be great in the kingdom of heaven, is rightly counted Saint Alphonsus Maria di Liguori, Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, and Bishop of Saint Agatha of the Goths. He shone as a watch-light on its tower, giving examples of all virtues to those who follow Christ and are of the household of God. Already, because of the brightness of his light, he has been reckoned among the saints, the domestics of God. But what he reduced to practice in his holy life, he taught also in word and by writing. He stands distinguished for dispelling and clearing up the lurking-places of unbelievers and Jansenists, so widely spread. And, over and beyond this, he has cleared up questions that were clouded, he has solved what was doubtful, making a safe path, through which the directors of Christian souls may tread with harmless foot, between the involved opinions of theologians, whether too loose or too rigorous.

"And besides this, he has signally cast light on the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception, and of the Infallibility of the Sovereign Pontiff teaching *ex cathedra*, and he strenuously taught these doctrines, which, in our day have been defined as of faith.

"He has finally made clear dark passages of the Holy Scriptures, both in his ascetic writings, which are freighted with a celestial odor, and in a most salutary commentary, in which, for the nourishment of piety and the instruction of the soul, he has given expositions of the Psalms, as well as of the hymns recited in the divine office, for the benefit especially of those obliged to its recitation."

"Pius VII, of holy memory, was greatly moved by the exceeding wisdom of Alphonsus, and spoke in his praise, as follows: "In the midnight of the world, he has shown, by his voice and his writings, the road of justice to the wandering, by which they may pass from the power of darkness to the light and kingdom of God."

"Nor were less remarkable words used by Pope Gregory XVI, of holy memory, when he raised by decretal letters, St. Alphonsus to the honors of canonization. Pope Gregory XVI said that there was in the writings of the blessed Alphonsus "a wonderful force, an abundance and variety of doctrine." But in our days the "Nations declare his wisdom, and the Church shows forth his praise," so that very many cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, almost all the prelates of the whole Catholic universe, the generals of religious orders, the theological faculties of the most celebrated universities, illustrious chapters of canons, and learned men of every ecclesiastical body, have presented petitions to our Holy Father Pius IX, Supreme Pontiff, in which they express their common desires that St. Alphonsus Maria di Liguori may be adorned with the title and the honors of

Doctor of the Church. His Holiness, graciously accepting these prayers, committed to the Congregation of Rites, according to custom in matters of this kind, the examining of so very grave a question. Consequently, in ordinary meetings held at the Vatican on the day below mentioned, hearing the most Eminent and Reverend Cardinal Constantine Patrizi, Dean of the Sacred College, prefect of the said Congregation, and reporter of the Cause, full attention having been given to the animadversions of the Rev. Father D. Peter Minetti, Promoter of the Holy Faith, with the answers of the Promoter of the Cause; and also the opinions of theologians not engaged in the cause (*proveritate*); and finally, all relating to the matter on the one side and on the other having been most severely weighed, the most Eminent and most Reverend Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation of Rites have judged, by unanimous consent, that it should be answered:

"To give counsel to His Holiness in favor of the granting, or declaration, and extension to the whole Church, of the title of *Doctor,*[17180] in honor of Saint Alphonsus Maria di Liguori, with special office and mass, the *Credo;* the antiphon *O Doctor* at the *Magnificat* of the First and Second Vespers; the *Sapientiam,* [from the Common of Doctors,] for the lessons of the First Nocturn; and the *In Mediœ Ecclesiœ,* for the Responsory of the Eighth Lesson. Dated March 11, 1871."

Presently, a faithful account having been made of all and singular the above, to our Most Holy Lord Pope, Pius IX, by the undersigned Secretary of the said Sacred Congregation, his holiness approved and confirmed the rescript and of his supreme authority ordered that a General Decree, *urbis et orbis,* should be sent forth, on the twenty-third day of the same month and year.

CONSTANTINE, CARD. PATRIZI,

Bishop of Ostia and Villetri, Prefect of the Sacred Cong. of Rites. [L. S.] D. BARTOLINI, Secretary of S. C. R.

Chapter LXXIX

The undying characteristic of St. Alphonsus.—The work most cherished by Alphonsus.—Sketch of the early days of the order in Northern Europe.—A prophecy and its fulfilment.—Vocation of F. Hoffbauer.—Hubl.—Various persecutions.—Splendid testimony.—Prisons and death.—Death of the second General.—His successors.—Jealousies of the Neapolitan government.—Present state of the Congregation.—Father Passerat.—His holy death.—Prayers and prophecies.

THE great and life-long characteristic of St. Alphonsus was zeal against sin. “And what,” asks one of the most eminent prelates of our day, “is the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, but this burning zeal against sin, incorporated and made perpetual in the Church of God?”[17181] We have already sketched the hopes and fears, the favors and crosses, which checkered the earlier days of the institute founded in so sublime an idea, and for such a glorious mission. Although it is chiefly as priest, bishop, and doctor, that Alphonsus di Liguori is known and loved by The zealous and the pious, yet it is evident from his rules and his letters, that he regarded the Congregation which he founded as the great work of his life; the work, by excellence, *which his Father had given him to do,* the work destined to perpetuate even to the day of doom, his uncompromising zeal against sin and worldliness, with his unfailing benignity and inexhaustible compassion for sinners. Hence a life of St. Alphonsus would seem incomplete without a slight glance at the fortunes of the Order which has the honor to claim him as its founder.

Twelve houses of the Congregation were in successful operation at the date of his happy death, 1787, namely those of Ciorani, in the diocese of Salerno, about seven leagues southeast of Naples; Nocera del Pagani, a city of some 7,000 inhabitants, a few miles from Ciorani; Illiceto, a little town in the diocese of Bovino ; and Caposele, a mere village in the diocese of Conza, all in the kingdom of Naples; Girgenti, a flourishing city in Sicily San Angelo, Benevento, Scifelli, Frosinone, Rome, Gubbio, and Spello, all except the Eternal City, unimportant places in the Papal territory.

The petty and despicable jealousies of the Neapolitan government, so liberal towards freemasons, had early endeavored to make such arrangements for the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer as would confine its workings within the limits of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, but nothing was farther from the views of the holy founder. Seeing that its development under such auspices must be cramped and stunted, he was particularly anxious to plant it in tore genial soil, and seized with gratitude and delight the first opportunities that offered of establishing his sons under the fatherly sway of his nearest royal neighbor, Pope Pius VI.

Alphonsus had prophesied that his Congregation, so far from becoming a prey to the enemies who employed their best energies for its destruction, would survive even to the judgment-day, and that, after his death, it would spread into many countries, and be most successful in procuring the glory of God and the salvation of souls, especially in the more northern regions. He had seen with delight, in 1784, the arrival in Rome of the two men[17182] destined to propagate the Congregation in these very regions, Clement Mary Hoffbauer, a simple peasant of Moravia, a baker by trade, and Thaddeus Hübl, a youth of Bohemia, likewise of the humblest class.

Scarcely had our saint gone to his reward, than his prophecies began to be verified. Towards the close of 1787, the very year of his death, Hoffbauer and Hübl, both subjects of Austria, but unable, because of the miserable laws of Joseph II, to make a foundation in any of his hereditary States, set out to evangelize the abandoned Catholics of Courland and Livonia, in the Empire of Russia, on the invitation of Monsignore Saluzzo, Apostolic Nuncio of Poland.

When the Fathers arrived at Varsovia, the Nuncio concluded that, as the wants of the Catholics were scarcely less pressing in Poland than in Russia, he would appeal to the Sovereign Pontiff for leave to detain them, which was readily granted. The king of Poland welcomed them with the most utmost cordiality, and bestowed on them the church of St. Bennon. From this first establishment the Polish Redemptorists have been called Bennonists.

The happy reunion of the houses of Naples, Sicily, and the Roman States was not consummated till 1791, when Father Blasucci was elected rector major of the whole Congregation. Blasucci may be regarded as the second

General, as neither Father de Paul nor Father Villani exercised any authority beyond the political boundaries of the States in which they respectively dwelt, if we except the single house of Varsovia, which was under the jurisdiction of Father de Paul. As communication by letter or otherwise between Poland and Italy was difficult and uncertain, the new general appointed Father Hoffbauer his Vicar General for the northern countries.

In 1794, a house was founded at Mittau, in Courland, where the Fathers became so popular that all the denominations sought to benefit by their ministrations, and before many months elapsed, they had completely gained the hearts of the people. But in 1798, the government forbade the Redemptorists to hold any communication with their brethren outside the Russian dominions, and sometime after suppressed the establishment. The Prussian Government, under which Varsovia had fallen, commanded that no subject should be admitted to profession under twenty-four years of age. This led to the closing of the convent at Mittau, to the intense regret of the inhabitants, and the Vicar General was obliged to send all the novices to Iestetten, in Switzerland, in 1803. Foundations were made at Lukow and Radomyn, but persecution followed the Fathers everywhere. The novitiate seems to have been especially aimed at, for we find it driven from one spot to another—in 1805 at Triberg in the depths of the Black Forest, and, after several futile attempts to settle in 1807, at Viège, in Valais. Despite extreme poverty and frequent persecution, God blessed abundantly the labors of the Fathers. The nuncio, writing to the General, then residing at Rome, said: “I tell your reverence for certain, that among all the religious bodies with which I am acquainted, the subjects of your Congregation are the most distinguished for their exemplary lives and remarkable modesty.”

It was especially at Varsovia that the fruits of their mission were apparent. Monsignore Litta, afterwards cardinal, wrote to Father General Blasucci, January 11, 1800: “On my return from St. Petersburg I passed through Varsovia, where I sojourned more than a month. I observed, to my great consolation, that the Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer flourishes more and more, by the acquisition of new workmen, by the incessant concourse of people, and by the great fruits which result from preaching, and from the administration of the sacraments of penance and holy communion. The church was literally full from morning till night, and from morning till night masses, preaching, confessions, or benediction of the blessed sacrament filled the hours. I do not exaggerate. There are four sermons a day, two in the morning and two in the evening, alternately in Polish and German. The fruit of these continual labors is easily seen in the edifying lives of the people. Great as are the exertions of the Fathers, I do not call them excessive, because I see that they are necessary, and I dare not counsel moderation, in view of the immense fruit produced, lest I should oppose the will of God and injure his work.”

But this happy state of things did not long continue. In 1807, the amiable and gifted Father Hübl, still in the prime of life, died the death of the just. The Vicar General had called him the Mother of the Congregation, because of his tender solicitude for his companions. Hardly had Father Hoffbauer ceased to bewail this dear son and brother, when a persecution arose which desolated the fair province of which such glowing accounts have reached us. The treaty of Tilsit altered once more the political aspect of Poland, and the accusations of the free-masons and Voltairians were so readily admitted under the new régime, that as early as June, 1808, the flourishing establishment at Varsovia was suppressed. The other foundations speedily shared its fate.

The poor Fathers were kept close prisoners in the fortress of Kustrin, and it is pleasant to record that the Protestant gaolers and other officials of that gloomy habitation treated them with affectionate reverence. The people loved to linger under their heavily barricaded windows, as their deep, melodious voices blended in the hymns and canticles of the Roman ritual—truly the songs of the Lord in a strange land—and their sweet wailings, borne afar on the evening breeze, were inexpressibly touching, both to the simple peasants and to the refined aristocrats. The dismal prison had become a house of praise and prayer, and a peace and happiness which perhaps it had never before known now reigned within its grim walls.

After several weeks, the Polish Fathers were commanded to return to their families, and Father Hoffbauer was permitted to retire to Vienna, where the archbishop appointed him pastor of the Italian Church. The same year, 1809, all the houses in the Papal States were suppressed, except Scifelli, which escaped, no one knew how or why. Only the establishments of Rome and Frosinone were ever restored. In 1815, Father Hoff bauer, at the request of the proper ecclesiastical authorities, sent a small band of his scattered sons to Bucharest, where they labored zealously and with fruit, until the Greek revolution made them wanderers once more.

After vicissitudes of every species, the Vicar General succeeded in establishing a foundation at Vienna, but he did not live to see the success of this work. Full of years and merits, he passed happily to our Lord, March 15, 1820.

In our own day, the cause of Clement Mary Hoffbauer has been introduced, and our present illustrious pontiff has declared him *Venerable.* The witnesses since examined with a view to his beatification included bishops, priests, physicians, lawyers, artists, aristocrats, peasants, merchants, Lutherans, and one Jew, all of whom were eye-witnesses to the facts to which they subscribed. The cause of Father Passerat has been introduced into the Sacred Congregation; also that of Brother Dominic Blasucci, who died during the lifetime of the holy founder, at the age of twenty. Blasucci has been styled the Aloysius of the Congregation. The lay-brother, Gerard Majello, called the Thaumaturgus of the Congregation, also a disciple of Alphonsus, has been solemnly beatified. Blessed Gerard died in 1755, aged twenty-nine.

Father Joseph Passerat was the worthy successor of the venerable Clement Mary Hoffbauer. It was he who introduced the Congregation into France, on the suggestion of the august daughter of Louis XVI, an exile like himself, but this foundation was not completed as rapidly as the piety of that unfortunate princess desired. It was not till 1820 that the Redemptorists were installed in their house near Strasburg. This establishment has been suppressed, and reopened, and suppressed again in our own day. In short, this order was accurately described by the holy founder when he said: “Our Congregation is like the grass of the meadow; it sprouts up, it is cut, but it does not die.” Prisons, banishment, and even death, with alternations of glory and success, comprise the history of the Redemptorist order. Perhaps for its time it has been more persistently persecuted than any of the great companies that form, as it were, the flying artillery of the Church.

In 1816, shortly after the beatification of St. Alphonsus, Father Blasucci died,[17183] second General of the Congregation, which he governed for a quarter of a century. He was succeeded by another disciple of the saint, Father Nicholas Mansione, who, when rector of Nocera in 1787, had the honor and happiness of administering the last sacraments to the dying founder. During his generalate and that of his immediate successors, Father Celestine Cocle (1824) and Camillo Ripoli (1832), the Congregation was considerably cramped by the petty jealousies of the Neapolitan government, which, as usual, attempted to regulate the business of the rector major. It is true that in 1841, Pope Gregory XVI divided the Congregation into six provinces, and commanded Ripoli to transfer to Rome the seat of his government, but in consequence of the senseless opposition of the Neapolitan government, this project was not fully carried out until after the election of his successor, Father Nicholas Mauron (present rector major), in 1855, from which date, the Neapolitan government being no longer able to impede its progress, the Congregation has spread into almost every civilized country, and been signally blessed by God.

It now (1873), consists of nine provinces, the Roman containing six houses, the French twelve, the Austrian eleven, the Belgian eight, Upper Germanic eight, Dutch six, Lower Germanic six, all on the European Continent. Several of these establishments have been suppressed or confiscated by the robber-king Victor Emanuel and the infidel Bismarck.

The Congregation was introduced into the United States in 1833, the missionaries being sent thither by the venerable Father Passerat, who for twenty years had been seeking an opportunity to plant his order in America.[17184] The American province now contains fourteen houses, of which the oldest is Rochester, and the last founded, Boston.

The Redemptorist Congregation was introduced into England in 1851, into Ireland in 1853, and into Scotland in 1867. It has been blessed with signal success in these kingdoms.

The Redemptorist houses of Central America are dependent on the Roman province. The total number of houses of this order is about eighty, besides which there have been several temporary missions.

The year 1848 was peculiarly disastrous to the Congregation in Europe. Four houses in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, six in Austria and Modena, were among the victims of the revolution, which showed, either that favored Europe was not yet fully reclaimed from barbarism, or that she had relapsed into it. A mob of our modern exponents of liberty and equality attempted to sack the establishment at Scifelli, and one of their number quietly ran his bayonet through the body of a poor lay-brother, who had, rashly or courageously, attempted to close the door against the sacrilegious robbers. The Fathers of the flourishing house of Vienna were compelled to enter close carriages, and conducted under a guard into the country, as far as their captors chose. They were then dropped in the forest, and left destitute of food and shelter, with the strictest injunction not to return to the city. The saintly and venerable Father Passerat was one of the victims of this outrage. A decree of the diet at Frankfort suppressed, throughout the whole Germanic Confederation, Jesuits, Redemptorists, and Liguorians. It is unnecessary to remark that the second and third terms are synonymous, though these learned lawmakers were not aware of that obvious fact. Incessant toll and persecutions told upon the vigorous frame of the saintly Father Passerat, now in his seventy-seventh year. He resigned his office of Vicar General, and retired to Tournai, where he died ten years later, October 30, 1858. No man ever knew better *how to abound and how to be brought low.* Tried by the highest prosperity and the depths of adversity—now waited on by emperors, again hooted by the rabble—he was unchanged in every vicissitude; to the very last he fully bore out the character his superior, the Venerable Clement Hoffbauer, had given of him to the rector major, Blasucci, in 1811:

“Father Passerat is a man of singular prudence and piety; he exacts of all great fidelity to the rule and constitutions. One may say he is patience personified; his zeal is incomparable; he refuses no labors; he braves all dangers. He has travelled on foot over twelve hundred miles. Twice he has visited me at Vienna, urged solely by the love of God and the interest of his community. In a word, the Congregation possesses in him an accomplished model of all virtues.

The last words of this wonderful missionary are characteristic: *Grant me, O Lord, eternal rest, and let perpetual light shine on me!* Rest eternal! Perpetual light! The two great cravings of the creature’s heart, whether saint or sinner.

Joseph Passerat was almost the last link that bound the Congregation to the days of its founder. Several Fathers trained by him still live to perpetuate the traditions he so faithfully taught and exemplified. Those who have barely seen him deem it a grace, and love to recall his benign features and his holy deportment.

We may appropriately add here the following words of the holy founder, for the world has seen them verified:

"I am certain that Jesus Christ regards lovingly our little society, yea, that He regards it as the apple of His eye. Daily experience proves this, since, amid so many persecutions, He never ceases to protect us and render us worthy of laboring for His glory in so many places, and multiplies His graces towards us."

"I have," he says elsewhere, a firm conviction that our little flock will continue to increase with time, not in honors and riches, but in efficacious means of procuring the glory of God, and laboring to cause Jesus Christ to be known and loved. We shall one day be reunited in heaven, never more to be separated, and there we shall meet hundreds of thousands who were once strangers to Jesus Christ and who, by our ministry restored to grace, will love Him and contribute eternally to our glory and happiness. Let us, then, have unbounded confidence in our dear Lord; He has selected us to be among the great ones of His court, as is evident from the protection He affords our Congregation in general, and each of its members in particular."

This seraph of earth frequently bursts into the most sublime petitions which a founder could make for his institute, a father for his children: "O Jesus, increase Thy divine love more and more in the hearts of all who live, and ever will live, in this Congregation, that, in heaven, burning like the seraphim, they may eternally praise Thee and magnify Thy mercies towards them!"

"O Lord Jesus," he again exclaims—and we humbly and devoutly echo his beautiful prayer—"O Lord Jesus, perfect Thy work; grant that we may be wholly Thine, and spend ourselves for Thy glory, in such a manner that all the subjects of this Congregation, until the judgment day, may be perfectly pleasing in Thy sight, and gain Thee an infinite number of souls! Amen."

THE END.

—POPULAR BOOK EXCERPTS—

INDEX

THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

DEATH, JUDGMENT, HEAVEN, AND HELL

NINE DISCOURSES FOR TIMES OF CALAMITIES

THE SEVEN SORROWS OF MARY

THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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THE HOLY EUCHARIST

CONTENTS

INDEX

THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

CONTENTS

The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ

NOTICE

INTRODUCTION

I
HOW DESERVING JESUS CHRIST IS OF OUR LOVE, ON ACCOUNT OF THE LOVE HE HAS SHOWN US IN HIS PASSION

II
HOW MUCH JESUS CHRIST DESERVES TO BE LOVED BY US, ON ACCOUNT OF THE LOVE HE HAS SHOWN US IN INSTITUTING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

III
THE GREAT CONFIDENCE WE OUGHT TO HAVE IN THE LOVE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN US AND IN ALL HE HAS DONE FOR US

IV
HOW MUCH WE ARE OBLIGED TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST

Chapter I
CHARITY IS PATIENT
(CHARITAS PATIENS EST.—1 COR. 13:4.)

Chapter II
CHARITY IS KIND
(CHARITAS BENIGNA EST.)

Chapter III
CHARITY ENVIETH NOT
(CHARITAS NON ÆMULATUR.)

Chapter IV
CHARITY DEALETH NOT PERVERSELY
(CHARITAS NON AGIT PERPERAM.)

I
LUKEWARMNESS

II
REMEDIES AGAINST LUKEWARMNESS

1. DESIRE OF PERFECTION

2. RESOLUTION

3. MENTAL PRAYER

4. FREQUENT COMMUNION

5. PRAYER

Chapter V
CHARITY IS NOT PUFFED UP
(CHARITAS NON INFLATUR.)

Chapter VI
CHARITY IS NOT AMBITIOUS
(CHARITAS NON EST AMBITIOSA.)

Chapter VII
CHARITY SEEKETH NOT HER OWN
(CHARITAS NON QUŒRIT QUŒ SUA SUNT.)

Chapter VIII
CHARITY IS NOT PROVOKED TO ANGER
(CHARITAS NON IRRITATUR.)

Chapter IX
CHARITY THINKETH NO EVIL, REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICETH WITH THE TRUTH
(CHARITAS NON COGITAT MALUM, NON GAUDET SUPER INIQUITATE, CONGAUDET AUTEM VERITATI.)

I
THE NECESSITY OF CONFORMING TO THE WILL OF GOD

II
OBEDIENCE

Chapter X
CHARITY BEARETH ALL THINGS
(CHARITAS OMNIA SUFFERT.)

I
PATIENCE IN SICKNESS

II
PATIENCE IN POVERTY

III
PATIENCE UNDER CONTEMPT

Chapter XI
CHARITY BELIEVETH ALL THINGS
(CHARITAS OMNIA CREDIT.)

Chapter XII
CHARITY HOPETH ALL THINGS
(CHARITAS OMNIA SPERAT.)

Chapter XIII
CHARITY BEARETH ALL THINGS
(CHARITAS OMNIA SUSTINET.)

I
TEMPTATIONS

II
DESOLATIONS

ABSTRACT OF THE VIRTUES TREATED OF IN THIS WORK, TO BE PRACTISED BY HIM WHO LOVES JESUS CHRIST

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

IX

X

XI

XII

NOVENA TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

MEDITATIONS

MEDITATION I
LOVE IS A FIRE THAT INFLAMES THE HEART

MEDITATION II
LOVE IS A LIGHT THAT ENLIGHTENS THE SOUL

MEDITATION III
LOVE IS A FOUNTAIN THAT SATISFIES

MEDITATION IV
LOVE IS A DEW WHICH FERTILIZES

MEDITATION V
LOVE IS A REPOSE THAT REFRESHES

MEDITATION VI
LOVE IS THE VIRTUE WHICH GIVES US STRENGTH

MEDITATION VII
LOVE CAUSES GOD TO DWELL IN OUR SOULS

MEDITATION VIII
LOVE IS A BOND WHICH BINDS

MEDITATION IX
LOVE IS A TREASURE CONTAINING EVERY GOOD

MEDITATION X
THE MEANS OF LOVING GOD AND OF BECOMING A SAINT

The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ

NOTICE

WE have here one of the masterpieces of St. Alphonsus,—a book that speaks to all hearts, that reveals to every Christian soul its true wants and the true means to satisfy them. One cannot read this book without becoming better; nor can one grow tired in reading it again and again. It is indeed a very highly-prized and widely-spread work. It was published in 1768. (Tannoia, B. 3, ch. 41, 42.)

The holy bishop, developing the celebrated text of St. Paul on the qualities of true charity, explains in thirteen chapters the principal virtues that we ought to practise and the defects that we ought to avoid in order to render to our Lord love for love. He treats of patience in general (Chap. I.), and in particular in sicknesses, poverty, and contempt (Chap. X.); of meekness (Chaps. II. and VIII.); of purity of intention (Chap. III.); of tepidity, and the remedies against this vice, namely, the desire of perfection, the determination to attain perfection, mental prayer, frequent communion, and prayer (Chap. IV.); of humility (Chap. V.); of ambition and vain-glory (Chap. VI.); of detachment from all things, especially when there is question of following one's vocation (Chap. VII.); of conformity to the will of God, and of obedience (Chap. IX.); of faith (Chap. XI.); of hope (Chap. XII.); and, finally, of temptations, and spiritual desolation (Chap. XIII.). The work is concluded by a summary of virtues that are to be practised.—ED.

INTRODUCTION

I

HOW DESERVING JESUS CHRIST IS OF OUR LOVE, ON ACCOUNT OF THE LOVE HE HAS SHOWN US IN HIS PASSION

THE whole sanctity and perfection of a soul consists in loving Jesus Christ, our God, our sovereign good, and our Redeemer. Whoever loves me, says Jesus Christ himself, shall be loved by my Eternal Father: *My Father loves you because you have loved Me.*[17185] Some, says St. Francis de Sales,[17186] make perfection consist in an austere life; others in prayer; others in frequenting the Sacraments; others in alms-deeds. But they deceive themselves: perfection consists in loving God with our whole heart. The Apostle wrote: *Above all things, . . . have charity, which is the bond of perfection.*[17187] It is charity which keeps united and preserves all the virtues that render a man perfect. Hence St. Augustine said: “Love God, and do whatever you please;”[17188] because a soul that loves God is taught by that same love never to do anything that will displease him, and to leave nothing undone that may please him.

But perhaps God does not deserve all our love? *He has loved us with an everlasting love.*[17189] O man, says the Lord, behold I was the first to love thee. Thou wast not yet in the world, nay, the world itself was not, and I already loved thee. As long as I am God, I loved thee; as long as I have loved myself, I have also loved thee. With good reason, therefore, did St. Agnes, that young holy virgin, reply to those who wished to unite her to an earthly spouse: “I am engaged to another lover.”[17190] “Go,” said she, “O lovers of this world, cease to sue my love; my God was the first to love me. He has loved me from all eternity: it is but just, then, for me to give him all my affections, and to love none other but him.”

As Almighty God knew that man is won by kindness, he determined to lavish his gifts upon him, and so take captive the affections of his heart. For this reason he said, *I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands* *of love.*[17191] I will catch men by those very snares by which they are naturally caught, that is, by the snares of love. And such exactly are all the favors of God to man. After having given him a soul created in his own image, with memory, understanding, and will, and a body with its senses, he created heaven and earth for him, yes, all that exists, all for the love of man,—the firmament, the stars, the planets, the seas, the rivers, the fountains, the hills, the plains, metals, fruits, and a countless variety of animals: and all these creatures that they might minister to the uses of man, and that man might love him in gratitude for so many admirable gifts.

"Heaven and earth, and all things, tell me to love Thee,"[17192] says St. Augustine. "My Lord," he said, "whatever I behold on the earth, or above the earth, all speak to me, and exhort me to love Thee; because all assure me that Thou hast made them for the love of me."

The Abbot de Rancé, founder of La Trappe, when from his hermitage he stood and surveyed the hills, the fountains, the birds, the flowers, the planets, and the skies, felt himself animated by each one of these creatures to love that God who had created all through love to him.

In like manner St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, when she held any beautiful flower in her hand, was enkindled by the sight of it with love to God; and she would say: "And God, then, has thought from all eternity of creating this flower for love of me!" Thus did that flower become, as it were, a dart of love, which sweetly wounded her, and united her more and more to her God.

On the other hand, St. Teresa, at the sight of trees, fountains, rivers, lakes, or meadows, declared that all these fair things upbraided her for her ingratitude in loving so coldly a God who created them that he might be loved by her.

To the like purpose is it related of a pious hermit, that when walking through the country, it seemed to him that the plants and flowers in his path reproached him for the cold return of love he made to God; so that he went along gently striking them with his staff, and saying to them: "Oh, be silent, be silent; you call me an ungrateful wretch; you tell me God has made you for love of me, and yet I do not love him; but now I understand you, be silent, be silent; do not reproach me more."

But God was not satisfied with giving us so many beautiful creatures. He has gone to such lengths to gain our love, as to give himself to us. The Eternal Father did not hesitate to give us even his only-begotten Son: *For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son.*[17193]When the Eternal Father saw that we were all dead, and deprived of his grace by sin, what did he do? for the immense love, nay, as the Apostle writes, for the too great love he bore us, he sent his beloved Son to make atonement for us; and so to restore to us that life which sin had robbed us of: Who *through his exceeding charity with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ.*[17194] And in granting us his Son (not sparing his Son, that he might spare us), he has granted us every good together with him, his grace, his love, and paradise, since assuredly all these gifts are much less than that of his Son: *He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all things.*[17195]

And so, likewise, the Son, through his love towards us, has given himself wholly to us: *Who loved me, and delivered Himself for me.*[17196] In order to redeem us from everlasting death, and to recover for us the divine grace and heaven which we had forfeited, he became man, and put on flesh like our own: *And the Word was made flesh.*[17197] Behold, then, a God reduced to nothingness: *But emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, . . . and in habit found as a man.*[17198] Behold the sovereign of the world humbling himself so low as to assume the form of a servant, and to subject himself to all the miseries which the rest of men endure.

But what is more astonishing still is, that he could very well have saved us without dying and without suffering at all; but no: he chose a life of sorrow and contempt, and a death of bitterness and ignominy even to the expiring on a cross,—the gibbet of infamy, the award of vilest criminals: *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.*[17199] But why, if he could have ransomed us without suffering, why should he choose to die, and to die on a cross? To show us how he loved us. *He loved us, and delivered Himself for us.*[17200] He loved us, and because he loved us, he delivered himself up to sorrows, and ignominies, and to a death more cruel than ever any man endured in this world.

Hence that great lover of Jesus Christ, St. Paul, took occasion to say: *The charity of Christ presseth us.*[17201] Wishing to show us by these words that it is not so much the sufferings themselves of Jesus Christ as his love in enduring them, that obliges us, and, as it were, constrains us to love him. Let us hear what St. Francis de Sales says on this text: "When we remember that Jesus Christ, true God, has loved us to such an excess as to suffer death, and the death of the cross, for us, our hearts are, as it were, put in a wine-press, and suffer violence, until love be extorted from them, but a violence which, the stronger it is, becomes the more delightful."[17202] He then goes on to say, "Ah! why do we not therefore cast ourselves on Jesus crucified, to die on the cross with him, who has chosen to die for love of us? I will hold him (should we say), and I will never let him go; I will die with him, and will be consumed in the flames of his love. One flame shall consume this divine Creator and his miserable creature. My Jesus gives himself unreservedly to me, and I give myself unreservedly to him. I will live and die on his loving breast; neither life nor death shall ever separate me from him. O eternal love, my soul longs after Thee, and makes choice of Thee forever. Come, O Holy Spirit, and inflame our hearts with love. O love, O death, to die to all other loves, to live solely to that of Jesus Christ! O Redeemer of our souls, grant that we may eternally sing, Live, Jesus! I love Jesus; live, Jesus, whom I love! yes, I love Jesus, who reigns for evermore"[17203]

The love of Jesus Christ towards men created in him a longing desire for the moment of his death, when his love should be fully manifested to them; hence he was wont to say in his lifetime: *I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!*[17204] I have to be baptized in my own blood; and how do I feel myself straitened with the desire that the hour of my Passion may soon arrive; for then man will know the love which I bear him! Hence St. John, speaking of that night in which Jesus began his Passion, writes: *Jesus knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end.*[17205] The Redeemer called that hour *His own hour,* because the time of his death was the time desired by him; as it was then that he wished to give mankind the last proof of his love, by dying for them upon a cross overwhelmed by sorrows.

But what could have ever induced a God to die as a malefactor upon a cross between two sinners, with such insult to his divine majesty? “Who did this?” asks St. Bernard; he answers, “It was love, careless of its dignity.”[17206] Ah, love indeed, when it tries to make itself known, does not seek what is becoming to the dignity of the lover, but what will serve best to declare itself to the object loved. St. Francis of Paula therefore had good reason to cry out at the sight of a crucifix, “O charity, O charity, O charity!” And in like manner, when we look upon Jesus on the cross, we should all exclaim, O love, O love, O love!

Ah, if faith had not assured us of it, who could ever have believed that a God, almighty, most happy, and the Lord of all, should have condescended to love man to such an extent that he seems to go out of himself for the love of him? We have seen Wisdom itself, that is the Eternal Word, become foolish through the excessive love he bore to man! So spoke St. Laurence Justinian: “We see Wisdom itself infatuated through excess of love.”[17207] St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said the same: One day, being in ecstasy, she took a wooden crucifix in her hands, and then cried out: “Yes, my Jesus, Thou art mad with love: I repeat it, and I will say it forever: My Jesus, thou art mad with love.” But no, says St. Denis the Areopagite; “no, it is not madness, but the ordinary effect of divine love, which makes him who loves go out of himself, in order to give himself up entirely to the object of his love: divine love causes ecstasy.”[17208]

Oh, if men would only pause and consider, looking at Jesus on the cross, the love that he has borne each one of them! “With what love,” says St. Francis de Sales, “would not our souls become enkindled at the sight of those flames which are in the Redeemer’s breast! And oh, what happiness, to be able to be consumed by that same fire with which our God burns for us! What joy, to be united to God by the chains of love!” St. Bonaventure called the wounds of Jesus Christ, wounds which pierce the most senseless hearts, and which inflame the most icy souls.[17209] How many darts of love come forth from those wounds, to wound the hardest hearts! Oh, what flames issue from the burning heart of Jesus Christ to inflame the coldest souls! And chains, how many, from that wounded side, to bind the most stubborn wills!

The Venerable John of Avila, who was so possessed with the love of Jesus Christ that he never failed in any of his sermons to speak of the love which Jesus Christ bears towards us, in a treatise on the love which this most loving Redeemer has for men, has expressed himself in sentiments so full of the fire of devotion, and of such beauty, that I desire to insert them here. He says as follows:

"Thou, O Redeemer, hast loved man in such a manner, that whoso reflects upon this love cannot do less than love Thee; for Thy love offers violence to hearts: as the Apostle says: *The charity of Christ presseth us.*[17210] The source of the love of Jesus Christ for men is his love for God. Hence he said on Maunday Thursday, *That the world may know that I love the Father, arise, let us go hence.*[17211] But whither? To die for men upon the cross."

"No human intellect can conceive how strongly this fire burns in the heart of Jesus Christ. As he was commanded to suffer death once, so, had he been commanded to die a thousand times, his love had been sufficient to endure it. And if what he suffered for all men had been imposed upon him for the salvation of one single soul, he would have done the same for each in particular as he did for all. And as he remained three hours upon the cross, so, had it been necessary, his love would have made him remain there even to the day of judgment. So that Jesus Christ loved much more than he suffered. O divine love, how far greater wert thou than thou outwardly seemedst to be; for though so many wounds and bruises tell us of great love, still they do not tell all its greatness. There was far more within than that which appeared externally. That was but as a spark which bounded forth from the vast ocean of infinite love. This is the greatest mark of love, to lay down our life for our friends. But this was not a sufficient mark for Jesus Christ wherewith to express his love."

"This is the love which causes holy souls to lose themselves, and to stand amazed, when once they have been allowed to know it. From it spring those burning sentiments of ardor, the desire of martyrdom, joy in sufferings, exultation under the storms of distress, the force to walk on burning coals as if they were roses, a thirst for sufferings, rejoicing in that which the world dreads, embracing that which it abhors. St. Ambrose says that the soul which is espoused to Jesus Christ upon the cross, thinks nothing so glorious as to bear upon itself the marks of the crucified one.”

“But how, O my lover, shall I repay this your love! It is right that blood should be compensated by blood. May I behold myself dyed in this blood and nailed to this cross! O holy cross, receive me also! O crown of thorns, enlarge thyself, that I too may place thee on my head! O nails, leave those innocent hands of my Lord, and come and pierce my heart with compassion and with love! For Thou, my Jesus, didst die, as St. Paul says, in order to gain dominion over the living and the dead, not by means of chastisements, but by love:” *For to this end Christ died and rose again: that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*[17212]

“O robber of hearts, the strength of Thy love has broken the exceeding hardness of our hearts! Thou hast inflamed the whole world with Thy love. O most loving Lord, inebriate our hearts with this wine, consume them with this fire, pierce them with this dart of Thy love! Thy Cross is indeed an arrow which pierces hearts. May all the world know that my heart is smitten! O sweetest love, what hast Thou done? Thou hast come to heal me, and Thou hast wounded me. Thou hast come to teach me, and Thou hast made me well-nigh mad. O madness full of wisdom, may I never live without you! All, O Lord, that I behold upon the cross invites me to love Thee: the wood, the figure, the wounds of Thy body; and above all, Thy love, engages me to love Thee, and never to forget Thee more.”[17213]

But in order to arrive at the perfect love of Jesus Christ, we must adopt the means. Behold, then, the means which St. Thomas Aquinas gives us:[17214]

1. To have a constant remembrance of the benefits of God, both general and particular.

2. To consider the infinite goodness of God, who is ever waiting to do us good, and who ever loves us, and seeks from us our love.

3. To avoid even the smallest thing that could offend him.

4. To renounce all the sensible goods of this world, riches, honors, and sensual pleasures.

Father Tauler[17215] says that meditation on the sacred Passion of Jesus Christ is a great means also for acquiring his perfect love.

Who can deny that, of all devotions, devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ is the most useful, the most tender, the most agreeable to God, one that gives the greatest consolation to sinners, and at the same time most powerfully enkindles loving souls? Whence is it that we receive so many blessings, if it be not from the Passion of Jesus Christ? Whence have we hope of pardon, courage against temptations, confidence that we shall go to heaven? Whence are so many lights to know the truth, so many loving calls, so many spurrings to change our life, so many desires to give ourselves up to God, except from the Passion of Jesus Christ? The Apostle therefore had but too great reason to declare him to be excommunicated who did not love Jesus Christ. *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.*[17216]

St. Bonaventure says there is no devotion more fitted for sanctifying a soul than meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ; whence he advises us to meditate every day upon the Passion, if we would advance in the love of God. “If you would make progress, meditate daily on the Passion of the Lord; for nothing works such an entire sanctification in the soul, as the meditation of the Passion of Christ.”[17217] And before him St. Augustine, as Bustis relates, said, that one tear shed in memory of the Passion is worth more than to fast weekly on bread and water for a year.[17218] Wherefore the saints were always occupied in considering the sorrows of Jesus Christ: it was by this means that St. Francis of Assisi became a seraph. He was one day found by a gentleman shedding tears, and crying out with a loud voice: being asked the cause, “I weep,” he answered, “over the sorrows and ignominies of my Lord: and what causes me the greatest sorrow is, that men, for whom he suffered so much, live in forgetfulness of him.” And on saying this he wept the more, so that this gentleman began also himself to weep. When the saint heard the bleating of a lamb, or saw anything which reminded him of the Passion of Jesus, he immediately shed tears. On another occasion, being sick, some one told him to read some pious book. “My book,” he replied, “is Jesus crucified.” Hence he did nothing but exhort his brethren to be ever thinking of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Tiepoli writes: “He who becomes not inflamed with the love of God by looking on Jesus dead upon the cross, will never love at all.”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Eternal Word! Thou hast spent three-and-thirty years in labors and fatigues; Thou hast given Thy life and Thy blood for man’s salvation; in short, Thou hast spared nothing to make men love Thee; and how is it possible that there should be those who know this, and yet do not love Thee? O God, amongst these ungrateful ones I also may be numbered! I see the wrong I have done Thee; O my Jesus, have pity upon me! I offer Thee this ungrateful heart—ungrateful it is true, but penitent. Yes, I repent above every other evil, O my dear Redeemer, for having despised Thee! I repent, and I am sorry with my whole heart. O my soul, love a God who is bound like a criminal for thee; a God scourged like a slave for thee; a God made a mock-king for thee; a God, in short, dead upon a cross, as the vilest outcast for thee! Yes, my Saviour, my God, I love Thee, I love Thee! Bring continually to my remembrance, I beseech Thee, all that Thou hast suffered for me, so that I may never more forget to love Thee. O cords that bound my Jesus, bind me to Jesus; thorns that crowned my Jesus, pierce me with the love of Jesus; nails that transfixed my Jesus, nail me to the Cross of Jesus, that I may live and die united to Jesus. O blood of Jesus, inebriate me with his holy love! O death of Jesus, make me die to every earthly affection! Pierced feet of my Lord, I embrace you; deliver me from hell, which I have deserved; my Jesus, in hell I could no more love Thee, and yet I desire to love Thee always. Save me, my dearest Saviour; bind me to Thyself, that I may never again lose Thee.

O Mary, refuge of sinners, and Mother of my Saviour! help a sinner who wishes to love God, and who recommends himself to thee; succor me for the love thou bearest to Jesus Christ.

II

HOW MUCH JESUS CHRIST DESERVES TO BE LOVED BY US, ON ACCOUNT OF THE LOVE HE HAS SHOWN US IN INSTITUTING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

Jesus, knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father: having loved His own . . . He loved them unto the end.[17219] Our most loving Saviour, knowing that his hour was now come for leaving this earth, desired, before he went to die for us, to leave us the greatest possible mark of his love; and this was the gift of the most Holy Sacrament.

St. Bernardine of Sienna remarks, that men remember more continually and love more tenderly the signs of love which are shown to them in the hour of death.[17220] Hence it is the custom that friends, when about to die, leave to those persons whom they have loved some gift, such as a garment or a ring, as a memorial of their affection. But what hast Thou, O my Jesus, left us, when quitting this world, in memory of Thy love? Not, indeed, a garment or a ring, but Thine own body, Thy blood, Thy soul, Thy divinity, Thy whole self, without reserve. "He gave thee all," says St. John Chrysostom; "He left nothing for himself."[17221]

The Council of Trent says,[17222] that in this gift of the Eucharist Jesus Christ desired, as it were, to pour forth all the riches of the love he had for men. And the Apostle observes, that Jesus desired to bestow this gift upon men on the very night itself when they were planning his death: *The same night in which He was betrayed, He took bread; and giving thanks, broke and said: Take ye, and eat: this is My body.*[17223] St. Bernardine of Sienna says, that Jesus Christ, burning with love for us, and not content with being prepared to give his life for us, was constrained by the excess of his love to work a greater work before he died; and this was to give his own body for our food.[17224]

This Sacrament, therefore, was rightly named by St. Thomas, "*the* Sacrament of love, the pledge of love."[17225] Sacrament of love; for love was the only motive which induced Jesus Christ to give us in it his whole self. Pledge of love; so that if we had ever doubted his love, we should have in this sacrament a pledge of it: as if our Redeemer, in leaving us this gift, had said: O souls, if you ever doubt my love, behold, I leave you myself in this Sacrament: with such a pledge, you can never any more doubt that I love you, and love you to excess. But more, St. Bernard calls this sacrament "the love of loves;"[17226] because this gift comprehends all the other gifts bestowed upon us by our Lord,—creation, redemption, predestination to glory; so that the Eucharist is not only a pledge of the love of Jesus Christ, but of paradise, which he desires also to give us. "In which," says the Church, "a pledge of future glory is given us."[17227] Hence St. Philip Neri could find no other name for Jesus Christ in the Sacrament save that of "love;" and so, when the holy Viaticum was brought to him, he was heard to exclaim, "Behold my love; give me my love."

The prophet Isaias[17228] desired that the whole world should know the tender inventions that our God has made use of, wherewith to make men love him. And who could ever have thought—if he himself had not done it—that the Incarnate Word would hide himself under the appearances of bread, in order to become himself our food? "Does it not seem folly," says St. Augustine, "to say, Eat my flesh; drink my blood?"[17229] When Jesus Christ revealed to his disciples the sacrament he desired to leave them, they could not bring themselves to believe him; and they left him, saying: *How can this Man give us His flesh to eat? . . . This saying is hard, and who can hear it?*[17230] But that which men could neither conceive nor believe, the great love of Jesus Christ hath thought of and accomplished. *Take ye, and eat,* said he to his disciples before he went to die; and through them to us all. Receive and eat: but what food shall that be, O Saviour of the world, which Thou desirest to give us before Thou diest? *Take ye, and eat; this is my body.*[17231] This is not earthly food; it is I myself who give myself entirely to you.

And oh, with what desire does Jesus Christ pant to come into our souls in the Holy Communion! *With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with yon before I suffer.*[17232] So he spoke on that night in which he instituted this sacrament of love. *With desire I have desired:* so did the excessive love which he bore us cause him to speak, as St. Laurence Justinian remarks: "These are the words of most burning love."[17233] And in order that every one might easily receive him, He desired to leave himself under the appearance of bread; for if he had left himself under the appearance of some rare or very costly food, the poor would have been deprived of him; but no, Jesus would hide himself under the form of bread, which costs but little, and can be found everywhere, in order that all in every country might be able to find him and receive him.

In order, then, to excite us to receive him in the Holy Communion, he not only exhorts us to do so by so many invitations,—*Come, eat My bread; and drink the wine which I have mingled for you;*[17234] *Eat, O friends, and drink,*[17235] speaking of this heavenly bread and wine,—but he even gives us a formal precept: *Take ye, and eat; this is My body.* And more than this; that we may go and receive him, he entices us with the promise of paradise. *He that eateth My flesh hath everlasting life. He that eateth this bread shall live forever.*[17236] And still more, he threatens us with hell, and exclusion from paradise, if we refuse to communicate. *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, you shall not have life in you.*[17237] These invitations, these promises, these threats, all proceed from the great desire he has to come to us in this sacrament.

But why is it that Jesus Christ so desires that we should receive him in the Holy Communion? Here is the reason. St. Denis says that love always sighs after and tends to union, and so also says St. Thomas, "Lovers desire of two to become one."[17238] Friends who really love each other would like to be so united as to become one person. Now this is what the infinite love of God for man has done; that he would not only give us himself in the eternal kingdom, but even in this life would permit men to possess him in the most intimate union, by giving them himself, whole and entire, under the appearances of bread in the sacrament. He stands there as though behind a wall; and from thence he beholds, as it were, through a closed lattice: *Behold He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices.*[17239] It is true, we do not see him; but he sees us, and is there really present: he is present, in order that we may possess him: but he hides himself from us to make us desire him: and as long as we have not reached our true country, Jesus desires to give himself wholly to us, and to remain united with us.

He could not satisfy his love by giving himself to the human race by his Incarnation and by his Passion, dying for all men upon the cross; but he desired to find out a way whereby he might give himself entirely to each one of us in particular; and for this end he instituted the Sacrament of the Altar, in order to unite himself wholly to each: *He that cateth My flesh,* he said, *abideth in me and I in him.*[17240] In Holy Communion Jesus unites himself to the soul, and the soul to Jesus; and this is not a union of mere affection, but it is a true and real union. Hence St. Francis de Sales says: "In no other action can the Saviour be considered more tender or more loving than in this, in which he annihilates himself, so to say, and reduces himself to food, in order to penetrate our souls, and to unite himself to the hearts of his faithful."[17241] St. John Chrysostom says, that Jesus Christ, through the ardent love which he bore us, desired so to unite himself to us, as to become one and the same thing with us. “He mingled himself with us, that we might be one thing; for this is the property of those who ardently love.”[17242]

“It was Thy wish, in short,” says St. Laurence Justinian, “O God, enamoured of our souls, to make, by means of this sacrament, Thine own heart, by an inseparable union, one and the same heart with ours!”[17243] St. Bernardine of Sienna adds, that “the gift of Jesus Christ to us as our food was the last step of his love; since he gives himself to us in order to unite himself wholly to us; in the same way as food becomes united with him who partakes of it.”[17244] Oh, how delighted is Jesus Christ to be united with our souls! He one day said to his beloved servant, Margaret of Ypres, after Communion, “See, my daughter, the beautiful union that exists between me and thee: come, then, love me; and let us remain ever united in love, and let us never separate again.”

We must, then, be persuaded that a soul can neither do, nor think of doing, anything which gives greater pleasure to Jesus Christ than to communicate frequently, with dispositions suitable to the great guest whom she has to receive into her heart. I have said *suitable,* not indeed *worthy* dispositions; for if worthy were necessary, who could ever communicate? Another God would alone be worthy to receive God. By *suitable,* I mean such dispositions as become a miserable creature, clothed with the unhappy flesh of Adam. Ordinarily speaking, it is sufficient if a person communicates in a state of grace, and with a great desire of growing in the love of Jesus Christ. St. Francis de Sales said, “It is by love alone that we must receive Jesus Christ in the Communion, since it is through love alone that he gives himself to us.”[17245] For the rest, with regard to the number of times a person should communicate, in this he should be guided by the advice of his spiritual Father. Nevertheless, we should be aware that no state of life or employment, neither the married state nor business, prevents frequent Communion, when the director thinks it advisable, as Pope Innocent XI. has declared in his decree of 1679, when he says, “Frequent Communion must be left to the judgment of the confessors. . . . who, for lay persons in business, or in the marriage state, must recommend it according as they see it will be profitable for their salvation.”[17246]

We must next understand that there is nothing from which we can derive such profit as from the Communion. The Eternal Father has made Jesus Christ the possessor of all his own heavenly treasures. *The Father hath given all things into His hands.*[17247] Hence, when Jesus Christ comes to a soul in Holy Communion, he brings with him boundless treasures of grace; and consequently after Communion we can justly say, *Now all good things came to me together with it.*[17248] St. Denis says, that the Sacrament of the Eucharist is far more powerful for the sanctification of souls than all other spiritual means of grace;[17249] and St. Vincent Ferrer, that one Communion does more for the soul than a week's fasting on bread and water.

In the first place, as the Council of Trent teaches, Communion is that great remedy which frees us from venial, and preserves us against mortal sins.[17250] It is said "from daily faults;" because according to St. Thomas,[17251] a man is excited by means of this sacrament to make acts of love, by which venial sins are forgiven. And it is said that "we are preserved from mortal sins, because Communion increases grace, which will preserve us from great faults. Hence Innocent III. says, that Jesus Christ delivered us from the power of sin by his Passion, but that by the Eucharist he delivers us from the power of sinning.[17252]

This Sacrament, moreover, above all others, inflames our souls with divine love. *God is love.*[17253] And he is a fire which consumes all earthly affections in our hearts. *He is a consuming fire.*[17254] And for this very purpose, namely, to enkindle this fire, the Son of God came upon earth. *I am come to send fire on the earth;* and he added, that he desired nothing but to see this fire enkindled in our souls: *And what will I but that it be kindled?*[17255] And oh, what flames of love does not Jesus Christ light up in the heart of every one who receives him devoutly in this sacrament! St. Catharine of Sienna once saw the Host in a priest's hand appearing as a globe of fire; and the saint was astonished that the hearts of all men were not burned up, and, as it were, reduced to ashes by such a flame. Such brilliant rays issued from the face of St. Rose of Lima after Communion, as to dazzle the eyes of those who saw her; and the heat from her mouth was so intense, that a hand held near it was scorched. It is related of St. Wenceslaus, that by merely visiting the churches where the Blessed Sacrament was kept, he was inflamed by such an ardor, that his servant who accompanied him did not feel the cold, if when walking on the snow he trod in the footsteps of the saint.

St. John Chrysostom says that the most Holy Sacrament is a burning fire; so that when we leave the altar we breathe forth flames of love, which make us objects of terror to hell.[17256] The spouse of the Canticles says: *He brought me into the cellar of wine, He set in order charity in me.*[17257] St. Gregory of Nyssa says that Communion is precisely this cellar of wine, in which the soul becomes so inebriated with divine love, that it forgets and loses sight of creatures; and this is that languishing with love of which the spouse again speaks: *Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples, because I languish with love.*[17258]

Some one will say: "But this is the very reason why I do not communicate frequently, because I see that I am so cold in the love of God." Gerson answers such a one by saying: "Do you, therefore, because you are cold, willingly keep away from the fire? Rather, because you feel yourself cold, should you so much the more frequently approach this sacrament, if you really desire to love Jesus Christ." "Although it be with lukewarmness," wrote St. Bonaventure, "still approach, trusting in the mercy of God. The more one feels himself sick, the greater need has he of a physician."[17259] In like manner, St. Francis de Sales: "Two sorts of persons ought to go frequently to Communion: the perfect, in order to remain so; and the imperfect, in order to be become perfect."[17260] But for frequent Communion, it is at least necessary to have a great desire to become a saint and to grow in the love of Jesus Christ. Our Lord said once to St. Matilda: "When you go to Communion desire all the love which a soul has ever had for me, and I will receive your love according to your desire."[17261]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O God of love, O infinite lover, worthy of infinite love, tell me what more canst Thou invent to make us love Thee? It was not sufficient for Thee to become man, and to subject Thyself to all our miseries; not sufficient to shed all Thy blood for us in torments, and then to die overwhelmed with sorrow, upon a cross destined for the most shameful malefactors. Thou didst, at last, oblige Thyself to be hidden under the species of bread and wine, to become our food, and so united with each one of us. Tell me, I repeat, what more canst Thou invent to make Thyself loved by us? Ah, wretched shall we be if we do not love Thee in this life! And when we shall have entered into eternity, what remorse shall we not feel for not having loved Thee! My Jesus, I will not die without loving Thee, and loving Thee exceedingly! I am heartily sorry, and am pained for having so greatly offended Thee. But now I love Thee above all things. I love Thee more than myself, and I consecrate to Thee all my affections. Do Thou, who inspirest me with this desire, give me also grace to accomplish it. My Jesus, my Jesus, I desire nothing of Thee but Thyself. Now that Thou hast drawn me to Thy love, I leave all, I renounce all, and I bind myself to Thee: Thou alone art sufficient for me.

O Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me, and make me a saint! Add this also to the many wonders thou hast done in changing sinners into saints.

III

THE GREAT CONFIDENCE WE OUGHT TO HAVE IN THE LOVE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN US AND IN ALL HE HAS DONE FOR US

David placed all his hope of salvation in his future Redeemer, and said: *Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.*

But how much more ought we to place our confidence in Jesus Christ, now that he has come, and has accomplished the work of redemption! Hence each one of us should say, and repeat again and again with greater confidence: *Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.*[17262]

If we have great reason to fear everlasting death on account of our sins against God, we have, on the other hand, far greater reason to hope for everlasting life through the merits of Jesus Christ, which are infinitely more powerful for our salvation than our sins are for our damnation. We have sinned, and have deserved hell; but the Redeemer has come to take upon himself all our offences, and to make satisfaction for them by His sufferings: *Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows.*[17263]

In the same unhappy moment in which we sinned, God had already written against us the sentence of eternal death; but what has our merciful Redeemer done? *Blotting out the handwriting of the decree which was against us, . . . the same He took out of the way, fastening it to the cross.*[17264] He cancelled by his blood the decree of our condemnation, and then fastened it to the cross, in order that, when we look at the sentence of our damnation for the sins we have committed, we may at the same time see the cross on which Jesus Christ died and blotted out this sentence by his blood, and so regain hope of pardon and everlasting life.

Oh, how far more powerfully does the blood of Jesus Christ speak for us, and obtain mercy for us from God, than did the blood of Abel speak against Cain! *You are come to Jesus the mediator of the New Testament, and to the sprinkling of blood, which speaketh better than that of Abel.*[17265] As if the Apostle had said, “O sinners, happy are you to be able, after you have sinned, to have recourse to Jesus crucified, who has shed all his blood, in order to become the mediator of peace between sinners and God, and to obtain pardon for them! Your iniquities cry out against you, but the blood of the Redeemer pleads in your favor; and the divine justice cannot but be appeased by the voice of this precious blood.”

It is true that we shall have to render a rigorous account to the Eternal Judge of all our sins. But who is to be our Judge? *The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.*[17266] Let us comfort ourselves, the Eternal Father has committed our judgment to our own Redeemer. Therefore St. Paul encourages us, saying, *Who is he that shall condemn? Christ Jesus who died, . . . who also maketh intercession for us.*[17267] Who is the judge to condemn us? It is that same Saviour who, in order not to condemn us to everlasting death, vouchsafed himself to be condemned and to die; and not content with this, at this moment intercedes with his Father for our salvation. Hence St. Thomas of Villanova says: “What do you fear, O sinner, if you detest your sin? How will he condemn you, who died in order not to condemn you? how will he cast you from him, if you return to his feet, he who came from heaven to seek you at the very time you were flying from him?”[17268]

And if we fear on account of our frailty to fall under the assaults of our enemies, against whom we must continually wage war, behold what we have to do, as the Apostle admonishes us: *Let us run to the fight proposed unto us: looking on Jesus the author and finisher of faith, who having joy proposed unto Him, underwent the cross, despising the shame.*[17269] Let us go out to the battle with great courage, looking at Jesus crucified, who from his cross offers us his assistance, the victory, and crown. In past times we fell into sin because we left off looking at the wounds and the pains endured by our Redeemer, and so we did not have recourse to him for help. But if for the future we set before our eyes all he has suffered for love of us, and how he ever stands ready to assist us when we have recourse to him, it is certain that we shall not be conquered by our enemies. St. Teresa said, with her wonted generosity, "I do not understand the fears of certain persons, who say, The devil, the devil, so long as we can say, God, God, and make Satan tremble."[17270] On the other hand, the saint assures us, that if we do not place all our confidence in God, all our own exertions will be of little or no avail. "All our exertions," these are her own words, "are of little use, if we do not give up entirely all trust in ourselves, and place it altogether in God."[17271] Oh, what two great mysteries of hope and love for us are the Passion of Jesus Christ and the Sacrament of the Altar!—mysteries, which we could have never believed, had not faith assured us of them. That God Almighty should deign to become man, shed all his blood, and die of sorrow upon a cross, and why? To pay for our sins, and gain salvation for us rebellious worms! And then his own very body, once sacrificed upon the Cross for us, this he vouchsafes to give us for our food, in order to become wholly united with us! O God, how should not these two mysteries consume with love the hearts of all men! And what sinner is there, be he ever so abandoned, who can despair of pardon, if he repent of the evil he has done, when he sees a God so full of love for men, and so inclined to do them good? Hence St. Bonaventure, full of confidence, said, "I will have great confidence, firmly hoping that he who has done and suffered so much for my salvation will deny me nothing that I have need of."[17272] How can he refuse to give me the graces necessary for my salvation, who has done and suffered so much to save me?

Let us go therefore (the Apostle exhorts us) *with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.*[17273] The throne of grace is the cross on which Jesus sits to dispense graces and mercy to all who come to him. But we must quickly have recourse to him, if we would find seasonable aid for our salvation: for there will come a time perhaps when we shall no longer be able to find it. Let us go quickly then and embrace the cross of Jesus Christ, and let us go with great confidence. Let us not be frightened by the sight of our miseries; in Jesus crucified we shall find all riches, all grace: *In all things you are made rich in Him, . . . so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace.*[17274] The merits of Jesus Christ have enriched us with all the divine treasures, and have made us capable of every grace we can desire.

St. Leo says, "that Jesus has brought us by his death more good than the devil has done us harm by sin."[17275] And by these words he explains what St. Paul said before him, *that the gift of redemption is greater than sin:* grace has overcome the offence. *Not as the offence, so also is the gift: where sin abounded, grace hath abounded more.*[17276] From this the Saviour encourages us to hope for every favor and every grace through his merits. And see how he teaches us the way to obtain all we want from his Eternal Father: *Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[17277] Whatever you desire, he says, ask for it of the Father in my name, and I promise you that you shall be heard. And indeed how shall the Father be able to deny us, when he has given us his only-begotten Son, whom he loves as himself? *He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?*[17278] The Apostle says *all things;* so that no grace is excepted, neither pardon, nor perseverance, nor holy love, nor perfection, nor paradise, "all, all, he has given us." But we must pray to him. God is all liberality to those who call upon him: *Rich unto all that call upon Him.*[17279]

I will again quote here many other beautiful thoughts of the Venerable John of Avila, which he has left us in his letters, on the great confidence we should have in the merits of Jesus Christ:

"Do not forget that Jesus Christ is the mediator between the Eternal Father and ourselves; and that we are beloved by him, and united to him by so strong bonds of love that nothing can break them, so long as a man does not himself dissolve them by some mortal sin. The blood of Jesus cries out, and asks mercy for us; and cries out so loudly that the noise of our sins is not heard. The death of Jesus Christ hath put to death our sins: *O Death, I* *will be thy death!*[17280] Those who are lost are not lost for want of means of satisfaction, but because they would not avail themselves of the sacraments as the means of profiting by the satisfaction made by Jesus Christ.

"Jesus has taken upon himself the affair of remedying our evils, as if it had been personally his own affair. So that he has called our sins his own, although he did not commit them, and has sought pardon for them; and with the most tender love has prayed, as if he were praying for himself, that all who should have recourse to him might become objects of love. And as he sought, so he found, because God has so ordained that Jesus and ourselves should be so united in one, that either he and we should be loved, or he and we hated: and since Jesus is not or cannot be hated, in the same way, if we remain united by love to Jesus, we shall be also loved. By his being loved by God, we are also loved, seeing that Jesus Christ can do more to make us loved than we can do to make ourselves hated; since the Eternal Father loves Jesus Christ far more than he hates sinners.

"Jesus said to his Father: *Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me.*[17281] Love has conquered hatred; and thus we have been pardoned and loved, and are secure of never being abandoned, so strong is the tie of love that binds us. The Lord said by Isaias: *Can a woman forget her infant? And if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven Thee in My hands.*[17282] He has graven us in his hands with his own blood. Thus we should not trouble ourselves about anything, since everything is ordained by those hands which were nailed to the cross in testimony of the love he bears us.

"Nothing can so trouble us on which Jesus Christ cannot reassure us. Let the sins I have committed surround me, let the devils lay snares for me, let fears for the future accuse me, by demanding mercy of the most tender Jesus Christ, who has loved me even until death, I cannot possibly lose confidence; for I see myself so highly valued, that God gave himself for me. O my Jesus, sure haven for those who seek Thee in time of peril! O most watchful Pastor, he deceives himself who does not trust in Thee, if only he has the will to amend his life! Therefore Thou hast said: I am here, fear not; I am he who afflicts and who consoles. Some from time to time I place in desolations, which seem equal to hell itself; but after a while I bring them out and console them. I am thine advocate, who have made thy, cause my own. I am thy surety, who am come to pay thy debts. I am thy Lord, who have redeemed thee with my blood, not in order to abandon thee, but to enrich thee, having bought thee at a great price. How shall I fly from him who seeks me, when I went forth to meet those who sought to outrage me? I did not turn away my face from him who struck me; and shall I from him who would adore me? How can my children doubt that I love them, seeing that out of love to them I placed myself in the hands of my enemies? Whom have I ever despised that loved me? Whom have I ever abandoned that sought my aid? Even I go seeking those that do not seek me."[17283]

If you believe that the Eternal Father has given you his Son, believe also that he will give you everything else which is infinitely less than his Son. Do not think that Jesus Christ is forgetful of you, since he has left you, as the greatest memorial and pledge of his love, himself in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my Jesus, my love, what joyful hope does Thy Passion give me! How can I possibly fear not to receive from an Almighty God who has given me all his blood, the pardon of my sins, paradise, and all other graces that I require! Ah, my Jesus, my hope and my love, Thou, in order that I might not perish, didst give Thy life; I love Thee above every good, my Redeemer and my God. Thou gavest Thyself entirely to me; I give Thee my whole will, and with it I repeat that I love Thee, and I will always say, I love Thee, I love Thee. So I always desire to say in this life so I wish to die, breathing forth my last sigh with this dear word on my lips, My God, I love Thee; and from that moment I may commence a love towards Thee which shall last forever, and without cessation for all eternity. I love Thee, then; and because I love Thee, I repent above all things for having offended Thee. In order not to lose a passing satisfaction, I have been willing, wretch that I am, to lose Thee so often, O infinite good! This thought torments me more than any pain: but it is a consolation to me to think that I have to do with infinite goodness, that knows not how to despise a heart that truly loves. Oh, that I could die for Thee, who didst die for me! My dear Redeemer, I surely hope of Thee eternal salvation in the life to come, and in this life I hope for holy perseverance in Thy love; and therefore I propose always to ask it of Thee. And do Thou, by the merits of Thy death, give me perseverance in praying to Thee. This too I ask and hope of thee, O Mary my Queen!

IV

HOW MUCH WE ARE OBLIGED TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ as God has a claim on all our love; but by the love which he has shown us, he wished to put us, so to speak, under the necessity of loving him, at least in gratitude for all that he has done and suffered for us. He has greatly loved us, that we might love him greatly. "Why does God love us, but that he may be loved?"[17284] wrote St. Bernard. And Moses had said the same before him: *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou fear the Lord thy God . . . and love Him?*[17285] Therefore the first command which he gave us was this: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with Thy whole heart.*[17286] And St. Paul says, that love is the fulfilling of the law: *Love is the fulfilling of the law.*[17287] For "fulfilling" the Greek text has the "embracing of the law;"[17288] love embraces the entire law.

Who, indeed, at the sight of a crucified God dying for our love can refuse to love him? Those thorns, those nails, that cross, those wounds, and that blood, call upon us, and irresistibly urge us, to love him who has loved us so much. One heart is too little wherewith to love this God so enamoured of us. In order to requite the love of Jesus Christ, it would require another God to die for his love. "Ah, why," exclaims St. Francis de Sales, "do we not throw ourselves on Jesus Christ, to die on the cross with him who was pleased to die there for the love of us?"[17289] The Apostle clearly impresses on us that Jesus Christ died for us for this end, that we might no longer live for ourselves, but solely for that God who died for us: *Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them.*[17290]

And the recommendation of Ecclesiasticus is here in point: *Forget not the kindness of thy surety; for He hath given His life for thee.*[17291] Be not unmindful of him who has stood surety for thee; who, to satisfy for thy sins, was willing to pay off, by his death, the debt of punishment due from thee.

Oh, how desirous is Jesus Christ that we should continually remember his Passion! and how it saddens him to see that we are so unmindful of it! Should a person endure for one of his friends affronts, blows, and imprisonment, how afflicting would it be for him to know that that friend afterwards never gave it a thought, and cared not even to hear it spoken of! On the contrary, how gratified would he be to know that his friend constantly spoke of it with the warmest gratitude, and often thanked him for it. So it is pleasing to Jesus Christ when we preserve in our minds a grateful and loving recollection of the sorrows and death which he underwent for us. Jesus Christ was the desire of all the ancient Fathers; he was the desire of all nations before he was yet come upon earth. Now, how much more ought he to be our only desire and our only love, now that we know that he is really come, and are aware how much he has done and suffered for us,—so that he even died upon the cross for love of us!

For this purpose he instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist on the day preceding his death, and gave us the injunction, that as often as we should be nourished with his most sacred flesh, we should be mindful of his death: *Take ye, and cat; this is My body. . . . This do for a commemoration of Me*, etc. *For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come.*[17292] Wherefore the holy Church prays: “O God! who under this wonderful Sacrament hast left us a memorial of Thy Passion,”[17293] etc. And she also sings: “O sacred banquet, in which Christ is taken, the memory of his Passion is renewed,”[17294] etc. Hence we may gather how pleasing to Jesus Christ are they who think frequently of his Passion, since it was for this very purpose that he left himself in the holy Sacrament upon our altars, in order that we might bear in continual and grateful remembrance all that he suffered for us, and by this means evermore increase our love towards him. St. Francis de Sales called Mount Calvary “the mountain of lovers.” It is impossible to remember that mount and not love Jesus Christ, who died there for love of us.

O God! and how is it that men do not love this God who has done so much to be loved by men! Before the Incarnation of the Word, man might have doubted whether God loved him with a true love; but after the coming of the Son of God, and after his dying for the love of men, how can we possibly doubt of his love? “O man,” says St. Thomas of Villanova, “look on that cross, on those torments, and that cruel death, which Jesus Christ has suffered for thee: after so great and so many tokens of his love, thou canst no longer entertain a doubt that he loves thee, and loves thee exceedingly.” And St. Bernard says, that “the cross and every wound of our Blessed Redeemer cry aloud to make us understand the love he bears us.”[17295]

In this grand mystery of man’s redemption, we must consider how Jesus employed all his thoughts and zeal to discover every means of making himself loved by us. Had he merely wished to die for our salvation, it would have been sufficient had he been slain by Herod with the other children; but no, he chose before dying to lead, during thirty-three years, a life of hardship and suffering; and during that time, with a view to win our love, he appeared in several different guises. First of all, as a poor child born in a stable; then as a little boy helping in the workshop; and finally, as a criminal executed on a cross. But before dying on the cross, we see him in many different states, one and all calculated to excite our compassion, and to make himself loved: in agony in the garden, bathed from head to foot in a sweat of blood; afterwards, in the court of Pilate, torn with scourges; then treated as a mock-king, with a reed in his hand, a ragged garment of purple on his shoulders, and a crown of thorns on his head; then dragged publicly through the streets to death, with the cross upon his shoulders; and at length, on the hill of Calvary, suspended on the cross by three iron nails. Tell me, does he merit our love or not, this God who has vouchsafed to endure all these torments, and to use so many means in order to captivate our love? Father John Rigouleux used to say: “I would spend my life in weeping for love of a God whose love induced him to die for the salvation of men.”

“Love is a great thing,”[17296] says St. Bernard. A great thing, a precious thing is love. Solomon, speaking of, the divine wisdom, which is holy charity, called it an infinite treasure; because he that possesses charity is made partaker of the friendship of God: *For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.*[17297]

The angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, says, that charity is not only the queen of all virtues, but that, wherever she reigns, she draws along with her, as it were, in her train, all other virtues, and directs them all so as to bring us in closer union with God; but charity is properly that which unites us with God. As St. Bernard tells us: “Charity is a virtue uniting us with God.”[17298] And, indeed, it is over and over again signified in the holy Scriptures, that God loves whoever loves him: *I love them that love Me.*[17299] *If any one loves me . . . My Father will love Him; and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.*[17300] *He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him.*[17301] Behold the beautiful union which charity produces; it unites the soul to God. Moreover, love supplies strength to practise and to surfer everything for God: *Love is strong as death.*[17302] St. Augustine writes: “Nothing is so hard that cannot be subdued by the fire of love.”[17303] Wherefore the saint says, that where we love, either the labor is not felt, or if felt, the labor itself is loved: “In that which is loved, either there is no labor, or the labor is loved.”[17304]

Let us hear from St. John Chrysostom what are the effects of divine love in those souls in which it reigns: “When the love of God has taken possession of a soul, it produces an insatiable desire to work for the beloved; insomuch that however many and however vast the works which she does, and however prolonged the duration of her service, all seems nothing in her eyes, and she is afflicted at doing so little for God; and were it permitted her to die and consume herself for him, she would be most happy. Hence it is that she esteems herself an unprofitable servant in all that she does; because she is instructed by love to know what God deserves, and sees by this clear light all the defects of her actions, and finds in them motives for confusion and pain, well aware how mean is all that she can do for so great a Lord.” “Oh! how those persons delude themselves,” says St. Francis de Sales, “who place virtue in anything else but in loving God! Some,” writes the saint, “put perfection in austerities, others in alms, others in prayer, others in frequenting the holy sacraments. For my part, I know of no other perfection than that of loving God with our whole heart; because all the other virtues, with out love, are but a mere heap of stones. And if we do not perfectly enjoy this holy love, the fault lies with us, because we do not, once for all, come to the conclusion of giving up ourselves wholly to God.”[17305]

Our Lord said one day to St. Teresa, “Everything which does not give pleasure to me is vanity.” Would that all understood well this great truth! *For the rest, one thing is necessary.*[17306] It is not necessary to be rich in this world, to gain the esteem of others, to lead a life of ease, to enjoy dignities, to have a reputation for learning; it is only necessary to love God and to do his will. For this single end has he created us, for this he preserves our life; and thus only can we gain admittance into Paradise. *Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm.*[17307] The Lord thus speaks to all his espoused souls. Put me as a seal upon thy heart and upon thine arm, in order that all thy desires and actions may tend to me; upon thy heart, that no other love but mine may enter there upon thine arm, in order that all thou dost may have me for its sole object. Oh, how quickly does that soul speed onwards to perfection, that in all its actions regards but Jesus crucified, and has no other pretension than to gratify him!

To acquire, then, a true love of Jesus Christ should be our only care. The masters of spiritual life describe the marks of true love. Love, say they, is *fearful,* and its fear is none other than that of displeasing God. It is *generous*, because, trusting in God, it is never daunted even at the greatest enterprises for his glory. It is *strong,* because it subdues all its evil appetites, even in the midst of the most violent temptations, and of the darkest desolations. It is *obedient,* because it immediately flies to execute the divine will. It is *pure,* because it loves God alone, and for the sole reason that he deserves to be loved. It is *ardent,* because it would inflame all mankind, and willingly see them consumed with divine love. It is *inebriating,* for it causes the soul to live as it were out of itself, as if it no longer saw, nor felt, nor had any more senses left for earthly things, bent wholly on loving God. It is *unitive*, by producing a strict union between the will of the creature and the will of the Creator. It is *longing,* for it fills the soul with desires of leaving this world, to fly and unite itself perfectly with God in its true and happy country, where it may love him with all its strength.

But no one teaches us so well the real characteristics and practice of charity as the great preacher of charity, St. Paul. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, he says, in the first place, that without charity man is nothing, and that nothing profits him: *If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing, And if I should* *distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*[17308] So that even should a person have faith strong enough to remove mountains, like St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, but had not charity, it would profit him nothing. Should he give all his goods to the poor, and even willingly suffer martyrdom, but remain void of charity,—should he do it, that is, for any other end than that of pleasing God, it would profit him nothing at all. Then St. Paul gives us the marks of true charity, and at the same time teaches us the practice of those virtues which are the daughters of charity; and he goes on to say: *Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up, is not ambitious; seeketh not her own; is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*[17309]

Let us therefore, in the present book, proceed to consider these holy practices, that we may thus see if the love which we owe to Jesus Christ truly reigns within us; as likewise that we may understand in what virtues we should chiefly exercise ourselves, in order to persevere and advance in this holy love.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O most lovely and most loving Heart of Jesus, miserable is the heart which does not love Thee! O God, for the love of men Thou didst die on the cross, helpless and forsaken, and how then can men live so forgetful of Thee? O love of God! O ingratitude of man! O men, O men! do but cast one look on the innocent Son of God, agonizing on the cross, and dying for you, in order to satisfy the divine justice for your sins, and by this means to allure you to love him. Observe how, at the same time, he prays his eternal Father to forgive you. Behold him, and love him. Ah, my Jesus, how small is the number of those that love Thee! Wretched too am I; for I also have lived so many years unmindful of Thee, and have grievously offended Thee, my beloved Redeemer! It is not so much the punishment I have deserved that makes me weep, as the love which Thou hast borne me. O sorrows of Jesus! O ignominies of Jesus! O wounds of Jesus! O death of Jesus! O love of Jesus! rest deeply engraved in my heart, and may your sweet recollection be forever fixed there, to wound me and inflame me continually with love. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee, my sovereign good; I love Thee, my love and my all; I love Thee, and I will love Thee forever. Oh, suffer me never more to forsake Thee, never more to lose Thee! Make me entirely Thine; do so by the merits of Thy death. In this I firmly trust.

And I have a great confidence also in thy intercession, O Mary, my Queen; make me love Jesus Christ and make me also love thee, my Mother and my hope!

Chapter I

CHARITY IS PATIENT

(CHARITAS PATIENS EST.—1 COR. 13:4.)

> *“Si quis non amat Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, sit anathema!”*
>
> “If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema!”—1 Cor. 16:22.
>
> “Charitas patiens est, benigna est; charitas non æmulatur, non agit perperam, non inflatur, non est ambitiosa, non quærit quæ sua sunt, non irritatur; non cogitat malum, non gaudet super iniquitate, congaudet autem veritati; omnia suffert, omnia credit, omnia sperat, omnia sustinet.”
>
> “Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger; thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.”—1 Cor. 13:4–7.

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST LOVES SUFFERINGS

THIS earth is the place for meriting, and therefore it is a place for suffering. Our true country, where God has prepared for us repose in everlasting joy, is paradise. We have but a short time to stay in this world; but in this short time we have many labors to undergo: *Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries.*[17310] We must suffer, and all must suffer; be they just, or be they sinners, each one must carry his cross. He that carries it with patience is saved; he that carries it with impatience is lost. St. Augustine says, the same miseries send some to paradise and some to hell: “One and the same blow lifts the good to glory, and reduces the bad to ashes.”[17311] The same saint observes, that by the test of suffering the chaff in the Church of God is distinguished from the wheat: he that humbles himself under tribulations, and is resigned to the will of God, is wheat for paradise; he that grows haughty and is enraged, and so forsakes God, is chaff for hell.

On the day when the cause of our salvation shall be decided, our life must be found conformable to the life of Jesus Christ, if we would enjoy the happy sentence of the predestined: *For whom He foreknew He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son.*[17312] This was the end for which the Eternal Word descended upon earth, to teach us, by his example, to carry with patience the cross which God sends us: *Christ suffered for us* (wrote St. Peter), *leaving you an example, that you should follow His steps.*[17313] So that Jesus Christ suffered on purpose to encourage us to suffer. O God! what a life was that of Jesus Christ! A life of ignominy and pain. The Prophet calls our Redeemer *despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows.*[17314] A man held in contempt, and treated as the lowest, the vilest among men, a man of sorrows; yes, for the life of Jesus Christ was made up of hardships and afflictions.

Now, in the same manner as God has treated his beloved Son, so, does he treat every one whom he loves, and whom he receives for his son: *For whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth; and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.*[17315] For this reason he one day said to St. Teresa: “Know that the souls dearest to my Father are those who are afflicted with the greatest sufferings.”[17316] Hence the saint said of all her troubles, that she would not exchange them for all the treasures in the world. She appeared after her death to a soul, and revealed to her that she enjoyed an immense reward in heaven, not so much for her good works, as for the sufferings which she cheerfully bore in this life for the love of God; and that if she could possibly entertain a wish to return upon earth, the only reason would be in order that she might suffer more for God.

He that loves God in suffering earns a double reward in paradise. St. Vincent of Paul[17317] said that it was a great misfortune to be free from suffering in this life. And he added, that a congregation or an individual that does not suffer, and is applauded by all the world, is not far from a fall. It was on this account that St. Francis of Assisi, on the day that he had suffered nothing for God, became afraid lest God had forgotten him. St. John Chrysostom[17318] says, that when God endows a man with the grace of suffering, he gives him a greater grace than that of raising the dead to life; because in performing miracles man remains God’s debtor; whereas in suffering, God makes himself the debtor of man. And he adds,[17319] that whoever endures something for God, even had he no other gift than the strength to suffer for the God whom he loves, this would procure for him an immense reward. Wherefore he affirmed, that he considered St. Paul to have received a greater grace in being bound in chains for Jesus Christ, than in being rapt to the third heaven in ecstasy.

But patience has a perfect work.[17320] The meaning of this is, that nothing is more pleasing to God than to see a soul suffering with patience all the crosses sent her by him. The effect of love is to liken the lover to the person loved. St. Francis de Sales said, “All the wounds of Christ are so many mouths, which preach to us that we must suffer for him. The science of the saints is to suffer constantly for Jesus; and in this way we shall soon become saints.” A person that loves Jesus Christ is anxious to be treated like Jesus Christ,—poor, persecuted, and despised. St. John beheld all the saints clothed in white, and with palms in their hands: *Clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.*[17321] The palm is the symbol of martyrs, and yet all the saints did not suffer martyrdom;—why, then, do all the saints bear palms in their hands? St. Gregory replies, that all the saints have been martyrs either of the sword or of patience; so that, he adds, “we can be martyrs without the sword, if we keep patience.”[17322]

The merit of a soul that loves Jesus Christ consists in loving and in suffering. Hear what our Lord said to St. Teresa: “Think you, my child, that merit consists in enjoyment? No, it consists in suffering and in loving. Look at my life, wholly embittered with afflictions. Be assured, my child, that the more my Father loves any one, the more sufferings he sends him; they are the standard of his love. Look at my wounds; your torments will never reach so far. It is absurd to suppose that my Father favors with his friendship those who are strangers to suffering.”[17323] And for our consolation St. Teresa makes this remark: “God never sends a trial, but he forthwith rewards it with some favor.”[17324] One day Jesus Christ appeared to the blessed Baptista Varani,[17325] and told her of three special favors which he is wont to bestow on cherished souls: the first is, not to sin; the second, which is greater, to perform good works; the third, and the greatest of all, to suffer for his love. So that St. Teresa[17326] used to say, whenever any one does something for God, the Almighty repays him with some trial. And therefore the saints, on receiving tribulations, thanked God for them.

St. Louis of France, referring to his captivity in Turkey, said: “I rejoice, and thank God more for the patience which he accorded me in the time of my imprisonment, than if he had made me master of the universe.” And when St. Elizabeth, princess of Thuringia, after her husband’s death, was banished with her son from the kingdom, and found herself homeless and abandoned by all, she went to a convent of the Franciscans, and there had the *Te Deum* sung in thanksgiving to God for the signal favor of being allowed to suffer for his love.

St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say, “All suffering is slight to gain heaven.” And the Apostle had already said the same: *The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.*[17327]

It would be a great gain for us to endure all the torments of all the martyrs during our whole lives, in order to enjoy one single moment of the bliss of paradise; with what readiness, then, should we embrace our crosses, when we know that the sufferings of this transitory life will gain for us an everlasting beatitude! *That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.*[17328] St. Agapitus, while still a mere boy in years, was threatened by the tyrant to have his head covered with a red-hot helmet; on which he replied, “And what better fortune could possibly befall me, than to lose my head here, to have it crowned hereafter in heaven?” This made St. Francis exclaim:

“I look for such a meed of bliss,
That all my pains seem happiness.”

But whoever desires the crown of paradise must needs combat and suffer: *If we suffer, we shall also reign.*[17329] We cannot get a reward without merit; and no merit is to be had without patience: *He is not crowned, except he strive lawfully.*[17330] And the person that strives with the greatest patience shall have the greatest reward. Wonderful indeed! When the temporal goods of this world are in question, worldlings endeavor to procure as much as they can; but when it is a question of the goods of eternal life, they say, “It is enough if we get a little corner in heaven!” Such is not the language of the saints: they are satisfied with anything whatever in this life, nay more, they strip themselves of all earthly goods; but concerning eternal goods, they strive to obtain them in as large a measure as possible. I would ask which of the two act with more wisdom and prudence?

But even with regard to the present life, it is certain that he who suffers with most patience enjoys the greatest peace. It was a saying of St. Philip Neri,[17331] that in this world there is no purgatory; it is either all paradise or all hell: he that patiently supports tribulations enjoys a paradise; he that does not do so, suffers a hell. Yes, for (as St. Teresa writes) he that embraces the crosses sent him by God feels them not. St. Francis de Sales, finding himself on one occasion beset on every side with tribulations, said, "For some time back the severe oppositions and secret contrarieties which have befallen me afford me so sweet a peace, that nothing can equal it; and they give me such an assurance that my soul will ere long be firmly united with God, that I can say with all truth that they are the sole ambition, the sole desire of my heart."[17332] And indeed peace can never be found by one who leads an irregular life, but only by him who lives in union with God and with his blessed will. A certain missionary of a religious Order, while in the Indies, was one day standing to witness the execution of a person under sentence of death, and already on the scaffold: the criminal called the missionary to him, and said, "You must know, Father, that I was once a member of your Order; whilst I observed the rules I led a very happy life; but when, afterwards, I began to relax in the strict observance of them, I immediately experienced pain in everything; so much so, that I abandoned the religious life, and gave myself up to vice, which has finally reduced me to the melancholy pass in which you at present behold me." And in conclusion he said, "I tell you this, that my example may be a warning to others." The Venerable Father Louis da Ponte said, "Take the sweet things of this life for bitter, and the bitter for sweet; and so you will be in the constant enjoyment of peace. Yes, for though the sweet are pleasant to sense, they invariably leave behind them the bitterness of remorse of conscience, on account of the imperfect satisfaction which, for the most part, they afford; but the bitter, when taken with patience from the hand of God, become sweet, and dear to the souls who love him."

Let us be convinced that in this valley of tears true peace of heart cannot be found, except by him who endures and lovingly embraces sufferings to please Almighty God: this is the consequence of that corruption in which all are placed through the infection of sin. The condition of the saints on earth is to suffer and to love; the condition of the saints in heaven is to enjoy and to love. Father Paul Segneri the younger, in a letter which he wrote one of his penitents to encourage her to suffer, gave her the counsel to keep these words inscribed at the foot of her crucifix: " 'Tis thus one loves." It is not simply by suffering, but by desiring to suffer for the love of Jesus Christ, that a soul gives the surest signs of really loving him. And what greater acquisition (said St. Teresa) can we possibly make than to have some token of gratifying Almighty God?[17333] Alas, how ready are the greatest part of men to take alarm at the bare mention of crosses, of humiliations, and of afflictions! Nevertheless, there are many souls who find all their delight in suffering, and who would be quite disconsolate did they pass their time on this earth without suffering. The sight of Jesus crucified (said a devout person) renders the cross so lovely to me, that it seems to me I could never be happy without suffering; the love of Jesus Christ is sufficient for me for all. Listen how Jesus advises every one who would follow him to take up and carry his cross: *Let him take up his cross, and follow Me.*[17334] But we must take it up and carry it, not by constraint and against our will, but with humility, patience, and love.

Oh, how acceptable to God is he that humbly and patiently embraces the crosses which he sends him! St. Ignatius of Loyola said, "There is no wood so apt to enkindle and maintain love towards God as the wood of the cross;" that is, to love him in the midst of sufferings. One day St. Gertrude asked our Lord what she could offer him most acceptable, and he replied, "My child, thou canst do nothing more gratifying to me than to submit patiently to all the tribulations that befall thee." Wherefore the great servant of God, Sister Victoria Angelini, affirmed that one day of crucifixion was worth a hundred years of all other spiritual exercises. And the Venerable Father John of Avila said, "One 'blessed be God' in contrarieties is worth more than a thousand thanksgivings in prosperity." Alas, how little men know of the inestimable value of afflictions endured for God! The Blessed Angela of Foligno said, "that if we knew the just value of suffering for God, it would become an object of plunder;" which is as much as to say, that each one would seek an opportunity of robbing his neighbor of the occasions of suffering. For this reason St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, well aware as she was of the merit of sufferings, sighed to have her life prolonged rather than to die and go to Heaven, “because,” said she, “in Heaven one can suffer no more.”

A soul that loves God has no other end in view but to be wholly united with him; but let us learn from St. Catharine of Genoa what is necessary to be done to arrive at this perfect union: “To attain union with God, adversities are indispensable; because by them God aims at destroying all our corrupt propensities within and without. And hence all injuries, contempts, infirmities, abandonment of relatives and friends, confusions, temptations, and other mortifications, all are in the highest degree necessary for us, in order that we may carry on the fight, until by repeated victories we come to extinguish within us all vicious movements, so that they are no longer felt; and we shall never arrive at divine union until adversities, instead of seeming bitter to us, become all sweet for God’s sake.”

It follows, then, that a soul that sincerely desires to belong to God must be resolved, as St. John of the Cross[17335] writes, not to seek enjoyments in this life, but to suffer in all things; she must embrace with eagerness all voluntary mortifications, and with still greater eagerness those which are involuntary, since they are the more welcome to Almighty God.

The patient man is better than the valiant.[17336] God is pleased with a person who practises mortification by fasting, hair-cloths, and disciplines, on account of the courage displayed in such mortifications; but he is much more pleased with those who have the courage to bear patiently and gladly such crosses as come from his own divine hand. St. Francis de Sales said, “Such mortifications as come to us from the hand of God, or from men by his permission, are always more precious than those which are the offspring of our own will; for it is a general rule, that wherever there is less of our own choice, God is better pleased, and we ourselves derive greater profit.”[17337] St. Teresa taught the same thing: “We gain more in one day by the oppositions which come to us from God or our neighbor than by ten years of mortifications of self-infliction.”[17338] Wherefore St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi made the generous declaration, that there could not be found in the whole world an affliction so severe, but what she would gladly bear with the thought that it came from God; and, in fact, during the five years of severe trial which the saint underwent, it was enough to restore peace to her soul to remember that it was by the will of God that she so suffered. Ah, God, that infinite treasure is cheaply purchased at any cost! Father Hippolytus Durazzo used to say, “Purchase God at what cost you will, he can never be dear.”

Let us then beseech God to make us worthy of his love; for if we did but once perfectly love him, all the goods of this earth would seem to us but as smoke and dirt, and we should relish ignominies and afflictions as delights. Let us hear what St. John Chrysostom says of a soul wholly given up to Almighty God: “He who has attained the perfect love of God seems to be alone on the earth,—he no longer cares either for glory or ignominy,—he scorns temptations and afflictions,—he loses all relish and appetite for created things. And as nothing in this world brings him any support or repose, he goes incessantly in search of his beloved without ever feeling wearied; so that when he toils, when he eats, when he is watching, or when sleeping, in every action and word, all his thoughts and desires are fixed upon finding his beloved; because his heart is where his treasure is.”[17339]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dear and beloved Jesus, my treasure, I have deserved by my offences never more to be allowed to love Thee; but by Thy merits, I entreat Thee, make me worthy of Thy pure love. I love Thee above all things; and I repent with my whole heart, of having ever despised Thee, and driven Thee from my soul; but now I love Thee more than myself; I love Thee with all my heart, O infinite good! I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, and I have not a wish besides that of loving Thee perfectly; nor have I a fear besides that of ever seeing myself deprived of Thy love. O my most loving Redeemer, enable me to know how great a good Thou art, and how great is the love Thou hast borne me in order to oblige me to love Thee! Ah, my God, suffer me not to live any longer unmindful of so much goodness! Enough have I offended Thee, I will never leave Thee again; I wish to employ all the remainder of my days in loving Thee, and in pleasing Thee. My Jesus, my Love, lend me Thine aid; help a sinner who wishes to love Thee and to be wholly Thine own.

O Mary my hope, thy Son hears thee; pray to him in my behalf, and obtain for me the grace of loving him perfectly!

Chapter II

CHARITY IS KIND

(CHARITAS BENIGNA EST.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST LOVES MEEKNESS

THE spirit of meekness is peculiar to God: *My spirit is sweet above honey.*[17340] Hence it is that a soul that loves God loves also all those whom God loves, namely, her neighbors; so that she eagerly seeks every occasion of helping all, of consoling all, and of making all happy as far as she can. St. Francis de Sales, who was the master and model of holy meekness, says, “Humble meekness is the virtue of virtues, which God has so much recommended to us; therefore we should endeavor to practise it always and in all things.”[17341] Hence the saint gives us this rule: “What you see can be done with love, do it; and what you see cannot be done without offence, leave it undone.”[17342] He means, when it can be omitted without offending God; because an offence of God must always, and as quickly as possible, be prevented by him who is bound to prevent it.

This meekness should be particularly observed towards the poor, who, by reason of their poverty, are often harshly treated by men. It should likewise be especially practised towards the sick who are suffering under infirmities, and for the most part meet with small help from others. Meekness is more especially to be observed in our behavior towards enemies: *Overcome evil with good.*[17343] Hatred must be overcome by love, and persecution by meekness; thus the saints acted, and so they conciliated the affections of their most exasperated enemies.

“There is nothing,” says St. Francis de Sales, “that gives so much edification to our neighbor as meekness of behavior.”[17344] The saint, therefore, was generally seen smiling, and with a countenance beaming with charity, which gave a tone to all his words and actions. This gave occasion to St. Vincent of Paul[17345] to declare that he never knew a kinder man in his life. He said further, that it seemed to him that in his lordship of Sales was a true likeness of Jesus Christ. Even in refusing what he could not in conscience comply with, he did so with such sweetness, that all, though unsuccessful in their requests, went away satisfied and well-disposed towards him. He was gentle towards all, towards Superiors, towards equals and inferiors, at home and abroad; in contrast with some, who, as the saint used to say, “seemed angels abroad, but were devils at home.”[17346] Moreover, the saint, in his conduct towards servants, never complained of their remissness; at most he would give them an admonition, but always in the gentlest terms. And this is a thing most praiseworthy in Superiors.

The Superior should use all kindness towards those under him. When telling them what they have to do, he should rather request than command. St. Vincent of Paul said: “A Superior will never find a better means of being readily obeyed than meekness.” And to the same effect was the saying of St. Jane Frances of Chantal: “I have tried various methods of governing, but I have not found any better than that of meekness and forbearance.”[17347]

And more than this, the Superior should be kind even in the correction of faults. It is one thing to correct with firmness, and another with harshness; it is needful at times to correct with firmness, when the fault is serious, and especially if it be repeated after the subject has already been admonished of it; but let us always be on our guard against harsh and angry correction; he that corrects with anger does more harm than good. This is that bitter zeal reproved by St. James. Some make a boast of keeping their family in order by severity, and they say it is the only successful method of treatment; but St. James speaks not so: *But if you have bitter zeal. . . . glory not.*[17348] If on some rare occasion it be necessary to speak a cross word, in order to bring the offender to a proper sense of his fault, yet in the end we ought invariably to leave him with a gentle countenance and a word of kindness. Wounds must be healed after the fashion of the good Samaritan in the Gospel, with wine and oil: “But as oil,” said St. Francis de Sales, “always swims on the surface of all other liquors, so must meekness prevail over all our actions.” And when it occurs that the person under correction is agitated, then the reprehension must be deferred till his anger has sub sided, or else we should only increase his indignation. The Canon Regular St. John said: “When the house is on fire, one must not cast wood into the flames.”

You know not of what spirit you are.[17349] Such were the words of Jesus Christ to his disciples James and John, when they would have brought down chastisements on the Samaritans for expelling them from their country. Ah, said the Lord to them, and what spirit is this? this is not my spirit, which is sweet and gentle; for I am come not to destroy but to save souls: *The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save.*[17350] And would you induce me to destroy them? Oh, hush! and never make the like request to me, for such is not according to my spirit. And, in fact, with what meekness did Jesus Christ treat the adulteress! *Woman,* said He, *hath no man condemned thee? Neither will I condemn thee! Go, and now sin no more.*[17351] He was satisfied with merely warning her not to sin again, and sent her away in peace. With what meekness, again, did he seek the conversion of the Samaritan woman, and so, in fact, converted her! He first asked her to give him to drink; then he said to her: *If thou didst know who He is that saith to thee, Give me to drink!* and then he revealed to her that he was the expected Messiah. And, again, with what meekness did he strive to convert the impious Judas, admitting him to eat of the same dish with him, washing his feet and admonishing him in the very act of his betrayal: Judas, and dost thou thus betray me with a kiss? *Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?*[17352] And see how he converted Peter after his denial of him! *And the Lord turning, looked on Peter.*[17353] On leaving the house of the high-priest, without making him a single reproach, he cast on him a look of tenderness, and thus converted him; and so effectually did he convert him, that during his whole life long Peter never ceased to bewail the injury he had done to his Master.

Oh, how much more is to be gained by meekness than by harshness! St. Francis de Sales said there was nothing more bitter than the bitter almond, but if made into a preserve, it becomes sweet and agreeable: thus corrections, though in their nature very unpleasant, are rendered pleasant by love and meekness, and so are attended with more beneficial results. St. Vincent of Paul said of himself, that in the government of his own congregation he had never corrected any one with severity, except on three occasions, when he supposed there was reason to do so, but that he regretted it ever afterwards, because he found it turned out badly; whereas he had always admirably succeeded by gentle correction.[17354]

St. Francis de Sales obtained from others whatever he wished by his meek behavior; and by this means he managed to gain the most hardened sinners to God. It was the same with St. Vincent of Paul, who taught his disciples this maxim: “Affability, love, and humility have a wonderful efficacy in winning the hearts of men, and in prevailing on them to undertake things most repugnant to nature.” He once gave a great sinner to the care of one of his Fathers, to bring him to sentiments of true repentance; but that Father, in spite of all his endeavors, found his labor fruitless, so that he begged the saint to speak a word to him. The saint accordingly spoke with him, and converted him. That sinner subsequently declared that the singular sweetness of Father Vincent had worked upon his heart. Wherefore it was that the saint could not bear his missionaries to treat sinners with severity; and he told them that the infernal spirit took advantage of the strictness of some to work the greater ruin of souls.

Kindness should be observed towards all on all occasions and at all times. St. Bernard remarks,[17355] that certain persons are gentle as long as things fall out to their taste; but scarcely do they experience some opposition or contradiction than they are instantly on fire, like Mount Vesuvius itself. Such as these may be called burning coals, but hidden under the embers. Whoever would become a saint, must, during this life, resemble the lily among thorns, which, however much it may be pricked by them, never ceases to be a lily; that is, it is always equally sweet and serene. The soul that loves God maintains an imperturbable peace of heart; ands he shows this in her very countenance, being ever mistress of herself, alike in prosperity and adversity, according to the lines of Cardinal Petrucci:

“Of outward things he views the varying guise,

While in his soul’s most inmost depth

Undimmed God’s image lies.”

Adversity brings out a person’s real character. St. Francis de Sales very tenderly loved the Order of the Visitation, which had cost him so much labor. He saw it several times in imminent danger of dissolution on account of the persecutions it underwent; but the saint never for a moment lost his peace, and was ready, if such was the will of God, to see it entirely destroyed; and then it was that he said: “For some time back the trying oppositions and secret contrarieties which have befallen me afford me so sweet a peace, that nothing can equal it; and they give me such an earnest of the immediate union of my soul with God, that, in truth, they form the sole desire of my heart.”[17356]

Whenever it happens that we have to reply to some one who insults us, let us be careful to answer with meekness: *A mild answer breaketh wrath.*[17357] A mild reply is enough to quench every spark of anger. And in case we feel irritated, it is best to keep silence, because then it seems only just to give vent to all that rises to our lips; but when our passion has subsided, we shall see that all our words were full of faults.

And when it happens that we ourselves commit some fault, we must also practise meekness in our own regard. To be exasperated at ourselves after a fault is not humility, but a subtle pride, as if we were anything else than the weak and miserable things that we are. St. Teresa said: “The humility that disturbs does not come from God, but from the devil.”[17358] To be angry at ourselves after the commission of a fault is a fault worse than the one committed, and will be the occasion of many other faults; it will make us leave off our devotions, prayers, and communions; or if we do practise them, they will be done very badly. St. Aloysius Gonzaga said that we cannot see in troubled waters, and that the devil fishes in them. A soul that is troubled knows little of God and of what it ought to do. Whenever, therefore, we fall into any fault, we should turn to God with humility and confidence, and craving his forgiveness, say to him, with St. Catharine of Genoa: “O Lord, this is the produce of my own garden! I love Thee with my whole heart, and I repent of the displeasure I have given Thee! I will never do the like again: grant me Thy assistance!”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O blessed chains that bind the soul with God, oh, enfold me still closer, and in links so firm that I may never be able to loosen myself from the love of my God! My Jesus, I love Thee; O treasure, O life of my soul, to Thee I cling, and I give myself wholly unto Thee! No, indeed, my beloved Lord, I wish never more to cease to love Thee. Thou who, to atone for my sins, didst allow Thyself to be bound as a criminal, and so bound to be led to death through the streets of Jerusalem,—Thou who didst consent to be nailed to the cross, and didst not leave it until life itself had left Thee, oh, suffer me never to be separated from Thee again; I regret above every other evil, to have at one time turned my back upon Thee, and henceforth I purpose by Thy grace to die rather than to give Thee the slightest displeasure. O my Jesus, I abandon myself to Thee. I love Thee with my whole heart; I love Thee more than myself. I have offended Thee in times past; but now I bitterly repent of it, and I would willingly die of grief. Oh, draw me entirely to Thyself! I renounce all sensible consolations; I wish for Thee alone, and nothing more. Make me love Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

O Mary, my hope, bind me to Jesus; and grant me to live and die in union with him, in order to come one day to the happy kingdom, where I shall have no more fear of ever being separated from his love!

Chapter III

CHARITY ENVIETH NOT

(CHARITAS NON ÆMULATUR.)

THE SOUL THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST DOES NOT ENVY THE GREAT ONES OF THIS WORLD, BUT ONLY THOSE WHO ARE GREATER LOVERS OF JESUS CHRIST

ST. GREGORY explains this next characteristic of charity in saying, that as charity despises all earthly greatness, it cannot possibly provoke her envy. "She envieth not, because, as she desireth nothing in this world, she I cannot envy earthly prosperity."[17359]

Hence we must distinguish two kinds of envy, one evil and the other holy. The evil kind is that which envies and repines at the worldly goods possessed by others on this earth. But holy envy, so far from wishing to be like, rather compassionates the great ones of the world, who live in the midst of honors and earthly pleasures. She seeks and desires God alone, and has no other aim besides that of loving him as much as she can; and therefore she has a pious envy of those who love him more than she does, for she would, if possible, surpass the very seraphim in loving him.

This is the sole end which pious souls have in view on earth—an end which so charms and ravishes the heart of God with love, that it causes him to say: *Thou hast wounded My heart, My sister; My spouse, thou hast wounded My heart with one of thy eyes.*[17360] By "one of thy eyes" is meant that one end which the espoused soul has in all her devotions and thoughts, namely, to please Almighty God. Men of the world look on things with many eyes, that is, have several inordinate views in their actions; as, for instance, to please others, to become honored, to obtain riches, and if nothing else, at least to please themselves; but the saints have but a single eye, with which they keep in view, in all that they do, the sole pleasure of God; and with David they say: *What have I in heaven, and besides Thee* *what do I desire upon earth?*[17361] What do I wish, O my God, in this world or in the next, save Thee alone? Thou art my riches, Thou art the only Lord of my heart. “Let the rich,” said St. Paulinus, “enjoy their riches, let the kings enjoy their kingdoms, Thou, O Christ, art my treasure and my kingdom!”[17362]

And here we must remark, that we must not only perform good works, but we must perform them well. In order that our works may be good and perfect, they must be done with the sole end of pleasing God. This was the admirable praise bestowed on Jesus Christ: *He hath done all things well.*[17363] Many actions may in themselves be praiseworthy, but from being performed for some other purpose than for the glory of God, they are often of little or no value in his sight. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, “God rewards our actions by the weight of pure intention.”[17364] As much as to say, that according as our intention is pure, so does the Lord accept of and reward our actions. But, O God, how difficult it is to find an action done solely for Thee! I remember a holy old man, a religious, who had labored much in the service of God, and died in the reputation of sanctity; now one day, as he cast a glance back at his past life, he said to me in a tone of sadness and fear, “Wo is me! when I consider all the actions of my past life, I do not find one done entirely for God.” Oh, this accursed self-love, that makes us lose all or the greater part of the fruit of our good actions! How many in their most holy employments, as of preaching, hearing confessions, giving missions, labor and exert themselves very much, and gain little or nothing because they do not regard God alone, but worldly honor, or self-interest, or the vanity of making an appearance, or at least their own inclination!

Our Lord has said, *Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven.*[17365] He that works for his own gratification already receives his wages: *Amen I say to you, they have received their reward.*[17366] But a reward, indeed, which dwindles into a little smoke, or the pleasure of a day that quickly vanishes, and confers no benefit on the soul. The Prophet Aggeus says, that whoever labors for anything else than to please God, puts his reward in a sack full of holes, which, when he comes to open, he finds entirely empty: *And he that hath earned wages, put them into a bag with* *holes.*[17367] And hence it is that such persons, in the event of their not gaining the object for which they entered on some undertaking, are thrown into great trouble. This is a sign that they had not in view the glory of God alone. He that undertakes a thing solely for the glory of God, is not troubled at all, though his undertaking may fail of success; for, in truth, by working with a pure intention, he has already gained his object, which was to please Almighty God.

The following are the signs which indicate whether we work solely for God in any spiritual undertaking. 1. If we are not disturbed at the failure of our plans, because when we see it is not God's will, neither is it any longer our will. 2. If we rejoice at the good done by others, as heartily as if we ourselves had done it. 3. If we have no preference for one charge more than for another, but willingly accept that which obedience to Superiors enjoins us. 4. If after our actions we do not seek the thanks or approbation of others, nor are in any way affected if we be found fault with or scolded, being satisfied with having pleased God. And if when the world applauds us we are not puffed up, but meet the vain glory, which might make itself felt, with the reply of the venerable John of Avila: "Get away, thou comest too late, for all has been already given to God."

This is to enter into the joy of the Lord; that is, to enjoy the enjoyment of God, as is promised to his faithful servants: *Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things,. . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*[17368] And if it falls to our lot to do something pleasing to God, what more, asks St. John Chrysostom, can we desire? "If thou art found worthy to perform something that pleases God, dost thou seek other recompense than this?"[17369] The greatest reward, the brightest fortune, that can befall a creature, is to give pleasure to his Creator.

And this is what Jesus Christ looks for from a soul that loves him: *Put me*, he says, *as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm.*[17370] He desires us to place him as a seal on our heart and on our arm: on our heart, in order that whatever we intend doing, we may intend solely for the love of God; on our arm, in order that whatever we do, all may be done to please God; so that God may be always the sole end of all our thoughts and of all our actions. St. Teresa said, that he who would become a saint must live free from every other desire than that of pleasing God; and her first daughter, the Venerable Beatrice of the Incarnation, said, “No sum whatever could repay the slightest thing done for God.”[17371] And with reason; for all things done to please God are acts of charity which unite us to God, and obtain for us everlasting rewards.

Purity of intention is called the heavenly alchemy by which iron is turned into gold; that is to say, the most trivial actions (such as to work, to take one’s meals, to take recreation or repose), when done for God, become the gold of holy love. Wherefore St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi believes for certain that those who do all with a pure intention, go straight to Paradise, without passing through purgatory. It is related (in the *Spiritual Treasury*) that it was the custom of a pious hermit, before setting about any work, to pause a little, and lift his eyes to heaven; on being questioned why he did so, he replied, “I am taking my aim.” By which he meant, that as the archer, before shooting his arrow, takes his aim, that he may not miss the mark, so before each action he made God his aim, in order that it might be sure of pleasing him. We should do the same; and even during the performance of our actions, it is very good for us from time to time to renew our good intention.

Those who have nothing else in view in their undertakings than the divine will, enjoy that holy liberty of spirit which belongs to the children of God; and this enables them to embrace everything that pleases Jesus Christ, however revolting it may be to their own self-love or human respect. The love of Jesus Christ establishes his lovers in a state of total indifference; so that all is the same to them, be it sweet or bitter; they desire nothing for their own pleasure, but all for the pleasure of God. With the same feelings of peace, they address themselves to small and great works; to the pleasant and the unpleasant: it is enough for them if they please God.

Many, on the other hand, are willing to serve God, but it must be in such an employment, in such a place, with such companions, or under such circumstances, or else they either quit the work, or do it with an ill-will. Such persons have not freedom of spirit, but are slaves of self-love; and on that account gain very little merit by what they do; they lead a troubled life, because the yoke of Jesus Christ becomes a burden to them. The true lovers of Jesus Christ care only to do what pleases him; and for the reason that it pleases him, when he wills, and where he wills, and in the manner he wills:

and whether he wishes to employ them in a state of life honored by the world, or in a life of obscurity and insignificance. This is what is meant by loving Jesus Christ with a pure love; and in this we ought to exercise ourselves, battling against the craving of our self-love, which would urge us to seek important and honorable functions, and such as suit our inclinations.

We must, moreover, be detached from all exercises, even spiritual ones, when the Lord wishes us to be occupied in other works of his good pleasure. One day, Father Alvarez, finding himself overwhelmed with business, was anxious to get rid of it, in order to go and pray, because it seemed to him that during that time he was not with God; but our Lord then said to him: “Though I do not keep thee with me, let it suffice thee that I make use of thee.”[17372] This is a profitable lesson for those who are sometimes disturbed at being obliged, by obedience or by charity, to leave their accustomed devotions; let them be assured that such disturbances on like occasions do not come from God, but either from the devil or from self-love. “Give pleasure to God, and die.” This is the grand maxim of the saints.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my Eternal God, I offer Thee my whole heart; but what sort of heart, O God, is it that I offer Thee? A heart, created, indeed, to love Thee; but which, instead of loving Thee, has so many times rebelled against Thee. But behold, my Jesus, if there was a time when my heart rebelled against Thee, now it is deeply grieved and penitent for the displeasure it has given Thee. Yes, my dear Redeemer, I am sorry for having despised Thee; and I am determined to do all to obey Thee, and to love Thee at every cost. Oh, draw me wholly to Thy love; do this for the sake of the love which made Thee die for me on the cross. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee with all my soul; I love Thee more than myself, O true and only lover of my soul; for I find none but Thee who have sacrificed their life for me. I weep to think that I have been so ungrateful to Thee. Unhappy that I am! I was already lost; but I trust that by Thy grace Thou hast restored me to life. And this shall be my life, to love Thee always, my sovereign good. Make me love Thee, O infinite love, and I ask Thee for nothing more!

O Mary my mother, accept of me for thy servant, and gain acceptance for me with Jesus thy Son.

Chapter IV

CHARITY DEALETH NOT PERVERSELY

(CHARITAS NON AGIT PERPERAM.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST AVOIDS LUKEWARMNESS, AND SEEKS PERFECTION; THE MEANS OF WHICH ARE: 1. DESIRE; 2. RESOLUTION; 3. MENTAL PRAYER; 4. COMMUNION; 5. PRAYER

ST. GREGORY, in his explanation of these words, “dealeth not perversely,” says that charity, giving herself up more and more to the love of God, ignores whatever is not right and holy.[17373] The Apostle had already written to the same effect, when he calls charity a bond that unites the most perfect virtues together in the soul. *Have charity, which is the bond of perfection.*[17374] And whereas charity delights in perfection, she consequently abhors that lukewarmness with which some persons serve God, to the great risk of losing charity, divine grace, their very soul, and their all.

I

LUKEWARMNESS

It must be observed that there are two kinds of tepidity or lukewarmness: the one unavoidable, the other avoidable.

I.—From the lukewarmness that is *unavoidable,* the saints themselves are not exempt; and this comprises all the failings that are committed by us without full consent, but merely from our natural frailty. Such are, for example, distractions at prayers, interior disquietudes, useless words, vain curiosity, the wish to appear, tastes in eating and drinking, the movements of concupiscence not instantly repressed, and such like. We ought to avoid these defects as much as we possibly can; but, owing to the weakness of our nature, caused by the infection of sin, it is impossible to avoid them altogether. We ought, indeed, to detest them after committing them, because they are displeasing to God; but, as we remarked in the preceding chapter, we ought to beware of making them a subject of alarm or disquietude. St. Francis de Sales writes as follows: “All such thoughts as create disquietude are not from God, who is the prince of peace; but they proceed always from the devil, or from self-love, or from the good opinion which we have of ourselves.”[17375] Such thoughts, therefore, as disturb us, must be straightway rejected, and made no account of.

It was said also by the same saint, with regard to indeliberate faults, that as they were involuntarily committed, so are they cancelled involuntarily. An act of sorrow, an act of love, is sufficient to cancel them. The Venerable Sister Mary Crucified, a Benedictine nun, saw once a globe of fire, on which a number of straws were cast, and were all forthwith reduced to ashes. She was given to understand by this figure that one act of divine love, made with fervor, destroys all the defects that we may have in our soul. The same effect is produced by the holy Communion; according to what we find in the Council of Trent, where the Eucharist is called “an antidote by which we are freed from daily faults.”[17376] Thus the like faults, though they are indeed faults, do not hinder perfection—that is, our advancing toward perfection; because in the present life no one attains perfection before he arrives at the kingdom of the blessed.

II. The tepidity, then, that does hinder perfection is that tepidity which is avoidable when a person commits deliberate venial faults; because all these faults committed with open eyes can effectually be avoided by the divine grace, even in the present life. Wherefore St. Teresa said: “May God deliver you from deliberate sin, however small it may be.”[17377] Such, for example, are wilful untruths, little detractions, imprecations, expressions of anger, derisions of one’s neighbor, cutting words, speeches of self-esteem, animosities nourished in the heart, inordinate attachments to persons of a different sex. “These are a sort of worm” (wrote the same saint) “which is not detected before it has eaten into the virtues.”[17378] Hence, in another place, the saint gave this admonition: “By means of small things the devil goes about making holes for great things to enter.”[17379]

We should therefore tremble at such deliberate faults; since they cause God to close his hands from bestowing upon us his clearer lights and stronger helps, and they deprive us of spiritual sweetnesses; and the result of them is to make the soul perform all spiritual exercises with great weariness and pain; and so, in course of time, she begins to leave off prayer, Communions, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and novenas; and, in fine, she will probably leave off all, as has not unfrequently been the case with many unhappy souls.

This is the meaning of that threat which our Lord makes to the tepid: *Thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot: but because thou art lukewarm . . . I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth.*[17380] How wonderful! He says, *I would thou wert cold!* What! and is it better to be cold, that is, deprived of grace, than to be tepid? Yes, in a certain sense it is better to be cold; because a person who is cold may more easily change his life, being stung by the reproaches of conscience; whereas a tepid person contracts the habit of slumbering on in his faults, without bestowing a thought, or taking any trouble to correct himself; and thus he makes his cure, as it were, desperate. St. Gregory says, “Tepidity, which has cooled down from fervor, is a hopeless state.”[17381] The Ven. Father Louis da Ponte said that he had committed many defects in the course of his life; but that he never had made a truce with his faults. Some there are who shake hands with their faults, and from that springs their ruin; especially when the fault is accompanied with some passionate attachment of self-esteem, of ambition, of liking to be seen, of heaping up money, of resentment against a neighbor, or of inordinate affection for a person of different sex. In such cases there is great danger of those hairs, as it were, becoming chains, as St. Francis of Assisi said, which will drag down the soul to hell. At all events, such a soul will never become a saint, and will forfeit that beautiful crown, which God had prepared for her, had she faithfully corresponded to grace. The bird no sooner feels itself loosed from the snare than it immediately flies; the soul, as soon as she is loosed from earthly attachments, immediately flies to God; but while she is bound, though it be but by the slightest thread, it is enough to prevent her from flying to God. Oh, how many spiritual persons there are who do not become saints, because they will not do themselves the violence to break away from certain little attachments!

All the evil arises from the little love they have for Jesus Christ. Those who are puffed up with self-esteem; those who frequently take to heart occurrences that fall out contrary to their wishes; who practise great indulgence towards themselves on account of their health; who keep their heart open to external objects, and the mind always distracted, with an eagerness to listen to, and to know, so many things that have nothing to do with the service of God, but merely serve to gratify private curiosity; who are ready to resent every little inattention from others, and consequently are often troubled, and grow remiss in prayer and recollection. One moment they are all devotion and joy, the next all impatience and melancholy, just as things happen, according to or against their humor; all such persons do not love Jesus Christ, or love him very little, and cast discredit on true devotion.

But suppose any one should find himself sunk in this unhappy state of tepidity, what has he to do? Certainly it is a hard thing for a soul grown lukewarm to resume her ancient fervor; but our Lord has said, that what man cannot do, God can very well do. *The things that are impossible with man, are possible with God.*[17382] Whoever prays and employs the means is sure to accomplish his desire.

II

REMEDIES AGAINST LUKEWARMNESS

The means to cast off tepidity, and to tread in the path of perfection, are five in number: 1. The desire of perfection; 2. The resolution to attain it; 3. Mental prayer; 4. Frequent Holy Communion; 5. Prayer.

1. DESIRE OF PERFECTION

The first means, then, is the desire of perfection. Pious desires are the wings which lift us up from earth; for, as St. Laurence Justinian says, desire “supplies strength, and renders pain more light:”[17383] on the one hand it gives strength to walk towards perfection, and on the other hand it lightens the fatigue of the journey. He who has a real desire of perfection fails not to advance continually towards it; and so advancing, he must finally arrive at it. On the contrary, he who has not the desire of perfection will always go backwards, and always find himself more imperfect than before. St. Augustine says, that “not to go forward in the way of God is to go backward.”[17384] He that makes no efforts to advance will find himself carried backward by the current of his corrupt nature.

They, then, who say “God does not wish us all to be saints” make a great mistake. Yes, for St. Paul says, *This is the Will of God, your sanctification.*[17385] God wishes all to be saints, and each one according to his state of life: the religious as a religious; the secular as a secular; the priest as a priest; the married as married; the man of business as a man of business; the soldier as a soldier; and so of every other state of life.

Most beautiful, indeed, are the instructions which my great patroness St. Teresa gives on this subject. She says, in one place, “Let us enlarge our thoughts; for hence we shall derive immense good.” Elsewhere she says: “We must beware of having poor desires; but rather put our confidence in God, in order that, by forcing ourselves continually onwards, we may by degrees arrive where, by the divine grace, so many saints have arrived.”[17386] And in confirmation of this she quoted her own experience, having known how courageous souls make considerable progress in a short period of time. “Because,” said she, “the Lord takes as much delight in our desires, as if they were put into execution.” In another place she says: “Almighty God does not confer extraordinary favors, except where his love has been earnestly sought after.”[17387] Again, in another passage, she remarks: “God does not fail to repay every good desire even in this life,[17388] for he is the friend of generous souls, provided only they do not trust in themselves.”[17389] This saint herself was endowed with just such a spirit of generosity; so that she once even said to our Lord, that were she to behold others in paradise enjoying him more than herself, she should not care; but were she to behold any one loving him more than she should love him, this she declared she knew not how she could endure.[17390]

We must, therefore, have a great courage: *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him.*[17391] God is surpassingly good and liberal towards a soul that heartily seeks him. Neither can past sins prove a hindrance to our becoming saints, if we only have the sincere desire to become so. St. Teresa remarks: “The devil strives to make us think it pride to entertain lofty desires, and to wish to imitate the saints; but it is of great service to encourage ourselves with the desire of great things, because, although the soul has not all at once the necessary strength, yet she nevertheless makes a bold fight, and rapidly advances.”[17392]

The Apostle writes: *To them that love God, all things work together unto good.*[17393] And the gloss or ancient commentary adds “even sins;”[17394] even past sins can contribute to our sanctification, inasmuch as the recollection of them keeps us more humble, and more grateful, when we witness the favors which God lavishes upon us, after all our outrages against him. I am capable of nothing (the sinner should say), nor do I deserve anything; I deserve nothing but hell; but I have to deal with a God of infinite bounty, who has promised to listen to all that pray to him. Now, as he has rescued me from a state of damnation, and wishes me to become holy, and now proffers me his help, I can certainly become a saint, not by my own strength, but by the grace of my God, who strengthens me: *I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.*[17395] When, therefore, we have once good desires, we must take courage, and trusting in God, endeavor to put them in execution; but if afterwards we encounter any obstacle in our spiritual enterprises, let us repose quietly on the will of God. God’s will must be preferred before every good desire of our own. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi would sooner have remained void of all perfection than possess it without the will of God.

2. RESOLUTION

The second means of perfection is the resolution to belong wholly to God. Many are called to perfection; they are urged on towards it by grace, they conceive a desire of it; but because they never really resolve to acquire it, they live and die in the ill-order of their tepid and imperfect life. The desire of perfection is not enough, if it be not followed up by a stern resolve to attain it. How many souls feed themselves on desires alone, but never make withal one step in the way of God! It is of such desires that the wise man speaks when he says: *Desire’s kill the slothful.*[17396] The slothful man is ever desiring, but never resolves to take the means suitable to his state of life to become a saint. He says: “Oh, if I were but in solitude, and not in this house! Oh, if I could but go and reside in another monastery, I would give myself entirely up to God!” And meanwhile he cannot support a certain companion; he cannot put up with a word of contradiction; he is dissipated about many useless cares; he commits a thousand faults of gluttony, of curiosity, and of pride; and yet he sighs out to the wind: “Oh, if I had but!” or “Oh, if I could but!” etc. Such desires do more harm than good; because some regale themselves upon them, and in the meantime go on leading a life of imperfection. It was a saying of St. Francis de Sales: “I do not approve of a person who, being engaged in some duty or vocation, stops to sigh for some other kind of life than is compatible with his actual position, or for other exercises unfitted for his present state; for it merely serves to dissipate his heart, and makes him languish in his necessary duties.”[17397]

We must, therefore, desire perfection, and resolutely take the means towards it. St. Teresa says: “God only looks for one resolution on our part, and will afterwards do all the rest himself:[17398] the devil has no fear of irresolute souls.”[17399] For this reason mental prayer must be used, in order to take the means which lead to perfection. Some make much prayer, but never come to a practical conclusion. The same saint said: “I would rather have a short prayer, which produces great fruits, than a prayer of many years, wherein a soul never gets further than resolving to do something worthy of Almighty God.”[17400] And elsewhere she says: “I have learned by experience that whoever, at the beginning, brings himself to the resolution of doing some great work, however difficult it may be, if he does so to please God, he has no reason to be afraid.”

The first resolution must be to make every effort, and to die rather than commit any deliberate sin whatever, however small it may be. It is true that all our endeavors, without the divine assistance, cannot enable us to vanquish temptations; but God wishes us on our part frequently to use this violence with ourselves, because then he will afterwards supply us with his grace, will succor our weakness, and enable us to gain the victory. This resolution removes from us every obstacle to our going forward, and at the same time gives us great courage, because it affords us an assurance of being in the grace of God. St. Francis de Sales writes: “The best security we can possess in this world of being in the grace of God, consists not indeed in feeling that we have his love, but in a pure and irrevocable abandonment of our entire being into his hands, and in the firm resolution of never consenting to any sin, either great or small."[17401] This is what is meant by being of a delicate conscience. Be it observed, that it is one thing to be of a delicate conscience, and another to be of a scrupulous conscience. To be of a delicate conscience is requisite to become a saint; but to be scrupulous is a defect, and does harm; and on this account we must obey our directors, and rise above scruples, which are nothing else but vain and unreasonable alarms.

Hence it is necessary to resolve on choosing the best, not only what is agreeable to God, but what is most agreeable to him, without any reserve. St. Francis de Sales says: "We must start with a strong and constant resolution to give ourselves wholly to God, and protest to him that for the future we wish to be his without any reserve, and then we must afterwards often renew this same resolution."[17402] St. Andrew Avellini made a vow to advance daily in perfection. It is not necessary for every one who wishes to become a saint to make it the matter of a vow; but he must endeavor everyday to make some steps forward in perfection. St. Laurence Justinian has written: "When a person is really making way, he feels in himself a continual desire of advancing; and the more he improves in perfection, the more this desire increases; because as his interior light increases each day more and more, he seems to himself always to be wanting in every virtue, and to be doing no good at all; and if, perchance, he is aware of some good he does, it always appears to him very imperfect, and he makes small account of it. The consequence is, he is continually laboring to acquire perfection without ever feeling wearied."

And we must begin quickly, and not wait for the morrow. Who knows whether we shall afterwards find time or not! Ecclesiastes counsels us: *Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly.*[17403] What thou canst do, do it quickly, and defer it not; and he adduces the reason why: *For neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening.*[17404] Because in the next life there is no more time to work, nor freewill to merit, nor prudence to do well, nor wisdom or experience to take good counsel by, for after death what is done is done.

A nun of the convent of Torre de Specchi in Rome, whose name was Sister Bonaventura, led a very lukewarm sort of life. There came a religious, Father Lancicius, to give the spiritual exercises to the nuns, and

Sister Bonaventura, feeling no inclination to shake off her tepidity, began to listen to the exercises with no good will. But at the very first sermon she was won by divine grace, so that she immediately went to the feet of the Father who preached, and said to him, with a tone of real determination, "Father, I wish to become a saint, and quickly a saint." And, by the assistance of God, she did so; for she lived only eight months after that event, and during that short time she lived and died a saint.

David said: *And I said, now have I begun.*[17405] So likewise exclaimed St. Charles Borromeo: "To-day I begin to serve God." And we should act in the same way as if we had hitherto done no good whatever; for, indeed, all that we do for God is nothing, since we are bound to do it. Let us therefore each day resolve to begin afresh to belong wholly to God. Neither let us stop to observe what or how others do. They who become truly saints are few. St. Bernard says: "One cannot be perfect without being singular."[17406] If we would imitate the common run of men, we should always remain imperfect, as for the most part they are. We must overcome all, renounce all, in order to gain all. St. Teresa said: "Because we do not come to the conclusion of giving all our affection to God, so neither does he give all his love to us."[17407] Oh, God, how little is all that is given to Jesus Christ, who has given his blood and his life for us! "However much we give," says the same saint, "is but dirt, in comparison of one single drop of blood shed for us by our Blessed Lord."[17408] The saints know not how to spare themselves, when there is a question of pleasing a God who gave himself wholly, without reserve, on purpose to oblige us to deny him nothing. St. John Chrysostom wrote: "He gave all to thee, and kept nothing for himself."[17409] God has bestowed his entire self upon thee; there is, then, no excuse for thee to behave reservedly with God. He has even died for us all, says the Apostle, in order that each one of us may live only for him who died for us: *Christ died for all; that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them.*[17410]

3. MENTAL PRAYER

The third means of becoming a saint is *mental prayer.* John Gerson writes:[17411] "That he who does not meditate on the eternal truths cannot, without a miracle, lead the life of a Christian. The reason is, because without mental prayer light fails us, and we walk in the dark. The truths of faith are not seen by the eyes of the body, but by the eyes of the mind, when we meditate; he that fails to meditate on them, fails to see them, and therefore walks in the dark; and being in the dark, he easily grows attached to sensible things, for the sake of which he then comes to despise the eternal.” St. Teresa wrote as follows to the Bishop of Osma: “Although we seem to discover in ourselves no imperfections; yet, when God opens the eyes of the soul, which he is wont to do in prayer, then they plainly appear.”[17412] And St. Bernard had before said, that he who does not meditate “does not abhor himself, merely because he does not know himself.”[17413] “Prayer,” says the saint, “regulates the affections, directs the actions,”[17414] keeps the affections of the soul in order, and directs all our actions to God; but without prayer the affections become attached to the earth, the actions conform themselves to the affections, and in this manner all runs into disorder.

We read of an awful example of this in the life of the Venerable Sister Mary Crucified of Sicily. Whilst this servant of God was praying, she heard a devil making a boast that he had succeeded in withdrawing a religious from the community-prayer; and she saw in spirit, that after this omission the devil tempted her to consent to a grievous sin, and that she was on the point of yielding. She forthwith accosted her, and by a timely admonition prevented her from falling. Abbé Diodès said, that whoever leaves off prayer “very shortly becomes either a beast or a devil.”[17415]

He therefore that leaves off prayer will leave off loving Jesus Christ. Prayer is the blessed furnace in which the fire of holy love is enkindled and kept alive: *And in my meditation a fire shall flame out.*[17416] It was said by St. Catharine of Bologna: “The person that foregoes the practice of prayer cuts that string which binds the soul to God.” It follows that the devil, finding the soul cold in divine love, will have little difficulty in inducing her to partake of some poisonous fruit or other. St. Teresa said, on the contrary, “Whosoever perseveres in prayer, let him hold for a certainty, that with however many sins the devil may surround him, the Lord will eventually bring him into the haven of salvation.”[17417] In another place she says, “Whoever halts not in the way of prayer arrives sooner or later.”[17418] And elsewhere she writes, “that it is on this account that the devil labors so hard to withdraw souls from prayer, because he well knows that he has missed gaining those who faithfully persevere in prayer.” Oh, how great are the benefits that flow from prayer! In prayer we conceive holy thoughts, we practise devout affections, we excite great desires, and form efficacious resolutions to give ourselves wholly to God; and thus the soul is led for his sake to sacrifice earthly pleasures and all disorderly appetites. It was said by St. Aloysius Gonzaga: “There will never be much perfection without much prayer.” Let him who longs for perfection mark well this notable saying of the saint.

We should not go to prayer in order to taste the sweetness of divine love; whoever prays from such a motive will lose his time, or at least derive little advantage from it. A person should begin to pray solely to please God, that is, solely to learn what the will of God is in his regard, and to beg of him the help to put it in practice. The Venerable Father Antony Torres said: “To carry the cross without consolation makes souls fly to perfection. Prayer unattended with sensible consolations confers greater fruit on the soul. But pitiable is the poor soul that leaves off prayer, because she finds no relish in it.” St. Teresa said: “When a soul leaves off prayer, it is as if she cast herself into hell without any need of devils.“[17419]

It results, too, from the practice of prayer, that a person constantly thinks of God. “The true lover” (says St. Teresa) “is ever mindful of the beloved one. And hence it follows that persons of prayer are always speaking of God, knowing, as they do, how pleasing it is to God that his lovers should delight in conversing about him, and on the love he bears them, and that thus they should endeavor to enkindle it in others.”[17420] The same saint wrote: “Jesus Christ is always found present at the conversations of the servants of God, and he is very much gratified to be the subject of their delight.”[17421]

Prayer, again, creates that desire of retiring into solitude, in order to converse alone with God, and to maintain interior recollection in the discharge of necessary external duties; I say *necessary,* such as the management of one’s family, or of the performance of duties required of us by obedience; because a person of prayer must love solitude, and avoid dissipation in superfluous and useless affairs, otherwise he will lose the spirit of recollection, which is a great means of preserving union with God:

My sister, my spouse is a garden enclosed.[17422] The soul espoused to Jesus Christ must be a garden closed against all creatures, and must not admit into her heart other thoughts, nor other business, but those of God or for God. Hearts thrown open never become saints. The saints, who have to labor in gaining souls to God, do not lose their recollection in the midst of all their labors, either of preaching, confessing, reconciling enemies, or assisting the sick. The same rule holds good with those who have to apply to study. How many from excessive study, and a desire to become learned, become neither holy nor learned, because true learning consists in the science of the saints; that is to say, in knowing how to love Jesus Christ; whereas, on the contrary, divine love brings with it knowledge and every good: *All good things came to me together with her,*[17423] that is, with holy charity. The Venerable John Berchmans had an extraordinary love for study, but by his great virtue he never allowed study to interfere with his spiritual interests. The Apostle exhorts us: *Not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise but to be wise unto sobriety.*[17424] A priest especially must have knowledge; he must know things, because he has to instruct others in the divine law: *For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth.*[17425] He must have knowledge, *but unto sobriety.* He that leaves prayer for study shows that in his study he seeks himself, and not God. He that seeks God leaves study (if it be not absolutely necessary), in order not to omit prayer.

Besides, the greatest evil is, that without mental prayer we do not pray at all. I have spoken frequently in my spiritual works of the necessity of prayer, and more especially in a little volume entitled, *On Prayer, the great Means, etc.;* and in the present chapter also I will briefly say a few other things. It will be sufficient then to quote here the opinion of the Venerable Palafox, Bishop of Osma, in his remarks on the letters of St. Teresa: “How can charity last, unless God grant us perseverance? How will the Lord grant us perseverance unless we ask it of him? And how shall we ask it of him except by prayer? Without prayer there is no communication with God for the preservation of virtue.”[17426] And so it is, because he that neglects mental prayer sees very little into the wants of his soul, he knows little of the dangers of his salvation, of the means to be used in order to overcome temptations; and so, understanding little of the necessity of prayer, he leaves off praying, and will certainly be lost.

Then as regards subjects for meditation, nothing is more useful than to meditate on the Four Last Things—death, judgment, hell, and heaven; but it is of especial advantage to meditate on death, and to imagine ourselves expiring on the bed of sickness, with the crucifix in our hands, and on the point of entering into eternity. But above all, to one that loves Jesus Christ, and is anxious always to increase in his love, no consideration is more efficacious than that of the Passion of the Redeemer. St. Francis de Sales calls "Mount Calvary the mountain of lovers." All the lovers of Jesus Christ love to abide on this mountain, where no air is breathed but the air of divine love. When we see a God dying for our love, and dying in order to gain our love (*He loved us, and delivered Himself up for us*[17427]), it is impossible not to love him ardently. Such darts of love continually issue forth from the wounds of Christ crucified as pierce even hearts of stone. Oh, happy is he who is ever going during this life to the heights of Calvary! O blessed Mount! O lovely Mount! O beloved Mount! and who shall ever leave thee more! A Mount that sends forth flames to enkindle the souls that perseveringly abide upon thee!

4. FREQUENT COMMUNION

The fourth means of perfection, and even of perseverance in the grace of God, is frequently to receive the Holy Communion, of which we have already spoken in the Introduction, § II., page 275, where we affirmed that a soul can do nothing more pleasing to Jesus Christ than to receive him often in the Sacrament of the Altar. St. Teresa said: "There is no better help to perfection than frequent Communion: oh, how admirably does the Lord bring such a soul to perfection!" And she adds, that, ordinarily speaking, they who communicate most frequently are found further advanced in perfection; and that there is greater spirituality in those communities where frequent Communion is the custom. For this reason it is that, as we find declared in a decree of Innocent XI., in 1679, the holy Fathers have so highly extolled, and so much promoted, the practice of frequent and even of daily Communion. Holy Communion, as the Council of Trent tells us, delivers us from daily faults, and preserves us from mortal ones. St. Bernard asserts[17428] that Communion represses the movements of anger and incontinence, which are the two passions that most frequently and most violently assail us. St. Thomas says,[17429] that Communion defeats the suggestions of the devil. And finally, St. John Chrysostom says, that Communion pours into our souls a great inclination to virtue, and a promptitude to practise it; and at the same time imparts to us a great peace, by which the path of perfection is made very sweet and easy to us. Besides, there is no sacrament so capable of kindling the divine love in souls as the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which Jesus Christ bestows on us his whole self, in order to unite us all to himself by means of holy love. Wherefore the Venerable Father John of Avila said: “Whoever deters souls from frequent Communion does the work of the devil.” Yes; for the devil has a great horror of this sacrament, from which souls derive immense strength to advance in divine love.

But the proper preparation is requisite to communicate well The first preparation, or, in other terms, the remote preparation, to be able to go to Communion daily, or several times in the week, is: 1. To keep free from all deliberate affection to sin—that is, to sin committed, as we say, with the eyes open. 2. The practice of much mental prayer. 3. The mortification of the senses and of the passions. St. Francis de Sales[17430] teaches as follows: “Whoever has overcome the greatest part of his bad inclinations, and has arrived at a notable degree of perfection, can communicate every day.” The angelic Doctor St. Thomas says,[17431] that any one who knows by experience that his soul derives an increase of divine love from the Holy Communion may communicate daily. Hence Innocent XI., in the above-mentioned decree, said that the greater or less frequency of Holy Communion must rest on the decision of the confessor who ought to be guided in this matter by the profit which he sees accrue to the souls under his direction. In the next place, the proximate preparation for Communion is that which is made on the morning itself of Communion, for which there is need of at least half an hour of mental prayer.

To reap also more abundant fruit from Communion, we must make a long thanksgiving. Father John of Avila said that the time after communion is “a time to gain treasures of graces.” St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi used to say that no time can be more calculated to inflame us with divine love than the time immediately after our Communion. And St. Teresa says: “After Communion let us be careful not to lose so good an opportunity of negotiating with God. His divine majesty is not accustomed to pay badly for his lodging, if he meets with a good reception.”[17432]

There are certain pusillanimous souls, who, on being exhorted to communicate more frequently, reply: “But I am not worthy.” But, do you not know, that the more you refrain from Communion, the more unworthy you become of it? Because, deprived of Holy Communion, you will have less strength, and will commit many faults. Well, then, obey your director, and be guided by him: faults do not forbid Holy Communion, when they are not committed with full will; besides, among your failings, the greatest is, not to submit to what your spiritual Father says to you.

“But in my past life I was very bad.” And I reply, that you must know, that he who is weakest has most need of the physician and of medicine. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is our physician and medicine as well. St. Ambrose said: “I, who am always sinning, have always need of medicine.”[17433] You will then say, perhaps: “But my confessor does not tell me to communicate oftener.” If, then, he does not tell you to do so, ask his permission to communicate oftener. Should he deny you, obey him; but in the mean time make him the request. “It would seem pride.” It would be pride if you were to wish to communicate against his will, but not when you ask his consent with humility. This heavenly bread requires hunger. Jesus loves to be desired, says a devout author; “He thirsts to be thirsted for.”[17434] And what a thought is this: “To-day I have communicated, and to-morrow I have to communicate.” Oh, how such a reflection keeps the soul attentive to avoid all defects and to do the will of God! “But I have no devotion.” If you mean sensible devotion, it is not necessary, neither does God always grant it even to his most beloved souls. It is enough for you to have the devotion of a will determined to belong wholly to God, and to make progress in his divine love. John Gerson says,[17435] that he who abstains from Communion because he does not feel that devotion which he would like to feel, acts like a man who does not approach the fire because he does not feel warm.

Alas, my God, how many souls, for want of applying themselves to lead a life of greater recollection and more detachment from earthly things, care not to seek Holy Communion! and this is the true cause of their not wishing to communicate more frequently. They are well aware that to be wishing always to appear, to dress with vanity, to be fond of nice eating and drinking, of bodily comforts, of conversations and amusements, does not harmonize with frequent Communion; they know that more prayer is required, more mortification, as well internal as external, more seclusion; and on this account they are ashamed to approach the altar more frequently. Without doubt, such souls are right to refrain from frequent Communion as long as they find themselves in that unhappy state of lukewarmness; but whoever is called to a more perfect life should lay aside this lukewarmness, if he would not greatly risk his eternal salvation.

It will be found likewise to contribute very much to keep fervor alive in the soul, often to make a *spiritual Communion*, so much recommended by the Council of Trent,[17436] which exhorts all the faithful to practise it. The spiritual Communion, as St. Thomas says,[17437] consists in an ardent desire to receive Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament; and therefore the saints were careful to make it several times in the day. The method of making it is this: "My Jesus, I believe that Thou art really present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love Thee, and I desire Thee; come to my soul. I embrace Thee; and I beseech Thee never to allow me to be separated from Thee again." Or more briefly thus: "My Jesus, come to me; I desire Thee; I embrace Thee; let us remain ever united together." This spiritual Communion may be practised several times a day: when we make our prayer, when we make our visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and especially when we attend Mass at the moment of the priest's Communion. The Dominican Sister Blessed Angela of the Cross said: "If my confessor had not taught me this method of communicating spiritually several times a day, I should not have trusted myself to live."

5. PRAYER

The fifth and most necessary means for the spiritual life, and for obtaining the love of Jesus Christ, is *prayer*. In the first place, I say that by this means God convinces us of the great love he bears us. What greater proof of affection can a person give to a friend than to say to him, "My friend, ask anything you like of me, and I will give it you?" Now, this is precisely what our Lord says to us: *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall* *find.*[17438] Wherefore prayer is called all-powerful with God to obtain every blessing: “Prayer, though it is one, can effect all things,” as Theodoret says;[17439] whoever prays, obtains from God whatever he chooses. The words of David are beautiful: *Blessed be God who hath not turned away my prayer nor his mercy from me.*[17440] Commenting on this passage, St. Augustine says, “As long as thou seest thyself not failing in prayer, be assured that the divine mercy will not fail thee either.” And St. John Chrysostom: “We always obtain, even while we are still praying.”[17441] When we pray to God he grants us the grace we ask for, even before we have ended our petition. If then we are poor, let us blame only ourselves, since we are poor merely because we wish to be poor, and so we are undeserving of pity. What sympathy can there be for a beggar, who, having a very rich master, and one most desirous to provide him with everything if he will only ask for it, nevertheless chooses still to continue in his poverty sooner than ask for what he wants? “Behold,” says the Apostle, “our God is ready to enrich all who call upon him:” *Rich unto all that call upon Him.*[17442]

Humble prayer, then, obtains all from God; but we must be persuaded at the same time, that if it be useful, it is no less necessary for our salvation. It is certain that we absolutely require the divine assistance, in order to overcome temptations; and sometimes, in certain more violent assaults, the sufficient grace which God gives to all, might possibly enable us to resist them; but on account of our inclination to evil, it will not ordinarily be sufficient, and we shall stand in need of a special grace. Whoever prays obtains this grace; but whoever prays not, obtains it not, and is lost. And this is more especially the case with regard to the grace of *final perseverance*, of dying in the grace of God, which is the grace absolutely necessary for our salvation, and without which we should be lost forever. St. Augustine[17443] says of this grace, that God only bestows it on those who pray. And this is the reason why so few are saved, because few indeed are mindful to beg of God this grace of perseverance.

In fine, the holy Fathers say, that prayer is necessary for us, not merely as a *necessity of precept* (so that divines say, that he who neglects for a month to recommend to God the affair of his salvation is not exempt from mortal sin), but also as a *necessity of means,* which is as much as to say, that whoever does not pray cannot possibly be saved. And the reason of it is, in short, because we cannot obtain eternal salvation without the help of divine grace, and this grace Almighty God only accords to those who pray. And because temptations, and the dangers of falling into God's displeasure, continually beset us, so ought our prayers to be continual. Hence St. Thomas declares that continual prayer is necessary for a man to save himself: "Unceasing prayer is necessary to man, that he may enter heaven."[17444] And Jesus Christ himself had already said the same thing: *We ought always to pray, and not to faint.*[17445] And afterwards the Apostle: *Pray without ceasing.*[17446] During the interval in which we shall cease to pray, the devil will conquer us. And though the grace of perseverance can in no wise be merited by us, as the Council of Trent teaches us,[17447] nevertheless St. Augustine says, "that in a certain sense we can merit it by prayer."[17448] The Lord wishes to dispense his grace to us, but he will be entreated first; nay more, as St. Gregory remarks, he wills to be importuned, and in a manner constrained by our prayers: "God wishes to be prayed to,—he wishes to be compelled,—he wishes to be, as it were, vanquished by our importunity."[17449] St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, "that when we ask graces of God, he not only hears us, but in a certain sense thanks us." Yes, because God, as the infinite goodness, in wishing to pour out himself upon others, has, so to speak, an infinite longing to distribute his gifts; but he wishes to be besought: hence it follows, that when he sees himself entreated by a soul, he receives so much pleasure, that in a certain sense he thanks that soul for it.

Well, then, if we wish to preserve ourselves in the grace of God till death, we must act the mendicant, and keep our mouths open to beg for God's help, always repeating, "My Jesus, mercy; never let me be separated from Thee; O Lord, come to my aid; My God, assist me!" This was the unceasing prayer of the ancient Fathers of the desert: "Incline unto my aid, O God: O Lord, make haste to help me![17450] O Lord, help me, and help me soon; for if Thou delayest Thy assistance, I shall fall and perish!" And this above all must be practised in the moment of temptation; he who acts otherwise is lost.

And let us have a great faith in prayer. God has promised to hear him that prays: *Ask, and you shall receive.*[17451] How can we doubt, says St.

Augustine, since God has bound himself by express promise, and cannot fail to grant us the favors we ask of him? “By promising he has made himself our debtor.”[17452] In recommending ourselves to God, we must have a sure confidence that God hears us, and then we shall obtain whatever we want. Behold what Jesus Christ says: *All things, whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.*[17453]

“But,” some one may say, “I am a sinner, and do not deserve to be heard.” But Jesus Christ says: *Every one that asketh, receiveth.*[17454] Every one, be he just, or be he a sinner. St. Thomas teaches us that the efficacy of prayer to obtain graces does not depend on our merits, but on the mercy of God, who has promised to hear every one who prays to him.[17455] And our Redeemer, in order to remove from us all fear when we pray, said: *Amen, amen, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.*[17456] As though he would say: Sinners, you have no merits of your own to obtain graces, wherefore do in this manner; when you would obtain graces, ask them of my Father in my name; that is, through my merits and through my love; and then ask as many as you choose, and they shall be granted to you. But let us mark well those words, “In My name;” which signify (as St. Thomas explains it), “in the name of the Saviour;” or, in other words, that the graces which we ask must be graces which regard our eternal salvation; and consequently we must remark that the promise does not regard temporal favors; these our Lord grants, when they are profitable for our eternal welfare; if they would prove otherwise, he refuses them. So that we should always ask for temporal favors, on condition that they will benefit our soul. But should they be spiritual graces, then they require no condition; but with confidence, and a sure confidence, we should say: “Eternal Father, in the name of Jesus Christ deliver me from this temptation: grant me holy perseverance, grant me Thy love, grant me heaven.” We can likewise ask these graces of Jesus Christ in his own name; that is, by his merits, since we have his promise also to this effect: *If you shall ask Me anything in My name, that I will do.*[17457]

And whilst we pray to God, let us not forget to recommend ourselves at the same time to Mary, the dispenser of graces. St. Bernard says, that it is Almighty God who bestows the graces; but he bestows them through the hands of Mary: “Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary; because what she seeks she finds, and cannot be refused.”[17458] If Mary prays for us, we are safe; for every petition of Mary is heard, and she can never meet with a repulse.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Jesus, my love, I am determined to love Thee as much as I can, and I wish to become a saint; and I wish to become a saint for this reason, in order to give Thee pleasure, and to love Thee exceedingly in this life and the next! I can do nothing of myself, but Thou canst do all things; and I know that Thou wishest me to become a saint. I see already that by Thy grace my soul sighs only for Thee, and seeks nothing else but Thee. I wish to live no more for myself; Thou desirest me to be wholly Thine, and I desire to be wholly Thine. Come, and unite me to Thyself, and Thyself to me. Thou art infinite goodness; Thou art he who hast loved me so much; Thou art, indeed, too loving and too lovely; how, then, can I love anything but Thee? I prefer Thy love before all the things of this world; Thou art the sole object, the sole end of all my affections. I leave all to be occupied solely in loving Thee, my Redeemer, my Comforter, my hope, my love, and my all. I will not despair of becoming a saint on account of the sins of my past life; for I know, my Jesus, that Thou didst die in order to pardon the truly penitent. I love Thee now with my whole heart, with my whole soul; I love Thee more than myself, and I bewail, above every other evil, ever having had the misfortune to despise Thee, my sovereign good. Now I am no longer my own, I am Thine; O God of my heart, dispose of me as Thou pleasest. In order to please Thee, I accept of all the tribulations Thou mayest choose to send me—sickness, sorrow, troubles, ignominies, poverty, persecution, desolation—I accept all to please Thee: in like manner I accept of the death Thou hast decreed for me, with all the anguish and crosses which may accompany it: it is enough if Thou grantest me the grace to love Thee exceedingly. Lend me Thy assistance; give me strength henceforth to compensate, by my love, for all the bitterness that I have caused Thee in past time, O only love of my soul!

O Queen of Heaven, O Mother of God, O great advocate of sinners, I trust in thee!

Chapter V

CHARITY IS NOT PUFFED UP

(CHARITAS NON INFLATUR.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST IS NOT VAIN OF HIS OWN WORTH, BUT HUMBLES HIMSELF, AND IS GLAD TO BE HUMBLED BY OTHERS

A PROUD person is like a balloon filled with air, which seems, indeed, great; but whose greatness, in reality, is nothing more than a little air; which, as soon as the balloon is opened, is quickly dispersed. He who loves God is humble, and is not elated at seeing any worth in himself; because he knows that whatever he possesses is the gift of God, and that of his own he has only nothingness and sin; so that this knowledge of the divine favors bestowed on him humbles him the more; whilst he is conscious of being so unworthy, and yet so favored by God.

St. Teresa says, in speaking of the especial favors she received from God: “God does with me as they do with a house, which, when about to fall, they prop up with supports.” When a soul receives a loving visit from God, and feels within herself an unwonted fervor of divine love, accompanied with tears, or with a great tenderness of heart, let her beware of supposing that God so favors her, in reward for some good action; but let her then humble herself the more, concluding that God caresses her in order that she may not forsake him; otherwise, were she to make such favors the subject of vain complacency, imagining herself more privileged, because she receives greater gifts from God than others, such a fault would induce God to deprive her of his favors. Two things are chiefly requisite for the stability of a house—the foundation and the roof; the foundation in us must be humility, in acknowledging ourselves good for nothing, and capable of nothing; and the roof is the divine assistance, in which alone we ought to put all our trust.

Whenever we behold ourselves unusually favored by God, we must humble ourselves the more. When St. Teresa received any special favor, she used to strive to place before her eyes all the faults she had ever committed; and thus the Lord received her into closer union with himself: the more a soul confesses herself undeserving of any favors, the more God enriches her with his graces. Thais, who was first a sinner and then a saint, humbled herself so profoundly before God that she dared not even mention his name; so that she had not the courage to say, "My God;" but she said, "My Creator, have mercy on me!"[17459] And St. Jerome writes, that in recompense for such humility, she saw a glorious throne prepared for her in heaven. In the life of St. Margaret of Cortona we read the same thing; that, when our Lord visited her one day with greater tokens of tenderness and love, she exclaimed: "But, O Lord, hast Thou then forgotten what I have been? Is it possible that Thou canst repay all my outrages against Thee with so exquisite sweetness?" And God replied, that when a soul loves him, and cordially repents of having offended him, he forgets all her past infidelities; as, indeed, he formerly spoke by the mouth of Ezechiel: *But if the wicked do penance. . . . I will not remember all his iniquities.*[17460] And in proof of this, he showed her a high throne, which he had prepared for her in heaven in the midst of the seraphim. Oh, that we could only well comprehend the value of humility! A single act of humility is worth more than all the riches of the universe.

It was the saying of St. Teresa, "Think not that thou hast advanced far in perfection, till thou considerest thyself the worst of all, and desirest to be placed below all." And on this maxim the saint acted, and so have done all the saints; St. Francis of Assisi, St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, and the rest, considered themselves the greatest sinners in the world, and were surprised that the earth sheltered them, and did not rather open under their feet to swallow them up alive; and they expressed themselves to this effect with the sincerest conviction, The Venerable Father John of Avila, who, from his earliest infancy had led a holy life, was on his deathbed; and the priest who came to attend him said many sublime things to him, taking him for what indeed he was, a great servant of God and a learned man; but Father Avila thus spoke to him: "Father, I pray you to make the recommendation of my soul, as of the soul of a criminal condemned to death; for such I am.” This is the opinion which saints entertain of themselves in life and death.

We, too, must act in this manner, if we would save our souls, and keep ourselves in the grace of God till death, reposing all our confidence in God alone. The proud man relies on his own strength, and falls on that account; but the humble man, by placing all his trust in God alone, stands firm and falls not, however violent and multiplied the temptations may be; for his watchword is: *I can do all things in Him that strengthened me.*[17461] The devil at one time tempts us to presumption, at another time to diffidence; whenever he suggests to us that we are in no danger of falling, then we should tremble the more; for were God but for an instant to withdraw his grace from us, we are lost. When, again, he tempts us to diffidence, then let us turn to God, and thus address him with great confidence: *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, I shall never be confounded.*[17462] My God, in Thee I have put all my hopes; I hope never to meet with confusion, nor to be bereft of Thy grace. We ought to exercise ourselves continually, even to the very last moments of our life, in these acts of diffidence in ourselves and of confidence in God, always beseeching God to grant us humility.

But it is not enough, in order to be humble, to have a lowly opinion of ourselves, and to consider ourselves the miserable beings that we really are; the man who is truly humble, says Thomas à Kempis,[17463] despises himself, and wishes also to be despised by others. This is what Jesus Christ so earnestly recommends us to practise, after his example: *Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.*[17464] Whoever styles himself the greatest sinner in the world, and then is angry when others despise him, plainly shows humility of tongue, but not of heart. St. Thomas Aquinas says, that a person who resents being slighted may be certain that he is far distant from perfection, even though he should work miracles. The divine Mother sent St. Ignatius Loyola from heaven to instruct St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi in humility; and behold the lesson which the saint gave her: “Humility is a gladness at whatever leads us to despise ourselves.”[17465] Mark well, a *gladness;* if the feelings are stirred with resentment at the contempt we receive, at least let us be glad in spirit.

And how is it possible for a soul not to love contempt, if she loves Jesus Christ, and beholds how her God was buffeted and spit upon, and how he suffered in his Passion! *Then did they spit in His face and buffeted Him; and others struck His face with the palms of their hands.*[17466] For this purpose our Redeemer wishes us to keep his image exposed on our altars, not indeed representing him in glory, but nailed to the cross, that we might have his ignominies constantly before our eyes; a sight which made the saints rejoice at being vilified in this world. And such was the prayer which St. John of the Cross addressed to Jesus Christ, when he appeared to him with the cross upon his shoulders: "O Lord, let me suffer, and be despised for Thee!"[17467] My Lord, on beholding Thee so reviled for my love, I only ask of Thee to let me suffer and be despised for Thy love.

St. Francis de Sales said,[17468] "To support injuries is the touchstone of humility and of true virtue." If a person pretending to spirituality practises prayer, frequent Communion, fasts, and mortifies himself, and yet cannot put up with an affront, or a biting word, of what is it a sign? It is a sign that he is a hollow cane, without humility and without virtue. And what indeed can a soul do that loves Jesus Christ, if she is unable to endure a slight for the love of Jesus Christ, who has endured so much for her? Thomas à Kempis, in his golden little book of the Imitation of Christ, writes as follows: "Since you have such an abhorrence of being humbled, it is a sign that you are not dead to the world, have no humility, and that you do not keep God before your eyes. He that has not God before his eyes, is disturbed at every syllable of censure that he hears."[17469] Thou canst not endure cuffs and blows for God; endure at least a passing word.

Oh, what surprise and scandal does that person occasion, who communicates often, and then is ready to resent every little word of contempt! On the contrary, what edification does a soul give that answers contempts with words of mildness, spoken in order to conciliate the offender; or perhaps makes no reply at all, nor complains of it to others, but continues with placid looks, and without showing the least sign of indignation! St. John Chrysostom says, that a meek person is not only serviceable to himself but likewise to others, by the good example he sets them of meekness in bearing contempt: "The meek man is useful to himself and to others."[17470] Thomas à Kempis mentions, with regard to this subject, several things in which we should practise humility; he says as follows: "What others say shall command an attentive hearing, and what you say shall be taken no notice of. Others shall make a request and obtain it; you shall ask for something and meet with a refusal. Others shall be magnified in the mouths of men, and on you no one shall bestow a word. Such and such an office shall be conferred on others, but you shall be passed by as unfit for anything. With such like trials the Lord is wont to prove his faithful servant; and to see how far he has learned to overcome himself and to hold his peace. Nature, indeed, will at times not like it; but you will derive immense profit thereby, if you support all in silence."[17471]

It was a saying of St. Jane of Chantal, that "a person who is truly humble takes occasion from receiving some humiliation to humble himself the more."[17472] Yes, for he who is truly humble never supposes himself humbled as much as he deserves. Those who behave in this manner are styled *blessed* by Jesus Christ. They are not called blessed who are esteemed by the world, who are honored and praised, as noble, as learned, as powerful; but they who are spoken ill of by the world, who are persecuted and calumniated; for it is for such that a glorious reward is prepared in heaven, if they only bear all with patience: *Blessed are you when they shall revile you and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly for My sake: be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.*[17473]

The grand occasion for practising humility is when we receive correction for some fault from Superiors or from others. Some people resemble the hedgehog: they seem all calmness and meekness as long as they remain untouched; but no sooner does a Superior or a friend touch them, by an observation on something which they have done imperfectly, than they forthwith become all prickles, and answer warmly, that so and so is not true, or that they were right in doing so, or that such a correction is quite uncalled for. In a word, to rebuke them is to become their enemy; they behave like a person who raves at the surgeon for paining them in the cure of their wounds. "He is angry with the surgeon,"[17474] writes St. Bernard. "When the virtuous and humble man is corrected for a fault," says St. John Chrysostom, "he grieves for having committed it; the proud man on the other hand, on receiving correction, grieves also; but he grieves that his fault is detected; and on this account he is troubled, gives answers, and is angry with the person who corrects him." This is the golden rule given by

St. Philip Neri, to be observed with regard to receiving correction: “Whoever would really become a saint must never excuse himself, although what is laid to his charge be not true.”[17475] And there is only one case to be excepted from this rule, and that is when self-defence may appear necessary to prevent scandal. Oh, what merit with God has that soul that is wrongfully reprehended, and yet keeps silence, and refrains from defending itself! St. Teresa said: “There are occasions when a soul makes more progress and acquires a greater degree of perfection by refraining from excusing herself than by listening to ten sermons; because by not excusing herself she begins to obtain freedom of spirit, and to be heedless whether the world speaks well or ill of her.”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Incarnate Word! I entreat Thee, by the merits of Thy holy humility, which led Thee to embrace so many ignominies and injuries for our love, deliver me from all pride, and grant me a share of Thy humility. And what right have I to complain of any affront whatever that may be offered me, after having so often deserved hell? O my Jesus, by the merit of all the scorn and affronts endured for me in Thy Passion, grant me the grace to live and die humbled on this earth, as Thou didst live and die humbled for my sake. For Thy love I would willingly be despised and forsaken by all the world; but without Thee I can do nothing. I love Thee, O my sovereign good; I love Thee, O beloved of my soul! I love Thee; and I hope, through Thee, to fulfil my purpose of suffering all for Thee,—affronts, betrayals, persecutions, afflictions, dryness, and desolation; enough is it for me if Thou dost not forsake me, O sole object of the love of my soul. Suffer me never more to estrange myself from Thee. Enkindle in me the desire to please Thee. Grant me fervor in loving Thee. Give me peace of mind in suffering for Thee. Give me resignation in all contradictions. Have mercy on me. I deserve nothing; but I fix all my hopes in Thee, who hast purchased me with Thine own blood.

And I hope all from thee, too, O my Queen and my Mother Mary, who art the refuge of sinners!

Chapter VI

CHARITY IS NOT AMBITIOUS

(CHARITAS NON EST AMBITIOSA.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST DESIRES NOTHING BUT JESUS CHRIST

HE that loves God does not desire to be esteemed and loved by his fellow-men: the single desire of his heart is to enjoy the favor of Almighty God, who alone forms the object of his love. St. Hilary writes, that all honor paid by the world is the business of the devil.[17476] And so it is; for the enemy traffics for hell, when he infects the soul with the desire of esteem; because, by thus laying aside humility, she runs great risks of plunging into every vice. St. James writes, that as God confers his graces with open hands upon the humble, so does he close them against the proud, whom he resists. *God resists the proud, and gives His grace to the humble.*[17477] He says he *resists* the proud, signifying that he does not even listen to their prayers. And certainly, among the acts of pride we may reckon the desire to be honored by men, and self-exaltation at receiving honors from them.

We have a frightful example of this in the history of Brother Justin the Franciscan, who had even risen to a lofty state of contemplation; but because perhaps—and indeed without a perhaps—he nourished within himself a desire of human esteem, behold what befell him. One day Pope Eugenius IV. sent for him; and on account of the great opinion he had of his sanctity, showed him peculiar marks of honor, embraced him, and made him sit by his side. Such high honors filled Brother Justin full of self-conceit; on which St. John Capistran said to him, “Alas, Brother Justin, thou didst leave us an angel, and thou returnest a devil!” And in fact, the hapless Brother becoming daily more and more puffed up with arrogance, and insisting on being treated according to his own estimate of himself, he at last murdered a brother with a knife; he afterwards became an apostate, and fled into the kingdom of Naples, where he perpetrated other atrocities; and there he died in prison, an apostate to the last.

Hence it is that a certain great servant of God wisely said, that when we hear or read of the fall of some towering cedars of Libanus, of a Solomon, a Tertullian, an Osius, who had all the reputation of saints, it is a sign that they were not given wholly to God; but nourished inwardly some spirit of pride and so fell away. Let us therefore tremble, when we feel arise within us an ambition to appear in public, and to be esteemed by the world; and when the world pays us some tribute of honor, let us beware of taking complacency in it, which might prove the cause of our utter ruin.

Let us especially be on our guard against all ambitious seeking of preference, and sensibility in points of honor. St. Teresa said, "Where punctiliousness prevails, there spirituality will never prevail."[17478] Many persons make profession of a spiritual life, but they are worshippers of self. They have the semblance of certain virtues, but they are ambitious of being praised in all their undertakings; and if nobody else praises them, they praise themselves: in short, they strive to appear better than others; and if their honor be touched, they lose their peace, they leave off Holy Communion, they omit all their devotions, and find no rest till they imagine they have got back their former standing. The true lovers of God do not so behave. They not only carefully shun every word of self-esteem and all self-complacency, but, further, they are sorry at hearing themselves commended by others, and their gladness is to behold themselves held in small repute by the rest of men.

The saying of St. Francis of Assisi is most true: "What I am before God, that I am." Of what use is it to pass for great in the eyes of the world, if before God we be vile and worthless? And on the contrary, what matters it to be despised by the world, provided we be dear and acceptable in the eyes of God? St. Augustine thus writes: "The approbation of him who praises neither heals a bad conscience, nor does the reproach of one who blames wound a good conscience."[17479] As the man who praises us cannot deliver us from the chastisement of our evil doings, so neither can he who blames us rob us of the merit of our good actions. "What does it matter," says St. Teresa, "though we be condemned and reviled by creatures, if before Thee, O God! we are great and without blame?” The saints had no other desire than to live unknown, and to pass for contemptible in the estimation of all. Thus writes St. Francis de Sales: “But what wrong do we suffer when people have a bad opinion of us, since we ought to have such of ourselves? Perhaps we know that we are bad, and yet wish to pass off for good in the estimation of others.”[17480]

Oh, what security is found in the hidden life for such as wish cordially to love Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ himself set us the example, by living hidden and despised for thirty years in a workshop. And with the same view of escaping the esteem of men, the saints went and hid themselves in deserts and in caves. It was said by St. Vincent of Paul,[17481] that a love of appearing in public, and of being spoken of in terms of praise, and of hearing our conduct commended, or that people should say that we succeed admirably and work wonders, is an evil which, while it makes us unmindful of God, contaminates our best actions, and proves the most fatal drawback to the spiritual life.

Whoever, therefore, would make progress in the love of Jesus Christ, must absolutely give a death-blow to the love of self-esteem. But how shall we inflict this blow? Behold how St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi instructs us: “That which, keeps alive the appetite for self-esteem is the occupying a favorable position in the minds of all; consequently the death of self-esteem is to keep one’s self hidden, so as not to be known to any one. And till we learn to die in this manner, we shall never be true servants of God.”[17482]

In order, then, to be pleasing in the sight of God, we must avoid all ambition of appearing and of making a parade in the eyes of men. And we must shun with still greater caution the ambition of governing others. Sooner than behold this accursed ambition set foot in the convent, St. Teresa[17483] declared she would prefer to have the whole convent burned, and all the nuns with it. So that she signified her wish, that if ever one of her religious should be caught aiming at the Superiorship, she should be expelled from the community, or at least undergo perpetual confinement. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, “The honor of a spiritual person consists in being put below all, and in abhorring all superiority over others. The ambition of a soul that loves God should be to excel all others in humility, according to the counsel of St. Paul: *In humility let each esteem others* *better than themselves.*”[17484] In a word, he that loves God must make God the sole object of his ambition.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My Jesus, grant me the ambition of pleasing Thee, and make me forget all creatures and myself also. What will it profit me to be loved by the whole world, if I be not loved by Thee, the only love of my soul! My Jesus, Thou camest into the world to win our hearts; if I am unable to give Thee my heart, do Thou please to take it and replenish it with Thy love, and never allow me to be separated from Thee any more. I have, alas! turned my back upon Thee in the past; but now that I am conscious of the evil I have done, I grieve over it with my whole heart, and no affliction in the world can so distress me, as the remembrance of the offences that I have so often committed against Thee. I am consoled to think that Thou art infinite goodness, that Thou dost not disdain to love a sinner who loves Thee. My beloved Redeemer, O sweetest love of my soul, I have heretofore slighted Thee; but now at least I love Thee more than myself! I offer Thee myself and all that belongs to me. I have only the one wish to love Thee, and to please Thee. This forms all my ambition; accept of it, and be pleased to increase it, and exterminate in me all desire of earthly goods. Thou art indeed deserving of love, and great indeed are my obligations of loving Thee. Behold me then, I wish to be wholly Thine; and I will suffer whatever Thou pleasest, Thou who for love of me didst die of sorrow on the cross! Thou wishest me to be a saint; Thou canst make me a saint; in Thee I place my trust.

And I also confide in thy protection, O Mary, great Mother of God!

Chapter VII

CHARITY SEEKETH NOT HER OWN

(CHARITAS NON QUŒRIT QUŒ SUA SUNT.)

HE THAT LOVETH JESUS CHRIST SEEKS TO DETACH HIMSELF FROM EVERY CREATURE

WHOEVER desires to love Jesus Christ with his whole heart must banish from his heart all that is not God, but is merely self-love. This is the meaning of those words, "seeketh not her own;" not to seek ourselves, but only what pleaseth God. And this is what God requires of us all, when he says: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*[17485] Two things are needful to love God with our whole heart: 1. To clear it of earth. 2. To fill it with holy love. It follows, that a heart in which any earthly affections linger can never belong wholly to God. St. Philip Neri[17486] said, "that as much love as we bestow on the creature, is so much taken from the Creator." In the next place, how must the earth be purged away from the heart? Truly by mortification and detachment from creatures. Some souls complain that they seek God, and do not find him; let them listen to what St. Teresa says: "Wean your heart from creatures, and seek God, and you will find him."[17487]

The mistake is, that some indeed wish to become saints, but after their own fashion; they would love Jesus Christ, but in their own way, without forsaking those diversions, that vanity of dress, those delicacies in food: they love God, but if they do not succeed in obtaining such or such an office, they live discontented; if, too, they happen to be touched in point of esteem, they are all on fire; if they do not recover from an illness, they lose all patience. They love God; but they refuse to let go that attachment for the riches, the honors of the world, for the vainglory of being reckoned of good family, of great learning, and better than others. Such as these practise prayer, and frequent Holy Communion; but inasmuch as they take with them hearts full of earth, they derive little profit. Our Lord does not even speak to them, for he knows that it is but a waste of words. In fact, he said as much to St. Teresa on a certain occasion: “I would speak to many souls, but the world keeps up such a noise about their ears, that my voice would never be heard by them. Oh, that they would retire a little from the world!” Whosoever, then, is full of earthly affections cannot even so much as hear the voice of God that speaks to him. But unhappy the man that continues attached to the sensible goods of this earth; he may easily become so blinded by them as one day to quit the love of Jesus Christ; and for want of forsaking these transitory goods he may lose God, the infinite good, forever. St. Teresa said: “It is a reasonable consequence, that he who runs after perishable goods should himself perish.”

St. Augustine[17488] informs us that Tiberius Cæsar desired that the Roman senate should enrol Jesus Christ among the rest of their gods; but the senate refused to do so, on the ground that he was too proud a God, and would be worshipped alone without any companions. It is quite true: God will be alone the object of our adoration and love; not indeed from pride, but because it is his just due, and because too of the love he bears us. For as he himself loves us exceedingly, he desires in return all our love; and is therefore jealous of any one else sharing the affections of our hearts, of which he desires to be the sole possessor: “Jesus is a jealous lover,”[17489] says St. Jerome; and he is unwilling therefore for us to fix our affections on anything but himself. And whenever he beholds any created object taking a share of our hearts, he looks on it as it were with jealousy, as the Apostle St. James says, because he will not endure a rival, but will remain the sole object of all our love: *Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain: To envy doth the Spirit covet which dwelleth in you?*[17490] The Lord in the sacred Canticles praises his spouse, saying: *My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed.*[17491] He call her “a garden enclosed,” because the soul that is his spouse keeps her heart shut against every earthly love, in order to preserve all for Jesus Christ alone. And does Jesus Christ perchance not deserve all our love? Ah, too much, too much has he deserved it, both for his own goodness and for his love towards us. The saints knew this well, and for this reason St. Francis de Sales said: “Were I conscious of one fibre in my heart that did not belong to God, I would forthwith tear it out.”[17492]

David longed to have wings free from all lime of worldly affections, in order to fly away and repose in God: *Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?*[17493] Many souls would wish to see themselves released from every earthly trammel to fly to God, and would in reality make lofty flights in the way of sanctity, if they would but detach themselves from everything in this world; but whereas they retain some little inordinate affection, and will not use violence with themselves to get rid of it, they remain always languishing on in their misery, without ever so much as lifting a foot from the ground. St. John of the Cross said: “The soul that remains with her affections attached to anything, however small, will, notwithstanding many virtues which she may possess, never arrive at divine union; for it signifies little whether the bird be tied by a slight thread or a thick one; since, however slight it may be, provided she does not break it, she remains always bound, and unable to fly. Oh, what a pitiful thing it is to see certain souls, rich in spiritual exercises, in virtues and divine favors; yet, because they are not bold enough to break off some trifling attachment, they cannot attain to divine union, for which it only needed one strong and resolute flight to break effectually that fatal thread! Since, when once the soul is emptied of all affection to creatures, God cannot help communicating himself wholly to her.”[17494]

He who would possess God entirely must give himself up entirely to God: *My beloved to me and I to him,*[17495] says the Sacred Spouse. My beloved has given himself entirely to me, and I give myself entirely to him. The love which Jesus Christ bears us causes him to desire all our love; and without all he is not satisfied. On this account we find St. Teresa thus writing to the Prioress of one of her convents: “Endeavor to train souls to a total detachment from everything created, because they are to be trained for the spouses of a king so jealous, that he would have them even forget themselves.” St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi took a little book of devotion from one of her novices, merely because she observed that she was too much attached to it. Many souls acquit themselves of the duty of prayer, of visiting the Blessed Sacrament, of frequenting Holy Communion; but nevertheless they make little or no progress in perfection, and all because they keep some fondness for something in their heart; and if they persist in living thus, they will not only be always miserable, but run the risk of losing all.

We must, therefore, beseech Almighty God, with David, to rid our heart of all earthly attachments: *Create a clean heart in me, O God.*[17496] Otherwise we can never be wholly his. He has given us to understand very plainly, that whoever will not renounce everything in this world, cannot be his disciple: *Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be my disciple.*[17497] For this reason the ancient Fathers of the desert were accustomed first to put this question to any youth who desired to associate himself with them: "Dost thou bring an empty heart, that the Holy Spirit may fill it?" Our Lord said the same thing to St. Gertrude, when she besought him to signify what he wished of her: "I wish nothing else, he said, but to find a heart devoid of creatures."[17498] We must therefore say to God with great resolution and courage: O Lord, I prefer Thee to all; to health, to riches, to honors and dignities, to applause, to learning, to consolations, to high hopes, to desires, and even to the very graces and gifts which I may receive of Thee! In short, I prefer Thee to every created good which is not Thee, O my God. Whatever benefit Thou grantest me, O my God, nothing besides Thyself will satisfy me. I desire Thee alone, and nothing else.

When the heart is detached from creatures, the divine love immediately enters and fills it. Moreover, St. Teresa said: "As soon as evil occasions are removed, the heart forthwith turns herself to love God." Yes, for the human heart cannot exist without loving; it must either love the Creator or creatures: if it does not love creatures, then assuredly it will love God. In short, we must leave all in order to gain all. "All for all,"[17499] says Thomas à Kempis. As long as St. Teresa cherished a certain affection, though pure, towards one of her relatives, she did not wholly belong to God; but when afterwards she summoned courage, and resolutely cut off the attachment, then she deserved to hear these words from Jesus: "Now, Teresa, thou art all mine, and I am all thine."[17500] One heart is quite too small to love this God, so loving and so lovely, and who merits an infinite love; and shall we then think of dividing this one little heart between creatures and God? The Venerable Louis da Ponte felt ashamed to speak thus to God: "O Lord, I love Thee above all things, above riches, honors, friends, relatives;" for it seemed to him as much as to say: "O Lord, I love Thee more than dirt, than smoke, and the worms of the earth!"

The Prophet Jeremias says, that the Lord is all goodness towards him who seeks him: *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him.*[17501] But he understands it of a soul that seeks God alone. O blessed loss! O blessed gain! to lose worldly goods, which cannot satisfy the heart and are soon gone, in order to obtain the sovereign and eternal good, which is God! It is related that a pious hermit, one day while the king was hunting through the wood, began to run to and fro as if in search of something; the king, observing him thus occupied, inquired of him who he was and what he was doing; the hermit replied: "And may I ask your majesty what you are engaged about in this desert?" The king made answer: "I am going in pursuit of game." And the hermit replied: "I, too, am going in pursuit of God." With these words he continued his road and went away. During the present life this must likewise be our only thought, our only purpose, to go in search of God in order to love him, and in search of his will in order to fulfil it, ridding our heart of all love of creatures. And whenever some worldly good would present itself to our imaginations to solicit our love, let us be ready prepared with this answer: "I have despised the kingdom of this world, and all the charms of this life, for the sake of the love of my Lord Jesus Christ."[17502] And what else are all the dignities and grandeurs of this world but smoke, filth, and vanity, which all disappear at death? Blessed he who can say: "My Jesus, I have left all for Thy love; Thou art my only love; Thou alone art sufficient for me."

Ah, when once the love of God takes full possession of a soul, she of her own accord (supposing always, of course, the assistance of divine grace) strives to divest herself of everything that could prove a hindrance to her belonging wholly to God. St. Francis de Sales remarks that when a house catches fire, all the furniture is thrown out of the window;[17503] meaning thereby, that when a person gives himself entirely to God, he needs no persuasion of preachers or confessors, but of his own accord seeks to get rid of every earthly affection. Father Segneri the younger called divine love a robber, which happily despoils us of all, that we may come into possession of God alone. A certain man, of respectable position in life, having renounced everything in order to become poor for the love of Jesus Christ, was questioned by a friend how he fell into such a state of poverty; he took from his pocket a small volume of the Gospels, and said: “Behold, this is what has stripped me of all.” The Holy Spirit says: *If a man shall give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing.*[17504] And when a soul fixes her whole love in God, she despises all, wealth, pleasures, dignities, territories, kingdoms, and all her longing is after God alone; she says, again and again: “My God, I wish for Thee only, and nothing more.” St. Francis de Sales writes:[17505] “The pure love of God consumes everything which is not God, to convert all into itself; for whatever we do for the love of God is love.”

The Sacred Spouse said: *He brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me.*[17506] This cellar of wine, writes St. Teresa, is divine love, which, on taking possession of a soul, so perfectly inebriates it as to make it forgetful of everything created. A person intoxicated is, as it were, dead in his senses; he does not see, nor hear, nor speak; and so it happens to the soul inebriated with divine love. She has no longer any sense of the things of the world; she wishes to think only of God, to speak only of God; she recognizes no other motive in all her actions but to love and to please God. In the sacred Canticles the Lord forbids them to awake his beloved, who sleeps: *Stir not up, nor make the beloved to awake, till she please.*[17507] This blessed sleep, enjoyed by souls espoused to Jesus Christ, says St. Basil, is nothing else than “the utter oblivion of all things,”[17508] a virtuous and voluntary forgetfulness of every created thing, in order to be occupied solely with God, and to be able to exclaim with St. Francis, “My God and my all.”[17509] My God, what are riches, and dignities, and goods of the world, compared with Thee! Thou art my all and my every good. “My God and my all.” Thomas à Kempis writes,[17510] “Oh, sweet word! It speaks enough for him who understands it; and to him who loves, it is most delicious to repeat again and again: My God and my all, my God and my all!”

DETACHMENT FROM RELATIVES, ABOVE ALL, IN REGARD TO ONE’S VOCATION

Wherefore, to arrive at perfect union with God, a total detachment from creatures is of absolute necessity. And to come to particulars, we must divest ourselves of all inordinate affection towards relatives. Jesus Christ says: *If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.*[17511] And wherefore this hatred to relatives? because generally, as regards the interests of the soul, we cannot have greater enemies than our own kindred: *And a man's enemies shall be those of his own household.*[17512] St. Charles Borromeo declared that he never went to pay a visit to his family without returning cooled in fervor. And when Father Antony Mendoza was asked why he refused to enter the house of his parents, he replied, "Because I know, by experience, that nowhere is the devotion of religious so dissipated as in the house of parents."

When, moreover, the choice of a state of life is concerned, it is certain that we are not obliged to obey our parents, according to the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas.[17513] Should a young man be called to the religious life, and find opposition from his parents, he is bound to obey God, and not his parents, who, as the same St. Thomas says, with a view to their own interests and private ends, stand in the way of our spiritual welfare. "Friends of flesh and blood are oftentimes opposed to our spiritual profit."[17514] And they are content, says St. Bernard,[17515] to have their children go to eternal perdition, rather than leave home. It is surprising, in this matter, to see some fathers and mothers, even though fearing God, yet so blinded by mistaken fondness, that they use every effort, and exhaust every means, to hinder the vocation of a child who wishes to become a religious. This conduct, however (except in very rare cases), cannot be excused from grievous sin.

But some one may say: What, then, and if such a youth does not become a religious, can he not be saved? Are, then, all who remain in the world cast away? I answer: Those whom God does not call into religion may be saved in the world by fulfilling the duties of their state; but those who are called from the world, and do not obey God, may, indeed, possibly be saved; but they will be saved with difficulty, because they will be deprived of those helps which God had destined for them in religion, and for want of which they will not accomplish their salvation. The theologian Habert writes, that he who disobeys his vocation remains in the Church like a member out of joint, and cannot discharge his duty without the greatest pain; and so will hardly effect his salvation. Whence he draws this conclusion: “Although, absolutely speaking, he can be saved, yet he will enter on the way, and employ the means of salvation with difficulty.”[17516]

The choice of a state of life is compared by Father Lewis of Grenada to the mainspring in a watch: if the mainspring be broken, the whole watch is out of order; and the same holds good with regard to our salvation—if the state of life be out of order, the whole life is out of order too. Alas, how many poor youths have lost their vocation through their parents, and have afterwards come to a bad end, and have themselves proved the ruin of their family! There was a certain youth who lost his religious vocation at the instigation of his father; but in course of time, conceiving a great dislike of this same father, he killed him with his own hand, and was executed for the crime. Another young man, whilst pursuing his studies in the seminary, was also called by God to leave the world; heedless of his vocation, he first left off the devout life he was leading, prayer, Holy Communion, etc.; then he gave himself up to vice; and eventually, as he was one night leaving a house of ill-fame, where he had been, he was murdered by his rival. Several priests ran to the spot, but they found him already dead. And, oh, what a sad catalogue of like examples could I here add!

But to return to our subject. St. Thomas advises those who are called to a more perfect life not to take their parents’ advice, because they would be their enemies in such a case.[17517] And if children are not bound to take the advice of their parents on their vocation, they are under less obligation of asking or waiting for their permission, particularly when they have reason to fear that they would unjustly refuse their consent, or prevent them from fulfilling their designs. St. Thomas of Aquinas, St. Peter of Alcantara, St. Francis Xavier, St. Louis Bertrand, and many others, embraced a religious state without even acquainting their parents.

SANCTITY REQUIRED TO ENTER HOLY ORDERS

Again, it must be observed that as we are very much exposed to be lost when to please our relatives we do not follow the divine vocation, so we also endanger our salvation when not to displease them we embrace the ecclesiastical state without being called to it by God. Now, a true vocation to this sublime dignity is distinguished by three signs, namely—the requisite knowledge, the intention of applying one's self only to God's service, and positive goodness of life. We shall here speak only of this last condition.

The Council of Trent has prescribed to bishops to raise to Holy Orders only those whose irreproachable conduct has been proved.[17518] This is a rule that Canon Law had already established.[17519] Although this is directly understood of the external proof that the bishop should have in regard to the irreproachable conduct of the aspirants to the priesthood, yet one cannot doubt that the Council requires not only external irreproachableness, but even with greater reason, interior irreproachableness, without which the former would be illusory. The Council also adds that those only are to be admitted to Holy Orders who show themselves worthy by a wise maturity.[17520] We, moreover, know that the Council prescribes for this end the keeping of the interstices, that is, of an interval of time between the different degrees of Holy Orders.[17521]

St. Thomas gives a reason for such a regulation: it is this, that in receiving Holy Orders one is destined to the most sublime ministry,—that of serving Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar. Hence the angelic Doctor adds that the sanctity of ecclesiastics ought to surpass that of the religious.[17522] He elsewhere explains that sanctity is required not only in those who are ordained, but also in the subject who presents himself to be admitted to Holy Orders, and he shows the difference that exists in this respect between the religious and the ecclesiastical state. For in religion one purifies one's self of one's vices, whilst to receive Holy Orders it is necessary that one has already led a pure and holy life.[17523] The holy Doctor also says in another place that the candidates for Holy Orders ought to be raised above the simple faithful by their virtue as well as by the dignity of their functions.[17524] And this merit he requires before ordination, for he calls it necessary not only in order to exercise well the ecclesiastical functions, but also to be worthily admitted among the number of the ministers of Jesus Christ.[17525] He finally concludes with these words: "In the reception of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the candidates receive a more abundant outpouring of grace in order thus to be in a position to advance to a higher perfection."[17526] By these last words, "to advance to a higher perfection," the saint declares that the grace of the sacrament, far from being useless, will dispose the subject by an increase of strength to obtain still greater merits; but he expresses, at the same time, how necessary it is for the candidate to prepare himself in a state of grace that is sufficient in order that he may be judged worthy of entering the sanctuary.

In my *Moral Theology*[17527] I have given on this point a long dissertation to establish that those cannot be excused from mortal sin who without having been sufficiently tried by a holy life receive a Holy Order; since they raise themselves to this sublime state without a divine vocation; for one cannot regard those as having been called by God who have not yet succeeded in overcoming a bad habit, especially the habit of offending against chastity. And whenever among those one might be found who is disposed by repentance to receive the Sacrament of Penance, he would nevertheless not be in a condition to receive Holy Orders, for in his case there must be more holiness of life manifested during a long trial. Otherwise the candidate would not be exempt from mortal sin on account of the grave presumption that he wished to intrude into the holy ministry without a vocation. Hence St. Anselm says: “Those who thus thrust themselves into Holy Orders and have in view only their own interests are robbers who arrogate to themselves the grace of God; instead of benediction they would receive God’s malediction.”[17528] As Bishop Abelly remarks, they would expose themselves to the great danger of being lost forever: “Whoever deliberately and without troubling himself whether or not he had a vocation would thrust himself into the priesthood, would without doubt plainly expose himself to eternal perdition.”[17529] Soto holds the same opinion when he asserts, in speaking of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, that positive sanctity in the candidate is of divine precept: “Assuredly,” he says, “this sanctity is not essential to the sacrament, though it is altogether necessary by a divine precept. . . . Now, the sanctity that should characterize the candidates to Holy Orders does not consist in the general disposition required for the reception of the other sacraments, and sufficient in order that the sacrament may not be impeded. For, in the Sacrament of Holy Orders, one receives not only grace, but one is raised to a much more sublime state. Hence in the candidates there must be great purity of life and perfect virtue.”[17530] Thomas Sanchez, Holzmann, the school of Salamanca, are also of the same opinion. Thus, what I have advanced is not only the opinion of one theologian, but it is the common teaching based upon what is taught by St. Thomas.

If any one receive Holy Orders without having led the requisite good life, not only would he himself commit a mortal sin, but also the bishop who confers them upon him without having been morally certain, by sufficient proofs, of the good conduct of the candidate. The confessor also would be guilty of mortal sin, because he gives absolution to one who, addicted to a bad habit, wishes to be ordained without having given evidence during a considerable time of a positively good life. Finally, parents also sin grievously because, though knowing the wicked conduct of their son, they yet try to induce him to take Holy Orders in order that afterwards he may become the support of the family. Jesus Christ instituted the ecclesiastical state, not to aid the houses of seculars, but to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Some imagine the ecclesiastical state to be an honorable and a remunerative employment or trade; but they deceive themselves. Hence, when parents ask the bishop to ordain one of their children who is ignorant, and whose conduct has been bad, alleging that their family is poor, and that they know not how otherwise to extricate themselves from their embarrassment, the bishop must say to them: This I cannot do; the ecclesiastical state is not established to give assistance to poor families, but to promote the good of the church. They should be sent away without listening to them any longer; for such persons ordinarily bring ruin not only upon their own souls, but upon their family and their country.

As for the priests who live with their parents, if they are solicited to occupy themselves less with the functions of their ministry than the interests and advancement of their families, they should answer what Jesus Christ one day said, for our own edification, to his holy mother: *Did you not know that I must be about my father's business?*.[17531] I am a priest; my duty it is not to amass wealth and procure honors, nor to govern the house, but to live in retirement, to meditate, to study, and to work for the salvation of souls. When it is absolutely necessary to aid one's family, one ought to do so as much as possible without neglecting one's principal care, which is, to apply one's self to one's own sanctification, and that of others.

DETACHMENT FROM HUMAN RESPECT AND FROM SELF-WILL

Moreover, any one that would belong wholly to God must be free of all human respect. Oh, how many souls does this accursed respect keep aloof from God, and even separate them from him forever! For instance, if they hear mention made of some or other of their failings, oh, what do they not do to justify themselves, and to convince the world that it is a calumny! If they perform some good work, how industrious are they to circulate it everywhere! They would have it known to the whole world, in order to be universally applauded. The saints behave in a very different way: they would rather publish their defects to the whole world, in order to pass in the eyes of all for the miserable creatures which they really are in their own eyes; and, on the contrary, in practising any act of virtue, they prefer to have God alone know of it; for their only care is to be acceptable to him. It is on this account that so many of them were enchanted with solitude, mindful, as they were, of the words of Jesus Christ: *But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth.*[17532] And again: *But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber; and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret.*[17533]

But of all things, self-detachment is most needful; that is, detachment from self-will. Only once succeed in subduing yourself, and you will easily triumph in every other combat. *Vince teipsum,* "Conquer thyself," was the maxim which St. Francis Xavier inculcated on all. And Jesus Christ said: *If any one would come after Me, let him deny himself.*[17534] Behold in small compass all that we need practise to become saints; to deny ourselves, and not to follow our own will: *Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own will.*[17535] And this is the greatest grace, said St. Francis of Assisi, that we can receive from God: the power, namely, to conquer ourselves by denying self-will. St. Bernard writes, that if all men would resist self-will, none would ever be damned: "Let self-will cease, and there will be no hell."[17536] The same saint writes, that it is the baneful effect of self-will to contaminate even our good works: "Self-will is a great evil, since it renders thy good works no longer good."[17537] As, for instance, were a penitent obstinately bent on mortifying himself, or on fasting, or on taking the discipline against the will of his director; we see that this act of penance, done at the instigation of self-will, becomes very defective.

Unhappy the man that lives the slave of self-will! for he shall have a yearning for many things, and shall not possess them; while, on the other hand, he will be forced to undergo many things distasteful and bitter to his inclinations: *From whence are wars and contentions among you? Are they not hence? From your concupiscences, which war in your members? You covet, and have not.*[17538] The first war springs from the appetite for sensual delights. Let us take away the occasion; let us mortify the eyes; let us recommend ourselves to God, and the war will be over. The second war arises from the covetousness of riches: let us cultivate a love of poverty, and this war will cease. The third war has its source in ambitiously seeking after honors: let us love humility and the hidden life, and this war too will be no more. The fourth war, and the most ruinous of all, comes from self-will: let us practise resignation in all things which happen by the will of God, and the war will cease. St. Bernard tells us that whenever we see a person troubled, the origin of his trouble is nothing else but his inability to gratify self-will. "Whence comes disquiet," says the saint, "except that we follow self-will?"[17539] Our Blessed Lord once complained of this to St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, in these words: "Certain souls desire my Spirit, but after their own fancy; and so they become incapable of receiving it."

We must therefore love God in the way that pleases God, and not that pleases us. God will have the soul divested of all, in order to be united to himself, and to be replenished with his divine love. St. Teresa[17540] writes as follows: "The prayer of union appears to me to be nothing more than to die utterly, as it were, to all things in this world, for the enjoyment of God alone. One thing is certain, that the more completely we empty ourselves of creatures, by detaching ourselves from them for the love of God, the more abundantly will he fill us with himself, and the more closely shall we be united with him." Many spiritual persons would attain to union with God; but then they do not desire the contrarieties which God sends them: they fret at having to suffer from ill-health, from poverty, from affronts; but, for want of resignation, they will never come to a perfect union with God. Let us hear what St. Catharine of Genoa said: "To arrive at union with God, the contrarieties which God sends us are absolutely necessary; his purpose is, to consume in us, by means of them, all irregular movements, both within and without. And hence all contempt, ailments, poverty, temptations, and other trials, are all indispensable, to give us the opportunity of fighting; that so, by the way of victory, we may eventually extinguish all inordinate movements, so as to be no more sensible of them; furthermore, until we begin to find contradictions sweet for God's sake, instead of bitter, we shall never arrive at divine union."

I here subjoin the practice of it, taught by St. John of the Cross. The saint says, that in order to perfect union, "a thorough mortification of the senses and of the appetites is necessary. On the part of the senses, every single relish that presents itself to them, if it be not purely for the glory of God, should forthwith be rejected for the love of Jesus Christ; for example, should you have a desire to see or hear something in no wise conducive to the greater glory of God, then refrain from it. As to the appetites also, endeavor to force ourselves always to choose the worst, the most disagreeable, or the poorest, without fostering any other wish than to suffer and to be despised."[17541]

In a word, he that truly loves Jesus Christ loses all affection for things of earth, and seeks to strip himself of all, in order to keep himself united with Jesus Christ alone. Jesus is the object of all his desires, Jesus the subject of all his thoughts; for Jesus he continually sighs; in every place, at every time, on every occasion, his sole aim is to give pleasure to Jesus. But to reach this point, we must study unceasingly to rid the heart of every affection which is not for God. And, I ask, what is meant by giving the soul entirely to God? It means, first, to shun whatever may be displeasing to God, and to do what is most pleasing to him; secondly, it means to accept unreservedly all that comes from his hands, how hard or disagreeable soever it may be; it means, thirdly, to give the preference in all things to the will of God over our own: this is what is meant by belonging wholly to God.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Ah, my God and my all! I cannot help feeling that, in spite of all my ingratitude and remissness in Thy service, Thou still invitest me to love Thee. Behold me, then; I will resist Thee no longer. I will leave all to be wholly Thine. I will no more live for myself: Thy claims on my love are too strong. My soul is enamoured of Thee; my Jesus, it sighs after Thee. And how can I possibly love anything else, after seeing Thee die of sufferings on a cross in order to save me! how could I behold Thee dead, and exhausted with torments, and not love Thee with my whole heart? Yes, I love Thee indeed with all my soul; and I have no other desire but to love Thee in this life and for all eternity. My love, my hope, my courage, and my consolation, give me strength to be faithful to Thee; grant me light, and make known to me from what I ought to detach myself; supply me too with a strong will to obey Thee in all things. O love of my soul! I offer myself, and deliver myself up entirely, to satisfy the desire which Thou hast to unite Thyself to me, that I may be wholly united with Thee, my God and my all. Oh, come then, my Jesus; come and take possession of my whole self, and occupy all my thoughts and all my affections. I renounce all my appetites, all my comforts, and all created things; Thou alone art sufficient for me. Grant me the grace to think only of Thee, to desire only Thee, to seek only Thee, my beloved and my only good!

O Mary, Mother of God, obtain for me holy perseverance!

Chapter VIII

CHARITY IS NOT PROVOKED TO ANGER

(CHARITAS NON IRRITATUR.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST IS NEVER ANGRY WITH HIS NEIGHBOR

THE virtue not to be angry at the contrarieties that happen to us is the daughter of meekness. We have already spoken at length of the acts which belong to meekness in preceding chapters; but since this is a virtue which requires to be constantly practised by every one living among his fellow-men, we will here make some remarks on the same subject more in particular, and more adapted for practice.

Humility and meekness were the favorite virtues of Jesus Christ; so that he bade his disciples learn of him to be meek and humble: *Learn of Me, for I am meek ana humble of heart.*[17542] Our Redeemer was called the Lamb,—*Behold the Lamb of God,*[17543]—as well in consideration of his having to be offered in sacrifice on the cross for our sins, as in consideration of the meekness exhibited by him during his entire life, but more especially at the time of his Passion. When in the house of Caiphas he received a blow from that servant, who at the same time upbraided him with presumption in those words: *Answerest thou the high-priest so?* Jesus only answered: *If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou me?*.[17544] He observed the same invariable meekness of conduct till death. While on the cross, and made the object of universal scorn and blasphemy, he only besought the Eternal Father to forgive them: *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*[17545]

Oh, how dear to Jesus Christ are those meek souls who, in suffering affronts, derisions, calumnies, persecutions, and even chastisement and blows, are not irritated against the person that thus injures or strikes them:

The prayer of the meek hath always pleased thee.[17546] God is always pleased with the prayers of the meek; that is to say, their prayers are always heard. Heaven is expressly promised to the meek: *Blessed are the meek, for they shalt possess the land.*[17547] Father Alvarez said that paradise is the country of those who are despised and persecuted and trodden under foot. Yes, for it is for them that the possession of the eternal kingdom is reserved, and not for the haughty, who are honored and esteemed by the world. David declares that the meek shall not only inherit eternal happiness, but shall likewise enjoy great peace in the present life: *The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight in abundance of peace.*[17548] It is so, because the saints harbor no malice against those who ill-treat them, but rather love them the more; and the Lord, in reward for their patience, gives them an increase of interior peace. St. Teresa said: "I seem to experience a renewed love towards those persons who speak ill of me."[17549] This gave occasion to the Sacred Congregation to say of the saint, that "even affronts themselves supplied her with the food of charity."[17550] Offences became a fresh reason for her to love the person who had offended her. No one can have such meekness as this, if he has not a great humility and a low opinion of himself, so as to consider himself worthy of every kind of contempt; and hence we see, on the contrary, that the proud are always irritable and vindictive, because they have a high conceit of themselves, and esteem themselves worthy of all honor.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.[17551] We must, indeed, die in the Lord to be blessed, and to enjoy that blessedness even in the present life: we mean, such happiness as can be had before entering heaven, which, though certainly much below that of heaven, yet far surpasses all the pleasures of sense in this world: *And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts;*[17552] so wrote the Apostle to his disciples. But to gain this peace, even in the midst of affronts and calumnies, we must be dead in the Lord: a dead person, how much soever he may be ill-treated and trampled on by others, resents it not; in like manner, he who is meek, like a dead body, which no longer sees or feels, should endure all the outrages committed against him. Whoever loves Jesus Christ from his heart easily attains to this; because, as he is conformed in all things to his will, he accepts with equal composure and peace of mind prosperous and adverse occurrences, consolations and afflictions, injuries and courtesies. Such was the conduct of the Apostle; and he says, therefore: *I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation.*[17553] Oh, happy the man who reaches this point of virtue! he enjoys a continual peace, which is a treasure precious beyond all other goods of this world. St. Francis de Sales said: "Of what value is the whole universe in comparison with peace of heart?"[17554] And, in truth, of what avail are all riches and all the honors of the world to a man that lives in disquiet, and whose heart is not at peace?"

In short, in order to remain constantly united with Jesus Christ, we must do all with tranquillity, and not be troubled at any contradiction that we may encounter. *The Lord is not in the earthquake.*[17555] The Lord does not abide in troubled hearts. Let us listen to the beautiful lessons given on this subject by that master of meekness St. Francis de Sales: "Never put yourself in a passion, nor open the door to anger on any pretext whatever; because, when once it has gained an entrance, it is no longer in our power to banish it, or moderate it, when we wish to do so. The remedies against it are: 1. To check it immediately, by diverting the mind to some other object, and not to speak a word. 2. To imitate the Apostles when they beheld the tempest at sea, and to have recourse to God, to whom it belongs to restore peace to the soul. 3. If you feel that, owing to your weakness, anger has already got footing in your breast, in that case do yourself violence to regain your composure, and then try to make acts of humility and of sweetness towards the person against whom you are irritated; but all this must be done with sweetness and without violence, for it is of the utmost importance not to irritate the wounds."[17556] The saint said that he himself was obliged to labor much during his life to overcome two passions which predominated in him, namely, anger and love: to subdue the passion of anger, he avowed it had cost him twenty-two years' hard struggle. As to the passion of love, he had succeeded in changing its object, by leaving creatures, and turning all his affections to God. And in this manner the saint acquired so great an interior peace, that it was visible even in his exterior; for he was invariably seen with a serene countenance and a smile on his features.

From whence are wars? . . . Are they not from your concupiscences?[17557] When we are made angry by some contradiction, we fancy we shall find relief and quiet by giving vent to our anger in actions, or at least in words:

but we are mistaken, it is not so; for after having done so, we shall find that we are much more disturbed than before. Whoever desires to persevere in uninterrupted peace, must beware of ever yielding to ill-humor. And whenever any one feels himself attacked by this ill-humor, he must do his utmost to banish it immediately; and he must not go to rest with it in his heart, but must divert himself from it by the perusal of some book, by singing some devout canticle, or by conversing on some pleasant subject with a friend. The Holy Spirit says: *Anger resteth in the bosom of a fool.*[17558] Anger remains a long time in the heart of fools, who have little love for Jesus Christ; but if by stealth it should ever enter into the hearts of the true lovers of Jesus Christ, it is quickly dislodged, and does not remain. A soul that cordially loves the Redeemer never feels in a bad humor, because, as she desires only what God desires, she has all she wishes for, and consequently is ever tranquil and well-balanced. The divine will tranquillizes her in every misfortune that occurs; and thus she is able at all times to observe meekness towards all. But we cannot acquire this meekness without a great love for Jesus Christ. In fact, we know by experience that we are not meeker and gentler towards others, except when we feel an increased tenderness towards Jesus Christ.

But since we cannot constantly experience this tenderness, we must prepare ourselves, in our mental prayer, to bear the crosses that may befall us. This was the practice of the saints; and so they were ever ready to receive with patience and meekness injuries, blows, and chastisements. When we meet with an insult from our neighbor, unless we have frequently trained ourselves beforehand, we shall find it extremely difficult to know what course to take, in order not to yield to the force of anger; in the very moment, our passion will make it appear but reasonable for us to retort boldly the audacity of the person who affronts us, but St. John Chrysostom says that it is not the right way to quench the fire which is raging in the mind of our neighbor by the fire of an indignant reply; to do so will only enkindle it the more: “One fire is not extinguished by another.”[17559]

Some one may say: But why should I use courtesy and gentleness towards an impertinent fellow, that insults me without cause? But St. Francis de Sales replies: “We must practise meekness, not only with reason, but against reason.”[17560]

We must therefore endeavor, on such occasions, to make a kind answer; and in this way we shall allay the fire: *A mild answer breaketh wrath.*[17561] But when the mind is troubled, the best expedient will be to keep silence. St. Bernard writes: “The eye troubled by anger sees not straight.”[17562] When the eye is dimmed with passion, it no longer distinguishes between what is and what is not unjust; anger is like a veil drawn over the eyes, so that we can no longer discern betwixt right and wrong; wherefore we must, like St. Francis de Sales, make a compact with our tongue: “I have made a covenant with my tongue,” he wrote, “never to speak while my heart is disturbed.”

But there are moments when it seems absolutely necessary to check insolence with severe words. David said: *Be angry, and sin not.*[17563] Occasions do exist, therefore, when we may be lawfully angry, provided it be without sin. But here is just the matter: speculatively speaking, it seems expedient at times to speak and reply to some people in terms of severity, in order to make an impression on them; but in practice it is very difficult to do this without some fault on our part; so that the sure way is always to admonish, or to reply, with gentleness, and to scrupulously guard against all resentment. St. Francis de Sales said: “I have never been angry without afterwards repenting of it.” And when, for some reason or other, we still feel warm, the safest way, as I said before, is to keep silence, and reserve the remonstrance till a more convenient moment, when the heart is cooled down.

We ought particularly to observe this meekness when we are corrected by our Superiors or friends. St. Francis de Sales again writes: “To receive a reprimand willingly, shows that we love the virtue opposed to the fault for which we are corrected; and consequently this is a great sign of progress in perfection.”[17564]

We must besides practise meekness towards ourselves. It is a delusion of the devil, to make us consider it a virtue to be angry with ourselves for committing some fault; far from it, it is a trick of the enemy to keep us in a state of trouble, that so we may be unfit for the performance of any good. St. Francis de Sales said: “Hold for certain that all such thoughts as create disquiet are not from God, who is the Prince of peace, but proceed either from the devil, or from self-love, or from the good opinion we have of ourselves. These are the three scources from which all our troubles spring. When, therefore, any thoughts arise which throw us into trouble, we must immediately reject and despise them."[17565]

Meekness is also more especially necessary when we have to correct others. Corrections made with a bitter zeal often do more harm than good, especially when he who must be corrected is himself excited: in such cases the correction should be put off, and we must wait until he is cool. And we ourselves ought no less to refrain from correcting while we are under the influence of ill-temper; for then our admonition will always be accompanied with harshness; and the person in fault, when he sees that he is corrected in such a way, will take no heed of the admonition, considering it the mere effect of passion. This holds good as far as concerns the good of our neighbor; as concerns our personal advantage, let us show how dearly we love Jesus Christ, by patiently and gladly supporting every sort of ill-treatment, injury, and contempt.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my despised Jesus, O love, O joy of my soul, Thou hast by Thy example made contempt most acceptable to Thy lovers! I promise Thee, from this day forward, to submit to every affront for the love of Thee, who for love of me didst submit on earth to every species of revilement from men. Do Thou grant me strength to keep this promise. Enable me to know and to perform whatever Thou desirest at my hands. My God and my all, I crave no other good than Thyself, who art infinite good! O Thou who takest my interests so much too heart, grant that my only care may be to gratify Thee! Grant that all my thoughts may be occupied in avoiding whatever may offend Thee, and in promoting whatever may contribute to Thy good pleasure. Ward off every occasion that may draw me from Thy love. I strip myself of my liberty, and consecrate it entirely to Thy good will. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! I love Thee, O my delight! O Word incarnate, I love Thee more than myself! Take pity on me, and heal whatever wounds remain in my poor soul from its past disloyalties towards Thee. I resign myself wholly into Thy arms, O my Jesus; I will be wholly Thine; I will suffer everything for love of Thee; and I ask of Thee nothing but Thyself!

O Holy Virgin and my Mother Mary, I love thee, and I rely on thee; succor me by thy powerful intercession!

Chapter IX

CHARITY THINKETH NO EVIL, REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICETH WITH THE TRUTH

(CHARITAS NON COGITAT MALUM, NON GAUDET SUPER INIQUITATE, CONGAUDET AUTEM VERITATI.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST ONLY WISHES WHAT JESUS CHRIST WISHES

CHARITY and truth always go together; so that charity, conscious that God is the only and the true good, detests iniquity, which is directly opposed to the divine will, and takes no satisfaction but in what pleases Almighty God. Hence the soul that loves God is heedless of what people say of it, and only aims at pleasing God. The Blessed Henry Suso said: “That man stands well with God who strives to conform himself to the truth, and for the rest is utterly indifferent to the opinion or treatment of mankind.”

As we have already more than once asserted, the sanctity and perfection of a soul consists in renouncement of self and in submission to the will of God; but now it will be well to enter more into detail.

I

THE NECESSITY OF CONFORMING TO THE WILL OF GOD

If, then, we would become saints, our whole endeavor must be, never to follow our own will, but always the will of God; the substance of all the precepts and divine counsels is comprised in doing and suffering what God wills, and in the manner he wills it. Let us, therefore, entreat the Lord to bestow on us a holy liberty of spirit; liberty of spirit leads us to embrace whatever is pleasing to Jesus Christ, regardless of all feelings of repugnance arising from self-love and human respect. The love of Jesus Christ makes those who love him utterly indifferent; so that all things are alike to them, whether bitter or sweet: they do not wish for anything that pleases themselves, but only for that which is pleasing to God; they employ themselves in little and great things, be they pleasant or unpleasant, with the same peace of mind; it is enough for them if they please God.

St. Augustine says: “Love, and do what you like.”[17566] Whoever really loves God seeks only to please him; and in this is all his pleasure. St. Teresa says: “He that seeks but the gratification of one he loves, is gratified with all that pleases that person. Love in its perfection produces this result; it makes a person heedless of all private interests and self-satisfaction, and concentrates all his thoughts on endeavoring to please the person beloved, and to do all he can to honor him himself, and to make him honored by others. O Lord, all our ills come from not keeping our eyes fixed on Thee! Were we solely intent on advancing, we should soon come to the end of our journey; but we fall and stumble a thousand times, and we even lose our way, for want of looking attentively to the right path.” Here we may see what should be the single aim of all our thoughts, actions, desires, and of all our prayers, namely, the pleasure of God; our way to perfection must be this, to walk according to the will of God.

God wishes us to love him with our whole heart: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*[17567] That person loves Jesus Christ with his whole heart who says to him with the Apostle: *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*[17568] Lord, signify to me what Thou wilt have me do; for I desire to perform all. And let us be persuaded that whilst we desire what God desires, we desire what is best for ourselves; for assuredly God only wishes what is best for us. St. Vincent of Paul said: “Conformity with the will of God is the treasure of a Christian and the remedy for all evils; since it comprises abnegation of self and union with God and all virtues.” In this, then, is all perfection: *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?* Jesus Christ promises us, *not a hair of your head shall perish.*[17569] Which is as much as to say, that the Lord rewards us for every good thought we have of pleasing him, and for every tribulation embraced with patience in conformity to his holy will. St. Teresa said, “The Lord never sends a trial, without remunerating it with some favor as often as we accept it with resignation.”[17570]

But our conformity to the divine will must be entire, without any reserve, and constant without withdrawal. In this consists the height of perfection; and to this (I repeat) all our works, all our desires, and all our prayers ought to tend. Some souls given to prayer, on reading of the ecstasies and raptures of St. Teresa and St. Philip Neri, come to wish to enjoy themselves these supernatural unions. Such wishes must be banished as contrary to humility; if we really desire to be saints, we must aspire after true union with God, which is to unite our will entirely to the will of God. St. Teresa[17571] said, "Those persons are deceived who fancy that union with God consists in ecstasies, raptures, and sensible enjoyments of him. It consists in nothing else than in submitting our will to the will of God; and this submission is perfect when our will is detached from everything, and so completely united with that of God, that all its movements depend solely on the will of God. This is the real and essential union which I have always sought after, and continually beg of the Lord." And then she adds: "Oh, how many of us say this, and seem to ourselves to desire nothing besides this; but, miserable creatures that we are, how few of us attain to it!" Such, indeed, is the undeniable truth; many of us say: O Lord! I give Thee my will, I desire nothing but what Thou desirest; but, in the event of some trying occurrence, we are at a loss how to yield calmly to the divine will. And this is the source of our continually complaining that we are unfortunate in the world, and that we are the butt of every misfortune; and so of our dragging on an unhappy life.

If we were conformed to the divine will in every trouble, we should undoubtedly become saints, and be the happiest of mankind. This, then, should form the chief object of our attention, to keep our will in unbroken union with the will of God in every occurrence of life, be it pleasant or unpleasant. It is the admonition of the Holy Spirit. *Winnow not with every wind*.[17572] Some people resemble the weathercocks, which turn about every wind that blows; if the wind is fair and favorable to their desires, they are all gladness and condescension; but if there blow a contrary wind, and things fall out against their desires, they are all sadness and impatience; this is why they do not become saints, and why their life is unhappy, because, in the present life, adversity will always befall us in a greater measure than prosperity. St. Dorotheus said, that to receive from the hands of God whatever happens is a great means to keep ourselves in continual peace and tranquillity of soul. And the saint relates, that on this account the ancient Fathers of the desert were never seen angry or melancholy, because they accepted whatever happened to them joyfully, as coming from the hands of God. Oh, happy the man who lives wholly united and abandoned to the divine will! he is neither puffed up by success nor depressed by reverses; for he well knows that all alike comes from the self-same hand of God; the will of God is the single rule of his own will; thus he only does what God wishes him to do, and he only desires what God does. He is not anxious to do many things, but to accomplish with perfection what he knows to be acceptable to God. Accordingly, he prefers the minutest obligations of his state of life to the most glorious and important actions, well aware that in the latter self-love may find a great share, whereas in the former there is certainly the will of God.

Thus we, too, shall be happy when we receive from God all the dispositions of his Providence in the spirit of perfect conformity to his divine will, utterly regardless whether or not they coincide with our private inclinations. The saintly Mother de Chantal said: “When shall we come to relish the divine will in every event that happens, without paying attention to anything else but the good pleasure of God, from whom it is certain that prosperity and adversity proceed alike from motives of love and for our best interests? When shall we resign ourselves unreservedly into the arms of our most loving heavenly Father, intrusting him with the care of our persons and our affairs, and reserving nothing for ourselves but the sole desire of pleasing God?” The friends of St. Vincent of Paul said of him while he was still on earth: “Vincent is always Vincent.” By which they meant to say, that the saint was ever to be seen with the same smiling face, whether in prosperity or in adversity; and was always himself, because, as he lived in the total abandonment of himself to God, he feared nothing and desired nothing but what was pleasing to God. St. Teresa said: “By this holy abandonment that admirable liberty of spirit is generated, which those who are perfect possess, wherein they find all the happiness in this life which they can possibly desire; inasmuch as, fearful of nothing, and desirous or wanting for nothing in the things of this world, they possess all.”[17573]

Many, on the other hand, fabricate a sort of sanctity according to their own inclinations; some, inclined to melancholy, make sanctity consist in living in seclusion; others, of a busy temperament, in preaching and in making up quarrels; some, of an austere nature, in penitential inflictions and macerations; others, who are naturally generous, in distributing alms; some in saying many vocal prayers; others in visiting sanctuaries; and all their sanctity consists in such or the like practices. External acts are the fruit of the love of Jesus Christ; but true love itself consists in a complete conformity to the will of God; and as a consequence of this, in denying ourselves and in preferring what is most pleasing to God, and solely because he deserves it.

Others wish to serve God; but it must be in that employment, in that place, with those companions, and in such circumstances; or else they either neglect their duty, or at least do it with a bad grace: such as these are not free in spirit, but are slaves of self-love, and on that account reap little merit even from what they perform; moreover, they live in perpetual disquiet, since their attachment to self-will makes the yoke of Jesus Christ become heavy to them. The true lovers of Jesus Christ love only that which is pleasing to Jesus Christ, and for the sole reason that it does please him; and they love it when it pleases Jesus Christ, where it pleases him, and how it pleases him; whether he chooses to employ them in honorable functions, or in mean and lowly occupations; in a life of notoriety in the world, or in one hidden and despised. This is the real drift of what is meant by the pure love of Jesus Christ; hence we must labor to overcome the cravings of our self-love, which seeks to be employed in those works only that are glorious, or that are according to our own inclinations. And what will it profit us to be the most honored, the most wealthy, the greatest in this world, without the will of God? The Blessed Henry Suso said, “I would rather be the vilest insect on earth by the will of God, than a seraph in heaven by my own will.”

Jesus Christ said: *Many shall say: Lord, we have cast out devils and done great wonders in Thy name: Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and cast out devils in Thy name, and done many miracles in Thy name?*[17574] But the Lord will answer them: *I never knew you; depart from Me, you that work iniquity.*[17575] Depart from me; I never acknowledged you for my disciples, because you preferred to follow your own inclinations rather than my will. And this is especially applicable to those priests who labor much for the salvation or perfection of others, while they themselves continue to live on in the mire of their imperfections. Perfection consists: *First,* in a true contempt of one's self. *Secondly,* in a thorough mortification of our own appetites. *Thirdly,* in a perfect conformity to the will of God: whosoever is wanting in one of these virtues is out of the way of perfection. On this account a great servant of God said, it was better for us in our actions to have the will of God rather than his glory as their sole end; for in doing the will of God, we at the same time promote his glory; whereas in proposing to ourselves the glory of God, we frequently deceive ourselves, and follow our own will under pretext of glorifying God. St. Francis de Sales said: "There are many who say to the Lord: I give myself wholly to Thee without reserve; but few indeed, in point of fact, practically embrace this abandonment. It consists in a certain indifference in accepting all kinds of events, just as they fall out according to the order of divine Providence, afflictions as well as consolations, slights and injuries as well as honor and glory."[17576]

It is therefore in suffering, and in embracing with cheerfulness whatever cuts against the grain of our own inclinations, that we can discover who is a true lover of Jesus Christ. Thomas à Kempis says "that he is not deserving of the name of lover who is not ready to endure all things for his beloved, and to follow in all things the will of his beloved."[17577] On the contrary, Father Balthazar Alvarez said, that whoever quietly resigns himself to the divine will in troubles "travels to God post-haste." And the saintly Mother Teresa said: "What greater acquisition can we make, than to have some proof that we are pleasing God?" And to this I add, that we cannot have a more certain proof of this, than by peacefully embracing the crosses which God sends us. We please God by thanking him for his benefits on earth; but, says Father John of Avila, one "blessed be God" uttered in adversity is worth six thousand acts of thanksgiving in prosperity.

And here we must observe, that we must receive with resignation not merely the crosses which come directly from God; for instance, ill-health, scanty talents, accidental reverses of fortune; but such, moreover, as come indirectly from God, and directly from our fellow-men; for instance, persecutions, thefts, injuries; for all, in reality, come from God. David was one day insulted by one of his vassals called Semei, who not only upbraided him with words of contumely, but even threw stones at him. One of the courtiers would have forthwith avenged the insult by cutting off the head of the offender; but David replied: *Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bid him curse David;*[17578] or, in other words, God makes use of him to chastise me for my sins, and therefore he allowed him to pursue me with injuries.

Wherefore St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, that all our prayers should have for their end to obtain from God the grace to follow his holy will in all things. Certain souls, greedy of spiritual dainties in prayer, go in search only of these banquets of sweet and tender feelings; but courageous souls that seek sincerely to belong wholly to God, ask him only for light to understand his will, and for strength to put it in execution. In order to attain to purity of love, it is necessary to submit our will in all things to the will of God: “Never consider yourselves,” said St. Francis de Sales, “to have arrived at the purity which you ought to have, as long as your will is not cheerfully obedient, even in things the most repulsive, to the will of God.” “Because,” as St. Teresa remarks, “the giving up of our will to God draws him to unite himself to our lowliness.”[17579] But this can never be obtained, except by means of mental prayer and of continual petitions addressed to the divine majesty, nor without a cordial desire to belong entirely to Jesus Christ without reserve.

O most amiable Heart of my divine Saviour, Heart enamoured of mankind, since Thou lovest us with such a depth of tenderness; O Heart, in fine, worthy to rule over and possess all our hearts, would that I could make all men comprehend the love Thou bearest them, and the tender caresses Thou dost lavish on those who love Thee without reserve! O Jesus my love, be pleased to accept the offering and the sacrifice which I this day make to Thee of my entire will! Acquaint me with what Thou wouldst have me to do; for I am determined to do all by the help of Thy grace.

II

OBEDIENCE

Now what is the surest way to know and ascertain what God requires of us? There is no surer way than to practise obedience to our Superiors and directors. St. Vincent of Paul said: “The will of God is never better complied with than when we obey our Superiors.” The Holy Ghost says: *Much better is obedience than the victims of fools.*[17580] God is more pleased with the sacrifice which we make to him of our own will, by submitting it to obedience, than with all other sacrifices which we can offer him; because in other things, as in alms-deeds, fastings, mortifications, and the like, we give of what is ours to God, but in giving him our will we present him ourselves: when we give him our goods, our mortifications, we give him part; but when we give him our will, we give him everything. So that when we say to God, O Lord, make me know by means of obedience what Thou requirest of me, for I wish to comply with all, we have nothing more to offer him.

Whoever, therefore, gives himself up to obedience, must needs detach himself totally from his own opinion. “What though each one,” says St. Francis de Sales, “has his own opinions, virtue is not thereby violated; but virtue is violated by the attachment which we have to our own opinions.”[17581] But alas! this attachment is the hardest thing to part with; and hence there are so few persons wholly given to God, because few render a thorough submission to obedience. There are some persons so fondly attached to their own opinion, that, on receiving an obedience, although the thing enjoined suit their inclination, yet, from the very fact that it is commanded, they lose all fancy for it, all wish to discharge it; for they find no relish in anything but in following the dictates of their individual will. How different is the conduct of saints! their only happiness flows from the execution of what obedience imposes on them. The saintly Mother Jane Frances de Chantal once told her daughters that they might spend the recreation-day in any manner they chose. When the evening came, they all went to her, to beg most earnestly that she would never again grant them such a permission; for they had never spent such a wearisome day as that on which they had been set free from obedience.

It is a delusion to think that any one can be possibly better employed than in the discharge of what obedience has imposed. St. Francis de Sales says: “To desert an occupation given by obedience in order to unite ourselves to

God by prayer, by reading, or by recollection, would be to withdraw from God to unite ourselves to our own self-love."[17582] St. Teresa adds, moreover, that whoever performs any work, even though it be spiritual, yet against obedience, assuredly works by the instigation of the devil, and not by divine inspiration, as he perhaps flatters himself; "because," says the saint, "the inspirations of God always come in company with obedience." To the same effect she says elsewhere; "God requires nothing more of a soul that is determined to love him than obedience."[17583] "A work done out of obedience," says Father Rodriguez, "outweighs every other that we can imagine." To lift up a straw from the ground out of obedience is of greater merit than a protracted prayer, or a discipline to blood, through our own will. This caused St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi to say, that she would rather be engaged in some exercise from obedience than in prayer; "because," said she, "in obedience I am certain of the will of God, whereas I am by no means so certain of it in any other exercise."[17584] According to all spiritual masters, it is better to leave off any devout exercise through obedience, than to continue it without obedience. The Most Blessed Virgin Mary revealed once to St. Bridget,[17585] that he who relinquishes some mortification through obedience reaps a twofold profit; since he has already obtained the merit of the mortification by the good-will to do it, and he also gains the merit of obedience by foregoing it. One day the famous Father Francis Arias went to see the Venerable Father John of Avila, his intimate friend, and he found him pensive and sad; he asked him the reason, and received this answer: "O happy you, who live under obedience, and are sure of doing the will of God. As for me, who shall warrant me whether I do a thing more pleasing to God in going from village to village, catechizing the poor peasants, or in remaining stationary in the confessional, to hear everyone that presents himself? Whereas he that is living under obedience is always sure that whatever he performs by obedience is according to the will of God, or rather that it is what is most acceptable to God." Let this serve as a consolation for all those who live under obedience.

For obedience to be perfect, we must obey with the *will* and with the *judgment.* To obey with the *will* signifies to obey willingly, and not by constraint, after the fashion of slaves; to obey with the *judgment* means to conform our judgment to that of the Superior, without examining what is commanded. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi remarks on this: “Perfect obedience demands a soul without judgment.” To the like purpose, St. Philip Neri said that, in order to obey with perfection, it was not enough to execute the thing commanded, but it must be done without reasoning on it; taking it for certain that what is commanded us is for us the most perfect thing we can do, although the opposite might be better before God.[17586]

This holds good not merely for religious, but likewise for seculars living under obedience to their spiritual directors. Let them request their director to prescribe them rules for the guidance of their affairs, both spiritual and temporal; and so they will make sure of doing what is best. St. Philip Neri said: “Let those who are desirous of progressing in the way of God submit themselves to a prudent confessor, whom they should obey as in God’s place. By so doing, we are certain of not having to render an account to God of the actions we perform.”[17587]

He said, moreover, “that we must place faith in the confessor, because the Lord will not permit him to err; that nothing is so sure of cutting off all the snares of the devil as to do the will of others in the performance of good; and that there is nothing more dangerous than to wish to direct ourselves according to our private fancy.” In like manner, St. Francis de Sales says, in speaking of the direction of the spiritual Father as a means of walking securely in the path of perfection, “This is the maxim of all maxims.”[17588] “Seek as you will,” says the devout Avila, “you will never so surely find the will of God as in the way of this humble obedience, so much recommended and so practised by all the ancient servants of God.” The same thing is affirmed by St. Bernard, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Antoninus, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, John Gerson, and all theologians and masters of the spiritual life; and St. John of the Cross said, that to call this truth in question is almost to doubt of the faith. The words of the saint are, “not to be satisfied with what the confessor says, is arrogance, and a want of faith.”

Among the maxims of St. Francis de Sales are the two following, most consolatory for scrupulous souls: “First, a truly obedient soul was never yet lost; secondly, we ought to be satisfied on being told by our spiritual director that we are going on well, without seeking to be convinced of it ourselves.” It is the teaching of many Doctors, as of Gerson, St. Antoninus, Cajetanus, Navarrus, Sanchez, Bonacina, Cordovius, Castropalao, and the

Doctors of Salamanca, with others, that the scrupulous person is bound, under strict obligation, to act in opposition to scruples, when from such scruples there is reason to apprehend grievous harm happening to soul or body, such as the loss of health, or of intellect; wherefore scrupulous persons ought to have greater scruple at not obeying the confessor than at acting in opposition to their scruples.

To sum up, therefore, all that has been said in this chapter, our salvation and perfection consist: 1. In denying ourselves; 2. In following the will of God; 3. In praying him always to give us strength to do both one and the other.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

What have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.[17589] My beloved Redeemer, infinitely amiable, since Thou hast come down from heaven to give Thyself wholly to me, what else shall I seek for on earth or in heaven besides Thee, who art the sovereign good, the only good worthy to be loved? Be Thou, then, the sole Lord of my heart, do Thou possess it entirely: may my soul love Thee alone, obey Thee alone, and seek to please no other than Thee. Let others enjoy the riches of this world, I wish only for Thee: Thou art and shalt ever be my treasure in this life and in eternity Wherefore I give Thee, O my Jesus, my whole heart and all my will. It was at one time, alas! a rebel against Thee; but now I dedicate it wholly to Thee. *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*[17590] Tell me what Thou requirest of me, and lend me Thy assistance; for I wiil leave nothing undone. Dispose of me, and of all that concerns me, as Thou pleasest; I accept of all, and resign myself to all. O Love deserving of infinite love, Thou hast loved me so as even to die for me; I love Thee with my whole heart, I love Thee more than myself, and into Thy hands I abandon my soul. On this very day I bid farewell to every worldly affection, I take leave of everything created, and I give myself without reserve to Thee; Through the merits of Thy Passion receive me, and make me faithful unto death. My Jesus, my Jesus, from this day forward I will live only for Thee, I will love none but Thee, I will seek nothing else than to do Thy blessed will.

Aid me by Thy grace, and aid me, too, by thy protection, O Mary my hope.

Chapter X

CHARITY BEARETH ALL THINGS

(CHARITAS OMNIA SUFFERT.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST BEARS ALL THINGS FOR JESUS CHRIST, AND ESPECIALLY ILLNESSES, POVERTY, AND CONTEMPT

IN Chapter I. we spoke of the virtue of patience in general. In this we will speak of certain matters in particular, which demand the especial practice of patience.

Father Balthazar Alvarez[17591] said that a Christian need not imagine himself to have made any progress until he has succeeded in penetrating his heart with a lasting sense of the sorrows, poverty, and ignominies of Jesus Christ so as to support with loving patience every sort of sorrow, privation, and contempt, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

I

PATIENCE IN SICKNESS

In the first place, let us speak of bodily infirmities, which, when borne with patience, merit for us a beautiful crown.

St. Vincent de Paul said: “Did we but know how precious a treasure is contained in infirmities, we should accept of them with joy as the greatest possible blessings.” Hence the saint himself, though constantly afflicted with ailments, that often left him no rest day or night, bore them with so much peace and such serenity of countenance that no one could guess that anything ailed him at all. Oh, how edifying is it to see a sick person bear his illness with a peaceful countenance, as did St. Francis de Sales! When he was ill, he simply explained his complaint to the physician, obeyed him exactly by taking the prescribed medicines, however nauseous; and for the rest he remained at peace, never uttering a single complaint in all his sufferings. What a contrast to this is the conduct of those who do nothing but complain even for the most trifling indisposition, and who would like to have around them all their relatives and friends to sympathize with them! Far different was the instruction of St. Teresa to her nuns: “My sisters, learn to suffer something for the love of Jesus Christ, without letting all the world know of it.”[17592] One Good Friday Jesus Christ favored the Venerable Father Louis da Ponte with so much bodily suffering, that no part of him was exempt from its particular pain: he mentioned his severe sufferings to a friend; but he was afterwards so sorry at having done so, that he made a vow never again to reveal to anybody whatever he might afterwards suffer. I say “he was favored;” for, to the saints, the illnesses and pains which God sends them are real favors. One day St. Francis of Assisi lay on his bed in excruciating torments; a companion said to him: “Father, beg God to ease your pains, and not to lay so heavy a hand upon you.” On hearing this, the saint instantly leaped from his bed, and going on his knees, thanked God for his sufferings; then, turning to his companion, he said: “Listen, did I not know that you so spoke from simplicity, I would refuse ever to see you again.”[17593]

Some one that is sick will say, it is not so much the infirmity itself that afflicts me, as that it disables me from going to church to perform my devotions, to communicate, and to hear Holy Mass; I cannot go to choir to recite the divine Office with my brethren; I cannot celebrate Mass; I cannot pray; for my head is aching with pain, and is light almost to fainting. But tell me now, if you please, why do you wish to go to church or to choir? why would you communicate and say or hear Holy Mass? is it to please God? but it is not now the pleasure of God that you say the Office, that you communicate, or hear Mass; but that you remain patiently on this bed, and support the pains of this infirmity. But you are displeased with my speaking thus; then you are not seeking to do what is pleasing to God, but what is pleasing to yourself. The Venerable John of Avila wrote as follows to a priest who so complained to him: “My friend, busy not yourself with what you would do if you were well, but be content to remain ill as long as God thinks fit. If you seek the will of God, what matters it to you whether you be well or ill?”[17594]

You say you are unable even to pray, because your head is weak. Be it so: you cannot meditate; but why cannot you make acts of resignation to the will of God? If you would only make these acts, you could not make a better prayer, welcoming with love all the torments that assail you. So did St. Vincent of Paul: when attacked by a serious illness, he was wont to keep himself tranquilly in the presence of God, without forcing his mind to dwell on any particular subject; his sole exercise was to elicit some short acts from time to time, as of love, of confidence, of thanksgiving, and more frequently of resignation, especially in the crisis of his sufferings. St. Francis de Sales made this remark: “Considered in themselves, tribulations are terrifying; but considered in the will of God, they are lovely and delightful.”[17595] You cannot say prayers; and what more exquisite prayer than to cast a look from time to time on your crucified Lord, and to offer him your pains, uniting the little that you endure to the overwhelming torments that afflicted Jesus on the cross!

There was a certain pious lady lying bedridden with many disorders; and on the servant putting the crucifix into her hand, and telling her to pray to God to deliver her from her miseries, she made answer: “But how can you desire me to seek to descend from the cross, whilst I hold in my hand a God crucified? God forbid that I should do so. I will suffer for him who chose to suffer torments for me incomparably greater than mine.” This was, indeed, precisely what Jesus Christ said to St. Teresa when she was laboring under serious illness; he appeared to her all covered with wounds, and then said to her: “Behold, my daughter, the bitterness of my sufferings, and consider if yours equal mine.”[17596] Hence the saint was accustomed to say, in the midst of all her infirmities: “When I remember in how many ways my Saviour suffered, though he was innocence itself, I know not how it could enter my head to complain of my sufferings.” During a period of thirty-eight years, St. Lidwine was afflicted with numberless evils—fevers, gout in the feet and hands, and sores, all her lifetime; nevertheless, from never losing sight of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, she maintained an unbroken cheerfulness and joy. In like manner, St. Joseph of Leonessa, a Capuchin, when the surgeon was about to amputate his arm, and his brethren would have bound him, to prevent him from stirring through vehemence of pain, seized hold of the crucifix and exclaimed: “Wherefore bind me?—wherefore bind me?

behold who it is that binds me to support every suffering patiently for love of him;” and so he bore the operation without a murmur. St. Jonas the Martyr, after passing the entire night immersed in ice by order of the tyrant, declared next morning that he had never spent a happier night, because he had pictured to himself Jesus hanging on the cross; and thus, compared with the torments of Jesus, his own had seemed rather caresses than torments.

Oh, what abundance of merits may be accumulated by patiently enduring illnesses! Almighty God revealed to Father Balthazar Alvarez the great glory he had in store for a certain nun, who had borne a painful sickness with resignation; and told him that she had acquired greater merit in those eight months of her illness than some other religious in many years. It is by the patient endurance of ill-health that we weave a great part, and perhaps the greater part, of the crown that God destines for us in heaven. St. Lidwine had a revelation to this effect. After sustaining many and most cruel disorders, as we mentioned above, she prayed to die a martyr for the love of Jesus Christ; now as she was one day sighing after this martyrdom, she suddenly saw a beautiful crown, but still incomplete, and she understood that it was destined for herself; whereupon the saint, longing to behold it completed, entreated the Lord to increase her sufferings. Her prayer was heard, for some soldiers came shortly after, and ill-treated her, not only with injurious words, but with blows and outrages. An angel then appeared to her with the crown completed, and informed her that those last injuries had added to it the gems that were wanting; and shortly afterwards she expired.

Ah, yes! to the hearts that fervently love Jesus Christ, pains and ignominies are most delightful. And thus we see the holy martyrs going with gladness to encounter the sharp prongs and hooks of iron, the plates of glowing steel and axes. The martyr St. Procopius thus spoke to the tyrant who tortured him: “Torment me as you like; but know at the same time, that nothing is sweeter to the lover of Jesus Christ than to suffer for his sake.”[17597] St. Gordius, Martyr, replied in the same way to the tyrant who threatened him death: “Thou threatenest me with death; but I am only sorry that I cannot die more than once for my own beloved Jesus.”[17598] And I ask, did these saints speak thus because they were insensible to pain or weak in intellect? “No,” replies St. Bernard; “not insensibility, but love caused this.”[17599] They were not insensible, for they felt well enough the torments inflicted on them; but since they loved God, they esteemed it a great privilege to suffer for God, and to lose all, even life itself, for the love of God.

Above all, in time of sickness we should be ready to accept of death, and of that death which God pleases. We must die, and our life must finish in our last illness; nor do we know which will be our last illness. Wherefore in every illness we must be prepared to accept that death which God has appointed for us. A sick person says: “Yes; but I have committed many sins, and have done no penance. I should like to live, not for the sake of living, but to make some satisfaction to God before my death.” But tell me, my brother, how do you know that if you live longer you will do penance, and not rather do worse than before? At present you can well cherish the hope that God has pardoned you; what penance can be more satisfactory than to accept of death with resignation, if God so wills it? St. Aloysius Gonzaga, at the age of twenty-three, gladly embraced death with this reflection: “At present,” he said, “I am, as I hope, in the grace of God. Hereafter, I know not what may befall me; so that I now die contentedly, if God calls me to the next life.”[17600] It was the opinion of Father John of Avila that every one, provided he be in good dispositions, though only moderately good, should desire death, to escape the danger, which always surrounds us in this world, of possibly sinning and losing the grace of God.

Besides, owing to our natural frailty, we cannot live in this world without committing at least venial sins; this should be a motive for us to embrace death willingly, that we may never offend God any more. Further, if we truly love God, we should ardently long to go to see him, and love him with all our strength in Paradise, which no one can do perfectly in this present life; but unless death open us the door, we cannot enter that blessed region of love. This caused St. Augustine, that loving soul, to cry out: “Oh, let me die, Lord, that I may behold Thee!”[17601] O Lord, let me die, otherwise I cannot behold and love Thee face to face.

II

PATIENCE IN POVERTY

In the second place, we must practise patience in the endurance of poverty. Our patience is certainly very much tried when we are in need of temporal goods. St. Augustine said: “He that has not God, has nothing; he that has God, has all.”[17602] He who possesses God, and remains united to his blessed will, finds every good. Witness St. Francis, barefooted, clad in sackcloth, and deprived of all things, yet happier than all the monarchs of the world, by simply repeating, “My God and my all.”[17603] A poor man is properly he that has not what he desires; but he that desires nothing, and is contented with his poverty, is in fact very rich. Of such St. Paul says: *Having nothing, yet possessing all things.*[17604] The true lovers of God have nothing, and yet have everything; since, when temporal goods fail them, they exclaim: “My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me;” and with this they rest satisfied. Not only did the saints maintain patience in poverty, but sought to be despoiled of all, in order to live detached from all, and united with God alone. If we have not courage enough to renounce all worldly goods, at all events let us be contented with that state of life in which God has placed us; let our solicitude be not for earthly goods, but for those of Paradise, which are immeasurably greater, and last forever; and let us be fully persuaded of what St. Teresa says: “The less we have here, the more we shall have there.”[17605]

St. Bonaventure said that temporal goods were nothing more than a sort of bird-lime to hinder the soul from flying to God. And St. John Climacus[17606] said, that poverty, OR the contrary, is a path which leads to God free of all hindrances. Our Lord himself said: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*[17607] In the other Beatitudes, the heaven of the life to come is promised to the meek and to the clean of heart; but to the poor, heaven (that is, heavenly joy) is promised even in this life: *theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Yes, for even in the present life the poor enjoy a foretaste of paradise. By the poor in spirit are meant those who are not merely poor in earthly goods, but who do not so much as desire them; who, having enough to clothe and feed them, live contented, according to the advice of the Apostle: *But having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content.*[17608] Oh, blessed poverty (exclaimed St. Laurence Justinian), which possesses nothing and fears nothing; she is ever joyous and ever in abundance, since she turns every inconvenience into advantage for the soul.[17609] St. Bernard said: “The avaricious man hungers after earthly things as a beggar, the poor man despises them as a lord.”[17610] The miser is always hungry as a beggar, because he is never satiated with the possessions he desires; the poor man, on the contray, despises them all as a rich lord, inasmuch as he desires nothing.

One day Jesus Christ thus spoke to the Blessed Angela of Foligno: “If poverty were not of great excellence, I would not have chosen it for myself, nor have bequeathed it to my elect.” And, in fact, the saints, seeing Jesus poor, had therefore a great affection for poverty. St. Paul says, that the desire of growing rich is a snare of Satan, by which he has wrought the ruin of innumerable souls: *They that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition.*[17611] Unhappy beings who, for the sake of vile creatures of earth, forfeit an infinite good, which is God! St. Basil the Martyr was quite in the right, when the Emperor Licinius proposed to make him the chief among his priests, if he would renounce Jesus Christ; he was right, I say, to reply: “Tell the emperor, that were he to give me his whole kingdom, he would not give me as much as he would rob me of, by depriving me of God.”[17612] Let us be content then with God, and with those things which he gives us, rejoicing in our poverty, when we stand in need of something we desire, and have it not; for herein consists our merit. “Not poverty,” says St. Bernard, “but the love of poverty, is reckoned a virtue.”[17613] Many are poor, but from not loving their poverty, they merit nothing; therefore St. Bernard says, that the virtue of poverty consists not in being poor, but in the love of poverty.

This love of poverty should be especially practised by religious who have made the vow of poverty. “Many religious,” says the same St. Bernard, “wish to be poor; but on the condition of wanting for nothing.”[17614] “Thus,” says St. Francis de Sales, “they wish for the honor of poverty, but not the inconveniences of poverty.”[17615] To such persons is applicable the saying of the Blessed Salomea, a nun of St. Clare: “That religious shall be a laughing-stock to angels and to men, who pretends to be poor, and yet murmurs when she is in want of something.” Good religious act differently; they love their poverty above all riches. The daughter of the Emperor Maximilian II., a discalced nun of St. Clare, called Sister Margaret of the Cross, appeared on one occasion before her brother, the Archduke Albert, in a patched-up habit, who evinced some astonishment, as if it were unbecoming her noble birth; but she made him this answer: “My brother, I am more content with this torn garment than all monarchs with their purple robes.” St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said: “O happy religious! who, detached from all by means of holy poverty, can say, *The Lord is the portion of my inheritance.*[17616] “My God, Thou art my portion and all my good.”[17617] St. Teresa, having received a large alms from a certain merchant, sent him word that his name was written in the Book of Life, and that, in token of this, he should lose all his possessions; and the merchant actually failed, and remained in poverty till death. St. Aloysius Gonzaga said that there could be no surer sign that a person is numbered among the elect, than to see him fearing God, and at the same time undergoing crosses and tribulations in this life.

The bereavement of relatives and friends by death be longs also, in some measure, to holy poverty; and in this we must especially practise patience. Some people, at the loss of a parent or friend, can find no rest; they shut themselves up to weep in their chamber, and giving free vent to their sorrow, become insupportable to all around them, by their want of patience. I would ask these persons, for whose gratification they thus lament and shed tears? For that of God? Certainly not; for God’s will is, that they should be resigned to his dispensations. For that of the soul departed? By no means: if the soul be lost, she abhors both you and your tears; if she be saved, and already in heaven, she would have you thank God on her part; if still in purgatory, she craves the help of your prayers, and wishes you to bow with resignation to the divine will, and to become a saint, in order that she may one day enjoy your society in paradise. Of what use, then, is all this weeping? On one occasion, the Venerable Father Joseph Caracciolo, the Theatine, was surrounded by his relatives, who were all bitterly lamenting the death of his brother, whereupon he said to them: “Come, come! let us keep these tears for a better purpose, to weep over the death of Jesus Christ, who has been to us a father, a brother, and spouse, and who died for love of us.” On such occasions we must imitate Job, who, on hearing the news of the death of his sons, exclaimed, with full resignation to the Divine will, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;* God gave me my sons, and

God hath taken them away. *As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord;*[17618] it hath pleased God that such things should happen, and so it pleaseth me; wherefore may he be blessed by me forever.

III

PATIENCE UNDER CONTEMPT

In the third place, we must practise patience, and show our love to God, by tranquilly submitting to contempt.

As soon as a soul delivers herself up to God, he sends her from himself, or through others, insults and persecution. One day an angel appeared to the Blessed Henry Suso and said to him, “Henry, thou hast hitherto mortified thyself in thy own way; henceforth thou shalt be mortified after the pleasure of others.” On the day following, as he was looking from a window on the street, he saw a dog shaking and tearing a rag which it held in its mouth; at the same moment a voice said to him, “So hast thou to be torn in the mouths of men.” Forthwith the Blessed Henry descended into the street and secured the rag, putting it by to encourage him in his coming trials.[17619]

Affronts and injuries were the delicacies the saints earnestly longed and sought for. St. Philip Neri, during the space of thirty years, had to put up with much ill-treatment in the house of St. Jerome at Rome; but on this very account he refused to leave it, and resisted all the invitations of his sons to come and live with them in the new Oratory, founded by himself, till he received an express command from the Pope to do so. So St. John of the Cross was prescribed change of air for an illness which eventually carried him to the grave; now, he could have selected a more commodious convent, of which the Prior was particularly attached to him; but he chose instead a poor convent, whose Prior was his enemy, and who, in fact, for a long time, and almost up to his dying day, spoke ill of him, and abused him in many ways, and even prohibited the other monks from visiting him. Here we see how the saints even sought to be despised. St. Teresa wrote this admirable maxim: “Whoever aspires to perfection must beware of ever saying: *They had no reason to treat me so.* If you will not bear any cross but one which is founded on reason, then perfection is not for you.” Whilst St. Peter Martyr was complaining in prison of being confined unjustly, he received that celebrated answer from the Crucifix: our Lord said to him, “And what evil have I done, that I suffer and die on this cross for men?” Oh, what consolation do the saints derive in all their tribulations from the ignominies which Jesus Christ endured! St. Eleazar, on being asked by his wife how he contrived to bear with so much patience the many injuries which he had to sustain, and that even from his own servants, replied: “I turn my looks on the outraged Jesus, and I discover immediately that my affronts are a mere nothing in comparison with what he suffered for my sake; and thus God gives me strength to support all patiently.”

In fine, affronts, poverty, torments, and all tribulations, serve only to estrange further from God the soul that does not love him; whereas, when they befall a soul in love with God, they become an instrument of closer union and more ardent love of God: *Many waters cannot quench charity.*[17620] However great and grievous troubles may be, so far from extinguishing the flames of charity, they only serve to enkindle them the more in a soul that loves nothing else but God.

But wherefore does Almighty God load us with so many crosses, and take pleasure in seeing us afflicted, reviled, persecuted, and ill-treated by the world? Is he, perchance, a tyrant, whose cruel disposition makes him rejoice in our suffering? No: God is by no means a tyrant, nor cruel; he is all compassion and love towards us; suffice it to say, that he has died for us. He indeed does rejoice at our suffering, but for our good; inasmuch as, by suffering here, we are released hereafter from the debt of torments justly due from us to his divine justice; he rejoices in them, because they detach us from the sensual pleasures of this world: when a mother would wean her child, she puts gall on the breast, in order to create a disgust in the child; he rejoices in them, because we give him, by our patience and resignation in bearing them, a token of our love; in fine, he rejoices in them, because they contribute to our increase of glory in heaven. Such are the reasons for which the Almighty, in his compassion and love towards us, is pleased at our suffering.

Let us now draw this chapter to a conclusion. That we may be able to practise patience to advantage in all our tribulations, we must be fully persuaded that every trial comes from the hands of God, either directly, or indirectly through men; we must therefore render God thanks whenever we are beset with sorrows, and accept, with gladness of heart, of every event, prosperous or adverse, that proceeds from him, knowing that all happens by his disposition for our welfare: *To them that love God all things work together unto good*.[17621] In addition to this, it is well in our tribulations to glance a moment at that hell which we have formerly deserved: for assuredly all the pains of this life are incomparably smaller than the awful pains of hell. But above all, prayer, by which we gain the divine assistance, is the great means to suffer patiently all affliction, scorn, and contradictions; and is that which will furnish us with the strength which we have not of ourselves. The saints were persuaded of this; they recommended themselves to God, and so overcame every kind of torments and persecutions.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Lord, I am fully persuaded that without suffering, and suffering with patience, I cannot win the crown of Paradise. David said: *From Him is my patience*.[17622] And I say the same; my patience in suffering must come from Thee. I make many purposes to accept in peace of all tribulations; but no sooner are they at hand than I grow sad and alarmed; and if I suffer, I suffer without merit and without love, because I know not how to suffer them so as to please Thee. O my Jesus, through the merits of Thy patience in bearing so many afflictions for love of me, grant me the grace to bear crosses for the love of Thee! I love Thee with my whole heart, O my dear Redeemer! I love Thee, my sovereign good! I love Thee, my own love, worthy of infinite love. I am grieved at any displeasure I have ever caused Thee, more than for any evil whatever. I promise Thee to receive with patience all the trials Thou mayest send me; but I look to Thee for help to be faithful to my promise, and especially to be enabled to bear in peace the throes of my last agony and death.

O Mary, my Queen, vouchsafe to obtain for me a true resignation in all the anguish and trials that await me in life and death.

Chapter XI

CHARITY BELIEVETH ALL THINGS

(CHARITAS OMNIA CREDIT.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST BELIEVES ALL HIS WORDS

WHOEVER loves a person, believes all that proceeds from the lips of that person; consequently, the more a soul loves Jesus Christ, the more lively and unshaken is her faith. When the good thief beheld our Redeemer, though he had done no ill, suffering death upon the cross with such patience, he began at once to love him; under the influence of this love, and of the divine light which then broke upon his soul, he believed that this was truly the Son of God, and begged not to be forgotten by him when he should have passed into his kingdom.

Faith is the foundation of charity; but faith afterwards receives its perfection from charity. His faith is most perfect whose love of God is most perfect. Charity produces in man not merely the faith of the understanding, but the faith of the will also: those who believe only with the understanding, but not with the will, as is the case with sinners who are perfectly convinced of the truths of the faith, but do not choose to live according to the divine commandments,—such as these have a very weak faith; for had they a more lively belief that the grace of God is a priceless treasure, and that sin, because it robs us of this grace, is the worst of evils, they would assuredly change their lives. If, then, they prefer the miserable creatures of this earth to God, it is because they either do not believe, or because their faith is very weak. On the contrary, he who believes not only with the understanding, but also with the will, so that he not only believes, but has the will to believe in God, the revealer of truth, from the love he has for him, and rejoices in so believing,—such a one has a perfect faith, and consequently seeks to make his life conformable to the truths that he believes.

Weakness of faith, however, in those who live in sin, does not spring from the obscurity of faith; for though God, in order to make our faith more meritorious, has veiled the objects of faith in darkness and secresy, he has at the same time given us so clear and convincing evidence of their truth, that not to believe them would argue not merely a lack of sense, but sheer madness and impiety. The weakness of the faith of many persons is to be traced to their wickedness of living. He who, rather than forego the enjoyment of forbidden pleasures, scorns the divine friendship, would wish there were no law to forbid, and no chastisement to punish, his sin; on this account he strives to blind himself to the eternal truths of death, judgment, and hell, and of divine justice; and because such subjects strike too much terror into his heart, and are too apt to mix bitterness in his cup of pleasure, he sets his brain to work to discover proofs, which have at least the look of plausibility; and by which he allows himself to be flattered into the persuasion that there is no soul, no God, no hell, in order that he may live and die like the brute beasts, without laws and without reason.

And this laxity of morals is the source whence have issued, and still issue daily, so many books and systems of Materialists, Indifferentists, Politicists, Deists, and Naturalists; some among them deny the divine existence, and some the divine Providence, saying that God, after having created men, takes no further notice of them, and is heedless whether they love or hate him whether they be saved or lost; others, again, deny the goodness of God, and maintain that he has created numberless souls for hell, becoming himself their tempter to sin, that so they may damn themselves, and go into everlasting fire, to curse him there forever.

Oh, ingratitude and wickedness of men! God has created them in his mercy, to make them eternally happy in heaven; he has poured on them so many lights, benefits, and graces, to bring them to eternal life; for the same end he has redeemed them at the price of so many sorrows and sufferings; and yet they strive to deny all, that they may give free rein to their vicious inclinations! But no: let them strive as they will, the unhappy beings cannot wrest themselves from remorse of conscience, and the dread of the divine vengeance. On this subject I have latterly published a work, entitled *The Truth of Faith,* in which I have clearly shown the inconsistency of all these systems of modern unbelievers. Oh, if they would but once forsake sin, and apply themselves earnestly to the love of Jesus Christ, they would then most certainly cast away all doubts about things of faith, and firmly believe all the truths that God has revealed!

The true lover of Jesus Christ keeps the eternal truths constantly in view, and orders all his actions according to them. Oh, how thoroughly does he who loves Jesus Christ understand the force of that saying of the Wise Man, *Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity;*[17623] that all earthly greatness is mere smoke, dirt, and delusion; that the soul's only welfare and happiness consists in loving its Creator, and in doing his blessed will; that we are, in reality, no more than what we are before God; that it is of no use to gain the whole world, if the soul be lost; that all the goods in the world can never satisfy the human heart, but only God himself; and, in fine, that we must leave all in order to gain all.

Charity believeth all things.[17624] There are other Christians,—though not so perverse as the class we have mentioned, who would fain believe in nothing, that they may give full scope to their unruly passions, and live on undisturbed by the stings of remorse,—there are others, I say, who believe, indeed, but their faith is languid; they believe the most holy mysteries of religion, the truths of Revelation contained in the Gospel, the Trinity, the Redemption, the holy Sacraments, and the rest; still they do not believe all. Jesus Christ has said: *Blessed are the poor; blessed are the sorrowful; blessed are the mortified; blessed are those whom men persecute, calumniate, and curse. Blessed are the poor; blessed are they that hunger; blessed are they that suffer persecution; blessed are you when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you.*[17625] This is the teaching of Jesus Christ in the Gospel. How, then, can it be said, that those believe in the Gospel who say: "Blessed are those who have money; blessed are those who suffer nothing; blessed are those who can take their amusements; pitiable is the man that suffers persecution and ill-treatment from others"? We must certainly say of such as these, that either they do not believe the Gospel, or that they believe only a part of it. He who believes it all esteems it his highest fortune, and a mark of the divine favor in this world, to be poor, to be sick, to be mortified, to be despised and ill-treated by men. Such is the belief, and such the language, of one who believes all that is said in the Gospel, and has a real love for Jesus Christ.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My beloved Redeemer, O life of my soul, I firmly believe that Thou art the only good worthy of being loved. I believe that Thou art the greatest lover of my soul, since through love alone Thou didst die, overwhelmed with sorrows for love of me. I believe there is no greater blessing in this world, or in the next, than to love Thee, and to do Thy adorable will. All this I believe most firmly; so that I renounce all things, that I may belong wholly to Thee, and that I may possess Thee alone. Help me, through the merits of Thy sacred Passion, and make me such as Thou wouldst have me to be. I believe in Thee, O infallible truth! I trust in Thee, O infinite mercy! I love Thee, O infinite goodness! O infinite love, I give myself wholly to Thee, who hast wholly given Thyself to me in Thy Passion, and in the holy Sacrament of the Altar.

And I recommend myself to Thee, O Mary, refuge of sinners, and Mother of God!

Chapter XII

CHARITY HOPETH ALL THINGS

(CHARITAS OMNIA SPERAT.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST HOPES FOR ALL THINGS FROM HIM

HOPE increases charity, and charity increases hope.

Hope in the divine goodness undoubtedly gives an increase to our love of Jesus Christ. St. Thomas says, that in the very moment when we hope to receive some benefit from a person, we begin also to love him.[17626] On this account, the Lord forbids us to put our trust in creatures: *Put not your trust in princes.*[17627] Further, he pronounces a curse on those who do so: *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.*[17628] God does not wish us to trust in creatures, because he does not wish us to fix our love upon them. Hence St. Vincent of Paul said: “Let us beware of reposing too much confidence in men; for when God beholds us thus leaning on them for support, he himself withdraws from us.” On the other hand, the more we trust in God, the more we shall advance in his holy love: *I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart.*[17629] Oh, how rapidly does that soul advance in perfection that has her heart dilated with confidence in God! She flies rather than runs; for by making God the foundation of all her hope, she flings aside her own weakness, and borrows the strength of God himself, which is communicated to all who place their confidence in him: *They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*[17630] The eagle is the bird that soars nearest the sun; in like manner, the soul that has God for her trust becomes detached from the earth, and more and more united to God by love.

Now as hope increases the love of God, so does love help to increase hope; for charity makes us the adopted sons of God. In the natural order we are the work of his hands; but in the supernatural order we are made sons of God, and partakers of the divine nature, through the merits of Jesus Christ; as the Apostle St. Peter writes: *That by these you may be made partakers of the Divine nature.*[17631] And if charity makes us the sons of God, it consequently makes us heirs of heaven, according to St. Paul: *And if sons, heirs also.*[17632] Now a son claims the right of abiding under the paternal roof; an heir is entitled to the property; and thus charity increases the hope of Paradise: so that the souls that love God cry out incessantly, "Thy kingdom come, Thy kingdom come!"[17633] Moreover, God loves those who love him: *I love them that love Me.*[17634] He showers down his graces on those that seek him by love: *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him.*[17635] Consequently, the soul that loves God most has the greatest hope in his goodness. This confidence produces that imperturbable tranquillity in the saints which makes them always joyful and full of peace, even amid the severest trials; for their love of Jesus Christ, and their persuasion of his liberality towards those who love him, leads them to trust solely in him; and thus they find a lasting repose. The sacred spouse abounded with delights, because she loved none but her Spouse, and leaned entirely on him for support; she was full of contentment, since she well knew how generous her beloved is towards all that love him; so that of her it is written: *Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her Beloved?*[17636] These words of the Wise Man are most true: *All good things come to me together with her.*[17637] With charity, all blessings are introduced into the soul.

The primary object of Christian hope is God, whom the soul enjoys in the kingdom of heaven. But we must not suppose that the hope of enjoying God in Paradise is any obstacle to charity; since the hope of Paradise is inseparably connected with charity, which there receives its full and complete perfection. Charity is that infinite treasure, spoken of by the Wise Man, which makes us the friends of God: *An infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.*[17638] The angelic Doctor St. Thomas says, that friendship is founded on the mutual communication of goods; for as friendship is nothing more than a mutual love between friends, it follows that there must be a reciprocal interchange of the good which each possesses.[17639] Hence the saint says: “If there be no communication, there is no friendship.” On this account Jesus Christ says to his disciples: *I have called you friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you.*[17640] Since he had made them his friends, he had communicated all his secrets to them.

St. Francis de Sales says: “If, by a supposition of what is impossible, there could be an infinite good (that is a God) to whom we belonged in no way whatever, and with whom we could have no union or communication, we should certainly esteem him more than ourselves; so that we might feel great desire of being able to love him; but we should not actually love him, because love is built upon union; for love is a friendship, and the foundation of friendship is to have things in common; and its end is union.”[17641] Thus St. Thomas teaches us that charity does not exclude the desire of the reward prepared for us in heaven by Almighty God; on the contrary, it makes us look to it as the chief object of our love, for such is God, who constitutes the bliss of paradise; for friendship implies, that friends rejoice with one another.[17642]

The Spouse in the Canticles refers to this reciprocal interchange of goods, when she says: *My Beloved to me and I to Him.*[17643] In heaven the soul belongs wholly to God, and God belongs wholly to the soul, according to the measure of her capacity and of her merits. But from the persuasion which the soul has of her own nothingness in comparison with the infinite attractions of Almighty God, and aware consequently that the claims of God on her love are beyond measure greater than her own can be on the love of God, she is therefore more anxious to procure the divine pleasure than her own enjoyment; so that she is more gratified by the pleasure which she affords Almighty God by giving herself entirely to him, than by God’s giving himself entirely to her; but at the same time she is delighted when God thus gives himself to her, inasmuch as she is thereby animated to give herself up to God with a greater intensity of love. She indeed rejoices at the glory which God imparts to her, but for the sole purpose of referring it back to God himself, and of thus doing her utmost to increase the divine glory. At the sight of God in heaven the soul cannot help loving him with all her strength; on the other hand, God cannot hate any one that loves him: but if (supposing what is impossible) God could hate a soul that loves him, and if a beatified soul could exist without loving God, she would much rather endure all the pains of hell, on condition of being allowed to love God as much as he should hate her, than to live without loving God, even though she could enjoy all the other delights of Paradise. So it is; for that conviction which the soul has of God’s boundless claims upon her love gives her a greater desire to love God than to be loved by him.

Charity hopeth all things.[17644] St. Thomas, with the Master of the Sentences, defines Christian hope to be a “sure expectation of eternal happiness.”[17645] Its certainty arises from the infallible promise of God to give eternal life to his faithful servants. Now charity, by taking away sin, at the same time takes aways all obstacles to our obtaining the happiness of the blessed; hence the greater our charity, the greater also and firmer is our hope hope, on the other hand, can in no way interfere with the purity of love, because, according to the observation of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, love tends naturally to union with the object beloved; or, as St. Augustine asserts in stronger terms, love itself is like a chain of gold that links together the hearts of the lover and the loved. “Love is as it were a kind of bond uniting two together.”[17646] And as this union can never be effected at a distance, the person that loves always longs for the presence of the object of his love. The sacred spouse languished in the absence of her beloved, and entreated her companions to acquaint him with her sorrow, that he might come and console her with his presence: *I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell Him that I languish with love*.[17647] A soul that loves Jesus Christ exceedingly cannot but desire and hope, as long as she remains on earth, to go without delay and be united to her beloved Lord in heaven.

Thus we see that the desire to go and see God in heaven, not so much for the delight which we shall experience in loving God, as for the pleasure which we shall afford God by loving him, is pure and perfect love. Nor is the joy of the blessed in heaven any hindrance to the purity of their of their love; such joy is inseparable from their love; but they take far more satisfaction in their love of God than in the joy that it affords them. Some one will perhaps say: But the desire of a reward is rather a love of concupiscence than a love of friendship. We must therefore make a distinction between temporal rewards promised by men and the eternal rewards of paradise promised by God to those who love him: the rewards given by man are distinct from their own persons and independent of them, since they do not bestow themselves, but only their goods, when they would remunerate others; on the contrary, the principal reward which God gives to the blessed is the gift of himself: *I am thy reward exceeding great.*[17648] Hence to desire heaven is the same thing as to desire God, who is our last end.

I wish here to propose a doubt, which may rise in the mind of one who loves God, and strives to conform himself in all things to his blessed will. If it should be ever revealed to such a one that he would be eternally lost, would he be obliged to bow to it with resignation, in order to practise conformity with the will of God? St. Thomas says no; and further, that he would sin by consenting to it, because he would be consenting to live in a state that involves sin, and is contrary to the last end for which God created him; for God did not create souls to hate him in hell, but to love him in heaven: so that he does not wish the death even of the sinner, but that all should be converted and saved. The holy Doctor says that God wishes no one to be damned except through sin; and therefore, a person, by consenting to his damnation, would not be acting in conformity with the will of God, but with the will of sin.[17649] But suppose that God, foreseeing the sin of a person, should have decreed his damnation, and that this decree should be revealed to him, would he be bound to consent to it? In the same passage the saint says, By no means; because such a revelation must not be taken as an irrevocable decree, but made merely *by way of communication,* as a threat of what would follow if he persists in sin.

But let every one banish such baneful thoughts from his mind, as only calculated to cool his confidence and love. Let us love Jesus Christ as much as possible here below; let us always be sighing to go hence and to behold him in paradise, that we may there love him perfectly; let us make it the grand object of all our hopes, to go thither to love him with all our strength. We are commanded even in this life to love God with our whole strength: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength;*[17650] but the angelical Doctor[17651] says that man cannot perfectly fulfil this precept upon earth; only Jesus Christ, who was both God and man, and the most holy Mary, who was full of grace and free from original sin, perfectly fulfilled it. But we miserable children of Adam, infected as we are with sin, can not love God without some imperfection; and it is in heaven alone, when we shall see God face to face, that we shall love him, nay more, that we shall be necessitated to love him with all our strength.

Behold, then, the scope of all our desires and aspirations, of all our thoughts and ardent hopes; to go and enjoy God in heaven, in order to love him with all our strength, and to rejoice in the enjoyment of God. The blessed certainly rejoice in their own felicity in that kingdom of delights; but the chief source of their happiness, and that which absorbs all the rest, is to know that their beloved Lord possesses an infinite happiness; for they love God incomparably more than themselves. Each one of the blessed has such a love for him, that he would willingly forfeit all happiness, and undergo the most cruel torments, rather than that God should lose (if it were possible for him to lose) one, even the least particle of his happiness. Hence the sight of God's infinite happiness, and the knowledge that it can never suffer diminution for all eternity, constitutes his paradise. This is the meaning of what our Lord says to every soul on whom he bestows the possession of eternal glory: *Enter into the joy of thy Lord.*[17652] It is not the joy that enters into the blessed soul, but the soul that enters into the joy of God, since the joy of God is the object of the joy of the blessed. Thus the good of God will be the good of the blessed; the riches of God will be their riches, and the happiness of God will be their happiness.

On the instant that a soul enters heaven, and sees by the light of glory the infinite beauty of God face to face, she is at once seized and all consumed with love. The happy soul is then as it were lost and immersed in that boundless ocean of the goodness of God. Then it is that she quite forgets herself, and inebriated with divine love, thinks only of loving her God: *They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy House.*[17653] As an intoxicated person no longer thinks of himself, so a soul in bliss can only think of loving and affording delight to her beloved Lord; she desires to possess him entirely, and she does in fact possess him, without fear of losing him any more; she desires to give herself wholly to him, at every moment, and she does indeed possess him for every moment she offers herself to God without reserve, and God receives her in his loving embraces, and so holds her, and shall hold her in the same fond embraces for all eternity.

In this manner the soul is wholly united to God in heaven, and loves him with all her strength; her love is most perfect and complete, and though necessarily finite, since a creature is not capable of infinite love, it nevertheless renders her perfectly happy and contented, so that she desires nothing more. On the other hand, Almighty God communicates himself, and unites himself wholly to the soul, filling her with himself proportionately to her merits; and this union is not merely by means only of his gifts, lights, and loving attractions, as is the case during the present life, but by his own very essence. As fire penetrates iron, and seems to change it into itself, so does God penetrate the soul and fill her with himself; and though she never loses her own being, yet she becomes so penetrated and absorbed by that immense ocean of the divine substance, that she remains, as it were, annihilated, and as if she ceased to exist. The Apostle prayed for this happy lot for his disciples when he said: *That you may be filled unto all the fulness of God.*[17654]

And this is the last end, which the goodness of God has appointed for us in the life to come. Hence the soul can never enjoy perfect repose on earth; because it is only in heaven that she can obtain perfect union with God. It is true that the lovers of Jesus Christ find peace in the practice of perfect conformity with the will of God; but they cannot in this life find complete repose; this is only obtained when our last end is obtained; that is, when we see God face to face, and are consumed with his divine love; and as long as the soul does not reach this end, she is ill at ease, and groans and sighs, saying: *Behold, in peace is my bitterness most bitter.*[17655] Yes, O my God, I live in peace in this valley of tears, because such is Thy will; but I cannot help feeling unspeakable bitterness at finding myself at a distance from Thee, and not yet perfectly united with Thee, who art my centre, my all, and the fulness of my repose!

For this reason the saints, though they were all inflamed with the love of God, did nothing but sigh after paradise. David cried out: *Wo is me, that my sojourning is prolonged!*[17656] *I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear.*[17657] St. Paul said of himself: *Having a desire to be with Christ.*[17658] St. Francis of Assisi said:

> “I look for such a meed of bliss,
> That all my pain seems happiness.”[17659]

These were all so many acts of perfect charity. The angelic Doctor teaches us, that the highest degree of charity that a soul can reach upon earth, is to desire intensely to go and be united with God, and to enjoy him in heaven.[17660] But, as we have already seen, this enjoyment of God in heaven does not consist so much in the fruition of the delights there lavished on her by Almighty God, as in the pleasure she takes in the happiness of God himself, whom she loves incomparably more than herself.

The holy souls in purgatory feel no pain more acutely than that of their yearning to possess God, from whom they remain still at a distance. And this sort of pain will afflict those especially who in their lifetime had but little desire of paradise. Cardinal Bellarmine[17661] also says, that there is a certain place in purgatory called, prison of honor,[17662] where certain souls are not tormented with any pain of sense, but merely with the pain of privation of the sight of God; examples of this are related by St. Gregory, Venerable Bede, St. Vincent Ferrer, and St. Bridget; and this punishment is not for the commission of sin, but for coldness in desiring heaven. Many souls aspire to perfection; but for the rest, they are too indifferent whether they go to enjoy the sight of God, or continue on earth. But eternal life is an inestimable good, that has been purchased by the death of Jesus Christ; and God punishes such souls as have been remise during life in their desires to obtain it.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O God, my Creator and my Redeemer, Thou hast created me for heaven; Thou hast redeemed me from hell to bring me into heaven; and I have so many times, in Thy very face, renounced my claim to heaven by my sins, and have remained contented in seeing myself doomed to hell! But blessed forever be Thy infinite mercy, which, I would fain hope, has pardoned me, and many a time rescued me from perdition. Ah, my Jesus, would that I had never offended Thee! would that I had always loved Thee! I am glad that at least I have still time to do so. I love Thee! O love of my soul, I love Thee with my whole heart; I love Thee more than myself! I see plainly that Thou wishest to save me, that I may be able to love Thee for all eternity in that kingdom of love. I thank Thee, and beseech Thee to help me for the remainder of my life, in which I wish to love Thee most ardently, that I may ardently love Thee in eternity. Ah, my Jesus, when will the day arrive that shall free me from all danger of losing Thee, that shall consume me with love, by unveiling before my eyes Thy infinite beauty, so that I shall be under the necessity of loving Thee? Oh, sweet necessity! oh, happy and dear and most desired necessity, which shall relieve me from all fear of evermore displeasing Thee, and shall oblige me to love Thee with all my strength! My conscience alarms me, and says: “How canst Thou presume to enter heaven?” But, my dearest Redeemer, Thy merits are all my hope.

O Mary, Queen of Heaven, thy intercession is all-powerful with God, in thee I put my trust!

Chapter XIII

CHARITY BEARETH ALL THINGS

(CHARITAS OMNIA SUSTINET.)

HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST WITH A STRONG LOVE DOES NOT CEASE TO LOVE HIM IN THE MIDST OF ALL SORTS OF TEMPTATIONS AND DESOLATIONS

IT is not the pains of poverty, of sickness, of dishonor and persecution, which in this life most afflict the souls that love God, but temptations and desolations of spirit. Whilst a soul is in the enjoyment of the loving presence of God, she is so far from grieving at all the afflictions and ignominies and outrages of men, that she is rather comforted by them, as they afford her an opportunity of showing God a token of her love; they serve, in short, as fuel to enkindle her love more and more. But to find herself solicited by temptations to forfeit the divine grace, or in the hour of desolation to apprehend having already lost it, oh, these are torments too cruel to bear for one who loves Jesus Christ with all her heart! However, the same love supplies her with strength to endure all patiently, and to pursue the way of perfection, on which she has entered. And, oh, what progress do those souls make by means of these trials, which God is pleased to send them in order to prove their love!

I

TEMPTATIONS

Temptations are the most grievous trials that can happen to a soul that loves Jesus Christ; she accepts with resignation of every other evil, as calculated only to bind her in closer union with God; but temptations to commit sin would drive her, as we said above, to a separation from Jesus Christ; and on this account they are more intolerable to her than all other afflictions.

We must know, however, that although no temptation to evil can ever come from God, but only from the devil or our own corrupt inclinations: *for God is not a tempter of evils, and he tempteth no man;*[17663] nevertheless, God does at times permit his most cherished souls to be the most grievously tempted.

In the first place, in order that from temptations the soul may better learn her own weakness, and the need she has of the divine assistance not to fall. Whilst a soul is favored with heavenly consolations, she feels as if she were able to vanquish every assault of the enemy, and to achieve every undertaking for the glory of God. But when she is strongly tempted, and is almost reeling on the edge of the precipice, and just ready to fall, then she becomes better acquainted with her own misery and with her inability to resist, if God did not come to her rescue. So it fared with St. Paul, who tells us that God had suffered him to be troubled with a temptation to sensual pleasure, in order to keep him humble after the revelations with which God had favored him: *And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me.*[17664]

Besides, God permits temptations with a view to detach us more thoroughly from this life; and to kindle in us the desire to go and behold him in heaven. Hence pious souls, finding themselves attacked day and night by so many enemies, come at length to feel a loathing for life, and exclaim: *Wo is me, that my sojourning is prolonged!*[17665] And they sigh for the moment when they can say: *The snare is broken and we are delivered.*[17666] The soul would willingly wing her flight to God; but as long as she lives upon this earth she is bound by a snare which detains her here below, where she is continually assailed with temptations; this snare is only broken by death: so that the souls that love God sigh for death, which will deliver them from all danger of losing him.

Almighty God, moreover, allows us to be tempted, to make us richer in merits; as it was said to Tobias: *And because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptations should prove thee.*[17667] Thus a soul need not imagine herself out of God’s favor because she is tempted, but should make it rather a motive of hope that God loves her. It is a delusion of the devil to lead some pusillanimous persons to suppose that temptations are sins that contaminate the soul. It is not bad thoughts that make us lose God, but the consenting to them; let the suggestions of the devil be ever so violent, let those filthy imaginations which overload our minds be ever so lively, they cannot cast the least stain on our souls, provided only we yield no consent to them; on the contrary, they make the soul purer, stronger, and dearer to Almighty God. St. Bernard says, that every time we overcome a temptation we win a fresh crown in heaven: “As often as we conquer, so often are we crowned.”[17668] An angel once appeared to a Cistercian monk, and put a crown into his hands, with orders that he should carry it to one of his fellow-religious, as a reward for the temptation that he had lately overcome.

Nor must we be disturbed if evil thoughts do not forthwith disappear from our minds, but continue obstinately to persecute us; it is enough if we detest them, and do our best to banish them. God is faithful, says the Apostle; he will not allow us to be tempted above our strength: *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.*[17669] Thus a person, so far from losing anything by temptations, derives great profit from them. On this account God frequently allows the souls dearest to him to undergo the severest temptations, that they may turn them into a source of greater merit on earth, and of greater glory in heaven. Stagnant water soon grows putrid; a soul left at ease, without any struggle or temptation, stands in great danger of perishing from some self-conceit of her own merit; she perhaps imagines herself to have already attained to perfection, and therefore has little fear; and consequently takes little pains to recommend herself to God and to secure her salvation; but when, on the contrary, she is agitated by temptations, and sees herself in danger of rushing headlong into sin, then she has recourse to God; she goes to the divine Mother; she renews her resolution rather to die than to sin; she humbles herself, and casts herself into the arms of the divine mercy: in this manner, as experience shows us, the soul acquires fresh strength and closer union with God.

This must not, however, lead us to seek after temptations; on the contrary, we must pray to God to deliver us from temptations, and from those more especially by which God foresees we should be overcome; and this is precisely the object of that petition of the Our Father: *Lead us not into temptation;*[17670] but when, by God's permission, we are beset with temptations, we must then, without either being alarmed or discouraged by those foul thoughts, rely wholly on Jesus Christ, and beseech him to help us; and he, on his part, will not fail to give us the strength to resist. St. Augustine says: "Throw thyself on him, and fear not; he will not withdraw to let thee fall."[17671]

REMEDIES AGAINST TEMPTATIONS

Let us come now to the means which we have to employ in order to vanquish temptations. Spiritual masters prescribe a variety of means; but the most necessary, and the safest (of which only I will here speak), is to have immediate recourse to God with all humility and confidence, saying: *Incline unto my aid, O God; O Lord, make haste to help me.*[17672] This short prayer will enable us to overcome the assaults of all the devils of hell; for God is infinitely more powerful than all of them. Almighty God knows well that of ourselves we are unable to resist the temptations of the infernal powers; and on this account the most learned Cardinal Gotti remarks, "that whenever we are assailed, and in danger of being overcome, God is obliged to give us strength enough to resist as often as we call upon him for it."[17673]

And how can we doubt of receiving help from Jesus Christ, after all the promises that he has made us in the Holy Scriptures? *Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.*[17674] Come to me, ye who are wearied in fighting against temptations, and I will restore your strength. *Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt honor Me.*[17675] When thou seest thyself troubled by thine enemies, call upon me, and I will bring thee out of the danger, and thou shalt praise me. *Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall hear: thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am.*[17676] Then shalt thou call upon the Lord for help, and he will hear thee: thou shalt cry out, Quick, O Lord, help me! and he will say to thee, Behold, here I am; I am present to help thee. *Who hath called upon Him, and He despised him?*[17677] And who, says the prophet, has ever called upon God, and God has despised him without giving him help? David felt sure of never falling a prey to his enemies, whilst he could have recourse to prayer; he says: *Praising, I will call upon the Lord: and I shall* *be saved from my enemies.*[17678] For he well knew that God is close to all who invoke his aid: *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him.*[17679] And St. Paul adds, that the Lord is by no means sparing, but lavish of graces towards all that pray to him: *Rich unto all that call upon Him.*[17680]

Oh, would to God that all men would have recourse to him whenever they are tempted to offend him; they would then certainly never commit sin! They unhappily fall, because, led away by the cravings of their vicious appetites, they prefer to lose God, the sovereign good, than to forego their wretched short-lived pleasures. Experience gives us manifest proofs that whoever calls on God in temptation does not fall; and whoever fails to call on him as surely falls: and this is especially true of temptations to impurity. Solomon himself said that he knew very well he could not be chaste, unless God gave him the grace to be so; and he therefore invoked him by prayer in the moment of temptation: *And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, . . . I went to the Lord and besought Him.*[17681] In temptations against purity (and the same holds good with regard to those against faith), we must take it as a rule never to strive to combat the temptation hand to hand; but we must endeavor immediately to get rid of it indirectly by making a good act of the love of God or of sorrow for our sins, or else by applying ourselves to some indifferent occupation calculated to distract us. At the very instant that we discover a thought of evil tendency, we must disown it immediately, and (so to speak) close the door in its face, and deny it all entrance into the mind, without tarrying in the least to examine its object or errand. We must cast away these foul suggestions as quickly as we would shake off a hot spark from the fire.

If the impure temptation has already forced its way into the mind, and plainly pictures its object to the imagination, so as to stir the passions, then, according to the advice of St. Jerome, we must burst forth into these words: “O Lord, Thou art my helper.”[17682] As soon, says the saint, as we feel the sting of concupiscence, we must have recourse to God, and say: “O Lord, do Thou assist me;” we must invoke the most holy names of Jesus and Mary, which possess a wonderful efficacy in the suppression of temptations of this nature. St. Francis de Sales says, that no sooner do children espy a wolf than they instantly seek refuge in the arms of their father and mother; and there they remain out of all danger. Our conduct must be the same: we must flee without delay for succor to Jesus and Mary, by earnestly calling upon them. I repeat that we must instantly have recourse to them, without giving a moment's audience to the temptation, or disputing with it. It is related in the fourth paragraph of the *Book of Sentences of the Fathers,*[17683] that one day St. Pacomius heard the devil boasting that he had frequently got the better of a certain monk on account of his lending ear to him, and not turning instantly to call upon God. He heard another devil, on the contrary, utter this complaint: As for me, I can do nothing with my monk, because he never fails to have recourse to God, and always defeats me.

Should the temptation, however, obstinately persist in attacking us, let us beware of becoming troubled or angry at it; for this might put it in the power of our enemy to overcome us. We must, on such occasions, make an act of humble resignation to the will of God, who thinks fit to allow us to be tormented by these abominable temptations; and we must say: O Lord, I deserve to be molested with these filthy suggestions, in punishment of my past sins; but Thou must help to free me. And as long as the temptation lasts, let us never cease calling on Jesus and Mary. It is also very profitable, in the like importunity of temptations, to renew our firm purpose to God of suffering every torment, and a thousand deaths, rather than offend him; and at the same time we must invoke his divine assistance. And even should the temptation be of such violence as to put us in imminent risk of consenting to it, we must then redouble our prayers, hasten into the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, cast ourselves at the feet of the crucifix, or of some image of our Blessed Lady, and there pray with increased fervor, and cry out for help with groans and tears. God is certainly ready to hear all who pray to him; and it is from him alone, and not from our own exertions, that we must look for strength to resist; but sometimes Almighty God wills these struggles of us, and then he makes up for our weakness, and grants us the victory. It is an excellent practice also, in the moment of temptation, to make the sign of the cross on the forehead and breast. It is also of great service to discover the temptation to our spiritual director. St. Philip Neri used to say, that a temptation disclosed is half overcome.

Here it will be well to remark, what is unanimously admitted by all theologians, even of the rigorist school, that persons who have during a considerable period of time been leading a virtuous life, and live habitually in the fear of God, whenever they are in doubt, and are not certain whether they have given consent to a grievous sin, ought to be perfectly assured that they have not lost the divine grace; for it is morally impossible that the will, confirmed in its good purposes for a considerable lapse of time, should on a sudden undergo so total a change as at once to consent to a mortal sin without clearly knowing it; the reason of it is, that mortal sin is so horrible a monster that it cannot possible enter a soul by which it has long been held in abhorrence, without her being fully aware of it. We have proved this at length in our Moral Theology.[17684] St. Teresa said: No one is lost without knowing it; and no one is deceived without the will to be deceived.[17685]

Wherefore, with regard to certain souls of delicate conscience, and solidly rooted in virtue, but at the same time timid and molested with temptations (especially if they be against faith or chastity), the director will find it sometimes expedient to forbid them to discover them or make any mention of them; because, if they have to mention them they are led to consider how such thoughts got entrance into their minds, and whether they paused to dispute with them, or took any complacency in them, or gave any consent to them; and so, by this too great reflection, those evil imaginations make a still deeper impression on their minds, and disturb them the more. Whenever the confessor is morally certain that the penitent has not consented to these suggestions, the best way is to forbid him to speak any more about them. And I find that St. Jane Frances de Chantal acted precisely in this manner. She relates of herself, that she was for several years assailed by the most violent storms of temptation, but had never spoken of them in confession, since she was not conscious of having ever yielded to them; and in this she had only followed faithfully the rule received from her director. She says, “I never had a full conviction of having consented.”[17686] These words give us to understand that the temptations did produce in her some agitation from scruples; but in spite of these, she resumed her tranquillity on the strength of the obedience imposed by her confessor, not to confess similar doubts. With this exception, it will be generally found an admirable means of quelling the violence of temptations to lay them open to our director, as we have said above.

But I repeat, the most efficacious and the most necessary of all remedies against temptations, is that remedy of all remedies, namely, to pray to God for help, and to continue praying as long as the temptation continues. Almighty God will frequently have decreed success, not to the first prayer, but to the second, third, or fourth. In short, we must be thoroughly persuaded that all our welfare depends on prayer: our amendment of life depends on prayer; our victory over temptations depends on prayer; on prayer depends our obtaining divine love, together with perfection, perseverance, and eternal salvation.

There may be some who, after the perusal of my spiritual works, will accuse me of tediousness in so often recommending the importance and necessity of having continual recourse to God by prayer. But I seem to myself to have said not too much, but far too little. I know that day and night we are all assailed with temptations from the infernal powers, and that Satan lets slip no occasion of causing us to fall. I know that, without the divine help, we have not strength to repel the assaults of the devils; and that therefore the Apostle exhorts us to put on the armor of God: *Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness.*[17687] And what is this armor with which St. Paul warns us to clothe ourselves in order to conquer our enemies? Behold of what it consists: *By all prayer and supplication, praying at all times in the spirit, and in the same watching with all instance.*[17688] This armor is constant and fervent prayer to God, that he may help us to gain the victory. I know, moreover, that in every page of the Holy Scriptures, both in the Old and the New Testament, we are repeatedly admonished to pray: *Call upon Me, and I will deliver thee.*[17689] *Cry to Me, and I will hear thee.*[17690] *We ought always to pray, and not to faint.*[17691] *Ask, and you shall receive.*[17692] *Watch and pray.*[17693] *Pray without ceasing.*[17694] So that I think, far from having spoken too much on prayer, I have not said enough.

I would urge it on all preachers, to recommend nothing so much to their audience as prayer; on confessors, to insist on nothing so earnestly with their penitents as prayer; on spiritual writers, to treat on no subject more copiously than on prayer. But it is a source of grief to my heart, and it seems to me a chastisement of our sins, that so many preachers, confessors, and authors speak so little of prayer. There is no doubt that sermons, meditations, Communions, and mortifications are great helps in the spiritual life; but if we fail to call upon God by prayer in the moment of temptation, we shall fall, in spite of all the sermons, meditations, Communions, penances, and virtuous resolutions. If, then, we really wish to be saved, let us always pray, and commend ourselves to Jesus Christ, and most of all when we are tempted; and let us not only pray for the grace of holy perseverance, but at the same time for the grace to pray always. Let us, likewise, take care to recommend ourselves to the divine Mother, who, as St. Bernard says, is the dispenser of graces: “Let us seek for graces, and let us seek them through Mary.”[17695] For the same saint assures us that it is the will of God, that not a single grace should be dealt to us except through the hands of Mary: “God has willed us to receive nothing that has not passed through the hands of Mary.”[17696]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Jesus, My Redeemer, I trust in Thy blood, that Thou hast forgiven me all my offences against Thee; and I fondly hope to come one day to bless Thee for it eternally in heaven: *The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever.*[17697] I plainly see now that I have over and over again fallen in times past, from the want of entreating Thee for holy perseverance. I earnestly beg Thee at this present moment to grant me perseverance: “Never suffer me to be separated from Thee.”[17698] And I purpose to make this prayer to Thee always; but especially when I am tempted to offend Thee. I indeed make this resolution and promise; but what will it profit me thus to resolve and promise, if Thou dost not give me the grace to run and cast myself at Thy feet? By the merits, then, of Thy sacred Passion, oh, grant me this grace, in all my necessities to have recourse to Thee.

O Mary, my Queen, and my Mother, I beseech thee, by thy tender love for Jesus Christ, to procure me the grace of always fleeing for succor, as long as I live, to thy blessed Son and to thee.

II

DESOLATIONS

St. Francis de Sales says: “It is a mistake to estimate devotions by the consolations which we feel. True devotion in the way of God consists in having a determined will to execute all that is pleasing to God.”[17699] Almighty God is wont to make use of aridities in order to draw closer to him his most cherished souls. Attachment to our own inordinate inclinations is the greatest obstacle to true union with God; and when, therefore, God intends to draw a soul to his perfect love, he endeavors to detach her from all affection to created goods. Thus his first care is to deprive her of temporal goods, of worldly pleasures, of property, honors, friends, relatives, and bodily health; by the like means of losses, troubles, neglects, bereavements, and infirmities, he extirpates by degrees all earthly attachment, in order that the affections may be set on him alone.

With a view to produce a fondness for spiritual things, God regales the soul at first with great consolations, with an abundance of tears and tenderness; she is thus easily weaned from the gratifications of sense, and seeks further to mortify herself with works of penance, fasts, haircloths, and disciplines; at this stage the director must keep a check on her, and not allow her to practise mortifications—at least not all those for which she asks permission—because, under the spur of this sensible devotions, a soul might easily ruin her health by indiscretion. It is a subtle artifice of the devil, when he beholds a person giving himself up to God, and receiving the consolations and caresses which God generally gives to beginners, to do his utmost to plunge him into the performance of immoderate penances, so as utterly to destroy his health; so that afterwards, by reason of bodily weakness, he not only gives up the mortifications, but prayer, Communion, and all exercises of devotion, and eventually sinks back into his old way of living. On this account, the director should be very sparing in allowing mortifications to those who are only just entering upon the spiritual life, and who desire to practise bodily mortifications; let him exhort them to practise rather interior mortification, by bearing patiently with affronts and contradictions, by obedience to Superiors, by bridling the curiosity to see, to hear, and the like; and let him tell them, that when they have acquired the good habit of practising these interior mortifications, they will then be sufficiently perfect to proceed to the external ones. For the rest, it is a serious error to say, as some say, that external mortifications are of little or no use. Without doubt, interior mortification is most requisite for perfection; but it does not follow from this that external mortifications are unnecessary. St. Vincent of Paul declared that the person who does not practise external mortifications will be neither mortified interiorly nor exteriorly. And St. John of the Cross declared that the director who despised external mortifications was unworthy of confidence, even though he should work miracles.

But to come back to our point. The soul then, in the commencement of her conversion to God, tastes the sweetness of those sensible consolations with which God seeks to allure her, and by them to wean her from earthly pleasures; she breaks off her attachment to creatures, and becomes attached to God. Still, her attachment is imperfect, inasmuch as it is fostered more by that sensibility of spiritual consolations than by the real wish to do what is pleasing to God; and she deceives herself by believing that the greater the pleasure she feels in her devotions, the more she loves Almighty God. The consequence of this is, that if this food of spiritual consolations is stopped, by her being taken from her ordinary exercises of devotion, and employed in other works of obedience, charity, or duties of her state, she is disturbed, and takes it greatly to heart: and this is a universal defect in our miserable human nature, to seek our own satisfaction in all that we do. Or again, when she no longer finds this sweet relish of devotion in her exercises, she either forsakes them, or lessens them; and continuing to lessen them from day to day, she at length omits them entirely. And this misfortune befalls many souls who, when called by Almighty God to love him, enter upon the way of perfection, and as long as spiritual sweetness lasts, make a certain progress; but alas! when this is no longer tasted, they leave off all, and resume their former ways. But it is of the highest importance to be fully persuaded that the love of God and perfection do not consist in feelings of tenderness and consolation, but in overcoming self-love, and in following the divine will. St. Francis de Sales says: “God is as worthy of our love when he afflicts us as when he consoles us.”

Amid these consolations, it requires no remarkable degree of virtue to forego sensual delights, and to endure affronts and contradictions. The soul in the midst of these sweetnesses can endure all things; but this endurance comes far more frequently from those sensible consolations than from the strength of true love of God. On this account the Lord, with a view to give her a solid foundation in virtue, retires from her, and deprives her of that sensible devotion, that he may rid her of all attachment to self-love, which was fed by such consolations. And hence it happens, that whereas formerly she felt a joy in making acts of offering, of confidence, and of love, now that the vein of consolations is dried up, she makes these acts with coldness and painful effort; and finds a weariness in the most pious exercises, in her prayers, spiritual readings, and Communions; she even finds in them nothing but darkness and fears, and all seems lost to her. She prays and prays again, and is overwhelmed with sadness, because God seems to have abandoned her.

Let us come now to the practice of what we are to do on our part in the like circumstances. When Almighty God in his mercy deigns to console us with his loving visitations, and to let us feel the presence of his grace, it is not good to reject the divine consolations, as some false mystics advise: let us thankfully receive them; but let us beware of settling down on them, and seeking delight in those feelings of spiritual tenderness. St. John of the Cross calls this a “spiritual gluttony,” which is faulty and displeasing to God. Let us strive in such moments to banish from our mind the sensible enjoyment of these sweetnesses: and let us be especially on our guard against supposing that these favors are a token of our standing better with God than others; for such a thought of vanity would oblige God to withdraw himself from us altogether, and to leave us in our miserries. We must certainly at such times return most fervent thanks to God, because such spiritual consolations are signal gifts of the divine bounty to our souls, far greater than all the riches and honors of this world; but let us not seek then to regale ourselves on these sensible sweetnesses, but let us rather humble ourselves by the remembrance of the sins of our past life. For the rest, we must consider this loving treatment as the pure result of the goodness of God; and that perhaps it is sent as the forerunner of some great tribulation soon to befall us, in order that we may be strengthened by these consolations to endure all with patience and resignation. We should therefore take the occasion of offering ourselves to suffer every pain, internal or external, that may happen to us,—every illness, every persecution, every spiritual desolation, saying: O my Lord, I am here before Thee; do with me, and with all that belongs to me, whatever Thou wilt;

grant me the grace to love Thee and perfectly to accomplish Thy holy will, and I ask no more!

When a soul is morally certain of being in the grace of God, although she may be deprived of worldly pleasures, as well as of those which come from God, she nevertheless rests satisfied with her state, conscious, as she is, of loving God, and of being loved by him. But God, who wishes to see her purified and divested of all sensible satisfaction, in order to unite her entirely to himself by means of pure love, what does he do? He puts her in the crucible of desolation, which is more painful to bear than the most severe trials, whether internal or external; she is left in a state of uncertainty if she be in the grace of God or not, and in the dense darkness that shrouds her, there seems no prospect of her evermore finding God. Almighty God, moreover, will sometimes permit her to be assailed by violent sensual temptations, accompanied by irregular movements of the inferior part, or perhaps by thoughts of unbelief, of despair, and even of hatred of God, when she imagines herself cast off by him, and that he no longer hears her prayers. And as, on the one hand, the suggestions of the devil are vehement, and the motions of concupiscence are excited, and, on the other, the soul finds herself in this great darkness, she can no longer sufficiently distinguish whether she properly resists or yields to the temptations, though her will resolutely refuses all consent. Her fears of having lost God are thus very much increased; and from her fancied infidelity in struggling against the temptations, she thinks herself deservedly abandoned by God. The saddest of all calamities seems to have befallen her,—to be able no longer to love God, and to be hated by him. St. Teresa passed through all these trials, and declares that during them solitude had no charms for her, but, on the contrary, filled her with horror; while prayer was changed for her into a perfect hell.

When a soul that loves God finds herself in this state, she must not lose courage; and neither must he who directs her become alarmed. Those sensual movements, those temptations against faith, those feelings of distrust, and those attacks which urge her to hate Almighty God, are fears, are tortures of the soul, are efforts of the enemy; but they are not voluntary, and therefore they are not sins. The sincere lover of Jesus Christ resists valiantly on such occasions, and withholds all consent to such suggestions; but because of the darkness which envelops her, she knows not how to distinguish, her soul is thrown into confusion, and the privation of the presence of divine grace makes her fearful and sad. But it can be soon discovered that in these souls, thus tried by God, all is dread and apprehension, but not truth: only ask them, even in their state of desolation, whether they would willingly commit one single deliberate venial sin; they will answer, that they are ready to suffer not one, but a thousand deaths, rather than be guilty of such displeasure to Almighty God.

It is necessary, therefore, to make this distinction, that it is one thing to perform an act of virtue, such as to repel a temptation, to trust in God, to love God, and to will what he wills; and it is another thing to have the consciousness of really making these good acts. This consciousness of doing good contributes to our pleasure; but the profit consists in the first point, that is, in actually doing good. With the first God is satisfied, and deprives the soul of the latter—that is, of the consciousness of doing good, in order thus to remove from her all self-satisfaction, which adds nothing to the merit of the action; for our Lord seeks more our real advantage than our own satisfaction. St. John of the Cross wrote the following words of comfort to a desolate soul: “You were never in a better state than at present; for you were never so deeply humbled, and so cut off from all attachment to this world, and at the same time you were never so thoroughly impressed with the conviction of your own wickedness. Neither were you ever so divested and purified of all self-seeking as now.”[17700] Let us, then, not believe that when we feel a greater tenderness of devotion we are more beloved by God; for perfection does not consist in that, but in the mortification of our own will, and in its union with the will of God.

Wherefore, in this state of desolation the soul must not heed the devil, when he suggests that God has abandoned her; nor must she leave off prayer. This is the object at which the devil is aiming, in order afterwards to drag her down some precipice. St. Teresa writes: “The Lord proves his true lovers by dryness and temptations. What though the dryness should be of lifelong duration, let the soul never relax in prayer; the time will arrive when all will be abundantly repaid.”[17701] In such a state of suffering, a person should humble himself by the reflection that his offences against God are undeserving of any milder treatment: he should humble himself, and be fully resigned to the divine will, saying: O my Lord, behold me at

Thy feet; if it be Thy will that I should remain thus desolate and afflicted for my whole life, and even for all eternity, only grant me Thy grace and the gift of Thy love, and do with me whatever Thou wilt.

It will be useless then, and perhaps a source of greater disquiet, to wish to assure yourself that you are in the grace of God, and that what you experience is only a trial, and not abandonment on the part of God. At such times it is not the will of God that you should have this assurance; and he so wills it for your greater advantage, in order that you may humble yourself the more, and increase your prayers and acts of confidence in his mercy. You desire to see, and God wills that you should not see. For the rest, St. Francis de Sales says: “The resolution not to consent to any sin, however small, is a sure sign that we are in God’s grace.”[17702] But a soul in profound desolation cannot even clearly discern this resolution; nevertheless, in such a state she must not aim at feeling what she wills; it is enough to will with the point of the will. In this manner she should entirely abandon herself into the arms of the divine goodness. Oh, how do such acts of confidence and resignation ravish the heart of God, when made in the midst of the darkness of desolation! Ah, let us simply trust in a God, who (as St. Teresa says) loves us far better than we love ourselves.

Let these souls, then, so dear to God, and who are resolutely determined to belong entirely to him, take comfort, although at the same time they see themselves deprived of every consolation. Their desolation is a sign of their being very acceptable to God, and that he has for them a place prepared in his heavenly kingdom, which overflows with consolations as full as they are lasting. And let them hold for certain, that the more they are afflicted in the present life, so much the more they shall be consoled in eternity: *According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, Thy comforts have given joy to my soul.*[17703]

EXAMPLE

For the encouragement of souls in desolation, I will here mention what is related in the life of St. Jane Frances de Chantal.

For the space of forty years she was tormented by the most fearful interior trials, by temptations, by fears of being in enmity with God, and of being even quite forsaken by him. Her afflictions were so excruciating and unremitting, that she declared her sole ray of comfort came from the thought of death. Moreover she said: “I am so furiously assaulted, that I know not where to hide my poor soul. I seem at times on the point of losing all patience, and of giving up all as utterly lost.” “The tyrant of temptation is so relentless,” she says, “that any hour of the day I would gladly barter it with the loss of my life; and sometimes it happens that I can neither eat nor sleep.”[17704]

During the last eight or nine years of her life, her temptations became still more violent. Mother de Chatel said that her saintly Mother de Chantal suffered a continual interior martyrdom night and day, at prayer, at work, and even during sleep; so that she felt the deepest compassion for her. The saint endured assaults against every virtue (except chastity), and had likewise to contend with doubts, darkness, and disgusts. Sometimes God would withdraw all lights from her, and seem indignant with her, and just on the point of expelling her from him; so that terror drove her to look in some other direction for relief: but failing to find any, she was obliged to return to look on God, and to abandon herself to his mercy. She seemed each moment ready to yield to the violence of her temptations. The divine assistance did not indeed forsake her; but it seemed to her to have done so, since, instead of finding satisfaction in anything, she found only weariness and anguish in prayer, in reading spiritual books, in Communion, and in all other exercises of piety. Her sole resource in this state of dereliction was to look upon God, and to let him do his will.

The saint said: “In all my abandonments my mere life is a new cross to me, and my incapability of action adds considerably to its heaviness.” And it was therefore that she compared herself to a sick person overwhelmed with sufferings, unable to turn from one side to the other, speechless, so as not to be able to express his ills, and blind, so as not to discern whether the attendants are administering to him medicine or poison. And then, weeping bitterly, she added, “I seem to be without faith, without hope, and without love for my God.” Nevertheless, the saint maintained throughout her serenity of countenance and affability in conversation, and kept her looks fixedly bent towards God, in the bosom of whose blessed will she constantly reposed. Wherefore St. Francis de Sales, who was her director, and knew well what an object of predilection her beautiful soul was to

Almighty God, wrote thus of her: "Her heart resembled a deaf musician, who, though he may sing most exquisitely, can derive no pleasure from it himself." And to herself he wrote as follows: "You must endeavor to serve your Saviour solely through love of his blessed will, utterly deprived of consolations, and overwhelmed by a deluge of fears and sadness."[17705] It is thus that the saints are formed:

"Long did the chisels ring around,
Long did the mallet's blows rebound,
Long work'd the head and toil'd the hand,
Ere stood thy stones as now they stand."[17706]

The saints of whom the Church sings are precisely these choice stones, which are reduced to shapeliness and beauty by the strokes of the chisel,—that is, by temptations, by fears, by darkness, and other torments, internal and external,—till at length they are made worthy to be enthroned in the blessed kingdom of Paradise.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O Jesus, my hope, my love and only love of my soul, I deserve not Thy consolations and sweet visitations; keep them for those innocent souls that have always loved Thee; sinner that I am, I do not deserve them, nor do I ask for them: this only do I ask, give me grace to love Thee, to accomplish Thy adorable will during my whole life; and then dispose of me as Thou pleasest! Unhappy me! far other darkness, other terrors, other abandonments would be due to the outrages which I have done Thee: hell were my just award, where, separated from Thee forever, and totally abandoned by Thee, I should shed tears eternally, without ever being able to love Thee more. But no, my Jesus, I accept of every punishment; only spare me this. Thou art deserving of an infinite love; Thou hast placed me under an excessive obligation of loving Thee; oh, no, I cannot trust myself to live and not love Thee! I do love Thee, my sovereign good; I love Thee with my whole heart; I love Thee more than myself; I love Thee, and have no other desire than to love Thee. I own that this my good-will is the pure effect of Thy grace; but do Thou, O my Lord, perfect Thy own work; withdraw not Thy helping hand till death! Oh, never for a moment leave me in my own hands; give me strength to vanquish temptations and to overcome myself; and for this end give me grace always to have recourse to Thee! I wish to belong wholly to Thee; I give Thee my body, my soul, my will, and my liberty; I will no longer live for myself, but for Thee alone, my Creator, my Redeemer, my love, and my all: my God and my all.[17707] I desire to become a saint, and I hope this of Thee. Afflict me as Thou wilt, deprive me of all; only deprive me not of Thy grace and of Thy love.

O Mary, the hope of sinners, great is thy power with God; I confide fully in thy intercession: I entreat thee by thy love of Jesus Christ, help me, and make me a saint!

ABSTRACT OF THE VIRTUES TREATED OF IN THIS WORK, TO BE PRACTISED BY HIM WHO LOVES JESUS CHRIST

I

We must patiently endure the tribulations of this life—ill-health, sorrows, poverty, losses, bereavement of kindred, affronts, persecutions, and all that is disagreeable. Let us invariably look on the trials of this world as signs of God's love towards us, and of his desire to save us in the world to come. And let us, moreover, be fully persuaded that the involuntary mortifications which God himself sends us are far more pleasing to him than those which are the fruit of our own choice.

In sickness let us endeavor to resign ourselves entirely to the will of God; no devout exercise is more acceptable to him than this. If at such times we are unable to meditate, let us fix our eyes on our crucified Lord, and offer him our sufferings in union with all that he endured for us upon the cross. And when we are told that we are about to die, let us accept the tidings with tranquility and in the spirit of sacrifice; that is, with the desire to die, in order to give pleasure to Jesus Christ: it was the like desire that gave all the merit to the death of the martyrs. We should then say: O Lord, behold me here with no other will but Thine own blessed will; I am willing to suffer as much as Thou pleasest; I wish to die whenever Thou wilt. Nor should we then wish to have our life prolonged, in order to do penance for our sins; to accept death with perfect resignation outweighs all other penance.

We must likewise practise conformity to the will of God in bearing poverty and the various inconveniences which accompany it: cold, hunger, fatigue, contempt, and scorn.

Nor should we be less resigned to losses, whether of property or of relatives and friends, on whom our ease and happiness depended. Let us acquire the good habit of saying in every adversity: God hath so willed it, and so I will it likewise. And at the death of our relatives, instead of wasting time in fruitless tears, let us employ it in praying for their souls; and offer to Jesus Christ, in their behalf, the pain of our bereavement.

Let us, moreover, force ourselves to endure scorn and insult with patience and tranquillity. Let us answer terms of outrage and injury with words of gentleness; but as long as we feel ourselves disturbed, the best plan is to keep silence, till the mind grows tranquil. Meanwhile let us not be fretfully speaking to others of the affront we have received, but in silence offer it to Jesus Christ, who endured so much for us.

II

Behave kindly to all, to Superiors and inferiors, to the high-born and peasant, to relatives and strangers; but more especially to the poor and infirm, and, above all, to those who regard us with an evil eye.

Gentleness in the correction of faults is more efficacious than any other means or reasons that may be employed. Be therefore on your guard against correcting in a fit of passion; for then harshness is sure to be mingled with it, either in word or action. Beware likewise of correcting the person in fault while he is excited; for in like cases the result is exasperation instead of improvement.

III

Envy not the great ones of this world then riches, honors, dignities, or applause given them by men; but envy rather those who most love Jesus Christ, who undoubtedly enjoy greater happiness than the first monarchs of the earth. Return thanks to the Lord for enlightening you to discover the vanity of all wordly things, for the sake of which so many unhappily perish.

IV

In all our actions and thoughts let us seek only the pleasure of Almighty God, and not our private satisfaction; and let us therefore lay aside all disquietude when our efforts are attended with failure. And when we succeed, let us be no less cautious against seeking the thanks and approbation of men; should they murmur against us, let us pay no attention to this; our consolation will be to have striven to please God, and not men.

V

The chief means of perfection are:

1. To avoid all deliberate sin, however small. Should we, however, happen unfortunately to commit a fault, let us refrain from becoming angry and impatient with ourselves: we must, on such occasions, quietly repent of it; and while we make an act of love to Jesus Christ, and beg his help, we must promise him not to repeat the fault.

2. To have an earnest desire to acquire the perfection of the saints, and to suffer all things to please Jesus Christ; and if we have not this desire, to beseech Jesus Christ, through his bounty, to grant it us; since, as long as we do not feel a sincere desire of becoming saints, we shall never make one step forward in the way of perfection.

3. To have a firm resolution of arriving at perfection: whoever is wanting in this resolution, works but languidly, and in the occasion does not overcome his repugnances; whereas a resolute soul, by the divine aid, which never fails her, surmounts every obstacle.

4. To make make daily two hours’ or at least one hours’ mental prayer; and, except in case of urgent necessity, never to relinquish it for the sake of any weariness, dryness, or trouble that we may experience.

5. To frequent Holy Communion several times a week, in obedience to the counsel of our director; for frequent Communion should not be practised against the consent of our director. The same rule holds good with regard to external mortifications, such as fasting, wearing the cilice, taking the discipline, and the rest; mortifications of this kind, when practised without obedience to our spiritual director, will either destroy health or produce vainglory. So that it is necessary for each one to have his own director, so that all may be regulated in obedience to him.

6. To pray continually, by having recourse to Jesus Christ in all our necessities, by invoking likewise the intercession of our Angel Guardian, of our Holy Patrons, and most particularly of the divine Mother, through whose hands Almighty God bestows all graces upon us. It has already been shown, at the end of Chapter IV., that our welfare entirely depends on prayer. We must especially not pass a day without begging God to grant us the gift of perseverance in his grace; whosoever asks for this perseverance obtains it, but he that does not ask for it obtains it not, and is damned: we

must pray, too, that Jesus Christ may grant us his holy love and perfect conformity with his divine will. Neither should we forget to pray for every grace through the merits of Jesus Christ. We must first make these prayers when we rise in the morning, and afterwards repeat them in our meditation, at Holy Communion, at the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and again in the evening at the examination of conscience. We must particularly cry to God for help in the time of temptation, and more especially in temptations against purity, when we should not cease to call for succor on the holy names of Jesus and Mary. He that prays, conquers; he that prays not, is conquered.

VI

With respect to humility, not to pride ourselves on riches, honors, high birth, talents, or any other natural advantage, and still less on any spiritual gift, reflecting that all are the gifts of God. To consider ourselves the worst of all, and consequently to delight in being despised by others; and not to act as some do, who declare themselves the worst of men, and at the same time wish to be treated as the best. Moreover, to receive corrections humbly, and without attempts to excuse ourselves, and this even though blamed wrongfully; except when to defend ourselves would be necessary in order to prevent others being scandalized.

Much more ought we to banish all desire of appearing in public, and of being honored by the world. The maxim of St. Francis should never be out of our sight: “We are just what we are before God.” It would be still worse for a religious to covet posts of honor and superiority in his community. The true honor of a religious is to be the most humble of all; and he is the humblest of all who most joyfully embraces humiliations.

VII

Detach your heart from all creatures. Whoever continues bound by the slightest fondness to things of earth can never rise to a perfect union with God.

To detach ourselves especially from an undue affection for our relatives. It was said by St. Philip Neri, that “whatever affection we bestow on creatures is so much taken from God."[17708] In deciding on a state of life, we must be quite unbiased by the advice of parents, who generally keep their own interests in view, rather than our real welfare.

Cast away all considerations of human respect, and of the vain esteem of men; and, above all, be detached from self-will. We must leave all, in order to gain all. "All for all,"[17709] writes Thomas à Kempis.

VIII

Not to give way to anger, whatever happens; but if perchance the sparks of passion are suddenly lighted in our breasts, let us call on God, and refrain from acting or speaking till we are sure that our anger is appeased. We shall find it of great service to arm ourselves in prayer against every chance of irritation that may befall us, in order not then to give way to culpable resentment; we should always remember that saying of St. Francis de Sales: "I never remember to have been angry without afterwards regretting it."

IX

All sanctity consists in loving God, and all love of God consists in doing his blessed will. We must, therefore, bow with resignation to all the dispositions of divine Providence without reserve; and so cheerfully submit to the adversity as well as prosperity which God sends, to the state of life in which God places us, to the sort of health which God bestows on us: and this should be the grand aim of all our prayers, namely, that God would enable us to fulfil his holy will in all things. And in order to be certain of the divine will, the religious must depend on obedience to his Superior, and those who are in the world to their confessor; for nothing is more certain than that saying of St. Philip Neri: "We shall have no account to render to God of what is done through obedience." Which is to be understood, of course, as long as there is no evident sin in the command.

X

There are two remedies against temptations: *resignation* and *prayer. Resignation,* for though temptations do not come from God, yet he permits them for our good. Wherefore beware of yielding to vexation, however annoying the temptations may be; be resigned to the will of God, who allows them; and take up the arms of prayer, which are the most powerful and the most certain to overcome our enemies. Bad thoughts, however filthy and abominable, are not sins; it is only the consenting to them which makes the sin. We shall never be overcome as long as we call on the holy names of Jesus and Mary. During the assaults of temptation, it is of service to renew our resolution to suffer death rather than to offend God; it is also a good practice repeatedly to sign ourselves with the sign of the cross, and with holy water; it is of great help, too, to discover the temptation to the confessor. But prayer is the most necessary remedy, and continual cries for help to Jesus and Mary.

XI

Then as to spiritual desolations, there are two acts in which we ought principally to exercise ourselves: 1st, to humble ourselves, with the sincere avowal that we deserve no better treatment; 2d, to resign ourselves to the will of God, and to abandon ourselves into the arms of his divine goodness. When God favors us with consolations, let us prepare ourselves for coming trials, which generally follow consolations. If it please God to leave us in desolation, let us be humble and fully resigned to his divine will, and we shall thus reap far greater advantage from desolations than from consolations.

XII

In order to live always well, we must store up deeply in our minds certain general maxims of eternal life, such as the following:

All passes away in this life, whether it be joy or sorrow; but in eternity nothing passes away.

What good is all the greatness of this world at the hour of death?

All that comes from God, whether it be adverse or prosperous, all is good, and is for our welfare.

We must leave all, to gain all.

There is no peace to be found without God.

To love God and save one’s soul is the one thing needful.

We need only be afraid of sin.

If God be lost, all is lost.

He that desires nothing in this world is master of the whole world.

He that prays is saved, and he that prays not is damned.

Let me die, and give God pleasure.

God is cheap at any cost.

Every pain is slight to him who has deserved hell.

He bears all who looks on Jesus crucified.

Everything becomes a pain that is not done for God.

Whoever wishes for God alone is rich in every good.

Happy the man who can say: “My Jesus, I desire Thee alone, and nothing more!”

He that loves God, finds pleasure in everything; he that loves not God, finds no true pleasure in anything.

NOVENA TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

CONSISTING OF MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE NOVENA, BEGINNING WITH THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION, TILL THE EVE OF PENTECOST INCLUSIVELY

The Novena to the Holy Spirit is the chief of all the Novenas, because it was the first that was ever celebrated, and that by the holy Apostles and the most holy Mary in the supper-room, and distinguished by so many remarkable wonders and gifts; principally by the gift of the same Holy Spirit, a gift merited for us by the Passion of Jesus Christ himself. Jesus himself made this known to us, when he said to his disciples, that if he did not die, he could not send us the Holy Ghost: *If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.*[17710] We know well by faith that the Holy Ghost is the love that the Father and the Eternal Word bear one to the other; and therefore the gift of love, which the Lord infuses into our souls, and which is the greatest of all gifts, is particularly attributed to the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says: *The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.*[17711] In this Novena, therefore, we must consider, above all, the great value of divine love, in order that we may desire to obtain it, and endeavor, by devout exercises, and specially by prayer, to be made partakers of it, since God has promised it to him who asks for it with humility: *Your Father from heaven will give the good Spirit to them that ask Him.*[17712]

MEDITATIONS

MEDITATION I

LOVE IS A FIRE THAT INFLAMES THE HEART

God had ordered, in the ancient law, that there should be a fire kept continually burning on his altar: *The fire on the altar shall always burn.*[17713] St. Gregory[17714] says, that the altars of God are our hearts, where he desires that the fire of his divine love should always be burning; and therefore the Eternal Father, not satisfied with having given us his Son Jesus Christ, to save us by his death, would also give us the Holy Ghost, that he might dwell in our souls, and keep them constantly on fire with love.

And Jesus himself declared, that he had come into the world on purpose to inflame our hearts with this holy fire, and that he desired nothing more than to see it kindled: *I am come to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?*[17715] Forgetting, therefore, the injuries and ingratitude he received from men on this earth, when he had ascended into heaven he sent down upon us the Holy Spirit. O most loving Redeemer, Thou dost, then, love us as well in Thy sufferings and ignominies as in Thy kingdom of glory! Hence it was that the Holy Ghost chose to appear in the supper-room under the form of tongues of fire: *And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were of fire.*[17716] And hence the Church teaches us to pray: “May the Holy Ghost, we beseech Thee, O Lord, inflame us with that fire which our Lord Jesus Christ came to cast upon the earth, and which he ardently desired should be enkindled.”[17717]

This was the holy fire which has inflamed the saints to do so great things for God, to love their enemies, to desire contempt, to deprive themselves of all earthly goods, and to embrace with delight even torments and death. Love cannot remain idle, and never says, “It is enough.” The soul that loves God, the more she does for her beloved, the more she desires to do, in order to please him, and to attract to herself his affections the more.

This holy fire is enkindled by mental prayer: *In my meditation a fire shall flame out.*[17718] If, therefore, we desire to burn with love towards God, let us love prayer; this is the blessed furnace in which this divine ardor is enkindled.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my God, hitherto I have done nothing for Thee, who hast done such great things for me! Alas! my coldness deserves that Thou shouldst “vomit me out of Thy mouth.” O Holy Spirit, I beseech Thee, “warm what is cold,”[17719] deliver me from this coldness, and enkindle within me an earnest desire of pleasing Thee. I now renounce all my worldly gratifications; and I will rather die than give Thee the least displeasure.

Thou didst appear in the shape of fiery tongues; I consecrate my tongue to Thee, that it may never offend Thee more. Thou didst give it me, O my God, to praise Thee with; and I have made use of it to offend Thee, and to draw others also into sinning against Thee. I repent of this with my whole soul. Oh, for the love of Jesus Christ, who, during his life on earth, honored Thee so much with his tongue, grant that I also may from this day forth honor Thee constantly, by celebrating Thy praises, by frequently invoking Thy aid, and by speaking of Thy goodness and the infinite love which Thou deservest! I love Thee, my sovereign good, I love Thee, O God of love! O Mary, thou art the most dear spouse of the Holy Ghost, obtain for me this holy fire!

MEDITATION II

LOVE IS A LIGHT THAT ENLIGHTENS THE SOUL

One of the greatest evils that the sin of Adam has produced in us, is that darkening of our reason by means of the passions which cloud our mind. Oh, how miserable is that soul that allows itself to be ruled by any passion! Passion, is as it were, a vapor, a veil which prevents us from seeing the truth. How can he fly from evil, who does not know what is evil? Besides, this obscurity increases in proportion as our sins increase. But the Holy Spirit, who is called “most blessed light,”[17720] is he who not only inflames our hearts to love him, through his divine splendor, but also dispels our darkness, and shows us the vanity of earthly things, the value of eternal goods, the importance of salvation, the price of grace, the goodness of God, the infinite love which he deserves, and the immense love which he bears us. *The sensual man perceiveth not those things that are of the Spirit of God.*[17721] A man who is absorbed in the pleasures of earth knows little of these truths, and therefore, unfortunate that he is, he loves what he ought to hate, and hates what he ought to love. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi exclaimed: O love not known! O love not loved!” And therefore St. Teresa said that God is not loved because he is not known. Hence the saints were always seeking light from God: *Send forth Thy light;*[17722] *illuminate my darkness;*[17723] *open Thou my eyes.*[17724] Yes: because without light we cannot avoid precipices, nor can we find God.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O holy and divine Spirit, I believe that Thou art really God, but one only God with the Father and the Son. I adore Thee, and acknowledge Thee as the giver of all those lights by which Thou hast made known to me the evil which I have committed in offending Thee, and the obligation which I am under of loving Thee. I thank Thee for them, and I repent with my whole heart of having offended Thee. I have deserved that Thou shouldst abandon me in my darkness; but I see that Thou hast not yet forsaken me. Continue, O eternal Spirit, to enlighten me, and to make me know more and more Thy infinite goodness; and give me strength to love Thee for the future with my whole heart. Add grace to grace; so that I may be sweetly overcome, and constrained to love none other but Thee. I implore this of Thee, through the merits of Jesus Christ. I love Thee, my sovereign good; I love Thee more than myself. I desire to be entirely Thine; do Thou accept me, and suffer me not to be separated from Thee any more. O Mary, my Mother, do thou always assist me by thy intercession!

MEDITATION III

LOVE IS A FOUNTAIN THAT SATISFIES

Love is also called a living fountain: “a living fountain, fire, and charity.”[17725] Our Blessed Redeemer said to the Samaritan woman: *But he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst for ever.*[17726] Love is the water which satisfies our thirst; he who loves God really with his whole heart neither seeks nor desires anything else; because in God he finds every good. Wherefore, satisfied with God, he often joyfully exclaims, “My God and my all!” My God, Thou art my whole good.

But the Almighty complains that many souls go about seeking for fleeting and miserable pleasures from creatures, and leave him, who is the infinite good and fountain of all joy: *They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.*[17727] Wherefore God, who loves us, and desires to see us happy, cries out and makes known to all: *If any thirst, let them come to me.*[17728] He who desires to be happy, let him come to me; and I will give him the Holy Ghost, who will make him blessed both in this life and the next. *He that believeth in Me* (he goes on to say), *as the Scripture saith, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*[17729] He therefore, that believes in Jesus Christ, and loves him, shall be enriched with so much grace, that from his heart (the heart, that is, the will), shall flow many fountains of holy virtues, which shall not only serve to preserve his own life, but also to give life to others. And this water was the Holy Ghost, the substantial love which Jesus Christ promised to send us from heaven after his ascension: *Now this He said of the Spirit, which they should receive who believed in Him, for as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*[17730]

The key which opens the channels of this blessed water is holy prayer, which obtains every good for us in virtue of the promise, *Ask, and you shall receive.*[17731] We are blind, poor, and weak; but prayer obtains for us light, strength, and abundance of grace. Theodoret said: "Prayer, though but one, can do all things."[17732] He who prays receives all he wishes. God desires to give us his graces; but he will have us pray for them.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

Lord, give me this water.[17733] O my Jesus, with the Samaritan woman, I beseech Thee, give me this water of Thy love, which may make me forget the earth, to live only for Thee, O amiable, infinite one. "Water that which is dry." My soul is a barren soil, which produces nothing but the weeds and thorns of sin; oh, do Thou water it with Thy grace, so that it may bring forth some fruits to Thy glory, before death takes me out of this world. O fountain of living water, O sovereign good, how many times have I left Thee for the puddles of this earth, which have deprived me of Thy love! Oh, would that I had died before I offended Thee! But for the future I will seek after nothing but Thee, O my God. Do Thou assist me, and enable me to be faithful to Thee. Mary, my hope, do thou keep me always under thy protection!

MEDITATION IV

LOVE IS A DEW WHICH FERTILIZES

Thus does Holy Church teach us to pray: "May the infusion of the Holy Ghost cleanse our hearts, and fertilize them by the interior sprinkling of his dew."[17734] Love fertilizes the good desires, the holy purposes, and the good works of our souls: these are the flowers and fruits which the grace of the Holy Spirit produces. Love is also called dew, because it cools the heart of bad passions and of temptations. Therefore the Holy Ghost is also called refreshment and cooling in the heat: "In heat refreshment and pleasing coolness."[17735] This dew descends into our hearts in the time of prayer. A quarter of an hour's prayer is sufficient to appease every passion of hatred or of inordinate love, however ardent it r may be: *He brought me into the cellar of wine, He set in order charity in me.*[17736] Holy meditation is this cellar where love is set in order, so that we love our neighbor as ourselves, and God above everything. He who loves God loves prayer; and he that loves not prayer will find it morally impossible to overcome his passions.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O holy and divine Spirit, I will no longer live to myself; but I will spend all the days that remain for me in this life in loving Thee and pleasing Thee. Therefore I beseech Thee to grant me the gift of prayer. Do Thou descend into my heart, and teach me to pray as I ought. Give me strength not to leave it off through weariness in times of aridity; and give me the spirit of prayer, that is to say, the grace constantly to pray to Thee, and to use those prayers which are dearest to Thy Sacred Heart. I was once lost through my sins; but I see, from all the kindnesses I have received from Thee, that Thou willest that I should be saved and become a saint; and I desire to become a saint to give Thee pleasure, and that I may love Thy infinite goodness more and more. I love Thee, O my sovereign good, my love, my all; and because I love Thee I give myself entirely to Thee. O Mary, my hope, do thou protect me!

MEDITATION V

LOVE IS A REPOSE THAT REFRESHES

Love is also called, "in labor rest, in mourning comfort."[17737] Love is repose that refreshes; because the principal office of love is to unite the will of the lover to that of the beloved one. To a soul that loves God, in every affront that it receives, in every sorrow that it endures, in every loss that happens to it, the knowledge that it is the will of its beloved that it should suffer these trials is enough to comfort it. It finds peace and contentment in all tribulations by merely saying, This is the will of my God. This is that peace which surpasses all the pleasure of sense: *The peace of God which surpasseth all understanding.*[17738] St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, by merely saying, “The will of God,” was always filled with joy.

In this life every one must carry his cross; but St. Teresa says, that the cross is heavy for him that drags it, not for him that embraces it. Thus our Lord knows well how to strike and how to heal: *He woundeth, and cureth,* says Job.[17739] The Holy Spirit, by his sweet unction, renders even ignominies and torments sweet and pleasant: *Yea, Lord; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.*[17740] Thus ought we to say in all adversities that happen to us: *So be it done, Lord, because so hath it pleased Thee.* And when the fear of any temporal evil that may befall us alarms us, let us always say: “Do what Thou wilt, my God; whatever Thou doest, I accept it all, henceforth.” And thus it is a very good thing to offer one’s self constantly during the day to God, as did St. Teresa.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my God, how often, for the sake of doing my own will, have I opposed myself to Thy will and despised it! I regret this evil more than every other evil. O Lord, from this day forward I will love Thee with my whole heart: *Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth.*[17741] Tell me what Thou wouldst have me to do, I will do it all. Thy will shall be my only desire, my only love. O Holy Spirit, help my weakness. Thou art goodness itself; how can I love any other but Thee? Oh, do Thou draw all my affections to Thyself by the sweetness of Thy holy love. I renounce everything, to give myself entirely to Thee. Do Thou accept me and help me. O Mary, my Mother, I trust in thee!

MEDITATION VI

LOVE IS THE VIRTUE WHICH GIVES US STRENGTH

Love is strong as death.[17742] As there is no created strength that can resist death, so there is no difficulty for a loving soul that love cannot overcome.

When there is question of pleasing its beloved, love conquers all,—losses, contempt, and sorrow: “Nothing is so hard, but that the fire of love can conquer it.”[17743]

This is the most certain mark whereby to know if a soul really loves God, if it is as faithful in love when things are adverse as when they are prosperous. St. Francis de Sales said, that “God is quite as amiable when he chastises as when he consoles us, because he does all for love.”[17744] Indeed, when he strikes us most in this life, then it is that he loves us most. St. John Chrysostom[17745] esteemed St. Paul in chains more fortunate than St. Paul rapt up into the third heaven.

Hence the holy martyrs, in the midst of their torments, rejoiced and thanked the Lord, as for the greatest favor that could fall to their lot—that of having to suffer for his love. And other saints, where there were wanting tyrants to afflict them, became their own executioners, by the penances which they inflicted upon themselves in order to please God. St. Augustine says, that “For that which men love, either no labor is felt, or the labor itself is loved.”[17746]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O God of my soul, I say that I love Thee; and yet what do I do for Thy love? Nothing. This shows, therefore, that either I do not love Thee, or I love Thee too little. Send me therefore, O my Jesus, Thy Holy Spirit, that he may come and give me strength to suffer for Thy love, and to do something for the love of Thee before death overtakes me. O my beloved Redeemer, let me not die cold and ungrateful as I have hitherto been to Thee. Grant me strength to love suffering, after so many sins whereby I have deserved hell. O my God, who art all goodness and love, Thou desirest to dwell in my heart from which I have so often expelled Thee; come, then, dwell within it, take possession of it, and make it entirely Thine. I love Thee, O my Lord; and if I love Thee, Thou art already with me, as St. John assures me: *He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him.*[17747] Since, therefore, Thou art with me, increase the flames, increase the chains, so that I may neither seek nor love anything else but Thee; and thus bound, may never be separated from Thy love. I desire to be Thine, O my Jesus, and entirely Thine. O Mary, my Queen and Advocate, obtain for me love and perseverance!

MEDITATION VII

LOVE CAUSES GOD TO DWELL IN OUR SOULS

The Holy Ghost is called “Sweet guest of the soul.” This was the great promise made by Jesus Christ to those who love him, when he said: *If you love Me, I will pray My Father, and He will send you the Holy Spirit, that He may always dwell in you. If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever.*[17748] For the Holy Spirit never forsakes a soul, says the Council of Trent, if he is not driven away from it: “He does not forsake, unless he be first forsaken.”[17749]

God, then, dwells in a soul that loves him; but he declares that he is not satisfied if we do not love him with our whole heart. St. Augustine tells us, that the Roman senate would not admit Jesus Christ into the number of their gods, because they said that he was a proud god, who would have none other beloved but himself. And so it is: he will have no rivals in the heart that loves him; and when he sees that he is not the only object loved, he is jealous (so to say), according to what St. James writes, of those creatures who divide with him the heart which he desires to have all to himself: *Do you think the Scripture saith in vain: To envy doth the spirit covet which dwelleth in you?*[17750] In short, as St. Jerome says, “Jesus is jealous.”[17751] Hence the heavenly Spouse praises that soul which, like the turtle-dove, lives in solitude and hidden from the world: *Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle-doves.*[17752] Because he does not choose that the world should take a part of that love which he desires to have all to himself, therefore he also praises his Spouse by calling her “a garden enclosed:” *My sister, My spouse, is a garden enclosed.*[17753] A garden closed against all earthly love. Do we doubt that Jesus deserves our whole love? “He gave himself wholly to thee,” says St. John Chrysostom; “He left nothing for himself.”[17754] He has given thee all his blood and his life; there remains nothing more for him to give thee.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my God, I see that Thou desirest to have me entirely for Thine own. I have oftentimes driven Thee from my soul, and yet Thou hast not disdained to return to me and reunite Thyself to me again. Oh, do Thou now take possession of my whole self. I give myself this day entirely to Thee; accept of me, O my Jesus, and let me never for the future live one moment deprived of Thy love. Thou seekest me, and I seek none other but Thee. Thou desirest my soul, and my soul desires none but Thee. Thou lovest me, and I love Thee; and since Thou lovest me, bind me to Thyself, so that I may never more be separated from Thee. O Queen of heaven, I trust in thee!

MEDITATION VIII

LOVE IS A BOND WHICH BINDS

As the Holy Spirit, who is uncreated love, is the indissoluble bond which binds the Father to the Eternal Word, so he also unites the soul to God. “Charity is a virtue,” says St. Augustine, “uniting us to God.”[17755] Hence, full of joy, St. Laurence Justinian exclaims: O love, thy bond has such strength, that it is able to bind even God, and unite him to our souls: “O love, how strong is thy bond, which could bind God!”[17756]

The bonds of the world are bonds of death; but the bonds of God are bonds of life and salvation: *Her bonds are a healthful binding.*[17757] Yes, because the bonds of God by means of love unite us to God, who is our true and only life.

Before the coming of Jesus Christ men fled away from God, and being attached to the earth, refused to unite themselves to their Creator; but the loving God has drawn them to himself by the bonds of love, as he promised by the prophet Osee: *I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love.*[17758] These bands are the benefits, the lights, the calls to his love, the promises of paradise, which he makes to us; but above all, the gift which he has bestowed upon us of Jesus Christ in the Sacrifice of the Cross and in the Sacrament of the Altar, and finally, the gift of his Holy Spirit. Therefore the prophet exclaims: *Loose the bonds from off thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.*[17759] O my soul, thou who art created for heaven, loose thyself from the bonds of earth, and unite thyself to God by the bonds of holy love: *Have charity, which is the bond of perfection.*[17760] Love is a bond which unites to herself all other virtues, and makes the soul perfect. “Love, and do what you will,”[17761] said St. Augustine. Love God, and do what thou wilt; because he who loves God tries to avoid causing any displeasure to his beloved, and seeks in all things to please him.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dearest Jesus, how much hast Thou not done to oblige me to love Thee, and how much hath it cost Thee to gain to Thyself my love! Ah, I should be too ungrateful if I loved Thee little, or divided my heart between Thy creatures and Thyself, after Thou hast given me Thy blood and Thy life. I will detach myself from everything, and in Thee alone will I place all my affections. But I am weak in carrying out this my desire; O Thou who hast inspired me with it, do Thou give me strength to execute it. Pierce my poor soul, O dearest Jesus, with the sweet dart of Thy love, so that I may ever languish with desire of Thee, and be dissolved with the love of Thee; that I may seek Thee alone, desire only Thee, and find none but Thee. My Jesus, I desire Thee, and Thee alone. Make me repeat continually in this life, and especially at the hour of my death, “Thee alone do I desire, and nothing else.” O Mary, my Mother, obtain for me that henceforth I may desire nothing but God.

MEDITATION IX

LOVE IS A TREASURE CONTAINING EVERY GOOD

Love is that treasure of which the Gospel says that we must leave all to obtain it; yes, because love makes us partakers of the friendship of God: *An infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.*[17762] O man, says St. Augustine, wherefore, then, goest thou about seeking for good things? seek that one good alone in which all other good things are contained. But we cannot find God, who is this sovereign good, if we do not forsake the things of the earth. St. Teresa writes, “Detach thy heart from creatures, and thou shalt find God.”[17763]

He that finds God finds all that he can desire: *Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart.*[17764] The human heart is constantly seeking after good things that may render it happy; but if it seeks them from creatures, how much soever it may acquire, it will never be satisfied with them; but if it seeks God alone, God will satisfy all its desires. Who are the happiest people in this world, if it be not the saints? And why? Because they desire and seek only God.

A certain prince, as he was going out hunting, saw a solitary who was running about in the forest, and asked him what he was doing in that desert. The solitary replied, “And thou, O prince, what art thou seeking?” The prince said, “I am going out in search of wild beasts.” “And I,” said the hermit, “am going out in search of God.” The tyrant offered gold and gems to St. Clement, in order to persuade him to renounce Jesus Christ; the saint exclaimed, with a sigh, “Alas, is God put into competition with a little dirt? Blessed is he who knows this treasure of divine love, and strives to obtain it. He who obtains it will of his own accord divest himself of everything else, that he may have nothing else but God.” “When the house is on fire,” says St. Francis de Sales, “all the goods are thrown out of the window.”[17765] And Father Paul Segneri the Younger, a great servant of God, used to say, that love is a thief, which robs us of all earthly affections; so that we can say, “And what else do I desire, but Thee alone, O my Lord?”

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

O my God, hitherto I have not sought Thee, but myself and my own pleasures; and for the sake of these I have turned my back upon Thee, my sovereign good. But I am comforted by these words of Jeremias, *The Lord is good to the soul that secketh Him.*[17766] They tell me that Thou art all goodness towards him who seeks Thee. My beloved Saviour, I know the evil that I have committed in forsaking Thee, and I repent of it with my whole heart. I know that Thou art an infinite treasure. I will not abuse this light; I will forsake all, and choose Thee for my only love. My God, my love, my all, I love Thee, I desire Thee, I sigh after Thee. Come, O Holy Spirit, and destroy in me by Thy sacred fire every affection which has not Thee for its object. Grant that I may be all Thine, and that I may conquer everything to please Thee. O Mary, my advocate and Mother, do thou help me by thy prayers!

MEDITATION X

THE MEANS OF LOVING GOD AND OF BECOMING A SAINT

The more we love God, the more holy do we become. St. Francis Borgia says that it is prayer that introduces divine love into the human heart; and it is mortification that withdraws the heart from the earth, and renders it capable of receiving this holy fire. The more there is of the earth in the heart, the less room there is for holy love: *Wisdom is not to be found in the land of them that live in delights.*[17767] Hence the saints have always sought to mortify as much as possible their self-love and their senses. The saints are few; but we must live with the few, if we will be saved with the few: “Live with the few,” writes St. John Climacus, “if you would reign with the few.”[17768] And St. Bernard says, “That cannot be perfect which is not singular.”[17769] He who would lead a perfect life must lead a singular life.

But before all, in order to become saints, it is necessary to have the desire to be saints; we must have the desire and the resolution. Some are always desiring, but they never begin to put their hands to the work. “Of these irresolute souls,” says St. Teresa, “the devil has no fear.” On the other hand, the saint said, “God is a friend of generous souls.” The devil tries to make it appear to us to be pride to think of doing great things for God. It would indeed be pride in us, if we thought of doing them, trusting in our own strength; but it is not pride to resolve to become saints, trusting in God, and saying, *I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.*[17770]

We must therefore be of good courage, make strong resolutions, and begin. Prayer can do everything. What we cannot do by our own strength, we shall do easily with the help of God, who has promised to give us whatever we ask of him: *You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.*[17771]

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS

My dearest Redeemer, Thou desirest my love, and commandest me to love Thee with my whole heart. Yes, my Jesus, I desire to love Thee with my whole heart. O my God, I will say to Thee, trusting in Thy mercy, my past sins do not make me fear, because I now hate them and detest them above every other evil; and I know that Thou dost forget the offences of a soul that is penitent and loves Thee. Indeed, because I have offended Thee more than others, I will also love Thee more than others, with the help that I hope to obtain from Thee. O my Lord, Thou desirest that I should be a saint; and I desire to become a saint to please Thee. I love Thee, O infinite goodness. To Thee do I give myself entirely. Thou art my only good, my only love. Accept of me, O my beloved, and make me entirely Thine, and suffer me not to offend Thee any more. Grant that I may be wholly consumed for Thee, as Thou hast wholly consumed Thyself for me, O Mary, the most loving and most beloved spouse of the Holy Spirit, obtain for me love and fidelity!

VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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CONTENTS

INDEX

VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

- CONTENTS
- Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin
  - NOTICE
  - TO MARY THE EVER-IMMACULATE VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD
  - TO THE READER
  - INTRODUCTION
    - I
THE VISIT TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT
    - II
THE VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN
    - III
SPIRITUAL COMMUNION
  - MANNER OF MAKING THE VISITS
  - VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN
  - *FIRST VISIT*
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
  - *SECOND VISIT*
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
  - *THIRD VISIT*
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
  - *FOURTH VISIT*
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
  - *FIFTH VISIT*
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

SIXTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

SEVENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

EIGHTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

NINTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

ELEVENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWELFTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

THIRTEENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

FOURTEENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

FIFTEENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

SIXTEENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

SEVENTEENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

EIGHTEENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

NINETEENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTIETH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-FIRST VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-SECOND VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-THIRD VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-FOURTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-FIFTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-SIXTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-SEVENTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-EIGHTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

TWENTY-NINTH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

THIRTIETH VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

THIRTY-FIRST VISIT
TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

HYMNS

  I
  JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT ENCLOSED IN THE TABERNACLE

  II
  THE VISIT TO JESUS ON THE ALTAR

Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin

NOTICE

THIS treatise, called the Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin, is the first work that St. Alphonsus published: this was in the year 1745. This first-born of his pen has met from its appearance with marvellous success, not only in Italy, but in Europe and the whole Catholic world. During the lifetime of the holy author it was translated into nearly every language. After more than a century the reputation that it has enjoyed instead of diminishing has ever increased. Our saint also composed other acts for Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin. These are to be found in Volume XVI.—ED.

TO MARY THE EVER-IMMACULATE VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD

MY most holy Queen,—On the point of publishing the present little work, in which I treat of the love of thy Son, I know not to whom I can better dedicate it than to thee, my most beloved Mother, who, amongst all creatures, art his most tender lover. I believe that by this little offering which I present to thee, and which is composed for the sole purpose of inflaming souls more and more with the love of Jesus Christ,—I believe, I say, that by it I shall greatly please thee, who desirest to see him loved by all as he deserves. To thee, then, I consecrate it, such as it is; do thou graciously accept and protect it; not indeed that I may receive the praises of men, but that all who read it may for the future correspond, by their greater devotion and affection, with the tender and excessive love which our most sweet Saviour has been pleased to show us in his Passion, and in the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament. As such, I place it at thy feet, and beseech thee to accept the gift as wholly thine, as also the giver, who has long since placed all his hopes in thee, and wishes and hopes always to call himself, and to rejoice in being,

Most gracious Lady,
Thy most loving, though most unworthy servant,
Alphonsus de Liguori,
Of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

TO THE READER

I BEG, my dear reader, that you will not despise this little book, though written with the utmost simplicity. I have composed it in a style very simple, because I believe that it will thus more likely promote devotion amongst all classes of persons. I also beg that whether I am living or dead you will recommend me to the Most Holy Sacrament each time that you use it; and on my part I promise to pray for all who do me this act of charity, every time I offer up the Most Holy Sacrifice.

INTRODUCTION

I

THE VISIT TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT

OUR holy faith teaches us, and we are bound to believe, that in the consecrated Host Jesus Christ is really present under the species of bread. But we must also understand that he is thus present on our altars as on a throne of love and mercy, to dispense graces and there to show us the love which he bears us, by being pleased to dwell night and day hidden in the midst of us.

It is well known that the Holy Church instituted the festival of Corpus Christi with a solemn octave, and that she celebrates it with the many usual processions, and so frequent expositions of this Most Holy Sacrament, that men may thereby be moved gratefully to acknowledge and honor this loving presence and dwelling of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, by their devotions, thanksgivings, and the tender affections of their souls. O God! how many insults and outrages has not this amiable Redeemer had, and has he not daily, to endure in this sacrament on the part of those very men for whose love he remains upon their altars on earth! Of this he indeed complained to his dear servant Sister Margaret Alacoque, as the author of the *Book of Devotion to the Heart of Jesus* relates. One day, as she was in prayer before the Most Holy Sacrament, Jesus showed her his heart on a throne of flames, crowned with thorns, and surmounted by a cross, and thus addressed her: “Behold that heart which has loved men so much, and which has spared itself nothing; and has even gone so far as to consume itself, thereby to show them its love; but in return the greater part of men only show me ingratitude, and this by the irreverences, tepidity, sacrileges, and contempt which they offer me in this sacrament of love; and that which I feel the most acutely is, that they are hearts consecrated to me.” Jesus then expressed his wish, that the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi should be dedicated as a particular festival in honor of his adorable heart;

and that on that day all souls who loved him should endeavor, by their homage, and by the affections of their souls, to make amends for the insults which men have offered him in this sacrament of the Altar; and at the same time he promised abundant graces to all who should thus honor him.

We can thus understand what our Lord said of old by his prophet, that his delight is to be with the children of men;[17772] since he is unable to tear himself from them even when they abandon and despise him. This also shows us how agreeable all those souls are to the heart of Jesus who frequently visit him, and remain in his company in the churches in which he is, under the sacramental species. He desired St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi to visit him in the Most Blessed Sacrament thirty-three times a day; and this beloved spouse of his faithfully obeyed him, and in all her visits to the altar approached it as near as she possibly could, as we read in her life.

But let all those devout souls who often go to spend their time with the Most Blessed Sacrament speak;—let them tell us the gifts, the inspirations which they have received, the flames of love which are there enkindled in their souls, the paradise which they enjoy in the presence of this hidden God.

The servant of God and great Sicilian missionary Father, Louis La Nusa, was, even in his youth and as a layman, so enamoured of Jesus Christ, that he seemed unable to tear himself from the presence of his beloved Lord. Such were the joys which he there experienced, that his director commanded him, in virtue of obedience, not to remain there for more than an hour. The time having elapsed, he showed in obeying (says the author of his life), that in tearing himself from the bosom of Jesus Christ he had to do himself just such violence as a child that has to detach itself from its mother’s breast in the very moment in which it is satiating itself with the utmost avidity; and when he had to do this, we are told that he remained standing with his eyes fixed on the altar, making repeated inclinations, as if he knew not how to quit his Lord, whose presence was so sweet and gracious to him. To St. Aloysius it was also forbidden to remain in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament; and as he used to pass before it, finding himself drawn, so to speak, by the sweet attractions of his Lord, and almost forced to remain there, he would, with the greatest effort, tear himself away, saying, with an excess of tender love: *Depart from me, O*

Lord, depart![17773] There it was also that St. Francis Xavier found refreshment in the midst of his many labors in India; for he employed his days in toiling for souls, and his nights in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament. St. John Francis Regis did the same thing; and sometimes finding the church closed, he endeavored to satisfy his longings by remaining on his knees outside the door, exposed to the rain and cold, that at least at a distance he might attend upon his comforter concealed under the sacramental species. St. Francis of Assisi used to go to communicate all his labors and undertakings to Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament. But tender indeed was the devotion of St. Wenceslaus, duke of Bohemia, to the Most Holy Sacrament. This holy king was so enamoured of Jesus there present, that he not only gathered the wheat and grapes, and made the hosts and wine with his own hands, and then gave them to be used in the Holy Sacrifice, but he used, even during the winter, to go at night to visit the church in which the Blessed Sacrament was kept. These visits enkindled in his beautiful soul such flames of divine love, that their ardor imparted itself even to his body, and took from the snow on which he walked its wonted cold; for it is related that the servant who accompanied him in these nightly excursions, having to walk through the snow, suffered much from the cold. The holy king, on perceiving this, was moved to compassion, and commanded him to follow him, and only to step in his footmarks; he did so, and never afterwards felt the cold.

In the visits you will read other examples of the tender affection with which souls inflamed with the love of God loved to dwell in the presence of the Most Holy Sacrament. But you will find that all the saints were enamoured of this most sweet devotion; since, indeed, it is impossible to find on earth a more precious gem, or a treasure more worthy of all our love, than Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament. Certainly amongst all devotions, after that of receiving the sacraments, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament holds the first place, is the most pleasing to God, and the most useful to ourselves. Do not then, O devout soul, refuse to begin this devotion; and forsaking the conversation of men, dwell each day, from this time forward, for at least half or quarter of an hour, in some church, in the presence of Jesus Christ under the sacramental species. *Taste and see how sweet is the Lord.*[17774] Only try this devotion, and by experience you will see the great benefit that you will derive from it. Be assured that the time you will thus spend with devotion before this most divine Sacrament will be the most profitable to you in life, and the source of your greatest consolation in death and in eternity. You must also be aware, that in a quarter of an hour’s prayer spent in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, you will perhaps gain more than in all the other spiritual exercises of the day. It is true, that in every place God graciously hears the petitions of those who pray to him, having promised to do so: *Ask, and you shall receive;*[17775] yet the disciple tells us that Jesus dispenses his graces in greater abundance to those who visit him in the Most Holy Sacrament. Blessed Henry Suso used also to say that Jesus Christ hears the prayers of the faithful more graciously in the sacrament of the altar than elsewhere. And where, indeed, did holy souls make their most beautiful resolutions, but prostrate before the Most Holy Sacrament? Who knows but that you also may one day, in the presence of the tabernacle, make the resolution to give yourself entirely to God? In this little book I feel myself bound, at least out of gratitude to my Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, to declare, that through the means of this devotion of visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament, which I practised, though with so much tepidity and in so imperfect a manner, I abandoned the world, in which, unfortunately, I lived until I was six-and-twenty years of age. Fortunate indeed will you be if you can detach yourself from it at an earlier period, and give yourself without reserve to that Lord who has given himself without reserve to you. I repeat it, that indeed you will be blessed, not only in eternity, but even in this life. Believe me, all is folly: feasts, theatres, parties of pleasure, amusements,—these are the goods of the world, but goods which are filled with the bitterness of gall and with sharp thorns. Believe me, who have experienced this and now weep over it. Be also assured that Jesus Christ finds means to console a soul that remains with a recollected spirit before the Most Blessed Sacrament, far beyond what the world can do with all its feasts and pastimes. Oh, how sweet a joy it is to remain with faith and tender devotion before an altar, and converse familiarly with Jesus Christ, who is there for the express purpose of listening to and graciously hearing those who pray to him; to ask his pardon for the displeasures which we have caused him; to represent our wants to him, as a friend does to a friend in whom he places all his confidence; to ask him for his graces, for his love, and for his kingdom; but above all, oh, what a heaven is it there to remain making acts of love towards that Lord who is on the very altar praying to the Eternal Father for us, and is there burning with love for us. Indeed that love it is which detains him there, thus hidden and unknown, and when he is even despised by ungrateful souls! But why should we say more? "Taste and see."

II

THE VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

And now as to the visits to the Most Blessed Virgin, the opinion of St. Bernard is well known, and generally believed: it is, that God dispenses no graces otherwise than through the hands of Mary: "God wills that we should receive nothing that does not pass through Mary's hands."[17776] Hence Father Suarez declares that it is now the sentiment of the universal Church, that "the intercession of Mary is not only useful, but even necessary to obtain graces."[17777].[17778] And we may remark that the Church gives us strong grounds for this belief, by applying the words of the Sacred Scripture to Mary, and making her say: *In me is all hope of life and of virtue. Come over to me, all ye that desire me.*[17779] Let all come to me; for I am the hope of all that you can desire. Hence she then adds: *Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors.*[17780] Blessed is he who is diligent in coming every day to the door of my powerful intercession; for by finding me he will find life and eternal salvation: *He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.*[17781] Hence it is not without reason that the Holy Church wills that we should all call her our common hope, by saluting her, saying, "Hail, our hope!"

"Let us then," says St. Bernard (who went so far as to call Mary "the whole ground of his hope"), "seek for graces, and seek them through Mary."[17782] Otherwise, says St. Antoninus, if we ask for graces without her intercession, we shall be making an effort to fly without wings, and we shall obtain nothing: "He who asks without her as his guide, attempts to fly without wings."[17783]

In Father Auriemma's little book, *Affetti Scambievoli*,[17784] we read of innumerable favors granted by the Mother of God to those who practised this most profitable devotion of often visiting her in her churches or before some image. We read of the graces which she granted in these visits to Blessed Albert the Great, to the Abbot Rupert, to Father Suarez, especially when she obtained for them the gift of understanding, by which they afterwards became so renowned throughout the Church for their great learning: the graces which she granted to the Venerable John Berchmans of the Society of Jesus, who was in the daily habit of visiting Mary in a chapel of the Roman college; he declared that he renounced all earthly love, to love no other after God than the Most Blessed Virgin, and had written at the foot of the image of his beloved Lady: "I will never rest until I shall have obtained a tender love for my Mother:"[17785] the graces which she granted to St. Bernardine of Sienna, who in his youth also went every day to visit her in a chapel near the city-gate, and declared that that Lady had ravished his heart. Hence he called her his beloved, and said that he could not do less than often visit her; and by her means he afterwards obtained the grace to renounce the world, and to become what he afterwards was, a great saint and the apostle of Italy.

Do you, then, be also careful always to join to your daily visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament a visit to the most holy Virgin Mary in some church, or at least before a devout image of her in your own house. If you do this with tender affection and confidence, you may hope to receive great things from this most gracious Lady, who, as St. Andrew of Crete says, always bestows great gifts on those who offer her even the least act of homage.[17786]

Mary, Queen of sweetest hope,
Who can e'er forget thee?
By thy mercy, by thy love,
Have pity, Queen, on me?

III

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

As in all the following visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament a spiritual Communion is recommended, it will be well to explain what it is, and the great advantages which result from its practice. A spiritual Communion, according to St. Thomas,[17787] consists in an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, and in lovingly embracing him as if we had actually received him.

How pleasing these spiritual Communions are to God, and the many graces which he bestows through their means, was manifested by our Lord himself to Sister Paula Maresca, the foundress of the convent of St. Catharine of Sienna in Naples, when (as it is related in her life) he showed her two precious vessels, the one of gold, the other of silver. He then told her that in the gold vessel he preserved her sacramental Communions, and in the silver one her spiritual Communions. He also told Blessed Jane of the Cross that each time that she communicated spiritually she received a grace of the same kind as the one that she received when she really communicated. Above all, it will suffice for us to know that the holy Council of Trent[17788] greatly praises spiritual Communions, and encourages the faithful to practise them.

Hence all devout souls are accustomed often to practise this holy exercise of spiritual Communion. Blessed Agatha of the Cross did so two hundred times a day. And Father Peter Faber, the first companion of St. Ignatius, used to say that it was of the highest utility to make spiritual Communions, in order to receive the sacramental Communion well.

All those who desire to advance in the love of Jesus Christ are exhorted to make a spiritual Communion at least once in every visit that they pay to the Most Blessed Sacrament, and at every Mass that they hear; and it would even be better on these occasions to repeat the Communions three times, that is to say, at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. This devotion is far more profitable than some suppose, and at the same time nothing can be easier to practise. The above-named Blessed Jane of the Cross used to say, that a spiritual Communion can be made without any one remarking it, without being fasting, without the permission of our director, and that we can make it at any time we please: an act of love does all.

MANNER OF MAKING THE VISITS[17789]

ACTS TO BE MADE BEFORE EACH VISIT TO THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, who, for the love which Thou bearest to men, remainest night and day in this Sacrament full of compassion and of love, awaiting, calling, and welcoming all who come to visit Thee: I believe that Thou art present in the Sacrament of the Altar: I adore Thee from the abyss of my nothingness, and I thank Thee for all the graces which Thou hast bestowed upon me, and in particular for having given me Thyself in this Sacrament, for having given me Thy most holy Mother Mary for my advocate, and for having called me to visit Thee in this church.

I now salute Thy most loving Heart; and this for three ends: 1. In thanksgiving for this great gift; 2. To make amends to Thee for all the outrages which Thou receivest in this Sacrament from all Thine enemies; 3. I intend by this visit to adore Thee in all the places on earth in which Thou art present in this Sacrament, and in which Thou art the least revered and the most abandoned.

My Jesus, I love Thee with my whole heart. I grieve for having hitherto so many times offended Thy infinite goodness. I purpose by Thy grace never more to offend Thee for the time to come; and now, miserable and unworthy though I be, I consecrate myself to Thee without reserve; I give Thee and renounce my entire will, my affections, my desires, and all that I possess. From henceforward do Thou dispose of me and of all that I have as Thou pleasest. All that I ask of Thee and desire is Thy holy love, final perseverance, and the perfect accomplishment of Thy will.

I recommend to Thee the souls in purgatory; but especially those who had the greatest devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. I also recommend to Thee all poor sinners.

In fine, my dear Saviour, I unite all my affections with the affections of Thy most loving Heart; and I offer them, thus united, to Thy Eternal Father, and beseech him in Thy name to vouchsafe, for Thy love, to accept and grant them.

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus, I believe that Thou art truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love Thee above all things, and I desire to possess Thee within my soul. Since I am unable now to receive Thee sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace Thee as being already there, and unite myself wholly to Thee; never permit me to be separated from Thee.

A SHORTER ACT

I believe that Thou, O Jesus, art in the Most Holy Sacrament! I love Thee and desire Thee! Come into my heart. I embrace Thee; oh, never leave me!

"May the burning and most sweet power of Thy love, O Lord Jesus Christ, I beseech Thee, absorb my mind, that I may die through love of Thy love, who wast graciously pleased to die through love of my love."[17790]—*St. Francis of Assisi.*

"O love not loved! O love not known!"—*St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi.*

"O my spouse, when wilt Thou take me to Thyself?"—*St. Peter of Alcantara.*

Jesus, my good, my sweetest love,

Strike and inflame this heart of mine,

Make it all fire for love of Thee!

Hail to the love of Jesus, our life, and our all! Hail to Mary, our hope! Amen.

After the spiritual Communion, you will then make a visit to some image of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Read the visit of the day, and finish by the following prayer, thereby to obtain the most powerful patronage of Mary:

Most holy Immaculate Virgin and my Mother Mary, to thee who art the Mother of my Lord, the Queen of the world, the advocate, the hope, the refuge of sinners, I have recourse to-day,—I, who am the most miserable of all. I render thee my most humble homages, O Great Queen, and I thank thee for all the graces thou hast conferred on me until now, particularly for having delivered me from hell, which I have so often deserved. I love thee, O most amiable Lady; and for the love which I bear thee, I promise to serve thee always, and to do all in my power to make others love thee also. I place in thee all my hopes; I confide my salvation to thy care. Accept me for thy servant, and receive me under thy mantle, O Mother of mercy. And since thou art so powerful with God, deliver me from all temptations, or rather obtain me the strength to triumph over them until death. Of thee I ask a perfect love for Jesus Christ. From thee I hope to die a good death. O my Mother, by the love which thou bearest to God, I beseech thee to help me at all times, but especially at the last moment of my life. Leave me not, I beseech thee, until thou seest me safe in heaven, blessing thee, and singing thy mercies for all eternity. Amen. So I hope. So may it be.

VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

FOR EACH DAY OF THE MONTH

FIRST VISIT[17791]

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Say preliminary prayer, *My Lord Jesus Christ*, etc., page 123.

Behold the source of every good, Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, who says, *If any man thirst, let him come to Me.*[17792] Oh, what torrents of grace have the saints drawn from the fountain of the Most Blessed Sacrament! for there Jesus dispenses all the merits of his Passion, as it was foretold by the Prophet: *You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains.*[17793] The Countess of Feria, that illustrious disciple of the Venerable Father John d'Avila, afterwards a poor Clare, and surnamed the spouse of the Most Blessed Sacrament from her long and frequent visits to it, on being asked how she employed the many hours thus passed in the presence of the Holy of holies, answered: "I could remain there for all eternity. And is not there present the very essence of God, who will be the food of the blessed? Good God! am I asked what I do in his presence? Why am I not rather asked, what is not done there? We love, we ask, we praise, we give thanks. We ask, what does a poor man do in the presence of one who is rich? What does a sick man do in the presence of his physician? What does a man do who is parched with thirst in the presence of a clear fountain? What is the occupation of one who is starving, and is placed before a splendid table?"

O my most amiable, most sweet, most beloved Jesus, my life, my hope, my treasure, the only love of my soul; oh, what has it cost Thee to remain thus with us in this Sacrament! Thou hadst to die, that Thou mightest thus dwell amongst us on our altars; and then, how many insults hast Thou not had to endure in this Sacrament, in order to aid us by Thy presence! Thy love, and the desire which Thou hast to be loved by us, have conquered all.

Come then, O Lord! come and take possession of my heart; close its doors forever, that henceforward no creature may enter there, to divide the love which is due to Thee, and which it is my ardent desire to bestow all on

Thee. Do Thou alone, my dear Redeemer, rule me; do Thou alone possess my whole being; and if ever I do not obey Thee perfectly, chastise me with rigor, that thenceforward I may be more watchful to please Thee as Thou willest. Grant that I may no longer seek for any other pleasure than that of giving Thee pleasure; that all my pleasure may be to visit Thee often on Thy altar; to entertain myself with Thee, and to receive Thee in Holy Communion. Let all who will, seek other treasures; the only treasure that I love, the only one that I desire, is that of Thy love; for this only will I ask at the foot of the altar. Do Thou make me forget myself, that thus I may only remember Thy goodness. Ye blessed seraphim, I envy you, not for your glory, but for the love which you bear to your and my God; oh, do you teach me what I must do to love him, and to please him.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, I will love Thee only; Thee only do I desire to please.

Then follows the Spiritual Communion, page 124, after which the visit should be paid to the ever-blessed Mary, the Mother of God, before her image.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY[17794]

In our Mother Mary we have another fountain, which is indeed fruitful to us. She is so rich in good things and in graces, says St. Bernard, that there is no one in the world who does not participate in them: “Of her fulness we have all received.”[17795] The Most Blessed Virgin Mary was filled by God with grace, and as such was saluted by the angel, “Hail, full of grace;” not for herself alone, but also for us. St. Peter Chrysologus adds, that she received that great abyss of grace, that she might then impart it to all who are devout to her: “The Blessed Virgin received this grace, that she might give in return salvation to all.”[17796]

Ejaculatory prayer. Cause of our joy, pray for us![17797]

(From the Naples Edition.)

PRAYER OF ST. EPHREM

Most pure and immaculate Virgin! divine Mary, Mother of God! thou art elevated in dignity above all the saints; thou art the hope of our fathers and the joy of the elect. Through thee, as the Mother of Jesus, we have been reconciled with God. O great Queen! have compassion on us, and grant us an asylum in the arms of thy mercy. We dedicate and consecrate ourselves to thy service; suffer not the devil to draw us with him into eternal flames.

Ejaculatory prayer. Cause of our joy, pray for us.[17798]

The usual prayer, page 125.

SECOND VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123

The devout Father Nieremberg says, that bread being a food which is consumed by eating, and which keeps when preserved for use, Jesus was pleased to dwell on earth under its species, that he might thus not only be consumed by uniting himself to the souls of his lovers by means of the Holy Communion, but also that he might be preserved in the tabernacle, and be present with us, and thus remind us of the love which he bears us. St. Paul says: *He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant.*[17799] But what must we say when we see him "taking the form of bread"? "No tongue would suffice," says St. Peter of Alcantara, "to proclaim the greatness of the love which Jesus bears to every soul that is in a state of grace. In order, therefore, that his absence might not be to them an occasion of forgetting him, this most sweet Spouse, when he was pleased to quit this life, left as a memorial this Most Blessed Sacrament, in which he himself remained. He did not wish that between these souls and himself any other pledge but himself should remain, whereby to keep alive their remembrance of him."

Since, then, my Jesus, Thou art enclosed in this tabernacle to receive the supplications of miserable creatures who come to seek an audience of Thee, listen this day to the petition addressed to Thee by the most ungrateful sinner living on earth. I come repentant to Thy feet; for I now know the evil which I have committed in giving Thee displeasure. My first prayer and desire, then, is, that Thou wilt be pleased to pardon me all the sins that I have committed against Thee. Ah, my God, would that I had never offended Thee! After this I must tell Thee my next desire. Now that I have found out Thy sovereign goodness, I have become enamoured of Thee; I feel an ardent desire to love Thee and to please Thee; but I have not the strength to do this unless Thou helpest me. Manifest, O great Lord, Thy supreme power, and Thy immense goodness to the whole court of heaven; change me from a great rebel, such as I have hitherto been to Thee, into a great lover of Thee. Thou canst do so, and I know that such is Thy will; supply all that is wanting in me, that thus I may be enabled to love Thee much—at least that I may love Thee as much as I have offended Thee. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee above all things; I love Thee more than my life, my God, my love, my all!

Ejaculatory prayer. My God and my all.

Spiritual Communion, page 124

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Let us go with confidence to the throne of grace: that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.[17800] St. Antoninus says,[17801] that Mary is this throne, from which God dispenses all graces.

O most amiable Queen, since thou hast so great a desire to help sinners, behold a great sinner who has recourse to thee; help me much, and help me without delay!

Ejaculatory Prayer. Sole refuge of sinners, have mercy on me.[17802]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. EPHREM

O Queen of the universe and most bountiful sovereign! thou art the great advocate of sinners, the sure port of those who have suffered shipwreck, the resource of the world, the ransom of captives, the solace of the weak, the consolation of the afflicted, the refuge and salvation of every creature. O full of grace enlighten my understanding, and loosen my tongue, that I may recount thy praises, and sing to thee the angelical salutation, which thou so justly deservest. Hail, thou who art the peace, the joy, the consolation of the whole world! Hail, paradise of delight, the assured asylum of all who are in danger, the source of grace, the mediatrix between God and man!

Ejaculatory Prayer. Refuge of sinners, take pity on me.

The usual prayer, page 125.

THIRD VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123

And My delights were to be with the children of men.[17803] Behold our Jesus, who, not satisfied with dying on earth for our love, is pleased even after his death to dwell with us in the Most Holy Sacrament, declaring that he finds his delights among men. "O men," exclaims St. Teresa, "how can you offend a God who declares that it is with you that he finds his delights!" Jesus finds his delights with us; and shall we not find ours with Jesus? And we especially who have had the honor to dwell in his palace? How greatly do those vassals esteem themselves honored to whom the king assigns an abode in his own residence! Behold the palace of the King; it is this house in which we dwell with Jesus Christ. Let us, then, learn to thank him for it, and to avail ourselves of conversing with Jesus Christ.

Behold me, then, O my Lord and God, before this altar, on which Thou dost reside night and day for my sake. Thou art the source of every good; Thou art the healer of every ill; Thou art the treasure of every poor creature. Behold now at Thy feet a sinner, who is of all the poorest and most infirm, and who asks Thy mercy; have pity upon me! Now that I see Thee in this Sacrament, come down from heaven upon earth only to do me good; I will not be disheartened at the sight of my misery. I praise Thee, I thank Thee, I love Thee; and if Thou willest that I should ask Thee for an alms, I will ask for this. O listen to me: I desire never more to offend Thee; and I desire that Thou shouldst give me light and grace to love Thee with all my strength. Lord, I love Thee with my whole soul; I love Thee with all my affections. Do Thou grant that I may thus speak with truth; and that I may speak in the same way during life and for all eternity. Most holy Virgin Mary, my holy patron saints, ye angels and all ye blessed spirits of paradise, help me to love my most amiable God.

Ejaculatory Prayer. O Good Shepherd, true bread, Jesus, have mercy on us: do Thou feed us; do Thou guard us; do Thou show us good things in the land of the living![17804]

Spiritual Communion, page 124

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Her bands are a healthful binding.[17805] The devout Pelbart says[17806] that devotion to Mary is a chain of predestination. Let us beseech our sovereign Lady to bind us always more closely by the chains of love to confidence in her protection.

Ejaculatory Prayer. O clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary.[17807]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. GERMANUS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Most holy Virgin! who art the greatest consolation that I receive from God, thou who art the heavenly dew which assuages all my pains, thou who art the light of my soul when it is enveloped in darkness, thou who art my guide in unknown paths, the support of my weakness, my treasure in poverty, my remedy in sickness, my consolation in trouble, my refuge in misery, and the hope of my salvation; hear my supplications, have pity on me, as becomes the mother of so good a God, and obtain for me a favorable reception of all my petitions at the throne of mercy.[17808]

Ejaculatory Prayer. O merciful, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary.

The usual prayer, page 125.

FOURTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123

Her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness.[17809] Friends on earth find such pleasure in being together, that they lose entire days in each other's company: with Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, those who love him not, get weary. After her death, St. Teresa, who was already in heaven, said to a nun: "Those who are in heaven and those who are on earth should be one and the same in purity and in love; we enjoying, and you suffering; and that which we do in heaven with the divine Essence, you should do on earth with the Most Blessed Sacrament."[17810] Behold, then, our paradise on earth;—the Most Blessed Sacrament.

O immaculate Lamb, sacrificed for us upon the cross, remember that I am one of those souls that Thou hast redeemed by so many sufferings, and by Thy death. Grant that Thou mayest be mine, and that I may never lose Thee, since Thou hast given Thyself to me, and givest Thyself every day, sacrificing Thyself for my love on the altar; and grant that I may be all Thine. I give myself to Thee without reserve, that Thou mayest dispose of me as Thou pleasest. I give Thee my will; chain it with the sweet bonds of Thy love, that it may forever be the slave of Thy most holy will. I wish no longer to live for the satisfaction of my desires, but only to please Thy goodness. Destroy in me all that does not please Thee; grant me the grace never to have any other thought than to please Thee, any other desire than that which Thou desirest. I love Thee, O my dear Saviour, with my whole heart; I love Thee because Thou desirest that I should love Thee; I love Thee because Thou art indeed worthy of my love. I grieve that I love Thee not as much as Thou deservest. I desire, Lord, to die for Thy love; accept my desire and give me thy love. Amen.

Ejaculatory Prayer. O good pleasure of my God, I sacrifice myself all to Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Mary says: *I am the Mother of fair love;*[17811] that is to say, she is the Mother of that love which beautifies souls. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi saw the Most Blessed Virgin Mary going about dispensing a sweet liquid, which was divine love. This gift is dispensed only by Mary; from Mary let us seek it.

Ejaculatory Prayer. My Mother, my hope, make me belong wholly to Jesus.

[From the Naples Edition]

PRAYER OF ST. GERMANUS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

O sovereign Queen! thou art our defence and our joy. Make me worthy to share with thee the happiness which thou enjoyest in heaven. Yes, my refuge, my defence, my strength, my hope, obtain for me, by thy powerful intercession, a place with thee in paradise. Being the mother of God, thou canst obtain it if thou pleasest.[17812] O Mary! thou art all-powerful in saving sinners, and, being the Mother of mercy, thou canst want no inducement to save them by thy intercession.[17813]

Ejaculatory Prayer. O my Mother and my hope! obtain for me the grace to be devoted entirely to Jesus.

The usual prayer, page 125.

FIFTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

The sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself, where she may lay her young ones! Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.[17814] The sparrow, says David, finds a dwelling in houses; turtle-doves in nests; but Thou, my king and my God, hast made Thyself a nest and found a dwelling on earth on our altars, that we might find Thee, and that Thou mightest dwell amongst us.

Lord, we cannot but say, that Thou art too much enamoured of men; Thou no longer knowest what to do to gain their love. But do Thou, my most amiable Jesus, give us the grace that we also may be passionately enamoured of Thee. It would indeed be unreasonable were we cold in our love towards a God who loves us with such affection. Draw us to Thee by the sweet attractions of Thy love; make us understand the endearing claims which Thou hast on our love.

O infinite Majesty and infinite Goodness, Thou lovest men so much, Thou hast done so much that Thou mightest be loved by men: how is it, then, that amongst men there are so few who love Thee? I will no longer be as I have hitherto been, of the unhappy number of those ungrateful creatures: I am resolved to love Thee as much as I can, and to love no other than Thee: Thou deservest it; Thou commandest me with so much earnestness to do so, I am resolved to satisfy Thee. Grant, O God of my soul, that I may fully satisfy Thee. I entreat Thee to grant me this favor by the merits of Thy Passion, and I confidently hope for it. Bestow the goods of the earth on those who desire them; I desire and seek the great treasure of Thy love alone. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee, infinite Goodness. Thou art all my riches, my whole satisfaction, my entire love.

Ejaculatory Prayer. My Jesus, Thou hast given Thy whole self to me; I give my whole self to Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

My Lady, St. Bernard calls thee “the ravisher of hearts.”[17815] He says that thou goest about stealing hearts by the charms of thy beauty and goodness. Steal also my heart and will, I beseech thee: I give them wholly to thee; offer them to God with thine own.

Ejaculatory Prayer. Mother most amiable, pray for me![17816]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD.

We look up to thee, O Queen of the world, for protection. After a life of so much sin and ingratitude, we have to appear before our Judge, and who shall appease his wrath? No one is so well qualified to do this as thyself, who didst love him so tenderly, and was so tenderly loved by him. O Mother of mercy, open then thy ears to our sighs and prayers. Thou dost not look with disdain on the sinner, however enormous his crimes may have been; if with sincere repentance he cries out to thee and entreats thy intercession, thou despisest him not. Thou animatest and consolest him, and dost not abandon him, until thou hast reconciled him with his Judge.[17817]

We fly, therefore, to thy protection, entreating thee to appease the indignation of thy Son, and to restore us to His grace.

Ejaculatory Prayer. O Mary! show thyself a mother to us.

The usual prayer, page 125.

SIXTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.[17818]—Jesus Christ says, that where a person esteems his treasure to be, there also he keeps his affections. Therefore the saints, who neither esteem nor love any other treasure than Jesus Christ, centre their hearts and all their love in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

My most amiable Jesus, hidden under the sacramental veils, who for the love which Thou bearest me remainest night and day imprisoned in this tabernacle, draw, I beseech Thee, my whole heart to Thee, that I may think of none but Thee, that I may love and seek and hope for Thee alone. Do this by the merits of Thy Passion, through which I seek and hope for it.

Ah, my sacramental Lord and divine Lover, how amiable and tender are the inventions of Thy love to gain the love of souls! O Eternal Word, Thou, in becoming man, wast not satisfied with dying for us; Thou hast also given us this sacrament as a companion, as food, and as a pledge of heaven. Thou reducest Thyself so as to appear amongst us, at one time as an infant in a stable, at another as a poor man in a workshop, then as a criminal on a gibbet, and now as bread on an altar. Tell me, couldst Thou invent other means to win our love?

O infinite goodness, when shall I really begin to correspond with such refinements of love? Lord, I will only live to love Thee alone. And of what use is life to me, if I do not spend it wholly in loving and pleasing Thee, my beloved Redeemer, who hast poured out Thy whole life for me? And what have I to love, if it is not Thee, who art all beauty, all condescension, all goodness, all loving, all worthy of love? May my soul live only to love Thee; may the sole remembrance of Thy love dissolve my soul with love; may the very names of crib, and cross, and sacrament inflame it with the desire to do great things for Thee, O my Jesus, who hast indeed done and suffered great things for me!

Ejaculatory Prayer. Grant, my Lord, that before I die I may do something for Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

As a fair olive-tree in the plain.[17819] I am, says Mary, the beautiful olive-tree from which the oil of mercy always flows. And I stand in the plain, that all may see me, and that all may have recourse to me. “Remember (let us say in the words of the prayer of St. Bernard), O most compassionate Mary, that it has never been heard of in any age, that any one having recourse to thy protection was abandoned by thee.”[17820] Most merciful Queen, such a thing was never heard of, that any one having recourse to thy aid was abandoned: I will not be the first unfortunate creature who, having recourse to thee, was abandoned.

Ejaculatory Prayer. O Mary, grant me the grace always to have recourse to thee!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD

O Mary! thou art the only woman on whom the Saviour of the world has poured the treasures of his grace without measure; hence we are taught to honor thy chaste womb as the temple of God, wherein he was pleased to begin the great work of our redemption, the reconciliation of God with man. Thou, O mother of God, art that spiritual garden, whose fruit is never gathered by the hands of sinners. Thou art that hallowed soil where God has planted all the flowers which adorn his church, and amongst the rest, the holy virtues of humility, purity, and charity, which are greater ornaments to the souls of men than violets, lilies, and roses are to the earth. Thou art the paradise of God, whence flows the stream of living water to moisten the earth. Oh, what benefits were bestowed on the world through thee, when thou wast selected to be the fortunate channel of so many graces!

Ejaculatory Prayer. Hail! our life, our sweetness, and our hope.[17821]

The usual prayer, page 125.

SEVENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.[17822] Thus our loving shepherd, who has given his life for us who are His sheep, would not separate himself from us by death. Behold me, he says, beloved sheep; I am always with you; for you I have remained on earth in this Sacrament; here you find me whenever you please, to help and console you by my presence: I will not leave you until the end of the world, as long as you are on earth. The Bride-groom, says St. Peter of Alcantara, wished to leave his bride company, that she might not remain alone during so long an absence; and therefore he left this Sacrament, in which he himself, the best companion he could leave her, remains.

My sweetest Lord, my most amiable Saviour, I am now visiting Thee on this altar; but Thou returnest me the visit with far other love when Thou enterest my soul in the Holy Communion. Thou art then not only present to me, but Thou becomest my food; Thou unitest and givest Thy whole self to me, so that I can then say with truth, My Jesus, Thou art now all mine. Since, then, Thou givest Thyself all to me, it is reasonable that I should give myself all to Thee. I am a worm, and Thou art God. O God of love! O love of my soul! when shall I find myself all Thine, in deeds, and not only in words? Thou canst do this; by the merits of Thy blood increase my confidence, that I may at once obtain this grace of Thee, that I may find myself all Thine, and in nothing mine own. Thou graciously nearest, O Lord, the prayers of all; hear now the prayers of a soul that indeed desires really to love Thee. I desire to love Thee with all my strength, I desire to obey Thee in all that Thou willest, without self-interest, without consolations, without reward. I wish to serve Thee through love, only to please Thee, only to content Thy heart, which is so passionately enamoured of me. My reward will be to love Thee. O beloved Son of the eternal Father, take possession of my liberty, of my will, of all that I possess, and of my entire self, and give me Thyself. I love Thee, I seek after Thee, I sigh after Thee; I desire Thee, I desire Thee, I desire Thee!

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, make me all Thine own!

Spiritual Communion, page 124

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

O our own most amiable Lady, the whole Church proclaims and salutes thee as "our hope"! Thou, then, who art the hope of all, be also my hope. St. Bernard called thee "the whole ground of his hope,"[17823] and said: "Let him who despairs hope in thee."[17824] Thus also will I address thee: My own Mary, thou savest even those who are in despair; in thee I place all my hope.

Ejaculatory prayer. Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD

O Blessed Queen! it is of thee the prophet speaks when he says, "Who is she that riseth like the day-star, beautiful as the moon, brilliant as the sun?"[17825] Yes, thou didst appear in the world like the bright day-star, preceding by the light of thy sanctity the coming of the Sun of Justice. The day on which thou camest into the world may well be styled a day of salvation and a day of grace. Thou art beautiful as the moon; because as none of the celestial bodies so nearly resembles the sun as it does, so there is no creature whose perfections so nearly approach to those of God as thy own. The moon enlightens the night by reflecting the rays of the sun, and thou enlightenest our darkness by the splendor of those virtues with which God has adorned thee. But thou art even more beautiful than the moon, because in thee is found neither spot nor shade; thou art brilliant like the sun; I mean that divine Sun who created the one which enlightens the earth, for, as he in his humanity is the most resplendent among men, so art thou the brightest amongst women.[17826]

Ejaculatory prayer. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners.[17827]

The usual prayer, page 125.

EIGHTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

To every soul that visits Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, he addresses the words which he said to the Sacred Spouse: *Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come.*[17828] Thou, O soul, that visitest me, "arise" from thy miseries; I am here to enrich thee with graces. "Make haste," approach, come near me; fear not my majesty, which has humbled itself in this Sacrament in order to take away thy fear, and to give thee confidence. "My beloved," thou art no longer my enemy, but my friend; since thou lovest me and I love thee. "My beautiful one," my grace has made thee fair. "And come," draw near and cast thyself into my arms, and ask me with the greatest confidence for whatever thou willest.

St. Teresa says that this great king of glory has disguised himself in the Sacrament under the species of bread, and that he has concealed his majesty to encourage us to approach his divine heart with greater confidence. Let us, then, draw near to Jesus with great condence and affection; let us unite ourselves to him, and let us ask him for graces.

O Eternal Word made man, and present for my sake in this Sacrament, what joy should be mine now that I stand in Thy presence, who art my God, who art infinite majesty and infinite goodness, and hast so tender an affection for my soul! Ye souls who love God, wherever you may be, either in heaven or on earth, love him for me also. Mary, my Mother, help me to love him. And Thou, most beloved Lord, make Thyself the object of all my love. Make Thyself the Lord of my entire will; possess my entire self. I consecrate my whole mind to Thee, that it may always be occupied with the thought of Thy goodness; I also consecrate my body to Thee, that it may help me to please Thee; I consecrate my soul to Thee, that it may be all Thine. Would, O beloved of my soul, that all men could know the tenderness of the love which Thou bearest them, that all might live only to honor Thee and to please Thee, as Thou desirest and deservest. Grant that at least I may always live enamoured of Thy infinite beauty. From this day forward my desire is to do all that I can to be pleasing to Thee. I now resolve to abandon everything, be it what it may, as soon as I perceive that it displeases Thee, however much it may cost me, even should it be necessary for this purpose to lose all, or even to lay down my life. Fortunate indeed shall I be, if I lose all to gain Thee, my God, my treasure, my love, my all!

Ejaculatory prayer. Jesus, my love, take all that I have; take full possession of me!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Whoever is a little one, let him come to me.[17829] Mary invites all children who need a mother to have recourse to her, as to the most loving of all mothers. The devout Nieremberg says, that the love of all mothers is a shadow in comparison with the love which Mary bears to each one of us.[17830] My Mother, mother of my soul, thou who lovest me, and desirest my salvation more than any other after God, O Mother, “show thyself a Mother.”[17831]

Ejaculatory prayer. My Mother, grant that I may always remember thee!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD.

Sweet and amiable Mary, no one can pronounce thy name without feeling the greatest desire of loving thee; and they who love thee cannot call thee to mind without being animated to love thee more. Pray for us to thy divine Son that he would vouchsafe to strengthen our weakness: no one is better entitled to speak in our favor to thy God and ours, than thyself, who art nearest to him. Intercede, then, for us, O blessed Mother, because thy Son hears thee, and thou canst obtain whatever thou askest.[17832]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, obtain for me the grace to have continual recourse to thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

NINTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, page 123.

St. John says that he saw our Lord girt up with a golden girdle, which supported his breasts: *I saw the Son of Man girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*[17833] Thus also is Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar, with his breasts all filled with milk; that is to say, with the graces which, in his mercy, he desires to bestow upon us. And as a mother, whose breasts are overcharged with milk, goes about seeking for children who may draw it off, and relieve her of its weight,[17834] so also does he call out to us, *You shall be carried at the breasts.*[17835]

The Venerable Father Alvarez saw Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with his hands filled with graces, and seeking to whom he might dispense them. Of St. Catharine of Sienna it is related, that when she approached the Most Holy Sacrament, she did so precisely with the same loving avidity with which a child flies to its mother’s breast.

O most beloved and only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, I know that Thou art the object most worthy of being loved. I desire to love Thee as much as Thou deservest to be loved, or at least as much as a soul can ever desire to love Thee. I fully understand that I, who am a traitor, and so great a rebel to Thy love, deserve not to love Thee, neither do I deserve to approach Thee so near as I now am in this church. But I feel that Thou, for all this, seekest my love; I hear Thee say, *My son, give me thy heart.*[17836] *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*[17837] I understand that it is for this end that Thou hast spared my life, and not sent me to hell, that I might be converted and turn all my affections to Thee. Since, then, Thou art pleased that even I should love Thee, oh, yes, my God, I will do so. Behold me: to Thee I yield myself up; I give myself to Thee; I love Thee. O God! all goodness, all love, I choose Thee for the only king and lord of my poor heart. Thou desirest it, and my will is to give it to Thee: it is cold, it is loathsome; but if Thou acceptest it, Thou wilt change it. Change me, my Lord, change me; I no longer have courage to live as I have hitherto done, un grateful, and with so little love towards Thy infinite goodness, which loves me so much, and deserves an in finite love. Enable me to supply from this day forward for all the love which I have hitherto failed to bear Thee.

Ejaculatory Prayer. My God, my God, I will love Thee, I will love Thee, I will love Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

In all things like to her Son Jesus is his Mother Mary; and as she is the Mother of mercy, she is thrice happy when she helps and consoles the miserable. So great is the desire of this Mother to bestow graces on all, that Bernardine de Bustis says, that “she desires more to do us good, and to impart to us graces, than we can desire to receive them.”[17838]

Ejaculatory prayer. Hail, our hope![17839]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. JOHN DAMASCENE

Hail! Mary, the hope of Christians. Hear the petition of a sinner, who wishes to love thee with the greatest tenderness, and to honor thee as thou deservest, and who reposes in thee, next to God, his hope of salvation. Being indebted to thee for the preservation of my life, I entreat thee to restore me to the grace of thy divine Son. Thou art the surest pledge of my salvation; deliver me, then, by thy prayers, from the heavy load of my sins. Disperse the darkness of my understanding; banish every inordinate affection from my heart; repress the temptations of my spiritual enemies, and so order my life that, under thy protection, I may arrive at eternal repose in heaven.[17840]

Ejaculatory prayer. O my Mother, obtain for me the grace that I may always remember thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

TENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

O foolish ones of the world, says St. Augustine, miserable creatures, where are you going to satisfy your hearts? Come to Jesus; for by him alone can that pleasure which you seek be bestowed. "Unhappy creatures, whither are you going? The good you seek for comes from him."[17841] My soul, be not of the number of these foolish ones; seek God alone: "seek for that one good in which are all good things."[17842] And if thou desirest soon to find him, behold, he is close to thee; tell him what thou desirest, since for this end it is that he is in the ciborium, to console thee, and to grant thy prayer. St. Teresa says that all are not allowed to speak to their king: the most that can be hoped for is to communicate with him through a third person. To converse with Thee, O King of glory, no third person is needed; Thou art always ready in the Sacrament of the Altar to give audience to all. All who desire Thee always find Thee there, and converse with Thee face to face. And even if any one at length succeeds in speaking with a king, how many difficulties has he had to overcome before he can do so! Kings grant audiences only a few times in the year; but Thou, in this Sacrament, grantest audience to all night and day, and whenever we please.

O Sacrament of love, Thou who, whether Thou givest Thyself in the Communion, or dwellest on the altar, knowest, by the tender attractions of Thy love, how to draw so many hearts to Thyself, who, enamoured of Thee, and filled with amazement at the sight of such love, burn with joy, and think always of Thee; draw also my miserable heart to Thyself; for it desires to love Thee, and to live enslaved by Thy love. For my part, I now and henceforward place all my interests, all my hopes, and all my affections, my soul, my body,—I place all in the hands of Thy goodness. Accept me, O Lord, and dispose of me as Thou pleasest. I will never again complain, O my love, of Thy holy dispensations; I know that, as they all take their source in Thy loving heart, they all will be full of love, and for my good. It is enough for me to know that Thou willest them; I will them also in time and in eternity. Do all that Thou willest in me and with me; I unite my entire self to Thy will, which is all holy, all good, all beautiful, all perfect, all loving. O will of my God, how dear art thou to me! My will is ever to live and die united to and bound up with Thee. Thy pleasure is my pleasure. I will that Thy desires shall also be my desires. My God, my God, help me; make me henceforward live for Thee alone; make me will only what Thou willest, and make me live only to love Thy amiable will. Grant that I may die for Thy love, since Thou hast died and become food for me. I curse those days in which I did my own will, so much to Thy displeasure. I love thee, O will of God, as much as I love God, since thou art one with him. I love Thee, then, with my whole heart, and give myself all to Thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. O will of God, thou art my love!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The great Queen says, *With me are riches . . . that I may enrich them that love me.*[17843] Let us love Mary, if we would be rich in graces. The writer who calls himself “the Idiot” styles her “the treasurer of graces.”[17844] Blessed is he who has recourse to Mary with love and confidence. My Mother, my hope, thou canst make me a saint; from thee I hope for this favor.

Ejaculatory prayer. Mother most amiable, pray for me![17845]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. ANDREW OF JERUSALEM

Hail! Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with thee. Hail! source of our joy. Through thee, as the Mother of Jesus, the sentence of our condemnation has been revoked, and changed into a judgment of benediction. Hail, temple of the Deity’s glory, sacred dwelling of the King of Heaven; thou art the reconciliation of God with man. Hail, Mother of our bliss; thou art truly blessed, because thou wast the only one amongst women found worthy to be the Mother of thy Creator. All nations call thee blessed.[17846] If I place my confidence in thee I shall be saved. Under thy protection I have nothing to fear, because, in being devoted to thee, I hold in my hand the most assured arms of salvation, which the Almighty grants only to those whom he wishes in a special manner to save.

Ejaculatory Prayer. We fly to thy protection, O sacred Mother of God!

The usual prayer, page 125.

ELEVENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

“Let us be careful,” says St. Teresa, “never to be at a distance from Jesus our beloved Shepherd, nor to lose sight of him; for the sheep which are near their shepherd are always more caressed and better fed, and always receive some choice morsels of that which he himself eats. If by chance the shepherd sleeps, still the lamb remains near him, and either waits until his slumber ends, or itself awakens him; and it is then caressed with new favors.”

My Redeemer, present in this Most Holy Sacrament, behold me near Thee: the only favor which I ask of Thee is, fervor and perseverance in Thy love. I thank thee, O holy faith; for thou teachest and assurest me that in the divine Sacrament of the Altar, in that heavenly bread, bread does not exist; but that my Lord Jesus Christ is all there, and that he is there for love of me. My Lord and my all, I believe that Thou art present in the Most Holy Sacrament; and though unknown to eyes of flesh, by the light of holy faith I discern Thee in the consecrated Host, as the monarch of heaven and earth, and as the Saviour of the world. Ah, my most sweet Jesus! as Thou art my hope, my salvation, my strength, my consolation, so also I will that Thou shouldst be all my love, and the only subject of all my thoughts, of my desires, and of my affections. I rejoice more in the supreme happiness which Thou enjoyest, and wilt enjoy forever, than in any good thing which I could ever have in time or in eternity. My supreme satisfaction is, that Thou, my beloved Redeemer, art supremely happy, and that Thy happiness is infinite. Reign, reign, my Lord, over my whole soul; I give it all to Thee; do Thou ever possess it. May my will, my senses, and my faculties be all servants of Thy love, and may they never in this world serve for anything else than to give Thee satisfaction and glory. Such was thy life, O first lover and Mother of my Jesus! Most holy Mary, do thou help me; do thou obtain for me the grace to live henceforward, as thou didst always live, in the happiness of belonging to God alone.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, may I be all Thine, and be Thou all mine!

Spiritual Communion, page 124

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Blessed is the man . . . that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors.[17847] Blessed is he who, like the poor who stand before the gates of the rich, is careful to seek for the alms of graces before the doors of the mercy of Mary! And thrice blessed is he who moreover seeks to imitate the virtues which he remarks in Mary, and more especially her purity and humility!

Ejaculatory prayer. My hope, help me!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. ANDREW OF CRETE OR OF JERUSALEM.

Mother of mercy! appease the anger of thy Son. Whilst thou wast upon earth, thou didst occupy only a small portion of it: but being now seated in the highest heavens, we look up to thee as the general mediatrix of all nations. We entreat thee, O sacred Virgin! to grant us the assistance of thy prayers, which are more desirable and more precious than all the treasures of the earth. Thy prayers move the Almighty to pardon our sins, and obtain for us the most abundant graces, to enable us to practise the virtues of a Christian life; they arrest the progress of our enemies, frustrate their designs, and triumph over the efforts of their malice.[17848]

Ejaculatory prayer. Mary! thou art my consolation, and, after Jesus, the foundation of my hope.[17849]

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWELFTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123

God is charity; and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.[17850] He who loves Jesus dwells with Jesus, and Jesus with him. *If any one love Me . . . My Father will love him; and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.*[17851] When St. Philip Neri received the Holy Communion as Viaticum, on seeing the Most Blessed Sacrament enter his room, he exclaimed: “Behold my love! behold my love!” Let each one of us, then, say, here in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament: Behold my love! behold the object of all my love for my whole life and for all eternity!

Since, then, my Lord and my God, Thou hast said in the Gospel that he who loves Thee will be beloved by Thee, and that Thou wilt come and dwell in him, and never more leave him, I love Thee above every other good: do Thou, then, also love me; for I, indeed, esteem being loved by Thee above all the kingdoms of the world. Come and fix Thy dwelling in the poor house of my soul in such a way that Thou mayest no more depart from me; or rather, so that I may never more drive Thee from me. Thou dost not go, if Thou art not expelled; but as I have already done this, so I might do again. Ah, never allow such a fresh act of wickedness, such horrible ingratitude, to be perpetrated in the world, as that I, who have been so especially favored by Thee, and who have received so many graces, should again drive Thee from my soul! But this might happen. I therefore, my Lord, desire death, if it so pleases Thee; that by dying united to Thee, I may live united to Thee forever. Yes, my Jesus; for this I hope. I embrace Thee; I press Thee to my poor heart; grant that I may always love Thee, and always be beloved by Thee. Yes, my most amiable Redeemer, I will always love

Thee; and Thou wilt always love me. I trust that our love will ever be mutual, O God of my soul, and this for all eternity. Amen.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, I desire always to love Thee, and always to be beloved by Thee.

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

They that work by me shall not sin.[17852] He, says Mary, who endeavors to honor me shall persevere to the end. *They that explain me shall have life everlasting;*[17853] and those who endeavor to make me known and loved by others will be of the number of the elect. Promise, then, that whenever you can, be it in public or in private, you will speak of the glories of Mary, and of devotion to her.

Ejaculatory prayer. Vouchsafe that I may praise Thee, most sacred Virgin![17854]

[According to the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. ILDEFONSUS.

O my Sovereign, and Mother of my God, thou art blessed amongst all women, pure amongst all virgins, and queen of all the heavenly host; all nations pronounce thee blessed. Vouchsafe that I may publish as much as possible thy greatness, that I may love thee to the utmost of my power, and that I may serve thee with all the capacity of my soul.

Ejaculatory prayer. Vouchsafe that I may praise thee, O blessed Virgin.[17855]

The usual prayer, page 125.

THIRTEENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

My eyes and my heart shall be there always.[17856] Behold, Jesus has verified this beautiful promise in the Sacrament of the Altar, wherein he dwells with us night and day.

My Lord, would it not have been enough hadst Thou remained in this Sacrament only during the day, when Thou couldst have had adorers of Thy presence to keep Thee company; but why remain also the whole night, when the churches are all closed, and when men retire to their homes, leaving Thee quite alone? Ah, yes! I already understand Thee: love has made Thee our prisoner; the excessive love which Thou bearest us has so bound Thee down on earth, that neither night nor day canst Thou leave us. Ah, most amiable Saviour, this refinement of love alone should oblige all men ever to stay with Thee in the sacred ciboriums, and to remain with Thee until forcibly compelled to leave Thee; and when they do so, they should all leave at the foot of the altar their hearts and affections inflamed with love towards an Incarnate God, who remains alone and enclosed in a tabernacle, all eyes to see and provide for them in their necessities, and all heart to love them, and who awaits the coming day to be again visited by his beloved souls.

Yes, my Jesus, I will please Thee; I consecrate my whole will and all my affections to Thee. O infinite Majesty of God, Thou hast left Thyself in this divine Sacrament, not only that Thou mightest be present with us and near us, but principally to communicate Thyself to Thy beloved souls. But, Lord, who will presume to approach Thee to feed upon Thy flesh? and who, on the other hand, can keep at a distance from Thee? For this purpose Thou concealest Thyself in the consecrated Host, that Thou mayest enter into us and possess our hearts. Thou burnest with the desire of being received by us, and Thou rejoicest in being there united with us. Come, then, my Jesus, come; I desire to receive Thee within myself, that Thou mayest be the God of my heart and of my will. All that is within me I yield, my dear Redeemer, to Thy love; satisfactions, pleasures, self-will, all I give up to Thee. O Love, O God of love, reign, triumph over my entire self; destroy and sacrifice all in me which is mine and not Thine. Permit not, O my Love, that my soul, which, having received Thee in the Holy Communion, is filled with the Majesty of God, should again attach itself to creatures. I love Thee, my God, I love Thee; and I will love Thee alone and forever.

Ejaculatory prayer. Draw me by the chains of Thy love![17857]

Spiritual Communion, page 125.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

St. Bernard exhorts us, saying: “Let us seek for grace, and let us seek it by Mary.”[17858] “She,” says St. Peter Damian, “is the treasure of divine graces.”[17859] She can enrich us, and she desires to do so. She therefore invites and calls us, saying: *Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me.*[17860] Most amiable Lady, most exalted Lady, most gracious Lady, look on a poor sinner who recommends himself to Thee, and who places all his confidence in Thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God![17861]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. ILDEFONSUS

Most humble handmaid of thy divine Son! I prostrate myself before thee, conjuring thee to obtain pardon of my sins, that I may be cleansed from all the imperfections of my life. I entreat thee to procure me the grace of being always united to God and to thee, and to be ever a faithful servant of thy Son and of thee: of thy Son, as my Lord and my Redeemer; and of thee, as the cause of my redemption: for if he has paid the price of my redemption, it was with the body which he received from thee.[17862]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! obtain for me confidence in thy intercession, and the grace that I may continually have recourse to thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

FOURTEENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Most amiable Jesus, I hear Thee say from this tabernacle in which Thou art present, *This is my rest forever and ever; here will I dwell, for I have chosen it.*[17863] Since, then, Thou hast chosen Thy dwelling on our altars in the midst of us, remaining there in the Most Holy Sacrament, and since Thy love for us makes Thee there find Thy repose, it is but just that our hearts also should ever dwell with Thee in affection, and should find all pleasure and repose in Thee. Blessed are you, O loving souls, who can find no sweeter repose in the world than in remaining near to your Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament! And blessed should I be, my Lord, did I from this time forward find no greater delight than in remaining always in Thy presence, or in always thinking of Thee, who in the Most Holy Sacrament art always thinking of me and of my welfare.

Ah, my Lord! and why have I lost so many years, in which I have not loved Thee? O miserable years, I curse you; and I bless Thee, O infinite patience of my God, for having for so many years borne with me, though so ungrateful to Thy love. And still, notwithstanding this ingratitude, Thou waitest for me: and why, my God, why? It is, that one day, overcome by Thy mercies and by Thy love, I may yield wholly to Thee. Lord, I will no longer resist, I will no longer be ungrateful. It is but just that I should consecrate to Thee the time, be it long or short, which I have still to live. I hope for Thy help, O my Jesus, to become entirely Thine. Thou didst favor me so much when I fled from Thee and despised Thy love; how much more may I now hope that Thou wilt favor me, now that I seek and desire to love Thee! Give me, then, the grace to love Thee, O God, worthy of infinite love. I love Thee with my whole heart; I love Thee above all things; I love Thee more than myself, more than my life. I am sorry for having offended

Thee, O infinite goodness: pardon me; and with Thy pardon grant me the grace to love Thee much in this life until death, and in the next life for all eternity. O Almighty God, show the world the greatness of Thy power, in the prodigy of a soul ungrateful as mine has been becoming one of Thy greatest lovers. Do this by Thy merits, my Jesus. It is my ardent desire, and I resolve thus to love Thee during my whole life: do Thou, who inspirest me with this desire, give me also the strength to accomplish it.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, I thank Thee for having waited for me until now!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

St. Germanus, addressing the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, says: “No one is saved but through thee; no one is delivered from evils but through thee; there is no one on whom any gift is bestowed but through thee.”[17864] Therefore, my Lady and my hope, if thou dost not help me I am lost, and shall be unable to bless thee in heaven. But, Lady, I hear all the saints say that thou never abandonest those who have recourse to thee. He only is lost who has not recourse to thee. I, then, miserable creature that I am, have recourse to thee, and in thee place all my hopes.

Ejaculatory prayer, in the words of St. Bernard. Mary is my whole confidence; she is the whole ground of my hope![17865]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. ANSELM.

We entreat thee, most Sacred Virgin, by that fulness of grace, whereby thou wast elevated to the highest degree of dignity and glory which a pure creature can possibly attain, that thou wouldst procure for us a fellowship with thee in glory. Pray for us, that we may obtain that happiness, to purchase which for us God vouchsafed to become man in thy immaculate womb. Be not deaf to our supplications; whatever thou askest of thy Son, he will grant to us: if thou desirest our salvation, and prayest for it, we are sure to be saved. But if thou dost shut the bowels of thy mercy against us; if thou, who art the Mother of clemency. dost not take pity on us, what will be our lot when thy Son shall appear in judgment?

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! behold our danger, and have compassion on us.

The usual prayer, page 125

FIFTEENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled? [17866] Father Francis Olimpio, the Theatine, used to say that there was nothing on earth which enkindled so ardent flames of divine love in the hearts of men as the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Hence our Lord showed himself to St. Catharine of Sienna in this Blessed Sacrament as a furnace of love, from which issued forth torrents of divine flames, spreading themselves over the whole earth: so much so, indeed, that the saint, in perfect astonishment, wondered how it was possible that men could live without burning with love for such love on the part of God towards them.

My Jesus, make me burn with the desire of Thee; grant that all my thoughts, and sighs, and desires, and seekings, may be for Thee alone. Oh, happy should I be, did this Thy heavenly fire fully possess me, and as I advance in years, gradually consume all earthly affections in me!

O divine Word! O my own Jesus! I see Thee all sacrificed, all annihilated, and so to say destroyed on the altar, for my love. It is, then, but right that, as Thou sacrificest Thyself as a victim of love for me, I at least should consecrate myself wholly to Thee. Yes, my God and my sovereign Lord, I now sacrifice to Thee my whole soul, my entire self, my whole will and my whole life. I unite this poor sacrifice of mine, O Eternal Father, to the infinite sacrifice of himself which Jesus, Thy Son and my Saviour, once offered to Thee on the cross, and which he now offers to Thee so many times every day on our altars. Accept it, then, through the merits of Jesus; and grant me the grace to renew it every day of my life, and to die sacrificing my whole self to Thy honor. I desire the grace granted to so many martyrs, to die for Thy love. But if I am unworthy of so great a grace, grant at least, my Lord, that I may sacrifice my life to Thee, together with my entire will, by accepting the death which Thou sendest me. Lord, I desire this grace; I desire to die with the intention of honoring and pleasing Thee thereby: and from this moment I sacrifice my life to Thee; and I offer Thee my death, when or wheresoever it may take place.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, I desire to die in order to please Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Allow me also, my most sweet Queen, to call thee, with thine own St. Bernard, “the whole ground of my hope,”[17867] and to say with St. John Damascene, “I have placed my whole hope in thee.”[17868] Thou hast to obtain for me the forgiveness of my sins; thou, perseverance until death; thou, deliverance from purgatory. All who are saved obtain salvation through thee: thou, then, O Mary, hast to save me: “He will be saved whom thou willest.”[17869] Will, then, my salvation, and I shall be saved. But thou savest all who invoke thee; behold, then, I invoke thee, and say:

Ejaculatory prayer. O salvation of those who invoke Thee, save me![17870]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. ANSELM.

Help us, O Queen of mercy! without regarding the multitude of our sins. Remember, that our Creator assumed from thee a human body, not to condemn, but to save sinners. Hadst thou been chosen to be the Mother of God for thy own benefit alone, thou mightest then be said to have no particular interest in our salvation; but God clothed himself in thy form for the sake of all mankind. Help us, therefore, and protect us: thou knowest the need which we have of thy assistance, and we earnestly recommend ourselves to thy prayers. Pray that we may not be eternally lost, but with thee may serve and love Jesus Christ forever.[17871]

The usual prayer, page 125.

SIXTEENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Had men but always recourse to the Most Blessed Sacrament to seek from it the remedy for their ills, they certainly would not be so miserable as they are. The prophet Jeremias, lamenting, exclaimed: *Is there no balm in Galaad? or is there no physician there?*[17872] Galaad, a mountain of Arabia, rich in aromatical spices, according to venerable Bede, is a figure of Jesus Christ, who in this Sacrament keeps in readiness all the remedies for our woes. Why, then, our Redeemer seems to ask, do you complain of your misfortunes, O sons of Adam, when you have the physician and the remedy for them all in this Sacrament? *Come to Me, and I will refresh you.*[17873] I will, then, address Thee in the words of the sisters of Lazarus: *Behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.*[17874] Lord, I am that miserable creature whom Thou lovest; my soul is all wounded by the sins which I have committed; my divine physician, I come to Thee, that Thou mayest heal me; if Thou wilt, Thou canst cure me: *Heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee.*[17875] Draw me wholly to Thyself, my most sweet Jesus, by the all-winning attractions of Thy love. Far rather would I be bound to Thee than become the Lord of the whole earth. I desire nothing else in the world but to love Thee. I have but little to give Thee; but could I gain possession of all the kingdoms of the world, I would do so, that I might renounce them all for Thy love. For Thee, then, I renounce what I can; I give up all relatives, all comforts, all pleasures, and even spiritual consolations: for Thee I renounce my liberty and my will. On Thee I desire to bestow all my love. I love Thee, infinite goodness; I love Thee more than myself, and I hope to love Thee for all eternity.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, I give myself to Thee: do Thou accept me!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

My Lady, though didst say to St. Bridget: “However much a man sins, if he returns to me with a real purpose of amendment, I am instantly ready to welcome him: neither do I pay attention to the greatness of his sins, but to the intention alone with which he comes. I do not disdain to anoint and heal his wounds; for I am called, and truly am, the Mother of mercy.”[17876] Since, then, thou hast both the power and the will to heal me, behold, I have recourse to thee, O heavenly physician; heal the many wounds of my soul: with a single word addressed by thee to thy Son I shall be restored.

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, have pity on me!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. PETER DAMIAN.

O holy Virgin! come to the assistance of those who call upon thee: cast a look of pity on us. Hast thou, in the close alliance thou holdest with the Deity, forgotten thy fellow-creatures? Ah! certainly not. Thou knowest too well the misery of our condition, and the dangers to which we are exposed, and it would ill become clemency and compassion like thine to forget us. Exert thy influence in our behalf. Nothing is impossible to thee, and thou canst, by thy prayers, obtain for the most grievous sinner, the sweet hope of salvation. The greater thy power is, the greater ought also to be thy mercy.[17877]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! thou canst by thy intercession cleanse me from my sins, and I look for this favor from thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

SEVENTEENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Loving souls can find no greater delight than to be in the company of those whom they love. If we, then, love Jesus Christ much, behold we are now in his presence. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament sees us and hears us: shall we, then, say nothing to him? Let us console ourselves in his company; let us rejoice in his glory, and in the love which so many enamoured souls bear him in the Most Holy Sacrament. Let us desire that all should love Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, and consecrate their hearts to him; at least let us consecrate all our affections to him. He should be all our love and our whole desire. Father Salesius, of the Society of Jesus, felt consolation in only speaking of the Most Blessed Sacrament; he could never visit it enough. When called to the parlor, on returning to his room, when going about the house, he always profited by these occasions to repeat his visits to his beloved Lord; so much so, that it was remarked that scarcely an hour of the day passed without his visiting him. At length he obtained the favor to die by the hands of heretics while defending the truth of the real presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

Oh, had I but the happiness to die for so noble a cause as the defence of this Sacrament, in which, O most amiable Jesus, Thou hast taught us the tenderness of the love which Thou bearest us! But since, my Lord, Thou workest so many miracles in this Sacrament, work this one also: draw my entire self to Thee. Thou indeed desirest that I should be all Thine, and Thou dost also indeed deserve that I should be so. Give me the strength to love Thee with all the affection of my soul. Give the goods of this world to whomsoever Thou willest. I renounce them all: I sigh after and desire Thy love alone; this alone do I now and will always seek. I love Thee, my Jesus; grant me the grace always to love Thee, and grant me this alone.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, when shall I really love Thee?

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

My most sweet Queen, how pleasing to me is that beautiful name by which thy devout clients address thee: “Most amiable Mother!”[17878] Yes, my Lady, thou art truly and indeed amiable. Thy beauty has captivated thy Lord himself: *And the king shall greatly desire thy beauty.*[17879] St. Bernard says that thy very name is so amiable to thy lovers, that when they pronounce or hear it they are inflamed with a fresh desire to love thee: “O sweet, O pious, O exceedingly amiable Mary! Thou canst not be named without inflaming, neither can thy name be heard without enkindling, the affections of those who love thee.”[17880] It is, then, reasonable, my most amiable Mother, that I should love thee. But I am not satisfied with only loving thee: I desire in the first place on earth, and then in heaven, to be, after God, thy greatest lover. If my desire is presumptuous, it is thou thyself who art to blame, on account of thy amiability, and the special love which thou hast shown me. If thou wert less amiable, my desire to love thee would be less. Accept, then, O Lady, this my desire; and in token that thou hast accepted it, do thou obtain me from God this love for which I ask thee, since he is so well pleased with the love which is borne thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. My most amiable Mother, I love thee much.

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. DAMIAN.

O Mother of God! cast upon us one look of compassion. I know that thou art full of goodness, and that thou lovest us in a measure that surpasses all other love. How often dost thou appease the anger of our Judge, when the hand of his justice is raised to strike us? All the treasures of mercy are in thy hands, and thou seekest every opportunity to save miserable sinners and to make them partakers of thy glory. Ah! never cease to interest thyself in our regard, that we may one day arrive at the happiness of seeing Thee in heaven; as the greatest good that we can enjoy, next to that of seeing God, is to see thee, to love thee, and to be under thy protection. Since thy Son desires to honor thee by refusing nothing that thou askest, hear our prayer, and intercede in our behalf.[17881]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! I love thee as the most amiable of the works of God, and place my confidence in thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

EIGHTEENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

One day Jesus will be seated on a throne of majesty in the valley of Josaphat; but now, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, he is seated on a throne of love. Did a king, to show his love for a poor shepherd, go and live in his village, how great would be the ingratitude of this peasant did he not often go to visit him, knowing the king’s wish to see him, and that for this purpose he had come to reside there!

Ah, my Jesus, for love of me Thou dwellest in the Sacrament of the Altar. Could I, then, do so, my desire would be to remain night and day in Thy presence. If the angels, O my Lord, filled with astonishment at the love which Thou bearest us, remain always around Thee, it is but reasonable that I, seeing Thee for my sake on this altar, should endeavor to please Thee, at least by remaining in Thy presence, to praise the love and goodness which Thou hast for me: *I will sing praise to Thee in the sight of the angels; I will worship towards Thy holy temple, and I will give glory to Thy name: for Thy mercy and for Thy truth.*[17882]

O God, present in this Most Holy Sacrament, O bread of angels, O heavenly food, I love Thee; but Thou art not, neither am I, satisfied with my love. I love Thee; but I love Thee too little. Do Thou, my Jesus, make known to me the beauty, the immense goodness which I love: make my heart banish from itself all earthly affections, and give place to Thy divine love. To fill me with Thy love, and to unite Thyself all to me, Thou descendest every day from heaven on our altars: it is, then, but just that I should think of nothing else but of loving, adoring, and pleasing Thee. I love Thee with my whole soul, I love Thee with all my affections. If Thou art graciously pleased to make me a return for this love, increase my love;

render its flames more ardent; that thus I may always love Thee more, and desire more and more to please Thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. Jesus, my love, give me love!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

As poor sick persons, who on account of their miseries are abandoned by all, find shelter in the public hospitals; so also do the most miserable sinners, who, although discarded by all, find protection in the mercy of Mary, by whom they are never rejected; for God has placed her in the world as a receptacle and as a public hospital for sinners, as St. Basil of Seleucia gives us to understand.[17883] Hence St. Ephrem also calls her "the asylum of sinners."[17884] Therefore, my Queen, if I have recourse to thee, thou canst not reject me on account of my sins; nay, even the more wretched I am, the greater is the claim which I have upon thy protection, since God has created thee as the refuge of the most miserable. Therefore to thee I have recourse, O Mary; I place myself under thy mantle. Thou art the refuge of sinners; thou art, then, my refuge, the hope of my salvation. If thou reject me, to whom shall I have recourse?

Ejaculatory prayer. Mary, my refuge, save me!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD.

O sovereign queen! on thee the Almighty has bestowed the perfection of all graces. Thou art styled full of grace, because the Holy Ghost has given it to thee in its greatest plenitude. We entreat thee to impart to us a portion of the fulness which thou hast received. Remember our necessities, and hear our prayers. Make us partakers of the riches and abundance which thou possessest. All nations call thee blessed; the whole hierarchy of heaven sings thy praises, and we, who are upon earth, cry out to thee. Receive our homage, O full of grace! Mother of God, our sovereign and our queen, the Lord is with thee; make intercession for us.[17885]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! look down upon us, and draw our hearts to God.

The usual prayer, page 125.

NINETEENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

It is sweet to every one to be in the company of a dear friend; and shall we not find it sweet, in this valley of tears, to remain in the company of the best friend we have, and who can do us every kind of good; who loves us with the most tender affection, and therefore dwells always with us? Behold, in the Most Blessed Sacrament we can converse at pleasure with Jesus, we can open our hearts to him, we can lay our wants before him, and we can ask him for his graces; in a word, in this Sacrament we can treat with the King of Heaven, in all confidence and without restraint. Joseph was only too happy when, as the sacred Scripture tells us, God descended by his grace into his prison to comfort him: *She went down with him into the pit, and in bands she left him not.*[17886] But we are yet more highly favored; for we have always with us in this land of miseries our God made Man, who, by his real presence, is with us all the days of our life, and comforts and helps us with the greatest affection and compassion. What a consolation it is to a poor prisoner to have an affectionate friend, who keeps him company, consoles him, gives him hope, succors him, and thinks of relieving him in his misery! Behold our good friend Jesus Christ, who in this Sacrament encourages us, saying: *Behold, I am with you all days.*[17887] Behold me, he says, all thine: I am come from heaven into thy prison expressly to console thee, to help thee, to deliver thee. Welcome me, and do so always; cling to me and thus thou wilt never feel thy miseries; and afterwards thou wilt come with me to my kingdom, where I shall make thee perfectly happy.

O God, O incomprehensible ocean of love, since Thy condescension towards us is so great, that in order to dwell near us Thou descendest upon our altars, I propose often to visit Thee; I am determined, as often as I possibly can, to enjoy Thy most sweet presence, which is the beautitude of the saints in heaven. Oh, could I but always remain in Thy presence, to adore Thee and to make Thee acts of love! Arouse, I beseech Thee, my soul, when through tepidity or worldly affairs it neglects to visit Thee. Enkindle in me a great desire always to remain near Thee in this Sacrament. Ah, my loving Jesus, would that I had always loved Thee! would that I had always pleased Thee! I console myself that I still have time to do so, not only in the next life, but also in this. I am determined to do so; I am determined to love Thee indeed, my sovereign good, my love, my treasure, my all. I will love Thee with all my strength.

Ejaculatory prayer. My God, help me to love Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The devout Bernardine de Bustis says: “O sinner, whoever you may be, despair not; but with confidence have recourse to this Lady: you will find her hands filled with mercies and graces.”[17888] “And know also,” he adds, “that this most compassionate Queen has a greater desire to do you good than you can have to be succored by her.”[17889] I will ever, O my Lady, thank God for having taught me to know thee. Unfortunate indeed should I be, did I not know thee, or did I forget thee. Ill would it fare with my salvation. But, my Mother, I bless thee, I love thee; and so great is my confidence in thee, that I place my whole soul in thy hands.

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, blessed is he who knows thee, and puts his trust in thee!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF THE ABBOT OF CELLES.

Draw me after thee, O Virgin Mary! that I may run in the odor of thy perfumes. Draw me because I am impeded by the weight of my sins, and by the malice of my enemies. As no one can go to thy divine Son who is not conducted by his heavenly Father, so I presume also to say, that no one can approach this same Jesus but through thy intercession. Thou art the teacher of true wisdom: through thee sinners obtain grace because thou art their advocate; thou promisest to obtain help for those who honor thee, because thou art the treasure of God and the depository of all his graces.[17890]

Ejaculatory prayer. O thou, who art the salvation of those who invoke thee, save me.[17891]

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTIETH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

The prophet Zacharias says: *In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for the washing of the sinner.*[17892] Jesus in the Holy Sacrament is the fountain foretold by the prophet as open to all, and to which we can go whenever we please, to wash our souls from all the stains of sin which are daily contracted. When any one falls into some fault, what more beautiful remedy is there than to have immediate recourse to the Most Blessed Sacrament?

Yes, my Jesus, I resolve always to do this; for I know that the waters of this fountain of Thine not only cleanse me, but also give me light, and strengthen me not to fall, and enable me cheerfully to bear contradictions, and also inflame me with Thy love. I know that for this end it is that Thou awaitest my visits, and recompensest those of Thy lovers with so many graces. My Jesus, delay not; but wash me now from all the defects that I have committed this day, and for which I am grieved because they have displeased Thee; strengthen me against relapse by giving me a great desire to love Thee much. Oh, could I but always dwell near Thee, as did Thy faithful servant Mary Diaz, who lived in the time of St. Teresa, and had permission from the Bishop of Avila to inhabit the tribune of a church, where she remained almost always in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament, which she called her neighbor, and which she only left to go to confession and Communion. When the Venerable Brother Francis of the Infant Jesus, of the Order of the Discalced Carmelites, passed before a church in which the Blessed Sacrament was kept, he could not refrain from entering to visit it, saying: “That it was not becoming for a friend to pass before the door of a friend without entering, at least to salute him and exchange a word.” But a word did not satisfy him; he always remained as long as obedience allowed him in the presence of his beloved Lord.

My only and infinite good, I see that Thou hast instituted this Sacrament, and that Thou remainest on this altar, to be loved by me; and that for this end Thou hast given me a heart capable of loving Thee much. Why is it, then, that I am so ungrateful as not to love Thee? or that I love Thee so little? Now it is not just that such goodness as Thou art should be so little loved. The love, at least, which Thou bearest me, deserves other and greater love on my part. Thou art an infinite God, and I am a miserable worm. It would be little, did I die for Thee, or wear myself out for Thee, who didst die for me, and dost sacrifice Thy entire self for me every day on the altar. Thou deservest to be much loved; I will love Thee much: help me, my Jesus, help me to love Thee, and to do that which pleases Thee so much, and which Thou so earnestly seekest of me.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Beloved to me, and I to my Beloved![17893]

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

My most sweet, most compassionate, most amiable Queen, oh, how great is the confidence with which St. Bernard inspires me when I have recourse to thee! He says that thou dost not go examining the merits of those who have recourse to thy compassion; but that thou offerest thyself to help all who pray to thee: “Mary does not discuss merits, but shows herself ready to hear and welcome all.”[17894] Therefore, if I pray to thee, thou dost graciously hear me. Well, then, listen to what I have to ask thee: I am a poor sinner, deserving of a thousand hells. I wish to change my life; I wish to love my God, whom I have so greatly offended. I dedicate myself to thee as thy slave; to thee I give myself, miserable as I am; save, then, a poor creature who is no longer his own, but thine. My Lady, dost thou understand me? Yes; I trust that thou hast understood me, and graciously heard my prayer.

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, I am thine; save me![17895]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF THE ABBOT OF CELLES.

Most sweet Virgin, thou hast found grace and favor with God, in having been preserved from original sin, filled with the Holy Ghost, and chosen to be the Mother of the Son of God. Thou holdest in thy hands all the treasures of grace, not only for thy own benefit, but also for ours; and thou failest not to distribute them according to our necessities, Thou assistest the good, by obtaining for them grace to persevere, and thou helpest the wicked by preparing them to receive the divine mercy; thou aidest the dying by defending them against the snares of the devil, and, after death, thou receivest their souls, and conductest them to the mansions of the blessed.[17896]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! happy is he who serves thee and trusts in thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTY-FIRST VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Wheresoever the body shall be, thither will the eagles also be gathered together.[17897] The saints generally understand by this body that of Jesus Christ; and by the eagles, souls who, being detached from creatures, rise above the things of the earth, and fly towards heaven, after which they always sigh in thought and affection, and where they constantly dwell. These eagles also find their paradise on earth wherever they find Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament; so much so, indeed, that they seem never to tire hovering around him. If eagles, says St. Jerome,[17898] on scenting a dead body go from afar to seek it, how much more should we run and fly to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, as to the most delicious food of our hearts! Hence saints in this valley of tears have always as parched harts run to this fountain of paradise. Father Balthasar Alvarez, of the Society of Jesus, in whatever occupation he was engaged, used often to cast his eyes towards the place in which he knew that the Blessed Sacrament was; he often visited it, and even spent entire nights before it. He used to weep when he saw the palaces of the great ones of this world filled with people, who courted a man from whom they hoped for some miserable earthly good, and the churches so abandoned, in which the supreme sovereign of the world dwells, and remains with us as on a throne of love, rich in immense and eternal treasures. He used also to say, that religious persons were indeed fortunate, because in the very houses in which they reside, they can, whenever they please, either night or day, visit this great Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament; and this lay people cannot do.

Since, then, my most loving Lord, notwithstanding that Thou seest me as a leper, and so ungrateful to Thy love, Thou invitest me to approach Thee, I will not be discouraged at the sight of my miseries: I come and approach

Thee; but do Thou wholly change me. Drive from me every love which is not for Thee, every desire which displeases Thee, every thought which does not tend toward Thee. My Jesus, my love, my treasure, my all, I am determined to please Thee alone. I will give pleasure only to Thee. Thou alone deservest all my love; Thee only will I love with my whole heart. Detach me from everything, my Lord, and bind me to Thyself alone; but bind me so firmly, that I may never more be able to separate myself from Thee, either in this life or in the next.

Ejaculatory prayer. My most sweet Jesus, never allow me to be separated from Thee![17899]

Spiritual Communion, page 124

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Denis, the Carthusian, calls the Most Blessed Virgin “the advocate of all the wicked who have recourse to her.”[17900]

Since, then, O great Mother of God, thy office is to defend the causes of the most guilty criminals who have recourse to thee, behold me now at thy feet; to thee I have recourse, and I address thee in the words of St. Thomas of Villanova: “O gracious advocate, fulfil thy charge.”[17901] Now quickly enter upon thy office, undertake my cause: it is true that I have indeed been guilty before my Lord, having offended him, after the many benefits and graces he has conferred upon me; but the evil is done; thou canst save me. Thou hast only to tell thy God that thou defendest me, and then I shall be forgiven, and shall be saved.

Ejaculatory prayer. My dear Mother, thou hast to save me!

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF WILLIAM BISHOP OF PARIS.

I address my petitions to thee, O Mother of God! whom the whole Church styles the Mother of mercy. Canst thou, whose prayers are always acceptable to God, refuse thy intercession in behalf of sinners? Justly does St. Bernard say, that we may cease to call thee the Mother of Mercy, if any one ever invokes thee in the hour of need, without experiencing thy assistance. Thou wilt not, therefore, exclude me from a share in thy compassion. Thou wilt intercede for me with more earnestness than I can for myself; and thou wilt procure more abundant graces than I could presume to ask. O Mother of mercy! can that clemency, which never abandoned any one, refuse me its assistance in the danger to which I am exposed of being eternally lost?[17902]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! I am thine: save me.[17903]

The usual prayer, page 125

TWENTY-SECOND VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

The Spouse in the sacred Canticles went about seeking for her Beloved; and not finding him, she asked all whom she met: *Have you seen Him whom my soul loveth?*[17904] Jesus was not then on earth; but now, if a soul that loves him seeks him, she can always find him in the Most Blessed Sacrament. The Venerable Father John Avila used to say, that amongst all sanctuaries he could neither find nor desire a more delightful one than a church in which the Most Blessed Sacrament is reserved.

O infinite love of my God, worthy of infinite love! And how couldst Thou, my Jesus, ever abase Thyself so far as, in order to dwell amongst men, and to unite Thyself to their hearts, to humble Thyself to such a degree as to conceal Thyself under the species of bread? O incarnate Word, Thou art supreme in Thy humility, because Thou art supreme in Thy love! How can I do otherwise than love Thee with my entire self, knowing as I do how much Thou hast done to captivate my love? I love Thee much; and therefore I give Thy good pleasure the preference above every interest and every satisfaction of my own. My pleasure is to give Thee pleasure, my Jesus, my God, my love, my all. Make me hunger to be continually in Thy presence in the Blessed Sacrament, to receive Thee into myself, and to keep Thee company. I should be indeed ungrateful did I not accept so sweet and gracious an invitation. Ah, Lord, annihilate in me all affection for created things! Thou willest that Thou alone, my Creator, shouldst be the object of all my sighs, of all my love. I love Thee, most amiable goodness of my God. I ask nothing of Thee but Thyself. I desire not my own pleasure; Thy pleasure is all my desire, and sufficient for me. Accept, my Jesus, this good desire of a sinner who wishes to love Thee. Help me by Thy grace. Grant that I, a miserable slave of hell, may from this day forward be the happy slave of Thy love.

Ejaculatory prayer. I love Thee, Jesus, my treasure, above every other treasure!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

My most sweet Lady and Mother, I am a vile rebel to thy great Son; but I come repentant to thy mercy, that thou mayest obtain for me pardon. Say not that thou canst not do so; for St. Bernard calls thee “the minister of propitiation.”[17905] To thee also it belongs to succor those who are in dangers, St. Ephrem calling thee “the helper of those in peril.”[17906] My Lady, who is in greater danger than I am? I have lost God: it is certain that I have been condemned to hell. I know not whether God has yet pardoned me. I may again lose him. But thou canst obtain me all; and from thee I hope for every good, for forgiveness, perseverance, and heaven. I hope to be one of those who, in the kingdom of the blessed, will most praise thy mercies, O Mary, for having saved me by thy intercession.

Ejaculatory prayer. I will sing the mercies of Mary for all eternity; I will sing them forever and ever! Amen, amen.[17907]

[From the Naples Edition.]

PRAYER OF WILLIAM, BISHOP OF PARIS.

O Mother of God! thy goodness never despises the sinner who recommends himself to thy patronage, however enormous his crimes may have been: and hence the Church justly calls thee her advocate and the refuge of sinners. Let not, then, my crimes prevent thee from fulfilling this office of mercy, whereby thou becomest the mediatrix of peace, the hope and secure asylum of all who are in affliction. Let it not be said that the Mother of God, who, for the sake of the world, brought forth the source of mercy, can refuse to look down with pity on any wretch that flies to her for assistance. Thou art employed as the mediatrix between God and man: let me experience a share of thy great compassion.”[17908]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, my loving Mother, may I, under God, owe my salvation to thee!

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTY-THIRD VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Many Christians submit to great fatigue, and expose themselves to many dangers, to visit the places in the Holy Land where our most loving Saviour was born, suffered, and died. We need not undertake so long a journey, or expose ourselves to so many dangers; the same Lord is near us, and dwells in the church, only a few steps distant from our houses. If pilgrims, says St. Paulinus,[17909] consider it a great thing to bring back a little dust from the crib, or from the holy sepulchre in which Jesus was buried, with what ardor should not we visit the Most Blessed Sacrament, where the same Jesus is in person, and where we can go without encountering so much fatigue and so many dangers! A religious person, to whom God had given great love for the Most Blessed Sacrament, amongst other things wrote as follows in a letter: “I see that every good thing that I have comes to me from the Most Blessed Sacrament. I have given and consecrated my whole self to Jesus in this Sacrament. I see innumerable graces, which are not granted because people do not go to this divine Sacrament. I see the great desire that our Lord has to dispense his graces in the Sacrament. O holy mystery! O sacred Host! Where is it that God manifests his power the most, if it is not in this Host? For this Host contains all that God has ever done for us. Let us not envy the blessed who are in heaven, since on earth we have the same Lord, with greater wonders of his love. Induce all with whom you speak to devote themselves to the Most Blessed Sacrament. I speak thus because this Sacrament enraptures my soul. Nor can I cease to speak of the Most Blessed Sacrament, which deserves so greatly to be loved. I know not what to do for Jesus in this Sacrament.” Thus the letter ends.

O ye Seraphim, who remain sweetly burning with love around your and my Lord; though it is not indeed for love of you but of me that this King of

Heaven is pleased to be present in this Sacrament—O loving Angels, let me also burn with love; and do you enkindle your love in me, that with you I also may burn! O my Jesus, teach me to know the greatness of the love which Thou bearest to men, that at the sight of so great love my desire to love Thee and please Thee may go on always increasing! I love Thee, most amiable Lord, and will always love Thee; and this alone to please Thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee, and I give myself to Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Most amiable Virgin, St. Bonaventure calls thee, "the Mother of orphans;"[17910] and St. Ephrem, moreover, calls thee "the receiver of orphans."[17911] Alas, these wretched orphans are no others than poor sinners who have lost God! Behold, then, I have recourse to thee, most holy Mary. I have lost my Father; but thou art my Mother, who must enable me to recover him. In this my so great misfortune I call thee to my aid; do thou succor me. Shall I remain disconsolate? No; for Innocent III., speaking of thee, asks, "Whoever called upon her, and was not graciously heard by her?"[17912] And whoever prayed to thee, and was not heard and helped by thee? Who was ever lost who had recourse to thee? He alone is lost who has not recourse to thee. Then, my Queen, if thou desirest my salvation, enable me always to invoke and confide in thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. My own most holy Mary, give me confidence in thee!

[From the Naples Edition.]

I shall say with St. Augustine, Remember, O Mary, full of goodness! that no sinner has ever been heard of that has had recourse to thy protection and been abandoned by thee. Let us, then, says St. Bernard, seek for grace through the means of Mary, because she can obtain what she asks, and her demands never meet with a refusal.[17913] O Mother of God! thou prayest for all; vouchsafe to pray for me, who am the greatest of sinners[17914], and therefore have the greatest need of thy intercession.[17915]

Ejaculatory prayer. I fly to thy protection, O sacred Mother of God!

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTY-FOURTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Verily Thou art a hidden God.[17916] In no other work of divine love are these words so fully verified as in this adorable mystery of the Most Holy Sacrament, where our God is entirely hidden. When the Eternal Word took flesh, he hid his divinity, and appeared as a man on earth; but remaining with us in this Sacrament, he hides even his humanity, and, as remarks St. Bernard, appears only under the form of bread, to show thereby the tenderness of the love which he bears us: “The divinity is hid, the humanity is hid; the bowels of charity alone appear.”[17917] O my Beloved Redeemer, at the sight of the excessive tenderness Thou hast for men, I am beside myself, my Lord, and know not what to say. In this Sacrament Thou goest so far for their love as to hide Thy majesty and lower Thy glory; Thou goest so far as even to consume and annihilate Thy divine life. And whilst Thou art on the altar Thou seemest to have nothing else to do than to love men, and to show them the love which Thou bearest them. And what gratitude do they show Thee in return, O great Son of God?

O Jesus, O too great a lover of men, allow me to say so, for I see that Thou preferrest their advantage to Thine own glory. And didst Thou not know to how much contempt this loving design of Thine would expose Thee? I see, and before me Thou didst see it full well Thyself, that the greater part of men adore Thee not, neither will they acknowledge Thee for what Thou art in this Sacrament. I know that these very men have gone so far as to trample on the consecrated Hosts, that they have thrown them on the ground, into water, and into fire. And I see the greater part even of those who believe in Thee, O God, who, so far from repairing so many outrages by the homage of their devotion, either come to the church to offend Thee still more by their irreverences, or else abandon Thee on Thy altar, and sometimes even leave it unprovided with a lamp or the necessary ornaments!

Oh, could I, my most sweet Saviour, but wash with my tears, or even with my blood, those unhappy places in which, in this Sacrament, Thy love and Thy enamoured heart have been so greatly outraged! But if so much is not granted me, I desire at least, my Lord, and determine, to visit Thee often, in order to adore Thee as I now adore Thee, and this in compensation for the insults which Thou receivest in this most divine mystery. Accept, O Eternal Father, this scanty honor, which I, the most miserable of men, now offer Thee in reparation of the outrages offered to Thy Son in the Most Holy Sacrament; accept it in union with that infinite honor which Jesus Christ gave Thee on the cross, and which he daily gives Thee in the Most Blessed Sacrament. O my Sacramental Jesus, would that I could fill all men with love for the Most Blessed Sacrament!

Ejaculatory prayer. O amiable Jesus, make Thyself known, make Thyself loved!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

My most powerful Lady, in the midst of my misgivings as to my eternal salvation, how great is the confidence which I feel when I have recourse to thee; and when I think that thou, my Mother, art, on the one hand, so rich in graces, that St. John Damascene calls thee “a sea of graces;”[17918] St. Bonaventure, “the assemblage of graces,”[17919] that is, the source in which all graces are congregated; St. Ephrem, “a fountain of grace and of all consolation;”[17920] and St. Bernard, “the fulness of every good;”[17921]—and when, on the other hand, I reflect that thy desire to do us good is so great, that thou esteemest thyself offended, as St. Bonaventure says, by him who does not ask thee for thy graces: “they sin against thee, O Lady,” he says, “who do not ask of thee;”[17922]—O most rich, O most wise, and most merciful Queen, I see that thou knowest far better than I do the wants of my soul, and that thou lovest me far more than I can love thee! Know, then, the grace for which I now ask thee; obtain me the grace which thou knowest to be the most expedient for my soul. Ask this favor from God, and I am satisfied.

Ejaculatory prayer. My God, grant me the graces which Mary asks Thee for me!

[From the Naples Edition.]

Let us go, says St. Paul, to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy in the time of need.[17923] Thou, divine Mary, art this throne of grace,[17924] from which God dispenses all his blessings. Most amiable Queen, thy delight is to assist those who are in the wretched state of sin: behold, then, at thy feet a grievous sinner, imploring the aid of thy prayers. Help me to the utmost of thy power, and without delay: the wonders of thy mercy will be enhanced by saving one that has deserved a thousand hells. Thy Son cannot withstand thy intercession. I entreat thee, therefore, by the love which thou entertainest for Jesus, to procure pardon for me for the past, and grace to lead a holy life for the future. O Mary, thou art my strength, and the ground of my hope.[17925]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, cast a look of compassion on me.

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTY-FIFTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

St. Paul praises the obedience of Jesus Christ, saying, that he obeyed his Eternal Father even to death: *becoming obedient even unto death.*[17926] But in this sacrament he has gone still farther; for here he has been pleased to become obedient, not only to his Eternal Father, but also to man; and not only to death, but as long as the world shall last; so that we can say: "He has become obedient even unto the consummation of the world." He, the King of Heaven, comes down from heaven in obedience to man, and then seems to dwell and converse there, in order to obey men: *And I do not resist.*[17927] There he remains without moving himself; he allows himself to be placed where men will, be it for exposition in the remonstrance, or to be enclosed in the tabernacle. He allows himself to be carried wheresoever he is borne, be it into houses or through the streets; he allows himself to be given in Communion to whomsoever he is administered, be they just or sinners. St. Luke says that whilst he dwelt on earth he obeyed the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph; but in this Sacrament he obeys as many creatures as there are priests on earth: *and I do not resist.*

Permit me now to address Thee, O most loving Heart of my Jesus, from which indeed all the Sacraments flowed forth, but principally this Sacrament of love. I would gladly give Thee as much glory and honor as Thou givest in the Holy Sacrament in our churches to the Eternal Father. I know that on this altar Thou still lovest me with that same love with which Thou didst love me when Thou didst close Thy divine life in the midst of so much anguish on the cross. O divine Heart, enlighten all those who know Thee not with the knowledge of Thyself! Through Thy merits deliver from purgatory, or at least relieve, the pains of the afflicted souls, who are already Thy spouses for all eternity. I adore Thee, I thank Thee, I love Thee, in union with all souls who at this moment love Thee, be they on earth or in heaven. O most pure Heart, purify my heart from all attachment to creatures, and fill it with Thy holy love! O most sweet Heart, possess my whole heart, so that henceforward it may be all Thine, and always be enabled to say: *Who, then, shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord?*[17928] Write, O most sacred Heart, upon my heart all the bitter sorrows, which for so many years Thou didst endure on earth with so much love for me, that, on seeing them, I may henceforward desire, or at least endure with patience, all the sorrows of this life. Most humble Heart of Jesus, give me a share of Thy humility. Most meek Heart, impart Thy sweetness to me. Take from my heart all that displeases Thee; convert it wholly to Thee, so that I may no longer will or desire other than what Thou willest. In a word, grant that I may live only to obey Thee, only to love Thee, only to give Thee pleasure. I know that I, indeed, owe Thee much; and that Thou hast indeed placed me under great obligations: it will be but little if I consume and wear myself out for Thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. O Heart of Jesus, Thou art the sole Lord of my heart!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

St. Bernard says, that Mary is that heavenly ark, in which if we take timely refuge, we shall certainly be delivered from the shipwreck of eternal damnation: “She is the ark in which we escape shipwreck.”[17929] The ark in which Noe escaped from the general wreck of the world was indeed a type of Mary. But Hesychius says, that Mary is a more spacious, stronger, and more compassionate ark.[17930] Only a few men and a few beasts were received and saved by the former; but Mary, our ark, receives all who take refuge under her mantle, and with certainty saves them all. Unfortunate should we be had we not Mary! But still, my Queen, how many are lost! and why? Because they have not recourse to thee. And who would ever be lost had he recourse to thee?

Ejaculatory prayer. Grant, most holy Mary, that we may all and always have recourse to thee!

[From the Naples Edition.]

O my sovereign Queen! thou art the treasure of God,[17931] and in thy hands are deposited those stores of mercy which he wishes to bestow upon us. Thou hast said, by the mouth of the prophet, that thou holdest in thy hands the treasures of heaven, to enrich those who love thee.[17932] My loving Mother, I am an unfortunate sinner, and in the greatest need of help. Remember that I love thee with all my heart; yes, next to God, there is no object that I love so much as thee, because I know that this is due to thy unrivalled perfections. Have pity on me, and forsake me not; help me during life, and help me at the hour of death, that I may one day arrive at the enjoyment of thy happy society in the kingdom of heaven.[17933]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! all my hopes are directed towards thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTY-SIXTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Rejoice, and praise, O thou habitation of Sion; for great is He that is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of Israel.[17934] O God, and what joy ought not we men to conceive, what hopes and what affections, in knowing that in the midst of our land, in our churches, near our houses, the Holy of holies, the true God, dwells and lives in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar! He who by his presence alone renders the saints in heaven blessed! He who is love itself. "It is not so much that he has love, as that he is love itself,"[17935] says St. Bernard. This Sacrament is not only a sacrament of love, but is love itself; it is God himself, who, for the immense love which he bears his creatures, calls himself, and is, love itself: *God is love.*[17936]

But I hear Thee complain, O my Sacramental Jesus: *I was a stranger, and you took Me not in;*[17937] that Thou camest on earth to be our guest for our good, and that we have not welcomed Thee. Thou art right, Lord, Thou art right; and I am one of these ungrateful creatures who have left Thee alone, without even visiting Thee. Chastise me as Thou pleasest; but not by depriving me of Thy presence, which is the chastisement I deserve: no, I will repair my fault, and the indignities which I have heaped upon Thee. From this day forward I will not only visit Thee often, but will remain with Thee for as long a time as I can. O most compassionate Saviour, be pleased to make me faithful to Thee; and grant that I may also, by my example, excite others to keep Thee company in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I hear the Eternal Father, who says: *This is my beloved Son: in whom I am well pleased.*[17938] A God, then, finds all his complacency in Thee; and shall not I, a miserable worm, find mine in dwelling with Thee in this valley of tears! O consuming fire, destroy in me all affections for earthly things; for they alone can render me unfaithful, and take me away from Thee. Thou canst do so, if Thou wilt: *Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.*[17939] Thou hast already done so much for me, do this also: banish from my heart all love which does not tend towards Thee. Behold, I give myself all to Thee: I now dedicate the whole remainder of my life to the love of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Thou, O Sacramental Jesus, hast to be my comfort, my love in life, and at the hour of my death, when Thou wilt come to be my Viaticum and my guide to Thy blessed kingdom. Amen, amen. So do I hope; so may it be!

Ejaculatory prayer. When, O my Jesus, shall I behold Thy beautiful face!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

In thee, our own most holy Mother, we find the remedy for all our woes; in thee we find strength in our weakness; for St. Germanus calls thee the "strength itself of our weakness."[17940] In thee we find a door by which to make our exit from the slavery of sin; for St. Bonaventure calls thee "the gate of liberty."[17941] In thee we find our certain peace; for the same saint calls thee "the safe repose of men."[17942] In thee we find relief in our miserable life. Thou art "the solace of our pilgrimage,"[17943] as St. Laurence Justinian calls thee. In thee, in a word, we find divine grace and God himself, for St. Bonaventure calls thee "the throne of God's grace;"[17944] and St. Proclus, "the bridge by which God descends to men;"[17945] that happy bridge by which God, who had been driven to a distance by our sins, returns to dwell by his grace in our souls.

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, thou art my strength, my deliverance, my peace, and salvation!

[From the Naples Edition.]

O Mary! I will say to thee in the words of thy servant St. Bernard:[17946] thou art the queen of mercy. And who are the subjects of thy mercy but such as are in misery and affliction? Yes, thou art truly the queen of mercy, and I, the most wretched of sinners, am thy subject. I, therefore, of all, am the best entitled to thy compassion. Turn then, O my advocate, those eyes of mercy towards me, and after my days of exile, show me Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb.[17947]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, my refuge, pray for me to Jesus.

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTY-SEVENTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

The holy Church sings in the Office of the Most Blessed Sacrament: “There is no other country, however great, whose gods are nigh it as our God is nigh to us.”[17948] When the Gentiles heard how far our God carried his works of love, they exclaimed: Oh, how good a God is this God of the Christians! And, indeed, although the Gentiles imagined their gods according to their own caprices,—yet, if you read history, you will never find in all their fables, and. among the many gods they invented, that they went so far as even to imagine a god as enamoured of men as is our true God; who, to show his love for his adorers, and to enrich them with graces, has worked such a prodigy of love as to become their constant companion, and to remain night and day concealed on their altars, seeming as if he knew not how to separate himself from them, even for a moment: *He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works.*[17949]

Thou, then, my most sweet Jesus, hast been pleased to work the greatest of Thy miracles in order to satisfy the excessive desire which Thou hast to remain always near and present to us. Why, then, do men fly from Thy presence? And how can they live for so long a time at a distance from Thee, or visit Thee so seldom? How is it that when in Thy presence they get so weary that a quarter of an hour appears an age? Oh, patience of my Jesus, how great art Thou! Yes, my Lord, I understand Thee; Thy patience is great, because the love Thou bearest to men is great: and this it is which, so to say, forces Thee to dwell always in the midst of creatures so ungrateful.

Ah, my God, who, because Thou art infinite in perfections art also infinite in love, permit not that I should for the future be, as I have hitherto been, of the number of these ungrateful ones. Grant me a love equal to Thy merits and to my own obligations. At one time I also was weary in Thy presence, either because I loved Thee not, or because I loved Thee too little; but if by Thy grace I am enabled to love Thee much, I shall no longer find it tedious to remain even for whole days and nights at Thy feet in the Most Holy Sacrament. O Eternal Father, I offer Thee Thine own Son himself; accept him for me, and through his merits give me so ardent and tender a love towards the Most Blessed Sacrament, that, constantly turning towards some church in which he dwells, I may think of, and desire with longing anxiety, the time when I may be able to go and entertain myself in his presence.

Ejaculatory prayer. My God, for the love of Jesus, give me a great love towards the Most Blessed Sacrament!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Mary is that tower of David, of which the Holy Ghost says in the sacred Canticles: *It is built with bulwarks; a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the armor of valiant men.*[17950] A tower built with a thousand fortresses, and containing a thousand shields and weapons, for the benefit of those who have recourse to it. Thou art, then, according to an expression of St. Ignatius, martyr, O most holy Mary, a most powerful defence for all those who are engaged in battle.[17951] Oh, how constantly are my enemies attacking me, in order to deprive me of the grace of God and of thy protection, my most dear Lady! But thou art my strength. Thou, indeed, dost not disdain to battle for those who trust in thee; for St. Ephrem calls thee “the bulwark of all who confide in thee.”[17952] Do thou, then, defend and fight for me, who have such great hope and confidence in thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. Mary, Mary, thy name is my defence!

[From the Naples Edition.]

My queen! thou hast said to thy servant St. Bridget, that as often as a man sins, if he returns to thee with sincere repentance, thou wilt receive him and restore him to the friendship of God; that thou dost not consider the greatness of his crimes, but the sincerity of his repentance; and that thou art ever ready to apply a cure to his wounds, because thou art in reality, as in name, the Mother of mercy.[17953] Since, therefore, thou rejectest no sinner who approaches thee with a sincere detestation of his crimes, and since thou hast both the power and the will to heal him, behold, I present myself before thee, and beseech thee to apply thy celestial remedies to the deep wounds or my soul. Thy Son can refuse thee nothing: entreat him, then, to pardon me and to grant me his love.[17954]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary! my hope, I expect all through thee.

The usual prayer, page 125

TWENTY-EIGHTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

God, having given us his own Son, says St. Paul, what good thing is there that we can fear he might deny us! *How hath He not also with Him given us all things?*[17955] We know, indeed, that all that the Eternal Father has he has given to Jesus Christ. *The Father has given Him all things into His hands.*[17956] Let us, then, ever thank the goodness, the mercy, the liberality of our most loving God, who has been pleased to make us rich in all good things, and in every grace, by giving us Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar: *In all things you are made rich in Him, . . . so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace.*[17957]

Therefore, O Saviour of the world, O Incarnate Word, if I desire to have Thee, I can really think that Thou art mine, and all mine. But can I at the same time say that I am all Thine, as Thou desirest? Ah, my Lord, prevent it; and never let the world witness such disorder and such ingratitude, as that I should not be Thine when Thou desirest me! Ah, no; let it never be! If it has been so hitherto, let it never be so again. I now, with the utmost determination, consecrate myself entirely to Thee; for time and eternity I consecrate my life, my will, my thoughts, my actions, my sufferings, to Thee. Behold me Thine; as a victim consecrated to Thee, I bid farewell to all creatures, and offer my whole self to Thee. Consume me with the flames of Thy divine love. No, I am determined that creatures shall no longer share my heart. The proofs which Thou hast given me of the love which Thou bearest me, even at a time when I did not love Thee, make me hope that Thou certainly acceptest me now that I love Thee, and out of love give myself to Thee.

Eternal Father, I now offer Thee all the virtues, the actions, the affections, of the Heart of Thy dear Jesus. Accept them, and by his merits, which are all mine,—for he has given them to me,—grant me the graces which Jesus asks Thee for me. With these merits I thank Thee for the many mercies which Thou hast shown me; with these I satisfy for what I owe Thee for my sins; through these I hope for every grace from Thee,—pardon, perseverance, Paradise, and above all, the crowning gift of Thy pure love. I well see that to all these gifts I myself place impediments; but do Thou also remedy this. I ask it of Thee in the name of Jesus Christ, who has promised: *Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do.*[17958] Then Thou canst not refuse me. Lord, my only desire is to love Thee, to give myself to Thee without reserve, and no longer to be ungrateful to Thee, as I have hitherto been. Behold me, and graciously hear me; grant that this may be the day of my entire conversion to Thee, so that I may never more cease to love Thee. I love Thee, my God! I love Thee, Infinite Goodness! I love Thee, my love, my paradise, my good, my life, my all!

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, who art all mine, Thou desirest me, and I desire Thee!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

What relief do I feel in my miseries, and what consolation in my tribulations, what strength do I not find in the midst of temptations, when I remember and call thee to my aid, O my most sweet and most holy Mother Mary! Yes, indeed, you were right, O ye saints, in calling my Lady “the haven of those who are in tribulation,”[17959] with St. Ephrem; “the repairer of our calamities,”[17960] and “the solace of the miserable,”[17961] with St. Bonaventure; and “the rest from our mournings,”[17962] with St. Germanus. My own Mary, do thou console me. I see myself loaded with sins, and surrounded by enemies; without virtue, and cold in my love towards God. Comfort me, comfort me; and let my consolation be to make me begin a new life—a life which will be really pleasing to thy Son and to thee.

Ejaculatory prayer. Change me, O Mary my Mother: change me; thou canst do it.

[From the Naples Edition.]

O Mary, how lovely is the name given to thee by thy faithful servants: *most amiable Mother.*[17963] Yes, thou art truly amiable: thy beauty and thy goodness have won the heart of the King of kings, even of God himself. He has said to thee, *How beautiful thou art, my beloved;* and again, *Thou art all beautiful, and there is no spot in thee.*[17964] If, then, thou art so dear to God, how can I, a miserable sinner, and indebted to thee for so many benefits, refuse to love thee? I love thee, therefore, my most amiable Queen, and I desire to be of the number of thy most devoted lovers. Accept my desire, and obtain for me from God the love which I ask, since nothing is more pleasing to him than to love thee.[17965]

Ejaculatory prayer. O my amiable Mother, grant that I may love thee with the greatest ardor.

The usual prayer, page 125.

TWENTY-NINTH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock.[17966] O most loving shepherd, who, not satisfied with sacrificing Thyself once to death on the altar of the cross for the love of Thy sheep, hast moreover been pleased to hide Thyself in this divine Sacrament on the altars of our churches, to be always near, and to knock at the doors of our hearts, and thus obtain Thy admission! Ah, did I but know how to enjoy Thy nearness to me as did the Sacred Spouse in the Canticles, who says: *I sat down under His shadow, whom I desired.*[17967] Ah, did I but love Thee, did I but really love Thee, my most amiable Sacrament, I also should wish never to leave the foot of a tabernacle either night or day; and fixing myself near Thy Majesty, concealed under the apparent shadow of the sacred species, I also should find those divine sweetnesses and that happiness which souls enamoured of Thee there find. Ah, do Thou be graciously pleased to draw me by the odor of Thy beauties, and of the immense love which Thou manifestest in this Sacrament: *Draw me: we will run after Thee to the odor of Thy ointments.*[17968] Yes, my Saviour, I will leave creatures and all earthly pleasures, to run after Thee in this Sacrament: *As olive-plants, round about Thy table.*[17969] Oh, what abundant fruits of virtues do those happy souls, like olive-plants, bring forth to God, who assist with love before the sacred tabernacle! But I am ashamed to appear before Thee, O my Jesus, so naked and so devoid of all virtues. Thou hast commanded that all who approach the altar to honor Thee should present a gift: *Thou shalt not appear empty before Me.*[17970] What, then, am I to do? Am I no more to appear before Thee? Ah, no; this would not please Thee. Poor as I am, I will approach Thee; and do Thou provide me with the gifts which Thou desirest. I see that Thou dwellest in the Sacrament, not only to reward Thy lovers, but also to provide for the poor out of Thy riches.

Be it so, then; let us now begin. I adore Thee, O King of my heart, and true lover of men. O shepherd, loving Thy sheep beyond all bounds, to this throne of Thy love I now approach; and having nothing else to present to Thee, I offer Thee my miserable heart, that it may be entirely consecrated to Thy love and to Thy good pleasure. With this heart I can love Thee, and I will love Thee as much as I can. Draw it, then, to Thyself, and bind it wholly to Thy will, so that, filled with consolation, it may be able from henceforth to say, as Thy dear disciple said, that it is bound by the chains of Thy love: *I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ.*[17971] Unite me, my Lord, entirely to Thyself, and make me forget myself, that I may have the happiness one day to lose all things, and even myself, to find Thee alone, and to love Thee forever. I love Thee, my Sacramental Lord; to Thee do I bind myself, to Thee do I unite myself; make me find Thee, make me love Thee, and never more separate Thyself from me.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

St. Bernard calls Mary “the royal road of the Saviour;”[17972] the safe road by which to find the Saviour and salvation. Since, then, it is true, O Queen, that thou art, as the same saint says, “the chariot in which our souls go to God,”[17973]—the one who guides us to him,—ah, Lady, thou must not suppose that I shall advance towards God, if thou dost not carry me in thine arms! Carry me, carry me; and if I resist, carry me by main force; do all the violence that thou canst by the sweet attractions of thy charity to my soul and to my rebellious will, that they may leave creatures, to seek for God alone and his divine will. Show the court of heaven the greatness of thy power. After so many wonders of thy mercy, show this one more: make a poor creature who is far from God wholly his.

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, thou canst make me a saint; I hope for this grace from thee!

[From the Naples Edition.]

O charitable Queen, thou art styled by thy servants *the advocate of sinners*.[17974] Since, then, thou art employed in defending sinners, who place themselves under thy protection, I fly to thee, and address thee in the language of one of thy most devoted servants, St. Thomas of Villanova: O loving advocate, exercise thy office in my behalf; undertake my defence.[17975] It is true that I have been a rebel to thy beloved Son; but the evil is committed: save me, then, from the dreadful consequence of my rebellion. If thou tell thy divine Son that thou hast taken me under thy protection, I shall be pardoned and saved.[17976]

Ejaculatory prayer. O my Mother, my dear Mother, save me.

The usual prayer, page 125.

THIRTIETH VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, etc., page 123.

Why hidest Thou Thy face?[17977] Job feared when he saw that God hid his face: but to know that Jesus Christ veils his majesty in the Most Blessed Sacrament should not inspire us with fear, but rather with greater love and confidence; since it is precisely to increase our confidence, and with greater evidence to manifest his love, that he remains on our altars concealed under the appearance of bread. Novarinus says "that whilst God hides his face in this Sacrament, he discloses his love."[17978] And who would ever dare approach him with confidence, and lay bare before him his affections and desires, did this King of heaven appear on our altars in the splendor of his glory?

Ah, my Jesus! what loving invention was this of the Most Blessed Sacrament, to hide Thyself under the appearance of bread, in order to make Thyself loved and that Thou mightest be found on earth by all who desire Thee! The prophet was right in saying that men should speak and raise their voices throughout the world, in order to make known to all men to what an excess the inventions of the love of our good God go for us: *Make His works known among the people.*[17979] O most loving Heart of my Jesus, worthy to possess the hearts of all creatures,—Heart all and ever full of flames of most pure love! O consuming fire, consume me all, and give me a new life of love and grace! Unite me to Thyself in such a way that I may never more be separated from Thee. O Heart open to be the refuge of souls, receive me! O Heart, which on the cross was so agonized for the sins of the world, give me true sorrow for my sins! I know that in this Sacrament Thou preservest the same sentiments of love for me which Thou hadst for me when dying on Calvary; and therefore Thou hast an ardent desire to unite me wholly to Thyself. And is it possible that I should any longer resist yielding up my entire self to Thy love and to Thy desire? Ah, by Thy merits, my beloved Jesus, be pleased Thyself to wound me, to bind me, to force me, to unite me in all things to Thy Heart. I am now determined by Thy grace to give Thee all the pleasure that I possibly can, by trampling under foot all human respect, inclinations, repugnances, all my tastes and conveniences, which may prevent me from entirely pleasing Thee. Do Thou, my Lord, so help me, that I may execute this determination in such a way, that henceforward all my works, opinions, and affections, may be all in conformity with Thy good pleasure. O love of God, do Thou drive all other loves from my heart! O Mary, my hope, thou art all-powerful with God, obtain me the grace to be a faithful servant of the pure love of Jesus until death. Amen, amen. So I hope: so may it be in time and in eternity!

Ejaculatory prayer. Who shall separate me from the love from Christ![17980]

Spiritual Communion page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

St. Bernard affirms, that the love of Mary towards us cannot be greater or more powerful than it is; hence by her affection she is always abundant in her compassion for us, and by her power she is plentiful in the relief she affords us: “The most powerful and compassionate charity of the Mother of God abounds in tender compassion, and in kind relief: she is equally rich in both.”[17981]

So that, my most pure Queen, thou art rich in power, and rich in compassion; thou art able to save, and desirest to save all. I therefore beseech thee, now and always, in the words of the devout Blosius, saying: “O Lady! protect me in my combats, and confirm me when I am wavering.”[17982] O most holy Mary, in this great battle in which I am now engaged with hell, do thou always help me; but when thou seest me wavering and likely to fall, O my Lady! do thou then extend thy hand with greater promptitude, and sustain me with greater vigor. O God! how many temptations have I still to overcome before my death! Mary, my hope, my refuge, my strength, do thou protect me, and never allow me to lose the grace of God. And on my part I resolve always and instantly to have recourse to thee in all temptations, saying:

Ejaculatory prayer. Help me, Mary! Mary, help me!

[From the Naples Edition.]

O Mary, we are taught by thy servant St. Bonaventure to regard thee as *the Mother of orphans*.[17983] Those unfortunate sinners, who have lost God, their Father, are orphans indeed. I fly then to thee, O merciful Mother: I have by my sins lost my Father; all my hope rests in thee, who still remainest as my Mother. I feel fresh confidence arise within me when I hear Innocent III. ask, Who has ever called on Mary without being heard?[17984] Who was ever lost that had sincere recourse to her? I fly, therefore, to thy holy protection; have compassion on me; help me, and do not forsake me.[17985]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mother of my God, augment daily my confidence in thee.

The usual prayer, page 125.

THIRTY-FIRST VISIT

TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, page 123.

Oh, how beautiful a sight was it to behold our sweet Redeemer on that day when, fatigued by his journey, he sat down, all engaging and loving, beside the well to await the Samaritan woman, that he might convert and save her! *Jesus, therefore, sat thus on the well.*[17986] It is precisely thus that this same Lord seems sweetly to dwell with us all the day long, having come down from heaven upon our altars as upon so many fountains of graces, where he awaits and invites souls to keep him company, at least for a while, that he may thus draw them to his perfect love. From every altar on which Jesus remains in the Most Holy Sacrament he seems to speak and address all, saying: O men! why do you fly my presence? Why do you not come and draw near to me, who love you so much, and who remain thus annihilated for your sake? Why do you fear? I am not now come on earth to judge; but I have hid myself in this Sacrament of love only to do good, and to save all who have recourse to me: *I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.*[17987]

Let us, then, understand, that as Jesus Christ in heaven is *always living to make intercession for us,*[17988] so in the Sacrament of the Altar he is continually, both night and day, exercising the compassionate office of our Advocate; offering himself as a victim for us to the Eternal Father, thus to obtain for us his mercies and innumerable graces. Therefore the devout Thomas à Kempis says, that we ought to approach and converse with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament without the fear of chastisement, and unrestrained, as to a beloved friend, “as one who loves speaks to his beloved, as a friend to a friend.”[17989]

Since, then, Thou thus givest me permission, let me, O my hidden King and Lord, now open my heart to Thee with confidence, and say: O my

Jesus! O enamoured of souls, I well know the injustice that men do Thee. Thou lovest them, and art not beloved by them; Thou doest good, and receivest contempt; Thou desirest to make them hear Thy voice, and they give Thee no ear; Thou offerest them Thy graces, and they refuse them. Ah, my Jesus! and is it true that I also at one time joined these ungrateful creatures in thus displeasing Thee? O God, it is but too true? But I am determined to amend, and to endeavor during the time that I still have to live, to make up for the displeasure which I have caused Thee, by doing all that I possibly can to please Thee and to give Thee pleasure. Tell me, Lord, what Thou askest of me, I will execute all without any reserve: make it known to me by the means of holy obedience, and I hope to do it. My God, I now resolutely promise Thee that I will never, from this day forward, omit anything which I know to be, rather than another, pleasing to Thee, even were I thereby to lose all—parents, friends, esteem, health, and even life. Let all perish, provided Thou art pleased. Happy is that loss, when all is lost and sacrificed to satisfy Thy heart, O God of my soul! I love Thee, O sovereign good, worthy of love above every other good; and in loving Thee I unite my poor heart to all the hearts with which the seraphim love Thee; I unite it to the heart of Mary, to the Heart of Jesus. I love Thee with my entire self; Thee alone will I love, and Thee alone will I always love.

Ejaculatory prayer. My God, my God! I am Thine, and Thou art mine!

Spiritual Communion, page 124.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Blessed Amadeus says that our most blessed Queen, Mary, is always in the divine presence, acting as our advocate, and interposing with God by her prayers, which are most powerful: “The most blessed Virgin stands before the face of her Creator, interceding with her most powerful prayers for us. For,” he adds, “she well sees our miseries and our dangers, and the most clement and sweet Lady compassionates and succors us with a mother’s love.”[17990]

Thou, my advocate and my most loving Mother, thou even now seest the miseries of my soul; thou seest my dangers, and prayest for me. Pray, pray, and cease not to pray, until thou seest me saved and thanking thee in heaven. The devout Blosius tells me that thou, O most sweet Mary, art, after

Jesus, the certain salvation of those who are thy faithful servants.[17991] Ah! this grace I now ask thee: grant me the happy lot of being thy faithful servant until death; that after death I may go to bless thee in heaven, where I shall be certain never more, as long as God is God, to leave thy sacred feet.

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, my Mother, grant that I may be ever thine!

[From the Naples Edition.]

O Mary, thou art the tower of David, and therefore art able to defend those who take refuge under thee. Protect all who are engaged in the contest. I experience continual assaults from my enemies, who are striving to deprive me of the grace of God, and to withdraw me from thy protection. But thou art the fortress and the bulwark of our hope; thou dost not disdain to fight in behalf of those who trust in thee. O Mary, defend me, then, against all my enemies, and fight my battles for me, because I rely with confidence on thee.[17992]

Ejaculatory prayer. O Mary, thou art my protectress.

The usual prayer, page 125.

My Good, my God, all mine Thou art;

Myself I give Thee, all my heart;

For Thee, and Thee alone, I sigh.

What have I in heaven? and besides Thee, what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.[17993]

HYMNS

I

JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT ENCLOSED IN THE TABERNACLE

O FLOWERS, O happy flowers, which day and night
So near to my own Jesus silent stay,
And never leave him, till before his sight
At length your life in fragrance fades away!
Could I, too, always make my dwelling-place
In that dear spot to which your charms you lend.
Oh, what a blessed lot were mine! what grace,
Close to my truest Life, my life to end!
O lights! O happy lights, which burn away,
The presence of our Jesus to proclaim;
Ah! could I see my heart become one day
Like you, all fire of love and burning flame,
Then, as you waste away, so would I die,
Like you, consumed with fire of love divine;
Oh! how I envy you! How blest were I
Could I but change your happy lot with mine!
O sacred pyx! thou art more favored still,
For thou my love concealed dost here enclose;
What nobler, happier part could creature fill?
In thee thy very God deigns to repose!
Ah! were thy office but for one brief day
On this my poor and frozen breast bestow’d,
Then would my heart be melted all away,
Of love and fire become the blest abode!
But ah, sweet flowers, bright lights, and pyx so blest!
Far, far more fortunate than you am I,

When my Belovèd comes within my breast,
All loving like a tender lamb to lie;
And I, poor worm, in this frail host receive
My good, my all, the God of Majesty!
Why then not burn? my life why then not give,
Since here my treasure gives himself to me?
Away, like fluttering moth around the light,
My raptured soul, about thy Jesus fly,
Inflamed with faith and love; and at the sight
Of thy belovèd ever burn and sigh!
And when the hour arrives, and he is thine
Whose very sight make Paradise above,
Oh, press him to thy heart with fire divine,
And say thou wilt but love, love, only love!

II

THE VISIT TO JESUS ON THE ALTAR

WHEN the loving Shepherd,
Ere he left the earth,
Shed, to pay our ransom,
Blood of priceless worth,—
These his lambs so cherish’d,
Purchased for his own,
He would not abandon
In the world alone.
Ere he makes us partners
Of his realm on high,
Happy and immortal
With him in the sky,—
Love immense, stupendous,
Makes him here below
Partner of our exile
In this world of woe.
Lest one heart that loves him

E’er should sigh with pain,
Pining for his presence,
Seeking him in vain,—
He on earth would tarry
Near to every one,
That each heart might find him
On his altar-throne.
Yes, upon that altar,
Captive in his cell,
Burning with affection,
Jesus deigns to dwell.
Thence he seeks to kindle
With his heavenly fires
Every heart that truly
To his love aspires.
How that fire enkindles,
Piercing like a dart,
He alone is witness
Who has felt its smart;
Though the heart approaches
Cold as falling snow,
Soon it melts and kindles
From the furnace glow.
Say, ye souls enamour’d,
What blest flames you feel:
Say, what fiery arrows
Pierce you as you kneel,
When you come to worship
Where your Jesus lies,
All your love awaiting,
Hid from mortal eyes.
Jesus, food of angels!
Monarch of the heart,
Oh, that I could never
From Thy face depart!

Yes, Thou ever dwellest
Here for love of me,
Hidden Thou remainest,
God of Majesty!
Soon I hope to see Thee,
And enjoy Thy love,
Face to face, sweet Jesus,
In Thy heaven above.
But on earth an exile
My delight shall be,
Ever to be near Thee,
Veiled for love of me.

DEATH, JUDGMENT, HEAVEN, AND HELL

MEDITATIONS ON THE FOUR LAST THINGS

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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CONTENTS

INDEX

DEATH, JUDGMENT, HEAVEN, AND HELL

CONTENTS

Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell

PART I
Meditations Suitable for All Times in the Year

MEDITATION I
ETERNAL SALVATION

MEDITATION III
THE PATIENCE OF GOD IN WAITING FOR SINNERS

MEDITATION IV
THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

MEDITATION V
THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS IN DEATH

MEDITATION VI
THE GREAT THOUGHT OF ETERNITY

MEDITATION VIII
THE ABUSE OF GOD’S MERCY

MEDITATION IX
THE EMPTINESS AND SHORTNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

MEDITATION XI
THE PAIN OF LOSS

MEDITATION XII
THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

MEDITATION XIII
PREPARATION FOR THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENTS

MEDITATION XIV
THE SUFFERING OF SOULS IN HELL IN THEIR MENTAL FACULTIES

MEDITATION XV
DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

MEDITATION XVII
THE ONE THING NECESSARY

MEDITATION XX
THE PATIENCE OF GOD WITH SINNERS

MEDITATION XXI
DEATH, THE PASSAGE TO ETERNITY

MEDITATION XXII
THE REFORMATION OF OUR LIVES BEFORE DEATH,

MEDITATION XXIV
THE VALUE OF TIME

MEDITATION XXV
THE TERRORS OF THE DYING MAN AT THE THOUGHT OF APPROACHING JUDGMENT

MEDITATION XXVI
THE FIRE OF HELL

MEDITATION XXVII
THE VANITY OF ALL WORLDLY THINGS

MEDITATION XXVIII
THE NUMBER OF OUR SINS

MEDITATION XXIX
THE FOLLY OF LIVING AS ENEMIES OF GOD

MEDITATION XXXI
THE GREAT AFFAIR OF SALVATION

MEDITATION XXXII
THE FREQUENT THOUGHT OF DEATH

MEDITATION XXXIII
THE TURNING AWAY FROM GOD BY SIN

MEDITATION XXXIV
THE MERCY OF GOD IN CALLING SINNERS TO REPENTANCE

MEDITATION XXXV
THE SOUL’S APPEARANCE AT THE TRIBUNAL OF GOD

MEDITATION XXXVI
THE UNHAPPY LIFE OF THE SINNER

MEDITATION XXXIX
THE NEAR APPROACH OF DEATH

MEDITATION XL
GOD ABANDONS THE SINNER IN HIS SINS

MEDITATION XLI
THE EXAMINATION AT THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

MEDITATION XLII
THE JOURNEY TO ETERNITY

MEDITATION XLIV
THE FOLLY OF NEGLECTING SALVATION

MEDITATION XLV
THE MOMENT OF DEATH

MEDITATION XLVII
THE SENTENCE OF PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

MEDITATION XLVIII
AN UNPROVIDED DEATH

MEDITATION XLIX
THE ETERNITY OF HELL

MEDITATION L
THE UNCERTAINTY OF GRACE

MEDITATION LI
THE DEATH OF JESUS FOR THE LOVE OF MEN

MEDITATION LII
THE CERTAINTY OF BEING EITHER SAVED OR LOST

MEDITATION LIII
THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

MEDITATION LVI
THE LAST JUDGMENT

MEDITATION LVII
THE INTENSITY OF THE PAINS OF HELL

MEDITATION LVIII
THE LOVE OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED

MEDITATION LIX
THE IRRETRIEVABLE LOSS OF THE SOUL

MEDITATION LX
WE MUST DIE

MEDITATION LXIII
THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

MEDITATION LXVI
THE APPEARANCE OF THE BODY IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH

MEDITATION LXVII
THE STATE OF THE BODY IN THE GRAVE

MEDITATION LXVIII
MAN IS SOON FORGOTTEN AFTER DEATH

MEDITATION LXIX
THE APPEARANCE OF ALL MANKIND IN THE VALLEY OF JOSAPHAT

MEDITATION LXX
THE BLINDNESS OF THOSE WHO SAY, IF WE BE LOST WE SHALL NOT BE LOST ALONE

MEDITATION LXXIII
THE CARE OF OUR SALVATION

MEDITATION LXXIV
THE LEAVING OF ALL AT DEATH

MEDITATION LXXV
THE MOMENT OF DEATH

MEDITATION LXXVI
THE EXAMINATION OF OUR SINS AT THE LAST DAY

MEDITATION LXVII
THE GREAT LOVE OF GOD FOR OUR SOULS

MEDITATION LXXVIII
THE REMORSE OF THE REPROBATE

MEDITATION LXXX
THE MISERABLE DEATH OF THE SINNER

MEDITATION LXXXI
THE HAPPY DEATH OF THE JUST

MEDITATION LXXXII
AT THE POINT OF DEATH

MEDITATION LXXXIII
THE RASHNESS OF THE SINNER IN COMMITTING MORTAL SIN

MEDITATION LXXXVII
THE TROUBLE AND CONFUSION OF THE HOUR OF DEATH

MEDITATION XCI
THE SENTENCE OF THE WICKED AT THE LAST JUDGMENT

MEDITATION XCII
THE SENTENCE OF THE ELECT

PART II
Pious Reflections on Different Points of Spirituality to Guide Souls that Desire to Advance in the Love of God

I
THE THOUGHT OF ETERNITY

II
WE ARE PILGRIMS ON EARTH

VIII
I MUST ONE DAY DIE

IX
PREPARATION FOR DEATH

X
HE THAT LOVES GOD MUST LOVE AND NOT ABHOR DEATH

XXII
THE WORDS OF A DYING MAN TO JESUS CRUCIFIED

XXIII
ACTS OF DEVOTION FOR THE TIME OF DEATH

XXIV
THE HOUSE OF ETERNITY

XXV
SOULS WHO LOVE GOD DESIRE TO GO TO SEE HIM IN HEAVEN

XXVII
THE AFFAIR OF ETERNAL SALVATION

XXVIII
WHAT WILL BE THE JOY OF THE BLESSED

XXIX
THE PAIN OF HAVING LOST GOD WILL BE THAT WHICH CONSTITUTES HELL

XXXIII
THE SIGHT AND LOVE OF GOD IN THE NEXT LIFE WILL CONSTITUTE THE JOY OF THE BLESSED

XLII
PRECIOUS IS THE DEATH OF THE SAINTS

XLV
ASPIRATIONS AFTER THE COUNTRY OF THE BLESSED

Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell

PART I

Meditations Suitable for All Times in the Year[17994]

MEDITATION I

ETERNAL SALVATION

1. Our most important affair is that of our eternal salvation; upon it depends our happiness or misery for ever. This affair will come to an end in eternity, and will decide whether we shall be saved or lost forever; whether we shall have acquired an eternity of delights, or an eternity of torments; whether we shall live forever happy, or forever miserable. O God! what will my lot be? Shall I be saved, or shall 1 be lost? I may be either. And if I may be lost, why do I not embrace such a life, as may secure for me life eternal? O Jesus! Thou didst die to save me; yet have I been lost, as often as I have lost Thee, my sovereign good: suffer me not to lose Thee any more.

2. Men esteem it a great affair to gain a lawsuit, to obtain a post of honour, or to acquire an estate. Nothing, however, that will end with time deserves to be esteemed great. Since, therefore, all the goods of this world will one day end in our regard, as we shall either leave them or they will leave us, that affair alone should be esteemed great, upon which depends eternal happiness or eternal misery.

O Jesus, my Redeemer, cast me not away from Thy face, as I have deserved! I am indeed a sinner; but I am grieved from the bottom of my heart for having offended Thy infinite goodness. Hitherto I have despised Thee, but now I love Thee above all things. Henceforth Thou alone shalt be my only good, my only love. Have pity on a sinner who penitently casts himself at Thy feet, and desires to love Thee. If I have grievously offended Thee, I now ardently desire to love Thee. What would have become of me, if Thou hadst called me out of life when I had lost Thy grace and favour? Since Thou, O Lord! hast shown so much mercy to me, grant me grace to become a saint.

3. Let us awaken our faith in a heaven and a hell of eternal duration: one or other will be our lot. *O God! how could I, knowing that by committing*

sin I was condemning myself to eternal torments how could I sin so often against Thee and forfeit Thy grace? Knowing that Thou art my God and my Redeemer, how could I, for the sake of a miserable gratification, so often turn my back upon Thee? O God, I am sorry above every evil for having thus despised Thee. I love Thee above every good, and henceforth I will suffer the loss of all things rather than lose Thy friendship. Give me strength to continue faithful. And do Thou, O Blessed Virgin Mary! pray for me and assist me.

MEDITATION III

THE PATIENCE OF GOD IN WAITING FOR SINNERS

1. Who in this world has so much patience with his equals as God with us his creatures, in bearing with us, and waiting for our repentance, after the many offences we have committed against him? Ah! my God, had I thus offended my brother or my father, long ago would he have driven me from his face! O Father of mercies, *cast me not away from Thy face,*[17995] but have pity on me.

2. *Thou hast mercy, says the wise man, upon all, because Thou canst do all things, and overlookest the sins of men for the sake of repentance.*[17996] Men conceal their sense of the injuries which they receive, either because they are good, and know that it belongs not to themselves to punish those who offend them; or because they are unable, and have not the power to revenge themselves. *But to Thee, my God, it does belong to take revenge of the offences which are committed against Thy infinite majesty; and thou indeed art able to avenge Thyself, whenever Thou pleaseth; and dost Thou dissemble? Men despise Thee; they make promises to Thee and afterwards betray Thee; and dost Thou seem not to behold them, or as if Thou hadst little concern for Thy honour? Thus, O Jesus, hast Thou done towards me. Ah! my God, my infinite good, I will no longer despise Thee, I will no longer provoke Thee to chastise me. And why should I delay until Thou abandonest me in reality and condemnest me to hell? I am truly sorry for all my offences against Thee. I would that I had died rather than offend Thee! Thou art my Lord, Thou hast created me, and Thou hast redeemed me by Thy death; Thou alone hast loved, Thou alone deservest to be loved, and Thou alone shall be the sole object of my love.*

3. My soul, how could you be so ungrateful and so daring against your God? When you offended him, could he not have suddenly called you out of life and punished you with hell? And yet he waited for you; instead of

chastising you, he preserved your life and gave you good things. But you, instead of being grateful to him and loving him for such excessive goodness, you continued to offend him! O my Lord, since Thou hast waited for me with so great mercy, I give Thee thanks. I am sorry for having offended Thee. I love Thee. I might at this hour have dwelt in hell, where I could not have repented, nor have loved Thee. But now that I can repent, I grieve with my whole heart for having offended Thy infinite goodness; and I love Thee above all things, more than I love myself. Forgive me, and grant that from this day I may love no other but Thee, who hast so loved me. May I live for Thee alone, my Redeemer, who for me didst die upon the cross! All my hopes are in Thy bitter Passion. O Mary, Mother of God! assist me by thy holy intercession.

MEDITATION IV

THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

1. We must die! how awful is the decree! we must die. *The sentence is passed: It is appointed for all men once to die.*[17997] Thou art a man and thou must die. St. Cyprian says that we are born with a rope around our necks, and as long as we live on earth we hourly approach the gallows, that is, the sickness that puts an end to our life. It would be madness for any one to delude himself with the idea that he shall not die. A poor man may flatter himself that he may become rich, or a vassal that he may be a king; but who can ever hope to escape death? One dies old, another young, but all at last must come to the grave. I therefore must one day die and enter eternity. But what will be my lot for eternity? happy or miserable? My Saviour Jesus, be Thou a Saviour to me!

2. Of all those who were living upon the earth at the beginning of the last century, not one is now alive. The greatest and most renowned princes of this world have exchanged their country; scarcely does there remain any remembrance of them, and their bare bones are hardly preserved in stone monuments. Make me, O God! more and more sensible of the folly of loving the goods of this world, and for the sake of them renouncing Thee, my sovereign and infinite good. What folly have I not been guilty of; and how much it grieves me! I give Thee thanks for having made me sensible of it.

3. A hundred years hence, at most, and neither you nor I will be any longer in this world; both will have gone into the house of eternity. A day, an hour, a moment, is approaching which will be the last both for you and me; and this hour, this moment, is already fixed by Almighty God; how then can we think of anything else but of loving God, who will then be our judge? Alas! what will my death be? O my Jesus and my judge! what will become of me when I shall have to appear before Thee to give an account

of my whole life? Pardon me, I beseech Thee, before that moment arrives which will decide my happiness or misery for eternity. I am sorry for having offended Thee, my sovereign good. Hitherto I have not loved Thee; but now I will love Thee with my whole soul. Grant me the grace of perseverance. O Mary, refuge of sinners, have pity on me!

MEDITATION V

THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS IN DEATH

1. *The day of destruction is at hand.*[17998] The day of death is called the day of destruction, because then is destroyed all that man has acquired; honours, friends, riches, possessions, kingdoms all are then no more. What then doth it profit us to gain the whole world if in death we must leave all? All is at an end at the bedside of the dying man. Is there any king, think you, said St. Ignatius to Xavier when he sought to bring him to God, who has taken with him into the other world even a thread of purple to mark his sovereignty? Has any rich man taken with him a single coin, or even one servant to attend him? In death all is left behind. The soul enters eternity alone and unattended, except by its works. Woe to me! where are my works to accompany me to a blessed eternity? I can discover none but such as render me deserving of eternal torments.

2. Men come into the world in unequal conditions: one is born rich, another poor, one a noble, another a plebeian; but all go out of it equal and alike. Consider the graves of the dead: see if you can discover among the bodies which are there interred, who was a master and who a servant, who was a king and who a beggar. O God! while others amass the fortunes of this world, may my only fortune be Thy holy grace. Thou alone art my only good both in this life and in the next.

3. In one word, everything on earth will come to an end. All greatness will end, all misery will end, honours will end, ignominies will end; pleasures will end, sufferings will end. Blessed in death, therefore, not he who has abounded in riches, honours, and pleasures, but he who has patiently endured poverty, contempt, and sufferings! The possession of temporal goods affords no consolation at the moment of death: that alone consoles us which has been done or suffered for God. O Jesus! separate my heart from this world, before death entirely takes me from it. Help me with

Thy grace; Thou indeed knowest how great is my weakness. Permit me not to be any more unfaithful to Thee, as I have hitherto been. I am sorry, O Lord! for having so often despised Thee. Now will I love Thee above every good, and will die a thousand times rather than forfeit Thy grace. But the infernal one ceases not to tempt me; in mercy abandon me not, leave me not to myself, permit me not to be any more separated from Thy love. O Mary, my hope! obtain for me the grace of perseverance.

MEDITATION VI

THE GREAT THOUGHT OF ETERNITY

1. Thus did St. Augustine designate the thought of eternity: *“The great thought” “magna cogitatio.”* It was this thought that induced so many solitaries to retire into deserts; so many religious, even kings and queens, to shut themselves up in cloisters; and so many martyrs to sacrifice their lives in the midst of torments, in order to acquire a happy eternity in heaven, and to avoid a miserable eternity in hell. The Ven. John of Avila converted a certain lady with these two words: *“Reflect,“ said he to her, “on these two words: Ever and Never.”* A certain monk went down into a grave that he might meditate continually on eternity, and constantly repeated, *“O eternity! eternity!”* How frequently, my God, have I deserved the eternity of hell! Oh, that I had never offended Thee! Grant me sorrow for my sins; have compassion on me.

2. The same Ven. John of Avila says, that he who believes in eternity and becomes not a saint should be confined as one deranged. He who builds a house for himself takes great pains to make it commodious, airy, and handsome, and says: *“I labour and give myself a great deal of trouble about this house, because I shall have to live in it all my life.”* And yet how little is the house of eternity thought of! When we shall have arrived at eternity there will be no question of our residing in a house more or less commodious, or more or less airy: the question will be of our dwelling in a palace overflowing with delights, or in a gulf of endless torments. And for how long a time? not for forty or fifty years, but forever, as long as God shall be God. The saints, to obtain salvation, thought it little to give their whole lives to prayer, penance, and the practice of good works. And what do we do for the same end?

O my God! many years of my life are already past, already death is near at hand, and what good have I hitherto done for Thee? Give me light, and *strength, to devote the remainder of my days to Thy service. Too much, alas! have I offended Thee; I desire hence forth to love Thee.*

3. *With fear and trembling work out your salvation.*[17999] To obtain salvation we must tremble at the thought of being lost, and tremble not so much at the thought of hell, as of sin, which alone can send us thither. He who dreads sin avoids dangerous occasions, frequently recommends himself to God, and has recourse to the means of keeping himself in the state of grace. He who acts thus will be saved; but for him who lives not in this manner it is morally impossible to be saved. Let us attend to that saying of St. Bernard: *"We cannot be too secure where eternity is at stake."*[18000] Thy blood, O Jesus, my Redeemer! is my security. I should have been already lost on account of my sins, hadst Thou not offered me Thy pardon, on condition of my repentance for having offended Thee. I am sorry therefore with my whole heart for having offended Thee, who art infinite goodness. I love Thee, O sovereign good! above every other good, I know that Thou willest my salvation, and I will endeavour to secure it by loving Thee forever. O Mary, Mother of God! pray to Jesus for me.

MEDITATION VIII

THE ABUSE OF GOD’S MERCY

1. There are two ways by which the devil endeavours to deceive men to their eternal ruin: after they have committed sin he tempts them to despair on account of the severity of divine justice; but before they have sinned he encourages them to do so by the hope of obtaining the divine mercy. And he effects the ruin of numberless souls as well by the second as by the first artifice. *“God is merciful,”* says the obstinate sinner to him who would convert him from the iniquity of his ways. *“God is merciful.”* But as the Mother of God expresses it in her canticle, *His mercy is to them that fear Him.*[18001] Yes, the Lord deals mercifully with him that fears to offend him, but not so with the man who presumes upon his mercy to offend him still more. O God! I give Thee thanks for having made me sensible of Thy patience in bearing with me. Behold, I am of the number of those who, presuming on Thy goodness, have offended Thee again and again.

2. God is merciful; but he is also just. Sinners are desirous that he should be merciful only, without being just; but that is impossible, because were he only to forgive and never to chastise, he would be wanting in justice. Hence Father Avila observes that patience on the part of God towards those who avail themselves of his compassion to offend him the more, would not be compassion, but a want of justice. He is bound to chastise the ungrateful. He bears with them for a certain time, but after that abandons them.

Such a punishment, O God! has not as yet overtaken me, or else I had now dwelt in hell, or had been obstinate in my sins. But no: I desire to amend my life; I desire to offend Thee no more. Though I have hitherto displeased Thee, I am sorry for it with my whole soul; I desire henceforth to love Thee, and I desire to love Thee more than others do, because Thou hast not shown the same patience towards others as towards me.

3. God is not mocked.[18002] Yet he would be mocked, if the sinner could go on continually offending him, and yet afterwards enjoy him in heaven. *What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap.*[18003] He who sows good works shall reap rewards; but he who sows iniquities shall reap chastisements. The hope of those who commit sin because God is forgiving, is an abomination in his sight: *their hope, says holy Job, is an abomination.*[18004] Hence the sinner, by such hope, provokes God to chastise him the sooner, as that servant would provoke his master, who, because his master was good, took advantage of his goodness to behave ill.

O Jesus! such, I fear, has been my conduct towards Thee; because Thou wast good I have made no account of Thy precepts. I confess that I have done wickedly; and I detest all the offences I have committed against Thee. Now do I love Thee more than myself, and I desire never more to displease Thee. Ah, if I should again offend Thee by mortal sin! Permit it not, O Lord; rather let me die. O Mary, Mother of perseverance, do thou assist me.

MEDITATION IX

THE EMPTINESS AND SHORTNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

1. Holy David said that the happiness of this life is as the dream of one awaking from sleep: *as the dream of them that awake*[18005] All the greatness and glory of this world will appear no more to poor wordlings, at the hour of death, than as a dream to one awaking from sleep, who finds that the fortune which he had acquired in his dream ends with his sleep. Hence, did one who was undeceived wisely write on the skull of a dead man, *"Cogitanti omnia vilescunt" He who thinks, undervalues all things.* Yes, to him who thinks on death, all the goods of this life appear, as they really are, vile and transitory. Nor can that man fix his affections on the earth who reflects that in a short time he must leave it forever. Ah, my God, how often have I despised Thy grace for the miserable goods of this world! Henceforth I desire to think of nothing but of loving and serving Thee. Assist me with Thy holy grace.

2. "And is it thus, then, that worldly grandeur and sovereign power must end?" Such was the exclamation of St. Francis Borgia, when he beheld the corpse of the Empress Isabella, who died in the flower of her youth. Reflecting upon what he saw, he resolved to bid adieu to the world, and to give himself entirely to God, saying, *"I will henceforth serve a master who will never forsake me."* Let us detach ourselves from present goods before death tears us away from them. What folly it is to expose ourselves to the danger of losing our souls, for the sake of some attachment to this miserable world, from which we shall soon have to depart; for soon it will be said to us by the minister of God, *"Go forth, Christian soul, out of this world!"*[18006]

O my Jesus, that I had always loved Thee! How many offences have I been guilty of against Thee! Teach me how to correct my disorderly life, for I am willing to do whatever Thou pleasest. Accept of my love, accept of my repentance, in which I love Thee more than myself, and crave Thy mercy and compassion.

3. Reflect that you cannot remain forever in this world. You must one day leave the country in which you now reside; you must one day go out from the house in which you now dwell to return to it no more. Think that many before you inhabited the same room in which you are at present reading; that they slept in the same bed in which you are accustomed to sleep; and where are they? gone into eternity. The same will happen to you. Make me sensible, O God, of the injustice I have been guilty of in turning my back upon Thee, my sovereign good; and grant me the sorrow to bewail my ingratitude as I ought. O that I had died rather than ever offended Thee! Suffer me not to live any longer ungrateful for the love which Thou hast shown me. My dear Redeemer, I love Thee above all things, and I desire to love Thee to the best of my power during the remainder of life. Strengthen my weakness by Thy grace; and do thou, Mary, Mother of God, intercede for me.

MEDITATION XI

THE PAIN OF LOSS

1. The greatest pain of hell is not the fire nor the darkness, not the stench, nor any other of all the material torments of that dreadful prison of despair; it is the pain of loss that is, the pain of having lost God which of itself may be said to constitute hell. The soul was created to be forever united with God, and to enjoy the sight of his enrapturing countenance. God is its last end, its only good, so that all the goods of earth and heaven, without God, could not make it happy. Hence it is that if a condemned soul in hell could possess and love God, hell, with all its torments, would be to it a paradise. But this will be its sovereign punishment, which will render it forever inconceivably miserable, to be deprived of God for all eternity, without the least hope of ever again beholding him or loving him. *Jesus, my Redeemer! nailed to the cross for my sake, Thou art my hope; oh that I had died rather than offended Thee!*

2. The soul, being created for God, has an instinctive tendency to become united with its sovereign good, its God; but being united with the body, when it wallows in iniquity, it becomes so darkened by the created objects which allure the senses that it loses its sight, and has so little knowledge of God as no longer to desire to be united with him. But when separated from the body, and from sensible objects, then it will know that God is the only good that can render it happy. Therefore, as soon as it shall have departed hence, it will feel itself drawn with most powerful attraction towards a union with God; but having left this life an enemy of God, it will be not only kept back from him by its sins, as by a chain, but dragged by them into hell, there to be forever separated and at a distance from God. The wretched soul in that eternal dungeon will know how beautiful God is, but will not be able to behold him. It will know how amiable God is, but will not be able to love him; it will even feel itself forced by its sins to hate him; and this will

be its hell of hells, to know that it hates a God who is infinitely lovely. It will desire that it were possible to destroy God, to whom it is hateful; and to destroy itself, hating God; and this will be the eternal occupation of this unhappy soul. *Do Thou, O Lord! have pity on me.*

3. This torment will be immensely increased by the remembrance of the graces that God bestowed upon it, and the love which he evinced towards it during its lifetime. It will especially call to mind the love of Jesus Christ in shedding his blood, and laying down his life for its salvation; but, ungrateful soul, not to forego its own miserable gratifications, it consented to lose God, its sovereign good; and it will find that no hope will be left of ever regaining him. *Ah, my God! were I in hell, I should not be able to love Thee, nor to repent of my sins; but as I have it now in my power to repent and to love Thee, I am sorry with my whole soul for having offended Thee, and love Thee above all things. Grant me to remember continually that hell which I have deserved, that I may love Thee with still greater and greater fervour. O Mary, refuge of sinners! do not abandon me.*

MEDITATION XII

THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

1. It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.[18007] It is of faith, that immediately after death we shall be judged according to our works in this life. And it is also of faith, that upon this judgment will depend our eternal salvation or perdition. Imagine yourself to be in your agony, and to have only a short time to live. Think that in a short time you would then have to appear before Jesus Christ to give an account of your whole life. Alas! how alarming would the sight of your sins then be to you! Jesus, my Redeemer! pardon me, I beseech Thee, before Thou judgest me. I know that I have many times already deserved to be sentenced to eternal death. No, I desire not to present myself guilty before Thee, but penitent and pardoned. O my sovereign good! I am grievously sorry for having offended Thee.

2. O God! what will be the anguish of the soul when it shall first behold Jesus Christ as its judge, and behold him terrible in his wrath? It will then see how much he has suffered for its sake; it will see what great mercies he has exercised towards it, and what powerful means he has bestowed upon it for the attainment of salvation; then will it also see the greatness of eternal goods, and the vileness of earthly pleasures, which have wrought its ruin; it will then see all these things, but to no purpose, because then there will be no more time to correct its past errors; what shall have then been done will be irrevocable. Before the judgment-seat of God, no nobility, nor dignity, nor riches will be considered; our works alone will be weighed there. *Grant, O Jesus! that when I first behold Thee I may see Thee appeased; and, for this end, grant me the grace to weep, during the remainder of my life, over the evil which I have done in turning my back upon Thee, to follow my own sinful caprices. No, I desire never more to offend Thee. I love Thee and desire to love Thee forever.*

3. What contentment will that Christian enjoy at the hour of death who has left the world to give himself to God; who has denied his senses all unlawful gratifications: and who, if he has on some occasions been wanting, has at last been wise enough afterwards to do worthy penance for it! On the other hand, what anguish will that Christian experience who has continually relapsed into the same vices, and at last finds himself at the point of death! Then will he exclaim: *"Alas! in a few moments I must appear before Jesus as my judge, and I have not as yet even begun to change my life! I have many times promised to do so, but I have not done it; and now, in a short time, what will become of me?"*

Ah, my Jesus and my judge! I return Thee thanks for the patience with which Thou hast hitherto waited for me. How many times have I myself written my own eternal condemnation. Since Thou hast thus waited to pardon me, reject me not, now prostrate at Thy feet. Receive me into Thy favour through the merits of Thy bitter Passion. I am sorry, my sovereign good! for having despised Thee. I love Thee above all things. I desire never more to forsake Thee. O Mary! recommend me to thy Son Jesus, and do not abandon me.

MEDITATION XIII

PREPARATION FOR THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENTS

1. *“Be you ready: for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come.”*[18008] The time of death will not be the time to prepare ourselves to die well; to die well and happily, we must prepare ourselves beforehand. There will not be time then to eradicate bad habits from the soul, to expel from the heart its predominant passions, and to extinguish all affection to earthly goods. *“The night cometh when no man can work”*[18009] All in death will be night; when nothing will be seen; and, hence, nothing done. The heart hardened, the mind obscured, confusion, fear, the desire of health, will all render it almost impossible at the hour of death to set in order a conscience confused and entangled in sin. Sacred wounds of my Redeemer! I adore you, I humbly kiss you, and I confide in you.

2. The saints thought they did but little, though they spent their whole lives in preparing for death, by acts of penance, prayer, and the practice of good works; and they trembled when they came to die. The venerable John Avila, although he had led a very holy life from his youth, when it was announced to him that he was about to die, made answer and said, *“Oh that I had a little more time to prepare myself for death!”* And what shall we say when the summons of death shall be brought to us? *No, my God, I do not wish to die disquieted and ungrateful, as at present I should die, if death were to overtake me; I desire to change my life, I desire to bewail my offences against Thee, I desire to love Thee with my whole heart. O Lord! help me, enable me to do something for Thee before I die, for Thee who hast died for the love of me.*

3. *The time is short,*[18010] says the Apostle. Yes, we have but a short time in which to set our accounts in order. Hence the Holy Ghost admonishes us, *Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it quickly.*[18011] Whatever thou art able to do to-day, put it not off till to-morrow; for to-day is passing away, and to-

morrow may bring death, which will deprive thee of all means of doing good, or of amending what thou hast done amiss. Woe to me! if death should find me still attached to this world. *Ah, my God, how many years have I lived at a distance from Thee! And how hast Thou had so much patience with me, in waiting for me and in calling me so often to repentance! I thank Thee, O my Redeemer! for Thy long forbearance, and I hope to thank Thee for it forever in heaven. "The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever."*[18012] *Hitherto I have not loved Thee, and have made little account of being or not being loved by Thee, but now I do love Thee with my whole heart; I love Thee above all things, more than I love myself, and I desire nothing so much as to be loved by Thee; and, recollecting how I have despised Thy love, I would willingly die of grief for having done so. Jesus, grant me perseverance in virtue. Mary, my holy mother, obtain for me the happiness of being faithful to God.*

MEDITATION XIV

THE SUFFERING OF SOULS IN HELL IN THEIR MENTAL FACULTIES

1. The souls in hell will be tormented in their memory. Never, in the abode of infinite misery will they lose for a moment the remembrance of the time that was allowed them in this life to practise virtue, and to make amends for the evil which they have done; and never will it be concealed from them that there is no longer the least hope of remedy. They will call to mind the lights which they received from God, his many loving calls, his offers of pardon, all despised; and they will see that all is now at an end, and that nothing remains for them, but to suffer and to despair for all eternity. *O Jesus! Thy blood, Thy sufferings, and Thy death are my trust and hope. Alas! suffer me not to fall into hell, there to curse forever even the blessings which Thou hast bestowed upon me.*

2. The souls in hell will be tormented in their understanding, by thinking continually of heaven, which they have wilfully lost through their own fault. The immense felicity enjoyed by the blessed in the abode of delights will be forever before their eyes; and this will render their life of dreadful sufferings, which they must drag on forever in the prison of despair and woe, still more tormenting. *Had I then died, my Redeemer, when I was in sin, I should now have had no hope of ever enjoying Thee in heaven! Thou gavest me life that I might gain heaven, and now have I lost heaven for something worse than nothing, by losing Thy grace! I love Thee, O God, and I am sorry for having offended Thee; and I hope, through the merits of Thy Passion, to come to love Thee forever in heaven.*

3. The souls in hell will be tormented in their will, by being denied everything which they desire, and by having every punishment inflicted upon them which they do not desire. They will never have anything which they wish for, but everything which they abhor. They will long to rid

themselves of their torments and to find peace; but there will be no peace for them; they will be forced to dwell in the midst of their torments forever. Their perverse will, by hating God when they know him to be the supreme good, and worthy of infinite love, will become their greatest torment. *So it is, my God; Thou art an infinite good and worthy of infinite love, and I have exchanged Thee for nothing! Oh that I had died and had not offered Thee so grievous an injury! I love Thee, my sovereign good. Have pity on me and suffer me not to be again ungrateful to Thee! I renounce all the delights of this world, and embrace Thee as my only good. I will be forever Thine; be Thou forever mine. This is my hope, my God, my love, and my all. Deus meus et omnia. O Mary! thou art all-powerful with God; obtain for me the grace of leading a holy life.*

MEDITATION XV

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

1. Jesus is the mediator of justice; Mary obtains for us grace; for, as St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Bernardine of Sienna, St. Germanus, St. Antoninus, and others say, it is the will of God to dispense through the hands of Mary whatever graces he is pleased to bestow upon us. With God, the prayers of the saints are the prayers of his friends, but the prayers of Mary are the prayers of his mother. Happy they who confidently and at all times have recourse to this divine mother! This, above all others, is the most pleasing devotion to the Blessed Virgin, ever to have recourse to her and to say: O Mary! intercede for me with thy Son Jesus.

2. Jesus is omnipotent by nature; Mary is very powerful by grace; she obtains whatever she asks for. It is impossible, says St. Antoninus, that this mother should ask any favour of her Son for those who are devout to her, and the Son not grant her request. Jesus delights to honour his mother by granting whatever she asks of him. Hence St. Bernard exhorts us to seek for grace, and to seek for it through Mary; *because she is a mother to whom nothing can be denied.*[18013] If, then, we should be saved, let us recommend ourselves to Mary, that she may intercede for us, because her prayers are always heard. O mother of mercy! have pity on me. Thou art styled the advocate of sinners; assist me, therefore, a sinner placing my confidence in thee.

3. Let us not doubt whether Mary will hear us when we address our prayers to her. It is her delight to exercise her powerful influence with God in obtaining for us whatever graces we stand in need of. It is sufficient to ask favours of Mary to obtain them. If we are unworthy of them, she renders us worthy, by her powerful intercession; and she is very desirous that we should have recourse to her, that she may save us. What sinner ever perished, who, with confidence and perseverance, had recourse to Mary, the

refuge of sinners? He is lost who has not recourse to Mary. *Mary, my mother and my hope! I take refuge under thy protection; reject me not, as I have deserved. Protect me and have pity on me, a miserable sinner. Obtain for me the forgiveness of my sins; obtain for me holy perseverance, the love of God, a good death, and a happy eternity. I hope all things of thee, because thou art most powerful with God. Make me holy, since thou hast it in thy power to do so, by thy holy intercession. O Mary! in thee do I confide, in thee do I place all my hopes, next to thy divine Son Jesus.*

MEDITATION XVII

THE ONE THING NECESSARY

1. One thing is necessary,[18014] the salvation of our souls. It is not necessary to be great, noble, or rich in this world, or to enjoy uninterrupted health; but it is necessary to save our souls, For this has God placed us here: not to acquire honours, riches, or pleasures, but to acquire by our good works that eternal kingdom which is prepared for those who, during this present life, fight against and overcome the enemies of their eternal salvation. *Ah, my Jesus, how often have I renounced heaven by renouncing Thy grace! But, O Lord! I am more grieved for having forfeited Thy friendship than for having lost heaven. Give me, O Jesus! a great sorrow for my sins, and mercifully pardon me.*

2. Of what consequence is it if a man be poor, mean, infirm, and despised in this life, provided that in the end he dies in the grace of God and secures his salvation? The more he has been afflicted with tribulations, if he suffered them with patience, the more will he be glorified in the kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, what does it profit a man to abound in riches and honours, if, when he dies, he is lost forever? If we are lost, all the goods that we have enjoyed in this world will be remembered only to increase our misery for eternity. Do Thou, my God, enlighten me; give me to understand that my only evil is to offend Thee, and my only good to love Thee. Enable me to spend the remainder of my days in serving Thee.

3. Salvation is necessary, because there is no medium; we must either be saved or lost. It will not do to say: I shall be satisfied with not going to hell; I shall not be concerned at being deprived of heaven. No; either heaven or hell; either forever happy with God in heaven in an ocean of delights, or forever trampled upon by devils in hell in an ocean of fire and torments: either saved, or lost; there is no alternative. *Jesus! I have hitherto chosen hell, and for years past I should have been suffering there, if in pity Thou*

hadst not borne with me. I thank Thee, O my Saviour! and I am sorry above every evil for having offended Thee. I hope, for the future, with the assistance of Thy grace, to walk no more in the way that conducts to hell. I love Thee, O my sovereign good! and I desire to love Thee forever. Grant me perseverance in good, and save me through that blood which Thou hast shed for me. O Mary, my hope! intercede for me.

MEDITATION XX

THE PATIENCE OF GOD WITH SINNERS

1. The more we have experienced the patient mercies of God, the more we ought to be afraid of continuing to abuse them, lest the time of God's vengeance overtake us. *Revenge is Mine, and I will repay in due time.*[18015] God will put an end to his forbearance towards those who will not cease to abuse it. *I give Thee thanks, O Lord! for having patiently borne with me, though I have so often betrayed Thee. Make me sensible of the evil that I have done by abusing Thy patience for so long a time; make me sorry for all the offences I have committed against Thee. No, I will never more abuse Thy tender mercy.*

2. "Commit this sin; you can afterwards confess it." Such is the artifice with which the devil has drawn many souls into hell. Many Christians, now in hell, have been lost by this delusion. *The Lord waiteth, that He may have mercy on you.*[18016] God waits for the sinner, that the sinner may be converted, and obtain mercy; but when God sees that the time which he allows the sinner for doing penance is employed only in increasing the number of his offences, then he waits no longer, but punishes him as he deserves. Pardon me, O God! for I desire never more to offend Thee. And why should I delay? that Thou mayest condemn me to hell? I fear indeed that now Thou canst no longer have patience with me. I have indeed offended Thee too grievously. I am sorry for it. I repent of it. I hope for forgiveness through the merits of that blood which Thou hast shed for me.

3. The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed: because His commiserations have not failed.[18017] Thus should he exclaim who finds, to his confusion, that he has frequently offended God. He should be most grateful to God for not having suffered him to die in his sins, and be most careful not to offend him again; otherwise the Lord will reproach him, saying: *What more could I have done for My vineyard that I have not done?*

[18018] God will say to him: Ungrateful soul! if thou hadst committed the same offences against man, who is viler than the earth, verily he would not have borne with thee. And how great mercies have I exercised towards thee! How many times have I called thee, and enlightened thee, and pardoned thee? The time of punishment is at hand; the time of forgiveness is past. Thus has God spoken to many who are now suffering in hell; where one of their greatest torments is the remembrance of the mercies which they formerly received from God. *O Jesus, my Redeemer and my Judge! I also have deserved to hear the same from Thy mouth; but I hear Thee now again calling me to pardon: Be converted to the Lord thy God:*[18019] *O accursed sin, which has made me lose my God, how much do I abhor and detest thee! I turn my whole self towards Thee, my Lord and my God! My sovereign good, I love Thee; and because I love Thee I repent with my whole soul for having, during the time that is past, so much despised Thee. My God! I desire never more to offend Thee: give me Thy love, grant me perseverance. Mary, my refuge, succour and help me.*

MEDITATION XXI

DEATH, THE PASSAGE TO ETERNITY

1. It is of faith that my soul is immortal, and that one day, when I least think of it, I must leave this world. I ought therefore to make a provision for myself, which will not fail with this life, but will be eternal even as I am eternal. Great things were done here, in their life time, by an Alexander or a Caesar; but for how many ages past have their glories ceased! and where are they now? *O my God, that I had always loved Thee! What now remains for me, after so many years spent in sin, but trouble and remorse of conscience? But since Thou dost allow me time to repair the evil which I have done, behold me, Lord, ready to perform whatever Thou requirest of me, whatever Thou pleasest. I will spend the remainder of my days in bewailing my ungrateful conduct towards Thee, and in loving Thee with all my power, my God and my all, my only good.*

2. What will it avail me to have been happy in this world (if indeed true happiness can be attained without God) if hereafter I should be miserable for all eternity? But what folly it is, to know that I must die, and that an eternity either of happiness or misery awaits me after death, and that upon dying ill or well depends my being miserable or happy forever, and yet, not to adopt every means in my power to secure a good death! *O Holy Spirit, enlighten and strengthen me to live always in Thy grace, until the hour of my departure. O infinite goodness! I am sensible of the evil which I have done by offending Thee, and I detest it: I know that Thou alone art worthy of being loved, and I love Thee above all things.*

3. In a word, all the good things of this life must end at our burial and be left, while we are mouldering in our graves. The shadow of death will cover and obscure all the grandeur and splendour of this world. He only, then, can be called happy who serves God in this world, and by loving and serving him acquires eternal happiness. *O Jesus! I am truly sorry for having*

hitherto made so little account of Thy love. Now I love Thee above all things, and I desire nothing else but to love Thee. Henceforth Thou only shalt be the sole object of my love, Thou only shalt be my all; and this is the only inheritance I ask of Thee; to love Thee always, both in this life and in the next. For the merits of Thy bitter Passion, give me perseverance in all virtues. Mary, mother of God, thou art my hope.

MEDITATION XXII

THE REFORMATION OF OUR LIVES BEFORE DEATH,

1. Everyone desires to die the death of the saints, but it is scarcely possible for the Christian to make a holy end who has led a disorderly life until the time of his death; to die united with God, after having always lived at a distance from him. The saints, in order to secure a. happy death, renounced all the riches, the delights, and all the hopes which this world held out to them, and embraced poor and mortified lives. They buried themselves alive in this world, to avoid, when dead, being buried forever in hell. *O God! for how many years past have I deserved to be buried in that place of torments, without hope of pardon, or of being able to love Thee! But Thou hast waited in order to pardon me. Truly, then, am I sorry from the bottom of my heart for having offended Thee, my sovereign good; and have pity on me, and do not permit me to offend Thee any more.*

2. God forewarns sinners that they will seek him in death and will not find him: *You shall seek and shall not find Me.*[18020] They shall not find him because they will not then seek.him through love, but only through the fear of hell; they will seek God without renouncing their affection for sin, and hence they shall not find him. No, my God, I will not wait to seek Thee in death, but will seek and desire Thee from this moment. I am sorry for having hitherto given Thee so much displeasure by seeking to gratify my own inclinations. I am sorry for it, I confess that I have done evil. But Thou willest not that the heart that seeks Thee should despair, but rejoice: *Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.*[18021] Yes, O Lord! I seek Thee, and I love Thee more than myself.

3. How miserable is the Christian who before his death has not spent a good part of his life in bewailing his sins! It is not to be denied that such a man may be converted at his death and obtain salvation; but the mind obscured, the heart hardened, the bad habits formed, the passions

predominant, render it morally impossible for him to die happily. An extraordinary grace will be necessary for him; but does God reserve such a grace to bestow it upon one who has continued ungrateful to him even until the moment of death? *O God, to what straits are sinners reduced to escape eternal destruction! No, my God, I will not wait until death to repent of my sins and to love Thee. I am sorry now for having offended Thee; now do I love Thee with my whole heart. Suffer me not any more to turn my back upon Thee; rather let me die. O holy Mother, Mary, obtain for me perseverance in virtue.*

MEDITATION XXIV

THE VALUE OF TIME

1. Time is a treasure of inestimable value, because in every moment of time we may gain an increase of grace and eternal glory. In hell the lost souls are tormented with the thought, and bitterly lament that now there is no more time for them in which to rescue themselves by repentance from eternal misery. What would they give but for one hour of time to save themselves by an act of true sorrow from destruction! In heaven there is no grief; but if the blessed could grieve, they would do so for having lost so much time during life, in which they might have acquired greater glory, and because time is now no longer theirs. *I give Thee thanks, O God! for giving me time to bewail my sins, and to make amends by my love for the offences I have committed against Thee.*

2. Nothing is so precious as time; and yet how comes it that nothing is so little valued? Men will spend hours in jesting, or standing at a window or in the middle of a road, to see what passes; and if you ask them what they are doing, they will tell you they are passing away time. O time, now so much despised! thou wilt be of all things else the most valued by such persons when death.shall have surprised them. What will they not then be willing to give for one hour of so much lost time! But time will remain no longer for them when it is said to each one of them: *"Go forth, Christian soul, out of this world:"*[18022] hasten to be gone, for now there is no time for thee. How will they then exclaim, lamenting, Alas! I have squandered away my whole life; during so many years I might have become a saint; but how far am I from being such; and shall I become such, now that there is no more time for me! But to what purpose will such lamentations be, when the dying man is on the verge of that moment on which will depend eternity?

3. Walk whilst you have light.[18023] The time of death is the time of night, when nothing can any longer be seen, nor anything be accomplished. *The* *night cometh, in which no man can work.*[18024] Hence the Holy Spirit admonishes us to walk in the way of the Lord, whilst we have the light and the day before us. Can we reflect that the time is near approaching in which the cause of our eternal salvation is to be decided, and still squander away time?

Let us not delay, but immediately put our accounts in order, because when we least think of it, Jesus Christ will come to judge us. *At what hour ye think not, the Son of man will come.*[18025] Hasten, then, my Jesus, hasten to pardon me. And shall I delay? shall I delay until I am cast into that eternal prison, where, with the rest of the condemned souls, I must forever lament, saying, *"The summer is past, and we are not saved."*[18026] No, my Lord, I will no longer resist Thy loving invitations. Who knows but that this meditation which I am now reading may be the last I shall ever cast my eyes upon! I am sorry for having offended Thee, O sovereign good! To Thee do I consecrate the remainder of my days, and beseech Thee to grant me holy perseverance. I desire never more to offend Thee, but forever to love Thee. O Mary, refuge of sinners! in thee do I place my confidence.

MEDITATION XXV

THE TERRORS OF THE DYING MAN AT THE THOUGHT OF APPROACHING JUDGMENT

1. Consider the fear which the thought of judgment will cause in the mind of a dying man, when he reflects that in a very short time he must present himself before Jesus Christ, his Judge, to render an account of all the actions of his past life. When the awful moment of his passage out of this world into another, out of time into eternity, arrives, then will there be nothing so tormenting to him as the sight of his sins. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, being ill, and thinking of judgment, trembled. *Her confessor told her not to fear. "Ah, Father," she replied, "it is an awful thing to appear before Jesus Christ as our Judge."* Such were the sensations of this holy virgin, who was a saint from her infancy. What will he say who has frequently deserved hell?

2. The abbot Agatho after many years of penance trembled, saying, *"What will become of me when I shall be judged?"* And how should he not tremble who has offended God by many mortal sins, and yet has done no penance for them? At death, the sight of his crimes, the rigor of the divine judgments, the uncertainty of the sentence to be pronounced upon him, what a tempest of horror and confusion will these raise around him! Let us be careful to throw ourselves at the feet of Jesus Christ, and secure our pardon before the arrival of our accounting day. *Ah! my Jesus and my Redeemer, who wilt one day be my judge, have pity on me before the day of justice. Behold at Thy feet a deserter, who has often promised to be faithful to Thee, and has as often again turned his back upon Thee. No, my God, Thou hast not deserved the treatment which Thou hast hitherto received at my hands. Forgive me, O Lord! for I desire truly to change and amend my life. I am sorry, my sovereign good! for having despised Thee: take pity on me.*

3. Then will be decided the great affair of our eternal salvation. Upon this decision will depend our being either saved or lost forever, our being happy or miserable for all eternity. But, O God! each one knows this, and says, *“So it is.”* But if it is so, why do we not leave all to attend only to our sanctification, and to the securing of our eternal salvation? *My God, I give Thee thanks for the light which Thou hast given me. Remember, O Jesus! that Thou didst die for my salvation; grant that when I first behold Thee I may see Thee appeased. If hitherto I have despised Thy grace, I now esteem it above every other good. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! and because I love Thee, I am sorry for having offended Thee. Hitherto I have forsaken Thee, but now I desire Thee and seek Thee; grant that I may find Thee, O God of my soul! Mary, my mother, recommend me to thy Son Jesus.*

MEDITATION XXVI

THE FIRE OF HELL

1. It is certain that hell is a pit of fire, in which the miserable souls of the wicked will be tormented forever. Even in this life the pain of burning is of all pains the most intense and dreadful; but the fire of hell has the power of inflicting much more excruciating torment, because it has been created by God to be the instrument of his wrath upon his rebellious creatures. *"Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,"*[18027] is the sentence of the reprobate. And as in this sentence of condemnation fire is particularly mentioned, we may conclude that, of all the torments with which the senses of the wicked are afflicted, fire is the greatest. *Ah, my God, for how many years past have I deserved to burn in this fire! But Thou hast waited for me, to behold me burning, not with this dreadful fire, but with the blessed flames of Thy holy love. Wherefore do I love Thee, my sovereign good, and desire to love Thee forever.*

2. In this world fire burns only outwardly, and does not penetrate our interior; but in hell the fire enters into the inmost recesses of its victims. *Thou shalt make them as an oven of fire.*[18028] Every one will become as a furnace of fire, so that the heart will burn within the chest, the bowels within the carcass, the brains within the skull, and even the marrow within the bones. Sinners, what are your feelings with regard to this fire? You, who cannot now bear a spark accidentally fallen from a candle, nor a house too hot, nor a ray of the sun upon your head, how will you endure to be permanently immersed in an ocean of fire, where you will be forever dying, and yet never, never die? *O my Redeemer! let not that blood which Thou didst shed for the love of me, be shed for me in vain. Grant me sorrow for my sins, grant me Thy holy love.*

3. *Which of you, saith the prophet, can dwell with devouring fire?*[18029] As a wild beast devoureth his prey, so shall the fire of hell continually devour

the unhappy soul, but without ever depriving him of life. Hence St. Peter Damian exclaims, *“Go on, sinner, go on, unchaste one; give thy flesh its desires: a day will come when thy impurities will be to thee as pitch within thy bowels, to nourish the fire which will consume thee in hell for all eternity.”*[18030] *O my God, whom I have despised and lost! forgive me, and suffer me not to lose Thee any more. I am sorry above every evil for having offended Thee. Receive me into Thy favour, for now do I promise Thee that I will love Thee, and love no other but Thee. Most holy Mary, deliver me by thy holy intercession, from ever suffering the torments of hell.*

MEDITATION XXVII

THE VANITY OF ALL WORLDLY THINGS

1. What is life but a vapour, which appears for a short time and then is seen no more? *What is your life? says St. James; it is a vapour which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away.*[18031] The vapours which arise from the earth, when raised into the air and surrounded by the rays of the sun, appear brilliant and beautiful; but the least wind disperses them, and they are seen no more. Such is the grandeur of this world. Behold that prince; to-day, he is feared, attended upon and honoured by thousands; to-morrow, he will be dead, despised and hated by all. In a word, honours, pleasures, and riches must all end in death. *O my God! make me sensible of the immensity of Thy goodness, that I may love nothing but Thee.*

2. Death deprives man of whatever he may possess in this world. What a sad sight, to behold a rich man, after death, carried out of his palace, to return thither no more! How sad to behold others taking possession of the estates which he has left, of his wealth, and whatever else he so lately enjoyed! His servants, after having accompanied him to his grave, abandon him, and leave him there, to be devoured by worms; no one esteeming him, no one flattering him. Formerly every one obeyed his nod, but now no one takes the least notice of his orders. *How wretched have I been, O Lord! in having, for so many years, gone after the vanities of the world, and left Thee, my sovereign good! But from this day forward I desire to possess Thee as my only treasure, as the only love of my soul.*

3. *Dust and ashes, why are you proud?*[18032] Man, says the Almighty, seest thou not that in a short time thou wilt become dust and ashes? and on what dost thou fix thy thoughts and affections? Reflect that death will soon rob thee of everything, and separate thee from the whole world. And if, when thou givest in thy accounts, thou be found wanting, what will become of thee for eternity? *I give Thee thanks, my Lord and my God. Thou*

speakest thus to me, because thou desirest to save me. Let Thy mercies now prevail. Thou hast promised to pardon such as repent of their offences against Thee. From the bottom of my heart do I repent: grant me therefore pardon. Thou hast promised to love those who love Thee: above all things do I now love Thee; wherefore do Thou love me also, and hate me not any more, as I have deserved. O Mary, my advocate, in thy protection is my hope.

MEDITATION XXVIII

THE NUMBER OF OUR SINS

1. It is the opinion of St. Basil, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and others, that as God has determined for each one the number of talents, the goods of fortune, and the number of days to be bestowed upon him, so he has also determined for each one the number of sins to be pardoned him, which being completed, God will pour out his chastisements upon him and pardon him no more. *Each one, says St. Augustine, is patiently borne with by Almighty God for a certain time; but when this is over, there is then no longer any more pardon for him.*[18033] *I am aware, O God! that I have hitherto abused Thy patience too much; but I know that Thou hast not yet abandoned me, because I am sorry for my sins, and this sorrow is a sign that Thou still lovest me. O my God! I desire never more to displease Thee; for pity's sake do not abandon me.*

2. *The Lord patiently expecteth, that when the day of judgment shall come, He may punish them in the fullness of their sins.*[18034] Although God has patience and waits for the sinner, yet, when the day arrives for the measure of his sins to be filled up he will wait for him no longer, but chastise him. *O Lord! wait yet for me a little while, do not yet abandon me; I hope with the assistance of Thy grace never to offend Thee more, nor to excite Thy anger against me. I am sorry, O my sovereign good! for having offended Thee, and I protest that I will never more betray Thee. I now esteem Thy friendship more than all the goods of the whole world.*

3. We commit sins, and we take no notice of the load of guilt which we are accumulating; but let us tremble lest what happened to King Baltassar befall us also: *Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting.*[18035] The devil may tell you that it matters not whether it be ten or eleven sins. But no, that wicked enemy deceives you; the sin which he is tempting you to commit will increase the load of your guilt; it may decide the balance of

divine justice against you, and you may be condemned for it to the torments of hell. If, Christian brother, you live not in fear that God will not show you mercy, should you add one more mortal sin to those which you have already committed; if you tremble not at the thought of this, you are in great danger of being lost. *No, my God: Thou hast borne with me too long; I will never more abuse Thy bountiful goodness. I thank Thee for having waited for me until now. I have forfeited Thy love too often; but I hope never more to lose Thee. Since Thou hast not yet abandoned me, enable me to find Thee again. I love Thee, O my God! and I am sorry from the bottom of my heart for having ever turned my back upon Thee. No, I desire never more to lose Thee. Assist me with Thy grace. And thou, my queen and my mother, Mary, help me by thy holy intercession.*

MEDITATION XXIX

THE FOLLY OF LIVING AS ENEMIES OF GOD

1. Sinners call the saints who, in this life, fly from honours, riches, and the pleasures of sense, and embrace poverty, contempt, and mortification, fools. But at the day of final retribution they will confess that they themselves have been fools in judging the lives of the saints to be folly: *We fools esteemed their life madness.*[18036] And what greater folly can there be than to live without God? which is to live a miserable life in this world, to be succeeded by a still more miserable one in hell. *No, I will not wait till the last day to confess my folly; I now confess it: how great has it been in offending Thee, my sovereign good! Father, "I am not worthy to be called Thy son."*[18037] *Father, I am not worthy to receive Thy forgiveness, but I hope for it through the blood which Thou hast shed for my sake. My Jesus, I am sorry for having despised Thee, I love Thee above all things.*

2. Unhappy sinners! blinded by their sins, they lose all judgment. What would be said of a man who should sell a kingdom for the smallest coin? And what should be said of him who, for a momentary pleasure, a vapour, a caprice, sells heaven and the grace of God? They think only of this life, which will shortly end, and in the meantime deserve hell for that life which will never end. O my God! permit me not to become any more so blind as to prefer, as I have hitherto done, my own unlawful gratifications before Thee, and for the sake of them to despise Thee, my sovereign good! I now detest them, and love Thee above all things.

3. Miserable worldlings! the time will come when they will bewail their folly; but when? when there will be no longer anything to prevent their eternal ruin. Then will they say, *What hath pride profited us? or what advantage Hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow?*[18038] Behold, they will exclaim, how all our delights have passed away like a shadow, and nothing remains to us now

but suffering and eternal lamentation! *Dear Jesus! have pity on me. I had forgotten Thee, but Thou didst not forget me. I love Thee with my whole soul, and I detest above all evil whatever sins I have committed against Thee. Pardon me, O God! and remember not my offences against Thee. And since Thou knowest my weakness, do not abandon me; give me strength to overcome all things to please Thee. O Mary, Mother of God! in thee do I place my hopes.*

MEDITATION XXXI

THE GREAT AFFAIR OF SALVATION

1. The affair of our eternal salvation is of all affairs the most important. But how comes it that men use all diligence to succeed in the affairs of this world, leave no means untried to obtain a desirable situation, to gain a lawsuit, or to bring about a marriage, reject no counsels, neglect no measures by which to secure their object, neither eat nor sleep, and yet do nothing to gain eternal salvation, nothing to gain it, but everything to forfeit it, as though hell, heaven, and eternity were not articles of faith, but only fables and lies? O God! assist me by Thy divine light; suffer me not to be any longer blinded, as I hitherto have been.

2. If an accident happen to a house, what is not immediately done to repair it? If a jewel be lost, what is not done to recover it? The soul is lost, the grace of God is lost, and men sleep and smile. We attend most carefully to our temporal welfare, and almost entirely neglect our eternal salvation! We call those happy who have renounced all things for God; why then are we so much attached to earthly things? *O Jesus! Thou hast so much desired my salvation as to shed Thy blood and lay down Thy life to secure it; and I have been so indifferent to the preservation of Thy grace as to renounce and forfeit it for mere nothing! I am sorry, O Lord! for having thus dishonoured Thee. I will renounce all things to attend only to Thy love, my God, who art most worthy of all love.*

3. The Son of God gives his life to save our souls; the devil is most diligent in his endeavours to bring them to eternal ruin: and do we take no care of them? St. Philip Neri convicts that man of the height of folly who is inattentive to the salvation of his soul. Let us arouse our faith: it is certain that, after this short life, another life awaits us, which will be either eternally happy or eternally miserable. *God has given us to choose which we will. Before man is life and death . . . that which he shall choose shall be*

given him.[18039] Ah! let us make such a choice now as we shall not have to repent of all eternity. O God! make me sensible of the great wrong I have done Thee in offending Thee and renouncing Thee for the love of creatures. I am sorry with my whole heart for having despised Thee, my sovereign good; do not reject me now that I return to Thee. I love Thee above all things, and for the future I will lose all things rather than forfeit Thy grace. Through the love which Thou hast shown me in dying for me, succour me with Thy help, and do not abandon me. O Mary, Mother of God! be thou my advocate.

MEDITATION XXXII

THE FREQUENT THOUGHT OF DEATH

1. Men who are attached to this world endeavour to banish the thoughts of death from their minds, as though, by avoiding the remembrance of death, they could avoid death itself. But no; by banishing the thoughts of death from their minds, they expose themselves to greater danger of making an evil end. There is no alternative: sooner or later we must die; and what is still more, we can die but once; and if once we be lost, we shall be lost forever. *My God, I give Thee thanks for having enlightened me. I have already lost too many years in offending Thee; but I will now spend the remainder of my life entirely in Thy service. Command me what Thou willest, for I desire to please Thee in all things.*

2. Holy anchorets, who formerly fled from the world into deserts in order to secure for themselves a happy death, took nothing with them but some spiritual book and a skull, by the sight of which they might continually keep up in their minds the remembrance of their last end. They meditated upon it, saying: *"As the bones of him to whom this skull belonged, so will the bones of my body one day be: and my soul who knows where that shall dwell?"* And thus they endeavoured to gain not the goods of this life, but of that life which will never end. *I give Thee thanks, O Lord! for not having suffered me to die when I was in the state of sin. I am sorry for having offended Thee, and hope, through Thy precious blood, for mercy and pardon. I desire, O Jesus! to renounce all things, and to do my utmost to please Thee.*

3. A certain hermit, being at the point of death, was observed to smile, and being asked why he was so cheerful, answered: "I have always kept death before my eyes, and hence, now that it is come, it does not alarm me." The approach of death, therefore, is terrible to those only who have thought of nothing but of gratifying themselves during their lifetime, and have never thought of their last end; but it is not terrible to those who, by frequently

thinking upon it, have learned to despise all earthly goods, and to love nothing but God. *O my Saviour! I perceive that death is already drawing near to me, and as yet I have done nothing for Thee, who didst die for me. No, before death, I will, O God! love Thee, who art worthy of infinite love. I have hitherto dishonoured Thee by the offences which I have committed against Thee; but I am sorry for them with my whole heart. For the future I will honour Thee, by loving Thee to the utmost of my power. Give me light and strength to do so. Thou wouldst have me be wholly Thine, and such do I desire to be. Help me by Thy grace; in Thee do I confide. And in thee also do I confide, O Mary, my Mother, and my hope!*

MEDITATION XXXIII

THE TURNING AWAY FROM GOD BY SIN

1. St. Augustine and St. Thomas define mortal sin to be a turning away from God: that is, the turning of one’s back upon God, leaving the Creator for the sake of the creature. What punishment would that subject deserve who, while his king was giving him a command, contemptuously turned his back upon him to go and transgress his orders? This is what the sinner does; and this is punished in hell with the pain of loss, that is, the loss of God, a punishment richly deserved by him who in this life turns his back upon his sovereign good. *Alas! my God, I have frequently turned my back upon Thee; but I see that Thou hast not yet abandoned me; I see that Thou approachest me, and inviting me to repentance, dost offer me Thy pardon. I am sorry above every evil for having offended Thee, do Thou have pity on me.*

2. Thou hast forsaken Me, saith the Lord, thou hast gone backward.[18040] God complains and says, Ungrateful soul, thou hast forsaken me! I should never have forsaken thee hadst not first turned thy back upon me: *thou hast gone backward.*[18041] O God, with what consternation will these words fill the soul of the sinner when he stands to be judged before Thy divine tribunal! Thou makest me hear them now, O my Saviour! not to condemn me, but to bring me to sorrow for the offences I have committed against Thee. Yes, O Jesus! I sincerely repent of all the displeasure which I have given Thee. For my own miserable gratifications I have forsaken Thee, my God, my sovereign, infinite good! But behold me a penitent returned to Thee; and reject me not.

3. *Why will you die, O house of Israel? return ye and live.*[18042] I have died, says Jesus Christ, for the salvation of your souls, and why will you condemn them by your sins to eternal death? Return to me, and you will recover the life of my grace. *O Jesus! I should not dare to crave Thy*

pardon, did I not know that Thou hast died to obtain my forgiveness. Alas! how often have I despised Thy grace and Thy love! O that I had died rather than ever offered Thee so great an injury! But Thou, who didst come near to me even when I offended Thee, wilt not now reject me, when I love Thee and seek no other but Thee. My God and my all, suffer me not any more to be ungrateful to Thee. Mary, Queen and Mother, obtain for me the grace of holy perseverance.

MEDITATION XXXIV

THE MERCY OF GOD IN CALLING SINNERS TO REPENTANCE

1. The Lord called to Adam, and said to him, *Where art thou?*[18043] These are the words of a father, says a pious author, going in quest of his lost son. Oh the immense compassion of our God! Adam sins, he turns his back upon God; and yet God does not abandon him, but follows him and calls after him, *“Adam, where art thou?” Thus, my soul, has God frequently done towards thee; thou hadst forsaken him by sin; but he did not hesitate to approach thee, and to call upon thee by many interior lights, by remorse of conscience, and by his holy inspirations; all of which were the effects of his compassion and love. God of mercy, O God of love! how could I have so grievously offended Thee, how could I have been so ungrateful to Thee!*

2. As a father when he beholds his son hastening to cast himself down from the brink of a precipice, presses forward towards him, and with tears endeavours to withhold him from destruction; so, my God, hast Thou done towards me. I was already hastening by my sins to precipitate myself into hell, and Thou didst hold me back. I am now sensible, O Lord! of the love which Thou hast shown me, and I hope to sing forever in heaven the praises of Thy mercy: *The mercies of the Lord I will—sing forever.*[18044] I know, O Jesus! that Thou desirest my salvation; but I do not know whether Thou hast yet pardoned me. Oh! give me intense sorrow for my sins, give me an ardent love for Thee, as signs of Thy merciful forgiveness.

3. *O my Saviour! how can I doubt of receiving Thy pardon, when Thou Thyself dost offer it to me, and art ready to receive me with open arms on my return to Thee? Wherefore I do return to Thee, sorrowing and overpowered at the consideration that after all my offences against Thee, Thou indeed still lovest me. Oh that I had never displeased Thee, my sovereign God! how much am I grieved for having done so! Pardon me, O*

Jesus! I will never more offend Thee. But I shall not be able to rest satisfied with Thy forgiveness only: give me also a great love for Thee. Having so often deserved to burn in the fire of hell, I now desire to burn in the fire of Thy holy love. I love Thee, who art my only love, my life, my treasure, my all. O Mary, my protectress! pray for me, that I may continue faithful to God until the end of my life.

MEDITATION XXXV

THE SOUL’S APPEARANCE AT THE TRIBUNAL OF GOD

1. When criminals are presented before their judges, though they fear and tremble, yet flatter themselves that either their crimes will not be proved against them, or that their judges will remit in part the punishments which they have deserved. O God! how great will be the horror of a guilty soul when presented before Jesus Christ, from whom nothing will be hidden, and who will judge it with the utmost severity! *I am the Judge and the Witness.*[18045] will he then say: *“I am thy Judge, and I am witness of all the offences thou hast committed against me.” O my Jesus! I deserved to hear this from Thy mouth, had the hour of my judgment arrived. But now Thou art pleased to assure me, that if I will repent of my sins, Thou wilt no longer remember them: I will not remember all his iniquities.*[18046]

2. It is the opinion of divines, that in the same place in which the soul is separated from the body it will be judged, and its lot decided either for eternal life or eternal death. But should the soul unhappily depart from the body in sin, what will it be able to say when Jesus Christ reminds it of his abused mercies, of the years he granted it, of the calls by which he invited it, and of the many other means which he afforded it of securing its salvation? *O Jesus, my Redeemer! Thou who condemnest obstinate sinners, dost not condemn those who love Thee and who are sorry for having. offended Thee. I am a sinner, but I love Thee more than myself, and I am sorry above every evil for having displeased Thee; oh, do Thou pardon me before the time comes when Thou wilt judge me!*

3. *At what hour you think not, the Son of man will come.*[18047] *When, therefore, O my Jesus and my Judge! Thou shalt judge me, after my death, Thy wounds will be a terror to me, reproaching me with my ingratitude for the love which Thou hast shown me in suffering and dying for me, but now they encourage me and give me confidence to hope for pardon from Thee,*

my Redeemer, who for the love of me, and that Thou mayest not have to condemn me, didst suffer Thyself to be tormented and crucified. We therefore pray Thee, "help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood."[18048] *O my Jesus! have pity on me, who am one of those sheep for whom Thou didst shed Thy sacred blood. If hitherto I have despised Thee, I now esteem and love Thee above all things. Make known to me the means by which I may be saved, and strengthen me to fulfil Thy holy will. I will no longer abuse Thy goodness. Thou hast placed me under too many obligations to Thee; I will no longer suffer myself to live at a distance from Thee and deprived of Thy love. Mary, Mother of mercy, have compassion on me.*

MEDITATION XXXVI

THE UNHAPPY LIFE OF THE SINNER

1. There is no peace for the wicked.[18049] The devil deceives poor sinners by making them believe that if they gratify their sensual desires, revenge themselves, or take what belongs to another, they will gain satisfaction and obtain peace: but no, for the reverse will always be their portion; the soul after sin becomes more than ever disquieted and afflicted. The brutes alone, who are created for the earth, can gain contentment from the enjoyments of the earth; but man, who is created to enjoy God, cannot derive satisfaction from any or all of God's creatures; his only source of happiness is God. *O my God! what, of all the delights by which I have offended Thee, now remains but bitterness and sorrow to torment me? I do not regret the bitterness which they now cause me; but only the displeasure which they have given Thee, who hast so much loved me.*

2. The wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest.[18050] What is a soul in disgrace with God but a tempestuous sea, always in agitation? one wave rises and another succeeds, and all are waves of pain and anguish. No one in the world can have all things according to his will. He who loves God, when adversity comes resigns himself to God's blessed will, and thus secures peace to his soul; but how can the sinner, if he is an enemy of God, pacify himself by resignation to God's holy appointments? Besides, sin always brings with it the dread of divine vengeance. *The wicked man fleeth, when no man pursueth.*[18051] Yes, for his own sin followeth after him, and by the remorse with which it preys upon his soul, makes him suffer an anticipated hell. *O my Lord and my God! I am exceedingly sorry for having forsaken Thee; do Thou forgive me, and suffer me not to lose Thee any more.*

3. *Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart.*[18052] Man, whither goest thou in search of content? Seek after God,

and he will satisfy all the desires of thy soul. *“Seek,” says St. Augustine, the one only good, in whom are all other goods.”*[18053] Behold a St. Francis, who when stripped of all worldly goods, being still united with God, found in this a heaven even here upon earth, and could not often enough exclaim, *“My God! my God and my all!”*[18054] Happy the soul that leaves all for God, for in him it finds all. *O Jesus! instead of abandoning me, as I have deserved, Thou offerest me pardon, and callest me to Thy love. Behold, I return to Thee overwhelmed with sorrow for the evil which I have done, and deeply affected at seeing that even still Thou lovest me after the many offences I have committed against Thee. Thou lovest me, and I also love Thee and love Thee more than myself. Receive me into Thy favour, and do with me what Thou pleasest: only do not deprive me of Thy love. Mary, Mother, have pity on me.*

MEDITATION XXXIX

THE NEAR APPROACH OF DEATH

1. Every one knows that he must certainly die; yet many delude themselves by imagining that death is at so immense a distance from them that it will scarcely ever reach them. No; our life is indeed short, and death is very near us. The days of our sojourning here are few, and perhaps much fewer than we imagine. What else is our life but a light vapour, which is driven away and disappears with the wind? a blade of grass which is dried up in the heat of the sun? O *God! Thou wouldst not suffer death to overtake me when I was under Thy displeasure, because Thou didst love me and didst desire my salvation; wherefore I will also love Thee.*

2. My days, said holy Job, have been swifter than a post.[18055] Death is hasting towards us more rapidly than a post, and we at every step, and every breath and moment, are drawing nearer and nearer to death. At the time of our death how shall we wish for one day or one hour of the many we now squander away to no purpose! *Ah! Lord, if death were now announced to me, what should I find that I have done for Thee? Alas! come to my assistance; let me not die ungrateful to Thee as I hitherto have been. Grant me true sorrow for my sins, the gift of Thy love, and holy perseverance.*

3. Death hastens towards us; wherefore we must also hasten to do that which is good, and to put our accounts in order against the day of its arrival. When death comes it precludes all remedies for what has been done amiss. How many are now in hell who thought of amending their lives at some future period, but were prevented by death and consigned to eternal torments! *My dear Redeemer, I will no longer resist Thy calls. Thou offerest me pardon, and I am desirous of obtaining it; I pray for it, and hope for it, through that death which Thou, my Jesus, hast suffered that Thou mayest be able to impart it to me. I am sorry, O infinite goodness, for having offended Thee. Thou, my Jesus, hast died for me, and I have postponed Thy*

friendship to my own wretched inclinations. For the future I hope with Thy assistance always to love Thee. I love Thee, O God! I love Thee. Thou art now and shalt be forever my only good, my only love. Mary, mother of God, watch over me and take pity on me.

MEDITATION XL

GOD ABANDONS THE SINNER IN HIS SINS

1. It is a grievous chastisement of God, when he cuts the sinner off in his sins; but still worse is that whereby he abandons him and suffers him to add sin upon sin. *“No punishment is so great,” says Bellarmine, “as when sin is made the punishment of sin.”*[18056] *I give Thee thanks, therefore, O Jesus! for not having suffered me to die in my sins; and I give Thee still greater thanks for not having abandoned me in my sins. And oh! into how much deeper an abyss of sin should I have fallen if Thou hadst not supported me. Continue, O Lord! to keep me from sin and do not forsake me.*

2. *I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be wasted.*[18057] When the master cuts down the fence of his vineyard, and leaves it open for any one to enter therein, it is a sign that he considers it not worth cultivating, and abandons it. In like manner does God proceed when he forsakes a sinful soul: he takes away from it the hedge of his holy fear, of his light, and of his voice; and hence the soul being blinded and enslaved by its vices, which overpower it, despises everything, the grace of God, heaven, admonitions, and censures; it thinks lightly even of its own damnation, and thus enveloped in darkness is certain to be lost forever.

The wicked man, when He is come into the depths of sins, contemneth.[18058] This have I deserved, O God! for having so often despised Thy light and Thy calls. But I see that Thou hast not yet abandoned me. I love Thee, O my God! and in Thee do I place all my hopes.

3. *We would have cured Babylon, but she is not healed; let us forsake her.*[18059] The physician visits the sick man, prescribes remedies for him, and makes him sensible of his maladies; but when he sees that his patient does not obey him, and on this account grows worse and worse, he takes leave of him and forsakes him. It is thus that God deals with obstinate sinners: after a certain time he speaks but little to them; and only assists them with grace

just sufficient to enable them to save their souls; but they will not save them. The darkness of their minds, the hardness of their hearts, and the inveteracy of their wicked habits, render it morally impossible for them to gain salvation. *But, O God! since Thou still callest me to repentance, Thou hast not yet abandoned me; I desire never more to forsake Thee. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! and because I love Thee I am exceedingly sorry for having offended Thee. I love Thee, and I hope through Thy blood to love Thee forever. Suffer me not to be any more separated from Thee. Hail Mary, Virgin of virgins, become my advocate.*

MEDITATION XLI

THE EXAMINATION AT THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

1. In the same moment and in the same place in which the soul departs from the body, the divine tribunal is erected, the indictment read, and the sentence pronounced by the sovereign judge. *Whom he foreknew, says St. Paul, he also predestinated to be made conformable to his Son . . . them he also justified.*[18060] In order, therefore, to be made worthy of glory, our lives must be made conformable to the life of Jesus Christ. Hence it is that St. Peter says that, *in the day of judgment, the just man shall scarcely be saved.*[18061] *O Jesus, my Saviour and my judge! what will become of me, since my whole life has hitherto been the reverse of Thine? But Thy Passion is my hope. I am a sinner, but Thou canst make me a saint, and this I hope for from Thy bounty.*

2. The Venerable Father Louis da Ponte, reflecting on the account which he should have to give of his whole life at the time of his death, trembled to such a degree as to make the whole room shake. And how ought we to tremble at the thought of this account! and how diligent ought we to be in seeking the Lord whilst we may find him! *At the time of death it will be difficult to find him, if we are overtaken in our sins; but now we may easily find him by repentance and love.*[18062] *Yes, my God, I am sorry above every evil for having despised Thee; and I now esteem and love Thee above every good.*

3. What shall I do, said holy Job, when God shall rise to judge? and when He shall examine, what shall I answer Him?[18063]

And what shall I answer him, if, after so many mercies, so many calls, still I resist him? No, Lord, I will no longer resist Thee, I will no longer be ungrateful to Thee. I have committed many offences and disloyalties against Thee, but Thou hast shed Thy blood to save me from my sins. *“Help Thy servant whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious* *blood.”*[18064] *I am sorry, my sovereign good, for having offended Thee, and I love Thee with my whole heart; have pity on me. And O Mary, my Mother, do not abandon me!*

MEDITATION XLII

THE JOURNEY TO ETERNITY

1. Man shall go into the house of his eternity.[18065] This earth is not our true country; we are only passing through it on our way to eternity. The land in which I dwell, the house which I inhabit, are not mine. In a short time, and when I least expect it, I must leave them. The house which will contain my body until the day of general judgment will be the grave, and the house of my soul will be eternity, in heaven if I be saved, in hell if I be lost. Foolish indeed, then, should I be were I to place my affections on things which I must soon leave. I will endeavour to procure for myself a happy mansion in which I may dwell forever.

2. Man shall go into the house of his eternity. It is said "he shall go," to give us to understand that each one shall go, in another life, into that house which he himself has chosen: "he shall go," he shall not be conducted, but shall go thither of his own free will. Faith teaches us that, in the next life, there are two habitations: one is a palace of delights, where all are happy forever, and this is paradise; the other is a prison of excruciating torments, where all are forever miserable, and this is hell. Choose, my soul, to which of the two thou wilt go. If thou desirest heaven, thou must walk in the way which leads to heaven; if thou shouldst walk in the way which leads to hell, thou wilt one day unhappily find thyself there. *O Jesus, enlighten me; Jesus, strengthen me. Suffer me not to be separated from Thee.*

3. *Man shall go into the house of his eternity.* If then I be saved and enter into the house of bliss, I shall there be happy forever; but if I be lost and enter into the house of woe, I shall be miserable forever. If, therefore, I would be saved, I must keep eternity always before my eyes. He who frequently meditates upon eternity does not become attached to the goods of this world, and thus secures his salvation. I will endeavour, therefore, so to regulate all my actions that they may be so many steps towards a happy

eternity. *O God! I believe in life eternal. Henceforth I will live only for Thee; hitherto I have lived for myself and have lost Thee, my sovereign good. I will never more lose Thee; but will forever serve and love Thee. Assist me, O Jesus! and do not abandon me. Mary, my Mother, protect me.*

MEDITATION XLIV

THE FOLLY OF NEGLECTING SALVATION

1. *What doth it profit a man, saith our Lord, if he gain the world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?*[18066] How many rich men, how many nobles, how many monarchs, are now in hell! What now remains to them of their riches and honours but remorse and rage, which prey upon their souls, and will continue to prey upon them for all eternity? O my God! enlighten me and assist me. I hope nevermore to be deprived of Thy grace. Have pity on a sinner who desires to love Thee.

2. How comes it, writes Salvian, that men believe in death, judgment, hell, and eternity, and yet live without fearing them? Hell is believed, and yet how many go down thither! But, O God! while these truths are believed, they are not dwelt upon, and hence are so many souls lost. Alas! I also have been of the number of those who have been guilty of such folly. Although I knew that by offending Thee I was forfeiting Thy friendship, and writing my own condemnation; yet I was not restrained from committing sin! “Cast me not away from Thy face.” I am sensible of the evil I have done in despising Thee, my God, and am grieved for it with my whole soul. Oh, *“cast me not away from Thy face.”*

3. And then? and then? Oh, what force had these two words with F. P. Francis Zazzera when repeated to him by St. Philip Neri, in order to induce him to renounce the world and give himself wholly to God! *Oh that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their latter end.*[18067] Oh! if all persons would but think of death, in which everything must be relinquished; of judgment, in which an account must be given of our whole lives; of a happy or miserable eternity, which must be the lot of each one: if all did but provide for these last things of their lives, no one would be lost. The present only is thought of, and hence is eternal salvation lost. *I give Thee thanks, O God, for the patience with which Thou hast*

hitherto borne with me, and for the light which—Thou now bestowest upon me. I see that although I forgot Thee, Thou didst not forget me. I am sorry, my sovereign good, for having turned my back upon Thee, and I am now resolved to give myself entirely to Thee. And why should I delay? That Thou mayest abandon me, and that death may find me as miserable and ungrateful as I have been even until now? No, my God, I will no more offend Thee, but will love Thee. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! Give me perseverance and Thy holy love; I ask for nothing more. Mary, refuge of sinners, intercede for me.[18068]

MEDITATION XLV

THE MOMENT OF DEATH

1. “O moment, on which depends eternity!”[18069] *x* Oh: how much depends on the last moment of our lives, on our last breath Either an eternity of delights, or an eternity of torments, a life of happiness, or a life of misery. What folly therefore must it be, for the sake of a wretched momentary pleasure in this life, to run the risk of making an evil end, and beginning a life of misery which will never terminate! *O God! what will become of me in the last moment of my life? O Jesus, who didst die for my salvation! suffer me not to be lost forever; suffer me not to lose Thee, my only good.*

2. O God! how do those miserable criminals who are condemned to cast lots for their lives tremble when they throw the dice, upon the cast of which depends their life or death! Tell me, Christian, if you were in such a situation, how much you would give to be liberated from it? But faith teaches you that you will one day arrive at that last moment, on which will depend your eternal life or death. You will then say, *“Alas! I must now be either happy forever with God, or in despair forever without him.”* No, my God, I will not lose Thee; if I have hitherto forfeited Thy friendship, I am sorry for it, and sincerely repent of it; I will never lose Thee more.

3. Either we believe, or we do not believe. And if we believe that there is an eternity, that we can die only once, and that if we die ill, the consequences will be eternal, without the least hope of remedy; why do we not resolve to separate ourselves from all danger of being lost, and to use all the means in our power to secure for ourselves a happy death? No security can be too great when eternity is at stake. The days of our lives are so many favours from God, by which he allows us time to prepare our accounts against the arrival of death. Delay not, for you have no time to lose. *Behold me, O God! tell me what I must do to be saved, for I will do all that Thou requirest of me. I have turned my back upon Thee; and for this I am* *exceedingly sorry, and for having done so would willingly die of grief. Pardon me, O Lord! and suffer me not to forsake Thee anymore. I love Thee above all things, and will never more cease to love Thee. Holy Mary, Virgin of virgins, obtain for me the grace of perseverance in virtue.*

MEDITATION XLVII

THE SENTENCE OF PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

1. Oh! what joy will he experience who, departing out of this life in the grace of God, will, on being presented before Jesus Christ, behold him with a benignant countenance, be lovingly received by him, and hear from him those delightful words: *Well done, thou good and faithful servant: because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*[18070] *But, O Jesus! if I were now to be summoned to judgment before Thee, how could I hope that Thou wouldst call me a good and faithful servant, when I have hitherto been so bad and faithless towards Thee, changing my promises of fidelity into treasons? But I will be faithful to Thee for the future, and will sooner lose my life a thousand times than forfeit Thy grace. Do Thou give me strength to fulfil this my resolution.*

2. On the other hand, what anguish, O Jesus! will that sinner experience, who, dying in sin, and being presented before Thee, beholds Thy wrathful countenance! The soul that departs this life in God’s displeasure will first condemn itself, and will then hear from Jesus Christ that terrible sentence: *Depart from me, thou accursed, into everlasting fire?*[18071] How often, O Jesus, have I deserved to hear from Thee the same sentence when I have committed mortal sin! When death overtakes me, Thou wilt then be my judge; but now Thou art my Father and Redeemer, ready to pardon me, if I am sorry for having offended Thee. I am therefore sorry, from the bottom of my heart, for all my offences against Thee; and I am sorry, not so much on account of hell which I have deserved by them, as because by them I have grievously offended Thee, who hast loved me with an infinite love.

3. The soul goes forth and leaves the body, but it is for some time doubtful whether the person be alive or dead. While the bystanders are doubting, the soul has already entered eternity. The priest, satisfied at length

that the man is dead, recites the prayer of the Church: “*Come to his assistance, all ye saints of God: meet him, all ye angels of God: receive his soul and present it now before its Lord.*”[18072] But of what avail will it be to the soul that has departed an enemy of God, and upon which sentence has already been passed, to call the saints and angels to its assistance? *O my good angel, ye saints, my holy advocates, St. Michael, St. Joseph, and you my holy protectress Mary! help me now whilst you have it in your power. And Thou, my Redeemer, pardon me now whilst Thou dost exercise mercy. I am sorry for having offended Thee, and I love Thee with my whole heart. Assist me, O Lord! and support me, that I may never offend Thee more. O Mary! take me forever to thy care.*

MEDITATION XLVIII

AN UNPROVIDED DEATH

1. Nothing is more certain than death, but nothing more uncertain than the hour of death. It is certain that the year and day of each one's death are already determined by our Lord, though we know them not; and wisely does God conceal them from us, in order that we may always prepare for our departure. I give Thee thanks, O Jesus! for having waited for me, and for not having called me out of life in the state of mortal sin. During the remainder of my life I will bewail my iniquities and love Thee with all my strength. I know that I must die, and by Thy grace I will prepare myself for a good death.

2. Jesus Christ admonishes us of the hour of our death, and when will it be? when we least expect it. *At what hour you think not, the Son of man will come.*[18073] If then, says St. Bernard, death may at any time take us out of life, we should at all times be prepared for it and keep our accounts in order. O Jesus! I will not wait until the moment of my death to give myself to Thee. Thou hast said that those who seek Thee shall find Thee: *Seek and ye shall find.*[18074] I seek Thee, I desire Thee; grant that I may find Thee. I am sorry for my sins and will nevermore offend Thee.

3. When then, dear Christian, you are tempted to commit sin with the hope of confessing it on the morrow, say to yourself: But who knows but that this moment may be my last? And if in this moment I should be guilty of sin, and death should overtake me, whither should I go? O God! how many miserable sinners have been struck by death in the act of feasting themselves on some poisonous gratification! The devil will say to you: This misfortune will not befall you. But do you answer him: If it should befall me, what will become of me for eternity? *O God! may not that happen to me which has happened to so many other unhappy sinners? How many are now in hell for lesser sins than I have committed! I give Thee thanks. O*

Jesus! for having waited for me with so much patience, and for having now enlightened me. I have erred in forsaking Thee; and death might have been my punishment; but since Thou givest me time, henceforward I will think of nothing but of loving Thee. Assist me with Thy grace. And do thou, Mary, assist me by thy holy intercession.

MEDITATION XLIX

THE ETERNITY OF HELL

1. If hell were not eternal, it would not be hell. Punishment that does not continue for a long time is not grievous punishment. On the other hand, punishment, however light it may be, when it continues for a long time, becomes intolerable. Were a person obliged during the whole of his life to see the same entertainments, or to hear the same music, how could he endure it? What then must it be to remain in hell and to suffer all its torments! And for how long a time? For all eternity. It would be folly, for the sake of a day’s pleasure, to condemn onēs self to be burnt alive. And is it not folly, for the sake of a sensual gratification, which can last but for one moment, to condemn onēs self to the fire of hell, whose victims, though dying every moment, yet never, never die? *O God! preserve me by Thy grace. Woe to me if I should turn my back upon Thee after the great mercy with which Thou hast dealt with me! Keep me, O God! and preserve me from so great a misfortune.*

2. Let us awaken our slumbering faith. It is certain that he who is lost is lost forever, without the least hope of being redeemed from eternal ruin. *They shall go into eternal punishment.*[18075] He who once enters the prison of hell can come out no more. Otherwise the condemned wretches would flatter themselves with hopes, and would say, Who knows, perhaps God may some day have pity on us and deliver us? But no, they well know that hell will never have an end, and that they must continue to suffer the same torments that they at present endure so long as God shall be God. *My dear Redeemer, I know too well that by the past I have forfeited Thy grace, and condemned myself to hell; but I do not know whether Thou hast pardoned me. Hasten to forgive me, O Jesus! while I bitterly lament my offences against Thee, and never suffer me to offend Thee any more.*

3. In this life death is of all things the most dreaded, but in hell it is of all things the most desired. There they desire and long for death, but cannot die. *They shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.*[18076] Are there not at least, in that place of torments, some to compassionate them? No, all hate them, and rejoice in their sufferings, which will last forever, without end of mitigation. The trumpet of divine justice continually sounds and thunders forth in their ears those terrible words: *"Ever, ever; never, never."* Amongst these miserable beings, O Jesus! I have deserved to be numbered; but do Thou, who hast hitherto preserved me from falling into hell, preserve me for the future from falling into sin, which alone can condemn me to that place of woe. Ah! never suffer me again to become Thy enemy. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! and I am sorry for having offended Thee. Pardon me, and as I have deserved to burn forever in the fire of hell, grant me to burn forever with the fire of Thy holy love. O Mary, in thy powerful intercession do I confide.

MEDITATION L

THE UNCERTAINTY OF GRACE

1. *Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and put it not off from day to day: for His wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance will He destroy thee.*[18077] The Lord admonishes us to be speedily converted, if we would be saved; because if we go on putting off our conversion from day to day, the time of vengeance will come, when God will neither call nor wait for us any longer; death will overtake us in sin, and there will be no means of escaping eternal damnation. God admonishes us in this manner, because he loves us and wills not to see us perish. I am convinced, O God! that Thou desirest my salvation; I know that Thou desirest to deal with me in Thy mercy; and it is my desire nevermore to despise Thee.

2. Alas! to how many are the admonitions given by God during life, become now in hell the most cruel swords that pierce their souls! In proportion as the mercies which God showed them were greater, so were their crimes more enormous. If, O Jesus! Thou hadst condemned me to hell, as I have deserved, how great would have been my punishment, since Thy graces and favours have been so abundant towards me! No, I will no longer be ungrateful to Thee. Say to me what Thou pleasest, and I will obey Thee in all things. I am sorry for having so often offended Thee; henceforward I will not seek to please myself, but to please only Thee, my God and only good.

3. How cautious are men in their temporal affairs, and yet how negligent in the affairs of eternity! If a man has to receive a sum of money from another, he uses every expedient to obtain it as quickly as possible, saying, *“Who knows what may happen?”* And yet, why do so many live months and years in sin? Because they do not say, when the soul is at stake, *“Who knows what may happen?”* If money be lost, however valuable it may be, all is not lost; but if the soul be lost, all is lost, and must be lost forever,

without hope of recovery. *My beloved Redeemer, Thou hast given me life that I may become worthy of Thy grace; and yet I have often renounced Thy grace for something worse than nothing. Pardon me, O infinite goodness! for I am sorry, from the bottom of my heart, for having done so. O Jesus! Thou hast done too much to oblige me to love Thee, and I desire to love Thee to the utmost of my power. I love Thee, my sovereign good, I love Thee more than myself. Permit me not, O God! to cease to love Thee any more. O Mary, holy queen! protect me.*

MEDITATION LI

THE DEATH OF JESUS FOR THE LOVE OF MEN

1. Was it ever possible that God, the Creator of all things, should have been pleased to die for the love of his creatures? It is of faith that he has done so. *He hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.*[18078] The earth, the heavens, and all nature, with astonishment beheld Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, the lord of the universe, die of intense pain and anguish, on a disgraceful cross; and why? For the love of men. And do men believe this and not love God? *I have believed it, O Jesus! and yet not only have I not loved Thee, but I have frequently offended Thee. Pardon me, I beseech Thee, and remind me continually of the death which Thou hast suffered for me, that I may nevermore offend Thee, but may always love Thee.*

2. It was not necessary for man's salvation that God should die; one drop of his blood, a single tear, or a prayer would have been sufficient, because being of infinite value, it would have redeemed this or a thousand other worlds. But, O Jesus! Thou wouldst suffer so much, to teach us Thy great love for us. Hence, St. Bonaventure exclaims, but with much greater reason may I exclaim, who have so often offended my Redeemer: *"Alas! my God, why hast Thou so much loved me? why, O Lord, why? Who am I?" O divine Pastor of my soul, behold I am the lost sheep, in quest of which Thou didst come upon the earth. I have ungratefully fled away from Thee; since, unmindful of the sufferings which I have occasioned Thee, Thou callest me, miserable as I am, but overcome with Thy great goodness, embracing Thy sacred feet, nailed to the cross. Jesus, my love, my treasure! I love Thee, and because I love Thee I am sorry for having offended Thee.*

3. St. Bernard, imagining himself present when Pilate passed sentence of death on our Blessed Saviour, thus addresses him: "*What hast Thou done, my most innocent Saviour, that Thou shouldst be thus condemned?*[18079] Thou art innocence itself; and how do I now behold Thee condemned to

death, even to the death of the cross? What crime hast Thou committed?” And he proceeds to answer, “Thy crime is love.” As if he had said, Ah! it is Thy too great love for us, and not Pilate, that condemns Thee to death. When, my dear Redeemer, I remember the offences I have committed against Thee, it is not hell, which I have deserved for them, that makes me grieve, but the love which Thou hast shown me. Ah! my crucified God, I desire to be henceforth and forever Thine, and I will love no other but Thee. Strengthen my weakness, and make me faithful to Thee. Holy Mary, mother of God, enable me to love Jesus; this is the only favour I ask.

MEDITATION LII

THE CERTAINTY OF BEING EITHER SAVED OR LOST

1. *With fear and trembling, saith the Apostle, work out your salvation.*[18080] In order to be saved we should tremble lest we be lost, for there is no medium; we must be either saved or lost forever. He who trembles not is in great danger of being lost, because he takes but little care to employ the means of obtaining salvation. God desires that all should be saved, and he gives to all his grace; but lie requires that all should co-operate for this end. All desire to be saved; many, because they will not employ the means of salvation, are lost. St. Philip Neri used to say, *“Heaven is not made for the slothful.”* Enlighten me, O Lord, that I may know what I ought to do, and what to avoid, for I desire to do all that Thou requirest of me. I am determined, by Thy grace, to save my soul.

2. St. Teresa said to her religious, *“One soul! my daughters, one eternity!”* She meant that in this world we ought not to attend to anything but to the salvation of our souls; because if the soul be lost, all will be lost; and if once lost, will be lost forever. Benedict XII, being asked by a prince for a favour that he could not grant without committing sin, answered the ambassador: *“Tell your prince that if I had two souls I would give him one; but as I have only one, I cannot consent to lose it for his sake.”* Thus should we answer the devil or the world when they offer us forbidden fruit. *O God! how often have I lost my soul. By forfeiting Thy grace! But since Thou offerest me Thy pardon, I detest all the offences I have committed against Thee, and love Thee above all things.*

3. Would that we were fully impressed with the meaning of that great maxim of St. Francis Xavier, “There is but one evil, and there is but one good in the world!” The only evil is damnation; the only good, salvation. No; poverty, infirmity, ignominies are not evils; these when embraced with resignation will increase our glory in heaven. On the other hand, health,

riches, and honours are not goods for too many Christians, because they become to them greater occasion of losing their souls. Save me then, O God! and do with me what Thou pleasest. Thou knowest and willest what is best for me. I abandon myself to Thy mercy: *Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.*[18081] I am so sorry for having been hitherto opposed to Thy will, as to die to expiate my offences; but now I love Thee, and will nothing but what Thou willest. Grant me Thy love, that I may be faithful to Thee. And, Mary, give me thy powerful assistance.

MEDITATION LIII

THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

1. How is it possible, O God! that there should be any Christians who believe that they must one day die; and that after death an eternity of happiness or misery awaits them; who know that on the moment of death will depend their being happy or miserable forever; and yet adopt not all the means of securing for themselves the blessing of a good death? *Give, O Lord! tears to my eyes that I may bewail my offences against Thee. I knew that by offending Thee I should forfeit Thy grace and condemn myself to eternal torments; I knew this, and yet I was not restrained from committing sin. I am sorry, O God! for having dishonoured Thee, by renouncing Thee for the sake of my own wretched inclinations; have pity on me.*

2. If we hear of one dying suddenly who did not live prepared for death, we compassionate him, and say, “Alas! what has become of his poor soul?” And yet why are we not ourselves prepared at all times to die? It may be that the misfortune of a sudden death may happen to us; but whether sooner or later, whether prepared or unprepared, whether we think of it or not, we must one day surrender our souls into the hands of God. The place of execution is already prepared for us, and the malady which is to be our executioner and take us out of the world is stealing upon us; why then do we not endeavour to become daily more and more united with Jesus Christ, who will soon become our Judge? *My dear Redeemer, I hope through the merits of Thy death to live and die in Thy grace and favour. I love Thee, O infinite goodness, and I hope to love Thee always in this life and for all eternity in the next.*

3. In every succeeding age, cities and kingdoms are peopled with new beings, and their predecessors buried in their graves. Those who lived here a century ago, where are they now! gone into eternity! And thus, dear reader, in a hundred years hence, even in a much shorter time, neither you

nor I will be alive in this world, but we shall be either happy or miserable forever in the next; either saved or lost for all eternity, one or other will most certainly be our lot. I may then, O God! either be saved, as I hope I shall be, or I may be lost on account of my sins And is it possible that I may be lost, and yet not think of adopting every means of securing my salvation? Enlighten me, O Lord! and make known to me what I must do to be saved, for with Thy help I will do all that Thou requirest of me. I have many times lost my respect for Thee, my Father, but Thou hast not ceased to love me. I detest all my offences against Thee, and I love Thee, O God! with my whole soul. Give me Thy blessing, Father, and never suffer me to be again separated from Thee. Mary, my mother, have pity on me.

MEDITATION LVI

THE LAST JUDGMENT

1. The last day is called in Scripture *a day of wrath and misery;*[18082] and such it will be for all those unhappy beings who have died in mortal sin; for on that day their most secret crimes will be made manifest to the whole world, and themselves separated from the company of the saints, and condemned to the eternal prison of hell, where they will suffer all the agonies of ever dying yet always remaining alive. St. Jerome, in the cave of Bethlehem, devoted to continual prayer and penance, trembled at the bare thought of the general judgment. The Ven. F. Juvenal Ancina hearing that sequence for the dead sung, "Dies iræ, dies ilia,"[18083] was so struck with the anticipation of judgment that he left the world and embraced a religious life. *O Jesus! what will become of me on that day? Shall I be placed on Thy right with the elect, or on Thy left with the reprobate? I know that I have deserved to be placed on Thy left, but I know also that Thou wilt still pardon me, if I repent of my sins: wherefore I do repent of them with my whole heart, and am resolved rather to die than offend Thee any more.*

2. As this will be a day of calamity and terror for the reprobate, so will it be a day of joy and triumph for the elect; for then, in the sight of all mankind, will the blessed souls of the elect be proclaimed queens of paradise, and spouses of the immaculate Lamb. *O Jesus! Thy precious blood is my hope. Remember not the offences that I have committed against Thee, and inflame my whole soul with Thy love. I love Thee, my sovereign good, and I trust that in that day I shall be associated with those loving souls who will praise and love Thee for all eternity.*

3. Choose, my soul; choose now either an eternal crown in that blessed kingdom, where God will be seen and loved face to face in the company of the saints, of the angels, and of Mary the Mother of Jesus; or the prison of hell, where you must weep and lament forever, abandoned by God and by all. *“O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.”*[1808][4] O divine Lamb, who, to deliver us from the pains of hell, wast pleased to sacrifice Thy divine life by a bitter death upon the cross, have compassion on us; but more particularly on me who have more than others offended Thee. I am sorry above every evil for having dishonoured Thee by my sins, but I hope on that day to honour Thee before men and angels, by proclaiming Thy mercies towards me. O Jesus! help me to love Thee; 1 desire Thee alone. O Mary, holy queen! protect me in that day.

MEDITATION LVII

THE INTENSITY OF THE PAINS OF HELL

1. In this life when a person suffers, however great his sufferings may be, he may, at least occasionally, obtain some mitigation or repose. A sick man may suffer all the day long the pains of the most cruel disorders; but, when night comes, he may perhaps sleep a little and be somewhat relieved. Not so with the miserable reprobate. For him there is no relief, no repose. He must weep and lament forever, he must suffer forever, and suffer torments the most excruciating, without once having throughout all eternity one moment of ease or mitigation. *Such, O Jesus! would have been my lot, hadst Thou called me out of life in my sins. Dearest Redeemer, I refuse not to suffer, but will truly love Thee.*

2. In this life by constantly suffering pain we become accustomed to it and better able to bear it; time mitigates sufferings which at first were most grievous to us. But will the souls in hell, by eternally suffering the torments which they endure, by the habit of enduring them for so many years, will they ever find their intensity diminished? No, for the torments of hell are of such a nature that, at the end of a hundred or a thousand years, those souls will experience the same degree of pain from them as when they first descended into that bottomless abyss. *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded*.[18085] I know, O Lord! that I have frequently deserved hell, yet I know likewise that Thou dost not desire the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live. O my God! I will not continue obstinate, but will repent with my whole soul of all my sins, and will love Thee more than myself; do Thou restore me to life, to the life of Thy holy grace.

3. In this life, when a person suffers he has the pity and sympathy of his relatives and friends; and these afford at least some comfort. But how miserable would it be for a man in the most excruciating pains to be upbraided and reproached by his relatives and friends with the misdeeds for

which he was suffering, saying to him without pity, *“Rave on in rage and despair; you have deserved all you suffer!”* The miserable wretches in hell suffer all kinds of torments, suffer them continually without any relief or comfort, and have none to compassionate them. Not even God can compassionate them, for they are his enemies; nor Mary, the Mother of Mercy; nor the angels, nor the saints; on the contrary, they rejoice in their sufferings. And, at the same time, what is the conduct of the devils towards the reprobate? They trample upon them and reproach them with the crimes which they have committed against God, and for which they are now most justly punished. *O Holy Mary, Mother of God, have pity on me, for thou hast it now in thy power to take pity on me and to recommend me to thy divine Son. O Jesus! Thou who didst not spare Thyself, to have compassion on me, but didst die upon the cross for my sake, save me, and may my salvation be to love Thee forever. I am sorry, O Lord! for having offended Thee, and will love Thee with my whole heart.*

MEDITATION LVIII

THE LOVE OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED

1. Who could have conceived that the Son of God, the Lord of the universe, to show his love for us, would suffer and die upon the cross, if he had not really done so? With reason therefore did Moses and Elias on Mount Tabor speak of the death of Jesus Christ *as of an excess of love.*[18086] And what could be greater excess of love than for the Creator to die for his creatures? *To make Thee an adequate return for Thy love, my dear Redeemer, it would be necessary for another God to die for Thee. It would therefore be but little, it would be nothing, were we poor miserable worms of the earth to give up our whole lives for Thee, who hast given Thine for us.*

2. What should still more excite us to love him is the ardent desire with which, through the course of his life, he longed for the hour of his death. By this desire he indeed proved how great his love was for us.

I have a baptism, said he, wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.[18087] I must be baptized with the baptism of my own blood, to wash away the sins of men, and how am I dying with the desire of my bitter Passion and death! My soul, lift up your eyes, and behold thy Lord hanging upon a disgraceful cross; behold the blood which trickles down from his wounds; behold his mangled body, all inviting you to love him. Your Redeemer in his sufferings would have you love him at least through compassion. *O Jesus! Thou didst not refuse me Thy life and precious blood, and shall I refuse Thee anything that Thou requirest of me? No, Thou hast given Thyself to me without reserve. I will give myself to Thee in like manner.*

3. St. Francis de Sales, speaking of these words of the Apostle, *The charity of Christ presseth us*[18088] says: “*Knowing that Jesus Christ, being true God, has loved us even to the laying-down of his life for us, and this upon a cross, do we not feel our hearts as it were in a press, forcibly*

straitened, and love expressed from them by a violence which is the more powerful as it is the more amiable?" And he adds: "Why, therefore, do we not cast ourselves upon Jesus Christ crucified, to die on the cross for the love of him who has willingly died upon the cross for the love of us? I will adhere to him, should we say, and will never abandon him; I will die with him, and be consumed in the fire of his love. My Jesus has given himself entirely to me, and I will give myself entirely to him. I will live and die upon his bosom; neither life nor death shall ever separate me from him. O eternal love! my soul seeks Thee and espouses Thee forever."[18089] O *Mary, Mother of God, obtain that I may belong entirely to Jesus Christ.*

MEDITATION LIX

THE IRRETRIEVABLE LOSS OF THE SOUL

1. There is no error so fatal in its consequences as the loss of eternal salvation. Other errors may be repaired; if a person lose a situation, lie may perhaps in time regain it; if he lose his goods, he may replace them, but if he lose his soul, he has no remedy nor hope of redemption. He can die but once; and if that once his soul be lost, it must be lost forever, and no power can save it for all eternity. *Behold, O God! a wretched sinner prostrate at Thy feet, one who for so many years past has deserved to dwell in hell without further hope of salvation, but who now loves Thee, and is sorry above every other evil for having offended Thee, and hopes for mercy.*

2. Does then nothing remain for the many wretched souls in hell but to lament bitterly, and say, *“Therefore we have erred,”*[18090] and there is no remedy for our error, nor will there be so long as God shall be God? *Ah! my Redeemer, were I in hell, I could nevermore repent, nor love Thee. I thank Thee for having borne with me with so great patience, even though I have deserved hell; and now that I am still able to repent and to love Thee, I do sincerely repent for having offended Thy infinite goodness, and love Thee above all things, more than I love myself. Never permit me, O Jesus! to cease to love Thee.*

3. Oh, what a torment must it be to the souls in hell to think that they knew their error before they were lost, and that they are lost entirely through their own fault! If a person lose a gold ring through carelessness, or a valuable coin, he has no peace for thinking that he has lost it through his own fault. *O God! how great is the internal torment of the wicked when they exclaim, “I have lost my soul, I have lost heaven, I have lost my God; I have lost my all; and this through my own fault!” O my dear Saviour! I desire never to lose Thee: if I have hitherto lost Thee, I have done ill; 1am sorry for it with my whole soul, and love Thee above all things. O Jesus!*

Thou hast saved me from hell that I may love Thee. I will therefore truly love Thee. Enable me to compensate by my love for the offences which I have committed against Thee. Holy Virgin Mary, thou art my hope.

MEDITATION LX

WE MUST DIE

1. How much is contained in these words, *“we must die!”* Christian brother, you must one day certainly die. As your name was one day entered in the baptismal register, so will it one day be entered in the book of the dead, and this day is already determined by Almighty God. As you now speak of the dear memory of your father, or of your uncle, or brother, so will posterity speak of you. As you now frequently hear of the deaths of your friends or acquaintances, so will others hear of your death, and you will be gone into eternity. *O God! what will then become of me? When my body is carried to the church, and Mass said over me, where will be my soul? Enable me, O Lord! to do something for Thy service before death overtakes me. How wretched should I be if at this moment it should surprise me!*

2. What would you say of a criminal on the way to execution who was looking about him here and there, and attending only to the amusements which happened to be going on? Would you not think him mad, or a man who did not believe his impending fate? Are you not every moment advancing towards death? And what do you think of? You know that you must die, and that you can die only once. You believe that after this life another awaits you which will never end; and that this eternal life will be happy or miserable according as your accounts are found at the day of your judgment; and how can you believe these truths and attend to anything else than making preparation for a good death? *Enlighten me, O my God, and let the thoughts of death, and of the eternity in which I must dwell, be ever present to my mind.*

3. Look at the skeletons heaped up in cemeteries: they are silently saying to you, “*What has happened to us will soon overtake you.*” The same is repeated to you by the portraits of your parents who are dead, by the letters of their handwriting, by the rooms, the beds, the clothes which they once

possessed and used, but which they have now quitted and left behind for you. All these things remind you of death which is waiting for you. *My crucified Jesus, I will not delay to embrace Thee till the moment of my death, when Thy crucified image will be presented to me; but I will embrace Thee now and press Thee to my heart. Hitherto I have frequently expelled Thee from my soul, but now I love Thee more than myself, and am sorry for having despised Thee. For the future I will be always Thine, and Thou shalt be always mine. This is my hope through Thy bitter Passion and death. And this also do I hope for through thy protection, O ever blessed Mary!*

MEDITATION LXIII

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

1. A day will come which will be the last of days, when this world will be no more. Before the coming of the Judge, fire will descend from heaven, and consume everything that is upon the earth: *The earth and the works which are in it shall be burnt up.*[18091] So that in that day everything upon the earth will be reduced to ashes. *O God! what will all the vanities of this world then appear, for which so many now sacrifice the salvation of their souls? What appearance will all the highest dignities of this earth then make, its purple, its crowns, and its sceptres? O the folly of those who shall have loved them! And O the lamentations of those who for the love of such vanities shall have lost their God!*

2. *The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again.*[18092] This trumpet will call all men together from their graves to come to judgment. Oh how beautiful and resplendent will the bodies of the just appear! *Then shall the just shine like the sun.*[18093] On the contrary, how ugly and deformed will the bodies of the reprobate appear! *What a torment will it be to these wretched souls to be again united with their bodies, for whose gratification they have lost heaven and lost their God, to be cast with them forever into hell, there to burn together in eternal flames! Happy will they then be who have denied their bodies all gratifications displeasing to God; and who, in order to hold them in greater subjection, have mortified them by fasting and penance! O Jesus! turn not Thy face away from me,*[18094] *as I have deserved. How often, for the sake of gratifying my senses, have I renounced Thy friendship! Oh that I had died rather than have thus dishonoured Thee! Have pity on me.*

3. All mankind being assembled together, will be summoned by angels to appear in the valley of Josaphat, there to be publicly judged before all: *Nations, nations in the valley of destruction.*[18095] O my God! and must I

appear in that valley? In what place shall I stand there? with the elect in glory, or with the reprobate in chains? My beloved Redeemer, Thy precious blood is my only hope. Woe to me! how often have I deserved to be condemned to dwell forever in hell, far, far from Thee, without being able to love Thee! No, my Jesus! I will love Thee forever, in this life and in the next. Permit me not to be ever again separated from Thee by sin. Thou knowest my weakness; be Thou always my help, O Jesus! and do not abandon me. Mary, my advocate, obtain for me the gift of holy perseverance.

MEDITATION LXVI

THE APPEARANCE OF THE BODY IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH

1. Remember, man, that thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return.[18096] At present you can see, feel, speak, and move. The day will come when you will no longer see, nor feel, nor speak, nor move. When your soul is separated from your body, your body will be consumed by worms and will moulder into dust; and your soul will go into eternity to be happy or miserable according as you have deserved by the actions of your life. *O God! I have deserved only Thy displeasure and the punishments of hell; but Thou wouldst not have me despair, but repent and love Thee, and place all my hopes in Thee.*

2. Figure to yourself the body of one whose soul has just departed. Look on his corpse still remaining on the bed: the head fallen upon the chest, the hair in disorder and still bathed in the cold sweat of death, the eyes sunk, the cheeks fallen in, the face of the colour of ashes, the lips and tongue black; so as to be loathsome and frightful to every beholder. See, dear Christian, to what a state your body will shortly be reduced which you now treat with so much indulgence. *O my God! I will no longer resist Thy gracious calls. What now remains of the many gratifications with which I have indulged my body, but remorse of conscience which continually torments me? Oh that I had rather died than ever offended Thee!*

3. When the body begins to corrupt, it becomes still more horrible. Twenty-four hours have scarcely elapsed since that young person died, and already his corpse begins to be offensive. The windows of the apartment must be opened, and perfumes employed, that the stench may not infect the whole house. His relatives and friends are in haste to commit him to the grave. He may have been a person of high rank, and to what does the pampering of his body now serve? It only hastens its corruption and increases its offensiveness. *Dearest Redeemer, although I knew that by sin I should greatly offend Thee, yet did I commit it. To afford myself a short-lived satisfaction, I was willing to forfeit the invaluable treasures of Thy grace. With sorrow do I cast myself prostrate at Thy feet; pardon me through the blood which Thou hast shed for me. Receive me again into Thy favour, and chastise me as Thou pleasest. I will willingly accept every chastisement, provided I be not deprived of Thy love. I love Thee, O God! with my whole heart; I love Thee more than myself. Grant that I may remain faithful to Thee till the end of my life. Mary, my hope, intercede for me.*

MEDITATION LXVII

THE STATE OF THE BODY IN THE GRAVE

1. Consider now, Christian brother, to what a state your body will be reduced in the grave. It will first become livid and then black. Mould of a dirty white colour will be produced over the whole surface of the flesh, from which a rotten humour will begin to ooze and flow upon the ground. In this humour a multitude of maggots will be generated, which will feast themselves upon the putrid flesh. Rats and other vermin will join in the feast and prey upon your poor carcass, some upon the outside, while others will enter into the mouth and others into the bowels. See to what a state that body will be reduced to please which you have so often offended God. *No, my God, I will never more offend Thee. Too many already have been my offences. Enlighten me and strengthen me against temptations.*

2. Then will your hair, cheeks, and lips fall off from your skull; your ribs will first be laid bare, and soon after your corrupted arms and legs. The worms, after having consumed all your flesh, will at last be consumed themselves. After this, nothing will remain of you but a mouldering skeleton, which in time will all fall to pieces; the head will be separated from the, trunk, and the bones from one another. See then what man is, considered as a mortal being. *O Jesus! have pity on me. For how many years past have I deserved to burn in hell! I have forsaken Thee, my God, but Thou hast not yet forsaken me. Pardon me, I beseech Thee, and suffer me not anymore to abandon Thee; and, when temptations assault me, may I ever have recourse to Thee.*

3. Behold, finally, that gay young warrior who a little while ago was considered the life and soul of society; where is he now? Enter his house; he dwells there no longer. His bed is occupied by another, and others have already seized and divided his spoils and armour. If you would see him, look into that newly made grave and you will behold a putrid mass of

corruption, horrible and offensive. *Saints of God, happy indeed are you, who, for the love of God, whom alone you loved in this world, were wise enough to mortify your bodies; now your bones are honoured upon altars, and your souls happy in the enjoyment of God face to face. Your bodies at the last day will again be united with your souls, to be your companions in bliss as they were formerly your companions in suffering. O God! I do not lament, but rejoice, that this my flesh, for which I have so often offended Thee, will one day be given to rottenness and worms: but I do indeed lament the crimes I have committed against Thee, for Thou art infinite goodness. O Jesus! I love Thee, and will never, nevermore offend Thee. Mary, mother of God, pray for me.*

MEDITATION LXVIII

MAN IS SOON FORGOTTEN AFTER DEATH

1. A young person has died early in life. A little while ago he was courted in conversation, and everywhere welcomed by all; but now that he is dead, he is become the horror of those who behold him. His.parents are in haste to get him out of the house, and call in bearers to carry him to the grave. How wretched, if, to satisfy his parents or others of this world, he has lost God! *My dear Redeemer, though all may forget me, Thou wilt still remember me, for Thou hast given Thy life for my salvation. Oh that I had never offended Thee!*

2. A little while ago the fame of his wit, gracefulness, urbanity, and facetiousness was spread far and wide; but now that he is dead he is almost out of mind and will soon be quite forgotten. Upon hearing the news of his death, some may remark of him, "He did himself great credit;" others may exclaim, "Oh, how sad! What a clever, facetious, and delightful man he was!" Some may grieve for him because he was pleasant or useful to them; while others may perhaps rejoice, because his death may be of advantage to them; but in a short time no one will so much as mention him. Even his parents and nearest relatives do not like to hear him spoken of, that their grief for him may not be renewed; and hence in visits of condolence everything is made the subject of conversation but the person who is dead; and if any one begins to allude to him, he is immediately stopped with an exclamation, "Pray do not mention him to me!" See what becomes of the affection of our parents and friends for us in this world! *My God, I am content that Thou alone shouldst love me, and will for the future love only Thee.*

3. Your relatives will at first be afflicted at your death, but it will not be long before they will console themselves with the portion of your property which may fall to their lot; and in the same room in which your soul

departed and was judged by Jesus Christ, they will feast, jest, dance, and laugh as before, and who knows where your soul will be? *Give me, O Lord! time to lament the offences I have committed against Thee before Thou summonest me to judgment. I will no longer resist Thy calls: who knows but that this meditation may be the last call I may receive? I confess that I have deserved hell, and as many hells as I have committed mortal sins; but Thou wilt not despise poor penitent sinners. I am sincerely sorry with my whole soul for having abused Thy infinite goodness by sensual gratifications. Forgive me and grant me grace to obey Thee and to love Thee till the end of my life. O Mary! I place myself under thy protection, and confide in thy holy intercession.*

MEDITATION LXIX

THE APPEARANCE OF ALL MANKIND IN THE VALLEY OF JOSAPHAT

1. The angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just.[18097] What would be the confusion of a person who, on entering into a church in the presence of a great concourse of people, should be forcibly expelled as one excommunicated!

Alas! how much greater will the ignominy of the reprobate be to see themselves in the day of judgment expelled from the company of the saints in presence of all mankind! In this life the wicked are honoured equally with the saints, and frequently more. But in that day, when the figure of this world passes away, the elect will be placed on the right hand, and caught up into the air to meet Jesus Christ, advancing to place crowns of glory on their heads, according to the words of the Apostle, *Then shall we be taken up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ in the air.*[18098] But the wicked, surrounded by their tormentors, the infernal spirits, will be placed on the left hand, waiting for the appearance of the judge coming publicly to condemn them. O foolish worldlings! you who now hold the lives of the saints in derision and contempt, in the valley of Josaphat, you will change your sentiments. There will you acknowledge your folly, but it will be too late.

2. Oh, what a splendid appearance will the saints make, on that day, who have forsaken all for God! How beautiful will be the appearance of the many young persons who, despising the riches and delights of the world, have shut themselves up in deserts or in cloisters, to attend only to their eternal salvation! And of the many martyrs who were so much despised and so cruelly tortured by the tyrants of this world! All these will be proclaimed courtiers of Jesus Christ in his heavenly glory. On the contrary, what a horrible appearance will a Herod make, or a Pilate, a Nero, or many others, who made so great a figure in this world, but died under God’s displeasure! *O Jesus, I embrace Thy holy cross. What are riches, what are honours, what is the whole world? Besides Thee, what do I desire?*

3. Christian, what will be your station at the last day? the right hand or the left? If you would occupy the right, you must walk in the way which conducts thither; it is impossible to keep the way to the left, and at length arrive at the right. *O Lamb of God! who didst come into the world to take away our sins, have pity on me. I am sorry for having offended Thee, and will love Thee above all things; suffer me not to offend Thee any more. I seek not worldly goods; give me only Thy grace and Thy love, and I ask for nothing more. O Mary, thou art my refuge and my hope.*

MEDITATION LXX

THE BLINDNESS OF THOSE WHO SAY, IF WE BE LOST WE SHALL NOT BE LOST ALONE

1. What do you say? that if you go to hell you will not go alone? But what consolation will the company of the wicked be to you in hell? Every condemned soul in hell weeps and laments, saying, Although I am condemned to suffer forever, would that I might suffer alone! The wretched company which you will meet with there will increase your torments by their despairing groans and moanings. What a torment to hear even a dog howling all night long, or an infant crying for five or six hours, and not to be able to sleep! And what will it be to hear the yells and howlings of so many wretched souls in despair, who will continually torment one another with their dismal noises, and this, not for one night, nor for many nights only, but for all eternity!

2. Again, your companions will but increase the torments of hell, by the stench of their burning carcasses. *Out of their carcasses, saith the prophet Isaias, shall a stench arise.*[18099] They are called carcasses, not because they are dead, for they are alive to pain, but because of the stench which they will emit. Your companions will also increase the torments of hell by their numbers; they will be in that pit as grapes in the wine-press of the anger of God: *He treadeth, said St. John, the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of God the Almighty.*[18100] They will be straitened on every side, so as to be unable to move hand or foot so long as God shall be God.

3. O accursed sin! how canst thou so blind men who are gifted with reason? Sinners, who affect to despise damnation, are yet more careful to preserve their goods, their situations, and their health; they do not say, “If I lose my property, my place, my health, I shall not be the only one who will lose such things.”Yet when the soul is at stake, they say, “If I be lost, I shall not be lost alone!” He who loses the good things of this world and saves his

soul will find a recompense for all he has lost; but he who loses his soul, what indemnity will he find? *What shall he give in exchange for his soul?*[18101] *O my God, enlighten me and do not forsake me. How often have I sold my soul to the devil, and exchanged Thy grace and favour for a wretched transitory indulgence of sense! I am sorry, O God! for having thus dishonoured Thy infinite majesty. My God, I love Thee: suffer me not to lose Thee any more. O Mary, Mother of God! deliver me from hell, and from the guilt of sin by thy holy intercession.*

MEDITATION LXXIII

THE CARE OF OUR SALVATION

1. The devil makes salvation appear to some too difficult to be accomplished, in order to dishearten them and induce them to abandon themselves to a disorderly life. It is true that if to obtain salvation it were necessary to retire into a desert, or to shut one's self up in a cloister, we ought to do so. But these extraordinary means are not necessary; ordinary means are sufficient, such as the frequentation of the sacraments, the avoiding of dangerous occasions, and the frequently recommending of ourselves by prayer to God. At our death we shall see that these things were easy; hence will our remorse be very great if until then we have neglected them.

2. We should resolve and say, *"I will save my soul, cost what it may."* Perish alt things else property, friends, and even life itself if I can but only save my soul! Let us never think we can do too much to obtain eternal salvation. Eternity is at stake, the being happy or miserable forever. "*No security can be too great," says St. Bernard, "where eternity is at stake."*[18102] *O God! I am ashamed to appear before Thee; how often for a mere nothing have I turned my back upon Thee! No, I will nevermore forfeit Thy grace, nor wilfully become Thine enemy. In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me not be confounded forever.*[18103] *I would rather a thousand times lose my life than lose Thy friendship.*

3. If during the past we have forfeited salvation, we must now endeavour to remedy the evil; we must change our lives, and this without delay. It is to no purpose to say I will do so in a short time. Hell is filled with souls who formerly said the same; but death surprised them, and prevented their proceedings. What a favour would God bestow upon a dying man on the point of breathing his last, were he to grant him one more year, or even one more month! Christian brother, at this very time, God bestows such a favour

upon you, and what use do you make of it? *Why, O God, do I delay? Do I wait for the period when there will be no more time for me, and when I shall find that I have in reality done nothing for Thee? I have the consolation of being as yet assisted by Thy grace. I love Thee above every good, and desire rather to die than to offend Thee. But Thou knowest my weakness, and the many treasons I have been guilty of against Thee. Help me, O Jesus! in Thee do I place all my hopes; and to Thee, O Mary, Mother of God! do I fly for protection.*

MEDITATION LXXIV

THE LEAVING OF ALL AT DEATH

1. Christians are well aware that they must die, yet for the most part they live as though they were never to die. If after this life there were no other life, if there were neither hell nor heaven, could they think less of death than they now do? If, dear Christian, you desire to live well, endeavour to spend the remainder of your days in the continual remembrance of death. Oh, how correctly does he judge of things, and how rightly does he direct all his actions, who performs them with a view to his departure hence! The remembrance of death destroys in him all affection to the good things of this world, by reminding him that he must soon leave them all behind him. *O God! since Thou givest me time to remedy the evil which I have done, make known to me Thy will, and I will do all that Thou requires! of me.*

2. If a traveller, on his journey to his own country, were to stop and spend his all in building a palace in a land through which he ought only to pass, and neglect to provide a dwelling for himself in that country in which he was to reside his whole life, he would be thought mad. And must not the Christian be deemed mad who thinks only of gratifying himself in this world, through which he has only to pass during a few days, and heeds not the danger of being miserable in the next, where he must live forever, as long as God shall be God? *Woe to me, O God! if Thou hadst called me out of life in my sins! I thank Thee for having borne with me with such great patience. Never suffer me to be again separated from Thee. My God, my sovereign good, I do and will love Thee above all things.*

3. Death will rob us of all things. Whatever we may have acquired in this world we must leave all behind us at our death. Nothing will then be allowed us but a coffin and a shroud, which will soon moulder away and become dust with our bodies. We must then leave the house which we now inhabit, and a dismal grave must be the dwelling-place of our bodies until

the day of judgment, when they must go either to heaven or to hell, accordingly as our souls have gone before them. All things will therefore end with me in death. Then shall I find that nothing will remain for me but the little which I have done for God. And were I to die this moment, what should I find that I have done for Thee, my Jesus? For what do I delay? that death may come and find me thus miserable? No, my God, I will amend my life. I detest all the offences I have ever committed against Thee. For the future I will not seek to gratify my own inclinations, but solely to do Thy will, who art the God of my soul. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! I love Thee above all things; mercifully grant me Thy grace. And do thou also, Mary, Mother of God, pray to thy divine Son for me.

MEDITATION LXXV

THE MOMENT OF DEATH

1. Imagine yourself, dear Christian, just now dead, and your soul entered into eternity. If now you had just departed from this world, what would you not wish to have done for life eternal? But what would such wishes avail you, if you had not spent the days of your mortal life in serving God? If you would now prevent that which you have time to prevent, place yourself in imagination frequently for the future in your grave, or rather upon your deathbed; imagine yourself to be dying, on the point of breathing your last, listen to the reproaches of your conscience and delay not to silence them by repentance. Delay not, for you have no time to lose. *Ah, my God! enlighten me, make known to me the way in which I should walk, and I will obey Thee in all things.*

2. St. Camillus de Lellis, looking at the graves of the dead, was accustomed to say, *"If those who are here interred could now return to life again, what would they not do to become saints! And I who have time at my disposal, what do I do for God?"* Thus did this saint animate himself to become more and more closely united with his Lord. Know then, dear Christian, that the time which God in his mercy now grants you is of the greatest value. Do not wait for time to labour for your salvation until you are gone into eternity, or until the arrival of that awful moment when it will be said to you, *"Depart, Christian soul, out of this world;"* make haste to go forth, for there is no more time for you to labour: what is done is done. O Jesus! remember that I am the lost sheep for which Thou hast laid down Thy life. *"We beseech Thee, therefore, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood."* Give me light and grace to do that now which I shall wish to have done at the hour of my death.

3. O eternal God! I tremble at the thought of being that unhappy tree of which Thou hast said: *Behold for these three years I come seeking fruit on*

this fig—tree, and I found none. Cut it down therefore: why cumbereth it the ground.[18104] Yet so it is, O Lord! for the many years I have now lived upon this earth, what good have I hitherto done? What fruit have I borne Thee all this time, but sin and bitterness? Alas! how have I deserved to have dwelt long ago in hell! Dearest Redeemer, spare me yet a little longer; I will not be obstinate; death will never find me in the state in which I now am. I will deplore and detest the days which I have spent in offending Thee, and will pass the remainder of my life in loving and honouring Thy infinite goodness. I do and will love Thee, my sovereign good. Take not Thy help away from me. And thou, O Blessed Virgin Mary, deprive me not of thy powerful protection.

MEDITATION LXXVI

THE EXAMINATION OF OUR SINS AT THE LAST DAY

1. Behold the heavens will open, and the angels and saints will descend to be present at the judgment followed by the Queen of Heaven, the ever blessed Virgin, and after her will appear the eternal Judge of the living and of the dead, encompassed with great power and majesty. The appearance of Jesus will be to the just the greatest consolation; but to the wicked, the indignant countenance of the Son of God will be horror and confusion worse than hell itself. *They will say to the mountains: Fall upon us, and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb.*[18105] They will desire that the mountains may immediately fall upon them rather than behold the indignant countenance of the Lamb, that is, of the Redeemer, who in their lifetime was as a lamb towards them, in silently bearing with their repeated injuries against him. *O Jesus! Thou who wilt one day be my Judge; I am heartily sorry for having so grievously offended Thee. Pardon me my sins, and grant that when Thou appearest as my Judge, I may not behold Thee indignant against me.*

2. *The judgment sat, and the books were opened.*[18106] Then will it be impossible to conceal our sins; Jesus himself, who will be our Judge, having long ago witnessed them, will manifest them to the whole world. *He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness.*[18107] Even the most secret sins, the most abominable impurities, and cruelties the most horrible, he will make known to all mankind. *O my Redeemer! Thou who already knowest all my iniquities, have mercy on me now, before the time of mercy ends.*

3. In a word, Jesus Christ will on that day make himself known as the great Lord of all: *The Lord shall be known, says the Psalmist, when he executeth judgment.*[18108] At present more account is made of some pleasure, of a mere vapour, of a fit of passion, than of God. Hence will the Judge then

justly say to the sinner, *To whom have ye likened me, or made me equal?* [18109] To what have you compared me and postponed me? Have your base inclinations, or a mere caprice, prevailed with you more than my grace? O God! what shall we then answer to such reproaches? Oh, how will our utter confusion close our mouths! But let us now answer and say: *O Jesus! I know that Thou wilt one day be my Judge, but now Thou art my Saviour. Remember that Thou hast died for me. I am sorry with my whole heart for having despised Thee, my sovereign good. But if hitherto I have despised Thee, behold I now esteem and love Thee more than myself, and am willing to die for Thy love. O Jesus! pardon me, and never suffer me to live any more deprived of Thy love. Mary, most gracious advocate of sinners, help me now whilst I can yet receive Thy powerful assistance.*

MEDITATION LXVII

THE GREAT LOVE OF GOD FOR OUR SOULS

1. The love which God bears our souls is eternal and infinite. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*[18110] So that God has from all eternity loved every human soul. For the salvation of souls he placed all other creatures in the world: *All things for the sake of the elect.*[18111] And lastly he sent his only Son into the world, made man for our sake, to die upon the cross for the salvation of our souls. *Thou, O God! hast indeed loved me from all eternity, and hast died for me, and how could I ever so grievously offend Thee?*

2. The only begotten Son of God, for the love of our souls, came down from heaven to free them from eternal death by his own death upon the cross; and having redeemed them with his blood, he called his angels to rejoice with him for the recovery of his lost sheep: *Rejoice with Me, because I have found the sheep that was lost.*[18112] *Dearest Redeemer, Thou didst come to seek me, and how have I hitherto fled away from Thee. No, my Jesus! I will no more fly from Thee. I will love Thee; and oh! do Thou so bind me to Thee by Thy holy love that I may live and die in Thy sacred embraces.*

3. The eternal Father has then given his Son, and the divine Son has given his precious blood and life for the salvation of my soul; and how often have I withdrawn myself from God and sold myself for something worse than nothing to his and my mortal enemy the devil! *Verily, my God! Thou hast spared nothing to save me from being lost, while I, for the sake of some paltry gratification, have many, many times renounced Thy friendship and love. Thou hast borne with me, that I might have time to bewail my sins and to love Thee, the God of my soul. I will therefore love Thee, my only good, and will grieve above every evil for having so often offended Thee. Oh! suffer me not to be anymore separated from Thy love. Remind me*

continually how much Thou hast done for my salvation, and how great has been the love which Thou hast shown me, that I may never cease to love Thee, my treasure, my life, and my all. Grant that I may ever love Thee, and then dispose of me as Thou pleasest. Mary, Mother of God, thy divine Son denies thee nothing; recommend to him, I beseech thee, my sinful soul.

MEDITATION LXXVIII

THE REMORSE OF THE REPROBATE

1. The condemned soul is tormented with three kinds of remorse. The first arises from reflecting for what a mere trifle it has incurred everlasting misery. For how long does the pleasure of sin last? only for a moment. To a man at the point of death, how long does his past life appear? a mere moment. But to one in hell, what do the fifty or sixty years of his sojourning upon the earth appear, when, in the gulf of eternity, he foresees that after a hundred or a thousand millions of years he will be only beginning eternity? Alas! does he exclaim, for a few moments of indulgence in poisonous pleasures, which I did but just taste, I must forever suffer, lament, and despair in this fiery furnace, abandoned by all, as long as God shall be God. *O my God! I give Thee thanks for Thy great mercy to me, and implore Thee still to have mercy on me.*

2. The second kind of remorse arises from the reflection of the condemned soul on the little which it need have done to be saved, but did not do it; and that now there is no remedy. Alas! does it say, if I had frequently confessed my sins, given myself to prayer, restored that ill-gotten property, pardoned my enemies, avoided that dangerous occasion, I should not have been lost. What would it have cost me? Although it might have cost me much, yet I ought to have been most willing to do my utmost to be saved. But I did not do it, and now I am lost forever. With how many inspirations did God favour me! How many times did he call me and admonish me that unless I desisted I should certainly be lost! I might then have remedied my past iniquity, but now I have no remedy. Ah! how does this thought afflict the wretched soul, even more than the fire and all the other torments of hell, that it might have been happy forever, but now must be miserable for all eternity! *O Jesus! it is now the time of mercy; do Thou*

mercifully pardon me. I love Thee, my sovereign good, and am exceedingly sorry for having ever despised Thee.

3. The third and most bitter kind of remorse arises from the consciousness of the wretched soul of the great happiness which it has forfeited through its own fault. It recollects that God afforded it abundant means of gaining heaven, that he died for its salvation, permitted it to be born in the bosom of the true Church, and bestowed upon it numberless graces, and it reflects that all have been rendered useless through its own fault. I am lost, it exclaims, and neither the merits of Jesus Christ, nor the intercession of the Mother of God, nor the prayers of the saints, are of any avail to me; every gleam of hope is vanished from me forever. *Oh that I had died, my God, rather than ever offended Thee! Receive me now into Thy favour; I love Thee, and will love Thee forever. Mary, most gracious advocate of sinners, intercede for me.*

MEDITATION LXXX

THE MISERABLE DEATH OF THE SINNER

1. Poor unhappy being! see how he is oppressed with sorrows! Alas! he is now about to die; a cold sweat is stealing over him, his breath is failing him, and he frequently faints away; and when come to himself, his head is so far gone and so weak that he can attend but to very little, understand but little, and speak but little. But the worst is, although he is drawing near his end, instead of thinking of the account he must shortly render to God, he thinks only of his medical attendants, and of the remedies they may be able to afford him to save him from death. And those who stand around him, instead of exhorting him to unite himself to God, flatter him by telling him that he is better, or say not a word, that they may not disturb him. O my God! deliver me from such an unhappy end.

2. But at last the priest admonishes him of his approaching dissolution, saying to him, *“You are now, dear brother, in a state of great danger, and must bid farewell to the world; give yourself then to God, and receive his holy sacraments.”* On hearing this fatal announcement, how dreadfully is he agitated, what sadness and remorse of conscience overwhelm him, and how dreadful is the conflict which he suffers! All the sins he has committed appear in confusion before him, the inspirations which he has neglected, his broken promises, and the many years of his past life now lost and gone forever, all rush upon his mind. He now opens his eyes to the truths of eternity, of which during his past life he made but very little account. O God! what terror do the thoughts of loss of Thy favour, of death, of judgment, of hell, and of eternity, strike into his unhappy soul! *O Jesus! have pity on me and pardon me; do not abandon me. I am sensible of the evil I have done in despising Thee, and would willingly die for Thy love. Assist me, O God! to begin now at least a new life.*

3. The dying sinner exclaims, *“O what great folly have I been guilty of! How have I squandered away my life! I might have been a saint, and I would not; and now, what can I do? My head wanders, and fears oppress me and will not suffer me to bring my mind to any one good work! In a few moments what will become of me? Dying in this manner, how can I be saved?”* He wishes for time to make his peace effectually with God, but time is no longer his. *“Alas!”* he cries out, *“this cold sweat is a sure symptom of the near approach of death;*

I begin to lose my sight and my breath; I can no longer move, I can hardly speak.” And thus, in the midst of so much confusion, despondency, and fear, his soul departs from his body and appears before Jesus Christ. *O my Jesus! Thy death is my hope. I love Thee above every good, and because I love Thee, I am sorry for having offended Thee. Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.*

MEDITATION LXXXI

THE HAPPY DEATH OF THE JUST

1. To the just man death is not a punishment, but a reward; it is not dreaded by him, but desired. How can it be dreadful to him if it is to terminate all his pains, afflictions, and conflicts, and all danger of losing God? Those words, *"Depart, Christian soul, out of this world,"*[18113] which strike such terror into the soul of the sinner, fill the soul that loves God with joy. The just man is not afflicted at leaving the good things of this world, because God has always been his only good; not at leaving honours, because he has always regarded them as smoke; not at being separated from his friends and relatives, because he has always loved them in God and for God. Hence, as in life he frequently exclaimed, *"My God and my all!"* he now repeats the same in death, with ecstasies of delight; the time being at hand for him to return to his God who made him, to love him face to face forever and ever in heaven.

2. The sorrows of death do not afflict him; he even rejoices to sacrifice the last remnants of his life as a testimony of his love for God, uniting the sufferings of his death to the sufferings of Jesus when dying on the cross. The thought that the time of sin and the danger of losing God are now past overwhelms him with delight. The devil fails not to suggest to his mind thoughts of despondency at the recollection of his past sins; but as he has for many years bewailed them, and loved Jesus Christ with his whole heart, he is not dismayed, but comforted. *O Jesus! how good and faithful art Thou to a soul that seeks and loves Thee!*

3. As the sinner who dies in mortal sin experiences, in the internal troubles and rage which he suffers in death, a foretaste of hell; so does the just man experience in death a foretaste of heaven. His acts of confidence and of the love of God, and his ardent desire to see God, afford him a beginning of that happiness which is soon to be completed for him in

heaven. With what gladness does he welcome the holy Viaticum when brought into his chamber! He exclaims like St. Philip Neri when he was on his death-bed, *“Because I have offended Thee, my God, I will say to Thee, with St. Bernard, “Thy wounds are my merits.” O my God! if I am in Thy grace, as I hope I am, grant me soon to die, that I may presently behold and love Thee face to face, and be secure of nevermore losing Thee. Mary, my Mother, obtain for me a holy death.”*

MEDITATION LXXXII

AT THE POINT OF DEATH

1. If now you were at the point of death, already in your agony and almost breathing your last, and about to appear before the divine tribunal, what would you not wish to have done for God? And what would you not give for a little more time to make your salvation more secure? Woe to me, if I do not make use of the light that is now given me, and amend my life! *He hath called against me the time.*[18114] The time which is now granted me by the mercy of God will be a great torment and a subject of bitter remorse to me at the hour of death, when time for me will be no more. *O Jesus! Thou didst spend Thy whole life for my salvation, and I have been many years in the world, and yet what have I hitherto done for Thee? Alas! all that I have done gives me only pain and remorse of conscience.*

2. Christian, God now gives Thee time, be then resolved: in what will you spend it? What do you wait for? Do you wait to see that light which will show you your wretched neglect, when there will be no remedy? Do you wait to hear that *"Go forth"* which must be obeyed without demur? *O my God! I will no longer abuse the light which Thou affordest me; but which I have hitherto so much abused. I thank Thee for this fresh admonition, which, may be the last Thou wilt ever give me. But since at present Thou thus enlightenest me, it is a mark that Thou hast not yet abandoned me, and art desirous of showing me mercy. My beloved Saviour, I am sorry above all things for having so often despised Thy graces and neglected Thy calls and inspirations. I promise with Thy help nevermore to offend Thee.*

3. O God! how many Christians die in the greatest uncertainty as to their salvation, and tormented with the thought that they have had time to serve Thee, and are now arrived at the end of their life, when no more time is left them for any good works! They are sensible that now all that remains to

them is to render a strict account of the many graces and inspirations bestowed upon them by God, and know not what to answer. *O Lord! I will not die under such a torment. Say what Thou requirest of me, make known to me the way of life in which I should walk, and I will obey Thee in all things. Hitherto I have despised Thy commands, but I am now sorry for it with my whole heart, and love Thee above all things. O Mary, refuge of sinners! recommend my soul to thy divine Son.*

MEDITATION LXXXIII

THE RASHNESS OF THE SINNER IN COMMITTING MORTAL SIN

1. God cannot but hate mortal sin, because mortal sin is directly opposed to his divine will: *“Sin,”* says St. Bernard, *“would destroy the divine will.”*[18115] As he cannot but hate mortal sin, so he cannot but hate the sinner who identifies himself with sin and rebels against his God: *To God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.*[18116] How great then is the rashness of the sinner in committing sin, when he knows that by so doing he will bring upon himself the hatred of God! *O my God! have mercy on me; Thou hast distinguished me with many graces, and I have repaid Thee with numerous offences; no one has so grievously offended Thee as I have done. Grant me, for Thy mercy’s sake, contrition for my sins.*

2. God is that all-powerful being who by a single act of his will created all things: *He commanded and they were made.*[18117] And he can in like manner, by a single act of his will, destroy all that he has created, whenever he pleases: *At a beck he can utterly destroy the whole world.*[18118] And will the sinner have the hardihood to put himself in opposition to this omnipotent God and make him his enemy? *He hath stretched out his hand, says holy Job, against God, and hath strengthened himself against the Almighty.*[18119] What should we think of an ant pretending to fight against an armed soldier? *And what ought to be said of me, O eternal God! who have so often dared to oppose myself to Thee, making no account of Thy power, and sensible that I was drawing down Thy anger upon me? But Thy holy Passion, O Jesus, gives me confidence to hope in Thee for pardon, who didst die to obtain forgiveness for me.*

3. The rashness of the sinner increases when we reflect that he offends God before his own eyes: *He provoketh Me to anger before My face.*[18120] What subject had ever the audacity to break the laws in the presence of the

king himself? But the sinner knows that God beholds him, and yet he does not hesitate to commit sin before him. *My dear Redeemer, I am that audacious being who has dared to despise Thy holy precepts before Thy face. I have therefore deserved hell; but Thou art my Saviour, who earnest to take away the sins of the world and to save poor sinners: The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*[18121] *How much am I grieved for having offended Thee! Thou hast given me many proofs of Thy love, and I have returned Thee as many injuries. O Jesus! put an end to my sins, and replenish me with Thy love. I love Thee, O infinite love! and tremble at the thought of being ever again deprived of Thy love, Permit it not, O God! rather let me die. O Mary, thou obtainest whatever thou askest of God; obtain for me the gift of holy perseverance.*

MEDITATION LXXXVII

THE TROUBLE AND CONFUSION OF THE HOUR OF DEATH

1. *Be ye always ready: for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come.*[18122] "Be ye always ready." Our blessed Saviour does not tell us to begin to prepare ourselves when death has arrived, but to prepare ourselves beforehand; because the time of death will be a time of confusion, when it will be morally impossible to prepare ourselves in a proper manner to appear for judgment, and to obtain a favourable sentence. *"It is a just punishment,"* says St. Augustine, *"upon him who, having it in his power to do good, will not do it, not to be able to do it afterwards when he desires to do it."*[18123] *No, my God! I will not wait until that time to begin a change of life. Make known to me what I must now do to please Thee, for I desire to do without reserve whatever Thou requirest of me.*

2. The time of death is the time of night, when nothing can be done. *The night cometh on, when no man can work.*[18124] The fatal news of the disease being mortal, the grief and pains which accompany it, the disordered state of the head, and, above all, remorse of conscience, will cast the poor sick man into such a state of distress and confusion as to hinder him from knowing what he is doing. He will anxiously desire to escape damnation, but will not find the means, for the time of chastisement will be at hand. *I will repay them in due time, that their foot may slide.*[18125] *O my God! I give Thee thanks for allowing me time to amend, now that it is the time of mercy and not of punishment. I would rather lose all things than forfeit Thy grace. My sovereign good, I love Thee above all things.*

3. Imagine yourself in a vessel overtaken by a storm in the midst of the sea, already struck upon a rock and on the point of sinking; think how great would be your confusion, and that you would not know what to do to escape death. And hence imagine how great will be the confusion of the sinner, who at his death finds himself in a bad state of conscience. His will,

his relatives, the last sacraments, restitutions to be made, the calls of God which he despised, oh, what a tempest will all these things create in the soul of the poor dying sinner! Go then, go now and put your troubled conscience in order. *O my God! let not Thy blood be shed for me in vain. Thou hast promised pardon to him that repents, wherefore do I grieve from the bottom of my heart for the many offences I have committed against Thee. I love Thee, O Lord! above all things, and will nevermore offend Thee. How is it possible I should ever again, after so many mercies, offend Thee? No, my God! I will rather die. Holy Mary, pray for me to thy divine Son, that I may never more offend him.*

MEDITATION XCI

THE SENTENCE OF THE WICKED AT THE LAST JUDGMENT

1. Consider how great the rage of the wicked will be, to behold on the last day, the just, shining with glory, waiting with joyful eagerness for that *Come, ye blessed,*[18126] with which Jesus Christ will invite them into heaven; and how great the shame and confusion of the wicked will be to behold themselves surrounded by devils, and trembling with expectation of that *Depart from me, ye cursed,*[18127] with which Jesus Christ will pronounce their condemnation before the whole world. O my dear Redeemer! suffer not Thy death, which Thou didst undergo with so much love, to become of no avail to me.

2. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.[18128] Such will be the sentence of condemnation, such the unhappy doom, which will fall upon the wicked: to burn forever in the flames of hell, accursed of God and separated from him. Do Christians believe that there is a hell? How comes it, then, that so many voluntarily expose themselves to its terrible torments? O my God! who knows but that I also may be of their number at the last day? I hope through Thy precious blood that so dreadful an evil will not befall me; but who will make me certain of this? Enlighten me, O Lord! and make known to me what I must do to escape Thy wrath, which I have hitherto so often provoked; take Thou pity on me and forgive me.

3. At last, in the midst of the valley of Josaphat, the earth will open and swallow up the wicked, together with the devil and all his evil spirits; who will all hear those gates shut over them which will never again be opened for all eternity. O accursed sin, to what a miserable end wilt thou one day conduct innumerable souls! *Unhappy they for whom is reserved such a lamentable doom for all eternity! O my God! what will my lot be? The fire of hell does not terrify me so much as the thought of being forever*

separated and at a distance from Thee, my only good. My dear Redeemer, if hitherto I have despised Thee, I now love Thee above all things and with my whole heart. I know that the punishment of remaining forever separated from Thee will not befall those who love Thee; grant therefore that I may love Thee forever; bind me and unite me closely to Thee; unite me daily more and more to Thee, that I may never be separated from Thee, and then do with me whatever else Thou pleasest. Holy Mary, advocate of sinners, never cease to protect me.

MEDITATION XCII

THE SENTENCE OF THE ELECT

1. Come, ye blessed of my Father.[18129] Such will be the glorious sentence which in the day of triumph will be pronounced in favour of those who have loved God. St. Francis of Assisi, having had it revealed to him that he was one of the predestinate, almost died of the consolation which such a revelation afforded him; what then will be the joy of the elect when they hear Jesus Christ inviting them, Come, ye blessed children, come and possess the inheritance of your divine Father; come and reign with him forever in heaven! *How often, O God! have I through my own fault forfeited Thy blessed kingdom! But, O Jesus! Thy precious merits encourage me to hope that I shall regain it. My dear Redeemer, I trust in Thee and love Thee.*

2. Oh, how will the blessed congratulate one another when they behold themselves placed upon thrones and united in the enjoyment of God for all eternity, without the least fear of ever being again separated from him! What joy and glory will be theirs to enter on that day crowned into heaven, singing together songs of gladness and the sweet praises of God! Happy souls, that are destined to such a blessed lot! *O God of my soul! bind me to Thee with the sweet bonds of Thy holy love, that in that day I may enter into Thy kingdom and praise and love Thee forever. The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever.*[18130]

3. Let us arouse our slumbering faith. It is certain that we shall one day be judged, and that we shall receive sentence either of eternal life or of eternal death. If we be not secure of obtaining the sentence of life, let us endeavour to make it certain. Let us fly from all those occasions which might expose us to the loss of our souls; and unite ourselves to Jesus Christ by frequently approaching the sacraments, by pious meditations, by spiritual reading and continual prayer. The adoption or neglect of these means will be the sign of our salvation or of our perdition. *My beloved*

Jesus, and my Judge, I hope through Thy precious blood that Thou wilt on that day bless me; and hence do Thou bless me now, and pardon me all the offences I have committed against Thee. Grant me to hear the same consoling words that Thou didst address to Magdalen, Thy sins are forgiven thee.[18131] *I am sorry with my whole heart for having offended Thee; pardon me, and at the same time give me grace always to love Thee. I love Thee, my sovereign good; I love Thee more than myself, my treasure, my love, my all. Thou art the God of my heart, and my portion forever.*[18132] *O my God! Thee only do I desire. Holy Mary, by thy powerful intercession thou canst procure my salvation, and thou desirest it; in thee do I confide.*

PART II

Pious Reflections on Different Points of Spirituality to Guide Souls that Desire to Advance in the Love of God[18133]

I

THE THOUGHT OF ETERNITY

SAINT AUGUSTINE called the thought of eternity the great thought: *Magna cogitatio.* This thought has brought the saints to count all the treasures and greatness of this life as nothing more than straw, dust, smoke, and refuse. This thought has sent many anchorites to hide themselves in deserts and caves, and so many noble youths, and even kings and emperors, to shut themselves up in cloisters. This thought has given courage to so many martyrs to endure the torture of piercing nails and heated irons, and even of being burnt in the fire.

No; we are not created for this earth: the end for which God has placed us in the world is this, that with our good deeds we may inherit eternal life. *The end is eternal life.*[18134] And, therefore, St. Eucherius said that the only affair that we should attend to in this life is eternity; that is, that we should win a happy eternity, and escape a miserable one. *The object for which we struggle is eternity.*[18135] If assured of this end, we are forever blessed; if we fail of it, we are forever miserable. Happy he who lives ever with eternity in view, with a lively faith that he must speedily die, and enter upon eternity. *The just man lives by faith.*[18136] It is faith that makes the just to live in the sight of God, and which gives light to their souls, by withdrawing them from earthly affections, and placing before their thoughts the eternal blessings which God promises to them that love him. St. Teresa said that all sins had their origin in a want of faith. Therefore, in order to overcome our passions and temptations, we ought constantly to revive our faith by saying: *I believe the life everlasting.*[18137] I believe that after this life, which will soon be ended, there is an eternal life, either full of joys, or full of pains, which will befall me, according to my merits or demerits. St. Augustine also said that a man who believes in eternity, and yet is not converted to God, has either lost his senses or his faith. *“O eternity!” (these are his* *words), “he that meditates upon thee, and repents not, either has not faith, or he has no heart.”*[18138] In reference to this, St. John Chrysostom relates that the Gentiles, when they saw Christians sinning, thought them either liars or fools. *If you believe not (they said) what you say you believe, you are liars; if you believe in eternity and sin, you are fools.*[18139] *“Woe to sinners who enter upon eternity without having known it, because they would not think upon it!” exclaims St. Cæsarius; and then he adds, “But oh, double woe! They enter upon it, and they never come forth.”*[18140]

St. Teresa said constantly to her disciples, “*My children, there is one soul, one eternity.*” By which she meant to say, *My children, we have one soul, and when that is lost, all is lost; and, once lost, it is lost forever.* In a word, upon that last breath which we breathe in dying, it depends whether we are forever blessed, or in despair. If the eternity of the next life, if paradise, if hell, were mere fictions of literary men, and things of doubtful reality, even then we ought to bestow all our care to live well, and not to risk our soul forever. But no; these things are not doubtful; they are sure things, they are things of faith; they more surely exist than those things which we see with our bodily sight. Let us, then, pray to our Lord, *Increase our faith;*[18141] for, if we are not strong in faith, we may become worse than Luther or Calvin. On the other hand, one thought of living faith upon the eternity that awaits us may make us saints. *St. Gregory wrote that they who meditate on eternity are neither puffed up by prosperity, nor cast down by adversity; for they desire nothing and they fear nothing in this world.*[18142]

When it happens to us to suffer any infirmities or persecutions, let us think of the hell which we have deserved through our sins. When we do this, every cross will seem light, and we shall thank the Lord, and say, *It is the mercy of the Lord that we are not consumed.*[18143] We shall say, with David, *Unless the Lord had been my helper, my soul had almost dwelt in hell.*[18144] Through myself I was already lost; Thou hast done this, O God of mercy! that Thou hast stretched forth Thy hand, and drawn me forth from hell: *Thou hast delivered my soul, that it should not perish.*[18145] *O my God! Thou knowest how often I have deserved hell; but, notwithstanding, Thou biddest me hope, and I desire to hope. My sins terrify me; but Thy death giveth me courage, and Thy promise of pardon to him that repenteth. A contrite and humbled heart, O God! Thou wilt not despise. I have* *dishonoured Thee for the time that is past, but now I love Thee above all things; and I grieve more than for any other evil, that I have offended Thee. O my Jesus! have mercy upon me. Mary, Mother of God, pray for me.*

II

WE ARE PILGRIMS ON EARTH

While we live in this life, we are so many pilgrims who wander up and down upon the earth, far from our country, which is heaven, where the Lord awaits us, that we may rejoice forever in his glorious countenance. *While we are in the body, writes the apostle, we are absent from the Lord.*[18146]

If, then, we love God, we ought to have a continual desire to leave this place of exile, by being separated from the body, that we may go and see him. It was for this that St. Paul ever sighed, as he said, *We are confident, and have a good will to be absent rather from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*[18147] Before the common redemption of us miserable sons of Adam, the way of approach to God was closed up; *but Jesus Christ, by his death, has obtained for us the grace of having it in our power to become the sons of God;*[18148] and thus has opened to us *the gates by which we can have access, as children, to our Father, Almighty God.*[18149] On this account St. Paul says, *Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow-citizens with the saints and the domestics of God.*[18150] Thus, so long as we are in the grace of God, we enjoy the citizenship of paradise, and belong to the family of God, St. Augustine says, *"Nature corrupted with sin produces citizens of an earthly city; but grace, which frees our nature from sin, makes us citizens of a heavenly country, and vessels of mercy."*[18151] This made David say, *I am a stranger on earth; hide not Thy commandments from me.*[18152] O Lord! I am a pilgrim upon this earth, teach me to keep Thy precepts, which are the road by which I may reach my country in heaven.

It is not wonderful that the wicked should wish to live forever in this world, for they justly fear that they shall pass from the pains of this life to the eternal and infinitely more terrible pains of hell; but how can he who loves God, and has a moral certainty that he is in a state of grace, desire to go on living in this vale of tears, in continual bitterness, in straits of conscience, in peril of perishing? How can he help sighing to depart at once to unite himself to God in a blessed eternity, where there is no danger of his destroying himself? Oh, how souls that love God groan continually while they live, and cry out with David, *Woe is me, for my banishment is prolonged!*[18153] Unhappy is he who must continue to live a long time in this world, in the midst of so many perils to his salvation! Therefore it is that the saints have continually had this prayer upon their lips, *Thy kingdom come.*[18154] Quickly, O Lord! quickly carry us to Thy kingdom. Let us make speed, then, as the apostle exhorts us, to enter that kingdom, where we shall find perfect peace and contentment: *Let us hasten to enter into that rest.*[18155] Let us hasten, I say, with desire, and not cease to walk onwards till we come to that blessed harbour which God prepares for them that love him. *"He that runs," says St. John Chrysostom, "pays not heed to the spectators, but to the crown of victory; he stands not, but hastens on his course."*[18156] Therefore the saint argues that the longer has been our life, the more we should hasten with good works to win the palm. Thus, our one constant prayer for the relief of the troubles and trials which we endure in this life ought to be this: *Thy kingdom come.*[18157] Lord, may Thy kingdom speedily come, where, united eternally with Thee, and seeing Thee face to face with all our powers, we shall no longer know fear, or danger of falling away.

And when we find ourselves afflicted with the labours or dishonours of the world, let us comfort ourselves with the great reward that God prepares for those who suffer for the love of him: *Rejoice in that day, and be glad; for behold, your reward is great in heaven.*[18158] St. Cyprian said *that with good reason our Lord wills that we should rejoice in labours and persecutions, because then the true soldiers of God are proved, and crowns are distributed to the faithful.*[18159] *Behold, O my God! my heart is ready;*[18160] behold me prepared for every cross that Thou givest me to endure. No, I desire not delights or pleasures in this life; he who has offended Thee and deserves hell, deserves not pleasures. I am ready to suffer all the infirmities and adversities that Thou sendest me; I am ready to embrace all the slights of men; I am content, if it pleases Thee to deprive me of all bodily and spiritual consolations; it is enough that Thou dost not deprive me of Thyself, and of the eternal love of Thee. This I deserve not, but I hope for it, through the blood that Thou hast shed for me. I love Thee, O my God, my love, my all! I shall live forever, and I shall love Thee forever, as I hope; and my paradise will ever be to rejoice in Thy infinite joy., which Thou dost truly merit, through Thine infinite goodness.

VIII

I MUST ONE DAY DIE

It is a most useful thought for salvation to say often to ourselves, “I must one day die.” The Church every year on Ash-Wednesday brings this remembrance to the faithful. *O man, remember that thou art dust, and to dust shalt thou return.*[18161] And this certainty of death is brought to our recollection many times in the year; sometimes by the burial-grounds which we pass upon the road, sometimes by the graves which we behold in churches, sometimes by the dead who are carried to burial. The most precious furniture that was carried by the anchorites to their caves was a—cross and a skull; the cross to remind them of the love which Jesus Christ has had for us, and the skull to remind them of the day of their own death. And thus they persevered in penitential works till the end of their days; and thus, dying in poverty in the desert, they died more content than if they had died as kings in their palaces. *The end is at hand; the end is at hand.*[18162] In this life, one man lives a longer, another a shorter time; but for every one, sooner or later, the end comes; and when that end is here, nothing will comfort us at the point of death but that we have loved Jesus Christ, and have endured with patience the labours of this life for the love of him. Then not the riches we have gained, nor the honours we have obtained, nor the pleasures we have enjoyed, will console us. All the greatness of the world cannot comfort a dying man; it rather adds to his pains; and the more he has gained of it, the more does he suffer. It was said by Sister Margaret of St. Anne, a nun of the Barefooted Carmelites, and daughter of the Emperor Rodolph II.: *“What profit is a kingdom in the hour of death?”*

Oh, how many worldly persons are there to whom, at the very moment when they are busy in seeking for gain, power, and office, the word of death comes: *Set thy house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.*[18163] Why, O man! hast thou neglected to make thy will till the hour when thou art in sickness? O my God! what pain is suffered by him who is on the point of gaining some lawsuit, or of taking possession of some palace or property, who hears it said by the priest who has come to pray for his soul, *“Depart, Christian soul, from this world.*[18164] Depart from this world, and render thy account to Jesus Christ.” “But now,” lie cries, “I am not well prepared.” What matters that? Thou must now depart. O my God! give me light, give me strength to spend the rest of my life in serving and loving Thee. If now I should die, I should not die content; I should die disturbed. What, then, do I wait for? That death should seize me at a moment of the greatest peril to my soul? O Lord! if I have been mad for the past, I would not be so for the time to come. Now I give myself wholly to Thee; receive me, and help me with Thy grace. In a word, to every one the end comes, and with the end comes that decisive moment on which depends a happy or a wretched eternity. *Oh, what a moment, on which eternity depends!*[18165] Oh, that all would think upon that moment, and the account they must give to their judge of their whole life! *Oh, that they were wise, and would understand, and would consider their last end!*[18166]

Truly, they would not then devote themselves to amassing riches, or labour to become great in this perishing world; they would think how to become saints, and to be great in that life which never ends. If, then, we have faith, let us believe that there is a death, a judgment, an eternity, and labour for the rest of our life to live only for God. And, therefore, let us take care to live as pilgrims in this earth, remembering that we must speedily leave it. Let us live ever with death before our eyes; and, in all the affairs of life, let us take care to act precisely as we should act at the point of death. All things upon earth either leave us, or we leave them. Let us hear Jesus Christ, who says, *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy.*[18167] Let us despise the treasures of earth, which cannot content us, and speedily end; and let us gain those heavenly treasures which will make us happy, and never be ended.

Miserable I am, O Lord! in that I have so often, for the sake of the goods of this life, turned my back upon Thee, who art the infinite good! I see my folly in having sought for a great name, and for making my fortune in the world. I see what my true happiness is: it is henceforth to love Thee, and in everything to fulfil Thy will. O my Jesus! take from me the desire of gain;

make me love neglect and an humble life. Give me strength to deny myself in everything that displeases Thee. Make me embrace, with a calm mind, infirmities, persecutions, desolations, and all the crosses that Thou mayest send me. Oh, that I could die for the love of Thee, abandoned by all, as Thou didst die for me! Holy Virgin, thy prayers can enable me to find my true happiness, which is to love earnestly thy Son. Oh, pray for me; in thee I trust.

IX

PREPARATION FOR DEATH

Death is certain. *“It is appointed to all men once to die.”*[18168] On the other hand, the time and manner of our death are uncertain. Therefore, Jesus Christ exhorts us, “Be ye ready, for ye know not the hour when the Son of man cometh.” He says, “Be ye ready;” and, there fore, it is necessary not only to prepare for death when death comes, but we must be ready to embrace it in whatever manner and in whatever circumstances it may come to us. It is accordingly very desirable that everyone, at least once a month, should make the following acts of devotion: *Behold, O my God! I am ready to embrace that death which Thou dost destine for me. From this time I embrace it, and I sacrifice my life in honour of Thy Majesty, and also in penance for my sins; being satisfied that this flesh, to please which I have so often offended Thee, should be devoured by worms, and be reduced to dust. O my Jesus! I unite the pains and agonies which I must then suffer to the pains and agonies which Thou, my Saviour j didst suffer in Thy death. I accept death with all the circumstances Thou mayest appoint; I accept its time, whether it be near or distant; I accept the manner, whether in bed or out of it, whether sudden or not, and from that more or less painful illness which may please Thee. In everything I resign myself to Thy holy will. Give me strength to suffer all with patience. What shall I render to the Lord for all the benefits He hath given to me?*[18169]

I thank Thee, O my God! first for the gift of faith, declaring that I desire to die a son of the holy Catholic Church. I thank Thee for not having caused me to die when I was in sin, and for having so often pardoned me with so much mercy. I thank Thee for so many lights of grace with which Thou hast sought to draw me to Thy love. I pray Thee to grant me to die after receiving the holy Viaticum, that, united with Thee, I may present myself at Thy tribunal. I do not deserve to hear from Thy mouth, *Well done, good and* *faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter into the joy of thy Lord.*[18170] I do not deserve it, for in nothing have I been perfectly faithful to Thee; but Thy death gives me hope that I shall be admitted to heaven, to love Thee there eternally, and with all my powers. O my crucified Love! have mercy upon me; look upon me with that love with which Thou didst look upon me from the cross when dying for me. *Remember not the sins of my youth and my ignorance, O Lord.*[18171] My sins terrify me, but I am comforted by that cross, on which I see Thee dead through the love of me. *"Behold the wood of the cross, on which hung the salvation of the world."!*[18172] I desire to end my life, that I may cease to offend Thee; by the blood that was shed for me, pardon me all my sins before death comes upon me. *"O blood of the Innocent, wash away the stains of the guilty."*[18173] My Jesus, I embrace Thy cross, and kiss the wounds of Thy holy feet, before which I desire to breathe my soul away. Leave me not at that last hour; *"We pray Thee save Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood."*[18174]

I love Thee with all my heart, I love Thee more than myself, and I repent with all my soul that I have displeased Thee. O Lord! I was lost, but Thou in Thy goodness hast delivered me from the world; receive, then, my soul from this hour, until that hour when it leaves the world. Therefore, I pray with St. Agatha, "Lord, Thou who hast taken from me the love of this world, receive my soul."[18175] *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth!*[18176] *O holy Virgin! help me at the moment of my death; O holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me a sinner, now and at the hour of my death; in thee, O Lady! have I hoped, I shall not be confounded forever. St. Joseph, my protector, obtain for me a holy death. My guardian angel, St. Michael the Archangel, defend me from the evil one in that last conflict. My holy patrons, and all saints in Paradise, succour me in that last hour. Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, be in my company at the hour of my death.*

X

HE THAT LOVES GOD MUST LOVE AND NOT ABHOR DEATH

How can he ever abhor death who is in the grace of God? *He that abideth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him.*[18177] He, therefore, that loves God is secure of his grace, and, thus dying, he is sure of going to rejoice forever in the kingdom of the blessed; and shall such a one fear death?

David truly said, Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.[18178] This means that no man may presume to be saved by his own merits; for no one but Jesus and Mary can say that he has been without sin throughout his life. But he ought not to fear death, if, with true repentance for his sins, he trusts in the merits of Jesus Christ, who came on earth to save sinners. *The Son of man came to save that which was lost.*[18179] And for this end he died, and poured forth his blood to save sinners. *The blood of Christ Jesus, says the Apostle, speaks more in favour of sinners than the blood of Abel spoke against Cain, who slew him.*[18180] It is true that, without a divine revelation, no man can possess an infallible certainty of his own salvation; but he that has given himself with a true heart to God, and is ready to lose everything, even life itself, rather than lose the divine grace, has a moral certainty that he will be saved. *This certainty is founded on the divine promises; no man, says the Scripture, ever trusted in God and was confounded.*[18181] Almighty God declares in many passages that he does not desire the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live. *Is it My will that a sinner should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should be converted from his ways, and live?*[18182] In another place he makes the same declaration, and adds an oath: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*[18183]

And, in the same chapter, God laments over those obstinate sinners who choose to perish because they will not leave their sins, and says, *Why will you die, O house of Israel.*[18184] And to those who repent of their sins he promises to forget all their iniquities. *If the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed he shall live, . . . I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done.*[18185] When a sinner also hates the sins he has committed, it is a certain sign that he has been pardoned. A holy Father[18186] says that whoever can say, with truth, *"I hate and abhor my iniquities,"*[18187] may be certain that they are forgiven. We have another sign of pardon when we recover grace and persevere in a good life for a considerable time after having sinned. It is also a sure sign to the same effect when we have a fixed resolution to die rather than lose the friendship of God, as also when we earnestly desire to love him, and to see him loved by others, and when we feel distress at seeing him offended. How is it, then, that certain great saints, after having given themselves wholly to God, and after a life of mortification and detachment from all earthly things, at the hour of death have felt great terror at the thought of appearing before Christ their judge? I reply that those great saints who have suffered these fears at the moment of death have been very few, and that it was the will of God that they should thus purge away the remains of their sins before entering on eternal blessedness; but that, ordinarily speaking, all the saints have died in remarkable peace, and with earnest desires to depart to the presence of God.

And for the rest, this is the very difference between sinners and saints at the hour of death, that sinners from fear pass on to despair, and saints from fear pass on to confidence, and thus die in peace. Therefore, every one who has a hope that he is in the grace of God ought to desire death, repeating the prayer which Christ Jesus has taught us, "Thy kingdom come;" and he ought to embrace death with joy when it comes that he may thus be freed from sin, and leave this world where no one lives without imperfections, and go to behold God, face to face, and love him with all his powers in the kingdom of love. O my beloved Jesus and my judge! when Thou dost judge me, for Thy mercy condemn me not to hell. In hell I cannot love Thee, but must hate Thee forever; and how can I hate Thee who art so worthy of love, and ho hast so loved me? If Thou wilt condemn me to hell, at least grant me grace to be able to love Thee there with all my heart. This grace I do not deserve, through my sins; but if I do not deserve it, Thou hast purchased it for me with the blood which Thou didst shed with such anguish for me upon the cross. O my Judge! inflict on me every pain, but deprive me not of the power of loving Thee. O Mother of God! behold the peril in which I stand of being condemned to be unable to love thy Son, who deserves an infinite love; help me; have pity on me.

XXII

THE WORDS OF A DYING MAN TO JESUS CRUCIFIED

Jesus, my Redeemer! who within a few moments wilt be my judge, have mercy upon me before the moment comes when Thou wilt judge me. No, my sins do not terrify me, nor the rigors of Thy judgment, while I see Thee dead upon this cross to save me. Yet, cease not to comfort me in the agony to which I am come: my enemies would terrify me by saying that there is no salvation for me: *Many say unto my soul, there is no salvation for him in his God.*[18188] But I will never cease to trust in Thy goodness, and say, *Thou, O Lord! art my lifter up.*[18189] Do Thou comfort me; do Thou make me feel that Thou art my salvation; *Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*[18190] Oh, let not all those pangs, those insults endured, that blood poured forth by Thee, be lost unto me. "Thou hast redeemed me, dying upon the cross; let not so great labour be in vain." Especially, I pray Thee, through that bitterness Thou didst feel when Thy blessed soul was separated from Thy most holy body, have mercy upon my soul when it departs from my body. It is true that through my sins I have continually despised Thee; but now I love Thee above everything, I love Thee more than myself; and I grieve with all my heart for all the offences that I have committed against Thee; I detest them, I hate them above every evil.

I see that through the offences I have been guilty of, I have deserved a thousand hells; but the bitter death which Thou hast been willing to endure for me, and the great mercies Thou hast already shown me, make me confidently hope that when I appear before Thee, Thou wilt welcome me with the kiss of peace. Trusting all in Thy goodness, O my God! I abandon myself into Thy loving arms. *In Thee, O Lord! I have hoped: I shall not be confounded forever.*[18191] Through the sins I have committed, I have again and again deserved hell; but I hope in Thy blood, that Thou hast not pardoned me; and I hope that I shall come to heaven to praise Thy mercies forever: *The mercies of God I will sing forever.*[18192] I willingly accept all the pains Thou dost destine for me in purgatory: it is just that the fire should purge away the wrongs I have done Thee. O holy prison, when shall I find myself shut up in thee, secure from being able ever to lose my God! O holy fire, when wilt thou purge away my vileness, and make me worthy to enter the kingdom of the blessed! O eternal Father! through the merits of the death of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, make me to die in Thy grace, and in Thy love, that I may come to love Thee throughout eternity. I thank Thee for all the graces Thou hast given me through my life, and especially for the great grace of Thy holy faith, and for having caused me to receive, in these my last days, all the holy sacraments. Thou willest that I should die, and I desire to die to please Thee. It is little, O Jesus, my Saviour! that I should die for Thee, who hast died for me. I am satisfied to say to Thee, with St. Francis, *“Let me die for love of Thee, who hast vouchsafed to die for love of me.”*

I receive death with peace, and also the pains that I must endure so long as I breathe; give me strength to suffer with a perfect conformity to Thy will. I offer them all to Thy glory, uniting them to the pains that Thou didst suffer in Thy Passion. O eternal Father! I sacrifice to Thee my life, and all my being; and I pray Thee to accept this my sacrifice, through the merits of the great sacrifice that Jesus Thy Son offered up of himself upon the cross. O Mother of God, and my Mother Mary! thou hast obtained many graces from God for me during my life; I thank thee with all my heart. Oh, abandon me not in this hour of my death, in which I have greater need of thy prayers. Pray to Jesus for me, and increase thy prayers; obtain for me sorrow for my sins, and more love for God, that I may come to love him forever, in company with Thee, and with all my powers, in heaven. “In thee, O Lady! I have hoped: I shall not be confounded forever.” Mary, my hope, in thee I trust.

XXIII

ACTS OF DEVOTION FOR THE TIME OF DEATH

It was revealed to St. Lidwina by an angel that the crown of merits and glory that awaited her in heaven could only be completed through the sufferings which she was to endure in the days which would immediately precede her death. The same thing happens to all devout souls when they depart from this world. It is certain that all good acts, and especially those of resignation in accepting death, performed with the view of pleasing God, are of great merit to everyone who dies in the grace of God. Let us here set down certain acts of devotion, which may be very acceptable to the Lord at the time of death.

O my God! I offer Thee my life, and I am prepared to die at any hour that may be pleasing to Thy holy will. *“Thy will be done;”* ever, ever, may Thy will be done. O Lord! if Thou willest to leave me in life for some time longer, blessed be Thy name; but I desire not life, except to spend it all in loving Thee and giving Thee pleasure. If Thou wilt that I should die of this sickness, still blessed art Thou. I embrace death to do Thy will, and I repeat, “Thy will, Thy will be done;” I only beg Thee to help all through this hour. “Have mercy on me, O God! according to Thy great mercy.” If, then, Thou wilt that I should leave this earth, I declare that I desire to die, because thus Thou wilt have it. I desire also to die, in order that, by the pain and bitterness of my death, I may satisfy Thy divine justice for all my sins, through which I have offended Thee and deserved hell. I desire also to die, that I may nevermore offend Thee, or cause Thee displeasure in this life. I also desire to die in acknowledgment of the gratitude which I owe Thee for all the benefits and gifts that Thou hast given me, contrary to all my own deserts. I desire to die, that I may show that I love Thy will more than my life. I desire, if it pleases Thee, to die now, at a time when I trust I am in Thy grace, in order to be assured that I shall praise and bless Thee forever. I desire, above all, to die, in order that I may come to love Thee eternally, and with all my powers, in heaven; where, through Thy blood, O my Redeemer! I hope to come, and to be sure of never ceasing to love Thee through all eternity. O my Jesus! Thou didst accept the death of the cross through love of me; I accept death, and all the pains that await me, through love of Thee. Therefore I say with St. Francis, *"May I die, O Lord! through love of Thee, who, through love of me, didst not disdain to die."*[18193]

I pray Thee, O my Saviour, my love, and my only good! by Thy holy wounds and Thy bitter death, make me to die in Thy grace, and through Thy blood suffer me not to perish. O sweetest Jesus! suffer me not to be separated from Thee. Lord! drive me not away from Thy face. I confess that, through my sins, I have deserved hell, and I mourn for them more than for any evil; and I hope to come to heaven to praise forever the great mercies Thou hast shown to me. "The mercies of the Lord I shall sing forever." I adore Thee, O my God! who hast created me. I believe in Thee, O Eternal Truth! I hope in Thee, O Infinite Mercy! I love Thee, O Supreme Goodness! I love Thee above everything; I love Thee more than myself, for Thou art worthy of being loved. And because I love Thee, I repent with all my heart for having despised Thy grace. I promise Thee to suffer every kind of death, and a thousand deaths, rather than displease Thee. O Jesus! Son of God, who didst die for me, have pity upon me! My Saviour, save me; and let it be my salvation to praise Thee through eternity. O Mary, Mother of God! pray to Jesus for me; now it is the time for thee to aid me. Mary, Mother of grace, Mother of mercy, do thou defend us from the enemy, and receive us in the hour of death. To thy protection we fly, O holy Mother of God! O Mary, holy Mother of God! pray for us sinners. St. Joseph, my patron and father, help me in this hour. St. Michael the Archangel, deliver me from the devils who lie in wait for my soul. O my holy advocates, and ye saints of paradise, pray to God for me. And Thou, my Jesus crucified, at the moment when I must breathe my last breath, receive my soul in Thy arms; to Thee I recommend it; remember that Thou hast redeemed me with Thy blood. "We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood."[18194] *O my crucified Jesus! my love and my hope, whether I live or die, I declare that I desire Thee alone, and nothing more. Thou art my God and my all, and what else can I desire but Thee! "What have I in* *heaven or upon earth! Thou art the God of my heart and my portion forever."*[18195] *Thou art the love of my heart; Thou art all my riches! To Thee, then, I recommend my soul; to Thee, who hast redeemed it with Thy death, Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit:*[18196] *Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth! Trusting in Thy mercy, I therefore say, In Thee, O Lord! have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever. O Mary, thou art my hope; to thee, therefore,*

I say again, In thee, O Lady! have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.[18197]

XXIV

THE HOUSE OF ETERNITY

A man shall go to the house of his eternity.[18198] We err in calling this our habitation in which we now dwell; the habitation of our body in a little while will be a grave, in which it must rest until the day of judgment; and the habitation of the soul will be either paradise or hell, according as it has deserved, and there will it continue through all eternity. At our burial our corpses do not go to the grave of themselves, they are carried thither by others; but the soul goes itself to the place which awaits it, either of eternal joy or eternal woe. *A man shall go to the house of his eternity.* According as a man lives well or ill, so he departs himself to his habitation, in paradise or in hell, which he shall never change.

Those who live on this earth often change their home, either to please themselves, or because they are compelled. In eternity the habitation is never changed; where we enter the first time, there we abide forever. If the tree fall to the south or to the north, in whatever place it shall fall, there shall it be. He that enters into the south, which is heaven, will be ever happy; he that enters the north, which is hell, will be ever miserable. He, then, who enters heaven, will be always united with God, always in company with the saints, always in the profoundest peace, always abundantly contented; because every blessed soul is filled and satisfied with joy, nor will he ever know the fear of losing it. If fear of losing their happiness could enter among the blessed, they would be no longer blessed; for the mere thought of losing the joy they possess would disturb the peace they enjoy. On the other hand, whoever enters into hell will be forever far from God: he will ever suffer in the fire of the damned. Let us not think that the pains of hell will be like those of earth, where, through the force of habit, a trouble continually grows less; for, as in paradise, the delights never cause weariness, but seem ever new, as though they were for the first time enjoyed (which is implied by the expression of *“ the new canticle,”* which the blessed are ever singing); so, in hell, the pains never grow less through all eternity; long custom will never diminish their torment. The miserable beings who are damned will feel the same anguish through eternity that they feel the first moment they experience its pangs.

St. Augustine said that he who believes in eternity and is not converted to God, has either lost his sense or his faith. Woe, cries St. Cæsarius, woe to sinners who enter eternity without knowing it, through having neglected to think upon it! And then he adds, *“But, O double woe! they enter it, and they never come forth.”* It is a double woe, the first of which will be to fall into that abyss of fire; the second, that he who falls into it will never come out: the door of hell opens only to those who enter, not to those who would depart. No; the saints did not do too much when they went to hide themselves in caves and deserts, to eat herbs, and to sleep on the ground, in order to save their souls. *“They did not do too much,” says St. Bernard, “because, where eternity is in question, no certainty can be too great.”* When, then, God visits us with any cross of infirmity, poverty, or any evil, let us think of the hell we have deserved, and thus every sorrow will appear light. Let us say, with Job, *I have sinned, and truly gone astray, and I have not received in accordance with my deserts.*[18199] O Lord, I have offended Thee, and many times betrayed Thee, and I have not been punished as I deserved; how, then, can I lament if Thou sendest me any tribulation? I, who have deserved hell! O my Jesus! send me not to hell, to the hell in which I could no longer love Thee, but must hate Thee forever. Deprive me of everything, of property, health, life; but deprive me not of Thyself. Grant that I may love Thee and praise Thee forever; and then chastise me, and do with me what Thou wilt. O Mother of God! pray to Jesus for me.

XXV

SOULS WHO LOVE GOD DESIRE TO GO TO SEE HIM IN HEAVEN

While we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord.[18200] Souls that, in this life, love nothing but God are like noble pilgrims, destined, according to their present state, to be the eternal bride of the King of heaven, but who now live far away without seeing him; wherefore they do nothing but sigh to depart to the country of the blessed, where they know that their Spouse awaits them. They know, indeed, that their Beloved is ever present with them, but that he is, as it were, hidden by a veil, and does not show himself. Or, to speak more correctly, he is like the sun behind clouds, which, from time to time, sends forth some ray of its splendour, but displays not itself openly. These beloved brides have a bandage before their eyes, which prevents them from seeing him whom they love. They live, nevertheless, contented, uniting themselves to the will of the Lord, who chooses to keep them in exile, and far away from himself; but with all this, they cannot but continually sigh to know him face to face, in order to be more inflamed with love towards him.

Therefore, everyone of them often sweetly laments with their beloved Spouse, because he shows himself not; and they say, *“O Thou only love of my heart, since Thou hast so loved me, and hast stricken me with Thy holy love, why hidest Thou Thyself, and makest me not to see Thee? I know that Thou art an infinite beauty, I love Thee more than myself, though I have never yet beheld Thee; open to me Thy fair countenance; I would know Thee all revealed, in order that I may no more look to myself nor to any creature, and may think only of loving Thee, my highest good.”*

When to these souls thus filled with love for God there appears any ray of the divine goodness, and of the love which God bears them, they would be dissolved and fade away for desire of him; and though for them the sun is still hidden behind the clouds, and his fair face is covered by a veil, and their own eyes are bandaged, so that they cannot gaze on him face to face; yet what shall be their joy when the clouds disperse, and the gate opens, and the bandage is taken from their eyes, and the fair countenance of their Beloved appears without a veil, so that in the clear light of day they look upon his beauty, his goodness, his greatness, and the love which he bears to them! O death, why dost thou so delay to come? If thou comest not, I cannot depart to behold my God. It is thou that must open to me the gate, that I may enter into the palace of my Lord. O blessed country, when will the day be here when I shall find myself beneath thy eternal tabernacles? O beloved of my soul, my Jesus, my treasure, my love, my all! when will that happy moment come, when, leaving this earth, I shall see myself all united with Thee? I deserve not this happiness; but the love which Thou hast shown me, and, still more, Thy infinite goodness, make me hope that I shall be one day joined to those happy souls, who, being wholly united with Thee, love Thee, and will love Thee with a perfect love through all eternity. O my Jesus! Thou seest the alternative in which I am placed, of being either ever united with Thee, or ever far from Thee; have mercy upon me; Thy blood is my hope; and thy intercession, O my Mother Mary! is my comfort and my joy.

XXVII

THE AFFAIR OF ETERNAL SALVATION

The business of our eternal salvation is for us that affair which is not only the most important, but the only thing that ought to trouble us; because, if this goes wrong, all is lost. One thought upon eternity, well weighed, is enough to make a saint. The great servant of God, F. Vincenzo Carafa, was wont to say that if all men thought with a living faith upon the eternity of another life, the world would become a desert, for no one would attend any more to the affairs of this life. Oh, that all had ever before their eyes the great truth taught us by Jesus Christ! *What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?*[18201] This truth has taught many a man to leave the world; many noble virgins, and even those of royal blood, to shut themselves up in a cloister; many anchorites to live in deserts, and many martyrs to give their lives for the faith; because they considered that if they lost their souls, all the good things of the world would profit them nothing in the eternal state. Therefore the Apostle wrote to his disciples: *We entreat you, brethren, that ye attend to your own business.*[18202] And of what business did St. Paul speak? He spoke of that business which, if it fail, implies that we lose the eternal kingdom of Paradise, and are cast into an abyss of torments that never end. *It is an affair of eternal punishments, and of the loss of the heavenly kingdom, says St. John Chrysostom.*[18203]

St. Philip Neri, therefore, had good reason for calling all those persons mad who bestow pains in this life for gaining riches and honours, and give little heed to the salvation of the soul. “All such,” said the venerable John Avila, “deserve to be shut up in an asylum for lunatics.” How can this be? This great servant of God meant to say, “You believe that there is an eternity of joys for those who love God, and an eternity of pains for those who offend him; and do you offend him?” Every loss of property, of reputation, of relatives, of health, can be repaired in this life, at least by a good death, and by the acquisition of eternal life, as it happened to the holy martyrs; but for what good things of the world, with fortune even the greatest, can be given the loss of the soul? *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*[18204] He that dies in the wrath of God, and loses his soul, loses with this every hope of repairing his ruin. *To the wicked, when he is dead, there is no hope more?*[18205] O God! if the doctrine of eternal life were but a simple, doubtful opinion of divines, we ought surely to give all our care for gaining a happy eternity, and avoiding a miserable one. But no; it is not a doubtful thing; it is certain, it is of faith, that we must come to one or the other. But what do we see? Every one who has faith, and thinks upon this truth, says, “So it is we must attend to the salvation of the soul;” but few are they who truly give heed to it. They devote themselves with all their energies to win this cause, or to obtain this situation, but lay aside the care of eternal salvation. *“Truly, it is the greatest of errors to neglect the business of eternal salvation,”*[18206] said St. Eucherius; it is an error that exceeds all others; for to lose the soul is a mistake without a remedy.

Oh, that they would be wise, and would understand, and consider the last things! Miserable are those learned men who labour at many things, and know not how to take forethought for their souls, that they may obtain a favourable sentence in the day of judgment! O my Redeemer! Thou hast given Thy blood to purchase my soul, and I have so often lost it, and given it to destruction! I give Thee thanks that Thou hast given me time to recover it, by recovering Thy grace. O my God! would that I had died before I had offended Thee! It comforts me to know that Thou knowest not how to despise a heart that humbles itself and repents of its sins. O Mary, refuge of sinners! help me a sinner, who recommends himself to thee, and trusts in thee.

XXVIII

WHAT WILL BE THE JOY OF THE BLESSED

“Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord”[18207] When the soul enters the kingdom of the blessed, and the barrier which hinders its sight is taken away, it will see openly and without a veil the infinite beauty of God; and this will be the joy of the blessed. Every object that the soul then will see in God himself will overwhelm it with delight; it will see the rectitude of his judgments, the harmony of his regulations for every soul, all ordained to his divine glory, and its own good. The soul will especially perceive, in respect to itself, the boundless love which God has entertained towards it in becoming man, and sacrificing his life upon the cross through love of it. Then will it know what an excess of goodness is comprehended in the mystery of the cross, in the sight of a God become a servant, and dying condemned upon an infamous tree; and in the mystery of the Eucharist, in the sight of a God beneath the species of bread, and made the food of his creatures.

In particular the soul will perceive all the graces and favours shown to it, which, until then, had been hidden. It will see all the mercies he has bestowed on it, in waiting for it, and pardoning its ingratitude. It will see the many calls, and lights, and aids that have been granted to it in abundance. It will see that these tribulations, these infirmities, these losses of property or of kindred, which it counted punishments, were not really punishments, but loving arrangements of God for drawing it to the perfect love for him. In a word, all these things will make the soul know the infinite goodness of its God, and the boundless love which he deserves; whence, so soon as it has reached heaven, it will have no other desire but to behold him in his blessedness and content; and, at the same time, comprehending that the happiness of God is supreme, infinite, and eternal, it will experience a joy that is only not infinite because a creature is not capable of anything that is infinite. It will enjoy, nevertheless, a pleasure that is extreme and full, which fills it with delight, and with that kind of delight that belongs to God himself; and thus will be fulfilled in it the words, *Enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord*.[18208] The blessed are not so much blessed through the delight which they experience in themselves as in the joy with which God rejoices; for the blessed love God so infinitely more than themselves that the blessedness of God delights them infinitely more than their own blessedness, through the love which they bear to him; which love makes them forget themselves, and all their delight is to please their Beloved.

And this is that holy and loving inebriation which causes the blessed to lose the memory of themselves, to give themselves wholly to praise and love the dear object of all their love, which is God. *They shall be inebriated with the fullness of Thy house*.[18209] Happy from their first entrance into heaven, they continue, as it were, lost, and, so to say, swallowed up in love, in that boundless ocean of the goodness of God. Wherefore every blessed soul will lose all its desires, and will have no other desire but to love God, and to beloved by him; and knowing that it is sure of ever loving him, and of being ever loved by him, this very thing will be its blessedness, which will fill it with joy, and will make it throughout eternity so satisfied with delight that it will desire nothing more. In a word, it will be the paradise of the blessed, to rejoice in the joy of God. And thus, he who in this life rejoices in the blessedness that God enjoys, and will enjoy through eternity, can say that even in this life he enters into the joy of God, and begins to enjoy Paradise. Yet, O my sweet Saviour, and the love of my soul! in this vale of tears I still see myself surrounded by enemies, who would separate me from Thee. O my beloved Lord! suffer me not to perish; make me ever love Thee in this life and in the next life, and then do with me what Thou wilt. O Queen of Paradise! if thou prayest for me, assuredly I shall be with thee eternally, to be in thy company, and to praise thee in Paradise.

XXIX

THE PAIN OF HAVING LOST GOD WILL BE THAT WHICH CONSTITUTES HELL

The weight of punishment must correspond to the weight of the sin. Mortal sin is defined by theologians in a single phrase, *"a turning away from God;"*[18210] and in this consists the wickedness of mortal sin; it consists in despising the divine grace, and in being willing, of one's own accord, to lose God, who is the greatest good; wherefore justly the greatest punishment of sinners in hell is the punishment of having lost God. The other pains of hell are terrible: the fire which devours; the gloom which darkens; the cries of the damned which deafen; the stench, which would be enough to cause those miserable beings to die, if die they could; the closeness which oppresses and hinders their breath; but these pains are nothing in comparison with the loss of God. In hell the reprobate wail eternally; and the bitterest subject of their wailing is the thought that, through their own fault, they have lost God. O God! what a blessing will they have lost! In this life of present objects, passions, temporal occupations, sensible pleasures and adverse events hinder us from contemplating the infinite beauty and goodness of God; but when the soul has departed from the prison-house of the body, it does not instantly behold God as he is; for, if it saw him, it would be instantly blessed; but it knows that God is an infinite good, and worthy of infinite love; whence the soul, which is created to see and love this God, would instantly go to unite itself to God; but if it were in sin, it would find an impenetrable wall (which is sin), that would forever close up the path which leads to God. O Lord! I thank Thee that this life is not yet closed to me, as I have deserved. I still can come to Thee; cast me not away from Thy face!

The soul that is created to love its Creator, by natural love cannot find itself impelled to love its ultimate end, which is God; in this life, the darkness of sin, and earthly affections, lull to sleep this inclination which it has to unite itself to God, and therefore it is not greatly afflicted at being separated; but when it leaves the body, and is delivered from the senses, then it comprehends with a clear knowledge that God only can give it content. Hence, so soon as it is separated from the body, immediately it flees to embrace its greatest good; but finding itself in sin, it perceives that, as an enemy, it is driven from God, But though driven away, it will not cease to feel itself ever drawn to unite itself to God; and this will be its hell, to find itself ever drawn towards God, and ever driven away from God. But it would be said that the miserable soul, if it has lost God, and can no more see him, can at least comfort itself in loving him. But this is not so; for being abandoned by grace, and made a slave to sin, its will is perverted; so that, on one side, it finds itself ever drawn to love God, and, on the other, compelled to hate him. Thus, at the same time that it knows that God is worthy of infinite love and praise, it hates him and curses him. Yet perhaps it might, at least in this prison of torments resign itself to the divine will, as holy souls do in purgatory, and bless the hand of this God that justly punishes it. But no; it cannot resign itself, because, to do this, it must be assisted by grace, while grace (as has been said) has abandoned it; whence it cannot unite its will to that of God, because its own will is altogether contrary to the divine will.

Whence it also comes that the wretched soul turns all its hatred upon itself, and thus will live forever, torn by contrary desires. It would fain live, it would fain die. On one part, it would live, in order to hate God, who is the object of its greatest hatred; on the other, it would die, that it might not feel the pain it experiences of having lost him, while it perceives that it cannot die. Thus it will live forever in one continual mortal agony. Let us pray God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to deliver us from hell; and especially he ought to pray thus, who, at any time in his life, has lost God through any grievous sin.

O Lord! (let him say) save me, and therefore bind me ever to Thee with Thy holy love; redouble these holy and sweet chains of salvation, which may ever bind me the more to Thee, Miserable that I am, I have despised Thy grace, and deserved to be forever separated from Thee, my greatest good, and to hate Thee forever. I thank Thee for having borne with me when I was at enmity with Thee; what would have become of me, had I then died? But now that Thou hast lengthened my life, grant that it may not be that I may still more displease Thee, but only to love Thee, and to mourn for the offences I have committed against Thee. O my Jesus! from this day forth Thou shalt be my only love, and my only fear will be to offend Thee, and to separate myself from Thee. But if Thou aidest me not, I can do nothing; I hope in Thy blood, that Thou wilt give me help to be all Thine own, O my Redeemer, my love, my all! O Mary, thou great advocate of sinners, help a sinner who recommends himself to thee, and trusts in thee. If we would be assured of not losing God, let us give ourselves indeed wholly to God. He that does not give himself wholly to God is ever in danger of turning his back upon him, and of losing him; but a soul which resolutely separates itself from everything, and gives itself all to God will no more lose him; because God himself will not allow that a soul that has heartily given itself all unto him should turn its back upon him and perish. Wherefore a great servant of God was wont to say that when we read of the fall of any who had before given tokens of living a holy life, we must consider that such persons had not given themselves all to God.

XXXIII

THE SIGHT AND LOVE OF GOD IN THE NEXT LIFE WILL CONSTITUTE THE JOY OF THE BLESSED

Let us see what it will be which in heaven will make those holy citizens completely happy. The soul in heaven when it sees God face to face, and knows his infinite beauty, and all his perfections that render him worthy of infinite love, cannot but love him with all its powers, and it loves him far more than itself; it even, as it were, forgets itself, and desires nothing but to behold him satisfied and loved who is its God; and seeing that God, who is the only object of all its affections, enjoys an infinite delight, this joy of God constitutes all its paradise. If it were capable of anything that is infinite, in seeing that its Beloved is infinitely content, its own joy thereupon would be also infinite; but, as a creature is not capable of infinite joy, it rests at least satisfied with joy to such an extent that it desires nothing more; and this is that satisfaction that David sighed for, when he said, *I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear.*[18211] Thus also is fulfilled what God says to the soul when he admits it into paradise, *Enter into the joy of thy Lord.*[18212] He does not bid joy enter into the soul, because this his joy, being infinite, cannot be contained in the creature; but he bids the soul enter into his joy, that it may receive a portion of it, and such a portion as will satisfy it, and fill it with delight. Therefore, I am of opinion that in meditation, among all acts of love towards God, there is none more perfect than the taking delight in the infinite joy of God. This is certainly the continual exercise of the blessed in heaven; so that he who often rejoices in the joy of God begins in this life to do that which he hopes to do in heaven through all eternity.

The love with which the saints in paradise burn towards God is such that if ever a fear of losing it were to enter their thoughts, or they were to think that they should not love him with all their powers, as now they love him, this fear would cause them to experience the pains of hell. But it is not so; for they are as sure, as they are sure of God, that they will ever love him with all their powers, and that they will be ever loved by God, and this mutual love will never change throughout eternity. O my God! make me worthy of this, through the merits of Jesus Christ. This happiness, which constitutes paradise, will be further increased by the splendour of that delightful city of God, the beauty of its inhabitants, and by their companionship, especially by that of the Queen of all, Mary, who will appear fairer than all, and by that of Jesus Christ, whose beauty again will infinitely surpass that of Mary.

The joy of the blessed will be increased by the dangers of losing so great a good, which they have all passed through in this life. What, then, will be the thanksgivings that they offer to God, when, through their own sins, they have deserved hell, and now find themselves there on high, whence they will see so many condemned to hell for less guilt than their own, while they are saved, and sure of not losing God, being destined to enjoy eternally those boundless delights in heaven, of which they will never grow weary. In this life, however great and continual be our joys, with time they always weary us; but for the delights of paradise, the more they are enjoyed, the more they are desired; and thus the blessed are ever satisfied and filled with these delights, and ever desire them: they ever desire them, and ever obtain them. Wherefore that sweet song with which the saints praise God and thank him for the happiness he has given them, is called a new song: *Sing to the Lord a new song.*[18213] It is called new, because the rejoicings of heaven seem ever new, as though they were experienced for the first time; and thus they ever rejoice in them, and ever ask for them; and, as they ever ask for them, they ever obtain them. Thus, as the damned are called *"vessels of wrath,"*[18214] the blessed are called " vessels of divine love."[18215] Justly, then, does St. Augustine[18216] say that to obtain this eternal blessedness there is needed a boundless labour.

Hence, it was little that the anchorites did with their penitential works and prayers to gain Paradise; it was little for the saints to leave their riches and kingdoms to gain it; little that the martyrs suffered from instruments of torture, and burning irons, and cruel deaths. Let us, at any rate, give heed to suffer joyfully the crosses that God sends us, because they all, if we are saved, will become for us eternal joys. When infirmities, pains, or any adversities afflict us, let us lift up our eyes to heaven and say, *“One day all these pains will have an end, and after them I hope to enjoy God forever.”* Let us take courage to suffer, and to despise the things of the world. Blessed is he who in death can say with St. Agatha, *“O Lord, who hast taken from me the love of the world, receive my soul.”*[18217] Let us endure everything, let us despise everything that is created; it is Jesus who awaits us, and stands with the crown in his hands to make us kings in heaven, if we be faithful to him. *But how can I, O my Jesus! aspire to so great a good,—I, who have so often, through the miserable desires of earth, renounced Paradise before Thee, and trodden under foot Thy grace? Yet Thy blood gives me courage to hope for Paradise, though I have so often deserved hell, because Thou hast died upon the cross, in order to bestow Paradise upon those who have not deserved it. O my God and Redeemer! I would no more lose Thee; give me help to be faithful to Thee; Thy kingdom come; through the merits of Thy blood grant me one day to enter Thy kingdom; and, in the meanwhile, until death comes, enable me perfectly to fulfil Thy will, which is the greatest good, and is that Paradise which can be possessed upon earth by him who loves Thee.* Therefore, O ye souls who love God! while we live in this vale of tears, let us ever sigh for Paradise, and say, “O fair country, wherein love bestows itself upon love, I sigh for Thee hour by hour, when, O my God, when will it be here?”

XLII

PRECIOUS IS THE DEATH OF THE SAINTS

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.[18218] Why is the death of the saints called precious? *"Because,"* answers St. Bernard,[18219] "it is so rich in blessings which deserve to be purchased at any cost." Some persons, attached to this world, would wish that there was no such thing as death; but St. Augustine says, "What is it to live long upon this earth, except to suffer long?"[18220] *"The miseries and difficulties that constantly weary us in this present life are so great,"* says St. Ambrose, *"that death seems rather a relief than a punishment."*[18221]

Death terrifies sinners, because they know that from the first death, if they die in sin, they will pass to the second death, which is eternal; but it does not terrify good souls, who, trusting in the merits of Jesus Christ, have sufficient signs to give them a moral assurance that they are in the grace of God. Wherefore, those words, "Depart, Christian soul, from this world," which are so terrible to those who die against their will, do not afflict the saints, who preserve their hearts free from worldly love, and with a true affection can continue repeating, *"My God and my all."*[18222] To these, death is not a "torment, but a rest from the pains they have suffered in struggling with temptations, and in quieting their scruples, and their fear of offending God; so that what St. John writes of them is fulfilled: *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord! Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.*[18223] He that dies loving God is not disturbed by the pains that death brings with it; but rather it is delightful to such persons to offer them to God, as the last remains of their life. Oh what peace is experienced by him who dies, when he has abandoned himself into the arms of Jesus Christ who chose for himself a death of bitterness and desolation, that he might obtain for us a death of sweetness and resignation!

O my Jesus! Thou art my judge, but Thou art also my Redeemer, who hast died to save me. From my first sin I have deserved to be condemned to hell, but in Thy mercy Thou hast given me a deep sorrow for my sins, wherefore I confidently hope that now Thou hast pardoned me. I have not deserved to love Thee; but with Thy gifts Thou hast drawn me to Thy love. If it is Thy will that this sickness shall bring death to me, I willingly receive it. I see truly that I do not now deserve to enter Paradise; I go content to purgatory, to suffer as much as it pleases Thee; there my greatest pain will be to continue far from Thee, and I shall sigh to come and see Thee and love Thee face to face; therefore, O my beloved Saviour! have mercy upon me.

And what else is this present life, but a state of perpetual peril of losing God? “ We walk amidst snares,” says St. Ambrose; amidst the deceits of enemies, who seek to cause us to lose the divine grace. Therefore St. Teresa, every time that the clock struck, gave thanks to God that another hour of struggle and peril had passed without sin; and therefore she was so rejoiced at the tidings of her coming death, considering that her struggles were over, and the time was near for her to depart and behold her God. In this present life we cannot live without defects. This is the motive that makes souls that love God even desire death. It was this thought that, at the time of death, gladdened Father Vincent Carafa, when he said, “Now that I finish my life, I cease to displease God.” A certain man gave directions to his attendants, that at the time of his death they should often repeat to him these words, “ Comfort thyself, because the time is near when thou wilt no more offend God.” And what else is this body to us but a prison in which. the soul is incarcerated, so that it cannot depart to unite itself to God? On this account, St. Francis, inflamed with love, at the hour of his death cried out with the prophet, “Take my soul out of prison.” O Lord, deliver me from this prison which prevents me from seeing Thee. O death, worthy of love, who can fear thee and not desire thee, since thou art the end of all toils, and the beginning of eternal life! St. Pionius the martyr, standing by the instruments of death, showed himself so full of joy, that the people who stood by wondered at his delight, and asked him how he could be so happy when he was just going to die. *“You are mistaken,” said he, as Eusebius relates, “you are mistaken; I am not hastening to death, but to life.”*

O most sweet Jesus, I thank Thee for not having called me to death when I was under Thy wrath, and for having won over my soul with such gentle *means as Thou hast employed. When I think of the displeasure I have caused Thee, I am ready to die with grief. This my soul, which was lost, I now commit wholly into Thy hands: into Thy hands I commend my spirit; remember, O Lord! that Thou hast redeemed it with Thy death. I love Thee, O infinite goodness! and I desire to depart quickly from this life, that I may come and love Thee with a more perfect love in heaven. And so long as I shall continue to live on this earth, make me continually to comprehend better my obligation to love Thee. O my God! receive me; I give myself wholly to Thee, and I trust in Thee through the merits of Jesus Christ. I also trust in thy intercession, O Mary, my hope!*

XLV

ASPIRATIONS AFTER THE COUNTRY OF THE BLESSED

Happy is he who is saved; who leaves this place of exile, and enters into the heavenly Jerusalem, and enjoys that perfect day which will be always day and always joyful, free from all molestation, and from all fear of ever losing so infinite a happiness. Jacob said, *The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty; few, and evil.*[18224] The same may be said of us miserable pilgrims, whilst we remain on this earth, to endure the toils of our exile, afflicted by temptations, torn by passions, and tormented by miseries, and still more by the fear of losing our eternal salvation at last. Seeing all this, we should conclude, and ever keep it in mind, that this is not our country, but a land of exile, where God detains us, in order that we may, through suffering, come to merit the reward of entering one day into our happy country.

And thus living detached from this earth, we ought always to aspire after Paradise, saying: " When shall it be, O Lord, that I shall be delivered from all these distresses, and think only of loving Thee and praising Thee? When will it be that Thou wilt be all to me in all things, as the Apostle writes: *That God may be all in all?*[18225] When shall I enjoy that unchanging peace, free from all affliction, and from all danger of being lost? When, my God, shall I find myself dwelling with Thee, and enjoying the sight of Thine infinite beauty face to face, and without veil? When shall I attain to the possession of Thee, my Creator, in such a manner that I may say, My God, I cannot lose Thee more? O my Saviour, whilst Thou seest me an exile, and full of trouble, in this land of enemies, where I live in continual warfare, help me with Thy grace, and console me in this sorrowful pilgrimage. Whatever the world may offer me, I know that nothing in it can bring peace; but yet I fear lest, if I have not help from Thee, the pleasures of the world, joined to my evil inclinations, should draw me on to some terrible precipice. Exile as I am in this valley of tears, I would think of Thee continually, O my God! and share in that infinite happiness which Thou enjoyest; but the evil appetites of sense make themselves heard within me, and disturb me. I would that my affections were ever occupied in loving Thee and thanking Thee; but in my flesh I feel drawn towards sensual delights, and thence I am constrained to exclaim with St. Paul, *Unhappy man that lam, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*[18226] Miserable man that I am, in continual combat, not only with external enemies, but with myself, whence *I am weighed down and a trouble to myself.*[18227]

Who, then, will deliver me from the body of this death? that is, from the danger of falling into sin, from that peril, the fear only of which is to me a continual death, which torments me, and will not cease to torment me during all my life: *Go not far from me, O God; my God, in Thy help I put my trust.*[18228] My God, go not far from me; because if Thou goest from me, I fear I shall displease Thee. Therefore, draw nearer to me with Thy powerful help; succour me continually, that I may be able to resist the attacks of my enemies. The royal prophet has said that Thou art ever near, that *Thou dost endow with holy patience all those who are of sorrowful heart, afflicted within themselves.*[18229] Remain beside me, then, my beloved Saviour, and give me that patience that I need to overcome the continual attacks by which I am tormented. As often as I try to give myself to meditation and prayer, troublesome thoughts draw me away, and distract me with a thousand follies; do Thou give me force to drive them from me, and to crucify all the evil inclinations that hinder me from uniting myself to Thee. And take from me, I pray Thee, the great repugnance that I feel to embracing in love and peace everything that is not according to my own self-love. O house of my God, prepared for those that love Thee, to Thee I sigh from this land of misery. *"I have gone astray as a sheep that is lost: O, seek Thy servant."* O beloved Shepherd of my soul, who didst descend from heaven to seek and to save the lost sheep, behold me, one of these who has turned from Thee, and lost itself! Seek Thy servant; Lord, seek me; abandon me not, as I deserve; seek me and save me; take me and keep me safe within Thine arms, that I may not leave Thee anymore. While I am looking towards Paradise with strong desire, my enemy frightens me with the remembrance of my sins; but the sight of Thee, my crucified Jesus, consoles me, and gives me courage to hope that some day I may come to love Thee, and behold Thee unveiled, in Thy blessed kingdom. Queen of heaven, continue to be my advocate. Through the blood of Jesus Christ, and through thine intercession, I have a firm hope of being saved.

NINE DISCOURSES FOR TIMES OF CALAMITIES

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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CONTENTS

INDEX

NINE DISCOURSES FOR TIMES OF CALAMITIES

- CONTENTS
- Nine Discourses for Times of Calamities
  - *FIRST DISCOURSE*
    GOD THREATENS TO CHASTISE US IN ORDER TO DELIVER US FROM CHASTISEMENT
  - *SECOND DISCOURSE.*
    SINNERS WILL NOT BELIEVE IN THE DIVINE THREATS UNTIL THE CHASTISEMENT HAS COME UPON THEM
  - *THIRD DISCOURSE.*
    GOD IS MERCIFUL FOR A SEASON, AND THEN CHASTISES
  - *FOURTH DISCOURSE.*
    THE FOUR PRINCIPAL GATES OF HELL
    - 1. HATRED
    - 2. BLASPHEMY.
    - 3. THEFT.
    - 4. IMPURITY
  - *FIFTH DISCOURSE.*
    EXTERNAL DEVOTIONS ARE USELESS IF WE DO NOT CLEANSE OUR SOULS FROM SIN
  - *SIXTH DISCOURSE.*
    GOD CHASTISES US IN THIS LIFE FOR OUR GOOD, NOT FOR OUR DESTRUCTION
  - *SEVENTH DISCOURSE.*
    GOD CHASTISES US IN THIS LIFE, ONLY THAT HE MAY SHOW US MERCY IN THE NEXT
  - *EIGHTH DISCOURSE.*
    PRAYERS APPEASE GOD, AND AVERT FROM US THE CHASTISEMENT WE DESERVE, PROVIDED WE PURPOSE TO AMEND

1. WE MUST PRAY AND HOPE

2. WE MUST HOPE AND PRAY AS WE OUGHT

NINTH DISCOURSE.
MOST HOLY MARY IS THE MEDIATRIX OF SINNERS

Nine Discourses for Times of Calamities

FIRST DISCOURSE

GOD THREATENS TO CHASTISE US IN ORDER TO DELIVER US FROM CHASTISEMENT

> "Heu! consolabor super hostibus meis, et vindicabor de inimicis meis."
>
> "Ah, I will comfort Myself over My adversaries: and I will be revenged of My enemies."—Isa. i. 24.

SUCH is the language of God, when speaking of punishment and vengeance: He says that he is constrained by his justice to take vengeance on his enemies. But, mark you, he begins with the word *Heu*, "Ah:" this word is an exclamation of grief by which he would give us to understand, that if he were capable of weeping when about to punish, he should weep bitterly at being compelled to afflict us his creatures, whom he has loved so dearly as to give up his life through love for us. " 'Alas!'" says Cornelius a Lapide, "is uttered by one who is lamenting and not insulting; God signifies by this word that he is grieving, and that he is unwilling to punish sinners."[18230] No, this God, who is the Father of mercies, and so much loves us, is not of a disposition to punish and afflict, but rather to pardon and console us. *For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of affliction.*[18231]

But some one will say, since such is his character, why does he now punish us? or, at least, appear as if he meant to punish us? Why so? Because he wishes to be merciful towards us: this anger which he now displays is all mercy and patience.

Let us then, my brethren, understand how the Lord at present appears in wrath, not with a view to our punishment, but in order that we may cleanse ourselves of our sins, and thus enable him to pardon us. Such is the subject of our discourse: GOD THREATENS TO CHASTISE IN ORDER TO DELIVER US FROM CHASTISEMENT.

The threats of men ordinarily proceed from their pride and impotence; whence, if they have it in their power to take vengeance on an object, they threaten nothing, lest they should thereby give their enemies an opportunity of escape. It is only when they want the power to wreak their vengeance that they betake themselves to threats, in order to gratify their passion, by awakening at least the fears of their enemies. Not so the threats of which God makes use; on the contrary, their nature is quite different. His threats do not arise from his inability to chastise, because he can be avenged when he wills; but he bears with us in order to see us penitent, and thus exempt from punishment. *Thou hast mercy upon all, because Thou canst do all things, and winkest at the sins of men for the sake of repentance.*[18232] Neither does he threaten from hatred, in order to torment us with fear; God threatens from love, in order that we may be converted to him, and thereby escape chastisement: he threatens, because he does not wish to see us lost: he threatens, in fine, because he loves our souls. *But Thou sparest all, because they are thine, O Lord, who lovest souls.*[18233] He threatens; but notwithstanding bears with us and delays the infliction, because he wishes to see us converted, not lost. *He dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.*[18234] Thus the threats of God are all acts of tenderness, and amorous calls of his goodness, by which he means to save us from the punishment which we deserve.

Yet forty days, exclaimed Jonas, *and Nineve shall be destroyed.*[18235] Wretched Ninevites, he cries, the day of your chastisement is come; I announce it to you on the part of God: Know that within forty days Nineve shall be destroyed, and cease to exist. But how comes it that Nineve did penance and was not destroyed? *And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way; and God had mercy.*[18236] Whereat Jonas was afflicted, and making lamentation before the Lord, said to him: *Therefore, I went before Thee into Tarsis, for I knew that Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil.*[18237] He then left Nineve, and was screened from the rays of the burning sun by an ivy which God caused to overshadow his head. But how did the Lord next act? He withered the ivy, whereat Jonas was so much afflicted that he wished for death. God then said to him, *Thou hast grieved for the ivy for which Thou hast not labored, nor made it to grow; . . . and* *shall not I spare Nineve?*[18238] Thou grievest for the ivy which thou hast not created, and shall not I pardon the men who are the work of my hands?

The destruction which the Lord caused to be held out against Nineve was, according to the explanation of St. Basil, not an actual prophecy, but a simple threat, by which he meant to bring about the conversion of that city. The saint says, that God often appears in wrath because he wishes to deal mercifully with us; and threatens, not with the intention of chastising but of delivering us from chastisement.[18239] St. Augustine adds, that when any one cries out to you “take care,” it is a sign he does not mean to injure you.[18240] And thus exactly does God act in our regard: he threatens us with chastisement, says St. Jerome, not that he means to inflict it, but to spare us if we profit by the warning.[18241] Thou, O Lord, says St. Augustine, art severe, but then most so when Thou wishest to save us; Thou threatenst, but in so threatening Thou hast no other object than to bring us to repentance.[18242] The Lord could chastise sinners without warning by a sudden death, which should not leave them time for repentance; but no, he displays his wrath, he brandishes his scourge, in order that he may see them reformed, not punished.

The Lord said to Jeremias: thou shalt say to them—*If so be, they will hearken and be converted every one from his evil way: that I may repent Me of the evil which I think to do unto them.*[18243] Go, he says, and tell the sinners if they wish to hear you, that if they cease from their sins, shall spare them the chastisements which I intended to have inflicted on them. And now, my brethren, mark me. The Lord addresses you in a similar way out of my mouth. If you amend, he will revoke the sentence of punishment. St. Jerome says: “God is wroth, not with us, but with our sins;”[18244] and St. John Chrysostom adds, that if we remember our sins God will forget them.[18245] He desires that we being humbled should reform, and crave pardon of him. *Because they are humbled I will not destroy them.*[18246]

But, in order to amend, we must be led to it by fear of punishment, otherwise, we never should be brought to change our lives. True it is, God protects him who places hope in his mercy. *He is the protector of all who trust in Him.*[18247] But he who hopes in the mercy of the Lord is always the man who fears his justice. *They that fear the Lord have hoped in the lord : He is their protector and their helper.*[18248] The Lord often speaks of the rigor of his judgments, and of hell, and of the great number who go thither. *Be not afraid of them who kill the body: . . . fear ye Hint who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell.*[18249] *Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who enter thereat.*[18250] And why does the Lord so often speak thus? In order that fear may keep us from vice, and from the passions, and from occasions; and that thus we may reasonably hope for salvation, which is only for the innocent, or the penitent, who hope and fear.

Oh, what strength has not the fear of hell to rein us in from sin! To that end has God created hell. He has created us, and redeemed us by his death, that we might be happy with him; he has imposed upon us the obligation of hoping for eternal life, and on that account encourages us, by saying that all those who hope in him shall be saved. *For none of them that wait on Thee shall be confounded.*[18251] On the other hand, it is his wish and command that we should be in fear of eternal damnation. Some heretics hold, that all who are not in sin should consider themselves as assuredly just and predestined; but these have with reason been condemned by the Council of Trent,[18252] because such a presumption is as perilous to salvation as fear is conducive to it. *And let Him be your dread, and He shall be a sanctification unto you.*[18253] The holy fear of God makes man holy. Wherefore David begged of God the grace of fear, in order that fear might destroy in him the inclinations of the flesh. *Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear.*[18254]

We should then fear on account of our sins, but this fear ought not to deject us: it should rather excite us to confidence in the divine mercy, as was the case with the prophet himself. *For Thy name's sake, O Lord, Thou wilt pardon my sin, for it is great.*[18255] How is that? Pardon me because my sin is great? Yes, because the divine mercy is most conspicuous in the case of greatest misery; and he who has been the greatest sinner is he who glorifies most the divine mercy, by hoping in God, who has promised to save all those who hope in him. *He will save them, because they have hoped in him.*[18256] For this reason it is, Ecclesiasticus says, that the fear of the Lord bringeth not pain, but joy and gladness: *The fear of the Lord shall delight the heart, and shall give joy and gladness.*[18257] Thus this very fear leads to the acquisition of a firm hope in God, which makes the soul happy: *He that feareth the Lord shall tremble at nothing, and shall not be afraid,* *for He is his hope. The soul of him that feareth the Lord is blessed.*[18258] Yes, blessed, because fear draws man away from sin. *The fear of the Lord driveth out sin,*[18259] and at the same time infuses into him a great desire of observing the commandments: *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord: he shall delight exceedingly in His commandments.*[18260]

We must, then, persuade ourselves that chastisement is not what the nature of God inclines him to. God, because by his nature he is infinite goodness,[18261] says St. Leo, has no other desire than to bless us, and to see us happy. When he punishes, he is obliged to do so in order to satisfy his justice, not to gratify his inclination. Isaias says, that punishment is a work contrary to the heart of God. *The Lord shall be angry. . . . that He may do His work, His strange work;. . . . His work is strange to Him.*[18262] And therefore does the Lord say, that he sometimes almost feigns the intention of punishing us.[18263] But why does he do so? For this reason: *Let every man of you return from his evil way.*[18264] He does so in order to our reformation, and consequently our exemption from the chastisement deserved by us. The Apostle writes, that God *hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth.*[18265] With regard to which passage, St. Bernard says, that God of himself wishes to love us, but that we force him to condemn us.[18266] He calls himself the Father of mercies, not of vengeance. Whence it comes that his tenderness all springs from himself, and his severity from us.

And who has ever been able to comprehend the greatness of the divine mercies? David says, that God, even while yet angry, feels compassion for us: *Thou hast been angry, and hast had mercy on us.*[18267] "O merciful wrath, which art enkindled but to succor, and threatenest but to pardon,"[18268] exclaims the abbot Beroncosius. "Thou hast shown," continues David, "thou *hast shown Thy people hard things, Thou hast made us drunk with the wine of sorrow."*[18269] God discovers himself to us armed with a scourge, but he does so in order to see us penitent and contrite for the offences which we are committing against him: *Thou hast given a warning to them that fear Thee: that they may flee before the bow: that Thy beloved may be delivered.*[18270] He appears with the bow already bent, upon the point of sending off the arrow, but he does not send it off, because he wishes that our terror should bring about amendment, and that thus we should escape the chastisement. *That Thy beloved may be delivered.*[18271] I wish to terrify them, says God, in order that struck by fear they may rise from the bed of sin and return to me. *In their affliction they will rise early to Me.*[18272] Yes, the Lord, although he sees us so ungrateful and worthy of punishment, is eager to free us from it, because how ungrateful soever we be, he loves us and wishes us well. *Give us help from trouble.*[18273] Thus, in fine, prayed David; and thus ought we to pray. Grant, O Lord, that this scourge which now afflicts us, may open our eyes, so that we depart from sin; because if we do not here have done with it, sin will lead us to eternal damnation, which is a scourge enduring forever.

What shall we then do, my brethren? Do you not see that God is angered? He can no longer bear with us. *The Lord is angry.* Do you not behold the scourges of God increasing every day? Our sins increase, says St. John Chrysostom, and our scourges increase likewise.[18274] God, my brethren, is wroth: but with all his anger he has commanded me to say, what he formerly commanded to be said by the prophet Zachary; *And thou shall say to them, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Turn ye to Me saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn to you saith the Lord of Hosts.*[18275] Sinners, saith the Lord, you have turned your backs upon me, and therefore have constrained me to deprive you of my grace. Do not oblige me to drive you forever from my face, and punish you in hell without hope of pardon. Have done with it: abandon sin, be converted to me, and I promise to pardon you all your offences, and once more to embrace you as my children. *Turn ye to Me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn to you.*[18276] Why do you wish to perish? (mark how tenderly the Lord speaks.) *And why will you die, O house of Israel.*[18277] Why will you fling yourselves into that burning furnace? *Return ye and live.*[18278] Return to me, I await you with open arms, ready to receive and pardon you.

Doubt not of this, O sinner, continues the Lord. *Learn to do well . . . And then come and accuse Me, saith the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow.*[18279] Take courage, saith the Lord, change your life, come to me, and if I do not pardon you, *accuse me.* As if he were to say, Accuse me of lying and bad faith; but, no, I shall not be unfaithful: your conscience now so black, shall by my grace become as white as snow. No; I will not chastise you if you reform, says the Lord, because I am God, not man. *I will not execute the fierceness of My wrath, . . . because I am*

God, and not man.[18280] He says besides, that men never forget an injury, but that when he sees a sinner penitent, he forgets all his offences. *I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done.*[18281] Let us then at once return to God, but let it be at once. We have offended him enough already, let us not tempt his anger any further. Behold him, he calls us, and is ready to pardon us if we repent of our evil deeds, and promise him to change our lives.[18282]

Here, and at the close of each succeeding Sermon, may be introduced Acts of Faith, Hope, and Sorrow, etc., with a Petition to the Mother of God for her intercession.

SECOND DISCOURSE.

SINNERS WILL NOT BELIEVE IN THE DIVINE THREATS UNTIL THE CHASTISEMENT HAS COME UPON THEM

“Si pœnitentiam *non egeritis omnes similiter peribitis.”*

“Except you do penance*, you shall all likewise perish.”—Luke,* xiii. 5.

AFTER our Lord had commanded our first parents not to eat of the forbidden fruit, unhappy Eve approached the tree and was addressed from it by the serpent, who said to her: Why has God forbidden you to eat of this delightful fruit? *Why hath God commanded you?* Eve replies: *God hath commanded us that we should not eat, and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die.*[18283] Behold the weakness of Eve! The Lord had absolutely threatened them with death, and she now begins to speak of it as doubtful: *Lest perhaps we die.* If I eat of it, she said, I shall perhaps die. But the devil, seeing that Eve was little in fear of the divine threat, proceeded to encourage her by saying: *No, you shall not die the death;*[18284] and thus he deceived her, and caused her to prevaricate and eat the apple. Thus, even now, does the enemy continue to deceive so many poor sinners. God threatens: Stop, sinners, and do penance, because if not you shall damn yourselves, as so many others have done: “Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.” The devil says to them: “No, you shall not die the death.” Fear nothing, sin on, continue to enjoy yourselves, because God is merciful; he will pardon you by and by, and you shall be saved. “God,” says St. Procopius, “inspires one with fear, the devil takes it away.”[18285] God only desires to terrify them by his threats, in order that they may depart from sin, and thus be saved. The devil wishes to destroy that fear, in order that they may persevere in sin, and thus be lost. Many are the wretches who believe the devil in preference to God, and are thus miserably damned. At present, behold the Lord displays his anger and threatens us with chastisement. Who knows how many there may be in this country who have no thought of changing their lives, in the hope that God will be appeased, and that it will be nothing. Hence the subject of the present discourse: SINNERS WILL NOT BELIEVE IN THE DEVINE THREATS, UNTIL THE CHASTISEMENT SHALL HAVE COME UPON THEM. My brethren, if we do not amend, the chastisement will come; if we do not put an end to our crimes, God will.

When Lot was warned by the Lord that he was about to destroy Sodom, Lot at once informed his sons-in-law: *Arise! get you out of this place, because the Lord will destroy this city.*[18286] But they would not believe him: *And He seemed to them to speak as it were in jest.*[18287] They imagined that he wished to sport with their fears, by terrifying them with such a threat. But the punishment overtook them, and they remained to be the sport of the dames. My brethren, what do we expect? God warns us that chastisement hangs over us; let us put a period to our sins, or shall we wait for God to do it? Hear, O sinner! what St. Paul says to you: *See, then, the severity and goodness of God—towards them, indeed, that are fallen, the severity; but towards thee the goodness of God, if thou abide in goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*[18288] Consider, says the Apostle, the justice which the Lord has exercised towards so many whom he has punished, and condemned to hell: *towards them, indeed, that are fallen, the severity.* Consider the mercy with which he has treated you; *but towards thee the goodness of God.* You must abandon sin; it you change your ways, avoid the occasions of sin, frequent the sacraments, and continue to lead a Christian life, the Lord will remit your punishment, *if you abide in goodness;* if not, you shall perish, *otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.* God has already borne with you too long, he can bear with you no longer. God is merciful, but he is just withal; he deals mercifully with those who fear him; he cannot act thus towards the obstinate.

Such a person laments when he sees himself punished, and says, why has God deprived me of my health? why has he taken from me this child, or this parent? *Ah, sinner! what have you said,* exclaims Jeremias, *your sins have withholden good things from you.*[18289] It was not the desire of God to deprive you of any blessing, of any gain, of your son, or your parent; it would have been the wish of God to make you happy in all things, but your sins have not allowed him. In the book of Job we read these words: *Is it a* *great matter that God should comfort thee? but thy wicked words hinder this.*[18290] The Lord would fain console you, but your blasphemy, your murmuring, your obscene words, spoken to the scandal of so many have prevented him. It is not God, but accursed sin, that renders us miserable and unhappy. *Sin maketh nations miserable.*[18291] We are wrong, says Salvian, in complaining of God when he deals hardly with us. Oh! how much more hardly do we deal with him, repaying with ingratitude the favors which he has bestowed on us![18292]

Sinners imagine that sin procures them happiness; but it is sin which makes them miserable, and afflicted in every respect. *Because thou didst not serve the Lord thy God, saith the Lord, in joy and gladness of heart, . . . thou shalt serve thy enemy, whom the Lord will send upon thee, in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and in want of all things, . . . till He consume thee.*[18293] Because thou hast not wished to serve thy God in the peace which all those taste who serve him, thou shalt serve thy enemy in poverty and affliction, until he shall have finished by making thee lose both soul and body. David says that the sinner by his crimes digs himself the pit into which he falls. *He is fallen into the hole he made.*[18294] Recollect the prodigal son: he, in order to live without restraint, and banquet as he pleased, left his father; but then, for having left his father, he is reduced to tend swine; reduced to such a degree of misery, that of the vile food with which the swine are filled, he has not wherewithal to fill himself: *And he would fain have Jilted his belly with the husks the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him.*[18295] St. Bernardine of Sienna,[18296] relates that a certain impious son dragged his father along the ground. What happened to him afterwards? One day he was himself dragged by his own son in like manner, when, arriving at a certain place, he exclaimed, “No more—stop here, no more—thus far did I drag my own father—stop.” Baronins[18297] mentions a circumstance of a like nature, concerning the daughter of Herodias, who caused John the Baptist to be beheaded. He tells of her, that one day as she was crossing a frozen river, the ice broke under her, and she remained with her head only above the aperture. By dint of her struggles to save herself from death, she had her head severed from her body, and thus died. Oh, how just is not God, when the time of vengeance arrives! he causes the sinner to be caught, and strangled in the net which his own hands have made. *The Lord shall be known when He executeth judgments, the sinner hath been caught in the works of his own hands.*[18298]

Let us tremble, my brethren, when we see others punished, knowing as we do, that we ourselves have deserved the same punishments. When the tower of Siloe fell upon eighteen persons and killed them, the Lord said to many who were present: *Think you that they also were debtors above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem.*[18299] Do you think that these wretches alone were in debt to God's justice on account of their sins? You are yet debtors to it; and if you do not penance, you shall be punished as well as they: *Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.*[18300] O, how many unfortunate men damn themselves by false hope in the divine mercy? Yes, God is merciful, and therefore assists and protects them who hope in his mercy: *He is the protector of all that trust in Him.*[18301] But he assists and protects those only who hope in him, with the intention of changing their lives, not those whose hope is accompanied by a perverse intention of continuing to offend him. The hope of the latter is not acceptable to God, he abominates and punishes it: *Their hope the abomination of the soul.*[18302] Poor sinners, their greatest misery is, that they are lost, and do not know their state. They jest, and they laugh, and they despise the threats of God, as if God had assured them that he should not punish them. "Whence," exclaims St. Bernard, "this accursed security?"[18303] Whence, O blind that you are, whence this accursed security? accursed, because it is this security which brings you to hell. *I will come to them that are at rest, and dwell securely.*[18304] The Lord is patient, but when the hour of chastisement arrives, then will he justly condemn to hell those wretches who continue in sin, and live in peace, as if there were no hell for them.

Let sin be no more for us, my brethren; let us be converted if we wish to escape the scourge which hangs over us. If we do not cease from sin, God will be obliged to punish us: *For evil-doers shall be cut off.*[18305] The obstinate are not only finally shut out from Paradise, but hurried off the earth, lest their example should draw others into hell. And let us reflect that these temporal scourges are nothing in comparison with those eternal chastisements, hope of relief from which there is none. Give ear, O sinner! my brother, give ear! *For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees.*[18306] The author of the *Imperfect Work*, in his comment upon this passage, says:

"It is said that the axe is laid, not to the branches, but to the root, so that it will be irreparably exterminated."[18307] He says that when the branches are lopped, the tree continues still to live; but when the tree is felled from the root, it then dies, and is cast into the fire. The Lord stands with the scourge in his hand, and you still continue in disgrace with him. *The axe is laid to the root.* Tremble lest God should make you die in your sins, for if you die thus, you shall be cast into the fire of hell, where your ruin shall be hopeless for eternity.

But, you will say, I have committed many sins during the past, and the Lord has borne with me. I may, therefore, hope that he will deal mercifully with me for the future. God says, do not speak so: *Say not I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me? for the Most High is a patient rewarder.*[18308] Do not say so, for God bears with you now, but he will not always bear with you. He endures to a certain extent, and then pays off all. *Now, therefore, stand up, that I may plead in judgment against you concerning all the kindness of the Lord,*[18309] said Samuel to the Hebrews. Oh how powerfully does not the abuse of the divine mercies assist in procuring the damnation of the ungrateful! *Gather them together as sheep for a sacrifice, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.*[18310] In the end the herd of those who will not be converted shall be victims of divine justice, and the Lord will condemn them to eternal death, on *the day of slaughter,* when the day of his vengeance shall have arrived (and we have reason always to be in dread, as long as we are not resolved to abandon sin, lest that day should be already near). *God is not mocked; for what things a man shall sow, these also shall he reap.*[18311] Sinners expect to mock God by confessing at Easter, or two or three times a year, and then returning to their vomit, and hoping after that to obtain salvation. "He is a mocker, not a penitent," says St. Isidor, "who continues to do that for which he is penitent;" but *God is not mocked.*

What salvation?—what salvation do you expect? *For what things a man shall sow, them also shall he* reap.[18312] *What* things do you sow? blasphemy, revenge, theft, impurity: what then do you hope for? He who sows in sin can hope to reap nothing but chastisements and hell. *For he that soweth in his flesh,* continues the same apostle, *of his flesh also shall reap corruption.*[18313] Continue, impure wretch! continue to live sunk in the mire of your impurity, your impurities will be converted into pitch within your bowels. “A day shall come,” says St. Peter Damian, “a day shall come, or rather a night, when your lust shall be turned into pitch to feed an eternal flame within your bowels.”[18314]

St. John Chrysostom says that some pretend not to see;[18315] they see the chastisements, and pretend not to see them. And then others, St. Ambrose says, have no fear of punishment until they see it has overtaken them.[18316] To all these it will happen as it did to mankind at the time of the deluge. The patriarch Noah foretold and announced to them the punishments which God had prepared for their sins; but the sinners would not believe him, and notwithstanding that the ark was building before their eyes, they did not change their lives, but went on sinning until the punishment was upon them, until they were smothered in the deluge. *And they knew not till the flood came and took them all away.*[18317] The same happened to the great Babylon, in the Apocalypse, who said: *I sit a queen, and I shall not see grief.*[18318] She persevered in her impurity in the hope of not being punished, but the chastisement at length came as had been predicted! *Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning, and famine, and she shall be burnt with fire.*[18319]

Brother, who knows whether this is not the last call which God may give you? Our Lord says that a certain owner of a vineyard, finding a fig-tree for the third year without fruit, said: *Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none; cut it down therefore, why cumbereth it the ground?*[18320] Then the dresser of the vine replied: *Lord, let it alone this year also . . . and if happily it bear fruit—but if not, then, after that, thou shalt cut it down.*[18321] Let us enter into ourselves, my brethren; for years has God been visiting our souls, and has found no other fruit therein than thorns and thistles, that is to say, sins. Hear how the divine justice exclaims, *Cut it down therefore, why cumbereth it the earth?* but mercy pleads, *Let it alone this year also.* Have courage, let us give it one trial more; let us see whether it will not be converted at this other call. But tremble lest the same mercy may not have granted to justice that if you do not now amend, your life shall be cut off, and your soul condemned to hell. Tremble, brother, and take measures that the mouth of the pit do not close over you. Such was the prayer of David: *Let not the deep swallow me up;*

and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.[18322] It is that which sin effects, causing the mouth of the pit, that is, the state of damnation into which the sinner has fallen, to close over him by degrees. As long as that pit is not entirely closed, there is some hope of escape; but if it once shut, what further hope remains for you? By the closing of the pit, I mean the sinner's being shut out from every glimmer of grace, and stopping at nothing; that being the accomplishment of what the wise man has said: *The wicked man, when he is come into the depth of sins, contemneth.*[18323] He despises the laws of God, admonitions, sermons, excommunications, threats—he Jespises hell itself; so that persons have been known to say, numbers go to hell, and I amongst the rest. Can the man who speaks so be saved? He can be saved, but it is morally impossible he should. Brother, what do you say? Perhaps you have yourself come to the contempt of the chastisements of God. What do you say? Well, and if you had, what should you do? Should you despair? No; you know what you have to do. Have recourse to the Mother of God. Although you should be in despair, and abandoned by God, Blosius says, that Mary is the hope of the despairing, and the aid of the abandoned.[18324] St. Bernard says the same thing when he exclaims, The despairing man who hopes in thee ceases to be desperate.[18325] But if God wishes that I should be lost, what hope can there be for me? But, says God, no, my son, I do not wish to see you lost: *I desire not the death of the wicked.*[18326] And what then do you desire, O Lord? I wish him to be converted, and recover the life of my grace: *But that the wicked turn from his way and live.*[18327] Haste then, brother, fling yourself at the feet of Jesus Christ; behold him! see how he stands with his arms open to embrace you, etc. (Here an act of contrition is made.)

THIRD DISCOURSE.

GOD IS MERCIFUL FOR A SEASON, AND THEN CHASTISES

> *“Indulsisligenti,* Domine*, indulsisti genti; numquid glorificatus es?”*
>
> “Thou hast been favorable to the nation, O Lord, thou hast been favorable to the nation; hast thou been glorified?”—*Isa.* xxvi. 15.

LORD, Thou hast often pardoned this people; Thou hast threatened it with destruction by earthquake, by pestilence, in neighboring countries; by the infirmities and death of its own citizens; but Thou hast afterwards taken pity on them: Thou hast been favorable to the nation, O Lord, Thou hast been favorable to the nation; hast Thou been glorified?[18328] *Thou hast pardoned us, Thou hast dealt mercifully with us; what hast Thou received in return? Have Thy people abandoned their sins? have they changed their lives? No, they have gone on from bad to worse; that momentary fear passed, they have begun afresh to offend Thee and provoke Thy wrath.—But, my brethren, perhaps you imagine that God will always wait, always pardon, and never punish? No;* GOD IS MERCIFUL FOR A SEASON; THEN HE PUNISHES; this *is the subject of this day’s discourse.*

We must persuade ourselves that God cannot do otherwise than hate sin; he is holiness itself, and therefore cannot but hate that monster, his enemy, whose malice is altogether opposed to the perfection of God. And if God hate sin, he must necessarily hate the sinner who makes league with sin. But to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.[18329] O God, with what an expression of grief and with what reason do you not complain of those who despise yon, to take part with your enemy. *Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth for the Lord hath spoken; I have brought up children, and exalted them; but they have despised Me.*[18330] Hear, O ye heavens, he says, and give car, O earth, witness the ingratitude with which I am treated by men. I have brought them up, and exalted them as my children, and they have repaid me with contempt and outrage. *The ox knoweth his owner, and* *the ass his master's crib: but Israel hath not known Me, . . . they are gone away backwards.*[18331] The beast of the field, the ox and the ass, continues the Lord, know their master, and are grateful to him, but my children have not known me, and have turned their back upon me. But how is this? "Services are remembered even by beasts,"[18332] says Seneca. The very brutes are grateful to their benefactors; see that dog how he serves and obeys, and is faithful to his master, who feeds him; even the wild beasts, the tiger and the lion are grateful to those who feed them. And God, my brethren, who till now has provided us with everything, who has given us food and raiment: What more? who has kept us in existence up to the moment when we offended him,—how have we treated him?

How do we purpose to act in future? Do we not think to live on as we have been living? Do we not perhaps think that there is no punishment, no hell for us? But hearken and know that as the Lord cannot but hate sin, because he is holy, so he cannot but chastise it when the sinner is obstinate, because he is just.

When he does chastise, it is not to please himself, but because we drive him to it. The wise man says that God did not create hell, through a desire of condemning man thereto, and that he does not rejoice in their damnation, because he does not wish to see his creatures perish: *For God made not death, neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living; for He created all things that they might be.*[18333] No gardener plants a tree in order to cut it down and burn it. It was not God's desire to see us miserable and in torment; and therefore, says St. John Chrysostom, he waits so long before he takes vengeance of the sinner.[18334] He waits for our conversion, that he may then be able to use his mercy in our regard. *Therefore the Lord waiteth, that He may have mercy on you.*[18335] Our God, says the same St. John Chrysostom, is in haste to save, and slow to condemn.[18336] When there is question of pardon, no sooner has the sinner repented than he is forgiven by God. Scarcely had David said *Peccavi, Domino,* when he was informed by the prophet that his pardon was already granted: *The Lord also hath taken away thy sin.*[18337] Yes, because "we do not desire pardon so anxiously as he desires to pardon us," says the same holy Doctor.[18338] On the other hand, when there is question of punishment, he waits, he admonishes, he sends us warning of it beforehand: *For the Lord God doth nothing without revealing His secret to His servants, the prophets.*[18339]

But when, at length, God sees that we are willing to yield neither to benefits, nor threats, nor admonitions, and that we will not amend, then he is forced by our own selves to punish us, and while punishing us, he will place before our eyes the great mercies he before extended to us: *Thou thoughtest unjustly that I shall be like to thee; but I will reprove thee, and set before thy face.*[18340] He will then say to the sinner, think you, O sinner, that I had forgotten, as you had done, the outrages you put upon me, and the graces I dispensed to you? St. Augustine says that God does not hate but loves us, and that he only hates our sins.[18341] He is not wroth with men, says St. Jerome, but with their sins.[18342] The saint says, that by his nature God is inclined to benefit us, and that it is we ourselves who oblige him to chastise us, and assume the appearance of severity, which he has not of himself.[18343] It is this which David means to express, when he says that the Lord in chastising is like a drunken man who strikes in his sleep: *And the Lord was awaked as one out of sleep, and He smote His enemies.*[18344] Theodoret adds that, as drunkenness is not natural to man, so chastisement does not naturally belong to God; it is we who force him into that wrath which is not his by nature.[18345] St. Jerome, reflecting on those words which Jesus Christ on the day of general judgment will address to the reprobate, *Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels,*[18346] inquires, who has prepared this fire for sinners? God perhaps. No, because God never created souls for hell, as the impious Luther taught: this fire has been kindled for sinners by their own sins.[18347] He who sows in sin, shall reap chastisement. He that soweth iniquity, shall reap evil.[18348] When the soul commits sin, it voluntarily obliges itself to pay the penalty thereof, and thus condemns itself to the pains of hell. *For you have said, we have entered into a league with death, and we have made a covenant with hell.*[18349] Hence St. Ambrose well says, that God has not condemned any one, but that each one is the author of his own chastisement.[18350] And the Holy Ghost says, that the sinner shall be consumed by the hatred which he bears himself; *with the rod of his anger he shall be consumed.*[18351] He, says Salvian, who offends God has no more cruel enemy than himself, since he himself has caused the torments which he suffers.[18352] God, he continues, does not wish to see us in affliction, but it is we who draw down sufferings upon ourselves, and by our sins enkindle the flames in which we are to burn.[18353] God punishes us, because we oblige him to punish us.

But I know, you say, the mercies of God are great: no matter how manifold my sins, I have in view a change of life by and by, and God will have mercy upon me. But no, God desires you not to speak thus. *And say not the mercy of the Lord is great, He will have mercy on the multitude of my sins.*[18354] And why has the Lord forbidden you to say so? The reason is this, *for mercy and wrath quickly come from Him.*[18355] Yes, it is true, God has patience, God waits for some sinners; I say some, for there are some whom God does not wait for at all; how many has he not sent to hell immediately after the first transgression? Others he does wait for, but he will not always wait for them; he spares them for a certain time and then punishes. *The Lord patiently expecteth, that when the day of judgment shall come, He may punish them in the fulness of their sins.*[18356] Mark well, *when the day of judgment shall come:* when the day of vengeance shall arrive, *in the fulness of their sins.* When the measure of sins which God has determined to pardon is filled up, he will punish. Then the Lord will have no mercy, and will chastise unremittingly.

The city of Jericho did not fall during the first circuit made by the Ark, it did not fall at the fifth, or at the sixth, but it fell at last at the seventh.[18357] And thus it will happen with thee, says St. Augustine, "at the seventh circuit made by the Ark the city of vanity will fall."[18358] God has pardoned you your first sin, your tenth, your seventieth, perhaps your thousandth; he has often called you, now calls you again; tremble lest this should be the last circuit taken by the ark, that is, the last call, after which, if you do not change your life, it will be over with you. *For the earth,* says the Apostle, *that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it . . . and bringeth forth thorns and briars is reprobate, and very near unto a curse, whose end is to be burned.*[18359] That soul, he says, which has often received the waters of divine light and grace, and instead of bearing fruit produces nought but the thorns of sin, is nigh unto a curse, and its end will be to burn eternally in hell fire. In a word, when the period comes, God punishes.

And let us know, that when God wishes to punish, he is able and knows how to do it. *The daughter of Sion shall be left . . . as a city that is laid waste.*[18360] How many cities do we not know to have been destroyed and levelled with the ground, by reason of the sins of the inhabitants, whom God could no longer bear with! One day, Jesus Christ being within sight of the city of Jerusalem, gazed upon it, and thinking of the ruin which her crimes were to draw down upon her, our Redeemer, who is so full of compassion for our miseries, began to weep: *Seeing the city, He wept over it,* saying: *They shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.*[18361] Poor city, there shall not be left in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not been willing to know the grace which I gave thee in visiting Thee with so many benefits, and bestowing upon thee so many tokens of my love; whilst thou hast ungratefully despised me, and driven me away. *Jerusalem Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children and thou wouldst not, behold your house shall be left to you desolate.*[18362] Sinful brother, who knows whether God does not at this moment look upon your soul and weep? Perhaps he sees that you will not turn to account this visit which he now pays you, this summons which he gives you to change your life. *How often would I . . . and thou wouldst not.* How often, says the Lord, have I wished to draw you to me by the lights which I have given you? How often have I called you and you would not hear me? You have been deaf to me and fled from me. *Behold your house shall be left to you desolate.* Behold I am already on the point of abandoning you, and it I abandon you, your ruin will be inevitable, irreparable.

We would have cured Babylon, but she is not humbled; let us forsake her.[18363] The physician when he sees that the patient will not adopt his remedies, which he himself carries to him with so much kindness, and which the other flings out of the window—what does he do at length? He turns his back upon him and abandons him. My brethren, by how many remedies, by how many inspirations, by how many calls, has not God endeavored to avert damnation from you? What more can he do? If you damn yourself, can you complain of God who has called you in so many different ways? God calls you by the voice of his minister, he calls you by the voice that is within you, he calls you by his favors, he calls you lastly by temporal punishments; in order that you may learn to dread those which are eternal. St. Bernardine of Sienna says that for certain sins, more especially those which are scandalous, there is no more effectual method of doing away with them than by temporal punishments.[18364] But when the Lord sees that his favors serve only to make the sinner more insolent in his evil life, when he sees that his threats are disregarded, when he perceives, in a word, that he speaks and is not heard; then he abandons the sinner, and chastises him with eternal death. Therefore does he say, *Because I called and you refused . . . and have neglected my reprehensions, I will also laugh in your destruction and will mock when that shall come which you feared.*[18365] You, says God, have laughed at my words, my threats, and my chastisements, your last chastisement shall come, and then I will laugh at ye. *And it* (the rod) *was turned into a serpent.*[18366] St. Bruno, in his commentary upon this passage, says, “the rod is turned into a serpent when they will not amend.”[18367] The eternal will succeed the temporal punishment.

Oh how well does not God know how to chastise, and so to order it that from the instruments and motives of sin should be drawn the chastisement! *That they might know that by what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented.*[18368] The Jews put Jesus Christ to death for fear the Romans should seize on their possessions. *If we let Him alone*, said they, *all will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation.*[18369] But the same sin of putting Jesus Christ to death was the cause of their being shortly after despoiled of everything by the Romans. “They feared they should lose temporal possessions,” says St. Augustine, “and thought not of eternal life, and so lost both.’’[18370] In trying to save their possessions, they lost their souls; the punishment came, and they lost both. Thus it falls out with many; they lose their souls for the things of earth; but God often condemns them to beggary in this world, and reprobation in the next.

My brethren, provoke no longer the anger of your God, know that in proportion to the multitude of his mercies towards you, in proportion to the length of time he has borne with you, your punishment will be greater if you do not amend. “The Lord makes up for the slow ness of his chastisement,” says St. Gregory, “by its grievousness when it does come."[18371] *Woe to thee, Corozain*, thus does the Lord speak to a soul that has abused his favors, *Woe to thee Bethsaida, for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty things which have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.*[18372] Yes, my brethren, if the graces which have been given to you had been given to a Turk or an Indian, *if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works which have been wrought in you,* he would have now been a saint, or at least have done great penance for his sins; and have you become a saint? have you at least done penance for your many mortal sins, for your many evil thoughts, words, and scandals? see you not how God is angry with you? how he stands with his scourge in his hand ? Do you see not death hanging over you.

And what are we to do? you inquire: are we to despair? No, God does not wish us to despair. *Let us go with confidence to the throne of grace:* that is what we are to do, as St. Paul exhorts us, in order *that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.*[18373] Let us at once go to the throne of grace that we may receive the pardon of our sins, and the remission of the punishment which overhangs us. By *seasonable aid* the Apostle means to convey that the aid which God may be willing to lend us to-day he may deny to-morrow. At once, then, to the throne of grace.

But what is the throne of grace? Jesus Christ, my brethren, is the throne of grace. *And He is the propitiation for our sins.*[18374] Jesus it is who by the merit of his blood can obtain pardon for us, but we must apply immediately. The Redeemer, during his preaching in Juda, cured the sick, and dispensed other favors as he went along; whoever was on the spot to ask a favor of him, obtained it; but whoever was negligent, and allowed him to pass without a request, remained as he was. *Who went about doing good.*[18375] It was this caused St. Augustine to say: "I fear Jesus passing by;"[18376] by which he meant to express that when the Lord offers us his grace, we must immediately correspond, doing our utmost to obtain it, that otherwise he will pass on and leave us without it. *To-day, if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts.*[18377] To-day God calls you; give yourself to God to-day; if you wait for to-morrow, intending to give yourself to him then, perhaps he will have ceased to call, and you will remain deserted.

Mary, the Queen and the mother of mercies, is also a throne of grace, as St. Antoninus says. Hence, if you see that God is angry with you, St. Bonaventure exhorts you to have recourse to the hope of sinners.[18378] “Go, have recourse to the hope of sinners: Mary is the hope of sinners, Mary who is called *the mother of holy hope*.[18379] But we must take notice that holy hope is the hope of that sinner who repents him of his evil ways, and determines upon a change of life; but if any one pursues an evil course in the hope that Mary will succor and save him, such a hope is false, such a hope is bad and rash. Let us then repent of our sins, resolve to amend, and then have recourse to Mary with a confidence that she will assist and save us. (Act of contrition.)

FOURTH DISCOURSE.

THE FOUR PRINCIPAL GATES OF HELL

“Defixæ sunt *in terra portæ ejus.”*

“Her gates are sunk into the ground.”—Lam. ii. 9.

Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat.[18380] Hell has then different gates, but these gates stand on our earth. *Her gates are sunk into the ground.*[18381] These are the vices by which men offend God, and draw down upon themselves chastisements and eternal death. Amongst the other vices, there are four which send most souls to hell, and on this earth bring upon men the scourges of God; and these four are, HATRED, BLASPHEMY, THEFT, and IMPURITY. Behold, the four gates by which the greater number of souls enter hell; and it is of these four that I mean to speak to-day, in order that you may amend and cure yourselves of these four vices, otherwise God will cure you of them, but by your own destruction.

1. HATRED

The first gate of hell is hatred. As paradise is the kingdom of love, so hell is the kingdom of hatred. Father, says such a person, I am grateful to and love my friends, but I cannot endure him who does me an injury. Now, brother, you must know that the barbarians, the Turks and Indians say and do all this: *Do not also the heathens this?*[18382] says the Lord. To wish well to him who serves you is a natural thing; it is done not only by the infidel, but even by the brutes and wild beasts. *But I say to you.*[18383] Hear what I say to you says Jesus Christ; hear my law, which is a law of love: *Love your enemies.*[18384] I wish, that you, my disciples, should love even your enemies. *Do good to them that hate you;*[18385] you must do good to them that wish you ill, *and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you;*[18386] if you can do nothing else, you must pray for them who persecute you, and then you shall be the children of God your father: *that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven.*[18387] St. Augustine then is right in saying that it is by love alone a child of God is known from a child of the devil.[18388] Thus have the saints always done; they have loved their enemies. A certain woman had traduced the honor of St. Catharine of Sienna, and the saint attended this same woman in her sickness, and ministered to her as a servant. St. Acaius sold his garment to succor one who had taken away his character. St. Ambrose gave to an assassin, who had attempted his life, a daily allowance, in order that he might have wherewithal to live. Such may indeed be called the children of God. Is it a great matter, says St. Thomas of Villanova, that often when we have received an injury from any one we forgive it at the suit of a friend who pleads for him? And shall we not do the same when God commands it?

Oh, how well grounded a hope of pardon has not he who pardons the man who has offended him. He has the promise of God himself, who says, *Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.*[18389] “By forgiving others,” says St. John Chrysostom, “you earn pardon for yourself.”[18390] But he, on the contrary, who will have vengeance, how can he hope for pardon for his sins? Such a person, in saying the “Our Father,” condemns himself when he says: “forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.”[18391] Then, when such a person wishes to take vengeance, he says to God: Lord, do not pardon me, because I will not pardon my enemies. You give judgment in your own cause, says St. John Chrysostom.[18392] But, be assured, that you shall be judged without mercy if you show not mercy to your neighbor. *For judgment without mercy to him that hath not done judgment.*[18393] But how, says St. Augustine, how can he who will not forgive his enemy, according to the command of God, have the face to ask pardon from God for his offences.[18394]

If then, my brethren, you wish to have revenge, bid adieu to paradise: *Without are dogs.*[18395] Dogs, on account of their natural fury, are taken to represent the revengeful. These dogs are shut out from paradise; they have a hell in this life; and they shall have hell in the next. “He who is at enmity with any one,” says St. John Chrysostom, “never enjoys peace: he is in everlasting trouble.”[18396]

But, Father, such a one has taken away my good name, which I will renounce for no one.[18397] Such is, forsooth, the proverb, ever in the mouths of those hellhounds who seek for revenge. He has taken away my honor, I must take his life. And is the life of a man at your disposal? God alone is master of life. *For it is Thou, O Lord, that hast the power of life and death.*[18398] Do you wish to take vengeance of your enemy? God wishes to lake vengeance of thee. Vengeance belongs to God alone. *Revenge is Mine, and I will repay them in due time.*[18399]

But how else, you say, can my honor be repaired? Well, and in order to repair your honor, you must trample under foot the honor of God. Do you not know, says St. Paul, that when you transgress the law you dishonor God? *Thou by transgression of the law dishonorest God.*[18400] And what honor is this of yours that you wish to repair? It is the same as the honor of a Turk, of an idolater: a Christian's honor is to obey God, and observe his law.

But other men will look down upon me; and so, for fear you should be looked down upon, you must condemn yourself to hell. But if you forgive, the good will praise you; wherefore it is, that St. John Chrysostom says: If you wish to be revenged, do good to your enemy, because then others will condemn your enemy,[18401] and speak well of you. It is not true that he loses his honor, who, when he has been injured or insulted, says: I am a Christian, I neither can nor will be revenged. Such a person gains instead of losing honor, and, besides, saves his soul. On the contrary, he who takes revenge will be punished by God, not only in the other life, but in this also. He is obliged to flee from the justice of men, after having taken that vengeance which will render his life henceforward miserable. What an unhappiness to live a fugitive; to be always in dread of justice; always in dread of the kindred of his victim; tormented with remorse of conscience, and condemned to hell?

And let us further know, my brethren, that revenge and the desire of revenge are alike enormous, are the same sin. Should we at any time receive an offence, what are we to do? When our passion begins to rise, we must have recourse to God, and to the most holy Mary, who will help us, and obtain strength for us to forgive. We should then endeavor to say: Lord, for the love of Thee I forgive the injury that has been done me, and do Thou in Thy mercy forgive me all the injuries I have done Thee.

2. BLASPHEMY.[18402]

Let us pass on to the second gate of hell, which is blasphemy. Some, when things go wrong with them, do not attack man, but endeavor to wreak their vengeance upon God himself by blasphemy. Know, my brethren, what manner of sin blasphemy is. A certain author says: "Every sin, compared with blasphemy, is light;"[18403] and first of all, St. John Chrysostom says, there is nothing worse than blasphemy.[18404] Other sins, says St. Bernard, are committed through frailty, but this only through malice.[18405] With reason, then, does St. Bernardine of Sienna call blasphemy a diabolical sin, because the blasphemer, like a demon, attacks God himself. He is worse than those who crucified Jesus Christ, because they did not know him to be God; but he who blasphemes knows him to be God, and insults him face to face. He is worse than the dogs, because dogs do not bite their masters, who feed them, but the blasphemer outrages God, who is at that very moment bestowing favors on him. What punishment, says St. Augustine, will suffice to chastise so horrid a crime?[18406] We should not wonder, says Julius III., that the scourges of God do not cease while such a crime exists among us.[18407]

Lorino[18408] cites the following fact: We read in the preface to the Pragmatic Sanction in France, that King Robert, when praying for the peace of the kingdom, was answered by the crucifix that the kingdom never should have had peace if he had not eradicated blasphemy. The Lord threatens to destroy the kingdom in which this accursed vice reigns. *They have blasphemed the Holy One of Israel; . . your land is desolate, . . . it shall be desolate.*[18409]

Oh, if there were always found some one to do what St. John Chrysostom advises: "Strike his mouth, and sanctify thereby thy hand."[18410] The mouth of the accursed blasphemer should be struck, and he should then be stoned, as the old law commanded: *And he that blasphemth the name of the Lord, dying let him die: all the multitude shall stone him.*[18411] But it would be better if that were done which St. Louis, King of France, put in force: he commanded by edict that every blasphemer should be branded on the mouth with an iron. A certain nobleman having blasphemed, many persons besought the king not to inflict that punishment upon him; but St. Louis insisted upon its infliction in every instance; and some taxing him with excessive cruelty on that account, he replied that he would suffer his own mouth to be burned sooner than allow such an outrage to be put upon God in his kingdom.

Tell me, blasphemer, of what country are you? Allow me to tell you, you belong to hell. St. Peter was known in the house of Caiphas for a Galilean by his speech. *Surely thou also art one of them,* it was said to him, *for even thy speech doth discover thee.*[18412] What is the language of the damned?—blasphemy. *And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and wounds.*[18413] What do you gain, my brethren, by these your blasphemies? you gain no honor by them. Blasphemers are abhorred even by their blasphemous companions. Do you gain any temporal advantage? Do you not see that this accursed vice keeps us forever in beggary? *Sin maketh nations miserable.*[18414] Do you derive pleasure from it? What pleasure do you derive from blaspheming God? The pleasure of the damned; and that moment of madness past, what pain and bitterness does it not leave in your hear? Resolve to rid yourself of this vice in any event. Take care, if you do not abandon it now, that you will not carry it with you to death, as has happened to so many who have died with blasphemy in their mouths. But, Father, what can I do when the madness comes upon me? Good God! and are there no other means of working it off than by blasphemy? Say, cursed be my sins. Mother of God, assist me, give me patience; your passion, your anger, will pass off quickly, and you will find yourself in the grace of God after the trial. If you do not act thus, you will find yourself more afflicted and more lost than before.

3. THEFT.[18415]

Let us now pass on to the consideration of the third great gate of hell by which so large a portion of the damned enter; I mean theft, borne, so to speak, adore money as their God, and look upon it as the object of all their desires. *The idols of the Gentiles are silver and gold.*[18416] But the sentence of condemnation has already been pronounced against such: *or thieves* . . .

nor extortioners shall possess the kingdom of God.[18417] It is true that theft is not the most enormous of sins, but St. Antoninus says that it very much endangers salvation. The reason is because for the remission of other sins true repentance only is required; but repentance is not enough for the remission of theft: there must be restitution, and this is made with difficulty. A certain hermit had once the following vision: he saw Lucifer seated on a throne, and inquiring of one of his demons why he had been so long about returning. The latter replied that he had been detained by his endeavors to tempt a thief not to restore what he had stolen. Let this fool be severely punished, said Lucifer. To what purpose have you spent this time? do you not know that he who has taken the property of another never restores it? And, in truth, so it is: the property of another becomes to him who takes it like his own blood; and the pain of suffering one's blood to be drawn for another is very difficult to endure. We learn it every day from experience: innumerable thefts take place; how much restitution do you see?

My brethren, see that you take not the property of your neighbor, and if during the past you have ever failed in this respect, make restitution as soon as possible. If you cannot at once make full restitution, do it by degrees. Know that the property of another in your possession will not only be the means of bringing you to hell, but will make you miserable even in this life. Thou hast despoiled others, says the prophet, and others shall despoil thee. *Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all that shall be left of the people shall spoil thee.*[18418] The property of another brings with it a curse which will fall upon the entire house of the thief. *This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the earth, . . . and it shall come to the house of the thief;*[18419] that is to say (as St. Gregory Nazianzen explains it), that the thief shall lose not only the stolen property, but his own[18420] The goods of another are as fire and smoke to consume everything that comes in their way.

Remember well, mothers and wives, when children or husbands bring home the property of their neighbor, remember well to chide and reprove them; not to applaud their action, or even consent to it by silence.

Tobias hearing a lamb bleat in his house, *Take heed,* said he, *lest perhaps it be stolen; restore ye it to its owners.*[18421] St Ausjustine says that Tobias, because he loved God, did not wish to hear the sound of theft in his house.[18422] Some persons take the property of their neighbor, and then are fain to quiet their consciences by alms-deeds. Christ, says St. John Chrysostom, will not be fed with the plunder of others.[18423] The sins of this kind, committed by the great, are acts of injustice, the injuries that they inflict upon others, the taking from the poor of what is their due. These are descriptions of theft which require perfect restitution, and a restitution most difficult of all to make, and most likely to be the cause of one’s damnation.

4. IMPURITY

We have now, lastly, to speak of the fourth gate of hell, which is impurity, and it is by this gate that the greater number of the damned enter. Some will say that it is a trifling sin. Is it a trifling sin? It is a mortal sin. St. Antoninus writes, that such is the nauseousness of this sin; that the devils themselves cannot endure it. Moreover, the Doctors of the Church say that certain demons, who have been superior to the rest, remembering their ancient dignity, disdain tempting to so loathsome a sin. Consider then how disgusting he must be to God, who, like a dog, is ever returning to his vomit, or wallowing like a pig in the stinking mire of this accursed vice. *The dog is returned to his vomit; and the sow that was washed, to her rolling in the mire.*[18424]

The impure say, moreover, God has compassion on us who are subject to this vice, because he knows that we are flesh. What do you say? God has compassion on this vice. But you must know that the most horrible chastisements with which God has ever visited the earth have been drawn down by this vice. St. Jerome says that this is the only sin of which we read that it caused God to repent him of having made man. *It repented Him that had made man; . . . for all flesh had corrupted its way.*[18425] Wherefore it is, St. Jerome says,[18426] that there is no sin which God punishes so rigorously, even upon earth, as this. He once sent fire from heaven upon five cities, and consumed all their inhabitants for this sin. Principally on account of this sin did God destroy mankind, with the exception of eight persons, by the deluge. It is a sin which God punishes, not only in the other life, but in this also. In confirmation of this, you have only to enter the hospitals, and see there the many poor young men, who were once strong and robust, but are now weak, squalid, full of pains, tormented with lancets and caustic, and ulcers, all through this accursed vice. *Because thou hast forgotten Me and cast Me off behind thy back, bear thou also thy wickedness and thy fornications.*[18427] Because, says God, you have forgotten me and turned your back upon me, for a miserable pleasure of the flesh, I am resolved that even in this life you shall pay the forfeit of your wickedness.

You say, God has compassion upon men subject to this sin. But it is this sin that sends most men to hell. St. Remigius says, that the greater number of the damned are in hell through this vice. Father Segneri writes, that as this vice fills the world with sinners, so it fills hell with damned souls; and before him St. Bernardine of Sienna wrote: “This sin draws the whole world, as it were, into sin.”[18428] And before him St. Bernard, St. Isidore, said, that “the human race is brought under the power of the devil more by lust than by all the other vices.”[18429] The reason is, because this vice proceeds from the natural inclination of the flesh. Hence the angelic Doctor says, that the devil does not take such complacency in securing the commission of any other sin as of this, because the person who is plunged in this infernal mire remains fast therein, and almost wholly unable to free himself more. “No one is so obstinate in sin as the impure,”[18430] says St. Thomas of Villanova. Moreover, this vice deprives one of all light, for the impure man becomes so blind as almost wholly to forget God, says St. Laurence Justinian;[18431] which is in accordance with what is said by the prophet Osee: *They will not set their thoughts to return to their God; for the spirit of fornication is in the midst of them, and they have not known God.*[18432] The impure man knows not God; he obeys neither God nor reason, as St. Jerome says; he obeys only the sensual appetite which causes him to act the beast.[18433]

This sin, because it flatters, makes us fall at once into the habit of it, a habit which some carry with them even to death. You see husbands, and decrepit old men, indulge in the same thoughts and committing the same sins that they committed in their youth. And because sins of this kind are so easily committed, they become multiplied without number. Ask of the sinner how many impure thoughts he has consented to: he will tell you he cannot remember. But, brother, if you cannot tell the number, God can; and you know that a single immodest thought is enough to send you to hell. How many immodest words have you spoken, in which you took delight yourself, and by which you scandalized your neighbor? From thoughts and words you proceed to acts, and to those innumerable impurities which those wretches roll and wallow in like swine,[18434] without ever being satisfied, for this vice is never satisfied.

But, Father, you will say, how can I hold out against the innumerable temptations which assail me? I am weak, I am flesh. And since you are weak, why not recommend yourself to God, and to most holy Mary, who is the mother of purity? Since you are flesh, why do you throw yourself in the way of sin? Why do you not mortify your eyes? Why do you gaze upon those objects whence temptations flow? St. Aloysius never raised his eyes to look even upon his mother.

It is to be remarked, moreover, that this sin brings with it innumerable others: enmities, thefts, and, more especially, sacrilegious confessions and Communions, by reason of the shame which will not allow these impurities to be disclosed in confession. And let us remark herein passing, that it is sacrilege above all things, that brings upon us sickness and death; for, says the Apostle, *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself not discerning the body of the Lord;* and then he adds: *therefore arc many infirm and weak among you.*[18435] And St. John Chrysostom, in explanation of that passage, says that St. Paul speaks of persons who were chastised with bodily infirmities, because they received the sacrament with a guilty conscience.[18436]

My brethren, should you ever have been sunk in this vice, I do not bid you be disheartened, but arise at once from this foul and infernal pit; beg of God forthwith to give you light, and stretch out his hand to you. The first thing that you have to do is to break with the occasion of sin: without that, preaching and tears and resolutions and confessions, all are lost. Remove the occasions, and then constantly recommend yourself to God, and to Mary the mother of purity. No matter how grievously you may be tempted, do not be discouraged by the temptation; at once call to your aid Jesus and Mary, pronouncing their sacred names. These blessed names have the virtue of making the devil fly, and stifling that hellish flame within you. If the devil persist in tempting you, persevere in calling upon Jesus and Mary, and certainly you shall not fall. In order to rid yourself of your evil habits, undertake some special devotion to our Lady; begin to fast in her honor upon Saturdays; contrive to visit her image every day, and beg of her to obtain for you deliverance from that vice. Every morning immediately after rising, never omit saying three “Hail Marys” in honor of her purity and do the same when going to bed; and above all things, as I have said, when the temptation is most troublesome, call quickly upon Jesus and Mary. Beware, brother, if you do not be converted now, you may never be converted. (Act of contrition.)

FIFTH DISCOURSE.

EXTERNAL DEVOTIONS ARE USELESS IF WE DO NOT CLEANSE OUR SOULS FROM SIN

“Et nunc nolite illudere ut forte constringantur vincula tua.”

“And now do not mock, lest your bonds be tied strait.”—Isa. xxvii. 22.

GOD commands Jonas to go and preach to Ninive. Jonas, instead of obeying God, flies by sea towards Tharsis. But, behold! a great tempest threatens to sink the ship; and Jonas knowing that the tempest was raised in punishment of his disobedience, said to the crew of the vessel: *Take me up and cast me into the sea, and the sea shall be calm to you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.*[18437] And they actually did cast him into the sea, and the tempest ceased thereupon. *And the sea ceased from raging.*[18438] Then if Jonas had not been thrown into the sea the tempest should not have ceased. Consider well, my brethren, what we are to learn from this. It is, that if we do not cast sin out of our souls, the tempest, that is, the scourge of God, will not cease. The tempest is excited by our sins; the tempest which is hurrying us to destruction. *Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*[18439] Behold, we have penitential exercises, novenas, and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; but to what purpose are those if we be not converted, if we do not rid our souls of sin? The subject of our discourse is: EXTERNAL DEVOTIONS ARE USELESS, IF WE DO NOT ABANDON OUR SINS; because otherwise we cannot please God.

It is said that the pain is not removed before the thorn has been plucked out. St. Jerome writes that God is never angered, since anger is passion, and passion is incompatible with God. He is always tranquil; and even in the act of punishing, his tranquillity is not in the least disturbed. *But Thou being master of power, judgest with tranquillity.*[18440] But the malice of mortal sin is so great, that if God were capable of wrath and affliction, it would enrage and afflict him. It is this that sinners do as far as in them lies, according to that of Isaias: *But they provoked to wrath, and afflicted the spirit of His holy one.*[18441] Moses writes, that when God was about to send the deluge, he declared himself to be so much afflicted by the sins of men as to be obliged to exterminate them from the earth. *And being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, He said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth.*[18442]

St. John Chrysostom says that sin is the only cause of all our sufferings and chastisements.[18443] Commenting upon these words in Genesis which the Lord spoke after the deluge, *I will place My bow in the clouds,*[18444] St. Ambrose[18445] remarks that God does not say I will place my arrow, but my *bow*, in the clouds; giving us thereby to understand that it is always the sinner who fixes the arrow in the bow of God by provoking him to chastisement.

If we wish to be pleasing to the Lord, we must remove the cause of his anger, which is sin. The man sick of the palsy besought Jesus Christ to restore the health of his body; but, before granting his request, our Lord first restored his soul's health by giving him sorrow for his sins, and then saying to him: *Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee.*[18446] St. Thomas says that the Redeemer first removed the cause of his infirmity, namely, his sins, and then freed him from the infirmity itself. "He asked for the health of the body, and the Lord gave him the health of the soul; because, like a good physician, he wished to take away the root of the evil."[18447] Sin is the root of every evil, as we find in St. Bernardine of Sienna.[18448] Hence the Lord after having healed him, warned him against sin in these words: *Go thy way, and sin no more, lest something worse befall thee.*[18449] Ecclesiasticus said the same before our Lord: *My son, in thy sickness* . . . *cleanse thy heart from sin, . . . and then give place to the physician.*[18450] You must first apply to the physician of the soul in order that he may free you from your sins, and then to the physician of the body that he may cure you of your disease.

In a word, the cause of all our chastisements is sin; and still more than sin, our obstinacy in it, as St. Basil says.[18451] We have offended God, and are, notwithstanding, unwilling to do penance. When God calls by the voice of his punishment, he desires that he should be heard; if he be not, he shall be compelled by ourselves to curse us: *But if thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God . . . all these curses shall come upon thee; . . . cursed shaft thou be in the city, cursed in the field.*[18452] . . . When we offend God, we provoke all creatures to punish us. St. Anselm says that in the same manner as a servant, when he offends his master, draws down upon him the wrath, not only of his master, but of the whole family; so we, when we offend God, excite against us the anger of all creatures.[18453] And St. Gregory says that we have more especially irritated against us those creatures which we have made use of against our Creator.[18454] God's mercy holds in those creatures that they may not afflict us, but when he sees that we make no account of his threats, and continue to live on in our former way, he will then make use of those creatures to take vengeance on us for the injuries we have done him: *He will arm the creature for the revenge of His enemies. And the whole world shall fight with Him against the unwise.*[18455] "There is no creature," says St. John Chrysostom, "which will not feel anger when it sees its Lord in anger."[18456]

If then, my brethren, we do not appease God by our conversion, we never shall be free from chastisement. What folly, says St. Gregory, could be more extreme than to imagine that God should cease to chastise before we should have ceased to offend?[18457] Many now come to the church, and hear the sermon, but go away without confession, or change of life. If we do not remove the cause of the scourge, how can we expect to be delivered from the scourge itself.[18458] Such is the reflection of St. Jerome. We continue to irritate God, and then wonder that God should continue to chastise us. "Impure as we are," says Salvian, "we wonder why we should be so miserable."[18459] Do we think that God is appeased by the mere circumstance of our appearing at church without repenting of our sins, without restoring the property or character of our neighbor, without avoiding those occasions of sin which keep us at a distance from God? Ah, let us not mock the Lord! *And now do not mock, lest your bonds be tied strait.*[18460] Do not mock God, says the prophet, lest those bonds which are securing you for hell be tied strait. Cornelius a Lapide, in commenting on the above passage of Isaias, says that when the fox is caught in the snare, its efforts to disengage itself only serve to entangle it the more. "So also will it happen to sinners who, while mocking at God's threats and punishments, become more and more involved in them."[18461] My brethren, let us have done; let us no more irritate God, the chastisement is near at hand: *For I have heard of the Lord the God of Hosts,* continues the prophet, *a consumption, and a cutting short upon all the earth.*[18462] I am not the prophet Isaias but I can say that I see the scourge which is hanging over us if we do not be converted.

Hear how the Lord says to you: *Who requires these things at your hands?*[18463] Who required your perpetual exercises and your visits of devotion to the church? I will have nothing from you unless you abandon sin: *Offer sacrifice no more in vain.*[18464] Of what use are your devotions if you do not amend your lives. *My soul hateth your solemnities.*[18465] Know, says the Lord, that your homage and external devotions are hateful to my soul whilst you think by these to avert your chastisement without removing your offences: *With burnt offerings Thou wilt not be delighted; a sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit.*[18466] No devotions, or alms, or penitential works are accepted by God from a soul in the state of sin, and without repentance. God accepts the acts of him alone who is contrite for his sin, and resolved upon a change of life.

Oh, surely God is not to be mocked![18467] I never commanded you, he says, to perform those devotions and acts of penance: *For I spoke not to your fathers . . . concerning the matter of burnt offering and sacrifices, but this thing I commanded them, saying: Hearken to My voice, and I will be your God.*[18468] What I wish of you, says God, is, that you hear my voice and change your life, and make a good confession, with real sorrow, for you must know yourselves, that your other confessions, followed by so many relapses, have been worth nothing. *I* wish that you should do violence to yourselves in breaking with that connection, with that company. I wish that you should endeavor to restore that property, to make good to your neighbor such a loss. *Hearken to My voice, obey My command, and I will be your God.* I will then be to you the God of mercy, such as you would have me to be. Cardinal Hugo, in his comment upon these words of our Lord, in the Gospel according to St. Matthew: *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,*[18469] says: "Some have ears, but ears which do not serve them for hearing."[18470] How many attend sermons and receive admonitions from the confessor, in which they are told all that they must do in order to please

God; but they leave the church only to live worse than before. How can God be appeased by such? or how can such be delivered from the divine chastisement? *Offer up the sacrifice of justice, and trust in the Lord,*[18471] says David. Honor God not in appearance, but by works. It is that which is meant by "the sacrifice of justice;" honor him by bewailing your sins, by the frequentation of the sacraments, by a change of life and then hope in the Lord; but to hope while you continue the state of sin, is not hope—it is rashness, it is a deceit of the enemy, and renders you more odious in the sight of God, and more deserving of punishment.

My brethren, you see that the Lord is in wrath, that he already has his hand lifted to strike with the scourge which threatens us; how do you think to escape? *Who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come?*[18472] *Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of penance,*[18473] says St. John the Baptist, preaching to the Jews of his day. You must do penance, but penance deserving of his pardon; that is it must be true and resolute. Your anger must be changed into meekness, by the forgiveness of those who offend you; your intemperance must become abstinence, by observing the fasts *commanded,* at least, by the Church; and by abstaining from the immoderate use of intoxicating drinks, which change man into a beast: therefore you must avoid the public house; impurity must give way in you to chastity, by not returning to that filthy vomit, by resisting evil thoughts, by not using bad words, by fleeing from bad companions and dangerous conversation. *You must bring forth fruit worthy of penance,* and the bringing forth of such fruit implies also that we attend to the service of God, and endeavor to serve him more than we offended him; *For, as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, . . . so now yield your members to love justice.*[18474] bus have done a St. Mary Magdalen, a St. Augustine, a St. Mary of Egypt, a St. Margaret of Cortona, who by their works of penance and sanctification rendered themselves more dear to God than others who had been less sinful, but more tepid. St. Gregory says: "For the most part, a fervent life after sin is the more pleasing to God than a life which, though innocent, is tepid.[18475] And thus does the saint explain the following passage of the Gospel: *There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance.*[18476] This is understood of the sinner who, after having arisen from sin, sets about serving God with more fervor than others who have long been just.

This is to bring forth fruit worthy of penance, not content one's self with hearing sermons and visiting the church, without abandoning sin, or avoiding the occasion of it. To act thus, is rather a mockery of God, and calculated to excite him to greater wrath. *And, think not,* pursues St. John the Baptist, *think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father.*[18477] It will not do to say, we have the Mother of God to assist us, we have our patron saint to procure us deliverance; because if we do not abandon our sins the saints cannot help us. The saints are the friends of God; hence they not only have no inclination, but they would even feel ashamed, to succor the obstinate. Let us tremble, because the Lord has already published the sentence: *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire.*[18478] Brother, how many years have you been in the world? Tell me what fruit of good works have you hitherto borne, what honor have you rendered to God by your life? Sin, outrage, contempt, such are the fruit you have borne, the honor you have rendered to God.—God now in his mercy gives you time for penance, in order that you may bewail the injuries you have done him, and love him the remainder of your days. What do you intend to do? What have you resolved upon? Resolve at once to give yourself to God. What do you expect? unless that if you do not at once turn to God, you shall be cut down and cast into the fire of hell.

But let us now bring our instruction to a conclusion; the Lord has sent me to preach here to-day, and has inspired you to come and listen to me, because he wishes to spare you the punishment which threatens you, if you do really turn to him: *Leave not out one word, if so be they will hearken and be converted, every one from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil which I think to do unto them.*[18479] The Lord has desired me to tell you on his part that he is willing to relent, and withdraw the scourge which he meant to inflict upon you: *That I may repent me of the evil which I think to do unto them ;* but on this condition, *if so be they will hearken and be converted every one from his evil way,* if they truly reform, otherwise he will put his threat in execution.—Tremble then if you be not yet resolved to change your life.

But, on the other hand, be joyful if you mean to turn in good earnest to God. *Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord,*[18480] because God is all tenderness and love to those that seek him. *The Lord is good* . . . *to the soul that seeketh Him.*[18481] Neither does the Lord know how to reject a heart humble and contrite for its offences. *A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*[18482] Let us be joyful, then, if we have the good intention of changing our lives, and if, on seeing ourselves guilty of so many sins before the Lord, we stand very much in fear of the divine judgments, let us have recourse to the Mother of mercies, the most holy Mary, who defends and secures from the divine vengeance all those who take refuge under her mantle.—"I am the citadel of all those who fly to me;"[18483] thus is she made to speak by St. John Damascene. (Act of contrition.)

SIXTH DISCOURSE.

GOD CHASTISES US IN THIS LIFE FOR OUR GOOD, NOT FOR OUR DESTRUCTION

“Mon enim delectaris in perditionibus nostris.”

“For thou art not delighted in our being lost.”—Job, iii. 22.

LET US feel persuaded, my brethren, that there is no one who loves us more than God. St. Teresa says that God loves us more than we love ourselves. He has loved us from eternity. *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*[18484] It is the love he has borne us which has drawn us from nothing, and given us being. *Therefore have I drawn Thee, taking pity on Thee.*[18485] Hence, when God chastises us upon the earth, it is not because he wishes to injure us, but because he wishes us well, and loves us. *But of this every one is sure that worshippeth Thee, that his life, if it be under trial, shall be crowned: and if it be under tribulation, shall be delivered.*[18486] So spoke Sara the wife of Tobias: Lord, he who serves thee is sure that after the trial shall have passed he shall be crowned, and that after tribulation he shall be spared the punishment which he deserved: *For Thou art not delighted in our being lost: because after a storm Thou makest a calm, and after tears and weeping Thou pourest in joyfullness.*[18487] After the tempest of chastisement he gives us peace, and after mourning, joy and gladness.

My brethren, let us convince ourselves of what I have undertaken to show you to-day, namely, that God does not afflict us in this life for our injury but for our good, in order that we may cease from sin, and by recovering his grace escape eternal punishment.

And I will give My fear in their heart, that they may not revolt from Me.[18488] The Lord says that he infuses his fear into our hearts, in order that he may enable us to triumph over our passion for earthly pleasures, for which, ungrateful that we are, we have left him. And when sinners have left him, how does he make them look into themselves, and recover his grace?

By putting on the appearance of anger, and chastising them in this life: *In Thy anger Thou shalt break the people in pieces.*[18489] Another version, according to St. Augustine, has: “In thy wrath thou shalt conduct the people.” The saint inquiring, What is the meaning of his conducting the people in his wrath? he then replies: “Thou, O Lord, fillest us with tribulations, in order that, being thus afflicted, we may abandon our sins and return to Thee.”[18490]

When the mother wishes to wean her infant how does she proceed? She puts gall upon her breast. Thus the Lord endeavors to draw our souls to himself, and wean them from the pleasures of this earth, which make them live in forgetfulness of their eternal salvation; he fills with bitterness all their pleasures, pomps, and possessions, in order that, not finding peace in those things, they may turn to God, who alone can satisfy them.

In their affliction they will rise early to Me.[18491] God says within himself, It I allow those sinners to enjoy their pleasures undisturbed, they will remain in the sleep of sin: they must be afflicted, in order that, recovering from their lethargy, they may return to me. When they shall be in tribulation they will say: *Come, let us return to the Lord, for He hath taken us, and He will heal us; He will strike and He will cure us.*[18492] What shall become of us, say those sinners, as they enter into themselves, if we do not turn from our evil courses? God will not be appeased, and will with justice continue to punish us: come on, let us retrace our steps; for he will cure us, and if he has afflicted us just now, he will upon our return think of consoling us with his mercy.

In the day of my trouble I sought God, . . . and I was not deceived,[18493] because he raised me up. For this reason does the prophet thank the Lord that he hath humbled him after his sin; because he was thus taught to observe the divine laws: *It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy justifications.*[18494] Tribulation is for the sinner at once a punishment and a grace, says St. Augustine.[18495] It is a punishment inasmuch as it has been drawn down upon him by his sins; but it is a grace, and an important grace, inasmuch as it may ward eternal destruction from him, and is an assurance that God means to deal mercifully with him if he look into himself, and receive with thankfulness that tribulation which has opened his eyes to his miserable condition, and invites him to return to God.

Let us then be converted, my brethren, and we shall escape from our several chastisements: "Why should he who accepts chastisement as a grace be afraid after receiving it?"[18496] says St. Augustine. He who turns to God, smarting from the scourge, has no longer anything to fear, because God scourges only in order that we may return to him; and this end once obtained, the Lord will scourge us no more.

St. Bernard says that it is impossible to pass from the pleasures of the earth to those of Paradise. "It is difficult, even impossible, for any one to enjoy present and future goods, to pass from delights to delights."[18497] Therefore does the Lord say, *Envy not the man who prospereth in his way, the man who doth unjust things.*[18498] "Does he prosper?" says St. Augustine; "ay, but 'in his own way.' And do you suffer? You do, but it is in the way of God."[18499] You who walk before God are in tribulation, but he, evil as is his way, prospers. Mark now—what the saint says in conclusion: "He has prosperity in this life, he shall be miserable in the next; you have tribulation in this life, you shall be happy in the next."[18500] Be glad, therefore, O sinners! and thank God when he punishes you in this life, and takes vengeance of your sins; because you may know thereby that he means to treat you with mercy in the next. *Thou wast a merciful God to them, and taking vengeance on their inventions.*[18501] The Lord when he chastises us has not chastisement so much in view as our conversion. God said to Nabuchodonozor: *Thou shalt eat grass like an ox, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.*[18502] For seven years, Nabuchodonozor, shalt thou be compelled to feed upon grass like a beast in order that thou mayest know I am the Lord; that it is I who give kingdoms, and take them away; and that thou mayest thus be cured of thy pride. And in fact this judgment did cause the haughty king to enter into himself and change; so that, after having been restored to his former condition, he said: *Therefore I , Nabuchodo—nozor, do now praise and magnify the King of heaven.*[18503] And God gave him back his kingdom. "He willingly changed his sentence," says St. Jerome, "because he saw his works changed."[18504]

Unhappy we, says the same saint, when God does not punish us in this life! It is a sign that he means us for eternal chastisements.[18505] What do we conclude, he continues, when the surgeon sees the flesh about to mortify, and does not cut it away? we conclude that he abandons the patient to death? God spares the sinner in this life, says St. Gregory, only to chastise him in the next.[18506] Woe to those sinners to whom God has ceased to speak, and appears not to be in anger. *I will cease and be angry no more.*[18507] The Lord then goes on to say: *But thou hast provoked Me in all these things: . . . and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, . . . that thou mayest remember, and be confounded.*[18508] A clay will come, he says, ungrateful sinner, when you shall know what I am; then shall you remember the graces I have given you, and see with confusion your black ingratitude.

Woe to the sinner who goes on in his evil life, and whom God in his vengeance suffers to accomplish his perverse desires, according to what is said by the prophet: *Israel hearkened not to Me, so I let them go according to the desires of their heart.*[18509] It is a sign that the Lord wishes to reward them on this earth for whatever little good they may have done, and reserves the chastisement of their sins for eternity. Speaking of the sinner whom he treats thus in this life, the Lord says. *Let us have pity on the wicked, but he will not learn justice, . . . and he shall not see the glory of the Lord.*[18510] Thus does the poor sinner hasten on to his ruin, because seeing himself prosperous, he deceives himself into the expectation that as God is dealing mercifully with him now, he will continue to do the same; and by this delusion he will be led to live on in his sins. But will the Lord be always thus merciful to him? No, the day of punishment will come at length, when he shall be excluded from paradise, and flung into the dungeon of the rebels: *And he shall not see the glory of the Lord.* “Let us have pity on the wicked; far from me be this mercy,”[18511] says St. Jerome. Lord, he says, extend not to me this dreadful pity; if I have offended Thee, let me be chastised for it in this life; because if Thou dost not chastise me here in this life, I shall have to be chastised in the other world for all eternity. For this reason did St. Augustine say: “Lord, here cut, here burn, that you may spare during eternity.”[18512] Chastise me here, O God, and do not spare me now, in order that I may be spared the punishment of hell. When the surgeon cuts the imposthume of the patient, it is a sign that he means to have him healed. St. Augustine says: “It is most merciful of the Lord not to suffer iniquity to pass unpunished.”[18513] The Lord deals very mercifully with the sinner when by chastisement he makes him enter into himself in this life. Hence Job besought the Lord so earnestly to afflict him. *And that this may be my comfort, that afflicting me with sorrow He spare not.*[18514]

Jonas slept in the ship when he was flying from the Lord; but God seeing that the wretched man was on the brink of temporal and eternal death, caused him to be warned of the tempest: *Why art thou fast asleep; rise up, call upon thy God.*[18515] God my brethren, now warns ye in like manner. You have been in the state of sin, deprived of sanctifying grace, the chastisement has come, and hat chastisement is the voice of God, saying to you, “Why are you fast asleep? rise and call upon your God.” Awake, sinner! do not live on forgetful of your soul and of God. Open your eyes, and see how you stand upon the verge of hell, where so many wretches are now bewailing sins less grievous than yours, and are you asleep? have you no thought of confession? no thought of rescuing yourself from eternal death? *Rise, call upon your God.* Up from that infernal pit into which you have fallen; pray to God to pardon you, beg of him this at least, if you are not at once resolved to change your life, that he will give you light, and make you see the wretched state in which you stand. Learn how to profit by the warning which the Lord vouchsafes you. Jeremias first sees a rod. *I see a rod watching;* he next sees a boiling caldron: *I see a boiling caldron.*[18516] St. Ambrose, in speaking of this passage, explains it thus: He who is not corrected by the rod, shall be thrown into the caldron, there to burn.[18517] He whom the temporal chastisement fails to convert, shall be sent to burn eternally in hell-fire. Sinful brother, listen to God, who addresses himself to your heart, by this chastisement, and calls on you to do penance. Tell me what answer do you make him?

The prodigal son, after having left his father, thought no more upon him, whilst he continued to live amid delights; but when he saw himself reduced to that state of misery described in the Gospel, poor, deserted, obliged to tend swine, and not allowed to fill himself with the food wherewith the swine were filled, then he came to himself, and said: *How many hired servants in my father’s house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger.*[18518] *I will arise and go to my father.*[18519] And so he did, and was lovingly received by his father. Brother, you have to do in like manner. You see the unhappy life you have hitherto led, by living away from God; a life full of thorns and bitterness; a life which could not be otherwise, as being without God, who alone can give content. You see how many servants of God who love him lead a happy life, and enjoy continual peace, the peace of God, which, as the Apostle says, surpasses all the pleasures of the senses. *The peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding.*[18520] And what are you doing? Do you not feel that you suffer a hell in this life? do you not know that you shall suffer one in the next? Take courage, say with the prodigal: *I will arise and go to my father.* I will arise from this sleep of death—this state of damnation, and return to God. It is true that I have sufficiently outraged him by leaving him so much against his desire, but he is still my Father. *I will arise and go to my father.* And when you shall go to that Father, what shall you say to him? Say what the prodigal said to his father: *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee; I am not now worthy to be called thy son.*[18521] Father, I acknowledge my error, I have done ill to leave Thee, who have so much loved me; I see now' that I am no longer worthy to be called Thy son; receive me at least as Thy servant; restore me at least to Thy grace, and then chastise me as Thou pleasest.

Oh, happy you, if you say and do thus! the same will happen you which befel the prodigal son. The father, when he saw his son retracing his steps, and perceived that he had humbled himself for his fault, not only did not drive him off—not only received him into his house, but embraced and kissed him as his son. *And running to him, fell upon his neck and kissed him.*[18522] He then clothed him with a precious garment, which represents the robe of grace: *Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him.*[18523] And he, moreover, makes a great feast in the house, to commemorate the recovery of his son, whom he looked upon as lost and dead: *Let us eat and make merry, because this my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found.*[18524]

Let us then be joyful, my brethren; it is true that God appears to be in wrath, but he is still our Father; let us retrace our steps in penance, and he will be appeased and spare us. Behold Mary our Mother praying for us on the one hand, and on the other turned towards us, saying, *In me is all hope of life and of virtue; . . . come over to me all.*[18525] My children, that Mother of Mercy says to us, My poor afflicted children, have recourse to me, and in me you shall find all hope; my son denies me nothing.[18526] You were dead by sin; come to me, find me, and you shall find life—the life of divine grace, which I shall recover for you by my intercession (Act of contrition.)

SEVENTH DISCOURSE.

GOD CHASTISES US IN THIS LIFE, ONLY THAT HE MAY SHOW US MERCY IN THE NEXT

“Ego quos amo arguo et castigo.”

“Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise.”—Apoc. iii. 19.

WHEN the Lord had raised that great tempest which threatened to sink the ship in which Jonas was sailing, in punishment of his disobedience to the divine command, that he should preach to the Ninevites, every one in the vessel was watching and in great fear, praying each to his God, with the exception of Jonas, who was asleep within the vessel: *He fell into a deep sleep.*[18527] But, knowing that he was the cause of the tempest, he caused himself to be thrown into the sea, and was there swallowed by the whale. When Jonas found himself in the body of that fish, and in such extreme danger of death, he addressed himself to God in prayer, and God delivered him: *I cried out of my affliction to the Lord, and the Lord heard me.*[18528] “Behold,” says St. Zeno, “how’ Jonas, who slumbered in the ship, is awake in the whale.”[18529] While in the ship, he slumbered in his sin; but when suffering chastisement, and upon the point of death, he opened his eyes and remembered God; hence he had recourse to the divine mercy which delivered him, causing the fish to leave him safe and sound upon the shore. Many persons, before seeing the divine chastisements, sleep in their sins, forgetful of God; but the Lord, because he does not desire their destruction, sends them afflictions, so that, roused from their lethargy, they return to him, and thus he is enabled to avoid punishing them during all eternity. The following is, then, the subject of this discourse: GOD PUNISHES US IN THIS LIFE, IN ORDER TO SPARE US IN THE NEXT.

We have not been created for this earth; we have been created for the blessed kingdom of Paradise. For this reason it is, says St. Augustine, that God mingles so much bitterness with the delights of the world in order that we may not forget him and eternal life.[18530] If, living as we do amid so many thorns in this life, we are strongly attached to it, and long so little after Paradise, how little should we not value Paradise if God were not to embitter continually the pleasures of this earth?

If we have offended God, we must needs be punished for it either in this world or in the next. St. Ambrose says that God is merciful as well when he punishes as when he does not.[18531] The chastisements of God are the effect of his love; they are, to be sure, punishments, but punishments which ward off from us eternal punishment, and bring us to everlasting happiness. *But whilst we are judged, we are chastised by the Lord, that we be not condemned with this world.*[18532] And Judith reminded the Hebrews of the same truth when they were under the scourge of the Lord: *Let us believe that these scourges of the Lord, with which like servants we are chastised, have happened for our amendment, and not for our destruction.*[18533] Sara, the wife of Tobias, says the same: *But of this every one is sure that worshippeth Thee: . . . if his life be under correction, it shall be allowed to come to Thy mercy, for Thou art not delighted in our being lost.*[18534] Lord, she said, Thou chastisest us here in order that Thou mayest spare us in the other life, for Thou dost not desire our destruction.

We have it from God himself that those whom he loves in this life he chastises in order that they may be converted: *Those whom I love I rebuke and chastise.*[18535] Where God loves, says St. Basil of Seleucia, severity is usually the pledge of his graces.[18536] Unhappy are the sinners who living in the state of sin prosper in this life; it is a sign that God reserves them for everlasting punishment. *The sinner hath provoked the Lord; according to the multitude of His wrath, He will not seek him.*[18537] Behold! says St. Augustine, speaking of the passage quoted, behold the most grievous chastisement! When he does not appear to take notice of the sinner, and leaves him unpunished, it is a sign that he is very wroth.[18538] I call you, says God to him whom he chastises, and will you be deaf to my voice? Son, be converted, otherwise you shall confirm my anger, since I shall cease to regard your salvation, and allow you to live on in your sins without punishment, but only that I may punish you in the life to come. *And My indignation shall rest in thee; and My jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will cease and be angry no more.*[18539] The Apostle warns you, my brethren, not to be deaf to the voice of God, for that on the day of judgment your obstinacy shall be rewarded with a dreadful chastisement, and that chastisement eternal. *But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of* God, *who will render to every man according to his works.*[18540]

So that, St. Jerome says, that there cannot be a greater punishment for a sinner than that he should not be punished in this life.[18541] And St. Isidore of Pelusium says that sinners who are punished in this life do not deserve pity, but those only who die without having been punished.[18542] It is not so bad, continues the saint, to be simply sick as to have no one to cure you.[18543] St. Augustine says, in another part, that when God does not chastise the sinner in this world, he chastises him most severely; whence he concludes that there is no greater misfortune than impunity for a sinner.[18544] After England had rebelled against the Church, God did not visit her with temporal scourges: her riches have been increasing from that time; but her chastisement is all the greater on that account, as she is left to perish in her sin. The absence of punishment is the greatest punishment, says the same holy Doctor. The not receiving chastisement in this life for sin is a great chastisement, and prosperity in sin a still greater.

Why then, Job inquires, do the wicked live, are they advanced and strengthened with riches?[18545] How comes it, O Lord, that sinners, instead of being taken out of this life in poverty and tribulation, enjoy health, and honors, and riches? The holy man answers, *They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell.*[18546] Wretched men! they enjoy their riches for a few days, and when the hour of chastisement comes, when they least expect it, they are condemned to burn forever in that place of torments. Jeremiah makes the self-same inquiry: *Why doth the way of the wicked prosper?*[18547] and then adds, *Gather them together as sheep for a sacrifice.*[18548] Animals destined for sacrifice are kept from all labor, and fattened up for slaughter. Thus does God act towards the obstinate: he abandons them, and suffers them to fatten on the pleasures of this life in order to sacrifice them in the other to his eternal justice; for these, says Minutius Felix, are fed like victims for the slaughter.[18549]

These wretched men, says David, shall not be punished in this life, they shall enjoy their fleeting pleasures; by and by their dream shall have ceased: *Neither shall they be scourged like other men; . . . they have suddenly ceased to be; as the dream of thou that awake, O Lord, so in Thy city Thou shalt bring their image to nothing.*[18550] How painful is not the case of a poor man, who dreams that he has grown rich or great, and upon awaking finds himself the miserable and sick creature he is? *And the enemies of the Lord shall . . . vanish like smoke.*[18551] The happiness of sinners is as suddenly dissipated as is smoke by a breath of air. "Smoke," observes St. Gregory, in his comment upon this passage, "vanishes in its ascent"[18552] And the same is the case with sinners: *I have seen the wicked highly exalted, . . . and I passed by, and lo! he was not.*[18553] Minutius Felix says, in his comment upon the place cited, the unhappy men are exalted the higher, that their fall may be the greater.[18554] The Lord allows the sinner to be exalted for his greater punishment, in order that his fall may be the more grievous, as is said by David. *When they were lifted up Thou hast cast them down.*[18555] If the sick man, says St. John Chrysostom, suffer hunger or thirst by order of his physician, it is a sign that the physician has hopes of him; but if the doctor allow him to eat what he pleases, and drink as much as he likes, what are we to conclude from that? It is plain that the physician has given him over. And thus, says St. Gregory, it is a manifest sign that God abandons the sinner to perdition, when lie never thwarts his evil purposes:[18556] and in the Book of Proverbs we read that *the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.*[18557] As lightning precedes thunder, says St. Bernard, so is prosperity the forerunner of damnation for the sinner.[18558]

The greatest punishment inflicted by God is, when he allows the sinner to sleep on in sin, without rousing him from that sleep of death in which he is buried. *I will make them drunk, that they may sleep an everlasting sleep, and awake no more, saith the Lord.*[18559] Cain, after the crime of murdering his brother, was afraid that he should be killed by the first person he should meet: *Every one therefore that findeth me shall kill me.*[18560] But the Lord assured him that he should live, and that no one should kill him; which assurance of a long life, according to St. Ambrose, was Cain's greatest punishment.[18561] The saint says, that God treats the obstinate sinner mercifully, when he gives him an early death, because he thus saves him from as many hells as he should have committed sins during a longer life. Let sinners, then, live according to the desires of their hearts, let them enjoy their pleasures in peace; there will at length come a time when they shall be caught as fish upon the hook. *As fishes are taken with the hook, . . . so men are taken in the evil time.*[18562] Whence St. Augustine says, "Do not rejoice like the fish who is delighted with the bait, for the fisherman has not yet pulled the hook."[18563] If you were to see a condemned man making merry at a banquet with the halter round his neck, and every moment awaiting the order for execution, would you envy or pity him? Neither should you envy the sinner who is happy in his vices. That wretched sinner is already on the hook, he is already in the infernal net; when the time of chastisement shall have arrived, then the wretch will know and deplore his damnation, but all to no purpose.

On the contrary, it is a good sign when a sinner is chastised and suffers tribulation in this life: it is a sign that God has still merciful views upon him, and that he wishes to substitute a temporal for an eternal punishment in his regard. God, says St. John Chrysostom, when he punishes us on this earth, does not do so out of hatred to us but that he may draw us to himself.[18564] He chastises for a little while, that he may have you with him for eternity.[18565] When the physician uses the knife, he does so to cure, says St. Augustine.[18566] And God, the saint continues, does the same in our regard. "God seems to be cruel; but do not fear; for he is a father who is never cruel, and does not wish to destroy us."[18567] But, does not God say the same himself? *Those, whom I love, I rebuke and chastise; be zealous therefore, and do penance.*[18568] Son, says God, I love you, and therefore I chastise you; "be zealous;" see how good I am to you; endeavor you to act in like manner towards me; do penance for your sins, if you wish that I should spare you the chastisement which you deserve: at least, accept with patience and turn to advantage the tribulation which I send you. In this cross which now afflicts you hear you my voice calling upon you to turn to me, and fly from hell, which is close upon you. *Behold! I stand at the gate antiknock;*[18569] I am knocking at the door of your heart; open then to me, and know that when the sinner who has driven me from his heart shall open the door again to me, I will enter, and keep him company forever. *If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him,* *and will sup with him, and he with Me.*[18570] I shall remain united to him forever on this earth; and if he remain faithful, I shall seat him beside me, on the throne of mv eternal kingdom. *To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in My throne.*[18571]

What! must we look upon God as a tyrant, who should take pleasure in our sufferings? He does take pleasure in punishing us, but exactly the same pleasure as a father takes in correcting his son: he does not take pleasure in the pain which he inflicts, but in the amendment it will work. *My son, reject not the correction of the Lord; and do not faint when thou art chastised by Him, for whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth, and as a father in the son, He pleaseth Himself.*[18572] He chastises you because he loves you; it is not that he wishes to see you afflicted, but converted; and if he takes pleasure in your suffering, he does so inasmuch as it is an instrument of conversion—just as a father who chastises his son derives pleasure, not from the affliction of his son, but from the amendment which he hopes to see in him, and which will prevent him from working his own ruin. Chastisement makes us return to God, says St. John Chrysostom;[18573] and it is to this end God inflicts it, in order that we may not stay away from him.

Why then, my brethren, do you complain of God when in tribulation? You ought to thank him prostrate on the earth; tell me now, if a man condemned to die were to have his sentence changed by the prince from death into one hour's imprisonment, and if he were to complain of that one hour, would his complaint be justifiable? Oh, would he not rather deserve that the prince should reverse the last sentence, and condemn him a second time to death? You have long and often deserved hell by your sins. And do you know all that the word *hell* conveys? Know that it is more dreadful to suffer for one moment in hell than to suffer for a hundred years the most frightful torments which the martyrs have suffered on earth; and in this hell you should have had to suffer during all eternity. And yet you complain if God send you some tribulation, some infirmity, some loss. Thank God, and say: Lord, this chastisement is trifling compared with my sins. I ought to have been in hell burning, deserted by all, and in despair: I thank you for having called me to yourself by this tribulation which you have sent me. God, says Oleaster, often calls sinners to repentance by temporal chastisements.[18574] By earthly chastisements the Lord shows us the immense punishment which our sins deserve; and therefore afflicts us on this earth, that we may be converted and escape eternal flames.

Wretched, then, as we have been, wretched indeed is that sinner who is left unpunished in this life, bill still more wretched he who, admonished by affliction, does not amend, says St. Basil.[18575] It is not a grievous thing to be afflicted by God on this earth after one has sinned; but it is very grievous not to be converted by the affliction sent, and to be like those of whom David speaks, who, although visited by the divine chastisement, still sleep on in their sins. *At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, they have all slumbered.*[18576] As if the sound of the scourges and the thunders of God, instead of rousing them from their lethargy, served only to make them sleep more soundly. *I struck you, yet you returned not to Me.*[18577] I have scourged you, says God, in order that you might return to me: but ye, ungrateful that you are, have been deaf to my calls. Unhappy the sinner who acts like him of whom the Lord says. *He shall send lightnings against him; . . . his heart shall be as hard as a stone, and as firm as a smith's anvil.*[18578] God visits him with chastisement, and he, instead of being softened and returning to the Lord by penance, shall be *as firm as a smith's anvil;* he shall grow more hardened under the blows of God, as the anvil errors continually harder under the hammer of the smith; and shall become like the impious Achaz, of whom the scripture says. *In the time of his distress he increased contempt against the Lord.*[18579] Unhappy man, instead of humbling himself, he the more despised the Lord.

Do you know what more happens to these rash beings? They begin to suffer hell even in this life. *He shall rain snares upon the sinners; fire and brimstone and storms of wind shall be the portion of their cup.*[18580] The Lord shall rain upon them his chastisement, sickness, misery, and every bitterness; but this is not the entire, it is only a portion of their cup, that is, of their chastisement. "The Lord says, 'the portion' only of their cup." observes St. Gregory; because their suffering begins here indeed, but shall be continued throughout eternity."[18581] He deserves all this who, being afflicted by the Lord for his conversion, continues to earn chastisement, and provoke the Lord to greater wrath, says St. Augustine.[18582] What can I do, O sinner! to work your conversion? will the Lord then say. I have called you by sermons and inspirations, and you have despised them: I have called you by favors, and you have grown more insolent; I have called you by scourges, and you continue to offend me. *For what shall I strike you any more, you that increase transgression; . . . and the daughter of Sion shall be left as a city that is laid waste*.[18583] Do you not wish to hearken even to my chastisements? Do you wish that I should abandon you? I shall be obliged to do it if you do not amend.

My brethren, let us no longer abuse the mercy which God uses towards us. Let us not be like the nettle, which stings him who strikes it. God afflicts us, because he loves us, and wishes to see us reformed, says Oleaster.[18584] When we feel the chastisement, we should bethink us of our sins, and say with the brethren of Joseph, *We deserve to suffer these things*, *because we have sinned against our brother.*[18585] Lord, Thou punishest us justly, because we have offended Thee, our Father and God. *Thou art just*, *O God! and Thy judgment is right.*[18586] *Everything Thou hast done to us, Thou hast done in true judgment.*[18587] Lord, Thou art just, and dost with justice punish us; we accept this tribulation which Thou sendest us; give us strength to suffer it with patience.

Here we should do well to remember what God once said to a nun: “You have sinned, you must do penance, you must pray.” Some sinners are satisfied with recommending themselves to the servants of God, but they must moreover pray and do penance. Let us do so, because when the Lord shall see our resignation he will not only forgive our sins, but even remit the chastisement; and if God continues to afflict us, let us have recourse to that Lady, who is called the consolatrix of the afflicted. All the saints compassionate us in our sufferings, but there is not of them, as St. Antoninus says, who feels so much for us as this divine Mother Mary.[18588] And Richard of St. Victor adds, that this Mother of mercy cannot behold unhappy sufferers without succoring them.[18589] (Act of contrition.)

EIGHTH DISCOURSE.

PRAYERS APPEASE GOD, AND AVERT FROM US THE CHASTISEMENT WE DESERVE, PROVIDED WE PURPOSE TO AMEND

“Petite et accipietis, quœrite et invenietis.”

“Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find.”—John, xvi. 24

HE who has a good heart cannot but feel compassion for the afflicted, and wish to see all men happy. But who has a heart as good as the Lord’s? He by his nature is infinite goodness, whence it is that God by his nature has an extreme desire to deliver us from every evil, and render us happy in all things, nay, even partakers of his own happiness. He wishes, therefore, that for our greater good we beg of him the graces which we stand in need of, that we may be spared the chastisement which we deserve, and arrive at life everlasting. Hence he has promised to hear the prayers of him who prays to him with hope in his goodness. *Ask and you shall receive.*

But to come at once to the subject of our discourse: GOD IS APPEASED BY PRAYERS, AND LED TO WITHDRAW THE CHASTISEMENT WHICH WE DESERVE, PROVIDED WE PURPOSE TO AMEND.

Hence in order to be delivered from the present scourge, and still more from the eternal scourge, WE MUST PRAY AND HOPE. This is to be the first point.—But it is not sufficient to pray and to hope: WE MUST PRAY AND HOPE AS WE OUGHT. This is to be the second point.

1. WE MUST PRAY AND HOPE

God wishes that we should all be saved, as the Apostle assures us: God, *Who will have all men to be saved.*[18590] And although he sees so many sinners who deserve hell, he does not wish that any of them should be lost, but that they should be restored to his grace by penance, and be saved. *Not* *willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.*[18591] But before delivering us from the punishment we have deserved, and dispensing his graces, he wishes to be sought in prayer. “By prayer,” says St. Laurence Justinian, “the wrath of God is suspended, his vengeance is delayed, and pardon finally procured.”[18592] Oh how great are the promises which God makes to him who prays! *Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.*[18593] *Cry to Me, and I will hear thee.*[18594] *You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.*[18595] Theodoret says that prayer is one only instrument, but that it can effect all things.[18596] And let us bear in mind, my brethren, that when we pray and ask things conducive to salvation, not even our sins can prevent our receiving the graces which we beg.—*For every one that asketh receiveth.*[18597] Jesus Christ here says that whoever asks, be he just or in sin, shall receive. Wherefore did David say, *For Thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Thee.*[18598] Hence the Apostle St. James, in order to excite us to prayer, tells us: *Bui if any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not.*[18599] When God is solicited, he gives more than is asked of him, he *giveth to all men abundantly.* When one man asks a favor of another whom he may have formerly injured, the latter usually reproaches him with the injury that had been done him; but not so God—he never *upbraideth.* When we beg of him some grace for the good of our souls, he never reproaches us with the offences which we have committed against him; but he hears us, and consoles us as though we had always served him faithfully. *Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name,* said the Lord one day to his disciples, and to-day he says the same thing to us: *Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.*[18600] As if he were to say, Why do you complain of me? You have only yourselves to blame—you have not asked graces of me, and therefore you have not received them. Ask of me, henceforward, what you please, and it shall be granted you; and if you have not merit sufficient to obtain it, ask it of my Father in my name, that is, through my merits, and whatever it be, I promise you that you shall obtain it. *Amen, amen, I say to you; if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you.*[18601] The princes of the earth, says St. John Chrysostom, give audience only to a few, and that seldom; but access can always be had to God by every one, at all times, and with certainty of a favorable hearing.[18602]

Rely, then, upon these great promises, so often repeated by the Lord in the Scriptures; and let us ever be attentive to beg of him those graces which are necessary for salvation, namely, the pardon of our sins, perseverance in his grace, his holy love, resignation to his divine will, a happy death, and Paradise. By prayer we shall attain all; without prayer we shall have nothing. What the holy Fathers and theologians commonly say, namely, that prayer is necessary to adults, as a means of salvation, comes to this, that it is impossible for any one to be saved without prayer. Lessius wisely says, that it ought to be of faith; that without prayer salvation is impossible to adults.[18603] And this is clearly to be drawn from the Scriptures, which say: *Ask, and you shall receive:*[18604] for as he who seeks obtains says St. Theresa, he who does not seek does not obtain. *Pray that ye enter not into temptation.*[18605] *We ought always to pray.*[18606] The words “seek,” and “pray,” and “we ought,” accordings to the opinions of most theologians, along with St. Thomas,[18607] imply a precept binding under pain of mortal sin.

Let us pray, then, and pray with great confidence. Confidence in what? In that divine promise by which says St. Augustine, God has made himself our debtor.[18608] He has promised; he cannot be wanting to his promise; let us seek and hope, and we must be saved. *No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.*[18609] There never has been and never will be found any one to hope in the Lord and be lost, as the prophet assures us: *He is the protector of all that trust in Him.*[18610]

But how comes it, then, that some persons ask graces and do not obtain them? St. James answers that it is because they ask ill. *You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss.*[18611] You must not only ask and hope, but ask and hope as you ought. This brings us to the second point.

2. WE MUST HOPE AND PRAY AS WE OUGHT

God has all the desire to deliver us from every evil and to share his blessings with us, as I said in the beginning, but he wishes to be sought in prayer, and prayed to as he should, in order that we should be heard. How can God think of hearing that sinner who prays to him that he may be freed from his afflictions, whilst he is unwilling to abandon sin, which is the cause of his afflictions? When the impious Jeroboam stretched out his hand against the prophet, who reproached him with his wretchedness, the Lord caused his hand to wither up, so that he could not draw it back. *And his hand which he stretched forth against him withered, and he was not able to draw it back again to him.*[18612] Then the king turned to the man of God, and besought him to beg of the Lord to restore his hand to him. Theodoret says, with regard to this circumstance: “Fool that he was to have asked the prophet’s prayers for the restoration of his hand, and not for pardon of his sins.”[18613] Thus do many act; they beg of God to deliver them from their afflictions; they beg of the servants of God to avert by their prayers the threatened chastisements, but they do not seek to obtain the grace of abandoning their sins and changing their lives. And how can such persons hope to be freed from the chastisement when they will not remove its cause? What arms the hand of the Lord with thunders to chastise and afflict us? Oh, it is accursed sin! “Punishment is the fine that is to be paid for sin,”[18614] says Tertullian. The afflictions we suffer are a fine which must be paid by him whom sin has subjected to the penalty. St. Basil in like manner says that sin is a note of hand which we give against ourselves.[18615] Since we sin, we voluntarily go in debt to God’s justice. It is not God, then, who makes us miserable; it is sin.[18616] Sin it is which obliges God to create chastisements: *Famine, and affliction, and scourges, all things are created for the wicked.*[18617]

Jeremias, addressing the divine vengeance, says, *O thou sword of the Lord, how long wilt thou not be quiet? Go into thy scabbard, rest and be still.*[18618] But then, he goes on to say, *How shall it be quiet when the Lord hath given it a charge against Ascalon?*[18619] How can the sword of the Lord ever be quiet if sinners do not choose to abandon their sin, notwithstanding that the Lord has given a charge to his sword to execute vengeance as long as sinners shall continue to deserve it? But some will say, we make novenas, we fast, we give alms, we pray to God: why are we not heard? To them the Lord replies, *When they fast, I will not hear their prayers, and when they offer holocausts and victims, I will not receive them; for I will consume them by the sword, and by famine, and by pestilence.*[18620] How, exclaims the Lord! how can I hear the prayers of those who beg to be freed from their afflictions, and not from their sins, because they do not wish to reform. What care I for their fasts, and their sacrifices, and their alms, when they will not change their lives. *I will consume them by the sword.* With all their prayers, and devotions, and penitential exercises, I shall be obliged by my justice to punish them.

Let us not, then, my brethren, trust to prayers or other devotions, unaccompanied by a resolution to amend. You pray, you smite your breast, and call for mercy; but that is not enough. The impious Antiochus prayed, but the Scriptures say that his prayers failed to obtain mercy from God. *Then this wicked man prayed to the Lord, of whom he was not to obtain mercy.*[18621] The unhappy man, finding himself devoured by worms, and near his end, prayed for life, but without having sorrow for his sins.

Nor let us trust in our holy protectors, if we do not purpose to amend. Some say we have our patron or some other saint who will defend us; we have our Mother Mary to procure our deliverance, *Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance. Who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come? . . . and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for our father.*[18622] How can we think to escape punishment if we do not abandon sin? How can the saints think of assisting us if we persist in exasperating the Lord? St. John Chrysostom says, of what use was Jeremias to the Jews?[18623] The Jews had Jeremias to pray for them, but, notwithstanding all the prayers of that holy prophet, they received the chastisement, because they did not wish to give up their sins. Beyond doubt, says the holy Doctor, the prayers of the saints contribute much to obtain the divine mercy for us, but when?—when we do penance.[18624] They are useful, but only when we do ourselves violence to abandon sin, to fly occasions, and return to God's favor.

The emperor Phocas, in order to defend himself from his enemies, raised walls and multiplied fortifications, but he heard a voice saying to him from heaven: "You build walls, but when the enemy is within, the city is easily taken."[18625] We must then expel this enemy, which is sin, from our souls, otherwise God cannot exempt us from chastisement, because he is just, and cannot leave sin unpunished. Another time the citizens of Antioch prayed to Mary to avert from them a scourge which overhung them; and whilst they were praying, St. Bertoldus heard the divine Mother replying from heaven, “Abandon your sins, and I shall be propitious to you.”[18626]

Let us then beg of the Lord to use mercy towards us, but let us pray as David prayed: *Lord, incline unto my* aid.[18627] God wishes to aid us, but he wishes that we should aid ourselves, by doing all that depends upon us. “He who desires to be assisted,” says Hilaretus,[18628] “must do all that he can to assist himself.” God wishes to save us, but we must not imagine that God will do all without our doing anything. St. Augustine says: “He who created you without your help, will not save you without your help.”[18629] What do you expect, sinful brother? That God will bring you to Paradise with all your sins upon you? Do you continue to draw down upon you the divine scourges, and yet hope to be delivered from them? Must God save you while you persist in damning yourself?

If we purpose truly to turn to God, then let us pray to him and rejoice; even though the sins of the entire world were ours, we should be heard, as I said to you in the beginning. Every one who prays with a purpose of amendment, obtains mercy.[18630] Let our prayers be in the name of Jesus Christ, who has promised that the eternal Father will grant us everything we ask in his name, that is, through his merits. *If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you.*[18631] Let us pray, and never cease from prayer; thus we shall obtain every grace, and save ourselves. It is to this we are exhorted by St. Bernard, who tells us to pray to God through the intercession of Mary: “Let us seek grace, and seek it through Mary; because he who seeks through her, obtains his request, and cannot be disappointed.”[18632] Mary, when we pray to her, certainly pleads for us with her Son; and when Mary prays for us, she obtains what she demands, and her prayer cannot be refused by a son who loves her so much. (Act of contrition.)

NINTH DISCOURSE.

MOST HOLY MARY IS THE MEDIATRIX OF SINNERS

> *“Ego murus et ubera mea sicut turris; ex quo factus sum coram eo quasi pacem reperiens.”*
>
> *“I am a wall, and my breasts are as a tower, since I am become in his presence as one finding peace.”—Cant. viii. 10.*

DIVINE grace is an infinite treasure, because it makes us friends of God. *For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.*[18633] Hence it follows, that if there cannot be a greater happiness than to enjoy the grace of God, there cannot be a greater misery than to incur his displeasure by sin, which makes us his enemies. *But to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.*[18634] But if, my brethren, any of you have had the misfortune to forfeit this divine grace by sin, do not despair, but console yourselves with the reflection, that you have in Jesus Christ himself a mediator, who can obtain pardon for you, and restore you the grace you have lost. *And He is the propitiation for our sins.*[18635]

What have you to fear, says St. Bernard, when you can have recourse to so great a mediator? He can do all things with his eternal Father.[18636] He has satisfied the divine justice for you, continues the holy abbot, and has nailed your sins to the cross, having taken them away from your soul.[18637] But if, notwithstanding all this, you fear to approach Jesus Christ on account of his divine majesty, God has given you another advocate with his Son, and that advocate is Mary.[18638]

Thus Mary has been given to the world as a mediatrix between God and sinners. Hear the words which the Holy Ghost makes her speak in the divine canticles: *I am a wall, and my breasts are as a tower, since I am become in His presence as one finding peace.*[18639] I am, she says, the refuge of those who fly to me; my breasts, that is, my mercy, are like a tower of defence to every one who has recourse to me; and he who is the enemy of

God, let him know that I am the mediatrix of peace between God and sinners. “She finds peace for enemies, salvation for the lost, mercy for those who are in despair,”[18640] says Cardinal Hugo. For this reason is Mary called *beautiful . . . as the curtains of Solomon.*[18641] In the tents of David naught was to be heard of but war; in the tents of Solomon naught is spoken of but peace. By this we are to understand that Mary has no other ministry in heaven than that of peace and pardon. Hence St. Andrew Avellino calls her the pleader of Paradise; but what are those occupations in which Mary is engaged? “Mary,” says Venerable Bede, “stands in the presence of her Son, praying unceasingly for sinners.”[18642] And Blessed Amadeus says that “Mary, all-powerful by her prayers, stands before the face of God, continually interceding for us.”[18643] Thus Mary never ceases to implore of God by her all-powerful prayers all graces for us, if we do not refuse them. And are there any found to refuse the graces solicited for them by this divine Mother? Yes, there are found such—yes, those who will not abandon sin, who will not give up this friendship, this occasion; who will not restore their neighbor’s property—those are they who will not receive the graces begged for them by Mary, because Mary wishes to obtain for them the grace of breaking off this connection, of flying this occasion of weakness, and they will not do it. And such as will not do it, positively refuse the grace sought for them by Mary. From heaven she sees well all our miseries and dangers; and oh, how deeply is she touched with compassion for us! With what motherly affection is she always endeavoring to assist us! “For she sees our dangers,” continues the Blessed Amadeus, “and as our merciful Sovereign compassionates us with maternal affection.”[18644]

One day St. Bridget heard Jesus Christ saying to Mary: “Mother, ask of me what you will.” And Mary answered him: “I ask mercy for the unfortunate.”[18645] As if she were to say to him, Son, since Thou hast made me the Mother of mercy, and Advocate of Sinners, can I ask aught else of Thee than mercy for the unhappy? In a word, St. Augustine says, that amongst all the saints, we have not one who is so solicitous for our salvation as Mary.[18646]

Isaias complains in his day as follows: *Behold, Thou art angry; . . . there is none who riseth up and taketh hold of Thee.*[18647] Lord, said the prophet, Thou art justly angry with us for our sins, and there is no one to appease

Thee, or draw Thee from chastising us. St. Bonaventure says that the prophet had reason to speak thus, since there was no Mary then.[18648] But at present, if Jesus Christ wishes to chastise a sinner, and the sinner recommends himself to Mary, she by her prayers for him restrains her Son, and averts the chastisement from him.[18649] There is no one, he says, so well able to hold back the sword of the Lord.[18650] Justly, then, did St. Andrew call Mary the peace of the Lord with men.[18651] And St. Justin called her the "Arbitress," saying, "The Word uses the Virgin as arbitress."[18652] *Sequestra* signifies an arbitress, to whose decision disputants binds themselves to yield. By which St. Justin means to say, that Jesus lays before Mary all his reasons for punishing such a sinner, that she may negotiate a peace; and the sinner, on the other side, places himself in her hands. Thus Mary on the one side obtains for the sinner the grace of amendment, and penance on the other; she obtains pardon for him of her Son, and thus it is concluded. Such is the ministry in the exercise of which Mary is continually occupied.

When Noe judged that the deluge ought to have ceased, he dismissed the dove from the ark. It returned with a branch of olive, significant of the peace which God had concluded with the world. This dove was a figure of Mary. "Thou art," says St. Bonaventure, "that most faithful dove of Noe which became the most faithful mediatrix between God and the world submerged by a spiritual deluge."[18653] Thou, O Mary! art the dove all faithful to him who invokes Thee—Thou art the dove that, interceding with God, hast obtained for us peace and salvation, says St. Epiphanius.[18654] Pelbart inquires how it happens that in the Old Law, the Lord was so vigorous in his chastisements, of universal deluge, of lire from heaven, of fiery serpents, and suchlike punishments; whereas he now deals so mercifully with us, who have sinned more grievously than those of old?[18655] And he answers, he does it all through love of Mary, who intercedes for us.[18656] "Oh how long since should heaven and earth have been destroyed," says St. Fulgentius, "if Mary had not interposed."[18657]

Wherefore the Church wishes that we should call this divine Mother our hope.[18658] The impious Luther could not endure that the Church should teach us to call Mary our hope. He said that our hope ought to rest only in God—not in the creature; and that God curses him who places his confidence in creatures: *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.*[18659] True;

but that is understood of those who trust in creatures, in contempt of God, or independently of him. But we hope in Mary, as our mediatrix with the Lord. In the same manner as Jesus is our mediator of right with his eternal Father, because by the merits of his Passion he obtains pardon for penitent sinners, so Mary is mediatrix by divine favor with her Son, and is such a mediatrix that her Son grants her every request; nay, that he wishes that every grace should pass through her hands. "The Lord," says St. Bernard, "has placed in Mary the plenitude of all good; so that if aught of hope or grace or salvation, is in us, we know that we derive it from Mary."[18660] The Lord has confided to Mary the treasure of mercies which he wishes to have dealt out to us, and therefore wishes that we should acknowledge every grace as coming through her. Whence the saint calls her his chief confidence, and the principal ground of his hope.[18661] For which reason he exhorts us to look for grace always through the intercession of Mary.[18662] And for the same reason the Church, in despite of Luther, calls Mary our hope.[18663]

Hence also do the saints call Mary the ladder, the moon, and the city of refuge. She is called by St. Bernard the ladder of sinners.[18664] It is sin which separates us from God. *But your iniquities have divided between you and your God.*[18665] A soul in the state of grace is in union with God, and God in union with it. *He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.*[18666] But when the soul turns its back upon God, then is it separated from him—plunged into an abyss of misery, and as far removed from him as sin itself. But when shall this wretched soul find a ladder by which to mount once more to God, and be again united to him? Mary is that ladder, to whom, if the sinner has recourse, no matter what his misery, or how great the filth of sins, he can come out of the pit of perdition. "Thou," says St Bernard, "dost not abhor the sinner, however loathsome he be; if he once sigh to thee, thou reachest him thy hand to draw him out of the gulf of despair."[18667] For the same reason is she called the moon: *Fair as the moon.*[18668] "As the moon," says St. Bernard, "is placed between the sun and earth, so is Mary stationed between God and us, to pour out his graces continually upon us."[18669] Hence, also, she is called the city of refuge, as she is made to call herself by St. John Damascene. "I am the city of all those that have recourse to me."[18670] In ancient law there were five cities of sanctuary; to which, if any one fled, he was secure of not being pursued by justice, no matter what his crime. At present we have not so many cities of sanctuary—we have only Mary to whom if any one shall have fled he may rest secure of not being pursued by the divine justice. In the cities of the old law every delinquent was in danger, could all his crimes escape unpunished; but Mary is a city of refuge which receives every criminal. “There is no one so much cast off by God,” said this blessed Mother to St. Bridget, “who, if he have recourse to me, shall not return to God, and receive pardon.”[18671]

Mary, so far from disdaining to assist sinners, prides herself upon the function of advocate of sinners, so that she is related to have said to the venerable sister Mary Villanin, “Next to my dignity of Mother of God, there is nothing which I so much value as my office of advocate of sinners.” “To this end,” says Idiota, who takes it from St. John Chrysostom, “hast thou been chosen from eternity to be the Mother of God, that those whose sins should exclude them from participation in the merits of thy Son might be made partakers of them by thy intercession.”[18672] This was the principal office for the fulfilment of which God created her, and placed her in the world: *Feed thy kids.*[18673] By kids he means sinners, and those kids are given in care to Mary, in order that they who on the day of judgment should by their sins have deserved to stand upon the left, may by her intercession stand upon the right. “Feed thy kids.” says William of Paris, “whom thou shalt convert into sheep, that they who should have been placed to the left may through thy intercession take their stand upon the right.”[18674] But we must not forget to notice what has been said upon this passage by William of England: “Feed thy kids.” Who are the kids of Mary? “These sinners,” he says, “who pay her no devotion, who do not beg of her to obtain their conversion, are not the kids of Mary, and shall be placed on the left.”[18675]

St. Bridget one day heard Jesus Christ saying to his mother, “Thou givest assistance to every one endeavoring to rise to God.”[18676] Mary assists every one who does himself violence to leave his evil life and turn to God, or at least prays to her that he may receive strength to do so; if he have not that desire, the divine mother herself cannot assist him. Mary then assists only those sinners who honor her by some special devotion, and who, if they yet remain in disgrace with God, have recourse to her that she may obtain pardon for them, and work their deliverance from their present infernal condition. The sinner who acts thus from his heart is secure, because Mary, as we have said before, has been therefore created that she might have charge of sinners, and lead them to God. The Lord revealed this to St. Catherine of Sienna: “She is chosen by me as a most delicious food, so as to capture men, especially sinners.”[18677] And the blessed Mother herself said to St. Bridget, that as the magnet attracts iron, so she draws the hard hearts of men to herself and to God.[18678] But we must always bear in mind that these hearts, notwithstanding their hardness, must desire liberation from their unhappy state.

Ah, if all had recourse to Mary with at least this desire, she would procure salvation for all. “What fear of damnation should that man feel,” says the Abbot Adam, “to whom Mary offers herself for a mother and an advocate?”[18679] He inquires again, “Could it be possible that you, the mother of mercy, should not intercede with the Redeemer for the soul he has redeemed?”[18680] He lastly makes answer: “Ah, Thou must intercede, because God, who has placed his Son mediator between man and heaven, has placed Thee mediatrix between his Son and guilty man.”[18681]

Then, sinner, says St. Bernard, give thanks to him who has provided you with such a mediatrix.[18682] Thank your God, who, in order to manifest his mercy towards you, has given you not only his Son for a mediator in his own right, but that you might have more confidence, has given you Mary as a mediatrix with that Son. Therefore it is St. Augustine calls her the only hope of sinners.[18683] And St. Bonaventure: “If by reason of your iniquities you see the Lord in anger, and fear to approach him, have recourse to the hope of sinners, who is Mary.”[18684] She will not reject you because you are too wretched; “it is her office to assist the wretched.”[18685] And William of Paris says exactly the same: “It is thy office to place thyself between God and man.”[18686] Hence, when we have recourse to Mary, let every one say to her with St. Thomas of Villanova: “Ah, therefore, thou our advocate fulfil thy office.”[18687] Since thou art Mother of God, and advocate of the wretched, assist me who am so wretched; if thou dost not assist me, I am lost; and let us proceed to address her in the words of St. Bernard: “Remember, O most pious virgin, that from the beginning, etc., etc.[18688] I do not wish to be the first unhappy man who shall have had recourse to thee, and yet be abandoned by thee. (Act of contrition.)

THE SEVEN
SORROWS OF MARY

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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CONTENTS

- INDEX
- THE SEVEN SORROWS OF MARY
  - CONTENTS
  - The Seven Sorrows of Mary
    - *ON THE FIRST DOLOR* OF ST. SIMEON’S PROPHECY
      - EXAMPLE
      - PRAYER
    - *ON THE SECOND DOLOR* OF THE FLIGHT OF JESUS INTO EGYPT
      - EXAMPLE
      - PRAYER
    - *ON THE THIRD DOLOR* OF THE LOSS OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE
      - EXAMPLE
      - PRAYER
    - *ON THE FOURTH DOLOR* OF THE MEETING OF MARY WITH JESUS, WHEN HE WENT TO DEATH
      - EXAMPLE
      - PRAYER
    - *ON THE FIFTH DOLOR* OF THE DEATH OF JESUS
      - EXAMPLE
      - PRAYER
    - *ON THE SIXTH DOLOR* THE PIERCING OF THE SIDE OF JESUS, AND HIS DESCENT FROM THE CROSS

  - EXAMPLE
  - PRAYER

ON THE SEVENTH DOLOR
THE BURIAL OF THE BODY OF JESUS

  - EXAMPLE
  - PRAYER

The Seven Sorrows of Mary

ON THE FIRST DOLOR

OF ST. SIMEON’S PROPHECY

IN this valley of tears, every man is born to weep, and every one must suffer those afflictions that daily befall him. But how much more miserable would life be, if every one knew also the future evils which are to afflict him! Too unhappy would he be, says Seneca, whose fate was such.[18689] The Lord exercises his compassion towards us, namely, that he does not make known to us the crosses that await us; that if we are to suffer them, at least we may suffer them only once. But he did not exercise this compassion with Mary, who, because God wished her to be the queen of dolors, and in all things like his Son, and to see always before her eyes, and to suffer continually all the sorrows that awaited her; and those were the sufferings of the passion and death of her beloved Jesus. For St. Simeon in the temple, after having received the divine child in his arms, predicted to her that this child was to be the mark for all the opposition and persecution of men: “Set for a sign which shall be contradicted;” and that therefore the sword of sorrow should pierce her soul; “And thy own soul a sword shall pierce.”[18690]

The holy Virgin herself said to St. Matilda, that at the announcement of St. Simeon all her joy was changed into sorrow.[18691] For, as it was revealed to St. Theresa, the blessed mother, although she knew before this that the life of her Son would be sacrificed for the salvation of the world, yet she then learned more particularly and distinctly the sufferings and cruel death that awaited her poor Son. She knew that he would be contradicted in all things. Contradicted in doctrine; for instead of being believed, he would be esteemed a blasphemer for teaching that he was the Son of God, as the impious Caiaphas declared him to be, saying: “He hath blasphemed, he is guilty of death.”[18692] Contradicted in his reputation, for he was noble, of royal lineage, and was despised as a peasant: “Is not this the carpenter’s son?”[18693] “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?”[18694] He was wisdom itself, and was treated as an ignorant man: “How doth this man know letters, having never learned?”[18695] As a false prophet: “And they blindfolded him and smote his face . . . saying: “Prophesy who is this that struck thee.”|[18696] He was treated as a madman: “He is mad, why hear you him?”[18697] As a wine-bibber, a glutton, and a friend of sinners: “Behold a man that is a glutton, and a drinker of wine, a friend of publicans and sinners.”*[18698] As a sorcerer: “By the prince of devils he casteth out devils.”†[18699] As a heretic and possessed person; “Do we not say well of thee, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?”‡[18700] In a word, Jesus was considered as so bad and notorious a man, that no trial was necessary to condemn him, as the Jews said to Pilate: “If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee.”[18701] He was contradicted in his soul, for even his eternal Father, in order to give place to the divine justice, contradicted him by not wishing to hear him when he prayed to him, saying: “Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me;”[18702] and abandoned him to fear, weariness, and sadness, so that our afflicted Lord said: “My soul is sorrowful even unto death.”[18703] His interior suffering even caused him to sweat blood. Contradicted and persecuted, in a word, in his body and in his life, for he was tortured in all his sacred members: in his hands, in his feet, in his face, and in his head, in his whole body, till, drained to the last drop of his blood, he died an ignominious death on the cross.

When David, in the midst of all his pleasures and royal grandeur, heard from Nathan the prophet, that his son should die—“The child that is born to thee shall surely die”[18704]—he could find no peace, but wept, fasted, and slept upon the ground. Mary received with the greatest calmness the announcement that her Son should die, and peacefully continued to submit to it; but what grief she must have continually suffered, seeing this amiable Son always near her, hearing from him words of eternal life, and beholding his holy demeanor. Abraham suffered great affliction during the three days he passed with his beloved Isaac, after he knew that he was to lose him. Oh God! not for three days, but for thirty three years, Mary had to endure a like sorrow. Like, do I say? A sorrow as much greater as the Son of Mary was more lovely than the son of Abraham. The blessed Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget,[18705] that while she lived on the earth there was not an hour when this grief did not pierce her soul: As often, she continued, as I looked upon my Son, as often as I wrapped him in his swaddling clothes, as often as I saw his hands and his feet, so often was my soul overwhelmed as it were with a fresh sorrow, because I considered how he would be crucified.[18706] Rupert the Abbot, contemplating Mary, while she was suckling her Son, imagines her addressing him in these words: "A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, ha shall abide between my breasts."[18707] Ah, my Son, I clasp the in my arms, because thou art so dear to me; but the dearer thou art to me, the more thou dost become to me a bundle of myrrh and of sorrow, when I think of thy sufferings. Mary, says St. Bernardine of Sienna,[18708] considered that the strength of the saints was to pass through death; the beauty of paradise to be deformed; the Lord of the universe to be bound as a criminal; the Creator of all things to be livid with stripes; the Judge of all to be condemned; the glory of heaven despised; the King of kings to be crowned with thorns, and treated as a mock king.

Father Engelgrave writes, that it was revealed to the same St. Bridget, that the afflicted mother, knowing all that her Son would have to suffer, suckling him, thought of the gall and vinegar; when she swathed him, of the cords with which he was to be bound; when she bore him in her arms, she thought of him being nailed to the cross; and when he slept, she thought of his death.[18709] As often as she put on him his clothes, she reflected that they would one day be torn from him, that he might be crucified; and when she beheld his sacred hands and feet, and thought of the nails that were to pierce them, as Mary said to St. Bridget: "My eyes filled with tears, and my heart was tortured with grief."[18710]

The evangelist says, that as Jesus Christ advanced in years, so also he advanced in wisdom and in grace with God and men.[18711] That is, he advanced in wisdom and in grace before men or in their estimation; and before God, according to St. Thomas,[18712] inasmuch as all his works would continually have availed to increase his merit, if from the beginning grace in its complete fulness had not been conferred on him by virtue of the hypostatic union. But if Jesus advanced in the esteem and love of others, how much more did he advance in Mary's love! But oh God, as love increased in her, the more increased in her the grief of having to lose him by a death so cruel. And the nearer the time of the passion of her Son approached, with so much greater pain did that sword of sorrow, predicted by St. Simeon, pierce the heart of the mother; precisely this the angel revealed to St. Bridget, saying: “That sword of sorrow was every hour drawing nearer to the Virgin as the time for the passion of her Son drew nearer.”[18713]

If, then, Jesus our King and his most holy mother did not refuse, for love of us, to suffer during their whole life such cruel pains, there is no reason that we should complain if we suffer a little. Jesus crucified once appeared to sister Magdalene Orsini, a Dominican nun, when she had been long suffering a great trial, and encouraged her to remain with him on the cross with that sorrow that was afflicting her. Sister Magdalene answered him complainingly: “Oh Lord, thou didst suffer on the cross only three hours, but it is more than three years that I have been suffering this cross.” Then the Redeemer replied: “Ah! ignorant soul, what dost thou say? I, from the first moment I was conceived, suffered in heart what I afterwards suffered on the cross.” If, then, we too suffer any affliction and complain, let us imagine that Jesus and his mother Mary are saying to us the same words.

EXAMPLE

Father Roviglione, of the Company of Jesus, relates,[18714] that a certain youth practised the devotion of visiting every day an image of the sorrowful Mary, in which she was represented with seven swords piercing her heart. One night the unhappy youth fell into mortal sin. Going next morning to visit the image, he saw in the heart of the blessed Virgin not only seven, but eight swords. As he stood gazing at this, he heard a voice saying to him, that this sin had added the eighth sword to the heart of Mary. This softened his hard heart; he went immediately to confession, and through the intercession of his advocate, recovered the divine grace.

PRAYER

Oh my blessed mother, not one sword only, but as many swords as I have committed sins have I added to those seven in thy heart. Ah, my Lady, thy sorrows are not due to thee who art innocent, but to me who am guilty. But since thou hast wished to suffer so much for me, ah, by thy merits obtain for me great sorrow for my sins, and patience under the trials of this life, which will always be light in comparison with my demerits, for I have often merited hell. Amen.

ON THE SECOND DOLOR

OF THE FLIGHT OF JESUS INTO EGYPT

As the stag, wounded by an arrow, carries the pain with him wherever he goes, because he carries with him the arrow that has wounded him; thus the divine mother, after the prophecy of St. Simeon, as we saw in our consideration of the first grief, always carried her sorrow with her by the continual remembrance of the passion of her Son. Ailgrin, explaining this passage of the Canticles, "The hairs of thy head as the purple of the king bound in the channel,"[18715] says: These hairs of Mary were her continual thoughts of the passion of Jesus, which kept always before her eyes the blood which was one day to flow from his wounds. Thy mind, oh Mary, and thy thoughts tinged in the blood of the passion of our Lord, were always moved with sorrow as if they actually saw the blood flowing from his wounds.[18716] Thus her Son himself was that arrow in the heart of Mary, who, the more worthy of love he showed himself to her, always wounded her the more with the sorrowful thought that she should lose him by so cruel a death. Let us now pass to the consideration of the second sword of sorrow which wounded Mary, in the flight of her infant Jesus into Egypt from the persecution of Herod.

Herod having heard that the expected Messiah was born, foolishly feared that the new-born King would deprive him of his kingdom. Hence St. Fulgentius, reproving him for his folly, thus says; "Why, oh Herod, art thou thus disturbed? This King who is born has not come to conquer kings by arms, but to subjugate them, in a wonderful manner, by his death."[18717] The impious Herod, therefore, waited to learn from the holy magi where the King was born, that he might take from him his life; but finding himself deceived by the magi, he ordered all the infants that could be found in the neighborhood of Bethlehem to be put to death. But an angel appeared in a dream to St. Joseph, and said to him: "Arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt."[18718] According to Gerson, immediately, on that very night, Joseph made this command known to Mary; and taking the infant Jesus, they commenced their journey, as it seems clearly from the Gospel itself: "Who arose and took the child and his mother by night, and retired into Egypt." Oh God, as blessed Albertus Magnus says in the name of Mary, must he, then, who came to save men flee from men? "Debet fugere qui salvator est mundi?"[18719] And then the afflicted Mary knew that already the prophecy of Simeon, regarding her Son, was beginning to be verified: "He is set for a sign which shall be contradicted."[18720] Seeing that scarcely is he born, when he is persecuted to death. What suffering it must have been to the heart of Mary, writes St. John Chrysostom, to hear the tidings of that cruel exile of herself with her Son! Flee from thy friends to strangers, from the holy temple of the only true God, to the temples of demons. What greater tribulation than that a new-born child, clinging to its mother's bosom, should be forced to fly with the mother herself![18721]

Every one can imagine how much Mary must have suffered on this journey. It was a long distance to Egypt. Authors generally agree with Barrada[18722] that it was four hundred miles; so that at least it was a journey of thirty days. The way, as St. Bonaventure describes it, was rough, unknown, through woods, and little frequented.[18723] The season was winter, and therefore they had to travel in snow, rain, wind, and storms, and through bad and difficult roads. Mary was then fifteen years of age, a delicate virgin, unaccustomed to such journeys. They had no servant to attend them. Joseph and Mary, said St. Peter Chrysologus, had no man-servant nor maid-servant; they were themselves both masters and servants.[18724] Oh God, how piteous a spectacle it was to see that tender Virgin, with that newly born infant in her arms wandering through this world! St. Bonaventure asks, Where did they obtain food? Where did they rest at night? How were they lodged?[18725] What other food could they have, than a piece of hard bread which Joseph brought with him or begged in charity? Where could they have slept (particularly in the two hundred miles of desert through which they travelled, where, as authors relate, there were neither houses nor inns) except on the sand, or under some tree in the wood, in the open air, exposed to robbers, or those wild beasts with which Egypt abounded? Ah, if any one had met these three greatest personages of the world, what would he have believed them to be but three poor, roving beggars?

They lived in Egypt, according to Brocard and Jansenius, in a district called Maturea, though, according to St. Anselm, they dwelt in Heliopolis, first called Memphis, and now Cairo. And here let us consider the great poverty they must have suffered for the seven years they were there, as St. Antoninus, St. Thomas, and others assert. They were foreigners, unknown, without revenues, without money, without kindred; hardly were they able to support themselves by their humble labors. As they were destitute, says St. Basil, it is manifest what effort they must have made to obtain there the necessaries of life.[18726] Moreover, Landolph of Saxony has written, and let it be repeated for the consolation of the poor, that so great was the poverty of Mary there, that sometimes she had not so much as a morsel of bread, when her Son, forced by hunger, asked it of her.[18727]

St. Matthew also relates that when Herod was dead, the angel again appeared, in a dream, to St. Joseph, and directed him to return to Judea. St. Bonaventure, speaking of his return, considers the greater pain of the blessed Virgin, on account of the sufferings which Jesus must have endured in that journey, having arrived at about the age of seven years—an age, says the saint, when he was so large that he could not be carried, and so small that he could not go without assistance.[18728]

The sight, then, of Jesus and Mary wandering like fugitives through this world, teaches us that we should also live as pilgrims on the earth, detached from the goods which the world offers us, as having soon to leave them and go to eternity. “We have not here a lasting city, but seek one that is to come.”[18729] To which St. Augustine adds: Thou art a stranger, thou givest a look, and then passest on: “Hospes es, vides et transis.” It also teaches us to embrace crosses, for we cannot live in this world without a cross. The blessed Veronica da Binasco, an Augustinian nun, was carried in spirit to accompany Mary and the infant Jesus in this journey to Egypt, and at the end of it the divine mother said to her: “Child, hast thou seen through what difficulties we have reached this place? Now learn that no one receives graces without suffering.” He who wishes to feel least the sufferings of this life, must take Jesus and Mary with him: “Accipe puerum et matrem ejus.” For him who lovingly bears in his heart this Son and this mother, all sufferings become light, and even sweet and dear. Let us then love them, let us console Mary by receiving her Son within our hearts, whom, even now, men continue to persecute with their sins.

EXAMPLE

One day the most holy Mary appeared to the blessed Colletta, a Franciscan nun, and showed her the infant Jesus in a basin, torn in pieces, and then said to her: “Thus sinners continually treat my Son, renewing his death and my sorrows; oh, my daughter, pray for them that they may be converted.”[18730] Similar to this is that other vision which appeared to the venerable sister Jane, of Jesus and Mary, also a Franciscan nun. As she was one day meditating on the infant Jesus, persecuted by Herod, she heard a great noise, as of armed people, who were pursuing some one; and then appeared before her a most beautiful child, who was fleeing in great distress, and cried to her: “MyJane, help me, hide me; I am Jesus of Nazareth, I am flying from sinners who wish to kill me, and who persecute me as Herod did: do thou save me.”[18731]

PRAYER

Then, oh Mary, even after thy Son hath died by the hands of men who persecuted him unto death, have not these ungrateful men yet ceased from persecuting him with their sins, and continuing to afflict thee, oh mother of sorrows? And I also, oh God, have been one of these. Ah, my most sweet mother, obtain for me tears to weep for such ingratitude. And then, by the sufferings thou didst experience in the journey to Egypt, assist me in the journey that I am making to eternity, that at length I may go to unite with thee in loving my persecuted Saviour, in the country of the blessed. Amen.

ON THE THIRD DOLOR

OF THE LOSS OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

ST. JAMES the Apostle has said, that our perfection consists in the virtue of patience. “And patience hath a perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing.”[18732] The Lord having then given us the Virgin Mary as an example of perfection, it was necessary that she should be laden with sorrows, that in her we might admire and imitate her heroic patience. The dolor that we are this day to consider is one of the greatest which our divine mother suffered during her life, namely, the loss of her Son in the temple. He who is born blind is little sensible of the pain of being deprived of the light of day; but to him who has once had sight and enjoyed the light, it is a great sorrow to find himself deprived of it by blindness. And thus it is with those unhappy souls who, being blinded by the mire of this earth, have but little knowledge of God, and therefore scarcely feel pain at not finding him. On the contrary, the man who, illuminated with celestial light, has been made worthy to find by love the sweet presence of the highest good, oh God, how he mourns when he finds himself deprived of it!

From this we can judge how painful must have been to Mary, who was accustomed to enjoy constantly the sweet presence of Jesus, that third sword which wounded her, when she lost him in Jerusalem, and was separated from him for three days.

In the second chapter of St. Luke we read that the blessed Virgin, being accustomed to visit the temple every year at the paschal season, with Joseph her spouse and Jesus, once went when he was about twelve years old, and Jesus remained in Jerusalem, though she was not aware of it, for she thought he was in company with others. When she reached Nazareth she inquired for her Son, and not finding him there, she returned immediately to Jerusalem to seek him, but did not succeed until after three days. Now let us imagine what distress that afflicted mother must have experienced in those three days in which she was searching everywhere for her Son, with the spouse in the Canticles: “Have you seen him whom my soul loveth?”[18733] But she could hear no tidings of him. Oh, with how much greater tenderness must Mary, overcome with fatigue, and yet not having found her beloved Son, have repeated those words of Ruben, concerning his brother Joseph: The boy doth not appear, and whither shall I go? “Puer non comparet, et ego quo ibo?” My Jesus doth not appear, and I know not what to do that I may find him; but where shall I go without my treasure? Weeping continually, she repeated during these three days with David: “My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily, Where is thy God?[18734] Wherefore Pelbart with reason says, that during those nights the afflicted mother had no rest, but wept and prayed without ceasing to God, that he would enable her to find her Son.[18735] And, according to St. Bernard, often during that time did she repeat to her Son himself the words of the spouse: “Show me where thou feedest, where thou liest in the mid-day, lest I begin to wander.”[18736] My Son, tell me where thou art, that I may no longer wander, seeking thee in vain.

Some writers assert, and not without reason, that this dolor was not only one of the greatest, but that it was the greatest and most painful of all. For in the first place, Mary in her other dolors had Jesus with her; she suffered when St. Simeon uttered the prophecy in the temple; she suffered in the flight to Egypt, but always with Jesus; but in this dolor she suffered at a distance from Jesus, without knowing where he was: “And the light of my eyes itself is not with me.”[18737] Thus, with tears, she then exclaimed: Ah, the light of my eyes, my dear Jesus, is no more with me; he is far from me, I know not where he is! Origen says, that though the love which this holy mother bore her Son, she suffered more at this loss of Jesus than any martyr ever suffered at death.[18738] Ah, how long were these three days for Mary! they appeared three ages. Very bitter days, for there was none to comfort her. And who, she exclaimed with Jeremias, who can console me if he who could console me is far from me? and therefore my eyes are not satisfied with weeping: “Therefore do I weep, and my eyes run down with water, because the comforter is far from me.”[18739] And with Tobias she repeated: “What manner of joy shall be to me who sit in darkness, and see not the light of heaven?”[18740]

Secondly.—Mary well understood the cause and end of the other dolors, namely, the redemption of the world, the divine will; but in this she did not know the cause of the absence of her Son. The sorrowful mother was grieved to find Jesus withdrawn from her, for her humility, says Lanspergius, made her consider herself unworthy to remain with him any longer, and attend upon him on earth, and have the care of such a treasure.[18741] And perhaps, she may have thought within herself, I have not served him as I ought. Perhaps I have been guilty of some neglect, and therefore he has left me. They sought him, lest he perchance had left them, as Origen has said.[18742] Certainly there is no greater grief for a soul that loves God than the fear of having displeased him. And therefore Mary never complained in any other sorrow but this, lovingly expostulating with Jesus after she found him: "Son, why hast thou done so to us? Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."[18743] By these words she did not wish to reprove Jesus, as the heretics blasphemously assert, but only to make known to him the grief she had experienced during his absence from her, on account of the love she bore him. It was not a rebuke, says blessed Denis the Carthusian, but a loving complaint: "Non erat increpatio, sed amorosa conquestio." Finally, this sword so cruelly pierced the heart of the Virgin, that the blessed Benvenuta, desiring one day to share the pain of the holy mother in this dolor, and praying her to obtain for her this grace, Mary appeared to her with the infant Jesus in her arms; but while Benvenuta was enjoying the sight of that most beautiful child, in one moment she was deprived of it. So great was her sorrow that she had recourse to Mary, to implore her pity that it should not make her die of grief. The holy Virgin appeared to her again three days after, and said to her: "Now learn, oh my daughter, that thy sorrow is but a small part of that which I suffered when I lost my Son."[18744]

This sorrow of Mary ought, in the first place, to serve as a comfort to those souls who are desolate and do not enjoy the sweet presence they once enjoyed of their Lord. They may weep, but let them weep in peace, as Mary wept in the absence of her Son. Let them take courage, and not fear that on this account they have lost the divine favor, for God himself said to St. Theresa: "No one is lost without knowing it; and no one is deceived without wishing to be deceived." If the Lord departs from the sight of that soul who loves him, he does not therefore depart from the heart. He often hides himself that she may seek him with greater desire and love. But those who would find Jesus must seek him, not amid the delights and pleasures of the world, but amid crosses and mortifications, as Mary sought him: We sought thee sorrowing, as she said to her Son: “Dolentes quærebamus te.” Learn from Mary to seek Jesus, says Origen “Disce a Maria quærere Jesum.”

Moreover, in this world we should seek no other good than Jesus. Job was not unhappy when he lost all that he possessed on earth; riches, children, health, and honors, and even descended from a throne to a dunghill; but because he had God with him, even then he was happy St. Augustine, speaking of him, says: He had lost all that God had given him, but he had God himself: “Perdiderat illa quæ dederat Deus, sed habebat ipsum Deum.” Unhappy and truly wretched are those souls who have lost God. If Mary wept for the absence of her Son for three days, how ought sinners to weep who have lost divine grace, to whom God says; “You are not my people, and I will not be yours.”[18745] For sin does this, namely, it separates the soul from God: “Your iniquities have divided between you and your God.”[18746] Hence, if even sinners possess all the goods of earth and have lost God, every thing on earth becomes vanity and affliction to them, as Solomon confessed: “Behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.”[18747] But as St. Augustine says: The greatest misfortune of these poor blind souls is, that if they lose an ox, they do not fail to go in search of it; if they lose a sheep, they use all diligence to find it; if they lose a beast of burden, they cannot rest; but they lose the highest good, which is God, and yet they eat and drink, and take their rest.[18748]

EXAMPLE

We read in the Annual Letters of the Society of Jesus, that in India, a young man who was just leaving his apartment in order to commit sin, heard a voice saying: “Stop, where are you going? He turned round and saw an image, in relief, of the sorrowful Mary, who drew out the sword which was in her breast, and said to him: “Take this dagger and pierce my heart rather than wound my Son with this sin.” At the sound of these words the youth prostrated himself on the ground, and with deep contrition, bursting into tears, he asked and obtained from God and the Virgin pardon of his sin.

PRAYER

Oh blessed Virgin, why art thou afflicted, seeking thy lost Son? Is it because thou dost not know where he is? But dost thou not know that he is in thy heart? Dost thou not see that he is feeding among the lilies? Thou thyself hast said it: “My beloved to me and I to him who feedeth among the lilies.”[18749] These, thy humble, pure, and holy thoughts and affections, are all lilies, that invite the divine spouse to dwell with thee. Ah, Mary, dost thou sigh after Jesus, thou who lovest none but Jesus? Leave sighing to me and so many other sinners who do not love him, and who have lost him by offending him. My most amiable mother, if through my fault thy Son hast not yet returned to my soul, wilt thou obtain for me that I may find him. I know well that he allows himself to be found by all who seek him: The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him: “Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quærenti illum.”[18750] Make me to seek him as I ought to seek him. Thou art the gate through which all find Jesus; through thee I too hope to find him.

ON THE FOURTH DOLOR

OF THE MEETING OF MARY WITH JESUS, WHEN HE WENT TO DEATH

ST. BERNARDINE says, that to form an idea of the grief of Mary in losing her Jesus by death, it is necessary to consider the love that this mother bore to this her Son. All mothers feel the sufferings of their children as their own. Hence the woman of Chanaan, when she prayed the Saviour to deliver her daughter from the devil that tormented her, said to him, that he should have pity on the mother rather than on the daughter: "Have mercy on me, oh Lord, thou son of David, my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil."[18751] But what mother ever loved a child so much as Mary loved Jesus? He was her only child, reared amidst so many troubles and pains; a most amiable child, and most loving to his mother; a Son, who was at the same time her Son and her God; who came on earth to kindle in the hearts of all the holy fire of divine love, as he himself declared: "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?"[18752] Let us consider how he must have inflamed that pure heart of his holy mother, so free from every earthly affection. In a word, the blessed Virgin herself said to St. Bridget, that through love her heart and the heart of her Son was one: "Unum erat cor meum, et cor filii mei." That blending of handmaid and mother, of Son and God, kindled in the heart of Mary a fire composed of a thousand flames. But afterwards, at the time of the passion, this flame of love was changed into a sea of sorrow. Hence St. Bernardine says: All the sorrows of the world united would not be equal to the sorrow of the glorious Mary.[18753] Yes, because this mother, as St. Lawrence Justinian writes: The more tenderly she loved, was the more deeply wounded.[18754] The greater the tenderness with which she loved him, the greater was her grief at the sight of his sufferings, especially when she met her Son, after he had already been condemned, going to death at the place of punishment, bearing the cross. And this is the fourth sword of sorrow which to-day we have to consider.

The blessed Virgin revealed to St. Bridget that at the time when the passion of our Lord was drawing nigh, her eyes were always filled with tears, as she thought of her beloved Son whom she was about to lose on this earth. Therefore, as she also said, a cold sweat covered her body from the fear that seized her at that prospect of approaching suffering.[18755] Behold, the appointed day at length arrived, and Jesus cams in tears to take leave of his mother before he went to death. St. Bonaventure, contemplating Mary on that night, says: Thou didst spend it without sleep, and while others slept, thou didst remain watching.[18756] Morning having arrived the disciples of Jesus Christ came to this afflicted mother, one, to bring her this tidings, another, that; but all tidings of sorrow, for in her were then verified the words of Jeremias: “Weeping, she hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; there is none to comfort her of all them that were dear to her.”[18757] One came to relate to her the cruel treatment of her Son in the house of Caiphas; another, the insults received by him from Herod. Finally, for I omit the rest to come to my point, St. John came and announced to Mary that the most unjust Pilate had already condemned him to death upon the cross. I say the most unjust, for, as St. Leo remarks, this unjust judge condemned him to death with the same lips with which he had pronounced him innocent.[18758] Ah, sorrowful mother; said St. John to her, thy Son has already been condemned to death, he is already on his way, bearing himself his cross on his way to Calvary, as he afterwards related in his Gospel: “And bearing his own cross he went forth to that place which is called Calvary.”[18759] Come, if thou dost desire to see him, and bid him a last farewell in some of the streets through which he is to pass.

Mary goes with St. John, and she perceives by the blood with which the way was sprinkled, that her Son had already passed there. This she revealed to St. Bridget: “By the footsteps of my Son I traced his course, for along the way by which he had passed, the ground was sprinkled with blood.”[18760] St. Bonaventure imagines the afflicted mother taking a shorter way, and placing herself at the corner of the street to meet her afflicted Son as he passed by.[18761] This most afflicted mother met her most afflicted Son: Mœstissima mater mœstissimo filio occurrit, said St. Bernard. While Mary stopped in that place how much she must have heard said against her Son by the Jews who knew her, and perhaps also words in mockery of herself! Alas! what a commencement of sorrows was then before her eyes, when she saw the nails, the hammers, the cords, the fatal instruments of the death of her Son borne before him! And what a sword pierced her heart when she heard the trumpet proclaiming along the way the sentence pronounced against her Son! But behold, now, after the instruments, the trumpet, and the ministers of justice had passed, she raises her eyes and sees; she sees, oh God, a young man covered with blood and wounds from head to foot, with a crown of thorns on his head, and two heavy beams on his shoulders; she looks at him and hardly knows him, saying, then, with Isaias: “And we have seen him, and there was no sightliness.”[18762] Yes, for the wounds, the bruises, and clotted blood, made him look like a leper: “We have thought him, as it were, a leper;”[18763] so that he could no longer be recognized. “And his look was, as it were, hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not.”[18764] But at length love recognizes him, and as soon as she knows him, ah, what was then, as St. Peter of Alcantara says in his meditations, the love and fear of the heart of Mary! On the one hand, she desired to see him; on the other, she could not endure to look upon so pitiable a sight. But at length they look at each other. The Son wipes from his eyes the clotted blood, which prevented him from seeing (as was revealed to St. Bridget), and looks upon the mother; the mother looks upon the Son. Ah, looks of sorrow, which pierced, as with so many arrows, those two holy and loving souls. When Margaret, the daughter of Sir Thomas More, met her father on his way to the scaffold, she could utter only two words, oh, father! oh, father! and fell fainting at his feet. At the sight of her Son going to Calvary, Mary fainted not; no, because it was not fitting that his mother should lose the use of her reason, as Father Suarez remarks, neither did she die, for God reserved her for a greater grief; but if she did not die, she suffered sorrow enough to cause her a thousand deaths.

The mother wished to embrace him, as St. Anselm says, but the officers of justice thrust her aside, loading her with insults, and urge onward our afflicted Lord. Mary follows. Ah, holy Virgin, where art thou going? To Calvary! And canst thou trust thyself to see him who is thy life hanging from a cross? And thy life shall be as it were hanging before thee: “Et erit vita tua quasi pendens ante te."[18765] Ah! my mother, stop, says St. Lawrence Justinian, as if the Son himself had then spoken to her; where dost thou hasten? Where art thou going? If thou comest where I go, thou wilt be tortured with my sufferings, and I with thine.[18766] But although the sight of her dying Jesus must cost her such cruel anguish, the loving Mary will not leave him. The Son goes before, and the mother follows, that she may be crucified with her Son, as William the Abbot says: The mother took up her cross, and followed him, that she might be crucified with him.[18767] We even pity the wild beasts: "Ferarum etiam miseremur;" as St. John Chrysostom has said. If we should see a lioness following her whelp as he was led to death, even this wild beast would call forth our compassion. And shall we not feel compassion to see Mary following her immaculate Lamb, as they are leading him to death? Let us then pity her, and endeavor also ourselves to accompany her Son and herself, bearing with patience the cross which the Lord imposes upon us. Why did Jesus Christ, asks St. John Chrysostom, desire to be alone in his other sufferings, but in bearing the cross wished to be helped by the Cyrenean? And he answers: That thou mayest understand that the cross of Christ is not sufficient without thine.[18768] The cross alone of Jesus is not enough to save us, if we do not bear with resignation also our own, even unto death.

EXAMPLE

The Saviour appeared one day to sister Diomira, a nun, in Florence, and said to her: "Think of me, and love me, and I will think of thee, and love thee:" and at the same time he presented her with a bunch of flowers and a cross, signifying to her by this, that the consolations of the saints on this earth are always to be accompanied by the cross. The cross unites souls to God. Blessed Jerome Emilian, when he was a soldier, and leading a very sinful life, was shut up by his enemies in a tower. There, feeling deeply his misfortune, and enlightened by God to amend his life, he had recourse to the most holy Mary, and then with the help of this divine mother, he began to live the life of a saint. By this he merited to see once in heaven the high place which God had prepared for him. He became founder of the order of Sommaschi, died a saint, and has been lately beatified by the holy Church.

PRAYER

My sorrowful mother, by the merit of that grief which thou didst feel at seeing thy beloved Jesus led to death, obtain for me the grace also to bear with patience those crosses which God sends me. Happy me, if I also shall know how to accompany thee with my cross until death. Thou and Jesus, both innocent, have borne a heavy cross; and shall I a sinner, who have merited hell, refuse mine? Ah, immaculate Virgin, I hope that thou wilt help me to bear my crosses with patience. Amen.

ON THE FIFTH DOLOR

OF THE DEATH OF JESUS

AND now we have to admire a new sort of martyrdom, a mother condemned to see an innocent son, whom she loved with all the affection of her heart, put to death before her eyes, by the most barbarous tortures. There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother: “Stabat autem juxta crucem mater ejus.” There is nothing more to be said, says St. John, of the martyrdom of Mary: behold her at the foot of the cross, looking on her dying Son, and then see if there is grief like her grief. Let us stop then also to-day on Calvary, to consider this fifth sword that pierced the heart of Mary, namely, the death of Jesus.

As soon as our afflicted Redeemer had ascended the hill of Calvary, the executioners stripped him of his garments, and piercing his sacred hands and feet with nails, not sharp, but blunt: “Non acutis, sed obtusis;” as St. Bernard says,[18769] and to torture him more, they fastened him to the cross. When they had crucified him, they planted the cross, and thus left him to die. The executioners abandon him, but Mary does not abandon him. She then draws nearer to the cross, in order to assist at his death. “I did not leave him,” thus the blessed Virgin revealed to St. Bridget, “and stood nearer to his cross.”[18770] But what did it avail, oh Lady, says St. Bonaventure, to go to Calvary to witness there the death of this Son? Shame should have prevented thee, for his disgrace was also thine, because thou wast his mother; or, at least, the horror of such a crime as that of seeing a God crucified by his own creatures, should have prevented thee.[18771] But the saint himself answers: Thy heart did not consider the horror, but the suffering: “Non considerabat cor tuum horrorem, sed dolorem.” Ah, thy heart did not then care for its own sorrow, but for the suffering and death of thy dear Son; and therefore thou thyself didst wish to be near him, at least to compassionate him. Ah, true mother! says William the Abbot, loving mother! for not even the terror of death could separate thee from thy beloved Son.[18772] But, oh God, what a spectacle of sorrow, to see this Son then in agony upon the cross, and under the cross this mother in agony, who was suffering all the pain that her Son was suffering! Behold the words in which Mary revealed to St. Bridget the pitiable state of her dying Son, as she saw him on the cross: “My dear Jesus was on the cross in grief and in agony; his eyes were sunken, half closed, and lifeless; the lips hanging, and the mouth open; the cheeks hollow, and attached to the teeth; the face lengthened, the nose sharp, the countenance sad; the head had fallen upon his breast, the hair black with blood, the stomach collapsed, the arms and legs stiff, and the whole body covered with wounds and blood.”[18773]

Mary also suffered all these pains of Jesus. Every torture inflicted on the body of Jesus, says St. Jerome, was a wound in the heart of the mother.[18774] Any one of us who should then have been on Mount Calvary, would have seen two altars, says St. John Chrysostom, on which two great sacrifices were consummating, one in the body of Jesus, the other in the heart of Mary. But rather would I see there, with St. Bonaventure, one altar only, namely, the cross alone of the Son, on which, with the victim, this divine Lamb, the mother also was sacrificed. Therefore the saint interrogates her in these words: Oh Lady, where art thou? Near the cross? Nay, on the cross, thou art crucified with thy Son.[18775] St. Augustine also says the same thing: The cross and nails of the Son were also the cross and nails of the mother; Christ being crucified, the mother was also crucified.[18776] Yes, because, as St. Bernard says, love inflicted on the heart of Mary the same suffering that the nails caused in the body of Jesus.[18777] Therefore, at the same time that the Son was sacrificing his body, the mother, as St. Bernardine says, was sacrificing her soul.[18778]

Mothers fly from the presence of their dying children; but if a mother is ever obliged to witness the death of a child, she procures for him all possible relief; she arranges the bed, that his posture may be more easy; she administers refreshments to him; and thus the poor mother relieves her own sorrows. Ah, mother, the most afflicted of all mothers! oh Mary, it was decreed that thou shouldst be present at the death of Jesus, but it was not given to thee to afford him any relief. Mary heard her Son say: I thirst: “Sitio;” but it was not permitted her to give him a little water to quench his great thirst. She could only say to him, as St. Vincent Ferrer remarks: My Son, I have only the water of my tears: “Fili, non habeo nisi aquam lacrymarum.”[18779] She saw that her Son, suspended by three nails to that bed of sorrow, could find no rest. She wished to clasp him to her heart, that she might give him relief, or at least that he might expire in her arms, but she could not.[18780] She only saw that poor Son in a sea of sorrow, seeking one who could console him as he had predicted by the mouth of the prophet: “I have trodden the winepress alone; I looked about and there was none to help; I sought and there was none to give aid.”[18781] But who was there among men to console him, if all were his enemies? Even on the cross they cursed and mocked him on every side: “And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads.”[18782] Some said to him: “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.”[18783] Some exclaimed: “He saved others, himself he cannot save.”[18784] Others said: “If he be the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross.”|[18785] The blessed Virgin herself said to St. Bridget: “I heard some call my Son a thief; I heard others call him an impostor; others said that no one deserved death more than he; and every word was to me a new sword of sorrow.”[18786]

But what increased most the sorrows which Mary suffered through compassion for her Son, was to hear him complain on the cross that even the eternal Father had abandoned him: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*[18787] Words which, as the divine mother herself said to St. Bridget, could never depart from her mind during her whole life.[18788] Thus the afflicted mother saw her Jesus suffering on every side; she desired to comfort him, but could not. And what caused her the greatest sorrow was to see that, by her presence and her grief, she increased the sufferings of her Son. The sorrow itself, says St. Bernard, that filled the heart of Mary, increased the bitterness of sorrow in the heart of Jesus.[18789] St. Bernard also says, that Jesus on the cross suffered more from compassion for his mother than from his own pains: he thus speaks in the name of the Virgin: I stood and looked upon him, and he looked upon me; and he suffered more for me than for himself.[18790] The same saint also, speaking of Mary beside her dying Son, says, that she lived dying without being able to die: Near the cross stood his mother, speechless; living she died, dying she lived; neither could she die, because she was dead, being yet alive.[18791] Passino writes that Jesus Christ himself, speaking one day to the blessed Baptista Varana, of Camerino, said to her, that he was so afflicted on the cross at the sight of his mother in such anguish at his feet, that compassion for his mother caused him to die without consolation. So that the blessed Baptista, being enlightened to know this suffering of Jesus, exclaimed: Oh my Lord, tell me no more of this thy sorrow, for I cannot bear it.

Men were astonished, says Simon of Cassia, when they saw this mother then keep silence, without uttering a complaint in this great suffering.[18792] But if the lips of Mary were silent, her heart was not so; for she did not cease offering to divine justice the life of her Son for our salvation. Therefore we know that by the merits of her dolors she co-operated with Christ in bringing us forth to the life of grace, and therefore we are children of her sorrows: Christ, says Lanspergius, wished her whom he had appointed for our mother to co-operate with him in our redemption; for she herself at the foot of the cross was to bring us forth as her children.[18793] And if ever any consolation entered into that sea of bitterness, namely, the heart of Mary, it was this only one; namely, the knowledge that by means of her sorrows, she was bringing us to eternal salvation; as Jesus himself revealed to St. Bridget: “My mother Mary, on account of her compassion and charity, was made mother of all in heaven and on earth.”[18794] And, indeed, these were the last words with which Jesus took leave of her before his death; this was his last remembrance, leaving us to her for her children in the person of John, when he said to her: Woman, behold thy Son: “Mulier ecce filius tuus.”[18795] And from that time Mary began to perform for us this office of a good mother; for, as St. Peter Damian declares, the penitent thief, through the prayers of Mary, was then converted and saved: Therefore the good thief repented, because the blessed Virgin, standing between the cross of her Son and that of the thief, prayed her Son for him; thus rewarding, by this favor, his former service.[18796] For as other authors also relate, this thief, in the journey to Egypt with the infant Jesus, showed them kindness; and this same office the blessed Virgin has ever continued, and still continues to perform.

EXAMPLE

A young man in Perugia once promised the devil that if he would help him to commit a sinful act which he desired to do, he would give him his soul; and he gave him a writing to that effect, signed with his blood. The evil deed was committed, and the devil demanded the performance of the promise. He led the young man to a well, and threatened to take him body and soul to hell if he would not cast himself into it. The wretched youth, thinking that it would be impossible for him to escape from his enemy, climbed the well-side in order to cast himself into it, but terrified at the thought of death, he said to the devil that he had not the courage to throw himself in, and that, if he wished to see him dead, he himself should thrust him in. The young man wore about his neck the scapular of the sorrowing Mary; and the devil said to him: “Take off that scapular, and I will thrust you in.” But the youth, seeing the protection which the divine mother still gave him through that scapular, refused to take it off, and after a great deal of altercation, the devil departed in confusion. The sinner repented, and grateful to his sorrowful mother, went to thank her, and presented a picture of this case, as an offering, at her altar in the new church of Santa Maria, in Perugia.[18797]

PRAYER

Ah, mother, the most afflicted of all mothers, thy Son, then, is dead; thy Son so amiable, and who loved thee so much! Weep, for thou hast reason to weep. Who can ever console thee? Nothing can console thee but the thought that Jesus, by his death, hath conquered hell, hath opened paradise which was closed to men, and hath gained so many souls. From that throne of the cross he was to reign over so many hearts, which, conquered by his love, would serve him with love. Do not disdain, oh my mother, to keep me near to weep with thee, for I have more reason than thou to weep for the offences that I have committed against thy Son. Ah, mother of mercy, I hope for pardon and my eternal salvation, first through the death of my Redeemer, and then through the merits of thy dolors. Amen.

ON THE SIXTH DOLOR

THE PIERCING OF THE SIDE OF JESUS, AND HIS DESCENT FROM THE CROSS

"Oh, all ye that pass by the way attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow."[18798] Devout souls, listen to what the sorrowful Mary says to you to-day: My beloved children, I do not wish you to console me; no, for my heart can never again be consoled on this earth after the death of my dear Jesus. If you wish to please me, this I ask of you, turn to me and see if there has ever been in the world a grief like mine, when I saw him who was all my love torn from me so cruelly. But, oh Lady, since thou dost not wish to be consoled, and hast such a thirst for suffering, I must say to thee that thy sorrows have not ended with the death of thy Son. To-day thou wilt be pierced by another sword of sorrow, when thou shalt see a cruel lance piercing the side of this thy Son, already dead, and shalt receive him in thy arms after he is taken from the cross. And now we are to consider to-day the sixth dolor which afflicted this sorrowful mother. Attend and weep. Hitherto the dolors of Mary tortured her one by one, but to-day they are all united to assail her.

To make known to a mother that her child is dead, is sufficient to kindle her whole soul with love for the lost one. Some persons, in order to lighten their grief, will remind mothers whose children have died, of the displeasure they had once caused them. But if I, oh my queen, should wish to lighten thy sorrow for the death of Jesus in this way, what displeasure has he ever caused thee, that I could recall to thy mind? Ah, no; he always loved thee, obeyed thee and respected thee. Now thou hast lost him, and who can describe thy sorrow? Do thou who hast felt it explain it. A devout author says, that when our Redeemer was dead, the heart of the great mother was first engaged in accompanying the most holy soul of the Son, and presenting it to the eternal father. I present thee, oh my God, Mary must then have said, the immaculate soul of thy and my Son, which has been obedient to thee even unto death: receive it, then, in thy arms. Thy justice is now satisfied, thy will accomplished; behold, the great sacrifice to thy eternal glory is consummated. And then turning to the lifeless members of her Jesus: Oh wounds, she said, oh loving wounds, I adore you, I rejoice with you, since through you salvation has been given to the world. You shall remain open in the body of my Son, to be the refuge of those who will have recourse to you. Oh how many, through you, shall receive the pardon of their sins, and then through you shall be inflamed to love the Sovereign Good!

That the joy of the following Paschal Sabbath should not be disturbed, the Jews wished the body of Jesus to be taken down from the cross; but because they could not take down a criminal until he was dead, they came with iron mallets to break his legs, as they had already done to the two thieves crucified with him. And Mary, while she remains weeping at the death of her Son, sees those armed men coming towards her Jesus. At this sight she first trembled with fear, then she said: Ah, my Son is already dead, cease to maltreat him, and cease to torture me a poor mother longer. She implored them not to break his legs: “Oravit eos, ne frangerent crura,” as St. Bonaventure writes. But while she is thus speaking, oh, God! she sees a soldier with violence brandishing a spear, and piercing the side of Jesus: “One of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water.”[18799] The cross shook at the stroke of the spear, and, as was revealed to St. Bridget, the heart of Jesus was divided: “Ita ut ambæ partes essent divisæ.”[18800] There came out blood and water, for only a few drops of blood remained, and those also the Saviour wished to shed, in order to show that he had no more blood to give us. The injury of that stroke was offered to Jesus, but the pain was inflicted on Mary: Christ, says the devout Lanspergius, shared with his mother the infliction of that wound, for he received the insult and his mother the pain.[18801] The holy Fathers explain this to be the very sword predicted to the Virgin by St. Simeon; a sword, not of iron, but of grief, which pierced through her blessed soul in the heart of Jesus, where it always dwelt. Thus, among others, St. Bernard says: The spear which opened his side passed through the soul of the Virgin, which could not be torn from the heart of Jesus.[18802] And the divine mother herself revealed the same to St. Bridget, saying: “When the spear was drawn out, the point appeared red with blood; then I felt as if my heart were pierced when I saw the heart of my most dear Son pierced.”[18803] The angel told St. Bridget, that such were the sufferings of Mary, that she was saved from death only by the miraculous power of God.[18804] In her other dolors she at least had her Son to compassionate her; and now she had not even him to take pity on her.

The afflicted mother, still fearing that other injuries might be inflicted on her Son, entreats Joseph of Arimathea to obtain from Pilate the body of her Jesus, that at least after his death she may be able to guard it and protect it from injuries. Joseph went to Pilate, and made known to him the sorrow and the wish of this afflicted mother; and St. Anselm thinks that compassion for the mother softened the heart of Pilate, and moved him to grant her the body of the Saviour. And now Jesus is taken from the cross. Oh most holy Virgin, after thou with so great love hadst given thy Son to the world for our salvation, behold the world returns him to thee again! But oh, my God, how dost thou return him to me? said Mary to the world. My Son was white and ruddy: “Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus:” but thou hast returned him to me blackened with bruises, and red, not with a ruddy color, but with the wounds thou hast inflicted upon him; he was beautiful, now there is no more beauty in him; he is all deformity. All were enamored with his aspect, now he excites horror in all who look upon him. Oh, how many swords, says St. Bonaventure, pierced the soul of this mother, when she received the body of her Son after it was taken from the cross: “O quot gladii animam matris pertransierunt!” Let us consider what anguish it would cause any mother to receive the lifeless body of a son! it was revealed to St. Bridget, that to take down the body of Jesus, three ladders were placed against the cross. Those holy disciples first drew out the nails from the hands and feet, and according to Metaphrastes, gave them in charge to Mary. Then one supported the upper part of the body of Jesus, the other the lower, and thus took it down from the cross. Bernardine de Bustis describes the afflicted mother as raising herself, and extending her arms to meet her dear Son; she embraces him, and then sits down at the foot of the cross. She sees his mouth open, his eye shut, she examines the lacerated flesh, and those exposed bones; she takes off the crown, and sees the cruel injury made by those thorns, in that sacred head; she looks upon those pierced hands and feet, and says: Ah, my Son, to what has the love thou didst bear to men reduced thee! But what evil hast thou done to them, that they have treated thee so cruelly? Thou wast my Father, Bernardine de Bustis imagines her to say, my brother, my spouse, my delight, my glory, my all.[18805] Oh, my Son, behold how I am afflicted, look upon me and console me; but thou dost look upon me no more. Speak, speak to me but one word, and console me; but thou dost speak no more, for thou art dead. Then turning to those barbarous instruments, she said: Oh cruel thorns, oh nails, oh merciless spear, how could you thus torture your Creator? But what thorns, what nails? Alas! sinners, she exclaimed, it is you who have thus cruelly treated my Son.

Thus Mary spoke and complained of us. But if now she were capable of suffering, what would she say? What grief would she feel to see that men after the death of her Son, continue to torment and crucify him by their sins? Let us no longer give pain to this sorrowful mother; and if we also have hither to grieved her by our sins, let us now do what she directs. She says to us: Return, ye transgressors, to the heart: “Redite, prævaricatores, ad cor.”[18806] Sinners, return to the wounded heart of my Jesus; return as penitents, for he will receive you. Flee from him to him, she continues to say with Guerric the Abbot; from the Judge to the Redeemer, from the tribunal to the cross.[18807] The Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget that she closed the eyes of her Son, when he was taken down from the cross, but she could not close his arms; “Ejus brachia flectere non potui.” Jesus Christ giving us to understand by this, that he desired to remain with open arms to receive all penitent sinners who return to him. Oh world, continues Mary, behold, then, thy time is the time of lovers: “Et ecce, tempus tuum, tempus amantium.”[18808] Now that my Son, oh world, has died to save thee, this is no longer for thee a time of fear, but of love: a time to love him who has desired to suffer so much in order to show thee the love he bore thee. Therefore, says St. Bernard, is the heart of Jesus wounded that, through the visible wound, the invisible wound of love may be seen.[18809] If then, concludes Mary, in the words of the Abbot of Celles, my Son had wished his side to be opened that he might give thee his heart,[18810] it is right, oh man, that thou shouldst give him thy heart. And if you wish, oh children of

Mary, to find a place in the heart of Jesus without fear of being cast out, go, says Ubertino of Casale, go with Mary, for she will obtain grace for you;[18811] and in the following example we have a beautiful proof of this.

EXAMPLE

The Disciple relates[18812] that there was once a poor sinner who, among other crimes, had killed his father and a brother, and therefore became a fugitive. Happening to hear one day during Lent, a sermon upon the divine mercy, he went to the preacher himself to make his confession. The confessor having heard his crimes, sent him to an altar of the sorrowful mother to pray that she might obtain for him compunction and pardon of his sins. The sinner obeyed, and began to pray, when behold, suddenly overpowered by contrition, he falls down dead. On the following day when the priest recommended to the people to pray for the deceased, a white dove appeared in the church and let fall a card at the feet of the priest. He took it up, and found these words written on it: “The soul of the dead, when it left the body, immediately went to paradise; and do you continue to preach the infinite mercy of God.”

PRAYER

Oh afflicted Virgin! oh soul, great in virtues and great also in sorrows! for both arise from that great fire of love thou hast for God; thou whose heart can love nothing but God; ah mother, have pity on me, for I have not loved God, and I have so much offended him. Thy sorrows give me great confidence to hope for pardon. But this is not enough; I wish to love my Lord, and who can better obtain this for me than thou—thou who art the mother of fair love? Ah Mary, thou dost console all, comfort me also. Amen.

ON THE SEVENTH DOLOR

THE BURIAL OF THE BODY OF JESUS

WHEN a mother is by the side of a suffering and dying child, she no doubt then feels and suffers all his pains; but when the afflicted child is really dead and about to be buried, and the sorrowful mother takes her last leave of him, oh God! the thought that she is to see him no more is a sorrow that exceeds all other sorrows. Behold, the last sword of sorrow which we are to consider, when Mary, after being present at the death of her Son upon the cross, after having embraced his lifeless body, was finally to leave him in the sepulchre, never more to enjoy his beloved presence.

But that we may better understand this last dolor, let us return to Calvary, again to look upon the afflicted mother, who still holds, clasped in her arms, the lifeless body of her Son. Oh my Son, she seems then to continue to say in the words of Job, my Son, thou art changed to be cruel towards me: “Mutatus es mihi in crudelem.”[18813] Yes, for all thy beauty, grace, virtue, and loveliness, all the signs of special love thou hast shown me, the peculiar favors thou hast bestowed on me, are all changed into so many darts of sorrow, which the more they have inflamed my love for thee, so much the more cause me cruelly to feel the pain of having lost thee. Ah, my beloved Son, in losing thee I have lost all. Thus St. Bernard speaks in her name: Oh truly begotten of God, thou wast to me a father, a son, a spouse; thou wast my life! Now I am deprived of my father, my spouse, and my Son, for with my Son whom I have lost, I lose all things.[18814]

Thus Mary, clinging to her Son, was dissolved in grief; but those holy disciples, fearing lest this poor mother would expire there through agony, went to take the body of her Son from her arms, to bear it away for burial. Therefore, with reverential force they took him from her arms, and having embalmed him, wrapped him in a linen cloth already prepared, upon which our Lord wished to leave to the world his image impressed, as may be seen at the present day in Turin. And now they bear him to the sepulchre. The sorrowful funeral train sets forth; the disciples place him on their shoulders; hosts of angels from heaven accompany him; those holy women follow him; and the afflicted mother follows in their company her Son to the grave. When they had reached the appointed place, how gladly would Mary have buried herself there alive with her Son! “Oh how willingly,” said the Virgin to St. Bridget, “would I have remained there alive with my Son, if it had been his will!”[18815] But since this was not the divine will, the authors relate that she herself accompanied the sacred body of Jesus into the sepulchre, where, as Baronius narrates, they deposited the nails and the crown of thorns. In raising the stone to close the sepulchre, the disciples of the Saviour had to turn to the Virgin, and say to her: Now, oh Lady, we must close the sepulchre; have patience, look upon thy Son, and take leave of him for the last time. Then, oh my beloved Son, must the afflicted mother have said, then shall I see thee no more? Receive then, this last time that I look upon thee, receive the last farewell from me thy dear mother, and receive my heart which I leave buried with thee. The Virgin, says St. Fulgentius, earnestly desired that her soul should be buried with the body of Christ.[18816] And Mary herself made this revelation to St. Bridget: “I can truly say, that at the burial of my Son, one sepulchre contained as it were two hearts.”[18817]

Finally, they take the stone and close up in the holy sepulchre the body of Jesus, that great treasure, greater than any in heaven and on earth. And here let us remark, that Mary left her heart buried with Jesus, because Jesus was all her treasure: “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”[18818] And where shall we keep our hearts buried? With creatures? In the mire? And why not with Jesus, who, although he has ascended to heaven, has wished to remain, not dead but alive, in the most holy sacrament of the altar, precisely in order that he may have with him and possess our hearts? But let us return to Mary. Before quitting the sepulchre, according to St. Bonaventure, she blessed that sacred stone, saying: Oh happy stone, that doth now inclose that body which was contained nine months in my womb, I bless thee, and envy thee; I leave thee to guard my Son for me, who is my only good, my only love. And then turning to the eternal Father, she said: Oh Father, to thee I recommend him, who is thy Son and mine; and thus bidding a last farewell to her Son, and to the sepulchre, she returned to her own house. This poor mother went away so afflicted and sad, according to St. Bernard, that she moved many to tears even against their will: “Multos etiam invitos ad lacrymas provocabat;” so that wherever she passed, all wept who met her: “Omnes plorabant qui obviabant ei,” and could not restrain their tears. And he adds, that those holy disciples, and the women who accompanied her, mourned for her even more than for their Lord.[18819]

St. Bonaventure says, that her two sisters covered her with a mourning cloak: The sisters of our Lady wrapped her in a veil as a widow, covering as it were her whole countenance.[18820] And he also says, that passing, on her return, before the cross, still wet with the blood of her Jesus, she was the first to adore it: Oh holy cross, she exclaimed, I kiss thee and adore thee; for thou art no longer an infamous wood, but a throne of love, and an altar of mercy, consecrated by the blood of the divine Lamb, who has been sacrificed upon thee, for the salvation of the world. She then leaves the cross and returns to her house; there the afflicted mother casts her eyes around, and no longer sees her Jesus; but instead of the presence of her dear Son, all the memorials of his holy life and cruel death are before her. There she is reminded of the embraces she gave her Son in the stable of Bethlehem, of the conversations held with him for so many years in the shop of Nazareth: she is reminded of their mutual affection, of his loving looks, of the words of eternal life that came forth from that divine mouth. And then comes before her the fatal scene of that very day; she sees those nails, those thorns, that lacerated flesh of her Son, those deep wounds, those uncovered bones, that open mouth, those closed eyes. Alas! what a night of sorrow was that night for Mary! The sorrowful mother turned to St. John, and said mournfully: Ah, John, where is thy master? Then she asked of Magdalen: Daughter, tell me where is thy beloved? Oh God! who has taken him from us? Mary weeps, and all those who are with her weep. And thou, oh my soul, dost thou not weep! Ah, turn to Mary, and say to her with St. Bonaventure: Let me, oh my Lady, let me weep; thou art innocent, I am guilty.[18821] At least entreat her to permit thee to weep with her: “Fac ut tecum lugeam.” She weeps for love, and thou dost weep through sorrow for thy sins. And thus weeping, thou mayest have the happy lot of him of whom we read in the following example.

EXAMPLE

Father Engelgrave relates,[18822] that a certain religious was so tormented by scruples, that sometimes he was almost driven to despair, but having great devotion to Mary, the mother of sorsows, he had recourse to her in the agony of his spirit, and was much comforted by contemplating her dolors. Death came, and the devil tormented him more than ever with scruples, and tempted him to despair. When, behold our merciful mother, seeing her poor son so afflicted, appeared to him, and said to him: “And why, oh my son, art thou so overcome with sorrow, thou who hast so often consoled me by thy compassion for my sorrows?[18823] Be comforted,” she said to him;” Jesus sends me to thee to console thee; be comforted, rejoice, and come with me to paradise.” And at these words the devout religious tranquilly expired, full of consolation and confidence.

PRAYER

My afflicted mother, I will not leave thee alone to weep; no, I wish to keep thee company with my tears. This grace I ask of thee to-day: obtain for me a continual remembrance of the passion of Jesus, and of thine also, and a tender devotion to them, that all the remaining days of my life may be spent in weeping for thy sorrows, oh my mother, and for those of my Redeemer. I hope that these dolors will give me the confidence and strength not to despair at the hour of my death, at the sight of the offences I have committed against my Lord. By these must I obtain pardon, perseverance, paradise, where I hope to rejoice with thee, and sing the infinite mercy of my God through all eternity: thus I hope, thus may it be. Amen, amen.

Whoever wishes to practise the devotion of reciting the chaplet of the dolors of Mary, will find it at the end of the book. I composed this many years since, and insert it anew here for the convenience of the servants of Mary, whom I pray in their charity to recommend me to her when they meditate upon her dolors.

Oh Lady, who dost ravish the heart of men with thy sweetness, hast thou not ravished mine? Oh, ravisher of hearts, when wilt thou restore to me my heart? Do with it as with thine own, and place it in the side of thy Son. Then I shall possess what I hope for, because thou art our hope.[18824]

—ARTICLES—

- INDEX
  - ARTICLES BY ALPHONSUS
    - CONTENTS
    - HOW TO CONVERSE WITH GOD
    - WHAT WILL HELL BE LIKE?
    - DAILY DEVOTIONS TO SAINT JOSEPH
    - MEDITATION MADE EASY
  - ARTICLES ABOUT ALPHONSUS
    - CONTENTS
    - SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI 1
    - SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI 2
    - SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI 3

ARTICLES
BY ALPHONSUS

CONTENTS

- INDEX
  - ARTICLES BY ALPHONSUS
    - CONTENTS
    - HOW TO CONVERSE WITH GOD
      - CHAPTER 1
LOVE AND CONFIDENCE
      - CHAPTER 2
WHY HAVE YOU LOVED ME?
      - CHAPTER 3
THE MERCIES OF THE LORD
      - CHAPTER 4
THE PARADISE OF GOD
      - CHAPTER 5
“TASTE AND SEE”
      - CHAPTER 6
EVERY MOMENT OF EVERY HOUR
      - CHAPTER 7
LOVE WILL FIND WORDS
      - CHAPTER 8
SOURCE OF ALL CONSOLATION
      - CHAPTER 9
THE GOD OF SALVATION
      - CHAPTER 10
REJOICE IN THE LORD
      - CHAPTER 11
“A CONTRITE AND HUMBLE HEART”

CHAPTER 12
WHAT WILL YOU HAVE ME DO, LORD?

CHAPTER 13
“AFTER THIS OUR EXILE ”

CHAPTER 14
SANCTIFY EVERY DAY

CHAPTER 15
EVERY ACTION WITH GOD AND FOR GOD

CHAPTER 16
KEEP ETERNITY NEAR AT HAND

CHAPTER 17
CREATION’S HYMN OF PRAISE

CHAPTER 18
GOD YOUR ONLY GOOD

CHAPTER 19
CONFORMITY WITH THE WILL OF GOD

CHAPTER 20
ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE

SHORT PRAYERS AND ASPIRATIONS

WHAT WILL HELL BE LIKE?

WHAT WILL HELL BE LIKE?

WE EXPECT REWARD OR PUNISHMENT

TEACHING OF PAGAN PHILOSOPHERS

BELIEF OF PAGANS

WHERE IS HELL LOCATED?

CATHOLIC TEACHING

HELL IS A DEFINITE PLACE

PAINS OF HELL

FIRE OF HELL

CAN A SPIRITUAL SOUL FEEL FIRE?

- PUNISHMENT BY COLD
- REMORSE OF CONSCIENCE
- SUFFERING FROM DEVILS AND DARKNESS
- PAIN OF LOSS OF GOD
- TEACHING OF ST. THOMAS
- GOD MAKES HEAVEN
- GOD MAKES HELL
- ETERNAL CHOICE IS MADE DURING LIFE
- GREATEST PAIN OF HELL
- THE DAMNED DO NOT FORGET
- THE DAMNED KNOW NOTHING ABOUT US
- DO THE DAMNED HAVE FAITH?
- THE WILL IS SET ON EVIL
- DO THE DAMNED WISH EVIL TO OTHERS?
- CASE OF THE RICH MAN IN HELL
- DO THE DAMNED REPENT OF SIN?
- HATRED OF GOD
- DO THE DAMNED DESIRE TO BE DESTROYED?
- PUNISHMENT OF HELL IS ETERNAL
- THIS PUNISHMENT IS NOT UNJUST
- HOW PUNISHMENT IS MEASURED
- THE PATIENCE OF GOD
- JESUS’ PARABLE OF DIVES AND LAZARUS
- FATIMA CHILDREN’S VISION OF HELL

DAILY DEVOTIONS TO SAINT JOSEPH
- PRAYER FOR EACH DAY

FIRST DAY

SECOND DAY

THIRD DAY

FOURTH DAY

FIFTH DAY

SIXTH DAY

SEVENTH DAY

EIGHTH DAY

NINTH DAY

TENTH DAY

ELEVENTH DAY

TWELFTH DAY

THIRTEENTH DAY

FOURTEENTH DAY

FIFTEENTH DAY

SIXTEENTH DAY

SEVENTEENTH DAY

EIGHTEENTH DAY

NINETEENTH DAY

TWENTIETH DAY

TWENTY-FIRST DAY

TWENTY-SECOND DAY

TWENTY-THIRD DAY

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY

- TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY
- TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY
- TWENTY-NINTH DAY
- THIRTIETH DAY
- THIRTY-FIRST DAY
- LITANY OF SAINT JOSEPH
- PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH

MEDITATION MADE EASY

- METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER
- PREPARATORY PRAYER
- MEDITATION
- CONSIDERATION
- AFFECTIONS
- PETITIONS
- RESOLUTIONS
- CONCLUSION
- ADDITIONAL REMARKS
- EXTRACTS FROM ST. ALPHONSUS’ BOOK ON MENTAL PRAYER
- THE END FOR WHICH WE MAKE MENTAL PRAYER
- PRAYER OF ST. ALPHONSUS
- ASPIRATIONS OF ST. ALPHONSUS
- SAYINGS OF ST. ALPHONSUS

HOW TO
CONVERSE
WITH GOD

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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CHAPTER 1

LOVE AND CONFIDENCE

JOB was astonished at seeing Almighty God so intent on doing good to us that He seems to have nothing more at heart than to love us and to induce us to love Him in return. In his amazement he cried out to the Lord: *“What is man that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him?” (Ps.* 8:5). Is it not a mistake, then, to think it a lack of respect for God’s infinite Majesty to act toward Him with great confidence and familiarity?

Assuredly, Loving Souls, you should go to God with all humility and respect, humbling yourselves in His presence, especially when you remember your past ingratitude and sins. Yet you should practice the greatest possible love and confidence in treating with Him. True, He is infinite Majesty, but He is also infinite Goodness and infinite Love. There can be no greater Lord than God; neither can there be a more ardent lover than He. Far from despising our confidence in Him, He rejoices that we have it—confidence and familiarity and affection like that which little children show toward their mothers.

Behold how He invites us to come to Him, and the loving embraces which He promises to lavish on us: *“You shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knees they shall caress you. As one whom the mother caresseth, so* *will I comfort you.” (Is.* 66:12–13). Just as a mother finds pleasure in taking her little child on her lap, there to feed and caress him, in like manner our loving God shows His fondness for His beloved souls who have given themselves entirely to Him and have placed all their hope in His goodness.

CHAPTER 2

WHY HAVE YOU LOVED ME?

CONSIDER that no one—whether friend or brother, father or mother, lover or spouse—loves you more than your God. And divine grace is the inestimable treasure through which vile creatures and servants like ourselves become dear friends of our Creator. *“For she is an infinite treasure to men! which they that use, become the friends of God.” (Wis.* 7:14). It was for the purpose of increasing our confidence that He *“emptied Himself” (Phil.* 2:7), so to speak, humbling Himself to the point of becoming a man in order to live in familiar converse with us. *“He conversed with men.” (Bar.* 3:38). He went so far as to become a little Babe and to live in poverty and die on a cross for our sake. He even placed Himself under the species of bread so as to be with us always and in the most intimate union. *“He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.” (John* 6:57).

In short, so great is God’s love for you that He seems to love no one but you. And therefore, you should love no one but Him. You should be able to say to Him: *“My Beloved to me, and I to Him.” (Cant.* 2:16). My God has given Himself entirely to me, and I give my whole self to Him; He has chosen me for His beloved, and I choose Him from among all for my only love. *“My Beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.” (Cant.* 5:10).

Often, therefore, speak to God in these words: “O my Lord, why have You loved me so much? What good do You find in my poor self? Have You forgotten the injuries I have done You? But since You have treated me with so much love—for instead of condemning me to Hell, You have given me graces without number—I will henceforth love no one but You, my God and my all. What grieves me most in my past offenses, O my loving God, is not so much the punishment I have deserved, as the displeasure I have given You, Who are worthy of infinite love. But You never reject a repentant and humble heart. *'A contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.' (Ps.* 50:19). Now indeed I wish for no one else but You alone in this life and in the next. *'For what have I in Heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? . . . Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.' (Ps.* 72:25–26). You alone are and will always be the only Lord of my heart and will; You alone my only good, my heaven, my hope, my all. *'Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.'* " *(Ps.* 72:26).

CHAPTER 3

THE MERCIES OF THE LORD

IF you wish to strengthen your confidence in God still more, often recall the loving way in which He has acted toward you, and how mercifully He has tried to bring you out of your sinful life, to break your attachment to the things of earth and draw you to His love. With such thoughts in your mind, now that you have resolved to love Him and please Him with all your strength, your only fear should be to fear God too much and to place too little confidence in Him. There can be no surer pledge of His love for you than His past mercies toward you. God is displeased at the diffidence of souls who love Him sincerely and whom He Himself loves. If, therefore, you wish to please His loving heart, go to Him henceforth with the greatest possible confidence and affection.

"Behold, I have graven thee in My hands: thy walls are always before My eyes." (Is. 49:16). "Beloved Soul," says the Lord, "why do you fear? Why are you afraid? Your name is written in My hands so that I may never forget to do you good. Perhaps you are afraid of your enemies? Know that I can never forget to protect you, since I have always before My eyes the charge of your defense." With this thought to rejoice him, David said to God: *"O Lord, Thou hast crowned us, as with a shield of Thy good will." (Ps.* 5:13). Who, O Lord, can ever do us harm if Your loving kindness is cast all around us as a wall of defense?

Above all, reanimate your confidence by thinking of the gift which God has given us in the person of Jesus Christ. *"God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son." (John* 3:16). How can we fear, asks the Apostle, that God will ever deny us anything since He has given us His own

Son? *“He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?” (Rom.* 8:32).

CHAPTER 4

THE PARADISE OF GOD

“MY *delights were to be with the children of men.” (Prov.* 8:31). The heart of man is, so to speak, the paradise of God. Oh, love the God who loves you! Since His delights are to be with you, let yours be found in Him. Spend all the days of your life with Him in whose company you hope to pass an eternity of bliss.

Acquire the habit of speaking to God as if you were alone with Him, familiarly and with confidence and love, as to the dearest and most loving of friends. It is a great mistake, as we have already remarked, to be afraid of Him and to act in His presence like a timid and craven slave trembling with fright before his master. But a far greater mistake it would be to think that to converse with God is wearisome and bitter. No, it cannot be. *“For her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness, but joy and gladness.” (Wis.* 8:16). Ask those who love Him with a sincere love, and they will tell you that they find no greater or prompter relief amid the troubles of their life than in loving conversation with their Divine Friend.

You are not asked to apply your mind continually to the thought of God and lay aside the fulfillment of your duties and your recreations. Nothing else is required than to act toward God, in the midst of your occupations, as you do, even when busy, toward those who love you and whom you love.

Your God is ever beside you—indeed, He is even within you. *“In Him we live, and move, and are.” (Acts* 17:28). Not only is there no need of an intermediary through whom He would want you to speak to Him, but He finds His delight in having you treat with Him personally and in all confidence. Speak to Him often of your business, your plans, your troubles, your fears—of everything that concerns you. But above all, converse with Him confidently and frankly; for God is not wont to speak to a soul that does not speak to Him.

CHAPTER 5

“TASTE AND SEE”

IF a soul is a stranger to God’s conversation, she will hardly hear His voice when He speaks to her, as He Himself complains: *“Our sister is little . . . What shall we do to our sister in the day when she is to be spoken to?” (Cant.* 8:8). Our sister is like a little child in My love: How can I speak to her if she does not understand what I say? God wishes to be feared as a mighty and terrible Lord by those who despise His grace; but on the other hand, He wishes to be treated like a most affectionate friend by those who love Him. Hence, He desires that we speak to Him often with familiarity and without any restriction.

True, the greatest reverence is due to God; but if He gives you the grace of feeling His presence and the desire to speak to Him as to the one who loves you more than anyone else, tell Him your thoughts freely and confidently. *“Wisdom . . . is easily seen by them that love her, and is found by them that seek her.” (Wis.* 6:13). When you desire His love, He does not wait until you go to Him, but He anticipates you and comes to you Himself with the graces and remedies you need. He only waits for you to speak to Him, in order to prove that He is near at hand, ready to hear and comfort you. *“In my affliction I called upon the Lord . . . and my cry before Him came into His ears.” (Ps.* 17:7).

God is everywhere by His immensity; but He has fixed a special abode in two places: in Heaven, where He is present by the glory He imparts to the Blessed; and on earth, in the humble soul that loves Him: *“The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart: and He will save the humble of spirit.” (Ps.* 33:19). Although our God dwells in the highest Heaven, still He does not disdain to treat with His faithful servants day and night in their grottoes or in their cells. There He bestows on them His divine consolations, a single one of which far exceeds all worldly delights—consolations which can be appreciated only by one who has experienced them. *“O taste and see that the Lord is sweet . . .” (Ps.* 33:9).

CHAPTER 6

EVERY MOMENT OF EVERY HOUR

FRIENDS in the world have their hours of conversation together, but they also have hours of separation. Such is not the case, however, with God and you; if you but wish, there will never be any separation from Him: *“If thou sleep, thou shalt not fear: thou shalt rest, and thy sleep shall be sweet . . . For the Lord will be at thy side.” (Prov.* 3:24, 26). God will be beside you when you sleep, always keeping watch over you: *“When I go into my house, I shall repose myself with her: for her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness.” (Wis.* 8:16). He does not go away from your bedside when you rest. Rather, He continues to think of you always, so that if you awake during the night, He may speak to you by His inspirations and receive in return from you an act of love or of oblation or of thanksgiving; and in this way, even during the night, He keeps up His loving conversation with you. Sometimes He even speaks to you in your sleep and makes His voice sound in your ears, that you may put His wishes into execution when you awake. *“I will speak to him in a dream” (Num.* 12:6).

And again in the morning, He is there waiting to hear some acts of love and confidence from you and to treasure your waking thoughts and the work you promise to do for Him during the day, as well as the sufferings you will patiently bear for His glory and love. Now just as He is sure to be present with you at the very moment you awake, even so, do not fail on your part to cast a loving glance at Him and rejoice at hearing from your God Himself the glad news that He is not far from you as He was in times past because of your sins. He loves you and wishes to be loved by you, and hence when you awake, He lovingly intimates to you His commandment: *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.” (Matt.* 22:37).

CHAPTER 7

LOVE WILL FIND WORDS

YOU ought therefore never to forget God’s presence, as most men do. Speak to Him as often as you can, for it does not tire Him, nor does He hold it in contempt, as do great men of the world. If you love Him, you will always have something to say to Him. Tell Him whatever comes to your mind about yourself and your affairs, as you would tell an intimate friend. Do not look upon Him as a high and mighty lord who desires to speak only to great ones—and then, only of great things. Our God delights in stooping down to converse with us, and He rejoices when we make known to Him our most trivial everyday affairs.

Such is His love and care for you that He seems to have no one else but you of whom to think. He is so concerned with your interests that He seems to have no providence except to preserve you, no almighty power except to help you, no mercy or kindness except to have compassion on you, to do you good and win you to His love and confidence by His kind attention.

Then freely open your heart to Him and ask Him to lead you to do His Divine Will in a perfect manner. Let all your designs and desires be directed only toward knowing His good pleasure and gratifying His Divine Heart. *“Bless God at all times, and desire of Him to direct thy ways, and that all thy counsels may abide in Him.” (Tob.* 4:20).

Do not say: “But why should I make known to God all my needs, since He sees and knows them better than I?” Surely He does, but He acts as if He were not aware of the wants which you neglect to disclose to Him and for which you do not ask His divine help. Our Saviour knew very well that Lazarus was dead; yet He did not reveal the fact that He knew it until Magdalen told Him, and then He consoled her by raising her brother to life.

When, therefore, you are suffering from some sickness, temptation, persecution or other trouble, go to Him at once and ask Him to reach out to you His helping hand. No sooner will you have put before His eyes your affliction by saying: *“Behold, O Lord, for I am in distress . . .” (Lam.* 1:20), than He will console you, or at least give you strength to suffer patiently the passing trial, and it will have been better for you to have had that trial than to have been delivered from it. Make known to God all feelings of sadness or fear that oppress you, and say to Him: “O my God, all my hopes are in You. I offer You this affliction and conform myself to Your Will. But have pity on me, and either deliver me from it or give me strength to suffer it.” And God will surely fulfill in you the promise He made in the Gospel always to console and comfort the afflicted when they have recourse to Him: “*Come to Me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you.” (Matt.* 11:28).

CHAPTER 8

SOURCE OF ALL CONSOLATION

GOD will not be displeased if you seek consolation from your friends; still, He wishes that principal recourse be had to Him. At least, after you have in vain sought solace from creatures, come to your Creator and say to Him: “Men, O Lord, have nothing but words for me: *‘and my familiar friends also are departed from me.’ (Job* 6:13). They cannot raise my low spirits; I will never again seek consolation from them. You are all my hope and all my love: from You alone do I look for comfort—and my comfort will be to do what pleases You most on this occasion. I am ready to bear this cross during my whole life and for all eternity, if such be Your good pleasure. Only help me.”

Do not be afraid that you will displease Him if you at times quietly complain to Him and say: *“Why, O Lord, hast Thou retired afar off?” (Ps.* 9:1). “You know that I love You and long for nothing else than Your love. Take pity on me and help me, do not forsake me.” If your anguish does not diminish but instead continues to bother you, then unite your prayers to those of Jesus Christ dying in utter desolation on the Cross, and cry out to Him for mercy, saying: *“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” (Matt.* 27:46).

This trial should serve but to increase your humility at the thought that one who has offended God does not deserve consolation; and it should occasion a renewal of your confidence in Him, in knowing that God does or permits everything only for your good: *“And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good.” (Rom.* 8:28). The more weary and discouraged you may feel, the more confidently should you cry out: *“The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?” (Ps.* 26:1). “You, O Lord, must enlighten me, You must save me. I trust in You.” *“In Thee, O my God, I put my trust; let me not be ashamed.” (Ps.* 24:2). Prayers such as these should restore peace to your soul, for no one has ever been lost who has placed his hopes in Him. *“For none of them that wait on Thee shall be confounded.” (Ps.* 24:3).

CHAPTER 9

THE GOD OF SALVATION

CONSIDER that your God loves you more than you can possibly love Him. What do you fear? David found comfort in these words: *“The Lord hath been mindful of us . . .” (Ps.* 113:12). Then you should say to Him: “Into Your arms I cast myself, O my God. I want to think of nothing but of loving You and giving You pleasure. Behold I am ready to do whatever You shall ask of me. Not only do You desire my welfare; You are solicitous for it. Therefore, I leave to You the care of my salvation. In You is my rest, and it will always be in You, since You will that I place all my hopes in You. *’In peace in the selfsame I will sleep, and I will rest: For Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope.’ “ (Ps.* 4:9–10).

“Think of the Lord in goodness.” (Wis. 1:1). The wise man exhorts us by these words to have greater confidence in the divine mercy than fear of the divine justice, since God is far more inclined to do good than to chastise. So says St. James: *“Mercy exalteth itself above judgment.” (Jas.* 2:13). Hence the Apostle St. Peter warns us that in the fears we feel for our concerns, be they temporal or eternal, we must abandon ourselves entirely to the good God, who has our salvation so much at heart: *“Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you.” (1 Ptr.* 5:7). In this same regard, how beautiful is the title which David gives the Lord when he says that our God is the God who seeks to save: *“For He is my God and my Saviour . . .” (Ps.* 61:7). This means, according to [St. Robert] Cardinal Bellarmine, that God’s own particular office is, not to condemn, but to save everyone; for even though He threatens with His disfavor those who despise Him, His mercy is assured to those who fear Him, as our Blessed Mother sang in her *Magnificat: “And His mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear Him.” (Luke* 1:50).

These texts of Scripture I set before you, O Devout Soul, in order that, when you are troubled by the thought whether you will be saved or lost, whether you are predestined or not, you may relieve your mind by considering the desire God has to save you, as is proved by His promises, if only you stand firm in your resolution to serve and love Him as He demands.

CHAPTER 10

REJOICE IN THE LORD

WHEN you receive some pleasant news, do not act as certain unfaithful and ungrateful persons are wont to do: They pray to God in adversity but forget and abandon Him in prosperity. Be as faithful to Him as you are to a friend who loves you and desires your welfare. Go at once to God and tell Him of your joy; praise and thank Him for it, and thus acknowledge that it is entirely a gift from His bounty. And rejoice in this happiness because it has been bestowed upon you by His good pleasure. In Him alone, therefore, seek joy and consolation: *"My soul shall rejoice in the Lord; and shall be delighted in His salvation." (Ps.* 34:9). Say to Him: "My Jesus, I bless You and will always bless You for the many graces bestowed on me when I deserve not graces but chastisements because of my many offenses against You." Say to Him with the Sacred Spouse: " *'In our gates are all fruits: the new and the old, my Beloved, I have kept for Thee.' (Cant.* 7:13). I thank You, O Lord; I wish to be mindful of Your benefits, both past and present, in order to render You honor and glory for them forever."

But if you love God, you should rejoice more in His happiness than in your own. One who has a very dear friend sometimes feels happier over his friend's good than over his own personal welfare. Then take comfort in the thought that your God is infinitely blessed. Say to Him often: "My beloved Lord, I rejoice more in Your happiness than in any good thing I have; indeed I do, because I love You more than I love myself."

Another mark of confidence which greatly gratifies your loving God is to cast yourself at once at His feet and ask pardon when you commit some fault. Consider that God is so inclined to forgive sinners that He weeps over their loss when they stray far from Him and live in a state of spiritual death. He lovingly calls them in these words: *"Why will you die, O house of Israel? . . . Return ye and live." (Ezech.* 18:31–32). He promises to welcome the sinner who has abandoned Him as soon as he returns to His arms: *"Return to Me, and I will return to you, saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal.* 3:7). Oh, would that sinners knew with what tenderness the Lord is waiting for them to grant them pardon! *"Therefore the Lord waiteth that He may have mercy on you . . . He will surely have pity on thee . . ." (Is.* 30:18–19). If only they realized the desire He has not to chastise them but to see them converted, to embrace them and press them to His Heart. He makes this solemn declaration: *"I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." (Ezech.* 33:11). He goes so far as to say: *“If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow.” (Is.* 1:18). In other words: “Sinners, repent of having offended Me and then come to Me, and if I do not forgive you, accuse Me, blame Me, and treat Me as one who has broken his promise. But I will stand by My promise. If you come to Me, rest assured that, even though your conscience be black, My grace will make it white as snow.”

CHAPTER 11

“A CONTRITE AND HUMBLE HEART”

FINALLY, God has declared that when a person repents of having offended Him, He forgets all his sins: *“And their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.” (Heb.* 10:17). So whenever you fall into some sin, raise your eyes at once to God, make an act of love and, while acknowledging your sin, confidently hope for pardon and say to Him: “ *‘Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick’ (John* 11:3); the heart which You love is sick and covered with sores: *’O Lord . . . heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.’ “ (Ps.* 40:5). Say: ’You go about seeking repentant sinners: behold one of them at Your feet, seeking You. The evil is done: what am I to do? You will not have me lose heart. Even though I have sinned, You wish me well, and I am sorry for the displeasure I have caused You. I propose not to do it again. You who are that God *‘who is gracious and merciful: patient and plenteous in mercy’ (Ps.* 144:8), forgive me. Let me hear the words You once spoke to Magdalen: *‘Thy sins are forgiven thee’ (Luke* 7:48), and give me strength to be faithful in the future.”

But particularly when you have fallen into sin, cast a glance at Jesus on the Cross so that you may not be discouraged; offer His merits to the Eternal Father, and then firmly hope for pardon, since, in order to forgive you, He has *“spared not even His own Son . . .” (Rom.* 8:32). Say to Him full of confidence: *“Look on the face of Thy Christ.” (Ps.* 83:10). “O my God, look on Your Son who died for me; and through love of Him, forgive me.”

Reflect attentively, O Devout Soul, on the teaching commonly given by spiritual masters: namely, that you should at once turn to God after you have been unfaithful to Him, even though it be the hundredth time in the day, and you should be at peace again after your faults and after recommending yourself to God, as has been said. Otherwise, if your soul remains discouraged and troubled by the sin you have committed, you will converse but little with God; your confidence in Him will grow less; your desire to love Him will become cold; and you will make little progress in the way of the Lord. On the other hand, if you turn to God at once to ask His pardon and to promise amendment, your faults will help you to advance further in divine love. It is not a rare occurrence among intimate friends that their friendship is strengthened when one has displeased the other but has afterwards humbled himself and asked pardon. Do likewise: Let your sins serve to bind you more closely in love to your God.

CHAPTER 12

WHAT WILL YOU HAVE ME DO, LORD?

WHEN you are troubled by any sort of doubt, whether it be caused by yourself or by others, act as do faithful friends who take counsel from each other about any matter that presents itself: Never fail to give God a proof of your confidence by asking His advice and praying to Him to enlighten you to resolve on what will be to His good pleasure. *"Put Thou words in my mouth, and strengthen the resolution in my heart." (Jdth.* 9:18). "Tell me, O Lord, what You wish me to do or to answer, and that will I do. *'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.' " (1 Kgs.* 3:9).

Again, prove to God your confidence by recommending to Him not only your personal needs, but also those of others. God is greatly pleased when, forgetful occasionally of your own affairs, you speak to Him about what concerns His glory, about your neighbor's difficulties, especially about those who are troubled and afflicted, about the souls in Purgatory who yearn to see Him, and about poor sinners who are deprived of His grace. For these latter in particular, say to God: "O Lord, You are so lovable and worthy of infinite love! How can You bear that so many souls in this world, on whom You lavish such great favors, refuse to know and to love You? Nay, they even offend and despise You. Ah, most loving God, make Yourself known, make Yourself loved! *'Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come!' (Matt.* 7:9–10). May Your name be adored and loved by all men! Let Your love rule supreme in all hearts! I beseech You, let me not depart from You without You granting me some grace for those poor souls on whose behalf I am praying to You.”

CHAPTER 13

“AFTER THIS OUR EXILE ”

IT is said that there is in Purgatory a special suffering, called the pain of languishing, for those souls who, while on earth, had little desire for Heaven. This is as it should be, for one shows small appreciation for the beautiful and eternal kingdom which Our Redeemer purchased for us by His death if he desires it but little. Therefore, Loving Souls, never forget to sigh often for Heaven, while saying to your God that it seems as if a thousand years separate you from the day on which you will see and love Him face to face. Develop a great longing to leave this land of exile, this place full of sin and fraught with danger of losing His divine grace: a great longing to come to that land of love where you will love Him with all your strength.

Often say to Him: “As long, O Lord, as I live on this earth, I always run the risk of wandering away from You and of losing Your love. When will the day come on which I shall depart from this life where I always offend You? When shall I begin to love You with all my soul and be united to You without fear of losing You any more?” Such was the continual desire of St. Teresa of Avila, to whom the sound of the clock gave fresh joy at the thought that another hour had been struck off her life and the danger of losing God. So intense was her longing for death, which would enable her to see God, that she died from her desire of dying. Therefore, she composed her hymn of love: *“I die, because I do not die.”*

Finally, if you wish to please the loving Heart of your God, try for as long a space of time as you can to converse with Him, with the greatest possible confidence; He will not fail to answer you and even to speak with you Himself. Not that He will make audible sounds strike your ears, but He will answer in words that you will clearly understand in your heart, insofar as you leave conversation with creatures and try to speak with your God—you alone with Him alone: *“I will lead her into the wilderness: and I will speak to her heart.” (Osee* 2:14). Then will He speak to you with those inspirations, those interior lights, those manifestations of His goodness, those gentle knockings at the door of your heart, those pledges of pardon, those feelings of peace, that hope of Heaven, that interior joy, the delightful sweetness of His grace, the loving union and intimate contact with Him: in a word, He will speak to you with those words of love which are readily understood by the souls whom He loves and who seek nothing but Him.

CHAPTER 14

SANCTIFY EVERY DAY

FINALLY, in order to summarize briefly what is scattered throughout the previous pages, I wish to point out a devotional practice which will render all your daily actions pleasing to God. When you awake in the morning, your first thought should be to raise your mind to God and offer Him all the actions of that day, asking Him to help you by His grace. Then make the other morning Christian acts of thanksgiving, love, petition, and the firm resolve of living during that day as if it were the last day of your life. Father St.-Jure teaches that one should, in the morning, make an agreement with the Divine Saviour: namely, that whenever you make certain signs, such as putting your hand on your heart, lifting your eyes heavenward or to the crucifix, or similar things, it is your intention to make an act of love, an act of desire to see Him loved by all, an act of self-offering, and the like.

After you have made the preceding acts, place your soul in the side of Jesus and under the mantle of Mary, and pray the Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus and Mary, to preserve you during the day. Then, before any other action, make at once at least half an hour of mental prayer or meditation; and the principal topic of your meditation should be the sufferings and contempt that our Blessed Lord endured in His Passion. This is the subject which is most precious to devout souls and which most inflames them with divine love.

There are three devotions which you must treasure above all the others if you want to grow in holiness: devotion to the Passion, to the Most Blessed Sacrament, and to the Blessed Virgin. In your meditations make frequent acts of contrition, love of God and self-oblation. The Venerable Father Charles Caraffa, founder of the *Pious Workers*, used to say that one fervent act of love in the morning meditation is sufficient to keep the soul fervent throughout the remainder of the day.

CHAPTER 15

EVERY ACTION WITH GOD AND FOR GOD

ESPECIALLY, then, in your other acts of devotion, such as Confession, Communion, the Divine Office, etc., when engaged in external occupations such as study, manual labor, or the duties of your state of life, do not neglect, at the beginning of every action, to offer it to God and to ask for His help to perform it well. Acquire the habit of retiring often into the cell of your heart, there to be united with God, as St. Catherine of Siena was wont to do. In short, whatever you do, do it with God and for God.

When you leave your room or your house and when you return, recommend yourself to the Blessed Mother by saying a *Hail Mary.* When going to table for your meals, offer to God whatever pleasure or displeasure you may feel in eating or drinking; and after the meal, thank Him by saying: “What benefits, O Lord, You bestow on one who has so greatly offended You!” Sometime during the day, make spiritual reading and a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin; and in the evening, recite the Rosary and make an examination of conscience together with the Christian Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, Contrition and firm purpose of amendment, as well as resolutions to receive the Holy Sacraments during life and at the moment of your death, and to gain all the indulgences attached to these acts. Upon going to bed, reflect that you ought to be in the fire of Hell; and go to sleep with the crucifix in your arms and with these words on your lips: *“In peace in the selfsame I will sleep, and I will rest: For Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope.” (Ps.* 4:9–10).

CHAPTER 16

KEEP ETERNITY NEAR AT HAND

IN order always to keep recollected and united with God in this life, insofar as possible, take advantage of all that you hear and see to raise your mind to God and to remind you of eternity. For example, when you look at water trickling from a leaking container, reflect that, in the same way, your life is ebbing away and death is drawing near. A lamp running low for want of oil should remind you that one day your life also will have to come to an end. At the sight of a funeral or of a corpse, remember that you also will have to die. If you see the great ones of this earth rejoicing in their dignity and wealth, have compassion on their folly and say: “God is enough for me.” *“Some* trust *in chariots, and some in horses: but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God.” (Ps.* 19:8). “They rejoice in vain things: no other glory do I want but to be in God’s grace and to love Him.”

When you witness magnificent obsequies or see imposing monuments on the graves of famous men, say to yourself: “What does all this avail them if they are damned?” When you gaze at the sea, noting whether it be tranquil or stormy, behold in this the difference between a soul that is in God’s grace and one that is not. A tree that has dried up should put you in mind of a soul deprived of God, good for nothing except to be burned. If you should ever see a culprit tremble with shame and fright before his judge or his father or superior because of some grave offense, imagine how frightened a sinner will be in the presence of Christ the Judge! At the rumbling of thunder and when you are afraid, think of the fear that shakes the damned on hearing constantly in Hell the thunders of the divine justice.

CHAPTER 17

CREATION’S HYMN OF PRAISE

IF you ever happen to hear someone who has been condemned to death remark in his grief: “Is there then no escape from death for me?” consider in what state of despair will be the soul that is condemned to Hell and cries out: “Can nothing then prevent my eternal ruin?”

When you view fields and seashores, flowers and fruits, which gladden you with their appearance or with their fragrance, say: “How many beautiful things God has made for me on this earth in order that I may love Him! What further delights He has in store for me in Heaven!” St. Teresa of Avila, on seeing beautiful hills and landscapes, used to say that they reproached her for her ingratitude toward God. The Abbot de Rance, founder of the Trappist Order, was wont to remark that these wonderful things of created nature reminded him of the obligation to love God. St. Augustine said the same in these words: *“Heaven and earth and all things tell me to love You.”* The story is told of a certain holy man who, while walking through the fields, would gently strike with a stick the flowers and plants he met on his way. *“Do not speak any more,”* he would say; *“do not* *reproach me with my ingratitude to God. I hear you; keep quiet; that is enough.”* St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, when she held in her hand a fruit or flower, felt herself wounded by divine love. *“Behold,”* she would say, *“how my God has thought for all eternity of creating this fruit and this flower as a token of His love for me.”*

CHAPTER 18

GOD YOUR ONLY GOOD

WHEN you look at rivers and brooks, think that just as the waters run to the sea without ever stopping, so you too must always run to God, who is your only good. If you happen to be in a vehicle drawn by beasts of burden, say to yourself: “How these animals toil to be of service to me; and how much trouble do I take to serve and please God?” A little dog is faithful to its master for the bit of bread which it receives from him. How much more are you bound to be faithful to God, who has created you and is ever preserving you, who provides you with all goods and lavishes so many blessings on you! When you hear the singing of birds, say: “O my soul, listen to these little creatures praising their Creator. But what do *you* do?” And then make acts of love. On the other hand, when you hear the cock crow, remember that, like St. Peter, at one time you too denied your Master; and renew your sorrow and your tears. Again, when you see the house or place where you committed sin, turn to God and say: *“The sins of my youth and my ignorance do not remember.” (Ps.* 24:7–8).

The sight of valleys made fertile by the waters running down from the mountains above should remind you that, in a similar manner, the grace of God is poured out on humble souls, but abandons the proud. When you see a beautiful church all decorated, consider the beauty of a soul in the state of grace—a real temple of God. The sea reminds us of the immensity and greatness of God. When you see a fire, or candles burning on an altar, say: “How many years I should have been burning in Hell! But since, O Lord, You have preserved me from it, grant that my heart may burn with love for You as that fire, or those candles.” When you gaze at the starlit skies, say with St. Andrew Avellino: *“O my feet, one day you will tread over those stars.”*

CHAPTER 19

CONFORMITY WITH THE WILL OF GOD

IN order often to call to mind the loving mysteries of our Saviour's life: when you see some hay, or a manger or a cave, think of the Infant Jesus in the stable of Bethlehem. A saw, a hammer, a plane or an axe should remind you of Jesus working like an ordinary lad in the workshop of Nazareth. Ropes, thorns, nails and wood should recall the sufferings and death of your Redeemer. The mere sight of a lamb made St. Francis of Assisi weep. *"My Lord,"* he would say, *"was led to death like a lamb for me."* Altars, chalices and patens should make you remember the great love Jesus Christ had for us in giving us the Most Blessed Sacrament.

During the day make frequent offerings of yourself to God, as St. Teresa of Avila was wont to do, by saying: "Here I am, O Lord; do with me what You please. Tell me what You wish me to do for You, and I will do it all." Repeat acts of love for God as often as you can. St. Teresa used to say that acts of love are like wood maintaining the fire of divine love kindled in our hearts.

One day the Venerable Sister Seraphina of Carpi was considering the fact that the mule of the convent was incapable of loving God, and she began to compassionate it by saying: "Poor beast, you do not know God; neither can you love Him"—and the mule acted as though it would give expression to its grief by shedding abundant tears. Thus you who can love God should be incited to make frequent acts of love when you see animals that are unable to know and love Him.

If you fall into some sin, humble yourself at once and rise again with a more fervent act of love. When something you do not want happens to you, offer it to God immediately by an act of conformity with His holy Will, and acquire the habit of always repeating in all adverse situations the words: "Such is God's Will and such also is mine." Acts of resignation are acts of love most dear and pleasing to the Heart of God.

CHAPTER 20

ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE

WHEN you have to make a decision or give some advice on matters of importance, first of all recommend yourself to God, and then set to work or give your answer. Repeat as often as you can during the day the invocation: *"O Lord, make haste to help me." (Ps.* 69:2). Such was the prayer of St. Rose of Lima: *"Help me, O Lord; do not leave me in my own hands."* And therefore often look at the crucifix and at the picture of the Blessed Virgin which you have in your room, and often invoke the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, but particularly when you are tempted.

God, because He is infinite goodness, has a great desire to grant His graces to us. The Venerable Alvarez one day saw our Saviour with His hands full of graces, going about seeking to whom He might dispense them. He wishes, however, that we ask Him for them: *"Ask and you shall receive." (John* 16:24). Otherwise, He withdraws His hand. But He willingly opens it to those who pray to Him. And who has ever called upon God, says Sirach, and gone away unanswered? *"Who hath called upon Him, and He despised him?" (Ecclus.* 2:12). David has written that the Lord is not only merciful, but exceedingly merciful, to those who pray to Him: *"For Thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild: and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Thee" (Ps.* 85:5).

Oh, how good and bountiful is the Lord to those who seek Him with love! *"The Lord is good to them that hope in Him, to the soul that seeketh Him." (Lam.* 3:25). If He lets even those who do not seek Him find Him —*"I was found by them that did not seek Me" (Rom.* 10:20)—how much more readily will He be found by one who seeks Him, and who seeks Him just to serve Him and to love Him?

Finally, St. Teresa of Avila says: "Just souls upon earth must unite and conform themselves in love to that which the souls of the Blessed do in Heaven." Just as the Saints in Heaven are concerned with God alone and have no other thought and pleasure than that of His glory and of His love, so must you also. On this earth God should be your only happiness, the only object of your affections, the only purpose of all your actions and desires—so that you may arrive at the eternal kingdom where your love will be entirely perfect and full, and where your desires will be completely fulfilled and satisfied.

Live Jesus our love and Mary our hope!

SHORT PRAYERS AND ASPIRATIONS

TO THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

To the King of ages, immortal and invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts: the heavens and the earth are full of Thy glory.

With all our heart and voice, we acknowledge, we praise and we bless Thee, God the Father unbegotten; Thou the only-begotten Son; Thou, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete: O holy and undivided Trinity!

May the most just, the most high and the most lovable Will of God be in all things done, praised, and ever more exalted. Amen.

My God and my All!

My God, grant that I may love Thee, and let the only reward of my love be to love Thee more and more. Amen.

My God, my only Good, Thou art all mine; may I be always Thine.

My God, I give You thanks for what You give, and for what You take away; Your will be done.

My God, make us to be of one mind in the truth, and of one heart in charity.

Teach me, O Lord, to do Thy Will, for Thou art my God.

O Most Holy Trinity, I adore Thee, who art dwelling by Thy grace within my soul.

O Most Holy Trinity, Who art dwelling by Thy grace within my soul, make me love Thee more and more.

O Most Holy Trinity, Who art dwelling by Thy grace within my soul, sanctify me more and more.

Abide with me, O Lord; be my true joy.

Blessed be the Name of the Lord!

My God, pour forth Thy blessings and Thy mercies upon all persons and upon all souls in Purgatory for whom, by reason of charity, gratitude and friendship, I am bound or desire to pray. Amen.

O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

O God, Thou art all-powerful; make me a saint.

ST. ALPHONSUS M. DE LIGUORI

Holy God, Holy Strong One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us.

To Thee be praise, to Thee be glory, to Thee be thanksgiving through endless ages, O Blessed Trinity.

Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving, honor, might and power be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.

Keep me, O Lord, as the apple of Your eye; beneath the shadow of Your wings protect me.

Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, this day *(or this night)* to keep us free from sin.

Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies.

O Lord, reward us not according to the sins which we have done, nor requite us according to our iniquities.

O Lord, remember not our former iniquities, and be merciful to our sins for Thy Name’s sake.

O praise the Lord, all you nations: praise Him, all you peoples.

For His mercy is confirmed upon us: and the truth of the Lord remains forever.

Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us!

From all sin deliver me, O Lord.

O Lord, I fear Thy justice, I implore Thy mercy. Deliver me not to everlasting pains, but grant that I may possess Thee in the midst of everlasting joys. Amen.

All through Thee, with Thee, and in Thee, O my God!

Most Holy Trinity, we adore Thee, and through Mary we implore Thee. Give to all mankind unity in the Catholic Faith and courage faithfully to confess it.

Lord, save us, we perish!

Thy will be done!

O merciful Lord, You are never weary of speaking to my poor heart; grant me the grace that, if today I hear Your voice, my heart may not be hardened.

CARDINAL MERRY DEL VAL

O Lord, I am nothing, but although nothing, I adore Thee.

CARDINAL MERRY DEL VAL

O Lord, I am my own enemy when I seek my peace apart from Thee.

CARDINAL MERRY DEL VAL

VARIOUS ACTS OF FAITH, HOPE, CHARITY AND CONTRITION

My God, I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee above all things with all my soul, with all my heart, and with all my strength. I love Thee because Thou art infinitely good and worthy of being loved; and because I love Thee, I repent with all my heart of having offended Thee. Have mercy on me, a sinner. Amen.

O Lord, increase our faith!

My God, I love Thee.

I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee, I adore Thee, O Blessed Trinity, one God. Have mercy on me now and at the hour of my death, and save me. Amen.

O my soul, love the Lord that loves you from all eternity!

CARD. MERRY DEL VAL

TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

My Jesus, mercy!

ST. LEONARD OF PORT MAURICE

Sweetest Jesus, be not my Judge but my Saviour.

ST. JEROME EMILIANI

Jesus, my God, I love Thee above all things.

Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!

O my Jesus, Thou Who art very Love, enkindle in my heart that divine fire which consumes the Saints and transforms them into Thee!

Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, Light of the World, I adore Thee. For Thee I live, for Thee I die. Amen.

Jesus, for Thee I live; Jesus, for Thee I die. I am Thine in life and in death. Amen.

O Jesus, Life Eternal in the bosom of the Father, life of souls made in Thine own likeness: in the name of Thy love, reveal Thy Heart and make It known!

O Jesus, the friend of little children, bless the little children of the whole world.

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!

Blessed be Jesus Christ and His most pure Mother!

Jesus, it is for love of Thee, with Thee and for Thee.

O Jesus, Son of the living God, have mercy on us!

O Jesus, Son of the Virgin Mary, have mercy on us!

O Jesus, King and center of all hearts, grant that peace may be in Thy kingdom.

O Jesus, with all my heart I cling to Thee.

O Jesus, be to me *Jesus*, and save me.

Christ Jesus, my Helper and my Redeemer!

ST. AUGUSTINE

O Lord Jesus Christ, Thou alone art holy, Thou alone art Lord, Thou alone art the Most High, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

O Jesus, grant that I may be Thine, wholly Thine, forever Thine. Amen.

All honor, laud and glory be,

O Jesus, Virgin-born, to Thee:

All glory, as is ever meet,

To Father and to Paraclete.

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, grant us Thy peace.

Grant to us, Thy servants, O Lord Jesus Christ, to be protected at all times and in all places by the patronage of Blessed Mary, Thy Virgin Mother. Amen.

O sweetest Jesus, hide me in Thy Sacred Heart, permit me not to be separated from Thee, defend me from the evil foe. Amen.

O Lord Jesus,

Through Your infant cries when You were born for me in the manger,

Through Your tears when You died for me on the Cross,

Through Your love as You live for me in the tabernacle,

Have mercy on me and save me!

My dearest Jesus, teach me to be patient when all the day long my heart is troubled by little but vexatious crosses. Amen.

CARDINAL MERRY DEL VAL

TO THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

O Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, have mercy on us!

May praise and adoration ever more be given to the most holy Sacrament!

O Sacrament most holy, O Sacrament divine,

All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine!

I adore Thee at every moment,

O living Bread from Heaven,

O Great Sacrament!

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!

Jesus, my God, I adore Thee here present in the Sacrament of Thy love!

TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved in every place!

Sweet Heart of my Jesus, grant that I may ever love Thee more!

Heart of Jesus, burning with love for us, set our hearts on fire with love for Thee.

Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like unto Thine.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, Thy kingdom come!

O Divine Heart of Jesus, convert sinners, save the dying, deliver the souls in Purgatory.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I believe in Your love for me.

Glory, love and thanksgiving be to the Sacred Heart of Jesus!

O Heart of love, I put all my trust in Thee; for I fear all things from my own weakness, but I hope for all things from Thy goodness.

ST. MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE

Sweet Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us and on our erring brethren.

All for Thee, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus!

Sacred Heart of Jesus, may You be known, loved and imitated!

Heart of Jesus, I put my trust in Thee!

WHAT WILL
HELL BE LIKE?

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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WHAT WILL HELL BE LIKE?

THOUGH many of the pagans were true atheists, considering Hell a fable invented to frighten the wicked, the more renowned of the ancient philosophers such as Socrates, Xenophon, Aristotle, Plato and others had no difficulty in admitting the existence of a future life—a Heaven where the good would be rewarded, and a Hell where the evil are to be punished. Only the most perverted of men will deny that there is a God, the Creator and Governor of all things. Such men would prefer to deny the existence of God than to face the just chastisement of their own misdeeds.

WE EXPECT REWARD OR PUNISHMENT

On the one hand, men know perfectly well that God is a just rewarder of good, and at the same time they behold in the world countless wicked men who live in the midst of prosperity, while many of the virtuous live out their lives in the midst of affliction and misfortune. Hence, most people are convinced that after this mortal life, there exists another world in which vice is to be chastised and virtue rewarded as it deserves.

TEACHING OF PAGAN PHILOSOPHERS

The most famous of the pagan philosophers did not hesitate to teach that there exists in the other life a Heaven and a Hell. Xenophon and Socrates, for instance, remarked that, “Rewards are in store for those who please

God, and punishments for those who displease Him." The same sentiments are expressed by Plato, Plutarch and others. While I refrain from quoting passages from these philosophers, I cannot pass over in silence two beautiful passages of the great orator, Cicero. In the first, he exclaims: "I wish to have no part with those who have recently begun to teach that souls die along with bodies, and that all is destroyed by death. Of far more weight with me is the authority of the ancient philosophers and of our own ancestors. They paid religious homage to the dead, and considered that their entrance into Heaven should be made easy for every good and just man." The second passage is even more to the point: "Those souls, which have been soiled by the vices of this life, will take the false road which separates them from the company of the gods; on the other hand, those who have preserved themselves pure and chaste, will find easy admittance to the divinity, the source of their existence."

BELIEF OF PAGANS

Among the fables of pagan peoples, there are numerous tales which, though they are fictitious, nevertheless attest to the belief of these people in the existence of a place of punishment in the future life. For us Christians, however, this belief of ancient pagans, and their philosophers, is but a substantiating argument. For we have the word of God Himself, attesting to the existence of Hell in countless passages of Sacred Scripture.

WHERE IS HELL LOCATED?

The question as to the place where Hell is situated has been a matter of conjecture among the Fathers of the Church and theologians. St. John Chrysostom, for instance, was of the opinion that it is situated outside the bounds of this universe. More commonly and with more reason, other theologians think that Hell is situated within the earth itself. Some have even gone so far as to declare that it is near the surface of the globe, basing their opinion, rather quaintly, upon the existence of many volcanic mountains such as Vesuvius, the Volcanic Isles, Mt. Etna and others.

CATHOLIC TEACHING

Aside from these debatable opinions, a group of heretics known as the Ubiquitists maintained that Hell is not restricted to any determined place, but is to be found everywhere, since God has not destined any special place for the damned. This opinion, however, is evidently false, and contrary to the common belief of the Catholic Church which teaches us that God has established a definite place for the demons and the reprobate, as is evident from several texts of Sacred Scripture. St. Jerome deduces this specifically from a passage in the book of Numbers (*Num.* 16:31–33). Here is described the fate of Dathan and Abiron who were precipitated into Hell, falling into a chasm which opened under their very feet. At the same time a great flame burst from the earth and killed two hundred and fifty men who were accomplices in their sin. Moreover, in many passages of Sacred Scripture, the word “descend” is used in reference to Hell, indicating that Hell is situated in the bowels of the earth.

HELL IS A DEFINITE PLACE

This assertion is confirmed by a passage of St. Luke (16:22): “But the rich man also died and was buried in hell.” The sacred text employs the word “buried,” because burials are made within the earth. Moreover, the rich man himself describes Hell as a “place of torment” (Lk. 16:28), confirming the opinion that Hell is a determined and definite place. In another place it is called a “lake”; “Thou hast saved me from those descending into the lake” (*Ps.* 29:3); and elsewhere, a pool: “And the devil who deceived them was cast into the pool of fire and brimstone.” (*Apoc.* 20:9). It is evident, therefore, that Hell is a determined place, and most probably situated within the earth. But as to where, precisely, it is situated, whether at the very center of the earth or nearer to the surface, cannot be determined from any revealed document. St. Thomas also declared that the dimensions of Hell, which will be the dwelling place of the damned after the resurrection, cannot be determined.

PAINS OF HELL

Let us now treat of the pains of Hell, and first of all, of that of sense. St. Thomas proves that the fire of Hell is a corporeal and material fire, though for the most part he does not write of the fire which torments the souls separated from their bodies, but of that which the damned are to endure after their corporeal resurrection. Many heretics have maintained that the fire of Hell is not material, but only metaphorical or imaginary fire. There are numerous texts in Sacred Scripture, however, which demonstrate that the fire of Hell is a true, material and corporeal fire. We read, for instance, in the book of Deuteronomy: “A fire is kindled in my wrath, and shall burn even to the lowest hell.” (*Deut.* 32:22). And in the book of Job: “A fire that is not kindled shall devour him” (*Job* 20:26), revealing that this fire of Hell needs not to be nourished, but, once enkindled by God, burns eternally. There are a number of passages in the book of Isaias referring to this fire of Hell: “Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” (33:14); “Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be a loathsome sight to all flesh.” (66:24). “He will give fire, and worms into their flesh, that they may burn, and may feel forever.” (*Judith* 16:21).

FIRE OF HELL

In the parable of the Gospel, the rich man buried in Hell cries out to Lazarus, “I am tormented in this flame.” (*Lk.* 16:24). He says, “in this flame,” to show that the fire of Hell is a fire of a particular type, a fire prepared expressly to avenge the injuries which sin has done to God by carnal pleasures. For, *as* the book of Ecclesiasticus remarks, “the vengeance on the flesh of the ungodly is fire and worms.” (*Eccl.* 7:19). Hence, St. Thomas argues that this fire will be the instrument of the avenging justice of Almighty God.

CAN A SPIRITUAL SOUL FEEL FIRE?

But here a difficulty is posed: how is it possible for corporeal fire to torment the spiritual soul? In answer to this question, we can only say that we know that it can be done. Perhaps the answer lies in this explanation of many theologians. The material fire of Hell will be given an extraordinary power by God, whereby it will be able to bind the spiritual soul to its place of torment, thus causing the soul untold humiliation and pain.

PUNISHMENT BY COLD

In this same fire, St. Thomas remarks, the bodies of the damned, in addition to the intense heat, will endure bitter cold, passing from one to the other, without knowing a moment of relief. Thus do Scripture scholars explain the passage of the book of Job: “Let him pass from the snow water to excessive heat, and his sin even to hell.” (*Job* 24:19). Hence, St. Jerome says, the damned in Hell endure all their torments in this one fire.

REMORSE OF CONSCIENCE

In addition to their sufferings from the heat and cold of the fire of Hell, Sacred Scripture enumerates a number of other torments which will afflict the damned. One of these is the “worm,” to which the Scriptures refer frequently. Some commentators have explained this “worm” as a material thing, which will feed upon, without consuming, the flesh of the damned. But most theologians explain it metaphorically as the remorse of conscience which will afflict the damned in the fire and darkness of Hell. Forever will they have imprinted on their memories the results of their sins; forever will they repeat the words ascribed to them in the book of Wisdom: “We have erred from the way of truth, we wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction and have walked through hard ways. What hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? . . . Such things as these the sinners said in hell.” (*Wis.* 5:6–14).

SUFFERING FROM DEVILS AND DARKNESS

Added to their own remorse of conscience, the damned will also be tormented by the reproaches of the demons. This will be one of the most cruel punishments of the damned: the devils, who are their enemies, will continually mock them and remind them of their sins. Nor will the sufferings of the bodies of the damned cease here. They will also be afflicted by the terrible darkness of Hell, described by the holy man, Job: “Before I go, and return no more, to a land that is dark and covered with the mist of death: a land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth.” (*Job* 10:22).

PAIN OF LOSS OF GOD

A certain author has written, but with little foundation, that the *pain of loss* is the same for all the reprobate. But it seems far more probable to me and to the majority of theologians that, though the damned are equally deprived of God, this pain will, nevertheless, afflict each according to the measure of his faults and the knowledge he will have in Hell of the God whom he has lost. For it is difficult to believe that one who has lost God by one mortal sin will be tormented in the same degree as one who has lost Him by a hundred sins. It is equally inconceivable to me, for instance, how one who has been in the state of sin for but one day, can be called upon to bear the same degree of punishment as he who has remained in this state for a whole year. For just as he who has loved God more ardently during his life, will enjoy Him more in Heaven, because of the knowledge of the immense good which he will then possess, so also will the damned, who has deprived himself of his God, be more severely tormented in realizing more deeply the great good which he has lost.

TEACHING OF ST. THOMAS

St. Thomas describes for us perfectly in what will consist the happiness of the elect and the torment of the reprobate. Insofar as his intellect is concerned, the Saint remarks, man will find complete joy in the vision of God; but, insofar as his affections are concerned, he will find complete satisfaction in the permanent union of his will with the infinite goodness of God. On the other hand, the torment of the damned will consist in being deprived of all divine light in his intellect, and in finding his affections obstinately turned away from the Divine Goodness. Elsewhere the saintly Doctor teaches that, though the punishment of the fire will be more terrifying, this separation from God is, however, a greater torment than that of the fire.

GOD MAKES HEAVEN

In short, it is God who will be our paradise, for He embraces all goods in Himself, as He Himself once declared to Moses: “I will show thee all good.” (*Ex.* 33:19). Such was also the promise which He made to Abraham because of his merits: “Fear not, Abram, I am thy protector, and thy reward exceedingly great.” (*Gen.* 15:1). And what greater reward can He promise than Himself, who is the one good embracing all other goods?

GOD MAKES HELL

It is also God who will make Hell, for, as St. Bernard remarks, He Himself will be the chastisement of the damned. For just as the elect will be supremely happy because God is for him, and he is for God, so also will the reprobate be unhappy, because God is no longer for him, and he is no longer for God. Let us listen to the threat which God made against those who refused to belong to Him during this life: “Call his name, Not my people’; for you are not my people, and I will not be yours.” (*Osee 1:9).* It is in this, then, that the torment of the damned will consist; it consists in the first sentence which Jesus Christ will pronounce over His enemies: “Depart from me into everlasting fire.” This eternal separation will constitute Hell for the damned.

ETERNAL CHOICE IS MADE DURING LIFE

For the present, sinners, blinded by the apparent goods of this earth, choose to live far from God and to turn their backs upon Him. And should God, who cannot dwell with sin, wish to enter into their hearts by expelling sin from them, they are not ashamed to repel Him, exclaiming: “Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.” (*Job* 21:14). Depart from us, we do not wish to follow Your ways, but our own, our passions, our pleasures. The great multitude of those, says Sacred Scripture, “who sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake; some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always?’ (*Dan.* 12:2). Yes, these unfortunates now sleep in the dust of their blindness; but, in the other life, unfortunately for them, they will awaken and realize the immense good which they have lost in voluntarily losing God.

GREATEST PAIN OF HELL

The sword which shall pierce them with the greatest sorrow will be the thought of having lost God, and of having lost Him through their own fault. Unfortunates that they are! They now seek to lose sight of God, but once fallen into Hell, they will no longer be able to cease thinking of Him, and in this will their chastisement consist.

St. Augustine says that in Hell, the damned will be forced to think of nothing but God, and that will cause them terrible torment. And St. Bonaventure, expressing the same sentiments, says that no thought will torment the damned more than the thought of God. The Lord will grant to them such a vivid knowledge of their offended God, His goodness so unworthily spurned, and consequently, of the chastisement which their crimes have merited, that this knowledge will cause them a suffering greater than that of all the other punishments of Hell.

We read in the book of Ezechiel: “Over the heads of the living creatures was the likeness of the firmament, as the appearance of crystal terrible to behold, and stretched out over their heads above.” (1:22). Explaining these words, one author says that the damned will have continually before their eyes a terrible crystal or mirror: with the assistance of some fatal light, they will behold, on one hand, the immense good which they have lost in voluntarily losing divine grace, and, on the other, they will view the justly wrathful face of God; and this torment will surpass by a million times all the other punishments of Hell.

On this same subject, the author Cajetan makes the following reflection upon the words of David: “The wicked shall be turned into hell, all the nations that forget God.” *(Ps.* 9:18). The Prophet, says this author, does not here speak of a change of heart, or conversion, but of the spirit of sinners. For just *as* sinners do not wish to think of God during this life, that they might not be forced to renounce their passions, they will be forced—despite themselves and by a just chastisement—to think continuously of God in Hell. They would wish to shut out all remembrance of God from their minds, but they will be forced to think always of Him, thus recalling all the benefits which they have received from Him, as well *as* the offenses which they have committed against Him and by which they have been separated from Him for all eternity.

THE DAMNED DO NOT FORGET

Let us now consider briefly the condition of the intellect of the damned in Hell. St. Thomas says that the damned will be able to remember all the subjects of natural knowledge which they acquired here on earth, for this acquired knowledge will remain in their souls after death. This is evident from Sacred Scripture as well, from the response of Abraham to the rich man buried in Hell: “Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime.” (*Lk.* 16:25). This, then, is the conclusion of the Angelic Doctor: Just as in the elect there will be nothing that is not a subject of happiness to them, so also in the damned there will be nothing which will not be a subject of torment to them. Hence, the damned will preserve in their memories the things which they knew here on earth, not, it is true, for their consolation, but solely to increase their torment. Moreover, during this life the soul is frequently prevented from considering thoughts which would be disagreeable to it, because of corporeal sufferings and anxieties; but in Hell the soul will no longer be subject to this influence of the body. Hence, in Hell the soul will no longer be prevented from considering those things which can be a cause of torture to it. Likewise, in Hell the soul of a man will have constantly in its memory all the divine appeals made to it during life, as well as the number of sins which he committed, each of which will procure for him a new Hell.

THE DAMNED KNOW NOTHING ABOUT US

Moreover, says Estius, just as God will procure the satisfaction of the blessed by making them know what concerns us, and especially that which concerns them in a special manner, such as our prayers addressed to them, on the other hand the damned will remain ignorant of all that concerns us, because they are complete strangers to the Church.

DO THE DAMNED HAVE FAITH?

It might be asked whether those Christians who possessed faith in this life, and who have not lost it by apostasy or heresy, will preserve it in Hell. St. Thomas responds in the negative, for in order to believe with a supernatural and theological faith, one must hold with a pious affection of the will to God the revealer. This pious affection, however, is a gift of God, of which He deprives them as well as the demons. They do, however, believe by a sort of natural faith, to which they are forced by the evidence of external signs, though this faith in not supernatural. It is in this sense that St. James has written that “The devils also believe and tremble” (*James* 2:19), signifying that their faith is forced and fearful.

Will the damned ever see or behold the glory of the Blessed? St. Thomas answers that at the Last Judgment the reprobate will see the blessed in their glory, without being able to distinguish in what it consists, solely realizing that they are enjoying an inexplicable glory. This sight will afflict them with great sorrow, either because of a feeling of envy, or because of regret at having lost that which they themselves could have acquired. And for their eternal chastisement, this shadow of the beatific vision which they have beheld will remain imprinted in their memory forever.

THE WILL IS SET ON EVIL

Let us now discuss the condition of the will of the damned. St. Thomas remarks that the will of the damned, insofar *as* it is a natural faculty, cannot but be good, since it does not proceed from themselves but from God, who is the Author of nature; the damned have, however, vitiated it by their malice. But when we consider the will of the damned in its use, it cannot but be evil, for it is completely opposed to the will of God and obstinate in evil.

But whence does this obstinacy in evil proceed? Sylvius, in a very clear explanation, says that the obstinacy of the damned results from the nature itself of their state. For, since the damned now find themselves at the terminus of their existence and deprived of all divine assistance, God, by a just judgment, abandons them to the evil which they have voluntarily chosen and in which they have wished to end their life. It is natural for everything, once it has reached its terminus, to rest in it, unless it be moved by some external power. Now, the damned have terminated their lives with the depraved will in which they have died, and God has resolved to leave them to the evil which they have chosen. Just as the blessed can never possess an evil will, because they are always united to God, in like manner the damned can never turn their will to good, and consequently will always be unhappy, because they are obstinately and irrevocably opposed to the divine will.

DO THE DAMNED WISH EVIL TO OTHERS?

Because of this evil will of the damned, the question might be asked: ‘Do the damned wish that all men be damned?’ St. Thomas responds in the affirmative, because of the hatred which the reprobate bear to all men. But here a difficulty presents itself. As the number of the damned increases, the punishment of each individual is aggravated: how, then, can they desire an increase of torment for themselves? St. Thomas says that such is their hatred and envy that they would prefer to suffer more cruelly with many others than to suffer less alone. And it matters little to them that among those whose loss they desire are some whom they loved dearly during life. For the Holy Doctor remarks that all affection which is not based upon love of God vanishes easily; otherwise, the order of justice and right would be reversed in Hell.

CASE OF THE RICH MAN IN HELL

If such be the case, then how can we explain the solicitude of the poor rich man in Hell, who besought Abraham to send Lazarus to his brothers on earth, to warn them to do penance lest they also be buried in Hell? St. Thomas explains that the envy of the damned is such that they would prefer to see all men lost, even their own parents; but since this is impossible, and, rooted as they are in self-love, they would rather see their parents delivered from Hell in preference to strangers, for they would be still more tormented by envy should they behold their own loved ones damned and others saved. This, then, is the reason for the concern of the rich man over the salvation of his brothers. The Angelic Doctor adds that this reprobate desired to see his brothers escape Hell, lest his own punishment be aggravated by their damnation, for by his bad example he had given occasion for their damnation.

DO THE DAMNED REPENT OF SIN?

It might also be asked whether the damned repent of their sins. St. Thomas answers that a man can repent of his faults in two ways: directly or indirectly. He can repent directly insofar as he repents by a sentiment of hatred for the sin committed; in this sense, the damned cannot repent of his sin, for since he finds himself confirmed in his perverse will, he loves the malice of his fault. But he can repent indirectly, insofar as he detests his punishment, of which his sin is the cause. Thus the damned will their sin, insofar as its malice is concerned, but detest its punishment, which, nevertheless, can never cease because their sin endures forever.

HATRED OF GOD

Do the damned hate God? St. Thomas says that God, considered in Himself, is the Supreme Good, and therefore cannot be an object of hatred for any reasonable creature. But He can become such to the damned in two ways: first, as the Author of their punishments, by which He is bound to afflict them; second, because they are obstinate in evil, while He is the infinite Good, they would hate God with their whole heart, even though He punished them but little.

DO THE DAMNED DESIRE TO BE DESTROYED?

We ask, finally, whether the damned would prefer to be annihilated and deprived of existence, than to submit to the punishments which they endure. St. Thomas, considering the question in itself, answers in the negative for, as he says, a state of non-being is never desirable, for it implies a deprivation of all good. But if this annihilation be considered as an end of all punishment, St. Thomas says that, from this point of view, the state of non-existence presents itself as a good. It is in this sense that Jesus Christ spoke this sentence of Judas: “It were better for him, if that man had not been born.” (*Mt.* 26:24). St. John seems to say the same thing when speaking of the damned in the Apocalypse: “In those days men shall seek death and shall not find it: and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.” (*Rev.* 9:6). This will of the damned, however, is uncertain, for they wish to continue to exist, that they might always hate God.

PUNISHMENT OF HELL IS ETERNAL

These punishments of the reprobate, which we have been considering, will endure forever. This doctrine of the eternity of the punishments of Hell was first denied by Origen, and later by the Socinians and a large number of Protestants. Origen, however, was condemned by the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople, and in general, by all the Fathers of the Church.

THIS PUNISHMENT IS NOT UNJUST

Nor can the eternity of the punishments of the damned ever be qualified as unjust. For anyone who offends God by a mortal sin merits an infinite punishment for an offense which is infinite. Hence, however severe or long the punishment may be, it can never be proportionate to the offense which has been committed. For the majesty of God is infinite; hence, whoever sins mortally merits an infinite punishment. It therefore appears just that mortal sin be punished by an eternal punishment.

HOW PUNISHMENT IS MEASURED

It is useless to object that it does not seem just to inflict an eternal punishment for a sin which endures but a moment. For St. Augustine remarks that punishment is not measured by the duration of a fault, but by its gravity. Even at the tribunals of justice here on earth, the penalty of death is imposed upon some crimes which are committed in an instant.

The Angelic Doctor adds that it is but just that the punishment should not cease as long as the fault does not cease. Now, a fault which remains eternally can be remitted only by the grace of God, which man cannot acquire after death. As we have seen above, the will of the damned is obstinate in evil. Hence, he continues to love his sin at the same time that he submits to its punishment. How, then, can God deliver him from his chastisement, while he continues to love his fault? How can God pardon his sin, while the damned is hardened in his hatred for God, if at the same time the Lord offered him pardon and friendship, the damned refused both the one and the other?

Nor can it be objected, *as* some heretics do, that it is contrary to the goodness and mercy of God to behold one of His creatures suffer eternally from such terrible punishments in Hell. For, as St. Thomas remarks, God has given superabundant witness of His goodness and mercy toward men. Beholding all men lost by the sin of Adam and their own sins, what great goodness did He not manifest in descending from Heaven to earth to become man, in the endurance of a poor, humble and afflicted life, in pouring forth the very last drop of His Blood amid such terrible torments upon an infamous gibbet? What greater proof of His goodness could He have given to men than to leave to them His own Body and Blood in the

Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, that they might there find nourishment for their souls, and that, through this means, they might preserve and increase their spiritual forces until death, after which, finding themselves more closely united to God, they might enter into Heaven, there to enjoy eternally the life of the blessed?

THE PATIENCE OF GOD

Ah! Most certainly, on the day of judgment, the Lord will make known to the entire world how many mercies, how many lights, how much help He has dispensed to each man during his life! And the numerous ingrates, who, despite such favors, have merited such chastisements, with what patience did He not pursue them, with what love has He not begged them to repent? If, despite such favors, they still would not renounce their passions and earthly pleasures, wished to live and die separated from God, voluntarily abandoning themselves to their eternal ruin, how can it be said that God has not manifested His mercy and goodness towards them?

In lieu of declaring the punishments of Hell not to be eternal, some heretics have invented another opinion, maintaining that the punishments of Hell will be lessened after a time, or momentarily interrupted. But this opinion is expressly contrary to the Sacred Scriptures. Isaias, for instance speaking of the reprobate proclaims: “Their worm will not die, and their fire will not be extinguished.” (*Is.* 66:24). And in the sentence pronounced against them at the Last Judgment, Jesus Christ will say to them: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.”

JESUS’ PARABLE OF DIVES AND LAZARUS

“There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen; and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table, and no one did give him; moreover the dogs came, and licked his sores.

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom. And the rich man also died: and he was buried in hell. And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom: And he cried, and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, to cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame. And Abraham said to him: Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted; and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you, there is fixed a great chaos: so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot, nor from thence come hither.

"And he said: Then, father, I beseech thee, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torments. And Abraham said to him: They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. But he said: No, father Abraham: but if one went to them from the dead, they will do penance. And he said to him: If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe, if one rise again from the dead." (*Lk.* 16:19–31).

FATIMA CHILDREN'S VISION OF HELL

(NOTE: In 1917 Our Blessed Mother appeared six times at Fatima, Portugal to Lucia dos Santos and Jacinta and Francisco Marto, three small children. During the course of these six world-famous apparitions—now approved by the Church as worthy of our devotion and propagation—the Blessed Virgin Mary made several startling statements and predictions, among them the outbreak of World War II if people did not change their lives. During the July 13 apparition, she allowed the children to see a vision of Hell. Following is Lucia's description of what they saw.)

At this point, Lucia was heard to say aloud: "Yes, she wants people to recite the Rosary. People must recite the Rosary." The Lady's face then grew very grave and she said: "Sacrifice yourselves for sinners and say often, especially when you make some sacrifice: '0 my Jesus, this is for love of You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the offences committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.—At these words, she opened her hands on the three children once again and the light streaming from them seemed to penetrate the earth, and the children beheld a vision of Hell. Lucia cried out in terror, calling upon Our Lady. "We could see a vast sea of fire," she revealed many years later. "Plunged in the flames were demons and lost souls, *as* if they were red-hot coals, transparent and black or bronze-colored, in human form, which floated about in the conflagration, borne by the flames which issued from them, with clouds of smoke, falling on all sides as sparks fall in a great conflagration without weight or equilibrium, amid shrieks and groans of sorrow and despair that horrified us and caused us to tremble with fear. The devils could be distinguished by horrible and loathesome forms of animals, frightful and unknown, but transparent like black coals that have turned red-hot.” Full of fear, the children raised their eyes beseechingly to the Lady, who said to them with unspeakable sadness and tenderness: “You have seen Hell where the souls of poor sinners go. In order to save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If people do what I ask, many souls will be saved and there will be peace.”

Lucia later stated that although the vision lasted “but an instant,” she felt they would have died of fear and terror if Our Lady had not already promised to take them to Heaven.

DAILY DEVOTIONS
TO SAINT JOSEPH

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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BY SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI, ADAPTED BY HUGH J. O’CONNELL, C.SS.R.—ST JOSEPH

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PRAYER FOR EACH DAY

(Read the reflection proper to the day and then close each day with the follow prayer:)

Most holy patriarch, Saint Joseph, I rejoice at the great dignity to which you have been raised in being made foster father of the Son of God, endowed with authority to command Him Whom heaven and earth obey.

My holy patron, since Jesus Himself respected and served you as His father, I, too, wish to enroll myself in your service. I choose you, after Mary, for my principal advocate and protector. I promise to honor you every day with some special devotion, and each day I will place myself under your protection.

As you did enjoy the sweet company of Jesus and Mary during your life on earth, grant that I may ever live close to them and never be separated from God by losing His grace. And as you were assisted by Jesus and Mary at the hour of your death, so grant me protection at the hour of my death, that, dying in your presence and that of Jesus and Mary, I may one day go to thank you in paradise, and in your company praise and love God for all eternity. Amen.

**Saint Joseph, patron of the universal Church, protect us. Protect our Holy Father, the Pope, and our Mother, Holy Church.*

FIRST DAY

God, because of the great love He bears us, and His great desire to see us saved, has given us among other means of salvation the practice of devotion to the saints. It is His will that they, who are His friends, should intercede for us, and by their merits and prayers obtain graces for us which we ourselves do not deserve.

But everyone must know that, after the Mother of God, Saint Joseph is, of all the saints, the one dearest to God. He has, therefore, great power with Him and can obtain graces for His devout clients. Let us then frequently say:

**Saint Joseph, give me the greatest confidence in your powerful intercession.*

SECOND DAY

We should, indeed, honor Saint Joseph, since the Son of God Himself was graciously pleased to honor him by calling him father. “Christ,” says Origen, “gave to Joseph the honor due to a parent.” The Holy Scriptures speak of him as the father of Jesus. “His father and mother were marveling at the things spoken concerning Him” (Luke 2:33). Mary also used this name: “in sorrow your father and I have been seeking you” (Luke 2:48). If, then, the King of Kings was pleased to raise Joseph to so high a dignity, it is right and obligatory on our part to endeavor to honor him as much as we can.

**Saint Joseph, I consecrate myself to your service forever. Protect me all the days of my life.*

THIRD DAY

The example of Jesus Christ, Who wished to honor Saint Joseph so much, and to be subject to him on earth, ought to inflame all with a fervent devotion toward this great saint. Since the Eternal Father shared His own authority with Saint Joseph, Jesus always regarded him as a father, and respected and obeyed him for thirty years. Saint Luke says He “was subject to them” (Luke 2:51). These words mean that during all this time the sole occupation of the Redeemer was to obey Mary and Joseph. To Saint Joseph, as head of the little family, belonged the office of commanding, and to Jesus as a subject, the duty of obedience. Hence, a learned author has justly said: “Men should pay great honor to him whom the King of Kings wished to raise to such a height.”

**Saint Joseph, by the obedience which Jesus rendered to you, make me always obedient to the will of God.*

FOURTH DAY

Saint Bernardine of Siena says that we should be persuaded that Our Lord, Who respected Saint Joseph on earth as His father, will refuse Him nothing in heaven; but on the contrary, will most abundantly grant His petitions. Jesus Himself advised Saint Margaret of Cortona to cherish a special devotion to Saint Joseph, and never to allow a day to pass without rendering some homage to him as His foster father. Let us not, then, fail to recommend ourselves each day to Saint Joseph and to ask him for graces.

**Saint Joseph, make me faithful in invoking you daily.*

FIFTH DAY

All the faithful should be devoted to Saint Joseph in order to obtain the grace of a good death, and this for three reasons.

1. Because Jesus Christ loved him not only as a friend, but as a father, and, therefore, his intercession is more powerful than that of the other saints.
2. Because Our Lord, in return for having saved Him from Herod, has given Saint Joseph the special privilege of protecting the dying against the snares of the devil.
3. Because Saint Joseph, who died in the company of Jesus and Mary, is the model of a holy death and can obtain this grace for his clients.

**Saint Joseph, obtain for me that, like you, I may die in the arms of Jesus and Mary*

SIXTH DAY

According to Saint John Damascene: “God gave Saint Joseph the love, the care, and the authority of a father over Jesus. He gave him the affection of a father that he might guard Him with great love; the solicitude of a father, that he might watch over Him with care; and the authority of a father that he might feel sure that he would be obeyed in all that he arranged concerning this Son.”

**Saint Joseph, be always a father to us; and grant that we may be always your faithful children.*

SEVENTH DAY

When God, destines anyone for a particular office, He gives him the graces that fit him for it. Therefore, since God chose Saint Joseph to fill the office of father over the person of the Incarnate Word, we must certainly believe that he conferred upon him all the sanctity which belonged to such an office. Gerson says that among other privileges Joseph had three which were special to him.

1. That he was sanctified in his mother’s womb, as were Jeremiah and Saint John the Baptist.
2. That he was at the same time confirmed in grace.
3. That he was always exempt from the inclinations of concupiscence—a privilege with which Saint Joseph by the merit of his purity, favors his devout clients by delivering them from carnal appetites.

**Saint Joseph, shining light of chastity, preserve the angelic virtue in me.*

EIGHTH DAY

In the Gospels Saint Joseph is called “just.” What is meant by a just man? Saint Peter Chrysologus says: “It means a perfect man—one who possesses all virtues.” Joseph was already holy before his marriage; but how much must his sanctity have increased after his union with the Blessed Virgin? The example of his holy spouse sufficed to sanctify him; and since Mary is the dispenser of all the graces which God grants to men, in what profusion must she not have showered them down upon her spouse, who she loved so much and by whom she was so tenderly loved!

**Saint Joseph, increase my devotion to Mary.*

NINTH DAY

The two disciples, going to Emmaus were inflamed with divine love by the few moments which they spent in company with our Savior, and by His words. What flames of holy love must not, then, have been enkindled in the heart of Saint Joseph, who for thirty years conversed with Jesus Christ, and listened to His words of eternal life; who observed the perfect example which Jesus gave of humility and patience, and saw the promptness with which He obeyed and helped him in his labors, and all that was needed for the household!

**Saint Joseph, inflame us with the love of Jesus.*

TENTH DAY

Saint Paul writes that in the next life Jesus Christ “will render to every man according to His works” (Romans 2:6). What great glory must we not suppose that He has bestowed upon Saint Joseph, who served and loved Him so much while He lived on earth! Our Lord has promised a reward to him who gives a cup of cold water to the poor in His name. What, then, must be the reward of Saint Joseph, who can say to Jesus Christ: “I not only provided You with food, with a dwelling, and with clothes, but I saved You from death, delivering You from the hands of Herod.”

**Saint Joseph, increase our zeal for growing in holiness by the hope of eternal reward.*

ELEVENTH DAY

We must believe that the life of Saint Joseph, spent in the presence of Jesus and Mary, was a continual prayer, abounding in acts of faith, confidence, love, resignation, and oblation. Since, then, the reward of the saints corresponds to their merits during life, consider how great must be the glory of Saint Joseph in heaven. Saint Augustine compares the other saints to the stars, but Saint Joseph to the sun.

It is, then, very reasonable to suppose that Saint Joseph, after Mary, surpasses all the other saints in merit and glory. The Venerable Bernardine de Bustis (died around 1515) says that when Saint Joseph asks any grace for those who are devoted to him, his prayers have in a certain manner the force of a command with Jesus and Mary.

**Saint Joseph, obtain for us a great spirit of prayer.*

TWELFTH DAY

To prove the power which Saint Joseph possesses in paradise, Saint Bernardine of Siena writes thus: “We cannot doubt that Christ accords to Saint Joseph, now that he is in heaven, even more perfectly the respect and reverence which He paid to him on earth. Our Lord, Who on earth revered Saint Joseph as His father, will certainly deny him nothing that he asks in heaven.” Let us then say to him with confidence:

**Saint Joseph, powerful protector of souls, keep us from all sin.*

THIRTEENTH DAY

O great Saint Joseph, since God has served you, I also wish to enroll myself in your service. I wish henceforth to serve you, to honor and love you. Take me under your protection and dispose of me as you please. My holy Saint Joseph, pray to Jesus for me. Having obeyed all your commands on earth, He will certainly never refuse anything you ask of Him. Tell Him to pardon me the offences that I have committed against Him. Tell Him to detach me from creatures and from myself. Ask Him to inflame me with His holy love.

**Saint Joseph, watch over us, your children.*

FOURTEENTH DAY

Most holy patriarch, now that you are on a lofty throne in heaven near your beloved Jesus, Who was subject to you on earth, have pity on me, who am exposed to the attacks of so many enemies, to the evil spirits, and the passions that continually strive to rob me of the grace of God. Through the grace given to you on earth of enjoying the continual society of Jesus and Mary, obtain for me the grace of living during the remaining days of my life united to God, by resisting the attacks of hell. Grant, too, that I may die with the love of Jesus and Mary in my heart so that I may be able one day to enjoy with you, their company in the kingdom of heaven.

**Saint Joseph, grant me a horror of sin and the grace to conquer my passions.*

FIFTEENTH DAY

Saint Bernard, speaking of Saint Joseph’s power of dispensing graces to his devout servants, makes use of the following remarkable words: “To some of the saints, power is granted to succor us in particular necessities; but to Saint Joseph power is granted to succor in all necessities, and to defend all those who, with devotion, have recourse to him.” Let us then often say to him:

**Saint Joseph, help us when we are in need.*

SIXTEENTH DAY

Saint Teresa says: “I do not remember to have asked any favour from Saint Joseph which he did not grant. An account of the many graces which God has bestowed upon me, and of the dangers, corporal and spiritual, from which He has delivered me through this saint would excite wonder. The Lord appears to have given power to the other saints to assist us in a single necessity; but experience shows that Saint Joseph gives aid in all. The Lord gives us to understand that, as He was to be subject to Saint Joseph on earth, so in heaven He does whatever the saint asks.”

**Saint Joseph, obtain for me the grace of perseverance in prayer.*

SEVENTEENTH DAY

Saint Teresa also writes: “I would wish to persuade all the world to be devoted to Saint Joseph, because I have long experience of the great favors which he obtains from God. I have never known any soul especially devoted to him that did not always advance in virtue. I ask, for God’s sake, that they who do not believe me will at least make a trial of this devotion. I cannot believe that favours are not granted to Saint Joseph in return for the help which he gave on earth to Jesus and Mary.”

**Saint Joseph, patron of the interior life, lead me to that perfection which God requires of me.*

EIGHTEENTH DAY

Let us ask Saint Joseph for the grace to love our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the particular grace which Saint Joseph obtains for those who are devout to him—a tender love toward the Incarnate Word. The saint merited the power to bestow this grace upon his servants by the great love which he himself bore toward Jesus while he lived on earth.

**Saint Joseph, make me love Jesus with all my heart.*

NINETEENTH DAY

When Jesus lived in this world in the house of Saint Joseph, could a sinner who desired to obtain forgiveness from Our Lord have found a more efficacious means of obtaining pardon than through Saint Joseph? If, then, we desire to receive the forgiveness of our sins, let us have recourse to Saint Joseph who, now that he is in heaven, is more loved by Jesus Christ than he was loved by Him on earth.

**Saint Joseph, obtain from Jesus the pardon of my sins.*

TWENTIETH DAY

“And Joseph also went from Galilee out of the town of Nazareth into Judea to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem” (Luke 2:4). In response to the decree of Caesar Augustus, Saint Joseph made the long journey across the hills from Galilee to Bethlehem with Mary, who bore beneath her heart the Incarnate Son of God. What sweet conversations must Mary and Joseph have held on this journey on the mercy of God in sending His Son into the world to redeem the human race, and on the love of this Son in coming into this valley of tears in order to atone by His suffering and death for the sins of men!

**Saint Joseph, I wish to belong entirely to you, so that through you I may belong entirely to Jesus and Mary.*

TWENTY-FIRST DAY

“And it came to pass while they were there, that the days for her to be delivered were fulfilled. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:6–7). How great must have been the sorrow of Saint Joseph when he could find no shelter for Mary on the night of the birth of the Divine Word, and was obliged to bring her to a stable! How his heart must have been pierced with anguish to see his holy spouse, who was pregnant, and near the time of childbirth, trembling with cold in that damp cave, which was open on every side. Dear Saint Joseph, through the pain which you felt in seeing the Divine Word born in a stable, so poor, without fire, without clothes,, and in hearing the cries caused by the cold which afflicted Him, I pray you to obtain for me a true sorrow for my sins by which I have drawn tears from Jesus.

**Saint Joseph, penetrate my heart with contrition and obtain for me the grace never to sin again.*

TWENTY-SECOND DAY

“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger” (Luke 2:7). How great must have been the joy of Saint Joseph when he heard Mary calling him and saying “Joseph, come, and adore our infant God, Who is just born in this cave. Behold how beautiful He is. Look at the King of the world in this manger, on this straw. See how He, Who makes the seraphs burn with love, trembles with cold. Behold how He Who is the joy of paradise weeps!” Dear Saint Joseph, through the joy which you received at the first sight of the infant Jesus in the crib, so beautiful and lovely that your heart began from that moment to beat with love for Him alone, obtain for me also the grace to love Jesus with an ardent love on earth so that I may one day go to enjoy Him in heaven.

**Saint Joseph, share with me a little of the burning love that you did bear to Jesus.*

TWENTY-THIRD DAY

“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men of good will” (Luke 2:14). Consider how great was the love and tenderness of Saint Joseph when he beheld with his own eyes the Son of God become an infant; when he heard the angels singing around their newborn Lord, and saw the stable filled with light. Kneeling down and weeping with love and compassion, Joseph said: “I adore You, yes I adore You, my Lord and my God. How great is my happiness to be the first, after Mary, to see You born, and to know that in this world You wish to be called and reputed my Son! Allow me, then, also to call You my Son, and to say: My God and my Son, to You I consecrate my whole being. My life shall be no longer mine, but shall be Yours without reserve!”

**Saint Joseph, grant that I may spend my life, like you, in the service of God.*

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY

“An angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph, saying, ‘Arise, and take the child and His mother and flee into Egypt’” (Matt. 2:13). Consider the ready obedience of Saint Joseph, who raised no doubts about the time of the journey, nor about the manner of travelling, nor about the place in Egypt in which they were to stay, but immediately prepared to set out. He instantly makes known to Mary the command of the angel, and on the same night sets out without guide on a journey of 400 miles through mountains, across rugged roads and deserts.

**My holy protector, obtain for me the grace of perfect obedience to the divine will.*

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY

How much Saint Joseph must have suffered on the journey into Egypt in seeing the sufferings of Jesus and Mary! Their food must have been a piece of hard bread. They could have slept only in some poor hut, or in the open air. Joseph was indeed conformed in all things to the will of the Eternal Father, but his tender and loving heart could not but feel pain in seeing the Son of God trembling and weeping from cold and the other hardships which He experienced.

**Saint Joseph, obtain for me the grace that in my journey to eternity I may never lose the company of Jesus and Mary.*

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY

“The boy Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and his parents did not know it” (Luke 2:43). How great was the pain of Saint Joseph when Jesus was lost in the temple! Joseph was accustomed to the enjoyment of the sweet presence of his beloved Savior. What, then, must have been his sorrow when he was deprived of it for three days, without knowing whether he should evermore find Jesus, and most painful of all, without knowing why he had lost Him. How great, on the other hand, was Joseph’s joy when he found Jesus and realized that the absence of the Child did not arise from any neglect on his part, but from a zeal for the glory of the Father.

**Saint Joseph, through the merits of the pains which you did suffer at losing Jesus, obtain for me tears to weep always for my sins.*

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY

“He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them” (Luke 2:51). Reflect on the holy life which Joseph led in the company of Jesus and Mary. In that family there was no business except that which tended to the greater glory of God; there were no thoughts or desires except the thought and desire of pleasing God; there were no discourses except on the love which men owe to God, and which God has shown to men, especially in sending His only begotten Son into the world to suffer and to end His life in a sea of sorrows and insults for the salvation of mankind.

**Saint Joseph, through the tears which you did shed in contemplating the future passion of Jesus, obtain for me a continual remembrance of the suffering of my Redeemer.*

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY

Consider the love which Saint Joseph bore to Mary, his holy spouse. She was the most beautiful of all women. She was more humble, more meek, more pure, more obedient, more inflamed with the love of God, than all the angels and than all men that have been or shall be created. Hence, she merited all his love. Add to this his realization of the love that she bore for him, and the fact that God had chosen her as His beloved Mother.

**Saint Joseph, obtain for me a great love for Mary, your most holy spouse.*

TWENTY-NINTH DAY

Consider the love which Joseph bore to Jesus. This love was not purely human like the love of other fathers, but super-human; for he loved Jesus not only as his son but also as his God. Joseph knew from the angel that his child was the Divine Word Who had become man to save mankind. He realized, too, that he himself had been chosen from among all men to be the protector and guardian of this divine Infant. What a flame of holy love must, then, have been enkindled in the heart of Joseph by reflecting on all these things, and by the sight of his Lord obeying him like a little boy, opening and closing the door, helping him to saw or to plane, gathering fragments of wood, or sweeping the house!

**Saint Joseph, remove from my heart all that could be an obstacle to the love of God.*

THIRTIETH DAY

“Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of His faithful ones” (Psalm 116:15. It is Psalm 115:6 in the Vulgate.) After having faithfully served Jesus and Mary, Saint Joseph reached the end of his life in the house at Nazareth. There, surrounded by angels, assisted by Jesus Christ the King of angels, and by Mary, his spouse, who placed themselves at each side of his poor bed, filled with the peace of paradise, he departed from this miserable life. Who shall ever be able to understand the sweetness, the consolation, the blessed hope, the acts of resignation, the flames of charity which the words of eternal life coming alternately from the lips of Jesus and Mary, breathed into the soul of Joseph at the end of his life?

**Saint Joseph, grant me peace, and resignation to God’s will at the hour of my death.*

THIRTY-FIRST DAY

Great, indeed, will be the comfort of those, who, at the hour of death shall be protected by Saint Joseph. For this great saint has received from God power to command the devils and to drive them away, less they tempt his servants in their dying moments. Happy is the soul that shall be assisted by this great advocate, who, on account of having died with the assistance of Jesus and Mary, and because of having preserved the infant Jesus from the danger of death by his flight into Egypt, has received the privilege of being the patron of a good death, and of delivering his clients from the danger of eternal death.

**Saint Joseph, defend me from the attacks of the devils at the last moment of my life.*

[Father O’Connell added the following two prayers to Saint Joseph. The first, the Litany, was sanctioned by Pope Saint Pius X.]

LITANY OF SAINT JOSEPH

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God the Father of Heaven, *Have mercy on us.*
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *Have mercy on us.*
God the Holy Ghost, *Have mercy on us.*
Holy Trinity, One God, *Have mercy on us.*
Holy Mary, *Pray for us.*
Saint Joseph, *Pray for us.*
Illustrious Son of David, *Pray for us.*
Light of Patriarchs, *Pray for us.*
Spouse of the Mother of God, *Pray for us.*
Chaste guardian of the Virgin, *Pray for us.*
Foster father of the Son of God, *Pray for us.*
Diligent protector of Christ, *Pray for us.*
Head of the Holy Family, *Pray for us.*
Joseph most just, *Pray for us.*
Joseph most chaste, *Pray for us.*
Joseph most prudent, *Pray for us.*
Joseph most valiant, *Pray for us.*
Joseph most obedient, *Pray for us*
Joseph most faithful, *Pray for us.*
Mirror of patience, *Pray for us.*
Lover of poverty, *Pray for us.*
Model of artisans, *Pray for us.*
Glory of home life, *Pray for us.*
Guardian of virgins, *Pray for us.*
Pillar of families, *Pray for us.*
Solace of the wretched, *Pray for us.*
Hope of the sick, *Pray for us.*
Patron of the dying, *Pray for us.*

Terror of demons, *Pray for us.*

Protector of Holy Church, *Pray for us.*

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, Spare us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, Graciously hear us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

He made him the lord of His household.

And prince over all His possessions.

Let us pray.

O God, in Your ineffable providence You were pleased to choose Blessed Joseph to be the spouse of Your most holy Mother; grant, we beseech You, that we may be worthy to have him for our intercessor in heaven whom on earth we venerate as our Protector. Who lives and reigns, world without end

Amen.

[The following prayer has a much more obscure origin which can only be traced with certainty to 1950.]

PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH

O Saint Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God, I place in you all my interest and desires. O Saint Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your divine Son all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So that, having engaged here below your heavenly power, I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of Fathers. O Saint Joseph, I never weary contemplating you, and Jesus asleep in your arms; I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart. Press Him in my name and kiss His fine head for me; and ask Him to return the Kiss when I draw my dying breath. Saint Joseph, Patron of departing souls, Pray for me. Amen.

{This prayer, it is claimed, was found in the fiftieth year of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This seems most unlikely. Who ‘found’ it? Who ‘lost’ it in the first place? Who first wrote it? Where are the copies of it in the writings and archives of the saints and scholars who have lived the Christian faith since that early date? Why was it ‘found’ and not simply passed on in the living tradition of Holy Church? If the claim were true, it would mean that the prayer pre-dates the majority of the New Testament. The claim, I repeat is most improbable.}

In 1505, it is further claimed that it was sent from the Pope (presumably Julius II) to Emperor Charles when he was going into battle. Now Julius was Pope in that year, but Charles V was not to be Emperor until 1519, and, in 1505, he was only five years old. Maximilian I was the Emperor in 1505. Nothing has been found in the historical record of either monarch, or of the Popes to support the assertion.

The prayer, however, is a great prayer. Regrettably, it is often to be found with exaggerated claims attached to it. These claims simply cannot be substantiated but remain pious and devout hopes. We will quote a typical example: 'Whoever shall read this prayer or hear it or keep it about themselves, shall never die a sudden death, or be drowned, or shall poison take effect on them; neither shall they fall into the hands of the enemy, or shall be burned in any fire or shall be overpowered in battle.' May it be so, indeed.

Sometimes it is accompanied by this advice: "Say for nine mornings for anything you may desire." This is good advice, surely. But then it is often ruined by words such as "It has never been known to fail." God answers all prayers but He answers them in accordance with His most Holy Will. Wiser publishers amend this statement, if they bother with it at all, to read: "It has seldom been known to fail." Sometimes the caution is added: "so be sure you really want what you ask." This is prudent advice, but if one were to be so presumptuous as to maintain that one could dictate to God and manipulate Him as if he were the subject of some shaman's ritual, by the mere performance of a (very beautiful) prayer, then one really ought to go back and repeat his Catechism classes of infancy.

Saint Joseph, patron of the universal Church, protect us. Protect our Holy Father, the Pope, and our Mother, Holy Church.

Thanks to: the Redemptorist Fathers

Saint Louis.

MEDITATION
MADE EASY

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

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METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER

"Before prayer prepare thy soul; and be not as a man that tempteth God."—Eccl. xviii.

PREPARATORY PRAYER

O My God, I firmly believe that I am in Thy presence. How canst Thou suffer in Thy sight one who has so often offended Thee ? But I know that in Thy infinite goodness Thou dost invite and even command me to come to Thee. Behold me then at Thy feet. I will look up with confidence into Thy Divine face and ask Thee, Who art my Master, to teach me to understand the truth I am about to consider and to give me the grace to profit by it. Say a 'Hail Mary,' to Our Blessed Lady, adding St. Joseph O my good Angel Guardian and Holy Patrons pray for me.

MEDITATION

FIRST of all, read for a short time, from a meditation book, some subject which you find helps you to pray. Read just sufficient so as to get a point to think about, such as for instance the striking words of our Lord: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?"

If you find the points of the public meditation does not help you, then take for your consideration. that subject which as a rule helps your devotion, e.g., the Passion, Blessed Sacrament, Sacred Heart, one of the Eternal Truths, or Perfections of God.

CONSIDERATION

MEDITATE for a while on the thought you will have taken for your consideration; that is, think for a short time what it means, what lessons it teaches you, and see how you stand in regard to this matter. Then, as soon as you feel you can speak to God, pass on to acts, affections, and petitions.

AFFECTIONS

These are short acts of:—

FAITH, HOPE, LOVE, HUMILITY, SORROW, PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT, ADORATION, PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING.

The most important of these acts are those of Love and Sorrow for Sin.

The act of love is the golden chain, which binds the soul to God. You should try to make as many acts of the love of God as you can.

These affections may be made in any order you wish. Begin with those acts which you find flow naturally from your consideration.

PETITIONS

ST. Alphonsus points out that the great fruit of mental prayer is that the soul realises its need of God's help in order to lead a good life. Hence it should ask God for those graces which the subject of meditation suggests.

There should be petitions for the increase of Faith, Hope, Charity, Humility, Sorrow, etc.

Earnestly ask God for Humility, Confidence, the Pardon of your Sins, Perseverance, and a happy Death. These petitions may be made in any order and can be united to the affections, e.g., "My God I love Thee, but increase my love."

RESOLUTIONS

These are of two kinds, GENERAL and PARTICULAR.

The general resolutions always remain the same, but the particular resolution can be changed.

GENERAL RESOLUTION.—To serve God and do all to please Him. Religious should also resolve to imitate Jesus Christ by their Recollection, Regularity and Resignation.

PARTICULAR RESOLUTION.—To avoid some deliberate sin, or to practise some virtue, as charity in word. For tepid souls, the first resolution must be to give up deliberate venial sin.

Religious should make their particular resolution the subject of their Particular Examen. They should also, after making their resolutions, renew their vows; for, adds the Saint, “this renovation is most pleasing to God.”

CONCLUSION

THE: affections and petitions should occupy most of the time of mental prayer. In a half-hour’s meditation give about three minutes to the Resolutions and Conclusion.

Thank God for the light He has given you.

Renew your purpose to fulfil your resolutions with God’s help.

Recommend to God the Holy Souls in Purgatory, all poor sinners, and the Holy Father’s Intentions, saying for them the “Our Father” and “Hail Mary.”

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

“Before prayer prepare thy soul; and be not as a man that tempteth God.” - Eccl. xviii.

1. The remote preparation for meditation is a good life. For success in mental prayer, the soul must have a sincere desire to serve God generously. Any deliberate sin spoils friendship with God. In the proximate preparation, three short acts should be made.

(a.) An act of faith in the presence of God.

An act of humility and sorrow for sin.

Petition for light.

2. Most of the difficulties about meditation arise from a misunderstanding as to what it is. The word “meditation” is misleading. Strictly speaking, it means thinking, reflecting, and reasoning. Hence, many falsely conclude that most of the meditation time must be spent in exercising their imagination. St. Alphonsus therefore, prefers to call it mental prayer, because the best meditation is made when the consideration is short, and the affections and petitions abound.

3. The progress of the soul does not consist in thinking much of God, but in loving Him ardently. Colloquy, that in speaking to God from one’s heart, is the essential part of meditation. This spontaneous prayer, which comes after reflection, may be made with or without words.

4. Just as you apply the needle again when the thread is drawn out, so the consideration of another point should be made as often as you feel you have nothing more to say to God.

5. Always use the affections and petitions which you feel animated to make. Do not imagine you must keep a precise order. Constantly ask God's grace, which by the light of the meditation you find you need. "Ask and you shall receive" says Our Divine Lord. Supposing that without much consideration, you feel an affectionate remembrance of God, do not stop this loving contemplation to make other acts. If again, your soul is united to God by supernatural recollection, you should not then labour to perform any other acts than those to which you feel yourself drawn to make to him.

6. If you are unwell and find it is hard to meditate even for a short time, it is sufficient to have the good will and say: "My Jesus, mercy. Lord, have mercy on me." Never give up mental prayer on account of aridity. As a statue gives pleasure to its owner, so the willing presence of a soul before God, gives Him pleasure. It is by aridities and temptations that God proves His lovers.

7. If for half an hour you read a meditation book most of the time, this is spiritual reading. If during this time you think and reason, this is study. But if you think a little and then pray, this is mental prayer.

8. Indulgences—Plenary, once a month on the usual conditions, to the faithful who make mental prayer devoutly for half an hour, or at least a quarter of an hour a day. Seven Years and Seven Quarantines, every time one teaches or learns how to make mental prayer.—*Benedict XIV. Dec. 16, 1746.*

EXTRACTS FROM ST. ALPHONSUS' BOOK ON MENTAL PRAYER

MORAL NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER FOR SALVATION

THE eternal truths are all spiritual, and cannot be seen by the eyes of the body but only by the eyes of the mind, that is, by thought and consideration. Now he who does not make mental prayer, does not see these truths, and consequently does not see the importance of eternal salvation, nor the means he should use in order to obtain it. This is why so many souls are lost: they neglect to consider the great business of their salvation and what they should do in order to be saved: "With desolation is all the land made desolate; because there is none that considereth in the heart." Jer. XII, 11. On the other hand, Holy Scripture says, that he who keeps before his mind the truths of faith, namely, death, judgment, the happy or unhappy eternity that awaits him, will never fall into sin: "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin." Ecclus VII, 40.

He who makes mental prayer instantly sees his defects and the dangers of perdition to which he is exposed, and seeing them, he will take to heart the remedies to be used. David, by meditating on eternity, was excited to virtue, to sorrow, and to penance for his sins: "I thought upon the days of old: and I had in my mind the eternal years . . . and I was exercised, and I swept my spirit." Ps. LII, G.

Mental prayer acts on the human heart as fire acts on iron. When the iron is cold, it is difficult to work; but placed in a fire it becomes soft, and the smith can, without difficulty, give it any form he chooses. To observe the divine precepts and counsels, it is necessary to have a heart which is docile, ready to receive heavenly inspirations, and prompt to carry them into effect. Now man becomes easily moved and docile under the influence of grace—which he receives in mental prayer: there, by the contemplation of the divine goodness, man finds his heart warmed, softened and ready to obey the divine voice. On the other hand, without mental prayer the soul remains hard, obstinate, disobedient, and thus shall be lost: "A hard heart shall fare evil at the last; and he that loveth danger shall perish in it." Eccl. III, 27.

Without prayer of petition on our part, God does not give us His help, and without divine help we cannot observe the commandments. From this absolute necessity of prayer of petition, arises the moral necessity of mental prayer. For he who neglects mental prayer, and is distracted by the cares of this world, will know but little of his spiritual needs, little of the danger in which he is of losing his soul, little of the means to overcome temptations; he will know but little even of the necessity in which we are all to ask God for His grace; and thus he will give up the practice of prayer, and neglecting prayer he will certainly be lost.

Pray, pray, pray, never cease to pray; If you pray you will certainly be saved: If you do not pray you will certainly be lost.

THE END FOR WHICH WE MAKE MENTAL PRAYER

FIRST of all, we make mental prayer that we may unite ourselves more closely with God. This union is not so much the effect of good thoughts in the mind as of good acts of the will, or holy affections.

Secondly, we make mental prayer to obtain from God the graces we need in advance in the way of salvation, and especially to obtain divine light in order to avoid sin and make use of the means which lead to perfection. The principal fruit of meditation is the exercise of prayer of petition.

Thirdly, we ought to make mental prayer not for the sake of spiritual consolation, but, as a primary end, to learn of God what He wishes us to do. It is true, that God is wont to console souls whom He loves, in the time of meditation; but these delights do not last all through one’s life: on the contrary, holy souls for the most part experience much dryness of spirit in mental prayer. Happy is he who does not leave off meditation in the time of desolation.

PRAYER OF ST. ALPHONSUS

MY Jesus, Thou hast loved me in the midst of pain; and in the midst of pain 1 wish to love Thee. Thou hast reserved nothing for Thyself. Thou hast given Thy blood and Thy life to gain my love; and shall I continue as hitherto to love Thee so little? No, my Redeemer, it shall not be so, my ingratitude is already sufficiently great. To Thee I consecrate my whole heart. Thou alone deservest all my love. Thee alone do I wish to love. My God, since Thou wishest that I be entirely Thine, give me strength to serve Thee as Thou deservest during the remainder of my life.

Pardon my tepidity and my infidelity. How often have I omitted mental prayer in order to indulge my caprice! Alas how often, when it was in my power to remain with Thee in order to please Thee, have I not spent my time with creatures offending Thee! Oh, that so many lost years would return! But since this is not possible, O my beloved Lord, I now at least consecrate to Thee all the time that remains to me. I love Thee, O my Jesus! I love Thee, O Sovereign Good! Thou art and ever shall be the only love of my soul.

O Mother of fair love, O Mary, obtain for me the grace to love thy divine Son, and to spend the remainder of my life in His love. Thou obtainest from Jesus all that thou desirest; from thee do I hope to obtain this gift.

ASPIRATIONS OF ST. ALPHONSUS

My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me.

O loving Heart of Jesus, inflame this poor heart of mine.

Before I die, make me all Thine own.

Eternal Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, have pity on me.

My God, I desire Thee alone.

I desire only Thee, and 1 desire all that Thou desirest.

Grant that when I first behold Thee, my Jesus, I may behold Thee appeased.

Rather let me die, than offend Thee more.

I should be too ungrateful to Thee, my God, if after so many graces I were to love Thee but little.

Grant me to know the immensity of Thy goodness, that I may indeed love Thee.

O eternal God, I hope to love Thee for all eternity.

Oh, That I had always loved Thee ! Oh, that I had died rather than have offended Thee.

I give Thee my will, my liberty, dispose of me as Thou pleasest.

May my only pleasure be to please Thee

Thou art Omnipotent; make me holy.

My Jesus, when shall I begin to love Thee, as Thou hast loved me?

Thou hast loved me without reserve; I wish to love Thee without reserve.

My Jesus, grant that I may die, saying, I love Thee, I love Thee.

SAYINGS OF ST. ALPHONSUS

The first means to love Jesus Christ, is mental prayer.

Mental prayer is a familiar conversation and union with God.

It consists not so much in thinking as in making affections, petitions and resolutions.

If God does not bestow His graces upon us, the fault is ours; it is because we do not ask them of Him. All mental prayer should consist in acts and petitions.

It is impossible for him who perseveres in mental prayer to continue in sin.

Remember that the devil labours hard to disturb us in the time of meditation, in order to make us abandon it. Let him who omits mental prayer on account of distractions be persuaded that he gives delight to the devil.

In going to meditation never propose to yourself your own pleasure and satisfaction, but only to please God, and to learn what He wishes you to do.

Many say the Rosary, the Office, and perform works of devotion; yet still continue in sin. But mental prayer and sin cannot exist together.

It is morally impossible for a religious who is not a lover of mental prayer, to be a good religious. Mental prayer is the blessed furnace in which souls are inflamed with the love of God: All the saints have become saints by mental prayer.

ARTICLES
ABOUT ALPHONSUS

CONTENTS

INDEX

- ARTICLES ABOUT ALPHONSUS
  - CONTENTS
  - SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI 1
    - INFORMATION
    - BIOGRAPHY
    - EARLY YEARS
    - EDUCATION
    - CAREER CHANGE
    - CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER
    - BISHOP
    - DEATH
    - VENERATION AND LEGACY
    - WORKS
    - OVERVIEW
    - MORAL THEOLOGY
    - MARIOLOGY
    - OTHER PROMINENT WORKS
    - ST. ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI—A FULL LIST OF ALPHONSUS’ WRITINGS
  - SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI 2

SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

1

INFORMATION

Saint

Alphonsus Maria de’ Liguori

C.Ss.R.

Bishop of Sant’Agata de’ Goti

St Alphonsus Liguori.jpg

Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Metropolis	Benevento
Diocese	Sant’Agata de’ Goti
See	Sant’Agata de’ Goti
Appointed	14 June 1762
Installed	20 June 1762
Term ended	26 June 1775
Predecessor	Flaminius Danza

Successor	Onofrio de Rossi
Orders	
Ordination	21 December 1726
Consecration	20 June 1762 by Ferdinando Maria de Rossi
Personal details	
Born	27 September 1696 Marianella, Campania,Kingdom of Naples
Died	1 August 1787 (aged 90) Pagani, Campania, Kingdom of Naples
Denomination	Roman Catholic
Sainthood	
Feast day	01-Aug 2 August (General Roman Calendar 1839–1969)
Venerated in	Catholic Church
Title as Saint	Bishop, Moral Theologian, Confessor and Doctor of the Church
Beatified	15 September 1816 Rome, Papal States

	by Pope Pius VII
Canonized	26 May 1839 Rome, Papal States by Pope Gregory XVI
Patronage	Pagani, Cancello, Naples (co-patron); arthritis, confessors, moralists
Shrines	Basilica Sanctuary of St. Alphonsus di Liguori 1, Piazza Sant’Alfonso di Liguori, Pagani, Salerno, Italy

Saint Alphonsus Maria de’ Liguori, C.Ss.R. (27 September 1696—1 August 1787), was an Italian Catholic bishop, spiritual writer, composer, musician, artist, poet, lawyer, scholastic philosopher, and theologian.

He founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (the Redemptorists). In 1762 he was appointed Bishop of Sant’Agata dei Goti. A prolific writer, he published devotional and ascetic works and letters. Among his best known works are *The Glories of Mary* and *The Way of the Cross,* the latter still used in parishes during Lenten devotions.

He was canonized in 1839 by Pope Gregory XVI. Pope Pius IX proclaimed him a Doctor of the Church in 1871. One of the most widely read Catholic authors, Alphonsus Liguori is the patron saint of confessors.

BIOGRAPHY

EARLY YEARS

Alphonsus Maria de’ Liguori was born in Marianella, near Naples, then part of the Kingdom of Naples. He was the eldest of eight children of Giuseppe and Anna Cavalieri Liguori. Two days after he was born he was baptized at the Church of Our Lady the Virgin as Alphonsus Mary Anthony John Cosmas Damian Michael Gaspard de’ Liguori. The family was an old and noble one, though the branch to which the Saint belonged had become somewhat impoverished. Alphonsus’s father, Don Joseph de’ Liguori was a naval officer and Captain of the Royal Galleys. His mother was of Spanish descent.

EDUCATION

Liguori learned to ride and fence, but was never a good shot due to poor eyesight. Myopia and chronic asthma precluded a military career, so his father had him educated for the legal profession. He was taught by tutors before entering the University of Naples, where he graduated with doctorates in civil and canon law at age sixteen. He remarked later that he was so small at the time as to be almost buried in his doctor’s gown and that all the spectators laughed. He became a successful lawyer. He was thinking of leaving the profession, and wrote to someone: “My friend, our profession is too full of difficulties and dangers; we lead an unhappy life and run risk of dying an unhappy death.” At the age of twenty-seven, after having lost an important case—the first he had lost in eight years of practicing law—he made a firm resolution to leave the profession of law. Moreover, he heard an interior voice, saying: “Leave the world, and give yourself to me.”

CAREER CHANGE

In 1723, he decided to offer himself as a novice to the Oratory of St. Philip Neri with the intention of becoming a priest. His father opposed this plan, but after two months (and with his Oratorian confessor’s permission), he and his father compromised: he would study for the priesthood, but not as an Oratorian and while living at home. He was ordained on 21 December 1726, at the age of 30. He lived his first years as a priest with the homeless and marginalized youth of Naples. He became very popular because of his plain and simple preaching. He said: “I have never preached a sermon which the poorest old woman in the congregation could not understand.” He founded the *Evening Chapels* which were managed by the young people themselves. These chapels were centers of prayer and piety, preaching, community, social activities, and education. At the time of his death, there were 72 of these chapels with over 10,000 active participants. His sermons were very effective at converting those who were alienated from their faith.

Liguori suffered from scruples much of his adult life, and felt guilt about the most minor issues relating to sin. Moreover, the saint viewed scruples as a blessing at times, he wrote: “Scruples are useful in the beginning of conversion. . . . they cleanse the soul, and at the same time make it careful.”

In 1729, Alphonsus left his family home and took up residence in the Chinese Institute in Naples. It was there that he began his missionary experience in the interior regions of the Kingdom of Naples where he found people who were much poorer and more abandoned than any of the street children in Naples. In 1731, while ministering to earthquake victims in the town of Foggia, Alphonsus claimed to have had a vision of the Virgin Mother in the appearance of a young girl of thirteen or fourteen, wearing a white veil.

CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

On 9 November 1732, Alphonsus founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, when Sister Maria Celeste Crostarosa told him that it had been revealed to her that he was the one God had chosen to found the congregation. He founded the congregation with the charism of preaching popular missions in the city and the countryside. Its goal was to teach and preach in the slums of cities and other poor places. They also fought Jansenism–a heresy that supported a very strict morality–declaring that “the penitents should be treated as souls to be saved rather than as criminals to be punished.” He is said never to have refused absolution to a penitent.

BISHOP

Alphonsus was consecrated Bishop of Sant’Agata dei Goti in 1762. He tried to refuse the appointment, proposing his age and infirmities as arguments against his consecration. During this time he wrote sermons, books, and articles to encourage devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary. His first order of business was to address ecclesiastical abuses in the diocese, reform the seminary and spiritually rehabilitate the clergy and faithful. He suspended those priests who celebrated Mass in less than

15 minutes, and sold his carriage and episcopal ring in order to give the money to the poor. In the last years of his life, he suffered a painful sickness and a bitter persecution from his fellow priests, who dismissed him from the Congregation he himself had founded.

DEATH

In 1775, he was allowed to retire from his office and went to live in the Redemptorist community in Pagani, Italy, where he died on 1 August 1787.

VENERATION AND LEGACY

Alphonsus Liguori was beatified on 15 September 1816 by Pope Pius VII and canonized on 26 May 1839 by Pope Gregory XVI.

In 1949, the Redemptorists founded the Alphonsian Academy for the advanced study of Catholic moral theology. He was named patron of confessors and moral theologians by Pope Pius XII on 26 April 1950, who subsequently wrote of him in the encyclical *Haurietis aquas.*

WORKS

OVERVIEW

Alphonsus was a prolific and popular author. He was proficient in the arts, his parents having had him trained by various masters, and was a musician, painter, poet, and author at the same time. Alphonsus wrote 111 works on spirituality and theology. The 21,500 editions and the translations into 72 languages that his works have undergone attest to the fact that he is one of the most widely read Catholic authors.

His best known musical work is his Christmas hymn *Quanno Nascetti Ninno,* later translated into Italian by Pope Pius IX as *Tu scendi dalle stelle* (“From Starry Skies Thou Comest”).

MORAL THEOLOGY

Alphonsus’ greatest contribution to the Church was in the area of moral theology. His masterpiece was *The Moral Theology* (1748), which was approved by the Pope himself. This was born of Alphonsus’ pastoral experience, his ability to respond to the practical questions posed by the faithful and from his contact with their everyday problems. He opposed sterile legalism and strict rigorism. According to Alphonsus, those were paths closed to the Gospel because “such rigor has never been taught nor practiced by the Church.” His system of moral theology is noted for its prudence, avoiding both laxism and excessive rigor. He is credited with the position of Aequiprobabilism, which avoided Jansenist rigorism as well as laxism and simple probabilism.

MARIOLOGY

His Mariology, though mainly pastoral in nature, rediscovered, integrated and defended the Mariology of Saint Augustine and Saint Ambrose and other fathers and represented an intellectual defence of Mariology in the 18th century, the Age of Enlightenment, against the rationalism to which his often flaming Marian enthusiasm contrasted.

The Glories of Mary
Marian Devotion
Prayers to the Divine Mother
Spiritual Songs
The True Spouse of Jesus Christ

OTHER PROMINENT WORKS

Great Means of Salvation and of Perfection
The Way of Salvation and of Perfection
The Way of the Cross,
The Incarnation, Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ
The Holy Eucharist
Victories of the Martyrs

ST. ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI—A FULL LIST OF ALPHONSUS’ WRITINGS

1728—The Eternal Truths, 64–5, 190

1732—Hymns and Verses, 190

1734—Prayers to Our Lady for each day of the week, 190

1743—Novena in honour of St. Teresa, 190, 348 Short Way of Perfection

1743—Precis of Christian Doctrine

1745—Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, 33, 67, 190–91, 254, 379

1745—Reflections useful for Bishops, 191–3, 342, 370, 377

1746—Letter concerning the Moral Implications of Cursing the Dead, 203–4

1748—Annotations to the Medulla Theologiae Moralis of H. Busenbaum S.J. In the course of the nine editions published during the saint's lifetime the title page changed to Moral Theology of the most ill. and Rev. d. Alphonsus De Liguori, bishop of S. Agatha of the Goths and Rector Major of the Congregation of the most Holy Redeemer, 67, 184, 204–5, 207–10, 220, 262–3, 274–8, 281–6, 332–443

1748—Reply to the Calumnies concerning Letter dealing with the Moral Implications of Cursing the Dead

1749—Dissertation in favour of the Moderate Use of the Probable Opinion, 266, 281, 426

1750—The Glories of Mary, 132, 263–4, 269–74, 398

1750—Consideration on Religious Vocation, 312

1751—Jesus hath loved us. Clock of the Passion

1751—Concerning the Refusal of Absolution to a Cleric 'habituato in vitio turpi,' 275

1751—Rest for Scrupulous Souls, 74

1752—Lives of Father Sarnelli and Brother Vito Curzio, 131, 301

1754—On Conversing Continually and Familiarly with God, 291

1754—Rules for Correct Living

1755—Pratica del Confessore per ben esercitare il suo ministero (Praxis Confessarii), 50, 282–6, 349, 406

1755—Dissertation on the moderate use of Probable Opinion, 281, 426

1755—Conformity with the Will of God

1756—Advice to newly approved Confessors

1756—Against the Errors of Modern Unbelievers called Materialists and Deists, 288

1756—Reply to an anonymous writer

1757—Rules for Seminaries, 338, 387

1757—A Short Treatise on the Necessity of Prayer, 291

1757—Examination of Candidates for Ordination

1757—Concerning the Cursing of the Dead, 203–6

1757—Advice to Priests for Assisting the Dying, 50–52

1757–59—Istruzione e pratica per un confessore (Compendium, Pratica Grande, Homo Apostolicus), 50, 284–6, 386

1758—Preparation for Death, 294, 477

1758—Nine Discourses for Times of Calamity

1758—Novena for Christmas, 294

1758—Novena for the Sacred Heart, 294

1758—Meditations in honour of St. Joseph, 294

1758—Reply to a Letter concerning the Cursing of the Dead

1758—Preparation for Mass and Thanksgiving, 337, 513

1759—Dissertation concerning the Prohibition of Books, 359

1759—Prayer, the Great Means of Salvation, 291

1760—The Selva (Dignity and Duties of the Priest with two Rules of Life for secular priests), 336–8, 375

1760—The Exercises of the Missions, 246, 259

1760—The Mass and Office hurriedly said, 338

1760–61—The True Spouse of Jesus Christ, 266, 351–2

1761—Meditations for a Private Retreat of Eight Days

1761—Considerations on the Passion of Jesus Christ

1761—The Way of the Cross

1761—Letter to a fellow religious on the mannar of Preaching with Apostolic Simplicity, 260–61

1761—Life and Death of Sr. Teresa de Liguori, 28

1761—A Short Compendium of Christian Doctrine, 391

1762—Reply to a letter from Don Cipriano Aristasio

1762—Dissertation on the Moderate use of the Probable Opinion, 266, 281, 424

1762—The Truth of the Faith as evidenced by the Motives of Credibility, 288

1762—Method of Making Mental Prayer with Children during Mass

1764—For Confessors appointed to Rural Areas (Il Confessore Diretto), 268, 427

1764—Reply concerning the frequentation of Holy Communion against Don Cipriano Aristasio

1764—Examination of Candidates for Confession Faculties

1764—Questions to be asked of Priests who wish to engage in the Ministry of the Confessional

1764—Apologia in favour of the use of an equally Probably Opinion, 425

1764—Defence of Dissertation in favour of the moderate use of the Probable Opinion against Adelfo Dositeo, 424–6

1764—Rules for the Monastery of Our Lady Queen of Heaven at Airola

1765—On the moderate use of the Probable Opinion, 425

1765—Some Points Concerning the Matter of Frequent Communion

1765—An uncertain Law cannot induce a certain Obligation

1766—The Way of Salvation, 383, 428

1766—Life of Father Paul Cafaro, C.SS.R., 301

1767—The Truth of the Faith, 288

1767—Refutation of the Book De l’Esprit, 288

1767—Refutation of a work On Preaching

1768—Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ, 73, 428

1768—Arguments against Febronius, 429

1768—Instructions on the Ten Commandments for the Faithful, 427

1768—Five Points on which Preachers should instruct the Faithful, 427

1769—An Exposition and Defense of the Points of Faith discussed and defined at the Council of Trent, 288, 429

1769—On the Grace of Justification

1769—On the Acceptance due to the Definitions of a Council, 429

1769—Ceremonies of the Mass

1769—Honoraria for Masses

1769 -Apologia for his Moral Theology attacked as lax

1770—An Opinion, which is not convincing, in favour of an Obligation, does not impost an Obligation

1771—Sermons for all the Sundays of the year, 427

1771—Letter to a Bishop on the benefits of Missions

1771—Letter on the benefit of Spiritual Exercises made in Silence

1772—Triumph of the Church (History and Refutation of various Heresies), 141, 289, 429

1772—Sermons for the feast of St. Joseph

1772—Sermons for the Clothing of a Religious

1773—Considerations on the Passion of Jesus Christ

1773—Considertions on some Spiritual Matters

1773—On the Truth of Devine Revelation, 289

1773—Is the use of Probable Opinion lawful?

1773—Miraculous Discovery of the Blessed Sacrament in a parish in Naples

1773—Meditations on the Passion of Jesus Christ for each day of the week

1774—Explanation on the Psalms and Canticles, 34

1774—Explanation of the Moral System favoured by the author (Alphonsus Maria de Liguori), 427

1775—Advice to Priests appointed to assist those Condemned to Death, 50–52

1775—Victory of the Martyrs, 430

1775—The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ

1775—Exhortation to Religious in general

1775—Exhortation to a Nun to make progress in the Love of Jesus Christ

1775—Wonderful Manifestation of Devine Providence

1775—Reply to the Reforms of the Abbot Rolli

1775—Admonitions necessary for persons of every State of Life who wish to save their Souls

1775—Novena in preparation for the Feast of All Souls

1775—Divine Love and the means of acquiring it

1775—Consolation and Encouragement for a Soul in a state of Spiritual Desolation

1776—A Theological-Moral Dissertation concerning Eternal Life, 441–3

1776—Fidelity of Subjects to God renders them faithful to the Prince, 430–31

1777—Instruction to Preachers

1778—Exhortations addressed to the Nuns of the Most Holy Redeemer

WIKIPEDIA

SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

2

Born at Marianella, near Naples, 27 September, 1696; died at Nocera de' Pagani, 1 August, 1787. The eighteenth century was not an age remarkable for depth of spiritual life, yet it produced three of the greatest missionaries of the Church, St. Leonard of Port Maurice, St. Paul of the Cross, and St. Alphonsus Liguori. Alphonsus Mary Antony John Cosmas Damian Michael Gaspard de' Liguori was born in his father's country house at Marianella near Naples, on Tuesday, 27 September, 1696. He was baptized two days later in the church of Our Lady of the Virgins, in Naples. The family was an old and noble one, though the branch to which the Saint belonged had become somewhat impoverished. Alphonsus's father, Don Joseph de' Liguori was a naval officer and Captain of the Royal Galleys. The Saint's mother was of Spanish descent, and if, as there can be little doubt, race is an element in individual character, we may see in Alphonsus's Spanish blood some explanation of the enormous tenacity of purpose which distinguished him from his earliest years. "I know his obstinacy," his father said of him as a young man; "when he once makes up his mind he is inflexible." Not many details have come down to us of Alphonsus's childhood. He was the eldest of seven children and the hope of his house. The boy was bright and quick beyond his years, and made great progress in all kinds of learning. In addition his father made him practice the harpsichord for three hours a day, and at the age of thirteen he played with the perfection of a master. Riding and fencing were his recreations, and an evening game of cards; he tells us that he was debarred from being a good shot by his bad sight. In early manhood he became very fond of the opera, but only that he might listen to the music, for when the curtain went up he took his glasses off, so as not to see the players distinctly. The Neapolitan stage at this time was in a good state, but the Saint had from his earliest years an ascetic repugnance to theatres, a repugnance which he never lost. The childish fault for which he most reproached himself in after-life was resisting his father too strongly when he was told to take part in a drawing-room play. Alphonsus was not sent to school but was educated by tutors under his father's eye. At the age of sixteen, on 21 January, 1713, he took his degree as Doctor of Laws, although twenty was the age fixed by the statutes. He said himself that he was so small at the time as to be almost buried in his doctor's gown and that all the spectators laughed. Soon after this the boy began his studies for the Bar, and about the age of nineteen practised his profession in the courts. In the eight years of his career as advocate, years crowded with work, he is said never to have lost a case. Even if there be some exaggeration in this, for it is not in an advocate's power always to be on the winning side, the tradition shows that he was extraordinarily able and successful. In fact, despite his youth, he seems at the age of twenty-seven to have been one of the leaders of the Neapolitan Bar.

Alphonsus, like so many saints, had an excellent father and a saintly mother. Don Joseph de' Liguori had his faults. He was somewhat worldly and ambitious, at any rate for his son, and was rough tempered when opposed. But he was a man of genuine faith and piety and stainless life, and he meant his son to be the same. Even when taking him into society in order to arrange a good marriage for him, he wished Alphonsus to put God first, and every year father and son would make a retreat together in some religious house. Alphonsus, assisted by divine grace, did not disappoint his father's care. A pure and modest boyhood passed into a manhood without reproach. A companion, Balthasar Cito, who afterwards became a distinguished judge, was asked in later years if Alphonsus had ever shown signs of levity in his youth. He answered emphatically: "Never! It would be a sacrilege to say otherwise." The Saint's confessor declared that he preserved his baptismal innocence till death. Still there was a time of danger.

There can be little doubt but that the young Alphonsus with his high spirits and strong character was ardently attached to his profession, and on the way to be spoilt by the success and popularity which it brought. About the year 1722, when he was twenty-six years old, he began to go constantly into society, to neglect prayer and the practices of piety which had been an integral part of his life, and to take pleasure in the attention with which he was everywhere received.

"Banquets, entertainments, theatres," he wrote later on—"these are the pleasures of the world, but pleasures which are filled with the bitterness of gall and sharp thorns. Believe me who have experienced it, and now weep over it." In all this there was no serious sin, but there was no high sanctity either, and God, Who wished His servant to be a saint and a great saint, was now to make him take the road to Damascus. In 1723 there was a lawsuit in the courts between a Neapolitan nobleman, whose name has not come down to us, and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, in which property valued at 500,000 ducats, that to say, $500,000 or 100,000 pounds, was at stake. Alphonsus was one of the leading counsel; we do not know on which side. When the day came the future Saint made a brilliant opening speech and sat down confident of victory. But before he called a witness the opposing counsel said to him in chilling tones: "Your arguments are wasted breath. You have overlooked a document which destroys your whole case." "What document is that?" said Alphonsus somewhat piqued. "Let us have it." A piece of evidence was handed to him which he had read and re-read many times, but always in a sense the exact contrary of that which he now saw it to have. The poor advocate turned pale. He remained thunderstruck for a moment; then said in a broken voice: "You are right. I have been mistaken. This document gives you the case." In vain those around him and even the judge on the bench tried to console him. He was crushed to the earth. He thought his mistake would be ascribed not to oversight but to deliberate deceit. He felt as if his career was ruined, and left the court almost beside himself, saying: "World, I know you now. Courts, you shall never see me more." For three days he refused all food. Then the storm subsided, and he began to see that his humiliation had been sent him by God to break down his pride and wean him from the world. Confident that some special sacrifice was required of him, though he did not yet know what, he did not return to his profession, but spent his days in prayer, seeking to know God's will. After a short interval—we do not know exactly how long—the answer came. On 28 August, 1723, the young advocate had gone to perform a favourite act of charity by visiting the sick in the Hospital for Incurables. Suddenly he found himself surrounded by a mysterious light; the house seemed to rock, and an interior voice said: "Leave the world and give thyself to Me." This occurred twice. Alphonsus left the Hospital and went to the church of the Redemption of Captives. Here he laid his sword before the statue of Our Lady, and made a solemn resolution to enter the ecclesiastical state, and furthermore to offer himself as a novice to the Fathers of the Oratory. He knew that trials were before him. His father, already displeased at the failure of two plans for his son's marriage, and exasperated at Alphonsus's present neglect of his profession, was likely to offer a strenuous opposition to his leaving the world. So indeed it proved. He had to endure a real persecution for two months. In the end a compromise was arrived at. Don Joseph agreed to allow his son to become a priest, provided he would give up his proposal joining the Oratory, and would continue to live at home. To this Alphonsus by the advice of his director, Father Thomas Pagano, himself an Oratorian, agreed. Thus was he left free for his real work, the founding of a new religious congregation. On 23 October of the same year, 1723, the Saint put on the clerical dress. In September of the next year he received the tonsure and soon after joined the association of missionary secular priests called the "Neapolitan Propaganda," membership of which did not entail residence in common. In December, 1724, he received minor orders, and the subdiaconate in September, 1725. On 6 April, 1726, he was ordained deacon, and soon after preached his first sermon. On 21 December of the same year, at the age of thirty, he was ordained priest. For six years he laboured in and around Naples, giving missions for the Propaganda and preaching to the lazzaroni of the capital. With the aid of two laymen, Peter Barbarese, a schoolmaster, and Nardone, an old soldier, both of whom he converted from an evil life, he enrolled thousands of lazzaroni in a sort of confraternity called the "Association of the Chapels," which exists to this day. Then God called him to his life work.

In April 1729, the Apostle of China, Matthew Ripa, founded a missionary college in Naples, which became known colloquially as the "Chinese College." A few months later Alphonsus left his father's house and went to live with Ripa, without, however, becoming a member of his society. In his new abode he met a friend of his host's, Father Thomas Falcoia, of the Congregation of the "Pii Operarii" (Pious Workers), and formed with him the great friendship of his life. There was a considerable difference in age between the two men, for Falcoia, born in 1663, was now sixty-six, and Alphonsus only thirty-three, but the old priest and the young had kindred souls. Many years before, in Rome, Falcoia had been shown a vision of a new religious family of men and women whose particular aim should be the perfect imitation of the virtues of Our Lord. He had even tried to form a branch of the Institute by uniting twelve priests in a common life at Tarentum, but the community soon broke up. In 1719, together with a Father Filangieri, also one of the “Pii Operarii,” he had refounded a Conservatorium of religious women at Scala on the mountains behind Amalfi. But as he drew up a rule for them, formed from that of the Visitation nuns, he does not seem to have had any clear idea of establishing the new institute of his vision. God, however, intended the new institute to begin with these nuns of Scala. In 1724, soon after Alphonsus left the world, a postulant, Julia Crostarosa, born in Naples on 31 October, 1696, and hence almost the same age as the Saint, entered the convent of Scala. She became known in religion as Sister Maria Celeste. In 1725, while still a novice, she had a series of visions in which she saw a new order (apparently of nuns only) similar to that revealed to Falcoia many years before. Even its Rule was made known to her. She was told to write it down and show it to the director of the convent, that is to Falcoia himself. While affecting to treat the novice with severity and to take no notice of her visions, the director was surprised to find that the Rule which she had written down was a realization of what had been so long in his mind. He submitted the new Rule to a number of theologians, who approved of it, and said it might be adopted in the convent of Scala, provided the community would accept it. But when the question was put to the community, opposition began. Most were in favour of accepting, but the superior objected and appealed to Filangieri, Falcoia’s colleague in establishing the convent, and now, as General of the “Pii Operarii,” his superior. Filangieri forbade any change of rule and removed Falcoia from all communication with the convent. Matters remained thus for some years. About 1729, however, Filangieri died, and on 8 October, 1730, Falcoia was consecrated Bishop of Castellamare. He was now free, subject to the approval of the Bishop of Scala, to act with regard to the convent as he thought best. It happened that Alphonsus, ill and overworked, had gone with some companions to Scala in the early summer of 1730. Unable to be idle, he had preached to the goatherds of the mountains with such success that Nicolas Guerriero, Bishop of Scala, begged him to return and give a retreat in his cathedral.

Falcoia, hearing of this, begged his friend to give a retreat to the nuns of his Conservatorium at the same time. Alphonsus agreed to both requests and set out with his two friends, John Mazzini and Vincent Mannarini, in September, 1730. The result of the retreat to the nuns was that the young priest, who before had been prejudiced by reports in Naples against the proposed new Rule, became its firm supporter, and even obtained permission from the Bishop of Scala for the change. In 1731, the convent unanimously adopted the new Rule, together with a habit of red and blue, the traditional colours of Our Lord's own dress. One branch of the new Institute seen by Falcoia in vision was thus established. The other was not to be long delayed. No doubt Thomas Falcoia had for some time hoped that the ardent young priest, who was so devoted to him, might, under his direction, be the founder of the new Order he had at heart. a fresh vision of Sister Maria Celeste seemed to show that such was the will of God. On 3 October, 1731, the eve of the feast of St. Francis, she saw Our Lord with St. Francis on His right hand and a priest on His left. A voice said "This is he whom I have chosen to be head of My Institute, the Prefect General of a new Congregation of men who shall work for My glory." The priest was Alphonsus. Soon after, Falcoia made known to the latter his vocation to leave Naples and establish an order of missionaries at Scala, who should work above all for the neglected goatherds of the mountains. A year of trouble and anxiety followed.

The Superior of the Propaganda and even Falcoia's friend, Matthew Ripa, opposed the project with all their might. But Alphonsus's director, Father Pagano; Father Fiorillo, a great Dominican preacher; Father Manulio, Provincial of the Jesuits; and Vincent Cutica, Superior of the Vincentians, supported the young priest, and, 9 November, 1732, the "Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer," or as it was called for seventeen years, "of the Most Holy Saviour," was begun in a little hospice belonging to the nuns of Scala. Though St. Alphonsus was founder and de facto head of the Institute, its general direction in the beginning, as well as the direction of Alphonsus's conscience, was undertaken by the Bishop of Castellamare and it was not till the latter's death, 20 April, 1743, that a general chapter was held and the Saint was formally elected Superior-General. In fact, in the beginning, the young priest in his humility would not be Superior even of the house, judging one of his companions, John Baptist Donato, better fitted for the post because he had already had some experience of community life in another institute.

The early years, following the founding of the new order, were not promising. Dissensions arose, the Saint's former friend and chief companion, Vincent Mannarini, opposing him and Falcoia in everything. On 1 April, 1733, all the companions of Alphonsus except one lay brother, Vitus Curtius, abandoned him, and founded the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, which, confined to the Kingdom of Naples, was extinguished in 1860 by the Italian Revolution. The dissensions even spread to the nuns, and Sister Maria Celeste herself left Scala and founded a convent at Foggia, where she died in the odour of sanctity, 14 September, 1755. She was declared Venerable 11 August, 1901. Alphonsus, however, stood firm; soon other companions arrived, and though Scala itself was given up by the Fathers in 1738, by 1746 the new Congregation had four houses at Nocera de' Pagani, Ciorani, Iliceto (now Deliceto), and Caposele, all in the Kingdom of Naples. In 1749, the Rule and Institute of men were approved by Pope Benedict XIV, and in 1750, the Rule and Institute of the nuns. Alphonsus was lawyer, founder, religious superior, bishop, theologian, and mystic, but he was above all a missionary, and no true biography of the Saint will neglect to give this due prominence. From 1726 to 1752, first as a member of the Neapolitan "Propaganda," and then as a leader of his own Fathers, he traversed the provinces of Naples for the greater part of each year giving missions even in the smallest villages and saving many souls. a special feature of his method was the return of the missionaries, after an interval of some months, to the scene of their labours to consolidate their work by what was called the "renewal of a mission."

After 1752 Alphonsus gave fewer missions. His infirmities were increasing, and he was occupied a good deal with his writings. His promotion to the episcopate in 1762 led to a renewal of his missionary activity, but in a slightly different form. The Saint had four houses, but during his lifetime it not only became impossible in the Kingdom of Naples to get any more, but even the barest toleration for those he had could scarcely be obtained. The cause of this was "regalism," the omnipotence of kings even in matters spiritual, which was the system of government in Naples as in all the Bourbon States. The immediate author of what was practically a lifelong persecution of the Saint was the Marquis Tanucci, who entered Naples in 1734. Naples had been part of the dominions of Spain since 1503, but in 1708 when Alphonsus was twelve years old, it was conquered by Austria during the war of the Spanish Succession. In 1734, however, it was reconquered by Don Carlos, the young Duke of Parma, great-grandson of Louis XIV, and the independent Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was established. With Don Carlos, or as he is generally called, Charles III, from his later title as King of Spain, came the lawyer, Bernard Tanucci, who governed Naples as Prime Minister and regent for the next forty-two years. This was to be a momentous revolution for Alphonsus. Had it happened a few years later, the new Government might have found the Redemptorist Congregation already authorized, and as Tanucci's anti-clerical policy rather showed itself in forbidding new Orders than, with the exception of the Society of Jesus, in suppressing old ones, the Saint might have been free to develop his work in comparative peace. As it was, he was refused the royal exequatur to the Brief of Benedict XIV, and State recognition of his Institute as a religious congregation till the day of his death. There were whole years, indeed, in which the Institute seemed on the verge of summary suppression. The suffering which this brought on Alphonsus, with his sensitive and high-strung disposition, was very great, besides what was worse, the relaxation of discipline and loss of vocations which it caused in the Order itself. Alphonsus, however, was unflagging in his efforts with the Court. It may be he was even too anxious, and on one occasion when he was over-whelmed by a fresh refusal, his friend the Marquis Brancone, Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs and a man of deep piety, said to him gently: “It would seem as if you placed all your trust here below”; on which the Saint recovered his peace of mind. A final attempt to gain the royal approval, which seemed as if at last it had been successful, led to the crowning sorrow of Alphonsus's life: the division and apparent ruin of his Congregation and the displeasure of the Holy See. This was in 1780, when Alphonsus was eighty-three years old. But, before relating the episode of the “Regolamento,” as it is called, we must speak of the period of the Saint's episcopate which intervened.

In the year 1747, King Charles of Naples wished to make Alphonsus Archbishop of Palermo, and it was only by the most earnest entreaties that he was able to escape. In 1762, there was no escape and he was constrained by formal obedience to the Pope to accept the Bishopric of St. Agatha of the

Goths, a very small Neapolitan diocese lying a few miles off the road from Naples to Capua. Here with 30,000 uninstructed people, 400 mostly indifferent and sometimes scandalous secular clergy, and seventeen more or less relaxed religious houses to look after, in a field so overgrown with weeds that they seemed the only crop, he wept and prayed and spent days and nights in unremitting labour for thirteen years. More than once he faced assassination unmoved. In a riot which took place during the terrible famine that fell upon Southern Italy in 1764, he saved the life of the syndic of St. Agatha by offering his own to the mob. He fed the poor, instructed the ignorant, reorganized his seminary, reformed his convents, created a new spirit in his clergy, banished scandalous noblemen and women of evil life with equal impartiality, brought the study of theology and especially of moral theology into honour, and all the time was begging pope after pope to let him resign his office because he was doing nothing for his diocese. To all his administrative work we must add his continual literary labours, his many hours of daily prayer, his terrible austerities, and a stress of illness which made his life a martyrdom.

Eight times during his long life, without counting his last sickness, the Saint received the sacraments of the dying, but the worst of all his illnesses was a terrible attack of rheumatic fever during his episcopate, an attack which lasted from May, 1768, to June, 1769, and left him paralyzed to the end of his days. It was this which gave St. Alphonsus the bent head which we notice in the portraits of him. So bent was it in the beginning, that the pressure of his chin produced a dangerous wound in the chest. Although the doctors succeeded in straightening the neck a little, the Saint for the rest of his life had to drink at meals through a tube. He could never have said Mass again had not an Augustinian prior shown him how to support himself on a chair so that with the assistance of an acolyte he could raise the chalice to his lips. But in spite of his infirmities both Clement XIII (1758–69) and Clement XIV (1769–74) obliged Alphonsus to remain at his post. In February, 1775, however, Pius VI was elected Pope, and the following May he permitted the Saint to resign his see.

Alphonsus returned to his little cell at Nocera in July, 1775, to prepare, as he thought, for a speedy and happy death. Twelve years, however, still separated him from his reward, years for the most part not of peace but of greater afflictions than any which had yet befallen him. By 1777, the Saint, in addition to four houses in Naples and one in Sicily, had four others at Scifelli, Frosinone, St. Angelo a Cupolo, and Beneventum, in the States of the Church. In case things became hopeless in Naples, he looked to these houses to maintain the Rule and Institute. In 1780, a crisis arose in which they did this, yet in such a way as to bring division in the Congregation and extreme suffering and disgrace upon its founder. The crisis arose in this way. From the year 1759 two former benefactors of the Congregation, Baron Sarnelli and Francis Maffei, by one of those changes not uncommon in Naples, had become its bitter enemies, and waged a vendetta against it in the law courts which lasted for twenty-four years. Sarnelli was almost openly supported by the all-powerful Tanucci, and the suppression of the Congregation at last seemed a matter of days, when on 26 October, 1776, Tanucci, who had offended Queen Maria Carolina, suddenly fell from power. Under the government of the Marquis della Sambuca, who, though a great regalist, was a personal friend of the Saint's, there was promise of better times, and in August, 1779, Alphonsus's hopes were raised by the publication of a royal decree allowing him to appoint superiors in his Congregation and to have a novitiate and house of studies. The Government throughout had recognized the good effect of his missions, but it wished the missionaries to be secular priests and not a religious order. The Decree of 1779, however, seemed a great step in advance. Alphonsus, having got so much, hoped to get a little more, and through his friend, Mgr. Testa, the Grand Almoner, even to have his Rule approved. He did not, as in the past, ask for an exequatur to the Brief of Benedict XIV, for relations at the time were more strained than ever between the Courts of Rome and Naples; but he hoped the king might give an independent sanction to his Rule, provided he waived all legal right to hold property in common, which he was quite prepared to do. It was all-important to the Fathers to be able to rebut the charge of being an illegal religious congregation, which was one of the chief allegations in the ever-adjourned and ever-impending action by Baron Sarnelli. Perhaps in any case the submission of their Rule to a suspicious and even hostile civil power was a mistake. At all events, it proved disastrous in the result. Alphonsus being so old and so inform—he was eighty-five, crippled, deaf, and nearly blind—his one chance of success was to be faithfully served by friends and subordinates, and he was betrayed at every turn. His friend the Grand Almoner betrayed him; his two envoys for negotiating with the Grand Almoner, Fathers Majone and Cimino, betrayed him, consultors general though they were. His very confessor and vicar general in the government of his Order, Father Andrew Villani, joined in the conspiracy. In the end the Rule was so altered as to be hardly recognizable, the very vows of religion being abolished. To this altered Rule or "Regolamento," as it came to be called, the unsuspecting Saint was induced to put his signature. It was approved by the king and forced upon the stupefied Congregation by the whole power of the State. a fearful commotion arose. Alphonsus himself was not spared. Vague rumours of impending treachery had got about and had been made known to him, but he had refused to believe them. "You have founded the Congregation and you have destroyed it," said one Father to him. The Saint only wept in silence and tried in vain to devise some means by which his Order might be saved. His best plan would have been to consult the Holy See, but in this he had been forestalled. The Fathers in the Papal States, with too precipitate zeal, in the very beginning denounced the change of Rule to Rome. Pius VI, already deeply displeased with the Neapolitan Government, took the fathers in his own dominions under his special protection, forbade all change of rule in their houses, and even withdrew them from obedience to the Neapolitan superiors, that is to St. Alphonsus, till an inquiry could be held. A long process followed in the Court of Rome, and on 22 September, 1780, a provisional Decree, which on 24 August, 1781, was made absolute, recognized the houses in the Papal States as alone constituting the Redemptorist Congregation. Father Francis de Paula, one of the chief appellants, was appointed their Superior General, "in place of those," so the brief ran, "who being higher superiors of the said Congregation have with their followers adopted a new system essentially different from the old, and have deserted the Institute in which they were professed, and have thereby ceased to be members of the Congregation." So the Saint was cut off from his own Order by the Pope who was to declare him "Venerable." In this state of exclusion he lived for seven years more and in it he died. It was only after his death, as he had prophesied, that the Neapolitan Government at last recognized the original Rule, and that the Redemptorist Congregation was reunited under one head (1793).

Alphonsus had still one final storm to meet, and then the end. About three years before his death he went through a veritable "Night of the Soul."

Fearful temptations against every virtue crowded upon him, together with diabolical apparitions and illusions, and terrible scruples and impulses to despair which made life a hell. at last came peace, and on 1 August, 1787, as the midday Angelus was ringing, the Saint passed peacefully to his reward. He had nearly completed his ninety-first year. He was declared "Venerable," 4 May, 1796; was beatified in 1816, and canonized in 1839. In 1871, he was declared a Doctor of the Church. "Alphonsus was of middle height," says his first biographer, Tannoia; "his head was rather large, his hair black, and beard well-grown." He had a;pleasant smile, and his conversation was very agreeable, yet he had great dignity of manner. He was a born leader of men. His devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to Our Lady was extraordinary. He had a tender charity towards all who were in trouble; he would go to any length to try to save a vocation; he would expose himself to death to prevent sin. He had a love for the lower animals, and wild creatures who fled from all else would come to him as to a friend. Psychologically, Alphonsus may be classed among twice-born souls; that is to say, there was a definitely marked break or conversion, in his life, in which he turned, not from serious sin, for that he never comitted, but from comparative worldliness, to thorough self-sacrifice for God. Alphonsus's temperament was very ardent. He was a man of strong passions, using the term in the philosophic sense, and tremendous energy, but from childhood his passions were under control. Yet, to take anger alone, though comparatively early in life he seemed dead to insult or injury which affected himself, in cases of cruelty, or of injustice to others, or of dishonour to God, he showed a prophet's indignation even in old age. Ultimately, however, anything merely human in this had disappeared. At the worst, it was only the scaffolding by which the temple of perfection was raised. Indeed, apart from those who become saints by the altogether special grace of martyrdom, it may be doubted if many men and women of phlegmatic temperament have been canonized. The differentia of saints is not faultlessness but driving-power, a driving-power exerted in generous self-sacrifice and ardent love of God. The impulse to this passionate service of God comes from Divine grace, but the soul must correspond (which is also a grace of God), and the soul of strong will and strong passions corresponds best. The difficulty about strong wills and strong passions is that they are hard to tame, but when they are tamed they are the raw material of sanctity.

Not less remarkable than the intensity with which Alphonsus worked is the amount of work he did. His perseverance was indomitable. He both made and kept a vow not to lose a single moment of time. He was helped in this by his turn of mind which was extremely practical. Though a good dogmatic theologian—a fact which has not been sufficiently recognized—he was not a metaphysician like the great scholastics. He was a lawyer, not only during his years at the Bar, but throughout his whole life—a lawyer, who to skilled advocacy and an enormous knowledge of practical detail added a wide and luminous hold of underlying principles. It was this which made him the prince of moral theologians, and gained him, when canonization made it possible, the title of "Doctor of the Church." This combination of practical common sense with extraordinary energy in administrative work ought to make Alphonsus, if he were better known, particularly attractive to the English-speaking nations, especially as he is so modern a saint. But we must not push resemblances too far. If in some things Alphonsus was an Anglo-Saxon, in others he was a Neapolitan of the Neapolitans, though always a saint. He often writes as a Neapolitan to Neapolitans. Were the vehement things in his letters and writings, especially in the matter of rebuke or complaint, to appraised as if uttered by an Anglo-Saxon in cold blood, we might be surprised and even shocked. Neapolitan students, in an animated but amicable discussion, seem to foreign eyes to be taking part in a violent quarrel. St. Alphonsus appeared a miracle of calm to Tannoia. Could he have been what an Anglo-Saxon would consider a miracle of calm, he would have seemed to his companions absolutely inhuman. The saints are not inhuman but real men of flesh and blood, however much some hagiographers may ignore the fact.

While the continual intensity of reiterated acts of virtue which we have called driving-power is what really creates sanctity, there is another indispensable quality. The extreme difficulty of the lifelong work of fashioning a saint consists precisely in this, that every act of virtue the saint performs goes to strengthen his character, that is, his will. On the other hand, ever since the Fall of Man, the will of man has been his greatest danger. It has a tendency at every moment to deflect, and if it does deflect from the right path, the greater the momentum the more terrible the final crash. Now the saint has a very great momentum indeed, and a spoiled saint is often a great villain.

To prevent the ship going to pieces on the rocks, it has need of a very responsive rudder, answering to the slightest pressure of Divine guidance. The rudder is humility, which, in the intellect, is a realization of our own unworthiness, and in the will, docility to right guidance. But how was Alphonsus to grow in this so necessary virtue when he was in authority nearly all his life? The answer is that God kept him humble by interior trials. From his earliest years he had an anxious fear about committing sin which passed at times into scruple.

He who ruled and directed others so wisely, had, where his own soul was concerned, to depend on obedience like a little child. To supplement this, God allowed him in the last years of his life to fall into disgrace with the pope, and to find himself deprived of all external authority, trembling at times even for his eternal salvation. St. Alphonsus does not offer as much directly to the student of mystical theology as do some contemplative saints who have led more retired lives. Unfortunately, he was not obliged by his confessor, in virtue of holy obedience, as St. Teresa was, to write down his states of prayer; so we do not know precisely what they were. The prayer he recommended to his Congregation, of which we have beautiful examples in his ascetical works, is affective; the use of short aspirations, petitions, and acts of love, rather than discursive meditation with long reflection. His own prayer was perhaps for the most part what some call “active,” others “ordinary,” contemplation. Of extraordinary passive states, such as rapture, there are not many instances recorded in his life, though there are some. At three different times in his missions, while preaching, a ray of light from a picture of Our Lady darted towards him, and he fell into an ecstasy before the people. In old age he was more than once raised in the air when speaking of God.

His intercession healed the sick; he read the secrets of hearts, and foretold the future. He fell into a clairvoyant trance at Arienzo on 21 September, 1774, and was present in spirit at the death-bed in Rome of Pope Clement XIV.

It was comparatively late in life that Alphonsus became a writer. If we except a few poems published in 1733 (the Saint was born in 1696), his first work, a tiny volume called “Visits to the Blessed Sacrament,” only appeared in 1744 or 1745, when he was nearly fifty years old. Three years later he published the first sketch of his “Moral Theology” in a single quarto volume called “Annotations to Busembaum,” a celebrated Jesuit moral theologian. He spent the next few years in recasting this work, and in 1753 appeared the first volume of the “Theologia Moralis,” the second volume, dedicated to Benedict XIV, following in 1755. Nine editions of the “Moral Theology” appeared in the Saint’s life-time, those of 1748, 1753–1755, 1757, 1760, 1763, 1767, 1773, 1779, and 1785, the “Annotations to Busembaum” counting as the first. In the second edition the work received the definite form it has since retained, though in later issues the Saint retracted a number of opinions, corrected minor ones, and worked at the statement of his theory of Equiprobabilism till at last he considered it complete. In addition, he published many editions of compendiums of his larger work, such as the “Homo Apostolicus,” made in 1759. The “Moral Theology,” after a historical introduction by the Saint’s friend, P. Zaccaria, S.J., which was omitted, however, from the eighth and ninth editions, begins with a treatise “De Conscientia,” followed by one “De Legibus.” These form the first book of the work, while the second contains the treatises on Faith, Hope, and Charity. The third book deals with the Ten Commandments, the fourth with the monastic and clerical states, and the duties of judges, advocates, doctors, merchants, and others. The fifth book has two treatises “De Actibus Humanis” and “De Peccatis”; the sixth is on the sacraments, the seventh and last on the censures of the Church.

St. Alphonsus as a moral theologian occupies the golden mean between the schools tending either to laxity or to rigour which divided the theological world of his time. When he was preparing for the priesthood in Naples, his masters were of the rigid school, for though the center of Jansenistic disturbance was in northern Europe, no shore was so remote as not to feel the ripple of its waves. When the Saint began to hear confessions, however, he soon saw the harm done by rigorism, and for the rest of his life he inclined more to the mild school of the Jesuit theologians, whom he calls “the masters of morals.” St. Alphonsus, however, did not in all things follow their teaching, especially on one point much debated in the schools; namely, whether we may in practice follow an opinion which denies a moral obligation, when the opinion which affirms a moral obligation seems to us to be altogether more probable. This is the great question of “Probabilism.” St. Alphonsus, after publishing anonymously (in 1749 and 1755) two treatises advocating the right to follow the less probable opinion, in the end decided against that lawfulness, and in case of doubt only allowed freedom from obligation where the opinions for and against the law were equal or nearly equal. He called his system Equiprobabilism. It is true that theologians even of the broadest school are agreed that, when an opinion in favour of the law is so much more probable as to amount practically to moral certainty, the less probable opinion cannot be followed, and some have supposed that St. Alphonsus meant no more than this by his terminology. According to this view he chose a different formula from the Jesuit writers, partly because he thought his own terms more exact, and, partly to save his teaching and his congregation as far as possible from the State persecution which after 1764 had already fallen so heavily on the Society of Jesus, and in 1773 was formally to suppress it. It is a matter for friendly controversy, but it seems there was a real difference, though not as great in practice as is supposed, between the Saint's later teaching and that current in the Society. Alphonsus was a lawyer, and as a lawyer he attached much importance to the weight of evidence. In a civil action a serious preponderance of evidence gives one side the case. If civil courts could not decide against a defendant on greater probability, but had to wait, as a criminal court must wait, for moral certainty, many actions would never be decided at all. St. Alphonsus likened the conflict between law and liberty to a civil action in which the law has the onus probandi, although greater probabilities give it a verdict. Pure probabilism likens it to a criminal trial, in which the jury must find in favour of liberty (the prisoner at the bar) if any single reasonable doubt whatever remain in its favour. Furthermore, St. Alphonsus was a great theologian, and so attached much weight to intrinsic probability. He was not afraid of making up his mind. “I follow my conscience,” he wrote in 1764, “and when reason persuades me I make little account of moralists.” To follow an opinion in favour of liberty without weighing it, merely because it is held by someone else, would have seemed to Alphonsus an abdication of the judicial office with which as a confessor he was invested. Still it must in fairness be admitted that all priests are not great theologians able to estimate intrinsic probability at its true worth, and the Church herself might be held to have conceded something to pure probabilism by the unprecedented honours she paid to the Saint in her Decree of 22 July, 1831, which allows confessors to follow any of St. Alphonsus’s own opinions without weighing the reasons on which they were based.

Besides his Moral Theology, the Saint wrote a large number of dogmatic and ascetical works nearly all in the vernacular. The “Glories of Mary,” “The Selva,” “The True Spouse of Christ,” “The Great Means of Prayer,” “The Way of Salvation,” “Opera Dogmatica, or History of the Council of Trent,” and “Sermons for all the Sundays in the Year,” are the best known. He was also a poet and musician. His hymns are justly celebrated in Italy. Quite recently, a duet composed by him, between the Soul and God, was found in the British Museum bearing the date 1760 and containing a correction in his own handwriting.

Finally, St. Alphonsus was a wonderful letter-writer, and the mere salvage of his correspondence amounts to 1,451 letters, filling three large volumes. It is not necessary to notice certain non-Catholic attacks on Alphonsus as a patron of lying. St. Alphonsus was so scrupulous about truth that when, in 1776, the regalist, Mgr. Filingeri, was made Archbishop of Naples, the Saint would not write to congratulate the new primate, even at the risk of making another powerful enemy for his persecuted Congregation, because he thought he could not honestly say he “was glad to hear of the appointment.” It will be remembered that even as a young man his chief distress at his breakdown in court was the fear that his mistake might be ascribed to deceit. The question as to what does or does not constitute a lie is not an easy one, but it is a subject in itself. Alphonsus said nothing in his “Moral Theology” which is not the common teaching of Catholic theologians.

Very few remarks upon his own times occur in the Saint’s letters. The eighteenth century was one series of great wars; that of the Spanish, Polish, and Austrian Succession; the Seven Years’ War, and the War of American Independence, ending with the still more gigantic struggles in Europe, which arose out of the events of 1789. Except in ’45, in all of these, down to the first shot fired at Lexington, the English-speaking world was on one side and the Bourbon States, including Naples, on the other. But to all this secular history about the only reference in the Saint’s correspondence which has come down to us is a sentence in a letter of April, 1744, which speaks of the passage of the Spanish troops who had come to defend Naples against the Austrians. He was more concerned with the spiritual conflict which was going on at the same time. The days were indeed evil. Infidelity and impiety were gaining ground; Voltaire and Rousseau were the idols of society; and the ancien régime, by undermining religion, its one support, was tottering to its fall. Alphonsus was a devoted friend of the Society of Jesus and its long persecution by the Bourbon Courts, ending in its suppression in 1773, filled him with grief. He died on the very eve of the great Revolution which was to sweep the persecutors away, having seen in vision the woes which the French invasion of 1798 was to bring on Naples.

An interesting series of portraits might be painted of those who play a part in the Saint's history: Charles III and his minister Tanucci; Charle's son Ferdinand, and Ferdinand's strange and unhappy Queen, Maria Carolina, daughter of Maria Teresa and sister of Marie Antoinette; Cardinals Spinelli, Sersale, and Orsini; Popes Benedict XIV, Clement XIII, Clement XIV, and Pius VI, to each of whom Alphonsus dedicated a volume of his works. Even the baleful shadow of Voltaire falls across the Saint's life, for Alphonsus wrote to congratulate him on a conversion, which alas, never took place! Again, we have a friendship of thirty years with the great Venetian publishing house of Remondini, whose letters from the Saint, carefully preserved as became business men, fill a quarto volume. Other personal friends of Alphonsus were the Jesuit Fathers de Matteis, Zaccaria, and Nonnotte.

A respected opponent was the redoubtable Dominican controversialist, P. Vincenzo Patuzzi, while to make up for hard blows we have another Dominican, P. Caputo, President of Alphonsus's seminary and a devoted helper in his work of reform. To come to saints, the great Jesuit missionary St. Francis di Geronimo took the little Alphonsus in his arms, blessed him, and prophesied that he would do great work for God; while a Franciscan, St. John Joseph of the Cross, was well known to Alphonsus in later life. Both of them were canonized on the same day as the Holy Doctor, 26 May, 1839. St. Paul of the Cross (1694–1775) and St. Alphonsus, who were altogether contemporaries, seem never to have met on earth, though the founder of the Passionists was a great friend of Alphonsus's uncle, Mgr. Cavalieri, himself a great servant of God. Other saints and servants of God were those of Alphonsus's own household, the lay brother, St. Gerard Majella, who died in 1755, and Januarius Sarnelli, Cfsar Sportelli, Dominic

Blasucci, and Maria Celeste, all of whom have been declared “Venerable” by the Church.

Blessed Clement Hofbauer joined the Redemptorist congregation in the aged Saint’s lifetime, though Alphonsus never saw in the flesh the man whom he knew would be the second founder of his Order. Except for the chances of European war, England and Naples were then in different worlds, but Alphonsus may have seen at the side of Don Carlos when he conquered Naples in 1734, an English boy of fourteen who had already shown great gallantry under fire and was to play a romantic part in history, Prince Charles Edward Stuart. But one may easily overcrowd a narrow canvas and it is better in so slight a sketch to leave the central figure in solitary relief. If any reader of this article will go to original sources and study the Saint’s life at greater length, he will not find his labour thrown away.

Much of the material for a complete life of St. Alphonsus is still in manuscript in the Roman archives of the Redemptorist Congregation and in the archives of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. The foundation of all subsequent lives is the Della vita ed istituto del venerabile Alfonso Maria Liguori, of ANTONY TANNOIA, one of the great biographies of literature. Tannoia was born about 1724 and entered the Redemptorist Congregation in 1746. As he did not die till 1808 (his work appeared in 1799) he was a companion of the Saint for over forty years and an eyewitness of much that he relates. Even where he is not that, he may generally be trusted, as he was a Boswell in collecting facts. His life contains a number of minor inaccuracies, however, and is seriously defective in its account of the founding of his Congregation and of the troubles which fell on it in 1780. Tannoia, also, through some mental idiosyncrasy, manages to give the misleading impression that St. Alphonsus was severe. There is a somewhat unsatisfactory French translation of Tannoia’s work. Mimoires sur la vie et la congrigation de St. Alphonse de Liguori (Paris, 1842, 3 vols.). The English translation in the Oratory Series is also rather inadequate. A justly celebrated life is the Vie et Institut de Saint Alphonse-Marie de Liguori, in four volumes, by CARDINAL VILLECOURT, (Tournai, 1893). The German life, DILGSKRON, Leben des heiligen Bischofs und Kirchenlehrers, Alfonsus Maria de Liguori (New York, 1887), is scholarly and accurate. CARDINAL CAPECELATRO has also written a life of the Saint, La Vita di Sant’ Alfonso Maria de Liguori (Rome, 2 vols.). The latest life, BERTHE, Saint Alphonse de Liguori (Paris, 1900, 2 vols. . SVO), gives an extremely full and picturesque account of the Saint’s life and times. This has recently been translated into English with additions and corrections (Dublin, 2 vols., royal SVO); DUMORTIER, Les premihres Redemptoristines (Lille, 1886), and Le Phre Antoine-Marie Tannoia (Paris, 1902), contain some useful information; as does BERRUTI, Lo Spirito di S. Alfonso Maria de Liguori, 3 ed. (Rome, 1896). The Saint’s own letters are of extreme value in supplementing Tannoia. A centenary edition, Lettere di S. Alfonso Maria de’Liguori (ROME, 1887, 3 vols.), was published by P. KUNTZ, C.SS.R., director of the Roman archives of his Congregation. An English translation in five volumes is included in the 22 volumes of the American centenary edition of St. Alphonsus’s ascetical works (New York). There are many editions of the Saint’s Moral Theology; the best and latest is that of P. GAUDI, C.SS.R. (Rome, 1905). The Saint’s complete dogmatic works have been translated into Latin by P. WALTER, C.SS.R., S. Alphonsi Mariae de Liguori Ecclesiae Doctoris Opera Dogmatica, (New York, 1903, 2 vols., 4to). See also HASSALL, The Balance of Power (1715–89) (London, 1901); COLLETTA, History of the Kingdom of Naples, 1734–1825, 2 vols., tr. by S. HORNER (Edinburgh, 1858); VON REUMONT, Die Carafa von Maddaloni (Berlin, 1851, 2 vols.); JOHNSTON, The Napoleonic Empire in South Italy, 2 vols. (London, 1904). Colletta’s book gives the best general picture of the time, but is marred by anti-clerical bias.

HAROLD CASTLE

CATHOLIC ENCYLOPEDIA

SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

3

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH, a.d. 1787

St ALPHONSUS was born at Marianella, near Naples, on September 27, 1696; his parents were Don Joseph de Liguori, captain of the royal gallies, and Donna Anna Cavalieri, whose elder brother became bishop of Troia and was a friend of St Paul-of-the-Cross: both people of virtuous and distinguished life. The boy was baptised Alphonsus Mary Antony John Francis Cosmas Damian Michael Gaspar, but preferred in after-life to call himself simply Alfonso Maria; the use of the Latin form of his name has become usual in English. Don Joseph was determined that his first-born should have every advantage that formal education could give him, and he was early put under tutors. He learned Greek, Latin, and French, the rudiments of mathematics, physical science and architecture, drawing and painting, riding and swordsmanship, and became an accomplished musician, especially a player of the harpsichord. At thirteen he began the study of jurisprudence, and when sixteen he was allowed, by dispensation of four years, to present himself before the university of Naples for examination for the doctor’s degree in both laws (civil and canon); it was granted him with acclamation. For two years Alphonsus was pupil of two distinguished Neapolitan lawyers, Perrone and Jovene, and in 1715 he was called to the Bar. In the same year he admitted to the spiritual confraternity of the Doctors, which was directed by the Oratorians. His reputation as a barrister is testified by the tradition (not certainly true) that in eight years of he never lost a case. In 1717 Don Joseph arranged a marriage for his son, but it came to nothing and Alphonsus continued to work diligently and quietly; for a year or two some slackness in religious care was observable, coupled with and perhaps due to an affection for “society life “and fashionable amusements, but he had the will to avoid serious sin. He was very fond of the music of the theatre, but music was not the only thing on the Neapolitan stage of eighteenth century; however, Alphonsus was very short-sighted and when the curtain went up his spectacles came off, and so he was able to enjoy the good without receiving harm from the dangerous. A retreat with the Lazarists during the Lent of 1722 and reception of the sacrament of Confirmation in the following autumn steadied him and revived his fervour, and at the next Lent he made a private resolution not to marry and to continue in his profession only until it should appear that God wished him to abandon it. What he took to be a clear indication of the divine will was shown him only a few months later.

A certain Neapolitan nobleman (whose name has not come down to us) was suing the Grand Duke of Tuscany for possession of an estate valued at over 100,ooo pounds. Alphonsus was briefed in the case, for which side we do not now know, but probably for his countryman, and made a great speech on his client’s behalf which much impressed the court. When he sat down opposing counsel coolly remarked, “You have wasted your breath. You have disregarded the evidence on which the whole case depends.” “What do you mean? Where? How?” asked Alphonsus. He was handed a document which he had read through several times, but with a passage marked that had entirely escaped his notice. The point at issue was whether the estate was held under Lombard law or under the Angevin capitularies: this clause made the point clear, and decided against the client of Alphonsus. For a moment he was silent. Then he said, “I have made a mistake. The case is yours,” and left the court, murmuring to himself, “Now I know you, 0 world! These courts shall not see me again!” He was as good as his word, and, braving the fiery indignation of his father, refused either to go on with his profession or to entertain a second project for his marriage. While visiting the sick in the hospital for incurables he twice heard as it were an interior voice, saying, “Leave the world, and give yourself to me”; he went straight to the church of our Lady of Ransom, laid his sword on her altar, and then offered himself to the priests of the Oratory. Don Joseph tried every way to dissuade his son, but was at last constrained to agree to his being a priest, provided that, instead of joining the Oratory, he should stay at home. On the advice of his director, Father Pagano, himself an Oratorian, Alphonsus accepted this condition.

He began his theological studies at home, and at the end of 1724 received minor orders. He thereupon was admitted to the Society of Propaganda, a local missionary-training congregation, and also joined the society called White Fathers whose particular work was ministering to criminals condemned to death. After being ordained deacon the Archbishop of Naples licensed him to preach in any church of the city, and in 1726 he was advanced to the priesthood. For the two following years he was engaged in missionary work throughout the kingdom of Naples, and at once made his mark. The early eighteenth century was a time of pompous oratory and florid verbosity in the pulpit—a fruit of the Renaissance out of control,—and of rigorism in the confessional—a fruit of Jansénism; Don Alphonsus repudiated both these characteristics. He preached simply and without affectation: “ It is a pleasure to listen to your sermons; you forget yourself and preach Jesus Christ,” somebody said to him, and he afterwards instructed his missioners: “Your style must be simple, but the sermon must be skilfully constructed. If skill is lacking it is unconnected and tasteless; if it be bombastic, the simple cannot understand it. I have never preached a sermon which the poorest old woman in the congregation could not understand.” He treated his penitents as souls to be saved rather than as criminals to be punished or frightened into better ways; he is said never to have refused absolution to a penitent. This was not pleasing to everybody, and some looked with suspicion on Don Alphonsus. He organised the *lazzaroni* of Naples into groups which met for instruction in Christian doctrine and virtue; one of the members was reproved by Don Alphonsus for his imprudent fasting, and another priest added, “It is God’s will that we should eat in order to live. If you are given cutlets, eat them and be thankful. They will do you good.” The remark was taken up and twisted into matter of offence: the clubs were secret societies of Epicureans, of Quietists, of some other heresy, there was a new sect, of Cutlets. The solemn wiseacres of Church and State took the matter up, arrests were made, and Don Alphonsus had to make explanations. The Archbishop counselled him to be more careful, the “Cutlet clubs” continued undisturbed, and developed into the great Association of the Chapels which numbers thousands of working-men who meet daily for prayer and instruction in the confraternity chapels. In 1729, being then thirty-three years old, Alphonsus left his father’s house to become chaplain to the College of the Holy Family, recently founded by Don Matthew Ripa for the training of missionaries to China. Here he met Thomas Falcoia, and became friendly with him; he was a priest twice his own age, whose life had been devoted to trying to establish a new religious institute in accordance with a vision he claimed to have had in Rome. All he had succeeded in doing was to establish a convent of nuns at Scala, Amalfi, to whom he had given a version of the rule of the Visitandines. One of the nuns, however, Sister Mary Celeste, alleged that she had received a revelation of the rule which the nuns were to follow, and when Father Falcoia discovered that its provisions tallied with those intimated to him twenty years before he was naturally impressed. In 1724 he proposed that this new rule should be adopted by the community, but there was a minority strongly opposed to it. This minority appealed to Father Falcoia’s superior (he was a member of the congregation of *Pii Operarii)* who ruled that Sister Mary Celeste had been deceived, that no alteration in their life should be made, and that Father Falcoia should cease to direct the convent. This was the position when, six years later, Falcoia got St Alphonsus interested in the matter. About the same time an unexpected turn was given to events by his appointment to the see of Castellaznare; this left him free to associate himself with the convent of Scala again, and one of his first episcopal acts was to invite Alphonsus to give a retreat to the nuns, a step that had far-reaching consequences for everybody concerned.

With his two friends John Mazzini and Vincent Mannarini, St Alphonsus went to Scala in September 1730, and after conducting a novena in the cathedral, betook himself to the convent; in addition to giving the retreat he investigated, with a lawyer’s precision, the matter of Sister Mary Celeste’s revelation, and came to the conclusion that it was from God and not an hallucination. He therefore recommended, and the nuns agreed, that the convent should be re-organized in accordance with the vision, and the Bishop of Scala gave his consent; there were still difficulties to be overcome, but on the feast of the Transfiguration 1731 the nuns put on their new habit, of red and blue, and entered upon their strictly enclosed and penitential life. Thus began the Redemptoristines, who still flourish in several lands. The new rule had been expanded and made more explicit by

St Alphonsus himself, who took over responsibility for their direction from the aged Mgr. Falcoia. No sooner was this brought about than the Bishop of Castellamare intimated to Don Alphonsus that he should now undertake the establishment of a new congregation of missionaries to work especially among the peasants of the country districts: his own original vision had included an institute of men and further revelations to that effect were attributed to Sister Mary Celeste. Alphonsus knew there was room for much work, but he was already committed to the Society of Propaganda and so referred the question to his director; rather unexpectedly Father Pagano approved of the Bishop's project and told Alphonsus to undertake it. The next twelve months were given over to facing a storm of opposition: his colleagues of the Propaganda Society and even his friends, Father Ripa and Canon Gizzio, violently objected to the scheme, while, in addition to Father Pagano, the Jesuit provincial, Manulio, the Lazarist superior, Cutica, and a learned Dominican, Fiorillo, supported it. At last, after a long and painful leave-taking with his father, St Alphonsus left Naples in November 1732 and went to Scala. There the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (which for its first seventeen years was known as "of the Most Holy Saviour") was born on the 9th of that month, and its first home was in a small house belonging to the convent of nuns. There were seven postulants under Alphonsus, with Mgr. Falcoia as informal superior general, and dissensions began at once, centring chiefly in this very matter of who was in supreme authority; a party opposed the Bishop, and consequently Alphonsus, and a schism was formed in both houses. Sister Mary Celeste went off to found a convent at Foggia, and at the end of five months St Alphonsus was alone but for one lay-brother. But other subjects came, a larger house became necessary, and in the autumn of 1733 successful missions were given in the diocese of Amalfi. In the following January a second foundation was made, at the request of the Bishop of Cajazzo, at Villa degli Schiavi, and here Alphonsus went to reside, and conducted missions. The saint is so well known as a moral theologian, for his writings, and for his efforts in founding the Redemptorists, that his eminence as a missioner has been overshadowed; but from 1726 till *1752* he was preaching up and down the kingdom of Naples, especially in villages and rural settlements, and with the greatest success. His confessional was crowded, hardened sinners returned to the healing sacraments in great numbers, enemies were reconciled, family feuds healed, and he established the practice, characteristic of the method of his followers, of returning some months after a mission was closed in order to confirm and consolidate the work.

But the troubles of the young Redemptorists were not over: indeed they had hardly begun. In the same year as the foundation at Villa degli Schiavi, Spain re-asserted its authority over Naples, the absolutist Charles III was in power, and he had as his prime minister the Marquis Bernard Tanucci, who was to be the lifelong opponent of the new congregation. A third house was started at Ciorani, between Salerno and Avellino, but in 1737 a priest of bad character spread evil reports about the establishment at Villa, the community was attacked by armed men, and it was deemed wise to close the house; in the following year troubles caused Scala too to be abandoned. On the other hand Cardinal Spinelli, Archbishop of Naples, put St Alphonsus at the head of a general mission throughout his diocese, and for two years the saint organized and conducted this, until the death of Mgr. Falcoia in 1743 recalled him to the work of the congregation. A general chapter was held, at which St Alphonsus was elected rector major *(i.e.*, superior general), vows were taken, and rules and constitutions were drawn up. They were now constituted as a religious institute and proceeded in the following years to make foundations at Nocera de’ Pagani, Deliceto, and Caposele, all under great difficulties of local and official opposition; “regalism” was in the ascendant and the implacable anticlericalism of Tanucci was a sword at all times threatening the existence of the congregation. There was no question of getting the royal approbation for it, in spite of the efforts of Alphonsus, and when in 1749 Pope Benedict XIV approved the constitutions of the new institute the *exequatur* to the papal brief was refused by the King of the Two Sicilies, who only a short time before had wished to make its founder archbishop of Palermo.

The first edition of the *Moral Theology* of St Alphonsus, in the form of annotations to the work of Busembaum, a Jesuit theologian, was published at Naples in 1748, with the *imprimatur* of both the King and the Archbishop;* and the second edition, which is properly the first of his own complete work, in 1753–5. It was approved by Pope Benedict XIV and had an immediate success, for with consummate wisdom it steered a middle course between the rigorism of Jansenism and an improper laxity; seven more editions were called for in the author’s lifetime. There is no need here to follow the controversy concerning “probabilism,” with which the name of St Alphonsus is associated. Probabilism is the system in moral theology which holds that, if of two opinions, one insists that in certain circumstances a law binds, while the other holds that in these circumstances it does not, one is allowed to follow an opinion favouring liberty provided it be truly and solidly probable, even though the opinion favouring the law be more probable. St Alphonsus eventually favoured what he called Aequiprobabilism, which insists that the law must be obeyed unless the opinion favouring liberty is at least nearly equally probable with that favouring the law, though there would appear to be little practical difference between the two systems. The Church permits the application of either, but the reader may be reminded that Probabilism is primarily a principle for the moral theologian and is not put forward as an ideal of Christian life; often the more perfect and therefore more desirable course of action is to follow the more probable opinion according to which the law is binding. Attempts have been made to impugn the morality of the teaching of St Alphonsus about lying: his was the ordinary teaching of the church, namely, that all lies are intrinsically wrong and illicit. The Holy See’s estimate of him as a moral theologian is shown by a decree of the Sacred Penitentiary in 1831 which allows confessors to follow any of his opinions, without considering the grounds on which they are based. Among the consequences of the teachings of the Jansenists was that holy Communion can be received worthily only very rarely and that devotion to our Lady is a useless superstition; St Alphonsus vigorously attacked both these errors, the last-named particularly by the publication in 1750 of *The Glories of Mary.* To many readers this famous book has seemed in parts exaggerated, but it must be borne in mind that it was written in answer to certain people who were trying to “regulate” devotion to our Lady in such a way as to do away with it altogether; and that it was intended for people who were sufficiently intelligent to distinguish between metaphorical and literal language, and who were well enough instructed in their religion to know that all the glories of Mary are “for the sake of her Son.” Among his numerous other works for which he was recognized as a doctor of the Church are *The True Spouse of Jesus Christ, The Great Means of Prayer, The Way of Salvation,* *The Admirable Workings of Divine Providence, a*nd a history of the Council of Trent.

From the time of the death of Mgr. Falcoia, St Alphonsus led a life of extraordinary industry: guiding and fostering his new congregation through troubles both external and internal, trying to get it authorized by the King, ministering to individual souls, conducting missions all over Naples and Sicily, even finding time to write hymns, compose music, and paint pictures. After 1752 his health was failing, his missionary vigour decreased, and he devoted much more time to writing. The general opinion of him was voiced by a prebendary of Naples, "If I were the Pope I would canonize him without process." "He fulfilled in a most perfect way," said Father Mazzini, "the divine precept of loving God above all things, with his whole heart and with all his strength, as all might have seen and as I saw better than anyone during the long years I spent with him. The love of God shone forth in all his acts and words, in his devout manner of speaking of Him, his recollection, his deep devotion before the Blessed Sacrament, and his continual exercise of the divine presence." He was strict, but tender and compassionate, and, often suffering acutely from scrupulosity himself, was particularly pitiful to others afflicted in the same way. His one remedy was implicit obedience to one's confessor, as is shown clearly in his letters to Father Rizzi, a priest of knowledge and good judgement who was, nevertheless, tormented by distressing scruples (this unfortunate man once wrote to a bishop, who was his penitent, advising him on a dispute that he had with his diocese. The bishop threatened to imprison him!**).** Father Cajone testified during the process of beatification of St Alphonsus that "His special and characteristic virtue seemed to me to be purity of intention. In all things and at all times he acted for God without any admixture of self. He said to us one day, 'By the grace of God I have never confessed having acted from passion. It may be that I have not noticed what was passing in me, but I have not remarked it so as to confess it.'" This is the more remarkable when it is considered that Alphonsus was a Neapolitan, and by nature passionate and precipitate, easily moved by anger, pride, or a sudden resolve.

When he was sixty-six years old St Alphonsus was made by Pope Clement XIII Bishop of Sant' Agata de' Goti, between Benevento and Capua. It was an honour entirely unexpected and unwanted: when the messenger of the nuncio apostolic presented himself at Nocera, greeted him as “Most Illustrious Lord,” and handed over the letter announcing the appointment, Alphonsus read it through and handed it back, saying, “Please do not come back again with any more of your ‘Most Illustrious’; it would be the death of me.” But the Pope would take no refusal, and he was consecrated in the church of the Minerva at Rome. Sant’ Agata was only a small diocese, but that was about all that could be said in its favour; it numbered 30,000 souls with 17 religious houses and 400 secular priests, of whom some did no pastoral work at all, living on the proceeds of an easy benefice, and others were not only slack but positively evil-living. The laity were to match, and rapidly getting worse; the results of nearly thirty years of neglect were apparent on all sides. After having established his own modest household, the new Bishop sent out a band of priests to conduct a general mission throughout the diocese: they were recruited from all orders and institutes in Naples except, for reasons of tact and prudence, his own congregation of Redemptorists. Alphonsus recommended two things only to these missioners, simplicity in the pulpit, charity in the confessional, and after hearing one of the priests neglect his advice he said to him, “Your sermon kept me awake all night. . . . If you wanted to preach only yourself, rather than Jesus Christ, why come all the way from Naples to Ariola to do it?” At the same time he set about a reform of the seminary, which had plenty of candidates but many of doubtful character, was housed in an unhealthy building, and suffered under a rector far too old for the post. “The Church,” said St Francis de Sales, “does not need many priests, but she must have good ones,” and St Alphonsus would not ordain anyone of whose good character and dispositions he was not personally satisfied. There were numerous benefices without cure of souls in the diocese, and he had to exercise an unremitting vigilance that personal influence was not brought to bear in granting them, and lest they were given to men of poor qualification on the plea that they were needy and could not do much harm. Some priests were in the habit of saying Mass in fifteen minutes or less; these were suspended *ipso facto* until they amended their ways, and the Bishop wrote a moving treatise on the subject “‘The priest at the altar,’ says St Cyprian, ‘represents the person of Jesus Christ.’ But whom do so many priests to-day represent? They represent only mountebanks earning their livelihood by their antics. Most lamentable of all is it to see religious, and some even of reformed orders, say Mass with such haste and such mutilation of the rite as would scandalize even the heathen. . . . 'Truly the sight of a Mass celebrated in this way is enough to make one lose the Faith.'" After he had been ten months at Sant' Agata St Alphonsus set out on a visitation of his diocese, during which he instructed, catechized and heard confessions in person, and insisted that scandals be put down firmly, whether arising from dirty and unkempt churches or from public wickedness and disorder. He was taken seriously ill at Ariola, and almost immediately after his return a famine broke out, with its usual accompaniment of plague. Alphonsus had foreseen and prophesied this calamity several times in the previous two years, but nothing had been done to avert it. Thousands were literally starving, and he sold everything to buy food for distribution among the sufferers, down to his carriage and mules and his uncle's episcopal ring; the Holy See authorized him to make use of the property of the endowment of the see for the same purpose, and he contracted debts right and left in his efforts at relief. When the mob clamoured for the life of the mayor of Sant' Agata, who was wrongfully accused of withholding food, Alphonsus braved their fury, offered his own life for that of the mayor, and finally distracted them by distributing the rations of the next two days. The Bishop was most vigorous in his concern for public morality; he always began with kindness, but when amendment was not promised or relapse occurred he took strong measures, invoking the help of the civil authorities. This made him many enemies, and several times his life was in danger from people of rank and others against whom he instituted proceedings. The custom of the courts of banishing hardened offenders, whether public vagabonds or private sinners, must have pressed somewhat hardly on the districts to which they went, and the bishops of neighbouring dioceses probably found scant consolation in the observation of the Bishop of Sant' Agata that, "Each must look after his own flock. When these people find themselves turned out everywhere, in disgrace and without food or shelter, they will come to their senses and give up their sinful lives."

Just before the suppression of the Jesuits in the Spanish dominions in 1767 a determined effort was made to disperse the still struggling Redemptorists. It was led by the powerful Don Francis Maffei, who had a grudge against the fathers at Deliceto because they remained neutral in a dispute he had with the local municipality, and Baron Sarnelli, who also had a personal grievance. The religious were denounced to the King as "degenerated . . . dominated by a spirit of greed. . . . They multiply properties and build magnificent monasteries. They eclipse even the Jesuits in their luxury and ostentation . . . they excite the people to rebel against their lords." Other charges and claims were added to this nonsensical indictment, and St Alphonsus went to Naples to defend his brethren. This was more than his opponents had bargained for, and when the case at last came on in the royal court the plaintiffs did not appear. But the judge would not enter judgement for the Redemptorists; instead he adjourned the case *sine die,* and Alphonsus returned to Arienzo, where he was living. He now set himself to answer the writings of Mgr. von Hontheim (" Febronius"), a German bishop who taught an exaggerated Gallicanism, opposing the authority of princes, bishops and councils to that of the Holy See. In the circumstances the *Vindication of the Supreme Power of the Roman Pontiff* had to be printed secretly in Naples, published privately and anonymously, and a few copies smuggled out of the country, even though Febronianism had already been condemned by the Pope. In June I767 St Alphonsus was attacked by terrible rheumatic pains which developed into an illness from which he was not expected to recover: not only did he receive the last sacraments but preparations were begun for his funeral. After twelve months his life was saved, but he was left with a permanent and incurable bending of the neck, familiar from the portraits of him; until the surgeons had succeeded in straightening it a little the pressure of the chin caused a raw wound in his chest and he was unable to celebrate Mass, which afterwards he could do with the aid of a chair at the communion. In addition to attacks on his moral theology, he had to face an accusation against the Redemptorists of carrying on the Society of Jesus under another name, and in 1770 the Sarnelli action came on again; this time the prime minister, Tanucci, intervened and appointed a commission to draw up a report. The case dragged on for another thirteen years before it was decided in favour of Alphonsus on all counts. Pope Clement XIV died on September 22**,** 1774**,*** and St Alphonsus in the following year petitioned his successor, Pius VI, for permission to resign his see. Similar petitions had been refused by Clement XIII and XIV, but the effects of his rheumatic fever were now taken into consideration, permission was granted, and the aged Bishop retired to his Redemptorist's cell at Nocera, hoping to end his days in peace.

But it was not to be. In 1777 the procurator in the Sarnelli case issued his report, a vicious document in which Alphonsus was not only charged with having illegally founded a religious body but with undermining Christian morality by his impious doctrines, "built up entirely from Jesuit authors"; Probabilism must be destroyed and the Redemptorists should be suppressed as simply Jesuits in disguise.+

St Alphonsus at once applied himself to drawing up a detailed refutation. In 1778 Maffei died, ruined by the litigation in which he had deliberately involved himself; he left six children and large debts. These debts were liquidated and these orphans provided for by the efforts of Father Antonio Tannoia, C.SS.R., with the assistance and encouragement of Alphonsus Liguori. Shortly after, Ferdinand di Leon, the procurator, died also, and taking advantage of the resentment which his report on the Redemptorists had aroused among many in Naples, St Alphonsus addressed a brief memoir to the King in defence of the exterior government of his congregation; as a result the established houses, with their superiors and novitiate, were approved. Thus encouraged be determined to make another effort to get the royal sanction for his rule (it was as religious rather than as priests that the congregation was objected to); in addition to the four houses in Naples and one In Sicily, it had now four others in the Papal States, at Scifelli, Frosinone, Sant' Angelo a Cupolo, and Benevento.

What followed was nothing less than tragic. Alphonsus agreed with the royal almoner, Mgr. Testa, to waive any request to be allowed to hold property in common, but otherwise to submit the rule unchanged, and the almoner would put it before the King. Then Testa betrayed him. He altered the rule in many respects, even to the extent of abolishing the vows of religion; he won over to his plot one of the consultors of the congregation, Father Majone, and this altered rule *(regolamento)* was presented to Alphonsus, written in a small hand and with many erasures. He was old, crippled, deaf, his sight was bad: he read over the familiar opening lines of the document—and signed it. Even his vicar general, Father Andrew Villani, connived at the cruel deception, probably through fear of the others. The King approved the *rego!amento,* it became legally binding, and its provisions were made known to the Redemptorists—and to their founder. The storm broke on him: "You have founded the congregation and you have destroyed it," he was told. For a moment be was indignant with Father

Villani: “I never thought I could be so deceived by you, Don Andrew,” and then he overwhelmed himself with reproaches for his infirmity and his remissness. “It was my duty to read it myself, but you know I find it difficult to read even a few lines.” To refuse to accept the *regolamento* now would mean suppression of the Redemptorists by the King; to accept it would mean suppression by the Pope, for the Holy See had already approved the original rule. Alphonsus cast about in every direction to save a *debacle,* but in vain; he would consult the Pope, but the Redemptorists in the Papal States had forestalled him, for they had at once denounced the new rule and put themselves under the protection of the Holy See. Pius VI forbade them to accept the *regolamento,* and withdrew them from the jurisdiction of St Alphonsus; he provisionally recognized those of the Papal States as the only true Redemptorists, and named Father Francis de Paula their superior general. In 1781 the fathers of Naples accepted the *regolamento,* with a slight modification which the King had accepted; but this was not acceptable at Rome and the provisional decree was made final. Thus was St Alphonsus excluded from the order which he had founded.

* *After saying Mass on the 21st, Alphonsus became unconscious and so remained for twenty-four hours, On coming round he announced that “I have been assisting the Pope, who has just died.” This incident is sometimes put forward as an example of bilocation, but seems simply to have been a clairvoyant trance. It was referred to, but no great importance was attached to it in the process of beatification. + This report was drawn up by the supporters of royal supremacy in religious affairs, under the influence of Jansenists.*

He bore the humiliation, inflicted by the authority he so loved and respected, with the utmost patience, and without murmuring accepted the apparent end of all his hopes as the will of God. Some followers deserted him and the remaining fathers in the Neapolitan kingdom were reduced to great want and distress, and by some of the bishops were looked on with suspicion and distrust; but in 1783 these same bishops, feeling the effect on their flocks of the loss of the missioners, whose mission faculties had been withdrawn by the Holy See, petitioned for their restoration, which was granted. This was a great consolation to St Alphonsus, who also had the happiness of seeing Father de Paula repentant for the separatist part which he had played. But there was still one more bitter trial for the saint: during the years 1784—85 he went through a terrible "dark night of the soul." He was assailed by temptations against every article of faith and against every virtue, prostrated by scruples and vain fears, and visited by diabolical illusions. For eighteen months this torment lasted, with intervals of light and relief, and was followed by a period when ecstasies were frequent, and prophecy and miracles took the place of interior trials. The end came peacefully on the night of July 31—August 1, 1787, when he was within two months of his ninety-first birthday. Pius VI, the pope who had condemned him under a misapprehension, in 1796 recognized Alphonsus Liguori as a venerable servant of God, in 1816 he was beatified, in 1839 canonized, and in 1871 declared by Pope Pius IX a Doctor of the Church. After the affair of the *regolamento* St Alphonsus predicted that the separated houses in the Papal States would prosper and spread the Redemptorist congregation and that those who had favoured division would become the advocates of reunion, but that this reunion would not come about till after his death. These predictions were verified; St Clement Hofbauer from Frosinone in 1785 first established the congregation beyond the Alps, and in 1793 the Neapolitan government recognized the original rule and the Redemptorists were again united, with Father Blasucci as rector major. Today they are established as missioners throughout Europe and America, and in several other parts of the world.

St Alphonsus de Ligouri. Pray for us

CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY

ILLUSTRATIONS

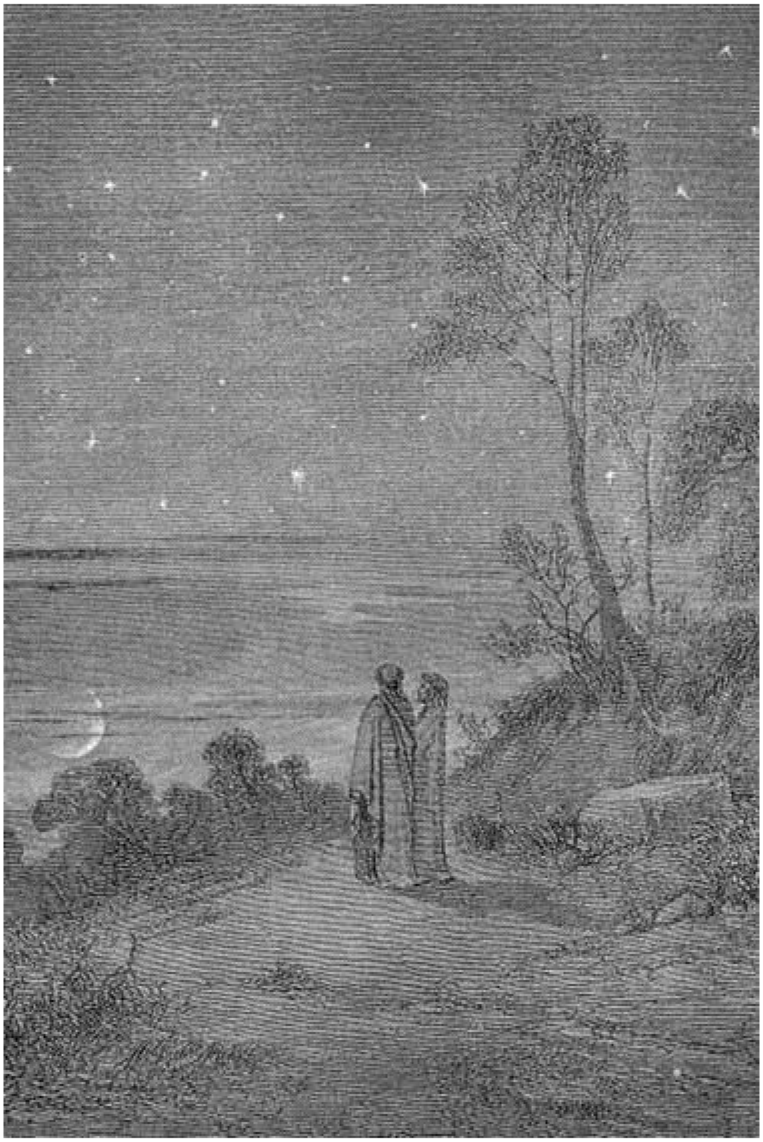

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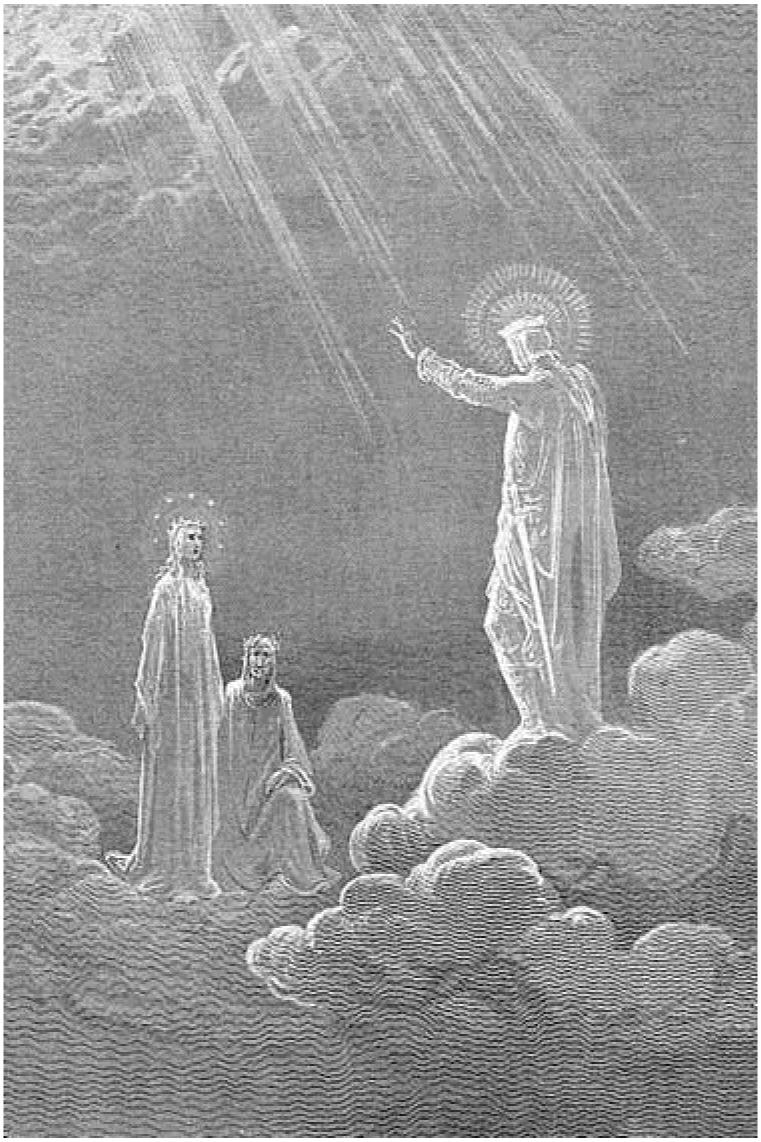

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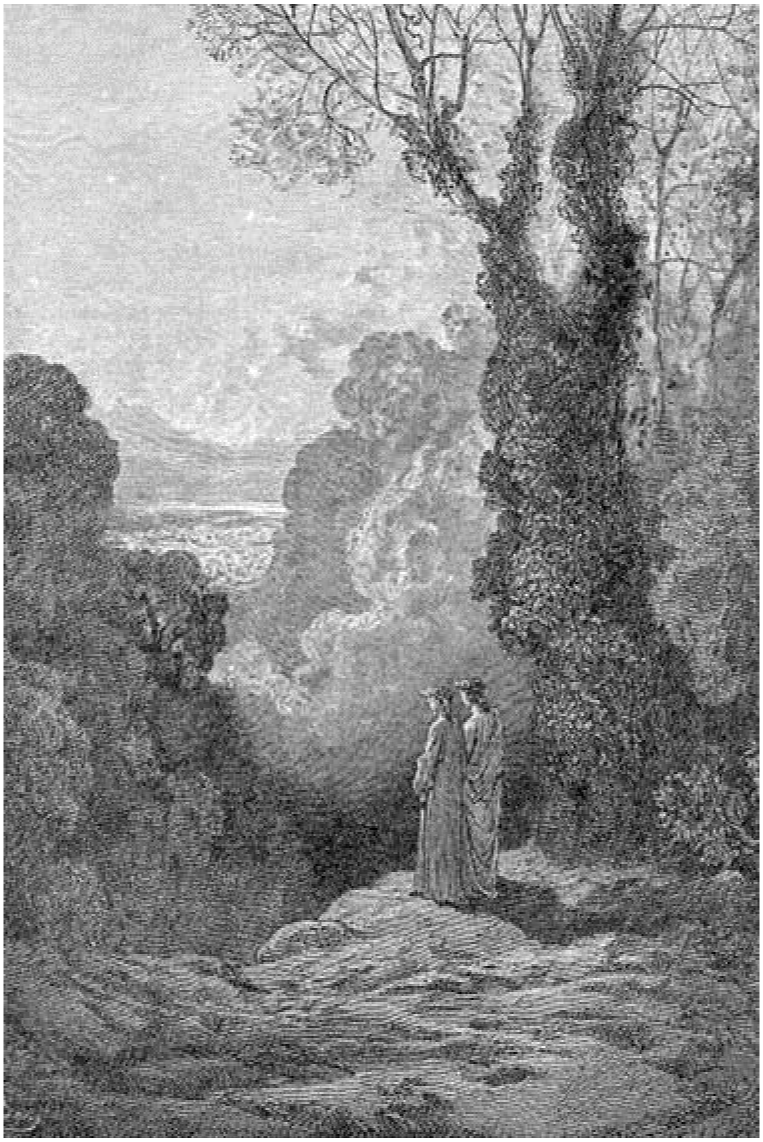

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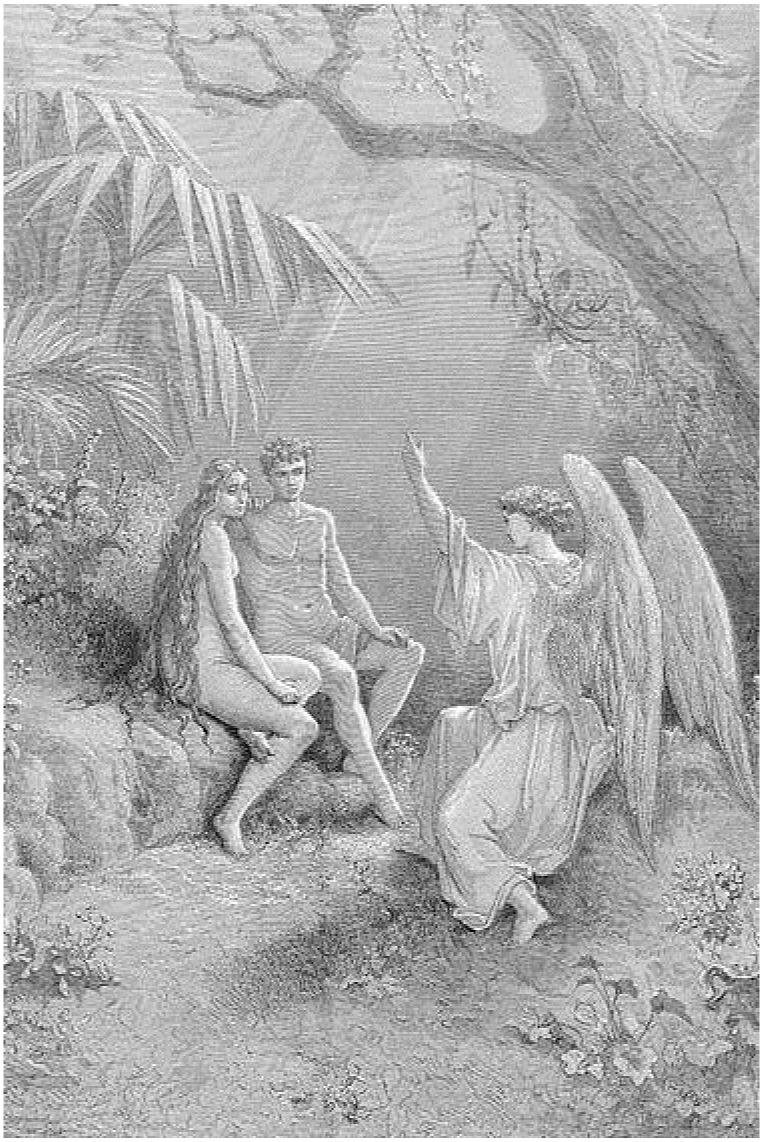

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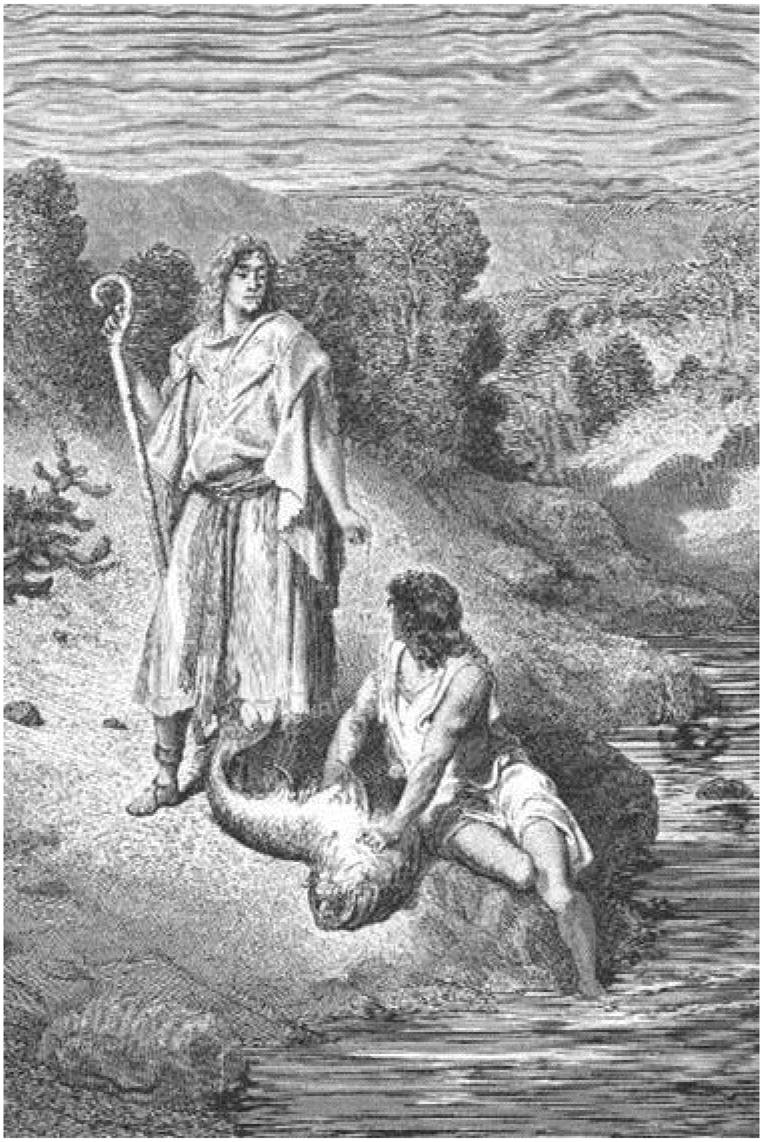

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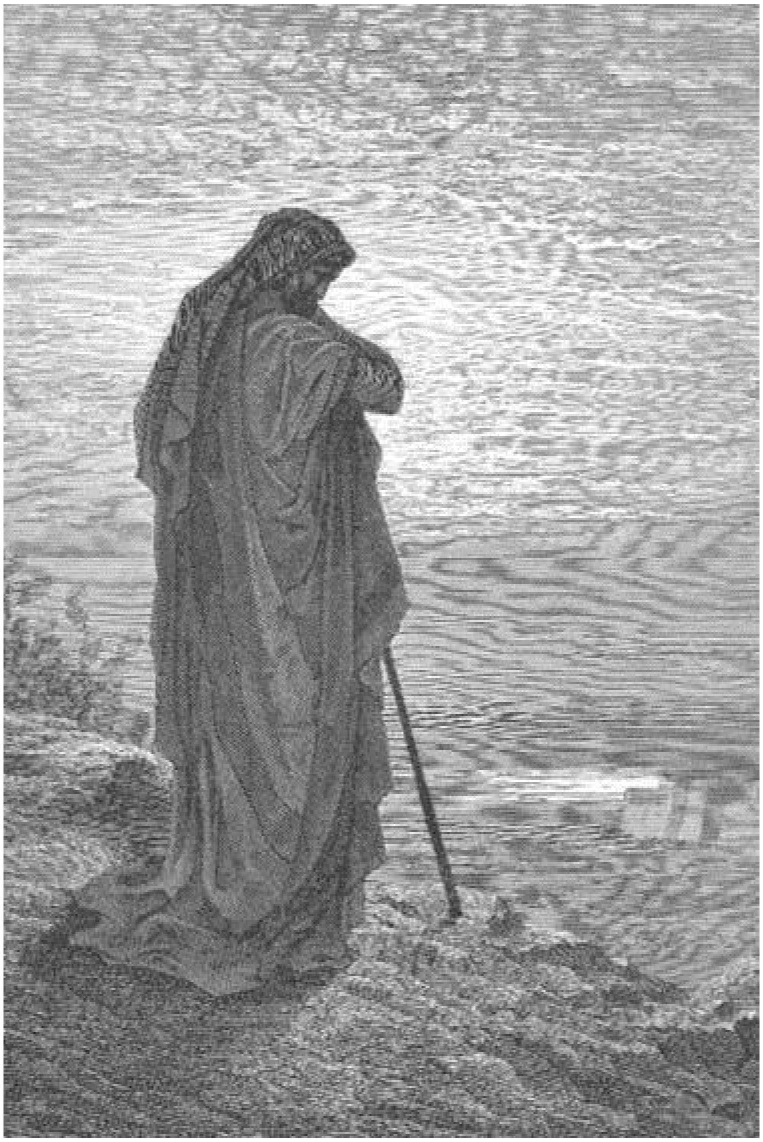

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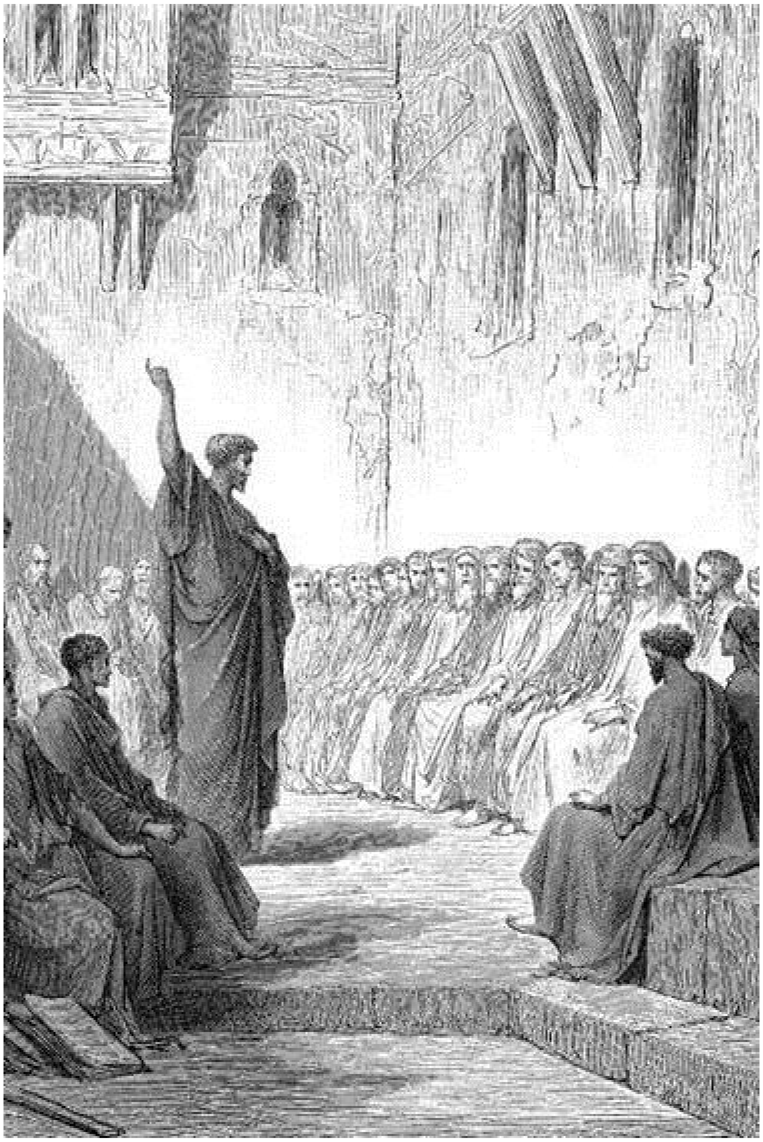

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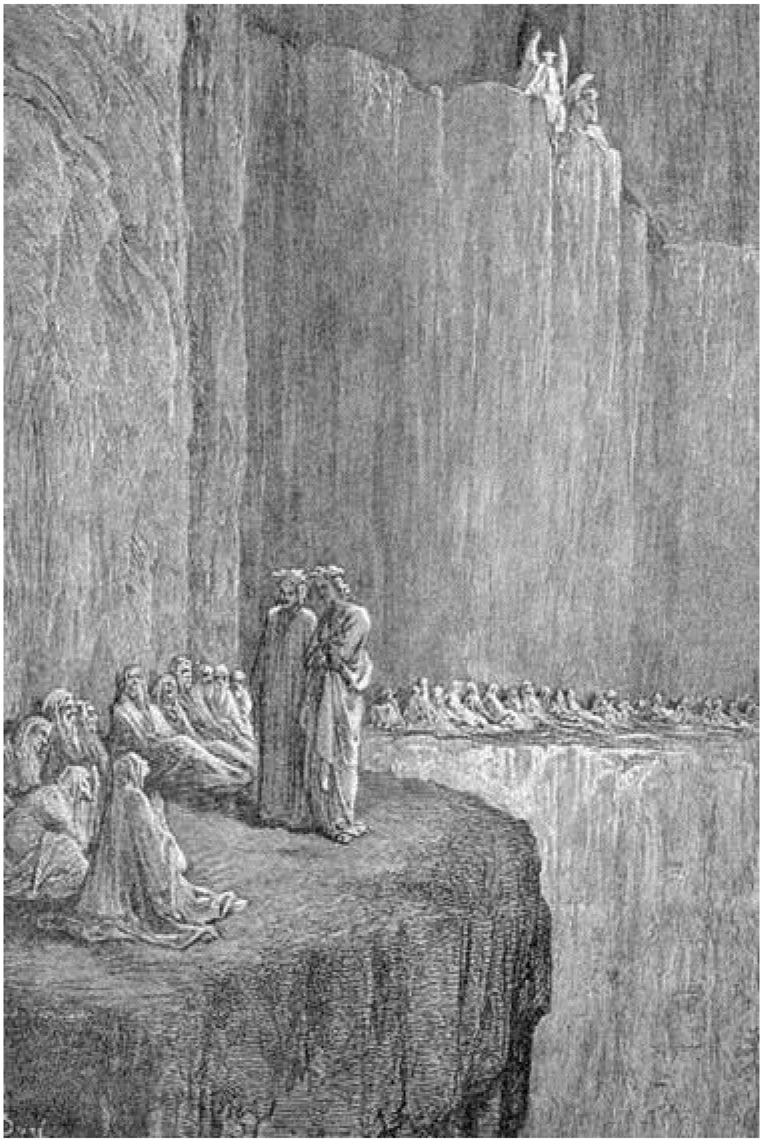

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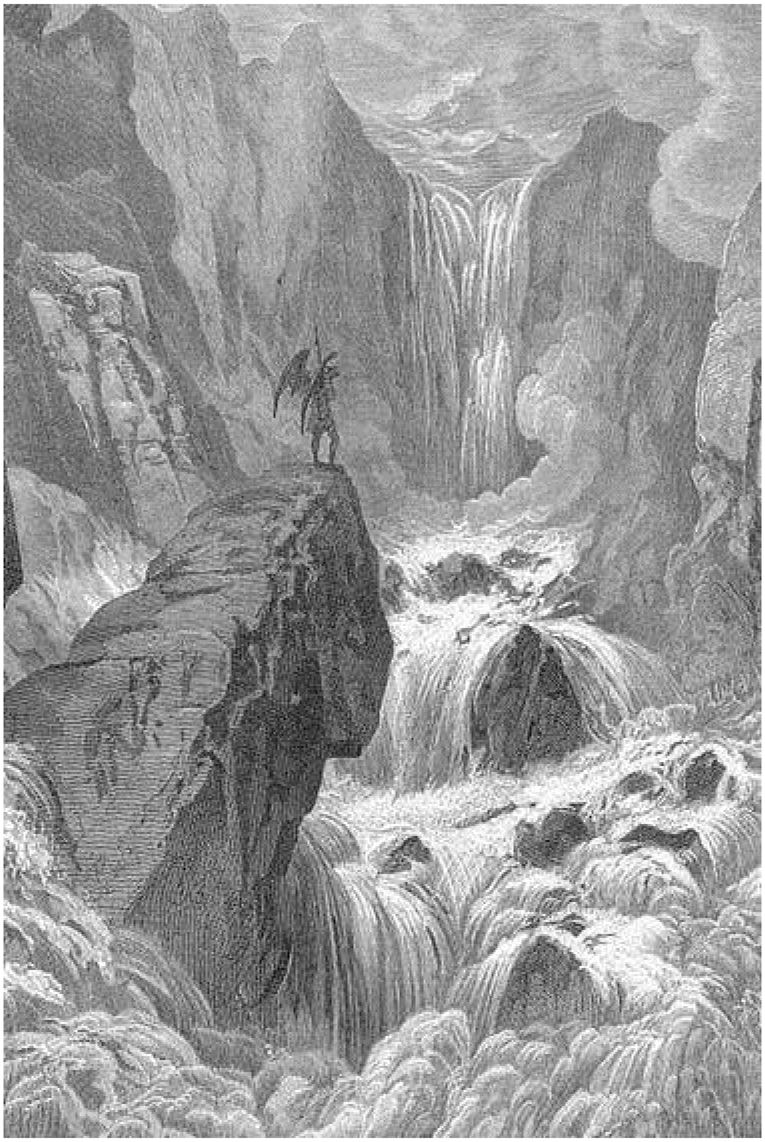

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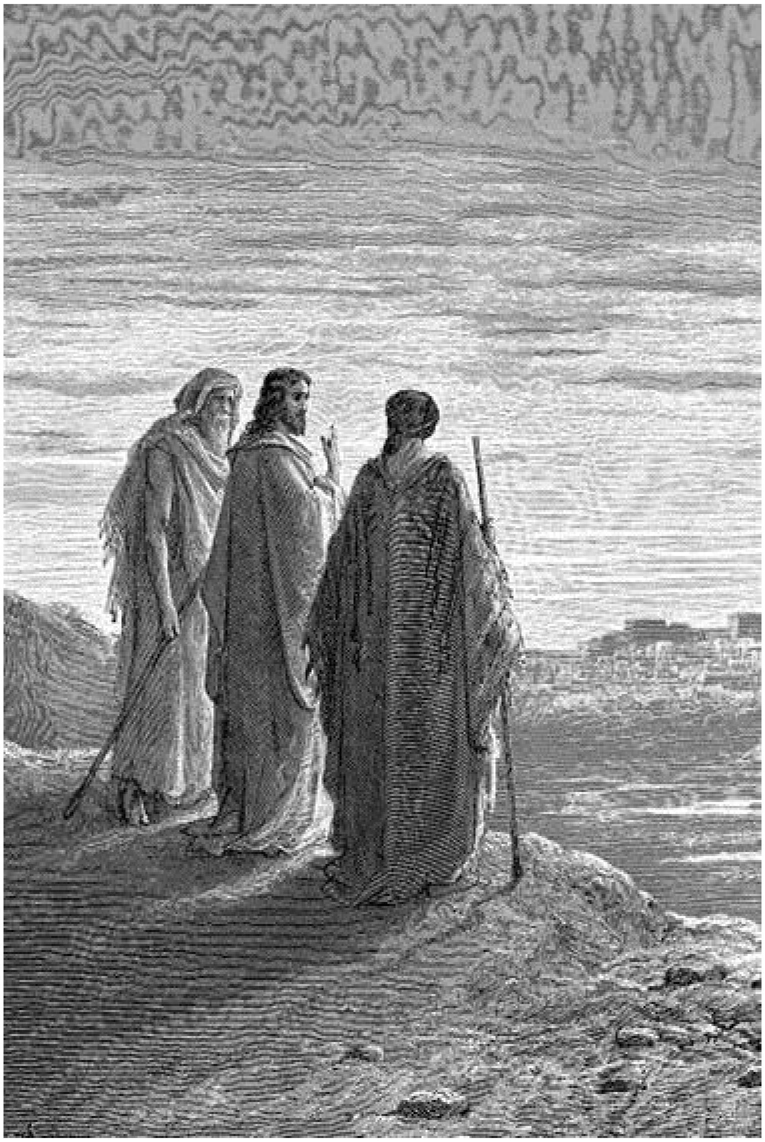

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ENDNOTES

[1] “Venerunt autem mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa.”—Wisd. vii.II.

[2] Ama, et fac quod vis.

[3] Inchoantibus præmium promittitur, sed perseverantibus datur.—*De modo bene viv.*s.6.

[4] “Post baptismum autem, necessaria est homini jugis oratio, ad hoc quod coelum intoeat”—P. 3.9.39.a.5.

[5] “Oportet simper orare et non deficere.”—Luke, xiii. I.

[6] “Hoc Dei donum suppliciter emereri potest.”—*De Dono persev.* C.6.

[7] “Operimentum tuum erunt vermes.”—Isai. xiv.II.

[8] “Auferes spiritum eorum, et deficient, et in pulverem suum revertentur.”—Ps. ciii.29.

[9] “Gravius fœtent divitum corpora.” In Hexamer. 1.6, c.8.

[10] “Perlit memoria eorum cum sonitu.”—Ps. ix.7.

[11] “Dimitte ergo me, ut plangam paululum dolorem meun.”—*Job* x.20.

[12] “Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.”—*Ps*,1.19.

[13] “Eum qui venit ad me non ejiciam foras.”—*John* vi. 37.

[14] “Perge ad sepulchrum, contemplare pulverem, cineres, vermes, et uspira,”—*Ad Theod.* paræn.I.

[15] “Redacta quasi in favillam æstivæ areæ, quæ rapta sunt vento.”—ii.35.

[16] “Expectat Deus, ut misereatur vestri.”—*Isa*, xxx,18.

[17] “In manus tuas, Domini, commendo spiritum meum.”—*Ps.* xxx.6.

[18] “Putredini dixi: Pater meus es;—Mater mea, et soror mea, ver bus.”—*Job*, xvii.14.

[19] “Considera te jam mortuum, quem scis de necessitate moriturum.”—*Lign.vit. de hum.*c.4.

[20] Vide prima, et erubesce.

[21] Vide media, et ingemisce.

[22] “Vide novissima, et contremisce.”—*De Divers.*s.12.

[23] “Ecce anni tres sunt, ex quo venio quærens fructum in ficulnea hac et non invenio.”—*Luke*, xiii.7.

[24] “Tempus non erit amplius: proficiscere.”—*Apoc*.x.6.

[25] “Succide ergo illam; ut quid etiam terram occupant?”—*Luke*, xiii,7.

[26] “Quærite et invenietis.”—*Matt.* Vii.7.

[27] “Si quid petieritis me in nominee meo, hoc *faciam.*”—*John*, xiv.14.

[28] “Quæ est vita vestra? vapor est ad modicum parens.”—*James* iv.15.

[29] “Contemplare sepulchra, vide utrum poteris discernere quis servus, quis dominus fuerit.”—*Hom.II.E.B. app.*

[30] “Impares nascimur, pares morimur.—*Ep.* 91.

[31] Sceptra ligonibus æquat.

[32] “Si vis, potes me mundare.”—*Matt*.viii.2.

[33] “Sana animam meam, quia peccavi tibi.”—*Ps*.xi.5.

[34] Nec divitias mors metuit, nec satellites, nec purpuram; putredo sequitur, et sanies defluit.—*De Prov.* s.6.

[35] “Cum interierit, non sumet omnia; neque descendet cum eo gloria ejus.”—*Ps*.xiviii.18.

[36] “Quid superbit terra et cinis?”—*Ecclus*.x.9.

[37] “In illa die peribunt cogitations eorum.”—*Ps*.cxiv.4.

[38] “Quæretis me et non invenietis.”—*John*, vii.34.

[39] “Ergo retribuam in tempere.”—*Deut*.xxxii.35.

[40] “Lætetur cor quærentium Dominum.”—I.*Par*.xvi.10.

[41] “Nolo mortem impii, sed ut convertatur . .. . . . et vivat.”—*Ezek*.xxxiii.II.

[42] “Velut somnium surgentium.”—*Ps*.Ixxii.20.

[43] Somnium, quia sopitis sensibus res magnæ apparent; et non sunt, et cito avolant.

[44] “Filli hominum, usquequo gravi corde? ut quid diligitis vanitatem et quæritis mendacium?”—*Ps.*iv.3.

[45] “Quodcunque facere potest manus tua instanter operare.”—*Eccles.*ix.10.

[46] “Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur.”—*Apoc.*xiv.13.

[47] “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—*Prov.*viii.17.

[48] Homo brevi vivens tempore. . . . . ; quasi flos egreditur et conteritur.”—*Job* xiv.I.

[49] “Clama. . . . Omnis caro fenum. . . . . . Vere fenum est populus: exsiccatum est fenum et cecidit flos.”—*Isa.*xi.6

[50] “Dies mei velociores fuerunt cursore.”—*Job,*ix.25.

[51] “Quod scribo de mea vita tollitur,”—*Ad Hel.de morte.Nep.*

[52] “Omnes morimur, et quasi aquæ dilabilmur in terram, quæ non revertuntur.”—*2 Kings,*xiv.14.

[53] “Pater, non sum dignus vocari fillius tuus.”—*Luke,*xv.21.

[54] “Convertimini ad me. . . . . . . et converter ad vos.”—*Zach.*i.3.

[55] “Præcisa est velut a texente vita mea: dum adhuc ordirer, succidit me.”—*Isa.*xxxviii.12.

[56] “Posuit me quasi in proverbium vulgi, et exemplum sum coram eis.”—*Job,*xvii.6.

[57] “Proverbium vulgi, et exemplum.

[58] “Parvus et magnus ibi sunt.”—*Job,*iii.19.

[59] Tempus breve est.

[60] “Cætera nostra, et bona et mala, incerta sunt; sola mors certa est.”—*Serm.*97.E.B.

[61] “Resistitur ignibus, undis, ferro, resistitur regibus; venit mors: quis ei resistit?”—*In Ps.*cxxi.

[62] “Constituisti terminos ejus, qui præteriri non poterunt.”—*Job,*xiv.5.

[63] “Quis est homo, qui vivet, et non videbit mortem?”—*Ps.*1xxxviii.49.

[64] “Dic mihi, ubi sunt amatores mundi? Nihil ex eis remansit, nisi cineres et vermes.”—*Medit.*c.3.

[65] “Mihi heri, et tibi hodie.”—*Ecclus.*xxxviii.23.

[66] “Dies formabuntur, et nemo in eis.”—*Ps.*cxxxviii.16.

[67] “O mors! bonum est judicium tuum.”—*Ecclus.*xii.3.

[68] “Consideretur vitæ terminus, et non erit in hoc mundo quod ametur.”—*Lign.Vit.de IIum.*c4.

[69] Omne quod est in mundo, concupiscentia carnis est, concupiscentia oculorum, et superbia vitæ.”—*I.John,* ii.16.

[70] “Nihil certius est morte, hora autem mortis nihil incertius.”—*De Cont.Mort.*c.3.

[71] “Sicut tur in nocte ita veniet.”—*I.Thess,*v,2,

[72] “Qua hora non putatis, Fillius hominis veniet.”—*Luke,*xii.40.

[73] “De morte incerti sumus, ut ad mortem semper parati inveniamur.”—Mort.1.12.c.20.

[74] “Mors ubique te expectat: tu ubique eam expectabis.”—*Medit.*c.3.

[75] “Sicut pisces capiuntur hamo. . . . .sic capiuntur homines in tempore maio.”—*Eccles.*ix.12.

[76] “(Deus) patienter agit propter vos, nolens aliquos perire sed omnes ad pœnitentiam reverti.”—*2 Peter* iii.9.

[77] Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.

[78] Ne nos inducas in tentationem.

[79] “Petite, et accipietis.”—*John,*xvi.24.

[80] “Nisi conversi fueritis, gladium suum vibrabit.”—*Ps.*vii.13.

[81] “Cum dixerint pax, et securitas, tunc repentinus eis superveniet interitus.”—*I Thess.*v.3.

[82] “Nisi pœnitentiam habueritis, omnes similiter peribitis.”—*Luke,*xiii.3. .

[83] “Nemo, volens ferir, dicit: observa!”—*Serm.*22.E.B

[84] “Non tardes converti ad Dominium, et non differas de die in diem; subito enim veniet ira illius, et in tempore vindictæ disperdet te.”—*Eccles.*v.8.

[85] “Mihi vindicta; ego retribuam, dicit Dominus.”—*Rom.*xii.19.

[86] “Justa pœna est ut qui recte facere, cum posset, noluit, amittar posse cum velit.”—*De Lib. Arb.* 1. 3, c.13.

[87] “Latet ultimus dies, ut observentur omnes dies.”—*Serm.*39.E.B.

[88] “Cum metu et tremore vestram salutem operamini.”—*Phil.*ii.12.

[89] “Si ceciderit lignum ad austrum, aut ad acquilonem, in quocumque loco ceciderit, ibi erit.”—*Eccles.*xi.3.

[90] “Quid enim faciam, cum surrexerit ad judicandum Deus; et cum quæsierit, quid respondebo illi?”—*Job*,xxxi.14.

[91] Angustia superveniente, pacem requirent, et non erit.

[92] Conturbatio super conturbationem veniet.

[93] “Contra spem in spem credidit.”—*Rom.*iv.18.

[94] “Turbabuntur populi et pertransibunt.”—*Job*,xxxiv.20.

[95] “Descendit diabolus ad vos habens iram magnam, sciens quod modicum tempus est.”—*Apoc.*xii.12.

[96] “Replebuntur domus eorum draconibus.”—*Isa.*xiii.21.

[97] “Virum injustum mala capient in interitu.”—*Ps.*cxxxix.12.

[98] “Opera tua sumus, non te deseremus.”—*Medit.*c.2.

[99] “Cor durum habebit male in novissimo; et qui amat periculum, in illo peribit.”—*Ecclus.*iii.27.

[100] “Qui prius a peccato relinquitur quam ipse relinquat, non libere sed quasi ex necessitate condemnat.”—*De vera pœnit.*c.17

[101] “Core jus indurabitur quasi lapis, et stringetur quasi malleatoris incus.”—*Job*,xli.15.

[102] Cor durum habebit male in novissimo.

[103] “Verterunt ad me tergum, et non faciem, et tempore afflictionis suæ dicent: Surge, et libera nos. Ubi sunt dii tui, quos fecisti tibi? Surgant, et liberent te.”—*Jer.*ii.27

[104] “Hoc teneo, hoc multiplici experientia didici, quod ei non bonus finis, cui mala simper vita fuit.”—*In Epis. Enseb. ad Dam.*

[105] “In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.”—*Ps.*xxx.6.

[106] “Ne tradas bestiis animae confitentium tibi.”—*Ps.*1xxiii.19.

[107] “Tunc invocabunt me, et non exaudiam.”—*Prov.*i.28.

[108] “Numquid Deus audiet clamorem ejus, cum venerit super eum angustia?”—*Job,*xxvii.9.

[109] “In interitu vestro ridebo et subsannabo.”—*Prov.*i.26.

[110] “Ridere Dei est nolle misereri.”—*Mor.*1.9.c.20.

[111] “Mea est ultio, et ego retribuam in tempore, ut labatur pes eorum.”—*Deut.*xxii.35.

[112] “In peccato vestro moriemini.”—*John,*viii.21, 24.

[113] “Moriemini in peccatis vestris.”—*Ibid.*24.

[114] “Quæretis me, et non invenietis.”—*John,*vii.34.

[115] “Quærits Dominum dum inveniri potest.”—*Isa.*1v.6.

[116] Impii nusquam didicerunt bene facere, nisi cum non est tempus bene faciendi.

[117] “Pondus et statera judicia Domini sunt.”—*Prov.*xvi.II.

[118] “Pœnitentia quæ ab infirmo petitur infirma est.”—*Serm.*255.E.B.App.

[119] “Vix de centum millibus quorum mala vita fuit, meretur in morte a Deo habere indulgentiam unus.”—*In Ep. Eus. ad. Dam.*

[120] “Majus miraculum est quod male viventes facient bonum finem, quam suscitare mortuous.”—*De Nat. V.S.I.*

[121] “Æquissime percutitur peccator ut moriens obliviscatur sui qui vivens oblitus est Dei.”—*S. 257 E.B. App.*

[122] “Nolite errare, Deus non irridetur; quæ enim seminaverit homo, hæc et metet: qui seminat in carne sua, de carne et metet corruptionem.”—*Gal.*vi.7.

[123] “Revertimini et vivite.”—*Ezek.*xviii.32.

[124] “Convertimino ad me et ego converter ad vos.”—*Zach.*i.3.

[125] “Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.”—*Ps.*1.19.

[126] “Nihil allud quam de se cogitare sufficient.”—*De Cont. Mundi.*c.15.

[127] Dispone domui tuæ, quia morieris tu, et non vives.

[128] “Desiderium peccatorum peribit.”—*Ps.*cxi.10.

[129] “Impietas impii non nocebit ei, in quacumque die conversue fuerit.”—*Ezek.*xxxiii.12.

[130] “Ne tradas bestilis animas confitentes tibi.”—*Ps.*lxxiii.19.

[131] “Pretiosa mors, tanquam finis laborum, victoriæ consummation, vitæ janua.”—*In Trans.Mal.*s.I.

[132] “Homo natus de muliere, brevi vivens tempore, repletur multis miserilis.”—*Job*,xiv.I

[133] “Tanuqam vita petitur supplici mora.”—*Ep.ci.* .

[134] “Quid est diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri.”—*Serm.* 84. E.B

[135] Hæc vita homini non ad quietem data est sed ad laborem.”—*Serm.* 42.

[136] Longum Deus adimit tormentum, cum vitam concedit brevem.

[137] “Ut mors remedium videatur esse, non pœna.”—*De Cain et. Ab* I.2, c.10.

[138] “Beati mortui, qui in Domino moriuntur Amodo jam dicit spiritus, ut requiescant a laboribus suis.”—*Apoc.xiv.*13.

[139] “Justorum animæ in manu Dei sunt, et non tanget illos tormentum mortis.”—*Wis.*iii.I.

[140] “Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus in æternum.”—*Ps.*lxxii.26.

[141] “Rapinam bonorum vestrorum cum gaudio suscepistis, cognos centes vos habere meliorem et manentem substantiam.”—*Heb.*x.34.

[142] “In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam.”—*Ps.* iv.9.

[143] “Absterget Deus omnem lacrymam ab oculis eorum, et mors ultra non erit.”—*Apoc.*xxi.4.

[144] “Ex labore ad requiem vado, et vos ploratis?”—*Lib.*5.1. II,n.52.

[145] “Quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus?”—*Rom.*vii.24.

146 “Veni de Libano sponsa mea, veni de cubilibus leonum.”—*Cant.*iv.8.

147 “Mihi vivere Christus est et mori lucrum.”—Phil. i.21.

148 “Raptus est ne militia mutaret intellectum ejus.”—*Wis.*iv.II

149 “Landa navigantis felcitatem sed cum pervenit ad porturu.”—*In Nativ.D.Fus.* hom.2.

150 “Septies enim cadet justus.”—*Prov.*xxiv.16.

151 “Quid est mors, nisi sepultura vitiorum?”—*De bon.mort.*c.4.

152 “Quid vitam istam desideramus, in qua quanto diutius quis fuerit tanto majori oneratur sarcina peccatorum?”—*Ibid.*c.2.

153 “Mortus descivit peccare.”—*In Ps.* cxciii.2.18.

154 “Laudavi magis mortuos quam viventes.”—*Eccles.*iv.2.

155 In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine Deus veritiatis.”—*Ps.*xxx.6.

156 Finis laborum, vitæ janua.

157 “Hæc porta Domini, justi intrabunt in eam.”—*Ps.* cxvii.20.

158 “Aperi mihi, dulcis soror.”—*In. Ep.Eus.ad.Dam.*

159 “Educ de custodia anuman meam.”—*Ps.* cxii.8.

160 “Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine.”—*Luke.*ii.29.

161 “Desiderium habens dissolvi, et esse cum Christo.”—*Phil.*i.23.

162 “Dum sumus in corpore, peregrinamur a Domino.”—2.*Cor.*v.6.

163 “Mors dicenda non est, sed vitæ principium.”—*De Virginit.*

164 Non est justis mors, sed translatio.

165 “O mors desiderablilis malorum finis, laboris clausula, quietis principium.”—*De Vis.inf.*1.I.c.6.

166 “Eja moriar Domine ut et videam.”—*Sol.an.an.D.*c.I.

167 “Mori timeat qui ad secundam mortem, de hac morte transibit.”—*De Mortal.*

[168] “Ero mors tua, o mors!”—*Osse,* xiii.41.

[169] “Erratis, non ad mortem, sed ad vitam contendo.”—*Ap. Eus.* L.iv.c.14.

[170] “Gratia Dei sum id quod sum.”—I.*Cor.*xv.10.

[171] “Ibi plus auxilli, ubi plus periculi,”—*De Jos.patr.*c.5.

[172] “Dominus. . . . .adjutor in opportunitatibus.”—*Ps.*ix.10.

[173] “Noli timere, plures enim nobiscur sunt, quam cum illis.”—4. *Kings,* vi.16

[174] “Dominus factus est adjutor meus.”—*Ps.*xxix.II.

[175] “Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea; quem timebo?”—*Ps.*xxvi.I.

[176] “Major illi cura est, ut nos ad salutem pertrahat quam diabolo ut nos ad damnationem impellat.”—*In Num.Hom.*20.

[177] “Fidelis Deus non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potetis.”—I *Cor.*x.13.

[178] “Justi quandoque dure moriendo purgantur in hoc mundo.”—*Spec.mor.*1.2.p.I.d.3.

[179] “Vulnera tua, merita mea.”

[180] “Egredere, anima mea; quid times? Septuginta prope annis servisti Christo, et mortem times?”

[181] “Si impius egerit pœnitentiam. . . . omnium iniquitatum ejus. . . . .non recordabor.”—*Ezek.*xviii.21.

[182] “Quomodo certo persuasus esse quis potest.quod Deus ei peccata dimiserit?”

[183] “Nimirum si dicat; Iniquitatem odio habui et abominatus sum.”—*Reg .brev. interr.*12.

[184] “Qui habet mandata mea et servat ea, ille est qui diligit me.”—*John,* xiv.21.

[185] “Charitas foras mittit timorem.”—I *John,* iv.18.

[186] “Justorum animæ in manu Dei sunt, et non tanget illos tormentum mortis; visi sunt oculis insipientum mori. . . . .illi autem sunt in pace.”—*Wis.*iii.I.

[187] “Cum dederit dilectis suis somnum ecce hereditas Domnin.”—*Ps.*cxxvi.2.

[188] “In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam.”—*Ps.*iv.9.

189 Non putabam tam dulce esse mori.

190 Ite, pedes; parum a paradiso distamus,

191 Ego vim faciam ut devorer.

192 “Non vereamur occidi, quos constet quando occidimur, coronari?”—*Epis. ad. Thibar.*

193 “Oportet. . . . . mortale hoc induere immortalitatem.”—I *Cor.* xv.55.

194 “Patienter vivit, delectabiliter moritur.”—*In* I *Job,* ii 2.

195 “Te Dominus and nuptias vocat; veni, ducam te quo desideras.”—*De S Ildeph. conc.* 2.

196 “Euge, serve bone et fidelis: quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, super multa te constituam; intra in gaudium Domini tui.”—*Matt.*xxv.21.

197 “Dicite justo quoniam *bene:* quoniam fructum adinventionum suarum comedet.”—*Isa.*iii.10.

198 “Fateri cœlum et eos, qui hinc eo commearunt luctu prosequi.”—*Ad. Vid.jun.tr.*I.

199 “Liquet acerbitatem non mortis esse, sed culpæ: non ad mortem metus referendus, sed ad vitam.”—*De bon.mort.*c.8.

200 “Timenti Dominum bebe erit in extremis.”—*Ecclus.*I.13.

201 “Non potest male mori, qui bene vixerit.”—*De Disc.chr.*, c.12.

202 “Justus autem, si morte præoccupatus fuerit, in refrigerio erit.”—*Wis.* iv.7.

203 “Offeramus Deo quod tenemur reddere.”—*Op.imp.in Matth. hom.* 25.

204 “In omnibus operibus tuis memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis.”—*Ecclus.*vii.40.

205 “Cum. . . . .interitus quasi temperstas ingruerit. . . . ., tunc invocabunt me, et non exaudiam. . . . .; comedent fructus viæ suæ.”—*Prov.*i. 27.

206 “Quæ seminaverit homo, hæc et metet.”—*Gal.*vi.§.

207 “Jam non poteris amplius villivare.”—*Luke,* xvi.2.

208 “Tempus non erit amplius.”—*Apoc.*x.6.

[209] “Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur.”—*Apoc.*xiv.13.

[210] The formula of this PROTESTATION is to be found at the end of the volume.

[211] “Facile contemnit omnia, qui se semper cogitate esse moriturum.”—*Ep. ad. Paulin.*

[212] “Beatus ille servus, quem, cum venerit Dominus ejus, invenerit sic facientem.”—*Matt.*xxiv.46.

[213] “In manus tuas commendo, spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine Deus veritatis.”—*Ps.*xxx.6.

[214] “Nullum temporis pretium.”—*De Brev.*vit.c.8.

[215] “Modico tempore potest homo lucrari gratiam et gloriam. Tempus tantum valet, quantum Deus, quippe tempore bene consumpto comparator Deus.”

[216] “O, si daretur hora!”

[217] “Quid de futuro, miser, præsumis, tamquam Pater tempora in tua posuerit potestate?”—*De Cont. Mund.*c. 16.

[218] Diem tenes, qui horam non tenes?

[219] “Nihil pretiosius tempore sed nihil vilius æstimatur.

[220] “Transeunt dies salutis, et nemo recogitat; nemo sibi non reditura momenta perilisse causatur.”—*De Cont. mundi,* c.16.

[221] “Mundi substantiam, honorem, voluptates, pro unius horæ spatio, commutarent.”—*De vit.sol.*c.10.

[222] “Memento Creatoris tui. . . . antequam tenebrescat sol et lumen.”—*Eccles.*xii.I.

[223] “Venit nox quando nemo potest operari.”—*John,* ix.4.

[224] “Vocavit adversum me tempus.”—*Lament.*i.15.

[225] “Ambulate dum lucem hanbetis.”—*John,* xii.35.

[226] “Jam non amplius in æterum ex te fructum quisquam manducet.”—*Mark*, xi.14.

[227] “Descendit diabolus ad vos habens iram magnam, sciens quod modicum tempus habet.”—*Apoc.* xii.12.

[228] “Particula boni doni non te præcterat.”—*Ecclus.*xiv.14.

[229] "Quid hic statis tota die otiosi?—*Matt.* xx.6.

[230] "Omne tempus in quo de Deo non cogitas, hoc te computes perdidisse."—*Medit.*c.6.

[231] "Quodcunque facere potest manus tua, instanter operare; quia nec opus nec ratio. . . . erunt apud inferos quo tu properas."—*Eccles.*ix.10.

[232] "Ecce nunc tempus acceptabile."—2 *Cor.*vi.2.

[233] "Hodie si vocem ejus audiertis, nolite obdurare corda vestra."—*Ps.*xciv.8.

[234] "Recogitabo tibi omnes annos meos in amaritudine animæ meæ."—*Isa.*xxxviii.15.

[235] "Redimentes tempus quoniam dies mali sunt."—*Eph.*v.16.

[236] Tempus redimes, si, quæ facere neglexisti, facis.

[237] "Plorans nequaquam plorabis, miserans miserebitur tui."—*Isa.*xxx.19.

[238] Rogamus vos. . . . .ut vestrum negotium agatis.

[239] "Anima est toto mundo pretiosior."—*In .I.Cor.*hom.3.

[240] "Empti enim estis pretio magno."—I *Cor.*vi.20.

[241] "Tam copioso munere humana redemptio agitur, ut homo Deum valere videatur."—*De dilig.D.*c.6.

[242] "Quam dabit homo commutationem pro anima sua?"—*Matt.*xvi.26.

[243] "Sic Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigentium daret."—*John,* iii.16.

[244] "Porro unum est necessarium."—*Luke,* x.42.

[245] "Quid prodest homini, si mundum universum lucretur, animæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur?"—*Matt.* xvi.26.

[246] "Unam petii a Domino hanc requiram, ut inhabitem in domo Domini."—*Ps.* xxvi.4.

[247] "Cum metu et tremore vestram salutem operamini."—*Phil.*ii.12.

[248] "Regnum cœlorum vim patitur et violenti rapiunt illud."—*Matt.*xi.12.

[249] "Vigilat hostis, dormis tu?"—*In Ps.* 65.

[250] “Finita est æstas et nos salvati non sumus.”—*Jer.* viii.20.

[251] “Ergo erravimus.”—*Wis.*v.6.

[252] “Perditio tua, Israel; tantummodo in me auxilium tuum.”—*Osee.* xiii.9.

[253] “Væ, fillii desertores, dicit Dominus.”—*Isa.*xxx.I.

[254] “Væ eis, quoniam recesserunt.”—*Osee,* vii.13.

[255] “Non sis tu mihi formidini, spes mea tu in die afflictionis.”—*Jer.*xvii.17.

[256] “Dies perditionis.”—*Deut.*xxxii.35.

[257] “Non nostra sunt, quæ non possumus auferre nobiscum; sola virtus comes est defunctorum.”—I*n Luc.*1. 7.

[258] “Omnia quæ desideraverunt oculi mei, non negavi eis.”—*Eccles.*ii.10.

[259] “In manu ejus statera dolosa.”—*Osse,*xii.7.

[260] “Dies mei velociores fuerunt cursore; pertransierunt quasi naves poma portantes.”—*Job,* ix.25.

[261] “Tanquam navis quæ pertransit flunctuantem aquam, cujus, cum præterierit, non est vestigium invenire.”—*Wis.*v.10.

[262] “Quid hic habebat, attendis; quid secum fert, attende.”—*Serm.*13.

[263] “Periit memoria eorum cum sonitu.”—*Ps.*ix.7.

[264] “Quid nobis profuit superbia? Aut divitarum jactantia quid contulit nobis? Transierunt omnia illa tanquam umbra.”—*Wis.*v.8.

[265] Filii hujus sæculi prudentiores filiis lucis sunt.”—*Luke,* xvi.8.

[266] “Tempus breve est: qui utuntur hoc mundo, tanquam non utantur; præterit enim figura hujus mundi.”—I. *Cor.*vii.29.

[267] Est minds instar scenæ: “Generatio præterit, et generatio advendit.”

[268] “Malitia horæ oblivionem facit luxuriæ magnæ.”—*Ecclus.*xi.29.

[269] “Stulte, hac nocte animam tuam repetunt a te; quæ autem parasti, cujus erunt?”—*Luke,* xii.20.

[270] “Sic est. qui sibi thesaurizat et non est in Deum dives.”—*Ibid.*21.

[271] Theasurizate vobis thesauros in cœlo, ubi neque ærugo neque tinea demolitur.”—*Matt.*vi.20.

[272] “Dives, si charitatem non habet, quid habet? Pauper, si charitatem habet, quid non habet?”—*Serm.*112. *E.B.app.*

[273] Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.”—I *John,* iv.16.

[274] “Non habemus hic manentem civitatem, sed futuram inquirimus.”—*Heb.*xiii.14.

[275] Hospes es, transis et vides.

[276] “Lætitia sempiterna super caput eorum.”—*Isa.*xxxv.10.

[277] “Mille anni ante oculos tuos, tamquam dies hesterna quæ præteriit.”—*Ps* .lxxxix.4.

[278] “Si ceciderit lignum ad austrum aut ad aquilonem, in quocuæ que loco ceciderit, ibi erit.”—*Eccles.* xi.3.

[279] O infelix felicitas, quæ divitem ad æternam infelicitatem traxit! O felix infelicitas, quæ pauperem ad æternitatis felicitatem perduxit.

[280] Magna cogitatio.

[281] “Omni momento ad ostium æternitatis sto.”—*De Damn. Reg.*c.10§. 3.

[282] “Ibit homo in domum æternitatis suæ.”

[283] Ante hominem vita et mors.

[284] “Quod placuerit ei, dabitur illi.”—*Ecclus.*xv.18.

[285] “Ecce ego do coram vobis viam vitæ et viam mortis.”—*Jer.*xxi.8.

[286] “Nemo vult sub spe salutis ægrotare.”—*Ad.Pet. D. fid.*c.3.

[287] “Clamabit ad me. . . . .eripiam eum et glorificabo eum. .”—*Ps.*xc.15.

[288] “Quis ergo nos separabit a charitate Christi?”—*Rom.*viii.35.

[289] “Dominus dominorum est, et Rex regum.”—*Apoc.*xvii.14.

[290] “Quasi stilla situlæ. . . . pulvis exiguus.”—*Isa.*xi.15.

[291] “Omnes gentes, quasi non sint sunt coram eo.”—*Isa.*xi.17.

[292] “Miser, et pauper, et cæcus, et nudus.”—*Apoc.*iii.17.

[293] “Tam tremendam majestatem audit irritare pulvisculus.”—*In cant.*s.16.

[294] “Peccatum quamdam infinitatem habet ex infinitate divinæ majestatis.”—*P.*3.*q.*I, a.2.

[295] Citra condignum.

[296] “In ditione tua cuncta sunt posita. . . . .Tu fecisti cœlum et terram.”—*Esth.*xiii.9.

[297] “Venti et mare obediunt ei.”—Matt.viii.27. “Ignis, grando, nix, glacies. . . . faciunt verbum ejus.”—*Ps.*cxiviii.8.

[298] “Confregisti jugum meum. . . . .et dixisti: non serviam.”—*Jer,* ii.20.

[299] “Quis est Dominus, ut audiam vocem ejus?. . . . Nescio Dominum.”—*Exod.*v.2.

[300] “Tu dereliquisti me, dicit Dominus; retrosum abiisti.”—*Jer.*xv.6.

[301] “Similiter autem odio sunt Deo impius et impietas ejus.”—*Wis.*xiv.9.

[302] “Contra Omnipotentem roboratus est.”—*Job,* xv.25.

[303] “Ex nihilo fecit illa Deus.”—2 *Mach.* vii. 28. “Potest. . . . et universum mundum uno nutu delere.”—*Ibid.* viii.18.

[304] “Tetendit adversus Deum manum suam. . . . Cucurrit adversus eum erecto collo et pingui cervice armatus est.”—*Job,* xv.25.

[305] “Clama ad me, et exaudiam te.”—*Jer.*xxxiii.3.

[306] “Per prævaricationem legis Deum inhonoras.”—*Rom.*ii.23.

[307] “Propter quid irritavit impius Deum?”—*Ps.* x.13.

[308] “Violabant me. . . . propter pugillum hordei et fragmen panis.”—*Ezek.*xiii.19.

[309] “Domine, quis similes tibi?”—*Ps.*xxxiv.10.

[310] “Cui assimilastis me, et adæquastis? dicit Sanctus.”—*Isa.*xi.25.

[311] “Projecisti me post corpus tuum.”—*Ezek.*xxiii.35.

[312] “Unusquisque quod cupit et veneratur, hoc illi deus est.”—*In Ps.*lxxx.

[313] Si amas delicias, deliciæ dicuntur deus tuus.

[314] “Quidquid homo Deo anteponit, sibi deum facit.”—*De Dup.Mart.*

[315] “Ecce dii tui, Israel.”—3 *Kings*, xii.28.

[316] Vitium in corde, est idolum in altari.

[317] “Cœlum et terram ego impleo.”—*Jer.*xxiii.2.4

[318] “Ad iracundiam provocat me ante faciem meam semper.”—*Isa.* lxv. 3.

[319] “Si quis diligit me. . . . Pater meus diligent eum, et ad eum veniemus, et mansionem apud eum faciemus.”—*John,* xiv.23.

[320] “Non deserit, nisi deseratur.”—*Sess.*6, *cap.*II.

[321] “Dixerunt Deo: Recede a nobis.”—*Job,* xxi.14.

[322] “Tunc vadit, et assumit septem alios spiritus secum nequiores se, et intrantes habitant ibi.”—*Matt.* xii.45.

[323] Exi ab eo, immunde spiritus, et da locum Spiritui Sancto.

[324] “Nescitis quia templum Dei estis?”—I *Cor.*, iii.16.

[325] Exi a me, Domine, da locum diabolo.

[326] “Sum tamquam rex a proprio regno expulsus, in cujus loco latro pessimus electus est.”—*Rev.*1. I.c.I.

[327] “Audite, cœli; auribus pecipe, terra: Filios enutrivi, et exaltavi: ipsi autem spreverunt me.”—*Isa.*i.2.

[328] “Ipsi autem ad iracundiam provocaverunt, et afflixerunt spiritum Sancti ejus.”—*Isa.*lxiii.10.

[329] “Peccatum mortale, si possibile esset, destrueret ipsum Deum, eo quod causa esset trisitiæ in Deo infinitæ.”—*De Satif.q.*I.

[330] “Peccatum, quantum in se est Deum perimit.”—*In Temp. Pasch.*s.3.

[331] “Exacerbavit Dominum peccator.”—Ps.x.4. “Qui Filium Dei conculcaverit.”—*Heb.*x.29.

[332] Deus cujus natura bonitas.

[333] “Irascetur, ut faciat opus suum, alienum opus ejus. . . . peregrinum est opus ejus ab eo.”—*Isa*.xxviii.21.

[334] “Deus, iratus es, et misertus es nobis.”—*Ps*.lix.3.

[335] “Ostentidsti populo tuo dura; potasti nos vino compunctionis.”—*Ps*.lix.5.

[336] “Dedisti metuentibus te significationem, ut fugiant a facie arcus, ut liberentur dilecti tui.”—*Ps*.lix.6.

[337] “Dissimulas peccata hominum propter pœnitentiam.”—*Wis*.xi.24.

[338] “Respicere ad iniquitatem non poteris; quare respicis super iniqua agentes, et taces?”—*Habac*.i.13.

[339] “Propterea expectat Dominus, ut misereatur vestri.”—*Isa*.xxx.18

[340] “Creatura enim tibi Factori deserviens, exardescit in tormentum adverus injustos.”—*Wis*.xvi.24.

[341] “Indulsisti genti, Domine, indulsisti genti; numquid glorificatus es?”—*Isa*.xxvi.15.

[342] “Nolo mortem implii, sed ut convertatur et vivat.”—*Ezek*.xxxiii.II.

[343] “Deus meus, pace tua dicam; nisi quia Deus es injustus esses.”—*De Vis.inf*.1.I.c.5.

[344] Nos peccavimus, inhæremus peccato.

[345] Et tu placates es?

[346] Nos te provocamus ad iram, tu autem conducis nos ad misericordiam.

[347] Infernus domus mea est.—*Job*,, xvii.13

[348] “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum.”—*Deut*.vi.5.

[349] “Adam, ubi es?”—*Gen*.iii.9.

[350] Sunt verba patris quærentis filium suum perditum.

[351] “Laboravi clamans, raucæ factæ sunt fauces meæ.”—*Ps*.ixviii.4.

[352] “Revertimini, et vivite.”—*Ezek.* xviii.32. .

[353] “Et quare moriemini, domus Israel?”—*Ezek.*xviii.31.

[354] “Dixerunt Deo: Recede a nobis.”—*Job*, xxi.14.

[355] “Ecce sto ad ostium, et pulso.”—*Apoc.*iii.20.

[356] “Aperi mihi, soror mea”—*Cant.*v.2.

[357] “Laboravi rogans.”—*Jer.*xv.6.

[358] “Deus etiam a se aversos amatory sequitur, et depreccatur ne pereant.*”—Ad Demoph.*

[359] “Obsecramus pro Christo, reconciliamini Deo.”—2 *Co*r.v.20.

[360] Ipse Christus vos obsecrat. Quid autem obsecrat? Reconciliamnini Deo. Non enim ipse inimicitas gerit, sed vos.

[361] “Quid est homo, quia magnificas eum? Aut quid apponis erga eum cor tuum?”—*Job,*vii.17.

[362] “Non avertet faciem suam a vobis, si reverse fueritis ad eum.”—2 *Par.*xxx.9.

[363] “Revertere ad me, dicit Dominus, et ego suscipiam te.”—*Jer.*iii.I.

[364] “Convertimini ad me,. . . . et convertar ad vos, dicit Dominus.”—*Zac.*i.3.

[365] “Imponit in humeros suos gaudens. Congratulamini mihi, quia inveni ovem meam quæ perierat.”—*Luke,* xv.5.

[366] Gaudium erit cœlo super uno peccatore pœntientiam agente.

[367] “Accurrens cecidit super collum ejus et osculates est eum.”—*Luke*, xv.20.

[368] “Si impius egerit pœntientiam. . . . .vita vivet. . . . .omnium iniquitatum ejus. . . . .non recordabor.”—*Ezek.* xviii.21.

[369] “Venite et arguite me. dicit Dominus: si fuerint peccata vestra ut coccinum, quasi nix dealbabuntur.”—*Isa.* i.18.

[370] “Exaltabitur parcens vobis.”—*Isa.*xxx.18.

[371] “Plorans nequaquam plorabis; miserans miserebitur tui.”—*Isa.*xxx.19.

[372] “Ad vocem clamoris tui, statim ut audierit, respondebit tibi.”—*Ibid.*

[373] Te ergo quærumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.

[374] “Vis, imus et colligimus ea?”—*Matt.*xiii.24.

[375] “In tempore messis dicam messoribus: collogite primum zizania, et alligate ea in fasciculos ad comburendum.”—*Ibid.* 30.

[376] “Desperando et sperando.”—*In Jo.*tr.33.

[377] Post peccatum spera misericordiam: ante peccatum, peritimesce justitiam.

[378] “Bonus est Deus, faciam quod mihi placet.”—*In Jo.*tr.33.

[379] “Ne dicas: Miseratio Domini magna est, multitudinis peccatorum meorum miserebitur.
—*Ecclus.*v.6.

[380] “Misercordia enim et ira ab illo cito proximant, et in peccatores respicit ira illius.”—*Ibid.*

[381] “Ego sum justus et misericors; peccatores tantum misericordem me exisimant.”—*Rev.*1.I.c.5.

[382] “Misericodia ejus. . . . timentibus eum.”—*Luke,* i.50.

[383] “Qui verus est in promittendo, verus est in minando.”—*De vera Pœnit.*c.7.

[384] “Cave ne unquam canem illum suscipas, qui misericordiam Dei pollicetur.”—*Scal. spri. gr.*6.

[385] “Sperat ut peccet, væ a perversa spe.”—*In Ps.* 144. .

[386] . “Dinumerari non possunt, quantos hæc inanis spei umbra deceperit.”—*Serm.*154 .*E.B. app.*

[387] “Fidit in lenitate magistri.”—*In Mat.hom.* 83.

[388] “Lata porta, et spatiosa via est, quæ ducit ad perditionem, et multi sunt qui intrant per eam.”—*Matt.* vii.13.

[389] “Irrisor est, non pœnitens.”—*Ad Frat.in er.s.*II.

[390] “Deus non irridetur.”—*Gal.* vi.7.

[391] “Quæ seminaverit homo, hæc et metet.”—*Ibid.* §

[392] “Et spes illorum, abominatio.”—*Job,* xi.20.

[393] “An divitias bonitatis ejus et patientiæ contemnis? Ignoras quoniam benignitas Dei ad pœnitentiam te adducit?”—*Rom.* ii.4.

[394] “Nisi converse fuertis, gladium suum vibrabit.”—*Ps.* vii.13.

[395] “Mea est ultio, et ego retribuam in tempore.”—*Deut.* xxxii.35.

[396] “Propterea expectat Dominus, ut misereatur vestri.”—*Isa.* xxx. 18.

[397] “Vocavit adversum me tempus.”—*Lam.*I.15.

[398] Ipsum tempus ad judicandum venit.

[399] “Curavimus Babylonem, et non est sanata; derelinquamus eam.”—*Jer.* li.9.

[400] “Auferam sepem ejus, et erit in direptionem.”—*Isa.* v.5.

[401] “Posuisti tenebras, et facta est nox; in ipsa pertransibunt omnes bestiæ silvæ.”—*Ps.* ciii.20.

[402] “Impius, cum in profundum venerit peccatorum, contemnit.:—*Prov.* xviii.3.

[403] “Misereamur impio, et non discet justitiam.”—*Isa.* xxvi.10.

[404] “Misericordiam hanc ego nolo; super omnem iram miseratio ista.”—*In Cant.* s. 42.

[405] “Secundum multitudinem iræ suæ non quæret.”—*Ps.*ix.4.

[406] “Auferetur zelus meus a te, et quiescam, nec irascar amplius.”—*Ezek.*xvi.42.

[407] “Et dimisi eos secundum desideria cordis eorum.”—*Ps.* lxxx.13.

[408] “Quare via impiorum prosperatur?. . . . congrega eos quasi gregem ad vicitman.”—*Jer.*xii.I.

[409] “Appone iniquitatem super iniquitatem. . . . .Deleantur de libro viventium”—*Ps.* lxviii.28.

[410] Nulla pœna major, quam cum peccatum est pœna peccati.

[411] “Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.”—*Ps.* lxxxviii.2.

[412] “Quid est quod debui ultra facere vineæ meæ, et non feci ei?”—*Isa.* v.4.

[413] “Misericordiæ Domini, quia non sumus consumpti.”—*Lam.*iii.22.

[414] Quid est quod debui ultra facere?

[415] “Eia, arbor infructuosa dilata est securis; noli esse secura, amputaberis.”—*Serm.* II0. *E.B.*

[416] “Hæc fecisti, et tacui; existimasti, inique, quod ero tui simillis; arguam te, et statuam contra faciem tuam.”—*Ps.* xiix.21.

[417] Ne permittas me separari a te.

[418] “Omnia in mensura, et numero, et pondere, disposuisti.”—*Wis.*xi.21.

[419] “Necdum enim completæ sunt iniquitates Amorrhæorum.”—*Gen.*xv.16.

[420] “Non addam ultra misereri domui Israel.”—*Os.*i.6.

[421] “Tentaverunt me jam per decem vices. . . . ; non videbunt terram.”—*Num.*xiv,22,

[422] “Gressus meos dinumerasti. . . . Signasti quasi in sacculo delicta mea.”—*Job,* xiv.16.

[423] “Mittite falces, quoniam maturavit messis.”—*Joel,* iii.13.

[424] “De propitiato peccato noli esse sine metu; neque adjicias peccatum super peccatum.”—*Ecclus.*v.5.

[425] “Dominus patienter expectat, u teas (nationes), cum judicii dies advenerit in plenitudine peccatorum puniat.”—2 *Mac.* vi.14.

[426] Porta quæso, peccatum meum, et revertere mecum, ut adorem Dominum.

[427] “Non revertar tecum, quia projecisti sermonem Domini, et projecit te Dominus.”—1 *Kings*, xv.25.

[428] “Appensus es in statera, et inventus es minus habens.”—*Dan.*v.27.

[429] Eadem nocte interfectus est Baltassar, rex chaldæus.

[430] “Ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in puncto ad inferna descendunt.”—*Job,* xxi.13.

[431] “Respice in faciem Christi tui.”—*Ps.*lxxxiii.10

[432] “Misit me, ut mederer contritis corde.”—*Isa.*lxi. I.

[433] *Dia1.*1.4.c.18.

[434] “Nunquam ex te fructus nascatur.”—*Matt.*xxi.19.

[435] “Super tribus sceleribus Damasci, et super quatuor non convertum tum.”—*Amos.*i.3.

[436] “O altitude divitiarum sapientiæ et scientiæ Dei! Quam incomprehensibilia sunt judicia ejus, et investigabiles viæ ejus!”—*Rom.*xi.33.

[437] “Quibus datur misericordia, gratuita datur; quibus non datur, justo Dei judicio non datur.”—*Ep.* 217, c. 5. *E.B.*

[438] “Egrediar sicut ante feci, et me excutiam.”—*Judges*, xvi.20.

[439] “Ne dicas: Peccavi, et quid accidit mihi triste? Altissimus enim est patiens redditor.”—*Ecclus.*v.4.

[440] Plus timendum est cum tolerat, quam cum festinanter punit.

[441] “Quos diu tolerat, durius damnat.”—*In Evang. hom.*13.

[442] “Sæpe, qui diu tolerati sunt, subita morte rapiuntur, ut nec fiere ante mortem liceat.”—*Mor.*1. 15.c.29.

[443] “Melius enim erat illis non cognoscere viam justitiæ, quam post agnitionem retrorsum converti.”—2 *Pet.* ii. 21.

[444] “Impossibile est enim eos, qui semel sunt illuminati, gustaverunt etiam donum coeleste. . . . et prolapsi sunt, rursus renovari ad pœnitentiam.”—*Heb.* vi.4.

[445] “Quia vocavi, et renuistis. . . . ego quogue, in interitu vestro, ridebo et subsannabo.”—*Prov.* i. 24.

[446] “Sicut canis qui revertitut ad vomitum sum, sic imprudens qui iterat stultitiam suam.”—*Prov.* xxvi.II

[447] “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.*iv.13.

[448] “Fili, peccasti? Non adjicias iterum; sed et de pristinis deprecare, ut tibi dimittantur.”—*Ecclus.*xxi.I.

[449] Diem tenes, qui horam non tenes?

[450] Qui pœnitenti veniam spopondit, peccanti diem crastinum nos promisit; fortasse dabit, fortasse non dabit.

[451] “Fiduciam habuisti in militia tua. . . . ; veniet super te malum, et nescies ortum ejus.”—*Isa.* xivii.10, 11.

452 “In te, Domine, speravi: non confundar in æternum.”—*Ps.*xxx.2.

453 “Si separaveris pretiosum a vili quasi os meum eris.”—*Jer.* xv.19.

454 “Nescit homo pretium ejus.”—*Job,* xxviii.13.

455 “Infinitus enim thesaurus est hominibus: quo qui usi sunt participes facti sunt amicitiæ Dei.”—*Wisd.* vii.14.

456 “Amicitia pares aut accipit, aut facit.”—*In Mich.*7.

457 “Vos amici mei estis, si feceritis quæ ego præcipio vobis. Jam non dicam vos servos. . . . vos autem dixi amicos.”—*John,* xv.14.

458 “O mira divinæ bonitatis dignatio! Servi non sumus digni nonminari, et amici vocamur.”—*In Evang, hom.* 27.

459 *Conf.*1.§, c.6.

460 “Ecces dii estis, et filii Excelsi omnes.”—*Ps.* Lxxxi.6.

461 “Videte qualem charitatem dedit nobis Pater, ut filii Dei nominemur, et simus.”—I. *John,* iii. .I.

462 “Sponsabo te mihi in fide.”—*Osee,* ii.20.

463 “Donum gratiæ excedit omnem facultatem naturæ creatæ, cum sit articipatio divinæ naturæ.”—I, 2. q. 112, a. I.

464 “Ut per hæc efficiamini divinæ consortes naturæ.”—2 *Pet.* i.4.

465 “Et ego claritatem, quam dedisti mihi, dedi eis.”—*John,* xvii.22.

466 “Qui adhæret Dominio, unus spiritus est.”—I *Cor.* vi.17.

467 “Si quis diligit me. . . . Pater meus diliget eum, et ad eum veniæus, et mansionem apud eum faciemus.”—*John,* xiv.23.

468 “Quam pulchra es, amica mea, quam pulchra es!”—*Can*t.iv.I.

469 “Oculi Domini super justos, et aures ejus ad preces eorum.”—*Ps.*xxxiii.16.

470 “Quilibet actus charitatis meretur vitam æternam.”—I. 2. q. 114, a. 7.

471 “Gustate, et videte, quoniam suavis est Dominus.”—*Ps.* xxxiii.9.

[472] "Pax multa diligentibus legem tuam."—*Ps.* cxviii.165.

[473] "Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum."—*Phi*l. iv.7.

[474] "Iniquitates vestræ diviserunt inter vos et Deum vestrum."—*Isa.* Lix.2.

[475] "Vos non populus meus, et ego non ero vester."—*Osee,* i .9.

[476] "Diligis omnia quæ sunt, et nihil odisti eorum quæ fecisti."—*Wis.* xi.25.

[477] "Odisti omnes qui operantur iniquitatem."—*Ps.* v.7.

[478] "Similiter autem odio sunt Deo impius et impietas ejus."—Wis. xiv.9.

[479] "Si ascendero in cœlum, tu illic es; si descendero in infernum, ades. . . . ; etenim illuc manus tua deducet me."—*Ps.* cxxxviii.8, 10.

[480] "Maledicti, qui declinant a mandatis tuis."—*Ps.* cxviii.21.

[481] "Omnes justitiæ ejus, quas feccerat, non recordabuntur."—*Ezek.* xviii.24.

[482] "Diligam te, Deus, foritudo mea."—*Ps.* xvii.2.

[483] "Et stultorum infinitus est numerus."—*Eccles.* i.15.

[484] "Sapientia enim hujus mundi stutitia est apud Deum."—I *Cor.* iii.19.

[485] "Nos insensati vitam illorum æstimabamus insaniam, et finem illorum sine honore."—*Wis.*v.4.

[486] "Ecce quomodo computati sunt inter filios Dei, et inter sanctos sors illorum est."—*Wis.*v.5.

[487] "Ergo erravimus a via veritatis, et justitiæ lumen non luxit nobis."—*Wis.* V.6.

[488] "Pater, peccavi in cœlum et coram te: jam non sum dignus vocari filius tuus."—*Luke,* xv.18.

[489] "Non dimittam te, nisi benedixeris mihi."—*Gen.*xxxii.26.

[490] "Hominem ilium dicimus, qui imaginem hominis salvam retinet: quæ autem est imago hominis? Rationalem esse."—*In Gen. hom.* 23.

[491] "Utinam saperent, et intelligerent, et novissima providerent!"—*Deut.* xxxii.29.

[492] "Meilor est puer pauper et sapiens, rege sene et stulto, qui nescit prævidere in posterum."—*Eccles.* iv.13.

[493] “Finem vero vitam æternam.”—*Rom.*vi.22.

[494] “Porro unum est necessarium.”—*Luke* x. 42.

[495] “Fac hominem perdidisse quo tendit, et dicatur ei: Quo is?—Ed dicat: Nescio—Nonne iste navem ad naufragium perducit? Talis est qui currit præter viam.”—*In Ps.* 31, cnarr.2.

[496] “Mortuus est. . . . et sepultus est in inferno.”—*Luke*, xvi.22.

[497] “Quid nobis profuit superbia, aut divitiarum jactantia? Transierunt omnia illa tamquam umbra.”—*Wis.* v.8.

[498] “Ante hominem vita et mora. . . . : quod placuerit ei, dabitur illi.”—*Ecclus.*xv.18.

[499] “Quid prodest homini, si mundum universum lucretur animæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur?”—*Matt* xvi.26.

500 “Non inters in judicium cum servo tuo.”—*Ps.* cxiii.2.

501 “Dedit illi scientiam sanctorum.”—*Wis.*x.10.

502 “Beatus, qui te scit, etiam si alia nesciat.”—*Conf.1.*5,c.4.

503 “Surgunt indocti, et coelum rapiunt.”—*Conf.*1.8,c.8.

504 Proficiscamur ad sepulchra.

505 “Nihil video, nisi putredinem, ossa, et vermes. Omnia fibula, somnium, umbra.”—*In Matth. hom.* 77.

506 “Quid prodest homini, si mundum universum lucretur?”—*Matt.* xvi.26.

507 “Qui amat animam suam, perdet eam.”—*John,* xii.25.

508 “Si quis vuit post me venire, abneget semetipsum.”—*Matt.*xvi.21.

509 “Vita in voluntate ejus.”—*Ps.*xxix.6.

510 “Ne tradas bestilis animas confitentes tibi.”—*Ps.* lxxiii.10

511 Da servis tuis illam, quam mundus dare non potest, pacem.

512 “Anima, habes multa bona posita in annos plurimos; requiesce, comede, bibe.”—*Luke,* xii.19.

513 Numquid animam porcinam habes?

514 “Ecce nos reliquimus omnia.”—*Matt.*xix.27.

515 “Comedistis, et non estis satiati.”—*Agg.*i.6.

516 “Major pecunia avaritiæ fauces non claudit sed extendi.”—*Serm.* 50, E.B.

517 “Et omnia quæ desideraverunt oculi mei, non negavi eis.”—*Eccles.*ii.10.

518 “Vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas.”—*Ibid.* i.2.

519 “Ecce universa vanitas, et afflictio spiritus.”—*Eccles.*i.14

520 “Contritio et inflicitas in viis eorum, et viam pacis non cognoverunt.”—*Ps.*xiii.3.

521 “Non est pax implils.”—*Isa.* .xiviii.22.

522 “Pavor iis qui operantur malum.”—*Prov.* x.29.

523 “Sonitus terroris semper in auribus illius.”—*Job,* xv.21.

524 “Fugit impius, nemine persequente.”—*Prov.*xxviii.I.

525 “Omnia igitur qui invenerit me, occident me.”—*Gen.*iv.14.

526 “Dixitque ei Dominus: Nequaquam ita fiet.”—*Ibid.* ver.15.

527 “Habitavit profugus in terra.”—*Ibid.*

528 “Impli autem quasi mare fervens, quod quiescere non potest.”—*Isai.*ivii.20.

529 Non est pax impiis.

530 Sunt aquæ, quæ non intrant illuc, ubi est sitis.

531 “Eo quod non servieris Domino Deo tuo in gaudio . . . servies inimico tuo . . . in fame, et siti, et nuditate, et omni penuria.”—*Deut.*xxviii.47,48.

532 “Delectare in Domino, et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui”—*Ps.* xxxvi.4.

533 “Inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te.”—*Conf.*1. i.c.i.

534 “Dura sunt omnia, et tu solus requies.”—*Conf.*1. 6.c. 16.

535 “Cur per multa vagaries, homuncio, quærendo bona? Ama urum bonum, in quo sunt omnia bona”—*Manual.* c. 34.

536 “Fuerunt mihi lacrymæ meæ panes die ac nocte, dum dicitur mihi quotidie. Ubi est Deus tuus?”—*Ps.* xii. 4.

537 “Qui reliquertit domum, vel fratres. . . . propter nomen meum, centuplum accipiet, et vitam æternam possidebit.”—*Matt.*xix. 29.

538 “Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.”—*Matt.* xi. 28.

539 “Crucem videntes, sed non etiam unctionem.”—*In Dedic. Eccl.* s. I

540 “Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus.”—*Ps.* xxxiii. 9.

541 “Si vis, potes me mundare. ”—*Matt.* viii.2.

[542] “Video aliam legem in membris meis. . . . captivantem me in lege peccati.”—*Rom.* vii. 23.

[543] “Excæcavit illos malitia eorum.”—*Wis.* ii. 21.

[544] “Ossa ejus implebuntur vitis.”—*Job,* xx.II.

[545] “In circuitu impii ambulant.”—*Ps.* xi. 9.

[546] “Ita ut ipsa consuetude mali non eos sinat videre quia malum est.”—*Serm.* 98, E.B

[547] “Pone illos ut rotam, et sicut stipulam ante faciem venti.”—*Ps.* lxxxii.14.

[548] “Dum consuetundini non rsistitur, facta est necessitas.”—*Conf.* 8, c.5.

[549] “Usus vertitur in naturam.”—T. iii.s. 15.

[550] “Impius cum in profundum venerit peccatorum, contemnit.”—*Prov.* xviii.3.

[551] “Cujus vult miseretur, et quem vuit indurate.”—*Rom.* ix. 18.

[552] “Obduratio Dei est nolle misereri.”—*DeDiv. Quæst. ad Simpl.* n. 15.

[553] “Cor ejus indurabitur tamquam lapis, et stringetur quasi malleatoris incus.”—*Job,* xii. 15.

[554] “Ab increpatione tua, Deus Jacob, dormitaverunt.”—*Ps.* ixxv. 7.

[555] Qui ne pudorem quidem habent in delictis.

[556] “Sus lota in volutabro luti.”—2 *Pet.* ii.22.

[557] “Cum populus immergit se in peccatis, sicut sus in volutabro luti, quid mirum, si Dei flagellantis futura judicia non cognoscit?”—T. II. s. 20, a. 2, c. 4.

[558] “Lætantur, cum malefecerint.”—*Prov.* ii. 14.

[559] “Quasi per risum stultus operatur scelus.”—*Ib.* x. 23.

[560] “Induratio, damnationis indicum,”—*Fer.* 6. *p. Dom.* I. *Quadr.*

[561] “Cor durum habebit male in novissimo.”—*Ecclus.* iii.27.

[562] “Rectus callis justi ad ambulandum.”—*Isa.* xxvi. 7.

[563] “In circuitu impli ambulant.”—*Ps.* xi.9.

[564] “Væ homini qui sequitur hunc circuitum.”—*In Ps.* xc. s.12.

[565] “Adolescens juxta viam suam, etiam cum senuerit, non recedet ab ea.”—*Prov.* xxii.6.

[566] “Et erit fortitudo vestra, ut favilla stupæ”—*Isa.* I. 31.

[567] “Quo fit, ut anima, a gratia destituta, diu evadere ulteriora peccata non possit.”—*Dom.* 4. *Quadr.*

[568] “Si mutare potest Æthiops pellem suam, aut pardus varietates suas; et vos poteritis benefacere, cum didiceritis malum.”—*Jer.* xiii. 23.

[569] “Qui vero mentis est duræ, corruet in malum.”—*Prov.* xxviii. 14.

[570] “Concidit me vulnere super vulnus, irruit in me quasi gigas.”—*Job.* xvi. 15.

[571] “Et posuerunt lapidem super me.”—*Lament* iii. 53.

[572] “Difficile surgit, quem moles malæ consuetudinis premit.”—*In Joan. tr.* 49.

[573] “Raro sanantur.”—*Fer.* 6. *p. Dom.* I. *Quadr.*

[574] “Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra d quod potestis.”—I *Cor.* x.13.

[575] “Petite, et accipietis.”—*John*, xvi. 24.

[576] “Corroboravit misericordiam suam super timentes se. . . . .Misertus est Dominus timentibus se.”—*Ps.* cii.II.13.

[577] “Nolite errare, Deus non irridetur.”—*Gal.* vi. 7.

[578] “Ne dixeris: Peccavi, et quid mihi accidit triste? Altissimus enim est patiens redditor.”—*Ecclus.* v. 4.

[579] “Quos diu tolerat, durius damnat.”—*In Evang. hom.* 13.

[580] “Miserciordiæ Domini, quia non sumus consumpti.”—*Lam.* iii.22.

[581] “Dominus patienter expectat, ut eas (nationes), cum judicii dies advenerit in plenitudine peccatorum puniat.”—*2 Mach.* vi. 14.

[582] “Auferam sepem ejus, et erit in direptionem.”—*Isa.* v. 5.

[583] “Cor durum habebit male in novissimo.”—*Ecclus.* iii.27.

[584] “Qui malignantur, exterminabuntur.”—*Ps.* xxxvi. 9.

[585] “Quæ seminaverit homo, hæc et metet.”—*Gal.* vi.8.

[586] “Vocavi et renuistis;. . . . ego quoque, in interitu vestro ridebo et subsannabo.”—*Prov.* i. 24.

[587] “Mea est ultio, et ego retribuam in tempore.”—*Deut.* xxxii. 35.

[588] “Qua hora non putatis, Filius hominis veniet.”—*Luke,* xii.40

[589] “Veniet vobis in amore, implis in tremore.”—*Serm.* 181.E.B. App.

[590] “Ante faciem indignationis ejus, quis stabit?”—*Nahum,* i. 6.

[591] “Indignatio regis nuntii mortis.”—*Prov.* xvi.14.

[592] Mallet esse in inferno.

[593] “Videbunt in quem transfixerunt.”—*John,* xix. 37.

[594] “(Montes) cadite super nos, et abscondite nos ab ira Agni.”—*Apoc.* vi.16.

[595] “Tunc videbunt Filium hominis.”—*Luke,* xxi. 27.

[596] “Hic Jesus, qui assumptus est a vobis in cœlum, sic veniet, quem admodum vidistis eum euntem in cœlum.”—*Acts,* i. II.

[597] “Grande gaudium inteuntium, grandis timor expectantium.”—*De Op. Sp.S.*1. 9, c.8.

[598] “Ego sum Joseph, quem vendidistis. . . . Non poterant respondere fraters, nimio terrore perterriti.”—*Gen.*xiv.3.

[599] Qua fronte misericordiam petes, primum de misericordiæ contemptu judicantus?

[600] “Superius erit Judex iratus, inferius horrendum chaos, a dextris peccata accusantia, a sinistris dæmonia ad supplicium trahentia, intus conscientia urens; quo fugiet peccator sic comprehensus.—*Ap. S. Bonav. Diæt. Sal.* t. 9.

[601] “Judicium sedit et libri aperti sunt.”—*Dan.* vii.10.

[602] Videbit unusquisque quod fecit.

[603] “Appensus es in statera, et inventus es minus habens.”—*Dan.* v. 27.

[604] Non aurum non opes, in stateram veniunt; solus rex appensus est.

[605] “Præsto erit diabolus ante tribunal Christi, et recitabuntur verba professionis nostræ: objiciet nobis in faciem quidquid fecimus, in qua die peccavimus, in quo loco.”—*De Sal. Doc.* c. 62.

[606] “Ego pro istis, nec alapas accepi, nec flagella sustinui.”—*De Op. et Eleem*

[607] “Omnes amici ejus spreverunt eam.”—*Lam.* i.2.

[608] “Lapis de pariete clamabit.”—*Hab.* ii. II

[609] “Testimonium reddente illis conscientia ipsorum. . . . in die, cum judicabit Deus.”—*Rom.* ii. 15.

[610] “In illo termpore, scrutabor Jerusalem in lucernis.”—*Soph.* i.12.

[611] “Vocavit adversum me tempus.”—*Lam.* i.15.

[612] “Purgabit filios Levi, et colabit eos quasi aurum.”—*Mal.* iii.3.

[613] “Cum accepero tempus, ego justitias judicabo.”—*Ps.* lxxiv.3.

[614] “Si justus vix salvabitur, impius et peccator ubi parebunt?”—I *Peter,* iv. 18.

[615] “Occurram eis quasi ursa, raptis catullis.”—*Os.* xiii.8.

[616] “Date ei de fructu manuum suarum.”—*Prov.* xxxi.31.

[617] “Quos præscivit, et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui.”—*Rom.* viii.29.

[618] “Quid faciam cum surrexerit ad judicandum Deus? Et cum quæsierit, qui respondebo illi?”—*Job*, xxxi. 14.

[619] “Omnis iniquitas oppilabit os suum.”—*Ps.* cvi.42.

[620] “Horridior quam ignis erit pudor.”—*Orat. de fut. jud.*

[621] “Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem æternum.”—*Matt.* xxv. 41.

[622] “Oh! quam horribiliter personabit tonitruum illud.”—*De Quat. Nov.* a. 26.

[623] “Qui non tremit ad tantum tonitruum, non dormit, sed mortuus est.”—*Medit.* 2.

[624] Tantus terror invadet malos, cum viderint Judicem sententiam proferentem, ut nisi essent immortalse, iterum morerentur.

625 “Non ibi precandi locus; nullus intercessor assistet, non amicus, non pater.”—*Dom.* I. *Adv. Conc.* 2.

626 “Quis te eripiet? Deus ne ille quem contempsisti?”—*Oratio de Pœnit.*

627 “Luna non dabit lumen suum.”—*Matt.* xxiv. 29.

628 “Fugiet a janua paradise Maria.”—*Ad Fratres in er. Ser.* 10.

629 “Heu! quam securi hæc dicimus et audimus, quasi nos non tangeret hæc sententia, aut quasi dies ille nunquam esset venturus!”—*Dom.* I. *Adv. conc.* I.

630 “Quænam est stulta securitas in discrimine tanto.”—*De S. Mart, conc.* I.

631 Numquid Deus vere damnaturus est?

632 “Finis venit, venit finis. . . . nunc complebo furorem meum in te, et judicabo te.”—*Esek.* vii. 6.

633 “Veniet judicii dies, et invenies verum quod minatus est Deus.”—*In Ps.* lxxiii.

634 “Ante judicium, para justitiam tibi.”—*Ecclus.* xviii.19.

635 Judex, ante judicium placari potest, in judicio non potest.

636 “Volo judicatus præsentari, non judicandus.”—*In Cant.* s. 55.

637 “Et quasi nihil posset facere Omnipotens, æstimabant eum.”—*Job*, xxii. 17.

638 “Cognoscetur Dominus judicia faciens.”—*Ps.* ix. 17.

639 “Dies iræ dies tribulationis et angustiæ, dies calamitatis et miseriæ.”—*Soph.* I. 15.

640 “Ignis ante ipsum præcedet.”—*Ps.* xcvi. 3.

641 “Terra et quæ in ipsa sunt opera exurentur.”—2 *Peter*, iii.10.

642 “Canet enim tuba, et mortui resurgent.”—1 *Cor.* xv. 52

643 Quoties diem judicii considerto, contremisco: semper videtur illa tuba insonare auribus meis: Surgite mortui, venite ad judicium

644 “Tunc justi fulgebunt sicut sol.”—*Matt.* xiii. 43.

645 “O felix pœnitentia, quæ tantam mihi promeruit gloriam.”—*In ejus off. lect.* 6

[646] “Non avertas faciem tuam a me.”—*Ps.* xxvi. . 9.

[647] “Quis est qui condemnet? Christus Jesus, qui mortuus est. . . . pro nobis.”—*Rom.* viii.34.

[648] “Populi, populi, in valle concisionis; quia juxta est dies Domini.”—*Joel.* iii. 14.

[649] “Exibunt angeli, et separabunt malos de medio justorum.”—*Matt.* xiii.49.

[650] “Quomodo putas impios confundendos, quando, segregatis justis, fuerint derelicti?”—*In Matt. hom.* 54.

[651] “Unus assumetur, et unus relingquetur.”—*Matt.* xxiv. 40.

[652] “Trisitia vestra vertetur in gaudium.”—*John,* xvi. 20.

[653] “Tunc laus erit uniculque a Deo.”—I *Cor.* iv. 5.

[654] “Rapiemur cum illis in nubibus obviam Christo in aera.”—I *Thess,* iv. 16.

[655] “Veniete Domino ad judicium, signum Crucis et alia Passionis indicia demonstrabuntur.”—*Comp. theol.* p. I. c. 244.

[656] “Tunc parebit signum Filii hominis: et tunc plangent omnes tribus terræ.”—*Matt.* xxiv. 30.

[657] Clavi de te conquerentur, cicatrices contra te loquentur, crux Christi contra te perorabit.

[658] “Fulgebunt justi. . . . Judicabunt nationes.”—*Wis.* iii. 7,8.

[659] “Et videbunt Filium hominis venientem in nubibus cœli cum virtute multa et majestate.”—*Matt.* xxiv. 30.

[660] “A facie ejus cruciabuntur populi.”—*Joel,* ii. 6.

[661] Damnatis melius esset inferno pœnas, quam Domini præsentiam ferre.

[662] Superat omnem pœnam confusio ista.

[663] “Dicunt montibus et petris: Cadite super nos, et absondite nos a facie sedentis super thronum, et ab ira Agni.”—*Apoc.* vi. 16.

[664] “Clama ad me, et exaudiam te.”—*Jer.* xxxiii. 3.

[665] “Judicium sedit, et libri aperti sunt.”—*Dan.* vii. 10.

[666] “Æquissime Judex, judica esse meum, qui tuus esse noluit.”—*De Sal. Doc.* c.62.

[667] “Testimonium reddente illis conscientia ipsorum.”—*Rom.* ii. 15.

[668] “Lapis de pariete clamabit.”—*Hab.* ii. II.

[669] “Ego sum Judex et testis, dicit Dominus.”—*Jer.* xxix. 23.

[670] “Illuminabit absondita tenebrarum.”—I *Cor.* iv. 5.

[671] “Revelabo pudenda tua in facie tua.”—*Nah.* iii. 5.

[672] “Beati, quorum remissæ sunt iniquitates, et quorum tecta sunt peccata.”—*Ps.* xxxi. I.

[673] “Venite, benedicti Patris mei, possidete paratum vobis regnum a constitutione mundi.”—*Matt.* xxv. 34.

[674] “Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem æternum.”—*Matt.* xxv. 41.

[675] “Valete, Justi! Vale. Crux! Vale. Paradise! Valete, patres ac filii! Nullum si quidem vestrum visuri sumus ultra. Vale, tu quoque, Dei Genitrix, Maria?”—*De Variis Torm. inf.*

[676] “Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.”—*Ps.* lxxxviii.2.

[677] “Duo enim mala fecit populus meus: me dereliquerunt, fontem aquæ vivæ; et foderunt sibi cisternas, cisternas dissipatas, quæ conpinere non valent aquas.”—*Jer.* ii. 13.

[678] “In hunc locum tormentorum.”—*Luke*, xvi. 28.

[679] “Per quæ peccat quis, per hæc et torquetur.”—*Wis.* xi. 17.

[680] “Terram tenebrosam, et opertam mortis caligine.”—*Job*, x. 21.

[681] “Usque in æternum non videbit lumen.”—*Ps.* xiviii.20.

[682] “Vox Domini intercedentis flammam ignis.”—*Ps.* xxviii. 7.

[683] Dividet a calore splendorem.

[684] “Quibus procella tenebrarum servata est in æternum.”—*Jud.* 13.

[685] “De cadaveribus eorum ascendet fœtor.”—*Isa.* xxxiv. 3.

[686] Ibi miserorum societas, miseriam non minuet, sed augebit.

[687] “Sicut oves in inferno positi sunt.”—*Ps.* xiviii.15.

[688] “Et ipse calcat torcular vini furoris iræ Dei.”—*Apoc.* xix. 15.

[689] “Fiant immobiles quasi lapis.”—*Exod.* xv. 16.

[690] “Sonitus terroris semper in auribus illus.”—*Job*, xv. 21.

[691] “Famem patientur ut canes.”—*Ps.* lviii. 15.

[692] “Vindicta carnis impii, ignis et vermis.”—*Ecclus.* vii. 19.

[693] “Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem æternum.”—*Matt.* xxv.41.

[694] In cujus comparatione, noster hic ignis depictus est.

[695] “Longe alius est ignis qui usui humano, alius qui Dei justitiæ deservit.”—*Apolog.* c. 48.

[696] “Ignis succensus est in furore meo.”—*Jer.* xv. 14.

[697] “Si abluerit Dominus sordes. . . . in spiritu ardoris.”—*Isa.* iv. 4.

[698] “Pones eos ut clibanum ignis.”—*Ps.* xx.10.

[699] “Quis poterit habitare de vobis cum igne devourante?—*Isa.* xxxiii. 14.

[700] “Veniet dies, imo nox, quando libido tua vertetur in picem, qua se perpetuus ignis in tuis, visceribus nutriat.”—*De Cœlib. sac.* c. 3.

[701] In uno igne omnia supplicia sentient in inferno peccatores.

[702] “Ad nimium calorem transeat ab aquis nivium.”—*Job*, xxiv. 19.

[703] “Desiderium peccatorum peribit.”—*Ps.* cxi. 10.

[704] “Addantur tormenta tormentis, ac Deo non priventur.”—*Serm. de. jud. fin.*

[705] “Si mille dixeris gehennas, nihil par dies illius doloris.”—*Ad pop. ant. hom.* 48

[706] “Nullam pœnam sentirent, continuo infernus converteretur in paradisum.”—*De Tripl. Hab.* c. 4.

[707] “Pœna damnati est infinita, quia est amissio boni infiniti.”—I. 2. q. 87, a. 4.

[708] “Separata autem anima a corporis gravamine, intelligit Deum summum bonum et quia illum est creata.”—P. 4, t. 14, c. 5, § 10.

[709] “Iniquitates vestræ diviserunt inter vos et Deum vestrum.”—*Isa.* lix. 2.

[710] “Abscondam faciem meam ab eo, et invenient eum omnia mala.”—*Deut.* xxxi. 17.

[711] “Quia vos non populus meus, et ego non ero vester.”—*Os.* i. 9.

[712] Ego sum ille nequam privatus amore Dei.

[713] “Cruciabuntur die ac nocte in sæcula sæculorum.”—*Apoc.* xx. 10.

[714] “Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem æternum. . . . . Et ibunt hi in supplicium æternum.”—*Matt.* xxv. 41, 46.

[715] “Pœnas dabunt in interitu æternas.”—2 *Thess.* 19.

[716] “Omnis igne salietur.”—*Mark*, ix. 48.

[717] “Neque absorbeat me profundum, neque urgeat super me puteus os suum.”—*Ps.* lxviii 16.

[718] Descensus erit, reditus non erit.

[719] “Quia, cum susceperit reos, claudetur sursum, et aperitur deorsum.”—*De Epiph. et. Inf. hom.* 3.

[720] “Mortuo homine impio, non erit ultra spes.”—*Prov.* xi. 7.

[721] “Statuam contra faciem tuam.”—*Ps.* xiix. 21.

[722] “Alii in vitam æternam, et alii in opprobrium, ut videant semper.”—*Dan.* xii. 2.

[723] Pondus æternitatis sustinent.

[724] Hic ure, hic seca; hic non parcas, ut in æternum parcas.

[725] “Sagittæ tuæ transeunt, vox tonitrui tui in rota.”—*Ps.* ixxvi. 19.

[726] “Eduxi gladium meum de vagina sua irrevocabilem.”—*Esek.* xxi. 5.

[727] “Non, quia homicidium in momento committitur, momentanea pœna punitur.”—I. 2. q. 87, a. 3.

[728] “In omni peccato mortali infinita Deo contumelia irrogatur; infinitæ autem injuriæ infinita debetur pœna.”—T. ii. s. 12, a. 2, c. 2.

[729] Comp. Theol. p. I, c. 183.

[730] “Non dabit Deo placationem suam:. . . . laborabit in æternum.”—*Ps.* xiviii. 8, 9.

[731] “Culpa semper poterit ibi puniri, et nunquam poterit expiari.”—*Spec. Mor.* 12, p. 3, d. 3.

[732] Ibi peccator pœnitere non potest.

[733] “Cui iratus est Dominus in æternum.”—*Mal.* i. 4.

[734] Insatiabiles sunt in desiderio peccandi.

[735] “Factus est dolor perpetuus, et, plaga desperabilis renuit curare.”—*Jer.* xv. 18.

[736] “Quærent mortem, et non inveniet eam; et desiderabunt mori, et fugiet mors ab eis.”—*Apoc.* ix.6.

[737] “O mors, quam dulcis esses, quibus tam amara fuisti!”—*Apud. S Bonav. Sol.* c. 3.

[738] “Mors depascet eos.”—*Ps.* xiviii. I

[739] “Lamentantur, et nullus erpit: plangent, et nemo compatitur.”—*Orat. de exitu anni.*

[740] “Custos, quid de nocte?”—*Isa.* xxi. II.

[741] “Non dereliquisti quærentes te, Domine.”—*Ps.* ix. II.

[742] Irrugiit clamore magno.”—*Gen.* xxvii. 34.

[743] “Gustans gustavi paululum mellis, et ecce morior.”—I *Kings.* xiv. 43.

[744] Principaliter dolebunt quod pro nihilo damnati sunt, et facillime vitam poterant consequi sempiternam.

[745] “Et angelus quem vidi stantem. . . . .juravit per viventem in sæcula sæculorum. . . . quia tempus non erit amplius.”—*Apoc.* x. 5.

[746] “Transiit messis, finita est æstas, et non salvati non sumus.”—*Jer.* viii. 20.

[747] Plus cœlo torquentur, quam gehenna.

[748] “Ante hominem vita et mors, bonum et malum: quod placuerit ei, dabitur illi.”—*Ecclus.* xv. 18.

[749] “Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis.”—*Ecclus.* vii. 40.

[750] Lætetur cor quærentium Dominum."—*Ps.* civ. 3.

[751] "Tristitia vestra veretur in gaudium."—*John,* xvi. 20.

[752] "Quam dilecta tabernacula tua, Domine virtutum!"—*Ps.* lxxxiii. 2.

[753] "Arcana verba, quæ non licet homini loqui."—2 *Cor.* xiii.4.

[754] "Oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quæ præparavit Deus iis qui diligunt illum."—I *Cor.* ii. 9.

[755] "Nihil quod nolis sit, totum sit quod velis."—*De Divers.* s.16.

[756] "Vide ne feceris; conservus enim tuus sum."—*Apoc.* xxii.9.

[757] "Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni: coronaberis."—*Cant.* iv. 8.

[758] "Intra in gaudium Domini tui."—*Matt.* xxv. 21.

[759] Nihil est quod nolit!

[760] Absterget Deus omnem lacrymam ab oculis eorum; et mors ultra non erit; neque luctus, neque clamor, neque dolor erit ultra; quia prima abierunt. Et dixit, qui sedebat in throno: Ecce, nova facio omnia—*Apoc.* xxi. 4.

[761] Totum est quod velit.

[762] "In sæcula sæculorum laudabunt te."—*Ps.* lxxxiii. 5.

[763] "Ego sum merces tua magna nimis."—*Gen.* xv. I.

[764] "Continuo infernus in amænum converteretur paradisum."—*De Tripl. Habit.* c. 4.

[765] "Tamquam alius torqueretur, alius loqueretur."—*Serm.* 275, E. B. .

[766] Versa et manduca.

[767] "Hoc igne accensus, flammarum non sentit incendia."—*Serm.* 206, E.B.

[768] "Si adeo dulce est flere pro te, quam dulce erit gaudere de te?"—*Seal. claustr.* c. 6

[769] "Videmus nunc per speculum in ænigmate: tunc autem facie ad faciem."—I. *Cor.* xiii. II.

[770] "Eum qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras."—*John,* vi. 37.

771 “Nescit homo, utrum amore an odio dignus sit.”—*Eccles.* ix. I.

772 “Inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus tuæ.”—*Ps.* xxxv. 9.

773 “Clama ad me, et exaudiam te.”—*Jer.* xxxiii.3.

774 “Invoca me. . . . .eruam te.”—*Ps.* xlix. 15.

775 “Si quid petieritis me in nomine meo, hoc faciam.”—*John*, xiv. 14.

776 “Quodcumque volueritis, petetis, et fiet vobis.”—*John,* xv. 7.

777 “Aut dabit quod petimus, aut quod nobis noverit esse utilius.”—*In Quadr.* s. 5.

778 “Tu, Domine, suavis et mitis et multæ misericordiæ omnibus invocantibus te.”—*Ps.* lxxxv. 5.

779 “Si quis vestrum indiget sapientia, postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluentur, et non improperat.”—*James,* i. 5.

780 “Oratio pie Deo vim infert.”—*Scala. Spir.* gr. 28.

781 “Hæc vis Deo grata est.”—*Apolog.* c. 39.

782 “Plus vult ille dare, quam nos accipere.”—*Serm.* 105, E.B.

783 “In quacumque die invocavero te; ecce cognovi quoniam Deus meus es.”—*Ps.* iv. 10.

784 Usque modo non petistis quidquam in nomine meo; petite, et accipietis, ut gaudium vestrum sit plenum.”—*John.* xvi. 24.

785 “Deus, in adjutorium meum intende.”—*Ps.* lxix. 2.

786 Aures principis paucis patent. Dei vero omnibus volentibus.

787 “Non minus quam arbores acquis, precibus indigemus.”—*De or. De0.*1. 1.

788 “Omnes hominess vult salvos fieri.”—I *Tim.* ii. 4.

789 “Nolens aliquos perire, sed omnes ad pœnitentiam reverti.”—2 *Peter,* iii. 9.

790 “Deus impossibilia non jubet; sed jubendo monet, et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis.”—*Sess.* vi. c. xi.

791 “Constat alia Deum dare etiam non orantibus, sicut initium fidei; alia nonnisi orantibus præparasse, sicut usque in finem perseverantiam.”—*De dono pers.* c. 16.

792 “Fide tenedum est, orationem adultis ad salutem esse necessariam, ut colligitur ex Scripturis.”—*De Just.1.* 2, c. 37, d. 3.

793 “Oportet semper orare.”—*Luke,* xviii. I.

794 “Vigilate et orate, ut non intretis in tentationem.”—*Luke*, xxii. 40.

795 “Petite, et dabitur vobis.”—*Matt.* vii. 7

796 “Sine intermissione orate.”—I. *Thess.* v. 17.

797 “Non habetis, propter quod non postulatis.”—*James,* iv. 2.

798 “Et ut scivi, quoniam aliter non possem esse continens, nisi Deus det. . . . .adii Dominum, et deprecatus sum.”—*Wis.* viii.21.

799 “Petitis, et non accipitis, eo quod male petatis.”—*James*, iv. 3.

800 “Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam.”—*Ibid,* iv. 6.

801 “Oratio humiliantis se nubes penetrabit; . . . . . . et non discedet, donec Altissimus aspiciat.”—*Ecclus.* xxxv. 2.

802 “Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.”—*Ps.1.* 19.

803 “Nullus speravit in Domino, et confusus est.”—*Ecclus.* ii. II.

804 “Omnia quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.”—*Mark,* xi. 24.

805 “Quis falli timeat, cum promittit Veritas?—*Conf.1.* 12, c. I.

806 “Non est Deus quasi homo, ut menitatur, nec ut filius hominis, ut mutetur. Dixit ergo, et non faciet?”—*Num.* xxiii. 19.

807 “Promittendo, debitorem se Deus fecit.”—*Serm.* 110, E.B.

808 “Oratio in impetrando non innititur merito, sed divinæ misericordiæ.”—2, 2. q. 178, a. 2.

809 “Omnis qui petit, accipit.”—*Matt.* vii. §.

810 “Omnis, sive justus, sive peccator sit.”—*Hom.* 18.

[811] Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petiertis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* xvi. 23.

[812] “Quid infirmo sit utile, magis novit medicus quam ægrotus.”—*Ap. S. Prosp.* sent. 212.

[813] “Deus negat propitius quæ concedit iratus.”—*Serm.* 354, E.B. .

[814] “Si vos, cum sitis mali, nostis bona data dare filiis vestries: quanto magis Pater vester de cœlo dabit spiritum bonum petentibus se!”—*Luke,* xi. 13.

[815] “Vult nos esse perseverantes in oratione, usque ad importunitatem.”—*In Luc.* xi.

[816] “Oportet semper orare, et non deficere.”—*Luke,* xviii.I.

[817] “Sine intermissione orate.”—I.*Thess.* v. 17.

[818] “Petite, et dabitur vobis; quærite, et invenietis; pulsate, et apert etur vobis.”—*Luke,* xi. 9.

[819] “Hoc Dei donum suppliciter emereri potest.”—*De dono persev.* c. 6.

[820] “Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus; quia quod quærit, invenit, et frustrari non potest.”—*Serm. De Aquad.*

[821] “Incipere multorum est, perseverare paucorum.”—*Cont. Jovin.*1. I.

[822] “Non quæruntur in Christianis initia, sed finis.”—*Ep. Ad Fur.*

[823] “Sola perseverantia coronatur.”—*Diat. Sa1.*1. 8, c. 2.

[824] “Paradisi janua.”—*De Obed.* c. 26.

[825] “Qui perseveraverit usuqe un finem, bic salvus erit.”—*Matt.* xxiv. 13.

[826] “Inchoantibus præmium promittitur, sed perseverantibus datur.”—*De modo bene.* viv. s. 6.

[827] “Sic currite ut comprehendatis.”—I *Cor.* ix. 24.

[828] “Cum metu et tremore vestram salutem operamini.”—*Phil.* ii. 12.

[829] “Nemo mittens manum suam ad aratrum, et respiciens retroaptus est regno Dei.”—*Luke,* lx. 62.

[830] “Beatus ille servus, quem cum venerit Dominus ejus, invenerit sic facientem.”—*Matt.* xxiv. 46.

[831] “Fili, accedens ad servitutem Dei sta in justitia et timore, et præpara animam tuam ad tentationem.”—*Ecclus.* ii. I

832 Quanto quis fortius nititur Deo servire, tanto acrius contra eum sævit adversarius.

833 “Cum immundus spiritus exierit de homine, ambulat per loca inaquosa, quærena requiem; et non inveniens, dicit: Revertar in domum mean, unde exivi. . . . Tunc vadit et assumit septem alios spiritus secum, nequlores se; et ingressi, habitant ibi. Et fiunt novissima hominis illius pejora prioribus.”—*Luke,* xi. 24.

834 Non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem, sed adversus principes et potestates. ”—*Eph.* vi. 12.

835 “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* iv. 13.

836 “Et ut scivi quoniam aliter non possem esse continens, nisi Deus det,. . . . .adil Dominium, et deprecatus sum illum.”—*Wis.* viii. 21.

837 “Cavete autem ab hominibus.”—*Matt.* x. 17.

838 “Abominantur impli eos qui in recta sunt via.”—*Prov.* xxix. 27.

839 “Omnes qui pie volunt vivere in Christo Jesu, persecutionem patientur.”—2 *Tim.* iii. 12.

840 “Sapientia enim hujus mundi stultitia est apud Deum.”—I. *Cor.* iii. 19.

841 “Verbum enim crucis pereuntibus quidem stultitia est.”—I *Cor.* i. 18.

842 “Maledicent illi, et tu benedices.”—*Ps.* cviii.28.

843 “Nam, qui me erubuerit et meos sermones, hunc Filius hominus erubescet, cum venerit in majestate sua.”—*Luke,* ix. 26.

844 “Arcta via est, quæ ducit ad vitam.”—*Matt.* vii. 14. “Regnum cœlorum vim patitur, et violenti rapiunt illud.”—*Matt.* xi. 12.

845 “Ecce sanus factus es; jam noli peccare, ne deterius tibi aliquid contingat.”—*John,* v. 14.

846 “Audis recidere, quam incidere, esse deterius.”—*In Cont.* s. 54.

847 “Væ filii desertores.”—*Isa.* xxx. I.

848 “Ipsi fuerunt rebelles lumini.”—*Job,* xxiv. 13.

849 “Si autem averterit se justus a justitia sua,. . . . .numquid vivet? Omnes justitiæ ejus, quas fecerat, non recordabuntur;. . . . in peccato suo morietur.”—*Ezek.* xviii.24.

850 “Inter consillia Christi, unum celebrrimum quasi religionis fundamentum est, fugere peccatorum occasiones.”—T. i. s. 21, a. 3.

851 “Præcepit nobis Deus, ne comederemus, et ne tangeremus illud.”—*Gen.* iii. 3.

852 “Qui amat periculum in illo peribit.”—*Ecclus.* iii. 27.

853 “Circuit quærena quem devoret.”—I *Peter,* v. 8.

854 “Explorat an sit pars, cujust aditu penetretur.”—*De velo et liv.*

855 Prodiit ligatus manibus et pedibus.

856 “Clama: Omnis caro fenum.”—*Isa.* xi. 6.

857 “Lucernum in fenum pone, ac tum aude negare quod fenum exuratur.”—*In Ps.1.*hom. I.

858 “Impossibile est flammis circumdari, et non ardere.”—*De Singul. Cler.*

859 “Et erit fortitudo vestra ut favilla stupæ.”—*Isa.* i. 31.

860 “Numquid potest homo. . . . .ambulare super prunas, ut non comburantur plantæ ejus?”—*Prov.* vi. 27.

861 “Quasi a facie colubri, fuge peccata.”—*Ecclus.* xxi. 2.

862 Fuge etiam tactus, etiam accessum.

863 “Viæ inferi, domus ejus.”—*Prov.* vii. 27.

864 “Si oculus tuus dexter scandaliset te, erue eum, et projice abs te.”—*Mat*t. v. 29.

865 “Nishi manducaveritis carnem Filli hominis, et biberitis ejus sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis.”—*John,* vi. 54.

866 “Si quis manducaverit ex hoc pane, vivet in æternum.”—*John,* vi. 52.

867 “Antidotom quo liberemur a culpis quotidanis, et a peccatis mortalibus præservemur.”—*Sess.* 13, cap. .2.

868 “Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis.”—*Ecclus.* vii. 40.

869 “Accedite ad eam, et illuminamini.”—*Ps.* xxxiii. 6.

[870] “Ducam eam in solitudinem, et loquar ad core jus.”—*Osee,* ii. 14.

[871] “In meditatione mea exardescet ignis.”—*Ps.* xxxviii.4.

[872] We must here remark that the means of perseverance so much recommended by St Alphonsus are nothing else than a good Rule of Life, which is given in the last part of this volume.—ED

[873] “Confirma hoc. Deus, quod operatus es in nobis.”—*Ps.* lxvii. 29.

[874] “O certe Dei nostril mira benignitas, qui suis reis te, Dominiam, tribuit Advocatum, ut, quod volueris, pro nobis valeas impetrare.”—*Stim.am.*p. 3, c.19.

[875] “Grande privilegium, quod Maria apud Filium sit potentissima.”—*St. Bonav. In Spec. lect.* v.

[876] Virgo potens, ora pro nobis.

[877] “Oratio Deiparæ habet rationem imperti; unde impossibile est eam non exaudiri.”—P. 4, t. 15, c. 17, § 4.

[878] “Filius, quasi exsolvens debitum, petitiones tuas implet.”—*Or. de. Ingr. B.V.*

[879] “Euge, euge, quæ debitorem habes Filium! Deo enim universi debemus, tibi autem ille debitor est.”—*Oe. de. Sim. et. Ann.*

[880] “Omnipotens auxilium tuum, O Maria.”—*Hymn 6 in depr. ad. Deip.*

[881] Cum autem eadem sit potestas Matris et Filli, ab omnipotente Filio omnipotens Mater effecta est.

[882] Quod Deus imperio, tu prece, Virgo potes!

[883] “Pete quod vis; non enim inanis potest esse petition tua.”—*Rev.*1. 6, c. 23.

[884] “Quia tu mihi nihil negasti in terra ego tibi nihil negabo in cœlo.”—*Rev.*1. I, c. 24.

[885] “Habes vires insuperabiles, ne clementiam tuam superet multitudo peccatorum. Nihil tuæ resistit potentiæ; tuam enim gloriam Creator existimat esse propriam.”—*Or. de. Ingr. B.V.*

[886] “Nil tibi impossibile, cui possibile est desperatos in spem beatitudinis relevare.”—*De Nat. B.V.* s .I.

[887] “Loquere, Domina, quia audit Filius tuus; et quæcumque petieris, impetrabis.”—*Depr. ad. glor.* V.

888 “Sed oculi Dominæ super justus et peccatores, sicut oculi matris ad puerum, ne cadat, vei, si ceciderit, ut subievet.”—*De laud. B. M.*1. 5.

889 “Certe, Domina, cum te aspicio, nihil nisi misercordiam cerno.”—*Stim. am.* P. 3, c. 19.

890 “Quid ad Mariam accedere trepidet humana fragilitas? Nihil austerum in ea, nihil terribile; toat suavis est.”—*In sign. magn.*

891 “Quasi oliva speciosa in campis.”—*Ecclus.* xxiv. 19.

892 “Advocata omnium iniquorum ad se confugientium.”—*De Laud. B.V.*1. . 2, a. 23.

893 “Ego vocor ad omnibus Mater misericordiæ, et vere misericordia Filii mei fecit me misericordem.”—*Rev.*1. 2, c. 23.

894 Ideo miser erit, qui ad misericordiam, cum posit, non accedit.

895 “Ipsa enim non misereri ignorat, et miseris non satisfacere nun quam scivit.”—*Stim. am.* p. 3, c. 13

896 Tu ea Regina misericordiæ; et qui misericordiæ subditi, nisi miseri?

897 “Tu Regina misericordiæ, et ego miserrimus peccator, subditorum maximus; rege nos ergo, O Regina misericordiæ.”—*Paciucch. In Salve Reg.* exe.2.

898 Publicum Valetudinarium.

899 “Etiam diabolo exhiberes misericordiam, si humiliter peteret.”—*Rev.* extr.c.50.

900 “Quantumcumque homo peccet, si ex vera emendatione ad me reversus fuerit, statim parata sum recipere revertentem; nec attendo quantum peccaverit, sed cum quali voluntate venit; nam non dedignor ejus plagas ungere et sanare, quia vocor (et vere sum) Mater misericordiæ.”—*Rev.1.* 2, c. 23;1. 6, c. 117.

901 “Respirate ad illam perditi peccatores, et perducet vos ad portum.”—*Psalt. B.V.* ps. 18.

902 Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus.”—*De Aquad.*

903 “Cupientes invenire gratiam, quæramus. Inventricem gratiæ.”—*De Laud. B.V.*1. 2. p. 5.

904 “Ne timeas, Maria; invenisti enim gratiam.”—*Luke,* i. 30.

905 “Currant igitur peccatores ad Virginem, qui gratiam amiserunt peccando; secure dicant: Redden obis rem nostrum, quam invenisti.”—*In Luc.* I.

906 “Advocata nostra, officium tuum imple.”—*In Nat. B.V.* conc. .3.

907 “In me omnis spes vitæ et virtutis; transite ad me omnes.”—*Ecclus.* xxiv. 25.

908 Omnes, justos et peccatores, invitat.

909 “Circuit, quærens quem devoret.”—I *Peter*, v. 8.

910 “Ipsa semper circuit, quærnes quem salvet.”—*Marial.* p. 3, s. I.

911 “Quia post tuum Filium ita generis humani curam gerit sicut tu?”—*De sona Deip.*

912 “Undique solicita de miseris. Solum misereri tu videris appetere.”—*Stim. am.* p.3, c. 19.

913 “Tanta est ejus benignitas, ut nemo ab ea repellatur.”—*De cont. B.V.* prol.

914 “Velocius occurrit ejus pietas, quam invocetur, et causas miserorum anticipat.”—*In Cant.* c. 23.

915 A Deo pietate replentur ubera tua, ut alicujus miseriæ notitia tacta, lac fundant misercordiæ, nec possis miserias scire et non subvenire.

916 Vinum non habent.

917 Magna erga miseros fuit misericordia Mariæ adhuc exultantis in mundo, sed multo major est regnantis in cœlo.

918 “Si tam prompta ad auxilium currit non quæsita, quid requisite præstitura est!”—*Umbra virg.* exc.72.

919 “Invenies semper paratam auxillari.”—*De Laud. B.V.*1. 2, p. I.

920 Plus desiderat ipsa facere tibi bonum et largiri gratiam, quam tu accipere concupiscas

921 “Invenies eam in manibus plenam misericordia et largitate.”—*Marial.* p. 2, s. 5.

922 In te, Domina, peccant, non solum qui tibi injuriam irrogant, sed etiam qui te non rogant

923 O salus te invocantum .

924 In te, Domina, speravi; non confundar in æternum.

925 “In charitate perpetua dilexi te.”—Jer. xxxi. 3.

926 “In charitate perpetua dilexi te; ideo attraxi te, miserans.”—Jer. xxxi. 3.

927 Ab alio amatore præventa sum.

928 “Cœlum et terra et omnia mihi dicunt ut te amem.”—*Conf.* 110, c. 6.

929 “Ne projicias me a facie tua.”—Ps.1. 13.

930 “Eum qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras.”—John, vi. 37.

931 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* V. 2.

932 “Semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens. . . . .et habitu inventus ut homo.”—*Phi*l. Ii. 7.

933 “Et verbum caro factum est.”—*John,* i, 14,

934 Quod sufficiebat redemptioni, non sufficiebat amori.

935 “Humiliavit semetipsim factus, est obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”—Phil, ii. 8.

936 “Dicebant excessum ejus, quem completurus erat in Jerusalem.”—Luke, ix. 31.

937 Exceesus doloris, excessus amoris.

938 “Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.”—*John,* xv. 13.

939 “Propterea Christus advenit, ut cognosceret homo quantum eum diligat Deus.”—*De catech, rud.*c.4.

940 “Baptismo autem habeo baptizari; et quomodo coarctor usquedum perficiatur!”—*Luke*, xii. 50.

941 “Desiderio desideravi hoc pasha manducare vobiscum.”—*Luke,* xxii, 15,

942 Hominum amore nequit expleri Deus.

943 “Charitas enim Christi urget nos.”—2 *Cor.* v. 14.

944 “Videmus sapientiam amoris nimietate infatuatam.”—*Serm. De Nativ.*

945 “Prædicamus Christum crucifixum, Judæis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam.”—I *Cor. i.* 23.

946 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* v. 2.

947 “Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est.”—2 *Cor.* v. 15.

948 “In hoc enim Christus mortuus est et resurrexit, ut et mortuorum et vivorum dominetur.”—*Rom.* xiv. 9.

949 “Cum esset omnipotens, plus dare non potuit.”—*Lohner Bibli.* tit. 52. §. 3.

950 “Quis melior thesaurus in corde hominis esse potest, quam corpus Christi?—T. iv.s. 12, a. I., c. 4.

951 “Nota facite adinventiones ejus.”—*Isa.* xii.4.

952 “Nonne videtur insania: Manducate mean carnem, bibite meum sanguinem?”—*In Ps.* xxxiii. en. I.

953 “Durus est hic sermo, et quis potest eum audire?”—*John,* vi. 61.

954 Hoc sacramentum est memoriale suæ dilectionis.

955 “Hoc facite in meam commemorationem.”—Luke, xxii. 19.

956 “In illo fervoris excessu, quando paratus erat pro nobis. m. ri, ab excessu amoris majus opus agere coactus est, quam unquam operatus fuit: dare nobis corpus in cibum.”—T. II.s. 54, a. I, c.I.

957 “Omnem vim amoris effudit amicis.”—*Serm. De Ascen. Dom.*

958 “Divitias divini sui erga hominess amoris velut effudit.”—*Sess.* 13. c. 2.

959 “Accipite et comedite; hoc est corpus meum.”—*Matt.* xxvi. 26.

960 Totum tibi dedit, nihil sibi reliquit.

961 “Deus in Eucharistia totum gNone ipse est et habet in summo dedit.”—*De Beat.* c. 3.

962 “Ecce, quem mundus capere non potest, capitvus noster est.”—*Esp. Miss.* c. 4.

963 “Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit.?”—*Rom.* viii. 32.

964 “Hoc ardentissimæ charitatis indicium.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 2.

965 “Sciens Jesus quia venit hora ejus, ut transeat ex hoc mundo ad Patrem, cum dilexisset suos. . . . . in finem dilexit eos.”—*John,* xiii.I.

966 Extremo amore, summe dilexit eos.

967 “In qua nocte tradebatur, accepit panem, et gratias agens fregit, et dixit: Accipite et manducate: hoc est corpus meum.”—I *Cor.* xi. 23.

968 Quæ in fine in signum amicitiæ celebrantur, firmius memorise imprimuntur et chariora tenentur.

969 “Ultimus gradus amoris est, cum se dedit nobis in cibum; quia dedit se nobis ad omnimodam unionem, sicut cibus et cibans invicem uniuntur.”—T. II. s.54, a. I. c.I: a. 4,c. I.

970 Huic nos unimur, et facti sumus unum corpus et una caro.

971 “Quia pastor oves proprio pascit cruore? Et quid dico, pastor? Matres multæ sunt, quæ filios allis tradunt nutricibus; hoc autem ipse non est passus, sed nos proprio sanguine pascit.”—*Adpop, Amt. hom.* 60

972 “Semetipsum nobis immiscuit, ut unum quid simus; ardenter enim amanitium hoc est.”—*Ad. pop. Ant. hom.* 61.

973 “Memoriam fecit mirabilium suorum misericors et miserator Dominus, escam dedit timentibus se.”—*Ps.* cx. 4.

974 “O quam mirabilis est dilectio tua, Domine Jesu, qui tuo corpori taliter nos incorporari voluisti, ut tecum unum cor et animan haberemus inseparabiliter colligatam.”—*De Inc. div, am.* c.5.

975 “Amor dignitatis nescius.”—*In Cant.* s. 64.

976 “Amor ratione caret, et vadit quo ducitur, non quo debeat.”—*Serm.* 147.

977 Sacramentum chariatatis, charitatis pignus.

978 “Sciens Jesus quia venit hora ejus.”—John , xiii. I.

979 Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare vobiscum.”—*Luke,* xxii. 15.

980 “Flagrantissimæ charitatis est vox hæc.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 2.

981 “Venite, comedite panem meum, et bibite vinum quod miscue vobis.”—*Prov.* ix. 5.

982 “Comedite, amici, et bibite, et inebriamino, charissimi.”—*Cant.* v. I.

983 “Accipite et comedite: hoc est corpus meum.”—*Matt.* xxxvi. 26.

984 “Qui manducate meam carnem, et bibit emum sanguine,.habet vitam æternam. . . . .Qui manducate hunc panem, vivet in æternum.”—*John,* vi. 55,

[985] “Nisi manducaveritis carnem Filii hominis, et biberitis ejus sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis.”—*John,* vi. 54.

[986] “Qui manducate mean carnem, et bibit meum sanguinem in me manet et ego in illo.”—*John,* vi. 57.

[987] “Omnis dedit ei Pater in manus.”—*John,* xiii. 3.

[988] “Venerunt autem mihi omnia bona partier cum illa.”—*Wis.* vii. II.

[989] Eucharistia maximam vim habet perficiendæ sanctiatis.

[990] “Antidotum quo liberemur a culpis quitidianis, et a peccatis mortalibus præservemur.”—*Sess.* 13. cap. 2.

[991] “Pharmacum immortalitatis.”—*Ep. ad. Eph.* c. 20.

[992] “Per crucis mysterium, eripuit nos a potestate peccati; per Eucharistiæ sacramentum, liberat nos a volunate peccandi.”—*De Alt. Myst. L.* 4, c. 44.

[993] “Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitiatem Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis; quia amore langueo.”—*Cant.* ii. 4.

[994] “Deus charitas est.”—John, iv. 8. “Ignis consumens est.”—*Deut.* iv. 24

[995] “Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid vulo, nisi ut accendatur?”—*Luke,* xii. 40.

[996] “Carbo est Eucharistia, quæ nos inflammat, ut tamquam leones ignem spirantes ab illa mensa recedamus, facti diabolo terribiles.”—*Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 61.

[997] “Licet tepide, tamen confidens de misericordia Dei accedat; tanto magis æger necesse habet requirere medicum, quanto magis senserit se ægrotum.”—*De Prof. re1.*1. 2, c. 77.

[998] Spir. Grat. i. 3. c. 22.

[999] “Ecces ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus, usque ad consummationem sæculi.”—*Matt.* xxviii. 20.

1000 “Non est alia natio tam grandis, quæ habeat deos appropinguantes sibi, sicut Deus noster adest nobis.”—*Deut.* Iv. 7.

1001 “Num, quem diligit anima mea, vidistis?”—*Cant.* iii. 3.

1002 “Indica mihi. . . . ubi pascas, ubi cubes in meridie.”—*Cant.* i. 6.

1003 “Ego flos campi, et lilium convallium.”—*Cont.* ii.I.

1004 “Non est satelles qui dicat: Non est hora.”—*In Ps.* iv.

1005 Sicut solet dilectus ad dilectum.—1. 4, c. 13.

1006 “Surge, propera, amica mea, columba mea, formosa mea, et veni.”—*Cant.*ii. 10.

1007 “Venite ad me, omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.”—*Matt.* xi. 28.

1008 :Ego ipse qui loquebar. . . . Ecce adsum.”—*Isa.* ii. 6.

1009 “Plus vuit ille dare, quam nos accipere.”—*Serm.* 105, E.B.

1010 “Numquid solitudo factus sum Israeli, aut terra serotina? Quara ergo dixit populus meus: Recessimus, non veniemus ultra ad te?”—*Jer.* ii. 31.

1011 “Vidi præcinctum ad mamillas zona aures.”—*Apoc.* i. 13.

1012 “Ad ubera portabimini . . . . . . Quomodo si cui mater blandiatur, ita ego consolabor vos.—*Isa.* lxvi. 12.

1013 Recede a me, Domine, recede.

1014 “Qui non diligit, manet in morte.”—I *John,* iii. 14. “Charitatem habete, quod est vinculum perfectionis.”—*Col.* iii.14.

1015 “Hostiam et oblationem noluisti; corpus autem aptasti mihi. . . . Tunc dixi: Ecce venio. . . . .ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam.”—*Heb.* x. 5.

1016 “Descendi de cœlo, non ut faciam voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem ejus qui misit me.”—*John,* vi. 38.

1017 “Ut cognoscat mundus quia diligo Patrem, et sicut mandatum dedit mihi Pater, sic facio: Surgite, eamus.”—*John,* xiv. 31.

1018 “Quicumque enim fecerit voluntatem Patris mei qui in cœlis est, ipse meus frater, et soror, et mater est.”—*Matt.* xii. 50.

1019 Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in cœlo, et in terra.

1020 “Inveni David, fillium Jesse, virum secundum cor meum, qui faciet omnes voluntates meas.”—*Acts,* xiii. 22.

1021 “Paratum cor meum Deus, paratum cor meum.”—*Ps.* lvi. 8; cvii.2.

1022 “Domine, quid me vis facere?”—*Acts,* ix. 6.

1023 “Vas electionis est mihi iste, ut portet nomen meum coram gentibus.”—*Acts,* ix. 15.

1024 “Ego Dominus, et non est alter, formans lucem et creans tene. bras faciens pacem et creans malum.”—*Isa.* xiv. 6.

1025 “Hona et maia, vita et mors, paupertas et honestas a Deo sunt.”—*Ecclus.* xi. 14.

1026 “Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit.”—*Job,* i. 21.

1027 “Sicut Domino placuit ita factum est: sit nomen Domini benedictum!”—*Job,* i. 21.

1028 “Ibant gaudentes a conspectus concilii, quoniam digni habiti sunt pro nomine Jesu contumeliam pati.”—*Acts,* v. 41.

1029 “Ita; Pater? quoniam sie fuit placitum ante te.”—*Matt.* xi. 26.

1030 “In pace, in idipsum, dormiam et requlescam.”—*Ps.* iv. 9.

1031 “Non contrisabit justum, quidquid ei acciderit.”—*Prov.* xii. 21.

1032 “Humiles sunt, hoc volunt; pauperes sunt, pauperie delectantur; itaque beati dicendi sunt.”—*De Gub.* D.1, I, n. 2.

1033 “Exsuperat omnem sensum.”—*Phil.* iv. 7.

1034 “Homo sanctus in sapientia manet sicut sol: nam stultus sicut luna mutatur.”—*Ecclus.* xxvii. 12.

1035 “Et in terra pax hominibus.”—*Luke,* ii. 14.

1036 “Gaudium vestrum nemo tollet a vobis.”—*John,* xvi. 22.

1037 “Voluntati enim ejus quis resistit?”—*Rom.* ix. 19.

1038 “Quis restiti ei, et pacem habuit?”—*Job,* ix. 4.

1039 “Hæc est enim voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra.”—I *Thess.* iv. 3.

1040 “Omnia cooperantur in bonum.”—*Rom.* viii. 28.

1041 “Ad emendationem, non ad perditionem nostram, evenisse credamus.”—*Judithh,* viii. 27.

1042 “Dominus solicitus est mei.”—*Ps.* xxxix. 18.

1043 “Qui etiam proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum, quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* viii. 32.

1044 “Omnem sollicitudinem vestram projicientes in eum, quoniam ipsi cura est de vobis.”—*I Peter,* v. 7.

1045 “Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.”—*Cant.* ii. 16.

1046 “Domine, quid me vis facere?”—*Acts,* ix.6.

1047 “Ecce ancilla Domini.”—*Luke,* i. 38.

1048 “Tuus sum ego, salvum me fac.”—*Ps.* cxviii. 94.

1049 “Ita, Pater, quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te.”—*Matt.* xi. 26.

1050 These meditations are an excellent summary of the foregoing Considerations on the Last Things of man. As they contain nothing exclusively proper to the days of the week to which they have been assigned, they may also be used at other times.

They are substantially the same as those that are found in the works of Father Sarnelli (II Cristiano santificato) and in those of St. Leonard of Port Maurice (Via del paradiso), and perhaps elsewhere, since neither appears to be the author of them. St. Alphonsus arranged them according to his own method, and inserted them in the first work that he published, about the year 1747, under the title of “Smaller Spiritual Works” (Operette spirituali).—ED.

1051 Maledictus homo qui peccat in spe.

1052 “Et misericordia ejus . . . timentibus eum.”—Luke, I 50

1053 “In plenitudine peccatorum puniat.”—2 Mach. vI 14.

1054 “Dixisti: Non serviam.”—Jer. iI 20.

1055 “Dominus patienter exspectat, ut, cum judicii dies advenerit, in plenitudine peccatorum puniat.”—2 Mach. vI 14.

1056 “Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem æternum.”—Matt. xxv. 41.

1057 “The Rule of Life” was published about the year 1767, in the volume entitled “The Way of Salvation.” of which it formed the third part with the treatise called “Darts of Fire.” In the general order of the works of Saint Alphonsus it naturally found its place under the title of the present volume that contains the foundation of the spiritual life; it is the complement, the practical conclusion of the Considerations on the eternal truths, as the Author himself so very frequently intimates.—ED.

1058 “Numquid potest homo . . . ambulare super prunas, ut non comburantur plantre ejus ?”-Prov. vI 27.

1059 “Violenti rapiunt illud.”—Matt. xi, 12

1060 “Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis.”—Ecclus. viI 40.

1061 “Qui vos audit, me audit.”—Luke, x. 16.

1062 “Nisi manducaveritis carnem Filii hominis, et biberitis ejus sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis.”—John, vI 54.

1063 “Si quis manducaverit ex hoc pane, vivet in æternum.”—John, vI 52

1064 A certain learned priest wrote three books against the opinion which I had maintained, namely, that a person who desires to keep himself in the grace of God may be allowed to communicate every week, although he may not be purified from the affection to venial sins. On this matter, I beg the reader to read the last answer in my “Moral Instruction,” lately printed. (See opuscule entitled “Frequent Communion.”)

1065 “Petite, et dabitur vobis.”—Matt. viI 7.

1066 “Omnia quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.”—Mark, xI 24.

1067 “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—Luk, xI 10.

1068 “Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—John, xvI 23.

1069 “Deus, in adjutorium meum intende; Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.”—Ps. lxix. 2.

1070 Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus; quia, quod qurerit, invenit, et frustrari non potest.

1071 Here it may be well to mention what the Author himself wrote to his religious, in a circular dated February 26, 1771: “I recommend that for the most part the meditation should be made from my books: *The Preparation for Death, Meditation on the Passion, Darts of Fire,* which are in the WAY OF SALVATION; and Meditations for Advent, up to the Octave of Epiphany. I say this, not in order to put forward my own poor books, but because these meditations are made up of devout affections, and what is of more importance, are full of holy prayer, of which I do not find many in other books. And hence I beg that the second part of the Meditation, consisting of affections and prayers, be always read."

We must observe that Saint Alphonsus makes the practice of mental prayer simple, clear, easy, and not less fruitful. Owing to the method which he teaches, this exercise, indispensable to him who wishes to sanctify himself, is really put within the reach of all. He wishes that everyone should learn how to meditate. He earnestly recommends that for this purpose special instructions should be given to the people.

Pope Benedict XIV. grants to those who in a church or elsewhere, either in public or private, shall teach the manner of making mental prayer, as well as to those who attend such instruction, a plenary indulgence once' a month, on the day on which they confess and communicate and pray to the intention of the Church; likewise an indulgence of seven years and seven times forty days, each time when, having been truly contrite, and having communicated, they teach mental prayer or attend an explanation that is given to learn how to make it. These indulgences are applicable to the souls in purgatory.—ED.

[1072] "Quilibet actus charitatis meretur vitam æternam.": 1æ, 2æ, q. II4, a. 7, ad 3

[1073] "Cor contritum et humiliatum Deus non despicies "—Ps L,19

[1074] "Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis." John, xvI 23.

[1075] Saint Alphonsus speaks here only of the two essential or principal points. "To satisfy the obligation of hearing Mass," he elsewhere says, "two things are necessary—an *intention* and *attention.* It is certain that those attending Mass offer the Holy Sacrifice with the priest. Think, therefore, of the great action which you perform. Meditate on the Passion of Jesus Christ, the Last Things, etc. If you prefer, read some spiritual book, or recite either the Office of the Blessed Virgin, or the Rosary, or other prayers. But at least pay attention to what the priest does." (Instr. on the Commandments, chap. 3.—ED.)

[1076] "Deus superbis resistit; humilibus autem dat gratiam."—James, iv. 6.

[1077] "Cum metu et tremore vestram salutem operaminI"—Phil ii, 12.

[1078] "Discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde."—Matt. xI 29.

[1079] "Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me. "-Matt. xvI 24.

[1080] "Noli regibus dare vinum."- Prov. xxxI 4

[1081] “Qui diligit Deum diligat et fratrem suum.”- I John, iv. 21

[1082] “Diliges Dominum, Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo . . . et proximum tuum sicut teipsum.”—Luke, x. 27.

[1083] “Responsio mollis frangit iram.”—Prov. xv. 1.

[1084] “Eleemosyna ab omni peccato eta morte liberat, et non patietur animam ire in tenebras.”—Tob. iv. II

[1085] “Benefacite his qui oderunt vos.”—Matt. v. 44

[1086] “Orate pro persequentibus et calumniantibus vos.”—Matt. v. 44

[1087] “Dimittite, et dimitteminI”—Luk, vI 37.

[1088] “Patientia autem opus perfectum habet.”—James, i 4

[1089] “Beati, qui persecutionem patiuntur propter justitiam. “-Matt. v. 10

[1090] “Quia acceptus eras Deo, necesse fuit ut tentatio probaret te.” Tob. xiI 13.

[1091] “Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis: sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proven tum.”—1 Cor. x. 13.

[1092] “Sufficit tibi, Paule, gratia mea; nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur.”—2 Cor. xiI 9

[1093] Et vita in voluntate ejus. ‘‘—Ps. xxix. 6

[1094] “Non contristabat justum, quidquid ei acciderit.”-Prov. xiI 21

[1095] “Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem vestrum. “-Matt. v. 16

[1096] “Qui parce seminat, parce et metet. “-2 Cor. ix. 6

[1097] “Petite, et accipietis.”—John, xvI 24.

[1098] These will be found in Volume IV. of the ascetical works.—ED.

[1099] These admonitions on the necessity of prayer and on the devotion to the Blessed Virgin were written or dictated by Saint Alphonsus when he was nearly eighty years of age. See Tannoia, Book 4, ch. 18.—ED.

[1100] “Omnes homines vult salvos fierI”—1 Tim. iI 4

[1101] Non dat, nisi petentI—In Ps. ciI

[1102] “Clama ad me, et exaudiam te.—Jer. xxxiiI 3.

[1103] “Quodcumque volueritis, petetis, et fiet vobis.” -John, xv. 7.

[1104] “Petite, et dabitur vobis.”—Matt. viI 7

[1105] “Oportet semper orare.”—Luke, xviiI 1.

[1106] “Omnis enim qui petit, acci pit.”—Luke, xI 10.

[1107] Invoca me; . . . eruam te.”—Ps. xlix. 15.

[1108] Preparation for Death. Preface.

[1109] Consid. on the Passion, ch. 8.

[1110] *These meditations were published by Saint Alphonsus in 1767. For a method of making meditation, see Compendium of Rules for a Christian Life, at the end of the volume. ED.*

[1111] *“Per prævaricationem legis, Deum inhonoras.” Rom. ii. 23.*

[1112] *“Violabant me . . . propter pugillum hordei et fragmen panis.” Ezek. xiii. 19.*

[1113] *“Domine, quis similis tibi?” Ps. xxxiv. 10.*

[1114] *“Ne projicias me a facie tua.” Ps. 1. 13.*

[1115] *“Misereris omnium, quia omnia poles; et dissimulas peccata hominum propter pœnitentiam.” Wis. xi. 24.*

[1116] *“Statutum est hominibus semel mori.” Heb. ix. 27.*

[1117] *“Juxta est dies perditionis.” Deut. xxxii. 35.*

[1118] *“Cum metu et tremore vestram salutem operamini.” Phil. ii. 12.*

[1119] *Nulla nimis securitas, ubi periclitatur æternitas.*

[1120] *Credo in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei . . . qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem . . . crucifixus . . . passus et sepultus est.*

[1121] *“Venit enim Filius hominis salvare quod perierat.” Matt, xviii. 11.*

[1122] *“Misericordia ejus timentibus eum.” Luke i. 50.*

[1123] *“Deus non irridetur.” Gal. vi. 7.*

[1124] *“Quæ seminaverit homo, hæc et metet.” Ibid. 8.*

[1125] *“Spes illorum abominatio.” Job, xi. 20.*

[1126] *“Velut somnium surgentium.” Ps. lxxii. 20.*

[1127] *Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo.*

[1128] *Filios enutrivi et exaltavi; ipsi autem spreverunt me.” Isa. i. 2.*

[1129] *“Quasi stilla situlæ . . . quasi pulvis exiguus.” Ibid. xl. 15.*

[1130] *“Omnes gentes quasi non sint, sic sunt coram eo.” Ibid. xl. 17.*

[1131] *“Statutum est hominibus semel mori; post hoc autem, judicium.” Heb. ix. 27.*

[1132] *“Estote parati, quia, qua hora non putatis, Filius hominis veniet,” Luke xii. 40.*

[1133] *“Venit nox, quando nemo potest operari.” John, ix. 4.*

[1134] *“Tempus breve est.” i Cor. vii. 29.*

[1135] *“Quodcumque facere potest manus tua, instanter operare.” Eccles. ix. 10.*

[1136] *“Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.” Ps. lxxxviii. 2.*

[1137] *“Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus; quia Mater est, et frustrari non potest.” S. de Aquæd.*

[1138] *“Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.” Isa. liii. 6.*

[1139] *“Dominus voluit conterere eum in infirmitate.” Isa. liii. 10.*

[1140] *“Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.” Phil. ii. 8.*

[1141] *“Tu autem eruisti animam meam, ut non periret; projecisti post tergum tuum omnia peccata mea.” Isa. xxxviii. 17.*

1142 *“Unum est necessarium.” Luke, x. 42.*

1143 *“Quis est Dominus, ut audiam vocem ejus? Nescio Dominum.” Exod. v. 2.*

1144 *“Confregisti jugum meum . . . et dixisti: Non serviam,” Jer. ii. 20.*

1145 *“Ne projicias me a facie tua.” Ps.1. 13,*

1146 *“In ditione enim tua cuncta sunt posita, et non est qui possit tuæ resistere voluntati,” Esth. xiii. 9.*

1147 *“Ego diligentes me diligo.” Prov. viii. 17.*

1148 *“Alienum opus ejus . . . peregrinum est opus ejus ab eo.” Isa. xxviii. 21.*

1149 *“Deus, . . . iratus es, et misertus es nobis.” Ps. lix. 3.*

1150 *“Viro qui corripientem dura cervice contemnit, repentinus ei superveniet interims, et eum sanitas non sequetur.” Prov. xxix. I.*

1151 *“Mea est ultio, et ego retribuam in tempore.” Deut. xxxii. 35.*

1152 *“Exspectat Dominus, ut misereatur vestri.” Isa. xxx. 18.*

1153 *“Misericordiæ Domini, quia non sumus consumpti.” Lam. iii. 22.*

1154 *“Quid est quod debui ultra facere vineæ meæ et non feci? Isa. v. 4.*

1155 *“Convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.” Osee, xiv. 2.*

1156 *“Quæretis me, et non invenietis.” John vii. 34,*

1157 *“Lætetur cor quærentium Dominum.” Ps. civ. 3.*

1158 *“Ecce Agnus Dei” John, i. 29.*

1159 *“Quasi agnus coram tondente se, obmutescet, et non aperiet os suum.” Isa. liii. 7.*

1160 *“Et ego quasi agnus mansuetus, qui portatur ad victimam.” Jer. xi. 19.*

1161 *“Diliges Dominum Deum tuum.” Matt. xxii. 37.*

1162 *Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo.*

[1163] *“Ambulate dum lucem habetis.” John, xii. 35*

[1164] *“Venit nox, quando nemo potest operari.” John, ix. 4.*

[1165] *“Qua hora non putatis, Filius hominis veniet.” Luke xii. 40.*

[1166] *“Finita est æstas, et nos salvati non sumus.” Jer. viii. 20.*

[1167] *“Discedite a me maledicti in ignem æternum qui paratus est diabolo et angelis eius” Matt. xxv. 41*

[1168] *“Pones eos ut clibanum ignis.” Ps. xx. 10.*

[1169] *“Quis poterit habitare de vobis cum igne devorante?” Isa. xxxiii. 14.*

[1170] *“Libido tua vertetur in picem, qua se perpetuus ignis in tuis visceribus nutriat.” Opusc. de cœl. sac. c. 3.*

[1171] *“Quid est enim vita vestra? vapor est ad modicum parens, et deinceps exterminabitur.” James, iv. 15.*

[1172] *“Quid snperbit terra et cinis?” Ecclus. x. 9.*

[1173] *“Tamdiu unumquemque a Dei patientia sustentari, quamdiu nondum finem repleverit; quo consummate, nullam illi veniam reservari.” De Vita Christ, c. 3.*

[1174] *“Dominus patienter exspectat, ut eas (nationes), cum judicii dies advenerit, in plenitudine peccatorum puniat.” 2 Mach. vi. 14*

[1175] *“Appensus es in statera, et inventus es minus habens.” Dan. v. 27.*

[1176] *“Nos insensati vitam illorum aestimabamus insaniam.” Wis. v. 4.*

[1177] *“Pater . . . non sum dignus vocari filius tuus.” Luke, xv. 19.*

[1178] *“Quid nobis profuit superbia? aut divitiarum jactantia quid contulit nobis? Transierunt omnia ilia tanquam umbra.” Wis. v. 8.*

[1179] *“Vulnera corda saxea vulnerantia, et mentes congelatas inflammantia.” Stim.div. am. p. i. c. I.*

[1180] *“Omnis figura ejus amorem spiral, et ad redamandum provocat, caput inclinatum, manus expansæ, pectus apertum. Off. Dol. B. V. resp. I.*

[1181] *“Charitas Christ! urget nos.” 2 Cor, v. 14.*

1182 *Charitas Christ! urget nos.*

1183 *“Ante hominem vita et mors, bonum et malum; quod placuerit si, dabitur illi.” Ecclus. xv. 18.*

1184 *“Tu reliquisti me, dicit Dominus; retrorsum abiisti.” Jer. xv. 6.*

1185 *Retrorsum abiisti.*

1186 *“Quare moriemini, domus Israel? Revertimini, et vivite.” Ezek. xviii. 31.*

1187 *“Adam . . . ubi es? Gen. iii. 9.*

1188 *“Misericordiæ Domini in æternum cantabo.” Ps. lxxxviii. 1.*

1189 *“Ego sum judex et testis.” Jer. xxix. 23.*

1190 *Omnium iniquitatum . . . non recordabor.” Ezek. xviii 22.*

1191 *“Qua hora non putatis, Filius hominis veniet.” Luke, xii. 40.*

1192 *Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.*

1193 *“Non est pax impiis, dicit Dominus.” Isa. xlviii. 22.*

1194 *“Impii quasi mare fervens, quod quiescere non potest.” Isa. lvii. 20.*

1195 *“Fugit impius, nemine persequente.” Prov. xxviii. I.*

1196 *“Delectare in Domino, et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui.” Ps. xxxvi. 4.*

1197 *“Ama unum bonum, in quo sunt omnia bona.” Man. c. 34.*

1198 *Deus meus, Deus meus, et omnia.*

1199 *“Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?” Luke, xii. 49.*

1200 *“In hoc enim Christus mortuus est et resurrexit, ut et mortuorum et vivorum dominetur.” Rom. xiv. 9.*

1201 *“Omnes homines vult salvos fieri.” i Tim. ii. 4.*

1202 *“Patienter agit, nolens aliquos perire, sed omnes ad pœnitentiam reverti.” 2 Peter, iii. 9.*

1203 *“Nolo mortem impii, sed ut convertatur . . . et vivat.” Ezek. xxxiii. 11.*

[1204] *“Dies mei velociores fuerunt cursore.” Job, ix. 25.*

[1205] *“Nulla pœna gravior, quam cum peccatum est pœna peccati.” In Ps. lxviii.*

[1206] *“Auferam sepem ejus, et erit in direptionem.” Isa. v. 5.*

[1207] *“Impius, cum in profundum venerit peccatorum, contemnit.” Prov. xviii. 3.*

[1208] *“Curavimus Babylonem, et non est sanata; derelinquamus.” Jer. li. 9.*

[1209] *“Quos præscivit et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui . . . illos et glorificavit.” Rom. viii. 29.*

[1210] *“Justus vix salvabitur.” I Peter, iv. 18.*

[1211] *“Quærite Dominum, dum inveniri potest.” Isa. Iv. 6.*

[1212] *“Quid faciam, cum surrexerit ad judicandum Deus? Et cum quæsierit, quid respondebo illi?” Job, xxxi. 14.*

[1213] *Tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.*

[1214] *“Ibit homo in domum æternitatis suæ.” Eccles. xii. 5.*

[1215] *“Virum dolorum.” Isa. liii. 3.*

[1216] *“Vidimus eam. . , despectum et novissimum virorum.” Isa.liii. 2.*

[1217] *quid enim prodest homini si mundum universum lucretur animæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur. Matt. xvi. 26.*

[1218] *“Utinam saperent, et intelligerent, ac novissima providerent.” Deut. xxxii. 29.*

[1219] The circumstance to which St. Alphonsus here refers is thus related by him in his sermon for Septuagesima Sunday: “St. Philip Neri, speaking, one day, to a young man named Francis Zazzera, who expected to make his fortune in the world by his talents, said: Be of good heart, my son; you may make a great fortune, you may become an eminent lawyer, you may then be made a prelate, then perhaps a cardinal, and then, who knows, perhaps even Pope. And then? and then? Go, continued the Saint, and reflect upon these two words. The young man went his way, and after having meditated on the two words and then? and then? abandoned all his worldly prospects, and gave himself entirely to God. Leaving the world, he entered into the same congregation that St. Philip had founded, and then he died in the odour of sanctity.”

[1220] *O momentum, a quo pendet æternitas!*

[1221] *“Obsecramus pro Christo, reconciliamini Deo.” 2 Cor. v. 20.*

[1222] *“Ipse Christus vos obsecrat; quid autem obsecrat? reconciliamini Deo.” In 2 Cor. hom. ii.*

[1223] *“Quid est homo, quia magnificas eum? aut quid apponis erga eum cor tuum? Job, vii. 17.*

[1224] *“Euge, serve bone et fidelis; quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, super multa te constituam: intra in gaudium Domini tui.” Mat. xxv. 23*

[1225] *Discede a me, maledicte, in ignem æternum.” Matt. xxv. 41.*

[1226] *Subvenite Sancti Dei. occurrite, Angeli Domini, suscipiente animam ejus, offerentes eam in conspectu Altissimi.*

[1227] *“Qua hora non putatis, Filius hominis veniet.” Luke, xii. 40.*

[1228] *“Quærite, et invenietis.” Matt vii. 7.*

[1229] *“Ibunt hi in supplicium æternum.” Matt. xxv. 46.*

[1230] *“Desiderabunt mori, et fugiet mors ab eis.” Apoc. ix. 6.*

[1231] *“Non tardes converti ad Dominum, et ne differas de die in diem: subito enim veniet ira illius, et in tempore vindictæ disperdet te.” Ecclus. v. 9.*

[1232] *“Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.” Eph. v. 2.*

[1233] *Quid fecisti, innocentissime Salvator, quod sic condemnareris?*

[1234] *“Cum metu et tremore vestram salutem operamini.” Phil. ii. 12.*

[1235] *“In manus tuas, Domine, commando spiritum meum.” Ps. xxx. 6.*

[1236] *“Solum mihi superest sepulcrum.” Job, xvii. i.*

[1237] *“Præcisa est velut a texente vita mea.” Isa. xxxviii. 12.*

[1238] *“Exacerbaverunt Deum excelsum.” Ps. lxxvii. 56.*

[1239] *“Perimit Deum.” S. 3 in temp. pasc.*

[1240] *“Destrueret Deum, eo quod esset causa tristitiæ infinitæ.” De Satisf. q. I.*

[1241] *“Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.” Matt. xxvi. 38.*

[1242] *“Dies iræ . . . dies calamitatis et miseriæ.” Soph. i. 15.*

[1243] *The Sequence “Dies Iræ, dies illa” being not familiar to all is appended to this book see the last page*

[1244] *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.*

[1245] *“In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” Ps. xxx. 2.*

[1246] *“Dicebant excessum ejus, quem completurus erat in Jerusalem.” Luke, ix. 31.*

[1247] *“Baptismo habeo baptizari, et quomodo coarctor usquedum perficietur?” Luke, xii. 50.*

[1248] *“Charitas Christi urget nos.” 2 Cor. v. 14.*

[1249] *Love of God, B. 7, ch. 8.*

[1250] *“Ergo erravimus.” Wis. v. 6.*

[1251] *“Eum qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras.” John, vi. 37.*

[1252] *“Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.” Ps.1. 19.*

[1253] *“Revertere ad me . . . et ego suscipiam te.” Jer, iii. i.*

[1254] *“Convertimini ad me . . . et convertar ad vos.” Zach. i. 3.*

[1255] *“Si autem impius egerit pœnitentiam . . . vita vivet et non morietur; omnium iniquitatum ejus, quas operatus est, non recordabor.” Ezek. xviii. 21.*

[1256] *“Ego diligentes me diligo.” Prov. viii. 17.*

[1257] *Et misericordia ejus timentibus eum.*

[1258] *“Ne dicas: Peccavi, et quid accidit mihi triste? Altissimus enim est patiens redditor.” Ecclus. v. 4.*

[1259] *“Terra et quæ in ipsa sunt opera exurentur.” 2 Peter, iii. 10.*

[1260] *“Canet tuba, et mortui resurgent.” I Cor. xv. 52*

[1261] *“Tunc justi fulgebunt sicut sol.” Matt. xiii. 43.*

[1262] *“Non avertas faciem tuam a me.” Ps. cxlii. 7.*

[1263] *“Populi populi in valle concisionis “ Joel. iii. 14.*

[1264] *“Sic Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret.” John, iii. 16.*

[1265] *“Deus meus, Deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti me?” Matt, xxvii. 46.*

[1266] *“Proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum.” Rom. viii. 32.*

[1267] *“Deus autem, qui dives est in misericordia propter nimiam charitatem suam qua dilexit nos, et cum essemus mortui peccatis, convivificavit nos in Christo.” Eph. ii. 4.*

[1268] *“Qui parce seminat, parce et metet.” 2 Cor. ix. 6.*

[1269] *“Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris. “—Gen. iii. 19.*

[1270] *“Exibunt Angeli, et separabunt malos de medio justorum.” Matt. xiii. 49.*

1271 *“Rapiemur cum illis in nubibus obviam Christo in aera.” I Thess. iv. 16.*

1272 *“De cadaveribus eorum ascendet fœtor. “ Isa. xxxiv. 3.*

1273 *“Et ipse calcat torcular vini furoris iræ Dei.” Apoc. xix. 15.*

1274 *“Quam dabit homo commutationem pro anima sua?” Matt. xvi. 26.*

1275 *“Dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me.” Gal. ii. 20.*

1276 *“Ut servum redimeret, sibi Filius ipse non pepercit. “ S. de pass. D.*

1277 *“Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.” John, xv. 13.*

1278 *Nulla nimia securitas, ubi periclitatur æternitas.*

1279 *“In te. Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” Ps. xxx. 2.*

1280 *“Ecce, anni tres sunt, ex quo venio quærens fructum in ficulnea hac, et non invenio.” Luke, xiii. 7.*

1281 *“Dicunt montibus et petris: Cadite super nos, et abscondite nos a facie sedentis super thronum et ab ira Agni.” Apoc. vi. 16.*

1282 *“Judicium sedit, et libri aperti sunt.” Dan. vii. 10.*

1283 *“Illuminabit abscondita tenebrarum.” I Cor. iv. 5.*

1284 *“Cognoscetur Dominus judicia faciens.” Ps. ix. 17.*

1285 *“Cui assimilastis me? . . . dicit Sanctus.” Isa. xl. 25.*

1286 *“In charitate perpetua dilexi te.” Jer. xxxi. 3.*

1287 *“Omnia . . . propter electos.” 2 Tim. ii. 10.*

1288 *“Congratulamini mihi, quia inveni ovem meam quæ perierat. Luke, xv. 6.*

1289 *“Quid est quod sic turbaris, Herodes? Rex iste qui natus est, non venit reges pugnando superare, sed moriendo subjugare.” S. de Epiph. et Inn. nece.*

1290 *“Non habemus regem nisi Cæsarem.” John, xix. 15.*

1291 *Rex meus es tu.*

1292 *“In hoc enim Christus mortuus est et resurrexit, ut et mortuorum et vivorum dominetur.” Rom. xiv. 9.*

1293 *Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo.*

1294 *“Vocavit adversum me tempus.” Lam. i. 15.*

1295 *Peccatum est destructivum divinæ voluntatis.*

1296 *“Similiter autem odio sunt Deo impius et impietas ejus.” Wis. xiv. 9.*

1297 *“Quoniam ipse dixit, et facta sunt.” Ps. xxxii. 9.*

1298 *“Potest . . . et universum m undum uno nutu delere.” 2 Mach. viii. 18.*

1299 *“Tetendit enim adversus Deum manum suam, et contra Omnipotentem roboratus est.” Job, xv. 25.*

1300 *“Ad iracundiam provocat me ante faciem meam semper.” Isa lxv. 3.*

1301 *“Venit enim Films hominis quærere et salvum facere quod perierat.” Luke, xix. 10.*

1302 *Surgam, et ibo ad patrem meum.*

1303 *Pater, . . . jam non sum dignus vocari filius tuus.*

1304 *“Quia tepidus es . . . incipiam. te evomere.” Apoc. iii. 16.*

1305 *“Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet.” Ecclus. xix. i.*

1306 *“Qui parce seminat, parce et metet. “ 2 Cor, ix. 6.*

1307 *“Maledictus qui facit opus Dei fraudulenter.” Jer. xlviii. 10.*

1308 *“Ego diligentes me diligo.” Prov. viii. 17.*

1309 *“Una est columba mea, perfecta mea.” Cant. vi. 8.*

1310 *“Dilexit nos. et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.” Eph. v. 2.*

1311 *Totum tibi dedit, nihil sibi reliquit.*

[1312] *“Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.” Cant. ii. 16.*

[1313] *Deus meus, et omnia.*

[1314] *“Et vos estote parati; quia, qua hora non putatis, Filius hominis veniet.” Luke, xii. 40.*

[1315] *De lib. arbit. 1. 3, c. 18.*

[1316] *“Venit nox, quando nemo potest operari.” John, ix. 4.*

[1317] *“Et ego retribuam in tempore, ut labatur pes eorum.” Deut. xxxii. 35.*

[1318] *“Non deserit, nisi descratur.” Sess. 6. c. 11*

[1319] *“Dixerunt Deo: Recede a nobis.” Job, xxi. 14.*

[1320] *Exi, immunde spiritus, da locum Spiritui Sancto.*

[1321] *Exi a me, Domine, da locum diabolo.*

[1322] *“Ne projicias me a facie tua.” Ps.1. 13.*

[1323] *“Triumphal de Deo amor.” In Cant. s. 64.*

[1324] *“Stultum visum est, ut pro hominibus Auctor vitæ moreretur.”—S. Greg. hom. 6 in Evang.*

[1325] *Quis hoc fecit?*

[1326] *“Amor, dignitatis nescius.” In Cant. s. 64.*

[1327] *Venite, benedicti.*

[1328] *Discedite, maledicti.*

[1329] *“Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem æternum.” Matt. xxv. 41.*

[1330] *“Venite, benedicti Patris mei.” Matt. xxv. 34,*

[1331] *“Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo, in æternum cantabo.” Ps. lxxxviii. 2.*

[1332] *“Remittuntur tibi peccata.” Liike, vii. 48.*

[1333] *“Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.” Ps. Ixxii. 26.*

[1334] *“Per prævaricationem legis, Deum inhonoras.” Rom, ii. 23.*

[1335] *Congratulamini mihi, quia inveni ovem meam, quæ perierat.*

[1336] *“Ad vocem clamoris tui, statim ut audierit, respondebit tibi.” Isa. xxx. 19.*

[1337] *“Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit,” Isa. liii. 4.*

[1338] *“Ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras, attritus est propter scelera nostra.” Isa. liii. 5.*

[1339] *“Nescit homo pretium ejus.” Job, xxviii. 13.*

[1340] *“Infinitus enim thesaurus est hominibus.” Wis. vii. 14.*

[1341] *“Surge, propera, amica mea.” Cant. ii. 10.*

[1342] *“Vos amici mei estis.” John, xv. 14.*

[1343] *“Amicus autem Dei, si voluero, ecce nunc fio.” Conf. 1. 8, c. 6.*

[1344] *“Ego diligentes me diligo.” Prov. viii. 17.*

[1345] *“Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi.” Prov. xxiii. 26.*

[1346] *“Et vita in voluntate ejus.” Ps. xxix. 6.*

[1347] *Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in cœlo et in terra.*

[1348] *“Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum.” Ps. lvi. 8.*

[1349] *“Domine, quid me vis facere?” Acts, ix. 6.*

[1350] *“Fiat voluntas tua. Ita, Pater; quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te.” Matt. xi. 26.*

[1351] *“Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit; sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est; sit nomen Domini benedictum.” Job, i. 21.*

[1352] This little work was published in 1773, with the “Considerations on the Passion.” The saintly author wrote on the 8th of September, 1773, in one of his spiritual letters: “Here are two little works, one of which may aid you to meditate on the Passion; I use it myself every day. . . . I also read every day something of the other little work, entitled Pious Reflections, etc. I wish you to do the same; for I wrote it specially for those souls that desire to give themselves up entirely to God.” ED.

[1353] *“Finem vero, vitam æternam.” Rom. vi. 22.*

[1354] *Negotium pro quo contendimus, æternitas est.*

[1355] *“Justus ex fide vivit.” Gal. iii. n.*

[1356] *Credo vitam æternam.*

[1357] *O æternitas! qui te cogitat, nec pœnitet, aut fidem non habet, aut, si habet fidem, cor non habet.*

[1358] *Exprobrabant gentiles, aut mendaces aut stultos esse Christianes: mendaces, si non crederent quod credere dicebant; stultos, si credebant et peccabant.*

[1359] *Væ peccatoribus qui incognitam ingrediuntur æternitatem! Sed, væ duplex! ingrediuntur, et non egrediuntur!*

[1360] *“Adauge nobis fidem.” Luke, xvii. 5.*

[1361] *“Quisquis in solo æternitatis desiderio figitur, nec prosperitate attollitur, nec adversitate quassatur; dum nil habet in mundo quod appetat, nihil est quod de mundo pertimescat.” Mor. 1. 10. c. 22.*

[1362] *“Misericordiæ Domini, quia non sumus consumpti.” Lam. iii. 22.*

[1363] *“Nisi quia Dominus adjuvit me, paulo minus habitasset in inferno animamea.” Ps. xciii. 17.*

[1364] *“Tu autem eruisti animam meam, tit non periret.” Isa. xxxviii. 17*

[1365] *“Dum sumus in corpore, peregrinamur a Domino.” 2 Cor. v. 6.*

[1366] *“Audemus autem, et bonam voluntatem habemus magis peregrinari a corpora et Præsentes esse ad Dominum.” 2 Cor. v. 8.*

[1367] *“Dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri,” John, i. 12.*

[1368] *“Quoniam per ipsum habemus accessum ambo in uno spiritu ad Patrem.” Eph. ii. 18.*

[1369] *“Ergo jam non estis hospites et advenæ, sed estis cives Sanctorum et domestici Dei.” Eph. ii. 19.*

[1370] *“Cives terrenæ civitatis parit peccato vitiata natura, qui sunt vasa iræ; cives vero cælestis patriæ parit a peccato naturam liberans gratia, qui sunt vasa misericordise.” De Civ. D. \. 15.*

[1371] *“Incola ego sum in terra, non abscondas a me mandatatua.” Ps. cxviii. 19.*

1372 *“Heu mihi, quia incolatus meus prolongatus est.” Ps. cxix. 5.*

1373 *Adveniat, adveniat regnum tuum.*

1374 *“Festinemus ergo ingredi in illam requiem.” Heb. iv. n.*

1375 *“Qui currit, non ad spectatores, sed ad palmam attendit; non consistit, sed cursum intendit. “ In Ep. ad Heb. hom. 7.*

1376 *Adveniat regnum tuum.*

1377 *“Gaudete in illa die, et exsultate; ecce enim merces vestra multa est in cœlo.” Ltike, vi. 23.*

1378 *“Gaudere nos et exsultare voluit in persecutionibus Dominus quia tunc dantur coroner fidei, tunc probantur milites Dei.” Epist. ad Thibar.*

1379 *“Paratum cor meum.” Ps. lvi. 8.*

1380 *“Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.” Matt. xxii. 37.*

1381 *“Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus, electus ex millibus.” Cant. v. 10.*

1382 *“Trahe me.” Cant. i. 3.*

1383 *Semi. 85, E. B.*

1384 *Ubi est Deus tuus?*

1385 *“Fuerunt mihi lacrymæ meæ panes die ac nocte. dum dicitur mihi quotidie: Ubi est Dens tuus?” Ps. xli. 4.*

1386 *“Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.” Matt. xi. 28.*

1387 *“Venit nox, quando nemo potest operari.” John. ix. 4.*

1388 *“Ambulate dum lucem habetis, ut non vos tenebræ comprehendant.” John, xii. 35,*

1389 *“Zelotypus est Jesus.” Ad Eustoch. De cust. virginit.*

1390 *Quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbæ, et volabo, et requiescam?” Ps. liv. 7.*

1391 *Insin.1. 4, c. 26.*

1392 *“Cor mundum crea in me, Deus.” Ps.1. 12,*

1393 *“Totum pro toto.” Imit. Chr. b. 3, c. 37.*

1394 *Spirit, p. 3. ch. 27.*

1395 *“Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem.” Cant. ii. 4.*

1396 *Deus meus, et omnia.*

1397 *Interior Castle, dem. 5, ch. I.*

1398 *“Infinitus enim thesaurus esthominibus, quo, qui usi sunt, participes facti sunt amicitiæ Dei.” Wis. vii. 14.*

1399 *De Disc. man. a. 6.*

1400 *Way of Perf. ch. 35.*

1401 *“Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.” Phil. iv. 13.*

1402 *“Desideria occidunt pigrum.” Prov. xxi. 25.*

1403 *Way of Perf. ch. 241.*

1404 *“Sapientia enim hujus mundi stultitia est apud Deum.” I Cor. iii. 19.*

1405 *“Hominem ilium dicimus, qui imaginem hominis salvam retinet; quæautem est imago hominis? rationalem esse.” Hom. 23 in Gen.*

1406 *“Scientia inflat.” I Cor. viii. 1.*

1407 *“Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam.” James, iv. 6.*

1408 *“Utinam saperent, et intelligerent, ac novissima providerent.” Deut. xxxii. 29.*

1409 *“Proficiscamur ad sepulcra. Nihil video nisi putredinem, ossa, et vermes.” Hom. 77 in Matt.*

1410 *“Dormierunt somnum suum, et nihil invenerunt . . . in manibus suis.” Ps. Ixxv. 6.*

1411 *“Et dedit illi scientiam sanctorum.” Wis. x. 10.*

1412 *Conf. b. 5, c. 4.*

1413 *“Surgunt indocti, et cælum rapiunt.” Conf. b. 8, c. 8.*

1414 *"Abscondisti base a sapientibus et prudentibus, et revelasti ea parvulis." Matt. xi. 25.*

1415 *"Petite, et dabitur vobis." Matt. vii. 7.*

1416 *"Oportet semper orare." Luke, xviii. I.*

1417 *"Sine me nihil potestis facere." John, xv. 5.*

1418 *"Non quod sufficientes simus cogitare aliquid a nobis." 2 Cor. iii. 5.*

1419 *"Deus dare vult, sed non dat nisi petenti." In Ps. cii.*

1420 *"Alia non nisi orantibus Deum præparasse, sicut perseverantiam." De dono pers. c. 16.*

1421 *"Necessaria est homini jugis oratio." 3. p. q. 39, a. 5.*

1422 *"Oportet semper orare, et non deficere." Luke, xviii. 1.*

1423 *"Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis." I Cor. x. 13.*

1424 *"Lex data est ut gratia quæreretur; gratia data est ut lex impleretur." De spir. et lift. c. 19.*

1425 *"Deus impossibilia non jubet; sed jubendo monet, et facere quod possis,et petere quod non possis; etadjuvat ut possis." Sess. 6, ch. II.*

1426 *"Et ut scivi quoniam aliter non possem esse continens, nisi Deus det . . . adii Dominum, et deprecatus sum ilium." Wis. viii. 21.*

1427 *"Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat." Phil. iv. 13.*

1428 *In 4 sent. d. 45, q. 3 a. 2.*

1429 *"Per te accessum habeamus ad Filium, O Inventrix gratiæ, Mater salutis, ut per te nos suscipiat, qui per te datus est nobis." In Adv. Dom. s. 2.*

1430 *P.I, ch. 5.*

1431 *P. I, ch. i.*

1432 *"Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus; quia quod quærit, invenit, et frustrari non potest." De Aquæd.*

1433 *"Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiae, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportune." Heb. iv. 16.*

1434 *Petite, et dabitur vobis.*

1435 *“Omnia quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.” Mark, xi. 24.*

1436 *“Si quis autem vestrum indiget sapientia, postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluenter et non improperat; et dabitur ei.” James, i. 5.*

1437 *“Amen, amen dico vobis; si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”John, xvi. 23.*

1438 *“Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris.” Gen. iii. 19.*

1439 *“Finis venit, venit finis.” Ezek. vii. 2.*

1440 *“Dispone domui tuæ, quia morieris tu, et non vives.” Isa. xxxviii. i.*

1441 *Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo.*

1442 *O momentum, a quo pendet æternitas!*

1443 *“Utinam saperent, et intelligerent, ac novissima providerent!” Deut. xxxii. 29.*

1444 *“Thesaurizate autem vobis thesauros in cælo, ubi neque ærugo neque tinea demolitur.” Matt. vi. 20.*

1445 *Et quemadmodum statutum est hominibus semel mori post hoc autem iudicium Heb ix. 27*

1446 *“Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi?” Ps. CXV. 12.*

1447 *“Euge, serve bone et fidelis; quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, super multa te constituam; intra in gaudium Domini tui.” Matt. xxv. 21.*

1448 *“Delicta juventutis meæ et ignorantias meas ne memineris.” Ps. xxiv. 7.*

1449 *Ecce lignum crucis, in quo salus mundi pependit.*

1450 *O sanguis innocentis! lava sordes pœnitentis.*

1451 *Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.*

1452 *Domine, qui abstulisti a me amorem sæculi, accipe animam meam.*

1453 *“In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum; . . . redemisti me, Domine, Deus veritatis.” Ps. xxx. 2–6.*

[1454] *“Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.” I John, iv. 16.*

[1455] *“Et non intres in judicium cum servo tuo, quia non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens.” Ps, cxlii. 2.*

[1456] *“Venit enim Filius hominis salvare quod perierat.” Matt, xviii. 11.*

[1457] *“Accessistis ad . . . Mediatorem Jesum, et sanguinis aspersionem melius loquentem quam Abel.” Heb. xii. 22.*

[1458] *“Nullus speravit in Domino, et confusus est.” Ecchis. ii. 11.*

[1459] *“Numquid voluntatis meæ est mors impii, dicit Dominus Deus, et non ut convertatur a viis suis, et vivat?” Ezek. xviii. 23.*

[1460] *“Vivo ego, dicit Dominus Deus, nolo mortem impii, sed ut convertatur impius a via sua, et vivat.” Ezek. xxxiii. 11.*

[1461] *Et quare moriemini, domus Israel?*

[1462] *“Si autem impius egerit pœnitentiam . . . vita vivet . . . omnium iniquitatum ejus, quas operatus est, non recordabor.” Ezek. xviii. 21.*

[1463] *Bas. M. Reg. brev. int. 12.*

[1464] *“Iniquitatem odio habui, et abominatus sum.” Ps. cxviii. 163.*

[1465] *Ecce lignum crucis, in quo salus mundi pependit.*

[1466] *“Hæc mihi sit consolatio, ut affligens me dolore non parcat, nec contradicam sermonibus Sancti.” Job, vi. 10.*

[1467] *“Ita, Pater! quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te.” Matt. xi. 26.*

[1468] *“Si dederit homo omnem substantiam domus suæ pro dilectione, quasi nihil despiciet eam.” Cant. viii. 7.*

[1469] *“Calicem quem dedit mihi Pater, non bibam ilium?” John, xviii. ii.*

[1470] *“Non sunt condignae passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam, quæ revelabitur in nobis.” Rom. viii. 18.*

[1471] *“Convertimini ad me, et convertar ad vos.” Zach. i. 3.*

1472 *"Si quisvult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam quotidie, et sequatur me." Luke, ix. 23.*

1473 *"In hoc enim vocati estis. quia et Christus passus est pro nobis, vobis relinquens exemplum, ut sequamini vestigia ejus." I Peter, ii. 21.*

1474 *"Amen, amen dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis."—John, xvi. 23.*

1475 *"Fortis est ut mors dilectio." Cant. viii. 6.*

1476 *"Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum." Phil. iv. 7.*

1477 *"Qui hominibus placent, confusi sunt, quoniam Deus sprevit eos." Ps. lii. 6.*

1478 *De Cons. 1. I, c. 2.*

1479 *"Consideratio regit affectus, dirigit actus, corrigit excessus." Ibid. c. 7.*

1480 *"Vult Deus rogari, vult cogi, vult quadam importunitate vinci." In Ps. Pœnit. 6.*

1481 *"Erit tamquam lignum quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum." Ps. i. 3.*

1482 *"In meditatione mea exardescet ignis." Ps. xxxviii. 4.*

1483 *Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem.*

1484 *Sedebit solitarius, et tacebit; quia levavit super se." Lam. iii. 28.*

1485 *Vult Deus rogari, vult cogi, vult quadam importunitate vinci.*

1486 *"Venerunt autem mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa." Wis. vii.11.*

1487 *"Amen, amen dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis." John, xvi. 23.*

1488 *"Confiteantur tibi populi, Deus, confiteantur tibi populi omnes." Ps. lxvi. 6.*

1489 *"Loquere, Domine, quia audit servus tuus." I Kings, iii. 9.*

1490 *"Ducam eam in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor ejus." Osee, ii. 14.*

1491 *"Plus vult ille dare, quam nos accipere." Serm. 105 E. B.*

1492 *"Misericordia Domini plena est terra." Ps. xxxii. 5.*

[1493] *“Superexaltat autem misericordia judicium.” James ii. 13.*

[1494] *“Deus meus, misericordia mea.” Ps. Iviii. 18.*

[1495] *“Propter nomen tuum, Domine, propitiaberis peccato meo.” Ps. xxiv. 11*

[1496] *“Dominus . . . irascetur; ut faciat opus suum, alienum opus ejus . . . peregrinum est opus ejus ab eo.” Is. xxviii. 21.*

[1497] *“Per viscera misericordiæ Dei nostri, in quibus visitavit nos oriens ex alto.” Luke, i. 78.*

[1498] *“Petite, et dabitur vobis.” Matt. vii. 7.*

[1499] *“Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.” Matt. XL 28.*

[1500] *“Numquid solitudo factus sum Israeli, aut terra serotina? quare ergo dixit populus meus: Recessimus, non veniemus ultra ad te.” Jer. ii. 31.*

[1501] *“Statim ut audierit, respondebit tibi.” Isa. xxx. 19.*

[1502] *“Non adeo cupis dimitti peccata tua, sicut ille dimittere.” In Act. hom. 36. 3*

[1503] *“Expectat Dominus, ut misereatur vestri.” Isa. xxx. 18.*

[1504] *“Dedisti metuentibus te significationem, ut fugiant a facie arcus, ut liberentur dilecti tui.” Ps. lix. 6.*

[1505] *“Ecce, sto ad ostium, et pulso.” Apoc. iii. 20.*

[1506] *“Et quare moriemini, domus Israel?” Ezek. xviii. 31.*

[1507] *“Deus etiam a se aversos amatorie sequitur, et deprecatur ne pereant.” Ep. ad Dem.*

[1508] *“Obsecramus pro Christo, reconciliamini Deo.” 2 Cor. v. 20.*

[1509] *“IpseChristus vos obsecrat: quid obsecrat? reconciliamini Deo.” In 2 Cor. Hom. 11.*

[1510] *“Eum qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras.” John, vi. 37.*

[1511] *“Convertimini ad me . . . et convertar ad vos.” Zach. i. 3.*

[1512] *“Si autem impius egerit pamnitentiam . . . vita vivet; omnium iniquitatum ejus. . non recordabor.” Ezek. xviii. 21.*

[1513] *“Venite, et arguite me . . . si fuerint peccata vestra ut coccinum, quasi nix dealbabuntur.” Isa. i. 18*

[1514] *“Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.” Ps.1. 19.*

[1515] *Luke, xv. 5–20.*

[1516] *Dico vobis, quod ita gaudium erit in camlo super uno peccatore pamnitentiam agente, quam super nonaginta novem justis.*

[1517] *“Fit plerumque Deo gratior amore ardens vita post culpam, quam securitate torpens innocentia.” Past. 1. 3, adm. 29.*

[1518] *“Nolite itaque amittere confidentiam vestram, quæ magnam habet remunerationem.” Heb. x. 35.*

[1519] *Quare tristis es, anima mea? et quare conturbas me? Spera in Deo, quoniam adhuc confitebor illi: salutare vultusmei, et Deus meus.*

[1520] *“Oratio pie Deo vim infert.” Seal. gr. 28.*

[1521] *“Fiat misericordia tua. Domine, super ns, quemadmodum speravimus in te.” Ps. xxxii. 22.*

[1522] *“Protector est omnium sperantium in se.” Ps. xvii. 31. “Qui salvos facis sperantes in te.” Ps. xvi. 7.*

[1523] *“Lætentur omnes qui sperant in te; in æternum exultabant, et habitabis in eis.” Ps. v. 12.*

[1524] *“Sperantem autem in Domino misericordia circumdabit.” Ps. xxxi. 10.*

[1525] *“Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportune.” Heb. iv. 16.*

[1526] *“Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.” Luke, xi. 10.*

[1527] *“Omnia quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.” Mark, xi. 24.*

[1528] *“Non delinquent, omnes qui sperant in eo.” Ps. xxxiii. 23.*

[1529] *“Qui autem sperant in Domino mutabunt fortitudinem.” Isa. xl. 31.*

[1530] *“Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.” Phil. iv. 13.*

[1531] *“Nullus speravit in Domino et confusus est.” Ecclus. ii. n.*

[1532] *“Amen, amen dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.” John, xvi. 23.*

[1533] *“Unum est necessarium.” Luke, x. 42.*

[1534] *“Nolite thesaurizare vobis thesauros in terra . . . thesaurizate autem vobis thesauros in cælo, ubi neque ærugo, neque tinea demolitur.” Matt. vi. 19.*

[1535] *“Omnes homines vult salvos fieri.” I Tim. ii. 4.*

[1536] *“Perditio tua, Israel; tantummodo in me auxilium tuum.” Osee, xiii. 9.*

[1537] *“Vindicta carnis impii, ignis et vermis.” Ecclus. vii. 19.*

[1538] *“Ergo erravimus.” Wis. v. 6.*

[1539] *“Cum metu et tremore vestram salutem operamini.” Phil. ii. 12.*

[1540] *“Bonus est Dominus sperantibus in eum, animæ quærenti ilium.” Lam. iii. 25.*

[1541] *“Meus cibus est, ut faciam voluntatem ejus qui misit me.” John, iv. 34.*

[1542] *“Et vita in voluntate ejus.” Ps. xxix. 6.*

[1543] *“Fideles in dilectione acquiescent illi.” Wis. iii. 9.*

[1544] *“Hæc est enim voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra.” I Thess. iv. 3*

[1545] *“Acquiesce ergo ei, et habeto pacem.” Job, xxii. 21.*

[1546] *“Non contristabit justum, quidquid ei accident.” Prov. xii. 2T.*

[1547] *“Omnem soilicitudinem vestram projicientes in eum, quoniam ipsi cura est de vobis. I Peter, v. 7.*

[1548] *“Jacta super Dominum curam tuam, et ipse te enutriet.” Ps. liv. 23.*

[1549] *“Erit tibi anima tua in salutem, quia in me habuisti fiduciam.” Jer. xxxix. 18.*

[1550] *“Non omnis qui dicit mihi: Domine! Domine! intrabit in regnum cœlorum; sed qui facit voluntatem Patris mei.” Matt. vii. 21.*

[1551] *“Doce me facere voluntatem tuam.” Ps. cxlii. 10.*

[1552] *“Cunctis diebus quibus nunc milito, expecto donee veniat immutatio mea.” Job, xiv. 14.*

[1553] *“Et mortui resurgent incorrupti, et nos immutabimur.” I Cor. xv. 52.*

[1554] *Donec veniat immutatio nostra.*

[1555] *“Ego . . . merces tua magna nimis.” Gen. xv. i.*

[1556] *“Beatus vir qui suffert tentationem, quoniam, cum probatus fuerit, accipiet coronam vitae, quam repromisit Deus diligentibus se.” James, i. 12.*

[1557] *“Percipietis immarcessibilem glories coronam.” I Peter, v. 4.*

[1558] *Quam repromisit Deus diligentibus se.*

1559 *“In igne probatur aurum et argentum; homines vero receptibiles in camino humiliationis.” Ecclus. ii. 5.*

1560 *“In humilitate tua patientiam habe.” Ibid. 4.*

1561 *“Mulierem fortem quis inveniet? Procul et de ultimis finibus pretium ejus.” Prov. xxxi. 10.*

1562 *“De mundo non estis . . . propterea odit vos mundus.” John, xv. 19.*

1563 *“Mihi absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi, per quem mihi mundus crucifixus est, et ego mundo.” Gal. vi. 14.*

1564 *“Dedit semetipsum pro peccatis nostris, ut eriperet nos de præsenti sæculo nequam.” Gal. i. 4.*

1565 *“Sapientia carnis inimica est Deo; legi enim Dei non est subjecta, nec enim potest.” Rom. viii. 7.*

1566 *“Multi dicunt animæ meæ: Non est salus ipsi in Deo ejus.” Ps. iii. 3.*

1567 *“Tu autem, Domine, susceptor meus es.” Ps. iii. 4.*

1568 *“Dic animæ meæ: Salus tua ego sum.” Ps. xxxiv. 3.*

1569 *“In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” Ps. xxx. 2,*

1570 *“Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.” Ps. lxxxviii. 2.*

1571 *Moriar, Domine, amore amoris tui, qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori!*

1572 *Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.*

1573 *“Quid mihi est in cælo? et a te quid volui super terram? . . . Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.” Ps. lxxii. 25.*

1574 *“In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine Deus veritatis.” Ps. xxx. 6.*

1575 *“In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” Ibid. 2.*

1576 *“Ibit homo in donmum æternitatis suæ.” Eccles, xii. 5.*

1577 *“Peccavi, et vere deliqui, et, ut eram dignus, non recepi.” Job, xxxiii. 27.*

1578 *“Dum sumus in corpore, peregrinamur a Domino.” 2 Cor. v. 6.*

1579 *“Ego sum Pastor bonus.” John, x. 11.*

1580 *“Peccata nostra ipse pertulit in corpora suo super lignum, ut, peccatis mortui, justitiæ vivamus; cujus livore sanati estis,” I Peter ii. 24.*

1581 *Amor meus crucifixus est.*

1582 *“Semetipsum nobis immiscuit, ut unum quid simus. ,. ardenter enim amantium hoc est.” Ad pop. Ant. Hom. 61.*

1583 *“Erravi sicut ovis quæ periit, quære servum tuum.” Ps. cxviii 176*

1584 *“Quid enim prodest homini, si mundum universum lucretur, animæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur? “ Matt. xvi. 26.*

1585 *“Rogamus autem vos, fratres . . . ut negodum vestrum agatis.” I Thess. iv. 10*

1586 *“De immortalibus suppliciis, de cœlestis regni amissione, res agitur.” In Matt. hom. 25.*

1587 *“Quam dabit homo commutationem pro anima sua?” Matt. xvi. 26.*

1588 *“Mortuo homine impio, non erit ultra spes.” Prov. xi. 7.*

1589 *“Sane supra omnem errorem est dissimulare negotium salutis suæ” De Contemptu m.*

1590 *“Intra in gaudium Domini tui.” Matt. xxv. 21.*

1591 *“Intra in gaudium Domini tui.” Matt. xxv. 21.*

1592 *“Inebriabuntur abubertate domus tuæ, et torrente voluptatis tuæ potabis eos.” Ps. xxxv. 9.*

1593 *Aversio a Deo.*

1594 *“Quid enim prodest homini, si mundum universum lucretur, animæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur?” Matt. xvi. 26.*

1595 *“Dies perditionis.” Deut. xxxii. 35.*

1596 *“Non nostra sunt quæ non possumus auferre nobiscum; sola virtus comes est defunctorum.” In Luke, 17.*

1597 *“Qum est enim vita vestra? Vapor est ad modicum parens, et deinceps exterminabitur. “ James, iv. 15.*

1598 *“Vidi impium superexaltatum . . . et transivi, et ecce non erat.” Ps. xxxvi. 35.*

1599 *“In manu ejus statera dolosa.” Osee, xii. 7.*

1600 *“Periit memoria eorum cum sonitu.” Ps. ix. 7.*

1601 *“Prmteriit enim figura hujus mundi.” I Cor. vii. 31.*

1602 *Epist. 1 06.*

1603 *O solitudo, in qua Deus cum suis familiariter loquitur et conversatur!*

1604 *“Anima mea liquefacta est, ut locutus est.” Cant. v. 6.*

1605 *“Sedebit solitarius, et tacebit, quia levavit super se.” Lam. iii. 28.*

1606 *“Quis dabit mihi pennas sicutcolumbse, et volabo, et requiescam?” Ps. liv. 7.*

1607 *Ecce elongavi fugiens, et mansi in solitudine.*

1608 *“Quid prodest solitude corporis, si solitude defuerit cordis?” Mor. 1. 30, c. 23.*

1609 *Vacate, et videte quoniam ego sum Deus.” Ps. xlv. 11.*

1610 *Bonus est Dominus . . . animæquærenti ilium.” Lam. iii. 25.*

1611 *“Hortus conclusus soror mea Sponsa.” Cant. iv. 12.*

1612 *Regnum mundi et omnem ornatum sæculi contempsi, propter amorem Domini mei Jesu Christi.*

1613 *“Satiabor, cum apparuerit gloria tua.” Ps. xvi. 15.*

1614 *“Intra in gaudium Domini tui.” Matt. xxv. 21.*

1615 *“Cantate Domino canticum novum.” Ps. xcvii. i.*

1616 *Vasa iræ.*

1617 *Vasa charitatis.*

1618 *In Ps. xxx vi. s. 2.*

1619 *“Domine, qui abstulisti a me amorem sseculi, accipe animam meam.” In ejus off. lect. 6.*

[1620] *Vacate, et videte quoniam ego sum Deus.” Ps. xlv. 11.*

[1621] *“Delectare in Domino, et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui.” Ps. xxxvi. 4.*

[1622] *“Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum.” Phil. iv. 7.*

[1623] *“Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus.” Ps. xxxiii. 9.*

[1624] *“Si adhuc hominibus placerem, Christi servus non essem.” Gal. i. 10.*

[1625] *“Ego, quæ placita sunt ei, facio semper.” John, viii. 29.*

[1626] *“Emitte manum tuam de alto, eripe me, et libera me de aquis multis.” Ps. cxliii. 7.*

[1627] *“Quid enim mihi est in cælo? et a te quid volui super terrain? . . . Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.” Ps. Ixxii. 25.*

[1628] *“Intra in gaudium Domini tui.” Matt. xxv. 21.*

[1629] *“Ego, quæ placita sunt ei, facio semper.” John, viii. 29.*

[1630] *“In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in æternum.” Ps. xxx. 2.*

[1631] *“Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum cælorum.” Matt. v. 3.*

[1632] *“Propter vos egenus factus est, ut illius inopia vos divites essetis.” 2 Cor. viii. 9.*

[1633] *“Sibi habeant divitias suas divites, sibi regna sua reges; nobis gloria et possessio et regnum Christus est.” Ep. ad Aprum.*

[1634] *“Fortis est ut mors dilectio.” Cant. viii. 6.*

[1635] *“Non enim habet amaritudinem conversatio illius, nec tædium convictus illius, sed lætitiam et gaudium.” Wis. viii. 16.*

[1636] *Nunquam minus solus, quam cum solus.*

[1637] *“Et ait illis: Venite seorsum in desertum locum, et requiescite pusillum.” Mark, vi. 31.*

[1638] *“Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quærenti ilium.” Lam. iii. 25.*

[1639] *Deus meus, et omnia! Regnum mundi et omnem ornatum sæculi contempsi, propter amorem Domini mei Jesu Christi.*

1640 *“Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus.” Ps. cxv. 15*

1641 *In Trans. S. Mai. s. I.*

1642 *“Quid est diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri?” Serm. 84 E. B.*

1643 *Ut mors remedium esse videatur, non pœna.*

1644 *Deus meus, et omnia!*

1645 *“Beati mortui, qui in Domino moriuntur. Amodo jam dicit Spiritus, ut requiescant a laboribus suis. “ Apoc. xiv. 13.*

1646 *“Nunquam illic anima, quo ceciderit, jacet.” Moral. 1. 31, c. 12.*

1647 *“Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet.” Ecclus. xix. i.*

1648 *“Si oculus tuus fuerit simplex, totum corpus tuum lucidum erit, si autem oculus tuus fuerit nequam, totum corpus tuum tenebrosum erit.” Matt. vi. 22.*

1649 *In sæculum pertusum.*

1650 *“Vidua hæc pauper plus omnibus misit.” Mark, xii. 43.*

1651 *Nec propter te cœpi, nec propter te desinam.*

1652 *“Si dignus fueris agere aliquid quod Deo placet, aliam præter id mercedem requiris.” De Compunct.1. 2.*

1653 *“Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea sponsa, vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum.” Cant. iv. 9.*

1654 *“Sive ergo manducatis, sive bibitis, sive aliud quid facitis, omnia in gloriam Dei facite.” I Cor. x. 31.*

1655 *“Dies peregrinationis meæ centum triginta annorum sunt, parvi et mall.” Gen. xlvii. 9.*

1656 *“Ut sit Deus omnia in omnibus.” I Cor. xv. 28.*

1657 *“Infelix ego homo! quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus?” Rom. vii. 24.*

1658 *“Factus sum mihimetipsi gravis.” Job, vii. 20*

1659 *“Deus, ne elongeris a me; Deus meus, in auxilium meum respice.” Ps. lxx. 12.*

[1660] *“Juxta est Dominus iis qui tribulato sunt corde.” Ps. xxxiii. 19.*

[1661] The little treatises that compose this third part were written and published by St. Alphonsus at different times, without intending to unite them one day in a whole work. We, however, perceive that they naturally adapt themselves to one another, and are intimately connected with one another as the members of the same body. In this combination we have not imitated the order that is observed in the first two parts, because these little works are not simply meditations or detached reflections, but treatises which seem to us to require a more systematic order. We have, therefore, arranged them according to the ordinary plan of amoral discourse; namely, the first treatise proposes the subject, that is, divine love, which constitutes our whole perfection, and our whole happiness on earth as well as in heaven, and it points out summarily the means thereto. The following four treatises confirm and develop the principal means of acquiring divine love. The sixth treatise, which discourses on Interior Trials, teaches us how to surmount particular difficulties, and even to profit by obstacles in order to raise ourselves to God. Finally, the last two present to us a glowing peroration and a practical conclusion. ED.

[1662] *“Deus meus es tu, quoniam bonorum meorum non eges.” Ps. xv. 2.*

[1663] *“Tu autem idem ipse es. et anni tui non deficient.” Ps. ci. 28.*

[1664] *“Quo ibo a spiritu tuo? et quo a facie tua fugiam? si ascendero in cœlum,tu illic es; si descendero in infernum, ades.” Ps. cxxxviii. 7.*

[1665] *“Ego Dominus. et non mutor.” Mal. iii. 6.*

[1666] *“Et in Angelis suis reperit pravitatem.” Job, iv. 18.*

[1667] *“Nemo bonus, nisi solus Deus.” Luke, xviii 19.*

[1668] *“Tanquam nihilum ante te.” Ps. xxxviii. 6.*

[1669] *“Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex tota fortitudine tua.” Deut. vi. 5.*

[1670] *“Eruntque verba hæc . . . in corde tuo,” Ibid. vi. 6.*

[1671] *“Et narrabis ea filiis tuis.” Ibid. vi. 7.*

[1672] *“Hoc est maximum et primum mandatum.” Matt. xxii. 38.*

[1673] *“Omnes homines vult salvos fieri.” I Tim. ii. 4.*

[1674] *“Patienter agit propter vos, nolens aliquos perire, sed omnes ad pœnitentiam reverti.” 2 Peter, iii. 9.*

1675 *“Quid Dominus Deus tuus petit a te, nisi ut timeas Dominum Deum tuum, et ambules in viis ejus, et diligas eum.” Deut. x. 12.*

1676 *“Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?” Luke, xii. 49.*

1677 *“Quasi sine te beatus esse non posset.” De Beatit. c. 7.*

1678 *“Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.” Deut. vi. 5.*

1679 *“Eruntque verba hæc . . . in corde tuo . . . et meditaberis in eis, sedens in domo tua, et ambulans in itinere, dormiens atque consurgens; et ligabis ea quasi signum in manu tua; eruntque et movebuntur inter oculos tuos; scribesque ea in limine et ostiis domus tuæ.” Detit. vi. 6–9.*

1680 *Matt, xxiii. 5.*

1681 *“Beata sagitta, quæ simul in cor adducit sagittarium Deum.” In Cant., Hom. 4.*

1682 *“Quoniam Deus charitas est.” i John, iv. 8.*

1683 *“Non potest velle, nisi quod Deus vult. “ De vita solit.*

1684 *“Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea sponsa.” Cant. iv. 9.*

1685 *Discamus jaculari corda in Deum.*

1686 *Jaculantur corda in Deum.*

1687 *Deus meus, et omnia!*

1688 *Trahe me post te.*

1689 *“Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.” Cant. ii. 16.*

1690 *Tolerabilius esset gehennam tolerare, quam recedere ab illo.*

1691 *“Om’nia detrimentum feci et arbitror ut stercora, ut Christum lucrifaciam.” Phil. iii. 8.*

1692 *“Si dederit homo omnem substantiam domus suæ pro dilectione, quasi nihil despiciet eam.” Cant. viii. 7.*

1693 *“Oh! quam durum est amanti animum dimidiare cum Christo et mundo!” Serm. 11 in Cant.*

1694 *Amor insolens est.*

1695 *“Summa diligibilitas summe debet diligi.” De 7 itin. 4 d. 5 a. i.*

1696 *“Totus in meos usus expensus.” In Circ. s. 3.*

1697 *“Intolerabile æstimat quidquid non sonat Deum, quem intus amat.” Mora1.1. 7, c. 6.*

1698 *“Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa.” Cant. iv. 12.*

1699 *“Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.” Ps. lxxii. 26.*

1700 *“Stultum hominibus visum est, ut pro hominibus Auctor vitæ moreretur.” In Ev. Hom. 6.*

1701 *“Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.” Eph. v. 2.*

1702 *“Dilexit nos, et lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo.” Apoc. i. 5*

1703 *“Tantum me diligis, ut te pro me odisse videaris.” Stim.div.am. p. 2, C. 2.*

1704 *Quasi esset servus eorum, et quilibet eorum esset Dei Deus.*

1705 *“Charitas Christi urget nos.” 2 Cor. v. 14.*

1706 *“Mihi autem absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi.” Gal. vi. 14.*

1707 *“Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit. . . . Vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras, attritus est propter scelera nostra.” Isa. liii. 4.*

1708 *“Christus dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.” Eph. v. 2.*

1709 *“Dilexit nos et lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo.” Apoc. i. 5.*

1710 *“Accipite et manducate; hoc est corpus meum.” I Cor. xi. 24.*

1711 *“Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo.” John, vi. 57.*

1712 *“In charitate perpetua dilexi te.” Jer. xxxi. 3.*

1713 *“Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.” Eph. v. 2.*

1714 *“Non potest velle, nisi quod Deus vult.” De vita solit.*

1715 *Amori sancto omnia dulcia sunt.*

[1716] *“Bonum est nos hic esse.” Matt. xvii. 4.*

[1717] *Interior Castle, d. 2, ch. i.*

[1718] *Doce me facere voluntatem tuam.” Ps. cxlii. 10.*

[1719] *Domine, quid me vis facere?” Acts, ix. 6.*

[1720] *“Calicem quem dedit mihi Pater, non bibam ilium?” John, xviii. ii.*

[1721] *“Ita, Pater, quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te.” Matt. xi. 26.*

[1722] *“Sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est.” Job, i. 21.*

[1723] *“Non contristabit justum quidquid ei acciderit.” Prov. xii. 21.*

[1724] *“Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quærenti ilium.” Lam. iii. 25.*

[1725] *“Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.” Cant. ii. 16.*

[1726] *“Petite, et dabitur vobis.” Matt. vii. 7.*

[1727] *Petite, et dabitur vobis.*

[1728] *“Amen, amen dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.” John, xvi. 23.*

[1729] *“Si quid petieritis me in nomine meo, hoc faciam.” John, xiv. 14.*

[1730] *“Propter nimiam charitatem suam, qua dilexit nos, cum essemus mortui peccatis, convivificavit nos in Christo.” Ephes. ii.4.*

[1731] *“Et dicebant excessum ejus, quem completurus erat in Jerusalem.” Luke, ix. 31.*

[1732] *“Gloria in altissimis Deo.” Luke, ii. 14.*

[1733] *“Non passio communis, non mors simplex, morti similis.” De Pass. s. 6.*

[1734] *“Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit.” Isa. liii. 7.*

[1735] *“Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.” Eph. v. 2.*

[1736] *“In charitate perpetua dilexi te.” Jer. xxxi. 3.*

[1737] *“Delens quod adversus nos erat chirographum decreti, quod erat contrarium nobis, et ipsum tulit de medio, affigens illud cruci.” Col. ii. 14.*

[1738] *“Donans vobis omnia delicta.” Col. ii. 13.*

[1739] *“Et expolians principatus et potestates, traduxit eos confidenter palam triumphans in seraetipso.” Col. ii. 15.*

[1740] *Quasi victor ac triumphator circumvehens secum prædam et hostes in triumphum.*

[1741] *“Pater, dimitte illis; non enim sciunt quid faciunt.” Luke, xxiii. 34.*

[1742] *“Et qui cum eocrucifixi erant, convitiabantur ei.” Mark, xv. 32.*

[1743] *“Domine, memento mei, cum veneris in regnum tuum.” Luke, xxiii. 42.*

[1744] *“Hodie mecum eris in paradise.” Luke, xxiii. 43.*

[1745] *“Dixit discipulo: Ecce Mater tua.” Jolin, xix. 27.*

[1746] *“Postea, sciens Jesus quia omnia consummata sunt . . . dixit: Consummatum est. Et inclinato capite, tradidit spiritum.” John, xix. 28.*

[1747] *“Ubi autem abundavit delictum, superabundavit gratia.” Rom. v. 20.*

[1748] *“Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratise, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportune.” Heb. iv. 16.*

[1749] *“Quis enim nos separabit a charitate Christi?” Rom. viii. 35.*

[1750] *“Charitas enim Christi urget nos.” 2 Cor. v. 14.*

[1751] *Love of God, book vii. ch. 8.*

[1752] *“Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est.” 2 Cor. v. 15.*

[1753] *“Semetipsum nobis immiscuit, ut unum quid simus; ardenter enim amantium hoc est.” Ad pop. Ant. Hom. 61.*

[1754] *“Filios enutrivi et exaltavi; ipsi autem spreverunt me.” Is. i. 2.*

[1755] *“Projecisti me post corpus tuum.” Ezek. xxiii. 35.*

[1756] *“Qui dixerunt Deo: Recede a nobis.” Job, xxi. 14.*

[1757] *“Deus autem, qui dives est in misericordia, propter nimiam charitatem suam qua dilexit nos, et cum essemus mortui peccatis, convivificavit nos in Christo.” Eph. ii. 4.*

[1758] *“Prædicamus Christum crucifixum, Judæis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam.” i Cor, i. 23.*

[1759] *“Vidimus sapientiam amoris nimietate infatuatam.” Serm. de Nat. D.*

[1760] *De perf. vit. c. 6.*

[1761] *“Vidimus eum . . . despectum, et novissimum virorum, virum dolorum.” Isa. liii. 2,*

[1762] *Moriar amore amoris tui, qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori.*

[1763] *“Pater, in manus tuas commando spiritum meum.” Luke. xxiii. 46.*

[1764] *“In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” Ps. xxx. 2*

[1765] *“Et inclinato capite, tradidit spiritum.” John, xix. 30*

[1766] *“Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.” Eph. v. 2.*

[1767] *Love of God, book vii. ch. 8.*

[1768] *“Et ego si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad meipsum.” John, xii. 32.*

[1769] *Trahe me post te in odorem unguentorum tuorum.*

[1770] *“Qui intuentur fide mortem Christi, sanantur a morsibus peccatorum.” In Jo. tr. 12.*

[1771] *“Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum.” I Cor. ii. 2.*

[1772] *“In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” Ps. xxx. 2.*

[1773] *1 Love of God, book 12, ch. 13.*

[1774] This is a golden treatise that seems rather to have been inspired from Heaven than to have emanated from the human mind. The Saint himself read it again and again; he constantly practised the wise maxims that it contains, always endeavoured to inculcate its practice on others, and was accustomed to say, “The saints became saints because they always remained united with the will of God.” After his eyesight had begun to fail him, he took care to have his little treatise read to him. ED.

[1775] *“Charitatem habete, quod est vinculum perfectionis.” Col. iii. 14.*

[1776] *De div. nom. c. 4.*

[1777] *“Numquid vult Dominus holocausta et victimas, et non potius ut obediatur voci Domini? . . . Quasi scelus idolatriæ est nolle acquiescere.” i Kings, xv. 22.*

[1778] *“Hostiam et oblationem noluisti, corpus autem aptasti mihi. . . . Tunc dixi: Ecce venio, . . . ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam.” Heb. x. 5.*

[1779] *“Descendi de cœlo, non ut faciam voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem ejus qui misit me.” John, vi. 38.*

[1780] *“Ut cognoscat mundus quia diligo Patrem, et sicut mandatum dedit mihi Pater, sic facio: surgite, eamus hinc.”John, xiv. 31.*

[1781] *“Quicunque enim fecerit voluntatem Patris mei . . . ipse est meus frater.” Matt. xii. 50.*

[1782] *Interior Castle, d. 2, ch. I.*

[1783] *“Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in cœlo et in terra.” Matt. vi. 10.*

[1784] *“Inveni David, filium Jesse, virum secundum cor meum, qui faciet omnes voluntates meas. “ Acts, xiii. 22.*

[1785] *“Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum.” Ps. lvi. 8; cvii. i.*

[1786] *“Doce me facere voluntatem tuam.” Ps. cxlii. 10.*

1787 *“Domine, quid me vis facere?” Acts, ix. 6.*

1788 *“Vas electionis est mihi iste, ut portet nomen meum coram gentibus.” Acts, ix. 15.*

1789 *“Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi.” Prov. xxiii. 26.*

1790 *“Nihil gratius Deo possumus offerre, quam ut dicamus ei. Posside nos.” In Ps. cxxxi.*

1791 *“Ego Dominus, et non est alter, formans lucem et tenebras, faciens pacem et creans malum. Isa. xlv. 8.*

1792 *“Si erit malum in civitate, quod Dominus non fecerit?” Amos, iii. 6.*

1793 *“Bona et mala, vita et mors, paupertas et honestas, a Deo sunt.” Eccles. xi. 14.*

1794 *“Ecce ego suscitabo super te malum de domo tua, et tollam uxores tuas in oculis tuis, et dabo proximo tuo.” 2 Kings, xii. 11.*

1795 *“Assur, virga furoris mei . . . mandabo illi ut auferat spolia et diripiat prædam.” Isa. x. 5.*

1796 *“Impietas eorum tamquam securis Dei facta est.” In Ps. Ixxiii.*

1797 *“Calicem quem dedit mihi Pater, non bibam ilium?” John, xviii. ii.*

1798 *“Dominus dedit, Domiaus abstulit.” Job, i. 21.*

1799 *Sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est; sit nomen Domini benedictum!*

1800 *“Quidquid hic accidit contra voluntatem nostram, noveritis non accidere nisi de voluntate Dei.” In Ps. cxlviii.*

1801 *Rosweide, Vit. Pat.1. 1, c. 12.*

1802 *Cæs, Dia1.1. 10, c. 6.*

1803 *“Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum. “ Rom. viii. 28.*

1804 *“Non contristabit justum, quidquid ei acciderit.” Prov. xii. 21.*

1805 *“Humiles sunt, hoc volunt; pauperes sunt, pauperie delectantur; itaque beati dicendi sunt.” De Gub. Dei.1. I.*

1806 *“Pax Dei, qua exsuperat omnem sensum.” Phil. iv. 7.*

1807 *“Et hoc vanitas et afflictio spiritus.” Eccles. iv. 16.*

1808 *“Homo sanctus in sapientia manet sicut sol; nam stultus sicut luna mutatur.” Ecclus. xxvii. 12.*

1809 *“Et in terra paxhominibus bones voluntatis.” Luke, ii. 14.*

1810 *“Noluntas Dei bona, et bene placens, etperfecta.” Rom. xii. 2.*

1811 *“Gaudium vestrum nemo tollet a vobis. . . . Gaudium vestrum sit plenum.” John, xvi. 22–24.*

1812 *St. Jure, Knowledge, etc.,1. 3, ch. 8.*

1813 *“Voluntati enim ejus quis resistit?” Rom. ix. 19.*

1814 *“Quis restitit ei, et pacem habuit?” Job, ix. 4.*

1815 *“Quid quæris, homuncio, quærendo bona? Ama unum bonum in quo sunt omnia bona.” Man. c. 34.*

1816 *“Nolens aliquos perire, sed omnes ad pœnitentiam reverti.” 2 Peter, iii. 9.*

1817 *“Hæc est enim voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra.” I Thess. iv. 3.*

1818 *“Omnia cooperantur in bonum.” Rom. viii. 28.*

1819 *“Ad emendationem, et non ad perditionem nostram evenisse credamus.”—Judith, viii. 27.*

1820 *“Domine, ut scuto bonæ voluntatis tuæ coronasti nos.” Ps. v. 13.*

1821 *“Dominus sollicitus estmei.” Ps. xxxix. 18.*

1822 *“Qui etiam proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum, quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?” Rom. viii. 32.*

1823 *“In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam; quoniam tu, Domine, singulariter in spe constituisti me.” Ps. iv. 10.*

1824 *“Omnem sollicitudinem vestram projicientes in eum, quoniam ipsi cura est de vobis.” I Peter, v. 7.*

1825 *“Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.” Cant. ii. 16.*

1826 *“Ibant gaudentes a conspectu concilii, quoniam digni habiti sunt pro nomine Jesu contumeliam pati.” Acts, v. 41.*

[1827] *“Ita, Pater, quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te.” Matt. xi. 26.*

[1828] *“Obmutui et non aperui os meum, quoniam tu fecisti.” Ps. xxxviii. 10.*

[1829] *Ep. ad Eustathium.*

[1830] *Christian Perfection, p. i, tr. 8, ch. 7.*

[1831] *“Porro unum est necessarium.” Luke, x. 42.*

[1832] *“Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.” Matt. xxvi. 38.*

[1833] *“Pater mi, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste.” Ibid. 39.*

[1834] *Verumtamen, non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu.*

[1835] *Lett. xiii. ed. Migne.*

[1836] *February 6.*

[1837] *Chap. 14.*

[1838] *Hic ure, hic seca, hic non parcas, ut in æternum parcas.*

[1839] *“Hæc sit mihi consolatio, ut affligens me dolore non parcat.” Job, vi. 10.*

[1840] *“Dominus est; quod bonum est in oculis suis, facial.” I Kings, iii. 18.*

[1841] *“Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?” Matt. xxvii. 46.*

[1842] *Audifil., c. 26.*

[1843] *“Ne magnitudo revelationum extollat me, datus est mihi stimulus carnis mew, angelus Satanw, qui me colaphizet.” 2 Cor. xii, 7.*

[1844] *“Est amicus socius mensw, et non permanebit in die necessitatis.” Ecclus. vi. 10.*

[1845] *Hist. laus. c. 20.*

[1846] *Christ. Perf, p. I, tr. 8, ch. 29.*

[1847] *De Prof, re1.1. 2, c. 76.*

[1848] *2 Cor. xii. 9.*

[1849] *Insin. 1. i, c. 11.*

[1850] *L. 3, c. 37.*

[1851] *“Educ de custodia animam meam.” Ps. cxli. 8.*

[1852] *“Cur vitam istam desideramus, in qua, quanto amplius vivimus, tanto plus peccamus?” Med. c. 2.*

[1853] *Eia moriar, ut te videam!*

[1854] *“Desiderium habens dissolvi, et esse cum Christo.” Phil. i. 23.*

[1855] *“Quando veniam et apparebo ante faciem Dei?” Ps. xli. 3.*

[1856] *Christ. Perf. p. I, tr. 8, ch. 30.*

[1857] *“Qui vos audit, me audit.” Luke, x. 16.*

[1858] *“Domine, quid me vis facere?” Acts, ix. 6.*

[1859] *“Tuus sum ego, salvum me fac.” Ps. cxviii. 94.*

[1860] *“Ita Peter! quoniam sic fuit placitumante te.” Matt. xi. 26.*

[1861] *“Quid est homo, quia magnificas eum? aut quid apponis erga eum cor tuum?” Job, vii. 17.*

[1862] *“Ad ubera portabimini, et super genua blandientur vobis; quomodo si cui mater blandiatur, ita ego consolabor vos.” Isa. lxvi. 12.*

[1863] *“Infinitus enim thesaurus est hominibus, quo qui usi sunt, participes facti sunt amicitiæ Dei.” Wis. vii. 14.*

[1864] *“Semetipsum exinanivit.” Phil. ii. 7.*

[1865] *“Et cum hominibus conversatus est.” Bar. iii. 38.*

[1866] *“Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo.” John, vi. 57.*

[1867] *“Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.” Cant. ii. 16.*

[1868] *“Dilectus meus . . . electus ex miliibus.” Cant. v. 10.*

1869 *“Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.” Ps.1. 19.*

1870 *“Quid enim mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? . . . Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.” Ps. lxxii. 25.*

1871 *“Ecce in manibus meis descripsi te; muri tui coram oculis meis semper.” Isa. xlix. 16.*

1872 *“Domine, ut scuto bonæ voluntatis tuæ coronasti nos.” Ps. v. 13.*

1873 *“Sic enim Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret.” John, iii. 16.*

1874 *“Pro nobis omnibus tradidit ilium; quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?” Rom. viii. 32.*

1875 *“Deliciæ meæ esse cum filiis hominum.” Prov. viii. 31.*

1876 *“Non enim habet amaritudinem conversatio illius, nec taedium convictus illius.” Wis. viii. 16.*

1877 *“In ipso enim vivimus, et movemur, et sumus.” Acts, xvii. 28.*

1878 *“Soror nostra parva . . . quid faciemus sorori nostræ, in die quando alloquenda est?” Cant. viii. 8.*

1879 *“Præoccupat qui se concupiscunt, ut se illis prior ostendat.” Wis. vi. 14.*

1880 *“Et aures ejus in preces eorum.” Ps. xxxiii. 16.*

1881 *“In sancto habitans, et cum contrito et humili spiritu.” Isa. lvii. 15.*

1882 *“Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus.” Ps. xxxiii. 9.*

1883 *“Quiesces, et suavis erit somnus tuus. . . . Dominus enim erit in latere tuo.” Prov. iii. 24.*

1884 *“Conquiescam cum ilia . . . et erit allocutio cogitationis.” Wis. viii. 9–16,*

1885 *“Per somnium loquar ad ilium.” Num. xii. 6.*

1886 *“Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex corde tuo.” Deut. vi. 5*

1887 *“Revela Domino viam tuam.” Ps. xxxvi. 5.*

1888 *“Et pete ab eo ut vias tuas dirigat et omnia consilia tua in ipso permaneant.” Tob. iv. 20.*

1889 *John, xi. 1.*

1890 *Lam. i. 20.*

1891 *“Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.” Matt. xi. 28.*

1892 *“Verbosi amici mei.” Job, xvi. 21.*

1893 *“Ut quid, Domine, recessisti longe?” Ps. ix. I.*

1894 *“Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?” Matt, xxvii. 46.*

1895 *“Omnia cooperantur in bonum.” Rom. viii. 28.*

1896 *“Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea; quem timebo?” Ps. xxvi. i.*

1897 *“In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” Ps. xxx. 2.*

1898 *“Nullus speravit in Domino, et confusus est.” Ecclus. ii. n.*

1899 *“Dominus sollicitus est mei.” Ps. xxxix. 18.*

1900 *“In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam; quoniam tu, Domine, singulariter in spe constituisti me.” Ps. iv. 9.*

1901 *“Sentite de Domino in bonitate.” Wis. i. 1.*

1902 *“Superexaltat autem misericordia judicium.” James, ii. 13.*

1903 *“Omnem sollicitudinem vestram projicientes in eum, quoniam ipsi cura est de vobis.” I Peter, v. 7.*

1904 *“Deus noster, Deus salvos faciendi.” Ps. lxvii. 21.*

1905 *Et misericordia ejus . . . timentibus eum.*

1906 *“Exultabo in Deo Jesu meo.” Habac. iii. 18.*

1907 *“Cantabo Domino, qui bona tribuit mihi.” Ps. xii. 6.*

1908 *“Omnia poma, nova et vetera, Dilecte mi, servavi tibi. Cant vii. 13.*

1909 *“Et quare moriemini, domus Israel? . . . Convertimini, et vivite. “ Ezek. xviii. 31.*

1910 *“Convertimini ad me . . . et convertar ad vos.” Zach. i. 3.*

1911 *“Expectat Dominus, ut misereatur vestri.” Isa. xxx. 18.*

1912 *“Vivo ego, dicit Dominus Deus, nolo mortem impii, sed ut convertatur impius a via sua, et vivat.” Ezek. xxxiii. n.*

1913 *“Et venite et arguite me, dicit Dominus; si fuerint peccata vestra ut coccinum, quasi nix dealbabuntur.” Isa. i. 18.*

1914 *“Omnium iniquitatum ejus . . . non recordabor.” Ezek. xviii. 22.*

1915 *“Domine, ecce quem amas, infirmatur. John, xi. 3.*

1916 *“Sana animam meam, quia peccavi tibi.” Ps. xl. 5.*

1917 *“Suavis et mitis, et multæ misericordiæ. “ Ps. Ixxxv. 5.*

1918 *“Remittuntur tibi peccata.” Luke, vii. 48.*

1919 *“Proprio Filio suo non pepercit.” Rom. viii. 32.*

1920 *“Respice in faciem Christi tui.” Ps. lxxxiii. 10.*

1921 *“Da verbum in ore meo, et in corde meo consilium corrobora.” Judith, ix. 1 8.*

1922 *“Loquere, Domine. quia audit servus tuus.” i Kings, iii. 10.*

1923 *Sanctificetur nomen tuum; adveniat regnum tuum.*

1924 *“Ducam eam in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor ejus.” Osee, ii. 14.*

1925 *“In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam—Ps. iv. 9.*

1926 *“Hi in curribus, et hi in equis; nos autem in nomine Domini.” Ps. xix. 8.*

1927 *“Cœlum et terra, et omnia quæ in eis sunt, mihi dicunt ut amem te.” Conf.1. 10, c. 6.*

1928 *“Delicta juventutis meæ, et ignorantias meas, ne memineris.” Ps. xxiv. 7.*

1929 *“Petite, et accipietis.” John, xvi. 24.*

1930 *“Quis invocavit eum, et despexit ilium?” Ecclus. ii. 12.*

1931 *“Tu, Domine, suavis et mitis, et multa’ misericordia’ omnibus invocantibus te.” Ps. lxxxv. 5.*

1932 *“Bonus est Dominus . . . anima’ qua’renti ilium” Lam. iii. 25.*

1933 *“Inventus sum anon qua’rentibus me.” Hom. x. 20.*

1934 This short treatise may be regarded as an abridgment of that which bears the title “ Great Means of obtaining Salvation,” though it was published several years before the latter. ED.

1935 *“Deus impossibilia non jubet, sed jubendo monet, et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis; et adjuvatut possis.” Sess. 6, c. u.*

1936 *See Habert (Theol. Gra’c. Pat.1. 2, c. 6, n. I; c. 15, n. 2 and 3); the latter quotes Gamache, Duval, Isambert, Le Moyne, etc., and asserts that such is the common opinion of the schools, notably that of the Sorbonne. See also Thomassin (Theol. dogm. tr. de Graf. c. 8); Duplessis d’Argentré (Diss. de mult. gen. div. gr.}, Tournely (Pra’l. theol. de gr. chr. q. 7, a. 4, concl. 5).*

1937 *“Nullum credimus ad salutem, nisi Deo invitante, venire; nullum invitatum salutem suam, nisi Deo auxiliante, operari; nullum, nisi orantem auxilium promereri.” De Eccl. Dogm. c. 26.*

1938 *“Deum constat alia dare etiam non orantibus, sicut initium fidei, alia non nisi orantibus Præparasse, sicut usque in finem perseverantiam.” De Dono pers. c. 16.*

1939 *De or. De0,1. I.*

1940 *OPORTET semper orare.” Luke, xviii. i.*

1941 *“Non habetis, propter quod non postulates.” James, iv. 2.*

1942 *“Petite et accipietis.” John, xvi. 24.*

1943 *“Omnes homines vult salvos fieri.” I Tim. ii. 4.*

1944 *“Clamabit ad me, et ego exaudiam eum.” Ps. xc. 15.*

1945 *“Clama ad me et exaudiam te.” Jer. xxxiii. 3.*

1946 *“Invoca me in die tribulationis, eruam te, et honorificabis me.” Ps. xlix. 15.*

1947 *“Quis invocavit eum, et despexit ilium?” Ecclus. ii. 12.*

1948 *“Ad vocem clamoris tui, statim ut audierit, respondebit tibi.” Isa. xxx. 19.*

1949 *“Adhuc illis loquentibus, ego audiam.” Isa. lxv. 24.*

1950 *“Benedictus Deus, qui non amovit orationem meam et misericordiam suam a me.” Ps. lxv. 20.*

1951 *Cum videris non a te amotam deprecationem tuam, securus esto, quia non est a te amota misericordia ejus.*

1952 *“Quodcunque volueritis, petetis, et fiet vobis.” John, xv. 7.*

1953 *Oratio, cum sit una, omnia potest.*

1954 *“Per ipsam impetratur obtentio omnis boni et amotio omnis mail.” In Luc. c. II.*

1955 *“Tu, Domine, suavis et mitis, et multæ misericordiæ, omnibus invocantibus te.” Ps. lxxxv. 5.*

1956 *“Si quis vestrum indiget sapientia, postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluenter. et non improperat.” James, i. 5.*

1957 *Deus cujus natura bonitas.*

1958 *“Dominus sollicitus est mei.” Ps. xxxix. 18.*

1959 *“In quacumque die invocavero te, ecce cognovi quoniam Deus meus es.” Ps. Iv. 10.*

1960 *“Domine, si vis, potes me mundare. Volo; mundare.” Matt. viii. 3.*

1961 *“Omnes nobis causamur deesse gratiam; sed justius forsitan ipsa sibi queritur gratia deesse nonnullos.” De Div. s. 17.*

1962 *“Usque modo non petistis quidquam in nomine meo; petite, et accipietis, ut gaudium vestrum sit plenum.” John, xvi. 24.*

1963 *“Deus in adjutorium meum intende.” Ps. lxix. 2.*

1964 *“Petitis, et non accipitis, eo quod male petatis. “ James, iv. 3.*

1965 *“Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam.” James, iv. 6.*

1966 *“Oratio humiliantis se nubes penetrabit . . . et non discedet, donec Altissimus aspiciat.” Ecclus. xxxv. 21. 8*

1967 *“Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.” Ps. 1. 19.*

1968 *“Nullus speravit in Domino, et confusus est.” Ecclus. ii. 11.*

1969 *“Oratio pie Deo vim infert.” Scal. spir. gr. 28.*

1970 *“Hæc vis Deo grata est.” Apolog.*

1971 *“Omnia quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.” Mark, xi. 24.*

1972 *“Non nos tantum hortaretur ut peteremus, nisi dare vellet.” Serm. 105, E. B.*

1973 *Non sum missus nisi ad oves quæ perierunt domus Israel.*

1974 *Domine adjuva me.*

1975 *Non est bonum sumere panem filiorum, et mittere canibus.*

1976 *“O mulier! magna est fides tua; fiat tibi sicut vis. Et sanata est filia ejus ex ilia hora.” Matt. xv. 28.*

1977 *Petite et accipietis.*

1978 *“Quis falli timeat, cum promittit Veritas?” Conf.1. 12, c. I.*

1979 *“Quanto magis dabit bonus, qui noshortaturut petanius!” Semi. 61, Ed. Ben.*

1980 *“Vult nos in oratione esse perseverantes usque ad importunitatem.” In Luc. xi. 8.*

1981 *Sess. 6, c. 13.*

1982 *“Hoc Dei donum suppliciter emereri potest.” De dono pers. c. 6.*

1983 *Quotidie petenda est, ut quotidie obtineatur.*

1984 *“Oportet semper orare, et non deficere.” Luke, xviii. i.*

1985 *“Vigilate itaque, omni tempore orantes, ut digni habeamini fugere ista omnia quæ futura sunt, et stare ante Filium hominis.” Luke, xxi. 36.*

1986 *“Sine intermissione orate.” I Thess. v. 17.*

1987 *“Beatus homo qui audit me, et qui vigilat ad fores meas quotidie.” Prov. viii. 34.*

1988 *“Petite, et dabitur vobis; quærite, et invenietis; pulsate, et aperietur vobis.” Luke, xi. 9.*

1989 *“Peccatores Deus non audit.” -John, ix. 31.*

1990 *“In quantum sunt peccatores.” 2, 2, q. 83, a. 16.*

1991 *“Omnis qui petit, accipit.” Luke, xi. 10.*

[1992] *“Etiam ea quæ non meremur, orando impetramus.” I. 2. q. 114, a. 9, ad I.*

[1993] *“Meritum innititur justitiæ; sed impetratio innititur gratiæ.” 2. 2. q. 83, a. 16, ad 2.*

[1994] *“Ipsa oratio familiares nos Deo facit.” Comp. theol p. 2, c. 2.*

[1995] *“Quod amicitia non perfecit, perfectum est ab oratione.” Hom. Non esse desp.*

[1996] *“Amen, amen dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.” John, xvi. 23.*

[1997] *“Non petitur in nomine Salvatoris, quidquid petitur contra rationem salutis.” In Joan, tr. 102.*

[1998] *“Datus est mihi stimulus carnis meas angelus Satanae, qui me colaphizet; propter quod ter Dominum rogavi, ut discederet a me.” 2 Cor. xii. 7–9.*

[1999] *“Sufficit tibi gratia mea.” Ibid.*

2000 *“In tribulatione invocasti me, et liberavi te; exaudivi te in abscondito tempestatis.” Ps. Ixxx. 8.*

2001 *“Plus vult ille dare, quam nos accipere.” Serm. 105, E. B.*

2002 *“Quas preces exaudis, si has non exaudis?” De Civ. D. L. 22, c, 8.*

2003 *Desiderium ad quid dares, nisi velles exaudire?*

2004 *“Si ergo vos, cum sitis mali, nostis bona data dare filiis vestris, quanto magis Pater vester de cælo dabit spiritum bonum petentibus se?” Luke xi. 13.*

2005 *Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus.*

2006 *“Nec facultas ei deesse poterit, nec voluntas.” De Assumpt. s.I.*

2007 *“Memorare, piissima Domina, non esse auditum quemquam, ad tua præsidia confugientem, esse derelictum. O Salus te*

invocantium!” In Cant, post Psalt.

2008 *“Qui vos audit, me audit.” Luke, x. 16.*

2009 *“Quidquid vice Dei præcipit homo, quod non sit tamen certum displicere Deo, haud secus omnino accipiendum est, quam si præcipiat Deus.” De Pro:, et Disp. c. 12.*

2010 *Introd. p. i, ch. 4.*

2011 *Life, B. i. c. 20, p. 130, Orat, ed.*

2012 *Quisquis ita dicis, erras; non enim te commisisti in manus hominis, quia litteratus, etc., sed quia tibi est primositus; quamobrem obedias illi, non ut homini, sed ut Deo.” Tr. de Primp. . ad M. cons. 3.*

2013 *Found, ch. 4.*

2014 *Introd. p. i, ch. 4.*

2015 *In c. Ad aures, De temp, ordinat.*

2016 *Ad pastoris sui consilium.*

2017 *Maximes.*

2018 *L. i. n. 434*

[2019] *Quod autem scrupuli sperni debeant, accedente prudentis, pii, doctique directoris judicio, et contra illos sit agendum.*

[2020] *6 " Non peccat qui agit contra scrupulos, immo aliquando est præcepti, præsertim si accedit confessarii judicium." Tr. 2, ex. 2, q. 2.*

[2021] *Ap. Salm. tr. 20, c. 7, n. 10.*

[2022] *"Caveas ad extremum ne, dum quæris securitatem, in gravem ruas præsumptionis foveam." Ap. Nat. Alex., loc. cit.*

[2023] *Nisi contra Deum (director) Præcipiat aperte.*

[2024] *"Obediendum in omnibus ubi peccatum non cernitur, i. e. (in Declar.), in quibus nullum manifestum est peccatum." P. 6, c. i, I.*

[2025] *"Nisi aperte sit malum quod præcipitur, accipiendum est ac si a Deo præcipiatur." De erud. rel. 1. 5, c. i.*

[2026] *"In dubiis, an sit contra Præceptum Dei, standum est præcepto prælati; quia, etsi contra Deum, attamen propter obedientise bonum non peccat subditus." In 2 Sent. d. 39, q. 3.*

[2027] *"Scrupulosis contra scrupulos agendum est, et fixo operis pede certandum. Scrupulos compescere melius quam per contemptum nequimus, et regulariter non absque alterius, et Præsertim superioris, consilio. Alioquin timor immoderatus aut inconsulta præsumptio prææcipitat." Cons. 6.*

[2028] *Book 2, ch. 10.*

[2029] *Busemb. 1. I, tr. I, c. 3. Cum Sane, Bech. Reg. Fill.*

[2030] *L. i, n. 557.*

[2031] *Tambur. in dec., 1. I, c. 3, 8. Cum Vasq. Val., etc.*

[2032] *"Conscientia formata est, quando, post discussionem et deliberationem, ex definitiva sententia rationis judicatur aliquid faciendum aut vitandum; et contra eamfacere, est peccatum. Timor vero conscientiæ seu scrupulus est, quando mens inter dubia vacillat, nesciens ad quid potius teneatur; non tamen vellet omittere quid-quid sciret esse placitum divinæ voluntati; et iste timor quantum fieri potest, abjiciendus et extinguendus." Comp. theolog, tr. de nat. et qua I. consc.*

[2033] *Salm. tr. 20. c. II, n. 5.*

[2034] *"Quod si aliqua insit deliberatio, sed imperfecta, erit peccatum veniale, non mortale." Tr. I, c. 9. De pecc.*

2035 *“Potest quod est mortale esse veniale propter imperfectionem actus; quia non perfecte pertingit ad rationem actus moralis, cum non sit deliberatus, sed subitus.” I. 2. q. 88, a. 6.*

2036 *“Nullus speravit in Domino, et confusus est.” Ecclus. ii. u.*

2037 *“Omnem sollicitudinem vestram projicientes in eum, quoniam ipsi cura est de vobis.” I Peter, v. 7.*

2038 *“Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea; quem timebo?” Ps. xxvi. i.*

2039 *“In pace in idipsum dormiam etrequiescam; quoniam tu, Domine, singulariter in spe constituisti me.” Ps. iv. 9.*

2040 *“In te; Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” Ps. xxx. 2.*

2041 *Found, ch. 5.*

2042 *“Qui vos audit, me audit.” Luke, x. 16.*

2043 *Maximes.*

2044 *“Quidquid vice Dei præcipit homo, quod non sit tamen certum displicere Deo, baud secus omnino accipiendum est, quam si præcipiat Deus.” De Præc. et Disp. c. 12.*

2045 *“Convertimini ad me, ait Dominus exercituum, et convertar ad vos.” Zach. i. 3.*

2046 *“Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.” Matt. xi. 28.*

2047 *“Venite, et arguite me, dicit Dominus; si fuerint peccata vestra ut coccinum, quasi nix dealbabuntur.” Isa. i. 18.*

2048 *“Et quare moriemini, domus Israel?” Ezek. xxxiii. 11.*

2049 *“Quapropter, fratres, magis satagite ut, per bona opera, certam vestram vocationem et electionem faciatis.” 2 Peter, i. 10.*

2050 *“Convertimini ad me, et salvi eritis.” Isa. xlv. 22.*

2051 *“Omnes homines vult salvos fieri, et ad agnitionem veritatis venire.” I Tim, ii. 4.*

2052 *“Vivo ego, dicit Dominus: nolo mortem impii, sed ut convertatur impius a via sua, et vivat.” Ezek. xxxiii. n.*

2053 *“Jurans etiam Vivo dicens, cupit credi sibi.” De Pœnit. c. 4.*

2054 *“Quid est adeo disertum in fidei decrelis, quod a cavillatione tutum esse possit?” De De0,1. 10, c. 15, n. 5.*

2055 *“In charitate perpetua dilexi te; ideo attraxi te miserans.” Jer. xxxi. 3.*

2056 *“Patienter agit propter vos, nolens aliquos perire, sed omnes ad pœnitentiam reverti.” 2 Peter, iii. 9.*

2057 *“Qui nos tanto pretio redemit, non vult perire quos emit.” Serm. 22, E. B.*

2058 *“Et quare moriemini, domus Israel? . . . Revertimini, et vivite.” Ezek. xviii. 31.*

2059 *“Qui vos audit, me audit; et qui vos spernit, me spernit.” Luke, x. 16.*

2060 *“Omnem sollicitudinem vestram projicientes in eum, quoniam ipsi cura estdevobis.” i Peter, v. 7.*

2061 *“Offertur omnibus, et nemo illius est expers, nisi qui renuit.” In Ptir. M. V. s. I.*

2062 *“Petite et accipietis.” John, xvi. 24.*

2063 *“Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.” Phil. iv. 13.*

2064 *“Nullus speravit in Domino, et confusus est.” Ecclus. ii. 11.*

2065 *“Donavit illi nomen quod est super omne nomen, ut in nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur caelestium, terrestrium, et infernorum.” Phil. ii. 9.*

2066 *“Calicem quem dedit mihi Pater, non bibam ilium?” John, xviii. 11.*

2067 *“Sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est; sit nomen Domini benedictum.” Job, i. 21.*

2068 *“Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quærenti ilium.” Lam. iii. 25.*

2069 *“Nullus speravit in Domino, et confusus est.” Ecclus. ii. 11.*

2070 *“Inventus sum a non quærentibus me.” Rom x. 20.*

2071 *“Ego diligentes me diligo. “ Prov. viii. 17.*

2072 “Quid me vis facere?” Acts, ix. 6.

2073 *“Doce me facere voluntatem tuam.” Ps, cxlii. 10.*

2074 *“Eamus et nos, ut moriamur cum eo.” john, xi. 16.*

2075 *“Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesus Christum, et hunc crucifixum.” I Cor. ii. 2.*

2076 *“Semper oculis cordis sui Christum in cruce tamquam morientem videat, qui devotionem in se vult conservare inextinguibilem.” De perf. vit. c. 6.*

2077 *“Deus, in adjutorium meum intende; Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.” Ps. lxix. 2.*

2078 *“Petite, et dabitur vobis.” Matt. vii. 7.*

2079 *“Magister, volumus ut, quodcumque petierimus, facias nobis.” Mark, x. 36.*

2080 *“Quid vultis ut faciam vobis?” Ibid.*

2081 *“Amen, amen dico vobis, si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.” John, xvi. 23.*

2082 *“Et Dominus voluit conterere eum in infirmitate.” Isa. liii. 10.*

2083 *Se finxit longius ire.*

2084 *Et coegerunt ilium, dicentes: Mane nobiscum, quoniam advesperascit.*

2085 *“Et intravit cum illis.” Luke, xxiv. 29.*

2086 *“Domine, ad quem ibimus?” John, vi. 69.*

2087 *“Neque mors, neque vita . . . neque creatura alia poterit nos separare a charitate Dei, quæ est in Christo Jesu.” Rom. viii. 38.*

2088 *“Dilata os tuum, et implebo illud.” Ps. Ixxx. n.*

2089 *“Protector est omnium sperantium in se.” Ps. xvii. 31.*

2090 *“Modicæ fidei, quare dubitasti?” Matt. xiv. 31.*

2091 *“Omnia quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.” Mark, xi. 24.*

2092 *“Postulet autem in fide, nihil hsesitans.” James, i. 6.*

2093 *“Deliciæ meæ, esse cum filiis hominuro.” Prov. viii. 31.*

2094 *“Ignem veni mittere in terram.” Luke, xii. 49.*

2095 *“Suadeo tibi emere a me aurum ignitum.” Apoc. iii. 18.*

2096 *“Filioli mei: non diligamus verbo neque lingua, sed opere et veritate.” I John, iii. 18.*

2097 *“Si operari renuit, amor non est.” Hom. 30 in Evang,*

2098 *“Qui habet mandata mea, et servat ea, ille est qui diligit me.” John, xiv. 21.*

2099 *“Omnia sæva et immania, prorsus facilia et prope nulla efficit amor” Serm. 70, E. B.*

2100 *Filioli mei, non diligamus verbo neque lingua, sed opere et veritate.*

2101 *“Ne forte peccaverint filii mei.” Job, i. 5.*

2102 *“Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit; sicut Domino placuit. ita factum est. Sit nomen Domini benedictum!” Job. i. 21.*

2103 *“Ut cognoscat mundus quiadiligo Patrem. . . . Surgite, eamus.” John, xiv. 31.*

2104 *“Omne aurum, in comparatione illius, arena est exigua.” Wis. vii. 9.*

2105 *“Divitias nihil esse duxi in comparatione illius.” Wis. vii. 8.*

2106 *“Si linguis hominum loquar, et angelorum, charitatem autem non habeam; factus sum velut æs sonans, aut cymbalum tinniens.” I Cor. xiii. I.*

2107 This abridgment of a Rule of Life was made by the holy author himself. ED.

2108 *“Qui vos audit, me audit.” Luke, x. 16.*

2109 *“Qui amat periculum, in illo peribit.” Ecchis. iii 27.*

2110 “Petite, et accipietis.”—*John,* 16:24.

2111 “Obsecro igitur primum omnium fieri obsecrationes, orationes, postulationes, gratiarum actiones.”—1 *Tim.* 2:1.

2112 2. 2. q. 83, a. 17.

2113 “Omnia potius disputat (Pelagius), quam ut oret.”—*De Nat. et Grat.* c. 17.

2114 “Si quis autem vestrum indiget sapientia, postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluenter, et non improperat.”—*James,* 1:5.

[2115] “Oportet semper orare.”—*Luke*, 18:1.

[2116] “Vigilate et orate, ut non intretis in tentationem.”—*Matt.* 26:41.

[2117] “Petite et dabitur vobis.”—*Matt.* 7:7.

[2118] “Fide tenendum est, orationem adultis ad salutem esse necessariam, ut colligitur ex Scripturis; quia oratio est medium sine quo auxilium ad salutem necessarium obtineri nequit.”—*De just. lib.* 2. c. 37. d. 3.

[2119] “Sine me nihil potestis facere.”—*John*, 15:5.

[2120] “Non ait: Perficere; sed: Facere.”—*Contra ep. pe1.*1. 2. *c.* 8.

[2121] “Non quod sufficientes simus cogitare aliquid a nobis, quasi ex nobis; sed sufficientia nostra ex Deo est.”—2 *Cor.* 3:5.

[2122] “Deus qui operatur omnia in omnibus.”—1 *Cor.* 12:6. “Faciam ut in præceptis meis ambuletis, et judicia mea custodiatis et operemini.”—*Ezek.* 36:27.

[2123] “Nulla facit homo bona, quæ non Deus præstat ut faciat homo.”—*Conc. Araus.* ii. *cap.* 20.

[2124] “Si quis dixerit sine præveniente Spiritus Sancti inspiratione, atque ejus adjutorio, hominem credere, sperare, diligere, aut pœnitere posse, sicut oportet ut ei justificationis gratia conferatur, anathema sit.”—*Sess.* 6, *Can.* 3.

[2125] “Alios munivit cursu, alios unguibus, alios pennis; hominem autem sic disposuit, ut virtus illius ipse sit.”—*Hom.* 18.

[2126] “Nullum credimus ad salutem, nisi Deo invitante, venire; nullum invitatum salutem suam, nisi Deo auxiliante, operari; nullum, nisi orantem, auxilium promereri.”—*De Eccl. Dogm.* c. 26.

[2127] “Constat Deum alia dare etiam non orantibus, sicut initium fidei; alia non nisi orantibus præparasse, sicut usque in finem perseverantiam.”—*De dono pers.* c. 16.

[2128] “Post baptismum autem, necessaria est homini jugis oratio, ad hoc quod cœlum introeat; licet enim per baptismum remittantur peccata, remanet tamen fomes peccati nos impugnans interius, et mundus et dæmones qui impugnant exterius.”—*P.* 3, *q.* 39, *a.* 5.

[2129] “Qui certat in agone, non coronatur, nisi legitime certaverit.”—2 *Tim.* 2:5.

[2130] “Homines postulando merentur accipere quod eis Deus ante sæcula disposuit donare.”—*Dia1.1.* 1, *c.* 8.

2131 “Sed ut nos consideremus in his ad divinum auxilium esse recurrendum, . . . et recognoscamus eum esse bonorum nostrorum auctorem.”—*Loco cit. ad i. et* 2.

2132 “Petite, et dabitur vobis; quærite et invenietis.”—*Matt.* 7:7.

2133 “Ego autem mendicus sum et pauper.”—*Ps.* 39:18.

2134 “Deus dare vult, sed non dat nisi petenti.”—*In Ps.* 102.

2135 “Sicut corpus sine anima non potest vivere, sic anima sine oratione mortua est et graviter olens.”—*De or. D.1.* I.

2136 “Sicut escis alitur caro, ita orationibus homo interior nutritur.”—*De sal. Doc.* c. 28.

2137 “(Peccavit) quia ad divinum auxilium recursum non habuit.”—*P.* 1, *q.* 94, *a.* 4.

2138 “Dei gratiam in vacuum recipientes, non orando constare nequiverunt.”—*Tr. adv. pelag. hær.*

2139 “Domus mea, Domus orationis vocabitur.”—*Matt.* 21:13.

2140 “Principium, progressus, et complementum est omnium virtutum.”—*Litt. past. de or. in comm.*

2141 “Sed cum ignoremus quid agere debeamus, hoc solum habemus residui, ut oculos nostros dirigamus ad te.”—2 *Par.* 20:12.

2142 “Oculi mei semper ad Dominum, quoniam ipse evellet de laqueo pedes meos.”—*Ps.* 24:16.

2143 “Respice in me et miserere mei; quia unicus et pauper sum ego.”—*Ibid.* 15. “Clamavi ad te, salvum me fac, ut custodiam mandata tua.”—*Ps.* 118:146.

2144 Deest quoque gratia, qua possibilia fiant.

2145 Deus impossibilia non jubet; sed jubendo monet, et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis; et adjuvat ut possis.

2146 *Sess.* 6, c. 11.

2147 “Videamus unde possit, unde non possit . . . medicina poterit, quod vitio non potest.”—*De Natura et gr.* c. 43.

2148 “Eo ipso quo firmissime creditur Deum justum et bonum impossibilia non potuisse præcipere, hinc admonemur, et in facihbus quid agamus, et in difficilibus quid petamus.”—*De Nat. et Gr.* c. 69.

2149 “Ideo jubet aliqua quæ non possumus, ut noverimus quid ab illo petere debeamus.”—*De Gr. et Lib. Arb.* c. 16.

2150 “Lex data est ut gratia quæreretur; gratia data est ut lex impleretur.”—*De Spir. et Litt.* c. 19.

2151 “Bona est lex, si quis ea legitime utatur; quid est ergo legitime uti lege? per legem agnoscere morbum suum, et quærere ad sanitatem divinum adjutorium.”—*Serm.* 156, *Ed. Bin.*

2152 “Qui sumus nos, aut quæ fortitudo nostra, ut tam multis tentationibus resistere valeamus? Hoc erat certe quod quærebat Deus, ut, videntes defectum nostrum, et quod non est nobis auxilium aliud, ad ejus misericordiam tota humilitate curramus.”—*In Quad.* s. 5.

2153 “Oratio pudicitiæ præsidium est.”—*De Or. Dom.* 1.

2154 “Et ut scivi quoniam aliter non possem esse continens, nisi Deus det, . . . adii Dominum, et deprecatus sum illum.”—*Wisd.* 8:21.

2155 “Dicendum quod illud quod possumus cum auxilio divino, non est nobis omnino impossibile.”—1. 2. q. 109, a. 4.

2156 “Consultissime homini præcipi, ut rectis passibus ambulet, ut, cum se non posse perspexerit, medicinam requirat ad sanandam peccati claudicationem.”—*De Perf. Just. hom. c.* 3.

2157 “Novit recte vivere, qui recte novit orare.”—*Serm.* 55, *E. B. app.*

2158 “Non habetis, propter quod non postulatis.”—*James,* 4:2.

2159 “Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis, sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proventum ut possitis sustinere.”—1 *Cor.* 10:13.

2160 Illud faciet provenire (gratiæ præsidio), quo possitis (tentationem) sustinere.

2161 “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* 4:13.

2162 “Nec quisquam poterit excusari, qui hostem vincere noluit, dum ab orando cessavit.”—*Serm. de Moyse.*

2163 “Bonum atque utile est suppliciter eos invocare, et ob beneficia impetranda a Deo per Filium ejus Jesum Christum ad eorum orationes, opem, auxiliumque, confugere.”—*Sess.* 25, *De inv. Sanct.*

2164 “Et pro nobis ipsis orate ad Dominum Deum nostrum.”—*Bar.* 1:13.

2165 “Fratres, orate pro nobis.”—1 *Thess.* 5:25.

[2166] “Ite ad servum meum Job; . . . Job autem servus meus orabit pro vobis; faciem ejus suscipiam.”—*Job,* 42:8.

[2167] Quia plurium orationibus quandoque impetratur, quod unius oratione non impetraretur.

[2168] “Ex hoc fit dignus, quod ad ipsum (sanctum) cum devotione recurrit.”—*In* 4*, Sent. dist.* 45, q. 3, a. 2

[2169] “Non sunt in statu orandi, sed magis ut oretur pro eis.”—2. 2. q. 83, a. 11.

[2170] *De Purg.1.* 2, c. 15.

[2171] *In Suppl.* q. 71, a. 6.

[2172] *De St. an. p. vit.* q. 4, d. 2.

[2173] *De Just.1.* 2, c. 37, d. 5.

[2174] “Piorum animæ mortuorum non separantur ab Ecclesia.”—*De Civitate Dei,*1. 20, c. 9.

[2175] “Charitas quæ est vinculum uniens membra Ecclesiæ, non solum ad vivos se extendit, sed etiam ad mortuos qui in charitate decedunt.”—*In* 4. *Sent. d.* 45. *q.* 2. *s.* 2.

[2176] “Gravior erit ille ignis, quam quidquid potest homo pati in hac vita.”—*In Ps.* 37.

[2177] “Sub eodem igne, peccator crematur, et electus purgatur.”—*In* 4. *Sent. d.* 21. *q.* 1. *a.* 1.

[2178] Mille inferni ignes simul uniti non darent tantam pœnam, quanta est sola pœna damni.

[2179] “Oportet quod pœna purgatorii, quantum ad pœnam damni excedat omnem pœnam istius vitæ.”—*Loco cit.*

[2180] “Si omnia tormenta mundi minori, quæ in purgatorio habetur, pœnæ comparentur, solatia erunt.”—*De Quat. Nov. a.* 53.

[2181] *Int. Op. Aug. Ep.* 19. *E. B. app.*

[2182] “Si fuerint in catenis, et vinciantur funibus paupertatis.”—*Job,* 36:8.

[2183] “Mendicitas impedit solutionem.”—*Serm. de mort.*

[2184] “Beati misericordes, quoniam ipsi misericordiam consequentur.” *Matt.* 5:7.

[2185] “Ergone Jonathas morietur, qui fecit salutem hanc magnam in Israel?”—3 *Kings*, 14:45.

[2186] *Quodl.* 9. *a.* 16. *ad* 1.

[2187] “Ad orationem quilibet tenetur, ex hoc ipso quod tenetur ad bona spiritualia sibi procuranda, quæ nonnisi divinitus dantur; unde alio modo procurari non possunt, nisi ut a Deo petantur.”—*In* 4, *Sent. d.* 15. *q.* 4. *a.* 1.

[2188] “Utrum debeamus Sanctos orare ad interpellandum pro nobis.” *Dist.* 45, *q.* 3, *a.* 2.

[2189] Hoc divinæ legis ordo requirit . . . sicut mediantibus Sanctorum suffragiis Dei beneficia in nos deveniunt, ita oportet nos in Deum reduci, ut iterato beneficia ejus sumamus mediantibus Sanctis.

[2190] Non est propter defectum misericordiæ ipsius, sed ut ordo prædictus conservetur in rebus.

[2191] “Quia lege naturali tenemur eum ordinem observare, quem Deus. instituit; at constituit Deus ut inferiores ad salutem perveniant, implorato superiorum subsidio.”—*De Relig. p.* 2, *c.* 2, *a.* 5.

[2192] “Magnum est enim in quolibet sancto, quando habet tantum de gratia quod sufficit ad salutem multorum; sed, quando haberet tantum quod sufficeret ad salutem omnium, hoc esset maximum, et hoc est in Christo et in Beata Virgine.”—*Expos. in Sal. Ang.*

[2193] “Per te accessum habeamus ad Filium, o Inventrix gratiæ, Mater salutis, ut per te nos suscipiat, qui per te datus est nobis!”—*In Adv. Dom. s.* 2,

[2194] “Totius boni plenitudinem posuit (Deus) in Maria, ut proinde, si quid spei in nobis est, si quid gratiæ, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare, quæ ascendit deliciis affluens: hortus deliciarum, ut undique fluant et effluant aromata ejus, charismata scilicet gratiarum.”—*De Aquæd.*

[2195] “Sic est voluntas ejus, qui totum nos habere voluit per Mariam.”

[2196] “Sed plane Mater membrorum ejus, quod nos sumus; quia co operata est charitate, ut fideles in Ecclesia nascerentur, qui illius capitis membra sunt.”—*De S. Virginit. c.* 6.

[2197] “Vita, Dulcedo, et Spes nostra! salve.”

[2198] “Ad Mariam recurre; non dubius dixerim, exaudiet utique Matrem Filius.—Filioli, hæc peccatorum scala, hæc mea maxima fiducia est, hæc tota ratio spei meæ.”—*De Aquæd.*

[2199] “Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus; quia, quod quærit, invenit, et frustrari non potest.”

[2200] “Nobis non est alia quam a te fiducia, o Virgo sincerissima!”—*De Laud. B. M. V.*

[2201] “Omnia bona quæ illic summa Majestas decrevit facere, tuis manibus voluit commendare; commissi quippe sunt tibi thesauri . . . et ornamenta gratiarum.”—*De Cor. Virg.* c. 15.

2202 “Si nos deserueris, quid de nobis fiet, O Vita christianorum!”—*De zona Deip.*

2203 “In manibus tuis sunt thesauri miserationum Domini.”—*De Nativ. s.* 1.

2204 “Qui petit sine ipsa duce, sine alis tentat volare.”—*P.* 4, *tit.* 15, c. 22.

2205 “Tu dispensatrix omnium gratiarum; salus nostra in manu tua est.”

2206 “Per Virginem a Capite Christo vitales gratiæ in ejus corpus mysticum transfunduntur.”

2207 “A tempore quo Virgo Mater concepit in utero Verbum Dei, quamdam, ut sic dicam, jurisdictionem obtinuit in omni Spiritus Sancti processione temporali; ita quod nulla creatura a Deo obtinuit gratiam, nisi secundum ipsius piæ Matris dispensationem.”

2208 “Ideo omnia dona, virtutes et gratiæ, quibus vult, per ipsius manus dispensantur.”—*S. d. Nat. M. V. c.* 8.

2209 “Cum tota natura divina intra Virginis uterum extiterit, non timeo dicere quod in omnes gratiarum effluxus quandam jurisdictionem habuerit hæc Virgo, de cujus utero, quasi de quodam divinitatis oceano, flumina emanant omnium gratiarum.”

2210 “Deus vult ut omnia bona ab ipso expectemus, potentissima Virginis Matris intercessione, cum eam, ut par est, invocamus, impetranda.”—*Ep.* 50, *in calce Theol.*

2211 “Sic est voluntas ejus, qui totum nos habere voluit per Mariam.”—*De Aquæd.*

2212 “Ecce Mater tua.”—*John.* 19:27.

2213 “Quasi diceret: Nullus sanguinis illius particeps erit, nisi intercessione Matris meæ. Vulnera gratiarum fontes sunt; sed ad nullos derivabuntur rivi, nisi per Marianum canalem. Joannes discipule, tantum a me amaberis, quantum eam amaveris.”—*Theol. ment. et cord. t.* 2,1. 10, *d.* 4, *c.* 1.

2214 “Ut dignitas intercessoris suppleat inopiam nostram. Unde, Virginem interpellare non est de divina misericordia diffidere, sed de propria indignitate timere.”—*De incarn. q.* 37, *a.* 4, *d.* 23, *s.* 3.

2215 “Ex hoc quod est Mater Dei, habet quandam dignitatem infinitam.”—*P.* 1, *q.* 25, *a.* 6. *ad* 4.

2216 “Angeli præsunt fidelium orationibus, et eas quotidie Deo offerunt.”—*In Matt. Can.* 18.

2217 *Apoc.* 8:3.

2218 “Invoca me in die tribulationis; eruam te.”—*Ps.* 49:15.

2219 “Clama ad me, et exaudiam te.”—*Jer.* 33:3.

2220 “Petite, et dabitur vobis; quærite, et invenietis; pulsate, et aperietur vobis . . . Pater vester, qui in cœlis est, dabit bona petentibus se.”—*Matt.* 7:7.

2221 “Omnis qui petit, accipit.”—*Luke,* 11:10.

2222 “Quodcumque volueritis, petetis, et fiet vobis.”—*John,* 15:7.

2223 “De omni re, quamcumque petierint, fiet illis a Patre meo.”—*Matt.* 18:19.

2224 “Omnia quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.”—*Mark* 11:24.

2225 “Si quid petieritis me in nomine meo, hoc faciam.—Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 14:14.—16:23.

2226 “Nullus sine victoria poterit coronari.”—*De Mart.* s. 1.

2227 “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* 4:13.

2228 “Oratio, cum sit una, omnia potest.”—*Ap. Rodrig.* p. 1, tr. 5, c. 14.

2229 “Per ipsam impetratur obtentio omnis boni et amotio omnis mali.”—*In Luc.* 11.

2230 “Per orationis exercitium, secum habitare arcemque erigere valet homo.”—*De Cast. Conn.* c. 22.

2231 “Oratio dæmoniis omnibus malis prævalet.”—*De Modo bene viv.* s. 49.

2232 “Invocabo Dominum, et ab inimicis salvus ero.”—*Ps.* 17:4.

2233 “Magna armatura precatio, tutela, portus, et thesaurus.”—*Hom. in Ps.* 145.

2234 “Reputaretur infidelis, nisi expectaret a rege auxilium.”—*Diæta sal.* t. 2. c. 5.

2235 “Pete tibi signum a Domino Deo tuo.”—*Is.* 7:11.

2236 “Non petam, et non tentabo Dominum.”

2237 “Audite ergo, Domus David: Numquid parum vobis est molestos esse hominibus, quia molesti estis et Deo meo?”

2238 “Venite ad me omnes, qui laborati et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.”—*Matt.* 11:28.

2239 “Venite, et arguite me, dicit Dominus: si fuerint peccata vestra ut coccinum, quasi nix dealbabuntur.”—*Is.* 1:18.

2240 “Oratio est fluctuantibus anchora, pauperum thesaurus, morborum curatio, custodia sanitatis.”—*Hom. de Consubst. cont. Anom.*

2241 “Placat Deum, postulata reportat, adversarios superat, immutat homines.”—*De Perf.* c. 12.

2242 “Invocavi, et venit in me spiritus sapientiæ.”—*Wis.* 7:7.

2243 “Os meum aperui, et attraxi spiritum.”—*Ps.* 118:131.

2244 “Nescit mortem, relinquit terras, cœlos intrat, convivit Deo.”—*Serm.* 45.

2245 “Nihil solliciti sitis; sed in omni oratione et obsecratione, cum gratiarum actione, petitiones vestræ innotescant apud Deum.”—*Phil.* 4:6.

2246 “Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis.”—1 *Cor.* 10:13.

2247 “Respondeo . . . , cum tentamur, nobis ad Deum confugientibus, per gratiam a Deo paratam et oblatam, vires adfuturas, qua et possimus resistere et actu resistamus; omnia enim possumus in eo qui nos confortat per gratiam, si humiliter petamus.”—*De Grat. q.* 2. *d.* 5. § 3.

2248 “Per orationes cuncta noxia effugantur.”—*De Sal. Doc. c.* 28.

2249 “Est oratio nuncius fidelissimus, notus Regi, qui cubiculum Regis adire, et sua importunitate pium Regis animum flectere, et laborantibus opem impetrare solitus est.”—*T.* 4. *s. in Dom.* 5. *p. Pasc.*

2250 “Plorans nequaquam plorabis, miserans miserebitur tui; ad vocem clamoris tui, statim ut audierit, respondebit tibi.”—*Is.* 30:19.

2251 “Numquid solitudo factus sum Israeli, aut terra serotina? quare ergo dixit populus meus: Recessimus, non veniemus ultra ad te?”—*Jer.* 2:31.

2252 “Deus paratus continue ad vocem servorum suorum est, nec unquam, ut oportet vocatus, non obaudivit.”—*In Matt. hom.* 55.

2253 “Semper obtinetur, etiam dum adhuc oramus.”

2254 “Adhuc illis loquentibus, ego audiam.”—*Is.* 65:24.

2255 “Prope est Dominus omnibus invocanlibus eum, omnibus invocantibus eum in veritate; voluntatem timentium se faciet, et deprecationem eorum exaudiet, et salvos faciet eos.”—*Ps.* 144:18.

2256 “Nec est alia natio tam grandis, quæ habeat deos appropinquantes sibi, sicut Deus noster adest cunctis obsecrationibus nostris.”—*Deut.* 4:7.

2257 “In quacumque die invocavero te, ecce cognovi quoniam Deus meus es.”—*Ps.* 55:10.

2258 “Dives in omnes qui invocant ilium.”—*Rom.* 10:12.

2259 “Ab Omnipotente petitis; aliquid magnum petite.”—*In Ps.* 62.

2260 “Quodcumque volueritis, petetis et fiet vobis.”—*John,* 15:7.

2261 “Si quis autem vestrum indiget sapientia, postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluenter, et non improperat.”—*James,* 1:5.

2262 “Quoniam tu, Domine, suavis et mitis et multæ misericordiæ omnibus invocantibus te.”—*Ps.* 85:5.

2263 “Hoc studeamus, et aperiemus nobis cœlum.”—*In Act. hom.* 36.

2264 “In quacunque die, lucratur homo oratione devota plus quam valeat totus mundus.”—*De Perf. vitæ, c.* 5.

2265 “Melius est orare quam legere: in lectione cognoscimus quæ facere debemus, in oratione accipimus quæ postulamus.”

2266 “Tunc magis diabolus cogitationes curarum sæcularium ingerit, quando orantem aspexerit.”—*Sent.1.* 3, c. 7.

[2267] “Sicut pullus hirundinis, sic clamabo,”—*Is.* 38:14.

[2268] “Deus, in adjutorium meum intende.”—*Ps.* 69:2.

[2269] “Quandoque citius brevi oratione aliquis obtinet, quod piis operibus vix obtineret.”—*De Prof. re1.1.* 2, c. 65.

[2270] “Qui petit a Deo, dum petit, accipit; ipsum namque petere est accipere.”

[2271] “Nihil potentius homine probo orante.”—*In Matt. hom.* 58.

[2272] “Ascendamus meditatione et oratione; illa docet quid desit, hæc ne desit obtinet.”—*De S. And.* s. 1.

[2273] “Innitendum est ut in primordio saltem cujusque operis dirigatur oratio.”—*Lign. vilæ de or.* c. 6.

[2274] “Nemo parvipendat orationem suam quia Deus non parvipendit earn . . . aut dabit quod petimus, aut quod noverit esse utilius.”—*De Quad.* s. 5.

[2275] “Apud me oratio Deo vitæ meæ; dicam Deo: susceptor meus es,”—*Ps.* 41:9.

[2276] “Amen, amen dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

[2277] “Petitis, et non accipitis, eo quod male petatis.”—*James,* 4:3.

[2278] “Ideo, quandoque petis, et non accipis, quia perperam postulasti, vel infideliter, vel leviter, vel non conferentia tibi, vel destitisti.”—*Const. Mon.* c. 1.

[2279] “Pro se, necessaria ad salutem, pie, et perseveranter.”—2. 2. q. 83, a. 15.

[2280] “Et orate pro invicem, ut salvemini; multum enim valet deprecatio justi assidua.”—*James,* 5:16.

[2281] “Orate pro persequentibus et calumniantibus vos.”—*Luke,* 6:28.

[2282] “Qui scit fratrem suum peccare peccatum non ad mortem, petat, et dabitur ei vita peccanti non ad mortem.”—1 *John,* 5:16.

[2283] *Apud Calm, in loc. cit.*

[2284] “Non petitur in nomine Salvatoris, quidquid petitur contra rationem salutis.”—*In Jo. tr.* 102.

[2285] “Fideliter supplicans Deo pro necessitatibus hujus vitæ, et misericorditer auditur, et misericorditer non auditur; quid enim infirmo sit utile, magis novit medicus quam ægrotus.”—*Ap. s.*

Prosp. Sent. 212.

2286 "Tribue tantum victui meo necessaria."—*Prov.* 30:8.

2287 2. 2. q. 83, a. 6.

2288 "Datus est mihi stimulus carnis meæ, angelus satanæ, qui me colaphizet; propter quod ter Dominum rogavi ut discederet a me."—2 *Cor.* 12:7.

2289 "Sufficit tibi gratia mea."

2290 "In tribulatione invocasti me, et liberavi te; exaudivi te in abscondito tempestatis; probavi te apud aquam contradictionis."—*Ps.* 80:8.

2291 "Respexit in orationem humilium."—*Ps.* 101:18.

2292 "Deus superbis resistit."—*James* 4:6.

2293 "Priusquam humiliarer, ego deliqui."—*Ps.* 118:67.

2294 "Omnes vos scandalum patiemini in me in ista nocte."—*Matt.* 26:31.

2295 "Etsi omnes scandalizati fuerint in te, ego nunquam scandalizabor."

2296 "Etiamsi oportuerit me mori tecum, non te negabo."

2297 "Et iterum negavit cum juramento: Quia non novi hominem."

2298 "Nisi quia Dominus adjuvit me, paulo minus habitasset in inferno anima mea."—*Ps.* 93:17.

2299 "Sine gratia, nullum prorsus, sive cogitando, sive agendo, faciunt homines bonum."—*De Corr. et Gr.* c. 2.

2300 "Non quod sufficientes simus cogitare aliquid a nobis, quasi ex nobis; sed sufficientia nostra ex Deo est."—2 *Cor.* 3:5.

2301 "Nisi Dominus ædificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui ædificant eam."—*Ps.* 126:1.

2302 "Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem, frustra vigilat qui custodit eam."—*Ibid.*

2303 "Non enim in arcu meo sperabo."—*Ps.* 43:7.

2304 "Gratia autem Dei sum id quod sum."—1 *Cor.* 15:10.

2305 “Itaque, qui se existimat stare, videat ne cadat.”—1 *Cor.* 10:12.

2306 “Nam, si quis existimat se aliquid esse, cum nihil sit, ipse se seducit.”—*Gal.* 6:3.

2307 “Multos impedit a firmitate præsumptio firmitatis; nemo erit a Deo firmus, nisi qui se a seipso sentit infirmum.”—*Serm.* 76 *E. B.*

2308 “Cum metu et tremore vestram salutem operamini.”—*Phil.* 2:12.

2309 “Hæc est tota scientia magna, scire quia homo nihil est.”—*In Ps.* 70. s. 1.

2310 “Oratio humiliantis se nubes penetrabit, . . . et non discedet donec Altissimus aspiciat.”—*Ecclus.* 35:21.

2311 “Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.”—*Ps.* 50:19.

2312 “Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam.”—*James* 4:6.

2313 “Scito, filia. quod anima perseverans in humili oratione adipiscitur omnem virtutem.”—*Ap. Blos, in Concl.* p. 2, c. 3.

2314 “Hæc est enim voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra.”—1 *Thess.* 4:3.

2315 “Universa vanitas et afflictio spiritus.”—*Eccles.* 1:14.

2316 “Postulet autem in fide, nihil hæsitans.”—*James,* 1:6.

2317 “Quantum ad efficaciam merendi, oratio innititur principaliter charitati; quantum ad efficaciam impetrandi, innititur principaliter fidei.”—2. 2. q. 83, a. 15.

2318 “Sola spes apud te (Domine) miserationis obtinet locum.”—*De Annunt.* s. 3.

2319 “Lætentur omnes qui sperant in te; in æternum exsultabunt, et habitabis in eis.”—*Ps.* 5:12.

2320 “Protector est omnium sperantium in se.”—*Ps.* 17:31.

2321 “Qui salvos facis sperantes in te.”—*Ps.* 16:7.

2322 “Non delinquent omnes qui sperant in eo.”—*Ps.* 33:23.

2323 “Ecce oculi Domini super metuentes eum, et in eis qui sperant super misericordia ejus, ut eruat a morte animas eorum.”—*Ps.* 32:18.

2324 “Quoniam in me speravit, liberabo eum, protegam eum, . . . eripiam eum, et glorificabo eum.”—*Ps.* 90:14.

2325 “Qui autem sperant in Domino, mutabunt fortitudinem, assument pennas sicut aquilæ, current et non laborabunt, ambulabunt et non deficient.”—*Is.* 40:31.

2326 “In silentio et in spe erit fortitudo vestra.”—*Is.* 30:15.

2327 “Nullus speravit in Domino, et confusus est.”—*Ecclus.* 2:11.

2328 “In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.”—*Ps.* 30:2.

2329 “Non est illusor Deus, ut se ad supportandum nos offerat, et nobis innitentibus ei se subtrahat.”—*S. Thomas. Erud. Princ.1.* 2, c. 5.

2330 “Beatus homo qui sperat in te.”—*Ps.* 83:13.

2331 “Sperantem autem in Domino misericordia circumdabit.”—*Ps.* 31:10.

2332 “Nolite itaque amittere confidentiam vestram, quæ magnam habet remunerationem.”—*Hebr.* 10:35.

2333 “Magna fides, magna meretur.”—*In Cant.* s. 32.

2334 “Nec oleum misericordiæ nisi in vasa fiduciæ (Domine) ponis.”—*De Annunt.* s. 3.

2335 “Fiat misericordia tua, Domine, super nos, quemadmodum speravimus in te.”—*Ps.* 32:22.

2336 “Vade, et sicut credidisti, fiat tibi.”—*Matt.* 8:13.

2337 “Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportune.”—*Hebr.* 4:16.

2338 “Qui enim dubitat, similis est fluctui maris, qui a vento movetur et circumfertur; non ergo æstimet homo ille quod accipiat aliquid a Domino.”—*James*, 1:6.

2339 “Non recte petisti, quia dubitabundus petisti.”—*Const, mon.* c. 2.

2340 “Qui confidunt in Domino, sicut mons Sion.”—*Ps.* 124:1.

2341 “Quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.”—*Mark*, 11:24.

2342 “Petite, et accipietis.”—*John*, 16:24.

2343 “Quis falli timeat, cum promittit Veritas?”—*Conf.1.* 12, c. 1.

2344 “Non nos tantum hortaretur ut peteremus, nisi dare vellet.”—*Serm.* 105, *E. B.*

2345 “Quodcumque volueritis, petetis, et fiet vobis.”—*John,* 15:7.

2346 “Teneamus spei nostræ confessionem indeclinabilem; fidelis enim est qui repromisit.”—*Hebr.* 10:23.

2347 “Qui contra spem in spem credidit.”—*Rom.* 4:18.

2348 “Et omnis qui habet hanc spem in eo, sanctificat se, sicut et ille sanctus est.”—1 *John,* 3:3.

2349 “Etiam si occiderit me, in ipso sperabo.”—*Job,* 13:15.

2350 “Miserere mei, Domine, Fili David: filia mea male a dæmonio vexatur.”—*Matt.* 15:22.

2351 “Domine, adjuva me.”

2352 “Non est bonum sumere panem filiorum, et mittere canibus.”

2353 “Et catelli edunt de micis.”

2354 “O mulier! magna est fides tua; fiat tibi sicut vis.”

2355 “Quis invocavit eum, et despexit ilium?”—*Ecclus.* 2:12.

2356 “Oratio justi clavis est cœli: ascendit precatio, et descendit Dei miseratio.”—*Serm.* 47, *E. B. app.*

2357 “Benedictus Deus, qui non amovit orationem meam et misericordiam suam a me.”—*Ps.* 65:20.

2358 “Cum videris non a te amotam deprecationem tuam, securus esto quia non est a te amota misericordia ejus.”—*In Ps.* 65.

2359 “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* 4:13.

2360 “Dominus mihi adjutor, et ego despiciam inimicos meos.”—*Ps.* 117:7.

2361 “Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea, quem timebo?”—*Ps.* 26:1.

2362 “Peccatores Deus non audit.”—*John,* 9:31.

2363 “Illud verbum est cœci nondum perfecte illuminati, et ideo non est ratum.”—2. 2. q. 83, a. 16.

2364 “Qui declinat aures suas ne audiat legem, oratio ejus erit execrabilis.”—*Prov.* 28:9.

2365 “Cum extenderitis manus vestras, avertam oculos meos a vobis; et cum multiplicaveritis orationem, non exaudiam.”—*Is.* 1:15.

2366 “Orabat hic scelestus Dominum, a quo misericordiam non esset consecuturus.”—2 *Mach.* 9:13.

2367 “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit, et qui quærit, invenit.”—*Matt.* 7:8.

2368 “Omnis, sive justus, sive peccator sit.”—*Hom.* 18.

2369 “Dico vobis, et si non dabit illi surgens eo quod amicus ejus sit, propter improbitatem tamen ejus surget, et dabit illi quotquot habet necessarios.”—*Luke,* 11:8.

2370 “Et ego dico vobis: Petite, et dabitur vobis.”

2371 “Non tam valet amicitia apud Deum, quam oratio; et quod amicitia non perfecit, perfectum est ab oratione.”—*Hom. Non esse desp.*

2372 “Peccatores impetrant quod petunt, si perseveranter petunt.”—*Const. Mon.* c. 1.

2373 “Clamet et peccator, ut ad Deum sua perveniat oratio.”—*In Ps.* vi. *pæn.*

2374 *Ep. ad Dam. de Fil. prod.*

2375 “Pater, peccavi.”—*Luke,* 15:21.

2376 “Si enim peccatores Deus non exaudiret, frustra ille Publicanus diceret: Deus, propitius esto mihi peccatori.”—*In Jo. tr.* 44.

2377 “Descendit hic justificatus in domum suam.”—*Luke,* 18:14.

2378 “Meritum innititur justitiæ, sed impetratio innititur gratiæ.”—2. 2. q. 83, a. 16.

2379 “Inclina, Deus meus, aurem tuam, et audi . . . ; neque enim in justificationibus nostris prosternimus preces ante faciem tuam, sed in miserationibus tuis multis.”—*Dan.* 9:18.

2380 “Ipsa oratio familiares nos Deo facit.”—*Comp. Theol.* p. 2, c. 2.

2381 “Desiderium ad quid daret, nisi vellet exaudire?”

2382 3 *Kings,* 21:27.

2383 2 *Par.* 23:12.

2384 *Dan.* 4:31.

2385 *Luke,* 23:42.

2386 “Nullus ab eo beneficia dolenter postulavit, qui non impetravit quod voluit.”—*Hom. de Moys.*

2387 “Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.”—*Matt.* 11:28.

2388 “Non adeo cupis dimitti peccata tua, sicut ille cupit peccata dimittere.”—*In Act. hom.* 36.

2389 “Nihil est quod non obtineat oratio, etiarasi mille peccatis obnoxius sis, sed vehemens. sed assidua.”

2390 “Si quis autem vestrum indiget sapientia. postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluenter, et non improperat.”—*James,* 1:5.

2391 “Amen, amen dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

2392 “Quæ Deus promittit, securi petite.”—*Serm.* 354. *E. B.*

2393 “Plus vult ille dare, quam nos accipere.”—*Serm.* 105, *E. B.*

2394 “Nonnisi quando non postulamus, irascitur.”—*In Matt. hom.* 23.

2395 “Quas udispreces exa, si has non exaudis?”—*De Civ. Dei,*1. 22, c. 8.

2396 “Si ergo vos, cum sitis mali, nostis bona data dare filiis vestris; quanto magis Pater vester de cœlo dabit spiritum bonum petentibus se!”—*Luke,* 11:15.

2397 “Aliunde haberi non potest, nisi ab eo qui potens est, eum qui stat, statuere ut perseveranter stet.”—*Sess.* 6, c. 13.

2398 “Hoc Dei donum suppliciter emereri potest.”—*De Dono pers.* c. 6.

2399 “Post baptismum autem, necessaria est homini jugis oratio, ad hoc quod cœlum introeat.”—P. 3, q. 39, a. 5.

2400 “Oportet semper orare, et non deficere.”—*Luke,* 18:1.

2401 “Vigilate itaque omni tempore orantes, ut digni habeamini fugere ista omnia quæ futura sunt, et stare ante Filium hominis.”—*Luke.* 21:36.

2402 “Non impediaris orare semper.”—*Ecclus.* 18:22.

2403 “Omni tempore benedic Deum, et pete ab eo ut vias tuas dirigat.”—*Job,* 4:20.

2404 “Sine intermissione orate.”—1 *Thess.* 5:17.

2405 “Orationi instate, vigilantes in ea.”—*Col.* 4:2.

2406 “Volo ergo viros orare in omni loco.”—1 *Tim.* 2:8.

2407 “Vult beneficio afficere in oratione perseverantem.”—*De Orat.* c. 32.

2408 “Quotidie petenda est, ut quotidie obtineatur.”

2409 “Si non dabit ille surgens eo quod amicus ejus sit, propter improbitatem tamen ejus surget, et dabit illi quotquot habet necessarios.”—*Luke,* 11:8.

2410 “Quanto magis dabit (Deus) bonus, qui nos hortatur ut petamus, cui displicet, si non petamus!”—*Serm.* 61, *E. B.*

2411 “Vult Deus nos in oratione esse perseverantes usque ad importunitatem.”—*In Luc.* 11:8.

2412 “Vult Deus rogari, vult cogi, vult quadam importunitate vinci. . . . Bona violentia, qua Deus non offenditur, sed placatur.”—*In Ps. pœnit.* vi.

2413 “Apud me oratio Deo vitae meæ.”—*Ps.* 41:9.

2414 “Dicet quis: Non possum jejunare, dare eleemosynas;—si dicitur ei: Ora; non potest hoc dicere.”

2415 “Hæc vis Deo grata est.”—*Apolog.* c. 39.

2416 “Oratio, quamvis importuna, plus arnica est.”—*Hom. in Matt.*

2417 “Beatus homo qui audit me, et qui vigilat ad fores meas quotidie.”—*Prov.* 8:34.

2418 “Petite, et dabitur vobis; quærite, et invenietis; pulsate, et aperietur vobis.”—*Luke,* 11:9.

2419 “Beati omnes qui exspectant eum.”—*Is.* 30:18.

2420 *De Just. et Jure,*1. 2, c. 37. d. 3.

2421 “Non vult (Deus) cito dare, ut discas magna magne desiderare: diu desiderata dulcius obtinentur; cito autem data vilescunt.”—*Serm.* 61, *E. B.*

2422 “Neque renuens nostras preces differt; sed hac arte, sedulos nos efficiens, ad semetipsum attrahere vult.”—*In Gen. hom.* 30.

2423 “Oratio non parvum vinculum est dilectionis in Deum, quæ cum eo colloqui assuefacit.”—*In Ps.* 4.

2424 “Non desistas, donee accipias.”—*In Matt. hom.* 24.

2425 “Si dixeris: Nisi accepero, non recedam;—prorsus accipies.”

2426 “Nescitis quod, ii qui in stadio currunt, omnes quidem currunt, sed unus accipit bravium? Sic currite ut comprehendatis.”—1 *Cor.* 9:24.

2427 “Oculi mei semper ad Dominum, quia ipse evellet de laqueo pedes meos.”—*Ps.* 24:15.

2428 “Adversarius vester diabolus, tamquam leo rugiens, circuit quærens quem devoret.”—1 *Pet.* 5:8.

2429 “Persequar inimicos meos, . . . et non convertar, donee deficiant.”—*Ps.* 17:38.

2430 “Perseverantissimis precibus.”

2431 “Sicut nunquam deficit pugna, sic nunquam cessemus petere misericordiam.”—*De uno Conf.* s. 5.

2432 “Væ his qui perdiderunt sustinentiam.”—*Ecclus.* 2:16.

2433 “Si fiduciam et gloriam spei, usque ad finem, firmam retineamus.”—*Heb.* 3:6.

2434 “Quis ergo nos separabit a charitate Christi? tribulatio, an angustia,—an periculum, an persecutio, an gladius?”—*Rom.* 8:35, 37.

2435 “Sed in his omnibus superamus, propter eum qui dilexit nos.”—*Ibid.*

2436 “Non me deseras.”

2437 “Tu non me deseras.”

2438 “Et effundam super domum David et super habitatores Jerusalem spiritum gratiæ et precum.”—*Zach.* 12:10.

2439 “Spe enim salvi facti sumus.”—*Rom.* 8:24.

2440 “Hujus nobis urbis fiducia latum præbebit ingressum.”—*In solemn. omn. SS. hom.* 2.

2441 “Diligis enim omnia quæ sunt, et nihil odisti eorum quæ fecisti.”—*Wis.* 11:25.

2442 “Habet omnis amor vim suam, nec potest vacare.”—*In Ps.* cxxi.

2443 “Amor, quæ bona illi esse credit quem amat, ea studet efficere.”—*Rhetor.*1. 2, c. 4.

2444 “Habetis fructum vestrum in sanctificationem, finem vero vitam æternam.”—*Rom.* 6:22.

2445 Proxima fidei.

2446 “Veteres prædestinatiani dixerunt, quoniam non vult Deus omnes salvos fieri, sed tantum eos qui salvantur.”

2447 “Anathema illi qui dixerit quod Christus non pro omnibus mortuus sit, nec omnes homines salvos esse velit.”—*Anath.* 6.

2448 “Damno eum qui dicit quod Christus mortem non pro omnium salute susceperit.”

2449 “Deus omnes homines sine exceptione vult salvos fieri, licet non omnes salventur.—Nullus est pro quo (Christus) passus non fuerit, licet non omnes passionis ejus mysterio redimantur.”—*Art.* 3, 4.

2450 “Quando Deus vult salvare animam, effectus indubitabilis sequitur voluntatem Dei.“Omnes quos vult Deus salvare per Christum, salvantur infallibiliter.”

2451 “Ut omnes adoptionem filiorum reciperent.—Verum, etsi ille pro omnibus mortuus est, non omnes tamen mortis ejus beneficium recipiunt.”—*Sess.* 6. c. 2–3.

2452 “In spem eriguntur, fidentes Deum sibi propter Christum propitium fore.”—*Sess.* 6, c. 6.

2453 “Semipelagianum est dicere Christum pro omnibus omnino hominibus mortuum esse, aut sanguinem suum fudisse.”

2454 “Omnes homines vult salvos fieri, et ad agnitionem veritatis venire.”—1 *Tim.* 2:4.

2455 “Dicendum quod, cum Apostolus dicat quod Deus ‘Omnes homines vult salvos fieri,’ necesse habemus concedere quod Deus velit.”—*In* 1 *Sent.* d. 46, a. 1, q. 1.

2456 “Sincerissime credendum atque profitendum est Deum velle ut omnes homines salvi fiant; siquidem Apostolus, cujus ista sententia est, sollicitissime præcipit ut Deo pro omnibus supplicetur.”—“*Resp. ad* 2 *obj. Vincent.*”

2457 “Obsecro igitur primum omnium fieri obsecrationes . . . pro omnibus hominibus.”

[2458] “Hoc enim bonum est et accceptum coram Salvatore nostro Deo, qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri.”

[2459] “Si omnes ille vult salvos fieri, merito pro omnibus oportet orare; si omnes ipse salvos fieri cupit, illius et tu concorda voluntati.”—*In* 1 *Tim. hom.* 7.

[2460] “Omnipotentis voluntas semper invicta est.”—*Enchir.* c. 102.

[2461] “Deus præcedenter vult omnes salvari. Efficit nos bonitatis suæ participes, ut bonus; peccantes autem punire vult, ut justus.”—*De Fid. orth.1.* 2, c. 29.

[2462] “Voluntas antecedens est qua (Deus) omnes homines salvos fieri vult. Consideratis autem omnibus circumstantiis personæ, sic non invenitur de omnibus bonum esse quod salventur; bonum est enim eum, qui se præparat et consentit, salvari, non vero nolentem et resistentem. Et hæc est voluntas consequens, eo quod præsupponit præescientiam operum, non tamquam causam voluntatis, sed quasi rationem voliti.”

[2463] “Eum qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras.”—*John,* 6:37.

[2464] “Secundum Chrysostomum: Si ergo pro salute hominum incarnatus sum, quomodo debeo eos ejicere? et hoc est quod dicit: Ideo non ejicio, quia descendi de cœlo ut faciam voluntatem Patris, qua vult omnes salvos fieri.”—*In Joan.* 6. *lect.* 4.

[2465] “Deus voluntate sua liberalissima dat (gratiam) omni præparanti se, ‘Qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri;’ et ideo gratia Dei nulli deest, sed omnibus, quantum in se est, se communicat.”—*In Heb.* 7. *lect.* 3.

[2466] “In Deo salus omnium hominum secundum se considerata habet rationem ut sit volibilis, et sic ejus voluntas est antecedens; sed, si consideretur bonum justitiæ, et quod peccata puniantur, sic non vult; et hæc est voluntas consequens.”—*In 1 Tim.* 2. *lect.* 1.

[2467] “Nec tamen est imperfectio ex parte voluntatis divinæ, sed ex parte voliti, quod non accipitur cum omnibus circumstantiis quæ exiguntur ad rectum ordinem in salutem.”—*In* 1 *Sent. d.* 46, *q.* 1, *a.* 1.

[2468] “Justus judex antecedenter vult omnem hominem vivere, sed consequenter vult homicidam suspendi; similiter Deus antecedenter vult omnem hominem salvari, sed consequenter vult quosdam damnari, secundum exigentiam suæ justitiæ.”—*P.* 1. *q.* 19, *a.* 6.

[2469] “Non enim medio quodam modo amorem inter et odium circa creaturas potest affici Deus, maxime erga homines, quos vel amat ad vitam perpetuam vel odit ad damnationem. Est autem summum hominis malum alienari a Deo ac reprobari. Quare, si cui Deus sempiternum vult exitium animæ, hunc non amat, sed odit odio illo quod esse maximum potest in eo genere quod naturalem ordinem excedit.”

[2470] “Quis erit enim exitus segregatorum? nonne amissio salutis?”—*Adv. Marc.1.* 4.

[2471] “Quamobrem, si omnes Deus amat homines eo affectu, qui merita illorum antecedit, non eorum odit animas, ac proinde non summum vult illis malum.”—*De De0.1.* 10, *c.* 3, *n.* 5.

[2472] “O altitudo divitiarum sapientiæ et scientiæ Dei! quam incomprehensibilia sunt judicia ejus, et investigabiles viæ ejus! Quis enim cognovit sensum Domini?”—*Rom* 11:34.

[2473] “Vivo ego, dicit Dominus Deus: nolo mortem impii, sed ut convertatur impius a via sua, et vivat.”—*Ezek.* 33:11.

[2474] “Jurans etiam, ‘Vivo!’ dicens, cupit credi sibi.”—*De Pœnit.*

[2475] “Quoniam ira in indignatione ejus, et vita in voluntate ejus.”—*Ps.* 29:6.

[2476] “Quid ergo dicit? nimirum quod vult Deus omnes vitæ fieri participes.”

[2477] “Deus noster, Deus salvos faciendi; et Domini Domini exitus mortis.”—*Ps.* 67:21.

[2478] “Hoc est illi proprium, hæc est ejus natura, Deus noster est Deus salvans, et Dei nostri sunt exitus mortis, id est, liberatio a morte.”

[2479] “Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.”—*Matt.* 11:28.

[2480] “Nolens aliquos perire, sed omnes ad pœnitentiam reverti.”—2 *Pet.* 3:9.

[2481] “Ecce sto ad ostium et pulso; si quis audierit vocem meam, et aperuerit mihi januam, intrabo ad ilium et cœnabo cum illo, et ipse mecum.”—*Apoc.* 3:20.

[2482] “Et quare moriemini, Domus Israel? Quia nolo mortem morientis, dicit Dominus Deus, revertimini et vivite.”—*Ezek.* 18:31.

[2483] “Quid debui ultra facere vineæ meæ, et non feci ei?”—*Is.* 5:4.

[2484] “Quoties volui congregare filios tuos, quemadmodum gallina congregat pullos suos sub alas, et noluisti!”—*Matt.* 23:37.

[2485] “Videns civitatem, flevit super illam.”—*Luke,* 19:41.

[2486] “Quod si ista Scripturæ loca, quibus hanc suam voluntatem et affectum tam illustribus ac tam sæpe repetitis sententiis, imo lacrymis ac jurejurando, testatus est Deus, calumniari licet et in contrarium detorquere sensum, ut, præter paucos, genus hominum omne perdere statuerit, nec eorum servandorum voluntatem habuerit, quid est adeo dissertum in fidei decretis, quod simili ab injuria et cavillatione tutum esse possit?”—*De Deo. lib.* 10, c. 15, n. 5.

2487 “Plane qui aliter sentiunt, nescio an ex Deo vero deum scenicum faciant, quales sunt qui reges in theatro se fingunt, cum tamen nihil minus quam reges sint.”—*Nodus præd.* p. 1, § 1.

2488 “Vult (Deus) salvari omnes; sed quia nullus absque propria voluntate salvatur, vult nos bonum velle, ut, cum voluerimus, velit in nobis et ipse suum implere consilium.”—*In Eph.* 1.

2489 “Voluit itaque Deus salvare cupientes, et provocavit ad salutem, ut voluntas haberet præmium; sed illi credere noluerunt.”—*In Is.* 63.

2490 “Ut omnes homines Deus salvos fieri velit, et non eos tantum qui ad sanctorum numerum pertinebunt, sed omnes omnino, ut nullus habeatur exceptus.”—*Ep. ad Aug.*

2491 “Omnibus dicit Christus: ‘Venite ad me, etc.;’ omnem enim, quantum in ipso est, hominem salvum fieri vult qui fecit omnes.”—*Ep.* 24. *ad Sever.*

2492 “Etiam circa impios ostendere suam debuit voluntatem; et ideo nec proditurum debuit præterire, ut adverterent omnes quod in electione etiam proditoris sui servandorum omnium insigne prætendit . . . Et quod in Deo fuit, ostendit omnibus quod omnes voluit liberare.”—*De Parad.* c. 8.

2493 “Qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri.”

2494 “Vult illos salvari, si et ipsi velint; nam utique qui legem dedit, nullum excipit a salute . . . Hæc medicina non profuit invitis.”

2495 “Cur igitur non omnes salvi fiunt, si vult Deus omnes salvos esse? Quoniam non omnium voluntas illius voluntatem sequitur; porro ipse neminem cogit.”—*De Mut. nom. hom.* 3, *E. B.*

2496 “Vult Deus omnes homines salvos fieri, non sic tamen ut eis adimat liberum arbitrium.”—*De Spir. et Litt.* c. 33.

2497 “In renatis enim nihil odit Deus . . . : innocentes, immaculati, puri, innoxii ac Deo dilecti effecti sunt, etc. Manere autem in baptizatis concupiscentiam vel fomitem, hæc sancta Synodus fatetur et sentit: quæ cum ad agonem relicta sit, nocere non consentientibus . . . non valet; quinimo, qui legitime certaverit, coronabitur.”—*Sess.* 5, *De pecc. or. n.* 5.

2498 “Ampliora adepti (sumus) per Christi gratiam, quam per diaboli amiseramus invidiam.”—*De Asc.* s. 1.

2499 “Non sicut delictum, ita et donum . . . Ubi autem abundavit delictum, superabundavit gralia.”—*Rom.* 5:15, 20.

2500 “Ego veni ut vitam habeant, et abundantius habeant”—*John,* 10:10.

2501 “Et copiosa apud eum redemptio.”—*Ps.* 129:7.—“Suscepit (Jerusalem) de manu Domini duplicia pro omnibus peccatis suis.”—*Isa.* 40:2.

2502 “Deus ita dimisit Ecclesiæ iniquitates per Christum, ut duplicia, id est, multiplicia bona susceperit pro pœnis peccatorum quas merebatur.”

2503 “Venit Filius hominis salvare quod perierat.”—*Matt.* 18:11.

2504 “Qui dedit redemptionem semetipsum pro omnibus.”—1 *Tim.* 2:6.

2505 “Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, non jam sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est.”—2 *Cor.* 5:15.

2506 “In hoc enim laboramus et maledicimur, quia speramus in Deum vivum, qui est Salvator omnium hominum, maxime fidelium.”—1 *Tim* 4:10.

2507 “Et ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris; non pro nostris autem tantum, sed etiam pro totius mundi.”—1 *John,* 2:2.

2508 “Charitas enim Christi urget nos: æstimantes hoc, quoniam si unus pro omnibus mortuus est, ergo omnes mortui sunt.”—2 *Cor.* 5:14.

2509 “Qui etiam proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit ilium.”—*Rom.* 8:32.

2510 “Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* 8:32.

2511 “Quid enim potuit negare, quibus Filium dedit? Absurdissimum est dicere Deum, qui dedit quod majus, noluisse dare quod est minus, hoc est, omnia ad salutem consequendam necessaria.”—*Nod. præd.* p. 1, § 2. n. 1.

2512 “Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus; solus inventus est qui, pro omnibus qui erant in peccatis mortui. offerretur.”—*In* 2 *Cor.* 5.

2513 “Venit ut vulnera nostra curaret; sed, quia non omnes medicinam expetunt . . . ideo volentes curat, non adstringit invitos.”—*In Ps.* 72.

2514 “Omnibus opem sanitatis detulit, ut quicumque perierit, mortis suæ causas sibi adscribat, qui curari noluit, cum remedium haberet. Christi autem manifesta in omnes prædicetur misericordia, ‘Qui omnes vult salvos fieri.’ ”—*De Abe1.1.* 2, c. 3.

2515 “Non ad unum quidem, non ad paucos, sed ad omnes testamentum suum scripsit Jesus; omnes scripti heredes sumus; testamentum commune est et jus omnium; hereditas universorum et soliditas singulorum.”—*In Ps.* cxviii. s. 14.

2516 “Omnes scripti heredes sumus.”

2517 “Sicut Christus nullum a reatu liberum reperit, ita liberandis omnibus venit.”—*In Nat. Dom.* s. 1

2518 “Non enim misit Deus Filium suum in mundum, ut judicet mundum, sed ut salvetur mundus per ipsum.”—*John,* 3:17.

2519 “Ergo, quantum in medico est, sanare venit ægrotum.”—*In Jo. tr.,* 12.

2520 “Sanat omnino ille quemlibet languidum, sed non sanat invitum.”—*In Ps.* cii.

2521 “Quid autem te beatius, quam ut, tamquam in manu tua vitam, sic habeas in voluntate sanitatem tuam?”

2522 “Qui nos tanto pretio redemit, non vult perire quos emit; non emit quos perdat, sed emit quos vivificet.”—*Serm.* 22, *E. B.*

2523 “Erigat se humana fragilitas; non dicat: Non ero (beatus). . . . Plus est quod (Christus) fecit, quam quod promisit; quid fecit? mortuus est pro te; quid promisit? ut vivas cum illo.”—*In Ps.* 148.

2524 “O contentiosam nugacitatem! Quomodo Dei sapientia medium voluit et non finem salutis?”—*Lib.* iii. c. 3, q. 4.

2525 “Agnoscitis latus quod pupugistis, quoniam et per vos et propter vos apertum est?”—*De Symb. ad cat.1.* 2, c. 8.

2526 “Christus Jesus est Mediator Dei et hominum, non quorumdam, sed inter Deum et omnes homines; et hoc non fuisset, nisi vellet omnes salvare.”—*In* 1 *Tim.* 2. *lect.* 1.

2527 “Semipelagianum est dicere Christum pro omnibus mortuum esse et sanguinem fudisse.”

2528 “Nullo modo principiis ejus (Augustini) consentaneum est, ut Christus Dominus, vel pro infidelium in infidelitate morientium, vel pro justorum non perseverantium æterna salute, mortuus esse et sanguinem fudisse sentiatur.”—*De Grat. Chr.* c. 20.

2529 “Confugimus ad tenendam propositam spem, quam sicut anchoram habemus animæ tutam ac firmam.”—*Heb.* 6:18.

2530 “Qua fiducia divinam misericordiam sperare poterunt scelerati homines, si certum non sit quod Deus salutem eorum velit? Qua fiducia Christi mortem Deo offerre poterunt, ut indulgentiam consequantur, si incertum est an pro ipsis oblata sit?”—*Lib.* 3, *c.* 3, *q.* 4.

2531 “Nemo firmiter sperare posset, dum ei plura desperandi quam sperandi fundamenta suppetunt; nam plures sunt relicti quam electi.”—*Nod. præd. p.* 1. § 1.

2532 “Omnis namque spes et totius fidei certitudo mihi est in pretioso sanguine Christi, qui effusus est propter nos et propter nostram salutem.”—*Medit. c.* 14.

2533 “Pœna sensus respondet conversioni ad creaturam, et in peccato originali non est conversio ad creaturam; et ideo peccato originali non debetur pœna sensus.”—*De Mal. q.* 5, *a.* 2.

2534 “Cum ad pœnas ventum est parvulorum, magnis, mihi crede, coarctor angustiis, ne quid respondeam prorsus invenio.”—*Epist.* 166, *E. B.*

2535 “Non enim metuendum est ne vita esse potuerit media quædam inter recte factum atque peccatum, et sententia judicis media esse non possit inter præmium et supplicium.”—*De Lib. Arb.1.* 3, *c.* 23.

2536 “Parvuli nee cœlesti gloria nec suppliciis a Justo Judice afficientur.”—*Serm. in S. Lav.*

2537 “Immatura mors infantium demonstrat neque in doloribus et mœstitia futuros eos qui sic vivere desierunt.”—*De Infant, etc.*

2538 *In* 2 *Sent. d.* 33, *q.* 2, *a.* 2.

2539 *De Mal. q.* 5, *a.* 3.

2540 “Imo magis gaudebunt de hoc quod participabunt multum de divina bonitate et perfectionibus naturalibus.”

2541 “Deo conjunguntur per participationem naturalium bonorum, et ita etiam de ipso gaudere poterunt naturali cognitione et dilectione.”—*In* 2. *Sent. d.* 33, *q.* 2, *a.* 2.

2542 “Antecedentis voluntatis, qua Deus vult omnium salutem, effectus est ipse ordo naturæ in finem salutis, et promoventia in finem omnibus communiter proposita, tam naturalia quam gratuita.”—*In* 1 *Sent. d.* 46. *q.* 1. *a.* 1.

2543 “Necesse est ut, quo (Deo) auxiliante vincimus, eo non adjuvante vincamur.”—*Rescr. ad Conc. Carthag.*

2544 “Deus impossiblia non jubet, sed jubendo monet, et facere quod possis et petere quod non possis; et adjuvat ut possis.”—*Sess.* 6, *cap.* 11.

2545 “Quod si (quis), perinde atque alii, et ex æquo cum ipsis divinæ gratiæ; opibus præditus, propria voluntate delapsus est, quomodo non eum servasse dicitur Christus, qui, quantum ad cavendi peccati auxilia concessa pertinet, hominem liberavit?”—*In J0.1.* 11. *c.* 21.

2546 “Ex libera sua utique voluntate; nam Deus, cum sit valde bonus, in utrisque parem benignitatem ostendit.”

2547 “Si salutem Pharao non est adeptus, totum id illius voluntati tribuendum est, cum nihil minus, quam qui salutem assecuti sunt, concessum illi fuerit”—*In Rom. hom.* 16.

2548 “Non est meum dare vobis, etc.”—*Matt.* 20:23.

2549 “Hoc ilium (Christum) significare voluisse, non suum esse tantummodo dare, sed et certantium esse capere; nam, si istud ex se uno penderet, omnes utique salvi essent homines.”—*Hom. in loco cit. cont. Anom.*

2550 “Etenim serio et modis omnibus (Deus) vult eos adjuvare qui in vitio volutantur, ut omnem eis excusationem eripiat.”—*Lib. 2. ep.* 270.

2551 “Multas æternæ vitæ januas (Dominus) aperuit, ut omnes, quantum in ipso est, absque impedimento ilia potiri possint.”—*Catech.* 18.

2552 “Nulli imperfectius de gratia quam Græci locuti sunt.”

2553 “Nihil boni operis (homo) agere potest absque eo, qui ita concessit liberum arbitrium, ut suam per singula opera gratiam non negaret.”—*Ep. ad Cyprian. presb.*

2554 “Qui enim venit et januam pulsat, vult semper intrare; sed in nobis est quod non semper ingreditur.”—*In Ps.* cxviii. s. 12.

2555 “Juste instat præcepto, qui præcurrit auxilio.”—*De Pass,* s. 16.

2556 “Nunc per unum in omnes donum vitæ justificationis gratia abundavit.”—*In Ps.* lix.

2557 “Quotidiana præstat (homini) remedia, quibus nisi freti nitamur, nullatenus humanos vincere poterimus errores.”—*Rescr. ad Conc. Carthag.*

2558 “Non tibi deputatur ad culpam quod invitus ignoras, sed quod negligis quærere quod ignoras; neque illud quod vulnerata membra non colligis, sed quod volentem sanare contemnis. Ista tua propria peccata sunt: nulli enim homini ablatum est scire utiliter quærere.—Quod ergo ignorat (anima) quid sibi agendum sit, ex eo est quod nondum accepit; sed hoc quoque accipiet, si hoc quod accepit bene usa fuerit: accepit autem ut pie ac diligenter quærat, si volet.”—*De Lib. Arb.1.* 3, c. 19, 22.

2559 “Quis peccat in eo quod nullo modo caveri potest? peccatur autem; caveri igitur potest.”—*De Lib. Arb.1.* 3, c. 18.

2560 “Sed opitulante illo qui non potest falli.”—*De Nat. et Gr.* c. 67.

2561 “Qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri.”—1 *Tim.* 2:4.

2562 “Et ideo gratia nulli deest, sed omnibus, quantum in se est, se communicat, sicut nec sol deest oculis cœcis.”—*In Heb.* 12, *lect.* 3.

2563 “Hoc ad divinam Providentiam pertinet, ut cuilibet provideat de necessariis ad salutem, dummodo ex parte ejus (hominis) non impediatur.”—*De Ver.* q. 14, a. 11.

2564 “Nemo potest venire ad me, nisi Pater, qui misit me, traxerit eum.”

2565 “Si non elevatur (cor humanum), non est defectus ex parte trahentis, qui, quantum in se est, nulli deficit; sed est propter impedimentum ejus qui trahitur.”—*In Jo.* 6, *lect.* 5.

2566 “Vult (Deus) omnes homines salvare, quantum est ex parte sui et voluntate sua antecedente, pro quanto dedit eis dona communia sufficientia ad salutem.”—*In* I *Sent.* d. 46, q. un.

2567 “Quanquam nemo convertatur nisi tractus per Patrem, attamen nemo excusationem prætexat quod non trahatur; ille semper stat ante ostium pulsans per internum et externum verbum.”—P. 7, c. 32.

2568 “Ecce sto ad ostium, et pulso; si quis . . . aperuerit mini januam, intrabo.”—*Apoc.* 3:20.

2569 “Deus voluntate sua liberalissima dat earn (gratiam) omni præparanti se.”—*In Heb.* 12, *lect.* 3.

2570 “Et ideo gratia Dei nulli deest, etc. Hoc ad divinam Providentiam pertinet, etc.”—Page 138.

2571 “Qui enim venit et januam pulsat, vult semper intrare; sed in nobis est quod non semper ingreditur, non semper manet.”—*In Ps.* cxviii. s. 12.

2572 “Quid est quod debui ultra facere vineæ; meæ, et non feci ei? an quod exspectavi ut faceret uvas, et fecit labruscas?”—*Is.* 5:4.

2573 “Si non dedisset facultatem ad faciendas uvas, quorsum diceret Dominus: ‘Exspectavi?’ ”—

2574 “Quoties volui congregare filios tuos. . . . et noluisti?”—*Matt.* 23:37.

2575 “Quomodo voluit, ita ut queratur de nolentibus, si eos non juvit ut possent velle?”

2576 “Suscepimus, Deus, misericordiam tuam in medio templi tui.”—*Ps.* 47:10.

2577 “In medio enim templi misericordia est, non in angulo aut diversorio, quia ‘Non est acceptio personarum apud Deum’ (*Rom.* 2:11).”

2578 “In communi posita est, offertur omnibus, et nemo illius expers, nisi qui renuit.”—*In Purif. B. V.* s. 1.

2579 “An divitias bonitatis ejus . . . contemnis? ignoras quoniam benignitas Dei ad pœnitentiam te adducit?”—*Rom.* 2:4.

2580 “Parcis autem omnibus, quoniam tua sant, Domine, qui amas animas.”—*Wisd.* 11:26.

2581 “Auxilium ad novum peccatum vitandum semper omnibus adest, vel immediate vel mediate, quo possint a Deo majora præsidia impetrare, quibus adjati peccata vitabunt.”—*De Gr. et Lib. Arb.1.* 2, c. 7.

2582 “Vivo ego, dicit Dominus Deus: nolo mortem impii, sed ut convertatur impius a via sua, et vivat.”—*Ezech.* 33:11.

2583 “Patienter agit propter vos, nolens aliquos perire, sed omnes ad pœnitentiam reverti.”—2 *Peter,* 3:9.

2584 “Quamvis autem illi qui in peccato sunt, vitare non possint, per propriam potestatem, quin impedimentum gratiæ præstent vel ponant, ut ostensum est, nisi auxilio gratiæ præveniantur; nihilominus tamen hoc eis imputatur ad culpam, quia hic defectus ex culpa præcedente in eis relinquitur: sicut ebrius ab homicidio non excusatur, quod per ebrietatem committit quam sua culpa incurrit. Præterea, licet ille qui est in peccato, non habeat hoc in propria potestate, quod omnino vitet peccatum, habet tamen potestatem nunc vitare hoc vel illud peccatum, ut dictum est; unde, quodcumque committit, voluntarie committit, et ita non immerito sibi imputatur ad culpam.”—*Contra Gent.1.* 3, c. 160.

2585 “Quod homo, in peccato existens, sine gratia peccatum vitare non potest.”

2586 “Cum enim mens hominis a statu rectitudinis declinaverit, manifestum est quod recessit ab ordine debiti finis. . . . Quandocumque igitur occurrerit aliquid conveniens inordinato fini, repugnans fini debito, eligetur, nisi reducatur ad debitum ordinem, ut finem debitum omnibus præferat, quod est gratiæ effectus; dum autem eligitur aliquid quod repugnat ultimo fini, impedimentum præstat gratiæ, quæ dirigit in finem. Unde manifestum est quod, post peccatum, non potest homo abstinere ab omni peccato, antequam per gratiam ad debitum ordinem reducatur. . . . Unde apparet stulta Pelagianorum opinio, qui dicebant hominem, in peccato existentem, sine gratia posse vitare peccata.”

2587 Quamvis autem illi, etc.

2588 “Nisi auxilio gratiæ præveniantur.”

2589 “Ne credas effectum ipsum esse ex remotione veræ lucis: hoc excludens, Evangelista subdit: ‘Erat lux vera quæ illuminat omnem hominem.’ Illuminat scilicet Verbum, quantum de se est, quia ex parte sua nulli deest, immo, ‘Omnes homines vult salvos fieri.’ Quod si aliquis non illuminatur, ex parte hominis est avertentis se a lumine illuminante.”—*In Jo.* i. *lect.* 5.

2590 “In statu viæ, nullus est qui mentis obstinationem non possit deponere, et sic divinæ voluntati conformari.”—*In* 1 *Sent.* d. 48, q. 1, a. 3.

2591 “Quamdiu manet homini usus liberi arbitrii in hac vita, . . . potest se præparare ad gratiam, de peccatis dolendo.”—*In* 4 *Sent.* d. 20, q. 1, a. 1.

2592 “Aliquis homo in statu viæ non potest esse ita obstinatus in malo, quin ad suam liberationem cooperari possit.”—*De Ver.* q. 24, a. 11.

2593 “Omnes homines vult (Deus) salvos fieri.”

2594 “Ideo gratia Dei nulli deest, sed omnibus, quantum in se est, se communicat.”

2595 “Deus, quantum in se est, paratus est omnibus gratiam dare. . . . Illi (ergo) soli gratia privantur, qui in seipsis gratiæ impedimentum præstant.”—*Contra Gent.1.* 3, c. 159.

2596 “Paratus est omnibus gratiam dare.”

2597 “Deum, nedum offerre, sed etiam conferre singulis hominibus, et infidelibus et induratis, auxilia sufficientia, vel proxima, vel saltem remota, ad observanda præcepta.”—*De Div. Vol.* q. 2, d. 3, § 2.

2598 “Dicere quod aliquod peccatum sit in hac vita de quo quis pœnitere non possit, erroneum est; . . . quia per hoc derogaretur virtuti gratiæ.”—P. 3, q. 86, a. 1.

2599 Gratia Dei nulli deest, sed omnibus, quantum in se est, se communicat.

2600 “Non nisi calumniose Sancto Thomæ imputari potest, quod peccatores aliquos a Deo totaliter deseri docnerit.”—*Lib.* 3, c. 3, q. 4.

2601 “Auxilium sufficiens ac necessarium ad vitanda peccata omnibus hominibus et omni tempore, vel immediate, vel mediate, a divina benignitate præstatur. . . . Dicimus, ‘Vel mediate;’ quoniam certum est aliquos non habere auxilium quo possint immediate vitare peccatum, tamen habere auxilium quo possint a Deo majora præsidia impetrare, quibus adjati peccata vitabunt.”—*De Gr. et Lib. Arb.1.* 2, c. 7.

2602 “Ut certo et absolute per omnem vitam destituatur auxilio Dei, ut de salute desperare possit.”—*Ibid.* c. 6.

2603 “Certo certior sum, quin vero et cerlissimos credo semper fuisse sanctos doctores qui fuerint hoc nomine digni, neminem unquam a Deo fuisse derelictum in hac mortali vita.”—*De Nat. et Gr.1.* 1, c. 18.

2604 “Quis peccat in eo quod nullo modo caveri potest?”—*De Lib. Arb.1.* 3, c. 18.

2605 “Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis, sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proventum, ut possitis sustinere.”—1 *Cor.* 10:13.

2606 “Faciet cum tentatione evadendi facultatem.”—*Testim.1.* 3, n. 91.

2607 “Illud faciet provenire (gratiæ præsidio), quo possitis (tentationem) sustinere.”

2608 “Peccati reum tenere quemquam, quia non fecit quod facere non potuit, summæ iniquitatis est.”—*De Duab. An.* c. 12.

2609 “Deus non est magis crudelis quam homo; sed homini imputatur in crudelitatem, si obliget aliquem per præceptum ad id quod implere non possit; ergo hoc de Deo nullo modo est æstimandum.”—*In* 2 *Sent.* d. 28, q. 1, a. 3.

2610 “Quando ex ejus negligentia est quod gratiam non habet, per quam potest servare mandata.”—*De Ver.* q. 24, a. 14.

2611 “Deus impossibilia non jubet; sed jubendo monet, et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis; et adjuvat ut possis.”—*Sess.* 6, cap. 11.

2612 “Sive autem iniquitas sive justitia, si in potestate non esset, nullum præmium, nulla pœna justa esset.”—*Cont. Faust.1.* 22, c. 78.

2613 “Si denique his abstinendi ab opere suo potestas nulla conceditur, peccatum eorum tenere non possumus.”—*De Duab. An.* c. 12.

2614 “Dat quidem ille (dæmon) consilium; sed, Deo auxiliante, nostrum est eligere vel repudiare quod suggerit; et ideo, cum per Dei adjutorium in potestate tua sit, quare non magis Deo quam ipsi obtemperare deliberas?”—*Serm.* 253, *E. B. App.*

2615 “Ex eo igitur quod non accepit, nullus reus est.”—*De Lib. Arb.1.* 3, c. 16.

2616 “Nemo vituperatione dignus, qui id non facit quod facere non potest.”—*De Duab. An.* c. 11.

2617 “Nec ad virtutes nee ad vitia necessitate trahimur; alioquin, ubi necessitas est, nec damnatio nec corona est.”—*Cant. Jov.1.* 2.

2618 “Non enim poneretur lex ei qui non haberct obsequium debitum legi in sua potestate.”—*Cont. Marcion.1.* 2.

2619 “Occulta nobis opitulatur gratia; verum in nobis situm est agere vel non agere bonum pro potestate.”—*De Just. ex op.* c. 56.

2620 “Auxilium (gratiæ) quibuscumque datur, misericorditer datur; quibus autem non datur, ex justitia non datur, in pœnam præcedentis, aut saltern originalis peccati; ut Augustinus dicit.”—2. 2. q. 2, a. 5.—*August. De Corr. et Grat.* c. 11.

2621 “Adhibita semper est universis hominibus quædam supernæ mensura doctrinæ, quæ, etsi parcioris gratiæ fuit, sufficit tamen quibusdam ad remedium, omnibus ad testimonium.”—*De Voc. Gent.1.* 2, c. 15.

2622 “Ad peccatum formale et ad demerendum, sufficit illa libertas qua voluntarium ac liberum fuit in causa sua, peccato originali et libertate Adami peccantis.”

2623 *De Gr. et Lib. Arb.1.* 2, c. 7.

2624 “Ad peccatum personale requirit potentia absoluta personalis.”

2625 “In renatis nihil odit Deus, quia nihil est damnationis iis qui vere consepulti sunt cum Christo per baptisma in mortem.”

2626 “Quæ, cum ad agonem relicta sit, nocere non consentientibus . . . non valet.”—*Sess.* 5. *De Pecc. or.* n. 5.

2627 “Deus nunquam denegat auxilium sufficiens ad implenda præcepta; alias nullo pacto possent impleri; et sic rediret Lutheri hæresis, quod Deus obligavit hominem ad impossibile.”—*In* 1. 2. q. 109, a. 8.

2628 “Fides est, ita ut oppositum sit hæresis manifesta, quod omnis homo, dum est in via, potest pœnitentiam agere de peccatis.”—*In P.* 3, q. 86, a. 1, d. 1.

2629 “Certum est secundum fidem, quod non est peccatum illud quod non est in hominis libera potestate.”—*De Aux.* q. un. a. 18.

2630 “Quis patienter audire potest hominem lapsum, absente gratia gradibus superiori, non alia gaudere libertate præter eam, qua necessitatus ad peccandum in genere, potest unum præ alio eligere peccatum.”—P. 2, a. 6.

2631 “Homo peccat etiam damnabiliter in eo quod necessario facit.”

2632 “Per simplicem suspensionem seu negationem actus.”

2633 “Simplex negatio actus.”

2634 “Quotiescumque aliquis peccat, necesse est ut ille de facto receperit aliquam divinam inspirationem. . . . Hæc conclusio asseritur a nobis certa secundum fidem; quia nemo peccat propter quod non facit quod facere non potest, ut certum est secundum fidem; sed homo, cui nihil aliud datum est quam quod ad naturam humanam pertinet, non habet unde possit operari supra naturam; ergo non peccat non operando aliquid supernaturale.”—*In* P. 1, q. 23, a. 3, *concl.* 3.

2635 “Cum ergo homo, peccando in foveam lapsus, impotens factus sit prosequendi iter ad æternam salutem, esto ipsum possit ob talem culpam punire; et similiter, si gratiam, qua fiat potens, oblatam respuat; sed si Deus ipsum in sua impotentia relinquere velit, non poterit nisi injuste obligare ut viam percurrat, et, nisi percurrat, punire."—*De Div. Vol.* q. 2, d. 3, § 3.

[2636] "Excæca cor populi hujus . . . , ne forte videat . . . et convertatur, et sanem eum."—*Is.* 6:10.

[2637] "Curavimus Babylonem, et non est sanata; derelinquamus eam."—*Jer.* 51:9.

[2638] "Appone iniquitatem super iniquitatem eorum, et non intrent in justitiam tuam."—*Ps.* 68:28.

[2639] "Propterea tradidit illos Deus in passiones ignomiæ.—Ergo cujus vult miseretur, et quem vult indurat."—*Rom.* 1:26; 9:18.

[2640] "Et ne nos inducas in tentationem."

[2641] "(Obstinatum esse eum) qui non de facili possit cooperari ad hoc quod exeat de peccato; et hæc est obstinatio imperfecta, qua aliquis potest esse obstinatus in statu viæ, dum scilicet habet ita firmatam voluntatem in peccato, quod non surgunt motus ad bonum nisi debiles."—*De Ver.* q. 24. a. 11.

[2642] "Interdum ex abundantia bonitatis suæ, etiam eos qui impedimentum gratiæ præstant, auxilio suo præevenit, avertens eos a malo et convertens ad bonum. Et sicut non omnes cæcos illuminat, nec omnes languidos sanat, ita non omnes qui gratiam impediunt, auxilio suo prævenit ut convertantur. . . . Hinc est quod Apostolus dicit: 'Deus volens ostendere iram et notam facere potentiam suam, sustinuit in multa patientia vasa iræ apta in interitum, ut ostenderet divitias gloriæ suæ in vasa misericordiæ, quæ præparavit in gloriam.' "—*Rom.* 9:22.

[2643] "Cum autem Deus, hominum qui in eisdem peccatis detinentur, hos quidem præveniens convertat, illos autem sustineat sive permittat secundum ordinem rerum procedere, non est ratio inquirenda, quare hos convertat, et non illos. Hinc est quod Apostolus dicit: 'An non habet potestatem figulus luti, ex eadem massa facere aliud quidem vas in honorem, aliud vero in contumeliam?' "—*Ibid.* 21, *Cont. Gent.1.* 3, c. 161.

[2644] Jansenius *De grat. Christi,* lib. iii. c. 13, circa finem, p. 139, "Delectatio relativè victrix." It is the distinct doctrine of the Jansenists that as a material atom within the influence of two opposite attractions, by inevitable necessity obeys that which is *most powerful,* so is it with the human will. At each waking moment, they say, a man is attracted either by heavenly or earthly delight, or by both. If the first, he necessarily loves God; if the second, he necessarily sins; if the third, he necessarily obeys the "delectatio relativè victrix," that one of the two delights which is intrinsically the most intense. The liberty requisite for merit or demerit, according to Jansenius' well-known proposition, consists not in any real *power of choice,* or *freedom from necessity,* but wholly in exemption from *external violence.*—ED.

[2645] "Hallucinatio est, qua putant semper adesse homini gratiam ut petat."—*De Gr. Chr.1.* 3, c. 13.

[2646] "Cum ergo plurimi, vel non petant gratiam illam qua possint præcepta facere, vel non ita petant ut necessarium est, nec omnibus gratiam vel ferventer petendi vel omnino petendi Deus largiatur,

apertissimum est fidelibus multis deesse illam sufficientem gratiam, et consequenter illam perpetuam, quam quidam prædicant, faciendi præcepti potestatem.”

[2647] For the benefit of the reader we here subjoin the five propositions:

1. Some commandments of God are impossible to just men who wish to fulfil them, and who, for this purpose, make efforts according to the strength that they at present possess; and the grace that would render them possible is wanting to them.

2. In the state of fallen nature one never resists interior grace.

3. To merit or demerit in the state of fallen nature, there is not required in man freedom from interior necessity (*libertas a necessitate*), but it is sufficient to have freedom from exterior compulsion (*libertas a coactione*).

4. The Semi-Pelagians admitted the necessity of an interior *preventing* grace for every act, even for the beginning of faith; they were heretics in that they maintained that the will of man can submit to this grace, or resist it.

5. It is a Semi-Pelagian error to say that Jesus Christ died or shed his blood for all men without exception.

These five propositions were condemned by Innocent X. in 1653. ED.

[2648] *De Gr. Chr.* q. 3, *De Jans. ep.* 3.

[2649] “Ex hoc infesto principio Jansenius ejusque discipuli has erroneas deducunt consecutiones, quæ cum illo principio arctissimo vinculo colligatæ cohærent.”—*Ep. cl.* 1, *ep.* 1.

[2650] “Ex principio duarum delectationum invincibilium tanquam ex radice fluere alios fere omnes Jansenii errores, ac præsertim quinque damnatas propositiones.”—*Aug. syst. vind.* d. 4, c. 1, § 8.

[2651] “Quod amplius delectat, secundum id operemur necesse est.”—*In Gal.* n. 49.

[2652] “Non erit sufficiens gratia, sed vel efficax, vel ita inefficax ex qua operatio nequidem possit sequi.”—*De Gr. Chr.1.* 4, c. 10.

[2653] “Aliqua Dei præcepta hominibus justis. volentibus et conantibus, secundum præsentes quas habent vires, sunt impossibilia; deest quoque illis gratia qua possibilia fiant.”—*Ibid,*1. 3, c. 13.

[2654] “Nisi major fuerit cœlestis delectatio quam terrena, fieri non potest quin propriæ voluntatis infirmitate vincamur.”

[2655] “Vigente enim delectatione carnali, impossibile est ut virtutis consideratio prævaleat.”—*De Gr. Chr.1.* 4, c. 6–9.

[2656] “Quomodo non sint excusati qui illo adjutorio carent, quandoquidem sine illo præceptum implere non possint?”—*Ibid.1.* 3, c. 15.

[2657] “Quo fit ut hæc necessitas, in doctrina Jansenii ejusque discipulorum, non sit necessitas moralis, sed antecedens et invincibilis; quæ citra apertam hæresim admitti non potest.”—*Ep. cl.* 2, *ep.* 3.

[2658] “Sine qua non magis potest homo bene operari, quam volare sine alis,—quam homini cœco ut videat, vel surdo ut audeat, vel tibiis fracto ut recte gradiatur.”—*De Gr.1.* 3, c. 15;1. 2, c. 1.

[2659] “Omnes homines dicuntur posse credere, posse diligere Deum; . . . hæc enim potestas non est aliud nisi flexibilis capacitas per quam possunt suscipere fidem et charitatem.”—L. 3, c. 15.

[2660] “Nee tamen, cum vult, potest, sed cum fuerit, adhibita curatione, sanatus.”—*De Perf. just.* c. 3, rat. 5.

[2661] “Quapropter, lustratis fundamentis Augustini, quibus tota doctrina de arbitrii libertate nititur, nihil aliud existimamus quam cognitionem acdelectationem seu delectabilem objecti complacentiam esse id quod tantam potestatem in liberum arbitrium habet, ut earn faciat velle vel nolle. . . . De cognitione hic non multum solliciti sumus; illam enim ad volendum esse necessarium vix quisquam dubitat.”—L. 7, c. 3.

[2662] “Profertur primus effectus legis dare cognitionem peccati.”—L. 1, c. 7.

[2663] “Peccatum non cognovi nisi per legem.”—*Rom.* 7:7.

[2664] “Finis ergo legis est ut reddatur homo inexcusabiiis; nec male hoc modo definietur quod sit conscientiæ agnitio inter justum et injustum discernentis, ad tollendum ignorantiæ prætextum.”—*Inst.1.* 2, c. 2.

[2665] “Qua quis potest facere (peccatum), et ab eo, saltern aliud perpetrando, abstinere.”—*De St. nat. laps.1.* 4, c. 21.

[2666] “Arbitrium lapsorum hominum nullo modo in peccando desinit esse liberum, quamvis generali quadam peccandi necessitate vinciatur; erit enim liberum quoad exercitium, ut loquuntur, necessitatum, quoad specificationem.”—*Ibid.* c. 19.

[2667] “Quidam posuerunt quod voluntas hominis ex necessitate movetur ad aliquid eligendum; nec tamen ponebant quod voluntas cogeretur. . . . Hæc autem opinio est hæretica; tollit enim rationem meritt et demeriti in humanis actibus: non enim videtur meritorium vel demeritorium, quod aliquis sic ex necessitate agit quod vitare non possit.”—*De Mal.* q. 6, *a. un.*

[2668] “Cum hoc efficiat (delectatio carnalis) blanditiis motus sui, ut, qui ad agendum et non agendum ante motum esset indifferens, ipso motu libidinis in alteram partem, instar æquilibrii cui pondus additur, impellatur.”—*De Gr.1.* 7, c. 14.

[2669] “Siquidem moralis prædeterminatio ilia dicitur juæ tantum se habet ex parte objecti, quemadmodum facit ille qui consulit, præcipit, rogat; sed hæc (delectatio) se habet in ipsa potentia voluntatis, quam propriæ suæ suavitatis magnitudine ad volendum applicat, et applicando determinat, utpote causans in ea hoc ipsum ut se determinet, ideoque prædeterminat.”—L. 8. c. 3.

[2670] “Voluntas determinatur ad electionem sui finis aliqua impressione quæ illius determinationem antecedat.”

[2671] “Jansenistæ contendunt delectatione gradibus superiori voluntatem invincibiliter determinari ad operandum, absque ullo respectu ad futuram ipsius voluntatis determinationem.”—*Bajan. et Jans. red. app.* 2.

[2672] “Ad merendum et demerendum, in statu naturæ Japsæ, non requiritur in homine libertas a necessitate, sed sufficit libertas a coactione.”

[2673] “Stare meritum posse cum agendi necessitate.”

[2674] Page 170.

[2675] “Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis, sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proventum, ut possitis sustinere.”—1 *Cor.* 10:13.

[2676] “Mandatum hoc, quod ego præcipio tibi hodie, non supra te est.”—*Deut.* 30:11.

[2677] “Qui potuit transgredi, et non est transgressus; facere mala, et non fecit.”—*Ecclus.* 31:10.

[2678] “Peccati reum tenere quemquam, quia non fecit quod facere non potuit, summæ iniquitatis esse et insaniæ.”—*De Duab. An.* c. 12.

[2679] “Optio vobis datur: eligite hodie quod placet, cui servire potissimum debeatis, utrum . . . diis Amorrhæorum . . . ; ego autem et domus mea serviemus Domino.”—*Jos.* 24:15.

[2680] “Plena utriusvis potestas ostenditur, ut, quasi suspensa et in medio posita, voluntas alterm quod volet e duobus adsciscat.”—*De Op. sex d.1.* 3, c. 2.

[2681] “Testes invoco hodie cœlum et terram, quod proposuerim vobis vitam et mortem, benedictionem et maledictionem; elige ergo vitam, ut et tu vivas et semen tuum.”—*Deut.* 30:19.

[2682] “Deus ab initio constituit hominem et reliquit ilium in manu consilii sui. Adjecit mandata et praecepta sua. . . . Ante hominem vita et mors, bonum et malum; quod placuerit ei, dabitur illi.”—*Ecclus.* 15:14.

[2683] “Non poterat expressioribus uti vocibus, si inter nos viveret ac de lite nostra judicaret, quam isthic fecit, ut libertatis humanæ arbitriique liberi naturam ac proprietatem describeret.”—*Loco sup. cit.*

[2684] “Vocavi et renuistis.”—*Prov.* 1:24.

[2685] “Ipsi fuerunt rebelles lumini.”—*Job,* 24:13.

[2686] “Expectavi, ut faceret uvas, et fecit labruscas.”—*Isa.* 5:2.

[2687] “Vos semper Spiritui Sancto resistitis.”—*Acts,* 7:51.

[2688] “Quod amplius nos delectat, secundum id operemur necesse est.” *In Gal.* a. 49.

[2689] “Nos nihil quam Augustinum sequimur. . . . Etiamsi crepet Pighius, nobis hoc extorquere non potest, quin Augustinus sit noster.”—*Adv. Pigh.1.* 3.

[2690] “Delectatio quippe quasi pondus est animæ.”—*De Mus.1.* 6, c. 11.

[2691] “Pondus meum, amor meus.”—*Conf.1.* 13, c. 9.

[2692] “Nos ita, Deo opitulante, ordinemus, ut inferioribus non offendamur, solis autem superioribus delectemur.”—*De Mus.1.* 6, c. 11.

[2693] “Quid est trahi voluptate? ‘Delectare in Domino, et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui.’ ”—*Ps.* 36:4.

[2694] “Videte quomodo trahit Pater: docendo delectat, non necessitated imponendo.”—*In Joan. tr.* 26.

[2695] “Si frui delectaverit, delectatio illicita refrenanda est; velut cum jejunamus, et visis cibis palati appetitus assurgit, non fit nisi delectatione, sed earn dominantis rationis jure cohibemus.”—*De Serm. Dom. in monte,*1. 1, c. 12.

[2696] “Justitia sic delectet, ut vincat etiam licitas delectationes.”—*Serm.* 159, *E. B.*

[2697] “Quod amplius nos delectat, secundum id operemur necesse est. Manifestum est certe secundum id nos vivere quod sectati fuerimus; sectabimur autem quod dilexerimus. Itaque, si ex ad verso existant duo, præceptum justitiæ et consuetudo carnalis, et utrumque diligitur, ibi sectabimur quod amplius dilexerimus.”—*In Gal.* n. 54.

[2698] “Non faciebam quod et incomparabili affectu amplius mihi placebat, et mox ut vellem, possem.”—*Conf.1.* 8, c. 8.

[2699] “Titillat delectatio illicitæ concupiscentiæ? pugna, resiste, noli consentire; et impletur hic: ‘Post concupiscentias tuas non eas.’ ”—*Ecclus.* 18:30.—*Serm.* 155, *E. B.*

[2700] “Si eadem tentatione ambo tententur, et unus ei cedat, atque consentiat, alter perseveret; quid aliud apparet, nisi unum voluisse, alterum noluisse a castitate deficere?”—*De Civ.* D.1. 12, c. 6.

2701 “Voluntas nostra nee voluntas esset, nisi esset in nostra potestate; non enim est nobis liberum quod in potestate non habemus.”—*De Lib. Arb.1.* 3, c. 3.

2702 Ch. 7:17.

2703 “Hoc ergo Dominus dicens: Facite hoc, aut, Facite illud,—ostendit esse in potestate (hominum) quid facerent; . . . qui enim servare legem non vult, in potestate ejus est, si velit.”—*De act. cum Fel. man.1.* 2, c. 4.

2704 “A fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos.”

2705 “Ubi dicitur: Noli hoc, et Noli illud;—et ubi ad aliquid faciendum vel non faciendum in divinis monitis opus voluntatis exigitur, satis liberum demonstratur arbitrium.”—*De Gr. et Lib. Arb.* c. 2.

2706 “Liberum in hominibus esse arbitrium, utrique dicimus; liberum autem esse quemquam ad agendum bonum sine adjutorio Dei, . . . vos dicitis; hinc estis Pelagiani.”—*De Nupt. et Conc.1.* 2, c. 3.

2707 “Utrique dicimus.”

2708 “Ista quæstio, ubi de arbitrio voluntatis et de Dei gratia disputatur, ita est ad discernendum difficilis, ut, quando defenditur arbitrium, negari Dei gratia videatur, quando asseritur Dei gratia, liberum arbitrium putetur auferri.”—*De Gr. Chr.* c. 47.

2709 “Neque imperaret hoc Deus ut faceremus, si impossibile judicaret ut hoc ab homine fieret.”—*In Ps.* 56.

2710 “Non enim peccatum esset quod non fieret voluntate; ac per hoc pœna injusta esset, si homo voluntatem non haberet liberam.”—*De Lib. Arb.1.* 2, c. 1.

2711 “Quis enim non clamet stultum esse præcepta dare ei cui liberum non est quod præcipitur facere, et iniquum esse eum damnare cui non fuit potestas jussa complere?”—*De Fide cont. Man.* c. 10.

2712 “Motus quo voluntas avertitur ab incommutabili bono, si natura vel necessitate existit, culpabilis esse nullo pacto potest.”—*De Lib. Arb.1.* 3, c. 1.

2713 “Consentire autem vocationi Dei, vel ab ea dissentire, propriæ voluntatis est.”—*De Sp. et Litt.* c. 34.

2714 “Neminem habere in potestate quid ei veniat in mentem.”

2715 “Sine quo voluntas velle non possit; sic tamen ut velle et nolle, uti vel non uti, in ejus libero arbitrio relinquatur.”

2716 “Aliqua Dei præcepta hominibus justis, volentibus et conantibus, secundum præsentes quas habent vires, sunt impossibilia; deest quoque illis gratia qua possibilia fiant.”

2717 “Ad merendum et demerendum in statu naturæ lapsæ, non requiritur in homine libertas a necessitate, sed sufficit libertas a coactione.”

2718 “Non sunt potestates hæ meæ, O Doctor! Faciam enim, si fata volunt . . . aderit necessario quod fatatum est.”—*Præp. ev.1.* 6, c. 6.

2719 “Natura physica gratiæ efficacis non in alio posita est quam in victrici delectatione qua mens circa bonum afficitur.”—*Instit.* p. 6, d. 1, q. 4, c. 7.

2720 “Manifestum relinquitur et Jansenianum systema illis (Luthero et Calvino) plane favere, indeque a viro Catholico sine crimine violatæ fidei propugnari nullatenus posse; non enim tuta fide, salvaque religione, defendi potest systema, cujus fundamentalibus admissis principiis, damnata dogmata necessum est approbare.”

2721 “Cum Ecclesia quinque propositiones damnaverit in sensu Jansenii, necesse est illas damnatas fuisse in ipso Jansenii systemate, delectationis scilicet superioris ac relative victricis, quæ totius systematis fundamentum est.”—*De Gr. Chr.* q. 3 *in prop.* 5 *Fans.*

2722 “Ea gratia est necessitans quæ supponit voluntatem destitutam vera potentia resistendi; atqui talis est gratia infallibiliter efficax ex virium graduali superioritate. Nam hujusmodi gratia supponit voluntatem non habere ad resistendum nisi vires inferiores. Repugnat autem ut vires superiores, quæ agunt ut superiores, vincantur ab inferioribus; alias necesse esset ut inferiores operarentur ultra suæ activitatis gradus.”

2723 “Ut fateatur, quando contra tentationes concupiscentiasque illicitas dimicamus, non ex propria voluntate, sed ex adjutorio Dei provenire victoriam.”—*Cath. conf.*

2724 “Nullus actus excedit proportionem principii activi. Et ideo videmus in rebus naturalibus quod nulla res potest perficere effectum per suam operationem qui excedat virtutem activam, sed solum potest producere per operationem suam effectum suæ virtuti proportionatum.”—1. 2. q. 109, a. 5.

2725 “Nobis enim sufficit quod hæc sola nobis Veritas concedatur, nimirum quoties gratiæ Dei consentimus, id oriri semper ex eo quod rectus amor, quem Deus nobis inspirat, viribus superior est perverso amori, et, quia viribus superior est, idcirco eum certissime superare.”—*Collat.* 4, c. 30.

2726 “Novimus quidem orthodoxos theologos qui vim gratiæ efficacem colligunt ex ipsius delectatione absolute et simpliciter victrice; quique in gratia sufficiente pares vires agnoscunt ad oppositam actualem cupiditatem superandam. Verum qui gratiam velint esse victricem relative, seu ex superioritate graduum, quique non aliam sufficientem admittunt gratiam quam viribus inferiorem oppositæ superiori concupiscentiæ, non alios quam Janseniani systematis defensores novimus.”—*De Gr. Chr.* q. 9, a. 2, obj. 6.

[2727] Berti. August. *Syst. Vindic. Diss.* 5, c. 3, n. 4. “In actu primo,” “in actu secundo.” “In actu primo” is much the same with our English expression *in power,* or *in liability;* “in actu secundo,” *in act.* Thus, at every moment we are subject to concupiscence *in actu primo,* because we are *liable* to be tempted by passion to disobey God’s will; but we are only subject to it “in actu secundo” when we are *at this moment* tempted by passion to disobey God’s will.—ED.

[2728] “Gratia quæ dat posse, dat totum complementum et totam virtutem seu sufficientiam quæ requiritur ex parte actus primi.”—*Man. Thom,* tr. 7, c. 10.

[2729] “Gratia sufficiens dat posse proximum et expeditum in ratione potentiæ.”—*De Gr.* q. 2, d. 4, § 2.

[2730] Gotti t. ii. tr. vi. *de Grat.* q. 2, dub. 4, n. 4, p. 286. “In sensu composito,” “in sensu diviso.” The meaning of these phrases will best be shown by illustrations. I have full moral power to avoid *all venial sins* “in sensu *diviso,*”—that is, I can avoid *each one* of them; there is no *one* which I cannot avoid,—but not “in sensu *composito,*” for I have *not* moral power to avoid *all* venial sins collectively.—ED.

[2731] “Gratia sufficiens non dat potentiam proxime completam et expeditam.”

[2732] “Prima supponebat potentiam expeditam et liberam, secunda impeditam et servam.”—*Cort. D. Aug.* tr. 2, q. 3, a. 2.

[2733] “Tria sunt quæ Jansenianum redolent dogma, et quinque damnatarum propositionum sunt fons et origo, a quibus novi Janseniani, quos inter eminent duo haud dubie spurii Augustinenses minime abhorrent. Horum primum est, quod non tantum in delectatione victrici reponunt gratiam efficientem, sed in delectatione victrici relativa. Alterum, quod negant in delectatione inferioris gradus potentiam proxime expeditam, ad hanc requirentes ex parte potentiæ et actus primi robustiorem delectationem; ideoque gratia inefficax, sive adjutorium sine quo ab ipsis deprædicatum, non est vera gratia sufficiens, neque Molinistico sensu neque Thomistico, cum gratia sufficiens communi sensu Catholicorum conferat ipsam potentiam proxime expeditam. Tertium, quod hinc consequitur, veram gratiam sufficientem e medio tollunt, illam potius inefficacem quam sufficientem appellantes.”

[2734] “Ego vero firmissime et absque ulla hæsitatione pronuntio, tria doctrinæ capita nuperrime commemorata nequaquam erronea esse nec damnatarum propositionum principia; sed aliquos Jansenii quidem refutandi zelo permotos, sed propriæ sententiæ præjudicio abreptos, quid catholicum sit, quid erroneum et damnatum minime dislinxisse, atque ex horum lucubrationibus ansam arripuisse sciolum anonymum, et si qui alii sunt curtæ eruditionis et pinguis minervæ homines, inconcussa Augustini dogmata, quæ, velint nolint, sunt eadem ac nostra, tamquam portenta hæresum calumniandi.”—*Aug. syst. vind.* d. 4, c. 1, § 2.

[2735] “Cuilibet fideli, nisi libere ponat obicem adest gratia orationis, qua impetrare potest auxilium immediate sufficiens ad implenda mandata.”—*De Theol. Disc.1.* 18, c. 8, p 4.

[2736] “In eo qui habet voluntatem parvam est potentia proxime sufficiens ad orandum et sufficiens remote ad observantiam præceptorum, quæ poterit proxime implere, dum per orationem obtinuerit

robustam voluntatem."—*Aug. syst. vind.* d. 4, c. 1, § 9.

2737 "Gratia efficax sola dat potentiam completam et expeditam."—*Ibid.* § 4.

2738 "Requiritur ut alio medio non egeat ut exeat in actum."

2739 "Nullus absque gratia per se efficaci, habet potentiam orandi conjunctam cum actu."—*De Theol. Disc.1.* 18, c. 8, p. 5.

2740 "Augustinus docet necessariam esse ad orandum certam scientiam et victricem delectationem."

2741 "Intelligamus, si possumus, Dominum Deum bonum ideo etiam Sanctis suis alicujus operis justi aliquando non tribuere vel certam scieutiam vel victricem delectationem, ut cognoscant non a seipsis, sed ab illo sibi esse lucem qua illuminentur tenebræ eorum, et suavitatem qua det fructum suum terra eorum."—*De Pecc. mer.1.* 2, c. 19.

2742 "Eo ipso quo firmissime creditur Deum justum et bonum impossibilia non præcipere, hinc admonemur, et in facilibus quid agamus, et in difficilibus quid petamus."—*De Nat. et Gr.* c. 69.

2743 "Deus impossibilia non jubet; sed jubendo monet, et facere quid possis, et petere quod non possis; et adjuvat ut possis."—*Sess.* 6, *cap.* 11.

2744 "Manifestum est potentiam ad orandum debere esse proximam in justo sive fideli; nam, si fidelis sit in potentia remota ad simpliciter orandum (non enim hie loquor de fervida et diuturniore oratione), non habet is aliam potentiam proximam pro impelranda oratione; alias procederetur in infinitum."—*Jans. err. cal. subl.* c. 2, § 1.

2745 "Etiam in statu naturæ lapsæ datur adjutorium *sine quo non.* secus ac Jansenius contendit, quod quidem adjutorium efficit in nobis . . . actus debiles, nempe orationes minus fervidas pro adimplendis mandatis; in ordine ad quorum executionem adjutorium *sine quo non* est tantum auxilium remotum, impetratorium tamen auxilii *quo,* sive gratiæ efficacis qua mandata implentur."—*Jans. err. cal. subl.* c. 2, § 1.

2746 "Facienti quod in se est, Deus non denegat gratiam."

2747 "Si hæc enim auxilia vere auxilia sunt, et proximam vere dant potestatem, qui fit ut, ex innumerabili tamdiu hominum qui ita juvantur multitudine, præceptum observet nemo? Aut quomodo vere sufficientia sunt, si præterea gratia efficax est necessaria? Non is habet potestatem sufficientem cui deest aliud auxilium necessarium, quod in ejus potestate non est."—*Cons. sch. de gr. tr.* 3, c. 8.

2748 "Deus non deficit ab agendo quod est necessarium ad salutem."—*P.* 1, q 49. a. 2.

2749 "Eo ipso quo firmissime creditur Deum justum et bonum impossibilia non præcipere, hinc admonemur, et in facilibus quid agamus, et in difficilibus quid petamus."—*De Nat. et Gr.* c. 69.

2750 “Igitur opera facilia seu actus bonos minus perfectos facere possumus, absque eo quod majus auxilium a Deo postulemus, quod tamen in actibus difficilioribus petendum est.”—*Loco sup. cit.*

2751 “Omnibus ea placuere sufficientia auxilia, vere sufficientia, quibus assentitur quandoque voluntas, quandoque non.”—*Cons. sch.* p. 2, *ad fin.*

2752 “Censemus primo, quod immediate cum ipso effectu consensus completi (gratia) sufficiens non habet habitudinem, nisi contingenter vel mediate. . . . Arbitramur proinde gratiam sufficientem esse gratiam dispositionis ad efficacem, utpote ex cujus bono usu Deus postea gratiam completi effectus effectivam creatæ voluntati concedat.”—*Theol. Gr. Patr.1.* 2, c. 15.

2753 “Catholici Doctores omnes, dari gratiam aliquam vere intrinsecam, quæ possit consensum voluntatis ad bonum salutis elicere, nec tamen propter liberam voluntatis resistentiam eumdem aliquando eliciat, omnibus in scholis professi sunt et profitentur.”—*Theol. Gr. Patr.1.* 2, c. 6.

2754 “Auxilia igitur gratiæ sufficientis sunt dispositiva ad efficacem, et efficacia secundum quid, effectus videlicet incompleti, impetrantis primo remote, propius, ac tandem proxime, qualis est actus fidei, spei, timoris, atque inter hæc omnia orationis. Unde celeberrimus Alphonsus Lemoinus gratiam illam sufficientem docuit esse gratiam petendi, seu orationis, de qua toties beatus Angustinus.”—*Ibid.* c. 15.

2755 Facienti quod in se est, Deus non denegat gratiam.

2756 “Donum istud, quo Deus dat ut jussa faciamus, affectum orationis subsequitur,—et talis affectus legi comes datur.”—*De De0,*1. 10, c. 20–19.

2757 “Aliquis potest bene agere, et aliquando bene agit.”

2758 “Nihil vetat ut, ex duobus æquali auxilio præventis, faciliores actus, plenam conversionem sæpissime præcedentes, unus faciat, alius non.”—*Lib.* 6, q. 3.

2759 “Cum sola gratia suflicienti aliquando homo convertitur.—*In* 1. 2. q. 109, a. 10.

2760 “Duo auxiliorum genera theologi statuunt, alterum sufficiens, alterum superabundans; et quidem priori auxilio excitati homines aliquando convertuntur, aliquando converti renuunt.”

2761 “Et quidem prius illud auxilium ad omnes homines quam latissime patere theologi definiunt.”—*In fest. S. Matt. conc.* 1, p. 1.

2762 “Si quosdam pietatis actus (nempe humiliter Deum deprecari) cum solo auxilio sufficienti (homo) facere potest, et aliquando facit, quibus se ad ulteriores gratias præparat.”

2763 “Ut priorum bono usui posteriores succedant.”—*Loco sup. cit.*

2764 “Infallibiliter (homines) promerentur oratione, pro qua sufficiens gratia, quæ nulli non præsto est, plenissime sufficit.”

2765 *Theol. S. Ans.* t. 3, d. 125, 126, 127.

2766 “Utrumlibet aut gratiæ cooperans agit, aut ea spreta, malum agere non desistit.”—*Sent.1.* 6, c. 50.

2767 “Alia ratio reddi non potest, nisi quod alter præbet assensum et cooperatur, alter vero minime.”—*De Nat. et Gr.1.* 1, c. 15.

2768 “Est motio divina sive instinctus quo movetur homo ad bonum, nec alicui denegatur. Homines deversimode se ad istum habent instinctum: aliqui namque illi acquiescunt, sicque ad gratiam habitualem de congruo disponuntur, quia facientibus quod in se est, non defore Deus creditur; alii repugnant.”—*Inst. chr.* d. 24, c. 20.

2769 “Hæc autem auxilia, quæ omnibus dantur, a plerisque inefficacia vocantur, quia non semper habent suum effectum, sed plerumque a peccatoribus frustrantur.”—*De Justif.1.* 13, c. 13.

2770 “In potestate tamen hominis aliquo modo dicitur esse quod ipse per Dei gratiam potest ab eo petere ac obtinere; et hoc modo in hominis justi potestate dici potest esse ut habeat auxilium ad perseverandum necessarium, illud impetrando orationibus.”—*De Gral.* q. 1, d. 13, § 3.

2771 “Auxilium sufficiens ad salutem, pro loco et tempore, mediate vel immediate omnibus datur . . . Dicimus: Mediate vel immediate;—quoniam, iis qui usu rationis utuntur, immitti credimus a Deo sanctas inspirationes, ac per hoc immediate illos habere gratiam excitantem, cui si acquiescere velint, possint ad justificationem disponi et ad salutem aliquando pertingere.”—*De Gr. et Lib. Arb.1.* 2, c. 5.

2772 “Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis; sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proventum, ut possitis sustinere.”—1 Cor. 10:13.

2773 “Non autem videretur esse fidelis Deus, si nobis denegaret, quantum in ipso est, ea per quæ pervenire ad eum possemus.”—*In* 1 *Cor.* 1. *lect.* 1.

2774 “Sapientia foris prædicat . . . , dicens: Usquequo, parvuli, diligitis infantiam, et stulti ea quæ sibi sunt noxia cupient . . . ? Convertimini ad correptionem meam: en, proferam vobis spiritum meum. . . . Quia vocavi, et renuistis . . . ; ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo et subsannabo.”—*Prov.* 1:20.

2775 “En, proferam vobis spiritum meum.”

2776 “Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.”—*Matt.* 11:28.

2777 “Venite et arguite me, dicit Dominus, si fuerint peccata vestra ut coccinum, quasi nix dealbabuntur.”—*Isa.* 1:18.

2778 “Petite, et dabitur vobis.”—*Matt.* 7:7.

2779 *Sess.* 6, *cap.* 4.

2780 “Deus impossibilia non jubet; sed jubendo monet, et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis; et adjuvat ut possis.”

2781 “Eo ipso quo firmissime creditur Deum justum et bonum impossibilia non potuisse præcipere, hinc admonemur, et in facilibus quid agamus, et in difficilibus quid petamus.”—*De Nat. et Grat.* c. 69.

2782 “Monet (Deus) et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis.”

2783 “Monet et facere quod possis.”

2784 “Monet et petere quod non possis.”

2785 “Hinc admonemur et in facilibus quid agamus, et in dificilibus quid petamus.”

2786 “Deus namque sua gratia semel justificatos non deserit, nisi ab eis prius deseratur.”—*Sess.* 6, *cap.* II.

2787 “Nonne aliquando ipsa oratio nostra sic tepida est, vel potius frigida et pene nulla, imo interdum ita nulla ut neque hoc in nobis cum dolore advertamus, quia, si vel hoc dolemus, jam oramus?”—*Ad Simp1.1.* 1, q. 2.

2788 “Aliud est peccatores non orare, aliud non habere gratiam qua orare possint.”—*Nod. præd.* p. 1, § 2.

2789 “Justi non semper orant ut oportet; eorum culpa est quod ita non orent, cum habeant ex gratia sufficientes vires ad orandum. Unde Sanctus Auguslinus ait quidem orationem nostram aliquando frigidam ac pene nullam esse, at non ait desse gratiam per quam oratio possit ardentior fieri.”—*De Gr. Chr.* q. 3. p. 1.

2790 “Colligo ipsammet tepidam orationem fieri a nobis cum adjutorio *sine quo non* ac ordinario concursu Dei, cum sint actus debiles et minus perfecti. Ea tamen tepida oratione impetramus spiritum ferventioris orationis, qui nobis adjutorio *quo* donatur.”—*Jans, err. cal. subl.* c. 3.

2791 “Ego libera et valida intentione preces ad te direxi, quoniam, ut hanc habere possem, exaudisti me infirmius orantem.”—*In Ps.* xvi.

2792 “Spiritus postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus.”—*Rom.* 8:26.

2793 “Interpellare nos facit, nobisque interpellandi inspirat affectum.”—*Ep.* 194, c. 4, *E. B.*

2794 “Quod dono ipsius tu facis, ille facere dicitur, quia sine illo tu non faccres.”—*In Ps.* lii.

2795 “Ubi quis permissus est in tentationem incidere, eventum ut sufferre possit et voluntatem Dei per orationem petere.”—*Mor. reg.* 62, c. 2.

2796 “Legem dedit quæ vulnera patefaceret, ut medicum optarent.”—*In Gall.* iii. 22.

2797 “Nec quisquam poterit excusari, qui hostem vincere noluit, dum orare cessavit.”—*Hom. de Moys.*

2798 “Qui sumus nos? aut quæ fortitudo nostra? hoc quærebat Deus, ut videntes defectum nostrum, et quod non est nobis auxilium aliud, ad ejus misericordiam tota humilitate curramus.”—*In Quad.* s. 5.

2799 “Omnes nobis causamur deesse gratiam; sed justius forsitan ipsa sibi queritur gratia deesse nonnullos.”—*De Div.* s. 17.

2800 “Magnum aliquid Pelagiani se scire putant, quando dicunt: Non juberet Deus quod sciret non posse ab homine fieri.—Quis hoc nesciat? sed ideo jubet aliqua quæ non possumus, ut noverimus quid ab illo petere debeamus.”—*De Gr. et Lib. Arb.* c. 16.

2801 “Non tibi deputatur ad culpam quod invitus ignoras, sed quod negligis quærere quod ignoras; neque illud quod vulnerata membra non colligis, sed quod volentem sanare contemnis. Ista tua propria peccata sunt: nulli enim homini ablatum est scire utiliter quærere.”—*De Lib. Arb.1.* 3, c. 19.

2802 “Quid ergo aliud ostenditur nobis, nisi quia et petere et quærere et pulsare ille concedit, qui ut hæc faciamus jubet?”—*Ad Simp1.1.* 1, q. 2.

2803 “Semel accipe et intellige: nondum traheris? ora ut traharis.”—*In Jo.* tr. 26.

2804 “Quod ergo ignorat (anima) quid sibi agendum sit, ex eo est quod nondum accepit; sed hoc quoque accipiet si hoc quod accepit bene usa fuerit: accepit autem ut pie et diligenter quærat, si volet.”—*De Lib. Arb.1.* 3, c. 22.

2805 “Homo qui voluerit, et non potuerit, oret ut habeat tantam voluntatem, quanta sufficit ad implenda mandata: sic quippe adjuvatur, ut faciat quod jubetur.”—*De Gr. et Lib. Arb.* c. 15.

2806 “Præcepto admonitum est liberum arbitrium, ut quæret Dei donum; quod quidem sine suo fructu prorsus admoneretur, nisi prius acciperet aliquid dilectionis, ut addi sibi quæreret unde, quod jubebatur, impleret.”—*De Gr. et Lib. Arb.* c. 18.

2807 “Ut addi sibi quæreret unde, quod jubebatur, impleret.”

2808 “Jubet ideo ut, facere jussa conati et nostra infirmitate fatigati, adjutorium gratiæ poscere noverimus.”—*Ep.* 157, *E. B.*

2809 “Lex subintravit ut abundaret delictum, cum homines adjutorium gratiæ non implorant; cum autem vocatione divina intelligunt cui sit ingemiscendum, et invocant cum, fiet quod sequitur: ‘Ubi abundavit delictum, superabundavit gratia.’ ”—*Rom.* 5:20.

2810 “Hoc restat in ista mortali vita libero arbitrio, non ut impleat homo justitiam cum voluerit, sed ut se supplici pietate convertat ad eum cujus dono eam possit implere.”—*Ad Simp1.1.* 1, q. 1.

2811 “Certum est nos mandata servare. si volumus; sed, quia præparatur voluntas a Domino, ab illo petendum est ut tantum velimus. quantum sufficit ut volendo faciamus.”—*De Gr. et Lib. Arb.* c. 16.

2812 “Qui corripi non vult, et dicit: Ora potius pro me,—ideo corripiendus est ut faciat (oret) etiam ipse pro se.”—*De Corr. et Gr.* c. 5.

2813 “Non se fallant qui dicunt: Ut quid nobis præcipitur ut declinemus a malo et faciamus bonum, si id velle et operari Deus operatur in nobis?”—*De Corr. et Gr.* c. 2.

2814 “Quando autem non agunt, orent ut, quod nondum habent, accipiant.”

2815 “Ut quid nobis præcipitur ut oremus, si orare Deus non operatur in nobis?”

2816 “Hoc ad divinam Providentiam pertinet, ut cuilibet provideat de necessariis ad salutem, dummodo ex parte ejus non impediatur.”—*De Verit.* q. 14, a. II.

2817 “Nemo potest venire ad me, nisi Pater, qui misit me, traxerit eum.”—*John*, 6:44.

2818 “Respondemus eo solum concludi non habere omnes auxilium efficax quo reipsa credant; non tamen concludi non habere omnes auxilium quo possint credere, vel certe quo possint auxilium petere.”—*De Gr. et Lib. Arb.1.* 2, c. 8.

2819 “Beneplacitum est Domino . . . in eis qui sperant super misericordiam ejus.”—*Ps.* 46:2.

2820 “Quoniam in me speravit, liberabo eum, protegam eum, . . . eripiam eum, et glorificabo eum.”—*Ps.* 90:14.

2821 “Salvabit eos, quia speraverunt in eo.”—*Ps.* 36:40.

2822 “Conserva me, Domine, quoniam speravi in te.”—*Ps.* 15:1.

2823 “Nullus speravit in Domino, et confusus est.”—*Ecclus.* 2:2.

2824 “Cœlum et terra transibunt, verba autem mea non præteribunt.”—*Matt.* 24:35.

2825 “Hoc totum hominis meritum, si totam spem suam ponat in eo.”—*In Ps.* xc. s. 15.

2826 “Invoca me in die tribulationis; eruam te, et honorificabis me.”—*Ps.* 49:15.

2827 “Fiat misericordia tua, Domine, super nos, quemadmodum speravimus in te.”—*Ps.* 32:22.

2828 “Sperate in eo, omnis congregatio populi.”—*Ps.* 61:9.

2829 “Qui timetis Dominum, sperate in ilium.”—*Ecclus.* 2:9.

2830 “Spera in Deo tuo semper.”—*Os.* 12:6.

2831 “Perfecte sperate in eam, quæ offertur vobis, gratiam.”—1 *Pet.* 1:13.

2832 “Spes est certa expectatio futuræ beatitudinis.”—2. 2. q. 18, a. 4.

2833 “In Dei auxilio firmissimam spem collocare et reponere omnes debent: Deus enim, nisi ipsi illius gratiæ defuerint, sicut cœpit opus bonum, ita perficiet, operans velle et perficere.”—*Sess.* 6, *cap.* 13.

2834 “Scio enim cui credidi, et certus sum qui potens est depositum meum servare.”—2 *Tim.* 1:12.

2835 “De potentia Dei et misericordia ejus certus est quicumque fidem habet.”

2836 “Certa expectatio beatitudinis.”

2837 “Si tamen permanetis in fide fundati, et stabiles, et immobiles a spe Evangelii, quod audistis.”—*Col.* 1:23.

2838 “Cupimus autem unumquemque vestrum eamdem ostentare sollicitudinem ad expletionem spei usque in finem; . . . ut per duas res immobiles, quibus impossible est mentiri Deum, fortissimum solatium habeamus, qui confugimus ad tenendam propositam spem, quam sicut anchoram habemus animæ tutam ac firmam.”—*Heb.* 6:11–18.

2839 “Neque enim vana nobis hæc expectatio, aut dubia spes videtur, innixa nimirum æternæ promissionibus Veritatis.”—*In Ps.* xc. s. 7.

2840 “Tria considero in quibus spes mea consistit; charitatem adoptionis, veritatem promissionis, potestatem redditionis.”—*Dom.* 6 p. *Pent.* s. 3.

2841 “Postulet autem in fide, nihil hæsitans.”

2842 “Qui enim hæsitat, similis est fluctui maris, qui a vento movetur et circumfertur; non ergo æstimet homo ille quod accipiat aliquid a Domino.”—*James*, 1:6.

2843 “In repromissione etiam Dei non hæsitavit diffidentia, sed confortatus est fide, dans gloriam Deo, plenissime sciens quia, quæcumque promisit Deus, potens est et facere.”—*Rom.* 4:20.

2844 “Propterea dico vobis: omnia quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.”—*Mark,* 11:24.

2845 “Petite et accipietis.—Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.—Dabit bona petentibus se.—Oportet semper orare.—Non habetis, propter quod non postulatis.—Si quis indiget sapientia, postulet a Deo, etc.”

2846 “Cor regis in manu Domini: quocumque voluerit, inclinabit illud.”—*Prov.* 21:1.

2847 “Spiritum meum ponam in medio vestri, et faciam ut in præceptis meis ambuletis.”—*Ezek.* 36:27.

2848 “Consilium meum stabit, et omnis voluntas mea fiet.”—*Isa.* 46:10.

2849 “Qui immutat cor principum populi terræ.”—*Job,* 12:24.

2850 “Deus autem pacis . . . aptet vos in omni bono, ut faciatis ejus voluntatem: faciens in vobis quod placeat coram se per Jesum Christum.”—Heb. 13:21.

2851 “Qui (Deus) tamen hoc non fecit nisi per ipsorum hominum voluntates, sine dubio habens humanorum cordium inclinandorum omnipotentissimam potestatem.”—*De Cor. et Gr.* c. 14.

2852 “Agit Omnipotens in cordibus hominum, ut per eos agat quod per eos agere voluerit.”—*De Gr. et Lib. Arb.* c. 21.

2853 “Et si faciunt homines bona quæ pertinent ad colendum Deum, ipse facit ut illi faciant quæ præcepit.”—*De Præd. SS.* c. 10.

2854 “Certum est nos facere cum facimus; sed ille facit ut faciamus, præbendo vires efficacissimas voluntati, qui dixit: ‘Faciam ut in præceptis meis ambuletis’ (*Ezek.* 36:27).”—*De Gr. et Lib. Arb.* c. 16.

2855 “Deus est enim (inquit Apostolus) qui operatur in vobis et velle et perficere pro bona voluntate. Nos ergo volumus; sed Deus in nobis operatur et velle.”—*Phil.* 2:13; *De Dono. pers.* c. 13.

2856 “Quia præparatur voluntas a Domino, ab illo petendum est, ut tantum velimus quantum sufficit, ut volendo faciamus.”—*De Gr. et Lib. Arb.* c. 16.

2857 “Novit (Deus) in ipsis hominum cordibus operari, non ut homines, quod fieri non potest, nolentes credant, sed ut volentes ex nolentibus fiant.”—*Ad Bonif.1.* 1, c. 19.

2858 “Operatur in cordibus hominum, non solum veras revelationes, sed bonas etiam voluntates.”—*De Gr. Chr.* c. 24.

2859 “Voluntates nostræ tantum valent, quantum Deus eas valere voluit.”—*De Civ. D.1.* 5, c. 9.

2860 “Voluntates, quæ conservant sæculi creaturam, ita esse in Dei potestate, ut eas, quo voluerit, quando voluerit, faciat inclinari.”—*De Gr. et Lib. Arb.* c. 20.

2861 “Deus movet voluntatem immutabiliter propter efficaciam virtutis moventis, quæ deficere non potest.”—*De Mal.* q. 6, ad 3.

2862 “Charitas impeccabilitatem habet ex virtute Spiritus Sancti, qui infallibiliter operatur quodcumque voluerit; unde impossibile est hæc duo simul esse vera: quod Spiritus Sanctus velitaliquem movere ad actum charitatis, et quod ipse charitatem amittat peccando.”—2. 2. q. 24, a. 11.

2863 “Si Deus movet voluntatem ad aliquid, impossibile est huic positioni quod voluntas ad illud non moveatur.”—1. 2. q. 10, a. 4.

2864 “Redite, prævaricatores, ad cor.”—*Isa.* 46:8.

2865 “Revertimini, et agite pœnitentiam. . . . Revertimini, et vivite.” *Ezek.* 18:30, 32.

2866 “Solve vincula colli tui.”—*Isa.* 52:2.

2867 “Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis.”—*Matt.* 11:28.

2868 “Resistite fortes in fide.”—1 *Pet.* 5:9.

2869 “Ambulate dum lucem habetis.”—*John*, 12:35.

2870 “Vos semper Spiritui Sancto resistitis.”—*Acts*, 7:51.

2871 “Quia vocavi, et renuistis; extendi manum meam, et non fuit qui aspiceret. Despexistis omne consilium meum, et increpationes meas neglexistis.”—*Prov.* 1:24.

2872 It may be of benefit to the reader to sum up here in a few simple words the teaching of St. Alphonsus about actual grace and about prayer. His teaching seems to us to dissipate all the doubts and difficulties that we meet with in the different systems.

In what God requires of us there are easy things that we can do with the ordinary grace common to all men—the grace *really* sufficient for acting, without the need of special help. But as soon as a soul wishes to correspond to the first grace that invites it to do the good by enlightening its intellect and fortifying its will, the Holy Ghost does not fail to unite himself to it and to aid it. Now, among the easy things that require no other help than the common grace given to all men is necessarily *Prayer*, by means of which we certainly obtain all the graces of which we stand in need in every state in which we may find ourselves. There are also difficult things which we cannot do without a special grace that is not common to all, but surely granted to every one that asks for it as he should by means of the common grace which is never wanting to any one.

This is conformable to the celebrated saying of St. Augustine, adopted and sanctioned by the Council of Trent: "*Deus impossibilia non jubet, sed jubendo monet, et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis; et adjuvat ut possis*" (pages 30, 214). "God does not command impossible things: but by commanding, admonishes you both to do what you can, and to pray for what you cannot do; and he helps you, so that you may be able." God, who is just, in imposing his law, joins to it the necessary grace—light and force—that admonishes the conscience and furnishes the means: *jubendo monet.* We must therefore admit a first grace given to all men:—a grace that makes them capable of doing easy things: *Facere quod possis.* and, consequently, to think of praying and to wish to pray. Now, as soon as we wish to pray, we are already united with God, we have already begun to ask and to obtain: *Petere quod non possis, et adjuvat ut possis.* In this all is contained.—ED.

2873 "Quodcumque volueritis, petetis, et fiet vobis."—*John* 15:7.

2874 "Tui amoris in me ignem accende."

2875 "Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo."—*Ps.* 88:2.

2876 We have made up this treatise from different extracts; the greatest part is taken from the True Spouse of Christ, Chapter XV., and the rest from other works that are indicated. The whole offers a complete exposition of the teaching of St. Alphonsus on mental prayer, and fills a very important gap that we could not leave in the methodical plan that we have followed; for mental prayer is unquestionably one of the greatest means of salvation and of perfection. To this treatise we add the Spiritual Retreat, which is but an extraordinary exercise of prayer.—ED

2877 "Desolatione desolata est omnis terra, quia nullus est qui recogitet corde."—*Jer.* 12:11.

2878 "Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis."—*Ecclus.* 7:36.

2879 "Accedite ad eum, et illuminamini."—*Ps.* 33:6.

2880 "Sint lumbi vestri præcincti, et lucernæ ardentes in manibus vestris."—*Luke.* 12:35.

2881 "Oratio est lucerna."

2882 "Lucerna pedibus meis, verbum tuum."—*Ps.* 118:105.

2883 Letter 8.

2884 "Seipsum non exhorret, quia nec sentit."—*De Cons.1.* 1, c. 2.

2885 “Cogitavi dies antiquos, et annos æternos in mente habui . . . et exercitabar, et scopebam spiritum meum.”—*Ps.* 76:6.

2886 “Flores apparuerunt in terra nostra, tempus putationis advenit; vox turturis audita est in terra nostra.”—*Cant.* 2:12.

2887 “Puta tempus putationis adesse, si meditatio præivit.”—*De Cons.1.* 2, c. 6.

2888 “Consideratio regit affectus, dirigit actus, corrigit excessus.”—*Ibid.1.* 1, c. 7.

2889 “Faber ignitum ferrum ictibus mollire satagit.”—*De grad. Doctr. Spir.* c. 26.

2890 “Dabis ergo servo tuo cor docile.”—3 *Kings,* 3:9.

2891 “Video autem aliam legem in membris meis, repugnantem legi mentis meæ.”—*Rom.* 7:23.

2892 “Cor durum habebit male in novissimo; et qui amat periculum, in illo peribit.”—*Ecclus.* 3:27.

2893 “Timeo tibi, Eugeni, ne multitudo negotiorum, intermissa oratione et consideratione, te ad cor durum perducat, quod seipsum non exhorret, quia nec sentit.”—*De Cons.1.* 1, c. 2.

2894 “Ex hoc otio vires proveniunt.”

2895 “Ne suscitetis neque evigilare faciatis Dilectam, donec ipsa velit.”—*Cant.* 3:5.

2896 See Necessity of Prayer, page 23.

2897 Letter 8.

2898 “Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi.”—*Ps.* 141:2.

2899 “Multi clamant, non voce sua, sed corporis. Cogitatio tua clamor est ad Dominum.”—*Ennarr. in Ps.* cxli.

2900 “Clama intus, ubi audit Deus.”—*In Ps.* xxx. en. 4.

2901 “Orantes omni tempore in spiritu.”—*Eph.* 6:18.

2902 “In meditatione mea exardescet ignis.”—*Ps.* 38:4.

2903 “Ducam eam in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor ejus.”—*Osee,* 2:14.

2904 “Ex oratione fugatur tentatio, abscedit tristitia, virtus reparatur, excitatur fervor, et divini amoris flamma succrescit.”—*De Casto Conn.* c. 22.

2905 “Beatus vir qui . . . in lege ejus meditabitur die ac nocte. Et erit tamquam lignum quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum, quod fructum suum dabit in tempore suo; et folium ejus non defluet, et omnia quæcumque faciet, prosperabuntur.”—*Ps.* 1:3.

2906 *Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 79.

2907 “Emissiones tuæ, paradisus malorum punicorum cum pomorum fructibus. . . . Fons hortorum, puteus aquarum viventium, quæ fluunt impetu de Libano.”—*Cant.* 4:13.

2908 “Anima mea sicut terra sine aqua tibi, . . . defecit spiritus meus.”—*Ps.* 142:6

2909 “Quisquis non orat Deum, nec divino ejus colloquio cupit assidue frui, is mortuus est. . . . Animæ mors est non 1rovolvi coram Deo.”—*De or. D.1.* r.

2910 “Radix vitis frugiferæ.”—*De or. D.1.* r.

2911 “Oratio est propugnaculum adversus impetum afflictionum, virtutum scaturigo, gratiarum conciliatrix.”—*Scala sp. gr.* 28.

2912 “Omnis profectus spiritualis ex meditatione procedit.”—*In Ps.* 36.

2913 “Absque meditationis exercitio, nullus, secluso miraculo Dei, ad Christianæ religionis normam attingit.”—*De Med. cons.* 7.

2914 “Sedebit solitarius, et tacebit, quia levavit super se.”—*Lam.* 3:28.

2915 *Pious Reflections,* § 15; *Preparation for Death, consid.* xxxvi.; *The Love of God,* § 3.

2916 *Interior Castle,* d. 2, ch. 1.

2917 “Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quærenti ilium.”—*Lam.* 3:25.

2918 “Ducam eam in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor ejus.”—*Osee,* 2:14.

2919 *De Disc. mon.* c. 24.

2920 “Venerunt autem mihi omnia bona pariter cum ilia.”—*Wisd.* 7:7.

2921 “Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

2922 “Confiteantur tibi populi, Deus, confiteantur tibi populi omnes.”—*Ps.* 66:6.

2923 “Loquere, Domine, quia audit servus tuus.”—1 *Kings,* 3:9.

[2924] *Rule of Life,* ch. i. § 2; *The Love of God,* § 3.

[2925] “Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis.”—*Ecclus.* 7:36.

[2926] *Homo Apost.* app. 4, § 3; *Pious Reflections,* § 32–34.

[2927] “Quid prodest solitudo corporis, si solitudo defuerit cordis?”—*Mor.1.* 30, c. 23.

[2928] “Tu autem, cum oraveris, intra in cubiculum tuum, et, clauso ostio, ora Patrem tuum in abscondito.”—*Matt.* 6:6.

[2929] “Silentium, et a strepitu quies, cogit cælestia meditari.”—*Epist.* 78.

[2930] “Mane et vespere tempus est orationis opportunum.”—*Spec. disc.* p. 1, c. 12.

[2931] “Si oratio negottum præcesserit, peccatum aditum non inveniet.”—*De orat. Dom. or.* 1.

[2932] “Non prius corpusculum requiescat, quam anima pascatur.”—*Ad Eust.de Virgin.*

[2933] *Homo apost. App.* 4, § 3. Pope Benedict XIV. grants to all the faithful who make mental prayer devoutly for half an hour, or at least for a quarter of an hour, every day, for a month, a *plenary* indulgence when truly penitent, after confession and Communion they devoutly pray to the intentions of the Church. This indulgence is applicable to the souls in purgatory.

[2934] “Cum charitas urget, se exponit proximo, sic tamen ut continue anhelet ad cubile Sponsi reditum.”—*De Casto Conn.* c. 12.

[2935] “Non enim habet amaritudinem conversatio illius, nec tædium convictus illius, sed lætitiam et gaudium.”—*Wisd.* 8:16.

[2936] “Oratio est familiaris conversatio et conjunctio cum Deo.”—*Scala sp. gr.* 28.

[2937] “Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus.”—*Ps.* 33:9.

[2938] “Ad præparandum te ad orationem, exue voluntates tuas.”

[2939] “Loquere, Domine, quia audit servus tuus.”—1 *Kings,* 3:10.

[2940] *Rule of Life,* ch. 2, § 2.

It may be useful to mention here what the author himself wrote to his religious in a circular dated February 26, 1771: “I recommend that, for the most part, the meditations should be taken from my books, *The Preparation for Death, Meditations on the Passion, Darts of Fire,*—the meditations from Advent to the octave of the Epiphany. I say this, not in order to put forward my own poor books, but because these meditations are made up of devout affections, and, what is of more importance, are full of holy prayers, of which I do not find many in other books; hence I make the request that the second part of the *Meditations,* consisting of affections and prayers, be always read."

Let us remark that St. Alphonsus renders the practice of meditation extremely simple, clear, easy, and not less profitable. Thanks to the method that he teaches, this exercise, which is indispensable to every one that wishes to sanctify himself, is, in fact, adapted to the comprehension of all. The Saint wishes that every one should learn how to meditate; he earnestly recommends that special instructions should be given to the people for this purpose; and that every day mental prayer should be made in the church, in common for persons in every condition of life, and particularly for those who do not know how to read. He moreover explains the method that should be followed in its exercise, that it may produce lasting fruits. (See Missions, ch. 7–9.)

Pope Benedict XIV. grants *an indulgence of seven years and seven times forty days,* every time, to all those who, in a church or elsewhere, either in public or in private, shall teach the manner of making mental prayer, as well as to those who attend such instruction, provided that each time, being truly penitent, they confess their sins and receive Holy Communion. To those who shall teach assiduously the way to make mental prayer, as well as to those who shall, with the same assiduity, learn how to make it, the same Pope grants a plenary indulgence once a month, on any day, when, being truly penitent, after confession and Communion, they shall pray for peace and union among Christian princes, for the extirpation of heresy, and for the triumph of the Church. These indulgences are applicable to the souls in Purgatory.—ED.

[2941] *Book of the Foundations,* ch. 5.

[2942] "Charitas operit multitudinem peccatorum."—1 *Peter,* 4:8.

[2943] "Ego diligentes me diligo."—*Prov.* 8:17.

[2944] "Quilibet actus charitatis meretur vitam æternam."—1. 2. q. 114. a. 7.

[2945] *Pious Reflections,* § 33.

[2946] "Martyres veros, non pœna facit, sed causa."—*Epist.* 89, *E. B.*

[2947] 2. 2. q. 124, a. 5.

[2948] *Vict. of the Martyrs,* Introd. § 2.

[2949] "Evagatio mentis, quæ fit præter propositum, orationis fructum non tollit."—2. 2. q. 83, a. 13.

[2950] *Pious Reflections,* § xxxiv.; *Conformity to the Will of God,* § 5.

[2951] St. Alphonsus wrote this letter, as also the meditations that follow it, during the last years of his life, according to Tannoia, book 4, ch. 18.

[2952] "Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis."—*Ecclus.* 7:36.

2953 “Utinam saperent, et intelligerent, ac novissima providerent!”—*Deut.* 32:29.

2954 “Illumina oculos meos, ne unquam obdormiam in morte.”—*Ps.* 12:4.

2955 “Deus illuminet vultum suum super nos.”—*Ps.* 66:2.

2956 “Notam fac mihi viam, in qua ambulem.”—*Ps.* 142:8.

2957 “Da mihi intellectum, et discam mandata tua.”—*Ps.* 118:73.

2958 “Accedite ad eum, et illuminamini.”—*Ps.* 33:6.

2959 “Sicut solem non videt oculus. nisi in lumine solis, sic lumen verum et divinum non poterit intelligentia videre, nisi in ipsius lumine.”—*De Sp. et An.* c. 12.

2960 “Nunc enim . . . requiescerem cum regibus et consulibus terræ, qui ædificant sibi solitudines.”—*Job,* 3:13.

2961 “Ædificant solitudines, id est, se ipsos a tumultu mundi quantum possunt, elongant, ut soli sint, et idonei loqui cum Deo.”—*In Job, loc. cit.*

2962 “Fuge, tace, quiesce.”

2963 “Fuge paululum occupationes terrenas, absconde te modicum a tumultuosis cogitationibus tuis; vaca aliquantulum Deo, et requiesce in eo. Dic Deo: Eia, nunc doce cor meum, ubi et quomodo te quærat, ubi et quomodo te inveniat.”—*Medit.* 21.

2964 “Non in commotione Dominus.”—3 *Kings*, 19:11.

2965 “Sibilus auræ tenuis.”—*Ibid.*

2966 “Ducam eam in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor ejus.”—*Os.* 2:14.

2967 “Ignitum eloquium tuum.”—*Ps.* 118:140.

2968 “Anima mea liquefacta est, ut (Dilectus meus) locutus est.”—*Cant.* 5:6.

2969 *Epist. ad Hilar.*

2970 “O solitudo, in qua Deus cum suis familiariter loquitur et conversatur!”

2971 “Pulchræ sunt genæ tuæ sicut turturis.”—*Cant.* 1:9.

2972 “Quæ est ista quæ ascendit de deserto, deliciis affluens?”—*Cant.* 8:5.

2973 “Renovamini autem spiritu mentis vestræ.”—*Ephes.* 5:23.

2974 “Quis dabit mihi pennas, sicut columbæ, et volabo et requiescam?”—*Ps.* 54:7.

2975 “Ecce, elongavi fugiens, et mansi in solitudine.”—*Ibid.* v. 8.

2976 “Dimissa turba, ascendit in montem solus orare.”—*Matt.* 14:23.

2977 “Ipse autem secedebat in desertum, et orabat.”—*Luke*, 5:16.

2978 “Venite seorsum in desertum locum, et requiescite pusillum.”—*Mark*, 6:31.

2979 “Non enim habet amaritudinem conversatio illius, nec tædium convictus illius, sed lætitiam et gaudium.”—*Wisd.* 8:16.

2980 “Solitudo mihi paradisus est.”—*Epist. ad Rust.*

2981 “Nunquam minus solus, quam cum solus.”—*De Vila sol.*

2982 “Consolabitur Dominus Sion, et consolabitur omnes ruinas ejus: et ponet desertum ejus quasi delicias, et solitudinem ejus quasi hortum Domini: gaudium et lætitia invenietur in ea, gratiarum actio et vox laudis.”—*Isa.* 51:3.

2983 “Sedebit solitarius et tacebit, quia levavit se supra se.”—*Lam.* 3:28.

2984 “Ad adipiscendam perfectionem, magnum in secessu subsidium.”

2985 “Felix homo, quem Christus e mundi strepitu in spiritualia exercitia et solitudinem cœlesti amœnitate florentem inducit.”

2986 “Quid prodest homini, si mundum universum lucretur, animæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur?”—*Matt.* 16:26.

2987 “Negotium pro quo contendimus, vita æterna est.”

2988 “Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus Deus.”—*Ps.* 84:9.

2989 “Vacate, et videte quoniam ego sum Deus.”—*Ps.* 45:11.

2990 “Quid prodest solitudo corporis, si desit solitudo cordis?”—*Mor.1.* 30, c. 23.

2991 “Sedete hic. donec vadam illuc, et orem.”—*Matt.* 26:36.

2992 “Loquere, Domine. quia audit servus tuus.”—1 *Kings*, 3:10.

[2993] “Notam fac mihi viam in qua ambulem.”—*Ps.* 142:8.

[2994] For a method of making a retreat, see Appendix at the end of this treatise.—ED.

[2995] “Non potest esse perfectum nisi singulare.”

[2996] We have divided these meditations into three points, according to the usual method of the saintly Author. Though these meditations have been composed for the time of a retreat, yet they may be used at any other time.—ED.

[2997] “Porro unum est necessarium.”—*Luke*, 10:42.

[2998] “Quam dabit homo commutationem pro anima sua?”—*Matt.* 16:26.

[2999] “Omnes homines vult salvos fieri.”—1 *Tim.* 2:4.

3000 “Ergo erravimus.”—*Wisd.* 5:6.

3001 “Quid est quod debui ultra facere vineæ meæ, et non feci?”—*Isa.* 5:4.

3002 “Nulla nimia securitas, ubi periclitatur æternitas.”

3003 “Cum metu et tremore vestram salutem operamini.”—*Phil.* 2:12.

3004 “Violenti rapiunt illud.”—*Matt.* 11:12.

3005 “Petite et accipietis.”—*John,* 16:24.

3006 “Quid prodest homini, si mundum universum lucretur, animæ vero suæ detrimentum padatur?”—*Matt.* 16:26.

3007 “Præterit enim figura hujus mundi.”—1 *Cor.* 7:31.

3008 “Velut somnium surgentium.”—*Ps.* 72:20.

3009 “Pater, . . . non sum dignus vocari filius tuus.”—*Luke,* 15:21.

3010 “Deus meus, et omnia.”

3011 “Quid nobis profuit superbia? aut divitiarum jactantia quid contulit nobis? Transierunt omnia illa tamquam umbra.”—*Wisd.* 5:8.

3012 “Ne projicias me a facie tua.”—*Ps.* 50:13.

3013 “Dies illa tamquam fur.”—1 *Thess.* 5:4.

3014 “Dies perditionis.”—*Deut.* 32:35.

3015 “Non habemus hic manentem civitatem, sed futuram inquirimus.”—*Heb.* 13:14.

3016 “Quoniam ibit homo in domum æternitatis suæ.”—*Eccles.* 12:5.

3017 “Si ceciderit lignum ad austrum aut ad aquilonem, in quocumque loco ceciderit, ibi erit.”—*Eccles.* 11:3.

3018 “Ibit homo.”

3019 “Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:26

3020 “Finita est æstas, et nos salvati non sumus.”—*Jer.* 8:20.

3021 “Qua hora non putatis, Filius hominis veniet.”—*Luke,* 12:40.

3022 “Tempus non erit amplius.”—*Apoc.* 10:6.

3023 “Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo.”

3024 “Oh! si daretur hora.”

3025 “Vocavit adversum me tempus.”—*Lam.* 1:15.

3026 “Ambulate, dum lucem habetis.”—*John,* 12:35.

3027 “Venit nox quando nemo potest operari.”—*John,* 9:4.

3028 “In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me. Domine.”—*Ps.* 30:6.

3029 “Deus non irridetur.”—*Gal.* 6:7.

3030 “Tuus sum ego, salvum me fac.”—*Ps.* 118:94.

3031 *De Perf.1.* 5, p. 2, c. 16.

3032 *Way of Perf.* ch. 42.

3033 *Sent.1.* 2, c. 19.

3034 *Sess.* 6, *can.* 22.

3035 *Serm.* 351, *E. B.*

3036 “Quia tepidus es, . . . incipiam te evomere ex ore meo.”—*Apoc.* 3:16.

3037 “Quærite et invenietis.”—*Matt.* 7:7.

3038 “Proficiscere de hoc mundo.”

3039 This and the following texts are taken from the prayers of the Church for the recommendation of a soul departing.—ED.

3040 “Hodie sit in pace locus tuus, et habitatio tua in sancta Sion.”

3041 “Miserere, Domine, gemituum, miserere lacrymarum ejus.”

3042 “Agnosce, Domine, creaturam tuam, non a diis alienis creatam, sed a te solo Deo vivo et vero.”

3043 “In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.”—*Ps.* 30:2.

3044 “Non sis tu mini formidini; spes mea tu in die afflictionis.”—*Jer.* 17:17.

3045 “Pretiosa . . . mors sanctorum.”—*Ps.* 115:15.

3046 “In pace, in idipsum, dormiam et requiescam.”—*Ps.* 4:9.

3047 “Eia, Domine! moriar, ut te videam.”—*Sol. an.* c. 1.

3048 “Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.”

3049 “Respice in faciem Christi tui.”—*Ps.* 83:10.

3050 “Subvenite, Sancti Dei; occurrite, Angeli Domini.”

3051 “Quæ seminaverit homo, hæc et metet.”—*Gal.* 6:8.

3052 “Quid faciam, cum surrexerit ad judicandum Deus? et cum quæsierit, quid respondebo illi?”—*Job*, 31:14.

3053 “Ne tradas bestiis animas confitentes tibi.”—*Ps.* 73:10.

3054 “Quærite Dominum, dum inveniri potest.”—*Isa.* 55:6.

3055 “Tristitia vestra vertetur in gaudium.”—*John*, 16:20.

3056 “Discedite a me, maledicti.”—*Matt.* 25:41.

3057 “Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem cruris.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

3058 “Respice in faciem Christi tui.”—*Ps.* 83:10.

3059 “Dilexit nos. et lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo.”—*Apoc.* 1:5.

3060 *Love of God,* book 12, ch. 13.

3061 These rules are a summary of the *Rule of Life,* which is found entire in Volume I., and abridged in Volume II.—ED.

3062 “Qui manducat meam carnem, et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo.”—*John*, 6:57.

3063 “Doce me facere voluntatem tuam.”—*Ps.* 142:10.

3064 “Domine, quid me vis facere?”—*Acts*, 9:6.

3065 “Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi.”—*Prov.* 23:26.

3066 “Bona et mala . . . a Deo sunt.”—*Ecclus.* 11:14.

3067 “Non contristabit justum, quidquid ei accident.”—*Prov.* 12:21.

3068 “In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in æternum.”—*Ps.* 30:2

3069 “Bona est oratio cum jejunio et eleemosyna.”—*Tob.* 12:8.

3070 “Ordine suo, non arbitrio nostro, virtus Spiritus Sancti ministratur.”—*De Sing. cler.*

3071 “Unusquisque proprium donum habet a Deo.”—1 *Cor.* 7:7.

3072 “Quos prædestinavit, hos et vocavit; et quos vocavit, hos et justificavit; quos autem justificavit, illos et glorificavit.”—*Rom.* 8:30.

3073 In another work (Volume XIII.) the holy Author expresses himself in these words: “God wills that all men should be saved, but not in the same way. As in heaven he has distinguished different degrees of glory, so on earth he has established different states of life, as so many different ways of gaining heaven” (Ch. 2 § 2). The choice is not arbitrary: “To enter into any state of life, a divine vocation is necessary; for without such a vocation it is, if not impossible, at least most difficult to fulfil the obligations of our state, and obtain salvation” (Ch. 10). The reason of this is evident; for it is God who in the order of his Providence assigns to each one of us his state of life and afterwards provides us with the graces and the help suitable to the state to which he calls us. We ought to be persuaded and ought never to forget that from all eternity God thinks with love of each one of us, just as a good father thinks of his only son.—ED.

3074 “Bene curris, sed extra viam.”

3075 “Ad Cain et ad munera ejus non respexit.”—*Gen.* 4:5.

3076 “Væ, filii desertores, dicit Dominus, ut faceretis consilium, et non ex me; et ordiremini telam, et non per spiritum meum.”—*Isa.* 30:1.

3077 From this it follows that the great and only affair which ought to preoccupy the minds of young persons of both sexes is to know the designs of God relatively to the state of life that they are to embrace, and to obtain from him the strength to conform to it. The *means* to adopt in order to be successful in this affair are indicated in an appendix to this treatise.

But we should know that God does not always call one all at once and suddenly to the most perfect state. Some he calls sooner, others later. There are some who are raised to it gradually, others who are led to it by a circuitous road, more or less long. Sometimes when we correspond well to a first vocation God grants us a better one; and occasionally our Lord is satisfied with making us understand the advantages of this or that vocation, in order that by esteeming it we may desire it, and by desiring it we may endeavor to obtain it by prayer and good works. We must conform to the will of God, and be united with it as well during life as at death.—ED.

3078 “Væ qui contradicit Fictori suo!”—*Isa.* 45:9.

3079 “Quis restitit ei, et pacem habuit?”—*Job,* 9:4.

3080 “Non sine magnis difficultatibus poterit saluti suæ consulere.”—*De Ord.* p. 3, c. 1, § 2.

3081 “Manebitque in corpore Ecclesiæ, velut membrum in corpore humano suis sedibus motum, quod servire potest, sed ægre, et cum deformitate. Licet, absolute loquendo, salvari possit, difficile tamen ingredietur viam humilitatis et pœnitentiæ, qua sola ipsi patet ingressus ad vitam.”—*Ibid.*

3082 *De Vit. Cler.* c. 5.

3083 *Epist.* 87.

3084 *Epist.1.* 2, c. 100.

3085 “Ipsi fuerunt rebelles lumini; nescierunt vias ejus.”—*Job,* 24:13.

3086 “En, proferam vobis spiritum meum.”—*Prov.* 1:23.

3087 “Quia vocavi, et renuistis . . . despexistis omne consilium meum. . . . Ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo et subsannabo, cum vobis id, quod timebatis, advenerit.”—*Ibid.* 1:24–26.

3088 “Tunc invocabunt me, et non exaudiam; mane consurgent, et non invenient me. Eo quod exosam habuerint disciplinam, . . . nec acquieverint consilio meo, et detraxerint universæ correptioni meæ.”—*Ibid.* 1:28–30.

3089 With these last words God reprimands those who set but little value on vocation, and who pretend that one can save one’s soul indifferently in every state of life. (*Theol. mor.1.* 4, n. 78.)

3090 “Qui spreverunt voluntatem Dei invitantem, voluntatem Dei sentient vindicantem.”—*R. ad obj. Vinc.* 16.

3091 “Sequar te, Domine; sed permitte mihi primum renuntiare his quæ domi sunt.”—*Luke,* 9:61.

3092 “Nemo mittens manum suam ad aratrum, et respiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei.”—*Ibid.* 62.

3093 “Quanto citius.”

3094 2. 2. q. 189, a. 10.

3095 “Talem obedientiam Christus quærit a nobis, ut neque instanti temporis moremur.”—*In Matt. hom.* 14.

3096 “Si vel levem arripuerit prorogationem.”—*Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 56.

3097 “Festina, quæso te, et hærentis in salo naviculæ funem magis præcide, quam solve.”—*Ad Paulin. de St. Scr.*

3098 We must here call to mind what the Author says in the *Christian Rule of Life, chap.* i.: “You should choose your director; consult him on all more important matters; and obey him in everything. He who obeys his confessor need not fear to go astray: *He that heareth you, heareth Me* (Luke, 10:16). The voice of the confessor is the voice of God.” We should, therefore, consult at least the confessor, who may delay giving an opinion when he thinks fit to do so on account of the importance of the decision he has to render.

The following are, according to St. Alphonsus, the three principal signs of a true vocation to the religious state: “1. We should have a good end in view, such as to remove from the dangers of the world, the better to assure ourselves of salvation, and to become more closely united with God. 2. We should not be subject to any positive impediment, such as the want of health, or of talent, or parents who are necessitous (“in necessitate gravi”—*Theol mor.1.* 4. n. 66)—matters that should be submitted to the judgment of the Superiors, towards whom we should be frank in telling the truth. 3. We should be admitted by the Superiors of the Institute. (Counsels to Novices.)”

Moreover, in the Church there are different religious Institutes, different kinds of perfection. It is not enough to know that one is called to the religious state; one must also examine for what Institute, for what Community the Lord has destined us, and one must follow in every point the impulse of grace. (See *Homo apost. tr. ult.* n. 39.) ED.

3099 *Entret.* 17.

3100 *De Mon.1.* 2, c. 36.

3101 “Parentibus filios religioni contradere non amplius quam usque ad decimum quartum eorum ætatis annum licentia poterit esse; postea vero, an cum voluntate parentum, an suæ devotionis sit solitarium votum, erit filiis licitum religionis assumere cultum.”—*Cap.* 6.

3102 *can.* 24.

3103 “Cum spiritualia impediunt parentes, nec agnoscendi quidem sunt.”—*In Jo. hom.* 84.

3104 “Non tenentur, nec servi dominis, nec filii parentibus, obedire de matrimonio contrahendo, vel virginitate servanda, vel aliquo alio hujusmodi.”—2. 2. q. 104, a. 5.

3105 “Frequenter amici carnales adversantur profectui spirituali.”—2. 2. q. 189, a. 10.

3106 “O durum patrem, o sævam matrem, quorum consolatio mors filii est; qui me malunt perire cum eis, quam regnare sine eis!”—*Ep.* 3.

3107 “Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam; et obliviscere populum tuum, et domum patris tui.”—*Ps.* 44:11.

3108 “Si Dominus vult animam ad se vocatam oblivisci patrem, domumque patris ejus, suggerit utique per hoc, quod vocatus ab ipso ad religionem non debet suorum carnalium amicorumque domesticorum consilium interponere talis vocationis exsecutioni.”—*In* 2. 2. q. 189, a. 10.

3109 “Nemo mittens manum ad aratrum, et respiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei.”—*Luke,* 9:61.

3110 “Respicit retro, qui dilationem quærit, cum propinquis occasione conferendi.”—*Ap. S. Thom. loc. cit.*

3111 “Ab hoc consilio, primo quidem, amovendi sunt carnis propinqui; dicitur enim: “Causam tuam tracta cum amico tuo.’ Propinqui autem carnis, in hoc negotio, amici non sunt, sed inimici, juxta sententiam Domini: ‘Inimici hominis, domestici ejus.’ ”

3112 The grace of a religious vocation is not only a signal favor for him who receives it, but is also a great blessing for the whole family. Christian parents should wish it for their children as the most precious good, by giving thanks to God if he deigns to grant it, and should hasten to offer him with their whole heart the happy sacrifice that he requires of them. What may they not expect from Him who rewards so liberally the least action that we perform out of love for Him? On the other hand, to oppose a vocation is to oppose God. What would be the consequence of such an attempt?

Happily, we see parents who, giving the good example of an entire submission to God’s will, have the wisdom to anticipate their children with the intention not to oppose their happiness and to leave them every liberty in reference to their vocation. Such parents do not run the risk of being deceived, and they acquire, moreover, great merit before the Lord.

St. Alphonsus, however, does not wish that young men should act thoughtlessly in a matter as important as it is delicate. He requires of them that they at least should consult a prudent director who will take care to weigh maturely before God all the circumstances, and to examine, among other things, whether the parents would not have some serious reason to allege; for instance, the grave necessity in which they found themselves, etc. We thus remove all danger of taking a rash step. (See note, page 388.)—ED.

3113 “I say ‘in which reigns exact observance;’ for it would be, perhaps, better to remain in the world than to enter a religious Institute in which relaxation has been introduced.” We see that this remark is made by the author himself; he also says elsewhere, “Si institutum relaxatum est, melius erit alicui ordinarie loquendi, quod in sæculo remaneat.” (*Hom. apost. tr. ult.* n. 39.)

3114 “Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me.”—*Matt.* 16:24.

3115 “Vincenti dabo manna absconditum.”—*Apoc.* 2:17.

3116 “Crucem vident, unctionem non vident.”—*In Dedic.* s. 1.

3117 “Qui fingis laborem in præcepto.”—*Ps.* 93:20.

3118 “Exsuperat omnem sensum.”—*Phil.* 4:7.

3119 “Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus.”—*Ps.* 33:9.

3120 “Vincenti dabo manna absconditum.”—*Apoc.* 2:17.

3121 “Non paupertas, sed amor paupertatis virtus est.”—*Epist.* 100.

3122 “Volunt esse pauperes, sed sine defectu.”

3123 “Frigus, famem, sitim, et contemptum.”

3124 “Non veni pacem mittere sed gladium; veni enim separare hominem adversus patrem suum et filiam adversus matrem suam.”—*Matt.* 10:34.

3125 “Inimici hominis, domestici ejus.”—*lb.* 36.

3126 “Qui non odit patrem suum, et matrem, . . . etc., non potest esse meus discipulus.”—*Luke,* 14:26.

3127 “Joannes, pete a me, quid vis. . . . Domine, pati et contemni pro te.”

3128 “Saturatus opprobriis.”

3129 “Ego, quæ placita sunt ei, facio semper.”—*John,* 8:29.

3130 “Quare jejunavimus, et non aspexisti? humiliavimus animas nostras, et nescisti? Ecce in die jejunii vestri invenitur voluntas vestra.”—*Isa.* 58:3.

3131 “Grande malum, propria voluntas, qua fit, ut bona tua tibi bona non sint.”—*In Cant.* s. 71.

3132 “Perfecta obedientia est indiscreta.”—*De vita solit.* c. 5.

3133 “Novitium prudentem in congregatione durare impossible est. . . . Discernere superioris est, subditi obedire.”—*Ibid.*

3134 “Quia acceptus eras Deo, necesse fuit ut tentatio probaret te.”—*Tob.* 12:13.

3135 “Tentat vos Dominus Deus vester, ut palam fiat, utrum diligatis eum, an non.”—*Deut.* 13:3

3136 “Accedite ad eum, et illuminamini.”—*Ps.* 33:6.

3137 “Petite et accipietis.”—*John,* 16:24.

3138 “Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea; quem timebo?”—*Ps.* 26:1.

3139 “Quid enim prodest homini, si mundum universum lucretur, animæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur?”—*Matt.* 16:26.

3140 “Transierunt omnia illa tanquam umbra.”—*Wisd.* 5:9.

3141 “Præterit figura hujus mundi.”—1 *Cor.* 7:31.

3142 “Finem vero, vitam æternam.”—*Rom.* 6:22.

3143 “Desolatione desolata est omnis terra, quia nullus est qui recogitet corde.”—*Jer.* 12:11.

3144 “Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis.”—*Ecclus.* 7:36.

3145 “Beati mortui, qui in Domino moriuntur.”—*Apoc.* 14:13.

3146 “Qui consuevit se delectationibus mundi privare, mundum deserere non sentiet.”

3147 “A quo pendet æternitas.”

3148 “Non putabam tam dulce esse mori.”

3149 “Qui reliquerit domum vel fratres, aut patrem, etc., centuplum accipiet, et vitam æternam possidebit.”—*Matt.* 19:29.

3150 “O vita secura, ubi absque formidine mors expectatur, immo et exoptatur cum dulcedine, et excipitur cum devotionel”—*Ad Mil. T.* c. 1.

3151 “Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus, electus ex millibus.”—*Cant.* 5:10.

3152 “Non fecit taliter omni nationi.”—*Ps.* 147:20.

3153 “Oves meæ vocem meam audiunt.”—*John,* 10:27.

3154 “Vermis eorum non moritur.”—*Mark,* 9:43.

3155 “Facilis via de cella ad cœlum . . . Vix unquam aliquis a cella in infernum descendit: quia vix unquam, nisi cœlo prædestinatus, in ea usque ad mortem persistit.”—*De Vit. Sol.* c. 4.

3156 “Illius cœlestis civitatis, iste est introitus.”

3157 “Magnum quippe prædestinationis indicium est.”—*De Disc. mon.* c. 7.

3158 “Corona justitiæ.”—2 *Tim.* 4:8.

3159 “Reddet unicuique secundum opera ejus.”—*Matt.* 14:27.

3160 “Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi.”—*Prov.* 23:26.

3161 “Euntes ibant et flebant. . . . Venientes autem venient cum exultatione, portantes manipulos suos.”—*Ps.* 125:6.

3162 “Funes ceciderunt mihi in præclaris, etenim hereditas mea præclara est mihi.”—*Ps.* 15:6.

3163 “Omnis qui reliquerit domum, vel fratres aut sorores, aut patrem aut matrem, . . . aut agros, propter nomen meum, centuplum accipiet et vitara æternam possidebit.”—*Matt.* 19:29.

3164 “Deus, . . . da servis tuis illam, quam mundus dare non potest, pacem.”

3165 “Delectare in Domino, et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui.”—*Ps.* 36:4.

3166 “Sibi divitias suas habeant divites, sibi regna sua reges; nobis Christus regnum et gloria est.”—*Ep. ad Aprum.*

3167 “Hi in curribus, et hi in equis; nos autem in nomine Domini Dei nostri invocabimus.”—*Ps.* 19:8.

3168 “Deus meus et omnia.”

3169 “Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum.”—*Phil.* 4:7.

3170 “Sed quia tepidus es, . . . incipiam te evomere ex ore meo.”—*Apoc.* 3:16.

3171 “Deus negligentes deserere consuevit.”—*In. Ps.* 118, s. 10.

3172 “Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet.”—*Ecclus.* 19:1.

3173 “Sequebatur eum a longe.”—*Matt.* 26:58.

3174 “Si dixeris: Sufficit; periisti.”—*Serm.* 169, *E. B.*

3175 “Qui parce seminat, parce et metet.”—2 *Cor.* 9:6.

3176 “Perfectum non potest esse, nisi singulare.”

3177 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—*Prov.* 8:17.

3178 “Deus meus, et omnia.”

3179 “Parvulus natus est nobis, filius datus est nobis.”—*Isa.* 9:6.

3180 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

3181 “Totum tibi dedit, nihil sibi reliquit.”

3182 “Una est columba mea, perfecta mea.”—*Cant.* 6:8.

3183 “Una uni.”

3184 “Dimitte omnia, et invenies omnia.”—*Imit.* book 3, c. 32.

3185 “O anima! sola esto, ut soli te serves.”—*In Cant.* s. 40.

3186 “Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi.”—*Cant.* 2:16.

3187 “Quid mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:25.

3188 “Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis.”

3189 “Vires subministrat, pœnam exhibet leviorem.”—*De Disc. mon.* c. 6.

3190 “Magna victoriæ pars est vincendi desiderium.”—*De Casto Conn.* c. 3.

3191 “Consummatus in brevi, explevit tempora multa.”—*Wis.* 4:13.

3192 “Bernarde, ad quid venisti?”

3193 “Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum.”—*Ps.* 56:8.

3194 “Domine, quid me vis facere?”—*Acts*, 9:6.

3195 “Exinanivit semetipsum, formam servi accipiens. . . . Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem cruris.”—*Phil.* 2:7.

3196 “Et Verbum caro factum est.”—*John,* 1:14.

3197 “Dicebant excessum, quem completurus erat in Jerusalem.”—*Luke,* 9:31.

3198 “Excessus doloris, excessus amoris.”

3199 “Propterea Christus advenit, ut cognosceret homo quantum cum diligat Deus.”—*De catech. rud.* c. 4.

3200 “Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.”—*John,* 15:13.

3201 “Prædicamus Christum crucifixum, Judæis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam.”—1 *Cor.* 1:23.

3202 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

3203 “Charitas enim Christi urget nos.”—2 *Cor.* 5:14.

3204 “Ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est.”—*Ibid.* 5:15.

3205 “Dilectus meus . . . electus ex millibus.”—*Cant.* 5:10.

3206 “O solitudo, in qua Deus cum suis familiariter loquitur et conversatur!”

3207 “Non habet amaritudinem conversatio ejus; nec tædium convictus illius, sed lætitiam et gaudium.”—*Sap.* 8:16.

3208 “Elegi abjectus esse in domo Dei mei, magis quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum.”—*Ps.* 83:11.

3209 “Quos præscivit, et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui.”—*Rom.* 8:29.

3210 “Propter vos egenus factus est, cum esset dives, ut illius inopia vos divites essetis.”—2 *Cor.* 8:9.

3211 “Vir dolorum.”—*Isa.* 53:3.

3212 “Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me.”—*Matt.* 16:24.

3213 “Hi sunt quos habuimus aliquando in derisum . . . Nos insensati vitam illorum æstimabamus insaniam. Ecce quomodo inter filios Dei computati sunt, et inter Sanctos sors illorum est.”—*Wisd.* 5:3 et seq.

3214 Although in this consideration, and in some other passages, St. Alphonsus may have had specially in view the Congregation of missionaries which he founded, yet the subject refers to all religious of both sexes, and to all persons who serve God. All are called to exercise directly or indirectly this charitable apostolate; every one according to his talent or his means, whether by a generous co-operation in the works that have for their object the defence of faith or the conversion of sinners, or by prayer and the other practices of piety. (See page 67.) All can share in the magnificent reward that the Lord reserves for his evangelical laborers (*Matt.* 10:40 et seq.; *James* 5:20).

3215 “Spiritus Domini . . . unxit me, evangelizare pauperibus.”—*Luke,* 4:18

3216 “Simon Joannis, diligis me? . . . Pasce oves meas.”—*John,* 21:17.

3217 “Non dixit Christus: Abjice pecunias, jejunium exerce, macera te laboribus; sed dixit: Pasce oves meas.”

3218 “Amen dico vobis: quamdiu fecistis uni ex his fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecistis.”—*Matt.* 25:40.

3219 “Magnificate Dominum mecum, et exaltemus nomen ejus.”—*Ps.* 33:4.

3220 “Si Deum amatis, omnes ad ejus amorem rapite.”—*In Ps.* 33. *en.* 2.

3221 “Animam salvasti, animam tuam prædestinasti.”

3222 “Cum effuderis esurienti animam tuam, et animam afflictam repleveris, requiem tibi dabit Dominus, et implebit splendoribus animamtuam.”—*Isa.* 58:10–11.

3223 “Quæ est enim nostra spes, aut gaudium, et corona gloriæ? Nonne vos ante Dominum Jesum Christum estis in adventu ejus?”—1 *Thess.* 2:19.

3224 “Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde.”—*Matt.* 11:29.

3225 “Non intelligentes quanto majus sit lucrum in tolerantia injuriarum.”

3226 “Mansuetus utilis sibi et aliis.”—*In Act. hom.* 6.

3227 “Beneplacitum est illi fides et mansuetudo.”—*Ecclus.* 45:4.

3228 “Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam.”—1 *Peter,* 5:5.

3229 “Mihi absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi.”—*Gal.* 6:14.

3230 “Amat nos amore invincibili.”—*In Nat. B. V.* s. 1.

3231 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—*Prov.* 8:17.

3232 “Solet maxima pro minimis reddere.”—*In Dorm. B. V.* s. 3.

3233 “Qui operantur in me, non peccabunt.”—*Off. of the Blessed Virg.*

3234 “Qui elucidant me, vitam æternam habebunt.”—*lb.*

3235 “Cui servire regnare est.”

3236 “Jesu et Maria, amores mei dulcissimi! pro vobis patiar, pro vobis moriar; sim totus vester, sim nihil meus.”

3237 “Finem vero, vitam æternam.”—*Rom.* 6:22.

3238 “Universa vanitas et afflictio spiritus.”—*Eccles.* 1:14.

3239 “Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo.”

3240 “Præterit enim figura hujus mundi.”—1 *Cor.* 7:31.

3241 “Quoniam ibit homo in domum æternitatis suæ.”—*Eccles.* 12:5.

3242 “Quid prodest homini, si mundum universum lucretur, animsæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur?—*Matt.* 16:26.”

3243 “Non fecit taliter omni nationi.”—*Ps.* 147:20.

3244 In Italy we often see priests who live with their parents or relatives.—ED.

3245 The holy author supposes in this case, as well as in the preceding answer, that the person to whom this advice is addressed is called to be a religious, or has at least the beginning of a vocation to the religious state, but the world keeps her back, and she hesitates. This supposition does not, however, hold good as regards the foregoing letter that treats of the spiritual exercises.—ED.

3246 “Vanitas vanitatum et afflictio spiritus.”—*Eccles.* 1:14.

3247 Missions, ch. 8, § 3.

3248 “Erunt sicut Angeli Dei in cœlo.”—*Matt.* 22:30.

3249 *Ann.* 480.

3250 “Exierunt obviam Sponso.”—*Matt.* 25:1.

3251 “Dilectus meus candidus, et rubicundus, electus ex millibus.”—*Cant.* 5:10.

3252 “Sponsum offertis? meliorem reperi.”—*De Virg.1.* 1.

3253 Croiset, Exerc. May 12.

3254 “Primitiæ Deo et Agno.”—*Apoc.* 14:4.

3255 “Qui pascitur inter lilia.”—*Cant.* 2:16.

3256 “Omnis ponderatio non est digna continents animæ.”—*Ecclus.* 26:20.

3257 “Mulicr innupta et virgo cogitat quæ Domini sunt, ut sit sancta corpore et spiritu; quæ autem nupta est, cogitat quæ sunt mundi, quomodo placeat viro.”—1 *Cor.* 7:34.

3258 “Porro hoc ad utilitatem vestram dico . . . ad id quod honestum est, et quod facultatem præbeat sine impedimento Dominum obsecrandi.”—*Ibid.* 35.

3259 “Quæ nupta est, cogitat quæ sunt mundi, quomodo placeat viro.”

3260 *Matt.* 25:1.

3261 “Nescio vos.”

3262 “Sequuntur Agnum quocumque ierit.”—*Apoc.* 14:4.

3263 *De S. Virginit.* c. 27.

3264 “Frumentum electorum et vinum germinans virgines.”—*Zach.* 9:17.

3265 “Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias.”—*Cant.* 2:2.

3266 “Pulchræ sunt genæ tuæ sicut turturis.”—*Cant.* 1:9.

3267 “Zelotypus est Jesus.”—*Ep. ad Eust.*

3268 *Vita S. Ansb.* 9 Febr.

3269 “Nulla in parte mœchari convenit virginem, non lingua, non aure, non oculo, non tactu, multoque minus animo.”—*De vera Virg.*

3270 “Sponsus sanguinum tu mihi es.”—*Exod.* 4:25.

3271 “Sequuntur Agnum quocumque ierit.”—*Apoc.* 14:4.

3272 “Adducentur Regi virgines post eam.”—*Ps.* 44:15.

3273 *Selva,* ch. 10.

3274 “Qui non intrat per ostium in ovile ovium, sed ascendit aliunde, ille fur est et latro.”—*John,* 10:1.

3275 “Latrones et fures appellat eos qui se ultro, ad non sibi datam desuper gratiam, obtrudunt.”—*In Jo.* 10:10.

3276 “Nec quisquam sumit sibi honorem, sed qui vocatur a Deo tamquam Aaron. Sic et Christus non semetipsum clarificavit ut pontifex fieret; sed qui locutus est ad eum: Filius meus es tu.”—*Heb.* 5:4, 5.

3277 “Plenum gratiæ et veritatis.”—*John,* 1:14.

3278 “In quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ et scientiæ absconditi.”—*Col.* 2:3.

3279 “Vis mihi facta est merito peccatorum meorum.”—*Epist.* 21, *E. B.*

3280 “Omnes sanctos reperio divini ministerii ingentem veluti molem formidantes.”—*De Fest. pasch. hom.* I.

3281 “Ita est aliquis sacrilegæ temeritatis, ac perditæ; mentis, ut putet sine Dei judicio fieri sacerdotem?”—*Epist.* 55.

3282 “Auderetne aliquis vestrum terreni cujuslibet reguli, non præcipiente aut etiam prohibente eo, occupare ministeria, negotia dispensare?”—*De Conv. ad cler.* c. 19.

3283 “Dispensatores regiæ domus.”—*De Vita cont.1.* 2, c. 2.

3284 “Duces et rectores gregis Christi.”—*De Dign. sac.* c. 2.

3285 “Interpretes divinorum judiciorum.”

3286 “Vicarii Christi.”—*Hom.* 17.

3287 “Regnum velle servum, crimen est.”—*Serm.* 23.

3288 “Quid istud temeritatis, imo quid insaniæ est? tu irreverenter irruis, nec vocatus, nec introductus.”—*De Vita cler.* c. 5.

3289 “Decernit sancta Synodus eos qui ea (ministeria) propria temeritate sibi sumunt, omnes, non Ecclesiæ ministros, sed fures et latrones per ostium non ingressos habendos esse.”—*Sess.* 23, *cap.* 4.

3290 “Non est mihi voluntas in vobis, dicit Dominus exercituum, et munus non suscipiam de manu vestra.”—*Mal.* 1:10.

3291 “Quisquis externorum accesserit (ad tabernaculum), occidetur.”—*Num.* 1:51.

3292 “Quoniam dignitas magna est, et revera divina sententia comprobanda.”—*In* 1 *Tim. hom.* 5.

3293 “Quis enim ex vobis, volens turrim ædificare, non prius sedens computat sumptus qui necessarii sunt, si habeat ad perficiendum?”—*Luke,* 11:28.

3294 “Principatum in populos, non sanguini deferendum, sed vitæ.”—*In Tit.* 1.

3295 “Quos dignos divina probet electio secundum vitæ, non generis, meritum.”

3296 “Matres corpora natorum amant, animas contemnunt; desiderant illos valere in sæculo isto, et non curant quid sint passuri in alio.”—*Hom.* 35.

3297 “Ego sum ostium ovium. . . . Per me si quis introierit, salvabitur.”—*John,* 10:7.

3298 “Si enim aliquis, liber ab omni vitioso affectu, ad clerum, Deo deserviendi causa et salutis populi gratia solum, se conferat, vocari a Deo præsumitur.”—*De Ord.* q. 4, a. 4.

3299 “Ambitione duceris, vel avaritia? inhias honori? Non te vocat Deus, sed diabolus tentat.”—*Hall.* p. 1, s. 3, c. 2, § 4.

3300 “Qui enim se ingerit, et propriam gloriam quærit, gratiæ Dei rapinam facit; et ideo non accipit benedictionem sed maledictionem.”—*In Heb.* 5.

3301 “Labia enim sacerdotis custodient scientiam, et legem requirent ex ore ejus.”—*Mal.* 2:7.

3302 “Medici parum docti multos occidunt.”—*Lib.* 2, *ep.* 12.

3303 “Nulli ad sacros Ordines sunt promovendi nisi quos vita et doctrina idoneos probat.”

3304 “Et constituas per civitates presbyteros, sicut et ego disposui tibi: si quis sine crimine est, etc.”—*Tit.* 1:5.

3305 “Qui confessi sunt peccata, canon (ecclesiasticus ordo) non admittit.”—*Can.* 9.

3306 “Ex eo tempore quo in Christo renatus est, nulla peccati conscientia remordeatur.”—*In Tit.* 1.

3307 “Et si perfectæ vitæ et conversationis fuerit, eum in presbyterum (poteris) ordinare.”—*Cap.* 1 *De diacono. Qui cler.*

3308 “Horreo considerans unde, quo vocaris, præsertim cum nullum intercurrerit pœnitentiæ tempus. Et quidem rectus ordo requirit ut prius propriam, deinde alienas curare studeas conscientias.”—*Epist.* 8.

3309 “Multo digniores erant ad catastam pœnalem, quam ad sacerdotium trahi.”—*Cast. in Eccl. ord.*

3310 “Non sunt promovendi ad regimen Ecclesiæ, qui adhuc vitiis subjacent.”—*Sent.1.* 3, c. 34.

3311 L. 6, n. 63 et s.

3312 “Si perfectæ vitæ est et conversationis fuerit.”

3313 “Ordines sacri præxigunt sanctitatem; unde pondus Ordinum imponendum est parietibus jam per sanctitatem desiccatis, id est ab humore vitiorum.”—2. 2. q. 189, a. 1.

3314 “In divino omni non audendum aliis ducem fieri, nisi secundum omnem habitum suum factus sit deiformissimus et Deo simillimus.”—*De Eccl. Hier.* c. 3.

3315 “Ad idoneam executionem Ordinum, non sufficit bonitas qualiscumque, sed requiritur bonitas excellens, ut, sicut illi, qui Ordinem suscipiunt, super plebem constituuntur gradu Ordinis, ita et superiores sint merito sanctitatis; et ideo præexigitur gratia quæ sufficiat ad hoc quod digne connumerentur in plebe Christi.”—*Suppl.* q. 35, a. 1.

3316 “Quia per sacrum Ordinem aliquis deputatur ad dignissima ministeria, quibus ipsi Christo servitur in Sacramento altaris; ad quod requiritur major sanctitas interior, quam requirat etiam religionis status.”—2. 2. q. 184, a. 8.

3317 “Qui non solum ætate neophyti, sed et qui neophyti sunt perfectione.”

3318 ”Ætas senectutis, vita immaculata.”—*Wisd.* 4:9.

3319 “Sciant episcopi debere ad hos (sacros) Ordines assumi dignos duntaxat, et quorum probata vita senectus sit.”—*Sess.* 23, *cap.* 12.

3320 “Sed etiam habeatur certitudo de qualitate promovendorum.”—*Suppl.* q. 36, a. 4.

3321 “Nullus debet ad ministerium altaris accedere, nisi cujus castitas ante susceptum ministerium fuerit approbata.”—*Lib.* 1, *ep.* 42.

3322 “Ne unquam ii qui ordinati sunt, pereant, prius aspiciatur si vita eorum continens ab annis plurimis fuit.”—*Lib.* 3, *ep.* 26.

3323 “Condemnati sunt ut daretur exemplum, ne quis non sibi a Deo datum munus pontificatus invaderet. . . . Hoc patientur quicumque se in episcopatus, aut presbyteratus, aut diaconatus, officium conantur ingerere.”—*Serm.* 30, *E. B. app.*

3324 “Non sine magnis difficultatibus poterit saluti suæ consulere.”

3325 “Manebitque in corpore Ecclesiæ velut membrum in corpore humano suis sedibus motum, quod servire potest, sed ægre admodum et cum deformitate.”—*De Ord.* p. 3, c. 1, § 2.

3326 “Qui sciens et volens, nulla divinæ vocationis habita ratione, sese in sacerdotium intruderet, haud dubie seipsum in apertissimum salutis discrimen injiceret, peccando scilicet in Spiritum Sanctum, quod quidem peccatum vix aut rarissime dimitti ex Evangelio discimus.”—*Sac. chr.* p. 1, c. 4.

3327 “Ipsi regnaverunt, et non ex me . . . iratus est furor meus in eos.”—*Os.* 8:4.

3328 “Ex se, et non ex arbitrio summi Rectoris, regnant: nequaquam divinitus vocati, sed sua cupidine accensi, culmen regiminis rapiunt potius quam assequuntur.”—*Past.* p. 1, c. 1.

3329 “Væ filii desertores, dicit Dominus, ut faceretis consilium, et non ex me!”—*Isa.* 30:1.

3330 “Multi dicent mihi in ilia die. Domine, Domine, nonne in nomine tuo prophetavimus (prædicando, docendo), et in nomine tuo dæmonia ejecimus (absolvendo pœnitentes), et in nomine tuo virtutes multas fecimus (corrigendo, lites componendo, errantes reducendo)?“Et tunc confitebor illis: Quia nunquam novi vos: discedite a me, qui operamini iniquitatem.”—*Matt.* 7:22.

3331 “Tollitis, non accipitis claves; de quibus Dominus queritur: ‘Ipsi regnaverunt, et non ex me.’ ”—*De Conv. ad cler.* c. 19.

3332 “Labor stultorum affliget eos, qui nesciunt in urbem pergere.”—*Eccles.* 10:15.

3333 “Eos Ecclesia accipit, quos Spiritus Sanctus præparavit, . . . et dignatio cœlestis gratiæ gignit.”—*In die ass. suæ,* s. 2.

3334 “Nemo deterius Ecclesiam lædit.”—*Cont. cler. aul.* c. 3.

3335 “Quos elegerit (Dominus), appropinquabunt ei.”—*Num.* 16:5.

3336 “Obstupesco ad ea quæ soliti sunt quidam insipientium audere, qui temere se conantur ingerere ad munus sacerdotii assumendum; licet non adsciti a gratia Christi; ignorantes, miseri, quod ignem et mortem sibi accumulant.”—*Or. de sacerd.*

3337 “Quam perditus est, qui sacrificium in sacrilegium, qui vitam convertit in mortem!”—*Epist.* 123.

3338 “Bene curris, sed extra viam.”

3339 “A vocatione pendet æternitas.”

3340 “Ordine suo, non nostro arbitrio, Sancti Spiritus virtus ministratur.”—*De Sing. cler.*

3341 “Quos prædestinavit, hos et vocavit; et quos vocavit, hos et justificavit; quos autem justificavit, illos et glorificavit.”—*Rom.* 8:30.

3342 “Unusquisque proprium donum habet ex Deo: alius quidem sic, alius vero sic.”—1 *Cor.* 7:7.

3343 “Cuicumque datur potentia aliqua divinitus, dantur etiam ea per quæ executio illius potentiæ possit congrue fieri.”—*Suppl.* q. 35, a. 1.

3344 “Illos quos Deus ad aliquid eligit, ita præparat et disponit, ut ad id ad quod eliguntur, inveniantur idonei, secundum illud: ‘Idoneos nos fecit ministros Novi Testamenti’ ”—(2 *Cor.* 3:5).P. 3, q. 27, a. 4.

3345 “Ego elegi vos, et posui vos, ut eatis et fructum afferatis.”—*John,* 15:16.

3346 “Rogate ergo dominurm messis, ut mittat operarios in messem suam.”—*Luke,* 10:2.

3347 “Sicut misit me Pater, et ego mitto vos.”—*John,* 20:21.

3348 “Qui mihi honoris est auctor, ipse mini fiet administrationum adjutor; dabit virtutem, qui contulit dignitatem.”—*In die ass. suæ,* s. 1.

3349 “Ego sum ostium. Per me si quis introierit, salvabitur; et ingredietur, et egredietur, et pascua inveniet.”—*John,* 10:9.

3350 “Ingredietur.”

3351 “Et egredietur.”

3352 “Et pascua inveniet.”

3353 “Dominus regit me, et nihil mini decrit; in loco pascuæ ibi me collocavit.”—*Ps.* 22:1.

3354 “Non mittebam prophetas, et ipsi currebant.—Propterea ecce ego tollam vos portans, et derelinquam vos . . . ; et dabo vos in opprobrium sempiternum, et in ignominiam æternam, quæ nunquam oblivione delebitur.”—*Jer.* 23:21–39.

3355 “Ut divina virtute evehatur, et transmittatur supra naturalem rerum ordinem.”—*Apud Hab. de Ord.* p. 3, c. 1, § 2.

3356 “Stultus apparuit, postquam elevatus est in sublime.”—*Prov.* 30:32.

3357 “Hujusmodi hominum genere nihil infelicius, nihil Ecclesiæ Dei calamitosius esse potest.”—P. 2, c. 7, q. 3.

3358 “Difficile est ut bono peragantur exitu, quæ malo sunt inchoata principio.”—*Epist.* 87.

3359 “Qualem, oro, potest fructum producere corrupta radix?”—*De Compunct.*

3360 “Omnis plantatio, quam non plantavit Pater meus cœlestis, eradicabitur.”—*Matt.* 15:13.

3361 “Ira est, non gratia, cum quis ponitur super ventum, nullas habens radices in soliditate virtutum.”—*De inst. ep.* c. 3.

3362 “Qui non fideliter introivit, quidni infideliter agat et contra Christum? faciet ad quod venit, ut mactet utique et disperdat.”—*De Vita cler.* c. 7.

3363 “Qui non intrat per ostium . . . , ille fur est et latro.—Fur non venit nisi ut furetur, et mactet, et perdat.”—*John*, 10:1–10.

3364 “Satius est maxime in ordinatione sacerdotum paucos bonos quam multos malos habere.”—*Cap.* 27.

3365 “Deus nunquam ita deserit Ecclesiam suam, quin inveniantur idonei ministri sufficientes ad necessitatem plebis.”—*Suppl.* q. 36, a. 4.

3366 “Non est hoc consulere populis, sed nocere.”—*Epist.* 87

3367 Matt. 5:8.

3368 Vol. i., at the end.

3369 1 “Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus Deus.”—*Ps.* 84:9.

3370 2 *Mach.* 1:18.

3371 “Et nunc, quid mihi est hic, dicit Dominus, quoniam ablatus est populus meus gratis?”—*Isai.* 52:5.

3372 “Deliciæ meæ, esse cum filiis hominum.”—*Prov.* 8:31.

3373 “Non reputo aliquid me habere.”

3374 “Quasi homo Dei Deus esset, et sine ipso beatus esse non posset.”—*Opusc.* 63, c. 7.

3375 “Audemus dicere quod Deus, præ magnitudine amoris, extra se sit.”—*De Div. Nom.* c. 4.

3376 “Perii, si Adam non moriatur.”

3377 “Perii, nisi misericordiam consequatur.”

3378 “Moriatur, qui nihil debeat morti.”—*In Annunt. B. M.* S. I.

3379 “Ecce ego, mitte me.”—*Isai.* 6:8.

3380 “Et Verbum caro factum est.”—*John*, 1:14.

3381 “Ideo ingrediens mundum dicit: Hostiam et oblationem noluisti; corpus autem aptasti mihi. . . . Tunc dixi: Ecce venio, . . . ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam.”—*Heb.* 10:5.

3382 “Propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem, descendit de cœlis. . . . et homo factus est.”—*Symb. Nic. et Const.*

3383 “Habitu inventus ut homo.”—*Phil.* 2:7.

3384 “Apparuit gratia Dei Salvatoris nostri omnibus hominibus.”—*Tit.* 2:11.

3385 “In terris visus est, et cum hominibus conversatus est.”—*Baruch*, 3:38.

3386 “In charitate perpetua dilexi te; ideo attraxi te, miserans.”—*Jer.* 31:3.

3387 “Benignitas et humanitas apparuit Salvatoris nostri Dei.”—*Tit.* 3:4.

3388 “Apparuerat ante potentia in rerum creatione; apparebat sapientia in earum gubernatione; sed benignitas misericordiæ maxime apparuit in humanitate.”—*In Nat. D.* s. 1.

3389 “Priusquam appareret humanitas, latebat benignitas. Sed, unde tanta agnosci poterat? Venit in carne, ut, apparente humanitate, benignitas agnosceretur.”—*In Epiph.* s. 1.

3390 “Homo, Deum contemnens, a Deo discessit; Deus, hominem diligens, ad homines venit.”—*S. de Dupl. Nat. Chr.*

3391 “Quia ad medicum venire non poteramus, ipse ad nos venire dignatus est.”—*Serm.* 88, *E. B.*

3392 “In funiculis Adam traham eos, in vinculis charitatis.”—*Osee*, 11:4.

3393 “Deus homo factus est, ut familiarius ab homine diligeretur.”—*Misc.1.* i. tit. 87.

3394 “In funiculis Adam traham eos, in vinculis charitatis.”—*Osee*, 11:4.

3395 “Diversis modis humano generi Bonitas Divina munera impertiit; sed abundantiam solitæ benignitatis excessit, quando in Christo ipsa ad peccatores Misericodia, ad errantes Veritas, ad mortuos Vita descendit.”—*De Nat.* s. 4.

3396 “Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto.”

3397 “Hoc autem ex maximo Dei amore provenit, ut Filius Dei carnem sibi assumeret in utero Virginis.”—P. 3, q. 32, a. 1.

3398 “Deus ab austro veniet.”—*Hab.* 3:3.

3399 “A magna charitate Dei in nos effulsit.”

3400 “Maxime propterea Christus advenit, ut cognosceret homo quantum eum diligat Deus.”—*De catech. rud.* c. 4.

3401 “In nullo sic amabilem suam hominibus patefecit charitatem, sicut cum Deus homo factus est.”—*De Casto Conn.* c. 23.

3402 “Nusquam enim Angelos apprehendit, sed semen Abrahæ appre-bendit.”—*Heb.* 2:16.

3403 “Non dixit: Suscepit,—sed: Apprehendit;—ex metaphora in-sequentium eos qui aversi sunt, ut fugientes apprehendere valeant.”—*In Heb. hom.* 5.

3404 “O felices paleas, rosis et liliis pulchriores! quæ vos genuit tellus? Non palearum momentaneum, sed perpetuum vos suppeditatis incendium, quod nulla flumina exstinguent.”

3405 “In primo homine, fecit nos Deus ad imaginem suam; in hac die, factus est ad imaginem nostram.”—*Serm.* 119, *E. B. app.*

3406 “Ecce Adam quasi unus ex nobis factus est.”—*Gen.* 3:22.

3407 “De cætero dicemus veraciter, quia Deus factus est quasi unus ex nobis.”—*De Emman.*1. 1, c. 19.

3408 “Deus tuus factus est frater tuus.”

3409 “Quanto minorem se fecit in humilitate, tanto majorem exhibuit in bonitate.”—*In Epiph.* s. 1.

3410 “Charilas Christi urget nos.”—2 *Cor.* 5:14.

3411 “Et Verbum caro factum est.”—*John*, 1:14.

3412 “Dilexit nos, et lavit nos . . . in sanguine suo.”—*Apoc.* 1:5.

3413 “Consideravi opera tua, et expavi.”—*off. Circumc. resp.* 6.

3414 “Domine, audivi auditionem tuam, et timui . . . Egressus es in salutem populi tui, in salutem cum Christo tuo.”—*Hab.* 3:2, 13.

3415 “Miraculum miraculorum.”—*De pot.* q. 6, a. 2, ad 9.

3416 “Creator oritur ex creatura.”—*In Nat. B. V.* s. 2.

3417 “Fecit potentiam in brachio suo.”—*Luke,* 1:51.

3418 “Non satiabar considerare altitudinem consilii tui super salutem generis humani.”—*conf.1.* 9, c. 6.

3419 “Cum amat Deus, non aliud vult quam amari.”—*In Cant.* s. 83.

3420 “Notam fecit dilectionem suam; experiatur et tuam.”—*De Aquæd.*

3421 “Utinam dirumperes cœlos et descenderes! a facie tua montes defluerent . . . aquæ arderent igni.”—*Isai.* 64:1.

3422 “Et Verbum caro factum est.”—*John,* 1:14.

3423 “Infinitus enim thesaurus est hominibus; quo qui usi sunt, participes facti sunt amicitiæ Dei.”—*Wisd.* 7:14.

3424 “Aliud desidera, si melius inveneris.”—*In Ps.* 26 *enarr.* 2.

3425 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—*Prov.* 8:17.

3426 “Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea: quem timebo?”—*Ps.* 26:1.

3427 “Quem amas, infirmatur.”—*John,* 11:3.

3428 “Venerunt . . . omnia bona pariter cum illa.”—*Wisd.* 7:11.

3429 “Ama, et fac quod vis.”

3430 “A sua inflammatissima charitate dæmones pellebantur, in tantum quod non erant ausi illi appropinquare.”—*Pro Fest. V. M.* s. 4, a. 3, c. 2.

3431 “Seraphim e cœlo descendere poterant, ut amorem discerent in corde Virginis.”

3432 “Quia tota ardens fuit, omnes se amantes eamque tangentes incendit (et sibi assimilat).”—*De B. V. M.* s. 1.

3433 “O Ignis qui semper ardes! accende me.”—*Solil. an. ad D. C.* 34.

3434 “Mater pulchræ dilectionis.”—*Ecclus.* 24:24.

3435 “Magnes amoris, amor.”

3436 “Si vis amari, ama.”—*Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 13.

3437 “Domine, quis similis tibi?”—*Ps.* 34:10.

3438 “Magnus Dominus, et laudabilis nimis; et magnitudinis ejus non est finis.”—*Ps.* 144:3.

3439 “Numquid non cœlum et tettan ego impleo?”—*Jer.* 23:24.

3440 “In ipso enim vivimus, et movemur, et sumus.”—*Acts*, 17:28.

3441 “Ecce gentes quasi stilla situlæ, et quasi momentum staterae, repuatæ sunt; ecce insulæ quasi pulvis exiguus. Omnes gentes, quasi non sint, sic sunt coram eo.”—*Isa.* 40:15–17.

3442 “Parvulus natus est nobis.”

3443 “Ille parvulus, ut vir possis esse perfectus; ille involutus pannis, ut tu mortis laqueis absolutus sis; ille in terris, ut tu cœlis.”—*In. Luc.* 2

3444 “Videas potentiam regi, sapientiam instrui, virtutem sustentari; Deum lactentem et vagientem, sed miseros consolantem.”—*De Laud. V. M. hom.* 2.

3445 “Semetipsum exinanivit.”—*Phil.* 2:7.

3446 “Ubi te exinanivisti, ibi pietas magis emicuit, ibi charitas plus effulsit.”—*In Cant.* s. 45.

3447 “Sciens Deus visendi se desiderio cruciari mortales, unde se visibilem faceret, hoc elegit.”—*Serm.* 147.

3448 “Se parvulum exhibuit, ut seipsum faceret gratum.”

3449 “Exinanitio facta ad usum nostrum.”

3450 “Ecce tempus tuum, tempus amantium.”—*Ezech.* 16:8.

3451 “Non ad aliud amat Deus, nisi ut ametur.”—*In Cant.* s. 83.

3452 “Et nunc, Isreal! quid Dominus Deus tuus petit a te, nisi ut timeas . . . et diligas eum?”—*Deut.* 10:12.

3453 “Nusquam enim Angelos apprehendit, sed semen Abrahæ apprehendit.”—*Heb.* 2:16.

3454 “Quare non dixit: Suscepit;—sed: Apprehendit?”

3455 “Ex metaphora insequentium eos qui aversi sunt.”

3456 “Et qualiter venire debuit, qui voluit timorem pellere, quaerere charitatem? Infantia hæc, quam barbariem non vencit? quam duritiem non resolvit? Quid non amoris expostulat? Sic ergo nasci voluit, qui amari voluit, non timeri.”—*Serm.* 158.

3457 “Sic nasci voluit, qui amari voluit, non timeri.”

3458 “Magnus Dominus, et laudabilis nimis; parvus Dominus, et amabilis nimis.”—*In Cant.* s. 48.

3459 “Magnus Dominus, et laudabilis nimis.”—*Ps.* 144:3.

3460 “Puer cum pueris, cum floribus, cum brachiis libenter esse solet.”—*Dom. infra oct. Nat.* s. 4.

3461 “Oh! quanto labore et quam ferventi amore quæsivit animam tuam amorosus Jesus!”

3462 “Virginis uterum vix egressus, dilectam animam tuam more infantium vocat: A, a, anima mea, te quæro, pro te hanc peregrinationem assumo.”—*T. II.* s. 51. a. c. 2.

3463 “Pater futuri sæculi.”—*Isa.* 9:6.

3464 “Diligite inimicos vestros, benefacite his qui oderunt vos, . . . ut sitis filii Patris vestri.”—*Matt.* 5:44.

3465 “Non est possibile quod homo qui dimiserit proximo, non recipiat remissionem a Domino.”—*In Act. hom.* 36.

3466 “Dimittite, et dimittemini.”—*Luke*, 6:37.

3467 “Nunquam injurias vindicavi.”

3468 “Non enim veni vocare justos, sed peccatores.”—*Matt.* 9:13.

3469 “Ubi te exinanivisti, ibi pietas magis emicuit, ibi charitas plus effulsit.”

3470 “Quid times, peccator? Quomodo te damnabit pœnitentiam, qui moritur ne damneris? Quomodo te abjicient redeuntem, qui de cœlo venit quaerere te?”—*Tr. de Adv. D.*

3471 “Lætetur cor quærentium Dominum.”—*Ps.* 104:3.

3472 “Si autem impius egerit poenitentiam . . . omnium iniquitatum ejus . . . non recordabor.”—*Ezech.* 18:21.

3473 “Ad parvulum accedere quis formidet?”—*In Nat. D. conc.* 4.

3474 “Puer nescit irasci, et, si irascitur, facile placatur.”

3475 “Parvulorum mores agnoscitis; una lacrymula placatur offensus, injuriam non recordatur. Accedite ergo ad eum, dum parvulus est, dum majestatis videtur oblitus.”

3476 “Nascitur parvulus, ut non formides potentiam, non justitiam.”

3477 “Celasti, Deus, sapientiam in infantuli ætate, ne accuset.”

3478 “Justitiam in humilitate, ne condemnet.”

3479 “Potentiam in infirmitate, ne cruciet.”

3480 “Adam. . . . ubi es?”

3481 “Vocem tuam audivi . . . et timui.”—*Gen.* 3:9.

3482 “Homo natus, terrorem deposuit.”

3483 “Noli timere; non puniendum, sed salvandum requirit.”

3484 “Ecce infans est, et sine voce; nam vagientis vox magis miseranda est, quam tremenda. Tenera membra Virgo Mater pannis alligat, et adhuc trepidas?”—*In Nat. D.* s. I.

3485 “Natalis Domini, natalis est pacis.”—*In Nat. D.* s. 6.

3486 “Princeps pacis.”—*Isa.* 9:6.

3487 “Si peccata nostra superant nos, pretium suum non contemnit Deus.”—*Serm.* 22, *Ed. B.*

3488 “Quid misericordius intelligi valet, quam cum Filius dicit: Tolle me, et redime te?”—*Cur. D. H.1.* 2, c. 20.

3489 “Oratio Deiparæ habet rationem imperii.”—P. 4, tit. 15, c. 17, § 4.

3490 “Accedis, non solum rogans, sed imperans; Domina, non ancilla; nam Filius nihil negans honorat te.”—*In Nat. B. V.* s. 1.

3491 “Tu autem, materna auctoritate pollens, etiam iis qui enormiter peccant, eximiam remissionis gratiam concilias.”—*In Deip. Dorm.* s. 2.

3492 “Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel, quia visitavit, et fecit redemptionem plebis suæ.”

3493 “Ut sine timore, de manu inimicorum nostrorum liberati, serviamus illi.”—*Luke,* 1:68–74.

3494 “In ditione enim tua cuncta sunt posita. . . . Tu fecisti cœlum et terram.”—*Esth.* 13:9.

3495 “Et habet in vestimento et in femore suo scriptum: Rex regum et Dominus dominantium.—*Apoc.* 19:16.

3496 “Sceptrum exactoris ejus superasti.”—*Isa.* 9:4.

3497 “*In. Is.1.* 1, *or.* 5.

3498 “Cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse se æqualem Deo; sed semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens, in similitudinem hominum factus.”—*Phil.* 2:6.

3499 “Voca nomen ejus: Accelera spolia detrahere, Festina prædari.” *Isa.* 8:3.

[3500] “Hoc est: Ne ultra patiatur regnare diabolum.”

[3501] “Mox natus, censu Cæsaris adscribitur, atque ob nostri liberationem ipse servitio subditur.”—*In Luc.* 2.

[3502] “Patitur Deus se pannis alligari, qui totius mundi debita venerat soluturus.”—*De Nat. Chr.* s. 3.

[3503] “Erat subditus illis.”—*Luke,* 2:51.

[3504] “In prima ætate, subditus parentibus, omnem laborem corporalem obedienter sustinuit. Cum illi enim essent pauperes, merito laboribus dediti erant. Jesus autem, his subditus, omniun etiam simul perferendo labores, obedientiam declarabat.”—*Const. mon.* c. 4.

[3505] “Filius hominis non venit ministrari, sed ministrare.”—*Matt.* 20:28.

[3506] “Ira me gessi et gero, ut velim omnibus ministrare, quasi omnium servus.”

[3507] “Non solum formam servi accepot, ut subesset; sed etiam mali servi, ut vapularet; et servi peccati, ut pœnam solveret.”—*Serm. de Pass.*

[3508] “Omnium Dominus judicis sententiæ subjicitur; omnium Rex carmisicum manu exerceri non gravatur.”—*De Beatit. or.* 1.

[3509] “Tradebat autem judicanti se injuste.”—1 *Peter,* 2:23.

[3510] “Cum malediceretur, non maledicebat; cum pateretur, non comminabatur.”—*Ib.* 2:23.

[3511] “Factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

[3512] “Formam servi accipiens, in similitudinem hominum factus.”—*Phil.* 2:7.

[3513] “Ut servus in dominum verteretur, formam servi Dominus accepit.”—*Serm.* 371. *E. B.*

[3514] “O mira circa nos tuæ pietatis dignario! O inæstimabilis dilectio charitatis,”—*In Sabb. S.*

[3515] “Ut servum redimeres, Filium tradidisti.”

[3516] “Quid est homo, quia magnificas eum? aut quid apponis erga eum cor tuum?”—*Job,* 7:17.

[3517] “Ubi autem abundavit delictum, superabundavit gratia.”—*Rom.* 5:20.

[3518] “Ampliora adepti sumus per Christi gratiam, quam per diaboli amiseramus invidiam.”—*De Asc. D. s.* 1.

[3519] “Suscepit de manu Domini duplicia pro omnibus peccatis suis.” *Isa.* 40:2.

[3520] “Ego veni ut vitam habeant, et abundantius habeant.”—*John*, 10:10.

[3521] “Non sicut delictum, ita et donum.”—*Rom.* 5:15.

[3522] “Et copiosa apud eum redemptio.”—*Ps.* 129:7.

[3523] “Vita Hominis illius superat omne debitum quod debent peccatores.”—*Med. de Red. hum.*

[3524] “O felix culpa, quæ talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem!”—*In Sabb. S.*

[3525] “Rorate, cœli, desuper, et nubes pluant Justum.”—*Isa.* 45:8.

[3526] “Emitte Agnum, Domine, dominatorem terræ.”—*Ibid.* 16:1

[3527] “Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam, et salutare tuum da nobis.”—*Ps.* 84:8.

[3528] “Fuit ille involutus in pannis, ut tu mortis laqueis absolutus sis; meum paupertas illius patrimonium est, et infirmitas Domini mea virtus est, mea lacrymæ illæ delicta lavarunt.”—*In Luc.* 2.

[3529] “Rupisti vincula mea, et dixisti: Non serviam.”—*Jer.* 2:20.

[3530] “Eo quod non servieris Domino Deo tuo in gaudio. . . . services inimico tuo . . . in fame, et siti, et nuditate, et omni penuria.”—*Deut.* 28:47

[3531] “Solve vincula colli tui, captiva filia Sion.”—*Isa.* 52:2.

[3532] “Vincula illius, alligatura salutaris.”—*Ecclus.* 6:31.

[3533] “Charitatem habete, quod est vinculum perfectionis.”—*Coloss.* 3:14.

[3534] “Ne permittas me separari a te! ne permittas me separari a te!”

[3535] “Ecce tu iratus es. . . . Non est qui. . . . consurgat, et teneat te.”—*Isa.* 64:5.

[3536] “consolamini, consolamini, popule meus, dicit Deus vester. . . . quia completa est malitia.”—*Isa.* 40:1.

[3537] “Justitia et Pax osculatæ sunt,”—*Ps.* 84:11.

[3538] “Sanctus, innocens, impollutus.”—*Heb.* 7:26.

[3539] “Apparuit ut peccata nostra lolleret.”—1 *John*, 3:5.

3540 “Deus Filium sunm mittens in similitudinem carnis peccati.”—*Rom.* 8:3.

3541 “Et de peccato damnavit peccatum in carne.”

3542 “proprio Filio Suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum.”—*Rom.* 8:32.

3543 “Sic enim Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret.” *John,* 3:16.

3544 “Non servum, non angelum, non archangelum dedit, sed Filium suum!”—*In Jo. nom.* 27.

3545 “O gratiam! O amoris vim!”

3546 “Quæ nunquam humanus animus aut cogitare aut sperare potuit, hæc nobis lagritus est.”—*In* 1 *Tim. hom.* 4

3547 “Quantum ad rationem humanam pertinet, injustam rem homoquilibet faceret, si pro pessimis servis filium bonum occideret.”—*De Gub. D.1.* 4.

3548 “Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

3549 “Et quasi agnus coram tondente se, obmutescet et non aperiet os suum.”—*Isai.* 53:7.

3550 “Vere languores nostros ipse tulit et dolores nostros ipse porta vit”—*Ibid.* 53:4.

3551 “Tanquam impius pati non recusat, modo homines salutem consequantur.”

3552 “Quis hoc fecit? Fecit amor.”

3553 “Comprehenderunt Jesum, et ligaverunt eum.”—*John* 18:12.

3554 “Quid tibi et vinculis!”—*De pass. D.* c. 4.

3555 “O charitas! quam magnum est vinculum tuum, quo Deus ligari potuit!”—*Lign. v. de Char.* c. 6.

3556 “Quid fecisti, O innocentissime salvator! quod sic condemnaveris?”

3557 “Amor tuus, peccatum tuum tuum.”

3558 “Et nunc clarifica me tu, Pater”—*John*, 17:5.

3559 “Quid dicis? hæc gloriam appellas?”

3560 “Ita, pro dileclis hæe gloriam existimo.”—*In Eph. hom.* 8

3561 “Dicite pusillanimis:Confortamini, et nolite timere; ecce Deus vester ultionem adducet retributionis; Deus ipse veniet, et salvabit vos.”—*Isa.* 35:4.

3562 “Neque fas est locum esse tristitiæ, ubi natalis est Vitæ.”—*In Nat. D. S.* 1.

3563 “Dulcis dies pœnitentibus; hodie peccatum tollitur, et peccator desperat.”—*S.* 117, *E. B. app.*

3564 “Delens quod adversus nos erat chirographum decreti, quod crat contrarium nobis, et ipsum tulit de medio, affigens illud cruci.”—*Coloss.* 2:14.

3565 “Factus est nobis sapientia a Deo, et justitia, et sanctificatio, et redemptio.”—1 *Cor.* 1:30.

3566 “In ablutione peccatorum.”—*In Cant.* s. 22.

3567 “Eum, qui non noverat peccatum, pro nobis peccatum fecit, ut nos efficeremur justitia Dei in ipso.”—2 *Cor.* 5:21.

3568 “In justitia tua libera mea.”—*Ps.* 30:2.

3569 “Redite, prævaricatores, ad cor.”—*Isa.* 46:8.

3570 “Convertimini ad me . . . et convertar ad vos.”—*Zach.* 1:3.

3571 “Quare moriemini, domus Israel? . . . revertimini, et vivite.”—*Ezech.* 18:31.

3572 “Per viscera misericordiæ Dei nostri, in quibus visitavit nos Oriens ex alto.”—*Luke,* 1:73.

3573 “Non enim habemus pontificem qui non possit compati infirmitatibus nostris, tentatum autem per omnia pro similitudine absque peccato. Debuit per omnia fratribus similari, ut misericors fieret.”—*Heb.* 4:15; 2:17.

3574 “Congratulamini mihi, quia inveni ovem meam quæ perierat. Imponit in humeros suos gaudens.”—*Luke,* 15:4–6.

3575 “Accurrens cecidit super collum ejus, et osculatus est eum.”—*Luke*, 15:20.

3576 “Ecce slo ad ostium, et pulso.”—*Apoc.* 3:20.

3577 “Nescitis cujus spiritus estis.”—*Luke,* 9:55.

3578 “Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.”—*Matt.* 11:28.

3579 “Nemo te condemnavit? . . . Nec ego te condemnabo. Vade, et jam amplius noli peccare.”—*John,* 8:10, 11.

3580 “Quis est qui condemnet? Christus Jesus, qui mortuus est, . . . qui etiam interpellat pro nobis.”—*Rom.* 8:34.

3581 “Ut servum redimeret, sibi Filius ipse non pepercit.”—*Serm. de Pass.*

3582 “Gratiam fidejussoris ne obliviscaris.”—*Ecclus.* 29:20.

3583 “Omnia cooperantur in bonum.”—*Rom.* 8:28.

3584 “Ita gaudium erit in cœlo super uno peccatore pœnitentiam agente, quam super nonaginta novem justis.”—*Luke,* 15:7.

3585 “Si impius egerit pœnitentiam . . . omnium iniquitatum ejus . . . non recordabor.”—*Ezech.* 18:21.

3586 “Venit nox, quando nemo potest operari.”—*John,* 9:4.

3587 “Tu autem, materna in Deum auctoritate pollens, etiam iis qui enormiter peccant, eximiam remissionis gratiam concilias.”—*In Deip. Dorm. s.* 2.

3588 “Mecum sunt divitiæ, . . . ut ditem diligentes me.”—*Prov.* 8:18.

3589 “In me gratia omnis viæ et veritatis, in me omnis spes vitæ et virtutis; transite ad me omnes.”—*Eccles.* 24:25.

3590 “Lætabitur deserta et invia, et exsultabit solitudo, et florebit quasi lilium.”—*Isa.* 35:1.

3591 “Dicite pusillanimis:Confortamini, et nolite timere: . . . Deus ipse veniet, et salvabit vos.”

3592 “Nolite timere; . . . Deus ipse veniet, et salvabit vos.”

3593 “Mea est fortitudo; per me reges regnant.”—*Prov.* 8:14

3594 “Ecce tu fecisti cœlum et terram in fortitudine tua; . . . non erit tibi difficile omne verbum.”—*Jer.* 32:17.

3595 “Ipse dixit et facta sunt.”—*Ps.* 148:5.

3596 “Potest. . . . universum mundum uno nutu delere.”—2 *Mach.* 8:18

3597 “Virtuti brachii tui quis resistet?”—*Wis.* 11:22.

3598 “Tetendit enim adversus Deum manum suam, et contra Omnipotentem roboratus est.”—*Job.* 15:25.

3599 “Deus ab austro veniet . . . ; ibi abscondita est fortitudo ejus,”—*Hab.* 3:3, 4.

3600 “Invenimus fortem et infirmum Jesum: fortem, per quem sine labore facta sunt omnia; infirmum vis nosse? Vebum caro factumest”

3601 “Condidit nos fortitudine sua; quæsivit nos infirmitate sua.”—*In Jo.* tr. 15.

3602 “Quoties volui congregare filios tuos, quemadmodum gallina congregat pullos suos sub alas, et noluisti!”—*Matt.* 23:37.

3603 “Qui cœlum regit, fasciis involvitur.”

3604 “Sic magnus est, quod portari non prævalet; et sic parvus, quod per se ire non potest.”—*Med. vit. Chr.* c. 13.

3605 “Vicit Leo de tribu Juda.”—*Apoc.* 5:5.

3606 “Deus noster, Deus salvos faciendi; et Domini, Domini exitus mortis.”—*Ps.* 67:21.

3607 “Hoc est illi proprium, hæc est ejus natura: ipse Deus noster est Deus salvans, et Dei nostri sunt exius mortis, id est liberatio a morte.”

3608 “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* 4:13.

3609 “Confidite; ego vici mundum.”—*John,* 16:33.

3610 “Antidotum quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis, et a peccatis mortalibus præservemus.”—*Sess.* 13, *cap.* 2.

3611 “Esset incurabilis, nisi subveniretur medicina Dei.”—*De Sacr. alt.* c. 1.

3612 “Per crucis mysterium, eripuit nos a potestate peccati; per Eucharistiæ sacramentum, liberat nos a voluntate peccandi.”—*De Alt. Myst.*1. 4, c. 44.

3613 “Amen, amen dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

3614 “Venit Christus, et alligavit diabolum. Alligatus est tamquam innexus canis catenis. Stultus home ille est, quem canis in catena positus mordet. Ille latrare potest, sollicitare potest; mordere non potest, nisi volentem: non enim extorquet a nobis consensum, sed petit.”—*S.* 37, *E. B. app.*

3615 “Quantum in medico est, sanare venit ægrotum; ipse se interimit, qui præcepta medici observare non vult.”—*In Jo. tr.* 12

3616 “Hortatur ut pugnes, et adjuvat ut vincas, et deficientem sublevat, et vincentem coronat.”—*In Ps.* 32. *en.* 2.

3617 “Tunc saliet, sicut cervus, claudus.”

3618 “Et quæ erat arida, erit in stagnum, et sitiens in fontes aquarum.”

3619 “In cubilibus, in quibus Prius dracones habitabant, orietur viror calami et junci.”—*Isa.* 35:6–7.

3620 “Quia humilis est vacuus in oculis suis.”

3621 “In omnibus divites facti estis in illo . . . , ita ut nihil vobis desit in ulla gratia.”—1 *Cor.* 1:5.

3622 “Semetipsum exinanivit.”—*Phil.* 2:7.

3623 “Quasi ad nihilum se redegit; se evacuavit majestate, gloria, at robore.”

3624 “Factus est nobis sapientia a Deo, et justitia, et sanctificatio, et redemptio.”—1 *Cor.* 1:30.

3625 “vidi . . . præcinctum ad mamillas zona aurea.”—*Apoc.* 1:12.

3626 “Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quæreniillum.”—*Lam.* 3:25.

3627 “Vult et non vult piger.”—*Prov.* 13:4.

3628 “Utinam dirumperes cœlos, et descenderes! a facie tua montes defluerent.”—*Isa.* 64:1.

3629 “Erunt prava in directa, et aspera in vias planas.”—*Isa.* 40:4.

3630 “Qui amat, non laborat.”—*In Jo. tr.* 48.

3631 “Dura sicut infernus æmulatio; lampades ejus, lampades ignis atque flammarum.”—*Cant.* 8:6.

3632 “Thesaurus et Thesauraria gratiarum.”—*Cont. de V. M. in prol.*

3633 “Tuus sum ego; salvum me fac.”—*Ps.* 118:94.

3634 “Petite et accipietis.”—*John,* 16:24.

3635 “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—*Matt.* 7:8.

3636 “Quid est quod sic turbaris, Herodes? Rex iste qui natus est, non venit reges pugnando superare, sed moriendo subjugare.”

3637 “Venit ergo non ut pugnet vivus, sed ut triumphet occisus.”—*S. de Epiph. et Inn. nece.*

3638 “Si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad meipsum.”—*John,* 12:32.

3639 “Parvulus natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis.”

3640 “Pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum!”—*Rom.* 8:32.

3641 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis!”—*Eph.* 5:2.

3642 “Natus est nobis, qui sibi erat.”

3643 “Triumphat de Deo amor.”

3644 “Sic enim Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret.”—*John.* 3:16.

3645 “Modum tunc, ut se proderet, invenit amor.”

3646 “Voluit esse nobis Creator et Redemptor.”

3647 “Parvulus natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis.”

3648 “Natus est vobis hodie Salvator.”—*Luke,* 2:11.

3649 “Cum hominibus conversatus est.”—*Bar.* 3:38.

3650 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis!”

3651 “Deus piissimus, præ amore hominis, non solum sua, verum seipsum impendit.”—*Man.* c. 26.

3652 “Dilexit nos, et lavit nos in sanguine suo.”—*Apoc.* 1:5.

3653 “O Deum, si fas est dici, prodigum sui præ desiderio hominis!”

3654 “An non prodigum sui, qui, non solum sua, sed seipsum impendit, ut hominem recuperaret?”—*In Pent.* s. 1.

3655 “Novit Dominus sagittare and amorem; sagittat, ut faciat amantem.”—*In Ps.* 119.

3656 “Cœlum et terra et omnia mihi dicunt ut te amem.”—*Conf.1.* 10, c. 6.

3657 “Posuit me sicut sagittam electam; in pharetra sua abscondit me.”—*Isa.* 49:2.

3658 “Sagitta electa reservatur; ita Christus quasi reservatus est in sinu Patris, donec venit plenitudo temporis, et tunc missus est advulnerandum corda fidelium.”

3659 “Sagittæ tuæ acutæ; populi sub te cadent.”—*Ps.* 44:6.

3660 “Propter te verias monstratur in formas, qui manet unica suæ majestatis in forma.”—*Serm.* 23.

3661 “Notas facite in populis adinventiones ejus.”—*Isa.* 12:4.

3662 “Si vulnus curare desideras, medicus est.”

3663 “Si febribus æstuas, fons est.”

3664 “Si mortem times, vita est; si cœlum desideras, via est.”—*De virg.*1. 3.

3665 “Dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me.”—*Gal.* 2:20.

3666 “Adeo singulum quemquam hominem diligit, quo diligit orbem universum.”—*In Gal.* 2.

3667 “Neque valet explicari quo circe circa unumquemque Deus moveatur affectu.” *De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 5.

3668 “Totus mihi datus, totus in meos usus expensus est.”—*In Circumc.* s. 3.

3669 “Totum nobis dedit, nihil sibi reliquit.”

3670 “Deus ultra quo se extenderet, non habet.”—*De Beatit.* c. 2.

3671 “Me pro me debeo; quid Deo retribuam pro se?”—*De dil. D.* c. 5.

3672 “Et factus est principatus super humerum ejus.”—*Isa.* 9:6.

3673 “Principatus super humerum ejus.”

3674 “Diabolus onera imponit humeris subditorum; Christus suis humeris sustinebit onus sui principatus; quia Christus sceptrum imperii sui, puta Crucem, humeris suis bajulabit, atque regnabit a lingo.”

3675 “Quis regnum insigne potestatis suæ humero præfert, et non aut capite diadema, aut in manu sceptrum? Solus Rex Christus Jesus potestatem suam in humero extulit, Crucem scilicet, ut exinde regnaret.”—*Adv. Jud.*

3676 “Christus semetipsum dedit; quid ergo magnum faciet homo, si semetipsum offerat Deo, cui ipse se prior obtulit Dens?”

3677 “Si scires donum Dei, et quis est qui dicit tibi: Da mihi bibere.”—*John,* 4:10.

3678 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum.”—*Matt.* 22:37.

3679 “Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi.”—*Prov.* 23:26.

3680 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”

3681 “In hoc enim Chirstus mortuus est et resurrexit, ut et mortuorum et vivorum dominetur.—Sive ergo vivimus, sive morimur, Domini sumus.”—*Rom.* 14:8.

3682 “Vitta copulans amantem et quod amatur.”—*De Trin.1.* 8. c. 10.

3683 “Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.”—*Cant.* 2:16.

3684 “Quid enim mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? . . . Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus, in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:25.

3685 “In capite libri scriptum est de me, ut facerem voluntatem tuam; Deus meus, volui.”—*Ps.* 39:8.

3686 “Domine, quid me vis facere?”—*Acts,* 9:6.

3687 “In manus tuas commendo spiritun meum.”

3688 “Redemisti me, Domine Deus veritatis.”—*Ps.* 30:6.

3689 “Tota pulchra es, Amica mea, et macula non est in te.”—*Cant.* 4:7.

3690 “Una est columba mea, perfecta mea.”—*Cant.* 6:8.

3691 “Omne quod est in mundo, concupiscentia carnis est, et concupiscentia oculorum, et superbia vitæ.”—1 *John,* 2:16.

3692 “Beatus et solus potens.”—1 *Tim.* 6:15.

3693 “Intra in gaudium Domini tui.”—*Matt.* 25:21.

3694 “Posuit eum in paradiso voluptatis.”—*Gen.* 2:15.

3695 “Quælibet passio Christi suffecisset ad redemptionem, propter infinitam dignitatem personæ.”—*Quodlib.* 2, a. 2.

3696 “Proposito sibi gaudi, sustinuit crucem.”—*Heb.* 12:2.

3697 “Quod sufficiebat redemptioni, non sufficiebat amori.”

3698 “Magna est enim velut mare contritio tua.”—*Lam.* 2:13.

3699 “Virum dolorum.”—*Isa.* 53:3.

3700 “Assumpsit dolorem in summo.”

3701 “Hostiam et oblationem noluisti, corpus autem aptasti mihi.”—*Heb.* 10:5.

3702 “Femina circumdabit virum.”—*Jer.* 31:22.

3703 “In quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ et scientiæ absconditi.”—*Col.* 2:3.

3704 “Vir erat Jesus necdum etiam natus, sed sapientia, non ætate.”—*De Laud. V. M. hom.* 2.

3705 “Erat ineffabiliter sapiens, sapienter infans.”—*Serm.* 187. *E. B.*

3706 “Magna cathedra, præsepium illud.”—*In Nat. D. conc.* 1.

3707 “In præsepe, omnia sunt villa visui ingrata auditui, olfactui molesta, tactui dura et aspera.”—*T.* 2. tr. 33.

3708 “Patitur Deus se pannis alligari, qui totius mundi debita venerat soluturus.”—*De Nat. Chr.* s. 3.

3709 “O felices panni, quibus peccatorum sordes extersimus!”—*S.* 119, *E. B. app.*

3710 “Felices lacrymæ, quibus nostra abluntur crimia.”—*In Nat. D. conc.* 1.

3711 “Dolor meus in conspectu meo semper.”—*Ps.* 37:18.

3712 “Christus crucem etiam in ventri Matris menti impressam habuit, adeo ut vix natus prinicipatum super humerum (*Isa.* 9:6) habere dicatur.”—*Umb. Virg.* c. 11. *exc.* 38.

3713 “Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

3714 “Animam meam pono pro ovibus meis.”—*John,* 10:15.

3715 “Desiderio desideravi hoc Pascha manducare vobicum.”—*Luke,* 22:15.

3716 “Baptismo autem habeo baptizari; et quomodo coarctor usque dum persiciatur!”—*Luke,* 12:50

3717 “Non ex metu mortis suæ, sed ex mora nostræ redemptionis.”—*In Luc.* xii.

3718 “Nonne hic est faber,—fabri filius?”—*Mark,* 6:3; *Matt.* 13:55.

3719 “Dei Filius illis delectabatur operibus, quibus lignorum segmentis et clavis sibi sæpe suturæ crucis imago præformabatur.”

3720 “Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.”—*Matt.* 26:38.

3721 “Principalius Chistus satisfecit pro pœna damni, quam sensus.”

3722 “Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum.”—*Cant.* 8:6.

3723 “Mirabile genus medicinæ! Medicus voluit ægrotare, et ægrotos sua infirmitate sanare.”—*Serm.* 247. *E. B. app.*

3724 “Et livore ejus sanati sumus.”—*Isa.* 53:5.

3725 “Prioi bibit Medicus sanus, ut bibere non dubitaret ægrotus.” *Serm.* 88, *E. B.*

3726 “Christianorum propria virtus est, etiam in adversis, referre gratias.”

3727 “In bonis gratias agens, reddidisti debitum; in malis, Deum reddidisti debitorem.”—*In Ps.* 9.

3728 “Disce a Christo, quemadmodum diligas christum.”—*In Cant.* s. 20.

3729 “Mihi autem absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi.”—*Gal.* 6:14.

3730 “Domine! pati et contemni pro te.”

3731 “Ubi Deus, ibidem et patientia.”—*De patient.*

3732 “Juxta est Dominus iis qui tribulato sunt corde.”—*Ps.* 33:19.

3733 “Christiano vera pax est a Dei voluntate non dividi.”—*In Nat. D.* s. 9.

3734 “Beatus est, qui habet omnia quæ vult, et nihil vult male.”—*De Trin.1.* 13, c. 5.

3735 “Misereamur impio!”—*Isa.* 26:10.

3736 “Misericordiam hanc nolo; super omnem iram miseratio ista.”—*In Cant.* s. 42.

3737 “De pretio erogato, Redemptoris tui agnosce munus tuæque prævaricationis pondus.”

3738 “Nihil ita me deterret, sicut videre Filium tuum propter peccatum crudelissima morte mulctatum.”

3739 “Major consolatio erit ei punitur, si amet Dominum, postquam exacerbavit tam misericordem, quam ei qui non punitur.”

3740 “Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.”—*Matt.* 11:28.

3741 “Omnibus pietatis sinum apertum tenet, neminem a se redire tristem sinit.”—*Alloq.*1. 1, can. 12.

3742 “Tibi miserendi est officium commissum.”—*Stim. div. am.* p. 3, c. 19.

3743 “Inveniet semper paratam auxiliari.”—*De Laud. B. M.1.* 2, p. 1.

3744 “Quis, O Domina! tuam rogavit opem, et fuitunquam derelictus?”—*Vit. S. Theoph. ap. Sur.* 4 *febr.*

3745 “Gloria in altissimis Deo!”—*Luke,* 2:14.

3746 “Excutere de pulvere.”

3747 “Consurge.”

3748 “Sede, Jerusalem.”

3749 “Meus est enim orbis terræ, et plenitudo ejus.”—*Ps.* 49:12.

3750 “Decus meus es tu, quoniam bonorum meorum non eges.”—*Ps.* 15:2.

3751 “Egenus factus est, cum esset dives, ut illius inopia vos divites essetis.”—2 *Cor.* 8:9.

3752 “Omnis quippe caro corruperat viam suam.”—*Gen.* 6:12.

3753 “Habitantibus in regione umbræ mortis, lux orta est eis.”—*Isa.* 9:2.

3754 “Lumen ad revelationem gentium.”—*Luke,* 2:32.

3755 “Lux in tenebris lucet, . . . quæ illuminat omnem hominem.”—*John,* 1:5.

3756 “Et erunt ocuii tui videntes Præceptorem tuum.”—*Isa.* 30:20.

3757 “Paupertas non inveniebature in cœlis; porro in terris abundabat, et nescieba homo pretoum ejus. Hance itaque Dei Filius concupiscens descendit, ut eam eligat sibi, et nobis sua æsimatione faciat pretiosam.”—*In Vig. Nat.* s. 1.

3758 “Schola Christi.”

3759 “Spelunca magistra.”

3760 “Non erat eis locus diversorio.”—*Luke.* 2:7.

3761 “Conditor Angelorum, non ostro obsitus, sed vilibus legitur panniculis obvolutus: erubescat terrena superbaia, ubi coruscat humilitas Redemptoris!”—*De Vest. eccl. c.* 2.

3762 “Qui complexu suo ambit omnia, in brutorum præsepe reclinaur!”—*De Beatit. or.* I.

3763 “Virgo lactabat ubere de cœlo pleno.”—*In Circ. resp.* 8.

3764 “Lacte modico pastus est.”—*In Nativ. ad L.*

3765 “Patet Christum, non tantum pauperem fuisse, sed et vere mendicum.”

3766 “Quomodo faciebant de victu? ubi nocte quiescebant? quomodo hospitabantur?”—*Med. vit. Chr. c.* 12.

3767 “Sudores freqentabant, necessaria vitæ inde sibi querentes.”—*Const. mon. c.* 5.

3768 “Aliquando Filius, famem patiens, panem petiit, nec unde darg Mater habuit.”—*Vit. Chr.* p. 1, c. 13.

3769 “Domus paupercula, supellex exigua: tale eligit Fabricator mundi hospitium.”—*Lib. de Nativ.*

3770 “Nonne hic est faber.—fabri filius?”—*Mark,* 6:3; *Matt.* 13:55.

3771 “Vulpes foveas habent, et volucres cœli nidos: Filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput reclinet.”—*Matt.* 8:20.

3772 “Speras te in mei sequela posse rem tuam augere; sed erras: quia ego, velut persectionis Magister, pauper sum, talesque volo esse meos discipulos.”

3773 “Servus Christi nihil præter Christum habet.”—*Ep. ad Heliod.*

3774 “Quasi insanus factus, ad miserias nostras descendit.”

3775 “Quis crederet divitern ad paupertatem descendere, dominum ad servitutem, regem ad ignominiam deliciosum ad austerilatem?”

3776 “Abscondit purpuram sub miseriæ vestimentis.”—*Serm. in Nat. Sulv.*

3777 “Qui alios ditat, paupertate afficitur: carnis mer paupertatem subit, ut ego divinitatis opes consequar.”—*In Pasch. or.* 2.

3778 “Hospes es, vides, et transis.”

3779 “Ut mundum contemnere docert.”

3780 “Nunc judicium est mundi.”—*John,* 12:31.

3781 “Initiavit Christus viam novam: dilexit, quam mundus odio habuit, paupertatem.”

3782 “Ditior Christi paupertas cunctis thesauris.”—*In Vig. Nat.* s. 4.

3783 “Omnia determentum feci et arbitror ut stercora, ut Christum lucrifaciam.”—*Phil.* 3:8.

3784 “Affersne cor vacuum?”

3785 “Ubi enim est thesaurus tuus, ibi est et cor tuum.”—*Matt.* 6:21.

3786 “Cor mundum crea in me, Deus.”—*Ps.* 50:12.

3787 “Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus, in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:26.

3788 “Nolite thesaurizare vobis thesauros in terrra, ubi ærugo et tinea demolitur . . . ; thesaurizate autem vobis theasuros in cœlo.”—*Matt.* 6:19.

3789 “Mecum sunt divitiæ . . . ut ditem diligents me.”—*Prov.* 8:18.

3790 “Ecce merces ejus cum eo.”—*Isa.* 62:11.

3791 “Ego . . . merces tua magna nimis.”—*Gen.* 15:1.

3792 “Inveni quem diligit anima; tenui eum, nec dimittam.”—*Cant.* 3:4.

3793 “Christus tenetur vinculis charitatis.”—*De Virginib.*1. 3.

3794 “Sibi habeant divities suas divites, sibi regna sua reges; nobies gloria et possessio et regnum Christus est.”—*Ep. ad Aprum.*

3795 “Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis.”

3796 “Non pavet indigentia laborare, cui donatum est in Domino omnia possidere.”—*In Quadr.* s. 4.

3797 “Mecum sunt divitiae . . . , ut ditem diligentes me.”—*Prov.* 8:18.

3798 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”—*Matt.* 22:37.

3799 “Habemus quod amemus et admiremur, habemus etiam quod imitermur.”—*De Circ.* s. 3.

3800 “Quod admiremur.”

3801 “Vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum.”—*Isa.* 6:1.

3802 “Quanto pro me vilior, tanto, mihi carior.”—*In Epiph. D.* s. 1.

3803 “Quod imitemur.”

3804 “Clamat exemplo quod postmodum prædicaturus verbo; Discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde.”—*In Nat. D.* s. 1.

3805 “Venti et mare obediunt ei.”—*Matt.* 8:27.

3806 “Soli Deo honor et gloria.”—1 *Tim.* 1:17.

3807 “Habitu inventus ut homo.”—*Phil.* 2:7.

3808 “Qui vestitur, sub veste absconditur; sic nature divina sub carnis veste delituit.”

3809 “Contraxit se Majestas, ut seipsam limo nostro conjungeret, et in persona una unirentur Deus st limus, majestas et infirmitas, tanta vilitas et sublimitas tanta.”—*In Vig. Nat.* s. 3.

3810 “Deus Filium suum mittens in similitudinem carnis peccati.”—*Rom.* 8:3.

3811 “Novissimum virorum.”—*Isa.* 53:3.

3812 “Saturabitur opprobriis.”—*Lam.* 3:30.

3813 “Opprobrium hominum et abjectio plebis.”—*Ps.* 21:7.

3814 “Ego autem sum vermis, et non homo.”—*Ibid.*

3815 “Sic voluit nasci excelsus humilis, at in ipsa humilitate ostenderet majestatem.”—*De symb. ad cat.*1. 2, c. 5.

3816 “Et hoc vobis signum: invenietis infantem pannis involutum, et positum in præsepio.”—*Luke,* 2:12.

3817 “Joseph et Maria non habent famulum, non ancillam; ipsi domin et famuil.”—*Hom. de Nat. Dom.*

3818 “Et eart subbitus illis.”—*Luke.* 2:51.

3819 “Positus est hic . . . in signum cui contradicetur.”—*Luke,* 2:34.

3820 “Blasphemavit . . . Reus est mortis.”—*Matt.* 26:65.

3821 “Insanit; quid eum auditis?”—*John,* 10:20.

3822 “Ecce homo devorator et bibens vinum, amicus publcanorum et peccatorum.”—*Luke,* 7:34.

3823 “In principe dæmoniorum ejicit dæmones.” *Matt.* 9:34.

3824 “Nonne bene dicimus nos, quia Samaritanus es lu et daemonium habes?”—*John,* 8:48.

3825 “Seductor ille.”—*Matt.* 27:63.

3826 “Si non esset hic malefactor, non tibi tradidissemus eum.”—*John,* 18:30.

3827 “Sprevit illum . . . quman ignorantem, quia verbum non respondit; tamquam stolidum, quia se non defensavit.”—*In Luc.* 23.

3828 “Ave, Rex Judærum.”

3829 “Et expuentes in eum.”—*Matt.* 27:30.

3830 “Dabant ei alapas.”—*John.* 19:3.

3831 “Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

3832 “Maledictus omnis qui pendet in ligno.”—*Gal.* 3:13.

3833 “Factus pro nobis maledictum.”—*Ibid.*

3834 “Dicitur maledictum, quod pro nobis maledictum suscepit,”

3835 “Ubi est, Deus, gloria tua, majestas tua?”

3836 “Noli quærere; extasim passus est Deus.”—*Serm. de Transfig.*

3837 “O gratiam, O amories vim! itane summus omnium imus factus est omnium!”

3838 “Fecit amor, dignitatis nescius.”

3839 “Triumphat de Deo amor.”

3840 “Semetipsum exinanivit ut scias amoris fuisase, quod altitido asaequata est.” *In cant.* s. 64.

3841 “Non aliter Die amor erga nos declarari poterat, quam quod nostra cause ad deteriorem partem se dejecerit.”

3842 “Oportuit ut, ad expiationis remedium, fieret humiliatio de summo ad imum.”—*De Verbo inc.* c. 8.

3843 “Quanto minorem se fecit in humanitate, tanto majorem exhibuit in bonitate.”—*In Epiph. D.* s. 1.

3844 “Hoc enim sentite in vobis, quod et in Christo Jesu.”—*Phil.* 2:5.

3845 “Propter hoc vitium superbiæ Deus humilies venit. Iste morbus Medicum decœlo deuxit, usque ad formam servi humiliavit, contumeliis egit, ligno suspendit. Erubescat homo esse superbus, propter quem factus est humilis Deus.”—*In Ps.* 18. en. 2.

3846 “Ut nos erigeret, se inclinavit.”—*Hom. in Nat. D.*

3847 “De stercore erigens pauperem, ut collocet cum principibus, cum proncipibus populi sui.”—*Ps.* 112:7

3848 “Humilitas enjus nostra nobilitas est.”—*De Trin.1.* 2.

3849 “Mira commutatio: venit accipere contumelias, dare honores, venit haurire dolorem, dare salutem, venit subire mortem, dare vitam.”—*In Ps.* 30. *en.* 2.

3850 “In cubilibus in quibus prius dracones habitabant, orietur viror calami.”—*Isa.* 35:7.

3851 “Calami, id est, humilitatis, quia humilis est vacuus in oculis suis.”

3852 “Ubi sese exinanivit Majestas, vermiculus intumescit?”—*In Nat. D. s.* 1.

3853 “Erigis te, Deus fugit a te; humilias te, Deus descendit ad te.”—*Serm.* 117, *E. B. app.*

3854 “Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.”—Ps.1. 19.

3855 “Petire, et dabitur vobis . . . ; omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—*Matt.* 7:7.

3856 “Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam.”—*James,* 4:6.

3857 “Oratio humiliantis se nubes penetrabit . . . ; et non discedet, donec Altissimus aspiciat.”—*Ecclus.* 35:21.

3858 “Evangelizo vobis grudium magnum.”

3859 “Natus est vobis hodie Salvator.”

3860 “Exiit edictum a Cæsare Augusto at describeretur universus orbis.”—*Luke,* 2:1.

3861 “Ut profitertur cum Maria desponsata sibi uxore prægnante.”—*Luke,* 2:5.

3862 “Et tu, Bethlem Ephrata, parvulus es in millibus Juda; ex te mihi egredietur, qui sit Dominator in Israel.”—*Mich.* 5:2.

3863 “In propria venit, et sui eum non receperunt.”—*John,* 1:2.

3864 “Factum est autem, cum essent ibi, impleti sunt dies ut pareret,”—*Luke,* 2:6.

3865 “Non erat eis locus in diversorio.”—*Luke.* 2:7.

3866 “Ubi aula? ubi thronus?”

3867 “Extendebat membra, quærens Matris savorem.”

3868 “Intravit senex, et, prosternens se, plorabat præ gaudio.”

3869 “Maxilla et pectore calefaciabat cum cum lætitia et tenera compassione materna.”—*Rev.1.* 7, c. 21.

3870 “In mundo erat . . . , et mundus cum non cogniovit.”—*John,* 1:10.

3871 “Et adorent eum omnes Angeli Dei.”—*Heb.* 1:6.

3872 “Gloria in altissimis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.”—*Luke,* 2:14.

3873 “Agnoscimus in stabulo exinanitam Majestatem, Sapientiam amoris nimietate infatuatam.”—*Serm. in Nat. D.*

3874 “Ego Flos campi et Lilium convallium.”—*Cant.* 2:1.

3875 “Ego Flos campi quia palam me exhibeo omnibus ad inveniendum.”

3876 “Non est satelles qui dicat: Non est hora.”—*In Ps.* iv.

3877 “Clamat stabulum, clamat præsepe.”—*In Nat.* D. s. 5.

3878 “Nomen Jesus primo fuit a Patre Prænominatum.”—*T.* ii. s. 49.

3879 “Nomen novum, quod os Domini nominabit.”—*Isa.* 62:2.

3880 “Et postquam consummati sunt dies octo, ut circumcideretur puer, vocatum est nomen ejus Jesus.”

3881 “Donavit illi nomen quod est super omne nomen.”—*Phil.* 2:9.

3882 “Ut in nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur, cœlestium, terrestrium, et infernorum.”—*Phil.* 2:10.

3883 “Propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem, descendit decœlis . . . , et homo factus est.”—*Symb. Nic.*

3884 “Nec omnino aut vocari posset aut esse Salvator, si forte quippiam horum defuisset.”—*in circ.* s. 2.

3885 “Circumciditur tamquam Filius Abrahæ; Jesus vocatur tamquam Filius Dei.”—*In Circ.* s. 1.

3886 “Oleum effusum nomen tuum.”—*Cant.* 1:2.

3887 “Lucet prædicatum.”

3888 “Unde putas in toto orbe tanta et subita fidei lux, nisi de prædicato nomine Jesu?”

3889 “Ibant gaudentes a conspectu Councilii, quoniam digni habiti sunt pro nomine Jesu contumeliam pati.”—*Acts,* 5:41.

3890 “Invocatum lenit et ungit.”

3891 “Ad exortum nominis lumen, nubilum diffugit, redit serenum.”

3892 “Labitur quis in crimen; currit ad laqueum mortis desperando; nonne, si invocet nemen vitæ, confestim respirabit ad vitam?”—*In Cant.* s. 15.

3893 “Si illud nomen invocasset, non periisset.”

3894 “Longe est desperation, ubi cst hujus nominis invocatio.”

3895 “Qui offensus fuerat, ipse intercessorem destinavit; quod illi debebatur, exsolvit.”—*Serm. in Nat. D.*

3896 “Si configeris ægritudine, si doloribus fatigaris, si concuteris formidine, Jesu nomen edicito.”—*Serm. in Circ. D.*

3897 “Si quid Petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

3898 “Quodcumque petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, hoc faciam.”—*John,* 14:13.

3899 “Fortis.”—*Isa.* 9:6.

3900 “Turris fortissima, nomen Domini.”—*Prov.* 18:10.

3901 “Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis; propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

3902 “Ipse se tantum humiliavit, ut ultra non posset; propter quod Deus tantum exaltavit, ut ulter non posset.”

3903 “Et donavit illi nomen quod est super omne nomen, ut in nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur cœlestium, terrestrium, et infernorum.”

3904 “In hoc nomine, Deitatis tota adoratur majestas.”—*Serm.* 144.

3905 “In nomine meo dæmonia ejicient.”—*Mark.* 16:17.

3906 “Nec enim aliud nomen est sub cœlo datum hominibus, in quo oporateat nos salvos fieri.”—*Acts.* 4:12.

3907 “Quodcumque petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, hoc faciam.”—*John,* 14:13.

3908 “Si tentaris a diabolo, si ab hominibus opprimeris, Jesu nomen edicito.”—*Serm. in Circ. D.*

3909 “Hæc sancta oratio, Jesus et Maria, brevis ad legendum, facilis ad tenedum, fortis ad protegendum.”—*Vall. hil.* c. 13.

3910 “Omnia quæcumque Deus pro salute hominum ordinavit, in Jesus nomine comprechenduntur.”—*T.* 2. s. 49.

3911 “O Jesu! quanti tibi constitit esse Jesum, salvatorem meum!”

3912 “Et imposuerunt super caput ejus causam ipsius scriptam; ‘Hicest Jesus, Rex Judœorum.’ ”

3913 “Innocens ego sum a sanguine justi hujus.”—*Matt.* 27:24.

3914 “Oleum effusum nomen tuum.”

3915 “Nempe effusio divinitatis.”

3916 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

3917 “Languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit.”—*Isa.* 53:4.

3918 “Hoc adversus genus nostrum chilographum titulo in cruce confixo delevit.”—*In J0.1.* 12. c. 29.

3919 “Delens quod adversus nos erat chirographum decreti.”—*Col.* 2:14.

3920 “Christus nos redemit de maledicto legis, factus pro nobis maledictum.”—*Ga.* 3:13.

3921 “Cum nomino Jesum, hominem mihi propono mitem, humilem, benignum, misericordem, omni sanctitate conspicuum eumdemques Deum omnipotentem, qui me sanet et roboret.”—*In Cant.* s. 15.

3922 “Sit tibi Jesus semper in corde; hic sit cibus, dulcedo et consolation tua!”

3923 “Expretus potest credere quid sit Jesum diligere.”—*Jub. de. nom. jesu.*

3924 “Nemo potest deicere: Dominus Jesus—nisi in Spiritu Sancto.”—1 *Cor.* 12:3.

3925 “Omne quodcumque facitis in verbo aut in opere, omnia in nomine Domini Jesu Christ.”—*Col.* 3:17.

3926 “Ego enim, non solum alligari, sed et mori . . . paratus sum, propter nomen Domini Jesu.”—*Acts*, 21:13.

3927 “Jesus et Maria! Pro vobis patiar, pro vobis moriar; sim totus vester, sim nihil meus.”

3928 This happy young man is no other than St. Edmund, Arch-bishop of Canterbury, as we may see in his life by Surius, November 16

We may here add a more recent example, which we read in the Life of the Venerable Brother Gerard Majella, of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, by Father Tannoia. Animated with fervent piety already in his infancy, he loved to visit a church in which was honored the mother of God holding the Infant Jesus in her arms. While Gerard was one day entering the church the divine Infant came to meet him and offered him a piece of white bread—a symbol of the gift that he was soon to give him in the most adorable sacrament of the Eucharist. Gerard, attracted by the sweet charms of the Infant Saviour, went often to the same church, and Jesus very frequency be-stowed upon him the same favor.

Later on he entered the service of a master who was extremely harsh and who omitted no opportunity to try Gerard’s heroic patience. A key was one day accidentally dropped into a well. Fore-seeing the trouble and the irritation that this accident would cause his master, and the sins that would be the result, Gerard, full of confidence, took a small statue of the Infant Jesus, lowered it into the well by means of a cord, and said, “You must see to it that my master does not become impatient.” When he had drawn up the statue in the presence of a large number of people, it was holding the key in its hands.—ED

3929 “Deus Filium suum mittens in similitudinem carnis peccati.”—*Rom.* 8:3.

3930 “Convertimini ad me . . . , et convertar ad vos.”—*Zach.* 1:3.

3931 “Si quis . . . aperuerit mihi januam, introibo ad illum.”—*Apoc.* 3:20.

3932 “Consideravi opera tua et expavi.”—*In Circ. Dom. resp.* 6.

3933 “Fecit potentiam in brachio suo.”

3934 “Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis!”—*Phil.* 2:8.

3935 “O gratiam, O amoris vim!”

3936 “Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—Rom. 8:32.

3937 “Qui factus est nobis sapientia a Deo, et justitia, et sanctificatio et redemptio.”—1 *Cor.* 1:30.

3938 “In omnibus divites facti estis in illo . . . ita ut nihil vobis desit in ulla gratia.”—1 *Cor.* 1:5.

3939 “Dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me.”—*Gal.* 2:20.

3940 “Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum.”—*Rom.* 8:28.

3941 “Ubi venit plenitudo tempories, mist Deus Filium suum . . . ut eos, qui sub lege ersnt, redimeret.”

3942 “Vocabis nomen ejus Jesum.”—*Luke,* 1:31.

3943 “Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.”

3944 “Et verbum caro factum est.”

3945 “Dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.”—*Ps.* 109:2.

3946 “A summo cœlo egressio ejus.”—*Ps.* 18:7.

3947 “Non horruisti virginis uterum.”

3948 “Forman servi accipiens.”—*Phil.* 2:7.

3949 “Et erat subditus illis.”—*Luke* 2:51.

3950 “Rupisti vincula mea, et dixisti: Non serviam.”—*Jer.* 2:20.

3951 “Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.”—*Ps.* 50:19.

3952 “Jesu dulcissime! ne permittas me seperari a te; ne permittas me seperari a te.”

3953 “Notus in Judæa Deus.”—*Ps.* 75:2.

3954 “Posuisti tenebras et facta est nox; in ipsa pertransibunt omnes besliæ silvæ.”—*Ps.* 103:20.

3955 “Habitantibus in regione umbræ mortis, lux orta est eis.”—*Isa.* 9:2.

3956 “In hoc apparuit Filius Dei, ut dissolvat opera diaboli.”—1 *John,* 3:8.

3957 “Creavit Dominus novum super terram.”

3958 “Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi bene complacui.”—*Matt.* 17:5.

3959 “Gloria in altissimis Deo.”—*Luke,* 2:14.

3960 “Ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris.”—1 *John,* 2:2.

3961 “Pater! peccavi in cœlum et coram te; jam non sum dignus vocari filius tuus.”—*Luke,* 15:21.

3962 “Pater! dimitte illis.”—*Luke,* 23:34.

3963 “Interpellat pro nobis.”—*Rom.* 8:34.

3964 “In similitudinem carnis peccati.”

3965 “Non solum formam servi accepit, ut subesset, sed etiam mali servi, ut vapularet.”—*Serm. de Pass.*

3966 “Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

3967 “Et posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.”—*Isa.* 53:6.

3968 “Et de peccato damnavit peccatum in carne.”

3969 “Ecce homo.”

3970 “Nimiam charitatem.”

3971 “Æterna redemptione inventa.”—*Heb.* 9:12.

3972 “Cum Christus apparuerit, vita vestra.”—*Col.* 3:4.

3973 “Ego veni ut vitam habeant, et abundantius habeant.”—*John*, 10:10.

3974 “Mortuus est Christus, ut, et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est.”—2 *Cor.* 5:15.

3975 “In hoc enim Christus mortuus est et resurrexit, ut et mortuorum et vivorum dominetur.”—*Rom.* 14:9.

3976 “Quasi sine ipso beatus esse non posset.”—*Opusc.* 63, c. 7.

3977 “Dilexit nos et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”

3978 “Non enim veni vocare justos, sed peccatores.”—*Matt.* 9:13.

3979 “Non egent qui sani sunt medico, sed qui male habent.”—*Luke*, 5:31.

3980 “Venit enim Filius hominis salvare quod perierat.”—*Matt.* 18:11.

3981 “Factus est Dominus refugium pauperi.”—*Ps.* 9:10.

3982 “Desiderium pauperum exaudivit Dominus.”—*Ps.* 9:38.

3983 “Veni in altitudinem maris, et tempesttas demersit me.”—*Ps.* 68:3.

3984 “Factus obediens usque ad mortem.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

3985 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum.”

3986 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”*Prov.* 8:17.

3987 “Iniquitates eorum ipse protabit.”

3988 “Ac si ipse ea patrasset.”

3989 “Ad quamlibet culpam singularem habuit aspectum.”—*T.* ii. s. 56, a. 1, c. 1.

3990 “Fecerunt eum dolore extrinsecus crucifigendo, send nos peccando intrinsecus.”

3991 “Dolor meus in conspectu meo semper.”

3992 “Ad quamlibt culpam singularem habuit aspectum.”

3993 “Pauper sum ego et in laboribus a juventute mea.”—*Ps.* 87:16.

3994 “Tu autem eruisti animam mean, ut non periret; projecisti post tergum tuum omnia peccata mea.”—*Isa.* 38:17.

3995 “Si quis . . . aperuerit mihi januam, intrabo ad illum, et cœnabo cum illo.”—*Apoc.* 3:20.

3996 “Baptismo habeo baptizari; et quomodo coarctor usque dum perficiatur!”

3997 “Dilexit nos, et lavit nos a peccatis in sanguine suo.”—*Apoc.* 1:5.

3998 “Mirum est quomodo pro tuo amore corda hominum non scinduntur.”—*Stim. div. am.* p. 2, c. 2.

3999 “Moriar amore amoris tui, qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori!”

4000 On December 16 we begin the Novena, page 214.

4001 “Quæ utilitas in sanguine meo, dum descendo in corruptionem?”

4002 “Transeat a me calix iste!”—*Matt.* 26:39.

4003 “Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid derliquisti me?”—*Matt.* 27:46.

4004 “Filium Dei conculcaverit . . . , et spiritui gratiæ contumeliam fecerit!”—*Heb.* 10:29.

4005 “Et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.”—*Luke,* 2:14.

4006 “Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

4007 “O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacrametum, ut animalia viderent Dominum natum, jacentem in præsepio!”—*Off. Nat. resp.* 4.

4008 “Reversi sunt pastores glorificantes et laudantes Deum in omnibus quæ audierant et viderant.”—*Luke,* 2:20.

4009 “Semetipsum exinanivit!”—*Phil.* 2:7.

4010 “Dilexit nos, et lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo.”—*Apoc.* 1:5.

4011 “Invoca me in die tribulationis; eruam te.”—*Ps.* 49:15.

4012 “Si quis sitit, veniat ad me, et bibat.”—*John,* 7:37.

4013 “Qui autem biberit ex aqua quam ego dabo ei, non sitiet in æternum.”—*John.* 4:13.

4014 “Fiet in eo fons aquæ salientis in vitam æternam.”

4015 “Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum.”—*Phil.* 4:7.

4016 “Beati, qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam!”—*Matt.* 5:6.

4017 “Erit tamquam lignum quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum.”—*Ps.* 1:3.

4018 “In meditatione mea exardescet ignis.”—*Ps.* 38:4.

4019 “Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris.”

4020 “Descendit usque ad lectum ægrotantis.”—*Serm.* 87, *E. B.*

4021 “Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit”—*Isa.* 53:4.

4022 “Calicem quem dedit mihi Pater, non bibam illum?”—*John,* 18:2.

4023 “Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”

4024 “Dedi te in lucem gentium, ut sis salus mea usque ad extremum terræ.”

4025 “Totus illi datus, totus in suos usus impenderis.”—*S. Bern.*

4026 “Ut tua inopia dites.”

4027 “Parvulus natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis.”—*Isa.* 9:6.

4028 “Sic Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret!”—*John,* 3:16.

4029 “Exsultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam.”—*Ps.* 58:6.

4030 “Ecce iste venit saliens in montibus, transiliens colles.”—*Cant.* 2:8.

4031 “Parvulus natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis.”—*Isa.* 9:6.

4032 “Jesus meus, et omnia.”

4033 “Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* 8:32.

4034 “Deum a me tollere nemo potest.”

4035 “Quis nos separabit a charitate Christi?”—*Rom.* 8:35.

4036 “Mane erigit mihi aurem. . . .”—*Isa.* 50:4.

4037 “Ego autem non contradico . . . ; corpus meum dedi percutientibus.”—*Ibid.* 6.

4038 “Tota die verecundia mea contra me est.”—*Ps.* 43:16

4039 “Factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

4040 “Parvulus natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis.”

4041 “Puer facile donat.”—*In Epiph.* s. 1.

4042 “In quo sunt omnes thesauri.”—*Col.* 2:3.

4043 “Omnia dedit in manu ejus.”—John, 3:35.

4044 “Taliter venire debuit, qui voluit timorem pellere, quærere charitatem.”—*Serm.* 158.

4045 “Omnium iniquitatum ejus . . . non recordabor.”—*Ezech.* 18:22.

4046 “Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.”—*Matt.* 26:38.

4047 “Defecit in dolore vita mea, et anni mei in gemitibus.”—*Ps.* 30:2

4048 “Oblatus est quia ipse voluit.”

4049 “Ideo ingrediens mundum dicit: Hostiam et oblationem noluisti; corpus autem aptasti mihi. . . . Tunc dixi: Ecce venio.”—*Heb.* 10:5.

4050 “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* 4:13.

4051 “Respice in faciem Chrish tui.”—*Ps.* 83:10.

4052 “Sicut homo sine adjutorio, inter mortuos lider.”

4053 “O grandis patientia Salvatoris!”

4054 “Gratiam fidejussoris ne obliviscaris; dedit enim pro te animam suam.”—*Ecclus.* 29:19.

4055 “Gratiam fidejussoris ne obliviscaris.”

4056 “Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?” *Luke*, 12:49.

4057 “Et ideo infinite dolebat.”

4058 “Tristitiam acriorem sæpe in anima fecit ingratitudo, quam dolor inflictus in corpore.”

4059 “Et posuerunt adversum me mala pro bonis, et odium prodilectione mea!”—*Ps.* 108:5.

4060 “Extraneus factus sum fratribus meis.”—*Ps.* 68:9.

4061 “Qui dicebant Deo: Recede a nobis; . . . cum ille implesset domos eorum bonis!”—*Job.* 22:17.

4062 “Recede a me, Domine.”

4063 “Convertimini ad me, . . . et convertar ad vos.”—*Zach.* 1:3.

4064 “Ipse est propititatio pro peccatis nostris.”—1 *John*, 2:2.

4065 “Pater, . . . jam non sum dignus vocari filius tuus.”—*Luke,* 15:21.

4066 “In hoc cognovimus charitatem Dei, quoniam ille animam suam pro nobis posuit.”—1 *John,* 3:16.

4067 “Omnibus hominibus.”

4068 “Lux venit in mundum, et dilexerunt homines magis tenebras quam lucem.”—*John,* 3:19.

4069 “Expectantes beatam spem et adventum gloriæ magni Dei et Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi,”

4070 “Videbunt Filium hominis venientem in nubibus cœli, cum virtute magna et majestate.”—*Matt.* 24:30.

4071 “In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine. Deus veritatis.”—*Ps.* 30:6.

4072 “Redemisti me, Domine.”

4073 “Ascendit autem et Joseph . . . , ut profiteretur cum Maria.”

4074 “Ecce enim evangelizo vobis gaudium magnum, quod erit omni populo, quia, est vobis hodie salvator.”—*Luke,* 2:10.

4075 “Per viscera misericordiæ Dei nostri, in quibus visitavit nos Oriens ex alto.”—*Luke,* 1:78.

4076 “Propter nostram salutem, descendit de cœlis.”—*Symb. Nic.*

4077 “Ego sum Pastor bonus. Bonus Pastor animam suam dat pro ovibus suis.”—*John,* 10:2.

4078 “In præsepio, ubi pastus est animalium, sua collocari membra permittit; in æternam refectionem vescendum a mortalibus suum corpus ostendit.”—*In Nat. D.* s. 5.

4079 “Parvulus natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis.”—*Isa.* 9:6.

4080 “Erravi sicut ovis quæ periit; quære servum tuum.”—*Ps.* 118:176.

4081 “Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccatum.”—*John,* 1:29.

4082 “Ecce Deus Salvator meus; fiducialiter agam, et non timebo.”—*Isa.* 12:2.

4083 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo,”—*Matt.* 22:37.

4084 “Invenietis infantem pannis involutum, et positum in præsepio.”—*Luke,* 2:12.

4085 “Propter nos factus est parvulus.”—*In Ps.* 58. s. 1.

4086 “Parvulus natus est nobis.”

4087 “Sic nasci voulit, qui voluit amari.”

4088 “Magnus Dominus et laudabilis nimis.”—*Ps.* 144:3.

4089 “Parvus Dominus et amabilis nimis.”—*In Cant.* s. 48.

4090 “Amemus puerum de Bethlehem! Amemus puerum de Bethlehem!”

4091 “Sanctus, innocens, impollutus,”—*Heb.* 7:26.

4092 “Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus, electus ex millibus.”—*Cant.* 5:10.

4093 “In hoc solo non invenit culpam.” *In Ezech. hom.* 8.

4094 “Ne permittas me separari a te! ne permittas me separari a te!”

4095 “Ne permittas me separari a te.”

4096 “Pannis eum involvit.”—*Luke,* 2:7.

4097 “Membra pannis involuta virgo mater alligat.”—*Off. de Pass.*

4098 “Vincula illius, alligatura salutaris.”—*Ecclus.* 6:31.

4099 “O Charitas! quam magnum est vinculum tuum, quo Deus ligari potuit!”—*Lign. V. de Char.* c. 6.

4100 “Quis mihi det te fratrem meum sugentem ubera materis meæ?”—*Cant.* 8:1.

4101 “Lac vestrum Christus est!”—*In* 1 *Jo. tr.* 3.

4102 “Beatus venter qui te portavit, et ubera quæ suxisti.” *Luke,* 9:27.

4103 “Et reclinavit eum in præsepio.”—*Luke,* 2:7

4104 “Corpus autem aptasti mihi.”—*Heb.* 10:5.

4105 “Et reclinavit eum in præsepio.”

4106 “Neque illum tali loco posuisset, nisi magnum aliquod mysterium ageretur.”—*In Natal. D. conc.* 1.

4107 “Legem martyrii præfigebat.”

4108 “Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat.”—*Cant.* 5:2.

4109 “Ne suscitetis neque evigilare faciatis dilectam, quoadusque ipsa velit.”—*Cant.* 2:7.

4110 “Summa rerum omnium oblivio.”—*Reg. fus. disp int.* 6.

4111 “Illi ex passione lugent, Christus ex compassione.” *In Nat. D.* s. 3.

4112 “Ecce quomodo amat eum!”—*John,* 11:36.

4113 “Ecce quomodo amat eos!”

4114 “Mea lacymæ illæ delicte lavarunt.”—*In Luc.* 2.

4115 “Et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.”—*Luke,* 2:14.

4116 To-day is the feast of the circumcision of our Lord. Further on, on page 316, there is a meditation on this mystery.

4117 “Et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum.”—*Luke,* 1:31.

4118 “Nomen quod est super omne nomen.”—*Phil.* 2:9.

4119 “In quo oporteat nos salvos fieri.”—*Acts,* 4:12.

4120 “Oleum effusum, nomen tuum.”—*Cant.* 1:2.

4121 “Qui non crediderit, condemnabitur.”—*Mark,* 16:16.

4122 “In nomine Jesu, omne genu flectatur cœlestium, terrestrium, et infernorum.”—*Phil.* 2:10.

4123 “Laudans invocabo Dominum, et ab inimicis meis salvus ero.”—*Ps.* 17:4.

4124 “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* 4:13.

4125 “Reversi sunt pastores glorificantes et laudantes Deum.”—*Luke.* 2:20.

4126 “Ducam eam in solitudinem, et loquar as cor ejus.”—*Os.* 2:14.

4127 “O solitude, in qua Deus cum suis familiariter loquitur et conversatur!”

4128 “Quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbæ, et volabo, et requiescam?”—*Ps.* 54:7.

4129 “Advocatum habemus apud Patrem, Jesum Christum.”—1 *John*, 2:1.

4130 “Qui etiam interpellat pro nobis.”—*Rom.* 8:34.

4131 “Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi carior!”—*In Epiph.* s. 1.

4132 “Egenus factus est . . . , ut illius inopia vos divites essetis.”—2 *Cor.* 8:9.

4133 “Deus meus, et omnia!”

4134 “Quid enim mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? . . . Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus, in æternum!”—*Ps.* 72:25.

4135 “Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus, in æternum!”

4136 This meditation is the same as Meditation V., for the first Thurs day of Advent, p. 182.

4137 “A summo cœlo egressio ejus.”—*Ps.* 18:7.

4138 “Non horruisti viginis uterum.”

4139 “Forman servi accipens.”—*Phil.* 2:7.

4140 “Et erat subditus illis”—*Luke.* 2:51.

4141 “Rupisti vincula mea, et dixisti: Non serviam.”—*Jer.* 2:20.

4142 “Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.”—*Ps.* 50:19.

4143 “Jesu dulcissime! ne permittas me separari a te; ne permittas me separari a te.”

4144 “Invenerunt puerum cum Maria.”—*Matt.* 2:2.

4145 “Tradidit semetipsum pro nobis oblationem et hostiam Deo.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

4146 “Surge, et accipe Pureum et Matrem ejus et fuge in Ægyptum.”—*Matt.* 2:13.

4147 “Quærunt Puerum ad perdendum eum.”

4148 “Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus, in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:26.

4149 “Deus meus, et omnia.”

4150 “Et erat subditus illis.”—*Luke*, 2:51.

4151 “Et Jesus proficiebat sapientia, et ætate, et gratia, apud Deum et homines.”—*Luke*, 2:52.

4152 “In quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ, et scientiæ absconditi.”—*Col.* 2:3

4153 “De plenitudine ejus nos omnes accepimus.”—*John*, 1:16.

4154 “Existimantes illum esse in comitatu.”—*Luke*, 2:44.

4155 “Fili, quid fecisti nobis sic? ecce pater tuus et ego dolentes quærebamus te.”

4156 “Fili, quid fecisti nobis sic? ecce pater tuus et ego dolentes quærebamus te.”

4157 “Nesciebatis quia, in his quæ Patris mei sunt, oportet me esse?”

4158 “Bonus est Dominus. . . . animæ quærenti illum.”—*Lam.* 3:25.

4159 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—*Prov.* 8:17.

4160 “Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.”—1 *John*, 4:16.

4161 “Lætetur cor quærentium Dominum.”—*Ps.* 104:3.

4162 “In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.”—*Ps.* 30:6.

4163 “In te, Domina, speravi; non coufundar in æternum.”

4164 These eight meditations, with the twelve others that follow them, did not form a part of the *Novena of Christmas.* They appeared some years later, in 1767.—ED.

4165 “Deus Filium suum mittens in similitudinem carnis peccati.”—*Rom.* 8:3.

4166 “Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”

4167 “Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John*, 16:23.

4168 “In omnibus divites facti estis in illo . . . , ita ut nihil vobis desit in ulla gratia.”—1 *Cor.* 1:5.

4169 “Plenitudo temporis.”

4170 “Misit Filium suum, ut eos, qui sub lege erant, redimeret.”—*Gal.* 4:4.

4171 “Noli me separari a te; noli me separari a te.”

4172 “Quasi sine ipso beatus esse non posset.”—*Opusc.* 63, c. 7.

4173 “Dolor meus in conspectu meo semper.”

4174 “Ad quamlibet culpam singularem habet aspectum.”—*T.* 2. s. 56, a. 1, c. 1.

4175 P. 3, q. 46, a. 6.

4176 “Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare vobisenm.”—*Luke,* 22:15.

4177 “Dilexit nos, et lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo.”—*Apoc.* 1:5.

4178 “Si quis sitit, veniat ad me.”—*John,* 7:37.

4179 “Qui autem biberit ex aqua quam ego dabo ei, non sitiet in æternum.”—*John,* 4:13.

4180 “Verbum caro factum est”—*John,* 1:14—“et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

4181 “Parvulus natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis.”—*Isa.* 9:6.

4182 “Quis hoc fecit? Amor fecit.”

4183 “Deus meus, et omnia.”

4184 “Et hoc vobis signum: invenietis infantem pannis involutum, et positum in præsepio.”—*Luke.* 2:12.

4185 “Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi carior.”

4186 “Virum dolorum.”—*Isa.* 53:3.

4187 “Benignitas et humanitas apparuit Salvatoris nostri Dei.”—*Tit.* 3:4.

4188 “Et erat subditus illis.”—*Luke.* 2:51.

4189 “Humiliavit semelipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

4190 “Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.”—*John,* 15:13.

4191 “Gloria in altissimis Deo.”—*Luke,* 2:14.

4192 “Invenerunt Puerum cum Maria.”—*Matt.* 2:2

4193 On page 151 there is a discourse, and on page 255 a meditation, and at the end of the volume, page 451, a novena on the same subject.—ED.

4194 “Et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum.”—*Luke,* 1:31.

4195 “Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

4196 “O Jesu! quanti tibi constitit esse Jesum, Salvatorem meum!”

4197 We think that it will be pleasing to St. Alphonsus, as well as to his pious readers, to add here, as an appendix, the list of indulgences with which the Sovereign Pontiffs have enriched the devotion to the Infant Jesus, and which we copy from the *Raccolta.* All these indul gences are applicable to the souls in purgatory.—ED.

4198 Saint Alphonsus set a high value on this little treatise. He recommends it in several places of his works, and we read in one of his spiritual letters (December 18, 1767) that he himself used it nearly every day. In it is to be found the expression of those sentiments with which the saintly author mostly loved to nourish himself, and by which he sanctified his soul. In this treatise are chiefly repeated, under every form, the most fervent acts of contrition and of love. “They are irresistible darts that pierce the hardest hearts, and in flame divine love in the coldest souls.” These pious reflections may be especially used when we are in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, in our Visits, before and after Holy Communion, during Holy Mass and other divine services, or when we meditate on the Passion of our Lord. This treatise, entitled *Darts of Fire,* was published by the holy author in 1767.—ED.

4199 “Vulnera corda saxea vulnerantia et mentes congelatas inflammantia.”—*stim. div. am.* p. 1, c. 1.

4200 “Quid est homo, quia magnificas eum? aut quid apponis erga eum cor tuum?”—*Job.* 7:17.

4201 “Deus cordis mei.”—*Ps.* 72:26.

4202 “In charitate perpetua dilexi te.”—*Jer.* 31:3.

4203 *In Nat. Domini*, s. 1.

4204 “Pro omnibus mortuus est Chritus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est et resurrexit.”—2 *Cor.* 5:15.

4205 “Quid sum ego?”

4206 “Quare, Domine, cur me tam amasti?”—*Stim. div. am.* p. 1, c. 13.

4207 “In hoc apparuit charitas Dei.”—1 *John,* 4:9.

4208 “O mira circa nos tuæ pietatis dignatio! O inætimabilis dilectio charitatis; ut servum redimeres, Filium tradidisti!”

4209 “Ut vivamus per eum.”—1 *John*, 4:9.

4210 “Maxime propterea Christus advenit, ut cognosceret homo quantum eum diligat Deus.”—*De catech. rud.* c. 4.

4211 “Ne nos inducas in tentationem, sed libera nos a malo.”

4212 “Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.”—*Cant.* 2:16.

4213 “Semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens, in similitudinem hominum factus.”—*Phil.* 2:7.

4214 “Sic nasci voluit, qui voluit amari.”—*Serm.* 158.

4215 “Utinam dirumperes cœlos et descenderes; a facie tua montes defluerent . . . , aquæ arderent igni.”—*Isa.* 64:1, 2.

4216 “O novissimum et altissimum.”—*S. de Passione.*

4217 “Jesu dulcissime! ne permittas me separari a te, ne permittas me separari a te.”

4218 “Deus meus et omnia.”

4219 “Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

4220 “Ad quamlibet culpam singularem habuit aspectum.”—*T.* 2. s. 56, a. 1.

4221 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et in tota anima tua.”—*Matt.* 22:37.

4222 “Quid tibi et vinculis?”—*Lib. de Pass.* c. 4.

4223 “Quid fecisti, innocentissime Salvator, quod sic condemnareris?”—*Lib. de Pass.* c. 4.

4224 “Peccatum tuum amor tuus.”

4225 “Vulneratus, attritus.”

4226 “Et nos putavimus eum quasi leprosum, et percussum a Deo, et humiliatum.”—*Isa.* 53:4.

4227 “Respice in faciem Christi tui.”—*Ps.* 83:10.

4228 “Amorem tui solum cum gratia tue mihi domes, et dives sum satis.”

4229 “Et plectentes coronam de spinis, posuerunt super caput ejus, et arundinem in dextera ejus. Et genu flexo ante eum, illudebant ei dicentes: Ave, Rex Judæorum.—Et expuentes in eum, acceperunt arundinem, et percutiebant caput ejus.”—*Matt.* 27:29.—“Et dabant ei alapas.”—John, 19:3.

4230 “Non habemus regem, nisi Cæsarem.”—*John,* 19:15.

4231 “In hoc enim Christus mortuus est et resurrexit, ut et mortuorum et vivorum dominetur.”—*Rom.* 14:9.

4232 “Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus, in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:26.

4233 “Cum amat Deus, non aliud vult, quam amari.”—*In Cant.* s. 83.

4234 “Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi.”—*John,* 1:29.

4235 “Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit.”—*Isa.* 53:4.

4236 “Cadite super nos, et abscondite nos a facie sedentis super thronum, et ab ira Agni.”—*Apoc.* 6:16.

4237 “Quis ergo nos separabit a charitate Christi?”—*Rom.* 8:35

4238 “Totus desiderabilis, talis est Dilectus meus.”—*Cant.* 5:16.

4239 “Veni in altitudinem maris, et tempestas demersit me.”—*Ps.* 68:3.

4240 *Love of God,* book 7, ch. 8.

4241 “Tu autem eruisti animam meam, ut non periret; projecisti post tergum tuum omnia peccata mea.”—*Isa.* 38:17.

4242 “Empti enim estis pretio magno.”—1 *Cor.* 6:20.

4243 “Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.”

4244 “Si impius egerit pœnitentiam . . . , omnium iniquitatum ejus . . . non recordabor.”—*Ezek.* 18:21.

4245 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—*Prov.* 8:17.

4246 “Morair, Domine, amore amoris tui, qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori.”

[4247] *Love of God*, book 12. ch. 13.

[4248] “Baptisom habeo baptizari; et quomodo coarctor, usquedum perficiatur!”—*Luke*, 12:50.

[4249] “Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare vobiscum, antequam patiar.”—*Ibid.* 22:15.

4250 “In hoc cognovimus charitatem Dei, quoniam ille animam suam pro nobis posuit.”—1 *John*, 3:16.

4251 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”—*Matt.* 22:37.

4252 “Pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum.”—*Rom.* 8:32.

4253 “Proprio Filio non pepercit.”—*Rom.* 8:32.

4254 “Propter scelus populi mei percussi eum.”—*Isa.* 53:8.

4255 “Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* 8:32.

4256 “Amen, amen dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John.* 16:23.

4257 “Gentibus autem stultitiam.”—1 *Cor.* 1:23.

4258 “Stultum visum est ut pro hominibus Auctor vitæ moreretur.”—*In Evang. hom.* 6.

4259 “Ignem veni mittere in terram: et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?”—*Luke*, 12:49.

4260 “Et voluit conterere eum.”

4261 “Propter nimiam charitatem suam qua dilexit nos, et cum essemus mortui peccatis, convivificavit nos in Christo.”—*Eph.* 2:5.

4262 “Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.”—*Ps.* 50:19.

4263 “Et animam meam pono pro ovibus meis.”—*John*, 10:15.

4264 “Dicebant excessum ejus, quem completurus erat in Jerusalem.”—*Luke*, 9:31.

4265 “Nos ergo diligamus eum, quoniam Deus prior dilexit nos.”—1 *John*, 4:19.

4266 “Congratulamini mihi, quia inveni ovem meam quæ perierat.”—*Luke*, 15:6.

4267 “Erravi sicut ovis quæ periit; quære servum tuum.”—*Ps.* 118:176.

4268 “Quasi homo Dei Deus esset, quasi sine ipso beatus esse non posset.”—*Opusc.* 63, c. 7.

4269 “Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit.”—*Isa.* 53:4.

4270 “Gratiam fidejussoris ne obliviscaris; dedit enim pro te animam suam.”—*Ecclus.* 29:20.

4271 “Quis est qui condemnet? Christus Jesus, qui mortuus est . . . , qui etiam interpellat pro nobis.”—*Rom.* 8:34.

4272 “Quis ergo nos separabit a charitate Christi?”—*Rom.* 8:35.

4273 “Hic est sanguis meus, qui pro multis effundetur.”—*Matt.* 26:28.

4274 “In omnibus divites facti estis in illo . . . ita ut nihil vobis desit in ulla gratia.”—1 *Cor.* 1:5.

4275 “Dives in omnes qui invocant illum.”—*Rom.* 10:12.

4276 “Pater, non sum dignus vocari filius tuus.”—*Luke*, 15:21.

4277 “Gaudium erit in cœlo super uno peccatore pœnitentiam agente.”—*Luke,* 15:7.

4278 “Veni ut vitam habeant, et abundantius habeant.”—*John,* 10:1.

4279 “Quid enim mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? . . . Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus, in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:25.

4280 “Lux vera, quæ illuminat omnem hominem.—*John,* 1:9.

4281 “Adauge nobis fidem.”—*Luke,* 17:5.

4282 “Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.”—*Ps.* 88:2.

4283 “Cum veneris judicare, noli me condemnare.”

4284 “Nolo mortem impii, sed ut convertatur . . . et vivat.—*Ezek.* 33:2.

4285 “In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.”—*Ps.* 30:2.

4286 “In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine, Deus veritatis.”—*Ps.* 30:6.

4287 “Qui etiam proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum; quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* 8:32.

4288 “Tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.”

4289 “Spes nostra! salve; Refugium peccatorum! ora pro nobis.”

4290 “Omnium iniquitatum ejus . . . non recordabor.”—*Ezek.* 18:22.

4291 “Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea; quem timebo?”—*Ps.* 26:1.

4292 “Adjutor meus esto; ne derelinquas me, neque despicias me, Deus salutaris meus.”—*Ps.* 26:9.

4293 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—Prov. 8:17.

4294 “Trahe me.”—*Cant.* 1:3.

4295 “Eia ergo, Advocata nostra! . . . Jesum, benedictum Fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.”

4296 “Electus ex millibus.”—*Cant.* 5:10.

4297 “Domine, quid me vis facere?”—*Acts,* 9:6.

4298 “Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.”—*Ps.* 88:2.

4299 “Quis nos separabit a charitate Christi?”—*Rom.* 8:35.

4300 “O bone Jesu! ne permittas me separari a te.”

4301 “Quid enim mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? . . . Deus cordis mei, el pars mea, Deus in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:25.

4302 “Amore amoris tui moriar, qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori.”—*St. Francis Assisi.*

4303 “Amor meus crucifixus est.”—*St. Pasch.*

4304 “Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis.”—*St. Ignatius Loyola.*

4305 “Moriar, Domine, ut te videam.”—*St. Augustine.*

4306 It is known that St. Alphonsus in his ascetical books took care frequently to remind his readers of the most essential practices of Christian life; hence the many admonitions and various formulas, now short, now long, which we distribute among the complete works as well as among the smaller separate, works, conformably to the author’s design.—ED.

4307 See *Rule of Life,* vol. i., ch. 2, § 6.

4308 This Novena and the Hymn that follows it remained unpublished till the year 1866. They were recently discovered at Rome among the writings of our holy author.—ED

4309 “Vocatum est nomen ejus Jesus . . . ab Angelo.”—*Luke,* 2:21.

4310 *In Circ.* s. 1.

[4311] *Matt.* 1:21.

[4312] “Tanto melior Angelis effectus, quanto differentius præ illis nomen hereditavit.”—*Heb.* 1:4.

[4313] *Office of the Holy Name.*

[4314] “Dominus meus et Deus meus.”—*John,* 20:28.

[4315] *Acts,* 4:12.

[4316] *John,* 10:10.

[4317] *Acts,* 4:17.

[4318] “Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

[4319] *In Circ. s.* 1.

[4320] “Oleum effusum, nomen tuum.”—*Cant.* 1:2.

[4321] *In Nat. D.* 1 *Vesp.*

[4322] *Luke,* 11:22.

[4323] *Phil.* 2:10.

[4324] 1 *Cor.* 1:23.

[4325] *John,* 1:3.

[4326] *John,* 8:3.

[4327] See note page 451. There is another hymn to the Infant Jesus, page 332.

[4328] “Ut autem tanti beneficii jugis in nobis maneret memoria, corpus suum in cibum fidelibus dereliquit.”—*Off Corp. Chr.*1. 2.

[4329] “Quotiescumque enim manducabitis panem hunc, et calicem bibetis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis.”—1 *Cor.* 11:26.

[4330] “Absorbeat, quæso, Domine Jesu Christe, mentem meam ignita et melliflua vis amoris tui, ut amore amoris tui moriar, qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori.”—*Prayer of St. Francis Assisi.*

[4331] “Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?”—*Luke,* 12:49.

4332 “Recogitate enim eum, qui talem sustinuit a peccatoribus adversum semetipsum contradictionem, ut ne fatigemini, animis vestris deficientes.”—*Heb.* 12:3.

4333 “Scribe, Domine, vulnera tua in corde meo, ut in eis legam dolorem et amorem: dolorem, ad sustinendum pro te omnem dolorem; amorem, ad contemnendum pro te omnem amorem.

4334 “Et non aperuit os suum.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

4335 “Attritus propter scelera nostra.”—*Isa.* 53:5.

4336 “Factus obediens usque ad mortem.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

4337 Life, chap. 22.

4338 “Si vis, homo, de virtute in virtutem, de gratia in gratiam proficere, quotidie mediteris Domini passionem.”

4339 “Nihil enim in anima ita operatur universalem sanctificationem, sicut meditatio passionis Christi.”

4340 “Charitas enim Christi urget nos.”—2 *Cor.* 5:14.

4341 “Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum.”—1 *Cor.* 2:2.

4342 “Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

4343 “Proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum.”—*Rom.* 8:32.

4344 “Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit.”—*Isa.* 53:4.

4345 “Condidit nos fortitudine sua, quæsivit nos infirmitate sua.”—*In Jo. tr.* 15.

4346 “Quo tuus attigit amor? Ego inique egi, tu pœna mulctaris.”—*Medit.* c. 7.

4347 “O bone Jesu! quid tibi est? Mori nos debuimus, et tu solvis? Nos peccavimus, et tu luis?—Opus sine exemplo, gratia sine merito, charitas sine modo!”—*Apud Lohn. Bibl.* tit. 110, § 3.

4348 “Sicut ovis ad occisionem ducetur.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

4349 “Christus nos redemit de maledicto legis, factus pro nobis maledictum, quia scriptum est: Maledictus omnis qui pendet in ligno; ut in gentibus benedictio Abrahæ fieret in Christo Jesu.”—*Gal.* 3:13.

4350 “Ille maledictum in cruce factus est, ut tu benedictus esses in Dei regno.”—*Epist.* 47.

4351 “Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?”—*Matt.* 27:46.

4352 “Ideo Christus derelictus est in pœnis, ne nos derelinquamur in culpis.”—*Lib.* xiii. *de Pass. D.*

4353 “Dilexit nos, et lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo.”—*Apoc.* 1:5.

4354 “Offert sanguinem melius clamantem quam Abel; quia iste justitiam, sanguis Christi misericordiam interpellabat.”—*Contens.*1. 10, d. 4, c. 1, *sp.* 1.

4355 “O bone Jesu! quid fecisti?”

4356 “Quid me tantum amasti? quare, Domine, quare? quid sum ego?”—*Stim. div. am.* p. 1, c. 13.

4357 “O vos omnes qui transitis per viam! attendite, et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus.”—*Lam.* 1:12.

4358 “Imo, Domine, attendam, et videbo si est amor sicut amor tuus.”

4359 “Dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me.”—*Gal.* 2:20.

4360 “Adeo singulum quemque hominum pari charitatis modo diligit, quo diligit universum orbem.”—*In Gal.* 2:20.

4361 “Præcellit omnem maternum ac filialem affectum Verbi Dei immensa charitas; neque humano valet explicare eloquio, quo circa unumquemque moveatur amore.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 5.

4362 “Toties morerer, quot sunt animæ in inferno.”—*Rev.* I. 7, c. 19.

4363 “Ego sum Pastor bonus. Bonus Pastor animam suam dat pro ovibus suis.”—*John,* 10:11.

4364 “Et dices in die illa: Confitebor tibi, Domine! . . . Ecce Deus Salvator meus; fiducialiter agam, et non timebo.”—*Isa.* 12:1.

4365 “An nescitis quoniam . . . non estis vestri? Empti enim estis pretio magno.”—1 *Cor.* 6:19.

4366 “Duo sunt, quæ amantem produnt: amato benefacere, et pro amato cruciatus ferre; et hoc est majus.”

4367 “Sed parum esse credidit, si affectum suum erga nos non etiam adversa sustinendo monstraret.”—*Serm.* 69.

4368 “Non aliter Dei amor erga nos declarari poterat.”

[4369] “Summum Deus in cruce nobis ostendit amorem!”—*In* 1 *Cor.* 1:25.

[4370] “In passionis rubore maxima et incomparabilis ostenditur charitas.”—*De Pass.* c. 41.

[4371] “Benignitas et humanitas apparuit Salvatoris nostri Dei.”—*Tit.* 3:4.

[4372] “Proposito sibi gaudio, sustinuit crucem.”—*Heb.* 12:2.

[4373] “Inter agones purus dolor animam a corpore disjunxit.”—*Contens.*1. 10, d. 4, c. 1, *sp.* 1.

[4374] “Quod sufficiebat redemptioni, non sufficiebat amori.”

[4375] “Christus, ex charitate patiendo, majus aliquid Deo exhibuit, quam exigeret recompensatio offensæ humani generis.”—P. 3, q. 48, a. 2.

[4376] “Multum fatigationis assumpsit, quo multæ dilectionis hominem debitorem teneret.”—*In Cant.* s. 11.

[4377] “Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.”—*John,* 15:13.

[4378] “Tu majorem habuisti, Domine, charitatem, ponens animam etiam pro inimicis.”—*S. de Pass. D.*

[4379] “Commendat autem charitatem suam Deus in nobis, quoniam, cum adhuc peccatores essemus, secundum tempus Christus pro nobis mortuus est.”—*Rom.* 5:8.

[4380] “Hæc prima causa passionis Domini, quia sciri voluit quantum amaret hominem Deus, qui plus amari voluit, quam timeri.”—*De Pass.* s. 6.

[4381] “Per hoc homo cognoscit quantum Deus hominem diligat.”—P. 3, q. 46, a. 3.

[4382] “In hoc cognovimus charitatem Dei, quoniam ille animam suam pro nobis posuit.”—1 *Jo.* 3:16.

[4383] “Tantus labor non sit cassus.”

[4384] “Jesu dulcissime! ne permittas me separari a te, ne permittas me separari a te.”

[4385] “Dicebant Excessum ejus, quem completurus erat in Jerusalem.”—*Luke,* 9:31.

[4386] “Excessus doloris, excessus amoris.”

[4387] “Quid ultra pati potuit, et non pertulit? ad summum pervenit summus amoris excessus.”—*Contens.*1. 10, d. 4, c. 1, *sp.* 1.

4388 “Magis hos quam seipsum amavit.”

4389 “Dilexisti me plus quam te, quia mori voluisti pro me.”—*Sol. an. ad D.* c. xiii.

4390 “O Deum, si fas est dici, prodigum sui præ desiderio hominis!”

4391 “An non prodigum sui, qui, non solum sua, sed seipsum impendit, ut hominem recuperaret?”—*In Pent.* s. 1.

4392 “Quis amoris tui vim cognosceret, quis vel suspicari posset a longe charitatis ardorem, quod sic amares, ut teipsum cruci et morti exponeres pro vermiculis?”

4393 “Excedit hæc charitas omnem scientiam, omnem sensum.”—*In Nat. D. conc.* 3.

4394 “Patet arcanum cordis per foramina corporis.”—*In Cant.* s. 61.

4395 “Qui dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me.”—*Gal.* 2:20.

4396 “Nos autem prædicamus Christum crucifixum, Judæis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam.”—1 *Cor.* 1:23.

4397 “Gentibus autem stultitiam.”

4398 “Agnovimus Sapientiam amoris nimietate infatuatam.”—*Serm. de Nat. Dom.*

4399 “Stultitia videtur, quod mortuus fuerit Deus propter salutem hominum.”—*In* 1 *Cor.* 4.

4400 “Stultus sum, quia stultior me fuisti.”

4401 “Dolor meus in conspectu meo semper.”—*Ps.* 37:18.

4402 “Magna est enim velut mare contritio tua.”—*Lam.* 2:13.

4403 “Salvum me fac, Deus, quoniam intraverunt aquæ usque ad animam meam; veni in altudinem maris, et tempestas demersit me.”—*Ps.* 68:2.

4404 “Ut servum redimeret, nec Pater Filio, nec sibi Filius ipse pepercit.”—*S. de Pass. D.*

4405 “Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.”—*Isa.* 53:6.

4406 “Assumpsit dolorem in summo, vituperationem in summo.”

4407 “Despectum, et novissimum virorum, virum dolorum.”—*Isa.* 53:3.

4408 “Scitis quid fecerim vobis?”—*John*, 13:12.

4409 “Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?”—*Luke* 12:49.

4410 “Passio Christi dicitur Baptismus, quia in ejus sanguine purificamur.”

4411 “Baptismo habeo baptizari; et quomodo coarctor, usquedum perficiatur?”

4412 “Sciens Jesus quia venit hora ejus, ut transeat ex hoc mundo ad Patrem, cum dilexisset suos . . . , in finem dilexit eos.”—*John*, 13:1.

4413 “Amantis hora ilia est, qua pro amico patitur.”—*Barrad.* T. iv.1. 2, c. 5.

4414 “Desiderio desideravi hoc Pascha manducare vobiscum.”—*Luke*, 22:15.

4415 “Desiderio desideravi; charitatis est vox hæc.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 2.

4416 “Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem. Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis, quia amore langueo.”—*Cant.* 2:4.

4417 “Surgite, eamus; ecce, qui me tradet, prope est.”—*Mark*, 14:42.

4418 “Sitio.”

4419 “Sitis hæc de ardore nascitur charitatis.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 19.

4420 “Per hoc *Sitio!* ostenditur ejus ardens desiderium de salute generis humani.”—*In Jo.* 19. *lect.* 5.

4421 “Sciens Jesus quia venit hora ejus, ut transeat ex hoc mundo ad Patrem, cum dilexisset suos . . . , in finem dilexit eos.”—*John*, 13:1.

4422 “In finem dilexit eos.”

4423 “Quasi dicat: Extremo amore et summe dilexit eos.”

4424 “Omnem vim amoris effudit amicis.”—*Serm. de Asc. D.*

4425 “Divitias sui erga homines amoris velut effudit.”—*Sess.* xiii. *cap.* 2.

4426 “Sacramentum charitatis, summæ charitatis Christi pignus est.”

4427 “Amor amorum.”

4428 “Consummatum est!”

[4429] “Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo.”—*John*, 6:37.

[4430] “Accipite et comedite; hoc est corpus meum.”—*Matt.* 26:26.

[4431] “Me comede, ut summa unio fiar.”—*In.* 1 *Tim. hom.* 15.

[4432] “O quam mirabilis est dilectio tua, Domine Jesu, qui tuo corpori taliter nos incorporare voluisti, ut tecum unum cor haberemus!”—*De Inc. div. am.* c. 5.

[4433] “Huic nos unimur, et facti sumus unum corpus, una caro.”

[4434] “Quis pastor oves proprio pascit cruore? Et quid dico, Pastor? Matres multæ sunt quæ filios aliis tradunt nutricibus. Hoc autem ipse non est passus, sed ipse nos proprio sanguine pascit.”—*Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 60.

[4435] “Semetipsum nobis immiscuit, ut unum quid simus; ardenter enim amantium hoc est.”—*Ibid. hom.* 61.

[4436] “Vidimus Sapientiam amoris nimietate infatuatam.”—*Serm. de Nat. D.*

[4437] “Nonne videtur insania: Manducate meam carnem, bibite meum sanguinem?”—*In Ps.* 33, *en.* 1.

[4438] “Audebimus et loqui, quod auctor omnium, præ amatoriæ bonitatis magnitudine, extra se sit?”—*De Div. Nom.* c. 4.

[4439] “Amor ratione caret, et vadit quo ducitur, non quo debeat.”—*Serm.* 147.

[4440] “Donum transcendens omnem plenitudinem.”

[4441] “Cum esset omnipotens plus dare non potuit.”

[4442] “Dominus Jesus, in qua nocte tradebatur, accepit panem, et gratias agens fregit, et dixit: Accipite et manducate; hoc est corpus meum, quod pro vobis tradetur.”—1 *Cor.* 11:23.

[4443] “Desiderio desideravi hoc Pascha manducare vobiscum.”—*Luke,* 22:15.

[4444] “Flagrantissimæ charitatis est vox hæc.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 2.

[4445] “*Spir. Grat.*1. 2, c. 3.

[4446] “Non ad aliud amat Deus, nisi ut ametur.”—*In Cant.* s. 83.

[4447] “Ignem veni mittere in terram.”—*Luke*, 12:49.

4448 “Ignis divinus.”

4449 “Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem. Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis; quia amore langueo.”—*Cant.* 2:4.

4450 “Quid mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus, in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:25.

4451 “Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris; et dicetis in illa die: Confitemini Domino, et invocate nomen ejus; notas facite in populis adinventiones ejus.”—*Isa.* 12:3.

4452 “Totum tibi dedit, nihil sibi reliquit.”

4453 “Deus in Eucharistia totum quod ipse est, et habet, in summo dedit.”—*De Beat.* c. 3.

4454 “Ecce, quem mundus capere non potest, captivus noster est.”—*Exp. Miss.* c. 4.

4455 “Indivisus cordis mei hospes.”

4456 “Totus in meos usus expensus.”—*In Circ.* s. 3.

4457 “Qui manducat me, et ipse vivet propter me.”—*John,* 6:58.

4458 “Cœpit pavere et tædere.”—*Mark,* 14:33.

4459 “Contristari et mœstus esse.”—*Matt.* 26:37.

4460 “Cœpit pavere.”

4461 “Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

4462 “Desiderio desideravi hoc Pascha manducare vobiscum.”—*Luke,* 22:15.

4463 “Pater mi! si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste.”—*Matt.* 26:39.

4464 “Orat transire calicem, ut ostendat quod vere homo erat.”—*In Marc.* 14.

4465 “Cœpit tædere.”

4466 “Apparuit autem illi angelus de cœlo, confortans eum.”—*Luke*, 22:43.

4467 “Confortatio dolorem non minuit, sed auxit.”

4468 “Cœpit contristari et mœstus esse.”

4469 *Serm.* 275, *E. B.*

4470 “Versa et manduca.”

4471 “Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.”—*Mark*, 14:34.

4472 “Excessit omnem dolorem cujuscumque contriti.”—P. 3, q. 46, a. 6.

4473 “Purum dolorem absque ulla consolationis permixtione expertus est.”—*Contens.*1. 10, d. 4, c. 1, *sp.* 1.

4474 “Et factus est sudor ejus sicut guttæ sanguinis decurrentis in terram.”—*Luke*, 22:44.

4475 “Procidit in faciem suam.”—*Matt.* 26:39.

4476 “Factus in agonia, prolixius orabat.”—*Luke*, 22:43.

4477 “Qui in diebus carnis suæ, preces supplicationesque, ad eum qui possit illum salvum facere a morte, cum clamore valido et lacrymis offerens, exauditus est pro sua reverentia.”—*Heb.* 5:7.

4478 “Non quod ego volo, sed quod tu.”—*Mark*, 14:36.

4479 “Nobiles animi pluris faciunt ignominiam, quam dolores corporis.”

4480 “Vidimus eum . . . despectum et novissimum virorum.”—*Isa.* 53:2.

4481 “Ipse se tantum humiliavit ut ultra non posset.”—*In Phil.* ii.

4482 “Tunc discipuli ejus, relinquentes eum, omnes fugerunt.”—*Mark*, 14:50.

4483 “Juda, osculo Filium hominis tradis?”—*Luke*, 22:48.

4484 “Ministri Judæorum comprehenderunt Jesum, et ligaverunt eum.”—*John*, 18:12.

4485 “O Rex regum et Dominus dominantium! quid tibi et vinculis?”—*De Pass.* c. 4.

4486 “O Charitas! quam magnum est vinculum tuum, quo Deus ligari potuit!”—*Lign. Vit. de Char.* c. 6.

4487 “Intuere, homo, canes istos trahentes eum ad victimam, et illum quasi agnum mansuetissimum sine resistentia ipsos sequi: alius apprehendit, alius ligat, alius impellit, alius percutit.”—*Med. Vii. Chr.* c. 75, 74.

4488 “Ego palam locutus sum . . . : ecce hi sciunt quæ dixerim ego.”—*John*, 18:20.

[4489] “Unus assistens ministrorum dedit alapam Jesu, dicens: Sic respondes Pontifici?”—*Ibid.* 22.

[4490] “O Angeli! quomodo siletis? Ad quid attonitos vos tenet tanta patientia?”

[4491] “Adjuro te per Deum vivum, ut dicas nobis si tu es Christus, Filius Dei.”—*Matt.* 26:63.

[4492] “At illi respondentes dixerunt: Reus est mortis.”—*Ibid.* 66.

[4493] “Tunc expuerunt in faciem ejus, et colaphis eum ceciderunt.”—*Ibid.* 67.

[4494] “Prophetiza nobis, Christe, quis est qui te percussit.”—*Matt.* 26:68.

[4495] “Corpus meum dedi percutientibus, et genas meas vellentibus; faciem meam non averti ab increpantibus et conspuentibus in me.”—*Isa.* 50:6.

[4496] *De Vita et Pass. Salv.* c. 17.

[4497] “Hæc medicina si superbiam non curat, quid earn curet, nescio.”—*Serm.* 77, *E. B.*

[4498] “Expuerunt in faciem ejus.”

[4499] “Ad extremam injuriam pertinet sputamenta accipere.”—*In Matt. tr.* 35.

4500 “Cum malediceretur, non maledicebat; cum pateretur, non comminabatur; tradebat autem judicanti se injuste.”—1 *Pet.* 2:23.

4501 “Quasi agnus coram tondente se, obmutescet, et non aperiet os suum.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

4502 “Nihil invenio causæ in hoc homine.”—*Luke,* 23:4.

4503 “Sprevit autem illum Herodes cum exercitu suo, et illusit indutum veste alba, et remisit ad Pilatum.”—*Luke,* 23:11.

4504 “Illudens ei, quasi fatuo, induit eum veste alba.”

4505 “Sprevit illum tamquam impotentem, quia signum non fecit; tamquam ignorantem, quia verbum non respondit; tamquam stolidum, quia se non defensavit.”

4506 “Dabit percutienti se maxillam, saturabitur opprobriis.”—*Lam.* 3:30.

4507 “Non hunc, sed Barabbam.”—*John,* 18:40.

4508 “Quid igitur faciam de Jesu?—*Matt.* 27:22.

4509 “Crucifigatur!”—*Ibid.*

4510 “Quid enim mali fecit?”—*Ibid.* 23.

4511 “Crucifigatur!”—*Ibid.*

4512 “Non hunc, sed Barabbam?”—*John*, 18:40.

4513 “Sustinuit crucem, confessione contempta.”—*Heb.* 12:2.

4514 “Ego autem sum vermis et non homo, opprobrium hominum et abjectio plebis.”—*Ps.* 21:7.

4515 “Et cum sceleratis reputatus est.”—*Isa.* 53:12.

4516 “O novissimum et altissimum! O humilem et sublimem! O op probrium hominum et gloriam angelorum!”—*Serm. de Pass. D.*

4517 “O gratiam! O amoris vim! itane summus omnium imus factus est omnium? Quis hoc fecit? Amor!”—*In Cant.* s. 64.

4518 “Christus passus est pro nobis, vobis relinquens exemplum, ut se quamini vestigia ejus.”—1 *Pet.* 2:21.

4519 “Tunc ergo apprehendit Pilatus Jesum, et flagellavit.”—*John,* 19:1.

4520 “Corripiam ergo illum, et dimittam.”—*Luke,* 23:22.

4521 “Non solum formam servi accepit, ut subesset, sed etiam mali servi, ut vapularet; et servi peccati, ut pœnam solveret.”—*Serm. de Pass. D.*

4522 “Cæditur, totoque flagris corpore dissipatur; nunc scapulas, nunc crura cingunt; vulnera vulneribus et plagas plagis recentibus addunt.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag* c. 14.

4523 “Propter scelus populi mei percussi eum.”—*Isa.* 53:8.

4524 “O ineffabilem Filii Dei erga peccatores charitatem!”

4525 “Fluit regius sanguis, superadditur livor super livorem, fractura super fracturam.”—*Med. vit. Chr.* c. 76.

4526 “Et super dolorem vulnerum meorum addiderunt.”—*Ps.* 68:27.

4527 “Concisa fuit caro, ut ossa dinumerari possent.”—*Contens.*1. 10, d. 4, c. 1, *sp.* 1.

4528 “Debuit plane mori; se tamen reservavit ad vitam, ut graviora perferret.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 14.

4529 “Corripiam ergo illum, et dimittam.”—*Luke,* 23:22.

4530 “Quadragenarium numerum non excedant, ne fœde laceratus ante oculos tuos abeat frater tuus.”—*Deut.* 25:3.

4531 “Ego quæ astabam, vidi corpus ejus flagellatum usque ad costas, ita ut costæ ejus viderentur. Et quod amarius erat. cum retraheren tur flagella, carnes ipsis flagellis sulcabantur.”—*Rev.*1. 1, c. 10.

4532 “Ecce homo!”—*John,* 19:5.

4533 “Sequebatur autem illum multa turba populi, et mulierum quæ plangebant et lamentabantur eum.”—*Luke,* 23:27.

4534 “Hunc angariaverunt ut tolleret crucem ejus.”—*Matt.* 27:32.

4535 “Et imposuerunt illi crucem portare post Jesum.”—*Luke,* 23:26.

4536 “Timebant ne moreretur in via.”

4537 “Eradamus eum de terra viventium, et nomen ejus non memoretur amplius.”—*Jer.* 11:19.

4538 “Ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras, attritus est propter scelera nostra.”—*Isa.* 53:5.

4539 “Et Dominus voluit conterere eum in infirmitate.”—*Is.* 53:10.

4540 “Et nos putavimus eum quasi leprosum et percussum a Deo.”—*Ibid.* 4.

4541 “O bone Jesu! nos peccavimus, et tu luis!”

4542 “Amemus Sponsum; quanto magis deformis nobis commendatur, tanto carior, tanto dulcior factus est sponsæ.”—*Serm.* 44, *E. B.*

4543 “Non est species ei, neque decor; et vidimus eum, et non erat aspectus.”—*Isa.* 53:2.

4544 “Tunc unus, concitato in se spiritu, quæsivit: Numquid interficietis eum sic injudicatum? Et statim secuit vincula ejus.”—*Rev.*1. 1, c. 10.

4545 “Tunc milites præsidis, suscipientes Jesum in prætorium congregaverunt ad eum universam cohortem. Et exuentes eum, chlamydem coccineam circumdederunt ei. Et plectentes coronam de spinis, posuerunt super caput ejus, et arundinem in dextera ejus.”—*Matt.* 27:27–30.

4546 “Et plectentes coronam de spinis, posuerunt super caput ejus.”—*Matt.* 27:29.

4547 *De Pass. hom.* 33.

4548 *Serm. in Parasc.*

4549 “Corona spinea capiti ejus arctissime imposita fuit, quæ ad medium frontis descendebat.”—*Rev.*1. 4, c. 70.

4550 “Spinæ cerebrum perforantes.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 14.

4551 “Sæpius oculos clausit, et acuta edidit suspiria quasi morituri.”

4552 “Plurimis rivis sanguinis decurrentibus per faciem ejus, et crines, oculos, et barbam replentibus, nihil nisi sanguis totum videbatur.”—*Rev.*1. 4, c. 70.

4553 “Non amplius facies Domini Jesu, sed hominis excoriati videretur.”

4554 “O amor! quid te appellem nescio, dulcem an asperum: utrumque esse videris.”—*Epist.* 1.

4555 “Coronatus est spinis, ut nos coronemur corona danda electis in patria.”—*In Jo.* 17.

4556 “Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo, in æternum cantabo.”—*Ps.* 88:2.

4557 “Spinæ quid, nisi peccatores?”

4558 “Scito et vide quia malum et amarum est reliquisse te Dominum Deum tuum.”—*Jer.* 2:19.

4559 “Et genu flexo ante eum illudebant ei, dicentes: Ave, Rex Judæorum! Et expuentes in eum, acceperunt arundinem, et percutiebant caput ejus.”—*Matt.* 27:29.

4560 “Et dabant ei alapas.”—*John,* 19:3.

4561 “Si non amamus eum, quia bonus, quia Deus, saltem amemus, quoniam tanta pro nostra salute perpessus est.”—*In Matt.* 27.

4562 “Exivit iterum Pilatus foras, et elicit eis: Ecce adduco vobis eum foras, ut cognoscatis quia nullam invenio in eo causam. (Exivit ergo Jesus portans coronam spineam et purpureum vestimentum.) Et dicit eis: Ecce homo!”—*John,* 19:4, 5.

4563 “ ‘Ecce homo,’ non clarus imperio, sed plenus opprobrio.”—*St. Aug. In Jo. tr.* 116.

4564 “Cum ergo vidissent eum pontifices et ministri, clamabant, dicentes: Crucifige, crucifige eum.”—*John,* 19:6.

4565 “Innocens ego sum a sanguine justi hujus; vos videritis!”—*Matt.* 27:24.

4566 “Sanguis ejus super nos et super filios nostros.”—*Ibid.* 25.

4567 “Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui.”—*Matt.* 3:17.

4568 “Respice in faciem Christi tui.”—*Ps.* 83:10.

4569 “Sanguis ejus super nos!”

4570 “Egredimini et videte, filiæ Sion, regem Salomonem in diademate, quo coronavit illum mater sua, in die desponsationis illius et in die lætitiæ cordis ejus.”—*Cant.* 3:11.

4571 “Egredimini et videte Regem vestrum in corona paupertatis, in corona miseriæ.”—*In Epiph.* s. 2.

4572 “Sponsus sanguinum tu mihi es.”—*Exod.* 4:25.

4573 “Tolle, tolle, crucifige eum.”—*John,* 19:15.

4574 “Regem vestrum crucifigam? Non habemus regem, nisi Cæsarem.”—*Ibid.*

4575 “Non habemus regem, nisi Jesum!”

4576 “Tu es ipse Rex meus.”—*Ps.* 43:5.

4577 “Adveniat regnum tuum.”—*Matt.* 6:10.

4578 “Domine, pati et contemni pro te.”

4579 “Si hunc dimittis, non es amicus Cæsaris.”—*John,* 19:12.

4580 “Tunc ergo tradidit eis illum, ut crucifigeretur.”—*Ibid.* 16.

4581 “Quid fecisti, innocentissime Salvator, ut sic judicareris? quid commisisti?”

4582 “Peccatum tuum est amor tuus.”

4583 “Non in te video causam mortis, nisi superabundantiam charitatis.”—*Stim. div. am.* p. 1, c. 2.

4584 “Hoc omnino amorem nostrum facile vindicat totum tibi.”—*In Cant.* s. 20.

4585 “Fortis est ut mors dilectio.”—*Cant.* 8:6.

4586 “Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

4587 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

4588 “Jesum vero tradidit voluntati eorum.”—*Luke,* 23:25.

4589 “Exuerunt eum chlamyde, et induerunt eum vestimentis ejus, et duxerunt eum ut crucifigerent.”—*Matt.* 27:31.

4590 “Induunt eum vestibus, quo melius ab omnibus cognosceretur; quia cum facies ejus esset cruentata et deformata, non poterat facile ab omnibus agnosci.”

4591 “Non exspectavit ut imponeretur sibi a milite, sed lætus arripuit.”—*De Uno Mart. conc.* 3.

4592 “Et bajulans sibi crucem, exivit in eum, qui dicitur Calvariæ, locum.”—*John,* 19:17.

4593 “Hosanna Filio David! benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.”—*Matt.* 21:9.

4594 “Sicut ovis ad occisionem ducetur.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

4595 “Factus est principatus super humerum ejus.”—*Isa.* 9:6.

4596 *Adv. Jud.*

4597 “Qui peccata nostra ipse pertulit in corpore suo super lignum.”—1 *Pet.* 2:24.

4598 “Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.”—*Isa.* 53:6.

4599 “Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis.”

4600 “Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me.”—*Matt.* 16:24.

4601 “Exeamus igitur ad eum extra castra, improperium ejus portantes.”—*Heb.* 13:13.

4602 *Conf. B.* 1, c. 5.

4603 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et in tota anima tua, et in tota mente tua.”—*Matt.* 22:37.

4604 “Et postquam venerunt in locum qui vocatur Calvariæ, ibi crucifixerunt eum.”—*Luke,* 23:33.

4605 “Manus et pedes cum fune trahebant ad loca clavorum ita ut nervi et venæ extenderentur et rumperentur.”—*Rev.*1. 1, c. 10.

4606 “Foderunt manus meas et pedes meos: dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea.”—*Ps.* 21:17.

4607 “Pejus nihil fuit inter omnia genera mortium.”—*In Jo. tr.* 36.

4608 “P. 3, q. 46, a. 6.

4609 “Corpus autem aptasti mihi.”—*Heb.* 10:5.

4610 “Et erit vita tua quasi pendens ante te.”—*Deut.* 28:66.

4611 “Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Judæorum.”—*John,* 19:19.

4612 “Factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

4613 “Quid sunt plagæ istæ in msdio manuum tuarum?”—*Zach.* 13:6.

4614 “Sunt monumenta charitatis, pretia redemptionis.”

4615 “Testis crux, testes dolores, testis amara mors, quam pro te sustinuit.”—*Dom.* 17 p. *Pent. conc.* 3.

4616 “Clamat crux, clamat vulnus, quod ipse vere dilexit.”

4617 “Erunt oculi tui videntes Præceptorem tuum.”—*Isa.* 30:20.

4618 “Et ego, si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad meipsum. (Hoc autem dicebat, significans qua morte esset moriturus).”—*John,* 12:32.

4619 “Omnes mundi gentes ad amorem sui traxit sanguinis sui merito, suo exemplo et amore.”

4620 “Dominus, mox ut in cruce pependit, omnes ad se per amoris desiderium traxit.”—*S. de Inv. Cruc.*

4621 “Quis enim Christum ex amore pro nobis morientem non redamet?”

4622 “Omnis figura ejus amorem spirat, ct ad redamandum provocat, caput inclinatum, manus expansæ, pectus apertum.”—*Off. Dol. B. V. resp.* I.

4623 “Alios salvos fecit, seipsum non potest salvum facere.”—*Matt.* 27:42.

4624 “Si Rex Israel est, descendat nunc de cruce.”—*Ibid.*

4625 “Pater! dimitte illis; non enim sciunt quid faciunt.”—*Luke,* 23:34.

4626 “Ad ostendendam abundantiam charitatis suæ, veniam persecutoribus postulavit.”—P. 3, q. 47, a. 4.

4627 “Percutientes pectora sua, revertebantur.”—*Luke,* 23:48.

4628 “Memento mei.”—*Luke,* 23:42.

4629 “Hodie mecum eris in paradise”—*Ibid.* 43.

4630 “Omni carens doloris temperamento.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag. c.* 17.

4631 “Magnitudo doloris Christi potest considerari ex doloris et tristitiae puritate.”—P. 3, q. 46, a. 6.

4632 “A planta pedis usque ad verticem capitis, non invenio nisi dolorem et mœrorem.”

4633 “Et sustinui . . . qui consolaretur, et non inveni.”—*Ps.* 68:21.

4634 “Repleta Matre, ad Filium redundabat inundatio amaritudinis.”

4635 “Ipse, videns me, plus dolebat de me, quam de se.”

4636 “O bone Jesu! tu magna pateris in corpore, sed multo magis in corde ex compassione Matris.”—“Mulier, ecce filius tuus.”—*John,* 19:26.

4637 “O Domina! si te offendi, pro justitia cor meum vulnera; si tibi servivi, pro mercede peto vulnera.”—*Stim. div. am.* p. 1, c. 3.

4638 “Clamavit Jesus voce magna, dicens, . . . Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?”—*Matt.* 27:46.

4639 “Derelictus est, ut amorem suum erga nos ostenderet, ct amorem nostrum ad se raperet.”

4640 “Domine, quid sitis? De cruce siles et de siti clamas!”—*S. de Pass. D.*

4641 “Sitis mea, salus vestra.”

4642 “Sitiebat nos, et dare se nobis desiderabat.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 19.

4643 “O desiderium passione majus!”

4644 “Sitit sitiri Deus.”—*Tetr. Sent.* 37.

4645 “Petite et accipietis.”—*John,* 16:24.

4646 “Consummatum est.”—*John,* 19:30.

4647 “Et ecce tempus tuum, tempus amantium.”—*Ezech.* 16:8.

4648 “Consummatum est quidquid justitia exigebat, quidquid charitas poscebat, quidquid esse poterat ad demonstrandum amorem.”—*De Vit. et Pass. Salv.* c. 49.

4649 “Et clamans voce magna, Jesus ait: Pater! in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum. Et hæc dicens, exspiravit.”—*Luke,* 23:46.

4650 “Non est in alio aliquo salus.”—*Acts,* 4:12.

4651 “Ego sum ostium: per me si quis introierit, salvabitur.”—*John,* 10:9.

4652 “Iniquitates eorum ipse portabit.”—*Isa.* 53:11.

4653 “Si enim sanguis hircorum et taurorum, et cinis vitulæ aspersus, inquinatos sanctificat ad emundationem carnis; quanto magis sanguis Christi, qui per Spiritum Sanctum semetipsum obtulit immaculatum Deo, emundabit conscientiam nostram ab operibus mortuis, ad serviendum Deo viventi?”—*Heb.* 9:13.

4654 “Delens quod adversus nos erat chirographum decreti, quod erat contrarium nobis, et ipsum tulit de medio, affigens illud cruci.”—*Col.* 2:14.

4655 “Introivit semel in Sancta, æterna redemptione inventa.”—*Heb.* 9:12.

4656 “Annuntiate inter gentes studia ejus.”—*Ps.* 9:12.

4657 “In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine, Deus veritatis.”—*Ps.* 30:6.

4658 “Filioli mei, hæc scribo vobis, ut non peccetis. Sed et si quis peccaverit, Advocatum habemus apud Patrem, Jesum Christum justum; et ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris.”—1 *John,* 2:1.

4659 “Semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis.”—*Heb.* 7:25.

4660 “Ut appareat nunc vultui Dei pro nobis.”—*Heb.* 9:24.

4661 “Accessistis ad . . . Mediatorem Jesum, et sanguinis aspersionem melius loquentem, quam Abel.”—*Heb.* 12:22, 24.

4662 “Gratiam fidejussoris ne obliviscaris; dedit enim pro te animam suam.”—*Ecclus.* 29:19.

4663 “Columba mea in foraminibus petræ.”—*Cant.* 2:14.

4664 “Foramina petræ sunt vulnera Redemptoris. In his fidelis anima spem suam constituit.”—*De S. Matt.* s. 3.

4665 “Confidite, ego vici mundum.”—*John,* 16:33.

4666 “Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

4667 “Quodcumque petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, hoc faciam, ut glorificetur Pater in Filio.”—*Ibid.* 14:13.

4668 “Quis est qui condemnat? Christus Jesus, qui mortuus est . . . , qui etiam interpellat pro nobis.”—*Rom.* 8:34.

4669 “Quid times, peccator? quomodo te damnabit pœnitentem, qui moritur, ne damneris? quomodo te abjiciet redeuntem, qui de cœlo venit quærere te?”—*Tr. de Adv. D.*

4670 “Ecce in manibus meis descripsi te; muri tui coram oculis meis semper.”—*Isa.* 49:16.

4671 “Etiam si occiderit me, in ipso sperabo. . . . Et ipse erit Salvator meus.”—*Job,* 13:15.

4672 “Et consummatus, factus est omnibus obtemperantibus sibi causa salutis æternæ.”—*Heb.* 5:9.

4673 “Curramus ad propositum nobis certamen, aspicientes in Auctorem fidei et Consummatorem Jesum, qui, proposito sibi gaudio, sustinuit crucem, confusione contempta.”—*Heb.* 12:1.

[4674] “Non turbetur cor vestrum . . . , quia vado parare vobis locum.”—*John,* 14:1–2.

[4675] “Pater, quos dedisti mihi, volo ut, ubi sum ego, et illi sint mecum.”—*John,* 17:24.

[4676] “Quid misericordius intelligi valet, quam cum peccatori, unde se redimat non habenti, Deus Pater dicit: Accipe Unigenitum meum, et da pro te;—et ipse Filius: Tolle me, et redime te?”—*Cur D. H.*1. 2, c. 20.

[4677] “Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.”

[4678] “Habentes ergo Pontificem magnum, qui penetravit cœlos, Jesum Filium Dei, teneamus confessionem. Non enim habemus Pontificem qui non possit compati infirmitatibus nostris; tentatum autem per omnia pro similitudine, absque peccato.”—*Heb.* 4:14.

[4679] “Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno”—*Ibid.* 14–16.

[4680] “Pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum; quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* 8:32.

[4681] “Dabit minus, id est, vitam æternam, qui dedit majus, id est, Filium suum.”

[4682] “Dominus retribuet pro me.”—*Ps.* 137:8.

[4683] “Ampliora adepti sumus per Christi gratiam, quam per diaboll amiseramus invidiam.”—*De Asc. D.* s. 1.

[4684] “Non sicut delictum, ita et donum.—Ubi autem abundavit delictum, superabundavit gratia.”—*Rom.* 5:15–20.

[4685] “Christi gratia majoris est efficaciæ, quam delictum.”

[4686] “Ego veni ut vitam habeant, et abundantius habeant.”—*John,* 10:10.

[4687] “O felix culpa, quæ talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptcrem!”

[4688] “Ecce Deus Salvator meus; fiducialiter agam, et non timebo.”—*Isa.* 12:2.

[4689] “Fiducialiter agam, immobiliter sperans nihil ad salutem necessarium ab eo negandum, qui tanta pro mea salute fecit et pertulit.”

[4690] “Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris; et dicetis in illa die: Confitemini Domino, et invocate nomen ejus.”—*Isa.* 12:3.

4691 “Et fons de domo Domini egredietur, et irrigabit torrentem spinarum.”—*Joel*, 3:8.

4692 “Propter vos egenus factus est, cum esset dives, ut illius inopia vos divites essetis.”—2 *Cor.* 8:9.

4693 “Factus est nobis sapientia a Deo, et justitia, et sanctificatio, et redemptio.”—1 *Cor.* 1:30.

4694 “Sapientia in prædicatione, justitia in absolutione, sanctificatio in conversatione, redemptio in passione.”—*In Cant* s. 22.

4695 “In omnibus divites facti estis in illo . . . , ita ut nihil vobis desit in ulla gratia.”—1 *Cor.* 1:5.

4696 “Sic Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret.”—*John*, 3:16.

4697 “Non servum, non Angelum, sed Filium suum donavit.”—*In Jo. hom.* 26.

4698 “O mira circa nos tuæ pietatis dignatio! o inæstimabilis dilectio charitatis! ut servum redimeres, Filium tradidisti.”

4699 “Tradidit voluntati eorum.”—*Luke*, 23:25.

4700 “Pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum.”—*Rom.* 8:32.

4701 “Amor habet rationem primi doni.”—P. 1, q. 38, a. 2.

4702 “Ex maximo Dei amore provenit, ut Filius Dei carnem sibi assumeret.”—P. 3, q. 32. a. 1.

4703 “Sic Deus dilexil mundum.”—*John*, 3:16.

4704 “Verbum ‘Sic’ significat amoris vehementiam.”—*In Jo. hom.* 26.

4705 “Qui etiam proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum.”—*Rom.* 8:32.

4706 “Et Dominus voluit conterere eum in infirmitate.”—*Isa.* 53:10.

4707 “Hie est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui.”—*Matt.* 3:17.

4708 “Propter scelus populi mei percussi eum.”—*Isa.* 53:8.

4709 “Deus autem, qui dives est in misericordia, propter nimiam charitatem suam qua dilexit nos, et cum essemus mortui peccatis, convivificavit nos in Christo.”—*Ephes.* 2:4.

4710 “Deus charitas est.”—1 *John*, 4:16.

4711 “In hoc apparuit charitas Dei in nobis, quoniam Filium suum unigenitum misit Deus in mundum, ut vivamus per eum.”—1 *John,* 4:9.

4712 “Gratificavit nos in dilecto Filio suo.”—*Ephes.* 1:6.

4713 “Benedixit nos in omni benedictione spirituali in cœlestibus in Christo.”—*Ibid.* 3.

4714 “Beneficit nobis omni dono spirituali.”

4715 “In cœlestibus in Christo.”

4716 “Trahe me vinculis amoris tui.”

4717 “Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem.”—*Cant.* 2:4.

4718 “Instruxit contra me charitatem tamquam exercitum.”—*G. Sanch. ap. Corn, a Lap.*

4719 “Posuit me sicut sagittam electam, in pharetra sua abscondit me.”—*Isa.* 49:2.

4720 “Sagitta electa reservatur; ita Christus quasi reservatus est in sinu Patris, donec venit plenitudo temporis, et tunc missus est ad vulnerandum corda fidelium.”

4721 *Horn, de Turt.*

4722 “Domine! tu scis quia amo te”—*John,* 21:15.

4723 “Opera manuum tuarum ne despicias.”—*Ps.* 137:8.

4724 “Et ecce tempus tuum, tempus amantium. . . . Et decora facta es vehementer nimis.”—*Ezech.* 16:8, 13.

4725 “Christus dilexit nos et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Ephes.* 5:2.

4726 “Ego pono animam meam . . . ; nemo tollit earn a me, sed ego pono earn a meipso.”—*John,* 10:17.

4727 “Cum dilexisset suos, qui erant in mundo, in finem dilexit eos.”—*John,* 13:1.

4728 “Summum dilectionis testimonium circa finem vitæ suæ in ipsa ara crucis monstravit.”—*Contens.*1. 10, d. 4, c. 1, *sp.* 1.

4729 “Et dicebant excessum ejus, quem completurus erat in Jerusalem.”—*Luke,* 9:31.

4730 “Dicitur passio Christi excessus, quia in ea ostensus est excessus dilectionis et pietatis.”

4731 “O vulnera, corda saxea vulnerantia. et mentes congelatas in flammantia!”—*Slim. div. am.* p. 1, c. 1.

4732 “Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus, electus ex millibus.” *Cant.* 5:10.

4733 “O! si scires mysterium crucis!”

4734 “In hoc enim Christus mortuus est et resurrexit, ut et mortuo rum et vivorum dominetur. Sive ergo morimur, sive vivimus, Domini sumus.”—*Rom.* 14:9.

4735 “Ignis, crux, bestiæ, et tota tormenta in me veniant; tantum te, Christe, fruar.”—*Epist. ad Rom.* c. 5.

4736 “Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quærenti illum.”—*Lam* 3:25.

4737 “Christus non sibi placuit.”—*Rom.* 15:3.

4738 “Christus suæ voluntati et commodis non servivit, sed ea omnia et vitam suam pro nostra salute exposuit.”

4739 “Ut servum redimeret, nec Pater Filio, nec sibi Filius ipse pepercit.”—*S. de Pass. D.*

4740 “Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est.”—2 *Cor.* 5:15.

4741 “Magnes amoris, amor.”

4742 “Si vis amari, ama.”—*Epist.* 9.

4743 “Stultum visum est ut pro hominibus Auctor vitæ moreretur.”—*In Evang. hom.* 6.

4744 “Contenius est te Deus, et tu non eris contentus Deo tuo?”—*Contens.*1. 10, d. 4, c. 1, *sp.* 1.

4745 “Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum.”—*Cant.* 8:6.

4746 “Quis ergo nos separabit a charitate Christi?”—*Rom.* 8:33.

4747 “Amor meus crucifixus est.

4748 This little work was published about two years after the preceding one, that is, in the year 1761 (*Tannoia,* b. 2, ch. 48).—ED.

4749 “Nihil tam salutiferum, quam quotidie cogitare quanta pro nobis pertulit Deus-Homo.”—*Ad Fr. in er.* s. 32.

4750 “Certum est quia, ubi Christi mors animo circumfertur, non potest regnare peccatum.”—*Lib.* 6 *in Rom.* 6.

4751 “O vulnera, corda saxea vulnerantia, et mentes congelatas in flammantia!”—*Stim. div. am.* p. 1, c. 1.

4752 *Exerc. de p. Mardi S.*

4753 “Semetipsum exinanivit. formam servi accipiens.”—*Phil.* 2:7.

4754 “Verbum caro factum est.”—*John,* 1:14.

4755 “Vidimus eum . . . despectum, et novissimum virorum, virum dolorum.”—*Isa.* 53:2–3.

4756 “Charitas enim Christi urget nos.”—2 *Cor.* 5:14.

4757 “Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris.”—*Isa.* 12:3.

4758 “Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.”—*Isa.* 53:6.

4759 “Qui etiam proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum, quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* 8:32.

4760 “Ecce Rex tuus venit tibi mansuetus, sedens super asinam et pullum filium subjugalis.”—*Matt.* 21:5.

4761 “Hosanna Filio David! benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini!”—*Matt.* 21:9.

4762 “Tolle, tolle, crucifige eum!—*John,* 19:15.

4763 “Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini!”

4764 “Et ut appropinquavit, videns civitatem, flevit super illam.”—*Luke,* 19:41.

4765 “Collegerunt ergo Pontifices et Pharisæi concilium, et dicebant: Quid facimus, quia hic homo multa signa facit?”—*John,* 11:47.

4766 “Expedit vobis ut unus moriatur homo pro populo, et non tota gens pereat.”—*Ibid.* 50.

4767 “Quid vultis mihi dare, et ego vobis eum tradam?”—*Matt.* 26:15.

4768 “At illi constituerunt ei triginta argenteos.”—*Matt.* 26:15.

4769 “Sciens Jesus quia venit hora ejus, ut transeat ex hoc mundo ad Patrem, cum dilexisset suos, . . . in finem dilexit eos.”—*John,* 13:1.

4770 “Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare vobiscum, antequam patiar.”—*Luke,* 22:15.

4771 “Cum recubuisset ille supra pectus Jesu.”—*John,* 13:25.

4772 “Surgit a cœna, et ponit vestimenta sua; et cum accepisset linteum præcinxit se. Deinde mittit aquam in pelvim, et cœpit lavare pedes discipulorum, et extergere linteo quo erat præcinctus.”—*John,* 13:4–5.

4773 “Cœnantibus autem eis, accepit Jesus panem, et benedixit, ac fregit. deditque discipulis suis, et ait: Accipite et comedite; hoc est corpus meum.”—*Matt.* 26:26.

4774 “Quotiescumque manducabitis panem hunc et calicem bibetis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis.”—1 *Cor.* 11:26.

4775 *De 1’ Or. et de la Med.* p. 1, ch. 4

4776 “Qui manducat me, et ipse vivet propter me.”—*John,* 6:58.

4777 “Dominus Jesus, in qua nocte tradebatur, accepit panem, et gratias agens fregit, et dixit: Accipite, et manducate; hoc est corpus meum.”—1 *Cor.* 11:23, 24.

4778 “Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo.”—*John,* 6:57.

4779 “Hymno dicto, exierunt in montem Oliveti.”—*Matt.* 26:30.

4780 “Cœpit pavere et tædere,—contristari et mœstus esse.”—*Mark,* 14:33.—*Matt.* 26:37.

4781 “Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.”—*Mark,* 14:34.

4782 “Factus in agonia, prolixius orabat.”—*Luke*, 22:43.

4783 “Pater mi! si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste.”—*Matt.* 26:39.

4784 “Verumtamen, non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu.”—*Ibid.*

4785 “Fiat voluntas tua. . . . ; et oravit tertio, eundem sermonem dicens.”—*Ibid.* 44.

4786 “Procidit super terram.”—*Mark,* 14:35.

4787 “Respice in faciem Christi tui.”—*Ps.* 83:10.

4788 “Et factus est sudor ejus sicut guttæ sanguinis decurrentis in terram.”—*Luke*, 22:44.

4789 “Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

4790 “Surgite eamus; ecce, qui me tradet, prope est.”—*Mark*, 14:42.

4791 “Quem quæritis?”—*John*, 18:4.

4792 “Comprehenderunt Jesum, et ligaverunt eum.”—*John*, 18:12.

4793 “Oblatus est quia ipse voluit, et non aperuit os suum; sicut ovis ad occisionem ducetur.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

4794 “Tunc discipuli ejus, relinquentes eum, omnes fugerunt.”—*Mark*, 14:50.

4795 “At illi, tenentes Jesum, duxerunt ad Caipham, principem sacerdotum, ubi Scribæ et Seniores convenerant.”—*Matt.* 26:57.

4796 “Deus meus, et omnia!”

4797 “Ego palam locutus sum mundo; . . . ecce hi sciunt quæ dixerim ego.”—*John*, 18:20.

4798 “Hæc autem cum dixisset, unus assistens ministrorum dedit alapam Jesu, dicens: Sic respondes Pontifici?”—*John*, 18:22.

4799 “Si male locutus sum, testimonium perhibe de malo; si autem bene, quid me cædis?”—*Ibid.* 23.

4800 “Quærebant falsum testimonium contra Jesum, ut eum morti traderent; et non invenerunt.”—*Matt.* 26:59.

4801 “Adjuro te per Deum vivum, ut dicas nobis si tu es Christus Filius Dei.”—*Matt.* 26:63.

4802 “Ego sum; et videbitis Filium hominis sedentem a dextris virtutis Dei et venientem cum nubibus cœli.”—*Mark.* 14:62.

4803 “Tunc Princeps sacerdotum scidit vestimenta sua, dicens: Blasphemavit; quid adhuc egemus testibus? Ecce nunc audistis blasphemiam; quid vobis videtur?”—*Matt.* 26:65.

4804 “At illi respondents dixerunt: Reus est mortis.”—*Ibid.* 66.

4805 “Tunc exspuerunt in faciem ejus, et colaphis eum ceciderunt; alii autem palmas in faciem ejus dederunt, dicentes: Prophetiza nobis, Christe, quis est qui te percussit?”—*Ibid.* 67.

4806 “Et cœperunt . . . velare faciem ejus.”—*Mark*, 14:65.

4807 “Mane autem facto, consilium inierunt . . . adversus Jesum, ut eum morti traderent; et vinctum adduxerunt eum et tradiderunt Pontio Pilato præsidi.”—*Matt.* 27:1.

4808 “Exivit ad Judæos, et dicit eis: Ego nullam invenio in eo causam.”—*John,* 18:38.

4809 “Remisit eum ad Herodem, qui et ipse Jerosolymis erat illis diebus.”—*Luke,* 23:7.

4810 “Interrogabat autem eum multis sermonibus; al ipse nihil illi respondebat.”—*Ibid.* 9.

4811 “Loquere, Domine, quia audit servus tuus.”—1 *Reg.* 3:10.

4812 “Sprevit autem illam Herodes cum exercitu suo; et illusit indutum vesie aiba, et remisit ad Pratum.”—*Luke* 23:11.

4813 “Non enim judicali me scire aliquid inter vos. nisi Jesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum.”—1 *Cor.* 2:2

4814 “Quem vultis dimittam vobis, Barabbam an Jesum?”—*Matt.* 27:17.

4815 “At illi dixerunt: Barabbam.”—*Matt.* 27:21.

4816 “Quid igitur faciam de Jesu? Dicunt omnes: Crucifigatur!”—*Ibid.* 22.

4817 “Quid enim mail fecit? At illi magis clamabant, dicentes: Crucifigatur!”—*Ibid.* 23.

4818 “Qui etiam proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum.”—*Rom.* 8:32.

4819 “Sic Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret.”—*John.* 3:16.

4820 “O mira circa nos tuæ pietatis dignatio! o inæstimabilis dilectio charitatis! ut servum redimeres, Filium tradidisti.”—*In Sabb. S.*

4821 “Tunc ergo apprehendit Pilatus Jesum, et flagellavit.”—*John,* 19:1.

4822 “Obtulistis mihi hunc hominem . . . ; et ecce ego, coram vobis interrogans, nullam causam inveni . . . ; sed neque Herodes . . . ; emendatum ergo illum dimittam.”—*Luke,* 23:14, 15.

4823 “Tunc ergo apprehendit Pilatus Jesum, et flagellavit.”—*John,* 19:1.

4824 “Et super dolorem vulnerum meorum addiderunt.”—*Ps.* 68:27.

4825 “Ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras, attritus est propter scelera nostra.”—*Isa.* 53:5.

4826 “Non est ei species neque decor; et vidimus eum, et non erat aspectus.”—*Isa.* 53:2.

4827 “Et quasi absconditus vultus ejus et despectus; unde nec reputavimus eum.”—*Ibid.* 3.

4828 “Et nos putavimus eum quasi leprosum, et percussum a Deo, et humiliatum.”—*Ibid.* 4.

4829 “Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit.”—*Ibid.* 4.

4830 “Sicut agnus coram tondente se sine voce, sic non aperuit os suum.”—*Acts,* 8:32.

4831 “Baptisimo autem habeo baptizari; et quomodo coarctor usquedum perficiatur!”—*Luke,* 12:50.

4832 “Tunc milites Præsidis, suscipientes Jesum in prætorium, congregaverunt ad eum universum cohortem: et exuentes eum chlamydem coccineam circumdederunt ei; et plectentes coronam de spinis, posuerunt super caput ejus, et arundinem in dextera ejus.”—*Matt.* 27:27.

4833 “Et exspuentes in eum, acceperunt arundinem, et percutiebant caput ejus.”—*Matt,* 27:30.

4834 “Qui, cum malediceretur, non maledicebat; cum pateretur, non comminabatur; tradebat autem judicanti se injuste.”—1 *Pet.* 2:23.

4835 “Dabit percutienti se maxillam, saturabitur opprobriis.”—*Lam.* 3:30.

4836 “Et genu flexo ante eum, illudebant ei, dicentes: Ave, Rex Judaeorum!”—*Matt,* 27:29.

4837 “Et dabant ei alapas.”—*John.* 19:3.

4838 “Exivit iterum Pilatus foras . . . , et dicit eis: Ecce Homo.”—*John,* 19:4, 5.

4839 “Exivit ergo Jesus portans coronam spineam et purpureum vestimentum.”—*John,* 19:5.

4840 “Cum ergo vidissent eum Pontifices et ministri, clamabant dicentest: Crucifige, crucifige eum.”—*Ibid.* 6.

4841 “Quærebat Pilatus dimittere eum.”—*John,* 19:12.

4842 “Judæi autem clamabant dicentes: Si hunc dimittis non es amicus Cæsaris; omnis enim qui se regem facit, contradicit Cæsari.”—*Ibid.*

4843 “Pilatus autem, cum audisset hos sermones, adduxit foras Jesum, et sedit pro tribunali.”—*John,* 19:13.

4844 “Dicit Judæis: Ecce Rex vester.”—*Ibid.* 14.

4845 “Illi autem clamabant: Tolle, tolle, crucifige eum.”—*Ibid.* 15.

4846 “Regem vestrum crucifigam?”—*Ibid.* 15.

4847 “Responderunt Pontifices: Non habemus regem, nisi Cæsarem!” *Ibid.* 19:15.

4848 “Tunc ergo tradidit eis illum, ut crucifigeretur.”—*John,* 19:16.

4849 “Accepta aqua, lavit manus coram populo, dicens: Innocens ego sum a sanguine justi hujus; vos videritis.”—*Matt,* 27:24.

4850 “Jesum vero tradidit voluntati eorum.”—*Luke*, 23:25.

4851 “Sanguis ejus super nos, et super filios nostros.”—*Matt,* 27:25.

4852 “Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

4853 “Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.”—*Ps.* 88:2.

4854 “Exuerunt eum chlamyde, et induerunt eum vestimentis ejus, et duxerunt eum ut crucifigerent.”—*Matt,* 27:31.

4855 “Et bajulans sibi crucem, exivit in eum, qui dicitur Calvariæ, locum.”—*John,* 19:17.

4856 “Et dicebant excessum ejus, quem completurus erat in Jerusalem.”—*Luke,* 9:31.

4857 “Ego quasi agnus mansuetus qui portatur ad victimam.”—*Jer.* 11:19.

4858 “Sequebatur autem illum multa turba populi et mulierum, quæ plangebant et lamentabantur eum.”—*Luke,* 23:27.

4859 “Si in viridi ligno hæc faciunt, in arido quid fiet?”—*Ibid.* 31.

4860 “Et factus est principatus super humerum ejus.”—*Isa.* 9:6.

4861 “Si quis vult post me venire, . . . tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me.”—*Matt.* 16:24.

4862 “Invenerunt hominem Cyrenæum, nomine Simonem; hunc angariaverunt ut tolleret crucem ejus.”—*Matt.* 27:32.

4863 “Et imposuerunt illi crucem portare post Jesum.”—*Luke,* 23:26.

4864 “Maledictus omnis qui pendet in ligno.”—*Gal.* 3:13.

4865 “Eradamus eum de terra viventium, et nomen ejus non memoretur amplius.”—*Jer.* 11:19.

4866 “Et dederunt ei vinum bibere cum felle mixtum; et cum gustasset, noluit bibere.”—*Matt.* 27:34.

4867 “Crucifixerunt eum, et cum eo alios duos, hinc et hinc, medium autem Jesum.”—*John,* 19:18.

4868 “Et cum sceleratis reputatus est.”—*Isa.* 53:12.

4869 “Sanguis ejus super nos.”—*Matt.* 27:25.

4870 “Accessistis ad . . . Mediatorem Jesum, et sanguinis aspersionem, melius loqueniem, quam Abel.”—*Heb.* 12:24.

4871 “Et ego, si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad meipsum.”—*John,* 12:32.

4872 “Diviserunt sibi vestimenta mea, et super vestem meam miserunt sortem.”—*Ps.* 21:19.

4873 “Sub umbra illius, quem desideraveram, sedi.”—*Cant.* 2:3.

4874 “Si Filius Dei es, descende de cruce.”—*Matt.* 27:40.

4875 “Vah! qui destruis templum Dei, et in triduo illud reædificas, salva temetipsum.”—*Ibid.*

4876 “Alios salvos fecit, seipsum non potest salvum facere.”—*Ibid.* 42.

4877 “Pater! dimitte illis; non enim sciunt quid faciunt.”—*Luke,* 23:34.

4878 “Domine! memento mei, cum veneris in regnum tuum.”—*Luke,* 23:42.

4879 “Amen dico tibi: Hodie mecum eris in paradiso.”—*Ibid.* 43.

4880 “Si autem impius egerit pœnitentiam . . . , omnium iniquitatum ejus . . . non recordabor.”—*Ezek.* 18:21.

4881 “Stabant autem juxta crucem Jesu Mater ejus. . . .”—*John,* 19:25.

4882 “Mulier, ecce filius tuus!”—*John,* 19:26.

4883 “Circa horam nonam, clamavit Jesus voce magna, dicens . . . Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?”—*Matt.* 27:46.

4884 “Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.”—*Matt.* 26:38.

4885 “Et sustinui qui simul contristaretur, et non fuit; et qui consolaretur, et non inveni.”—*Ps.* 68:21.

4886 “Postea, sciens Jesus quia omnia consummata sunt, ut consummaretur Scriptura, dixit: Sitio! . . . Illi autem spongiam plenam aceto . . . obtulerunt ori ejus.”—*John*, 19:28, 29.

4887 “Et in siti mea potaverunt me aceto.”—*Ps.* 68:22.

4888 “Cum ergo accepisset Jesus acetum, dixit: Consummatum est.”—*John*, 19:30.

4889 “Et clamans voce magna, Jesus ait: Pater! in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.”—*Luke*, 23:46.

4890 “Et inclinato capite, tradidit spiritum.”—*John*, 19:30.

4891 “Charitas Christi urget nos.”—2 *Cor.* 5:14.

4892 *Love of God.*—B. 7, ch. 8.

4893 Ibid. bk. 12, ch. 13.

4894 Ibid. bk. 7, ch. 8; bk. 12, ch. 13.

4895 In this introduction, the saintly author informs us that when he wrote this treatise he was seventy-seven years of age. This was thirteen years after he had written the *Simple Exposition of the Passion.* The considerations he wrote less for the use of others than for his own spiritual advantage, being desirous of preparing himself well for death. He sent the little work to a pious person, with a letter dated September 8, 1773, in which he says: “You may use this little book in your prayers when you meditate on the Passion. I am using it myself every day. I desire that you should not allow a day to pass without recalling to your mind, with the aid of this or another book, something of the Passion. The Passion was for the saints a continual subject of meditation.”—ED.

4896 “Quotiescumque enim manducabitis panem hunc, et calicem bibetis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis.”—1 *Cor.* 11:26.

4897 “Hæc quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis.”

4898 “Ut autem tanti beneficii jugis in nobis maneret memoria, corpus suum in cibum sumendum dereliquit.”—*Opusc.* 57.

4899 “Per quod recolitur memoria illius, quam in sua passione Christus monstravit, excellentissimæ charitatis.”

4900 “Nihil tam salutiferum, quam quotidie cogitare quanta pro nobis pertulit Deus Homo.”—*Ad Fr. in er. s.* 32.

4901 *Concl. an.* p. 2, c. 2.

[4902] *Sac. an.* p. 3, c. 21.

[4903] “O passio mirabilis, quæ suum meditatorem reddit divinum!”

[4904] “Vulnera, corda saxea vulnerantia, et mentes congelatas inflammantia.”—*Stim. div. am.* p. 1, c. 1.

[4905] “Regnum meum non est de hoc mundo.”—*John,* 18:36.

[4906] “Quid est quod sic turbaris, Herodes? Rex iste. qui natus est, non venit reges pugnando superare, sed moriendo mirabiliter subjugare.”—*S. de Epiph. et Inn. nece.*

[4907] “Et erit fides in temporibus tuis; divitiæ salutis, sapientia et scientia; timor Domini ipse est thesaurus ejus.”

[4908] “Ad annuntiandum mansuetis misit me, ut mederer contritis corde, et prædicarem captivis indulgentiam, et clausis apertionem.”—*Isa.* 33:6; 61:1.

[4909] “Dominus a dextris tuis, confregit in die iræ suæ reges; judicabit in nationibus, implebit ruinas: conquassabit capita in terra multorum.”—*Ps.* 109:5.

[4910] “Gladius Domini devorabit ab extremo terræ usque ad extremum ejus.”—*Jer.* 12:12.

[4911] “Ecce Rex tuus veniet tibi justus et Salvator: ipse pauper et ascendens super asinam et super pullum filium asinæ.”—*Zach.* 9:9.

[4912] “Et invenit Jesus asellum et sedit super eum, sicut scriptum est: Noli timere, filia Sion: ecce Rex tuus venit sedens super pullum asinæ.”—*John,* 12:14

[4913] “Et tu, Bethlehem Ephrata, parvulus es in millibus Juda: ex te mihi egredietur, qui sit dominator in Israel: et egressus ejus ab initio, a diebus æternitatis.”—*Mich.* 5:2.

[4914] *Matt.* 2:6; *John,* 7:42.

[4915] “Ex Ægypto vocavi Filium meum.”—*Os.* 11:1.

[4916] “Pauper sum ego et in laboribus a juventute mea.”—*Ps.* 87:16.

[4917] “Hostiam et oblationem noluisti, corpus autem aptasti mihi.”—*Heb.* 10:5.

[4918] “Tunc dixi: Ecce venio: in capite libri scriptum est de me, ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam.”—*Heb.* 10:5–7.

[4919] “Super quo percutiam vos ultra?”—*Isa.* 1:5.

4920 “Propter scelus populi mei percussi eum.”—*Isa* 53:8.

4921 “Et Dominus voluit conterere eum in infirmitate.”—*Ibid.* 10.

4922 “Proposito sibi gaudio, sustinuit crucem.”—*Heb.* 12:2.

4923 “Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit.”—*Isa.* 53:4.

4924 *Lev.* 16:5.

4925 “Factus pro nobis maledictum.”—*Gal.* 3:13.

4926 “Eum, qui non noverat peccatum, pro nobis peccatum fecit ut nos efficeremur justitia Dei in ipso.”—2 *Cor.* 5:21.

4927 *Num.* 21:8.

4928 “Sicut Moyses exaltavit serpentem in deserto, ita exaltari oportet Filium hominis, ut omnis qui credit in ipsum, non pereat, sed habeat vitam æternam.”—*John,* 3:14.

4929 “Si enim est verus Filius Dei, suscipiet illum et liberabit eum.”—*Wisd.* 2:18.

4930 “Confidit in Deo; liberet nunc, si vult eum; dixit enim: Quia Filius Dei sum.”—*Matt.* 27:43.

4931 “Contumelia et tormento interrogemus cum . . . , et probemus patientiam illius; morte turpissima condemnemus eum.”—*Wisd.* 2:19.

4932 “Mittamus lignum in panem ejus, et eradamus eum de terra viventium; et nomen ejus non memoretur amplius.”—*Jer.* 11:19.

4933 “Qui etiam proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum; quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* 8:32.

4934 “Sic enim Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret.”—*John,* 3:16.

4935 “O mira circa nos tuæ pietatis dignatio! o inæstimabilis dilectio charitatis! ut servum redimeres, Filium tradidisti.”

4936 “Melioris Testamenti sponsor factus est Jesus.”—*Heb.* 7:22.

4937 “Gratiam fidejussoris ne obliviscaris; dedit enim pro te animam suam.”—*Ecclus.* 29:20.

4938 Delens quod adversus nos erat chirographum decreti, quod erat contrarium nobis, et ipsum tulit de medio, affigens illud cruci.”—*Col.* 2:14.

4939 “Et non est in alio aliquo salus; nee enim aliud nomen est sub cœlo datum hominibus, in quo oporteat nos salvos fieri.”—*Acts.* 4:12.

4940 *Theol. mor.*1. 2, tr. 1.

4941 “Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

4942 “Quotiescumque enim manducabitis panem hunc, et calicem bibetis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis.”—1 *Cor.* 11:26.

4943 “Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum.”—*Ibid.* 2:2.

4944 “In quacumque tribulatione invenitur ejus remedium in cruce; ibi est obedientia ad Deum, ibi chartias ad proximum, ibi patientia in adversis. Unde Augustinus: Crux non solum fuit patibulum patientis, sed etiam cathedra docentis.”—*In Heb.* 12 *lect.* 1.

4945 “Sub umbra illius, quem desideraveram, sedi.”—*Cant.* 2:3.

4946 “Oh! si scires mysterium crucis!”

4947 “Quis potest nominari aut Regum aut Prophetarum, in quem hæc congruant? Nemo sane!”—*De ver. rel. chr.*1. 5, n. 10.

4948 “Quis credidit auditui nostro? et brachium Domini cui revelatum est?”—*Isa.* 53:1.

4949 “Cum autem tanta signa fecisset coram eis, non credebant in eum; ut sermo Isaiæ Prophetæ impleretur, quem dixit: Domine, quis credidit auditui nostro? et brachium Domini cui revelatum est?”—*John,* 12:37.

4950 “Et ascendet sicut virgultum coram eo, et sicut radix de terra sitienti.”—*Isa.* 53:2.

4951 “Non est species ei neque decor.”—*Ibid.*

4952 “Et vidimus eum, et non erat aspectus, et desideravimus eum.”—*Ibid.*

4953 “Despectum, et novissimum virorum, virum dolorum. . . . unde nec reputavimus eum.”—*Isa.* 53:3.

4954 “O novissimum et altissimum! o humilem et sublimem! o opprobrium hominum et gloriam angelorum! nemo illo sublimior, neque humilior.”—*S. de Pass. D.*

4955 “Desiderabis subjici omnibus, et reformidabis præferri etiam minimo.”—*Ibid.*

4956 “Magna est velut mare contritio tua.”—*Lam.* 2:13.

4957 “Et omnes fluctus tuos induxisti super me.”—*Ps.* 87:8.

4958 “Veni in altitudinem maris, et tempestas demersit me.”—*Ps.* 68:3.

4959 “Quem proposuit Deus propitiationem per fidem in sanguine ipsius, ad ostensionem justitiæ suæ.”—*Rom.* 3:25.

4960 “Deus Filium suum mittens in similitudinem carnis peccati, et de peccato damnavit peccatum in carne.”—*Ibid.* 8:3.

4961 “Oblatus est. quia ipse voluit.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

4962 “Et posui: Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.”—*Ibid.* 6.

4963 “Factus pro nobis maledictum.”—*Gal.* 3:13.

4964 “Uterque autem dolor in Christo fuit maximus inter dolores præsentis vitæ.”—P. 3, q. 46, a. 6.

4965 “Corpus autem aptasti mihi.”—*Heb.* 10:5.

4966 “Ecce homo!”—*John.* 19:5.

4967 “Præ doloris magnitudine sensum doloris amittunt.”

4968 “Et nos putavimus eum quasi leprosum, et percussum a Deo, et humiliatum. Ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras, attritus est propter scelera nostra. Disciplina pacis nostræ super eum, et livore ejus sanati sumus. Omnes nos quasi oves erravimus, unusquisque in viam suam declinavit; et posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.”—*Isa.* 53:4–6.

4969 “Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit; et non aperuit os suum. Et quasi agnus coram tondente se, obmutescet.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

4970 “Tu autem eruisti animam meam ut non periret, projecisti post tergum tuum omnia peccata mea.”—*Isa.* 38:17.

4971 “Ego pono animam meam. . . . Nemo tollit eam a me, sed ego pono eam a meipso.”—*John,* 10:17.

4972 “Æmulos habebat, pares non habet.”—*In Luc.* xxii.

4973 “Et posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.”—*Isa.* 53:6.

4974 “Peccata nostra ipse pertulit in corpore suo super lignum.”—1 *Pet.* 2:24.

4975 “Non solum attendit quantam virtutem dolor ejus haberet, sed etiam quantum dolor ejus sufficeret secundum humanam naturam ad tantam satisfactionem.”—P. 3, q. 46, a. 6.

4976 “Tantum voluit doloris sufferre, quantum si ipse omnia peccata fecisset.”

4977 “Et Dominus voluit conterere eum in infirmitate.”—*Isa.* 53:10.

4978 “Nullus potuit ei æquari vivacitate sensus; dolor illius omnium dolorum fuit acutissimus.”—*In Sent.*1. 3, d. 16, a. 1, q. 2.

4979 “Dolor in Christo fuit maximus inter dolores præsentis vitæ.”—P. 3, q. 46, a. 6.

4980 “In singulis singula Martyrum sustinebat tormenta.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 19.

4981 “Super me confirmatus est furor tuus . . . ; in me transierunt iræ tuæ.”—*Ps.* 87:8, 17.

4982 “Factus pro nobis maledictum.”—*Gal.* 3:13.

4983 “Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem,”—*Matt.* 26:38.

4984 “Apparuit autem illi Angelus de cœlo, confortans eum.”—*Luke,* 22:43.

4985 “Confortatio dolorem non minuit, sed auxit.”

4986 “Confortatus est ex fructus magnitudine, non subtracta doloris magnitudine.”

4987 “Et factus in agonia, prolixius orabat. Et factus est sudor ejus sicut guttæ sanguinis decurrentis in terram.”—*Luke,* 22:43, 44.

4988 “Dolor fuit in summo.”

4989 “Pater mi! si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste.”—*Matt.* 26:39.

4990 “Oblatus est, quia ipse vomit.”

4991 “Verumtamen, non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu.”—*Matt.* 26:44.

4992 “Et oravit tertio, eundem sermonem dicens.”—*Mark*, 14:39.

4993 “Corpus meum dedi percutientibus, et genas meas vellentibus; faciem meam non averti ab increpantibus et conspuentibus in me.”—*Isa.* 50:6.

4994 “Et cœperunt quidam conspuere eum, et velare faciem ejus, et colaphis eum cædere, et dicere ei: Prophetiza!—Et ministri alapis eum cædebant.”—*Mark,* 14:65.

4995 “Sicut ovis ad occisionem ducetur.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

4996 “Si posuerit pro peccato animam suam, videbit semen longævum . . . ; in scientia sua justificabit ipse justus servus meus multos.”—*Isa.* 53:10, 11.

4997 “Foderunt manus meas et pedes meos; dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea.”

4998 “Diviserunt sibi vestimenta mea, et super vestem meam miserunt sortem.”—*Ps.* 21:19; *Matt.* 27:35; *John*, 19:23.

4999 “Prætereuntes autem blasphemabant eum, moventes capita sua et dicentes: Vah, qui destruis templum Dei, et in triduo illud reædificas, salva temetipsum; si Filius Dei es, descende de cruce. Similiter et Principes sacerdotum illudentes cum Scribis et Senioribus dicebant: Alios salvos fecit, seipsum non potest salvum facere; si Rex Israel est, descendat nunc de cruce, et credimus ei. Confidit in Deo; liberet nunc, si vult eum; dixit enim: Quia Filius Dei sum.”—*Matt.* 27:40–43.

5000 “Omnes videntes me deriserunt me; locuti sunt labiis et move runt caput: Speravit in Domino, eripiat eum; salvum faciat eum, quoniam vult eum.”—*Ps.* 21:8, 9.

5001 “Et sustinui qui simul contristaretur, et non fuit; et qui consolaretur, et non inveni.”—*Ps.* 68:21.

5002 “Deus meus, respice in me; quare medereliquisti? longe a salute mea verba delictorum meorum.”—*Ps.* 21:2.

5003 “Eli! Eli! lamma sabacthani?—Hoc est: Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid delerequisti me?”—*Matt.* 27:46.

5004 “Dabit percutienti se maxillam, saturabitur opprobriis.”—*Lam.* 3:30.

5005 “Hæc non cognoverunt discipuli ejus primum; sed, quando glorificatus est Jesus, tunc recordati sunt quia hæc erant scripta de eo, et hæc fecerunt ei.”—*John,* 12:16.

5006 “Justitia et Pax osculatæ sunt.”—*Ps.* 84:11.

5007 “Speret Israel in Domino, quia apud Dominum misericordia, et copiosa apud eum redemptio.”—*Ps.* 129:6.

5008 “Utinam appenderentur peccata mea . . . , et calamitas quam patior, in statera! quasi arena maris hæc gravior appareret.”—*Job,* 6:2.

5009 “Delicta nostra sua delicta fecit, ut justitiam suam nostram justitiam faceret.”—*In Ps.* 21. *en.* 2.

5010 “In statera divinæ Justitiæ, passio Christi præponderat peccatis humanæ naturæ.”

5011 “Ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris, . . . etiam pro totius mundi.”—1 *John,* 2:2.

5012 “Tua in ejus afflictionibus metire delicta.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 20.

5013 “Semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens.”—*Phil.* 2:7.

5014 “Non solum formam servi accepit, ut subesset, sed etiam mali servi, ut vapularet.”—*S. de Pass. D.*

5015 “Hic est enim sanguis meus novi testamenti, qui pro multis effundetur.”—*Matt.* 26:28.

5016 “Tradetur enim Gentibus, et illudetur, et flagellabitur.”—*Luke,* 18:32.

5017 “Jubente lictore, seipsum vestibus exuit, columnam sponte amplectens ligatur, et flagellis, non evellendo, sed sulcando, totum corpus laceratur.”—*Rev.*1. 4, c. 70.

5018 “Ita ut costæ viderentur.”—*Ibid.*1. 1, c. 10.

5019 “Sacratissimum corpus Dei flagella secuerunt.”—*In Matt.* 27.

5020 “Usque ad defatigationem.”

5021 “Attritus est propter scelera nostra.”—*Isa.* 53:5.

5022 “Quæ (corona) tam vehementer caput Filii mei pupugit, ut ex sanguine affluente replerentur oculi ejus.—Ad medium frontis descendebat, plurimis rivis sanguinis decurrentibus per faciem ejus, ut quasi nihil nisi sanguis totum videretur.”—*Rev.*1. 1, c. 10;1. 4, c. 70.

5023 “Corona spinea, semel imposita, et nunquam detracta.”—*In Matt. tr.* 35.

5024 “Milites ergo, cum crucifixissent eum, acceperunt vestimenta ejus (et fecerunt quatuor partes, unicuique militi partem), et tunicam; erat autem tunica inconsutilis, desuper contexta per totum; dixerunt ergo ad invicem: Non scindamus eam, sed sortiamur de illa cujus sit.”—*John,* 19:23, 24.

5025 “Maledicta terra in opere tuo . . . ; spinas et tribulos germinabit tibi.”—*Gen.* 3:17.

5026 “Hunc (Christum) enim oportebat pro omnibus gentibus fieri sacrificium.”—*Adv. Judæos.*

5027 “Et exeuntes eum, chlamydem coccineam circumdederunt ei; et plectentes coronam de spinis, posuerunt super caput ejus, et arundinem in dextera ejus; et genu flexo ante eum, illudebant ei, dicentes: Ave, Rex Judæorum. Et expuentes in eum, acceperunt arundinem, et percutiebant caput ejus.—*Matt.* 27:28–30.

5028 “Et dabant ei alapas.”—*John.* 19:3.

5029 “Et. bajulans sibi crucem, exivit in eum, qui dicitur Calvariæ, locum”—*John,* 19:17.

5030 “Si pectet impietas, grande ludibrium; si pietas, grande mysterium.”—*In Jo. tr.* 117.

5031 “Factus est principatus super humerum ejus.”—*Isa.* 9:6.

5032 “Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me.”—*Matt.* 16:24.

5033 “Spes Christianorum, desperatorum Via.”

5034 “Navigantium Gubernator.”

5035 “Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me, ut discam justificationes tuas.”—*Ps.* 118:71.

5036 “Justorum Consiliarius.”

5037 “Tribulatorum Requies.”

5038 “Martyrum Gloriatio.”

5039 “Mihi absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi.”—*Gal.* 6:14.

5040 “Ægrotantium Medicus.”

5041 “Sitientium Fons.”

5042 “Voluntarie extendit brachium, et, aperta sua dextera manu, posuit eam in cruce; quam tortores crucifixerunt.”—*Rev.* 1. 7, c. 15.

5043 “Mors ipsa protendebatur, ne dolor citius finiretur.”—*In Jo. tr.* 36.

5044 “Et cum sceleratis reputatus est.”—*Isa.* 53:12.

5045 “Medium in Sancta Triade, medium inter Moysen et Eliam, medium inter Latrones!”

5046 “Et cum sceleratis reputatus est, et ipse peccata multorum tulit.”—*Isa.* 53:12.

5047 “Quis est iste qui venit de Edom, tinctis vestibus de Bosra? iste formosus in stola sua, gradiens in multitudine fortitudinis suæ.”—*Isa.* 63:1.

5048 “Ego, qui loquor justitiam, et propugnator sum ad salvandum.”—*Isa.* 63:1.

5049 “Quare ergo rubrum est vestimentum tuum, et vestimenta tua sicut calcantium in torculari?”—*Ibid.* 2.

5050 “Torcular calcavi solus, et de gentibus non est vir mecum.”—*Ibid.* 3.

5051 “Et vestitus erat veste aspersa sanguine, et vocatur nomen ejus Verbum Dei.”—*Apoc.* 19:13.

5052 “Torcular in quo calcatus calcavit.”—*In Ez. hom.* 13.

5053 “Et voluit Dominus conterere eum in infirmitate.”—*Isa.* 53:10.

5054 “Speciosus forma præ filiis hominum.”—*Ps.* 44:3.

5055 “Pendebat in cruce deformis, sed deformitas illius pulchritudo nostra erat.”—*Serm.* 27, *E. B.*

5056 “Hi qui amicti sunt stolis albis, qui sunt? . . . Hi sunt qui venerunt de tribulatione magna, et laverunt stolas suas et dealbaverunt eas in sanguine Agni.”—*Apoc.* 7:13.

5057 “Et ego, si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad meipsum.”—*John,* 12:32.

5058 “Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.”—*Ps.* 88:2.

5059 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum.”—*Deut.* 6:5.

5060 “Quoniam propter te sustinui opprobrium, operuit confusio faciem meam.”—*Ps.* 68:8.

5061 “Qui, proposito sibi gaudio, sustinuit crucem, confusione contempta.”—*Heb.* 12:2.

5062 “Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi! miserere mei.”

5063 “Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?”—*Matt.* 27:46.

5064 “Veni in altitudinem maris, et tempestas demersit me.”—*Ps.* 68:3.

5065 “Prætereuntes autem blasphemabant eum, moventes capita sua.”—*Matt.* 27:39.

5066 “Omnes videntes me deriserunt me, locuti sunt labiis et moverunt caput.”—*Ps.* 21:8.

5067 “Vah, qui destruis templum Dei, et in triduo illud reædificas!”—*Matt.* 27:40.

5068 “Solvite templum hoc, et in tribus diebus excitabo illud.”—*John,* 2:19.

5069 “Salva temetipsum!”

5070 “Si Filius Dei es, descende de cruce.”—*Matt.* 27:40.

5071 “Noluit descendere, ne descenderet sibi, sed ut moreretur mihi.”—*In Luc.* 23.

5072 “Diabolus incitabat illos ut dicerent: Descendat nunc de cruce,—quia cognoscebat quod salus per crucem fieret.”—*In Marc.* 15.

5073 “Si voluisset descendere, neque a principio ascendisset.”

5074 “Volebant enim ut tamquam seductor in conspectu omnium vituperatus decederet.”—*In Matt. hom.* 88.

5075 “Qui Filius Dei est, ideo non descendit de cruce; nam ideo venit, ut crucifigeretur pro nobis.”—*De Cruce et Latr. hom.* 2.

5076 “Neque descendendo de cruce voluit Filius Dei agnosci, sed ex eo quod in cruce permaneret.”—*Serm. de Pass. et Cr.*

5077 “Christus nos redemit de maledicto legis, factus pro nobis maledictum; quia scriptum est: Maledictus omnis qui pendet in ligno.”—*Gal.* 3:13.

5078 “Alios salvos fecit, seipsum non potest salvum facere.”—*Matt.* 27:42.

5079 “Non vestræ cæcitatis arbitrio, o stulti Scribæ, ostendenda erat potentia Salvatoris; nec secundum preces blasphemantium linguarum, humani generis redemptio debebat omitti.”—*De Pass.* s. 17.

5080 “Si de cruce tunc descenderet, virtutem nobis patientiæ non demonstraret.”—*In Evang. hom.* 21.

5081 “Quia patientiam docebat, ideo potentiam differebat.”—*In Jo. tr.* 37.

5082 “Exeamus igitur ad eum extra castra, improperium ejus portantes.”—*Heb.* 13:13.

5083 “Confidit in Deo; liberet nunc si vult eum; dixit enim: Quia Filius Dei sum.”—*Matt.* 27:43.

5084 “Speravit in Domino, eripiat eum; salvum faciat eum, quoniam vult eum.”—*Ps.* 21:9.

5085 “Tauri pingues obsederunt me. . . . Circumdederunt me canes multi. . . . Salva me ex ore leonis.”—*Ps.* 21:13, 17, 22.

5086 “Liberet nunc, si vult eum.”—*Matt.* 27:43.

5087 “Promittit se scientiam Dei habere, et Filium Dei se nominat . . . , et gloriatur Patrem se habere Deum. Si enim est verus Filius Dei, suscipiet illum, et liberabit eum de manibus contrariorum. Contumelia et tormento interrogemus eum, ut sciamus reverentiam ejus, et probemus patientiam illius; morte turpissima condemnemus eum.”—*Wisd.* 2:13, 16, 18–20.

5088 “Animam meam pono pro ovibus meis. . . . Propterea me diligit Pater, quia ego pono animam meam.”—*John,* 10:15, 17.

5089 “Totum denique Dei mei penes vos dedecus, sacramentum est humanæ salutis.”

5090 “Sibi quidem indigna, homini autem necessaria: et ita jam Deo digna, quia nihil tam dignum Deo, quam salus hominis.”—*Adv. Marc.*1. 2.

5091 Qui me erubuerit et meos sermones, hunc Filius hominis erubescet, cum venerit in majestate sua.”—*Luke,* 9:26.

5092 *Luke,* 23:34.

5093 “Illis petebat veniam a quibus adhuc accipiebat injuriam; non enim attendebat, quod ab ipsis moriebatur, sed quia pro ipsis moriebatur.”—*In Jo. tr.* 31.

5094 “Non quia non posset ipse relaxare, sed ut nos pro persequentibus orare doceret.”

5095 “Mira res! ille clamabat: Ignosce!—Judæi: Crucifige!”—*S. de Pass. D.*

5096 “Cum ipse ad hoc nitatur ut salventur, Judæi ad hoc ut damnentur. Plus debet apud Deum posse Filii charitas, quam populi cæcitas.”—*De* 7 *Verbis.*

5097 “Vivificatur Christi sanguine, etiam qui fudit sanguinem Christi.”—*De Bono pat.*

5098 *Serm.* 49, *E. B.*

5099 “Impetravit quod petierat Christus, multaque statim de Judæis millia crediderunt.”—*Ad Hedib.* q. 8.

5100 “Vos semper Spiritui Sancto resistitis.”—*Acts,* 7:51.

5101 “Misit me, ut mederer contritis corde.”—*Isa.* 61:1.

5102 “Venit enim Filius hominis salvare quod perierat.”—*Matt.* 18:11.

5103 *Luke,* 23:43.

5104 “Si tu es Christus, salvum fac temetipsum et nos. Et nos quidem juste, nam digna factis recipimus; hie vero nihil mali gessit. Domine, memento mei, cum veneris in regnum tuum. Amen dico tibi: Hodie mecum eris in paradiso “—*Luke,* 23:39–43.

5105 “Ibi credit, timet, compungitur et pœnitet, confitetur et prædicat, amat, confidit, orat.”—*De* 7 *Verbis.*

5106 “Regnaturum credidit, quem morientem vidit.”—*Mor.*1. 18, c. 25.

5107 “Non est ausus ante dicere, ‘Memento mei;’ quam, post confesionem iniquitatis, sarcinam peccatorum deponeret.”—*Serm.* 155, *E. B. app.*

5108 “O beatum latronem! rapuisti regnum ista confessione.”—*S. contra omn. hær.*

5109 *Lib.* 8, c. 16, q. 12.

5110 “Semper plus Dominus tribuit, quam rogatur. Ille rogabat ut memor sui esset: Dominus autem ait, ‘Hodie mecum eris in paradiso.’ ”—*In Luc.* 23.

[5111] “Nullum ante Latronem invenies repromissionem paradisi meruisse.”

[5112] “Si autem impius egerit pœnitentiam . . . , omnium iniquitatum ejus . . . non recordabor.”—*Ezech.* 18:21, 22.

[5113] “Ad vocem clamoris tui, statim ut audierit, respondebit tibi.”—*Isa.* 30:19.

[5114] “Paratus in amplexus peccatorum.”—*Man.* c. 23.

[5115] *John*, 19:26, 27.

[5116] “Erant autem et mulieres de longe aspicientes, inter quas erat Maria Magdalene.”—*Mark*, 15:40.

[5117] “Stabant autem juxta crucem Jesu Mater ejus, et soror Matris ejus, Maria Cleophæ, et Maria Magdalene.”—*John*, 19:25.

[5118] “Tunc Dei Mater propinquius cruci astitit, quam cæteræ mulieres, Judærum vincens timorem.”—*In Matt.* c. 67.

[5119] “Plane Mater, quæ nec in terrore mortis Filium deserebat.”—*In Ass. B. M.* s. 4.

[5120] “Stantem lego, flentem non lego.”—*Or. de ob. Val.*

[5121] “Plane mater membrorum ejus, quod nos sumus; quia cooperataest charitate ut fideles in Ecclesia nascerentur, qui illius Capitis membra sunt.”—*De S. Virg.* c. 6.

[5122] “Tacebant ambo illi Martyres, et, præ nimio dolore, loqui non poterant.”—*De Lam. V. M.*

[5123] “Cum vidisset ergo Jesus Matrem et Discipulum quem diligebat . . .”—*John*, 19:26.

[5124] “Semper amoris oculus acutius intuetur.”—*Serm.* 78.

[5125] “Morale est ut, quos diligimus, videamus præ cæteris.”—*De Jos, pair.* c. 10.

[5126] “Nec ipse me adstantem cruci videre potuit, nisi sanguine expresso per ciliorum compressionem.”—*Rev.*1. 4, c. 70.

[5127] “Cui Matrem Virginem virgini commendavit.”—*Off. de S. Jo.*

[5128] “Et ex illa hora accepit eam Discipulus in sua.”—*John*, 19:27.

[5129] “Qui vidit, testimonium perhibuit.”—*John*, 19:35.

5130 “Quod vidimus oculis nostris . . . , testamur et annuntiamus.”—1 *John,* 1:1.

5131 “Inimicitias ponam inter te et Mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius: ipsa conteret caput tuum, et tu insidiaberis calcaneo ejus.”—*Gen.* 3:15.

5132 “Omnes enim vos unum estis in Christo Jesu; si autem vos Christi, ergo semen Abrahæ estis.”—*Gal.* 3:28.

5133 “Dixitque Jesus Matri: ‘Ecce filius tuus;’ perinde ac si dixisset: Ecce hic Jesus quem genuisti.—Etenim, qui perfectus est, non amplius vivit ipse, sed in ipso vivit Christus.”

5134 “Promeruit ut, per preces ejus ac merita, meritum passionis Christi communicetur hominibus.”—*De Laud. V. M.*1. 2, a. 23.

5135 *Matt.* 27:46.

5136 “Jesus, pendens in cruce, erat satisfaciens de toto rigore justitiæ suo Parenti, tamquam Judici, pro peccatis generis humani.”—*Lib.* 8, c. 18, q. 3.

5137 “Vox ista doctrina est, non querela.”—*De Pass.* s. 16.

5138 “Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.”—*Luke,* 23:46.

5139 “Qui in diebus carnis suæ, preces supplicationesque ad eum, qui possit illum salvum facere a morte, cum clamore valido et lacrymis offerens, exauditus est pro sua reverentia.”—*Heb.* 5:7.

5140 “De domo mea ejiciam eos; non addam ut diligam eos.”—*Osee,* 9:15.

5141 “Si imminente morte turbaris, non te existimes reprobum, nec desperationi te abjicias; ideo enim Christus turbatus est in conspectu mortis suæ.”

5142 “Pater mi! si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste.”—*Matt.* 26:39.

5143 “Verumtamen, non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu.”—*Ibid.*

5144 “Et oravit tertio, eundem sermonem dicens.”—*Ibid.* 44.

5145 “Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore.”—*Ps.* 33:2.

5146 “Tu autem, Domine, ne elongaveris auxilium tuum a me; ad de fensionem meam conspice.”—*Ps.* 21:20.

5147 *John,* 19:28.

5148 “Postea, sciens Jesus quia omnia consummata sunt, ut consummaretur Scriptura, dixit: Sitio.”—*John*, 19:28.

5149 “Et dederunt in escam meam fel, et in siti mea potaverunt me aceto.”—*Ps.* 68:22.

5150 “Habuit et aliam sitim, puta, amplius patiendi atque evidentius suum nobis demonstrandi amorem.”—*Marg. sp.* p. 3, c. 18.

5151 “Sitis hæc de ardore nascitur charitatis.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 10.

5152 *John*, 19:30.

5153 “Cum ergo accepisset Jesus acetum dixit: consummatum est.”—*Ibid.*

5154 “Per patientiam curramus ad propositum nobis certamen, aspicientes in Auctorem fidei et Consummatorem Jesum, qui, proposito sibi gaudio, sustinuit crucem.”—*Heb.* 12:1.

5155 “Quid te docuit pendens, qui descendere noluit, nisi ut sis fortis in Deo tuo?”—*In Ps.* lxx. s. 1.

5156 “Qui autem perseveraverit usque in finem, hic salvus erit.”—*Matt.* 10:22.

5157 “Recogitate enim eum. . . . Nondum enim usque ad sanguinem restitistis, adversus peccatum repugnantes.”—*Heb.* 12:3, 4.

5158 “In his omnibus superamus propter eum, qui dilexit nos.”—*Rom.* 8:37.

5159 “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* 4:13.

5160 *Luke*, 23:46.

5161 “Clamavit voce magna, ut omnes scirent quod Patrem Deum appellaret.”—*In Matt.* c. 67.

5162 “Ut ostenderet hæc sua potestate fieri.”—*In Matt. hom.* 89.

5163 “Et animam meam pono pro ovibus meis. . . . Nemo tollit eam a me, sed ego pono eam a meipso.”—*John*, 10:15.

5164 “In eo homines apud Patrem commendat per ipsum vivificandos; membra enim sumus, et membra unum corpus sunt. . . . Omnes ergo in se Deo commendat.”

5165 “Pater sancte! serva eos in nomine tuo quos dedisti mihi, ut sint unum sicut et nos. Volo ut, ubi sum ego, et illi sint mecum.”—*John*, 17:11, 24.

5166 “Scio enim cui credidi, et certus sum quia potens est depositum meum servare in illum diem.”—2 *Tim.* 1:12.

5167 “In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine Deus veritatis.”—*Ps.* 30:6.

5168 “In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.”—*Ps.* 30:2.

5169 “Et inclinato capite, tradidit spiritum.”—*John,* 19:30.

5170 “Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

5171 “Mors ad ipsum non audebat accedere; ideo Christus, inclinato capite, eam vocavit.”—*Interpr. par.* q. 41.

5172 “Jesus autem, iterum clamans voce magna, emisit spiritum.”—*Matt.* 27:50.

5173 “ ‘Emisit,’ quia non invitus amisit: quod enim emittitur, voluntarium est; quod amittitur, necessarium.”—*In Luc.* 28.

5174 “De manu mortis liberabo eos, de morte redimam eos: ero mors tua, o mors! morsus tuus ero, inferne.”—*Osee,* 13:14.

5175 “Absorpta est mors in victoria. Ubi est, mors, victoria tua? ubi est, mors, stimulus tuus? Stimulus autem mortis peccatum est.”—1 *Cor.* 15:54.

5176 “Ut per mortem destrueret eum, qui habebat mortis imperium, id est, diabolum.”—*Heb.* 2:14.

5177 “Fulget Crucis mysterium,

Qua Vita mortem pertulit,

Et morte vitam protulit.”—*Off. de Pass.*

5178 “Almique membra corporis

Amor sacerdos immolat.”—*Off. de Temp. Pasch.*

5179 *Love of God,* bk. 7, ch. 8.

5180 “Respice in faciem Christi tui.”—*Ps.* 83:10.

5181 “Propter scelus populi mei percussi eum.”—*Isa.* 53:8.

5182 “Sic enim Deus dilexit mundum, et Filium suum unigenitum daret.”—*John,* 3:16.

5183 “Hic est sanguis meus Novi Testamenti, qui pro multis effundetur.”—*Mark*, 14:24.

5184 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

5185 “Intra in gaudium Domini tui.”—*Matt.* 25:21.

5186 “Patienter vivunt, delectabiliter moriuntur.”—*In 1 Jo. tr.* 9.

5187 “In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.”—*Ps.* 30:2.

5188 “Aut Deus, naturæ Auctor, patitur, aut mundi machina dissolvitur.”

5189 “Deus ignotus in carne patitur; ideoque universum hisce tenebris obscuratur.”—*Enc. B. Dion.*

5190 *Prap. ev.*1. 5, c. 17.

5191 “Magnus Pan mortuus est.”

5192 T. iv.1. 7, c. 21.

5193 “A sexta autem hora, tenebræ factæ sunt super universam terram usque ad horam nonam. Et ecce velum Templi scissum est in duas partes a summo usque deorsum; et terra mota est, et petræ scissæ sunt.”—*Matt.* 27:45, 51.

5194 “Et erit in die illa, dicit Dominus Deus: occidet sol in meridie, et tenebrescere faciam terram in die luminis.”—*Amos*, 8:9.

5195 “Videtur luminare majus retraxisse radios suos, ne impii sua luce fruerentur.”—*In Matt.* 27.

5196 “Retraxit fadios suos, pendentem in cruce Dominum spectare non ausus.”—*In Am.* 8.

5197 “Pendente in patibulo Creatore, universa creatura congemuit.”—*De Pass.* s. 6.

5198 “A sexta hora contenebratus orbis defuncto Domino lugubre fecit officium.”—*De Jejunio.*

5199 “Eodem momento diei, medium orbem signante sole, lux subducta est. Eum mundi casum relatum in archivis vestris habetis.”—*Apolog.* c. 21.

5200 “Quarto anno Olympiadis 202, factum est deliquium solis omnibus cognitis majus, et nox facta est hora diei sexta, ita ut stellæ in cœlo conspicerentur.”—*Chron.*1. 2.

5201 “Et velum Templi scissum est in duas partes a summo usque deorsum.”—*Matt.* 27:51.

5202 *Heb.* 9:1.

[5203] *Lev.* 4:6–17.

[5204] *Lev.* 16:12, 14; *Heb.* 9:7.

[5205] “Christus autem assistens Pontifex futurorum bonorum, per amplius et perfectius tabernaculum non manufactum, id est, non hujus creationis: neque per sanguinem hircorum aut vitulorum, sed per proprium sanguinem, introivit semel in Sancta, æterna Redemptione inventa.”—*Heb.* 9:11.

[5206] “Una enim oblatione consummavit in sempiternum sanctificatos.”—*Heb.* 10:14.

[5207] “Et ideo Novi Testamenti Mediator est.”—*Ibid.* 9:15.

[5208] “Nihil enim ad perfectum adduxit Lex.”—*Ibid.* 7:19.

[5209] “Nos audivimus ex Lege, quia Christus manet in æternum.”—*John*, 12:34.

[5210] “Et ideo Novi Testamenti Mediator est, ut morte intercedente in redemptionem earum prævaricationum quæ erant sub priori Testamento, repromissionem accipiant, qui vocati sunt, æternæ hereditatis.”—*Heb.* 9:15.

[5211] “Habentes itaque, fratres, fiduciam in introitu Sanctorum in sanguine Christi, quam initiavit nobis viam novam et viventem per velamen, id est, carnem suam.”—*Heb.* 10:19.

[5212] “Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportune”—*Ibid.* 4:16.

[5213] *De Pass.* s. 10.

[5214] “Translato enim sacerdotio, necesse est ut et legis translatio fiat.”—*Heb.* 7:12.

[5215] “Scissum velum significavit divisum jam esse parietem inter cœlum et terram, qui inter Deum erat et homines, et factum esse hominibus cœlum pervium.”—*In Matt.* c. 67.

[5216] “Et terra mota est, et petræ scissæ sunt.”—*Matt.* 27:51.

[5217] *Hist.*1. 7, c. 4.

[5218] *Fragm. in Job*, 9.

[5219] *Chron.*1. 2.

[5220] “Adhuc unum modicum est, et ego commovebo cœlum et terram.”—*Agg.* ii. 7.

[5221] “In cruce fixus homo est, Deus e cruce terruit orbem.”—*De Ob. Celsi.*

[5222] *Jerus. Descr.* n. 252.

[5223] *Ann.* 34.

[5224] *Ann.* 1215, n. 15.

[5225] "O duriora saxis pectora Judæorum! finduntur petræ, sed horum corda durantur."—*In Luc.* 23.

[5226] "Et monumenta aperta sunt, et multa corpora Sanctorum, qui dormierant, surrexerunt; et exeuntes de monumentis, post resurrectionem ejus, venerunt in Sanctam Civitatem et apparuerunt multis."—*Matt.* 27:52.

[5227] "Monumentorum reseratio quid aliud nisi, claustris mortis effractis, resurrectionem significat mortuorum?"—*In Luc.* xxiii.

[5228] "Tamen, cum monumenta aperta sunt, non antea resurrexerunt quam Dominus resurgeret, ut esset primogenitus resurrectionis ex mortuis."

[5229] "Principium, primogenitus ex mortuis, ut sit in omnibus ipse primatum tenens."—*Col.* 1:18.

[5230] "Tu quoque, in sanguine Testamenti tui, emisisti vinctos tuos de lacu in quo non est aqua."—*Zach.* 9:11.

[5231] "Centurio autem et qui cum eo erant custodientes Jesum, viso terræ motu et his quæ fiebant, timuerunt valde, dicentes: Vere Filius Dei erat iste."—*Matt.* 27:54.

[5232] "Et omnis turba eorum qui simul aderant ad spectaculum istud, et videbant quæ fiebant, percutientes pectora sua revertebantur."—*Luke,* 23:48.

[5233] "Qui ergo receperunt sermonem ejus, baptizati sunt; et appositæ sunt in die illa animæ circiter tria milia."—*Acts,* 2:41.

[5234] "Sed unus militum lancea latus ejus aperuit, et continuo exivit sanguis et aqua."—*John,* 19:34.

[5235] "Lancea attigit costam, et ambæ partes cordis fuerunt in lancea."—*Rev.*1. 2, c. 21.

[5236] "Ut illic quodam modo vitæ ostium panderetur, unde sacramenta Ecclesiæ manaverunt, sine quibus ad vitam non intratur."—*In Jo. tr.* 120.

[5237] "Propterea vulneratum est, ut, per vulnus visibile, vulnus amoris invisibile videamus; carnale ergo vulnus vulnus spirituale ostendit."—*Lib. de Pass.* c. 3.

[5238] "Non minus hodie in conspectu Patris oblatio illa est efficax, quam die qua de saucio latere sanguis et aqua exivit."

5239 “Propter vos egenus factus est, cum esset dives, ut illius inopia vos divites essetis.”—2 *Cor.* 8:9.

5240 “Oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quæ præparavit Deus iis qui diligunt illum.”—1 *Cor.* 2:9.

5241 “Nam et qui certat in agone, non coronatur, nisi legitime certaverit.”—2 *Tim.* 2:5.

5242 “Id enim quod in præsenti est momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostræ, supra modum in sublimitate æternum gloriæ pondus operatur in nobis.”—2 *Cor.* 4:17.

5243 *Love of God*, b. 12, ch. 13.

5244 “Sic enim Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret.”—*John*, 3:16.

5245 “In hoc apparuit charitas Dei in nobis, quoniam Filium suum unigenitum misit Deus in mundum, ut vivamus per eum.”—1 *John*, 4:9.

5246 “Qui etiam proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum.”—*Rom.* 8:32.

5247 “Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.—Propter scelus populi mei percussi eum . . . et Dominus voluit conterere eum in infirmitate.”—*Isa.* 53:6–8.

5248 “Propter nimiam charitatem suam qua dilexit nos, et cum essemus mortui peccatis, convivificavit nos in Christo.”—*Eph.* 2:5.

5249 “O mira circa nos tuæ pietatis dignatio! o inæstimabilis dilectio charitatis! ut servum redimeres, Filium tradidisti.”—*In Sabb. S.*

5250 “Deus charitas est.”—1 *John,* 4:8.

5251 “Diligis enim omnia, quæ sunt, et nihil odisti eorum, quæ fecisti.”—*Wisd.* 11:25.

5252 “Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

5253 “Sicut ovis ad occisionem ducetur, et quasi agnus coram tondente se obmutescet, et non aperiet os suum.”—*Ibid.*

5254 “Factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

5255 “Ego pono animam meam. . . . Nemo tollit eam a me, sed ego pono eam a meipso.”—*John,* 10:17.

5256 “Ego sum Pastor bonus. Bonus pastor animam suam dat pro ovibus suis.”—*John,* 10:11.

5257 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

5258 “Et ego, si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad meipsum.”—*John.* 12:32.

5259 “Hoc autem dicebat significans qua morte esset moriturus.”—*Ibid.*

5260 “ ‘Omnia traham,’ quasi a tyranno detenta.”

5261 “Non pro te dedit aurum, non prædia, sed proprium cruorem, in crucis moriendo patibulo.”—*De Cont. m.* c. 7.

5262 “Ut judex judicaretur, Justitia damnaretur, Vita moreretur.”—*Serm.* 191, *E. B.*

5263 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

5264 “Qui dilexit nos, et lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo.”—*Apoc.* 1:5.

5265 “Ad quamlibet culpam singularem habuit aspectum.”—T. ii. s. 56, a. 1, c. 1.

5266 “O Amoris vim! Summus omnium imus factus est omnium. Quis hoc fecit? Amor, dignitatis nescius, affectu potens. Triumphat de Deo Amor.”—*In Cant.* s. 64.

5267 “In fide vivo Filii Dei, qui dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me.”—*Gal.* 2:20.

5268 “Tam copioso munere redemptio agitur, ut homo Deum valere videatur.”—*De Dilig. D.* c. 6.

5269 “Dilexisti me plus quam te, quia voluisti mori pro me.”—*Sol. an, ad D.* c. 13.

5270 “Quod potuit gutta, voluit unda.”

5271 “Et dicebant excessum ejus, quem completurus erat in Jerusalem.”—*Luke,* 9:31.

5272 “Misericordiam magnam invenimus, pretium majus omni debito.”—*Cur D. H.*1. 2, c. 21.

5273 “Mihi autem absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi.”—*Gal.* 6:14.

5274 “Debitores nos fecit, qui primus exhibuit. Mensa quæ sit, nostis; ibi est corpus et sanguis Christi; qui accedit ad talem mensam, præparet talia.”—*In Jo.* tr. 47.

5275 “Charitas Christi urget nos.”—2 *Cor.* 5:14.

5276 *Love of God,* B. 7, ch. 8.

5277 “Scientes quod non corruptibilibus auro vel argento redempti estis . . . , sed pretioso sanguine, quasi agni immaculati, Christi.”—1 *Pet.* 1:18.

5278 “Venit enim Filius hominis quærere et salvum facere quod perierat.”—*Luke,* 19:10.

5279 “Ecce positus est hic in ruinam et in resurrectionem multorum in Israel, et in signum cui contradicetur.”—*Ibid.* 2:34.

5280 “In hoc enim Christus mortuus est et resurrexit, ut et mortuorum et vivorum dominetur.”—*Rom.* 14:9.

5281 “Sive ergo vivimus, sive morimur, Domini sumus.”—*Ibid.* 8.

5282 “Majorem nostri habet curam Deus, quam nos ipsi; vitam nostram divitias suas, et mortem damnum, æstimat; non enim nobis ipsis tantum morimur, sed si morimur, Domino morimur.”

5283 “Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut, et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est et resurrexit.”—2 *Cor.* 5:15.

5284 “Stultum visum est ut pro hominibus Auctor vitæ moreretur.”—*In Evang. hom.* 6.

5285 “Minus te amat, qui tecum aliquid amat, quod non propter te amat.”—*Conf.* i. 10, c. 20.

5286 “Neque hoc facit stupor, sed amor.”—*In Cant.* s. 61.

5287 “Nunquam tam jucunde epulati sumus, quam cum hic fixi esse cœpimus.”

5288 “Parum vobis amare non licet; toto vobis figatur in corde, qui pro vobis est fixus in cruce.”—*De S. Virginit.* c. 55.

[5289] “Christo confixus sum cruci; vivo autem jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus . . . , qui dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me.”—*Gal.* 2:19.

[5290] “Vivo jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus. Ac si diceret: Ad alia omnia mortuus sum; non sentio, non attendo; si quæ vero sunt Christi, hæc me vivum inveniunt et paratum.”—*In Quadr.* s. 7.

[5291] “Mihi enim vivere Christus est.”—*Phil.* 1:21.

[5292] “Fidelis sermo; nam si commortui sumus, et convivemus; si sustinebimus, et conregnabimus; si negaverimus, et ille negabit nos.”—2 *Tim.* 2:11.

[5293] “Non est in alio aliquo salus.”—*Acts*, 4:12.

[5294] “Crux, Spes Christianorum, claudorum Baculus, Consolatio pauperum, Destructio superborum, contra dæmones Triumphus, adolescentum Pædagogus, navigantium Gubernator, periclitantium Portus, justorum Consiliarius, tribulatorum Requies, ægrotantium Medicus, martyrum Gloriatio.”—*Hom. de Cruce.*

[5295] “Scio et humiliari, scio et abundare (ubique et in omnibus institutus sum); et satiari, et esurire; et abundare, et penuriam pati: omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* 4:12.

[5296] “Omnia possum in corroborante me Christo.”

[5297] “Omnipotentes facit omnes qui in se sperant.”

[5298] “Ita animus, si non præsumat de se, sed confortetur a Verbo, poterit dominari sui, ut non dominetur ei omnis iniquitas.”

[5299] “Ita Verbo innixum nulla vis, nulla fraus, nulla illecebra, poterit stantem dejicere.”—*In Cant.* s. 85

[5300] “Sufficit tibi gratia mea; nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur.”—2 *Cor.* 12:9.

[5301] “Libenter igitur gloriabor in infirmitatibus meis, ut inhabitet in me virtus Christi. Propter quod placeo mihi in infirmitatibus meis, in contumeliis, in necessitatibus, in persecutionibus, in angustiis pro Christo; cum enim infirmor, tunc potens sum.”—*Ibid.* 9, 10.

[5302] “Verbum enim crucis pereuntibus quidem stultitia est; iis autem qui salvi fiunt, id est nobis, Dei virtus est.”—1 *Cor.* 1:18.

[5303] “Fortidudo nostra est infirmitatis in veritate cognitio et in humilitate confessio.”

[5304] “Hæc hominibus sola perfectio, si imperfectos esse se noverint.”—*Epist.* 43, *E. B.*

[5305] “Protector est omnium sperantium in se.—Qui salvos facis sperantes in te.”—*Ps.* 17:31; 16:7.

5306 “Qui confidunt in Domino, sicut mons Sion; non commovebitur in æternum, qui habitat in Jerusalem.”—*Ps.* 124:1.

5307 “Projice te in eum; non se subtrahet, ut cadas; excipiet et sanabit te.”—*Conf.*1. 8, c. 11.

5308 “In eo enim, in quo passus est ipse et tentatus, potens est et eis, qui tentantur, auxiliari.”—*Heb.* 2:18.

5309 “Non enim habemus Pontificem qui non possit compati infirmitatibus nostris; tentatum autem peromni a pro similitudine absque peccato.—*Heb.* 4:15. Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno.”—*Ibid.* 16.

5310 “Cœpit pavere, et tædere,—contristari et mœstus esse.”—*Mark*, 14:33; *Matt.* 26:37.

5311 “Spiritus quidem promptus est, caro autem infirma.”—*Matt.* 26:41.

5312 “Pater mi! si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste.”

5313 “Verumtamen, non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu.”—*Matt.* 26:39.

5314 “Fiat voluntas tua! . . . Et oravit tertio, eundem sermonem dicens.”—*Ibid.* 44.

5315 “Hæc vox (Fiat) omnes Confessores accendit, omnes Martyres coronavit.”—*De Pass.* s. 7.

5316 “Factus in agonia, prolixius orabat.”—*Luke*, 22:43.

5317 “Factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem cruris.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

5318 “Venit nostra accipiens, et sua retribuens.”—*De Pass.* s. 3.

5319 “Et quidem cum esset Filius Dei, didicit, ex iis quæ passus est, obedientiam.”—*Heb.* 5:8.

5320 “Et consummatus, factus est omnibus obtemperantibus sibi causa salutis æternæ.”—*Heb.* 5:9.

5321 *S. in fest. S. Laur.*

5322 *Hist. Ecc1.*1. 6. c. 5.

5323 *Hist. Laus*, c. 3.

5324 “Quis ergo nos separabit a charitate Christi? tribulatio? an angustia? an fames? an nuditas? an periculum? an persecutio? an gladius?”—*Rom.* 8:35.

5325 “Sed in his omnibus superamus propter eum qui dilexit nos.”—*Ibid.* 37.

5326 “Fruitio Dei.”—2. 2, q. 17, a. 2.

5327 “Venit enim Filius hominis salvare quod perierat.”—*Matt.* 28:11.

5328 “Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccatum mundi.”—*John*, 1:29.

5329 “Et quasi agnus coram tondente se, obmutescet.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

5330 “Et ego quasi agnus mansuetus, qui portatur ad victimam.”—*Jer.* 11:19.

5331 “Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.”—*Isa.* 53:6.

5332 “Unus pro omnibus occiditur, ut omne genus hominum Deo Patri lucrifaciat.”

5333 “Qui peccata nostra ipse pertulit in corpore suo super lignum. ut, peccatis mortui, justitiæ vivamus; cujus livore sanati sumus.”—1 *Pet.* 2:24.

5334 “Quid mirabilius quam quod mors vivificet, vulnera sanent?”—*Stim. div. am.* p. 1, c. 1.

5335 “Gratificavit nos in dilecto Filio suo, in quo habemus redemptionem per sanguinem ejus, remissionem peccatorum, secundum divitias gratiæ ejus, quæ superabundavit in nobis.”—*Eph.* 1:6.

5336 “Et ideo Novi Testamenti Mediator est.”—*Heb.* 9:15.

5337 “Unde nec primum quide m (Testamentum) sine sanguine dedicatum est.”—*Heb.* 9:18.

5338 “Lecto enim omni mandato Legis a Moyse universo populo, accipiens sanguinem vitulorum et hircorum cum aqua et lana coccinea et hyssopo. . . .”—*Heb.* 9:19.

5339 “Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus.”—*Cant.* 5:10.

5340 “Ipsum quoque librum et omnem populum aspersit, dicens: Hic sanguis Testamenti quod mandavit ad vos Deus.”—*Heb.* 9:19, 20.

5341 “Et omnia pene in sanguine secundum Legem mundantur; et sine sanguinis effusione, non fit remissio.”—*Ibid.* 22.

5342 “Lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo.”—*Apoc.* 1:5.

5343 “Christus autem assistens Pontifex futurorum bonorum, per amplius et perfectius tabernaculum non manufactum, id est, non hujus creationis, neque per sanguinem hircorum aut vitulorum, sed per proprium sanguinem, introivit semel in Sancta, æterna redemptione inventa.”—*Heb.* 9:11, 12.

5344 “Si enim sanguis hircorum et taurorum, et cinis vitulæ aspersus, inquinatos sanctificat ad emundationem carnis; quanto magis sanguis Christi, qui per Spiritum Sanctum semetipsum obtulit immaculatum Deo, emundabit conscientiam nostram ab operibus mortuis, ad serviendum Deo viventi!”—*Ibid.* 13, 14.

5345 “Hic est enim Sanguis meus Novi Testamenti, qui pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum.”—*Matt.* 26:28.

5346 “Tu es Sacerdos in æternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.”—*Ps.* 109:4.

5347 “Hic autem, eo quod maneat in æternum, sempiternum habet sacerdotium.”—*Heb.* 7:24.

5348 “Unde et salvare in perpetuum potest accedentes per semetipsum ad Deum, semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis.”—*Ibid.* 25.

5349 “Tot vulnera, tot ora.”

5350 “Accessistis ad . . . Mediatorem Jesum, et sanguinis aspersionem melius loquentem. quam Abel.”—*Heb.* 12:22.

5351 “Plus fecit, quam promisit.”—Enarr. in *Ps.* cxlviii.

5352 “Filioli mei, hæc scribo vobis ut non peccetis; sed et si quis peccaverit, Advocatum habemus apud Patrem, Jesum Christum justum.”—*1 John,* 2:1.

5353 “Et consummatus, factus est omnibus obtemperantibus sibi causa salutis æternæ.”—*Heb.* 5:9.

5354 “Per patientiam curramus ad propositum nobis certamen, aspicientes in Auctorem fidei et Consummatorem Jesum, qui, proposito sibi gaudio, sustinuit crucem, confusione contempta.”—*Ibid.* 12:1.

5355 “O Sanguis Innocentis! lava sordes pœnitentis.”

5356 “Multi dicunt animæ meæ: non est salus ipsi in Deo ejus.”—*Ps.* 3:3.

5357 “Tu autem, Domine, susceptor meus es.”—*Ibid.* 4.

5358 “Eum, qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras.”—*John,* 6:37.

5359 “Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.”

5360 “Supra modum gravati sumus supra virtutem, ita ut tæderet nos etiam vivere.”—2 *Cor.* 1:8.

5361 “Ut non simus fidentes in nobis, sed in Deo, qui suscitat mortuos.”—*Ibid.* 9.

5362 “Aporiamur, sed non destituimur; . . . dejicimur, sed non perimus.”—*Ibid.* 4:8.

5363 “Habemus autem thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus, ut sublimitas sit virtutis Dei, et non ex nobis.”—2 *Cor.* 4:7.

5364 “Induite vos armaturam Dei, ut possitis stare adversus insidias diaboli. Quoniam non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem, sed adversus principes et potestates.”—*Eph.* 6:11–15.

5365 “State ergo succincti lumbos vestros in veritate.”—*Ibid.* 14.

5366 “Et induti loricam justitiæ.”

5367 “Et calceati pedes in præparatione Evangelii pacis.”

5368 “In omnibus sumentes scutum fidei, in quo possitis omnia tela nequissimi ignea extinguere.”—*Eph.* 6:16.

5369 “Et galeam salutis assumite, et gladium spiritus, quod est verbum Dei.”—*Ibid.* 17.

5370 “Petite et dabitur vobis.”—*Matt.* 7:7.

5371 “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—*Luke,* 11:10.

5372 “Clama ad me, et exaudiam te.”—*Jer.* 33:3.

5373 “Invoca me . . . , eruam te.”—*Ps.* 49:15.

5374 “Per omnem orationem et obsecrationem orantes omni tempore in spiritu, et in ipso vigilantes in omni instantia et obsecratione pro omnibus sanctis.”—*Eph.* 6:18.

5375 “Illuminare his qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis sedent.”—*Luke,* 1:79.

5376 “Primo vincendæ sunt delectationes, postea dolores.”—*Serm.* 335, *E. B.*

5377 “Qui parce seminat, parce et metet.”—2 *Cor.* 9:6.

5378 “Quæ superbia sanari potest, si humilitate Filii Dei non sanatur? quæ avaritia, si paupertate Filii Dei non sanatur? quæ iracundia, si patientia Filii Dei non sanatur?”—*De Ag. Chr.* c. 11.

5379 “Et ideo Novi Testamenti Mediator est, ut, morte intercedente, . . . repromissionem accipiant, qui vocati sunt, æternæ hereditatis.”—*Heb.* 9:15.

5380 “Ubi enim Testamentum est, mors necesse est intercedat testatoris. Testamentum enim in mortuis confirmatum est; alioquin, nondum valet, dum vivit qui testatus est.”—*Ibid.* 16, 17.

5381 “Hæc enim sunt duo Testamenta: unum quidem in monte Sina in servitutem generans.”—*Gal.* 4:24.

5382 “Nos autem, fratres, secundum Isaac, promissionis filii sumus.”—*Gal.* 4:28.

5383 “Si autem filii, et hæredes; hæredes quidem Dei, cohæredes autem Christi.”—*Rom.* 8:17.

5384 “Si tamen compatimur, ut et conglorificemur.”—*Ibid.*

5385 “Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me.”—*Matt.* 16:24.

5386 “Existimo enim quod non sunt condignæ passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam, quæ revelabitur in nobis.”—*Rom.* 8:18.

5387 “Spe enim salvi facti sumus.”—*Rom.* 8:24.

5388 “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—*Luke,* 11:10.

5389 “Spiritus adjuvat infirmitatem nostram, . . . postulat pro nobis.”—*Rom.* 8:26.

5390 “ ‘Postulat,’ id est, postulare facit.”—*Ep.* 194, c. 4, *E. B.*

5391 “Scimus autem quoniam, diligentibus Deum, omnia cooperantur in bonum.”—*Rom.* 8:28.

5392 “Nam quos præscivit, et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui.”—*Ibid.* 29.

5393 “Qui etiam proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum.”—*Rom.* 8:32.

5394 “Quis est qui condemnet? Christus Jesus, qui mortuus est.”—*Ibid.* 34.

5395 “Hi sunt qui . . . laverunt stolas suas et dealbaverunt eas in sanguine Agni.”—*Apoc.* 7:14.

5396 “Quoniam tu, Domine, suavis et mitis, et multæ misericordiæ omnibus invocantibus te.”—*Ps.* 85:5.

5397 “Hæc est enim voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra.”—1 *Thess.* 4:3.

5398 “Adimpleo ea quæ desunt passionum Christi in carne mea.”—*Col.* 1:24.

5399 “Nam quos præscivit, et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui, ut sit ipse primogenitus in multis fratribus.”—*Rom.* 8:29.

5400 “Hominis satisfactio efficaciam habet a satisfactione Christi.”

5401 “Regnum cœlorum vim patitur, et violenti rapiunt illud.”—*Matt.* 11:12.

5402 “Vim faciamus Domino, non compellendo, sed lacrymis exorando.”

5403 “O beata violentia, quæ, non indignatione percutitur, sed misericordia condonatur!”

5404 “Quisquis enim violentior Christo fuerit, religiosior habebitur a Christo. Prius enim ipsi regnare debemus in nobis, ut regnum possimus diripere Salvatoris.”—*Serm.* 15.

5405 “Pro justitia agonizare pro anima tua, et usque ad mortem certa pro justitia; et Deus expugnabit pro te inimicos tuos.”—*Ecclus.* 4:33.

5406 “Vidi turbam magnam . . . , stantes ante thronum in conspectu Agni amicti stolis albis; et palmæ in manibus eorum.”—*Apoc.* 7:9.

5407 “Si te respicis, nihil poteris; sed, si in Domino confidis, dabitur tibi fortitudo.”

5408 “Per multas tribulationes oportet nos intrare in regnum Dei.”—*Acts,* 14:21.

5409 “Hi sunt qui venerunt de tribulatione magna, et laverunt stolas suas et dealbaverunt eas in sanguine Agni.”—*Apoc.* 7:14.

5410 “Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis.”—1 *Cor.* 10:13.

5411 “Petite, et dabitur vobis; quærite, et invenietis.”—*Matt.* 7:7.

5412 “Deus impossibilia non jubet; sed jubendo monet, et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis; et adjuvat ut possis.”—*Sess.* vi. c. 11.

5413 “Si homines suis jumentis non plus oneris imponunt, quam ferre possint, multo minus hominibus plus tentationum imponet Deus, quam ferre queant.”—*De Patientia.*

5414 “Crux ubique te exspectat; necesse est te ubique tonere patientiam, si internam vis habere pacem. Si libenter crucem portas, portabit te ad desideratum finem.”—*Imit. Chr.*1. 2, c. 12.

5415 “Quis Sanctorum sine cruce fuit? Tota vita Christi crux fuit et martyrium; et tu tibi quæris gaudium?”

5416 “Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris.”—*Isa.* 12:3.

5417 “ ‘De fontibus Salvatoris,’ hoc est, de vulneribus Jesu Christi.”

5418 “Semper oculis cordis sui Christum in cruce tamquam morientem videat, qui devotionem in se vult conservare.”—*De Perf. vit.* c. 6.

[5419] 2. 2, q. 82, a. 1.

[5420] “Recogitate enim eum qui talem sustinuit a peccatoribus adversus semetipsum contradictionem, ut ne fatigemini, animis vestris deficientes.”—*Heb.* 12:3.

[5421] “Novissimum virorum, virum dolorum.”—*Isa.* 53:3.

[5422] “Nondum enim usque ad sanguinem restitistis, adversus peccatum repugnantes.”—*Heb.* 12:4.

[5423] “Malim insilire in rogum ardentissimum, quam peccatum ullum admittere in Deum meum.”—*Vit.* c. 19, *ap. Sur.* 16 *Nov.*

[5424] *Simil.* c. 190.

[5425] “Christo igitur passo in carne, et vos eadem cogitatione armamini.”—1 *Pet.* 4:1.

[5426] “ ‘Armamini,’ quia memoria passionis contra tentationes munit et roborat.”

[5427] “Si quid melius saluti hominum quam pati fuisset, Christus utique verbo et exemplo ostendisset.”

[5428] “Videntes angustias Domini, levius vestras portabitis.”—*In Cant.* s. 43.

[5429] “Quid non suave tibi esse poterit, cum tibi collegeris omnes amaritudines Domini?”—*De Divers.* s. 22.

[5430] *Vit.* c. 23, *ap. Sur.* 27 *Sept.*

[5431] “Grata ignominia cruris ei qui Crucifixo ingratus non est.”—*In Cant.* s. 25.

[5432] “Tunc exspuerunt in faciem ejus, et colaphis eum ceciderunt; alii autem palmas in faciem ejus dederunt, dicentes: Prophetiza nobis, Christe, quis est qui te percussit?”—*Matt.* 26:67.

[5433] “Martyr, videns sanguinem suum, non sua, sed Redemptoris vulnera attendit, dolores non sentit; nec deest dolor, sed pro Christo contemnitur. Nihil enim tam amarum ad mortem est, quod morte Christi non sanetur.”

[5434] “In omnibus divites facti estis in illo.”—1 *Cor.* 1:5.

[5435] “Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

[5436] *Ann.* 1323, n. 68.

5437 “Ut per mortem destrueret eum qui habebat mortis imperium, id est, diabolum, et liberaret eos qui, timore mortis, per totam vitam obnoxii erant servituti.”—*Heb.* 2:14, 15.

5438 “Unde debuit per omnia fratribus similari, ut misericors fieret . . . ; in eo enim in quo passus est ipse et tentatus, potens est et eis, qui tentantur, auxiliari.”—*Ibid.* 17.

5439 “Si imminente morte turbaris, non te existimes reprobum, nec desperationi te abjicias; ideo enim Christus turbatus est in conspectu suæ mortis.”

5440 “Christus, per mortem suam, abstulit timorem mortis; quando enim considerat homo quod Filius Dei mori voluit, non timet mori.”—*In Heb.* 2 *lect.* 4.

5441 “Proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum; quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* 8:32.

5442 “Quod ex me mihi deest, usurpo mihi ex visceribus Domini.”—*In Cant.* s. 61.

5443 “Deus qui justificat, quis est qui condemnet? Christus Jesus, qui mortuus est, imo qui et resurrexit, qui est ad dexteram Dei, qui etiam interpellat pro nobis.”—*Rom.* 8:34.

5444 “Qui dedit semetipsum pro peccatis nostris, ut eriperet nos de præsenti sæculo nequam.”—*Gal.* 1:4.

5445 “Quotidie orat Christus pro Ecclesia.”—*In Ps. pœn.* v.

5446 “ ‘Interpellat,’ id est, pro nobis mediationis ratione supplicat.”—*De Theol. or.* 4.

5447 *In Ps.* xxix. *en.* 2.

5448 “Qui nos tanto pretio redemit, non vult perire quos emit . . . ; si peccata nostra superant nos, pretium suum non contemnit Deus.”—*Serm.* 22, *E. B.*

5449 “Per patientiam curramus ad propositum nobis certamen, aspicientes in Auctorem fidei et Consummatorem Jesum, qui, proposito sibi gaudio, sustinuit crucem, confusione contempta.”—*Heb.* 12:1.

5450 “Omnia bona terrena contempsit Christus, ut contemnenda demonstraret; omnia terrena sustinuit mala, quæ sustinenda præcipiebat: ut neque in illis quæreretur felicitas, neque in istis infelicitas timeretur.”—*De catech. rud.* c. 22.

5451 “Per ipsum habemus accessum . . . ad Patrem.”—*Eph.* 2:18.

5452 “Vix enim pro justo quis moritur; nam pro bono forsitan quis audeat mori.—Cum adhuc peccatores essemus, secundum tempus, Christus pro nobis mortuus est.—Si enim, cum inimici essemus, reconciliati sumus Deo per mortem Filii ejus, multo magis, reconciliati, salvi erimus in vita ipsius."—*Rom.* 5:7–10.

5453 "Sed non sicut delictum, ita et donum; si enim unius delicto multi mortui sunt, multo magis gratia Dei et donum in gratia unius hominis Jesu Christi in plures abundavit."—*Ibid.* 15.

5454 "Ampliora adepti per ineffabilem Christi gratiam, quam per diaboli amiseramus invidiam."—*De Asc. Dom.* s. 1.

5455 "Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti."

5456 "Jesus meus, Deus meus, et omnia!"

5457 The Meditations on the Passion collected in this volume are thirty in number; thirteen others are found among the Meditations suitable for all times in the year (see Vol. II.); and two of them among those that make up the Meditations for a Retreat in Vol. III.—ED.

5458 "Tempus tuum, tempus amantium."—*Ezech.* 16:8.

5459 "Christus dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis."—*Eph.* 5:2.

5460 "Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit . . . ; vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras, attritus est propter scelera nostra."—*Isa.* 53:4, 5.

5461 "Dilexit nos, et lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo."—*Apoc.* 1:5.

5462 "In hoc cognovimus charitatem Dei, quoniam ille animam suam pro nobis posuit."—1 *John*, 3:16.

5463 "Charitas enim Christi urget nos."—2 *Cor.* 5:14.

5464 "Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est."—*Ibid.* 15.

5465 "O vulnera, corda saxea vulnerantia, et mentes congelatas inflammantia!"—*Stim. div. am.* p. 1, c. 1.

5466 "Vidimus Sapientiam amoris nimietate infatuatam."—*S. de Nat. D.*

5467 "Prædicamus Christum crucifixum, Judæis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam."—1 *Cor.* 1:23.

5468 "Cœpit pavere et tædere,—contristari et mœstus esse."—*Mark*, 14:33; *Matt.* 26:37.

5469 "Pater mi! si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste."—*Matt.* 26:39.

5470 “Baptismo habeo baptizari; et quomodo coarctor usque dum perficiatur!”—*Luke,* 12:50.

5471 “Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.”—*Matt.* 26:38.

5472 “Et factus est sudor ejus sicut guttæ sanguinis decurrentis in terram.”—*Luke*, 22:44.

5473 “Procidit in faciem suam.”—*Matt.* 26:39.

5474 “Et factus in agonia, prolixius orabat.”—*Luke*, 22:43.

5475 “Comprehenderunt Jesum, et ligaverunt eum.”—*John,* 18:12.

5476 “O Rex regum! quid tibi et vinculis?”—*De Pass.* c. 4.

5477 *Med. vit. Chr.* c. 74, 75.

5478 “Tunc discipuli ejus, relinquentes eum, omnes fugerunt.”—*Mark*, 14:50.

5479 “Ego palam locutus sum mundo . . . ; ecce hi sciunt quæ dixerim ego.”—*John,* 18:20, 21.

5480 “Sic respondes Pontifici?”—*Ibid.* 22.

5481 “At illi respondentes, dixerunt: Reus est mortis.”—*Matt.* 26:66.

5482 “Tunc exspuerunt in faciem ejus, et colaphis eum ceciderunt.”—*Matt.* 26:67.

5483 “Prophetiza nobis, Christe, quis est qui te percussit?”—*Ibid.* 68.

5484 “Quasi agnus coram tondente se, obmutescet, et non aperuit os suum.”—*Isa.* 53:7

5485 “Tune ergo apprehendit Pilatus Jesum, et flagellavit.”—*John,* 19:1.

5486 “Emendatum ergo illum dimittam;—corripiam ergo illum, et dimittam.”—*Luke* 23:16, 22.

5487 *Rev.*1. 4, c. 70

5488 “Et super dolorem vulnerum meorum addiderunt.”—*Ps.* 68:27.

5489 *Rev.*1. 1, c. 10.

5490 “Ecce Homo!”—*John*, 19:5.

5491 “Attritus est propter scelera nostra.”—*Isa.* 53:5.

[5492] “Et nos putavimus eum quasi leprosum.”—*Ibid.* 4.

[5493] “Ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras.”—*Ibid.* 5.

[5494] “Acceperunt arundinem, et percutiebant caput ejus.”—*Matt.* 27:30.

[5495] *Serm.* 47.

[5496] *Rev.*1. 4, c. 70.

[5497] “Et genu flexo ante eum, illudebant ei, dicentes: Ave, Rex Judæorum! Et exspuentes in eum,—dabant ei alapas.”—*Matt*, 27:29; *John*, 19:3.

[5498] “Ecce Homo!”—*John*, 19:5.

[5499] “Sanguis ejus super nos.”—*Matt.* 27:25.

5500 “Crucifige, crucifige eum! . . . Tolle, tolle, crucifige eum!”—*John*, 19:6, 15.

5501 “Quid fecisti, innocentissime Salvator, quod sic condemnareris?”

5502 “Peccatum tuum est amor tuus!”

5503 “Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem cruris.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

5504 “Et bajulans sibi crucem exivit in eum, qui dicitur Calvariæ, locum.”—*John*, 19:17.

5505 “Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Judæorum.”—*John*, 19:19.

5506 “Si filius Dei es, descende de cruce.”—*Matt.* 27:40.

5507 “Alios salvos fecit, seipsum non potest salvum facere.”—*Ibid.* 42.

5508 “Unus autem de his, qui pendebant, latronibus, blasphemabat eum.”—*Luke*, 23:39.

5509 “Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?”—*Matt.* 27:46.

5510 “Consummatum est!”—*John*, 19:30.

5511 Page 221.

5512 “Dedit semetipsum pro peccatis nostris.”—*Gal.* 1:4.

5513 “Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.”—*Ps.* 88:2.

5514 “Gratiam fidejussoris ne obliviscaris; dedit enim pro te animam suam.”—*Ecclus.* 29:20.

5515 “Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

5516 “In tantum melioris testamenti sponsor factus est Jesus.”—*Heb.* 7:22.

5517 “Hic calix novum testamentum est in meo sanguine.”—1 *Cor.* 11:25.

5518 “Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit.”—*Isa.* 53:4.

5519 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

5520 “Ut servum redimeret, sibi Filius ipse non pepercit.”—*S. de Pass. D.*

5521 “Venit enim Filius hominis salvare quod perierat.”—*Matt.* 18:11.

5522 “Christus nos redemit de maledicto legis, factus pro nobis maledictum; quia scriptum est: Maledictus omnis qui pendet in ligno.”—*Gal.* 3:13.

5523 “Non corruptibilibus auro vel argento redempti estis . . . , sed pretioso sanguine quasi Agni immaculati Christi.”—1 *Pet.* 1:18, 19.

5524 “An nescitis quoniam . . . non estis vestri? Empti enim estis pretio magno.”—1 *Cor.* 6:19, 20.

5525 “Virum dolorum et scientem infirmitatem.”—*Isa.* 53:3.

5526 “O Amor! quid te appellem nescio, dulcem an asperum, utrumque esse videris.”—*Ep.* 1.

5527 “Assumpsit dolorem in summum. vituperationem in summum.”

5528 “Corpus autem aptasti mihi.”—*Heb.* 10:5.

5529 “Tunc dixi: Ecce venio, ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam.”—*Heb.* 10:9

5530 “In qua voluntate sanctificati sumus per oblationem corporis Jesu Christi semel.”—*Heb.* 10:10.

5531 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

5532 “Vidimus eum . . . despectum, et novissimum virorum, virum dolorum.”—*Isa.* 53:2, 3.

5533 *In Phil.* 2.

5534 “Nonne hic est fabri filius?”—*Matt.* 13:55.

5535 “A Nazareth potest aliquid boni esse?”—*John,* 1:46.

5536 “Insanit; quid eum auditis?”—*John,* 10:20.

5537 “Ecce homo devorator et bibens vinum.”—*Luke,* 7:34.

5538 “In principe dæmoniorum ejicit dæmones.”—*Matt.* 9:34.

5539 “Nonne bene dicimus, quia Samaritanus es tu?”—*John,* 8:48.

5540 “Ecce nunc audistis blasphemiam; quid vobis videtur? At illi respondentes dixerunt: Reus est mortis.”—*Matt.* 26:65, 66.

5541 “Tunc exspuerunt in faciem ejus, et colaphis eum ceciderunt; alii autem palmas in faciem ejus dederunt.”—*Ibid.* 67.

5542 “Corpus meum dedi percutientibus, et genas meas vellentibus; faciem meam non averti ab increpantibus et conspuentibus in me.”—*Isa.* 1:6.

5543 “Prophetiza nobis, Christe, quis est qui te percussit?”—*Matt.* 26:68.

5544 “Magna est enim velut mare contritio tua.”—*Lam.* 2:13.

5545 “Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.”—*Matt.* 26:38.

5546 “Ad quamlibet culpam singularem habuit aspectum.”—T. 2 s. 56, a. 1, c. 1.

5547 “Dolor meus in conspectu meo semper.”—*Ps.* 37:18.

5548 “Magnitudo doloris Christi potest considerari ex doloris et tristitiæ puritate.”—P. 3, q. 46, a. 6.

5549 “Sustinui . . . qui consolaretur, et non inveni.”—*Ps.* 68:21.

5550 “Si Filius Dei es, descende de cruce! . . . Alios salvos fecit, seipsum non potest salvum facere.”—*Matt.* 27:40–42.

5551 “Clamavit Jesus voce magna, dicens . . . Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?”—*Ibid.* 46.

5552 “Veni in altitudinem maris, et tempestas demersit me.”—*Ps.* 68:3.

5553 “Tunc discipuli ejus, relinquentes eum, omnes fugerunt.”—*Mark*, 14:50.

5554 “Si non esset hic malefactor, non tibi tradidissemus eum.”—*John*, 18:30.

5555 “Sprevit autem illum Herodes cum exercitu suo, et illusit indutum veste alba.”—*Luke*, 23:11.

5556 “Clamaverunt ergo rursum omnes, dicentes: Non hunc, sed Barabbam.”—*John*, 18:40.

5557 “Tunc ergo apprehendit Pilatus Jesum, et flagellavit.”—*John*, 19:1.

5558 “illudebant ei, dicentes: Ave Rex Judæorum! Et exspuentes in eum, acceperunt arundinem, et percutiebant caput ejus.”—*Matt.* 27:29, 30.

5559 “Et cum sceleratis reputatus est.”—*Isa.* 53:12.

5560 *Deut.* 21:23.

5561 “Factus pro nobis maledictum; quia scriptum est: Maledictus omnis qui pendet in ligno.”—*Gal.* 3:13.

5562 “Qui, proposito sibi gaudio, sustinuit crucem, confusione contempta.”—*Heb.* 12:2.

5563 “Dabit percutienti se maxillam, saturabitur opprobriis.”—*Lam.* 3:30.

5564 “O novissimum et altissimum! Opprobrium hominum et gloriam Angelorum.”—*S. de Pass. D.*

5565 “Itane summus omnium imus factus est omnium? O Amoris vim! quis hoc fecit? Amor!”—*In Cant.* s. 64.

5566 “Virum dolorum.”—*Isa.* 53:3.

5567 “Et ego, si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad meipsum.”—*John,* 12:32.

5568 “Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est et resurrexit.”—2 *Cor.* 5:15.

5569 “Videns civitatem, plevit super illam.”—*Luke*, 19:41.

5570 “Hosanna Filio David! benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini!”—*Matt.* 21:9.

5571 “Tolle, tolle, crucifige eum!”—*John,* 19:15.

5572 “Cœpit pavere et tædere,—contristari et mœstus esse.”—*Mark*, 14:33; *Matt.* 26:37.

5573 “Factus in agonia, prolixius orabat.”—*Luke*, 22:43.

5574 “Pater mi! si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste.”—*Matt.* 26:39.

5575 “Verumtamen, non sicut ego volo, sed sicu. tu.”—*Matt.* 26:39.

5576 “Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.”—*Mark,* 14:34.

5577 “Et factus est sudor ejus sicut guttæ sanguinis decurrentis in terram.’—*Luke,* 22:44.

5578 “Comprehenderunt Jesum, et ligaverunt eum.”—*John,* 18:12.

5579 “Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit, et non aperuit os suum; sicut ovis ad occisionem ducetur.”—*Isa.* 53:7.

5580 “Ecce hi sciunt quæ dixerim ego.”—*John.* 18:21.

5581 “Sic respondes Pontifici?—*Ibid.* 22.

5582 “Quid adhuc egemus testibus? Ecce, nunc audistis blasphemiam! Quid vobis videtur? At illi respondentes, dixerunt: Reus est mortis!”—*Matt.* 26:65, 66.

5583 “Prophetiza nobis, Christe, quis est qui te percussit?—Tunc cœperunt quidam conspuere eum, et velare faciem ejus, et colaphis eum cædere, et dicere ei: Prophetiza. Et ministri alapis eum cædebant.”—*Matt.* 26:68; *Mark,* 14:65.

5584 “Loquere, Domine, quia audit servus tuus.”—1 *Reg.* 3:10.

5585 “Illusit indutum veste alba, et remisit ad Pilatum.”—*Luke.* 23:2.

5586 “Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos. nisi Jesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum.”—1 *Cor.* 2:2.

5587 “Quem vultis dimittam vobis, Barabbam an Jesum?”—*Matt.* 27:17.

5588 “Tunc ergo apprehendit Pilatus Jesum, et flagellavit.”—*John,* 19:1.

5589 “Sicut agnus coram tondente se sine voce, sic non aperuit os suum.”—*Acts,* 8:32.

5590 “Attritus est propter scelera nostra.”—*Isa.* 53:5.

5591 “Et nos putavimus eum quasi leprosum.”—*Ibid.* 4.

5592 “Exuentes eum, chlamydem coccineam circumdederunt ei; et plectentes coronam de spinis, posuerunt super caput ejus, et arundinem in dextera ejus.”—*Matt.* 27:28, 29.

5593 “Et exspuentes in eum, acceperunt arundinem, et percutiebant caput ejus.”—*Ibid.* 30.

5594 “Dabit percutienti se maxillam, saturabitur opprobriis.”—*Lam.* 3:30.

5595 “Et genu flexo ante eum, illudebant ei, dicentes: Ave, Rex judæorum!—et dabant ei alapas.”—*Matt.* 27:29; *John,* 19:3.

5596 “Ecce homo!”—*John,* 19:5.

5597 “Crucifige, crucifige eum!”—*John,* 19:6.

5598 “Si hunc dimittis, non es amicus Cæsaris.”—*Ibid.* 12.

5599 “Non habemus regem, nisi Cæsarem.”—*Ibid.* 15.

5600 “Innocens ego sum a sanguine justi hujus.”—Matt. 27:24.

5601 “Jesum vero tradidit voluntati corum.”—*Luke*, 23:25.

5602 “Sanguis ejus super nos, et super filios nostros.”—*Matt.* 27:25.

5603 “Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

5604 “Exuerunt eum chlamyde, et induerunt eum vestimentis ejus, et duxerunt eum ut crucifigerent.”—*Matt.* 27:31.

5605 “Et bajulans sibi crucem exivit in eum, qui dicitur Calvariæ, locum.”—*John*, 19:17.

5606 “Ego quasi agnus mansuetus qui portatur ad victimam.”—*Jer.* 11:19.

5607 “Plangebant el lamentabantur eum.”—*Luke*, 23:27.

5608 *Matt.* 27:40.

5609 “Pater, dimitte illis! Non enim sciunt, quid faciunt.”—*Luke*, 23:34.

5610 “Si autem impius egerit pœnitentiam . . . , omnium iniquitatum ejus . . . non recordabor.”—*Ezeck.* 18:21, 22.

5611 “Clamavit Jesus voce magna, dicens: . . . Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?”—*Matt.* 27:46.

5612 “Dixit: Sitio!”—*John*, 19:28.

5613 “Consummatum est!”—*John*, 19:30.

5614 “Et inclinato capite, tradidit spiritum.”—*John*, 19:30.

5615 “Stabant autem juxta crucem Jesu Mater ejus. . . .”—*John*, 19:25.

5616 “Tristitia vestra vertetur in gaudium.”—*John*, 16:20.

5617 “Oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quæ præparavit Deus iis qui diligunt illum.”—1 *Cor.* 2:9.

5618 “Nihil est quod nolis, totum est quod velis.”

5619 “Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni; coronaberis.”—*Cant.* 4:3.

5620 “Intra in gaudium Domini tui.”—*Matt.* 25:21.

[5621] “Si quid petieritis me in nomine meo, hoc faciam.”—*John.* 14:14.

[5622] At the end, the *Our Father,* the *Hail Mary,* and the *Glory be to the Father* may be said to the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff.

[5623] This is, however, not a mere abridgment that St. Alphonsus gives us. As was usual with him, he appropriated the subject and treated it after his own manner by confining himself to quoting on some points the opinion of the French author. What he ascribes to the latter is found, nearly word for word, in the book entitled “L’Idée du Sacerdoce et du Sacrifice de Jésus-Christ, par le R. P. De Condren, etc. Par un Prêtre de l’Oratoire.” We doubt, however, whether this excellent work is that which our Saint had before him; for it appears to us that such a work cannot be called anonymous, though the learned Oratorian who published it in 1677 gives in the title-page only his title, and the initials of his name in his dedication, by signing himself P. Q. (This is Father Pasquier Quesnel, who later on became unfortunately so famous.) This doubt is confirmed by the remark that we add further on, page 26, and is changed almost into certainty in view of a passage that we read on page 36, and that we have not seen in the aforesaid work. We therefore believe that there exists a more recent work in which “L’Idée” of Father De Condren is reproduced in an incomplete manner and without the name of the author.—ED.

[5624] *Lev.* 16:8.

[5625] “Et posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.”—*Isa.* 53:6.

[5626] “Exeamus igitur ad eum extra castra, improperium ejus portantes.”—*Heb.* 13:13.

[5627] “Hostiam et oblationem noluisti, corpus autem aptasti mihi; holocautomata pro peccato non tibi placuerunt; tunc dixi: Ecce venio; in capite libri scriptum est de me, ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam.”—*Heb.* 10:5.

[5628] *Deut.* 15:21.

[5629] “Noe . . . obtulit holocausta super altare; odoratusque est Dominus odorem suavitatis.”—*Gen.* 8:20.

[5630] *Exod.* 12:3.

[5631] “Infirma et egena elementa.”—*Gal.* 4:9.

[5632] “Quem Pater sanctificavit.”—*John.* 10:36.

[5633] “Quod nascetur ex te Sanctum, vocabitur Filius Dei.”—*Luke,* 1:35.

[5634] “Corpus autem aptasti mihi, . . . ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam.”—*Heb.* 10:5.

[5635] “Quia hostias et oblationes et holocautomata noluisti . . . tunc dixi: Ecce venio, ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam.”—*Heb.* 10:8.

[5636] “In qua voluntate sanctificati sumus per oblationem corporis Jesu Christi semel.”—*Ibid.* 10.

[5637] “Et a tempore cum ablatum fuerit juge sacrificium, et posita fuerit abominatio in desolatione, dies mille ducenti nonaginta.”—*Dan.* 12:11.

[5638] “Tu es Sacerdos in æternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.”—*Ps.* 109:4.

[5639] “Et nunc clarifica me tu, Pater, apud temetipsum, claritate quam habui, priusquam mundus fieret, apud te.”—*John,* 17:5.

[5640] “Is igitur Deus et Dominus noster, etsi semel semetipsum in ara crucis, morte intercedente, Deo Patri oblaturus erat, ut æternam illic redemptionem operaretur; quia tamen per mortem sacerdotium ejus exstinguendum non erat; in cœna novissima, qua nocte tradebatur, ut dilectæ sponsæ suæ Ecclesiæ visibile, sicut hominum natura exigit, relinqueret sacrificium, quo cruentum illud semel in cruce peragendum repræsentaretur, ejusque memoria in finem usque sæculi permaneret, atque illius salutaris virtus in remissionem eorum, quæ a nobis quotidie committuntur, peccatorum applicaretur, Sacerdotem secundum ordinem Melchisedech se in æternum constitutum declarans, corpus et sanguinem suum sub speciebus panis et vini Deo Patri obtulit; ac, sub earumdem rerum symbolis, Apostolis, quos tunc Novi Testamenti Sacerdotes constituebat, ut sumerent, tradidit; et eisdem eorumque in sacerdotio successoribus, ut offerrent, præcepit per hæc verba: ‘Hoc facite in meam commemorationem;’ uti semper Catholica Ecclesia intellexit et docuit.”—*Sess.* 22, c. 1.

[5641] “Una enim eademque est Hostia, idem nunc offerens Sacerdotis ministerio, qui seipsum tunc in cruce obtulit, sola offerendi ratione diversa.”—*Sess.* 22, c. 2.

[5642] P. 2, c. 4, q 62.

[5643] “Quoties hujus Hostiæ commemoratio celebratur, opus nostræ redemptionis exercetur.”—*Dom.* 9 p. *Pent.*

[5644] It seems to us that the two explanations which we have just read—the explanation of the anonymous author and that of St. Alphonsus—about the consummation or the last two parts of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ can be and should be admitted, should not exclude each other, but should be united. It was necessary that this great sacrifice, the only real sacrifice worthy of God, should be consummated in heaven and on earth at the same time, to unite to God the body of Jesus Christ entirely; that is, the Church triumphant and the Church militant: in heaven, by the glorious union of Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, of the angels, of the saints with God, and among themselves in the bosom of God in which the sacrifice is perfect and eternal: on earth, by Holy Mass and Communion, in which all the faithful partake of the same victim under the Eucharistic veil. The body of the Redeemer, immolated on the Cross, had, therefore, to be transformed in a twofold manner; namely, by the resurrection, for the consummation of the sacrifice in heavenly glory; by the Eucharist, for the consummation of the sacrifice in earthly combats. This twofold consummation of the true sacrifice was typified in the ceremonies of the Old Law: the burning of the victim

represented heavenly Communion, and the eating of it represented earthly Communion. But in heaven, as in Holy Mass, we have not only consummation, but we have all the parts of the Sacrifice of the Cross and of the sacrifices of the Old Law. Hence, three kinds of sacrifices, or three degrees, are to be distinguished. In the Old Law there were figures without the reality; in the New Law we have the reality under the figures or appearances; in glory we have the reality exposed and unveiled. Such is, briefly, the thought of Père De Coudren, wisely developed by him who published it. Such is, also, without doubt, the thought of St. Alphonsus; for otherwise we should not understand what he says on page 22, where he explains the text taken from Daniel.—ED.

[5645] *Epist.*1, 7, *ind.* 2, *ep.* 63.

[5646] *De Alt. Myst.*1. 2, c. 13.

[5647] *De Missæ S.*1. 2, c. 3.

[5648] *Ann.* 325.

[5649] "Nos, in isto loco, non aram fecimus Stephano, sed de reliquiis Stephani aram Deo."—*Serm.* 318, *E. B.*

[5650] *De Missæ S.*1. 2, c. 4.

[5651] *Ration.*1. 4, c. I.

[5652] *De Miss.*1. 2, c. 16.

[5653] *Luke,* 2:14.

[5654] *De Missæ S.*1. 2, c. 8.

[5655] "Mensa quæ sit, nostis; ibi est corpus et sanguis Christi; qui accedit ad talem mensam, præparet talia."—*In Jo. tr.* 47.

[5656] "Monet sancta Synodus præceptum esse ab Ecclesia Sacerdotibus, ut aquam vino in calice offerendo miscerent; quod Christum Dominum ita fecisse credatur."—*Sess.* 22 c. 7.

[5657] *Lib.* 2, c. 9, § 2.

[5658] "Domine, has oblationes benignus assume, ut, quod singuli obtulerunt, cunctis proficiat."

[5659] *Isa.* 6:3.

[5660] *Matt.* 21:9.

[5661] "Ab omni errore purum."

[5662] “Is enim constat, cum ex ipsis Domini verbis, turn ex Apostolorum traditionibus, ac Sanctorum quoque Pontificum piis institutionibus.”—*Sess.* 22, c. 4.

[5663] *De Sacr.*1. 4, c. 4.

[5664] “ ‘Illibata,’ quæ sine macula cordis et corporis oportet offerri.”—*De Alt. Myst.*1. 3, c. 3.

[5665] “Cum altari assistitur, semper ad Patrem dirigatur oratio.”—c. 23.

[5666] “Non petimus immutari æternum Dei propositum, sed causam pro effectu ponimus, orantes ut Deus nos ad se convertat atque ad æternam felicitatem perducat; qui sunt effectus prædestinationis.”—*In Sent.*1. 1, d. 40, § 22.

[5667] Such should also be, in this grave ceremony, the sentiments of all the faithful, who, we should not forget, offer the holy sacrifice jointly with the priest.—ED.

[5668] “Exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem, rationabile obsequium vestrum.”—*Rom.* 12:1.

[5669] “Non ut consecratio impleatur, sed ut nobis fiat fructuosa.”—P. 3, q. 83, a. 4.

[5670] “Non suis sermonibus, sed utitur sermonibus Christi.”—*De Sacr.*1. 4, c. 4.

[5671] *Matt.* 26:26.

[5672] “Hic est calix novum Testamentum in Sanguine meo, qui pro vobis fundetur.”—*Luke,* 22:20.

[5673] “Hic est enim Sanguis meus novi Testamenti, qui pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum.”—*Matt.* 26:28.

[5674] “In sanguine Testamenti æterni.”—*Heb.* 13:20.

[5675] “Quoniam aliud ibi cernitur, aliud creditur.”—*De Alt. Myst.*1. 4, c. 36.

[5676] “Sane formam istam verborum ab ipso Christo acceperunt Apostoli, et ab ipsis Apostolis accepit Ecclesia.”—*Ibid.* c. 5.

[5677] P. 2, c. 4, q. 20.

[5678] *De Miss. Sacr.* 1. 2, c. 15.—Benedict XIV. here observes that St. Thomas (P. 3, q. 18, a. 3) seems to favor the opinion of those who make the essential form of the consecration of the chalice consist in all the words that the priest pronounces as far as *Hœc quoties cumque;* because the words that follow, *Hic est enim calix sanguinis mei*, are *determinationes prœdicati*, that is to say, *sanguinis Christi*, and consequently, belonging *ad integritatem ejusdem locutionis*, are *de substantia formœ.* St. Pius V. caused the contrary opinion to be erased from the commentary of Cajetan.

[5679] “Sacerdos, post consecrationem, non utitur crucesignatione ad benedicendum et consecrandum, sed solum ad commemorandum virtutem crucis et modum passionis Christi quæ ad crucem est terminata.”—P. 3, q. 83, a. 5.

[5680] “Sacerdos petit hoc pro corpore mystico, ut scilicet orationes Sacerdotis et populi Angelus assistens divinis mysteriis Deo repræsentet.”—P. 3, q. 83, a. 4.

[5681] “Animas ibi detentas, fidelium suffragiis, potissimum vero acceptabili altaris Sacrificio juvari.”—*Sess.* 25, *Deer, de Purg.*

[5682] *Sess.* 22, c. 2.

[5683] “Videte qualem charitatem dedit nobis Pater, ut Filii Dei nominemur et simus.”—1 *John,* 3:1.

[5684] “Accepistis Spiritum adoptionis, in quo clamamus: Abba (Pater).”—*Rom.* 8:15.

[5685] *Luke,* 11:3.

[5686] “Tribue tantum victui meo necessaria.”—*Prov.* 30:8.

[5687] ”Supersubstantialem.”—*Matt.* 6:11.

[5688] These two expressions are not opposed to each other; on the contrary, one explains the other. We ask, in the one as in the other, what is each day necessary for the subsistence of the body and of the soul; but we chiefly ask for spiritual nourishment, and, above everything else, for the Holy Eucharist, which is pre-eminently and beyond comparison called the bread of life and the true bread of the children of God: *Panis vitæ, vere Panis filiorum.*—ED.

[5689] “Deus enim intentator malorum est; ipse autem neminem tentat.”—*James,* 1:13.

[5690] “Excæca cor populi hujus . . . ne forte videat.”—*Isa.* 6:10.

[5691] “Vigilate et orate, ut non intretis in tentationem.”—*Matt.* 26:41.

[5692] “Per multas tribulationes oportet nos intrare in regnum Dei.”—*Acts,* 14:21.

[5693] This signifies that the divine Mediator gives support to our prayer and renders it efficacious.—ED.

[5694] “Oratio, quamvis importuna, plus amica est.”—*Hom. in Matt.*

[5695] “Vult Deus nos in oratione esse perseverantes usque ad importunitatem.”—*In Luc.* 11:8.

[5696] P. 3, q. 83, a. 5.

5697 "Non enim petimus ut nunc fiat Consecratio, sed ut Consecratio, antea facta, sit nobis ad vitam æternam salutaris."—*De Miss.*1. 2, c. 27.

5698 "Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?"—*Rom.* 8:32.

5699 "Deo gratias agere, est sentire omnia bona a Deo data esse, et pro ipsis Deum laudare."

5700 We add this paragraph that it may serve as a practical conclusion. It is taken from the "True Spouse of Christ," chap. 24, §4.

5701 See Vol. I., A Christian's Rule of Life, chap. 2, § 4.

5702 We find this exercise, with that which is mentioned at the end of the Novena to the Holy Ghost, in an old edition of the Reflections and Affections on the Passion (*Operette spir.,* p. 2. *Napoli,* 1769). The act which concludes it—the Offering of the Mass—shows that it here finds a suitable place in connection with the Holy Sacrifice, as it does elsewhere in connection with Holy Communion.—There are other shorter Acts for Confession in the Christian's Rule of Life, chap. 2. § 3. On the advantages of frequent confession, and the manner how to approach worthily this sacrament, see True Spouse of Christ, chap. 18. § 1, and Instructions on the Commandments and the Sacraments, part ii. chap. 5.—ED.

5703 These Acts and the Aspirations that follow them were published by the Saint, with the Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, about the year 1745.—ED.

5704 *Introd.,* ch. 21.

5705 "Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo."—*John,* 6:57.

5706 "Antidotum quo liberemur a culpis quotitianis, et a peccatis mortalibus præservemur."—*Sess.* 13. c. 2.

5707 "Defectus non in cibo est, sed in edentis dispositione."—*De Sacr. M.* c. 6, § 6.

5708 "Numquid potest homo abscondere ignem in sinu suo, ut vestimenta illius non ardeant?"—*Prov.* 6:27.

5709 "Ignis consumens est."—*Deut.* 4:24.

5710 "Qui lotus est, non indiget nisi ut pedes lavet."—*John,* 13:10.

5711 *Insin.*1. 4, c. 26.

5712 *Sup. Magn.* tr. 9, p. 1.

5713 “Esurientes implevit bonis.”—*Luke*, 1:53.

5714 Part I. Ep. 50.

5715 *Spir. Grat.*1. 2, c. 3.

5716 “Ecce iste venit saliens in montibus, transiliens colles.”—*Cant.* 2:8.

5717 “En ipse stat post parietem nostrum, respiciens per fenestras, prospiciens per cancellos.”—*Cant.* 2:9.

5718 *Decr, ad Arm.*

5719 “Me autem non semper habetis.”—*Matt.* 26:11.

5720 “Et oravit tertio, eumdem sermonem dicens.”—*Matt.* 26:44.

5721 “Quid tibi vis faciam?”—*Mark*, 10:51.

5722 “Exi a me, quia homo peccator sum.”—*Luke*, 5:8.

5723 “Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi?”—*Ps.* 115:12.

5724 “Venite, audite, . . . omnes qui timetis Deum, quanta fecit animæ meæ.”—*Ps.* 65:16.

5725 “Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi.”—*Cant.* 2:16.

5726 “Quid tibi vis faciam”—*Mark*, 10:51.

5727 “Cor mundum crea in me, Deus.”—*Ps.* 50:12.

5728 “Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John*, 16:23.

5729 *Alph. Rodrig.*

5730 *Cant.* 3:2.

5731 *Cant.* 1:12.

5732 “Botrus cypri Dilectus meus mihi in vineis Engaddi.”—*Cant.* 1:13.

5733 *Cant.* 1:11.

5734 *Wisd.* 1:1.

5735 “In judiciis tuis supersperavi.—Judicia tua jucunda.—Memor fui judiciorum tuorum, . . . et consolatus sum.”—*Ps.* 118:43, 39, 52.

5736 “Bonus est Dominus animæ quærenti illum.”—Lam. 3:25.

5737 “Quam bonus Israel Deus his qui recto sunt corde!”—*Ps.* 72:1.

5738 *Cant.* 5:2

5739 *Cant.* 5:1.

5740 *Isa.* 66:12.

5741 *Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 60.

5742 “Meliora sunt ubera tua vino.”—*Cant.* 1:1.

5743 *Cant.* 5:1.

5744 “Adveniat regnum tuum.”—*Matt.* 6:10.

5745 *Cant.* 2:5.

5746 *Cant.* 5:10.

5747 Tit. 3:4.

5748 “Nonne videtur insania: Manducate meam carnem, bibite meum sanguinem?”—*In Ps.* 33. *en.* 1.

5749 “Accipite, et comedite; hoc est corpus meum.”—*Matt.* 26:26.

5750 “Durus est hic sermo et quis potest eum audire?”—*John,* 6:61.

5751 “Et nunc, Israel, quid Dominus Deus tuus petit a te, nisi ut . . . diligas eum, ac servias Domino Deo tuo in toto corde tuo?”—*Deut,* 10:12.

5752 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—*Prov.* 8:17.

5753 “Convertimini ad me, . . . et convertar ad vos.”—*Zach.* 1:3.

5754 “Si quis diligit me, . . . et Pater meus diliget eum, et ad eum veniemus, et mansionem apud eum faciemus.”—*John,* 14:23.

5755 “Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis.”—*S. Aug. Conf.*1. 10, c. 29.

5756 *Cant.* 1:5.

5757 “Nigra sum, sed formosa.”—*Ibid.* 4.

5758 *Cant.* 1:3.

5759 “In pace, in idipsum dormiam et requiescam.”—*Ps.* 4:9.

5760 *Cant.* 2:4.

5761 *Cant.* 6:1.

5762 *Cant.* 5:16.

5763 “Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum.”—*Ps.* 56:8.

5764 “Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore.”—*Ps.* 33:2.

5765 *Cant.* 8:5.

5766 *Cant.* 8:9.

5767 “Panis cor hominis confirmet.”—*Ps.* 103:15.

5768 “Qui manducat me, et ipse vivet propter me.”—*John,* 6:58.

5769 “Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo.”—*Ibid.* 57.

5770 *Cant.* 3:4.

5771 “Inveni, quem diligit anima mea; tenui eum, nec dimittam.”—*Cant.* 3:4.

5772 “Adjuro vos, . . . ne suscitetis neque evigilare faciatis dilectam.”—*Cant.* 8:4.

5773 *Cant.* 4:16.

5774 *Cant.* 5:1.

5775 *Ps.* 22:1.

5776 “Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea; quem timebo?”—*Ps.* 26:1.

5777 “Etiam si occiderit me, in ipso sperabo.”—*Job,* 13:15.

5778 *Isa.* 49:16.

5779 “Et si ilia oblita fuerit, ego tamen non obliviscar tui.”—*Isa.* 49:15.

5780 “Scuto bonæ voluntatis tuæ coronasti nos.”—*Ps.* 5:13.

5781 “Domine, quid me vis facere?”—*Acts,* 12:6.

5782 “Fiat voluntas tua.”—*Matt.* 6:10.

5783 “Doce me facere voluntatem tuam.”—*Ps.* 142:10.

5784 “Ego, quæ placita sunt ei, facio semper.”—*John,* 8:29.

5785 *Prov.* 23:26.

5786 “Revertetur enim Dominus, ut gaudeat super te in omnibus bonis.”—*Deut.* 30:9.

5787 *Is.* 5:4.

5788 “Verbum caro factum est.”—*John,* 1:14.

5789 “Formam servi accipiens.”—*Phil.* 2:7.

5790 “Sum vermis et non homo.”—*Ps.* 21:7.

5791 “Factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

5792 “Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.”—*John,* 15:13.

[5793] *Cant.* 8:6.

[5794] “Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus in æternum.”—Ps. 72:26.

[5795] *Prov.* 8:31.

[5796] “Recede a me, Domine, recede!”

[5797] “Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus.”—*Ps.* 33:9.

[5798] “Petite et accipietis.—*John,* 16:24.

[5799] “Nihil nos Deus voluit habere, quod per Mariæ manus non transiret.”—*In Vig. Nat. Dom.* s. 3.

[5800] “Sentit Ecclesia Virginis intercessionem esse utilem et necessariam.”—*De Inc.* p. 2, q. 37, a. 4, d. 23.

[5801] This question is treated at length in the *Glories of Mary,* Part I. ch, 5.

[5802] “In me omnis spes vitæ et virtutis. Transite ad me omnes.”—*Ecclus.* 24:25.

[5803] “Beatus homo qui audit me, et qui vigilat ad fores meas quotidie, et observat ad postes ostii mei.”—*Prov.* 8:34.

[5804] “Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam, et hauriet salutem a Domino.”—*Ibid.* 35.

[5805] “Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus.”—*De Aquœd.*

[5806] “Qui petit sine ipsa duce, sine alis tentat volare.”—P. 4, *tit.* 15, c. 22.

[5807] *Affetti Scamb.* p. 2, c. 3.

[5808] “Nunquam quiescam, donec obtinuero tenerum amorem erga Matrem meam.”

[5809] “Solet maxima pro minimis reddere.”—*In Dorm. B. V.* s. 3.

[5810] P. 3, q. 80, a. 1.

[5811] *Sess.* xiii. c. 8.

[5812] His Holiness, Pius IX., by an autograph rescript, September 7, 1854, confirmed August 8 and September 23, 1859, attached to each of the two prayers of St. Alphonsus, beginning with the words, *My Lord Jesus Christ,—Most Holy Immaculate Virgin,*—an indulgence of three hundred days each time that one recites with, at least contrite heart, either the first before the Blessed Sacrament, or the second before an image of the Blessed Virgin. His Holiness granted, besides, a *plenary indulgence*, once a month, to persons who during this time recite every day both those prayers in the manner indicated, provided they confess and communicate and pray for some time to the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff.—ED.

[5813] "Absorbeat, quæso, Domine Jesu Christe, mentem meam ignita et melliflua vis amoris tui, ut amore amoris tui moriar, qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori!"

[5814] See manner of making the Visits, page 123.

[5815] "Qui sitit, veniat ad me."—*John,* 7:37.

[5816] "Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris."—*Isa.* 12:3.

[5817] We have two kinds of Visits to the Blessed Virgin, one of which is found in several editions published at Naples, and the other in those editions that have appeared elsewhere. Both kinds, however, were without doubt written by St. Alphonsus. This is the reason why we publish them in his complete works. It may, perhaps, be asked why two kinds of Visits have been published, and which of the two was published first? To this no positive answer can be given, though we may venture on a conjecture. The Visits to the Blessed Sacrament appeared about the year 1745, with those Visits to the Blessed Virgin that we have put in the first place, and that were soon spread all over Europe. About five years after this publication, in 1750, the work called *Glories of Mary* was published, and excited comment on the part of some critics. An anonymous writer dared to reproach St. Alphonsus with having exaggerated certain prerogatives attributed to the Mother of God; but the saint at once replied to this attack and triumphantly repelled it. It is very probable that St. Alphonsus then replaced the first twenty two Visits that he had composed in honor of the Blessed Virgin by prayers drawn from different authors of great celebrity—prayers that had already been inserted in his book, the *Glories of Mary,* "to show the high idea that the saints had of the power and mercy of the Mother of God." The nine other Visits, joined to these prayers, appear to have been chosen with some modifications in the text which we regard as the first published. But this change was made only in the Naples editions; everywhere else the first prevailing text, or translations therefrom, have continued to be printed, with the exception of the first French translation which was made in 1773, from the fifteenth Naples edition.—ED.

[5818] "De plenitudine ejus accepimus omnes."—*De Laud. V. M. hom.*

[5819] "Hanc gratiam accepit Virgo, salutem sæculis redditura."—*Serm.* 143.

[5820] "Causa nostræ lætitiæ! ora pro nobis."

[5821] "Causa nostræ lætitiæ! ora pro nobis."

[5822] "Semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens."—*Phil* 2:7.

[5823] "Adeamus cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno."—*Heb.* 4:16.

[5824] P. 4, *tit.* 15, c. 14.

[5825] “Unicum Refugium peccatorum! miserere mei!”—*St. Aug.*

[5826] “Deliciæ meæ, esse cum filiis hominum.”—*Prov.* 8:31.

[5827]

“Bone Pastor, Panis vere,

Jesu! nostri miserere:

Tu nos pasce, nos tuere;

Tu nos bona fac videre

In terra viventium.”

[5828] “Vincula illius, alligatura salutaris.”—*Ecclus.* 6:31.

[5829] *Stellar.*1. 12, p. 1, a. 2.

[5830] “O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria.”

[5831] *Encom. in S. Deip.*

[5832] “Non habet amaritudinem conversatio illius, nec tædium convictus illius, sed lætitiam et gaudium.”—*Wis.* 8:16.

[5833] *Rib.*1. 5, c 4.

[5834] “Ego mater pulchræ dilectionis.”—*Ecclus.* 24:24.

[5835] *Encom. in S. Deip.*

[5836] *In Dorm. V. M.* s. 2.

[5837] “Passer invenit sibi domum, et turtur nidum sibi, ubi ponat pullos suos: altaria tua, Domine virtutum, Rex meus et Deus meus.”—*Ps.* 83:4.

[5838] “Raptrix cordium.”—*Med. in Salve Reg.*

[5839] “Mater amabilis! ora pro me.”

[5840] *Depr. ad glor. V.*

[5841] "Ubi thesaurus vester est, ibi et cor vestrum erit."—*Luke,* 12:34.

[5842] "Quasi oliva speciosa in campis."—*Ecclus.* 24:19.

[5843] "Memorare, piisima Maria, a sæculo non esse auditum quem-quam ad tua præsidia confugientem esse derelictum."

[5844] "Vita, Dulcedo, Spes nostra, salve!"

[5845] "Ecce vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem sæculi."—*Matt,* 28:20.

[5846] "Tota ratio spei meæ."—*De Aquœd.*

[5847] "In te speret, qui desperat."—*Med. in Salve Reg.*

[5848] *Cant.* 6:9.

[5849] *Depr. ad glor. V.*

[5850] "Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus!"

[5851] "Surge, propera, amica mea, columba mea, formosa mea, et veni."—*Cant.* 2:10.

[5852] "Si quis est parvulus, veniat ad me."—*Prov.* 9:4,

[5853] *De Affect. erga B. V.* c. 14.

[5854] "Monstra te esse Matrem."

[5855] *Depr. ad glor. V.*

[5856] "Vidi . . . præcinctum ad mamillas zona aurea."—*Apoc.* 1:12.

[5857] St. Francis de Sales, in his treatise *The Love of God*, B. 1, ch. 15, uses the same comparison in explaining it, to show us that the divine goodness takes greater pleasure in giving us his graces than we do in receiving them.—ED.

[5858] "Ad ubera portabimini."—*Isa.* 66:13.

[5859] "Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi."—*Prov.* 23:26.

[5860] "Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo."—*Matt.* 22:37.

5861 “Plus enim desiderat ipsa facere tibi bonum et largiri gratiam, quam tu accipere concupiscas.”—*Mar.* p. 2, s. 5.

5862 “Spes nostra! salve.”

5863 *In Nat. B. M. V.* s. 1.

5864 “Miseri, quo itis? Bonum quod amatis, ab illo est.”—*Conf.*1. 4, c. 12.

5865 “Ama unum bonum, in quo sunt omnia bona.”—*Man.* c. 34.

5866 “Mecum sunt divitiæ, . . . ut ditem diligentes me.”—*Prov.* 18:8.

5867 “Thesaurus gratiarum.”—*Cont. de V. M.* c. i.

5868 “Mater amabilis! ora pro me.”

5869 *In S. Deip. Ann.*

5870 “Beatus homo . . . qui vigilat ad fores meas quotidie, et observat ad postes ostii mei.”—*Prov.* 8:34.

5871 *In Dorm. S. M.* s. 3.

5872 “Hæc tota mea fiducia, hæc tota ratio spei meæ.”—*S. Bern. De Aquæd.*

5873 “Deus charitas est; et qui manet in charitate in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.”—1 *John,* 4:16.

5874 “Si quis diligit me, . . . et Pater meus diligit eum; et ad eum veniemus, et mansionem apud eum faciemus.”—*John,* 14:23.

5875 “Qui operantur in me non peccabunt.”—*Eclus.* 24:30.

5876 “Qui elucidant me, vitam æternam habebunt.”—*Ibid.* 31.

5877 “Dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata!”

5878 “Dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata!”

5879 “Et erunt oculi mei et cor meum ibi cunctis diebus.”—3 *Kings,* 9:3.

5880 “Trahe me vinculis amoris tui.”

5881 “Quæramus gratiam et per Mariam quæramus.”—*De Aquæd.*

5882 “Thesaurus divinarum gratiarum.”

5883 “Si quis est parvulus, veniat ad me.”—*Prov.* 9:4.

5884 “Sub tuum præsidium confugimus, sancta Dei genitrix!”

5885 *De Virg. perp. S. M.* c. 12.

5886 “Hæc requies mea in sæculum sæculi; hic habitabo, quoniam elegi eam.”—*Ps.* 131:14.

5887 “Nullus est qui salvus fiat, nisi per te; nemo qui liberetur a malis, nisi per te; nemo cui donum concedatur, nisi per te.”—*De Zona Deip. ap. Sur.* 31 *Aug.*

5888 “Hæc tota mea fiducia, hæc tota ratio spei meæ.”—*S. Bern. De A quæd.*

5889 “Ignem veni mittere interram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?”—*Luke,* 12:49.

5890 “Tota ratio spei meæ.”—*De Aquæd.*

5891 “Totam spem meam in te collocavi.”—*Carmina.*

5892 “*Quem* vis, salvus erit.”—*Cant, post Psalt.*

5893 “O Salus te invocantium, salva me!”

5894 *De Excell. B. M.* c. 12.

5895 “Numquid resina non est in Galaad? aut medicus non est ibi?”—*Jer.* 8:22.

5896 “Venite ad me omnes . . . et ego reficiam vos.”—*Matt.* 11:28.

5897 “Ecce, quem amas, infirmatur.”—*John*, 11:3.

5898 “Sana animam meam quia peccavi tibi.”—*Ps.* 40:5.

5899 “Quantumcumque homo peccet, si ex vera emendatione ad me reversus fuerit, statim parata sum recipere revertentem; nec attendo quantum peccaverit, sed cum quali voluntate venit: nam non dedignor ejus plagas ungere et sanare, quia vocor (et vere sum) Mater misericordiæ.”—*Rev.*1. 2, c. 23; *et1.* 6, c. 117.

5900 *In Nat. B. M. V.* s. 1.

5901 “Mater amabilis.”

[5902] “Concupivit Rex speciem tuam.”—*Ps.* 44:12.

[5903] “O dulcis, o pia, o multum amabilis Maria! tu nec nominari potes, quin accendas, nec cogitari, quin recrees affectus diligentium te.”—*Spec. B. V.* c. 9.

[5904] *In Nat. B. V. M.* s. 1.

[5905] “In conspectu Angelorum psallam tibi, adorabo ad templum sanctum tuum, et confitebor nomini tuo, super misericordia tua et veritate tua.”—*Ps.* 137:1, 2.

[5906] “Aperuit Deus peccatoribus publicum valetudinarium.”

[5907] “Diversorium peccatorum.”—*De Laud. Dei Gen.*

[5908] *In Annunt. Deip.*

[5909] “Descendit cum illo in foveam, et in vinculis non dereliquit illum.”—*Wisd.* 10:13.

[5910] “Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus.”—*Matt,* 28:20.

[5911] “O peccator! non diffidas, sed secure ad istam Dominam recurras; invenies eam in manibus plenam misericordia et largitate.”—*Mar.* p. 2, s. 5.

[5912] “Plus enim ipsa desiderat facere tibi bonum, quam tu accipere concupiscas.”

[5913] *Cont. de V. M.* c. 1.

[5914] “O Salus te invocantium!”—S. *Bonav.*

[5915] “In die illa erit fons patens domui David et habitantibus Jerusalem, in ablutionem peccatoris.”—*Zach.* 13:1.

[5916] “Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.”—*Cant.* 2:16.

[5917] “Maria non discutit merita, sed omnibus se exorabilem præbet.”—*In Sign. magn.*

[5918] “O Maria, tuus sum ego, salvum me fac!”

[5919] “*Contempt, de V. M.* c. 6.

[5920] “Ubicumque fuerit corpus, illic congregabantur et aquilæ.”—*Matt.* 24:23.

[5921] *In Matt, loco cit.*

[5922] “Jesu mi dulcissime! ne permittas me separari a te.”

[5923] “Advocata omnium iniquorum ad eam confugientium.”—*De Laud. V. M.* 1. 2, a. 23.

[5924] “Eja ergo, Advocata nostra! officium tuum imple.”—*In Nat. B. V. conc.* 3.

[5925] *De Rhet. div,* c. 18.

[5926] “O Maria! tuus sum ego, salvum me fac.”

[5927] “Num quem diligit anima mea vidistis?”—*Cant.* 3:3.

[5928] “Ministra propitiationis.”—*In Sign. magn.*

[5929] “Opitulatrix periclitantium.”—*De Laud. Dei Gen.*

[5930] “Misericordias Mariæ in æternum cantabo, in aeternum cantabo. Amen, Amen.”

[5931] *De Rhet. div.* c. 18.

[5932] *Epist.* 36 *ad Mac.*

[5933] “Mater orphanorum.”—*Psalt. min. B. V.*

[5934] “Susceptio orphanorum.”—*De Laud. Dei Gen.*

[5935] “Quis invocavit eam, et non est exauditus ab ipsa?”—*De Ass. B. V.* s. 2.

[5936] “Quæramus gratiam et per Mariam quæramus; quia quod quærit, invenit, et frustrari non potest.”—*De Aquæd.*

[5937] “Sub tuum præsidium confugimus, sancta Dei genitrix!”

[5938] See the Sixth and the Thirteenth Visit, page 139 and 156.

[5939] “Vere tu es Deus absconditus.”—*Isa.* 45:15.

[5940] “Latet divinitas, latet humanitas; sola patent viscera charitatis.”

[5941] “Pelagus gratiarum.”—*In Nat. V. M. or.* 1.

[5942] “Congregatio gratiarum.”—*Spec. B. V.* c. 7.

[5943] “Fons gratiæ et totius consolationis.”—*De Laud. Dei Gen.*

5944 “Plenitudo totius boni.”—*De Aquæd.*

5945 “In te, Domina, peccant, qui te non rogant.”

5946 “Adeamus cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno.”—*Heb.* 4:16.

5947 *St. Antoninus.*—P. 4, *tit.* 15, c. 14.

5948 See the Second Visit, page 130.

5949 “Factus obediens usque ad mortem.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

5950 “Ego autem non contradico.”—*Isa.* 50:5.

5951 “Neque mors, neque vita, . . . poterit nos separare a charitate Dei, quæ est in Christo Jesu.”—*Rom.* 8:39.

5952 “Area in qua naufragium evadimus.”—*S. de B. M. Deip*

5953 “Area Noe largior.”—*De S. M. Deip. hom.* 2.

5954 “Thesaurus et Thesauraria gratiarum.”—*Idiot. Cont. de V. M.* c. 1.

5955 “Mecum sunt divitiæ, . . . ut ditem diligentes me.”—*Prov.* 18:8.

5956 See the Tenth Visit, page 149.

5957 “Exsulta et lauda, habitatio Sion; quia Magnus in medio tui, Sanctus Israel.”—*Isa.* 12:6.

5958 “Amorem non tam habet, quam ipse est.”—*In Cant.* s. 59.

5959 “Deus charitas est.”—*1 John,* 4:16.

5960 “Hospes eram, et non collegistis me.”—*Matt.* 25:43.

5961 “Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui.”—*Matt.* 3:17.

5962 “Domine, si vis, potes me mundare.”—*Matt.* 8:2.

5963 “Potentia debilitatis nostræ.”—*Enc. Deiparæ.*

5964 “Porta libertatis.”—*Psalt. min. B. V.*

5965 “Quies tuta hominum.”

5966 “Solatium perigrinationis nostræ.”—*S. in Nat. V. M.*

5967 “Thronus gratiæ Dei.”

5968 “Pons per quem Deus ad homines descendit.”—*Or. I in Dei gen.*

5969 “Tu es Regina misericordiæ; et qui subditi, nisi miseri? Tu Regina misericordiæ, et ego miserrimus peccator, subditorum maximus. Rege nos ergo, o Regina misericordiæ.”

5970 “Eja ergo, Advocata nostra! illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte.”

5971 “Non est alia natio tam grandis, quæ habeat deos appropinquantes sibi, sicut Deus noster adest nobis.”—*Resp.* 7.—*Deut.* 4:7.

5972 “Memoriam fecit mirabilium suorum.”—*Ps.* 110:4.

5973 “Ædificata est cum propugnaculis; mille clypei pendent ex ea, omnis armatura fortium.”—*Cant.* 4:4.

5974 “Propugnaculum munitissimum in bello versantibus.”

5975 “Propugnatrix confidentium in te.”

5976 “Quantumcumque homo peccet, si ex vera emendatione ad me reversus fuerit, statim parata sum recipere revertentem; nec attendo quantum peccaverit, sed cum quali voluntate venit: nam non dedignor ejus plagas ungere et sanare, quia vocor (et vere sum) Mater misericordiæ.”—*Rev.*1. 2, c. 23;1. 6, c. 117.

5977 See the Sixteenth Visit, page 163.

5978 “Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* 8:32.

5979 “Omnia dedit ei Pater in manus.”—*John,* 13:2.

5980 “In omnibus divites facti estis in illo, . . . ita ut nihil vobis desit in ulla gratia.”—1 *Cor.* 1:5, 7.

5981 “Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

5982 “Portus vexatorum.”—*Or. ad Deip.*

5983 “Restauratio calamitatum nostrarum.”

5984 “Solatium miserorum.”—*Cant, post Psalt.*

5985 “Requies gemituum nostrorum.”—*Enc. Deiparæ.*

5986 “Mater amabilis.”

5987 “Concupivit Rex speciem tuam. Quam pulchra es, Amica mea! quam pulchra es!—Tota pulchra es, Amica mea, et macula non est in te.”—*Cant.* 4:1, 7.

5988 See the Seventeenth Visit, page 165.

5989 “Sto ad ostium, et pulse”—*Apoc.* 3:20.

5990 “Sub umbra illius, quem desideraveram, sedi.”—*Cant.* 2:3.

5991 “Trahe me: post te curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum.”—*Cant.* 1:3.

5992 “Sicut novellæ olivarum in circuitu mensæ tuæ.”—*Ps.* 127:3.

5993 “Non apparebis in conspectu meo vacuus.”—*Exod.* 23:15.

5994 “Ego Paulus, vinctus Christi Jesu.”—*Eph.* 3:1.

5995 “Via regia Salvatoris.”—*De Adv. Dom.* s. 2.

5996 “Vehiculum ad Deum animarum nostrarum.”

5997 “Advocata omnium iniquorum ad eam confugientium.”—*Be Laud. V. M.*1. 2, a. 23.

5998 “Eja ergo, Advocata nostra! officium tuum imple.’—*In Nat. B. V. conc.* 3.

5999 See the Twenty-first Visit, page 176.

6000 “Cur faciem tuam abscondis?”—*Job,* 13:24.

6001 “Dum Deus in hoc Sacramento faciem suam abscondit, amorem suum detegit.”

6002 “Notas facite in populis adinventiones ejus.”—*Isa.* 12:4.

6003 “Quis me separabit a charitate Christi?”—*Rom.* 8:35.

6004 “Potentissima et piissima charitas Dei Matris, et affectu compatiendi, et subveniendi abundat effectu: æque locuples in utroque.”—*In Assumpt.* s. 4.

6005 “O Domina! me pugnantem protege, me vacillantem confirma.”—*Par. an.* p. 2. c. 4.

6006 “Mater orphanorum.”—*Psalt. min. B. V.*

6007 “Quis invocavit earn, et non est exauditus ab ipsa?”—*De Ass. B. V.* s. 2.

6008 See the Twenty-third Visit, page 181.

6009 “Jesus ergo, fatigatus ex itinere, sedebat sic supra fontem.”—*John,* 4:6.

6010 “Non veni ut judicem mundum, sed ut salvificem mundum.”—*John.* 12:47.

6011 “Semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis.”—*Heb.* 7:25.

6012 “Sicut solet dilectus ad dilectum loqui, et amicus cum amico convivari.”—*Imit. Chr.* B. 4, c. 13.

6013 “Adstat Beatissima Virgo vultui Conditoris, prece potentissima semper interpellans pro nobis. Videt enim nostra discrimina, nostrique clemens ac dulcis Domina materno affectu miseretur.”—*De Laud. B. V. hom.* 8.

6014 “Tu post Unigenicum tuum certa fidelium salus.”—*Par. an.* p. 2, c. 4.

6015 See the Twenty-seventh Visit, page 192.

6016 “Quid enim mihi est in cœlo? et a Te quid volui super terram? Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:25, 26.

6017 “Sciens Jesus quia venit hora ejus, ut transeat ex hoc mundo ad Patrem.”—*John,* 13:1.

6018 “Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus, usque ad consummationem sæculi.”—*Matt,* 28:20.

6019 “Deus meus, et omnia!”

6020 “Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.”—*Matt.* 11:28.

6021 “Divitias divini sui erga homines amoris velut effudit.”—*Sess.* xiii. c. 2.

6022 “Accipite et comedite; hoc est corpus meum.”—*Matt.* 26:26.

6023 “Sciens Jesus quia venit hora ejus, ut transeat ex hoc mundo ad Patrem, cum dilexisset suos, . . . in finem dilexit eos.”—*John,* 13:1.

6024 “In qua nocte tradebatur, accepit panem, et gratias agens fregit, et dixit: Accipite et manducate; hoc est corpus meum.”—1 *Cor.* 11:23.

6025 “Sacramentum charitatis, summæ charitatis pignus.”

6026 “Amor amorum.”

6027 “Ultimus gradus amoris est, cum se dedit nobis in cibum; quia dedit se nobis ad omnimodam unionem, sicut cibus et cibans invicem uniuntur.”—T. ii. s. 54, a. 1, c. 1.

6028 *Introd.* p. 2, *ch.* 21.

6029 “Semetipsum nobis immiscuit, ut unum quid simus; ardenter enim amantium hoc est.”—*Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 61.

6030 “Voluisti ut tecum unum cor haberemus.”—*De Inc. div. am.* c. 5.

6031 “Qui manducat meam carnem . . . , in me manet, et ego in illo.”—*John,* 6:57.

6032 *In J0.*1. 4, c. 17.

6033 “Ne permittas me separari a te!”

6034 “Sciens Jesus quia venit hora ejus.”—*John,* 13:1.

6035 “Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare vobiscum.”—*Luke,* 22:15.

6036 “Flagrantissimæ charitatis est vox hæc.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 2.

6037 “Accipite et comedite; hoc est corpus meum.”—*Matt.* 26:26.

6038 “Qui manducat meam carnem . . . , habet vitam æternam.”—*John,* 6:55.

6039 “Nisi manducaveritis carnem Filii hominis . . . , non habebitis vitam in vobis.”—*Ibid.* 54.

[6040] *Spir. Grat.*1. 2, c. 3.

[6041] “Sitit sitiri Deus.”—*Tetr. Sent.* 37.

[6042] “Ego sum panis vivus, qui de cœlo descendi; si quis manducaverit ex hoc pane, vivet in æternum.”—*John,* 6:51.

[6043] “Antidotum, quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis, et a peccatis mortalibus præservemur.”—*Sess.* xiii. c. 2.

[6044] *De Alt. Myst.*1. 4, c. 44.

[6045] “Tanto magis æger necesse habet requirere medicum, quanto magis senserit se ægrotum.—*De Prof. re1.1.* 2, *c.* 77.

[6046] “In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.”—*Ps.* 30:2.

[6047] “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* 4:13.

[6048] “Defectus non in cibo est, sed in edentis dispositione.”—*De Sacr. M.* c. 6, § 6.

[6049] *Insin.*1. 4, c. 26.

[6050] *Sup. Magn. tr.* 9, p. 1.

[6051] *Introd.* p. 2, *ch.* 21.

[6052] *Spir. Grat.*1. 3, c. 22.

[6053] “Quid tibi vis faciam?”—*Mark,* 10:51.

[6054] This opuscule was written and published in 1758. (Tannoia, B. 2, ch. 46.)

[6055] “Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?”—*Luke,* 12:49.

[6056] “Ipse enim Pater amat vos, quia vos me amastis.”—*John,* 16:27.

[6057] “Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

[6058] “Quos præscivit et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii Sui.”—*Rom.* 8:29.

[6059] “Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi.”—*Prov.* 23:26.

[6060] “Cor meum et caro mea exsultaverunt in Deum vivum.”—*Ps.* 83:3.

6061 “Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus, in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:26.

6062 “Charitas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum, qui datus est nobis.”—*Rom.* 5:5.

6063 *Lib.* 4, p. 2, c. 30, n. 17.

6064 *Life*, ch. 29.

6065 “Dignum reputamus, si de ipsius passionis specialibus instrumentis, et præsertim in partibus in quibus instrumenta ipsa dicuntur haberi, speciale festum celebretur, nosque Christi fideles in eorum devotione divinis officiis specialiter foveamus.”—*Lib.* 4. p. 2, c. 30, n. 15.

6066 “Cœpit pavere et tædere,—contristari et mœstus esse.”—*Mark*, 14:33; *Matt.* 26:37.

6067 The reader is aware that the desire of St. Alphonsus was realized a few years afterwards, and even during his lifetime. In 1765 the permission to celebrate the feast of the Sacred Heart by an Office and a Proper Mass on the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi was granted to several churches by Clement XIII.; nearly all the dioceses of the Catholic world asked and successively obtained the same permission; and Pope Pius IX. by a decree of August 23, 1856, in answer to a request of the bishops of France, rendered this feast obligatory for the universal Church. Moreover, by another decree, dated May 8, 1873, His Holiness vouchsafed to grant to persons who every day during the month of June offer special prayers and perform some pious acts in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, either in public or in private, *an indulgence of seven* years for each of those days, and besides, *a plenary indulgence* on any day of the month, provided that, being truly penitent, after confession and Communion, they shall visit some church or public oratory and pray there devoutly, for some time, for the intention of His Holiness. These indulgences are applicable to the souls in purgatory.—ED.

6068 “Dicebant excessum ejus, quem completurus erat in Jerusalem.” *Luke*, 9:31.

6069 “Cum dilexisset suos, . . . in finem dilexit eos.”—*John*, 13:1.

6070 “In charitate perpetua dilexi te.”—*Jer.* 31:3.

6071 “Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem in me manet, et ego in illo.”—*John*, 6:57.

6072 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”—*Matt.* 22:37.

6073 *Opusc.* 63, c. 7.

6074 “Quid est homo, quia magnificas eum? aut quid apponis erga eum cor tuum?”—*Job.* 7:17.

6075 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”—*Matt.* 22:37.

6076 “Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi.”—*Prov.* 23:26.

6077 “Sto ad ostium et pulso.”—*Apoc.* 3:20.

6078 “Aperi mihi, soror mea.”—*Cant.* 5:2.

6079 “Non ad aliud amat Deus, nisi ut ametur.”—*In Cant.* s. 83.

6080 “Quid Dominus Deus petit a te, nisi ut timeas . . . et diligas eum?”—*Deut.* 10:12.

6081 “Congratulamini mihi, quia inveni ovem meam quæ perierat.”—*Luke,* 15:6.

6082 “Qui non diligit, manet in morte.”—1 *John,* 3:14.

6083 “Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.”—1 *John,* 4:16.

6084 “Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.”—*Mark,* 14:34.

6085 “Quare moriemini, domus Israel? . . . Revertimini, et vivite.”—*Ezek.* 18:31.

6086 “Omnium iniquitatum ejus . . . non recordabor.”—*Ibid.* 22.

6087 “Ne permittas me separari a te.”

6088 “Mecum sunt divitiæ, . . . ut ditem diligentes me.”—*Prov.* 8:18, 21.

6089 “Propter vos egenus factus est, cum esset dives, ut illius inopia vos divites essetis.”—2 *Cor.* 8:9

6090 “Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* 8:32.

6091 “In omnibus divites facti estis in illo, . . . ita ut nihil vobis desit in ulla gratia.”—1 *Cor.* 1:5, 7.

6092 “Sine me nihil potestis facere.”—*John,* 15:5.

6093 “Usque modo non petistis quidquam, . . . petite, et accipietis.”—*John,* 16:24.

6094 “Dives in omnes qui invocant illum.”—*Rom.* 10:12.

6095 “Quoniam tu, Domine, suavis et mitis, et multæ misericordiæ omnibus invocantibus te.”—*Ps.* 85:5.

6096 “Centuplum accipiet.”—*Matt.* 19:29.

6097 “Eum qui venit ad me non ejiciam foras.”—*John,* 6:37.

6098 “Fidelis est, qui vocavit vos, qui etiam faciet.”—1 *Thess.* 5:24.

6099 “Si quis . . . aperuerit mihi januam, intrabo ad illum, et cœnabo cum illo.”—*Apoc.* 3:20.

6100 “Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

6101 “Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra quod potestis.”—1 *Cor.* 10:13.

6102 “Non est Deus quasi homo, ut mentiatur, nec ut filius hominis, ut mutetur.”—*Num.* 23:19.

6103 “Dixit ergo, et non faciet?”—*Ibid.*

6104 “Euge, serve bone et fidelis; quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, super multa te constituam; intra in gaudium Domini tui.”—*Matt.* 25:21.

6105 This was written by St. Alphonsus, but remained unpublished till 1875.—ED.

6106 “Adhuc si expediret, pro te sola tolerarem omnia quæ toleravi pro toto mundo.”

6107 “Impelle me, Carpe, quia paratus sum pro hominibus crucifigi.”

6108 St. Alphonsus, in adopting these two hymns and inserting them among his works, informs us that they were composed by another author, whom he does not name.—ED.

6109 “Ipse enim Pater amat vos, quia vos me amastis.”—*John,* 16:27.

6110 *Spirit,* p. 1, *ch.* 25.

6111 “Super omnia, . . . charitatem habete, quod est vinculum perfectionis.”—*Col.* 3:14.

6112 “Ama, et fac quod vis.”

6113 ‘In charitate perpetua dilexi te.”—*Jer.* 31:3.

6114 “Ab alio amatore præventa sum.”

6115 “In funiculis Adam traham eos, in vinculis charitatis.”—*Osee,* 11:4.

6116 “Cœlum et terra et omnia mihi dicunt, ut te amem.”—*Conf.* B. 10, c. 6.

6117 “Sic enim Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium unigenitum daret.” *John,* 3:16.

6118 “Propter nimiam charitatem suam qua dilexit nos, et cum essemus mortui peccatis, convivificavit nos in Christo.”—*Eph.* 2:4.

6119 “Qui etiam proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum: quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* 8:32.

6120 “Dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me.”—*Gal.* 2:20.

6121 “Et Verbum caro factum est.”—*John,* 1:14.

6122 “Exinanivit semetipsum formam servi accipiens, . . . et habitu inventus ut homo.”—*Phil.* 2:7.

6123 “Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem cruris.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

6124 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

6125 “Charitas Christi urget nos.”—2 *Cor.* 5:14.

6126 *Love of God.* B. 7, c. 8.

6127 *Love of God,* B. 12, c. 13.

6128 “Baptismo habeo baptizari; et quomodo coarctor usquedum perficiatur!”—*Luke,* 12:50.

6129 “Sciens Jesus quia venit hora ejus, ut transeat ex hoc mundo ad Patrem, cum dilexisset suos, . . . in finem dilexit eos.”—*John,* 13:1.

6130 “Quis hoc fecit?—Fecit amor, dignitatis nescius.”—*In Cant.* s. 61.

6131 “Vidimus Sapientiam amoris nimietate infatuatam.”—*Serm.de Nat. D.*

6132 “Extasim facit divinus amor.”—*De Div. Nom.* c. 4.

6133 “Vulnera, corda saxea vulnerantia, et mentes congelatas inflammantia.”—*Stim. div. am.* p. I, c. I.

6134 “Charitas Christi urget nos.”—2 *Cor.* 5:14.

6135 “Ut cognoscat mundus quia diligo Patrem, . . . surgite, eamus.”—*John* 14:31.

6136 “In hoc enim Christus mortuus est et resurrexit, ut et mortuorum et vivorum dominetur.”—*Rom.* 14:9.

6137 *Disc, on the Love of God.*

6138 *De Duob. Præc.* c. 4.

6139 *Epist.* 20.

6140 “Si quis non amat Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, sit anathema.”—1 *Cor.* 16:22.

6141 “Si vis proficere, quotidie mediteris Domini passionem; nihil enim in anima ita operatur universalem sanctimoniam, sicut meditatio passionis Christi.”

6142 “Magis meretur vel unam lacrymam emittens ob memoriam passionis Christi, quam si qualibet anni hebdomada in pane et aqua jejunaret.”—*Rosar.* p. 2, s. 15.

6143 “Sciens Jesus quia venit hora ejus, ut transeat ex hoc mundo ad Patrem, cum dilexisset suos qui erant in mundo, in finem dilexit eos.”—*John,* 13:1.

6144 “Quæ in fine in signum amicitiæ celebrantur, firmius memoriæ imprimuntur, et cariora tenentur.”—T. ii. s. 54, a. 1, c. 1.

6145 “Totum tibi dedit, nihil sibi reliquit.”

6146 “Divitias divini sui erga homines amoris velut effudit.”—*Sess.* xiii. c. 2.

6147 “In qua nocte tradebatur, accepit panem, et gratias agens fregit, et dixit: Accipite et manducate; hoc est corpus meum.”—1 *Cor.* 11:23.

6148 “In illo fervoris excessu, quando paratus erat pro nobis mori, ab excessu amoris majus opus agere coactus est, quam umquam operatus fuit, dare nobis corpus in cibum.”—*Loco cit.*

6149 “Sacramentum charitatis, Pignus charitatis.”

6150 “Amor amorum.”

6151 “In quo . . . futuræ gloriæ nobis pignus datur.”

6152 *Isa.* 12:4.

6153 “Nonne videtur insania: Manducate meam carnem, bibite meum sanguinem?”—*In Ps.* 33. *en.* 1.

6154 “Quomodo potest hic nobis carnem suam dare ad manducandum?—Durus est hic sermo; et quis potest eum audire?”—*John,* 6:53, 61.

6155 “Accipite et manducate; hoc est corpus meum.”

6156 “Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare vobiscum.”—*Luke,* 22:15.

6157 “Flagrantissimæ charitatis est vox hæc.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 2.

6158 “Venite, comedite panem meum, et bibite vinum quod miscui vobis.”—*Prov.* 9:5.

6159 “Comedite, amici, et bibite.”—*Cant.* 5:1.

6160 “Qui manducat meam carnem, . . . habet vitam æternam.—Qui manducat hunc panem, vivet in æternum.”—*John,* 6:55, 59.

6161 “Nisi manducaveritis carnem Filii hominis, . . . non habebitis vitam in vobis.”—*John,* 6:54.

6162 “Amantes desiderant ex ambobus fieri unum.”—1. 2, q. 28, a. 1.

6163 “En ipse stat post parictem nostrum respiciens per fenestras, prospiciens per cancellos.”—*Cant.* 2:9.

6164 “Qui manducat meam carnem, . . . in me manet, et ego in illo.”—*John,* 6:57.

6165 *Introd.* p. 2, *ch.* 21.

6166 “Semetipsum nobis immiscuit, ut unum quid simus; ardenter enim amantium hoc est.”—*Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 61.

6167 “O quam mirabilis est dilectio tua, Domine Jesu, qui tuo corpori taliter nos incorporari voluisti, ut tecum unum cor et unam animam haberemus inseparabiliter colligatam!”—*De Inc. div. am.* c. 5.

6168 “Ultimus gradus amoris est, cum se dedit nobis in cibum; quia dedit se nobis ad omnimodam unionem, sicut cibus et cibans invicem uniuntur.”—T. ii. s. 54, a. 4, c. i.

6169 *Introd.* p. 2, *ch.* 21.

6170 “Frequens accessus (ad Eucharistiam) confessariorum judicio est relinquendus, qui, . . . laicis negotiatoribus et conjugatis, quod prospicient eorum saluti profuturum, id illis pæescribere debebunt.”

6171 “Omnia dedit ei Pater in manus.”—*John,* 13:3.

6172 “Venerunt mihi omnia bona pariter cum ilia.”—*Wisd.* 7:11.

6173 “Eucharistia maximam vim habet perficiendæ sanctitatis.”

6174 “Antidotum quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis, et a peccatis mortalibus præservemur.”—*Sess.* xiii. c. 2.

6175 P. 3, q. 79, a. 4.

6176 “Per crucis mysterium, eripuit nos a potestate peccati; per Eucharistiæ sacramentum, liberat nos a voluntate peccandi.”—*De Alt. Myst.* 1. 4, c. 44.

6177 “Deus charitas est.”—1 *John*, 4:8.

6178 “Ignis consumens est.”—*Dent.* 4:24.

6179 “Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?”—*Luke*, 12:49.

6180 “Carbo est Eucharistia, quæ nos inflammat, ut tamquam leones ignem spirantes ab illa mensa recedamus, facti diabolo terribiles.”—*Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 61.

6181 “Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem.”—*Cant.* 2:4.

6182 “Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis, quia amore langueo.”—*Cant.* 2:5.

6183 “Licet tepide, tamen confidens de misericordia Dei accedat; tanto magis æger necesse habet requirere medicum, quanto magis senserit se ægrotum.”—*De Prof. rel.* 1. 2, c. 77.

6184 *Introd.* p. 2. *ch.* 21.

6185 *Spir. Grat.* 1. 3, c. 22.

6186 “In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine Deus veritatis.”—*Ps.* 30:6.

6187 “Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit.”—*Isa.* 53:4.

6188 “Delens quod adversus nos erat chirographum decreti, quod erat contrarium nobis, et ipsum tulit de medio, affigens illud cruci.”—*Col.* 2:14.

6189 “Accessistis ad . . . Mediatorem Jesum, et sanguinis aspersionem melius loquentem quam Abel.”—*Heb.* 12:22, 24.

6190 “Pater . . . omne judicium dedit Filio.”—*John*, 5:22.

6191 “Quis est qui condemnet? Christus Jesus, qui mortuus est, . . . qui etiam interpellat pro nobis.”—*Rom.* 8:34.

6192 “Quid times, peccator? Quomodo te damnabit pœnitentem, qui moritur ne damneris? Quomodo te abjiciet redeuntem, qui de cœlo venit quærere te?”—*Tr. de Adv. D.*

6193 “Curramus ad propositum nobis certamen, aspicientes in Auctorem fidei et consummatorem Jesum, qui, proposito sibi gaudio, sustinuit crucem, confusione contempta.”—*Heb.* 12:1, 2.

[6194] *Life, ch.* 25.

[6195] *Life, ch.* 8.

[6196] “Fiducialiter agam, immobiliter sperans nihil ad salutem necessarium ab eo negandum, qui tanta pro mea salute fecit et pertulit.”

[6197] “Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno”—*Heb.* 4:16.

[6198] “In omnibus divites facti estis in illo, . . . ita ut nihil vobis desit in ulla gratia.”—1 *Cor.* 1:5, 7.

[6199] “Ampliora adepti sumus per Christi gratiam, quam per diaboli amiseramus invidiam.”—*De Asc.* s. 1.

[6200] “Non sicut delictum, ita et donum: . . . ubi abundavit delictum, superabundavit gratia.”—*Rom.* 5:15.

[6201] “Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

[6202] “Pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum; quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* 8:32.

[6203] “Dives in omnes qui invocant illum.”—*Ibid.* 10:12.

[6204] “O mors! ero mors tua.”—*Osee,* 13:14.

[6205] “Pater! quos dedisti mihi, volo ut, ubi sum ego, et illi sint mecum.”—*John,* 17:24.

[6206] “Numquid oblivisci potest mulier infantem suum, ut non misereatur filio uteri sui? et si ilia oblita fuerit, ego tamen non obliviscar tui.”—*Isa.* 49:15.

[6207] *Part* 2, *Ep.* 48.

[6208] “Non ad aliud amat, nisi ut ametur.”—*In Cant.* s. 83.

[6209] “Et nunc, Israel, quid Dominus Deus tuus petit a te, nisi ut timeas Dominum Deum tuum, . . . et diligas eum?—*Deut.* 10:12.

[6210] “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”—*Deut.* 6:5.

[6211] “Plenitudo legis est dilectio.”—*Rom.* 13:10.

[6212] “Completio legis.”

6213 *Love of God,* B. 7, *ch.* 8.

6214 “Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est.”—2 *Cor.* 5:15.

6215 “Gratiam fidejussoris ne obliviscaris; dedit enim pro te animam suam.”—*Ecclus.* 29:20.

6216 “Accipite et manducate; hoc est corpus meum: . . . hoc facite in meam commemorationem. . . . Quotiescumque enim manducabitis panem hunc, . . . mortem Domini annuntiabitis.”—1 *Cor.* 11:24.

6217 “Deus qui nobis sub Sacramento mirabili passionis tuæ memoriam reliquisti. . . .”

6218 “O sacrum convivium, in quo Christus sumitur, recolitur memoria passionis ejus! . . .”

6219 “Testis crux, testes dolores, testis amara mors quam pro te sustinuit.”—*Dom.* 17 p. *Pent. cone.* 3.

6220 “Magna res amor.”—*In Cant.* s. 83.

6221 “Infinitus enim thesaurus est hominibus, quo qui usi sunt, participes facti sunt amicitiæ Dei.”—*Wisd.* 7:14.

6222 “Charitas est virtus conjungens nos Deo.”

6223 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—*Prov.* 8:17.

6224 “Si quis diligit me, . . . Pater meus diliget eum, et ad eum veniemus, et mansionem apud eum faciemus.”—*John,* 14:23.

6225 “Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.”—1 *John,* 4:16.

6226 “Fortis est ut mors dilectio.”—*Cant.* 8:6.

6227 “Nihil tam durum, quod amoris igne non vincatur.”—*De Mor. Eccl. cat.* c. 22.

6228 “In eo quod amatur, aut non laboratur, aut et labor amatur.”—*De Bono vid.* c. 21.

6229 *Spirit,* p. 1, *ch.* 25.

6230 “Porro unum est necessarium.”—*Luke,* 10:42.

6231 “Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum.”—*Cant.* 8:6.

[6232] “Et si habuero omnem fidem, ita ut montes transferam, charitatem autem non habuero, nihil sum. Et si distribuero in cibos pauperum omnes facultates meas; et si tradidero corpus meum, ita ut ardeam, charitatem autem non habuero, nihil mihi prodest.”—1 *Cor.* 13:2, 3.

[6233] “Charitas patiens est, benigna est; charitas non æmulatur, non agit perperam, non inflatur, non est ambitiosa, non quærit quæ sua sunt, non irritatur; non cogitat malum, non gaudet super iniquitate, congaudet autem veritati; omnia suffert, omnia credit, omnia sperat, omnia sustinet.”—1 *Cor.* 13:4–7.

[6234] “Homo natus de muliere, brevi vivens tempore, repletur multis miseriis.”—*Job,* 14:1.

[6235] “Una eademque tunsio bonos producit ad gloriam, malos redigit in favillam.”—*Serm.* 52,, *E. B. app.*

[6236] “Nam quos præscivit, et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui.”—*Rom.* 8:29.

[6237] “Christus passus est pro nobis, vobis relinquens exemplum, ut sequamini vestigia ejus.”—1 *Pet.* 2:21.

[6238] “Despectum et novissimum virorum.”—*Isa.* 53:3.

[6239] “Quem enim diligit Dominus, castigat; flagellat autem omnem filium quem recipit.”—*Heb.* 12:6.

[6240] *Life, addit.*

[6241] *Abelly,*1. 3. c. 43.

[6242] *In Phil. hom.* 4.

[6243] *In Eph. hom.* 8.

[6244] “Patientia autem opus perfectum habet.”—*James,* 1:4.

[6245] “Amicti stolis albis, et palmæ in manibus eorum.”—*Apoc.* 7:9.

[6246] “Nos sine ferro esse possumus martyres, si patientiam veraciter in animo custodimus.”—*In Evang. hom.* 35.

[6247] *Life, addit.*

[6248] *Life,* ch. 30.

[6249] *Boll.* 31 *Maii. Vit.* c. 7.

[6250] *Found,* ch. 31.

[6251] “Non sunt condignæ passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam quæ revelabitur in nobis.”—*Rom.* 8:18.

[6252] “Momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostræ supra modum in sublimitate æternum gloriæ pondus operatur in nobis.”—2 *Cor.* 4:17.

[6253] “Si sustinebimus, et conregnabimus.”—2 *Tim.* 2:12.

[6254] “Qui certat in agone, non coronatur, nisi legitime certaverit.”—2 *Tim.* 2:5.

[6255] *Bacci,*1. 2, ch. 20.

[6256] *Spirit,* ch. 19.

[6257] *Life,* ch. 10.

[6258] “Tollat crucem suam quotidie, et sequatur me.”—*Luke,* 9:23.

[6259] *Mont. du C.*1. 2, ch. 7.

[6260] “Melior est patiens viro forti.”—*Prov,* 16:32.

[6261] *Spirit*, ch. 4.

[6262] *Way of Perf.* ch. 37.

[6263] In this chapter we have spoken of patience in general; in Chapter X. we shall treat more particularly of occasions in which we have especially to practise patience.

[6264] “Spiritus enim meus super mel dulcis.”—*Ecclus.* 24:27.

[6265] *Lettre* 853.

[6266] *Lettre* 786.

[6267] “Vince in bono malum.”—*Rom.* 12:21.

[6268] *Lettre* 605.

[6269] *Abelly,*1. 3, ch. 27.

[6270] *Introd.* ch. 8.

[6271] *Mém. de la M. de Chaugy,* p. 3, ch. 19.

[6272] “Quod si zelum amarum habetis, . . . nolite gloriari.”—*James,* 3:14.

[6273] “Nescitis cujus spiritus estis.”—*Luke,* 9:55.

[6274] “Filius hominis non venit animas perdere, sed salvare.”—*Luke,* 9:56.

[6275] “Mulier, . . . nemo te condemnavit? . . . Nec ego te condemnabo. Vade, et jam amplius noli peccare.”—*John,* 8:10, 11.

[6276] “Juda! osculo Filium hominis tradis?”—*Luke,* 22:48.

[6277] “Conversus Dominus respexit Petrum.”—*Luke,* 22:61.

[6278] *Abelly,*1. 3, ch. 27.

[6279] *In Adv. D.* s. 4.

[6280] *Spirit,* ch. 10.

[6281] “Responsio mollis frangit iram.”—*Prov.* 15:1.

[6282] *Life,* ch 30.

[6283] “ ‘Non æmulatur;’ quia, per hoc quod in præsenti mundo nihil appetit, invidere terrenis successibus nescit.”—*Mor.*1. 10, c. 8.

[6284] “Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea Sponsa, vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum.”—*Cant.* 4:9.

[6285] “Quid enim mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? . . . Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus, in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:25, 26.

[6286] “Sibi habeant divitias suas divites, sibi regna sua reges; nobis gloria, et possessio, et regnum, Christus est.”—*Ep. ad Aprum.*

[6287] “Bene omnia fecit.”—*Mark,* 7:37.

[6288] *Pucc.* p. 1, ch. 58.

[6289] “Attendite ne justitiam vestram faciatis coram hominibus, ut videamini ab eis; alioquin mercedem non habebitis apud Patrem vestrum qui in cœlis est.”—*Matt.* 6:1.

6290 “Amen, dico vobis, receperunt mercedem suam.”—*Matt.* 6:5.

6291 “Et qui mercedes congregavit, misit eas in sacculum pertusum.”—*Agg.* 1:6.

6292 “Euge, serve bone et fidelis: quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, super multa te constituam; intra in gaudium Domini tui.”—*Matt.* 25:21.

6293 “Si dignus fueris agere aliquid quod Deo placet, aliam, præter id, mercedem requiris?”—*De Compunct.*1. 2.

6294 “Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum.”—*Cant.* 8:6.

6295 *Found*, ch. 12.

6296 *Life*, ch. 2.

6297 “Non agit perperam. Quia (charitas), quæ se in solum Dei amorem dilatat, quidquid a rectitudine discrepat, ignorat.”—*Mor.*1. 10, c. 8.

6298 “Charitatem habete, quod est vinculum perfectionis.”—*Col.* 3:14.

6299 *Lettre* 51.

6300 “Antidolum, quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis.”

6301 *Way of Perf.* ch. 42.

6302 *Inter. Castle*, ch. 3.

6303 *Found*, ch. 29.

6304 “Neque frigidus es, neque calidus; utinam frigidus esses, aut calidus! sed, quia tepidus es, . . . incipiam te evomere.”—*Apoc.* 3:15, 16.

6305 “Tepor (quia fervore defecit) in desperatione est.”—*Past.* p. 3, *adm.* 35.

6306 “Quæ impossibilia sunt apud homines, possibilia sunt apud Deum.”—*Luke*, 18:27.

6307 “Vires subministrat, pænam exhibet leviorem.”—*De Disc. mon.* c. 6.

6308 “Non progredi, jam reverti est.”—*Ep.* 17, *E. B. app.*

6309 “Hæc est voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra.”—1 *Thess.* 4:3.

[6310] *Life,* ch. 13.

[6311] *Way of Perf,* ch. 35.

[6312] *Life,* ch. 4.

[6313] *Life,* ch. 13.

[6314] *Rib.*1. 4, c. 10.

[6315] “Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quærenti illum.”—*Lam.* 3:25.

[6316] *Life,* ch. 13.

[6317] “Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum.”—*Rom.* 8:28.

[6318] “Etiam peccata.”

[6319] “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* 4:13.

[6320] “Desideria occidunt pigrum.”—*Prov.* 21:25.

[6321] *Introd.* ch. 37.

[6322] *Found,* ch. 28.

[6323] *Way of Perf.* ch. 24

[6324] *Life,* ch. 39.

[6325] *Spirit,* ch. 9.

[6326] *Love of God,* B. 12, ch. 8.

[6327] “Quodcumque facere potest manus tua, instanter operare.”—*Eccles.* 9:10.

[6328] “Quia nec opus, nec ratio, nec sapientia nec scientia, erunt apud inferos, quo tu properas.”—*Ibid.*

[6329] “Et dixi: Nunc cœpi.”—*Ps.* 76:11.

[6330] “Perfectum esse non potest nisi singulare.”

[6331] *Life,* ch. 11.

6332 *Ibid.* ch 39.

6333 “Totum tibi dedit, nihil sibi reliquit.”

6334 “Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est.”—2 *Cor.* 5:15.

6335 *De Med. cons.* 7.

6336 *Lettre* 8.

6337 “Seipsum non exhorret, quia nec sentit.”—*De Cons.*1. 1, c. 2.

6338 “Consideratio regit affectus, dirigit actus.”—*Ibid.* c. 7.

6339 *Pall. Hist. Iaus.* c. 98.

6340 “In meditatione mea exardescet ignis.”—*Ps.* 38:4.

6341 *Life.* ch. 8.

6342 *Ibid.* ch. 19.

6343 *Life,* ch. 19.

6344 *Found,* ch. 5.

6345 *Life,* ch. 34.

6346 “Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa.”—*Cant.* 4:12.

6347 “Venerunt autem mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa.”—*Wisd.* 7:11.

6348 “Non plus sapere, quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem.”—*Rom.* 12:3.

6349 “Labia enim sacerdotis custodient scientiam, et legem requirent ex ore ejus.”—*Mal.* 2:7.

6350 *Lettre* 8.

6351 “Dilexit nos et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

6352 *In Cœna D.* s. 1.

6353 P. 3, q. 79, a. 6.

6354 *Introd.* ch. 20.

6355 *In* 4 *Sent.* d. 12, q. 3, a. 1, s. 2.

6356 *Way of Perfection,* ch. 35.

6357 “Qui semper pecco, semper debeo habere medicum.”—*De Sacram.*1. 4, c. 6.

6358 “Sitit sitiri Deus.”—*Tetr. Sent.* 37.

6359 *Sup. Magn. tr.* 9, p. 3.

6360 *Sess.* xiii. cap. 8.

6361 P. 3. q. 79, a. 1.

6362 “Petite, et dabitur vobis; quærite, et invenietis.”—*Matt.* 7:7.

6363 “Oratio cum sit una omnia potest.”—*Ap. Rodr.* p. 1, *tr.* 5, c. 14; *Wisd.* 7:27.

6364 “Benedictus Deus, qui non amovit orationem meam et misericordiam suam a me.”—*Ps.* 65:20.

6365 “Semper obtinemus, etiam dum adhuc oramus.”

6366 “Dives in omnibus qui invocant illum.”—*Rom.* 10:12.

6367 *De Dono pers.* c. 16.

6368 “Necessaria est homini jugis oratio, ad hoc quod cœlum introeat.”—P. 3, q. 39, a. 5.

6369 “Oportet semper orare, et non deficere.”—*Luke,* 18:1.

6370 “Sine intermissione orate.”—1 *Thess.* 5:17.

6371 *Sess.* vi. *cap.* 13.

6372 “Hoc Dei donum suppliciter emereri potest.”—*De Dono pers.* c. 6.

6373 “Vult Deus rogari, vult cogi, vult quadam importunitate vinci.”—*In Ps.* 6 *pœn.*

6374 “Deus, in adjutorium meum intende; Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.”—*Ps.* 69:2.

6375 “Petite, et accipietis.”—*John,* 16:24.

6376 “Promittendo, debitorem se fecit.”—*Serm.* 110, *E. B.*

6377 “Omnia quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.”—*Mark,* 11:24.

6378 “Omnis qui petit, accipit.”—*Luke,* 11:10.

6379 “Oratio in impetrando non innititur merito, sed divinæ misericordiæ.”—2. 2, q. 178, a. 2.

6380 “Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

6381 “Si quid petieritis me in nomine meo, hoc faciam.”—*John,* 14:14.

6382 “Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus; quia, quod quærit, invenit, et frustrari non potest.”—*De Aquæd.*

6383 “Qui plasmasti me, miserere mei.”—*Vitæ Patr.*1. I.

6384 “Si autem impius egerit pœnitentiam, . . . omnium iniquitatum ejus, quas operatus est, non recordabor.”—*Ezech.* 18:21, 22.

6385 “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* 4:13.

6386 “In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.”—*Ps.* 30:2.

6387 *Imit. Chr.* B. 3, c. 7.

6388 “Discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde.”—*Matt.* 11:29.

6389 *Cepar.* c. 11.

6390 “Tunc exspuerunt in faciem ejus, et colaphis eum ceciderunt; alii autem palmas in faciem ejus dederunt.”—*Matt.* 26:67.

6391 “Domine, pati et contemni pro te.”

6392 *Spirit,* ch. 10.

6393 *Imit. Chr.* B 3, c. 46.

6394 “Mansuetus utilis sibi et aliis.”—*In Act. hom.* 6.

6395 *Imit. Chr.* B. 3, c. 49.

6396 *Mars01.*1. 4, ch. 8.

[6397] “Beati estis, cum maledixerint vobis, et persecuti vos fuerint, et dixerint omne malum adversum vos mentientes, propter me; gaudete et exultate, quoniam merces vestra copiosa est in cœlis.”—*Matt.* 5:11.

[6398] “Medicanti irascitur.”—*In Cant.* s. 42.

[6399] *Bacci,*1. 2, ch. 17.

[6400] “Omnis sæculi honor diaboli negotium est.”—*In Matt.* c. 3, n. 5.

[6401] “Deus superbis resistit; humilibus autem dat gratiam.”—*James,* 4:6.

[6402] *Way of Perf.* ch. 13.

[6403] “Nec malam conscientiam sanat laudantis præconium, nee bonam vulnerat conviciantis opprobrium.”—*Contra Peti1.*1. 3, c. 7.

[6404] *Spirit,* ch. 3.

[6405] *Abelly,*1. 3, ch. 34, 48.

[6406] *Cepar.* c. 13.

[6407] *Way of Perf.* ch. 8.

[6408] “In humilitate superiores.”—*Phil.* 2:3.

[6409] “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”—*Matt.* 22:37.

[6410] *Bacci,*1. 22, ch. 15.

[6411] *Avis* 36.

[6412] *De Cons. Evang.*1. 1, c. 12.

[6413] “Zelotypus est Jesus.”—*Ep. ad Eust.*

[6414] “An putatis quoniam inaniter Scriptura dicat: Ad invidiam concupiscit Spiritus qui habitat in vobis?”—*James,* 4:5.

[6415] “Hortus conclusus soror mea, Sponsa.”—*Cant.* 4:12.

[6416] *Spirit,* ch. 9.

[6417] “Quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbæ, et volabo, et requies cam?”—*Ps.* 54:7.

[6418] *Montée du C.*1. I, ch. II.

[6419] “Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.”—*Cant.* 2:16.

[6420] “Cor mundum crea in me, Deus.”—*Ps.* 50:12.

[6421] “Qui non renuntiat omnibus quæ possidet, non potest meus esse discipulus.”—*Luke,* 14:33.

[6422] *Insin.*1. 4, c. 26.

[6423] “Totum pro toto.”—*Imit. Chr.* B. 3, c. 37.

[6424] *Life, ch.* 39.

[6425] “Bonus est Dominis . . . animæ quærenti illum.”—*Lam.* 3:25.

[6426] “Regnum mundi et omnem ornatum sæculi contempsi, propter amorem Domini mei Jesu Christi.”—*Offic. nec Virg. nec Mart. resp.* 8.

[6427] *Spirit,* ch. 27.

[6428] “Si dederit homo omnem substantiam domus suæ pro dilectione, quasi nihil despiciet earn.”—*Cant.* 8:7.

[6429] *Lettres* 531, 203.

[6430] “Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem.”—*Cant.* 2:4.

[6431] “Ne suscitetis, neque evigilare faciatis dilectam.”—*Cant.* 2:7.

[6432] “Summa rerum omnium oblivio.”—*Reg. fus. disp. int.* 6.

[6433] “Deus meus, et omnia.”

[6434] *Imit. Chr.* B. 3, c. 34.

[6435] “Si quis venit ad me, et non odit patrem suum, et matrem, et uxorem, et filios, et sorores, adhuc autem et animam suam, non potest meus esse discipulus.”—*Luke,* 14:26.

[6436] “Et inimici hominis domestici ejus.”—*Matt.* 10:36.

[6437] 2. 2, q. 104, a. 5.

6438 “Frequenter amici carnales adversantur profectui spirituali.”—2. 2, q. 189, a. 10.

6439 *Epist.* III.

6440 “Non sine magnis difficultatibus poterit saluti suæ consulere, manebitque in corpore Ecclesiæ velut membrum suis sedibus motum, quod servire potest, sed ægre et cum deformitate. Licet, absolute loquendo, salvari possit, difficile tamen ingredietur viam humilitatis et pœnitentiæ, qua sola ipsi patet ingressus ad vitam.”—*De Ord.* p. 3, c. 1, § 2.

6441 “Ab hoc consilio amovendi sunt carnis propinqui . . . : in hoc proposito, amici non sunt, sed potius inimici. juxta sententiam Domini: ‘Inimici hominis, domestici ejus.’ ”—*Contra retr. a rel.* c. 9.

6442 “Subdiaconi et diaconi ordinentur ut habentes bonum testimonium et in minoribus Ordinibus jam probati.”—*Sess.* xxiii. *cap.* 13.

6443 “Nullus ordinetur, nisi probatus fuerit.”—*Cap. Nullus, dist.* 24.

6444 “Sciant episcopi debere ad hos (sacros) Ordines assumi dignos dumtaxat, et quorum probata vita senectus sit.”—*Sess.* xxiii. *cap.* 12.

6445 “Ut in eis, cum ætate, vitæ meritum et doctrina major accrescat.”—*Sess.* 23 *cap.* 11.

6446 “Quia per sacrum Ordinem aliquis deputatur ad dignissima ministeria, quibus ipsi Christo servitur in Sacramento altaris; ad quod requiritur major sanctitas interior quam requirat etiam religionis status.”—2. 2, q. 184, a. 8.

6447 “Ordines sacri præexigunt sanctitatem; sed status religionis est exercitium quoddam ad sanctitatem asseqnendam. Unde pondus Ordinum imponendum est parietibus jam per sanctitatem desiccatis; sed pondus religionis desiccat parietes, id est, homines ab humore vitiorum.”—2. 2, q. 189, a. 1.

6448 “Ut, sicut illi, qui Ordinem suscipiunt, super plebem constituuntur gradu Ordinis, ita et superiores sint merito sanctitatis.”

6449 “Et ideo præexigitur gratia, quæ sufficiat ad hoc quod digne connumerentur in plebe Christi.”

6450 “Sed confertur in ipsa susceptione Ordinis amplius gratiæ munus per quod ad majora reddantur idonei.”—*Suppl.* q. 35, a. 1.

6451 *Lib.* 6, c. 2, n. 63.

6452 “Qui enim se ingerit, et propriam gloriam quærit, gratiæ Dei rapinam facit, et ideo non accipit benedictionem sed maledictionem.”—*In Hebr.* 5.

6453 “Qui sciens et volens, nulla divinæ vocationis habita ratione, sese in Sacerdotium intruderet, haud dubie seipsum in apertissimum salutis discrimen injiceret.”—*Sac. Chr.* p. 1, c. 4.

6454 “Quamvis morum integritas non sit de essentia Sacramenti, est tamen præcepto divino maxime necessaria. . . . At vero, quod de idoneitate eorum qui sacris sunt Ordinibus initiandi definitur, non est generalis illa dispositio quæ in suscipiente quodcumque Sacramentum requiritur, ne sacramentalis gratia obicem inveniat. . . . Enim vero, quoniam per sacramentum Ordinis homo, non solum gratiam suscipit, sed ad sublimiorem statum conscendit, requiritur in eo morum honestas et virtutum claritas.”—*In* 4 *Sent.* d. 25, q. 1, a. 4.

6455 “Nesciebatis quæ in his quae Patris mei sunt oportet me esse?”—*Luke,* 2:49.

6456 “Te autem faciente eleemosynam, nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextera tua.”—*Matt.* 6:3.

6457 “Cum oraveris, intra in cubiculum tuum, et clauso ostio, ora Patrem tuum in abscondito.”—*Ibid.* 6.

6458 “Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum.”—*Matt.* 16:24.

6459 “Post concupiscentias tuas non eas, et a voluntate tua avertere.”—*Ecclus.* 18:30.

6460 “Cesset voluntas propria, et infernus non erit.”—*In Temp. Pasch.* s. 3.

6461 “Grande malum propria voluntas, qua fit ut bona tua tibi bona non sint.”—*In Cant.* s. 71.

6462 “Unde bella et lites in vobis? nonne hinc, ex concupiscentiis vestris, quæ militant in membris vestris? Concupiscitis, et non habetis.”—*James,* 4:1, 2.

6463 “Unde turbatio, nisi quod propriam sequimur voluntatem?”—*De Div.* s. 26.

6464 *Interior Castle,* ch. 1.

6465 *Mont. du C.*1. 1, ch. 4–13.

6466 “Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde.”—*Matt.* 11:29.

6467 “Ecce Agnus Dei.”—*John,* 1:29.

6468 “Si male locutus sum, testimonium perhibe de malo; si autem bene, quid me cædis?”—*John,* 18:23.

6469 “Pater! dimitte illis; non enim sciunt quid faciunt.”—*Luke,* 23:34.

6470 “Mansuetorum semper tibi placuit deprecatio.”—*Judith,* 9:16.

6471 “Beati mites, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram.”—*Matt.* 5:4.

6472 “Mansueti autem hæreditabunt terram, et delectabuntur in multitudine pacis.”—*Ps.* 36:11.

6473 *Rib.*1. 4, c. 26.

6474 “Offensiones amoris ipsi escam ministrabunt.”

6475 “Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur.”—*Apoc.* 14:13.

6476 “Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum.”—*Phil.* 4:7.

6477 “Superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione nostra.”—2 *Cor.* 7:4

6478 *Lettre* 580.

6479 “Non in commotione Deus.”—3 *Kings,* 19:11.

6480 *Introd.* ch. 8.

6481 “Unde bella? . . . nonne hinc, ex concupiscentiis vestris?”—*James,* 4:1, 2.

6482 “Ira in sinu stulti requiescit.”—*Ecclus.* 7:10.

6483 “Igne non potest ignis extingui.”—*In Gen. hom.* 58.

6484 *Lettre* 231.

6485 “Responsio mollis frangit iram.”—*Prov.* 15:1.

6486 “Turbatus præ ira oculus . . . reclum non videt.”—*De Cons.*1. 2, c. 11.

6487 “Irascimini, et nolite peccare.”—*Ps.* 4:5.

6488 *Spirit,* ch. 19.

6489 *Lettre* 51.

6490 “Ama, et fac quod vis.”

6491 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”—*Matt.* 22:37.

6492 “Domine, quid me vis facere?”—*Acts,* 9:6.

[6493] “Et capillus de capite vestro non peribit.”—*Luke*, 21:18.

[6494] *Life*, ch. 30.

[6495] *Found*, ch. 5.

[6496] “Ne ventiles te in omnem ventum.”—*Ecclus.* 5:2.

[6497] *Found*, ch. 5.

[6498] “Domine, nonne in nomine tuo prophetavimus, et in nomine tuo dæmonia ejecimus, et in nomine tuo virtutes multas fecimus?”—*Matt.* 7:22.

[6499] “Nunquam novi vos; discedite a me, qui operamini iniquitatem.”—*Ibid.* 23.

[6500] *Entret.* 2.

[6501] “Qui non est paratus omnia pati et ad voluntatem stare dilecti, non est dignus amator appellari.”—*Imit. Chr.*1. 3, c. 5.

[6502] “Dimitte eum ut maledicat; Dominus enim præcepit ei ut male-diceret David.”—*2 Kings*, 16:10.

[6503] *Way of Perfect.* ch. 33.

[6504] “Melior est obedientia, quam stultorum victimæ.”—*Eccles.* 4:17.

[6505] *Entret.* 14.

[6506] *Spirit,* ch. 19.

[6507] *Found,* ch. 5.

[6508] *Cepar.* c. 5.

[6509] *Rev.*1. 4, c. 26.

[6510] *Bacci,*1. 1, c. 20.

[6511] *Bacci,*1. 1, c. 20.

[6512] *Introd.* p. 1, c. 4.

[6513] “Quid mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? . . . Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus, in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:25.

[6514] “Domine quid me vis facere?”—*Acts,* 9:6.

[6515] *Life,* ch. 3.

[6516] *Way of Perf.* ch. 12.

[6517] *Vita,* c. 14.

[6518] *Part* 2, *Ep.* 54.

[6519] *Love of God* B. 9, ch. 2.

[6520] *Life, addit.*

[6521] *Ap. Sur.* 8 *Jul.*

[6522] *S. Bas. hom. in Gord. M.*

[6523] “Neque hoc facit stupor, sed amor.”—*In Cant.* s. 61.

[6524] *Life,* ch. 25.

[6525] “Eia, Domine! moriar, ut te videam.”—*Sol. an. ad D.* c. 1.

[6526] *Serm.* 85, *E. B.*

[6527] “Deus meus, et omnia.”

[6528] “Nihil habentes, et omnia possidentes.”—2 *Cor.* 6:10.

[6529] *Found.* ch. 14.

[6530] *Scala sp. gr.* 17.

[6531] “Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum cœlorum.”—*Matt.* 5:3.

[6532] “Habentes autem alimenta et quibus tegamur, his conteni sumus.”—1 *Tim.* 6:8.

[6533] *De Disc. mon.* c:2.

[6534] “Avarus terrena esurit ut mendicus, fidelis contemnit ut dominus.”—*In Cant.* s. 21.

[6535] “Qui volunt divites fieri, incidunt . . . in laqueum diaboli et desideria . . . nociva, quæ mergunt homines in interitum et perditionem.—1 *Tim.* 6:9.

[6536] *Boll. April* 26, *Act.* n. 11.

[6537] “Non paupertas virtus reputatur, sed paupertatis amor.”—*Epist.* 100.

[6538] “Pauperes esse volunt, eo tamen pacto, ut nihil eis desit.”—*In Adv. D.* s. 4.

[6539] *Introd.* ch. 16.

[6540] “Dominus pars hæreditatis meæ.”—*Ps.* 15:5.

[6541] *Cepar.* c:22.

6542 “Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit: sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est; sit nomen Domini benedictum.”—*Job,* 1:21.

6543 *Life,* ch. 22.

6544 “Aquæ multæ non potuerunt exstinguere charitatem.”—*Cant.* 8:7.

6545 “Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum.”—*Rom.* 8:28.

6546 “Ab ipso patientia mea.”—*Ps.* 61:6.

6547 “Vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas.”—*Eccles.* 1:2.

6548 “Charitas omnia credit.”

6549 “Beati pauperes.—Beati qui lugent.—Beati qui esuriunt.—Beati qui persecutionem patiuntur.—Beati estis cum maledixerint vobis, . . . et dixerint omne malum adversus vos.”—*Matt,* 5:3–11.

6550 “Ex hoc enim quod per aliquem speramus nobis posse provenire bona, movemur in ipsum sicut in bonum nostrum, et sic incipimus ipsum amare.”—1. 2, q. 40, a. 7.

6551 “Nolite confidere in principibus.”—*Ps.* 145:2.

6552 “Maledictus homo qui confidit in homine.”—*Jer.* 17:5.

6553 “Viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri, cum dilatasti cor meum.”—*Ps.* 118:32.

6554 “Qui autem sperant in Domino, mutabunt fortitudinem, assument pennas sicut aquilæ, current et non laborabunt, ambulabunt et non deficient.”—*Is.* 40:31.

6555 “Ut per hæc efficiamini divinæ naturæ consortes.”—2 *Pet.* 1:4.

6556 “Si autem filii, et hæredes.”—*Rom.* 8:17.

6557 “Adveniat, adveniat regnum tuum.”

6558 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—*Prov.* 8:17.

6559 “Bonus est Dominus. . . . animæ quærenti illum.”—*Lam.* 3:25.

6560 “Quæ est ista quæ ascendet de deserto, deliciis affluens, innixa super Dilectum suum?”—*Cant.* 8:5.

6561 “Venerunt autem mihi omnia bona pariter cum ilia.”—*Wisd.* 7:11.

6562 “Infinitus enim thesaurus est hominibus, quo qui usi sunt, participes facti sunt amicitiæ Dei.”—*Wisd.* 7:14.

6563 “Amicitia super amorem addit mutuam redamationem cum quadam communicatione mutua.”—1.2, q. 65, a. 5.

6564 “Vos autem dixi Amicos, quia omnia, quæcumque audivi a Patre meo, nota feci vobis.”—*John,* 15:15.

6565 *Love of God,* B. 10, c. 10.

6566 “Amicorum est quod quærant invicem perfrui; sed nihil aliud est merces nostra, quam perfrui Deo videndo ipsum; ergo charitas, non solum non excludit, sed etiam facit habere oculum ad mercedem.”—*In* 3 *Sent.* d. 29, q. 1, a. 4.

6567 “Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.”—*Cant.* 2:16.

6568 “Charitas omnia sperat.”

6569 “Spes est certa exspectatio beatitudinis.”—*In* 3 *Sent.* d. 26.

6570 “Amor est quædam vitta duo aliqua copulans.”—*De Trin.*1. 8, c.10.

6571 “Adjuro vos, filiæ Jerusalem, si inveneritis Dilectum meum, ut nuntietis ei quia amore langueo.”—*Cant.* 5:8.

6572 “Ego . . . merces tua magna nimis.”—*Gen.* 15:1.

6573 “Unde, velle suam damnationem absolute, non esset conformare suam voluntatem divinæ, sed voluntati peccati.”—*De Ver.* q. 23, a. 8.

6574 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex omnibus viribus tuis,”—*Luke,* 10:27.

6575 *In* 3 *Sent.* d. 27.

6576 “Intra in gaudium Domini tui.”—*Matt.* 25:21.

6577 “Inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus tuæ.”—*Ps.* 35:9.

6578 “Ut impleamini in omnem plenitudinem Dei.”—*Eph.* 3:19.

6579 “Ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima.”—*Is.* 38:17.

6580 “Heu mihi, quia incolatus meus prolongatus est.”—*Ps.* 119:5.

6581 “Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua.”—*Ps.* 16:15.

6582 “Desiderium habens dissolvi, et esse cum Christo.”—*Phil.* 1:23.

6583 *Apophth.* 57.

6584 “Tertium autem studium estut homo ad hoc principaliter intendat, ut Deo inhæreat et eo fruatur; et hoc pertinet ad perfectos, qui cupiunt dissolvi, et esse cum Christo.”—2. 2, q. 24, a. 9.

6585 *De Purg.*1. 2, c. 7.

6586 “Carcer honoratus.”

6587 “Deus enim intentator malorum est, ipse autem neminem tentat.”—*James,* 1:13.

6588 “Et ne magnitudo revelatiomim extollat me, datus est mihi stimulus carnis meæ, angelus Satanæ, qui me colaphizet.”—2 *Cor.* 12:7.

6589 “Heu mihi, quia incolatus meus prolongatus est.”—*Ps.* 119:5.

6590 “Laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus.”—*Ps.* 123:7.

6591 “Et quia acceptus eras Deo, necesse fuit, ut tentatio probaret te.”—*Tob.* 12:13.

6592 “Quoties restiteris, toties coronaberis.”—*In Quadr.* s. 5.

6593 “Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis, sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proventum.”—1 *Cor.* 10:13.

6594 “Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.”—*Matt.* 6:13.

6595 “Projice te in eum, noli metuere; non se subtrahet, ut cadas.”—*Conf.* B. 8, c. II.

6596 “Deus, in adjutorium meum intende; Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.”—*Ps.* 69:2.

6597 “Respondeo, . . . cum tentamur, nobis ad Deum confugientibus, per gratiam a Deo paratam et oblatam, vires adfuturas, qua possimus resisiere et actu resistamus.”—*De Div. Grat.* q. 2, d. 5, § 3.

6598 “Venite ad me omnes, qui, laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.”—*Matt.* 11:28.

6599 “Et invoca me in die tribulationis; eruam te, et honorificabis me.”—*Ps.* 49:15.

6600 “Tunc invocabis, et Dominus exaudiet; clamabis, et dicet: Ecce adsum.”—*Is.* 58:9.

6601 “Quis invocavit eum, et despexit illum?—*Ecclus.* 2:12.

6602 “Laudans invocabo Dominum, et ab inimicis meis salvus ero.”—*Ps.* 17:4.

6603 “Prope est Dominus omnibus invocantibus eum.”—*Ps.* 144:18.

6604 “Dives in omnibus qui invocant illum.”—*Rom.* 10:12.

6605 “Et ut scivi quoniam aliter non possem esse continens, nisi Deus det, . . . adii Dominum, et deprecatus sum illum.”—*Wisd.* 8:21.

6606 “Statim ut libido titillaverit sensum, erumpamus in vocem: Dominus auxiliator meus!”—*ad Eust.*

6607 *Vitæ: Patr.*1. 3, n. 35.

6608 *Lib.* 6, n. 476.

6609 *Life, addit.*

6610 *Mém. de la M. de Chaugy,* p. 3. ch. 27.

6611 “Induite vos armaturam Dei, ut possitis stare adversus insidias diaboli; quoniam non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem, sed adversus principes et potestates, adversus mundi rectores tenebrarum harum.”—*Eph.* 6:11, 12.

6612 “Per omnem orationem et obsecrationem orantes omni tempore in spiritu, et in ipso vigilantes in omni instantia.”—*Eph.* 6:18.

6613 “Invoca me . . . eruam te.”—*Ps.* 49:15.

6614 “Clama ad me, et exaudiam te.”—*Jer.* 33:3.

6615 “Oportet semper orare et non deficere.”—*Luke*, 18:1.

6616 “Petite, et dabitur vobis.”—*Matt.* 7:7.

6617 “Vigilate et orate.”—*Matt.* 26:41.

6618 “Sine intermissione orate.”—1 *Thess.* 5:17.

6619 “Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus.”

[6620] “Nihil nos Deus voluit habere, quod per Mariæ manus non transiret.”—*In Vig. Nat.* s. 3.

[6621] “Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.”—*Ps.* 88:2.

[6622] “Ne permittas me separari a te.”

[6623] *Introd.* ch. 13.

[6624] *Lettre* 8.

[6625] *Life,* ch. 11.

[6626] *Spirit*, ch. 4.

[6627] “Secundum multitudinem dolorum meorum in corde meo, consolationes tuæ lætificaverunt animam meam.”—*Ps.* 93:19.

[6628] *Mém. de la M. de Chaugy,* p. 3, ch. 27.

[6629] *Love of God*, B. 9, ch. 11.

[6630] “Scalpri salubris ictibus

Et tunsione plurima,

Fabri polita malleo,

Hanc saxa molem construunt,

Aptisque juncta nexibus

Locantur in fastigio.”—*Offic. Dedic. eccl.*

[6631] “Deus meus et omnia.”

[6632] *Bacci,*1. 2, ch. 15.

[6633] “Totum pro toto.”—*Imit. Chr.*1. 3, c. 37.

[6634] “Si autem non abiero, Paracletus non veniet ad vos; si autem abiero, mittam eum ad vos.”—*John*, 16:7.

[6635] “Charitas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum, qui datus est nobis.”—*Rom.* 5:5.

[6636] “Pater vester de cœlo dabit Spiritum bonum petentibus se.”—*Luke*, 11:13.

[6637] “Ignis autem in altari semper ardebit.”—*Lev.* 6:12.

[6638] *Mor.*1. 25, c. 7.

[6639] “Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?”—*Luke*, 12:49.

[6640] “Et apparuerunt illis dispertitæ linguæ tanquam ignis.”—*Acts*, 2:3.

[6641] “Illo nos igne, quæsumus, Domine, Spiritus Sanctus inflammet, quem Dominus noster Jesus Christus misit in terram, et voluit vehementer accendi.”—*In Sabb. Pent.*

[6642] “In meditatione mea exardescet ignis.”—*Ps.* 38:4.

[6643] “Fove quod est frigidum.”

[6644] “Lux beatissima.”

[6645] “Animalis homo non percipit ea quæ sunt Spiritus Dei.”—1 *Cor.* 2:14.

[6646] “Emitte lucem tuam.”—*Ps.* 42:3.

[6647] “Illumina tenebras meas.”—*Ps.* 17:29.

[6648] “Revela oculos meos.”—*Ps.* 118:18.

[6649] “Fons vivus, ignis, charitas.”

[6650] “Qui autem biberit ex hac aqua quam ego dabo ei, non sitiet in æternum.”—*John*, 4:13.

[6651] “Me dereliquerunt fontem aquæ vivæ, et foderunt sibi cisternas, cisternas dissipatas, quæ continere non valent aquas.”—*Jer.* 2:13.

[6652] “Si quis sitit veniat ad me, et bibat.”—*John*, 7:37.

[6653] “Qui credit in me, sicut dicit Scriptura, flumina de ventre ejus fluent aquæ vivæ.”—*Ibid.* 38.

[6654] “Hoc autem dixit de Spiritu quem accepturi erant credentes in eum; nondum enim erat Spiritus datus, quia Jesus nondum erat glorificatus.”—*Ibid.* 39.

[6655] “Petite et accipietis.”—*John*, 16:24.

[6656] “Oratio, cum sit una, omnia potest.”—*Ap. Rodr.* p. 1, tr. 5, c. 14.

6657 “Domine, da mihi hanc aquam.”—*John,* 4:15.

6658 “Sancti Spiritus corda nostra mundet infusio, et sul roris intima aspersione fœcundet.”

6659 “In æstu temperies, dulce refrigerium.”

6660 “Introduxit me in cellam vinariam; ordinavit in me charitatem.”—*Cant.* 2:4.

6661 “In labore requies, in fletu solatium.”

6662 “Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum.”—*Phil.* 4:7.

6663 “Ipse vulnerat, et medetur.”—*Job,* 5:18.

6664 “Ita, Pater! quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te.”—*Matt.* 11:26.

6665 “Loquere, Domine, quia audit servus tuus.”—1 *Kings,* 3:10.

6666 “Fortis est ut mors dilectio.”—*Cant.* 8:6.

6667 “Nihil tam durum, quod amoris igne non vincatur.”—*De Mor. Eccl. Cath.* c. 22.

6668 *Love of God,* B. 9, ch. 2.

6669 *In Eph. hom.* 8.

6670 “In eo quod amatur, aut non laboratur, aut et labor amatur.”—*De Bono vid.* c. 21.

6671 “Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.”—1 *John,* 4:16.

6672 “Si diligitis me, mandata mea servate. Et ego rogabo Patrem, et alium Paracletum dabit vobis, ut maneat vobiscum in æternum.”—*John,* 14:15.

6673 “Non deserit, nisi deseratur.”—*Sess.* vi. c. 11.

6674 “An putatis quia inaniter Scriptura dicat: Ad invidiam concupiscit Spiritus qui habitat in vobis?”—*James,* 4:5.

6675 “Zelotypus est Jesus.”—*Epist. ad Eust.*

6676 “Pulchræ sunt genæ tuæ sicut turturis.”—*Cant.* 1:9.

6677 “Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa.”—*Ibid.* 4:12.

6678 “Totum tibi dedit, nihil sibi reliquit.”

6679 “Charitas est virtus conjungens nos Deo.”

6680 “O charitas! quam magnum est vinculum tuum, quo Deus ligari potuit!”—*Lign. v. de Char.* c. 6.

6681 “Vincula illius, alligatura salutaris.”—*Ecclus.* 6:31.

6682 “In funiculis Adam traham eos, in vinculis charitatis.”—*Os.* 11:4.

6683 “Solve vincula colli tui, captiva filia Sion.”—*Is.* 52:2.

6684 “Charitatem habete, quod est vinculum perfectionis.”—*Col.* 3:14

6685 “Ama, et fac quod vis.”

6686 “Infinitus enim thesaurus est hominibus, quo qui usi sunt, participes facti sunt amicitiæ Dei.”—*Wisd.* 7:14.

6687 *Avis* 36.

6688 “Delectare in Domino, et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui.”—*Ps.* 36:4.

6689 *“Spirit,* ch. 27.

6690 “Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quærenti illum. *Lam.* 3:25.

6691 “Sapientia vero ubi invenitur? . . . Nescit homo pretium ejus, nec invenitur in terra suaviter viventium.”—*Job,* 28:12, 13.

6692 “Vive cum paucis, si vis regnare cum paucis.”

6693 “Perfectum non potest esse, nisi singulare.”

6694 “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.” *Phil.* 4:13.

6695 “Quodcumque volueritis petetis, et fiet vobis.”—*John,* 15:7.

6696 Pope Pius VI., by a brief, May 26, 1796, granted to all the faithful who, once or oftener in the day, with at least contrite heart and devotion, shall say in Latin or in any other language the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus,* or the sequence *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, an indulgence of three hundred days during the octave of Pentecost, and of one hundred days at any other time; and, moreover, a plenary indulgence each month, on the usual conditions. These indulgences are applicable to the souls in purgatory.—ED.

[6697] Mater quidem spiritu non capitis nostri, quod est ipse salvator, ex quo magis illa spiritualiter nata est; quia omnes, qui in eum crediderint, in quibus et ipsa est, recte filii sponsi appellantur: sed plane mater membrorum ejus (quæ nos sumus) quia cooperate est charitate, ut fideles in Ecclesia nascerentur, qui illius capitis membra sunt. Lib. de Sancta Virginitate, cap. 6.

[6698] M. Nicole, Instr. theol. and mor. on the Lord's Prayer, the Angelical Salutation, &c. Instr. 5, c. 2.

[6699] Part 1, c. 6, 2, c. 7, 8, 2, c. 9.

[6700] In Christo fult plenitudo gratiæ, sicut in capite influente, in Maria vero, sicut in collo transfundente. Theolog. mentis et cordis. Tom. 2, Lib. 10. Dissert. 6, c. 1. Speculat. 2. in Reflexiones.

[6701] Dicitur autem Beata Virgo plena gratiæ, quantum ad tria . . . Tertio quo ad refusionem in omnes homines. Magnum enim est in quolibet sancto, quando habet tantum de gratia quod sufficit ad salutem multorum; sed quando haberet tantum, quod sufficeret ad salutem omnium hominum de mundo, hoc esset maximum; et hoc est in Christo et in Beata Virgine. Nam in omni pericuro potes salutem obtinere ab ipsa Virgine gloriosa. Unde cantic. 4. *Mille clypei*, id est remedia contra pericula, *pendent ex ea.* Item in omni opere virtutis potes eam habere in adjutorium; et ideo dicit ipsa Eccli. 24:25.

[6702] Laus Mariæ fons est indeficiens, qui quanto amplius tenditur, tanto amplius impletur; quanto amplius impletur, tanto amplius dilatatur.

[6703] Etiamsi omnium nostrum membra verterentur in linguas eam laudare sufficiret nullus. Ap. B. Dion. Carth.

[6704] Honorare Mariam est thesaurizare vitam eternam. De Laud. v. c. 2.

[6705] Honorificantes se in hoc sæculo honorificabit in futuro.

[6706] Qui elucidant me, vitam eternam habebunt. Eccli. 24:31.

[6707] Exulta, exulta, anima mea, et lætare in illa; quia multa bona sunt laudatoribus præparata. Si enim omnes scripturæ loquuntur de ea. Deiparam perpetuo corde et lingua celebremus, ut ab ipsa ad gaudia eterna perducamur.

[6708] Revei. cap. 14.

[6709] Ap. P. Auriem.

[6710] Fili miserere animæ amatoris tui et laudatoris mei. Serm. 20, ad Nov.

[6711] Quomodo fieri potest ut ex memoria laudum ejus salus non proveniat peccatorum, cujus uterus facta est via ad peccatoras salvandos? S. Ans. Lib. 3, de Exc. V. cap. 1.

6712 Laudamus humilitatem, miramur virginitatem; sed miseris sapit dulcius misericordia; misericordiam amplectimur carius, recordamur sæptus, crebrius invocamus. Serm. 4, de Ass.

6713 Jesus et Maria, amores mei dulcissimi, pro vobis patiar, pro vobis moriar: sim totus vester, sim nihil meus. Ap. Auriem Aff. sc.

6714 Si ipse Rex est qui natus est de Virgine, mater, quæ eum genuit. Regina et Domina proprie ac vere censetur. Serm. de Deip.

6715 Iunc autem Virgo in illo consensu meruit primatum orbis, dominum mundi, sceptrum regni super omnes creaturas. Tom. 2d, cap. 51.

6716 Neque a dominatione filii Mater potest esse sejuncta, una est Mariæ et Christi caro.

Filii gloriam cum Matre, non tam communem judico, quam eamdem. S. Arnol. de Laud. Virg.

6717 Regina constituta, totum jure possidet filli regnum. Rupert, abb.

6718 Tot creaturæ serviunt gloriosæ Virgini, quot serviunt Trinitati; omnes namque creaturæ sive angeli, sive homines, et omnia quæ sunt in cœlo et in terra, quia omnia sunt divino imperio subjecta, gloriosæ Virgini sunt subjectæ. Tom. 2, cap. 61.

6719 Perge Maria, perge secura in bonis filii tui; fiducialite age tamquam regina, mater regis et sponsa; tibi debetur regnum et potestas.

6720 Hoc reges habent magnificum, prodesse miseris.

6721 Duo hæc audivi, quia potestas Dei est, et tibi, Domine, misericordia. Psal. 61:12.

6722 Regnum Dei consistit in potestate et misericordia; potestate Deo remanente, cessit quodammodo misericordiæ pars matri regnanti. Psal. 3. Tr. 4th, S. Magn.

6723 Quando filium Dei in utero concepit, et post modum peperit, dimidiam partem regni Dei impetravit, ut ipsa sit regina misericordiæ, ut Christus est rex justitiæ.

6724 Deus judicium tuum regi da; et justitiam tuam filio regis. Psal. 71:2.

6725 Quia misericordiam tuam dedisti Matri Regis.

6726 Deus judicium tuum regi da, et misericordiam tuam matri ejus.

6727 Pater omne judicium dedit filio, et omne officium misericordiæ dedit matri.

6728 Unxit te Deus oleo lætitiæ. Psal. 44:8.

6729 Maria, plena unctione misericordiæ et oleo pictatis; propterea unxit te Deus oleo lætitiæ. In spec. cap. 7.

6730 Ne putes quod animam tuam tantum liberes, quia in domo regis es præ cunctis Judæis. Esth. 4:15.

6731 Quæ est petitio tua? Si inveni gratiam in oculis tuis o rex, dona mihi populum meum, pro quo obsecro.

6732 Lex clementiæ in lingua ejus. Prov. 31:26.

6733 Quod divinæ pietatis abyssum cui vult, quando vult et quomode vult, creditur aperire; ut nemo tam enormis peccator pereat, cui sancta sanctorum pratrocinii suffragia præstat. In Salve Regina.

6734 Maria quanto altior et sanctior, tanto clementior et dulcior circa conversos peccatores. Lib. 1, ep. 47.

6735 Quid ad Mariam accedere trepidat humana fragilitas? Nihil austerum in ea, nihil terribile; tota suavis est, omnibus offerens lac et lanam. Super Sign. Magn.

6736 Ita benigna est, ut neminem tristem redire sinat. Lib. 4, c. 12.

6737 Tu es regina misericordiæ, et ego miserrimus peccator, subditorum maximus. Rege nos ergo, o regina misericordiæ. In Salv. Reg,

6738 Habes vires insuperabiles, ne clementiam tuam superet multitudo peccatorum. Nihil tuæ resistet potentiæ; tuam enim gloriam treator existimat esse propriam, et filius in ea exultans, quasi on solvens debitum, implet petitiones tuas. Or. de exitu, R. V.

6739 Ego regina cœli; ego mater misericordiæ; ego justorum gaudium et aditus peccatorum ad Deum. Nullus est adeo maledictus, qui quamdiu vivit careat misericordia mea; quia propter ne levius tentatur a dæmonibus, quam alias tentaretur. Nullus est ita abjectus a Deo, nisi fuerit omnino maledictus, qui si me invocaverit, non revertatur ad Deum, et babiturus, sit misericordiam. Ego vocor ab omnibus mater misericordiæ, et vere misericordia illius misericordem me fecit. Ideo miser erit qui ad misericordem, cum possit, non accedit. Rev. Lib. 1, cap. 6.

6740 Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Libano, veni; coronaberis. . . . de cubilibus leonum, de montibus pardorum. Cant. 4:8.

6741 De talium leonem cubiculis tu coronaberis. Eorum saius corona tua erit. Rup. Vid. 1. 3., in Cant.

6742 Domina, me tuæ dominationi volo committere. ut me plenarie ragas et gubernes. Non mihi me relinquas.

[6743] Tuus sum ego, salvum me fac.

[6744] Veni, ut vitam. habeant et abundantius habeant. Joab.

[6745] Pater futuri sæculi, princeps pacis. Isa. 9:6.

[6746] Virgo per hunc consensum in incarnatione filii omnium salutem vigorosissime expetiit et procuravit; et omnium salvationi per hunc consensum se dedicavit, ita ut ex tunc omnes in suis visconibus bajulat, tanquam verissima mater filios suos. Tr. de B. V. serm. 6.

[6747] Peperit filium suum primogenitum. Luc. cap. 2:7.

[6748] Si primogenitus, ergo alii filii secuti sunt secundogeniti? Carnales nullos habet B. Virgo, præter Christum; ergo spirituales habeas necesse est.

[6749] Venter tuus sicut acervus tritici, vallatus liliis. Cant. 7:2.

6750 Unum granum frumenti fuit in utero Virginis, Christus Dominus; et tamen acervus tritici dicitur, quia granum hoc virtute omnes electos continet, ut ipse sit primogenitus in multis fratribus. De Instit. Virg.

6751 In illo uno fructu, in uno salvatore omnium Jesu plurimos Maria peperit ad salutem. Pariendo vitam, multos peperit ad vitam, In Cant. 4:13.

6752 Illa spiritu mater est membrorum salvatoris, quia cooperata est charitate, ut fideles in ecclesia nascerentur. De Virg. cap. 6.

6753 Posuit me custodem in vineis; vineam meam non custodivi. Cant. 1:5.

6754 Ut multas animas salvas faceret, animam suam morti exposuit.

6755 Et tuam ipsius animam doloris gladius pertransibit. Luc 2:35.

6756 Nullo modo dubitandum est, quia Mariæ animus volut etiam tradere filium suum pro salute generis humani, ut mater per omnia conformis fieret Patri et Filio.

6757 Isa. 63:3.

6758 Joan. 19:26.

6759 Deinde dicit discipulo: Ecce mater tua. Joan 19:27.

6760 In Joanne intelligimus omnes, quorum B. Virgo per dilectionem facta est mater. Tom 1, Serm. 55.

6761 Deinde dicit discipulo; Ecce mater tua. Joan. 19:27.

6762 Joanne est nomen particulare, discipulus commune, ut denototur quod Maria omnibus detur in matrem.

6763 Ego sum mater pulchræ dilectionis. Eccli. 24:24.

6764 Quia tota es amor erga nos, quos in filios recepit. Paciucch. de B. V.

6765 Nonne plus sine comparatione nos diligis, ac bona nostra procuras, quam mater carnalis?

6766 Salvam fac filium anciliæ tuæ. Psal. 85:16.

6767 Cujus anciliæ?

6768 Quæ dit; Ecce ancilla Domini. In Psal. 85.

[6769] Quam bene nobis erit sub præsidio tantæ matris? Quis detrahere audebit de sinu ejus? Quæ nos tentatio, aut turbatio superare poterit confidentes in patrocinio matris Dei et nostræ Bell, de sept verb.

[6770] Fidelium piissima mater, furente tentationum tempestate, materno affectu eos, velut intra viscera propria receptos protegit, donoe in beatum portum reponat. V. cap. 14, exc. 81.

[6771] Ita ego facio, et faciam omnibus peccatoribus misericordiam meam potentibus. Lib. 4, c. 38.

[6772] Sub tuum præsidium confugimus, sancta Dei genetrix.

[6773] Dic, anima mea, cum magna fiducia: Exultabo et lætabor, quia quicquid judicabitur de me pendet ex sententia fratris et matria meæ.

[6774] Oh beata fiducia, oh tutum refugium! Mater Dei est mater mea. Qua certitudine igitur deb emus sperare, quoniam salus de boni fratris et piæ matris pendet arbitrio! In Depr. ad. V.

[6775] Si quis est parvulus, veniat ad me. Prov. 9:4.

[6776] Opusc. 60, cap. 4.

[6777] Natura hoc bestiis infundit, ut catulos parvulos ament. Lib. 6, Exa. c. 4.

[6778] Nunquid oblivisci potest mulier infantem suum, ut non misereatur filio uteri sui? Et si illa oblita fuerit ego tamen non obliviscar tui. Isa. 49:15.

[6779] Ego mater pulchræ dilectionis. Eccl. 24:24.

[6780] Se dilectionis esse matrem gloriatur, quia tota est amor erga nos, quos in filios recepit. Paciucch.

[6781] Flagrabat Virgo æstuante charitate incensa, ut pro humani genoris salute simul cum prole profunderet vitam. Tract de. Verb. Dom.

[6782] Pendebat in cruce filius, mater persecutoribus se offerebat. De Inst. Virg. c. 7.

[6783] Hoc mandatum habemus a Deo, ut qui diligit Deum, diligat et fratrem suum. 1 Joan. 4:21.

[6784] Vita, Lib. 2, cap. 5.

[6785] Mulier ecce filius tuus.

[6786] “Sic Deus dilexit mundum, ut filium suum unigenitum daret.” Joan. 3:16.

[6787] Sic Maria dilexit nos, ut filium suum unigenitum daret.

6788 Nulla post eam creatura ita per amorem nostrum exardescet, quæ filium suum unicum, quem multo plus se amavit, nobis dedit, et pro nobis obtulit.

6789 Veni salvum facere, quod perierat. Luc. 19:10.

6790 Factus obediens usque ad mortem. Phil. 2:8.

6791 Et signum magnum apparuit in cœlo, mulier amicta sole. Apoc. 12:1.

6792 Non est qui se abscondet a calore ejus. Psal. 18:7.

6793 A calore ejus, idest a dilectione Mariæ.

6794 Oh quanta cura est Virgini matri de nobis! Omnibus aperit sinum misericordiæ suæ.

6795 Constat pro universo genere humano fuisse solicitam. Ho. 2, Mis.

6796 Domine, da mihi, quod pro me postulat Ss. Virgo Maria.

6797 Ipsa enim majora optat, quam nos optare possumus.

6798 Plus ipsa desiderat facere tibi bonum, et largiri gratiam quam tu accipere concupiscas. Mar. 1, Serm. 5.

6799 Præoccupat qui se concupiscunt, ut illis se prior ostendat Sap. 6:14.

6800 Prins occurrit, quam invocetur. Ric. in Cant. 4:5.

6801 Facile invenitur ab his qui diligunt illam. Sap. 6:18.

6802 Ego diligentes me diligo. Prov. 8:17.

6803 Inventa Maria Virgine, invenitur omne bonum. Ipsa namque diligit diligentes se, immo sibi servientibus servit. De contempi. Virgin, in Prolog.

6804 Semper Maria cum amantibus est amantior. Ep. ad., Ep. aur.

6805 Ave Domina, mater mea; imo cor meum, anima mea.

6806 Raptrix cordium.

6807 Nonne rapuisti cor meum?

6808 Scio, Domina, quia amantissima es et amas nos amore invincibili. Serm. 1, de Nat. B. V.

6809 Beati quorum corda diligunt Mariam! Beati qui ei famulantur!

6810 Nunquam in hoc certamine a nobis vincitur. Amorem redhibet, et præterita beneficia semper novis adauget. Paciucch. de B. Virg.

6811 Vestri continuo amore langueat cor meum, liquefiat anima mea. In Depr. ad V.

6812 Date itaque supplicanti animæ meæ, non propter meritum meum sed propter meritum vestrum, date illi quantum digni estis amorem vestrum. Oh amator hominum, tu potuisti reos tuos usque ad mortem amare, et poteris roganti amorem tui et matris tuæ negare? Loc cit.

6813 Affett Scamb. tom. 2, cap. 7.

6814 Nunquam quiescam, donec habuero tenerum amorem erga matrom meam Mariam.

6815 Amor aut similes invenit, aut facit. Aristot.

6816 Ego sum quasi mater omnium peccatorum volentium se emendare. L. 4, Rev. c. 138.

6817 Pone finem a voluntate peccandi, et invenies Mariam—indubitanter promitto—promptiorem carnali matre in tui dilectione. L. 4, Ep. 47.

6818 Surrexerunt filii ejus. Prov. 31:28.

6819 Nec dignus est, qui in mortali peccato est, vocari filius tantæ matria.

6820 Qui genetricis non facit opera, negat genus.

6821 Filii Mariæ imitatores ejus, in castitate, humilitate, mansuetudine, misericordia.

6822 Monstra te esse matrem.

6823 Monstra te esse filium. Ap. Aur.

6824 Maledictus a Deo qui exasperat matrem suam. Eccli 3:18.

6825 Matrem suam, idest Mariam.

6826 Conanti surgere ad Deum tribuis auxilium, et neminem relinquis vacuum a tua consolatione.

6827 2, 2, qu. 178, a. 2, ad 1.

6828 Omnis qui petit, accipit. Luc. 11:10.

6829 Si merita invocantis non merentur, ut exaudiatur; merita tamen matris intercedunt, ut exaudiatur.

6830 Quia indignus erat, cui donaretur, datum est Mariæ, ut per illam acciperes quicquid haberes. Serm. 3, in Vig. Nat.

6831 Oh felix Maria, tu mater rei, tu mater judicis; cum sis mater utriusque, discordias inter tuos filios nequis sustinere. In Dept. ad V.

6832 Quantumcumque homo peccat, statim parata sum recipere revertentem; nec attendo quantum peccaverit, sed cum quali intentione redit; nam non dedignor ejus plagas ungere, et sanare, quia vocor et vere sum mater misericordiæ. Rev.1. c. 23.

6833 Miserere mei. Domine Fili David, filia mea male a dœmonio vexatur. Matth. 15:22.

6834 Miserere mei.

6835 Maria clamat pro anima peccatrice; miserere mei. De Laud. V n. 6.

6836 Oh Maria peccatorem toti mundo despectum, materno affectu complecteris! nec deseris, quousque miserum judici reconcilies. In spec. c. 5.

6837 C. 14

6838 Mariæ peccatores in filios commendavi, propterea adeo est sedula, ut, officio suo satisfaciens neminem eorum, qui sibi commissi sunt, præcipue illam invocantium, perire sinat, sed quantum valet, omnes mihi reducat. 5:1, 4, Min. Op.

6839 Hujus matris bonitas, misericordia, fidelitas, charitas erga homines tanta est ut nullis verbis explicari possit.

6840 Beatis illius pedibus persolvamur; teneamus eam, nec dimittamus donec benedixerit nes. In Sign. Mag.

6841 Etiamsi occiderit me, sperabo in eum; et tutus confidens juxta ejus imaginem mori desidero, et salvus ero.

6842 Nomen habes quod vivas, et mortuus es. Apoc. 3:1.

6843 Qui mane vigilant ad me, invenient me. Prov. 8:17.

6844 Invenient me, invenient gratiam.

6845 Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam, et hauriet salutem a Domino.

6846 Audite, audite qui cupitis regnum Dei; Virginem Mariam honorate, et invenietis vitam et salutem eternam.

6847 Omnes indulgentias factas in Veteri Testamento non ambigo Deum fecisse solum propter hujus benedictæ puellæ Virginis reverentiam, et amorem. Tom. 4, serm. 61, c. 8.

6848 Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus. Serm. de aquæd.

6849 Inventrix gratiæ.

6850 Ne timeas Maria, invenisti gratiam. Luc. 1:30.

6851 Ave gratia plena, Dominus tecum.

6852 Currant ergo, currant peccatores ad Virginem qui gratiam amiserant peccando, et eam invenient apud ipsam. Secum dicant; Redde nobis rem nostram, quam invenisti.

6853 Cupientes invenire gratiam quæramus inventricem gratiæ, quæ, quia semper invenit frustrari non poterit. De Laud. V.1. 2.

6854 Ego murus et ubera mea sicut turris. Cant. 8:10.

6855 Ex quo facta sum coram eo quasi pacem reperiens. Cant. 8:10.

6856 Vade ad matrem misericordiæ, et ostende illi tuorum plagas peccatorum; et ita ostendet pro te ubera. Exaudiet utique matrem filius.

6857 Concede, misericors Deus, fragilitati nostræ præsidium; ut qui sanctæ Dei Genitricis memoriam agimus, intercessionis ejus auxilio a nostris iniquitatibus resurgamus.

6858 Tu es spes unica peccatorum, quia, per te speramus veniam omnium delictorum. Serm. 18, de Sanctis.

6859 Per hanc peccatorum veniam consequimur.

6860 Ave igitur mater, Cœlum, Thronus, Ecclesiæ nostræ Decus; assidue precare Jesum, ut per te misericordiam invenire in die judicii, et quæ reposita sunt iis qui diligunt Deum bona consequi possimus. In Offic. Nat. B. M., die 5.

6861 Quæ est ista, quæ progreditur quasi aurora consurgens? Cant. 6:9.

6862 Cum aurora sit finis noctis, et origo diei, vere per auroram designatur Maria Virgo, quæ fuit finis vitiorum, et origo virtutum. Serm. 2. de Ass. B. V.

6863 Serm. 3, in Dorm. B. V.

6864 De Zona Virgin.

6865 Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes. Luc. 1:48.

6866 Ex hoc beatam te dicent omnes generationes, quæ omnibus generationibus vitam et gloriam genuisti. Serm. 2, in Pentec.

6867 In te peccatores veniam, justi gratiam inveniunt in eternum. Serm. de Nat. B. V.

6868 O peccator ne diffidas etiamsi commisisti omnia peccata; sed secure ad istam gloriosissiman Dominam recurras. Invenies eam in manibus plenam misericordia, et largitate; plus enim ipsa desiderat facere tibi bonum, et largiri gratiam, quam tu acciperi concupiscas. Serm. 5, de N. M.

6869 Fidejussio divinarum reconciliationum, quæ dato pignore fit.

6870 Exultabant autem prænoscentes, quod ipse Dominus ex tua humilitate et vitæ puritate, O Maria stella præfulgida, placaretur, et quod reciperet eos in suam gratiam, qui ipsum ad iraeundiam provocaverunt. Serm. Ang. c. 9.

6871 Es. della SS. Virg.

6872 Scis dulcissima Dei mater, quantum placeat benedicto filio tuo salus nostra. Guill. Paris.

6873 Quotidie petenda est, ut quotidie obtineatur.

6874 Qui operantur in me, non peccabunt; qui elucidant me, vitans eternam habebunt. Eccli. 24:30, 31.

6875 Prov. 8:15. In Festo S. Mariæ ad nives.

6876 Sicut turris David collum tuum, quæ edificata est cum propugnaculis; mille clypei pendent ex ea, omnis armatura fortium. Cant. 4:4.

6877 Quasi platanus exaltata sum juxta aquam in plateis. Eccli. 24:19.

6878 Platanus habet folia scutis similia.

6879 Virgo ramorum extensione se ubique expandit, ut filios Adæ ab æstu et turbine umbra desiderabili protegeret. B. Am. Hom. 8.

6880 Tolle corpus hoc solare, ubi dies? Tolle Mariam, quid, nisi tenebræ relinquentur? Serm. de Aquæd.

6881 Posuisti tenebras, et facta est nox; in ipsa pertransibunt omnes bestiæ sylvæ. Psal. 103:20.

6882 Væ væ eis qui solem istum aversantur!

6883 Sicut respiratio non solum est signum vitæ, sed etiam causa; sic Mariæ nomen, quod in servorum Dei ore versatur, simul argumentum est quod vere vivant, simul etiam hanc vitam efficit et conservat; omnemque eis opem impertitur. Orat. de Deip.

6884 Beatus homo qui audit me, qui vigilat ad fores meas quotidie, et observat ad postes ostii mei. Prov. 8:34. In Festo Conc. B. V. M.

6885 Luna in nocte, aurora in diluculo, sol in die. Serm. 2, de Ass.

6886 Vincula illius alligatura salutaris. Eccli. 6:31.

6887 Quare vinculæ? nisi quia servos ligat, ne discurrant per campos licentiæ.

6888 In plenitudine sanctorum detentio mea. Eccli. 24:16.

6889 Ipsa quoque non solum in plenitudine sanctorum detinetur, sed etiam in plenitudine sanctos detinet, ne eorum plenitudo minuatur; detinet nimirum virtutes, ne fugiant; detinet demonos ne noceant. In spec.

6890 Omnes domestici ejus vestiti sunt duplicibus. Prov. 31:21.

6891 Duplici veste ipsa ornat sibi devotos, quia tam Christi quam suis virtutibus eos induit.

6892 Si prodigus filius viventem matrem habuisset, vei a paterna dome nunquam discessisset, vei forte citius rediisset.

6893 In fluctibus maris ambulavi. C. 24:8.

6894 Scilicet cum familiaribus meis, ut ipsos eruerem a naufragie peccatorum.

6895 Sicut pulli, volitantibus desuper milvis, ad gallinæ alas occurrunt, ita nos sub velamento alarum tuarum abscondimur, Serm. 3, de Nat. Virg.

6896 Nescimus aliud refugium nisi te, tu sola es unica spes nostra, tu sola patrona nostra, ad quem omnes aspicimus.

6897 O quisquis te intelligis in hujus sæculi pro fluvio magis inter procellas et tempestates fluctuare, quam per terram ambulare; ne avertas oculos a fulgore hujus sideris, si non vis obrui procellis; respice stellam, voca Mariam. In periculis, in angustiis, in rebus dubiis Mariam cogita, Mariam invoca. Non recedat ab ore, non recedat a corde. Ipsam sequens, non devias. Ipsam rogans, non desperas. Ipsa tenente, non corruis. Ipsa protegente, non metuis. Ipsa duce, non fatigaris. Ipsa propitia, pervenis. Sic fac, et vives. Hom. 2, super Missus.

6898 Omni tempore diligit qui amicus est, et frater in angustiis comprobatur. Prov. 17:17.

6899 Ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc et in hora mortis nostræ.

6900 Descendit Diabolus ad vos, habens iram magnam, sciens quod-modicum tempus habet. Apoc. 12:12.

6901 Implebuntur domus eorum draconibus. Isa. 13:21.

6902 Et si ambulavero in medio umbræ mortis, virga tua, et baculus tuus ipsa me consolata sunt. Psal. 22:4.

6903 Egredietur virga de radice Jesse, et flos de radice ejus ascendet. Isa. 11:1.

6904 Hæc est illa virga, qua retunduntur impetus adversantium dosmonum. Serm. de Ass. B. V.

6905 Si Maria pro nobis, quis contra nos.

6906 Patrig. Menol. alli. 28 Apr.

6907 Patrig. Men. etc.

6908 Michael dux et princeps militiæ cœlestis cum omnibus administratoriis spiritibus, tuis, virgo, paret præceptis, in defendendis, et suscipiendis de corpore animabus Fidelium, specialiater tibi, Domina, die, ac nocte se commendantium. In Spec. B. V. c. 3.

6909 Infernus subter te conturbatus est in occursum adventus tui, suscitabit sibi gigantes. Isa. 14:9.

6910 Quis apud judicem accusare audeat, cui viderit matrem patrocinantem? Ricc. ap. Pep. to. 5, Lez. 244.

6911 Morientibus beata virgo, non tantum succurrit, sed etiam occrrit. Epist. 2.

6912 Tunc ego carissima eorum domina et mater occurram eis in morte, ut ipsi consolationem et refrigerium habeant. Rev. lib. 1, c. 20.

6913 Beata virgo animas morientium suscipit. Serm. de Ass.

6914 Vincula ejus alligatura salutaris, in novissimis invenies requiem in ea. Eccli. 6:29, 31.

6915 C. 31.

[6916] Opusc. 33, c. 4.

[6917] Adolphe mi carissime, mori cur times, meus cum sis?

[6918] Ego omnibus qui mihi pie deserviunt, volo in morte fidelissime tamquam mater piissima adesse eosque consolari ac protegere. Ap. Blos. p. 2, Concl. an. fid. cap. 12.

[6919] Div. alla verg. tom. 1, tr. 1, q. 11.

[6920] Joannes non est meum, in hac hora meos devotos derelinquere.

[6921] Bolland. 8 Martii.

[6922] Crisog. Mond. Mar. p. 3, d. 38.

[6923] Maledictus homo qui confidit in homine. Jer. 17:5.

[6924] De Beat. SS. lib. 2. cap. 2.

[6925] Ut dignitas intercessoris suppleat inopiam nostram. De Exc. V. c. 6.

[6926] Unde Virginem interpellare, non est de divina misericordia diffidere, sed de propria indignitate formidare. Loc. cit.

[6927] Mater sanctæ spei. Cap. 24:24.

[6928] Ave animæ spes; ave Christianorum firma salus; ave peccatorum adjutrix; ave vallum fidelium; et mundi salus. De Laud. Virg.

[6929] Nobis non est alia quam a te fiducia, O Virgo sincerissima; sub alis tuæ pietatis protege et custodi nos. De Laud. Virg.

[6930] Tu unicum nostrum, refugium subsidium, et asylum. Con 3, de Conc. Virg.

[6931] Intuere, homo, consilium Dei, consilium pietatis; redempturus humanum genus, universum prætium contulit in Maria. Serm. de Nat.

[6932] Facies et propitiatorium de auro mundissimo. . . . Inde præcipiam et loquar ad te. Exod. c. 25. v. 17, 22.

[6933] Te universus mundus continet commune propitiatorium. Inde pientissimus Dominus loquitur ad cor; inde responsa dat benignitatis et veniæ; inde munera largitur; inde nobis omne bonum emanat.

6934 Quid est quod sine Mariæ consensu non perficitur incarnationis mysterium? quia nempe vult illam Deus omnium bonorum esse principium. Lib. 3, contr. Valent. c. 33.

6935 Per ipsam habet mundus, et habiturus est omne bonum. In Pref. Contempl. B. M.

6936 O Maria quis te non amet? Tu in dubiis es lumen, in mœroribus solatium, in periculis refugium. Tu post unigenitum tuum certa fidelium salus. Ave desperantium spes, ave destitutorum adjutrix. Cujus honori tantum tribuit Filius, ut quod vis, mox flat. Cimeliarch. Embol. 1, ad Mar.

6937 Oh Domina mea, sola mihi ex Deo solatium, itineris mei directio, debilitatis meæ potentia, mendicitatis meæ divitiæ, vulnerum meorum medicina, dolorum meorum revelatio, vinculorum meorum solatio, salutis meæ spes; exaudi orationes meas, miserere suspiriorum meorum, Domina mea, refugium, vita, auxiliuin, spes et robur meum. In Encom. Deip.

6938 Venerunt autem mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa. Cap. 7. v. 11.

6939 Omnium bonorum mater est; et venerunt mihi omnia bona cum illa, scilicet virgine, potest dicere mundus. S. Anton. Part. 1. tit. 17, c. 20.

6940 Inventa Maria, invenitur omne bonum.

6941 Mecum sunt divitiæ et opes superbæ. . . . ut ditem diligentes me Prov. 8:18–21.

6942 Oculi omnium nostrum ad manus Mariæ semper debent respicers, ut per manns ejus aliquid boni accipiamus. In Spec.

6943 Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes. Luc. 1:48.

6944 Ex hoc beatam te dicent omnes generationes, quæ omnibus generationibus vitam et gloriam genuisti. In te peccatores veniam, justi gratiam inveniunt in æternum. Serm. 2, in Pentoc.

6945 Matrem meam veneratione præcipua venerare; ego enim mundo dedi in puritatis exemplum, in præsidium tutissimum, ut sit tribulatis asylum, quam nemo formidet; nemo ad eam accedere trepidet. Propterea namque adeo feci eam mitem, adeo misericordem ut neminem aspernat, nulli se neget; omnibus pietatis sinum apertum teneat, neminem a se redire tristem sinat. Lib. 4. Min. Op.

6946 Quantumcumque me Deus præsciverat, scio quod seipsum negare non potest. Eum amplexabor, et si mini non benedixerit, eum non demittam; et sine me recedere non valebit. In cavernis vulnerum suorum me abscondam, ibique extra se me invenire non poterit.

6947 Ad matris suæ pedes provulutus stabo, et mihi veniam impetret; ipsa enim non misereri ignorat; et miseris non satisfacere nunquam scivit. Ideoque ex compassione mihi ad indulgentiam Filium inclinabit. P. 3, Stim. Div. Am. c. 13.

6948 Respice, O mater misericordiosissima, respice servos tuos, in te enim omnem spem nostram collocavimus. Orat de Deip.

6949 Unica spes mea Jesus, et post Jesum Virgo Maria.

6950 Fecitque Deus duo luminaria magna; luminare majus ut præesset diei, luminare minus ut præesset nocti. Gen. 1:16.

6951 Luminare majus Christus, qui præest justis; luminare minus, idest Maria, quæ præest peccatoribus.

6952 Qui jacet in nocte culpæ, respiciat lunam, deprecetur Mariam, Serm. 2, de Ass. B. V.

6953 Mariæ virtute et precibus pene innumeræ peccatorum conversiones fiunt.

6954 Psal. 86:3.

6955 Ego civitas refugii omnium ad me confugientium. Or. 2. de Dorm.

6956 Convenite celeriter et ingrediamur civitatem munitam, et sileamus ibi. Jerem. 8:14.

6957 Et sileamus ibi. Quia non audemus deprecari Dominum quem offendimus, ipsa, deprecetur et roget.

6958 Fugite O Adam, O Eva, fugite eorum liberi intra sinum matris Mariæ. Ipsa est civitas refugii, spes unica peccatorum. B. Fernandez, in c. 4 Gen.

6959 Serm. 18, de Sanct.

6960 Ave peccatorum refugium et hospitium: ad quam nimirum confugere possunt peccatores. De. Laud. Virg.

6961 Protexit me in abscondito tabernaculi sui. Psal. 26:5.

6962 Tabernaculum a Deo fabricatum, in quo solus Deus ingressus est sacris mysteriis operaturus in te pro salute omnium hominum.

6963 Nescimus aliud refugium nisi te. Tu sola es unica spes nostra in qua confidimus. Tu sola patrona nostra, ad quam omnes aspicimus. Serm. 3. de Nat. B. V.

6964 Rev. entr. c. 50.

6965 Respirate ad illam perditi peccatores, et perducet vos ad portum. In Psal. 8.

6966 Si non vis obrui procellis, respice stellam, voca Mariam. Hom. 2. sup. Miss.

6967 Ipsa peccantium singulare refugium; ipsa omnium quos tentatio urget, aut calamitas, aut persecutio, tutissimum asylum.

6968 Tota mitis est et suavis, non solum justis, verum etiam peccatoribus, et desperatis. Quos, ut ad se ex corde clamare conspexerit, statim adjavat, suscipit et Judici reconciliat.

6969 Nullum aspernens, nulli se negat; omnes consolatur, et tenuiter invocata, præsto adest.

6970 Sua bonitate sæpe eos, qui Deo minus afficiuntur ad sui cultum blande allicit; potenterque excitat, ut per hujusmodi studium præparentur ad gratiam, et tandem apti reddantur regno cœlorum.

6971 Talis a Deo facta est, ut nemo ad eam accedere trepidet.

6972 Fieri non potest, ut pereat, qui Mariæ sedulus et humilis cultor extiterit. In can. Vit. Spir. cap. 18.

6973 Eccli. 24:19.

6974 Ecce tu iratus es, et peccavimus. . . . non est qui consurgat, et teneat te. Isa. 64:5, 7.

6975 Ante Mariam non fuit qui sic Deum detinere auderet.

6976 Detinet Filium ne peccatoribus percutiat.

6977 Nemo tam idoneus, qui gladio Domini manus objiciat.

6978 Querebatur Dominus ante Mariam: Non est qui consurgat, et teneat me. Ezech. 22. Donec inventa est Maria, quæ tenuit eum, donec emolliret. De Laud. Virg.

6979 Ne diffidas, peccator, sed in cunctis Mariam sequere et invoca, quam voluit Deus in cunctis subvenire. De Annunc. B. Virg.

6980 Pergens ad gregem, affer mihi duos hædos. Gen. 27:2.

6981 Part. 4, tit. 15, c. 2.

6982 Vere sapiens mulier, quæ novit sic hædos condire, ut gratiam cervorum coæquent, aut etiam superent. Tom. 3, de Grat.

6983 Nullus ita abjectus a Deo, qui si me invocaverit, non reveriatur ad Deum.

6984 Etiam diabolo misericordiam exhiberes si humilites peterat. Rev. 50:1, 100:6.

6985 Quod arca animalia suscepit, animalia servavit. Paciucch. de B. V.

6986 Ap. Blos. Mon. Spir. cap. 1.

6987 Tu peccatorem quantumcumque fœtidum non horres, al ad te suspiraverit, tu illum a desperationis baratro pia manu retrahis. Orat. Paneg. ad B. V.

6988 Ruth 2:3.

6989 Ruth in oculis Booz, Maria in oculis Domini hanc gratiana invenit, ut ipsa spicas, idest animas a messoribus derelictas, colligere ad veniam possit. In Spe. cap. 8.

6990 Nullum tam execrabilem peccatorem orbis habet, quem ipea abominetur, et a se repellat; quemque dilectissimo nato suo (modo suam precetur opem) non possit, sciat et velit reconciliare. Blos. de dictis, P. P. c. 5.

6991 Salve spes desperstorum.

6992 Spes delinquentium. P. P. cap. 5.

6993 Unica spes peccatorum.

6994 Naufragorum portus tutissimus.

6995 Protectrix damnatorum.

6996 Quis non sperabit in te, quæ etiam adjuvas desperatos! Non dubito, quod si ad te venerimus; habebimus quod volemus. In te ergo speret qui desperat. Sup. Salv. Reg.

6997 In Promptuar.

6998 Beatus homo, qui audit me, et vigilat ad fores meas quotidiel Proverbs 8:34.

6999 Ipsa tales quærit qui ad eam devote et reverenter accedant; hosenim diligit, hos nutrit, hos in filios suscipit. P. 3, Stim. Div. Am. c. 16.

7000 Videns et festinans. In Spec.

7001 Videns enim nostram miseriam, est et festinans ad impendendam suam misericordiam.

7002 Nescit nectere moras benefaciendi cupida, nec gratiarum avara custos est; tardare nescit molimina misericordiæ mater beneficentiæ suæ thesauros in suos effusura. Nov. Umbr. Virg. c. 10, Exc. 75.

7003 Duo ubera tua sicut duo hinnulli capreæ. Cant. 4:5.

7004 Compressione levissima angelicæ salutationis larga stillabunt stillicidiæ.

7005 Petite et accipietis.,

7006 Alis utitur Deus; ut suis opituletur, statim advolat; alas sumit et Virgo, in nostri auxilium advolatura. Nov. c. 10, Excurs. 73.

7007 Et datæ sunt mulieri alæ duæ aquilæ magnæ ut volaret in desertum. Apoc. 12:14.

7008 Pennas habet aquilæ, quia amore Dei volat.

7009 Motu celerrimo seraphin alas excedens, ubique suis ut mater occurrit. Hom. 8, de Laud. Virg.

7010 Exurgens Maria abiit in montana cum festinatione. Luc 2:1–39.

7011 Manus filius tornatiles. Cant. 5:14.

7012 Sicut ars tornandi promptior est aliis artibus, sic Maria ad benefaciendum promptior est aliis sanctis. De Laud. Virg. i.5.

7013 Omnes consolatur, et tenuiter invocata præsto adest. Blosius in Cant. Vit. Spir. c. 18.

7014 Inveniens semper paratam auxiliari.

7015 Plus vult illa facere tibi bonum, quam tu accipere concupiscas. Mar. 1, Serm. 5, de Nom. Mar.

7016 Non enim mater hæc dedignatur peccatorem sicut nec bona mater filium scabiosum. Quia propter hoc factam se recolit misericordiæ genitricem. Ubi enim non est miseria, misericordia non habet locum De Laud. Virg. lib. 4.

7017 Rev. lib. 4, cap. 49.

7018 Præoccupat, qui se concupiscunt, ut illis se prius ostendat. C. vi. 4.

7019 In Cant. c. 6:9.

7020 Velocitate præstat.

7021 Velocius occurrit ejus pietas, quam invocetur, et causas misesorum anticipat. Loc. cit.

7022 Adeo replentur ubera tua misericordia, ut alterius miseriæ notitia tacta, lac fundant misercordiæ. Nec possis miserias scire, et non subvenire. In Cant. c. 7:3.

7023 Luc. 2.

7024 Joan. 2:3

7025 Si tam prompta ad auxilium currit non quæsita, quid quæsita præstitura est. C. 10, Ex. 27.

7026 Quis invocavit eam et non est auditus ab ipsa? Serm. 2, de Ass. B. V.

7027 Quis unquam, O Beata, fideliter omnipotentem tuam rogavit opem, et fuit derelictus? Revera nullus unquam. In vita S. Theoph.

7028 Sileat misericordiam tuam, Virgo beata, qui in necessitatibus te invocatam meminerit defuisse. Serm. 1, de Ass.

7029 Citius cœlum cum terra perierint, quam Maria aliquem serio so implorantom sua ope destituat. In Spec. c. 12.

7030 Velocior nonnunquam est nostra salus, invocato nomine Mariæ, quam invocato nomine Jesu. De Exc. V. c. 6.

7031 Quia ad Christum, tanquam judicem, pertinet etiam punire; ad Virginem tanquam patronam nonnisi misereri. Loc. cit.

7032 Multa petuntur a Deo, etinon obtinentur; multa petuntur a Maria et obtinentur; non quia potentior sed quia Deus eam decrevit sic nonorare. Ap. P. Pep. Grandez, etc.

7033 Nulla erit petitio tua in me, quæ non audiatur. Lib. 1, 80.

7034 Et per te omnes, qui per te petunt misericordiam, cum voluntate so emendandi, gratiam habebunt. Loc. cit.

7035 Ex omnipotentia mea, Mater, tibi concessi propitiationem omnium peccatorum, qui devote invocant tuæ pietatis auxilium, qualicumque modo placeat tibi. Ap. Pep. loc. cit.

7036 Memorare piissima Maria, a sæculo non esse auditum, quamquam ad tua præsidia confugientem esse derelictum.

7037 Quem ipsa vis salvus erit.

7038 O salus te invocantium.

7039 Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem; ipsa conteret caput tuum. Gen. 3:15.

7040 Mater Domini Jesu Christi in illa muliere promissa est.

7041 Non pono, sed ponam ne ad Evam pertinere videatur.

7042 Parentibus primis Virginem ab ipsis processuram; quæ afferret majus bonum quam ipsi perdiderunt. Serm. 2, de Nat. Virg.

7043 Ipsa conteret caput tuum.

7044 Ipse conteret caput tuum.

7045 Sub Mariæ pedibus conculcatus et contritus miseram patitur servitutem. Serm. in Sign. Magn.

7046 Et Eva mors, et caligo; in Maria, vita consistit, et lux. Illa a diabolo victa est; hæc diabolum vicit et ligavit. Ap. Scala Franc. p. 4, c. 10.

7047 Confidit in ea cor viri sui, et spoliis non indigebit. Prov. 31:11.

7048 Confidit in ea cor viri sui, scilicet Christi. Et spoliis non indigebit; ipsa enim quasi ditat sponsum suum, quibus spoliat diabolum.

7049 Quasi palma exaltata sum in Cades. Eccli. 24:18.

7050 Scilicet ad defendendum.

7051 Beata Virgo dominatur in regno inferni. Dicitur igitur domina dæmonum, quasi domans dæmones. Serm. 3, de Glor. Nom. Mar.

7052 Terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata. Cant. 6:3.

7053 Ego quasi vitis fructificavi suavitatem odoris. Eccli. 24:23.

7054 Aiunt de florescentibus vitibus omne reptile venantium excedere loco. Serm. 60, in Cant.

7055 Quasi cedrus exaltata sum in Libano. Eccli. 24:17.

7056 Cedrus odore suo fugat serpentes, et beata Virgo dæmones.

7057 Cum elevaretur arca, dicebat Moyses; Surge Domine, et dissipentur inimici tui. Num. 10:33.

7058 Erat enim ibi arca Dei. 1, Reg. 14:18.

7059 Arca continens manna, idest Christum, est B. Virgo, quæ victoriam eontra homines et dæmones largitur. Cornel. a Lap.

7060 Quando elevata fuit Virgo gloriosa a celestia regna, dæmonis potentia imminuta est et dissipata. Tom. 3, de B. V. Serm. 11.

7061 O quam tremenda est Maria dæmonibus. Spec. Virg. c. 3.

7062 Perfodit in tenebris domos. . . . Si subito apparuerit aurora; arbitrantur umbram mortis. Job 24:16, 17.

7063 Perfodiunt in tenebris ignorantiæ domos mentium nostrarum. Si subito supervenerit aurora, idest Mariæ gratia, et misericordia, sic fugiunt, sicut omnes fugiunt mortem. In Spec. Virg.

7064 Super omnes etiam malignos spiritus ipsam sic potentem effecit, quod quotiescumque ipsi hominem Virginis auxilium implorantem impugnaverint, ad ipsius Virginis nutum illico pavidi procul diffugiunt; volentes potius suas pœnas multiplicari, quam ejusdem Virginis potentiam super se taliter dominari. Serm. Aug. c. 20.

7065 Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias. Cant. 2:2.

7066 Sicut lilium valet inter serpentes et venena, sic beatæ Virginis invocatio singulare est remedium in omni tentatione, præsertim libidinis, ut experientia constat.

7067 Insuperabilem spem tuam habens, O Deipara, servabor, Persequar inimicos meos, solam habens ut thoracem protectionem tuam, et omnipotens anxilium tuum. In Annunc. Dei Gen.

7068 Tu arma omni vi belli potentiora, trophæumque invictum præstitisti.

7069 Per diem in columna nubis, et per noctem in columna ignis. Exod. 13:21.

7070 Ecce duo officia, ad quæ data est nobis Maria, scilicet, ut nos protegat a calore solis justitiæ, tamquam nubes, et tamquam ignis; ut omnes nos protegat contra diabolum. Lib. 7, de Laud. Virg.

7071 Fluunt sicut cera a facie ignis, ubi inveniunt crebram hujus nominis recordationem, devotam invocationem, solicitam imitationem. In Spec.

7072 In nomine Mariæ omne genuflectitur, et dæmones non solum pertimescunt, sed, audita hac voce, contremiscunt. Serm. sup. Miss.

7073 Expavescunt cœli reginam spiritus maligni et diffugiunt, audite somine eius. verut au igne, tamquam tonitru de cœle factum sit, prosternuntur ad sanctæ Mariæ vocabulum. L. 4, ad Nov.

7074 Sæpe vidimus et audivimus plurimos homines in suis periculis nominis recodari Mariæ, et illico omnis periculi matum evasisse. S. Ans. de Exc. Virg. c. 6.

7075 Gloriosum et admirabile est nomen tuum O Maria; qui illud retinent non expavescunt in puncto mortis; nam dæmones audientes hoc nomen Mariæ statim relinquunt animam. In Psalt. B.V.

7076 Non sic timent hostes visibiles castrorum multitudinem copiosam, sicut æreæ potestates Mariæ vocabulum, et patrocinium. Loc. cit.

7077 Tu servos tuos contra hostis invasiones, sola tui nominis invocatione tutos servas. Serm. de Zona. Virg.

7078 Satan fugit, infernus contremiscit, cum dico Ave Maria.

7079 Omnes dæmones audientes hoc nomen, Maria, statim relinquunt animam quasi territi. L. 1, Rev. c. 9.

7080 Et revertuntur ad eam, nisi aliqua emendatio subsequatur. Lib. 1. Rev. c. 9.

7081 Father Auriemma, Affetti Scambiev. Tom. i. c. 7.

7082 Mach. 15:14.

7083 Thess. 1, c. 5:25.

7084 Orate pro invicem ut salvemini. C. 5:16.

7085 Gloria filiorum Patres eorum. Prov. 17:6.

7086 Non est dubium, quicquid in laudibus matris profermius, ad filium pertinere. Hom. 4, Sup. Miss.

7087 Refunditur in filium quod impenditur matri, transfunditur honor in regem, qui defertur in famulatum reginæ.

7088 Maria fidelissima mediatrix nostræ salutis.

7089 Quomodo non est plena gratia, quæ effecta est paradisi scala, cœli janua, Dei atque hominum verissima mediatrix? Serm. de Annunc.

7090 Ut dignitas intercessoris suppleat inopiam nostram. Unde Virginem interpellare, non est de divina misericordia diffidere. sed de propria indignitate formidare. De Exc. V. c. 6.

7091 Qui vult ut omnia bona ab ipso expectemus, potentissima Virginis matris intercessione impetranda, cum eam, ut par est, invocamus. Epist. 76, in calce tom. 4, Moral.

7092 Sic est voluntas ejus, qui totum nos habere voluit per Mariam.

7093 Quasi diceret, Nullus sanguinis mei particeps erit, nisi intercessione matris meæ. Vulnera gratiarum fontes sunt, sed ad nullos derivabuntur rivi, nisi per Mariæ canalem. Joannes discipule, tantum a me amaberis, quantum eam amaveris. Theol. mentis, et cord. tom. 2. 1. 10, D. 4, c. 1.

7094 1 Tim. 2:5.

7095 In me omnis spes vitæ et virtutis.

7096 In me omnis gratia vitæ et veritatis.

7097 Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam, et hauriet salutem a Domino.

7098 Qui operantur in me, non peccabunt. Qui elucidant me, vitam æternam habebunt.

7099 Ejus magnalia firmiter credere. Laud. Virg.

7100 Felix namque es, sacra Virgo Maria, et omni laude dignissima.

7101 Plenus aquæductus, ut accipiant cæteri de plenitudine. Serm de Aquæd.

7102 Propterea tempore humano generi fluenta gratiæ defuerunt, quod necdum intercederet is de quo loquimur, tam desiderabilis aquæductus. Serm. de Aquæd.

7103 Descendit per aquæductum vena illa cœlestis stillicidia gratiæ arentibus cordibus nostris in fundens. Loc. cit.

7104 Intueamini quanto devotionis affectu a nobis eam voluit honorari, qui totius boni plenitudinem posuit in Maria; ut proinde si quid spei nobis est, si quid gratiæ, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare. Serm. de Nat. Virg.

7105 Per eam de cœlis exivit quidquid gratiæ venit in mundum. P. 4, tit. 15, c. 20.

7106 Quia sicut luna inter corpora cœlestia et terrena est media, et quod ab illis accipitad inferiora refundit; sic et Virgo regina inter nos et Deum est media, et gratiam ipsa nobis refundit. Serm. 74, de Nat. Dom.

7107 Datum est Mariæ, ut per illam acciperes quicquid haberes. Serm. 3, in Virg. Nat.

7108 Nullus potest cœlum, intrare, nisi per Mariam transeat tamquam per portam.

7109 In Christo fuit plenitudo gratiæ sicut in capite influente, in Maria sicut in collo transfundente. Serm. de Ass. B. V.

7110 Per Virginem a capite Christi vitales gratiæ in ejus corpus mysticum transfunduntur. Serm. 61, de Nat. Virg. c. 8.

7111 Cum tota natura divina intra Virginis uterum extiterit; non timeo dicere quod in omnes gratiarum effluxus quamdam jurisdictionem habuerit hæc Virgo, de cujus utero quasi de quodam divinitatis oceano flumina emanabant omnium gratiarum. In Spec. cap. 3.

7112 A tempore quo virgo mater concepit in utero verbum Dei, quamdam, ut sic dicam, jurisdictionem obtinuit, in omni spiritus sancti, processione temporali; ita ut nulla creatura aliquam a Deo obtinuit gratiam, nisi secundum ipsius piæ matris dispensationem. Serm. 61, tract. 1, art. 8.

7113 Crasset. Div. della Verg.

7114 Fœmina circumdabit virum. Jerem. 31:22.

7115 Ideo omnia dona, virtutes, et gratiæ, quibus vult, quande vult, et quomodo vult, per ipsius manus dispensantur. Serm. 61, ut sup.

7116 Deus quicquid boni dat creaturis suis, per manus matris Virginis vult transire.

7117 Accede ad Virginem, quia per ipsam mundus habiturus est omne bonum. De contempl. V. in Prol.

7118 Sentit Ecclesia intercessionem B. Virginis esse sibi utilem, et necessariam. Tom. 2, in 3, par. disp. 23, sect. 3.

7119 Nihil Deus habere nos voluit, quod per manus Mariæ non transtret. Serm. 3, in Vigil. Nat.

7120 Omnia bona quæ illis summa majestas decrevit facere, tuis manibus decrevit commendare: commissi quippe sunt thesauri, et ornamenta gratiarum. In Cor. Virg. c. 15.

7121 De Nat. Virg. ap. Pac. Exc. 1, n. 15.

7122 Egredietur virga de radice Jesse, et fios de radice ejus ascendet, et requiescet super eum spiritus Domini. Isa. 11:1, 2.

7123 Quicumque Spiritus Sancti gratiam adipisci desiderat, florem, in virga quærat; per virgam enim ad florem, per florem ad spiritum pervenimus. In Spec. c. 6.

[7124] Si hunc florem habere desideras, virgam floris precibus flectas. Loc. cit.

[7125] Invenerunt puerum cum Maria matre ejus. Matth. 2:11.

[7126] Nunquam invenitur Christus, nisi cum Maria, nisi per Mariam, Serm. 25. In Epiph.

[7127] Frustra igitur quærit qui cum Maria invenire non quærit.

[7128] Ut sim servus filli, servitutem appeto genitricis. De Virg. Mar. c. 12.

[7129] Spec. Hist. 1. 7, c. 105.

[7130] Dist. 2. c. 3.

[7131] Congruum magis fuit ut adesset nostræ reparationi sexus uterque, quorum corruptioni neuter defuissit. Serm. in Sig Magn.

[7132] Adam et Eva vendiderunt mundum pro uno pomo; filius meus et ego redemimus mundum uno corde. Lib. 5, c. 35.

[7133] Qui potuit omnia de nihilo facere, noluit ea violata sine Maria reficere. In Alloq. cœl. n. 37.

[7134] Auxiliatrix nostræ justificationis, quia Deus omnes gratias faciendas Mariæ commisit.

[7135] Ad illam sicut ad medium, sicut ad negotium omnium sæculorum respiciant, et qui præcesserunt, et nos qui sumus. et qui sequentur. Serm. 2, in Pentec.

[7136] Nemo venit ad me, nisi Pater meus traxerit eum.

[7137] Nemo venit ad me, nisi Mater mea suis precibus traxerit eum. In Cant. c. 2, v. 3.

[7138] Benedicta tu inter mulieres, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Luc. 1:42.

[7139] Et unde hoc mihi, ut veniat mater Domini mei ad me? Lec. 2. 42.

[7140] Facta est quasi navis institoris, de longo portans panem suum. Prov. 31:14.

[7141] Ego sum panis vivus, qui de cœlo descendi, si quis manducaverit ex hoc pane vivet in æternum. Joan 6:51.

[7142] In mare mundi submergentur omnes illi, quos non suscepit navis ista. De Laud. Virg.

[7143] Ideo quoties videmus insurgentes fluctus hujus maris, clamare debemus ad Mariam; Domina, salva nos, perimus. Loc. cit.

7144 Regina immaculata et pura, salva me, libera ab eterna damnatione. Orat. Paneg.

7145 O salus te invocantium.

7146 Nemini nisi per eam patet aditus ad salutem. Pacciucch. de B. Virg.

7147 Nemo qui salvus fiat nisi per te. Serm. de Zona. Virg.

7148 Qui petit sine ipsa, sine alis tentat volare. P. 3, tit. 15, c. 22, 9.

7149 Terra Egypti in manu tua est.

7150 Decrevit nihil dare, nisi per Mariam. Serm. de Nat. Virg.

7151 Salus nostra in manu Mariæ est, ut ei dicere multo melius valeamus nos Christiani, quam Egyptii dixerunt Joseph salus nostra in manu illius est. L. 2, de Laud. Virg. p. 1.

7152 In Præf. Cant. 5.

7153 Tota salus mundi consistit in multitudine favoris Mariæ.

7154 Tu dispensatrix omnium gratiarum; salus nostra in manu tua est. Serm. 1, de Nat. B. Virg.

7155 Sicut lapis, subtracta terra, delabitur in profundum; ita subtracto Mariæ adjutorio, homo delabitur in peccatum, et inde in infernum. L. 8, de Laud. Virg. c. 11.

7156 Ipse sine ea non salvabit te.

7157 Quemadmodum infans sine nutrice non potest vivere, ita sine domina nostra non potes habere salute. In Cant. B. V. pro Sabb.

7158 Sitiat ergo anima tua ad ipsam; tene, nec dimitte, donec benedixerit tibi.

7159 Nemo est, o sanctissima, qui ad Dei notitiam venit, nisi per te; nemo qui salvus fiat, nisi per te, Dei parens; nemo liber a periculis nisi per te, Virgo mater. Nemo donum Dei suscepit, nisi per te, gratia piena. Serm. de Zona. Virg.

7160 Nisi enim tu iter aperieres, nemo spiritualis evaderet. Orat. de Dorm. Deip.

7161 Per te accessum habemus ad filium, o inventrix gratiæ, mater salutis, ut per te nos suscipiat, qui per te datus est nobis.

7162 Si nos deserueris, quid erit de nobis, Vita Christianorum? Serm. de Zone Virg.

[7163] Tom. 2, in 3, p. D. 28, sect. 3.

[7164] Frustra alios sanctos oraret, quem ista no adjuvaret.

[7165] Vultum tuum deprecabuntur omnes divites plebis. Psal. 44:13.

[7166] Inter sanctos non solemus uti uno tamquam intercessore ad alium, cum omnes sint ejusdem ordinis, ad virginem autem tamquam ad Dominam ac Reginam alii sancti adhibentur intercessores.

[7167] Nel Diario di Maria alli. 21, di Marzo.

[7168] Quid possunt omnes isti tecum, tu sola potes sine illis omnibus. Orat. 45, ad S. Virg. Mar.

[7169] Quia mater es salvatoris nostri, sponsa Dei, regina cœli et terræ. Lib. Or. Exc. v. ap. Pac. Exc. 20, in sal. Ang. 2, 7.

[7170] Te tacente, nullus juvabit, nullus orabit.

[7171] Te, domina orante, omnes juvabunt et orabunt.

[7172] In his book, “Divoto di Maria.”

[7173] Gyrum cœli circuivi sola. Eccli. 24:8.

[7174] Quando virgo sanctissima procedit ad Deum pro nobis deprecandum imperat angelis et sanctis, ut eam comitentur, et simul cum ipsa altissimum pro nobis exorent. in Spec. V. c. 3.

[7175] Ferre nequeo ut Maria dicatur spes et vita mea. In Post. Maj. Hvang. in Nat. Mar.

[7176] Maledictus homo qui confidit in homine. 17:5.

[7177] Filioli, hæc maxima mea fiducia, hæc tota ratio spei meæ. Or. Pan. ad B. V.

[7178] In te spem meam collocavi ex animo et intentis oculis, abs to pendeo. Ap. Auriem. to. 1, c. 7.

[7179] Omnes spes vitæ. Opusc. 7.

[7180] Nobis non est alia quam a te fiducia, o virgo sincerris sima. Sub alis pietatis protege et custodi nos. De Laud. Virg.

[7181] Totis medullis cordium hanc Mariam veneremur, quia sic est voluntas ejus, qui totum nos habere voluit per Mariam. Serm. de Nat. B. V.

[7182] Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus. Serm. de Aquæd.

7183 Quia indignus eras, cui donaret, datum est Mariæ ut perillain acciperes quidquid haberes. Serm. 3, in Virg. Nativ.

7184 Quidquid Deo offerre potes, Mariæ commendare memento, si non vis sustinere repulsum. Serm. de Aquæd.

7185 Crasset Div. alla. B. V. tom. 1, tr. 1, q. 10.

7186 C. 2. v. 51.

7187 Cum de ceteris sanctis dicatur, eos esse cum Deo, Maria majus aliquid sortita est, ut non solum ipsa subjiceretur voluntati Dei, sed etiam Dominus voluntati ipsius, L. 1, de Laud. Virg. c. 5.

7188 Ap. 14.

7189 De virgine autem Maria secure dici potest, quod agnus sequedater eam, quocumque ivit; ex illo Lucæ: Erat subditus illis, Loc. cit.

7190 Grande privilegium Mariæ, quod apud filium sit potentissima. In Spec. c. 8.

7191 Data est tibi omnis potestas in cœlo et in terra; et nihil tibi impossible, cui possibile est etiam desperatos in spem salutis relevare. Serm. 1, de Nat. B. V.

7192 Accedis enim ad illud humanæ reconciliationis aitare, non solum rogans, sed imperans: domina, non ancilla; nam filius nihii negans honurat. Loc. cit.

7193 Serm. 3, in Dorm. B. V.

7194 Imperio Virginis omnia famulantur, etiam Deus. Tom. E. Serm. 61.

7195 Te Deus, o virgo, sic exaltavit, ut omnia tibi secum possibilia esse donaris. Lib. de Conc. Virg.

7196 Eisdem privilegiis secundum leges gaudet rex et regiua. Cum autem eadem sit potestas filii et matris, ab omnipotente filio omnipotens mater facta est. L. 4, de Laud. Virg.

7197 Ecclesia est, non tantum sub Virginis patrocinio, verum etiam sub dominatione ac potestate. P. 4, tit. 15, c. 20, 62.

7198 Pete quod vis a me, non enim potest esse inanis petitio tua. Rev. 1. c. 4.

7199 Quia tu mihi nihil negasti in terris, ego nihil tibi negabo in cœlis.

7200 Quicquid tu Virgo velis, nequaquam fieri non poterit. De Exc. Virg. c. 12.

7201 Roganda sum, ut velim; quia, si volo, necesse est fieri. Ap. P. Pep Grand, etc.

7202 Moveat te natura; potentia moveat; quia quanto potentior tante misericordior esse debebis. Serm. 1, de N. B. V.

7203 Potentissima, et piissima charitas matris Dei, et affectu compatiendi, et subveniendi abundat effectu; æque locuples in utroque. Serm. 4. de Assumt.

7204 Joan. 2:3.

7205 Quid mihi et tibi, mulier? nondum venit hora mea. Joan. 2:4.

7206 Joan. 2:7.

7207 Et licet ita responderit, maternis tamen precibus obtemperavit.

7208 Per illa verba, nondum venit hora mea, ostendit se dilatucum fuisee miraculum, si alius rogasset; quia tamen rogabat mater, fecit. Apud. Defens. cultus Mariani, auctore R. D. Henr. de Cerf. p. 129.

7209 Quo matrem honoraret, prævenit tempus miraculi faciendi.

7210 Nulla creatura tot et tanta impetrare posset apud filium tuum miseris, quam tu impetras eisdem; in quo procul dubio non tamquam ancillam, sed tamquam matrem verissimam to honorat.

7211 Quæ habitas in hortis, amici auscultant, fac me audire vecem tuam. Cant. 8:13.

7212 Quæ habitas in hortis cœlestibus, fiducialiter pro quibus volueris intercede; non enim possum oblivisci me filium tuum, ut matri quidpiam denegandum putem. Tantum ut vocem proferat, quia a filio audiri, exaudiri est.

7213 Virgo Maria ex eo quod ille homo est, et natus ex ea, quasi quodam matus imperio, apud ipsum impetrare quod voluerit pia fiducia non dubitatur. Serm. viii. de B. Virg.

7214 Lib. 5, cap. 4.

7215 Unum beatæ Mariæ suspirium plus posset, quam omnium Sanctorum simul suffragia. In tit. B. V. verbo. Virg. pot.

7216 De B. V.

7217 Oratio Deiparæ habet rationem imperii; unde impossibiie est, eam non exaudiri. P. 4. tit. 15, c. 17, 4.

[7218] Tu autem materna in Deum auctoritate pollens, etiam iis qui enormiter peccant, eximiam remissionis gratiam concilias; non enim potes non exaudiri, cum Deus tibi ut veræ et intemeratæ Matri in omnibus morem gerat. Van. Enc. Deip.

[7219] Domina benedicta, quid est quod non poteris? Quod enim vis, hoc factum est. L. 4, Rev. c. 74.

[7220] Quod Deus imperio, tu prece Virgo potes.

[7221] Nunquid non pertinet ad benignitatem Domini, matris honorem servare, qui legem non venit solvere; sed adimplere?

[7222] Filius quasi exsolveus debitum, implet petitiones tuas. Or. de Ex. Mar.

[7223] Euge euge, quæ debitorem habes filium, qui omnibus mutuatur. Deo enim universi debemus, tibi autem etiam ille debitor est. Orat. in Hyp. Dom.

[7224] Virgo quæ meruit pro liberandis proferre pretium, potest plus omnibus suffragium liberatis impendere. Orat. 2. de aff. B. V.

[7225] Potes quidem omnes salvare, ut Dei Altissimi Mater, precibus materna auctoritate pollentibus. Ex. Men. 1, Jan. Ode. 4.

[7226] Oh certe Dei nostri mira benignitas, qui suis reis te Dominam tribuit advocatam, ut auxilio tuo, quod volueris, valeas impetrare. In Salv. Reg.

[7227] O mirabilis erga nos, misericordia Dei nostri, qui ne fugeremus pro sententia, voluit matrem ac dominam gratiæ instituero advocatam!

[7228] Mirac. di Maria, Mir. 47.

[7229] Loquere, Domina, quia audit filius tuus et quæcumque petieris, impertrabis.

[7230] Maria diligit diligentes se; imo sibi servientibus servit. Ipsa benedicto filio suo irato potentissime reconciliat servos et amatores suos. Præf. in Cant.

[7231] Tanta est ejus benignitas, quod nulli formidandum est ad eam, accedere; tantaque misericordia ut nemo ab ea repellatur.

[7232] Ipsa preces servorum, maxime quæ sibi exhibentur, repræsentat in conspectu divinæ majestatis; quia ipsa est advocata nostra apud filium, sicut filius apud Patrem. Imo apud Patrem et Filium procurat negotia et preces nostras. In dict. Præf.

[7233] Singulare perditorum refugium, miserorum spem, advocatan omnium iniquorum ad se confugientium.

7234 Grande privilegium Mariæ, quod apud filium sit potentissima. In Spec. lect. 6, 7.

7235 Sed quid tanta Mariæ potentia prodesset nobis; si ipsa nihii curaret de nobis?

7236 Carissimi sciamus indubitanter, et pro hoc gratias agamus incessanter, quia sicut ipsa apud eum omnibus sanctis est potentior, ita pro nobis omnibus est sollicitior.

7237 Quis post filium tuum curam gerit generis humani, sicut tu? Serm. de Zona. Virg.

7238 Quis ita nos defendit in nostris afflictionibus. Quis pugnat pre peccatoribus?

7239 Propterea patrotinum tuum majus est quam apprehendi possit.

7240 Cæteri sancti jure quodam patrocinii pro sibi specialiter commissis plus possunt prodesse, quam pro alienis; beatissima vero Virgo, sicut omnium est regina, sic est omnium patrona et advocata, et cura illi est de omnibus. De Contempl. B. V. in Prol.

7241 Adstat beatissima Virgo vultui conditoris prece potentissima, semper interpellans pro nobis.

7242 Videt enim nostra discrimina, nostrique clemens Domina materno affectu miseretur.

7243 Inveniet semper paratam auxiliari.

7244 Ipsa pro universo mundo paratissima est ad precandum.

7245 Advocatam præmisit peregrinatio nostra; quæ tamquam judicis mater, et mater misericordiæ, suppliciter et efficaciter salutis nostræ negocia pertractabit. Serm. 1, de Ass.

7246 Unam te ac solam pro nobis in cœlo fatemur esse sollicitam. Ap. in Spec. lect. 6.

7247 Tam prudens et diserta est advocata Maria, quod non poteal filius vindicare in eos, pro quibus ipsa allegat. De Laud. v. 1, 2, P. 2.

7248 Salve jus dirimens lites. Ap. Pep. Lez. to. 5.

7249 Benedicta tu, quæ prohibuisti me hodie, ne ulciscerer me manu mea. C. xxx.

7250 Fidelis et potens mediator Dei et hominum; sed divinam reverentur in eo homines majestatem, opus est enim mediatore ad mediatorem ipsum: nec alter nobis utilior quam Maria. Serm. in Sign. Magn.

7251 Quid ad Mariam accedere trepidet humana fragilitas? Nihii susterum in ea, nihil terribile, tota suavis est.

7252 Revolve diligentius evangelicæ historiæ seriem universam, et si quid forte durum occurrerit in Maria, ad eam accedere verearis, Serm. in Sign. Magn.

7253 Adibo te imo etiam conveniam, gloriossissima Dei genitrix, quam matrem misericordiæ vocat, imo clamitat omnis eccles a sanctorum. De Reth. Div. c. 18.

7254 Tu, inquam, cujus gratiositas nunquam repulsam patitur, cujus misericordia nulli unquam defuit; cujus benignissima humanitas nullum unquam deprecantem quantumcumque peccatorem despexit.

7255 An falso aut inaniter vocat te omnis Ecclesia advocatam suam, et miserorum refugium?

7256 Absit, ut peccata mea possint suspendere te a tam salubri officio pietatis; quo et advocata es, et mediatrix hominum, post filium tuum spes unica et refugium tutissimum miserorum.

7257 Totum siquidem quod habes gratiæ, totum quod habes gloriæ, et etiam hoc ipsum quod mater es Dei, si fas est dicere, ob peccatores tibi collata sunt.

7258 Absit hoc a matre Dei, quæ fontem pietatis toti mundo pe perit, ut cuique miserorum suæ misericordiæ subventionem unquam leneget.

7259 Officium ergo tuum est te mediam interponere inter ipsum et homines. Moveat te gloriosa Dei mater, benignissima misericordia tua, quæ major est incogitabiliter omnibus vitiis meis et peccatis. D. e. 18, de Reth. Div.

7260 Consolamini pussillanimos; respirate miserabiles; Virgo Deipara est humani generis advocata; idonea, sapientissima, universaiis. In Rog. pro exp. adv. Turc susc.

7261 L. 7, c. 25.

7262 in Ex.

7263 Infinitus est thesaurus, quo qui usi sunt, participes facti sunt amicitiæ Dei. Sap. 7:14.

7264 Joan. 15:14.

7265 Iniquitates vestræ diviserunt inter vos et Deum vestrum! Is. 59:2.

7266 Odio sunt Deo impius et impietas ejus. Sap. 14:9.

7267 Jesum tibi dedit mediatorem; quid non apud talem patrem filus talis obtineat. Serm. de Aquæd.

7268 Serverum imaginantur, qui pius est, terribilem, qui amabilis est. Quid timetis modicæ fidei? Peccata affixit cruci suis manibus.

7269 Sed forsitan et in ipso majestatem vereare divinam, quod licet factus sit homo, manserit tamen Deus. Advocatum habere vis et apud ipsum? recurre ad Mariam; exaudiet utique matrem filius, et exaudiet filium Pater.

7270 Filioli, hæc peccatorum scala, hæc maxima mea fiducia est, hæc tota ratio spei meæ. Cit. Serm. de Aquæd.

7271 Ego murus; et ubera mea sicnt turris, ex quo facta sum coram se quasi pacem reperiens. Cant. c. 8 v. 10.

7272 Ipsa reperit pacem inimicis, salutem perditis, indulgentiam reis, misericordiam desperatis.

7273 Cant. 1:4.

7274 Tu enim es illa fidelissima columba Noe, quæ inter Deum et mundum dilnvio spirituali submersum mediatrix fidelissima extitisti.

7275 Nam ipsa Christum nobis detulit fontem misericordiæ. P. Spinell.

7276 Per te pax cœlestis donata est.

7277 Ego sum columba Noe, Ecclesiæ ramum oiivæ et pacis inferens universalis. In Bibl. Mar. lib. Cant. n. 16.

7278 Et Iris erat in circuitu sedis. Apoc. c. 4:3.

7279 Iris in circuitu sedis est Maria, quæ mitigat Dei judicium et senientiam contra peccatores. In Spec. S. Script.

7280 Arcum meum ponam in nubibus, et erit signum fœderis inter me et terram . . . Videbo illam, et recordabor fœderis sempiterni. Gen. 9:13.

7281 Ipsa est arcus fœderis sempiterni. Serm. 1, de No. Mar. Art. 1, c. 3.

7282 Fructus iridis est recordatio divini fœderis; sic per verginem gloriosam offensa eis remittitur, fœdus stringitur. Serm. in Apoc. c. 41.

7283 Pulchra ut Luna. Cant. 6:9.

7284 Sicut Luna est media inter corpora cœlestia et terrena, et quod ab illis accipit ad inferiora refundit; sic et virgo regia inter nos et Deum est media, et gratiam ipsa nobis refundit. Serm. 14, de Nat. Dom.

7285 Cant. 1:8.

7286 Pasce hædos tuos, quos convertis in oves, et qui a sinistris in judicio erant collocandi, tua intercessione collocantur a dextris.

7287 Hæc est a me electa tanquam esca dulcissima ad capiendos homines, potissimum peccatores. Ap. Blos. Monil. Spir.

7288 Suos vocat quia non omnes hædi vocantur Mariæ, sed qui Mariam colunt ac venerantur, licet sceleribus contaminate. Qui vero peccatis irretiti sunt, nec B. Virginem speciali obsequio prosequuntur, nec preces fundunt in ejus cultum, ut aliquando resipiscant, hædi prefecto sunt non Mariæ, sed ad sinistram judicis sistendi.

7289 Ego eripiam te de affligentibus te.

7290 Sicut magnes attrahit ferrum sic ego attraho dura corda. L. 3. Rev. c. 32.

7291 Ideo mater Dei præelecta es ab eterno; ut quos justitia filli salvare non potest, tu per tuam salvares pietatem. Hom. de Præs. B. V.

7292 Scio illam magis propter peccatores, quam propter justos, factam esse Dei Matrem; dixit enim ejus bonus filius se non venisse vocare justos, sed peccatores.

7293 Peccatores non abhorres, sine quibus nunquam fores tanto digna filio.

7294 Totum quod habes, si fas eat dicere, peccatoribus debest omnia enim propter peccatores tibi collata sunt. De Reth. Div. c. 18.

7295 Si ipsa propter peccatores facta est Dei mater, quomodo immanitas peccatorum meorum cogere poterit desperare veniam? De Exc. v. c.1.

7296 Quam idcirco de hoc sæculo transtuiit, ut apud te pro peccatis nostris fiducialiter intercedat.

7297 Verbum usum est Virgine sequestra.

7298 Divinarum reconciliationum, quæ pignore accepto fit Fidejussio. Or. 2, de Aff.

7299 Si propter tuas nequitias Dominum videris indignatum, ad spem peccatouam confugias; sibi pro miseris satisfacere ex officio commissum est.

7300 Timere ne debet ut pereat, cui Maria se matrem exhibet, et advocatam.

7301 Tu misericordiæ mater non rogabis pro filio filium, pro redempto redemptorem?

7302 Rogabis plane quia qui filium tuum inter Deum et hominem posuit mediatorem, te quoque inter reum, et judicem posuit adjutricem.

7303 Age gratias ei, qui talem tibi mediatricem providit. Serm, in Sign. Magn.

7304 Ros. Sacr. p. 5, c. 60.

7305 Stor. Virg.1. 1, c. 11.

7306 Officium tuum est, te mediam interponere inter Deum et nosiness.

7307 Eja ergo advocata nostra officium tuum imple.

7308 Ap. il P. Pep. to. 5, Lec. 235.

7309 Oculi Domini super justos. Ps. 33:16.

7310 Sed oculi Dominæ super justos et peccatores.

7311 Sicut oculi matris ad puerum ne cadat, vel si ceciderit, ut cum sublevet.

7312 Mater pete quod vis a me.

7313 Rev.1. 1. c. 46.

7314 Undique sollicita es de miseris misericordia vallaris, solum misseri videris appetere. Sup. Salve Reg.

7315 Stat Maria in conspectu filli sui non cessans pro peccatoribus exorare. In cap. 1 Luc.

7316 Nullum in hac vita adeo pœnæ torserunt propriæ sicut Mariam alienæ. Epist. ad Eust.

7317 Officium piæ auxiliatricis assumpsit non rogata.

7318 Nunquid, O Beata Virgo, quia ita glorificata es, ideo nostræ humilitatis oblita es? Absit, non convenit tantæ misericordiæ, tantæ miseriæ oblivisci. Serm. 1, de Nat. Virg.

7319 Benedicta filia priorem misericordiam posteriore superasti. Ruth 3:10.

7320 Magna fuit erga miseros misericordia Mariæ adhnc exulantis mundo, sed multo major est regnantis in cœlo. In Spec, B. V. c. 8.

7321 Majorem per innumerabilia beneficia nunc ostendit misericordiam; quia magis nunc videt hominum miserias.

7322 Nam quemadmodum sollunam superat magnitudine splendoris, sic priorem Mariæ misericordiam superat magnitudo superioris.

7323 Quis est super quem misericordia Mariæ non resplendent? Loc. cit.

7324 Cant. 6:9.

7325 Non est qui se abscondat a calore ejus.

7326 Nunc autem conjuncta filio non obliviscitur innatæ bonitatis suæ, sed ad omnes extendit misericordiam suam, etiam ad pessimos; ut sicut sole illuminantur cœlestia et terrestria, sic ex dulcodine Mariæ nullus est qui non per eam, si petitur sentiat pietatem. L. 3, Rev. c. 30.

7327 Patrign. Men. 2, Feb.

7328 Patr. Mon. 2, Feb.

7329 Maria omnia omnibus facta est; omnibus misericordiæ sinum aperit, ut de plenitudine ejus accipiant omnes, captivus, redemptionem, æger curationem, tristis consolationem, peccator veniam; ut non sit qui se abscondat a calore ejus. In Sig. Mag.

7330 Quis te non diliget, O Maria, pulchriorem sole, dulciorem mollo omnibus amabilis, omnibus affabilis?

7331 Ave ergo, Domina mea, mater mea; imo cor meum, anima mea, parce mihi, Domina, si me amare te dicam; si ego non sum dignus te amare, tu non es digna amari a me. Stim. p. 5, c. 19.

7332 Rev.1. 4, c. 53.

7333 Eja ergo; advocata nostra, illos tuos misericordes ocules ad nos converte.

7334 Latitudo, misericordiæ tuæ repiet orbem terrarum. Serm. 4. Sup. Miss.

7335 In te, Domina, peccant, non solum qui tibi injuriam irrogant, sed etiam qui te non rogant. In Spec. Virg.

7336 Doce nos sperare majora meritis, quæ meritis majora largiri non desinis.

[7337] Præparabitur in misericordia solium ejus. Isa. 16:5.

[7338] Solium divinæ misericordiæ est Maria, in qua omnes inveniunt solatia misericordiæ. Spec. c. 8.

[7339] Nam sicut misericordiosissimum Dominum, ita misericordiosissimam Dominam habemus. Dominus noster multæ misericordiæ invocantibus se; et Domina nostra multæ misericordiæ invocantibus se.

[7340] In te mihi regni sedem constituam, per te preces exaudiam. Communicasti mihi quod homo sum, communicabo tibi quod Deus sam. Serm. 2, de Ass.

[7341] Hi sunt misericordiosissimi oculi mei, quos ad omnes me invocantes possum salubriter inclinare. Rev.1. 4, c. 53.

[7342] Fili, et istæ lacrimæ peribunt?

[7343] Ex omnipotentia mea, mater reverenda, tibi concessi propitistionem omnium peccatorum, qui devote invocant tuæ piotatis auxiliam, qualicunque modo placeat tibi.

[7344] Mater misericordiæ, tanta est pietas tua, quanta potestas; tam pia ea ad parcendum, quam potens ad impetrandum.

[7345] Quando non compatieris miseris, mater misericordiæ? Aut quando illi opem conferre non poteris, cum sis mater omnipotentæ? Eadem facilitate obtinens quodcumque vis; qua facilitate nostra innotescit miseria. Ap. P. Pep.

[7346] O mater misericordiæ, saturare gloria filli tui, et dimitte reliquias tuas parvulis tuis. In Cant. lib. 5.

[7347] Ne alligaveris peccata mea contra me, qui misericordiam tuam allego contra ea. Absit, ut stent in judicio peccata mea contra misericordiam tuam, quæ omnibus vitiis fortior est. De Roth. Div. c. 18.

[7348] c. 11, p. 1

[7349] Tom. 1. qu. 7.

[7350] Teologia Mariana.

[7351] Virid.1. 1, Probl. 9.

[7352] Virgo benedictissima, sicut impossibile est, ut a te aversus, et a te despectus salvetur, ita ad te conversus et a te respectus impossibile est ut pereat. De Exc. Virg. c. 11.

[7353] Sicut impossibile est, ut illi a quibus Maria oculos suæ misericordiæ avertit, salventur; ita necessarium quod hi, ad quos convertit oculos suos, pro eis advocans, salventur et glorificentur. Part 4, tit. 50.

[7354] Bibl. Mar. c. 60.

[7355] Qui neglexerit illam, morietur in peccatis suis. In Psal. 116.

[7356] Qui te non invocat in hac vita, non perveniet ad regnum Dei. ln Psal. 86.

[7357] A quibus averteris vultum tuum, non erit spes ad salutem.

[7358] Impossibile est aliquem salvari peccatorum, nisi per tuum, O Virgo, auxilium et favorem, quia quos non salvat Dei justitia, salvai sua intercessione Mariæ; misericordia infinita. Ap. celada in Jud. Fig. s. 10.

[7359] In Deprec. ad Virg.

[7360] In Comp. Virg. c. 5.

[7361] Prov. 8:36.

[7362] Facta est quasi navis institoris. Prov. 31:14.

[7363] In mare mundi submergentur omnes illi, quos non suscipit navis ista. De Laud. V.1. 11.

[7364] Nunquam de me audiatur, quasi averser Mariam, erga quam minus bene affici reprobatæ mentis certum existimem judicium. V. Ap. P. Pep. Lez. tom. 7.

[7365] Qui audit me non confundetur. Eccli. 24:30.

[7366] Qui præstat in obsequio tuo, procul fiet a perditione. In Psal. 118.

[7367] Quantumcumque quis fuerit peccator, si Mariæ devotus extiterit nunquam in æternum peribit. Cant. 12, in Matt.

[7368] Ejice ancillam hanc, et filium ejus. Gen. 21:10.

[7369] Qui Dei genitrici perseveranter obsequitur, non multa mora et Deum ipsum in se recipiet. In Salv. Reg. Ex. 5.

[7370] Or. de Laud. V.

[7371] Nec facultas, nec voluntas illi deesse potest. Serm. de Aff.

7372 Impossibile est Deiparam non exaudiri. P. 4, tit. 15, c. 17. v. 4.

7373 Serm. de Aquæd.

7374 Serm. de Nat. B. V.

7375 Salve, inferorum formido, Christianorum spes, certa est fiducia iua. Orat. ad Virg.

7376 Mariæ filii mei genitrici a bonitate mea concessum est propter Incarnati Verbi reverentiam, ut quicumque etiam peccator ad eam cum devota veneratione recurrit, nullo modo rapiatur de dæmone internali. In Man. Spir.

7377 Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuæ, ne perdas cum impiis animam meam. Psal. 25:8, 9.

7378 Sapientia ædificavit sibi domum. Prov. 9:1.

7379 Nunquam peribit qui genitrici Virgini devotus sedulusque extiterit.

7380 Pax multa diligentibus te, Domina; anima eorum non videbit mortem in æternum. In Psal. 118.

7381 Fieri non potest ut pereat qui Mariæ sedulus et umilis cultor extiterit. In Cant. v. Spir. c. 18.

7382 Quanti fuissent, æternaliter condemnati, vel permansissent in desperatione obstinati, nisi beatissima Virgo Maria interpellasset ad filium. Ap. Pep. Lez. tom. 7.

7383 Ap. Crass. to. 1, q. 12.

7384 L. 1, c. 35.

7385 Stellar. Cor. B. V. 1. 12. p. 2. a. 1.

7386 Quid autem de nobis fiet, O sanctissima Virgo, O vita Christianerum. De Zona Virg.

7387 Æternum væ non sentiet ilie pro quo semel oraverit Maria.

7388 Si accedam ad judicium, et matrem misericordiæ in causa mea habeo mecum, quis judicium denegabit propitium? In C. c. 15.

7389 Si judex servum suum damnare voluerit. per manus tuas piiesimas, O Maria, hoc faciat. Hor. Sap.1. 1, c. 16.

7390 In te, Domina, speravi, non confundar in æternum. In Psal. Mar.

7391 P. Alf. Andrada de Bapt. Virg.

[7392] Beata Virgo nn regno purgatorii dominium habet. Serm. 3 de Nom. Mar. a 1, c. 3.

[7393] Cap. 24 v. 8.

[7394] Scilicet visitans et subveniens necessitatibus et tormentis devotorum meorum quia filii sunt. Serm. 3, de Nom. Mar. a. 1, c. 8.

[7395] Vide quam referat Virginem colere, cum cultorum suorum in purgatorii flammis existentium non obliviscatur. Et licet omnibus opem et refrigerram ferat, id tamen præcipue erga suos præstat. Nov. Virg. Umb. c. 15, exc. 86.

[7396] Ego mater omnium qui sunt in purgatorio, quia omnes pœnæ, quæ debentur illis pro peccatis suis, in qualibet hora propter preces meas quodammodo mitigantur. L. 4. Rev. c. 132.

[7397] Cap. 24:8.

[7398] Abyssi, idest purgatorii, adjuvans illas sanctas animas.

[7399] Maria bona, existentibus in purgatorio; quia per eam habent suffragium. Ser. 2, de Nat.

[7400] Tu es mater mea, tu mater misericordiæ, tu consolatio eorum, qui sunt in purgatorio. Lib. 1, Rev. 19.

[7401] Qui sunt in purgatorio guadent, nomine meo audito, quemadmodum æger jacens in lecto, cum audit verbum solatii. Ap. B. Dion. Cant. 1:3, de Laud. V.

[7402] Virginis nomen illarum pœnarum refrigerium est; addit Virgo preces quibus veluti supero quodam rore cruciatus illi magni mitigantur. Nov. cit. c. 15, exc. 86.

[7403] Totum purgatorium fuisse evacuatum.

[7404] Ferunt quippe bonæ notæ auctores, Virginem in cœlum ituram a filio hoc petiisse, ut omnes animas quæ detinebantur in purgatorio, secum ad gloriam ducere posset. Cit. Exc. 86.

[7405] Ab his tormentis liberat beata Virgo, maxime devotos suos Serm. 3. de Nom. Mar. a. 2, c. 3.

[7406] Crediderim omnibus qui in flammis purgantur, Mariæ meritis non solum leviores fuisse redditas illas pœnas, sed et breviores; adeo ut cruciatuum tempus contractum Virginis ope illius sit. Cit. Exc. 86.

[7407] Lib. 3, Ep. 10 et in ord. 50.

[7408] Beatissima Virgo singulis in annis festivitate nativitatis Christi ad purgatorii loca cum multitudine angelorum descendit, et multas inde animas cripit. Etiam in nocte dominicæ resurrectionis solet descendere ad purgatorium pro eductione animarum. Cart. Serm. 2. de Aff.

7409 Facile autem crediderim in quocumque Virginis solemni festo plures animas ab illis pœnis eximi. In loc. cit.

7410 Tom. 2, Div. d. B. Virg. tr. 6, prat. 4.

7411 Materno plane affectu, dum igne purgatorn expiantur, solari, ac in cœlestem patriam obtentu suo quantocius pie creditor afferre. In Festo S. Mar. de M. Carm. 16, Jul.

7412 In lib. de Gest. Vir. ill. Sol. Villar.

7413 Troph. Marian.1. 4, c. 29.

7414 In omnibus requiem quæsivi, et in hereditate Domini morabor. Cap. 24:11.

7415 Et in hæreditate Domini morabor, idest in illis qui sunt hæreditas Domini.

7416 Qui creavit me, requievit in tabernacuio meo; et dixit mihi, in Jacob inhabita, et in Israel hæreditare, et in electis meis mitts radices.

7417 Ego feci in cœlis, ut oriretur lumen indeficiens. Cap. 24 v. 6.

7418 Multi sancti sunt in cœlis, intercessione ejus, qui nunquam, ibi fuissent nisi per eam.

7419 Qui speraverit in illa, porta cœli reserabitur ei.

7420 Reseramentum cœlestis Jerusalem. Orat. de Laud. Virg.

7421 Tibi regni cœlestis claves thesaurique commissi sunt. Cimel. Endol. 1.

7422 Aperi nobis, O Virgo, cœium, cujus claves habes.

7423 Dicitur stella maris, quia sicut navigantes ad portum diriguntur per stellam maris, ita Christiani diriguntur ad gloriam per Mariam. Opusc. 8.

7424 Scala cœlestis, quia per ipsam Deus descendit ad terram, ut per ipsam homines mererentur ascendere ad cœlum.

7425 Ave gratia plena, quod facta sis salutis via, ascensusque ad superos. Serm. 1, de Annunc.

7426 Scire et cognoscere te, O Virgo Deipara, est via immortalitatis; et narrare virtutes tuas est via salutis. In Psal. 85.

7427 P.1, t. 1, c. 35.

7428 Quis salvatur? quis regnat In cœio? illi sunt, pro quibus regina misericordiæ interpellat.

7429 Prov. 8:15.

7430 In Jerusalem potestas mea. C. 24, 25.

7431 Imperando scilicet quod volo, et quos volo, introducendo Ric0.1. 4, de. L. V.

7432 Totum jure possidet filii regnum. L. 3, in Cant. 4.

7433 Cœleste nobis regnum sno interventu, auxiliis, et precibus impetravit. St. Antoninus, p. 4, tit. 15, c. 2, s. 1.

7434 Qui Virgini famulatur, ita securus est de paradiso ac si esset in paradiso. Guerricus Abbas.

7435 Summus honor servire Mariæ, et de ejus esse familia. Etenim ei servire regnare est, est ejus agi frœnis plusquam regnum. De Exc. Virg. c. 9.

7436 Gens quæ non servierit illi, peribit. Gentes destitutæ tantæ matris auxilio, destituuntur auxilio Filii, et totius curiæ cœlestis. Exc. Virg. c. 9.

7437 Advocatam promisit peregrinatio nostra, quæ tanquam judicis mater, et mater misericordiæ, suppliciter et efficaciter salutis nostræ negotia pertractabit. Serm. 1, de Assump.

7438 Eam tu pontem fecisti, quo a mundi fluctibus trajiciens, ad tranquillum portum tunm deveniamus. Orat. in Nat. Deip.

7439 Audite, gentes, qui cupitis regnum Dei, Virginem Mariam honorate et invenietis vitam æternam. In Psalt. Vir.

7440 Peccatores per te, Deum exquisierunt et salvi facti sunt. Serm. de Dorm. Deip.

7441 Et in capite ejus corona stellarum duodecim. Apoc. 12:1.

7442 Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Libano, veni coronaberis de cubilibus leonum, de montibus pardorum. Cant. 4:8.

7443 Et quid est hoc? nisi quia feræ per gratiam et orationes Mariæ sunt stellæ, quæ conveniunt tantæ reginæ. De Laud. Virg. cap. 3.

7444 Nescit homo utrum odio vel amore dignus sit, sed omnia in futurum servantur incerta. Eccli. 9:1, 2.

7445 Domine quis habitabit in tabernacnlo tuo? Psal. 45:1.

7446 Amplectamur Mariæ vestigia, peccatores, et ejus beatis podibus pervolvamur. Teneamus eam fortiter, nec dimittamus, donec ab ea mereemur benedici.

7447 Tantummodo velis salutem nostram, et vere nequaquam saivi ease non poterimus. De Exc. Virg. c. 11.

7448 Necessarium est quod hi ad quos convertit (Maria) oculos suos justificentur, et glorificentur. P. 4, tit. 55.

7449 Beatam me dicent omnes generationes, Luc. 1:48.

7450 Beata jure dicitur, quia omnes ex ea beatificantur. Serm. 3, de Aff.

7451 Tu felicitatis nostræ principium, medium et finis. Serm. in Hypant.

7452 Per te cœlum apertum est, infernus evacuatus, instaurata cœlestis Jerusalem, miseris damnationem expectantibus vita data est. Serm. 4, de Aff. Virg.

7453 Qui operabunt in me, non peccabunt. Qui elucidant me, me vitam æternam habebunt. Eccli. 24:30, 31.

7454 Qui acquirunt gratiam Mariæ, agnoscentur a civibus paradisi et qui habuerit caracterem ejus, adnotabitur in libro vitæ. In Spec.

7455 Qui vicerit. . . . scribam super eum nomen Dei mei, et nomen civitatis Dei mei. Apoc. 3:12.

7456 Gloriosa dicta sunt de te, civitas Dei. Psal. 86:3.

7457 Habens signaculum hoc, cognovit Dominus qui sunt ejus. Tim. 2:10.

7458 Certissimum est signum salutis æternæ consequendæ.

7459 Habentes devotionem hanc, signum est prædestinationis permagnum ad gloriam. P. 2, Ros. c. 11.

7460 Signum sit tibi probabilissimum æternæ salutis, si perseveranter in die beatam virginem in Psalterio salutaveris. P. 44, de Psalt. c. 44.

7461 Omnes domestici ejus vestiti sunt duplicibus. 31:21.

7462 Sicut lætantium omnium habitatio est in te, sancti Dei genitrix.

7463 Lib. 7, Dial. c. 3.

7464 Terra repromissionis Maria lacte et melle manans. Serm. sup. Salv. Reg.

7465 Maria adeo prædita est misericordiæ visceribus ut non tames misericors, sed ipsa misericordia dici promereatur. Serm. 1. de Mat. Dom.

7466 Certe, Domina, cum te aspicio, nihil nisi misericordiam cerno: nam pro miseris mater Dei facta es, et tibi officium miserendi commissum. Undique sollicita es de miseris, misericordia vallaris: solum misereri videris appetere. Stim. Am.

7467 Cujus viscera nunquam desistunt fructum parturire pietatis. Serm. 1, de Assum.

7468 Serm.1, in Dom. p. Ep.

7469 Eccli. 24:19.

7470 Merito dici potest mater olei, nam est mater misericordiæ. Lib. 1, in Cant.

7471 Ne forte non sufficiat nobis et vobis. Matth. 25:9.

7472 Maria plena oleo pietatis. In. Spec. cap. 7.

7473 Gratia plena, et in tantum plena, ut ex tua redundante oleo totus mundus hauriat. Si enim prudentes Virgines oleum acceperunt in vasis cum lampadibus, tu prudentissima Virgo gestasti vas redundans et indeficiens, ex quo, effuso oleo misericordiæ, omnium lampades illuminares.

7474 Ut omnes eam respiciant, omnes ad eam confugiant.

7475 Ad olivam in campis omnes possunt accedere, et accipere fructum ejus. Ad Mariam et justi et peccatores possunt accedere, ut inde misericordiam accipiant. P. 3, tit. 31, c. 4.

7476 O quot sententias flagellorum propter peccata hæc sanctissima Virgo misericorditer revocavit!

7477 Non est tutior locus ad latendum, quam sinus Mariæ. Ibi pauper habet domicilium, ibi infirmus invenit remedium, tristis solatium; ibi turbatus consilium, ibi destitutus acquirit juvamentum.

7478 Ubi non est mulier ingemiscit egens. Eccli. 36:27.

7479 Ingemiscit infirmus, ubi non fuerit hæc sanctissima mater.

7480 Nisi preces Mariæ intervenirent, non esset spes misericordiæ Rev. 1. 6, c. 26.

7481 Non reperitur aliquis sanctorum ita compati in infirmitatibus, sicut mulier hæc beatissima Virgo Maria. P. 4, t. 15. c. 2.

7482 Ubicumque fuerit miseria, tua currit et succurrit misericordia. In Cant. 4, 5.

7483 Itaque, O B. Virgo, ubi miserias invenis, ibi tuas misericordias effundis. Cap. 4, 1, Reg.

7484 Et usque ad futurum sæculum non desinam, ut in habitatione sancta coram ipso ministravi. Eccli. 24:14.

7485 Usque ad futurum sæculum, id est beatorum, non desinam miseriis subvenire, et pro peccatoribus orare.

7486 Plus vult ilia bonum tibi facere et largiri gratiam, quam tu accipere concupiscas. Mar. p. 1, Serm. 5, de Nov. Mar.

7487 Invenies eam in manibus plenam misericordia et liberalitata Loc. cit.

7488 Quin et camelis tuis hauriam aquam, donec cuncti bibant. Gen. 24:19.

7489 Domina, nec puero Abrahæ tantum, sed et camelis tribue de supereffluente hydria tua. Serm. Sup. Miss.

7490 Dives in omnes qui invocant illum. Rom. 10:12.

7491 Largitas Mariæ assimilat largitatem filii sui; dat amplius quam petatur. De Laud. Virg.

7492 Majori devotione orabis pro me, quam ego auderem petere; et majora mihi impetrabis quam petere præsumam.

7493 Noscitis cujus spiritus estis. Luc. 9:55.

7494 Ego vocor mater misericordiæ, et vero misericordia illius misericordem me fecit. Rev.1. 1, c. 6.

7495 Et signum magnum apparuit in cœlo, mulier amicta sole. Apoc. 12:1.

7496 Vestis solem, et vestiris ab eo.

7497 Non discutit merita, sed omnibus exorabilem se præbet. Serm in Sign. Magn.

7498 Cant. 6:9.

7499 Pulchra ut luna quia pulchrum. est benefacere lndignis. Epist. 26.

7500 Quod sol facit in anno, luna facit in mense. Jo. di Minian,1. 1, de Cœl. c. 3.

7501 Velocior nonnumquam est nostra salus, invocato nomine Mariæ, quam invocato nomine Jesu. De Excell. Virg. c. 6.

7502 Si pertimescis ad Deum accedere, respice ad Mariam: non illic invenis quod timeas, genus tuum vides.

7503 Quæ ad eam pertinent, plena omnia pietatis et gratiæ. Denique omnia omnibus facta est, sapientibus et insipientibus copiosissime charitate debitricem se fecit. Omnibus misericordiæ suæ sinum aperit, ut de plenitudine ejus accipiant omnes. Super Sign. Magn.

7504 Circuit quærens quem devoret. Ep. 1, c. 5.

7505 Ipsa semper circuit, quærens quem salvet. Marial. p. 3. Serm. 3.

7506 Patrocinium tuum majus est, quam apprehendi possit, De Zona. Virg.

7507 Quare parcit nunc mundo ipse Deus, qui olim multo his minora peccata acrius punivit? Ap. P. Pepe. Grand, etc.

7508 Totum hoc facit propter B. Virginem, et ejus merita.

7509 Cœlum et terra jamdudum ruissent, si Maria suis precibus non sustentasset.

7510 Securum accessum jam habet homo ad Deum, ubi mediatorem causæ suæ filium habet ante Patrem, et ante filium, matrem, Christus ostendit Patri latus et vulnera, Maria Christo pectus, et ubera. De Laud. Virg.

7511 Una puella sic Deum in sui pectoris capit hospitio, ut pacem terris, salutem perditis, vitam mortuis, pro ipsa domo exigat pensionem. Serm. 140.

7512 Sæpe quos justitia filii potest damnare, mater misericordiæ liberat. Thesaurus Domini est, et thesauraria gratiarum. Salus nostra in manu illius est. Prolog. in Contempl. Virg.

7513 Hæc est nostra salus, vita, spes, consilium, refugium, auxilium nostrum. P. 1, Ser. 6, de Com. Mar.

7514 Adeamus cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, ut gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno. Hebr. 4:16.

7515 Ad thronum gratiæ, scilicet ad Mariam. P. 4, t. 15, c. 14, s. 7.

7516 Clemens indigentibus, pia exorantibus, dulcis diligentibus. O clemens pœnitentibus, pia proficientibus, dulcis contemplantibus. O clemens liberando, O pie largiendo, O dulcis te donando.

Sup. Salv. Reg.

7517 Lib. de Nat. Mar.

7518 Or. de Præs. Deip.

7519 Hist. tit. 4. c. 6.

7520 De Laud. Virg. p. 14.

7521 Dedit tibi, Maria, tota Trinitas nomen post nomen filii tui supra omne nomen; ut in nomine tuo omne genuflectatur, cœlestium, terrestrium, et infernoram. De Laud. v.1. 1, c. 2.

7522 Hoc nomen Mariæ plenum est omni dulcedine ac suavitate divina.

7523 Nomen Jesu . . . Nomen Mariæ jubilus in corde, mel in ore, in aure melos.

7524 Quæ est ista, quæ ascendit per desertum, sicut virgula fumi? O 3:6.

7525 Quæ est ista, quæ progreditur, quasi aurora consurgens? C. 6:9.

7526 Quæ est ista, quæ ascendit de deserto deliciis affluens? 8:5.

7527 Forsitan, quia duice nomen sibi desiderant responderi. De Laud. Virg. c. 2.

7528 Neque enim post filii nomen aliud nomen cœlum et terra nominat, unde tantum gratiæ, spei, et suavitatis piæ mentes concipiant. De Grat. Nov. Test. tr. 6.

7529 Nomen namque Mariæ mirum quid, suave, atque divinum in so continet, et cum convenit amicis cordibus, amicæ suavitatis odorem spiret. Et mirum illud est de nomine Mariæ, ut millies auditum semper audiatur quasi novum. De. grat. Nov. Test. tr. 6.

7530 O magna, O pia, O multum landabilis Maria, tu nec nominari potes quin accendas; nee cogitari, quin recrees affectus diligentium te. Ap. S. Bon. Spec. c. 8.

7531 Mariæ nomen longe melius quam divitiæ, quia melius augustiam relevat. De Laud. Virg. c. 2.

7532 Tunm, Dei genitrix, nomen divinis benedictionibus et gratiis ex omni parte refertum. Orat. in Hyp.

7533 Nomen tuum devote nominari non potest sine nominantis utilitate. Spec. B. Virg. c. 8.

7534 Tanta est virtue tui sacratissimi nominis, semper benigna Virgo Maria, quod mirabiliter emollit duritia cordis humani. Peccator per te respirat in spe veniæ et gratiæ. Idiot. in Alph. Mar. p. 827.

7535 Unguentum nomen tuum. Descendat istud unguentum in animæ preæcordia, S. Maria, quo divinæ gratiæ spiramenta redoleam, De Instit. Virg. c. 13.

7536 O Maria, tui recordatio nominis mœstos lætificat, errantes ad viam salutis revocat, et peccatores ne desperent confortat. In vita Christ, p. 2, c. 86.

7537 Sic Maria suo sanctissimo nomine, quod quinque fitteris constat, confert quotidie veniam Deccatoribus. Stellar, a. 2.

7538 Cant. 1:2.

7539 Gloria nominis ejus oleo effuso comparatur. Oleum ægrotantem sanat, odorem parit, fiammam accendit. In Cant. 1:2.

7540 Peccator es? ad nomen Mariæ confugias; ipsum solum sufficit ad medendum. Nulla pestis, quæ ad nomen Mariæ non cedat continuo. De Land. Virg. p. 14.

7541 Expavescunt cœli reginam spiritus maligni, et diffugiunt, audito nomine sancto ejus, velut ab igne. Serm. 4, p. 3, ad Novit.

7542 Nullus est in hac vita tam frigidus ab amore Dei, qui si invocaverit nomen meum, cum proposito pœnitendi, statim diabolus ab ipso non discedat. Rev. lib. 1, c. 9.

7543 Omnes dæmones verentur hoc nomen, et timent, qui andientes hoc nomen Mariæ, statim relinquunt animam de unguibus, quibus tenebant eam. Rev.1. 2, c. 19.

7544 Angeli boni, audito nomine meo, justis magis propinquant. Ap. Dion. Cart, de Laud. V. cap. ult.

7545 Quomodo corpus enim vitalis signum operationis habet respirationem, ita sanctissimum nomen tuum, O Virgo, quod in ore servorum tuorum versatur assidue, vitæ et auxilii non solum est signum, sed etiam ea procurat et conciliat. De Zona. Virg.

7546 Turris fortissima nomen Dominæ, ad ipsam fugiet peccator, et liberabitur. Hæc defendit quoslibet, et quantumlibet peccatores. De Laud. Virg.1. 11.

7547 Non est in aliquo nomine tam potens adjutorium, nec est aliud nomen datum hominibus post nomen Jesu, ex quo tanta salus refundatur hominibus, sicut nomen Mariæ. De Laud. Virg. c. 2.

7548 Luc. 1:27.

7549 Hoc nomen semper cum castitate conjunctum esse debet. Loc. cit.

7550 Serm.146.

7551 In periculis, in augustiis, in rebus dubiis Mariam cogita, Mariam invoca. Non recedat ab ore, non recedat a corde. Hom. 2, Sup. Miss.

7552 Quicumque invocaverit nomen tuum, et in te sperabit cum proposito emendandi, tria illi dabuntur, contritio peccatorum, eorum satisfactio, et fortitudo ad proficiendum et insuper regnum cœlorum. Rev.1. 1, c. 10.

7553 Tanta enim est in me dulcedo verborum tuorum, quod negare non valeo, quod tu petis.

7554 Nomen Mariæ; est reseratorium portæ cœli. In Deprec ad Virg.

7555 Devota invocatio hujus nominis ducit ad virorem gratiæ in præsenti, et ad virorem gloriæ in futuro. De Laud. Virg.1. 2, c. 2.

7556 Si consolari in omni tribulatione quæritis, accedite ad Mariam, Mariam invocate, Mariam honorate, Mariæ vos commendate; cum Maria gaudete, cum Maris dolete, cum Maria orate, cum Maria ambulate, cum Maria Jesum quærite; cum Maria et Jesu vivere et mort desiderate. Fratres, si ista exercetis, proficietis. Maria pro vobis libenter orabit, et Jesu libenter matrem suam exaudiet. Serm. par. 3, Serm. 2.

7557 Hæc brevis oratio, Jesu et Maria, facills est ad tenendum, dulcis ad cogitandum, fortis ad protegendum.

7558 Beatus vir qui dillgit nomen tuum, Maria!

7559 Gloriosum et admirabile nomen tuum; qui illud rotinent, nom expavescunt in puncto mortis. Spec. B. Virg.

7560 Inter ipsam dulcissimi nominis articulationem. An. 1109.

7561 Dei matris nomen sit mihi ultimus linguæ loquentis motus. Orat 6, ad Ann. Virg.

7562 Propter honorem nominis tui in exitu animæ meæ de hoe muade occurre illi, domina, et suscipe eam. In Psalt. Deip

7563 Consolare eam vultu sancto tuo. Esto illi scala et iter ad paradisum; impetra ei indulgentiam pacis et sedem lucis.

7564 Sustine devotos, suscipe causas reorum ante tribunal Christi.

7565 Ego ex ore altissimi prodivi primogenita anto omnem creaturam. Eccli. 24:5.

7566 Dominus possedit me in initio viarum suarum. Prov. 8:22.

7567 Ep. contr. Pa. Samos.

[7568] In vitam prodiisti, ut orbis universi administram te præberes. Or. 1, de Nat, Virg.

[7569] Sicut per illam homines evaserunt diluvium, sic per istam peccati naufragium. Per illam paucorum facta est liberatio, per istam humani generis salvatio. Serm. de B. Virg.

[7570] Or. de S. Deip.

[7571] Salve quæ sustulisti tristitiam Evæ.

[7572] Ave, Dei hominumque sequestra constituta.

[7573] Ave totius orbis conciliatrix.

[7574] Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius; ipsa conteret caput tuum. Gen. 3:15.

[7575] Cum peccati originalis caput sit diabolus, tale caput Maria contrivit; quia nulla peccati subjectio ingressum habuit in animam Virginis, et ideo ab omni macula immunis fuit. In Gen. 3:15.

[7576] Congruum erat ut B. Virgo Maria, per quam aufertur nobis opprobrium, vinceret diabolum, ut nec ei succumberet ad modicum. In 3, dist. 3, art. 2. q. 2.

[7577] Tu ante omnem creaturam in mente Dei præordinata fuisti, ut Deum ipsum hominem procreares. Serm. 15, cap. 4.

[7578] Sanctitas illis rebus attribuiter, quæ in Deum sunt ordinatæ. 1. p. q. 36. art. 1.

[7579] Neque enim homini præparatur habitatio, sed Deo. 1. Par. 29:1.

[7580] Omnium artifex Deus, filio suo dignum habitaculum fabricaturus, eam omnium gratificantium charismatum copia adornavit. Lib. 2. de Laud. Virg. art. 2.

[7581] Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui gloriosæ Virgnis et matris Mariæ corpus et animam ut dignum filli tui habitaculum effici mereretur, Spiritu Sancto co-operante præparasti, etc.

[7582] Prov. 17:6.

[7583] Providentia singulari perfecit ut sanctissima Virgo ab ipso vitæ suæ principio tam omnino existeret pura quam decebat illam, quæ Christo digna mater existeret. In Men. die. 25. Martii.

[7584] Quod vel paucis mortalium constat esse collatum, fas certe non est suspicari tantæ Virgini esse negatum. Epist. 174.

7585 Nihil unquam alicui sanctoram concessum est, quod a principio vitæ cumulatius non præfulgeat in Maria. Serm. 2, de Ass.

7586 Matris Dei et servorum Dei infinitum est discrimen. Or. 1, de Ass.

7587 Majora in quovis genere privilegia gratiæ deferenda sunt matri Dei, quam servis. 3, p. q. 27, art. 2.

7588 Impotensne fuit sapientia Dei mundum habitaculum condere, remota omni labe conditionis humanæ? Serm. de Conc.

7589 Angelos, aliis peccantibus, a peccato servavit; et matrem ab aliorum peccatis exortem servare non potuit? Loc. cit.

7590 Decens erat ut ea puritate, qua major sub Deo nequit intelligi, Virgo illa niteret, cui Deus Pater unicum sibi filium dare disponebat. Dict. Lib. de Conc.

7591 Cum Virginis una cum corpore animam conservasset, ut eam decebat, quæ Deum in sinu suo exceptura erat; sanctus enim ipse cum sit, in sanctis requiescit. Lib. 4, de Fid. Ort. cap. 15.

7592 Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias. Cant. 2:2.

7593 Nascens de homine factor hominum talem sibi debuit eligere matrem, qualem se decere sciebat. H. 3, Sup. Miss.

7594 Tertio fuit sanctificatio maternalis, et hæc removet omnem culpam originalem. Hæc fuit in B. Virgine; sane Deus talem tam nobilitate naturæ, quam perfectione gratiæ condidit matrem, qualem eum decebat habere suam matrem. Tom. 2, Serm. 51, c. 1.

7595 Talis enim decebat, ut nobis esset pontifex sanctus, innocens, impollutus segregatus a peccatoribus, etc. Heb. 7:26.

7596 Oportuit eum qui peccata venerat tollere, esse a peccatoribus segregatum quantum ad culpam cui Adam subjacuit. 3, p. c. 4, art. 5, ad. 1.

7597 Non de terra, sed de cœlo vas sibi hoc per quod descenderet, Christus elegit, et sacravit templum pudoris. De Inst. Virg. c. 5.

7598 Primus homo de terra terrenus; secundus homo de cœlo cœlestis. 1 C. 15:47.

7599 Non decuit regem gloriæ jacere nisi in vase purissimo et electissimo præ omnibus angelis et hominibus. Rev.1. 1, c. 17.

7600 Maria fuit vas mundum et non mundum; mundum quia totum pulchra; sed non mundum, quia de peccatoribus nata est, licet sine peccato concepta, ut filius meus de ea sine peccato nasceretur. L.

5, c. 13.

[7601] Gloria enim hominis ex honore patris sui, et dedecus filii pater sine honore. Eccli. 3:13.

[7602] Putredo namque humanæ est opprobrium conditionis, a quo cum Jesus sit alienus, natura Mariæ excipitur; caro enim Jesu caro Mariæ est. Serm. de Ass. B. V.

[7603] Caro Christi caro est Mariæ, et quamvis gloria resurrectionis fuerit glorificata, eadem tamen mansit quæ de Maria sumpta est. Loc. cit.

[7604] Una est Mariæ et Christi caro; atque adeo filii gloriam cum matre non tam communem judico, quam eamdem. De L. V.

[7605] Tu sola inventa est digna, ut in tua virginali aula Rex Regum primam sibi mansionem eligeret. In Depr. ad Virg.

[7606] Antequam conciperet, jam idonea erat ut esset mater Dei. Serm. 3.de Nat. Virg.

[7607] B. Virgo cujus viscera meruerunt portare Christum Dominum. Resp. 1, Noct. 2, in Nat. Mar.

[7608] B. Virgo dicitur meruisse portare dominum omnium, non quia meruit ipsum incarnari, sed quia meruit ex gratia sibi data illum puritatis et sanctitatis gradum ut congrue posset esse mater Dei. 3 p. q. 2, a 11, ad 3.

[7609] Singularis ejus sanctitas ex gratia hoc promeruit, quod susceptione Dei singulariter judicata est digna. De Ass. Serm. 2.

[7610] Quæ autem excellentia, quæ perfectio decuit eam ut esset mater Dei. Serm. 3, Nat. Virg.

[7611] Beata autem Virgo fuit electa divinitus, ut esset mater Dei; et ideo non est dubitandum, quin Deus, per suam gratiam, eam ad hoc idoneam reddidit, secundum quod Angelus ad eam dicit. Luc. 1, Invensiti gratiam apud Deum; ecce concipies, etc., 3, p. q. 27, a. 4, in corp.

[7612] Non fuisset idonea mater Dei, si peccasset aliquando, quia ignominia matris ad filium redundasset. Serm. 3, Nat. Virg.

[7613] Excepta itaque S. Virgine Maria, de qua propter honorem Domini nullam prorsus, cum de peccatis agitur, habere volo quæstionem. Inde enim scimus quod ei plug gratiæ collatum fuerit ad vincendum ex omni parte peccatum, quæ concipere et parere meruit eum quem constat nullum habuisse peccatum. De Nat. et grat. contr. Pel. t. 7, c. 36.

[7614] Christus talem matrem sibi elegit, qualem moruit habere, de qua non erubesceret.

[7615] Intra viscera, quæ citra ullam sui dedecoris notam creaverat, habitavit. Or. de Nat. Dom.

7616 Nonne mater ejus dicitur Maria? Matth. 13:55.

7617 Nonne mater ejus extitit peccatrix?

7618 Sapientia ædificavit sibi domum. Prov. 9:1.

7619 Sanctificavit tabernaculum suum altissimus. . . . Adjuvabit eam Deus mane diluculo. Psal. 45:5, 6.

7620 Psal. 92:5.

7621 In malevolam animam non introibit sapientia, nec habitabit in corpora subdito peccatis. Sap. 1:4.

7622 Dei filius in ipsa habitabit, non solum in anima, sed etiam in utero. 3, p. q. 27, a. 4.

7623 Nullam digniorem domum sibi filius Dei ædificavit, quam Mariam, quæ nunquam fuit ab hostibus capta, neque suis ornamentis spoliata.

7624 Quis unquam audivit architectum, qui sibi domum ædifieavit, ejus occupationem et possessionem primo suo inimico cessisse. In Conc. Eph.n. 6.

7625 Qui dixit, honora patrem et matrem ut decretum a se promulgatum servaret, omnem Matri gratiam et honorem impendit. Or. in Hypap.

7626 Sicut honorem matris præcipit ita inhonorationem damnat. Serm. de Ass. B. Virg.

7627 Cum tu Summus Princeps veils habere matrem, illi certe debebis honorem; nimis autem appareret illam legem non bene adimpleri, si in abominationem peccati originalis permitteres illam quæ esse debet habitaculum totius puritatis. Serm. de Conc. B. M.

7628 Christus plus pro redimenda Virgine venit quam pro omni alia creatura.

7629 Duplex est redimendi modus, unus redimendo lapsum, alter redimendo non lapsum, ne cadat.

7630 Nobilius redimitur cui providetur, ne cadat, quam ut lapsus erigatur.

7631 Scot, Acad. tom. 8, art. 3, sect. 3. q. 1. s. 5.

7632 Credendum est enim quod novo sanctificationis genere in ejus conceptionis primordio Spiritus Sanctus eam a peccato originali (non quod infuit, sed quod infuisset) redemit atque singulari gratia preservavit. Serm. 2, de Ass.

7633 Alii liberatorem, Virgo sancta præliberatorem habuit.

7634 Talis agnus, qualis Mater agni; quoniam omnis arbor ex fructu suo cognoscitur. Coll. 3, de Verb. Inc.

7635 O digna digni, formosa pulchri, excelsa altissimi, mater Dei. Ug. de S. Vict. Serm. de Ass.

7636 Lacta, O Maria, Creatorem tuum, lacta eum qui te fecit, et qui talem fecit te, ut ipse fleret ex te. Serm. de Nat. Virg.

7637 Hæc est quæ sola meruit mater, et sponsa vocari. Serm. de Ass.

7638 Ipse spiritus Dei. ipse amor Patris et Fihi corporaliter venit in eam singularique gratia præ omnibus in ipsa requievit, et reginam eœli et terræ fecit sponsam suam. De Exc. Virg c. 4.

7639 Spiritus Sanctus superveniet in te. Luc. 1:35.

7640 Unde dicitur templum Domini, sacrarium Spiritus Sancti, quia concepit ex Spiritu Sancto. Opusc. 8.

7641 Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te. Cant. 4:7.

7642 Tom. 2. Serm. 52.

7643 Serm, de Nat. Virg.

7644 Tota pulchra es, Virgo gloriosissima, non in parte, sed in toto; et macula peccati sive mortalis, sive venialis, sive originalis non est in te. In Contemp. B. V c. 3.

7645 Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus. Cant. 4:12.

7646 Hæc est hortus conclusus, fons signatus ad quam nulli petuerunt doli irrumpere, nec prevalere fraus inimici: sed permansit sancta mente, et corpore. Ep. 10, ad Eust. de Ass.

7647 Hortus conclusus tu es, ad quem deflorandum manus peccatorum nunquam introivit.

7648 Fundamenta ejus in montibus Sanctis; diligit Dominus portas Sion super omnia tabernacula Jacob. . . . Homo natus est in ea et ipse fundavit eam Altissimus. Psal. 86:1, 2, 5.

7649 Mutæ filiæ congregaverunt divitias, tu supergressa es universas. Prov. 31:29.

7650 Adolescentularum non est numerus. Una est columba mea, perfecta mea, una est matris suæ. Cant. 6:8.

7651 Bene gratia piena dicitur, quia cæteris per partes præstatur, Mariæ vero simul se tota infundit plenitudo gratiæ. Serm. de Ass. B.V.

7652 Anima B. Virginis ita fuit plena quod ex ea refundit gratia in carnem, ut de ipsa conciperet Deum. Opusc. 8.

7653 Simul in ea collecta est gratiæ plenitudo, quia ab exordio suæ conceptionis aspersione Spiritus Sancti tota deitatis gratia est superfusa. Lib. de Panib. cap. 10.

7654 A Deo electam et præelectam totam eam rapturus erat sibi Spiritus Sanctus. Serm. de Ann.

7655 De Arcan.1. 7, c. 18.

7656 L. 8, Exerc. 8.

7657 Lib. 2, Cant. ex to.

7658 De V. Conc. c. 7, s. 7.

7659 De pecc. orig. c. ult.

7660 Umbra. Virg. c. 10, exc. 28.

7661 P. 8, d. 2, q. 2, a. 3.

7662 Man. to. 3, tr. 5, c. 6, s. 2.

7663 To. 3, de pecc. c. 7.

7664 Omnes in quo (Ada) peccaverunt. Rom. 5.

7665 In Exam. Theol.

7666 1, 2, q. 2, do pecc.

7667 Piet. Lugd. n. 29.

7668 Disc. Th. de imm. Conc.

7669 Qu. Prod. ad Trut.

7670 C. xii. 49, 55.

7671 Suscipe me non ex Sara, sed ex Maria, ut incorrupta sit virgo, sed virgo per gratiam ab omni integra labe peccati. Serm. 22, in Psal. 118.

7672 Nec serpentis venenosi affiatibus infecta est. Hom. 1.

7673 Immaculata, et ab omni peccati labe alienissima. Tom. 5, or. ad Dei Gen.

7674 Ave, gratia plena; quibus ostendit ex integro (nota ex Integro) iram primæ sententiæ exclusam, et plenam bencdictionis gratiam restitutam. Serm. 11, in Nat. Dom.

7675 Nubes illa non fuit in tenebris, semper in luce. In Psal. 77.

7676 Nec sustinebat justitia, ut illud vas electionis communibus laxaretur injuriis, quoniam plurimum a cæteris distans natura communicabat non culpa. Lib. de Carn. Christi oper. de Nativ.

7677 Qui antiquam virginem sine probro condidit, ipse et secundam sine nota et crimine fabricatus est. Or. de Deip.

7678 Virginem ideo dici immaculatam, quia in nullo corrupta est. In Ep. Ap. Syn. to. 3, p. 307.

7679 Constat eam aboriginali peccato fuisse immunem. Cont. Disp. De Virg. Mar.

7680 Ad hunc paradisum serpens aditum non habuit Or. 2, de Nat. Mar.

7681 Caro Virginis ex Adam sumpta, maculas Adam non admisit. Serm. de Ass. V.

7682 Hæc est incorrupta terra illa, cui benedixit Dominus, ab omni propterea peccati contagione libera. In Psal. 101.

7683 Domina nostra fuit plena gratia præveniente in sua sanctificatione, gratia scilicet præservativa contra fœditatem originalis culpæ, Serm. 2, de Ass.

7684 Non enim credendum est, quod ipse filius Dei voluerit nasci ex Virgine, et sumere ejus carnem, quæ esset maculata aliquo originali peccato. Tom. 3, Serm. 49.

7685 Ab ipsa conceptione fuit in benedictionibus præventa. Serm. de Annunt.

7686 Gratiam singularem, O dulcissima Virgo, invenisti, quia fuerunt in te ab originali labe præservatio, etc. C. 6.

7687 De Prœf. Virg. q. 6, a. 4.

7688 Aucta rursus. et propagata fuit pietas hæc et cultus erga Deiparam . . . ita ut, accedentibus academiis ad hanc sententiam, jam fere omnes Catholici eam complectantur.

7689 Tom. 5, p, 2,1. 14, c. 2, n. 10.

7690 In. adn. ad. Est. 1. 2, Dist. 3, s. 2.

[7691] Ep. Decr. 4, c. 2.

[7692] In Sede Apostolica extra maculam semper est catholica servate religio. Decr. 24, 9, 1, c. In sede.

[7693] Serm. 95, et 113.

[7694] Ep. ad. Can. Lugd.

[7695] Ecclesia celebrat nativitatem B. Virginis; non autem celebratur festum in Ecclesia nisi pro aliquo sancto; Ergo B. Virgo fuit in utero sanctificata. 2, p. q. 27, a. 2.

[7696] Psal. 71:6.

[7697] Virgo sancta totam sibi hauserat Spiritus Sancti gratiam. In. Cat. D. Ph. in 1. Luc.

[7698] C. 24:16.

[7699] Totum teneo in plenitudine quod alii sancti tenet in partes. Serm. 3, de B. V.

[7700] Virgo sanctific ata fuit in utero super omnes sanctos et angelos.

[7701] Tom. 3, Lez. 136.

[7702] Ap. P. Pepe. Loc. cit.

[7703] Serm. 2.

[7704] Unicuique a Deo datur gratia, secundum hoc ad quod eligitur. 3, p. q. 27, a. 5, ad. 1.

[7705] Qui et idoneos nos fecit ministros Novi Testamenti. 2 Cor. 3:6

[7706] Regula firma est in sacra theologia, quod quandocumque Deus aliquem eligit ad aliquem statum, omnia bona illi dispenset, quæ illi statui necessaria sunt et illum copiose decorant. Serm. 10, a 2, c. 1.

[7707] Virgo fuit electa, ut esset mater Dei, et ideo non est dubitandum quia Deus per suam gratiam eam ad hoc idoneam reddidit. Loc. cit. art. 4.

[7708] In B. Virgine fuit perfectio quasi dispositive. per quam reddebatur idouea ad hoc quod esset mater Christi; et hæc fuit perfactio sanctificationis. Cit. q. 27. a. 5, ad 2.

[7709] 3, p. q. 7, a. 10, ad 1.

7710 Virtus divina, licet possit facere aliquid majus et melius, quam sit habitualis gratia Christi; non tamen posset facere quod ordinaretur ad aliquid majus quam sit unio personalis ad filium unigenitum a Patre, cui unioni sufficienter correspondet talis mensura gratiæ, secundum definitionem divinæ sapientiæ. D. q. 7, a. 12, ad 2.

7711 Potentiam naturalem ad recipiendum posse totam impleri, non autem potentiam obedientiæ. S. Th. q. 29, de Verit. a. 3, ad 3.

7712 Beata Virgo est plena gratia, non ex parte ipsius gratiæ; quia non habuit gratiam in summa excellentia qua potest haberi, nec ad omnes effectus gratiæ; sed dicitur fuisse plena gratia per comparationem ad ipsam: quia scilicet habebat gratiam sufficientem ad statum illum, ad quem erat a Deo electa, ut esset mater unigeniti ejus. D. q. 7, a. 10, ad 1.

7713 Et igitur dignitas matris Dei regula, per quam metiendum, quic-quid Virgini ab eo collatum credimus.

7714 Psal. 86:1.

7715 Diligit Dominus portas Sion super omnia tabernacula Jacob. 36:2.

7716 Et erit in novissimis diebus præparatus mons domus Domini in vertice montium, et elevabitur super coiles, et fluent ad eum omnes gentes. Isa. 2:2.

7717 Mons quippe in vertice montium, quis altitudo Mariæ super omnes sanctos refulsit. L. 1, in 1, Reg. c. v.

7718 Mons in quo beneplacitum est Deo habitare in eo.

7719 Siderum rapit positionem, ut sint quasi non sint; sic Virgo mes ita singulorum. et omnium antecedit. Serm. de Ass.

7720 Neque enim decebat Deum alia mater quam Virgo neque Virginem alius filius quam Deus.

7721 Ipsa in nostra salute communem cum Christo effectum obtinuit.

7722 Omnium salutem desideravit. quæsivit, obtinuit; imo omnium salus per ipsam effecta. C. 26, in Cant.

7723 C. 24:25.

7724 Ibid.

7725 Ego mater pulchræ dilectionis, et timoris, et agnitionis, et sanctæ spei.

7726 Magnifica gratiæ inventricem, mediatricem salutis, restauratricem sæculorum. Hæc mihi de illa cantat Ecclesia, et me eadem docuit decantare. Epist. 175, ad Canonic. Lugd.

7727 Bene plena, quia cæteris sanctis datur gratia per partes; Mariæ vero tota se infudit plenitudo gratiæ. Serm. de Ass.

7728 Ave gratia plena, propterea Deum inter et homines mediatrix intercedens.

7729 Quomodo non est Maria plena gratia, quæ effecta est paradisi scala, interventrix mundi, Dei atque hominum verissima mediatrix. Serm, de ann. B. V.

7730 Pura sanctitas pectoris ejus, omnis creaturæ puritatem, sanctitatemque transcendens, promeruit ut reparatrix perditi orbis dignissima floret. De Excell. Virg. c. 9.

7731 Utraque creatura per hanc reparatur, et angelorum ruina per hanc resturata est, et natura humana reconciliata. In Cant. 4.

7732 Cuncta per hanc Virginem in statum pristinum revocata sunt et restaurata. De Exc. Virg. c. 11.

7733 Father La Colombiere. Serm. 31.

7734 Eccli. 24:19.

7735 Eccli. 24:23.

7736 Serm. 1, in Ann.

7737 Quæ est ista, quæ ascendit de deserto deliciis affiuens, innixa super dilectum suum? Cant. 8:5.

7738 Hoc est quæ ascendit, ita ut inhæret Dei Verbo, sicut vitis propago? Ap. Seg. Pred. 40, dell' Ann.

7739 Fuit etiam gratia plena quantum ad refusionem ad omnes somines.

7740 Sed quando quis haberet tantum, quod sufficeret ad salutem omnium, hoc esset maximum; et hoc fuit in Christo et beata Virgine. Opusc. 8.

7741 Et de plenitudine ejus nos omnes accepimus. C. 1:16.

7742 Gratia plena, de cujus plenitudine accipiunt universi.

7743 ita ut nulius sit. qui de plenitudine gratiæ Virginis non sit particeps.

7744 Quis unquam reperitur cui Virgo propitia non sit? Quis ad quem ejus misericordia non se extendat?

7745 Plenus aquæductus, ut accipiant cæteri de plenitudine, sed non plenitudinem ipsam.

7746 Intueamini qnanto devotionis affectu a nobis eam voluerit honorari, qui totius boni plenitudinem posuit in Maria; ut proinde si quid spei nobis est, si quid gratiæ, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare. Serm. de Aquæd.

7747 Incidi præcepit aquæductus illorum. Judith 7:6.

7748 Udo cessa de ludo; lusisti satis; Udo.

7749 Cant. 2:10.

[7750] Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam; et obliviscere populum tuum, et domum patris tui. Psal. 44:11.

[7751] 3 p. q. 19, a. 3.

[7752] Sanctificari per propium actum est perfectior modus. Ergo credendum est hoc modo fuisse sanctificatam Virginem. To. 2, in 3 p. D. 4, 5, 8.

[7753] 1 p. q. 63, a. 5, et q. 95, a. 2.

[7754] Ex ea accepit humanam Naturam, et ideo præ cæteris majorem debuit a Christo gratiæ plenitudinem obtinere. 3 p. q. 27, a. 5.

[7755] Unde fit ut singulare jus habeat ad dona filii sui. T. 2, in 3, p. D. 1, 5, 2.

[7756] Serm. Ang. c. 14.

[7757] Serm. Ang. c. 14.

[7758] De Form. et Mor. B. M.

[7759] De Vir. 1. 1.

[7760] Pro eo quod in contemptum locus esset venturus . . . Virgines quæ conclusæ erant, procurrebant ad Oniam.

[7761] Tertio anno oblata est in templo. Serm. de Laud. Virg.

[7762] Anna haud cunctata est eam at templum adducere, ac Deo offerre. Or. de Nat. Chr.

[7763] De Oblat. Deip.

[7764] Cant. 7:1.

[7765] Magnam quoqne festivitatem fecit Deus cum angelis in deductione suæ sponsæ ad templum. Marial. p. 4, Serm. 1.

[7766] Quia nullus unquam Deo gratior, usque ad illud tempus ascendit. Loc. cit.

[7767] Abi ergo, oh Domina Mater Dei, in atria Domini, exultans et expectans Sancti Spiritus adventum et unigeniti Filli conceptionem Do Oblat Virg.

[7768] Gen. 8:9.

7769 Congratulamini mihi omnes qui diligitis Dominum, quis, cum assem parvula, placui altissimo. In 2, Resp. 1, Noct, in Fest. S. M. ad Niv.

7770 Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.

7771 Lib. 1, de Inst. Virg.

7772 Maria seipsam perpetuis Dei obsequiis obtulit et dedicavit. Mar. p. 4, Serm. 1.

7773 Cant. 2:16.

7774 Ad templum adducitur, ac deinde in domo Dei plantata, atque per spiritum saginata, instar olivæ frugiferæ virtutum omnium domicilium efficitur. L. 4, de Fid. c. 15.

7775 Or. 1, de Nat. Virg.

7776 De Fid. Ort.1. 4, c. 15.

7777 De Form. et Mor. B. M.

7778 De illa appres. l'ist. della vita di Maria del P. Gius. de Gesu to Maria. Carm. Scalz0.1. 2, c. 1.

7779 Vita Christi. c. 3.

7780 Cum pater meus et mater mea dimiserunt me in templo, statui in corde meo habere Deum in patrem, et sæpe cogitabam quid posem facere illi gratum.

7781 Statui servare virginitatem; nihil unquam possidere in mundo; et omnem voluntatem meam Deo commisi.

7782 Diliges Dominum Deum tuum.

7783 L. 2. et. 1. 3. c. 8.

7784 Vox turturis audita est in terra nostra. Cant. 2:12.

7785 Emitte agnum, Domine, dominatorem terræ. Isa. 16:1.

7786 Rorate cœli desuper, et nubes pluant justum. Id. xlv. 8.

7787 Utinam dirumperes cœlos, et descenderes. Id. lxiv. 1.

7788 Quæ est ista quæ ascendit per desertum sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus myrrhæ. et thuris et universi pulveris pigmentaril. Cant. 3:6.

7789 Vere virgo erat hortus deliciarum in quo consita sunt universe florum genera, et odoramenta virtutum. Serm. de Ass.

7790 Ap. Canis. 1. 1. de B. V. c. 13.

7791 Nec in terris locus dignior utero virginali.

7792 Ultima gratia perfectionis est præparatio ad Filium Dei concipiendum. P. 4, tit. 15, c. 6.

7793 Væ tempori illi, in quo non amavi te.

7794 Qui autem se exaltaverit, humiliabitur; et qui se humili averit, exaitabitur. Matt. 23:12.

7795 Adolescentularum non est numerus. Una est columba mea perfecta mea. Cant. 6:7, 8.

7796 Dum esset Rex in accubitu suo, nardus mea dedit odorem suum. Cant. 1:11.

7797 Nardus est herba parva, et significat B. Virginem, quæ dedit humilitatis odorem; qui odor usque ad cœlum ascendit, et in cœlo accumbentem fecit quasi evigilare, et in utero suo quiescere. P. 4, tit. 15, c. 21, s. 2.

7798 Noluit carnem sumere ex ipsa, non dante ipsa. In Cant. 3.

7799 Ave gratia plena; Dominus tecum; benedicta tu in mulieribus Luc. 1:28.

7800 Quæ cum audisset, turbata est in sermone ejus, et cogitabat qualis esset ista salutatio.

7801 Si dixisset, oh Maria, tu es major ribalda quæ est in mundo, non ita admirata fuisset; unde turbata fuit de tantis laudibus. Serm. 35, de Am. Inc. p. 3.

7802 Nolui laudem meam, sed solius Datoris et Creatoris. L. 1, Rev. c. 23.

7803 Sicut Christus per angelum voluit confortari, ita per angelum de buit Virgo animari.

7804 Ne timeas, Maria, invenisti gratiam apud Deum. Luc. 1:30.

7805 Ecce concipies, et paries filium, et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum. Luc 1:31.

7806 Expectat angelus responsum, expectamus et nos, oh Domina, verbum miserationis, quos miserabiliter premit sententia damnationis. Hom. 4, Sup. Miss.

7807 Ecce offertur tibi pretium salutis nostræ; statim liberabi mur, siconsentis. Loc. cit.

7808 Ipse quoque Dominus, quantum concupivit decorem tuum, tantum desiderat et responsionis assensum, in qua nimirum proposuit salvare mundum. Hom. 4, Sup. Miss.

7809 Responde jam Virgo sacra, vitam quid tricas mundo? Serm. 21, de Temp.

7810 Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum. Luc. 1:38.

7811 O Fiat potens! O Fiat efficax! O Fiat super omni fiat venerandum! Conc. 3, de Ann.

7812 O humilitas, angusta sibi, ampla Divinitati! Insufficiens sibi, sufficiens ei quem non capit orbis!

7813 Quanta humilitatis virtus, cum tanta puritate, cum innocentia tanta, imo cum tanta gratia plenitudine?

7814 Unde tibi humilitas, et tanta humilitas O Beata?

7815 Super astra Dei exaltabo solium meum, et similis ero altissimo. Isa. 14:13.

7816 Digna plane quam respiceret Dominus, cujus decorem concunpisseret Rex, cujus odore suavissimo ab æterno illo Paterni sinus attraheretur accubitu.

7817 Beata Virgo plus meruit, dicendo humiliter: Ecce ancilla Domini, quam simul mereri possent omnes puræ creaturæ. Mar. 12, p. 5, p. 2.

7818 Hom. 1, Sup. Miss.

7819 Maluit Deus de Virgine incarnari propter humilitatem, quam propter aliam quamcumque virtutem.

7820 Unde promerui tantam gratiam, nisi quia cogitavi et scivi nihil a me esse vel habere? L. 2, Rev. c. 35.

7821 Quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ . . . fecit mihi magna qui potens est. Luc. 4. 48, 49.

7822 Non ait, respexit virginitatem, innocentiam; seu humilitatem tantum.

7823 Facta est Mariæ humilitas scala cœlestis, per quam Deus descendit ad terras. Sup. Magn.

7824 Ultima gratia perfectionis est præparatio ad Filium Dei conci, piendum; quæ præparatio fuit per profundam humilitatem. p. 5, tit. 15, c. 6, et 8.

7825 Egredietur virga de radice Jesse, et fios de radice ejus ascendet. Isa. 11:1.

7826 De radice ejus, humilitas cordis intelligitur.

7827 Nota, quod non ex summitate, sed de radice ascendet fios.

7828 Averte oculos tuos, quia ipsi me avolare fecerunt. Cant. 6:4.

7829 Unde avolare, nisi a sinu Patris in uterum matris?

7830 Ita illius oculi humillimi Deum tenuerunt, ut suavissima quadam violentia ipsummet Dei Patris Verbum in uterum suum Virgo attraxerit. In c. 14, Gen. sect. 1.

7831 Quam pulchra es, amica mea, quam pulchra esi oculi tui columbarum. Cant. 4:1.

7832 Ubinam terrarium tam speciosa Virgo inveniri posset, quæ Regem cœlorum oculis caperet, et vinculis charitatis pia violentia captivum traheret. De Grat. Nov. Test. tr. 6.

7833 Tract. de L. V.

7834 Or. de Laud. Deip.

7835 Or. de Dorm. Deip.

7836 Nihil tibi, Domina est æqualis; omne enim quod est, aut supra te est, aut infra; quod supra, solus Deus; quod infra, est omne quod Deus non est. Ap. Pelb. Stellar. 1. p. 3, a. 2.

7837 Tanta est perfectio Virginis ut soli Deo cognoscenda reservatur To. 2, Serm. 51, a. c. 3. 2.

7838 Satis fuit de ea dicere; de qua natus est Jesus.

7839 Quid ultra requiris? Sufficit tibi quod mater Dei est. Ubi ergo totum erat, pars scribenda non fuit. Conc. 2, de Nat. Virg.

7840 Hoc solum de S. Virgine predicari, quod Dei mater sit, excedit omnem altitudinem, quæ post Deum dici vel cogitari potest. De. Exc. Virg. c. 4.

7841 Si cœli Reginam, si angelorum Dominam, vel quodlibet aliud protuleris, non assurges ad hunc honorem, quo prædicatur Dei genitrix. L. de Pan. c. 31.

7842 Quanto aliquid magis appropinquat principio in quolibet genere tanto magis participat effectum illius principii. Beata autem virgo Maria propinquissima Christo fuit secundum humanitatem; quia ex ea accepit humanam naturam; et ideo præcæteris majorem debuit a Christo gratiæ plenitudinem obtinere. 3 p. q. 27, a. 5.

7843 Dignitas matris est alterioris ordinis, pertinet enim quodammode ad ordinem unionis hypostaticæ; illum enim intrinsece respicit, et cum illa necessariam coujunctionem habet. To. 2, in. 3, p. d. 2, s. 2.

7844 Post hypostaticam conjunctionem non est alia tam vicina, ut unio matris Dei cum filio suo. L. 2, de Laud. V.

7845 Est suprema quædam conjunctio cum persona infinita. 1, p. q. 25, a. 6.

7846 Immediate post esse Deum, est esse matrem Dei. Super Miss. c. 180.

7847 Magis Deo conjungi, nisi fieret Deus, non potuit.

7848 Quod fœmina conciperet et pareret Deum oportuit eam elevari ad quamdam æqualitatem divinam, per quamdam infinitatem gratiarum. To. 1, Serm. 61, c. 16.

7849 Quarto modo inest Deus creaturæ, scilicet Mariæ Virgini, per identitatem, quia idem est quam illa. Serm. 1, de Nat. Virg.

7850 Hic taceat et contremiscat omnis creatura, et vix audeat aspicere tantæ dignitatis immensitatem. Habitat Deus in Virgine, cum qua unius naturæ habet identitatem. Loc. cit.

7851 Dignitas matris Dei suo genere est infinita. To. 2, in 3, p.d. 18,1. 4

7852 Cum enim gratia habitualis sit donum creatum, confiteri oportet quod habeat essentiam finitam. Est cujuslibet creaturæ determinata capacitatis mensura, quæ tamen divinæ potestati non præjudicat, quin possit aliam creaturam majoris capacitatis facere. Opusc. 2, Comp. Theol. c. 215.

7853 Virtus divina, licet possit facere aliquid majus et melius quam sit habitualis gratia Christi, non tamen posset facere quod ordinaretur ad aliquid majus quam sit unio personalis ad filium unigenitum a patre. 3. p. q. 7, a. 12, ad 2.

7854 B. Virgo ex hoc quod est mater Dei, habet quamdam dignitatem infinitam, ex bono infinito quod est Deus. Et ex hac parte non potest fieri melius. 1, p. q. 25, a. 6, ad 4.

7855 Utique habet quandam infinitatem esse matrem infiniti. Conc. 3, de Nat. Mar.

7856 Status maternitatis Dei erat summus status, qui puræ creature dari posset. To. 3, Serm. 6, a. 3, c. 1.

7857 Dominus B. Virgini summum donavit, cujus capax fuit pura creatura, scilicet Dei maternitatem. L. 1, de Land. Virg. c. 178.

7858 Esse matrem Dei est gratia maxima puræ creaturæ conferibilis. Ipsa est quam majorem facere non potest Deus, majus cœlum, majorem quam matrem Dei facere non potest. Spec. B. V. Lect. 10.

7859 Luc. 1:49.

7860 Non explicat quænam hæc magna fuerint, quia inexplicabilia. Conc. 3, de Nat. Virg.

7861 Propter hanc totus mundus factus est. Serm. 7, in Salv. Reg.

7862 Dispositione tua, Virgo sanctissima, perseverat mundus, quem et tu cum Deo ab initio fundasti. Ap. P. Pep. Lect. 371.

7863 Prov. 8:30.

7864 Propter singularissimam dilectionem ad hanc Virginem præservavit. To. 1, Serm. 61. c. 8.

7865 In Off. Ass. B. V.

7866 Beatissima Virgo gratia fuit plena, quia omnes gratias generales et speciales omnium creaturarum in summo habuit. Bibl. Ma. in Luc. 13.

7867 Omnes angelos et omnia quæ creata sunt excessit pulchritudo tua. L. 1. Rev. c. 51.

7868 Tanta erat sua gratia ut non solum in se virginitatem servaret, sed etiam si quos inviseret, integritatis donum insigne conferret. De Inst. Virg. c. 7.

7869 Gratia sanctificationis non solum repressit in Virgine motus illicitos, sed etiam in aliis efficaciam habuit; ita ut quamvis esset pulchra corpore a nullo concupisceretur. In 3 Dist. disp. 2, q. 2, a. 2

7870 Unde fit, ut singulare jus habeat ad dona filii suf. To. 2, m 8 p. d. 1, s. 2.

7871 Tu autem quæ materna in Deum auctoritate polles, etiam lis qum anormiter peccant eximiam reconciliationis gratiam concilias. Now enim potes non exaudiri cum Deus tibi ut veræ ac iutemerat matri suæ in omnibus morem gerat. De Zona Virg.

7872 Serm. de Ass.

7873 Non tantum sibi te fecit, sed te angelis dedit in instaurationem, hominibus in reparationem, dæmonibus in hostem nam per te Deus homini pacificator, diabolus vincitur et conteritur. V. in Prol Cont. Virg.

7874 P. 3, Reg. 34.

7875 1 Par.

7876 Felix illa domus quam mater Dei visitat.

7877 1:39.

7878 Et intravit in domum Zachariæ, et salutavit Elisabeth.

7879 Et facta est vox salutationis tuæ in auribus meis, exultavis in gaudio infami in utero meo.

7880 Cum B. Virgo salutavit Elisabeth, vox salutationis per aures ejus ingrediens ad puerum descendit, virtute cujus salutationis puef Spiritum Sanctum accepit. Part 7, Serm. 4.

7881 Prol. Cont. Virg. c. 1.

7882 De Trin.

7883 Maria sic gratia plena dicitur, quod in illa gratiæ thesaurus reconderetur.

7884 Maria est thesaurus quia in ca, ut in gazophylacio, reposuit Dominus omnia dona gratiarum; et de hoc thesauro largitur ipse larga stipendia suis militibus et operariis. De Laud. Virg.1. 4.

7885 Simile est regnum cœlorum thesauro abscondito in agro, quem qui invenit homo, vadit et vendit universa quæ habet, et emit agrum illum. Matth. 13:14.

7886 Ager iste est Maria, in qua thesaurus Dei Patris absconditua est. Spec. c. 7.

7887 Totius boni plenitudinem posuit in Maria, ut proinde si quid spec in nobis est, si quid gratiæ, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redun, dare. Serm. de Aquæd.

7888 Eccli. 24:25.

7889 In manibus tuis omnes thesauri miserationum Dei.

7890 Omnia bona quæ illis summa majestas decrevit facere, tuis manibus decrevit commendare; commissi quippe tibi sunt thesauri et ornamenta gratiarum. In Cor. Virg. cap. 15.

7891 Nemo qui salvus fiet, nisi per te; nemo donum Dei suscipit, nisi per te. Serm. de Zona Virg.

7892 Ne timeas, Maria invenisti enim gratiam apud Deum. Luc. 1:39.

7893 Ne timeas, quia Invenisti. Non rapuisti, ut primus angelus; non perdidisti, ut primus parens; non emisti ut Simon Magus; sed invenisti, quia quæsivisti. Invenisti gratiam increatam et in illa omnem creaturam. In Marial. c. 237.

7894 Hanc gratiam accepit Virgo salutem sæculis redditura. Serm. 3, de Ann.

7895 Invenisti gratiam, quantam? quantam superius dixerat, plenam et vere plenam, quæ largo imbre totam funderet, et infunderet creaturam. Serm. 142.

7896 Sicut sol factus est, ut illiuminat totam mundam; sic Maria facts est, ut misericordiam impetret toti mundo. De Laud. Virg. lib. 7.

7897 A tempore quo Virgo mater concepit in utero verbum Dei, quandam ut sic dicam, jurisdictionem obtinuit in omni Spiritus Sancti processione temporali; ita ut nulla creatura aliquam a Deo obtinuit gratiam, nisi secundum ipsius piæ matris dispensationem. Serm. 61, Tract. 1, Art. 8.

7898 Cupientes invenire gratiam, quæramus inventricem gratiæ, quæ quia semper invenit, frustrari non potest. De Laud. Virg.1. 2, p. 5.

7899 Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus; quia quod quærit, invenit, et frustrari non potest. Serm. de Aquæd.

7900 Quia sic est voluntas ejus, qui totum nos habere voluit per Mariam. Loc. cit.

7901 Prov. 8:18, 21.

7902 Divitiæ salutis penes Virginem nostris usibus reservantur. Christus in Virginis utero pauperum gazophylacium collocavit; inde pauperes locupletati sunt. In. Alleg. utr. Test. c. 24. Eccli.

7903 Ad hoc enim data est ipsa mundo quasi aquæductus, ut per ipsam a Deo ad homines dona cœlestia jugiter descenderent.

7904 Ad quid nisi, ut, adveniente jam Spiritu plena sibi, eodem superveniente, nobis quoque superplena et superffiuens fiat? Serm. 2. de Ass.

7905 Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam, en hauriet salutem a Domino, Prov. 8:35.

7906 Propterea tanto tempore humano generi fluenta gratiæ defuerunt quod necdum intercederet is tam desiderabilis aquæductus. Serm. de Aquæd.

7907 Ego civitas refugii iis, qui ad me confugiunt; accedite, et gratiarum dona affluentissime haurite. Serm. 2, de Dorm. B. V.

7908 Per te hæreditamus misericordiam miseri, ingrati gratiam, veniam peccatores, sublimia infirmi, cœlestia terreni, mortales vitam, et patriam peregrini. Serm. de Ass. B. V.

7909 L. 3, c. 12.

7910 Non ablit quasi incredula de oraculo, sed quasi læta pro vote festina præ gaudio, religiosa pro officio. In. c. 1, Luc.

7911 Mansit autem Maria cum illa quasi mensibus tribus; et reversa est in domum suam. Luc. 1:56.

7912 Quid eam ad officium charitatis festinare cogebat, nisi charitas quæ in corde fervebat? Spec. c. 54.

[7913] Pius vult illa bonum tibi facere, et largiri gratiam, quam tu accipere concupiscas. Mar. p. 1, Serm. 5.

[7914] In te, Domina, peccant non solum qui tibi injuriam irrogant, sed etiam qui te non rogant. In Spec. Virg.

[7915] Maria thesaurus Domini est, et thesauraria gratiarum ipsius. Donis specialibus ditat copiosissime servientes sibi. In Prol. Cant. B. V. c. 1.

[7916] Tanta est ejus benignitas, quod nulli formidandum est ad eam accidere. Tantaque misericordia, quod ab ea nemo repellitur.

[7917] Omnes invito, omnes expecto, omnes desidero, nullum peccatorem despicio.

[7918] Et factum est, ut audivit salutationem Mariæ Elisabeth, exultavit infans in utero ejus; et repleta est Spiritu Sancto Elisabeth. Luc. 1:41.

[7919] Vide quanta virtus sit verbis Dominæ, quia ad eorum pronuntiationem confertur Spiritus Sanctus. Tract, de Vit. Christ.

[7920] Gaudet filius, orante matre, quia omnia quæ nobis precibus suæ genetricis evictus donat, ipsi matri se donasse putat. Ap. Baldi Giard di Mar. nella Pref.

[7921] Tu autem materna in Deum anctoritate pollens, etiam iis, qui enormiter peccant, eximiam remissionis gratiam concilias. Non enim potes non exaudiri, cum Deus tibi ut veræ et intemeratæ matri in omnibus morem gerat. Or. de Dorm. V.

[7922] Vinum non habent . . . Quid mihi et tibi est mulier? nondum venit hora mea. Jo. 2:3, 4.

[7923] Et licet ita responderit, maternis tamen votis obtemperavit. S. Jo. Chrys. Hom. 21, in Joan.

[7924] Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno. Hebr. 4:16.

[7925] Serm. de Ded. Eccl.

[7926] Spiritus Sanctus tota sua dulcedine me penetrando, tam gratiosam effecit, ut omnis qui per me gratiam quærit, ipsam inveniat. Ap. Canis.1. 1, c. 13.

[7927] Velocior cat nounumquam salus nostra, invocato nomine Mariæ, quam invocato nomine Jesu. De Exc. Virg. c. 6.

[7928] Misericordiæ januam aperi nobis, benedicta Deipara tu enim es salus generis humani.

[7929] L. 1, P. 1, c. 5.

7930 Et postquam impleti sunt dies purgationis ejus, secundum legem Moysi, tulerunt illum in Jerusalem, ut sisterent eum Domino. Luc. 2:22.

7931 Qui proprio filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus, tradidit illum. Rom. 8:32.

7932 Or. de Laud. Deip.

7933 Serm. de Purific. Virg.

7934 O Virgo regia, nollem tibi talia nuntiare, sed audi. Serm. de Purific. Virg.

7935 Nimium nunc pro isto infante læteris, sed ecce iste positus in signum cui contradicetur.

7936 O quot millia hominum pro ipso puero laniabuntur, et jugulabuntur; et si omnes patientur in corpore, tu Virgo in corde patieris. Loc. cit.

7937 Et tuam ipsius animam doloris gladius pertransibit. Luc. 2:35.

7938 Qui edebat panes meos, magnificavit super me supplantationem. Psal. 40:10.

7939 Zacc. 13:7.

7940 Corpus meum dedi percutientibus, et genas meas vellentibus, faciem meam non averti ab increpantibus, et conspuentibus in me. Isa. 50:6.

7941 Ego autem sum vermis et non homo; opprobrium hominum et abjectio plebis. Psal. 21:7.

7942 Saturabitur opprobriis. Thren. 3.

7943 Ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras, attritus est propter scelera nostra. Isa. 53:5.

7944 Non est species ei neque decor. . . . Et nos putavimus eum quasi leprosum. Isa. 53:2, 4.

7945 Dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea. Psal. 21:18.

7946 Foderunt manus meas et pedes meas. Loc. cit.

7947 Et cum sceleratis reputatus est. Isa. 53:12.

7948 Et aspicient ad me quem confixerunt. Zacc. 12:10

7949 Si fieri potuisset, omnia tormenta quæ filius pertulit, sustinuisset; et nihilominus placuit ei quod unigenitus ejus pro salute generia humani offerretur. In p. 1, Dist. 48, q. 2.

[7950] Dolor iste, usquedum assumpta fui corpore et anima in cœlum, nunquam deficit a corde meo.

[7951] Pia Domina, non crediderim te ullo puncto potuisse stimulos tanti cruciatus, quin vitam emitteres, sustinere, nisi ipse spiritus vitæ te confortasset.

[7952] Moriebatur vivens, dolorem ferens morte crudeliorem.

[7953] De Fide. ad Petr.

[7954] De Laud. Virg.

[7955] Serm. 1, de Ass.

[7956] In Exc. Virg.

[7957] Ap. S. Bon. Spec. c. 20.

[7958] Serm. 2, de Ass.

[7959] Hom. 2, Ass.

[7960] Omnino tunc erat una Christi et Mariæ voluntas, unumque holocaustum ambo pariter offerebant; unde communem in mundi salute cum illo effectum ostendit. Tr. de Laud. Virg.

[7961] Dici potest Virgo mundi salvatrix propter meritum suæ compassionis, quæ patienti filio acerbissime condolendo excellenter promeruit, ut per preces ejus meritum passionis Christi hominibus communicetur. L. 2, de Land. Virg. art. 23.

[7962] Redempturus humanum genus, universum pretium contulit in Mariam. Serm. de Aquæd.

[7963] Quia fecisti hanc rem, et non pepercisti filio tuo unigenito propter me; benedicam tibi, et multiplicabo semen tuum sicut stellas cœli. Genes. 22:16, 17.

[7964] Responsum acceperat a Spiritu Sancto non visurum se mortem nisi prius videret Christum Dominum. Luc. 2:26.

[7965] Ap. Marc.

[7966] Exaudiet utique matrem filius. De Aquæd.

[7967] Ignorare Antipatrum sexcentas epistolas una deleri matris lacrymula? Plut. in Alex.

[7968] O mors, quam amara est memoria tua homini pacem habenti in substantiis suis! Eccli. 41:1.

[7969] Apoc. 14:13.

[7970] Signum magnum apparuit in cœlo; mulier amicta sole et luna sub pedibus ejus. Apoc. 12:1.

[7971] Vox turturis audita est in terra nostra. Cant. 2:12.

[7972] Quæ est ista quæ ascendit per desertum, etc. Cant. 3:6.

[7973] Talis ascendisti per desertum, idest animam habens solitariam.

[7974] Opera tua sumus, non te deseremus.

[7975] Cant. 4:7.

[7976] Abite, abite cum lacrymis vestris; non est tempus lacrymarum.

[7977] Ave gratia plena; Dominus tecum . . . invenisti gratiam. Luc. 18:30.

[7978] Quæ est ista quæ ascendit per desertum, sicut virgula fumi, ex aromatibus myrahæ, et thuris, et universi pulveris pigmentarii Cant. 3:6.

[7979] Talis fumi virgula, beata Maria, suavem odorem spirasti altissimo.

[7980] Virgula fumi, quia concremata intus in holocaustum incendio divini amoris, ex ea flagrabat suavissimus odor.

[7981] Ubi thesaurus vester est ibi et cor vestrum erit. Luc. 12:34.

[7982] Serm. de Nat. V. Mar.

[7983] Quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbæ, et volabo et requiescam? Psal. 54:7.

[7984] Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus. Psal. 41:2.

[7985] Comp. Hist.

[7986] L. 2, c. 21.

[7987] Orat. de Dorm. Mar.

[7988] S. Andr. Cret. Or. de Dorm. Deip., Damasc. de Dorm. Deip Bathim,1. 3, Hist. c. 40.

[7989] Orat. de Ass. Virg.

[7990] Nicephorus and Metaphrastes, appr. 1’Ist. di Mar. del P. F. Gius. e M. 1. 5, 13.

[7991] Adjuro vos, filise Jerusalem, si inveneritis dilectum meum, ut suntietis ei, quia amore langueo. Cant. 5:8.

[7992] App. S. gio. Dam. or. de Ass. V.

[7993] Lib.1, cap. 1, 2.

[7994] Serm. 1, de Ass.

[7995] Gaudeamus omnes in Domino diem festum celebrantes sub honore B. Mariæ Virginis.

[7996] Surge, Domine, in requiem tuam, tu et arca sanctificationis tuæ. Psal. 131:8.

[7997] Ascendat etiam Maria tua sanctissima mater, tui conceptione sanctificata. Serm. de Ass.

[7998] Et David et omnis domus Israel ducebant arcam testamenti Domini in jubilo, et clangore buccinæ. 2 Reg. 6:15.

[7999] Ad transferendum te in cœlum non unus tantum carrus igneus, sed totus cum rege suo filio tuo venit, atque occurrit exercitus an, gelorum.

8000 Surrexit gloriosus Jesus in occursum suæ dulcissimæ matris.

8001 Prudentiore consilio illam præcedere volebas, quatenus in regno tuo ei locum præparares, et sic comitatus tota curia tua festivus ei occurrens sublimius, sicut decebat, tuam matrem ad te exaltares. Vid. de Exc. Virg. cap. 8.

8002 Invenies occursum ejus pompæ digniorem, quam in Christi ascensione; soli quippe angeli redemptori occurrere potuerunt, matri vero filius ipse cum tota curia tam angelorum quam sanctorum occurrens, auxit ad beatæ consistorium sessionis. Serm. de Ass.

8003 Ego ut patrem honorarem, ad terram descendi; ut matrem honorarem, ad cœlum reascendi.

8004 Surge, propera, amica mea, columba mea, et veni. Jam hyems transiit, imber abiit et recessit. Cant. 2:10, 11.

8005 Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Libano; veni coronberis. Cant. 4:8.

8006 Attollite portas principes vestras, et elevamini portæ eternales, et introibit rex gloriæ. Psal. 23:7.

8007 Attollite portas, principes, vestras, et elevamini portæ eternales, et introibit regina gloriæ.

8008 Una omnium in cœlo erat lætantium (vox): Quæ est ista quæ ascendit de deserto deliciis affiuens, innixa super dilectum suum Cant. 8:5.

8009 Tu gloria Jerusalem, tu lætitia Israel. tu honorificentia populi nostri. Jud. 15:10.

8010 Viderunt eam filiæ, et beatissimam prædicaverunt, . . . et laur daverunt eam. Cant. 6:8.

8011 Exaltata est sancta Dei genitrix super choros angelorum ad cœlestia regna. In Fest. Ass.

8012 Matrem dico exaltatam super choros angelorum, ut nibil contempletur super se mater, nisi filium suum. Serm. 4, de Ass.

8013 Quæst. 108.

8014 Virgo sola constituit hierarchiam secundam sub Deo hierarcha primo. Sup. Magn. tr. 4.

8015 Virgo est domina angelorum; ergo et improportionabiliter est supra omnem hierarchiam angelorum exaltata. 4, part. tit. 15, c. 20.

8016 Psal. 44:10.

8017 Collocatur Maria a dexteris Dei. De Ass. B. V.

8018 Sicut est incomparabile quod gessit, ita et incomprehensibile præmium, et gloria inter omnes sanctos, quam meruit. Serm. de Ass.

8019 Reddet unicuique secundum opera ejus. Rom. 2:6.

8020 Sicnt habuit meritum omnium, et amplius, ita congruum fuit, ut super omnes ponatur ordines cœlestes. L. de Sol. Sanct.

8021 Quantum enim gratiæ in terris adepta est, tantum et in cœlis obtinet gloriæ; singularis.

8022 II. P. la Colombiere, Pred. 18, 28.

8023 De Nat et Grat1. 7, c. 36.

8024 Sess. 6, Can. 13.

8025 1 Cor. 15:41.

8026 Astitit regina a dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato circumdata varietate. Psal. 44:10.

8027 Sanctorum omnium privilegia, O Virgo, omnia habes in te congesta.

8028 Maria universos tantum excedit, quantum sol reliqua astra. Or de An.

8029 Sol ita sibi siderum et Iunæ rapit positionem, ut sint quasi non sint. Similiter et Virga Jesse utrorumque spirituum habebat digni tatem, ut in comparatione virginis nec possint apparere. Serm. de Ass.

8030 Divinæ gloriæ participatio cæteris quodammodo per partes datur, sed secundum Bernardum B. Virgo Maria penetravit abyssum, ut quantum creaturæ conditio patitur, illi luci inaccessibili videatur immersa. To. 1, Serm. 61, a. 2, c. 2, 20.

8031 Visio Virginis matris super omnes creaturas incomparabiliter contemplatur majestatem Dei. De Laud. Virg. c. 69.

8032 Quodammodo sicut cætera luminaria illuminantur a sole, sic tota cœlestis curia a gloriosa virgine lætificatur. Loc. cit. art. 3, c. 3.

8033 Gloriosa virgo cum cœlis ascendit, supernorum gaudia civium cumulavit. Serm. de Ass.

8034 Serm. 1, de Nat.

8035 Post Deum major nostra gloria et majus nostrum gaudium ex Maria.

[8036] Nunquid, O beata Virgo, quia ita glorificata es, ideo nostræ humilitatis oblita es? Serm. 1, de Nat. V.

[8037] Absit non convenit tantæ misericordiæ tantæ miseriæ oblivisci.

[8038] Magna fuit erga miseros misericordia Mariæ exulantis in mundo, sed multo major est regnantis in cœlo. Spec. c. 8.

[8039] Regina Maria non gravat tributis, sed largitur servis suis divitias, dona gratiarum, thesanros meritorum, et magnitudinem præmiorum. De Laud. Virg 1. 6.

[8040] O mater misericordiæ, saturare gloria filii tui, et dimitte reliquias parvulis tuis. Tu jam ad mensam Domini nos sub mensa catelli. Serm. 4, de Ass. Virg.

[8041] L. 3, Mirac. B. Virg.

[8042] Cap. 22:18

[8043] Brev. Rom. 6, Maj.

[8044] Martyrium amplectitur id quod in obedientia summum esse potest, ut scilicet aliquis sit obediens usque ad mortem. 2, 2, q. 134, a. 3, ad 3.

[8045] Non ferro carnificis, sed acerbo dolore cordis. Ap. Baldi. tom. 1, p. 146.

[8046] A nativitatis exordio, passio crucis simul exorta. Serm. 2, de Pass

[8047] Proculdubio est credendum, quod ipsa ex inspiratione Spiritus Sancti perfectius intellexit quicquid Prophetarum eloquia figurabant. Serm. Ang. c. 17.

[8048] Ex Scripturis Deum incarnari intelligens, et quod tam diversis pœnis deberet cruciari, tribulationem non modicam sustinuit Serm. Ang. c. 16.

[8049] Thr. ii.13.

[8050] Tu longum præscia futuræ passionis filii tui, pertulisti martyrium. In Cant. c. 4.

[8051] Rev.1. 7, c. 2.

[8052] Nolite solam attendere horam illam qua dilectum meum vidi mori; nam Simeonis gladius, antequam pertransiret, longum per me transitum fecit. Cum igitur eum lactarem, foverem et prospicerem ejus mortem, quam prolixam me putatis pertulisse passionem? Loc. cit.

[8053] Defecit in dolore vita mea, et anni mei in gemitibus. Psal. 30:11.

[8054] Psal. 37:18.

[8055] Tempore quo post ascensionem filii mei vixi, passio sua in corde meo fixa erat, ut sive comedebam, give laborabam, quasi recens erat in memoria mea. Rev.1. 6, c. 65.

[8056] Beatissima Virgo pro tota vita fecit professionem doloris. Vit. Christ. c. 28.

[8057] Sicut rosa crescere solet inter spinas ita B. Virgo in hoc mundo crevit inter tribulationes; et sicut, crescente rosa, crescunt spinæ; sic hæc electissima rosa Maria, quanto crescebat ætate, tanto tribulationum spinis pungebatur. Serm. Ang. c. 16.

[8058] Cui comparabo te? vel cui assimilabo te, filia Jerusalem? Magna est enim velut mare contritio tua. Quis medebitur tui? Thren. ii.1.

[8059] Quemadmodum mare est in amaritudine excellens, ita tuæ contritioni nulla calamitas æquari potest.

[8060] Utique, Domina, non crediderim te potuisse stimulos tanti cruclatus, quin vitam amitteres, sustinere; nisi ipse spiritus tui filii te confortaret. De Ec. Virg. c. 3.

[8061] Tantus fuit dolor Virginis, quod si inter omnes creaturas, quæ dolorem pati possunt, divideretur, omnes subito interirent. To. 1, Serm. 67.

[8062] Luc. 2:35.

[8063] Nimirum in tabernaculo illo duo videres altaria, aliud in pectore matris, aliud in corpore Christi; Christus carnem, Maria immolabat animam. Tr. de sep. verb. Do. in Cru.

[8064] P. 1, tit. 15, c. 24.

[8065] Illa videndo in omnibus passa est: quia amabat omnes. ferebat in oculis quod in carne omnes, Serm. 109, de Divers c. 6.

[8066] Hom. 5.

[8067] Passionis Christi speculum effectum erat cor Virginis, in illo agnoscebantur sputa, convicia, verbera, vulnera. De Agon. Chri. c. 11.

[8068] Singula vulnera per ejus corpus dispersa, in uno corde sunt unita, De Planctu. Virg. in Stim. Am.

[8069] O Domina mea ubi stabas? Nunquid tantum juxta crucem Imo in cruce cum filio crucifixa eras. Loc. cit.

[8070] Torcular calcavi solus, et de gentibus non est vir mecum. Isa. 63:3.

8071 Verum est, Domine, quod non est vir tecum, sed mulier una est tecum, quæ omnia vulnera quæ tu suscepisti in corpore, suscepit in corde.

8072 Parentes atrocius torquentur in liberis, quam in seipsis. Libell. de Machab.

8073 Maria torquebatur magis, quam si torqueretur ex se; quoniam supra se incomparabiliter diligebat id unde dolebat. Cit. Hom. 5.

8074 Ubi thesaurus vester est, ibi et cor vestrum erit. Luc. 12:34.

8075 Nunquam tam jucunde epulati sumus, quam cum hæc libenter Jesu Christi amore perferimus.

8076 Segnior fuit ignis qui foris ussit, quam qui intus accendit. In. Nat. S. Laur.

8077 In illa longa morte, in illis tormentis illo calice ebrius torments non sentit. Tract. 27.

8078 Magna est velut mare contritio tua; quis medebitur tui?

8079 In aliis martyribus magnitudo amoris dolorem lenivit passionis; sed beata Virgo quanto plus amavit, tanto plus doluit tantoque ipsius martyrium gravius fuit. Ap. Crois. Vit. Mar. s. 23.

8080 Ut scias quantus fuerit dolor B. Virginis, cogita quantus fuerit amor.

8081 Duæ dilectiones in unam convenerant et ex duobus amoribus factus est amor unus, cum Virgo mater filio divinitatis amorem impenderet, et in Deo amorem nato exhiberet. Hom. 5, de Laud. V.

8082 Quantum capere potuit puri hominis modus.

8083 Unde sicut non fuit amor sicut amor ejus, ita non fuit dolor sicut dolor ejus.

8084 O vos omnes qui transitis per viam attendite, et videte, si est dolor sicut dolor meus. Thren. 1:12.

8085 Nullus dolor amarior, quia nulla proles charior. De Compos. Virg. c. 2.

8086 Non fuit talis filius, non fuit talis mater; non fuit tanta charitas, non fuit dolor tantus. Ideo quanto dilexit tenerius, tanta vulnerata est profundius. Lib. 3, de Laud. Virg.

8087 Parum est Mariam in passione filii tam acerbos pertulisse dolores, ut omnium martyrum collective tormenta superaret. Ap. Sinisc. Mart. de Mar. Cons. 36.

8088 Quicquid crudelitatis inflictum est corporibus martyrum, leve fuit, aut potius nihil comparatione tuæ passionis. De Exc. Virg. c. 5.

8089 Virgo universos martyres tantum excedit, quantum sol reliqua astra.

8090 P. Pinam.

8091 O Domina, cur ivisti immolari pro nobis? Non sufficiebat filit passio, nisi crucifigeretur et mater? Ap. Pac. Exc. 10, in Sal. Ang.

8092 Sicut totus mundus obligatur Deo propter passionem, sic obligatur Dominæ propter compassionem. Sup. Miss. cap. 20.

8093 Sic pia et misericors est, et fuit, quod maluit omnes tribulationes sufferre, quam quod animæ non redimerentur. Rev.1. 3, c. 30.

8094 Lætabatur dolens quod offerebatur sacrificium in redemptionem omnium quo placabatur. De Gest. D.1. 2. c. 27.

8095 Respicio ad omnes qui in mundo sunt, si forte sint aliqui qui compatiantur mihi, et recogitent dolorem meum; et valde paucos invenio. Ideo filia mea, licet a multis oblita sim, tu tamen non obliviscaris mei, vide dolorem meum, et imitare quam tum potes, et dole. Rev.1. 2, c. 24.

8096 Gian. Cent. Serv.1. 1, c. 14.

8097 Ap. Bolland. 13, Jan.

8098 Stellar. 1. 3, p. 3, a. 3.

8099 L. 6, c. 97.

8100 O Domina, si te offendi pro justitia cor meum vulnera; si tibi servivi, nunc pro mercede, peto, vulnera. Opprobriosum est videre Dominum Jesum vulneratum, te convulneratum, et me illæsum.

8101 Calamitosus esset animus futuri præscius et ante miserias miser Ep. 98.

8102 Positus est hic in signum cui contradicetur. Et tuam ipsius animam doloris gladius pertransibit. Luc. 2:35.

8103 Omnis lætitia mea ad illa verba in mœrore converse est.

8104 Blasphemavit, reus est mortis. Matt. 26:65, 66.

8105 Non hic fabri filius? Matt. 13:55.

8106 Nonne hic est faber, filius Mariæ? Matt. 6:3.

[8107] Quomodo hic literas scit, cum non didicerit. Joan. 7:15.

[8108] Et velaverunt eum, et percutiebant faciem ejus . . . dicentes; Prophetiza, quis est qui te percussit. Luc. 22:64.

[8109] Insanit, quid eum auditis? Joan. 10:20.

[8110] Ecce homo devorator, et bibens vinum, amicus publicanorum et peccatorum. Luc. 7:34.

[8111] In principe dæmoniorum ejicit dæmonia. Matt. 9:34.

[8112] Nonne bene dicimus nos, quia Samaritanus es tu, et dœmonium babes? Joan. 8:48.

[8113] Si non esset hic malefactor, non tibi tradidissemus eum. Joan. 18:30.

[8114] Pater mi, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste. Matt. 26:39.

[8115] Tristis es anima mea usque ad mortem. Matt. 26:38.

[8116] Filius qui natus est tibi, morte morietur. 2 Reg. 12:14.

[8117] Lib. 6, Rev. c. 9.

[8118] Quoties aspiciebam filium meum, quoties involvebam eum pannis, quoties videbam ejus manus et pedes; toties animus meus quasi novo dolore absorptus est; quia cogitabam, quomodo crucifigeretur. Lib. 6, c. 57.

[8119] Fasciculus mirrhæ dilectus meus mihi, inter ubera mea commorabitur. Cant. 1:12.

[8120] Tom. 3, Serm. 2, a 3, c. 1.

[8121] Eum lactans cogitabat de felle et aceto; quando fasciis involvebat, funes cogitabat quibus ligandus erat; quando gestabat, cogitabat in cruce confixum; quando dormiebat, cogitabat mortuum. Tom. 1, Ev. Lu. Dom. infr. Oct. Nat. s. 1.

[8122] Oeuli mei replebantur lacrymis, et cor meum torquebatur dolora. Lib. 6. c. 57, et1. 7, c. 7.

[8123] Et Jesus proficlebat sapientia et ætate, et gratia apud Deum, et homines. Luc. 2:23.

[8124] 3, p. q. 7, art. 12

[8125] Ille doloris gladius Virgini omni hora tanto se propius approximabat, quanto Filius passionis tempori magis appropinquabat. Fer. 6, lect. 2, c. 16.

[8126] Fase. di Rose, p. 2, c. 2.

[8127] Et comæ capitis tui sicut purpura regis vincta canalibus. C. 7. v. 5.

[8128] Mens tua, O Maria, et cogitationes tuæ tinctæ in sanguine dorminicæ passionis, sic affectæ semper fuere, quasi recenter viderent sanguinem de vulneribus profluentem. In Cant. c. 7, v. 5.

[8129] Quid est quod sic turbaris Herodes? Rex iste qui natus est non venit reges pugnando superare sed moriendo mirabiliter subjugare. Serm. 5, de Epiph.

[8130] Surge et accipe puerum, et matrem ejus et fuge in Egyptum. Matth. 2:13.

[8131] Qui consurgens accepit puerum et matrem ejus nocte, et secessit in Egyptum. Matth. 2:14.

[8132] Positus est hic in signum cui contradicetur.

[8133] Fuge a tuis ad extraneos, a templo ad dæmonum fans. Quæ major tribulatio, quam quod recens natus a collo matris pendens eum ipsa matre paupercula fugere cogatur?

[8134] 3, Lib. 10, c. 8.

[8135] Viam silvestrem, obscuram, asperam, et inhabitam.

[8136] Joseph et Maria non habent famulum, non ancillam; ipsi domini et famuli.

[8137] Quomodo faciebant de victu? Ubi nocte quiescebant? Quomodo hospitabantur. De Vit. Chr.

[8138] Cum enim essent egeni, manifestum est quod sudores frequentabant necessaria vitæ inde sibi quærentes.

[8139] Aliquando filius famem patiens panem petit, nec unde dare mater habuit. In Vit. Christi. c. 13.

[8140] Sic magnus est, ut portari non valeat; et sic parvus quod per se ire non potest.

[8141] Non habemus hic manentem civitatem, sed futuram inquirimus. Heb. 13:14.

[8142] Ap. P. Genev. Serv. Dol. di Mar.

[8143] Loc. cit.

[8144] Patientia autem opus perfectum habet, ut sitis perfecti et integri, in nullo deficientes. Jac. 1:4.

[8145] Num quem diligit anima mea vidistis? Cant. 3:3.

8146 Fuerunt mihi lacrymæ meæ panes die ac nocte, dum dicitur mihi quotidie, ubi est Deus tuus? Psal. 41:4.

8147 Illas noctes insomnes duxit in lacrymis, Deum deprecando, ut daret illi reperire filium.

8148 Indica, mihi ubi cubes, ubi pascas in meridie, ne vagari incipiam. Cant. 1:6.

8149 Lumen oculorum meorum. et ipse non est mecum, Psal. 37:11.

8150 Vehementer doluit, quia vehementer amabat. Plus doluit de ejus amissione, quam aliquis martyr dolorem sentiat de animæ a corpore separatione. Hom. infr. Oct. Ep.

8151 Idcirco ego plorans, et oculus meus deducens aquas, quia longe est a me consolator meus. Thren. 1:16.

8152 Quale gaudium erit mihi, qui in tenebris sedeo, et lumen cœli non video. Tob. 6:11.

8153 Tristabatur ex humilitate, quia arbitrabatur se indignam eui tam pretiosus commissus esset thesaurus.

8154 Quærebant eum, ne forte reliquisset eos. Ap. Corn. a Lap. in Luc. 2.

8155 Fili, quid fecisti nobis sis? Pater tuus et ego dolentes quærebamus te. Luc. 2:48.

8156 March. Diar. 30, Ott.

8157 Vos non populus meus, et ego non ero vester. Os. i.9.

8158 Peccata vestra diviserunt inter vos et Deum vestrum. Isa. 59:2.

8159 Ecce universa vanitas, et afflictio spiritus. Eccli. 1:14.

8160 Perdit homo bovem, et post eum vadit: perdit ovem et sollicite eam quærit; perdit asinum, et non quiescit. Perdit homo Deum, et comedit, et bibit, et quiescit.

8161 Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi, qui pascitur inter lilia. Cant. 2:16.

8162 Thren. 3:25.

8163 Miserere mei, Domine fili David, filia mea male a dæmone vexatur. Matth. 15:22.

8164 Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur. Luc. 12:49.

8165 Omnes dolores mundi, si essent simul conjuncti, non essent tanti quantus dolor gloriosæ Mariæ. Tom. iii. 5, 45.

8166 Quanto dilexit tenerius. tanto est vulnerata profundius.

8167 Imminente passione filii mei, lacrymæ erant in oculis meis, et sudor in corpore præ timore. L. 1, Rev. c. 10.

8168 Sine somno duxisti, et soporatis cæteris, vigil permansisti.

8169 Plorans ploravit in nocte, et lacrymæ in maxillis ejus; non est qui consolotur eam, ex omnibus charis ejus. Thren. 1:12.

8170 Iisdem labiis mittit ad mortem quibus eum pronuntiaverunt innocentem.

8171 Et bajulanis sibi crucem exivit in eum qui dicitur Calvariæ locum. Joan. 19:17.

8172 Ex vestigiis filii mei cognoscebam incessum ejus; quæ enim procedenat, apparebat terra infusa sanguine. L. 4, c. 77.

8173 Med. 6.

8174 Et vidimus eum, et non erat aspectus. Isa. 53:2.

8175 Putavimus eum quasi leprosum. Isa. 53:4.

8176 Et quasi absconditus vultus ejus, et despectus, unde nec reputavimus eum. Isa. 53:3.

8177 Deut. 28:66.

8178 Heu quo properas, quo venis mater! Cruciatu meo cruciaberia, et ego tuo.

8179 Tollebat et mater crucem suam, et sequebatur eum, crucifigends cum ipso. In Cant. 7.

8180 Ut intelligas Christi crucem non sufficere sine tua.

8181 Serm, 2, de Pass.

8182 Ego non separabar ab eo, et stabam vicinior cruci ejus. L. 1, c. 6.

8183 Cur ivisti, O Domina, ad Calvariæ locum? cur te non retinuit pudor, horror facinoris?

8184 Plane mater, quæ nec in terrore mortis filium deserebat. Serm. 8, de Ass.

8185 L. 1, Rev. c. 10, et 1. 4, c. 70.

8186 Quot læsiones in corpore Christi, tot vulnera in corde matris. Ap. Bald. to. 1, p. 499.

8187 O Domina, ubi stas? Numquid juxta crucem? Imo in cruce cum filio cruciaris? Ap. Bald. tom. 1, p. 452.

8188 Crux et clavi filii fuerunt et matris; Christo cruciflxo crucifigebatur et mater.

8189 Quod in carne Christi agebant clavi, in Virginis mente affectus erga filium.

8190 Dum illi corpus, ista spiritum immolabat. To. 1, Serm. 31.

8191 Ap. Bald. p. 456.

8192 Volebat eum amplecti sed manus frustra protersæ in se complexæ redibant. Ap. Bald. 463.

8193 Torcular calcavi solus . . . Circumspexi, et non est auxiliator; quæsivi, et non fuit qui adjuvaret. Isa. 63:3, 5.

8194 Prætereuntes autem blasphemabant eum moventes capita sua. Matt. 27:39.

8195 Si filius Dei es, descende de cruce.

8196 Alios salvos fecit, seipsum non potest salvum facere.

8197 Si rex Israel est, descendat nunc de cruce. Loc. cit.

8198 Rev.1. 4, c. 70.

8199 Deus, Deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti de? Matth. 27:46.

8200 Rev.1. 4, c. 70.

8201 Repleta matre, ad filium redundaret inundatio amaritudims. Hom. in Ev. Stabat.

8202 Stabam ego videns eum, ipse videns me, et plus dolebat de me quam de se. Ap. Simisc. Cons. 28.

8203 Juxta crucem stabat mater, vox illi non erat; moriebatur vivens, vivebat moriens; nec mori poterat, quia vivens mortua erat. De. Lament. Virg.

8204 Stupebant omnes qui noverant hujus hominis matrem, quod etiam in tantæ angustiæ pressura silentium servabat.

8205 Voluit eam Christus cooperatricem nostræ redemptionis adstare, quam nobis constituerat dare matrem; debebat enim ipsa sub cruco nos parere filios. Hom. 44, de Pass. Dom.

8206 Maria mater mea, propter compassionem et charitatem facta est mater omnium in cœlis et in terra. L. 1, c. 31.

8207 Joan. 19:26.

8208 Idcirco resipuit bonus latro, quia B. Virgo inter cruces filli et latronis posita, filium pro latrone deprecabatur; hoc suo beneficio, antiquum latronis obsequium recompensans. Ap. Salm. to. 1, tr. 47.

8209 Monum. Conv. Pec. ap. P. Sinisch. Sans. 16.

8210 O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte, si est dolor sicut dolor meus. Thren. 1:12.

8211 Unus militum lancea latus ejus aperuit, et continuo exivit sanguis, et aqua. Joan. 19:34.

8212 Rev.1. 2, c. 21.

8213 Divisit Christus cum matre sua hujus vulneris pœnam, ut ipse injuriam acciperet, mater dolorem.

8214 Lancea quæ ipsius latus aperuit, animam Virginis pertransivit, quæ inde nequibat avelli. De Lament. Virg.

8215 Cum retraheretur hasta, apparuit cuspis rubea sanguine. Tune mihi videbatur quod quasi cor menm perforaretur, cum vidissem cor filii mei charissimi perforatum. Rev. c. 10.

8216 Non parvum miraculum a Deo factum est, quod B. Virgo tot doloribus sauciata spiritum non exhalarit.

8217 Tu mihi pater eras, tu frater, sponsus, meæ deliciæ, mea gloria, tu mihi omnia eras.

8218 Isa. 46.

8219 Ab ipso fuge ad ipsum, a judice ad redemptorem, a tribunali ad crucem.

8220 Ezech. 16:8.

8221 Propterea vulneratum est cor Christi, ut per vulnus visibile vulnus amoris invisibilis videatur. Serm. de pass. Dom.

8222 Præ nimio amore aperuit sibi latus, ut præberet cor suum.

8223 Filii hujus matris, ingredite um ipsa intra penetralia cordis Jesu

8224 Promt. Ex. V. Miser.

8225 C. 30:21.

8226 O vere Dei nate, tu nihi pater, tu mihi filius, tu mihi sponsus, tu mihi anima eras! Nunc orbor patre, viduor sponso, desolor filio, uno perdito filio omnia perdo. De Lam. V. Mar.

8227 O quam libenter tunc posita fuissem viva cum filio meo, si fuisset voluntas ejus! Rev.1. 1.

8228 Animam cum corpore Christi contumulari Virgo vehementer exoptavit.

8229 Vere dicere possum quod sepulto filio meo quasi duo corda in ano sepulchro fuerunt. Rev.1. 2, c. 21.

8230 Ubi thesaurus vester est, ibi et cor vestrum erit. Luc. 12:34.

8231 Super ipsam potius, quam super Dominum plangebant.

8232 Sorores Dominæ velaverunt eam tamquam viduam; cooperientes quasi totum vultum.

8233 Sine, Domina mea, sine me flere; tu innocens es, ego sum reus.

8234 Dom infra oct Nat. s. 2.

8235 Et tu, fili mi, cur mœrore conficeris, qui in mœrore meo toties me consolatus es?

8236 O Domina, quæ rapis corda hominum dulcore, nonne cor meum capuisti? O raptrix cordium, quando mihi restitues cor meum? Guberna illud cum tuo, et in latere filii colloca. Tunc possidebo quod spero, quia tu es spes nostra. S. Bernard. Med. in Salv. Reg. ap. s. Bon. Stim. c. 19, part. 3.

8237 Nunc, ergo filii, audite me; beati qui custodiunt vias meas. Prov. 8:33.

8238 Dilectissimi Mariam colite quam amatis, quia tunc vere amatis si imitari volueritis quam amatis. S. Hier. Serm. de Ass. ap. Lohn.

8239 Alii sanctorum specialia opera exercuerunt; alius fuit castus, alius humilis, alius misericors; sed B. Virgo datur in exemplum omnium virtutum. Opusc. 8.

8240 Talis fuit Maria ut ejus unius vitæ omnium disciplina sit. L. 2, de Virg.

8241 Sit vobis tanquam in imagine descripta virginitas vitaque Mariæ, in qua refulget forma virtutis. Hinc sumatis exempla vivendi . . . quid corrigere, quid fugere, qui tenere debeatis. Loc. cit.

[8242] Humilitas est fundamentum custosque virtutem.

[8243] Vit.1. 6, c. 2, s. 11.

[8244] Et discite a me, quia mitis sum, et humilis corde. Matth. 11:29.

[8245] Prima virtus in qua Virgo nata, et infans se singulariter exercuit, fuit humilitas.

[8246] Ita modeste de se sentiebat, ut cum tot gratias haberet, nulli se prætulit.

[8247] Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea sponsa . . . in uno crine colli tui. Cant. 4:9.

[8248] In uno crine, idest in nimia humilitate cordis tui. Iste est crinis colli, humilis cogitatus. . . . Quid uno crine gracilius? In d. 1. Cant. 4.

[8249] Nolite, me considerare quod fusca sim, quia decoloravit me sol. Cant. 1:6.

8250 Appropinquans illi me nigram invenio.

8251 Virgo continue habebat actualem relationem ad divinam majeslatem. et ad sui nihilitatem.

8252 Pro firmo scias, quod me reputabam vilissimam et gratis Dei indignam. Ap. S. Bon. de Vit. Christ.

8253 Sicut nulla post filium Dei creatura tantum ascendit in gratiæ dignitatem, sic nec tantum descendit in abyssum humilitatis. To. 2, Serm. 51, c. 3.

8254 Matth. 1:19.

8255 Benedicta tu in mulieres . . . Et unde hoc mihi ut veniat mater Domini mei ad me? Et beata quæ credidisti, &c. Luc. 1:42, 43, 44.

8256 Ubi quid enim ego me tantum humiliabam, aut promerui tantam gratiam, nisi quia cogitavi et scivi nihil a me esse vel habere. Ideo nolui laudem meam, sed solum datoris et creatoris. Rev.1. 2, c. 23.

8257 O vere beata humilitas, quæ Deum hominibus peperit, paradisum aperuit, et animas ab inferis liberavit. Serm. 35, de Sanctis.

8258 Venisse Mariam mirabatur Elisabeth, sed magis miretur quod ipsa non ministrari venerit, sed ministrare. Serm. de Nat. Virg.

8259 C. 12.

8260 Foris stabat, nec materna auctoritate sermonem interrupit, nec in domum intravit ubi filius loquebatur.

8261 Hi omnes erant perseverantes unanimitur in oratione cum mulieribus, et Maria matre Jesu. Act. 1:14.

8262 Merito facta novissima prima, quæ cum prima esset omnium, de novissimam faciebat. Serm. Sup. Si. Mar.

8263 Quid contemtibilius quam vocari fatua, omnibus indigere, omnibus indigniorem se credere? Talis O filia, fuit humilitas mei hoc gaudium meum, hæc voluntas tota, qua nulli nisi filio mendlacare cogitabam.

8264 Rev.1. 1, c. 29.

8265 Si non potes virginitatem, humilis, imitare humilitatem Virginis. Ho. 1, Sup. Miss.

8266 Ergo et tu, filia mea veni, et absconde te sub mantello meo; his mantellus humilitas mea est.

8267 Nec humilitas mea proficit, nisi unusquisque studuerit eam imitari Ergo, filia mea, induere hac humilitate.

8268 Agnoscit Virgo et diligit diligentes se, et prope est invocantibus se; præsertim iis quos videt conformes sibi factos in castitate et humilitate. In Salv. Reg.

8269 Æmulamini hanc virtutem, si Mariam diligitis. Loc. cit.

8270 Superat omnium creaturarum amores in filium suum.

8271 Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo. Matt. 22:37.

8272 Plene et perfecte in patria implebitur hoc præceptum; in via autem impletur, sed imperfecte. 2, 2. q. 24, vid. a. 6, 8.

8273 Aut aliquis implet hoc preceptum, aut nullus; si aliquis, ergo beatissima Virgo. Super. Miss. c. 76.

8274 Emmanuelis nostri puerpera in omni fuit virtutum consummatione perfecta. Quis illud primum mandatum sic unquam implevit: Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo? In ea divinus amor adeo concaluit, ut qualiscumque defectus in eam incidere non posset. L. 2, de Em. c. 26.

8275 Amor Christi Mariæ animam non modo confixit, sed etiam pertransivit; ut nullam in pectore virginali particulam vacuan relinqueret, sed toto corde, tota anima, tota virtute diligeret at esset gratia plena. Serm. 29, in Cant.

8276 Cant. 2:10.

8277 Seraphim e cœlo descendere poterant, ut amorem discerent in corde virginis.

8278 Joan. 4:16.

8279 Totam eam incanduerat divinus amor, ita ut nihil esset mundanum quod ejus violaret affectum, sed ardorcontinuus, et ebrietas profusi amoris. Hier. aut. Sofron. Serm. de Ass.

8280 Cant. 8:6.

8281 Ap. a Lap.

8282 Mariam, velut ignis ferrum, Spiritus Sanctus totam ignivit; ita ut in ea Spiritus Sancti flamma tantum videatur, nec sentiatur nisi tantum ignis amoris Dei. De. Ass. Or. 1.

8283 Apoc. 12:1.

8284 Jure ergo Maria sole perhibetur amicta, quæ profundissimam divinæ sapientiæ, ultra quam credi valeat, penetravit abyssum; ut quantum sine personali unione creaturæ conditio patitur, luci illi iuaccessibili videatur immersa. Serm. in Sign Magn.

8285 Sicut magnus ignis effugat muscas, sic a sua inflammata charitate dæmones pellebantur, quod non ausi sint illi appropinquare. To. 2, serm. 61, a. 3.

8286 Virgo principibus tenebrarum terribilis fuit, ut ad eam accedere, eamque tentare non præsumserint, deterrebat eos flamma charitatis. P. c. 26, in Cant.

8287 Actus perfectæ charitatis, quos B. Virgo habuit in hac vita, innumerabiles fuerunt, quæ fere totam vitam in contemplatione transegit, et tunc amoris actum frequentissime repetebat. To. 2, in 3, p. D. 18, S. 4.

8288 Tamen ipsa gloriosissima Virgo de privilegio singulari continue et semper Deum amabat actualiter. P. 2, Serm. 4, de Nat. Virg.

8289 Adeo ut nec actio contemplationem minuerot, et contemplatie non desereret actionem. Serm. 1, de Nat. Virg.

8290 L. 5, in Jul. c. 9.

8291 L. 2, de Virg.

8292 Prov. 31:18.

8293 Anima ejus libere tunc tendebat in Deum; unde illo tempore erat perfectior contemplatrix, quam unquam fuerit alius dum vigilavit.

8294 Cant. 5:2.

8295 To. 2, Serm. 51, a. 3, c. 3.

8296 Nihil unquam elegit nisi quod divina sapientia demonstrabat; tantumque dilexit Deum, quantum a se diligendum existimabat. Loc. cit.

8297 Credimus etiam sine præjudicio melioris sententiæ, B. Virginem in conceptione filii Dei charitatem talem accepisse qualis et quanta percipi poterat a pura creatura in statu viæ. L. de Laud. Virg c. 96.

8298 Hæc Virgo sua pulchritudine Deum a cœlis allexit, qui amore illius captus est, et humanitatis nostræ nexibus irretitus. Conc. 5, in Nat, Dom.

8299 O virtus Virginis matris! Una pnella vulneravit et rapuit divinum cor. To. 2, Serm. 61, a. 1, c. 4.

8300 Adjuro vos, filiæ Jerusalem, si inveneritis dilectum meum, ut nuncietis ei, quia amore langueo. Cant. 5:8.

8301 L. 4, n. 306.

8302 Quia tota ardens fuit, omnes se amantes eamque tangentes incendit, et sibi assimilat.

8303 Et hoc mandatum habemus a Deo, ut qui diligit Deum, diligat et fratrem suum. 1 Joan. 4:21.

8304 Ferculum fecit sibi rex Salomon . . . media charitate constravit propter filias Jerusalem. Cant. 3:9.

8305 B. Virginis sinus fuit ferculum ferens verbum; ideoque media charitate constratum propter filias Jerusalem quia Christus qui est ipsa charitas, maximam charitatem B. Virgini aspiravit, ut ipsa ad illam recurrentibus opem ferret.

8306 Joan. 2:3.

8307 Luc. 1:39.

8308 Sic Maria dilexit mundum, ut filium suum unigenitum daret.

8309 O benedicta inter mulieres, quæ angelos vincit puritate et sanctos superas pietate.

8310 Quia magis nunc videt hominum miserias. Spec. c. 8.

8311 Magna fuit erga miseros misericordia Mariæ adhuc exulantis in mundo, sed multo major est regnantis in cœlo. Luc. cit.

8312 Ex dulcedine Mariæ nullus est, qui non per eam, si petitur sentiat pietatem. Rev.1. c. 3, 30.

8313 Nisi preces matris meæ intervenirent, non esset spes misericordiæ L. 6, c. 29.

8314 Beatus homo qui audit me, et qui vigilat ad fores meas quotidie, et observat ad postes ostii mei. Prov. 8:34.

8315 Nulla res est quæ Virginis benevolentiam conciliat, ac misericordia.

8316 Estote misericordes, sicut et pater vester misericors est. Luc. 8:36.

8317 Estote misericordes sicut et mater vestra misericors est.

8318 Date et dabitur vobis; eadem quippe mensura qua mensi fueritis, remetietur vobic. Luc. 6:38.

8319 Pietas autem ad omnia utilis est, promissionem habens vitæ, quæ nunc est, et futuræ. 1 Tim. 4:8.

8320 Fœneratur Domino qui miseretur pauperi.

8321 Si Deo fœneratur is ergo nobis debitor est.

8322 Ego mater pulchræ dilectionis, et timoris, et agnitionis, et sanctæ spei. Eccli. 24:24.

8323 Quod Heva ligavit per incredulitatem, Maria solvit per fidem.

8324 Crediderat Heva serpenti, Maria Gabrieii; quod illa credende deliquit, hæc credendo delevit.

8325 Fides Mariæ cœlum aperuit, cum angelo nuncianti consensit.

8326 Sanctificatus est enim vir infidelis per mulierem fidelem. 1 Cor. 7:14.

8327 Hæc est mulier fidelis, per cujus fidem salvatus est Adam vir infidelis et tota posteritas.

8328 Beata quæ credidisti quoniam perficientur ea, quæ dicta sunt tibi a Domino. Luc. 1:45.

8329 Beatior Maria percipiendo fidem Christi, quam concipiende carnem Christi.

8330 Stabat mater fide elevata, quam de Christi divinitate fixa retinuit.

8331 Non extinguetur in nocte lucerna ejus. 31:18.

8332 Torcular calcavi solus, et de gentibus non est vir mecum. 63:3.

8333 Dicit vir propter Virginem, in qua nunquam fides defecit.

8334 Gaude, Maria Virgo, cunctas hæreses sola interemisti inuniverso mundo. Ant. 1, Noct. 3.

8335 Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea, sponsa . . . in uno oculorum tuorum. Cant. 4:9.

8336 Per oculos fidem designat, qua Dei filio Virgo maxime complacuit.

8337 Ille vero credit, qui exercet operando quod credit.

8338 Dicis, credo, fac quod dicis, et fides est.

8339 Justus autem meus ex fide vidit. Hebr. 10:38.

8340 2:20.

8341 Mihi autem adhærere Deo bonum est; ponere in Domino Deo spem meam. Psal. 72:28.

8342 Quæ est ista quæ ascendit de deserto, deliciis affluens innixa super dilectum suum? Cant. 8:5.

8343 Ascendit de deserto, scilicet de mundo, quem sic deseruit, et tamquam desertum reputavit, ut ab ipso omnem suum averterit affectum. Innixa super dilectum suum, nam non suis meritis, sed ipsius innitebatur gratiæ, qui gratiam tribuit. Ap. Cornel, in Cant. 8:5.

8344 Matth. 1:19.

8345 B. Virgo autem noduit ultro secretum hoc Josepho pandere, ne sua dona jactare videretur, sed Dei curæ idipsum resignavit certissime confidens, Deum suam innocentiam et famam tutaturam.

8346 Et reclinavit eum in præsepio, qua non erat eis locus in diversorio, Luc. 2:7.

8347 Qui consurgens accepit puerum, et matrem ejus nocte, et secessit in Ægyptum. Matth. 2:14.

8348 Quid mihi et tibi est mulier, nondum venit hora mea. Joan. 2:4.

8349 Phil. 4:13.

8350 Eccli. 24:24.

8351 Inter omnia certamina duriora sunt prælia castitatis, ubi quotidiana est pugna et rara victoria.

8352 Virgo virginum, quæ sine consilio, sine exemplo munus virginitatis Deo obtulit, et per sui imitationem omnes virgines germinavit. Mar. p. 29.

8353 Psal. 44:16.

8354 O Virgo quis te docuit Deo placere virginitate, et in terris angelicam ducere vitam. Hom. 4. Sup. Miss.

8355 Christus matrem virginem elegit, ut ipsa omnibus esset exemplum eastitatis. Ap. Parav. p. 2, c. 1.

8356 Cant. 1:9.

8357 Cant. 2:2.

8358 Omnes aliæ virgines spinæ fuerunt vel sibi vel aliis; B. Virgo nec sibi, nec aliis.

8359 Id. S. Dio.

8360 Ap. Par. loc. cit.

8361 Tu dicis Mariam virginem non permansisse? Ego mihi plus vindico, etiam ipsum Joseph virginem fuisse per Mariam L. adv. Molvid.

8362 Quomodo fiet istud, quoniam virum non cognosco. Luc. 1:34

8363 Qui castitatem servavit, angelus est, qui perdidit, diabolus.

8364 Matth. 22.

8365 Nunquam Maria tantam gratiam invenissit, nisi cibo temperatissima fuisset; non enim se compatiuntur gratia et gula.

8366 Cant. 5:5.

8367 Prov. 11:15.

8368 Mansit autem Maria cum illa quasi mensibus tribus; et reversa est in domum suam. Elisabeth autem impletum est tempus pariendi, et peperit filium. Cap. 1:56.

8369 Et ut scivi quoniam aliter non possem esse continens nisi Deus det . . . aii Dominum, et deprecatus sum illum. Sap. 8:21.

8370 Ap. S. Bon. de Vit. Chr. c. 3.

8371 Propter vos egenus factus est, cum esset dives, et illius inopia vos divites essetis. 2 Cor. 8:9.

8372 Si vis perfectus esse, vende quæ habes, et da pauperibus . . . et veni, sequere me. Matth. 19:21.

8373 Ap. Parav. p. c. 2.

8374 A principio vovi in corde meo nihil unquam possidere in mundo. L. 1, c. 10.

8375 Aurum sibi oblatum a magis non modicum, prout decebat eorum regiam majestatem, non sibi reservavit, sed pauperibus per Joseph distribuit. Ap. Par. loc. cit.

8376 Pro filio . . . deferet agnum. 12:6.

8377 Et ut darent hostiam secundum quod dictum est in lege Domini, par turturum aut duos pullos columbarum. Luc. 2:24.

8378 Omnia quæ habere potui dedi indigentibus, nihilque nisibum tensem et vestitum reservavi. Rev.1. 1, c. 10.

8379 Ap. auct. Vit. Mar. L. 5, c. 13.

8380 Beati pauperes spiritu quoniam ipsorum est regnum cœlorum. Matth. 5:3.

8381 Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis.

8382 Pauper multum consolari potest de paupertate Mariæ, et de paupere Christo.

8383 Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.

8384 O vera ancilla, quæ neque dicto, neque facto, neque cogitatu inquam contradixit Altissimo, nihil sibi libertatis reservans, sed per omnia subdita Deo. Conc. de Annunc.

8385 Luc. 1:48.

8386 Sicut Heva inobediens et sibi et universo generi humano causa facta est mortis; sic et Maria Virgo obediens et sibi et universo generi humano facta est causa salutis. Ap. Parav. p. 2, c. 11.

8387 In B. Virgine nullum fuit omnino retardativum, proinde rota volubilis fuit secundum omnem Spiritus Sancti motu. To. 3, Serm. 11, a. 2, c. 1.

8388 Virgo semper habuit continuum aspectum ad Dei beneplacitum at forventem consensum. To. 2, s. 41, a. 3, c. 2.

8389 Anima mea liquefacta est, ut dilectus meus locutus est. Cant. 5:6.

8390 Anima mea liquefacta est per incendium charitatis, parata instar metalli liquefacti decurrere in omnes modulos divinæ voluntatis.

8391 Ne Virgini subtrahatur occasio exercendi actum obedientiæ ad quem erat paratissima.

8392 Parata enim stetit, si deesset manus percussoris. Ap. Parav. p. 2. c. 12.

8393 Beatus venter qui te portavit. . . . Quinimmo beati qui audiunt verbum Dei, et custodiunt illud. Luc. 11:28.

8394 Et inde quidem beata, quia Verbi incarnandi ministra facta est; sed inde multo beatior quia ejusdem semper amandi custos manebat æterna. C. 40, in Luc.

8395 March. Diar. della Mad.

8396 Rev.1. 6, c. 11.

8397 Qui vos audit me audit; et qui vos spernit, me spernit. Luc. 10:16.

8398 Pro obedientia mea tantam potestatem obtinui, quod nullus tam immundis peccator, si ad me cum emendatione proposito converatur et cum corde contrito, non habebit veniam.

8399 In patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras. Luc. 21:19.

8400 Sicut rosa crescere solet inter spinas; ita hæc venerabilis Virgo in hoc mundo crevit inter tribulatioues. Serm. Ang. c. 10.

8401 Maria facta est mater nostra, quos genuit filio compatiendo.

8402 Quid utilius ad vitam, vel majus ad gloriam, quam patientia.

8403 2:6.

8404 Jac. 1:4.

8405 Post hæc vidi turbam magnam . . . et palmæ in manibueorum. Apoc. 7:9.

8406 Nos sine ferro martyres esse possumus, si patientiam cu todiamus.

8407 Momentaneum, et leve tribuiationis nostræ . . . æternum gleriæ pondus operator in nobis. 2 Cor. 4:17.

8408 Luc 18:1.

8409 Maria exemplum dedit quod oportet sequi, et non deficere. Spec. c. 4.

8410 Sup. Miss. 80.

8411 Surgebam semper in noctis medio et pergebam ante altare templi, et ibi petitiones meas præsentabam. V. Ap. S. Bon. de Vit. Chr. c. 3.

8412 Loca dominicæ nativitatis, passionis, sepulturæ frequenter visitabat.

8413 Nulla unquam inordinata affectio, nec distractio mentem Virginis a contemplationis lumine revocavit nec occupatio ulla exterior. De Laud. Virg.1. 2, art. 8.

8414 Ecce Virgo concipiet, et pariet filium, et vocabitur nomen ejus Emmanuel. C. 7:1.

8415 Merito solitudinis quam ipsa summe diligebat. L. 1, c. 6.

8416 Nunquam exibat e domo, nisi quando ibat ad templum; et tunc ibat tota composita, semper habens oculos suos ad terram. Serm. in Virg. Nat.

8417 In proposito erat hominum fugere frequentias, vitare colloquia.

8418 Cant. 1:9.

8419 Turtur est solivaga, et signat mentis virtutem unitivam. Ap. S. Bon. Dist. 7.

8420 Cant. 3:6.

8421 2:14.

8422 O solitudo, in qua Deus cum suis familiariter loquitur, et conversatur.

8423 Silentinm, et a strepitu quies cogit cælestia meditari.

8424 Transite ad me omnes qui concupiscitis me, et a generationibus meis implemini. Eccli. 24:26.

8425 Nec primam similem visa est, nec habere sequentem.

Sola sine exemplo placuisti fœmina Christo. Sedulius.

8426 Cam sit magnificentissima, solet maxima pro minimis reddere. Or. 2, de Dorm. Virg.

8427 Opues. c. 28.

8428 Ep. 120.

8429 Qui tenuerit Mariam perseveranter, hic beatus erit in spe, quia omnia optata ei succedent. L. 2, p. 48.

8430 Salutate eam angelica salutatione, quia vocem hanc audit valde libenter. Serm. 31, ad Nov.

8431 March. 20, Aug.

8432 Libenter nos salutat cum gratia, si libenter salutamus cum Ave Maria. Auriem. Aff. Scam. tom. 1, c. 6.

8433 Si quis veniat ad matrem Domini dicens, Ave Maria, numquid poterit ei gratiam denegare?

8434 Serm. 1, ad Nov.

8435 To. 2, tr. 6, prat. 2.

8436 Loc. cit.

8437 Ap. Viva. de Ind. s. ult.

8438 Loc. cit.

8439 Ap. Maracci. p. 25.

8440 To. 2, tr. 6, prat. 6.

8441 Venite, comedite panem meum, et bibite vinum quod miscu vobis.

8442 At the end of the book will be found two formulas of this dedication: one for a single person, and the other for a family.

8443 To. 1, c. 8.

8444 Per illud triste Sabbatum stetit in fide, propterea aptissime S. Ecclesia diem Sabbati per totum anni circulum celebrare consuevit. L. 2, de Pass.

8445 Ap. Auriem.1. c.

8446 No. 75.

8447 To. 2, tr. 6, p. 4.

8448 In Marc. c. 5, n. 10.

8449 Accipe, fili dilectissime, hoc tui ordinis scapulare, meæ confraternitatis signum, tibi et cunctis Carmelitis privilegium; in quo quis moriens æternum non patietur incendium. Ap. Lez.1. cit.

8450 C. 8, s. 2.

8451 Confessor pro viribus suadebit, ut alicui societati pœnitentes ad seribantur. Act. Med. to. 1, c. 6, 58.

8452 Turris David, mille clypei pendent ex ea, omnis armatura fortium. Cant. 4:4.

8453 Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis. Eccli. 7:40.

8454 Desolatione desolata est omnis terra, quia nullus est qui recogitet sorde. Jer. 12:11.

8455 Joan. 10:27.

8456 Joan. 16:24.

8457 Si duo ex vobis consenserint super terram, de omni re, quamcumque petierint, fiet illis a Patre meo. Matth. 18:19.

8458 Multi minimi, dum congregantur unanimes, fiunt magni; et multorum preces impossibile est non audiri.

8459 Tamquam antidotum quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis, et a peccatis mortalibus præservemur. Sess. 13, c. 2.

8460 Sap. 7:11

8461 Ap. Sarn. d Congr. p. 1.

8462 Prov. 31:21.

8463 To. 2, c. 4.

8464 To. 2, pr. 5.

8465 Ap. P. Pepe. to. 5, Lez. 235, in fin.

8466 Hic est filius meus Eberardus, qui nihil mihi unquam negavit.

8467 P. Auriem. to. 1, c. 12.

8468 Sess. 22, c. 3.

8469 Ut illis proficiat ad honorem. nobis autem ad salutem.

8470 1. Barry, Pa. Ap.

8471 Append. Indulg. in calce Trut, s. ult.

8472 Serm. 61.

8473 Domina dic pro nobis filio tuo, vinnm non habent. Calix hujus vini inebrians quam præclarus est! Inebriat amor Dei ad contemptum mundi; calefacit, facit fortes, somnolentes ad temporalia, et ad invisibilia promptos, S. Bern, aut quisquis est auctor in Salv. Reg. Serm. 4.

8474 Tu es ager plenus, plena virtutum, plena gratiarum. Tu processisti ut aurora lucida, et rubicunda; quia superatis originalibus peccatis in utero matris, nata es lucida cognitione veritatis, et rubicunda amore virtutis; nihil omnino immicus proficit in te, eo quod mille clypei pependerunt ex te, omnis armatura fortium; nihil est enim virtutis quod ex te non resplendeat, et quicquid singuli habuere sancti, tu sola possedisti. Ibid.

8475 O Domina nostra, mediatrix nostra, advocata nostra, tu filio nos commenda. Fac, o benedicta, per gratiam quam meruisti, nt qui, te mediante, dignatus est fieri particeps nostræ infirmitatis et miseriæ, te quoque intercedente, participes nos faciat beatitudinis et gloriæ suæ. Ibid.

8476 To. 2, tr. 6, prat. 20.

8477 L. 3, de Deip. c 18.

8478 Annal. Soc. 1650, Ap. Auriem. Aff. Scamb. t. 3, c. 7.

8479 Ann. Marian. 1505.

8480 Bonif. Hist. Virg. c. 6.

8481 In Vit. p. Aut. de Collel. c. 32, s. 5.

8482 Pacciuch. in Sal. Ang. Exc. 4, No. 10.

8483 Bonif. 1. 4, c. 4, ex. B. Alan. etc.

8484 Diotall. to. 2, Dom. 2, Quinquag

8485 Ap. Auriem. to. 2. c. 11.

8486 Cartag. to, 4, 1. ult. s. 114. Let any one who wishes for other examples of the power of the Rosary, read those at the end of the first vol. of the above mentioned work, pages, 68, 92, 133, 262, 302.

8487 Theoph. Rayu. de S. Lacr. c. 15.

8488 Cantiprat. 1. 3, c. 19, p. 18.

8489 Bovio esempio di. S. S. Verg. to. 3, Es. 9.

8490 Ann. Marian. 1618.

8491 Appr. Auriem. to. 1, c. 7

8492 Bovio. to. 6, Es. 7.

8493 Cesar.1. 3, c. 33.

8494 Spec. Ex. B. num. 69, et Crass. to. 2, tr. 6, pr. 1.

[8495] Bolland. 15, Maji.

[8496] Ap. Crass, to. 2, tr. 6, p. 1.

[8497] Tesoro del Rosar. 1. 4, Mir. 17, Diotall. to. 1, Agg. Es. 7.

[8498] Crass. to. 2, tr. 6, pr. 14.

[8499] Crass, loc. cit.

8500 Ann. Cisterc. an. 1151, c. 5, et Bov. to. 5, Es. 6.

8501 V. P. Aur. to. 2, ex. c. 4.

8502 Auriem. to. 2, c. 6.

8503 Aur. c. 5.

8504 Ann. Congr. an. 1598.

8505 Leonero. Sodal. Parth.1. 3, c. 3.

8506 Ibid.

8507 Ann. Soc. 1550.

8508 Auriem. to. 2, c. 7.

8509 Ann. Marian. 19 Jul.

8510 Barri. Par. ap. c. 2.

8511 Patr. Menol. 18 Settembre

8512 Andrado del Battes. di. n. Don. e il. P. Rho. Sab. Es. 71.

8513 An. Soc. ap. Auriem. to, 2, c. 1.

8514 Chronic. Cisterc.

8515 Chron. Min. 104,1. 5, c. 25.

8516 Chron, Dul. to. 1, del Labbeo. e il P. Rho. es. 27.

8517 P. Andrad.1. 2. Imit. della. V. c. 23.

8518 P. Rho. Sab. Es 42.

8519 P. Sinisc. Mart. de Mar. Cons. 38

8520 In Vita. B. Bern. Tolom.

8521 Spec. Ex. V. B. Maria, Ex. 10.

8522 Giac. di Vorag. in Fest. Ass. et Spec. Ex. 31.

8523 Patrign, Men. 8 lug.

8524 Eus. Nier. Troph. Mar.1. 2, c. 14.

8525 Job. Clictov. in Serm. Conc.

8526 Spec. Ex. verb. Laborare. Ex. 7.

8527 S. Ans. in ep. ap. Auriem. to. 1, c. 8.

8528 Prato. Fior.1. 3, Es. 105.

8529 Andr. nel suo Itin. Grad. 7, ap. Bov. to. 4, Esemp. 5.

8530 Cæsarius.1. 7, Dial. c. 24.

8531 Sigon de Reb. It. ap. Diotall. to. 2, in fin. Ex. 4.

8532 Discep. Promt. Ex. 83.

8533 P. Allozza. Ciel. Stell. di Mar.1. 3, c. 5, Es. 60.

8534 Chron. Ord. ap. Aur. to. 2, c. 6.

8535 Aur. to. 2, c. 6.

8536 Ann. Min. ap. Aur. to. 1, c. 4

8537 P. Rho. Sab. della B. 1. Es. 75.

8538 St. Greg.1. 4, Dial. c. 17.

8539 Jos. Mar. Barchius, in Vita.

8540 Spec. Ex. verb. B. Virg. Ex. 3.

8541 Chron. Verdun, ap. P. Rho.

8542 Cantip.1. 2, c. 29, p. 6.

8543 S. Gregor. Dia1.1. 1, c. 9.

8544 An. Soc, 1656, ap. Aur. to. 2, c. 6.

8545 P. Sinise. Mart. di Mar. Cons. 15.

8546 In Vita.

8547 Cantiprat. 1. Apum. ap. Sin. Cons. 9.

8548 P. Tausc. de SS. Mar. del. 1. 2, c. 26.

8549 Ann. Ord. Serv. Cen. 2,1. 4, c. 13.

8550 In Vita et ap. Bov. to. 4. Ex. 36.

8551 P. Recup. de Sign. Fruct. Sign. 12.

8552 Rossign. Pieta Osseg.

8553 In Vita.

8554 Franc. Lelli in Vita.

8555 Menol. Cist. ai Santi d'Agosto.

8556 Surius dic 22, Aprilis.

8557 Mater pete quod vis a me; non enim potest esse inanis petitio tua. Tu nihil mihi negasti in terris; ego nihil tibi negabo in cœlis.

8558 Omnia dona et gratiæ quibus vult, quando vult, et quomodo vult per ipsius manus dispensantur.

8559 Mecum sunt divitæ ut ditem diligentes me. Prov. 8:18, 21.

8560 Tanta erat Mariæ gratia, ut si quis inviseret, integritatis in signe donum conferret.

8561 Cant. 2:2.

8562 Cant. 4:7.

8563 Ex quo facta sum coram eo quasi pacem reperiens.

8564 Cant. 4:1.

8565 Cant. 6.

8566 Tanta est perfectio Virginis, ut soli Deo cognoscenda reservetur.

8567 Tuam enim gloriam Creator existimat esse propriam.

8568 Qui elucidant me vitam æternam habebunt. Offic. in Concep. B. Virg.

8569 Honorantes eam in hoc sæcuio, honorabit in futuro.

8570 Accedis non rogans, sed imperans; nam filius nihil negans, honorat.

8571 Sileat misericordiam tuam, si quis te invocatam meminerit defuisse.

8572 In te, Domina, peccant non solum qui tibi injuriam irrogant, sed etiam qui te non rogant.

8573 Beatus homo qui audit me et vigilat ad fores meas quotidie. Prov. 8:34.

8574 Qui operantur in me non peccabunt, . . . qui elucidate me vitam æternam habebunt. Eccli. 24:30, 31.

8575 In me gratia omnis viæ et veritatis; in me omnis spes vitæ et virtutis . . . transite ad me omnes. Eccli. 24:25, 26.

8576 6:31.

8577 Quare vincula. Nisi qnia serves suos ligat, ne discurrant per campos licentiæ.

8578 Nativitas tua sancta Dei genitrix gaudium annuuciavit universe mundo.

8579 Redempturus humanum genus universum pretium contulit in Maria, ut, si quid salutis in nobis est, ab illa noverimus redundare.

8580 Quinimmo beati qui audiunt verbum Dei, et custodiunt illudi Luc. 11:28.

8581 Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.

8582 4:12.

8583 Rosa rubicunda per Dei et proximi charitatem; nam igneus color charitatem denotat.

8584 Unam solam in cœlis fatemur esse solicitam.

8585 Collum tuum sicut turris David; mille clypei pendent ex ea, omnis armatura fortium. Cant. 4:4.

8586 Sicut Sion locus erat eminentissimus, sic B. Virgo altissima.

8587 Psal. 86:2.

8588 Cant. 7:4.

8589 Per Virginem a capite Christo vitales gratiæ in ejus corpus mysticum transfunduntur.

8590 Sicut turris eburnea, Deo amabilis, diabolo terribilis.

8591 Nihil erat in templo quod non auro tegeretur; nihil erat in Vigine quod non sanctitate plenum esset.

8592 Prov. 9:1.

8593 Domus Dei cujus tanta est abundantia, quod nostram potest replere inopiam.

8594 Nullus potest intrare in cœlum, nisi per Mariam, tamquam pet tortam.

8595 In Missa. B. V.

8596 Sicut per stellam maris navigantes diriguntur ad portum, sic per Mariam homines diriguntur ad cœlum.

8597 Ne avertas oculos a fulgore hujus sideris, si non vis obrui procellis.

8598 Ipsam sequens, non devias; ipsa protegente non metuis, ipsa propitia, pervenis.

8599 Qui invenerit me, inveniet vitam, et hauriet salutem a Domino. Prov. 8:35.

8600 Refugium tutissimum a qua nullus peccator despicitur. Omnes peccatores excipit, nec moram in hoc facit.

8601 Civitas refugii omnium ad eam confugientium.

8602 Peccatorem toti mundo despectum materno affectu complecteris, nec deseris quousque miserum judici reconcilias.

8603 Quis post filium tuum curam gerit generis humani, sicut tus Quis ita nos defendit in nostris afflictionbus?

8604 Non reperitur aliquis sanctorum ita compati infirmitalibus nos tris, sicut mulier hæc, B. Virgo Maria.

8605 Auxilium promptum et paratum christianorum, eripiens nos a periculis.

8606 Cant. 6:3.

8607 Ave, gratia plena: Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus. Luc. 1:28.

8608 Luc. 1:29.

8609 Ne timeas Maria, invenisti enim gratiam apud Deum.

8610 Ecce concipies in utero et paries filium et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum.

8611 Ecce ancilla Domini fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.

8612 1:39.

8613 Benedicta tu in mulieres, et benedictus fructus ventris tus

8614 Et unde hoc mihi, ut veniat mater Domini mei ad me?

8615 Ut andivit salutationem Mariæ Elisabeth exultavit infans in utero ejus, et repleta est spiritu sancto Elisabeth. Luc. 1:41.

8616 Exaltata est sancta Dei genitrix super choros angelorum ad cœlostia regna.

8617 Quæ est ista quæ progreditur quasi aurora consurgens? Cant. 6:9.

8618 Nativitas tua, Dei genitrix virgo, gaudium annuntiavit universo mundo, ex te enim ortus est sol justitiæ, qui donavit nobis vitam sempiternam.

8619 Plenus aquæductus, ut accipiant ceteri de ejus plenitudine.

8620 Colos. 1:15.

8621 Prov. 8:22.

8622 Sinisc. in. fin. prat. 3, p. 3.

8623 App. Crass. tom. 2. see. 4.

8624 Ex offic. præd. et Diar. 7, mart.

8625 Blosius or. ad B. V.

8626 S. Bern. aut quisq. est auctor sup. Salv. Reg. Serm. 2.

[8627] Loc. cit. Serm. 3.

[8628] In Salv. Reg. S. Bon. Stim. c 19, p 3.

[8629] Loc. cit.

[8630] Sup. Salv. Reg.

[8631] Book iv. Chap. 3 (7).

[8632] “Omnes qui pie volunt vivere in Christo Jesu, persecutionem patientur.”—2 Tim. iii. 12.

[8633] “Per multas tribulationes oportet nos intrare in regnum Del.”—Acts, xiv. 21.

[8634] “Nonne hæc oportuit pati Christum, et ita intrare in gloriam suam?”—Luke, xxiv. 26.

[8635] “Non est discipulus super magistrum, nec servus super doininum suum.”—Matt. x. 24.

[8636] “Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis; sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proventum, ut possitis sustinere.”—I Cor. x. 13.

[8637] “In mundo pressuram habebitis; sed confidite, ego vici mundum.”—John, xvi. 33.

[8638] “Gaudete et exsultate, quoniam merces vestra copiosa est in cœlis.”—Matt. v. 12.

[8639] “Amicti stolis albis, et palmæ in manibus eorum.”—Apoc. vii. 9

[8640] Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ, vol. vi. page 308 or 309.

[8641] See pp. 37, 39.

[8642] Sure Signs of Divine Love, vol. ii. page 492.

[8643] Bacci, 1. 2, ch. 5.

[8644] Conf. Book 9, c. 13.—S. 131, E. B.

[8645] “Sive autem iniquitas, sive justitia, si in potestate non esset, nullum præmium, nulla pœna justa esset.”—Contra Faust. 1. 22, c. 78.

[8646] “Omne regnum in seipsum divisum desolabitur.”-Luke, xi. 17.

[8647] “Prædicaverunt ubique, Domino coöperante et sermonem confirmante sequentibus signis.”—Mark, xvi. 20.

[8648] Apolog. I.

[8649] “Beati estis, cum maledixerint vobis, et persecuti vos fuerint . . . Gaudete et exsultate, quoniam merces vestra copiosa est in cœlis.”-Matt. v. 11.

[8650] “Omnis ergo qui confitebitur me coram hominibus, confitebor et ego eum coram Patre meo, qui in cœlis est.”—Matt. x. 32.

[8651] In Ps. lxiii.

[8652] “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—Eph. v. 2.

[8653] Dial. cum Triph.

[8654] *Adv. Hæres.* 1. 3, c. 11.

[8655] Lib. 10, Ep. 97.

[8656] Suidas, Hist. v. Trajanus.

[8657] Strom. 1. 6.

[8658] Apologet. c. 50.

[8659] De Princip. 1. 4, c. 1.

[8660] Adv. Judæos.

[8661] Adv. Gent. 1. 2.

[8662] Vita Const. 1. 2, c. 7, 45, 46.

[8663] Hist. 1. 1, c. 18.

[8664] Is. lix. 1.

[8665] No, certainly, “the hand of the Lord hath not been shortened;” we see this at all times displaying itself with a new lustre. At the time when St. Alphonsus wrote this sketch, more than a century ago, one of the most terrible trials to which the Church had to submit began by the suppression of the Jesuits, and ended in the French Revolution. The altar and the throne were overturned; the last trace of them was to be effaced; the blood of the martyrs flowed in torrents; the Sovereign Pontiff, despoiled of his States, was dragged into exile, where he died. The Church appeared annihilated in the eyes of her enemies, when she rose again with Pius VII., who, chosen miraculously at Venice, proceeded without hindrance to Rome and sat triumphantly on his throne in sight of an astonished world. His invincible patience, resting only on God, overcame all the artifices and all the violence of a tyrant who was then all-powerful, of whom God made an illustrious example of his justice and mercy. At the present day we see that three things are lying in the abyss opened by impiety to engulf religion. These three things are Josephism, Gallicanism, and Jansenism. Not only is divine worship re-established in France, but this fertile land, notwithstanding the efforts of hell, produces a multitude of new institutions, fruits of the noblest zeal, such as the admirable work of the Propagation of the Faith. The same religious movement signalizes itself in other parts of Europe by many remarkable conversions, notably in Germany, Sweden, and England. The Catholic missions make progress nearly everywhere—in Africa, Asia, America, and Australia, and as far as the innumerable islands of Oceanica, where horrible cannibals become exemplary Christians. Corea counts more than ten thousand followers of Christ and one hundred and forty martyrs before it has even seen a priest; something nearly similar took place among the Indians of the Rocky Mountains in northern Oregon. The pontificate of Pius IX., troubled as was that of Pius VII., is not less fertile in wonders of every kind; thus, among other things, at the moment of peril, a devoted band of young men came from different Catholic countries, closed around the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and did not hesitate to shed their blood in defence of the rights of the Holy See; and when the Holy Father was deprived of necessary resources there was established the Peter's pence, which extended from Belgium to all other countries, to assist in overcoming falsehood, hypocrisy, and brutal force that had conspired against the Church. The Church of God on earth is always militant; but each of her combats furnishes a new proof of the truth of the infallible words: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against her" (Matt. xvi. 18).—ED.

8666 "Exaltationes Dei in gutture eorum, et gladii ancipites in manibus eorum, ad faciendam vindictam in nationibus, increpationes in populis, ad alligandos reges eorum in compedibus et nobiles eorum in manicis ferreis, ut faciant in eis judicium conscriptum."-Ps. cxlix. 6.

8667 "Ligatis minibus et pedibus ejus, mittite eum in tenebras exteriores; ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium."-Matt. xxii. 13.

8668 Abelly, 1. 3, ch. 9.

8669 "Martyres veros, non pœna facit, sed causa."—Epist. 89, E. B.

8670 2. 2, q. 124, a. 5.

8671 The same idea is repeated, page 39.

8672 "Qui non diligit, manet in morte."—I John, iii. 14.

8673 "Neque hoc facit stupor, sed amor."—In Cant. s. 61.

8674 "Verumtamen, non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu."—Matt. xxvi. 39.

8675 Page 37.

8676 "Honoremus beatos Martyres, principes fidei, intercessores mundi."-Serm. 92.

[8677] Matt. x. 42.

[8678] L. 2, ch. 6.

[8679] There was another instrument of torture which is called in Latin Nervus. It was a wooden machine destined to confine the feet, and sometimes the neck and the hands; it had several holes at different distances from one another. Hence it is said of certain martyrs that their feet were stretched as far as the fourth or fifth hole.—ED.

[8680] In Part II. we shall see several other tortures invented by the refined cruelty of the Japanese.—ED.

[8681] This holds good only of Part I.; in Part II. the author has followed a chronological order, but we may everywhere ee that he has taken care to vary the subjects, according to the condition of persons, of their country, ol their manner of death; for instance, a distinguished old man, the Bishop of Antioch, is transported to Rome to be devoured by beasts; now a young woman with her child is beheaded in Asia Minor; then a generous deacon undergoes various tortures in Spain; etc.—Ed.

[8682] Ad Scapul.

[8683] Ann. 307.

[8684] Istor. eccl. 1. 3, n. 9.

[8685] In Latin, Cirycus or Quiricus.

[8686] We think it our duty to rectify several passages of this narration, in which the author has confused two holy martyrs of the same name and of the same period, but not of the same place. She whose victory St. Basil describes in his homilies was of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, when she was denounced as a Christian by the spoliation of her property, and then condemned to be burnt alive, because she had steadfastly refused to offer incense to the idols, as we read in the martyrology, July 30. This was at the beginning of the persecution of Diocletian in 303. She was courageous enough to place herself at once on the funeral pile. After the execution her body was found entire, without change; then it was interred in the vestibule of the cathedral church, where afterwards a fountain sent forth miraculous water which healed many sick persons. All these circumstances have reference to St. Julitta of Cæsarea.—As for St. Julitta of Iconium, the mother St. Cyr, the martyrology mentions her, June 16. She was recognized and arrested as a Christian on her arrival in Tharsis. After seeing her son perish in a manner so cruel and yet so consoling, she was subjected to various tortures, and terminated her triumph by being beheaded. Her body and that of her son were then cast out of the city with those of other criminals; but her two servants who had taken flight and had hidden themselves, came secretly, carried them away, and carefully buried them in the field. Later on, when peace was restored to the Church, under the great Constantine, one of them who was yet living discovered the precious deposit, which became the object of the veneration of the faithful. Dom Ruinart and the other authors cited by St. Alphonsus are in accord with these facts, the narrative of which is drawn from a letter of Theodore, Bishop of Iconium. Giry and Butler add that St. Amator, Bishop of Auxerre from 388 till 418, carried to France the relics of St. Cyr and of St. Julitta, and distributed them in several places, especially at Nevers, Toulouse, St. Amand in Flanders, etc. Churches and monasteries were consecrated in their honor, and they were venerated in the West as well as in the East.—ED.

[8687] Hist. eccl. 1. 8, n. 46.

[8688] About the year 864, adds Alban Butler, the relics of St. Vincent were carried to the abbey of Castres, in Languedoc to withdraw them from the sacrilegious fury of the Moors; part of them were given to the abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés; those that were deposited at Castres were burnt by the Huguenots about the end of the sixteenth century. Aimon, who wrote the history of the translation of these holy relics from Valencia to Castres, relates several miracles that attended it.—ED.

[8689] “Quæ hodie regio, quousque Christianum nomen extenditur, natalem non gaudet celebrare Vincentii?”—Serm. 276, E. B.

[8690] “Scio tribulationem tuam et paupertatem tuam; sed dives es . . . Esto fidelis usque ad mortem, et dabo tibi. . . . coronam vitæ.”—Apoc. ii. 9.

[8691] Hist. eccl. 1. 3, n. 48.

[8692] After the execution their bodies were found entire and fresh as in full health, without any trace of fire. St. Hermes, though a simple deacon, was a distinguished man. He had been first magistrate of the city of Heraclea, and had fulfilled the duties of his office with so much wisdom that he conciliated the esteem and veneration of all his fellow-citizens. After having renounced everything to devote himself to the service of the Church, he took the resolution to live only by the labor of his hands, like the great Apostle, and he had a son named Philip whom he brought up in the same principles. While the executioners were setting fire to the pile in which he was to be consumed, and perceiving one of his friends in the crowd, he called him and said: “Go, and tell my son: ‘These are the last words of your dying father—words that he leaves you as the most precious marks of his affection. You are young avoid as dangerous everything that can weaken your soul; above all, avoid sloth; keep the peace with every one.’ ” The flames having risen prevented him from continuing. These details are given by Ruinart.—Ed.

[8693] Istor. Eccl. 1. 9, n. 33.

[8694] This was, according to Alban Butler, in 421, during the reign of Vararanes V., son and successor to Isdegerdes, who died a short time after he had rekindled the fire of persecution in 420.—ED.

[8695] Hist. eccl. 1. 8, n. 48.

[8696] Istor. eccl. 1. 9, n. 46.

[8697] Racc. di V. 6 ag.

[8698] The sepulchres of the ancients, says Fleury, were high buildings, often large enough to contain rooms. St. Hilaria and the three other saints martyred with her are inscribed in the martyrology, August 12.—ED.

[8699] Of the number of martyrs mention was made on page 33.

[8700] According to certain authors, St. Sabinus consummated his martyrdom December 7, 304, although the martyrology mentions him on December 30. Giry adds that the virtuous Serena also obtained the crown of the martyrs some time after, and that she is honored at Metz, January 30.—ED.

[8701] Livre 8, n. 39.

[8702] Matt. v. 10.

[8703] Ibid. xvi. 24.

[8704] These glorious victims of the most odious of tyrannies were all of an advanced age; but this did not hinder the tyrant from subjecting them, through hatred of their religion, to the most shameful indignities. Among them was particularly noticed St. Tecusa, of whom mention was made above; the names of the six others are: Alexandra, Claudia, Faina, Euphrasia, Matrona, and Julitta. See the martyrology, May 18.—Ed.

[8705] Istor. eccl. 1. 9, n. 21

[8706] Such are in substance the Acts that Ruinart admits to be true in his second edition (Amstelædami, 1713). We must, however, observe that according to other authorities, confirmed by the Roman Breviary, St. Respicius was a tribune who, at the sight of the superhuman courage shown by St. Trypho while he was tortured, opened his eyes to the faith, at once declared himself a Christian, and was united to the glorious martyr. Their relics have been transported to Rome and deposited in the Church of the Holy Ghost.—ED.

[8707] Istor. eccl. 1. 9, n. 20.

[8708] A wonderful profession of faith, evidently inspired by Him who said: “You shall be brought before governors, and before kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the gentiles [of my divinity and of the truth of my doctrine]. But when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you” (Matt. x. 18). The Holy Church is our mother according to faith, and it is God who has revealed to her the truths that she teaches us.—ED.

[8709] De Resurr. 1. 2.

[8710] In Ps. clvii.

[8711] De Persecut. Afr. 1. 5.

[8712] See chapters lxxi. and lxxv.

[8713] Algiers.

[8714] Theophrastus.

[8715] De Bello Vand. 1. i. c. 8. Anno 484.

[8716] We may recall to mind a similar miracle related above, in the martyrdom of St. Romanus, page 104.—ED.

[8717] In the primitive times, in which the Church was composed only of converts, it was not unusual to see married men raised to the dignity of the priesthood and even to that of the episcopate; but these were obliged to live in perpetual continence. The ministers of the altar are consecrated to God, and can no longer belong to any one except to him.—ED.

[8718] This brother, says Alban Butler, was one of the judges.—ED.

[8719] Hist, eccles. 1. 6, n. 41.

[8720] Their Acts are found in the collections of Ruinart.

[8721] As for St. Peter, who suffered with them, see Chapter XLVI.

[8722] Or Nisibis, at present Nezib in Mesopotamia.

[8723] This history is related more at length by Father Marin (Vies des Pères, 1. ix. ch. 1) after the Bollandists. He adds several interesting circumstances. God glorified St. Febronia after her death by many miracles. Lysimachus and Primus were not only converted, but renounced all worldly prospects and embraced the religious life. Moreover, Ieria threw herself at the feet of the venerable Briena, and begged her to receive her into her community that she might occupy the place of Febronia; she also wished that her jewels should serve to adorn the coffin of the glorious martyr.-ED.

[8724] At present Cherchell, a small village in the province of Mascara, in Algiers. The time in which St. Arcadius suffered is uncertain; according to Alban Butler it was probably in the third century.-ED.

[8725] The ancient Sichem, now called Naplous.—It is in reference to the place of his birth, and not in allusion to his religious principles, that St. Epiphanius calls our saint a Samaritan, for St. Justin himself declares that he had been a Gentile previously to his conversion.

[8726] The clerical character of St. Justin is by no means an uncontroverted point. The silence of the ancient authors with regard to his ordination has induced some to consider him a layman, as they think that so important a circumstance, had it taken place, could not have been omitted by early writers. Yet this, after all, is but a negative argument; and the other opinion, although founded only upon inference, seems more probable. His preaching, teaching, catechizing, etc., would proclaim him a deacon, at least; and it is hard to believe that if such a person at all entered the clerical state the

Church would have failed to promote him to the priesthood. The circumstantial evidence in favor of his ordination has been sufficient to convince Tillemont and others.—ED.

[8727] The deacons of the ancient Church frequently carried the Eucharist to the Christians who were in prison for the faith, or otherwise unavoidably absent; and sometimes even administered it in the assemblies of the faithful, as these words of St. Justin are frequently cited to prove. They did not, however, discharge this duty by virtue of their office, but merely by the delegated power given them by their Superiors. The circumstances of the Church, during the persecutions, rendered this discipline necessary, and an instance is recorded by Eusebius (Lib. 6, Histor. cap. xxxvi.) of even a layman having been sent with the Viaticum to a dying person. Vasquez (Disp. 219, cap. 1) shows that this practice was not contrary to the divine institution of the Eucharist.—ED.

[8728] The followers of Marcion and Valentinus.—Marcion, having been excommunicated for a crime of incontinency, committed under very aggravating circumstances, professed himself a Stoic philosopher, turned heresiarch, and taught the existence of two gods, or first principles. Valentinus fell away from the faith, as Tertullian (Lib. cont. Valent, cap. 4) relates, in consequence of his pride and jealousy, because another person was preferred to him, in the election of a bishop. The errors of this heresiarch were most ridiculous: he taught the existence of an eternal and invisible God, called Bathos, who, being married to a divinity styled Ennoia, produced thirty inferior deities, whom he denominated Æônes. Pope St. Anicetus was most vigilant in protecting the faithful from the artifices of these heretics, and their errors were ably refuted by St. Irenæus, Tertullian, and others.—Ed.

[8729] A learned Jew who, being obliged to fly from his country, retired to Greece and spent a considerable time in the study of philosophy, principally at Corinth. He introduced himself to St. Justin, who continued to wear the philosopher’s cloak after his conversion, on one of the public walks, and spoke of the excellence of philosophy. This conversation, which forms the substance of the book referred to in the text, is given at some length by Fleury.-Hist. Ecc. tom. 1, livre 3, num. iii in fine.—ED.

[8730] These were Chariton, Evelpiste, Hierax, Peon, Liberianus, and a woman named Charitana.—ED.

[8731] His father, whose name was Secundus, was master of the horse, that is, chief commander of the imperial troops in Syria. His mother was Anthusa, and she had two children, one of whom was a daughter. Anthusa did not wish to marry again, in order to devote herself entirely to the welfare of her children: she herself took care to instil into them the first principles of Christianity. “Never,” says Alban Butler, “was a woman more worthy of bearing the name of mother.” The pagans themselves could not help admiring her virtues; and a celebrated philosopher cried out while speaking of her: “What wonderful women have the Christians!”—ED.

[8732] He was born at Tharsus, of a patrician family, and had been for some time Prætor of Constantinople. After the cabal which obliged St. Gregory Nazianzen to retire from that see, he was appointed to it. Although at the time advanced in years, and not only a layman, but a catechumen, and one, moreover, whose conduct had been irregular. The circumstances that led to his appointment are rather curious, and are given at length by Fleury (Hist. tom. iv. liv. 18, num. v.). Having made a complimentary visit to Diodore, Bishop of Tharsus, this prelate was so taken with his venerable appearance, his majestic mien and the amiability and blandness of his deportment, that he represented him to Flavianus, Bishop of Antioch, as a fit person to occupy the vacant See of Constantinople. Flavianus, knowing that many eminent persons were being presented, laughed at the proposal; but wishing to please his friend, placed the name of Nectarius at the end of the list of candidates, which he presented to the Emperor Theodosius. The emperor used all his influence to have him appointed, and finally succeeded in obtaining his confirmation from the Pope.—ED.

[8733] This writer attributes the fire to the divine displeasure at the saint’s banishment.—Dialog, c. 20.

[8734] They are mentioned in the Roman Martyrology on the 12th January.

[8735] Later on his venerated relics were transported to Rome and placed in the Vatican Church, under the altar erected in his honor. As the day of his death is that on which is celebrated the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, the Greeks keep this feast on November 13, and the Latins, January 27. His wonderful eloquence earned for him the surname of Chrysostom, or Golden Mouth, and his excellent writings the title of Doctor of the Church.—ED.

[8736] This prelate, charmed with the happy disposition of his pupil, conceived for him the tenderness of a father, and gave him his name in admitting him to the sacrament of confirmation. Young Adalbert was a child of the Blessed Virgin. Being yet an infant, he was attacked by a violent illness that reduced him to extremity. His parents then carried him to the church, and placed him on St. Mary’s alter, and promised to consecrate him to the service of God if he should recover his health. Their prayers were heard. (See Alban Butler and Giry.)-ED.

[8737] Geysa, or Giesa the Fourth, Duke of Hungary, had been converted to the Christian faith, and baptized, together with his entire family. Shortly after his baptism, and just before the arrival of our saint, he was informed in a vision that a heavenly messenger would arrive in his dominions. St. Adalbert was therefore kindly received at his court; and we are informed by Fleury (Hist., tom. 12, liv. 58, num. vii.) that his preaching was followed by the conversion of many, and the erection of churches in various places. Geysa had contemplated the establishment of bishoprics throughout his dominions, but was told, in the vision already mentioned, that his hands had been stained with human blood, and that God had reserved the accomplishment of this great work for his son. The promise was amply fulfilled in the period of St. Stephen, first king of Hungary, who seems to have been born about the time of St. Adalbert’s arrival, and was baptized by him.-ED.

[8738] Or Cirta, at present Constantine, in Algiers. The province of Constantine is ancient Numidia, of which Cirta was the capital.—ED.

[8739] Inscribed in the martyrology under date of April 29.

[8740] St. Peter Damian (Tom. II. in fine) explains this vision to us. The judge is evidently our Lord himself, who makes his faithful ascend by degrees to the perfection that he requires of them; then he sends them to martyrdom by giving them the strength to triumph, although he seems to disappear at the moment of the combat. St. Cyprian, who comes to the assistance of Marianus, was Bishop of Carthage, a neighboring city in Numidia, and had been martyred only a short time before, in 258; this makes us believe that our two saints belonged to his church. The meadow represents this world through which we are only passing. The high trees are the saints who look down upon us and protect us. The bowl out of which St. Cyprian was the first to drink is the chalice of the passion or martyrdom: “He shall drink of the torrent in the way”—De torrente in via bibet (Ps. cix. 7).”—ED.

[8741] The fulfilment of this was not long delayed, for in this very year, or the one following, Valerian’s affairs in the East became so desperate that he had to proceed thither in person, and even offered to purchase an inglorious peace from Sapor the First, King of the Persians. This monarch refused to treat with his ambassadors, and requested a personal interview, at which he treacherously seized Valerian, and retained him till his death in captivity, during which he suffered every species of indignity. Fleury relates that he used to have his wretched captive led forth, when he was going to ride, that he might mount his horse by placing his foot on his neck; and that he finally caused him to be flayed alive, and his skin having been dried and dyed red, to be hung up in one of the temples. This and many other calamities which befell the empire were regarded by the Christians as so many instances of divine wrath.—ED.

[8742] Serm. 284, E. B.

[8743] Matt. x. 20.

[8744] I Cor. v. 16-vi. 19.

[8745] See the Breviary and the martyrology.

[8746] After the persecution there were built at Syracuse, in honor of St. Lucy, two churches, of which one was in the city where her body was buried, and the other outside of the city, in the place where she was martyred. One of her arms was afterwards taken to Constantinople, and thence to Venice. In the eighth century, the Duke of Spoleto, having made himself master of Sicily, had the relics of the saint taken away to enrich therewith the city of Corsino, in his duchy; and in 970, Thierry, Bishop of Metz, having come to Italy with the Emperor Otto I., obtained this great treasure for the church of St. Vincent at Metz, where he had it deposited in a sumptuous chapel. The second arm was given in 1042 to the abbey of Liutburg. The precious relics of the saint having fortunately escaped the sacrilegious fury of the revolutionists, repost at present in the Church of Ottange (Moselle). They have been everywhere, and are even now, venerated with the greatest devotion. (See Giry, Paris, 1860.)—ED.

[8747] A celebrated monastery of Constantinople; hence the surname of Studite, given to St. Theodorus and St. Nicholas. We read in the martyrology, November 12: “St. Theodorus the Studite, who, by the combat that he sustained for the Catholic faith against the iconoclast heretics, has made himself famous in the whole Church.” He was of a very distinguished family, and had for his master in spiritual life St. Plato, his uncle, Abbot of Symboleon, then of Saccudion, near Constantinople, where he succeeded him in 794. He was beaten with rods and exiled to Thessalonica by order of the Emperor Constantine VI., whose scandalous marriage he had blamed. Having been restored to his community after the sad death of this prince in 797, he assumed the direction of it, and afterwards transferred it to the monastery of Studius in order to avoid the insults of the Mussulmans, who were already making incursions as far as the gates of the city. As for St. Nicholas, we do not find him inscribed in the Roman martyrology, but the Bollandists give his Life on February 4. This Life is so intimately united with that of his illustrious master, that it is, so to speak, one and the same history.

This is the reason why we have believed it to be well to place the two names at the head of the paragraph, although the original bears only the name of St. Nicholas.—ED.

[8748] It is well known that St. Teresa with her young brother did the same thing when she was seven years old. See Volume VIII. pp. 370, 381.—ED.

[8749] Istor. eccl. 1. 9, n. 51.

[8750] Hist. eccl. 1. 8, n. 46.

[8751] Peristeph. hymn. 9.

[8752] Istor. eccl. 1. 9, n. 37.

[8753] Cibalis, an ancient episcopal city, the native place of the emperors Valentian and Valens, at Swilei, on the Save, in Illyria.—ED.

[8754] Also called Aphian and Amphian.

[8755] De Mart. Palæst. c. 4.

[8756] Martyrology, April 8.

[8757] The Menology of Basil, quoted by Bollandus, does not mention the kind of death that St. Gordius suffered. The Menologies of the Greeks, which are also quoted by Bollandus, say that he perished by the sword: Ferro occubuit. Baronius (anno 304, n. 62) leads us to believe that his throat was cut: Jugulum ferro obtulit. St. Basil, however, speaks only of flames to which the martyr was consigned. Perhaps the holy martyr was stabbed on the funeral pile and burned afterwards as a victim immolated as a holocaust.—ED.

[8758] Three sisters, virgins and martyrs, executed at Thessalonica. The first two were burnt alive on April 3, and the third on April 5, according to the martyrology. Dom Ruinart has recorded their Acts in his collection, after Baronius and Surius.—ED.

[8759] Istor. eccl. 1. 9, n. 45.

[8760] Alban Butler says with greater authority that the relics translated to Constantinople seem to have been those of St. Anastasia the Elder, martyred at Sirmich (or at Rome, according to the martyrology, October 28, and our author, Chap. LVII.), under Valerian, and that the body of St. Anastasia, widow, called the Junior, was transferred to Rome and deposited in the church that still bears her name. It was in this church that the Pope in ancient times used to celebrate the second Mass of Christmas, in which a commemoration of the saint is made. The holy widow did not live a long time with her unworthy husband; she was therefore very young; and we read in her first letter to St. Chrysogonus that she had preserved her virginity. This is undoubtedly the reason why several authors give her the title of virgin.—ED.

[8761] † The origin of this appellation was the following: The violent Arian Bishop, Macedonius, obtained from the Emperor Constantius an edict commanding that the churches of all those who maintained that God the Son was consubstantial with the Father should be pulled down. This intolerant measure affected the Novatians as well as the Catholics, and one of their churches in Constantinople was demolished. They, however, assembled in such numbers, and men, women, and children labored so perseveringly, that in a surprisingly short time they transferred the materials to the other side of the water, and built their church there. The Emperor Julian afterwards gave them their original site, and again they brought back their materials; and having rebuilt the church, and rendered it more magnificent than before, they called it “The Anastasia,” i.e., the resuscitated. It is in this sense only that it can be styled “The Church of the Resurrection,” for it was not dedicated in honor of the Resurrection of our Lord, but to the Eternal Wisdom, as the title, Sancta Sophia, implies.

[8762] There was question, says Alban Butler, of the fast called the fast of the stations, which was kept on Wednesdays and Fridays; it was not broken till None, that is, about three o’clock in the afternoon, and it was then ten o’clock in the morning.—ED.

[8763] Serm. 273, E. B.

[8764] Serm. 273, E. B.

[8765] See note, page 113

[8766] Deut. xiii.

[8767] Matt. x. 33.

[8768] Matt. x. 37.

[8769] This was on the occasion of the second rebuilding of her church, by Cardinal Paolo Emilio Sfrondato, to whom Rome is indebted for the present most magnificent church called “Santa Cecilia in Trasteverc.”

[8770] Dom Gueranger, in his history of St. Cecilia, defends these Acts with as much learning as argument against the critics of whom they have been the targets in the two last centuries.—ED.

[8771] There exists to the present day a tradition that St. Cecilia was confined, not in the common prison, but in her own house, perhaps out of respect to her rank. This is the more probable as she suffered under the Emperor Alexander Severus, who was very favorable to the Christians; for although, as Cardinal Orsi and Tillemont relate, several of them suffered martyrdom during his reign, this was owing to popular disturbance, or to the tyranny of the governors. It was thought necessary to record the opinion, that the saint was imprisoned in her own dwelling; as, without the knowledge of this circumstance, several of the facts stated by our holy author might appear dubious. It is only by supposing this circumstance and her having amply satisfied the avarice of the guards, that we can imagine it possible for her to have summoned St. Urban from the catacombs, and to have held such assemblies in her prison. The oven or stove in which they attempted to suffocate the saint was that which warmed the domestic baths.—ED.

[8772] Among these, St. Jerome should not be forgotten, whose beautiful and concise eulogy of the saint was considered by Baronius as her most appropriate panegyric: “By the writings and the tongues of all nations, particularly in the churches, hath St. Agnes been praised, who overcame both the tenderness of her age and the cruelty of the tyrant and sanctified the honor of her chastity with the glory of martyrdom.”—S. Hier. Ep. viii.

[8773] Istor. eccl. 1. 9, n. 42.

[8774] De Virginib. 1. 1.

[8775] The martyrdom of St. Agnes took place, according to Ruinart, about the year 304. Her virginal body was religiously deposited in 3 place belonging to her parents. The following is what is contained in the Roman Breviary in her office of January 28: “One night when the parents of the blessed Agnes were watching at her grave, she appeared to them in company with a band of virgins, and said to them: ‘Father and mother, weep not for me as though I were dead: for now these virgins and I live together in Him whose love was my whole life upon earth.’ Some years afterwards, Constance, the daughter of the Emperor Constantine, being sick of an incurable ulcer, betook herself to the said grave, although she was not yet a Christian, and as she lay by it and slept, she seemed to hear the voice of Agnes, saying to her: ‘Constance, be of good courage; believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God, and he will make thee whole.’ The princess, being healed, was baptized, along with many others of the emperor’s family and household, and afterwards built over the grave of the blessed Agnes a church named in her honor.”

Alban Butler or Godescard adds: “This church gives title to a Cardinal. Every year, on the feast of St. Agnes, the abbot of St. Peter’s ad Vincula blesses in it, at High Mass, two lambs, which are thence carried to the Pope, by whom they are again blessed. After this they are sent to the nuns of St. Laurence’s, in Panisperna, or sometimes to the Capucinesses, who make of the wool of these lambs palliums, which the Pope blesses and sends to the archbishops and bishops who occupy privileged sees. These palliums are emblems of meekness and spotless purity. St. Augustine says that the name Agnes signifies lamb in Latin, and chaste in Greek.”

Dom Gueranger, in his history of St. Cecilia, chapter 31, describes the labors undertaken in 1605 to discover the relics of St. Agnes. They were found under the main altar in a marble tomb in which they had been resting for a thousand years, with the relics of St. Emerantiana, her foster-sister. The precious relics of these two virgins were at once enclosed in a silver reliquary presented by Pope Paul V.—ED.

[8776] He is also styled Bishop of Ctesiphon, a city built by the Parthians, on the bank of the river Tigris, opposite to that upon which the ancient Seleucia, now Bagdad, stood. Some are of opinion that these ancient cities were separated only by the river, while others contend that they were three miles apart; Fleury makes the distance thirty. This last opinion seems improbable, as bishoprics were formerly very—small; and we frequently find Seleucia and Ctesiphon spoken of as one archbishopric. The first general council of Nice is said to have made it the Metropolitan See of Persia, during the episcopate of St. Simeon.

[8777] The father of Sapor died before the birth of his son; and the Magians, that he might be born a king, performed the ceremony of his coronation upon the pregnant mother; so that the wicked life and bloody reign of this vainglorious tyrant began together in the year 310. But our author, in saying that the latter was about the middle of the fourth century, refers to that part of it which was rendered most remarkable by his third, and most cruel, persecution of the Christians.

[8778] The happy penitent was too much afflicted at his apostasy to be ablicitous for his honor, and seems to have made this request in order that the real cause of his death, being made public, the scandal which he had given might be repaired.—ED.

8779 Hist. eccl. 1. 2, c. c-11.

8780 Alban Butler adds that St. Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons, wrote the panegyric of these saints, in which he says that the dust of their tomb was distributed over the whole country for the benefit of the sick. The virtue of this dust is also attested by St. Gregory of Tours. He says that their bodies in the sixth century lay deposited with the body of St. Irenæus, under the altar of the Church of St. John, that at present bears the name of St. Irenæus. The relics of St. Epipodius and St. Alexander were discovered and solemnly translated in 1410.-ED.

8781 Matt. vii. 14.

8782 The names of St. Paregorius and St. Leo, martyred at Patara, are not found in the Roman martyrology; but the Bollandists and Ruinart give their acts as trustworthy, and the Greeks celebrate their feast on February 18. As for the time of their martyrdom, it is unknown; several think that it took place in the third century.—ED.

8783 Later on a magnificent church was at first erected in this place that became famous for its great number of miracles; there a very celebrated monastery was built, and finally a city under the name of St. Alban, between Birmingham and London.—ED.

8784 Dom Ruinart gives the Acts of this martyr with those of Saints Andrew, Paul, and Dionysia, or Denysa, whose triumph has been already related at page 116.—ED.

8785 Istor. eccl. 1. 5, n. 59.

8786 At present a city in the province of Naples.

8787 Dom Ruinart adds the following extract from manuscripts in the Vatican Library: “The holy martyrs Nicander and Marcian, as also Daria, the wife of Nicander, and his son, terminated their career at Venafro. The Christians carried off their bodies, and buried them near the place where they had been beheaded; afterwards a church was built here in their honor.” And Cardinal Baronius, in his notes upon the martyrology, cites another author (Petrus de Natalibus, in Catal. 1. 5, c. 90), who assures us that the wife of St. Nicander also underwent the capital punishment three days after her husband.—ED.

8788 See note, page 189.

8789 This church gives title to a Cardinal. In 1773 it was given by Clement XIV. to the Blessed Paul of the Cross, Founder of the Congregation of the Passionists—a work which he had begun with his brother John Baptist. The Holy Father, while making this donation graciously called to mind the names of the two brothers: Joannes et Paulus.—ED.

8790 See another part of the answer of the saint, page 34.

[8791] “Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore; semper laus ejus in oremeo.”—Ps. xxxiii. 2.

[8792] We are here informed that the martyrs were nine in number—five catechumens, and four whose names are given; but from their Acts, most correctly edited by Ruinart, it appears that the saints who are named were four of the five catechumens; the fifth was one Revocatus. They were afterwards joined by Saturus, who voluntarily surrendered himself to the persecutors, and is mentioned by St. Perpetua in the narration of her first vision.—ED.

[8793] We have judged it necessary to modify somewhat a few passages of this interesting account after authentic Acts collected with much care and given entire by Ruinart and Alban Butler. By them we are informed that Felicitas was seven or eight months gone with child, and that Perpetua had yet a father, an old man still very much attached to paganism; her mother was evidently a Christian, as was one of her two brothers, the other being a catechumen; her infant was yet at her breast, and she nursed it herself. We observe that St. Saturus is not mentioned in the Roman martyrology.—ED.

[8794] The Acts state that Saturus suffered with the rest, and also relate a vision with which he was honored. We are assured by the same venerable authority, that St. Perpetua was favored with two other most important visions. She had a young brother, named Dinocrates, who died when he was only seven years of age, of a most hideous ulcer in the face. She recollected his death during her imprisonment; and having prayed for his repose, saw him in a vision, with the ulcer on his face, having a most squalid appearance, and endeavoring to drink from a vessel which he could not reach. After her vision she knew that her brother was in pain, and continued to pray fervently for his relief. She was accordingly favored with a second vision, in which she saw him quite clean, refreshing himself with the water, and retaining only a scar where the ulcer had formerly been. “I knew,” she says, “from this vision, that he had been released from his pain.” It has been thought worth while to mention these visions of St. Perpetua, as they must be most acceptable to the reader, since they show that the existence of a place of temporary punishment after death, and prayers for the departed, were doctrines of the Church as early as the year 203. Ruinart, in his “Admonitio in passionem, SS. Perpet. et Fclic., num. 6,” refutes the opinion of Valesius, that the compiler of these Acts was a Montanist, because these heretics pretended to have many supernal illustrations, and like the fanatics of our own days, extraordinary impulses from the Holy Spirit. He also mentions a letter written to Valesius, wherein the writer endeavors to prove from his style in similar productions that Tertullian was the original compiler. Indeed, St. Perpetua herself has been most unjustly charged with Montanism by the enemies of Catholic doctrine, but the imputation is as injudicious as it is unjust, since it establishes beyond a doubt the authenticity of the Acts, which could not be denied, and palpably manifests the straits to which heresy is driven. How could the Church rank as a martyr a woman belonging to a sect universally condemned for their blasphemous errors, and loathed and abhorred for their enormous extravagances? St. Augustine himself, although he declares (Lib. 1, de anima, ad Renatum, et Lib. 3, ad Vincent.) that the Revelations of St. Perpetua are not to be placed in the Canon of Scripture, nevertheless styles them “Divine Revelations,” and calls upon the faithful to honor them —Exhortationes earum in DIVINIS REVELATIONIBUS, cum legerentur, audivimus . . . mente spectavimus, religione honoravimus.” S. Aug. Serm. 1, de SS. Perpet. et Felic.-ED.

[8795] De Anima, 1. I. c. 10; 1. 3, c. 9; 1. 4, c. 18.

[8796] De Anima.

[8797] Serm. 70.

[8798] Dom Ruinart and Giry add that the body of St. Perpetua, taken later to France, was resting in their time at the Abbey of St. Peter of Vierzon.—ED.

[8799] Alban Butler adds that the Christians took away the bodies during the night and buried them in different places. St. Eulogius took charge of the education of the two daughters of Sts. Aurelius and Natalia, and finished also his life by a glorious martyrdom, March 11, 859. In 858 two monks of the abbey of St. Germain des Pres, at Paris, named Usnard and Odilard, carried from Corduba to France the bodies of Sts. George and Aurelius with the head of St. Natalia. This transfer was accompanied by many miracles: Aimoin wrote an account of it.—ED.

[8800] Istor. eccl. 1. 9, n. 30.

[8801] Their Acts contain another interesting fact. Before retiring the governor commanded ten soldiers to intermix the bodies with those of the gladiators who had been slain, and to guard them in order that they might not be recognized and the Christians might not be able to carry them off. Several, however, approached in the darkness and implored the help of God with great fervor; their prayers were heard. The night was very dark and a violent thunderstorm with rain dispersed the guards. The faithful distinguished the three bodies by a miraculous star or ray of light that streamed on each of them. They joyfully carried off the precious treasures and hid them in a hollow cave in the neighboring mountains, where the governor was not able, by any search that he could make, to find them.—ED.

[8802] At present Sisek, or Sisseg, a town situated two leagues from Zagrab, in Croatia. The episcopal see of Siscia has been transferred to Zagrab.—ED.

[8803] Matt. x. 23.

[8804] The holy bishop retired, however, only when he was obliged to do so on account of the persecution, following in this the counsel and example of the divine Master. This we find in his office as well as in the Acts collected by the Bollandists.—ED.

[8805] Four different manuscript acts of this saint have been published by Bollandus, who observes that the first, which was found in a monastery of Canons Regular, is of very great antiquity. These four MSS. agree in the leading facts, and all mention the circumstance of the beasts visiting our saint and being blessed by him. The MS. III. compares St. Blase, in this respect, to Daniel in the den of lions, and to Elias in the wilderness, and MS. IV., which was in the possession of Cardinal Baronius, observes that, as the prophet was fed by ravens, so our saint was supplied with food by the wild beasts that frequented his cave. As it was the sin of man that first rendered animals savage towards him, it has been regarded as a proof of the innocence and sanctity of a person to find wild beasts inoffensive and familiar with him; and several instances of this mark of holiness are to be met with in the “Lives of the Saints.” The blessing of those beasts by St. Blase will remind some readers of the ceremony still performed at Rome, on St. Anthony’s day, 17th January, when horses and other useful animals are assembled before the church, and blessed. This ceremony has been the subject of much unbecoming and inconsiderate ridicule, for it should be remembered that, in the beginning, the

Almighty Creator himself blessed all his creatures; and, after the fall of man, pronounced a curse upon the earth. It is to avert as much as possible the effects of this malediction that we pray for the giving and preserving of the fruits of the earth, and for the well-being of those animals that God has created for our benefit, and for the manifestation of his own almighty power. Yet the man who, with scrupulous punctuality, says grace before meat, and implores the blessing of heaven on the roasted ribs of an ox upon his table, will ridicule the benediction invoked over the living animal, when standing at the foot of the Esquiline!—ED.

[8806] St. Anastasia, virgin, is often called the Elder, to distinguish her from St. Anastasia, widow. As to her relics, see note, page 174.-ED.

[8807] Victor in Latin signifies a conqueror.

[8808] These holy relics were preserved at Marseilles in the cathedral church and in that of St. Victor, till the revolution of 1793, the sacrilegious deeds of which deprived the Church of this treasure as well as of many others. Two celebrated abbeys bore the name of St. Victor: one of the Benedictines at Marseilles, erected at the beginning of the fifth century on the tomb of the glorious martyrs by the illustrious abbot John Cassian; the other of the regular Canons at Paris, where two distinguished authors lived, often cited by St. Alphonsus, namely, Hugo of St. Victor, a Belgian, and his disciple Richard, a Scotchman.—Ed.

[8809] De Officiis, 1. I, c. 41.

[8810] Peristeph. hymn. 3.

[8811] Alban Butler and Giry cite several churches in France that possessed relics of St. Laurence, but it is probable that they possess them no longer in consequence of the outrages of the Calvinists of the 16th century, and of the revolutionists of 1793.

We read in the annals of Erstein, in Alsace, that the Empress Irmengard, the wife of Lothair I., obtained from Pope Leo IV., about the year 850, the body of St. Sixtus II., and that he had it buried in the abbey of Erstein, the church of which bore the name of this holy Pope.

The relics of St. Romanus were transferred to Lucca, where they are kept under the high altar of the church that bears his name.—ED.

[8812] Acta S. Sebast. apud Boll.

[8813] This is the account given by Surius, who quotes Metaphrastes; but it is far more probable that our saint’s parents, however virtuous, were poor. St. Gregory Nazianzen concludes one of his sermons with an allusion to the saint, and calls him “the renowned Mammas, a shepherd and a martyr.” St. Basil also has an admirable homily upon this blessed martyr, who seems to have been celebrated among the Greeks. The object of the homily is to show that poverty and humility constitute real glory; and that, although custom may warrant the profane panegyrist in extolling the character of a person by referring to the nobility of his birth and to the glorious achievements of his ancestors, yet the laws of truth shall forever prohibit us from praising any one except for his own virtues. The holy Father insists that our saint was but a poor shepherd, who could boast of no worldly distinction; and indeed the reader is inclined to suspect that he was anxious to contradict some apocryphal accounts that would attribute noble ancestry to St. Mammas, for he emphatically says, “Yes, a shepherd! Let us not be ashamed of the truth. Let us not imitate the profane writers of fable.”—St. Basil hom. xxiii. in Mamant. martyr.

[8814] St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nazianzen, and many other celebrated authors eulogize St. Mammas. Alban Butler or Godescard, and Giry, assure us that his head was translated from Constantinople to Langres at the beginning of the 13th century, and deposited in the cathedral that took this holy martyr as its chief patron and titular saint.—ED.

[8815] St. Genesius did not receive the sacrament of regeneration, as the player did not intend to do that which the Church doth, but merely to represent and ridicule her most sacred rites. Our saint, however, received the baptism of martyrdom.—ED.

[8816] The ambition, turbulence, and hypocrisy of this wretched man are portrayed at length by Fleury. He had been a stoic philosopher, and had gained some reputation by his eloquence; but being possessed by a devil, he was relieved by a Christian exorcist, and thereupon embraced the faith. He, however, continued a catechumen until he was overtaken by a dangerous illness, when he received baptism in bed. The Church condemned the lukewarmness of those who would so defer their baptism by refusing to admit them to Holy Orders; yet did this hypocrite so ingratiate himself with his bishop as to be ordained priest, notwithstanding that the entire body of the clergy and many of the laity requested the bishop not to lay hands upon him. Novatian soon proved their distrust of him to be but too well founded; for the persecution coming on, he shut himself up in his house, and when the deacons called upon him for the discharge of his priestly functions, he flew in a passion, and exclaimed that he would no longer discharge any clerical duty, as he desired to practise another kind of philosophy. Having thus manifested his cowardice and want of zeal, he next showed his turbulent spirit in opposing and endeavoring to bring discredit upon his Superiors. To this end he became most rigid, and complained that the bishops were too easy in admitting those who had offered sacrifice to a reconciliation with the Church, and that they were thereby guilty of a most criminal relaxation of discipline. He was not only encouraged and abetted in establishing an open schism at Rome by the turbulent and wicked Novatus; but by his hypocrisy, his cunning, and his desperate calumny of St. Cornelius, he deceived many well-meaning and incautious persons, among whom were St. Hippolytus, and some others who had actually been confessors of the faith. These, however, were quickly disabused, with the exception of Evaristus and Nicostrates, who obstinately persevered in their errors. By the most nefarious means he seduced three bishops to Rome, and obtained from them the episcopal consecration. Thus making himself the first anti-pope, he wrote to the different Churches in the quality of Chief Pastor, which caused much uneasiness to the distant bishops and congregations, as they thought, on the one hand, that an impostor could not be favored by ecclesiastics of eminent sanctity; and on the other, they doubted the truth of his assertions regarding the irregularity of the appointment of Pope Cornelius. But the veil of hypocrisy and cheat under which the: schismatic endeavored to conceal himself was too thin not to be seen through by the intelligent and penetrating Bishop of Alexandria, St. Dionysius, who having received from him a formal notice of his appointment, sent him the following answer: “You inform me that you were raised to this dignity very much against your inclination; you will, therefore, be the more willing to resign it. This you should do, rather than allow a schism to continue in the Church; and for doing so you shall deserve and receive commendation. But should persecution be the consequence of your resignation, know that it will be a more glorious martyrdom than to die for the faith; because by the latter a person provides only for his own soul, while he who maintains the unity of the Church consults for the salvation of many." This holy bishop and St. Cyprian were of great assistance to the Pope in crushing the schism. The wretched Novatian afterwards added heresy to his other crimes, by teaching that the Church had not the power of forgiving certain sins; but that apostates, murderers, etc., should be left to the mercy of God, without being reconciled to the Church, no matter what penance they might perform. This doctrine being condemned by the Church, he was followed only by a few, in giving Communion to whom he used to administer a most horrid oath, that they never would abandon him to return to Cornelius. The history of this schism has been given more at length than the dimensions of a note would seem to authorize, not only on account of its importance, but because it is a tolerably fair sample of the motives that influence the authors of heresy and schism, as well as of the means by which they are propagated.—ED.

[8817] Peristeph. hymn. 4.

[8818] The faithful secretly carried off the body of St. Symphorian, and buried it with great veneration. Towards the end of the fourth century a chapel was built over the tomb, which became celebrated by many miracles. Other churches and monasteries have been since erected in several places in his honor. At the cathedral of Autun there are a few relics that escaped the sacrilegious fury of the Huguenots, who burnt a part of them in 1570, and the saint has always been greatly???

[8819] The wife of this wretched man, who was remarkable for her piety, did not fail to make him recognize the hand of God in the exquisite tortures which he suffered during the frightful disease that terminated his wicked life. Moved by the exhortations of this pious lady, and by his own sufferings, he wrote to the emperor to restore the Christian religion; but his prayer was unheeded by the arch-apostate, and he died the victim of God's wrath. It is said that he invoked the mercy of the Lord in his last moments; but we know that "the death of the wicked is very evil"—Ps. xxxiii., and we have reason to tremble for the sincerity of that sorrow which is elicited by bodily pain.—ED.

[8820] See Chapters XVII. and LXXV.

[8821] A city which, according 10 Alban Butler, must not be confounded with the ancient capital of Syria; it was situated between Syria and Arabia, and depended on the government of Phenicia.-ED

[8822] It was to Galerius Maximianus that our saint was physician. This emperor conceived a great liking for him, on account of his great talents and extraordinary beauty, and placed him under the tuition of the celebrated Euphrosymus. It has been said of St. Pantaleon that he had apostatized upon his reception at court, and that St. Hermolaus merely encouraged him to retract this false step; but the Acts state that he was baptized by his friend, and although he himself says that his mother exhorted him to profess the Christian religion, it does not appear that he ever did so previously to his baptism. —Ed.

[8823] From this circumstance it may be supposed that Hermolaus was a priest; the Acts are silent on this point.-Ed.

[8824] St. Hermolaus and his two companions, Hermippus and Hermocrates, suffered before St. Pantaleon.—ED.

[8825] See Chapters XVII. and LXXI.

[8826] Our author means the aboriginal inhabitants, now called “Berbers.”—ED.

[8827] This notice is wanting in several Italian editions; we find it in the Turin edition of 1831. St. Alphonsus seems to have based his narrative on the work of Father Crasset, “History of the Church in Japan,” published at first under the pseudonym of “M. l’Abbé T.”

The empire of Japan, situated northwest of China, is composed of a great number of islands, the area of which is about the same as that of California, which lies due east, and its population is nearly equal to that of the United States. Its capital is Tokyo, formerly called Jedo. Although within the last half-century the Japanese have been compelled to change their foreign policy, and have even sent several embassies to Europe, still, as late as 1870, 4000 Christians from one valley alone were exiled for their faith.

It was on the 15th of August, 1549, that St. Francis Xavier landed in Japan to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Forty years afterwards there were seen a great number of servants of the true God in every condition of life, some of them even near the throne; the Christian religion was dominant in several kingdoms, so that towards the beginning of the 17th centtiry, according to trustworthy writers, the church in Japan numbered two million Catholics.—ED.

[8828] Protasius was his baptismal name, and he took the name of John when he received confirmation. We may read about his heroic death in Chapter VII.—ED.

[8829] These twenty-six martyrs, beatified in 1627 by Pope Urban VIII., were canonized by Pius IX., June 8, 1862, on the feast of Pentecost, in the presence of about three hundred bishops who had come from all parts of the world. Their feast is fixed for the 5th of February, the day on which they consummated their sacrifice. The following are their names and their rank:

Six Franciscan Religious; namely, the three priests, Fathers Peter Baptist, aged fifty-two; Martin de Aguirre, or of the Ascension, aged thirty; and Francis Blanco, aged thirty—all Spaniards; one cleric. Philip of Jesus or Las Casas, aged twenty-three, born in Mexico; two lay-brothers, Francis of St. Michael, aged fifty-four, a Spaniard, and Gonzalvo Garcia, aged twenty-five, born in the Indies of Portuguese parents.

Seventeen Japanese who, before going to execution, were received into the Third Order of St. Francis; namely, Michael Cozaki and his son Thomas, aged fourteen; Anthony, aged thirteen; Paul Ibarki and his younger brother, Leo Garazuma, with their nephew Louis, a boy of eleven; Paul Suzuki; Francis, a physician of Meaco, aged forty-six; Come Toja or Takia; Thomas Danki; Bonaventure or Ventura; Gabriel, aged nineteen; John Kisnia or Kimoia; Joachim Saquir or Saccakibara, aged forty; Matthias, a substitute for another of the same name; Francis Fahelente, Peter Sukegiro.

Three Japanese Jesuits, namely, Father Paul Miki, aged thirty-three, with two novices, John de Goto, aged nineteen, and James Kisai, aged sixty-four, who made their vows on the very day of their martyrdom. The Jesuits had not then been included in the sentence of condemnation; but the governor of Ozaka had these three arrested as they were in the city, and joined them to the Franciscans, against whom this persecution was chiefly directed.-ED.

[8830] Nevertheless the Christian religion, during the regency, which lasted four years, and before Daifusama became the sole ruler, had spread rapidly, for the Jesuits converted in two years seventy thousand Japanese.—ED.

[8831] These were noblemen who devoted themselves to the exercise of charity, and who were known by the name of Gifiaqui; we shall see their glorious end, as related in Chapter V.—ED.

[8832] Page 332.

[8833] Page 316.

[8834] As for his wife and child, see note in chap. xvii.

[8835] As these illustrious conquerors will probably not fail, as we have been assured, to receive the honors of triumph in the Church, as we have seen in the case of those mentioned, Chapter II., page 326, we deem it useful to give a list of their names.

There were eight Dominicans; namely, the Dominican Fathers Moralez, Alphonse de Mena, Ange Ferrier, Joseph and Hyacinthe Orfanelli; the brothers Alexis and Thomas; John, of the Third Order. The first six were burnt.

Four Franciscans: Fathers Peter d’Avila and Richard of St. Anne; Brothers Leo and Vincent. All four perished by fire. Father Richard is he of whom St. Alphonsus relates the example in the Glories of Mary, P. I. ch. viii. § I (Vol. VII. p. 233).

Nine Jesuits: Fathers Charles Spinola, who was very celebrated, being regarded as the chief of this glorious phalanx, and Sebastian Quimura; the novices whose vows were received by Father Spinola before the execution, Peter Sampo, Gonzalve Fusai, Thomas Acafoxi, Michael Xumpo, Anthony Kiuni, Louis Cavara, and John Ciungocu. All were condemned to the fire; but the last one was beheaded, for want of a stake to which to tie him.

The four seculars delivered up to the flames were: Anthony—of Corea, Paul—, Anthony Sanga, and Lucius Fraitez.

Twenty-seven seculars beheaded: Isabella Fernandez, widow of Dominic George, (Chap. XI. page 364), and his son Ignatius, aged four years; Mary, widow of Andrew Tocuan, a martyr; Apollina, a widow; Agnes, widow of Come, a martyr; Marina, a widow; Mary, wife of Anthony of Corea, condemned to the fire; his son, John aged twelve; and his brother Peter, aged three; Mary, widow of John Xun, a martyr; Dominica, a widow; Magdalen, wife of Anthony Sanga, condemned to the fire; Mary, wife of Paul—, also condemned to the tire; Catharine—; Thecla, wife of Paul Nangaxi, the one who, having come forth from the fire, re-entered it voluntarily, and his son Peter, aged seven; Dominic Nacavo, son of Matthias, a martyr; Peter Motoiurna, aged five, son of John, a martyr; Bartholomew Cavano; Dominic Yamanda; Damian—, and his son Michael, aged five; Thomas—; Clement and his son Anthony, aged three; Rufus Clare, wife of a martyr.—ED.

[8836] We shall hear of his martyrdom in the following chapter.

[8837] “Clamabit ad me, et ego exaudiam eum.”-Ps. xc. 15.

[8838] “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”-Phil. iv. 13.

[8839] Chapter XXVI., page 400.

[8840] Page 403.

[8841] Chap. XXVII., page 401.

[8842] Before concluding I will here relate a very edifying occurrence. Toward the end of the mission there was a religious of the Order of St. Augustine, who to remain unknown became a vender of chestnuts, and entered under this disguise one of the vessels. As he asked too much for his chestnuts someone gave him a blow on the cheek; but he received this affront without the slightest emotion, and continued quietly to offer his chestnuts for sale. The idolaters, observing that such meekness was not a virtue practised among them, suspected the vender of being a Christian, arrested him and put him to death, after the religious had openly professed his faith. Wonderful power of the grace of Jesus Christ, who gives to his servants the strength to practise virtues unknown among pagans!

[8843] Page 40.

[8844] We here give four hymns by St. Alphonsus that were recently discovered; and as the original text is not easily found we quote it in full. To these we add the lines that are sung during the missions.—ED.

[8845] See note, page 435. The first three of these hymns are taken from one of the volumes examined during the process of the canonization of St. Alphonsus, and the first is mentioned in his Life, 1. i. ch. 3, either by Father Tannoia or by Cardinal Villecourt. As to the fourth, it is sung in Italy during the visits to the Blessed Sacrament as one of the hymns of our saint, and there is no doubt that he is the author.—ED.

[8846] Pages 295, 352 of this volume.

[8847] Life of St. Alphonsus, by Cardinal Villecourt, 1. 3, ch. 34.

[8848] “ Erunt sicut Angeli Dei in coelo.” Matt. xxii. 30.

[8849] “ Cast has angelos facit: qui earn serya.Yit, angelus est; qui perdidit, diabolus.” De Virg. 1. i.

[8850] “ E cœlo accersivit quod imitaretur in terris; vivendi sibi usum quæsivit e cœlo, quæ sponsum sibi invenit in coelo.” De Virg. 1, i.

[8851] “ Despondi vos uni viro virginem castam exhibere Christo.” 2 Cor. xi. 2.

8852 “ Exierunt obviam Sponso. . . . Introierunt cum eo ad nuptias.” Matt. xxv. i.

8853 “ Castaque virginitas decoratur conjuge Christo.” Carm. Virginit.

8854 “ Sponsabo te mihi in fide.” Os. ii. 20.

8855 “ Sequuntur Agnum, quocunque ierit.” Apoc. xiv. 4.

8856 Sponsa nos ipsi sumus, et omnes simul una sponsa. et animæ singulorum quæi singulae sponsne.” Domi. 1. p. Epiph. s. 2.

8857 “ Omnes animæ sponsæ sunt Christi, specialius tamen virgines.” De Virg. s. 2.

8858 “ Unus omnium sacrarum virginum sponsus.” Ep. ad prob. De virg. c. 4.

8859 “ Qualis est Dilectus tuus ex dilecto, o pulcherrima mulierum ?” Cant. v. 9.

8860 Dilectus metis candidus et rubicundus, electus ex millibus.” Ibid.

8861 “ Nihil illo magnificentius, nihil gloriosius, nihil pulchrius, nihil munificentius.” De Contemptu M.

8862 “ Virgines agnoscant cui se consecrarunt.” Ep. ad Antioch.

8863 “ Sponsum offertis; meliorem reperi.” DC J irg. 1. I.

8864 Croiset, Exerc., May 12.

8865 Mulier innupta et virgo cogitat quæ Domini sunt, ut sit sancta corpora et spiritu; quæ autem nupta est, cogitat quæ mundi sunt, quo-modo placeat viro.” i Cor. vii. 34.

8866 Porro hoc ad utilitatem vestram dico. . . . , ad id quod honestum est, et quod facultatem præbeat sine impedimento Dominum obsecrandi.” Ibid. iii. 35.

8867 “Qui enim est virgo, ab inutilibus cogitationibus liberam habet animam.” In I Cor. vii. 32.

8868 “ Ut sit sancta corpore et spiritu. Corpore sancta, propter casti-tatem; spiritu sancta, propter familiaritatem cum Deo.” in i Cor. vii. 34.

8869 “ Si nulla merces amplior virginem sequeretur, sufficeret ei hæc sola prælatio: cogitare quæ Domini sunt.”

8870 “ Non solum in future saeculo gloriam, sed et in præsenti requiem abet virginitas.” In I Cor. vii.

8871 “Quem diligebat Jesus.” John, xiii. 23.

8872 “ Virgo est electus a Domino, atque inter caeteros magis dilectus.” Die 27 Dec. resp. i.

8873 “ Virgines enim sunt. Hi sequuntur Agnum, quocumque ierit. Hi cmpti sunt ex hominibus primitiæ Deo et Agno.” Apoc. xiv. 4.

8874 “ Sicut primitiæ fructuum delectabiliores sunt.”

8875 “ Qui pascitur inter lilia.” Cant. ii. 16.

8876 “ Sicut diabolus cceno libidinis saginatur, ita Christus castimoniæ liliis pascitur.” Aponius, In Cant. 1. 5.

8877 “Cantus a Virginibus modulati suaviorem Agno harmoniam efficiunt, quam si omnes alii SanctL canere contenderent”

8878 “ Omnis ponderatio non est digna continentis animæ.” Ecclus. xxvi. 20.

8879 “ Inde est quod votum continentire non habet dispensationem, quia non haLet compensationem,” In Ecclus. xxvi. 20.

8880 “ Quomodo fiet istud, quoniam virum non cognosce ?” Luke , i. 34.

8881 “ Virginitas est regina virtutum, possessio omnium bonorum.”

8882 “ Hanc (virgin itatem) si amaveris, a Domino in omnibus prosperaberis.” De Virt. c. 9.

8883 Virginitas præparat animam ad videndum in præsenti Jesum Sponsum per fidem, et in future per gloriam.” T. ii. s. 48, a. I.

8884 “ Et nemo poterat cantare canticum, nisi ilia centum quadraginta quatuor milla, qui empti sunt de terra.” Apoc. xiv. 3.

8885 “ Gaudia propria Virginum Christi non sunt eadem non virginum, quamvis Christi; nam sunt aliis, sed nullis talia.” DC Virginit. c. 27.

8886 “Nescio vos.” Matt. xxv. 12.

8887 “ Si Sponsum se exhibeat, mutabit vocem, et dicet: Si ego sponsus, ubi est amor meus? Exigit ergo Deus timeri ut Dominus, honorari ut Pater, ut Sponsus amari.” In Cant. s. 83.

8888 “ In meditatione mea exardescet ignis.” Ps. xxxviii. 4.

8889 “ Et ut scivi quoniam aliter non possem esse continens, nisi Deus det . . . , adii Dominum, et deprecatus sum illum.” Wisd. viii. 21.

8890 “ Sicut lilium inter spinas.” Cant. ii. 2.

8891 “ Nulla in parte mœchari convenit virginem, non lingua, non aure, non oculo.non tactu; multoque minus animo.” De Vera Virg.

8892 “ Sequuntur Agnum, quocumque ierit.” Apoc. xiv. 4.

8893 “ Pulchrae sunt genie tuae sLcut turturis.” Cant. 1. 9

8894 “Zelotypus est Jesus; non vult ab aliis videri faciem tuam.” Ep. ad Eust.

8895 Vita S. Ansb. 9 Febr.

8896 Ann. 870, n. 39.

8897 Hist. p. 3, t. 24, c. 9, g II.

8898 “ Abrenuntias huic sæculo et omnibus vanitatibus ejus?”

8899 “ Abrenuntio.”

8900 “ Nunc autem quia saeculum reliquisti, serva fœdus quod spopondisti.” Ep. ad Demetr.

8901 “ Egredimini et videte, filiæ Sion, regem Salomonem in diademate quo coronavit ilium mater sua, in die desponsationis illius, et in die Lætitiæ cordis ejus.” Cant. iii. 11.

8902 “ Gaudeamus, et exultemus, et demus gloriam ei, quia venerunt nuptiæAgni, et uxor ejus præparavit se.” Apoc. xix. 7.

8903 “ Murenulas aureas faciemus tibi, vermiculatas argento.” Cant. i. 10.

8904 “ Dexteram meam et collum meum cinxit lapidibus pretiosis. Induit me Dominus cyclade auro texta et immensis monilibus ornavit me.” Offic. 21 Jan.

8905 “ Haec est generatio quarentium eum.” Ps. xxiii. 6.

8906 “In hoc ad invicem zelate, quænam huic Sponso carior, quænam familiarior existat, quæ-humilior, quæ obedientior.” De Nat. Mar. ad mon. cone. 2.

8907 “ Fili, accedens ad servitutem Dei, sta in justitia et timore, et praepara animam tuam ad tentationem. . . . In humilitate tua patientiam habe, quoniam in igne probatur aurum.” Ecclus. ii. I.

8908 “ Nemo potest duobus Dominis servire.” Matt. vi. 24.

8909 Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est.” 2 Cor. v. 15.

8910 Sponsum habes pulcherrimum. Misit pignus amoris; in ipso munere poteris agnoscere quo affectu ilium diligere debeas.” De dil. Deo, c. 4.

8911 “ Nihil tibi et turbis; obliviscere omnium; soli serves te ipsam, quern ex omnibus tibi elegisti.” In Cant. s. 40.

8912 “ Quot et quales abjecti sunt, qui hanc, quae tibi data est, gratiam consequi non potuerunt ! Omnibus illis Redemptor tuus te pnetulit; elegit te Sponsus tuus, Deus tuus.” De dil. Deo, c. 7.

8913 “ Propterea dicit Dominus: Ecce tempus tuum, tempus amantium. Haec igitur recolens in corde tuo, in eo reponas spem tuam et dilectionem tuam, qui in charitate perpetua dilexit te, et attraxit te miserans, Jesus, Sponsus tuus.”

8914 “ Discede a me, pabulum mortis, quia jam ab alio amatore præventa sum.” Offic. 2ijnn.

8915 “ Posuit signum in faciem meam, ut nullum, prætereum, amatorem ad m ittam. “ Ibid

8916 “ Dei sponsa, disce superbiam sanctam; scito te illis esse meliorem, et die: Inveni quern quærebat anima mea; tenebo eum, et non dimittam.” Ep. ad Eust.

8917 Charitatem habete, quod est vinculum perfectionis.”—Col iii. 14.

8918 “Ipsi sum desponsata cui Angeli serviunt.”

8919 “ Annulo tuo subarrhavit me, et tanquam sponsam decoravit me corona.” Offic. 21 jan.

8920 “ Tene quod habes, ut nemo accipiat coronam tuam.” Apoc. iii. 11.

8921 “ Jesu, mi Sponse ! ne permittas me separari a te.”

8922 “ Quis ergo nos separabit a charitate Christi ? Neque mors, neque vita, . . . neque creatura alia, poterit nos separari a charitate Dei.”—Rom. viii. 35–38.

8923 Dux fuisti in misericordia tua populo quern redemisti, et portasti eum in fortitudine tua ad habitaculum sanctum tuum.” Exod. xv. 13.

8924 “ Laudas Deum, cum agie negotium ; laudas, cum cibum et potum capis; laudas, cum requisis et dormis In Ps. cxlvi.

8925 “Nonne hæc est religio sancta, in qua homo vivit purius, cadit rarius, surgit velocius, incedit cautius, irroratur frequentius, quiescit securius, moritur confidentius, purgatur citius, remuneratur copiosius ?” Hom, in illud Matth. xiii. : Simile est.

8926 “ Ecce in die jejunii vestri invenitur voluntas vestra.” Is. lvni. 3.

8927 “ Quod infirmum est in vohis, fortius est sæcularibus. “ In Cant. s—57-

8928 “Credo nullum hie esse qui, si quartam partem, eorum quæ facit, in sæculo actitaret, non adoraretur ut sanctus.” In Ps. xc. s. 4.

8929 “ Omne quod est in mundo, concupiscentia carnis est, et concupiscentia oculorum, et superbia vitæ.” i John, ii. 16.

8930 “Mundus totus in maligno positus est.” i John, v 19.

8931 “ Væ soli; quia cum ceciderit non habet sublevantem se.” Eccles, iv. 10.

8932 “Si unus ceciderit, ab altero fulcietur.” Ibid.

8933 “ Juvatur a sociis ad resurgendum.”

8934 “ Cum ceciderit (Justus), non collidetur; quia Dominus supponit manum suam.” Ps. xxxvi. 24.

8935 Boll. 23 Apr, Vit. p. 3. c. i.

8936 “ Pax Dei, quae exsuperat omnem sensum.” Phil. iv. 7.

8937 “ Elegi abjectus esse in domo Dei mei, magis quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum.” Ps. xxxiii. 11.

8938 “ Deus meus, et omnia.”

8939 “ Consulto Deus gratiam religionis hominibus occultavit; nam, si cognosceretur illius felicitas, omnes ad eam concurrerent.” vit. c. 9.

8940 “ Apostasia cordis, sub habitu religionis cor saeculare gerere.” In Ps. xc. s. 3.

8941 “ Omnis qui reliquerit domum vel fratres, aut sorores, aut patrem, aut matrem, aut uxorem, aut filios, aut agros, propter nomen meum, centuplum accipiet, et vitam æternam possidebit.” Matt. xix. 29.

8942 “ Impossibile est mentiri Deum; promisit autem ille vitam æternam ista relinquentibus. Tu reliquisti omnia ista; quid igitur prohibet de hujusmodi promissione esse securum?” De Provid. 1. I.

8943 “ Moriens enim vix aut nunquam a cella in infernum descendit, quia vix unquam, nisi cœlo praedestinatus, in ea usque ad mortem persistit.” De Vit. . sol. c. 4.

8944 “ Illius cœlestis civitatis iste est introitus; magnum quippe electionis indicium est, hujus fraternitatis habere consortium.” DC Discipl. mon. c. 7.

8945 “ Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur.” Apoc. xiv. 13.

8946 “ Rationabiliter autem dici potest quod, etiam per ingressum religionis, aliquis consequatur remissionem omnium peccatorum. In satisfactionem pro omnibus peccatis, sufficit qiuxl aliquis se totaliter divinis obsequiis mancipet per religionis ingressum, quæ excedit omne genus satisfaction is. Unde legitur in Vitis Patrum, quod eamdem gratiam consequuntur religionem intrantes, quam consequuntur baptizati.” 2. 2 r q. 189, a. 3.

8947 “Quisquis enim potum dederit vobis calicem aquæ in nomine meo, . . . non perdet mercedem suam.” Mark, ix. 40.

8948 “ Flos est ille ecclesiastic! generis,. . . . illustrior portio gregis Christi.” De Discipl. virg.

8949 “Sunt generis nostri primitive, columnae et coronæ fidei, margaritæ templi.” Orat. 9.

8950 Ribera, Vit. 1. i, c. 13.

8951 Dubitari non debet ipsorum mentis adhuc stare mundum.” Hist. Monach. prol.

8952 Quæst. Rom. q. 29.

8953 “ Ubi tu Caius, ego Caia.”

8954 “ Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi”Prov. xxiii. 26.

8955 “ Posuit oculum suum super corda illorum.” Rcdits. xvii. 7.

8956 “ Omnis gloria ejus . . . ab intus.” Ps. xliv. 14.

8957 “ Exigit Deus timeri ut Dominus, honorari ut Pater, ut Sponsus amari.” In Cant. s. 83.

8958 “ Accipe velum, ut nullum amatorem præter eum admittas.”

8959 “ Regnum mundi et omnem ornatum sæculi contempsi, propter amorem Domini mei Jesu Christi, quem vidi, quem amavi, in quem credidi, quem dilexi.”

8960 “ Discede a me, pabulum mortis, quia jam abalioamatore præventa sum.”

8961 “ Ipsi desponsata sum, cui Angeli serviunt.” Offic. 2: Jan.

8962 “ Omni custodia serva cor tuum, quia ex ipso vita procedit.” Prov. iv. 23.

8963 Affersne cor vacuum, ut possit illud Spiritus Sanctus implere ?

8964 “ Cor mundum crea in me, Deus. “ Ps.1. 12.

8965 “ Væ duplici corde.” Ecclus. ii. 14.

8966 “ Iratus Deus, quia fit ibi pars diabolo, discedit, et totum diabolus possidet. “/;&gt;/&lt;;. tr. 7.

8967 “ Minus te amat, qui tecum aliquid aliud amat. “ Conf. 1. 10, c. 29.

8968 Life, ch. 39.

8969 “ Una uni !”

8970 Ne amorem divideres, tibi factus est Creator et Redemptor.”

8971 “ Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.” Matt. xxii. 37.

8972 “ Hæc est generatio quaerentium eum.” Ps. xxiii. 6.

8973 “ Nihil tibi et turbis; obliviscere omnium; soli omnium serves te ipsam, quern ex omnibus tibi elegisti.” In Cant. s. 40.

8974 “ Mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus.” Cant. iv. 12.

8975 “ Hortus conclusus, qui neminem nisi Dilectum admittit.” In Cant. s—35-

8976 “ Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum, quia fortis est ut mors dilectio.” Cant. viii. 6.

8977 “ Super cor et super brachium sponsæ Dilectus ut signaculum ponitur, quia in sancta anima, quantum ab ea diligatur, et voluntate et actione designatur.”

8978 “ Si dederit homo omnem substantiam domus suæ pro dilectione, quasi nihil despiciet eam.” Cant. viii. 7.

8979 “ Totum tibi dedit, nihil sibi retinuit.”

8980 “ Totus mihi datus, totus in meos usus expensus est.” In Circumc, s. 3-

8981 “ Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.” Cant. ii. 16.

8982 “ Nunc princeps hujus mundi ejicitur foras.” John, xii. 31.

8983 “ Sed extra corda credentium.” In 1 Jo. tr. 4.

8984 Way of Per f. ch. 17.

8985 Life, ch. 11.

8986 “ Cantate Domino canticum novum.” Ps. xcv. i.

8987 “ Quid habet canticum novum, nisi amorem novum ?” Serm. 336, E. B.

8988 Sensus enim et cogitatio humani cordis in malum prona sunt ab adolescentia sua.” Gen. viii. 21.

8989 “ Vox hujus cantoris, fervor est sanctiamoris; ipsum amemus propter ipsum.”

8990 “ Sibi habeant divitias suas divites, sibi regna sua reges; nobis eloria, et possessio, et regnum, Christus est.” Ep. ad Aprum.

8991 “ Deus meus, et omnia. Quid mihi est in coelo, et a te quid volui super terram ?. . . . Deus cordis mei et pars mea Deus in aeternum. “ Ps. Ixxii. 25, 26.

8992 “ Inveni, quern diligit anima mea; tenui eum, nee dimittam.” Cant. iii. 4.

8993 “ Beati mortui, qui in Domino moriuntur.” Apoc. xiv. 13.

8994 “ Nutrimentum charitatis est imminutio cupiditatis; perfectio, nulla cupiditas.” De div. quast. q. 36.

8995 Nihil tam durum, quod non amoris igne vincatur.” De Mor. eccl. cath. c. 22.

8996 “ In eo quod amatur, aut non laboratur, aut et labor amatur.” De Bono vid. c. 21.

8997 “ Suave mihi subito factum est carere suavitatibus nugarum; et quas amittere metus fuerat, jam dimittere gaudium est.” Conf. 1. 9, c. i.

8998 “ Regnum cœlorum vim patitur, et violenti rapiunt illud.” Matt. xi. 12.

8999 “ Tene quod habes, ut nemo accipiat coronam tuam.” Apoc. xi. 12.

9000 “Quos præscivit, et prsedestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui.” Rom. viii. 29.

9001 “ Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum.” Matt. xvi. 24.

9002 “ O bone Jesu ! moriar amore amoris tui, qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori.”

9003 “ Qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sedei qui pro ipsis mortuus est.” 2 Cor. v. 15.

9004 “ Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.” Phil. iv. 13.

9005 “ Omnia quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.” Murk, xi. 24.

9006 “ Domine, qui abstulisti a meamorem sæculi, accipe animam meam.” Offic. 21 Jan.

9007 “Cum in omnibus mundi studiis non satiantur homines, hie tantum crepisse sufficiet.” Ad Demetr. De Virginit.

9008 “ Christianum cum dico, perfectum dico.” In Ps. cxviii. s. 12.

9009 “ Perfectum non potest esse, nisi singulare.”

9010 “ Loquere, Domine, quia audit servus tuus.” 1 Kings, iii. 9.

9011 “Quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbæ, et volabo, et requiescam ?” Ps. liv. 7.

9012 “Vires subministrat , pœnam exhibet leviorem.” DC Disc. mon. c 6

9013 “ Justorum autem semita, quasi lux splendens, procedit et crescit usque ad perfectam diem; via impiorum tenebrosa, nesciunt ubi corruant.” Prov. iv. 18.

9014 “ Non progredi, jam est reverti.” Ep. 17, E. B.

9015 Past. p. 3, c. i.

9016 “ Sensus enim et cogitatio humani cordis in malum prona sunt ab adolescentia sua,” Gen. viii. 21.

9017 “ Non vis proficere; vis ergo deficere ? Nequaquam! Quid ergo? Inquis: Vivere volo et manere in quo perveni; nee pejor fieri patior, nee melior cupio. Hoc ergo vis, quod esse non potest.” Ep. 254.

9018 “Sic currite ut comprehendatis.” i Cor. ix. 24.

9019 “ Hæc est enim voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra.” i Thess. iv. 3.

9020 “ Estote ergo vos perfecti, sicut et Pater vester coelestis perfectus est.” Matt. v. 48.

9021 “ Sancti estote quia ego sanctus sum.” Lev. xi. 44.

9022 “ Deus impossibilia non jubet; sed jubendo monet, et faccre quod possis, et petere quod non possis; et adjuvat ut possis.” Sess. vi. c. IT.

9023 “ Tola vita christiani boni sanctum desiderium est.” In I Jo. tr. 4.

9024 “ Qui statum religionis assumit, non tenetur habere perfectam charitatem, sed tenetur ad hoc tendere. Non tenetur religiosus ad omnia exercitia quibus ad perfectionem pervenitur, sed ad ilia quæ determinate sunt ei taxata, secundum regulam quam professus est.” 2. 2, q. 1 86, a. 2.

9025 Entret. i.2

9026 2, q. 1 86, a. 9.

9027 Beatus vir cujus est auxiliumabs ste; ascensiones in corde suo disposuit in valle lacrymarum; . . . ibunt de virtute in virtutem.” Ps. Ixxxiii. 6.

9028 In via christianæ perfectionis semper ulterius progrediendi Offic. 10 Nov.

9029 “ Consummatus in brevi, explevit tempora multa.” Wisd. iv. 13.

9030 “ Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.” Phil. iv. 13.

9031 “Legebat, et exuebatur mundo mens ejus.”

9032 “Quid quaerimus? Majorne esse potent spes nostra, quam ut amici imperatoris simus? Et per quot pericula pervenitur ad grandius pericuium? Et quando istuc erit?” Conf. 1. 8, c. 6.

9033 “ Amicus autem Dei, si voluero, ecce nunc fio.”

9034 “ Vult et non vult piger.” Prov. xiii. 4.

9035 “ Desideria occidunt pigrum.” Ibid. xxi. 25.

9036 Introduct. ch. 37

9037 Way of Perf. ch. 39

9038 “ In meditatione mea exardescet ignis.” Ps. xxxviii. 4.

9039 “ Et dixi: Nunc cœpi.” Ps. Ixxvi. 11.

9040 “ Fratres mei, discutite vos sine palpatione. Semper tibi displiceat quod es, si vis pervenire ad id quod nondum es. .”

9041 “ Ubi tibi placuisti, ibi remansisti.”

9042 “ Si autem dixeris: Sufficit; et periisti.” Serm. 169, E. B.

9043 “ Profecto, nolle proficere, deficere est.” Epist. 254.

9044 “ Segniores facit et in arrogantiam extollit.” In Phil, hom. 12.

9045 “ Qui currit, non reputat quantum spatii perfecerit, sed quantum desit.” Ibid.

9046 “Quasi effodientes thesaurum.” Job, iii. 21.

9047 “ Hoc semper in corde, frequenter etiam in ore habebat: Bernarde, ad quid venisti ?” Surius, Vit. 1. I, c. 4.

9048 “ Qualis prime die ingredieris, talis etiam reliquos dies peragas.” Vit. Patr. 1. 3, n. 198

9049 Lib. 3, n. 216.

9050 L. 5, libell. 7, n. 40.

9051 “ Jugis conatus ad perfectionera, perfectio reputatur.” Epist. 254.

9052 “Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem vestrum, qui in cœlis est.” Matt. v. 16.

9053 “ Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”

9054 Ecce constitui te hodie super gentes et super regna, ut evellas et destruas, . . . et ædifices et plantes. Jer. i. 10.

9055 “ in multis enim offendimus omnes.” James, iii. 2.

9056 Si Dexerimus, quoniam peccatum non habemus, ipsi nos seducimus, et veritas in nobis non. est.” I John, i. 8.

9057 “ Peccatum peccator audebit direre parvum? Deum enim exhonorare, quando parvum est ?” Mcd. 2.

9058 Life ch. 25.

9059 Way of Perf. ch. 42.

9060 “ Non ignores rugam tibi unam turpiorem esse, quam maxima vulnera iis qui in mundo vivunt.” Adv. mul. sese orn.

9061 “ Ego Dilecto meo, et ad me conversio ejus.” Cant. vii. 10.

9062 “ Ubi dixisti: Sufficit; et periisti.” Scrni. 169, E. .

9063 “ Numquam illic anima, quo ceciderit, jacet.” Mor. 1. 31, c. 12.

9064 De Perf. 1. 5, p. 2, c. 16.

9065 “ Petrus autem sequebatur eum a longe.” Matt. xxvi. 58.

9066 Sent. 1. 2, c. 19

9067 “Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet.” Ecclus, xix. i.

9068 “ Noli ilia contemnere, quia minora sunt; sed time, quia plurasunt; timenda est ruina multitudinis, etsi non magnitudinis.” Serm. o, .B.

9069 Serm. 56.

9070 In Matth. hom. 87.

9071 “ Capite nobis vulpes parvulas, quae demoliuntur vineas.” Cant, ii. 15.

9072 “ Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.” Matt. vi. 13.

9073 “ Qui parce seminal, parce et-metet.” 2 Cor. ix. 6.

9074 1 De Nov. rup. c. 23.

9075 “ De propitiate peccato, noli esse sine metu.” Ecclus. v. 5.

9076 “ Negligentes Deus deserere consuevit.” In Ps. cxviii. s. 10,

9077 “ Si non lavero te, non habebis pattern mecum.” John xiii. 8

9078 “Muscæ morientes perdunt suavitatem unguenti.” Ecclus. x. i.

9079 “Sunt velut scabies, et nostrum decus ita exterminant, ut a Sponsi amplexibus separent.” Serm. 351, E. B

9080 “ Seminastis rmiltum, et intulistis parum; . . . et qui mercedes con-gregavit, misit eas in sæculum pertusum.” Agg. i. 6

9081 “ Omni enim habenti dabitur, et abundabit; ei autem qui non habet, et quod vidctur habere, auferetur ab eo.” Matt. xxv. 29.

9082 “ Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo.” Ps. Ixxxvii. 2.

9083 “Tune maxime insidiatur adversarius, quando videt nobis passiones aliquas generari; tune fomites movet, laqueos parat.” De OFFic. 1. I, c. 4

9084 “ Diabolus non pugnat cito contra aliquem per grandia vitia, sed per parva, ut possit quomodocumque intrare et dominari homini, ut postea in majora vitia eum impellat.”

9085 “ Nemo repente fit turpissimus.” Dedam. n. 15.

9086 “ A minimis incipiunt, qui in maxima proruunt.” De Ord. Vit. c. II.

9087 “ Ecce quantus ignis quam magnam silvam incendit!” James, iii. 5

9088 i. 2, q. 78, a. I. 2 i. 2, q. 73, a . 10

9089 “ Ruina quæ de alto est, graviori casu collidetur.” De Dignit. Sac. c. 3.

9090 “ Posui te in monte sancto Dei, . . . et peccasti; et ejeci tede monte Dei, et perdidi te.” Ezck. xxviii. 14.

9091 “ Scio opera tua, quia neque frigiduses, neque calidus.” Apoc. iii. 15.

9092 “ Utinam frigidus esses aut calidus ! sed, quia tepidus es, et nee frigidus nee calidus, incipiam te evomere ex ore meo.” Ibid. 15, 16.

9093 “Tepor (qui a fervore defecit) in desperatione est.” Past. p. 3, adm. 35.

9094 “ Quæ impossibilia sunt apud homines, possibilia sunt apud Deum.” Luke xviii. 27.

9095 Life, ch. 30.

9096 “ In hujusmodi quasi inevitabilibus (culpis), et negligentia culpabilis est, et timor immoderatus.” In Cœna Doni, s. i.

9097 “ Septies enim cadet Justus, ct rer.urget.” Prov. xxiv. 16.

9098 Cum aliquis ferventer movetur in Deum.” P. 3, q. 87, a. 3.

9099 “ Contingere potest quod tanta devotione mens, per sumptionem Sacramenti, in Domino absorbeatur, quod ab omnibus venialibus expurgetur.” De Chr. Doni. s. 12, a. 2, c. i.

9100 “ Petite, et accipietis. “John, xvi. 24.

9101 Percuties cas usque ad internecionem.” Deut. vii.

9102 Found, ch. 28.

9103 Life, ch. 30.

9104 Collat. 10, c. 1 6.

9105 “ Persequar inimicos meos, et comprehendam illos; et non convertar, donee deficiant.” Fs. xvii. 38.

9106 “ Quantumlibet in hoc corpora manens profeceris, erras, si vitia putes emortua, et non magis suppressa.” In Cant. s. 58.

9107 “ Non enim in arcu meo sperabo, et gladius meus non salvabit me.” Ps. xliii. 7

9108 “ Petite, et dabitur vobis; quaerite, et invenietis.” Luke, xi. 9.

9109 “ Oportet semper orare, et non deficere.” Luke, xviii. I.

9110 “ Fecerunt civitates duas amores duo: terrenam, amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei; coelestem, amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui.” De Civ. D. 1. 14, c. 28.

9111 “Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum.” Matt. xvi. 24.

9112 Nutrimentum charitatis est imminutio cupiditatis; perfectio, nulla cupiditas,” De div. quæst q. 36.

9113 “ Regere motus animi.” Serm. 196, E. B.

9114 “ Magis nocet domesticus hostis.” Medit. c. 13.

9115 “ Animae irreverent! et infrunitse ne tradas me.” Ecclus. xxiii. 6.

9116 “ Militia est vita hotninis super terram.” Job vii 1

9117 “Credite mihi.et putata repullulant, et effugata redeunt.” In Cant. s. 58.

9118 “ Aliud est has bestias in campo operis sævientes aspiccre, aliud intra cord is caveam frementes tenere.” Mor. 1. 6, c. 22.

9119 Vit. Patr. 1 5, libel. 7, n. 5.

9120 “ Quid proficit clauses esse aditus, si intus hostis fames cuncta contristat ?”In Cant. s. 26.

9121 “ Tantum proficies, quantum tibi ipsi vim intuleris. “ Imit. Chr. 1. i.c. 23.

9122 “Quid prodest tenuari abstinentia, si animus intumescit superbia? Quid vinum non bibere, et odio inebriuri ?”—Ep. Ad celant.

9123 “ Virum dolorum.” Is. liii. 3.

9124 “ Proposito sihi gaudio, sustinuit crucem.” Hebr. xii. 2.

9125 “ Volve et revolve vitam Jesu; semper eum invenies in cruce.”

9126 “ Vadam ad montem myrrhæ.” Cant. iv. 6.

9127 “ Venis ad Crucifixum ? Crucifixus venias, aut crucifigendus.” De Exali. S. Cruc. s. I.

9128 “ Semper mortificationem Jesu in corpore nostro circumferentes. “ 2 Cor iv.10

9129 “Qui sunt Christi, carnem suam crucifixerunt cum vitiis et concupiscentiis. “ Gal. v. 24.

9130 “ Quid aquilæ prosunt alæ, capto pede ?”

9131 “Navis, quantumcumque Integra, nihil prodest, si parvum fundo foramen relinquat. “int. Op. S. Aug. ep. 19, App. E. B.

9132 “Calca jacentem, conflige cum resistente.” Serm 156 E B

9133 Life, ch. 26.

9134 “ Cum parvula est cupiditas, nequaquam parvæ consuetudinis robur accipiat; elide illam.” In Ps. cxxxvi.

9135 “ Nisi citius passiones sustuleris, ulcus efficiunt.” De Perf. man,

9136 Doctr. ii.

9137 Collat. 12, c. 5.

9138 “ Omnis enim qui petit accipit.” Luke, xi. 10.

9139 “ Qui amat, non laborat.” In Jo. tr. 48.

9140 “ Cesset voluntas propria, et infernus non erit.” In Temp. Pasfh. s. 3.

9141 “ Destructio magna virtutum.” Hom, de S. Bencd.

9142 “ Voluntas Dei fons est totius boni; voluntas hominis totius est exordium mali.” De Similit. c. 8.

9143 “ Qui se sibi magistrum constituit, stulto se discipulum subdit.” Epist. 87.

9144 “ Diabolus, perversa voluntate, ex bono angelo diabolus factus est.” Conf. 1. 7, c. 3.

9145 Non pugnant nobiscum daemones, quando voluntates nostras facimus; quia voluntates nostrae dremones facts sunt.” Vit. Pair. 1. 5, lib. 10, n. 62

9146 “ Qui sibi dux esse vult, spreto duce proprio, non jam indiget dæmone tentante, quia ipse factus est dæmon sibi.” De Lib. leg. a mon. cons. 6.

9147 “ Post concupiscentias tuas non eas, et a voluntate tua avertere.” Ecclus. xviii. 30.

9148 “ Nihil est quod diabolus plus oderit, quam obedieniiam.”

9149 Found, ch. 5.

9150 “ Tantum adjicies virtuti, quantum subtraxeris propriæ voluntati.”

9151 Cassian, De Cænob. inst. 1. 4, c. 28.

9152 “ Finis cœnobitae est omnes suascrucifigere voluntates.” Collat. 19, c. 8

9153 “Quasi peccatum ariolandi est, repugnare; et quasi scelus idololatriæ, nolle acquiescere.” I Kings, xv. 23.

9154 “Quasi ergo peccatum ariolandi est, repugnare; quia cordis sui superbis adinvcntionibus credunt, et prælatorum consiliis refragantur.”

9155 Reg. fus. Disp. int. 28.

9156 “A remediis longinquiora sunt vitia quæ, sub specie virtutum, videntur emergere.” Collat. 4, c.20

9157 “ Quare jejunavimus et non aspexisti?” Is. Iviii. 3.

9158 “Ecce, in die jejunii vestri, invenitur voluntas vestra.” Ibid.

9159 “Grande malum propria voluntas, qua fit ut bona tua tibi bona non sint !” in Cant. s. 71.

9160 Entret. 21.

9161 “ Bead sumus, Israel; quia, quæ Deo placent, manifesta sunt nobis.” Bar. iv. 4.

9162 “ Gravissimum a se onus rejecit, qui suam repulit voluntatem.”—De Disc. mon. c . 7.

9163 “Quis tyrannus crudelior quam hominis voluntas?” Hom, de S. Ben.

9164 “Quid prodest, si in loco quies et silentium sit, et in habitatoribus colluctatio passionum; si exteriora serenitas teneat, et interiora tempestas?” Ad Mon. hom. 9.

9165 “Unde turbatio, nisi quod propriam sequimur voluntatem ?” De Div. s. 26.

9166 De Cœn. Inst. 1.4. c. 8

9167 Vit. S. Phil. 20 Aug.

9168 “ Habeto pacem cum prælatis tuis: non detrahas eis, nee libenter audias alios detrahentes eis; quia specialiter Deus hoc vitium punit in subditis, etiam in præsenti.” Op. Ad quid ven. c. 3.

9169 “ Fucta præpositorum oris gladio non sunt ferienda, etiam cum recte reprehendenda videntur. “ Epist. 1. 12, ep. 13.

9170 “ Diis non detrahes.” Exod. xxii. 28.

9171 Puccini, p. 4, c. 29; p. 3, n. I.

9172 “Bernarde, ad quid venisti?”

9173 “ Tota religionis perfectio in voluntatis propriae abdicatione consistit.” Spec. disc, ad novit. p. i, c. 4.

9174 “ Nihil est homini amabilius libertate propræ voluntatis.” De Perf. vitæ; spir. c. 10.

9175 “ Melior est enim obedientia, quam victimæ. “ i Kings, xv. 22; Eccles. iv. 17.

9176 “ Per alias virtutes, nostra Deo impendimus; per obedientiam, nosmetipsos exhibemus.” In I Kings, xv.

9177 “ Obedientia virtus est quæ virtutes caeteras menti inserit, insertas que custodit.” Moral. 1. 35, c. 12.

9178 Found, ch. 5.

9179 Barone, Vit. 1. 3, c. ir.

9180 “ Vir obediens loquetur victoriam.” Prov. xxi. 28.

9181 “ Victores sunt, qui obediunt; quia, dum voluntatem suam aliis perfecte subjiciunt, ipsi lapsis per inobedientiamangclis dominantur.” In 1 kings, 1. 4, c. 5.

9182 “ Mortificatione voluntatum marcescunt uni versa vitia.” De Cœnob. inst, 1. 4, c. 43.

9183 Si averteris facere voluntatem tuam, sustollam te super altitudines terræ.” Is. Iviii. 13.

9184 “ Sicut seipsum Deo tradidit, voluntatem propriam immolando, sic a Deo omne quod poposcerit, consequetur.” Lign. vit. de Obed c. 3.

9185 “Factus obediens susque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.” Phil. ii. 8.

9186 “Redimunt se, ne obediant; non ita Christus: ille siquidem dedit vitam, ne perderet obedientiam.” De Mor. Episc. c. 19.

9187 2. 2, q. 186, a. 8.

9188 Way of Perfection ch. 19.

9189 Found, ch. 5.

9190 L. 5, libell. 14, n. 19.

9191 “ Majoris est meriti injuncta refectio, jejunio propria deliberatione supcepto. “ In I reg. 1. 2, c. 4.

9192 Rev. 1. 4, c. 26,

9193 “ Qui vos audit, me audit; et qui vos spernit, me spernit.” Luke x. 16.

9194 Non quasi hominibus placentes, sed ut servi Christi, facientes voluntatem Dei ex animo.” Eph. vi. 6.

9195 “ Quos (prælatos) sibi Deus aequare quodam modo dignatus, sibimet imputat illorum et reverentiam et contemptum.” De Præc. et Disp. c. 9.

9196 “ Sive Deus, sive homo, vicarius Dei, mandatum quodcumque tradiderit, pari profecto obsequendum est cura.”

9197 Scala parad. gr. 4.

9198 “ Ingredere civitatem, et ibi dicctur tibi, quid te oporteat facere.”—Acts, ix. 7.

9199 “ Quidquid, vice Dei, praecipit homo, quod non sit tamen certum displicere Deo, baud secus omnino accipiendum est, quam si præcipiat Deus.” DC Price, et Disp. c. 9.

9200 Bacci,1.i, ch. 20.

9201 “ Obedite præpositis vestris, et subjacete eis; ipsi enim pervigilant, quasi rationem pro animabus vestris reddituri.” Hebr. xiii. 17.

9202 “ Ut cum gaudio hoc faciant, et non gementes.” Hebr. xiii. 17.

9203 “ Hoc enim non expedit vobis.” Ibid.

9204 “ Quid tibi vis faciam ?” Luke xviii. 41.

9205 “Vere cœcus, quia non exclamavit: Absit, Domine; tu magis dic quid me facere veils.”In Conv. S. Pauli, s. i.

9206 Insin. 1. 3, c. 84.

9207 “ In quantum gravaris, in tantum lucraris.” Epist. 73.

9208 “ Majorum imperia tune etiam veneranda sunt, cum ipsi laudabilem non habent vitam. In 1 Reg. 1. 2, c. 4.

9209 “ Omnia ergo quæcumque dixerint vobis, servate etfacite, secundum opera vero eorum nolite facere.” Matt, xxiii. 3.

9210 “ Puta te, quæso, monachum esse, non medicum.” In Cant. s. 30.

9211 “ Parce quieti tuæ.”

9212 “ Parce labor! ministrantium.”

9213 “ Parce gravamini dornus.”

9214 V. de Abdic. rerum.

9215 Wading. Ann. Min. anno 1219, n. 19.

9216 “ Disciplinam qui abjicit, infelix est; et vacua est spes illorum. et labores sine fructu.” Wisd. iii. II.

9217 Way of Per f. ch. II.

9218 “Melius est digitum esse, et esse in corpore, quam esse oculum, et evelli de corpore.”

9219 “Ad relinquendos dulces affectus, fortissimi fuimus ; et nunc, ad declinandas negligentias, infirmi sumus.” Ad Monach. hom. 8.

9220 “ Senatorem perdidisti, et monachum non fecisti.”

9221 “ Si veram putes sæculi libertatem, rediisti in servitutem hominis, et amisisti libertatem Christi.” De Cor. milit.

9222 Knowledge and Love, book 3, ch. 17, i.

9223 Surius, St pt. 15.

9224 Insin. 1. 3, c. 33.

9225 “Qui parce seminat, parce et metet.” 2 Cor. ix. 6.

9226 “Multi optant pro Christo mori, qui pro Christo nolunt levia pati.” De Prof. rel. 1. 2, c. 5.

9227 Page 172.

9228 “ Qui dissipat sepem, mordebit eum coluber.” Ecdcs. x. 8.

9229 “ Transgressio obligat solum ad peccatum veniale.” 2. 2, q. iSO, a. 9.

9230 “ Infecunda arbor, dum fundit umbram, inimica, non sibi soli, sed etiam palmitibus fit fecundis.” Serm. 106.

9231 “Citius persuadent oculi, quam aures.” Scrm. 76.

9232 “ Nemo inde strui potest, unde destruitur.” De Prescript. “—2 Mac. vi. 1 8.

9233 “ Justi aspectus admonitio est.” In Ps. cxviii. s. 10.

9234 “ Deinceps, ut vera sponsa, meum zelabis honorem.” Offic. 15 Oct.

9235 Christi sarcina pennas habet.” In Ps. lix.

9236 Funes ceciderunt mihi in praeclaris.” Ps, xv. 6.

9237 “ Ego vinctus in Domino.” Eph. iv. i.

9238 “ Non tibi imponeret torquem aureum, nisi primum in compedibus ferreis te alligasset.” in Ps. cxlix.

9239 “Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in cælis est.” Matt. v. 16.

9240 “Optima religiosi perfectio, communia quaeque servare.” Spec, disc. p. 2, c. 2.

9241 “Sive justi, sive injusti; utrum quisquam proficiat; utrum Deo placeat, au displiceat.” Expos, in Keg. S. Aug. c. 12.

9242 Way of Perf. ch. 11.

9243 In spiritu amoris, et non cum perturbatione timoris.” Const, p. 6, c. i.

9244 “ Loco timoris offensae succedat amor.” Ibid. c. 5.

9245 “ Ilium tantum diem vixisse te computa, in quo voluntates , abnegasti, et quern sine ulla regulæ trangressione duxisti.” Ad Monach . hom. 9.

9246 “ Bene omnia fecit.” Mark, vii. 37.

9247 “ Omnis gloria ejus filiæ regis ab intus.” Ps. xliv. 14.

9248 “ In omni opere suo, dicat sibi: Si modo moriturus esses, faceres istud ?” Spec. Monach. n. i.

9249 Admon. ad fil. spir.

9250 “ Beatus ille servus quern, cum venerit Dominus ejus, invenerit sic facientem.” Matt. xxiv. 46.

9251 “Ducam te per semitas æquitatis; quas cum ingressus fueris, non arctabuntur gressus tui, et currens non habebis offendiculum.” Prov. iv. n, 12.

9252 “Primum, tibi importabile videtur aliquid; processu temporis, si assuescas, judicabis non adeo grave; paulo post, nee senties; paulo post, etiam delectabit.” DC Consid. 1. i, c. 2.

9253 “ Modicum laboravi, et inveni mihi multam requiem.” Ecclus. li. 35

9254 “ Succide illam; ut quid etiam terram occupat ?” Luke, xiii. 6.

9255 “ Fidelis obediens nescit moras; parat aures auditui, manus operi, itineri pedes.” De Divers, s. 41.

9256 Inst. spir. a pp. 4, c. 6.

9257 Flatus, De Bono stat. rel. 1. 2, c. 5.

9258 Wading, Annal. Min, anno 1222, n. II.

9259 Surius, 7 Mart 13

9260 He Cœnob. inst. 1. 5, c. 40.

9261 “ Verus obediens nunquam præceptum exspectat; sed, selum voluntatem prælati sciens vel credens, exsequitur pro præcepto.” De Virtut. c. 3.

9262 2. 2, q. 104, a. 2.

9263 “ Si coeperis dijudicare prælatum, si murmuras in corde, etsi exterius impleas, non est virtus, sed velamentum malitire.” In Circumc. D. s. 3.

9264 “ Quisquis, vel aperte vel occulte, satagit ut, quod habet in voluntate, hoc ei spiritualis pater injungat, ipse se seducit, si sibi quasi de obedientia blandiatur; neque enim in ea re ipse prælato, sed magis ei prælatus obedit.” DC divers, s. 35.

9265 “ Monstra diaboli.”

9266 “ Quis locus obedientire, ubi tristitine cernitur negritudo ?” Ibid. s. 41.

9267 “ Hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus.” 2 Cor. ix. 7.

9268 “ Obedientia est sepulcrum propriæ voluntatis.” Scala par ad. gr. 4.

9269 “ Obedite . . . in simplicitate cordis vestri.” Ephes. vi. 5.

9270 “ Si ignoras te, o pulcherrima inter mulieres! egredere, et abi post vestigia gregum.” Cant. 1. 7.

9271 “Cum bona voluntate servientes, sicut Domino, et non hominibus.” Eph. vi. 7.

9272 “ Perfecta obedientia est indiscreta.” DC Vit. sol. c. 5.

9273 “ Novitium prudentem in congregatione durare, impossibile est.”

9274 “ Discernere superioris est, aliorum est obedire.”

9275 “ Quasi lutum figuli in manu ipsius.” Ecchis, xxxiii. 13.

9276 “ Numquid dicet lutum figulo suo: Quid facis . . . ?” Is. xlv. 9.

9277 “ Nee de majorum sententia judices, cujus officium est obedire.”

9278 “ Nemo rcctus judex sui ipsius.”

9279 Apertisque oculis, nihil videbat ; ad manus autem ilium tra-hentes, introduxerunt Damascum.” Acts, ix. 8.

9280 Imperfecti cordis indicium est, exigere de quibusque rationem.” De Præc. et Disp. c. 10. 3”Cur præcepit vobis Deus ut non comederetis de omni ligno paradisi?” Gen. iii. I.

9281 “ Ne forte moriamur.” Gen. iii. 3.

9282 “ Nequaquam morte moriemini.” Ibid. 4.

9283 Scal, parad. gr. 4. 4 De Virt. man. or. dial. I, c. 12. 5 Dia1.1. 2, c. 7.

9284 “Sibi solum credere, pessimum est.”

9285 “Impossibile est, qui proprio fidit iudicio, diaboli illusione non decipi.” Coll. 16, c,11.

9286 “ Nihil est quod Ecclesiam Dei ita destruere potest, ut quando discipuli magistris non cohærent.” In iliud ad Rom. c. 16, Salutate, etc.

9287 “ Non dereliquisti quærentes te, Domine.” Dan. xiv. 37.

9288 “Caro enim concupiscit adversus spiritual, spiritus autem adversus carnem.” Gal. v. 17.

[9289] “ Ista charitas destruit charitatem, talis misericordia crudelitate plena est, qua ita corpori servitur, ut anima juguletur.” Apol. ad Guill, c. 8.

[9290] “ Simus nos crudeles interim non parcendo, at vos parcendo crudeliores.” in. Ps. xc. s. 10.

[9291] Practice of Perfec. tr. i, ch. 4.

[9292] Vexo eum qui vexat me.”

[9293] “ Quiescant passiones, quiescam ego.”

[9294] “ Ubi non est sepes, diripietur possessio.” Ecclus. xxxvi. 27.

[9295] “ Hæc oportuit facere et ilia non omittere.” Matt, xxiii. 23.

[9296] “ Castigo corpus meum, et in servitutem redigo.” 1 Cor. ix. 27.

[9297] “ Magis nocet domesticus hostis.” Medit. c. 13.

[9298] Lib. i, rit. S. Euphros.

[9299] “Compatior infirmitati corporum; seel timenda multo magis ampliusque cavenda infirmitas animarum.” Epist. 345.

[9300] “ Homines Christo dediti, et infirmi sunt, et volunt esse; si fortes iuerint, sancti esse vix possunt.” De Gubern. D. 1. i.

[9301] Found. ch. 12.

[9302] Vit. Patr. 1. 5, libell. 7.

[9303] “ Vulnera charitatis non faciunt sentire vulnera carnis.”

[9304] “ In tribulatione maxima erunt, nisi pœnitentiam ab operibus suis egerint.” Apoc. ii. 22.

[9305] P. 4, tit. 14, c. 10, 4.

[9306] Way of Perf. ch. 19.

[9307] Ibid. ch. 4.

[9308] Found, ch. 5.

[9309] “ Illi quidem, ut corruptibilem coronam accipiant; nos autem, incorruptam.” 1 Cor. ix. 25.

9310 Et palmæ in manibus eorum.” Apoc. vii. 9.

9311 Non sunt condignæ passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam, quæ revelabitur in nobis.” Rom. viii. 18.

9312 Momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostræ . . . æternum gloriæ pondus operatur in nobis.” 2 Cor. iv. 17.

9313 1 Pet ii—5

9314 Dedic. Eccl.

9315 Vit. Patr. I. 5, libell. 7, n. 31

9316 “ Qui amat, non laborat. “-In Jo. tr. 48.

9317 Life, ch. 26.

9318 “ Mihi autem absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi.” Gal. vi. 14.

9319 “Qui autem sunt Christi, carnem suam crucifixerunt cum vitiis et concupiscentiis.” Gal v. 24.

9320 “ Particula boni doni non te prætereat.” Ecclus. xiv. 14.

9321 Scal, par.gr. 5.

9322 “ Pepigi fœdus cum oculis meis, ut ne cogitarem quidem de virgine.” Job, xxxi. i.

9323 “ Visum sequitur cogitatio, cogitationem delectatio, delectationem consensus.”

9324 “ Vidit . . . quod bonum esset, . . . et pulchrum oculis, aspectuque delectabile, et tulit.” Gen. iii. 6.

9325 “ Nostris tantum initiis opus habet.”

9326 “ Per oculos intrat ad mentem sagitta amoris.” De modo bate viv. s. 23.

9327 “ Oculus meus deprædatus est animam meam.” Lam. iii. 51.

9328 “ Deprimendi sunt oculi, quasi quidam raptores ad culpam.” Mor. J. 21, c. 2.

9329 “ Pulchritudo ejus captivam fecit animam ejus.” Judith, xvi. 11

9330 “ Pans innocentire, cœcitas.” DC Remed, fort.

9331 Apolog. c. 46.

9332 “Ne circumspicias speciem alienam; . . . ex hoc concupiscentia, quasi ignis, exardescit.” Ecclus. ix. 8, 9.

9333 Dial. 1. 2, c.

9334 Ep. ad Eustoch.

9335 “ Oculi vestri, etsi jaciuntur in aliquam, figantur in nulla.” Reg. ad serv. D. n. 6

9336 Lancicius, De ext. corp. comp. n. 304.

9337 “ Intueri non licet, quod non licet concupiscere.”

9338 “ Ubi Christus est, modestia est.” Ep. ad Dioclem.

9339 “ Ex visu cognoscitur vir.” Ecclus. xix. 26

9340 “ Lucerna ardens et lucens.” John, v. 35.

9341 “ Spectaculum facti sunnis mundo, et Angelis et hominibus.” i Cor. iv. 9

9342 “ Modestia vestra nota sit omnibus hominibus; Dominus prope esu” Phil. iv. 5.

9343 Plerisque justi aspectus admonitio est.”

9344 “ Quam pulchrum ergo, si videaris, et prosis !” In Ps. cxviii. s. 10.

9345 Die 1 Jan

9346 “ Et ipse elevatis oculis in discipulos . . .” Luke, vi. 20.

9347 “ Cum sublevasset ergo oculos Jesus. . . .”John, vi. 5.

9348 “Obsecro vos per mansuetudinem et modestiam Christ!.” 2 Cor. x. i.

9349 Serm. de Ascesi.

9350 “ Averte oculos meos, ne videant vanitatem.” Ps. cxviii. 37.

9351 “ Auro, margaritis, et monilibus adornatæ, ornamenta cordis perdiderunt.” De Disc, et Hab. virg.

9352 Mulierum ornamentum est probitate florere, colloquium cum divinis oraculis habere, fuso et lanae operam dare, oculis et labiis vinculum injicere.” Adv. mul. se orn.

9353 “ Incessus sit nec segnis nec vehemens.” Ep. 1 ad Greg.

9354 “ De vulgo aliquis si scurriles voces emittat, baud facile quisquam attenderit; at qui vitae genus perfectum profitetur, hunc, si latum unguem ab officio suo recedere visus sit, omnes confestim observant. “ Reg.fus. disp. int. 22.

9355 “ In medio sermonimi, ne adjicias loqui.” Ecclus. xi. 8.

9356 “ Ne cujusquam offendat aurem vox fortior.” De Offic. 1. i, c. 18.

9357 “ Cavendum est, ab iis qui pietati student, ne in risum effusi sint.” Reg. fus. disp. int. 1 7.

9358 “ Non ad conflictum spiritualis agonis assurgitur, si non prius gulæ appetitus eclomatur.” Mor. 1. 30, c. 26.

9359 “ Beluinus est homo, amando talia, qualia belure.”

9360—“Puto, jumenta dicerent, si loqui fas esset; Ecce Adam factus est quasi unus ex nobis. “ In Cant. s. 35.

9361 “ Quorum deus venter est.” Phil. iii. 19.

9362 Dial. 1. 4, c. 38.

9363 Ibid. 1. i, c. 4.

9364 Conf. 1. 10, c. 31.

9365 Panem ipsum cum mensura studebo sumere, ne, onerato ventre, stare ad orandum taedeat.” in Cant. s. 66.

9366 Si ad vigilias surgere indigestum cogis, non cantum, sed planctiim potius extorquebis.” Apol. ad Guill. c. 9.

9367 Divina consolatio non tribuitur admittentibus alienam.” De vit. et Mor. cler. c. 21.

9368 “ Ventris saturitas seminarium libidinis est.” Adv. Jovin. 1. 2.

9369 “ Impossibile est saturum ventrem pugnas non experiri.” De Can. inst. 1. 5, c. 13.

9370 “ Diabolus, victus de gula, non tentat de libidine.”

9371 “ Deus, qui corporali jejunio vitia comprimis, mentem elevas, virentem largiris et præmia.” Preface of Lent.

9372 Ad Eustoch.

9373 “ In qualitate, in quantitate, et modo.” DC Prof. rel. 1. 2, c. 47.

9374 “ Ut non delicata requirat, sed simplicia.”

9375 “Vinum et carnium sagimen robur quidem adducunt corpori, sed animam reddunt languidam.” Strom. 1. 7.

9376 “ Carnem raonacho nee sumendi nee gustandi est concessa licentia.” DC Consccr. d. 5, c. 32.

9377 Abstineo a carnibus, ne carnis nutriant vitia.” in Cant. s. 66.

9378 Noli regibus dare vinum.” Prov. xxxi. 4.

9379 Cui vae ? . . . nonne his qui commorantur in vino, et student calicibus epotandis.” Prov. xxiii. 29, 30.

9380 “ Luxuriosa res vinum.” Prov. xx. i.

9381 “ Hoc primum moneo, ut sponsa Christi vinum fugiat pro veneno; vinum et adolescentia, duplex inoendium voluptatis est.”

9382 De Cœnob. inst. 1. 5, c. 23.

9383 Bacci, 1. 2, ch. 14–17.

9384 De Grad. humil. gr. 5.

9385 “ Ut non nimis et saepius quam decet, ut sit refectio corporis, non onus.”

9386 “Sit tibi moderatus cibus, et nunquam venter expletus.”

9387 “ Sed et ex vilissimis cibis vitanda satietas est.” Adv. Jovin. 1. 2.

9388 “ Quando comedis, cogita quod statim tibi orandum et legendum sit.” Epist. ad furiam.

9389 De Cœnob. inst. 1. 5, c. 25.

9390 Reg. ch. 49.

9391 In Cant. s. 19.

9392 “ Quod sine permissione patris spiritualis fit, præsumptioni deputabitur, non mercedi.”

9393 “ Ut non importune requiratur (cibus), nee inordinate sumatur, sed religiose.”

9394 Bacci, 1. 2, ch. 14.

9395 “ Beata terra . . . cujus principes vescuntur in tempore suo.” Eccles. x. 17.

9396 L. to F. G ration, Febr. 27, 1581.

9397 “ Noli avidus esse in omni epulatione.” Ecclus. xxxvii. 32.

9398 Propos. 8

9399 Vit. Patr. 1. 6, libell. I, n. 17.

9400 Introduct. p. 3, ch. 23.

9401 “ Unusquisque super mensam aliquid offert Deo.” Reg. c. 49.

9402 Direct, asc. tr. 2, a. i, c. 4.

9403 “ Facilius est camelum per foramen acus transire, quam divitem intrare regnum cœlorum.” Matt. xix. 24.

9404 Const, p. 10, 5.

9405 Way of Perf. ch. 2.

9406 Cepari. Vit. c. 59.

9407 Inter op. S. Aug. E. B. App. ep. 19, c. 8.

9408 De Cœnob. inst. 1. 4, c. 20.

9409 “ Si vis perfectus esse, vade, vende quæ habes, et da pauperibus.” Matt. xix. 21.

9410 “Cum sarcina temporalium, spiritus ad Deum non potest ascendere.”

9411 “ Amor rerum terrenarum viscum est spiritualium pennarum.” Serm. 112, E. B.

9412 “ Magna penna paupertatis, qua cito volatur in regnum coelorum. De Adv. D. s. 4.

9413 “ O beata paupertas voluntaria: nihil possidens, nihil formidans; semper hilaris, semper abundans; et cum nihil habeat, omne incommodum suo facit profectui deservire !” De Disc. man. c. 2.

9414 “ Paupertas non inveniebatur in coelis; interris abundabat, et nesciebat homo pretium ejus; hanc itaque Dei Filius concupiscens descendit, ut cam cligat sibi, et nobis faciat pretiosam.” In Vig. Nat. D. s. I.

9415 “ Propter vos egenus factus est, cum esset dives, ut illius inopia vos divites essetis.” 2 Cor. viii. 9.

9416 John, vi. 9.

9417 “ Omnia arbitror . . . ut stercora, ut Christum lucrifaciam “ Phil. iii. 8.

9418 “Si dederit homo omnem substantiate domus suæ pro dilectione, quasi nihil despiciet eam.” Cant. viii. 7.

9419 Beati mites, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram.”

9420 Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt.”

9421 “Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum cœlorum.” Matt. v. 3, 4, 8.

9422 “Ex Dei decreto, ad pauperes pertinet regnum cœlorum; ipsi, in illud, plenum jus habent.” In Matth. 1. c.

9423 Found, ch. 14

9424 “ Felix tale commercium, ubi datur lutum, tollitur aurum .” Epist. 1. 7, ep. 7.

9425 “ Ecce nos reliquimus omnia, et secuti sumus te; quid ergo erit nobis ?” Matt. xix. 27.

9426 “ Amen dico vobis, quod vos qui secuti estis me, in regeneratione, cum sederit Filius hominis in sede majestatis sure, sedebitis et vos super sedes duodecim, judicantes dumlecim tribus Israel.” Ihid. 28.

9427 “et omnis qui reliquerit domum . . . aut agros propter nomen nieum, centuplum accipiet, et vitam æternam possidebit.” Ibid. 29

9428 “ Nihil habentes, et omnia possidentes. “ 2 Cor. vi. 10.

9429 Matt. xiii. 22.

9430 “ Avarus terrena esurit ut mendicus, fidelis contemnit ut dominus.” In Cant. s. 21.

9431 “ Occurrit mihi pauper, et quæro pauperem “ Serm 14, E. B.

9432 “ Habentes autem alimenta, et quibus tegamur, his content! simus.” I Tim. vi. 8.

9433 “ Qui volunt divites fieri, incidunt in tentationem et in laqueum diaboli, et desideria multa inutilia et nociva, quæ mergunt homines in inheritum et perditionem.” Ibid. 9.

9434 Matt. xix. 27.

9435 Collat t. 5, c. 21.

9436 “ Exsultat adversarius, quando nos videt ad hoc maxima contempsisse, ut in minimis vinceremur.” Ad Monach. hom 5.

9437 Prædiorum magnificentiam contemnentes vidimus, pro acu, procalamo, commoveri; et inde occasiones mortis incurrunt!” Coll. i. c. 6.

9438 Habendi amor, nisi ad integrum resecetur, ardentior est in parvis Ad Monach. hom. 4.

9439 Qui non renuntiat omnibus quæ possidet, non potest meus esse discipulus.” Luke, xiv. 33

9440 “ Non enim paupertas virtus reputatur, sed paupertatis amor.” Epist. 100.

9441 In Matt. xix. 27, 28.

9442 “ De paupertatis nomine gloriantur, et paupertatis sodales fugiunt, famem, sitim, contemptum, despectionem.” De Vita spir. c. i.

9443 “ Pauperes esse volunt, eo tamen pacto, ut nihil eis desit.” In Adv. D. s. 4.

9444 What is here said, as far as the end of the chapter, does not apply to well-regulated convents, and has reference only to the abuses that had gradually crept into convents of Italy at the time when St. Alphonsus lived, and that could not be entirely removed. ED.

9445 “ Paupertas est abdicatio sollicitudinum sæculi, iter ad Deum sine impedimento, expulsio omnis tristitirc.” Scala par. gr. 17.

9446 “ Bonum est facilitates pauperibus erogare; sed melius est egere cum Christo.” 2. 2. q. 32, a. 8.

9447 “ Nemo vult ibi pretiosis vestibus indui, ubi ab aliis non possit videri.” In Evang. hom. 40.

9448 “ Omnis gloria ejus filiae regis ab intus.” Ps. xliv. 14.

[9449] “ Exteriora signa produnt quid in animolatet intus.” Rev. 1. 4, c. 114.

[9450] “ Studium in ornando corpora internam indicat deformitatem.” In Genes, hom 37.

[9451] “ Quanto amplius corpus foris ornatur, tanto interius anima fœdatur.” De Modo bene viv. c. 9.

[9452] Puccini, Vit. 1. 4, c. 31; Cepari, c. 56.

[9453] Avarus, quod est idolorum servitus non habet hereditatem in regno Christi.” Eph. v. 5.

[9454] Contemnamus pecunias, ne contemnamur a Christo.”In Rom. hom. 7.

[9455] Acts, iv. 34, 35

[9456] Epist. ad Dcmclr.

[9457] L. to the Abbess of St. Peter at Florence.

[9458] Clementina Exivi, Rursis, de verb, signif.

[9459] It is to be remarked that what St. Alphonsus says here applies to the contemplative Orders. ED.

[9460] “Quid putas? in his qureritur pnenitentium compimctio, an intuentium admiratio ?” Apol. ad Guill. c. 12.

[9461] “ Alia causa est Episcoporum, alia monachorum: nos, qui mundi pretiosa reliquimus, in his devotionem excitare intendimus.”

[9462] Pars sacrilegii est, rem pauperum dare non pauperibus.” Ad Pammach.

[9463] Crebra munuscula, et sudariola, et fasciolas, ac degustatos cibos, blandasque litterulas, sanctus amor non habet.” Ad Nepotian.

[9464] Chap. X. , 2.

[9465] Introd. ch. 16.

[9466] Epist. 345.

[9467] Boll. 26 Apr. Ait. n. II.

[9468] “ Si quis venit ad me, et non odit patrem suum et matrem, . . . non potest meus esse discipulus.” Luke, xiv. 26.

9469 “ Veni enim separate hominem adversus patrem suum, et filiam adversus matrem suam.” Matt. x.35

9470 “ Frequenter amici carnales adversantur profectui spirituali.” 2. 2, q. 189, a. 10.

9471 “ Propinqui carnis, in hoc proposito, amici non sunt, sed potius inimici. “ Centra retrah. a relig. a. 9.

9472 “ Extra cognates quis que debet fieri, si vult Parenti omnium verius jungi.” Mor. 1. 7, c. 13.

9473 “Jesus inter cognatos non invenitur.” Epist. 107.

9474 “ Carnalis amor extra Dei amorem cito te capiet.” Epist. 134.

9475 “ Qui dixit patri suo et matri suæ : Nescio vos; et fratribus suis: Ignore vos; . . . hi custodierunt eloquium tuum, et pactum tuum servaverant.” Dent, xxxiii. 9.

9476 “ Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam, et obliviscere populum tuum et domum patris tui; et concupiscet Rex decorem tuum.” Ps. xliv.

ii.

9477 “Grande praemium parentis obliti: Concupiscet Rex decorem tuum!” Epist. ad Furiam.

9478 “ Omnis qui reliquerit domum, vel fratres, aut sorores, aut patrem, aut matrem, . . . propter nomen meum, centuplum, accipiet, et vitam æternam possidebit.” Malt. xix. 29.

9479 Way of Perf. ch. x

9480 “ Quanti monachorum, dum patris matrisque miserentur, suas animas perdiderunt!” Reg. Monach. de laude Relig.

9481 “ Grandis in suos pietas, impietas in Deum est.” Ep. ad Paulam.

9482 “ Fugiamus illorum curam tamquam diabolicam.” Const. Mon. c. 21.

9483 “ Nemo mittens manum suam ad aratrum et respiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei.” Luke, ix. 62.

9484 “ Sine ut mortui sepeliant mortuos suos.” Luke, ix. 60.

9485 “ Nesciebatis quia, in his quæ Patris mei sunt, oportet me esse ?” Luke, ii. 49.

9486 On this and other similar passages, see a useful remark in the NOTICE at the beginning of this volume. ED.

9487 “ Qui familiaritatem non vult vitare suspectam, cito labitur in ruinam.” Serm. 293, App. E. B.

9488 3 kings, xi. 4.

9489 De Singularit. cler.

9490 “ Homo et mulier, ignis et palea; et diabolus nunquam insufflare cessat, ut accendatur.” Eusebius ad Damns, de morte Hicr.

9491 Life, ch. 32.

9492 “ Cæteris vitiis quis potest resistere; huic tamen non potest, nisi per fugam.” De Modo confit. c. 14.

9493 “ Sede solitarius, sicul turtur, nihil tibi ct turbis.” In Cant. s. 40.

9494 L. to the abbess of St. Peter.

9495 “ Dum parvus est hostis, interfice.” Ep. ad Eustoch

9496 “ Nec quia sanctiores fuerint, ideo minus cavendæ; quo enim sanctiores fuerint, eo magis alliciunt.” De Modo confit. c. 14

9497 De Profectu Rel. 1. 2, c. 27.

9498 “ Juvenis, æqualium tuorum consuetudinem defugito; quantos illorum opera adversarius plerosque sempiterno igni cremandos addixit!”

9499 “Spirituals primo charitatis quadam specie illectos, postea in voraginem præcipites deturbavit.” S. de Abdic. rer.

9500 Arnald, vit. c. 64.

9501 “ In terra sanctorum iniqua gessit, et non videbit gloriam Domini.” Is. xxvi. 10.

9502 De Instit. Man. s. i.

9503 “Oh ! quot detrusit ad inferos infirmitas hæc !”

9504 “ Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa.” Cant. iv. 12.

9505 “ Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo,”

9506 “ Humilitas primum locum tenet, in quantum expellit superbiam cui Deus resistit.” 2. 2, q. 161, a. 5.

9507 “Qui sine humilitate virtutes congregat, quasi in ventum pulverem portat.” In Ps. pœnit. iii.

9508 Spec. Exempt, dist. 9, ex. 199

9509 “ Nisi humilitas praecesserit, et comitetur, et consecuta fuerit, totum extorquet de manu superbia.” Epist. 118, E. B.

9510 “ Semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens.” Phil. ii. 7.

9511 “ Despectum, et novissimum virorum.” Is. liii. 3

9512 “ Exemplum enim dedi vobis, ut, quemadmodum ego feci vobis, ita et vos faciatis.” John, xiii. 15.

9513 “ Hæc medicina si superbiam non curat, quid earn curet, nescio.” Serm. 77, E. B.

9514 “ Ea est prima humilitas, secunda humilitas, tertia humilitas; et quoties interrogates, hoc dicerem.” Epist. 118, E. B.

9515 “ Abominatio Domini est omnis arrogans.” Prov. xvi. 5.

9516 “Quid autem habes, quod non accepisti?” i Cor. iv. 7.

9517 “ Nescis quia tu es miser . . . et cæcus. “ Apoc. iii. 17.

9518 “ Si districte judicetur, injusta invenietur omnis justitia nostra. “ In fest. Omn. Sanct. s.

9519 I. 3”Gratia autem Dei sum id quod sum.” i Cor. xv. 10.

9520 “Non quod sufficientes simus cogitare aliquid anobis.” 2 Cor. iii. 5.

9521 Dial. 1. 4. c. 5.

9522 “ Datus est mihi stimulus carnis mere, angelus Satanæ qui me colaphizhet propter quod ter Dominum rogavi ut discederet a me, et dixit mihi: Sufficit tibi gratia mea.” 2 Cor. xii. 7.

9523 “ Priusquam humiliarer, ego deliqui.” Ps. cxviii. 67.

9524 “ Altus est Deus: erigis te, et fugit a te; humilias te, et descendit ad te.” .Serm 177, App. E. B.

9525 “Excelsus Dominus, et humilia respicit, et alta a longe cognoscit. Ps. cxxxvii. 6.

9526 “Qui autem se exaltabitur, humiliabitur.” Matt, xxiii. 12.

9527 Op. 34 de Var. mir. Narrat. c. 4.

9528 “ Deus superbis resistit; humilibus autem dat gratiam.” James iv. 6.

9529 “ Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.” Luke, xi. 10.

9530 “ Humiliare Deo, et exsperta manus ejus.” Ecclus. xiii. 9.

9531 “ Domine, concede mihi thesaurum humilitatis.” Medit. c. I.

9532 “ Qui emittis fontes in convallibus; inter medium montium pertransibunt aquæ” Ps. ciii. 10

9533 “ Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae, . . . fecit mihi magna, qui potens est.” Luke, \. 48, 49.

9534 “ Oratio humiliantis se nubes pertransibit ; . . . et non discedet, donee Altissimus aspiciat.” Ecclus. xxxv. 21.

9535 “ Ne avertatur humilis, factus confusus.” Ps. Ixxiii. 21.

9536 “ Evidentissimum reproborum signum superbia est; at contra, humilitas electorum.” Mor. 1. 34, c. 22.

9537 Vita Patr. 1. 3, n. 129.

9538 “ Nisi efficiamini sicut parvuli, non intrabitis in regnum cœlorum.” Matt, xviii. 3.

9539 “ Beati estis cum maledixerint vobis, et persecuti vos fuerint, . . . quoniam merces vestra copiosa est in coelis.” Matt. v. 11.

9540 “ Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde, et invenietis requiem animabus vestris.” Matt. xi. 29.

9541 “ Et cum hæc omnia habeam, nihil me habere puto, quamdiu videro Mardochaeum Judæum sedentem ante fores regias.” Esth. v. 13.

9542 “ Virtutem quasi umbra sequitur, et, appetitores sui deserens, appetit contemptores.” Ep. ad Eustoch.

9543 Peccavi, et vere deliqui, et, ut eram dignus, non recepi.” Job. xxxiii. 27.

9544 “ Ne projicias me a facie tua.”

9545 “ Humilitas est virtus qua homo, verissima sui cognitione, sibi ipsi vilescit.” De Grad. hum. c. I.

9546 Interior Castle, dem. 6. ch. 10.

9547 “ Tanto fit quisque Deo pretiosior, quanto vilior sibi.” Mor. I. 18, C. 22.

9548 “ Noverim te, noverim me.” Solil. 1. 2, c. I.

9549 “ Ab humilibus honoratur.” Ecclus. iii. 21.

9550 “ Si glorietur nubes, quod imbres genuerint, quis non irrideat ?” In Cant. s. 13.

9551 “ Quisquis tibi enumerat merita sua, quid tibi enumerat, nisi munera tua?” Conf. 1. 9, c. 13.

9552 Life, ch. 10.

9553 “ Abundantius illis omnibus laboravi.” i Cor. xv. 10

9554 “ Non ego autem, sed gratia Dei mecum.” i Cor. xv. 10.

9555 “ Etiamsi oportuerit me mori tecum. non te negabo.” Matt. xxvi. 35.

9556 “ Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.” Phil. iv. 13.

9557 “ Qui autem sperant in Domino, mutabunt fortitudinem.” Is. xl. 31

9558 “In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” Ps. xxx. 2

9559 “ Omnia cooperantur in bonum.” Rom. viii. 28

9560 “ Etiam peccata.”

[9561] Insin. 1. 3, c. 78.

[9562] “ Nisi quia Dominus adjuvit me, paulo minus habitasset in inferno anima mea.” Ps. xciii. 17

[9563] Collat. 2, c. 13.

[9564] “ Fratres, et si praeoccupatus fuerit homo in aliquo delicto, . . . hujusmodi instruite in spiritu lætatis, considerans teipsum, ne et tu tenteris.” Gal. vi. i.

[9565] De cœnob. inst. 1. 5, c. 30.

[9566] “ Cæteros contempsisti ; cæteris pejor factus es,”

[9567] I 2, q. 73, a. 10

[9568] “ Deus, in adjutorium meum intende; Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.” Ps. Ixix. I.

[9569] “ In anima, non cst timenda quantalibet humiliatio; horrendum autem minima vel minima erectio.” in Cant. s. 37

[9570] “ Si autem impius egerit pœnitentiam, . . . omnium iniquitatum ejus . . . non recordabor.” Ezck., xviii. 21. .

[9571] “ Primus profectus, nolle dominari; secundus, velle subjici; tertius, in ipsa subjectione, quaslibet injurias illatas sequanimiter pati.” De Divers, s. 60.

[9572] “ Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde.” Matt. xi. 29.

[9573] Collat. 18, c. II.

[9574] “ Est qui nequiter humiliatæ, et interiora ejus plena sunt dolo.” Ecclus xix. 23.

[9575] In Cant. s. 16.

[9576] Scal. par. gr. 21.

[9577] “Cum se peccatorem dicit, id de se dicenti etiam alteri non contradicit “ Mor. 1. 22, c. 14,

[9578] “Verus humilis vilis vult reputari, non humilis prædicari.” In Cant. s. 1 6.

[9579] “Humiliationem convertit in humilitatem.”In Cant. s. 34.

[9580] “Laudet te alienus, et non os tuum.” Prov. xxvii. 2.

9581 “ Grande mlum, si, vel modice, plus vero te extollas.” In Gmt. s. 37-

9582 Mor. 1. 22, c. 9; 1. 26, c. 30.

9583 “ Exaltatus autem, humiliatus sum et conturbatus.” Ps. Ixxxvii. 16

9584 “ Recepisti bona in vita tua.” Luke, xvi. 25.

9585 “ Quomoclo probatur . . . in fornace aurum, sic probatur homo ore laudantis.” Prov. xxvii. 21.

9586 Nec malam conscientiam sanat laudantis praeconium, nee bonam vulnerat conviciantis opprobrium.” Contra Petil. 1. 3, c. 7

9587 Melius me ego novi, quam illi; sect melius Deus, quam ego.” In Ps. xxx vi. s. 3.

9588 “ Omnis sæculi honor diaboli negotium est.” In Matth. c. 3, n. 5.

9589 “ Corpus Ecclesiæ ambientium contagione foedatur.” Epist. i.

9590 Way of Perf. ch. 8, 13.

9591 Epist. 14.

9592 “Vix fieri potest quod, qui delectatur honore, in periculo magno non sit.” Med. vitæ Chr. c. 35.

9593 “ In hoc ad invicem zelate, quaenam huic Sponso carior existat, quæ humilior.” De Nat. Mar. ad man. cone.2

9594 “ Elegi abjectus esse in domo Dei mei, magis quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum “ Ps. Ixxxiii. n. 3

9595 “ Ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari.” Alph. relig.

9596 “ Sed in humilitate superiores.” Phil. ii. 3.

9597 “ Homo, cum in honore esset, non intellexit, comparatus est juventis insipientibus, et similis factus est illis.” Ps. xlviii. 13.

9598 Inst. 1. 4, c. 30.

9599 “ Multo deformior est superbia, quæ sub humilitatis signis latet.” Ep. ad Celant.

9600 “ Multos novimus, qui, arguente nullo, peccatores se confitentur; cum vero de culpa fuerint correpti, defensionis patrocinium quærunt, ne peccatores videantur.” Mor. 1. 22, c. II.

9601 “ Qui odit correptionem, vestigium est peccatoris. “ Ecclus. xxi. 7.

9602 “Medicanti irascitur, qui non irascitur sagittanti.” In Cant. s. 42.

9603 “ Et quod detraxerint universæ correptioni, . , , prosperitas stultorum perdet eos.” Prov. i. 29.

9604 “ Soror, multas age gratias illi qui increpaverit te; non contristeris, cum monstraverit viam salutis.” De Modo bene viv. c. 18.

9605 “Ipsa est perfectio nostra, humilitas.” In Ps. cxxx.

9606 In Gen. hom. 34.

9607 Est humilis, qui humiliationem convertit in humilitatem.” In Cant. s. 34.

9608 In igne probatur aurum, . . . homines vero receptibiles in camino humiliationis.” Ecclus. ii. 5.

9609 “ Nardus mea dedit odorem suum.” Cant. i.11.

9610 Scal. par. gr. 4

9611 “ Est qui nequiter humiliat se, et interiora ejus plena sunt dolo.” Ecclus. xix. 23.

9612 “ Ego plagis conscientire nullurn judico accommodatius medicamentum probris et contumeliis.” Epist. 280.

9613 “ Beati eritis, cum vos oderint homines, et cum separaverint vos, et exprobraverint, et ejecerint nomen vestrum tamquam malum, propter Filium hominis.” Luke, vi. 22.

9614 “Si exprobramini in nomine Christi, beati eritis; quoniam, quod est honoris, gloriæ, et virtutis Dei, et qui est ejus Spiritus, super vos requiescit.” i Pet. iv. 14.

9615 “ Nunc incipio e; se Christi discipilus “ Epist. ad Rom.

9616 “ Mansuetus, utilis sibi ct aliis.” In Act. hom. 6.

9617 “ Nihil ita conciliat domino familiares, ut quod ilium vident mansuetudine jucundum.” S. de Mansuet.

9618 “ Abominantur impii cos qui in recta sunt via.” Prov. xxix. 27.

9619 “Omnes qui pie volunt vivere in Christo Jesu, persecutionem patientur.” 2 Tim. iii.12

9620 “Si me persecuti sunt, et vos persequentur.” John, xv. 20

9621 Interior Castle, d. 7, ch. 4.

9622 Ibant gaudentes a conspectu concilii, quoniam digni habiti sunt pro nomine Jesu contumeliam pati.” Acts, v. 41.

9623 “ Beati estis, cum maledixerint vobis et persecuti vos fuerint; . gaudete et exsultate, quoniam merces vestra copiosa est in cœlis.” Matt. v. 11, 12.

9624 “ Humilis corde cor Christi est.” Ep. ad Sever.

9625 “ Et hoc mandatum habemus a Deo, ut, qui diligit Denni, diligatet fratrem suum.”1 John, iv. 21. 2

9626 2, q. 25, a. I.

9627 Quia præceptum Domini est; et si solum fiat, sufficit.” in Ep. ad Gal. c. 6.

9628 “Si quis dixerit quoniam diligo Deum, et fratrem suum oderit, mendaxest.” i John, iv. 20.

9629 “ Quamdiu fecistis uni ex his fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecistis.” Matt. xxv. 40.

9630 “ Ecce quam bonum, et quam jucundum, habitare fratres in unum.” Ps. cxxxii. i.

9631 “ Multitudinis autem credentium erat cor unum et anima una. Acts, iv. 32.

9632 Pater sancte, serva eos, . . . ut sint unum, sicut et nos.” John, xvii. ii.

9633 Habitabit lupus cum agno, et pardus cum hœdo; . . . non nocebunt, et non Occident.” Is. xi. 6. 3 Scal. par. gr. 4,

9634 “ Quando vides in aliqua fabrica lapides et ligna bene sibi cohserere, securus intras, ruinam non times.” Serm. 336, E. B.

9635 “ Sine charitate, monasteria sunt tartara,” Reg. Monach. c. I.

9636 “ Induite vos ergo, sicut electi Dei, . . . viscera misericordiæ.” Col. iii. 12.

9637 “ Nolite judicare, ut non judicemini, in quo enim judicio judica—veritis, judicabimini.” Matt. vii. i.

9638 “Charitas . . . non cogitat malum.” i Cor. xiii. 4.

9639 “ Charitas non se multum dolet errare, cum bene credit etiam de malo.” In Ps. cxlvii.

9640 1. 2, q. 36, a. 2.

9641 “Evenire plerumque solet, ut, non amissa charitate, et inimici nos ruina Iætificet, et rursum ejus gloria, sine invidiæ culpa, contristet: cum et, ruente eo, quosdam bene erigi credimus, et, proficiente illo, plerosque injuste opprimi formidamus.” Mor. 1. 22, c. II.

9642 “ Invidia autem diaboli, mors introivit in orbem terrarum; imi-tantur autem ilium, qui sunt ex parte illius.” Wis. ii. 24

9643 “Susurro coinquinabit animam suam, et in omnibus odietur.” Ecclus. xxi. 31.

9644 “Qui ab aliis vitiis recesserunt, in istud tamen incidunt. “Ep. ad Celant.

9645 De Apib. 1. 2, c. 37.

9646 Vit. S. Malach. c. 13.

9647 “ Sepi aures tuas spinis, linguam nequam noli audire.” Ecclus. xxviii. 28.

9648 “ Sicut vitta coccinnea, labia tua.” Cant, iv. 3.

9649 In Cant. hom. 7

9650 “ Excusa intentionem, si opus non potes.” In Cant. s. 40.

9651 “ Operimentum fratrum.” 17 Febr. Vit. c. 6.

9652 “ Sex sunt, quaeodit Dominus; et septimum cletestaturanima ejus.” Prov. vi. 16

9653 “ Eum qui seminal inter fratres discordias.” Ibid. 19.

9654 “ Audisti verbum adversus proximum tuum ? commoriatur in te.”Ecclus. xix. 10.

9655 “ Omnia ergo qua?cumque vultis ut faciant vobis homines, et vos facite illis.” Matt. vii. 12.

9656 De ea re quæ te non molestat, ne certeris. Ecclus. xi. 9.

9657 Charitas patiens est.” I Cor. xiii. 4.

9658 “ Alter alterius onera portate.” Gal. vi. 2.

9659 Responsio mollis frangit iram.” Prov. xv. i.

9660 Igne non potest ignis extingui, nec furor furore.” In Gen. hom, 58.

9661 “Irascimini, et nolite peccare.” Px. iv. 5

9662 Introd. p. 3, ch. 8.

9663 “ Turbatus præ ira oculus . . . rectum non videt.” De Consid. I. 2, c. ii.

9664 Sola virtus humilitatis est læsæ reparatio charitatis.” In Nat. Dom. s. 2,

9665 “Si ergo offers munus tuum ad altare. et ibi recordatus fueris quia frater tuus habet aliquid adversum te, relinque ibi munus tuum ante altare, et vade prius reconciliari fratri tuo; et tune veniens offeres munus tuum.” Matt. v. 23.

9666 “ Filioli mei, non diligamus verbo neque lingua, sed opere et veritate.” i John, iii. 18.

9667 “ Justi autem misericordes sunt et

miserantur.” Prov. xiii. 13

9668 Ribera, Vit . 1. 4, c. II.

9669 “ Eleemosyna a morte liberal , et ipsa est quæ purgat peccata, et facit invenire misericord iam et vitam seternam.” Tobias xii. 9.

9670 “ Dominus nil crebrius mandat, quam ut insistamus eleemosynis.” De Op. Et Eleem.

9671 “ Qui . . . viderit fratrem suum necessitatem habere, et clauserit viscera sua ab eo, quomodo charitas Dei manet in eo?” I John, iii. 17.

9672 “ In qua mensura mensi fueritis, remetietur vobis.” Matt. vii. 2.

9673 “ Eleemosyna est ars omnium artium qurestuosissima.” Ad pop. Ant. hom33

9674 Matt. xxv. 40.

9675 “ Ordinavit in me charitatem.” Cant. ii. 4.

9676 James, v. 20.

9677 Tu eum vides perire, et negligis; pejor es tacendo, quam ille conviciando.” Serm 82, E. B.

9678 De Sacerd.1. 2.

9679 “ Num rustos fratris mei sum ego?” Gen. iv. 9.

9680 “ Et mandavit illis unicuique de proximo suo.” Ecclus. xvii. 12.

9681 “ Si ad Deum tenditis, curate ne ad eum soli veniatis.” In Evang. hom. 6.

9682 “ Si Deum amatis, rapite omnes ad amorem Dei.” In Ps. xxxiii. cn. 2.

9683 “Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant opera vestra buna, et glorificent Patrem vestrum, qui in cœlis est.” Matt. v. 16.

9684 “ Deinceps, ut vera sponsa, meum zelabis honorem.” Office 15 Oct.

9685 “Amen, amen, dico vobis; si quid petieritis Patrem in nomin ; meo, dabit vobis.” John, xvi. 23.

9686 “ Ego autem dico vobis. Diligite inimicos vestros, benefacite his qui oderunt vos, et orate pro persequentibus et calumniantibus vos.” Matt. v. 44.

9687 Way of Perf. ch. 14.

9688 “ Inimicum diligere, vindicta cœlestis est.” Ep. ad Sever.

9689 Crist, istr, p. i, rag. 20, n. 20.

9690 “Si infinnus es, ora; oras, et Dominus te protegit.” Enarr. in Ps. xxxviii.

9691 Dimittite et dimittemini.” Luke, vi. 37.

9692 Orate pro persequentibus et calumniantibus vos.” Matt. v. 44.

9693 “ Patientia autem opus perfectum habet.” James, 1. 4.,

9694 “Melior est patiens viro forti.” Prov. xvi. 32.

9695 “Nolite fieri sicut equus et mulus, quibusnon est intellectus. “ Pa, xxxi. 9.

9696 “ Una eademque tunsio bonos producit ad gloriam, malos redigit in favillam.” Serm. 52, App. E. B.

9697 Qui timent pruinam, irruet super eos nix.”—Job, \\. 16.

9698 “ Tola vita christiani, crux est.” SCI-M. 52, App. E. B.

9699 Scal. par. gr. I. “

9700 “ Tune finienda pugna, quando succedit secura victoria.” De Vita cont. 1. i, c. i.

9701 “ Peccatum, sanies est; pœna, ferrum medicinale; ita peccans, si non puniatur, miserrimus est.” Ad pop. Ant. Hom. 6.

9702 “ Intelligat homo medicum esse Deum, et tribulationem medicamentum esse ad salutem, non pœnam ad damnationem.” In Ps. xxi. en. 2.

9703 “Quern enim diligit, Dominus castigat; flagellat autem omnem filium quern recipit.” Hebr. xii. 6.

9704 “Gaudes; agnosce Patrem blandientem. Tribularis; agnosce Patrem emendantem.” In Ps. liv.

9705 Si exceptus es a passione flagellorum, exceptus es a numero filiorum.” Serm. 46, c. 5.

9706 Et ferrum et plumbum in medio fornacis . . . facti sunt.” Ezek. xxii. 18.

9707 Purgare eos per ignem tribulationis volui, et aurum fieri quæsivi; sed in fornace mihi in plumbum, versi sunt” Pastor, p. 3, adm. 14.

9708 “ Auferetur zelus meus a te, et quiescam, nee irascar amplius.”—Ezek. xvi. 42.

9709 Tune magis irascitur Deus, clum non irascitur. Volo irascaris mihi, Pater misericordiarum.” In Cant. s. 42.

9710 Petite et dabitur vobis.” Matt. vii. 7.

9711 “ Digna factis recipimus.” lAtke, xxiii. 41.

9712 “ Et hæc mihi sitconsolatio, ut, affligens me dolore, non parcat.” Job, vi. 10.

9713 In 4 sent. d. 21, q. I, a. I.

9714 “ Gravior erit ille ignis, quam quidquid potest homo pati in hac vita.” In Ps. xxxvii.

9715 “Non sunt condignæ passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam, qua? revelabitur in nobis.” Rom. viii. 18.

9716 “ Momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostræ . . . æternum gloria? pondus operatur in nobis.” 2 Cor. iv. 17.

9717 “ Beatus vir qui suffert tentationem; quoniam, cum probatus fuerit, accipiet coronam vitæ.” James, i. 12.

9718 “ Si bona suscepimus de manu Dei, mala quare non suscipiamus ?” Job, ii. 10.

9719 Spec. Exempt . dist. 9. c. 138.

9720 “Quando consolaberis me?” Ps. cxviii. 82.

9721 “ Electorum est hie conteri, quibus servatur de æternitate gaudere.” Mor. I. 26, c. 1 8.

9722 “Quære, et invenies singulos sanctos adversa perpessos; solus in deliciis Salomon fuit, et forsitan ideo corruit.”

9723 “ Quos præscivit, et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui.” Rom. viii. 29.

9724 “ Si tamen compatimur, ut et conglorificemur.” Ibid. 17.

9725 “ Qui cum malediceretur, non maledicebat; cum pateretur, non comminabatur.” i Pet. ii. 23.

9726 “ In patientia vestra, possidebitis animas vestras.” Luke, xxi. 19.

9727 “ Amarus est mundus, et diligitur; puta, si dulcis esset, qualiter amaretur. “ Serni. 298, App. E. B.

9728 “ Christus passus est pro nobis, vobis relinquens exemplum, ut sequamini vestigia ejus.” i Pet. ii. 21.

9729 “ Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me.” Matt. xvi. 24.

9730 “ Est enim amicus secundum tempus suum; et non permanebit in die tribulationis.” En Ins. vi. 8.

9731 “ Charitas patiens est, . . . omnia suffert.” I Cor. xiii. 4.

9732 Tamquam aurum in fornace, probavit illos.” Wisd. iii. 6.

9733 Quia acceptus eras Deo, necesse fuit ut tentatio probaret te.” Tob. xii. 13.

9734 “Quando Deus dat alicui ut mortuos resuscitet, minus dat quam cum dat occasionem patiendi.”

9735 “ Fro miraculis enim, debitor sum Deo; at pro patientia, debitorem habeo Christum.” In Phil. hom. 4.

9736 “ Grata ignominia crucis ei qui Crucifixo ingratus non est.” In Cant. s. 25.

9737 “ Omnia fiunt facilia charitati.” De Nat. et Grat. c. 69.

9738 “ Vincenti dabo manna abscond hum.” Apoc ii. 17.

9739 “ Jucundius gaudere de bona conscientia inter molestias, quam de mala inter delicias.” De catech. rud. c. 16.

9740 Surius, 8 Jul.

9741 Victories of Mart., Part I. ch. xxxiii.

9742 Victories of Mart., Part I. ch. xlviii.

9743 “ Laudate Dominum omnes gentes.” Ps. cxvi.

9744 “ Neque hoc facit stupor, sed amor; n c deest dolor, sed superatur, sed contemnitur.” In Cant, s. 61.

9745 “Si fortes fuerint, sancti esse non possent.” De Gub. Dei. 1.

9746 “ Homines Christo dediti, et infirmi sunt, et esse volunt,”

9747 Part 2, Ep. 51

9748 “ Benedicite, ignis et aestus Domino; . . . benedicite, geln et frigus, Domino. “Dan. iii. 66, 69.

9749 “Cur vitam desideramus, in qua, quanto amplius vivimus, tanto plus peocamus?” Med. c. 2.

9750 “ Eia, Domine ! moriar, ut te videam.” Solil. an. ad D. c. i

9751 “ Quid tibi sufficit, cui Deus non sufficit?” Serm. 105, E. B.

9752 “ Deus meus, et omnia.”

9753 “ Nihil habentes et omnia possidentes.” 2 Cor. vi. 10.

9754 “ Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit; . . . sit nomen Domini benedictum.” Job, i. 21.

9755 Boll. 29 Apr. Vit. c. I

9756 “ Etsi non habemus peccatum quod nobis objicit inimicus, habemus tamen alterum, quod digne in nobis flagelletur.” In Ps. Ixviii. s. i.

9757 Omnes qui pie volunt vivere in Christo Jesu, persecutionem patientur.” 2 Tim, iii. 12.

9758 “ Recogitate enim eum qui talem sustinuit a peccatoribus adversum semetipsum contradictionem.” Hebr. xii. 3.

9759 Life, ch. 11

9760 “ Ne timeas, O Sponsa, si paulisper tibi subtrahit faciem suam; omnia ista cooperantur tibi in bonum; recedit ad cautelam, ne incipias contemnere sodales, . . . ut desideratus avidius quaeratur.” Scal. claust. c. 8.

9761 “Et factus in agonia prolixius orabat.” Luke, xxii. 43.

9762 “ Exspecta ilium, quia veniens veniet, et non tardabit.” Hab. ii. 3.

9763 “ In mundo pressuram habebitis; sed confidite, ego vici mundum.” John, xvi. 33.

9764 “ Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.” Phil. iv. 13.

9765 Tristatur aliquis vestrum; oret.” James, v. 15.

9766 invoca me in die tribulationis; eruam te, et honorificabis me.” Ps. xlix. 15.

9767 “ Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.” Matt, xl 28.

9768 “ Fili, accedens ad servitutem Dei, . . . praepara animam tuam ad tentationem.” Ecclus. ii. i.

9769 “Cibus ejus electus.” Habac. i. 16.

9770 Ep. ad Eustoch.

9771 “ Qui non est tentatus, quid scit?” Ecclus. xxxiv. 9.

9772 “ Petrus, qui ante tentationem præsumpsit de se, in tentatione didicit se.”In Ps. xxxvi. s. I

9773 “ Et ne magnitude revelationum extollat me, dalus est mihi stimulus carnis meæ, angelus Satanæ, qui me colaphizet.” 2 Cor. xii. 7.

9774 “ Quoties restiteris, toties coronaberis.” In Quadr. s. 5.

9775 “ Tune ille conatus reputabitur tibi pro corona.” Rev. 1. 6, c. 94.

9776 “ Fidelis autem Deus qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis, sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proventum.” I Cor. x. 13.

9777 “ Propter quod ter Dominum rogavi, ut discederet a me; et dixit mihi: Sufficit tibi gratia mea.” 2 Cor. xii. 8.

9778 “ An isti in semetipsis possunt, an non in Domino ?” Conf. 1. 8, c. 11.

9779 “ Projice te in eum noli metuere: non se subtrahet ut cadas.” Loco cit.

9780 “ Ut scivi quoniam aliter non possem esse continens, nisi Deus del, . . . adii Dominum, et deprecatus sum ilium.” Wisd. viii.21

9781 “Statim ut libido titillaverit sensum, erumpamus in vocem: Dominus. auxiliator meus.” Ep. ad Eustoch.

9782 Deus in adjutorium meum intende.” Ps. Ixix. I.

9783 Clama ad me, et exaudiam te.” Jer. xxxiii. 3.

9784 Invoca me in die tribulationis; eruam te.” Ps. xlix. 15—6

9785 “Petite, etdabiturvobis; quaerite, et invenietis.” Matt. vii. 7.

9786 “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.” Luke, xi. 10

9787 “ Quodcumque volueritis, petetis, et fiet vobis.” John, xv. 7—

9788 “Vit. Patr. 1. 3, n. 35

9789 Vit. Patr. n. 13.

9790 “Dum parvus est hostis, interfice.” Ep. ad Eustoch.

9791 “ Omnia dæmonum machinamenta (virtute Crucis) ad nihilum redigit (Christus).” Scrni. 247, App. E. B.

9792 I it. B. Ant. c. 8.

9793 Ad Crucem confugit, eaque adversus terrores consignat.” In Julian, orat. I.

9794 Vit. Patr. I. 5, libell. 5, n. n.

9795 “ Protector est omnium sperantium in se.” Ps. xvii. 31.

9796 Quoniam in me speravit, liberabo eum.” Ps. xc. 14.

9797 In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” Ps. xxx. 2,

9798 Life, ch. 25.

9799 Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.” Phil. iv. 13.

9800 Hist. p. 3, tit. 24, c. 7, 7.

9801 Const. Mon. c. 4.

9802 “Quiamat periculum, in illo peribit.” Ecclus. iii. 27.

9803 Scal. par. gr. 23.

9804 “ Nec unquam bonus, nisi boni simulatione, deceptus est.” In Cant. s. 66.

9805 Vit. S, Franc, c.11

9806 “ Laudans invocabo Dominum, et de inimicis meis salvus ero.” Ps. xvii. 4.

9807 Eadem velle et eadem nolle, firma amicitiaest.” Ep. ad Demetr.

9808 Fideles in dilectione acquiescent illi.” Wisd. iii. 9.

9809 “Præbe, fill mi, cor tuum mihi.” Prov. xxiii. 26

9810 “ Cum homo vult aliquid per propriam voluntatem, Deo aufert (quasi suam coronam; sicut enim corona soli regi competit, sic propria; voluntas soli Deo.” De Similit. c. 8.

9811 “ Quasi scelus idololatriæ, nolle acquiescere. “ I Kings, xv. 23.

9812 “ Inveni David, filium Jesse, virum secundum cor meum, qui faciet omnes voluntates meas.” Acts, xiii. 22.

9813 “ Vocaberis voluntas mea in ea.” Is. Ixii. 4.

9814 “ Anima mea liquefacta est, ut locutus est.” Cant. v. 6.

9815 “ Per hoc quod Deum honoramus, mens nostra ei subjicitur; et in fioc ejus perfectio consistit.” 2. 2, q. 81, a. 7.

9816 “ Voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra.” i Thess. iv. 3.

9817 “Consilium meum stabit, et omnis voluntas mea fiet.” Is. xlvi. 10.

9818 “ Quis restitit ei, et pacem habuit Job, ix. 4.

9819 “Obmutui, et non aperui os meum, quoniam tu fecisti.” Ps. xxxviii. 10.

9820 “ Qui, postquam coangustatus est, oravit Dominum Deum suum, et egit poenitentiam valde coram Deo.” 2 Par. xxxiii. 12.

9821 Luke, xv. 4.

9822 “ Numquid oblivisci potest mulier infantem suum, ut non misereatur filio uteri sui?” Is. xlix. 15.

9823 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem! . . . quoties volui congregare filios tuos, quemadmodum gallina congregat pullos suos sub alas, et noluisti!” Matt, xxiii. 37.

9824 “ Domine, ut scuto bonae voluntatis tuæ coronasti nos.” Ps. v. 13.

9825 Filles de J. ch. 5, 11.

9826 Life, ch. 30.

9827 “ Ad justam legem Dei pertinuit, ut, qui a Deo noluit suaviter regi, poenaliter a seipso regeretur.” Epist.11

9828 Non contristabit justum, quidquid ei acciderit.” Prov. xii. 21.

9829 “ Humiles sunt, hoc volunt; pauperes sunt, pauperie delectantur; itaque, quidquid illud fuerit, beati dicendi sunt.” DC Cub. D. 1. i, n. 2.

9830 “Virga tua et baculus tuus, ipsa me consolata sunt.” Ps. xxii.4

9831 Life, ch. 10.

9832 “Bona et mala, vita et mors, . . . a Deo sunt.” Ecclus. xi. 14.

9833 “ Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit; sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est; sit nomen Domini benedictum.” Job, i.21

9834 “ Dixit: Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit. Non dixit: Dominus dedit, diabolus abstulit.” In Ps. xc. s. I.

9835 “ Calicem quern dedit mihi Pater, non bibam ilium?” John, xviii. ii.

9836 Doctr. 7

9837 “ Livor vulneris absterget mala. “ Prov. xx. 30.

9838 “ Juxtaest Dominus iis qui tribulato sunt corde.” Ps. xxxiii. 19.

9839 “ Cum ipso sum in tribulatione.” Ps. xc. 15.

9840 “ Exquisivi Dominum, et exaudivit me.” Ps. xxxiii. 5.

9841 Insin. 1. 3, c. 54.

9842 Vit. Patr. 1. i, c. 12.

9843 Vit. S. Franc, c. 14.

9844 Way of Perf. ch. 18.

9845 “ Vivo autem, jam non ego; vivit vero in me Christus. “ Gal. ii. 20.

9846 “Ita, Pater, quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te.” Matt, xi 26

9847 Dial. 1. 10, c. 6.

9848 Dial. 1. 3, c. 1 6.

9849 “ Hoc si revera facere potuerit, neque infernum nequc purgatorium, suhibit, etiamsi totius mundi peccata commisisset.” Cons. pus. c. 34, 2

9850 Diligent ibus Deum, omnia cooperantur in bonum. Rom. viii. 28.

[9851] “ Et vita in voluntate ejus.” Ps. xxix. 6.

[9852] See Vol. II.

[9853] Desolatione desolata est omnis terra, quia nullus est qui recogitet corde.”—Jer. xii. 11.

[9854] “Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis.” Ecclus. vii. 40.

[9855] Accedite ad eum, et illuminamini.” Ps. xxxiii. 6.

[9856] Sint lumbivestri præcincti, et lucernæ ardentes in manibus vestris.” Luke, xii. 35.

[9857] “ Oratio est lucerna.”

[9858] “ Lucerna pedibus meis, verbum tuum.” Ps. cxviii. 105.

[9859] Letter 8

[9860] “Seipsum non exhorret, quia nec sentit.” De Consid. 1. i, c. 2.

[9861] “ Cogitavi dies antiques, et annos æternos in mente habui, . . . et exercitabar, et scopebam spiritum meum.” Ps. Ixxvi. 6.

[9862] “ Flores apparuerunt in terra nostra, tempus putationis advenit; vox turturis audita est in terra nostra.” Cant. ii. 12.

[9863] “ Puta tempus putationis adesse, si meditatio præivit.” DC Const J. 1. 2, c. 6.

[9864] “ Consideratio regit affectus, dirigit actus, corrigit excessus.” Ibid. I. i, c. 7.

[9865] “ Faber ignitum ferrum ictibus raollire satagit.”

[9866] Dabis ergo servo tuo cor docile.” 3 Kings, iii. 9.

[9867] Video autem aliam legem in membris meis, repugnantem legimentis mere.” Rom. vii. 23.

[9868] Cor durum habebit male in novissimo; et qui amat periculum in illo peribit.” Ecclus. iii. 27.

[9869] Timeo tibi, Eugeni, ne multitude negotiorum, intermissa oratione et consideratione, te ad cor durum perducat; quod seipsum non ex—horret, quia nec sentit.” De Consid. 1. i, c. 2

[9870] “ Ex hoc otio vires proveniunt.”

[9871] “ Ne suscitetis neque evigilare faciatis Dilectam, donec ipsa velit.” Cant. iii. 5

9872 “Sine intermissione orate.” I Thess. v. 17.

9873 “ Ego autem mendicus sum et pauper.” Ps. xxxix. 18.

9874 “ Simpliciter impossibile est, absque precationis praesidio cum vir—tute degere.” De or. D. 1. I.

9875 “ Vult Deus rogari, vult cogi, vult quadam importunitate vinci.” In Ps. pœnit. vi.

9876 “ Impossibile est hominem congruo precantem studio unquam peccare.” Ad pop. Ant. hom. 79.

9877 “Si nos conspexerint deprecatione munitos, illico resiliunt.” De or. D.I.1.

9878 Letter 8

9879 “ Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi.” Ps. cxli. 2.

9880 “ Multi clamant, non voce sua, sed corporis. Cogitatio tua clamor est ad Dominum.” Rnarr. in Ps. cxli.

9881 “ Clama intus, ubi audit Deus.” In Ps. xxx, en. 4.

9882 “ Orantes omni tempore in spiritu.” Eph. vi. 18.

9883 Life, ch. 8.

9884 In meditatione mea exardescet ignis.” Ps. xxxviii. 4.

9885 Ducam eam in solitudinem et loquar ad cor ejus.” Osee, ii. 14.

9886 “ Ex oratione fugatur tentatio, abscedit tristitia, virtus reparatur excitatur fervor, et divini amoris flarnma succrescit.” De Casio Conn. c. 22.

9887 “ Beatus vir qui . . . in lege ejus meditabitur die ac nocte. Et erit tanquam lignum quod plantatum est secus decursum aquarum, quod fructum dabit in tempore suo ; et folium ejus non defluet, et omnia quæcumque faciet, prosperabuntur.” Ps. 1. 3.

9888 Ad pop. Ant. hom. 79.

9889 Emissiones tuæ, paradisus malorum punicorum cum pomorum fructibus. . . . Fons hortorum, puteus aquarum viventium, quae fluunt impetu de Libano.” Cant. iv. 13.

9890 “ Anima measicut terra sine aqua tibi; . . . defecit spiritus meus.” Ps. cxlii. 6.

9891 “Quisquis non orat Deum, nee divino ejus colloquio cupit assidue frui, is mortuus est. . Animne mors est, non provolvi coram Deo. “ De or. D.1.I.

9892 “ Radix vitis frugiferæ.” Ibid.

9893 “ Oratio est propugnaculum adversus impetum afflictionum, virtutum scaturigo, gratiarum conciliatrix.” Scal. par. gr. 23.

9894 “Omnis profectus spiritualis ex meditatione procedit. “ In Ps. xxxvi.

9895 “ Absque meditationis exercitio, nullus, serluso miraculo Dei, ad christianæ religionis normam attingit.” De Med. cons. 7.

9896 “ Sedebit solitarius, et tacebit, quia levavit super se.” Lam. iii. 28.

9897 “ Tu autem, cum oraveris, intra in cubiculum tuum, et, clause ostio, ora Patrem tuum in abscondito.” Matt. vi. 6.

9898 Silentium. et a strepitu quies, cogit cœlestia meditari.” Epist. 78.

9899 Chap. XVI. II.

9900 “ Mane et vespere tempus est orationis opportunum.” Spec. disc. p. i, c. 12.

9901 “ Si oratio negotium praecesserit, peccatum aditum non inveniet.”—De Or. Dom. or. I.

9902 “ Non prius corpusculum requiescat, quam anima pascatur.” Ad Eustoch.

9903 “Cum charitas urget, se exponit proximo, sic tamen ut continue anhelet ad cubile Sponsi reditum.” De Casto Conn. c. 12.

9904 “ Non enim habet amaritudine in conversatio illius, nec tædium convictus illius, sed Iætitiam et gaudiurn.” Wisd. viii. 16.

9905 “ Oratio est familiaris conversatio et conjunctio cum Deo.” Scal, par. gr. 28.

9906 “ Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus.” Ps. xxxiii. 9

9907 Ad præparandum te ad orationem, exue voluntates tuas. “ Scal, par. gr. 28.

9908 “ Loquere, Domine, quia audit servus tuus.” i Kings, iii. 19.

9909 “ Exspectate hie.” De cont. D. c. i.

[9910] Collat. 23, c. 7.

[9911] Lettre 629.

[9912] “ Evagatio mentis, quæ fit præter propositum, orationis fructum non tollit.” 2. 2, q. 83, a. 13.

[9913] Introd. p. 2, ch I

[9914] Found, ch. 5.

[9915] Charitas operit multitudinem peccatorum.” i Pet. iv. 8.

[9916] “ Ego diligentes me diligo.” Prov. viii. 17.

[9917] “ Quilibet actus charitatis meretur vitam æternam.” i. 2,q. 114,3. 7.

[9918] “ Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo dabit vobis. “John, xvi. 23.

[9919] 2. 2, q. 189, a. 3.

[9920] “ Nihil declarat quis sit amans Christi, quam si curam Eratrum agat.” Contra Anom hom. 6.

[9921] Life, ch. 19

[9922] Life ch 8

[9923] Life, ch. 19

[9924] Life, ch. 11

[9925] Life ch 11

[9926] 2. 2, q. 82, a. I.

[9927] “ Non quod ego vo!o, sed quod tu.” Mark, xiv, 36.

[9928] “Perparum orat, quisquis, illo tantum tempore quo genua flectuntur, orare consuevit.” Collat. 10, c. 14.

[9929] “Si vis salvus esse, fuge, tace, et quiesce.” Vit. Patr. 1. 3, n. 190.

[9930] Silentium, et a strepitu quies.cogit cœlestia meditari.” Epist. 78.

[9931] “ Non in commotione Dominus.” 3 Kings, xix. 11.

9932 “ Erit . . . cultus justiti, ne silentium.” Is. xxxii. 17.

9933 “ In silentio et in spe erit fortitude vestra. “ Is. xxx. 15.

9934 Cavea multiloquio; hoc enim sanctas cogitationes extinguit. “—Doctr. 24.

9935 “ Ducam eam in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor ejus.” Osee, ii. 14.

9936 “ In multiloquio non deerit peccatum.” Pror, x. 19.

9937 “ Dico autem vobis, quoniam omne verbum otiosum, quod locuti fuerint homines, reddent rationcmdc eo, in die judicii.” Matt, xii 36.

9938 “ Universitas iniquitatis.” James, iii. 6.

9939 “ Vir linguosus non dirigetur in terra.” Ps. xxxix. 12.

9940 “ Silent igitur paludes; homines non silebunt ?” De Virgin, 1. 3.

9941 “ Omni tempore silentio debent studere monachi.”—Reg c. 42.

9942 “Qui custodit os suum, custodit animam suam.” Prov. xiii. 3.

9943 “Si quis in verbo non offendit, hie perfectus est vir.” James, iii. 2.

9944 “ Tempus tacendi, et tempus loquendi.” Ecclus. iii. 7.

9945 “ Per silentium disci, quod postea proferatur.”

9946 “ Tune solum loquendum est, quando plus proficit quam silentium.” In Ps. cxl.

9947 “ Aut tace, aut die meliora silentio.”

9948 Pract. of perf. p. 2, tr. 2, ch. 8.

9949 “ Me sæpe pœnituit dixisse, nunquam tacuisse.” Surius , 19 Jul

9950 “ Cum. Deo, multis; cumhominibus, paucis loquere.” Encom. in Fs.

9951 “ Verbs tuis facito stateram.” Ecclus. xxviii. 29.

9952 “Bis ad limam veniant verba, quam semel ad linguam.” Punct. perf. 7-

9953 Spec, disc. p. i, c. 31.

9954 “ Loquamur Dominum Jesum, ipsum semper loquamur. “ In Ps. XXXVI.

9955 “ Particula boni doni non te prretereat.” Ecclus. xiv. 14.

9956 “ O solitude, in qua Deus cum suis familiariter loquitur ac conversatur !”

9957 “ Non in commotione Deus.” 3 Kings, xix. 11

9958 “ Ducam earn in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor ejus.” Osee, ii. 14.

9959 “ Anima mea liquefacta est, ut locutus est.” Cant. v. 6.

9960 Ep. ad Hilar.

9961 Epist. 106.

9962 “ Lætabitur deserta et invia, et exsultabit solitude, et florebit quasi lilium; germinans germinabit; . . . ipsi videbunt gloriam Domini et decorem Dei nostri.” Is. Xxxv. 1.

9963 “ Evasimus semel; hactenus periculosis nos non inferamus.” De Pœnit, n. 7.

9964 Non enim habet amaritudinem conversatio illius; nee tædium convictus illius, sed lætitiam et gaudium.” Wisd. viii. 16.

9965 “Solitude mihi paradisus est.” Ep. ad Rust.

9966 Nunquam minus solus, quam cum solus.” De Vita sol. c. 4.

9967 “Quasi tristes, semper autem gaudentes.” 2 Cor. vi. 10.

9968 “ Consolabitur Dominus Sion, et consolabitur omnes ruinas ejus; et ponet desertum ejus quasi delicias, et solitudinem ejus quasi hortum Domini; gaudium et lætitia invenietur in ea, gratiarum actio, et vox laudis.” Is. li. 3.

9969 “Ecce elongavi fugiens, et mansi in solitudine.” Ps. liv. 8.

9970 “ Hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa.” Cant. iv. 12.

9971 Hortus nescit esse, qui nescit esse conclusus.” In Cant. s. 35.

9972 Sede ergo solitarius; secede, non corpore, sed intentione.” In Cant. s. 40.

9973 “ Venite seorsum in desertum locum, et requiescite pusillum.” Mark, vi. 31.

9974 “Solitudo semper amanda est, tenenda vero non semper.” De Casto Conn. c. 6.

9975 Quid prodest solitudo corporis, si solitude defuerit cordis ?” Mor. 1. 30, c. 23.

9976 “ In plateis, in triviis, suum pietas habet secretum.” Serm. 9.

9977 “Quid mihi est in cœlo ? et a te quid volui super terram ? . . . Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.” Ps. Ixxii. 25.

9978 Admonitions, 36.

9979 “Vacate, et videte quoniam ego sum Deus.” Ps. xlv. 11

9980 “ Cum oraveris, intra in cubiculum tuum, et, clauso ostio, ora Patrem tuum in abscondito.” Matt. vi. 6.

9981 ManuaI. c. 30.

9982 “ Sedebit solitarius. et tacebit, quia levavit super se.” Lam. iii. 28.

9983 Reddent rationem pro otioso silentio.”

9984 Solitudinem non facit esse solum.” In Ps cxl.

9985 “ Multam enim malitiam docuit otiositas.” EC fins, xxxiii. 29.

9986 De Prof. rel. 1. I, c. 39.

9987 “ Quæsivit lanam et linum, et operata est consilio manuum suarum.” Prov. xxxi. 13.

9988 “ Habeto lanam semper in manibus.” Ep. ad Demetr.

9989 “ Totus exterius laborabat, et totus interius Deo vacahat.” Lohner, Bibl. tit. 13, p. 2.

9990 “ Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum.” Cant. viii. 6.

9991 Fili, ne in multis sint actus tui; et si dives fueris, non eris immunis a delicto. “ Ecclus. xi. 10.

9992 Si Dominum præsentem, et omnia videntem, semper cogitaremus, aut vix aut nunquam peccaremus.” Opusc. 58, c. 2.

9993 Memoria Dei excludit cuncta flagitia.” In Ezech. c. 22.

9994 Tanta in puero fuit disciplina reverentiae, ut naturam vinceret.” De Virgin. 1. 3

[9995] Way of Perf. ch. 29.

[9996] “ Non est Deus in conspectu ejus; inquinatæ sunt viæ illius in omni tempore.” Ps. x. 5.

[9997] Pallad. Hist. laus. c. 98.

[9998] “ Melius est mihi absque opere incidere in manus vestras, quam peccare in conspectu Domini.” Dan. xiii. 23.

[9999] Metaphrast. Vit. S. Ephrem.

10000 “ Qui plasmasti me, miserere mei.”

10001 Vit. Patr. 1. I.

10002 “Pone me juxta te, et cujusvis manus pugnet contra me.” Job, xvii. 3.

10003 “ Si ita nos ipsos disposuimus, nihil mail faciemus, nihil malidicemus, nihil mali cogitabimus.” In Phil. hom. 8.

10004 “ Ad solam defuncti seu absentis memoriam, flabat spiritus, et fluebant aquæ.” In Cant. s. 14.

10005 “ Memor fui Dei, et delectatus sum.” Ps. Ixxvi. 4.

10006 Found, ch. 5.

10007 Life, ch. 13.

10008 Numquid non cœlum et terram ego impleo ?” Jer. xxiii. 24.

10009 In ipso enim vivimus, et movcmur, et sumus.” Acts, xvii. 28.

10010 Solil. c. 14; Conf. 1. 3, c. 11.

10011 “ Disce amare in creatura Creatorem, et in factura Factorem, ne teneat te quod ab illo factum est, et amittas eum a quo et ipse factus es. Enarr. in Ps. xxxix.

10012 “Cœlum et terra, et omnia quæ in eis sunt, mihi dicunt ut te amem.” Conf. 1. 10, c. 6.

10013 Way of Perf. ch. 29.

10014 “ Nescitis quia templum Dei estis, et Spiritus Dei habitat in vobis?” I Cor, iii. 16.

10015 “Siquis diligit me, . . . et Pater meus diligit eum, et ad cum veniemus, et mansionem apud eum faciemus. “John, xiv. 23.

10016 “ Inhabitabo in illis, et inambulabo inter eos, et ero illorum Deus.” 2 Cor. vi. 16.

10017 Way of Perf. ch. 29.

10018 “ Providibam Dominum in conspectu meo semper.” Ps. xv. 8.

10019 Insin, 1. I, c. 12.

10020 De Int. Domo. c. 27.

10021 “Ambula coram me, et esto perfectus.” Gen. xvii. i.

10022 “ Omnibus autem diebus vitae tug, in mente habeto Deum “Tobias iv. 6.

10023 “ Dei tantum memor esto, eumque semper tibi pnesentem considera.” Bolland. 23 Febr.

10024 “ Indicabo tibi, o homo, quid sit bonum, et quid Dominus r quirat a te: utique . . . solicitum ambulare cum Deo tuo.” Mich. vi.

10025 “ Nee enim tam sæpe spiritum ducere, quam Dei meminisse debemus.” De Theol. orat. I.

10026 “ Si crebris precationibus te ipsum accendas, non dabis occasionem diabolo, aut ullum ad tuas cogitationes aditum.” De Anna. hom. 4.

10027 “Oculi mei semper ad Dominum; quoniam ipse evellet de laqueo pedes meos. “ Ps. xxiv. 15.

10028 “ Confirma me, Domine Deus, in hac hora.”—Judith, xiii. 9.

10029 “Semper vident faciem Patris.” Matt, xviii. 10.

10030 “Lectio nos ad orationcm instruit et ad operationem.*”—Dc Modo bene viv. c.* 50.

10031 “Lectio et oratio sunt arma, quibus diabolos expugnatur, beatiduo aquiritur. Ibid

10032 Sine legeiidi studio, ncminem ad Deum intentum videas.”

10033 Attende lectioni.”—1 Tim. iv. 3.

10034 “Non necesse habes aurum in luto quaerere.”—*Ep. ad Furiam.*

10035 “Quaerite, et invenietis.”—*Matt.* vii. 7

10036 “Quaerite legendo, et invenietis meditando: lectio quasi cibum ori apponit, meditatio masticat.”—*Seal, clanstr.* c. 2.

10037 “Semper in manibus tuis sit divina lectio, ut omnes cogitationum sagittai hujusmodi clypeo repellantur.”

10038 “Lectionem adhibeas speculi vice.”

10039 Ibi fceda, ibi pulchra nostra cognoscimus; ibi sentimus quantum proficimus.”—Mer. 1. 2, c. 1.

10040 “Oras; loqueris ad Sponsum. Legis; ille tibi loquitur.”—Ep. ad Eustoch.

[10041] “Ilium alloquimur, cum oramus; ilium audimus, cum legimus.”—*De Office.* I. 1, c. 20.

[10042] *Enarr. Ps*, xc.s 2.

[10043] Conf. I. 8. C. 6.

[10044] We may add the ascetical works of St. Alphonsus; for many well—instructed persons even say that they wish for no other books, since in them they find all that they need, and this more clearly and surely than elsewhere. Our saint seems, in fact, to have provided for all the wants of the soul. At the end of this volume is found a table of subjects for spiritual reading that may be made each month on the virtue that we propose to practise.—ED.

[10045] Exempla servorum tuorum, congesta in sinum cogitations nostra?, urebant ct absumebant gravem torporem, ct accendebant nos valide.—*Conf.* 1. 9, c, 2.

[10046] Ex recordatione Sanctorum, tamquam lapidum ignitorum, in deificum recalescebat incendium.”—*Vita S. Franc*, c. 9.

[10047] *In Evang. kom.* 15

[10048] Loquere, Domine, quia audit servus tuus.”—1 *Kings*, iii. 9.

[10049] “Multi legunt, et ab ipsa lectione jejuni sunt.*”—In Ezech. Kom.* 10.

[10050] 21”Nutri animam tuam lectionibus divinis.

[10051] “Non pigeat sajpius eumdem repetere versum. *De Patient. E Cons. sac.*

[10052] “Oratio lcctionem interrumpat *De Vita sol.* c. io.

[10053] *L. de Blois, Concl. p. 2, c. f.*

[10054] *Collat. I, c. 5.*

[10055] “In multis enim offendimus omnes.”—*James*, iii. 2.

[10056] *Scal. par. gr.* 4.

[10057] *Lettre* 55

[10058] In 1 reg I. 6 c 2

[10059] “Aliquando non est tarn meritorium credere, sicut velle credere.”—*De Prep ad M. cons* 3

10060 *“In* contritionc est duplex dolor: unus in ipsa voluntate, quest essentialiter ipsa contritio, que nihil aliud est quam displicentia praeteriti peccati; alius dolor est in parte sensitiva, qui causatur ex primo dolore.”—*Suppl.* q. 3. a. 1

10061 Disponit omnia suaviter. *Wisd.* viii. I.

Ecce in pace amaritudo mea amanssima, Is.xxxviii 17.

10062 *Lib.* 6, n. 454.

10063 Nullum, praeter eum, amatorem admittam.”

10064 For her peace of conscience, a religious or novice may approach or have summoned any confessor approved by the local Ordinary for women’s confessions and validly and lawfully confess to him in a prescribed place. The Superioress may not hinder this in any way; and contrary privileges are revoked. *Crf. Can.* 522.

10065 *Lib.* 6, n. 450 *et* 476.

10066 *Lib.* 6, n. 477.

10067 *Entret.* 15.

10068 “Verteranda sunt, non imitanda, ne. dum se quisque discipulum hominis esse despiciat, magistcr erroris fiat. *Dial.* I. 1, c. 1.

10069 Coll 2 c. 6.

10070 Life. Ch.13

10071 A religious for the peace of her soul and for greater spiritual progress may ask the Ordinary for a special confessor or spiritual director. Cfr. Can. 520. n. 2.

10072 “Te ergo quaesumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine rcdemisti.”

10073 *Introd. ch. 2*

10074 *Lettre 213.*

10075 *“Sicut oves in inferno positi sunt.”—Ps. xiviii. 15.*

10076 Dir asc.tr.2 a 11. C.2.

10077 “*Qui vos audit, me audit; et qui vos spernit, me spernit.”—Luke x. 16.*

[10078] “Quidquid vice Dei praecipit homo, quod non sit tamen certum displicere Deo, baud secus omnino accipiendum est, quam si praecipiat Deus.”—*De Prac. et Disp.* c. 9.

[10079] Conferea cum aliquo mansueto cordis medico: et quod per ilium tibi loquentem Dominus aperuerit, scribe mihi.”—*Ep.* 95, *E. B.*

[10080] “Consule discretos, et acquiesce illis.”—P. I, tit. 3, c. 10, §10.

[10081] “Quisquis its dicis, erras: non enim te commisisti in manus hominis, quia literatus, etc., sed quia tibi est praepositus; quamobrem, obedias illi, non ut homini, sed ut Deo.”—De *Prap. ad M. cons.* 3.

[10082] *Found*, ch. 5.

[10083] *Suppl* q. 10. a. 5

[10084] Sess.14 cap, 5.

[10085] Page 32

[10086] Page 23.

[10087] P. 1, tit. 3, *C.* 10, § 10.

[10088] De Paenit. d. 7, c. 4, n. 65.

[10089] De Bonit et Mal act. hum. d. 12, sect. 7.

[10090] Conscientia formata est, quando, post discussionem et deliberationem, ex definitiva sententia rationis judicatur aliquid faciendum aut vitandum; et contra cam agere est peccatum. Timor vero conscientiae seu scrupulus est, quando mens inter dubia vacillat, nescicns ad quid potius teneatur; non tamen vellet omittere quidquid sciret esse placitum divinae voluntati; et iste timor, quantum fieri potest, abjiciendus et ex—linguendus.”—*Comp, theol. tr. de nat. et qual. consc.*

[10091] Quam bonus Israel Deus his qui recto sunt corde!”—*Ps.* Ixxii. I.

[10092] Bonus est Dominus sperantibus in eum, anima: quaerenti ilium.”—*Lam.* iii. 25.

[10093] Jacta super Dominum curam tuam, et ipse te enutriet; non dabit in aetemum fluctuationem justo.”—*Ps.* liv. 23.

[10094] *Way of Perf.* ch. 42.

[10095] “In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum. *Ps.* xxx. 6.

10096 “In te Domine speravi; non confundar in aeternum.”—*Ibid.* i.

10097 P 3. q—65, a. 3; q. 73, a. 3.

10098 “Qui manducat meam carncm, . . . in me manet, et ego in illo.”

—John, vi. 57.

10099 “Corpus suum in nos contemperavit, ut unum quid simus.”—Ad fop. Ant. horn. 61.

10100 “Ut unum quid ex utrisque factum videatur.”—In Jo. *1.* 10, c. 13.

10101 “Comedite, et eritis vos gratia quod ego sum natura.”—In Exod. 1. 3, c. 12.

10102 “Nec tu me in te mutabis, sed tu mutaberis in me.”—Conf. *1. 7 c.10*

10103 “Antidotum quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis, et a peccatis mortalibus praeservemur.”—*Sess.* 13. c. 2.

10104 “Si quis vestrum, non tarn saepe, non tain acerbos sentit iracundiae motus, invidiae, luxuriae, gratias agat Corpori Domini; quoniam virtus Sacramenti operatur in eo.”—*In Caen.* D. s. 1.

10105 “Repellit omnem daemonum impugnationem. P. 3. q—*79.* a—6

10106 Ad pop. Ant. hom. 61.

10107 P.3 79 a. I.

10108 “Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur”—Luke xii. 49.

10109 Sciens Jesus quia venit hora ejus, ut transeat ex hoc mundo ad Patrem, cum dilexisset suos, . . . in finem dilexit eos.”—*John,* xiii. 1.

10110 “Divitias sui erga homines amoris velut effudit.”—Sess. 13, c. 2.

10111 “Sacramentum charitatis.*”—De Sacr. alt.* c. 25.

10112 “Amor amorum.”—In Caen. D. s. 2.

10113 “Consummatum est.”—John. xix. 30.

10114 “Quotidi . . . frangentes circa domos Panem.”—Acts, ii. 46.

10115 “Munus benedictum.”

10116 P. 3, q. 80, a. 10.

10117 De Hier. Eccl. c. 3.

10118 Ep. ad Lucin.

10119 Cap. Etsi dc Conseer. d. 2.

10120 In Cone. Later, c. 21.

10121 Sess. 13, c. 9.

10122 *In Ps.* cxxxi.

10123 *Insin. 1. 4,* c. *26.*

10124 Sess. 13, can. I.

10125 “Domine, non sum dignus ut intrcs sub tectum meum. Matt. Viii. 8.

10126 Introd. ch. 21.

10127 Bios. Concl. an. fid. c. 6, n. 6.

10128 Capari, ch48, boll. C.14, n.157

10129 *Way of Perf.* ch. 35.

10130 “Quid tibi vis faciam?”—*Mark.* x. 51.

10131 “Qui non meretur quotidie accipere, non meretur post annum acci-pere.”—*De Sa cram.* L 5, c. 4.

10132 *Collat.* 23, c. 21.

10133 “Amor tamen et spes, ad qua: semper Scriptura nos provocat, pracferuntur timori.*”*—P. 3, q. 80, a. 10.

10134 Page 66.

10135 “Qui semper pecco, semper debeo habere medicinam.”—*De Sac—ram.* 1. 4, c. 6.

10136 De Prcep. ad M. cons. 4.

[10137] De Discipl. mon. c. 19

[10138] “Licet tepide, tamen fiducialiter accedat; quia tanto magis neger necesse habet requirere medicurn, quanto magis senserit se aegrotum.”

—De Prof. rel. p. 2, c. 76.

[10139] Page 66.

[10140] *Introd* ch. 21.

[10141] P. 2, c. q. 40.

[10142] P. 3. q 79. a 4.

[10143] P 3 Q 80. a. I.

[10144] *Sess. 13 Cap .8*.

[10145] *Formic. I.* I, c. I.

[10146] “Da amantem, ct sentit quod dico.”—*In. Jo. tr.* 26. 6

[10147] *De l’Or. et de la Med.* p. I, ch. 4.

[10148] “Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummati—onem saeculi.”—*Matt,* xxviii. 20.

[10149] Bouhours, Vie, *1*. 6.

[10150] D’Aubenton, Vie, *1*. 4.

[10151] Dupont. Vie, ch. 6.

[10152] *Ribera, Vit. 1.* 5, c. 4.

[10153] “Ubi cst qui natus est Rex Judaorum?—*Matt.* ii. 2.

[10154] Her writings, p. I, § I.

[10155] “‘Sio cuius tuus fuerit simplex, totum corpus tuum lucidum erit; si autem oculus tuus fuerit nequam, totum corpus tuum tenebrosum erit.”—*Matt.* vi. 22.

[10156] “Homo enim videt ea quae parent; Dominus autem intuetur cor.”—i *Kings,* xvi. 7.

10157 Et si tradidero corpus meum ita ut ardcam, charitatem autem non habuero, nihil mihi prodest."—i Cor. xiii. 3.

10158 "Martyrem non facit poena, sed causa."—Semi. 331, E. B.

10159 "HolocaUsta medullata offeram tibi."—Ps. Ixv. 15.

10160 "Non Valde attendas quid homo facial, sed quid, cum facit, respiciat."—In Ps. xxxi. en. 2.

10161 "Tantum facis, quantum intend is."

10162 "Qune est ista, qua: ascendit per desertum, sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus myrrhae, et thuris, et universi pulveris pigmentariit"—Cant. iii. 6.

10163 "Tangit Christum fides paucorum; prcmit eum turba multorum."—Serm. 62, E. B.

10164 "Amendico vobis, quoniam vidua hajc pauper plus omnibus misit."—*Mark*, xii. 41.

10165 "Considerans, non quantum, sed ex quanto dedisset.*"—De Op. et* Eleem.

10166 "Qui mercedes congregavit, misit eas in sacculum pertusum."—*Agg.* i. 6.

10167 "Attendite ne justitiam vestram faciatis coram hominibus, ut vide amini ab eis."—*Mett.* vi. i.

10168 "Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem vestrum, qui in coelis est."—*Matt.* v. 16.

10169 Nee propter te coepi, nec propter te desinam

10170 Life ch. 10

10171 "Ego Dilecto meo et ad me conversion ejus"-Can ii.10

10172 De Beatit. c. 7.

10173 "Intra in gaudium Domini tui."Matt.xxv.21.

10174 "Quando operator, non ut ipsa Deo placeat, sed. . . . quia placeat Deo quod operator."—De Divers.s.103.7

10175 "Non quaero voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem ejus qui misit me."-John. V.30

10176 "Ego quae placita sunt ai facio semper."-John.viii.29

10177 “Bene omnia fecit.”-Mark vii.37

10178 “Si dignus fueris agree aliquid quod Deo placet, alium, prater id, mercedem requiris?”-De compunct I.2

10179 “Si non habet area quod donet, habet cor et voluntas.”

10180 “Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum.”—*Cant.* viii. 6.

10181 “Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea sponsa; vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum.”—*Cant.* iv. 9

10182 ‘‘Servientes sicut Domino, et non hominibus. *Eph.* vi. 7.

10183 “Sive ergo manducatis, sive bibitis, sive aliud quid facitis, omnia in gloriam Dei facite.”—1 *Cor.* x. 31.

10184 *Knowl and Love, b.3.* ch. 15. s. 3.

10185 Life, ch.2

10186 “Explevit tempora multa.”-Wisd.iv.13

10187 “Viri sanguinum et dolosi non dimidiabunt dies suos.”-Ps.liv.24

10188 “Illum diem vixisse te computa, qui puritatis habuit luceem.”-Ad Monach.hom.9

10189 “Euge, serve bone et fidelis; quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, super multa te constituam.”—*Matt. xxv. 21.*

10190 “Petite, et accipietis.”—John, xvi. 24.

10191 “Oportet semper orare.”—Luke, xviii. 1.

10192 “Orate ut non intretis in tentationem.”—Mark, xiv. 38.

10193 “Petite, et dabitur vobis.”—Matt. vii. 7.

10194 “Ad orationem quilibet tenetur, ex hoc ipso quod tenetur ad bona spiritualia sibi procuranda; quaj procurari non possunt, nisi a Deo petantur.*”—In* 4 *Sent.* d. 15, q. 4, a. I.

10195 *Lessius, De Inst. 1.* 2, c. 37, d. 3.

10196 “Simpliciter impossibile est, absque precationis prcesidio, cum virtute degere’—*De or. Deo, 1.* 1.

10197 “Fiditendendum est orationem adultis ad salutem esse necessarium.”—*Loco cit.*

10198 “Post Baptismum autem necessaria est homini jugis oratio, ad hoc quod coelum introeat.”—P. 3. q. 39, a. 5.

10199 “Postquam aliquis est justificatus per gratiam, necesse habet a Deo petere perseverantia: donum, ut scilicet custodiatur a malo usque ad finem vitae.”—1. 2, q. 109, a. ro.

10200 “Si quis dixerit justification, vel sine speciali auxilio Dei in accepta justitia perseverare posse, vel cum eo non posse, anathema sit.—*Sess.* 6, *can.* 22.

10201 “Constat alia Deum dare etiam non orantibus, sicut initium fidei; alia non nisi orantibus paeparasse, sicut usque in finem perseverantiam. *Dc Dono pers.* c. 16.

10202 “Persuasum habeamus quod animae mors sit, non provolvi ad Dei genua.*”—De or. Deo, 1.* I.

10203 “Deus, in adjutorium meum intende; Domine ad adjuvandum me festina.”—*Ps.* lxix. i.

10204 “Petite et dabitur vobis”-Luke.xi.9

10205 “Quodcumque volueritis petitis et fiet vobis.”-John xv.7

10206 “Oratio pie Deo vim infert.”-Scal.par.gr.28

10207 “Ego autem mendicus sum et pauper.’’—Ps. xxxix. iS.

10208 “Benedictus Deus, qui non amovit orationem meam et misericordiam suam a me.”—Ps. lxv. 20.

10209 “Cum videris non a te amotam deprecationem tuam, securus esto, quia non est a te amota misericordia ejus.

10210 “Semper obtinetur, etiam dum adhuc oramus.”

10211 “Adhuc illis loquentibus. ego audiam.”—Is. lxv. 24.

10212 “Deus superbis resistit; humilibus autem dat gratiam.”—James, iv. 6.

10213 “Oratio humiliantis se nubes penetrabit, . . . et non discedet, donec Altissimus aspiciat.”—*Ecclus.* xxxv. 21.

10214 “Nullus speravit in Domino, et confusus est.”-Ecclus.ii.II

10215 “Postulet autem in fide, nihil haesitans”—*James,* i. 6.

10216 “Qui enim habitat, similis est fluctui maris, qui a vento movetur et circumfertur, non ergo aestimet homo ille quod accipiat aliquid a Domino.”—*Ibid.* 6, 7.

10217 “Omnia quaecumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.”—*Mark,* xi. 24.

10218 “Quis falli tiineat, cum promittit Veritas?”—*Conf. 1.* 12, c. 1.

10219 “Hortatur ut petas; negabit quod petis?”—*Serm.* 61, *E. B*

10220 “Promittendo, debitorem se Deus fecit.”—*Serm.110, E. B.*

10221 “Oratio, in impetrando, non innititur merito, sed divinae misericordiae.”—2. 2, q. 178, a. 2.

10222 “Petite, et dabitur vobis; . . . omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—*Luke,* xi. 9.

10223 “Omnis, sive justus, sive peccator sit.”—*In Matt hom.* 18.

10224 “Amen, amen dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* xvi. 22

10225 “Si quis autem vestrum indiget sapientia, postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluenter.”—*James,* i. 5.

10226 “Non improperat.”—*Ibid.*

10227 “Obtinere, in sola precum mora est.*”—In Matt. can.* 6

10228 *Sess.* 6, *cap.* 12.

10229 “Hoc Dei donum suppliciter emereri potest.*”—De Dono pers.* c. 6.

10230 “Necessaria est homini jugis oratio, ad hoc quod coelum introeat.”—*3.* q—*39.* a. 5.

10231 “Oportet semper orare, et non deficere”—*Luke,* xviii. i.

10232 “Sine intermissione orate.”—I *Thess.* v. 17.

10233 “Quotidie petenda est, ut quotidie obtineatur.”

10234 “Vult Deus rogari, vult cogi, vult quadam importunitate vinci.”—*In Ps. paenit.* vi.

10235 “Petite, etdabitur vobis; quserite, et invenietis; pulsate, et aperietur vobis.”—*Luke*, xi. 9.

10236 “Effundam super domum David, et super habitatores Jerusalem, spiritum gratia: et prccum.”—*Zach.* xii. 10.

10237 “Frustra jacitur rete ante oculos pennatorum.”—*Prov.* i. 17.

10238 “Deus impossibilia non jubet; sed jubendo monet, et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis; et adjuvat ut possis.’’—*Sess.* 6, *cap. 11*.

10239 “Quid infirmo sit utile, magis novit medicus, quam aigrotus.”—*Ap.S. Prosp. sent.* 212.

10240 “Si vos, cum sitis mali, nostis bona data dare filiis vestris, quanto magis Pater vester de coelodabit spiritum bonum petentibus se! *L.uke* xi. 13.

10241 *Way of Perf.* ch. 1.

10242 “Quastuorum preces exaudis, si has non exaudis?”—*De Civ. D.* I. 22, c. 8.8

10243 “Clama ad me, et exaudiam te.”—Jer. xxxiii. 3.

10244 “Invoca me, . . . eruam te.”—Ps. xlix. 15.

10245 “Petite, et dabitur vobis .”—Matt. vii. 7.

10246 “Omnia qinecumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.”—Mark, xi. 24.

10247 “Quodcumque volueritis, petetis, et fiet vobis .”—John, xv. 7.

10248 “Si quid petieritis me in nomine meo, hoc faciam.”—*John*, xiv. 14.

10249 “Orationi instantes.”—*Rom.* xii. 12.

10250 *In Rom.* xii. *lect.* 2.

10251 “Quaeramus gratiam, et per Mariam quajramus; quia, quod quaerit, invenit, et frustrari non potest.*”—De Aquaed.*

10252 “Tui amoris in corde meo ignem accende.”

10253 “Ne pennittas me separari a te.”

10254 “Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam, et hauriet salutem a Domino.’’ Prov. viii. 35.

10255 “Sicut, o Beatissima ! omnis a te aversus et a te despectus necesse est ut intereat, ita omnis ad te conversus et a te respectus impossibile est ut pereat.”—Orat. 51.

10256 “Necessarium est quod hi ad quos convertit oculos suos, pro eis advocans, justificentur et glorificentur.’’—P. 4, tit. 15, c. 14, § 7.

10257 “Qui acquirit gratiam Maria;, agnoscetur a civibus paradisi ; et qui habuerit characterem ejus, adnotabitur in Libro vita;.”—Ps. B. V. ps.9’

10258 “Sicut per stellam maris navigantes diriguntur ad portum, ita Christiani diriguntur per Mariam ad gloriam. *Exp. in bat. Ang.*

10259 “Nec facultas ei deesse poterit, nec voluntas. *“—In Assumpt.* s. I.

10260 “Virgo potens, ora pro nobis.”

10261 “Fecit mihi magna. qui potens est .*”—Luke,* i. 49.

10262 *Salazar, In Prov.* viii. 18.

10263 “Pete quod vis a me ; non enim inanis potest esse petitio tua.”

10264 “Quia tu mihi nihil negasti in terra, ego tibi nihil negabo in coelo.”-*Rev.* 1. 6, c. 23; 1. 1, c. 24.

10265 “Oratio Deiparae habet rationem imperii ; unde impossible est cam non exaudiri.”—P. 4, t. 15, c. 17, § 4.

10266 “Monstra te esse Matrem.”

10267 *De Laud. B. AT.* 1. 2, p. 1.

10268 “Omnipotens auxilium tuum, o Maria !”—*Hymn.* 6.

10269 “Cum autem eadem sit potestas Matris et Filii, ab omnipotente Filio omnipotens Mater est effecta.*”—De Laud. B. AT.* 1. 4.

10270 “Habes vires insuperabiles ne clementiam tuam seperet multitudo peccatorum ; nibil tuae resistit potentiae, tuam enim glorium Creator existimat esse propriam.”—*Or. de Ingr. B. V.*

10271 “Nihil tibi impossible, cui possibile est desperatos in spem beatitudinis relevare.*”—In Nat. B. V.* s. I.

10272 *In Dorm. V. M.* s. 2.

10273 Spec.B.V lect.6

10274 *De Zona Deip.*

10275 “Ego vocor ab omnibus Mater misericordia; vere, misericordia Filii mei fecit me misericordem.”

10276 “Ideo miser erit, qui ad misericordiam, cum possit, non accedit.”—*Rev.* 1. 2, c. 23.

10277 “A Deo pietate replentur ubera, ut, alicujus miseria: notitia tacta lac fundant misericordiai, nec possis miserias scire, et non subvenire.”—*In Cant.* c. 23.

10278 “Vinum non habent.”—*John,* ii. 3.

10279 “Magna erga miseros fuit misericordia Mariae adhuc exsulantis in mundo; sed multo major est regnantis in coelo.*”—Spec. B. V. lect.* 10.

10280 “Inveniet semper paratam auxiliari.”—*De Laud. B. M.* 1. 2, p. I.

10281 “Invenies eam in manibus plenam misericordia et largitate.”—*Mar.* p. 2, s. 5.

10282 “Velocius occurrit ejus pietas, quam invocetur, et causas miserorum anticipat.”—*In Cant.* s. 23.

10283 “Quid ad Mariam recurrere trepidet humana fragilitas? nihil aus-terum in ea, nihil terribile; tota suavis est. *In Sign, viagn.*

10284 “In me omnis spes vita: et virtutis; transite ad me omnes.”—*Ecclus.* xxiv. 25.

10285 “Omnes, justos et peccatores, invitat. *Stell.B.V. I.* 1, p. 4. a.I.c.4

10286 “Circuit quaerens quem devoret. I *Pet.* v. 8, 10287 “Ipsa semper circuit quaerens quern salvet.”—*Mar .p.* 3.s.i

10288 “In te. Domina, peccant, nom solum qui tibi injuriam irrogant, sed etiam qui te non rogant.”

10289 “Certe, Domina, cum te aspicio, nihil nisi misericordiam cerno.”—Stim, am. p. 3. c. 19.

10290 “Ipsa enim non misereri ignorat, et miseris non satisfacerc nun—quam scivit.”—Stirn. am. p. 3, c. 13.

10291 “Mater, pete quod vis.”—Rev. 1. 6, c. 23.

10292 “Misericordiam peto miseris.”—Rev. 1. 1, c. 50.

10293 “Oculi Domini super justos.”—Ps. xxxiii. 16.

10294 “Oculi Dominae super justos et peccatores, sicut oculi matris super puerum, ne cadat.et.si cecederit, ut eum relevet.”—De Laud. B. M. I. p. 2.

10295 “Sicut est omnium Regina sic et omnium Advocata.”-Cont.de.V.M.in prol.

10296 “Advocata omnium iniquorum ad eam confegientium.”-De Laud. V.I.2.a.23

10297 “Ego Civitas refugii omnium ad me confugientium.*”—De Dorm.B. V. or.* 2.

10298 “Respirate ad illam, perditi peccatores, et perducct vos ad portum.*”—Psalt. B. V. ps.* xviii.

10299 “Eja ergo, Advocata nostra ! officium tuum imple.”—*In Nut. B. V. conc.* 3.

10300 “Quaeramus gratium, et per Marium quaeramus.”—De Aquaed.

10301 “Cupientes invenire gratiam, qureramus inventricem gratiae.”—De *Laud. B. M.* 1. 2, p. 5

10302 “Ne timeas, Maria; invenisti enim gratiam.”—*Luke*, i. 30.

10303 “Currant igitur, currant peccatores ad Virginem; qui gratiam amis-erunt pcccando, secure dicant: Redde nobis rem nostram, quam invenisti.*”—In Luc.* i.

10304 “Etiam diabolo exhibercs misericordiam, si humiliter peteret.”—*Rev. extr.* c. 50.

10305 “Publicum Valetudinarium “

10306 “Tu peccatorem, quantumlibet foetidum, non horres; si ad te suspiraverit, tu ilium a desperationis barathro pia manu retrahis.”—Depr. ad B. V.

10307 “Ipsa est a me velut esca dulcissima electa, in capiendis hominibus, et animabus praecipue peccatorum.”—Dial. c. 139.

10308 “Nullus ita alienatus est a Deo, qui, si me invocaverit, non revertatur ad Deum et habiturus sit misericordiam.” Rev. *1*. 6, c. 10.

10309 “Sicut magnes attrahit ferrum, sic ego attraho Deo dura corda.”—Rev. *1*. 3, c. 32.

10310 “Spes nostra ! salve.”

10311 “Totius boni plenitudinem posuit in Maria, ut proinde, si quid spei in nobis est, si quid gratiae, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare.”—*De A quaed.*

10312 “Haee mea maxima fiducia, haee tola ratio spei meae.”—De Aquaed.

10313 “O Salus te invocantium”—Cant. post Psalt.

10314 “In te, Domina, speravi; non confundar in asternum.”

10315 “Aeternum *vat* non sentiet ille, pro quo semel oraverit Maria.”

10316 “Pone finem in voluntate peccandi, et invenies Mariam, indubitanter promitto, promptiorem carnali matre in tui dilectione.”—Lib. I, ep. 47.

10317 “Quantumcumque homo peccet, si ex vera emenciatione reversus fuerit statim parata sum recipere revertentem ; nec attendo quantum peccaverit. sed cum quali voluntate venit ; nam non dedignor ejus plagas ungere et sanare, quia vocor (et vere sum) Mater misericordia:.”—Rev. I. 2, c. 23; 1. 6, c. 17.

10318 “Ego sum quasi Mater se volentium emendare.”—Rev. *1*. 4, c. 138

10319 “Conanti surgere ad Deum tribuis auxilium, et neminem relinquis vacuum a consolatione.”—Rev. 1. 1, c. 19.

10320 “Cum sit magnificentissima, solet maxima pro minimis dare.”—In Dorm. B. V. s. 3.

10321 Beatus homo qui audit me, et qui vigilat ad fores meas quotidie.”—*Prov.* viii. 34.

10322 “Roganda est ut velit; quia, si vult, necesse est fieri.”—*De Laud. 3. M.* I. 2, c. I.

10323 “In periculis, in angustiis, in rebus dubiis, Mariam invoca.”

10324 “Non recedat ab ore, non recedat a corde.”—*De Laud. V. M. hom.* 2.

10325 “Nomen tuum devote nominari non potest, sine nominantis militate.”—*Spec. B. V. lect.* 9.

10326 *De Zona Deip*

10327 “Qui operantur ir me, non peccabunt; qui elucidant me, vitam aeternam habebunt.”—*Ecclus.* xxiv. 30.

10328 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.’’—*Dent.* vi.

10329 “Paebe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi.”—*Prov.* xxiii. 26.

10330 “Quid Dominus Deus tuus petit a te, nisi ut . . . diligas eum ac servias Domino Deo tuo ex toto corde tuo?—*Deut.* x. 12.

10331 “Ego protector tuus sum, et merces tua magna nimis.”—*Gen.* xv.

10332 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—*Prov.* viii. 17.

10333 “Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.”—I *John,* iv. 16.

10334 “Qui diligit me, diligetur a Patre meo, et ego diligam eum.”—*John*, xiv. 2i.

10335 “Charitas est virtus conjungens nos Deo.”

10336 I *Cor.* xiii. 4.

10337 “Plenitudo ergo legisest dilectio.”-Rom.xiii.10

10338 “Ama, et fac quod vis.’’

10339 “In charitate perpetua dilexi te; ideo attraxi te. ”—*Jer.* xxxi. 3.

10340 “Ab alio amatore praeventa sum.”

10341 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* . v. 2.

10342 “Exinanivit semetipsum formam servi accipiens . . . et habitu inventus ut homo.”-Phil.ii.7

10343 “Et Verbum caro factum est.”-John.i.14

10344 “Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis. ”—*Phil.* ii. 8.

[10345] “Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.”—*John,* xv. ,13.

[10346] “Baptismo autem habeo baptizari; et quomodo coarctor, usque dum perficiatur?”—*Luke,* xii. 50.

[10347] “Charitas enim Christi urget nos.”—2 *Cor.* v. 14.

[10348] “Vidimus Sapientiam amoris nimietate infactuatum.”-Serm. de. Nat. D

[10349] “Nos autem prredicamus Christum crucifixum, Judieis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autein stultitiam, ’—1 *Cor.* i. 23

[10350] “Stultum visum est, ut pro hominibus Auctor vitae moreretur.”—*In Evang. hom.* 6.

[10351] “Dilexit nos et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* v. 2.

[10352] “Propterea Christus advenit, ut cognosceret homo quantum eum dili gat Deus.*”—De catech. rud.* c. 4.

[10353] “Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?”—*Luke,* xii. 49.

[10354] “Quid tibi et vinculis*?”—De Pass. D.* c. 4.

[10355] “Quis hoc fecit? Amor, dignitatis nescius.”

[10356] “Triumphat de Deo amor.*”—In Cant.* s. 64.

[10357] “Quid fecisti, innocentissimi Salvator, quod sic condemnareris?”

[10358] “Peccatum tuum, amor tuus.”

[10359] “Quid est homo, quia magnificas eum, aut quid apponis erga eum cor tuum?”—*Job,* vii. 17.

[10360] “Quasi homo Dei Deus esset, et sine ipso beatus esse non posset.”—*De Beatit.* c. 7.

[10361] “In hoc enim Christus mortuus est, ut et mortuorum et vivorum dominetur.”—*Rom.* xiv. 9.

[10362] “Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est.”—2 *Cor.* v. 15.

[10363] “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”—*Deut.* vi. 5.

[10364] *Life,* ch. 13.

[10365] *In Evang. hom.* 30

[10366] *De Cons. Ev.* 1. 1, c. 18.

[10367] Spirit Ch.9

[10368] *Admonitions*, 36

[10369] “Bonus est Dominus . . . animze quaerenti ilium *.”*—*Lam.* iii. 25.

[10370] *Life*, ch. 39

[10371] *Lettres*, 531, 203.

[10372] “Deus meus, et *omnia.”*

[10373] “Regnum mundi et omnem ornatum sicculi contempsi, propter amorem Jesu Christi, quern vidi quern amavi, in quern credidi, quem dilexi.”—*Offic. S. Martyr. tantum, Resp.* viii.

[10374] *Lettre* 738.

[10375] “Justorum autem semita, quasi lux splendens, procedit et crescit usque ad perfectum diem.”—*Prov.* iv. 78. 8

[10376] *Rom.* viii. 38.

[10377] “Diligentibus Deumomnia cooperantur in bonum.”—*Rom.* viii. 28.

[10378] *Entret.* 3.

[10379] *Spirit*, ch. 23.

[10380] “Ignis autem in altari semper ardebit.”—*Lev.* vi. 12.

[10381] Mor. I.25.c.7

[10382] “Diiiges Dominam Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo Eruntque verba haee . , . in corde tuo; . . . et meditaberis in eis, sedens in doino tua, et ambulans in itinere, dormiens atque consurgens; et ligabis ca quasi signum in manu tua, erunlque et movebuntur inter oculos tuos; scribesque ea in limine et in ostiis domus tuae.”—*Deut.* vi. 5.

[10383] “Omnia possum in eo qui confortat.”—*Phil. Iv. I3.*

10384 “Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem; fulcite me lloribus, stipate me malis, quia amort langueo.”—*Cant.* ii. 4, 5. SEC.

10385 *“Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.”*

10386 “Plus proficit amica correptio, quam accusatio turbulenta; illa pudorem incutit, haee indignationem movet. Amicum magis te, qui corripitur, credat, quam inimicum.”-*In Luc.* 1. 8, c. 17.

10387 “Vis fratrem corrigere? Lacryma, exhortare, comprehende pedes, osculari non erubescas, si modo vere mederi vis.”—*Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 3.

10388 “Juvenes plerumque severitas admonitionis ad profectum dirigit, senes vero deprecatio blanda.”—*Past.* p. 3, *a dm.* 2.

10389 *Lettre* 788.

10390 “Argue, obsecra, increpa.”—2 *Tim.* iv. 2.

10391 *De Sex Alis, c. 3.*

10392 P. 2 tit.9 c.5. § 3.

10393 *Man.* p. 2, § 18.

10394 *Vol. X.*

10395 “Infirmus (eram) et visitastis me.”—*Matt.* xxv. 36

10396 *Summ. p. 2, tit. 9, c. 12, § 3.*

10397 *16 Jun.*

10398 *2. 2, q. 83, a. 13.*

10399 *2. 2, q. 83, a. 13*

10400 *Salmantic. Theol. mor. tr. 16, c. 3, n. 55–62*

10401 Vol. X. p. 229.

10402 “Laetamini in Domino et excultate, justi.”-Ps. Xxxi. II.

10403 True Spouse of Christ, Vol. I. page 226.

[10404] Everyone sees that there is question here of very great abuses that existed in certain relaxed convents of Italy. ED.

[10405] "Maledicent illi, et tu benedices."—*Ps.* cviii. 28.

[10406] Page 82.

[10407] *True Spouse of Christ, Vol. I. page 490.*

[10408] Page 130.

[10409] "In manus tuas, Domine commendo spiritum meum."

[10410] *True Spouse of Christ,* Vol. I. page 421.

[10411] Page 55

[10412] *Entret. 2.*

[10413] This summary is an appendix that belongs to the work, as may be seen, page 160. The author has made a similar one for the faithful in general, as we may see in Vol. III., page 360.—ED.

[10414] This is an appendix that, like the preceding, belongs to the work, as we may see, page 206. These maxims are also offered to all the faithful in Vol. III., page 358.—Ed.

[10415] These Aspirations are also referred to, page 156.

[10416] Volumes XIII. and XIV. treat of the Holy Mass and of the divine Office; volumes XV. and XVI. of missions and of preaching, and a subsequent volume containing Pastoral letters.

[10417] Selva di materie predicabili ed istruttive, per dare gli esercizj ai Preti, ed anche per uso di lezione privata a proprio profitto ; The author informs us in his preface that he did not endeavor to put much order into the collection of ideas suitable for each subject; we, however, perceive that there is more order in it than he would have us believe.

In order the better to understand the author, we have, as much as possible, divided each subject into paragraphs; by such an arrangement the subjects are not only more easily grasped and retained, but we may most conveniently use this book either for meditation or for spiritual reading.

[10418] St. Alphonsus was not yet a bishop when he published this work; he was appointed to this office two years later.

[10419] We read in a treatise entitled L INFALLIBILITE ET LE CONCILE GENERAL, ch. 8, written by Cardinal Dechamps, a note that is to the point. After having called St. Alphonsus " the most faithful and the most powerful Echo of tradition in modern times," the eloquent Cardinal explains

that our author was, however, not a simple echo in his dogmatical, in his moral. .or in his ascetical works, on which he passes a eulogy which he concludes as follows: “ Among his ascetical works there is one that St. Alphonsus has modestly entitled a COLLECTION of texts. At first sight one might believe that this is true; but if one reads the book attentively one sees that the thought of the author—is the framework of the whole, and that the strongest and the sweetest that tradition contains he skilfully adapts to the service of his pen.

10420 “ Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis.” Ecclus. vii. 40.

10421 “Omnium apex est Sacerdotium.” Epist. ad Sniyrn

10422 “ Miraculum est stupendum, magna, immensa, infinita Sacerdoti dignitas.” De Sacerdotio,

10423 “ Sacerdotium in terris peragitur sed in rerum coalestium ordinem referendum est.” De Saccrd. 1. 3.

10424 “O SaceVdos Dei ! si altitudinem cœli contemplaris, altior es; si omnium dominorum sublimitatem, sublimior es; solo tuo Creatore inferior es.” Cat al. gloria mundi, p. 4, cons. 6.

10425 “ Inter Deum et hominem medius constitutes; minor Deo, sed major homine.” In Consecr. Pont. s. 2.

10426 “ Qui Sacerdotem dixit, prorsus divinum insinuat virum.” De Eccl Hier. c. i.

10427 “Angelica, imo divina est dignitas.” Ibid.

10428 “ Excedit omnem cogitationem donum dignitatis sacerdotalis.” De Saccrd.

10429 Qui vos audit, me audit; et qui vos spernit, me spernit.” Luke, x. 16.

10430 “Qui honorat Sacerdotem Christi, honorat Christum; et qui injuriat Sacerdotem Christi, injuriat Christum.” Hom. 17.

10431 “Genus divinis ministeriis mancipatum.” De Adorat. 1. 13.

10432 “ Deifica professio.” De Dignit. sac. c. 3.

10433 “Quasi stilla situlæ, . . . pulvis exiguus. . . . Omnes gentes, quasi non sint, sic sunt coram eo.” Isa. xl. 15, 17.

10434 “ Pro universo terrarum orbe legatus intercedit apud Deum.” De Sacerd.1. 6.

10435 “Cum Deo familiariter agit.” De Saccrdotio.

10436 “ Obediente Domino voci hominis.” Jos. x. 14.

10437 “ Sol, contra Gabaon ne movearis. . . . Stetit itaque sol in medio cœli.” Ibid. x. 12.

10438 Maxima illis est collata potestas! Ad eorum pene libitum, corpus Christi de panis transsubstantiatur materia; descendit de cœlo in carne Verbum, et altaris verissime reperitur inmensa! Hoc illis pra:rogatur ex gratia, quod nusquam datum est Angelis. Hi assistunt Deo; illi contrectant manibus, tribuunt populis, et in se suscipiunt.” Serm. de Euchar.

10439 “ Tanta ei (Petro) potestas attributa est judicandi, ut in arbitrio ejus poneretur cœleste judicium.” In Nat. B. Petri, hom. 3.

10440 “ Pra:cedit Petri sententia sententiam Redemptoris.” Serm. 26.

10441 “ Dominus sequitur servum; et quidquid hic in inferioribus judicaverit, hoc ille in supernis comprobat.” De Verbis Is. Hom.5.

10442 In domo Dei, divinorum bonorum ceconomos, sociosque Dei, Sacerdotes respicite.” Ep. ad Polyc.

10443 “ Ipsi sunt Ecclesia: decus, columna: firmissima:; ipsi janua: Civitatis a:terna:, per quos omnes ingrediuntur ad Christum; ipsi janitores, quibus claves data: sunt regni cœlorum; ipsi dispensatores regia: domus, quorum arbitrio dividuntur gradus singulorum. “ De Vita cont. 1. 2, c. 2

10444 “ Omne judicium a Filio illis traditum Nam, quasi in cœlum translati, ad principatum istum perducti sunt. Si cui rex hunc honorem detulerit, ut potestatem habeat quoscunque in carcerem conjectos laxandi, beatus ille judicio omnium fuerit; at vero qui tanto majorem a Deo accepit potestatem, quanto animæ corporibus præstant.” De Sacerd. 1. 3.

10445 “ Nihil in hoc sæculo excellentius.” DC Dignit. sac. c. 3.

10446 “ Prætulit vos, Sacerdotes, regibus et imperatoribus; prætulit Angelis.” Serm. ad Pastor, in syn.

10447 Longe erit inferius, quam si plumbum ad auri fulgorem compares.” De Dignit. sac. c. 2.

10448 Quanto anima corpore præstantior est, tanto est Sacerdotium regno excellentius.” Constit. apost. 1. 2, c. 34.

10449 “ Habent principes vinculi potestatem, verum corporum solum; Sacerdotes vinculum etiam animarum contingit.” De Sacerd. 1. 3.

10450 “ Boni principis est Dei Sacerdotes honorare.” Cap. Boni princ. dist. 96.

10451 “ Reges flexis genibus offerunt ei munera, et deosculantur manum, ut ex ejus contactu sanctificentur.” Serm. 47.

10452 “ Major est hic principatus quam regis; propterea rex caput submittit manui Sacerdotis.” De Verbis Is. hom. 4.

10453 Sacerdotium ipsi quoque Angeli venerantur.” Orat. ad Naz. tint. perc.

10454 “ Licet assistant Angeli, præsidentis (Sacerdotis) imperium exspectantes, nullus tamen eorum ligandi atque solvendi possidet potestatem.” Serm. 2.6.

10455 “ Licet Beatissima Virgo excellentior fuerit Apostolis, non tamen illi, sed istis Dominus claves regni cœlorum commisit.” Cap. Nova quædam. De Pœnit.

10456 “Virgo benedicta, excusa me, quia non loquor contra te: Sacer-dotium ipse prætulit supra te.” T. i, s. 20, a. 2, c. 7.

10457 “ O veneranda Sacerdotum dignitas, in quorum manibus, veldt in utero Virginis, Filius Dei incarnatur.” Molina. Instr. Sacerd. tr. i,c. 5, 2.

10458 “ Parentes Christi.” S. ad Past, in syn.

10459 “ Ipse dixit, et facta sunt.” Ps. xxxii. 9.

10460 “ Potestas Sacerdotis est sicut potestas Personarum divinarum; quia, in panis transsubstantiatione, tanta requiritur virtus, quanta in mundi creatione.” Loco cit.

10461 “ O venerabilis sanctitudo manuum! o felix exercitium! Qui creavit me (si fas est dicere) dedit mihi creare se; et qui creavit me sine me ipse creavit se mediante me!”

10462 “ Ad nutum Domini, ex nihilo substiterunt excelsa cœlorum, vasta terrarum; ita parem potentiam in spiritualibus Sacerdotis verbis præbet virtus.” Hom, de Corpore Chr.

10463 “ Vos estis Vicarii Christi, qui vicem ejus geritis.” Ad Fr. in er. s. 36

10464 “ Dei peopleam in terris gerentes.”

10465 “ Pro Christo legatione fungimur, tamquam Deo exhortante per nos.” 2 Cor. v. 20.

10466 “Accedat Sacerdosadaltaris tribunal ut Christus.” Serm. De Euchar.

10467 Sacerdos vice Christi vere fungitur.” Ep. ad Occil.

10468 “ Cum videris Sacerdotem offerentem, consideres Christi manum in—visibiliter extensam.” Ad pop. Ant. hom. 60.

10469 “ De suo vestiens Sacerdotes.”

10470 “ Deus, qui omnipotentiam tuam parcendo maxime et miserendo manifestas.” Dam. iv post Pent.

10471 “ Quis potest dimittere peccata, nisi solus Deus?” Luke, v. 21.

10472 “ Ego feci cœhim et terram; verumtamen meliorem et nobiliorem creationem do tibi: fac novam animam quæ est in peccato. Ego feci ut terra produceret fructus suos; do tibi meliorem creationem, ut anima fructus suos producat.”

10473 “ Prorsus majus hoc esse dixerim, quam est cœlum et terra, et quæ—cunque cernuntur in cœlo et in terra.” In Jo. tr. 72.

10474 “ Et si habes brachium sicut Deus, et si voce simili tonas?” Job xl. 4

10475 “ Munus Spiritus Sancti, officium Sacerdotis.”

10476 “ Insufflavit, et dixit eis: Accipite Spiritum Sanctum: quorum remi—seritis peccata, remittuntur eis; et quorum retinueritis, retenta sunt.” John, xx. 22.

10477 “ Dei enim sumus adjutores.” I Cor. iii. 9.

10478 “ Principatum superni judicii sortiuntur; ut, vice Dei, quibusdam peccata retineant, quibusdam relaxent.” In Evang. Hom.26.

10479 “ Post Deum, terrenus Deus.” Const, a post. 1. 2, c. 26.

10480 “ Deus stetit in synagoga Deorum.” Ps. Ixxxi. i.

10481 “ Dii excelsi, in quorum synagoga Deus Deorum stare desiderat.” Ad Fr. in er. s. 36.

10482 “ Sacerdotes, propter officii dignitatem, Deorum nomine nuncupantur.” Can. Cum ex injuncto. De Haret.

10483 “ Ne sit honor sublimis, et vitadeformis; deifica professio, et illicita actio. Actio respondeat nomini.” De Dignat. sac. c. 3.

10484 “ Quid est dignitas in indigno, nisi ornamentum in luto?” Ad Ecd. cath. 1. 2.

10485 “Nee quisquam sumit sibi honorem, sed qui vocatur a Deo, tam—quam Aaron. Sic et Christus non semetipsum clarificavit ut Pontifex fieret, sed qui locutus est ad eum: Filius meus es tu; ego hodie genui Mt.”Heb. v. 4.

10486 “ Grandis dignitas Sacerdotum, sed grandis ruina eorum, si peccant. Lætemur ad ascensum, sed timeamus ad lapsum.” In Ezech. c. 44.

10487 “ Ingrediuntur electi, Sacerdotum manibus expiati, cœlestem patriatn: et Sacerdotes ad inferni supplicia festinant !”

10488 “ Et ipsa in cloacas descendit !” In Evang. Hom.17.

10489 “ Omnes sanctos reperio divini ministerii ingentem veluti molem formidantes.” De Fest. pasch. hom. I.

10490 “ Nemo læto animo creattir Sacerdos.”

10491 “ Humiliter secessit. “ Vita S. Cypr.

10492 “ Vota eligentium velociori præveniens fuga, latebris incertis abscoaditur.” Vita S. Fulg. c. i6

10493 “ Quam resistebam, ne ordinarer !” Epist. 82.

10494 “ Omnis namque Pontifex, ex hominibus assumptus, pro hominibus constituitur in iis quæ sunt ad Deum, ut offerat dona et sacrificia pro pecatis; qui condolere possit iis qui ignorant et errant. .” Heb v i

10495 “ Fungi sacerdotio et habere laudem.” Ecclus. xlv. 19.

10496 “ Habere laudem, id est, officium laudandi Deum.”

10497 “ Sicut Angelorum est perpetim laudare Deum in cœlis, sic Saccerdotum officium est eumdem jugiter laudare in terris.”

10498 “ Amoris sui velut vicarium (Petrum) relinquebat.” In Luk. 1. 10, c. ult.

10499 “ Sicut misit me Pater, et ego mitto vos.” John, xx. 21.

[10500] Ego te clarificavi super terram; opus consummavi. . . . Mani—festavi nomen tuum hominibus.” John, xvii. 4.

[10501] “ Ego dedi eis sermonem tuum. . . . Sanctifica eos in veritate. . . . Sicut tu me misistl in mundum, et ego misi eos.” Ibid. xvii. 18.

[10502] “ Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur ?” Luke, xii. 49.

[10503] “ Ideo vocati sumus a Christo, non ut operemur quæ ad nostrum pertinent usum, sed quæ ad gloriam Dei. . . . Verus amor non quærit quæ sua sunt, sed ad libitum ainati cuncta desiderat perficere.” Hom.34.

[10504] “ Separavi vos a cæteris populis, ut essetis mei.” Levit. xx. 26.

[10505] “ Sacramentorum Dei cooperatores et dispensatores.” Opusc. 27, c. 3.

[10506] “ Duces et rectores gregis Christi.” De Dignit. sac. c. 2.

[10507] “ Verus minister altaris Deo, non sibi, natus est.” In Ps. 118, s. 8.

[10508] “ Separavit vos Deus Israel ab omni populo, et junxit sibi.” Num. xvi. 9.

[10509] “ Si quis mihi ministrat, me sequatur.” John, xii. 26.

[10510] Opprobria exprobrantium tibi ceciderunt super me. “ Ps. Ixviii. 10.

[10511] “ Fuit necessarium aliquos e populo seligi ac destinari, qui ad impendendum debitum Deo cultum, et sui status obligatione et institutione, intenderent.” Scotus acad. De Ord. d. I, a. I, q. i.

[10512] “ Exhlbeamus nosmetipsos sicut Dei ministros.” 2 Cor. vi. 4.

[10513] “ Crucifixus est, ut destruatur corpus peccati.” Rom. vi. 6.

[10514] “ Pro Christo legatione fungimur. “ 2 Cor. v. 20.

[10515] “ Dei enim sumus adjutores.” i Cor. iii. 9.

[10516] “ Insufflavit, et dixit eis: Accipite Spiritum Sanctum: quorum remiseritis peccata, remittuntur eis.” John, xx. 22.

[10517] “ Ingenium sacerdotale essentialiter consistit in ardenti studio promovendi gloriam Dei et salutem proximi.” De Ord. p. 3, c. 5, q. 3

[10518] “ Constituitur in iis quæ sunt ad Deum.” Hcbr. v. I.

10519 “ Quo significaretur quotidie clericos, abjecta ceterarum rerum cura, uni Deo prorsus vacare debere.” Brcviar. 31 Dec.

10520 “ In hoc sita est Sacerdotis perfectio, ut ad divinam promoveatur imitationem, quodque divinius est omnium, ipsius etiam Dei cooperator existat.” De Cal. Hierarch. c. 3.

10521 “ Sacerdos Sacra docens.” Summ. p. 3, tr. 14, c. 7, r.

10522 “ Presbyter Præbensiter.” Gemma an. 1. i, c. 181.

10523 “ Duces et Rectores gregis Christi.” De Dignit. Sacerd. c. 2. “Regale Sacerdotium, Gens Sancta, Populus acquisitions. “—i Pt. ii. 9.

10524 “ Officium quæstus, non pecuniarum, sed animarum.” Scrm. 78.

10525 “ Dei causam relinquimus, et ad terrena negotia vacamus.” In Evang. Hom.17.

10526 “ Stulto labore consumeris. . . . Esto tu populo in his quæ ad Deum pertinent.” Exod. xviii. 18.

10527 “Non virtutum merita, sed subsidia vitæ præsentis exquirunt.” Mor. 1. 23, c. 26.

10528 “Ad stipendia dumtaxat oculos habent.” Epiit. 1. I, ep. 447.

10529 “ Magna dignitas, sed majus est pondus. In alto gradu positi sunt ; oportet quoque ut in sublimi virtutum culmine sint erecti ; alio-quin, non ad meritum, sed ad proprium prresunt judicium.” De Inst. pral. c. ii.

10530 “Sacerdotes honorati; dicam autem, onerati.”

10531 “ Non dignitas, sed opus dignitatis salvare consuevit. “ Ad Sophon. 3.

10532 “Dum terreni hominis imago deponitur, et cœlestis forma suscipitur.” De Pass. s. 14.

10533 “ Estote ergo vos perfecti, sicut et Pater vester cœlestis perfectus est » Matth. v. 48.

10534 “ Nihil in Sacerdote commune cum studio atque usu multitudinis.” Epist. 6.

10535 “ Debet præponderare vita sacerdotis, sicut præponderat gratia.” Epist. 82.

10536 “ Tantum inter Sacerdotem et quemlibet probum interesse debet, quantum inter cœlum et terram discriminis est.” Epist. 1. 2, ep. 205.

10537 “ Quicunque profitetur statum aliquem, tenetur ad ea quæ illi statui conveniunt.”

10538 “ Clericus duas res professus est, et sanctitatem et clericatum.” Serm. 355, E. B.

10539 Professio clericorum, vita cœlestis.”

10540 “ Sacerdos ad majorem tenetur perfectionem sanctitatis.” Imit. Chr. 1. 4, c. 5.

10541 “ Clericis suis Salvator, non ut cæteris voluntarium, sed imperativum officium perfectionis indicit.” De Eccl. Cathol. 1. 2.

10542 “Sanctum Domini.” Exod. xxxix. 29.

10543 “ Ut integritas Sacerdotis monstraretur, qui totum se Deo dicaverit.” In Levit. q. 3.

10544 “ Hoc enim est sacrificium primitivum, quando unusquisque se offert hostiam, et a se incipit, ut postea munus suum possit offerre.” De Abel, 1. 2, c. 6.

10545 Sacerdos continuum holocaustum offerre præcipitur, ut, a perfecta sapientia incipiens, in eadem finiat, et totam vitam suam componat ad perfectionem.” In Levit. 1. 2, c. I.

10546 “ Separavi vos a cæteris populis, ut essetis mei.” Levit. xx. 26.

10547 “Nemo, militans Deo, implicat se negotiis sæcularibus, ut ei pla-ceat. cui se probavit.” 2 Tim. ii. 4.

10548 “ Dominus pars hereditatis meæ et calicis mei; tu es qui restitues hereditatem meam mihi.” Ps. xv. 5.

10549 “ Clamat vestis clericalis, clamat status professi animi sanctitatem.”

10550 “ Jugis conatus ad perfectionem, perfectio reputatur.” Epist. 254.

10551 “ Curritur passim ad sacros Ordines sine consideratione.” De Conv. ad cler. c. 20.

10552 “ Quam rarus, qui potest dicere: Portio mea, Dominus; quern non inflammet libido, non stimulet avaritia, non aliqua negotiorum sæcularium cura sollicitet !” In Ps. cxviii. s. 8.

10553 “ Fecit nos regnum et Sacerdotes Deo et Patri suo.” Apoc. i. 6.

10554 “ In quo Deus regnat nunc per gratiam, postea per gloriam.

10555 “ Fecit nos reges; regnamus enim cum ipso, et imperamus vitiis.”

10556 “ Necesse est ut, mortuus omnibus passionibus, vivat vita divina.”

10557 “ Et ego claritatem, quam dedisti mihi, dedi eis.” John, xvii. 22.

10558 “ Necesse est Sacerdotem sic esse purum, ut, in ipsis cœlis col—locatus, inter cœlestes illas virtutes medius staret.” De Sacerd. 1. 3.

10559 Oportet ergo Episcopum irreprehensibilem esse.” I Tim. iii. 2.

10560 “ Diaconos similiter pudicos.”

10561 Quæ de Episcopis dixit, etiam Sacerdotibus congruit.” In i Tim. Hom.ii.

10562 “ Omnes virtutes comprehend it.” Ep. ad. Occanum.

10563 “ Qui non tantum vitio careat, sed qui omnibus virtutibus sit ornatus.”

10564 Can. 9, 10.

10565 I. Can. 2.

10566 Can. 76.

10567 IV. Can. 68.

10568 Corp. fur. Can. dist. 81.

10569 “ In omnibus enim quod irreprehensibile est, Sancta defendit Ecclesia. Qui sancti non sunt, sancta tractare non possunt.” Dist. 81. can. 4–6.

10570 “ Clerici, quibus pars Dominus est, a sæculi segregati vivant.”

10571 “ Decet omnino clericos, in sortem Domini vocatos, vitam moresque suos componere, ut habitu, gestu, sermone, aliisque rebus, nil nisi grave ac religione plenum præ se ferant.” Sess. 2, cap. i, de Ref.

10572 “ Sacerdos debet vitam habere immaculatam, ut omnes in ilium veluti in aliquod exemplar excellens intueantur. Idcirco enim nos (Deus)elegit, ut simus quasi luminaria, et magistri cæterorum efficiamur, ac veluti angeli cum hominibus versemur in terris.” In I Tim. Hom.

10573 “ Clericus interpretetur primo vocabulum suum, ct nitatur esse quod dicitur. “ Ep. ad Nepotian.

10574 “ Cui Deus portio est, nihil debet curare, nisi Deum.” DC Esau. c. 2.

10575 “ Omnis namque Pontifex, ex hominibus assumptus, pro hominibus constituitur in iis quæ sunt ad Deum.” Hcbr. v. i.

10576 “ Non propter gloriam, non propter cumulandas divitias.” In Hebr. v. led. 1.

10577 “ Homo Dei.” i Tim. vi. n.

10578 “ Hæc est generatio quærentium eum.” Ps. xxiii. 6.

10579 “ Separavi vos a cæteris populis, ut essetis mei.” Levit. xx. 26.

10580 “ Idcirco enim nos (Deus) elegit, ut veluti angeli cum hominibus versemur in terris.” In i Tim. Hom.10.

10581 “ Sanctificabor in iis qui appropinquant mihi. “ Levit. x. 3.

10582 “ Agnoscar sanctus ex sanctitate ministrorum.”

10583 “ Quia, per sacrum Ordinem, aliquis deputaturad dignissima ministeria, quibus ipsi Christo servitur in Sacramento altaris; ad quod requiritur major sanctitas interior, quam requirit etiam religionis status. Unde gravius peccat, cæteris paribus, clericus in sacris Ordinibus constitutus, si aliquid contrarium sanctitati agat, quam aliquis religiosus qui non habet Ordinem sacrum.” 2. 2, q. 184, a. 3

10584 “ Bonus monachus vix bonum clericum facit.” Epist. 60, E. B.

10585 “ Verus minister altaris Deo, non sibi, natus est.” In Ps. cxviii s. 3.

10586 “ Et sedebit conflans et emundans argentum; et purgabit filios Levi, et colabit eos quasi aurum et quasi argentum; et erunt Domino offerentes sacrificia in justitia.” Mai. iii. 3

10587 « Sancti erunt Deo suo et non polluent nomen ejus; incensum enim Domini et panes Dei sui offerunt, et ideo sancti erunt.” Levit. xxi. 6.

10588 “ Ipsum videlicet Corpus Domini, quod in ara crucis pependit. Ideoque sanctitas requiritur, quæ sita est in puritate animi; sine qua, quisquis ad hæc tremenda mysteria accedit, immundus accedit.” In Levit. xxi. 6.

10589 Væ nobis miseris, qui, ministerium altissimum sortiti, tarn pro cul absumus a fervore quern Salomon in umbraticis Sacerdotibus exigebat.” In Ps. cxxxi. 7.

10590 “ Mundamini, qui fertis vasa Domini.” Is. Hi. n.

10591 “ Quanto mundiores esse oportet, qui in manibus et corpora portant Christum!” Epist. 123.

10592 “ Oportet mundum esse, qui non solum vasa aurea debet tractare, sed etiam ilia in quibus Domini mors exercetur.”

10593 “ Quo solari radio non splendidiorem oportet esse manum Carnem hanc dividentem, os quod igne spiritual! repletur, linguam quæ tremendo nimis Sanguine rubescit ?” Ad pop. Ant. hom. 60.

10594 “ Accedat ut Christus, ministret ut sanctus.” S. de Euchar.

10595 “ Necessario fatemur nullum aliud opus adeo sanctum ac divinum tractari posse, quam hoc tremendum mysterium.”

10596 “ Satis apparet omnem operam in eo ponendam esse, quanta ut maxima fieri potest interior! cordis munditia peragatur.” Sess. 22, decr, de Observ.

10597 “ Ne lingua, quæ vocat de cœlo Filium Dei, contra Dominum lo—quatur; et manus. quæ intinguntur sanguine Christi, polluantur sanguine peccati.” Molina, Instr. Sac. tr. i, c. 5, 2.

10598 “ Qui habuerit maculam, non offeret panes Deosuo.” Lcvit. xxi. 17

10599 “ Si tanta sanctitas requirebatur in Sacerdotibus qui sacrificabant oves et boves, quid, quæso, requiritur in Sacerdotibus qui sacrificant divinum Agnum ?” In Ps. cxxxi. 7.

10600 “ Qui est aliquo vitio irretitus, non debet ad ministerium Ordinis accedere.” Suppl. q. 36, a. i.

10601 “ Nec accedet ad ministerium ejus. si cæcus fuerit, si claudus, . . . si gibbus, . . . si habens jugem scabiem.” Levit. xxi. 18.

10602 “ Sus lota in volutabro luti.” 2 Pet. ii. 22.

10603 “ Nec accedat ad altare, quia maculam habet, et contaminare non debet sanctuarium meum.” Levit. xxi. 23.

10604 “ Oportet sine crimine esse, sicut Dei dispensatorem.” Tit. i. 7.

10605 “Medius stat Sacerdos inter Deum et naturam humanam; illinc venientia beneficia ad nos deferens, et nostras petitiones illuc perferens Dominum iratum reconcilians, et nos eripiens ex illius manibus.” De Verbis Is. hom. 5.

10606 “ Nisi quis renatus fuerit denuo, non potest videre regnum Dei.”—John, iii. 3.

10607 “Nisi manducaveritis carnem Filii hominis, . . . non habebitis vitam in vobis.” John, vi. 54.

10608 “Sine his, salutis compotes fieri non possumus.” De Sacerd. 1. 3.

10609 “ Divinæ voluntatis Indices.” De Vita cont. I. 2, c. 2.

10610 “ Muros Ecclesiæ.” Hom. 10.

10611 “ Castra sanctitatis.” De Offic. 1. i, c. 50.

10612 “Mundi Fundamenta et Fidei Columnas. “ Carm. ad Episc.

10613 “ Sacerdotes onus totius orbis portant humeris sanctitatis.” Hom de Dedic. eccl.

10614 “ Orabitque pro eo Sacerdos et pro peccato ejus coram Domino, et repropitiabitur ei, dimitteturque peccatum.” Levit. xix. 22.

10615 “Sacerdotes die noctuque, pro plebe sibi commissa, oportet orare. “ In I Tim. c. 3.

10616 “ Medii inter Deum et hominem plebem, debent bona conscientia nitere quoad Deum, et bona fama quoad homines.” Suppl. q. 36, a. i.

10617 “Qua mente apud Deum intercessoris locum pro populo arripit, qui familiarem se ejus gratiæ esse per vitæ merita nescit?” Past. p. I, c. ii.

10618 “Cum is qui displicet, ad intercedendum mittitur, irati animus ad deteriora provocatur.”

10619 “Talem esse oportet Domini Sacerdotem. ut, quod populus pro se apud Deum non valuerit, ipse pro populo mereatur impetrare.” In Ps. xxxvi. s. 2.

10620 “Emendatiorem esse convenit populo, quern necesse est orare pro populo.” Dist. 61, can. Non negamus.

10621 “Ecce mundus Sacerdotibus plenus est, et rarus invenitur mediator.” (We have not found these words in St. Bernard, but the following are St. Gregory s words: “ Ecce mundus Sacerdotibus plenus est; sed tamen in messe Dei rarus valde invenitur operator.” In Evang. hom. 17.)

10622 “Plus placet Deo latratus canum, quam oratio talium clericorum.” Cornelius à Lapide in Lev. i. 17.

10623 “ Doctores pietatis.” Hom. 10.

10624 “Salvatores mundi.” In Abdiam, 21.

10625 “ Januæ civitatis æternæ.” De Vila cont, 1. 2, c. 2.

10626 “ Forma virtutum.” Serm. 26.

10627 “ Qui in erudiendis atque instituendis ad virtutem populis prærit, necesse est ut in omnibus sanctus sit, et in nullo reprehensibilis. “ De Offic. eal. 1. 2, c. 5.

10628 “ Irreprehensibiles esse oportet, quos necesse est præesse corrigendis.” Ep. ad Episc. Hispan, 10629 “ In divino omni non audendum aliis ducem fieri, nisi, secundum omnem habitum suum, factus sit deiformissimus et Deo simillimus.” De Ecd. Hier. c. 3.

10630 “Cujus vita despicitur, restat ut ejus prædicatio contetnnatur.”—In Evang. hom. 12

10631 “ Et eadem ratione, omnia spiritualia ab eis exhibita.” Suppl. q. 36, a. 4.

10632 “ Purgari prius oportet, deinde purgare; ad Deum appropinquari, et alios adducere; sanctificari, et postea sanctificare; lucem fieri, et alios illuminare.” Apologet. I.

10633 “ Necesse est ut esse munda studeat manus, quæ aliorum sordes curat. “ Past. p. 2, c. 2.

10634 “ Lucerna quæ non ardet, non accendit.” In Ezech. Hom. 11.

10635 “ Lingua amoris, ei qui non amat, barbara est.” In Cant. s. 79.

10636 Spectaculum facti sumus mundo, et Angelis et hominibus.” i Cor. iv. 9.

10637 “In eos, tanquam in speculum, reliqui omnes oculos conjiciunt, exiisque sumunt quod imitentur.” Sess. 22, c. i, dc Ref.

10638 “ De medio populi segregantur, ut, non solum seipsos, verum et populum tueantur; vero, ad hanc tuitionem, clericalis non sufficit prærogativa dignitatis, nisi dignitati adjungatur cumulus sanctitatis.” De Dignit. cler. c. 2.

10639 Ad idoneam executionem Ordinum, non sufficit bonitas qualiscumque, sed requiritur bonitas excellens.” Suppl. q. 35, a. i.

10640 “ Illi, qui in divinis mysteriis applicantur, perfecti in virtute esse debent.” In 4 Sent. d. 24, q. 3, a. i.

10641 “ Interior perfectio ad hoc requiritur, quod aliquis digne hujusmod actus exerceat.” 2. 2, q. 184, a. 6.

10642 “ Sancti erunt Deo suo, et non polluent nomen ejus.” Levit. xxi. 6.

10643 “Qualis est Deus eorum, qui talia agunt? numquid sustineret eos talia facientes, nisi consentiret eorum operibus?” Hom. 10.

10644 “ In omnibus exhibeamus nosmetipsos sicut Dei ministros: in multa patientia, in vigiliis, in jejuniis, in castitate, in scientia, in suavilate, in caritate non ficta: quasi tristes, semper autem gaudentes; tanquam nihil habentes, et omnia possidentes.” 2. Cor. vi. 4.

10645 “Sancti estote quia ego sanctus sum.” Levit. xi. 44.

10646 “ Ego sum Pastor bonus. Bonus Pastor animam suam dat pro ovibus suis. “ John, x. 11.

10647 “ Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?” Luke, xii. 49.

10648 “ Sacerdotes tui induantur justitiam.” Ps. cxxxi.

10649 “ Induite vos ergo, sicut elect! Dei, sancti et dilecti, viscera misericordiæ.” Col. iii. 12.—.

10650 “ Nihil in hac vita felicius et hominibus acceptability Presbyteri officio; sed nihil apud Deum miserius, et tristius, et damnabilius. “ Epist. 21, E. B.

10651 Const. Apost. 1. 2, c. 26.

10652 “ Cum enim augentur dona, rationes etiam crescunt donorum.” In Evang. hom. 9.

10653 “ Cesleste tenet officium, angelus Domini factus est; tanquam angelus, aut eligitur, aut reprobatur.” Declam. n. 24.

10654 “ Neque enim mediocris virtus sacerdotalis est, cui cavendum, non solum ne gravioribus flagitiis sit affinis, sed ne minimis quidem.” Epist. 82.

10655 “ Si dixeris: Sufficit; et peristi.” Serm. 169, E. B.

10656 “ Quid facis nobis sic?”

10657 “ Quid est quod me quærebatis? nesciebatis quia, in his quæ Patris mei sunt, oportet me esse ?” Luke, ii. 49.

10658 “ Propter notitiam veritatis.” 2. 2, q. 10, a. 3.

10659 “ Labia enim Sacerdotis custodient scientiam, et legem requirent ex ore ejus.” Mai. ii. 7.

10660 “Scienti legem, et non facienti, peccatum est grande.” De Dignit. sac. c. 3.

10661 “ Sagittant in obscuro.” Ps. x. 3.

10662 “ Vos estis lux mundi.” Matth. v. 14.

10663 “ Vobis datum est nosse mysterium regni Dei.” Luke, viii. 10.

10664 “ Peccatum est destructivum divinæ bonitatis.”

10665 “ Peccatum, quantum in se est, Deum perimit.” In Temp. Pasch. s. 3.

10666 “ Quantum ad voluntatem suam, occidit Deum.” Hom. 40.

10667 “Peccatum mortale, si possibile esset, destrueret Deum, eo quod esset causa tristitiæ (in Deo) infinitæ.” De Satisf. q. 1

10668 “Quo melius videt, eo gravius peccat.”

10669 “ Angelus Domini factus est. In clero quippe, tanquam in cœlo gerens iniqua.” Declam. n. 24.

10670 “ Noluit intelligere, ut bene ageret.” Ps. xxxv. 4.

10671 “ Scienter eligitur.” i. 2, q. 78, a. i.

10672 “ Omne peccatum ex malitia est contra Spiritum Sanctum.” De Malo, q. 3, a. 14.

10673 “ Non remittetur ei, neque in hoc sæculo, neque in futuro.” Matth. xii. 32.

10674 “ Pater, dimitte illis; non enim sciiint quidfaciunt.” Luke ,xxiii. 34.

10675 “ Sciunt quid faciunt.”

10676 “ Quomodo obscuratum est aurum, mutatus est color optimus !”

10677 “ Nulla re Deus magis offenditur, quam quando peccatores Sacerdotii dignitate præfulgent.” In Matth. hom. 41.

10678 “ Naturaliter magis indignamur his qui nobis familiarissimi sunt, cum in nos peccaverint.” Glossa, in I Pet. iv,

10679 “Dei intimi familiares.”

10680 “ Enumera honores, dignitates; omnium apex est Sacerdos.”

10681 “ Dispensatores regiæ domus.

10682 “ Ipsum elegit ab omni vivente, offerre sacrificium Deo” Ecclus. xlv. 20.

10683 “ Deus terrenus.”

10684 “Quid est quod debui ultra facere vineæ meæ, et non feci ?” Is. v. 4.

10685 “Quid est, quod dilectus meus, in domo mea, fecit scelera multa ? Jer. xi. 15.

10686 “Heu, Domine Deus, quia ipsi sunt in persecutione tua primi, qui videntur in Ecclesia tua gerere principatum.” In Convers. S, Pauli, s. I.

10687 Audite, cœli, et auribus percipe, terra. . . . filios enutrivi et exaltavi; ipsi autem spreverunt me.” Is. i. 2,

10688 “Si inimicus maledixisset mihi, sustinuissem utique, . , . tu vero, homo unanimis, dux meus et notus meus, qui simul mecum dulces capiebas cibos” Ps. liv. 13.

10689 “Qui vescebantur voluptuose, . . . qui nutriebantur in croceis, amplexati sunt stercora !” Lam. iv. 5.

10690 “ Qui in purpura educati fuerunt.”

10691 “ Vos autem genus electum, regale Sacerdotium.” i Pet. ii. 9.

10692 “ Pro mensura peccati erit et plagarum modus.” Deut. xxv. 2.

10693 “Si privatim pecces, nihil tale passurus es; si in Sacerdotio peccas, periisti.” In Act. Ap. Hom.3.

10694 “ Propheta namque et Sacerdos polluti sunt, et in domo mea inveni malum eorum, ait Dominus. Idcirco via eorum erit quasi lubricum in tenebris; impellentur enim, et corruent in ea.”—Jer. xxiii. 11

10695 “ Melius erat illis non cognoscere viam justitiæ, quam, post agnitio nem, retrorsum converti.” “2 Pet. ii. 21.

10696 “ Major scientia majoris pœnæ fit materia. Propterea Sacerdos, si eadem cum subditis peccata committit, non eadem, sed multa acerbiora patietur.” Ad pop. Ant. hom. 77.

10697 “ Ut videntes non videant, et audientes non intelligant.” Luke, viii. 10; Isa. vi, 9.

10698 “ Sæcularis homo, post peccalum, facile ad pœnitentiam venit.”

10699 “ Quia, quasi novum aliquid audiens, expavescit.”

10700 “ Omnia enim quæ sunt in Scripturis ante oculos ejus inveterata et vilia æstimantur; nam quidquid illic terrible est, usu vilescit.”

10701 “ Nihil autem impossibilius, quam ilium corrigere qui omnia scit.” Hom. 40.

10702 “ Grandis dignitas Sacerdotum; sed grandis ruina eorum, si peccant.” In Ezech. xliv.

10703 “ Ab altiori gradu fit casus gravior.” Declam. n. 25.

10704 “ Ut levius est de piano corruere, sic gravius est qui de sublimi ceciderit dignitate; quia ruina quæ de alto est, graviori casu colliditur.” De Dignit. sac. c. 3

10705 Lætemur ad ascensum, sed timeamus ad lapsum.” In Ezech. xliv.

10706 “Posui te in monte sancto Dei, . , . et peccasti; et ejeci te de monte Dei, et perdidi te.” Ezech, xxviii. 14.

10707 Vos estis lux mundi. Non potest civitas abscondi, supra montem posita.” Matt. v. 14.

10708 “ Quo est gratia cumulatior, et status sublimior, eo casus est gravior, et damnabilior culpa. “ De Compunct. p. I.

10709 “ Altius mergitur, qui de alto cadit.”

10710 “ Quid altius cœlo? De cœlo cadit, in cœlestibus qui delinquit.” Serm. 26.

10711 Tanquam fulgur in impetu vehementi dejicieris.” Declam n. 25

10712 “ Corruent in ea.” Jer. xxiii. 12.

10713 “ Et tu, Capharnaum, usque ad cœlum exaltata, usque ad infernum demergeris. “ Luke, x. 15.

10714 “ Cum enim augentur dona, rationes etiam crescunt donorum.” In Evang. hom. 9.

10715 “ Ingratus meretur beneficii subtractionem.”

10716 “ Omni enim habenti dabitur, et abundabit; ei awtem qui non habet, et quod videtur habere, auferetur ab eo.” Matt. xxv. 29.

10717 “ Ingratitude exsiccat fontem divinæ pietatis.” In Cant. s. 51.

10718 “ Nulla certe in mundo tarn crudelis bestia, quam mains Sacerdos; nam corrigi non patitur.” Eusebius, Ep. ad Dam. de morte Hier.

10719 “Laici delinquentes facile emendantur; clerici, si mali fuerint, inemendabiles sunt.” Hom. 43.

10720 Epist. 1. 4, ep. 3

10721 “ Impossible est enim, eos, qui semel sunt illuminati, gustaverunt etiam donum cœleste, et participes facti sunt Spiritus Sancti, . . . et prolapsi sunt, rursus renovari ad pœnitentiam.” Heb. vi. 4.

10722 “ Angelus Domini factus est; tanquam angelus, aut eligitur, aut reprobatur.” Declam. n. 24.

10723 “ Multa sunt laicis venialia, quæ clericis sunt mortalia.” In Consecr, Pont. s. i.

10724 “ Terra enim sæpe venientem super se bibens imbrem, . . . profer ens autem spinas ac tribulos, reproba est, et maledicto proxiina: cujus consummatio in combustionem.” Heb. vi.11

10725 “ Si Dominus ego sum, ubi est timor meus? dicit Dominus exercituum ad vos, o Sacerdotes, quid despicitis nomen meum !” Mal i. 6.

10726 “ Alto quippe demersi oblivionis somno, ad nullum Dominican comminationis tonitruum expergiscuntur, ut suum periculum expavescant.” In Cant. s. 77.

10727 “ Impius, cum in profundum venerit peccatorum, contemnit.”—Prov, xviii. 3.

10728 “ Tales Sacerdotes non sunt mei Sacerdotes, sed veri proditores.”—Rev. 1. i, c. 47.

10729 “ In terra sanctorum iniqua gessit, et non videbit gloriam Domini.” Isa. xxvi. 10.

10730 “ Territus, terreo.” Serm. 40, E. B.

10731 “ Audiamus ilium, dum rogat, ne nos postea non audiat, dum judicat.” Serm. 29, E. B. app.

10732 Nobilem necesse est esse Sacerdotem, ut, qui minister est Domini, erubescat æ servum esse peccati.” Opusc. 25, c. 2.

10733 “ Statutum est hominibus semel mori; post hoc autem, judicium.Heb. ix. 27.

10734 “ Omnes nos enim manifestari oportet ante tribunal Christi, ut referat unusquisque propria corporis, prout gessit.” 2 Cor. v. 10.

10735 “ Redde rationem vilicationis tuæ.” Luke, xvi. 2,

10736 “Cum quæsierit, quid respondebo illi?” Job, xxxi. 14.

10737 “Tempus est ut incipiat judicium a domo Dei.” I Pet. iv. 17.

10738 “ A sanctuario meo incipite.” Ezech. ix. 6.

10739 “Judicium durissimum, his qui præsunt, fiet.” Wisd. vi. 6.

10740 “ Omni autem cui multum datum est, multum quæretur ab eo.” Luke, xii. 48.

10741 “ Laicus, in die judicii, stolam sacerdotalem accipiet; Sacerdos autem peccator spoliabiturdignitate, et erit inter infideles et hypocritas.” Hom. 40.

10742 “ Audite hoc, Sacerdotes: . . . quia vobis judicitim est.” Osee, v. i.

10743 “ Duplici contritione contere eos.” Jer. xvii. 18.

10744 “ Grandis dignitas Sacredotum, sed grandis ruina, si peccant.” In Ezech. xliv.

10745 “Sacerdos, si eadem cum subditis peccata committit, non eadem, sed multo acerbiora patietur.” Ad pop. Ant. hom. 77.

10746 “ Præ omnibus diabolis, profundius submergentur in infernum.” Rev. 1. 4, c. 135.

10747 “ Infernus subter conturbatus est in occursum adventus tui. . . . Omnes principes terræ surrexerunt de soliis suis. . . . Universi respondebunt, et dicent tibi: Et tu vulneratus es sicut et nos, nostri similis effectus es.” Isa. xiv. 9, 10.

10748 “ Detracta est ad inferos superbia tua, concidit cadaver tuutn; subter te sternetur tinea, et operimentum tuum erunt vermes.” Ibid.11

10749 “ Et deriserunt sabbata ejus.” Lam. i. 7.

10750 “ Qui pastorem de medio tulerit, totum gregem dissipat.” In r Tim. Hom. I.

10751 “Plus duces, quam milites, appetuntur in pugna.” Inter op. S. Cypr. De Singul. cler.

10752 *“ Quid feci tibi, aut in quo contristavi te? responde mihi.*

Eduxi te de terra Ægypti: et tu parasti crucem Salvatori tuo.

Ego te pavi manna per desertum: et tu me cecidisti alapis et flagellis.

Quid ultra debui facere tibi, et non feci ? Ego plantavi te vineam speciosissimam: et tu facta es mihi nimis amara.

Ego dedi tibi sceptrum regale: et tu dedisti capiti meo spineam coronam.

Ego te exaltavi: et tu me suspendisti in patibulo crucis.” Improperia, sung on Good Friday.

10753 “ Scio opera tua, et laborem, et patientiam tuam.” Apoc. ii. 2.

10754 “ Sed habeo adversum te, quod caritatem tuam primam reliquisti.” Ib. 4.

10755 Memor esto itaque unde excideris, et age poanitentiam, et prima opera fac; sin autem, venio tibi, et movebo candelabrum tuum de loco suo.” Ib. 5.

10756 “ Petrus autem sequebatur eum a longe.” Matth. xxvi. 58.

10757 “ Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet.” Ecclus. xix. i.

10758 “ Decidet a pietate, a statu gratiæ in statum peccati.”

10759 “ Difficile est ut non cadere in gravia permittatur, qui minus gravia non veretur.” Homil. init. quadr.

10760 Judicio autem divino in reatum nequiorem labuntur, qui distringere minora sua facta contemnunt.” Sent. \. 2, c. ig.

10761 “ Magna præcavisti! de minutis quid agis? Projecisti molem! vide ne arena obruaris.” In Ps. xxxix.

10762 “Ut, usu cuncta levigante, nequaquam post committere etiam graviora timeamus.” Mor. 1. 10, c. 14.

10763 “ Periculum est ne in perfectam insensibilitatem deveniamus.” Doctr. 3.

10764 “ Nolite locum dare diabolo.” ph. iv. 27.

10765 “ Lapsus quispiam nequaquam subitanea ruina corruisse credendus est.” Coll. 6, c. 17.

10766 “ Novimus multos, omnes virtutes numero habuisse, et tamen, negligentia lapses, ad vitiorum barathrum devenisse.” In Matth. hom. 27.

10767 “ Scio opera tua, quia neque frigidus es, neque calidus.” Apoc. iii. 15.

10768 “ Tepidus est qui non audet Deum mortaliter sciens et volens offendere, sed perfectioris vitæ studium negligit, unde facile concupiscentiis se committit.” In Apoc. iii. 16.

10769 “ Sunt velut irremissæ ægrotatiunculæ, quæ vitam quidem non dissolvunt, sed ita corpus extenuant, ut accedente aliquo gravi morbo statim corpus, vires non habens resistendi, succumbat.” De Perf. 1. 5, p. 2, c. 1 6

10770 “ Utinam frigidus esses, aut calidus! sed quia tepidus es, et nec frigidus nec calidus, incipiam te evomere ex ore meo.”

10771 “ Licet frigidus sit pejor tepido, tamen pejor est status tepidi, quia tepidus est in majori periculo ruendi sine spe resurgendi.” In Apoc. iii. 1 6.

10772 “ Facilius enim est quemlibet paganum ad fidem Christi adducere, quam talem aliquem a suo torpore ad spiritus fervorem revocare.”

10773 “ Frequenter vidimus de frigidis ad spiritalem pervenire fervorem, de tepidis omnino non vidimus.” Coll. 4, c. 19.

10774 “ Sicut ante teporem frigus sub spe est, ita tepor in desperatione qui enim adhuc in peccatis est, conversionis fiduciam non amittit; qui vero post conversionem tepuit, et spem, quæ esse potuit de peccatore, subtraxit,” Past, p. 3, c. I, a dm. 35.

10775 “ Major enim quo citius quia sit culpa agnoscitur, eo etiam citius emendatur; minor vero, dum quasi nulla creditur, eo pejus quo et securius in usu retinetur. Unde fit plerumque ut mens, assueta malis levibus, nec graviora perhorrescat, et in majoribus contemnat.” Past. p. 3, c. I, adm. 34.

10776 “ Magna peccata eo justis minus periculosa sunt, quod aspectum satis tetrum exhorrent; at minima periculosiora videntur, quia latenter ad ruinam disponunt.” De Perf. 1. 5, p. 2, c. 16.

10777 “ Non tanto studio magna peccata esse vitanda, quam parva: ilia enim natura adversatur; hæc autem, quia parva sunt, desides reddunt. Dum contemnuntur, non potest ad eorum expulsionem animus generose insurgere; unde cito ex parvis maxima fiunt.” In Matth. hom. 87,

10778 “Capita nobis vulpes parvulas quæ demoliuntur vineas; nam vinea nostra floruit.” Cant. ii. 15.

10779 “ Culpæ leves et imperfectiones vulpes parvulæ sunt, in quibus nihil nimisnoxium aspicimus; sed hæ vineam, id est, animam demoliuntur, quia eam sterilem faciunt, dum pluviam auxilii cœlestis impediunt.” De Perf. 1. 5, p. 2, c. 16.

10780 “Sed, quia tepidus es, incipiam te evomere ex ore meo “Apoc iii. 16.

10781 “ Porro tepidus incipit evomi, cum, permanens in tepore suo, Deo nauseam movere incipit, donee tandem omnino in morte sua evomatur, et a Christo in æternum separetur.”

10782 “Vomitus significat Deum exsecrari tepidos, sicut exsecramur icl quod os evomuit.”In Apoc. iii. 16.

10783 “ Calcabis olivam, et non ungeris oleo.” Mich, vi. 15.

10784 “Si dixeris: Sufficit; et periisti.” Serm. 169, E. B

10785 Vision, c. 51.

10786 Chap. III.

10787 “ Maledictus, qui facit opus Domini fraudulenter.” Jer. xlviii. 10.

10788 “ Negligentes Deus deserere consuevit.” In Ps. cxviii. s. 10.

10789 “ Deus vult a seraphim s ministrari; tepido gratiam suam subtrahit, sinitque eum dormire, itaque ruere in barathrum.”

10790 “ Qui parce seminal, parce et metet.” 2. Cor. ix. 6.

10791 “Omni enim habenti dabitur, et abundabit; ei autem qui non habet, et quod videtur habere, auferetur ab eo.” Matth. xxv. 29

10792 “ Malos male perdet, et vineam suam locabit aliis agricolis, qui reddant ei fructum temporibus suis.” Matth. xxi. 41.

10793 “Ideo dico vobis quia auferetur a vobis regnum Dei, et dabitur genti facienti fructus ejus.” Ibid. 43.

10794 “ Seminastis multum, et intulistis parum; . . . et qui mercedes congregavit, misit eas in sacculum pertusum.” Agg. i. 6

10795 “Signum est amoris satis tepidi, velle amatum in solis rebus gravibus non offendere, et in aliis, quæ non tanta severitate præcipit, ejus voluntatem procaciter violate.” De Exterm. mali, 1. i, c. 12.

10796 “ Hostium malitia, qua tarn solliciti sunt in nostram perditionem, nos quoque sollicitos facial, ut in timore et tremore ipsorum nostram salutem operemur.” De S. Andrea, s. 2.

10797 “ In magno versatur periculo, sæpeque, inter tot occasiones quibus plena est hæc vita, in mortale prolabitur.” In Apoc. iii. 15.

10798 “ Cœli non sunt mundi in conspectu ejus.” Job, xv. 15.

10799 “In multis enim offendimus omnes.” James, iii. 2.

10800 Necesse est de mundano pulvere etiam religiosa corda sordcscere.” De Quadr. s. 4.

10801 “Septies enim cadet Justus, et resurget.” Prov. xxiv. 16.

10802 “ Et si non sumus sine peccatis, oderimus tamen ea.” Serm. 181, E. B.

10803 “Si confiteamur peccata nostra, fidelis est et . Justus, ut remittat nobis peccata nostra, et emundet nos ab omni iniquitate.” i John, i. 9.

10804 “ Sane tales culpas generaliter exposuisse satis est.” Consol. pusill. c. i , 4.

10805 Brev. Reg. tyr. sp;. 4.

10806 “ Sufficit actus quo aliquis detestatur peccatum veniale vel explicite vel implicite, sicut cum aliquis ferventer movetur ad Deum.” P. 3, q. 87, a. 3.

10807 “Triplici ratione, aliqua causant remissionem venialium: 1, per infusionem gratiæ; et hoc modo, per Eucharistiam et omnia Sacramenta, venialia remittuntur; 2, in quantum sunt cum aliquo motu detestationis; et hoc modo, confessio generalis, tunsio pectoris, et Oratio Dominica, operantur ad remissionem; 3, in quantum sunt cum aliquo motu reverentiæ in Deum et ad res divinas; et hoc modo, benedictio episcopalis, aspersio aquæ benedictæ, oratio in ecclesia dedicata, et si aliqua sunt hujusmodi, operantur ad remissionem venialium” S. Thomas, loco citato.

10808 “ Contingere potest quod tanta devotione mens, per sumptionem Sacramenti, in Domino absorbeatur, quod ab omnibus venialibus expurgetur.” De Chr. Dom. s. 12, a. 2, c. i.

10809 “ Muscæ morientes perdunt suavitatem unguenti.” Eccles. x. I.

10810 “ Dum musca cadit in unguentum, manendo in illo, destruit ejus valorem atque odorem. Spiritualiter, muscre morientes sunt cogitationes vanæ, affectiones illicitæ, distractiones morosæ, quæ perdunt suavitatem unguenti, id est, dulcedinem spiritualium exercitiorum.”

10811 In Convers. S. Pauli, s. I.

10812 “ Qui cognovit voluntatem domini sui, et non præaravit, et non fecit secundum voluntatem ejus, vapulabit multis; qui autem non cognovit, et fecit digna plagis, vapulabit paucis.” Luke, xii. 47.

10813 “ Quemadmodum singulis diebus in multis offendimus, ita quotidianas expiationes habemus.” Parad, an. p. i, c. 3.

10814 “ Quæ impossibilia sunt apud homines, possibilia sunt apud Deum.” Luke, xviii. 27.

10815 “ Petite, et accipietis.”

10816 “ Meritum meum, misericordia tua.”

10817 Orat. 5.

10818 “ Vermis quo nullus nocentior.” T. II. s. 52, a. 3, c. 2

10819 “ Luxuria omnium virtutum eradicat germina,”

10820 “Luxuria seminarium et origo vitiorum est.” St. Thom. de Vill. De S. Ildeph. conc. 2.

10821 “ Demptis parvulis, ex adultis pauci, propter hoc vitium, salvantur.” Il Crist, istr. p. I, rag. 24.

10822 “Gemma pretiosissima, a paucis inventa.” De Virginit.

10823 “ Teipsum castum custodi.” i Tim. v. 22.

10824 “Ante omnia Sacerdos, qui divinis assistit altaribus, castitate debit accingi.” In Levit. hom. 4.

10825 “Soli qui puram agunt vitam, sunt Dei Sacerdotes.” Strom. 1. 4.

10826 “ Si pudicitia Sacerdotes creat, libido Sacerdotibus dignitatem abrogat.”Epist.1. 3, ep. 75-

10827 “ Nemo ad sacrum Ordinem permittatur accedere, nisi aut virgo aut probatæ castitatis existat.” Cap. A Mtdtis. De œt. et qual. ord.

10828 “ Ab omnium graduum dignitate.”

10829 “Qui, post acceptum sacrum Ordinem, lapsus in peccatum carnis fuerit, sacro Ordine ita careat, ut ad altaris ministerium ulterius non accedat.” Cap. Pervenit. dist. 50.

10830 Cap. Presbyter, dist. 82.

10831 “ Unxit nos Deus, qui et signavit nos.” 2 Cor. i. 21.

10832 “ Sacerdos ne polluat sanctuarium Domini; quia oleum sanctæ unctionis super eum est.”

10833 “ Teipsum castum custodi, ut domum Dei, templum Christi.” Ep. ad Heron. Diac.

10834 “ Nonne templum Deiviolant? Nolite vasa Deo sacrata in vasa contumeliæ vertere.” Opusc. 18, d. 2, c. 47.

10835 “Cum ipsi templum et sacrarium Spiritus Sanctl debeant esse, indignum est eos immunditiis deservire.” Cap. Decernimus. dist. 28.

10836 “ Sus lota in volutabro luti !” 2 Pet. ii. 22.

10837 “ Deum in ipsis habitantem corrumpunt, quantum in se est, et vitiorum suorum conjunctione poluunt.”—Pædog. 1. 2, c. 10.

10838 “ Sacerdotes ejus contempserunt legem meam, et polluerunt sanctuaria mea; . . . et coinquinabor in medio eorum.” Ezech. xxii. 26.

10839 “ Polluimus corpus Christi, quando indigni accedimus ad altare.” In Mal. i. 7.

10840 “ Pudicitia sacerdotalis, non solum ab opere immundo, sed etiam a jactu oculi sit libera.” In Tit. i. 8, 9.

10841 “ Necesse est Sacerdotem sic esse purum, ut, in ipsis cœlis collocatus, inter cœlestes illas virtutes medius staret.” De Sacerd. 1.3

10842 “Quo solares radios non deberet excedere manus ilia, quæ hanc carnem tractat?” In Matt. hom. 83.

10843 “ Quis adeo impius erit, qui lutosis manibus Sacratissimum Sacramentum tractare præsumat?”Instead of these words we read at the place indicated: “Si eru-bescimus et timemus Eucharistiam manibus sordidis tangere, plus debemus timere ipsam Eucharistiam in anima polluta suscipere.” Serm. 292, E. B. App. ED.

10844 “Audent Agni immaculati sacras contingere carnes, et intingere in sanguinem Salvatoris manus, quibus paulo ante carnes attrectaverunt.” Declain. n. 13.

10845 “ Ne manus quæ intinguntur sanguine Christi, polluantur sanguine peccati.” Molina, Intr. Sac. tr. I, c. 5, 2.

10846 “ *Qua puritate oportebit custodire castitatem,* quos necesse *est quotidie sacrosanctis Agni carnibus vesci !” De Can.* Inst. 1. 6, c. 8.

10847 “ Qui sacra illius verba Sacramenti ore immundo profert, in faciem Salvatoris spuit; et cum in os immundum sanctisimam Carnem ponit, eam quasi in lutum projicit.” Serm. 38.

10848 “ Majus peccatum est, quam si projiciat Corpus Christi in cloacam.”

10849 “Cur, o Sacerdos, qui sacrificium Deo debes offerre, temet ipsum prius maligno spiritui non vereris victimam immolare.” Opus. 1 7, c. 3.

10850 “ Vos estis dæmonum victimæ, ad æternæ mortis succidium destinatæ; ex vobis diabolus, tamquam delicatis dapibus, pascitur et saginatur.”

10851 “Ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima.” Is. xxxviii. 17.

10852 “ Amara prius in nece Martyrum, amarior in conflictu hæreticorum, amarissima in moribus domesticorum. Pax est, et non est pax: pax a paganis, pax ab hæreticis, sed non profecto a filiis.” In Cant. s. 33.

10853 “Qui prædicator constitutus es castitatis, non te pudet servum esse libidinis!” S. ad Past, in syn.

10854 “Castitas, mundans mentes hominum, præstat videre Deum.” Serm. 291, E. B. app.

10855 “ Cæcitas mentis, odium Dei, affectus præsentis sæculi, horor vel desperatio futuri.” 2. 2, q. 153, a. 5.

10856 “ Luxuria futura non sinit cogitare.”

10857 John Calvin was provided, at the age of twelve, with a chaplaincy in the church of Noyon, and afterwards with the curacy of Pont l’Evêque, near this city, although he was never raised to the dignity of the priesthood. (Diet. hist, de Feller.)

10858 “ Ambulabunt ut cæci, quia Domino peccaverunt.” Soph. i. 17.

10859 “ Percutiat te Dominus amentia, et cæcitate, ac furore mentis, et palpes in meridie, sicut palpare solet cæcus in tenebris, et non dirigas vias tuas.” Deut. xxviii. 28.

10860 “Non dabunt cogitationes suas, ut revertantur ad Deum suum; quia spiritus fornicationum in medio eorum, et Dominum non cognoverunt.” Os. v. 4.

10861 “ Nec admonitiones, nec consilia, ne aliquid aliud salvare potest animam libidine periclitantem.” Hom, contra lux.

10862 “ Supercecidit ignis, et non viderunt solem.” Ps. Ivii. 9.

10863 “ Supercecidit ignis, id est, concupiscentiæ.” 2. 2, q. 15, a. i.

10864 “ Vitia carnalia extinguunt judicium rationis. Delectatio quæ est in venereis, totam animam trahit ad sensibilem delectationem.” 2. 2, q. 53, a. 6.

10865 “ Luxuria hominem pejorem bestiafacit.” Eusebius, Ep. ad Dam. de morte Hier, 10866 “Accedite ad eum, et illuminamini.” Ps. xxxiii. 6.

10867 “ Per peccatum luxuriæ, homo videtur maxime a Deo recedere.” In Job 31, led. i.

10868 “Animalis autem homo non percipit ea quæ sunt Spiritus Dei.” I Cor. ii. 14.

10869 “ Non percipit.”

10870 “ Ubi casperit quis luxuriari, incipit deviate a fide recta.” Epist 36

10871 “ Ossa ejus implebuntur vitiis adolescentia: ejus et cum eo in pulvere dormient.” Job, xx. 11.

10872 “ Quia oblita es mei, et projecisti me post corpus tuum, tu quoque porta scelus tuum et fornicationes tuas.” Ezech. xxiii. 35.

10873 “ Illi Deum post corpus suum ponunt, qui suarum obtemperant illecebris voluptatum.” Opusc. 18, diss. 2, c. 3.

10874 Eserc. della buona m. p. I, d. 34.

10875 “ Hoc rete diaboli, si quis capitur, non cito solvitur.” *Eusebius, Ep, ad Dam. de morte Hier.*

10876 “ Diabolus dicitur maxima gaudere de peccato luxuria:, quia est rnaxima: adha:rentia:, et difficile ab eo homo potest eripi.” i. 2, q. 73, a. 5.

10877 “ Morbus immedicabilis.” Pccdag. 1. 2, c. 10.

10878 “ Vitium immutabile.”

10879 “ Impudicitia mater est impasnitentia:.” De Disc, et Bon. pud.

10880 “ Est fere impossibile triumphare de carne, si ipsa de nobis triumphavit.”

10881 “ Propheta et Sacerdos polluti sunt; . . . idcirco via eorum erit quasi lubricum in tenebris; impellentur enim, et corruent in ea.”-Jer. xxiii. II.

10882 “ Dum servitur libidini, facta est consuetude; et dum consuetudini non resistitur, facta est necessitas.” Conf. 1. 8, c. 5.

10883 “ Vix aliquis talium veram habet contritionem; idcirco pene omnes æternaliter damnantur.” Quat. Nov. p. 3. a. 13

10884 “ Altaria Domini, non alienum, sed ignem dumtaxat divini amoris accipiunt; quisquis igitur carnalis concupiscentiæ flamma æstuat, et sacris assistere mysteriis non formidat, ille divinæ ultionis igne consumitur. “ Opusc. 27, c. 3.

10885 “ Veniet, veniet profecto dies, imo nox, quando libido ista tua vertetur in picem, qua se perpetuus ignis in tuis visceribus inextinguibiliter nutriat.” Opusc. 17, c. 3.

10886 Quid illi sperandum, qui, cœlestibus tricliniis intromissus, non modo non est spiritalis indumend decore conspicuus, sed ultro etiam foetet sordentis luxuriæ squalore perfusus.” Opusc. 18, d. i, c. 4.

10887 “ Cessa pro me orare, pro quo nullatenus exaudieris.” Anno 1100, n. 24.

10888 Epist. 1. 5, ep. 16.

10889 Rev. 1, 2, c. 2.

[They that desire more information on the means of overcoming sins of the flesh, and especially on the two means above mentioned, the avoidance of occasions, and prayer, should read the instruction on chastity in the second part of this work.]

10890 “ Vos autem recessistis de via, et scandalizastis plurimos in lege; . . . propter quod et ego dedi vos contemptibiles et humiles

omnibus populis.” Mai. ii. 8.

10891 “ Qui amat periculum, in illo peribit.” Ecclus. iii. 27.

10892 “ Oratio pudicitiæ præsidium est.” De or. Dom. or. I.

10893 “ Et ut scivi quoniam aliter nom possem esse continens, nisi Deus det, . . . adii Dominum, et deprecatus sum ilium.” Wisd. viii. 21.

10894 “ Necessario fatemur nullum aliud opus adeo sanctum a Christ! fidelibus tractari posse, quam hoc tremendum mysterium.” Sess. 22, Decr, de observ. in Missa.

10895 “ Habuit bovem Judæus, habet Christum Christianus, cujus sacrificium tanto excellentius est, quanto Christus bove major est.”

10896 “Congrua tune fuit servilis hostia servis; servata est liberatrix victima jam filiis et amicis.” Ep. contra Petrobr.

10897 “ Qua oblatione nulla major, nulla utilior, nulloque oculis Divinæ Majestatis est gratior.” Serm, de Euchar.

10898 “Locus altari vicinus plenus est Angelorum choris, in honorem illius qui immolatur.” De Sacerd. 1. 6.

[10899] “Quis fidelium habere dubium possit, in ipsa immolationis hora, ad Sacerdotis vocem cœlos aperiri, et in illo Jesu Christi mysterio Angelorum choros adesse ?” Dial. 1. 4, c. 58.

[10900] “ Sacerdos enim hoc ineffabile ccnficit mysterium, et Angeli conficienti sibi quasi famuli assistunt.” Molina, Instr. Sac. tr. i, c. 5, 2.

[10901] “ Idem nunc offerens Sacerdotum ministerio, qui seipsum tune in cruce obtulit.” Sess. 22, cap. 2.

[10902] “Sacerdos vice Christi vere fungitur.” Epist. 62.

[10903] “ Hoc est corpus meum; hic est calix sanguinis mei.”

[10904] “Qui vos audit, me audit; qui vos spernit, me spernit.” Luke, x. 16.

[10905] “ Mundamini, qui fertis vasa Domini.” Is. lii. 11.

[10906] “ Quanto mundiores esse oportet, qui in manibus et in corpora portant Christum!” Epist. 123

[10907] “Satis apparet omnem operam et diligentiam in eo ponendam esse, ut quanta maxima fieri potest interiori cordis munditia peragatur.” Sess. 22, Decr, de obs. in Missa.

[10908] “ Candorem significat vitæ innocentis, quæ a Sacerdote debet incipere.”

[10909] “ Videte dignitatem vestram, Sacerdotes; et sicut super omnes, propter hoc mysterium, honoravit vos Dominus, ita et vos diligite eum et honorate.” Op. p. i, ep. 12.

[10910] “ Honorificabitis autem, non cultu vestium, sed ornatis moribus, studiis spiritualibus, operibus bonis.” De Mor. et Off. Episc. c. 2

[10911] “ Ad vos, o Sacerdotes, qui despicitis nomen meum! . . . Offertis super altare meum panem pollutum, et dicitis: In quo polluimus te?” Mal. 1. 6.

[10912] “Polluimus panem, id est, corpus Christi, quando indigni accedimus ad altare.”

[10913] “ De stercore erigens pauperem, ut collocet eum cum principibus populi sui.” Ps. cxii. 6.

[10914] “ Qui non adhibet honorem quern debet altari sancto, factis testatur illud esse contemptibile.” Molina, Instr. Sacerd. tr. 2, c. 18, I.

[10915] “Quo igitur solari radio non puriorem esse oportet manum carnem hanc dividentem, linguam quæ tremendo nimis sanguine rubescit?” Ad pop. Ant. honi. 60.

10916 “ Nonne accedentem ad altare Sacerdotem sic parum esse oportet, ut, si in ipsis cœlis esset collocatus, inter cœlestes illas virtutes medius staret.” De Sacerd. 1. 3.

10917 “ Quis adeo impius erit, qui lutosis manibus sacratissimum Sacramentum tractare præsumat?”

10918 “ Cum extenderitis manus vestras, avertam oculos meos a vobis.” Is. i. 15.

10919 “ Dispergam super vultum vestrum stercus solemnitatum vestrarum.” Mal. ii. 3.

10920 “ Hæc quidem ilia munda oblatio est, quffi nulla malitia offerentium inquinari potest.” Sess. 22, cap. i.

10921 “ Coinquinabar in medio eorum.” Ezech. xxii. 26.

10922 “ Heu, Domine, Deus, quia ipsi sunt in persecutione tua primi, qui videntur in Ecclesia tua gerere principatum.” In Conv. S. Pauli s. i.

10923 “ Vis infertur corpori Domini; in Dominum manibus atque ore delinquunt.” Serm. de. Lapsis.

10924 “ Qui sacra illius verba Sacramenti ore immundo profert, in faciem Salvatoris spuit; et cum in os immundum sanctissimum carnem ponit, eum quasi in lutum projicit“ Serm. 38.

10925 “ Lutum non adeo indignum est corpore divino, quam indignæst carnis tuæ impuritas.” In Heb. 10, 16.

10926 “ Majus peccatum est, quam si projiceret corpus Christi in cloacam.”

10927 “Quantum flagitium sit in spurcissimam pectoris tui cloacam Christi sanguinem fundere.” De Sacram. alt. cone. 3.

10928 “ Aliud est promulgata edicta negligere, aliud ipsum regem vibrato propriæ manus jaculo sanciare. Deterius nemo peccat, quam Sacerdos qui indigne sacrificat: aliter in quocumque modo peccantes, quasi Dominum in rebus ejus offendimus; indigne vero sacrificantes, velut in peopleam ejus manus injicere non timemus.” Opusc. 26, c. 2.

10929 “ Minus peccaverunt Judæi crucifigen es in terra deambulantem, quam qui contemnunt in cœlo sedentem. In Ps. 68, s. 2.

10930 “ Semel Judæi Christo manus intulerunt ; isti quotidie corpus ejus lacessunt. O manus præscindendæ!” De Idol.

10931 Cfr. our Moral Theology, 1. 6, n. 35, and V. Hinc dicimus 9

10932 Miser non caligaverunt oculi tui, lingua torpuit, conciderunt brachia !” Ep. ad Sabian.

[10933] “ *Multo dæmonic pejor est, qui, peccati* conscius, *accedit ad* altare.” *In Matt.* hom. 83.

[10934] Life, ch. 38.

[10935] “ Quando qui particeps est cum ipso in mysteriis, peccatum committit, non eum conculeat.” In Heb. hom.20

[10936] “ Quanto majus putatis deteriora mereri supplicia, qui Filium Dei conculcaverit, et sanguinem testament! pollutum duxerit, in quo sanctificatus est?” Heb. x.20.

[10937] “ Columnæ cœli contremiscunt.” Job, xxvi. n.

[10938] “ Quam perditus ergo est, qui redemptionem in perditionem, qui sacrificium in sacrilegium, qui vitam convertit in mortem ! Verbum beati Hieronymi est: Perfidus Judæus, perfidus Christianus, ille de latere, isle de calice, sanguinem Christi fudit “ Epist. 123.

[10939] “ Corpus meum amarius crucifigunt, quam Judæi.” Rev. 1. 4, c. 133-

[10940] “ Ne, si peccatis obnoxii offerunt, eorum oblatio sit quasi qui victimat Filium in conspectu Patris.” Durant. De Rit. Eccl. 1. 2. c. 42, 4

[10941] “ Quoniam, si inimicus meus maledixisset mihi, sustinuissem utique; . . . tu vero, homo unanimis, dux meus et notus meus, qui simul mecum dulces capiebas cibos !” Ps. liv. 13.

[10942] “Tales Sacerdotes non sunt mei Sacerdotes, sed veri proditores ipsi enim et me vendunt quasi Judas.” Rev. 1. I, c. 47.

[10943] “ Juda traditore deteriores effecti, eo quod, sicut ille tradidit Jesum Judæis, sic isti tradunt diabolis, eo quod ilium ponunt in loco sub potestate diaboli constituto.” T. II. s. 55, a. I, c. 3.

[10944] 1 “Nonne Christus potest stare, et dicere: Juda ! tradis osculo Filium hominis !” Serm. 42.

[10945] “ Qui Christi corpus indigne conficit, Christum tradit, ut Christus, dum traditur dicat; Ecce manus tradentis me mecum est in mensa.” P. de Blois, Epist. 123.

[10946] “ Ineisqui peccant, nec sanctamysteriacontingere verentur, totus dæmon se insinuat; quod etiam in proditore quoque fecit.” Epist. 1. 3 e p 364

[10947] “Ne lingua, quæ vocat de cœlo Filium Dei, contra Dominum loquatur; et manus, quæ intinguntur sanguine Christi, polluantur sanguine peccati.” Molina, Instr. Sacr. tr. i, c. 5, 2.

[10948] “ Quando ergo peccare volueris, quære aliam linguam quam eam quæ rubescit sanguine Christi, alias manus præter eas quæ Christum suscipiunt.”

[10949] “ Accedunt, non vocati a Deo, sed impulsi ab avaritia.” De Præp. ad M. c. 8.

10950 “ Numquid carnes sanctæ auferent a te malitias tuas, in quibus gloriata es ?” Jer. xi. 15.

10951 “ Excusatione caret, qui facinus, ipso judice teste, committit.” Serm. 26.

10952 “ Cavendum est ne alienum ignem, hoc est, libidinis flammam, inter salutares hostias deferamus.” Opusc. 26, c. i. Levit. x.

10953 “ Quisquis carnalis concupiscentiæ flamma æstuat, et sacris assistere mysteriis non formidat, ille, procul dubio, divinæ ultionis igne consumitur.” Opusc. 27, c. 3.

10954 “ Absit ut aliquis huic idolo substernatur, ut Filium Virginis in Veneris templo suscipiat.” Serm. 60.

10955 “Quid illi sperandum, qui, cœlestibus tricliniis intromissus, non modo non est spiritualis indumenti decore conspicuus, sed ultro etiam fætet sordentis luxuriæ squalore perfusus.” Opusc. 18. d. i, c. 4.

10956 “ Væ ei qui se alienum fecerit ab eo: et multum væ ei qui immundus accesserit.” De Oid. vitæ. c. 2.

10957 “ Ingredior ad Sacerdotem istum ut sponsus; egredior ut Judex, judicaturus contemptus a sumente.” Rev. 1. 4, c. 62.

10958 “Væ sacrilegis manibus, vææ immundis pectoribus impiorum Sacerdotum! omne supplicium minus est flagitio quo Christus contemnitur in hoc sacrificio.” De Sacrum, alt. cone. 3.

10959 “ Maledicti sunt a cœlo et terra, et ab hominibus creaturis, quæ ipsæ obediunt Deo, et isti spreverunt.” Rev. 1. I, c. 47.

10960 “ Videmus Sacerdotes abutentes vasis Deo consecratis; sed prope est manus ilia et scriptura terribilis: Mane, Thecel, Phares : Numeratum, Appensum, Divisum.” Serm. 56

10961 “ Fiat mensa eorum coram ipsis in laqueum.” Ps. Ixviii. 23.

10962 “ Sumentes indigne, præ cæteris delicta graviora committunt, et pertinaciores in malo sunt.” S. de Euchar.

10963 “ Qui enim manducat et bibit indigne, judicium sibi manducat et bibit.” I Cor. xi. 29.

10964 “Cur, o Sacerdos, qui sacrificium Deo debes offerre, temetipsum prius maligno spiritui non vereris victimam immolare?” Opusc. 17, c. 3

10965 “ Quibus nihil aliud actum est, quam ut pudor hominibus peccandi demeretur.” De Vita beata, c. 26.

10966 “ Quid aliud est vitia incendere, quam auctores illis inscribere deos, dare morbo, exemplo divinitatis, excusatam licentiam ?” De Brevit. vitæ, c. 1 6.

10967 “ Quod divos decuit, cur mihi turpe putem ?”

10968 “ Persuadent sibi id licere, quod a suis pastoribus fieri conspiciunt, et ardentius perpetrant.”

10969 “ Sicut misit me Pater, et ego mitto vos.” John, xx. 21.

10970 “ Cave ne committas quod, qui volunt imitari, coguntur delinquere.” Ep. ad Heliod.

10971 “ Dictum vel factum minus rectum, præbens occasionem ruinæ.” 2, 2, q. 43, a. i.

10972 “ Peccantes autem in fratres, et percutientes conscientiam eorum infirmam, in Christum peccatis.” i Cor. viii. 12.

10973 “ Si (Dominus) proprium sanguinem dedit in pretium redemptionis animarum, non tibi videtur graviorem sustinere persecutionem ab illo qui, scandali occasione avertit ab eo animas quas redemit, quam a Judæo, qui sanguinem suum fudit ?” In Conv. S. Pauli, s. i.

10974 “ Vos estis-sal terræ?” Matt. v. 13.

10975 “ Itaque, si sal infatuatum fuerit, in quo salietur? Qui erunt homines per quos a vobis error auferatur, cum vos elegerit Deus, per quos errorem auferat cæterorum ?”

10976 “ Ergo ad nihilum valet sal infatuatum, nisi ut mittatur foras, et calcetur ab hominibus.” De Serm. Dom. in monte, 1. I, c. C.

10977 “Vos estis lux mundi.” Matt. v. 14.

10978 “ Splendore vitæ totum illuminantis orbem splendere debet animus Sacerdotis.” De Sacerd. 1. 6.

10979 “ Laqueus ruinæ populi mei, Sacerdotes mali.” Fast. p. i, c, 2.

10980 “ Ne paucorum facinus multorum possit esse perditio; nam causa sunt ruinæ populi Sacerdotes mali.” Epist. 1. 9, ep. 64.

10981 “ Et erit, sicut populus, sic Sacerdos.” Os. iv. 9.

10982 “ Et inebriabo animam Sacerdotum pinguedine, et populus meus bonis meis adimplebitur.” Jer. xxxi. 14.

10983 Si pingues sint Sacerdotes, erunt itidern populi pingues; et secus, si illi inanes erunt, magnum populis imminebit paupertatis periculum.” In Synod, diæc. n, orat. I.

10984 ““Principes tenebrarum principes Ecclesiæ salutant. Læti omnes nos gratias eisdem referimus, quia, per eorum negligentiam, ad nos devolvitur totus fere mundus.” De Apib. 1. i, c. 20.

10985 “ Grex perditus factus est populus meus; pastores eorum seduxerunt eos.” Jer. 1. 6.

10986 “ Unde fit ut, cum pastor per abrupta graditur, ad præcipitium grex sequatur.” Past. p. i, c. 2.

10987 “ Misera eorum conversatio plebis subversio est.” In Conv. S. Pauli, s. i.

10988 “ Si quis de populo deviat, solus perit; verum principis error multos involvit, et tantis obest, quantis præst ipse.” Epist. 127.

10989 “ Unde conjicitur quod peccatum Sacerdotis totius multitudinis peccato cosequatur, quia Sacerdos in suo peccato totam fecit delinquere multitudinem.” In Consecr. Pont. s. i.

10990 “ Si Sacerdos qui unctus est, peccaverit, delinquere faciens populum.” Lev. iv. 3.

10991 “ Nolite eis cœlum claudere; clauditis, dum male vivere ostenditis.” Ad Fratr. in er. s. 36.

10992 “Viso exemplo pravo Sacerdotum, peccator nduciam peccandi sumit, et incipit de peccato, quod prius reputabat erubescibile, gloriari.”

10993 “ Ideo ipsis erit amplior maledictio præ aliis, quia se vita sua perdunt et alio.” Rev. 1. 4, c. 132.

10994 “ Vidit arborem pallentibus foliis marcidam, et intellexit agricola quia læsuram in radicibus habet; ita, cum videris populum irreligiosum, sine dubio cognoscis quia Sacerdotium ejus non est sanum.” Hom. 38.

10995 De Dignit. sac. c. 5.

10996 “ Omne caput languidum. . . . A planta pedis usque ad verticem, non est in eo sanitas.” Is. i. 5.

10997 “ Caput enim languidum doctor est agens peccatum, cujus malum ad corpus pervenit.” Sent. 1. 3, c. 38.

10998 “ Totius familiæ Domini status et ordo nutabit, si, quod requiritur in corpore, non inveniatur in capite.” Epist. 87.

10999 “ Quis enim in cœno fontem requirat? . . . An vero idoneum eum putabo, qui mihi det consilium, quod non dat sibi ?” Ojficior. 1. 2, c. 12.

11000 Opusc. Max. cum princip. philos.

11001 “ Inferiorum culpæ ad nullos magis referenda? sunt, quam ad desides rectores.” 6.” Bernard. De Consid. 1. 3, c. 5.

11002 In Evang. hom. 17.

11003 “ Quasi totius orbis pater Sacerdos est; dignum igitur est ut omnium curam agat, sicut ut Deus, cujus fungitur vice.” In I Tim. hom. 6.

11004 “ Quid faciet laicus, nisi quod patrem suum spiritualem viderit facientem.” Serm. 57.

11005 “ Quidquid feceris, id sibi omnes faciendum putant.” Ep. ad Heliod

11006 “ Numquid talia clerici, etiam majoris ordinis, faciunt?” Serm. 15

11007 “ Quid mihi loqueris ? Ipsi clerici non illud faciunt, et me cogisut faciam ?” Serm. 137, E. B.

11008 “ In exemplum culpa vehementer extenditur, quando, pro revereniia Ordinis, peccator honoratur.” Past. p. i, c. 2.

11009 “Quibus quotidie percussionibus intereat populus videtis; cujus hoc, nisi nostro præcipue, peccato agitur? Nos pereunti populo auctores mortis existimus, qui esse debuimus duces ad vitam.” In Evang. hom. 17.

11010 “Si dixeris: Et mihi sufficit conscientia mea; non euro quid loquantur homines; audi Apostolum scribentem: Providentes bona, non tantum coram Deo, sed etiam coram omnibus hominibus. “ Rom. xii. 17.

11011 “Non parcunt suis, qui non parcunt sibi, perimentes pariter et pereuntes.” In Cant. s. 77.

11012 “ Post indoctos prelates malosque, in Ecclesia, nulla pestis adnocendum infirmis valentior invenitur.” De Ord. vitte. c. I.

11013 “ Multi sunt catholici prædicando, qui hæretici sunt operando quod hæretici faciebant per prava dogmata, hoc faciunt plures hodie per mala exempla; et tanto graviores sunt hæreticis, quanto prævalent opera verbis.” S. ad Past, in Syn.

11014 “ Longum iter est per præcepta, breve et efficax per exempla.” Epist. 6.

11015 “ Omnibus castitas pernecessaria est, sed maxime ministris Christi altaris, quorum vita aliorum debet esse assidua salutis prædicatio.” Serm 291, E. B. app.

11016 “ Qui prædicator constitutus es castitatis, non te pudet servum esse libidinis ?” Opnsc. 17, c. 3.

11017 “ Clamat vestis clericalis, clamat status professi animi sanctitatem.”

11018 “Nemo amplius in Ecclesia nocet, quam qui, perverse agens, nomen vel ordinem sanctitatis habet.” Past. p. I, c. 2

11019 “ Sacerdotii dignitate velut armis ad vitium abuti.” Epist. 1. 2, ep. 162.

11020 “Abominabilem fecisti decorem tuum.” Ezech. xvi. 25.

11021 “ Aut cæteris honestiores, aut fabula omnibus sunt.” De Consid. 1. 4, c. 6.

11022 “ Quomodo non sit confusio esse Sacerdotes inferiores laicis, quos etiam esse æquales magna confusio est?” Hom. 40.

11023 “ Si, quæ in se erubescit, in te, quern reverendum arbitratur, offendat?” Epist. 6.

11024 “ Audite hoc, Sacerdotes; . . . quia vobis judicium est, quoniam laqueus facti estis speculation!, et rete expansum.” Os. v. I.

11025 Cum primum captafuerit anima, ad alias decipiendas fit laqueus.” De recta viv. rat. c. 22.

11026 “ Quia inventi sunt in populo meo impii insidiantes quasi aucupes, laqueos ponentes et pedicas ad capiendos viros.” Jer. v. 26.

11027 “Quomodo aucupes facere solent, qui columbas, quas prius ceperint, excæant et surdas faciunt, ut, dum ad illas reliquæ columbæ convenerint, praparatis retibus capiantur.” Hom 35.

11028 “Quomodo obscuratum est aurum, mutatus est color optimus, dispersi sunt lapides sanctuarii in capita omnium platearum!” Lam. iv. i.

11029 “Aurum quippe obscuratum est, quia Sacerdotum vita, per actiones infirmas, ostenditur reproba; color optimus est mutat.us, quia ille sanctitatis habitus, per abjecta opera, ad ignominiam despectionis venit; dispersi sunt lapides sanctuarii in capite omnium platearum, quia hi qui, per vitam et orationem, intus semper esse debuerant, foris vacant. Ecce jam pene nulla est sæculi actio, quam non Sacerdotes administrat.” In Evang. hom. 17.

11030 “Filii matris meæ pugnaverunt contra me.” Cant. 1. 5.

11031 “ Propter vitia Sacerdotum Dei, sanctuarium destitutum est.” Ep. ad Sabiniam.

11032 “ Ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima.” Is. xxxviii. 17.

11033 “ Pax a paganis, pax ab hæreticis, sed non profecto a filiis.” In Cant. s. 33.

11034 “Nullum puto ab aliis majus præjudicium, quam a Sacerdotibus, tolerat Deus, quando eos, quos ad aliorum correctionem posuit, dare de se exempla pravitatis cernit.” In Evang. hom. 17.

11035 “ Nemini dantesullam offensionem, ut non vituperetur ministerium nostrum; sed in omnibus exhibeamus nosmetipsos sicut Dei ministros.” 1 Cor. vi. 3.

11036 “In nobis lex Christiana maledicitur.”

11037 “ Plurimi, considerantes cleri sceleratam vitam, ex hoc vacillantes, imo multoties deficientes in fide, sacramenta despiciunt, vitia non evitant, non horrent inferos, cœlestia minima concupiscunt.” T. I. s. 19, a. 2, c. i.

11038 “ Qualis est eorum Deus, qui talia agunt? Num quid sustineret eos talia facientes. nisi consentiret eorum operibus?” Hom. 10.

11039 “ Veteres scrutans historias, invenire non possum scidisse Ecclesiam, et populos seduxisse, præter eos qui Sacerdotes a Deo positifuerunt.” In Oseam, c. 9.

11040 “ Propter negligentiam Sacerdotum, hæreses pullularunt.”

11041 “ Propter peccata nostra (Sacerdotum), data est in conculcationem et opprobrium Sancta Ecclesia Christi.” Serm. 60.

11042 “ Serpit hodie putida tabes per omne corpus Ecclesiæ, et, quo latius, eo desperatius, eoque periculosius quo interius; narn, si insurgeret apertus inimicus hæreticus, mitteretur foras; si violentus inimicus, absconderet se ab eo; nunc vero, quern ejiciet, aut aquoabscondet se ? omnes necessarii, et omnes adversarii.” In Cant. s. 33.

11043 “ Væ homini illi per quern scandalum venit.” Matt, xviii. 7.

11044 “ Elegit eum ex omni came !” Ecclus. xlv. 4.

11045 “ Elegi vos et posui vos, ut eatis et fructum afferatis.” John, xv. 16.

11046 “ Si perversa perpetrant, tot mortibus digni sunt, quot ad subditos suos perditionis exempla transmittunt.” Past. p. 3, c. i, adm. 5.

11047 “ Ipsis erit amplior maledictio, quia se vita sua perdunt, et alios.” Rev. 1. 4, c. 132.

11048 “ Malos male perdet, et vineam suam locabit aliis agricolis, qui reddant ei fructum temporibus suis.” Matt. xxi. 41.

11049 “ Occurram eis quasi ursa, raptis catulis.” Os. xiii. 8.

11050 “ Si pro se unusquisque vix poterit in die judicii rationem reddere, quid de Sacerdotibus futurum est, a quibus sunt omnium animse requirendæ?” Serm. 287, E. B. app.

11051 “ Si Sacerdotes fuerint in peccatis, totus populus convertitur ad peccandum; ideo, unusquisque pro suo peccato reddet rationem, Sacerdotes autem pro omnium peccatis.” Hom. 38.

11052 “ Laicus, in die judicii, stolam sacerdotalem accipiet; Sacerdos autem peccator spoliabitur sacerdotii dignitate quam habuit, et erit inter infideles et hypocritas.” Hom.40.

11053 “ Ab omni specie mala abstinete vos.” I Thess. v. 22.

11054 “Ut ancillæ a mansione, in qua clericus manet, removeantur.” Conc. Agath c. II.

11055 “ Ne forte, . , . offendiculum fiat infirmis.” I Cor. viii. 9.

11056 “ Longe pejus est, collaudare delinquentes, quam delinquere.” De Saul et David, hom. 2.

11057 “Multi Sacerdotes, et pauci Sacerdotes: multi nomine, pauci opere.” Hom. 43.

11058 “ Dei enim sumus adjutores.” I Cor. iii. 9.

11059 “ Sacerdotes Dominus mundi esse voluit salvatores.” InAbdiam, 21.

11060 “ Dispensatores regiæ domus.” De vita cont. 1. 2, c. 2.

11061 “ Ecce ego mittam piscatores multos, dicit Dominus, et piscabuntur eos; et post hæc, mittam eis multos venatores, et venabuntureos de omni monte, et de omni colle, et de cavernis petrarum.”—Jer, xvi. 16.

11062 In Ps. 118, s. 6.

11063 “In opere creationis, non fuit qui adjuvaret; in mysterio vero redemptionis, voluit habere coadjutores.” Serm. 47.

11064 “ Regi, quæ hie sunt, commissa sunt; mini cœlestia, mihi Sacerdoti.” De Verbis Is. hom. 4.

11065 “Licet Beatissima Virgo excellentior fuerit Apostolis, non tamen illi, sed istis Dominus claves regni cœlorum commisit.” Cap. Nova quædam, de Pœn. et Rem.

11066 “Sacerdos, dux exercitus Domini.” Opusc. 25, c.

11067 “Sponsæ Custodem.” In Cant. s. 77.

11068 “Post Deum, terrenus deus.” Const. Apost. 1. 2, c. 26.

11069 “ Nihil honorabilius Sacerdotibus; omnis enim spes atque salus in iis est.” Ep. ad S. Leon.

11070 “ Parentes in præsentem, Sacerdotes in vitam æternam nos generant.” De Sacerd. I.

11071 “Absque Sacerdotibus, nulla sanctorum congregatio.” Ep. ad Trall.

11072 “Vos estis presbyteri in populo Dei, et ex vobis pendet anima illorum.” Judith, viii. 21.

11073 “ Honorate Sacerdotes, ut bene vivendi auctores.”

11074 “ Omnis namque Pontifex ex hominibus assumptus, pro hominibus constituitur in iis quæ sunt ad Deum, ut offerat dona et sacrificia pro peccatis.” Heb. v. i.

11075 “Qui condolere possit iis qui ignorant et errant.” Ibid. v. 2.

11076 “Regale sacerdotium, . . . populus acquisitions. “ i Pet. ii. 9.

11077 “ Clericatus officium est quæstus, non pecuniarum, sed animarum.”

11078 Serm. 78.

11079 “Sacerdos, id est, sacra docens.” Summ. p. 3, tit. 14, c. 7, i. 6 “Sacerdos, quasi sacra dans.” P. 3, q. 22, a. i.

11080 “ Presbyter dicitur præbens iter populo de exsilio ad patriam.” Gemma, an. 1. i, c. 181.

11081 “Duces et Rectores gregis Christi.” De Dignit. sac. c. 2.

11082 “ Nomen congruat actioni, ne sit nomen inane, crimen immane.” Ibid. c. 3.

11083 “ Detrimentum pecoris pastoris ignominia est.” Reg. Monach. de Laude vit.

11084 “ Si officium vis exercere presbyteri, aliorum salutem fac lucrum animæ tuæ.” Ep. ad Paulin.

11085 “ Sacerdotis proprium est, animas e mundo rapere, et dare Deo.”

11086 “ De medio populi segregantur, ut, non solum seipsos, verum et populum tueantur.” DC Dignit. cler. c. 2.

11087 In Ps. 118, s. 30.

11088 Theolog. Moral. 1. 6, n. 625.

11089 “Sicut misit me Pater, et ego mitto vos.” John, xx. 21.

11090 “ Ad ministranda Sacramenta idonei comprobentur.” Sess. 23, cap. 14, de Ref.

11091 “Ideo posuit Ordinem in eo, ut quidam aliis Sacramenta traderent.” Suppl. q. 34, a. i.

11092 “Sicut misit me Pater, et ego mitto vos.”—John, xx. 21.

11093 Hæc cum dixisset, insufflavit, et dixit eis: Accipite Spiritum Sanctum; quorum remiseritis peccata, remittuntur eis.” Ibid. xx. 22.

11094 Adjuvantes autem, exhortamur ne in vacuum gratiam Dei recipiatis.” 2 Cor. vi. i.

11095 “Ut sales, condiant animos ad corruptionis sanitatem.”

11096 “Vos estis sal terræ. Quod si sal evanuerit, in quo salietur? ad nihilum valet ultra, nisi ut mittatur foras, et conculcetur ab hominibus.” Matt. v. 13.

11097 “ Quasi totius orbis pater Sacerdos est; dignum igitur est ut omnium curam agat, sicut et Deus, cujus fungitur vice.” In i Tim. hom. 6

11098 “Medicos animarum.”

11099 “Medicos spirituales.”

11100 “ Si medicus fugit ægrotos, quis curabit?” De Sex Alls Scr. c. 5.

11101 “ Habet et Ecclesia muros suos.” In Ps. 118, s. 22.

11102 “ Muri illius sunt Sacerdotes.” Hom. 10.

11103 “ Lapides sanctuarii.” Lam. iv. i.

11104 “ Columnar sanctorum, merita Sacerdotum sunt, qui nutantis mundi statum orationibus sustinent.” Hom, de Dedic. eccl.

11105 “ Si pars domus fuerit corrupta, facilis est reparatio.” Hom. 47.

11106 “ Coloni populum, quasi vineam, colentes.” Hom. 40.

11107 “ Sudant agricolæ, putant et fodiunt vinitores.”

11108 “ Torpent otio, madent deliciis.” Declam. n. 11,11.

11109 “ Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci.” Matt. ix. 37.

11110 2. 2, q. 184, a. 6.

11111 “ Posui vos, ut eatis et fructum afferatis.” John, xv. 16.

11112 “ Eorum quæ Dei sunt negotiatores.” Ad Frat. in er. s. 36.

11113 “ Ecce constitui te hodie super gentes et super regna, ut evellas, et destruas, et disperdas, et dissipes, et ædifices, et plantes.” Jer. i. 10

11114 “Abscond! talentum tuum in terra; ecce habes quod tuum est.” Matt. xxv. 25.

11115 “ Tollite itaque ab eo talentum, et date ei qui habet decem talenta; . . . et inutilem servum ejicite in tenebras exteriores.”

11116 De Dignit. sac. c. I.

11117 “ Notent hoc qui ingenio, doctrina, aliisque dotibus sibi a Deo datis, non utuntur ad suam aliorumque salutem, ob desidiam vel metum peccandi; ab his enim rationem exposcet Christus in die judicii.” In Matt. 25, 18.

11118 “ Audiant quod talentum qui erogare noluit, cum sententia damnationis amisit.” Past. p. 3, c. I. adm. 26.

11119 “Qui Dei donum in utilitatem alienam communicat, plenius meretur habere quod habet; qui autem talentum Domini abscondit, quod videtur habere, auferetur ab eo.” De Inst. Episc.

11120 “ Neque id mihi persuasi, salvum fieri quemquam posse, qui pro proximi sui salute nihil laboris impendent.”

11121 “ Neque juvabit talentum sibi traditum non imminuisse; immo hoc ille nomine periit, quod non auxisset et duplicasset.” De Sacerd. 1.

11122 “Sufficit mihi anima mea. Eia, non tibi venit in mentem servus ille qui abscondit talentum.” In Jos. tr. 10.

11123 “Ille cui dispensatio verbi commissa est, etiam si sancte vivat, et tamen perdite viventes arguere, aut erubescat aut metuat, cum omnibus qui eo tacente perierunt, peril; et quid ei proderit non puniri suo, qui puniendus est alieno peccaio!” De Vit. cont. 1. i, c. 20.

11124 “ Presbyter qui cleri vel populi curam non gerit, segregatur; et si in secordia perseveret, deponatur.” Can. 57.

11125 “Qua conscientia honorem sibi debltum vendicant, qui pro animabus sibi creditis non laborant.” Ep. ad Turrib. c. 16.

11126 “ Sacerdotio initiandus non alio affectu accedere debet, quam ad submittendos humeros publico muneri vice Christi in Ecclesia. Qui alio affectu sacros Ordines ambiunt, hos Scriptura lupos et latrones appellat. . . . Quod ingens ultio tandem certo subsequetur.”

11127 “ Sacerdotes pro populorum iniquitate damnantur, si eos aut ignorantes non erudiant aut peccantes non arguant.” Sent. 1. 3, c. 46.

11128 “ Sæpe non damnantur propriis peccatis, sed alienis quæ non cœrcuerunt.”

11129 “ Si enim Sacerdos, ex ignorantia vel negligentia, non exponat populo viam salutis, reus erit apud Deum animarum illarum quæ sub ipso perierunt.” De Officio Sac.

11130 “ Si Sacerdos suam tantum disposuerit salvare animam, et alienas neglexerit, cum impiis detrudetur in gehennam.”

11131 « Si, dicente me adimpium: Morte morieris; non annuntiaveris ei, neque locutus fueris ut avertatur a via sua impia, et vivat, ipse impius in iniquitate sua morietur, sanguinem autem ejus de manu tua requiram.” Ezech. iii. 18.

11132 “ Ex tantis procul dubio rei sunt, quantis, venientes ad publicum, prodesse potuerunt.” Past. p. i, c. 5.

11133 “ Empti enim estis pretio magno.” i Cor. vi. 20.

11134 “ Si depositum, quod sibi Christus sanguine proprio pretiosius iudicavit x contigerit negligentius custodire.” In AdvDoms. 3.

11135 “ Unusquisque pro suo peccato reddet rationem; Sacerdotes, pro omnium peccatis.” Hom. 38.

11136 “ Ipsi enim pervigilant, quasi rationem pro animabus vestris reddituri.” Heb. xiii. 17.

11137 “ Quod alii peccant, illi imputatur.” In Act. hom. 3.

11138 “Si pro se unusquisque vix poterit, in die judicii, rationem reddere, quid de Sacerdotibus futurum est, a quibus sunt omnium animæ requirendæ? Serm. 287, R. B. app.

11139 “ Bonum erat magis fodere, aut etiam mendicare, Venient, venient ante tribunal Christi; audietur populorum querela, quorum vixere stipendiis, nec diluerunt peccata !” Declam. n. 19.

11140 “ Baptismo autem habeo baptizari; et quomodo coarctor usquedum perficiatur ?.” Luke, xii. 50.

11141 “ Nihil itagratum Deo, et ita curæ, ut animarum salus.” In Gen. hom. 3.

11142 “Nihil tam Deo gratum, quam operam dare ut omnes reddantur meliores.”

11143 “ Labora pro salute peccatorum; hoc enim præ omnibus est mihi carissimum.”

11144 “ Nihil aliud est Domino curæ, præterquam hoc solum opus, ut homo salvus fiat.” Oral, ad Gentes.

11145 “ Si Deum honorare conaris, non aliter melius. quam in hominis salute, poteris actitare.” De Compunct. p. 2.

11146 “ Totus iste mundus ad unius animas pretium æstimari non potest.” Medit. c. 3.

11147 “ Etsi ingentes erogaveris pecunias, plus efficieris, si unam converteris animam.” In I Cor. Hom.3.

11148 “Erat una pastoris ovicula; sed grex una carior non erat.” De Pœnit.

11149 “ Dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me.” Gal. ii. 20.

11150 “ Neque enim recusaturus esset vel ob unum hominem tantam exhibere dispensationem.”

11151 “ Omnes Angelos convocat ad congratulandum non homini, sed sibi, quasi homo Dei Deus esset, et tota salus divina ab ipsius inventione dependeret, et quasi sine ipso beatus esse non posset.” De Beat. c. 7.

11152 The first of these authors is St. Denis the Areopagite (Ep. ad Demoph.}, and it is believed that St. Carpus, who had this vision, is the one of whom St. Paul speaks in 2. Tim. iv. 13. ED.

11153 “ Percute me, quia iterum pro peccatoribus mori paratus sum.”

11154 “ *Essentialiter consistit in ardenti studio promovendi gloriam Dei et salutem proximi.”* De *Sacr.* Ord. p. 3, c. 5.

11155 “ Quis ferat presbyterum ordinari, ut sibi tantum vacet, et non aliis ?” De Ord. c. 3, a. 5, reg. 22.

11156 Exod. xxviii.

11157 “ Zelus est effectus amoris; ergo, qui non zelat, non amat; qui non amat, manet in morte.”

11158 “ Tu quidem, in tui custodia vigilans, bene facis; sed, qui juvat multos, melius facit.” In Cant. s. 12.

11159 “ Nihil adeo declarat quis sit fidelis et amans Christi, quam si fratrum curam agat; hoc maximum amicitise argumentum est.” Serm. de B. Philog.

[11160] “Simon Joannis, amas me?” John,xxi. 17.

[11161] “ Pasce oves meas

[11162] “ Poterat dicere: Si amas me, abjice pecunias, jejunia exerce, raacera te laboribus. Nunc vero ait: Pasce oves meas. “ Serm. de B. Philog.

[11163] “ Sicut meas pasce, non sicut tuas; gloriam meam in eis quære, non tuam; lucra mea, non tua.” In Jo. tr. 123.

[11164] Found, ch. i.

[11165] “ Optabam enim ego ipse anathema esse a Christo pro fratribus meis.” Rom. ix. 3.

[11166] “ Millies optarem ipse exsecrabilis esse, si per hoc liceret animas vestras convertere.” In Act. Hom.3.

[11167] Stim. div. am. p. 2, c. 1 1.

[11168] “ Si amatis Deum, rapite omnes ad amorem Dei.” In Ps. 53, en. 1.

[11169] “ Magnificate Dominum mecum, et exaltemus nomen ejus in idipsum.” Ps. xxxiii. 4.

[11170] “ Cum effuderis animam tuam, et animam afflictam repleveris, orietur in tenebris lux tua; . . . et requiem tibi dabit Dominus semper, et implebit splendoribus animam tuam, et ossa tua liberabit.” Is. Iviii. 10.

[11171] “Animam salvasti, animam tuam prædestinasti.”

[11172] “ Qui convert! fecerit peccatorem ab errore viæ suæ, salvabit animam ejus a morte, et operiet mulutudinem peccatorum. “ James, v. 20.

[11173] “ Ergone Jonathas morietur, qui fecit salutem hanc magnam in Israel ?” i Kings, xiv. 45.

[11174] “ Amodo jam dicit spiritus, ut requiescant a laboribus suis; opera enim illomm sequuntur illos.” Apoc. xiv. 13.

[11175] “ Dulcis est somnus operand.” Eccles. v. 11.

[11176] “ Tanto celerius quisque a suis peccatis absolvitur, quanto, per ejus vitam et linguam, aliorum animæ solvuntur.”

[11177] “ Etiam rogo et te, germane compar: adjuva illas quæ mecum laboraverunt in Evangelic, cum Clemente et cæteris adjutoribus meis, quorum nomina sunt in Libro vitæ.” Phil, iv. 3.

11178 “ Fulgebunt, . . . qui ad justitiam erudiunt multos, quasi stellæ in perpetuas æternitates.” Dan. xii. 3.

11179 “ Si magnæ mercedis est a morte eripere carnem quandoque morituram, quanti est meriti a morte animam liberare sine fine victuram!” Mor. 1. 19, c. 1 6.

11180 “Qui autem fecerit et docuerit, hie magnus vocabitur in regno cœlorum.” Matt. v. 19.

11181 “ Quæ enim nostra spes, aut gaudium, aut corona gloriæ ? Nonne vos ante Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum estis in adventu ejus ?” I Thess. ii. 19.

11182 “ Tot coronas sibi multiplicat, quot Deo animas lucrifacit.”

11183 “ Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Libano, veni; coronaberis . . . de cubilibus leonum, de montibus pardorum.” Cant, iv. 8.

11184 “ Euntes ibant et flebant, mittentes semina sua; venientes autem venient cum exsultatione, portantes manipulos suos.” Ps. cxxv. 6.

11185 “ Noli diffidere; curam exigeris, non curationem. Denique audisti « Curam illius habe » (Luke, x. 35); et non: « Cura, vel Sana illum »; quia unusquisque secundum suum laborem accipiet (I Cor. iii. 8), et non secundum proventum; reddet Deus mercedem laborum (Wisd. x. 17) sanctorum suorum.” De Cons. 1. 4, c. 2.

11186 “ Non minus meretur in illis qui deficiunt vel modicum proficiunt, quam in his qui maxime proficiunt; non enim dixit Apostolus (I Cor. iii. 8) : Unusquisque propriam mercedem accipiet secundum suum profectum; sed, secundum suum laborem.”

11187 “ In terra sterili et saxosa, etsi fructus paucior, sed pretium majus.” De Sex Alis Ser. c. 5.

11188 “ Maximum periculum de factis alterius rationem reddere.” In Heb. c. 13, lect. 3.

11189 “Quot regendis subditis præest, reddendæ apud eum (Christum Judicem) rationis tempore, ut ita dicam, tot solus animas habet. “ Mor. 1. 24, c. 30.

11190 “ Ad sacros Ordines accedunt, non salutem animarum, sed quæstum pecuniarum qu?srentes.” De Præp. ad M. c. 8.

11191 “ Non ut meliores, sed ut ditiores; nec ut sanctiores, sed ut honoratiores sint?” De Vita cont. 1. i, c. 21.

11192 “ Hodie, in promotione quorumdam, prima quæstio est. quæ sit summa reddituum, non quæ sit conversatio subjectorum.” Epist. 15.

11193 “ Quæ sua sunt, quærunt, non quæ sunt Jesu Christi.” Phil. ii. 21.

11194 “ Pasce oves meas; nec Mulge, sen Tonde.” Dcclam. n. 12.

11195 “ Mercenarii sumus conducti; sicut ergo nemo conducit mercenarium ut solum manducet, sic et nos, non ideo vocati sumus a Christo ut solum operemur quæ ad nostrum pertinent usum, sed ad gloriam Dei.” Hom.34.

11196 “Nec præesse se hominibus gaudeant, sed prodesse.” Past. p. 2, c. 6.

11197 “ Hi onus totius orbis portant humeris sanctitatis.” Hom, de Dedic. Eccl.

11198 “ Ad mediatoris officium proprie pertinet conjungere eos interquos est mediator.” P. 3, q. 26, a. I.

11199 “Cum is qui displicet, ad intercedendum mittitur, irati animus ad deteriora provocatur.” Past. p. i.e. n.

11200 “ Necesse est ut esse munda studeat manus, quæ diluere aliorum sordes curat.” Past. p. 2, c. 2.

11201 “ Rectus ordo postulat ut prius propriam, deinde alienas curare studeas conscientias.” Epist. 8.

11202 “ Quod in aure auditis, prædicate super tecta.” Matt. x. 27.

11203 “ Concham te exhibebis, non canalem. Canales hodie in Ecclesia multos habemus, conchas vero perpaucas.” In Cant. s. 18.

11204 “ Canes muti, non valentes latrare.” Is. Ivi. 10.

11205 “ Nolite tacere, ne populi peccata vobis imputentur.” Epist. 28.

11206 “ Dum pacem desiderant, pravos mores nequaquam redarguunt; et consentiendo perversis, ab Auctoris sui se pace disjungunt.” Past. p. 3, c. i, adm. 23.

11207 “ Cadit asina, et est qui sublevet eam; perit anima, et nemo est qui reputet.” De Cons. 1. 4, c. 6.

11208 “ Eligitur viam erranti demonstrate.” Epist. 1. 7, ind. 2, ep. no.

11209 “ Sacerdos qui alium ab errore non revocat, seipsum errare demonstrat.” Ep. ad Turrib. c. 15,

11210 Nos qui Sacerdotes vocamur, tot occidimus, quot ad mortem ire quotidie tepide videmus. “ In Ezech. Hom.11.

11211 “ Fides ex auditu; auditus autem per verbum Christi.” Rom.vi. 17.

11212 “ Væ tibi, si præes; sed væ gravius, si, quia præesse metuis, prodesse refugis!” Epist, 86.

11213 “ Labia enim Sacerdotis custodient scientiam, et legem requirent exore ejus.” Mal. ii. 7.

11214 “ Quis quæsivit hæc de manibus vestris, ut ambularetis in atriis meis?” Is. i. 12.

11215 “ Quisnam ad id te cœgit?” De Sacerd. 1. 4.

11216 “ Tempus nunc agendi, non consultandi. “

11217 “ Neque licet ad ignorantiam confugere, quandoquidem qui delegatus est ut aliorum emendet ignorantiam, is ignorantiam prætendere minime poterit; hoc nomine supplicium nulla excusatione poterit depellere, quamvis unius dumtaxat animæ jactura accident.” De Sacerd. 1. 6.

11218 “ Contra justitiam faciunt, qui otiosum studium fructuosæ utilitati regendæ multitudinis anteponunt.” De Vita cont. 1. 3, c. 28.

11219 “Quotidie clericos, abjecta cæterarum rerum cura, uni Deo prorsus vacare debere.” Breviar. 31 Dec.

11220 “ Stulto labore consumeris. . . . Esto tu populo in his quæ ad Deum pertinent.” Exod. xviii. 18.

11221 “ Id scire oportet, te, priusquam ordinabaris, tibi vixisse; ordinatum autem, illis quibus ordinatus est.” Ep. ad Dracont.

11222 “ Sacerdotibus proprie animarum curandarum sollicitudo commissa est.” De Vita cont. 1. 2., c. 2.

11223 Qui non intrat per ostium in ovile ovium, sed ascendit aliunde, ille fur est et latro.” John, x. i.

11224 Latrones et fures appellat eos qui se ultro, ad non sibi datam desuper gratiam, obtrudunt.” In Jo. x. 10.

11225 “Nec quisquam sumit sibi honorem, sed qui vocatur a Deo tamquam Aaron. Sic et Christus non semetipsum clarificavit ut pontifex fieret; sed qui locutus est ad eum. Filius meus es tu.” Heb. v. 4, 5.

11226 “Plenum gratiæ et veritatis.” John, 1. 14.

11227 “ In quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ et scientiæ absconditi.” Col. ii. 3.

11228 “ Vis mihi facta est merito peccatorum meorum.” Epist. 21, E. B.

11229 “Omnes sanctos reperio divini ministerii ingentem veluti molem formidantes.” De Fest. pasch. Hom.I.

11230 “ Ita est aliquis sacrilegæ temeritatis, ac perditæ mentis, ut putet sine Dei judicio fieri sacerdotem?” Epist. 55.

11231 “ Auderetne aliquis vestmm terreni cujuslibet reguii, non præcipiente aut etiam prohibente eo, occupare ministeria, negotia dispensare ?” De Conv. adder, c. 19.

11232 “ Dispensatores regiæ domus.” De Vita cont. 1. 2, c. 2.

11233 “ Duces et rectores gregis Christi.” De Dign. sac. c. 2.

11234 “ Interpretes divinorum judiciorum.”

11235 “ Vicarii Christi.” Hom.17.

11236 “ Regnum velle servum, crimen est.” Serm. 23.

11237 “Quid istud temeritatis, imo quid insaniæ est? tu irreverenter irruis, nec vocatus, nec introductus.” De Vita cler. c. 5.

11238 “ Decernit sancta Synodus eos qui ea (ministeria) propria temeri tate sibi sumunt, omnes, non Ecclesiæ ministros, sed fures et latrones per ostium non ingressos habendos esse.” Sess. 23, cap. 4.

11239 “ Non est mihi voluntas in vobis, dicit Dominus exercituum, et munus non suscipiam de manu vestra.” Mal. i. 10.

11240 “ Quisquis externorum accesserit (ad tabernaculum) occidetur.” Num. i. 51.

11241 “ Quoniam dignitas magna est, et revera divina sententia comprobanda. “ In I Tim. Hom.5.

11242 “ Quis enim ex vobis, volens turrim ædificare, non prius sedens computat sumptus qui necessarii sunt, si habeat ad perficiendum ?”—Luke, xiv. 28.

11243 “ Principatum in populos, non sanguini deferendum, sed vitæ .” In Tit. i.

11244 “Quos dignos divina probet electio, secundum vitæ , non generis meritum.”

11245 “ Matres corpora natorum amant, animas contemnunt; desiderant illos valere in sæculo isto, et non curant quid sint passuri in alio.” Hom. 35.

11246 “ Et mimici hominis, domestici ejus.” Matt. x. 36.

[11247] “Qui amat patrem aut matrem plus quam me, non est me dignus.” Matt. x. 37.

[11248] “Si justum est, in conspectu Dei, vos potius audire quam Deum, judicate.” Acts, iv. 19.

[11249] Propinqui autem carnis, in hoc proposito.amici nonsunt, sed potius inimici, juxta sententiam Domini: Inimici hominis, domestic! ejus. “ Contra retr. a. rel c. 9.

11250 O durum pattern, o sævam matrem, quorum consolatio mors filii est; qui me malunt perirecum eis, quam regnare sine eis!” Epist. in

11251 “ Non parentes, sed peremptores.”

11252 “ Ego sum ostium ovium. . . . Per me si quis introierit, salvabitur. “ John, x. 7.

11253 “ Si enim aliquis, liber ab omni vitioso affectu, ad clerum, Deo deserviendi causa et salutis populi gratia solum, se conferat, vocari a Deo præ sumitur.” De Ord. q. 4, a. 4.

11254 “Ambivone duceris, vel avaritia? inhias honori? Non te vocat Deus, sed diabolus tentat.” Hall, p i, s. 3, c. 2, 4.

11255 “ Qui enim se ingerit et propriam gloriam quærit, gratiæ Dei rapinam facit; et ideo non accipit benedictionem, sed maledictionem.” In Heb. 5.

11256 “ Labia enim Sacerdotis custodient scientiam, et legem requirent ex ore ejus.” Mal. ii. 7.

11257 “ Medici parum docti multos occidunt.” Lib. 2, ep. 12.

11258 “ Nulli ad sacros Ordines sunt promovendi, nisi quos vita et doctrina idoneos probat.”

11259 “Qui confess! sunt peccata, canon (ecclesiasticus ordo) non admittit. “ Can. 9.

11260 “ Ex eo tempore quo in Christo renatus est, nulla peccati conscientia remordeatur.” In Tit. I.

11261 “ Et si perfectæ vitæ et conversations fuerit, eum in presbyterum (poteris) ordinare.” Cap. I, De diacono. Qui cler.

11262 “ Horreo considerans unde, quo vocaris, præ sertim cum nullum intercurrerit pœnitentiæ tempus. Et quidem rectus ordo requirit ut prius propriam, deinde alienas curare studeas conscientias.” Epist. 8.

11263 “ Multi digniores erant ad catastam pœnalem, quam ad Sacerdotium trahi.” Cast, in eccl. ord.

11264 “ Non sunt promovendi ad regimen Ecclesiæ , qui adhuc vitiis subjacent.” Sent. 1. 3, c. 34.

11265 Theol. moral. 1. 6, n. 63, et s.

11266 Ordines sacri præexigunt sanctitatem ; unde pondus Ordinum imponendum est parietibus jam per sanctitatem desiccatis, id est, ab humore vitiorum.” 2, 2, q. 189, a. i.

11267 “ In divino omni non audendum aliis ducem fieri, nisi secundum omnem habitum suum factus sit deiformissimus et Deo simillimus.” De Eccl. Hier. c. 3.

11268 “ Ad idoneam executionem Ordinum, non sufficit bonitas qualiscumque, sed requiritur bonitas excellens, ut, sicut illi, qui Ordinem suscipiunt, super plebem constituuntur gradu Ordinis, ita et superiores sint merito sanctitatis; et ideo præexigitur gratia quæ sufficiat ad hoc quod digne connumerentur in plebe Christi.” Suppl. q. 35, a. i.

11269 “ Quia per sacrum Ordinem aliquis deputatur ad dignissima ministeria, quibus—ipsi Christo servitur in Sacramento altaris; ad quod requiritur major sanctitas interior, quam requirat etiam religionis status.” 2. 2, q. 184, a. 8.

11270 “ Qui non solum ætate neophyti, sed et qui neophyti sunt perfectione.”

11271 “ Ætas senectutis, vita immaculata.” Wisd. iv. 9.

11272 “ Sciant episcopi debere ad hos (sacros) Ordines assumi dignos dumtaxat, et quorum probata vita senectus sit.” Sess. 23, cap. 12.

11273 “ Sed etiam habeatur certitude de qualitate promovendorum.” Suppl. q. 36, a. 4.

11274 “ Nullus debet ad ministerium altaris accedere, nisi cujus castitas ante susceptum ministerium fuerit approbata.” Lib. I, ep. 42.

11275 “ Ne unquam ii qui ordinati sunt, pereant, prius aspiciatur sr vita eorum continens ab annis plurimis fuit.” Lib. 3, ep. 26.

11276 “ Condemnati sunt ut daretur exemplum, ne quis non sibi a Deo datum munus pontificatus invaderet. . . . Hoc patiuntur *quicumque se in episcopatus,* aut *presbyteratus, aut diaconatus, officium conantur* ingerere.” Serm. 30, E. B. app.

We may also see other useful reflections on the virtue required to be admitted to holy Orders, in the “Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ,” Chapter VII, vol. vi. page 382. Ed

11277 “ Manebitque in corpora Ecclesiæ velut membrum in corpora humano suis sedibus motum, quod servire potest, sed ægre admodum et cum deformitate. De Ord. p. 3, c. i, 2.

11278 “ Qui sciens et volens, nulla divinæ vocationis habita ratione, sese in sacerdotium intruderet, baud dubie seipsum in apertissimum salutis discrimen injiceret, peccando scilicet in Spiritum Sanctum, quod quidem peccatum vix aut rarissime dimitti ex Evangelio discimus.” Sac. chr. p. I, c. 4.

11279 “ Ipsi regnaverunt, et non ex me, . . . iratus est furor meus in eos.” Os. viii. 4.

11280 “ Ex se, et non ex arbitrio summi Rectoris, regnant: nequaquam divinitus vocati, sed sua cupidine accensi, culmen regiminis rapiunt potius quam assequuntur.” Past. p. I, c. i.

11281 “ Væ filii desertores, dicit Dominus, ut faceretis consilium, et non ex me !” Isa. xxx. i.

11282 “ Multi dicent mihi in ilia die. Domine, Domine. nonne in nomine tuo prophetavimus (prædicando, docendo), et in nomine tuo dæ monia ejecimus (absolvendo pœnitentes), et in nomine tuo virtutes multas fecimus (corrigendo, lites componendo, errantes reducendo)? Et tune confitebor illis: Quh nunquam novi vos: discedite a me, qui operamini iniquitatem.” Matt. vii. 22.

11283 “ Tollitis, non accipitis claves; de qtiibus Dominus queritur: Ipsi regnaverunt, et non ex me. “ De Conv. ad cler. c. 19.

11284 Labor stultorum affliget eos, qui nesciunt in urbem pergere.” Eccles. x. 15.

11285 “Eos Ecclesia accipit, quos Spiritus Sanctus præ paravit, . . . et dignatio cœlestis gratia gignit.” In die ass. suæ, s. 2.

11286 “ Nemo deterius Ecclesiam lædit.” Cont. cler. mil. c. 3.

11287 “ Quos elegerit (Dominus), appropinquabunt ei.” Num. xvi. 5.

11288 “ Obstupesco ad ea quæ soliti sunt quidam insipientium audere, qui temere se conantur ingerere ad munus Sacerdotii assumendum, licet non adsciti a gratia Christi: ignorantes, miseri, quod ignem et mortem sibi accumulant.” Or. de Sacerd.

11289 “ Quam perditus est, qui sacrificium in sacrilegium, qui vitam convertit in mortem.” Ep. ad rich. land.

11290 “ Bene curris, sed extra viam.

11291 “A vocatione pendet æternitas.”

11292 “Ordine suo, non nostro arbitrio, Sancti Spiritus virtus ministratur. “ De Sing. clcr.

11293 “ Quos prædestinavit, hos et vocavit; et quos vocavit, hos et justificavit; quos autem justificavit, illos et glorificavit.” Rom. viii.

11294 “ Unusquisque proprium donum habet ex Deo: alius quidem sic, alius vero sic.” i Cor. vii. 7,

11295 “ Cuicumque datur potentia aliqua divinitus, dantur etiam ea per quæ executio illius poientiæ possit congrue fieri.” Suppl. q. 35, a. i.

11296 “ Illos quos Deus ad aliquid eligit, ita præparat et disponit, tit ad id ad quod eliguntur, inveniantur idonei, secundum illud: Idoneos nos fecit ministros Novi Testament!. “ (2 Cor. iii. 5.) P. 3, q. 27 a. 4.

11297 “ Ego elegi vos, et posui vos, ut eatis et fructum afferatis.” John, xv. 1 6.

11298 “ Rogate ergo dominum messis, ut mittat operarios in messem suam.” Ltike, x 2.

11299 “ Sicut misit me Pater, et ego mitto vos.” John, xx. 21.

11300 Qai mihi honoris est auctor, ipse mihi fiet administrationum adjutor; dabit virtutem, qui contulit dignitatem.” In die ass. sucz, s. i.

11301 “ Ego sum ostium. Per me si quis introierit, salvabitur; et ingredietur, et egredietur, et pascua inveniet.” John, x. g.

11302 “ Ingredietur. “

11303 “ Et egredietur.”

11304 “ Et pascua inveniet.”

11305 “ Dominus regit me, et nihil mihi deerit; in loco pascuæ ibi me collocavit.” Ps. xxii. i.

11306 “ Non mittebam prophetas, et ipsi currebant. Propterea ecce ego tollam vos p6rtans, et derelinquam vos; . . . et dabo vos in opprobrium sempiternum, et in ignominiam æternam, quæ nunquam oblivione delebitur.” Jer. xxiii. 21–39.

11307 “ Ut divina virtute evehatur, et transmittatur supra naturalem rerum ordinem.” Habert, de Ord. p. 3, c. i, 2.

11308 “ Stultus apparuit, postquam elevatus est in sublime.” Prov.xxx. 32.

11309 “ Hujusmodi hominum genere nihil infelicius, nihil Ecclesiæ Dei calamitosius esse potest.” P. 2, c. 7, q. 3.

11310 “ Difficile est ut bono peragantur exitu, quæ malo sunt inchoata principio.” Epist. 87.

11311 “Qualem, oro, potest fructum producere corrupta radix ? ‘’ De Compunct.

11312 “ Omnis plantatio, quam non plantavit Pater meus cœlestis, eradicabitur.” Matt. xv. 13.

11313 “ Ira est, non gratia, cum quis ponitur super ventum, nullas habens radices in soliditate virtutum.” De inst. ep. c. 3.

11314 “Qui non fideliter introivit, quidni infideliter agat et contra Christum? faciet ad quod venit, ut mactet utique et disperdat.” De Vita cler. c. 7.

11315 “ Qui non intrat per ostium, . . . ille fur est et latro. Fur non venit nisi ut furetur, et mactet, et perdat.” John, x. i-io.

11316 “ Satius est maxime in ordinatione sacerdotum paucos bonos quam multos malos habere.” Cap. 27.

11317 “ Deus nunquam ita deserit Ecclesiam suam, quin inveniantur idonei ministri sufficientes ad necessitatem plebis.” Suppl. q. 36, a. 4.

11318 “ Non est hoc consulere populis, sed nocere.” Epist. 87.

11319 “ Sacerdos sum non vocatus; quid faciendum?”

11320 “ Ingemiscendum.”

11321 “Si vitæ sanctitas non præcessit, sequatur saltern.”

11322 “ Bonas fac de cætero vias tuas et studia tua.” Epist. 27.

11323 De Ord. p. 3, c. i, 2.

11324 De Oblig. cler. c. i, a. I, concl. 3.

11325 Deus tune ex misericordia ea homini largitur auxilia, quæ legitime vocatis ex qualicumque justhia debet.”

11326 Deus impossibilia non jubet; sed jubendo monet, et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis; et adjuvat ut possis.” Sess. 6, cap. ii.

11327 “Omnis namque Pontifex, ex hominibus assumptus, pro hominibus constituitur in iis quæ sunt ad Deum, ut offerat dona et sacrificia pro peccatis.” Heb. v. i.

11328 “ Infirma et egena elementa.” Gal. iv. 9.

11329 “ Idem nunc offerens, Sacerdotum ministerio, qui seipsum tune in cruce obtulit.” Sess. 22, cap. 2.

11330 “ Cum videris Sacerdotem offerentem, ne ut Sacerdotem esse putes, sed Christ! manum invisibiliter extensam.” Ad pop. Ant. Hom.60.

11331 “ Necessario fatemur nullum aliud opus adeo sanctum ac divinum a Christ! fidelibus tractari posse, quam hoc tremendum mysterium. Sess. 22, Decr, de obs. in cel. M.

11332 “ Hoc beneficium majus est inter omnia bona quæ hominibus concessa sunt, et hoc est quod Deus majori charitate mortalibus indulsit, quia in hoc mysterio salus mundi tota consistit.” Collat, 1. 2, c. 28.

11333 “ Per quam orbis terræ consistit.” Or. de proph. Sim.

11334 “ Non minus videtur facere Deus in hoc quod quotidie dignatur descendere de cœlo super altare, quam cum naturam humani generis assumpsit.” De Inst. Novit. p. I, c. n.

11335 “O veneranda Sacerdotum dignitas, in quorum manibus, velut in utero Virginis, Filius Dei incarnatur.” Molina, Instr. Sac. tr. i, c. 5, 2.

11336 “ In qualibet Missa invenitur omnis fructus quern Christus operatus est in cruce.” J. Herolt, De Sanct. s. 48. “ Quidquid est effectus Dominicæ passionis, est effectus hujus Sacramend.” In Jo. 6, lect. 6.

11337 “ Tantum valet celebratio Missse, quantum mors Christ! in cruce.” J. Herolt, De Sanct. s. 48.

11338 “Quoties hujus Hostiæ commemoratio celebratur, opus nostræ redemptionis exercetur.” Miss. Doni. 9 /. Pent.

11339 “ Una enim eademque est Hostiæ, idem nunc offerens Sacerdotum ministerio, qui seipsum tune in cruce obtulit, sola offerendi ratione di versa.” Sess. 22, cap. 2.

11340 “Quid enim bonum ejus est, et quid pulchrum ejus, nisi frumentum electorum, et vinum germinans virgines?” Zach. ix. 17.

11341 “Sacramenta in Eucharistia consummantur.” P. 3, q. 65, a. 3.

11342 “ Et ideo hoc est memoriale totius dilectionis suse, et quasi com pendium quoddam omnium beneficiorum suorum.” De Inst. Novit . p. i, c. ii.

11343 “ Robur autem datum est ei contra juge Sacrificium propter peccata.” Dan. viii. 12.

11344 “ Satis apparet omnem operam et diligentiam in eo ponendam esse, ut quanta maxima fieri potest interiori cordis munditia peragatur.” Sess. 22, Decr, de obs. in cel. M.

11345 “ Maledictus, qui facit opus Domini fraudulenter.” Jer. xlviii. 10.

11346 “ Cave ne nimis tepidus accedas; quia indigne sumis, si non accedis reverenter et considerate.” De Præp. ad M. c. 5.

11347 Introd. p. 2, ch. 14.

11348 “ Dicendo Eucharistiam, omnem benignitatis Dei thesaurum aperio.” In I Cor. Hom.24.

11349 “ Nolite dare sanctum canibus, neque mittatis margaritas vestras ante porcos.” Matt. vii. 6.

11350 “ Tamquam leones ignem spirantes ab ilia mensa recedamus. facti diabolo terribiles.” Ad pop. Ant. Hom.61.

11351 “ Defectus non in cibo est, sed in edentis dispositione “ De Sacr. M. c. 6, 6,

11352 “ Mundamini, qui fertis vasa Domini.” Is. lii. 11.

11353 “ Quarito mundiores esse oportet, qui in manibus et in corpore portant Christum.” Epist. 123.

11354 “ Hæc nemo contemnat, quoniam ut audivit Petrus nisi laverit ea Christus, non habebimus partem cum eo.” S. in Cœna Dom.

11355 “ Inter Missarum solemnia, semper passio Domini miscenda est, ut ejus, cujus corpus et sanguis conficitur, passio celebretur.” Epist. i.

11356 “ Quotiescumque enim manducabitis Panem hunc, et Calicem bibetis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis.” i Cor. xi. 26.

11357 Offic. Corp. Chr.

11358 “Antequam celebrent, se colligant, et orantes mentem in tanti ministerii cogitatione defigant,” Const, p. 2, n. 5.

11359 “Curse, sollicitudines, servitutes, exspectate me hie, donee ego cum puero, ratio cum intelligentia, usque illuc properantes, postquam adoraverimus, revertamur ad vos; revertemur enim, et, heu ! revertemur quam citissime.” De Antore Dei, c. i.

11360 “ Quando sederis ut comedas cum principe, diligenter attende quæ apposita sunt ante faciem tuam.” Prov. xxiii. i.

11361 “ Mediatoris gerit officium; propterea delinquentium omnium debet esse precator.” Serm. de Euchar.

11362 “ Medius stat Sacerdos inter Deum et naturam humanam, illinc venientia beneficia ad nos deferens,” In fsaiatn, Hom.5.

11363 Propter hoc Missa nominatur, quia per Angelum Sacerdos preees ad Deum mittit, sicut populus ad Sacerdotem.” P. 3, q. 83, a. 4.

11364 Ipsis profecto Sacerdotibus licet, non tantum semel in anno, ut olim, sed diebus singulis introire Sancta Sanctorum, et tarn pro ipsis quam pro populi reconciliatione, offerre Hostiam.” De Inst. præl. c. 10.

11365 “ Tria sunt, quæ celebraturus intenderedebet, scilicet: Deum colere, Christi mortem memorari, et totam Ecclesiam juvare.” De Præp. ad M. c. 9.

[11366] " Sacerdos vice Christi vere fungitur." Epist. ad Cœcil.

[11367] "O impietatem! scenam cœlum fecistis, et Deus vobis factus est actus." Or. ad Gent.

[11368] " Districte, in virtute sanctæ obedientiæ."

[11369] " Juxta ritum, modum, ac normam, quæ per Missale hoc a nobis nunc traditur."

[11370] " Pavete ad Sanctuarium meum." Lev. xxvi. 2.

[11371] " Quod si audire nolueris vocem Domini Dei tui, ut custodias . . . cæremonias, . . . venient super te omnes maledictiones istæ. . . . Maledictus eris in civitate, maledictus in agro." Deut. xxviii. 15.

[11372] Life, ch. 33.

[11373] De Sacram. d. 84, s. 2.

[11374] Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 400.

[11375] " Omnem operam ponendam esse, ut quanta maxima fieri potest exteriori devotionis ac pietatis specie peragatur. " Decr, de obs. in M

[11376] " Irreverentia, quæ ab impietate vix sejuncta esse potest." Sess. 22.

[11377] " Ecclesia cæremonias adhibuit, quo et majestas tanti Sacrificii commendaretur, et mentes fidelium, per hæc visibilia religionis signa, ad rerum altissimarum , quæ in hoc Sacrificio latent, contemplationem excitarentur." Sess. 22, De Sacrif. M. c. 5.

[11378] " Ex inordinata et indisciplinata multitudine Sacerdotum, hodie datur ostentui nostræ redemptionis venerabile Sacramentum." Epist. 123.

[11379] " Ne populum sibi commissum a devotione potius revocent, quam ad sacrorum mysteriorum venerationem invitent."

[11380] " Tolle, tolle, crucifige eum !"

[11381] " Ad vos, o Sacerdotes, qui despicitis nomen meum, et dixistis: In quo despeximus nomen tuum ? . . . In eo quod dicitis: Mensa Domini despecta est." Mal. i. 6.

[11382] " Cum omne crimen sacrifices deleatur, quid pro delictorum expiatione Domino dabitur, quando in ipsa sacrificii oblatione erratur?"—Cap. Cum omne, de Consecr. dist. 2.

11383 “ Decernit sancta synodus, ut Ordinarii locorum eaomnia prohibere sedulo curent ac teneantur, quæ irreverentia (quæ ab impietate vix sejuncta esse potest) induxit.” Sess. 22, Decr, de obs. in M.

11384 “Oratio citius exauditur in ecclesia in præsentia Sacerdotis celebrantis.”

Such is the citation given by our author, but here is what we read in the sermon mentioned as of John Herold, called The Disciple, speaking of the fruits of Mass granted to him that hears it: “ Oratio tua citius exauditur in ecclesia in præsentia Dei, et etiam oratio Sacerdotis celebrantis; quia quilibet Sacerdos in qualibet Missa tenetur orare pro circumstantibus.” De Sanctis, s. 48. (Prayer, as well as the prayer of the priest celebrating, is more quickly heard in the church in the presence of God ; because every priest is obliged at every Mass to pray for those that are present.) ED.

11385 “ Actio et pronuntiatio ostendat fidem et intentionem quam (Sacerdos) habere debet de Christi et Angelorum in Sacrificio præsentia.”

11386 “ Intrinsecos motus gestus exterior attestatur. Spec. disc. p. 2, c. I.

11387 “ Præcipimus quoque ut oratoria, vasa, corporalia, et vestimenta, munda, et nitida conserventur; nimis enim videtur absurdum in sacris sordes negligere, quæ dedecerent etiam in profanis.” Tit. 44, can. i, Relinqui. 15

11388 “Si homines parvum beneficium pnestiterint, exspectant a nobis gratitudinem; quanto magis id nobis faciendum in iis quæ a Deoaccepimus, qui hoc solum ob nostrum utilitatem vult fieri?” In Gen, Hom.26.

11389 “ Heu ! quomodo Christum tam cito fastidis?” Epist. 2.

11390 “ Quid vis ut tibi faciam ?”

11391 De Sacram. disp. 63, sect. 7.

11392 Man. Thom, p. 3, tr. 4, c. 9.

11393 Decr, ad Arm.

11394 “Qui manducat meam carnem, et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo.”—John, vi. 57.

11395 “ Ipsa re nos suum efficit corpus.” Ad pop. Ant. hom. 60.

11396 “ Numquid non perit, quod donatur ingrato?” In Cant. s. 51.

11397 “ Verus minister altaris, Deo, non sibi, natus est.” In Ps. 118, s. 8.

11398 “ Incensum enim Domini et panes Dei sui offerunt, et ideo sancti erunt.” Lev. xxi. 6.

11399 “ Cum Sacerdos, non habens legitimum impedimentum, celebrare omittit, quantum in se est, privat Trinitatem gloria, Angelos lætitia, peccatores venia, justos subsidio, in purgatorio existentes refrigerio Ecclesiam beneficio, et seipsum medicina.” Dt Præp. ad M. c. 5

11400 “Obedite præpositis vestris, et subjacete eis; ipsi enim pervigilant, quasi rationem pro animabus vestris reddituri.” Heb, xiii. 17.

11401 “ Pascite, qui in vobis est, gregem Dei.” i Pet. v. 2.

11402 “ Attendite vobis et universo gregi, in quo vos Spiritus Sanctus posuit episcopus, regere Ecclesiam Dei.” Acts, xx. 28.

11403 Epist. 21, E. B.

11404 “ Bonus si fuerit, qui tibi præest, nutritor tuus est; malus si fuerit, tentator tuus est,.” Serm. 12, E. B.

11405 “ Propter Oniæ pontificis pietatem.” 2 Mach. iii. i.

11406 Integritas præsidentium salus est subditorum.” Sess. 6, de Ref. c, i.

11407 Grex perditus factus est populus meus; pastores eorum seduxerunt eos.” Jer. 1 6.

11408 “ Nullum majus præjudicium, quam a Sacerdotibus, tolerat Deus, quando eos, quos ad aliorum correctionem posuit, dare de se exempla pravitatis cernit.” In Evang. Hom.17.

11409 “ Plurimi, considerantes cleri sceleratam vitam, Sacramenta despiciunt, vitia non evitant, non horrent inferos, cœlestia minime concupiscunt.” T. I. s. 19, a. 2, c. i.

11410 “ Quid mihi loqueris ? Ipsi clerici non illud faciunt, et me cogis ut faciam ?” Serm. 137, E. B.

11411 Viso exemplo pravo Sacerdotum, peccator fiduciam peccandi sumit, et incipit de peccato, quod prius putabat erubescibile, gloriari.” Rev. 1. 4, c. 132.

11412 “ Sacerdotes in Ecclesia, bases in templo.” In Evang. Hom.17.

11413 Justitiam, constantiam, misericordiam, fortitudinem, cæterasque virtutes, in se ostendant; exemplo præeant.”

11414 “ Conscientia tibi, fama proximo tuo; qui, fidens conscientiæ tuæ, negligit famam suam, crudelis est.” Serm. 355, E. B.

11415 “ Ipsum elegit ab omni vivente, offerre sacrificium Deo, incensum, et bonum odorem.” Acclns. xlv. 20.

11416 “ Vos estis sal terræ.” Matt. v. 14.

11417 “ Condientes alios doctrina et vitæ exemplo.”

11418 “ Vos estis lux mundi” Matt. v. 13.

11419 “ Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem vestrum, qui in cœlis est.” Matt, v. 16.

11420 “ Idcirco nos elegit, ut simus quasi luminaria.” In 1 Tim. Hom.10.

11421 “ Stellæ longe lateque proximos illuminantes.” Ep. ad Synod. Silvan.

11422 “ Fulgebunt . . . qui ad justitiam erudiunt multos, quasi stellar in perpetuas æternitates. “ Dan. xii. 3.

11423 “ Sacerdos debet vitam habere compositam, ut omnes in ilium veluti in exemplar excellens intueantur; idcirco enim Deus nos elegit, ut simus quasi luminaria et magistri cæterorum.” In i Tim. Hom.10. .

11424 Neque accendunt lucernam, et ponunt eam sub modio, sed super candelabrum, ut luceat omnibus qui in domo sunt.”

11425 “ Clerici vita omnium oculis sic exposita est, ut inde bene vel male vivendi exempla duci soleant.” Anno 1583, c. 21.

11426 “ Patres christianorum.”

11427 “ Quasi totius orbis pater Sacerdos est; dignum igitur est ut omnium curam agat.” In i Tim. Hom.6.

11428 “Quid faciet laicus, nisi quod patrem suum spiritualem viderit facientem ?” Serm. 57.

11429 “ Sicut misit me Pater, et ego mitto vos.” John, xx. 21.

11430 “ Sacerdos dicitur quasi sacrum dans: dat enim sacrum de Deo, id est, prædicationem; sacrum Deo, orationem; sacrum Dei, carnem et sanguinem; sacrum pro Deo, vivendi exemplum.” Serm. 38.

11431 “Presbyter dicitur præbens iter, scilicet populo, de exsilio hujus mundi ad patriam cœlestis regni.” Gemma an. 1. I, c. 181.

11432 “ In omnibus teipsum præbe exemplum, . . . ut is qui ex adverse est, vereatur, nihil habens malum dicere de nobis.” Tit. ii. 8.

11433 “ Ut quid enim a populo (Sacerdotes) segregantur, nisi ut divisam a populo vivendi regulam teneant?” Opusc, 18, d. 2, c. 2.

11434 “ Forma virtutem.” Serm. 26.

11435 “ Sit communis omnibus schola exemplarque virtutum vitæ tuæ splendor.” In Tit. hom. 4.

11436 “Cathedram sanctitatis exigit ministerium hoc.”

11437 “Sacerdotes tui induantur justitiam, et sancti tui exsultent.” Ps, cxxxi. 9.

11438 “ In omnibus exhibeamus nosmetipsos sicut Dei ministros, . . . in castitate, in scientia, in longanimitate . ., .” 2 Cor. vi. 4.

11439 “ Si quis mihi ministrat, me sequatur.” John, xii. 26.

11440 “ Docet actuum nostrorum testem esse publicam existimationem, ut, qui videt ministrum congruis ornatum virtutibus Dominum veneretur, qui tales servulos habeat.” De Offic. 1. i, c. 50.

11441 “ Nos, non notaculo corporis, sed innocentiæ ac modestiæ signo facile dignoscimus.” Octav. c. 9.

11442 “Necesse est ut esse munda studeat manus, quæ diluere aliorum sordes curat.” Past. p. 2, c. 2.

11443 “Sacerdos, dux exercitus Domini.” Opusc. 25, c. 2.

11444 “ In divino omni non audendum aliis ducem fieri, nisi secundum omnem habitum suum factus sit deiformissimus et Deo simillimus.”—De Eccl. Hier. c. 3. S. Thomas, Suppl. q. 36, a. i.

11445 “ Vita clericorum forma est laicorum, ut illi tamquam duces progrediantur, isti vero tamquam gregessequantur.” De Dignit. cler, c. 2.

11446 “ Rectores terræ.”

11447 “ Irreprehensibiles esse convenit, quos præesse necesse est corrigendis.” Ep. ad Episc. Hispan.

11448 “ Ecclesiastici, quemadmodum eminent gradu, sic lurnine virtutum prælucere debent, et profited genus vivendi, quod alios excitet ad sanctitatem. “

11449 “Integritas præsidentium salus est subditorum.” Ep. ad Episc. Afr. c. i.

11450 “ Doctor pietatis.” In Baptism. Chr.

[11451] “ Qui in erudiendis atque instituendis ad virtutem populis præerit, necesse est ut in omnibus sanctus sit.” De Off. Eccl. 1. 2, c. 5.

[11452] “ Estote ergo vos perfecti, sicut et Pater vester cœlestis perfectus est.” Matt. v. 48.

[11453] “Si viris in plebe positis tam perfectam Deus vivendi regulam dedit, quanto esse illos perfectiores jubet, a quibus omnes docendi sunt ut possint esse perfecti!” Ad Eccl. Cathol. 1. 2.

[11454] “ Lucerna quæ non ardet, non accendit.” In Ezech. Hom.11

[11455] “ Lingua amoris, ei qui non amat, barbara est.” In Cant. s. 79.

[11456] “ Cujus vita despicitur, restat ut ejus prædicatio contemnatur.” In Evang. Hom.12.

[11457] “ Et eadem ratione, omnia spiritualia exhibita.” Suppl. q. 36, a. 4

[11458] Ita pietate ac castis moribus conspicui, ut pneclarum bonorum operum exemplum et vitæ monita ab eis possint expectari.” Sess. 23, de Ref. c. 14.

[11459] “ Est perpetuum prædicandi genus.”

[11460] “ Quorum vita aliorum debet esse salutis prædicatio.” Serm. 291, E. B. app.

[11461] “ Bona exempla voces edunt omni tuba clariores.” In Matt. Hom.15

[11462] “ Non confundant opera tua sermonem tuum, ne, cum in ecclesia loqueris, tacitus quilibet respondeat: Cur ergo hæc, quædicis, ipse non facis ?” Ep. ad Nepotian.

[11463] “ Dabis voci tuæ vocem virtutis, si, quod suades, prius tibi illud cognosceris persuasisse. Validior operis quam oris vox.” In Cant. s. 59

[11464] “ Qui non facit quod docet, non alium docet, sed semetipsum condemnat.” Hom.10.

[11465] Ilia vox libentius auditorum corda penetrat, quam dicentis vita commendat.” Past. p. 2, c. 3.

[11466] Quoniam magis oculis quam auribus credunt homines, necesse est ut Sacerdos bonum præbeat exemplum, tarn in vestitu quam in reliquis actionibus.”

[11467] “ In eos tamquam in speculum reliqui oculos conjiciunt, ex iisque sumunt quod imitentur.” Sess. 22, de Ref. c. I.

[11468] “ Decet Sacerdotem moribus clarescere, quatenus in eo, tamquam in vitæ suæ speculo, plebs, et eligere quod sequatur, et videre possit quod corrigat.” Epist. 17, ind. i, ep. 32.

11469 “Spectaculum facti sumus mundo, et Angelis et hominibus.” i Cor. iv. 9.

11470 “ Clamat vestisclericalis, clamat status professi animi sanctitatem.”

11471 “ Hi onus totius orbis portant humeris sanctitatis. “ Hom, de Dedic. eccl.

11472 “ Sacerdos de religione sua, in habitus, vultus, acsermonis gravitate, talem se exhibere studeat, ut se formam discipline ac modestiæ infundat.” Anno 855, can. 15.

11473 “ Clericus verbis turpibus jocularis ab officio removendus.” Cap. 60.

11474 “ Inter sæculares, nugæ sunt; in ore Sacerdotis, blasphemiæ.”

11475 “ Consecrasti os tuum Evangelic; talibus aperire, illicitum; assuescere, sacrilegum.” De Cons. 1. 2, c. 13.

11476 “ Omne quod non ædificat, in periculum vertitur loquentium.”

11477 “ Quod veniale est plebi, criminale est Sacerdoti. Quod erroneum est ovi, peremptorium est pastori.” Ad Past, in syn. s. 3.

11478 “ Splendidæ vestis manifestiores sunt maculæ.” Orat. 31.

11479 “ Qui ab aliis vitiis recesserunt, in istud tamen, quasi in extremum diaboli laqueum, incidunt.” Ep. ad Celant.

11480 “ Sicut in pestilentibus locis sensim attractus ær morbum injicit, sic in prava conversatione mala hauriuntur, etiamsi statim incommo dum non sentiatur. “ Hom.Quod D. non sit auct. mal 16

11481 “ Videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem vestrum, qui in cœlis est.” Matt. v. 16.

11482 “ Omnis autem ponderatio non est digna continentis animæ.” Ecclus. xxvi. 20.

11483 “ Vita spiritus.”

11484 “ Regina virtutum.”

11485 “ Acquisitio triumphorum.”

11486 “O castitas, quæ homines Angelis similes reddis!” De Castit.

11487 “ Castitas angelum de homine facit.” De Mor. et Off. Ep. c. 3.

11488 “ Castitas angelos facit: qui eam servavit, angehisest; quiperdidit, diabolus.” De Virg. 1. i.

11489 “ Et erunt sicut Angeli Dei.” Matt. xxii. 30.

11490 “ Hujus virtutis merito, homines Angelis æquantur.” De Cœnob. Inst. 1. 6, c. 6.

11491 “ Differunt quidem inter se Angeluset homo pudicus, sed felicitate, non virtute; sed, etsi illius castitas felicior, hujus tamen fortior esse cognoscitur.” De Mor. et Off. Ep. c. 3.St. John Chrysostom admirably develops this comparison between chaste souls and angels, as may be seen in the breviary, June 21, the 3d nocturn. ED.

11492 “ Pudicitia hominem Deosimillimum facit.” De Vera Virginit.

11493 “ Si in figura tanta observantia, quanta in veritate ?” De Offic. 1. i, c. 50.

11494 *“Nec accedet ad ministerium* ejus, . . . si *albuginem habens in oculo, si jugem* scabiem.” Lev. xxi. 18.

11495 “ Jugem habet scabiem, cui carnis petulantia dominatur.” Past. p. i, c. ii.

11496 “ Diis omnia munda.”

11497 “ Ne contagione aliqua eorum castitas labefactetur.”

11498 “ O grand is christianorum miseria! ecce pagani doctores fidelium facti sunt.” Ad Fr. in er. s. 37.

11499 “Soli qui puram agunt vitam, sunt Dei Sacerdotes. “ Strom. 1. 4.

11500 Sit humilis Sacerdos, sit devotus; si non est castus, nihil est. De D. Ang. cone. 3.

11501 “ Omnibus castitas pernecessaria est, sed maxime ministris Christi altaris.” Serm. 291, E. B. app.

11502 “ Lilium convallium.”

11503 “ Qui pascitur inter lilia.” Cant. ii. 1–16.

11504 “Præ cæteris discipulis diligebat Jesus Joannem, propter præro gativam castitatis.”

11505 “ Ante omnia, Sacerdos, qui divinis assistit altaribus, castitate debet accingi.” In Lev. Hom.4.

11506 “ Necesse est Sacerdotem sic esse purum, ut, si in ipsis cœlis esset collocatus, inter cœlestes illas Virtutes medius staret.” De Sacerd. 1. 3.

11507 “ Longa castitas pro virginitate reputatur.” De Alodo b. viv. c. 22.

11508 “ Nemo ad sacrum Ordinem permittatur accedere, nisi aut virgoaut probatæ castitatis exsistat. “

11509 “ Eos qui in sacris Ordinibus sunt positi. si caste non vixerint, excludendos ab omni graduum dignitate.” Cap. A multis, de tet. et quol. Ord.

11510 “ Nullus debet ad ministerium altaris accedere, nisi cujus castitas ante susceptum ministerium fuerit approbata.” Epist. 1. i, ep. 42.

11511 “Qui sine uxore est, sollicitus est quæ Domini sunt, quomodo placeat Deo; qui autem cum uxore est, sollicitus est quæ sunt mundi, quomodo placeat uxori, et divisus est.” i Cor. vii. 32.

11512 “ O pudicitia, domicilium Spiritus Sancti, Angelorum vita, Sanctorum corona!” De Virginit.

11513 “ Ornamentum Ecclesiæ Dei, corona illustrior Sacerdotum.”

11514 “Teipsum castum custodi, ut domum Dei, templum Christi, organum Spiritus Sancti.” Ep. ad Heron,

11515 “ Fortitudo ejus in lumbis ejus.” Job, xl. 11.

11516 “ Inter omnia certamina, sola duriora sunt prælia castitatis, ubi quotidiana est pugna, et rara victoria.” Serm. 293, E. B. app.

11517 “ Quanti, post frequentes orationes, diutissimatn eremi habitationem, cibi potusque parcitatem, seducti spiritu fornicationis, deserta relinquentes, duplici interitu, perierunt ! “ De spir. an. hit. 1. i.

11518 “ Minim est quam facile ab iis deperdatur, qui ad ejus conservationem non invigilant.”

11519 “ Primum hujus vitii remedium est longe fieri ab eis quorum præsentia alliciat ad malum.”

11520 “ Nunquam luxuria facilius vincitur, quam fugiendo.” Serm. 45.

11521 “ Habemus autem thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus.” 2 Cor. iv. 7.

11522 “ Scivi quoniam aliter non possem esse continens, nisi Deus det. Wisd. viii. 21

11523 “ Qui amat periculum, in illo peribit.” Ecdus. iii. 27.

11524 “ Contra libidinis impetum, apprehende fugam, si vis obtinere victoriam.” Serm. 293, E. B. app.

11525 “ Plurimi sanctissimi ceciderunt hoc vitio propter suam securitatem ; nullus in hoc confidat.”

11526 “ Si sanctus es, nec tamen securus es.” Euseb. Ep. ad Dam. de morte Hier.

11527 “ Numquid potest homo . . . ambulare super prunas, ut non comburantur plantæ ejus?” Prov. vi. 27.

11528 “ Num tu saxeus es, num ferreus ? Homo es, communi naturæ imbecillitati obnoxius; ignem capis, nec ureris? Lucernam in feno pone, ac turn aude negare quod fenum uratur. Quod fenum est, hoc natura nostra est.” In Ps. 50, Hom.i.

11529 “Quasi a facie colubri, fuge peccata.” Ecclus. xxi. 2.

11530 “ Ne ipsa quidem verba diu passus est; contagium enim judicavit, si diutius moraretur.” De S. fos. c. 5.

11531 “ Ascendit mors per fenestras.” Jer. ix. 21.

11532 Apolog. c. 46.

11533 “Animus feritur et commovetur, non impudicæ tantum intuitu, sed etiam pudicæ.” De Sacerd. 1. 6.

11534 “ Pepigi foedus cum oculis meis, ut ne cogitarem quidem de virgine.” Job, xxxi. i.

11535 “ Virginem ne conspicias, ne forte scandalizeris in decore illius.” Ecclus. ix. 5.

11536 “Visum sequitur cogitatio, cogitationem delectatio, delectationem consensus.”

11537 “ Propter Angelos.”

11538 “ Propter Angelos, id est, Sacerdotes, ne, in ejus faciem inspicientes, moverentur ad libidinem.” In i Cor. xi. 10.

11539 “ Officii tui est, non solum oculos castos custodire, sed et linguam; numquam de formis mulierum disputes.” Ep. ad Nepot.

11540 “ Nostris tantum initiis (diabolus) opus habet.”

11541 “ Pudicitia sacerdotalis non solum ab opere se immundo abstineat, sed etiam a jactu oculi sit libera.” In Tit. i.

11542 “ In medio mulierum noli commorari.” Ecclus. xlii. 12.

11543 “ De vestimentis enim procedit timea, et a muliere iniquitas viri.” Ibid.

11544 “ Sicut tibi nihil tale volenti nascitur in veste et e veste tinea, ita nihil tale volenti nascitur ex femina desiderium.”

11545 “Tinea insensibiliter in veste nascitur, et eam erodit; sic insensibiliter ex conversatione cum muliere oritur libido, etiam inter religiosos.”

11546 Sine ulla dubitatione, qui familiaritatem non vult vitare suspectam, cito labitur in ruinara.” Serm. 293, E. B. app.

11547 Dial. 1. 4, c. ii.

11548 “ Recede mulier, adhuc igniculus vivit, paleam tolle.”

11549 “ Cumque jam esset senex, depravatum est cor ejus per mulieres, ut sequeretur deos alienos.” 3 Kings, xi. 4.

11550 “ Impossibile est flammis circumdari, et non ardere.” De Singular, cler.

11551 “ Cum femina semper esse, et non cognoscere feminam, nonne plus est quam mortuum suscitare ?” In Cant. s. 65.

11552 “ Longe fac ab ea viam tuam, et ne appropinques foribus domus ejus.” Prov. v. 8.

11553 “ Cum feminis, sermo brevis et rigidus.”

11554 “ Transeunter feminis exhibenda est accessio, quodammodo fugitiva.” De Singular, cler.

11555 “ Diabolus, pingens, speciosus efficit quidquid horridum fuerit.”

11556 “ Prohibe tecum morari, etiam quæ de genere tuo sunt.” Ep. ad Ocean.

11557 “ Magis illicito delinquitur ubi sine suspicione securum potest esse delictum.”

11558 Acta Mediol. p. 2, syn. 4, Monit.

11559 “ Sermo brevis et rigidus cum mulieribus est habendus; nec tamen, quia sanctiores fuerint, ideo minus cavendse; quo enim sanctiores fuerint, eo magis alliciunt.” De Modo confit.

11560 “Licet carnalis affectio sit omnibus periculosa, etiam tamen perniciosa est magis, quando conversantur cum peoplea qua spiritualis videtur; nam, quamvis eorum principium videatur esse purum, frequens tamen familiaritas domesticum est periculum; quæ quidem familiaritas quanto plus crescit, tanto plus infirmatur principale motivum, et puritas maculatur.”

11561 “Sicque spiritualis devotio convertitur in carnalem.” De Profectu Rel. 1. 2, c. 27.

11562 “ Fortis impegit in fortem, et ambo pariter conciderunt.” Jer. xlvi. 12.

11563 “Magnos prælatos Ecclesiæ sub hac specie coruisse reperi, de quorum casu non magis præsumebam, quam Hieronymi et Ambrosii.” *S. Thomas, De modo confit.*

11564 “Ne in præterita castitate confidas; solus cum sola, absque teste, non sedeas.”

11565 “Si cum ipsis conversari necessitas te obstringat, oculos humi dejectos habe; cumque pauca locutus fueris, statim avola.” Lib. 2, ep. 284.

11566 “Talis efficitur homo, qualium societate fruitur.” Eusebius, De Morte Hier.

11567 Lubricum in tenebris.”

11568 T. III. Serm, extr. s. 13, n. 6. .

11569 “ Multam enim malitiam docuit otiositas.” Ecclus. xxxiii. 29.

11570 “ Hæc fuit iniquitas Sodomæ . . otium ipsius.” Ezeck.xvi 49.

11571 “ Cedet libido laboribus, cedet operi.” De Cont, in, de Lab,

11572 “ Facito aliquidoperis, ut te semper diabolus inveniat occupatum.” Ep, ad Rustic.

11573 “Occupatus ab uno dæmone impugnatur; otiosus ab innumeris vasiauir. De Prof. rel. 1. i, c. 39.

11574 “Castigo corpus meum, et in servitutem redigo.” i Cor. ix. 27.

11575 “ Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic arnica mea inter filias.” Cant. ii. 2.

11576 “Noli regibus dare vinum.” Prov. xxxi. 4.

11577 “Venter enim mero sestuans despumat in libidinem.” Reg. Monach. de Abst.

11578 “Vinum et ebrietas auferunt cor.” Os. iv. 11.

11579 “Vinum et siceram non bibet, et Spiritu Saricto replebitur.” Luke, i. 15.

11580 “ Modico vino utere, propter stomachum tuum et frequentes tuas infirmitates.” I Tim. v. 23.

11581 Adv. Jovin. 1. 2.

11582 “Luxuria nutritur a ventris ingluvie.” De Prof. rel. 1. 2, c. 52.

11583 “ Deus qui, corporali jejunio, vitia comprimis, mentem elevas, virtutem largiris et præmia.”

11584 “ Diabolus, victus de gula, non tentat de libidine.”

11585 “ Castitatem apprehendi non posse, nisi prim; humilitatis in corde fundamenta fuerint collocata.” De Cœnob. inst. 1. 6, c. 18.

11586 “ Priusquam humiliarer, ego deliqui.” Ps. cxviii. 67.

11587 “ Ut castitas detur, humilitas meretur.” De Mor. et Off. Ep. c. 5.

11588 “Gustos virginitatis, charitas; locus hujus custodis, humilitas.” De S. Virginit. c. 51.

11589 Qui sola continentia bellum hoc superare nititur, similis est ei qui, una manu natans, pelago liberari contendit; sit ergo humilitas continentiæ conjuncta.” Scala spir. gr. 15.

11590 Oportet semper orare, et non deficere.”—Luke, xviii. i.

11591 “ Petite, et dabitur vobis.” Matt. vii. 7.

11592 ‘’Post baptismum, necessaria est homini jugis oratio.” P. 3, q. 39. a—5-

11593 “ Impossibile est hominem suis pennis ad tam præcelsum cœlestem præmium subvolare, nisi eum gratia Domini de terræ cœna evexerit.” De Cœnob. inst. 1. 6, c. 6

11594 “ Ideirco, juxta Sapientis monitum (Wisd. viii 21) adeundus est Dominus, et ex totis præcordiis deprecandus.” Saceni. Chr. p. 5, c. 14.

11595 “ Inter hæc, imo et ante hæc omnia, de divinus castris auxilium petendum est.” De Disc, et Bono pudic.

11596 “ Et ut scivi quoniam aliter non possem esse continens, nisi Deus det, et hoc ipsum erat sapientiæ, scire cujus esset hoc donum, adii Dominum, et deprecatus sum ilium, et dixi ex totis præcordiis meis.” Wisd. viii. 21.

11597 “ Primis diaboli titillationibus obviandum est, nec foveri debet coluber donee in draconem formetur.” De Jej. et Tent. Chr.

11598 “ Nolo sinas cogitationem crescere; dum parvus est hostis, interfice.” Ep. ad Eustoch.

11599 “Cum me pulsat aliqua turpis cogitatio, recurro ad vulnera Christi. Tula requies in vulneribus Salvatoris.” Manual, c. 22, 21.

11600 “ Ne sinas, Domine Jesu, et Sanctissima Virgo Maria !” Surius, 7 Mart.

11601 “ Mater pulchræ dilectionis et Gustos virginitatis.”

11602 Crist, istr. p. 3, r. 34, 2.

11603 This double example is related with some other details in the Glories of Mary, p. 2, Disc. 4 (Vol. VII. page 379).

11604 “ Fides exauditu; auditus autem perverbum Christi.” Rom. x. 17

11605 “ Prædica verbum: insta opportune, importune; argue, obsecra, increpa, in omni patientia et doctrina.” 2 Tim. iv. 2.

11606 “ Clama, ne cesses: quasi tuba, exalta vocem tuam, et annuntia populo meo scelera eorum.” Is. Iviii. i.

11607 “ Ecce dedi verba mea in ore tuo; ecce constitui te hodie super gentes et super regna, ut evellas, et destinas, . . . et ædifices, et plantes.” Jer. i. 9.

11608 “ Euntes ergo, docete omnes gentes . . . servare omnia quæcum que mandavi vobis.” Matt, xxviii. 19.

11609 “ Si, dicente me ad impium: Morte morieris; non annuntiaveris ei, . . . ipse impius in iniquitate sua morietur, sanguinem autem ejus de manu tua requiram.” Ezech. iii. 18.

11610 “ Cujus vita despicitur, restat ut ejus prædicatio contemnatur.” In Evang. Hom.12.

11611 “ Denegatis in opere, quod videmini profited in verbo.” Hom.40.

11612 “ Inexcusabilis es, o homo omnis qui judicas ! in quo enim judicas alterum, teipsum condemnas.” Rom. ii. i.

11613 “ Lucerna quæ non ardet, non accendit.” In Ezech. Hom.11.

11614 De la Pred. ch. 5, a. I.

11615 “ Quod in aure auditis, prædicate super tecta.” Matt. x. 27.

11616 “ In meditatione mea exardescet ignis.” Ps. xxxviii. 4.

11617 “ Archipresbyteri, per se vel per alios idoneos, plebes sibi commissas, pro earum capacitate, pascent Salutaribus verbis.” Sess. 5, de Ref. c. 2.

11618 De la Predic. ch. 5, a. I.

11619 Prædicatio mea non in persuasibilibus humanæ sapientiæ verbis, sed in ostensione spiritus et virtutis.” i Cor. ii. 4.

11620 “ Sapientibus et insipientibus debitor sum.” Rom 1. 14.

11621 “Parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui frangeret eis.” Lam. iv. 4.

11622 “ Dentur idonei confessarii; ecce omnium Christianorum plena reformatio.”

11623 “ Onus angelicis humeris formidandum.” Sess. 6, de Ref. c. i.

11624 “ Periculosa res est, pro peccatoribus se fidejussorem constituere.” De Inst. Præl I. c. 6.

11625 “ Nullibi periculosius erratur.”

11626 “ Requiram gregem meum de manu eorum. “ Ezech. xxxiv. 10.

11627 “ Obedite præpositis vestris, et subjacete eis; ipsi enim pervigilant, quasi rationem pro animabus vestris reddituri.” Heb. xiii. 17.

11628 “ Quot regendis subditis præest, reddendæ apud eum rationis tempore, ut ita dicam, tot solus animas habet.” Moral. I. 24, c. 30.

11629 “ Si horremus, dum peccatorum propriorum rationem reddituri sumus, quid illi expectandum est, qui tarn multorum nomine causam sit dicturus ?.” De Sacerd. 1. 3.

11630 “ Gratia indiget plurima, et sapientia non modica, qui proximorum animas ad vitam resuscitate conatur. “ De Compunct. p. 2.

11631 “ Ars est artium regimen animarurn.” Past. p. i, c. i.

11632 “ Scientiascientiarum mihi esse videturhominem regere.” Apol i.

11633 “ Qui error confessarios simui et pœnitentes in æternum interitum trahet.”

11634 “ Nemo, nisi valde sanctus, absque sui detrimento, proximorum curis occupatur.” De Casio Conn. c. 12.

11635 “ Nescitis cujus spiritus estis.” Ltike, ix. 55.

11636 “ Induite vos ergo, sicut elect! Dei, sancti et dilecti, viscera misericordiæ.” Col. iii. 12.

11637 “Vos non, quasi judices criminum, ad percutiendum positi estis, sed, quasi judices morborum, ad sanandum.” Misc. 1. I, tit. 49.

11638 “ Spiritualis devotio convertatur in carnalem.” De Modo confit.

11639 “ Noli quærere fieri judex, nisi valeas virtute irrumpere iniquitates, ne forte extimescas faciem potentis.” Ecclus. vii. 6.

11640 “ Cavenda est conscientia nimis larga, et nimis stricta; nam prima generat præsumptionem, secunda desperationem. Prima sæpe salvat damnandum; secunda, e contra, damnat salvandum. Comp. theol. 1. 2, c. 52.

11641 “ Cum austeritate imperabitis eis, et cum potentia; et dispersæ sunt oves meæ.” Ezech. xxxiv. 4.

11642 “ Per tales assertiones nimis duras et strictas, præsertim in non certissimis, nequaquam eruuntur homines aluto peccatorum, sed in illud profundius, quia desperatius, immerguntur.”

11643 “ Doctores theologi ne sint faciles asserere actiones aliquas aut omissiones esse mortalia, præsertim. in non certissimis.” De Vita. sp. led. 4, cor. ii.

11644 “ Non sis nimis pronus judicare mortalia peccata, ubi tibi non constat per certam Scripturam.” Summ. 1. 3, de Pœnit. 21.

11645 “ Quoestio qua quæritur de aliquo actu utrum sit peccatum mortale vel non, nisi ad hoc habeatur auctoritas expressa Scripturæ sacræ, aut canonis, seu determinationis Ecclesiæ , vel evidens ratio, non nisi periculosissime determinatur.” P. 2, tit. i, c. n, 28.

11646 “Ædificat ad gehennam.”

11647 “ Ex prædictis igitur videtur dicendum quod, ubi in hujusmodi ornatibus confessor inveniat clare et indubitanter mortale, talem non absolvat, nisi proponat abstinere a tali crimine. Si vero non potest clare perspicere utrum sit mortale vel veniale, non videtur tune præcipitanda sententia (ut dicit Gulielmus specie in quadam simili), ut scilicet deneget propter hoc absolutionem, vel illi faciat conscientiam de mortali; quia, faciendo postea contra illud, etiamsi illud non esset mortale, ei erit mortale, quia omne quod est contra conscientiam, ædificat ad gehennam. Et cum promptiora sint jura ad solvendum quam ad ligandum (Can. Ponderet, dist. i), et melius sit Domino reddere rationem de nimia misericordia quam de nimia severitate, ut dicit Chrysostomus (Can. Alligant, 26, q. 7), potius videtur absolvendum et divino examini dimittendum.” P. 2, tit. 4, c. 5, 8.

11648 “ Dico, secundum Archiepiscopum, quod tuta conscientia potest quis eligere unam opinionem, et secundum eam operari, si habeat notabiles doctores, et non sit expresse contra determinationem Scripture vel Ecclesiæ , etc.” Summa, verbo Scrupulus, 5.

11649 “ Concordat etiam Bernardus Claramontensis, dicens: Si sunt opiniones inter magnos dicentes quod peccatum est, alii vero dicunt quod non, tune debet consulere aliquos, de quorum judicio confidit, et secundum consilium discretorum facere, et peccatum reputare vel non reputare; ex quo enim opiniones sunt inter magnos, et Ecclesia non determinavit alteram pattern, teneat quam voluerit, dummodo judicium in hoc resideat propter dicta eorum saltern quos reputat peritos.” Consol. tim. consc. p. 3, c. 12.

11650 “ Qui ergo assentit opinioni alicujus magistri, contra manifestum Scripturæ testimonium, sive contra id quod publice tenetur secundum Ecclesiæ auctoritatem, non potest ab erroris vitio excusari.” Quodlib. 3, a. 10.

11651 “ Prima opinio videtur probabilior, quia nihil debet damnari tamquam mortale peccatum, de quo non habetur evidens ratio vel manifesta auctoritas Scripturæ.” In 4 Sent. d. 16, q. 4, concl. 5.

11652 “Per se.”

11653 “ Per accidens.”

11654 Theol. Mor. 1. 6, n. 454.

11655 “ Impie pios.”

11656 “ Etiam cum jactura vita:.”

11657 “ Paenitenti habenti consuetudinem peccandi contra legem Dei. natura:, aut Ecclesia:, etsi emendationis nulla spes appareat, nec est neganda nec differenda absolutio, dummodo ore proferat se dolere et proponere emendationem.” Prop. damn. 60.

11658 Homo Apost. tr. tilt, punct. 2.

11659 De Orat. 1. 2, c. 4.

11660 “ Et dimissa turba, ascendit in montem solus orare.” Matt. xiv. 23.

11661 “ Erat pernoctans in oratione.” Luke, vi. 12.

11662 “ Quid enim te pro salute tua facere oportet, quando pro te Christus in oratione pernoctat !”

11663 “ (Sacerdotes) die noctuque pro plebe sibi commissa oportet orare.” In I Tim iii.

11664 “ Incensum enim Domini et panes Dei sui offerunt.” Levit. xxi. 6.

11665 “ Dirigatur oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectu tuo.” Ps. cxl. 2.

11666 “ Phialas aureas plenas odoramentorum, quæ sunt orationes sanctorum.” Apoc. v. 8.

11667 Anno 1579, Const, p. 3, n. 2.

11668 “Sint lumbi vestri præcincti, et lucernse ardentes in manibus vestris.” Luke, xii. 35.

11669 Diæta sal. t. 2, c. 5.

11670 “ Accedite ad eum, et illuminamini.” Ps. xxxiii. 6.

11671 “ Ex hoc otio vires proveniunt.”

11672 “ Vacate, et videte quoniam ego sum Deus.” Ps. xlv. n.

11673 Venite seorsum in desertum locum, et requiescite pusillum.” Mark, vi. 31.

11674 Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.” Phil. iv. 13.

11675 Vult Deus rogari, vult cogi, vult quadam importunitate vinci.” In Ps. pœnit, 6

11676 Life, ch. 19.

11677 “ Multi clamant, non voce sua, sed corporis. Cogitatio tua clamor est ad Dominum.” In Ps. 141.

11678 “ Clama intus, ubi Deus audit.” In Ps. 30, en. 4.

11679 “ Orantes omni tempore in spiritu.” Eph. vi. 18. Life, ch. 8.

11680 “ Ex oratione fugatur tentatio, abscedit tristitia, virtus reparatur, excitatur fervor, et divint amoris flamma succrescit.” De Casto Conn. c. 22. Ribadeneira, 1. 5, c. I.

11681 “ Consideratio regit affectus, dirigit actus, corrigit excessus.” De Consid. 1. i, c. 7.

11682 “ Quisquis non orat Deum, nec divino ejus colloquio cupit assidue frui, is mortuus est. . . . Animæ mors est, non provolvi coram Deo.” De or. Deo, 1. I.

11683 “ Omnis profectus spiritualis ex meditatione procedit.” In Ps. 36.

11684 “ Absque meditationis exercitio, nullus, secluso miraculo Dei, ad Christianæ religionis normam attingit.” De Med. cons. 7.

11685 Cepari, 1. 2, c 3.

11686 Volume X., See also Discourse on the same subject at the end of this work, and the complete treatise on mental prayer that has been given in Volume III., ED.

11687 Lettre 629.

11688 “ Tune magis diabolus cogitationes curarum sæculanum ingerit, quando orantem aspexerit.” Sent. 1. 3, c. 7.

11689 “ Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam.” James, iv. 6.

11690 “ Plorabunt Sacerdotes, ministri Domini, etdicent: Parce, Domine, parce populo tuo.” Joel, ii. 17.

11691 “ Plus placet Deo latratus canum, quam oratio talium clericorum.” Corn. à Lap. in Levit. i. 17.

11692 “ Attende tibi et doctrinæ. .” I Tim. iv. 16.

11693 “ Beatus, qui te scit, etiamsi ilia nesciat.” Conf. 1. 5, c. 4.

11694 “ Et dedit illi scientiam sanctorum.” Wisd. x. 10.

11695 “ In anima incomparabiliter, per amoris unitivi desideria, perfectio amplioris cognitionis relinquitur, quam studendo requiratur.” Myst. Theol. c. 3, p. 2.

11696 “ Amor ipse notitia est.” In Evang. Hom.27

11697 “ Amare, videre est.”

11698 “ Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus.” Ps. xxxiii. 9.

11699 “ Si sapientia Deus est, verus philosophus est arnator Dei.” De Civ. Dei. 1. 8, c. i.

11700 “ Sapientia , . facile videtur ab his qui diligunt eam, et invenitur ab his qui quærunt illam. Præoccupat, qui se concupiscunt, ut illis se prior ostendat.” Wisd. vi. 13.

11701 “ Qui de luce vigilaverit ad illam, non laborabit; assidentem enim illam foribus suis inveniet.” Ib. 15.

11702 “ Venerunt autem mihi omnia bona pariter cum ilia.” Ib. vii. 11.

11703 “ Sibi habeant sapientiam suam philosophi, sibi divitias suas divites, sibi regna sua reges, nobis gloria, et possessio, et regnum, Christus est.” Ep. ad Aprum.

11704 “Deus meus, et omnia!”

11705 “ Si quis autem vestrum indiget sapientia, postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluenter, et non improperat.” James, i. 5.

11706 “ Vacat tibi ut philosophus sis; non vacat ut christianus sis ?” Ep. ad Jovium.

11707 “ Vacat tibi ut eruditus sis; non vacat ut Sacerdos sis?”

11708 “ Non exiguum tempus habemus, sed multum perdimus.” De Brevit V. c. I.

11709 “ Necessaria ignoramus, quia superflua addiscimus.”

11710 ’ Fratres, viros, . . . constituamus super hoc opus. Nos vero orationi et ministerio verbi instantes erimus.” Acts, vi. 3.

11711 Lettre 8. .

11712 “ Timeo tibi, Eugeni, ne multitude negotiorum, intermissa oratione et consideratione, te ad cor durum perducat; quod seipsum non exhorret, quia nec sentit.” De Cons. 1. i, c. 2.

11713 “ Marthæ studium, absque Mariæ gustu, non potest esse perfectum.”

11714 “ Fallitur quisquis opus hoc periculosum, absque orationis præsidio, consummare se posse putat; in via deficit, si ab interna maneat refectione jejunus.” De Inst. præl. c. 11.

11715 “ Quod in aure auditis, prædicate super tecta.” Matth. x. 27.

11716 “ Ducam eam in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor ejus.” Osee, ii. 14.

11717 In oratione fit conceptio spiritualis.” E. ad Severium.

11718 Concham te exhibebis, non canalem. Canales hodie in Ecclesia multos habemus, conchas vero perpaucas.” In Cant. s. 18.

11719 “ Difficile est proximorum lucris insistere. Priusquam hujusmodi studiis se tradat, orationi intendat.” De Tr. Chr. Ag. c. 7.

11720 “ Trahe me; post te curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum.” Cant. i. 3.

11721 “ Non curram ego sola, current et adolescentulæ mecum; curremus simul, ego odore unguentorum tuorum, illæ meo excitatæ exemplo.”—In Cant, s. 21.

11722 “ Sufficit unus homo zelo succensus totum corrigere populum.”

11723 “ Charitas enim Christi urget nos.” 2 Cor. v. 14.

11724 “ Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris; et dicetis indie ilia: Confitemini Domino, et invocate nomen ejus.” Isa. xii. 3.

11725 “ Studiose et devote.”

11726 Cap. Dolentes, de Cel. Missar.

11727 “ Hoc versatur in corde, quod profertur in voce.” Ep. 211, E. B.

11728 Quomodo te audiri a Deo postulas, cum te ipse non audias ?” De Or. Dom.

11729 Officium futura: claritatis ediscimus.” De Or.

11730 In sa:cula sa:culorum laudabunt te.” Ps. Ixxxiii. 5.

11731 Ne quis ingrediatur templum curis onustus mundanis; hac ante ostium deponamus.” In Is. Hom. 2.

11732 “ Si orat Psalmus, orate; si gemit, gemite; si sperat, sperate.” In Ps. xxx. en. 4.

11733 “ *Implentur Spiritu* Sancto.” *In Eph.* Hom.19.

11734 We may see a more extended instruction on the recitation of the Office in the True Spouse of Jesiis Christ, Ch. 24, Vol. XI. We may also find a short treatise on the same subject at the end of the next volume (Volume XIII.). ED.

11735 “ Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde.”—Matth. xi. 29.

11736 “ Tanto quisque debet esse humilior, quanto est sublimior.” De 7 Donis Sp. S.

11737 “ Humilitas est Sacerdotum gemma.” De lust, prccl. c 21.

11738 “ In summo honore summa tibi sit humilitas.” De Virt. et Vit. c. 10.

11739 “ Qui major est in vobis, fiat sicut minor.” Luke xxii. 26.

11740 “ Si separaveris pretiosum a vili, quasi os meum eris.” Jer. xv. 19.

11741 “ Noverim me, noverim te.” Solil. 1. 2, c. i.

11742 “ Quid superbit terra et cinis ?” Ecclus. x. 9.

11743 “ Quid autem habes, quod non accepisti ? Si autem accepisti, quid gloriaris, quasi non acceperis ?” i Cor. iv. 7.

11744 “Quasi pannus menstruatse, universæ justitiæ nostræ.” Isa. lxiv.6.

11745 “Dicis: Quod dives sum; et nescis quia tu es miser, et miserabilis, et cæcus, et nudus.” Apoc. iii. 17.

11746 “ Quidquid minus est in te fervoris, humilitas supplebit confessionis.” De Int. Domo, c. 21.

11747 “ Altus est Deus. Erigis te, et fugit a te; humilias-te, et descendit ad te.” Serrn. 177, E. B. app.

11748 “ Abominatio Domini est omnis arrogans.” Prov. xvi. 5.

11749 “Deus superbis resistit; humilibus autem dat gratiam.”—James, iv. 6.

11750 “ Oratio humiliantis se nubes penetrabit; . . . et non discedet, donee Altissimus aspiciat.” Ecclus. xxxv. 21.

11751 “ Excelsus Dominus, et humilia respicit; et alta a longe cognoscit.” Ps. cxxxvii. 6.

11752 “Amen dico vobis, nescio vos.” Matth. xxv. 12.

11753 “ Odibilis coram Deo est et hominibus superbia.” Ecchis. x. 7.

11754 “ Ubi fuerit superbia, ibi erit et contumelia.” Prov. xi. 2.

11755 “ Fugiendo gloriam, gloriam merebatur, quæ virtutem quasi umbra sequitur, et, appetitores sui deserens, appetit contemptores.” Ep. ad Eustoch.

11756 “Qui autem se exaltaverit, humiliabitur; et qui se humiliaverit. exaltabitur.” Matth. xxiii. 12.

11757 “ Doctores humilium, duces superbiæ—“Ep. 1. 4, ep, 32.

11758 “ Qui rem non tacuerit, non tacebit auctorem.” Ep. 105.

11759 “ Amen dico vobis, receperunt mercedem suam.” Matth. vi. 2.

11760 “ Tres species odivit anima mea: . . . pauperem superbum, divitem mendacem, senem fatuum.” Ecclus. xxv. 3.

11761 “ Contritionem præcedit superbia; et ante ruinam, exaltatur spiritus.” Prov. xvi. 18.

11762 “ Audeo dicere, superbis esse utile cadere in aliquod apertum peccatum, unde sibi displiceant.” De Civ. D. 1. 14, c. 13.

11763 “ Priusquam humiliarer, ego deliqui.” Ps. cxviii. 67.

11764 “ Multis sæpe superbia luxuriæ seminarium fuit; quia, dum eos spiritus quasi in altum erexit, caro in infimis mersit.” Mor. 1. 26, c. 12.

11765 “Spiritus fornicationum in medio eorum. . . . Et respondebit arrogantia Israel in facie ejus.” Osee, v. 4.

11766 “ Propter quod tradidit illos Deus in desideria cordis eorum, in immunditiam, ut contumeliis afficiant corpora sua in semelipsis.” Rom. i. 24.

11767 Dial. 1. 4, c. 5.

11768 8 Jan. V. S. Sever.

11769 “ Et ne magnitude revelationum extollat me, datus est mihi sti mulus carnis mese, angelus Satanæ, qui me colaphizet. Propter quod ter Dominum rogavi, ut discederet a me; et dixit mihi: Sufficit tibi gratia mea; nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur. “ 2 Cor. xii. 7

11770 “ Ad revelationum humiliandam superbiam, monitor quidam humanæ imbecillitatis apponitur.” Ep. ad Paulam.

11771 “Per humilitatis custodiam servanda est munditia castitatis.” Mor. 1. 26, c. ii

11772 “ Dedit nobis ministerium reconciliationis.” 2 Cor. v. 18.

11773 “Pro Christo ergo legatione fungimur, tamquam Deo exhortante per nos.” Ib. 20.

11774 “ Gratia autem Dei sum id quod sum.” i Cor, xv. 10.

11775 “ Non quod sufficientes simus cogitare aliquid a nobis.” 2. Cor. iii. 5

11776 “Cum feceritis omnia quæ præcepta sunt vobis, dicite: Servi inutiles sumus; quod debuimus facere, fecimus.” Luke, xvii. 10.

11777 “ Deus meus es tu, quoniam bonorum meorum non eges.” Ps. xv. 2.

11778 “ Si juste egeris, quid donabis ei, aut quid de manu tua accipiet?” Job, xxxv. 7.

11779 “Si evangelizavero. non est mihi gloria; necessitas enim mihi incumbit.” i Cor. ix. 16.

11780 “Si glorientur nubes, quod imbres genuerint, quis non irrideat?” In Cant. s. 13.

11781 “ Laudo Deum in sanctis suis, qui, in ipsis manens, ipse facit opera.” Ibid.

11782 “Si quid boni est, parvum vel magnum, donum tuum est; et nostrum non est nisi malum.” Solil. an. ad D. c. 15.

11783 “ Quisquis tibi enumerat merita sua, quid tibi enumerat, nisi munera tua?” Conf. 1. 9, c. 13.

11784 “ Quæ de manu tua accepimus, dedimus tibi.” i Par. xxix. 14.

11785 “ Nisi humilitas præcesserit, totum extorquet de manu superbia.” Ep. 118, E. B

11786 “Superbia bonis operibus insidiatur, ut pereant.” Ib. 211.

11787 “ Qui sine humilitate virtutes congregat, quasi in ventum pulverem portat.” In Ps. pœnit. 3.

11788 “ Cæteros contempsisti; cæteris pejor factus es.”

[11789] " Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem, frustra vigilat, qui custodit eam." Ps. cxxvi. I.

[11790] " Nisi Dominus ædificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt, qui sedificant eam." Ps. cxxvi. i.

[11791] Ribadeneira, Vit. 1. 3, c. 2.

[11792] " Da eis vulvam sine liberis et ubera arentia." Osee, ix. 14.

[11793] "Scientia inflat." I Cor. viii. i.

[11794] " Servi inutiles sumus."

[11795] " Numquid gloriabitur securis contra eum qui secat in ea?" Isa. x. 15.

[11796] "Sine me nihil potestis facere." John, xv. 5.

[11797] " Non ait, quia sine me parum potestis facere, sed nihil." In Jo. tr. 81.

[11798] "Non quod sufficientes simus cogitare aliquid a nobis." 2 Cor. iii. 5.

[11799] " Neque qui plantat, est aliquid, neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat, Deus." I Cor. iii. 7.

[11800] " Nos dicamus inutiles, ut utiles efficiamur." Ad pop. Ant. Hom.38.

[11801] " Soli Deo honor et gloria." i Tim i. 17.

[11802] " Ego ero in ore tuo." Exod. iv. 15.

[11803] " Libenter igitur gloriabor in infirmitadbus meis, ut inhabitet in me virtus Christi." i Cor. xii. 9.

[11804] " Nihil arduum est humilibus." De Epiph. s. 5.

[11805] " Qui autem sperant in Domino, mutabunt fortitudinem." Isa,. xl. 31.

[11806] " Omnia possum in eo, qui me confortat." Phil. iv. 13.

[11807] " In Deo faciemus virtutem." Ps. lix. 14.

[11808] " Infirma mundi elegit Deus, ut confundat fortia, . . . ut non glorietur omnis caro in conspectu ejus." i Cor. i. 27.

[11809] " Omnia cooperantur in bonum." Rom. viii. 28.

[11810] " Etiam peccata."

11811 “ Bonum mihi—quia humiliasti me.” Ps. cxviii. 71.

11812 “Peccavi et vere deliqui, et, ut eram dignus, non recepi.”—Job, xxxiii. 27.

11813 Mor. 1. 22, c. 14.

11814 “Multi habent humilitatis speciem, virtutem non habent.” Ep. 44.

11815 Collat. 18, c. ii.

11816 “ Est qui nequiter humiliat se, et interiora ejus plena sunt dolo.” Ecclus. xix. 23.

11817 “Appetere de humilitate laudem, humilitatis est, non virtus, sed subversio.” In Cant. s. 16.

11818 “ Est humilis, qui humiliationem convertit in humilitatem.” Ib. s. 34.

11819 “Nisi conversi fueritis, et efficiamini sicut parvuli non intrabitis in regnum cœlorum.” Matth. xviii. 3.

11820 “ Reproborum signum superbia est; at contra, humilitas electo-rum.” Mor. 1. 34, c. 22.

11821 “ Deus superbis resistit; humilibus autem dat gratiam.”—James, iv. 6.

11822 “ Humiliate Deo, exspecta manus ejus.” Ecclus. xiii. 9.

11823 “Amen, amen, dico vobis: nisi granum frumenti cadens in terram, mortuum fuerit, ipsurh solum manet; si autem mortuum fuerit, multum fructum affert.” John, xii. 24.

11824 “ Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde.” Matth. xi. 29.

11825 “ Ecce Agnus Dei.” John, i. 29.

11826 “ Emitte Agnum, Domine, dominatorem terræ.” Isa. xvi. i.

11827 “Quasi agnus coram tondente se, obmutescet, et non aperiet os suum.” Ib, liii. 7.

11828 “Quasi agnus mansuetus qui portatu-r ad victimam.” Jcr. xi. 19.

11829 “Qui, cum malediceretur, non maledicebat; cum pateretur, non comminabatur.” i Pet. ii. 23.

11830 “ Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde.”

11831 “ Mansuetudo præ cæteris virtutibus nos Deo conformes facit.” In Rom. Hom.19.

11832 “ Benefacite his qui oderunt vos, . . . ut sitis filii Patris vestri qui in cœlis est, qui solem suum oriri facit super bonos et malos.” Matth. v. 44.

11833 “Eos solos qui mansuetudine conspicui sunt, Dei imitatores Christus nominat.” Serm. de Mansuetud.

11834 “ Beati mites, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram.” Matth. v. 4.

11835 “ Introd. p. 3, ch. 8.

11836 “Quod beneplacitum est illi, fides et mansuetudo.” Ecclus. i. 34.

11837 “ Suscipiens mansuetos Dominus.” Ps. cxlvi. 6.

11838 “ Humilium et mansuetorum semper tibi placuit deprecatio.” Judith, ix. 16.

11839 “Caveatur iracundia, aut cohibeatur.” Offic. 1. i, c. 21.

11840 “Cum his qui sunt a mansuetudine alienissimi, tune virtus ostenditur.” In Ps. 119.

11841 “ Responsio mollis frangit iram.” Prov, xv. I.

11842 “ Sicut rogum accensum aqua exstinguit, ita animam ira sestuantem verbum cum mansuetudine prolatum mitigat.”In Gen. Hom. 58.

11843 “Verbum dulce multiplicat amicos, et mitigat inimicos.” Ecclus. vi. 5.

11844 “ Igne non potest ignis exstingui, nee furor furore.”

11845 “ Vos non, quasi judices criminum, ad percutiendum positi estis sed, quasi judices morborum, ad sanandum.” Misc. 1. I, tit. 49.

11846 “ Maximum remedium est iræ, mora.” De Ira, 1. 2, c. 28.

11847 “ Turbatus præ ira oculus rectum non videt.” De Consid, 1. 2, c. ii.

11848 “ Secundum rectam rationem irasci.” 2. 2, q. 158, a. I.

11849 “ Irascimini, et nolite peccare.” Ps. iv. 5.

11850 Introd. p. 3, ch. 8.

11851 E. 38, E. B.

11852 “ Væ, quæ consuunt pulvillos sub omni cubito manus, et faciunt cervicalia sub capite universæ ætatis, ad capiendas animas! . . . Et confortastis manus impii, ut non reverteretur a via sua mala, et viveret.” Ezech. xiii. 18.

11853 “ Non est ista charitas, sed languor.” In i Jo. tr. 7.

11854 “Licet conqueratur æger impatiens per dolorem, gratias aget postmodum, cumsenserit sanitatem.” De Lapsis.

11855 “ Fratres. et si præoccupatus fuerit homo in aliquo delicto, vos qui spirituales estis, hujusmodi instruite in spiritu lenitatis, considerans teipsum, ne et tu tenteris.” Gal. vi. I.

11856 “ Turpe quidem est in præ lato, cum ira et austeritate corripere.” Ep. 100.

11857 “ Facies turbatior, pulcherrima ora foedavit.” De Ira, 1. 2, c. 35.

11858 “Sit amor, sed non emolliens; sit rigor, sed. non exasperans; sit pietas, sed non plus, quam expediat, parcens.” Mor. 1. 20, c. 6.

11859 Reg. fus. disp. int. 51,

11860 Collat. 2, c. 13.

11861 De Cœnob. inst. 1. 5, c. 30.

11862 “ Reprehensionem, non odium, sed misericordia preecedat.” De Serm. D. in monte, 1. 2, c. 19.

11863 “ Considerata infirmitas propria, mala nobis excusat aliena.”—Mor. 1. 5, c. 33.

11864 “ Plus mihi nocitura est ira, quam injuria. “ De Ira, 1. 3, c. 25.

11865 “ Jussisti ut pœna sua sibi sit omnis inordinatus animus.” Conf. 1. i, c. 12.

11866 Introd. p. 3, ch. q.

11867 “ Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde, et invenietis requiem animabus vestris.” Matth. xi. 29.

11868 “ Mansueti autem hereditabunt terram, et delectabuntur in multitudine pads.” Ps. xxxvi. 11.

11869 “ Nihil asperum mitibus.” De Epiph. s. 5.

11870 “Sol non occidat super iracundiam vestram; nolite locum dare diabolo.” Ephes iv. 26.

11871 “ Non intelligences, quanto majus sit lucrum in tolerantia injuriarum.”

11872 “Primus profectus, nolle dominari; secundus, velle subjici; tertius, injurias æquanimiter pati.” De Divers, s. 60.

11873 Doctr. 20.

11874 “ In humilitate tua patientiam habe.” Ecclus. ii. 4.

11875 “ Est humilis, qui humiliationem convertit in humilitatem.” In Cant, s. 34.

11876 “ Nardus mea dedit odorera suum.” Cant i. II.

11877 “ Deus superbis resistit; humilibus autem dat gratiam.” James, iv. 6.

11878 “ Nec malam conscientiam sanat laudantis præconium, nec bonam vulnerat conviciantis opprobrium.” Contra Petil. 1. 3, c. 7.

11879 “ Nihil ita conciliat domino familiares, ut quod ilium vident mansuetudine jucundum.” S. de Mansuet.

11880 “ Ut plus eum pro mansuetudine diligerent, quam pro factis admirarentur.” Offic. 1. 2, c. 7.

11881 “ Mansuetus, utilis sibi et aliis.” In Act. Hom.6.

11882 In Gen. Hom.34.

11883 “ Nunc incipio esse Christi discipulus.” Ep. ad Rom.

11884 “ Tantum proficies, quantum tibi ipsi vim intuleris.” De Imit. 1. I, c. 25.

11885 “ Ibant gaudentes a conspectu concilii, quoniam digni habiti sunt pro nomine Jesu contumeliam pati.” Acts, v. 41.

11886 “ Non est humilis, qui non optat sperni.”

11887 “Joannes, pete quid vis a me.”

11888 “ Domine, pati et contemni pro te.”

11889 “ Ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari.” Alphab. rel.

11890 “ Beati eritis, cum vos oderint homines, et cum separaverint vos, et exprobraverint, et ejecerint nomen vestrum tanquam malum, propter Filium hominis. Gaudete in ilia die, et exsultate; ecce enim merces vestra multa est in cœlo.” Luke, vi. 22.

11891 “Si exprobramini in nomine Christi, beati eritis, quoniam quod est honoris, gloriæ, et virtutis Dei, et qui est ejus Spiritus, super vos requiescit.” I Pet. iv. 14.

11892 “Quod fecerit Deus hominem rectum.” Eccles. vii. 30.

11893 “ Caro enim concupiscit adversus spiritum, spiritus autem adversus camera.” Gal. v, 17.

11894 “Video autem aliam legem in membris meis, repugnantem legimentis meæ, et captivantem me in lege peccati.”—Rom. vii. 23.

11895 “ Constitui te . . . ut evellas et destruas, . . . ædifices et plantes.” Jer. i. 10.

11896 “Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt.” Matth. v. 8.

11897 “ Deum videre vis? prius cogita de corde mundando.” Serm. 177, E. B. app.

11898 “ Quern docebit (Deus) scientiam ? Ablactatos a lacte, avulsos ab uberibus.” ha. xxviii. 9.

11899 “ Animalis autem homo non percipit ea quæ sunt Spiritus Dei.”—i Cor. ii. 14.

11900 “ Myrrha, et gutta. et casia, a vestimentis tuis.” Ps. xliv. 9.

11901 “ Si myrrha prima spirare cœperit per mortificationem voluptatum, consequentur et alise species aromaticæ.” De Annunt. s. i.

11902 “ Messui myrrham meam cum aromatibus meis.” Cant. v. i.

11903 “ Quos præscivit, et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui.” Rom. viii. 29.

11904 “ Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me.” Matt. xvi. 24.

11905 “ Despectum et novissimum virorum, virum dolorum.” Isa. liii. 3.

11906 “Semper mortificationem Jesu in corpore nostro circumferentes, ut et vita Jesu manifestetur in corporibus nostris.” 2 Cor. iv. 10.

11907 “ Ad ejus imitationem, assidue carnem mortificemus.”

11908 “Quia passionis dominicæ mysteria celebramus, debemus imitari quod agimus.”

11909 “Quæ est ista quæ ascendit per desertum, sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus myrrhæ et thuris?” Cant. Hi. 6.

11910 Et universi pulveris pigmentarii.”

11911 “ Vadam ad montem myrrhæ et ad collem thuris.” Cant. iv. 6.

11912 “ Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me.” Matt. xvi. 24.

11913 “ Duo sunt crucis genera, unum corporale, aliud spirituale. Alterum est sublimius, scilicet, regere motus animi.” Serin. 196, E. B. app.

11914 “ Circumcisio cordis in spiritu.” Rom. ii. 29.

11915 “ Dimisi eos secundum desideria cordis eorum; ibunt in adinventionibus suis.” Ps. Ixxx. 13.

11916 “ Animæ irreverenti et infrunitæ ne tradas me.” Ecclus. xxiii. 6.

11917 “ Vince teipsum.”

11918 “ Non est minimum, in minimis seipsum relinquere.” De Imit, 1. 3—c. 39-

11919 “ Nihil prodest, sine seipso cretera reliquisse.” Hom. 9,

11920 “ Qui relinquere disponis omnia, te quoque inter relinquenda numerare memento.” Declam. n. 3.

11921 “Sane, nisi abnegaverit semetipsum, sequi eum (Christum) non potest.” Ib. n. 48.

11922 “ Exsultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam” (Ps, xviii, 6); “ nec sequi poteras oneratus.” Declam. n. 2.

11923 “Tantum proficies, quantum tibi ipsi vim intuleris.” De Imit. 1. J, c. 25.

11924 “Quid prodest tenuari abstinentia, si animus intumescit superbia? Quid vinum non bibere, et odio inebriari ?” Ep. ad Celant.

11925 “ Etenim Christus non sibi complacuit.” Rom. xv. 3.

11926 “ Humilis habitus non sanctse novitatis est meritum, sed priscæ vetustatis operculum. Veterem hominem non exuerunt, sed novo palliant.” In Cant, s, 16.

11927 Scal. par. gr. 2.

11928 “ Possessa onerant, amata inquinant, atnissa cruciant.” Ep. 103.

11929 “ Dominus pars hereditatis meæ et calicis mei; tu es qui restitues hereditatem. meam mihi.” Ps. xv. 5.

11930 “ Si igitur Deus portio ejus est, non levem Creatori suo contume—liam videtur inferre, qui, super hoc singulare talentum, terrenam æstuat pecuniam cumulate.” Opusc. 27. procem.

11931 “Quis, obsecro, avidius clericis quærit temporalia?” S. ad Past. in syn.

11932 “ Non nummum propter Deum impendunt, sed Deum propter nummum colunt.” De Civ. D. 1. 11. c. 25.

11933 “ Ignominia Sacerdotis est studere divitiis.” Ep. ad Nepot.

11934 “ Ingenti periculo sunt Sacerdotes qui curis pecuniæ, et familiarium rerum incrementis, occupantur.” In Ps. 138.

11935 “Qui volunt divites fieri, incidunt in tentationem, et in laqueum diaboli, et desideria multa inutilia et nociva, quæ mergunt homines in interitum et perditionem.” i Tim. vi. 9.

11936 “ Qui aurum redigit, gratiam prodigit.” Serm. 59.

11937 “Avarus, quod est idolorum servitus.” Ephes. v. 5.

11938 “ Tolle pecuniarum studium, et omnia mala sublata sum “In 1 Tim. Hom.17.

11939 “ Divitiæ nostræ sunt pudicitia, pietas, humilitas, mansuetudo; illæ nobis ambiendæ sunt, quæ nos ornare possint, pariter et munire.” De Vita cont. 1. 2, c. 13.

11940 “ Habentes autem alimenta, et quibus tegamur, his contenti simus.” i Tim. vi. 8.

11941 “ Nolite thesaurizare vobis thesauros in terra, ubi ærugo et tinea demolitur. . . . Thesaurizate autem vobis thesauros in cœlo.”—Matth. vi. 19.

11942 “Thesaurizate, non thesauros in terra, sed bonorum operum et animarum in cœlis.”

11943 “Nemo, militans Deo, implicat se negotiis sæcularibus, ut ei placeat, cui se probavit.” 2 Tim. ii. 4.

11944 “ Holocausta medullata offeram tibi.” Ps. Ixv. 15.

11945 “ Quisquis se per negotiorum sæeularium exercitia delectabiliter fundit, holocausti sui medullas cum visceribus subtrahit, et solam victimæ pellem Deo adolere contendit.” Opusc. 12, c. 22.

11946 “ Magnis addictus es, noli minimis occupari.” De Inst. Episc.

11947 “ Fructus horum quid, nisi araneorum telæ ?” De Cons. I. i. c. 2.

11948 “ Nescio cur nos affligimus circa nihil, cum possidere Creatorem omnium valeamus !” Stim. div, am. p. 2, c. 2.

11949 “ Rivus, qua fluit, cavat terram ; sic discursus temporalium conscientiam rodit.” De Cons, 1. 4, c. 6.

11950 “Aurem cordis terrenarum cogitationum turba, dum perstrepit, claudit.” Mor. 1. 23, c. 20.

11951 “Quanto se rerum studiis occupant, tanto a charitate divina se separant.”

11952 “ Sæcularia negotia aliquando ex compassione toleranda sunt, nunquam vero ex amore requirenda.” Past. p. 2, c. 7.

11953 “ Per multas tribulationes, intrant justi in regnum cœlorum; hi autem, per multas tribulationes, promerentur infernum.” Ep. 14.

11954 “ Non in foro Christus reperitur.” De Virginit. I. 3.

11955 “ Ei. qui vult tecum judicio contendere, et tunicam tuam tollere, dimitte ei et pallium.” Matt. v. 40.

11956 “ Perde aliquid, ut Deo vaces, non litibus. Perde nummos, ut emas tibi quietem.” Serin. 167, R. B.

11957 “ Hinc jam te condemno, quod judicio contendas.” In I Cor. Hom.16.

11958 Diabolus est qui in artem ludos ingessit.” In Matth. Hom.6.

11959 Non solum profusos, sed omnes etiam jocos declinandos arbitror.” Offic. 1. i, c. 23.

11960 “Licet interdum honesta joca sint, tamen ab ecclesiastica abhor rent regula.

11961 “Animarum subversio, cupiditas dignitatum.” Ep. 23.

11962 “ Patitur omnia, sed pro caducis.” Ep. 14.

11963 “ Benigna est, sed divitibus.”

11964 “ Omnia suffert pro vanitate.”

11965 “ Omnia credit, omnia sperat, sed quæ sunt ad gloriam hujus vitæ .”

11966 “ In honorurn cupiditate, quanta spinæ !” Enarr. in Ps. 102

11967 “ Vidi impium superexaltatum, et elevatum sicut cedros Libani; et transivi, et ecce non erat.” Ps. xxxvi. 35.

11968 “ Stultorum exaltatio, ignominia.” Prov. Iii. 35.

11969 “ Eo deformior, quo illustrior.” De Cons. 1. 2, c. 7.

11970 “ Claras suas maculas reddit.” Variar. 1. 12, n. 2.

11971 “ Invident nobis; ibi nos felices putant, ubi periclitamur.” Serm. 354, E. B.

11972 “ Miror, an fieri possit, ut aliquis ex rectoribus salvus fiat.” In Heb. Hom.34.

11973 “ Mensura oneris, pro mensura debet esse gestantis; alioquin impositi oneris fit ruina, ubi vectoris infirmitas est.” Lib. de Viduis.

11974 “Qui enim se ingerit, et propriam gloriam quærit, non sumit honorem, sed, gratise Dei rapinam faciens, jus alienum usurpat.” In Heb. v. 4.

11975 “ Quos videmus vineis dominicis se ingerere, fures sunt, non cultores.” In Cant. s. 30.

11976 “ Ipse regnaverunt, et non ex me.” Osee, viii. 4. We may also apply here the words of our Lord: “ Qui non intrat per ostium in ovile ovium, sed ascendit aliunde, ille fur est et latro.” John, x. i.

11977 “ Corpus Ecclesise ambientium contagione foedatur.” Ep. I.

11978 “ Recumbe in novissimo loco.” Luke, xiv. 10.

11979 “ Cineri non expedit, ut in alto sit, ne dispergatur a vento.” De Erud, princ. 1. I, c. I.

11980 “ Elegi abjectus esse in domo Dei mei, magis quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum.” Ps. Ixxxiii. 11

11981 *“ Si quis* . . . non *odit patrem* suum *et* matrem, . . . non *potest* meus *esse discipulus.”* Luke, xiv. 26.

11982 “ Si prohibeant ne vitam secundum ecclesiastics discipline normam instituat, si negotiis ssecularibus eum implicent, tune eos, tanquam in Dei adversaries, odisse et fugere tenetur.” Abelly, Sac. chr. p. 4, c. 6.

11983 “Quos adversaries in via Dei patimur, odiendo et fugiendo nesciamus.” In Evang. Hom.37.

11984 “ Nec in domo Domini Sacerdos eligitur, nisi qui dixerit patri et matri: Nescio vos.” Ep. 102.

11985 “ Suis se abneget, qui servire Deo gestit.” De Esau, c. 2.

11986 “ Honorandus est pater, sed obediendum est Deo.” Serm. 100, E. B.

11987 “Grandis in suos pietas, impietas in Deum est.” Ep. ad Paulam.

11988 Veni enim separare hominem adversus patrem suum.” Matth. x. 35-

11989 Et inimici hominis, domestici ejus.” Ibid. 36.

11990 “ Fugiamus illorum curam tamquam diabolicam.” Const. Mon. c. 21.

11991 “ Propter patrem, militiam Christ! deseram ?”

11992 “ Quid facis in paterna domo, delicate miles? Ubi vallum? ubi fossa? Licet in limine pater jaceat, per calcatum perge patrem, siccis oculis ad vexillum Crucis evola. Solum pietatis genus est in hac re, ess crudelem.” Ep. ad Heliod.

11993 “Comburo vos, ne comburar a vobis.” Ad Fr. in er. s. 40.

11994 “ Extra cognates quisque debet fieri, si vult Parenti omnium verius jungi.” Mor. 1. 7, c. 18.

11995 “ Carnalis amor extra Dei amorem cito te capiet.” Ep. 134.

11996 “ Quomodo te, bone Jesu, inter meos cognates inveniam, qu inter tuos minime es inventus?” Spec. Disc. p. i, c. 23.

11997 “ Fili, quid fecisti nobis sic?”

11998 “Quid est quod me quærebatis ? nesciebatis quia, in his quæ Patris mei sunt, oportet me esse?” Luke, ii. 49.

11999 “ Dimitte mortuos sepelire mortuos suos.” Matth. viii. 22.

12000 “ Acceptius obsequium homo præ stat Deo, suam voluntatem mortificans, quam si mortuos ad vitam revocaret.” Sac. an. p. i, 5. .

12001 “ In die jejunii vestri, invenitur voluntas vestra.” Isa. Iviii. 3.

12002 “ Grande malum, propria voluntas, qua fit ut bona tua tibi bona non sint.” In Cant. s. 71

12003 “Cesset voluntas propria, et infernus nonerit.” In Temp. Pasch. s. 3.

12004 “ Ligatus, non ferro alieno, sed mea ferrea voluntate.” Conf. 1. 8, c. 5.

12005 “Quantum in ipsa est, Deum perimit propria voluntas.” In Temp. Pasch. s. 3.

12006 “ Qui se sibi magistrum constituit, stulto se discipulum subdit.” Ep. 87.

12007 “ Et vita in voluntate ejus.” Ps. xxix. 6.

12008 “Qui vos audit, me audit.” Luke, x. 16.

12009 “ Et qui vos spernit, me spernit. .”

12010 “ Quasi scelus idololatriæ, nolle acquiescere.” i Kings, xv. 23.

12011 “ Quidquid, vice Dei, præcipit homo, quod non sit tamen certum displicere Deo, baud secus omnino accipiendum est, quam si præcipiat Deus.” De Prccc. et Disp. c. 9.

12012 “ Nunquam meam feci voluntatem; nec quemquam docui, quod prius ipse non feci.”

12013 “ Mortificatione voluntatum marcescunt universa vitia.” De Cœnob. inst. 1. 4, c. 28–43.

12014 “ Vir obediens loquetur victoriam.” Prov. xxi. 28.

12015 “ Melior est enim obedientia quam victimæ.” I Kings, xv. 22.

12016 “ Sicut seipsum Deo tradidit, voluntatem propriam immolando, sic a Deo, omne quod poposcerit, consequetur.” Lign. v. de Obed. c. 3.

12017 “ Si averteris . . . facere voluntatem tuam, . . . sustollam te super altitudines terrse.” Isa. Iviii. 13.

12018 “ Oratio, cum sit una, omnia potest.”

12019 “ Quodcumque volueritis, petetis, et fiet vobis.”

12020 John, xv. 7.

12021 “ Nullus Deo et Sacrificio dignus est, nisi qui prius se viventem hostiam exhibuerit.” Apolog. I.

12022 “ Hoc est sacrificium primitivum, quando unusquisqne se offert hostiam, ut postea munus suum possit offerre.” De Cain et Ab. 1. 2, c. 6

12023 “Nisi granum frumenti cadens in terram mortuum fuerit, ipsum solum manet; si autem mortuum fuerit, multum fructum affert.”—John, xii. 24.

12024 “ Nihil quod caro blanditur, libeat; nihil quod carnalem vitam trucidat, spiritus perhorrescat.” In Evang. Hom 11

12025 “ Qui enim voluerit animam suam salvam facere, perdet eam; qui autem perdiderit animam suam propter me, inveniet eam,” Matth. . xvi. 25.

12026 “ Jactura felix! contemptu universorum, Christus sequendus est, et æternitas comparanda.” In Matth. can. 16.

12027 “ Integrum te da illi, quia ille, ut te salvaret, integrum se tradidit.” De Modo bene. viv. c. 8.

12028 “ Nutrimentum charitatis est imminutio cupiditatis; perfectio, nulla cupiditas.” De div. qucest. q. 36.

12029 “Video autem aliam legem in membris meis, repugnantem legimentis mese.” Rom. vii. 23.

12030 “ Id est concupiscentia carnis contrarians rationi.”

12031 “ Qui autem sunt Christi, carnem suam crucifixerunt cum vitiis et concupiscentiis.” Gal. v. 24.

12032 Way of Perf. ch. 19.

12033 Foundat. ch. 5.

12034 “ Qui nori peregrinatur a corpora, peregrinatur a Domino.” In Luc. c. 9.

12035 “Inversis pedibus ambulat.” Ad Fr. in er. s. 50.

12036 Major sum et ad majora genitus, quam ut mancipium sim mei corporis.” Ep. 65.

12037 “ Dum (carni) parcimus, ad prælium hostem nutrimus.” Mor. 1. 30, c. 28.

12038 “Salomon templum Deo condidit; sed utinam corporis templum pse servasset!” Apol. David. 1. 2,

12039 “ Ista charitas destruit charitatem; talis misericordia crudelitate plena est, qua ita corpori servitur, utanima juguletur.” Apol. ad Guill c.8

12040 “ Non vis castigari; sis judex tui ipsius, te reprehende et corrige.”

12041 “ Anima in cœlestia non surgit, nisi mortificatione membrorum.”

12042 “ O felix pœnitenda, qua; tantam mihi promeruit gloriam!”

12043 “ Cito adducuntur, ut ea faciant quæ non licent, qui faciunt omnia quæ licent.” Pædag. 1. 2, c. I.

12044 Dial. 1. 4, c. II.

12045 “Per oculos intrat ad mentem sagitta amoris.” De Modo bene viv. s. 23.

12046 “ Oculus meus deprædatus est animam meam.” Lam. iii. 51.

12047 “ Hæc omnia tibi dabo, si cadens adoraveris me.” Matth. iv. 9.

12048 “ Vidit igitur mulier quod bonum esset lignum ad vescendum, et pulchrum oculis, aspectuque delectabile; et tulit de fructu illius, et comedit.” Gen. iii. 6.

12049 “ Exordia sunt maximarum iniquitatum.”

12050 “ Oculi, quasi quidam raptores ad culpam.” In Lam. 3.

12051 “ Adero absens.”

12052 “ Spectavit, clamavit, exarsit; abstulit inde secum insaniam.” Conf. 1. 6, c. 8.

12053 “ Pars innocentiæ, cæcitas.” De Remed, fort.

12054 “ Qui claudit oculos suos ne videat malum, iste in excelsis habitabit.” Is a. xxxiii. 15.

12055 “ Pepigi fœdus cum oculis meis, ut ne cogitarem quidem de virgine.” Job, xxxi. i.

12056 “Ab omnibus quæcunque ad aurium et ad oculorum pertinent illecebras, Dei Sacerdotes abstinere debent.” Anno 813, can. 7.

12057 Averte faciem tuam a muliere compta, et ne circumspicias speciem alienam; propter speciem mulieris, multi perierunt.” Ecclns. ix. 8.

12058 “ Oculi vestri, etsi jaciuntur in aliquam, figantur in nullam.” Reg. ad serv. D . n. 6.

12059 “ Averte oculos meos, ne videant vanitatem.” Ps. cxviii. 37.

12060 “ Elevatis oculis in discipulos suos.” Luke, vi. 20.

12061 “Cum sublevasset ergo oculos Jesus.” John., vi. 5.

12062 “ Obsecro vos per mansuetudinem et modestiam Christi.” 2 Cor. x. i.

12063 “ Oportet oculos habere ad terram dejectas, animam vero ad cœlum erectam.” Serm. de Ascesi.

12064 “ Speculum mentis est fades, et taciti oculi cordis fatentur arcana.” Ep. ad Furiam.

12065 “ Impudicus oculus impudici cordis est nuntius.” Reg. ad serv. D. n. 6.

12066 “ Vox quædam est animi, corporis motus.” Offic. 1. I, c. 18.

12067 “Quorum habitus, sermo, vultus, incessus, doctrina virtutum est.” Ep. ad Rusticum.

12068 “ Sic decet omnino clericos vitam moresque suos componere, ut habitu, gestu, incessu, nil nisi grave ac religione plenum præ se ferant.” Sess. 22, de Ref. c. i.

12069 “ Sacerdotis animum splendescere oportet, ut illustrare possit, qui oculos in eum conjiciunt.” De Sacei d. 1. 3.

12070 “ In silentio proficit anima.” De Imit. 1. i, c. 20.

12071 “ Gustos justitiæ, silentium.” Ep. 1. 7, ep. 6.

12072 “ In silentio et in spe erit fortitude vestra.” Isa. xxx. 15.

12073 “ In multiloquio non deerit peccatum.” Prov. x. 19.

12074 “ Os tuum, os Christi; non debes, non dico, ad detractiones, ad mendacia, sed nec ad otiosos sermones os aperire.” Medit. i, 5.

12075 “Memento, os tuum cœlestibus oraculis consecratum; sacrilegium puta, si quid non divinum sonet.” In Cant. s. 18.

12076 “ Vocis sonum libret modestia, ne cujusquam offendat aurem vox fortior.” Offic. 1. i, c. 18.

12077 “ Sepi aures tuas spinis, linguam nequam noli audire.” Ecclus. xxviii. 28.

12078 “ Ut foris vestiaris, intus exspoliaris.” Serm. 60, E, B.

12079 “ Clamant nudi, et dicunt: Nostrum est, quod effunditis; nostris necessitatibus detrahitur, quidquid accedit vanitatibus vestris.” De Mor. et Off. Ep. c. 2.

12080 “Virum sacerdotalem cum moderate indumento versari debere; et quidquid, non propter usum, sed ostentatorium ornatum, assumitur, in nequitiæ reprehensionem incurrere.” Can. 16.

12081 “ Nisi attonso capite, patentibus auribus.”

12082 “ Illiberali tonsu se tondentes.” Pædag. 1. 3, c. 3.

12083 “ Capillis muliebribus se in feminas transfigurant. “ De Jej. et Tent. Christi.

12084 Vir quidem, si comam nutriat, ignominia est illi.” i Cor. xi. 14.

12085 “ Nos, non notaculo corporis, sed innocentiæ ac modestiæ signo, facile dignoscimus.” Octav. c. 9.

12086 “ Decet actuum nostrorum esse publicam æstimationem, ut, qui videt ministrum altaris congruis ornatum virtutibus, Dominum veneretur, qui tales servulos habeat.” Offic. 1. i, c. 50.

12087 “ Tyrocinium militiæ christianæ sanctis jejuniis inchoarunt.” De Jejun. Pent. s. i.

12088 Bacci, 1. 2, ch. 14.

12089 “ Inimicos crucis Christi, quorum finis interitus, quorum deus venter est.” Phil. iii. 18.

12090 “ Omnem disciplinam victus aut occidit aut vulnerat.” De Jejunio.

12091 “ Luxuria nutritur a ventris ingluvie.” De Prof. rel. 1. 2, c. 52.

12092 “ Si ciborum nimietate anima obruatur, illico mens torpescit, et corporis nostri terra spinas libidinum germinabit.” Serm. 141, E. B. app.

12093 “ Sacerdotes qui intemperanter ingurgitant, deponendi sunt.”

12094 “ Qui delicate a pueritia nutrit servum suum, postea sentiet eum contumacem.” Prov. xxix. 21.

12095 “ Ne præbeamus vires corpori, ne committat bellum adversus spiritum.” De Sal. docum. c. 35.

12096 “ Vexo eum qui vexat me “ Vit. S. M. c. 7

12097 “ Castigo corpus meum, et in servitutem redigo.” I Cor. ix. 27.

12098 “ Diabolus, victus de gula, non tentat de libidine.”

12099 “ Gula debellata, christianus facilius cæteravitia profligabit.” In I Cor. ix. 27.

12100 “ Ingluvies a plerisque superari difficilius solet, quam cætera vitia.” Enchir. parv. 1. i, doc. n.

12101 “ 1. Ante debitum tempus, vel sæpius quam deceat, comedere, præter necessitatem, more pecudum. 2. Cum nimia aviditate, sicut anes famelici. 3. Nimis se implere ex delectatione. 4. Nimis exquisita quærere.” De Prof. rel. 1. i, c. 36.

12102 “ Facile contemnitur clericus qui, sæpe vocatus ad prandium, ire non recusat.” Ep. ad Nepot,

12103 “ Consolatores nos potius (laici) in moeroribus suis, quam convivas in prosperis, noverint.”

12104 “ Sciat unusquisque vestrum vas suum possidere in sanctificatione et honore, non in passione desiderii.” I Thess. iv. 4.

12105 Sent. 72.

12106 “ Hæc oportuit facere, et ilia non omittere.” Matth. xxiii. 23.

12107 “ Mortifica corpus tuum, et diabolum vinces.”

12108 “ Nescit homo pretium ejus, nec invenitrr in terra suaviter viventium.” Job, xxviii. 13.

12109 “ Vadam ad montem myrrhæ.” Cant. iv. 6.

12110 “ Qui pascitur inter lilia.” Cant. ii. 16.

12111 “ Lilia hæc oriuntur in monte myrrhæ, et nusquam magis illæsa servantur: ubi carnis mortificantur affectus, ibi lilia castimonise nascuntur et florent.” In Cant. s. 28.

12112 “ Sicut enim exhibuistis membra vestra servire immunditiæ et iniquitati ad iniquitatem, ita nunc exhibete membra vestra servire justitiæ in sanctificationem.” Rom. vi. 19.

12113 “Curre, Domine, curre, et vulnera servos tuos vulneribus sacris, ne vulnerentur vulneribus mortis.”

12114 “ Conteratur contemptor Dei; si recte sentis, dices: Reus est mortis, crucifigatur.” Medit c. 15.

[12115] “ Cessat vindicta divina, si conversio præcurrat humana.” In i Cor. ii

[12116] “ Quis restitit ei, et pacem habuit ?” Job, ix. 4.

[12117] “ Impii autem, quasi mare fervens, quod quiescere non potest.” Isa. Ivii. 20.

[12118] “ Ipse sibi est bellum, qui pacem noluit habere cum Deo.” Enarr. in Ps. 75.

[12119] “ Unde bella et lites in vobis ? nonne hinc, ex concupiscentiis vestris, quæ militant in membris vestris ?” James, iv. i.

[12120] “ Vincenti dabo manna absconditum.” Apoc. ii. 17.

[12121] “ Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum.” Phil. iv. 7.

[12122] “ Beati mortui, qui in Domino moriuntur.” Apoc. xiv. 13.

[12123] “ Crucem videntes, sed non etiam unctionem.” In Dedic. s. I.

[12124] “ Tollite jugum meum super vos, . . . et invenietis requiem animabus vestris.” Matth. xi. 29.

[12125] “Qui amat, non laborat.” In Jo. tr. 48.

[12126] “Amor, difficultatis nomen erubescit.” Lign. v. de Char. c. 4.

[12127] “ Fortis est ut mors dilectio.” Cant. viii. 6.

[12128] “ Qui enim voluerit animam salvam facere, perdet eam.” Matth. xvi. 25.

[12129] “ Noli amare in hac vita, ne perdas in æterna vita.” In Jo. tr. 51.

[12130] “ Stantes ante thronum, . . . et palmæ in manibus eorum.” Apoc. vii. 9.

[12131] “ Non sunt condignæ passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam quæ revelabitur innobis.” Rom. viii. 18.

[12132] “ Id enim quod in præ senti est momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostræ, supra modum in sublimitate seternum gloria pondus operatur in nobis.” 2 Car. iv. 17.

[12133] “ Oblectamenta præsentis vitæ , quid sunt, nisi furta vitse futuræ?”

[12134] “ Quando Deus dat alicui ut mortuos resuscitet, minus dat, quam cum dat occasionem patiendi.”

12135 “ Pro miraculis enim, debitor sum Deo; ut pro patientia, debitorem habes Christum.” In Phil. Hom.4.

12136 “ Tamquam lapides vivi superaxlificamini, domus spiritualis.” i Pet. ii. 5.

12137 “*Scalpri salubris ictibus,*

Et tunsione plurima,

Fabri polita malleo,

Hanc saxa molem construunt.” Off. Dedic. Eccl. Hymn.

12138 “ Justus autem ex fide vivit.” Rom. i. 17.

12139 “ Quoniam ibit homo in domum a:ternitatis sua:.” Eccles. xii. 5.

12140 “ Deus hortatur ut pugnes, et deficientem sublevat, et vincentem coronal.” In Ps. 32, enarr. 2.

12141 “Omnis autem qui in agone contendit, ab omnibus se abstinet; et illi quidem utcorruptibilemcoronamaccipiant, nos autem incorruptam.” i Cor. ix. 25.

12142 “ Sacerdos dici potes, esse nonpotes.” Scrm. 41.

12143 “ Verus minister altaris Deo, non sibi, natus est.” In Ps. 118, s. 8.

12144 “ Incensum enim Domini et panes Dei sui offerunt, et ideo sanctierunt.” Levit. xxi. 6.

12145 “ Mens consecrata Deo.” In Lev. Hom.15.

12146 “ Dominus pars hereditatis mea:. “

12147 “ Cui Deus portio est, nihil debet curare, nisi Deum.” De Esau, C. 2.

12148 “ Nemo, militans Deo, implicat se negotiis ssecularibus, ut ei placeat, cui se probavit.” 2 7 i?u. ii. 4.

12149 “ Sequere me, et dimitte mortuos sepelire mortuos suos.” Matth. viii. 22.

12150 “Hie paterni funeris sepultura prohibetur, ut intelligas humana posthabenda divinis.” In Luc. c. 9.

12151 “ In terra eorum nihil possidebitis, nec habebitis partem inter eos; ego pars et hereditas tua in medio filiorum Israel.” Num. xviii. 20.

12152 “ Magna dignatio Domini, si eam, Sacerdos, cognoscas: quod velit Deus esse pars tua. Quid non habebis, si Deum habeas ?”

12153 “ Eligant sibi alii partes, quibus fruantur, terrenas et temporales; portio sanctorum, Dominus a:ternus est. Bibant alii mortiferas voluptates; portio calicis mei, Dominus est.” Enarr in Ps. 15.

12154 “ Si non amavero te, quid amabo?” Medit. 13.

12155 “ Unum est necessarium.” Luke, x. 42.

12156 “Quid enim mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram ? . . . Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.” Ps. Ixxii. 25.

12157 “ Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.” John, xv. 13.

12158 “ Dicebant excessum ejus, quern completurus erat in Jerusalem. “—Luke, ix. 31.

12159 “Quisdignus erat ut Filius Dei mortem pro eo pateretur?” De Mensura Cruc. c. 2.

12160 “ Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus.” 2 Cor. v. 15.

12161 “ Prædicamus Christum crucifixum, Judæris quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam.” I Cor. i. 23.

12162 “ Vidimus Sapientiam amoris nimietate infatuatam.” Serm. de Nat. D.

12163 “ Charitas enim Christi urget nos.” 2 Cor. v. 14,

12164 “ Etsi Christus pro omnibus mortuus est, pro nobis tamen specialiter passus est. Plus debet, qui plus accepit; reddamus ergo amorem pro sangoiinis pretio.” In Luc. c. 7.

12165 “ Oh! si scires mysterium Crucis!”

12166 “ Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris.” Isa. xii. 3

12167 “ Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum Chris tum, et hunc crucifixum.” I Cor. ii. 2

12168 “ Et si noverim omnem scientiam, charitatem autem non habuero nihil sum.” i Cor. xiii. 2.

12169 “ Omnia detrimentum feci, et arbitror ut stercora, ut Christum lucrifaciam.” Phil. iii. 8.

12170 “ Ego Paulus, vinctus Christi Jesu.” Eph. iii. i.

12171 “ Adolescentularum non est numerus; una est columba mea, perfecta mea.” Cant. vi. 7.

12172 “ Disce a Christo quemadmodum diligas Christum. 5 In Cant. s. 20.

12173 “ Parvulus enim natus est nobis. et filius datus est nobis.” Isa. ix. 6.

12174 “ Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.” Eph. v. 2.

12175 “ Totum tibi dedit, nihil sibi reliquit.”

12176 “ Integrum te da illi, quia ille, ut te salvaret, integrum se tradidit.” De Modo bene viv. c. 8.

12177 “ Nihil de vobis retineatis vobis, ut totos vos recipiat; qui se vobis exhibet totum.”

12178 “ Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est.” i Cor. v. 15.

12179 “ Moriar mihi, ut tu solus in me vivas.”

12180 “Minus te amat, qui tecum aliquid amat, quod non propter te amat.” Conf. 1. 10, c. 29.

12181 “ Anima, sola esto, ut soli te serves.” In Cant. s. 40.

12182 “ Initium enim illius, verissima est discipline concupiscentia.” Wisd. vi. 1 8.

12183 “ lustorum autem semita, quasi lux splendens. procedit et crescit usque ad perfectam diem.” Prov. Iv.18

12184 “ Via impiorum tenebrosa; nesciunt ubi corruant.” Ib. 19.

12185 “ Non progredi, reverti est.” Ep. 17, E. B. app.

12186 Past. p. 3, c. i.

12187 “ Non vis proficere; vis ergo deficere.”

12188 “ Hoc ergo vis, quod esse non potest.” Ep. 254.

12189 “ Nunquam in eodem statu permanet.” Job, xiv. 2.

12190 “ Sic currite, ut comprehendatis.” i Cor. ix. 24.

12191 “ Beati, qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam.” MatlJi. v. 6.

12192 “ Esurientes implevit bonis.” Magnif.

12193 “ Fulgebunt justi, et tanquam scintillse in arundineto discurrent. “ Wisd. iii. 7.

12194 “ Si vis perfectus esse, vade. . . .” Matth. xix. 21.

12195 “ Vult et non vult piger.” Prov. xiii. 4.

12196 “ Desideria occidunt pigrum.” Prov. xxi. 25.

12197 “ Invenitur ab his qui quærunt illam.” Wisd. vi. 13.

12198 “ Si quæritis, quærite.” Isa. xxi. 12.

12199 “ Non pedum passibus, sed desideriis quæritur Deus.” In Cant. s. 84.

12200 Life, ch. 13.

12201 “ Dilata os tuum, et implebo illud.” Ps. Ixxx. n.

12202 “ Dilata desiderium tuum.”

12203 “ Consummatus in brevi, explevit tempora multa.” Wisd. iv. 13.

12204 “Vires subministrat, pœnam exhibet leviorem.” DC Disc. won. c. 6.

12205 “ Magna victoriæ pars est vincendi desiderium.” De Casto Conn. c. 3.

12206 “ Laboranti agusta via est, amanti lata.” In Ps. 30, en. 2. .

12207 “ Viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri, cum dilatasticor meum.” Ps. cxviii. 32.

12208 “ Deus non minus sancto desiderio Isetatur, quam si anima amore liquefiat.”

12209 “ Amicus Dei, si voluero, ecce nunc fio.” Conf. 1. 8, c. 6.

12210 “ Nullum omnino præ sentire ejus certius testimonium est, quam desiderium gratiæ amplioris.” De S. Anctr. s. 2.

12211 “ Non attendit Deus quid fecerit homo, sed quid velit esse.”

12212 “ Si oculus tuus fuerit simplex, totum corpus tuum lucidum erit.” Matth. vi. 22.

12213 “ Bonum opus intentio facit.” In Ps. 21, en. 2.

12214 “ Homo enim videt ea quæ parent; Dominus autem intuetur cor.” I Kings, xvi. 7.

12215 “ Holocausta medullata off e ram tibi.” Ps. Ixv. 15.

12216 “ Oblata Deo, non pretio, sed affectu placent.” Adv. Avarit. 1. i.

12217 “ Bene omnia fecit.” Mark, vii. 37.

12218 “ Non quæro voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem ejus qui misit me.” John, v. 30.

12219 “ Rarum est, fidelem animam inveniri, ut nihil ob gloriæ cupiditatem facial.” Dial. adv. Luciferianos.

12220 “ Domine, nonne in nomine tuo prophetavimus, et in nomine tuo dæmonia ejecimus, et in nomine tuovirtutes multas fecimus?” Matth. vii. 22.

12221 “Nunquam novi vos; discedite a me, qui operamini iniquitatem.” Ibid

12222 “ Nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextera tua.” Matth. vi. 3.

12223 “ Quod facit amor Dei, non corrumpat vanitas.” Serm. 63, E. B. app.

12224 “ Ego Dominus, . . . odio habens rapinam in holocausto.” Isa. Ixi. 8.

12225 “ Verus amor præmium non requirit, sed meretur; habet præmium, sed id quod amatur.” De dil. Deo, c. 7.

12226 “ Verus amor seipso contentus est.”

12227 “ Quis tribuat ut omnis populus prophetet!” Num. xi. 20,.

12228 “ Et dies pleni invenientur in eis.” Ps. Ixxii. 10.

12229 “ Dolosi non dimidiabunt dies suos.” Ps. liv. 24.

12230 “ Ilium tantum diem vixisse te computa; in quo voluntates proprias abnegasti.” Ad Monach. Hom.9.

12231 “ Magis nos obligat, qui exiguum dedit libenter, quam qui, non voluntatem tantum juvandi habuit, sed cupiditatem.” De Benefic. 1. I, c. 7.

12232 “ Vidua hæc pauper plus omnibus misit.” Mark, xii. 43.

12233 “ Considerans, non quantum, sed ex quanto dedisset.” De Ope et Eleem. .

12234 “ Anima potius vult ipsum esse beatum, quam seipsam esse beatam.” De Beatit. c. 7.

12235 “ Glorificate et portate Deum in corpora vestro.” i Cor. vi. 20.

12236 “ Portari vult a nobis Christum, sed gloriose, non cum tædio, non cum murmure; portari, non trahi: trahenti enim onerosus est Christus.” In Cant. s. 17.

12237 “ Ut cognoscat mundus quia diligo Patrem, . . . surgite, eamus hinc.” John xiv. 31.

12238 Life, ch. 26.

12239 “ Grata ignominia crucis ei qui Crucifixo ingratus non est.” In Cant. s. 25.

12240 “ Exhibeamus nosmetipsos sicut Dei ministros in multa patientia, in tribulation ibus, in necessitatibus, in angustiis, . . . in laboribus . . .” 2 Cor. vi. 4.

12241 “ Adveniente die judicii, non quærettir quid legimus, sed quid fecimus.” De Imit. Chr. 1. i, c. 3.

12242 “ Habentes oculos non videtis.” Jer. v. 21.

12243 “ Et si . . . noverim mysteria omnia et omnem scientiam, charitatem autem non habuero, nihil sum.” I Cor. xiii. 2.

12244 “ Charitas omnia suffert.”

12245 “ Et omnes qui pie volunt vivere in Christo Jesu, persecutionem patientur.” 2 Tim. iii. 12.

12246 “ Si me persecuti sunt, et vos persequentur.” John, xv. 20.

12247 “ Non otiosa ætas religiosi viri est, neque quietam exigit vitam; impugnatur sæpe, et hæc sunt quæ fidem probant.” In Ps. cxxviii.

12248 “ Quern enim diligit Dominus, castigat; flagellat autem omnem filium quem recipit.” Heb, xii. 6.

12249 “ Ego, quos amo, arguo et castigo.” Apoc. iii. 19.

12250 “ Patienlia autem opus perfectum habet.” James, i. 4.

12251 “ Quia acceptus eras Deo, necesse fuit ut tentatio probaret te.” Tob. xii. 13.

12252 Etsi non habemus peecatum quod nobis objicit inimicus, habemus tamen alterum, quod digne in nobis flagellatur.” In Ps. 68, s. I.

12253 “ Ad emendationem, et non ad perditionem nostram, evenisse credamus.” Judith, viii. 27.

12254 “ Hie ure, hie seca; hie non parcas, ut in æternum parcas.”

12255 “ Si bona suscepimus de manu Dei, mala quare non suscipiamus ?” Job, ii. 10.

12256 Una eademque tunsio bonos perducit ad gloriam, males redigit in favillam.” Serm. 52, E. B. app.

12257 “ Quos passio jungebat. causa separabat.” Ep. 185, E. B.

12258 “ Hi sunt qui venerunt de tribulatione magna; . . ideo sunt ante thronum Dei.” Apoc. vii. 14.

12259 “ Et vita in voluntate ejus.” Ps. xxix. 6.

12260 Int. Castle, d. 2, ch. i.

12261 “ Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi.” Prov. xxiii. 26.

12262 “ Nonne tu es Deus meus, qui tarn crebro pulsas et mendicas ad ostium nostrum, dicens: Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi? imo, et sæpe repulsus, te iterum ingeris “ De Mens, cruc. c. 5.

12263 “ Domine, quid me vis facere ?” Acts, ix. 6.

12264 “ Nihil gratius Deo possumus offere, quam ut dicamus ei: Posside nos.” In Ps. 131.

12265 “ Inveni David, filium Jesse, virum secundum cor meum, qui faciet omnes voluntates meas.” Acts, xiii. 22.

12266 “ Doce me facere voluntatem tuam.” Ps. cxlii. 9.

12267 “ Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum.” Ps. Ivi. 8.

12268 “ Quidquid hie accidit contra voluntatem nostram, noveritis non accidere nisi de voluntate Dei.” In Ps. 148.

12269 “ Bona et mala, vita et mors, paupertas et honestas, a Deo sunt.” Ecclus. xi. 14.

12270 “ Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit; sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est; sit nomen Domini benedictum!” Job, i. 21.

12271 “ Delectare in Domino, et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui.” Ps. xxxvi. 4.

12272 “ Qui autem biberit ex aqua quam ego dabo ei, non sitiet in æternum. “John iv. 13.

12273 “ Beati, qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam, quoniam ipsi satura-buntur.” Matth. v. 6.

12274 “ Non contristabit justum, quid quid ei accident.” Prov. xii. 21.

12275 “ Humiles sunt, hoc volunt; pauperes sunt, pauperie delectantur; itaque beati dicendi sunt” De Gub. Dei, 1. i.

12276 “Pater mi, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste; verumtamen, non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu.” Matth. xxvi. 39,

12277 Part 2, ep. 54.

12278 “ Datus est mihi stimulus carnis meæ; . . . propter quod ter Dominum rogavi, ut discederet a me.” 2 Cor. xii. 7.

12279 “ Sufficit tibi gratia mea.”

12280 “ Dominus sollicitus est mei.” Ps. xxxix. 18.

12281 “ Omnem sollicitudinem vestram projicientes in eum, quoniam ipsi cura est de vobis.” i Pet. v. 7.

12282 “ Fiat voluntas tua!”

12283 “ Ita, Pater! quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te.” Matth. xi. 26.

12284 “ Ecce ancilla Domini!”

12285 “ Domine, quid me vis facere?”

12286 “ Non attendit Deus quid fecerit homo, sed quid velitsæ.”

12287 “ Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.” Matth, vii. 8.

12288 “Quodcunque volueritis, petetis, et fiet vobis. “—Jo/in, xv. 7.

12289 “ Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis.”

12290 “ Exaudi, exaudi, exaudi me, Deus meus, Rex meus, Pater meus, Honor meus, Salus mea, Lux mea, Vita mea! exaudi, exaudi, exaudi me. Jam te solum amo, te solum quæro. Sana et aperi oculos meos. Recipe fugitivum tuuir.; satis inimicis tuis servierim. Jubeas me purum perfectumque amatorem esse sapientiæ tuæ.” Solil. 1. i, c. i.

12291 “ Quæratnus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus; quia, quod quærit, invenit, et frustrari non potest. “ De A quad.

12292 Sess. 25 De inv. Sanct.

12293 Utrum debeamus Sanctos orare ad interpellandum pro nobis.”

12294 “ Ordo est divinitus institutus in rebus, secundum Dionysium, ut per media ultima reducantur in Deum. Unde, cum Sancti, qui sunt in patria, sint Deo propinquissimi, hoc divinæ legis ordo requirit, ut nos, qui marientes in corpore peregrinamur a Domino, in eum per Sanctos medios reducamur.”

12295 “ Sicut, mediantibus Sanctorum suffragiis, Dei beneficia in nos deveniunt, ita oportet nos in Deum reduci, ut iterate beneficia ejus sumamus mediantibus Sanctis.” In 4 Sent. d. 45, q. 3, a. 2.

12296 “ Lege natural! tenemur eum ordinem observare, quern Deus instituit; at constituit Deus ut inferiores ad salutem perveniant, implorato superiorum subsidio.” De Relig. p. 2, c. 2, a. 5.

12297 “Magnum est enim in quolibet Sancto, quando habet tantum de gratia quod sufficit ad salutem multorum; sed, quando haberet tantum quod sufficeret ad salutem omnium, hoc esset maximum, et hoc est in Christo et in Beata Virgine.” Expos, in Sal. Ang,

12298 “ Per te accessum habeamus ad Filium, o Inventrix gratise, Mater salutis, ut per te nos suscipiat, qui per te ciatus est nobis !” In Adv. Dom. s. 2.

12299 “Totiusboni plenitudinem posuit (Deus) in Maria, ut proinde, si quid spei in nobis est, si quid gratiæ , si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare, quæ ascendit deliciis affluens: hortus deliciarum, ut undique fluant et effluant aromata ejus, charismata scilicet gratiarum.” De Aquæd.

12300 “ Sic est voluntas ejus qui totum nos habere voluit per Mariam.”

12301 “Qui me_invenerit, inveniet vitam, et hauriet salutem a Domino.” Prov. viii. 35.

12302 “ In me gratia omnis vise et veritatis; in me omnis spes vitæ et virtutis. . . . Qui operantur in me, non peccabunt. Qui elucidant me, vitam æternam habebunt.” Ecclus. xxiv. 25.

12303 “ Vita, Dulcedo, et Spes nostra.”

12304 “ Ad Mariam recurre; non dubius dixerim, exaudiet utique Matrem Filius.”

12305 “ Filioli, hæc peccatorum scala, hæc mea maxima fiducia est, hæc tota ratio spei meæ.”

12306 “Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus; quia, quod quærit, invenit, et frustrari non potest. De Aquæd.

12307 “ Nobis non est alia quam a te fiducia, o Virgo sincerissima !” De Laud. B. M. V.

12308 “ Omnia bona quæ illic summa Majestas decrevit facere, tuis manibus voluit commendare; commissi quippe sunt tibi thesauri . . . et ornamenta gratiarum.” De Cor. Virg. c. 15.

12309 “ In manibus tuis sunt thesauri miserationum Domini.” De Nativ. s. I.

12310 “ Tu Dispensatrix omnium gratiarum; salus nostra in manu tua est.”

12311 “ Deus vult ut omnia bona ab ipso exspectemus, potentissima Virginis Matris intercessione, cum eam, ut par est, invocamus, impetranda.” Ep. 50 in calce. Theol.

12312 “ Ecce Mater tua ! (John, xix. 20); quasi diceret: Nullus sanguinis illius particeps erit, nisi intercessione Matris meæ. Vulnera gratiarum fontes sunt; sed ad nullos derivabantur rivi, nisi per Marianum canalem. Joannes discipule, tantum a me amaberis, quantum eam amaveris.” Theol. ment. et cord. t. 2, 1. 10, d. 4, c. I.

12313 “ Sine alis tentat volare.” P. 4, tit. 15, c. 22.

12314 “ Omnis a te aversus necesse est ut intereat.” Orat. 51.

12315 “Oui neglexerit illam, morietur in peccatis suis.” Psalt. B. V.ps. 116.

12316 “Gens qua: non servierit tibi, peribit.” Bibl. Mar. Is. n. 20.

12317 “ In mare mundi submerguntur omnes illi, quos non suscipit Navis ista.” De Laud, B. M. 1.11.

12318 Crasset, Ve r. DL ! V. p. I, tr. i, q. 6.

12319 “ Omnipotens auxilium tuum, o Maria!” Hymn. 6.

12320 “ Ab omnipotente Filio omnipotens Mater est effecta.” De Laud. B. M. 1. 4.

12321 “ Mater, pete quod vis a me; non enim inanis potest esse petitio tua. Quia tu mihi nihil negasti in terra, ego tibi nihil negabo in ccrslo.” Rev. 1. 6, c. 23; 1. I, c. 24.

12322 “ Oratio Deipara: habet rationem imperii; unde impossibile est eam non exaudiri.” P. 4, t. 15, c. 17, . 4.

12323 In Dorm. B. V. s. 2.

12324 “ Filius, quasi exsolvens debitum, petitiones tuas implet.” Orat. de Ingr. B. V.

12325 “ Accedis ante illud humana: reconciliationis Altare, non solum rogans, sed imperans, Domina, non ancilla; nam Filius, nihil negans, honorat te.” In Nat, B. V. s. i.

12326 “ Vinum non habent.” John, ii. 3.

12327 “Quid mihi et tibi est, mulier ? nondum venit hora mea.”

12328 “ Et licet ita responderit, maternis tamen precibus obtemperavit.” In Jo. Hom.21.

12329 Tu autem, materna in Deum auctoritate pollens, etiam iis, qui enormiter peccant, gratiam concilias; non enim potesnonexaudiri, cum Deus tibi, ut verse et intemeratæ Matri, in omnibus morem gerat.” In Dorm. Deip. s. 2.

12330 Habes vires insuperabiles, ne clementiam tuam superet multitudo peccatorum. Nihil tuæ resistit potentiæ; tuam enim gloriam

Creator existimat esse propriam.” Or. de Ingr. B. V.

12331 “ Nihil tibi impossibile, cui possibile est desperates in spem beatitudinis relevare.” De Nat. B. V. s. I.

12332 “ Nec facultas ei deesse poterit, nec voluntas. “ In Assumpt. s. I.

12333 De Aff. erga B. V. c. 14.

12334 “ Quasi oliva speciosa in campis. “ Ecclus. xxiv. 19.

12335 “ In campis, ut omnes eam respiciant, omnes ad eam confugiant. “

12336 “Adstat Beatissima Virgo vultui Conditoris, prece potentissima semper interpellans pro nobis.”

12337 “Stat Maria in conspectu Filii sui, non cessans pro peccatoribus exorare.”

12338 “ Quid de fonte pietatis procederet, nisi pietas ?” Dom. i p. Epiph. s. i

12339 “ Mater, pete quod vis a me.” Rev. 1. 6, c. 23.

12340 “ Misericordiam peto miseris.” Ib. 1. i, c. 50.

12341 Sapientibus et insipientibus copiosissima charitate debitricem se fecit; omnibus misericordiæ sinum aperit, ut de plenitudine ejus accipiant universi.” In Sign. magn. 27

12342 “ Certe, Domina ! cum te aspicio, nihil nisi misericordiam cerno; nam pro miseris Mater Dei facta es, et tibi miserendi est officium commissum.” Stim. div. am. p. 3, c. 19.

12343 “Maria adeo prædita est misericordiæ visceribus, ut, non tantum misericors, sed ipsa Misericordia dici promereatur.”

12344 “Quis, post Filium tuum, curam gerit generis humani, sicut tu? Quis ita nos defendit in nostris affiictionibus ? Quis pugnat pro peccatoribus? Propterea, patrocinium tuum majus est, quam comprehend i possit. De Zona Deip.

12345 “Te solam, o Maria ! pro Sa-ncta Ecclesia sollicitam præ omnibus Sanctis scimus.” S. Bonav. Spec. B. V. lect. 6.

12346 “ Non est satietas defensionis ejus.” De Zona Deip.

12347 “ Plus desiderat ipsa facere tibi bonum et largiri gratiam, quam tu accipere concupiscas.”

12348 “ Circuit quærens quem devoret.” i Pet. v. 8.

12349 “ Ipsa semper circuit quærens quem salvet.” Maria I p. 2, s 5; p. 3, s. I.

12350 “ Majori devotione orabis pro me, quam ego auderem petere; et majora etiam impetrabis mihi, quam petere pnesumam.” De Rhet. div. c. 1 8.

12351 “ Ideo miser erit, qui ad misericordiam, cum possit, non accedit!” Rev. 1. 2, c. 23.

12352 “ Adeo feci eam mitem, ut neminem a se redire tristem sinat.” Alloq. 1. i, p. 4, can. 12.

12353 “Semper paratam auxiliari.” De Laud. B. M. 1. 2, p. i.

12354 “A Deo pietate replentur ubera tua, ut, alicujus miseriæ notitia tacta, lac fundant misericordiæ, nec possis miserias scire et non sub venire.” In Cant. c. 23.

12355 “Quis invocavit eam, et non est exauditus ab ipsa?” De Assumpt. s. 2.

12356 “ Quis, o Domina ! fideliter omnipotentem tuam rogavit opem, et fuit derelictus ? revera nullus unquam.” Surius, 4 Febr. Vit. S. Theoph.

12357 “ Sileat misericordiam tuam, Virgo Beata, qui invocatam te in necessitatibus suis sibi meminerit defuisse.” De Assumpt. s. 4.

[12358] “ Ipsa enim non misereri ignorat, et miseris non satisfacere nunquam scivit.” Stim, am. p. 3, c. 13.

[12359] “ In te, Domina, peccant, non solum qui tibi injuriam irrogant, sed etiam qui te non rogant.”

[12360] “ Etiam diabolo exhiberes misericordiam, si humiliter peteret.” Rev. extr. c. 50.

[12361] “ Quantumcumque homo peccet, si ex vera emendatione ad me reversus fuerit, statim parata sum recipere revertentem; nec attendo quantum peccaverit, sed cum quali voluntate venit; nam non dedignor ejus plagas ungere et sanare, quia vocor (et vere sum) Mater misericordiæ.” Rev. 1. 2, c. 23; 1. 6, c. 17.

[12362] “ O Salus te invocantium rCant. p. Psalt.

[12363] “Quidquid minimum, dummodo sit constans.”

[12364] “ Cum sit rmgnificentissima, solet maxima pro minimis reddere.” In Dorm. B. V. s. q,

[12365] “ Qui elucidant me, vitam æternam habebunt.” Ecclus. xxiv. 31.

[12366] Rev. cxtr. c. 104.

[12367] “ Honorare Mariarn, thesaurizare est sibi vitam æternam.” De Laud, B, M. 1. 2, p. I.

[12368] We have thought it useful to add here the formula which the saint gives elsewhere in several places. ED.

[12369] To understand this passage and others of a like nature, we must know that many secular priests in Italy remained with their families, having no special employment; this was the case with St. Alphonsus himself at the beginning of his priestly life. ED.

[12370] We may remark that nothing is said about breakfast, because in Italy, generally, no meal is taken as in the countries of the north, but dinner is taken earlier. ED.

[12371] “ Terram miseriæ et tenebrarum, ubi umbra mortis, et nullus orao, sed sempiternus horror inhabitat.” Job, x. 22.

[12372] It may perhaps be needless to recall here to mind the ascetical works written by St. Alphonsus himself. Many well-instructed priests avow that they seek no other books of piety, because they find all that they desire in those of the holy bishop, who seems to have provided for all the wants of the soul. ED.

[12373] We all know the Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin which are found in Volume VI. This precious little work is also published separately. ED.

12374 There is no question here of the annual retreat. ED.

12375 " Etiam peccata."

12376 "Omnia cooperantur in bonum." Rom. viii. 23.

12377 " Non progredi, jam reverti est." Epist. 17, E. B. app.

12378 " Charitas enim Christi urget nos." 2 Car., v. 14.

12379 " Vulnera corda saxea vulnerantia, et mentes congelatas inflammantia." Stim. div. am. p. 1 c. I.

12380 " In multiloquio non deerit peccatum." Prov. x. 19.

12381 " O solitude, in qua Deus cum suis familiariter loquitur ac conversatur!"

12382 " Ducam eam in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor ejus." Os. ii. 14.

12383 " Silentiura. et a strepitu quies cogit cœlestia meditari." Epist. 78.

12384 " In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam." Ps. iv. 9.

12385 " Non contristabit justum quidquid ei accident." Prov. xii. 21.

12386 Quia tola ardens fuit, omnes se amantes, eamque tangentes, incendit." De B. V M. s. I

12387 " Abneget semetipsum." Matt, xvi. 24.

12388 "Sicut pullus hirundinis, sic clamabo." Is. xxxviii. 14.

12389 In the Italian editions this Exhortation is joined as an appendix to the Rules for Seminaries, which may be found in a subsequent volume.

12390 " Scientia inflat, charitas vero ædificat. Si quis autem se existimat scire aliquid, nondum cognovit quemadmodum oporteat eum scire." I Cor. viii. i.

12391 " Dedit illi scientiam sanctorum." Wisd. x. 10.

12392 " Abscondisti hæc a sapientibus et prudentibus, et revelasti ea parvulis." Matt. xi. 25

12393 " Beatus, qui te scit, etiamsi ilia nesciat." Conf. I. 5, c. 4

12394 " Surgunt indocti, et cœlum rapiunt!" Conf. 1. 8, c. 8.

12395 “ Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum.” I Cor. ii. 2.

12396 “ Cor purum est cor vacuum ab omni cupiditate.”

12397 “ Qui amat, amat, et aliud novit nihil.” In Cant. s. 83.

12398 This discourse, which remained unpublished till 1869, was found among the manuscripts of St. Alphonsus preserved at Rome. From its context we see that it was composed for retreats that are given to priests and to candidates for Holy Orders, and it seems that it was composed before 1737, since the author gives on page 446 only the title of Blessed to St. John Francis Regis, canonized at this time by Pope Clement XII ED.

12399 *“ Desolatione desolata est omnis terra: quia nullus est qui recogitet corde.” Jer. xii. 11.*

12400 “ Loquar ad Dominum meum, cum sim pulvis et cinis.” Gen, xviii. 27.

12401 “ Ut vitam habeant, et abundantius habeant.” John, x. 10.

12402 “ Loquere, Domine, quia audit servus. tuus.” i Kings, iii. 9.

12403 Life, ch. 8. .

12404 Diæt. sal tit. 2, c. 5.

12405 Life, ch. 8,

12406 “ Accedite ad eum, et illuminamini.” Ps. xxxiii. 6.

12407 “ Gœlestis ejus doctrinæ pabulo nutriamur.”

12408 Life, ch. 19.

12409 “ Quid videbis in Sulamite nisi chores castrorum ?” Cant. vii. i

12410 “ Terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.” Cant. vi. 3.

12411 Ad pop. Ant. Hom.79.

12412 “ Hortus conclusus.” Cant. iv. 12.

12413 “ Emissiones tuæ, paradisus malorum punicorum, cum pomorum fructibus.” Ibid. 13.

12414 “ Fons hortorum, puteus aquarum viventium.” Ibid. 15.

12415 “ Anima mea sicut terra sine aqua tibi.” Ps. czlii. 6.

12416 “Sicut corpus, sine anima, non potest vivere, sic anima, sine oratione, mortua est, et graviter olens.” De or. Deo, 1. i.

12417 Ps. i. 3.

12418 “ Tamquam lignum quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum, quod fructum suum dabit in tempore suo; et folium ejus non defluet.” Ps. i. 3.

12419 “ Charitatem habete, quod est vinculum perfectionis.” Col. iii. 14.

12420 “ In meditatione mea exardescet ignis.” Ps. xxxviii. 4.

12421 “ Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem.” Cant. ii. 4.

12422 “ Deus tuus ignis consumens est.” Deut. iv. 24.

12423 “ Oratio est hominis conjunctio cum Deo.” Scala par. gr. 28.

12424 “ Ducam eam in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor ejus.” Os. ii. 14.

12425 “ Genus deditum oration! et contemplation!.”

12426 “ Nos vero orationi et ministerio verbi instantes erimus. “ Acts, vi. 4.

12427 “ Requiescite pusillum.” Mark, vi. 31.

12428 “ Sedebit solitarius, et tacebit, quia levavit super se. “ Lam. iii. 28.

12429 “Sat est, Domine, sat est!”

12430 “ Erat pernoctans in oratione Dei.” Luke, vi. 12.

12431 “ Fuge, Dilecte mi . . . super monies aromatum.” Cant. viii. 14.

12432 “ Sub umbra illins quern desideraveram, sedi.” Cant. ii. 3.

12433 “ Quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbæ, et volabo, et requiescam.” Ps. liv. 7.

12434 “ O ignis qui semper ardes! accende me.” Solil. an. ad D. c. 19.

12435 “ Veni, columba mea in foraminibus petraa, in caverna maceriaa.”—Cant. ii. 13.

12436 “ Elegi vos de mundo. “ John, xv. 19.

12437 “ Domine, qui abstulisti a me amorem saaculi, accipe animam meam.” Off. 5 febr.

12438 “ Regnum mundi et omnem ornatum saaculi contempsi, propter amorem Domini mei Jesu Christi!” Comm. non Virg.

12439 Visits, Introd, Vol. VI. page 117.

12440 Villecourt, Vie de St. Alph. 1, v. ch. vii.

12441 Tannoia and Villecourt, 1. iii. ch. viii.

12442 Panzuti, Novenar. Scrm. 4.

12443 Tannoia and Villecourt, 1. iii. ch. xliv

12444 Tannoia and Villecourt, 1. iii. ch. Xiii., xiv., xxix.

12445 Tannoia and Villecourt, 1. iii. ch. xliv.

12446 Villecourt, 1. iv. ch. xxvii.

12447 By the Rev. Leop. J. Dujardin, C.SS.R.

12448 This is, however, not a mere abridgment that St. Alphonsus gives us. As was usual with him, he appropriated the subject and treated it after his own manner by confining himself to quoting on some points the opinion of the French author. What he ascribes to the latter is found, nearly word for word, in the book entitled “L’Idee du Sacerdoce et du Sacrifice de Jesus-Christ, par le R. P. De Condren, etc. Par un Pretre de l’Oratoire.” We doubt, however, whether his excellent work is that which our Saint had before him; for it appears to us that such a work cannot be called anonymous, though the learned Oratorian who published it in 1677 gives in the title-page only his title, and the initials of his name in his dedication, by signing himself P. Q. (This is Father Pasquier Quesnel, who later on became unfortunately so famous.) This doubt is confirmed by the remark that we add further on, page 36, and is changed almost into certainty in view of a passage that we read on page 46, and that we have not seen in the aforesaid work. We therefore believe that there exists a more recent work in which “L’Idee” of Father De Condren is reproduced in an incomplete manner and without the name of the author.—ED.

12449 Lev. xvi. 8.

12450 “Et posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.”—Isa. liii. 6.

12451 “Exeamus igitur ad eum extra castra, improperium ejus portantes.”—Heb. xiii. 13.

12452 “Hostoiam et oblationem noluisti, corpus autem aptasti mihi; holocautomata pro peccato non tibi placuerunt; tunc dixi: Ecce venio; in capite libri scriptum est de me, ut faciam, Deus, voluntluem tuam.”—Heb. x. 5.

12453 Deut. xv. 2

12454 “Noe . . . obutlit holocau sta super altare: odoratusque est domiuns odorem suavitaits.”—Gen. viii. 20.

12455 Exod. xii. 3.

12456 “Infirma et egena elememta.”—Gal. iv. 9.

12457 “Quem Pater sanctificavit.”—John, x. 36.

12458 “Quod nascetur ex te Sanctum, vocabitur filius Dei.”—Luke, i. 35.

12459 “Corpus autem aptasti mihi, . . . ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam.”—Heb. x 5.

12460 “Quia hostias et oblationes et holocautomata noluisti . . . tunc dixi: Ecce venio, ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam.”—Heb. x. 8.

12461 “In qua voluntate sanctificati sumus per oblationem corporis Jesu Christi semel.”—Ibid. 10.

12462 “Et a tempore cum ablatum fuerit juge sacrificium, et posita fubrit abomination in desolatione, dies mille ducenti nonaginta.”—Dan. Xii. 11.

12463 “Tue es sacerdos in æternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.”—Ps. cix. 4.

12464 “Et nunc clarinca me tu, Pater, apud temetipsum, claritate quam habui, priusquam mundus fieret, apud te.”—John, xvii. 5.

12465 “Is igitur Deus et Dominus noster, etsi semel semetipsum in ara cruces, morte intercedent, Deo Patri oblaturus erat, ut aeternam illic redemptionem operaretur; in coena novissima, qua nocte tradebatur, ut dilectae sponsae suae Ecclesiae visibile, sicut hominum natura exigit, relinqueret sacrificium, quo cruentum illud semel in cruce peragendum rapraesentaretur, ejusque memoria in finem usque saeculi permaneret, atque illius salutaris virtus in remissionem eorum, quae a nobis quotidie committuntur, peccatorum applicaretur, Sacerdotem secundum ordinem Melchisedech se in aeternum constitutum declarans, corpus et sanguinem suum sub speciebus panis et vini Deo Patri obtulit; ac, sub earumdem rerum symbolis, Apostolis, quos tunc Novi Testamenti Sacerdotes constituebat, ut sumerent, tradidit; et eisdem eorumque in sacerdotio successoribus, ut offerrent, praecepit per haec verba: ‘Hoc facite in meam commemorationem;’ uti simper Catholica Ecclesia intellexit et docuit.”—Sess. 22, c. 1.

[12466] “Una enim eademque est Hostia, idem nunc offerens Sacerdotis ministerio, qui seipsum tunc in cruce obtulic, sola offerendi ratione diversa.”—Sess. 22, c. 2.

[12467] P. 2, c. 4, q. 62.

[12468] “Quoties hujus Hostiæ commemoratio celebratur, opus nostræ redemptions exercetur.”—Dom. 9 p. Pent.

[12469] It seems to us that the two explanations which we have just read—the explanation of the anonymous author and that of St. Alphonsus—about the consummation or the last two parts of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ can be and should be admitted, should not exclude each other, but should be united. It was necessary that this great sacrifice, the only real sacrifice worthy of God, should be consummated in heaven and on earth at the same time, to unite to God the body of Jesus Christ entirely; that is, the Church triumphant and the Church militant: in heaven, by the glorious union of Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, of the angels, of the saints with God, and among themselves in the bosom of God in which the sacrifice is perfect and eternal: on earth, by Holy Mass and Communion, in which all the faithful partake of the same victim under the Eucharistic veil. The body of the Redeemer, immolated on the Cross, had, therefore to be transformed in a twofold manner; namely, by the resurrection, for the consummation of the sacrifice in heavenly glory; by the Eucharist, for the consummation of the sacrifice in earthly combats. This twofold consummation of the true sacrifice was typified in the ceremonies of the Old Law: the burning of the victim represented heavenly Communion, and the eating of it represented earthly Communion. But in heaven, as in Holy Mass, we have not only consummation, but we have all the parts of the Sacrifice of the Cross and of the sacrifices of the Old Law. Hence, three kinds of sacrifices, or three degrees, are to be distinguished. In the Old Law there were figures without the reality; in the New Law we have the reality under the figures or appearances; in glory we have the reality exposed and unveiled. Such is, briefly, the thought of Pere De Condren, wisely developed by him who published it. Such is, also, without doubt, the thought of St. Alphonsus; for otherwise we should not understand what he says on page 32, where he explains the text taken from Daniel.—ED.

[12470] Epist. 1. 7, ind. 2, ep. 63.

[12471] De Alt. Myst. 1. 2, c. 13.

[12472] De Missae S. 1. 2, c. 3.

[12473] Ann. 325.

[12474] “Nos, in isto loco, non aram fecimus Stephano, sed de reliquiis Stephani aram Deo.”—Serm. 318, E. B.

[12475] De Missœ S. 1. 2, c. 4.

[12476] Ration. 1. 4, c. 1.

12477 De Miss. 1. 2, c. 16.

12478 Luke, ii, 14.

12479 De Missœ S. 1. 2, c. 8.

12480 “Mensa quæ sit, nostis; ibi est corpus et sanguis Christi; qui accedit ad talem mensam, præparet talia.”—In Jo. tr. 47.

12481 “Monet sancta Synodus præceptum esse ab Ecclesia Sacerdotibus, ut aquam vino in calice offerendo miscerent; quod Christum Dominum ita fecisse credatur.”—Sess. 22 c. 7.

12482 Lib. 2, C. 9, § 2.

12483 “Domine, has oblationes benignus assume, ut, quod singuli obiulerunt, cunctis proficiat.”

12484 Isa. Vi. 3.

12485 Matt. Xxi. 9.

12486 “Ab omni errore purum.”

12487 “Is enim constat, cum ex ipsis Domini verbis, tum ex Apostolorum traditionibus, ac Sanctorum quoque Pontificum piis institutionibus.”—Sess. 22, c. 4.

12488 De Sacr. 1. 4, c. 4.

12489 “ ‘Illibata,’ quæ sine macula cordis et corporis oportet offerri.”—De Alt. Myst. 1. 3, c. 3.

12490 “Cum altari assistitur, semper ad Patrem dirigatur oratio.”—c. 23

12491 “Non petimus immutari æternum Dei propositum, sed causam pro effectu ponimus, orantes ut Deus nos ad se convertat atque ad æternam felicitatem perducat; qui sunt effectus prædestinationis.”—In Sent. 1. 1, d. 40, § 22.

12492 Such should also be, in this grave ceremony, the sentiments of all the faithful, who, we should not forget, offer the holy sacrifice jointly with the priest.—ED.

12493 “Exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem, rationabile obsequium vestrum.”—Rom. xii. 1.

12494 “Non ut consecratio impleatur, sed ut nobis fiat fructuosa “-P 3, q. 83, a. 4.

12495 “Non suis sermonibus, sed utitur sermonibus Christi.”—De Sacr. 1. 4, c. 4

[12496] Matt. Xxvi. 26.

[12497] “Hic est calix novum Testamentum in Sanguine meo, qui pro vobis fundetur.”—Luke, xxii. 20.

[12498] “Hic est enim Sanguis meus novi Testamenti, qui pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum.”—Matt. xxvi. 28.

[12499] “In sanguine Testamenti æterni.”—Heb. xiii. 20.

12500 “Quoniam aliud ibi cernitur, aliud creditur.”—De Alt. Myst. 1. 4, c. 36.

12501 “Sane formam istam verborum ab ipso Christo acceperunt Apostoli, et ab ipsis Apostolis accepit Ecclesia.”—Ibid. c. 5.

12502 P. 2, c. 4, q. 20.

12503 De Miss. Sacr. 1. 2, c. 15.—Benedict XIV. here observes that St. Thomas (P. 3, q. 18, a. 3) seems to favor the opinion of those who make the essential form of the consecration of the chalice consist in all the words that the priest pronounces as far as Hœc quotiescumque; because the words that follow, Hic est enim calix sanguinis mei, are determinationes, prædicati, that is to say, sanguinis Christi, and consequently, belonging ad integritatem ejusdem locutionis, are de substantia formœ. St. Pius V. caused the contrary opinion to be erased from the commentary of Cajetan,

12504 “Sacerdos, post consecrationem, non utitur crucesignatione ad benedicendum et consecrandum, sed solum ad commemorandum virtutem crucis et modum passionis Christi quæ ad crucem est terminata.”—P. 3, q. 83, a. 5.

12505 “Sacerdos petit hoc pro corpore mystico, ut scilicet orationes Sacerdotis et populi Angelus assistens divinis mysteriis Deo repræsentet.”—P. 3, q. 83, a. 4.

12506 “Animas ibi detentas, fidelium suffragiis, potissimum vero acceptabili altaris Sacrificio juvari.”—Sess. 25, Decr. de Purg.

12507 Sess. 22, c. 2.

12508 “Videte qualem charitatem dedit nobis Pater, ut filii Dei nominemur et simus.”—1 John, iii. 1.

12509 “Accepistis Spiritum adoptionis, in quo clamamus: Abba (Pater).”—Rom. viii. 15.

12510 Luke, xi. 3.

12511 “Tribue tantum victui meo necessaria.”—Prov. xxx. 8.

12512 “Supersubstantialem.”—Matt. vi. 11.

12513 These two expressions are not opposed to each other; on the contrary, one explains the other. We ask, in the one as in the other, what is each day necessary for the subsistence of the body and of the soul; but we chiefly ask for spiritual nourishment, and, above everything else, for the Holy Eucharist, which is pre-eminently and beyond comparison called the bread of life and the true bread of the children of God. Panis vitœ, vere Panis filiorum.—ED.

12514 “Deus enim intentator malorum est; ipse autem neminem tentat.”—*James, i. 13.*

12515 “ Excæca cor populi hujus . . . ne forte videat.”—Isa. vi. 10.

12516 “Vigilate et orate, ut non intretis in tentationem.”—Matt, xxvi.

12517 “Per multas tribulationes oportet nos intrare in regnum Dei.”—Acts, xiv. 21.

12518 This signifies that the divine Mediator gives support to our prayer and renders it efficacious.—ED.

12519 “Oratio, quamvis importuna, plus amica est.”—Hom, in Matt.

12520 “Vult Deus nos in oratione esse perseverantes usque ad importunitatem.”—In Luc. xi. 8.

12521 P. 3, q. 83, a. 5.

12522 “Non enim petimus ut nunc fiat Consecratio, sed ut Consecratio, antea facta, sit nobis ad vitam æternam salutaris.—De Miss. 1. 2, c.

12523 “Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—Rom. viii.

12524 “Deo gratias agere, est sentire omnia bona a Deo data esse, et pro ipsis Deum laudare.”

12525 “Ab hujusmodi autem culpa veniali excusabit quælibet mediocris causa rationabilis, puta: si dans eleemosynam postulet ut statim celebretur; si exspectet populus, aut aliqua persona gravis; si superior præcipiat, tempus celebrandi transeat, vel instet commoditas studii, itineris, et similia.”—(Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 347.) See also “Dispositions of the Celebrant,” in the Appendix. § VJ.

12526 Epist. ad Otton. card. Tusc.

12527 De Sacrif. Missœ, 1. 3, c. 13, n. 4.

12528 “Dubitatur an sit veniale, omittere orationes ante vel post Missam. Communiter negant, quia in Rubrica non adest de illis præceptum, sed tantum insinuatio, cum ibi, in præparatione Missæ, solummodo dicatur: ‘Orationes pro temporis opportunitate (hoc est, commoditate) dicendæ.’ Hoc tamen non obstante, Sacerdotem, qui sine ulla præparatione, saltem domi facta, ad sacrificandum accederet, puto ab aliqua culpa non excusandum.”—(Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 410.) Our author does not comprise among these prayers of mere counsel those that one recites in putting on the vestments, nor those that one should say at the end of Mass, Ch. XI. n. 14; they do not bear the title Pro temporis opportunitate, but are positively prescribed.

12529 De Herdt (s. Liturg. prax. tom. I. n. 195) teaches that the priest should wash his hands and not merely his fingers, as he does at the Lavabo of the Mass. “Lotio manuum ante Missam debet fieri saltem sub veniali; et sub gravi, si manus sint valde immundæ, propter reverentiam Sacrificii.”—(Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 409.)

12530 He places the purificator directly upon the chalice; and if he carries with him a small spoon with which he may put a little water into the chalice at the Offertory, as such a thing is allowed (S. R.

C., Febr. 6, 1858), he places it on the purificator. See Appendix: The Chalice and its Accessories, § III.; and the permission to touch the sacred vessels, § X.

12531 Decr. Jan. 22, 1701. Nevertheless, later on, the question was again asked in these words: "An, non obstantibus decretis a Sacra Rituum Congregatione editis, uti liceat palla a parte superiori panno serico cooperta?—and the Congregation answered, January 10, 1852: 'Permitti posse, dummodo palla linea subnexa calicem cooperiat, ac pannus superior non sit nigri coloris aut referat aliqua mortis signa.' "

12532 In Rubr. Miss. p. 2, t. 1, litt. o.

12533 Merati, In Rubr. Miss. p. 2, t. 2, n. 12,

12534 De Euchar. p. 2, c. 9, a. 2, s. 8.

12535 Rubr. gen. tit. xx.

12536 That is to say, in case of necessity, when, for example, there is no sacristy. The vestments, however, cannot be taken to the altar on which the Blessed Sacrament is publicly exposed, as the Ceremoniale Episcoporum directs.

12537 S. R. C., Sept. 27, 1659.

12538 Baldeschi remarks that this opinion of Merati is contrary to the Rubric of the Missal, as we may see further on, Ch. IV. n. 1, where we read: "In omni deosculatione, sive altaris, sive libri, sivc alterius rei, non producitur signum crucis pollice vel manu super id quod osculandumest." Hence the forming of the cross may be omitted.

12539 "Congruentius uti cingulo lineo," ut S. R. C. die 22 Januarii 1701 declaravit. Novissime autem permisit S. R. C. ut etiam cingula lanea licite adhiberi possent. Die 23 Dec, 1862, in una Ord. Carthus., n. 5326

12540 S. R. C., June 8, 1709,

12541 The palm or span is equal to nine inches.–ED.

12542 At the present time this is done nowhere. Martinucci, I. c. n. 13, reckons it among the faults to throw the stole over the head down the back without arranging it at the neck, so that the cross which is in the middle may appear above the chasuble.

12543 A white handkerchief is more becoming.

12544 The following is, according to Fornici, the mystical signification attached by the Church to the priestly ornaments; the priest would do well to think of it while vesting in order the better to represent the person of Jesus Christ at the altar: "Ad revocandos in memoriam Passionis mysteria,

amictus mystice significat, aut velum quo Judæi Christi faciem obtexerunt, aut coronam spineam, aut ipsius divinitatem sub humanitatis amictu absconditam; alba illam vestem figurat, qua indutum Christum Jesum Herodes irrisit; cingulum in horto Christum fune ligatum; manipulus vincula proponit contemplanda quibus Salvator columnæ fuit ad flagellandum alligatus; stola, juxta Soto, funes quibus Christus, crucem bajulans, constrictus est; casula tandem, aut vestimentum purpureum coram Pilato, aut vestem inconsutilem quam Christo, cruci affigendo, Judæi detraxerunt." As for the quality of the vestments, see Appendix, § IV.

[12545] As to the server, see Appendix, § X.

[12546] In the Rubric of the Missal it is not said whether the reverence is to be profound or moderate. Authors agree that the profound is to be made to the cross or image of the crucifix; the moderate, to the image of the Blessed Virgin; but the simple, to the image of the other saints.

[12547] The head is inclined when in the hymn Gloria in excelsis the word Deo is pronounced, and at Deum in the symbol Credo in unum Deum.

[12548] The custom generally followed in Rome is that the priest when leaving the sacristy takes holy water and makes the sign of the cross. The Congregation of Rites, consulted on this practice, answered, March 27. 1779: "Si commode fieri potest, se signet; sin minus, se abstineat." It would be well for the server to present holy water to the priest.

[12549] Among the faults committed at Mass St. Alphonsus enumerates this fault namely: "E sacristia exeundo Psalmum Miserere recitare, quamvis aliquam orationem mentaliter dicere possit."—(See Chap XVII n. 2.)

[12550] Martinucci.1. 1, c. 18, n. 21, says: "Manum oblique bursæ imponens, ne quid a calice decidat."

[12551] "Praxis Urbis est optima Rubricarum interpres."–(Schober, page 18, note 13.)

[12552] As for the reverence due to the relic of the True Cross, the following is the decision that has been given: "Si loco principe reliquia Sanctissimæ Crucis super altare fuerit exposita, tunc transeuntes ante illam, unico genu usque ad terram flexo, venerare debent: diversimode vero solo capitis inclinatione, si præfata reliquia recondita erit in custodia.—(S. R. C., 7 Maii 1746.)

[12553] St. Alphonsus gives some other details on this subject in his Moral Theology,1. 6, n. 396.

[12554] This practice raised doubts, and the Congregation of Rites having been consulted, answered, November 12, 1831: "In accessu et recessu, in plano est genuflectendum; in infimo autem gradu altaris, quoties genuflectere occurrat."

[12555] Here no inclination to the cross is to be made (Schober, page 22. note 22).

[12556] Baldeschi, p. I. art. 3, n. 27, recommends tha the coporal be so extended that the last fold that is towards the celebrant and the front of the altar be the last opened; and the same be first closed, lest

there be danger of losing the fragments that may have inadvertently remained. Bauldry, p. 3, tit. 2, n. 3, and Hagerer, tit. 2, n. 2, say that it is a fault against the Rubric not to unfold it immediately and to wait till the Offertory. The same must be said if any one does not open the front fold of the corporal, but keeps it closed till the Offertory; because the Rubric says nothing of this practice.–(Schober, page 23, n. 23.)

12557 The Rubric of the Missal does not prescribe this inclination.—(See Schober, page 24, n. 26.)

12558 The inclinations when the priest leaves the middle of the altar or returns to the middle must be omitted; for the Rubric prescribes the reverence only twice: (a) before the priest descends from the altar to begin Mass, “facta primum cruci reverentia,” says the Rubric, part II. tit. 2, n. 4; and (b) if he passes before the middle of the altar, carrying the Missal himself, “caput cruci inclinat” (Rubr. tit. 6, n. 1). Such is the practice in Rome (see Schober, page 24, note 27).

12559 Schober (page 26, n. 28) says: “Videant rectores ut bona Missalia habeant . . . requiritur, 1. Adprobatio Ordinarii, quæ attestari debet, editionem comparatam fuisse cum editione Romana et eidem conformem esse; 2, Ne sit antiquata sed ex recentioribus editionibus.”

What is to be thought of those that are accustomed nearly always to say the whole Canon by heart? Schober answers (page 27, n. 28): “Sine dubio in re tam gravissima saltem interdum periculo lethaliter peccandi se exponunt. . . . Ipsa Rubrica saltem indirecte requirit ut Canon ex libro legatur. . . . Si tamen quidam auctores requirunt, ut totus Canon ex libro legatur et non memoriter recitetur, id non ita rigide intelligi debet, ut aliqua pauca ejusdem verba, maxime quæ cum gestibus conjuncta sunt, non possint memoriter recitari, dummodo probe sciantur, aut ex præcedenti obtutu bene recenterque fuerint memoriæ tradita.”

12560 “An, in Missis privatis, permitti possit ministro aperire Missale et invenire Missam?” To this question the Congregation of Rites answered, September 7, 1816: “Negative, et serventur Rubricæ.”

12561 In regard to the number and quality of the candles required, see Moral Theology, 1. 6, n. 394. See also Appendix, § II. n. 3.

12562 According to note 2, page 96, this genuflection is to be made on the lowest step.

12563 “Neque tam submissa (voce), ut a circumstantibus audiri non possit,” adds the Rubric, p. I. tit. XVI. n. 2. Conf. theol. mor. S. Alph. lib. 6, n. 403.

12564 See Theol. Moral, lib. 6, n. 413.

12565 Page 93.

12566 There are various decrees forbidding the adding to the Confiteor of the name of a saint. However, the S. C. R., through a special favor, has allowed religious communities to use the name of the founder. If the priest celebrates without a server, he should not say the Confiteor twice.

12567 According to the Rubric of the Mass which is celebrated by a bishop, it is not allowed the ministers to say: tibi vel te Reverendissime Pater.

12568 No inclination is to be made, as the Rubric prescribes none: “Post Introitum redibit ad medium altare, ac nullam cruci faciens reverentiam, junctis semper manibus, recitabit Kyrie eleison simul cum ministro.”—(Martinucci, lib. i. c. 18, n. 39.)

12569 The Rubric says (1. c. n. 3): “Elevansque usque ad humeros (quod in omni manuum elevatione observatur)”; Cærem. Episcop. lib. ii. cap. n. 38: “Elevatisque manibus ad altitudinem humerorum.”

12570 According to the Rubric of the Missal, the hands are again to be joined when the word Deo is said. Merati (p. ii. tit. 4, n. 10), following this Rubric, writes: “Dum sacerdos profert vocem illam Deo duo præstat: alterum est jungere manus ante pectus de more; alterum vero est inclinare caput;” this is the common opinion of the Rubricists.

12571 St. Alphonsus seems to admit either opinion. It is certain that the Rubric does not prescribe that the hands be joined in the case above mentioned. The Congregation of Rites, consulted on this point, answered, November 12, 1831: “Serventur Rubricæ.”

12572 Also when Masses are celebrated within any octave of the Blessed Virgin. The same holds good for the votive Masses of the saints that are celebrated within their octaves.—(See Schober, page 39, note 7.)

12573 “Pro re gravi, vel pro publica Ecclesiæ causa, dummodo non dicatur Missa cum paramentis violaceis.”—(Rubr. gen. tit. VIII. n. 4.)

12574 “Perspicilla sæculo elapso naribus tantum insidebant nec tam decenter, sicut hodie, firmabantur. Facilius quidem poterant levari, sed etiam faciliter decidebant. . . . cum hodie conspicilla modo penitus diverso et magis convenienti adhibeatur, difficiliusque deponi et iterum firmari possint, non videtur amplius necessarium, illa ad quamcumque actionem infra Missam deponere, quum insuper juxta Rubricas generales, tit. xx.: ‘super altare nihil omnino ponatur, quod ad Missæ sacrificium vel ipsius altaris ornamentum non pertineat.’ Sic vero practicatum videmus ab optimis quoque sacerdotibus. Si quis autem utatur perspicillis, quæ antiquis similia sunt et germanice Zwicker, gallice Pince-nez vocantur, ea deponere debet, quandocumque ad populum se vertit.”—(Schober, page 40, note 1.)

12575 Or on the altar, as has been said above, Chapter III., page 103.

12576 “Easque tenet usque ad finem,” the Rubric adds (1. c., tit. V. n. 1).

12577 Or “if at the beginning of the prayer mention is made of the Son.”—(Rubric, gen, tit, n, 17.)

12578 If, namely, it has its own conclusion.

12579 Baldeschi and most of the authors say that the head should be raised immediately.—(See Schober, page 41, note 6.)

12580 Also in the prayer for the Pope when he is mentioned the head is always inclined—not, however, to the cross. Likewise at the name of the bishop the head is to be inclined towards the book when his prayer is said; as also when the name of the Blessed Trinity is uttered the head is inclined as at the name Jesus. This inclination takes place whether the three Persons are either expressly named together, as in Deo Patri sit gloria, or when the name of the Blessed Trinity is expressly mentioned at the end of the hymns.—(S. R. C., August 12, 1854.)

12581 Merati (1, c, n, 11) explicitly says what is to be understood by a commemoration: "Nomine commemorationis, ait, veniunt illi Sancti, de quibus recolitur specialis memoria in Oratione, vel qui de illis recurrit in illa die festum, aut simplex, aut semiduplex, aut duplex, aut dies infra Octavam, aut de illo Sancto dicitur Missa."

12582 "Quando immediate sequuntur plura nomina Sanctorum, satis est, caput tantum semel inclinare, ita tamen ut inclinatio duret a primo nomine usque ad ultimum; sic enim etiam Rubricæ satisfieri videtur, quia nomina proferuntur inclinato capite. Quod autem non habet locum, quando nomina diversam inclinationem requirunt. uti v. gr. in festo S. Joseph, in principio Evangelii: 'Cum esset desponsata mater Jesus Maria Joseph,' ad quæ verba triplex inclinatio facienda est, nempe minimarum maxima, media et minima."—(Schober, page 43, n. 9.)

12583 The S. R. C., Sept. 7, 1844, answered: "Inclinationem capitis non esse faciendam at the words optimam partem elegit sibi Maria quæ non auferetur ab ea in æternum," words found in the Mass of the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

12584 The conclusion is always such as is required by the prayer to which it is added, no regard being had to the preceding prayers.

12585 No inclination is to be made, as the Rubric does not proscribe it.

12586 "Vel communem, si officium fit de Dominica."—(Rub. Miss. p. 1, tit. IX. n. 10.)

12587 Nempe tertia Oratio.

12588 In reference to the prayer A cunctis the following decisions are to be considered:

1. In the prayer A cunctis the name of S. Joseph is always to be added—in the words cum beato Joseph—after the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and before all other patron saints, except the angels and St. John the Baptist. This also holds good for the Post-Communion.—(S. C. R., April 22, 1871.)

2. At the letter N. in the prayer A cunctis there must be mentioned in every church the name of the patron or the titular saint of the church in which one celebrates Mass. But if the name is already mentioned, it need not be mentioned again (S. C. R., Nov. 12, 1831); and then the two words atque beato should be omitted.

If this church is dedicated to the Holy Trinity, to the Holy Cross, to the Holy Spirit, or any other mystery, no mention is made of them; and the two words atque beato are omitted. We also omit them for reasons given above if the church is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, to St. Michael, to St. John the Baptist, to St. Joseph, to St. Peter, or to St. Paul.—(S. C. R., Apr. 16, 1853.)

In a chapel or oratory without a patron or titular saint we must always take the name of the patron either of the city or of the country.—(S. C. R., Febr. 15, 1873.)

If there are several patrons, we must place them according to the order that each one occupies in Litaniis majoribus.—(S. R. C., Sept. 28, 1865.)

3. May religious invoke their holy founder in the two prayers A cunctis and Mundet? Yes, provided they do not omit the patron or the titular saint.—(S. C. R., June 17, 1843.)

[12589] “Feriæ majores are the feriæ of Advent, of Lent, of the Ember days, and feria secunda Rogationum ; feria tertia et quarta Rogationum are minores, and if they occur in a Mass with the commemoration simplicis, the commemoration simplicis is to precede such a feria.”—(Schober, page 52, note 27.)

[12590] The Munda cor should not be begun until after the priest has profoundly inclined.

[12591] Here the Rubric of the Missal expressly prescribes an inclination.

[12592] A blind priest authorized to say always a votive Mass cannot say Mass with Credo on a Sunday.—(Schober. p. 58.)

[12593] The Credo should be said on both feasts of St. Joseph; namely, in festo natali, as well as in alio ipsius Patrocinii, etiam in casu translationis extra Dominicam.—(S. R C., April 22, 1871.)

[12594] At present all the Doctors of the Church have their feasts sub ritu duplici. St. Mary Magdalen has a Credo in the Mass celebrated on her feast.

[12595] This is the decree: “Regulares in ipsa civitate degentes in posterum teneri ad celebrandum festum Dedicationis ecclesiæ cathedralis cum officio duplicis secundæ classis, non tamcn cum octava.

[12596] By the principal feasts of the religious Orders is to be understood those of their holy founders, of their titular and patron saints.

[12597] St. Alphonsus follows here Merati; others deny that the hands are to be raised, for the Rubric says: “Extendens et jungens manus, caputque inclinans, dicit Oremus.”

[12598] Although some drops of the precious blood may still remain in the chalice, no genuflection is made either in leaving the middle of the altar, or returning to it.—(S. R. C., July 20, 1686.)

12599 When a large Host is to be consecrated for the monstrance, it is placed on the paten, and after the offering it is put on the corporal at the side before the chalice, that is, to the left of the celebrant in a straight line with the other large Host, according to the usual custom. If, however, the Host that is to be put into the monstrance is adjusted only with difficulty, it may be consecrated in the lunula itself, while remaining on the corporal in the above-mentioned place.—(Schober, page 63, n. 5.)

12600 This is what Benedict XIV. says: “Communis sententia est non posse particulas consecrari, cum Canon recitari inceperit, etiamsi ageretur de consecranda particular quæ afferenda esset pro Viatico ad infirmum; eo enim casu, prava quædam detrahi posset particular ex Hostia Missæ, et reservari pro infirmo.”-(De Sacrif. M. s. 2, n. 158, vel 1. 3, c. 18.)

12601 The Rubric of the Missal says nothing about an inclination to the cross.

12602 “An in Missis privatis permitti possit ministro, si fuerit sacerdos vel diaconus sive subdiaconus, ut præparet calicem et ipsum extergat in fine post ablutions, sicut in Missa solemni?” S.C.R. die 7 Sept. 1816, answered; “Negative, et serventur Rubricæ.”

12603 In the same decree to the question: “An purificatorium poni debeat super pedem calicis, dum præparatur, vel potius super patenam?” the answer was given by the S.R.C.: “Relinqui posse sacerdotis arbitrio.”

12604 The prayer Deus, qui humanæ substantiæ should be begun by the priest at the same moment in which he blesses the water; “non vero prius aqua benedicatur nihil dicendo, atque tunc demum facto signo cruces illa oratio incipiatur.”-(S.R.C., Aug. 12, 1854.)

12605 The Sacred Congregation of Rites, February 6, 1858, decided that the use of the small spoon is not prohibited: “Usum pravi cochlearis non esse prohibitum.”

12606 Rubricists agree that the extremities of the purificator should look towards the altar, and not towards the celebrant.

12607 Here the Rubric prescribes no inclination of the head.

12608 Page 108.

12609 The Rubric, however, does not prescribe any inclination; hence it should be omitted.

12610 No inclination is here prescribed by the Rubric.

12611 The Rubric of the Missal says nothing about an inclination.

12612 Page 116.

12613 According to the Rubric the hands are not to be raised higher, but are only to be joined.—(Sec Schober, page 73, note 35.)

[12614] The Rubric should be observed, that is, the hands are not to be joined.—(See Schober, page 75, note 40.)

[12615] Page 139.

[12616] “Ad verbum Memento incipit sacerdos elevare manus et ad tuarum eas jungit.”—(Schober, page 78, note 4.)

[12617] We may see what St. Alphonsus teaches in regard to the value and the application of the fruit of the Mass in his dissertation on the Honorarium. We may also find in the exercises for the Preparation other formulas of intention.

[12618] “Deus cœli et terræ, omnium bonorum fons indeficiens, ego miserrimus peccator et Ecclesiæ tuæ minister indignissimus, quia hoc sacrificium vim impetratoriam infinitam habet, offero illud pro meis, et omnium viventium ac defunctorum necessitatibus; et primo quidem fructum, quem possum et debeo, illi principaliter applico, pro quo celebrare intendo; et si forte contingat eum non indigere, vel non esse capacem, opto et volo hunc fructum ad N. derivari, cum applicatione indulgentiarum mihi, vel tali defuncto. Secundario autem, sine ejus præjudicio, pro quo offerre primario teneor vel intendo, offero pro omnibus mihi particulariter commendatis, pro N. N. pro tali gratia obtinenda, et pro cunctis viventibus, atque defunctis, pro quibus me indignum famulum tuum legatione apud te fungi voluisti, ut defunctis requiem indulgeas, vivisque gratiam concedas tibi serviendi, et in amore tuo usque in finem perseverandi. Amen.”-De Sacrific. Missæ, c. 4, § 6.

[12619] “Ut omnium recordari possis, quorum recordari et pro quibus debes orare, postquam dixisti: Memento, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum, ut ipsæ preces vim habeant efficaciorem, multum proderit cum Christi Domini cruciatibus illas associare, hunc fere in modum: 1° Pro te ipso orabis per sanguinem pro nobis effusum, ut per ilium expieris a peccatis, et eas virtutes obtineas, quæ tibi maxime sunt necessariæ, et finalem perseverantiam. 2° Per latus transfixum, Ecclesiam commendabis, quæ ex eo orta est. 3° Per caput spinis coronatum, summum pontificem, omnesque principes et antistites. 4° Per vulnus dexteræ manus, amicos, consanguineos et benefactores. 5° Per vulnus sinistræ, omnes qui te oderunt, vel aliqua molestia aut scandalo affecerunt. 6° Per dexterum pedem transforaturn, personas et negotia a superioribus commendata. 7° Per sinistrum, omnes qui sunt in peccato mortali ut in dexteram partem transferantur. 8° Per flagella, sputa et alapas, ethnicos, hæreticos, cæterosque infideles, qui Deum contumeliis afficiunt. 9° Per crucifixionem, religiosos omnium ordinum, ut crucem voluntariæ asperitatis libenter ferant. 10° Per sitim, eos omnes qui tuas preces expetunt. 11° Per angorem, quem in horto pati voluit, omnes qui in aliqua calamitate, periculo, necessitate, tentatione aut molestia versantur. 12° Per mortem et sepulturam, justos omnes, ut cum ipso sepulti, semper in justitia perseverent, speciatim vero pro illis orabis, quorum te Deus meminisse vult, et tu nescis, pro his, quos Deus maxime diligit, licet eorum munerum et nomina ignores: id enim gratissimum illi est.”

[12620] “In conclusione, quando dicit: Per eumdem jungit manus.”-(Rubrica, 1. c., n. 4.)

[12621] If a saint has an octave, we must make this inclination not only in the Masses in which we make mention of this saint, but also in those in which on account of the occurrence of a feast primæ classis or secundæ classis no commemoration is made. This rule does not apply to the Masses of the

Dead: “An in festo Sanctorum qui nomi—nantur in Canone, si sint rit. semidupl. vel Missa dicatur de Requiem, inclinandum sit caput, quando in Canone nominantur prædicti Sancti?” S.R.C. respondit: “Negative.” In una Panormitan. die 12 April, 1823. ad. 13, n. 4594.

12622 Page 139.

12623 Accenso intorticio. . . . In his Moral Theology (1. 6, n. 394) St. Alphonsus says: “Probabiliter ait Croix cum Sporer, nullam esse obligationem accendendi tertiam candelam post Sanctus; sic enim hodie communis usus habuit.”

12624 This is to be a simple minimarum maxima inclination.

12625 But the Rubric mentioned above says: “Cum autem finierit supradicta verba (i.e., benedixit, . . . ex hoc omnes), etc.

12626 Authors are not agreed whether or not the genuflection is to be made with a pause (morula). The Rubric says nothing about it; it should therefore be omitted.

12627 According to the Rubric, a genuflection should be made before covering the ciborium. (See Schober, page 86, note 18.)

12628 Tom. 3, a. 17, qu. 2 (et in dissert. 1. 4).

12629 That is a simple minimarum maxima inclination.

12630 The Rubric says: “Sinistra calicem infra cuppam tenens, dextra signat super eum.”

12631 “An sacerdos ponere debeat manus intra coporale, dum dicit orationes Supplices te rogamus et orationes ante communionem?” S. R. C. respondit: “Servandas esse rubricas quæ jubent manus ponendas esse super altare, non intra corporale.”-(In Tuden. die 7 Sept., 1886.)

12632 This is better explained by thc foregoing Rubric of the Mass: “Cum dicit: Ex hac altaris,” etc.

12633 The hands should be extended usque ad finem, according to the Rubric.

12634 Note the word afterwards (postea), for then only after the priest has said Amen, and not before he places his left hand on the corporal, etc.

12635 Lib. 2, c. 8, n. 73.

12636 Page 108.

12637 As the body is already inclined, no inclination of the head is to be made at the name Jesus.

[12638] “Hic nonnulli abstergunt digitos super patenam; sed non recte faciunt, quia tum a Rubrica hic id non prescribitur, tum non super patenam. sed super calicem digiti abstergendi sunt”-(Schober, page 98, note 15.)

[12639] “Juxta hanc Rubricam utique in collectione fragmentorum moraliter possibilis diligentia et advertentia requiritur, ne quid fragmentum super corporale aut patenam remaneat, et irreverentia committatur; sed multi, minus recte, nimiam et superfluam diligentiam adhibent, corporale et patenam fricant et perfricant, ut particulas, quæ non sunt fragmenta sacræ hostiæ, sed fila et fragmenta corporalis aut aliarum rerum, colligant, et in hac collectione tempus ita conterunt, ut finis ejus vix expectandus sit.”—(Ibid. page 98, note 17.)

[12640] Cfr. note 1, page 156.

[12641] “Peccaret graviter sacerdos, si hostiam majorem in Missa consecratam reponeret in tabernaculo, et ejus loco sumeret hostiam, quæ in eodem tabernaculo antea continebatur; ipse enim de suo sacrificio participare debet. Cfr. Can. Relatum de Consecr. distinct. II.-Hostiam, e monstrantia sumptam sumit, vel unacum altera sacrificii (Rubr. Miss. de defect. tit. 7, n. 2 et 3), vel post sumptionem Sanguinis ante purificationem. S. R. C. 3 Sept. 1672, in una Cochen. ad 3, n. 2602.”—(Ibid. page 99, note 19.)

[12642] St. Alphonsus, in his Moral Theology, 1. 6, n. 408, says: “Hic obiter advertendum, decentius esse, ut Sanguis sumatur unico haustu, prout communiter docetur. . . . Melius dicunt Tonellius, Castaldus, et Crassus, semel Calicem ori admovendum, aliquando immorando, ut reliquiæ omnes, quantum fieri potest, attrahantur.”

[12643] Authors agree that the second mode is preferable, although the first is indicated by the Rubric, De Defect. tit x. n. 8.

[12644] The Rubric of the Missal does not here prescribe an inclination of the head.

[12645] No inclination is prescribed by the Rubric.

[12646] “Si aliud Evangelium,” scribit Martinucci, lib. i,cap. 141, “e Missali legerit, non osculabitur textum, postquam legere desierit, sed librum claudet, efficiens ut libri apertura versa sit ad medium altare.’’

[12647] Martinucci, 1. c. n. 142, says: “Sine ulla ad Crucem reverentia se convertet, descendet de altaris gradibus . . .” This is in accordance with the foregoing Rubric of the Missal. See also note 2, page 99.

[12648] If the Blessed Sacrament is in the tabernacle, St. Alphonsus requires the genuflection to be made super gradu; but according to a decision of S. R. C. die 12 Nov., 1831: “in accessu ad altare, et in recessu in plano genuflectendum est.”

[12649] Here another genuflection is to be made before the priest takes the paten with the Host, according to the Rubric quoted above.

[12650] Some authors say that the priest in distributing Communion may use a purificator different from the purificator that he uses at Mass, and that he may take it between the forefinger and middle finger of his left hand, so that it hangs on both sides of the last three fingers. But the Rubrics of the Missal, the Roman Ritual, the Ceremonial of the Bishops, say nothing about such a practice.

The priest is not allowed while administering holy Communion, either during or at end of Mass, to hold the paten between the fingers of his left hand, which carries the ciborium, for the purpose of placing it under the chin of those communicating (S. R. C. 12 Aug., 1854).

[12651] “Praxis tamen Urbis habet, ut de altari, ubi expositum est Ss. Sacramentum, non detur Communio. Si Ss. Sacramentum exponatur eo tempore, quo fideles ad Communionem accedere solent, sacra pyxis in alio altari deponetur juxta praxim in Urbe. Et ita faciendum esse, scripsit Ven. Innocentius XI., die 20 Maji, 1682, ad Archiepiscopum Mechlinen. Si autem in ecclesia unicum altare reperiatur, permitti potest distribute sacræ Communionis intra vel extra Missam coram Sanctissimo super altari exposito.-S. R. C. die 26 Sept. . 1868, in una Rhemen. n. 5411.”-(Schober, page 109, n. 4.)

[12652] St. Alphonsus wishes that here, the priest having returned to the altar, should genuflect after covering the ciborium; but the S. R. C., December 23, 1862 (in una Romana, n. 5324), has decreed: “ a sacerdote redeunte ad altare post fidelium Comnumionem genuflectendum, antequam cooperiat sacram in pyxidem, et iterum genuflectendum, antequam, pyxide in tabernaculo posita, ipsius tabernaculi ostiolum claudat.” The holy Doctor is, however, right when, in opposition to Merati, he says that not three but only two genuflections are to be made.

[12653] As to the renewal of the Hosts, see Schober, page 112, note 10.

[12654] But the following decree of July 23, 1868, takes away in regard to Communion nearly every distinction between Masses of the Dead and other Masses, and forbids the use of the violet color exccpt in one case: “Posse in Missis Defunctorum cum paramentis nigris sacram Communionem fidelibus ministrari, etiam ex particulis præconsecratis, extrahendo pyxidem a tabernaculo. Posse item in paramentis nigris ministrari Communionem immediate post Missam Defunctorum; data autem rationabili causa, immediate quoque ante eamdem Missam; in utroque tamen casu omittendam esse benedictionem. Missas vero Defunctorum celebrandas esse omnino in paramentis nigris, adeo ut violacea adhiberi nequeant, nisi in casu, quo die 2 Novembris, sanctissimæ Eucharistiæ Sacramentum publicæ fidelium adorationi sit expositum pro solemni Oratione Quadrag. Horarum, prout cautum est in decreto Sacræ hujus Congregations die 16 Septembris, anni 1801.”

[12655] It is now decided that the stole: “Juxta Ritualis Rubricam debet esse coloris Officio convenientis.”—(S. R. C. in una Trident., 12 March. 1836.)

[12656] In plano.—(Decree of November 12, 1831.)

12657 The burse is sometimes found on the altar; sometimes the server carries it; however: “Decere ut a sacerdote deferatur.”—(S. R. C. September 24, 1842.)

12658 St. Alphonsus prescribes that three genuflections are to be made, but by the Rubrics two genuflections are determined before the priest administers Communion: namely, the first, before taking the ciborium out of the tabernacle; the other, after the ciborium lus been uncovered on the altar.—(Decr. S. R. C. December 1862, n. 5324.)

12659 “Tempore paschali,” says the Rubric of the Roman Ritual, “dicitur Oratio: Spiritum nobis Domine,” etc.—(Ex Post-communione Sabbati Sancti.)

12660 By the Roman Ritual there is prescribed in this prayer the entire conclusion: Qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patri in unitate, etc.

12661 The versicles Domine exaudi and Dominus vobiscum should follow the versicle Panem de cælo and precede the prayer, as has been decided by the S. C. September 24, 1842.

12662 According to a decision, S. R. C. December 23, 1862, the priest puts the ciborium on the corporal in the middle of the altar, genuflects; if fragments adhere to his fingers, he rubs them over the ciborium, covers it, purifies his fingers, recites the antiphon, the versicles, and the prayer, then puts the ciborium into the tabernacle, makes a second genuflection, and shuts the tabernacle.

12663 Communion may be distributed “tempore quo in ecclesia Missæ celebrantur, vel ad formam Rubricæ vel ad formam indulti eidem ecclesiæ concessi” (S. R. C., September 7, 1816, Tuden. n. 4526, 37); etiam ante auroram vel post meridiem, imo “sub vesperis, i.e. in extrema diei parte, si accedat aliqua specialis causa” (S. Alph. VI. (v.) 252). Excipitur Missa in media nocte Nativitatis Domini. Feria V. in Cœna Domini et Sabbato Sancto inter Missarum solemnia fideles sacram Communionem recipere possunt.

12664 According to a decision of S.R.C. September 7, 1816, the left hand should be placed on the alter.-(Schober, page 128, note 2.)

12665 Per Evangelica dicta, etc., is not said (S. R. C. die 11 Sept., 1847).

12666 Agnus Dei is recited with the hands joined, not placed on the altar.—(Martinucci, 1. I, c. 19, n. 11.)

12667 In regard to the prayers, (1) On the day of the Commemoration of All Souls, on the day of deposition (that is, of the death or burial), and on that of the anniversary; also on the third, seventh, and thirtieth days,—only one prayer is said, says the Rubric of the Missal (p. 1, tit. 5, n. 3). This holds good not only for the Missa cantata, but for private Masses. On the other days in the Mass for the Dead at least three prayers are said, and more may be added, if the number be kept uneven, but not more than seven. The first prayer must always be Deus qui inter apostolicos sacerdotes, the prayer Fidelium is to be said last. (2) The Sequence, Dies iræ is said on All Souls’ Day, and “die depositionis defuncti,” and “quandocumque in Missa dicitur una tantum Oratio;” in other Masses for the Dead “dicatur ad arbitrium sacerdotis.”—(Rub. Missal, p. I. tit. 5, n. 4.)

[12668] De Sacerd. 1. 4, c. 3, § 3.

[12669] 4 Kings, xvii. 34.

[12670] John, xiii. 30.

[12671] See Chapter II., page 93, at 2.

[12672] This reverence after Mass is not prescribed in the Missal. See note 2, page 99.

[12673] See, however, note 2, page 99.

[12674] The hands are not raised higher. See Chapter VII., note 1.

[12675] The various points of which this Appendix treats are taken substantially from the “Moral Theology” of our author, who treats them at length. We have thought it expedient to sum up here as matters that one should know and should never forget, before undertaking to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice. If further explanations are required, they may easily be found in the places indicated.

[12676] Theol. mor. 1. 6. n. 372 et seq.

[12677] For further particulars see Wapelhorst, Compendium Sacræ Liturgiæ page 12.

[12678] The altar is of stone, and represents Jesus Christ: Petra autem erat Christus (I Cor. x. 4). Ipso summo angulari lapide Christo Jesu (Eph. ii. 20). In every consecrated church there is at least a fixed altar, the main altar, consecrated when the church is consecrated. The consecrated stone, which constitutes the portable altar, should be placed in the middle of the table of the altar and not far from its edge, so that one nny easily discover it by touching the altar-cloths that should cover the altar entirely. The fixed altar loses its consecration when it is broken in a notable manner, or when the table is taken away, or when the sepulcher of the relics is opened. Ihe portable altar also loses its consecration by a considerable fracture, or by opening the sepulchre of the relics. (S. R. C., 14 Mart., 1693; 15 Maii, 1819; 3 Mart., 1821; 23 Maii. 1835; 6 Oct. 1837; 23 Maii, 1846; 23 Sept. 1848.) The relics enclosed in the altar are chiefly those of several martyrs; see what is said of this, page 40.

[12679] S. R. C., 15 Maii, 1819.

[12680] The ends of the top altar-cloth should fall usque ad terram, that is to say, to the base of the altar on both sides. A Pallium or Antipendium is also required, but only when the front of the altar is not sufficiently ornamented.

[12681] When the Blessed Sacrament is exposed we should conform, in regard to the cross, to the usage established in each church (S. R. C., 2 Sept. 1741).

[12682] S. R. C. 11 Jul. 1704.

[12683] The candlesticks should be placed on the altar, and not fixed in the wall (S. R. C. 16 Sept. 1866). In regard to the candle that should be lit at the Consecration, see page 154.

[12684] S. R. C., 10 Dec. 1857, n. 5255.

[12685] Tabella Secretarum, cards containing the prayers that are to be recited in a low voice, secreto, with the Gloria in excelsis and the Credo, placed in the middle of the altar for the convenience of the celebrant. It is customary to place another at the Epistle corner for the prayer Deus qui Humanæ substantiæ and the psalm Lavabo, and still another on the other side for the last Gospel.

Ampullæ vitreæ. Cruets of glass are preferable for the sake of cleanliness, and in order to prevent the danger of using water instead ot wine; it is, however, permitted to use cruets of gold or silver (S. R. C. die 28 Aprilis, 1865).

[12686] Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 370, 386 et seq.

[12687] A little spoon to put water into the wine at the Offertory is not forbidden (S. R. C., 6 Feb. 1858).

[12688] Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 376 et seq.

[12689] We have seen above, on pages 84, 202, the opinion of St. Alphonsus in regard to the employment of vestments that are in a bad condition.

[12690] We here give in a few words the meaning of the five colors used:

1. White, on the feasts of our Lord, indicates joy and glory; and on the feasts of the blessed Virgin, of the angels, of confessors, of virgins, and of other saints and martyrs, purity, innocence, and glorious immortality.

2. Red, at Pentecost, represents the Holy Ghost in the form of tongues of fire; and on the feasts of the Holy Cross and of martyrs, blood shed and love triumphant.

3. Green, at the Masses de tempore, from the octave of the Epiphany to Septuagesima, and from the octave of Pentecost to Advent, signifies an ordinary situation, which is neither that of joy nor that of sorrow. The Sundays that fall within the octave are excepted; for then the color of the octave is taken.

4. Violet well expresses the sentiments of humility and contrition, prayer joined to penance. It is used at the Masses de tempore in Advent, and from Septuagesima to Wednesday of Holy Week inclusively; on the Vigils and Ember days, except the Vigil and the Ember days of Pentecost and on the Vigil of Epiphany; on the Rogation days; on the feast of the Holy Innocents on account of the grief of the mothers, when this feast does not fall on a Sunday, on which the red color is used. Finally, in the votive Masses de Passione, pro quacumque necessitate, pro peccatis, ad postulandam gratiam bene moriendi, ad tollendum schisma, contra paganos, tempore belli, pro pace, pro vitanda mortalitate, pro iter agentibus, et pro infirmis.

[12691] Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 198 et seq.

12692 De Defect, tit. II.

12693 Theolog. mor. 1. 6, n. 306.

12694 Mention has been made above, page 157, what properly constitutes the form of consecration.

12695 Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 251, 215, et seq.-Homo Apost. tr. 15, n. 18.

12696 There is question here of a Host that one discovers after having taken the ablution; otherwise, while still fasting, if one cannot put it into the tabernacle, one may consume it immediately, instead of reserving it for another priest.

12697 Theol. Mor. 1. 6, n. 262, 266, et seq.

12698 Sess. XIII. cap. VII.

12699 Prop. 38 et 39.

12700 The Rubric cited above, instead of Quamprimum, says: Cumprimum poterit. This means the same.

12701 Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 278 et seq.

12702 We here see that the author gives only a counsel. The opposite opinion not being improbable, and the Rubric itself not making any distinction, we should not, if the case occurs, be too scrupulous in this respect.

12703 To interior purity should be joined exterior decorum—propriety, order, and modesty. If these qualities are requisite in a priest in every place and at all times, they arc much more required when he ascends the altar.

12704 Mention has already been made, in the preceding pages, of the various accidents that may occur during Mass; we here make a summary of other accidents by following the Rubric.—(De Defect. tit. X.)

12705 Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 352, 361, et seq.

12706 We read in the Rubric given at n. 2: Si quis, extra hujusmodi casus necessitatis, integra Sacramenta non sumpserit gravissime peccat.

12707 Many authors think that even in this case it would be sufficient that the sick celebrant could consume the Host and the precious blood and omit the other ceremonies.

12708 If one can find no priest to finish the Sacrifice, at least before midday, the consecrated species must be kept to be consumed at the Mass of the following day.

[12709] In alio calice, or in a vessel that is blessed; but if a second chalice can be had, it seems to be preferable to use it for finishing Mass by leaving the consecrated Wine in the first chalice according to the advice of Janssens.

[12710] Servetur, in the tabernacle, but apart.

[12711] “Quandoque accidit ut. in extersione coporalis, colligatur pulvis tabaci; circa quod, distinguendum est: si iste pulvis nullum Hostiæ fragmentum contigerit, tunc potest extra corporale projici; si fragmenta contigerit, subdistinguendum: si ab eis certe separari valeat, tunc post Missam in sacrarium projiciatur; si vero ipsis fragmentis sit commixtus, tunc, secluso nauseæ periculo, sumendus videtur cum fragmentis Hostiæ, ipsi adhærentibus, et potius cum purificatione calicis, quam cum Sacro Sanguine: si vero nausea timeatur, super corporale relinquatur. At quid, finita Missa, agendum sit de illo pulvere, de illis fragmentis; an in tabernaculo servanda, ad modum Hostiæ venenatæ; id aliis definiendum relinquo.”—(Bouvry.)

[12712] Per negligentiam, as usually happens. Against this the Rubric warns us; but we must act in the same way if the thing takes place in consequence of any accident.

[12713] Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 250. According to Benedict XIV. (De Sacrif. M. 1. 3, c. 20.), the woman that communicates may in this case herself convey the Host to her mouth. We add that it will be proper for her to wash her fingers in a vessel, and to dry them with a purificator.

[12714] Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 356 et seq.

[12715] Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 340 et seq.

[12716] We must remark that, even during the night preceding Christmas, it is not permitted to say a private Mass before the aurora, nor to give Communion.-(S. R. C., Dec. 7, 1641; Sept. 15, 1668; Sept. 18, 1781).

[12717] The Rubrics of the Missal do not give any rules that are to be followed in this case; nor does our holy author treat the case specially. We have, however, deemed some rules to be indispensable in the present treatise. We copy the summary from the Irish Ecclesiastical Record (August, 1888), which translated it from the Ephemerides Liturgicæ (No 4. p. 245, April, 1888, Romæ).

[12718] Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 382, 391, et 392.

[12719] St. Alphonsus published this treatise in a volume, of which it formed the third part; the first part was composed of the treatise “The Ceremonies of the Mass,” as may be seen in the preceding pages and the second of exercises on the Passion for preparation and thanksgiving, preceded by an introduction on the respect with which one should celebrate Mass, as we see at the end of this volume. See Tannoia and Villecourt, 1. 3, ch. 42. We add a few useful notes.—Ed.

[12720] This is evidently an Italian translation of the work published in France in 1748, under the same title, and also without the name of the author. We have before us the second edition, which

appeared in 1757. Feller ascribes it to Dom Guiard, a Benedictine of the Congregation of St. Maurus.

[12721] Wax, oil, flour, etc., were also offered, all that was necessary for the exercise of worship and for the subsistence of its ministers, as well as for the relief of the poor.

[12722] “Distinguitur (fructus Missæ) in generalem, specialem, et specialissimum: fructus generalis obtingit omnibus fidelibus vivis et defunctis; specialis, ab aliis dictus medius vel ministerialis, obtingit tam eis pro quibus applicatur, quam assistentibus et concurrentibus ministrando paramenta, luminaria, hostias, etc.; specialissimus demum obtingit soli Sacerdoti.” (Theol mor. 1. 6, n. 312.) Cardinal Gousset thus distinguishes these same fruits of the holy Sacrifice: “The general fruit, which is common to all the faithful, to the living, and to the dead detained in purgatory; the special fruit, which is for all those that attend or take some part in the celebration of the Mass; the very special fruit, which is particularly for those to whose intention the Mass is said; finally, the personal fruit for the priest who says the Mass.”-(De l’Euch. n. 279.)

[12723] See what is said about this further on, at n. 6.

[12724] De Rebus lit. 1. I, c. 15.

[12725] “Alia nequitia: Sacerdotes, in eadem Missa, tot hostias consccrabant, quot erant eleemosynam offerentes.”—(Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 316.)

[12726] Anno 1324, cap. 6.

[12727] Benedict XIV., Instit. 56, n. 6.

[12728] Ibid. n. 12.

[12729] Ibid. n. 13.

[12730] Missas adventitias.—“Nemo ignorat perpetuas alias, alias vero adventitias, Missas nuncupari: primæ quidem quotidie, vel certis quibusdam diebus, ratione beneficii, aut fundatoris instituto, vel testatoris voluntate, celebrantur; adventitiæ vocantur, pro quibus stipendium a fidelibus traditur, ita tamen ut nullus fundus nullumque onus in futurum tempus constituatur” (Benedict XIV., Instit. 56, n. 10.) We also distinguish founded Masses from those Masses that are called manual.

[12731] Sess. XXII., Decr, de observ.

[12732] Giulio, a Roman coin, worth about thirty centimes.

[12733] Benedict XIV., Instil. 56, n. 11.

[12734] Merati, P. 3, tit. 12, n. 5.

[12735] Benedict XIV., Instit. 56, n. 14.

[12736] “In Missis autem pro defunctis, dilationem unius mensis merito gravem reputant Salmanticenses,” etc. (Theol. mar. 1. 6, n. 371). If, however, the person who requests a Mass, either for the living or for the dead, consents to a delay, the Mass may be deferred.

We read, in the diocesan statutes of St. Alphonsus: “We recall to mind the grave obligation resting on all the priests not to defer the discharge of the promised Masses beyond two months if these are Masses for the living, nor beyond one month if they are Masses for the dead; so that, in order to be excused from a grave fault, they should be discharged within the time here indicated.”—(Tannoia, 1. iii. 22, Notlif. 4.)

[12737] Verb. abbr. c. 29.

[12738] 2 Tim. ii. 4.

[12739] De Euch. 1. 6, c. 9.

[12740] In 4 Sent. d. 12, §§ 17 et 18.

[12741] De Rebus lit. 1, c. 14.

[12742] In P. 3, q. 83, a. 5.

[12743] De Theol. Dis. 1. 33, c. 21.

[12744] Orat. in laud, patris.

[12745] Vit. S. Ambr. n. 10.

[12746] De Obitu S. Paul.

[12747] Hist. 1. 2, n. 13.

[12748] In Evang. hom. 37.

[12749] Præf. in sæc. 2 ben. n. 36.

[12750] De Rebus lit. 1. 1, c. 14 et 18.

[12751] De Sacr. Ecc1.1. Non plures.

[12752] De Eccl. occ. atque or. Cons. 1. 3, c. 15.

[12753] I Cor. x. 16, xi. 20.

[12754] Berti, De Theol. Dis. 1. 33. c. 21.

[12755] Instit. p. 8, d. 4, q. 1, c. 2,a. 1, § 2.

[12756] Præl. de Euch. q. 4, a. 5.

[12757] Something about this question has already been said at n. 1.

[12758] De Rebus lit. 1. 2, c. 8.

[12759] Præf. in part. I, sæc. 3, ben. n. 62.

[12760] De Eccl. Disc. p. 3, 1. 1, c. 71.

[12761] Bentdict XIV. Inst. 56, n. 1.

[12762] De Sollic. Eccl. p. 36.

[12763] In P. 3, q. 79, a. 5.

[12764] De Loc. theol. 1. 2, c. 13.

[12765] In 4 Sent. d. 45, q. 2, a. 4.

[12766] In 4 Sent. d. 45, a. 2, q. 3.

[12767] Quodlib, 20.

[12768] De Sacrum, p. 1, d. 79, s. 11.

[12769] De Just. 1. 9, q. 2, a. 2.

[12770] De Euch. 1. 6, c. 4, pr. 4.

[12771] Can. Miss. Expos, lect. 27.

[12772] In 4 Sent. d. 45, q. 3.

[12773] In 4 Sent. d. 45, q. 2.

[12774] De Euch. c. 6, a. 6, pr. 1.

[12775] De Sacrif. M. tr. ase. c. 1, § 4.

[12776] De Just. 1. 9, q. 2. a. 2.

[12777] Theol. spec, de Euch. 1. 3, d. 2, c. 5.

[12778] P. 3, q. 79, a. 5.

[12779] St. Alphonsus has treated this question somewhat differently in his Moral Theology (1. 6. n. 312), printed in 1753; but in his defence of Catholic dogmas defined by the Council of Trent (Sess. xxii. n. 22), a work published in 1769, he speaks of it as in the present opuscule, which appeared a little before.

[12780] Benedict XIV. Instit. 56, n. 1.

[12781] Sess. viii.

[12782] Sess. xxv. de Ref, cap. iv.

[12783] Suppl. ad p. 3, q. 71, a. 13.

[12784] Anno 1281, cap. 2.

[12785] Benedict XIV. Instit. 56, n. 4.

[12786] I Cor. ix. 13.

[12787] De Sollic. eccl. p. 19.

[12788] Sess. xxii. De obs. in celebr. M.

[12789] Page 243.

[12790] I Cor. ix. 13.

[12791] Serm. 46, c. 2, E. B.

[12792] 2, 2, q. 100, a. 2.

12793 I Cor. ix. 7.

12794 In 4 Sent. d. 25, q. 3, a. 2.

12795 Præl. de Euch. q. 8, a. 10, de Honor.

12796 Eccl. Disc. p. 3, 1. I, c. 72, n. 5.

12797 Sess. XIV. cap. VII.

12798 Benedict XIV., Inst. 56, n. 15.

12799 De Indulg. 1. I, c. 14.

12800 “Clemens XIII., prævio voto Sacræ Congregationis Indulgentiarum, die 19 Maii, 1759, indulsit omnibus ecclesiis parochialibus altare privilegiatum quotidianum ad septennium; quo expleto, præcepit omnibus Episcopis, Abbatibus, Vicariisque, Capitularibus, pro suis parœciis, confirmationem ejusdem privilegii ad septennium petere.”—(Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 339.)

To gain the indulgence of the privileged altar, Mass must be said in black on all the days on which this color is permitted; when it is not permitted, the Mass of the day is said.—(S. C. Ind. 11 Apr., 1840, et 11 Mart., 1851.)

12801 Necessario fatemur nullum aliud opus adeo sanctum ac divinum a Christi fidelibus tractari posse, quam hoc tremendum mysterium.”-Sess. xxii. Decr, de obs. in celebr. M.

12802 “Quid enim bonum ejus est. et quid pulchrum ejus. nisi frumentum electorum, et vinum germinans virgins?”-Zach. ix. 17.

12803 “Fere omnia Sacramenta in Eucharistia consummantur.”—P. 3, q. 65. a. 3.

12804 “Quidquid est effectus Dominicæ passionis, totum etiam est effectus hujus Sacramenti.”—In Jo. 6, lect. 6.

12805 “Quoties hujus Hostiæ commemoratio celebratur, opus nostræ redemptions exercetur.”—Dom. ix. post Pent.

12806 “Una enim eademque est Hostia, idem nunc offerens Sacerdotum ministerio, qui seipsum tunc in cruce obtulit, sola offerendi ratione diversa.”—Sess. xxii. De sacrif. M. c. ii.

12807 “O veneranda Sacerdotum dignitas, in quorum manibus, velut in utero Virginis, Filius Dei incarnatur!”—Molina, Instit. Sac. tr. I, c. 5, § 2.

12808 “Divinum Sacrificium ideo institutum est, ne nos ingrati simus apud Deum.”—Adv. Hær. 1. 4, c. 32.

12809 “Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”-John, xvi. 23.

12810 “Qui etiam interpellat pro nobis.”—Rom. viii. 34.

12811 “Hujus quippe oblatione placatus Dominus, gratiam et donum pœnitentiæ concedens, crimina et peccata etiam ingentia dimittit.”—Sess. xxii. De Sacrif. M. c. ii.

12812 “Offerimus tibi, Domine, calicem salutaris . . . pro nostra et totius mundi salute.”

12813 “Satis apparet omnem operam et diligentiam in eo ponendam esse, ut, quanta maxima fieri potest interiori cordis munditia atque exteriori devotionis ac pietatis specie, peragatur.”-Sess. xxii. Decr, de obs. in cel. M.

12814 Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 400.

12815 “Decernit sancta synodus ut Ordinarii locorum ea omnia prohibere sedulo curent ac teneantur, quæ irreverentia (quæ ab impietate vix sejuncta esse potest) induxit.”—Sess. xxii. de obs. in cel. M.

12816 “Ipsi, ut delegati Sedis Apostolicæ, prohibeant, mandent, corrigant, atque, ad ea servanda, censuris aliisque pœnis compellant.”

12817 Levit. xxvi. 2.

12818 “Quod si audire nolueris vocem Domini Dei tui, ut custodias et facias Omnia mandata ejus et cæremonias, quas ego præcipio tibi hodie, venient super te omnes maledictions istæ, et apprehendent te. Maledictus eris in civitate, maledictus in agro. . . .”-Deut. Xxviii. 15.

12819 Life, ch. 33.

12820 De Sacram. d. 84, s. 2.

12821 “Ad vos, o Sacerdotes, qui despicitis nomen meum, et dixistis: In quo despeximus nomen tuum? . . . In eo quod dicitis: Mensa Domini despecta est.”—Mal. i. 6.

12822 “Defectus non in cibo est, sed in edentis dispositione.”—De Sacr. M. c. 6, § 6.

12823 “Qui manducat meam carnem, et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo.”—John, vi. 57.

12824 “Quid tibi vis faciam?”—Mark, x. 51.

12825 It is well to repeat every day, immediately before celebrating, these four acts—of faith, hope, love, and contrition; and this even though the meditation be already made.

[12826] John Herold, De Sanct. s. 48.

[12827] Sess. xxii. cap. ii.

[12828] De incompr. Dei nat. hom. 3.

[12829] Ad pop. Ant. hom. 60.

[12830] Ad pop. Ant. hom. 61.

[12831] This prayer (Eternal Father, etc.) should be repeated every day after Mass. It will also be well to recite each day the following Invocations, Anima Christi, etc., and repeat three times with particular fervor the verse, Ne permittas me separari a te. They are enriched with many indulgences. (Note by the author.)—Above, on page 286, the Invocations of St. Ignatius are given as they are in the Raccolta; we, however, give them here as St. Alphonsus quotes them in his opuscule, with the other prayers that he adds at the end.

[12832] Thomas à Kempis, Imit. Chr. 1. iv. c. 11.

[12833] "Quidquid est effectus Dominicæ passionis, est effectus hujus Sacramenti."—In Jo. 6, lect. 6.

[12834] "Quoties hujus Hostiæ commemoratio celebratur, opus nostræ redemptionis exercetur."—Miss. Dom. ix. post Pent.

[12835] "Una enim eademque est Hostia, idem nunc offerens Sacerdotum ministerio, qui seipsum tunc in cruce obtulit, sola offerendi ratione diversa."—Sess. xxii. cap. ii.

[12836] "Offerimus tibi, Domine, calicem salutaris . . . pro nostra et totius mundi salute."

[12837] Sess. xxii. cap. i-ii.

[12838] "Satis apparet omnem operam et diligentiam in eo ponendam esse, ui, quanta maxima fieri potest interiori cordis munditia atque exterior devotionis ac pietalis specie, peragatur."—Sess, xxii., Decr. de obs. in cel. M.

[12839] Instit. 34, n. 30.

[12840] Tr. 18, q. 2, c. 3.

[12841] P. 1, tit. 16, dub. 6.

[12842] Tr. 3, n. 814.

[12843] Theol. mor. 1. 6, n. 399.

12844 De Sacram. 1. 3, d. 2, c. 10, n. 1.

12845 Tr. 15, n. 75, resp. 4.

12846 Tr. 18, q. 2, c. 3, q. 4, r. 3.

12847 L. 6, p. 2, n. 422.

12848 Jer. xlviii. 10.

12849 Sess. xxii. De Sacrif. M, c. v.

12850 Life, ch. 33.

12851 "Ecclesia cæremonias adhibuit, quo et majestas tanti Sacrificii commendaretur, et mentes fidelium, per hæc visibilia religionis signa, ad rerum altissimarum, quæ in hoc Sacrificio latent, contemplationem excitarentur."—Sess. xxii. De Sacrif. M. c. v.

12852 "Ne populum sibi commissum a devotione potius revocent, quam ad sacrorum mysteriorurn venerationem invitent."

12853 "Decernit sancta synodus ut Ordinarii locorum ea omnia prohibere sedulo curent ac teneantur, quæ irreverentia (quæ ab impietate vix sejuncta esse potest) induxit."—Sess. xxii. Decr, de obs. in cel. M.

12854 Ecce iste venit saliens in montibus, transiliens colles."—Cant. ii. 8.

12855 "En ipse stat post parietem nostrum, respiciens per fenestras, prospiciens per cancellos."—Cant. ii. 9.

12856 "Exi a me, quia homo peccator sum."—Luke, v. 8.

12857 "Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi?"—Ps, CXV. 12.

12858 "Venite, audite, . . . omnes qui timetis Deum, quanta fecit animæ meæ."—Ps. lxv. 16.

12859 "Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi."—Cant. ii. 16.

12860 "Quid tibi vis faciam?"—Mark, x. 51.

12861 "Cor mundum crea in me, Deus."—Ps. 1. 12.

12862 "Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis."—John, xvi. 23.

[12863] Alph. Rodrig.

[12864] This is a translation from a manuscript left by the holy author, and unpublished in Italian. We think it to be a fruit and a testimony of his fervor during the last vears of his life.—ED.

[12865] “Eum qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras.”—John, vi. 37.

[12866] “Inveni quem diligit anima mea.”—Cant. iii. 4.

[12867] “Veni, Auster: perfla hortum meum, et fluant aromata illius.”—Cant. iv. 16.

[12868] “In te, Domine, speravi: non confundar in æternum.”-Ps. xxx. 2.

[12869] Abridgment of the prayer that is found on page 284.

[12870] “Necessario fatemur, nullum aliud opus adeo sanctum ac divinum a Christi fidelibus tractari posse, quam hoc tremendum mysterium.”—Sess. xxii. Decr. de obs. in cel. M.

[12871] “Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—John, xvi. 23.

[12872] “Qui etiam interpellat pro nobis.”—Rom. viii. 34.

[12873] “Hujus quippe oblatione placatus Dominus, gratiam et donum pœnitentiæ concedens, crimina et peccata etiam ingentia dimittit.”—Sess. xxii. De Sacrif. M. c. ii.

[12874] “Offerimus tibi, Domine, calicem salutaris, . . . pro nostra et totius mundi salute.”

[12875] “Quid enim bonum ejus est, et quid pulchrum est, nisi frumentum electorum, et vinum germinans virgins?”-Zach. ix. 17.

[12876] “Fere Omnia Sacramenta in Eucharistia consummantur.”-P. 3, q. 65, a. 3.

[12877] “Et ideo hoc est memoriale totius dilectionis suæ, et quasi compendium quoddam omnium beneficiorum suorum.”—De Instit. Novit. p. 1, c. 11.

[12878] “Robur autem datum ei contra juge Sacrificium propter peccata.”-Dan. viii. 12.

[12879] “Non minus videtur facere Deus in hoc quod quotidie dignatur descendere de cœlo super altare, quam cum naturam humani generis assumpsit.”—Loc. cit.

[12880] “O veneranda Sacerdotum dignitas, in quorum manibus, velut in utero Virginis, Filius Dei incarnatur!”—Molina, Instr. Sac. tr. 1, c. 5, § 2.

[12881] “In qualibet Missa invenitur omnis fructus quem Christus operatus est in cruce.”—J. Herolt. de Sanct. s. 48.

“Quidquid est effectus Dominicæ passionis, est effectus hujus Sacramenti.”—In Jo. 6, lect. 6.

[12882] “Tantum valet celebratio Missæ, quantum mors Christi in cruce.’’—J. Herolt, loco cit.

[12883] “Quoties hujus Hostiæ commemoratio celebratur, opus nostræ redemptionis exercetur.”—Miss. Dom. 9 p. Pent.

[12884] “Una enim eademque est Hostia, idem nunc offerens Sacerdotum ministerio, qui seipsum tunc in Cruce obtulit, sola offerendi ratione diversa.”-Sess. 22, cap. 2.

[12885] “Satis apparet omnem operam et diligentiam in eo ponendam esse, ut, quanta maxima fieri potest interiori cordis munditia atque exteriori devotionis ac pietatis specie, peragatur.”—Sess. 22, Decr. de obs. in cel. M.

[12886] “Nolite dare sanctum canibus, neque mittatis margaritas vestras ante porcos.”—Matt. vii. 6.

[12887] “Tamquam leones ignem spirantes ab illa mensa recedamus facti diabolo terribiles ”—Ad pop. Ant. hom. 61.

[12888] “Defectus non in cibo est, sed in edentis dispositione.”—De Sacr. M. c. 6, § 6.

[12889] “Mundamini, qui fertis vasa Domini.”—Is. lii. 11.

[12890] “Quanto mundiores esse oportet, qui in manibus et in corpore portant Christum!”—Epist. 123.

[12891] “Hæc nemo contemnat, quoniam, ut audivit Petrus, nisi laverit ea Christus, non habebimus partem cum eo.”—S. in Cæna Dom.

[12892] Offic. Corp. Chr.

[12893] “Quotiescumque enim manducabitis Panem hunc, et Calicem bibetis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis.”-I Cor. xii. 26.

[12894] “Antequam celebrent, se Colligant, et orantes mentem in tanti ministerii cogitatione defigant.”—Const, p. 2, n. 5.

[12895] “Mediatoris gerit officium; propterea delinquentium omnium debet esse precator.”—S. de Euchar.

[12896] “Medius stat sacerdos inter Deum et naturam humanam, illinc venientia beneficia ad nos deferens.”—In Isaiam hom. 5.

12897 “Si quis, principem sæculi rogaturus, habitu honesto, gestu decenti, prolatione, non præcipiti, distincta, attenta quoque mente, seipsum studet componere, quanto diligentius, in sacro loco omnipotentem rogaturus Deum, hæc facere curabit!”-Sess. 21, can. 3.

12898 Tr. 18, q. 2, c. 3, q. 2, resp. 3.

12899 De Sacr. 1. 3, d. 2, c. 10, n. 13.

12900 “Si Sacerdos per notabile tempus voluntarie distractus, eas Missæ partes quæ Canonem continent, recitet, peccabit mortaliter. Videtur autem mihi gravis esse irreverentia, quod quis, dum profitetur Deum summe venerari, cum illo irreverenter, per voluntariam distractionem, se gerat.”—De Sacrif. M. 1. 2, c. 3, n. 9.

12901 “Sacerdos maxime curare debet, ut ea quæ clara voce dicenda sunt, distincte et apposite proferat, non admodum festinanter, ut advertere possit quæ legit.”—Rubr. gen. tit. 16, n. 2.

12902 Life, ch. 33.

12903 Lib. 6, p. 2, n. 422.

12904 De Sacr. 1. 3, d. 2, c. 10, n. 1.

12905 Rubr. Miss. p. 3, tit. II, n. 9.

12906 Tr. 15, n. 75, resp. 4.

12907 Tr. 18, q. 2, c. 3, q. 4, r. 3.

12908 Loco cit.

12909 Loco cit.

12910 “Quod si audire nolueris vocem Domini Dei tui, ut custodias et facias . . . cæremonias, . . . venient super te omnes maledictiones istæ. . . . Maledictus eris in civitate, maledictus in agro. . . . Maledictus eris ingrediens, et maledictus egrediens. . . .”—Deut, xxviii. 15.

12911 Or. ad Gent.

12912 “Age decenter cum hoc puero, nam optimos habet parentes.

12913 “Pavete ad sanctuarium meum.”—Levit. xxvi. 2.

12914 “Sacerdos vice Christi vere fungitur.”—Epist. ad Cæcil.

12915 “Plerique celebrantes conantur, non ut Missam celebrant, sed ut absolvant; non ut devotionis exercitium, sed ut victus sustentationem habeant; ita ut Missæ celebratio, non tamquam religionis mysteria, sed ut lucrandi ars quædam exerceatur.”

12916 “Ecclesia cæremonias adhibuit, quo et majestas tanti Sacrificii commendaretur, et mentes fidelium, per hæc visibilia religionis et pietatis signa, ad rerum altissimarum, quæ in hoc Sacrificio fatent, contemplationem excitarentur.”—Sess. 22, de Sacrif. M. c. 5.

12917 “Ex inordinata et indisciplinata multitudine Sacerdotum, hodie datur ostentui nostræ redemptionis venerabile Sacramentum.”—Epist. 123.

12918 “Ne populum sibi commissum a devotione potius revocent, quam ad sacrorum mysteriorum venerationem invitent.”

12919 “Cum omne crimen sacrificiis deleatur, quid pro delictorum expiatione Domino dabitur, quando in ipsa sacrificii oblatione erratur?”—Cap. Cum omne, de Consecr. dist. 2.

12920 De Gemitu, col 1. 2, c. 5.

12921 “Aliud est etiam lacrymis uberrimis dignum, quod, ob nonnullorum Sacerdotum incuriam aut improbitatem, sacrosancta mysteria tam indecore tractentur, ut, qui illa tractant, videantur non credere majestatem Domini esse præsentem. Sic enim aliqui, sine spiritu, sine affectu, sine timore, festinatione incredibili Sacrum perficiunt, quasi fide Christum non viderent aut ab eo se videri non crederent.”—Bulla Annus qui, § 15.

12922 Ad ann. 1552, n. 49.

12923 “Colligitur Prælatos, etiam regulares, et Rectores ecclesiarum, peccare mortaliter, si permittunt subditos celebrare cum nimia festinatione; quia, ratione muneris, tenentur curare ut celebratio congruo modo se habeat.”—De Sacrif. Novæ Leg. q. 229, n. 7.

12924 “Decernit sancta synodus ut Ordinarii locorum ea omnia prohibere sedulo curent ac teneantur, quæ irreverentia (quæ ab impietate vix sejuncta esse potest) induxit.”—Sess. 22, Decr. de abs, in M.

12925 “Ipsi, ut delegati Sedis Apostolicæ, prohibeant, mandent, corrigant, atque, ad ea servanda, censuris aliisque pœnis compellant.”—Loco cit.

12926 Instr. Sac. tr. 3, c. 14, § 2.

12927 Benedict XIV. Inst. 34, n. 30.

12928 “Nemo Missam longius horæ semisse protrahat, neque triente contrahat.”

12929 “Missa privata per dimidiam circiter horam, sed non ultra, extendatur.”

12930 “Semihoram, in faciendo Sacro, nec multum excedat; neque ita brevis sit, ut illam non expleat.”

12931 “Breviter, id est, circa dimidiam horam; vix enim breviori spatio possunt omnia in communibus Missis peragi cum debito decore ac devotione.”

12932 “Nec facile quis mihi persuadebit se communiter cum sensu pietatis intra horæ quadrantem finire Sacrum.”—Tract. 3, n. 814.

12933 “Nemo credat Missam esse prolixam, si mediam horam non excedat, et nimis brevem computare debent, si saltem tertiam horæ partem non compleat, ut communiter docent doctores. Quia tamen, qui infra quadrantem Missam absolvit, necesse est valde indevote celebrare, plura confundere, truncare, vel saltern syncopare, ideo communiter dicitur peccare mortaliter. Ex hoc autem oritur, Episcopis et Prælatis regularibus, obligatio sub gravi turpem hanc et scandalosam celeritatem exstirpare.”—Tr. 18, q. 2, c. 3, q. 2.

12934 “Certum requiri tantum spatium, quod possit satis esse ad perficiendas cæremonias ea gravitate, quæ tantum Sacrificium decet. In Rubr. p. 1, t. 6, d. 6.

12935 “Dicendum est satius esse declinare ad moderatam prolixitatem, quam ad indecentem accelerationem; quia majestas Sacrificii exigit potius ilium modum qui congruat gravitati actionis, quam declinationem ad oppositum.”—De Sacr. Novæ Leg. q. 228, n. 4.

12936 “Alte, breviter, clare, devote et exacte. Sacerdos autem maxime curare debet, ut ea quæ clara voce dicenda sunt distincte et apposite proferat, non admodum festinanter, ut advertere possit quæ legit; nec nimis morose, ne audientes tædio afficiat.”—Rubr. gen. tit. 16, n. 2.

12937 “Brevis intelligitur (Missa) modo non destruat devotionem; unde, si esset infra dimidium horæ, non posset dici devota, et consequenter male diceretur.”

12938 “Melius est declinare in longitudinem, quam in brevitatem; quia cum longitudine non potest peccari graviter et scandalum dari, sicut in nimis brevi.”

12939 “Ad vos, O Sacerdotes, qui despicitis nomen meum et dixistis: In quo despeximus nomen tuum? . . . In eo quod dicitis. Mensa Domini despecta est.”—Mal. i. 7.

12940 “Respondit aliam in cœlo Reginam esse longe meliorem, cui solemnia Missæ peragere disposuerat; in potestate ejus esse, vel Missam audire, vel penitus discedere.”—Boll. 18 Febr. Vit. p. 1, c. 2.

12941 “Oratio citius exauditur in ecclesia in præsentia Sacerdotis celebrantis.”

12942 Such is the citation given by our author; but the following is what we read in the sermon indicated by John Herolt, called “The Disciple,” speaking of the fruits of Mass to be derived by him who heard it: “Oratio tua citius exauditur in ecclesia in præsentia Dei, etiam oratio Sacerdotis celebrantis; quia quilibet Sacerdos in qualibet Missa tenetur orare pro circumstantibus.—Thy prayer also, as well as the prayer of the priest celebrating, is more quickly heard in the church in the presence of God, because every priest in every Mass is obliged to pray for those that are present."—De Sanctis, s. 48.

12943 "Præcipimus quoque ut oratoria, vasa, corporalia, et vestimenta, munda et nitida conserventur; nimis enim videtur absurdum in sacris sordes negligere, quæ dedecerent etiam in profanis."-Tit. 44, can. I, Relinqui.

12944 "Si homines parvum beneficium præstiterint, exspectant a nobis gratitudinem; quanto magis id nobis faciendum in iis quæ a Deo accipimus, qui hoc solum ob nostram utilitatem vult fieri!"—In Gen. hom. 26.

12945 "Heu! quomodo Christum tam cito fastidis!"-Epist. 2.

12946 "Quid tibi vis faciam?"—Mark, x. 51.

12947 De Sacram. disp. 63, § 7.

12948 Man. Thom. p. 3, tr. 4, c. 9.

12949 "Qui manducat meam carnem, et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo."-Jo. vi. 57.

12950 "Ipsa re nos suum efficit corpus."

12951 "Numquid non perit, quod donatur ingrato?"—In Cant. s. 51.

12952 "Verus minister altaris Deo, non sibi natus est."-In Ps. cxviii. s. 8.

12953 "Cum Sacerdos, non habens legitimum impedimentum, celebrare omittit, quantum in se est, privat Trinitatem gloria, Angelos lætitia, peccatores venia, justos subsidio, in purgatorio existentes refrigerio, Ecclesiam beneficio, et seipsum medicina."—De Præp. ad M. c. 5.

12954 "Sacrificium laudis honorificabit me; et illic iter quo ostendam illi salutare Dei."—Ps. 49, 23.

12955 "Psalmorum cantus illius (cœlestis) hymnodiæ præludium est."—Orat, in S. Baptismum.

12956 "Spiritus meus, qui est in te, et verba mea, quæ posui in ore tuo, non recedent de ore tuo."—Is. lix. 21.

12957 "Vera postulatio non in oris est vocibus, sed in cogitationibus cordis; valentiores namque voces apud aures Dei non faciunt verba nostra, sed desideria."—Mor. 1. 22, c. 18.

12958 "Orabo spiritu, orabo et mente; psallam spiritu, psallam et mente."—I Cor. xiv. 15.

12959 “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—Luke, xi, 10.

12960 “Maledicti, qui declinant a mandatis tuis.”—Ps. cxviii. 21.

12961 “Illam orationem non audit Deus, cui, qui orat, non intendit.”-Ap. S. Thom. 2. 2, q. 83, a. 13.

12962 “Si orem lingua, . . . mens autem mea sine fructu est.”—I Cor. xiv. 14.

12963 “Quomodo te audiri a Deo postulas, cum te ipse non audias.”-De Orat. Dom.

12964 “Non est absque peccato, quod aliquis orando evagationem mentis patiatur; videtur enim deridere Deum, sicut si alicui homini loqueretur, et non attenderet ad ea quæ ipse proferret.”—2. 2, q. 83, a. 13.

12965 “Populus hic labiis me honorat; cor autem eorum longe est a me!”—Matt. xv. 8.

12966 “Labia sunt in canticis, animus in patinis.”—Serm. 59.

12967 “Quid est voce psallere, mente autem domum aut forum circumire, nisi homines fallere, et Deum irridere?”—Anno 1549, Cap. 6, de Hor. can.

12968 “Divinum axilium est implorandum non remisse, nec mente huc vel illuc evagante; eo quod talis, non solum non impetrabit, sed magis Deum irritabit.”—Const, mon. c. 2.

12969 “Ad vos mandatum hoc, O Sacerdotes! . . . Si nolueritis ponere super cor, ut detis gloriam nomini meo, . . . maledicam benedictionibus vestris.”—Mal. ii. 1.

12970 “Diabolus stet a dextris ejus. Cum judicatur, exeat condemnatus; et oratio ejus fiat in peccatum.”—Ps. cviii. 6.

12971 “Spiritus Sanctus gratum non recipit, quidquid aliud, quam quod debes, obtuleris, neglecto eo quod debes.”

12972 “Ne quis ingrediatur templum curis onustus mundanis; hæc ante ostium deponamus.”—In Is. hom. 2.

12973 “Ante orationem, præpara animam tuam.”-Ecclus. xviii. 23.

12974 “Dirigatur oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectu tuo.”-Ps. cxl. 2.

12975 “Habentes. . . . phialas aureas plenas odoramentorum, quæ sunt orationes sanctorum.”—Apoc. 5, 8.

12976 “Ad talem orationem tale debetur incensum.”—Jordanus Sax. Vit. Fratr. 1. 2, c. 15.

12977 “Ne, quod tepescere cœperat, omnino frigescat et penitus exstinguatur, nisi crebrius inflammetur.”—Epist. 130, E. B.

12978 “Triplex est attentio quæ orationi vocali potest adhiberi: una quidem, qua attenditur ad verba, ne aliquis in eis erret; secunda, qua attenditur ad sensum verborum; tertia, qua attenditur ad finem orationis, scilicet, ad Deum et ad rem pro qua oratur.”—2. 2, q. 83. a. 13.

12979 “Prima est attentio ad verba quibus petimus, deinde ad petitionem ipsam, et ad ea quæ petitionem circumstant; et quaecumque harum attentionum adsit, non est reputanda inattenta oratio.”—In 4 Sent. d. 15, q. 4, a. 2, sol. 5.

12980 Spec. Disc. p. 1. c. 16.

12981 “In spiritu et veritate orat, qui ex instinctu spiritus ad adorandum accedit, etiamsi, ex aliqua infirmitate, mens postmodum evagedur.”—2. 2, q. 83, a. 13.

12982 “Mens humana diu stare in alto non potest; pondere enim infirmitatis humanæ deprimitur ad inferiora. Et ideo contingit quod, quando mens orantis ascendit in Deum per contemplationem, subito evagetur.”—Loco cit.

12983 “Si quis ex proposito in oration mente evagetur, hoc peccatum est, et impedit orationis fructum.”-Ibid.

12984 “Quae segnitia est alienari, cum Dominum deprecaris, quasi sit aliud quod magis debeas cogitare, quam quod cum Deo loqueris.”—De Orat. Dom.

12985 “Voluntas neglecta facit cogitationes indignas Deo; pia, efficaces ad fructum spiritus.”-De Vita sol. c. 16.

12986 “Cum oratis Deum, hoc versetur in corde, quod profertur in voce.”—Epist. 211, E. B.

12987 “Si orat Psalmus, orate; si gemit, gemite; si sperat, sperate.”—In Ps. 30, en. 4.

12988 “Verba significantia aliquid ad devotionem pertinens, excitant mentes.”—2. 2, q. 83, a. 12.

12989 Cap. Dolentes, de Cel. Missar.

12990 “Hoc negotium plus gemitibus quam sermonibus agitur.”—Epist. 130, E. B.

12991 “Utilius habent decem versus cum rationabili assignatione cantari, quam totum psalmum cum confusione mentis effundi.”-De Cænob. inst. 1. 2, c. 11.

12992 Ps. xxx. 6.

12993 Ps. cx. 9.

[12994] Ps. cxxix. 7.

[12995] Ps. ii. 2.

[12996] Ps. xxi. 17.

[12997] Ps. xxi. 19.

[12998] Ps. lxviii. 22.

[12999] Ps. xxi. 28.

[13000] Ps. xvii. 3, 4, 31.

[13001] Ps. xxvi. 1.

[13002] Ps. xxx. 2, 6.

[13003] Ps. xxxi. 10.

[13004] Ps. xxxii. 22.

[13005] Ps. lxxxviii. 2.

[13006] Ps. xc. 14.

[13007] Ps. cxviii. 175.

[13008] Ps. cxlii. 10.

[13009] Ps. xvi. 15.

[13010] Ps. xvii. 2.

[13011] Ps. xxxiii. 4.

[13012] Ps. xli. 2, 3.

[13013] Ps. lvi. 8.

[13014] Ps. lxii. 2.

[13015] Ps. lxvi. 4.

[13016] Ps. lxxii. 25.

[13017] Ps. lxxvi. 4.

[13018] Ps. lxv. 16.

[13019] Ps. cxv. 12.

[13020] Ps. xxi. 7.

[13021] Ps. lxxxv. 13.

[13022] Ps. xciii. 17.

[13023] Ps. cxviii. 176.

[13024] Ps. cxlii. 2.

[13025] Ps. xli. 4.

[13026] Ps. cxviii. 136, 163.

[13027] Ps. xxxix. 9.

[13028] Ps. lxv.

[13029] Ps. cxviii. 44, 93, 106.

[13030] “Interpretationem studio assequatur, unde mens animusque ad aliquem salutarem affectum incendatur.”—Anno 1579, Constit. p. 3, n. 6.

[13031] See page 58 for a full explanation of the Pater noster.

[13032] We have adopted the Douay Version of the Psalms, as published by D. & J. Sadlier & co., New York, under the direction of Dr. John Gilmary Shea, with the approbation of the late Cardinal McCloskey.

[13033] “Psalmorum liber, quæcumque utilia sunt ex omnibus (Libris canonicis) continet, et communis quidam bonæ doctrinæ thesaurus est, apte singulis necessaria subministrans.”—*Præf. in Ps.*

[13034] “Quoniam necesse est impleri omnia quæ scripta sunt in Lege Moysi, et Prophetis, et Psalmis de me.”—*Luke,* 24:44.

[13035] The writers of the *Masora,* a Jewish critical work on the text of the Hebrew Scriptures, composed by several learned rabbis of the school of Tiberias, in the eighth and ninth centuries.—ED.

[13036] “Stabant Levitæ in organis carminum Domini, quæ fecit David rex ad laudandum Dominum: Quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus; hymnos David canentes per manus suas.”—2 *Par.* 7:6.

[13037] *De Civit. Dei,*1. xvii. c. 14.

[13038] *Præf. in Ps.*

[13039] *In Libr. Ps.* prol.

[13040] *Syn. S. Script.* 50:13.

13041 “Psalmos omnes eorum testamur auctorum qui ponuntur in titulis.”—*Præf. in Ps. juxta hebr. verit.*

13042 “Sciamus errare eos qui omnes Psalmos David arbitrantur, et non eorum quorum nominibus inscripti sunt.”—*Ep. ad Cypr.*

13043 “Non omnes Psalmi a David editi sunt.”—*In Ps. i adnol.*

13044 *Pref. gén. sur les Ps.* n. 2.

13045 “Quamnam mihi afferunt utilitatem sive horum sive illorum sint aliqui, cum certum sit ex virtute Spiritus Sancti omnes conscripsisse?”—*In omnes Ps.* prol.

13046 “Cum ejus rei Spiritum Sanctum auctorem tenemus, quia scriptorem quærimus? quid aliud egimus, nisi, legentes litteras, de calamo perscrutamur?”—*Præf. in Job, c. 1.*

13047 *De Doctr. chr.*1. 2, c. 5.

13048 *In Psalm* ii.

13049 “Si quis autem Libros ipsos integros cum omnibus suis partibus, prout in Ecclesia catholica legi consueverunt, et in veteri vulgata latina editione habentur, pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit, . . . et sciens et prudens contempserint, anathema sit.”—*Sess.* 4.

13050 “Statuit et declarat sancta synodus ut hæc ipsa vetus et vulgata editio quæ longo tot sæculorum usu in ipsa Ecclesia probata est in publicis lectionibus, pro authentica habeatur, et ut nemo illam rejicere quovis prætextu audeat vel præsumat.”—*Ibid.*

13051 *Præf. in Job.*

13052 “Communis quidem oratio est, quæ per ministros Ecclesiæ, in persona totius fidelis populi, Deo offertur.”—2. 2, q. lxxxiii., a. 12.

13053 “Orationibus et Psalmis vacare in Ecclesia, divinum Officium celebrando, est quoddam opus publicum ad Ecclesiæ edificationem ordinatum.”—*Opusc.* 29. 100:5.

13054 “Manent tria hæc: verbum, exemplum, oratio; major autem his est oratio.”—*Epist.* 201, n. 3.

13055 “Petite et dabitur vobis.”—*Matt.* 8:7.

13056 “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—*Luke*, 9:10.

13057 See *Psalm* 77:21.

[13058] “*Juravi*” (*Num.* 14:28).—“*Si introibunt.*” Formula of imprecatory oath. See Psalm 88:35. St. Paul admirably comments on these last two verses, 4 and 5, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, ch. 3 and 4.

[13059] We remark in this first verse a triple gradation of sinfulness: 1. *Abiit,* one turns away from good; *Stetit,* one takes part in evil; *Sedit,* one settles down in it through habit. 2. *Consilio,* temptation; *Via,* the going astray; *Cathedra,* the giving of scandal. 3. *Impiorum,* bad principles; *Peccatorum,* bad conduct; *Pestilentiæ,* utter corruption.

[13060] Jeremias (17:8) employs and develops nearly the same comparison.

[13061] To be known by the Lord, says St. Augustine, is to live; to be ignored by him is to perish. See Psalm 36:18. Jesus Christ has also said in the same sense: “I know you not—*Nescio vos*” (*Matt.* 25:12).

[13062] We may add: Acknowledge the king and the supreme Judge whom God places over you, and think of serving him only.

[13063] Bellarmine observes that *David* is here in the dative case, as is proved by the Greek version; consequently these words signify: *Psalmus a Deo inspiratus Davidi*—A psalm inspired by God into David. He adds that the principal object that the Holy Ghost had in view appears to be Jesus Christ himself, of whom David was the figure.

[13064] To these we add the devils and sinners who have led him to offend God, and from whom he has resolved to keep aloof (5:8). Hence, penetrated with a true contrition, he feels in his heart that God hears him (5:9); and he is filled with confidence and joy.

[13065] In the prophetical sense, says Bellarmine, David represents the person of Jesus Christ, and that of all the just who are calumniated and persecuted.

[13066] There is in this verse a remarkable gradation.

[13067] The literal translation of the Greek is: *Justus, et fortis, et paticns, et non iram adducens omni die.*

[13068] In holy Scripture the word *Vas* often means instrument. (See Psalm 70:24; *Is.* 22:24; *Jer.* 50:25 and 51:20.)

[13069] This passage has a twofold meaning. In the literal sense, it is applicable to men whom God has made masters over all earthly things: “*Cœlum cœli, Domino, terram autem dedit filiis hominum*—The heaven of the heavens is the Lord’s, but the earth hath he given to the children of men” (*Ps.* 113:25), But in the figurative sense it applies to Jesus Christ, as St, Paul attests (*Heb.* 2:6). God deigned to visit the human race by the Incarnation of the Word, who appeared then in some way inferior to the angels, especially in his Passion, but who afterwards was crowned with glory in his resurrection and ascension, when to his dominion were submitted the angels, men, and demons who, according to St.

Augustine and Bellarmine, are typified by the animals that people the air, the earth, and the sea. "*Omnia dedit ei Pater in manus*—Knowing that the Father had given him all things into his hands" (*John*, 13:3). "*Omnia enim subjicit sub pedibus ejus*—For he hath put all things under his feet" (1 *Cor.* 13:13).

13070 At the gates of the city, where usually was assembled a crowd of people. See Psalm 72:28.

13071 Here the late Hebrew Doctors divide this psalm into two, making verse 22 the beginning of Psalm 10. And again they join the psalms 146 and 147 into one, in order that the whole number of psalms should not exceed one hundred and fifty. In this manner the psalms are numbered in the Protestant Bible.

13072 God observes all that, and he will punish him; see verse 37

13073 "*Animæ meæ.*" A Hebraism for *Mihi.*

13074 The psalms, Bellarmine here remarks, are written in a poetical style; hence we see so many figures shine forth in them. For example, the word *eyelids* is put for the eyes; the word *eyes* for the mind; *to interrogate,* for to know perfectly, as after interrogations and a very exact examination.

13075 *Id est,* says Bellarmine, *sicut eos involvi quotidie in pluribus et majoribus peccatis, percutiendo eos cæcitate, et tradendo eos in reprobum sensum*—That is, he will permit them to be daily involved in more and greater sins, by striking them with blindness, and delivering them over to a reprobate sense.

13076 As in Psalm 27:4.

13077 See Psalm 52, as also the Epistle to the Romans, 3:10, where the Apostle cites a part of this psalm,

13078 These three verses, 5, 6, 7, are not found in the Hebrew, nor in the Greek.—"*Contritio et infelicitas in viis eorum.*" Bellarmine and Men ochius understand this passage in the active sense; that is to say: They spread everywhere ruin and desolation, and leave no one in peace.

13079 St. Paul also (*Acts*, 13:35).—As this whole psalm is a continual prayer, says Bellarmine, the last four verses cannot be understood of Jesus Christ without applying to him the entire psalm,

13080 Motives of his confidence: his innocence and rectitude, the mercy and justice of God, the malice and iniquity of the wicked.

13081 See Psalm 65:9, 10.

13082 *Sub umbra alarum tuarum.*" The psalmist often uses this metaphor, which so well depicts the tenderness and goodness of the Lord towards his faithful servants. Our Saviour himself explains this touching signification in those words addressed to Jerusalem: “How often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings” (*Matt*, 23:37).

13083 This psalm is found nearly in the same words in 2 *Kings*, 22. The following is the idea that Canon Gaume expresses in regard to this psalm: David, protected by God, and triumphant, is a figure of Jesus Christ. Struggles and victories of the Church. Magnificent images, to depict the power of the Lord and his acts, now paternal, now terrible, of his Providence. The militant Christian finds in this the greatest motives of confidence and love.

13084 Holy Scripture often employs the word *Cornu* in the sense of strength or power, a metaphor taken from animals with horns.—The prophet began by saying to God: *Fortitudo mea*—Thou art my strength. He then explains (verses 1–3) in what way the Lord is his strength. In the Hebrew, as Bellarmine observes, the expressions are more figurative and energetic: for *Firmamentum et Adjutor,* the Hebrew word signifies *rock,* firm stone; *Refugium,* fortress; *Protector,* shield or buckler. The following verse is a kind of conclusion to this exordium; then comes the description of the help received from the Almighty.

13085 We admire these poetical images: God, who is incensed, arms himself with his arrows, which are thunderbolts; the clouds form his chariot, which is drawn by winged coursers—that is, impetuous winds; and these coursers are conducted by the angels. The thunder (verse 15) is called the voice of the Most High; the tempest (verse 18), the breath of his wrath.

13086 They attacked me unexpectedly.

13087 “*Justitias.*” St. Jerome translates: *Præcepta*—Precepts. The same as in 2 *Kings,* 22:23.

13088 The psalmist arrives at the object that he seems chiefly to have in view; namely, the praise of the law of God, designated under various names, ordinarily given in Scripture as *Lex, Testimonium, Justitiæ, Præceptum, Timor, Judicia.* In these four verses (8–11) he describes eight beautiful characters on which it is important to meditate.

13089 Or those strangers that live far from Thee and Thy law.

13090 These two verses correspond to three verses of the preceding psalm (4, 5, and 6). In the following verses it is said that God not only heard the desires and the prayers of David, but that he anticipated and afterwards surpassed them by such favors as could not have their entire fulfilment except in the person of Jesus Christ, who was himself the greatest of the blessings granted to the holy king.

13091 Others understand: Thou wilt cause him to be blessed in all ages.

13092 St. Jerome translates the Hebrew thus: *Pones eos humerum; funes tuos firmabis contra facies eorum.*

13093 Bellarmine says that the past is here employed for the future, according to the custom of the prophets, to show the certainty of the event.

13094 See Psalm 60:2.

13095 “*Legem pone mihi . . . in via tua.*” In the Hebrew, according to Bellarmine: *Doce me;* . . . and according to St. Jerome: *Ostende mihi . . . viam tuam.*

13096 Bellarmine gives several reasons showing that this psalm does not apply to David, but to Jesus Christ on the cross, according to the explanation of St. Augustine and St. Jerome. It is, he says, an abridgment of Psalm 21.

13097 5, 6. **[27:5, 6]** “*Da . . . Tribue . . . Redde . . .*” These words are not an imprecation, but a prophecy of what is to happen; this the following verse explains and proves.

13098 “*Et in opera.*” According to the Hebrew and the Greek, the preposition *in* is redundant. St. Jerome’s translation has: *Et opus.* On this passage Bellarmine makes an excellent reflection: All evils, he says, come from not applying ourselves to knowing and understanding the wonders worked by the Lord in the creation, redemption, and the government of the human race. If we attentively consider these things we could hardly refrain from loving God. Hence those words of our Saviour to Jerusalem: *Si cognovisses et tu, et quidem in hac die tua quœ ad pacem tibi! . . . Non relinquent in te lapidem super lapidem, eo quod non cognoveris tempus visitationis tuœ*—If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace! . . . They shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone; because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation (*Luke,* 19:42). And St. Paul says: *Si enim cognovissent, nunquam Dominum gloriœ crucifixissent*—If they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory (1 *Cor.* 2:8). Hence also: *Desolatione desolata est omnis terra, quia nullus est qui recogitet corde*—With desolation is all the land made desolate: because there is none that considereth in the heart (*Jer.* 12:2).

13099 “*Refloruit caro mea.*” These words, applied to Jesus Christ, admirably foretell his resurrection.

13100 Title of the psalm: *Psalmus David, in consummationi Tabernaculi.* St. Jerome thence infers that David composed this psalm when he caused the Ark of the Covenant to be placed in the tabernacle erected on Mount Sion (2 *Kings,* 6:17). This tabernacle being a figure of the Church, the prophet raises his thoughts from the figure to the reality, and announces the preaching of the Gospel by the Voice of the Lord, which nothing can resist.

13101 “*Virtutem.*” By this word some understand the force of resisting enemies and of conquering them. Such is the conclusion of this poetical picture, in which the psalmist shows us in a few strokes the marvellous effects of the voice of God, which calls down the tempest and the thunder upon the elements of the physical world—water, air, fire, and earth,—and then upon the plants, animals, and men, to induce the latter to recognize the Providence of God, and to render him the homage that is due to him. In a figurative sense, as we may see in detail in Bellarmine, this Voice of God represents the preaching of the Gospel. We add that the Voice of the Lord (verses 3 and 8) prefigure in a perfect manner the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, who descended upon the Apostles with a great noise under the forms of tongues of fire, as is so well expressed by these words of verse 7: *Vox Domini intercidentis flammam ignis.*

13102 So it is understood by several interpreters, such as Father De Carrières. But the psalm bears the title: *Psalmus cantici, in dedicatione damus David*—A psalm of a canticle at the dedication of David's house. This means, according to others, that David composed this psalm for the ceremony of his entrance into the palace that he had built for himself at Jerusalem (2 *Kings*, 5:11). As to the words *Sanaste me* (v. 2), they understand them of the deliverance from mental sufferings with which the psalmist had been afflicted in the midst of the mortal dangers that he had encountered. One may see in this psalm a picture of the vicissitudes of human life, over which God ever watches as a father and as a judge. In a higher sense, it is applicable to our Saviour in his resurrection; hence it forms part of the Office of Holy Saturday.

13103 This verse may signify: Thou hast preserved me from death, or, in a spiritual sense, from sin. When applied to Jesus Christ it well describes his resurrection, his soul coming forth from Limbo and his body from the tomb.

13104 By the night we may understand the present life; by the morning, the entrance into a blessed eternity.

13105 In this passage, according to Bellarmine and Bossuet, the future is used instead of the past; for the psalmist relates what he then said, and this agrees better with verse 13.

13106 The subject is the same as that of Psalm 70.

13107 Thus most of the interpreters understand this verse as if it were substantially a repetition of the first; but others, with Bellarmine, who gives a detailed explanation of it, prefer the following meaning: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin, etc.; that is, Blessed is he who preserved his innocence. St. Paul (*Rom.* 4:7) cites these two verses.

13108 This verse, which is very obscure, leaves room for various interpre tations. Bellarmine finds the following more conformable to the letter of the Vulgate and to the Hebrew text: Certainly, when the mighty waters come, that is to say, sufferings of all kinds, which at the last day must fall as a deluge on the wicked, they shall not approach him, that is, the man who was converted in time.

13109 It is the prophet who asks for the suppression of the wicked. "*In camo et freno.*" By the evils and afflictions that withdraw or remove the soul from sin.

13110 The prophet speaks thus of himself, and repeats what he said in verse 4. See also verse 17. "*Non . . . omni bono.*" Hebraism for *Nullo bono.*

13111 This psalm is admirably suited to Jesus Christ, the Just by excellence. Bellarmine even thinks, with St. Augustine and St. Jerome, that this is its principal meaning.

13112 The shield of God is his goodness, his benevolence. *Ut scuto bonæ voluntatis tuæ coronasti eum*—Thou hast crowned us as with a shield of Thy goodwill (*Ps.* 5:15). It is also equity or justice: *Sumet scutum inexpugnabile æquitatem*—He will take equity for an invincible shield (*Wisdom*, 5:20).

[13113] Or, according to St. Augustine, and conformably to verse 3: In his Salvation, his Saviour who is God himself.

[13114] “*Unicam meam*” My soul, or my life, which is my only one. According to Bellarmine: *Recte dicitur unica, quasi unice dilecta*—Rightly it is called the only one, as being the one alone beloved. See the same expression in Psalm 21:21.

[13115] Let us analyze this portrait of a perverse man: iniquity in his thought and affections, in his words, in his whole conduct towards God and man; the reason is, he has no fear of God; he does not see, he does not understand, he is not willing.

[13116] Bellarmine remarks that this psalm does not form a consecutive discourse: it is a collection of detached sentences, to the number of twenty-two; and in the Hebrew they are arranged alphabetically, according to the first letter of each. The other alphabetical psalms are 24, 33, 110, 111, 118, and 144.

[13117] Our dear Lord has said the same: “Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land” (*Matt.* 5:4).

[13118] Or else: Divine justice will cause . . . An ordinary prediction under the form of imprecation.

[13119] See Psalm 1:7.

[13120] A beautiful image of the paternal goodness of the Creator! See the same in Psalm 40:3.

[13121] “*Inhabita*” The imperative for the future, according to Menochius. This promise, says Bellarmine, v. 28, 29, may be applied to the present life; but properly it has reference to life eternal.

[13122] The same as verse 12; but there it was by violence, here it is by craft, as the Jews acted against Jesus Christ.

[13123] This may also be understood in a higher sense, of eternal reward according to the text: *Opera enim illorum sequuntur illos*—Their works follow them (*Apoc.* 14:13).

[13124] “*Cicatrices.*” According to the Hebrew, this word means neglected wounds, that is, wounds that engender corruption. This is aptly referred 10 the time spent by David, after his double crime, without entering into himself, until the prophet Nathan came to open for him his eyes to his sad condition.

[13125] “*Et dum commoventur.*” Bellarmine says that the particle *Et* is put here for *Nam* or *Quia,* as often happens in Scripture.

[13126] Or, I was silent, although I had good things to say.

[13127] “*Exardescet ignis.*” St. Jerome translates: *Incensus sum igne.*

[13128] A Hebraism signifying a prolonged waiting, accompanied by an rdent desire.

[13129] For, according to what has been said at the head of the psalm, it is Jesus Christ who speaks in the person of his mystical Body. "*petram.*" A stone that is raised and firm.

[13130] "*Sacrificium.*" St. Paul (*Heb.* 10:5) says: *Hostiam.* In the following verse we read: *Holocaustum et (sacrificium) pro peccato*—Holocaust for sin. These words designate the different sacrifices, or rather the bloody victims, such as bulls and lambs, which, in the Old Law, were offered on the altar to expiate sin (*Lev.* 1:4, 5, 6)—"*Oblationem.*" By this may be understood offerings of inanimate gifts, such as flour, bread, oil, etc. (*Lev.* 2:6).

[13131] According to the Hebrew: *Aures autem fodisti mihi*—Thou has dug or bored my ears. According to the Greek: *Corpus autem perfecisti mihi.* These different versions may be reconciled according to Menochius: *Corpus* is the proper term; *Aures* is a figure, the part for the whole. This part is well chosen to denote attention and readiness to obey, as we read in Psalm 17:48: *In auditu auris obedivit mihi*—At the hearing of the ear he has obeyed me. In the same sense may be explained the words: *Fodisti, Perfecisti, Aptasti.*

[13132] "*Legem tuam in medio cordis mei.*" *Posui*—I have placed, is understood. That is to say: I have resolved from the bottom of my heart to execute all that Thou hast ordained.

[13133] My iniquities, that is to say (as it is Jesus Christ that speaks): The sins of all men which I have assumed to expiate. Our divine Saviour, having accepted the sacrifice of the Passion to redeem the human race, by supplying the insufficiency of all other sacrifices, according to the will of his Father (verses 9, 10, 11) says that in spite of persecutions he publishes his mercy and his justice (verses 12, 13, 14). He then begs of his Father not to abandon him in his Passion and death, but to hasten the moment of his resurrection (verses 15 to 18). Finally, in the form of a prayer he predicts on one side the confusion of his enemies (verses 19, 20, 21), and on the other, the triumph of his faithful friends (verse 22). The last two verses are a summary of the entire psalm with regard to the person of Jesus Christ and his mystical Body, the Holy Church.

[13134] See *Psalm* 69.

[13135] The poor, the indigent man, is Jesus Christ suffering in his own person or in the members of his mystical body.

[13136] A prediction or a promise in form of prayer. "*In terra.*" Here on earth, and hereafter in the land of the living.

[13137] Remark this touching apostrophe; the prophet seems to say: Yes, O my God! See what Thou hast done for Thy servant, and Thou wilt thus console him in all his tribulations, spiritual and corporal, so that he will say: *Superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione nostra*—I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation (2 *Cor.* 7:4). Compare this with what is said in Psalm 36:25.

[13138] In this and in the following verses it is Jesus Christ that speaks. If he says that he has sinned, this must be understood of our iniquities which he took upon himself.

13139 This verse and the following one apply to Judas. “*Ut videret.*” In order to find a favorable opportunity to execute his project.

13140 “*Mihi.*” A redundant pronoun, according to the Hebrew.

13141 See on the same subject Psalm 83.

13142 See Psalm 42:6.

13143 The holy Fathers regard this psalm as prophetic. It is the people of God that speak: groaning under oppression, they represent to the Lord the benefits that they once received from his bounty; then they describe their present miseries, and ask the help that they need.

13144 “*Plantasti eos.*” A significant metaphor, more fully developed in Psalm 79:10, 11, 12.

13145 “*Ventilabimus cornu.*” An expression, the energy of which Gaume with Bellarmine brings forward in this phrase: We will scatter them, as a bull when infuriated casts into the air with his horns earth or straw.

13146 We read in the title: *Canticum pro Dilecto*—A song for the Beloved. By this well-beloved we generally understand the Man-God, of whom the heavenly Father has said: *Hic est Filius meus dilectus*—This is my beloved Son (*Matt.* 3:17).

13147 Bellarmine says that these first two verses are a kind of preface admonishing us in a special manner that this psalm is a pure prophecy. The prophet then begins by a certain apostrophe, transported as it were with admiration without naming the hero to whom he addresses himself in his contemplation He exalts his personal qualities, his royal and divine dignity, the greatness and prosperity of his reign; then (verse 11) he eulogizes his Spouse, to whom he gives advice full of wisdom, and predicts (verse 18) the fruit of her sublime union; he concludes (verse 19) by saying that everything should contribute to the glory of our Lord.

13148 “*Virga æquitatis.*” See Epistle to the Hebrews, in which St. Paul cites this and the following verse (*Heb.* 1:8).

13149 “*Ejus.*” According to Bellarmine and other interpreters, this pronoun is redundant. “*Filiæ Regis.*” The Spouse of the King is also he King’s daughter; this is very applicable to the Church and to other significations.

13150 This verse is obscure. “*In fortitudine ejus.*” Many refer these words to God, and translate: By his power.

13151 “*Speciem Jacob.*” The beauty or the flower of the people of Israel, that is, the Apostles and the other disciples whom our Lord chose to form the first nucleus of his Church. This agrees with what St. Paul says (*Rom.* 11.).

[13152] That is: *Digne, attente, ac devote.* The psalmist points out to us the principal titles that our Lord has to our homage and to our praise: his greatness and his power (verse 2); his benefits (verses 3, 4); his glory (verse 5); the power that he exercises over the whole earth by the triumph of his Church (verses 8, 9).

[13153] "*Tharsis.*" It is not known what this name designates; it is supposed to be India.

[13154] "*Lætetur mons Sion, et exsultent filiæ Judæ.*" The prophet has just said to God that his right hand is full of justice; he here invites Jerusalem and the other cities of Judea, that is, the Mother Church and then all the churches successively established in the world, to rejoice at the effects of his justice; then, in the following verses, he asks all the members to unite themselves to their Head in a loving manner, in order to fortify the holy city by making reign therein order and life, which should be a continual sermon and a manifest sign of God's presence in the midst of it.

[13155] These first four verses form the exordium. The prophet invites all men, of every condition, to listen most attentively to him. He then sets forth his subject: lessons of wisdom and prudence which he has meditated upon in his heart by obeying the divine inspiration, and which he will express in suitable and lofty language to the accompaniment of delicious music.

[13156] "*Redimet homo.*" Many interpreters understand these words in an interrogative sense: Shall another man redeem?

[13157] Man, whom God has raised to so high an honor, by creating him according to his own image, with intelligence, reason, free will, immortality of the soul and dominion over all earthly things, does not understand his dignity, his high destiny: he can if he wishes reach the happiness of God himself, and he precipitates himself into the abyss of every evil. See *Psalm* 27:7.

[13158] Many, observes Bellarmine, are called gods by different rights; namely, by a false creed, as the pagan divinities or the demons; by the grace of adoption, as the angels and saints; by similitude, as princes and judges. But all these gods are subject to one alone, who is the true God; called, therefore, the God of gods (see *Psalm,* 81:1, 6).

[13159] In the verses 8 to 16, the Sovereign Judge declares to the servants of God that the sacrifices, that is, the material gifts that are offered to him, have of themselves no value in his eyes, since they are of no use to him, and everything belongs to him; they are agreeable to him only inasmuch as they faithfully represent the sentiments of the heart, such as faith, hope, charity, contrition, gratitude. See *Psalm* 50:17, 18. It is the heart that the Lord wishes and upon which he looks: *Dominus autem intuetur cor*—The Lord beholdeth the heart (1 *Kings,* 16:7). And it is thus that he appreciates the offering of the poor widow (*Mark,* 12:42). It is the same in regard to all meritorious acts that are rewarded in accordance with the pure intention and the interior sacrifice. See, moreover, the conclusion, verse 24. In the following verses, 17 to 23, the Lord points out to us that we shall have to render to him an account of the faults committed; namely, in our thoughts in our affections, in omissions, 18 and 22; in actions and co-operation, 19; in words, 20, 21.

[13160] A sacrifice of praise, as Bellarmine explains, verses 15, 24, is not only simple praise, an agreeable word: it is our homage offered on the altar of the heart by the fire of charity. Such an act

can be performed with or without the help of the lips, and cannot be contradicted by exterior conduct.

[13161] “*Cogitavit lingua.*” Poetical figure, to say that one has not spoken without premeditation. “*Sicut novacula acuta.*” Comparison which expresses promptness and facility. The two following verses show the source of evil in the perversity of the heart.

[13162] All the verses of this psalm, except verse 7, and some differences of expression are found in Psalm 13.

[13163] See *Psalm* 40:10.

[13164] “*Vespere, et mane, et meridie.*” It was usual to pray especially three times a day (*Dan.* 6:10). Evening is put first, because then the celebration of the feasts began (*Levit.* 23:32). Hence the first Vespers in the office of the Church.

[13165] This explanation is doubtless taken from the Hebrew text. St. Jerome thus translates this passage: *Nitidius butyro os ejus; pugnat autem cor illius.* His mouth is smoother than butter; but his heart is at war. A meaning that agrees with the following verse.

[13166] David wrote this psalm on the occasion of his meeting Saul in a cave when this prince was pursuing him (1 *Kings,* 24). This is indicated by the title which reads: *Cum fugeret a facie Saul in speluncam.*

[13167] Reference to the danger incurred by David when he was surrounded by the troops of Saul in the desert of Maon (1 *Kings,* 23:26).

[13168] This verse and those that follow are reproduced in Psalm 107. with some slight differences of expression.

[13169] Bellarmine, following Theodoret, says that David calls the spirit or the gift of prophecy his glory.

[13170] There is, in the verses that precede, a succession of remarkable comparisons: verses 4. 5: the wicked become obstinate in evil like the adder, which is supposed to resist every means to charm or soften it; verse 6: they are violent like furious lions, but God renders them incapable of doing harm; verse 7: they advance as a torrent which threatens to swallow up everything on its way, but the waters flow away and disappear; verse 8: they melt away like wax before the fire; verse 9: they resemble a thorny shrub that is rooted up and buried in the ground before its thorns have acquired the strength to wound.

[13171] Many interpreters unite the second part of this verse to the following, and translate: And Thou O Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel, attend . . .

[13172] Bellarmine remarks, with St. Augustine, that “*Misericordia mea*” means much more than *Salus mea, Vita mea, Spes mea,* and similar appellations; for it is to the mercy of God that we owe

existence, life, deliverance from evil, and progress in good; it is by the mercy of God that we are predestined, called, justified, and that we shall at last be glorified.

13173 This verse and the following verses form the second part of Psalm 107, with some difference of expression.

13174 It is thus the Septuagint call the Philistines, because they had no affinity with the Israelites; whereas the Edomites were descended from Esau, or Edom, the brother of Jacob, and the Ammonites and Moabites from Lot, the nephew of Abraham. See *Psalm* 85:4. According to Menochius the meaning of the verse is: I will go to take possession of Edom; for already the Philistines obey me.

13175 All these verses apply very well to the Church militant.

13176 See *Psalm* 26:10.

13177 St. Jerome translates: *Non timebo.* But Bellarmine says that in the Hebrew the terms are here the same as in verse 2: *Non movebor.*

13178 Many, also, understand thereby the resurrection, either spiritual or eternal, in accordance with the title: *Canticum psalmi resurrectionis*—A Canticle of the Psalm of the Resurrection.

13179 This psalm is thought to have been composed for the translation of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (2 *Kings*, 6.). The first verse is a reproduction of the prayer of Moses in the desert when the Ark was raised to begin the journey: "*Surge, Domine, et dissipentur inimici tui; et fugiant, qui oderunt te, a facie tua*—Arise, O Lord, and let Thy enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee from before Thy face" (*Num.* 10:35).

13180 The following is what we read in regard to verse 5: *Quia odio habuerunt me gratis*—They have hated me without cause (*John,* 15:25).—12: *Zelus domus tuæ comedit me*—The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up (*John,* 2:17).—26: (*John,* 19:28).—30: *Fiat commoratio eorum deserta, et non sit qui inhabitet in ea*—Let their habitation become desolate, and let there be none to dwell therein (*Acts,* 1:20). The prophet makes Jesus Christ speak through the whole psalm.

13181 *Mundus eum non cognovit. In propria venit, et sui eum non receperunt*—The world knew him not. He came to his own, and his own received him not (*John,* 1:10). *Hunc autem nescimus unde sit* —As to this man we know not whence he is (*John*, 9:29).

13182 In this last part of the psalm, the prophet, always speaking in the person of Jesus Christ, predicts the glory of the Saviour and the establishment of the Church.

13183 That is, which has all the qualities of a choice victim.

13184 "*In vasis.*" See *Psalm* 7:14. "*Sanctus Israel.*" God was called the Holy One of Israel, because he sanctified the people of Israel with his grace, and that people was to acknowledge and celebrate the sanctity of God with the worship that they rendered to him.

13185 Title of the Psalm: *In Salomonem*—On Salomon At the end we read: *Defecerunt laudes David, filii Jesse*—The praises of David, the son of Jesse, are ended. By this it appears that this psalm was the last that David composed, although it is not placed here in the last place. The name of Salomon signifies Pacific, a name most suitable for him who is the Son of David by excellence, the Prince of peace, of whom Salomon was the figure. Hence it is generally acknowledged that this psalm, taken as a whole, is applicable only to the divine Messias.

13186 Let us add to these authorities the authority of St. Bernard, who (*De Laud. Virg. Matris*, s. 2) thus applies this verse: "*Descendet sicut pluvia in vellus.*" The Son of God at first descended into the womb of the Blessed Virgin without show and noise, like gentle dew on pure wool; but afterwards as an abundant rain: "*Et sicut stillicidia super terram*," he spread over the whole earth with show and noise; namely, the show of miracles and the sound of the voices of the preachers of the Gospel.

13187 By "*Pauperem*"—Poor, Bellarmine understands the human race after its fall, despoiled of all its goods, and incapable of help from any creature. By "*A potente*"—the Powerful, he understands the devil, whose miserable slave man had become.

13188 "*Adorabunt de ipso semper.*" Bellarmine's explanation is: *Redempli ab ipso adorabunt Deum verum ex ipsius ritu, doctrina, et inslitudione, usque ad mundi consummationem*—Those redeemed by Jesus Christ will adore the true God according to Christ's own rite, teaching, and institution. And Gaume translates: He shall always be adored on his own account.

13189 The psalmist makes the man who is just, but poor and afflicted, speak: at first, he confesses that at the sight of the prosperity of the impious here below, of whom he gives a description, he was tempted to be worried, so much so that he was on the point of losing faith in divine Providence; but afterwards, in verse 15 and in the following verses, he acknowledges his wrong, humbles himself before God, and renders homage to his justice and his goodness; he concludes, verse 24, in expressing the liveliest sentiments of confidence and love.

13190 Gaume has preferred the sense of the Vulgate.

13191 A metaphor frequently used in Scripture. It makes us understand that there exists between God and the soul of his servant a union similar to that of married persons; so that the soul that violates this happy union by giving way to an inordinate love of creatures, or to sin, especially to apostacy, becomes in reference to God like a spouse that has committed the sin of adultery. See *Psalm* 105:37.

13192 See *Psalm* 9:14.

13193 According to Bellarmine and others it is a notice addressed to all men to induce them to lay aside pride in the expectation of God's judgment.

13194 "*Populum tuum, filios Jacob et Joseph.*" The name of Joseph is frequently found in the psalms, with or instead of the name of the Patriarch Jacob, as representing the entire people of God. Several reasons may be given for this: God as well as Jacob, had a particular affection for Joseph, and preferred him to his brethren on account of his virtue; besides, the right of primogeniture, of which Ruben had rendered himself unworthy, was given to the family of Joseph (1 *Paral.* 6), and in the division of the promised land it formed two tribes instead of one, those of Ephraim and Manasses, whom Jacob (*Gen.* 43:5) had adopted and raised to the rank of his own sons, in transferring the birthright of Manasses to Ephraim. The tribe of Ephraim was established in the centre, and for a long time it had the privilege of possessing at Silo the Tabernacle with the Ark of the Covenant, as may be seen in the following psalm. Moreover, Bellarmine says (*Ps.* 79:1) that Joseph, who had fed the people of Israel in Egypt, was looked upon as their chief.

13195 Bellarmine adds here a useful remark: David in mentioning the tribe of Ephraim means all the Israelites; it was the most powerful after the tribe of Juda, and in Scripture most frequently reproaches are addressed to the tribe of Ephraim, and praises to the tribe of Juda. Hence it is that the afflictions of the entire people are represented under the name of Ephraim rather than that of the other tribes; and towards the end of the psalm, v. 73, 74, the tribe of Juda is chosen in preference of that of Ephraim. See the Prophet Osee. Moreover, in the tribe of Ephraim was situated the town of Silo, which for a long time had the privilege of possessing the holy Tabernacle, a favor of which it was afterwards deprived as is related in verse 66. See note to preceding psalm, v. 14.

13196 Nevertheless, we find for the seventh plague the hail mixed with fire from heaven: *Grando et ignis mista pariter ferebantur*—The hail and the fire mixed with it drove on together (*Exod.* 9:24). This is more explicit elsewhere: *Quod enim mirabile erat, in aqua, quæ omnia exstinguit, plus ignis valebat . . . Nix autem et glacies sustinebant vim ignis*—And which was wonderful, in water which extinguisheth all things, the fire had more force . . . Snow and ice endured the force of fire (*Wisd.* 16:17–22).

13197 See notes to verses 12 and 66.

13198 Bellarmine observes that this eulogium is applicable to David only in a limited sense; but it is perfectly verified in him of whom David was the figure, Jesus Christ, the King of future ages and the Good Shepherd of the flock of his faithful.

13199 We remark, in order to better understand the verse, that these are the tribes that have sprung from Rachel. In the desert they walked and camped together, having always the Ark before their eyes; so in the promised land they were grouped towards the centre, and kept the Ark, at first at Silo, in the tribe of Ephraim, and then on the mountain of Sion, in the tribe of Benjamin. Now the holy Ark was adorned with two figures of Cherubim extending their wings upon the propitiatory, where the Lord manifested his presence and rendered his oracles.

13200 To be fed on tears, is to be so afflicted that one can neither eat nor drink.

13201 This allegory signifies, according to Menochius, that the kings and the princes of God surpassed the neighboring kings in dignity and in power.

13202 In fact, the possessions of the Israelites extended on the one side as far as the Mediterranean, and on the other as far as the Euphrates (*Exod.* 23:31; *Deut.* 11:24).

13203 "*Singularis.*" This verse properly signifies Solitary, and is here a substantive, as Bellarmine explains it; it is, says Gaume, the name given by hunters to the old wild boar that lives isolated. From

Singularis, understood *Porcus,* comes the Italian *Cinghiale,* and the French *Sanglier.*

13204 “*Virum dexteræ tuæ.*” Bellarmine and other interpreters, understand by these words Jesus Christ, whom God formed with his own hand, or by the operation of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. We may add that he was to take his seat at the right hand of the eternal Father.

13205 They had promised to obey him faithfully: *Omnia verba Domini, quæ locutus est, faciemus*—We will do all the words of the Lord (*Exod.* 24:3). “*Tempus.*” According to St. Augustine: *Tempus supplicii*—Their time of punishment. Bellarmine says that in this and the next verse it is the psalmist who speaks.

13206 It is thus that the Septuagint call the Philistines. According to the Hebrew: *Palæstina*—the land of the Philistines: *Terra Philistinorum* (Gen. 21:33). See Psalm 59:9.

13207 Also the Moabites, descendants of Moab, also son of Lot (*Gen.* 19:37).

13208 It seems to us that we can explain this verse in a more literal manner, namely: Make them like a light wheel or straw, exposed to the wind to be its sport, that is, in such a manner that they are incapable of resisting.

13209 “*Montes.*” That is, according to Menochius and Bossuet: The wooded mountains; which gives simply the ordinary repetition.

13210 Thy land; that is, its inhabitants, or Thy people.

13211 “*Justitia de cœlo prospexit.*” Therefore divine Justice will direct its eyes from the heights of the heavens down upon the earth, to exact from the Man-God due satisfaction and thereby re-establish us in sanctity. Such is the explanation given by Canon Gaume.

13212 See Psalm liii, verse 3.

13213 *Superbus* in Hebrew *Rahab,* in Psalm 88:11, and in Isaias 51:9; Pharaoh is designated thereby.

13214 See note to Psalm 82:6. This is especially explained by Bellarmine and Menochius (*Ps.* 59.).

13215 This text well applies to the beginning of the psalm, as also to verses 9 and 10.

13216 On the subject of these three verses, 11, 12, and 13, one may see the Canticle of Ezechias, verse 13; and Psalm 113:26.

13217 In fact, the prayer of the Saviour was not absolute; for he added: *Verumtamen, non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu*—Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt (*Matt.* 26:39). But the verse adapts itself better to this word that he uttered in his abandonment on the cross: *Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?*—My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (*Matt.* 27:46.)

[13218] The verse may also be understood in this sense: Jesus Christ spent the first thirty years of his life in the obscurity of a simple workman; but when he distinguished himself by his teaching and his miracles, he became an object of persecution till his death on the cross.

[13219] See Psalm 86:3.

[13220] We find the same expressions in Psalm 106:3.

[13221] Some interpreters translate the Hebrew in the singular; but St. Jerome translates it in the plural, and Bellarmine says: *In græco habetur: “Filiis tuis” sed Sanctus Hieronymus, in Epistola ad Suniam et Fretellam, dicit omnes interpretes vertisse:* “Sanctis tuis,” *ut habetur in hebræo.*

[13222] Here begins the second part of the psalm: the prophet puts the calamities in juxtaposition with the promises in order to touch the heart of God and obtain mercy.

[13223] Bellarmine says that the Hebrew text is more clear; he translates it litterally thus: *Cessare fecisti munditiam ejus; et thronum ejus in terram destruxisti*—Thou hast made his comeliness (brightness or glory) to cease, and hast brought down his throne to the ground. By *Munditiam* he understands the splendor of the royal ornaments.

[13224] The beginning of the prayer to hasten the coming of the Messias, and the accomplishment of the divine promises.

[13225] This conclusion of the psalm, says Canon Gaume, shows that in the complaints of the prophet there was neither impatience nor murmuring; we see in them an unreserve full of confidence in the wisdom and good pleasure of God.

[13226] God has reserved vengeance to himself: *Mea est ultio.* (Saturday at Lauds, Canticle of Moses, v. 50; or *Deut,* 32:35.) *Mihi vindicta; ego retribuam* (*Rom.* 12:19).

[13227] “*Superbis.*” That is: To the proud that refuse to humble themselves to do penance.

[13228] Bellarmine and Gaume admire this expression: *Plantavit aurem.* In fact it is an image that well shows on one side the hand of the author of nature, and on the other the organ of hearing buried in the head with its numerous sinuosities, like the plant that extends its tortuous roots into the bosom of the earth.

[13229] The two following psalms refer to the same subject.

[13230] See Psalm 103:2.

[13231] See Psalm 92:2. We may here understand the creation; this is well expressed by the word *Firmavit,* or *Fundavit* (1 *Paral.* 16:30); but if we apply the verse to the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, and to the reformation of manners accomplished by the evangelical law, the word *Correxit* suits perfectly.

13232 The following may be the idea of this verse and of the rest of the psalm: The Lord will at first appear enveloped in obscurity, like the sun when hidden by the clouds; yet he will govern all with a sovereign justice which he will manifest by showing himself in his justice at the last day.

13233 Bellarmine explaining the word *Sanctum* says that it gives us to understand that the work is accomplished, not by the material force of the arm, but by a spiritual force; in fact, Jesus Christ has not crushed the enemy of our salvation by corporal arms or forces, but by his charity, his patience, his humanity, his obedience, the merits of his holy life, the shedding of his precious blood and his death on the cross.

13234 God was regarded as seated on the wings of Cherubim, stretched out over the Propitiatory or Mercy-seat (2 *Kings,* 6:2). Hence the Ark is called God's foot-stool (1 *Par.* 28:2). But according to several Fathers, the prophet could also have had in view another holy Ark, another foot-stool of God, yet more worthy of our adoration, namely, the Humanity of Jesus Christ personally united with the Divinity.

13235 For Psalm 91.—*Bonum est*—which is sometimes said instead of the above, see Saturday at Lauds.

13236 Several interpreters, as Bellarmine, agreeing with the different editions of the breviary which we have been able to see, read this passage without the interrogation, and thus understand the Vulgate: *Intelligam in via immaculata, quando venies ad me.* That is: I will see and I will follow the pure way when Thou comest to my aid. St. Jerome translates the Hebrew in the same way: *Erudiar in via perfecta, quando venies ad me.* This version agrees well with the rest of the psalm understood in the future tense; it then expresses a series of good resolutions with the request of the grace necessary to be faithful to them.

13237 The very title of the psalm in the Hebrew as well as in the Greek and the Latin clearly indicates its subject: *Oratio pauperis, cum anxius fuerit, et in conspectu Domini effuderit precem suam;* Prayer of the poor man when he is in anxiety, and when he pours out his prayer in the presence of the Lord.

13238 The following is another explanation: I have been stricken as grass which is trodden down and dried by the heat of the sun, and my heart is fallen into aridity and desolation, because I neglected to take spiritual nourishment to sustain my soul.

13239 The terms of this last verse suit perfectly the holy Church, which is the city of God, in which a happy people always dwell under the infallible direction of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, until it becomes established in the abode of the eternal beatitude.

13240 Of what and how we are formed.

13241 See Psalm 95.

13242 The psalm seems to refer to the firmament which separates the upper from the lower waters (*Gen.* 1:6). Gaume says that science has established the existence of these higher waters. See Psalm

148:4.

[13243] This verse may be understood of the earth, and signifies that in proportion as the waters retired the mountains seemed to rise up and the valleys to lower themselves; but it may also be understood of the waves, which, pressed by the order of the Most High, rose up like mountains, and lowered themselves like valleys by rolling into the abysses that were prepared for them. Moreover, the Lord said to the sea: Thou shalt come so far, and no farther: *Usque huc venies, et non procedes amplius, et hie confrhiges tumentes fluctus tuos*—Hitherto thou shalt come, and shalt go no farther, and here thou shalt break thy swelling waves (*Job*, 38:11).

[13244] The first fifteen verses of this psalm form part of the Canticle of David (1 *Paral*, 16:8–22), but with some differences of expression.

[13245] “*Laudamini.*” St. Jerome translates the Hebrew: *Exsultate;* and Bellarmine: *Laudate vos ipsos;* which the learned Cardinal thus explains: Congratulate yourselves or glory, not in yourselves or in your virtue, but in this that the holy name of God has been manifested to you, according to the advice of the Apostle: *Qui gloriatur, in Domino glorietur*—He that glorieth, may glory in the Lord (1 *Cor.* 1:31). In Paralipomenon we read simply: *Laudate nomen sanctum ejus*—Praise ye his holy name (1 *Par.* 16:10).

[13246] Seek always his face. “*Faciem ejus.*” That is, his benevolent looks, his favor, his grace, by avoiding all that may displease him, and by doing what is agreeable to him.

[13247] “*Servi . . . Electi,*” According to the Greek, these words are in the plural.

[13248] The promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob may be seen in *Gen.* 12:7, 13:15, 17:7, 26:3, 28:13. On the word “*Funiculum,*” see Psalm 77:60.

[13249] Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, called Christs, or Anointed, and Prophets, because they were specially consecrated to the service of God, exercised the functions of the priesthood, and foretold the future (*Gen.* 20:7, 27:46).

13250 "*Firmamentum.*" According to the Hebrew: *Baculum*—the Staff, as we read in Leviticus: *Postquam confregero baculum panis vestri*—After I have broken the staff of your bread (*Lev.* 26:26).

13251 St. Jerome translates as it is in the Greek: *Sibi.* The fact is, as Moses brought forward difficulties, God gave him his brother as an assistant (*Exod.* 4:15).

13252 St. Jerome translates: *Non fuerunt increduli verbis ejus*—They were not incredulous as to his words. Here is another interpretation adopted by many: He (God) did not belie his words. According to the Greek, we have *Quia* instead of *Et non;* literal translation: *Quia exacerbaverunt sermones ejus.* We must remark that the psalmist does not try to recall all the plagues of Egypt, nor to follow the historical order, as in Exodus 7.; darkness was a new plague. See Psalm 77:49–56.

13253 Menochius (*Exod.* 13:21) expresses the same opinion by quoting another text: *Nubes quoque Domini super eos erat per diem*—The cloud also of the Lord was over them by day when they marched (*Num.* 10:34). He joins to it the Greek version in these words: *Nubes Domini fuit obumbrans super eos*—In this arid desert, in which the people of God passed forty years, the heat of the day must have been excessive.

13254 For this verse and the preceding see Psalm 77:18, and the following verses. The last verses sum up the benefits of God, according to promise, and the obligations of his people.

13255 "*Omnes laudes ejus.*" All the praises that he merits for the marvels of his goodness, mercy, power, wisdom, etc. The psalm begins by acknowledging that his subject is above his strength.

13256 It is by this means that the Lord is deservedly praised. *Rectos decet collaudatio*—Praise becometh the upright (*Ps.* 22:1). Petition for this grace in the two following verses.

13257 In the Greek version the plural is used as it is in Latin. Bellarmine explains and conciliates well the two numbers by saying that it is the people who speak, or the psalmist in the name of the people; this can be expressed in the plural as well as in the singular. In these few words he asks for the election or predestination, justification, or glorification, which are the principle, the means, and the end of eternal beatitude in order that God may be praised there in a perfect manner. We may remark that the rest of the psalm is found in the plural, even in the Hebrew: *Peccavimus,* etc.

13258 "*Concupierunt concupiscentiam.*" Bossuet explains this by saying: *Vehementissime concupiverunt cibos.* See Psalm 77, verse 20, and the following verses.

13259 "*Gloriam suam.*" Bellarmine. Menochius, Carrières, Gaume, etc., thus explain: The true God who was, or was contributory to, their glory. It seems to us that the psalmist explains clearly enough the following verse: *Deum qui salvabit eos* . . . The God who wrought so many wonders to save them.

13260 This example, as Bellarmine and St. Augustine remark, shows the great power of the intercession of the saints with God; and, surely, without the continual prayers of the servants of God the world would not continue long.

13261 The Hebrew word, says Bellarmine, has two meanings, *to judge* and *to pray*, and the two agree well with each other in the present case: Phinees, justly indignant, struck the scandalous sinner in the midst of his crime, and begged at the same time the Lord to have pity on his people. This act of zeal and of piety pleased God and appeased his justice,

13262 See *Psalm* 80:7.

13263 We may see in regard to this and the following verses the Book of Judges.

13264 See *Psalm* 72:26.

13265 "*In iniquitatibus suis.*" St. Jerome translates: *Propter iniquitatem suam.* Menochius: *Propter iniquitates suas.* Carrières and Gaume give the same sense: Because of their iniquities.

13266 Others translate: He showed his mercy towards them in the sight of all those, etc. Such is the meaning which St. Augustine and Bellarmine regard as the most probable.

13267 The psalmist begins by an invitation to praise the goodness and the mercy of God. He then describes four examples of recourse to the Lord in affliction, and at the end of each repeats his invitation: see verses 6–8, 13–15, 19–21, and 28–31. He concludes by an eulogium and a prophecy of the all-powerful and ever-merciful Providence of the Most High towards his servants, or his Church.

13268 See *Psalm* 88:12.

13269 Such is the literal sense of these verses, 4 to 7; but the history of the Israelites is here an example of what happens to all men, people or individuals. So it is understood by Bellarmine.

13270 "*Umbra mortis.*" See *Psalm* 43:21.

13271 "*Tuus. Domine, sermo, qui sanat omnia*—Thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things (*Wis.* 16:12). In the most exalted sense we may understand the mission of the Incarnate Word. Word consubstantial with the external Father, sent to heal the human race of the wounds inflicted by sin.

13272 Bellarmine with St. Augustine applies this last part, even in its literal sense, or at least in its allegorical and prophetic sense, to the Synagogue and the Church. This is mentioned by St. Alphonsus in the heading of the psalm. In fact, it is easy to recognize in these striking figures the fields of the Synagogue, once so favored, now sterile and abandoned; while the deserts and uncultivated lands of the Gentile world, receiving the seed of the Gospel with the waters of grace, are peopled with saints, and produce in abundance fruits of salvation.

13273 These two verses, 39, 40, well apply to the reprobation of the obstinate Jews, and the two following to the vocation of the Gentiles.

13274 "*In gloria mea.*" Bellarmine says with Theodoret that David calls his glory the spirit or the gift of prophecy.

13275 These are the Philistines. See Psalm 86:4.

13276 It is Jesus Christ that speaks: He said: *Clarifica me tu, Pater*—Glorify Thou me, O Father! (*John*, 17:5.) Among the Jews some attacked him openly, as when they called him Beelzebub (*Matt.* 10:25); others sought to surprise him, as when they said: *Magister, scimus quia verax es*—Master, we know that Thou art a true speaker (*Matt.* 22:16). Judas was to betray him with a kiss; and all were about to overwhelm him with outrages, while declaring him worthy of death.

13277 We may add that since that time the Jews have had no High Priest.

13278 Bellarmine applies this verse and the preceding verses to the Jewish people after the ruin of Jerusalem, and he shows in this the fulfilment of the prophecy of Osee: *Dies multos sedebunt filii Israel sine rege, et sine principe, et sine sacrificio, et sine altari, et sine ephod*—The children of Israel shall sit many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without altar, and without ephod (*Osee,* 3:4). Thenceforward the Jews no longer formed one family, one people, or one kingdom; they were so many separate units scattered among foreign nations, without king, without leader, without altar, and without High Priest.

13279 The word *opus* is used in the sense of wages: *Non morabitur opus mercenarii tui apud te usque mane*—The wages of him that hath been hired by thee shall not abide with thee until the morning (*Lev,* 19:13).

13280 Title of the psalm: *Laus cantici ipsi David, in die ante Sabbatum, quando fundata est terra*—Praise *in the way* of a canticle, for David himself, on the day before the Sabbath, when the earth was founded. By this we see that formerly this psalm was sung on the eve of the Sabbath, the day on which the work of creation was completed by the formation of man, whose dominion the earth was to be. On this same day the earth was renewed and restored by the Passion of our divine Saviour, to which mystery interpreters likewise apply this psalm; but the Church sings it at daybreak on Sunday, at Lauds, because if Jesus Christ redeemed the world by his Passion and death on the eve of the Sabbath, it was at the earliest dawn of Sunday that he took possession of his kingdom by his glorious resurrection: *Dominus regnavit,* etc. A song of triumph, which, placed at the beginning, characterizes perfectly the entire Office.

13281 We may remark that in the text the comparative is understood; this renders the expression stronger and more suitable. The expression signifies that in regard to Him who is spoken of no comparison is possible.

13282 Or else: My soul desires Thee ardently as its food and its drink, its light, and its joy. Even my body sighs after Thee on account of its numberless necessities and many miseries, which Thou only canst remedy.

13283 “*Dedit.*” The past instead of the future, according to the custom of the prophets. “*Fructum suum.*” Its fruit by excellence beyond all comparison. See Psalm 84:13; also the text of Isaias: *Erit germen Domini in magnificentia et gloria, et Fructus terræ sublimis*—The bud of the Lord shall be in magnificence, and glory, and the fruit of the earth shall be high (*Is.* 4:2).

13284 “*Benedicat nos Deus.*” That is: May the Lord fill us with every kind of good, but especially with spiritual and heavenly goods.

13285 However, as the present work is not only an explanation, but also, according to its title, a translation (see the Dedication) for the use of persons who do not understand Latin, we have deemed it expedient to furnish also a translation of this admirable canticle. It is abridged from the one found in the prophet Daniel, which consists of thirty-eight verses. In it the three young martyrs, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, call first (v. 1) upon all creatures in general, animate and inanimate, to bless the Lord; then (verses 2 to 14) they address themselves to the several kinds of creatures in particular, beginning with the angels of heaven above and descending by degrees down to earth; then (verses 15–17) they encourage all the servants of God, and lastly (v. 18) their own selves, to praise him. The two last verses have been added by the Holy Church; but the last being formed from the verses 52 and 56 of Daniel.—Remarks: Verse 3. “*Aquæ omnes quæ super cælos sunt.*” See next psalm, verse 4. “*Virtutem Domini.*” This expression is variously understood; it seems to denote the angelic hosts charged with executing the intimations of God’s will throughout the universe. See Psalm 102. v. 22, and next psalm, 5:2. Verse 5. “*Spiritus Dei.*” The winds. Verse 6. “*Frigus est æstus.*” Some understand hereby winter and summer.

13286 Bellarmine, who holds the second opinion with the holy Fathers, seems to us to refute in a solid way this last opinion; besides, we see that the psalm is divided into two parts, the first of which refers to the higher regions of the heavens. See, moreover, in the preceding canticle, verse 3, and in Psalm 103, verse 3.

13287 Reference is here made to the last judgment. We may remark a striking relation between the next verse and the words of our Lord: *Ligatis manibus et pedibus ejus, mittite eum in tenebras exteriores*—Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness.

13288 This psalm is, as it were, the conclusion of the two preceding psalms and of the whole psalter.

13289 Title of the psalm: *Psalmus David, cum venit ad eum Nathan propheta, quando intravit ad Bethsabee*—Psalm of David when Nathan came to him, after he had sinned with Bethsabee (2 *Kings,* 12).

13290 This part of the verse is cited by St. Paul (*Rom.* 3:4).

13291 We also find in this verse reference to another purification wrought by the sprinkling of water which was mixed with the ashes of the victim offered for sin (*Num.* 19:9); this is regarded as a figure of baptism. See Bellarmine.

13292 “*Sanguinibus.*” The plural instead of the singular, a Hebraism, to denote the abundance of the blood shed, and the enormity of the crime. Besides Urias, David had caused a considerable number of his bravest soldiers to be destroyed (2 *Kings,* 9:13). In praying to God to deliver us from remorse, we should ask him not to take away the remembrance of our faults, but in his goodness to deign to repair the evil that we have done, and even to change it into good, as happened to the royal penitent.

13293 The last two verses apply very well to the spiritual Jerusalem in which the true sacrifice of justice was to be offered, which alone could fully satisfy divine justice, and of which the ancient sacrifices were a figure.

One cannot meditate too much on this psalm. which is an admirable and a salutary prayer, filled with light and unction, and which one never grows weary in repeating. We remark at least the motives invoked by the prophet to touch the heart of God and to obtain his grace, a grace that is perfect, that is, the remission of his sins, v. 2; a pure heart and a light spirit, v. 3, 8, 10, 11, with a holy joy, companion of innocence, v. 9, 13; and the gift of perseverance, v. 12, 13; the first motive, the divine mercy and goodness, v. 1. 2; the second, the knowledge that he had of his sad state, and the sorrow that he felt, v. 4; the third, his avowal and the promise of pardon, v. 5; the fourth, the misery of his nature in consequence of original sin, v. 6; the fifth, the sincerity of his soul, v. 7; the sixth, his good resolutions, and the good that he could do to others, v. 14, 15, 16; finally, the seventh, his contrite and humbled heart disposed to make every sacrifice, v. 17 and the following verses.

13294 "*Videbo*" According to the Hebrew: *Contemplabor;* which gives to the verse the following meaning: Every morning I will place myself in Thy presence, and I will contemplate, or will consider, will meditate on—what subject? that you repel all those that give themselves up to sin, v. 5, either in action, or in word, v. 6, or in sentiments, desires, thoughts, v. 7.

13295 Our divine Saviour himself employed this figure of the water when speaking of the spiritual goods that he brought into the world (*john*, 4:13; 7:38). And he has chosen water as the matter of the sacrament of baptism. Moreover, St. Paul says that the rock from which Moses made water flow represented Jesus Christ (1 *Cor.* 10:4).

13296 "*Adinventiones ejus.*" The marvels of mercy and goodness which he invented and wrought for our sanctification and our salvation, as is said in the following verse: "*Magnifice fecit.*"

13297 This is an abridgment of psalm 41, page 132.

13298 4:5. "*Ad altare Dei . . . Confitebor tibi in cithara.*" Bellarmine says that the prophet thus designates the sacrifice of praise which is offered to God in the eternal tabernacles, and which agrees with what we read in the Apocalypse: *Habentes singuli citharas*—Having every one of them harps (5:8). *Et vocem quam audivi, sicut citharœdorum citharizantium in citharis suis*—And the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers, harping on their harps (14:2).

13299 Ezechias was then thirty-nine years old (4 *Kings,* 18:2; 10:6).

13300 As Ezechias had as yet no child, it grieved him to think that the promised Messias would not be in his line. However, according to the Hebrew the word *Generatio* means here: *Vita, ætas, temipus vitæ*—Life, age, time of life; hence the words are more commonly interpreted: My life has been taken away.

13301 That is: Give security for me by undertaking my defence, and by protecting me from the evil that oppresses me like a tyrant.—After these complaints the sick man opens his eyes, and recognizes the hand of God justly striking him; then he humbles himself, confessing his faults, and the Lord with the pardon restores to him his health by prolonging his life for fifteen years.

[13302] For there is the holy place that Thou Thyself hast chosen for Thy abode among us and for the seat of Thy worshiop.—For a greater reason if we apply this verse to the heavenly Jerusalem as in the Office of the Dead.

[13303] "*Vespere.*" In the Greek this is the genitive case.

[13304] "*Flumen Dei.*" That is, according to Bellarmine: The various courses of the water, which are God's work.

[13305] "*Rivos.*" According to the Hebrew: *Sulcos.* Thus it is translated by St. Jerome.

[13306] "*Donec.*" According to the Greek: *Quia*—Because.—In this passage, v. 6 to 12, we perceive several figures found also in psalm 112. and in the canticle *Magnificat.*

(For the psalm *Laudate Dominum de cœlis,* see Sunday at Lauds.)

[13307] "According to its title: *Oratio Moysi, hominis Dei*—A prayer for Moses, the man of God. Many with St. Athanasius (*Ep. ad Marcell*). and St. Jerome (*Ep. ad Cypr.*) think that these words are to be understood literally, and consequently that Moses is the author of the psalm. Bellarmine combats this opinion. Bossuet defends it.

[13308] "*Deus.*" Bellarmine thinks that this word is in the vocative case, which gives it more energy and expression; he notes also the force of the present tense: "*Tu es*" as showing the eternity of God, without past or future.

(The psalms *Deus, Deus meus,* and *Deus misereatur,* as on Sunday at Lauds.)

[13309] "*Aranea.*" As a spider. The Septuagint added this word, and have thus modified the comparison.—"*Dies annorum nostrorum in ipsis.*" A Hebrew turn, observes Bellarmine, for saying: *In diebus annorum nostrorum.*

[13310] "*Quoniam.*" That is to say: *Verumtamen* or *Certe*—However or certainly.—"*Supervenit.*" According to the Greek it is the past tense.

[13311] This verse and the following may be extended to the past tense, as we find them in the Vulgate; but in the beginning we must supply these words: Make that we may be able to say: We have been, etc.—The translation of St. Jerome is clearer: *Imple nos matutina misericordia tua, et laudabimus et Lætabimur in cunctis diebus nostris Lætifica nos pro diebus quibus afflixisti nos, et annis in quibus vidimus mala*—Fill us in the morning with Thy mercy, and we shall give praise and rejoice all our days. Gladden us for the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and for the years in which we have seen evils.

13312 The faithful soul, while reciting this admirable canticle, will think of baptism, which delivered it from the yoke of Satan, and of the heavenly country, where it hopes to arrive, God conducting it, in order to repeat there eternally this same song of praise and thanksgiving that St. John (*Apoc.* 15:3) says that he heard. There is no doubt that it was composed in verse; but we are ignorant of the ancient rhythm of Hebrew poetry. This truly divine poem is the most ancient of all that exist in any language.

13313 "*Ascensorem.*" Pharao, and with him his whole army, as we see in verses 4 to 21.

13314 "*Et factus est.*" That is, according to Cornelius: *Nam*, or *Quia factus est.*

13315 *Projecit.*" According to the Hebrew: *Ejaculatus est*—He hurled them with as much ease as an archer hurls an arrow.

13316 "*In fortibus.*" According to the Hebrew and Greek: *In diis*—Among the gods of the heathen.

13317 "*Ascenderunt populi, et irati sunt.*" According to the Hebrew: *Audierunt populi, et fremuerunt.* It seems to us that the two versions may be reconciled in the following manner: The inhabitants of the country have heard it said that the Israelites were approaching; they ran to the heights to see, and they trembled with anger.

13318 However, among the interpreters whom we have been able to consult, we have found none that shares the opinion of Father Lallemant.

13319 *Plantabis.*" As to this expression, see Psalm 43:3. The prophet uses this and the preceding verb in the future; but he then uses the past tense: *Operatus es, Firmaverunt*, though everything refers to the future.

13320 The simplicity of this summary contrasts strikingly with the grandeur of the canticle of which it retraces the first subject.

(The other psalms, as well as the *Benedictus*, as on Sunday at Lauds.)

13321 Title of the Psalm: *Psalmus David, quando persequebatur eum Absalom, filius ejus*—A psalm of David when his son Absalom pursued him (2 *Kings*, 17.).

13322 The holy Doctor observes that David does not say: *In justitia;* but: *In tua justitia.* The justice of God demands that according to his promise, he pardons the truly repentant. The following verse elucidates and supports this explanation.

13323 Bossuet says of this canticle: *Ut magnificentissime, ita obscurissime canit.*

13324 "*Doluerunt montes; gurges aquarum transiit.*" While the waters that came down from above stopped before the ark, stood like a mountain; the waters that were beneath ran down into the sea, and this caused the bed of the river to be dry (*Jos.* 3:16).

13325 “*Maledixisti sceptris ejus.*” Father Cornelius says: *Maledicere Dei est malefacere, lædere, occidere, perdere; dicere enim Dei est efficax, idemque quod facere. Per sceptra, vel principes intettige, qui gestabant sceptra quasi insigne principatus, vel metonymice, “sceptris,” id est, regnis et provinciis quibus imperabat Pharao.* Menochius, Tirinus, Bossuet, etc., also apply this passage, and that which precedes, chiefly to Pharao. See Canticle of Moses, page 369.

13326 According to Cornelius, the prophet celebrates in this canticle the wonders that God wrought in delivering the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, because these wonders represented those that were to be worked in the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon. Now, these two deliverances prefigured the mystery of the redemption of souls, which the prophet had chiefly in view. Then, in verse 24, he takes up and develops what he said in the beginning, namely, the grief that he felt at the sight of the evils that were to fall upon the people of Israel; but he concludes, verse 30, by putting confidence in the Lord who was to save this same people in the person of whom he speaks.

13327 Title of the psalm: *Psalmus cantici in die Sabbati*—A psalm of a canticle on the Sabbath day. According to Bellarmine, this title signifies that the psalm was composed to be sung on the Sabbath, in order to teach the people that they should praise God on that day, especially for his creating and governing the world.

13328 “*Bonum est.*” It is good; that is, according to the explanation of Bellarmine, it is just, profitable, pleasant, and honorable: just, because due; profitable, because meritorious; pleasant, because sweet to one that loves to praise the Beloved; honorable, because this is the occupation of the celestial spirits.

13329 “*Mane misericordiam tuam: et veritatem tuam per noctem.*” We believe that here by the morning, or the day, and by the night we must understand the time of prosperity and the time of adversity: in prosperity we should acknowledge the benefits that we owe to the goodness and mercy of God; in adversity, we should remember the goods that he promises to those that remain faithful to him or who are converted, and who count with certainty and confidence on his faithfulness in keeping all his promises.

13330 After having exalted the works of creation which the foolish of the world cannot understand, the prophet has us to consider the justice that God exercises by his Providence, at first towards sinners who perish like grass, and afterwards towards virtuous men, who are compared to palm-trees and cedars.

13331 Bellarmine explains: Planted in the Church of God by true faith, watered by the waters of the grace of the sacraments, rooted in and based on charity, they do not cease to produce flowers and fruits by holy aspirations and good works.

13332 The following are the words that the Lord addressed to Moses: *Scribite vobis canticum istud, et docete filios Israel; ut memoriter teneant et ore decantent; et sit mihi carmen istud pro testimonio inter filios Israel:* Write you this canticle, and teach the children of Israel: that they may know it by heart and sing it by mouth; and this song may be unto me for a testimony among the children of Israel. That is, in order that they may by this means constantly recall what I am, my goodness towards them, their ingratitude, their unfaithfulness, what they may expect in future, my justice and my mercy.

[13333] Their vine, or their nation, which was a choice vine, the vine of the Saviour. See Psalm 79:9.

[13334] See Psalm 93:1.

[13335] We read in the title: *Cum venissent Ziphæi, et dixissent ad Saul: Nonne David absconditus est apud nos?*—When the men of Ziph had come, and said to Saul: Is not David hidden with us? (1 *Kings* 23:19.) This psalm refers to the danger to which David was exposed when he hid himself in the desert of Ziph.

[13336] See Psalm 85:13.

[13337] Ordinary prediction under the form of prayer.

[13338] Many give this interpretation: By drawing me out of distress, and placing me at ease in perfect liberty.

[13339] This verse, says Bellarmine, expresses the cries of joy and of salutation uttered by the just.

[13340] We add that the Saviour applied to himself this and the next verse (*Matt.* 21:42).

[13341] This day, as the Office of Easter attests and in which this verse is frequently repeated, is the day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, when having been rejected by the Jews in his Passion, he was established and recognized as the Corner-stone of the great edifice of the universal Church. According to Bellarmine, the following verse is joined to this, as if it were: Let us then rejoice, saying: *O Domine,* etc.

[13342] After having predicted the advent and the triumph of the Messias, the prophet in the two verses exhorts the faithful people to render to God solemn thanksgiving for such a benefit. Then in vs. 27 and 28, repetition of v. 20, he himself expresses his gratitude to the Lord; he finally concludes as admirably as he began.

[13343] Many think that there is question here of Mount Sion, and that this psalm was composed for the translation of the Ark; but according to Bellarmine, this opinion does not appear to rest on any solid foundation. After having said that all men have their habitation on earth, the prophet asks who are those that will be admitted to the heavenly abode.

[13344] This verse is a summary of spiritual perfection: Exemption from every evil, either exterior or interior; good use of talents received; fidelity to God and also to our neighbor. Such are the qualities of our divine model; this should be the same with all those that wish to follow him: "*Quærentium eum;*" hence they shall enter with him into glory on the day of triumph, as has been partly seen at his ascension, and as will be seen in a complete manner after the last judgment; then all the elect with body and soul, shall make their triumphant entrance into the happy city, following the King of Glory. —See Psalm 14.

[13345] True way, that does not deceive nor mislead: *Omnia mandata tua, Veritas.*—All thy statutes are truth (*Ps.* 118:86).

[13346] Twofold explanation of what we read in the preceding verse: *Legem dabit delinquentibus.* The prophet says, as Bellarmine remarks, that this is not understood of all sinners, but only of those that are humble and meek, submissive to the divine teachings, and well disposed to receive them. He still rests upon this explanation in the following verse.

[13347] This verse is obscure. According to Menochius, the first part is not interrogative but is expressive of admiration, as if it were said: How happy is the man that fears the Lord! The prophet then describes in this same verse and in the following verses the happiness of him who fears God.

[13348] See the preceding psalm, 5:5 and 11.

[13349] "*Cum concilio vanitatis.*" Bellarmine with Theodoret thinks that here there is question of the worship of idols.

[13350] The prophet has just said what he abhors and what he desires to flee from; he now speaks of what he loves and what he wishes to practise so as to be preserved from the misfortune of the wicked and to share in the felicity of the saints.

[13351] In the same mystical sense by "*Baculus*" is understood the cross, which was the instrument of our salvation. Here ends the allegory of the shepherd and the sheep.

[13352] Amongst the Orientals it was the custom, as Bellarmine remarks, to provide at feasts precious unguents for the guests; hence our Lord said to Simon the Pharisee: *Oleo caput meum non unxisti*—My head with oil thou didst not anoint (*Luke,* 7:46). In these two verses, 6 and 7, the psalmist employing another allegory speaks to God as to a generous host who treats him magnificently while his enemies seek to fill him with bitterness. He is thus consoled in the midst of his grief according to what is said in Psalm 93:19; and as St. Paul has so well proved (2 *Cor.* 7:4). He then finishes the psalm, 5:8, 9, by expressing his confidence in obtaining from the divine mercy the grace of final perseverance.

[13353] "*Verba delictorum meorum.*" According to Bellarmine and Menochius this is a Hebraism for *Delicta mea.*

[13354] "*Et non ad insipientiam mihi.*" St. Jerome translates: *Nec est silentium mihi.* This verse, which is interpreted in many various ways, we prefer to interpret thus: I will invoke Thee during my life, so that this chalice, this cruel death, may move away from me, and Thou wilt not hear me; but I will invoke Thee after my death so that Thou mayest resuscitate me, and then Thou wilt not keep silence in my regard, but wilt hear me.

[13355] "*Vult eum.*" A Hebraism, say the interpreters, for *Amat eum.* This then signifies: If it is true that God is with him, as he assures us.

13356 “*Quoniam.*” Bellarmine observes that this particle does not always mark the cause, but that it is often put for the conjunction *Et* or *Autem*, and that it is even at times redundant, like a simple ornament. “*In te projectus sum ex utero.*” Allusion, says Canon Gaume, to the ancient custom of putting the child on the knees of the father after it is born.

13357 “*Vituli.*” There are some that understand by this the men of the people.

13358 It is thus that he went so far as to pray for them by excusing them, saying: *Pater, dimitte illis; non enim sciunt quid facitint.*—Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (*Luke*, 23:34).

13359 “*Annuntiabitur Domino generatio ventura.*” Bellarmine thus explains this phrase: *Annuntiabitur Dominus generationi venturæ.*

13360 This holy law is designated almost in every verse of this psalm under various names, which express its different characteristics; these names are: *Eloquium*, repeated five times; *Eloquia*, four times; *Judicium*, twice; *Judicia*, thirteen times; *Justificationes*, twenty-eight times; *Lex*, twenty-seven times; *Mandatum*, twice; *Mandata*, thirty-six times; *Sermones*, four times; *Testimonia*, twenty-two times; *Verbum*, once; *Verba*, four times; *Veritas*, once; *Via*, once; *Viæ*, three times. It is noteworthy that several of these words are employed here and there in the sense of a Promise, namely: *Eloquium*, ten times; *Eloquia*, once; *Judicim*, twice; *Sermones*, once; *Verbum*, seven times; *Verba*, once. They refer to the promises of help or of reward, and this also relates to the fulfilment of the law.

13361 “*Justificationes.*” The precepts of the divine law are thus called in Scripture because they are just, and because they that observe them shall be found just before the divine Judge. *Factores legis justificabuntur*—The doers of the law shall be justified (*Rom.* 2:13).

13362 “*Judicia justitiæ tuæ.*” The sentences, decrees, the rules of conduct that Thou hast established according to Thy justice. In this verse and the three following verses the prophet expresses his affection for the law of God; it is always in his mouth, in his will, in his intelligence, and in his memory.

13363 Desire and petition for persevering in fervor. In verses 17 to 32 the prophet makes us ask for the grace to avoid or to overcome what hinders us from practising well the law of God; namely, the death of the soul, the passions that make one blind, the dangers of the world, tepidity, pride, the devil, human respect, earthly affections, ignorance, tediousness, discouragement, sadness.

13364 Or, “*Vivifica me secundum verbum tuum*” Make me live conformably to Thy law.

13365 “*Statue*” Render firm and stable. This is a request for the gift of perseverance. We may remark that the same prayers under different forms are reproduced here and there in the course of the psalm.

13366 Promises of recompense for those that observe Thy Law.

13367 We remark here that the word *Judicium* or *Judicia* in this psalm can be understood of three ways that are linked together, namely, of the law itself as in verses 7, 13. etc., of the judgment that will be pronounced on the observance of this law; or of the recompense or chastisement that will be merited.

13368 But here the holy Doctor translates as in the Vulgate: *In pruina.* In these three verses and in several others, especially in verse 123, says Gaume, is expressed in a touching manner the happy martyrdom of a soul whom nothing turns aside from the sight of the sovereign good, who sighs after the visit of its God, calls for him in a loud voice, and while waiting, finds its only repose in the confidence and fidelity that it never ceases to offer him.

13369 All is just and true: they will not fail to realize their promises and their menaces. The same expression as in verses 142 and 151.

13370 "*Meditatio.*" According to the Hebrew: *Delectatio.* We understand thereby, says Bellarmine, that there is question here of an agreeable and a sweet meditation which recreates and sustains the heart of man in his trials by the consideration of the divine promises.—"*In humilitate.*" St. Jerome translates: *In pressura.*

13371 "*Quomodo?*" St. Jerome translates: *Quam!* And Bellarmine explains: *Quam vehementer!* Hence this other interpretation of the verse: Oh, how I love Thy law! it is unceasingly the subject of my meditation.

13372 We may understand this verse in this sense: Receive with kindness the promise that I make Thee with a good heart that I will observe Thy law (v. 106), and aid me with Thy grace to keep it faithfully.

13373 St. Jerome renders it: *Propter æternam retributionem*—Because of the eternal reward. This reward is chiefly the possession of God himself as he said to Abraham: *Ego . . . merces tua magna nimis*—I am . . . thy reward exceeding great (*Gen.* 15:1). See, moreover, Psalm 15:5; 72:24, 25. The whole law is the love of God; now love seeks and wishes only the object loved.

13374 "*Vivam.*" I shall then live a true life. There are some that believe this verb to be in the subjunctive mood, and thus translate the word: Make me live. See the same expression in verses 77 and 144.

13375 Nothing is more unjust than the thoughts of the proud, especially in regard to God whom they refuse to obey as Satan refused; but the more they esteem themselves, the more the Lord despises them; and he lets them fall into the abyss that they dig for themselves by their pride.

13376 "*Attraxi spiritum.*" Literally, I inhaled the air, or drew in my breath, that is, I sighed deeply; a figure that expresses an ardent desire.

13377 "*Judicium.*" The Hebrew word, says Bellarmine, signifies *judicium, morem, consuetudinem, modum, et alia.*

13378 We can compare this with verse 7 of Psalm 11, and with what Moses has said in speaking of the apparition of God on Mount Sinai: *In dextra ejus ignea lex*—In his right hand a fiery law (*Deut.*

33:2). The law of God can be called thus, because as fire it illumines, purifies, and inflames by producing in souls divine love. See also Psalm 18.

13379 St. Jerome translates: *Parvulus sum ego, et contemptibilis; sed præcepta tua non sum oblitus.* That is, in our opinion: I am small and miserable; but if I observe well Thy law, I shall be tall and rich, as much as it is possible for one to be so. See verses 14, 22, and 162.

13380 To love the law of God is to love God himself, and nothing can hurt those that really possess this holy love; on the other hand, everything contributes to their greater good: *Diligentibus Deum, omnia cooperantur in bonum*—To them that love God all things work together unto good (*Rom.* 8:28). This twenty-first stanza of eight verses, 161 to 168, expresses the sentiments of a soul established in perfection.

13381 The prophet makes us finish this great psalm by an humble and a fervent prayer, in order to obtain the grace faithfully to observe the divine law, and so to attain our eternal salvation.

13382 See the text of St. Paul: *In sempiternum sedet in dextera Dei, de cætero exspectans donec ponantur inimici ejus scabellum pedum ejus*—Forever sitteth on the right hand of God. From henceforth expecting until his enemies be made his footstool (*Heb.* 10:12). The same Apostle (*Heb.* 1:13), and St. Peter (*Acts*, 2:34), cite these first two verses.

13383 In the first four verses the prophet has described the royalty of the Messias; in the following verse he announces what will be his priesthood.

13384 The differences that are found between the priesthood of Melchisedech and that of Aaron are as follows: 1. Melchisedech is represented as the perpetual Priest, without predecessor and without successor; therefore it is said of him: *Neque initium dierum, neque finem vitæ habens, assimilatus autem Filio Dei, manet sacerdos in perpetuum*—Having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but likened unto the Son of God, continueth a priest forever (*Heb.* 7:3). Aaron has had successors. 2. Melchisedech was King and Priest; Aaron, Priest only. 3. Melchisedech offers bread and wine; Aaron offers animals. 4. Melchisedech was universal Priest, not of any nation; Aaron was Priest of the Israelites only. 5. Melchisedech had no need of a tabernacle or a temple to offer his sacrifice; Aaron needed one so that the Jews had no more sacrifice, because their Temple was destroyed.

13385 According to St. Augustine, the prophet contemplating Jesus Christ after his ascension addressed to the eternal Father the words of this verse; he says: The Lord who is sitting at Thy right will overthrow those that wish to oppose his reign or his Church upon earth. Bellarmine prefers this explanation as easier and more natural.

13386 This verse well applies to the end of the world and to the Last Judgment. Hence the proud will be confounded, and the humble after having been made to drink with their divine Master of the water of the torrent, shall be glorified with him.

13387 St. Paul also says: *Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis. Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum, et donavit illi nomen quod est super omne nomen*—He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death: even to the death of the cross (*Phil.* 2:8). And our

Lord himself said: *Nonne hæc oportuit pati Christum, et ita intrare in gloriam suam?*—Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory? (*Luke*, 24:26).

13388 Fidelity in the fulfilment of the promises made to his servants; justice in the judgment that condemns the Chananeans to be despoiled in punishment of their crimes.

13389 We may here remark the composition of the psalm in order to understand it well: After the first verse, which announces the subject, the prophet praises the works of God in general, v. 2, 3; then his benefits towards the typical people, v. 4, 5, 6; the excellence and the stability of his law, v. 7; and finally, the sending of the divine Redeemer giving salvation to the world: the last two verses form a practical conclusion, indicating the way to be followed to profit by these graces.

13390 In the Hebrew text this psalm has the same form as the preceding. We may distinguish in it three parts: 1. Happiness of the just man, because of his love for God; 2 (verses 5 to 8). Happiness of the just man, because of his love for his neighbor; 3. Unhappiness of the sinner.

13391 The prophet began by saying that God deserves to be praised in every place and at all times on account of his greatness and power; he here shows us that we should praise him most especially with thanksgiving for his goodness and wonderful Providence in behalf of all his creatures.

13392 "*Barbaro.*" That is: Speaking another language not understood (1 *Cor.* 14:11). "*Facta est Judæa.*" According to the Hebrew: *Factus est Judas.* Juda or the Jewish people. "*Ejus.*" That is: *Dei.* We may also understand the second verse in this sense: God chose the land of Judæa, there to establish his sanctuary, or his Temple or worship; and chose the people of Israel to exercise or represent his power on earth.

13393 We think that the two ideas may be thus reconciled: The waters that flee represent sinners; the mountains that exult represent the just; the manifestations of the presence of God terrify some and delight others.

13394 Prediction under the form of an imprecation. This may also signify that these unfortunate beings by their culpable blindness render themselves worthy of a like chastisement.

13395 The true God whom we adore, very different from the false divinities whose vanity is described in verses 12 to 16, is also as good and merciful as he is powerful; he does not cease to sustain, to favor, and to protect efficaciously his faithful servants, verses 17 to 22.

13396 The just soul, after the present life, continues to love and to praise God, and does so even in a more perfect manner, but its works are no longer meritorious. See Canticle of Ezechias, v. 13.

13397 A canticle simple, sublime, and admirable, says Gaume, giving expression to Mary's sentiments, and showing the divine plan for the salvation of the world.

13398 The Church herself seems to indicate this sense in the antiphon in which we read: *Quia ancillam humilem respexit Deus*—Because God hath regarded the humble handmaid. There are, however, interpreters that understand and explain the word *Humilitatem* in the sense of the virtue of huminty.

13399 "*Qui potens est, et sanctum nomen ejus et misericordia ejus* . . ." That is: *Qui potens est, et sanctus, et misericors*—Who is mighty, and holy, and merciful. In the marvellous work wrought by Mary, God has shown forth his power, his sanctity, and his mercy: his power, by making her become Mother, and the Mother of the Word incarnate without ceasing to be a Virgin; his sanctity, by raising her to all the perfection that such a dignity required; his mercy, which he has extended through her to all the faithful and to all repentant sinners of every age, so that it is through her as a channel that we receive all graces. Then, verses 6, 7, 8, God has also manifested his power, on the one hand, in his justice in regard to the proud and the rich of the world, his enemies, and on the other hand, in his goodness towards the humble and the poor. And, verses 9, 10, he has also manifested his mercy, at first in the promises made to his servants, and, finally, in his faithfulness in accomplishing them.

13400 This in the Hebrew text is joined to the foregoing psalm

13401 Mercy has reference to the Jews and the Gentiles; but the faithfulness of the Lord does not properly regard only the Jews to whom alone his promises were made.

13402 This psalm and those that follow till Psalm 133. inclusively, bear each the title *Canticum graduum—Songs of Degrees;* a title the meaning of which is not known. They are the fifteen psalms which in the breviary are called *Psalmi graduales—Gradual Psalms.* Many think that they were chanted by the people while ascending the fifteen steps of the Temple. However this may be, there are other degrees which the Holy Ghost seems to have particularly desired to put before us, namely, the terrestrial Jerusalem, a figure of the two following; the spiritual Jerusalem, or the Church militant; and the heavenly Jerusalem, or the Church triumphant. It is to this that we should tend by sighing after the end of our exile, and by invoking without ceasing the help of the Lord as the Israelites did in their captivity in Babylon.

13403 The Cedarians, whence the name Saracens, inhabited Arabia Petræa. In the spiritual sense, says Gaume, this word designates worldlings, given up to error and corruption, and in the midst of whom the devout soul has much to suffer.

13404 We have several traits to remark in this beautiful description of the care of divine Providence in regard to the faithful man that confides in his goodness. It not only watches his feet, v. 3, to preserve him from falls and false steps, but it extends its attention to his whole person. In verse 5: "*Protectio tua.*" According to the Hebrew, after Bellarmine: *Umbraculum tuum.* That is: God is to his servant as a portable pavilion or a shield resting on his hand, and always ready to protect him against all that may be hurtful to him, the dangers of the day and of the night, v. 6, or of prosperity and of adversity, the enemies that attack openly and those that remain hidden. See Psalm 90:5. 4 to 6. In verse 8: "*Introitum tuum et exitum tuum.*" The coming in and the going out, or the beginning and the end of every action, of every undertaking, of every day of our whole life. According to the Hebrew, as St. Jerome translates it, it is in an inverse order: *Exitum tuum et introitum tuum;* this applies especially to the departure from the land of exile and to the entrance into our country.

13405 In verses 2, 3. “*In manibus.*” St. Jerome translates: *Ad manum;* this agrees better with what follows: “*Ad Dominum*” Bellarmine thus explains the comparison: When a servant or slave in fault is punished he looks with fear and sadness at the hand of his master who strikes him, and he seems even by his look to ask for mercy.

13406 Interpreters that see in this psalm the expression of the joy of the Jews after their deliverance take the verbs in the past tense, as they are found in the Vulgate, but it seems to be more natural to understand them in the future; this is allowed by the Hebrew, and agrees better with the verses 3 and 5. We remark the sequence of ideas: interior consolation, v. 1; exterior joy, 2; universal admiration and thanksgiving, 3, 4; prayer to hasten this happy event, 5; courage in waiting, sustained by the hopes of the fruits to be gathered; a wonderful figure, 6, 7, 8.

13407 There are some that explain this verse differently: Grant that we return from exile in full numbers and with speed, as a current that carries everything with it when under the influence of the South wind.

13408 The holy souls, fruit of the Passion of Jesus Christ, and children of the Church, always persecuted as their divine Spouse, are the arms that the Almighty employs to combat and to overcome the errors and bad passions of the world.

13409 It is known that among the Orientals it was there that judgments were rendered in the presence of the people assembled. See Psalm 68:15.

13410 We may, however, see under these sensible images goods of a higher order: the works of a just man are already a kind of posterity that he leaves after him on earth; there are moreover spiritual children in the souls that he has contributed, by prayer, by example, by word, in bringing them back or sustaining them or making them advance in the way of salvation. In verse 2, the psalmist addresses himself to each in particular, and we may remark that he does not make happiness consist in the possession of riches.

13411 In these last two verses, according to Bellarmine, the Holy Ghost promises the just man supreme blessing, the only true and perfect happiness, which consists in seeing and possessing the sovereign Good in the heavenly Jerusalem during all eternity.

13412 Beginning similar to that of Psalm 123. “*Expugnaverunt.*” According to the Hebrew and the Greek. Bellarmine says: *Angustiaverunt, Bellaverunt.* We easily recognize here in the people of Israel the Church militant of all times.

13413 Ordinary prediction under the form of imprecation, and remarkable comparison; that is: They shall be like the grass, not of the field, but of the house-tops, which no one takes the trouble to pull out or gather; for the sun dries it and makes it wither before it can develop itself. In verse 7 reference is made to the ancient custom of addressing good wishes to the mowers; this could not be if there were question of the grass on the house-tops.

13414 The psalm here enters a second part. repentant sinners are exhorted never to cease to hope in God, because he is full of mercy and faithful to his promises; he himself works out their redemption, and delivers them from all their sins.

13415 In reciting it let us represent to ourselves that we should be the temple of the Holy Ghost, a sanctuary where Jesus Christ, through holy Communion, comes to live in person with the Holy Trinity. Represent to ourselves also the promises that we have made to God and those that God has deigned to make to us.

13416 “*Si introiero* . . .” Formula of oath. See Psalm 88:35.

13417 The psalmist means that the Ark had no proper and fixed abode; it had been three hundred and twenty-eight years in Ephrata, that is, at Silo, in the land of Ephraim; it was afterwards, for seventy years (1 *Kings*, 7.), at Cariathiarim, a name that signifies City of Forests, after having been seven months with the Philistines; and before being transported (2 *Kings*, 6.) to Mount Sion it was for three months at the house of Obededom, near Jerusalem.

13418 Christ, or the Anointed, that is, King Salomon: who, after having asked for the ministers of the sanctuary interior and exterior sanctity, now prays for himself by confiding in the merits of his father and in the promises that God made to him,—promises that he calls to mind till the end of the psalm, as he calls to mind at the beginning the promise of David.

13419 All these divine promises are absolute in reference to Jesus Christ and his Church, but not in reference to what concerns the other children of David and his temporal kingdom.

13420 The sense of this double comparison: Fraternal union is agreeable and useful to all those that have the happiness to share in it; it is agreeable, as the most precious perfume, such as is used at the consecration of bishops; it is useful, as the dew that descends upon arid hills to fertilize them. We believe that by Mount Sion must here be understood not that of Jerusalem, but that which is beyond the Jordan near Hermon (*Deut.* 4:48); and in the Hebrew we find the plural: the mountains of Sion. The Holy Ghost shows us in these images how the heavenly favors and blessings are poured out on the assembly of the faithful, that is, the Church, the members of which are united. 1. At the consecration of a bishop the holy oil, which is a figure of grace, flows from the head to the beard, according to Bellarmine, and from the beard to the vestment: the head is the chief prelate; the beard, according to Bellarmine, are the prelates; the vestment is the faithful. 2. In the same way, the dew that descends from heaven to fertilize the earth extends from the high mountain of Hermon to the hills that surround it.

13421 See the canticle of Moses, v. 52 (Saturday at Lauds).

13422 We may see the same description in Psalm 113:12–16.

13423 After having portrayed the vanity of the worship of idols, the prophet addresses himself to all those that acknowledge the true God, then in particular to priests, to levites, to the simple faithful, and calls upon them never to cease to render him homage.

13424 Or: The God of all those that are called gods by any title whatsoever. See Psalms 49. and 81.

[13425] The prodigies of the power, wisdom, goodness, and mercy of the Lord, enumerated in this psalm, should represent to our mind those of a higher order, such as the divine law, the Redemption, the Eucharist, the Church. We notice that the last two verses reproduce the beginning for the conclusion.

[13426] It is attributed to David in its very title; it is therefore a prophecy, and is written in a poetic style which one cannot too much admire. We may distinguish in it four parts. The first, v. 1, 2, portrays the affliction of the Israelites in their captivity: oppressed by lively regrets at the remembrance of Jerusalem, which was so far from them, and all devastated in punishment of their faults, they sit down in sadness and weep; their citterns, according to the Hebrew word, are suspended from the willow-tree as a sign of mourning. The second, v. 3–5, shows their indignation when, whether through curiosity or irony, they are asked to sing their sacred hymns. The third, v. 6–8, is a protestation of fidelity and love for Jerusalem, which is to be the first subject of their joy, and that only when they will be able to celebrate their deliverance. The fourth, in fine, is an imprecation or prediction against their enemies.

[13427] The Israelites are here spoken of in the plural; now all the faithful people speak in the singular, as one single man; they wish by a kind of oath that their hand should immediately perish or become useless if, forgetful of their dear Jerusalem, they would attempt to play on an instrument to express their joy; they afterwards say the same thing of the tongue, should they try to sing any hymn.

[13428] This whole psalm seems to us to apply very well to Jesus Christ speaking in his own person and in that of his mystical body, as in Psalm 39. We may compare with it the prayer of our divine Saviour after the last supper (*John*, 17.). It is no doubt in this sense that we recite it at the Vespers of the feast of the Most Holy Redeemer and of the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

[13429] “*Sanctum.*” According to the Greek, this word should be taken as a substantive, and according to the Hebrew, we should have: *Verbum.* So that we should read: *Magnificasti, super omne nomen, sanctum tuum,* or *Verbum tuum;* and translate: Thou hast raised Thy saint or Thy incarnate Word above every name, or above every one that bears Thy name. An interpretation that seems to agree well with the text of the Apostle: *Donavit illi nomen quod est super omne nomen*—God hath given him a name which is above all names (*Phil.* 2:9).

[13430] “*De longe.*” Long before, from eternity. “*Funiculum.*” St. Augustine translates: *Limitem.*

[13431] “*Quia non est sermo in lingua mea.*” Bellarmine says that here should be supplied: *Quem tu non prævideris*—Which Thou hast not foreseen. Hence it means: For my tongue does not utter any word that Thou hast not foreseen. Thou knowest them, v. 2, 3, all my thoughts, all my words, all my actions.

[13432] “*Posuisti super me manum tuam.*” That is, according to Bellarmine: After having formed me, Thou didst not abandon me; but Thou hast placed and constantly keep Thy hand upon me, to lead, protect, and preserve me; without which I should have fallen back into nothingness.

[13433] *In ipso enim vivimus, et movemur, et sumus*—For in him we live and move and are (*Acts* 17:28).

[13434] “*In perfectum meum*” St. Jerome translates: *Informem adhuc me.* The second and the third part of the verse are very obscure, and they give occasion to very different interpretations.

[13435] What the psalmist said in the beginning God had done in his behalf, he begs him in concluding to do always till he arrived at the object of all his desires.

[13436] Such is, says Bellarmine, the opinion of Theodoret, followed by more modern interpreters; but according to the ancient Fathers, St. Hilary, St. Jerome, St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, this psalm is a prayer of the mystical body of Jesus Christ against the devil and his agents. It is without doubt in this sense that the Church recites them in the Vespers of the three days of the Holy Week, as also in the Office of the Commemoration of the Passion and in that of the Five Wounds.

[13437] The psalmist predicts in this verse, joined to the two following, the eternal loss of the wicked, and in the last two the eternal happiness of the just.

[13438] The same subject as in the preceding psalm. It is still, according to Bellarmine and other interpreters, the society of the faithful, or each one of its members, that speak. Here is what the Holy Ghost makes us ask of God: the grace of praying well, v. 2; discretion in our words, v. 3; simplicity of heart, v. 4; finally, flight from bad companions and association with virtuous persons.

[13439] Incense was to be burnt twice a day, morning and evening, before the Lord on the altar of incense (*Exod.* 30:7). Likewise two lambs were to be offered, one in the morning, and one in the evening (*Exod.* 39:38).

[13440] The expression *Excusare excusationes* is, according to Bellarmine, a Hebraism for *Facere excusationes.* Thus we say: *Prœliari prœlia, Judicare judicia,* for *facere pralia, judicia.* “*Cum electis.*” According to the Hebrew, says the same interpreter: *Cum dulcibus cibis*—With their dainties: and St. Jerome translates: *In deliciis.* That is: In their feastings, their pleasures. “*In retiaculo ejus.*” The pronoun *Ejus* is variously interpreted; some take it for *Suo;* but others refer it either to *Iniquitatem* which precedes, or to God, or to the devil. “*Singulariter.*” According to the Greek: *Solitarie.* That is: Isolated far from people of a bad life; this agrees with the second part of verse 5.

[13441] Title of the psalm: *Intellectus David, Cum esset in spelunca, oratio*—Of understanding for David; a prayer when he was in the cave. Some think that there is here question of the Grotto of Odolla, others of that of Engaddi (1 *kings,* 22 and 24). The whole psalm well applies to David, but much better to Him of whom he was a figure; and it is this sense that the prophet seems to us to have chiefly in view: first, v. 1–4, we recognize our Lord in his agony in the Garden of Olives; then, v. 5–9, we see him in the hands of his enemies, betrayed, abandoned, denied by his friends; finally, v. 10, he is in the tomb surrounded by a guard, awaiting his resurrection.

[13442] The friend, or he that comes to our assistance, that protects, is regarded as placed on the right: *Dexter:* Propitious, favorable.

[13443] The title of the psalm is: *Psalmus David adversus Goliath*—A psalm of David against Goliath. Under these figures we may see with the holy Fathers Jesus Christ and his Church triumphing over

the devil and his agents, and also the just man fighting against his spiritual enemies, interior and exterior.

13444 The shadow has no consistency; it changes and is dissipated without leaving any trace; such is the life of man upon earth, such is man himself (*Job,* 14:2). And still God has had the goodness to make something great of him; see Psalm 8:5. We may compare this with what is said in Psalm 38:7.

13445 We may see, for these figurative expressions, Psalms 17:11, and 103:33.

13446 "*Filiorum alienorum.*" That is: A foreign race, or the Philistines, who are called *Alienigenæ.* See Psalm 82:6.

13447 Bellarmine gives the following abridged analysis of this psalm: Verses 1, 2, announce the subject: Praise of our Lord, God and King. 3–10, his grandeur, power, glory, justice, goodness, mercy, meekness, considered in his works. 14–21, his royal virtues: probity, clemency, liberality, justice, accessibility, condescension, protection of the good and punishment of the wicked. 22, conclusion.

13448 This verse is not found in the present Hebrew text. Bellarmine and Bossuet see in this omission an evident proof of the alteration of that text.

13449 It is from the liberality of God that all the goods that we enjoy in this life come—not only food, as is said in the preceding verse, but also clothing, etc., and he gives them in abundance to all living beings. See Psalm 103.

13450 Even Moses has said: *Non est alia natio tam grandis, quæ habeat deos appropinquantes sibi, sieut Dens noster adest cunctis obsecrationibus nostris*—Neither is there any other nation so great, that hath gods so nigh them, as our God is present to all our petitions (*Deut.* 4:7). "*In veritate.*" This expression includes all the conditions that our prayer should have in order to be heard.

13451 Frailty of human support, and motives of confidence in God. The psalmist begins by inviting himself to praise God: *Lauda, anima mea, Dominum.* What follows is his answer: Yes, I will praise, etc.

13452 "*Spiritus ejus.*" That is: The spirit or the soul of each one of them. "*Revertetur in terram suam.*" We may see an analogous passage in Psalm 103:30.

13453 Goodness, wisdom, power, providence, justice, and mercy of God.

13454 This verse may be understood of the terrestrial Jerusalem, built again after the captivity of Babylon; but we may also understand it of the spiritual Jerusalem, of the holy Church, and of the celestial Jerusalem. In the same manner can the two following verses be understood in a spiritual sense: God with tender mercy heals the wounds of penitent souls, and he knows all those that are predestined to shine as stars in the firmament of eternity (*Dan.* 12:3; *Matt.* 13:43).

13455 This means that if God hears the voice of animals, great and small, that invoke him in their wants, he will with greater reason hear men (*Matt.* 6:26). But they should put confidence in him, and not reckon on their own strength, as is said in the following verses. Verses 8, 9, and 10, recall to mind those of Psalm 103:14, 15.

13456 It is interpreted and applied differently; the sense which appears to us most natural is this: After the invitation of the first verse the psalmist says that it is God who gives peace and abundance, v. 2, 3; that it is he also that sends trials, sufferings, typified by the rigors of winter, v. 4, 5, 6, and that he puts an end to them when it pleases him, v. 7. All the nations participate more or less in these goods and in these evils; but a privilege eminently distinguishes the people of God: it is the happiness of knowing his holy law, v. 8, 9. And if this privilege has been great for the people of Israel, instructed by the prophets, how much greater is it for the new people, formed by the divine Master himself, and enriched by so many graces!

13457 Jesus Christ, of whom David was a figure, is properly the Saint of God, the Saint by eminence, he whom God has glorified above every one else in a wonderful manner, v. 4; our Master and our Model, he reminds us at first of the efficacy of prayer: then he exhorts us to detach ourselves from the goods of this world, to flee from sin, to practise virtue, and to seek only justice, sanctity, by putting our whole confidence in God.

13458 It is an answer to the previous question: *Quis ostendit nobis bona?* Some explain this verse differently by the words: *Lumen vultus tui*—The light of Thy countenance. They understand the light of natural reason, impressed—*signatum*—on the superior part of the human soul, which is created after the image of God; this light is given to all men, that they may be able to distinguish the true goods from those that are false, as well as the way that leads to true happiness; but not all walk this way; hence the just man says in the singular number: "*In corde meo,*" not *In cordibus nostris.* Interior joy is the inheritance of a good conscience.

13459 The prophet, v. 1, announces his proposition, and says, v. 2, part first, how one enters this asylum of divine protection. The just man, v. 2, 3, declares that he is in this disposition. Then, v. 4 to 13, the prophet describes to him the favors that he will enjoy. Finally, God confirms and completes this picture by magnificent promises.

13460 "*In adjutorio.*" St. Jerome translates: *In abscondito:* In the secret or hiding place.

13461 "*Liberavit.*" In the Hebrew and in the Greek this is in the future tense: *Liberabit;* which joined to the preceding words, signifies: I hope that he will deliver me.

13462 Bellarmine, with St. Augustine, gives the following explanation as more true, more simple, and more literal: Among thy fellow-combatants in life thou wilt see a great number fall on thy left hand, that is, in adversity, and a still greater number at thy right, that is, in prosperity, without thyself receiving any injury.

13463 "*Quoniam.*" Many interpreters understand the verb *Dixisti,* and read thus: *Quoniam dixisti. Tu es, Domine, spes mea; ideo . . ."Altissimum."* According to the Hebrew and the Greek this word is here a substantive: The Most High;—so that the phrase means: Thou hast chosen the most High for thy refuge.

13464 Bellarmine says that this verse is quite metaphorical. “*Manibus.*” The hands of the angels are their intelligence and will. “*Lapidem.*” The stones are the difficulties to be met with in the course of life, as scandals, temptations, persecutions, etc. “*Pedem.*” The feet are, with St. Augustine and St. Bernard, human affections, especially love and fear.

13465 In these last three verses God himself confirms what precedes by eight promises, four of which regard this present life: *Liberabo eum, Protegam eum, Exaudiam eum, Cum ipso sum.* The four others relate to a glorious eternity: *Eripiam eum, Glorificabo eum, Longitudine dierum replebo eum, Ostendam illi salutare meum;* that is: I will draw him from this world of tribulation, and I will raise him to the abode of glory; there his life will have no longer an end, and he will enjoy a happiness that I enjoy myself.

13466 This psalm is the last of the fifteen which are called Gradual psalms. See note of Psalm 119, page 465.

13467 The holy old man sighed after the end of his exile on this earth, so full of misery and dangers; but the Holy Ghost had revealed to him (*Luke,* 2:26) that he would not die before he had seen the Messias; therefore, seeing this happy condition accomplished, and regarding as granted the grace that he solicited, he says with assurance: “*Nunc dimittis.*” Then he announces the providential destiny of the divine Infant who had come to enlighten and to save all nations. We may compare this prophecy with those that we read in the *Magnificat,* page 459, and in the *Benedictus,* page 344, where the conversion of the Gentiles is announced in terms less explicit. Cornelius à Lapide says that this canticle is recited every evening, to remind us of death before sleep, which is the image of death, and in order that we may prepare for it by desiring it, after the example of St. Simeon.

13468 Dignity and duties of the priest, or Selva, vol. xii. p. 265.

13469 “Quomodo autem audient sine praedicante? . . . Ergo fides ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Christi.”—Rom. x. 14–17.

13470 “Praedica verbum, insta opportune, importune, argue, obsecra, increpa in omni patientia et doctrina.”—2 Tim. iv. 2.

13471 “Clama, ne cesses, quasi tuba exalta vocem tuam, et annuntia populo meo peccata eorum.”—Isa. 1viii. 1.

13472 “Ecce dedi verba mea in ore tuo; ecce constitui te hodie super gentes et super regna, ut evellas, et destruas, etc.”—Jer. i. 9.

13473 “Euntes ergo docete omnes gentes; servare omnia quaecumque mandavi vobis.”–Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

[13474] “Si, dicente me ad impium: Morte morieris; non annuntiaverit ei . . , ipse impius in iniquitate sua morietur, sanguinem autem ejus de manu tua requiram.”–Ezech. iii. 18.

[13475] “Sacra schola praecepta rhetorum non sequitur.”–In Gordium Mart.

[13476] “Aget quantum potest ut intelligatur, et obedienter audiatur.”—De Doct. Christ. 1. 4, c. 15, n. 32.

[13477] “Qui eloquentiae principaliter studet, homines non intendit inducere ad imitationem eorum quae dicit, sed dicentis.”–Opusc. cap. xix. 19.

[13478] “Qui sunt isti, qui ut nubes volant?”—Is. lx. 8.

[13479] “Archypresbyteri, etc., per se, vel alios idoneos, plebes sibi commissas pro earum capacitate pascent salutaribus verbis.”—Sess. 5, de Ref. c. ii.

[13480] “Nisi manifestum sermonem dederitis, quomodo scietur id quod dicitur? eritis enim in aera loquentes.”–Cor. xiv. 9.

[13481] “Maxima praedicatorum turba majorem nominis sui celebrandi, quam divinae gloriae et salutis humanae procuradae curam habent.”–Ecel. Rhet. 1. 1, c. 6.

[13482] “Parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui frangeret eis.”—Lam. iv. 4.

[13483] “Panis frangendus, non curiose scindendus.”

[13484] “Et ego, cum venissem ad vos, fratres, veni non in sublimitate sermonis aut sapientiae, annuntians vobis testimonium Christi. Non enim judicavi me seire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum.”—1 Cor. ii. 1.

[13485] “Quid mirum, si nullum fructum faciunt plerique qui praedicationem in eloquentiae saecularis artificio, in periodorum commensuratione, in verborum lenociniis humanaeque rationis excursibus collocant. Evangelium non docent, sed inventa sua, Jesum crucifixum nesciunt academicos oratores lubentius sibi proponunt imitandos quam apostolos, et apostolicos viros. Simplicitatem sermonis, non penitus christiana destitutam eloquentia, naturali, decore ornatam, non fucatam, comitetur humilitas concionatoris. Timeat ne superbia sua gloriae humanae plaususque captatione, ac ostentatione eloquentiae Dei opus impediat. Quo major ejus humilitas, quo minor in mediis humanis fiducia, minor eloquentiae secularis affectatio, eo major spiritui et virluti Dei ad conversionem animarum locus datur.”

[13486] Life, ch. xvi.

[13487] “Multi praedicatores, sed pauci qui praedicant ut oportet.”—In die Pentec. conc. 2.

[13488] “Quare igitur non est obducta cicatrix filiae populi mei?”—Jer. viii. 2.

13489 “Eo quod non sunt sacerdotes, quorum debeant curari medicamine.”

13490 “Si stetissent in consilio meo, et nota fecissent verba mea populo meo, avertissem utique eos a via sua mala.”—Jer. xxiii. 22.

13491 “Effeminatae quippe sunt eorum magistrorum animae qui semper sonantia componunt, et nihil virile, nihil Deo dignum est in iis.”—In Ezech, hom. 3.

13492 “Praedicatio christiana non indiget pompa et cultu sermonis; ideoque piscatores, homines imperiti, electi sunt qui evangelizarent.”—In 1 Cor. 1.

13493 “Simplicitatem sermonis non penitus christiana destitutam eloquentia naturali decore ornatam, non fucatam, comitetur humilitas concionatoris. . . . Quo minor in mediis humanis fiducia, minor eloquentiae saecularis affectatio, eo major spiritui et virtuti Dei ad conversionem animarum locus datur.”

13494 “Vivus est sermo Dei, et efficax, et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti.”–Heb. iv. 12.

13495 “Numquid non verba mea quasi ignis, dicit Dominus, et quasi malleus conterens petram?”–Jer. xxiii. 29.

13496 “Omnia verba divina quamvis rustica sint et incomposita, viva sunt, quoniam intus habeant veritatem Dei et ideo vivificant audientem. Omnia autem verba secularia quoniam non habent in se virtutem Dei, quamvis sint composita et ingeniosa, mortua sunt; propterea nec audientem salvant.”–Hom. 46.

13497 “Sicut gladius ferire nequit, nisi si nudus; nam intra vaginam constitutus quantumvis sit acutus non vulnerabit: ita verbum Dei, ut impiorum corda vulneret, nudum esse debet, sine figurarum ornamento, aut vanae eloquentiae floribus.”–Biblioth. mor. tr. 83, d. 11.

13498 “Haec nos patimur, verborum fucos conquaerentes, et compositionem elegantem, ut delectemus proximum. Consideramus quomodo videamur admirabiles, non quomodo morbos componamus.”—Horn. 33. ad pop.

13499 “Miser et infelix proditor.”—Ad pop. ant. hom. 33.

13500 “Non nos tonantia et poetica verba proferimus nec eloquentia utimur seculari sermone fucata, sed praedicamus Christum crucifixum.”

13501 “Debet ad infirmitatem audientium semetipsum contrahendo descendere, ne dum parvis sublimia, et idcirco non profutura loquitur, magis curet se ostendere quam auditoribus prodesse.”–Mor. 1. 20, c. 1.

13502 “Non barbarismi confusionem devito, etiam praepositionum casus servare contemno, quia indignum existimo ut verba coelestis oraculi restringam sub regulis Donati.”–Ep. ad Leandr. in Expos. I. Job.

13503 “Non est occultatum os meum a te, quod fecisti in me.”–Ps. cxxxviii. 15.

13504 “Habeo in abscondito quoddam ossum. Sic potius loquamur, melius est ut reprehendant nos grammatici quam non intelligant populi.”–In Ps. 138, n. 20.

13505 “In ipso sermone malit (concionator) placere rebus magis quam verbis; nee doctor verbis serviat, sed verba doctori.”

13506 “Parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui frangeret eis.”—Lam. iv. 4.

13507 Farther on, in Chapter VII. of the present volume.

13508 “El sermo meus et praedicatio mea non in persuasibilibus humanae sapientiae verbis sed in ostensione spiritus et virtutis.”—1 Cor. ii. 4.

13509 “Haec fuit demonstratio Apostolorum ostendere spiritum eructantem arcana divina, ita ut alii cernerent Spiritum Sanctum per os eorum loqui.”

13510 “Tam apertus debet esse sermo docentis, ut ab intelligentia sua nullos, quamvis imperitos, excludat.”

13511 “Dedit nobis ministerium reconciliationis. . . . et posuit in nobis verbum reconciliationis . . . Pro Christo legatione fungimur, tanquam Deo exhortante per nos.”—2 Cor. v. 18.

13512 “Miser et infelix Proditor.”

13513 “Non enim sumus, sicut plurimi, adulterantes verbum Dei; sed ex sinceritate, sed sicut ex Deo, coram Deo, in Christo loquimur.”—2 Cor. ii. 17.

13514 “Adulterari verbum Dei est ex eo, non spiritales fructus, sed adulterinos foetus quaerere laudis humanae.”—Mor. 1. 22, c. 17.

13515 “Propterea ecce ego ad prophetas, ait Dominus, qui furantur verba mea: Projiciam quippe vos.”—Jer. xxiii. 30, 33.

[13516] “Praedicator qui plausum quaerit, non conversionem populi, hic damnabitur quia praedicationis officio, ad laudem non Dei sed suam abusus est, tum quia salutem tot animarum sibi creditam impedivit et avertit.”—In Luc. vi. 26.

[13517] “Si dicente me ad impium: Morte morieris; non annuntiaveris ei, . . . ipse impius in iniquitate sua morietur, sanguinem autem ejus de manu tua requiram.”—Ezech. iii. 18.

[13518] “Venient, venient ante tribunal Christi; ubi erit pauperum accusatio, quorum vixere stipendiis, nec diluere peccata.”—De Vita et Mor. Cler. c. 7.

[13519] “Sententiarum vivacitatem sermo cultus ex industria enervat.—De Vita contempl. 1. 3, c. 34.

[13520] “Misit me Christus . . . evangelizare, non in sapientia verbi, ut non evacuetur crux Christi.”—1 Cor. i. 17.

[13521] “Alii externae sapientiae operam dabant, ostendit (Apostolus) eam non solum cruci non opem ferre, sed etiam eam exinanire.”

[13522] “Non praesumam unquam in sapientia verbi, ne evacuetur crux Christi; sed Scripturarum auctoritate contentus, simplicitati obedire potius studeo, quam tumori.”—Contra Felicia. c. 2.

[13523] ‘‘O stulte, ardet domus tua; et tu expectas compositam orationem?”

[13524] Biblioth. mor. tr. 83, d. 42.

[13525] “Praedicatio mea, non in persuasibilibus humanae sapientiae verbis, sed in ostensione spiritus et virtutis.”—1 Cor. ii 4.

[13526] “Haec verba Apostoli quid aliud sibi volunt, quam non satis esse quod dicimus, ut animas moveant hominum nisi doctori divinitus adsit coelestis gratiae energia, juxta illud (Ps. 1xvii. 13): Dominus dabit verbum evangelizantibus virtute multa?”

[13527] Rev. 1. 6, c. 35.

[13528] “Quod luxuriat, in flore sermonis hebetatur in fructu.”—In Ps. 118, S. 12.

[13529] “Mirabantur sed non convertebantur.”—In Jo. tr. 29, n. 2.

[13530] “Docente te in ecclesia, non clamor populi, sed gemitus suscitetur. Auditorum lacrymae laudes tuae sint.”—Ep. ad Nepotian.

[13531] Lettre 218, man. de precher, ch. 2, a. 3.

[13532] “Non quaerit aeger medicum eloquentem, sed sanantem. Quid; oblectas? aliud agitur; urendus, secandus sum. ad haec adhibitus es.”

[13533] “Illius doctoris libenter vocem, audio, qui non sibi, plausum, sed; mihi planctum moveat.”—In Cant. s. 59, n. 3.

[13534] By Father Daubenton, 1. 3.

[13535] Lettre 218, man. de precher, ch. 5, a. 1, 3, 4; ch. 2, a. 2.

[13536] lb. ch. 2, a. 3.

[13537] “Concede propitius ut ejus dirigentibus monitis, aeterna gaudia consequamur.”—We may also apply this remark to the teachings of our saint; for we also read in the prayer of his Office: Ut ejus salutaribus monitis edocti . . . ad te pervenire feliciter valeamus. He was, moreover, raised to the dignity of Doctor of the Church—Ed.

[13538] “Evangelii minister delectabit, si sit sermonis apti, facilis, ac perspicui.”

[13539] “Quid enim fortius desiderat anima quam veritatem?”–In Jo. tr. 26, n. 5.

[13540] Love of God, B. 3, ch. 9.

[13541] “Ut sic moveat affectum ut flectat scilicet curando, ut quae dicta sunt, velit implere.”—P. 3, tit. 18, ch. 3, § 4.

[13542] “Subvertit ecclesiam, quod et vos non quaeritis sermonem qui pungere possit, sed qui oblectet, quasi cantores audientes. Et idem sit ac si Pater videns puerum aegrotum illi, quaecumque oblectent, porrigat, talem non dixerim Patrem. Hoc etiam nobis accidit, flosculos verborum sectamur, ut oblectemus, non ut compungamus, et laudibus obtentis, abeamus,”—In Act, hom. 30.

[13543] Abelly, 1. 3. ch. 34.

[13544] Cardinal Villecourt (1. 3, ch. 38) informs us that this anonymous author was an abbe named Coyer, whose person and whose books have hardly been noticed in France. However this may be, his sacrilegious utopia touched the zeal of the holy bishop, and has produced for us a few more good pages, which appeared in 1767 with The Truth of Faith.

[13545] “Et sic oportebat Christum pati, et resurgere a mortuis tertia die, et praedicare in nomine ejus poenitentiam et remissionem peccatorum in omnes gentes.”—Luke, xxiv. 46.

[13546] “Euntes in mundum universum, praedicate Evangelium omni creaturae.”—Mark, xvi. 15.

[13547] “Docentes eos servare omnia quaecumque mandavi vobis.”—Matt. xxviii. 15.

[13548] “In verbo veritatis Evangelii, quod pervenit ad vos, sicut in universo mundo est, et fructificat, et crescit, sicut in vobis, ex eo die qua audistis.”—Col. i. 5.

13549 “Illi autem profecti praedicaverunt ubique, Domino cooperante, et sermonem confirmante sequentibus signis.”—Mark, xvi. 20.

13550 “Et quomodo descendit imber et nix de coelo, et illuc ultra non revertitur, sed inebriat terram, et infundit eam, et germinare eam facit, et dat semen serenti, et panem comedenti; sic erit verbum meum, quod egredietur de ore meo: non revertetur ad me vacuum, sed faciet quaecumque volui, et prosperabitur in his ad quae misi illud.—Is. Iv. 10.

13551 “Vivus est enim sermo Dei, et efficax, et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti, et pertingens usque ad divisionem animae et spiritus.”—Heb. iv. 12.

13552 “Placuit Deo per stultitiam praedicationis salvos facere credentes.”—1 Cor. i. 21.

13553 “Nos autem praedicamus Christum crucifixum, Judaeis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam.”—Ib. i. 23.

13554 “In universo mundo est et fructificat.”–Col. i. 6.

13555 “In omni orbe terrarum, in omni Graecia atque universis exteris nationibus, innumeri sunt et immensi qui, relictis patriis legibus, et his quos putabant deos, se disciplinae Christi tradiderunt.”–Periarch.1. 4, n. 1.

13556 “Vestra omnia implevimus, urbes, insulas, conciliabula, castra, decurias, senatum, forum.”—Apologet. c. 37.

13557 Ad Laetam, de Instit. filae.

13558 Vit. Patr. 1. 1, c. 5.

13559 “Quomodo ergo invocabunt, in quem non crediderunt? Aut quomodo credent ei quem non andierunt? Quomodo autem audient sine praedicante?”—Rom. x. 14.

13560 This letter was printed in connection with Sermons for Sundays, which appeared in 1771 (Villecourt, tome vi, pages 304 et 472).—Ed.

13561 1. 2, q. 113, a. 9.

13562 “Quomodo credent ei quem non audierunt? Quomodo autem audient sine praedicante? Quomodo vero praedicabunt, nisi mittantur?”—Rom. x. 14.

13563 “Ad erudiendam ergo dominus plebem suam, quasi ad excolendam vineam. nullo tempore destit operarios mittere.”—In Evang. hom. 19.

13564 “Novissime, diebus istis, locutus est nobis in Filio.”—Heb. i. 2.

[13565] “Euntes in mundum universum praedicate evangelium omni creaturae.—Mark, xvi. 15.

[13566] “In universo rnundo est. et fructificat, et crescit.” Col. i. 6.

[13567] “Per solas missiones impletur praedestinatio, quae est transmissio creaturae rationalis in vitam aetenam.”—Theol. 1. 3, d. 6, c. 2, sp. 2.

[13568] “Tot parvuli in oppidulis petunt panem et non est qui fragat eis. Vae, vae praelatis dormientibus, vae presbyteris otiosis!”—Loco eit.

[13569] “ Plebes sibi commissas, pro earum capacitate, pascant salutaribus verbis, docendo necessaria ad salutem annunciandoque cum brevitate et facilitate sermonis vitia quae eas declinare, et virtutes, quas sectari oporteat.”—Sess. 5, c. 2, de Ref.

[13570] “Nemo propheta acceptus est in patria sua.”—Luke, iv. 24.

[13571] “Quandoque tanta commotione convertit (Deus) cor hominis, ut subito perfecte consequatur sanitatem spiritualem.—P. 3, q. 86, c. 5.

[13572] “Confessarius a quibusvis peccatoribus gravioribus etiam recidivis, stata lege, non exigat ut per notabile tempus praeviae exercuerint opera poenitentiae; sed cum sanctis Patribus expendant Deum, in conversione peccatoris, non tam considerari mensuram temporis quam doloris.”

[13573] In the Life of the saint by Abelly, 1. 4. ch. 5, this Place is called Niolo, situated in the island of Corsica, where a mission was given in 1652. This Life presents many other very interesting details about the good done in the missions given by the children of St. Vincent de Paul.—Ed.

[13574] See treatise on the EXERCISES OF THE MISSIONS, ch. x.

[13575] See EXERCISES OF THE MISSIONS, ch. vii. art. 8, n. 4.

[13576] These objections are refuted more at length in the Letter to a Bishop. page 73.

[13577] This exercise is scarcely in vogue outside of Italy. It was the practice of St. Alphonsus in his missions to send some of the missionaries, accompanied by clerics with a cross and lighted torches, to make short exhortations at the corner of the streets and public places for the first few evenings of the mission. The object of these exhortations was to excite the people to penance, and invite them to attend the exercises of the mission. A stanza of some suitable hymn was first sung, and then the missionary gave a short but animated exhortation.—Ed.

[13578] We should know that St. Alphonsus, wishing to produce by his labors solid and durable fruits, used the means suitable for this end: he employed in each mission a number of evangelical laborers proportionate to the population and to the difficulties of the place; there were often twenty of them, and sometimes more and the exercises lasted at least two or three weeks. (Tannoia and Villecourt, 1. 2. ch. 52.)—Ed.

[13579] “Pro Christo legatione fungimur. 2 Cor. v. 20.

[13580] “Videns civitatem, flevit super illam.”—Luke, xix. 41.

[13581] “Eo quod non cognoveris tempus visitationis tuae.”—Ibid. 44.

[13582] “Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis, nolite obdurare corda vestra.”—Ps. xciv. 8.

[13583] “Convertimini ad me, . . . et convertar ad vos.”—Zach. i. 3.

[13584] “Oves meae vocem meam audiunt.”—John, x. 27.

[13585] Two or three days after the beginning of the mission St. Alphonsus replaced the evening exhortations by another exercise: at the end of the great sermon in the evening the women left the church and only the men remained, who, the lights having been extinguished, took the discipline in common. All the missionaries had to be present; one of them began by summing up the motives of the sermon that had just been preached, and tried to inspire his hearers with sentiments of compunction so as to dispose them for this act of penance. Then the men could be seen weeping on account of their sins, and trying to satisfy the justice of God. (Tannoia and Villecourt, 1. 2, ch. 52. See the Method of giving Missions in this treatise.)—ED.

[13586] “Quid enim faciam, cum surrexerit ad judicandum Deus? et cum quaesierit, quid respondebo illi?”—Job, xxxi. 14.

[13587] “Deus ultionum.”—Ps. xciii. 1.

[13588] “Judicium enim sine misericordia illi qui non fecit misericordiam.”—James, ii. 13.

[13589] “Nescio qua fronte indulgentiam peccatorum obtinere poterit, qui Deo, praecipienti inimicis suis veniam dare, non acquiescit.”—Serm. 273, E. B. app.

[13590] “Mea est ultio, et ego retribuam in tempore.”—Deut. xxxii. 35.

[13591] “Dimittite, et dimittemini.”—Luke, vi. 37.

[13592] In the Pater noster, the divine Master commands us to ask God to pardon us only as we pardon others.—Ed.

[13593] According to Tannoia and Villecourt, 1. 2, ch. 52, this was the practice followed by St. Alphonsus in his missions: Before the evening sermon, when the people were assembled in the church, a part of the Rosary was recited, not in Latin according to the Italian custom, but in the vernacular, in order that the people might understand what they said, and that, accustoming themselves to recite the Rosary in this way, they might subsequently continue this practice. The missionary took care to explain how pleasing it is to the Blessed Virgin, and to point out to the people

the indulgences that were attached to it, especially did he recommend the recitation of the Rosary (or five decades) every evening, in common, with their families. Ed.

13594 “Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam, et hauriet salutem a Domino.”—Prov. viii. 35.

13595 Super Angel. Salut. exc. 3, n. 10.

13596 “Ne corda divideremus, voluit esse nobis Creator et Redemptor.”

13597 “Gaudeamus, et exsultemus, et demus gloriam ei, quia venerunt nuptiae Agni, et uxor ejus praeparavit se.”—Apoc. xix. 7.

13598 “Accipite, et comedite; hoc est corpus meum.”—Matt. xxvi. 26.

13599 “Eum, qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras.”—John, vi. 37.

13600 See what has been said about the Exhortation of Peace, page 124.

13601 “Dimittite, et dimittemini.”—Luke, vi. 37.

13602 “Nolite dare sanctum canibus.”—Matt. vii. 6.

13603 “Foris canes.”—Apoc. xxii. 15.

13604 “Qui manducat meam carnem, . . . in me manet, et ego in illo.”—John, vi. 57.

13605 “Unus vestrum me traditurus est.”—Matt. xxvi. 21.

13606 “Quid tibi vis faciam?”—Mark, x. 51.

13607 “Amen, amen dico vobis: Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—John, xvi. 23.

13608 By dispensation it is allowed to eat meat on Saturdays.

13609 In other words, to contribute to the support of the Church.

13610 See Hints to the Catechist, which precede Instructions on the Commandments and Sacraments.

13611 Page 173.

13612 The examples to be related here are the same as those given in this volume at the end of the INSTRUCTIONS ON THE COMMANDMENTS AND THE SACRAMENTS.

[13613] Page 143.

[13614] Const. Etsi pastoralis, § 3, n. 4.

[13615] These three parts form the three articles of the chapter which in addition contains the following: 4. The Memory, the Pronunciation, and Gesture. 5. Special instructions for the sermons of the mission. 6. The exercise of a devout life. 7. The last sermon on perseverance, with the Papal blessing. 8. Other remarks relative to the sermon.—ED.

[13616] We put here in the first rank the works of our holy Doctor himself; we shall find in them an abundant and a sure mine for every kind of subject.

[13617] “Scandalum est dictum vel factum minus rectum, praebens occasionem ruinae.”—2. 2. q. 43. a. I.

[13618] “Domino servientes, spe gaudentes, in tribulatione patientes, orationi instantes.”—Rom. xii. II.

[13619] “Domino servientes, spe gaudentes, in tribulatione patientes, orationi instantes.”—Rom. xii. II.

[13620] “Mirabantur, et non convertebantur.”

[13621] 1. 2. q. 23. a. 4.

[13622] “Eratis enim aliquando tenebrae, nunc autem lux in Domino.”—Ephes. v. 8.

[13623] “Veni non in sublimitate sermonis aut sapientiae. . . . Sermo meus et praedicatio mea, non in persuasibilibus humanae sapientiae verbis, sed in ostensione spiritus et virtutis.”—I Cor. ii. I.

[13624] “Effeminate; quippe sunt eorum magistrorum animae, qui semper sonantia componunt, et nihil virile, nihil Deo dignum est in iis qui juxta voluntatem audientium praedicant.”—In Ezech. hom. 3.

[13625] “Non quaerit aeger medicum eloquentem, sed sanantem. Quid oblectas? Aliud agitur: urendus, secandus sum; ad haec adhibitus es.”—Epist. 15.

[13626] “Docente te in ecclesia, non clamor populi, sed gemitus excitetur, lacrymorum auditorum laudes tui sint.”—Ad Nepot. de Vita Cler.

[13627] “Praedicatio christiana non indiget pompa et cultu sermonis; ideoque piscatores, homines imperiti, electi sunt, qui evangelizarent.”—In 1 Cor. i.

[13628] “Adulterantes verbum Dei.”—2 Cor. ii. 17.

13629 “Perversus quisquis, ac vanae gloriae serviens, recte adulterari verbum Dei dicitur, quia, per sacrum eloquium, non Deo filios gignere, sed suam scientiam desiderat ostentare, et voluptati magis, quam generationi, operam impendit.”—Mor. 1. 16, c. 28.

13630 “Sententiarum vivacitatem sermo cultus ex industria enervat.”

13631 “Misit me Christus . . . evangelizare, non in sapientia verbi, ut non evacuetur crux Christi.”—1 Cor. i. 17.

13632 “Alii externae sapientiae operam dabant; ostendit (Paulus) eam, non solum cruci non opem ferre, sed etiam eam exinanire.”

13633 Rev. 1. 6, c. 35.

13634 “Quaere quid scribas, non quemadmodum. . . . Cujuscumque orationem videris sollicitam et politam, scito animum esse pusillis occupatum.”—Epist. 115.

13635 DIGNITY AND DUTIES OF THE PRIEST, Part II., Instr. iv. (Volume XII., page 269).—LETTER TO A RELIGIOUS, in this volume, page 17.

13636 “Frange esurienti panem.”—Is. lviii. 7.

13637 “Multiplicabo semen tuum sicut stellas coeli.”—Gen. xxii. 17.

13638 “Multiplicabo semen tuum sicut stellas coeli.”—Gen. xxii. 17.

13639 “Mors in olla.”—4 Kings, iv. 40.

13640 “Praebe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi.”—Prov. xxiii. 26.

13641 “Femina judicavit, femina disposuit, femina prophetavit, femina triumphavit.”—De Viduis.

13642 “Hebraei sunt, et ego; Israelitae sunt, et ego; semen Abrahae sunt, et ego.”—2 Cor. xi. 22.

13643 “Quid miramur, fratres? Mariam venientem, an Dominum suscipientem? Suscipientem dicam, an trahentem? sed melius dicam trahentem et suscipientem.”—In Evang. hom. 33.

13644 “Consolamini, consolamini, popule meus.”—Is. xl. r.

13645 “Stantes erant pedes nostri in atriis tuis Jerusalem: Jerusalem, quae aedificatur ut civitas.”—Ps. cxxi. 2.

13646 “Deus, quis similis erit tibi? ne taceas, neque compescaris, Deus.”—Ps. 1xxxii. 2.

13647 “Notum autem vobis facio, fratres, Evangelium quod praedicavi vobis, quod et accepistis, in quo et statis, per quod et salvamini.”—1 Cor. xv. 1.

13648 “Tribulatio patientiam operatur, patientia autem probationem, probatio vero spem: spes autem non confundit.”—Rom. v. 3.

13649 Indumenta deponit, purpura exuitur, diademate exhonoratur, cultu et corde mutatur.”—De Gubern. Dei, 1. 2.

13650 “Visitabo super orbis mala.”—Is. xiii. II.

13651 “Anima mea turbata est valde; sed tu, Domine, usquequo?”—Ps, vi. 4.

13652 “Usquequo non exaudies, et non dabis auxilium, ut resurgam?”

13653 “Omnis amaritudo, et ira, et indignatio, et clamor, et blasphemia, tollatur a vodis.”—Ephes. iv. 31.

13654 Serm. 115, n. 2, E. B.

13655 De Tobin, c. 5.

13656 Is. i. 17.

13657 De Martyr, s. 2.

13658 Is. xxii. 13.

13659 Serm. 60, n. 3, E. B.

13660 “Per gloriam et ignobilitatem, per infamiam et bonam famam, ut seductores et veraces.”—2 Cor. vi. 8.

13661 Page 180.

13662 Serm. 132, n. 2, E. B.

13663 Serm. 60, n. 4, E. B.

13664 “Quanti mercenarii in domo patris mei abundant panibus, ego autem hic fame pereo!”—Luke, xv. 17.

13665 “Ubi es?”—Gen. iii. 9.

[13666] “Si Dominus ego sum, ubi est timor meus?”—Mal. i. 6.

[13667] Jer. ii. 5.

[13668] “Dic cui thesaurizas? Mihi, inquis?”—Serm. 60, n. 3, E. B.

[13669] “Tanta in puero barbaro fuit disciplina reverentiae, ut naturam vinceret!”

[13670] This is hardly known outside of Italy.—Ed.

[13671] The pulpits in Italy are more or less wide in extent; this enables the preacher to move several steps to the right or to the left.—ED.

[13672] Pages 192 and 193.

[13673] Page 199.

[13674] Page 205.

[13675] Page 214.

[13676] “Desideria occidunt pigrum.”—Prov. xxi. 25.

[13677] “Eum, qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras.”—John, vi. 37.

[13678] See above, page 195.

[13679] Page 95.

[13680] Page 117.

[13681] “Eum, qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras.”—John, vi. 37.

[13682] “Convertimini ad me . . . et convertar ad vos.”—Zach. i. 3.

[13683] “Quare moriemini, dorous Israel?”—Ezech. xviii. 31.

[13684] “Revertimini, et vivite.”—Ib. 32.

[13685] “Remittuntur tibi peccata.”—Luke, vii. 48.

[13686] Homo apost. append. 4, § 3—Volume III. page 252, of the ascetical works.

[13687] See the beginning of Chapter IX.

[13688] In regard to this, we read in the life of the holy author: "Affections on the Passion were then so tender in the mouth of Alphonsus that torrents of tears could be seen flowing in the church: before, the people wept through sorrow for having sinned; in this meditation, they shed tears of love. To move the sensibility of the people, he exhibited before their eyes, in the last of these meditations, a large picture which he had himself painted, and in which Jesus Christ was represented dead on the cross, having his limbs all covered with blood and wounds. This exercise, so touching, produced the greatest fruit on the missions" (Tannoia and Villecourt, 1. 2, ch. 52).

We have collected the different teachings of St. Alphonsus on mental prayer, so that it forms a complete treatise: it is to be found in Volume

III., page 252.—ED.

[13689] There is here question of the two strophes Pange lingua and Tantum ergo, which are found further on at the end of the Acts for the Visit to the Blessed Sacrament. It was a particular custom to chant these two strophes for Benediction, instead of the last two, Tantum ergo and Genitori, according to the common rule.—ED.

[13690] It is needless to repeat that these practices are unknown outside of Italy.—ED.

[13691] Page 223.

[13692] Pope Pius IX., by a Rescript of March 27, 1852, deigned to grant other indulgences, namely: A plenary indulgence, on the anniversary of the erection of any cross, or on the Sunday following, as also on the Feasts of the Finding and of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross; conditions requisite: To confess and to communicate; to visit the cross, or one of the crosses erected, and a church or a public oratory and there to pray for some time to the intention of the Holy Father.

Indulgence of thirty days every time one recites devoutly before the crosses erected, five "Our Fathers," five "Hail Marys," and five "Glory be to the Fathers," in memory of the wounds of our Lord.—ED.

[13693] Page 184.

[13694] Page 230.

[13695] "Venerunt autem mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa."—Wis. vii. II.

[13696] "Oves meae vocem meam audiunt."—John, x. 27.

[13697] "Memorare novissima tua, et in aeternum non peccabis."—Ecclus. vii. 40.

[13698] Sess. 13, cap. 2.

[13699] Mecum sunt divitiae . . . ut ditem diligentes me."—Prov. viii. 18.

13700 “Qui acquirit gratiam Mariae, agnoscetur a civibus paradisi; et qui habuerit characterem nominis ejus, annotabitur in Libro vitae.”—Psalt. B. M. V. ps. 91.

13701 “Domestici ejus vestiti sunt duplicibus.”—Prov. xxxi. 21.

13702 Further details in regard to confraternities may be found in the GLORIES OF MARY, Volume VIII., page 155.

13703 “Illustrior portio gregis Christi.”—De Discip. et Hab. Virg.

13704 “Erunt sicut Angeli Dei in coelo.”—Matt. xxii. 30.

13705 Ann. 480.

13706 “Exierunt obviam Sponso.”—Matt. xxv. i.

13707 “Dilectus meus candidus, et rubicundus, electus ex millibus.”—Cant. v. 10.

13708 “Sponsum offertis; meliorem reperi.”—De Virg. 1. I.

13709 Croiset, Exerc. 12 Mai.

13710 “Primitiae Deo et Agno”—Apoc. xiv. 4.

13711 “Qui pascitur inter lilia.”—Cant. iv. 16.

13712 “Omnis ponderatio non est digna continentis animae.”—Eccul. xxvi. 20.

13713 “Mulier innupta et virgo cogitat quae Domini sunt, ut sit sancta corpore et spiritu; quae autem nupta est, cogitat quae sunt mundi, quomodo placeat viro.”—1 Cor. vii. 34.

13714 “Porro hoc ad utilitatem vestram dico, . . . ad id quod honestum est, et quod facultatem praebeat sine impedimento Dominum obsecrandi.”—Ibid. vii. 35.

13715 Matt. xxv. I.

13716 “Sequuntur agnum quocumque ierit.”—Apoe, xiv. 4.

13717 De S. Virginit. c. 27.

13718 “Frumentum electorum et vinum germinans virgines.”—Zach. ix. 17.

13719 “Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias.”—Cant. ii. 2.

[13720] “Pulchrae sunt genae tuae sicut turturis.”—Cant. i. 9.

[13721] “Zelotypus est Jesus.”—Ep. ad Eust.

[13722] Vita S. Ansb. 9. febr.

[13723] Anno 870, n. 39.

[13724] “Nulla in parte moechari convenit virginem, non lingua, non aure, non oculo, non tactu, multoque minus animo.”—De Vera Virg.

[13725] “Sponsus sanguinum tu mihi es.”—Exod. iv. 25.

[13726] “Sequuntur Agnum quocumque ierit.”—Apoc. xiv. 4.

[13727] “Adducentur Regi virgines post eam.”—Ps. xliv. 15.

[13728] See what is said on this subject, page 231, and seq.

[13729] The Acts are to be found at the end of this work.

[13730] See page 247.

[13731] “Qui operantur in me, non peccabunt. Qui elucidant me, vitam aeternam habebunt.”—Ecclus. xxiv. 30.

[13732] That is, this worthy prelate was the spiritual director of the Founder, who took care to take counsel of him in all the affairs of his Institute. (Villecourt, 1. i, ch. 21, and 1. 2, ch. 17.) We see here the humility of the saint.—ED.

[13733] The hours here mentioned are after the Italian usage: twenty-four o’clock finishes, and one o’clock begins about half an hour after sunset. See this subject treated more fully in the note, page 269 of Volume XI.—ED.

[13734] Homo apost. tr. ult. § 3, n. 18.

[13735] “Plenus Aquaeductus, ut accipiant caeteri de ejus plenitudine.”—De Aquaed. n. 3.

[13736] “Redempturus humanum genus, pretium universum contulit in Mariam.”

[13737] “Si quid in nobis est, si quid gratiae, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare.”—De Aquaed. n. 6.

[13738] “Nulla gratia venit de coelo ad terram, nisi transeat per manus Mariae.”—Apud S. Bernardin. Pro Fest. V. M. s. 5, c. 8.

[13739] “Sic est voluntas ejus, qui totum nos habere voluit per Mariam.”—De Aquaed. n. 7.

[13740] “Deus vult ut omnia bona ab ipso exspectemus, potentissima Virginis Matris intercessione impetranda.”—Ep. 50 in calce Theol.

[13741] “Nullus sanguinis mei particeps erit, nisi intercessione Matris meae.”—Theol. ment. et cord. t. 2, 1. 10, d. 4, c. 1.

[13742] “Nec facultas ei deesse poterit, nec voluntas.”—De Assumpt. s. I, n, 2.

[13743] “Haec maxima mea fiducia est. haec tota ratio spei mea.”—De Aquaed. n. 7.

[13744] “Quaeramus gratiam, et per Mariam quaeramus.”—Ibid. n. 8.

[13745] “Ipsam sequens, non devias; ipsam rogans, non desperas; ipsam cogitans, non erras; ipsa tenente, non corruis; ipsa protegente, non metuis; ipsa duce, non fatigaris; ipsa propitia, pervenis.”—De Laud. V. M. hom. 2.

[13746] “Nobis non est alia quam a te fiducia, o Virgo sincerissima!”—De Laud. B. M. V.

[13747] “Nullus potest coelum intrare, nisi per Mariam transeat, tamquam per portam.”—In Luc. 1.

[13748] “Omnia dona et gratiae, quibus vult, quando vult, et quomodo vult, per ipsius manus dispensantur.”

[13749] “Tu Dispensatrix omnium gratiarum; salus nostra in manu tua est.”—S. de Nat. M. V. s. 8.

13750 “Nihil tibi impossibile, cui possibile est etiam desperatos in spem beatitudinis relevare.”

13751 “Filius, nihil negans, honorat te.”—De. Nat. B. M. V. s. 1.

13752 Part I. Ch. V.

13753 “Nulla gratia venit de coelo ad terram, nisi transeat per manus Mariae.”

13754 “Qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri.”—1 Tim. ii. 4.

13755 “Et ideo gratia nulli deest, sed omnibus, quantum in se est, se communicat.”—In Heb. 12. lect. 3.

13756 “Nullum salutem suam, nisi Deo auxiliante, operari; nullum, nisi orantem, auxilium promereri.”

13757 De Eccl. Dogm. c. 26.

13758 “Alia non nisi orantibus praeparasse, sicut usque in finem perseverantiam.”—De Dono persev. c. 16.

13759 “Oportet semper orare.”—Luke, xviii. 1.

13760 “Petite, et accipietis.”—John, xvi. 24.

13761 “Sine intermissione orate.”—1 Thess. v. 17.

13762 P. 3, q. 39, a. 5.

13763 “Si quis dixerit justificatum, vel sine speciali auxilio Dei in accepta justitia perseverare posse, vel cum eo non posse, anathema sit.”—Sess. vi. can. xxii.

13764 “Amen, amen, dico vobis, si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—John, xvi. 23.

13765 “Postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluenter, et non improperat.”—James, i. 5.

13766 “Omnia quaecumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.”—Mark, xi. 24.

13767 “Qui amat periculum, in illo peribit.”—Ecclus. iii. 27.

13768 “Cum exponimus nos in periculo, Deus nos derelinquit in illo.”

13769 T. 1, s. 21, a. 3, c. 3.

[13770] “Adversarius vester diabolus . . . circuit, quaerens quem devoret.—1 Pet. v. 8.

[13771] “Quod si oculus tuus dexter scandalizet te, erue eum et projice abs te.”—Matt. v. 29.

[13772] “Cum metu et tremore, vestram salutem operamini.”—Phil. ii. 12.

[13773] Pudorem dedit Deus peccato, confessioni fiduciam. Invertit rem diabolus: peccato fiduciam praebet, confessioni pudorem.”—De Poenit. hom. 3.

[13774] In the Italian editions these regulations are found among the Letters and Circulars addressed by the holy founder to the members of his Institute; we may here see, briefly, how he directed his missions in the kingdom of Naples.—ED.

[13775] Page 95.

[13776] Old Italian reckoning, that is, two hours and a half before sunset.

[13777] Page 254.

[13778] Page 169.

[13779] Pages 140 and 156.

[13780] Page 130.

[13781] Page 179.

[13782] Page 302.

[13783] Page 118.

[13784] Page 126.

[13785] This custom of preaching the last sermon before the exercise of the devout life was followed by St. Alphonsus only during the first years of his apostolate, as has been explained above, page 234. —Ed.

[13786] Page 234.

[13787] Pages 230 and 234.

[13788] Pages 292 and 297.

[13789] John, xv. 12; xiii. 34; xvii. II.

13790 1 Cor. i. 34.

13791 It should be known that St. Alphonsus and his companions when on missions, often numbering from fifteen to twenty Fathers in large places, lodged in a special building, and were served by their own lay-brothers, without being a burden to any one.—ED.

13792 These sermons, to be preached in the missions, are to be found in Volume XVI. of the Centenary Edition.—ED.

13793 There is question here of the large catechism, about which instruction is given to adults; as for the little catechism for children, see page 156.

13794 “Pro Christo ergo legatione fungimur.”—2 Cor. v. 20.

13795 Page 17: LETTER TO A RELIGIOUS.

13796 “Vulnera, corda saxea vulnerantia, et mentes congelatas inflammantia.”—Stim, div. am. p. 1, c. 1.

13797 “Si quis hominem semel justificatum dixerit . . . posse in tota vita peccata omnia, etiam venialia, vitare, nisi ex speciali Dei privilegio quemadmodum de Beata Virgine tenet Ecclesia; anathema sit.”—Sess. vi. can. xxiii.

13798 “Anima quae peccaverit, ipsa morietur.”—Ezech. xviii. 20.

13799 “Ibunt hi in supplicium aeternum.”—Matt xxv. 46.

13800 L. 2, q. 87, a. 4.

13801 De Divers. Quaest. 1. I, q. 2, n. 18.

13802 “Tu reliquisti me, dicit Dominus; retrorsum abiisti.”—Jer. xv. 6.

13803 “Filios enutrivi et exaltavi, ipsi autem spreverunt me.”—Is. i. 2.

13804 “Per praevaricationem legis, Deum inhonoras.”—Rom. ii. 23.

13805 “Confregisti jugum meum, rupisti vincula mea, et dixisti: Non serviam.”—Jer. ii. 20.

13806 “Omnes gentes, quasi non sint, sic sunt coram eo.”—Is. xl. 17.

13807 “Quis peccatum ullum leve audeat appellare?”—Reg. brev. int. 4.

13808 “Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet.”—Ecclus. xix. 1.

[13809] Conf. 1. 8, c. 6.

[13810] Hist. laus, c. 44.

[13811] “Non habebis deos alienos coram me.”—Exod. xx. 3.

[13812] “Angelis suis mandavit de te, ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis.”—Ps xc. 11,

[13813] “Deus fide, spe, et charitate, colendus.”—Enchir. c. 3.

[13814] “Neque enim aliunde haereses obortae sunt, aut nata schismata, quam inde quod Sacerdoti Dei non obtemperatur, nec unus in Ecclesia ad tempus Sacerdos et ad tempus Judex vice Christi cogitatur.—Epist. ad Cornel.

[13815] “Ecclesia Dei vivi, columna et firmamentum veritatis.”—1 Tim. iii. 15.

[13816] “Portae inferi non praevalebunt adversus eam.”—Matt. xvi. 18.

[13817] Ego Evangelio non crederem, nisi me Ecclesiae Catholicae commoveret auctoritas.”—Cont. Epist. Fund. c. 5.

[13818] We shall find farther on, § IV., a formula which explicitly contains all the truths that one must believe by necessity of means and of precept. See, moreover, page 140.

[13819] “Credere enim oportet, accedentem ad Deum, quia est, et inquirentibus se remunerator sit.”—Heb. xi. 6.

[13820] Prop. 64.

[13821] Doetr Christ. c. 3. a. 6.

[13822] Sess. xxv. De invoe. Sanet.

[13823] “Hoc divinae legis ordo requirit, ut nos, qui manentes in corpore peregrinamur a Domino, in eum per Sanctos medios reducamur.”—In 4. Sent. d. 45, q. 3, a. 2.

[13824] *Contin. de tournely. De Relig.* p. 2, c. 2, a. 5. q. I. *Sylvinus*, In 2. 2, q. 83, a. 4, concl. 2.

[13825] “Fides non habet meritum, cui Humana ratio praebet experimentum.”—In Evang. hom. 26.

[13826] The cathedral at Naples possesses the relics of this glorious martyr, with his blood collected during his execution and preserved in two vials. Every time that his head is brought in sight of his blood enclosed in the two vials, this blood, which is congealed and solid, liquefies and boils as living blood in the presence of all the spectators. (Victories of the Martyrs, Chap. LXV., page 284.) ED.

[13827] Hist. 1. 2, n. 32.

[13828] Peristeph. hymn. 10.

[13829] “Amen, amen, dico vobis: Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—John, xvi. 23.

[13830] “Per te accessum habemus ad Filium, O inventrix gratiae, Mater salutis! ut per te nos suscipiat, qui per te datus est nobis.”—In Adv. Dom. s. 2.

[13831] “Haec est tota ratio spei meae.”—De Aquaed.

[13832] “Vita, Dulcedo, et Spes nostra.”

[13833] “Major est iniquitas mea, quam ut veniam merear.”—Gen. iv. 13.

[13834] “Convertimini ad me, . . . et convertar advos.”—Zach. i. 3.

[13835] “Non delinquant omnes qui sperant in eo.” Ps. xxxiii. 23.

[13836] “Quoniam in me speravit, liberabo eum.” Ps. xc. 14.

[13837] This act is reproduced afterwards, § IV., with a further explanation.

[13838] Hist. Eccl. 1. 4, c. 13.

[13839] Deut. vi. 6, etc.

[13840] Sec § IV., page 387.

[13841] “Non tenemur proximum diligere actu interno formali.”—Prop. 10.

[13842] “Diliges proximum tuum sicut te ipsum.”—Matt. xxii. 39.

[13843] “Evenire plerumque solet, ut, non amissa charitate, et inimici nos ruina laetificet, et rursum ejus gloria contristet, cum et ruente eo, quosdam bene erigi credimus, et proficiente illo plerosque injuste opprimi formidamus.”—Mor. 1. 22, c. II.

[13844] Prop. 15.

[13845] Sess. VI., c. xiii.

[13846] “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—Matt. vii. 8.

13847 “Omnis, sive justus, sive peccator sit.”—Homil. 18.

13848 2. 2, q. 83, a. 16.

13849 “Petite, et accipietis.”—John, xvi. 24.

13850 “Omnia quaecumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.”—Mark, xi. 24.

13851 “Deus superbis resistit; humilibus autem dat gratiam.”—James, iv. 6.

13852 And through her hand we receive all the graces. (Pages 374 and 380.)

13853 + There is here question of exterior acts of charity towards our neighbor; as for interior acts, they have been spoken of above, page 384.

13854 “Qui diligit Deum, diligat et fratrem suum.”—I John, iv. 21.

13855 “Diliges proximum tuum sicut te ipsum.”—Matt. xxii. 39.

13856 “Ego autem dico vobis: Diligite inimicos vestros; benefacite his qui oderunt vos, et orate pro persequentibus et calumniantibus vos.”—Matt. v. 44.

13857 “Dimittite, et dimittemini.”—Luke, vi. 37.

13858 “Judicium enim sine misericordia illi qui non fecit misericordiam.”—James, ii. 13.

13859 “Nescio qua fronte indulgentiam peccatorum obtinere poterit, qui, Deo praecipiente veniam dare, non acquiescit.”—Serm. 273, E. B. app.

13860 “Quod superest, date eleemosynam.”—Luuke, xi. 41.

13861 “Eleemosyna a morte liberat; et ipsa est quae purgat peccata, et facit invenire misericordiam et vitam aeternam.”—Tob. xii. 9.

13862 “Foeneratur Domino, qui miseretur pauperis; et vicissitudinem suam reddet ei.”—Prov. xix 17.

13863 “Vade, et corripe eum.”—Matt xviii. 15.

13864 “Quamdiu fecistis uni ex his fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecistis.”—Matt. xxv. 40.

13865 “Deum computat debitorem.”—De Opere et Eleem. ad fin.

13866 “Audisti verbum adversus proximum tuum? Commoriatur in te.”—Ecclus. xix. 10.

13867 See Chapter VIII, n. 4.

13868 “Sputa diaboli, mentes necantia.”

13869 “Unus loquitur, et unum tantum verbum profert, et tamen multitudinis audientium animas interficit.”—In Cant. s. 24, n. 4.

13870 “Qui autem scandalizaverit unum de pusillis istis, qui in me credunt, expedit ei ut suspendatur mola asinaria in collo ejus, et demergatur in profundum maris.”—Matt. xviii. 6.

13871 “Vae homini illi per quem scandalum venit!”—Matt, xviii. 7.

13872 Bolland, 7 Jan.

13873 “Anima quae declinaverit ad magos et ad ariolos . . . ponam faciem meam contra eam, et interficiam illam de medio populi sui.”—Lev. xx. 6.

13874 “Non assumes nomen Domini Dei tui in vanum.”—Exod. xx. 7.

13875 “Mundus totus in maligno positus est.”—1 John, v. 19.

13876 2, 2, q. 76, a. I.

13877 We should here bear in mind that cursing the dead was one of the habits of the people of Italy. Many regarded this as a grievous sin, so that in Puglia it was made a reserved case. The inconveniences that resulted from this severity induced St. Alphonsus to publish, on this question, about the year 1746, a learned dissertation, of which he here gives a summary.—(Villecourt, 1. 2, ch. 26 and 46.)

13878 “Unum tantum consulo, quod non sis nimis pronus judicare mortalia peccata, ubi tibi non constat per certam Scripturam.”—Summ. 1. 3, de Poenit. § 21.

13879 “Nisi ad hoc habeatur auctoritas expressa Scripturae, sacrae, aut Canonis, seu determinationis Ecclesiae, vel evidens ratio, non nisi periculosissime determinatur; nam, si determinetur quod sit ibi mortale, et non sit, mortaliter peccabit contra faciens.”—P. 2, tit. 1, 6. 11, § 28.

13880 “Educ blasphemum extra castra . . . et lapidet eum populus universus.”—Levit. xxiv. 14.

13881 “Omne quippe peccatum comparatum blasphemiae, levius est.”—In Isaiam, c. 18.

13882 “Da alapam; contere os ejus.”—Ad pop. Ant. hom. 1.

13883 Ann. 494.

13884 Dial. 1. 4, c. 18.

13885 “Juramentum nunquam obligat ad illicitum.”

13886 “Juramentum servari debet, semper ac servari potest.”

13887 “Cum causa, licitum est jurare sine animo jurandi, sive res sit levis, sive sit gravis.”—Prop. damn.

13888 Jer. iv. 2.

13889 See Chapter VII. n. 1.

13890 “Memento ut diem Sabbati sanctifices.”—Exod. xx. 8.

13891 “Praeceptum de sanctificatione Sabbati est morale, quantum ad hoc, quod homo deputet aliquod tempus vitae suae ad vacandum divinis; . . . sed in quantum in hoc praecepto determinatur speciale tempus, est caeremoniale.”—2. 2, q. 122, a. 4.

13892 Die 7. sept. Vit. c. 9.

13893 Sent. 3, ch. 17, q. I, a. 5, sol. 2.

13894 “Omne opus servile non facietis in eo.”—Lev. xxiii. 7.

13895 “Opera etiam corporalia, ad spiritualem Dei cultum non pertinentia, in tantum servilia dicuntur, in quantum proprie pertinent ad servientes; in quantum vero sunt communia et servis et liberis, servilia non dicuntur.”—2. 2. q. 122, a. 4.

13896 De Feriis, c. 3.

13897 De Feriis, c. ult.

13898 Prop. 53.

13899 Ad Arch. Compost. 8 Jul. 1744.

13900 In 4 Sent. d. 15, q. 3, a. 4, sol. 3.

13901 Brev. Appetente, 20 Dec. 1759.

13902 “Honora patrem tuum et matrem tuam, ut sis longaevus super terram quam Dominus Deus tuus dabit tibi.”—Exod. xx. 12.

13903 “Fili, suscipe senectam patris tui.”—Ecclus. iii. 14.

13904 Exam. 1. 5, c. 16.

13905 “Verites prino. instr. 28.

13906 The author quoted, adds that this repentant sinner having faithfully done the penance and repaired his fault, the toad disappeared.—Ed.

13907 In opere et sermone, et omni patientia, honora patrem tuum. Ecctus. iii. 9.

13908 “Qui maledixerit patri suo vel matri, morte moriatur.”—Exod. xxi. 17.

13909 “Et est maledictus a Deo, qui exasperat matrem.”—Ecclus. iii. 18.

13910 “Honora patrem tuum et matrem, . . . ut longo vivas tempore, et bene sit tibi in terra.”—Deut. v. 16.

13911 T. 2, s. 17, a. 3, c. I.

13912 De Civ. D. 1, 22, c. 8.

13913 “Fili, suscipe senectam patris tui, et non contristes eum in vita illius.”—Ecclus. iii. 14.

13914 “Et si defecerit sensu, veniam da, et ne spernas eum in virtute tua.”—Ibid. iii. 15.

13915 “Filii, obedite parentibus vestris in Domino.”—Eph. vi. 1.

13916 “Obedite parentibus vesiris in Domino.”—Eph. vi. 1.

13917 2. 2, q. 104, a. 5.

13918 Sess. xxv. c. 13.

13919 “Non parentes, sed peremptores.”—Epist. iii.

13920 “Qui parcit virgae, odit filium suum; qui autem diligit illum, intanter erudit.”—Prov. xiii. 24.

13921 1 Kings, ii. 4.

13922 “Immolaverunt filios suos et filias suas daemoniis.”—Ps. cv. 37.

13923 “Eos ad peccatum, quantum in eis fuit, obligaverunt.”—In Ps. xvi.

13924 “Numquid colligunt de spinis uvas?”—Matt. viii. 16.

13925 These festivals in the order of the calendar are: The Purification, Annunciation, Visitation, Assumption, Nativity, Presentation, and Immaculate Conception.

13926 “Curva illos a pueritia illorum.”—Ecclus. vii. 25.

13927 “Famuli et famulae domesticae possunt occulte heris suis surripere, ad compensandam operam suam, quam majorem judicant salario quod recipiunt.”—Prop. 37.

13928 “Non occides.”—Exod. xx. 13.

13929 “Tu es enim, Domine, qui vitae et mortis habes potestatem.”—Wis. xvi. 13.

13930 “Viri sanguinum et dolosi non dimidiabunt dies suos.”—Ps. liv. 24.

13931 “Habitavit profugus in terra.”—Gen. iv. 16.

13932 In nearly all his ascetical works, as we have indicated at the end of the Preface of Volume XIV., the holy Doctor teaches that one should even desire death in order to make sure of no more offending God and of possessing him for all eternity.—ED.

13933 “Desiderium habens dissolvi, et esse cum Christo.”—Phil. i. 23.

13934 3 Kings, xix. 4.

13935 2. 2, q. 64, a. 7.

13936 De 5 Praec. q. 4.

13937 De Sent. excomm. c. 3.

13938 P. 3, t. 4, c. 3, § 2.

13939 Loco cit.

13940 “Si effringens fur domum, sive suffodiens, fuerit inventus, et accepto vulnere mortuus fuerit, percussor non erit reus sanguinis.”—Exod. xxii. 2.

13941 Can. causa 23, q. 1, c. 4.

13942 “Responsio mollis frangit iram.”—Prov. xv. I.

13943 “Non moechaberis.”—Exod. xx. 14.

13944 “Homo enim videt ea quae parent; Dominus autem intuetur cor.”—1 Kings, xvi. 7.

13945 “Quoties resistis, toties coronaris.”

13946 “Datus est mihi stimulus carnis meae, angelus Satanae, qui me colaphizet.”—2 Cor. xii. 7.

13947 “Propter quod, ter Dominum rogavi, ut discederet a me.”—Ibid. 8.

13948 “Sufficit tibi gratia mea.”

13949 “Nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur.”—Ibid. 9.

13950 “Nisi quis repulerit delectationem, delectatio in consensum transit, et animam occidit.”—De Similit. c. 40.

13951 Vit. c. 33.

13952 Il Crist, istr. p. I, rag. 31.

13953 “Omnis fornicator, aut immundus . . . non habet hereditatem in regno Christi.”—Eph. v. 5.

13954 “Maximum saeculi malum, impudicitia.”—Comp, ad Helv. c. 16.

13955 “Nullam capitaliorem pestem, quam corporis voluptatem.”—De Senect. c. 12.

13956 “Quodcumque peccatum dixeris, nihil huic sceleri aequale reperies.”

13957 “Est luxuria ipsis daemoniis exosa.”

13958 “Tua libido non sinit me ad te accedere.”

13959 “Diabolus dicitur maxime gaudere de peccato luxuriae, quia difficile ab eo homo potest eripi.”—I. 2, q. 73. a. 5.

13960 “Non dabunt cogitationes suas ut revertantur ad Deum suum, quia spiritus fornicationum in medio eorum.”—Os. v. 4.

13961 Gen. xix.—Wis. x. 6.

13962 “Omnis quippe caro corruperat viam suam.”—Gen. vi. 12.

13963 “Venit diluvium, et perdidit omnes.”—Luke, xvii. 27.

13964 “Fornicatus est populus cum filiabus Moab, . . . et occisi sunt viginti quatuor millia hominum.”—Num. xxv. I. 9.

13965 “Quia oblita es mei, et projecisti me post corpus tuum, tu quoque porta scelus tuum et fornicationes tuas.”—Ezech. xxiii. 35.

13966 “Ex adultis, propter carnis vitium, pauci salvantur.”

13967 Il Crist. instr. p. I, rag, 24.

13968 Dial. 1. 4, c. 32.

13969 “Quod si non continent, nubant; melius est enim nubere, quam uri.”—Cor. vii. 9.

13970 “Priusquam humiliarer, ego deliqui.”—Ps. cxviii. 67.

13971 “Vinum germinans virgines.”—Zach. ix. 17.

13972 “Sancta Virgo virginum.”

13973 Il Christ, istr. p. 3, rag. 34.

13974 “Erit fortitudo vestra ut favilla stuppae, . . . et non erit qui extinguat.”—Isa. i. 31.

13975 “Majus miraculum est in occasione non peccare, quam mortuum resuscitare.”

13976 “Qui amat periculum, in illo peribit.”—Ecclus. iii. 27.

13977 What is meant by proximate occasion may be seen in Part II. ch. v. § 3. n. 3.

13978 Il Cris. istr. p. 1. rag. 24.

13979 “Per oculos intrat in mentem sagitta impuri amoris.”—De Modo bene viv. c. 23.

13980 “Averte faciem tuam a muliere compta.”—Ecclus. ix. 8.

13981 “Cum sancto sanctus eris; . . . cum perverso perverteris.”—Ps. xvii. 26.

13982 “Talis erit, qualis est conversatio qua utitur.”

13983 “Sepi aures tuas spinis; linguam nequam noli audire.”—Ecclus. xxviii. 28.

13984 Spec. Exempl.

[13985] Tresor de la Doctr. chret. p. 3, ch. 7, 1. 3.

[13986] “Vana lectio vanas generat cogitationes, et exstinguit mentis devotionem.”—De Instit. Nov. p. 1, c. 14.

[13987] “Quae pudica ad spectaculum processerat, revertitur impudica.”—De Gratia D. ad Donat.

[13988] “Ubi tripudia, ibi diaboli festum celebratur.”—De Ludicris Rebus.

[13989] “Non sunt haec ludicra; sunt crimina.”—Serm. 155.

[13990] “Non furtum facies.”—Exod. xx. 15.

[13991] Chapter IV. § 3, page 455.

[13992] “Neque fures, neque avari, . . . neque rapaces regnum Dei possidebunt.”—1 Cor. vi. 10.

[13993] “Panis egentium vita pauperum est; qui defraudat illum, homo sanguinis est.”—Ecclus. xxxiv. 25.

[13994] “Ecce merces operariorum, . . . quae fraudata est a vobis, clamat; et clamor eorum in aures Domini Sabaoth introivit.”—James. v. 4.

[13995] “Eadem die reddes ei pretium laboris sui ante solis occasum, quia pauper est.”—Deut. xxiv. 15.

[13996] Father Engelgrave (Lux. Evang. p. 1, embl. 23, § 2) cites the same example as having occurred at Lille, according to Bruzelinus (Annal. Fland. ann. 955).—ED.

[13997] “Comederunt sacrificia mortuorum, . . . et multiplicata est in eis ruina.”—Ps. cv. 28.

[13998] At the present time money with us is not a mere medium of private exchange for the purposes of housekeeping; it is a medium of commercial exchange. It represents not use value, but market value. Formerly Church and State together enacted a number of laws to restrain the taking of interest. At this day the State has repealed those laws, and the Church has officially signified that she no longer insists on them. Still she maintains dogmatically that there is such a sin as usury, and what it is, as defined in the Fifth Council of the Lateran. See Moral Philosophy, article Usury, page 255, by Rev. Joseph Rickaby, S. J.—ED.

[13999] Clem. 1. 5, tit. 5.

14000 “Abominatur enim Dominus Deus tuus eum qui facit haec.”—Deut. xxv. 16.

14001 Mirac. 1. 3, c. 37.

14002 “Reddite ergo omnibus debita.”—Rom. xiii. 7.

14003 “Non remittitur peccatum, nisi restituatur ablatum. Ad Maced. Edit. Ben. Ep. 153, n. 20.

14004 “Nullum peccatum periculosius furto. In aliis, homo dolendo salvatur; de isto, oportet ut etiam satisfaciat.”

14005 Let us not forget that if material means are wanting to us, we can always, and should always, have recourse to God with confidence, by imploring his mercy and by offering him our good works, or at least our good will with the merits of Jesus Christ. God who is our Father, a Father infinitely rich and infinitely good, will deign without doubt to supply our indigence, either by procuring for us what is wanting, or by himself repairing all our wrongs done to our neighbors, living or dead. Let us remember the prodigal son.—ED.

14006 Haec est maledictio quae egreditur super faciem omnis terrae; . . . et veniet ad domum furis, . . . et consumet eam.”—Zach. v. 3.

14007 “Qui opes inique possidet, etiam opes suas amittet.”

14008 “Terrena res possideatur, non possideat.”

14009 “Non loqueris, contra proximum tuum, falsum testimonium.”—Exod. xx. 16.

14010 Page 415.

14011 “Os autem quod mentitur, occidit animam.”—Wis. i. II.

14012 “Maledictus, qui pervertit judicium.”—Deut. xxvii. 19.

14013 “Hist. 1. 6, c. 9.

14014 “Raro invenies, qui non libenter reprehendat vitam alienam.”—Epist. ad Celant.

14015 “Si quis in verbo non offendit, hie perfectus est vir.”—James, iii. 2.

14016 “Vir linguosus.”—Ps. cxxxix. 12.

14017 “Venenum aspidum sub labiis corum.”—Ps. xiii. 3.

14018 Page 398.

[14019] Page 503.

[14020] 2, 2, q. 73, a 2.

[14021] Ibid. a. 4.

[14022] “Stultus ambulans, cum ipse insipiens sit, omnes stultos aestimat.”—Eccles. x. 3.

[14023] “Non concupisces domum proximi tui, nec desiderabis uxorem ejus, . . . nec omnia quae illius sunt—“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house: neither shalt thou desire his wife . . . nor anything that he has.”—Exod. xx. 17.

[14024] Let us here add that the two sacraments, namely: Baptism and Penance, are commonly called the sacraments of the dead, because they were instituted to restore the life of grace to those that are deprived of it by sin. The five other sacraments are called the sacraments of the living, because they were instituted for those that possess the life of grace.—ED.

[14025] “Nisi quis renatus fuerit denuo, non potest videre regnum Dei.”—John, iii. 3.

[14026] “Ad hoc quod homo se praeparet ad gratiam in Baptismo percipiendam, praeexigitur fides, sed non charitas, quia sufficit attritio praecedens, etsi non sit contritio.”—In Sent. 4, d. 6, q. 1, a. 3, sol. 1, ad 5.

[14027] Chap. V., § 2.

[14028] “Si quis dixerit in ministris, dum Sacramentum conficiunt et conferunt, non requiri intentionem saltem faciendi quod facit Ecclesia, anathema sit.”—Sess. VII. De Sacr. in gen. can. II.

[14029] Clement, de Baptismo.

[14030] Sess V. de Confirm, can. I.

[14031] Decr, pro Armen.

[14032] De Confirm, q. 6.

[14033] Encycl. 54. § 52.

[14034] “N., signo te signo Crucis, et confirmo te Chrismate salutis, in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.”

[14035] De Confirm. q. 14.

[14036] De Syn. 1. 7, c. 10, n. 5.

[14037] “Monendi sunt ab Ordinariis locorum, eos gravis peccati reatu teneri, si, cum possunt ad Confirmationem accedere, illam renuunt ac negligunt.”—Const. Etsi pastoralis, § 3, n. 4.

[14038] This having been omitted in some dioceses, the second Plenary Council of Baltimore uses these words: “Episcopi nullum non movebunt lapidem, ut disciplina hujusmodi” (adhibendi scil. Patrinos in Confirmatione). “Jam in nunnullis harum Provinciarum dioecesibus invecta, ubique introducatur.”—A. 253, and p. cxxxix. n. 11.

[14039] Sess. XIII., can. III.

[14040] Bellarmin. De Euch. 1. 2, c. 10.

[14041] Lat. VI. iv., cap. 1.

[14042] “Antidotum, quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis, et a peccatis mortalibus praeservemur.”—Sess, XIII. cap. 2.

[14043] “Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem, habet vitam aeternam; et ego resuscitabo eum in novissimo die.”—John,

vi. 55.

[14044] “Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo.”—John, vi. 57.

[14045] “Judicium sibi manducat et bibit.”—1 Cor. xi. 29.

[14046] P. 3, q. 80, a. 9, ad. 3.

[14047] De Syn. 1. 7, c. 12, n. 3.

[14048] S. de Lapsis.

[14049] “Quorum remiseritis peccata, remittuntur eis; et quorum retinueritis, retenta sunt.”—John, xx. 23.

[14050] “Renovamur spiritu mentis nostrae.”—Sess. vi. cap. vii.

[14051] Bacci. 1. I, ch. 20.

[14052] “Qui vos audit, me audit.”—Luke, x. 16.

[14053] Legenda S. Franc., c. II.

[14054] Eccles. Hist. Angl., 1. 5, c. 15.

14055 “Nisi poenitentiam habueritis, omnes similiter peribitis.”—Luke, xiii. 3.

14056 “Animi dolor ac detestatio est de peccato commisso, cum proposito non peccandi de caetero.”—Sess. XIV., cap. iv.

14057 “Recogitabo tibi omnes annos meos, in amaritudine animae meae.”—Is. xxxviii. 15.

14058 “Peccavi, tradens sanguinem justum.”—Matt. xxvii. 4.

14059 “Major est iniquitas mea quam ut veniam merear.”—Gen. iv. 13.

14060 “Si adeo dulce est flere pro te, quam dulce erit gaudere de te!”—Scala Claustr. c. 6.

14061 See again the motives given above at n. 2, page 531.

14062 “Etsi contritionem hanc aliquando charitate perfectam esse contingat, hominemque Deo reconciliare priusquam hoc Sacramentum actu suscipiatur. . . .—Sess. XIV., cap. iv.

14063 “Quamvis (attritio), sine sacramento Poenitentiae, per se ad justificationem perducere peccatorem nequeat, tamen eum ad Dei gratiam in sacramento Poeniteniae impetrandam disponit.”—Loco cit.

14064 “Illum tamquam omnis justitiae fontem diligere incipiunt.”—Sess. VI., cap. vi.

14065 “Charitas illa quae est plenitudo legis, non est semper conjuncta cum remissione peccatorum.”—Prop. 32.

14066 “Plenitudo ergo legis est dilectio.”—Rom. xiii. 10.

14067 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”—Matt. xxii. 37.

14068 “Cum mandatur quod Deum ex toto corde diligamus, datur intelligi quod Deum super omnia debemus diligere.”—2. 2, q. 44, a. 8.

14069 “Actus peccati mortalis contrariatur charitati, quae consistit in hoc quod Deus diligatur super omnia.”—2. 2, q. 24, a. 12.

14070 “Charitas non potest esse cum peccato mortali.”—2. 2, q. 45, a. 4.

14071 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—Prov. viii. 17.

14072 “Qui autem diligit me, diligetur a Patre meo, et ego diligam eum.”—John, xiv. 21.

14073 “Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.”—1 John, iv. 16.

14074 “Charitas operit multitudinem peccatorum.”—Pet. iv 8.

14075 “Quantumcumque parvus sit dolor, dummodo ad contritionis rationem sufficiat, omnem culpam delet.”—Suppl. ad p. 3, q. 5. a. 3.

14076 Sess. XIV., can ix.

14077 “Timor Dei, initium dilectionis ejus.”—Ecclus. xxv. 16.

14078 “Ex hoc quod per aliquem speramus bona, incipimus ipsum amare.”—I. 2, q. 40, a. 7.

14079 “Fidentes Deum sibi, propter Christum, propitium fore.”—Sess. VI., cap. vi.

14080 “Si voluntatem peccandi excludat, cum spe veniae.”—Sess. xiv. cap. iv.

14081 “Animi dolor ac detestatio est de peccato commisso, cum proposito non peccandi de caetero.”—Sess. xiv. cap. iv.

14082 “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—Phil. iv. 13.

14083 “Invocabo Dominum, et ab inimicis meis salvus ero.”—Ps. xvii. 4.

14084 “Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis.”—1 Cor x. 13.

14085 “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—Matt. vii. 8.

14086 “Dividite infantem vivum in duas partes.”—3 Kings, iii. 25.

14087 “Obsecro, domine, date illi infantem vivum, et nolite interficere eum.”

14088 “Nemo potest duobus dominis servire.”—Matt. vi. 24.

14089 Pages 360 and 363.

14090 “Posse in tota vita peccata omnia, etiam venialia, vitare, nisi ex speciali Dei privilegio, quem admodum de Beata Virgine tenet Ecclesia.”—Sess. vi. cap. xxiii.

14091 “Erit fortitudo vestra ut favilla stuppae: . . . et succendetur, . . . et non erit qui extinguat.”—Isa. i. 31.

14092 “Si oculus tuus dexter scandalizat te, erue eum, et projice abs te.”—Matt. v. 29.

14093 “Est enim confusio adducens peccatum, et est confusio adducens gloriam et gratiam.”—Ecclus. iv. 25.

[14094] “Pudorem dedit Deus peccato, confessioni fiduciam. Invertit rem diabolus: peccato fiduciam praebet, confessioni pudorem.”—De Poenit. hom. 3.

[14095] “O insania! de vulnere non erubescis, de ligatura vulneris erubescis!”—In Ps. 1. n. 8.

[14096] “Quod ignorat, medecina non curat.”—Sess. xiv. cap. 5.

[14097] “Remedium fit ipsi diabolo triumphus.”

[14098] “Omnes enim nos manifestari oportet ante tribunal Christi.”—2 Cor. v. 10.

[14099] “Revelabo pudenda tua in facie tua, et ostendam gentibus nuditatem tuam, et regnis ignominiam tuam.”—Nah. iii. 5.

[14100] “Si aliquando, quare non modo?”—Possidius. Vita Aug. c. 27.

[14101] “Ex occultatione peccati nascitur cordis obstinatio.”—De Conf. sacramentali.

[14102] Legenda S. Franc, mirac. § 2.

[14103] Cesaire. Dial. 1. 3, c. 13.

[14104] Page 534.

[14105] “Si te excusas, Deus te accusabit; si te accusas, Deus te excusabit.”

[14106] Sess. xiv. cap. viii.

[14107] Tresor de la Doctr. Chert., p. 4, ch. 5, lec. ii.

[14108] Many of these indulgences have been modified since the time of our holy author. See Raccolta.—ED.

[14109] Marav. di Dio., p. I.

[14110] “Infirmatur quis in vobis; inducat presbyteros Ecclesiae, et orent super eum, ungentes eum oleo in nomine Domini; et oratio fidei salvabit infirmum, et alleviabit eum Dominus; et si in peccatis sit, remittentur ei.”—James. v. 14.

[14111] “Sanitatem corporis interdum, ubi saluti animae expedierit, (infirmus) consequitur.”—Sess. xiv. de Extr. Unet. cap. 2.

[14112] “Qui gravi morbo laborant.”—Bulla 53, § 46.

[14113] "Gravissime peccant, qui illud tempus aegroti ungendi observare solent, cum, jam omni salutis spe amissa, vita et sensibus carere incipiat."—De Extr. Unet, q, 9.

[14114] "AEgroti animam alleviat, magnam in eo divinae misericordiae fiduciam excitando, qua infirmus sublevatus, et morbi incommoda levius fert, et tentationibus daemonis facilius resistit."—Sess. xiv. de Extr. Unet. cap. ii.

[14115] "Delicta si quae sint adhuc expianda, ac peccati reliquias abstergit."—Sess. xiv. Ibid.

[14116] De Extr. Unet. q. 12.

[14117] "Nolite tangere christos meos."—Ps. civ. 15.

[14118] "Qui vos audit, me audit; et qui vos spernit."—Luke, x. 16.

[14119] Theophil.

[14120] Pages 444 and 456.

[14121] Tob. vi.

[14122] Tob. x. 13.

[14123] See page 552.

[14124] In a notice to the reader, prefixed to the *Glories of Mary,* St. Alphonsus explains the sense in which he wished his doctrine regarding the privileges of the Blessed Virgin to be understood. He concludes this explanation in the following words: "Then, to say all in a few words, the God of all holiness, in order to glorify the Mother of the Redeemer, has decreed and ordained, that her great charity should pray for all those for whom her Divine Son has paid and offered the most superabundant price of his precious blood, in which alone is '*our salvation, life, and resurrection.*' And on the foundation of this doctrine, and inasmuch as they accord with it, I have intended to lay down my propositions, which the saints, in their affectionate colloquies with Mary, and in their fervent discourses upon her, have not hesitated to assert." *Glories of Mary, Monza Edition,* vol. 1., pp. 11, 12.

In the third chapter of the first volume (pp. 123, 124), St. Alphonsus compares the hope which we place in the Blessed Virgin to the confidence which a person has in a minister of state whom he asks to procure a favour from his sovereign.

"Whatsoever Mary obtains for us, she obtains it through the merits of Jesus Christ, and because she prays in the name of Jesus Christ." *Glories of Mary,* vol. 1., p. 188.

"Mary, then, is said to be omnipotent in the manner in which omnipotence can be understood of a creature; for a creature is incapable of a divine attribute. Thus she is omnipotent, inasmuch as she obtains by her prayers whatever she asks." *Ibid.,* p. 223.

To obtain favours through the intercession of Mary, by practising devout exercises in her honour, “the first condition is, that we perform our devotions with a soul free from sin, or, at least, with a desire to give up sin.” “If a person wish to commit sin with the hope of being saved by the Blessed Virgin, he shall thus render himself unworthy and incapable of her protection.” *Glories of Mary*, vol. ii., pp. 325, 326.

[14125] That is, without the permission of the penitent.

[14126] Scala is a small town with 1700 to 1800 inhabitants, a bishop’s see, about one league or three miles north of Amalfi, two and a half leagues southwest of Nocera, three west of Salerno, two southeast of Castellammare, and seven or eight southeast of Naples.

[14127] The 9th of November is the day of the Dedication of the Basilica of the Holy Saviour at Rome. We shall afterwards see that it was Benedict XIV. who gave to this Congregation the title of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[14128] Villa degli Schiavi (of the slaves), a dependency of Formicola, about seven and a half miles northwest of Caiazzo, and as far north northeast of Capua.

[14129] Barony of the Sarnelli family, in the diocese of Salerno, nearly six miles northeast of Nocera, and seven southeast of Naples.

[14130] Nocera de’ Pagani, an episcopal city, of seven thousand inhabitants, eighteen miles southeast of Naples.

[14131] A samll town of Capitanata, in the diocese of Bovino, south of Toria and Foggia.

[14132] A village four miles from Veroli.

[14133] He was declared VenerabU by Pope Pius IX., May 14, 1876, and beatified by Leo XIII., January 29, 1888.

[14134] Only the Text of the Rule is here given, not the Constitutions.

[14135] “Secular priests,” that is to say, those that are not Regulars properly so-called, who make solemn vows, whilst in the Congregation only simple vows are made. But before God simple vows are not of less binding force than solemn vows, as we may see in Corp. Jur., Rursus quidam (Qui cleric. vel vovent. 6): Quum simplex votum, apud Deum, non minus obliget quam solemne. The only difference that is found between these two kinds of vows consists in a greater difficulty to break the bond contracted by solemn vows, this being a privilege established not by divine right, but by the Church, in accordance with the Bull of Gregory XIII., Ascendente Domino, promulgated May 26, 1854, in favor of the Society of Jesus, and striking with anathema whoever would dare to say: “That all those that have not been solemnly professed in the aforesaid Society cannot be true members of this body, nor be really and properly religious, but that they are simple seculars, subject to the jurisdiction of the Ordinaries, and that not the Society, nor the Superiors, nor We ourselves possess, or acquire, or have the power to confer upon the Superiors any right by virtue of such vows. Now

those that hold this opinion do not consider that the solemnity of the vows is derived only from an ecclesiastical institution; that the three vows of this Society, though simple, have been recognized by the Holy See as substantial vows of religion; and that those that make them are truly engaged in the religious state, since by these vows they consecrate themselves, in fact, give themselves, to the Society, and devote themselves to God's service.'' The solemnity is, therefore, not essential to religious profession. The principal reason why St. Alphonsus wished to adhere to simple vows was because simple vows allow greater facility for the dismissal of subjects that do not persevere in the spirit of their vocation; for he preferred a small number of fervent subjects, faithful to regular observance—such as they should be in order to preserve perfect Community life, which is the essential basis of his Institute,—to a larger number, who might otherwise possess brilliant talents. Moreover, wishing on the other hand to strengthen the bond that was to attach the subjects to the Congregation, and to supply as much as possible the defect of the solemnity, the holy founder took care to add to the three ordinary vows of religion the vow and oath of perseverance till death. By virtue of this oath of fidelity, received and accepted by the Congregation, the profession that is made therein assumes the character of a contract, and consequently becomes an obligation of justice, which cannot be removed except by legitimate dispensation.

[14136] "Subject," in all that has reference to apostolic labors. (See further on, page 70, n. 1.)

[14137] "To the spiritual relief of the most abandoned souls;" such is the special end of the Congregation: its place is wherever there are stray sheep to be gathered and saved. At the period when the Congregation was established there were in the cities, especially of the kingdom of Naples, a large number of priests and many religious Institutes; spiritual help of every kind usually abounded there, while in a multitude of hamlets and remote places a considerable population found themselves as it were abandoned, and almost deprived of the means of salvation. It is principally to such people that St. Alphonsus and his companions were called to exercise their zeal, and even to establish themselves among them "as far as possible," in order to be more within reach of coming to the assistance of the poor that required their care. However, the holy founder did not refuse to give missions or other spiritual exercises or to found houses also in cities, when he thought such a thing expedient; he would have had stronger reasons for doing so in other countries, above all at the present time, when, after many vicissitudes, abandoned souls are often found in larger numbers in cities than in country places.

It may be well to mention here what we read in the resolutions drawn up in the General Chapters, held under the presidency of the holy founder himself, in regard to the fitness the subjects should endeavor to acquire to correspond to the end of their vocation: "In order to attain more perfectly the end of the Institute, which consists in the sanctification of the people, the members of the Congregation shall unite the study of the sciences to a most virtuous life. They shall, therefore, strive with all diligence to attain proficiency in all the sciences, both human and divine, and should especially be learned in sacred literature, so that under all circumstances they may be able to render useful service to the Church. An illiterate workman, even though he may be a man of prayer, is like a soldier without weapons. They shall, therefore, do all in their power to make continual progress in science as well as in virtue, in order that they may be the instruments best adapted to perform the duties of the apostolic ministry.

[14138] The General Chapter, over which the holy founder presided in 1764, permitted the giving of retreats outside of the time of giving missions, if retreats are asked for by the bishops.

[14139] The silver ducat is generally of the value of four shillings and sixpence sterling, about equal to the American dollar, and the gold ducat of twice the value.

[14140] And the oath. (See the end of the first note, page 62, and of Art. III., last chapter, page 84.)

[14141] That is, about half an hour after sunset.

[14142] The Neapolitan palm is a measure of length equal to ten or eleven inches.

[14143] In 1841, Gregory XVI. fixed the residence of the Rector Major at Rome; but this order was not put in execution till 1855, by virtue of the decree of His Holiness Pius IX., dated October 8, 1853.

[14144] “Lectors,” or those that are charged with the duty of teaching the sciences to the students.

[14145] By a decree, dated July 2, I841, Gregory XVI. divided the Congregation into several Provinces. It concerns the Rector Major to erect new ones with the approbation of the Holy See, and he appoints the Provincials with their two Consultors every three years.

[14146] Since the erection of Provinces, the Rectors and the Deputies of each house form the Provincial Chapter, with the Superior, the two Consultors, and the Procurator of the Province; the General Chapter is composed of the Procurator and of the General Consultors, of the Provincial Superiors, and of two Deputies elected in each Provincial Chapter.

[14147] The Rector Major for the government of each Province appoints a Provincial Superior and two Consultors, the first of whom is the Ad-monitor, and the second is the Secretary. The Provincial and his Consultors appoint a Procurator of the Province, admit or dismiss novices, make or permit certain expenses, etc. The Provincial has jurisdiction over the subjects and the local Rectors of his Province, he visits the houses every year, and renders an account to the Rector Major.

[14148] A scudo, equal to five francs seven centimes, is a silver coin varying in value from a little more than four shillings sterling, or about ninety-six cents, to a little less than this.

[14149] “Ordine suo, non arbitrio nostro, virtus Spiritus Sancti ministratur.”—De Sing. cler.

[14150] “Unusquisque proprium donum habet a Deo.”-I Cor. vii. 7.

[14151] “Quos prœdestinavit, hos et vocavit; et quos vocavit, hos et justificavit; quos autem justificavit, illos et glorificavit.”-Rom. viii. 30.

[14152] In another work (Volume XII.) the holy author expresses himself in these words: “God wills that all men should be saved, but not in the same way. As in heaven he has distinguished different degrees of glory, so on earth he has established different states of life, as so many different ways of gaining heaven” (Ch. II. § 2). The choice is not arbitrary: “To enter into any state of life, a divine vocation is necessary; for without such a vocation it is, if not impossible, at least most difficult to

fulfil the obligations of our state, and obtain salvation. The reason of this is evident; for it is God who in the order of his Providence assigns to each one of us his state of life and afterwards provides us with the graces and the help suitable to the state to which he calls us" (Ch. X.). We ought to be persuaded and ought never to forget that from all eternity God thinks with love of each one of us, just as a good father thinks of his only son.—ED.

[14153] "Bene curris, sed extra viam."

[14154] "Ad Cain et ad munera ejus non respexit."—Gen. iv. 5.

[14155] "Væ, filii desertores, dicit Dominus, ut faceretis consilium, et non ex me; et ordiremini telam, et non ex me; et ordiremini telam, et non per spiritum meum."—Isa. xxx. 1.

[14156] "Vœ qui contradicit Fictori suo!"—Isa. xlv. 9.

[14157] "Quis rest tit ei, et pacem habuit?"—Job. ix. 4.

[14158] "Non sine magnis difficultatibus poterit saluti suœ consulere."—De Ord. p. 3, c. 1, § 2.

[14159] Manebitque in corpore Eeclesiœ, velut membrum in corpore humano suis sedibus motum, quod servire potest, sed œgre, et cum deformitate. Licet, absolute loquendo, salvari possit, difficile tamen ingredietur viam humilitatis et pœnitentiœ, qua sola ipsi patet ingressus ad vitam"—Ibid.

[14160] De Vit. Cler. c. 5.

[14161] Epist. 87.

[14162] Epist. 1. 2, c. 100.

[14163] "Ipsi fuerunt rebelles lumini; nescierunt vias ejus."—Job, xxiv. 13.

[14164] "En, proferam vobis spiritum meum."—I'rov. i. 23.

[14165] "Quia vocavi, et renuistis . . . despexistis omne consilium meum. . . . Ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo et subsannabo, cum vobis id, quod timebatis, advenerit."—Ibid. i. 24–26.

[14166] "Tunc invocabunt me, et non exaudiam; mane consurgent, et non invenient me. Eo quod exosam habuerint disciplinam, . . . nec acquieverint consilio meo, et detraxerint universœ correptioni meœ."—Ibid. i. 28–30.

[14167] With these last words, God reprimands those who set but little value on vocation, and who pretend that one can save one's soul indifferently in every state of life. (Theol. mor. 1. 4, n. 78.)

[14168] "Qui spreverunt voluntatem Dei invitantem, voluntatem Dei sentient vindicantem."—R. ad obj. Vine. 16.

[14169] “Sequar te, Domine; sed permitte mihi primum renuntiare his quœ domi sunt.”—Luke, ix. 61.

[14170] “Nemo mittens manum suam ad aratru, et respiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei.”—Ibid. 62.

[14171] “Quanto citius.”

[14172] 2. 2. q. 189, a. 10.

[14173] “Talem obedientiam Christus quœrit a nobis, ut neque instanti temporis moremur.”—In Matth. honi. 14.

[14174] “Si vel levem arripuerit prorogationem.”—Ad pop. Aut. hom. 56.

[14175] “Festina, quœso te, et hœrentis in salo naviculœ funem magis prœcide, quam solve.”—Ad Paulin, de St. Scr.

[14176] We must here call to mind what the author says in the Christian Rule of Life, chap. i.: “You should choose your director; consult him on all more important matters; and obey him in everything. He who obeys his confessor need not fear to go astray: He that heareth you, heareth Me (Luke, x. 16). The voice of the confessor is the voice of God.” We should, therefore, consult at least the confessor, who may delay giving an opinion when he thinks fit to do so on account of the importance of the decision he has to render.

The following are, according to St. Alphonsus, the three principal signs of a true vocation to the religious state: “1. We should have a good end in view, such as to remove from the dangers of the world, the better to assure ourselves of salvation, and to become more closely united with God. 2. We should not be subject to any positive impediment, such as the want of health, or of talent, or parents who are necessitous (‘in necessitate gravi’-Theol. mor. 1. 4, n. 66)—matters that should be submitted to the judgment of the Superiors, towards whom we should be frank in telling the truth. 3. We should be admitted by the Superiors of the Institute. (Counsels to Novices.)”

Moreover, in the Church there are different religious Institutes, different kinds of perfection. It is not enough to know that one is called to the religious state; one must also examine for what Institute, for what Community the Lord has destined us, and one must follow in every point the impulse of grace. (See Homo apost. tr. ult. n 39.)

Ed.

[14177] Entret. 17.

[14178] De Mon. 1. 2, c. 36.

[14179] “Parentibus filios religioni contradere non amplius quam usque ad decimum quartum eorum œtatis annum licentia poterit esse; postea vero, an cum voluntate parentum, an suœ devotionis sit solitarium votum, erit filiis licitum religionis assumere cultum.”—Cap. 6.

[14180] Can. 24.

[14181] “Cum spiritualia impediunt parentes, nec agnoscendi quidem sunt.”—In Jo. hom. 84.

[14182] “Non tenentur, nec servi dominis, nec filii parentibus, obedire de matrimonio contrahendo, vel virginitate servanda, vel aliquo alio hujusmodi.”—2, 2. q. 104. a. 5.

[14183] “Frequenter amici carnales adversantur profectui spirituali.”—2. 2. q. 189, a. 10.

[14184] “O durum patrem, o sœvam matrm, quorum consolation mors filii est; qui me malunt nos perire cum eis, quam regnare sine eis!”-Ep. 111.

[14185] “Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam; et obliviscere populum tuum, et domum patris tui.”-Ps. Xliv. 11.

[14186] “Si Dominus vult animam ad se vocatam oblivisci patrem, domum que patris ejus, suggerit utique per hoc, quod vocatus ab ipso ad religionem non debet suorum carnalium amicorumque domesticorum consilium interponere talis vocationis exsecutioni.”-In 2. 2. q. 189. a. 10.

[14187] “Nemo mittens manum ad aratrum, et respiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei.”-Luke, ix. 61.

[14188] “ Respicit retro, qui dilationem qurit, cum propinquis occasione conferendi.”—Ap. S. Thom. lot. cit.

[14189] “Ab hoc consilio, primo quidem, amovendi sunt carnis propinqur; dicitur enim: ‘Causam tuam tracta cum amico tuo.’ Propinqui autem carnis, in hoc negotio, amici non sunt, sed inimici, juxta sententiam Domini: ‘Inimici hominis, domestici ejus.’”-Matth. x. 36.

[14190] “I say ‘in which reigns exact observance;’ for it would be, perhaps better to remain in the world than to enter a religious Institute in which relaxation has been introduced.” We see that this remark is made by the author himself; he also says elsewhere, “Si institutum relaxatum est, melius erit alicui ordinarie loquendi, quod in sœculo remaneat.” (Hom. apost. tr. ult. n. 39.)

[14191] “Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me.”—Matth. xvi. 24.

[14192] “Vincenti dabo manna absconditum.”—Apoc. ii. 17.

[14193] “Crucem vident, unctionem non vident.”—In Dedic, s. 1.

[14194] Qui fingis laborem in prœcepto.”—Ps. xciii. 20.

[14195] “Exsuperat omnem sensum.”—Phil. iv. 7.

[14196] “Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus.”-Ps. xxxiii. 9.

14197 Vincenti dabo manna absconditum."-Apoc. ii. 17.

14198 In the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer the vow of poverty comprises the renunciation of every dignity and every benefice or employment. Moreover, to the three vows are added the vow and oath of perseverance.

14199 "Non paupertas, sed amor paupertatis virtus est."—Epist. 100.

14200 "Volunt esse pauperes, sed sine defectu."

14201 "Frigus, famem, sitim, et contemptum."

14202 "Non veni pacem mittere sed gladium; veni enim separare hominem adversus patrem suum et filiam adversus matrem suam. Matth. x. 34.

14203 "Inimici hominis, domestici ejus "—Ib. 36.

14204 "Qui non odit patrem suum, et matrem, . . . etc., non potest esse mcus discipulus."—Luke, xiv. 26.

14205 We here read in the first edition: "By the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we do not see in this our little Congregation the scandal of a subject seeking for some employment that might give him a name, such as that of Superior, preacher, or confessor, and the like."

14206 "Joannes, pete a me, quid vis. . . . Domine, pati et contemni pro te."

14207 "Saturatus opprobriis."

14208 "Ego, quœ placita sunt ei, facio semper." John, viii. 29.

14209 "Quare jejunavimus, et non aspexisti? humiliavimus animas nostras, et nescisti? Ecce in die jejunii vestri invenitur voluntas vestra."—Isa. lviii. 3.

14210 "Grande malum, propria voluntas, qua fit, ut bona tua tibi bona non sint."—In Cant. s. 71.

14211 "Perfecta obedientia es indiscreta."-De vita solit. c. 5.

14212 "Novitium Prudentem in congregatione durare impossibile est. . . . Discernere superioris est, subditi obedire,"-Ibid.

14213 In the first edition the saint added: "On the other hand, it will happen that the more a subject desires to be employed in the salvation of souls, in missions, in preaching, in hearing confessions, or in studying, and the like, the less he will be so employed. He will be forbidden to study; he will be left alone in the house when all the others go out on missions, etc. In such cases he must understand that in practising obedience he gives the greatest pleasure to God; so that he ought to accept this obedience with the same gladness and peace of mind as if he were employed on missions. God grant that no subject of the Congregation should ever ask, or make known his desire, to preach or to go on missions, and so forth. By the grace of God, this fault, which would be a grievous one, is not found among the members of the Congregation. Nevertheless, each one should be well persuaded that the more he shows such a desire, the more he will be contradicted and mortified in it. The subjects should have but one desire,—the desire to do that which obedience demands of them. And, indeed, what merit would all these labors have in the eyes of God if the Superiors assigned them, not as God had inspired them to do, but simply to satisfy the natural inclinations of the subjects? Besides, God would not lend his aid to works of this kind, and the subjects themselves would derive from them little fruit. Let him, therefore, who would enter the Congregation principally in order to give missions, to preach, and so on, not think of entering, because this is not the spirit of the institute. He only has the spirit of the Institute who enters it with the desire of practising obedience, and of submitting peacefully to be put away into some corner without having any employment, happy that the good is done by others while he himself will do only that which is directly imposed upon him by obedience, without having asked for it."

[14214] "Quia acceptus eras Deo, necesse fuit ut tentatio probaret te."—Tob. xii. 13.

[14215] "Tentat vos Dominus Deus vester, ut palam fiat, utrum diligatis cum, an non."—Deut. xiii. 3.

[14216] "Accedite ad eum, et illuminamini."-Ps. xxxiii. 6.

[14217] "Petite et accipietis."—John, xvi. 24.

[14218] "Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea; quem timebo?"-Ps. xxvi. 1.

[14219] "Quid enim prodest homini, si mundum universum lucretur, animœ vero detrimentum patiatur?"-Matth. xvi. 26.

[14220] "Transierunt omnia illa tanquam umbra."-Wisd. v. 9.

[14221] "Prœterit figura hujus mundi."—I Cor. vii. 51.

[14222] "Finem vero, vitam œternam."—Rom. vi. 22.

[14223] "Desolatione desolata est omnis terra, quia nullus est qui recogitet corde."-Jer. xii. 11.

[14224] "Memorare novissima tua, et in œternum non peccabis."-Ecclus. vii. 40.

[14225] "Beati mortui, qui in Domino moriuntur."—Apoc. xiv. 13.

[14226] "Qui consuevit se delectationibus mundi privare, mundum deserere non sentiet."

[14227] "A quo pendet œternitas."

[14228] “Non putabam tam dulce esse mori.”

[14229] “Qui reliquerit domum vel fratres, aut patrem, etc., centuplum accipiet, et vitam œternam possidebit.”-Matth. xix. 29.

[14230] “O vita secura, ubi absque formidine mors expectatur, immo et exoptatur cum dulcedine, et excipitur cum devotione.” Ad Mil. T. c. 1.

[14231] “Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus, electus ex millibus.”—Cant. v. 10.

[14232] “Non fecit taliter omni nationi.”-Ps. cxlvii. 20.

[14233] “Oves meœ vocem meam audiunt.”—John, x. 27.

[14234] “Vermis eorum non moritur.”-Mark, ix. 43.

[14235] “Facilis via de cella ad cœlum. . . . Vix unquam aliquis a cella in infernum descendit; quia vix unquam, nisi cœlo prœdestinatus, in ea usque ad mortem persistit.”-De Vit. Sol. c. 4.

[14236] “Illius cœlestis civitatis, iste est introitus.”

[14237] “Magnum quippe prœdestinationis indicium est.”-De Disc. mon. c. 7.

[14238] “Corona justitiœ.”—2 Tim. iv. 8.

[14239] Reddet unicuique secundum opera ejus.”—Matth. xvi. 27.

[14240] “Prœbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi.”—Prov. xxiii. 26.

[14241] “Euntes ibant. . . . Venientes autem venient cum exultatione, portantes manipulos suos.”—Ps. cxxv. 6.

[14242] “Funes ceciderunt mihi in prœclaris, etenim hereditas mea prœclara est mihi.”-Ps. xv. 6.

[14243] “Omnis qui reliquerit domum, vel fratres aut sorores, aut patrem aut matrem, . . . aut agros, propter nomen meum, centuplum accipiet et vitam œternam possidebit.”—Matth. xix. 29.

[14244] “Deus, . . . da servis tuis illam, quam mundus dare non potest, pacem.”

[14245] “Delectare in Domino, et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui.”-Ps. xxxvi. 4.

[14246] “Sibi divitias suas habeant divites, sibi regna sua reges; nobis Christus regnum et gloria est.”—Fp. ad Aprum.

14247 “Hi in curribus, et hi in equis; nos autem in nomine Domini Dei nostri invocabimus.”—*Ps.* xix. 8.

14248 “Deus meus et omnia.”

14249 “Pax Dei, quœ exsuperat omnem sensum.”-Phil. vi. 7.

14250 “Sed quia tepidus es,. . . . incipiam te evomere ex ore meo.”—Apoc. iii. 16.

14251 “Deus negligentes deserere consuevit.”—In Ps. 118, s. 10.

14252 “Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet.”—Ecclus. xix. 1.

14253 “Sequebatur eum a longe.”—Matth. xxvi. 58.

14254 “Si dixeris: Sufficit; periisti.”-Serm. 169, E. B.

14255 “Qui parce seminat, parce et metet.”—2 Cor. ix. 6.

14256 “Perfectum non potest esse, nisi singulare.’’

14257 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—Prov. viii. 17.

14258 “Deus meus, et omnia.”

14259 “Parvulus natus est nobis, filius datus est nobis.”—Isa. ix. 6.

14260 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—Eph. v. 2.

14261 “Totum tibi dedit, nihil sibi reliquit.”

14262 “Una est columba mea, perfecta mea.”—Cant. vi. 8.

14263 “Una uni.”

14264 “Dimitte omnia, et invenies omnia.”—Imit. book 3, c. 32.

14265 “O anima! sola esto, ut soli te serves.”—In Cant. s. 40.

14266 “Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi.”—Cant. ii. 16.

14267 “Quid mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in œternum.”—Ps. lxxii. 25.

14268 “Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis.”

14269 “Vires subministrat, pœnam exhibet leviorem.”—De Disc. mon. c. 6.

14270 “Magna victoriœ pars est vincendi desiderium.”—De Casto Conn. c. 3.

14271 “Consummatus in brevi, explevit tempora multa.”—Wis. iv. 13.

14272 “Bernarde, ad quid venisti?”

14273 “Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum.”-Ps. lvi. 8.

14274 “Domine, quid me vis facere?”-Acts, ix. 6.

14275 “Exinanivit semetipsum, formam servi accipiens. . . . Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”—Phil. ii. 7.

14276 “Et Verbum caro factum est.”—John, i. 14.

14277 “Dicebant excessum, quem completurus erat in Jerusalem.”-Luke, ix. 31.

14278 “Excessus doloris, cxcessus amoris.’’

14279 “Propterea Christus advenit, ut cognosceret homo quantum eum diligat Deus.”—De catech. rud. c. 4.

14280 “Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.”-John, xv. 13.

14281 “Prœdicamus Christum crucifixum, Judœis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam.”—I Cor. i. 23.

14282 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—Eph. v. 2.

14283 “Charitas enim Christi urget nos.”-2 Cor. v. 14.

14284 “Ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mertuus est.”-Ibid. v. 15.

14285 “Dilectus meus. . . . electus ex millibus.”—Cant. v. 10.

14286 “O solitudo, in qua Deus cum suis familiariter loquitur et conversatur!”

14287 “Non habet amaritudinem conversatio ejus; nec tœdium convictus illius, sed lœtitiam et gaudaim.”—Sap. viii. 16.

14288 “Elegi abjectus esse in domo Dei mei, magis quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum.”—Ps. lxxxiii. 11.

14289 “Quos præscivit, et prædestinavit conformes fieri imagines Filii sui”-Rom. viii. 29.

14290 “Propter vos egenus factus est, cum esset dives, ut illius inopia vos divites essetis.”—2 Cor. viii. 9.

14291 “Vir dolorum.”—Isa. liii. 3.

14292 “Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me.”—Matth. xvi. 24.

14293 “Hi sunt quos habuimus aliquando in derisum. . . . Nos insensate vitam illorum œstimabamus insaniam. Ecce quomodo inter filios Dei computati sunt, et inter Sanctos sors illorum est.”—Wisd. v. 3 et seq.

14294 “Spiritus Domini . . . unxit me, evangelizare pauperibus.”—Luke, iv. 18.

14295 “Simon Joannis, diligis me?. . . . Pasce oves meas.”—John, xxi. 17.

14296 “Non dixit Christus: Abjice pecunias, jejunium exerce, macera te laboribus; sed dixit: Pasce oves meas.”

14297 “Amen dico vobis: quamdiu fecistis uni ex his fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecistis.”—Matth. xxv. 40.

14298 “Magnificate Dominum mecum, et exaltemus nomen ejus.”-Ps. xxxiii. 4.

14299 “Si Deum amatis, omnes ad ejus amorem rapite.”-In Ps. xxxiii. en. 2.

14300 “Animam salvasti, animam tuam prœdestinasti.”

14301 “Cum effuderis esurienti animam tuam, et animam afflictam repleveris, requiem tibi dabit Dominus, et implebit splendoribus animam tuam.”—Isa. lviii. 10, 11.

14302 “Quœ est enim nostra spes, aut gaudium, et corona gloriœ? Nonne vos ante Dominum Jesum Christum estis in adventu ejus?”—I Thess. ii. 19.

14303 “Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde.”-Matth. xi. 29.

14304 “Non intelligentes quanto majus sit lucrum in tolerantia injuriarum.”

14305 “Mansuetus utilis sibi et aliis.”—In Act. hom. 6.

14306 “Beneplacitum est illi fides et mansuetudo.”—Ecclus. i. 34.

14307 “Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam.”—I Peter, v. 5.

14308 “Mihi absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi.”-Gal. vi. 14.

14309 “Amat nos amore invincibili.”—In Nat. B. V. s. 1.

14310 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—Prov. viii. 17.

14311 “Solet maxima pro minimis reddere.”—In Dorm. B. V. s. 3.

14312 “Qui operantur in me, non peccabunt.”—Off. of the Blessed Virg.

14313 “Qui elucidunt me, vitam œternam habebunt.”—lb.

14314 “Cui servire regnare est.”

14315 Jesu et Maria, amores mei dulcissimi! pro vobis patiar, pro vobis moriar; sim totus vester, sim nihil meus.”

14316 A little work published in 1750.

14317 “Non coronabitur, nisi qui legitime perseveraverit.”—2 Tim. ii. 5.

14318 “Tene quod habes, ut nemo accipiat coronam tuam.’’—Apoc. iii. 11.

14319 “Et quia acceptus eras Deo, necesse fuit ut tentatio probaret te.”-Tob. xii. 13.

14320 “Fili accedens ad servitutem Dei, prœpara animam tuam ad temptationem.”—Ecclus. ii. 1.

14321 “Qui amat patrem aut matrem plus quam me, non est me dignus.”-Matth. x. 37.

14322 “Non veni pacem mittere sed gladium: veni enim separare hominem adversus patrem suum, et filiam adversus matrem suam.”-Matth. x. 34.

14323 “Et inimici hominis domestici ejus.”

14324 “Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam, et obliviscere populum tuum et domum patris tui.”—Ps. xliv. 11.

14325 “In caritate perpetua dilexi te.”-Jer. xxxi. 3.

14326 “Bernarde, ad quid venisti?”

14327 Way of Perf., ch. xix.

14328 Found, ch. v.

14329 “Vanitas vanitatum et afflictio spiritus.”-Eccles. i. 14.

14330 “Delectare in Domino, et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui.”-Ps. xxxvi. 4.

[14331] “Vincentibus dabo manna absconditum.”—Apoc. Ii. 17.

[14332] “Pax Dei, quœ exsuperat omnem sensum.”—Phil. iv. 7.

[14333] “Qui reliquerit domum, vel fratres aut patrem, etc., propter nomen meum, centuplum accipiet, et vitam œternam possidebit.”—Matth. xix. 29.

[14334] “Prœbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi.”-Prov. xxxii. 26.

[14335] “Melior est obedientia, quam victimœ.”—1 Kings, xv. 22.

[14336] “Vir obediens loquetur victorias.”-Prov. xxi. 25.

[14337] “Nemo propheta acceptas est in patria sua.”—Luke, iv. 24.

[14338] “Beati sumus, Israel; quia quœ Deo placent, manifesta sunt nobis.”—Bar. iv. 4.

[14339] “Qui parce seminat, parce et metet.”—2 Cor. ix. 6.

[14340] De Dono pers. c. xvi.

[14341] “Loquere Domine, quia audit servus tuus.”—I Kings, iii. 9.

[14342] “Confirma hoc Deus quod operatus es in me.”

[14343] Auriemma, Aff. scamb. p. 2, c. 7.

[14344] “Non fecit taliter omni nationi.”—Ps. cxlvii. 20.

[14345] “Deus virtutum, convertere; respice tie cœlo, et vide, et visita vineam istam, et perfice eam quam plantavit dextera tua; et super Filium hominis, quem confirmasti tibi.”-Ps. lxxix. 15.

[14346] This was written by St. Alphonsus, but remained unpublished till 1868.—ED.

[14347] “Si radix sancta, et rami.”—Rom. xi. 16.

[14348] “Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum.”—Cant. viii. 6.

[14349] “Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea sponsa.”—Cant. iv. 9.

[14350] “Vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum.”-Ibid. iv. 9.

[14351] “Verus amor seipso contentus est, ipse prœmium sibi est; prœter se, non requirit causam, non fructum: amo, quia amo; amo, ut amem.”

[14352] A dissertation found among the manuscripts of St. Alphonsus, that remained unpublished till 1868.—ED.

[14353] “Nolite possidere aurum, neque argentum, neque pecuniam in zonis vestris, non peram in via, neque duas tunicas, neque calceamenta, neque virgam.”—Matth. x. 9.

[14354] “Ab omni eos liberat sollicitudine, dicens: ‘Nihil tuleritis in via, etc.’ (Luke. ix. 3). Et quia quodammodo nudos miserat, severitatem præcepti temperavit, dicens: ‘Dignus enim est operarius cibo suo.’—(Matth. x. 10); id est, necessariis ad vitam; quasi eis dicat: Tantum accipite, quantum in vectu et vestitu vobis necessarium est.—Unde et Apostolus replicat: ‘Habentes autem alimenta, et quibus tegamur, his contenti simus’ (I Tim. vi. 8). Ecce quare præcepit eis nihil ferre, quia omnia debentur eis pro labore. De jure naturali est, ut, illis qui serviunt communitati in spiritualibus, provideantur a communitate in temporalibus necessaria. Non ergo prohibuit eis ferre necessaria ad sustentationem hujus vitæ, sed ut demonstraret hæc eis deberi ab illis quibus prædicarent. Necomnino præcepit eis illa, sed magis ad revocandum eorum affectum ab inordinato amore temporalium, ut non quærerent superflua, sed eis sufficerent nccessaria.”-Vita J. Chr. p. 1, c. 51.

[14355] In viam Gentium ne abieritis, et in civitatem Samaritanorum ne intraveritis; sed potius ite ad oves quæ perierunt domus Israel.”-Matth. x. 5.

[14356] “Quando misi vos sine sacculo, et pera, et calceamentis, numquid aliquid defuit vobis? At illi dixerunt: Nihil. Dixit ergo eis: Sed nunc, qui habet sacculum, tollat,” etc.-Luke, xxii. 35.

[14357] In Matth. x. 9.

[14358] I. 2, q. 108, a. 2.

[14359] “Loculos habens, ea quæ mittebantur, portabat.”-John, xii. 6; iv. 8.

[14360] “Ex hoc Christi exemplo sequitur, perfectioni nihil derogare habere bona in communi ut habent passim Ordines religiosi, uti definit Joannes XXII.”—Extrav. ad Conditorem. tit. 14. De verb, signif. c. 3.

[14361] “Redemptorem ejusque Apostolos in speciali non habuisse aliqua, nec in communi, hæreticum est censendum, . . . cum Scripturæ sacræ, quæ in plerisque locis ipsos nonnulla habuisse asserit, contradicat expresse.”-Extrav. Cum inter nonnullos. tit. 14. De verb. signif. c. 4.

[14362] Matth. ii. 11; viii. 14; ix. 10.

[14363] Matth. viii. 14; Mark, i. 29.

[14364] Matth. xix. 27.

[14365] 2. 2, q. 188, a. 7.

14366 “Utrum habere aliquid in communi diminuat perfectionem religionis.”

14367 “Satis ostenditur et propria debere propter perfectionem contemni, et sine impedimento perfectionis posse facultates communes possideri.”

14368 “Non enim omnis sollicitudo a Domino interdicitur, sed superflua et nociva. Unde, super illud Matthæi VI., ‘Ne solliciti sitis;’ dicit Augustinus: ‘Non hoc dicit ut ista non procurentur, quantum necessitatis est, sed ut non ista intueantur, et propter ista faciant quidquid in Evangelii prædicatione facere jubentur.’”

14369 “Nam sollicitudo quæ circa proprias divitias adhibetur, pertinet ad amorem privatum, quo quis se temporaliter amat; sed sollicitudo quæ adhibetur circa res communes, pertinet ad amorem charitatis, quæ non quærit quæ sua sunt, sed communibus intendit. Et quia religio ad perfectionem charitatis ordinatur, quam perficit amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui, habere aliquid proprium repugnat perfectioni religionis, sed sollicitudo quæ adhibetur circa bona communia, pertinere potest ad charitatem.”

14370 “Ex quo patet quod habere superabundantes divitias in communi est impedimentum perfectionis, licet non totaliter excludat eam; habere autem de rebus exterioribus in communi, sive mobilibus, sive immobilibus, quantum sufficit ad simplicem victum, perfectionem religionis non impedit.

14371 “Si autem (paupertas) consideratur per comparationem ad speciales fines religionum, tanto erit unaquæque religio secundum paupertatem perfectior, quanto habet paupertatem magis proportionatam suo fini.”

14372 “Talem religionem decet paupertas tails quæ minimam sollicitudinem ingerat.”

14373 “Manifestum est autem quod minimam sollicitudinem ingerit conservare res usui hominum necessarias, tempore congruo procuratas.”

14374 John, iv. 8.

14375 “Ex quo patet quod conservare pecuniam, aut quascumque alias res communes, ad sustentationem religiosorum . . . est perfectioni conforme quam Christus docuit suo exemplo.”

14376

“Quocirca veteres fundatores sanxerunt ut religiosi haberent bona in communi, ut sine cura vacarent orationi, studio, prædicationi, sicut patet ex Constitutionibus Sancti Basilii, Sancti Augustini, Sancti Bernardi, Sancti Dominici.”—In Jo. xi. 6.

14377

“Convenientius est habere bona in communi; quare hoc in iis congruentius et perfectius est.”

[14378]

“Austeritatem vitæ charitate in proximum compensant.”

[14379]

Matth. vi. 24.

[14380]

August 7.

[14381] Uncle of St. Alphonsus.

[14382] “Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarium.”—2 Cor. xi. 28.

[14383] Of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[14384] This Institution, founded in 1729, had for its aim the forming and the raising to the priesthood of young men brought from China, who afterwards would return home to maintain and propagate religion. St. Alphonsus also entered that college.

[14385] St. Alphonsus was also a member of this Congregation, which counted among its members the flower of the clergy.

[14386] The holy founder here avoids mentioning himself by attributing all to his spiritual director, who only approved his work and aided him with his counsel. Father Sarnelli, his friend, was to have been one of his first companions; but he was able to join him only towards the end of 1733, a year after the foundation of his Institute.

[14387] “Multi dicunt animæ meæ: Non est salus ipsi in Deo ejus.”—Ps. iii. 3.

[14388] “Si quid petieritis patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”-John, xvi. 23.

[14389] “Evangelizare pauperibus misit me.”—Luke, iv. 18.

[14390] “Væ mihi si non evangelizavero!”—I Cor. ix. 16.

[14391] St. Alphonsus abstains from speaking of the share that he had in this success. We read in his Life that though he was not able personally to aid Father Sarnelli, he yet lent him his assistance in an efficacious manner by the help of his counsels, and by securing in his favor the protection of eminent persons.—Tannoia and Villecourt, 1. 2, ch. 16.

[14392] The reader is here reminded of what has been said above, page 259, of the great work on the glories of Mary.

14393 This good father continues in fact to preach by his writings that are still being reprinted; two editions of 1836 and 1848 we have now before us.

14394 The beginning and the end of this sketch show that it was composed in order that it might follow the preceding Life of Father Sarnelli—Ed.

14395 Cardinal Villecourt, 1. 2, ch. 33, says that he died April 19, 1750.

14396 The same remark holds good as on page 254.

14397 This Father was Alphonsus himself. Sportelli introduced him to his friend, and it is then that he spoke to him about the new Institute. Curzius thus understood the mystery of the providential dream that he had had: he clearly saw his heavenly vocation, and immediately resolved to follow it by rendering thanks to God for such a favor.—*Tannoia and Villecourt,* 1. I, at the end.

14398 Father Tannoia also praises the obedience of this first brother of the Congregation. At Scala, being charged with the duty of ringing the bell for the exercises of the Community, he never failed to do so even when he was alone at the house. His last illness lasted forty-nine days, at the house of an ecclesiastic who had the charity to receive him. He died on Saturday, September 18, 1745. The corpse was solemnly carried to the church of the Redemptorists, and St. Alphonsus, who was then at Iliceto, offered up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for him, being so affected with grief at the loss of the holy brother that he burst into tears, which several times during the obsequies prevented him from singing the prayers. People struggled with one another for the possession of the things that had been used by Vitus as if they were holy relics. Mgr. Amato, bishop of Lacedogna, had entertained so high an esteem for the deceased, that after the lapse of a few years he obtained permission to keep the skull of the saintly brother, and he placed it on the desk before which he usually made his daily meditation. After twenty years—when the bishop was dead—this venerable relic was restored to the house of the Redemptorists at Iliceto. (Tannoia and Villecourt, 1. 2, ch. 20.)

14399 This little notice and the sermon that follows are found immediately after the last of the Abridged Sermons for Sundays in a Neapolitan edition which appeared in 1774. For the indulgence attached to the devotion of the Rosary, see Volume VIII., page 148, and for the consideration of the mysteries, Volume XV., page 133.—ED.

14400 “Ascensio mentis ad Deum.”

14401 “Qui sola voce precatur, sine mentis applicatione, nesciens quid dicat, quis non videt hunc psitaco similem esse.”

14402 “Populus hic labiis me honorat; cor autem eorum longe est a me.”—Matt. xv. 8.

14403 “Dirigatur oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectus tuo.”-Ps. cxl. 2.

14404 “Nefas est ut labia illa, quibus Dominum confiteris, rogas, benedicis, alicujus polluantur sorde peccati.”

[14405] "Muscæ morientes perdunt suavitatem unguenti."—Eccles. x. I.

[14406] "Charitas patiens est, benigna est; charitas non æmulatur, non agit perperam, non inflatur, non est ambitiosa, non quærit quæ sua sunt, non irritatur, non cogitat malum; non gaudet supet iniquitate, congaudet autem veritati; omnia suffer, omnia credit, omnia sperat, omnia sustinet."—I *Cor.* xiii. 4.

[14407] "Si quis autem putat se religiosum esse, non refrenans linguam suam, sed seducens cor suum, hujus vana est religio."—James, i. 26.

[14408] "Filii eorum et nepotes, sicut fecerunt patres sui, ita faciunt usque in præsentem diem."—4 Kings, xvii. 41.

[14409] "Ubi enim sunt duo vel tres congregati in nomine meo, ibi sum in medio eorum."—Matt. xviii. 20.

[14410] "Misericordiam mortuis mittit Trinitas per psalterium Mariæ, Matris misericordiæ."

[14411] "Sanctæ ergo et salubris est cogitatio, pro defunctis exorare."-2 Mach. xii. 46.

[14412] "Ego sum Mater omnium qui sunt in purgatorio.

[14413] "Beata Virgo in regno purgatorii dominium habet."

[14414] It is not known at what time St. Alphonsus composed this sermon; we think it belongs to the first period of his sacerdotal life. Nearly all that it contains is found in Volume V.—ED.

[14415] "Cœpit pavere."—Mark, xiv. 33.

[14416] "Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit."—Is. liii. 7.

[14417] "Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare vobiscum, antequam patiar."—Luke, xxii. 15.

[14418] "Pater mi, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste."—Matt. xxvi. 39.

[14419] "Cœpit contristari et mœstus esse."—Matt. xxvi. 37.

[14420] "Et factus est sudor ejus, sicut guttæ sanguinis decurrentis in terram."-Luke, xxii. 44.

[14421] "Surgite, eamus: ecce, qui me tradet, prope est."-Mark, xiv.

[14422] "Juda, osculo Filium hominis tradis?"—*Luke*, xxiv. 48.

[14423] "Quem quæritis?"-John, xviii. 4.

[14424] Comprehenderunt Jesum, et ligaverunt eum.”—*John*, xviii. 12.

[14425] “O Rex regum! quid tibi et vinculis?”—De Pass. c. 4.

[14426] “Intuere, homo, canes istos trahentes eum.’’—Med. vit. Chr. c. 75.

[14427] “Tunc discipuli ejus relinquentes eum, omnes fugerunt.’’—Mark, xiv. 50.

[14428] “Ego palam locutus sum mundo; . . . ecce hi sciunt quæ dixerim ego.”—John, xviii. 20.

[14429] “Sic respondes Pontifici?”—Ibid. 22.

[14430] “Si male locutus sum, testimonium perhibe de malo; si autem bene, quid me cædis?”-Ibid. 23.

[14431] “Adjuro te per Deum vivum, ut dicas nobis, si tu es Christus, Filius Dei.”-Matt. xxvi. 63.

[14432] “Ego sum. .” . . .

[14433] “Blasphemavit!” . . .

[14434] “Reus est mortis.”

[14435] “Tunc exspuerunt in faciem ejus, et colaphis eum ceciderunt: alii autem palmas in faciem ejus dederunt.”—Matt. xxvi. 67.

[14436] “Prophetiza nobis, Christe, quis est, qui te percussit.”-Matt. xxvi. 68.

[14437] “Ego nullam invenio in eo causam.”-Luke, xxiii. 11.

[14438] “Sprevit autem illum Herodes cum exercitu suo, et illusit indutum veste alba; et remisit ad Pilatum.”—Luke, xxiii. 11.

[14439] “Non hunc, sed Barabbam.”

[14440] “Emendatum ergo illum dimittam.”—Luke, xxiii. 16.

[14441] “Tunc ergo apprehendit Pilatus Jesum, et flagellavit.” John, xix. 1.

[14442] “Cæditur, totoque flagris corpore dissipatur; nunc scapulas, nunc crura cingunt; vulnera vulneribus et plagas plagis recentibus addunt.”-De Tr. Chr. Ag. c. 11.

[14443] “Propter scelus populi mei percussi eum.”—Matt. xxvii. 30.

[14444] “Acceperunt arundinem, et percutiebant caput ejus.”-Matt. xxvii. 30.

14445 “Et genu flexo ante eum, illudebant ei, dicentes: Ave Rex Judæorum!”—Matt. xxvii. 29.

14446 “Et dabant ei alapas.”-John, xix. 3.

14447 “Exivit ergo iterum Pilatus foras. . . . et dicit eis: Ecce Homo.”

14448 “Ego enim non invenio in eo causam.”—John, xix. 6.

14449 “Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi bene complacui.”—Matt. xvii. 5.

14450 “Tolle, tolle: crucifige cum.”-John, xix. 11.

14451 “Si hunc dimittis, non es amicus Cæsaris.”—Ibid. 12.

14452 “Innocens ego sum a sanguine justi hujus; vos videritis.”-Matt. xxvii. 24.

14453 “Sanguis ejus super nos et super filios nostros.”

14454 “Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”-John. xix. 15.

14455 “Et bajulans sibi crucem, exivit in eum, qui dicitur Calvariæ, locum.”-Matt. xxi. 9.

14456 “Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini!”-John, xix. 17.

14457 “Sequebatur autem illum multa turba populi et mulierum, quæ plangebant et lamentabantur eum.”-Luke, xxiii. 27.

14458 “Factus est principatus super humerum ejus.”-Is. ix. 6.

14459 “Qui peccata nostra ipse pertulit in corpore suo super lignum.”-I Pet. ii. 24.

14460 “Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.”-Is. liii. 6.

14461 “Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis.”

14462 “Manus et pedes cum fune trahebant ad loca calvorum, ita ut nervi et venæ extenderentur et rumperentur.”-Rev. 1. 1, c. 10.

14463 “Foderunt manus meas et pedes meos, dinumeraverunt Omnia ossa mea.”-Ps. xxi. 17.

14464 “Pejus nihil fuit inter omnia genera mortium.”-In Jo. tr. 36.

14465 P. 3. q. 46. a. 6.

[14466] “Corpus autem aptasti mihi.”-Heb. x. 5.

[14467] “Et erit vita tua quasi pendens ante te.”—Deut. xxviii. 66.

[14468] “Jesu Nazarenus, Rex Judæorum.”-John, xix. 19.

[14469] “Factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”-Phil. ii. 8.

[14470] “Quid sunt plagæ istæ in medio manuum tuarum?”

[14471] “Sunt monumenta charitatis, pretia redemptionis.”

[14472] Testis crux, testes dolores, testis amara mors, quam pro te sustinuit.”—Dom. 17. p. Pent. conc. 3.

[14473] “Clamat crux, clamat vulnus, quod ipse vere dilexit.”

[14474] “Et sustinui . . . qui consolaretur, et non inveni.”-Ps. lxviii. 21.

[14475] “Si Filius Dei es, descende de cruce.”

[14476] “Vale, qui destruis templum Dei, et in triduo reædificas; salva temet ipsum.”

[14477] “Alios salvos fecit, seipsum non potest salvum facere.”-Matt. xxvii. 40–42.

[14478] “Pater! dimitte illis; non enim sciunt quid faciunt.”-Luke, xxiii. 34.

[14479] “Ad ostendendam charitatis suæ, veniam pro persecutoribus postulavit.”—P. 3. q. 47. a. 4.

[14480] “Percutientes pectora sua, revertebantur.”-Luke, xxiii. 48.

[14481] “Stabant autem juxta crucem Jesu Mater ejus. . . .”—John, xix. 25.

[14482] “Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?”—Matth. xxvii. 46.

[14483] “Consummatum est.”—John, xix. 30.

[14484] “Et clamans voce magna, Jesus ait: Pater! in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.”—Luke, xxiii. 46.

[14485] “Et hæc dicens, exspiravit.”—Ibid.

[14486] See Volume XV., page 223.

[14487] The holy author expresses more at length his thought on this point in the preceding volume, page 10. He published these discourses, with the PREPARATION FOR DEATH, in 1758.—Ed.

[14488] " 'Heu!' " dolentis est, non insultantis; significat Deus hac voce se dolentem et invitum punire peccatores."

[14489] "Ego enim scio cogitationes quas ego cogito super vos, ait Dominus, cogitationes pacis, et non afflictionis."-Jer. xxix. 11.

[14490] "Misereris omnium, quia omnia potes, et dissimulas peccata hominum propter pœnitentiam."—Wisd. xi. 24.

[14491] "Parcis autem omnibus, quoniam tua sunt, Domine, qui amas animas"—Ibid. 27.

[14492] "Patienter agit propter vos, nolens aliquos perire, sed omnes ad pœnitentiam reverti."—2 Pet. iii. 9.

[14493] "Adhuc quadraginta dies, et Ninive subvertetur." Jonas, iii. 4.

[14494] "Vidit Deus opera eorum, quia conversi sunt de via sua mala, et misertus est."—Ibid. 10.

[14495] "Propter hoc præoccupavi ut fugerem in Tharsis: scio enim quia tu Deus elemens et misericors es, patiens et multæ miserationis et ignoscens super malitia."—Jonas, iv. 2.

[14496] "Tu doles super hederam, in qua non laborasti, neque fecisti ut eresceret; . . . et ego non parcam Ninive?"—Ibid. 10.

[14497] "Indignans miseretur, et minitans salvare desiderat."

[14498] "Nemo, volens ferire, dicit: Observa!"-Serm. 22, E. B.

[14499] "In hoc clementia Dei ostenditur; qui enim prædicit pœnam non vult punier."

14500 “Sævis, et salvas; terres, et vocas.”-In Ps. 55.

14501 “Loquaris ad eos, . . . si forte audient, et convertantur unusquisque a via sua mala, et pœniteat me mali quod cogito facere eis.”-Jer. xxvi. 2.

14502 “Neque Deus hominibus, sed vitiis irascitur.”—In Dan. c. 4.

14503 “Si nos peccatorum meminerimus, Deus obliviscetur.”—Ad pop. ant. hom. 41.

14504 “Quia humiliati sunt, non disperdam eos.”—2 Par. xii. 7.

14505 “Protector est omnium sperantium in se.”—Ps, xvii. 31.

14506 “Qui timent Dominum. speraverunt in Domino; adjutor eorum et protector eorum est.”—Ps. xiii. 11.

14507 “Timete eum qui . . . habet potestatem mittere in gehennam.”-Luke, xii. 5.

14508 “Spatiosa via est, quæ ducit ad perditionem, et multi sunt, qui intrant per eam.”—Matth. vii. 13.

14509 “Universi qui sustinent te, non confundentur.”—Ps. xxiv. 2.

14510 Sess. vi. can. xiv., xv.

14511 “Ipse (Deus) terror vester, et erit vobis in sanctificationem.”—Is. viii. 13.

14512 “Configе timore tuo carnes meas.”—Ps. cxviii. 120.

14513 “Propter nomen tuum, Domine, propitiaberis peccato meo; multum est enim.”—Ps. xxiv. 11.

14514 “Salvabit eos, quia speraverunt in eo.”—Ps. xxxvi. 40.

14515 “Timor Domini delectabit cor, et dabit lætitiam et gaudium.”-Ecclus. i. 12.

14516 “Qui timet Dominum, nihil trepidabit, et non pavebit; quoniam ipse est spes ejus. Timentis Dominum beata est anima ejus.”-Ecclus. xxxiv. 17.

14517 “Timor Domini expellit peccatum.”-Ecclus. i. 27.

14518 “Beatus vir qui timet Dominum; in mandatis ejus volet nimis.”-Ps. cxi. 1.

14519 “Deus cujus natura, bonitus.”-In Nat. D. s. 2.

14520 “Irascetur, et faciat opus suum, alienum opus ejus; . . . peregrinum est opus ejus ab eo.”-Is. xxviii. 21.

14521 “Ego fingo contra vos malum.”

14522 “Revertatur unusquisque a via sua mala.”-Jer. xviii. 11.

14523 “Cujus vult miseretur, et quem vult indurat.”-Rom. ix. 18.

14524 “Quod miseretur, proprium illi est; nam, quod condemnat, nose um cogimus.”-In Nat. D. s. 5, n. 3.

14525 “Deus. . . . iratus es, et misertus es nobis.”-Ps. lix. 3.

14526 “O ira misericors: quæ sic irascitur, ut subveniat; sic minatur, ut parcat!”-Serm. In Nat. Mart.

14527 “Ostendisti populo tuo dura, potasti nos vino compunctionis.”

14528 “Dedisti metuentibus te significationem, ut fugiant a facie arcus, ut liberentur dilecti tui.”

14529 “Ut liberentur dilecti tui.”

14530 “In tribulatione sua mane consurgent ad me.”-Osse, vi. 1.

14531 “Da nobis auxilium de tribulatione.”

14532 “Crescit malitia, crescit inopia rerum.”—De Helia, s. 2.

14533 “Dices ad eos: Hæc dicit Dominus exercituum: Convertimini ad me,. . . . et convertar ad vos.”—Zach. i. 3.

14534 “Convertimini ad me, et convertar ad vos.”

14535 “Et quare moriemini, domus Israel?”

14536 “Revertimini, et vivite.”—Ezech. xviii. 31, 32.

14537 “Discite benefacere, . . . et venite, et arguite me, . . . si fuerint peccata vestra ut coccinum, quasi nix dealbabuntur.”—Is. i. 17.

14538 “Non faciam furorem iræ meæ, . . . quoniam Deus ego, et non homo.”—Osee, vi. 9.

14539 “Omnium iniquitatum ejus, quas operatus est, non recordabor.”-Ezech. xviii, 2.

[14540] See at the end of the Sermon 0n the Passion, page 317.

[14541] "Præcepit nobis Deus ne comederemus et ne tangeremus illud, ne forte moriamur."—Gen. iii. 3.

[14542] "Nequaquam morte moriemini."—Ibid. 4.

[14543] "Deus timorem incutit, diabolus adimit."

[14544] "Surgite, egredimini de loco isto; quia delebit Dominus civitatem hanc."—Gen. xix. 14.

[14545] "Et visus est eis quasi ludens loqui."

[14546] "Vide ergo bonitatem et severitatem Dei: in eos quidem qui ceciderunt, severitatem; in te autem bonitatem Dei, si permanseris in bonitate; alioquin et tu excideris."-Rom. xi. 22.

[14547] "Peccata vestra prohibuerunt bonum a vobis."—Jer. v. 25.

[14548] "Numquid grande est, ut consoletur te Deus? Sed verba tua prava hoc prohibent."—Job, xv. 11.

[14549] "Miseros autem facit populos peccatum."—Prov. xiv. 34.

[14550] "Quid querimur quod dure agat nobiscum Deus? Multo nos cum Deo durius agimus."—De Gub. D. 1. 4.

[14551] "Eo quod non servieris Domino Deo tuo in gaudio, . . . servies inimico tuo . . . in. fame, et siti, et nuditate, el omni penuria, . . . donec te conterat."—Deut. xxviii. 47.

[14552] "Incidit in foveam quam fecit."—Ps. vii. 16.

[14553] "Cupiebat implere ventrem suum de siliquis quas porci manducabant, et nemo illi dabat."—Luke, xv. 16.

[14554] Seraph. quadr. s. 12, p. 2.

[14555] Ann. 33, n 6.

[14556] "Cognoscetur Dominus judicia faciens: in operibus manuum suarum comprehensus est peccator."—Ps. ix. 17.

[14557] "Putatis quia et ipsi debitores fuerint præter omnes homines habitants in Jerusalem?"-Luke, xiii. 4.

14558 “Si pœnitentiam non egeritis, omnes similiter peribitis.”

14559 “Protector est omnium sperantium in se.”-Ps. xvii. 31.

14560 “Spes illorum abominatio.”—Job, xi. 20.

14561 “Et unde hæc securitas maledicta?”-De Divers. s. 28.

14562 “Veniam ad quiescentes, habitantesque secure.”-Ezech. xxviii. 11.

14563 “Qui malignantur, exterminabuntur.”-Ps. xxvi. 9.

14564 “Jam enim securis ad radicem arborum posita est.”-Luke, iii. 9.

14565 “Non ad ramos posita dicitur, sed ad radicem, ut irreparabiliter exterminentur.”-Homil. 3.

14566 “Ne dixeris: Peccavi, et quid mihi accidit triste? Altissimus enim est patiens redditor.”—Ecclus. v. 4.

14567 “Judicio contendam adversum vos coram Domino, de omnibus misericordiis Domini.”—I Kings, xii. 7.

14568 “Congrega eos quasi gregem ad victimam, et sanctifica eos in die occisionis!”—Jer. xii. 3.

14569 “Deus non irridetur, quæ enim seminaverit homo, hæc et metet.”—Gal. vi. 7.

14570 “Quæ enim seminaverit homo, hæc et metet.”

14571 “Qui seminat in carne sua, de carne et metet corruptionem.”

14572 “Veniet dies, imo nox, quando libido tua vertetur in picem, qua se perpetuus ignis in tuis visceribus nutriat!”—De Cœlib. sac. c. 3.

14573 “Fingunt non videre.”

14574 “Nihil timent, quia nihil vident.”

14575 “Et non cognoverunt, donec venit diluvium, et tulit omnes.”—Matt. xxiv. 39.

14576 “Sedeo regina, . . . et luctum non videbo.”—Apoc. xviii. 7.

14577 “Ideo in una die venient plagæ ejus, . . . et igne comburetur.”

14578 “Ecce anni tres sunt, ex quo venio quærens fructum in filcunea hac, et non invenio; succide ergo illam; ut quid etiam terram occupat?”—Luke, xiii. 7.

14579 “Dimitte illam et hoc anno, . . . siquidem fecerit fructum; sin autem, in futurum succides eam.”

14580 “Neque absorbeat me profundum, neque urgeat super me puteus os suum.”—Ps. lxviii. 16.

14581 “Impius, cum in profundum venerit peccatorum, contemnit.”—Prov. xviii. 3.

14582 “Spes desperantium, Adjutrix destitutorum.”

14583 “In te speret, qui desperat.”—Med. in Salve Reg.

14584 “Nolo mortem impii.”—Ezech. xxxiii. 11.

14585 “Sed ut convertatur, . . . et vivat.”—Ibid.

14586 “Indulsisti genti, Domine, indulsisti genti; numquid glorificatus es?

14587 “Similiter autem odio sunt Deo impius et impietas ejus.”—Wisd. xiv. 9.

14588 “Audi, cœli, et auribus percipe, terra. . . . Filios enutrivi; ipsi autem spreverunt me.”—Is. i. 2.

14589 “Cognovit bos possessorem suum, et asinus præpsepe domini sui; Israel autem me non cognovit. . . . Abalienati sunt retrorsum.”—Ibid. 3, 4.

14590 “Officia etiam feræ sentiunt.”—De Benef. 1. I, c. 3.

14591 “Deus mortem non fecit, nec lætatur in perditione vivorum; creavit enim ut essent omnia.”—Wisd. i. 13.

14592 “Ad reposcendam de peccantibus ultionem, consuevit Dens moras nectere.”

14593 “Propterea exspectat Dominus, ut misereatur vestri.”—Is. xxx. 18.

14594 “Ad salutem velox, tardus ad demolitionem.”—De Pænit. hom. 5.

14595 “Dominus quoque transtulit peccatum tuum”—2 Kings, xii. 13.

14596 “Non ita tua condonari peccata cupis, quam tibi remissa esse expetit.”

14597 “Non facit Dominus Deus verbum, nisi revelaverit secretum suum.”—Amos. iii. 7.

14598 “Existimasti, inique, quod ero tui similis; arguam te, et statuam contra faciem tuam.”—Ps. xlix. 20.

14599 “Odit Deus, et amat; odit tua, amat te.”—Serm. 142, E. B.

14600 “Neque Deus hominibus, sed vitiis irascitur.”—In Dom. c. 4.

14601 “Deus, qui natura benignus est, vestris peccatis cogetur personam, quam non habet, crudelitatis assumere.”

14602 “Excitatus est . . . tamquam potens crapulatus a vino, et percussit inimicos suos.”—Ps. lxxvii. 65.

14603 “Thesaurizas tibi iram, quam Deus naturaliter non habet.”—In Ezech. c. 16.

14604 “Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem æternum, qui paratus est diabolo et angelis ejus.”—Matth. xxv. 41.

14605 “Comparaverunt delictis suis.”

14606 “Qui seminat iniquitatem, metet mala.”—Prov. xxii. 8.

14607 “Dixistis enim: Percussimus fœdus cum morte, et cum inferno fecimus pactum.”—Is. xxviii. 15.

14608 “Nullum prius ipse condemnat, sed unusquisque sibi auctor est pœnæ.”—In Luc. c. 8.

14609 “Et virga iræ suæ consummabitur.”—Prov. xxii. 8.

14610 “Ipse sibi parat peccator, quod patitur; nihil itaque est in nos crudelius nobis.”

14611 “Nos nos, etiam Deo nolente, cruciamus; nos cœlestis iræ ignem accendimus, et excitamus incendia quibus ardeamus.”—De Gulf. Dei, 1. 8.

14612 “Ne dicas: Miseratio Domini magna est; multitudinis peccatorum meorum miserebitur.”-Ecclus. v. 6.

14613 “Misericordia enim et ira ab illo cito proximant.”-Ibid. 7.

14614 “Dominus patienter exspectat, ut . . . cum judicii dies advenerit, in plenitudine peccatorum puniat.”-2 Mach. vi. 14.

14615 Jos. vi. 20.

14616 “Veniet septimus arcæ circuitus, et civitas vanitatis corruet.”

14617 “Terra enim sæpe venientem super se bibens imbrem, . . . proferens autem spinas ac tribulos, reproba est, et maledicto proxima; cujus consummatio in combustionem.”—Heb. vi. 7.

14618 “Derelinquetur filia Sion . . . sicut civitas quæ vastatur.”—Is. i. 8.

14619 “Videns civitatem, flevit super illam, dicens: . . . Non relinquent in te lapidem super lapidem, eo quod non cognoveris tempus visitaionis tuæ.”—Luke, xix. 41.

14620 “Quoties volui congregare filios tuos, . . . et noluisti! Ecce relinquetur vobis domus vestra deserta.”—Luke, xiii. 34.

14621 “Curavimus Babylonem, et non est sanata; derelinquamus eam.”—Jer. li. 9.

14622 “Pro talibus admonendis, nullum reperitur remedium nisi Dei flagellum.”—T. II., s. 18. a. 2. c. 2.

14623 “Quia vocavi, et renuistis, . . . et increpationes meas neglexistis, ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo et subsannabo.”—Prov. i. 24.

14624 “Virga . . . versa est in colubrum.”—Exod. iv. 3.

14625 “Virga illis vertitur in draconem, qui sæpius correcti, se emendare volunt.”

14626 “Per quæ peccat quis, per hæc et torquetur.’’—Wisd. xi. 17.

14627 “Venient Romani, et tollent nostrum locum.”—John, xi. 48.

14628 “Temporalia perdere timuerunt. et vitam æternam non cogitaverunt; ac sic utrumque amiserunt.”—In Jo. tr. 49, n. 26.

14629 “Tardam vindictam compensat Dominus gravitate pœnarum.”

14630 “Væ tibi, Corozain! Væ tibi, Bethsaida! Quia, si in Tyro et Sidone Factæ fuissent virtutes quæ factæ sunt in vobis, olim in cilicio et cinere sedentes pœniterent.”Luke, x. 13.

14631 “Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno.”—Heb. iv. 16.

14632 “Ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris.”—I John, ii. 2.

14633 “Pertransiit benefaciendo.”—Acts, x. 38.

14634 “Timeo Jesum transeuntem.”—Serm. 88, E. B.

14635 “Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis, nolite obdurare corda vestra.”—Ps. xciv. 8.

14636 “Si contra te Dominum videris indignatum, ad spem peccatorum confugias.”—Stim. div. am. p. 3, c. 12.

14637 “Mater . . . sanctæ spei.”—Ecclus. xxiv. 24.

14638 “Spatiosa via est quæ ducit ad perditionem, et multi sunt qui intrant per eam”—Matth. vii. 13.

14639 “Defixæ sunt in terra portæ ejus.”

14640 “Nonne et ethnici hoc faciunt?”—Matth. v. 47.

14641 “Ego autem dico vobis.”

14642 “Diligite inimicos vestros.”

14643 “Benefacite his qui oderunt vos.”

14644 “Et orate pro persecutoribus et calumniantibus vos.”

14645 “Ut sitis filii Patris vestry qui in cœlis est.”-Matth. v. 44, 45.

14646 “Dilectio sola discernit inter filios Dei et filios diabolic.”-In I Jo. tr. 5.

14647 “Dimittite, et dimittemini.”—Luke, vi. 37.

14648 “Remittendo aliis, veniam tibi dedisti.”

14649 “Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris.”

14650 “Tu in tua causa fers sententiam.”—In Jo. hom. 38.

14651 “Judicium autem sine misericordia illi qui non fecit misericordiam.”—James, ii. 13.

14652 “Nescio qua fronte indulgentiam peccatorum obtinere poterit, qui, Deo præcipiente, inimicis suis veniam dare non acquiescit.”—Serm. 273, E. B.

14653 “Foris canes.”—Apoc. xxii. 15.

14654 “Qui inimicum habet, nunquam fruitur pace; perpetuo æstuat.”

14655 “Honorem meum nemini dabo.”

14656 “Tue s enim, Domine, qui vitæ et mortis habes potestatem.”-Wisd. xvi. 13.

14657 “Mea est ultio, et ego retribuam in tempore.”-Deut. xxxiii. 35.

14658 “Per prævaricationem legis Deum inhonoras.”-Rom. ii. 23.

14659 “Beneficiis eum affice, et ultus es.”

14660 See Volume XVI., page 553.

14661 “Omne peccatum, comparatum blasphemiæ, levius est.”—In Is. c. 18.

14662 “Blasphemia pejus nihil.”—In I Cor. hom. 13.

14663 “Alia peccata videntur procedere partim ex fragilitate, partim ex ignorantia; sed peccatum blasphemiæ procedit ex propria malitia.”—Seraph, quadr. s. 33, p. 2.

14664 “Quæ supplicia sufficient, cum Deo fit ista tam nefaria injuria?”

14665 “Minime mirandum, si flagella non amoveantur.”—Bulla. 23

14666 In Levit. xxiv. 14.

14667 “Blasphemaverunt Sanctum Israel; . . . terra vestra . . . desolabitur.”—Is. i. 4.

14668 “Contere os ejus, percussione manum tuam sanctifica.”—Ad pop. Ant. hom. 1.

14669 “Qui blasphemaverit nomen Domini, morte moriatur: lapidibus opprimet eum omnis multitudo.”—Levit. xxiv. 16.

14670 “Vere et tu ex illis es; nam et loquela tua manifestum te facit.”-Matth. xxvi. 73.

14671 “Et blasphemaverunt Deum cœli, præ doloribus et vulneribus suis.”-Apoc. xvi. 11.

14672 “Miseros facit populos peccatum.”—Prov. xiv. 34.

14673 See Volume XV , page 483.

14674 “Simulacra gentium, argentum et aurum.”—Ps. ciii 12.

14675 “Neque fures . . . neque rapaces regnum Dei possidebunt.”-I Cor. vi. 10.

14676 “Quia tu spoliasti gentes multas, spoliabunt te omnes.”—Habac. ii. 8.

14677 “Hæc est maledictio quæ egreditur super faciem omnis terræ; . . . et veniet ad domum furis.”—Zach. v. 3.

14678 “Qui opes inique possidet, etiam opes suas amittet.”

14679 “Videte ne forte furtivus sit; reddite eum.”—Tob. ii. 21.

14680 “Nolebat sonum furti audire in domo.”—Serm. 88, E. B.

14681 “Non vult Christus rapina nutriri.”

14682 “Canis reversus ad suum vomitum, et sus lota in volutabro luti.”—2 Peter, ii. 22.

14683 “Pœnituit cum quod hominem fecisset. . . . Omnis quippe caro corruperat viam suam.”—Gen. vi. 6–12.

14684 “Pro nullo alio reatu, tarn manifestam justitiam exercuit Deus, quam pro isto.”—Epist. Euseb. ad Dam.

14685 “Quia oblita es mei, et projecisti me post corpus tuum, tu quoque porta scelus tuum et fornicationes tuas.”—Ezech. xxiii. 35.

14686 “Hoc peccatum quasi totum mundum trahit ad supplicium.”—Serm. Extraord. 12, p. 2.

14687 “Magis per luxuriam humanum genus subditur diabolo, quam per cætera vitia.”—Sent. 1. 2, c. 39.

14688 “Nullus in peccato tenacior, quam libidinosus.”—De S. Ildeph c. 2.

14689 “Voluptates (impudicæ) oblivionem Dei inducunt.”—Lign. vit. de Contin. c. 4.

14690 “Non dabunt cogitationes suas ut revertantur ad Deum suum, quia spiritus fornicationum in medio eorum, et Dominum non cognoverunt.”—Osee, v. 4.

14691 “Nec paret rationi, qui impetu ducitur.”

14692 “Sus in volutabro luti.”

14693 “Qui enim manducat et bibit indigne, judicium sibi manducat et bibit, non dijudicans corpus Domini.”—I Cor. xi. 29.

[14694] "Quandoquidem peccabant, quod participes fierent Mysteriorum, non expurgata conscientia."—In Isaiam, c. 3.

[14695] "Tollite me, et mittite in mare, et cessabit mare a vobis; scio enim ego quoniam propter me tempestas hæc grandis venit."—Jon. i. 12.

[14696] "Et stetit mare a fervore suo."—Ibid. 15.

[14697] "Iniquitates nostræ quasi ventus abstulerunt nos."—Is. lxiv. 6.

[14698] "Tu autem, Dominator virtutis, cum tranquillitate judicas."—Wisd. xii. 18.

[14699] "Ipsi autem ad iracundiam provocaverunt et afflixerunt spiritum Sancti ejus."—Is. lxiii. 10.

[14700] "Tactus dolore cordis intrinsecus, Delebo, inquit, hominem quem creavi."—Gen. vi. 6.

[14701] "Ubi est fons peccati, illic est plaga supplicii."—In Ps. 3.

[14702] "Arcum meum ponam in nubibus."—Gen. ix. 13.

[14703] De Noe, c. 27.

[14704] "Confide, fili, remittuntur tibi peccata tua."—Matth. ix. 2.

[14705] "Iste petebat sanitatem corporis, et Dominus dat sanitatem animæ. Fecit sicut bonus medicus, qui curat causam."—In Matth. 9.

[14706] "Causa infirmitatum sæpius sunt peccata."—Quadrag. de Christ. Rel. s. 13. a. 3. c. 3.

[14707] "Eccc sanus factus es; jam noli peccare, ne deterius tibi aliquid contingat."—John, v. 14.

[14708] "Fili, in tua infirmitate, . . . ab omni delicto munda cor tuum, . . . et da locum medico."—Ecclus. xxxviii. 9.

[14709] "Nostri causa hæc invehuntur, qui retinemus cor impœnitens."—Enarr. in Is. 9.

[14710] "Si audire nolueris vocem Domini, . . . venient super te omnes maledictions istæ, et apprehendent te; maledictus eris in civitate, maledictus in agro. . . ."-Deut. xxviii. 15.

[14711] "Non solum iram Dei promeruimus, sed totam creaturam adversum nos excitavimus."—De Similit. c. 102.

[14712] "Cuncta quæ ad usum pravitatis infleximus, ad usum nobis vertuntur ultionis."—In Evang. hom. 35.

14713 “Armabit creaturam ad ultionem, . . et pugnabit cum illo orbis terrarum contra insensatos.”—Wisd. v. 18.

14714 “Non est ulla creatura quæ mota non fuerit, cum ipsum Dominum senserit.”-Homil. In absol.

14715 “Est primum genus dementiæ, nolle a malis suis quiescere, et Deum a sua velle ultione cessare.”-Lib. 8, ep. 41.

14716 “Nec amputamus causa morbi, ut morbus auferatur.”-Ad Heliod. de Morte Nep.

14717 “Miramur si miseri, qui tam impuri sumus?”-De Gub. Dei, 1, 7.

14718 “Et nunc nolite illudere, ne forte constringantur vincula vestra.”-Is. xxviii. 22.

14719 “Impii illusores, irridendo Dei minas et pœnas, magis iisdem se adstringunt.”

14720 “Consummationem enim et abbreviationem audivi a Domino Deo exercituum super universam terram.”

14721 “Quis quæsivit hæc de manibus vestris?”—Is. i. 12.

14722 “Ne offeratis ultra sacrificium frustra.”

14723 “Solemnitates vestras odivit anima mea.”

14724 “Holocaustis non delectaberis. Sacrificium Deo, spiritus contribulatus.”—Ps. 1. 18.

14725 “Deus non irridetur.”—Gal. vi. 7.

14726 “Non sum locutus . . . de verbo . . . victimarum. Sed hoc verbum præcepi: . . . Audite vocem meam, et ero vobis Deus.”—Jer. vii. 22.

14727 “Qui habet aures audiendi, audiat.”-Matth. xi. 15.

14728 “Alii habent aures, sed non habent aures audiendi.”

14729 “Sacrificate sacrificium justitiæ, et sperat in domino.”-Ps. iv. 6.

14730 “Quis demonstravit vobis fugere a ventura ira?”-Matth. iii. 7.

14731 “Facite ergo fructum dignum pœnitentiæ.”

14732 “Sicut enim exhibuistis membra vestra servire immunditiæ . . . ita nunc exhibete . . . servire justitiæ.”-Rom. vi. 19.

[14733] “Fit plerumque Deo gratior amore ardens vita post culpam, quam securitate torpens innocentia.”-Past. p. 3, adm. 29.

[14734] “Guadium erit in cœlo super uno peccatore pœnitentiam agente, quam super nonaginta novem justis.”-Luke, xv. 7.

[14735] “Et ne velitis dicere intra vos: Patrem habemus Abraham.”—Matth. iii. 9.

[14736] “Omnis arbor quæ non facit fructum bonum, excidetur, et in ignem mittetur”—Matth. vii. 19.

[14737] “Noli, subtrahere verbum, si forte audiant, et convertantur . . . et pœniteat me mali quod cogito facere eis.”—Jer. xxvi. 2.

[14738] “Lætetur cor quærentium Dominum.’’—Ps. civ. 3.

[14739] “Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quærenti illum.”—Lam. iii. 25.

[14740] “Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.”—Ps. 1. 19.

[14741] “Ego civitas refugii omnium ad me confugientium.”

[14742] “In charitate perpetua dilexi te.”-Jer. xxxi. 3.

[14743] “Ideo attraxi te miserans.”-Ibid.

[14744] “Hoc autem pro certo habet omnis qui te colit, quod vita ejus, si in probatione fuerit, coronabitur; si autem in tribulation fuerit, liberabitur.”

[14745] “Non enim delectaris in perditionibus nostris; post tempestatem, tranquillum facis; et post . . . fletum exsultationem infundis.”

[14746] “Timorem meum dabo in corde eorum, ut non recedant a me.”—Jer. xxxii. 40

[14747] “In ira populos confringes.”—Ps. lv. 8.

[14748] “Quid enim ‘In ira populos deduces’? Imples tribulationibus omnia, ut, in tribulationibus positi, homines recurrant ad te.”—In Ps. 55. n. 13.

[14749] “In tribulatione sua mane consurgent ad me.”—Osee, vi. 1.

14750 “Venite, et revertamur ad Dominum; quia cepit, et sanabit nos; percutiet, et curabit nos.”

14751 “In die tribulatione meæ, Deum exquisivi, . . . et non sum deceptus.”—Ps. lxxvi. 3.

14752 “Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me, ut discam justificationes tuas.”—Ps. cxviii. 71.

14753 “Pœna est, et gratia est.”—In Ps. 38.

14754 “Quid servat post pœnam, qui per gratiam exhibet pœnam?”

14755 “Difficile est, imo impossibile, ut præsentibus quis fruatur bonis, et futuris; ut de deliciis transeat ad delicias.”—De Inter. Domo, c. 25.

14756 “Noli æmulari in eo qui prosperatur in via sua, in homine faciente injustitias.”—Ps. xxxvi. 7.

14757 “Prosperatur, sed in via sua; laboras, sed in via Dei.”

14758 “Illi prosperitas in via est, in perventione infelicitas; tibi labor in via, in perventione felicitas.”—In Ps. 36, Serm. 1, n. 9

14759 “Deus, tu propitius fuisti eis, et ulciscens in omnes adventiones eorum.”—Ps. xcviii. 8.

14760 “Fenum quasi bos comedes, et septem tempora mutabuntur super te. donec scias quod dominetur Excelsus in regno hominum.”—Dan. iv. 29.

14761 “Nunc . . . laudo, et magnifico, et glorifico Regem cœli.”-Ibid. 34.

14762 “Libenter mutavit sententiam, quia vidit opera commutata.”-In Jon. iii. 10.

14763 “Magna est ira Dei, quando non nobis irascitur: reservat nos sicut vitulum in occisione.”

14764 “Parcit, ut in perpetuum feriat.”—Mor. 1. 7, c. 8.

14765 “Quiescam, nec irascar amplius.”

14766 “Provocasti me in omnibus his. . . . Scies quia ego Dominus, ut recorderis et confundaris.”—Ezech. xvi. 42, 43, 62.

14767 “Israel non intendit mihi, et dimisi eos secundum desideria cordis eorum.”—Ps. lxxx. 12.

14768 “Misereamur impio, et non discet justitiam; . . . et non videbit gloriam Domini.”—Is. xxvi. 10.

14769 “Misereamur impio; longe a me misericordia tam rigorosa.”

14770 “Domine, hic seca, hic non parcas, ut in æternum parcas.”

14771 “Magnæ misericordiæ est nequitiam impunitarn non relinquere.”-Serm. 171, E. B.

14772 “Hæc mihi sit consolatio, ut, affligens me dolore, non pareat.”—Job. vi. 10.

14773 “Quid in sopore deprimeris? Surge, invoca Deum tuum.”-Jon. i. 6.

14774 “Virgam vigilantem ego video. Ollam succensam ego video.”—Jer. i. 11—13.

14775 “Qui virga non corrigitur, in ollam mittitur, ut ardeat.”—In Ps. xxxviii.

14776 “Quanti mercenarii in domo patris mei abundant panibus. ego autem hic fame pereo!”-Luke, xv. 17.

14777 “Surgam, et ibo ad patrem meum”—Ibid. 18.

14778 “Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum.”—Phil. iv. 7.

14779 “Pater, peccavi in cœlum et coram te; jam non sum dignus vocari filius tuus.”

14780 “Accurrens cecidit super collum ejus, et osculatus est eum.”

14781 “Proferte stolam primam, et induite illum.”

14782 “Epulemur, quia hic filius meus mortuus erat, et revixit; perierat, et inventus est.”

14783 “In me omnis spes vitæ virtutis; transite ad me omnes.”-Ecclus. xxiv. 25.

14784 “Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam.”-Prov. viii. 35.

14785 “Dormiebat sopore gravi.”—Jon. i. 5.

14786 “Clamavi de tribulatione mea ad Dominum, et exaudivit me.”—Jon. ii. 3.

14787 “Vigilat in ceto, qui stertebat in navi.”—Serm. de Jon.

14788 “Si cessaret Deus, et non misceret amaritudines felicitatibus sæculi, oblivisceremur eum.”—In Ps. xciii.

14789 “Quam clemens Dominus, quam pius in utroque, cum aut miseretur aut vindicate!”-In Luc. c. 13.

14790 “Dum judicamur autem, a Domino corripimur, ut non cum hoc mundo damnemur.”—I Cor. xi. 32.

14791 “Flagella Domini quibus quasi servi corripimur, ad emendationem et non ad perditionem nostram, evenisse credamus.”—Judith, viii. 27.

14792 “Omnis qui te colit, . . . si in correptione fuerit, ad misericordiam tuam venire licebit; non enim delectaris in perditionibus nostris.”—Tab. iii. 21.

14793 “Ego, quos amo, arguo et castigo.”—Apoc. iii. 19.

14794 “Ubi amor est, severitas solet esse pignus gratiarum.”

14795 “Exacerbavit Dominum peccator; secundum multitudinem iræ suæ non quæret.”—Ps. ix. 25.

14796 “Non exquiret; multum irascitur, dum non exquirit.”

14797 “Et requiescet indignatio mea in te; et auferetur zelus meus a te; et quiescam, nec irascar amplius.”—Ezech. xvi. 42.

14798 “Secundum autem duritiam tuam et impœnitens cor, thesaurizas tibi iram in die iræ, et revelationis justi judicii Dei, qui reddet unicuique secundum opera ejus.”—Rom. ii. 5.

14799 “Magna ira est, quando peccantibus non irascitur Deus.”—Ep. ad Castrut.

14800 “Delinquentes in hac vita castigati deplorandi non sunt, sed qui impuniti abeunt.”—Lib. 5, ep. 269.

14801 “Non tam molestum ægrotare, quam morbo medelam non afferri.”

14802 “Si impunita dimittit, tunc punit infestius; quoniam nihil est infelicius felicitate peccantium.’’—Epist. 138, n. 14, E. B.

14803 “Quare ergo impii vivunt, sublevati sunt, confortatique divitiis?”

14804 “Ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in puncto ad inferna descendunt.’’—Job, xxi. 7, 13.

14805 “Quare via impiorum prosperatur?”

14806 “Congrega eos quasi gregem ad victimam.”—Jer. xii. 1–3.

14807 “Hi enim ut victimæ ad supplicium saginantur.”—Octav. c. 10.

14808 “Cum hominibus non flagellabuntur; . . . verumtamen . . . subito defecerunt . . . velut somnium surgentium.”-Ps. lii. 5–18.

14809 “Quemadmodum fumus deficient.’’—Ps. xxxvi. 20.

14810 “Fumus ascendcndo deficit.”—Lib. i, ep. 5.

14811 “Vidi impium superexaltatum; . . . et transivi, et ecce non erat.”-Ps. xxxvi. 35.

14812 “Miseri, in hoc altius tolluntur, ut decidant altius.’’—Octav. c. 10.

14813 “Dejecisti eos, dum allevarentur.”-Ps. lxxii. 18.

14814 “Manifestum perditionis indicium est, quando nulla contrarietas impedit quod mens perversa concepit.”-Mor. 1. 26, c. 16.

14815 “Prosperitas stultorum perdet illos.”—Prov. i. 32.

14816 “Sicut fulgur tonitrum portat, ita prosperitas supplicia sempiterna.”

14817 “Inebriabo cos, ut sopiantur, et dormiant somnum sempiternum, et non consurgant, dicit Dominus.”—Jer. li. 39.

14818 “Omnis igitur qui invenerit me, occidet me.”—Gen. iv. 14.

14819 “Longæva vita vindicta est; favor enim impiorum est, si subito moriantur.”

14820 “Sicut pisces capiuntur hamo, . . . sic capiuntur homines in tempore malo.’’—Eccles. ix. 12.

14821 “Noli gaudere ad piscem qui in esca sua exsultat; nondum traxit hamum piscator.”—In Ps. 91, n. 8.

14822 “Cum irascitur, non odio hoc facit, sed ut ad se attrahat quos non vult perire.”

14823 “Adversatur ad tempus, ut te secum habeat in reternum.”—In Matt. hom. 14.

14824 “Medici percutiunt, et sanant.”

14825 “Sævire videtur Deus; cum ista facit, ne metuas; quoniam pater est, nunquam sic sævit, ut perdat.”-In Ps. 65, n. 16.

14826 “Ego, qous amo, arguo et castigo.”-Apoc. iii. 19.

14827 “Ecce sto ad ostium, et pulso.”

14828 “Si quis . . . aperuerit mihi januam, intrabo ad illum, et cœnabo cum illo, et ipse mecum.”-Apoc. iii. 20.

14829 “Qui viverit, dabo ei sedere mecum in throno meo.”-Apoc. iii. 21.

14830 “Disciplinam Domini, fili mi, ne abjicias; nec deficias, cum ab eo corriperis. Quem enim diligit Dominus, corripit; et quasi pater in filio complacet sibi.”-Prov. iii. 11.

14831 “Pœnæ nos ad Deum perducunt.”—Ad pop. Ant. hom. 6.

14832 “Pœna est modus loquendi Dei, quo culpam ostendit.”

14833 “Non est grave plaga affici, sed plaga non meliorem effici.”

14834 “Ab increpatione tua, Deus Jacob, dormitaverunt.”—Ps. lxxv. 7.

14835 “Percussi vos, . . . et non redistis ad me.”—Amos, iv. 9.

14836 “Mittet contra eum fulmina; . . . cor jus indurabitur tamquam lapis, et stringetur quasi malleatoris incus.”-Job. xli. 14.

14837 “Tempore angustiæ suæ, auxit contemptum in Dominum.”-2 Par. xxviii. 22.

14838 “Pluet supra peccatores laqueos; ignis et sulphur, et spiritus procellarum, paris calicis eorum.”-Ps. x. 7.

14839 “Partem calicis dixit, quia eorum passio hic per Dolores incipitur, sed in ultione perpetua consummatur.”-Mor. 1, 15. c. 21.

14840 “In flagellis positum flagellis digna committere, est sævientem acrius ad iracundiam concitare.”

14841 “Super quo percutiam vos ultra, addentes prævaricationem? Et derelinquetur filia Sion . . . sicut civitas quæ vastatur.”—Is. i. 5–8.

14842 “Optima consideration, cum senseris pœnam, culpæ meminisse.”

14843 “Merito hæc patimur, quia peccavimu.’’—Gen. xlii. 21.

14844 “Justus es, Domine, et rectum judicium tuum.”—Ps. cxviii. 137.

14845 “Quæ fecisti nobis, in vero judicio fecisti.”—Dan. iii. 31.

14846 “Non reperitur aliquem Sanctorum ita compati in infirmitatibus, sicut Mulier hæc, Beata Virgo Maria.”-P. 4, tit. 15, c. 12.

14847 “(Non potest) miserias scire, et non subvenire.”

14848 “Omnes homines vult salvos fieri.”—I Tim. ii. 4.

14849 “Nolens aliquos perire, sed omnes ad pœnitentiam reverti.”—2 Petr. iii. 9.

14850 “Per orationem, ira Dei suspenditur, vindicta differtur, venia procuratur.”—Lign. Vit. de Orat. c. 2.

14851 “Invoca me; . . . eruam te.”—Ps. xlix. 15.

14852 “Clama ad me, et exaudiam te.”—Jer. xxxiii. 3.

14853 “Quodcumque volueritis, petetis, et fiet vobis.”—John, xv. 7.

14854 “Oratio, cum sit una, omnia potest.”—Apud Rodr, p. I, tr. 5, c. 14.—Wisd. vii. 27.

14855 “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—Matth. vii. 8.

14856 “Tu, Domine, suavis et mitis, et multæ misericordiæ omnibus invocantibus te.”—Ps. lxxxv. 5.

14857 “Si quis autem vestrum indiget sapientia, postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluenter, nec improperat.”—James, i. 5.

14858 “Usque modo non petistis quidquam in nomine meo; petite, et accipietis, ut gaudium vestrum sit plenum.”—John, xvi. 24.

14859 “Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—John, xvi. 23.

14860 “Aures principis paucis patent, Deo vero omnibus volentibus.”

14861 “Fide tenendum est, orationem adultis esse necessarian.”-De Inst. 1, 2, c. 37, d. 3.

14862 “Petite et accipietis.”-John, xvi. 24.

14863 “Orate, ut non intretis in tentationem.”-Matth, xxvi. 41.

14864 “Oportet semper orare.”-Luke, xviii. 1.

14865 2. 2, q. 83, a. 3.

14866 “Promittendo, debitorem se Deus fecit.”-Serm. 110, E. B.

14867 “Nullus speravit in Domino, et confuses est.”-Ecclus. ii. 11.

14868 “Protector est omnium sperantium in se.”—Ps. xvii. 31.

14869 “Petitis, et non accipitis, eo quod male petatis.”—James, iv. 3.

14870 “Et exaruit manus ejus quam extenderat contra eum, nec valuit retrahere eam ad se.”—3 Kings, xiii. 4.

14871 “Valde stultus supplex rogavit Prophetam, ut sibi peteret, non sceleris remissionem, sed manus curationem.”

14872 “Census peccati, pœna.”

14873 “Est chirographum quoddam contra nos.”

14874 “Miseros autem facit populos peccatum.”—Prov. xiv. 34.

14875 “Fames, et contritio, et flagella; super iniquos creata sunt hæc omnia.”—Ecclus. xl. 9.

14876 “O mucro Domini! usquequo non quiesces? Ingredere in vaginam tuam, refrigerare, et sile.”—Jer. xlvii. 6.

14877 “Quomodo quiescet, cum Dominus præceperit ei adversus Ascalonem?”

14878 “Cum jejunaverint, non exaudiam preces eorum; et si obtulerint holocautomata et victimas, non suscipiam ea; quoniam gladio, et fame, et peste, consumam eos.”—Jer. xiv. 12.

14879 “Orabat autem hic scelestus Dominum, a quo non esset misericordiam consecuturus.”—2 Mach. ix. 13.

14880 “Facite ergo fructum dignum pœnitentiæ. Et ne velitis dicere intra vos: Patrem habemus Abraham.”-Matt. iii. 8.

14881 “Quid profuit Jeremias Judæis?”—Ad pop. Ant. hom. 79.

14882 “Prosunt, et plurimum, sed quando nos quoque aliquid agimus.”

14883 “Erigis muros; intus cum sit malum, urbs captu facilis est.”

14884 “Abusum projicite, et ero vobis propitia.”

14885 “Deus, in adjutorium meum intende.”-Ps. lxix. 2.

14886 “Qui se juvari efflagitat, etiam, quod in se est, faciat.”

14887 “Qui creavit te sine te, non salvabit te sine te.”

14888 “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—Matt. vii. 8.

14889 “Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—John, xvi. 23.

14890 “Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus; quia, quod quærit, invenit, et frustrari non potest.”—De Aquad.

14891 “Infinitus enim thesaurus est hominibus: quo qui usi sunt, participes facti sunt amicitiæ Dei.”—Wisd. vii. 14.

14892 “Odio sunt Deo impius et impietus ejus.”-Wisd. xiv. 9.

14893 “Ipse est propitiation pro peccatis nostris.”-I John, ii. 2.

14894 “Jesum tibi dedit mediatorem: quid non apud Patrem Filius talis obtineat?”—De Aquad.

14895 “Quid timetis, modicæ fidei? Affixit peccata cruci cum suis manibus.”—In Cant. s. 38.

14896 “Sed forsitan et in ipso majestatem vereare divinam? Advocatum habere vis ad ipsum? Ad Mariam recurred.”-De Aquad.

14897 “Ego murus, et ubera mea sicut turris, ex quo facta sum coram eo quasi pacem reperiens.”-Cant. viii. 10.

14898 “Ipsa reperit pacem inimicis, salute perditis, misericordiam desperatis.”-In Cant. viii. 10.

14899 “Formosa . . . sicut pelles Salomonis.”-Cant. i. 4.

14900 “Stat Maria in conspectus Filii sui, non cessans pro peccatoribus exorare.”

14901 “Adstat Beatissima Virgo vultui Conditoris, prece potentissima semper interpellans pro nobis.”

14902 “Videt enim nostra discrimina, nostrique clemens Domina materno affectu miseretur.”

14903 “Pete, Mater, quid vis a me. . . . Misericordiam peto pro miseris.”

14904 “Te solam, O Maria, pro Sancta Ecclesia sollicitam præ omnibus Sanctis scimus.”—Apud S. Bonav. spec. B. M. V. lect. 6.

14905 “Ecce tu iratus es, et peccavimus; . . . non est . . . qui consurgat, et teneat te.”—Is. lxiv. 5–7.

14906 “Ante Mariam, non fuit qui sic detinere Dominum auderet.”

14907 “Detinet Filium, ne peccatores percutiat.”

14908 “Nemo tam idoneus, qui gladio Domini manum objiciat.”—Spec. B. M. V. lect. 7–14.

14909 “Salve, divina cum hominibus Reconciliatio!”

14910 “Verbum usum est Virgine Sequestra.”—Exposit. fid. de Trin.

14911 “Tu es ilia fidelissima columba Noe, quæ inter Deum et mundum, diluvio spirituali submersum, Mediatrix fidelissima extitisti.”—Spec. B. M. V. lecl. 9.

14912 “Per te pax cœlestis donate est.”

14913 “Quare parcit nunc mundo ipse Deus, qui olim etiam multo his minora peccata acrius punivit?”

14914 “Totum hoc facit propter Beatam Virginem.”—Stell. B. V. 1. II, p. 2, c. 2.

14915 “Cœlum et terra jamdudum ruissent, si Maria suis precibus non sustentasset!”

14916 “Spes nostra, salve.”

14917 “Maledictus homo qui confidit in homine.”-Jer. xvii. 5.

14918 “Totius boni plenitudinem posuit in Maria, ut proinde, si quid spei in nobis est, si quid gratiæ, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare.”—De Aquad.

14919 “Hæc mea maxima fiducia est, hæc tota ratio spei meæ.”

14920 “Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam gratiam.”

14921 “Spes nostra, salve.”

14922 “Hæc peccatorum Scala.”-De Aquad.

14923 “Iniquitates vestræ diviserunt inter vos et Deum vestrum.”-Is. lix. 2.

14924 “Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.”—I John, iv. 16.

14925 “Tu peccatorem quantumlibet fœtidum non horres; si ad te suspiraverit, tu ilium a desperationis barathro pia manu retrahis.”—Depr. ad glor. V.

14926 “Pulchra ut luna.”—Cant. vi. 9.

14927 “Sicut luna est media inter solem et terram, sic et Virgo regia inter nos et Deum est media, et gratiam nobis refundit.”

14928 “Ego civitas omnium ad me confugientium.”

14929 “Nullus est ita abjectus a Deo, qui, si me invocaverit, non revertatur ad Deum, et habiturus sit misericordiam.”

14930 “Ideo Mater Dei præelecta es ab æterno, ut, quos justitia Filii saivare non potest, tu per tuam salvares pietatem.”

14931 “Pasce hædos tuos.”-Cant. i. 7.

14932 “Pasce hædos tuos, quos convertis in oves, ut, qui a sinistris in judicio erant collocandi, tua intercessione collocentur a dextris.”

14933 “Qui nec Beatam Virginem obsequio prosequuntur. nec preces fundunt ut aliquando resipiscant, hædi non sunt Mariæ, sed ad sinistram sistendi.”

14934 “Conanti surgere ad Deum tribuis auxilium.”

14935 “Ipsa est a me velut esca dulcissima elecla pro capiendis hominibus, et animabus præcipue peccatorum.”—Dial. tr. 4, c. 139.

14936 “Sicut magnes attrahit ferrum, sic ego attraho Deo dura corda.”—Rev. 1. 3, c. 3.

14937 “Timerene debet et pereat, cui Maria sc Matrem exhibet et Advocatam?”

14938 “Tu, misericordiæ Mater, non rogabis pro redempto Redemptorem?”

14939 “Rogabis plane; quia, qui Filium tuum inter Deum et homines posuit Mediatorem, te quoque inter reum et Judicem, posuit Mediatricem.”—Marial. s. I.

14940 “Age gratias ei qui talem tibi Mediatricem providit.”—In Sign. Magn.

14941 “Spes unica peccatorum.”

14942 “Si propter tuas nequitias Dominum videris indignatum, ad spem peccatorum confugias.”

14943 “Sibi pro miseris satisfacere ex officio est commissum.”—Stim, div am. p. 3, c. 12.

14944 “Officium tuum est mediam te iuterponere inter Deum et homines.”—De Rhet. div. c. 18.

14945 “Eia ergo, Advocata nostra, officium tuum imple.”—De Nat. V. M. conc. 3.

14946 “Memorare, piissima Maria, a sæculo non esse auditum, quemquam ad tua præsidia confugientem esse derelictum.”

14947 Ep. ad Dracont.

14948 “Væ pastoribus Israel, qui pascebant semetipsos: . . . Ecce ego ipse super pastores requiram gregem meum de manu eorum.”—Ezech. xxxi. 2–10.

14949 Moral. 1. 24, C. 30.

14950 “Nomen habes quod vivas, et mortuus es.”—Apoc. iii. I.

14951 “Prefects,’’ or “ Overseers,” see RULES farther on.

14952 De Ordinatione presbyt.

14953 Lib. 3, ep. 26.

14954 Volume XII., page 194.

14955

“Oportet, . . . episcopum irreprehensibilem esse.”-I Tim. iii. 2.

14956

“Omnes virtutes in uno sermone comprehendit apostolus.”-

14957

“Concbam te exhibebis, et non canalem. Implere prius, et sic curato effundere.”—In Cant. s. 18.

14958

“Attende tibi et doctrinæ; justa in illis. Hoc enim faciens, et teipsum salvum facies, et eos qui te audiunt.”-I Tim. iv. 16.

14959 “Ut luceat omnibus qui in domo sunt.”—Matt. v. 15.

[14960] "Magis oculis quam auribus credunt homines."

[14961] "In omnibus teipsum præbe exemplum."—Tit. ii. 7.

[14962] "Episcopos teneri per seipsos, si legitime impediti non fucrint, ad prædicandum."

[14963] "Est præcipuum episcoporum munus."—Sess. v. cap. ii. de Ref.

[14964] See on this subject Letter to a Bishop, Volume XV. p. 73.

[14965] "Per solas missiones impletur prædestinatio."-Theol. 1. 3. d. 6. c. 2, sp. 2.

[14966] "Tot parvuli in oppidulis petunt panem, et non est qui frangat eis. Væ, væ prælatis dormitantibus!"

[14967] "Qui autem sapiens est, audit consilia."-Prov. xii. 15

[14968] Die 17 Nov.

[14969] "Exhortare et argue cum omni imperio. Nemo te contemnat."—Tit. ii. 15.

[14970] "Si adhuc hominibus placerem, Christi servus non essem."—Gal. i. 10.

[14971] "Bonus pastor animam suam dat pro ovibus suis."—John, x. 11.

[14972] "Magis amat justitiam, quam vitam."

[14973] "His quibus prodesse non potuit correptio, non pareat abscissio."

[14974] "Pelagum laborum, et ærumnarum abyssum."—De Sacerd. 1. 6.

[14975] Serm. 339, E. B.

[14976] "Non arbitrior inter episcopos multos esse qui salvi fiant, sed multo plures qui pereant."-In Act. Hom. 3.

[14977] "Miror si potest salvari aliquis rectorum."—In Hebr. Hom. 34.

[14978] "Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat."-Phil. iv. 13.

[14979] St. Alphonsus published this Rule towards the end of the year 1756 (Villecourt, I. vi. ch. iii.) He had that year introduced a wonderful reform into the seminary of Nola, which was in a very bad state, as is related by Father Tannoia (Book II. ch. 44). It is without doubt in consequence of this undertaking, which was crowned with such success, that he composed the present opuscule. In order

to understand certain details, it should he known that by a seminary we here understand an establishment which comprises not only what we call a Great Seminary, but also all the classes of humanities, and even of the preparatory courses, to which very young boys are admitted; the whole, however, is divided into several separated sections.—ED.

[14980] “Ministri enim Dei sunt, in hoc ipsum servientes.”—Rom. xiii. 6

[14981] “Ideo necessitate subditi estote, non solum propter iram, sed etiam propter conscientiam.”—Ibid. 5.

[14982] “Confortare et esto robustus. Noli metuere, et noli timere; quoniam tecum est Dominus Deus tuus.”-Jos. i. 9.

[14983] Hist. Eccl, sæc. iv. diss. 21.

[14984] St. Hieron. Dial, adversus Lucifer.

[14985] St. Cyprian de Unitate Ecclesiæ.

[14986] Danes, Gen. Temp. Nat. in Epil.

[14987] Baron. Annal, 35, d. 23; N. Alex. Hist. Ecclesias. t. 5, c. 11, n.-1; Hermant. His. Con. 56, 1, c. 7; Van

Ranst, His. Her. n. 1.

[14988] Nat. Alex. t. 5, in fin. Dis. 24.

[14989] St. Iraeneus, de Heresi.1. 2, c. 58.

[14990] Baron. Ann. 35, n. 14, ad. 17; Fleury, His. Eccl. t. 1,1. 2, n. 23; St. Augus.; St. Joan. Chris.

[14991] Baron, n. 17; Nat. Alex. t. 5, c. 11; Orsi, Istor. Ecc1.1. 1, n. 20, and1. 2, n. 19; Berti. Brev. Histor. t. 1, c. 3.

[14992] Fleury, loc. cit. n. 42; N. Alex. loc. cit. art. 2

[14993] N. Alex. t. 5, c. 11, or. 5; Fleury, t. 1, L 2, n. 42; Berti, loc. cit.: Orsi, t. 1,1. 2, n. 43.

[14994] Bernin. Istor. del Eresia, t. 1, c. 1; St. Iren. 1. 3, c. 4, de S.

[14995] N. Alex. loc. cit, art. 6; Fleury, loc. cit. n, 42. [N.B Fleury puts Ebion first, next Cerinthus, and lastly Menander,]

[14996] Fleury, n. 19.

[14997] Orsi, t. 2, I. 3, n. 23.

[14998] Nat. Alex. t. 5, diss. 9; Baron. An. 68, n. 9; Orsi, t. 1, n. 64; Fleury, t. 1, L 2, n. 21; Berti, loc. cit.

[14999] N. Alex. t. 6, c. 3, ar. 2; Flemy,1. 3, n. 20; Berti, t. 1, c. 3; Bernin. t. 1, c. 2

15000 Van Ranst, His. p. 20.

15001 Fleury, t. 1,1. 3, n. 2627; Bernin. t. 1, c. 5; Graveson, t. 3, . 49; N. Alex. t. 6, c. 3, ar. 6.

15002 Fleury, t. 1, 1. 3, n. 30; Bernin. t. 1, c. 2; Van Ranst, p. 20.

15003 Fleury,1. 3, n. 30,1. 4, n. 9 & 10

15004 Van Ranst, p. 22.

15005 Fleury,1. 3, n. 20; Bern. t. 1, c. 2.

15006 Bern. loc. cit.

15007 N. Alex. t. 6, c. 3, ar. 12; Gotti, Ver. Eel. t. 2, c, 27, s. 1; Bernin. loc. cit.

15008 Orsi, t. 2,1. 4, n. 11; Fleury, t, 1,1. 4, n. 8; Baron. An. 174, n.3, 4; N. Alex. t. 6, c. 3, ar. 7.

15009 Fleury, loc. cit. n. 8; Orsi, loc, cit. n. 12.

15010 Fleury,1. 3, n. 30; Nat. Alex. t. 6, c. 3, ar. 4; Orsi, t. 2,1. 3, n. 44

15011 Orsi, t. 2, L 3, n. 45; N. Alex. t. 6, c. 3, ar. 5; Baron. Ann. 146, n. 9, &c.; Fleury, t. 1,1. 3, n. 34.

15012 Fleury, loc. cit. . 35

15013 Orsi, t. 2,1. 4, n. 17

15014 Euseb. Hist. Ecc1.1. 5, c. 15.

15015 Baron. An. 173, n. 20; N. Alex. t. 6, sec. 2, c. 3, ar. 8; Fleury, t. 1, 1. 4, n. 5; Bernin. t. 1, c. 8; Orsi, t. 2, L 4, n. 18.

15016 Nat. Alex. cit. ar. 8, n. 11; St. Angus. & St. Cyril. [St. Epiphanius says it is the Peputians.]

15017 Van Ranst, His. Heres. p. 24; Vedia anche Nat. Alex. loc. cit.

15018 Nat. Alex. t. 6, c. 3, ar. 9; Van Ranst, p. 24.

15019 N. Alex. loc. cit. ar. 10; Fleury, f. 1,1. 4, n. 33, 34

15020 Fleury, loc. cit. n. 21; N. Alex, loc. cit. ar. 15.

[15021] Nat. Alex. t. 7, s. 3, c. 3, ar. 1, ex Euseb.; Van Ranst, p. 65.

[15022] Nat, Alex, ibid, c. 3, ar. 7; Van Ranst, p. 48.

[15023] Nat. Alex. t. 7, c. 3, ar. 7; Orsi, t. 2,1. 5, n. 14; Hermant, 1. 1, c. 60; Fleury, I. 7, n. 35. ~

[15024] Orsi, t. 3,1. 8, n. 15; Gotti de Vera Rel. t. 2, c, 11, s. 2; N. Alex. t. 7, c. 3, ar. 8, sec. 2; Hermant, t. 1, c. 63; Fleury, t. 2,1. 8, n. 1.

[15025] Baron. Ann. 277, ex n. 1; Nat. Alex. t. 7, c. 3, ar. 9, sec. 1.

[15026] Nat. Alex ibid, vide sec. 2; Hermant, t. 1, c. 65; Fleury, t. 2, L 8, n. 1012; Baron. Ann. 277, . 1, & seq.; Graves, in sec. 3.

[15027] Veritā della Fede, part 3, c. 2, sec. 2.

[15028] Fleury, t. 1, L 4, n. 47.

[15029] Baron. Ann. 201, n. 3, & seq. ad. 11; Fleury, t. 1,1. 25 & 26; Orsi,t. 3,1. 8, n. 28.

[15030] Fleury, t. I, 1. 5, n. 25

[15031] Fleury, t. 1, I. 6, n. 3, cum St. Augus. & Nat. Alex. t. 6, c. 3, ar. 8, n. 9.

[15032] Nat. Alex. t. 1, ar. 12.

[15033] Fleury, I. 5, n. 2; Orsi,1. 5, n. 27.

[15034] Nat. Alex. t. 7, nr. 12.

[15035] Origen, Stromata,1. 10.

[15036] Orsi,1. 6, n. 61.

[15037] Nat. Alex, ibid; Orsi, n. 30.

[15038] Orsi, t. 3,1. 7, n. 33.

[15039] Euseb. His. Ecc1.1. 6.

[15040] Orsi. t. 3, I. 7, n. 33

[15041] Orsi, loc. cit.; Hermant, t. 1, c. 68; Bar. Ann. 204, n. 8; V. Ranst, p. 42; Graves, s. 3

15042 Bernin. Istor. t. 1, c. 1, p. 125.

15043 Rone. not. in Natal, loc. cit.

15044 Euseb.1. 6; Hist. Eccl. c. 59.

15045 Baron. Ann. 253, n. 117, & seq. cum Graves, loc. cit

15046 Petav. in Animadv. in St. Epiph. Heres. 64; Huetius,1. 1; Orig. c. 4; Pagius ad an. 251, n. 19; Nat. Alex. t. 7, diss. 15, q. 2, art, unic.

15047 Baron. Ann. 400, &c.

15048 Cabassut. Notit. Hist. Cone. Constan. II. an. 553, n. 14. in fin. .

15049 Hermant, t. 1, c, 132

15050 Orsi, t. 18,1. 41, n. 1 & 5, ad 7,(

15051 Orsi, al luogo cit. n. 70

15052 Baron. An. 254, n. 50. ; Nat. t. 7, c. 3, or. 3, 4; Fleury, t. 1, 1. 6, n. 51.

15053 Nat, loc. cit.; Baron, n. 61, &c.

15054 Nat. Alex, ibid; Van Ranst, p. 45, 46; Fleury, cit. n. 51; Hermant, t. 1, c. 48, 51.

15055 Nat. Alex. t. 7, c. 3, ar. 6, 9; Van Ranst, p. 47 & 64; Berti, t. 1, s. 3, c. 3.

15056 Baron. Ann. 303, n. 29, & Ann. 306, n. 74 & 75; vide Fleury, Nat. Alex. Orsi, Van Ranst, & Hermant.

15057 Hermant, c. 78, &c.

15058 Fleury, t. 2,1. 10, n. 26.

15059 St. Augus. 1. de Heres. c. 69.

15060 0rsi, t. 4, 1. 11, n. 61 & 52.

15061 Nat. Alex. t. 9, diss. 31.

15062 St. Opt. I. 2, de Donatis.

15063 Baron. An. .157, w. 15; V. Ranst; Floury, t. 2, 111, n. 46,; Hermant, c. 81.

15064 Orsi, t. 11, I. 25, n. 1, 24; Baron. Ann. 411, n. 24.

15065 Baron. An. 412, n. 1, &c.; Orsi, n. 28, 29.

15066 Hermant, c. 99.

15067 Baron. An. 591, &c.

15068 Baron. An. 319; Van Ranst, p. 70; Nat. Alex. t. 8, c. 3, ar. 3; Fleury, I. 10; Hermant, t. 1, c.85; Orsi,1. 12, n. 2.

15069 Nat. ibid, ar. 2; St. Athan. cum. Socrat. & Theodoret; Orsi,1. 12, n. 41; Fleury,1. 11, n. 15. ~

15070 Baron. An. 310, n. 4 & 5.

15071 N. Alex. t. 8, diss. 9.

15072 St. Epip. Her. 69, Theod. &c.

15073 Nat. Alex. ar. 3, sec. 2; Fleury, cit. n. 28; Baron. An. 315, n. 19 &20; Hermant c. 84.

15074 N. Alex. ar. 4, s. 1; Fleury. ibid; Hermant, c. 86; Orsi

15075 Theodoret,1. 1, c. 4.

15076 Socrat,1. 1, c. 6; Orsi, n. 9 Fleury, loc. cit.

15077 St. Athan. Apol. 15.

15078 Orsi,1. 12, n. 16; Fleury, 110, n. 37.

15079 Eussb. in Vit. Costant. c. 63.

15080 Baron. An. 518, n. 88; Fleury, n. 42; Van Ranst, p. 71.

15081 N. Alex. ar. 4, sec. 1; Fleury, 110, n. 43; Orsi, /. 12, n. 21; Hermant,1. 1, c. 86.

15082 Orsi,1. 12, n. 24.

15083 Fleury,1. 11, n. 1; Orsi,1. 12, n25

15084 Baron. Ann. 325; Nat. Alex., Fleury, Ruf. Soc. St. Athanasius,& Soz.

15085 Theodoret, 7. 1, c. 7; Fleury, & Orsi.

15086 Socrat.1. 1, c. 3; N. Alex. Orsi, Fleury.

15087 St. Athan. Apol. de Fuga.

15088 Orsi, n. 22, infra

15089 Fleury,1. 11, n. 10

15090 Ibid.

15091 Socrat.1. 2, c. 8.

15092 Fleury, al loc. cit. con St. Athan.

15093 N. Alex. ar. 4, sec. 2; Rufin.; Theodoret, His. Eccles.

15094 Fleury,1. 11, n. 10.

15095 Theod. 1. 1, c. 7.

15096 Euseb. in vita Const, c. 12.

15097 Cabass. Not. Concil. p. 88, ex St. Athan. Socrat., Rufin. & Theod.

15098 St. Athan. His. Arian. n, 42.

15099 Baron. Ann. 325, n. 173.

15100 Sozyraan,1. 1, c. 28. /. 12, n. 54.

15101 Socrat.1. 1, c. 8.

15102 Flemy, L 11, n. 24; Orsi, t. 5,

15103 Orsi, ibid.

15104 St. Hieron. Epist. ad Ctesiphont.

15105 Juenin, Theol. t. 3, ar, 4, sec. 1.

15106 Fleury, t. 2,1. 11, n. 24; Orsi, t. 5,1. 12, n. 42.

15107 N. Alex. ar. 4, sec. 2,

15108 St. Athan. de Synod, n. 5; Nat, Alex. ar 4 sec; 2

15109 Euseb. His.1. 3, c. 18, & Socrat

15110 Ibid.;

15111 N. Alex. ibid

15112 Orsi ibid; Soc.1. 1.

15113 Epiphan. Her. 59, & St. Hier. adv. Vigilan.

15114 N. Alex. t. 8; Diss. 20.

15115 Orsi, t, 5, I 12

15116 Ibid.

15117 Fleury,1. 11, n. 29

15118 Orsi, n. 80.

15119 Orsi, n. 84; Nat. Alex. a. 4, t. 4; Fleury, ibid, n. 11.

15120 Theodoret, I. 1, t. 22.

15121 Orsi, t. 5, 1. 12, n. 87, & 90.

15122 Ibid.

15123 Socrat.1. 1, c. 33; Sozom. Rufin, Nat. Alex. &Fleury. ~

15124 Orsi,1. 12, n. 92

15125 Ibid

15126 Socrat1.1. n.28

15127 Orsi, I. 12, n. 96

15128 Epiph. Her. 69

[15129] Orsi,1. 12, n. 97.

[15130] Ibid, n. 93.

[15131] Orsi,1. 12, n. 94, ex St. Athan. Apol. contra Ar. n. 65.

[15132] Nat. Alex. t. 8, c. 3; Hermant, t. 1, c. 92, &Fleury.

[15133] Orsi, cit.

[15134] Ibid.

[15135] Fleury, Orsi, Socr. Sozyman, St. Epiphan. loc. cit.

[15136] Baroniu, Soc. Sozymen, Libellus, Marcel. & Fausti, p. 19; St. Epiplian. Loc. Cit.

[15137] Socrates; Baron, An. 336; Auctores, cit.; Euseb. Vita Constant.; Schelestr. in Antiquit. &c.

[15138] Auctores, cit. ibid.

[15139] Fleury, N. Alex. & Bar. loc. con

[15140] Orsi,Fleury, St. Ath. Apol loc. cit.

[15141] Orsi, cit. St. Hilar. Fragm. 5. Severus, Sulpici. His.1. 2 & seq.

[15142] Sozyraen, I. 4; Soc. I 2; Fleury, Orsi, Ser. Sulp.1. 2.

[15143] Senates, Sozymen, St. Hilary, Fragm. 2; St. Athanasius, His. Arian; St. Augus. 1. con.; Parmen. Nat. Alex. Fleury, loc. cit.

[15144] Socrates, Orsi, Sozymen; Nat. Alex. St. Athan. His. Arian.

[15145] Auctores, citati; Nat. Alex. I. cit.

[15146] Nat. Alex.; Fleury, I. 13

[15147] Tournelly, Theol. t. 2; Blondell. de Primatu, p. 48; Petav. in observ. St. Epiphan.; Danaeus, Opus, de Her.; Baron. An. 357; Nat. Alex., Fleury, Graveson; Juenin, Theol. 40, 3 ques.; Bern in.; Hermant, t. 1; Orsi, I. 14; Gotti, de Vcr. Rel.; Selvaggi, not. 52, ad Mosh.

[15148] Nat. Alex. & cit.

[15149] Nat Alex disc. 32; Sozymen, loc. cit,; Theolog.1. 2, c. 2; Baron. An. 359; Orsi, t. 6.1. 14; Baron. An. 357, & seq; Sozymen, Bened. XIV., de Canon. S.S. t. 4. ~

[15150] N. Alex. t. 9; Hermant. t. 1, c. 102.

[15151] S. Hieron., Dialog., ad. Lucifer. Fleury t. 2. Orsi cit. S. Athan. de Synode. Sozymen,1. 2.

[15152] Thood.1. 2. c. 19; Soz.1. 4; Soc.1. 2,

[15153] St. Hilar. Fragmen. p. 453. Sulp. Ser.1. 2.

[15154] S. Hieron ad. Lucif. n. 17; Nat., Meury & Orsi, loc. con; N.

[15155] Baron. An. 359; St. Athan. de Synod; Fleury,1. 14, n. 33; St. Greg. Naz. Oral. 21; Soc.1. 2, c 47.

[15156] Fleury, t. 2,1. 14 & 15; Theod.1. 3; Philost. c. 2.

[15157] Orsi cit. Theod. Fleury, loc. cit,; St. Hieron,Ep. 60.

[15158] Sulpicius, 1. 5; Fleury & Orsi, cit.; Sandinus; Vit, Pon. t. 1.

[15159] Fleury, i bid; Theod.1. 4, c. 24; Soz. L 6, c. 14; Soc.1. 4, c. 15.

[15160] Anctor. cit.

[15161] St. Hieron. Chron.; St. Taulin. Ep. 29; Auetor. antea. cit.

[15162] Orsi, cit.; St. Pros, in Chron.

[15163] Fleury,1. 4; Baron. An. 437 & 456; Orsi, cit.

[15164] Orsi. t. 15. Fluery. t. 5.1. 30. N. Alex. t. 10.

[15165] Fleury, Orsi, Na1.1. con; Graveson, His. Eccles. t. 3, Procopius,1. 1, de Bellow. Vand.

[15166] Fleury, t. 5; Gregor. Jur. 9, t. 15; Danes, Gen. Temp. not. p. 237.

[15167] Bernin. t, 1; Coc.1. 1, c. 25; Daeneus and Theod

[15168] N. Alex. Bernin. t. 1, &c.

[15169] Cabassutius, Not. Concil. p. 136; Orsi, t. 81 18, n. 71, & seq.; Fleury, I 18, n. 1, & seq.; Nat. Alex. T. 1. diss 37 ar 2

[15170] Niceff 12, c. 2.

[15171] Bernini, t. 1, p. 316.

[15172] Nat. t. 8, ar. 3, ex St. Epiph. Her. 77; St. Leo, Ser. de Nat. Dom.; St Aug de her. c. 55; Socrat.1, 2, c. 36.

[15173] Nat. ibid

[15174] Nat. ibid

[15175] Fleury, t. 3,1. 17, n. 225; Orsi,. t: 7, I 16, n. 115.

[15176] Bernin. t. 2, s. 4, c. 8.

[15177] St. Greg. Niss. Serm. de St. Ephrem

[15178] N. Alex. t. S. c. 3, a. 1481.

[15179] St. Epip. Her. 77, n. 26 & 78.

[15180] St. Epip. Her. 79

[15181] Fleury, t. 3,1. 17, n. 26; Orsi, t. 7, 1. 7, n. 50.

[15182] Nat. Alex. t. 8, c. 3, art. 15; Fleury, t. 3,1. 19, n. 36.

[15183] St. Eph. Her. 88 n. 1

[15184] Supplem. t. 11, n . 30

[15185] St. Epiph n. 3

[15186] Theod. t. 4, c. 11.

[15187] Theod. Her . fab .1. 4 c .2 Nat. Alex. t. 8, c. 3, act 16; Fleury, t. 3.1. 19 n. 35

[15188] St. Aug. Her.1. 5, c. 7.

[15189] St. Epip. Her. n. 3.

[15190] Fleury, t. 3, I. 19, n. 25; Nat. Alex. t. 8, c. 3, ar. 16; Orsi, t. 8,1. 12, n. 78

[15191] Graveson, Hist. Eccl. t. 3, col. 2; Nat. Alex. t. 8, c. 4, ar. 5; Gotti. Ver. Eel. t. 2, c. 88, s. 2; Van Ranst, His. sec. xii, p. 195; Bernini, t. 2. c. 1.

[15192] Nat. Alex. t. 8, c. 3. ar. 17; Fleury, t. 3, L 17, n. 56, &1. 18, n. 30; Orsi, t. 8, I 18, n. 44, & 100.

[15193] St. Augus. f. deHer. c. 68.

[15194] Nat. Alex, ibid, ar. 20.

[15195] App. Koncag. Nota, ad N. Alex. t. 8, c. 3, ar. 9; Diz. Portat. t. 1, Ver. Audeo; Berti, t. 1, sec. 4, c.3.

[15196] Nat, Alex. loc. cit.

[15197] St. Hieron.1. 1, Comment, in cap. ii, Matt.

[15198] St. Ambrose, Ep. 41, n. 9.

[15199] Nat. Alex. t. 8, c. 3, ar. 19; Orsi, t. 9,1. 20, n. 27; Fleury, t. 3,1. 19.

[15200] Nat. Alex. t. 8, ar. 19.

[15201] Basnape, ad an. 5, ante Pom. n. 25.

[15202] Col. Con. t. 1, col. 1. 10, col. 1151.

[15203] Petav. Theol. Dog. 6,1. 14, c. 3

[15204] St. Leo, Epist.

[15205] Origen, Hom. 14, in Luc.

[15206] Patres. S. Maur. apud S. Hieron. t. 7, p. 285.

[15207] St. Basil, in can. 1; Isa. n. 201.

[15208] Canis.1. 4, c. 10, de Virg. Deip.

[15209] St. Fulgent.1. 1, devere Protest. n. 5

[15210] St. Greg. Nys.Orat. de Occursu.

[15211] St. Ambrose,1. 2, in Luc. n. 57.

15212 St. Jerome, I. 2, Dial, contra Pelag. n. 4.

15213 St. Hier. Epis. 61.

15214 St. Hier. Epis. 75.

15215 Idem. Epis. ad Ripar. 55.

15216 St. Hier.1. con. Vigilan. c. 2.

15217 Fleury, t. 3,1. 22, n. 5; Orsi, t. 10, 1. 25, n. 62; Nat. Alex. t. 10 c. 3, art 1; Diet. Portatif. 4, ver Vigilan

15218 St. Aug. de Gestis Pelagian, c. 22

15219 Gennad de Scriptur. c. 42.

15220 Orsi, t. 11, /. 25, n. 42; Fleury, t. 4,1. 23, Nos. 1 and 2.

15221 Orsi, ibid.

15222 Fleury, ibid. n. 1, ex Mereat. Comp. Theolog. t. 5, pt. 1, Disp. 1, a. 3.

15223 St. Aug. de Gertis Pelagian, c. 35 & 35.

15224 Nat. Alex. t. 10, c. 3. art., 3; St. Fluery,1. c, n. 48; Tournelly,

15225 St. August, Serm. 26. al. 11, de. Verb, apost.

15226 Idem, I. de. Spir. & littas.c . 2.

15227 Apud. St. Angus.1. de Gratia Christi. c. 2.

15228 St. Augus. de Gratia Christi. a. lib. arb. c. 13

15229 Idem lib.de Gratia, cap. 7 & 10.

15230 St. Augus. de Gratia Christi c. 26.

15231 Orsi, t. 11,1. 25, n. 44; Fleury,1. 3, n. 3

15232 St. Hier. Ep. 8, ad Demetr.

15233 Apud, St. Augus. Ep. 143.

[15234] St. Aug. ibid.

[15235] St. Hier. Ep. 8, ad Demetr.

[15236] Orsi, t. 25, n. Ill; Fleury,1. 23, n. 18, & seq

[15237] Baron. Ann. a. 415, n. 23,

[15238] Fleury, I. 23, n. 20.

[15239] St. Hier. Ep. 79.

[15240] St. Aug. de Her. c. 88.

[15241] St. Aug. de Grat. & lib. arb. c. 17

[15242] Orsi, I. 25, n. 117, ex St. Aug.1. de Gest. Pel. c. 33.

[15243] Nat. Alex. t. 10, c. 3, ar. 4, s. 4; Fleury, ibid, n. 20: Orsi, t 11,1. 25, n. 121

[15244] Nat. Alex, ibid, s. 5; Fleury,loc. cit.; Orsi, n. 122

[15245] St. Innoc. Ep. 181, n.8 &9, & Ep. 182, n. 6.

[15246] Fleury, t. 4,1. 23, n. 34; Orsi, t. 11, I. 25, n. 129.

[15247] St. Aug. Serm. 131, n. 10

[15248] St. Prosp. In Carm. de Ingratis.

[15249] Graveson, t. 3, col. 2.

15250 Garner, ap. Danes Temp. not. p. 240

15251 Act. 5 & 7, can. 1 & 4, ap. Danes ibid, p. 241, &vide Fleury,1. 25, n. 53.

15252 Hermant, t. 1, c. 124; Orsi,1.

15253 Diz. Tort. verb. Pelagio

15254 Hermant, t. 1, c. 124.

15255 Orsi, t. 12, L 17, n. 59.

15256 Nat. Alex. t. 10, c. 3, a. 7 & 8; Orsi, loc. cit. n. 60 & 61. ; Fleury, t. 4,1. 24, n. 56 & seq.

15257 Nat.1. cit. ar. 7, s. 4.

15258 Nat. A1.1. cit. ar. 10, in fin.

15259 Nat. Al. t. 10, c. 3, ar. 5.

15260 Sigisbert in Cron. an. 415.

15261 Nat. loco. cit.

15262 Orsi, t. 15,1;. 35, n. 83; Berti Hist. t. 1, s. 5, c. 4.

15263 Tour. t. 4, p. 1, D. 3, concl. 3

15264 Graves, Hist. t. 3, coll. 2, p. 19.

15265 Nat. Alex. t. 10, c. 3, . 2, p. 144, and Dis. Prop. p. 461 .

15266 Fleury, t. 7, 1. 41, n. 41 &49, &1. 50, n. 48; Van Ranst, s. 9, p. 153

15267 Tournelly, Theol. Comp. t. 5, 1, Disp. 4, ar. 3.

15268 Tourn. loc. cit

15269 Gotti. t. 2, Viet. adv. Her. c. 84, s. 2.

15270 Lupus Not. ad conc. 1 Rom.; Berti, The01.1. 6, c. 14, prop. 3, & Hist. s. 9, c. 4; Contens. The01.1. 8; De Praedest. app. 1, .s. 3; Ron caglia, Animad. ap. N. Alex. t. 13, 8; De Praedest. app. 1, .s. 3; Ron

[15271] Sirmund. Tract, de Praed. Har. Card, de Noris,1. 2; Hist. Pelag. c. 15; Mabillon, ad sec. IV. Bened. Tournelly, Theol. t. 5, loo. cit. p. 142; Gotti, loc. sopra cit. c. 84, s. diss. 5. 2; Nat. Alex. loc. cit. t. 13, diss. 5.

[15272] Nat. Alex. t. 10, c. 3, a. 12, s. 1; Baron. Ann. 428, n. 1, & seq.; Orsi, t. 12, 7. 28. ex n. 1, &Floury, t. 4,1. 24, n. 54.

[15273] Evagr. Hist.1, 1, c. 5.

[15274] Orsi, t. 12, I 28, n. 1.

[15275] Fleury, t. 4, L 24, n. 54; Nat. . loc. cit

[15276] Apud. Nat. Alex. t. 10, c. 3, art. 12

[15277] Orsi, loc. cit. n. 8; Serm. 1, ap. More.

[15278] Orsi,1. 28, n. 9.

[15279] Orsi, n. 10; Fleury, t. 4,1. 25, n.6

[15280] St. Cyril, Ep. Ad Mon. n. 3, apud.; Fleury, t. 4, t. 25, n. 3; Orsi,1. 28, n. 14.

[15281] Epis. ad Nestor, c. 6, ap.; Fleury, ibid.

[15282] Fleury, ibid.

[15283] St. Cyril, Ep. ad Nest. c. 10, ap.; Fleury, I.25

[15284] St. Cyril, ad. Acac. c. 22

[15285] Libell. Basil, c. 30, n. 2.

[15286] Nat. Alex. t. 10, c. 3, a. 12, s. 2; Fleury,1. 25, n. 3; Orsi, t. 12, 1, 28, n. 37, and seq.

[15287] Con. Ephes.p. 1, c. 3, n. 6

[15288] Conc. Ephes. p. I, c. 14.

[15289] Baron. An. 430, n. 7.

[15290] Fleury, t. 4,1. 25, n. 10, & seq; Nat. Alex. cit. ar. 12 & 3

[15291] Conc. Ephes. p. 1, c. 26

15292 Apud, Bernini, t. 1, sec. 5, c. 4, p. 452, & Orsi, t. 12,1. 28, n. 48

15293 Orsi, t. 13,1. 29, n. 1, ar. 2.

15294 Celest. Ep. 161.

15295 Orsi, loc. cit. n. 1, in fin.

15296 Celest Epis. 17, apud; Orsi, ibid. n. 2.

15297 Graveson, t. 3, sec. 5, col 4.

15298 Orsi,1. 29, n. 12.

15299 Orsi, loc. cit. n. 12.

15300 In actis Con. Ephes. ap. Bernin. sec. 4, c. 4, p. 458.

15301 Orsi, t. 13,1. 29, n. 18.

15302 Orsi, n. 21; Fleury, t. 4, 1. 25, n. 42.

15303 Epis. Cyr.1. 3, Conc.

15304 Floury and Orsi, loc. cit.

15305 Apud, Bcrnin. sec. 5, c. 4,; Nat, Alex. t. 10, c. 3, err. 12, s. 6.

15306 Orsi, 1. 29, n. 23, and seq.

15307 Orsi, n. 25.

15308 Cabassu. not. Con. sec. 5, n. 17, and Orsi, n. 33.

15309 Orsi,1. cit. n. 49

15310 Orsi, t. 13,1. 30, n. 28.

15311 Orsi, n. 42.

15312 Orsi,1. 29, n. 42, & seq.

15313 Orsi, loc. cit.

15314 Orsi,1. 29, n. 52.

15315 Baron. Ann. 431, n. 98 & 99.

15316 Orsi, n. 58

15317 Baron, n. 101; Orsi, n. 61.

15318 Baron. Ann. 451, n. 104.

15319 Baron, n. 105 & 107. (

15320 Baron. Ann. 451, n. 108; Cabass. sec. v, 17; Fleury, t. 4,1. 26, n. 6.

15321 Orsi, t. 13,1.30, n. 28.

15322 Baron. Ann. 431, n. 113.

15323 Baron, n. 126 & 127.

15324 Baron, n. 159.

15325 Fleury, t. 4, L 26, n. 34

15326 Baron. Ann. 520, n, 67; Cabass. sec. 5, n. 18; Orsi, t.18, 1. 30, n. 74; Nat. t. 10, c. 3, ar. 12, n. 18, s. 10, Hermant, t.1. c. 148.

15327 Baron, n. 177 & 181.

15328 Dan. temp. not. p. 241.

15329 Liberat. Brev. c. 10.

15330 Coll. Sup. c. 199.

15331 Fleury, t. 4, 1. 26, n. 36

15332 Hermant. t. 1, c. 202.

15333 Berti, t. 1, sec. vi. c. 2.

15334 Fleury, t. 6.1. 44, n. 50.

15335 N. Alex, t . 12, s. 8, c. 2, a. 3, f. 2

15336 Graves, f. 3; Colloq.3, p. 55.

15337 Nat. Alex. loc. cit. c. 2, a. 3, f. 1 .

15338 Basnage, ad. an. 444, n. 13

15339 Basnage, I. cit. ad an. 430.

15340 Habetur, in Sess. 4; Con. Col.

15341 Sess. 4; Cone. Col. 1021.

15342 Tom. 4; Con. Col. 1023

15343 Tom. 5; Con. Col. 1004.

15344 Selvag. in Mosheim, Part II. n. 82. p. 729.

15345 Nat. Alex.1. 10, c. 3, ar. 13, s. 1;.Baron. An. 448, ex. n. 19; Hermant, t. 1, c. 155; Fleury, t. 4,1. 27, n. 23

15346 Liberat. Brev. c. 11.

15347 St. Leo, Ep. 19, I. 6.

15348 Fleury, t. 4, I. 27, n. 23

15349 Snip.1. 25, n. 2, ap. Fleury, cit. n. 23

15350 Orsi, ibid. n. 16; Fleury, cit. n. 23; Nat. Alex. t. 10, or. 13, s. 2.

15351 Orsi, t. 14, Z. 32, n. 9

15352 Orsi, ibid. n. 16; Fleury,1. c.

15353 Orsi, loc. cit. n. 17; Fleury, A 27, n. 24.

15354 Orsi, n. 18.

15355 Fleury, 7. 27, n. 28; Orsi, t. 14, t I 32, n. 23; Baron. An. 448, n. 48; Hermant. t. 1, c. 155.

15356 Fleury, t. 4,1. 27, n. 28; Orsi, t. 14, I. 52, n. 23.

15357 Nat. Alex. t. 10, c. 3, art. 13, sec. 4

[15358] St. Leo, Epis. 20, al. 8.

[15359] Orsi, cit. n. 33.

[15360] Bernin. t. 1, sec. 5, c. 6, p. 510;. Petr. Anat. Ap. par ad Theol. I. 4, de Script. Eccl. art. 30.

[15361] St. Leo, Epis. 20, ap. Orsi, ibid, n. 24, 25; ileury, n. 31, 32

[15362] Liberat. Brevia. c. 11.

[15363] Fleury, t. 4,1. 97, n. 31; Nat. Alex. c. 3, art. 13, sec. 6, 7.

[15364] Hermant, t. 1, c. 156.

[15365] Baron. Ann. 444, n. 33, ex Lib.

[15366] Hermant, loc. cit.

[15367] Liberat. Brevia. c. 12.

[15368] Orsi, n. 41.

[15369] Orsi, n. 52.

[15370] Orsi, n. 53.

[15371] Orsi, n. 14,1. 32, n. 54.

[15372] Orsi, n. 55.

[15373] Orsi, n 56; Baron. Ann. 448, it. 91, ad 93.

[15374] Fleury, t. 4, Z, 26, n. 36, in fine.

[15375] Cassian.1. 1, de Incar. contra Nestor, c. 2 & 3.

[15376] Fleury, L 27, n. 41.

[15377] Orsi,1. 33, n. 58; Baron. Ann. 449, n. 92

[15378] Orsi, n. 59 & 60.

[15379] Orsi. t, 14, 1. 32, n. 62; Fleury, t. 4, 1. 27, n. 41; Hermant. t. 1, c. 157.

15380 Orsi,1. 14, I. 33, n. 62, vide; Fleury, f.4,1. 67, n. 41, t. 1; Ber. p. 552.

15381 Orsi, n. 68.

15382 Orsi, t. 12,1. 28, n. 49.

15383 Nat. Alex. t. 10, c. 4, n. 28; Orsi, loc. cit. n. 50

15384 Orsi,1. 28, n. 62.

15385 St. Cyril, Apol. cap.

15386 Orsi, t. 13,1. 30, n. 66 & seq

15387 Orsi, t. 13,1. 30, n. 12.

15388 Orsi, n. 13.

15389 Orsi, t. 13,1. 30, n. 67.

15390 Orsi, t. 14, 1. 32, n. 10 & 11

15391 Orsi, t14,1.32, n.68,&seq. ad. 85,

15392 Orsi, t. 14,1. 33, n. 3.

15393 Orsi, ibid. n. 20.

15394 Orsi, ibid. n. 70.

15395 Orsi, ibid. n. 20.

15396 Orsi, t. 14,1. 13, n. 61.

15397 Hermant. t. 1, c. 157; Fleury, t. 4,1. 27, n. 41.

15398 Orsi, t. 14, I 32, n. 97.

15399 Libel. Theo. set. Con. Chal. v;. Fleury,1. cit.

15400 Hermant. t. 1, c. 157.

15401 Orsi,1. 32, n. 90.

15402 Orsi, loc. cit. n. 101

15403 Hermant. t. I, c. 158.

15404 Fleury, t. 4,1. 27, n. 48, in fin

15405 Orsi, t. 14,1. 35, n. 28 & 29.

15406 St. Leo, Epis. 52

15407 Lib. Brev. c. 13, & Mar. in Chron

15408 Vide. Nat. Alex. t. 10, c.4, a. 13, s. 17

15409 Acta, Con. Chal.

15410 Orsi,1. 23, n. 45, 47 & 70.

15411 Orsi, ibid,1. 49. 17; Orsi, ibid, . 50 & 55.

15412 Nat. Alex. t. 10, c. 3, ar. 13, s.

15413 Orsi, t. 14,1.33, n. 59, 60.

15414 Orsi, t, 14, 1. 33, n. 62. Orsi, loc. cit. n. 61.

15415 Fleury t. 4,1. 28, n. 21;

15416 Orsi, t. 14, I. 33, . 66.

15417 Orsi, t. 14,1. 33, n. 78 & 79.

15418 Orsi,1. cit. n. 84.

15419 Orsi,1. cit. n. 82 & 63.

15420 Fleury, t. 14,1. 28, n. 33; Orsi, n. 86.

15421 Orsi, t. 14,1. 33, n. 4; Fleury, ibid.1. 28, n. 55.

15422 Berni. t. 1, c. 6, p. 534.

15423 Orsi, t. 14,1. 33, n. 55, in fin. 133.

15424 Evag. 1. 2, c. 5

15425 Ap. Orsi, t. 14, L 35, n. 91.

15426 Evag.1. 1, c. 31.

15427 Orsi,1. cit. n. 90.

15428 Orsi, t. 14, /. 33, n. 94.

15429 Orsi, n. 111.

15430 Orsi, cit. loc. 33, n. 131.

15431 Orsi, t. 15,1. 34, n. 12 & 13.

15432 Orsi, t. 15, 1. 34, n. 12 & 13.

15433 Orsi, t, U, I 33, n. 105.

15434 Orsi, t. 15, 1. 34, n. 15; Fleury, t. 4,1. 29, n. 2.

15435 Orsi, n. 16, &c.; Baron. An. 457, n. 28.

15436 Orsi, t. 15,1. 33, n. 17, &Fleury, t. 4, 129, n. 2.

15437 Orsi, t. 15,1. 34, n. 18 & 19

15438 Orsi, loc. cit, n. 48.

15439 St. Leo, Epis.137, al. 99.

15440 Fleury, t. 4,1. 29, n. 13; Orsi, n. 61 & 62.

15441 Fleury, t. 4, 1. 29, n. 45.

15442 Orsi, t. 15,1. 35, n. 66 & 68

15443 Liberat. Breviar. c. 16.

15444 Fleury,1. 29, n. 49; cum Gonnad de Scrip. Ecclesias. n. 80

15445 Mosheim, Hist. Ecclesias. cen. v. p. 2, c. 5, n. 12; M Lain, ibid

15446 Orsi, t. 12,1. 27, n. 14.

15447 Evagrius,1. 1, c. 33.

15448 Theod. Philoch c. 26.

15449 Fleury, t. 4,1. 29, n. 1.

15450 Mazzocelii, t. 3, in Com. in Cal.; Neap. p;. 585.

15451 Orsi, t. 12,1. 17, n. 14, infra ex Thcod. exc.1. 2.

15452 Evagrius,1. 2, c, 20

15453 Orsi, t. 15,1. 34 & 57.

15454 Orsi, cit., n. 57.

15455 Orsi, t. 15,1. 35, n. 62,

15456 Orsi, t. 15,1. 35, n. 66, 68.

15457 Fleury,1. 29, n. 49, ex Gennad. de Scrip. Eccles. n. 80.

15458 Fleury, ad cit. n. 49.

15459 Evagr.1. 3, c. 14.

15460 Fleury, t. 4,1. 20, n 53.

15461 Nat. Alex. t. 10, c. 3, a. 15, s. 4

15462 Baron. Ann. 428.

15463 Nat. Alex. loc. cit.

15464 Fleury, t. 4,1. 29, n. 54.

15465 Nat. Alex. t. 10, c. 3, art. 14, s. 5; Fleury, t. 5,1. 30, n. 21.

15466 Fleury, t. 4, L 29, n. 30; Orsi, t. 15,1. 35, n, 18; Nat. Alex. t. 10, c. 3, art. 17

15467 Liberat. Breviar. His. Eutych.

15468 Orsi, loc. cit.

15469 Orsi, ibid, n. 64 & 69.

15470 Orsi, vide ibid; Fleury, loc. cit. n. 49, in fin. ex Evagr.1. 3, c. 10

15471 Fleury, ibid, n. 50.

15472 Fleury, t. 5,1. 30, n. 17; Nat. Alex. loc. cit.

15473 Orsi, t. 15,1. 35, n. 27.

15474 Orsi, t. 16, /. 36, n. 27, 28.

15475 Orsi, t. 16, J. 36, n. 67.

15476 Orsi, n. 68.

15477 Evagr.1. 3, c. 32; Orsi, t. 16,1. 35, n 37, con Theodoret.

15478 Orsi, loc. cit. n. 70.

15479 Orsi, n. 112.

15480 Orsi, t. 19,1. 37, n. 21.

15481 Orsi, t. 17,1. 38, n. 34; Fleury, t. 5,1. 31, w. 33.

15482 Orsi, L 19,1. 42, n. 89

15483 Orsi, t. 19,1. 39, n. 37, in fin.

15484 Orsi, t, 19,1. 43, n. 67.

15485 Orsi, loc. cit. n. 68. ~

15486 Orsi, t. 16,1. 37, n. 62, cum Evagr.1. 3, n. 33

15487 Orsi, n. 63.

15488 Orsi, n. 71

15489 Orsi, n. 72

[15490] Fleury, t. 5,1. 33, n. 2; Nat. Alex, t.11, c. 3, a, 3; Gotti, loc. cit.

[15491] St. Greg.1. 10, Ep. 39, a. 42,

[15492] Fleury & Nat. Alex.1. cit.Berti, Brev. His. t. 1, s. 6, c. 3

[15493] Niceph.1. 18, c. 47, 48

[15494] Gotti,1. cit. c. 76, s. 6, n. 7.

[15495] St. Thomas, p. 2, q. 15, a. 4.

[15496] Gotti1. cit. ex Liberal, m Brev. c. 20

[15497] Gotti ibid. n. 78.

[15498] Fleury, t. 5, I. 34, n. 8, cum Evagr.1. 4, n. 30; Orsi, t. 19,1. 42,

[15499] Fleury,1. cit.

15500 Evagr, I. 4, n. 33. c. 31

15501 Fleury, I. c. n. 11.

15502 Baron. Ann. 565, n. 1

15503 Evagr. I. 4, c. 40; Nicph.1. 16

15504 Orsi, t. 19,1. 42, n. 84.

15505 *Baron*, loc. cit. n. *3*.

15506 Acemetic, or sleepless monks, were a celebrated order in the East. They were called the sleepless, because night and day they kept up Divine psalmody without intermission; the community was divided into three sections, and each spent eight hours out of the twenty-four singing the praises of God. TRANS.

15507 Orsi, t. 17,1. 39, n. 123.

15508 Orsi, loc. cit.

15509 Fleury, t. 5,1. 32, n. 35; Orsi, ibid, n. 24.

15510 Fleury, t. 5, 1. 32, n. 39; Gotti. t. 2, loc. cit. c, 77.1. t. 3; Orsi, loc. cit. n. 128.

15511 Eoncaglia, Not. apud.; Nat. Alex. t. 11, c. 3, ar. 2.

15512 Danes.; Nat. Temp. p. 255

15513 De Norris; Diss. Histor. de Syn. V.c.d.

15514 Orsi, t. 7,1. 39, it. 84.

15515 Tournelly, Theol. Comp. t. 3; append, a. 2, de Con. Constan. 2, p. 998.

15516 Mosheim, Hist. Eccles. Centur. 6, par. 2, c. 3, p. 839

15517 Mos. loc. cit.

15518 Juenin, Theol. t. I, ar. 5, s. 2, ver. Quinto

15519 Ver. del. Fede, part 3, c. 4, nota a.

15520 Fleury, t. 7,1. 38, n. 1

15521 Nat. Alex. t. 12, c. 12, a. 2.

15522 Fleury, loco cit.

15523 Fleury, t. 6,1. 38, n. 4, 5.

15524 Baron. Ann. 163, n. 4; Nat. Alex. t. 12, c. 2, a. 1, sec. 2.

15525 Fleury, t. 6, I 37, n. 41.

15526 Meury, al luogo cit.

15527 Fleury, loc. cit.; Van Ranst, sec. 6, p. 125; Herm. Hist. 1. 1, c. 235.

15528 Epist. Cyri, p. 952, ap. Fleury, loc. cit. n. 42.

15529 Fleury, cit. n. 42.

15530 Fleury, t. 6,1. 37, n. 43, 44.

15531 Fleury, loc. cit.1. 28, n. 25.

15532 Nat. Alex. t. 12, dis. 2, p. 3.

15533 Anasta. Praef. ad Joan. Diacon

15534 Graveson, Hist. Ecclesi. t. 2, p. 48, c. 3.

15535 Cave Hist. St. Leo, Monoth.

15536 Nat. Alex. t. 11, Hist. Ecclesias. Diss. II. Prop. 3.

15537 Nat. Alex. t. 12, c. 2, . 2, n. 4; Fleury, t. 6,1. 38, n. 21.

15538 Fleury, loc. cit. n. 22.

15539 Nat. Alex.loc. cit. n. 6; Fleury, loc. cit. n. 45.

15540 Fleury, t. 6,1. 38, n. 24, in fine.

15541 Anast. in Thed. Con. Lat. s. 2, p. 116

15542 Fleury, loc. cit,

15543 Fleury, t. 6, 1. 38, n. 36 & 40

15544 Danaeus. Temp. Natio. p. 158,

15545 Fleury. t. 6,1. 39, n. 42.

15546 Gotti, Vic. adver. Her. c. 68, f. 4, n. 41.

15547 Nat. Alexander, t. 12, c. 5, or. 3.

15548 Nat. Alexander, t. 12, c. 2, a. 1, s. 4; Herm. c. 240; Fleury, t. 6,1. 4, n. 11; Berti. t. 1, sec. 7, c. a.

15549 Tournely. Theol. Com. t. 3, in appen. p. 304.

15550 Graveson, Hist. Ecclesias. t. 3, p. 60; Collog. 4

15551 Baron, ap. Grav

15552 Grav. loc. cit. p. 27

15553 Danams Temp. Not. p. 259.

15554 Hermant. t. 5, c. 242,

15555 Nat. Alexander, t. 12, or. 1, s.4.

15556 Nat. Alexander, t. VI, c 2, ar. 12, s. 2, in fine

15557 Nat. Alexander, loc. cit. a. 3.

15558 Nat. Alex. t. 12, sec. 8, c. 2, a. 1; Hermant, t. 1, p. 283; Fleury, t. 6,1. 42, n. 1; Baron. Ann. 723, n. 17, & vide Ann. 726, n. 3

15559 Nat. Alex. loc. cit. ,Fleury, loc. cit.

15560 Fleury, t. 6, 7. 42, n. 3.

15561 Fleury, loc. Git, n. 4, ex Theophil.

15562 Fleury, t. 6,1. 42, n. 4.

15563 Theoph. Ann. 10, p. 340, ap. Fleury, loc. cit.; Baron. Ann. 754, n. 42

15564 Fleury, loc. cit,

15565 Fleury, t. 6, I. 42, n. 5.

15566 Baron. An. 754, n. 37; Fleury, loc. cit. n. 5, con. Anas, in Greg. II. and Theopeil. 15. ;p. 543, &c.

15567 Fleury, loc. cit. w. 6.

15568 Fleury, t. 6,1. 42, n. 6

15569 Theoph. or. 13, p. 343, apud; Fleur. loc. cit. n. 7.

15570 Fleury, t. 6,1. 42, n. 1 & 8.

15571 Fleury, loc. cit. n. 9.

15572 Anast. in Greg. III., n. 8 & 9 apud; Fleury,1. 42, n. 16

15573 Fleury, t. 6,1. 42, n. 16 & 17.

15574 Hermant, t. 1, c. 187; Gotti. t. 2, c. 80, s. 1, n. 15, 16, 17

15575 Natal, t. 12, c. 2, . 1, s. 1.

15576 Hermant,1. 1, c. 289; Baron. 763, n. 19.

15577 Fleury, t. 6,1. 43, n. 32.

15578 Fleury, loc. cit. n. 46.

15579 Fleury, t. 6,1. 43, n. 36,

15580 Fleury, n. 8.

15581 Nat. Alex. t. 12, c. 2, art. 1, s. 2; Fleury, t. 6,1. 44, n. 7.

15582 Hermant, t. 1, c. 299, 300

15583 Fleury,1. 44, n. 16.

15584 Van Ranst, sec. 8, p. 147.

15585 Hermant, t. 1, c. 304, 305.

15586 Fleury, t. 6,1. 44, n. 25.

15587 Fleury, t. 6,1. 44, 28.

15588 Fleury, n. 39; Nat. Alex. t. 11, c. 3, d. 3; Graves, t. 3, col. 4.

15589 Fleury, t. 6, 7. 44, n. 29.

15590 Gotti, Ver. Rel. t. 2, c. 80, s. 4.

15591 Graves. Hist. Eccl. t. 3, col. 4.

15592 Selvag. nota, 65, ad 1. 10, Mosh. p. 1063,

15593 Hermant, t. 1, c. 344

15594 Van Ranst, p. 162.

15595 Fleury, t. 7, 1. 50, n. 2.

15596 Fleury, loc. cit. n. 3.

15597 Nat. Alex. t. 13, Dis. 4, s. 2.

15598 Nat. Alex. loc. cat. s. 2; Fleury, t. 7,1. 50, n. 3; Baron. An. 858, n. 25

15599 Bar. An. 859, n. 54; Fleury, loc. cit. n. 3 & 4; Nat. Alex. loc. cit.

15600 Fleury, loc. cit. n. 4. cum Anas, in Nic. 4

15601 Nat. Alex. t. 13; Diss. 4. s. 3, ex. Epis. 6; Nichol.

15602 Nichol. Ep. 9.

15603 Nat. Alex. loc. cit. s. 4.

15604 Baron. Ann. 801, n. 1; Nat. Alex. cit. s. 4, and Bernin. s. 9, c. 9. ex. Niceta in Vit. St. Ig. Nat.

15605 Nat. Alex. loc. cit. s. 4; Fleury, t. 7, c. 53, n. 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, & . Nat. Alex, t . 14; Diss. 14, s. 6.

15606 Nichol. Epis. 13.

15607 Fleury, loo. cit. n. 15, 18, 19, & Nat. Alex, t, 13, diss. 14, s. 6.

15608 Baron. Ann. G63, . 3; Fleury, t.7,1. 50, n. 19, 26.

15609 Nichol. Epis. 8.

15610 Fleury, loc. cit. n. 41; Nat. Alex. cit. s. 6

15611 Fleury, n. 42. Fleury, n. 52, 53.

15612 Fleury, loc. cit, n. 41.

15613 Nat. Alex. t. 13, diss. 4, s. 7

15614 Baron. Ann. 663, n. 13; Nat. Alex. cit. s. 7

15615 Fleury, t. 7, I 52, n. 55, 56.

15616 Baron. Ann. 869, n. 49

15617 Nat. Alex. loc. cit. & Grav. t. 3, s. 9, coll. . 4

15618 Baron. Ann. 367, n. 92; Nicetas in Vita, St. Ignatii, p. 1226

15619 Fleury, t. 7, 1. 51, n, 1, 2.

15620 Nat. Alex. loc. cit, s. 9, &Fleury, loc. cit.

15621 Fleury, loc. cit. n. 18. n. 19.

15622 Baron. Ann. 868, n. 38; Nat. Alex. loc. cit. s. 9, &Fleury, cit.

15623 Nat. Alex. s. 11,& Graveson, t. 3, coll. 3, p. 153.

15624 Nat. Alex. t. 13; Diss. 4, s. 12.

15625 Baron. Ann. 869, n. 28.

15626 Baron. Ann. 869, n. 37, &Fleury, t. 7,1. 51, n. 29, & seq.

15627 N. Alex. sec. 22, &Fleury,1. 51, n. 55.

15628 N. Alex. loc. cit.

15629 Nicep. ap. Fleury, loc. cit. 46

15630 Hermant, t. 1, c. 374.

15631 Fleury, t. 7,1. 31, n. 44, 49.

15632 Fleury, loc. cit. n. 41.

15633 Nat. Alex. t. 7, diss. 4, sec. 25; Fleury, t. 8,1. 53, re. 1, ex Nicet.

15634 Nat. Alex. sec. 25; Baron. Ann, 878, n. 53; Fleury, t. 8, 1. 53, w. 1, & seq.; Van Ranst, p. 154.

15635 Fleury, cit.1. 53, n. 52.

15636 Nat. Alex. loc. cit. sec. 25.

15637 Fleury, loc. cit. n. 3, 4; N. Alex. cod. sec. 25.

15638 Baron. Ann. 879, t. 10; N. Alex. t. 13, diss. 4, sec. 26; Fleury, t. 8,1. 53, n. 7.

15639 De Marc, de Concordia, Sac. & Imp.1. 3, c. 14.

15640 Nat. Alex., loc. cit. sec. 28.

15641 Gotti, Ver. Belig. t. 2, c. 85, sec. 1

15642 Fleury, t. 53, n. 51.

15643 Apud. Gotti, loc. cit.

15644 Nat. Alex. s. 29

15645 Danaeus tem. net. p. 271

15646 Chris. Lupus, p. 3, Conc. Diss. de Act. St. Leo VII.

15647 Bernin. t. 3, sec. xi, c. 6; Van Ranst, sec. 10, p. 171; Bask. t. 2, sec. 11, c. 3.

15648 Nat. Alex. t. 17, diss. 7, de Con. Lug. 11, o. 1. ; Graveson, t. 4, coll. 4, p. 116.

15649 Nat. Alex. cit. a. 2, n. 1.

15650 Nat. Alex. cit. n. 2.

15651 Kaynal. Ann. 1274, n. 14.

15652 Nat. Alex. loc. cit. a. 2, n. 6, ex Nicephor.1. 5, & aliis

15653 Nat. Alex. t. 17, digs. 7, a. 2, per totum.

15654 Spondan. ad. Ann. 1438, n. 28.

15655 Incit. Sogg. 25, n. 1, & 27

15656 S. Bernard, t. 1, q. 1033; Serm. 3, om. SS. n 1.

15657 Card. Justin, in Concil. Floren. par. 3, p. 263, & ap. Bernin. t . 4, s. 5, 6, p. 134

15658 Kainal. Ann. 1442, n. 1 &2.

15659 Hermant, t. 2, c. 201; Berti . H. t. 2, s. 16, c. 5.

15660 Danes, gen. tem. not. p. 275.

15661 Graveson, His. Ecclesias. t. 3, sec. 10, coll 2.

15662 Fleury, t. 8, I. 58, n. 53 & 55; Graves, t. 3, sec. 11, coll 3; Gotti, Ver. Relig. t. 2, c. 86, sec. 1; Berti, sec. 11, c. 3; Van Ranst, sec. 11, p. 173, & seq

15663 Van Banst, sec. 11, p. 167; Berti, Brev. His. sec. 11, c. 3

15664 Quidmond, f. 1, de Corp. xti. ver. in Euch.

15665 Nat. Alex. t. 14, sec. 11, c. 4, art. 2; Graves, t. 3, sec. 11, coll. 3

15666 Nat. Alex. t. 14, diss. 1, art. 4

15667 Gotti, Ver. Rel. t. 2, c. 87, sec. 1 . & 2; Fleury, t. 8,1. 59, n. 65; Graves, loc. cit.

15668 Fleury, t. 9,1. 62, n. 60; N. Alex. loc. cit. art. 17; Gotti,loc. cit. s. 3

15669 Mabillon, pref. 2, sec. 6, n. 31

15670 Fleury, t. 9, /. 63, n. 40.

15671 Villel. Malmesb. de rebus, Ang1.1. 3.

15672 Bibli. Cum. p. 1120.

15673 Graves. Hist. t. 3, sec. 12, coll. 2.

15674 Nat. Alex. t. 14, sec. 12, c. 4, art. 4; Gotti, Ver. Rel. t. 2, c. 89, s. 1.

15675 Gotti, loc. cit. n. 10,1. 69, n. 24; N. Alex. loc. cit.; Graves, loc. cit

15676 Gotti, c. 79, sec. 2

15677 Nat. Alex. cit. art. 7; Fleury, cit. n. 24.

15678 Fleury, n. 25.

15679 Nat, Alex. loc. cit.

15680 Fleury, t. 10, I. 67, n. 22.

15681 Fleury, loc. cit. n. 21; Nat. Alex. t. 15, diss. 1, a. 7.

15682 Fleury, t. 10,1. 68, n. 61, 62; Nat. Alex. c. 1.

15683 Fleury, loc. cit. n. 67; Nat. Alex. art. Sin fine.

15684 Nat. Alex. loc. cit. art. 12, &Fleury, loc. cit

15685 Fleury, n. 61, Alex. art. 5, ex: Ep. St. Bernar.

15686 Graveson, t. 3, sec. 12, coll. 3.

15687 Gotti. Ver. Rel. t. 2, c. 90, s. 3, um Baron. Ann. 1140, n. 11, & seq. loc. cit.

15688 Nat. Alex. t. 14, s. 12, c. 3, art. 8.

15689 Fleury, t. 10, 168, . 55; Gotti, loc. cit. s. 1; Nat. Alex,

15690 Nat. Alex. loc. cit.; Fleury, t. 10,1. 69, n. 10; Gotti, loc. cit.

15691 Van Ranst His. p. 148; Fleury, t. 10,1. 70, n. I; Nat. Alex. &Gotti, loc. cit.

15692 Nat. Alex. t. 14, s. 12, c. 4, a. 9; Graveson His. Eccles. t 3, sec. 12, coll. 3; Fleury, t. 10, I 69, n. 23

15693 Nat. Alex. t. 14, s. 12, c. 4, ar. 12.

15694 Nat. loc. cit. ar. 6.

[15695] Graves, t.3, s. 12, Coll. 3; Fleury, f. 11,1. 77, n. 46; Berti, s. 12, c. 3; Van. Ranst. p. 214.

[15696] N. Alex. loc. cit. or. 11.

[15697] Floury,1. 11,1. 73, n. 55; Nat. Alex. t. 14, c. 4, art. 13; Gotti, t. 2, c 93, s. 1

[15698] Graves, t. 3, . 12, Coll. 3.

[15699] Rainer, Opuse de Hoeret.

[15700] Graves, loc. cit. & Nat. Alex. loc. cit.

[15701] Nat. Alex. loc. cit. ar. 13, s. 2, & seq.

[15702] Nat. Alex. loc. cit. s. 7.

[15703] Nat. Alex.1. 16, c. 3, ar. 1.

[15704] Graves, t. 3, s. 12, Coll. 3

[15705] Caesar Heisterb. Dial. Mirac. Diss. 5, c. 2.

[15706] Spondan. Epit. Baron, ad. Ann. 1181.

[15707] Nat. Alex. loc. cit. s. 2

[15708] Lucas Tuden,1. 3, Adv. Al big.

[15709] Caesar,1. 5, de Demon.

[15710] Gotti, Ver. Eel. t. 2, c. 94, . 3,

[15711] Fleury, t. 11,1. 76, n. 36; Gotti, loc. cit.; Nat. Alex. loc. cit. loc. cit

[15712] Parisius, Hist. Anglic, an. 1223.

[15713] Fleury, t. 11,1. 78, n. 60; Gotti, Nat. Alex. loc. cit. s. 2.

[15714] Pat, Vallis. Ser. His. Albig. c.7,

[15715] Nat. Alex. t. 16, c. 3; Gotti, Ver Rel. t. 2, c. 94, cap. 3

[15716] Gotti, loc. cit.

[15717] Nat. Alex. loc. cit. s. 4; Gotti, loc. cit s. 4; Bernin. t. 3; sec. 13, c. 1; Graveson, t. 4, sec. 33 : Coll. 3.

[15718] Rainald Ann 1213, n 60.

[15719] Fleury, L 11,1. 78, n. 18; Nat. &Gotti, loc. cit.

[15720] Pet. Vallises. His. Al big. c. 86.

[15721] Grav. loc. cit.

[15722] Nat. Alex. loc. cit. sec. 4, &Gotti, loc. cit.

[15723] Nat. Alex.1. 16, c. 3, s. 5; Gotti, t. 2, c. 94.

[15724] Fleury, t 11, A 67, n. 59; Nat. Alex. c. 16,1. 3, a. 2; Graveson, t. 4, sec. 13, coll. 3.

[15725] St. Thomas, 1, p. 9, 3, ar. 8.

[15726] Fleury, Nat. Alex. Graveson, loc. cit.

[15727] Fleury,1. 12, 1. 84, n. 30; Nat. Alex, t, 16, c. 3, ar. 1; Berti, Brev. Histor. sec. 13, r. 3.

[15728] Nat. Alex. t. 16, sec. 13, art. 5; Fleury, t. 13, I. 84, n. 62.

[15729] Nat. Alex. loc. cit.

[15730] Van Ranst, His. Heres p. 221.

[15731] Nat. Alex. t. 16, c. 3, ar. 13, p. 193.

[15732] I believe the holy Author was misled in this fact; it is generally supposed that the primary cause of his rancour against the Monastic Orders and the Court of Rome were his expulsion from the Warden ship of Canterbury Hall, into which he had illegally intruded himself See LINGARD, vol. IV., c. 2.

[15733] Nat. Alex. s. 6, n. 1; Gotti, loc. cit. n. 2.

[15734] *Gotti*, ib. *n.* 3; *Nat.* Alex. 6, *n.* 1; *Grav.* loc; *cit.*

[15735] Nat. Alex. s. 6, n. 1; Gotti, ibid, n. 5, & Grav. loc. cit.

[15736] Gotti, loc. cit. n.5; Van Ranst, dicto, n. 241; Bernin.1. 3, c. 9

[15737] Bernin. loc. cit. c. 9, con Richard, Ranst. Ann. 1381, ex Walsingh.

[15738] Nat. Alex. t. 16, sec. 14, c. 3, . art. 22, s. 6; Gotti, i bid, Van

[15739] Serar. Moguntinar. rerom,1. 5

[15740] Treter de Mirac. Eucharis.

[15741] Bredembach in Collat.1. 1, c. 35.

[15742] Walsingham, ap. Bernin. t. 3, c. 9; Van Ranst, p. 241; Varillas, t.1.1.1 & Gotti, loc. cit.

[15743] Graveson, t. 4, sec. 15, coll. 31; Bernin. t, 3,1. 9, p. 609, c. 8,

[15744] Coclaeus, Hist. Hussit. 7Eneas Silv. Hist. Bohem. c. 35; Bernin, t. 4, sec. 15, c. 2, p. 9; Graves. I. 4, coll. 3, p. 75; Gotti, Ver. &c. c. 105.

[15745] Nat. Alex. sec. 14, c 3, . 22, sec. 6; 7Eneas Silv. Hist. Bohem. c. 35.

[15746] Nat. Alex. sec. 15, c. 2, a. 1, sec. 2.

[15747] Labbe, . . 12, cone.

[15748] Varillas, His. &c., t. 1, I. 11, . 25; Gotti, Ver. Bel. 105, s. 3, n. 1.

[15749] Coclaeus, His. Huss. t. 2. Varillas, loc. cit.; Gotti, cit.

15750 Gotti, loc. cit. sec. 3, n. 3.

15751 Gotti, ibid; Van Ranst, p. 279; Varillas, loc. cit.; Bernin. t. 4; Rainaldus, Ann. 1415, n. 32.

15752 Varill. loc. cit. p. 48; Gotti, loc. cit. s. 3, n. 8; Van Ranst. 279.

15753 Rainal. Ann. 1415, n. 13 & seq.

15754 Varil.p. 51,1. 1; Gotti, c. 105; Bern. t. 4, c. 4.

15755 Varil. Dis. t. 1 t. 2; Gotti, c. 105; Van Ranst. p. 281.

15756 Van Ranst, p. 382; Bernini, loc, cit.

15757 Rainald. Ann. 1516, n. 91; Bernin. t. 4, sec. 26, c. 2, p. 255.

15758 Gotti, Ver. Rel. c. 108. sec, 2, n. 6.

15759 Nat. Alex. t. 19, sec. 15, c. 5, art. 1, n. 12.

15760 Nat. Alex. loc. cit.

15761 Victor, in Scholiis ad Epist. Hier. ep. 30.

15762 Rainald. &Bernin. loc. cit

15763 Alberto Pic0,1. 20.

15764 Albert0,1. 11, 12.

15765 Erasm. advers. Hil. 1. 12; Bernin. loc. cit.

15766 Nat. Alex. cit. art. 10, n. 12.

15767 Varill. t.1, 1,7,p. 322.

15768 Nat, Alex. Loc. cit

15769 Gotti, Ver. Rel. t. 2, c. 108, sec. 2; Baron. Ann. 1517, n. 56; Varillas Istor. & c. t. 1,1. 3, p. 129; Hermant, Histor. Concili, t. 2, c. 227.

15770 Gotti. cit. sec. 2, n. 3.

15771 Nat Alex. loc. cit; Gotti, loc. cit. sec. 2, n. 2

15772 Gotti, sec. 5, n. 2

15773 Staphil. Resp. contra Jac. Smi delin, p. 404.

15774 Varillas, loc. cit. I 14, p. 31.

15775 Luther Praefat. ad lib. de Vot. Mon

15776 Nat. Alex, ibid, see. 1, n. 1; Gotti, loc. cit. sec. 2.

15777 Hermant, Histor. Conc. t. 1, c. 228; Nat. Alex. t. 19, art. 11, sec. 1, n. 1; Van Ranst Haer. p. 298; Gotti Ver. Rel. c. 108, sec. 2, n. 6

15778 Nat. Alex. sec. 1, n. 3; Hermant, loc. cit.; Van Ranst, loc. cit.

15779 Hermant, loc. cit. c. 227.

15780 Nat. Alex. Gotti, Van Ranst, Bernino, &c.

15781 Hermant, c. 228; Van Ranst, p. 299; Gotti, c. 108, sec. 3, n. 3.

15782 Ap. Van Ranst, His. p. 300.

15783 Gotti, sec. 2, n. 8.

15784 Gotti, ibid, n. 9, &Van Ranst, loc cit.

15785 Nat. Alex. t. 19, or. 11, sec. 4; Gotti, loc. cit. sec. 2, n. 20; Hermant. t. 2, c. 229.

15786 Hermant, c. 230.

15787 Nat. Alex. loc. cit. sec. 4.

15788 Hermant, cit. c. 230; Van Ranst, p. 302; Gotti, sec. 3, n. 10.

15789 Nat Alex. or. 11, sec. 4, n. 1; Gotti, c. 108, sec. 3, n. 10

15790 Nat. Alex, loc.cit.; Van Ranst, p. 302.

15791 Van Ranst, p 302.

15792 Luther, t. I; Oper. p. 208.

15793 Gotti, sec. 3, n. 11. 4,

[15794] Gotti, c. 108, sec. 3, n. 12; Van Ranst, p. 302; Nat. Alex. sec. 4, n. 1; Hermant, c. 229

[15795] Hermant, c. 229; Nat. Alex. sec. n. 1; Van Ranst, p. 302.

[15796] Van Ranst, p. 303; Varillas,1. 3, p. 48.

[15797] Hermant, t. 1, c. 230.

[15798] Gotti, c. 108, n. 13.

[15799] Cocleus de act, &Script. Luth. Ann. 1523.

[15800] Nat. Alex. sec. 14, n. 4; Varill. t. 1,1. 4, dalla, . 175; Van Ranst, p. 304

[15801] Nat. Alex. loc. cit.; Van Ranst, p. 205

[15802] Hermant, c. 230, 231; Van Ranst, loc. cit.

[15803] Nat. Alex. t. 9, sec. 4, n. 9, ex Sleidano, I 6; Van Ranst, q. 306; Hermant, t. 2, c. 244.

[15804] Van Ranst, p. 306; Nat. Alex, loc. cit. n. 10.

[15805] Varillas, t. 1, p. 306; Hermant, t. 2, c. 243.

[15806] Nat. Alex. loc. cit. sec. 4, n. 11; Van Ranst, P . 307

[15807] Nat. Alex. loc. cit, n. 11; Hermant, c. 244.—

[15808] Varillas, t.1,1. 10, p. 445, coll 1.

[15809] Nat. Alex. sec. 4, n. 10, in fin. ex Cochlaeo in Act. Lutheri & Sleidan0,1. 7; Van Ranst, p. 307

[15810] Nat. Alex. sec. 4, n. 13; Hermant, t. 2, c. 245

[15811] Van Ranst, p. 307; Nat. Alex, t. 19, c. 10, sec. 4, n. 1.

[15812] Nat. Alex. loc. cit.

[15813] Varillas, t. 1, 11, p. 530, c. 2.

[15814] Cochleus in Actis Lutheri.

[15815] Gotti, c. 105, s. 5, n. 7; Van Ranst, p. 308; Bernin. t. 4, sec. 16, c. 5. p.454; Varillas, t;. 2,1. 14,p.34.

15816 Varillas, t. 2,1. 24, p. 366.

15817 Varillas, 1. 25, p. 393.

15818 Varill. t. 2,1. 17, p. 122, &1. 24, p. 364.

15819 Lindan Epist. Roraem in Luther.

15820 Nat. Alex. t. 19, c. 10, art. 5, p, 321

15821 Nat. Alex. loc. cit. c. 10, art. 5.

15822 Historia Relig. Jovet, t. 2, p. 324.

15823 KB. Bishops have been appointed lately to Sweden and Norway,

15824 Joves, cit. p. 343.

15825 Bernin. t. 4, sec. 16, c. 2, p. 285.

15826 Nat. Alex. t. 19, art, 11, sec. 2; Gotti, c, 108, sec. 4; Tournelly, Comp, Thol. t. 5, p. 1, diss. 5, art. 2.

15827 Nat. Alex. t. 19, a. 11; s. 3, n. 4; Gotti, Ver. Rel. s. 109, sec. 3; Van Ranst, p. 308; Hermant, c. 241.

15828 Hermant, loc. cit

15829 Varillas Hist. 20, 2,1. 24, p. 363.

15830 Varillas, s. 1,1. 8, p. 364.

15831 Gotti, loc. cit. n. 2

15832 Floremund,1. 2, c. 9; Van Ranst, &Gotti, loc. cit.; & Nat. Alex. loc. cit. n. 10.

15833 Berti, His. sec. 16, c. 3.

15834 Ap. Spondara. ad. an. 1560, n. 32

15835 Gotti, c. 109, sec. 7, n. 1, 2; Van Ranst , p. 310; Varillas, t. 1, 117, p. 122, & t. 2, L 24, p. 363; Nat. Alex. t. 19, a. 11, sec. 3, n. 10.

15836 Nat Alex. t. 19, a. 11, sec. 3, n. 7; Gotti, c. 109, sec. 5, n. 7; Van Ranst, p. 310

[15837] Varillas, t. 1,1. 11, p. 512.

[15838] Remund. in Synopsi,1. 2, c. 16.

[15839] Gotti, loc. cit. sec. 6, n. 1 ad 6; N. Alex, loc. cit. n. 8; Van Ranst, cit. p. 310.

[15840] Gotti, sec. 7, n. 8; Van Ranst, loc. cit.; Nat. Alex. loc. cit. n. 11.

[15841] St. Thomas, p. 3, q. 64, ar. 1.

[15842] Gotti, sec. 7, n.S; Van Ranst, p. 310.

[15843] Gotti, loc. cit. sec. 6.

[15844] Remuncl. in Synopsi,1. 2, c. 14, n. 2.

[15845] Nat. Alex. t. 1, sec. 3, n. 8, 9; Gotti, sec. 6, n. 8 ad 10; Van Ranst, p. 293.

[15846] Bossuet, Istor. 1. 2, n. 41.

[15847] Gotti, c. 109, sec. 5; Nat. Alex. t. 19, sec. 3, n. 6; Van Ranst, p. 311

[15848] Gotti, loc. cit.

[15849] Apud, Gotti, c. 109, sec. 7, n. I ad 7.

[15850] Gotti, Ver. Ed. t. 2, c.110, sec. 1, n. 1.

[15851] August. Serm. 176, alias 10, de Verb Apost.

[15852] Orig. t. 2, p. 35, St. Iren.p 147, n. 4; Tertul. p. 231; St. Greg. Naz. t. 1, p. 658; St. Amb. t. 1, o. 349; St. Cypr. Epist. adFidum, n. 59; St. Aug. Serm. 10, de Verb. Apost. alias 177.

[15853] Nat. Alex. t. 18, art. 11, sec. 12; Gotti, loc. cit. n. 2

[15854] Varillas, t. 1,1. 6, p. 266.

[15855] Varillas, p. 270; Hermant Hist. t. 2, c. 239.

[15856] Hermant, loc. cit.; Varill. p. 267.

[15857] Ap.Gottiibid,n.7, ex Sleidan,1. 5.

[15858] Nat. Alex. t. 29, cit. sec. 12, Gotti, cit, cap. 110, sec. 1, n. 1.

[15859] Nat. Alex. loc. cit.; Gotti, n. 8; Varill. p. 288; Van Eanst, sec. 16, p. 313; Hermant, c. 239.

[15860] N. Alex. cit. a. 12, n. 2; Varill.p. 427; V. Ranst. p. 315; Her. c. 241

[15861] Varill. p. 436.

[15862] Her. loc. cit.; V. Ranst, p. 314

[15863] Nat. Alex. t. 19, art. 11, n. 4; Van Ranst,p. 315, & sec.

[15864] Nat. Alex. t. 19, s. 3; Gotti, Ver. Rel. c. 109, s. I; Van Ranst, s. 16, P , 217; Hermant, t. 1, c. 231; Varillas, t. 1,1. 3, p. 148.

[15865] Hermant, c. 234; Gotti, s. 1, n. 2; Varillas, t. 1, I 3, p. 211.

[15866] Berti. Brev. Hist. s. 3.

[15867] Bos. Stor. del. Variaz. I. 2, n. 12

[15868] Gotti, c. 109, n. 3, ex cochleo, ad an. 15, 25; V Ranst, p. 217; Var. 242

[15869] Octavius Lavert. P. 117.

Deus qui post tarn longam et impiam Sacerdotum tuorum caecitatem Beatum Andream Carlostadium ea gratia donare dignatus es, ut primus, nulla habita Papistici Juris ratione, uxorem ducere ausus fuerit, da quEesumus ut omnes Sacerdotes recepta sanamente, ej us vestigia sequentes ejectis concubinis aut eisdem ductis ad legitiinum consortium thori convertantur. Oremus Nos ergo concubinis nostris gravati, te Deus poscimus, ut illius, qui Patres nostros sectatus antiques tibi placet, nos imitatione guadeamus in aeternum.

[15870] Rinal. an. 1523, n. 74.

[15871] Varillas, 18, p. 359.

[15872] Lancis, t. 4, 1st. s. 16, c. 3; Var. loc. cit.

[15873] Nat. Alex. t. 19, sec. 16, art. 11, c. 3, n. 2; Gotti, Ver. Rel. c. 100, s. 2, n. 1; Varillas, t. 1,1. 4, . 155.

[15874] Apud. Nat. Alex. s. 3, n. 2; Gotti, loc. cit. n. 1.

[15875] Zuinglius,1. de Subsid. Euch.

[15876] Hermant, t.1,c. 237.

[15877] Gotti, loc. cit. n. 4; Varill. I 7, p. 304; Nat. Alex. loc. cit

[15878] Varill. t. 1, 1. 5, p. 214.

[15879] Gotti, c. 109, s. 2, n. 11.

[15880] Varill. 1. 7, p, 304; Hermant, c. 237; Nat. Alex. c. 19, art. 12, s. 3, n. 2.

[15881] Varill. L 8, p. 354; Gotti,loc. cit. n. 13.

[15882] Varill. t. 1, 1. 4, p, 355.

[15883] Nat. Alex.loc. cit.; Gotti, n. 13, &Van Ranst, p. 318

[15884] Varill. loc. cit. p. 358, & seq.

[15885] Bossuet, Hist, de Variat.1. 2, . n. 19.

[15886] Nat. Alex. t. 19, s. 3, n. 3.

[15887] Floremund in Synopsi.1. 2, c. 8, n. 9.

[15888] Gotti, loc. cit. n. 15.

[15889] Gotti, n. 1C, & Nat. Alex. loc. cit.

[15890] Varill. L 8, p. 356.

[15891] Gotti, n. 17,

[15892] Gotti, c. 109, s. 2, in fine.

[15893] Gotti, t. 2, c. 109, see. 4; Varil. t, 11. 8, p. 363.

[15894] Gotti, loc. cit. n. 1.

[15895] Varil. loc. cit.

[15896] Gotti, loc. cit. n. 2, 3; Varil. t. 1,1. 8, p. 364.

[15897] Vari1.1. 11, p. 297.

[15898] Gotti, loc. cit. n. 5.

15899 Varillas, t. 2,1. 17, p. 106; Dizion. Port, alia parola Vermigli.

15900 Varillas, I. 17, p. 106; Berti Hist. sec. 16, c. 3; Van Ranst, sec. 16, p. 391; Dizion. Portat. loc. cit.

15901 Varillas, Istor. della Rel. t. 1, L 12, p. 450

15902 Varillas, al. loc. cit.; Nat. Alex.1, 19, a. 13, sec.1,n. 1; Gotti Ver Rel. t. 2, c. Ill, sec. I, n. 1; Hermant Hist, de Cone. t. 2, c. 271; Van Ranst Hist. Haer. p. 119; Berti Hist. sec. 16, c. 3, p. 161; Lancist Hist. t. 4, sec. 16, c. 5.

15903 Nat. loc. cit. n. 1; Gotti, ibid, n, 3; Hermant, cit. c. 271; Varil. al loc. cit. p. 431.

15904 Gotti, cit. c. Ill, n. 5; Van Ranst, p. 320; Varill. t. 1,1. 10, p. 452.

15905 Van Ranst, p. 330; Gotti, loc. cit. n. 5; N. Alex. loc. cit. s.1,n. 1.

15906 Varillas,. 10, p. 345.

15907 Nat. Alex t. 19, a. 13, s. 1;Gotti, c. 3, s. 1, n. 3; Van Ranst, p. 330; Vari1.1. 30, p. 454.

15908 Varill. cit. p. 454; Gotti, loc. cit. n. 6.

15909 Van Ranst, s. 16, p. 323; Nat. Alex. loc. cit. n. 1; Varill. p. 459.

15910 Vari11.1. 10, p. 457; Hermant, t. 2, c. 271; Nat. Alex. s. 1, n. 1; Gotti, c. Ill, s. 2, n. 1.

15911 Nat. Alex. t. 19, a. 13, w.2; Van Ranst,p. 321; Goti, c.111,s.2, n.4.

15912 Varill. t. 1,1. 10, p. 465; Van Ranst, p. 321.

15913 Apud Berti. Brev. Hist. t. 2 s. 16, c. 3, p. 162.

15914 Nat. Alex. loc. cit. n. 2; Van Ranst, p. 221; Gotti. c.111, s.1, n.6.

15915 Gotti. ibid.

15916 Vari11.1. 12, p. 512, & Nat. Alex. a. 13; s. I, n. I

15917 Nat. cit. n. in fin; Gotti, s. 2, n. 7.

15918 Nat. Alex. loc. cit. n. 3; Varill. . p. 513; Van Ranst, p. 121; Gotti, c. Ill, s. 2, n. 8.

15919 Vari11.1. 11, p. 514

15920 Gotti, s. 2, n. 9; Varill. loc. cit. Nat. Alex. ibid.

15921 Nat. Alex. t. 19, ar. 13, sec. 1, n. 4, & seq. Gotti, c. Ill, sec. 2, n. 10.

15922 Gotti, n. 11

15923 Gotti, n. 1114.

15924 Nat. Alex. cit. sec. 1, re. 8; Gotti, loc. cit. n. 14.

15925 Varillas, t. 2,1. 20.

15926 Varillas, t. 2,1. 20, p. 219; Gotti, c. Ill, sec. 3, n. 1; Nat. Alex. loc. cit. sec. 1, n. 9.

15927 Varillas,1. 20, p 221.

15928 Nat. Alex. t. 19, ar. 13, sec. 1, n. 10; Varillas,1.21 p 256; Gotti, c, 111, sec. 3, n. 5.

15929 Gotti, loc. cit, n, 6.

15930 Varillas,1. 23, n. 331; Gotti, loc. cit. n. 8

15931 Nat. Alex. sec. 1, n. 16; Gotti, i bid, n. 9.

15932 Varillas, t. 1,1. 10, p. 459

15933 Spondan. ad an. 1564; Nat. Alex. err. 13, sec. n. 16; Gotti, . loc. cit. sec. 3, n. 10; Varillas.1. 12, t. 1,1. 10, p. 450.

15934 Spondan. ad an. 1534.

15935 Varillas, loc. cit.

15936 Nat. Alex. cit. n. 16, in fin.

15937 Gotti, sec. 1, n. 6

15938 Remundus,1. 1, c. 9, n. 3.

15939 Gotti, c. 114, sec. 4, n, I, 6; Varillas, t. 2,1. 18, 137.

15940 Berti, Brev. Hist. t. 2, sec. 16, c. 1.

15941 Spondan, ad An. 1501, . 19.

[15942] Floremund, Remund. I. 8, c. 17 n. 6.

[15943] Gotti, loc. cit. n.7, 10.

[15944] Vita di St. Francesco di Sales, da Pietro Ga110,1. 2, c. 21, 22.

[15945] Van Ranst, Hist. sec. 16, p. 322.

[15946] Van Ranst, loc. cit. vide Her. t, 2, c. 272.

[15947] Spondan, ad an, 1560, n, 7.

[15948] Nat. Alex. t. 19, c. 11, art. 9, n. 3, & 4.

[15949] Nat. Alex. n. 5; Hermant, t. 2, c. 306.

[15950] Apud Gotti, c. Ill, s. 4, n. 15.

[15951] Gotti, loc. cit. n. 16, c. 17.

[15952] Varillas, t. 2, I. 27, dalla p;. 441, Jovet Storia della Relia. t. 1, p 95.

[15953] Jovet loc. cit, p. 105. N.B This was written in 1770.

[15954] Varillas Hist. Her. t. 2, I 28, dalla p. 471; Hermant Histor. de Concil. t. 2, c. 265

[15955] Varillas, p. 475.

[15956] Varillas, loc, cit.

[15957] Varill. t. 2,1. 28, p. 426.

[15958] Varill. p. 479. (

[15959] Varill. p. 500.

[15960] Varill. p. 502, 503.

[15961] Varill. p. 50 e. seg.

[15962] Vide P. Suar.1. 3, in St. Thom. c. 72, ar. 8, in fin.

[15963] Varillas, sopra, t. 2,1. 28; Bern, t. 4, s. 16, c. 11; Joves Istoria della Rel. t. 2, p. 84; Dizion. Port.

15964 Prateol. Haer. 13.

15965 Francisc. Forvandes. in Theo mach. Calv

15966 Calvin. Antid. ad Synod. Trident, ad Sess. IV.

15967 Calvin, in Autid. loc. cit.

15968 Calvin. Instit. 1. 1, c. 13, sec.

15969 Calvin, vide loc. cit.

15970 Calvin. Epist. ad Stanearum.

15971 Calvin, vide loc. cit.

15972 Gotti, Vera Chiesa, t. 1, c. 8, sec. 1, n. 9

15973 Calvin. Inst.1. 1, c. 13, sec. 9, n. 23, 24.

15974 Calv. L 3, c. 3, sec. 10. .

15975 Idem1. 3, c. 14, sec. 4.

15976 Idem. 1. 3, c. 11, sec. 15, 16

15977 Idem,1. 3, c. 11, sec. 3.

15978 Calv. Inst.1. 3, c. 2, sec. 16, & seq.

15979 Idem,1. 3, c. 2, sec. 11, 12.

15980 Tertull. de Script. Hatirat. c. 42.

15981 Calv. Inst.1. 2 c . 2

15982 Calv.1. 2, c. 3.

15983 Calvin, de Pratidest, Dei, atiterna.

15984 Calv. Inst.1. 3, c. 23.

15985 Calv. ibid.

15986 Calvin. Instit.1. 4, c. 14, s. 4

15987 Idem,1. 4, c. 14, s. 11

15988 Idem, 1. 4, c. 14, s. 26.

15989 Idem,1. 4, c. 14, s. 23.

15990 Calvin, Instit. in Antid. Conc. Trid. ad Can. 9, Sess. 7

15991 Idem,1. 4, c. 19. s. 19, 20.

15992 Idem, c. 19, s. 31.

15993 Idem,1. 4, c. 15, n. 20.

15994 Bossuet Variat. t. 3,1. 14, n. 37.

15995 Calvin,1. 4, c. 15, s. 20 & seq.

15996 Idem,1. 3, c. 15, s. 3& 4.

15997 Vide loc. cit.

15998 Calvin, loc. cit. de Caena Dom.

15999 Calvin. Instit.1. 4, c. 17, s. 32.

16000 Mem, loc. cit. s. 33, 34.

16001 Calvin.1. 4, c. 17, s. 4648.

16002 Dallasus Apol. Eccl. Reform, p. 43.

16003 Calvin. Instit.1. 4, c. 18.

16004 Idem, L 3, c. 5, s. 6, 10.

16005 Calvin. Inst. Idem1. 3, c. 5, s. 2.

16006 Idem1. 3, c. 20

16007 Idem I. c. II.

16008 Idem1. 4, c. 6.

16009 Idem1. 4, c. 9.

16010 Idem1. 4, c. 20

16011 Idem1. 4, c. 12, n. 19 & 20.

16012 Ibid, s. 23.

16013 Idem,1. 4, c. 13, s. 6.

16014 Calvin Respons. de Usur. inter Epist. p. 223; Nat. Alex. t. 19, art. 13, s. 2; Gotti, t. 2, c. 3, s. 5.

16015 Nat. Alex. t. 19, art. 13, sec. 3; Gotti, Ver. Rel. c. 312, sec. 1, 2.

16016 Nat. Alex. t. 19, c. 3, art. 11, sec. 13, n. 6.

16017 Nat. Alex. loc. cit.; Gotti, Ver. Rel. c. 12, sec. 2, n. 40; Dizion. Port, alia parola Grozio.

16018 Jovet. Storia della Relig. t. 2, dal. prin. i Gotti, Ver. Re. c. 113, s. 1.

16019 Sand, de Schism, Anglic, in Pro.

16020 Gotti, c. 113, 8 . 2, n. 1, 2; Herm. Hist. Conc. c. 166

16021 Gotti, loc. cit. n. 2

[16022] Bossuet, His. des Variat. t. 2, 1. 7, n. 1.

[16023] Nat. Alex. Hist, t. 19, c. 13, a. 3, n. 1; Gotti, c. 213, s. 2, n. 6.

[16024] Gotti, . 2, n. 3.

[16025] Boss. al. cit.1. 7, n. 61.

[16026] Floremund,1. 6, Synop. c. 2, n. 2; Gotti, c. 113, s. 2, n. 8, 9, 10; Nat. Alex. loc. cit. n. 1

[16027] Gotti, n. 9.

[16028] Nat. Alex. cit. n. 1, Varillas 1st. t. 1,1. 9, p. 412

[16029] Nat. Alex. t. 19, art. r, n. 2.

[16030] Gotti, c. 113, sec. 2, n. 13, in fin. & Nat. Alex. loc. cit. n. 2.

[16031] Jovet, t. 2, p. 29; Gotti, sec. 2, n. 14.

[16032] Bossuet1. 7, n, 9

[16033] Nat. Alex. . t. 19, c. 13, a. 3, n. 2; Gotti, loc. cit.

[16034] Gotti, c. 113, sec. 2, n. 15

[16035] Nat. Alex. t. 19, c. 13, a. 3, n. 3

[16036] Gotti, sec. 2, n 16; Varillas, t. 1,1. 9, n. 420. (

[16037] Gotti, sec. 2, n. 17.

[16038] Nat. Alex. loc. cit, n. 3; Gotti, loc. cit.

[16039] Nat. Alex. Loc. cit.; Gotti, c. 113, sec. 2, n. 18; Bossuet, Variat. 1. 7, n. 21.

[16040] Nat. Alex. art. 3, n. 4; Gotti, sec. 2, n. 20.

[16041] Gotti, loc. cit.

[16042] Nat. Alex, t, 19, c. 13, n. 3, n. 5; Gotti, c. 113, sec. 2, n. 21.

[16043] Gotti, n. 22; Nat. Alex. loc. cit. n. 5.

16044 Bossuet His.1. 7, n. 11.

16045 Sand.1. 1, dc Schis. Ang.p. 135; Gotti, sec. 2, n. 22.

16046 Sand. &Gotti, loc. cit. n. 23.

16047 Gotti, c. 113, s. 2, n. 24; Nat, Alex. t. 19, r. 13, art, 3, n. 6.

16048 Sander,1. 1, p. 107, 112; Gotti, s. 3, n. 25; Nat. Alex. loc. cit.

16049 Vari11.1. 9, p. 423; Gotti, s. 2, n. 26; Hermant, c. 200; Nat. Alex. cit. n. 6; Bossuet, Hist.1. 7, n. 21, 22, 23.

16050 Bossuet Hist. L 7, n. 33; Nat. Alex. t. 19, art. 3, n. 7; Gotti, s. 2, art.

16051 Varill. t. 1, I. 12, p. 544.

16052 Varil. t. 1, c. 11, p. 515; Nat. Alex. loc. cit. n. 8.

16053 Gotti, s. 2, n. 23.

16054 Varil. p. 306; Nat. Alex. loc. cit; Gotti, s. 2, n. 2.

16055 Varill. t. 11, p, 507, et scq.

16056 Varill. t. 1,1. 12, p. 551

16057 Varillas, t. 1,1. 12, p. 53; Nat, Alex. c. 23, a. 3, n. 7; Bossuet,1. 7, n, 34.

16058 Varill loc. cit. ;&gt;. 675; Bossuet, loc. cit

16059 Gotti, s. 2, n. 29; Hermant, t. 2, c. 266; Nat. Alex. loc. cit. n. 7

16060 Varill. loc. cit. p. 575.

16061 Varill. t. 2, I 13, . 575; Nat. Alex. a. 3, n. 7.

16062 Varill. t. 2,1. 16 p.98

16063 Varillas, loc. cit. p. 99.

16064 Gotti, s. 2, n. 31; Varillas, t. 2, p. 99.

16065 Nat. Alex. a. 3, n. 9; Gotti, s. 2,n. 30; Varillas, loc. cit.

16066 Bart. 1st d'Inghi1.1. 1, c. 1, p 4.

16067 Natal, loc. cit.; Varill. p. 100; Bartol. p. 3.

16068 Varillas, loc. cit. p. 101; Gotti, loc. cit. n. 2; Hermant, c. 267

16069 Varillas, t. 2, I. 17, p. 105, & seq.;

16070 Nat. Alex. art. 4.

16071 Varillas,1. 17, p. 116.

16072 Bossuet, n. 90.

16073 Bossuet, t.—2,1. 7, n. 96.

16074 Gotti, loc. cit. sec. 1, n. 3; Nat. Alex. loc. cit.; Bossuet Hist.1. 7, n. 86.

16075 Varillas, I 17, p. 126.

16076 Varillas, loc. cit. . 126, coll. 2.

16077 Varillas,1. 17, p. 120.

16078 Varillas, t. 2,1. 17, p;. 131, &1. 20, p . 1.

16079 Varillas, t. 2,1. 20, p. 208.

16080 Varillas,1. 20, p;. 209, a. 211; Nat. Alex. t. 19, c. 13, art. 5; Gotti, c. 114, sec. 1, n. 4; Hermant, c. 208.

16081 Bart01.1. 1, c. 3; Nat. Alex. loc. cit.; Hermant, c. 269; Varillas, t. 2,1. 20, p. 212; Gotti, c. 114, sec 2, a1.

16082 Varillas, 121, p. 232; Gotti, ibid, n. 4; Hermant, loc. cit.; Bossuet, 1st.1. 7, n. 103.

16083 Nat. Alex, ibid; Gotti, loc. cit. n. 4.

16084 Nat. Alex. art. 5,—in fin.; Varillas, I. 21, p. 229; Gotti, sec. 2, n 5, ad 7.

16085 Gotti, c. 114, s. 3, n. 2; Varillas, t. 2,1. 22. p. 284

16086 Nat. Alex. t. 19, c. 13; Berti, His. sec. 16.

16087 Nat. Alex. loc. cit.; Gotti, c. 114; Varillas, t. 2; Hermant, c. 270.

16088 Nat. Alex. ar. 6, Gotti, s. 3.

16089 Varillas,1. 22.

16090 Nat. Alex. loc. cit.; Gotti, cit. n. 3.

16091 Varillas,1. 2,1. 22, n. 290

16092 Nat, Alex . . . 6, w. 2; Gotti, c . 144, s. 3, n. 5; Vari1.1. 2.

16093 Nat. Alex. Ar.6. n. 3; Gotti, c. 114, s. 3, n. 6, 7.

16094 Bartol. Istor. D’Inghi1.1. 6. c. 1.

16095 Nat. Alex. t. 19, art. 3, s. 6 Gotti, c. 144, s. 3, n. 8.

16096 Varil. t. 2, 1. 26, p. 437.

16097 Idem,1. 29.

16098 Idem,1. 28.

16099 Nat. Alex. art. 3; Gotti, c. 114, s. 3; Bartoli, Istord D’Inghi11. 6

16100 Bartoli. Istor. cit.

16101 St. Augus. Epis. 102, alias 49, cont. Pagan, b. 2, 3.

16102 This was written in the last century, but the reader will praise the Almighty that such a state of things exists no longer. The Holy Author can now look down from heaven on a flourishing Church in England, and behold his own children, the Redemptionists, labouring with the other faithful labourers of the Gospel, in extending the kingdom of Christ.

16103 Jovet, Hist, delle Relig. t. 2, p. 287; Varil. t. 1,1. 8, p. 370; Nat, Alex. s. 19; Gotti, Ver. Rel. I. 2, c. 115; Van Ranst, s. 16, p. 325.

16104 Varil. loc. cit.

16105 Jovet, p. 288.

16106 Nat. Alex. t. 19, art. 14; Van Ranst, p. 320.

[16107] Van Ranst, p. 326.

[16108] Gotti, c. 115; Nat. Alex. t. 19, ar. 14; Jovet, t. 1, p. 296.

[16109] Jovet, loc. cit.

[16110] Van Ranst, loc. cit.

[16111] Gotti, s. 2, 3; Nat. Alex, cit

[16112] Gotti, loc. cit.

[16113] Spondon. ad Ann. 1561, n. 34; Van Ranst, sec. 16, p. 327; Gotti, c. 115

[16114] Jovet, His. Rel. p. 291; Gotti, s. 2, n. 6; Nat. Alex. t. 19, art. 14.

[16115] Jovet, p. 294.

[16116] Jovet, cit. p. 300

[16117] Nat. Alex. s. 3; Gotti, s. 2, n. 6; Jovet, cit

[16118] Varill. Hist. t. 2, p. 109; Gotti, 115.

[16119] Varill. p. 111.

[16120] Varill, cit. p. 100.

[16121] Gotti, cit. sec. 2, n. 8; Varillas, p. 112, & seq.; Nat. Alex. t. 19, a. 14, sec. 3; Van Ranst, sec. 16, p. 328; Bern. t. 4, sec. 16, c. 5; Berti, Brev. Hist. Eccl. sec. 6, c. 3; Bover. in Ann. Capuccin. 1543; Menoch. Cent. p. 2, c. 89; Paulus Grisald. Decis. Fid. Cath. in Ind. error. & Haerat. Simid. Comp. Stor, degli Haeresiarchi, sec. 16; Graveson, t. 4, Hist. Eccl. coll. 3.

[16122] Nat. Alex. t. 19, art. 14; Gotti, c. 116, sec. 3, n. 1; Van Ranst, sec. 16, p. 328

[16123] Gotti, loc. cit. n. 2.

[16124] Nat. Alex. loc. cit. n. 1.

[16125] Gotti, cit. n. 2

[16126] Nat. Alex. n. 2; Gotti, n. 3.

[16127] N.B This was written in 1765, or thereabouts.

16128 Gotti, c. 115, sec. 3, n. 15; Van Ranst, p. 308.

16129 Berti, Brev. Hist. t. 2, sec. 17; Bernini, t. 4, sec. 17, c. 5.

16130 Van Ranst, sec. 17, ;&gt;. 325; Bernin. t, 4, sec. 17, c 1, 2, 3; Berti. loc. cit.

16131 Gotti, loc. cit.; Van Ranst, sec. 17, p. 346.

16132 Verita della Fede. Tar. 1, c. 6, s. 5. .

16133 Gotti, cit. in fin.

16134 Possevin. t. 2, in M. Bajum.

16135 Gotti Ver. Rel. t 2, c. 116; Bernin. sec 16.

16136 Gotti, cit. s. 3, n. 1, 2.

16137 Gotti, Ver. Rel. c. 118, s. 1, n. 1.

16138 Bernin. t. 4, sec. 18,1. 3, in fine.

16139 Bernin. cit.

16140 Gotti, s. 3, n. 5.

16141 Pallav. His. Con. Trid. Mo, c. 7, n. 13; Collet. Coiit.Tournel.de Grat. 4, p. 1. Eighty-five Bishops, in 1650, wrote to Pope Innocent X., the successor of Urban, thus

16142 “Beatissime Pater, majores causas ad Sedan Apostolicam referre, solemnus Ecclesiaemos est quem Fides Patri nunquam deficiens perpetuo retineri pro jure suo postulat.” They then lay before the Holy Father the five famous propositions extracted from the book of Jansenius, and beg the judgment of the Apostolic See on them Gotti, loc, cit. c. 118.

16143 Tournell. loc. cit.

16144 Tournelly, p. 200.

16145 Libell. inscrip. Second letter de M. Arnauld.

16146 Tournelly, p. 253.

16147 Ibid. 226.

16148 Tournully, ibid.

16149 Ibid, p;. 256.

16150 Jour 257

16151 Gotti c.118

16152 St. Thomas. In cap.ii ad Galatas.

16153 St. Thomas in cap. i, ad Ga1.1. 1

16154 Bell, de Rom. Pontiff, c. 27.

16155 St. Thom, in II. Cor. I. 3, c. n,

16156 Tour Comp. The01. t. 5 p. 1 Disc. 9 p.396

16157 Tour p. 397; Gotti c . 110 s.1 n. 3 (

16158 Tour. p. 300; Gotti, n. 5.

16159 Tour. p. 405.

16160 Tour. d. 406.

16161 Tour. p. 409, 410.

16162 Tour cit

16163 Tour cit

16164 Tour cit

16165 Tour cit

16166 Tour cit

16167 Tour cit

16168 Tour cit

16169 Tour cit

[16170] Apud Tour. p. 745.

[16171] Bernin. Hist, de Heres. t. 4, sec. 17, c. 8; Gotti, Ver. Rel. 120.

[16172] Gotti, n. 2, 3

[16173] Gotti, loc. cit. . 4, 5, 6.

[16174] Bernin. loc. cit.

[16175] Burnin. 4, c. 8,

[16176] Gotti, Ver. Rel. c. 5.

[16177] Perron, de Protes.

[16178] Encyc. Brit, Art. Zinzendorf and United Brethren.

[16179] Mosheim, Cent. XVIII.

[16180] Wesley's Journal; Centenary Report, and Benson's Apology, &c.

[16181] Euseb. His. Eccles.

[16182] St. Augus. trac. 26, in Jo.

[16183] Theod. qu. 19, in Gen

[16184] Tertull. 1. contra Prax. c. 12; St. Basil, t. 1; Hom. 9 in Hexamer.; Theod. qu. 19, in Gen.; St. Iran.1. 4, n. 37.

[16185] St. Basil, loc. cit. p. 87.

[16186] Tert. adv. Prax. c. 26; St. Ath. Orat. contr. Sab, Gregal.

[16187] Tournel. Theol. Comp. t. 2, qu. 3, p. 41; Juenin, Theol. t. 3, c. 2.

[16188] St. Cypr. LI, de Unit. Eccl. St Ath.1. 1, ad Theoph.; St. Epiph. Haer. St. Fulg. 1. contra, Arian. Tertull. 1. adv. Prax. 25; St. Hier. (aut Auctor) Prol. ad Ep. Canon, Vitens.1. 3, de Pers. Air.

[16189] St. Cypr. LI, de Unit. Eccl. St Ath.1. 1, ad Theoph.; St. Epiph. Haer. St. Fulg. 1. contra, Arian. Tertull. 1. adv. Prax. 25; St. Hier. (aut Auctor) Prol. ad Ep. Canon, Vitens.1. 3, de Pers. Air.

[16190] St. Cypr. LI, de Unit. Eccl. St Ath.1. 1, ad Theoph.; St. Epiph. Haer. St. Fulg. 1. contra, Arian. Tertull. 1. adv. Prax. 25; St. Hier. (aut Auctor) Prol. ad Ep. Canon, Vitens.1. 3, de Pers. Air.

[16191] St. Cypr. LI, de Unit. Eccl. St Ath.1. 1, ad Theoph.; St. Epiph. Haer. St. Fulg. 1. contra, Arian. Tertull. 1. adv. Prax. 25; St. Hier. (aut Auctor) Prol. ad Ep. Canon, Vitens.1. 3, de Pers. Air.

[16192] St. Hilar. in 12 lib.; St. Greg. Nazian, in plur. Orat. Nyss. Orat. contra Ennom.; St. Chrys. in 5 Hom.; St. Amb. lib. de Spir. S. St. Augus.1. 15; Jo. Dam.1. 1 de Fide

[16193] St. Clem. Epis. ad Corint; St. Polyear. Orat. in suo marg. apud Euseb. L 4; His. c. 14; Athenagor. Leg. pro. Chris.; St. Iren. in ejus , oper.; Tertullian, contra Prax. Diony. Alex. Ep. ad Paul, Samosat.; St. Gregor. Thaum. in Expos. Fid.

[16194] St. Cyril, Alex.1. 11, in Jo. p. 99.

[16195] Origen lib. Con. Celsum.

[16196] Hilar.1. 7, de Trint. n. 10.

[16197] St. Jo. Chry. in Jo.

[16198] St. Thom, in cap. 1, Joan. loc. 2.

[16199] St. Aug.1. ii. cle Trinit. cap. 6.

[16200] St. Athan. Orat. con. Arian. n.9.

[16201] St. Cyprian, de Unit. Eccles

[16202] St. Aug. Tract 48 in Joan

[16203] St. Joan. Chrysos. Hom. 6 in Jo.

[16204] St. Athan. Orat. 4 ad Arian

[16205] St. Angus, lib. I, con. Maxim, cap. 24.

[16206] St. Augus. Ep. 66.

[16207] St. Hilar.1. 7, de Trin, n. 21.

[16208] St. Amb.1. 1, de Fide ad Gratian, c. 5.

[16209] St. Aug.1. 6, de Trinit. c. 5.

16210 St. Thomas, gates. Disp. de Poteutia, art. 14, ad 7.

16211 St. Thomas, 1. part, ques. 46, art. 2, 3.

16212 St. Augus. Trac. in Joan,

16213 St. Aug.1. 16, de Civ. c. 2.

16214 Euseb. His.1. 4, c. 13.

16215 Juenin, Theol. t. 3, c. 1, s. 1.

16216 St. Iraen, ad Haer.1. 3 c 6

16217 Idem,1. 4, r. 8.

16218 St. Iraen. ad Haer. I. 3, c. 11.

16219 Theoph.1. 5; Allegor. in Evang.

16220 Clem. Alex, in Admon. ad Graecos.

16221 Idem,1. 1; Paedagog. c. 8

16222 Origen,1. 3, cont. Celsum.

16223 Idem, 1. 4, cont. Celsum.

16224 Nat. Alex. sec. 3, Diss. 16, art. 2. (

16225 Dionys. Alex, apud St. Athan. t. 1, p. 561

16226 St. Greg. Thaum. p. 1, Oper. apud Greg. Nyssen. in Vita Greg. Thaum.

16227 St. Hier. de Scrip. Eccles. c. 34

16228 Theodoret, Dial. 1, p. 37.

16229 St. Cyprian, de lib. Unit Eccles.

16230 Idem,1. de Idol, vanit.

16231 Tertull. Apol. c. 21.

[16232] Idem, lib. con. Praxeam. c. 25.

[16233] Vide Juvenin. t. 3, q. 2, c. 1, a. 1, sec. 2; Tournely, t. 2, q. 4, art. 3, sec. 2; Antoin. Theol. Trac. de Trin. c. 1, art. 3.

[16234] Socinus Epist, ad Radoc, in t. 1, suor. Oper.

[16235] St. Ambrose,1. 5, de Fide, c. 8, n. 115

[16236] St. Hieron. in Cap. 4; Ep. ad Eph. St. August. lib. de Fid. & Simb.

[16237] St. Hilar. lib. de Synod, c. 5.

[16238] St. Aug.1. 5, de Trin. c. 12; St. Fulgent, lib. contra serm. fastid. Arian. St. Athanas. Orat. contra Arian.

[16239] St. Cyri1,1. 25; Thesaur

[16240] St. Basi1,1. 4, con. Eunom.

[16241] Tertul. con. Frax. c. 7.

[16242] St. Ambrose,1. 1, de Fide

[16243] St. Ambrose,1. 3, de Fide.

[16244] St. Ambrose,1. 5, de Fide. c. 16, n. 204

[16245] St. Ambrose,1. 2, de Fide. c. 1.

[16246] St. Angus. /. 1, de Trin. c. 12.

[16247] St. Thomas, 1, p. 9, 42, a. 6, ad 1.

[16248] Hilar. de Trin.1. 9.

[16249] Tertullian, con. Praxeam, c. 26.

16250 St. A than. Epis. ad Serassion, n. 6.

16251 St. Isidore,1. 7; Etymol. c. 4.

16252 St. Ambrose,1. 1 ,de Spir. S. c. 4.

16253 St. Basil, 15, con. Eunom.

16254 St Basil, 11, con. Eunom. et lib. de. Sp. S. c. 16; St. Ambrose1.1, de Spir. S. c. 4; St. Gregor. Nazianz. Orat. 37

16255 St. Augus. 12, con. Maximin. c. 21.

16256 St. Ambrose,1. 1, de S. S. c. 7.

16257 St. Athanas. Epis. 1, ad Serapion. n. 22.

16258 St. Athanas. ibid,

16259 Dydim.1. de St. San

16260 St. Augus. in I. Cor. c. 6; Coll. cum Maximin. in Arian.

16261 St. Fulgentius,1. 3, ad Trasimund, c. 35

16262 St. Basi1,1. 1, de S. Sancto, c. 25.

16263 St. Basi1,1. de S. Sancto, c. 29.

16264 St. Iragin,1. 1, ad Hagires. c. 19.

16265 St. Iragin.1. 5, c. 12.

16266 Clem. Alex. Pagidag.1. 1, c. 6. .

16267 Idem,1. 3, c. 7.

16268 Tertul. de Pudic. c. 21.

16269 Idem, con. Praxeam, c. 3

16270 St. Cyp. Ep. ad Juba.

16271 St. Athan. Ep. ad Scrap.; St. de S. San.; St. Cyril, Hieros. Cat. Basi1,1. 3, 5, cont. Eunom. &1. de 16, 17; St. Cyril, Alex.1. 7, de Spi. S.; St. Greg. Naz.1. 5, de Trin. & I de S. Sane.; St. Hil. de Theol.; St. Greg. Nys.1. ad Eust.; Trinit. St. Epiphan. Hier. 74; Didimus,1.

16272 Theodoret,1. 2, Hist. c. 22.

16273 St. Augus.1. 2, alias 3, coiit. Maxim, c. 3.

16274 St. Amb.1. 1, de Sanc. c. 3.

16275 St. Augus. Trac. 99, in Joan

16276 St. Ambrose,1. 2, de Sp. San. c. 12.

16277 St. Augus. Coll. cum Maxim.

16278 St. Ambrose,1. de Sp. San. c. 11.

16279 Osius,1. de Sac. Conjug,

16280 St. Augus.1. 4, de Trinit. c. 20.

16281 St. Augus. Trac. 99, in Joan.

16282 St. Augus.1. 4, de Trin. c. 20.

16283 St. August.1. 2 (alias 3), cent. Maxim, c. 14

16284 St. Anse1.1 de Proc. Spi. S. c. 7.

16285 St. Greg. Nyss.1. ad Ablav.

16286 St. Greg. Nyss.1. ad Ablavium.

16287 St. Angus, trac 39 in Jo.

16288 Jo. Damasc.1.I, de Fide, c. 11.

16289 St. Cyril in Joelem, c. 2

16290 Idem,1. 14, Thesaur.

16291 St. Athan. Oat. 3, cont. Arian. n . 24

16292 St. Basi1,1. 5, cont. Eunom.

16293 Tertu1.1. cont. Praxeam, c. 4

16294 St. Hilar.1. 2, de Trin

16295 St. Ambrose,1. 1, ile S. S. c. 11

16296 Idem, de Symb. ap. r. 30. art. 10.

16297 St. Dionys.1. 1, de Divin. nom. c. 2.

16298 St. Athan. Quaes. de Nat Dei.

16299 St. Maxim. Ep. ad Marin.

16300 St. Damas. I. 1, de Fide Orth. c. 11.

16301 St. Greg. Nazian. Orat. 24, ad Episcop

16302 Petavius.1. 7, de Trin. c. 17, n. 12n

16303 Petavius.1. 7, de Trin. c. 17, n. 12n

16304 Petavius.1. 7, de Trin. c. 17, n. 12n

16305 St. Augus.1. de Spir. S. et litt.

16306 St. Augus.1. 4, con. Julian, c. 3.

16307 St. Augus. loc. cit. ad Corinth.

16308 St. Aug.1. 2, dc Praed. S.S. . c. 2.

16309 St. Aug. I. 2, de Pec. mer. c. 18.

16310 St. Cypri. I. 3, acl Quir. c. 4.

16311 St. Amb. I. 7, in Luc. c. 3

16312 St. Chrysos. Hom. 13, in Jean.

16313 Idem, Hom. 22, in Gen.

16314 St. Chrysos. Hom, in cap. 4, 1, ad Cor

16315 St. Hieron, I 3, con. Pelag. .

16316 Idem, Ep. ad Demetri.

16317 Idem, Ep. ad Ctesiphon.

16318 St. Prosp. Resp. ad c. 8, Gallor

16319 C. Orsi; Ir. Ecc t. 13,1. 29, n. 52, cum St. Prosp I, con. Collat. c. 21 ,

16320 St. Augus.1. 2, con. 2, Epis. Pelag, c. 5.

16321 St. Thom. 1, 2, 9,109, a. 4, ad. 2.

16322 St. Aug1. de Praed S. S. c. 2.

16323 Ibid. c, 3.

16324 St. Aug. ibid, c. 1.

16325 St. Aug.1. de Dono. persev. c. 23,

16326 St. Aug. de Nat. & Gratia. c. 44

16327 St. Aug. Ibid

16328 Ibid.

16329 St. Aug. I. 3, de Lib. Arb. c. 19, n. 53.

16330 Idem,1. 1, ad Simp.q. 2.

16331 Idem, Trac. 26, in Joan. c. 22, n. 65.

16332 St. Aug. de Grat. & Lib. Arb. c. 18.

16333 Jansen.1. 3, de Grat. Christ. c. 11.

16334 Bellar. I 2, de Grat. & Lib. Art. c. 3

16335 St. Aug. 1. de Spir. & lit. c. 33, & in Ps. 18,n.7

16336 St. Pros, dc Voc. Gent.1. 2, . c . 5.

16337 St. Thom. Quaes. 14, de Verit. art. 11, ad. 1.

16338 St. Cyril, Dial. 9.

16339 St. Ignat. Epis. ad Eph. n. 20.

16340 St. Iren.1. 3, c. 26, al. 18, n. 2.

16341 St. Athan1. de Inc Verb. n. 2

16342 St. Greg. Naz. Orat. 31

16343 St. Joan. Chry. Ep. ad Cuesar.

16344 St. Amb. De Incar. c. 5

16345 St. Hieron. trac. 49, in Joan. & seq.

16346 Concil. Ephes. t. 3; Con. p. 115,

16347 Petav.1. 7, c. 4, n. 11, et c. 5, n. 8.

16348 Vide Tournelly, Comp. Theol. t. 4, p. 2, Incarn. c. 3, ar. 1, p. 800, signanter, p. 817, vers. ter.

16349 St. Ignat. Ep. ad Ephe. a. 14

16350 St. Justin, Apol. &Dialog, cum Triphon. n. 44.

16351 Iraen.1. 3, c. 21, al. 31, n. 10.

16352 St. Dionis. Ep. ad Paul, Samos.

16353 St. Athan. Orat, 3, a. 4, con. Arian.

16354 St. Greg. Nazian. Orat 51.

16355 St. Chrysos. Horn. 2, in Matth. n. 2.

16356 Tertu1.1. de Cor. Chris, c. 17

16357 St. Ambr. Ep. 63.

16358 St. Hier.1. con.,Elvid.

16359 St. Aug. in Enchir. cap. 36

16360 St. Cyril, Ep. 1 ad Success.

16361 Tom. 4; Concil. Labboei. p. 223, 226.

16362 Vide t. 2, Concil.p. 900, 964.

16363 Petav.1. 3, de Incar. c. 6, 7.

16364 St. Ignat. Ep. Eph. 7.

16365 St. Hi1.1. 9, de Trin.

16366 St. Greg. Nazian. Orat. de Nat

16367 St. Ambrose,1. 2, de Fide, c. 9, alias 4, n. 79.

16368 St. Chiysos. in Psalm xliv, n. 4.

16369 St. Aug.1. 1, de Trin. c. 7 n. 14.

16370 St. John Chrys. Hom. 11, in Joan.

16371 St. August. Ser. 187, & al. 77, de Tempore.

16372 St. Iraen.1. 2, ad. User. c. 21; Tertull. Apol. c 21; St. Cyprian, Van. Idol.; St Grog. Nyss. Catech c. 25; St. Angus. Ep. 137, al. 3, ad Volusian.; St. Leo, Ser. 3, in die Natal

16373 Leon, de Sect. art. 4

16374 Petav.1. 8, de Incar. c. 4, et seq.

16375 St. Augus.1. 2, Adv. Maximin. c. 20.

16376 St. Ambros.1. 20, in Luc. n. 69, &60.

16377 Petav.1. 3, de Incarn. c. 8 & 9.

16378 St. Joan. Damas. Ora. de duab. Chris. Volunt,

16379 St. Jo. Damas.1. 3, de Fide Or thodox. c. 19.

16380 St. Athanas. in I. de Adv. Chri.

16381 St. Greg. Naz. Orat, 2 de Filio.

16382 St. Cyril, Alex.1. 4, in Joan.

16383 St. Joan.Damas Orat. de 2 Chris. Volent.

16384 Mosh. His. t. 3, Cent. IX. c. 3, p. 1175.

16385 St. Aug.1. 3, de Doct, Chris. c. 10.

16386 St. Cyril. Hieros. Cath. Mystagog. 4.

16387 Calvin. Instit.1. 4, c. 17, s. 1.

16388 St. Thom. Loc. 9, in Joan.

16389 St. Hilar.1. 8, de Trin. n. 13.

16390 St. Ignat. Ep. ad Smirn. ap. Theodor. Dial.

16391 St. Iraen.1. ad Huer. c. 18, al 34

16392 Idem, 1. 4, c. 34

16393 St. Justin. Apol. 2

16394 Tertu1.1. Resur. c. 8. c. 9

16395 Grig. Hom. 5, in divers.

16396 St. Amb.1. 4, de Sacram. c. 4,

16397 St. Chrys. Horn, ad Pop. Antioch. .

16398 Apud. Antoin. de Euch. Theol. Univer. c. 4, 1.

16399 St. Aug.1. 2, con. adver. legis. c. 9

16400 St. Remig. in Ep. ad Cor. c. 10.

16401 St. Greg. Hom. 22, in Evang.

16402 St. Joan. Daneas,1. 4, Orthodox, c. 14.

16403 St. Aug.1. 3, de Doct. Christian. c. 16.

16404 St. Aug. Ser. 83, de Div. n. 27.

16405 Bossuet, His. des Variat. t. 2,1. 9; Du Hamel, Theol. De Euch.

16406 Calvin, Inst.1. 4, c. 1 1 .

16407 Idem

16408 Idem

16409 Bossuet, t. 2,1. 9

16410 Thuan.1. 28, r. 48.

16411 St. John Chrysos. Hom, in Joan

16412 St. Aug. Tract 27 in Joan,

16413 St. Fulgen. ad Ferrand. Dial, do Zuing. quweest. ix, 5.

16414 Luther, lib. con. Reg. Angliac.

16415 St. Thom, p. 3, qn. 75, iirt.1.

16416 St. Cyril, Hieros. Cath. Mystagog.

16417 St. Greg. Nyssa. Orat. Cath. c. 37.

16418 St. Ambrose de Initland. c. 9

16419 St. Jo. Damas.1. 4, Orthod. Fidei. c. 14

16420 Tertul. contra Marcion.1. 4, c. 4; Chrysos. Hom. 4, in una cor. St. Hi1.1. 8, de Trinit.

16421 Bossuet. Variat. t. 1,1. 2, i. 31; Ospinian. ann. 1527, p. 49.

16422 St. Thom p. 3, q. 76, a. 1,

16423 St. Thom 3 p. qu. 76, a. 5, ad. 3.

16424 St. Chrysost. Horn. 60, ad Pap.

16425 Tertu1.1. 2, ad Uxor. c. 5.

16426 St. Cypri. Tract, de Lapsis.

16427 St. Basil, Ep. 289 ad Cesar. Patriciam

16428 St. Justin. Apol. 2, p. 97

16429 St. Iraen. Ep. ad Vic. Pon.

16430 St. Greg. Nazian. Orat. 11

16431 St. Ambr. Orat. de obitu fratris Satyri.

16432 Miibill. Liturg. Gallic.1. 2, r. 0, n. 20.

16433 Tournelly, t. 2, de Euch. p. 105, n. 5

16434 Niceph. Histor. I 17, c. 25.

16435 Ifstius, in 4, dist. S, c. 6.

16436 St. Thorn, q. 74, art. 3, ad 2,

16437 St. Thom. 3, p. q. 73, art. 2.

16438 Petr. de Marca Diss. posthuma de Sacrif. Missa

16439 Luther,1. de Abrog. Missa

16440 Calvin, Inst.1. 4, c. 17, sec. 39.

16441 Arcud.1. 3, c. 28.

16442 Durand. Z. 4. de Div. Offic. c. 41, n. 13

16443 Innoc. III. 14, Myst. c. 6.

16444 Ap. Tournelly Comp. de Euch. qu. 4, a. 6, p. 184.

16445 Gotti, Theol. du Euch. qu. 2, sec.1,n.2.

16446 St. Thom. 3, p. q. 78, a. 1.

16447 St. Thom, loc. cit. a. 5.

16448 Le Brun, t. 3, rer. Liturg. p. 212

16449 St. Thom 3, p. q. 78, a. 5.

16450 St. Ambrose, de Sacramen. t 4, c . 4.

16451 St. Chrisost. Hom. 1 de Prod. Judae

16452 St. Justin, Apol. 2.

16453 St. Iraen.1. 5, c. 2.

16454 St. Justin Apol. 2

16455 St. Iren.1. 4, c. 24, &1. 3, c. 2

16456 St. Aug. Serm. 28, de Verb. Do

16457 Idem, de Trinit. c. 4

16458 Bellar.1. 4 de Euchar. c. 19.

16459 Salmeron. t. 9, trac. 13, p. 88; Tournell. de Euchar. 9, 4, a. 6, vers. Quaer.

16460 Tournell. loc. cit. p. 191, v. Dices. 1

16461 St. Thorn. 3 p. 9, 78, a. 1, ad 4.

16462 Liguor. Theol. Moral t. 2, dub. 6 de Euch. &c.

16463 St. Thom, in 4 Dist. 8, q. 2, ar. 2, q. 2.

16464 Cap. xi, Cent, xvi, ar. 3.

16465 St. Aug.1. de Ver. Rel. c. 14.

16466 St. Aug. 1. de Sp. &Lit. c. 1, &1. de Perf. Just. Resp

16467 St. Thom. 2, 2 qu. 44, art. 8, ad. 2.

[16468] Calvin in Antid. Con. Trid. Sess. vi, c. 12.

[16469] St. Thom. 1, 2, qu. 96, art. 5.

[16470] Ap. St. Aug. dc Corrept, et Grat. t. 10, c. 4, n. 6, in fine

[16471] St. Aug. i bid, c. 5, n. 7

[16472] Luther, in Assert, art. 31.

[16473] Idem, art. 33

[16474] Idem, art. 36.

[16475] Becan. Man. contr.1. 1, c. 18, ex Calv. Inst,1. 2, t. I, sec. 9, &c.

[16476] St. Augus. in Psalm, 83.

[16477] St. Cyprian de Unit,

[16478] St. Chrysos.1. 5, I. 1, de Prav

[16479] St. Aug.1. de Nat. et Grat c 2

[16480] Idem. Epis. 165.

[16481] St. Aug. I. 15 de Trin. c. 18.

[16482] Pich. Theol. Pol. par. post. ar. 6.

[16483] Bossuet. Variat.1. 8, n. 30 in fine

[16484] Calvin,1. de vera rat. Reform. Eccles.

[16485] Luther, Serm. de Indulg. t. 1, p. 59.

[16486] Luther Serm. de Indulg. t. 1, p. 30.

[16487] Calvin, Instit,1. 3, c. 2, s. 38

[16488] Bossuet, Var. t. 3, I. 14, n. 16.

[16489] Calv. Ant. ad Con. Trid. s. 6, c. 13.

[16490] Recuil. de Genevre, part 2, p . 169.

[16491] Bossuet, Variat. t. 3,1. 14, n. 16.

[16492] Calvin, Inst.1. 3, c. 23, sec. 7, infra

[16493] Idem, ibid, sec. 39.

[16494] Idem,1. 3, c. 4, sec. 3.

[16495] Calvin, Inst,1.1, c. 18, sec. 4.

[16496] Idem,1. 1, c. 17, sec. 5.

[16497] Zuing. Serm. de Provid. c. 6

[16498] Calv.1.1, c. 1, sec. 3.

[16499] Calvin, Inst.1. 1, c. 10, sec. 3.

16500 Calvin. Inst.1. 1, c. 18, s. 1.

16501 Zuing. Serm. de Provident, c. 5

16502 Calv.1. 3, c. 23. s. 2.

16503 Tertull. le cont. Hermog

16504 St. Ambr. i. de Par. c. 15.

16505 St. Augus.1. 105, ad Sixtum.

16506 Calvin. Inst.1. 1, c. 21, sec. 5

16507 Calvin, Inst.1. 1, c. 21. s. 5.

16508 St. Prosper. Resp. ad 2. Object. Vin

16509 St.Chrysos. in 1, Tim. 2, Hom. 7.

16510 St. Joan. Damas.1. 2, de Fide. Orthod. c. 2.

16511 St, Thom, cap. 6, Joan. lee. 4.

16512 Petav. Theol. t. 1, I. 10, c. 15, n. 5.

16513 Nodus Praed. Par. 1.

16514 St. Hier. Comment, in c. 1, ad Ephesios.

16515 St. Hilar. Ep. ad Aug.

16516 St. Paulin. Ep. 24, ad Sever.n.9

16517 St. Ambr. de Libro Parad, c. 8.

16518 Petrocor. The01.1. 1, c. 3, q. 4.

16519 Mezzo della Preghiera Par. 2, c. 4.

16520 St. Thom, ad I. Tim, ii, lect. 1.

16521 St. Chrysos. Horn. 43, de Longitud. prem.

16522 St. Augus. I. 3, contra Julian, c. 18.

16523 Centuriat. 102, c. 4

16524 St. Fulgent,1. 1, ad Monim. c. 24.

16525 St. Thom, quaest. 14, de Verit. art. 11, ad 1.

16526 Idem in Epist. ad Hebr. c. 12, lect. 3.

16527 St. Aug. de Anima,1. 2, c. 12, n. 17.

16528 St. Thom, in 2, Sent. Dist. 28, qu. 1, a. 3

16529 Idem, ques. 24, de Verit. a. 14, ad 2.

16530 Ambro. I. 2, de Abel. c. 3.

16531 St. Augus. trac. 12, in Joan, cir. fin.

16532 Idem.

16533 St. Isid. Pelus.1. 2, Ep. 270.

16534 St. Augus. Ep. 194, ad Sixtum

16535 Idem, Tract, in Joan.

16536 St. Angus. Ep. 194, ad Sixtum.

16537 St. Aug. I. de Corrept. et Grat. c. 5 &6, ad 1.

16538 St. Fulgen. I. 1, ad Monim. c. 16. Gallor. c 6.

16539 Calvin,1. 3, c. 21, sec. 7.

16540 St. Prosp. in libell. ad Capit.

16541 St. Prosper, Res. 3 ad Capit. Gallor.

16542 Luther, lib. de Concil. ar. 28, 29.

16543 Joan Vysembogard. Ep. ad Lud. Colin.

16544 St. Athanas. Ep. de Synod. Arim. St. Epiphan. An. at. in fin.; St. Cyprian,1. 4, Ep. 9; St. Angus. 1. 1, contra at. c. 18; St. Greg. Ep. 24 ad Patriarch.

16545 St. Greg. Nazianz. Ep. ad Cledon.; St. Basil, Ep. 78; St. Cyril, de Trinit.; St. Ambr. Ep. 32; St. Athan. Ep. ad Episc. Afric.; St. Aug.1. I, de Bapt. c. 18; St. Leo, Ep. 77, ad Anatol

16546 Calv. List.1. 4, c. 9, sec. 3.

16547 St. Aug. de Unit. Eccl. c. 11.

16548 Calvin, loc. cit. sec. 4.

16549 St. Augus.1. 32, contra Faust, c. 13; St. Hier. Ep. ad Aug. quae est 11, inter Epist. August.

16550 St. Aug. loc. cit.

16551 Kuffin. Histor.1. 10, c. 32.

16552 Bellar. de Conc.1. 2, c. 8, v. 13.

16553 Beda, lib. de sex. aetatib.

16554 Luther de Conc. art. 29, &Calvin, Inst.1. 4, c. 9, sec. 8.

16555 Calvin, Inst,1. 4, c. 0, sec. 14.

16556 Vedi Pallavic. Istor. del Cone, di Trento, t. 2, c. 15, n. 9.

16557 Estius, in 20 Act. v. 12.

16558 St. Cypr. Ep. ad Pupinum.

16559 St. Ignat. Ep. ad Trallian.

16560 Tom. 4, Conc. p;. 111.

16561 St. Cypr. Ep. ad Jubajan; St Hilar. de Synod.; St. Ambr. Ep.22 St. Hieron. Apol. 2 contra Ruffin. Osius ap. St. Athanas. Ep. ad Solit. St. Leo Magnus Ep. 16.

16562 Luther, Ser. in A bus. t.7, p—275.

16563 Jansen.1. 3, d. Statu. nat. pur. c. ult.

16564 Comp. Thool. t. 5, p.1, Disp. 5, art. 3, s. 2.

16565 St. August.1. 3, de lib. arb. c. 20.

16566 Tourn. t. 5, p. 2, c. 7, p. 67.

16567 Tourn. t. 5, p. 2, c. 7, p. 67.

16568 St. August.1. 3, de lib. arb. c. 20, 22, 23

16569 St. August.1. 3, de lib. arb. c. 20, 22, 23

16570 St. Thom, qu. 4, de Malo. a. 1

16571 Idem in Summa. 1, p. q. 95, art. 1.

16572 Bellarm.1. de Grat. primi hom. cap. 5. (

16573 St. August.1. 3, contra Julian, cap. 12.

16574 St. Thorn. 1. 4, contra Gentes, c. 50.

16575 St. Thom, q. 22, de Verit.

16576 Idem 4, Sent. Dist. 49. q. 1, art. 3.

16577 Jansen.1. 4, de Grat. Christ, c. 11.

16578 Jansen. de lib arb. I. 2, c. 4

16579 Jansen.1. 7, de Grat. Chr. c. 3, vide etiam, c. 50.

16580 Idem, eod. tit. 7. 7, c. 3.

16581 Idem, eod. tit.1. 8, c. 2

16582 Jansen.1. 2, c. 4

16583 Jans, de Grat. Christ.1. 4, c. 7, &1. 7, c. 5.

16584 Ibid, 11, c. 5

16585 Chap. 12, art. 3.

16586 St August, lib. dc Nat. et Grat. c. 26.

16587 St August, lib. dc Nat. et Grat. c. 26.

16588 St August, lib. dc Nat. et Grat. c. 26.

16589 Idem de Fide contra Manich.1. 10.

16590 St. August, lib. do Nat. et Grat. c. 43

16591 Idem Serm. 191, de Temp,

16592 St. August, lib de Nat, &Grat. c. 26

16593 St. Thorn. Lect. 1, in cap. 1, Epist. 1 ad Cor.

16594 Jansen.1. 4, de Grat, Christ. c. 9.

16595 Janscn. cod. tit.1. 2, c 24.

16596 St. August, Horn. 12, inter 50

16597 St. Aug.1. 6, dc Grat. Clir. c . 6

16598 Idem eod. tit. c. 24.

16599 Idem,1. 3, de lib. arb. c. 3.

16600 St. Aug. de Nat. & Grat. c. 67

16601 St. Aug.1. 2 de Peccator. merit. c. 17.

16602 Idem de Praedest. Ss. c. 3 in Ep. 227 ad Vital, n. 9.

16603 Janscn. I. 3 de Grat. Christ. c. 21

16604 Chap. 4, art. 1, n. 16.

16605 Jansen. I. 3, de Grat. Christ. c. 3

16606 St. Ambrose, in Ps. 118, t. 1, p.1077

16607 Idem,1. de Joseph, c. 7

16608 St. Hier. in Ep. 2, ad Cor. c.5.

[16609] St. Prosp. ad object. 9, Gallor.

[16610] St. Anselm. in c. 2, Ep. 1, ad Tim.

[16611] St. Aug. Tract. 12, in Joan. circa fin.

[16612] St. Prosp. de Vocat. Gent. c. 4.

[16613] St. August.1. 3, dc lib. arb. c. 19, n. 53.

[16614] Chap. 4, art. 2, n. 16.

[16615] Bossuet, lib. Justisic. des Reflex. &c. sec. 16, p. 100

[16616] Syn. Valent. com. Concil. p. 136

[16617] Eccl. Lugdun.1.deten.ver.&c.c.5.

[16618] Antoine Theol. univers. t. 2, de Grat. c. 1, a. 6, ad Prop. 5.

[16619] Tourn. The01.1. 1, q. 8, art. 10, Concl. 2.

[16620] St. August. Tract. 2, in Ep.1, Jo.

[16621] St. Thom. 2, 2, q. 18, a. 4.

[16622] Bossuet Catech. Meldens. 3, p. 161, n. 117.

[16623] St. Thom. 2, 2, qu. 18, art. 4 ad 3.

[16624] St. August. Medis. 50, cap. 14.

[16625] St. Thomas, 2, 2 7. 180, a. 8, ad 2

[16626] St. Aug. Conf.1. 10, c. 40.

[16627] St. Thom. 3 p. q.1, 39, a. 5.

[16628] St. August.1. 5, de Civ. c. 20

[16629] St. Bern. Serm. 49, de Modo bene viv. or. 7.

[16630] Berruyer, t. 8, p. 59

16631 Idem, ibid, . 60.

16632 St. Iraeneus, 117, adv. Haeres

16633 St. Athan. Epist. ad Epictetum

16634 St. Cyrill. in Commonitor. ad Eulogium.

16635 St. Chrisost. Hom. 3, ad c. 1, Ep. ad Caesar

16636 St. Basil. Horn, in Princ. Johann.

16637 St. Greg. Thaumat. in Vita St. Greg. Nyss

16638 St. August. Serm. 38, de Verb. Dom.

16639 St. August, in Euchirid, c. 30.

16640 Euseb. Ces.1. I, de Fide.

16641 P. Berruyer, t. 8, p. 89 & 98

16642 Berruyer, t. 8, p. 8,

16643 Berruyer, t. 8, p. 83.

16644 St .Fulgent. Fragm. 32, I. 9.

16645 St. Athan. Epist. 2, ad Scrapion.

16646 St. Thom. 3, p. 711, 32, art. 3.

16647 Tertull. adv. Praxcam, n. 50.

16648 Catech. Rom. c. 3. art. 2, n. 11,

16649 St. Thomas, p. 1, q. 4, ar. 1.

16650 St. Hilar.1. 10, de Trin

16651 St. Greg. Naziaii. Orat. 31.

16652 St. John Chrysos. Ep. ad Caesar. et Hom. 3, ad cap. 1

16653 St. Hieron. Tract 40, in Jo

16654 St. August, in Euchirid. cap. 33.

16655 St. August, in Euchirid. cap. 33.

16656 St. August, in Euchirid. cap. 33.

16657 Berruyer, t. 8, p. 63.

16658 St. Athanasius, contra Apollinar1. 1, w. 15.

16659 St. Greg. Nyss. Orat. 1 in Christ. Resur

16660 St. Aug. Tract 78, in Joan. w. 2.

16661 St. Jo. Damasc. 1. 3, de Fide, c. 27.

16662 St. Hilar. r. 33, in Matth. part 2, pag. 487

16663 St. Ambros. I. 10, in Luc. c. 13

16664 Cont. Tournely, de Incarn. t, 4,

16665 Conc. Lat. IV. in cap. Firmiter, de Summ. Trin. &c.

16666 Berruyer, t. 8, p. 66.

16667 Berruyer, t. 8, p. 53.

16668 Idem, p. 22.

16669 Idem, ;p. 18, 19.

16670 Berruyer, t. 8, p. 20, 21, & 23.

16671 Idem,p. 53.

16672 Berruyer, t. 8, p. 53 & 95.

16673 St. Augus. in EucMrid. c. 35.

16674 St. Cyrill. Ep. 2, ad Nestor.

16675 St. Leo, Ep. ad Julian.

16676 St. Aug. in Euchir. c. 36

16677 St, Jo. Dam.1. 4 Fide orth, c.6.

16678 Berruyer, t. 8, p. 18.

16679 St. Cyr. Epist. ad Nestor.

16680 St. Thom. 3 ;p. qu. 2, ar. 6, ad 4.

16681 Bossuet, Diss. Ilistor. p. 2

16682 St. Thom, p. 3, q. 19, a. 1.

16683 St. Hieron. Tract. 49, in Joan.

16684 St. Ambr. ap. St. Leon, in Ep. 134.

16685 St. Leo, Serm. 66

16686 St. Augu. in Euchirid. c. 35.

16687 St. Thomas, 3, p. qu. 60, art. 8.

16688 St. Thom. 3, p. q. 44, art. 4

16689 Idem, ibid, qu. 21, art. 1, ad 1.

16690 St. Ambros. in Luc

16691 St. Hilar.1. 10, de Trinit

16692 St. Ambros.1. 3, de Fide, c. 4.

16693 St. Thom. 3 p. q, 43, art. 4.

16694 St. Aug.1. 18 de C. D. c. 47.

16695 St. Aug. de Nat. et Grat. p. 149.

16696 St. Aug. de Nupt. et concup.1. 2 p.113

16697 Seneca, Eplst. 73.

16698 Idem, de Constantia Sap. c. R

16699 Idem, Epist. 53.

16700 Cicero de Nat. Deor. p. 253.

16701 St. Aug. de Civit. Dei, I. 8, c. 12.

16702 Berruyer, t. I, p. 58.

16703 Selvag. in Mosh. vol. 1, n. GS.

16704 St. Thom. 3, p. q. 23, a. 1.

16705 St. Thom. 3 p. q. H, a. 3.

16706 St. Thorn, p. 3, ar. 1, ad. 2

16707 St. August, lib de Agone Christiano, c. 11.

16708 Saggio Storico di Prof. Candido M. Romano, Roma Libreria Salesiano, 1896.

16709 St. Denis Areop. De Div. Nom. c. 4.

16710 Bl. H. Suso L. 2, c. 4.

16711 St. Teresa, Obras 4:27, 28

16712 Suso, Serm. 2 (Opera colon Agrip.)

16713 Ibid.

16714 St. August in Ps. 131:3

16715 St. John Avil. Letters 41.

16716 St. Aug. in Ps. 73.

16717 Ibid.

16718 ML (Vitae Patrum. Exact citation unknown.

[16719] Caesarius: Dial. distin. 10: cap. 9.

[16720] Anton. Panorm. De dictis Alph. bk. 4.

[16721] St. Salvian. De Gubern, Dei. Bk 1. no. 2.

[16722] St. Doroth, Doctrina 7:4 & 6.

[16723] Puccine. Vita. Part. 1. chap 59.

[16724] Tauler, Serm. De Fest. pge 473 foll.

[16725] St. Aug. Opera. Cap. 34 ML 40–966.

[16726] St. Leo Serm. de Nat. 2. cap. 1.

[16727] Ibid.

[16728] St. John Avil. Epist. 2.

[16729] St. Bernard, Med. chap 8.

[16730] St. John Avila. Audi fil. c. 13.

[16731] Mother Angiola del Cielo, called in the world Maria de Vito, was born at Naples in the year 1700. At the age of 19, burning with the desire to consecrate herself to the Spouse of virgins, she in company with her sister entered a conservatory which had recently been founded in the little town of Scala. Her great piety and the soundness of her judgment were such that, though still very young, she was considered worthy to fill the responsible position of mistress of novices, and in the year 1729 she was elected Superior of the Community. Understanding, however, from certain supernatural revelations that another Rule, the principle aim of which should be the continual imitation of our Saviour Jesus Christ, was to be substituted for the Rule hitherto observed, Mother Angiola employed all her energy to bring about this change, since the above-mentioned revelations had received the approval of St. Alphonsus during the spiritual exercises given by him in September, 1730. The following year, in the month of May, the conservatory of Scala adopted the new Rule, taking at the same time the name of the Most Holy Saviour. Thus was most solemnly begun the Institute known today by the name of the nuns of the Most Holy Redeemer or Redemptoristines, whose Rule received the approbation of the Holy See in 1750.

Mother Angiola was frequently re-elected Superior, so that we might almost say she always presided over that fervent Community. She enjoyed the good fortune of having for upwards of ten years the Venerable Gennaro Sarnelli as her spiritual director, and the numerous letters addressed to her, which are now in our possession, show us clearly the height of sanctity to which she attained.

This holy religious, whose memory is blessed among the children of St. Alphonsus, died a holy death, in the year 1782.

[16732] Tommaso Falcoia, a member of the Order of the Pious Workers, was the spiritual director of the nuns of Scala. He was at that time at Rome, where during the same month he was consecrated bishop.

[16733] Cor mio, confida e spera:

Che la tempesta ancor,

Condune sa talor

La nave in porto.

[16734] Giovanni Mazzini was one of the first companions of the saint.

[16735] These little remembrances were written on separate small slips of paper; they have all been lost.

[16736] Sister Maria Raffaella was the sister of Mother Angiola del Cielo, and she it was who in the year 1767 founded the monastery of the nuns of the Most Holy Redeemer, at St. Agatha of the Goths.

[16737] Our saint was accustomed to employ this tender epithet when speaking of the most holy Mother of God.

[16738] The word *imprecations* is here used ironically.

[16739] “Motives for Loving God,” explained in meditations taken from the works of several authors of the Society of Jesus, work published by P. Jacopo Sanvitale, S. J.

[16740] A sacred diary for devout clients of Mary, for every day in the year, by P. Francesco Marchese, of the Oratory at Rome.

[16741] Mention is made of her in the preceding letter.

[16742] This Congregation referred to was an association of diocesan missionaries, called the association of *apostolic missions*, of which St. Alphonsus was always a member.

[16743] Reference is here made to the foundation of the Congregation of the Most Holy Saviour, which in the year 1749 received the approbation of Benedict XIV., under the title of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[16744] This priest was one of the first companions of St. Alphonsus.

[16745] Our readers will thank us for giving here a sketch of the life of Mgr. Falcoia, the holy prelate and zealous apostle, whose name occurs so often in the following letters. He was born on the 16th of May, 1663. Having spent his youth happily in the acquisition of virtue, and in the study of the humanities, he felt himself drawn to a life of perfection. Following the advice of that venerable and

saintly man, Antonio Torres, he at the age of twenty turned his hack upon the world, and dedicated himself entirely to God and to the salvation of souls in the zealous Congregation of the Pious Workers.

Scarcely ordained priest, he was considered worthy to be sent to Rome in company with that great servant of God, Ludovico Sabbatini, in order to found there the first house of the Institute. He spent there twenty years, carrying out many works conducive to the glory of God, and to the salvation of souls. After his return to Naples, he was called upon to fill the highest and most difficult offices of the Congregation which he did with the greatest care and diligence, working, however, at the same time as a fervent and untiring missionary. Here too, as in Rome, and wherever he appeared, he drew all hearts to himself by the odor of his virtues. His spirit of prayer, of mortification, his zeal for the salvation of souls, and, above all, his earnest desire to copy as closely as possible the example of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, endeared him to all who knew him.

God now wished to place this great light upon the candlestick, to illumine the Church; he was accordingly selected to rule the diocese of Castellammare, which position he retained up to the clay of his death; all his thoughts were concentrated upon the discharge of his duties by word and deed, God aiding and confirming his works by signs and wonders as frequent as they were extraordinary.

But the greatest glory of Falcoia was to have been chosen by God to form and guide the illustrious Apostle and Doctor of modern times, St. Alphonsus. In fact, the saint had him as director from the 24th of August 1732 to the end of Falcoia’s life, and he surrendered himself so entirely into his hands that he bound himself by vow to obey him. He depended on him in everything, especially in the foundation of the Institute, and in the manifold contradictions to which the work gave rise. The fatherly solicitude of the loving and prudent director was equal to the filial confidence of his disciple. He consoled St. Alphonsus in all his afflictions, and inspired him with courage, telling him that though the Congregation was as yet as small as a grain of mustard seed, yet the time would come when it would be spread throughout the world.

We shall select only a few among many beautiful instances of this. On the 31st of July, 1733, he wrote to St. Alphonsus: “Happy we who have been selected, for we by our humiliations, fatigue and suffering have to bear the triumphal chariot of divine glory through the whole world. Great courage then, my dear Alphonsus!

Scalpri salubris ictibus

Et tunsione plurima,

Fabri polita malleo

Hanc saxa molem construunt.”

[Many a blow and biting sculpture

Polished well those stones elect,

In their places now compacted

By the heavenly architect.]

On the 28th of July, of the following year, he wrote the following words: “Do not trouble yourself about anything else, neither about the work, nor about yourself who have been chosen by the divine Majesty as the principal instrument for the erection of the new edifice, and for carrying his name among the peoples and kingdoms.” He expressed the very same sentiments on his deathbed when in a spirit of prophecy he said of the new Congregation: *This work comes from God, and it will spread like the flowers of the field*. Shortly after he departed this life with every mark of sanctity, and predestination on the 20th of April, 1743.

We possess more than one hundred letters written by Falcoia to St. Alphonsus, but very few of those written by the saint to his director. There is good reason to believe that when these letters passed into the hands of St. Alphonsus after the death of Falcoia, he destroyed them in a spirit of humility.

[16746] The saint was a member of the Congregation of the Apostolic Missions, which, as a reward for his indefatigable labors, had given him a chaplaincy.

[16747] The Congregation disapproving of the saint’s undertaking had decided upon his expulsion.

[16748] One of his first companions, who opposed his Rule and his work in order to embrace a new Institute.

[16749] Maria Celeste Crostarosa was born at Naples, October 11, 1697. It was she who, in consequence of a revelation, suggested to St. Alphonsus the plan for the foundation of the Congregation of the Most Holy Saviour. Falling under the influence of Don Vincenzo Mannarini, and especially of Don Silvestro Tosquez, after the foundation of the Institute, she began to withdraw from the spiritual guidance of Mgr. Falcoia. She, moreover, began to entertain certain ideas with regard to the establishment of a Rule entirely at variance with those held by St. Alphonsus and by Mgr. Falcoia himself. In consequence of this, Providence permitted her to be dismissed from the convent. After leaving Scala, she reformed a conservatory of maidens at Nocera. Having been called to Foggia, she founded there another conservatory for the daughters of the nobility, which is at present, under the title of the Most Holy Saviour, a source of great edification for that town. She died with the reputation of heroic virtue, September 14, 1755, and her body remained in a wonderful state of preservation for many years.

[16750] The Sister had written to the saint these cutting remarks.

[16751] Don Bartolomeo Carace had been the first spiritual director of the nun.

[16752] Don Silvestro Tosquez had a brother who filled a very high position at the Imperial Court of Vienna.

[16753] Chap. x. *Foundations.*

[16754] The Sister had written various rules, which she said were revealed to her by Jesus Christ.

[16755] At this period St. Alphonsus and Mgr. Falcoia intended to combine the work of the missions with that of the schools.

[16756] Don Giovanni Battista di Donato, before joining St. Alphonsus, had been a member of a recently founded Congregation at Teano which he afterwards, in company with Don Vincenzo Mannarini and Silvestro Tosquez, again entered. The Congregation then took the name of the Most Holy Sacrament.

[16757] By the advice of Alphonsus Don Giovanni Battista di Donato had become Superior of the new Community of Scala.

[16758] Nicola Guerriero was Bishop of Scala.

[16759] She was a nun at Scala, and had received many supernatural favors.

[16760] Our saint had given the spiritual exercises to these nuns in the month of March of the same year, 1733.

[16761] Although St. Alphonsus wrote many letters to this priest, the latter could not be induced to enter our Institute, for which he however, always entertained the greatest affection.

[16762] The Venerable Gennaro Sarnelli.

[16763] S. Maria del Vignanello was a hermitage not far from Villa degli Schiavi, where the holy founder had opened the second house of his Institute, and where he had been living for about a month.

[16764] A priest that tried a work analogous to that of St. Alphonsus.

[16765] He refers to the hope placed in D. Silvestro Tosquez of obtaining the Imperial approbation through his brother who had great influence at the court of Vienna.

[16766] Gennaro Rendina, horn at Naples, September 28, 1707, entered the new Institute where as a lay-brother he died after a holy life at an advanced age.

16767 The saint, as appears from his *journal*, before founding his Congregation, had cherished the idea of consecrating himself to the missions in heathen countries. Two years after the foundation he wished to carry out his intention; but Mgr. Falcoia in a letter dated July 20, 1734, and Father Tommaso Pagano, his first director, in another letter of August 4, the same year, forbade him to do so.

16768 The founder of the Congregation of the Holy Family among the members of which St. Alphonsus had lived for two years. The seat of this Congregation at Naples was called the Chinese College, its object being to train missionaries for China.

16769 Camigliano, a town in the diocese of Calvi.

16770 Pietro Agosto Scorza, born at Torre Maggiore, July 11, 1676, was first bishop of Teramo; then from April 9, 1731, archbishop of Amalfi, where he died in 1747, or at the beginning of 1748.

16771 In the month of January of this year, the saint with the Venerable Gennaro Sarnelli, and others had given a mission at Positano. On this occasion there was question of founding here a house of the Congregation, but because the municipality wished that the holy founder should assume the obligation of taking care of the public schools, the project was not carried out.

16772 The mediation of the prelate proved useless; but the saint continued nevertheless to take care of the school, as appears from one of his letters addressed to his director, Mgr. Falcoia, dated October 5, of this year, in which we read: “The small income of six ducats [25 fr.] for the school makes no impression upon me, because we should not show the least shadow of being desirous of money, just as we should in no way lose confidence in divine Providence; and since Monsignor would feel displeased if the school were abandoned, we shall not abandon it on any account; the more so as it is not a little service, which is blessed by God, to educate ten or twelve souls who, I hope, will receive less a literary than a moral education. . . .”

16773 A village in the diocese of Capua.

16774 A village in the diocese of Capua.

16775 The foundation at Ciorani.

16776 This affair of the Ven. Gennaro Sarnelli our saint thus describes in his sketch of Sarnelli’s life: “As D. Gennaro saw that these unhappy woman by being scattered through the whole city did immense harm and gave great scandal, he was convinced that the only method of remedying so great an evil was to compel them to live together outside of Naples. The whole city and God, above all, know what labors and expense this project occasioned him, for the furtherance of which he composed several books entitled the “Abuses of Prostitution.” This undertaking drew down on him the opposition and the reproaches of friends as well as of enemies, for as they looked upon the thing as impossible, they were always striving to make him abandon it, and were bitterly ridiculing it. But his confidence in God was strong and unshaken, although he was alone and devoid of the help of man. He managed so well with the first ministers of the king, our protector, that he at last had the satisfaction of seeing his desires fulfilled.”—We may read the details of this great undertaking in the little work entitled: “Le vénérable serviteur de Dieu, le P. Janvier-Marie Sarnelli.”—Paris, Jules Vic., 1886.

[16777] Neapolitan Missionaries.—So called from the Church of St. George Major, the seat of their Congregation.

[16778] Constantino Vigilante, Bishop of Caiazzo, was very much pained at the departure of the Fathers from Villa degli Schiavi, and did all in his power to induce them to return. We cannot ascertain why the bishop was at the time somewhat displeased with the Fathers; at any rate, it is certain that this estrangement did not last very long; for we learn from numerous documents that he was ever very friendly to St. Alphonsus and to the Congregation.

[16779] This was most probably Prince Francesco Carafa, lord of the hamlet Villa degli Schiavi.

[16780] Father Cesare Sportelli, a man of saintly life, was born at Mola di Bari in the year 1699. Having passed his course of studies very successfully at Naples, he devoted himself to the study of law, in which, thanks to his great talents, he made wonderful progress. Having discovered that a Congregation under the title of the Most Holy Saviour had been founded, he turned his back upon the world, and became the first companion of St. Alphonsus. In the year 1742 he was chosen to be the first Superior of the house at Pagani, and in the year 1747, of the house at Caposele. He rendered great services on the missions. He died on the 19th of April, 1750. Before he breathed his last he began to sing *In exitu Israel de Egypto*, and in this joyous frame of mind he gave up his spirit to God. He wrought many miracles after his death; three years and six months after his death the body was found beautiful, entire and flexible.

[16781] In the month of October 1737, the saint was giving a mission at Naples, in the church of the Holy Ghost.

[16782] Father Giuglio Marocco , after the forced departure of the Fathers from Villa degli Schiavi, remained at Caiazzo, his native place, in order to treat of the affairs of their return to Villa.

[16783] Prince Francesco Carafa, lord of Villa degli Schiavi, had declared himself against the Fathers. The Princess, his wife, who was very pious, made every effort to secure their return. See letter of May 25, 1759.

[16784] Calvanico was at that time a village in the diocese of Salerno containing 1568 souls.

[16785] Casimiro Rossi, born at Naples, March 11, 1685, was first bishop of Taranto, then from May 5, 1738 archbishop of Salerno, where he died in 1759.

[16786] The saint had given a mission at Fisciano in the month of November, 1739. He gave another at Castellammare in the parish of S. Salvatore at the beginning of 1740, and it is from this town that he writes the present letter.

[16787] This great servant of God, born at Naples, September 12, 1702, entered the rising Congregation in September 1733. He was a living image of the holy founder, so that like him he

lived only for God and the good of souls, for the salvation of whom he always labored with incomparable zeal and ardor, with the living voice of preaching, and with the publication of many celebrated works. Finally, after eleven years of apostolic labors, worn out by fatigue and austerities, he rendered his beautiful soul to God. The cause of his Beatification was introduced by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, December 3, 1874.

[16788] E'en though there be no hope for me,

My God, I'll love Thee still;

Though lost, my love shall e'er be Thine,

For only Thou my heart canst fill.

[16789] This work, written in Portuguese by the Venerable servant of God, Father Thomas of Jesus, of the Order of St. Augustine, was translated into Italian by Father Louis Flori, S. J. [into French by Father Alleaume, S. J.]

[16790] Father Giovanni Mazzini had the charge of applying the intentions of the Masses.

[16791] This short note is the postscript to a letter of Don Cesare Sportelli, in which he announces to the bishop that on the 21st of July all the Fathers and Brothers of Ciorani had made their profession.

[16792] Michele de Alteriis, after having finished his novitiate, left the Congregation at the instance of his father.

[16793] This altogether paternal letter produced no effect upon Father Marocco; after the lapse of one month he left definitely the Institute, to which he was, however, not bound by any vow.

[16794] Sant' Aniello, a village in the neighborhood of Naples, where the saint remained for the mission to be given in the suburbs of the city.

[16795] The priest D. Giuseppe Sparano, always a great friend of our saint, was born at Naples, December 22, 1709. In 1743 on account of his rare qualities he was chosen Canon of the Metropolitan church, synodal examiner, and later Superior of the Congregation of the Apostolic Missions, called *Propaganda*. In 1753, he published his "Historical Memoirs of the Church of Naples, and of that of the Congregation of the Apostolic Missions" (2 vols.) May 29, 1775, he was preconized Archbishop of Acerenza and Matera, and died the following year.

[16796] Cardinal Spinelli refused to let St. Alphonsus depart, as he had placed the direction of the diocesan missions in his charge.

[16797] About 85 francs.

[16798] This was the residence of the Lazarists, named from the quarter where they lived.

[16799] A work written by Ven. Gennaro Sarnelli, 2 vols. in 12mo (Naples, Festa Brothers.)

[16800] To understand the reason for the citations given here, it is necessary to consult what Tannoia in his "Life of St. Alphonsus" has written of the opposition made to the Fathers of the Institute, in order to crush the new foundation at Pagani: "To jealousy there were added wrath and rancor; self-interest also came into play. When the Regulars perceived the great veneration and deference paid to our members, they began to persuade themselves that their daily alms were on the point of ceasing; in the same manner the priests feared that all legacies, not only Masses that might he said, but donations, etc., would flow into the coffers of the missionaries. Thus self-interest and jealousy took possession of the hearts of the clergy. And in a short time seculars were also infected with the poison. . . . . ."—Book ii. chap. xvii.

[16801] "Detrimentum consideramus in jure quæsito, et non quærendo; unde non est attendendum quod alii non recipiunt eleemosynas, quas in præsenti recipiunt, quia hæ sunt in libertate elargientium."—Cap. un. De excess. Prælat. n. 49, tom. 3).

[16802] "Præferentes est profectus spiritualis lucro eleemosynarum; aliter nulla Religio ullibi erigi posset."—Num. 55, d. 1.

[16803] "Attendendum est utile locorum spirituale."—Num. 68.

[16804] "Ad vocandum interesse habentes."

[16805] "Nec tenere formare processum."

[16806] "Non est necessaria citatio, si opulentia loci satis est ad sustentationem omnium."—Tom. I, consult. 179, num. 50.

[16807] "Diminutio eleemosynarum, cum sint valde incerta, idcirco est præjudicium accidentale."

[16808] "Ob imaginariam diminutionem eleemosynarum, non est impediendum opus publicum in publicam utilitatem."

[16809] That is to say, the decree by which the Bishop of Nocera, Mgr. Nicolò di Dominicis, approved of the establishment of the house and church at Pagani.

[16810] The adversaries of the Congregation, in fact, obtained from the royal counsel a decision forbidding anything new to be done.—*Tannoia*, book ii. chap. xxii.

[16811] In this Act the bishop speaks of the blessing of the first stone of the church: "The blessing," says the prelate, "which we charged our Vicar-general, Don Nicola Ferri, to give, was in fact solemnly given in the month of last June, in the midst of a large number of people whose transports of joy recalled those of David singing and dancing before the Ark of the Lord. . . ."

16812 The following notice may be read in the catalogue of the Congregation about this holy subject: “July 10, 1745, there was admitted into the novitiate Celestino de Robertis, born May 19, 1719, in the town of Sieti, district of Giffoni, in the diocese and province of Salerno, not having yet received any of the Holy Orders. He made his profession into the hands of our Father, July 9, 1746, in our house of Santa Maria della Consolazione, at Iliceto. He died in the odor of sanctity in our house at Caposele, April 20, 1807. He so loved the Blessed Virgin that with one of his little pictures he worked prodigies, and when he desired to receive graces from her he used to say: ‘Do me this favor.’ He spent the greatest part of the day in prayer.”

16813 The saint was then occupied in writing the little work “The Visits to the Most Holy Sacrament, and to the Blessed Virgin, for Every Day in the Month.” He therefore changed his usual exclamation “Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!” into this: “Praised be the Most Holy Sacrament, and Mary Immaculate!”

16814 At this time there were many warlike movements of the Spanish troops in consequence of the death of Charles VI., as the Austrians were menacing the Neapolitan territory.

16815 Giuseppe Sersale, at that time Canon of the metropolitan church at Naples and later Archbishop of Sorrento, was a great friend of St. Alphonsus and of the Venerable Sarnelli.

16816 The Congregation of the *apostolic missions* to which the Venerable Father Sarnelli belonged.

16817 Tommaso Carace, a member of the same Congregation.

16818 They were seven in all.

16819 Giacomo Casati was Canon of the collegiate church at Iliceto, in the diocese of Bovino.

16820 The Prince of Castellaneta, D. Mattia Miroballo d’ Aragona, had asked St. Alphonsus to give a mission at Iliceto.

16821 Father Xavier Rossi was born in the year 1706; he entered the Congregation a year after its foundation. He applied himself from the beginning to a perfect imitation of Jesus Christ, our Lord. He passed almost his whole life at Ciorani; confiding only in divine Providence, he began the building of the house into which he afterwards introduced the great work of the spiritual exercises. This great servant of God died in 1758 while looking fixedly at the images of Jesus and Mary.

16822 The Bishop of Foggia, to whose diocese the town of Foggia then belonged and where he resided several months of the year, was at that time Mgr. Giovanni Pietro Faccolli.

16823 Don Ignazio was a secular priest who accompanied the Fathers on missions.

16824 This secular priest accompanied the Fathers on the missions. He is the same of whom mention is afterwards made.

[16825] D. Francesco Cantaldi, the founder of the house at Pagani, was afterwards as active in destroying the foundation as he had been before in securing it.

[16826] Modugno, situated in the diocese of Bari, had afterwards a mission in the month of February, 1745.

[16827] D. Giovanni Oliviero was a penitent of the saint and lived at Naples.

[16828] Father Mazzini was born at Naples, December 18, 1704. Having spent his youth in wonderful innocence, he afterwards devoted himself to the ecclesiastical state. Since the year 1723 he had heeu one of the most intimate friends of our saint. The Congregation having been established, it was not permitted him by his confessor to enter the Institute at once as he had wished to do; but after three years spent in earnest entreaties, he obtained the so much desired permission. An entire volume would not suffice to contain a narration of the virtues practised by this fervent servant of God. It suffices to say that he was worthy of being in every respect one of the dearest friends of St. Alphonsus. He survived the saint a few years, and so had the good fortune of giving his testimony in the process of Beatification. He died in the peace of the Lord, December 3, 1792.

[16829] Pope Benedict XIV. wishing to promote in the kingdom of Naples the good custom of frequenting the sacraments had since September 8, 1744, delegated Cardinal Spinelli for this work.

[16830] Quo utilius percipiatur fructus sanctarum missionum ac proinde animarum saluti proficiatur, supplicantis petitionibus inhærentes, facultates, quæ nobis a SSmo Domino nostro Benedicto P. P. XIV, tamquam supremo Directori in Regni Neapolitani missionibus specialiter delegato, concessæ et communicatæ fuerunt, tibi Superiori Congregationis SSmi Salvatoris, in Iliceto institutæ, concedimus et elargimur. Volumus tamen, ut supradictis facultatibus, pro missionibus in supplici libello expressis tantum, et in actu sacramentalis confessionis per teipsum, et durante missionis tempore dumtaxat, ut valeas, et non aliter.

Similiter Christifidelium pietatem confovere et devotionem augere cupientes, Indulgentiarum, quarum dispensatores idem SSmo Dominus esse Nos voluit, omnibus et singulis utriusque sexus, qui ubique civitatum et locorum Regni Neapolitani missionibus interfuerint; vel, legitimo impedimento detenti interesse non valentes, pias tamen preces pro spirituali earumdem missionum fructu ad Deum fuderint, septem annos cum totidem quarantenis libenter impertimur. Insuper omnibus Christifidelibus, qui vere pœnitentes et confessi ac SSmo Eucharistiæ sacramento refecti, ultima die missioni interfuerint, vel qui legitime præpediti præsentes esse non valentes, expleta tamen sacramentali confessione et communione, easdem, ut supra, preces ad Deum fuderint, plenariam omnium peccatorum suorum Indulgentiam et remissionem, per dictas tantum in supplici libello enunciatas missiones valituram, misericorditer in Domino concedimus et elargimur.

Datum NEAPOLI, ex nostro Palatio achiepiscopali, die undecima mensis decembris 1745.

JOSEPHUS Cardinalis, Archiepiscopus.

JOSEPH ROMANO, Canonicus secret.

[16831] A mixture of music and plain-chant very much in use in the second half of the eighteenth century. The inconveniences that resulted from this altogether wordly chant had for a long time made the Church forbid it to the monasteries; but an extraordinary infatuation always introduced it again. “There is nothing more ridiculous and more flat,” says Jean-Jacque Rousseau with reason, “than these plain-chants that are adapted to modern music. We are under great obligations to the bishops, provosts, and singers who oppose this barbarous mixture.”—Quoted by D. Guéranger, *Institutions liturgiques,* book, ii. chap. xx.

[16832] This retreat was preached in the month of December 1745, on the occasion of the celebrated mission given at Foggia.

[16833] Common life had relaxed in the eighteenth century in many convents of Italy. Certain religious were then by reason of their charge obliged to incur expenses on feasts and pious solemnities, and in order to do this they encroached upon their revenues. As vanity was frequently their motive, these expenses became at times very considerable.

[16834] Giuseppe de Liguori, father of St. Alphonsus, had died some weeks previously. He had secured to his son Alphonsus, an annual income of one hundred and fifty ducats payable to our saint after his death; moreover, he bequeathed to him at his death (December 1745) two hundred ducats as a special gift. Don Ercole, it seems, pretended that this last gift nearly annulled the former.—We here mention that the ducat is about equal to an American dollar, or to 4 francs, 25 centimes.

[16835] Given by the Fathers of the Mission or Lazarists.

[16836] This is treated of in the preceding letter.

[16837] The *Falcidian* law guaranteed to the heir one fourth of the amount of the legacy which he was charged to pay.—The *Trebbellian* law guaranteed to the heir the fourth of the amount of the universal trusts which he was restoring.

[16838] The saint here refers to the renunciation of his primogeniture.

[16839] Father Tannoia says in his “Life of St. Alphonsus” (B. ii. chap. xxvi.) that the Renewal took place and that the nine days of this exercise resembled a new mission.

[16840] Father Villani, born February 8, 1706, in the town of Curtoli in the district of Sanseverino, was, in the year 1737, admitted into the Institute of St. Alphonsus of which after the holy founder he became the principal corner-stone. As he was a man of great learning, of tried virtue, and of singular prudence, many important offices were entrusted to him. He was successively Master of novices, several times Rector, then Consultor-General, Vicar-General, and before the death of St. Alphonsus, Superior-General of the houses in the kingdom of Naples. He died in 1792, greatly lamented by all.

[16841] A Chapter was held in the house at Ciorani, October 12, 1746; but as the holy founder could not be present on account of ill health, he had the various decisions of the Chapter forwarded to him. The Fathers who had assembled decided upon some measures which, far from obtaining the approbation of the saint, were the cause why the Chapter was deferred till the year following.

[16842] Father Sportelli had to repair to Naples to complete the foundation of the house of *Mater Domini* at Caposele.

[16843] Some of the Fathers who were voters failed to be present at the Chapter, October 12, and it was decided that notwithstanding their absence the Chapter should be continued if they would not have arrived on the 25th of the same month.

[16844] In fact, the Chapter was held in the month of October of the following year.

[16845] Father Sportelli, President of the Chapter was entirely of the same opinion as the saint was, to whom in writing he had mentioned, October 10, 1746, his fears and cautions.

[16846] Mgr. Giuseppe Nicolai, Archbishop of Conza from 1731 till 1759.

[16847] Father Francesco Sanseverino, who afterwards became Archbishop of Palermo.

[16848] D. Nicola Muscarelli, a student of the Congregation.

[16849] See Letter 71.

[16850] Sister Maria Celeste Crostarosa of whom we have given a short notice above (Letter 6) had founded at Foggia the monastery of the Most Holy Saviour about the year 1739.

[16851] I grain = fr. 0.0425.

[16852] It seems that the Sisters had written to the Sacred Congregation and then through fear of persecutions had afterwards repented of this courageous act.

[16853] During this year the saint remained at Naples about three months, in order to attend to the affairs of the Congregation and to gain the law-suit over the enemies of the house at Pagani.

[16854] D. Girolamo had scarcely entered the novitiate when he received the sad news of the sudden death of his brother.

[16855] The archpriest of Teora, the birth-place of D. Girolamo.

[16856] D. Girolamo by the advice of Father Cafaro had made the preceding year the vow of entering the Congregation of the Most Holy Saviour.

[16857] Tr. 15, c. 3, n. 54.

[16858] D. Girolamo abided by the saint’s decision, persevered in the Institute, and on March 25, 1748, made his profession.

[16859] This was Marquis Brancone, Secretary of State.

[16860] Father Francesco Pepe, S. J., a friend of St. Alphonsus.

[16861] D. Vincenzo Mannarini, at that time Superior of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament, absolutely wished to re-unite his Congregation to the Congregation of St. Alphonsus.

[16862] The Congregation of the Most Holy Sacrament took charge of public schools and could have houses in the cities.

[16863] This is the law-suit brought by D. Francesco Contaldi against the house at Pagani.

[16864] Father Cesare Sportelli thus wrote from Naples to Father Mazzini: “Father Rector Major has been strongly urged to accept the episcopate, and is still in great fear about it. He has, however, made a wonderful defence.”

[16865] Father Cesare Sportelli was then to treat in Caposele of the affair of a new foundation of the house of *Mater Domini*.

[16866] We read the following account of this estimable member of the Institute in the catalogue of the Congregation:

“On the 7th of December, 1747, Francesco Margotta a priest and a native of Calitri, was admitted into the Congregation. He was in his forty-eighth year, and had been for some time a missionary and a member of the venerable Congregation of Father Pavone, established in the Collegio Massimo of the Jesuit Fathers at Naples. He found himself necessarily engaged in numerous domestic affairs; but he employed them for the profit of the Congregation by stipulating an advantageous donation in favor of the new house at Caposele. The care of his affairs kept him for some time at Calitri, and our holy founder permitted him to begin his novitiate at home, where he remained till March 3, when he proceeded to Ciorani to complete it. He made his profession in the presence of Father Villani, July 2, 1748. After rendering the greatest services to the Congregation, which he likewise made the heir of all his property, he died a holy death, August 11, 1764.

[16867] On the occasion of the foundation of the house at Ciorani, the priest, D. Andrea Sarnelli, a brother of our Venerable Gennaro had given us by a public deed the sum of two hundred ducats annually. Wishing better to regulate this donation, he made to St. Alphonsus new propositions, which form the subject of the present letter.

[16868] The Baron Angelo Sarnelli, the father of Don Andrea.

[16869] D. Nicola, D. Domenico and D. Ciccio (or Francesco) were brothers of D. Andrea.

[16870] From this petition we may perceive that although the saint was altogether opposed to the union of his Congregation with that of Don Vincenzo Mannarini, yet the Grand Almoner had himself endeavored to bring about this union.

[16871] The full title of the Italian work is: “Pratica del confessore per ben esercitare it suo ministero.”—The large work of Moral Theology of which St. Alphonsus speaks had been published some months before under the title: “Medulla Theologiæ moralis R. P. Hermanii Busenbaum S. J. cum adnotationibus per R. P. D. Alphonsum de Ligorio . . . adjunctis.” (I vol. in 4°.)

[16872] Mgr. Felice Leoni, an Augustinian, was born at Giovenazzo, July 14, 1677; was consecrated bishop, September 26, 1735, and died in 1754.

[16873] The Cardinal entrusted the examination of the Rule of the new Institute to his auditor the abbate Blaschi, and on the 11th of October he sent to the Sacred Congregation a report favorable to the approbation, using nearly the same words that the saint used in his notes.

[16874] This great haste on the journey from Cirignola to Santa Agata della Puglia was shown by Fathers Sportelli, Villani, Cafaro and six others, in the month of January, 1746. We subjoin the account given by Father Sportelli to Father Mazzini: “January 22, we set out in a heavy rain, which lasted the whole day, and so we reached Ascoli thoroughly drenched. A room was given to us containing two beds; there nine of us were obliged to find accommodations as best we could. When morning dawned, we set out for Ascoli, still thoroughly wet, and the day was so cold that our clothing froze upon our bodies. We were in great haste, for our Father had told us to begin the mission on Sunday the 23d; however, we found him at Santa Agata and learned that he had opened the mission on Saturday, 22, and had preached on Sunday. As his breast began to give him great trouble, I had to continue the mission.”

[16875] Twenty *carlini* are equal to 8 fr. 50 centimes; a *carlino,* being equal to 7 cents of our money.

[16876] This young man was D. Giovanni Tommaso Nittoli, of the village of Leoni. Admitted into the novitiate, April 6, 1749, he made his profession, March 28, 1750, and after a .holy life died on Holy Thursday, in 1785. Many favors are said to have been obtained through his intercession.

[16877] It was on January 28, 1749, that Father Villani who was at Rome informed the saint of the Pontifical approbation of the Congregation, which was thenceforth called *Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.* The Brief of approbation: *Ad Pastoralis dignitatis fastigium* was promulgated February 25.

[16878] After receiving the Pontifical approbation Father Villani and Brother Francesco Tartaglione made a pilgrimage to Loreto to thank our Blessed Lady.

[16879] This affair was the proposition of Father Muscari to enter the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

[16880] Father Muscari had been charged to attend to the printing of the Rule, approved by the Holy See.

[16881] The Congregation by the change of its name obtained the favor of reciting the Office of the Most Holy Redeemer, such as was already recited at Venice.

16882 In consequence of this acceptance Father Muscari made his profession at Rome, June 1, 1749, in the church of the Most Holy Trinity, in the presence of two notaries. Cardinal Domenico Orsini, representing on this occasion the person of St. Alphonsus, received by proxy the vows of the newly professed.

16883 This work of Father Giovanni Antonio Bianchi of the Minor Conventuals of St. Francis, was published at Rome (1745—1751) under the title: “Della potestà e polizia della Chiesa, trattati due contro le nuove opinioni di Pietro Giannone.” (Of the power and government of the Church, in two treatises directed against the new opinions of Pietro Giannone.)

16884 As Father Muscari was to pass through Naples to go first to S. Eufemia, his native place, and then to Ciorani, he was to take the aforesaid work to Brother Francesco, who then lived at Naples in a house belonging to the Congregation.

16885 Don Giuseppe de Rosa, a native of Nocera de’ Pagani, was at that time studying theology at Rome; and as he was under the direction of Father Muscari, also conceived the desire of entering the new Congregation. St. Alphonsus received him, but the young priest remained only a few months in the novitiate. In 1775 he became Bishop of Policastro.

16886 Father Robertis was a native of Sieti, where his sisters were living at the time.

16887 Father D. Francesco Buonomano.

16888 On seeing the good effected by the missions, Mgr. Giuseppe Nicolai became more and more a friend of the Institute of St. Alphonsus; and although he had already given large subsidies for beginning the foundation of the convent at Caposele, he yet gave this year one hundred ducats more for the enlargement of the house, and he kindly consented to ordain Gerardo Grassi and Pasquale Amendolara, both natives of the diocese of Conza.

16889 The Fathers of the Congregation of the Most Holy Sacrament.

16890 The books here mentioned were copies of the saint’s Moral Theology, which priests might receive by saying some Masses to the intention of the saint.

16891 D. Nicodemo de Angelis of the diocese of Benevento.

16892 Auletta, in the diocese of Conza.

16893 D. Benedetto Grazioli, a great friend and benefactor of the Congregation.

16894 Pasquale Amendolara was a young student for whom Father Margotta was to obtain a letter dimissory from the archbishop.

16895 Father Margotta was giving a mission at Atella, a town in the diocese of Melfi.

16896 This other young man was Donato Mellacio, who had not yet attained the proper age to enter the novitiate.

16897 These two others were Vito Polestra and Domenico Blasucci.

16898 Literally: comb so many cats!

16899 Don Angelo Latessa, a secular priest at this time, afterwards entered the Congregation.

16900 The building of the house at Caposele.

16901 Father Sportelli died shortly after, namely, April 19.

16902 S. Maria Maggiore, a hamlet of Nocera.

16903 St. Alphonsus, who could never he satisfied with the Neapolitan examiners charged with the revision of books, no doubt refers here to certain difficulties which were raised against “The Glories of Mary.” The teachings followed at Naples were generally very severe, and the holy Doctor had more than one discussion with the censors, as one may gather from his letters.

16904 Matteo Testa, a celebrated missionary who became later on Grand Almoner and died as Archbishop of Reggio.

16905 A Neapolitan priest, the author of several learned works.

16906 Vitolano, a town in the diocese of Benevento.

16907 Gesualdo, a town in the diocese of Frigento.

16908 Montefalcione, a town in the diocese of Benevento.

16909 St. Alphonsus, after the mission given at Melfi in the month of April, 1750, went to preach a mission at Ripacandida where, says Tannoia, he did not omit to pay a visit to the Carmelite nuns, and he was greatly edified by their fervor.—Their monastery had been founded October 15, 1735, by the archpriest Giambattista Rossi, who died in the odor of sanctity in the month of November, 1746.

Sister Maria di Gesù was the niece of this archpriest and of the archpriest of Contursi, the author of the Life of Mgr. Cavalieri, uncle of St. Alphonsus. How much our saint esteemed this nun, appears from the many letters addressed to her.

16910 The Sister had written to him as follows: “Wishing to adore (Jesus Christ himself) in himself, and not himself in myself, who am infinite baseness, I cannot succeed. What causes me most pain, my Father, is that having reached the greatest depth of my hell, I nevertheless feel myself, notwithstanding my immense miseries, united with this good Master, and in the closest manner. I am afflicted to see him so profoundly abased in me; but when I wish to break this union, to leave him himself in himself and myself in myself, I feel myself dying, and it seems that my soul must separate itself from my body; for our Lord does not wish to consent to this, and he continues to hold me in the close union of which I have spoken. What happens to me in Communion, happens to me also in prayer; night and day, continually, at every moment, I find myself in this state, in which, however, I preserve my liberty. Be so good my Father, to give me advice, and tell me whether I am not an idolatress of myself. Dissipate my fears; you well understand in what an abasement I find myself; help me for the love of the Most Blessed Virgin and of my mother St. Teresa, whom you love; for I know that you love her. Finally I beg you to forgive me if I have written too much . . .”

[16911] These new Spouses were two daughters of D. Benedetto Grazioli of Atella, a very pious and rich man who bestowed abundant gifts upon the Institute of St. Alphonsus.

[16912] There were at Naples two seminaries: one destined properly speaking for the Neapolitans; this was called the *urban* seminary; the other destined for the Neapolitans of the diocese of Naples; this was called the *diocesan* seminary.—(Sparano, *Historical Memoires*).

[16913] Father Margotta was then a prey to great interior trials, as is shown in his correspondence with Father Cafaro, his director.

[16914] Father Giuseppe Muscari, of whom mention has been made above (Letters 107; 108, 109) having been appointed Prefect of students on account of his extensive erudition, abused this high trust and caused the loss of vocation to four young men, namely, Pasquale Adinolfi, Domenico Cacciatore, Gaetano Spera, and Domenico Sviglia. He depicted the condition of the Congregation to these youths in the very darkest colors, and then proposed to found a new Institute in the city of Rome. His treacherous plan was only too successful, for after his dismissal from the Congregation—as St. Alphonsus had penetrated his base design—the four deluded youths presented themselves to the saint and haughtily demanded a dispensation. Not being able to obtain this, they turned their backs upon their vocation. This sad story may be found in Tannoia in his Life of the saint, Book ii. chap. xxxv. We however add that Gaetano Spera and Domenico Sviglia, seeing the folly of their course, returned after some time, and had the happiness of dying happily in the Congregation, the former in the year 1762, the latter on March 27, 1797.

[16915] On account of the ill-feeling that had arisen between Fathers Muscari and Mazzini St. Alphonsus had sent the latter to the house at Caposele.

[16916] Nicodemo de Angelis saw his profession considerably delayed on account of the requirements of his patrimony. The eulogy bestowed upon him by St. Alphonsus on account of the purity of his morals, he merited during the course of his whole life. We take pleasure in transcribing here a note that Father D. Lorenzo Nigro in “Vita del Servo di Dio Antonio Puzzo, familiare de’ PP. del SS. Redentorè” (Napoli 1792), has consecrated to his pious memory: “Father D. Nicodemo de Angelis died in our house at Ciorani in the odor of sanctity, aged sixty-two, having been a member of the Congregation for forty-three years and four months. He was visited by the Lord with a long and painful apoplexy, which deprived him of the use of his right arm and left leg. His resignation to the divine will was heroic, and as he could no longer celebrate Mass, he received our Lord every day in holy Communion. He showed the greatest devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ and to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Most exact in all the exercises of the Community, he was the first to rise in the morning, in all seasons, and went at once to the choir and the church under great difficulties; he could be seen

moving through the corridors, resting with one hand against the wall, in order to visit and to speak to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Having been thus tried for more than five years, after many other new sufferings, he died the death of the just in the peace of the Lord, May 19, 1792."

16917 Cardinal Francesco Landi.

16918 At this time there did not yet exist in the Congregation the law of enclosure which was introduced a short while afterwards.

16919 There was then question of a foundation at Rionero in the diocese of Melfi.

16920 Father Petrella was born June 29, 1726, at Trivico; he made his profession, July 2, 1748, and died a holy death at Iliceto, March 15, 1771.

16921 This was probably Father Salvadore Gallo who was then temporary Superior in the absence of Father Carmine Fiocchi. The latter had the preceding month succeeded Father Paolo Cafaro as Rector of the house at Iliceto.

16922 Rev. Father Carmine Picone was born, October 8, 1727, at Candida, in the diocese of Avellino. "I made the acquaintance of the servant of God"—he thus speaks in the process for the beatification of St. Alphonsus—"when I was sent in the year 1749 by my Ordinary to Ciorani to make the spiritual exercises before receiving the Order of subdeaconship. I remained at Ciorani ten days; the servant of God gave the exercises; he preached in the evening and Father Villani in the morning. There I had for the first time an opportunity of beholding his extraordinary zeal and of witnessing the great fruit which resulted from his fervent exhortations. There I heard the voice of God calling me to leave the world and to embrace the Rule of the Congregation. . . . . I then firmly resolved to enter the Institute. This resolution I carried out some six months after the spiritual exercises; I proceeded to the house at Ciorani where the servant of God, after examining me, as well with regard to my vocation as to my studies, admitted me and gave me the habit of the Congregation, October 25, 1749."

The general catalogue of the Congregation speaks in the following terms of this subject: "Father Carmine Picone died in our house at Nocera, October 16, 1795. He was a holy, mortified, and exemplary member of the Institute; on account of his great virtue he was made Master of novices, Rector several terms, and finally Consultor-General.

16923 This nephew of Father Ferrara was the future Father Giuseppe Melchionna, who received the habit of the Congregation, March 4, 1752.

16924 Mgr. Basta was a very great friend of the Carmelite Fathers, whose Order he even wished at one time to enter; but this friendship was the cause of great embarrassment to the holy Prioress of the convent of Ripacandida. The fact was, the Carmelites of Naples wished to introduce into this monastery a mitigation to which both the Prioress and St. Alphonsus were opposed. Moreover, as Mother Maria di Gesù was following extraordinary ways, the bishop had her examined by a Carmelite Father, and the latter declared her to be a visionary. Finally, in the year 1752, Mgr. Basta, after having taken away from the Sisters their old director, forbade them to have any communication with other directors. This rigorous measure caused great disquietude among these religious. St. Alphonsus tries in this letter to remove this disquietude.

16925 This important affair was a persecution from which the Institute suffered in consequence of a calumny circulated against it. The king was made to believe that the Congregation had acquired a property of great value.—The sick man was Father Paolo Cafaro.

16926 Brother Francesco Tartaglione, carried away by the passion of anger had thrown a tumbler at a lay-brother who offended him by some sarcastic words. He received his penance in the spirit of humility, after which he was admitted to profession, October 31, 1752.

16927 This was a young priest from the diocese of Cava, who on account of the opposition made by his family was not as yet able to begin his novitiate.

16928 Pietro Paolo Blasucci, who in 1793 became Superior-General of the Congregation, secretly fled from Ruovo, his native place, in order to enter the Institute of the Most Holy Redeemer. After the opposition of his family had subsided, he began his novitiate, August 14, of the year 1752.

16929 In fact, Ignazio Fiore, a native of Riccia and Pietro Picone began their novitiate June 21.

16930 There is question of the profession of Donato Melaccio and of Fabrizio Cimino, which took place July 16 of this year.

16931 This subscription aimed at promoting the sale of the Moral Theology of the saint, a second edition of which was at that time being printed at Naples.

16932 To understand these words it is enough to refer to a passage of a letter from Father Rossi, written in answer, June 20: “My Father (thus speaks Rossi), I have already spoken to Signor D. Andrea about the building of a church, and I have promised him to spend for it every year one hundred ducats; the mode of carrying away the earth has been discussed and the baron has been approached on the subject; he also has the intention of contributing something towards the building of the church, and Don Andrea has offered to furnish all the lime and to maintain the expense of two oxen that are to be used to carry the material.”

16933 The *ambrette* is a plant with the odor of *ambergris* or musk.—Perhaps the saint intended these plants to adorn the altar of the Blessed Sacrament.

16934 Father Francesco Del Corpo had made his profession a month before, that is, May 13.

16935 That is, for the affair of the foundation of the house at Ciorani made by D. Andrea Sarnelli. The saint, to secure its stability, caused another contract to be made by which (the Congregation having already been declared by the civil authority incapable of making any purchase) he personally accepted the donation from D. Andrea.

16936 San Matteo, a hamlet of Nocera.

[16937] Father Bernardo Tortora, born at Nocera de’ Pagani, entered the Congregation in 1743. The cause of his secession from the Congregation, which happened July 25, 1752, is given by Tannoia in his Life of the saint: “While living in the house at Ciorani, he took offence at a correction given him by the Rector, and without breathing a word, or communicating his temptation to any one, he set out for Pagani with the intention of laying the whole matter before St. Alphonsus. On the way his eyes were opened, and not having the courage to present himself, he retired to his own family, instead of going to one of our houses.” Later on he became parish priest of the church of St. Felice at Pagani.

[16938] This excellent religious was born November 9, 1706. When forty-three years old he resolved to enter the Congregation, having been moved thereto by the holy life of Father Cesare Sportelli. After a novitiate of six months he made his profession in the presence of St. Alphonsus, August 5, 1750. He became an indefatigable missionary, and died in the peace of the Lord, March 4, 1777, in the house at Ciorani.—The journey to Ischia, of which mention is made in the letter was to have taken place on the occasion of the mission at Casamicciola, the native place of Father Buonamano.

[16939] This petition, as may be inferred from a letter of July 4, 1753, was not presented to the king, at least in this year.

[16940] From the following letter written by Brancone to the saint we can conjecture the reply of the saintly Prioress.

NAPLES, February 10, 1753.

Dearest Friend: Your letters, the one dated the 29th of last month, and the other, the 4th of this month, filled me with consolation, for in them I read the proofs of your kindness and of the love which you bear me: I thank you with all my heart.

I have read the letter of the Prioress of Ripacandida, which you kindly sent to me. Rest assured that I shall never communicate to anyone what has been confided to me by you and by her. The letter showed me that she held with regard to my proposed step the same opinion that some other devout and learned persons hold. I adore the divine will which disposes of me in this manner, and I shall continue to bear my burden with the greatest devotion and cheerfulness, hoping that our Lord will deign to bless me. I have never refused to bear the burden, nor am I doing so now; but as I see how difficult it is to work out my eternal salvation, I grow despondent and my courage vanishes. For this reason I ask you and all your chosen souls to obtain for me from God better health that I may fulfill the duties of my office scrupulously and cheerfully. And as in your letters you spoke of the Prioress, Sister Maria di Gesù, as a pious servant of God, I feel a great desire to open a correspondence with her for my spiritual advantage; I hope to obtain this favor through you and through the bishop to whom she is subject. Hence, as soon as you approve of my wish, let me know where Ripacandida is situated, and whether the Prioress—as a Carmelite—is subject to the Provincial of the Carmelites or to the bishop. If the latter be the case, please tell me who the bishop is, adding at the same time what you know about the family of the Prioress and of the condition of the nuns in the monastery. I intend to do this under your direction and with your approval.

I thank you for your prayers, and I beg you to continue them. . . . .

16941 Father Bernardo Apice, born at Castellammare, December 21, 1728, made his religious profession, January 6, 1748, and died September 9, 1769. He had therefore spent twenty-two years in apostolic labors, now in Naples, now in Sicily, where he was Rector for three years. Father Agostino Saccardi wrote the life of this saintly man, which was printed at Naples in the year 1816.

16942 Born at Monteparano (diocese of Taranto) April 26, 1711, he was appointed Bishop of Melfi, January 9, 1748, and occupied this see till the beginning of the year 1766.

16943 Born at Atella (diocese of Melfi) June 13, 1724, he took the habit of our Congregation November 12, 1759, and made profession November 21, 1760. He was probably the son of Don Benedetto Grazioli, a distinguished benefactor of the Institute, who is often mentioned in the letters of St. Alphonsus.

16944 There was question of making a foundation at Rionero (see Letter 127).

16945 The Congregation was then exposed to various persecutions on the part of the civil government because of pretended acquisitions.

16946 Father D. Carmine Fiocchi was born June 13, 1721, at Caiano, in the diocese of Salerno of respectable and virtuous parents. At an early age he was a model of fervor. Prayer was his delight, and so desirous was he of doing penance that his mother was obliged to take from him the instruments of mortification with which he tortured his innocent body. When he reached the proper age, his parents sent him to Naples where he might receive an education suitable to his birth and fortune. There in the course of his studies, in which he distinguished himself, he remained steadfast in piety, so that his beautiful soul, full of the love of Jesus Christ well understood how to despise the vain allurements of the world. Having entered the seminary of Salerno, young Fiocchi soon after received subdeaconship. Anxious however to belong to God without reserve, he aspired to the religious life, and after having prayed much, his choice fell upon the Congregation of St. Alphonsus. He then wrote to the holy founder who, after examining his vocation, wrote to him that it came from God, that God wished him to belong entirely to Him, and finally that the resolution that he had formed should be at once put in execution.

Animated by these words the fervent seminarian hastened to Ciorani to make his novitiate. His parents, notwithstanding their piety, were in consternation on account of his departure, and so much were they moved by their affection for flesh and blood that they applied to the civil authorities to aid them in their design. The authorities arrogating to themselves the right of sustaining such unjust pretensions, ordained that the novice should be shut up in a convent at Salerno , there to examine and to prove better his vocation. But with God’s help the young man triumphed over all obstacles and had finally the satisfaction of being able to return to the novitiate, where he made his religious profession in the presence of St. Alphonsus, May 8, 1744.

After he had become a priest, he was destined for the work of the missions. The success that he met with was wonderful. Without any fear of exaggeration it may be asserted that he was one of the greatest missionaries of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. During the thirty years that he spent in this laborious ministry, he led back to God innumerable sinners, sanctified the clergy of many dioceses, and re-kindled fervor in a great number of monasteries. He was only twenty-eight years of age when he was called to be the Superior of the house at Pagani; and in 1750, after the death of Father Sportelli, St. Alphonsus appointed him to be one of the three General-Consultors.

All the virtues of a religious shone brilliantly in Father Fiocchi. But he distinguished himself above all by his fervor in prayer, his spirit of mortification, his love for Mary Immaculate and for his devotion to our Blessed Mother of the Seven Dolors. Then the love that he felt for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament was without a parallel: when he offered the Holy Sacrifice he resembled a seraph. This worthy son of St. Alphonsus went to his eternal repose in 1776, while sweetly invoking the name of Mary. Four years after his death his body was found incorrupt.

[16947] Pietro Picone, cousin of Father Carmine Picone, born May 24, 1733 and admitted to the novitiate June 21, 1752, fell ill during the last months of his novitiate. The malady appearing serious, the Superiors wished to send him for some time to Manicalciati, his native place. This determination was the occasion of great sadness to the pious youth, since this departure for home had the appearance of dismissal from the Congregation. He therefore wrote a long letter to the holy founder, entreating him not to send him away from the house of God. The saint sent him the foregoing letter. Pietro Picone made his profession in the presence of Father Paolo Cafaro at Caposele, on the day indicated in the answer of St. Alphonsus, and died a holy death in the same house at Caposele, in the month of November of the following year.

[16948] Mother Angiola, the penitent of the saint in the world, had founded the reformed Carmelite convent at Capua. The Queen of Naples, Maria Amalia Walburga, frequented this convent and expressed a great regard for the saintly foundress.

[16949] Don Giambattista Rossi, archpriest of Ripacandida and founder of the discalced Carmelites there, died with the reputation of a saint, in the fifty-sixth year of his age, in the year 1746. Many miracles were wrought through his intercession. The Life of this great servant was printed in the year 1752 and dedicated to His Holiness, Benedict XIV. One of the sisters of Rossi lived at Pescopagano; and for this reason, St. Alphonsus in the following letter advises Father Giovenale to seek for relics of Don Rossi at Ripacandida.

[16950] Father D. Francesco Giovenale, born at Lacedogna, February 6, 1719, entered the Congregation in 1747, and after a virtuous life died at S. Angelo a Cupolo, June 16, 1782.

[16951] The archpriest of Lacedogna Don Domenico Antonio Cappuccio was from the year 1748 one of the penitents of Father Cafaro.

[16952] Another penitent of Father Cafaro.

[16953] Father Margotta as Procurator-General of the Congregation spent the greater part of his time at Naples, to transact the affairs of the Institute.

[16954] Father Cafaro was a native of Cava.

[16955] Father Bernardo Apice.

[16956] Father Paolo Cafaro, born at Cava July 5, 1707, was admitted to religious profession July 2, 1741, and died August 13, 1753. At his death, St. Alphonsus, adoring the divine judgments, expresses the feelings of his heart in a celebrated little hymn on the will of God, that begins with the following words:

Il tuo gusto, e non il mio

Amo solo in te, mio Dio.

Voglio solo, o mio Signore,

Ciò che vuol la tua bontà.

Quanto degna sei d' amore,

O divina Volontà,

('Tis Thy good pleasure, not my own,

In Thee, my God, I love alone;

And nothing I desire of Thee

But what Thy goodness wills for me.

O will of God! O will divine!

All, all our love be ever Thine.)

In the year 1767, the saint published a short sketch of the life of Father Cafaro.

On the death of Mgr. Falcoia Father Cafaro became the spiritual director of our saint, who, as appears from his journal, afterwards asked Father Andrea Villani to fill that position. The words of the journal are as follows: "All the obediences given by Father Paolo and by other directors have been confirmed by Father Andrea, this day, August 15, 1753."

[16957] The funeral oration by Father Bernardo Apice is preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

[16958] Very likely he refers to the sermons preached about the deceased Father Paolo Cafaro.

[16959] Father Apice had composed a funeral oration on Father Cafaro, and his oration had been sent to Nocera to furnish notes for Father Alessandro de Meo who likewise pronounced a funeral oration on the deceased, August 30, in our church at Pagani.

[16960] This young man, a native of Ruvo, diocese of Muro, became later on (1781) Superior-General of the Congregation in the Pontifical States.

[16961] This Congregation was called *Ritiro delle Vergini dell' Immacolata Concezione e di S. Vincenzo.* (Asylum of the orphans of the Immaculate Conception of St. Vincent de Paul.) It was built under the direction of Cardinal Spinelli, who committed the care of it to Canon Nicola Borgia, later on (that is in 1751) Bishop of Cava. About 500 young girls found shelter in this retreat.

[16962] Demetrio Barbugli, S. J., has written among other works "Spiritual Readings for the Use of Nuns, or Commentary on Some Passages of St. Bernard."

[16963] Father Margotta being a native of the diocese of Conza was inclined to leave his patrimony to the house at Caposele.

[16964] The Congregation had not been recognized as an ecclesiastical corporation; and could not therefore acquire any property.

[16965] This friend was Carmine Ventapane of Maratea, in the diocese of Cassano, and was one of the ablest professors of medical science at Naples. He was very zealous and at the same time wealthy. Having seen with his own eyes the spiritual abandonment of the people of Calabria, he resolved to have missions given there at his own expense, and for this purpose he applied to St. Alphonsus and to Father Margotta. And in fact, when everything had been arranged, the missions began in November 1756.

[16966] Francesco Antonio Bonaventura, born at Barletta, was a great friend of St. Alphonsus. A man of great piety and learning, he was preconized bishop of Nusco, November 26, 1753, and he governed his diocese up to the year 1788.

[16967] No doubt the saint evidently meant that they were not of much value in regard to their practical utility for missions.

[16968] The said Rules were printed at Rome in 1750, after the Institute of the Redemptoristines had been approved by the Holy See. It seems that the copy sent to the saint at Nocera was lost.

[16969] A grain is twenty-fourth part of a pennyworth troy; 15 grains are equal to 64 centimes, a centime being about one fifth of a United States cent.

[16970] The first volume of the second edition, begun in Naples in 1952 and finished in 1755.

[16971] The saint had asked the Pope to interpose his mediation with the civil authorities, in order to obtain the *exequatur* of the apostolic Brief by which our Congregation had been approved.

[16972] The priest Don Gennaro Farina had left the novitiate after receiving a most tender letter from his mother.

[16973] Don Pietro Genovese and Don Bernardo Tortora had left the Congregation after their profession

16974 In the month of May, 1753, Mother Maria di Gesù was relieved of the office of Prioress, having been succeeded by Sister Maria of the Holy Ghost.

16975 A convent at Naples.

16976 Mauro Murante and Michele di Michele, both of Melfi, had entered the Congregation by the advice of the Sister.

16977 D. Luigi Mercante, a young man of twenty-eight years of age and already Auditor at the tribunal of Lucera, was a penitent of Father Fiocchi. Sister Maria di Gesù urged him to enter the Congregation; but certain obstacles, unknown to us, prevented the execution of this pious project.

16978 Probably to confer with Mother Angiola del Divino Amore in regard to the affairs of the Congregation.

16979 Cassano Irpino, a place in the diocese of Nusco.

16980 This pious subject, born in Avellino, October 20, 1728, made his profession, May 27, 1751, and after many apostolic labors died the death of the just at Ciorani, January 3, 1813.

16981 It appears that this order was so efficacious that the sick man was entirely cured. Father Giuseppe Landi thus relates the miracle in his chronicles: “While I was staying at our house at Ciorani, Father Saverio Rossi was lying at this house seriously ill; but as his malady grew worse and the sick man was already given up by the doctors, suffering as he was from a dangerous hiccough, our Father Alfonso who was staying at Nocera de’ Pagani, distant about eight miles from Ciorani, wrote every day for information regarding Father Saverio. When I wrote to him that the latter was very ill and that there was but little hope of recovery, he wrote to me that I should tell the sick man that it was his intention that he should get well, and should be cured of his sickness. Through obedience I informed him of this, but D. Saverio grew worse, and I at once informed the saint that all hopes of recovery had banished. Then the saint, full of confidence in God, wrote with his own hand the following words: *My dear Father D. Saverio, I wish that you should get well, and this I command under obedience, and for the love of Jesus Christ and of the Blessed Virgin I command you.* After having received and read this letter, I had not the courage to read it to him; but as Father Andrea Villani, an old Father of great virtue, was staying at the house, I begged him to take it to the sick man and to make known to him the will of our Father. Father Villani having approached the bed of the dying Father said to him: ‘Father Saverio, have you faith in obedience?’ The latter having answered in the affirmative, Father Villani made known to him the order of our Father Alfonso; the sick man having devoutly kissed the letter, put it under the pillow of his bed, and wonderful to relate! from this time he began to grow better, and in a short while arose from his bed quite restored.”

16982 Antonino Sersale, born at Sorrento, June 26, 1702, first archbishop of Brindisi, then of Taranto, was created archbishop of Naples, February 16, 1754, then Cardinal with the title of Santa Pudenziana, April 22 of the same year. On the 23d of the said month he took possession of his new church assisted by D. Giulio Niccolò Torni, Archbishop of Arcadiopolis, but he came to his church only on the 16th of the following June.—He died at Naples, June 24, 1775.

[16983] The reason of this decadence is well expressed by Canon Sparano in his *Historical Memoires of the Church of Naples* (vol. ii. page 350). “Cardinal Spinelli,” he says, “went to Rome at the end of 1749 for the opening of the Holy Year, and remained in this city till he resigned this See, that is, for the space of four years and two months. Ecclesiastical studies began to decay immediately after his departure. . . . etc.”

[16984] These three Congregations were: 1. The Congregation of the Archiepiscopate, or of the *Propaganda,* or of the *apostolic missions,* erected under the patronage of *Marry Queen of the Apostles;* 2. The Congregation of Father Pavone or the *Conference;* 3. The Congregation of the Purity or of *S. Giorgio.* These three associations are still in existence.

[16985] Cardinal Sersale had formerly been a member of the Congregation of the Apostolic Missions.

[16986] D. Giuseppe Iorio and D. Giambattista Fusco were both members of the Congregation of the Archiepiscopate. The former is the author of the famous work “Il Vescovo consolato,” and of many other works. Sparano pronounces a most beautiful eulogy on Don Fusco in his *Memorie Istoriche,* tom. ii. pag. 374.

[16987] A large volume would be needed in which to narrate the life of this learned and exemplary religious. Born at Corato, October26, 1724, Antonio Tannoia made his profession, December 8, 1747, and as soon as he was ordained priest, the office of Master of novices was entrusted to his care, and a short time afterwards he was made Rector of the house at Iliceto. “When I was still a young man”—so he speaks of himself in the process of beatification of St. Alphonsus—“I was so afflicted with a combination of diseases that the first doctors of Naples despaired of my recovery. The servant of God, however, said to me one day: ‘Have no fear, you will not die; but you will have to lead a life of great bodily infirmity.’ I have lead such a life and I am leading it still, because it is now nearly fifty years that I have felt myself always afflicted by grave maladies; I have expected death every moment, and if I did not die, and if I am to live, my life will be a life of misery and pain, as the servant of God has told me.” Thus he spoke in 1796. But notwithstanding these continual and very great sufferings, he lived heroically faithful to all the exercises of piety, to the fatigues of the apostolic ministry, and to study. He wrote several valuable works, and among them the “Life of St. Alphonsus.” (3 vols.) He died a holy death at Iliceto, March 12, 1808.

[16988] Father Gasparo Caione was appointed Rector of Caposele about the end of July, 1754, in place of Father Mazzini who did not find the air very healthy. He was a native of Troia, and was born there, August 4, 1722. He had studied law at Naples; he was a man of great talent. Following the voice of grace, he entered the Congregation, September 18, 1751, in which he rendered very great services during his long life. He died at our house in Benevento, October 30, 1809.

[16989] The feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin was every year celebrated with the greatest pomp in our church of the *Mater Domini* at Caposele.

[16990] Father Andrea Strina, a native of the city of Lettere, was admitted as a subdeacon to the novitiate, March 1, 1748. He labored much for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and died full of merit at S. Angelo a Cupolo, April 21, 1797.

[16991] Benedetto Grazioli of Atella, a rich man and a great benefactor of the Congregation, had at that time come to Caposele to spend some weeks in solitude and prayer.

[16992] Father D. Angelo Latessa arid Frater D. Pietro Picone were sick at that time; and a short time after both died; the first, October 5; the second, November 9, of the year 1754.

[16993] Venerable Gerardo Maria Maiella had been with Father Margotta at Naples during three months, and was re-called to Caposele at the beginning of October of this year. A year after his soul entered Paradise.

[16994] Francesco Saverio Manfredonia, a native of Bovino had been professed for three months, when his father came to solicit the favor of taking him to his native place.

[16995] These two young men were Lorenzo Nigro di Bella, of the diocese of Muro, and Giambattista Gargano di Montella, of the diocese of Nusco. Both were however admitted to the novitiate the following year.

[16996] Father Caione made Frater Manfredonia set out from Caposele to Nocera, and from Nocera St. Alphonsus sent him to Ciorani.

[16997] Manfredonia, ordered to proceed to the convent of Ciorani, left it, November 21 without a dispensation from his vows, and contrary to the formal obedience of not leaving this house. May 30, 1755, not having yet received the dispensation, he was forced to re-enter the Institute; but as he had lost the spirit of the Congregation he was dismissed as incorrigible; this time he was released from his vows. Such was for this unfortunate young man the sad result of having concealed his temptation against his vocation.

[16998] The occasion of the expulsion of Father Gerardo Grassi is found described by Father Tannoia in his Life of the saint: “Alphonsus having ordered Father Grassi to be sent to Iliceto, the latter, who was in the house at Ciorani refused to go. But the motives of the one that gave the command and of the one that did not wish to obey were diametrically opposite. Father Grassi with little edification due to the Community, wished to assist his brother who was making his studies at Salerno; and St. Alphonsus for the same reason wished him to change his abode, and seeing the resistance that this subject made, dismissed him from the Congregation.”

[16999] This uncle was Canon Domenico Rosato who had greatly aided his nephew when he entered the Congregation, as is seen in the letter of Father Cafaro to St. Alphonsus.

[17000] September 7, 1752, Mgr. Marco de Simone, Bishop' of Troia, had in fact written to St. Alphonsus in the following terms: "When you consider Don Gasparo Caione ready for sacred orders I shall at once ordain him, although I have deferred perhaps for a long time to ordain all the others,"

[17001] The student Michele di Michele.

[17002] The little work of the *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin.*

[17003] A most excellent young man of Ruvo, who as we have already indicated became afterwards Superior-General of the Congregation in the Pontifical States.

[17004] Sacra Congregatio Emorum et Rmorum S. R. E. Cardinalium negotiis et consultationibus Episcoporum et Regularium præposita, attenta relatione archiepiscopi Beneventani, eidem benigne commisit ut, veris existentibus narratis, Oratoris precibus, pro suo arbitrio et conscientia indulgeat, juxta petita.

ROMÆ, 13 Junii 1755.

C. A. CARD. CAVALCHINI.

P. GUGLIELMI, secretarius.

[17005] Father D. Tommaso Pagano, the first director of the saint, died shortly after, August 25, of the same year 1755.

[17006] This communication was conceded by a Pontifical Rescript of July 19, 1756, and a Brief of August 11, 1757.

[17007] This Father seems to have been Father Apice; but the fear of the saint vanished a short time afterwards, because the Father reformed in such a way that he lived and died a saint, as may be seen in his Life written by Father Agostino Saccardi.

[17008] The Master of novices was Father Tannoia; but on account of bad health, he was obliged to stay at Iliceto for some months.

[17009] The two other candidates that received the holy habit with Francesco de Paola, on the feast of St. Aloysius de Gonzaga, were Michael Ferrazzano di Solofra and Sebastiano de Jacobis di S. Fele.

[17010] This little work has the title "Pratica del confessore per ben esercitare il suo ministero." (Practice of the confessor for the worthy exercise of his ministry.)

[17011] The second volume of his Moral Theology.

[17012] Twenty *carlini* = 8 fr. 50 centimes.

[17013] Father Carmine Fiocchi was then Rector of the house at Iliceto.

[17014] To understand the meaning of this, see note added to the letter dated August 5, of the year 1755.

[17015] Father Saverio Rossi, Rector of the house at Ciorani, and Father Pasquale Caprioli, the Minister.

[17016] D. Vito Polestra and D. Donato Melaccio, natives of the archdiocese of Conza, who were then to receive Holy Orders.

[17017] The Bishop of Muro, Mgr. Vito Moio, was greatly displeased at the entrance into our Congregation of young Francesco Antonio de Paola, his diocesan.

[17018] The second volume of his Moral Theology, to which he wished to add Elenchus 99 *questionum post primam editionem anni* 1748 *reformatarum.*

[17019] The work “Pratica del confessore per ben esercitare il suo ministero,” of which mention has already been made, and the work “Dissertatio scholastico-moralis pro usu moderato opinionis probabilis in concursu probabilioris.”

[17020] Luigi Capuano, horn at Cava, June 21, 1739, was admitted to the novitiate, July 14, 1755.

[17021] The Venerable Brother Gerardo Maiella was then collecting for the building of the house at Caposele, and he died shortly afterwards, that is, October 15, 1755.

[17022] Ten *tomoli* = 5 1/2 hectolitres; a hectolitre being equal to 2 bu. and 3.35 pks.

[17023] Father Caione speaks of this fact in the juridical depositions for the beatification of the saint (*Summar.* n. 18, § 93): “The house of Caposele,” he says, “was burdened with a seigniorial tax, above the sum which his Majesty, Charles III, had assigned us; the latter sum amounted to about four grains a day [about 20 centimes] for each subject. I succeeded in having the Municipal Council convoked to abolish this enormous tax of forty ducats [170 frs.] annually; as the tax exceeded the sum given us as an alms by the king; but all in vain. 1 found myself covered with shame and confusion; every one contradicted me. I thus reported the whole affair to the servant of God, and he answered in the following terms: ‘As the people of Caposele have treated us so well, it is necessary to think of avenging ourselves; but how shall we do this? Listen: be more liberal henceforth in dispensing alms, be more assiduous in the confessional; when you are called to the sick run without any hesitation; do not complain of the wrong done you; let this be your revenge.’ “

[17024] Luigi Capuano became later a great missionary, but he had not the good fortune of dying in the Congregation, as we shall see further on.

[17025] In the *journal* of Father Pasquale Caprioli we read this notice: “November 14, 1755, Father Rector Major went to give a mission at Benevento, and returned with Father Spera to Pagani, December 12.”

[17026] Brother Francesco Tartaglione, having finished the penance of which we have spoken in the letter of May 10, 1752, was sent back to Naples where he lived as he had always till his happy death in a house of the Congregation. At that time St. Alphonsus, while on his way to the mission at Benevento, was staying for two days at Naples with his mother who was seriously ill, and thus it happened that the Brother spoke to him about the purchase of the works of St. Augustine.

[17027] D. Gerardo Gisone, born February 10, 1720 at Recigliano, in the diocese of Muro, made his profession, September 8, 1756, and after a virtuous life, died in 1765.

[17028] In the general catalogue of the Congregation we read the following statement: “In the General Chapter held on the 15th of October of the year 1755, after deliberately weighing the matter, it was decided by the Fathers assembled in Chapter to admit into the Congregation youths who have attained the age of sixteen years and six months, whereas formerly they could not be admitted before their eighteenth year. The climate of Ciorani has not proved very beneficial to the novices; besides, by reason of the many courses of spiritual exercises held there—the number of those following the exercises being at times two hundred—the novices were disturbed and distracted; it has therefore been decided to transfer the novitiate to Iliceto, to the house of Santa Maria della Consolazione. The place was truly well adapted for a novitiate, being tar removed from all the noise of the world; the novitiate was placed under the care of Father Antonio Maria Tannoia, Rector and Master of novices.” Thus far the catalogue.

[17029] Father Tannoia had done his utmost to have the novitiate transferred to Iliceto.

[17030] His pious mother died a few days after the saint had written this letter, and he received the news of her death with perfect tranquility. The following is what Father D. Pasquale Caprioli says of this event in his juridical deposition (*Sum.* n. 11, § 43): “His virtue was heroic on hearing of the death of his most pious mother. Donna Anna Maria Cavalieri was a lady of so religious a spirit that she daily recited the divine Office like a cloistered nun, and was so exact and scrupulous in regard to the fasts of the Church that she observed them most rigorously notwithstanding her old age, being ninety-four years old when she died. She led a devout life and practiced mental prayer, in which she was directed by her own son. Our servant of God heard the sad news of his mother’s death while giving a mission at Benevento, and without having lost his self-possession he preached in the evening, and merely told the people in a quiet way that they should recommend to God the soul of his mother.”

Moreover, Father Nicolò Grossi in his juridical deposition (*Sum.* n. 11, § 154) speaks thus: “I saw him perform an heroic act of resignation to the divine will when he received the news of the death of his mother at Naples. We were to go with him to a mission in the city of Benevento. Having heard that his mother, whom he himself directed in the ways of God, was ill on account of her advanced age and other indispositions, he sent us ahead on the usual Bracigliano road, he himself taking the road to Naples where he arranged all the spiritual affairs of his mother, and then set out for Benevento. A few days after, he received a letter announcing her death. He came to table with us, and before dining he said in a tranquil manner without having lost his composure that he had received notice of his mother’s death; and that on the following morning we should have the charity to apply the Mass for her soul; in a firm voice he intoned the prayers recited before meals. Both I and my companions were filled with admiration at such virtue.”

[17031] Father Amendolara, born at Contursi, in the diocese of Conza, December 20, 1723, entered the Congregation in the year 1747, and died, May 1, 1755. He was greatly beloved by St. Alphonsus, because he was full of fervor and a man of great talent.

[17032] A little before, the saint had written thus to the same Father: "Know that I do not wish to have cornices at the doors, in the choir, or in the library. Have patience; if you have put them there, have them taken away and see that everything be made plain. Poverty loves simplicity and what is necessary, not what is superfluous."

[17033] This was done. Giambattista Ansalone was admitted to the novitiate, January 24, 1756, and made his profession September 8, of the same year.

[17034] The Chapter that was held at Pagani in the month of October of the same year.

[17035] This hymn in honor of St. Aloysius is found among the works of the saint (Vol. ix. page 438).

[17036] Mention will again be made of Mauro Murante in a subsequent letter. He was born at Melfi, May 6, 1735; he received the habit of our Congregation February 13, 1754, and was professed December 24 of the same year.

[17037] The Venerable Brother Gerardo Maiella used to stay with the Murante family whenever he came to spend some time at Melfi. It was, therefore, this family that furnished the account of the miracles wrought in this city by the holy Brother. (See Life of Brother Gerard.)

[17038] The Venerable Brother Gerardo had died, October 15, 1755, and Father Giovenale having been his director for a time, he had written an account of his Life just as Father Caione had done.

[17039] See Letter of August 5, of the year 1755.

[17040] *Siesta*, the taking of an after-noon nap, practiced by people of hot countries and by other people.

[17041] Father Apice, Minister of the house at Caposele and as such charged with the care of the lay-brothers was at that time occupied in the work of the missions.

[17042] Father Villani was at that time Rector of the new house at S. Angelo a Cupolo.

[17043] Probably a new Brother admitted on the recommendation of D. Benedetto Grazioli of Atella.

[17044] Father Ferrara, born June 9, 1715, made his profession, March 25, 1748. He was a learned man and rendered many services to St. Alphonsus in the publishing of his works. How excellent his life was may be inferred from the words of the holy Founder, who called him a man *dead to his own will.* Father Ferrara died, August 22, 1767 at S. Agata de' Goti.

17045 In consequence of the unjust complaints of the lay-brothers in the house at Iliceto, the saint took away from the Brothers in all the houses the hour of sleep (*siesta*) during the day. This decision created also a semi-revolution among some of the Brothers in the house at Ciorani. The sad event is thus narrated in the *journal* of Father Pasquale Caprioli: "January 15, owing to some murmurings among the Brothers at Ciorani three of them one at Pagani, and two at Ciorani—were confined to their rooms for eight days. This penance was given to Brothers Carlo, Giuseppe and Domenico; then January 20, Brother Crescenzo of Sarno was dismissed for not wishing to submit to the foregoing penance."

17046 This short letter is a postscript added by him to a letter written to Father Tannoia by a student, Frater Pietro Paolo Blasucci.

17047 Those that had just received the habit (January 24, 1756) were the priest D. Gerardo Gisone and the acolyte Giambattista Ansalone.

17048 The city of Potenza is an episcopal See, and had at that time a population of 6585 souls.

17049 It appears that D. Fabrizio Cimino because of his illness, of which mention is made in a letter of the 20th of this month, was sent for a change of air to the mission at Rocca. In this letter he is called Father, but it seems that he was not yet a priest, having been born March 29, 1733.

17050 Father Francesco Pentimalli was born, September 20, 1714, at S. Eufemia, in the diocese of Mileto, in Farther Calabria. He had already been ordained priest before entering the novitiate, February 13, 1751; he made his profession in the presence of St. Alphonsus October 2 of the same year. While setting out in company with several other Fathers for the missions of Sicily, he was overtaken by death at his native place, S. Eufemia, November 15, 1761. He was truly an apostolic man of God.

17051 It was customary that when a Father was sent to another house to assist at a mission, he continued to apply the Masses to the intention of the house to which he was ascribed. Father Basile therefore having been sent from Ciorani to help the Fathers at Iliceto should have said Mass to the intention of the house at Ciorani; hence the Fathers at Ciorani created a commotion about which the letter speaks. Whereupon the saint ordered Father Tannoia to remedy this confusion.

17052 Tannoia tells us in his "Life of St. Alphonsus" (Book ii. chap. xxxix.) that King Charles had proposed to the saint to undertake the reform of an ancient and respectable Order. "According to the king's plan, St. Alphonsus and his companions were to take the habit and the name of this Order without, however, relinquishing the observance of their own Rule; moreover, they were to give missions in the same manner as hitherto, and to act in every matter as it should seem best to the saint." Thus far Tannoia; it appears to us this affair of Matera and the reform proposed by the king are identical.

17053 This candidate from Torrecuso, in the archdiocese of Benevento, was young Giuseppe Maffei. He was admitted to the novitiate May 1 of this year.

17054 This work on Scripture did not please him as it gave only the literal sense. See Letter of January 11, 1756.

17055 After having spent at Naples six or seven weeks, occupied with the affairs of the Congregation and preaching with an indefatigable zeal, St. Alphonsus returned to Nocera de' Pagani to spend there Holy Week, to contemplate according to his custom the mysteries of the Passion of our Lord. He had scarcely returned when he fell dangerously ill, and his illness lasted from April 10 to 17, that is, from the Saturday before Palm Sunday till Holy Saturday. "It would be a fine thing," he said, "to die during Holy Week," and he repeated three times the words: "Oh, what a fine thing would it be to die in Holy Week! for my illness is serious," he added. Father Caprioli having answered: "Let us leave it all to God," "yes," said the saint, "what God wishes I also wish, and his good pleasure is mine." On the first day of his illness he had one of the students, Frater Buonassisa, to read to him the *Proficiscere anima christiana,*—Depart, Christian soul—and on hearing it he cried out: *Oh, what beautiful prayers, what beautiful pearls of Paradise!* Before going to bed he said to some sick persons who had come to see him: "Love Jesus Christ and do his will, as I wish to do myself by going to bed."—These edifying details are drawn from an account written by Father Giuseppe Melchionna.

17056 Lorenzo Nigro had made his profession the preceding day.

17057 Vitelli and Pica were two novices who had been sent away.

17058 Giuseppe Paravento and Isidoro Leggio made their profession June 3.

17059 This little work published during this year, 1756, bears the title: "Breve dissertazione contro gli errori dei moderni increduli, oggidi nominati Materialisti e Deisti." (A brief dissertation against the errors of modern unbelievers called to-day Materialists and Deists.)

17060 The lay-brother Mattia Fazzano was a skilful clock and watchmaker; the saint, therefore, did not wish him to accompany the Fathers on their missions, as the Brother probably had to make clocks for the houses.

17061 Father Rizzi had written to his penitent Mgr. Tommaso Pacelli Bishop of Bovino, a letter in which he reminded the prelate of his duties, telling him that the people of the diocese were greatly dissatisfied with him. This indiscreet letter so angered the bishop that he wished to imprison this zealous, but too imprudent Father.

17062 The permission, namely, of having the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel of the novitiate.

17063 The means employed was to transfer the novitiate to Nocera. This occurred July 18, and the novitiate remained there till October 15, of the following year.

17064 "In the beginning of July"—says Tannoia—"Alphonsus went again to Naples. He was most anxious to see his Congregation better established and secured by royal authority, and to obtain the *exequatur* for the apostolic Brief. On the 10th of the same month he wrote to Father Gasparo Caione: 'Make a novena and have the people to make it for the success of the affair of the approbation.' On the 20th he again wrote: ‘I am laboring hard at Naples, but I meet with difficulties. *Let us leave the matter in God’s hands.* Make another novena with the discipline every evening, and have the people to make a second novena’ . . . He remained more than a month at Naples; he might have been seen in spite of the burning sun running from the house of one minister to the other. But all in vain; the opinion of Mgr. Galliano prevailed, and under pretence that the king in granting the *exequatur* to the Bull would not be free to suppress the Congregation should it degenerate, the petition was refused.” So far Tannoia, Book ii. chap. xliv.

[17065] Two carlini = fr. 0.85.

[17066] Mgr. Giuseppe Nicolai wished Father Caione to be present as Examiner at the *concursus* for the office of archpriest of Andretta.

[17067] Father Francesco de Leo was then teaching philosophy, and after the course of philosophy had been finished, having to teach theology to the same students, he wished to procure for us from France a certain number of copies of Tournely’s Theology. St. Alphonsus preferred to apply to his publisher, Giuseppe Remondini at Venice, and the latter procured the books in question as one may see in a letter of the saint to Remondini, dated March 14, 1757.

[17068] Mother Maria di Gesù had been re-elected Prioress at the end of the month of May, 1756.

[17069] The holy nun had been, as we have said, deprived of daily Communion. As we have seen in Letter 248, St. Alphonsus interceded with Mgr. de Melfi to remove this prohibition.

[17070] This favor had been granted on July 17, 1756, and confirmed on August 11, by the Brief: *Pastoris æterni.*

[17071] The stipends of the Masses of Father D. Pietro Petrella.

[17072] Here there is question of the vineyard which Don Andrea Sarnelli had presented to the Congregation. The Baron Nicola Sarnelli, after the death of his brother, made so many efforts to annul this donation, raised so many difficulties for the Institute that it was agreed, December 7, 1755, to pay him within a certain space of time the sum of a thousand ducats.

[17073] The feast and the octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin were celebrated with great solemnity in the house at Caposele.

[17074] Frater Lorenzo Nigro, to whose ordination the laws of the kingdom were opposed, as he was the only son, was subsequently ordained at Benevento, in the Papal domain.

[17075] This work is probably that which was printed in Milan in the year 1715 and which bears the title: “I prodigi della grazia espressi nella conversione di alcuni grandi peccatori, morti da veri penitenti nel monastero della Trappa della stretta osservanza Cistercienze, opera transportata dalla lingua francese nell’ italiana da un monaco di Buonsollazzo, e dedicata a’ Peccatori.—The French work had appeared in 1696 under the title: “Relations de la mort de quelques religieux de 1’ Abbaye

de la Trappe" (2 vol. in 12mo); l' Abbé de Rancé is the author. The edition of 1713 was enlarged by another volume, Paris, Delaulne.

17076 The "Rule for Seminaries."

17077 The letter addressed to the Bishop of Sicily of which mention was made in a preceding letter, number 278.

17078 Maffei was the agent at Iliceto of the Prince of Castellaneta, and as the officials of the commune depended on him, he succeeded in preventing our Fathers from cutting wood, and from using other privileges.

17079 He did not enter the Congregation, or at least he did not make his profession.

17080 The Archbishop of Conza wished to impose on the Fathers of Caposele the duty of hearing the confessions of the nuns of Calitri; a thing that was forbidden by the Rule of the Institute.

17081 Father Margotta was a native of Calitri. It was he whom the archbishop wished to have as confessor of the nuns.

17082 The young man Amato Ricca had begun his novitiate March 25 of this year, but on account of weak health he was sent to Caposele. He made his profession at Ciorani, April 20, 1758.

17083 Giuseppe Caputo, having become a widower, retired into our Congregation in company with his son, and became a lay-brother. When the time for his son's ordination drew near, he was expected at Ciorani to settle about the patrimony of his son.

17084 Edmond Purchot (Purcozio), Rector of the Paris university (1651—1734). The fourth edition of his *Institutiones philosophicæ* appeared at Lyons and at Paris in 1753.—The edition of Padua is of 1751.

17085 After one year of government this holy religious had again become a simple subject.

17086 The Venerable Brother Gerardo Maria Maiella died in the odor of sanctity, October 15, 1755. Father Caione had his portrait taken and many copies of it were printed at the expense of Don Benedetto Grazioli of Atella who had held the holy Brother in the highest esteem. This esteem was shared by Sister Maria di Gesù who had the happiness of speaking more than once with the Venerable Brother. She had been a witness of one of his ecstasies. See Life of Brother Gerardo.

17087 "An liceat ab alio pecuniam accipere, vel simile quid, quod in pauperes distribuatur?" (Et respondet:) "Si ita accipiat ut liberum ei sit his vel illis dare, tum omnino contra votum facturum, si accipiat sine facultate (Superioris), cum neque proprietas, neque usus illius rei, independens a Superiore, cuiquam paupertatis voto obstricto conveniat."—*Paupertas,* tom. 3, tit. 112, § ii. *in fine.*

17088 *Religious Perfection,* part 3, treat. 3, ch. 15.

17089 “Certi item juris est, non posse religiosum secundi generis peculium habere: nam etiam voto paupertatis repugnat usus vel administratio, in qua Abbas nutu suo monachum amovere non possit; religiosus enim nihil proprium habere potest, sed usus vel administratio, quam quis pro libitn habet, nullius alterius voluntati subjectam, est aliquid proprium.”—*Azor,* part. i. lib. 12, cap. 9, vers. *Hoc posito.*

17090 “Administratio autem bonorum monasteriorum seu conventuum ad solos officiales eorumdem, ad nutum Superiorum amovibiles, pertineat.”—*Sess.* 25, *de Regular. et Monial,* cap. 2.

17091 Francesco Siniscalchi, knew not how to overcome the temptations that assailed him and he was allowed to leave the Congregation, December 30, of this year 1757. Having then become a priest, he was a few years afterwards assassinated in Sicily by a friend to whom he had lent some money.

17092 The students of the Congregation must make a short retreat every Sunday till the signal which is given before dinner.

17093 Father Pietro Paolo Blasucci, one of the chief ornaments of our Congregation, was born at Ruvo, in the diocese of Muro, February 22, 1729. Having finished the humanities and philosophy, he found himself impelled to follow the generous example of his younger brother Domenico, who had entered our Institute, and secretly fled from his father’s house. He received the habit, August 14, 1752, and on the same day of the following year, he made his profession. We may easily form an estimate of his talents, of his prudence and of his other striking qualities when we learn that St. Alphonsus promoted him, though he was still a young man, to the important position of Superior and director of the Sicilian missions. Blasucci was only thirty-two years of age when he undertook to found the house at Girgenti. It would take a large volume to record all his labors on that abandoned island, and the many petty annoyances which he had to suffer from evil-minded men and from the civil authorities. In the year 1792, Father Pietro Paolo was elected Superior-General of the Congregation, and after governing the Institute in a saintly manner for twenty-four years, he died full of virtue and merit in our house of S. Michele de’ Pagani, May 13, 1817, at the age of eighty-eight.

17094 Father Gisone was then *socius* of Father Tannoia, or assistant of the Master of novices.

17095 Don Angelo Maione was born at S. Domenico, in the diocese of Cassano, March 17, 1733, and was admitted into the novitiate, August 15, 1758; he made his profession, April 15, of the following year. For a long time he was a most useful member of the Congregation, but unfortunately he afterwards disgraced himself by attempting to introduce the *Regolamento,* a matter which is treated in the “Life of St. Alphonsus.”

17096 A novice just dismissed.

17097 These three novices, sent from Iliceto to Ciorani before their profession, were Amato Ricca, Teodosio Telesca, and Andrea Morza. They made their vows April 20 into the hands of Father Pietro Paolo Blasucci.

17098 The title of this work is as follows: “Disinganni per vivere e morire bene, sopra le cinque parole di S. Paolo apostolo, opera composta dal P. Francesco della Croce, carmelitano scalzo.” (Disenchantments, or Instructions to Live and Die Well, founded on Five Words of St. Paul the Apostle. Work composed by Father Francis of the Cross, a discalced Carmelite.)

17099 Gaetano Maturazzo had made profession August 31, 1946. The loss of vocation was for him the greatest misfortune; for after leaving the Congregation he led a disorderly life and found his death in a brawl, dying without the consolations of the Church.

17100 It seems that in view of the death of the Archbishop of Conza, which occurred on October 24, the Fathers of the house at Caposele wished to propose for his successor a person who in his quality of bishop could not be *elected*, but had to be *asked for.* Hence the canonical term of *Postulation.* We add that the See of Conza was subject to *Pontifical nomination.*

17101 40 ducats = 170 francs.

17102 The Archbishop of Conza, Mgr. Giuseppe Nicolai, who died November 8, of this year, had left a thousand ducats to our house at Caposele.

17103 Raffaelle Palumbo, a native of Avigliano, in the diocese of Potenza, began his novitiate December 25, 1758.

17104 A work of Charles Duplessis d’ Argentré, Doctor of the Sorbonne; he died in 1740 Bishop of Tulle. In 1702 he published, among other works, the *Elements of Theology in Latin.*

17105 The Frenchmen, that is, the Fathers of the Mission.

17106 The laws of the kingdom did not permit to those that were the only sons to become priests; and because D. Lorenzo Nigro was the only son of his family St. Alphonsus required him to renounce his inheritance, so that the Congregation might not be molested. It seems that this renouncement took place; because in September 1759, D. Lorenzo was ordained priest at Benevento, outside of the kingdom.

17107 It seems that Father Caione had complained that the saint had appointed Frater D. Sebastiano de Iacobis as secret inspector of the Community at Caposele, an appointment that gave so much the more displeasure, since he was only twenty-two years of age, and was professed but one year.

17108 Father D. Sabino Barberio, born December 23, 1712, had been professed only seven weeks when he was dismissed from the Institute.

17109 Abate Giovanni Ciceri of Grottola in the diocese of Matera had conceded to St. Alphonsus, November 3, 1757, the right of giving a name for the laic chaplaincy founded by the same Abate, with the obligation, as it seems, of contributing to the maintenance of one of his family in a seminary.

17110 Frater Fabio Buonopane had made his profession, December 25, 1758, in the house at Iliceto.

[17111] Constantino Santorelli came forth victorious from all the attacks made upon him, and thus had the consolation of entering the novitiate, February 12, and to make his profession December 25, 1759. He died at Nocera in 1787. His spirit of obedience won for him the title: *Maximus in minimis* (Very great in very small things).

[17112] D. Domenico Cacciatore was one of the four students seduced by Father D. Giuseppe Muscari (see Letter 124). But although the saint had re-admitted him, he nevertheless, it is not known why, did not re-enter the Congregation.

[17113] Mgr. Niccolò d' Amato, before becoming Bishop of Lacedogna, had been up to the year 1749, vicar of Mgr. Nicolai, Archbishop of Conza, and thus having been present at all the transactions preceding the foundation of Caposele and well instructed in regard to the whole question, was the only one who could help our Fathers and quiet our opponents.

[17114] On *Death*, that is, the “Preparation for Death,” a work published by the saint during the preceding year.

[17115] Native city of Father Tannoia.

[17116] Francesco Antonio Maffei a man of very great influence at Iliceto began thenceforth to molest our Congregation.

[17117] Baron Sarnelli, after having, December 7, made an agreement (of which mention is made in Letter 266) by which the donation given by his brother was ratified, and after having given up every claim, began again to molest the Congregation by creating new law-suits and by annoying the Institute during many years.

[17118] That is, the Congregation or Confraternity of Pilgrims which had for its object to give lodging to pilgrims.

[17119] There is question here, probably, of the little work entitled: “Dissertatio de justa prohibitione et abolitione librorum nocuæ lectionis.” (Dissertation on the Just Prohibition and Abolition of Bad Books.)

[17120] Mgr. Isidoro Sanchez de Luna Benedictine of Monte Cassino, born at Naples, November 16, 1705; was first bishop of Ariano from May 6, 1748 to April 22, 1754, then archbishop of Taranto from April 22, 1754 till May 28, 1759, and finally Archbishop of Salerno from May 28, 1759 till the year 1783.

[17121] Father Pasquale de Matteis, born in the city of Lecce, April 4, 1705, entered the Society of Jesus, May 18, 1720, and always lived in it with much fervor of spirit. As he was always held in great esteem on account of his learning and virtues, the most honorable offices were entrusted to him. He was professor of rhetoric, of philosophy, of Greek, of Moral Theology, Rector of Massimo College for fourteen years, Provincial, and finally, Superior of the house at Naples. He also published some ascetical works which were highly prized. The famous Minister Bernardo Tanucci made him some

flattering promises to induce him to leave the Society, but he refused every offer and took with his companions the road into exile. He died a holy death at Rome, February 20, 1779.

[17122] In the month of September of this year the Jesuits had been expelled from Portugal, through the machinations of the execrable Marquis of Pombal.

[17123] The work entitled: “Dissertatio de justa prohibitione et abolitione librorum nocuæ lectionis.”

[17124] This work was published in 1760 under the title: “Selva di materie predicabili et istruttive per dar gli esercizi ai preti, ed anche per uso di lezione privata a proprio profitto.” (Selva, or Collection of Material for Sermons and Instructions for Ecclesiastical Retreats, and also for Private Spiritual Reading.)

[17125] D. Raffaelle Palumbo, D. Constantino Santorelli and D. Epifanio Mazzarelli made afterwards their profession, December 25, into the hands of their Master, Father Tannoia.

[17126] In fact, Father Murante had so much lost the spirit of fervor that after one month he lost his vocation; but soon afterwards he felt so bitter remorse that it caused his death.

[17127] Andrea Morza was born at Caposele, September 17, 1739, and made his profession, April 20, 1758. His life was short but holy. He had a great desire to go among the heathen, as we see from the following letter written to St. Alphonsus, September 6, 1758: “My dear Father: The Lord in his goodness has deigned to enkindle in my heart the desire of laying down my life for him; and not a day passes that I do not wander with my thoughts among the barbarous nations, imagining that I am in the midst of them, bound with chains, shedding my blood for my Jesus. I am in great hopes that this moment so happy for me will come. The Lord knows how diligently I study; but I do so only for this end, and many times a day I renew the vow that I have made.—My dear Father, I beg you for the love of Jesus and Mary to grant me permission not to eat flesh-meat during the novenas of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Teresa, and of the Blessed Sacrament. I conclude by kissing your feet and asking your blessing.—Your most unworthy son, Andrea Morza of the Most Holy Redeemer.”

As he could not set out for the missions among the heathen, Andrea Morza, just ordained priest, asked to go on the missions in Sicily. His request was granted; but after eight months he was taken ill with consumption and was obliged to return home where he died, August 5, 1764, We have many of his letters addressed to his director, Father de Leo; they justify his high reputation for sanctity.

[17128] This letter was written from Naples, because the saint was at that time giving the exercises of which he had spoken in his letter of December 3, the preceding year.

[17129] An examination of the general catalogue of the Congregation shows that these two priests were not admitted.

[17130] Father Giuseppe Melchionna, a nephew of Father Girolamo Ferrara, was born at Teora in the. archdiocese of Conza; he made his religious profession March 3, 1753, and died in our house at Nocera de’ Pagani in the year 1803. Father Tannoia in his “Life of St. Alphonsus” book ii. chap. lxii. speaking of Father Melchionna’s charity and of the temptations against his vocation, cites this letter

with the following reflections: “St. Alphonsus entertained so high an idea of our holy vocation that it caused him inexpressible anguish when he perceived any one tempted to turn his back upon the Congregation. At such times he endeavored to discover whether it was merely a temptation or whether it was the diabolical obstinacy of the will. If he saw it was only a temptation, he sympathized with the subject and assisted him by his prayers; he even excused certain impertinences. A young Father, who thought he had been sent to Iliceto as a punishment wrote an impertinent letter to St. Alphonsus, asking either to be removed from Iliceto, or to be dispensed from his vows. St. Alphonsus who saw the temptation, replied in a jocular tone: ‘When St. Anthony, etc.’ “ Tannoia then adds: “With mildness, tempered, however, with a little severity St. Alphonsus dissipated the temptation and gave peace to the afflicted subject.”

[17131] The saint speaks of those postulants whose vocation was still doubtful.

[17132] Tito, a place in the diocese of Potenza.

[17133] Mgr. Marcello Papiniano Cusano was not beloved at Palermo, because, he was not originally from Sicily, but a Neapolitan, from Frasso, in the diocese of Sant’ Agata de’ Goti.

[17134] This mistake or rather this swindle is thus related by Father Tannoia in the Life of the saint: “A Neapolitan gentleman taking advantage of the veneration in which the name of Alphonsus was generally held, wrote in his name to different dioceses requesting pecuniary assistance for the benefit of the works of piety in which he was engaged. On account of the high esteem in which Alphonsus was held large sums were obtained. Although this man was anxious to take his letters from the post-office, it providentially happened that our Brother Francesco Tartaglione, who was at Naples transacting business, succeeded in being ahead of him. Alphonsus opened a letter at Pagani and discovered to his amazement that Mgr. Lucchesi had instructed his agent to send him (Alphonsus) twenty ducats. Alphonsus thanked the prelate for his courteous exhibition of kindness and informed him at the same time that not he but some swindler had made such a request in his name. Monsignor answered him more courteously and requested him to receive the money, and use it as he thought best.”

[17135] The Sicilian ounce is equal to 12.75 frs.

[17136] This work entitled: “The Great Means of Prayer to acquire Eternal Salvation and all the Graces that one Desires,” published in the preceding year, 1759.

[17137] The unfortunate Father Norbert, a Capuchin, called later on Abate Platel, had written principally against the Jesuits the work “Mémoires historiques sur les Missions des Indes orientales” (Historical Memoirs on the Missions of the East Indies 1744, 2 vols.)—and “Mémoires historiques apologétiques” (Historical Apologetic Memoirs) presented in 1751 to the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XIV.—The first work was condemned by the Congregation of the Index in 1745; the other in 1751.

[17138] Father Bartolomeo Corrado had made his vows, November 12 this year.

[17139] It seems that Father Caione and the other Consultors gave a favorable vote; for we read the following notice in the general catalogue of the Congregation: “On the 25th of March, 1761, Don

Pasquale Giuliano a cleric and doctor of medicine, a native of Moncianisi, in the diocese of Capua, aged thirty years, three months and seventeen days, was admitted to the novitiate. He made his religious profession, August 15, of the same year in the presence of Father Giovanni Rizzi; the time which he spent at Ciorani teaching the humanities (one year and eight months), was reckoned as a part of his novitiate." After many years of zealous apostolic labor, he passed away to his reward in our house at Girgenti, in Sicily.

17140 There is here question of some particular propositions; it being known that Father Daniele Concina was a very rigid author.

17141 Don Ettore Carafa.—The project of which there is question here was that of a foundation at Corato.

17142 The Archbishop of Trani in whose diocese was situated the city of Corato.

17143 In the Life of Father Apice mention is made of this religious as of a very holy person. Some of the letters addressed to her by the celebrated missionary are quoted in this book.

17144 Father Chiesa belonged to the Order of Hermits of St. Augustine of the Congregation of S. Giovanni a Carbonara. He was a very learned man and a great friend of St. Alphonsus.

17145 Father Tannoia in his Life of St. Alphonsus (book ii. ch. xlvii.) narrates at length the reform of this asylum, which was undertaken and brought to a happy issue by the Fathers of our Congregation.

17146 Chiara Gaiano, niece of our Father Carlo Gaiano, was a native of Spiano, diocese of Salerno. St. Alphonsus had been her director when she was in the world. Hence she wrote to him as soon as she made her profession in the monastery of the SSma Trinità at Ravello. The saint answered her by the present letter.

17147 In a. letter addressed to Father Tannoia, dated June 8, 1792, the Sister thus expresses herself on this subject: "My mother having become blind, I wrote to Monsignor [St. Alphonsus] that he should recommend her in his prayers and asked him whether he could not beg God to cure her. He answered me, November 7, 1758, that such a thing was impossible. I was then staying with my family on account of the illness of my mother. But Monsignor in the letter which he wrote pressed me to enter the convent, saying that he did not wish me to lose my vocation on account of my mother . . . I obeyed, and a short time afterwards I entered as a religious the convent where I had spent a year as a pupil."

17148 From this it would seem that the saint intended to write the Life of Frater Domenico Blasucci and that of Father Sportelli.

17149 Ettore Carafa.

17150 Giovanni Rizzi was born August 22, 1713 of good and pious parents, at Zungoli in the diocese of Ariano. When he was a year old, death took his father from him. Having been confided to the care of an uncle, who was a Canon, he devoted himself to study. After completing his philosophical course, as he was gifted with a brilliant mind, he was sent to Rome, where after a few years he gained the doctor’s degree. Having been ordained priest on his return home, he devoted himself for some time to the education of youth, when yielding to the request of Mgr. Giovanni Anzano, he went to the seminary of Campagna, where he taught first philosophy, with great applause, and then, theology; afterwards as Rector of the seminary, he worked for the good of the Institute with a zeal proportioned to his great gifts and to his sanctity. In 1750 he entered our Congregation, and after a fervent novitiate of six months, he made his profession December 25, of the same year. His life was ever worthy of a son of the Congregation. He was a true model of regular observance and of missionary zeal. He showed wonderful skill in giving the spiritual exercises to priests and to gentlemen. His fame being spread abroad by these labors, bishops and the first cities of the kingdom vied with one another in endeavoring to secure this great preacher. After years of continual labor in the ministry, the servant of God, fell asleep in the Lord, January 6, 1771 at our house of S. Angelo a Cupolo, and God did not delay to manifest the sanctity of his servant by several miracles.

[17151] The Bishop of Sisteron, Pietro Francesco Laffiteau wrote among other works: 1. “History of the Constitution *Unigenitus;*” 2. “Refutation of Anecdotes on the Constitution *Unigenitus.*” He was a determined adversary of the Jansenists.

[17152] Bisaquino forms part of the archdiocese of Monreale (Sicily.)

[17153] Don Carlo Gaiano was a great missionary of our Congregation.

[17154] In another letter, of which there still exists a fragment, the saint speaks thus to him: “As to your spirit, would to God that all were in what you call a miserable state. The misery you cause yourself when you go to confession. If you did not confess these things, you would be at peace. And I assure you that you are in the state of grace, and that what you call your sins are apprehensions, fears, torments, but not sins. Rest assured that God loves you. I bless you.”

[17155] This youth was an acolyte named Pietro Francesco Romano; he received the habit January 17, 1762.

[17156] These Fathers were General-Consultors.

[17157] Father Francesco Pentimalli had been sent with Father Pietro Paolo Blasucci and two other Fathers to Sicily to establish a foundation at Girgenti. The Fathers made the journey overland, and when about to go to Messina they were obliged to stop, the communication between Calabria and Sicily having been broken by rumors that a pestilence had broken out. Father Tannoia says: “Seeing it impossible for the moment to proceed, Father Pentimalli halted at S. Eufemia, his native place, for the purpose of giving some rest to his companions; but scarcely had he arrived on November 10, when he was seized with a violent fever, which carried him off in three days. This loss afflicted Alphonsus deeply. Father Pentimalli was one of his best missionaries; for besides his rare talents he had such power over the hearts of others that he could lead them as he wished.”

[17158] After the death of any member of the Congregation all the priests of the Institute must apply five Masses for the soul of the deceased confrère.

17159 Father Biogio Amarante, a distinguished missionary, died November 2, in our house at S. Angelo a Cupolo. He was born November 25, 1722 at Nocera de' Pagani, and had made his profession July 12, 1744.

17160 The work entitled: "The True Spouse of Jesus Christ," published the preceding year.

17161 Vincenzo Buonopane was born August 26, 1743 at Grottaminarda in the diocese of Avellino; he was admitted to the novitiate December 25, 1761 and to profession, January 6, 1763. He died a holy death at Naples (where he had been sent for a change of air), assisted by Father Girolamo Ferrara, February 7, 1764.

17162 Mgr. Gioacchino Martinez, Bishop of Avellino was opposed to the young man's entrance into the novitiate, as he wished to keep so able a subject for his own diocese.

17163

Cardinal Wiseman's birthday was the Feast of St. Alphonsus, to whom, as the Apostle of the Sacrament of Penance, and of the spirit of benignness to sinners, he had an especial devotion.—DR. MANNING'S SERMON, *Omnia pro Christo.*

17164

Pagani is a suburb of Nocera; the latter is often called Nocera del Pagani.

17165

The writer is obliged to Mr. Justin McCarthy for instructing Mr. Disraeli that the word "Apology" bears more meanings than one. In the "Apologies" put forth by Doctors and martyrs, from the 'Apology' of Tertullian in the second century, and that of Dr. Newman in the nineteenth, Catholic Doctrine, &c., has rather been explained and defended than apologized for."

17166

The forty-four bishops themselves assured the Pope in a protest that they did not condemn the contrary opinion, i. e. Papal Infallibility.

17167

Monsignor Cavaliere, the saintly bishop of Troia.

17168

Taburno is a mountain which overtops St. Agatha.

17169

"It was the intention of the Catholic king that this salutary work should never cease to exist." Did the king then mean to live forever to protect it? We trust God has rewarded his good intentions; but, though the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer is little more than a century old, it has already seen the end of his dynasty.

17170

The Passionist Fathers had already begun to evangelize Northern Italy when St. Alphonsus founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer in the South. It is worthy of remark that our saint’s learned and most pious uncle, Monsignor Cavalieri, Bishop of Troia, was the great friend and protector of St. Paul of the Cross and his companions, who used to say that the labors and austerities of this holy prelate, even in old age, made them ashamed.

17171

It is hardly necessary to observe that, though the saint was at the head of the literary men of his country for some two thirds of a century, his genius never emitted a spark of literary jealousy.

17172

The Father who so coolly accepted his master’s post in 1785, lived, let us hope, to repent, of so easily taking the first place while the saintly Founder was alive. He died at Frosinone in 1814.

17173

His usual mode of requesting, and even commanding, was, “Have the goodness to oblige me,” “Do this in charity for a poor old man,” “For the love of our dear Lady gratify me in this,” “Have compassion with a feeble old man, and obey for the sake of Jesus Christ,” “I beseech you to give me this consolation, that you will do this for the love of God,” &c.

17174

Visits to the blessed sacrament.

17175

Glories of Mary.

17176

The Jourdain (Giordani) family were originally from Nocera.

17177

Several descendants of the saint’s brother, Count Hercules Liguori, and of his sister Teresa, Duchess of Presenzano, still glory in claiming as their collateral ancestor, the great bishop and doctor. Like most of the old families of Naples, thy have considerably declined from their former wealth, power, and consequence. Those of the family who were present at his canonization, had the gratification of seeing his statue honored with a niche in St. Peter’s.

17178

This elegant work of art is a miracle of taste and genius, wrought by the first artist of the day, in the purest white marble. It is almost thirty feet in height, a perfect colossus. The likeness to the saint is striking—those who knew him in life have testified to this. The mitre and crosier are held by a cherub.

17179

The Church calls the day of their death their birthday, as commencing their new and blessed life as saints in heaven.

17180

In eighteen centuries the title of *Doctor of the Church* had been conferred only on seventeen. St. Bonaventure, Card. Archbp. of Albano, who died in 1274, closed the illustrious category until March 23, 1871, when St. Alphonsus was elevated to this rare dignity.

17181

Archbishop Manning, in his sermon on The Mission of St. Alfonso, delivered in the Redemptorist Church, Clapham, Aug. 2, 1864.

17182

When Hoffbauer reached Rome, he accidentally as it were wandered into the little church of St. Julian, and being greatly struck by the deportment of some religious who were praying before the altar, he asked a little boy to what order they belonged. “They are Fathers of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer,” answered the child, “and you, sir, will one day belong to their institute.” Clement, astonished at this, asked for the Superior, and hearing that the Redemptorists were the religious of the world-renowned Monsignore Liguori, he immediately joined them, to the dismay of his friend and companion Hubl, who was still undecided as to what order he would embrace. Instead of retiring to rest that night, Clement prayed till morning that his dear friend Thaddeus might obtain of God a vocation to the Congregation. The prayer was granted. Hubl called upon him early next day, and begged to be admitted among the novices.

17183

Father General Blasucci was a younger brother of the venerable Dominic Blasucci, “the Aloysius of the Congregation.”

17184

There is a story current, we know not upon what authority, that St. Alphonsus, seeing a sailing vessel bound for New Orleans, prophesied that his sons would yet possess flourishing establishments in that city, and become the instruments of the perfection and salvation of innumerable souls.

17185 “Ipse enim Pater amat vos, quia vos me amastis.”—*John*, 16:27.

17186 *Spirit*, p. 1, *ch.* 25.

17187 “Super omnia, . . . charitatem habete, quod est vinculum perfectionis.”—*Col.* 3:14.

17188 “Ama, et fac quod vis.”

17189 ‘In charitate perpetua dilexi te.”—*Jer.* 31:3.

17190 “Ab alio amatore præventa sum.”

17191 “In funiculis Adam traham eos, in vinculis charitatis.”—*Osee,* 11:4.

17192 “Cœlum et terra et omnia mihi dicunt, ut te amem.”—*Conf.* B. 10, c. 6.

17193 “Sic enim Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium unigenitum daret.” *John,* 3:16.

17194 “Propter nimiam charitatem suam qua dilexit nos, et cum essemus mortui peccatis, convivificavit nos in Christo.”—*Eph.* 2:4.

17195 “Qui etiam proprio Filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum: quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* 8:32.

17196 “Dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me.”—*Gal.* 2:20.

17197 “Et Verbum caro factum est.”—*John,* 1:14.

17198 “Exinanivit semetipsum formam servi accipiens, . . . et habitu inventus ut homo.”—*Phil.* 2:7.

17199 “Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem cruris.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

17200 “Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

17201 “Charitas Christi urget nos.”—2 *Cor.* 5:14.

17202 *Love of God.* B. 7, c. 8.

17203 *Love of God,* B. 12, c. 13.

17204 “Baptismo habeo baptizari; et quomodo coarctor usquedum perficiatur!”—*Luke,* 12:50.

17205 “Sciens Jesus quia venit hora ejus, ut transeat ex hoc mundo ad Patrem, cum dilexisset suos, . . . in finem dilexit eos.”—*John,* 13:1.

17206 “Quis hoc fecit?—Fecit amor, dignitatis nescius.”—*In Cant.* s. 61.

17207 “Vidimus Sapientiam amoris nimietate infatuatam.”—*Serm.de Nat. D.*

17208 “Extasim facit divinus amor.”—*De Div. Nom.* c. 4.

17209 “Vulnera, corda saxea vulnerantia, et mentes congelatas inflammantia.”—*Stim. div. am.* p. I, c. I.

17210 “Charitas Christi urget nos.”—2 *Cor.* 5:14.

17211 “Ut cognoscat mundus quia diligo Patrem, . . . surgite, eamus.”—*John* 14:31.

17212 “In hoc enim Christus mortuus est et resurrexit, ut et mortuorum et vivorum dominetur.”—*Rom.* 14:9.

17213 *Disc, on the Love of God.*

17214 *De Duob. Prœc.* c. 4.

17215 *Epist.* 20.

17216 “Si quis non amat Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, sit anathema.”—1 *Cor.* 16:22.

17217 “Si vis proficere, quotidie mediteris Domini passionem; nihil enim in anima ita operatur universalem sanctimoniam, sicut meditatio passionis Christi.”

17218 “Magis meretur vel unam lacrymam emittens ob memoriam passionis Christi, quam si qualibet anni hebdomada in pane et aqua jejunaret.”—*Rosar.* p. 2, s. 15.

17219 “Sciens Jesus quia venit hora ejus, ut transeat ex hoc mundo ad Patrem, cum dilexisset suos qui erant in mundo, in finem dilexit eos.”—*John,* 13:1.

17220 “Quæ in fine in signum amicitiæ celebrantur, firmius memoriæ imprimuntur, et cariora tenentur.”—T. ii. s. 54, a. 1, c. 1.

17221 “Totum tibi dedit, nihil sibi reliquit.”

17222 “Divitias divini sui erga homines amoris velut effudit.”—*Sess.* xiii. c. 2.

17223 “In qua nocte tradebatur, accepit panem, et gratias agens fregit, et dixit: Accipite et manducate; hoc est corpus meum.”—1 *Cor.* 11:23.

17224 “In illo fervoris excessu, quando paratus erat pro nobis mori, ab excessu amoris majus opus agere coactus est, quam umquam operatus fuit, dare nobis corpus in cibum.”—*Loco cit.*

17225 “Sacramentum charitatis, Pignus charitatis.”

17226 “Amor amorum.”

17227 “In quo . . . futuræ gloriæ nobis pignus datur.”

17228 *Isa.* 12:4.

17229 “Nonne videtur insania: Manducate meam carnem, bibite meum sanguinem?”—*In Ps.* 33. *en.* 1.

17230 “Quomodo potest hic nobis carnem suam dare ad manducandum?—Durus est hic sermo; et quis potest eum audire?”—*John,* 6:53, 61.

17231 “Accipite et manducate; hoc est corpus meum.”

17232 “Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare vobiscum.”—*Luke,* 22:15.

17233 “Flagrantissimæ charitatis est vox hæc.”—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 2.

17234 “Venite, comedite panem meum, et bibite vinum quod miscui vobis.”—*Prov.* 9:5.

17235 “Comedite, amici, et bibite.”—*Cant.* 5:1.

17236 “Qui manducat meam carnem, . . . habet vitam æternam.—Qui manducat hunc panem, vivet in æternum.”—*John,* 6:55, 59.

17237 “Nisi manducaveritis carnem Filii hominis, . . . non habebitis vitam in vobis.”—*John,* 6:54.

17238 “Amantes desiderant ex ambobus fieri unum.”—1. 2, q. 28, a. 1.

17239 “En ipse stat post parictem nostrum respiciens per fenestras, prospiciens per cancellos.”—*Cant.* 2:9.

17240 “Qui manducat meam carnem, . . . in me manet, et ego in illo.”—*John,* 6:57.

17241 *Introd.* p. 2, *ch.* 21.

17242 “Semetipsum nobis immiscuit, ut unum quid simus; ardenter enim amantium hoc est.”—*Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 61.

17243 “O quam mirabilis est dilectio tua, Domine Jesu, qui tuo corpori taliter nos incorporari voluisti, ut tecum unum cor et unam animam haberemus inseparabiliter colligatam!”—*De Inc. div. am.* c. 5.

17244 “Ultimus gradus amoris est, cum se dedit nobis in cibum; quia dedit se nobis ad omnimodam unionem, sicut cibus et cibans invicem uniuntur.”—T. ii. s. 54, a. 4, c. i.

17245 *Introd.* p. 2, *ch.* 21.

17246 “Frequens accessus (ad Eucharistiam) confessariorum judicio est relinquendus, qui, . . . laicis negotiatoribus et conjugatis, quod prospicient eorum saluti profuturum, id illis pæescribere debebunt.”

17247 “Omnia dedit ei Pater in manus.”—*John,* 13:3.

17248 “Venerunt mihi omnia bona pariter cum ilia.”—*Wisd.* 7:11.

17249 “Eucharistia maximam vim habet perficiendæ sanctitatis.”

[17250] “Antidotum quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis, et a peccatis mortalibus præservemur.”—*Sess.* xiii. c. 2.

[17251] P. 3, q. 79, a. 4.

[17252] “Per crucis mysterium, eripuit nos a potestate peccati; per Eucharistiæ sacramentum, liberat nos a voluntate peccandi.”—*De Alt. Myst.* 1. 4, c. 44.

[17253] “Deus charitas est.”—1 *John*, 4:8.

[17254] “Ignis consumens est.”—*Dent.* 4:24.

[17255] “Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?”—*Luke*, 12:49.

[17256] “Carbo est Eucharistia, quæ nos inflammat, ut tamquam leones ignem spirantes ab illa mensa recedamus, facti diabolo terribiles.”—*Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 61.

[17257] “Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem.”—*Cant.* 2:4.

[17258] “Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis, quia amore langueo.”—*Cant.* 2:5.

[17259] “Licet tepide, tamen confidens de misericordia Dei accedat; tanto magis æger necesse habet requirere medicum, quanto magis senserit se ægrotum.”—*De Prof. rel.* 1. 2, c. 77.

[17260] *Introd.* p. 2. *ch.* 21.

[17261] *Spir. Grat.* 1. 3, c. 22.

[17262] “In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine Deus veritatis.”—*Ps.* 30:6.

[17263] “Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit.”—*Isa.* 53:4.

[17264] “Delens quod adversus nos erat chirographum decreti, quod erat contrarium nobis, et ipsum tulit de medio, affigens illud cruci.”—*Col.* 2:14.

[17265] “Accessistis ad . . . Mediatorem Jesum, et sanguinis aspersionem melius loquentem quam Abel.”—*Heb.* 12:22, 24.

[17266] “Pater . . . omne judicium dedit Filio.”—*John*, 5:22.

[17267] “Quis est qui condemnet? Christus Jesus, qui mortuus est, . . . qui etiam interpellat pro nobis.”—*Rom.* 8:34.

[17268] "Quid times, peccator? Quomodo te damnabit pœnitentem, qui moritur ne damneris? Quomodo te abjiciet redeuntem, qui de cœlo venit quærere te?"—*Tr. de Adv. D.*

[17269] "Curramus ad propositum nobis certamen, aspicientes in Auctorem fidei et consummatorem Jesum, qui, proposito sibi gaudio, sustinuit crucem, confusione contempta."—*Heb.* 12:1, 2.

[17270] *Life, ch.* 25.

[17271] *Life, ch.* 8.

[17272] "Fiducialiter agam, immobiliter sperans nihil ad salutem necessarium ab eo negandum, qui tanta pro mea salute fecit et pertulit."

[17273] "Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno"—*Heb.* 4:16.

[17274] "In omnibus divites facti estis in illo, . . . ita ut nihil vobis desit in ulla gratia."—1 *Cor.* 1:5, 7.

[17275] "Ampliora adepti sumus per Christi gratiam, quam per diaboli amiseramus invidiam."—*De Asc.* s. 1.

[17276] "Non sicut delictum, ita et donum: . . . ubi abundavit delictum, superabundavit gratia."—*Rom.* 5:15.

[17277] "Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis."—*John,* 16:23.

[17278] "Pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum; quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?"—*Rom.* 8:32.

[17279] "Dives in omnes qui invocant illum."—*Ibid.* 10:12.

[17280] "O mors! ero mors tua."—*Osee,* 13:14.

[17281] "Pater! quos dedisti mihi, volo ut, ubi sum ego, et illi sint mecum."—*John,* 17:24.

[17282] "Numquid oblivisci potest mulier infantem suum, ut non misereatur filio uteri sui? et si ilia oblita fuerit, ego tamen non obliviscar tui."—*Isa.* 49:15.

[17283] *Part* 2, *Ep.* 48.

[17284] "Non ad aliud amat, nisi ut ametur."—*In Cant.* s. 83.

17285 “Et nunc, Israel, quid Dominus Deus tuus petit a te, nisi ut timeas Dominum Deum tuum, . . . et diligas eum?—*Deut.* 10:12.

17286 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”—*Deut.* 6:5.

17287 “Plenitudo legis est dilectio.”—*Rom.* 13:10.

17288 “Completio legis.”

17289 *Love of God,* B. 7, *ch.* 8.

17290 “Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est.”—2 *Cor.* 5:15.

17291 “Gratiam fidejussoris ne obliviscaris; dedit enim pro te animam suam.”—*Ecclus.* 29:20.

17292 “Accipite et manducate; hoc est corpus meum: . . . hoc facite in meam commemorationem. . . . Quotiescumque enim manducabitis panem hunc, . . . mortem Domini annuntiabitis.”—1 *Cor.* 11:24.

17293 “Deus qui nobis sub Sacramento mirabili passionis tuæ memoriam reliquisti. . . .”

17294 “O sacrum convivium, in quo Christus sumitur, recolitur memoria passionis ejus! . . .”

17295 “Testis crux, testes dolores, testis amara mors quam pro te sustinuit.”—*Dom.* 17 p. *Pent. cone.* 3.

17296 “Magna res amor.”—*In Cant.* s. 83.

17297 “Infinitus enim thesaurus est hominibus, quo qui usi sunt, participes facti sunt amicitiæ Dei.”—*Wisd.* 7:14.

17298 “Charitas est virtus conjungens nos Deo.”

17299 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—*Prov.* 8:17.

17300 “Si quis diligit me, . . . Pater meus diliget eum, et ad eum veniemus, et mansionem apud eum faciemus.”—*John,* 14:23.

17301 “Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.”—1 *John,* 4:16.

17302 “Fortis est ut mors dilectio.”—*Cant.* 8:6.

17303 “Nihil tam durum, quod amoris igne non vincatur.”—*De Mor. Eccl. cat.* c. 22.

17304 “In eo quod amatur, aut non laboratur, aut et labor amatur.”—*De Bono vid.* c. 21.

17305 *Spirit,* p. 1, *ch.* 25.

17306 “Porro unum est necessarium.”—*Luke,* 10:42.

17307 “Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum.”—*Cant.* 8:6.

17308 “Et si habuero omnem fidem, ita ut montes transferam, charitatem autem non habuero, nihil sum. Et si distribuero in cibos pauperum omnes facultates meas; et si tradidero corpus meum, ita ut ardeam, charitatem autem non habuero, nihil mihi prodest.”—1 *Cor.* 13:2, 3.

17309 “Charitas patiens est, benigna est; charitas non æmulatur, non agit perperam, non inflatur, non est ambitiosa, non quærit quæ sua sunt, non irritatur; non cogitat malum, non gaudet super iniquitate, congaudet autem veritati; omnia suffert, omnia credit, omnia sperat, omnia sustinet.”—1 *Cor.* 13:4–7.

17310 “Homo natus de muliere, brevi vivens tempore, repletur multis miseriis.”—*Job,* 14:1.

17311 “Una eademque tunsio bonos producit ad gloriam, malos redigit in favillam.”—*Serm.* 52,, *E. B. app.*

17312 “Nam quos præscivit, et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui.”—*Rom.* 8:29.

17313 “Christus passus est pro nobis, vobis relinquens exemplum, ut sequamini vestigia ejus.”—1 *Pet.* 2:21.

17314 “Despectum et novissimum virorum.”—*Isa.* 53:3.

17315 “Quem enim diligit Dominus, castigat; flagellat autem omnem filium quem recipit.”—*Heb.* 12:6.

17316 *Life, addit.*

17317 *Abelly,*1. 3. c. 43.

17318 *In Phil. hom.* 4.

17319 *In Eph. hom.* 8.

17320 “Patientia autem opus perfectum habet.”—*James,* 1:4.

17321 “Amicti stolis albis, et palmæ in manibus eorum.”—*Apoc.* 7:9.

[17322] "Nos sine ferro esse possumus martyres, si patientiam veraciter in animo custodimus."—*In Evang. hom.* 35.

[17323] *Life, addit.*

[17324] *Life*, ch. 30.

[17325] *Boll.* 31 *Maii. Vit.* c. 7.

[17326] *Found*, ch. 31.

[17327] "Non sunt condignæ passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam quæ revelabitur in nobis."—*Rom.* 8:18.

[17328] "Momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostræ supra modum in sublimitate æternum gloriæ pondus operatur in nobis."—2 *Cor.* 4:17.

[17329] "Si sustinebimus, et conregnabimus."—2 *Tim.* 2:12.

[17330] "Qui certat in agone, non coronatur, nisi legitime certaverit."—2 *Tim.* 2:5.

[17331] *Bacci*,1. 2, ch. 20.

[17332] *Spirit*, ch. 19.

[17333] *Life*, ch. 10.

[17334] "Tollat crucem suam quotidie, et sequatur me."—*Luke*, 9:23.

[17335] *Mont. du C.*1. 2, ch. 7.

[17336] "Melior est patiens viro forti."—*Prov*, 16:32.

[17337] *Spirit*, ch. 4.

[17338] *Way of Perf.* ch. 37.

[17339] In this chapter we have spoken of patience in general; in Chapter X. we shall treat more particularly of occasions in which we have especially to practise patience.

[17340] "Spiritus enim meus super mel dulcis."—*Ecclus.* 24:27.

[17341] *Lettre* 853.

17342 *Lettre* 786.

17343 “Vince in bono malum.”—*Rom.* 12:21.

17344 *Lettre* 605.

17345 *Abelly,*1. 3, ch. 27.

17346 *Introd.* ch. 8.

17347 *Mém. de la M. de Chaugy,* p. 3, ch. 19.

17348 “Quod si zelum amarum habetis, . . . nolite gloriari.”—*James,* 3:14.

17349 “Nescitis cujus spiritus estis.”—*Luke,* 9:55.

17350 “Filius hominis non venit animas perdere, sed salvare.”—*Luke,* 9:56.

17351 “Mulier, . . . nemo te condemnavit? . . . Nec ego te condemnabo. Vade, et jam amplius noli peccare.”—*John,* 8:10, 11.

17352 “Juda! osculo Filium hominis tradis?”—*Luke,* 22:48.

17353 “Conversus Dominus respexit Petrum.”—*Luke,* 22:61.

17354 *Abelly,*1. 3, ch. 27.

17355 *In Adv. D.* s. 4.

17356 *Spirit,* ch. 10.

17357 “Responsio mollis frangit iram.”—*Prov.* 15:1.

17358 *Life,* ch 30.

17359 “ ‘Non æmulatur;’ quia, per hoc quod in præsenti mundo nihil appetit, invidere terrenis successibus nescit.”—*Mor.*1. 10, c. 8.

17360 “Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea Sponsa, vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum.”—*Cant.* 4:9.

17361 “Quid enim mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? . . . Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus, in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:25, 26.

17362 “Sibi habeant divitias suas divites, sibi regna sua reges; nobis gloria, et possessio, et regnum, Christus est.”—*Ep. ad Aprum.*

17363 “Bene omnia fecit.”—*Mark,* 7:37.

17364 *Pucc.* p. 1, ch. 58.

17365 “Attendite ne justitiam vestram faciatis coram hominibus, ut videamini ab eis; alioquin mercedem non habebitis apud Patrem vestrum qui in cœlis est.”—*Matt.* 6:1.

17366 “Amen, dico vobis, receperunt mercedem suam.”—*Matt.* 6:5.

17367 “Et qui mercedes congregavit, misit eas in sacculum pertusum.”—*Agg.* 1:6.

17368 “Euge, serve bone et fidelis: quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, super multa te constituam; intra in gaudium Domini tui.”—*Matt.* 25:21.

17369 “Si dignus fueris agere aliquid quod Deo placet, aliam, præter id, mercedem requiris?”—*De Compunct.*1. 2.

17370 “Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum.”—*Cant.* 8:6.

17371 *Found,* ch. 12.

17372 *Life,* ch. 2.

17373 “Non agit perperam. Quia (charitas), quæ se in solum Dei amorem dilatat, quidquid a rectitudine discrepat, ignorat.”—*Mor.*1. 10, c. 8.

17374 “Charitatem habete, quod est vinculum perfectionis.”—*Col.* 3:14.

17375 *Lettre* 51.

17376 “Antidolum, quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis.”

17377 *Way of Perf.* ch. 42.

17378 *Inter. Castle,* ch. 3.

17379 *Found,* ch. 29.

17380 “Neque frigidus es, neque calidus; utinam frigidus esses, aut calidus! sed, quia tepidus es, . . . incipiam te evomere.”—*Apoc.* 3:15, 16.

[17381] “Tepor (quia fervore defecit) in desperatione est.”—*Past.* p. 3, *adm.* 35.

[17382] “Quæ impossibilia sunt apud homines, possibilia sunt apud Deum.”—*Luke*, 18:27.

[17383] “Vires subministrat, pænam exhibet leviorem.”—*De Disc. mon.* c. 6.

[17384] “Non progredi, jam reverti est.”—*Ep.* 17, *E. B. app.*

[17385] “Hæc est voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra.”—1 *Thess.* 4:3.

[17386] *Life*, ch. 13.

[17387] *Way of Perf*, ch. 35.

[17388] *Life*, ch. 4.

[17389] *Life*, ch. 13.

[17390] *Rib.*1. 4, c. 10.

[17391] “Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quærenti illum.”—*Lam.* 3:25.

[17392] *Life*, ch. 13.

[17393] “Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum.”—*Rom.* 8:28.

[17394] “Etiam peccata.”

[17395] “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* 4:13.

[17396] “Desideria occidunt pigrum.”—*Prov.* 21:25.

[17397] *Introd.* ch. 37.

[17398] *Found*, ch. 28.

[17399] *Way of Perf.* ch. 24

[17400] *Life*, ch. 39.

[17401] *Spirit*, ch. 9.

[17402] *Love of God*, B. 12, ch. 8.

17403 “Quodcumque facere potest manus tua, instanter operare.”—*Eccles.* 9:10.

17404 “Quia nec opus, nec ratio, nec sapientia nec scientia, erunt apud inferos, quo tu properas.”—*Ibid.*

17405 “Et dixi: Nunc cœpi.”—*Ps.* 76:11.

17406 “Perfectum esse non potest nisi singulare.”

17407 *Life*, ch. 11.

17408 *Ibid.* ch 39.

17409 “Totum tibi dedit, nihil sibi reliquit.”

17410 “Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est.”—2 *Cor.* 5:15.

17411 *De Med. cons.* 7.

17412 *Lettre* 8.

17413 “Seipsum non exhorret, quia nec sentit.”—*De Cons.*1. 1, c. 2.

17414 “Consideratio regit affectus, dirigit actus.”—*Ibid.* c. 7.

17415 *Pall. Hist. Iaus.* c. 98.

17416 “In meditatione mea exardescet ignis.”—*Ps.* 38:4.

17417 *Life.* ch. 8.

17418 *Ibid.* ch. 19.

17419 *Life*, ch. 19.

17420 *Found*, ch. 5.

17421 *Life*, ch. 34.

17422 “Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa.”—*Cant.* 4:12.

17423 “Venerunt autem mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa.”—*Wisd.* 7:11.

17424 “Non plus sapere, quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem.”—*Rom.* 12:3.

17425 “Labia enim sacerdotis custodient scientiam, et legem requirent ex ore ejus.”—*Mal.* 2:7.

17426 *Lettre* 8.

17427 “Dilexit nos et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.”—*Eph.* 5:2.

17428 *In Cœna D.* s. 1.

17429 P. 3, q. 79, a. 6.

17430 *Introd.* ch. 20.

17431 *In* 4 *Sent.* d. 12, q. 3, a. 1, s. 2.

17432 *Way of Perfection*, ch. 35.

17433 “Qui semper pecco, semper debeo habere medicum.”—*De Sacram.*1. 4, c. 6.

17434 “Sitit sitiri Deus.”—*Tetr. Sent.* 37.

17435 *Sup. Magn. tr.* 9, p. 3.

17436 *Sess.* xiii. cap. 8.

17437 P. 3. q. 79, a. 1.

17438 “Petite, et dabitur vobis; quærite, et invenietis.”—*Matt.* 7:7.

17439 “Oratio cum sit una omnia potest.”—*Ap. Rodr.* p. 1, *tr.* 5, c. 14; *Wisd.* 7:27.

17440 “Benedictus Deus, qui non amovit orationem meam et misericordiam suam a me.”—*Ps.* 65:20.

17441 “Semper obtinemus, etiam dum adhuc oramus.”

17442 “Dives in omnibus qui invocant illum.”—*Rom.* 10:12.

17443 *De Dono pers.* c. 16.

17444 “Necessaria est homini jugis oratio, ad hoc quod cœlum introeat.”—P. 3, q. 39, a. 5.

17445 “Oportet semper orare, et non deficere.”—*Luke,* 18:1.

[17446] “Sine intermissione orate.”—1 *Thess.* 5:17.

[17447] *Sess.* vi. *cap.* 13.

[17448] “Hoc Dei donum suppliciter emereri potest.”—*De Dono pers.* c. 6.

[17449] “Vult Deus rogari, vult cogi, vult quadam importunitate vinci.”—*In Ps.* 6 *pœn.*

[17450] “Deus, in adjutorium meum intende; Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.”—*Ps.* 69:2.

[17451] “Petite, et accipietis.”—*John,* 16:24.

[17452] “Promittendo, debitorem se fecit.”—*Serm.* 110, *E. B.*

[17453] “Omnia quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et evenient vobis.”—*Mark,* 11:24.

[17454] “Omnis qui petit, accipit.”—*Luke,* 11:10.

[17455] “Oratio in impetrando non innititur merito, sed divinæ misericordiæ.”—2. 2, q. 178, a. 2.

[17456] “Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

[17457] “Si quid petieritis me in nomine meo, hoc faciam.”—*John,* 14:14.

[17458] “Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus; quia, quod quærit, invenit, et frustrari non potest.”—*De Aquæd.*

[17459] “Qui plasmasti me, miserere mei.”—*Vitæ Patr.*1. I.

[17460] “Si autem impius egerit pœnitentiam, . . . omnium iniquitatum ejus, quas operatus est, non recordabor.”—*Ezech.* 18:21, 22.

[17461] “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.”—*Phil.* 4:13.

[17462] “In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.”—*Ps.* 30:2.

[17463] *Imit. Chr.* B. 3, c. 7.

[17464] “Discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde.”—*Matt.* 11:29.

[17465] *Cepar.* c. 11.

17466 “Tunc exspuerunt in faciem ejus, et colaphis eum ceciderunt; alii autem palmas in faciem ejus dederunt.”—*Matt.* 26:67.

17467 “Domine, pati et contemni pro te.”

17468 *Spirit*, ch. 10.

17469 *Imit. Chr.* B 3, c. 46.

17470 “Mansuetus utilis sibi et aliis.”—*In Act. hom.* 6.

17471 *Imit. Chr.* B. 3, c. 49.

17472 *Mars01*.1. 4, ch. 8.

17473 “Beati estis, cum maledixerint vobis, et persecuti vos fuerint, et dixerint omne malum adversum vos mentientes, propter me; gaudete et exultate, quoniam merces vestra copiosa est in cœlis.”—*Matt.* 5:11.

17474 “Medicanti irascitur.”—*In Cant.* s. 42.

17475 *Bacci*,1. 2, ch. 17.

17476 “Omnis sæculi honor diaboli negotium est.”—*In Matt.* c. 3, n. 5.

17477 “Deus superbis resistit; humilibus autem dat gratiam.”—*James*, 4:6.

17478 *Way of Perf.* ch. 13.

17479 “Nec malam conscientiam sanat laudantis præconium, nee bonam vulnerat conviciantis opprobrium.”—*Contra Peti1*.1. 3, c. 7.

17480 *Spirit*, ch. 3.

17481 *Abelly*,1. 3, ch. 34, 48.

17482 *Cepar.* c. 13.

17483 *Way of Perf.* ch. 8.

17484 “In humilitate superiores.”—*Phil.* 2:3.

17485 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”—*Matt.* 22:37.

[17486] *Bacci*,1. 22, ch. 15.

[17487] *Avis* 36.

[17488] *De Cons. Evang.*1. 1, c. 12.

[17489] “Zelotypus est Jesus.”—*Ep. ad Eust.*

[17490] “An putatis quoniam inaniter Scriptura dicat: Ad invidiam concupiscit Spiritus qui habitat in vobis?”—*James*, 4:5.

[17491] “Hortus conclusus soror mea, Sponsa.”—*Cant.* 4:12.

[17492] *Spirit*, ch. 9.

[17493] “Quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbæ, et volabo, et requies cam?”—*Ps.* 54:7.

[17494] *Montée du C.*1. I, ch. II.

[17495] “Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.”—*Cant.* 2:16.

[17496] “Cor mundum crea in me, Deus.”—*Ps.* 50:12.

[17497] “Qui non renuntiat omnibus quæ possidet, non potest meus esse discipulus.”—*Luke*, 14:33.

[17498] *Insin.*1. 4, c. 26.

[17499] “Totum pro toto.”—*Imit. Chr.* B. 3, c. 37.

17500 *Life, ch.* 39.

17501 “Bonus est Dominis . . . animæ quærenti illum.”—*Lam.* 3:25.

17502 “Regnum mundi et omnem ornatum sæculi contempsi, propter amorem Domini mei Jesu Christi.”—*Offic. nec Virg. nec Mart. resp.* 8.

17503 *Spirit,* ch. 27.

17504 “Si dederit homo omnem substantiam domus suæ pro dilectione, quasi nihil despiciet earn.”—*Cant.* 8:7.

17505 *Lettres* 531, 203.

17506 “Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem.”—*Cant.* 2:4.

17507 “Ne suscitetis, neque evigilare faciatis dilectam.”—*Cant.* 2:7.

17508 “Summa rerum omnium oblivio.”—*Reg. fus. disp. int.* 6.

17509 “Deus meus, et omnia.”

17510 *Imit. Chr.* B. 3, c. 34.

17511 “Si quis venit ad me, et non odit patrem suum, et matrem, et uxorem, et filios, et sorores, adhuc autem et animam suam, non potest meus esse discipulus.”—*Luke,* 14:26.

17512 “Et inimici hominis domestici ejus.”—*Matt.* 10:36.

17513 2. 2, q. 104, a. 5.

17514 “Frequenter amici carnales adversantur profectui spirituali.”—2. 2, q. 189, a. 10.

17515 *Epist.* III.

17516 “Non sine magnis difficultatibus poterit saluti suæ consulere, manebitque in corpore Ecclesiæ velut membrum suis sedibus motum, quod servire potest, sed ægre et cum deformitate. Licet, absolute loquendo, salvari possit, difficile tamen ingredietur viam humilitatis et pœnitentiæ, qua sola ipsi patet ingressus ad vitam.”—*De Ord.* p. 3, c. 1, § 2.

17517 “Ab hoc consilio amovendi sunt carnis propinqui . . . : in hoc proposito, amici non sunt, sed potius inimici. juxta sententiam Domini: ‘Inimici hominis, domestici ejus.’ ”—*Contra retr. a rel.* c. 9.

17518 “Subdiaconi et diaconi ordinentur ut habentes bonum testimonium et in minoribus Ordinibus jam probati.”—*Sess.* xxiii. *cap.* 13.

17519 “Nullus ordinetur, nisi probatus fuerit.”—*Cap. Nullus, dist.* 24.

17520 “Sciant episcopi debere ad hos (sacros) Ordines assumi dignos dumtaxat, et quorum probata vita senectus sit.”—*Sess.* xxiii. *cap.* 12.

17521 “Ut in eis, cum ætate, vitæ meritum et doctrina major accrescat.”—*Sess.* 23 *cap.* 11.

17522 “Quia per sacrum Ordinem aliquis deputatur ad dignissima ministeria, quibus ipsi Christo servitur in Sacramento altaris; ad quod requiritur major sanctitas interior quam requirat etiam religionis status.”—2. 2, q. 184, a. 8.

17523 “Ordines sacri præexigunt sanctitatem; sed status religionis est exercitium quoddam ad sanctitatem asseqnendam. Unde pondus Ordinum imponendum est parietibus jam per sanctitatem desiccatis; sed pondus religionis desiccat parietes, id est, homines ab humore vitiorum.”—2. 2, q. 189, a. 1.

17524 “Ut, sicut illi, qui Ordinem suscipiunt, super plebem constituuntur gradu Ordinis, ita et superiores sint merito sanctitatis.”

17525 “Et ideo præexigitur gratia, quæ sufficiat ad hoc quod digne connumerentur in plebe Christi.”

17526 “Sed confertur in ipsa susceptione Ordinis amplius gratiæ munus per quod ad majora reddantur idonei.”—*Suppl.* q. 35, a. 1.

17527 *Lib.* 6, c. 2, n. 63.

17528 “Qui enim se ingerit, et propriam gloriam quærit, gratiæ Dei rapinam facit, et ideo non accipit benedictionem sed maledictionem.”—*In Hebr.* 5.

17529 “Qui sciens et volens, nulla divinæ vocationis habita ratione, sese in Sacerdotium intruderet, haud dubie seipsum in apertissimum salutis discrimen injiceret.”—*Sac. Chr.* p. 1, c. 4.

17530 “Quamvis morum integritas non sit de essentia Sacramenti, est tamen præcepto divino maxime necessaria. . . . At vero, quod de idoneitate eorum qui sacris sunt Ordinibus initiandi definitur, non est generalis illa dispositio quæ in suscipiente quodcumque Sacramentum requiritur, ne sacramentalis gratia obicem inveniat. . . . Enim vero, quoniam per sacramentum Ordinis homo, non solum gratiam suscipit, sed ad sublimiorem statum conscendit, requiritur in eo morum honestas et virtutum claritas.”—*In* 4 *Sent.* d. 25, q. 1, a. 4.

17531 “Nesciebatis quæ in his quae Patris mei sunt oportet me esse?”—*Luke,* 2:49.

17532 “Te autem faciente eleemosynam, nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextera tua.”—*Matt.* 6:3.

17533 “Cum oraveris, intra in cubiculum tuum, et clauso ostio, ora Patrem tuum in abscondito.”—*Ibid.* 6.

17534 “Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum.”—*Matt.* 16:24.

17535 “Post concupiscentias tuas non eas, et a voluntate tua avertere.”—*Ecclus.* 18:30.

17536 “Cesset voluntas propria, et infernus non erit.”—*In Temp. Pasch.* s. 3.

17537 “Grande malum propria voluntas, qua fit ut bona tua tibi bona non sint.”—*In Cant.* s. 71.

17538 “Unde bella et lites in vobis? nonne hinc, ex concupiscentiis vestris, quæ militant in membris vestris? Concupiscitis, et non habetis.”—*James,* 4:1, 2.

17539 “Unde turbatio, nisi quod propriam sequimur voluntatem?”—*De Div.* s. 26.

17540 *Interior Castle,* ch. 1.

17541 *Mont. du C.*1. 1, ch. 4–13.

17542 “Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde.”—*Matt.* 11:29.

17543 “Ecce Agnus Dei.”—*John,* 1:29.

17544 “Si male locutus sum, testimonium perhibe de malo; si autem bene, quid me cædis?”—*John,* 18:23.

17545 “Pater! dimitte illis; non enim sciunt quid faciunt.”—*Luke,* 23:34.

17546 “Mansuetorum semper tibi placuit deprecatio.”—*Judith,* 9:16.

17547 “Beati mites, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram.”—*Matt.* 5:4.

17548 “Mansueti autem hæreditabunt terram, et delectabuntur in multitudine pacis.”—*Ps.* 36:11.

17549 *Rib.*1. 4, c. 26.

17550 “Offensiones amoris ipsi escam ministrabunt.”

17551 “Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur.”—*Apoc.* 14:13.

17552 “Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum.”—*Phil.* 4:7.

17553 “Superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione nostra.”—2 *Cor.* 7:4

[17554] *Lettre* 580.

[17555] “Non in commotione Deus.”—3 *Kings*, 19:11.

[17556] *Introd.* ch. 8.

[17557] “Unde bella? . . . nonne hinc, ex concupiscentiis vestris?”—*James*, 4:1, 2.

[17558] “Ira in sinu stulti requiescit.”—*Ecclus.* 7:10.

[17559] “Igne non potest ignis extingui.”—*In Gen. hom.* 58.

[17560] *Lettre* 231.

[17561] “Responsio mollis frangit iram.”—*Prov.* 15:1.

[17562] “Turbatus præ ira oculus . . . reclum non videt.”—*De Cons.*1. 2, c. 11.

[17563] “Irascimini, et nolite peccare.”—*Ps.* 4:5.

[17564] *Spirit*, ch. 19.

[17565] *Lettre* 51.

[17566] “Ama, et fac quod vis.”

[17567] “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”—*Matt.* 22:37.

[17568] “Domine, quid me vis facere?”—*Acts*, 9:6.

[17569] “Et capillus de capite vestro non peribit.”—*Luke*, 21:18.

[17570] *Life*, ch. 30.

[17571] *Found*, ch. 5.

[17572] “Ne ventiles te in omnem ventum.”—*Ecclus.* 5:2.

[17573] *Found*, ch. 5.

[17574] “Domine, nonne in nomine tuo prophetavimus, et in nomine tuo dæmonia ejecimus, et in nomine tuo virtutes multas fecimus?”—*Matt.* 7:22.

[17575] “Nunquam novi vos; discedite a me, qui operamini iniquitatem.”—*Ibid.* 23.

17576 *Entret.* 2.

17577 “Qui non est paratus omnia pati et ad voluntatem stare dilecti, non est dignus amator appellari.”—*Imit. Chr.*1. 3, c. 5.

17578 “Dimitte eum ut maledicat; Dominus enim præcepit ei ut male-diceret David.”—*2 Kings*, 16:10.

17579 *Way of Perfect.* ch. 33.

17580 “Melior est obedientia, quam stultorum victimæ.”—*Eccles.* 4:17.

17581 *Entret.* 14.

17582 *Spirit*, ch. 19.

17583 *Found*, ch. 5.

17584 *Cepar.* c. 5.

17585 *Rev.*1. 4, c. 26.

17586 *Bacci*,1. 1, c. 20.

17587 *Bacci*,1. 1, c. 20.

17588 *Introd.* p. 1, c. 4.

17589 “Quid mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? . . . Deus cordis mei, et pars mea, Deus, in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:25.

17590 “Domine quid me vis facere?”—*Acts*, 9:6.

17591 *Life*, ch. 3.

17592 *Way of Perf.* ch. 12.

17593 *Vita*, c. 14.

17594 *Part* 2, *Ep.* 54.

17595 *Love of God* B. 9, ch. 2.

17596 *Life, addit.*

[17597] *Ap. Sur.* 8 *Jul.*

[17598] *S. Bas. hom. in Gord. M.*

[17599] “Neque hoc facit stupor, sed amor.”—*In Cant.* s. 61.

[17600] *Life*, ch. 25.

[17601] “Eia, Domine! moriar, ut te videam.”—*Sol. an. ad D.* c. 1.

[17602] *Serm.* 85, *E. B.*

[17603] “Deus meus, et omnia.”

[17604] “Nihil habentes, et omnia possidentes.”—2 *Cor.* 6:10.

[17605] *Found.* ch. 14.

[17606] *Scala sp. gr.* 17.

[17607] “Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum cœlorum.”—*Matt.* 5:3.

[17608] “Habentes autem alimenta et quibus tegamur, his conteni sumus.”—1 *Tim.* 6:8.

[17609] *De Disc. mon.* c:2.

[17610] “Avarus terrena esurit ut mendicus, fidelis contemnit ut dominus.”—*In Cant.* s. 21.

[17611] “Qui volunt divites fieri, incidunt . . . in laqueum diaboli et desideria . . . nociva, quæ mergunt homines in interitum et perditionem.—1 *Tim.* 6:9.

[17612] *Boll. April* 26, *Act.* n. 11.

[17613] “Non paupertas virtus reputatur, sed paupertatis amor.”—*Epist.* 100.

[17614] “Pauperes esse volunt, eo tamen pacto, ut nihil eis desit.”—*In Adv. D.* s. 4.

[17615] *Introd.* ch. 16.

[17616] “Dominus pars hæreditatis meæ.”—*Ps.* 15:5.

[17617] *Cepar.* c:22.

17618 “Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit: sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est; sit nomen Domini benedictum.”—*Job,* 1:21.

17619 *Life*, ch. 22.

17620 “Aquæ multæ non potuerunt exstinguere charitatem.”—*Cant.* 8:7.

17621 “Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum.”—*Rom.* 8:28.

17622 “Ab ipso patientia mea.”—*Ps.* 61:6.

17623 “Vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas.”—*Eccles.* 1:2.

17624 “Charitas omnia credit.”

17625 “Beati pauperes.—Beati qui lugent.—Beati qui esuriunt.—Beati qui persecutionem patiuntur.—Beati estis cum maledixerint vobis, . . . et dixerint omne malum adversus vos.”—*Matt,* 5:3–11.

17626 “Ex hoc enim quod per aliquem speramus nobis posse provenire bona, movemur in ipsum sicut in bonum nostrum, et sic incipimus ipsum amare.”—1. 2, q. 40, a. 7.

17627 “Nolite confidere in principibus.”—*Ps.* 145:2.

17628 “Maledictus homo qui confidit in homine.”—*Jer.* 17:5.

17629 “Viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri, cum dilatasti cor meum.”—*Ps.* 118:32.

17630 “Qui autem sperant in Domino, mutabunt fortitudinem, assument pennas sicut aquilæ, current et non laborabunt, ambulabunt et non deficient.”—*Is.* 40:31.

17631 “Ut per hæc efficiamini divinæ naturæ consortes.”—2 *Pet.* 1:4.

17632 “Si autem filii, et hæredes.”—*Rom.* 8:17.

17633 “Adveniat, adveniat regnum tuum.”

17634 “Ego diligentes me diligo.”—*Prov.* 8:17.

17635 “Bonus est Dominus. . . . animæ quærenti illum.”—*Lam.* 3:25.

17636 “Quæ est ista quæ ascendet de deserto, deliciis affluens, innixa super Dilectum suum?”—*Cant.* 8:5.

17637 “Venerunt autem mihi omnia bona pariter cum ilia.”—*Wisd.* 7:11.

17638 "Infinitus enim thesaurus est hominibus, quo qui usi sunt, participes facti sunt amicitiæ Dei."—*Wisd.* 7:14.

17639 "Amicitia super amorem addit mutuam redamationem cum quadam communicatione mutua."—1.2, q. 65, a. 5.

17640 "Vos autem dixi Amicos, quia omnia, quæcumque audivi a Patre meo, nota feci vobis."—*John,* 15:15.

17641 *Love of God,* B. 10, c. 10.

17642 "Amicorum est quod quærant invicem perfrui; sed nihil aliud est merces nostra, quam perfrui Deo videndo ipsum; ergo charitas, non solum non excludit, sed etiam facit habere oculum ad mercedem."—*In* 3 *Sent.* d. 29, q. 1, a. 4.

17643 "Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi."—*Cant.* 2:16.

17644 "Charitas omnia sperat."

17645 "Spes est certa exspectatio beatitudinis."—*In* 3 *Sent.* d. 26.

17646 "Amor est quædam vitta duo aliqua copulans."—*De Trin.*1. 8, c.10.

17647 "Adjuro vos, filiæ Jerusalem, si inveneritis Dilectum meum, ut nuntietis ei quia amore langueo."—*Cant.* 5:8.

17648 "Ego . . . merces tua magna nimis."—*Gen.* 15:1.

17649 "Unde, velle suam damnationem absolute, non esset conformare suam voluntatem divinæ, sed voluntati peccati."—*De Ver.* q. 23, a. 8.

17650 "Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex omnibus viribus tuis,"—*Luke,* 10:27.

17651 *In* 3 *Sent.* d. 27.

17652 "Intra in gaudium Domini tui."—*Matt.* 25:21.

17653 "Inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus tuæ."—*Ps.* 35:9.

17654 "Ut impleamini in omnem plenitudinem Dei."—*Eph.* 3:19.

17655 "Ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima."—*Is.* 38:17.

17656 “Heu mihi, quia incolatus meus prolongatus est.”—*Ps.* 119:5.

17657 “Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua.”—*Ps.* 16:15.

17658 “Desiderium habens dissolvi, et esse cum Christo.”—*Phil.* 1:23.

17659 *Apophth.* 57.

17660 “Tertium autem studium estut homo ad hoc principaliter intendat, ut Deo inhæreat et eo fruatur; et hoc pertinet ad perfectos, qui cupiunt dissolvi, et esse cum Christo.”—2. 2, q. 24, a. 9.

17661 *De Purg.*1. 2, c. 7.

17662 “Carcer honoratus.”

17663 “Deus enim intentator malorum est, ipse autem neminem tentat.”—*James,* 1:13.

17664 “Et ne magnitudo revelatiomim extollat me, datus est mihi stimulus carnis meæ, angelus Satanæ, qui me colaphizet.”—2 *Cor.* 12:7.

17665 “Heu mihi, quia incolatus meus prolongatus est.”—*Ps.* 119:5.

17666 “Laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus.”—*Ps.* 123:7.

17667 “Et quia acceptus eras Deo, necesse fuit, ut tentatio probaret te.”—*Tob.* 12:13.

17668 “Quoties restiteris, toties coronaberis.”—*In Quadr.* s. 5.

17669 “Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis, sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proventum.”—1 *Cor.* 10:13.

17670 “Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.”—*Matt.* 6:13.

17671 “Projice te in eum, noli metuere; non se subtrahet, ut cadas.”—*Conf.* B. 8, c. II.

17672 “Deus, in adjutorium meum intende; Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.”—*Ps.* 69:2.

17673 “Respondeo, . . . cum tentamur, nobis ad Deum confugientibus, per gratiam a Deo paratam et oblatam, vires adfuturas, qua possimus resisiere et actu resistamus.”—*De Div. Grat.* q. 2, d. 5, § 3.

17674 “Venite ad me omnes, qui, laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.”—*Matt.* 11:28.

17675 “Et invoca me in die tribulationis; eruam te, et honorificabis me.”—*Ps.* 49:15.

17676 “Tunc invocabis, et Dominus exaudiet; clamabis, et dicet: Ecce adsum.”—*Is.* 58:9.

17677 “Quis invocavit eum, et despexit illum?—*Ecclus.* 2:12.

17678 “Laudans invocabo Dominum, et ab inimicis meis salvus ero.”—*Ps.* 17:4.

17679 “Prope est Dominus omnibus invocantibus eum.”—*Ps.* 144:18.

17680 “Dives in omnibus qui invocant illum.”—*Rom.* 10:12.

17681 “Et ut scivi quoniam aliter non possem esse continens, nisi Deus det, . . . adii Dominum, et deprecatus sum illum.”—*Wisd.* 8:21.

17682 “Statim ut libido titillaverit sensum, erumpamus in vocem: Dominus auxiliator meus!”—*ad Eust.*

17683 *Vitæ: Patr.*1. 3, n. 35.

17684 *Lib.* 6, n. 476.

17685 *Life, addit.*

17686 *Mém. de la M. de Chaugy,* p. 3. ch. 27.

17687 “Induite vos armaturam Dei, ut possitis stare adversus insidias diaboli; quoniam non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem, sed adversus principes et potestates, adversus mundi rectores tenebrarum harum.”—*Eph.* 6:11, 12.

17688 “Per omnem orationem et obsecrationem orantes omni tempore in spiritu, et in ipso vigilantes in omni instantia.”—*Eph.* 6:18.

17689 “Invoca me . . . eruam te.”—*Ps.* 49:15.

17690 “Clama ad me, et exaudiam te.”—*Jer.* 33:3.

17691 “Oportet semper orare et non deficere.”—*Luke,* 18:1.

17692 “Petite, et dabitur vobis.”—*Matt.* 7:7.

17693 “Vigilate et orate.”—*Matt.* 26:41.

17694 “Sine intermissione orate.”—1 *Thess.* 5:17.

17695 “Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus.”

[17696] “Nihil nos Deus voluit habere, quod per Mariæ manus non transiret.”—*In Vig. Nat.* s. 3.

[17697] “Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.”—*Ps.* 88:2.

[17698] “Ne permittas me separari a te.”

[17699] *Introd.* ch. 13.

[17700] *Lettre* 8.

[17701] *Life*, ch. 11.

[17702] *Spirit*, ch. 4.

[17703] “Secundum multitudinem dolorum meorum in corde meo, consolationes tuæ lætificaverunt animam meam.”—*Ps.* 93:19.

[17704] *Mém. de la M. de Chaugy*, p. 3, ch. 27.

[17705] *Love of God*, B. 9, ch. 11.

[17706] “Scalpri salubris ictibus

Et tunsione plurima,

Fabri polita malleo,

Hanc saxa molem construunt,

Aptisque juncta nexibus

Locantur in fastigio.”—*Offic. Dedic. eccl.*

[17707] “Deus meus et omnia.”

[17708] *Bacci*,1. 2, ch. 15.

[17709] “Totum pro toto.”—*Imit. Chr.*1. 3, c. 37.

[17710] “Si autem non abiero, Paracletus non veniet ad vos; si autem abiero, mittam eum ad vos.”—*John*, 16:7.

[17711] “Charitas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum, qui datus est nobis.”—*Rom.* 5:5.

17712 “Pater vester de cœlo dabit Spiritum bonum petentibus se.”—*Luke,* 11:13.

17713 “Ignis autem in altari semper ardebit.”—*Lev.* 6:12.

17714 *Mor.*1. 25, c. 7.

17715 “Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?”—*Luke,* 12:49.

17716 “Et apparuerunt illis dispertitæ linguæ tanquam ignis.”—*Acts,* 2:3.

17717 “Illo nos igne, quæsumus, Domine, Spiritus Sanctus inflammet, quem Dominus noster Jesus Christus misit in terram, et voluit vehementer accendi.”—*In Sabb. Pent.*

17718 “In meditatione mea exardescet ignis.”—*Ps.* 38:4.

17719 “Fove quod est frigidum.”

17720 “Lux beatissima.”

17721 “Animalis homo non percipit ea quæ sunt Spiritus Dei.”—1 *Cor.* 2:14.

17722 “Emitte lucem tuam.”—*Ps.* 42:3.

17723 “Illumina tenebras meas.”—*Ps.* 17:29.

17724 “Revela oculos meos.”—*Ps.* 118:18.

17725 “Fons vivus, ignis, charitas.”

17726 “Qui autem biberit ex hac aqua quam ego dabo ei, non sitiet in æternum.”—*John,* 4:13.

17727 “Me dereliquerunt fontem aquæ vivæ, et foderunt sibi cisternas, cisternas dissipatas, quæ continere non valent aquas.”—*Jer.* 2:13.

17728 “Si quis sitit veniat ad me, et bibat.”—*John,* 7:37.

17729 “Qui credit in me, sicut dicit Scriptura, flumina de ventre ejus fluent aquæ vivæ.”—*Ibid.* 38.

17730 “Hoc autem dixit de Spiritu quem accepturi erant credentes in eum; nondum enim erat Spiritus datus, quia Jesus nondum erat glorificatus.”—*Ibid.* 39.

17731 “Petite et accipietis.”—*John,* 16:24.

17732 “Oratio, cum sit una, omnia potest.”—*Ap. Rodr.* p. 1, tr. 5, c. 14.

17733 “Domine, da mihi hanc aquam.”—*John,* 4:15.

17734 “Sancti Spiritus corda nostra mundet infusio, et sul roris intima aspersione fœcundet.”

17735 “In æstu temperies, dulce refrigerium.”

17736 “Introduxit me in cellam vinariam; ordinavit in me charitatem.”—*Cant.* 2:4.

17737 “In labore requies, in fletu solatium.”

17738 “Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum.”—*Phil.* 4:7.

17739 “Ipse vulnerat, et medetur.”—*Job,* 5:18.

17740 “Ita, Pater! quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te.”—*Matt.* 11:26.

17741 “Loquere, Domine, quia audit servus tuus.”—1 *Kings,* 3:10.

17742 “Fortis est ut mors dilectio.”—*Cant.* 8:6.

17743 “Nihil tam durum, quod amoris igne non vincatur.”—*De Mor. Eccl. Cath.* c. 22.

17744 *Love of God,* B. 9, ch. 2.

17745 *In Eph. hom.* 8.

17746 “In eo quod amatur, aut non laboratur, aut et labor amatur.”—*De Bono vid.* c. 21.

17747 “Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.”—1 *John,* 4:16.

17748 “Si diligitis me, mandata mea servate. Et ego rogabo Patrem, et alium Paracletum dabit vobis, ut maneat vobiscum in æternum.”—*John,* 14:15.

17749 “Non deserit, nisi deseratur.”—*Sess.* vi. c. 11.

17750 “An putatis quia inaniter Scriptura dicat: Ad invidiam concupiscit Spiritus qui habitat in vobis?”—*James,* 4:5.

17751 “Zelotypus est Jesus.”—*Epist. ad Eust.*

17752 “Pulchræ sunt genæ tuæ sicut turturis.”—*Cant.* 1:9.

17753 “Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa.”—*Ibid.* 4:12.

17754 “Totum tibi dedit, nihil sibi reliquit.”

17755 “Charitas est virtus conjungens nos Deo.”

17756 “O charitas! quam magnum est vinculum tuum, quo Deus ligari potuit!”—*Lign. v. de Char.* c. 6.

17757 “Vincula illius, alligatura salutaris.”—*Ecclus.* 6:31.

17758 “In funiculis Adam traham eos, in vinculis charitatis.”—*Os.* 11:4.

17759 “Solve vincula colli tui, captiva filia Sion.”—*Is.* 52:2.

17760 “Charitatem habete, quod est vinculum perfectionis.”—*Col.* 3:14

17761 “Ama, et fac quod vis.”

17762 “Infinitus enim thesaurus est hominibus, quo qui usi sunt, participes facti sunt amicitiæ Dei.”—*Wisd.* 7:14.

17763 *Avis* 36.

17764 “Delectare in Domino, et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui.”—*Ps.* 36:4.

17765 “*Spirit,* ch. 27.

17766 “Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quærenti illum. *Lam.* 3:25.

17767 “Sapientia vero ubi invenitur? . . . Nescit homo pretium ejus, nec invenitur in terra suaviter viventium.”—*Job,* 28:12, 13.

17768 “Vive cum paucis, si vis regnare cum paucis.”

17769 “Perfectum non potest esse, nisi singulare.”

17770 “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.” *Phil.* 4:13.

17771 “Quodcumque volueritis petetis, et fiet vobis.”—*John,* 15:7.

17772 *Prov.* 8:31.

17773 “Recede a me, Domine, recede!”

17774 “Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus.”—*Ps.* 33:9.

17775 “Petite et accipietis.—*John,* 16:24.

17776 “Nihil nos Deus voluit habere, quod per Mariæ manus non transiret.”—*In Vig. Nat. Dom.* s. 3.

17777 “Sentit Ecclesia Virginis intercessionem esse utilem et necessariam.”—*De Inc.* p. 2, q. 37, a. 4, d. 23.

17778 This question is treated at length in the *Glories of Mary,* Part I. ch, 5.

17779 “In me omnis spes vitæ et virtutis. Transite ad me omnes.”—*Ecclus.* 24:25.

17780 “Beatus homo qui audit me, et qui vigilat ad fores meas quotidie, et observat ad postes ostii mei.”—*Prov.* 8:34.

17781 “Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam, et hauriet salutem a Domino.”—*Ibid.* 35.

17782 “Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus.”—*De Aquœd.*

17783 “Qui petit sine ipsa duce, sine alis tentat volare.”—P. 4, *tit.* 15, c. 22.

17784 *Affetti Scamb.* p. 2, c. 3.

17785 “Nunquam quiescam, donec obtinuero tenerum amorem erga Matrem meam.”

17786 “Solet maxima pro minimis reddere.”—*In Dorm. B. V.* s. 3.

17787 P. 3, q. 80, a. 1.

17788 *Sess.* xiii. c. 8.

17789 His Holiness, Pius IX., by an autograph rescript, September 7, 1854, confirmed August 8 and September 23, 1859, attached to each of the two prayers of St. Alphonsus, beginning with the words, *My Lord Jesus Christ,—Most Holy Immaculate Virgin,*—an indulgence of three hundred days each time that one recites with, at least contrite heart, either the first before the Blessed Sacrament, or the second before an image of the Blessed Virgin. His Holiness granted, besides, a *plenary indulgence*, once a month, to persons who during this time recite every day both those prayers in the manner indicated, provided they confess and communicate and pray for some time to the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff.—ED.

17790 “Absorbeat, quæso, Domine Jesu Christe, mentem meam ignita et melliflua vis amoris tui, ut amore amoris tui moriar, qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori!”

17791 See manner of making the Visits, page 123.

17792 “Qui sitit, veniat ad me.”—*John*, 7:37.

17793 “Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris.”—*Isa.* 12:3.

17794 We have two kinds of Visits to the Blessed Virgin, one of which is found in several editions published at Naples, and the other in those editions that have appeared elsewhere. Both kinds, however, were without doubt written by St. Alphonsus. This is the reason why we publish them in his complete works. It may, perhaps, be asked why two kinds of Visits have been published, and which of the two was published first? To this no positive answer can be given, though we may venture on a conjecture. The Visits to the Blessed Sacrament appeared about the year 1745, with those Visits to the Blessed Virgin that we have put in the first place, and that were soon spread all over Europe. About five years after this publication, in 1750, the work called *Glories of Mary* was published, and excited comment on the part of some critics. An anonymous writer dared to reproach St. Alphonsus with having exaggerated certain prerogatives attributed to the Mother of God; but the saint at once replied to this attack and triumphantly repelled it. It is very probable that St. Alphonsus then replaced the first twenty two Visits that he had composed in honor of the Blessed Virgin by prayers drawn from different authors of great celebrity—prayers that had already been inserted in his book, the *Glories of Mary*, “to show the high idea that the saints had of the power and mercy of the Mother of God.” The nine other Visits, joined to these prayers, appear to have been chosen with some modifications in the text which we regard as the first published. But this change was made only in the Naples editions; everywhere else the first prevailing text, or translations therefrom, have continued to be printed, with the exception of the first French translation which was made in 1773, from the fifteenth Naples edition.—ED.

17795 “De plenitudine ejus accepimus omnes.”—*De Laud. V. M. hom.*

17796 “Hanc gratiam accepit Virgo, salutem sæculis redditura.”—*Serm.* 143.

17797 “Causa nostræ lætitiæ! ora pro nobis.”

17798 “Causa nostræ lætitiæ! ora pro nobis.”

17799 “Semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens.”—*Phil* 2:7.

17800 “Adeamus cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno.”—*Heb.* 4:16.

17801 P. 4, *tit.* 15, c. 14.

17802 “Unicum Refugium peccatorum! miserere mei!”—*St. Aug.*

17803 “Deliciæ meæ, esse cum filiis hominum.”—*Prov.* 8:31.

17804

“Bone Pastor, Panis vere,

Jesu! nostri miserere:

Tu nos pasce, nos tuere;

Tu nos bona fac videre

In terra viventium.”

17805 “Vincula illius, alligatura salutaris.”—*Ecclus.* 6:31.

17806 *Stellar.*1. 12, p. 1, a. 2.

17807 “O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria.”

17808 *Encom. in S. Deip.*

17809 “Non habet amaritudinem conversatio illius, nec tædium convictus illius, sed lætitiam et gaudium.”—*Wis.* 8:16.

17810 *Rib.*1. 5, c 4.

17811 “Ego mater pulchræ dilectionis.”—*Ecclus.* 24:24.

17812 *Encom. in S. Deip.*

17813 *In Dorm. V. M.* s. 2.

17814 “Passer invenit sibi domum, et turtur nidum sibi, ubi ponat pullos suos: altaria tua, Domine virtutum, Rex meus et Deus meus.”—*Ps.* 83:4.

17815 “Raptrix cordium.”—*Med. in Salve Reg.*

17816 “Mater amabilis! ora pro me.”

17817 *Depr. ad glor. V.*

17818 “Ubi thesaurus vester est, ibi et cor vestrum erit.”—*Luke*, 12:34.

17819 “Quasi oliva speciosa in campis.”—*Ecclus.* 24:19.

17820 “Memorare, piisima Maria, a sæculo non esse auditum quem-quam ad tua præsidia confugientem esse derelictum.”

17821 “Vita, Dulcedo, Spes nostra, salve!”

17822 “Ecce vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem sæculi.”—*Matt*, 28:20.

17823 “Tota ratio spei meæ.”—*De Aquæd.*

17824 “In te speret, qui desperat.”—*Med. in Salve Reg.*

17825 *Cant.* 6:9.

17826 *Depr. ad glor. V.*

17827 “Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus!”

17828 “Surge, propera, amica mea, columba mea, formosa mea, et veni.”—*Cant.* 2:10.

17829 “Si quis est parvulus, veniat ad me.”—*Prov.* 9:4,

17830 *De Affect. erga B. V.* c. 14.

17831 “Monstra te esse Matrem.”

17832 *Depr. ad glor. V.*

17833 “Vidi . . . præcinctum ad mamillas zona aurea.”—*Apoc.* 1:12.

17834 St. Francis de Sales, in his treatise *The Love of God*, B. 1, ch. 15, uses the same comparison in explaining it, to show us that the divine goodness takes greater pleasure in giving us his graces than we do in receiving them.—ED.

17835 “Ad ubera portabimini.”—*Isa.* 66:13.

17836 “Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi.”—*Prov.* 23:26.

17837 “Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo.”—*Matt.* 22:37.

17838 “Plus enim desiderat ipsa facere tibi bonum et largiri gratiam, quam tu accipere concupiscas.”—*Mar.* p. 2, s. 5.

17839 “Spes nostra! salve.”

17840 *In Nat. B. M. V.* s. 1.

17841 “Miseri, quo itis? Bonum quod amatis, ab illo est.”—*Conf.*1. 4, c. 12.

17842 “Ama unum bonum, in quo sunt omnia bona.”—*Man.* c. 34.

17843 “Mecum sunt divitiæ, . . . ut ditem diligentes me.”—*Prov.* 18:8.

17844 “Thesaurus gratiarum.”—*Cont. de V. M.* c. i.

17845 “Mater amabilis! ora pro me.”

17846 *In S. Deip. Ann.*

17847 “Beatus homo . . . qui vigilat ad fores meas quotidie, et observat ad postes ostii mei.”—*Prov.* 8:34.

17848 *In Dorm. S. M.* s. 3.

17849 “Hæc tota mea fiducia, hæc tota ratio spei meæ.”—*S. Bern. De Aquæd.*

17850 “Deus charitas est; et qui manet in charitate in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.”—1 *John*, 4:16.

17851 “Si quis diligit me, . . . et Pater meus diligit eum; et ad eum veniemus, et mansionem apud eum faciemus.”—*John*, 14:23.

17852 “Qui operantur in me non peccabunt.”—*Eclus.* 24:30.

17853 “Qui elucidant me, vitam æternam habebunt.”—*Ibid.* 31.

17854 “Dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata!”

17855 “Dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata!”

17856 “Et erunt oculi mei et cor meum ibi cunctis diebus.”—3 *Kings*, 9:3.

17857 “Trahe me vinculis amoris tui.”

17858 “Quæramus gratiam et per Mariam quæramus.”—*De Aquæd.*

17859 “Thesaurus divinarum gratiarum.”

17860 “Si quis est parvulus, veniat ad me.”—*Prov.* 9:4.

17861 “Sub tuum præsidium confugimus, sancta Dei genitrix!”

17862 *De Virg. perp. S. M.* c. 12.

17863 “Hæc requies mea in sæculum sæculi; hic habitabo, quoniam elegi eam.”—*Ps.* 131:14.

17864 “Nullus est qui salvus fiat, nisi per te; nemo qui liberetur a malis, nisi per te; nemo cui donum concedatur, nisi per te.”—*De Zona Deip. ap. Sur.* 31 *Aug.*

17865 “Hæc tota mea fiducia, hæc tota ratio spei meæ.”—*S. Bern. De A quæd.*

17866 “Ignem veni mittere interram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?”—*Luke*, 12:49.

17867 “Tota ratio spei meæ.”—*De Aquæd.*

17868 “Totam spem meam in te collocavi.”—*Carmina.*

17869 “*Quem* vis, salvus erit.”—*Cant, post Psalt.*

17870 “O Salus te invocantium, salva me!”

17871 *De Excell. B. M.* c. 12.

17872 “Numquid resina non est in Galaad? aut medicus non est ibi?”—*Jer.* 8:22.

17873 “Venite ad me omnes . . . et ego reficiam vos.”—*Matt.* 11:28.

17874 “Ecce, quem amas, infirmatur.”—*John*, 11:3.

17875 “Sana animam meam quia peccavi tibi.”—*Ps.* 40:5.

17876 “Quantumcumque homo peccet, si ex vera emendatione ad me reversus fuerit, statim parata sum recipere revertentem; nec attendo quantum peccaverit, sed cum quali voluntate venit: nam non dedignor ejus plagas ungere et sanare, quia vocor (et vere sum) Mater misericordiæ.”—*Rev.*1. 2, c. 23; *et1.* 6, c. 117.

17877 *In Nat. B. M. V.* s. 1.

17878 “Mater amabilis.”

17879 “Concupivit Rex speciem tuam.”—*Ps.* 44:12.

17880 “O dulcis, o pia, o multum amabilis Maria! tu nec nominari potes, quin accendas, nec cogitari, quin recrees affectus diligentium te.”—*Spec. B. V.* c. 9.

17881 *In Nat. B. V. M.* s. 1.

17882 “In conspectu Angelorum psallam tibi, adorabo ad templum sanctum tuum, et confitebor nomini tuo, super misericordia tua et veritate tua.”—*Ps.* 137:1, 2.

17883 “Aperuit Deus peccatoribus publicum valetudinarium.”

17884 “Diversorium peccatorum.”—*De Laud. Dei Gen.*

17885 *In Annunt. Deip.*

17886 “Descendit cum illo in foveam, et in vinculis non dereliquit illum.”—*Wisd.* 10:13.

17887 “Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus.”—*Matt,* 28:20.

17888 “O peccator! non diffidas, sed secure ad istam Dominam recurras; invenies eam in manibus plenam misericordia et largitate.”—*Mar.* p. 2, s. 5.

17889 “Plus enim ipsa desiderat facere tibi bonum, quam tu accipere concupiscas.”

17890 *Cont. de V. M.* c. 1.

17891 “O Salus te invocantium!”—S. *Bonav.*

17892 “In die illa erit fons patens domui David et habitantibus Jerusalem, in ablutionem peccatoris.”—*Zach.* 13:1.

17893 “Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.”—*Cant.* 2:16.

17894 “Maria non discutit merita, sed omnibus se exorabilem præbet.”—*In Sign. magn.*

17895 “O Maria, tuus sum ego, salvum me fac!”

17896 “*Contempt, de V. M.* c. 6.

17897 “Ubicumque fuerit corpus, illic congregabantur et aquilæ.”—*Matt.* 24:23.

17898 *In Matt, loco cit.*

[17899] “Jesu mi dulcissime! ne permittas me separari a te.”

[17900] “Advocata omnium iniquorum ad eam confugientium.”—*De Laud. V. M.* 1. 2, a. 23.

[17901] “Eja ergo, Advocata nostra! officium tuum imple.”—*In Nat. B. V. conc.* 3.

[17902] *De Rhet. div,* c. 18.

[17903] “O Maria! tuus sum ego, salvum me fac.”

[17904] “Num quem diligit anima mea vidistis?”—*Cant.* 3:3.

[17905] “Ministra propitiationis.”—*In Sign. magn.*

[17906] “Opitulatrix periclitantium.”—*De Laud. Dei Gen.*

[17907] “Misericordias Mariæ in æternum cantabo, in aeternum cantabo. Amen, Amen.”

[17908] *De Rhet. div.* c. 18.

[17909] *Epist.* 36 *ad Mac.*

[17910] “Mater orphanorum.”—*Psalt. min. B. V.*

[17911] “Susceptio orphanorum.”—*De Laud. Dei Gen.*

[17912] “Quis invocavit eam, et non est exauditus ab ipsa?”—*De Ass. B. V.* s. 2.

[17913] “Quæramus gratiam et per Mariam quæramus; quia quod quærit, invenit, et frustrari non potest.”—*De Aquæd.*

[17914] “Sub tuum præsidium confugimus, sancta Dei genitrix!”

[17915] See the Sixth and the Thirteenth Visit, page 139 and 156.

[17916] “Vere tu es Deus absconditus.”—*Isa.* 45:15.

[17917] “Latet divinitas, latet humanitas; sola patent viscera charitatis.”

[17918] “Pelagus gratiarum.”—*In Nat. V. M. or.* 1.

[17919] “Congregatio gratiarum.”—*Spec. B. V.* c. 7.

[17920] “Fons gratiæ et totius consolationis.”—*De Laud. Dei Gen.*

17921 “Plenitudo totius boni.”—*De Aquæd.*

17922 “In te, Domina, peccant, qui te non rogant.”

17923 “Adeamus cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno.”—*Heb.* 4:16.

17924 *St. Antoninus.*—P. 4, *tit.* 15, c. 14.

17925 See the Second Visit, page 130.

17926 “Factus obediens usque ad mortem.”—*Phil.* 2:8.

17927 “Ego autem non contradico.”—*Isa.* 50:5.

17928 “Neque mors, neque vita, . . . poterit nos separare a charitate Dei, quæ est in Christo Jesu.”—*Rom.* 8:39.

17929 “Area in qua naufragium evadimus.”—*S. de B. M. Deip*

17930 “Area Noe largior.”—*De S. M. Deip. hom.* 2.

17931 “Thesaurus et Thesauraria gratiarum.”—*Idiot. Cont. de V. M.* c. 1.

17932 “Mecum sunt divitiæ, . . . ut ditem diligentes me.”—*Prov.* 18:8.

17933 See the Tenth Visit, page 149.

17934 “Exsulta et lauda, habitatio Sion; quia Magnus in medio tui, Sanctus Israel.”—*Isa.* 12:6.

17935 “Amorem non tam habet, quam ipse est.”—*In Cant.* s. 59.

17936 “Deus charitas est.”—*1 John,* 4:16.

17937 “Hospes eram, et non collegistis me.”—*Matt.* 25:43.

17938 “Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui.”—*Matt.* 3:17.

17939 “Domine, si vis, potes me mundare.”—*Matt.* 8:2.

17940 “Potentia debilitatis nostræ.”—*Enc. Deiparæ.*

17941 “Porta libertatis.”—*Psalt. min. B. V.*

17942 “Quies tuta hominum.”

17943 “Solatium perigrinationis nostræ.”—*S. in Nat. V. M.*

17944 “Thronus gratiæ Dei.”

17945 “Pons per quem Deus ad homines descendit.”—*Or. I in Dei gen.*

17946 “Tu es Regina misericordiæ; et qui subditi, nisi miseri? Tu Regina misericordiæ, et ego miserrimus peccator, subditorum maximus. Rege nos ergo, o Regina misericordiæ.”

17947 “Eja ergo, Advocata nostra! illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte.”

17948 “Non est alia natio tam grandis, quæ habeat deos appropinquantes sibi, sicut Deus noster adest nobis.”—*Resp.* 7.—*Deut.* 4:7.

17949 “Memoriam fecit mirabilium suorum.”—*Ps.* 110:4.

17950 “Ædificata est cum propugnaculis; mille clypei pendent ex ea, omnis armatura fortium.”—*Cant.* 4:4.

17951 “Propugnaculum munitissimum in bello versantibus.”

17952 “Propugnatrix confidentium in te.”

17953 “Quantumcumque homo peccet, si ex vera emendatione ad me reversus fuerit, statim parata sum recipere revertentem; nec attendo quantum peccaverit, sed cum quali voluntate venit: nam non dedignor ejus plagas ungere et sanare, quia vocor (et vere sum) Mater misericordiæ.”—*Rev.*1. 2, c. 23;1. 6, c. 117.

17954 See the Sixteenth Visit, page 163.

17955 “Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?”—*Rom.* 8:32.

17956 “Omnia dedit ei Pater in manus.”—*John,* 13:2.

17957 “In omnibus divites facti estis in illo, . . . ita ut nihil vobis desit in ulla gratia.”—1 *Cor.* 1:5, 7.

17958 “Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—*John,* 16:23.

17959 “Portus vexatorum.”—*Or. ad Deip.*

17960 “Restauratio calamitatum nostrarum.”

[17961] “Solatium miserorum.”—*Cant, post Psalt.*

[17962] “Requies gemituum nostrorum.”—*Enc. Deiparæ.*

[17963] “Mater amabilis.”

[17964] “Concupivit Rex speciem tuam. Quam pulchra es, Amica mea! quam pulchra es!—Tota pulchra es, Amica mea, et macula non est in te.”—*Cant.* 4:1, 7.

[17965] See the Seventeenth Visit, page 165.

[17966] “Sto ad ostium, et pulse”—*Apoc.* 3:20.

[17967] “Sub umbra illius, quem desideraveram, sedi.”—*Cant.* 2:3.

[17968] “Trahe me: post te curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum.”—*Cant.* 1:3.

[17969] “Sicut novellæ olivarum in circuitu mensæ tuæ.”—*Ps.* 127:3.

[17970] “Non apparebis in conspectu meo vacuus.”—*Exod.* 23:15.

[17971] “Ego Paulus, vinctus Christi Jesu.”—*Eph.* 3:1.

[17972] “Via regia Salvatoris.”—*De Adv. Dom.* s. 2.

[17973] “Vehiculum ad Deum animarum nostrarum.”

[17974] “Advocata omnium iniquorum ad eam confugientium.”—*Be Laud. V. M.*1. 2, a. 23.

[17975] “Eja ergo, Advocata nostra! officium tuum imple.’—*In Nat. B. V. conc.* 3.

[17976] See the Twenty-first Visit, page 176.

[17977] “Cur faciem tuam abscondis?”—*Job,* 13:24.

[17978] “Dum Deus in hoc Sacramento faciem suam abscondit, amorem suum detegit.”

[17979] “Notas facite in populis adinventiones ejus.”—*Isa.* 12:4.

[17980] “Quis me separabit a charitate Christi?”—*Rom.* 8:35.

[17981] “Potentissima et piissima charitas Dei Matris, et affectu compatiendi, et subveniendi abundat effectu: æque locuples in utroque.”—*In Assumpt.* s. 4.

17982 “O Domina! me pugnantem protege, me vacillantem confirma.”—*Par. an.* p. 2. c. 4.

17983 “Mater orphanorum.”—*Psalt. min. B. V.*

17984 “Quis invocavit earn, et non est exauditus ab ipsa?”—*De Ass. B. V.* s. 2.

17985 See the Twenty-third Visit, page 181.

17986 “Jesus ergo, fatigatus ex itinere, sedebat sic supra fontem.”—*John*, 4:6.

17987 “Non veni ut judicem mundum, sed ut salvificem mundum.”—*John.* 12:47.

17988 “Semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis.”—*Heb.* 7:25.

17989 “Sicut solet dilectus ad dilectum loqui, et amicus cum amico convivari.”—*Imit. Chr.* B. 4, c. 13.

17990 “Adstat Beatissima Virgo vultui Conditoris, prece potentissima semper interpellans pro nobis. Videt enim nostra discrimina, nostrique clemens ac dulcis Domina materno affectu miseretur.”—*De Laud. B. V. hom.* 8.

17991 “Tu post Unigenicum tuum certa fidelium salus.”—*Par. an.* p. 2, c. 4.

17992 See the Twenty-seventh Visit, page 192.

17993 “Quid enim mihi est in cœlo? et a Te quid volui super terram? Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.”—*Ps.* 72:25, 26.

17994 *These meditations were published by Saint Alphonsus in 1767. For a method of making meditation, see Compendium of Rules for a Christian Life, at the end of the volume. ED.*

17995 *“Ne projicias me a facie tua.” Ps. 1. 13.*

17996 *“Misereris omnium, quia omnia poles; et dissimulas peccata hominum propter pœnitentiam.” Wis. xi. 24.*

17997 *“Statutum est hominibus semel mori.” Heb. ix. 27.*

17998 *“Juxta est dies perditionis.” Deut. xxxii. 35.*

17999 *“Cum metu et tremore vestram salutem operamini.” Phil. ii. 12.*

18000 *Nulla nimis securitas, ubi periclitatur æternitas.*

18001 *“Misericordia ejus timentibus eum.” Luke i. 50.*

18002 *“Deus non irridetur.” Gal. vi. 7.*

18003 *“Quæ seminaverit homo, hæc et metet.” Ibid. 8.*

18004 *“Spes illorum abominatio.” Job, xi. 20.*

18005 *“Velut somnium surgentium.” Ps. lxxii. 20.*

18006 *Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo.*

18007 *“Statutum est hominibus semel mori; post hoc autem, judicium.” Heb. ix. 27.*

18008 *“Estote parati, quia, qua hora non putatis, Filius hominis veniet,” Luke xii. 40.*

18009 *“Venit nox, quando nemo potest operari.” John, ix. 4.*

18010 *“Tempus breve est.” i Cor. vii. 29.*

18011 *“Quodcumque facere potest manus tua, instanter operare.” Eccles. ix. 10.*

18012 *“Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.” Ps. lxxxviii. 2.*

18013 *“Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus; quia Mater est, et frustrari non potest.” S. de Aquæd.*

18014 *“Unum est necessarium.” Luke, x. 42.*

18015 *“Mea est ultio, et ego retribuam in tempore.” Deut. xxxii. 35.*

18016 *“Exspectat Dominus, ut misereatur vestri.” Isa. xxx. 18.*

18017 *“Misericordiæ Domini, quia non sumus consumpti.” Lam. iii. 22.*

18018 *“Quid est quod debui ultra facere vineæ meæ et non feci? Isa. v. 4.*

18019 *“Convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.” Osee, xiv. 2.*

18020 *“Quæretis me, et non invenietis.” John vii. 34,*

18021 *“Lætetur cor quærentium Dominum.” Ps. civ. 3.*

[18022] *Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo.*

[18023] *“Ambulate dum lucem habetis.” John, xii. 35*

[18024] *“Venit nox, quando nemo potest operari.” John, ix. 4.*

[18025] *“Qua hora non putatis, Filius hominis veniet.” Luke xii. 40.*

[18026] *“Finita est æstas, et nos salvati non sumus.” Jer. viii. 20.*

[18027] *“Discedite a me maledicti in ignem æternum qui paratus est diabolo et angelis eius” Matt. xxv. 41*

[18028] *“Pones eos ut clibanum ignis.” Ps. xx. 10.*

[18029] *“Quis poterit habitare de vobis cum igne devorante?” Isa. xxxiii. 14.*

[18030] *“Libido tua vertetur in picem, qua se perpetuus ignis in tuis visceribus nutriat.” Opusc. de cœl. sac. c. 3.*

[18031] *“Quid est enim vita vestra? vapor est ad modicum parens, et deinceps exterminabitur.” James, iv. 15.*

[18032] *“Quid snperbit terra et cinis?” Ecclus. x. 9.*

[18033] *“Tamdiu unumquemque a Dei patientia sustentari, quamdiu nondum finem repleverit; quo consummate, nullam illi veniam reservari.” De Vita Christ, c. 3.*

[18034] *“Dominus patienter exspectat, ut eas (nationes), cum judicii dies advenerit, in plenitudine peccatorum puniat.” 2 Mach. vi. 14*

[18035] *“Appensus es in statera, et inventus es minus habens.” Dan. v. 27.*

[18036] *“Nos insensati vitam illorum aestimabamus insaniam.” Wis. v. 4.*

[18037] *“Pater . . . non sum dignus vocari filius tuus.” Luke, xv. 19.*

[18038] *“Quid nobis profuit superbia? aut divitiarum jactantia quid contulit nobis? Transierunt omnia ilia tanquam umbra.” Wis. v. 8.*

[18039] *“Ante hominem vita et mors, bonum et malum; quod placuerit si, dabitur illi.” Ecclus. xv. 18.*

[18040] *“Tu reliquisti me, dicit Dominus; retrorsum abiisti.” Jer. xv. 6.*

18041 *Retrorsum abiisti.*

18042 *“Quare moriemini, domus Israel? Revertimini, et vivite.” Ezek. xviii. 31.*

18043 *“Adam . . . ubi es? Gen. iii. 9.*

18044 *“Misericordiæ Domini in æternum cantabo.” Ps. lxxxviii. 1.*

18045 *“Ego sum judex et testis.” Jer. xxix. 23.*

18046 *Omnium iniquitatum . . . non recordabor.” Ezek. xviii 22.*

18047 *“Qua hora non putatis, Filius hominis veniet.” Luke, xii. 40.*

18048 *Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.*

18049 *“Non est pax impiis, dicit Dominus.” Isa. xlviii. 22.*

18050 *“Impii quasi mare fervens, quod quiescere non potest.” Isa. lvii. 20.*

18051 *“Fugit impius, nemine persequente.” Prov. xxviii. I.*

18052 *“Delectare in Domino, et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui.” Ps. xxxvi. 4.*

18053 *“Ama unum bonum, in quo sunt omnia bona.” Man. c. 34.*

18054 *Deus meus, Deus meus, et omnia.*

18055 *“Dies mei velociores fuerunt cursore.” Job, ix. 25.*

18056 *“Nulla pœna gravior, quam cum peccatum est pœna peccati.” In Ps. lxviii.*

18057 *“Auferam sepem ejus, et erit in direptionem.” Isa. v. 5.*

18058 *“Impius, cum in profundum venerit peccatorum, contemnit.” Prov. xviii. 3.*

18059 *“Curavimus Babylonem, et non est sanata; derelinquamus.” Jer. li. 9.*

18060 *“Quos præscivit et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui . . . illos et glorificavit.” Rom. viii. 29.*

18061 *“Justus vix salvabitur.” I Peter, iv. 18.*

18062 *“Quærite Dominum, dum inveniri potest.” Isa. Iv. 6.*

18063 *“Quid faciam, cum surrexerit ad judicandum Deus? Et cum quæsierit, quid respondebo illi?” Job, xxxi. 14.*

18064 *Tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.*

18065 *“Ibit homo in domum æternitatis suæ.” Eccles. xii. 5.*

18066 *quid enim prodest homini si mundum universum lucretur animæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur. Matt. xvi. 26.*

18067 *“Utinam saperent, et intelligerent, ac novissima providerent.” Deut. xxxii. 29.*

18068 The circumstance to which St. Alphonsus here refers is thus related by him in his sermon for Septuagesima Sunday: “St. Philip Neri, speaking, one day, to a young man named Francis Zazzera, who expected to make his fortune in the world by his talents, said: Be of good heart, my son; you may make a great fortune, you may become an eminent lawyer, you may then be made a prelate, then perhaps a cardinal, and then, who knows, perhaps even Pope. And then? and then? Go, continued the Saint, and reflect upon these two words. The young man went his way, and after having meditated on the two words and then? and then? abandoned all his worldly prospects, and gave himself entirely to God. Leaving the world, he entered into the same congregation that St. Philip had founded, and then he died in the odour of sanctity.”

18069 *O momentum, a quo pendet æternitas!*

18070 *“Euge, serve bone et fidelis; quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, super multa te constituam: intra in gaudium Domini tui.” Mat. xxv. 23*

18071 *Discede a me, maledicte, in ignem æternum.” Matt. xxv. 41.*

18072 *Subvenite Sancti Dei. occurrite, Angeli Domini, suscipiente animam ejus, offerentes eam in conspectu Altissimi.*

18073 *“Qua hora non putatis, Filius hominis veniet.” Luke, xii. 40.*

18074 *“Quærite, et invenietis.” Matt vii. 7.*

18075 *“Ibunt hi in supplicium æternum.” Matt. xxv. 46.*

18076 *“Desiderabunt mori, et fugiet mors ab eis.” Apoc. ix. 6.*

18077 *“Non tardes converti ad Dominum, et ne differas de die in diem: subito enim veniet ira illius, et in tempore vindictæ disperdet te.” Ecclus. v. 9.*

18078 *“Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis.” Eph. v. 2.*

18079 *Quid fecisti, innocentissime Salvator, quod sic condemnareris?*

18080 *“Cum metu et tremore vestram salutem operamini.” Phil. ii. 12.*

18081 *“In manus tuas, Domine, commando spiritum meum.” Ps. xxx. 6.*

18082 *“Dies iræ . . . dies calamitatis et miseriæ.” Soph. i. 15.*

18083 *The Sequence “Dies Iræ, dies illa” being not familiar to all is appended to this book see the last page*

18084 *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.*

18085 *“In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” Ps. xxx. 2.*

18086 *“Dicebant excessum ejus, quem completurus erat in Jerusalem.” Luke, ix. 31.*

18087 *“Baptismo habeo baptizari, et quomodo coarctor usquedum perficietur?” Luke, xii. 50.*

18088 *“Charitas Christi urget nos.” 2 Cor. v. 14.*

18089 *Love of God, B. 7, ch. 8.*

18090 *“Ergo erravimus.” Wis. v. 6.*

18091 *“Terra et quæ in ipsa sunt opera exurentur.” 2 Peter, iii. 10.*

18092 *“Canet tuba, et mortui resurgent.” I Cor. xv. 52*

18093 *“Tunc justi fulgebunt sicut sol.” Matt. xiii. 43.*

18094 *“Non avertas faciem tuam a me.” Ps. cxlii. 7.*

18095 *“Populi populi in valle concisionis “ Joel. iii. 14.*

18096 *“Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris. “—Gen. iii. 19.*

18097 *“Exibunt Angeli, et separabunt malos de medio justorum.” Matt. xiii. 49.*

18098 *“Rapiemur cum illis in nubibus obviam Christo in aera.” I Thess. iv. 16.*

18099 *“De cadaveribus eorum ascendet fœtor. “ Isa. xxxiv. 3.*

18100 *“Et ipse calcat torcular vini furoris iræ Dei.” Apoc. xix. 15.*

18101 *“Quam dabit homo commutationem pro anima sua?” Matt. xvi. 26.*

18102 *Nulla nimia securitas, ubi periclitatur æternitas.*

18103 *“In te. Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” Ps. xxx. 2.*

18104 *“Ecce, anni tres sunt, ex quo venio quærens fructum in ficulnea hac, et non invenio.” Luke, xiii. 7.*

18105 *“Dicunt montibus et petris: Cadite super nos, et abscondite nos a facie sedentis super thronum et ab ira Agni.” Apoc. vi. 16.*

18106 *“Judicium sedit, et libri aperti sunt.” Dan. vii. 10.*

18107 *“Illuminabit abscondita tenebrarum.” I Cor. iv. 5.*

18108 *“Cognoscetur Dominus judicia faciens.” Ps. ix. 17.*

18109 *“Cui assimilastis me? . . . dicit Sanctus.” Isa. xl. 25.*

18110 *“In charitate perpetua dilexi te.” Jer. xxxi. 3.*

18111 *“Omnia . . . propter electos.” 2 Tim. ii. 10.*

18112 *“Congratulamini mihi, quia inveni ovem meam quæ perierat. Luke, xv. 6.*

18113 *Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo.*

18114 *“Vocavit adversum me tempus.” Lam. i. 15.*

18115 *Peccatum est destructivum divinæ voluntatis.*

18116 *“Similiter autem odio sunt Deo impius et impietas ejus.” Wis. xiv. 9.*

18117 *“Quoniam ipse dixit, et facta sunt.” Ps. xxxii. 9.*

18118 *“Potest . . . et universum m undum uno nutu delere.” 2 Mach. viii. 18.*

18119 *“Tetendit enim adversus Deum manum suam, et contra Omnipotentem roboratus est.” Job, xv. 25.*

18120 *“Ad iracundiam provocat me ante faciem meam semper.” Isa lxv. 3.*

18121 *“Venit enim Films hominis quærere et salvum facere quod perierat.” Luke, xix. 10.*

[18122] *“Et vos estote parati; quia, qua hora non putatis, Filius hominis veniet.” Luke, xii. 40.*

[18123] *De lib. arbit. 1. 3, c. 18.*

[18124] *“Venit nox, quando nemo potest operari.” John, ix. 4.*

[18125] *“Et ego retribuam in tempore, ut labatur pes eorum.” Deut. xxxii. 35.*

[18126] *Venite, benedicti.*

[18127] *Discedite, maledicti.*

[18128] *“Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem æternum.” Matt. xxv. 41.*

[18129] *“Venite, benedicti Patris mei.” Matt. xxv. 34,*

[18130] *“Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo, in æternum cantabo.” Ps. lxxxviii. 2.*

[18131] *“Remittuntur tibi peccata.” Liike, vii. 48.*

[18132] *“Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.” Ps. Ixxii. 26.*

[18133] This little work was published in 1773, with the “Considerations on the Passion.” The saintly author wrote on the 8th of September, 1773, in one of his spiritual letters: “Here are two little works, one of which may aid you to meditate on the Passion; I use it myself every day. . . . I also read every day something of the other little work, entitled Pious Reflections, etc. I wish you to do the same; for I wrote it specially for those souls that desire to give themselves up entirely to God.” ED.

[18134] *“Finem vero, vitam æternam.” Rom. vi. 22.*

[18135] *Negotium pro quo contendimus, æternitas est.*

[18136] *“Justus ex fide vivit.” Gal. iii. n.*

[18137] *Credo vitam æternam.*

[18138] *O æternitas! qui te cogitat, nec pænitet, aut fidem non habet, aut, si habet fidem, cor non habet.*

[18139] *Exprobrabant gentiles, aut mendaces aut stultos esse Christianes: mendaces, si non crederent quod credere dicebant; stultos, si credebant et peccabant.*

[18140] *Væ peccatoribus qui incognitam ingrediuntur æternitatem! Sed, væ duplex! ingrediuntur, et non egrediuntur!*

[18141] *“Adauge nobis fidem.” Luke, xvii. 5.*

[18142] *“Quisquis in solo æternitatis desiderio figitur, nec prosperitate attollitur, nec adversitate quassatur; dum nil habet in mundo quod appetat, nihil est quod de mundo pertimescat.” Mor. 1. 10. c. 22.*

[18143] *“Misericordiæ Domini, quia non sumus consumpti.” Lam. iii. 22.*

[18144] *“Nisi quia Dominus adjuvit me, paulo minus habitasset in inferno animamea.” Ps. xciii. 17.*

[18145] *“Tu autem eruisti animam meam, tit non periret.” Isa. xxxviii. 17*

[18146] *“Dum sumus in corpore, peregrinamur a Domino.” 2 Cor. v. 6.*

[18147] *“Audemus autem, et bonam voluntatem habemus magis peregrinari a corpora et Præsentes esse ad Dominum.” 2 Cor. v. 8.*

[18148] *“Dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri,” John, i. 12.*

[18149] *“Quoniam per ipsum habemus accessum ambo in uno spiritu ad Patrem.” Eph. ii. 18.*

[18150] *“Ergo jam non estis hospites et advenæ, sed estis cives Sanctorum et domestici Dei.” Eph. ii. 19.*

[18151] *“Cives terrenæ civitatis parit peccato vitiata natura, qui sunt vasa iræ; cives vero cælestis patriæ parit a peccato naturam liberans gratia, qui sunt vasa misericordise.” De Civ. D. \. 15.*

[18152] *“Incola ego sum in terra, non abscondas a me mandatatua.” Ps. cxviii. 19.*

[18153] *“Heu mihi, quia incolatus meus prolongatus est.” Ps. cxix. 5.*

[18154] *Adveniat, adveniat regnum tuum.*

[18155] *“Festinemus ergo ingredi in illam requiem.” Heb. iv. n.*

[18156] *“Qui currit, non ad spectatores, sed ad palmam attendit; non consistit, sed cursum intendit. “ In Ep. ad Heb. hom. 7.*

[18157] *Adveniat regnum tuum.*

[18158] *“Gaudete in illa die, et exsultate; ecce enim merces vestra multa est in cælo.” Ltike, vi. 23.*

[18159] *“Gaudere nos et exsultare voluit in persecutionibus Dominus quia tunc dantur coroner fidei, tunc probantur milites Dei.” Epist. ad Thibar.*

18160 *“Paratum cor meum.” Ps. lvi. 8.*

18161 *“Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris.” Gen. iii. 19.*

18162 *“Finis venit, venit finis.” Ezek. vii. 2.*

18163 *“Dispone domui tuæ, quia morieris tu, et non vives.” Isa. xxxviii. i.*

18164 *Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo.*

18165 *O momentum, a quo pendet æternitas!*

18166 *“Utinam saperent, et intelligerent, ac novissima providerent!” Deut. xxxii. 29.*

18167 *“Thesaurizate autem vobis thesauros in cælo, ubi neque ærugo neque tinea demolitur.” Matt. vi. 20.*

18168 *Et quemadmodum statutum est hominibus semel mori post hoc autem iudicium Heb ix. 27*

18169 *“Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi?” Ps. CXV. 12.*

18170 *“Euge, serve bone et fidelis; quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, super multa te constituam; intra in gaudium Domini tui.” Matt. xxv. 21.*

18171 *“Delicta juventutis meæ et ignorantias meas ne memineris.” Ps. xxiv. 7.*

18172 *Ecce lignum crucis, in quo salus mundi pependit.*

18173 *O sanguis innocentis! lava sordes pœnitentis.*

18174 *Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.*

18175 *Domine, qui abstulisti a me amorem sæculi, accipe animam meam.*

18176 *“In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum; . . . redemisti me, Domine, Deus veritatis.” Ps. xxx. 2–6.*

18177 *“Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.” I John, iv. 16.*

18178 *“Et non intres in judicium cum servo tuo, quia non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens.” Ps, cxlii. 2.*

18179 *“Venit enim Filius hominis salvare quod perierat.” Matt, xviii. 11.*

18180 *“Accessistis ad . . . Mediatorem Jesum, et sanguinis aspersionem melius loquentem quam Abel.” Heb. xii. 22.*

18181 *“Nullus speravit in Domino, et confusus est.” Ecchis. ii. 11.*

18182 *“Numquid voluntatis meæ est mors impii, dicit Dominus Deus, et non ut convertatur a viis suis, et vivat?” Ezek. xviii. 23.*

18183 *“Vivo ego, dicit Dominus Deus, nolo mortem impii, sed ut convertatur impius a via sua, et vivat.” Ezek. xxxiii. 11.*

18184 *Et quare moriemini, domus Israel?*

18185 *“Si autem impius egerit pœnitentiam . . . vita vivet . . . omnium iniquitatum ejus, quas operatus est, non recordabor.” Ezek. xviii. 21.*

18186 *Bas. M. Reg. brev. int. 12.*

18187 *“Iniquitatem odio habui, et abominatus sum.” Ps. cxviii. 163.*

18188 *“Multi dicunt animæ meæ: Non est salus ipsi in Deo ejus.” Ps. iii. 3.*

18189 *“Tu autem, Domine, susceptor meus es.” Ps. iii. 4.*

18190 *“Dic animæ meæ: Salus tua ego sum.” Ps. xxxiv. 3.*

18191 *“In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” Ps. xxx. 2,*

18192 *“Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.” Ps. lxxxviii. 2.*

18193 *Moriar, Domine, amore amoris tui, qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori!*

18194 *Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.*

18195 *“Quid mihi est in cælo? et a te quid volui super terram? . . . Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.” Ps. lxxii. 25.*

18196 *“In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine Deus veritatis.” Ps. xxx. 6.*

18197 *“In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” Ibid. 2.*

18198 *“Ibit homo in donmum æternitatis suæ.” Eccles, xii. 5.*

18199 *“Peccavi, et vere deliqui, et, ut eram dignus, non recepi.” Job, xxxiii. 27.*

18200 *“Dum sumus in corpore, peregrinamur a Domino.” 2 Cor. v. 6.*

18201 *“Quid enim prodest homini, si mundum universum lucretur, animæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur? “ Matt. xvi. 26.*

18202 *“Rogamus autem vos, fratres . . . ut negodum vestrum agatis.” I Thess. iv. 10*

18203 *“De immortalibus suppliciis, de cœlestis regni amissione, res agitur.” In Matt. hom. 25.*

18204 *“Quam dabit homo commutationem pro anima sua?” Matt. xvi. 26.*

18205 *“Mortuo homine impio, non erit ultra spes.” Prov. xi. 7.*

18206 *“Sane supra omnem errorem est dissimulare negotium salutis suæ” De Contemptu m.*

18207 *“Intra in gaudium Domini tui.” Matt. xxv. 21.*

18208 *“Intra in gaudium Domini tui.” Matt. xxv. 21.*

18209 *“Inebriabuntur abubertate domus tuæ, et torrente voluptatis tuæ potabis eos.” Ps. xxxv. 9.*

18210 *Aversio a Deo.*

18211 *“Satiabor, cum apparuerit gloria tua.” Ps. xvi. 15.*

18212 *“Intra in gaudium Domini tui.” Matt. xxv. 21.*

18213 *“Cantate Domino canticum novum.” Ps. xcvii. i.*

18214 *Vasa iræ.*

18215 *Vasa charitatis.*

18216 *In Ps. xxx vi. s. 2.*

18217 *“Domine, qui abstulisti a me amorem sseculi, accipe animam meam.” In ejus off. lect. 6.*

18218 *“Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus.” Ps. cxv. 15*

18219 *In Trans. S. Mai. s. I.*

18220 *“Quid est diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri?” Serm. 84 E. B.*

18221 *Ut mors remedium esse videatur, non pœna.*

[18222] *Deus meus, et omnia!*

[18223] *“Beati mortui, qui in Domino moriuntur. Amodo jam dicit Spiritus, ut requiescant a laboribus suis. “ Apoc. xiv. 13.*

[18224] *“Dies peregrinationis meæ centum triginta annorum sunt, parvi et mall.” Gen. xlvii. 9.*

[18225] *“Ut sit Deus omnia in omnibus.” I Cor. xv. 28.*

[18226] *“Infelix ego homo! quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus?” Rom. vii. 24.*

[18227] *“Factus sum mihimetipsi gravis.” Job, vii. 20*

[18228] *“Deus, ne elongeris a me; Deus meus, in auxilium meum respice.” Ps. lxx. 12.*

[18229] *“Juxta est Dominus iis qui tribulato sunt corde.” Ps. xxxiii. 19.*

[18230] “ ‘Heu!’ ” dolentis est, non insultantis; significat Deus hac voce se dolentem et invitum punire peccatores.”

[18231] “Ego enim scio cogitationes quas ego cogito super vos, ait Dominus, cogitationes pacis, et non afflictionis.”-Jer. xxix. 11.

[18232] “Misereris omnium, quia omnia potes, et dissimulas peccata hominum propter pœnitentiam.”—Wisd. xi. 24.

[18233] “Parcis autem omnibus, quoniam tua sunt, Domine, qui amas animas”—Ibid. 27.

[18234] “Patienter agit propter vos, nolens aliquos perire, sed omnes ad pœnitentiam reverti.”—2 Pet. iii. 9.

[18235] “Adhuc quadraginta dies, et Ninive subvertetur.” Jonas, iii. 4.

[18236] “Vidit Deus opera eorum, quia conversi sunt de via sua mala, et misertus est.”—Ibid. 10.

[18237] “Propter hoc præoccupavi ut fugerem in Tharsis: scio enim quia tu Deus elemens et misericors es, patiens et multæ miserationis et ignoscens super malitia.”—Jonas, iv. 2.

[18238] “Tu doles super hederam, in qua non laborasti, neque fecisti ut eresceret; . . . et ego non parcam Ninive?”—Ibid. 10.

[18239] “Indignans miseretur, et minitans salvare desiderat.”

[18240] “Nemo, volens ferire, dicit: Observa!”-Serm. 22, E. B.

18241 “In hoc clementia Dei ostenditur; qui enim prædicit pœnam non vult punier.”

18242 “Sævis, et salvas; terres, et vocas.”-In Ps. 55.

18243 “Loquaris ad eos, . . . si forte audient, et convertantur unusquisque a via sua mala, et pœniteat me mali quod cogito facere eis.”-Jer. xxvi. 2.

18244 “Neque Deus hominibus, sed vitiis irascitur.”—In Dan. c. 4.

18245 “Si nos peccatorum meminerimus, Deus obliviscetur.”—Ad pop. ant. hom. 41.

18246 “Quia humiliati sunt, non disperdam eos.”—2 Par. xii. 7.

18247 “Protector est omnium sperantium in se.”—Ps, xvii. 31.

18248 “Qui timent Dominum. speraverunt in Domino; adjutor eorum et protector eorum est.”—Ps. xiii. 11.

18249 “Timete eum qui . . . habet potestatem mittere in gehennam.”-Luke, xii. 5.

18250 “Spatiosa via est, quæ ducit ad perditionem, et multi sunt, qui intrant per eam.”—Matth. vii. 13.

18251 “Universi qui sustinent te, non confundentur.”—Ps. xxiv. 2.

18252 Sess. vi. can. xiv., xv.

18253 “Ipse (Deus) terror vester, et erit vobis in sanctificationem.”—Is. viii. 13.

18254 “Confige timore tuo carnes meas.”—Ps. cxviii. 120.

18255 “Propter nomen tuum, Domine, propitiaberis peccato meo; multum est enim.”—Ps. xxiv. 11.

18256 “Salvabit eos, quia speraverunt in eo.”—Ps. xxxvi. 40.

18257 “Timor Domini delectabit cor, et dabit lætitiam et gaudium.”-Ecclus. i. 12.

18258 “Qui timet Dominum, nihil trepidabit, et non pavebit; quoniam ipse est spes ejus. Timentis Dominum beata est anima ejus.”-Ecclus. xxxiv. 17.

18259 “Timor Domini expellit peccatum.”-Ecclus. i. 27.

18260 “Beatus vir qui timet Dominum; in mandatis ejus volet nimis.”-Ps. cxi. 1.

18261 “Deus cujus natura, bonitus.”-In Nat. D. s. 2.

18262 “Irascetur, et faciat opus suum, alienum opus ejus; . . . peregrinum est opus ejus ab eo.”-Is. xxviii. 21.

18263 “Ego fingo contra vos malum.”

18264 “Revertatur unusquisque a via sua mala.”-Jer. xviii. 11.

18265 “Cujus vult miseretur, et quem vult indurat.”-Rom. ix. 18.

18266 “Quod miseretur, proprium illi est; nam, quod condemnat, nose um cogimus.”-In Nat. D. s. 5, n. 3.

18267 “Deus. . . . iratus es, et misertus es nobis.”-Ps. lix. 3.

18268 “O ira misericors: quæ sic irascitur, ut subveniat; sic minatur, ut parcat!”-Serm. In Nat. Mart.

18269 “Ostendisti populo tuo dura, potasti nos vino compunctionis.”

18270 “Dedisti metuentibus te significationem, ut fugiant a facie arcus, ut liberentur dilecti tui.”

18271 “Ut liberentur dilecti tui.”

18272 “In tribulatione sua mane consurgent ad me.”-Osse, vi. 1.

18273 “Da nobis auxilium de tribulatione.”

18274 “Crescit malitia, crescit inopia rerum.”—De Helia, s. 2.

18275 “Dices ad eos: Hæc dicit Dominus exercituum: Convertimini ad me,. . . . et convertar ad vos.”—Zach. i. 3.

18276 “Convertimini ad me, et convertar ad vos.”

18277 “Et quare moriemini, domus Israel?”

18278 “Revertimini, et vivite.”—Ezech. xviii. 31, 32.

18279 “Discite benefacere, . . . et venite, et arguite me, . . . si fuerint peccata vestra ut coccinum, quasi nix dealbabuntur.”—Is. i. 17.

18280 “Non faciam furorem iræ meæ, . . . quoniam Deus ego, et non homo.”—Osee, vi. 9.

18281 “Omnium iniquitatum ejus, quas operatus est, non recordabor.”-Ezech. xviii, 2.

18282 See at the end of the Sermon 0n the Passion, page 317.

18283 “Præcepit nobis Deus ne comederemus et ne tangeremus illud, ne forte moriamur.”—Gen. iii. 3.

18284 “Nequaquam morte moriemini.”—Ibid. 4.

18285 “Deus timorem incutit, diabolus adimit.”

18286 “Surgite, egredimini de loco isto; quia delebit Dominus civitatem hanc.”—Gen. xix. 14.

18287 “Et visus est eis quasi ludens loqui.”

18288 “Vide ergo bonitatem et severitatem Dei: in eos quidem qui ceciderunt, severitatem; in te autem bonitatem Dei, si permanseris in bonitate; alioquin et tu excideris.”-Rom. xi. 22.

18289 “Peccata vestra prohibuerunt bonum a vobis.”—Jer. v. 25.

18290 “Numquid grande est, ut consoletur te Deus? Sed verba tua prava hoc prohibent.”—Job, xv. 11.

18291 “Miseros autem facit populos peccatum.”—Prov. xiv. 34.

18292 “Quid querimur quod dure agat nobiscum Deus? Multo nos cum Deo durius agimus.”—De Gub. D. 1. 4.

18293 “Eo quod non servieris Domino Deo tuo in gaudio, . . . servies inimico tuo . . . in. fame, et siti, et nuditate, el omni penuria, . . . donec te conterat.”—Deut. xxviii. 47.

18294 “Incidit in foveam quam fecit.”—Ps. vii. 16.

18295 “Cupiebat implere ventrem suum de siliquis quas porci manducabant, et nemo illi dabat.”—Luke, xv. 16.

18296 Seraph. quadr. s. 12, p. 2.

18297 Ann. 33, n 6.

18298 “Cognoscetur Dominus judicia faciens: in operibus manuum suarum comprehensus est peccator.”—Ps. ix. 17.

18299 “Putatis quia et ipsi debitores fuerint præter omnes homines habitants in Jerusalem?”-Luke, xiii. 4.

18300 “Si pœnitentiam non egeritis, omnes similiter peribitis.”

18301 “Protector est omnium sperantium in se.”-Ps. xvii. 31.

18302 “Spes illorum abominatio.”—Job, xi. 20.

18303 “Et unde hæc securitas maledicta?”-De Divers. s. 28.

18304 “Veniam ad quiescentes, habitantesque secure.”-Ezech. xxviii. 11.

18305 “Qui malignantur, exterminabuntur.”-Ps. xxvi. 9.

18306 “Jam enim securis ad radicem arborum posita est.”-Luke, iii. 9.

18307 “Non ad ramos posita dicitur, sed ad radicem, ut irreparabiliter exterminentur.”-Homil. 3.

18308 “Ne dixeris: Peccavi, et quid mihi accidit triste? Altissimus enim est patiens redditor.”—Ecclus. v. 4.

18309 “Judicio contendam adversum vos coram Domino, de omnibus misericordiis Domini.”—I Kings, xii. 7.

18310 “Congrega eos quasi gregem ad victimam, et sanctifica eos in die occisionis!”—Jer. xii. 3.

18311 “Deus non irridetur, quæ enim seminaverit homo, hæc et metet.”—Gal. vi. 7.

18312 “Quæ enim seminaverit homo, hæc et metet.”

18313 “Qui seminat in carne sua, de carne et metet corruptionem.”

18314 “Veniet dies, imo nox, quando libido tua vertetur in picem, qua se perpetuus ignis in tuis visceribus nutriat!”—De Cœlib. sac. c. 3.

18315 “Fingunt non videre.”

18316 “Nihil timent, quia nihil vident.”

18317 “Et non cognoverunt, donec venit diluvium, et tulit omnes.”—Matt. xxiv. 39.

18318 “Sedeo regina, . . . et luctum non videbo.”—Apoc. xviii. 7.

18319 “Ideo in una die venient plagæ ejus, . . . et igne comburetur.”

18320 “Ecce anni tres sunt, ex quo venio quærens fructum in filcunea hac, et non invenio; succide ergo illam; ut quid etiam terram occupat?”—Luke, xiii. 7.

18321 “Dimitte illam et hoc anno, . . . siquidem fecerit fructum; sin autem, in futurum succides eam.”

18322 “Neque absorbeat me profundum, neque urgeat super me puteus os suum.”—Ps. lxviii. 16.

18323 “Impius, cum in profundum venerit peccatorum, contemnit.”—Prov. xviii. 3.

18324 “Spes desperantium, Adjutrix destitutorum.”

18325 “In te speret, qui desperat.”—Med. in Salve Reg.

18326 “Nolo mortem impii.”—Ezech. xxxiii. 11.

18327 “Sed ut convertatur, . . . et vivat.”—Ibid.

18328 “Indulsisti genti, Domine, indulsisti genti; numquid glorificatus es?

18329 “Similiter autem odio sunt Deo impius et impietas ejus.”—Wisd. xiv. 9.

18330 “Audi, cœli, et auribus percipe, terra. . . . Filios enutrivi; ipsi autem spreverunt me.”—Is. i. 2.

18331 “Cognovit bos possessorem suum, et asinus præpsepe domini sui; Israel autem me non cognovit. . . . Abalienati sunt retrorsum.”—Ibid. 3, 4.

18332 “Officia etiam feræ sentiunt.”—De Benef. 1. I, c. 3.

18333 “Deus mortem non fecit, nec lætatur in perditione vivorum; creavit enim ut essent omnia.”—Wisd. i. 13.

18334 “Ad reposcendam de peccantibus ultionem, consuevit Dens moras nectere.”

18335 “Propterea exspectat Dominus, ut misereatur vestri.”—Is. xxx. 18.

18336 “Ad salutem velox, tardus ad demolitionem.”—De Pænit. hom. 5.

18337 “Dominus quoque transtulit peccatum tuum”—2 Kings, xii. 13.

18338 “Non ita tua condonari peccata cupis, quam tibi remissa esse expetit.”

18339 “Non facit Dominus Deus verbum, nisi revelaverit secretum suum.”—Amos. iii. 7.

18340 “Existimasti, inique, quod ero tui similis; arguam te, et statuam contra faciem tuam.”—Ps. xlix. 20.

18341 “Odit Deus, et amat; odit tua, amat te.”—Serm. 142, E. B.

18342 “Neque Deus hominibus, sed vitiis irascitur.”—In Dom. c. 4.

18343 “Deus, qui natura benignus est, vestris peccatis cogetur personam, quam non habet, crudelitatis assumere.”

18344 “Excitatus est . . . tamquam potens crapulatus a vino, et percussit inimicos suos.”—Ps. lxxvii. 65.

18345 “Thesaurizas tibi iram, quam Deus naturaliter non habet.”—In Ezech. c. 16.

18346 “Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem æternum, qui paratus est diabolo et angelis ejus.”—Matth. xxv. 41.

18347 “Comparaverunt delictis suis.”

18348 “Qui seminat iniquitatem, metet mala.”—Prov. xxii. 8.

18349 “Dixistis enim: Percussimus fœdus cum morte, et cum inferno fecimus pactum.”—Is. xxviii. 15.

18350 “Nullum prius ipse condemnat, sed unusquisque sibi auctor est pœnæ.”—In Luc. c. 8.

18351 “Et virga iræ suæ consummabitur.”—Prov. xxii. 8.

18352 “Ipse sibi parat peccator, quod patitur; nihil itaque est in nos crudelius nobis.”

18353 “Nos nos, etiam Deo nolente, cruciamus; nos cœlestis iræ ignem accendimus, et excitamus incendia quibus ardeamus.”—De Gulf. Dei, 1. 8.

18354 “Ne dicas: Miseratio Domini magna est; multitudinis peccatorum meorum miserebitur.”-Ecclus. v. 6.

18355 “Misericordia enim et ira ab illo cito proximant.”-Ibid. 7.

18356 “Dominus patienter exspectat, ut . . . cum judicii dies advenerit, in plenitudine peccatorum puniat.”-2 Mach. vi. 14.

18357 Jos. vi. 20.

18358 “Veniet septimus arcæ circuitus, et civitas vanitatis corruet.”

18359 “Terra enim sæpe venientem super se bibens imbrem, . . . proferens autem spinas ac tribulos, reproba est, et maledicto proxima; cujus consummatio in combustionem.”—Heb. vi. 7.

18360 “Derelinquetur filia Sion . . . sicut civitas quæ vastatur.”—Is. i. 8.

18361 “Videns civitatem, flevit super illam, dicens: . . . Non relinquent in te lapidem super lapidem, eo quod non cognoveris tempus visitaionis tuæ.”—Luke, xix. 41.

18362 “Quoties volui congregare filios tuos, . . . et noluisti! Ecce relinquetur vobis domus vestra deserta.”—Luke, xiii. 34.

18363 “Curavimus Babylonem, et non est sanata; derelinquamus eam.”—Jer. li. 9.

18364 “Pro talibus admonendis, nullum reperitur remedium nisi Dei flagellum.”—T. II., s. 18. a. 2. c. 2.

18365 “Quia vocavi, et renuistis, . . . et increpationes meas neglexistis, ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo et subsannabo.”—Prov. i. 24.

18366 “Virga . . . versa est in colubrum.”—Exod. iv. 3.

18367 “Virga illis vertitur in draconem, qui sæpius correcti, se emendare volunt.”

18368 “Per quæ peccat quis, per hæc et torquetur.’’—Wisd. xi. 17.

18369 “Venient Romani, et tollent nostrum locum.”—John, xi. 48.

18370 “Temporalia perdere timuerunt. et vitam æternam non cogitaverunt; ac sic utrumque amiserunt.”—In Jo. tr. 49, n. 26.

18371 “Tardam vindictam compensat Dominus gravitate pœnarum.”

18372 “Væ tibi, Corozain! Væ tibi, Bethsaida! Quia, si in Tyro et Sidone Factæ fuissent virtutes quæ factæ sunt in vobis, olim in cilicio et cinere sedentes pœniterent.”Luke, x. 13.

18373 “Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno.”—Heb. iv. 16.

18374 “Ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris.”—I John, ii. 2.

18375 “Pertransiit benefaciendo.”—Acts, x. 38.

18376 “Timeo Jesum transeuntem.”—Serm. 88, E. B.

18377 “Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis, nolite obdurare corda vestra.”—Ps. xciv. 8.

18378 “Si contra te Dominum videris indignatum, ad spem peccatorum confugias.”—Stim. div. am. p. 3, c. 12.

18379 “Mater . . . sanctæ spei.”—Ecclus. xxiv. 24.

18380 “Spatiosa via est quæ ducit ad perditionem, et multi sunt qui intrant per eam”—Matth. vii. 13.

18381 “Defixæ sunt in terra portæ ejus.”

18382 “Nonne et ethnici hoc faciunt?”—Matth. v. 47.

18383 “Ego autem dico vobis.”

18384 “Diligite inimicos vestros.”

18385 “Benefacite his qui oderunt vos.”

18386 “Et orate pro persecutoribus et calumniantibus vos.”

18387 “Ut sitis filii Patris vestry qui in cœlis est.”-Matth. v. 44, 45.

18388 “Dilectio sola discernit inter filios Dei et filios diabolic.”-In I Jo. tr. 5.

18389 “Dimittite, et dimittemini.”—Luke, vi. 37.

18390 “Remittendo aliis, veniam tibi dedisti.”

18391 “Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris.”

18392 “Tu in tua causa fers sententiam.”—In Jo. hom. 38.

18393 “Judicium autem sine misericordia illi qui non fecit misericordiam.”—James, ii. 13.

18394 “Nescio qua fronte indulgentiam peccatorum obtinere poterit, qui, Deo præcipiente, inimicis suis veniam dare non acquiescit.”—Serm. 273, E. B.

18395 “Foris canes.”—Apoc. xxii. 15.

18396 “Qui inimicum habet, nunquam fruitur pace; perpetuo æstuat.”

18397 “Honorem meum nemini dabo.”

18398 “Tue s enim, Domine, qui vitæ et mortis habes potestatem.”-Wisd. xvi. 13.

18399 “Mea est ultio, et ego retribuam in tempore.”-Deut. xxxiii. 35.

18400 “Per prævaricationem legis Deum inhonoras.”-Rom. ii. 23.

18401 “Beneficiis eum affice, et ultus es.”

18402 See Volume XVI., page 553.

18403 “Omne peccatum, comparatum blasphemiæ, levius est.”—In Is. c. 18.

18404 “Blasphemia pejus nihil.”—In I Cor. hom. 13.

18405 “Alia peccata videntur procedere partim ex fragilitate, partim ex ignorantia; sed peccatum blasphemiæ procedit ex propria malitia.”—Seraph, quadr. s. 33, p. 2.

18406 “Quæ supplicia sufficient, cum Deo fit ista tam nefaria injuria?”

18407 “Minime mirandum, si flagella non amoveantur.”—Bulla. 23

18408 In Levit. xxiv. 14.

18409 “Blasphemaverunt Sanctum Israel; . . . terra vestra . . . desolabitur.”—Is. i. 4.

18410 “Contere os ejus, percussione manum tuam sanctifica.”—Ad pop. Ant. hom. 1.

18411 “Qui blasphemaverit nomen Domini, morte moriatur: lapidibus opprimet eum omnis multitudo.”—Levit. xxiv. 16.

18412 “Vere et tu ex illis es; nam et loquela tua manifestum te facit.”-Matth. xxvi. 73.

18413 “Et blasphemaverunt Deum cœli, præ doloribus et vulneribus suis.”-Apoc. xvi. 11.

18414 “Miseros facit populos peccatum.”—Prov. xiv. 34.

18415 See Volume XV , page 483.

18416 “Simulacra gentium, argentum et aurum.”—Ps. ciii 12.

18417 “Neque fures . . . neque rapaces regnum Dei possidebunt.”-I Cor. vi. 10.

18418 “Quia tu spoliasti gentes multas, spoliabunt te omnes.”—Habac. ii. 8.

18419 “Hæc est maledictio quæ egreditur super faciem omnis terræ; . . . et veniet ad domum furis.”—Zach. v. 3.

18420 “Qui opes inique possidet, etiam opes suas amittet.”

18421 “Videte ne forte furtivus sit; reddite eum.”—Tob. ii. 21.

18422 “Nolebat sonum furti audire in domo.”—Serm. 88, E. B.

18423 “Non vult Christus rapina nutriri.”

18424 “Canis reversus ad suum vomitum, et sus lota in volutabro luti.”—2 Peter, ii. 22.

18425 “Pœnituit cum quod hominem fecisset. . . . Omnis quippe caro corruperat viam suam.”—Gen. vi. 6–12.

18426 “Pro nullo alio reatu, tarn manifestam justitiam exercuit Deus, quam pro isto.”—Epist. Euseb. ad Dam.

18427 “Quia oblita es mei, et projecisti me post corpus tuum, tu quoque porta scelus tuum et fornicationes tuas.”—Ezech. xxiii. 35.

18428 “Hoc peccatum quasi totum mundum trahit ad supplicium.”—Serm. Extraord. 12, p. 2.

18429 “Magis per luxuriam humanum genus subditur diabolo, quam per cætera vitia.”—Sent. 1. 2, c. 39.

18430 “Nullus in peccato tenacior, quam libidinosus.”—De S. Ildeph c. 2.

18431 “Voluptates (impudicæ) oblivionem Dei inducunt.”—Lign. vit. de Contin. c. 4.

18432 “Non dabunt cogitationes suas ut revertantur ad Deum suum, quia spiritus fornicationum in medio eorum, et Dominum non cognoverunt.”—Osee, v. 4.

18433 “Nec paret rationi, qui impetu ducitur.”

18434 “Sus in volutabro luti.”

18435 “Qui enim manducat et bibit indigne, judicium sibi manducat et bibit, non dijudicans corpus Domini.”—I Cor. xi. 29.

18436 “Quandoquidem peccabant, quod participes fierent Mysteriorum, non expurgata conscientia.”—In Isaiam, c. 3.

18437 “Tollite me, et mittite in mare, et cessabit mare a vobis; scio enim ego quoniam propter me tempestas hæc grandis venit.”—Jon. i. 12.

18438 “Et stetit mare a fervore suo.”—Ibid. 15.

18439 “Iniquitates nostræ quasi ventus abstulerunt nos.”—Is. lxiv. 6.

18440 “Tu autem, Dominator virtutis, cum tranquillitate judicas.”—Wisd. xii. 18.

18441 “Ipsi autem ad iracundiam provocaverunt et afflixerunt spiritum Sancti ejus.”—Is. lxiii. 10.

18442 “Tactus dolore cordis intrinsecus, Delebo, inquit, hominem quem creavi.”—Gen. vi. 6.

18443 “Ubi est fons peccati, illic est plaga supplicii.”—In Ps. 3.

18444 “Arcum meum ponam in nubibus.”—Gen. ix. 13.

18445 De Noe, c. 27.

18446 “Confide, fili, remittuntur tibi peccata tua.”—Matth. ix. 2.

[18447] “Iste petebat sanitatem corporis, et Dominus dat sanitatem animæ. Fecit sicut bonus medicus, qui curat causam.”—In Matth. 9.

[18448] “Causa infirmitatum sæpius sunt peccata.”—Quadrag. de Christ. Rel. s. 13. a. 3. c. 3.

[18449] “Eccc sanus factus es; jam noli peccare, ne deterius tibi aliquid contingat.”—John, v. 14.

[18450] “Fili, in tua infirmitate, . . . ab omni delicto munda cor tuum, . . . et da locum medico.”—Ecclus. xxxviii. 9.

[18451] “Nostri causa hæc invehuntur, qui retinemus cor impœnitens.”—Enarr. in Is. 9.

[18452] “Si audire nolueris vocem Domini, . . . venient super te omnes maledictions istæ, et apprehendent te; maledictus eris in civitate, maledictus in agro. . . .”-Deut. xxviii. 15.

[18453] “Non solum iram Dei promeruimus, sed totam creaturam adversum nos excitavimus.”—De Similit. c. 102.

[18454] “Cuncta quæ ad usum pravitatis infleximus, ad usum nobis vertuntur ultionis.”—In Evang. hom. 35.

[18455] “Armabit creaturam ad ultionem, . . et pugnabit cum illo orbis terrarum contra insensatos.”—Wisd. v. 18.

[18456] “Non est ulla creatura quæ mota non fuerit, cum ipsum Dominum senserit.”-Homil. In absol.

[18457] “Est primum genus dementiæ, nolle a malis suis quiescere, et Deum a sua velle ultione cessare.”-Lib. 8, ep. 41.

[18458] “Nec amputamus causa morbi, ut morbus auferatur.”-Ad Heliod. de Morte Nep.

[18459] “Miramur si miseri, qui tam impuri sumus?”-De Gub. Dei, 1, 7.

[18460] “Et nunc nolite illudere, ne forte constringantur vincula vestra.”-Is. xxviii. 22.

[18461] “Impii illusores, irridendo Dei minas et pœnas, magis iisdem se adstringunt.”

[18462] “Consummationem enim et abbreviationem audivi a Domino Deo exercituum super universam terram.”

[18463] “Quis quæsivit hæc de manibus vestris?”—Is. i. 12.

[18464] “Ne offeratis ultra sacrificium frustra.”

18465 “Solemnitates vestras odivit anima mea.”

18466 “Holocaustis non delectaberis. Sacrificium Deo, spiritus contribulatus.”—Ps. 1. 18.

18467 “Deus non irridetur.”—Gal. vi. 7.

18468 “Non sum locutus . . . de verbo . . . victimarum. Sed hoc verbum præcepi: . . . Audite vocem meam, et ero vobis Deus.”—Jer. vii. 22.

18469 “Qui habet aures audiendi, audiat.”-Matth. xi. 15.

18470 “Alii habent aures, sed non habent aures audiendi.”

18471 “Sacrificate sacrificium justitiæ, et sperat in domino.”-Ps. iv. 6.

18472 “Quis demonstravit vobis fugere a ventura ira?”-Matth. iii. 7.

18473 “Facite ergo fructum dignum pœnitentiæ.”

18474 “Sicut enim exhibuistis membra vestra servire immunditiæ . . . ita nunc exhibete . . . servire justitiæ.”-Rom. vi. 19.

18475 “Fit plerumque Deo gratior amore ardens vita post culpam, quam securitate torpens innocentia.”-Past. p. 3, adm. 29.

18476 “Guadium erit in cœlo super uno peccatore pœnitentiam agente, quam super nonaginta novem justis.”-Luke, xv. 7.

18477 “Et ne velitis dicere intra vos: Patrem habemus Abraham.”—Matth. iii. 9.

18478 “Omnis arbor quæ non facit fructum bonum, excidetur, et in ignem mittetur”—Matth. vii. 19.

18479 “Noli, subtrahere verbum, si forte audiant, et convertantur . . . et pœniteat me mali quod cogito facere eis.”—Jer. xxvi. 2.

18480 “Lætetur cor quærentium Dominum.’’—Ps. civ. 3.

18481 “Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quærenti illum.”—Lam. iii. 25.

18482 “Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.”—Ps. 1. 19.

18483 “Ego civitas refugii omnium ad me confugientium.”

18484 “In charitate perpetua dilexi te.”-Jer. xxxi. 3.

18485 “Ideo attraxi te miserans.”-Ibid.

18486 “Hoc autem pro certo habet omnis qui te colit, quod vita ejus, si in probatione fuerit, coronabitur; si autem in tribulation fuerit, liberabitur.”

18487 “Non enim delectaris in perditionibus nostris; post tempestatem, tranquillum facis; et post . . . fletum exsultationem infundis.”

18488 “Timorem meum dabo in corde eorum, ut non recedant a me.”—Jer. xxxii. 40

18489 “In ira populos confringes.”—Ps. lv. 8.

18490 “Quid enim ‘In ira populos deduces’? Imples tribulationibus omnia, ut, in tribulationibus positi, homines recurrant ad te.”—In Ps. 55. n. 13.

18491 “In tribulatione sua mane consurgent ad me.”—Osee, vi. 1.

18492 “Venite, et revertamur ad Dominum; quia cepit, et sanabit nos; percutiet, et curabit nos.”

18493 “In die tribulatione meæ, Deum exquisivi, . . . et non sum deceptus.”—Ps. lxxvi. 3.

18494 “Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me, ut discam justificationes tuas.”—Ps. cxviii. 71.

18495 “Pœna est, et gratia est.”—In Ps. 38.

18496 “Quid servat post pœnam, qui per gratiam exhibet pœnam?”

18497 “Difficile est, imo impossibile, ut præsentibus quis fruatur bonis, et futuris; ut de deliciis transeat ad delicias.”—De Inter. Domo, c. 25.

18498 “Noli æmulari in eo qui prosperatur in via sua, in homine faciente injustitias.”—Ps. xxxvi. 7.

18499 “Prosperatur, sed in via sua; laboras, sed in via Dei.”

18500 “Illi prosperitas in via est, in perventione infelicitas; tibi labor in via, in perventione felicitas.”—In Ps. 36, Serm. 1, n. 9

18501 “Deus, tu propitius fuisti eis, et ulciscens in omnes adventiones eorum.”—Ps. xcviii. 8.

18502 “Fenum quasi bos comedes, et septem tempora mutabuntur super te. donec scias quod dominetur Excelsus in regno hominum.”—Dan. iv. 29.

18503 “Nunc . . . laudo, et magnifico, et glorifico Regem cœli.”-Ibid. 34.

18504 “Libenter mutavit sententiam, quia vidit opera commutata.”-In Jon. iii. 10.

18505 “Magna est ira Dei, quando non nobis irascitur: reservat nos sicut vitulum in occisione.”

18506 “Parcit, ut in perpetuum feriat.”—Mor. 1. 7, c. 8.

18507 “Quiescam, nec irascar amplius.”

18508 “Provocasti me in omnibus his. . . . Scies quia ego Dominus, ut recorderis et confundaris.”—Ezech. xvi. 42, 43, 62.

18509 “Israel non intendit mihi, et dimisi eos secundum desideria cordis eorum.”—Ps. lxxx. 12.

18510 “Misereamur impio, et non discet justitiam; . . . et non videbit gloriam Domini.”—Is. xxvi. 10.

18511 “Misereamur impio; longe a me misericordia tam rigorosa.”

18512 “Domine, hic seca, hic non parcas, ut in æternum parcas.”

18513 “Magnæ misericordiæ est nequitiam impunitarn non relinquere.”-Serm. 171, E. B.

18514 “Hæc mihi sit consolatio, ut, affligens me dolore, non pareat.”—Job. vi. 10.

18515 “Quid in sopore deprimeris? Surge, invoca Deum tuum.”-Jon. i. 6.

18516 “Virgam vigilantem ego video. Ollam succensam ego video.”—Jer. i. 11—13.

18517 “Qui virga non corrigitur, in ollam mittitur, ut ardeat.”—In Ps. xxxviii.

18518 “Quanti mercenarii in domo patris mei abundant panibus. ego autem hic fame pereo!”-Luke, xv. 17.

18519 “Surgam, et ibo ad patrem meum”—Ibid. 18.

18520 “Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum.”—Phil. iv. 7.

18521 “Pater, peccavi in cœlum et coram te; jam non sum dignus vocari filius tuus.”

18522 “Accurrens cecidit super collum ejus, et osculatus est eum.”

18523 “Proferte stolam primam, et induite illum.”

18524 “Epulemur, quia hic filius meus mortuus erat, et revixit; perierat, et inventus est.”

18525 “In me omnis spes vitæ virtutis; transite ad me omnes.”-Ecclus. xxiv. 25.

18526 “Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam.”-Prov. viii. 35.

18527 “Dormiebat sopore gravi.”—Jon. i. 5.

18528 “Clamavi de tribulatione mea ad Dominum, et exaudivit me.”—Jon. ii. 3.

18529 “Vigilat in ceto, qui stertebat in navi.”—Serm. de Jon.

18530 “Si cessaret Deus, et non misceret amaritudines felicitatibus sæculi, oblivisceremur eum.”—In Ps. xciii.

18531 “Quam clemens Dominus, quam pius in utroque, cum aut miseretur aut vindicate!”-In Luc. c. 13.

18532 “Dum judicamur autem, a Domino corripimur, ut non cum hoc mundo damnemur.”—I Cor. xi. 32.

18533 “Flagella Domini quibus quasi servi corripimur, ad emendationem et non ad perditionem nostram, evenisse credamus.”—Judith, viii. 27.

18534 “Omnis qui te colit, . . . si in correptione fuerit, ad misericordiam tuam venire licebit; non enim delectaris in perditionibus nostris.”—Tab. iii. 21.

18535 “Ego, quos amo, arguo et castigo.”—Apoc. iii. 19.

18536 “Ubi amor est, severitas solet esse pignus gratiarum.”

18537 “Exacerbavit Dominum peccator; secundum multitudinem iræ suæ non quæret.”—Ps. ix. 25.

18538 “Non exquiret; multum irascitur, dum non exquirit.”

18539 “Et requiescet indignatio mea in te; et auferetur zelus meus a te; et quiescam, nec irascar amplius.”—Ezech. xvi. 42.

18540 “Secundum autem duritiam tuam et impœnitens cor, thesaurizas tibi iram in die iræ, et revelationis justi judicii Dei, qui reddet unicuique secundum opera ejus.”—Rom. ii. 5.

18541 “Magna ira est, quando peccantibus non irascitur Deus.”—Ep. ad Castrut.

18542 “Delinquentes in hac vita castigati deplorandi non sunt, sed qui impuniti abeunt.”—Lib. 5, ep. 269.

18543 “Non tam molestum ægrotare, quam morbo medelam non afferri.”

18544 “Si impunita dimittit, tunc punit infestius; quoniam nihil est infelicius felicitate peccantium.’’—Epist. 138, n. 14, E. B.

18545 “Quare ergo impii vivunt, sublevati sunt, confortatique divitiis?”

18546 “Ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in puncto ad inferna descendunt.’’—Job, xxi. 7, 13.

18547 “Quare via impiorum prosperatur?”

18548 “Congrega eos quasi gregem ad victimam.”—Jer. xii. 1–3.

18549 “Hi enim ut victimæ ad supplicium saginantur.”—Octav. c. 10.

18550 “Cum hominibus non flagellabuntur; . . . verumtamen . . . subito defecerunt . . . velut somnium surgentium.”-Ps. lii. 5–18.

18551 “Quemadmodum fumus deficient.’’—Ps. xxxvi. 20.

18552 “Fumus ascendcndo deficit.”—Lib. i, ep. 5.

18553 “Vidi impium superexaltatum; . . . et transivi, et ecce non erat.”-Ps. xxxvi. 35.

18554 “Miseri, in hoc altius tolluntur, ut decidant altius.’’—Octav. c. 10.

18555 “Dejecisti eos, dum allevarentur.”-Ps. lxxii. 18.

18556 “Manifestum perditionis indicium est, quando nulla contrarietas impedit quod mens perversa concepit.”-Mor. 1. 26, c. 16.

18557 “Prosperitas stultorum perdet illos.”—Prov. i. 32.

18558 “Sicut fulgur tonitrum portat, ita prosperitas supplicia sempiterna.”

18559 “Inebriabo cos, ut sopiantur, et dormiant somnum sempiternum, et non consurgant, dicit Dominus.”—Jer. li. 39.

18560 “Omnis igitur qui invenerit me, occidet me.”—Gen. iv. 14.

18561 “Longæva vita vindicta est; favor enim impiorum est, si subito moriantur.”

18562 “Sicut pisces capiuntur hamo, . . . sic capiuntur homines in tempore malo.’’—Eccles. ix. 12.

18563 “Noli gaudere ad piscem qui in esca sua exsultat; nondum traxit hamum piscator.”—In Ps. 91, n. 8.

18564 “Cum irascitur, non odio hoc facit, sed ut ad se attrahat quos non vult perire.”

18565 “Adversatur ad tempus, ut te secum habeat in reternum.”—In Matt. hom. 14.

18566 “Medici percutiunt, et sanant.”

18567 “Sævire videtur Deus; cum ista facit, ne metuas; quoniam pater est, nunquam sic sævit, ut perdat.”-In Ps. 65, n. 16.

18568 “Ego, qous amo, arguo et castigo.”-Apoc. iii. 19.

18569 “Ecce sto ad ostium, et pulso.”

18570 “Si quis . . . aperuerit mihi januam, intrabo ad illum, et cœnabo cum illo, et ipse mecum.”-Apoc. iii. 20.

18571 “Qui viverit, dabo ei sedere mecum in throno meo.”-Apoc. iii. 21.

18572 “Disciplinam Domini, fili mi, ne abjicias; nec deficias, cum ab eo corriperis. Quem enim diligit Dominus, corripit; et quasi pater in filio complacet sibi.”-Prov. iii. 11.

18573 “Pœnæ nos ad Deum perducunt.”—Ad pop. Ant. hom. 6.

18574 “Pœna est modus loquendi Dei, quo culpam ostendit.”

18575 “Non est grave plaga affici, sed plaga non meliorem effici.”

18576 “Ab increpatione tua, Deus Jacob, dormitaverunt.”—Ps. lxxv. 7.

18577 “Percussi vos, . . . et non redistis ad me.”—Amos, iv. 9.

18578 “Mittet contra eum fulmina; . . . cor jus indurabitur tamquam lapis, et stringetur quasi malleatoris incus.”-Job. xli. 14.

18579 “Tempore angustiæ suæ, auxit contemptum in Dominum.”-2 Par. xxviii. 22.

18580 “Pluet supra peccatores laqueos; ignis et sulphur, et spiritus procellarum, paris calicis eorum.”-Ps. x. 7.

18581 “Partem calicis dixit, quia eorum passio hic per Dolores incipitur, sed in ultione perpetua consummatur.”-Mor. 1, 15. c. 21.

18582 “In flagellis positum flagellis digna committere, est sævientem acrius ad iracundiam concitare.”

18583 “Super quo percutiam vos ultra, addentes prævaricationem? Et derelinquetur filia Sion . . . sicut civitas quæ vastatur.”—Is. i. 5–8.

18584 “Optima consideration, cum senseris pœnam, culpæ meminisse.”

18585 “Merito hæc patimur, quia peccavimu.’’—Gen. xlii. 21.

18586 “Justus es, Domine, et rectum judicium tuum.”—Ps. cxviii. 137.

18587 “Quæ fecisti nobis, in vero judicio fecisti.”—Dan. iii. 31.

18588 “Non reperitur aliquem Sanctorum ita compati in infirmitatibus, sicut Mulier hæc, Beata Virgo Maria.”-P. 4, tit. 15, c. 12.

18589 “(Non potest) miserias scire, et non subvenire.”

18590 “Omnes homines vult salvos fieri.”—I Tim. ii. 4.

18591 “Nolens aliquos perire, sed omnes ad pœnitentiam reverti.”—2 Petr. iii. 9.

18592 “Per orationem, ira Dei suspenditur, vindicta differtur, venia procuratur.”—Lign. Vit. de Orat. c. 2.

18593 “Invoca me; . . . eruam te.”—Ps. xlix. 15.

18594 “Clama ad me, et exaudiam te.”—Jer. xxxiii. 3.

18595 “Quodcumque volueritis, petetis, et fiet vobis.”—John, xv. 7.

18596 “Oratio, cum sit una, omnia potest.”—Apud Rodr, p. I, tr. 5, c. 14.—Wisd. vii. 27.

[18597] “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—Matth. vii. 8.

[18598] “Tu, Domine, suavis et mitis, et multæ misericordiæ omnibus invocantibus te.”—Ps. lxxxv. 5.

[18599] “Si quis autem vestrum indiget sapientia, postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluenter, nec improperat.”—James, i. 5.

[18600] “Usque modo non petistis quidquam in nomine meo; petite, et accipietis, ut gaudium vestrum sit plenum.”—John, xvi. 24.

[18601] “Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—John, xvi. 23.

[18602] “Aures principis paucis patent, Deo vero omnibus volentibus.”

[18603] “Fide tenendum est, orationem adultis esse necessarian.”-De Inst. 1, 2, c. 37, d. 3.

[18604] “Petite et accipietis.”-John, xvi. 24.

[18605] “Orate, ut non intretis in tentationem.”-Matth, xxvi. 41.

[18606] “Oportet semper orare.”-Luke, xviii. 1.

[18607] 2. 2, q. 83, a. 3.

[18608] “Promittendo, debitorem se Deus fecit.”-Serm. 110, E. B.

[18609] “Nullus speravit in Domino, et confuses est.”-Ecclus. ii. 11.

[18610] “Protector est omnium sperantium in se.”—Ps. xvii. 31.

[18611] “Petitis, et non accipitis, eo quod male petatis.”—James, iv. 3.

[18612] “Et exaruit manus ejus quam extenderat contra eum, nec valuit retrahere eam ad se.”—3 Kings, xiii. 4.

[18613] “Valde stultus supplex rogavit Prophetam, ut sibi peteret, non sceleris remissionem, sed manus curationem.”

[18614] “Census peccati, pœna.”

[18615] “Est chirographum quoddam contra nos.”

[18616] “Miseros autem facit populos peccatum.”—Prov. xiv. 34.

18617 “Fames, et contritio, et flagella; super iniquos creata sunt hæc omnia.”—Ecclus. xl. 9.

18618 “O mucro Domini! usquequo non quiesces? Ingredere in vaginam tuam, refrigerare, et sile.”—Jer. xlvii. 6.

18619 “Quomodo quiescet, cum Dominus præceperit ei adversus Ascalonem?”

18620 “Cum jejunaverint, non exaudiam preces eorum; et si obtulerint holocautomata et victimas, non suscipiam ea; quoniam gladio, et fame, et peste, consumam eos.”—Jer. xiv. 12.

18621 “Orabat autem hic scelestus Dominum, a quo non esset misericordiam consecuturus.”—2 Mach. ix. 13.

18622 “Facite ergo fructum dignum pœnitentiæ. Et ne velitis dicere intra vos: Patrem habemus Abraham.”-Matt. iii. 8.

18623 “Quid profuit Jeremias Judæis?”—Ad pop. Ant. hom. 79.

18624 “Prosunt, et plurimum, sed quando nos quoque aliquid agimus.”

18625 “Erigis muros; intus cum sit malum, urbs captu facilis est.”

18626 “Abusum projicite, et ero vobis propitia.”

18627 “Deus, in adjutorium meum intende.”-Ps. lxix. 2.

18628 “Qui se juvari efflagitat, etiam, quod in se est, faciat.”

18629 “Qui creavit te sine te, non salvabit te sine te.”

18630 “Omnis enim qui petit, accipit.”—Matt. vii. 8.

18631 “Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.”—John, xvi. 23.

18632 “Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus; quia, quod quærit, invenit, et frustrari non potest.”—De Aquad.

18633 “Infinitus enim thesaurus est hominibus: quo qui usi sunt, participes facti sunt amicitiæ Dei.”—Wisd. vii. 14.

18634 “Odio sunt Deo impius et impietus ejus.”-Wisd. xiv. 9.

18635 “Ipse est propitiation pro peccatis nostris.”-I John, ii. 2.

18636 “Jesum tibi dedit mediatorem: quid non apud Patrem Filius talis obtineat?”—De Aquad.

18637 “Quid timetis, modicæ fidei? Affixit peccata cruci cum suis manibus.”—In Cant. s. 38.

18638 “Sed forsitan et in ipso majestatem vereare divinam? Advocatum habere vis ad ipsum? Ad Mariam recurred.”-De Aquad.

18639 “Ego murus, et ubera mea sicut turris, ex quo facta sum coram eo quasi pacem reperiens.”-Cant. viii. 10.

18640 “Ipsa reperit pacem inimicis, salute perditis, misericordiam desperatis.”-In Cant. viii. 10.

18641 “Formosa . . . sicut pelles Salomonis.”-Cant. i. 4.

18642 “Stat Maria in conspectus Filii sui, non cessans pro peccatoribus exorare.”

18643 “Adstat Beatissima Virgo vultui Conditoris, prece potentissima semper interpellans pro nobis.”

18644 “Videt enim nostra discrimina, nostrique clemens Domina materno affectu miseretur.”

18645 “Pete, Mater, quid vis a me. . . . Misericordiam peto pro miseris.”

18646 “Te solam, O Maria, pro Sancta Ecclesia sollicitam præ omnibus Sanctis scimus.”—Apud S. Bonav. spec. B. M. V. lect. 6.

18647 “Ecce tu iratus es, et peccavimus; . . . non est . . . qui consurgat, et teneat te.”—Is. lxiv. 5–7.

18648 “Ante Mariam, non fuit qui sic detinere Dominum auderet.”

18649 “Detinet Filium, ne peccatores percutiat.”

18650 “Nemo tam idoneus, qui gladio Domini manum objiciat.”—Spec. B. M. V. lect. 7–14.

18651 “Salve, divina cum hominibus Reconciliatio!”

18652 “Verbum usum est Virgine Sequestra.”—Exposit. fid. de Trin.

18653 “Tu es ilia fidelissima columba Noe, quæ inter Deum et mundum, diluvio spirituali submersum, Mediatrix fidelissima extitisti.”—Spec. B. M. V. lecl. 9.

18654 “Per te pax cœlestis donate est.”

18655 “Quare parcit nunc mundo ipse Deus, qui olim etiam multo his minora peccata acrius punivit?”

18656 “Totum hoc facit propter Beatam Virginem.”—Stell. B. V. 1. II, p. 2, c. 2.

18657 “Cœlum et terra jamdudum ruissent, si Maria suis precibus non sustentasset!”

18658 “Spes nostra, salve.”

18659 “Maledictus homo qui confidit in homine.”-Jer. xvii. 5.

18660 “Totius boni plenitudinem posuit in Maria, ut proinde, si quid spei in nobis est, si quid gratiæ, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare.”—De Aquad.

18661 “Hæc mea maxima fiducia est, hæc tota ratio spei meæ.”

18662 “Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam gratiam.”

18663 “Spes nostra, salve.”

18664 “Hæc peccatorum Scala.”-De Aquad.

18665 “Iniquitates vestræ diviserunt inter vos et Deum vestrum.”-Is. lix. 2.

18666 “Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.”—I John, iv. 16.

18667 “Tu peccatorem quantumlibet fœtidum non horres; si ad te suspiraverit, tu ilium a desperationis barathro pia manu retrahis.”—Depr. ad glor. V.

18668 “Pulchra ut luna.”—Cant. vi. 9.

18669 “Sicut luna est media inter solem et terram, sic et Virgo regia inter nos et Deum est media, et gratiam nobis refundit.”

18670 “Ego civitas omnium ad me confugientium.”

18671 “Nullus est ita abjectus a Deo, qui, si me invocaverit, non revertatur ad Deum, et habiturus sit misericordiam.”

18672 “Ideo Mater Dei præelecta es ab æterno, ut, quos justitia Filii saivare non potest, tu per tuam salvares pietatem.”

18673 “Pasce hædos tuos.”-Cant. i. 7.

18674 “Pasce hædos tuos, quos convertis in oves, ut, qui a sinistris in judicio erant collocandi, tua intercessione collocentur a dextris.”

18675 “Qui nec Beatam Virginem obsequio prosequuntur. nec preces fundunt ut aliquando resipiscant, hædi non sunt Mariæ, sed ad sinistram sistendi.”

18676 “Conanti surgere ad Deum tribuis auxilium.”

18677 “Ipsa est a me velut esca dulcissima elecla pro capiendis hominibus, et animabus præcipue peccatorum.”—Dial. tr. 4, c. 139.

18678 “Sicut magnes attrahit ferrum, sic ego attraho Deo dura corda.”—Rev. 1. 3, c. 3.

18679 “Timerene debet et pereat, cui Maria sc Matrem exhibet et Advocatam?”

18680 “Tu, misericordiæ Mater, non rogabis pro redempto Redemptorem?”

18681 “Rogabis plane; quia, qui Filium tuum inter Deum et homines posuit Mediatorem, te quoque inter reum et Judicem, posuit Mediatricem.”—Marial. s. I.

18682 “Age gratias ei qui talem tibi Mediatricem providit.”—In Sign. Magn.

18683 “Spes unica peccatorum.”

18684 “Si propter tuas nequitias Dominum videris indignatum, ad spem peccatorum confugias.”

18685 “Sibi pro miseris satisfacere ex officio est commissum.”—Stim, div am. p. 3, c. 12.

18686 “Officium tuum est mediam te iuterponere inter Deum et homines.”—De Rhet. div. c. 18.

18687 “Eia ergo, Advocata nostra, officium tuum imple.”—De Nat. V. M. conc. 3.

18688 “Memorare, piissima Maria, a sæculo non esse auditum, quemquam ad tua præsidia confugientem esse derelictum.”

18689 Calamitosus esset animus futuri præscius et ante miserias miser Ep. 98.

18690 Positus est hic in signum cui contradicetur. Et tuam ipsius animam doloris gladius pertransibit. Luc. 2:35.

18691 Omnis lætitia mea ad illa verba in mœrore converse est.

18692 Blasphemavit, reus est mortis. Matt. 26:65, 66.

18693 Non hic fabri filius? Matt. 13:55.

18694 Nonne hic est faber, filius Mariæ? Matt. 6:3.

18695 Quomodo hic literas scit, cum non didicerit. Joan. 7:15.

18696 Et velaverunt eum, et percutiebant faciem ejus . . . dicentes; Prophetiza, quis est qui te percussit. Luc. 22:64.

18697 Insanit, quid eum auditis? Joan. 10:20.

18698 Ecce homo devorator, et bibens vinum, amicus publicanorum et peccatorum. Luc. 7:34.

18699 In principe dæmoniorum ejicit dæmonia. Matt. 9:34.

18700 Nonne bene dicimus nos, quia Samaritanus es tu, et dœmonium babes? Joan. 8:48.

18701 Si non esset hic malefactor, non tibi tradidissemus eum. Joan. 18:30.

18702 Pater mi, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste. Matt. 26:39.

18703 Tristis es anima mea usque ad mortem. Matt. 26:38.

18704 Filius qui natus est tibi, morte morietur. 2 Reg. 12:14.

18705 Lib. 6, Rev. c. 9.

18706 Quoties aspiciebam filium meum, quoties involvebam eum pannis, quoties videbam ejus manus et pedes; toties animus meus quasi novo dolore absorptus est; quia cogitabam, quomodo crucifigeretur. Lib. 6, c. 57.

18707 Fasciculus mirrhæ dilectus meus mihi, inter ubera mea commorabitur. Cant. 1:12.

18708 Tom. 3, Serm. 2, a 3, c. 1.

18709 Eum lactans cogitabat de felle et aceto; quando fasciis involvebat, funes cogitabat quibus ligandus erat; quando gestabat, cogitabat in cruce confixum; quando dormiebat, cogitabat mortuum. Tom. 1, Ev. Lu. Dom. infr. Oct. Nat. s. 1.

18710 Oeuli mei replebantur lacrymis, et cor meum torquebatur dolora. Lib. 6. c. 57, et1. 7, c. 7.

18711 Et Jesus proficlebat sapientia et ætate, et gratia apud Deum, et homines. Luc. 2:23.

18712 3, p. q. 7, art. 12

[18713] Ille doloris gladius Virgini omni hora tanto se propius approximabat, quanto Filius passionis tempori magis appropinquabat. Fer. 6, lect. 2, c. 16.

[18714] Fase. di Rose, p. 2, c. 2.

[18715] Et comæ capitis tui sicut purpura regis vincta canalibus. C. 7. v. 5.

[18716] Mens tua, O Maria, et cogitationes tuæ tinctæ in sanguine dorminicæ passionis, sic affectæ semper fuere, quasi recenter viderent sanguinem de vulneribus profluentem. In Cant. c. 7, v. 5.

[18717] Quid est quod sic turbaris Herodes? Rex iste qui natus est non venit reges pugnando superare sed moriendo mirabiliter subjugare. Serm. 5, de Epiph.

[18718] Surge et accipe puerum, et matrem ejus et fuge in Egyptum. Matth. 2:13.

[18719] Qui consurgens accepit puerum et matrem ejus nocte, et secessit in Egyptum. Matth. 2:14.

[18720] Positus est hic in signum cui contradicetur.

[18721] Fuge a tuis ad extraneos, a templo ad dæmonum fans. Quæ major tribulatio, quam quod recens natus a collo matris pendens eum ipsa matre paupercula fugere cogatur?

[18722] 3, Lib. 10, c. 8.

[18723] Viam silvestrem, obscuram, asperam, et inhabitam.

[18724] Joseph et Maria non habent famulum, non ancillam; ipsi domini et famuli.

[18725] Quomodo faciebant de victu? Ubi nocte quiescebant? Quomodo hospitabantur. De Vit. Chr.

[18726] Cum enim essent egeni, manifestum est quod sudores frequentabant necessaria vitæ inde sibi quærentes.

[18727] Aliquando filius famem patiens panem petit, nec unde dare mater habuit. In Vit. Christi. c. 13.

[18728] Sic magnus est, ut portari non valeat; et sic parvus quod per se ire non potest.

[18729] Non habemus hic manentem civitatem, sed futuram inquirimus. Heb. 13:14.

[18730] Ap. P. Genev. Serv. Dol. di Mar.

[18731] Loc. cit.

[18732] Patientia autem opus perfectum habet, ut sitis perfecti et integri, in nullo deficientes. Jac. 1:4.

18733 Num quem diligit anima mea vidistis? Cant. 3:3.

18734 Fuerunt mihi lacrymæ meæ panes die ac nocte, dum dicitur mihi quotidie, ubi est Deus tuus? Psal. 41:4.

18735 Illas noctes insomnes duxit in lacrymis, Deum deprecando, ut daret illi reperire filium.

18736 Indica, mihi ubi cubes, ubi pascas in meridie, ne vagari incipiam. Cant. 1:6.

18737 Lumen oculorum meorum. et ipse non est mecum, Psal. 37:11.

18738 Vehementer doluit, quia vehementer amabat. Plus doluit de ejus amissione, quam aliquis martyr dolorem sentiat de animæ a corpore separatione. Hom. infr. Oct. Ep.

18739 Idcirco ego plorans, et oculus meus deducens aquas, quia longe est a me consolator meus. Thren. 1:16.

18740 Quale gaudium erit mihi, qui in tenebris sedeo, et lumen cœli non video. Tob. 6:11.

18741 Tristabatur ex humilitate, quia arbitrabatur se indignam eui tam pretiosus commissus esset thesaurus.

18742 Quærebant eum, ne forte reliquisset eos. Ap. Corn. a Lap. in Luc. 2.

18743 Fili, quid fecisti nobis sis? Pater tuus et ego dolentes quærebamus te. Luc. 2:48.

18744 March. Diar. 30, Ott.

18745 Vos non populus meus, et ego non ero vester. Os. i.9.

18746 Peccata vestra diviserunt inter vos et Deum vestrum. Isa. 59:2.

18747 Ecce universa vanitas, et afflictio spiritus. Eccli. 1:14.

18748 Perdit homo bovem, et post eum vadit: perdit ovem et sollicite eam quærit; perdit asinum, et non quiescit. Perdit homo Deum, et comedit, et bibit, et quiescit.

18749 Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi, qui pascitur inter lilia. Cant. 2:16.

18750 Thren. 3:25.

18751 Miserere mei, Domine fili David, filia mea male a dæmone vexatur. Matth. 15:22.

18752 Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur. Luc. 12:49.

18753 Omnes dolores mundi, si essent simul conjuncti, non essent tanti quantus dolor gloriosæ Mariæ. Tom. iii. 5, 45.

18754 Quanto dilexit tenerius. tanto est vulnerata profundius.

18755 Imminente passione filii mei, lacrymæ erant in oculis meis, et sudor in corpore præ timore. L. 1, Rev. c. 10.

18756 Sine somno duxisti, et soporatis cæteris, vigil permansisti.

18757 Plorans ploravit in nocte, et lacrymæ in maxillis ejus; non est qui consolotur eam, ex omnibus charis ejus. Thren. 1:12.

18758 Iisdem labiis mittit ad mortem quibus eum pronuntiaverunt innocentem.

18759 Et bajulanis sibi crucem exivit in eum qui dicitur Calvariæ locum. Joan. 19:17.

18760 Ex vestigiis filii mei cognoscebam incessum ejus; quæ enim procedenat, apparebat terra infusa sanguine. L. 4, c. 77.

18761 Med. 6.

18762 Et vidimus eum, et non erat aspectus. Isa. 53:2.

18763 Putavimus eum quasi leprosum. Isa. 53:4.

18764 Et quasi absconditus vultus ejus, et despectus, unde nec reputavimus eum. Isa. 53:3.

18765 Deut. 28:66.

18766 Heu quo properas, quo venis mater! Cruciatu meo cruciaberia, et ego tuo.

18767 Tollebat et mater crucem suam, et sequebatur eum, crucifigends cum ipso. In Cant. 7.

18768 Ut intelligas Christi crucem non sufficere sine tua.

18769 Serm, 2, de Pass.

[18770] Ego non separabar ab eo, et stabam vicinior cruci ejus. L. 1, c. 6.

[18771] Cur ivisti, O Domina, ad Calvariæ locum? cur te non retinuit pudor, horror facinoris?

[18772] Plane mater, quæ nec in terrore mortis filium deserebat. Serm. 8, de Ass.

[18773] L. 1, Rev. c. 10, et 1. 4, c. 70.

[18774] Quot læsiones in corpore Christi, tot vulnera in corde matris. Ap. Bald. to. 1, p. 499.

[18775] O Domina, ubi stas? Numquid juxta crucem? Imo in cruce cum filio cruciaris? Ap. Bald. tom. 1, p. 452.

[18776] Crux et clavi filii fuerunt et matris; Christo cruciflxo crucifigebatur et mater.

[18777] Quod in carne Christi agebant clavi, in Virginis mente affectus erga filium.

[18778] Dum illi corpus, ista spiritum immolabat. To. 1, Serm. 31.

[18779] Ap. Bald. p. 456.

[18780] Volebat eum amplecti sed manus frustra protersæ in se complexæ redibant. Ap. Bald. 463.

[18781] Torcular calcavi solus . . . Circumspexi, et non est auxiliator; quæsivi, et non fuit qui adjuvaret. Isa. 63:3, 5.

[18782] Prætereuntes autem blasphemabant eum moventes capita sua. Matt. 27:39.

[18783] Si filius Dei es, descende de cruce.

[18784] Alios salvos fecit, seipsum non potest salvum facere.

[18785] Si rex Israel est, descendat nunc de cruce. Loc. cit.

[18786] Rev.1. 4, c. 70.

[18787] Deus, Deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti de? Matth. 27:46.

[18788] Rev.1. 4, c. 70.

[18789] Repleta matre, ad filium redundaret inundatio amaritudims. Hom. in Ev. Stabat.

[18790] Stabam ego videns eum, ipse videns me, et plus dolebat de me quam de se. Ap. Simisc. Cons. 28.

[18791] Juxta crucem stabat mater, vox illi non erat; moriebatur vivens, vivebat moriens; nec mori poterat, quia vivens mortua erat. De. Lament. Virg.

[18792] Stupebant omnes qui noverant hujus hominis matrem, quod etiam in tantæ angustiæ pressura silentium servabat.

[18793] Voluit eam Christus cooperatricem nostræ redemptionis adstare, quam nobis constituerat dare matrem; debebat enim ipsa sub cruco nos parere filios. Hom. 44, de Pass. Dom.

[18794] Maria mater mea, propter compassionem et charitatem facta est mater omnium in cœlis et in terra. L. 1, c. 31.

[18795] Joan. 19:26.

[18796] Idcirco resipuit bonus latro, quia B. Virgo inter cruces filli et latronis posita, filium pro latrone deprecabatur; hoc suo beneficio, antiquum latronis obsequium recompensans. Ap. Salm. to. 1, tr. 47.

[18797] Monum. Conv. Pec. ap. P. Sinisch. Sans. 16.

[18798] O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte, si est dolor sicut dolor meus. Thren. 1:12.

[18799] Unus militum lancea latus ejus aperuit, et continuo exivit sanguis, et aqua. Joan. 19:34.

[18800] Rev.1. 2, c. 21.

[18801] Divisit Christus cum matre sua hujus vulneris pœnam, ut ipse injuriam acciperet, mater dolorem.

[18802] Lancea quæ ipsius latus aperuit, animam Virginis pertransivit, quæ inde nequibat avelli. De Lament. Virg.

[18803] Cum retraheretur hasta, apparuit cuspis rubea sanguine. Tune mihi videbatur quod quasi cor menm perforaretur, cum vidissem cor filii mei charissimi perforatum. Rev. c. 10.

[18804] Non parvum miraculum a Deo factum est, quod B. Virgo tot doloribus sauciata spiritum non exhalarit.

[18805] Tu mihi pater eras, tu frater, sponsus, meæ deliciæ, mea gloria, tu mihi omnia eras.

[18806] Isa. 46.

[18807] Ab ipso fuge ad ipsum, a judice ad redemptorem, a tribunali ad crucem.

18808 Ezech. 16:8.

18809 Propterea vulneratum est cor Christi, ut per vulnus visibile vulnus amoris invisibilis videatur. Serm. de pass. Dom.

18810 Præ nimio amore aperuit sibi latus, ut præberet cor suum.

18811 Filii hujus matris, ingredite um ipsa intra penetralia cordis Jesu

18812 Promt. Ex. V. Miser.

18813 C. 30:21.

18814 O vere Dei nate, tu nihi pater, tu mihi filius, tu mihi sponsus, tu mihi anima eras! Nunc orbor patre, viduor sponso, desolor filio, uno perdito filio omnia perdo. De Lam. V. Mar.

18815 O quam libenter tunc posita fuissem viva cum filio meo, si fuisset voluntas ejus! Rev.1. 1.

18816 Animam cum corpore Christi contumulari Virgo vehementer exoptavit.

18817 Vere dicere possum quod sepulto filio meo quasi duo corda in ano sepulchro fuerunt. Rev.1. 2, c. 21.

18818 Ubi thesaurus vester est, ibi et cor vestrum erit. Luc. 12:34.

18819 Super ipsam potius, quam super Dominum plangebant.

18820 Sorores Dominæ velaverunt eam tamquam viduam; cooperientes quasi totum vultum.

18821 Sine, Domina mea, sine me flere; tu innocens es, ego sum reus.

18822 Dom infra oct Nat. s. 2.

18823 Et tu, fili mi, cur mœrore conficeris, qui in mœrore meo toties me consolatus es?

18824 O Domina, quæ rapis corda hominum dulcore, nonne cor meum capuisti? O raptrix cordium, quando mihi restitues cor meum? Guberna illud cum tuo, et in latere filii colloca. Tunc possidebo quod spero, quia tu es spes nostra. S. Bernard. Med. in Salv. Reg. ap. s. Bon. Stim. c. 19, part. 3.